

# **Opportunity and Prosperity Agenda**

## **Gordon For City Council 2026 Campaign Platform**

### **Election**

City of San Diego City Council 2026

### **Office**

City of San Diego 4<sup>th</sup> Council District

### **Candidate**

Matthew Gordon

### **Campaign Manager**

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# Introduction and Constituency Overview

The City of San Diego 4<sup>th</sup> Council District is comprised of approximately 150,000 residents and 18 separate communities spanning multiple ages, ethnicities, national origins, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Since the 1960s District 4 has served as the epicenter of the Black political establishment in San Diego County producing notable community and political leaders such as Leon Williams, George Stevens, Dr. Shirley Weber, and Monica Montgomery Steppe. Over the past half century, District 4 has become an increasingly diverse multicultural council district as population patterns and relocation trends continue to shift San Diego's neighborhood landscape.

As of the most recent Federal Decennial Census, the core ethnic composition of the district is 47% Latino, 22% Asian, 15% Black, and 9% White. Additionally, a significant portion of district neighborhoods fall within federal census low to moderate income (LMI) areas of concern which has led to the district's ongoing reputation as one of San Diego's "Communities of Concern/Underserved Communities" hallmarked by historic under economic investment, high crime, low socioeconomic mobility, a food desert, predatory zoning policies, and a massive service disparity when compared to other city of San Diego areas, and most recently the district has suffered a devastating increase in the damage to critical infrastructure following the 2024 January floods that occurred in significant portions of the district.

In spite of these challenges, the district's political leadership as well as the policy priorities of the district's political establishment have failed to change or deliver meaningful results to residents over decades, despite the issue profile being relatively the same. We believe the district's chronic lack of issue resolution, and the district's leadership only responding to a small minority of special interests opens the door to create a broader coalition and propose radical new solutions to solving the district's persistent needs and concerns. Our policy agenda seeks to answer fundamental questions and provide solid answers for how we not only meet our existing challenges but set the district up to thrive in successive decades to come with proactive leadership and robust community engagement.

# Campaign Mission Question

How can we do a better job of delivering opportunities and prosperity to the residents of San Diego's 4<sup>th</sup> City Council District?

## Campaign Thesis

This campaign was initiated on the fundamental premise that the residents of District 4 are not being effectively or fairly served at City Hall. We believe that the residents of District 4 reflect not only the needs and desires of all San Diegans, but the needs and desires of all Americans as well.

We seek to address the fundamental issues that residents of District 4 have continuously vocalized for decades: the district's leadership and the City are not serving the needs of everyday people and our district residents, the needs of our residents are continuously ignored, the City is not making sufficient effort in improving the quality of life for residents in our area, the status quo in City of San Diego is not working for the working and middle class, the residents of San Diego have had enough and demand new solutions to address our city's problems, our residents need their government to stand up for them.

Our campaign believes that if we prioritize an agenda centered around a relentless focus on delivering opportunity and prosperity to the residents of District 4 and the City of San Diego as a whole, we will solve our most daunting social issues as a city, improve the quality of life for everyday people in our city, and see real change in our neighborhoods.

Our campaign defines an Opportunity and Prosperity Agenda as one that delivers meaningful economic relief to residents, provides pathways for residents to raise their quality of life, provides solutions that keep communities safe and healthy, ensures government delivers high quality resident services, builds strong community groups, builds structures for regular resident input and collaboration, and thinks about better ways to provide services and solutions to resident needs.

We believe that focusing on policy ideas that deliver on economic opportunities, high quality government services, responsive and transparent government, prioritizing consumer rights, listening to resident feedback, fair prices and low costs of living, and protecting civil rights is the most effective way to deliver broad prosperity to San Diego.

# Campaign Values

1. Ending District 4's Status as a "Community of Concern and Under Resourced Community".
2. Equal and Equitable representation of all district constituents and equal representation of all cultures that exist in District 4.
3. Ensuring District 4 Residents receive high quality baseline city services equal to all other districts and neighborhoods within the City of San Diego.
4. Eliminating all remaining structural quality of life barriers for District 4 residents resulting from historic discrimination and predatory development policies such as redlining.
5. Investing in our community groups and the developing the next generation of community leaders. District 4 is only as strong as the community groups that represent resident priorities and their vision for their communities.
6. Building the District of the Future. We believe District 4 should be the leader within the City of San Diego in implementing new infrastructure technologies, designing more livable neighborhoods, preserving the natural environment, and imagining better ways for human beings to live and work together.
7. Building local solutions that solve national problems. We believe local government is the laboratory of democratic society. We believe that San Diego should lead the nation in putting forward bold solutions that address homelessness, cost of living, creating safe communities, climate resiliency, and socioeconomic mobility that serve as models for the entire country.
8. Making San Diego affordable for all residents. We believe that working people, students, essential workers, young adults, new immigrants, families, and senior citizens should all be able to afford a high quality of life within the City of San Diego and all residents of the city should have access to socioeconomic mobility throughout their life.
9. All people are worthy and equal of dignity, equal rights, and a high quality of life no matter ability or background.

# Priorities: Opportunity and Prosperity

1. Creating more economic opportunities for residents.
2. Delivering high quality government services.
3. Making sure government is transparent and effective for residents.
4. Protecting and expanding resident and consumer rights.
5. Taking resident feedback into account and creating forums for community input.
6. Developing solutions that ensure fair prices and low costs of living.
7. Protecting and expanding resident civil rights.
8. Innovating City Services for Residents and Businesses.
9. Ensuring residents a comprehensive Disaster Relief Plan.
10. Making San Diego Affordable For Working Families.

## **Opportunity and Prosperity Policy Agenda**

# 1. District Revitalization, Renewal, and Opportunity Creation

Creating a formal standing working group within the District 4 Council office consisting of community leaders across the district to identify key district development projects and priorities, establish goals and timelines completing revitalization projects and building resident input into the district decision making process.

Creating, maintaining and annually evaluating and updating a community driven district level economic development agenda and priorities list within the 4<sup>th</sup> District Council Office.

Within the framework of a central economic development agenda and priorities list, create commercial corridor master plans for districts major economic clusters, the I-805 corridor, the Euclid Ave corridor, the Market St corridor, and the Reo Drive corridor.

Activating the Council District's CPPS budget to provide dedicated ongoing funding support for community programs that increase neighborhood foot traffic, consumer spending and grow the neighborhood economy such as Jazz at the Creek, Daygo Eats, an Annual Juneteenth Celebration, Filipino Cultural Festival, the MLK community parade and allocating funding for two weekly Farmer's Markets in the district along Reo Drive and Imperial Ave section of the Black Arts and Culture District.

Designating the commercial corridor along Reo Drive as a Filipino Cultural & Commercial District to spur growth and investment in the Paradise Hills and Bay Terraces neighborhoods in our district and finally acknowledge the ongoing contributions of AAPI populations to our district.

Expanding the boundaries of the Black Arts & Culture District Designation to include Euclid Ave to increase development opportunities and drive economic growth.

Auditing the City of San Diego's Promise Zone Program and analyzing the program's efforts over the last 10 years to identify gaps, shortcomings of the program and receive recommendations on how to improve the district moving forward.

Creating a formal program with local financial institutions to increase the presence of bank branches and financial institutions within the district to expanded banking services, community lending, and provide financial services access to underbanked residents.

Launch an international district campaign to acquire four new grocery store locations within the boundaries of Council District 4 by 2030.

Fund and build at least two Community Gateway Signs by 2035.

## 2. Community Group Engagement and Empowerment

Expand the City's Nonprofit Academy program to include ongoing services for supporting and developing neighborhood councils, community interest groups, and planning groups so that all council districts have thriving community organizations that can implement resident ideas for improving their communities and bring community projects to life.

Partnering with the City of San Diego's Office of Boards and Commissions to leverage their best practices and standards to ensure that all neighborhoods within Council District 4 have active and robust resident councils that provide resident feedback and raise concerns to the council office. Creating new resident councils with the Office of Boards and Commissions where necessary to make sure all residents feel they are equally heard within the district.

Establish a District 4 Disability Advisory Council to ensure policies, budgets, and development plans include the voices and needs of disabled residents.

Make City services and the Councilmember's office more accessible by setting up weekly rotating office hours in different District 4 neighborhoods, allowing residents to address concerns, access resources, and get help without traveling downtown and promoting the usage of community assets in D4 such as our libraries and senior centers.

Giving Neighborhood Councils and resident organizations reservation priority for city facilities to encourage residents to meet regularly and ensure that all resident feedback groups have dedicated meeting spaces.

Create a permanent MLK Weekend Committee with equal representation from Harbor Drive parade organizers and Southeastern San Diego community leaders to plan future events, manage sponsorship continuity and promote cultural unity and prosperity.



Build a consistent, predictable forum where residents, business owners, faith leaders, and youth from District 4 can weigh in on priorities, budget allocations, and policy proposals before decisions are finalized. Two per year — one in spring (before City budget is finalized) and one in fall (before next year's legislative agenda is set).

### 3. Eliminating Housing Access Barriers

Banning Security Deposit differentiation between renters with different credit scores. All applicants get charged the same deposit (I.e. can't charge people with lower credit scores a higher security deposit).

Creating security deposit payment plan regulations within the city of San Diego. Allowing residents to pay their securities deposits upfront, or over 6 month or 12-month terms to reduce housing acquisition costs.

Banning Credit Score Minimums for properties located within the boundaries of the city of San Diego that prevent people from being able to access high quality housing.

Standardizing the monthly income requirement for rentals within city boundaries at 2.5x gross monthly income.

Dedicating a portion of Transit Occupancy Tax revenue and all Rental Business Tax Certificate revenue to a cash rent stabilization and qualified eviction prevention program.

Requiring all corporate landlords in the city of San Diego to submit monthly vacancy reports to the San Diego Housing Commission and charging penalties for unit vacancies longer the 45 days to close the luxury rental promotion loophole.

Banning rental junk fees such as pet rent within city of San Diego boundaries.

Limiting the usage of unlawful detainers in the consideration of rental applications except in certain circumstances, setting the maximum availability of those records on tenant screening reports to two years within the City of San Diego.

## 4. Development and Zoning Reform

Auditing the Development Services Department's Permit Review and Approval Process with recommendations for process eliminations, redundancy eliminations, reduced timelines for approvals, and reducing costs to applicants and developers.

Setting maximum project approval timeline standards for the Development Services Department to reduce excessive permit review timelines, and lower development financing costs.

## 5. Expanding Public Safety Resources

Recognizing the limited the capacity of San Diego Police Department to respond to all resident safety concerns, we propose working with the San Diego Chief of Police to restructure the department and the city's public safety service delivery system to include shifting positions from other city departments to provide regular crime prevention support, data analysis on crime and safety trends within neighborhoods, adding services focused on regular community engagement and proactive safety management, expanding contracting with trusted community groups and organizations to improve positive outlets for at risk populations, and providing additional safety positions outside of uniformed officers to reduce the burden on enforcement services.

Public Safety Plan for Community-Based Policing and Officer Wellness - Encourage a percentage of officers to patrol their own neighborhoods where they reside, fostering stronger community relationships and accountability.

Partner with SDUSD to reimagine the D.A.R.E. program in partnership to educate youth about the dangers of drugs and promote positive relationships between law enforcement and the community.

Building a permanent and adequate facility at Fire Station 51.

## 6. Dedicated Small Business Support and Expanding Individual Opportunities

Divert all City of San Diego Business Tax Certificate Revenue into a Special Revenue Fund only for small business support to permanently fund programs within the City's Small Business Enhancement Program.

Reform and upgrade the city's Storefront Improvement Program. Convert the construction rebate to an upfront grant. Raise the minimum award from \$8,000 to \$10,000 for all businesses and make the minimum award \$15,000 for businesses located with Community of Concern/LMI census tracts as defined by the Climate Equity Index (council districts 4, (some 6),8,9) and create an eligible contractors list for the program within LMI census tracts that restricts contracting opportunities for the Storefront Improvement Program to businesses and contractors that primarily work and or live in Council District Communities of Concern.

Expand the Storefront Improvement Program eligible expenses to include qualified equipment purchases such as new POS systems, Computers, or store displays and include the ability to use SIP funds for interior design improvements as well.

Modify the Economic Development Department's Capacity Building Grant Program for nonprofits that serve small businesses, raising the minimum award to \$50,000 per organization and \$70,000 per organization in Community of Concern/LMI census tracts as defined by the Climate Equity Index (council districts 4, (some 6),8,9) including the ability for community groups to utilize funds for creating new organizations to improve economic development within their communities.

Advocate for expanded job opportunities for people with disabilities in District 4 by partnering with local employers, workforce agencies, and the City's Economic Development Department to create inclusive hiring pipelines and job training programs.

Secure City and County funding for assistive technology, mobility aids, and home modifications for low-income residents with disabilities.

Push for increased accessibility service standards in City facilities, parks, and transportation to remove barriers to employment, education, and civic participation.

## 7. Protecting Neighborhood Services

Passing an ordinance that requires the Mayor's budget to fully fund operating hours for libraries, parks, and city owned facilities when the city facility is located in an LMI census tract to preserve the ability of working families to leverage public facilities.

## 8. Building and Running a Data Informed City

Passing an ordinance that requires of the City of San Diego's Performance and Analytics Department to publish data from all city departments to the public that clearly displays baseline service activity across all neighborhoods and publish resident complaint and city resolution data from the City's Get It Done App so that residents can see the city is being responsive to their needs.

## 9. Changing the Culture and Responsiveness of the District Office.

Hiring a staff that looks like the Council District and ensuring that language services for English, Tagalog, Spanish, and American Sign Language are represented within Council Staff.

Mandating that all resident inquires and assistance requested are responded to with 2 business days of being received by the council office, and publishing monthly reports and distributing them to neighborhood councils on the concerns residents are raising with the office, how many of the issues the council office was able to resolve, ongoing issues the office is continuing to work on and most importantly the success rate the office has in resolving resident concerns.

Establishing a dedicated district hotline via email and phone. [District4hotline@sandiego.gov](mailto:District4hotline@sandiego.gov)