

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [Staff](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [Terms of Use](#)
- [Calendar](#)
- [Subscribe!](#)
- [Site Navigation](#)
- [OB Rag](#)

[San Diego Free Press](#)

- [Activism](#)
 - [Environment](#)
- [Business](#)
 - [Labor](#)
- [Columns](#)
 - [BLOG UGLY](#)
 - [City Heights: Up Close & Personal](#)
 - [Desde la Logan](#)
 - [Editor's Picks](#)
 - [Field of View](#)
 - [From the Soul](#)
 - [MemeMemo](#)
 - [Readers Write](#)
 - [SD for Free](#)
 - [Sex in San Diego](#)
 - [The Dove and the Cockerel](#)
 - [The Starting Line](#)
 - [Tio Emilio](#)
 - [Under the Perfect Sun](#)
- [Culture](#)
 - [Arts](#)
 - [Books & Poetry](#)
 - [Film & Theater](#)
 - [Food & Drink](#)
 - [Music](#)
 - [Sports](#)
 - [Travel](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Government](#)
 - [Military](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Media](#)

- [Encore](#)
- [Politics](#)
 - [Courts, Justice](#)
 - [Voter Guide 2012](#)
- [Satire](#)

Challenges and Opportunities for San Diego's Next Mayor

by [Source](#) on September 10, 2013 · [1 comment](#)

in [Activism](#), [Environment](#), [Government](#), [Politics](#)

Forming the Basis of a Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative



By Jay Powell / Part One of a Two Part Series

As things stand now Kevin Faulconer, a two term City Councilman, appears to be the choice of establishment Republicans, while Nathan Fletcher, former State Assemblyman and David Alvarez, City Councilman, will be vying for the support of the Democratic Party faithful.

Questions still remain about IF other credible candidates will throw their hat in ring in the days remaining to declare and file as candidates for this accelerated special election.

While we hold our breath, I suggest that those of us who have embraced a platform that was characterized as “neighborhoods first” during the last Mayoral election take the initiative to define what we mean by that phrase.

In fact, I suggest that we begin that dialogue in the San Diego Free Press and on the airwaves of the new community radio station, [KNSJ](#) to engage other like-minded advocates and activists to define this concept before the candidates and their handlers define it for us.

What follows is my own synthesis of challenges and opportunities for your consideration that could help shape the dialogue over the next several weeks and possibly months.

These could form the basis of a “sustainable neighborhoods initiative” for our next Mayor to make the City of San Diego a leader in helping create a livable, sustainable and equitable, bi-national region through intensive public participation at a neighborhood level.

Regardless of who is elected, the core principles, goals and objectives will need to be reasserted and advocated for in the face of the usual special interests that will be very vocal and active during and after the election.

These opportunities are accompanied by brief description of potential challenges.

A formal [Sustainable Neighborhoods Initiative](#) led through the Office of the Mayor could enhance and implement the City's [General Plan Vision for a City of Villages](#) by building on the potential of neighborhood leaders working in cooperation with other stakeholders and decision-makers to achieve vibrant, livable, sustainable, quality neighborhoods in each of the recognized community planning areas.

The Mayor would engage community and neighborhood leaders and community-based organizations in the San Diego-Tijuana region to advocate and carry out local initiatives that demonstrate how the region can respond to economic and environmental challenges at a neighborhood level, while helping build more self sufficient, resilient and productive communities.

In a recent proposal to advance equity in San Diego the [Environmental Health Coalition](#) noted that “rising inequality in the US is an underlying factor in both our social fragmentation and economic under performance. The San Diego/Tijuana region is at a crossroads with imperatives of equity coupled with strategies to shore up the economy and quality of life.”

It was noted that data is abundant regarding conditions in San Diego's under served and most impacted neighborhoods. What is needed is to use this information as the basis for policy changes to provide investments for the improvement of these communities and neighborhoods and to measure the results in the areas of economic success and environmental protection.

Newer portions of the city have benefitted from [Facilities Benefit Assessments](#) (FBA's) and other financing mechanisms to put in place quality facilities. Some older areas have benefitted from creation of redevelopment districts and special maintenance districts. With the loss of redevelopment funding, these areas are increasingly vulnerable to a reversal of hard won improvements in economic and environmental conditions.

We need to direct more resources to those areas that have consistently been underfunded over the last three or more decades to ensure equity and opportunity for residents to contribute to their neighborhoods, their communities and the health and welfare of the San Diego-Tijuana region.

The Challenge of Climate Change



The effects of climate change present challenges as well as opportunities for the region to work in cooperation to protect the environment while expanding the economic health of all residents.

Communities and neighborhoods can be key implementers of a [City-wide Climate Action Plan](#) that addresses energy, transportation, waste and land use (including local food generation) in a coordinated manner. The challenge can be met on a neighborhood by neighborhood, community-based approach to achieving measureable objectives for saving energy and water, generating renewable energy, reducing green house gases and solid waste generation through less dependence on fossil fueled automobiles and aggressive reuse and recycling strategies.

Neighborhoods that work together to achieve or surpass these objectives should be rewarded with additional resources by the City. All of these neighborhood driven initiatives will recognize the positive economic multiplier effect of creating local, livable wage jobs.

The following is an admittedly dense, literal outline of four areas for consideration by voters and Mayoral candidates in setting forth an agenda for the next seven years and future of San Diego. I welcome your consideration and comment in this forum and hopefully in future Mayoral candidate forums.

1. Open Government.

Open government implies not only transparency, but active engagement. The latter is different from “outreach” which very often is a symbolic effort. Active engagement requires identifying and promoting an informed and active network of un-incorporated and incorporated public interest non profits and community-based organizations. Walking the talk, taking “neighborhoods first” from rhetoric to reality.

Let’s translate what we know we did not like in the first “strong Mayor” administration and the shortfalls in the brief Mayor Filner administration to what we define as successful open government and how we would measure and achieve accountability (eg., responsiveness to requests for information and openness to hear other views; appointments to Boards, Commissions and Task Groups) so that previous pledges to bring others to be at the table are reinforced and realized.

2. Environmental Quality and Managed Growth.

One of the key areas for achievement and that could help structure a Mayoral administration in this area is the framework for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) that is under review to help the City meet State of California

mandates. CAP has been characterized as the mitigation document for the 2008 General Plan which is the City's "Constitution for Development". The areas identified in the CAP approximate some of the elements of that General Plan. A draft document is awaiting finalization. CAP has four main areas : Energy, Transportation, Land Use (and Local Food System), Waste (Reduction).

A. Energy.

Opportunities: Cover all City-owned and City-leased buildings and parking lots and City related (eg, Housing Commission, Water and Waste water treatment facilities) and funded properties and projects with solar photovoltaics to maximum extent feasible.



Set forth local clean energy (roof top and parking lot solar and energy efficiency) and carbon use goals and metrics by community planning area and within each community by identifiable neighborhood.

Promote local clean energy financing programs and districts, [Community Clean Power](#) options already in place in other regions such as Marin and Sonoma Counties to give utility customers real choices, promote potential neighborhood [micro-energy districts](#) and cooperatives in conjunction with [EcoDistricts](#) being piloted in North Park and Pacific Beach. Quantify and highlight the savings to consumers, fossil energy and carbon reductions and the local jobs (by community) to be created and the economic multipliers from these local investments.

Review franchise agreements coming up for use of public right of way by SDGE and/or other community-accountable utilities to ensure policies that promote energy efficiency and local solar generation.

Challenges: Entrenched regulated monopoly in charge of all aspects of energy production and distribution. SDGE and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) currently in a symbiotic relationship that is inhibiting full realization of energy efficiency and local solar. California Energy Commission (CEC) at the state level is still supporting siting of large centralized power plants which endanger environmental quality, open space.

B. Transportation.



Opportunities: The Mayor and Council President are two key representatives to [SANDAG](#). City appointments to the Transportation Committee are critical. SANDAG has consolidated [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) and [Regional Land Use](#) plans into one review process. The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) is reviewed for updates annually. The City of San Diego has a 40% weighted vote. We can identify other allies committed to carrying out a progressive shift to accelerate active transportation and transit projects, and scale back highway expansion projects. SANDAG majority vote can shift TRANSNET (Transportation Sales Tax) funding to active transportation, transit and transit operations (eg, help pay for operations).

Implement pilot program for “kids ride free” (under preschool age with parents ride free, primary and secondary school age ride free, reduced rates to secondary and college students).

As an example and in recognition of the current San Diego Free Press focus on City Heights and environs, here are some Mid-City priorities:

- Complete the CenterLine BRT stations and system with routes to key job centers north and south and SR 94 interchange to downtown; stations to be connected to adjacent neighborhoods and economic development business sites and parking centers.
- Complete the CenterLine bike route into Mission Valley and through Mid City communities; make walkability and safety improvements identified by California Endowment sponsored Healthy Communities, Built Environment Team.

Challenges: SANDAG’s current RTP still front loads expenditures on automobile highway facilities projects.

C. Land Use and Local Food System.

Areas of Opportunity:



Managed Growth and Open Space Protection:

Accelerate updates to Community Plans and properly implement City policies and ordinances and protections in all Community Plans and in “Proposition A Lands” (open space lands that require voter approval to develop at

urban intensities).

Put special priority on maximizing amount of land actually dedicated to open space through legislation similar to that sponsored by State Senator Kehoe in 2012. Less than half of 10,000 acres identified as eligible under the Kehoe bill was included in staff recommendation in October 2012. Identify status of open space acquisition funds including franchise fees and the fund established by Prop C in 1996 and funds to be provided as part of voter approvals of development in the Future Urbanizing Area.

Identify funding and develop potential for appropriate urban forestry greening in public right of way and open space that helps achieve water quality and carbon absorption goals.

Restore and revise the role and responsibilities of the Planning Commission to complement a “Department of Planning and Sustainability”.

Recreation: Enforce and ensure that joint use facilities such as those provided with Schools are open to use by neighborhoods. Encourage and support neighborhood group “ownership” and stewardship of these facilities to include potential operation by capable, accountable community-based organizations.

Local Food Production: Investigate the potential to use appropriate, non sensitive open space or other City-owned land for community farms such as the New Roots Community Farm.

Community Plan Updates: Restore funding and commitment to complete community plan updates. These updates need to be more fully integrated with neighborhood and community based Capital Improvement Program (CIP) priorities including neighborhood infrastructure priorities that are compatible with Climate Action Plan goals.

Livable Neighborhoods Program: Evaluate and reinstate mid-90’s Livable Neighborhoods program, placing City staff in communities to meet with community leaders to help them define priorities and implement projects with them not “for” them. Staff is more responsive to community input for implementation of improvements and maintenance.

Infrastructure Deficiencies: Create a “21st Century Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative” model for San Diego jurisdictions that takes into account Climate Action Plan recommendations and builds for the 21st Century (not just repairs to outdated infrastructure). Integrate infrastructure improvements with affordable housing finance assistance and restore funding sources such as Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) funds for the [Housing Trust Fund](#).

Foster a “Neighborhood Infrastructure Repair , Restoration and Maintenance Program” that has at its heart the prioritization and implementation by responsible and community-accountable organizations. The principles are self-determination and building capacity of community-based non-profits to take over more responsibilities to carry out local, neighborhood repairs, improvements and maintenance while creating local, well paying jobs.

Challenges: Development Services Department (DSD) dependence on fees induces processing of inappropriate development. Attempts to circumvent the 1985 Managed Growth Initiative, both of the controversial Sunroad developments and the CenterPoint development are just the few we know of that were permitted during the Sanders administration. Lack of coordination in North City Future Urbanizing area provides for urban sprawl impacts from adjacent County unincorporated areas.

Perpetuation of practices and preferences for downtown reinvestment via new Civic San Diego. Recognize that the downtown/CCDC area has been sufficiently stimulated and need to not be given preferences over other communities in processing and funding.

California Energy Commission (CEC) has only temporarily suspended review of siting the Quail Brush power plant on designated open space next to Mission Trails Park and the proposal to develop a huge 800 Megawatt, fossil-fueled "North City Energy Center" in University City which threatens open space was withdrawn by the Sanders Administration but is no doubt sitting in the wings.

D. Waste (Reduction).



Opportunities: Provide incentives for increase in volume of recyclable materials from commercial and residential waste generators. Set forth community goals and metrics and include rewards for waste reduction and recycling at or beyond goals (recognize the nexus of costs imposed by waste in collection, absorbing land and transport of waste and export of funds from San Diego).

Challenges: Just approved expansion of Sycamore Canyon landfill without sufficient incentives to reduce waste stream to this facility. Revision or repeal of "Peoples Ordinance" which requires free pickup of unlimited amount of trash and garbage.

3. International Commerce



Recognize and enhance economic potential of the three key ports of entry: at the US Mexico Border, in San Diego Bay, and at Lindbergh Field to emphasize San Diego-Tijuana Region geography and attractiveness as an international center of trade and commerce.

Opportunities: Make transit for pedestrians, public transit and commerce at US Mexico Border more efficient. Work with Tijuana and Baja California to improve and provide bilingual signage at border and within areas of Tijuana and San Diego to better promote Baja California and San Diego as regional tourist and visitor destinations. Identify other niche markets for San Diego Bay working waterfront commerce. Improve goods movement while respecting and protecting environment in adjacent communities. Promote cleaner fuels and emission controls on all goods movement carriers. Investigate potential of separating air transport of goods from passengers.

Challenges: Federal laws and programs; competition with other ports; restrictions for sharing or use of other airport sites. Ensuring proper goods movement routes and reduced pollution from trucks.

4. Economic and Employment Development.



Opportunities: Expand recommendations from the City Council Committee on Economic Development Strategy by actively involving community-based non profits in the creation and promotion of enterprises to train and employ lower income residents to accomplish sustainable

neighborhood goals. Actively promote Federal and local, community hire and contracting requirements in all projects that include City funding.

The principle is to achieve a multiplier effect of the investment of public funds in housing, infrastructure, and neighborhood improvement projects through establishment of neighborhood improvement cooperations and enterprises that derive their priorities from the communities they serve and provide training and jobs and business opportunities to residents of those communities. Expand and enhance connections to community colleges and labor council and Veterans agencies and organizations for training and placement in energy efficiency and local solar production jobs.

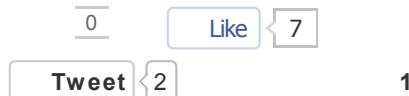
Rebuilding of neighborhood infrastructure such as sidewalks, lighting, and new active transportation and transit improvements should employ residents of those communities and contract for goods and services within those communities.

The requirements of [AB 32](#) for Green House Gas reductions and the recommendations of the Climate Change Task Force should be evaluated for job production potential, goals and incentive programs.

Challenges: Entrenched macro-employer centric programs and funding subsidies versus more emphasis on local and micro business development, especially in enterprises that will achieve sustainable neighborhoods. Proposals to subsidize a new football stadium and/or sports complex, an infrastructure bond which is designed to backfill inadequate capital facilities that were funded through insufficient facilities benefit assessments (FBAs) and the essentially permanent allocation of transient occupancy taxes to an independent, non-accountable "Tourism Marketing District" all constitute threats to needed investments in under-served and under-funded communities.

Up Next, Part Two: Funding for 21st Century Infrastructure

Jay Powell is retired from 20 years work with the City Heights Community Development Corporation. He previously served with environmental organizations locally and in the Bay Area. He currently is promoting cooperations to achieve local clean energy and managed growth policies and projects.



{ 1 comment... read it below or [add one](#) }



[Alessandra Colfi, Ph.D.\(c\) September 10, 2013 at 9:08 am](#)

Thank you for this very comprehensive assessment Jay; this is what we need to keep on the forefront and act on for our safety, health, energy, economy, peace, future.

[Reply](#)

Leave a Comment

 Name * E-mail * Website

Be notified of followup comments via e-mail. You can also [subscribe](#) without commenting.

Older Article: [Part II: The Birds, the Bees, and the Wolf Pack](#)



- **SDFP on Instagram**



• **Search the SDFP**

To search, type and hit enter

• **Keep in Touch with SDFP**



• **Get SDFP Updates by Email**

Enter your email address to get daily updates via email:

Delivered by [FeedBurner](#)

See our [Subscriptions Page](#) for more options

• **Support the SDFP with a Donation at PayPal**



• **Editor's Picks**

- [California's Already Fracked](#)

- [To Bomb or Not to Bomb \(Syria\), That is The Question](#)
- [City Heights, My Hero in the Era of "The New Jim Crow"](#)
- [Part I: A Story About Sex... More or Less](#)
- [Wendy McDonald Can Barely Afford a Burger King](#)
- [Happy Labor Day, Now More than Ever](#)

• Recent Comments

Cynthia on [Part II: The Birds, the Bees, and the Wolf Pack](#)



Dana: Excellent defense of the union, which is true and which I fully support. However, the question remains unanswered about whether ...



bob dorn on [The Labor Council's Choice: David Alvarez](#)

Couldn't agree more. I'd rather have you to kick around than that drone called "Cory."



bob dorn on [The Labor Council's Choice: David Alvarez](#)

"The more Dems the better" wins Best Short Post of the Day (so far). More candidates, more political weather created. ...



[Alessandra Colfi, Ph.D.\(c\)](#) on [Challenges and Opportunities for San Diego's Next Mayor](#)

Thank you for this very comprehensive assessment Jay; this is what we need to keep on the forefront and act ...



Dana Levy on [Part II: The Birds, the Bees, and the Wolf Pack](#)

Your article was great except the bashing of the building trades unions. Where did that come from? The union only ...



Judith Wesling on [Part II: The Birds, the Bees, and the Wolf Pack](#)

Unbelievable. I have it on good authority that last night the commentators on Monday Night Football Chargers game were ...



Anna Daniels on [Part II: The Birds, the Bees, and the Wolf Pack](#)

Jay Powell's post today about challenges and opportunities facing our next mayor should be a companion read. Many of ...

cahlo on [Can Congress Walk and Chew Gum at the Same Time? October 5th Immigration Reform](#)



[Rally Planned for San Diego](#)

what needs reform is that the govt should follow the immigration laws on the books.....nothing more, nothing less

• Freeps and Friends Tweet

Freeps
Tweets from a list by SDFreePress.org
Freeps & Friends

 **Murtaza Baxamusa PhD** 1m
@Baxamusa
.@Tefere_Gebre is an inspiration for all immigrants who advocate for working people.
peoplesworld.org/ethiopian-immi...
#afcio13
Expand

 **Murtaza Baxamusa PhD** 11m
@Baxamusa
Cost of cash: who pays most to cash their own money?
[newyorker.com/online/blogs/c... ..](http://newyorker.com/online/blogs/c...)
(insightful study by @benmazzotta @IBGC_Fletcher)

 **Murtaza Baxamusa PhD** 12m
@Baxamusa
Cost of cash: who pays most to cash their own money?
newyorker.com/online/blogs/c...
(insightful study by @benmazzotta @IGBC_Fletcher)
From San Diego, CA, United States

 **Desde la Logan** 1h
@DesdeLaLogan
#barriologan raised @AlvarezSD

- **Six Months Ago on SDFP**

- [Desde la Logan Yo Soy Chicano... Thanks to Mesa College Chicano Studies](#)
- [Health Insurance Scams Leave People High and Dry](#)
- [In America We Have the Power to Change \(Thoughts of Freedom\)](#)
- [Where's Planning in San Diego? Moving Beyond Process and Delivering Results](#)
- [The Starting Line – End Welfare for UT-San Diego's Owner and his Friends; Raise the Minimum Wage](#)
- [San Diego For Free: City Farmers Nursery - Plant Paradise in City Heights](#)

- **Communities: Click the name to view the archives**

[Balboa Park](#) [Barrio Logan](#) [Carlsbad](#) [Chula Vista](#) [City Heights](#) [Coronado](#)

[Del Mar](#) [Downtown](#) [downtown San Diego](#) [El Cajon](#) [Encinitas](#) [Escondido](#) [Golden Hill](#)
[Hillcrest](#) [Imperial Beach](#) [Kearny Mesa](#) [La Jolla](#) [La Mesa](#) [Lemon Grove](#) [Mission Bay](#) [Mission Beach](#)
[Mission Valley](#) [National City](#) [Normal Heights](#) [North County](#) [North Park](#) [North San Diego County](#)
[Ocean Beach](#) [Oceanside](#) [Old Town](#) [Pacific Beach](#) [Point Loma](#) [Poway](#) [Ramona](#) [San Diego](#)
[at Large](#) [San Onofre](#) [Santee](#) [San Ysidro](#) [Sherman Heights](#) [Solana Beach](#) [Southeast San Diego](#) [South Park](#)
[Tijuana](#) [UCSD](#) [University City](#)

• Over at OB Rag:

- [OB People's Food Adds Parking With Purchase of Next-Door Duplex](#)
OB People's Food has just purchased property immediately to the east of its current parking lot, which will increase the...
- [The San Diego Labor Council's Choice: David Alvarez](#)
By Jim Miller Last Friday evening, after five grueling hours of candidate interviews and spirited debate, the San Diego-Imperial Counties...
- [What's in it for Me? Your Obamacare Health Insurance Options](#)
By Joan McCarter / Daily Kos Oct. 1 will be upon us before we know it, the launch date of...
- [US Farmers Continue David Vs. Goliath Battle Against Monsanto](#)
Group brings challenge to patents on Monsanto's genetically engineered seed to Supreme Court.
By Andrea Germanos / Common Dreams A...

 [Subscribe to this Feed](#)



• Topics

- [Activism](#)
- [Arts](#)
- [BLOG UGLY](#)
- [Books & Poetry](#)
- [Business](#)
- [City Heights: Up Close & Personal](#)
- [Columns](#)
- [Courts, Justice](#)
- [Culture](#)
- [Desde la Logan](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Editor's Picks](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Encore](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Field of View](#)

- [Film & Theater](#)
- [Food & Drink](#)
- [From the Soul](#)
- [Government](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Labor](#)
- [Media](#)
- [MemeMemo](#)
- [Military](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Readers Write](#)
- [Satire](#)
- [SD for Free](#)
- [Sex in San Diego](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [The Dove and the Cockerel](#)
- [The Starting Line](#)
- [Tio Emilio](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Under the Perfect Sun](#)
- [Voter Guide 2012](#)

• Archives

- [September 2013](#)
- [August 2013](#)
- [July 2013](#)
- [June 2013](#)
- [May 2013](#)
- [April 2013](#)
- [March 2013](#)
- [February 2013](#)
- [January 2013](#)
- [December 2012](#)
- [November 2012](#)
- [October 2012](#)
- [September 2012](#)
- [August 2012](#)
- [July 2012](#)
- [June 2012](#)
- [May 2012](#)
- [April 2012](#)
- [March 2012](#)
- [February 2012](#)

- [October 2011](#)
- [September 2011](#)
- [August 2011](#)
- [May 2011](#)
- [March 2011](#)
- [September 2010](#)

[Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#) | [About Us](#) | [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright 2010-2013 SanDiegoFreePress.org | [Web Hosting](#) By Arvixе | Code is Poetry