



The City of



# Economic Development

## MEETING NOTES

### San Diego Promise Zone

#### Economic Activity Meeting Notes

Thursday, January 23 | 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM | via Zoom

**Economic Activity Goal:** Increase Economic Activity

#### In Attendance:

**Access Inc.** (Julieta Gonzalez), **Akitso** (Anna Sotto), **Asian Business Association** (Wesley Quach), **Business For Good San Diego** (Mikey Knab), **California Coast Credit Union** (Angel Nolasco), **City Heights Community Development Corporation** (Sylvia Ramirez), **City of San Diego - Economic Development Department** (Viridiana Quintana), **City of San Diego Promise Zone** (Roosevelt Williams III, Zachary Engberg, Daniel Hamilton, Domanic Riley, Donika Moreno, Oscar Silva, Brandon Tran, Ronah Fe Famorcan), **County of San Diego – Office of Homeless Solutions and Equitable Communities** (Kenya Benitez, Samantha Mendoza), **Department of Housing and Urban Development** (Megan Emme), **International Rescue Committee** (Irene Bwayo), **Local Initiatives Support Corporation** (Ivonne Rojas), **Logan Heights Community Development Corporation** (Felix Lopez), **National University** (Danielle Stephen), **Partnership for Environmental Progress** (John Tucker), **San Diego ART Matters** (Michael Angelo Camacho), **San Diego Black Business Network** (Prince Graham), **San Diego Futures Foundation** (Teresa Valenzuela), **San Diego Made** (Brook Dailey), **San Diego Parks Foundation** (Imani Robinson), **San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation** (Liz Muthoni), **San Diego State University** (Andrew Soliz), **The PoBoy Shop** (Lynne Taylor)

#### Meeting Notes:

##### Introductions, Culture Share, and Agenda Review:

- Danielle Stephens welcomed everyone to the January Economic Activity Meeting and shared the agenda.
- The culture share for this month tied into “Civil Rights Day” and asked participants how their work to increase economic development in the Promise Zone helped advance the cause of civil rights for Promise Zone residents.

##### Partner Announcements:

- **Angel Nolasco:** Angel has recently been hired by California Coast Credit Union as their new Community Engagement Specialist. He will now be attending Promise Zone Steering Committee meeting going forward alongside Promise Zone Working Group meetings as his schedule allows.

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- In his role as a Community Engagement Specialist, Cal Coast's first brick-and-mortar branch in the Promise Zone will open in the first quarter of 2025. The branch will be located in Logan Heights next to the Amazon drop and defunct Wal-mart. The opening of this branch will solve a long-running problem of few banks being physically located in the Promise Zone.
- **Andrew Soliz:** San Diego State University will host several career fairs during the February to May timeframe, as follows:
  - Feb 5 – 6: STEM Fair Day from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Feb 27: All Majors Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Mar 13: Spring Business Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Mar 24: Spring Public Health Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Mar 25: Hospitality Job Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Apr 10: Just in Time Career Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
  - Apr 24: Imperial Valley Career Fair from 12 pm – 3 pm
  - May 28: Summer Career Fair from 10 am – 2 pm
- **Liz Muthoni:** San Diego Regional EDC in partnership with Border Region Talent Pipeline K-16 Collaborative are sponsoring a funded summer internship program. San Diego area companies who participate in the program will be able to host summer interns at no cost to themselves. Applications from interested companies are due Feb 28, 2025.
  - [Apply Here](#)
- **Felix Lopez:** Logan Heights CDC will be hosting food distributions on every 3rd Friday of the month from 10 am – 12 pm at 3040 Imperial Ave. The next two will be held on February 21 and March 21. If you'd like more information or additional dates, please email [info@loganheightscdc.org](mailto:info@loganheightscdc.org).
  - Logan Heights CDC will also be hosting Community Markets every 3rd Saturday of each month from 12 pm – 3 pm at 2835 Imperial Ave. These community markets will offer customers fresh produce from local vendors. The next two Community Market will be held on February 15 and March 15. For additional dates, please email [info@loganheightscdc.org](mailto:info@loganheightscdc.org).
- **Lynne Taylor:** The Po' Boy Shop has recently opened in the Lincoln Park Community. This fast casual dining establishment serves Louisiana, Southern, and Caribbean specialty dishes. Come join them for a bite if you're in the area.
  - [Website](#)

### **Promise Zone Updates:**

- Communications Associate VISTA and Healthy Communities representative Bex Nava-McClellan's last day with the Promise Zone was January 2, 2025; they are now planting trees in San Jose for fellow AmeriCorps program Our City Forest.
  - With their departure there is now an opening for a new Promise Zone Communications VISTA. If you know someone who would be a great candidate, please let them know about the opportunity [at this link here](#).
- Grants & Research Associate Zachary Engberg, who also supported the Healthy Communities working group, will complete his year of service on February 10, 2025.

- Together with Bex, Zachary identified and mapped key resources and created how-to guides for victory gardening (gardening on a budget), gardening without land, and a physical map of local community and school gardens in the Promise Zone. Additionally, he spearheaded the Promise Zone's first P.O.W.E.R Hour event to prepare young people for our Career Expo.
- Ronah Fe Famarcan's Employ & Empower internship with the team will end on January 31, 2025.
  - Ronah worked closely with Bex on creating our monthly newsletter and has been the person behind the interviews for each Community and City Spotlight.
  - The Promise Zone is seeking another intern to continue in Ronah's footsteps supporting our newsletter and Working Group meeting.
    - This hybrid, paid internship is open to undergraduate and graduate students with at least 75 semester/112.5 quarter units. Benefits include free MTS transit passes, LinkedIn Learning, and mentoring opportunities. If you know someone who would be interested, please have them [Apply Here](#).
- The Promise Zone would like to thank Bex, Zachary, and Ronah for all their contributions!
- The date and location have been secured for the Promise Zone's 2025 Youth-led Career Expo. This year's expo will take place on **Tuesday, March 18** at the Balboa Park Club. Please save the date and join us in making this year's expo a success. Any employer of young people ages 16-24 who has part-time, full-time, internships, or summer jobs available as well as organizations that offer career readiness programs may participate as a vendor at no cost. Additionally, if you'd like to sponsor the event with a cash donation, raffle prizes, or promotional items for swag bags, please email [PromiseZone@sandiego.gov](mailto:PromiseZone@sandiego.gov).
- The Community Spotlight for this month is John Tucker, Program Manager at the Partnership for Economic Prosperity (PEP) and an incredibly engaged member of the Economic Activity Working Group. The Working Group has appreciated his contributions.
  - Outside of his work with the Promise Zone, John has supported various businesses across San Diego, in industries as diverse as landscaping up to manufacturing. Helping them all evolve from small startups to thriving enterprises.
  - To submit a nominee for a future spotlight, use this google forms link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSehcidTURu9Xb6lywuyh4z4y9JgqDCFxmXdNgSheNjaDp8Hw/viewform?usp=sharing>

### **Business For Good San Diego Presentation:**

Mikey Knab is a co-founder and board member of Business for Good San Diego. During his presentation he gave the Working Group a brief overview of the work Business for Good has done to bring about policy change in San Diego. Key takeaways from their presentation were:

- Business for Good San Diego is a coalition of 100+ locally owned businesses across San Diego with a focus on advocating for equitable, inclusive, and sustainable practices.
  - They have secured 5 policy victories since beginning in 2017.
    - One of these victories was the establishment of SD Community Power as an alternative to San Diego Gas & Electric (SDGE). The purpose of SD Community Power is to prioritize local control of energy generation and distribution, while making it more affordable and sustainable in the long run.
- The project they have been advocating for is to have more community choice in service providers when it comes to city required mandates, i.e., waste disposal or commercial composting.
  - There were only 3 haulers officially sanctioned by the City of San Diego to dispose of waste and all 3 declined to dispose of organic waste from businesses.
    - Business for Good lobbied for 2 years to get this changed and allow smaller franchise haulers to be allowed to dispose of commercial compost. They succeeded but shortly thereafter a state law mandated that all haulers were required to dispose of organic waste.
      - Mikey counts this as a victory because only by making the issue known was it possible for it to be implemented as a state-wide requirement.
- Business for Good also advocates for budget initiatives at the county level such as MEHKO (Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation).
  - MEHKO is a program that allows chefs to avoid the steep overhead costs of operating a brick-and-mortar restaurant by preparing and selling meals from their home kitchens.
    - On January 5, 2025, the MEHKO program was made permanent by a vote from the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.
- Business for Good supports immigrant owned businesses and works closely with the County of San Diego's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.
  - Advocated for the establishment of Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs at the County level.
  - Super Cocina is a founding member of Business for Good San Diego and is a locally owned immigrant-run restaurant as an example of their close ties to the immigrant community.
- Business for Good supports a more holistic definition of success for business owners to include not just financial success, but also community impact.
- Mikey indicated that if anyone was interested in getting involved or supporting the work that Business for Good San Diego is doing then they could either:

- Join as a member if you're a small business owner.
- Make a donation if you are an individual.
- Partner with them if you are a CBO (Community Based Organization).

## Q&A

**Andrew Soliz:** How can we partner with your organization?

- **Mikey:** If you'd like to get in contact with me or Business for Good San Diego for a potential partnership then my contact information is [mikeyknew@gmail.com](mailto:mikeyknew@gmail.com).
  - You can also attend one of our events located on this calendar:  
<https://members.businessforgoodsd.org/calendar>

**Lynne Taylor:** If we have food waste from our restaurant, would that get picked up to be composted?

- **Mikey:** All waste service providers are legally required to haul organic food waste in accordance with state law (SB183).
  - Link to [New Statewide Mandatory Organic Waste Collection - CalRecycle Home Page](#)

**Irene Bwayo:** What challenges do you foresee facing immigrant-run enterprises?

- **Mikey:** The new administration brings a host of challenges for immigrant service providers including additional budget cuts to programs that assist immigrants.
  - County has recently cut lead of Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs despite its only starting 5 years ago.
  - City budget deficit will not help matters as City support is crucial to protecting our most vulnerable community members.

## **Alliance SBDC Presentation:**

Wesley Quach is Director of Special Projects at Asian Business Association San Diego, which forms a part of Alliance SBDC where he works as a Business Advisor. His presentation focused on the successes and challenges that come with providing outreach services to diverse communities. Key takeaways were:

- Alliance SBDC or Strategic Alliance San Diego Ethnic Chambers of Commerce is a partnership between the Asian Business Association San Diego, County of San Diego Black Chamber of Commerce, and San Diego County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.
  - Danielle Stephen, our Economic Activity co-chair used to work at Alliance SBDC and believes they are the best group of people she's ever worked with, and that they have the community's interest in mind with all the work they do. She helped bring the DREAM grant to fruition while she worked there in 2022, which provided microgrants to small businesses throughout San Diego.

- The Asian Business Association San Diego (ABASD) was founded in 1990 and represents the business interests of over 30,000 Asian-Pacific Islander (API) owned businesses throughout San Diego.
  - ABASD is registered as a 501(c)6 Chamber of Commerce, 501(c)4 Political Action Committee, and 501(c)3 Foundation.
    - All three legal designations of ABASD are administered separately.
  - ABASD is funded by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC).
- ABASD as part of the SBDC network provides several services to San Diego businesses including:
  - No-cost business counseling.
  - Technical assistance
  - Training events, workshops, and webinars.
  - Accounting & finance.
  - Disaster relief & recovery, etc.
- ABASD has a small outreach budget, but through local partners like LISC and their generous funding they have been able to effectively expand their outreach efforts to include:
  - City of Chula Vista and Escondido's Small Business & Non-profit Relief Fund
    - To ensure the success of this program, Wesley personally visited Escondido once a week.
  - COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Restaurant Revitalization Fund
  - City of San Diego Flood Relief
  - Diamond District, Little Saigon, South Bay, etc.
- To create effective outreach to local businesses, ABASD likes to account for a few criteria:
  - Outreach partners that currently operate in the area.
  - Personnel, equipment, materials needed.
    - Touchpoints (Flyers, physical mail)
  - Baseline metrics
    - # of businesses, geographic area, etc.
  - Outputs
    - Registered as SBDC client.
    - Did they require technical assistance?
    - Change in sales, jobs created/retained, etc.
    - Success stories.
- Challenges that ABASD have faced in their outreach efforts include:
  - Time & Scarcity
    - QR Codes are not an effective means of reaching those without tech literacy. Must still call/text them which can be limited by the owner's availability and schedule.
  - Trust & Follow-up



- Suits may signify to many business owners that you are a cop if you not there to purchase a good or service.
      - Wesley prefers to dress in a polo instead to avoid this misconception.
    - Many vendors have asked Wesley if he worked for the health department when he tried to assist them.
  - Confusion
    - Wesley shared that his mom was confused about what SBDC was and did despite him working for it.
    - Many people are confused by the jargon and acronyms many non-profits employ.
      - An example given by Wesley is business triage, which is a decision-making framework and doesn't refer to stabilizing failing businesses.
  - Cultural & Linguistic Barriers
    - ABASD have had to bring IPADs to events to register clients as many people have illegible handwriting that makes it hard to conduct follow-up or verify information.
  - Owner Availability
    - Materials may not reach owners if left with employees.
  - Willingness to Accept Help
    - Owners may not have proper financials or want to be public about receiving financial assistance.
    - Many owners didn't want to come forth about receiving COVID-19 relief in case their landlord or loan providers wanted to collect on outstanding debts. Other owners believed that competing businesses would be jealous of them receiving aid.
- ABASD has conducted outreach at the YMCA and the Black Chamber of Commerce.
  - They've also held digital/physical hybrid meetings during COVID.
  - They're flyers are available in Vietnamese, Mandarin, Filipino, and many other languages.

### Q&A

**Danielle:** Many organizations struggle with outreach. Would you be willing to provide your slides for others to utilize?

- **Wesley:** I'll be sure to send them in a follow-up email.

### **Economic Activity Logic Model Breakout Groups:**

Prior to the Breakout Groups we had a short discussion about altering our objective from **Increase and Improve Access to Capital** to **Increase and Improve Access to Capital and Education around Financial Literacy and Capital**.

- One critique given about this proposed change was that it would be hard to teach people to budget if they do not have the money to budget with.
- Other members concurred that financials must come before advocating for financially responsible behavior.

**Group 1:** Strengthen the Business Base and Attract New Businesses to Vacant Land ([View Objective 1 Logic Model](#))

**Attendance:** Sylvia Ramirez, Domanic Riley, Daniel Hamilton, Brandon Tran, Andrew Soliz, Felix Lopez, Julieta Gonzalez, Lynne Taylor, Megan Emme, Michael Angelo Camacho, Prince Graham, Samantha Mendoza

- Sylvia began the session by catching others up to speed and explaining that while the purpose of this subgroup is to activate vacant land that we have been unable to secure much information on vacant land in the Promise Zone and who to contact about it.
  - Working Group has done work to locate and identify City-owned land but realized that there were few if any non-assigned plots of land in the Promise Zone for potential business owners.
- Next Sylvia brought up the research the group has done into vending restrictions in the Promise Zone.
  - Prince explained that illegal street vending is a problem in the Promise Zone. He would like to research how to change zoning regulations to make vending activities legal.
    - Prince indicated that his organization Black Business Network would like to be a part of this process.
      - Black Business Network currently consists of 400 Black-owned businesses that provide each other with micro-grants. The businesses in the network are dwindling due to gentrification and disinvestment of the communities they operate in.
    - Daniel shared that many vendors have been pushed to selling their wares in Wal-Mart parking lots in the Encanto neighborhood due to restrictions elsewhere.
      - According to Prince, Wal-Mart doesn't own the property that they are located on. A property management company does, which means that the property manager must be the one to enforce vending ordinances through legal means. He also added that many vendors pop-up at night to take advantage of shift turnover.
      - Julieta explained that many of these vendors originated in tourist areas near the Port and had been moved to Encanto by the threat of stringent Health Department restrictions shutting down their businesses.



- She suggests talking to the Health Department about these restrictions and on possibly allowing vendors to utilize pre-packaged food.
- Michael suggested having an activity devoted to seeking a policy solution to the problems that face street vendors. Or even having a meeting with street vendors about what they need.

**Group 2:** Support Small Businesses, Entrepreneurs, and Self-Employed Residents ([View Objective 2 Logic Model](#))

**Attendance:** Danielle Stephen, Roosevelt William III, Donika Moreno, Zachary Engberg, Oscar Silva, Ronah Fe Famorcan, Anna Sotto, Brook Dailey, John Tucker, Teresa Valenzuela

- John would like to develop a panel for banks similar to the Working Group that came together to create the business matrix that Catalyst hosts on its website.
  - Would help determine if they are a good or bad lender to Promise Zone businesses.
  - Danielle agreed that a panel would be a good idea and that having an in-person meeting with one to understand what that entails would be a great starting point.
- John has made advancements on his predatory lending prevention program. The toolkit he's creating will include resources like flyers to be distributed to business.
- Anna is interested in supporting the Storefront Improvement Program.
  - Wants to create wooden business signs for food vendors for marketing purposes, possibly as an award for completing certain programs.
    - Could also make signs for cart vendors.
  - She wonders if there is a gap in knowledge about the program because people might not know about it, how to fill out applications for it, or if they even qualify for it.
- Andrew would like to welcome small businesses to SDSU career and other events.
  - Would like to get more connected with downtown business associations.
  - He also indicated that interns at SDSU are available for interested businesses.
- Logan Heights CDC has a program to identify safe vending spaces and assist vendors in the process of qualifying for a business license.

**Breakout Room Discussion Review in Large Group:**

- Sylvia's breakout group will look to research vending restrictions with a focus on possible policy solutions to address issues faced by street vendors. They would also like to reach out to the Health Department to get their opinion on food vending guidelines.

- Danielle's breakout group discussed vendor licensing and possibly crafting signs for street vendor carts as part of the Storefront Improvement Program. They would also like to inquire about potential corporate and church partnerships for small businesses.
  - Roosevelt has a list of churches that may be interested in partnerships.
  - In future meeting the group will focus on establishing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to mark their progress.

### **Wrap Up and Adjourn:**

- Co-chairs thanked those who attended the meeting and encouraged them to leave any feedback through the Digital Comment Box: <https://forms.gle/FAbFjw4ZUuAd3Uiy6>

### **Meeting Conclusion:**

- **Meeting Day for Next Month:** Thursday, February 27, 2025, 10:00 am-11:30 am
- Digital Comment Box: <https://us16.list-manage.com/survey?u=e913b9d30ca18b3436360cf47&id=62c8f5dc2f>