



## **Recruit, Retain and Remove the Red Tape: A Plan for Economic Development in the City of San Diego**

**By Barbara Bry**

When I started as the Associate Director of CONNECT in 1986, you could count the number of life science companies on two hands, and Qualcomm was only one year old. At CONNECT, I developed many of the programs like Springboard, which has become internationally recognized for getting entrepreneurs the resources they need for success—capital, access to management and cutting-edge technology.

Today, San Diego has hundreds of life science companies, Qualcomm has thousands of employees, and we have industries that we never imagined such as wireless health, cyber-security, bio-algae, and clean tech. After I left CONNECT, I became an entrepreneur, and I've been on the founding team of companies like ProFlowers.com that have created hundreds of jobs for San Diegans.

If I'm elected, I would be the first technology entrepreneur on the City Council and a champion for these industries that are powering the financial future of our City. A recent report by the National University System Institute for Public Policy Research points out that the growth of technology-driven innovation companies is faster than growth in other sectors of the regional economy. Importantly, these companies pay an average wage of \$114,300, which is 2.3 times more than the average non-tech job in San Diego.

Even more impressive is a recent report from the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corp. that pegs the local impact of our nonprofit research institutions at \$4.6 billion a year, which the report says is the equivalent of 34 San Diego Comic-Cons per year, 33 U.S. Open golf championships or four San Diego Convention Centers.

My life has been spent helping to launch these kinds of industries and companies. I have a demonstrated track record of working with diverse people and connecting the dots to create programs and initiatives that move San Diego forward.

San Diego's strengths include a talented workforce, a strong existing base of innovation economy industries, and top-tier universities and research institutions. A comprehensive economic development strategy leverages our strengths to address our challenges and build a thriving and inclusive economy.

## **Recruit our own. Train our own. Hire and Promote our own.**

To build the talent pipeline, I will:

- Work with universities, research institutions, and businesses in District 1 to increase outreach to our schools in order to attract local talent into the innovation economy.
- Promote existing resources and programs to ensure that students learn about, and are inspired by, the opportunities available to them in San Diego if they pursue an education that prepares them for a career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Some examples:
  - Qualcomm's Thinkabit Lab for K – 12 students
  - The Salk Institute's Mobile Science Lab
  - J. Craig Venter Institute's DiscoverGenomics! Science Education Program
  - CONNECT2Careers summer employment program that provides meaningful work experiences that prepare young adults for in-demand jobs.
- Encourage the local implementation of national programs such as Hour of Code, a one-hour introduction to computer science, designed to demystify code and show that anybody can learn the basics.
- Support and track new programs like SD Hacks at UC San Diego. A hackathon is an event, typically lasting several days, in which a large number of people (including college students and potential employers) meet to engage in collaborative computer programming.
- Ensure that focus on STEM training includes middle-skill positions, such as lab technicians and assistants and the development of short-term, technical training programs.

## **Grow companies. Retain companies. Attract companies. Remove red tape.**

To grow San Diego companies, retain the companies we already have in San Diego, and make it easier to operate and expand in San Diego, I will:

- Make sure that San Diego businesses of all sizes have access to the capital that they need to operate and grow their businesses by connecting them with local, state and federal resources.
- Foster the entrepreneurs who are already here in San Diego to make sure they can access the resources available to them.
- Focus in on small business growth by promoting services of the City's Office of Small Business as well as the local San Diego chapter of the U.S. Small Business Administration and its counseling and technical assistance programs.
- Include a dedicated District 1 business representative on staff to work with local companies to make sure they are aware of programs and services that could be of value to them. This includes programs that give advantages to companies located within the City when they seek contracts to sell goods or services to the City.
- Work with City departments to see that City services are provided in a timely, efficient way.
- Seek to use our reputation as an innovation leader to attract a leading tech company, like Google or Facebook, to open a major facility in San Diego. Depending on location, this company could anchor a new entrepreneurship ecosystem, fostering development of retail, housing, and other commerce.
- Advocate for the establishment of a Water Innovation Zone to promote San Diego as a national hub for innovative water research and development. This innovation zone would include a state-of-the-art testing center to ensure safe, clean drinking water for all our residents, a research facility to adopt the latest water testing and conservation techniques, a water management program to upgrade our

wastewater conservation efforts, and an education component to share the knowledge. Federal and state funds and foundation grants can be leveraged to launch our region's Water Innovation Zone.

- Advocate for the review of city regulations and processes that are applicable to small businesses to ensure that we are not creating unnecessary and cumbersome rules, with an initial focus on development services and the restaurant industry.
- Bolster the success of San Diego's women and minority-owned business enterprises (WMBEs) by ensuring that our City's Minority Business Enterprise Program is promoting contracting with WMBEs, as well as offering programs and guidance on access to capital and other resources.

**Increase access to investment capital and markets. Balance plans for growth with infrastructure investments.**

To increase access to capital and support for all entrepreneurs and small business owners within District 1 and throughout the City, I will:

- Support the City's efforts to increase exports out of the region and increase the amount of foreign direct investment into the region.
- Advocate for a faster, fairer and friendlier Community Plan update process for our communities, one that includes an infrastructure implementation plan that clearly outlines responsibilities for providing infrastructure improvements necessary to accommodate growth.
- Secure infrastructure investments in the district that help keep our talent here. This includes securing a safe, clean water supply; providing better transportation options to improve traffic flow and reduce pollution; and protecting our pristine coastline.
- Work with District 1 residents to address their ongoing legitimate concerns regarding the balance between economic growth and our enviable quality of life.

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