County of San Diego

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November 16, 2020

To the honorable members of the Board of Supervisors and the Citizens of San Diego County:

The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) of the County of San Diego (County) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2020, is hereby submitted in compliance with Sections 25250 and 25253 of the Government Code of the State of California.

Management assumes full responsibility for the completeness and reliability of the information contained in this report, based upon a comprehensive internal control framework it established for this purpose. Because the cost of internal controls should not exceed anticipated benefits, the objective is to provide reasonable, rather than absolute, assurance that the financial statements are free of any material misstatements.

Macias Gini & O'Connell LLP, has issued an unmodified ("clean") opinion on the County of San Diego's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2020. The independent auditor's report is located at the front of the financial section of this report.

Management's discussion and analysis (MD&A) immediately follows the independent auditor's report and provides a narrative introduction, overview, and analysis of the financial statements. MD&A complements this letter of transmittal and should be read in conjunction with it.

County Profile

San Diego County covers 4,261 square miles, approximately the size of the state of Connecticut, extending 70 miles along the Pacific Coast from Mexico to Orange County and inland 75 miles to Imperial County along the international border shared with Mexico. Riverside and Orange counties form the northern border. It is the most southwestern county in the contiguous 48 states.

San Diego County enjoys a wide variety of climate and terrain, from coastal plains and fertile inland valleys to mountain ranges and the Anza-Borrego Desert. The Cleveland National Forest occupies much of the interior portion of the County. The climate is mild in the coastal and valley regions, where most resources and population are located. The average annual rainfall is less than 12 inches for the coastal regions.

According to the State of California Department of Finance (DOF) as of May 2019, the County's population estimate for January 1, 2019 was 3.35 million, which grew 0.6 percent from 3.34 million as of the January 1, 2018 estimate. San Diego is the second largest county by population in California according to the DOF, and the fifth largest county by population in the nation, as measured by the U.S. Census Bureau based on 2018 population estimates. There are 18 incorporated cities in the County; the City of San Diego being the largest, with a population of approximately 1.42 million; and the City of Del Mar the smallest, at approximately 4,322 people, according to DOF population estimates as of January 1, 2018.

The racial and ethnic composition of the County is as diverse as its geography. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) projects that in 2035, the San Diego region's population will continue to grow in its diversity with: 36.3 percent White; 41.4 percent Hispanic; 13.9 percent Asian and Pacific Islander; 4.0 percent African American; and 4.4 percent all other groups including American Indian. Significant growth in the region's Hispanic population is seen in this projection.

County Government, Economy and Outlook

County Government

San Diego became one of California's original 27 counties on February 18, 1850, shortly after California became the 31st State in the Union. The County functions under a charter adopted in 1933, as subsequently amended. A five-member Board of Supervisors elected to four-year terms in district, nonpartisan elections governs the County. Each board member is limited to no more than two terms and must reside in the district from which he or she is elected.

The Board of Supervisors sets priorities and approves the County's two-year budget. The County may exercise its powers only through the Board of Supervisors or through agents and officers acting under the authority of the Board or authority conferred by law. The Board of Supervisors appoints the following officers: the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the County Counsel, the Probation Officer and the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. All other nonelected officers are appointed by the CAO. The CAO assists the Board of Supervisors in coordinating the functions and operations of the County; is responsible for carrying out all of the Board's policy decisions that pertain to the functions assigned to that officer; and supervises the expenditures of all departments. Elected officials head the offices of the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk, District Attorney, Sheriff and Treasurer-Tax Collector.

The State Legislature has granted each county the power necessary to provide for the health and well-being of its residents. The County provides a full range of public services to residents, including law enforcement, detention and correction, emergency response services, health and human services, parks and recreation, libraries and roads. The County also serves as a delivery channel for many State services, including foster care, public health care and elections.

These services are provided by four business Groups (Public Safety, the Health and Human Services Agency, Land Use and Environment, and Finance and General Government), each headed by a General Manager who reports to the CAO.

Economy and Outlook

U.S. Economy

Gross domestic product (GDP) is one of the main indicators of the health of the nation's economy, representing the net total dollar value of all goods and services produced in the U.S. over a given time period. GDP growth is driven by a variety of economic sectors, including personal consumption expenditures, gross private domestic investment, net exports of goods and services, and government consumption expenditures and gross investment.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), calendar year 2019 saw an increase in real GDP, closing the year with a 2.3 percent annual growth over the previous year, compared to an increase of 2.9 percent seen in 2018 (GDP Increases In Fourth Quarter, February 27, 2020, <https://www.bea.gov/system/files/2020-02/gdp4q19_2nd_0.pdf>, accessed on March 25, 2020). According to the BEA, "The increase in real GDP in the fourth quarter reflected positive contributions from personal consumption expenditures (PCE), federal government spending, exports, residential fixed investment, and state and local government spending that were partly offset by negative contributions from private inventory investment and nonresidential fixed investment." (ibid).

However, the national economy was significantly impacted by response to the global COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March of 2020. In the first quarter of 2020, real GDP was estimated by the BEA to have decreased at an annual rate of 5.0 percent (May 28, 2020, <https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/

2020-05/gdp1q20_2nd_0.pdf>, accessed on June 11, 2020). According to the BEA, "The decline in first quarter GDP reflected the response to the spread of COVID-19, as governments issued "stay-at-home" orders in March. This led to rapid changes in demand, as businesses and schools switched to remote work or canceled operations and consumers canceled, restricted, or redirected their spending." (ibid).

Commenting on the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCLA Anderson March Economic Outlook notes, "real GDP is now on track to decline in the second quarter of 2020 by 7.5% from the previous quarter and an additional 1.25% in the third quarter. (UCLA Anderson March Economic Outlook, April 10, 2020, https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/march-2020-economic-outlook>). In an earlier report, UCLA Anderson announced the beginning of a recession, which they projected to last through September, 2020 (<https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/news-and-events/press-releases/ucla-anderson-forecast-announces-the-arrival-of-the-2020-recession>) UCLA adds, "this contraction will drive the official unemployment rate to a peak of around 13% in the fourth quarter, and total job loss to approximately 17 million" (ibid).

In 2019, the national unemployment rate was historically strong and had dropped to 3.7 percent from 3.9 percent in 2018. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 produced dramatic increases in unemployment across the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), "total nonfarm payroll employment fell by 1.4 million and 20.7 million, respectively in March and April", but announced in June that, "Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 2.5 million in May, and the unemployment rate declined to 13.3 percent (from 14.7 percent in April) . . . reflecting a limited resumption of economic activity that had been curtailed due to the coronavirus pandemic and efforts to contain it" (BLS News Release, The Employment Situation - May 2020 <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>.

Increased unemployment and slowing economic activity led to low interest rates. Commenting on the impact of the pandemic, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) stated, "The ongoing public health crisis will weigh heavily on economic activity, employment, and inflation in the near term, and poses considerable risks to the economic outlook over the medium term. In light of these developments, the FOMC decided to maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent. The Committee expects to maintain this target range until it is confident that the economy has weathered recent events and is on track to achieve its maximum employment and price stability goals (Federal Reserve Press Release, June 20, 2020 <https://www.federalreserve.gov/monetarypolicy/files/monetary20200610a1.pdf>).

In the May 2020 monthly update of Housing Market Indicators, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) stated that activity in the housing markets declined overall. From a year over year basis, housing price increases remained fairly stable with annual gains ranging from 4 to 6 percent; new home construction decreased to its slowest pace since 2015 at 29.7 percent lower than a year earlier; and mortgage rates for a 30-year fixed rates reached an all-time low of 3.31 percent compared to 3.99 percent a year ago. (HUD, Housing Market Indicators Monthly Update, May 2020, p.1) In the housing sector, UCLA Anderson estimated housing starts above 1.35 million units a year, below annual averages of 1.4 - 1.5 million units/year. (The UCLA Anderson Forecast for the Nation and California: March 2020 Report, p. 18) Going forward UCLA Anderson indicates that, "In spite of the weaker economy, the continued robust demand for housing coupled with lower interest rates leads to little change in the forecast for homebuilding" (ibid., p. 61).

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted federal fiscal stimulus efforts, which will provide substantial support to economic activity in 2020. Federal fiscal policy measures enacted in response to the pandemic have provided income support for households and businesses; increased grants-in-aid to state and local governments including the County of San Diego; and facilitated loans to businesses, households, states, and localities (Federal Reserve System, Monetary Policy Report, June 12, 2020, pg. 19).

What remains uncertain is the duration of the public health emergency and pace of any subsequent economic recovery once the pandemic eases.

California Economy

California's economy is large and diverse, with global leadership in innovation-based industries including information technology, aerospace, entertainment and biosciences. A global destination for millions of visitors, California supports a robust tourism industry, and its farmers and ranchers provide for the world. California accounts for more than 14 percent of the nation's GDP in current dollars which is, by far, the largest of any state according to the BEA (Gross Domestic Product by State: Fourth Quarter and Annual 2019, April 7, 2020, https://www.bea.gov/system/files/2020-04/qgdpstate0420.pdf, accessed on June 17, 2020).

In 2019, California's economy was forecast to grow at a rate of nearly 3.0 percent. According to the LAEDC, "Growth in the California economy has slackened substantially over the previous years, with real GDP growth only achieving about 2.6 percent in 2019, down from 4.3 percent in 2018 (LAEDC, "The 2020 LAEDC Economic Forecast", February 19, 2020, https://laedc.org/2020/02/19/2020-economic-forecast/, p. 14, accessed on June 17, 2020). Slowing in Statewide growth expectations are forecast to include "... real GDP growth of 2.0 percent for 2020 and 1.6 percent the following year" continued the LAEDC (ibid). These projections for Statewide economic slowing include, "employment growth of roughly 283,000 jobs in 2020 and 275,000 in 2021 with associated increases in unemployment to 4.0% and 3.9% in the respective forecast years. These job gains are estimated to occur across all sectors with the largest gains in manufacturing, utilities, business services, education, health and tourism," (LAEDC, p. 30). California's lost sales tax revenue from decreased consumer spending during the COVID-19 pandemic were covered by State budget reserve fund balances. Plans to rebuild State budget reserves identified in 2019-20 will continue to be implemented. ("California Budget Perspective 2020-21," March 2020, https://calbudgetcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/CA_Budget_Center_Budget-Perspective-2020-21-Chartbook.pdf, accessed on June 17, 2020, p. 10).

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, UCLA Anderson projected California's total employment growth rate to "... be at 0.9% and 1.3%..." for 2020 and 2021. (UCLA Anderson, "Financial Outlook for 2020", news release, https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/news-and-events/press-releases/ucla-anderson-forecast-upgrades-outlook-for-the-nation-as-financial-conditions-improve, December 4, 2019, accessed June 17, 2020). However, the mandated shelter-in-place response to the COVID-19 pandemic delivered a swift and harsh blow to California businesses and labor force. As of May 2020, the state unemployment rate was at 15.9 percent which was 12.3 percent higher than May 2020 (3.6) ("Local Area Unemployment Statistics", Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/lau/>, accessed on June 29, 2020). The employment sector can be expected to slowly rebound as consumer spending restarts and taxable sales restore sales tax revenue, once the pandemic eases later in the year. Many uncertainties remain about when that will occur, and if consumer spending will return to pre-pandemic patterns.

As the State progresses through the reopening process, job growth and wage gains may be realized by some Californians. "The reopening of bars, wineries, and gyms, even at a reduced capacity, is expected to increase consumer spending and bring additional jobs back to the economy just as the labor force recovery began to stagnate" (California Economic Forecast, "A Surge of Re-Employment This Month: California Bars and Gyms are Now Open", https://californiaforecast.com/covid-19-economic-analysis/, June 15, 2020, accessed on June 17, 2020). Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans and federal or other assistance will further support business sectors and residents with financial recovery. At the national level, the first round of PPP loans will see some business sectors using the funds "...to rehire workers that had been laid off. Other companies will use them to prevent layoffs in the future. Some organizations have undoubtedly applied for loans when they had no intention of laying anyone off at all. And other firms will allocate the funding to finance both payrolls and other perhaps larger expenses such as rent, equipment, materials, and utilities" (California Economic Forecast, "PPP Loans Could Fund 39 Million Jobs", https://californiaforecast.com/covid-19-economic-analysis/, April 24, 2020, accessed June 17, 2020).

In terms of housing, "The demand..., especially in coastal California, is also predicted to continue to motivate additional supply gains, with an over 8,000 year-over-year increase in permits in both 2019 and 2020. Despite these additions, home values are also expected to rise through 2020 to an average state value of over $593,000 by the end of 2020" (LAEDC, p. 7). Despite these gains, experts continue to see weakness in California's ability to meet its housing demand. "Estimates vary regarding total housing stock shortfall; however, all estimates agree on the need for a significant acceleration of construction over the average of 100,000 units added per year between 2014 and 2018," comments the LAEDC (ibid). UCLA Anderson concludes, "even though there is a concerted effort to increase home construction in the State, in the near term it is likely to fail, and as a consequence our forecast for the California economy is weaker for 2019 and 2020..." (UCLA Anderson, p. 57). In fact, UCLA Anderson projects, "weaker housing markets into 2020," with, "housing starts in 2019 and 2020... revised downward... with a recovery in building beginning in 2021" (ibid, p. 61).

Housing affordability continues to challenge the State's growth. "Governor maintains increased funding for housing production included in the 2019-20 budget, but proposes no significant new housing investments" (California Budget & Policy Center, p. 18). Spending related to the planning and production of housing included in the 2019-20 State budget will occur in 2020. "In 2018, the median home in California was 7.3 times the median household income, in contrast to the median home in the United States, which was only 3.7 times the median household income" (LAEDC, p. 16). The LAEDC cautions "the fact that the median Californian household must pay more than seven times its income to afford a home should be grounds for grave concern regarding sustainable economic growth" (ibid). In fact, "more than half of California's renters and over a third of homeowners with mortgages have high housing costs," defined as shelter costs that exceed 30 percent of household income, according to the California Budget & Policy Center (California Budget & Policy Center, p. 20).

Continued lack of affordable housing presents near-term and longer-range constraints on the State's economy. The LAEDC comments, "While there are any number of reasons why people choose to leave the state, or to put off having children, the dominant story is one of a housing markets so overheated that it is becoming increasingly less practical for those who do not already own a home to buy one" (LAEDC, p. 16).

San Diego Economy

As of 2019, the San Diego region was home to more than 3.3 million residents, the second largest county in California and fifth largest in the nation in terms of population according to the U.S. Census Bureau ("ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates by All Counties in the United States", US Census Bureau, https://data.census/gov, accessed on June 12, 2020). In 2018 the San Diego metropolitan region accounted for more than $219.4 billion, or 8.1 percent of California's GDP, based on data from the BEA and 8.5 percent of the State's population, based on U.S. Census Bureau data.

The San Diego region includes the largest concentration of U.S. military in the world, making the military presence an important driver of the region's economy. In addition, San Diego is a thriving hub for the life sciences/biomedical and technology-oriented industries and a popular travel destination. The region's quality of life attracts a well-educated, talented workforce and well-off retirees which contribute to local consumer spending.

In January 2020, the San Diego Business Journal hosted its annual economic forecast and all the panelists gave mostly positive reviews for the local outlook. Some cautioned the economy could slow; others indicated housing and cost of living would continue to be key challenges; but no one predicted a recession let alone the global pandemic which would shut down the local economy. Initially, the economic impact of the shutdown and quarantine was underestimated. Economist Tara Sinclair from George Washington University said, "The key is to watch big macro numbers rather than obsessively watching things tied to virus and supply chains. If people aren't getting haircuts anymore, that's a bad sign" ("Will the Coronavirus Cause a Recession? Keep Your Eye on the

Barbershops," The New York Times, accessed on March 3, 2020). No one could anticipate that hair salons and barbershops, along with countless other businesses would be closed in San Diego County beginning in March 2020.

According to the California Employment Development Department, San Diego County went from adding jobs in the month of February to losing jobs by tens, then by hundreds of thousands. Unemployment rose sharply from pre-COVID-19 levels of 3.2 percent to 15.0% at the end of May ("Local Area Unemployment Statistics," State of California Employment Development Department, <https://data.edd.ca.gov/Labor-Force-and-Unemployment-Rates/Local-Area-Unemployment-Statistics-LAUS-/e6gwgvii/data> accessed on June 21, 2020). In addition, SANDAG estimated taxable sales declined 44 percent during the stay at home orders from pre-COVID-19 levels of $5.3 billion to April 2020 estimates of $3.0 billion ("COVID-19 Impact on the San Diego Regional Economy - Consumer Spending", SANDAG, pg. 2, as of May 28, 2020).

Beacon Economics assessed that job losses in the San Diego region were concentrated in a few key sectors, including leisure & hospitality, retail, and education & health services; by combining the losses in these sectors with those in professional services, one can account for about 78 percent of job losses in the County ("San Diego Regional Outlook, Summer 2020," Beacon Economics, <https://beaconecon.com/publications/regional-outlook/regional-outlook-san-diego/> accessed on June 16, 2020). The analysis from Beacon Economics went on to estimate the number of essential vs. non-essential workers in San Diego County for purposes of determining the keys to recovery. Their examination found roughly half of the essential and non-essential workers in San Diego will not be able to work from home because their type of job requires them to interact directly with customers (ibid). This makes this group of workers not only a higher risk of having their health compromised, but it makes them one of the keys to local economic recovery (ibid). The question is posed to consumers: will you visit a business that requires you to interact with workers who regularly work with other customers? Consumers' answers could either speed or slow the local economic recovery.

Based on a recessionary environment combined with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, overall sales tax dollars are expected to be less in 2020 than the same period in 2019. Deepest declines are anticipated in the Food, Auto, and General retail sectors, along with their suppliers. Some individual businesses may not recover and have already begun to permanently close. Job losses are expected to reduce purchases of new cars and other high-cost items. Losses in the high-tech innovation industries may be more modest. And there may be increases in the Food and Drug, and online retail sectors. Looking toward the future, there is much uncertainty about how long consumers may take to fully return to their previous income and spending patterns, if they do at all.

With fewer consumer purchases, less sales tax is collected by San Diego County. As of the Third Quarter report to the Board of Supervisors in mid-May, the County was projected to realize a shortfall in anticipated Sales Tax-based General Purpose Revenue of $3.7 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $4.4 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21. The State is also offering many businesses payment plans and extensions, effectively pushing the collection of current revenue out to the end of the fiscal year, and into Fiscal Year 2020-21. While not a revenue loss, these actions impact the County's cash flows.

Since the Great Recession, the County's reliance on sales tax revenue has increased. Due to changes in funding and service delivery models by the State, sales tax revenue has become critical to supporting essential program areas in Public Safety, and Health and Human Services through dedicated revenue sources including Prop 172 and Health and Public Safety Realignment. As of Third Quarter, the County had expected lower than previously projected levels in these Sales Tax-based program revenues of $82.7 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $161.7 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21. Consumer activity also supports the County's program revenue for Behavioral Health through the Mental Health Services Act and road repair activities through the State Gas Tax. Due to the slowdown in economic activity following the pandemic, these revenue sources combined are expected lower than previously projected levels by $19.6 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $44.0 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

Pre-COVID-19, the visitor industry was the region's second largest export industry and, employed "199,800 residents in fields directly related to the hospitality industry, including lodging, food service, attractions, and transportation," according to the San Diego Tourism Authority ("San Diego County 2020 Visitor Industry General Facts," San Diego Tourism Authority, pg. 1). San Diego welcomed 35.1 million visitors annually who spent more than $11.6 billion at local businesses (ibid). Before the pandemic, the San Diego Travel Forecast indicated moderate 2 percent growth in visits in 2020 before declining in 2021-2024. Post-COVID-19, the leisure and hospitality sector shut down. According to the San Diego Regional EDC, this sector alone accounted for 96,200 or about 50 percent of job losses in April 2020 ("San Diego's Economic Pulse: May 2020", San Diego Regional EDC <https://www.sandiegobusiness.org/blog/san-diegos-economic-pulse-may-2020/> accessed June 16, 2020). Declining tourism resulting from COVID-19 impacts the County's revenue from Transient Occupancy Tax, the County's hotel room tax collected in the unincorporated area. As of Third Quarter, this revenue source was projected to realize a shortfall of $1.8 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $2.8 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

In terms of jobs and employment, the region's numbers look bleak, compared to pre-COVID-19 results. A study using 2019 data and reported by the Union-Tribune found that San Diego County had 23 percent of its workforce in either the retail or leisure & hospitality sectors; this setup left the region headed for a hard fall during the pandemic ("San Diego's reliance on tourism jobs could mean a bigger economic COVID-19 hit," The San Diego Union Tribune, April 21, 2020). According to California Employment Development Department data, the unemployment rate in San Diego County hovered around 3 percent from August through December 2019 and continued at that level through February 2020 ("Local Area Unemployment Statistics," State of California Employment Development Department, <https://data.edd.ca.gov/Labor-Force-and-Unemployment-Rates/Local-Area-Unemployment-Statistics-LAUS-/e6gw-gvii/data> accessed on June 21, 2020). This pre-COVID-19 unemployment rate remained until March when it ticked up slightly to 4.2 percent; in April, the unemployment rate more than tripled to 15 percent (ibid). The preliminary unemployment numbers for May (15 percent unemployment rate) show a potential flattening of job losses, but only time will tell if there will be additional job losses in the San Diego region. Growing unemployment constrains consumer spending and associated County revenues, while increasing the County's costs due to demand for the County's essential safety net services that residents rely upon in times of uncertainty and need.

When it comes to wages, San Diego County workers made about 12 percent more than the national average; that's the good news ("San Diego Business Journal Economic Trends 2020," San Diego Business Journal, February 10, 2020, pgs. 11-24). The bad news: it is about 43 percent more expensive to live in San Diego County than the national average which means a significant portion of the local population feels 30 percent underpaid (ibid). Much of the additional expense to live in San Diego can be attributed to housing and healthcare. Before the pandemic, business leaders confirmed a dilemma between the rising cost of housing and the slow (or lack of) growth in wages. Mark Cafferty, President and CEO of the San Diego Regional EDC said, "In San Diego…53 percent of the people we know are paying well over 30 percent of their overall income towards their rent and their mortgage…we've gotten to a point where our cost of living is on par with all of those [Bay Area] metros, and our wages, in many instances are not". The CFO of Kaiser added not only is housing consuming a larger portion of the household budget, but health care costs are increasing by about 6 percent per year too (ibid); it's unclear how COVID-19 may change those projections. The the median household income for San Diego County in 2018 was nearly $75,000, but diminishing factors including inflation and the real estate market can reduce that overall buying power.

Inflation can have a dampening effect on the region's wage gains; inflation occurs when prices rapidly increase and reduce buying power; economists consider high inflation bad for the economy although some inflation is healthy ("Deflation: Who Let the Air Out", Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, pg. 2).

Deflation exists when overall prices decrease, and this is also a concern for economists because it encourages consumers to save and wait for lower future prices, which can create a cyclical problem (ibid). Both inflation and deflation are measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). As of June 2020, the CPI for San Diego County was down 0.4 percent, indicating slight deflation for April and May ("Consumer Price Index, San Diego Area - May 2020," Bureau of Labor Statistics, pg. 1). While food prices increased 3.2 percent during this period, likely a result of more people eating at home as well as other COVID-19-related food-supply issues, energy prices fell 10.8 percent due primarily to lower gas prices and apparel prices fell 5% due to the economic shut down (ibid). As mentioned earlier, the behavior of consumers will shape the post-COVID-19 recovery for the San Diego region. If consumers save, deflation will snowball and the pace of any economic recovery will slow; if consumers spend, prices will stabilize, and economic recovery will surge.

Increasing unemployment exacerbates the pressure of high housing costs. San Diego housing is among the least affordable. The median price of a home in the region reached $670,000 in the first quarter of 2020, up 8 percent from the prior year and keeping San Diego's housing market as the second most expensive in the nation according to the San Diego Regional EDC ("Economic Snapshot," San Diego Regional EDC, <https://www.sandiegobusiness.org/research/economic-snapshot/> accessed on June 17, 2020). The EDC concludes San Diego has an affordability crisis and housing is at the epicenter. "The cost of housing is the primary driver of the region's high cost of living… if left unaddressed, the region's cost of living pressures will erode its economic competitiveness" ("Addressing San Diego's Affordability Crisis," San Diego Regional EDC, <http://affordability.inclusivesd.org/> accessed on June 17, 2020)."

Prior to COVID-19, economists predicted the local housing market would continue to appreciate at an annual 5 percent rate, similar to prior years ("San Diego Business Journal Economic Trends 2020," San Diego Business Journal, February 10, 2020, pgs. 11-24). Economists anticipated some recessionary activity and predicted the real estate market would slow to 0 percent or flat appreciation (ibid). While the market did slow, appreciation continued; March realized 8 percent year over year growth in sales price, April saw 4 percent growth, and May reached 1 percent gains ("Monthly Indicators," San Diego Association of Realtors, pg.7). In general, buyers of local real estate have been quick to buy listed properties due to historically low interest rates, but sellers have been reluctant to list their properties during the pandemic (ibid). In short, the decreased supply due to COVID-19 slowed market activity but low interest rates increased buyer appetite; combined, these slowed real estate market activity and drove up prices. Continued appreciation in the real estate market is anticipated to continue generating a slow increase in property tax revenue for the County. However, there are some revenue losses associated with the COVID-19 property tax delinquencies. In May 2020, the Governor of California instructed counties to stop the collection of late fees for delinquent property tax payments, which impacted the County of San Diego's Teeter Program revenue and increased anticipated delinquencies of total property taxes in the coming fiscal year. In total, as of the third quarter, the County was projected to realize a shortfall in anticipated Property Tax-based General Purpose Revenue of $34.1 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $34.3 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21, compared to projections earlier in the fiscal year.

While a boon to consumers looking to purchase real estate, low interest rates impact the County's earnings from interest in various funds. As of Third Quarter, the County was projected to realize a shortfall in anticipated revenue from interest earnings of $4.2 million in Fiscal Year 2019-20 and $21.9 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21.

Looking to construction as an indicator of future activity in the residential real estate market, the San Diego Regional EDC reports that in the first quarter of 2020, "Housing permits increased year-over-year in San Diego by 82 percent, largely due to multi-family housing increasing by 181 percent" ("Economic Snapshot," San Diego Regional EDC, <https://www.sandiegobusiness.org/research/economic-snapshot/> accessed on June 17, 2020). Michael Pugliese, an economist for Wells Fargo said before the pandemic that San Diego is still growing but in many ways its growth is limited by affordability, which is anchored to the high cost of housing; he went on to explain this accounts for some net migration out of San Diego - people can't afford to live in the County ("San Diego Business Journal Economic Trends 2020," San Diego Business Journal, February 10, 2020, pgs. 11-24). He continued, San Diego is "still not back to where we were in terms of single family and even multifamily building permits...you have this kind of strange challenge of a local economy is booming, strong wage growth, strong labor market growth and employment growth. But these affordability challenges - high rent growth, high home price growth, maybe not as much building as we'd like to see - and that's creating some real challenges" (ibid).

Outside of the single-family home sector and pre-COVID-19, according to the San Diego Business Journal, "The asking rent per square foot has been driven up just because this is such an in-demand class, especially kind of the upper end, the class A" ("San Diego Business Journal Economic Trends 2020," San Diego Business Journal, February 10, 2020, pgs. 11-24). However, with more employees potentially working from home permanently and added social distancing requirements for every business, government and non-profit, the market demand will certainly change post-COVID-19.

Real estate tracker CoStar predicted a 10 percent drop in rents across San Diego County by the end of the year due to COVID-19 ("Forecast: San Diego rents to drop by 10 percent" The San Diego Union Tribune, May 29, 2020). Falling rental income could increase pressure on property owners to eventually default on their property. Another measure of the housing market is the rate of foreclosures, as well as the companion indices of notices of loan default and deeds recorded (changes in ownership). According to the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk, foreclosures compared to total deeds recorded averaged 0.3 percent over the three-year period of 2003 through 2005, then rose significantly reaching 16.9 percent in 2008 and has declined to 0.6 percent in 2018. Total deeds recorded in 2019 were 118,342, an increase of 6.2 percent from the previous year. Notices from lenders to property owners that they were in default on their mortgage loans peaked at 38,308 in 2009, and foreclosures reached a high of 19,577 in 2008. In comparison, San Diego County saw 2,976 Notices of Default in 2019, down 8.1 percent from the 2018 level. The percentage of properties with delinquent mortgage loans that went into foreclosure averaged at approximately 11.6 percent from 2003 through 2005. During the recession, this indicator peaked at 57.5 percent in 2008 but since has declined to 19.3 percent in 2019, a decrease of 1.8 percent from 2018.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and Economic Conditions

As discussed, the County was heavily impacted by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic and its resulting business closures and "stay home" orders beginning in March 2020. Under the responsibilities of the region's Public Health Officer, the County was directly responsible for safeguarding health in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through various Public Health Orders and actions under the Local Health Emergency issued in February 2020. Additionally, the County itself underwent significant changes in how core government services were delivered, along with employers across the nation, as businesses shuttered, and the majority of employees and the public remained at home for months. Resulting job losses pushed the County's caseloads higher in many essential public assistance programs residents rely upon in times of uncertainty and need.

Further, many County services were interrupted, prohibited or otherwise impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on businesses, residents and government. As discussed previously, in many cases the County's revenues from various sources, including for essential public safety and health programs supported by sales tax-related revenues, declined significantly from earlier projections. Intergovernmental revenues were impacted due to the pandemic's widespread impact to the State and federal governments. And a changing operating environment has cut into fee-for-service revenue, among impacts to other revenue sources. Financial market volatility also impacted short-term revenues and long-term costs associated with projected losses in the San Diego County Employee's Retirement Association's retirement fund. At the same time, the County benefited from some unanticipated federal revenue to offset costs of the County's direct COVID-19 response through the

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020 (CARES Act).

County's Economic Base

The County's economic stability is based on significant manufacturing presence and innovation clusters (e.g. energy storage, cyber-security, and clean tech), a large tourist industry attracted by the favorable climate of the region, a considerable defense-related presence from federal spending, and a thriving hub of biotech and telecommunications industries. Highlights of seasonally unadjusted County employment as of August 2020 data from the California Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division are listed below:

- Non-farm industry employment totals 1.37 million jobs. This represents a loss of more than 135,000 jobs from August 2019. Agriculture includes 9,600 jobs, or 0.7 percent of all industries in the region.
- Goods-producing industries make up 14.0 percent of non-farm employment or 192,000 jobs. The most significant sectors include manufacturing, which accounted for 7.9 percent of non-farm employment or 108,800 jobs; and construction, which accounted for 6.0 percent of total non-farm employment or 82,800 jobs.
- Private (non-government) services industries constitute the largest share of employment in the region and accounted for 69.6 percent of total non-farm employment, with 955,000 employed.
- Of these, professional and business services make up the largest non-government sector, comprising 18.9 percent of total non-farm employment, totaling 259,200 jobs. Other large non-government sectors in the private services industry category include: trade, transportation and utilities (206,600 jobs); educational and health services (202,700 jobs); and leisure and hospitality (148,000 jobs).
- Government accounted for 16.4 percent of total non-farm employment, or 224,300 jobs. San Diego's local governments, including education, contribute significantly to this sector.

County revenues that are affected by the state of the local economy include property taxes, sales taxes, and charges for services. Key factors impacting these revenues include real estate activity and consumer spending which are in turn greatly influenced by interest rates and employment levels. Short-term and long-term interest rates remain low by historical standards.

General Management System

The General Management System (GMS) is the County of San Diego's ("County") foundation that guides operations and service delivery to residents, businesses and visitors. The GMS outlines the County's strategic intent, prioritizes its goals and use of resources, describes how it monitors progress on performance, ensures collaboration and recognizes accomplishments in a structured, coordinated way. By communicating and adhering to this business model, the County of San Diego is able to maintain an organizational culture that values transparency, accountability, innovation, and fiscal discipline and that provides focused, meaningful public services.

At the heart of the GMS are five overlapping components which ensure that the County asks and answers crucial questions, as well as completes required deliverables:

- Strategic Planning
- Operational Planning
- Monitoring and Control
- Functional Threading
- Motivation, Rewards and Recognition

These five GMS components form an annual cycle that is renewed each fiscal year with review of the Strategic Plan and development of a new Operational Plan. More information about the GMS and the Strategic Plan is available online at: www.sdcounty.ca.gov/cao/.

Context for Strategic and Operational Planning

To be effective, the goals that the County sets and the resources that are allocated must be consistent with the purpose of the organization. The context for all strategic and operational planning is provided by the County's vision; a vision that can only be realized through strong regional partnerships with the community, stakeholders and employees.

Vision:

A region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving - Live Well San Diego

Mission:

To efficiently provide public services that build strong and sustainable communities

Values:

The County recognizes that "The noblest motive is the public good." As such, there is an ethical obligation for employees to uphold basic standards as we conduct operations. The County is dedicated to:

- Integrity - Character First:
  - We maintain the public's trust through honest and fair behavior
  - We exhibit the courage to do the right thing for the right reason
  - We are dedicated to the highest ethical standards
- Stewardship - Service Before Self:
  - We are accountable to each other and the public for providing service and value
  - We uphold the law and effectively manage the County's public facilities, resources and natural environment
  - We accept personal responsibility for our conduct and obligations
  - We will ensure responsible stewardship of all that is entrusted to us
- Commitment - Excellence in all that we do:
  - We work with professionalism and purpose
  - We make a positive difference in the lives of the residents we serve
  - We support a diverse workforce and inclusive culture by embracing our differences
  - We practice civility by fostering an environment of courteous and appropriate treatment of all employees and the residents we serve
  - We promote innovation and open communication

Strategic and Operational Planning (Budgetary) Process

The County ensures operations are strategically aligned across the organization by developing a five year Strategic Plan that sets forth priorities the County will accomplish with public resources. The Strategic Plan is developed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the County Executive Team, based on the policies and initiatives set by the Board of Supervisors, an enterprise review of the issues, risks and opportunities facing the region and reflects the changing environment, economy and community needs. All County programs support at least one of these four Strategic Initiatives through Audacious Visions, Enterprise-Wide Goals and departmental objectives that make achievement of the initiatives possible. The Strategic Initiatives include:

- Building Better Health
- Living Safely
- Sustainable Environments/Thriving
- Operational Excellence

The Operational Plan provides the County's detailed financial plan for the next two fiscal years. However, pursuant to Government Code Section 29000 et seq., State law allows the Board of Supervisors to formally adopt only the first year of the Operational Plan as the County's budget. The Board approves the second year of the plan in principle for planning purposes. To demonstrate that resources are allocated to support the County's Strategic Plan, all program objectives in the Operational Plan and department performance measures are aligned with the County's Strategic Initiatives, Audacious Visions and/or Enterprise-Wide Goals.

State law permits modifications to the adopted budget during the year with approval by the Board of Supervisors, or in certain instances, by the Auditor and Controller. The Chief Administrative Officer reviews the status of the County's performance against the budget, and requests adjustments as needed, in a quarterly status report to the Board of Supervisors.

Financial (Budgetary) Policies

California Government Code (GC) Sections 29000 through 29144 provide the statutory requirements pertaining to the form and content of the County's budget. Government Code Section 29009 requires a balanced budget in the recommended, adopted and final budgets, defined as "funding sources shall equal the financing uses."

County Charter Section 703 establishes the Chief Administrative Officer as responsible for all Groups/Agencies and their departments (except departments with elected officials as department heads), for supervising the expenditures of all departments and for reporting to the Board of Supervisors whether specific expenditures are necessary.

County Code of Administrative Ordinances Article VII establishes the components and timeline for the budget process and establishes the Chief Administrative Officer as responsible for budget estimates and submitting recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. This article also establishes guidelines for the use of fund balance and the maintenance of reserves in order to protect the fiscal health and stability of the County. Expenditures for services are subject to fluctuations in demand and revenues are influenced by changes in the economy and State and federal regulations. This section ensures the County is prepared for unforeseen events by establishing, maintaining and replenishing prudent levels of fund balance and reserves, and by ensuring that all one-time resources generated by the County are appropriated for one-time expenditures only.

On February 14, 2020, the County of San Diego declared a local public health emergency due to COVID-19. In response to the declared emergency and the economic impacts of COVID-19 on County finances, on May 19, 2020 the Board of Supervisors ratified the Chief Administrative Officer's suspension of sections 113.2, 113.5(a), and 113.5(b) of the San Diego County Administrative Code and any other provision of local law pertaining to General Fund balance, reserves, commitments, assignment and management practices until further notice.

The County has the following financial policies that serve as guidelines for the budget process:

Board of Supervisors Policies

A-136 Use of County of San Diego General Management System for Administration of County Operations: Establishes the General Management System (GMS) as the formal guide for the administration of County departments, programs and services, and ensures that all County departments and offices operate in compliance with the GMS.

B-29 Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts - Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery: Provides a methodology and procedure to encourage County departments to recover full cost for services whenever possible.

B-37 Use of the Capital Program Funds: Establishes funding methods, administration and control, and allowable uses of the Capital Program Funds.

B-58 Funding of the Community Enhancement Program: Establishes guidelines and criteria for allocating the appropriations for the Community Enhancement Program.

B-63 Competitive Determination of Optimum Service Delivery Method: Provides that selected departments analyze services, either County-operated or contracted, to determine if the quality, economy and productivity are equal to that of an alternative delivery method, including other government agencies, and to determine how the revenues can be maximized so the highest level or volume of services can be provided.

B-65 Long-Term Obligations and Financial Management Policy: Governs the management and planning for the long-term financial outlook and obligations that bear the County of San Diego's name or name of any related Agency for the County.

B-72 Neighborhood Reinvestment Program: Establishes guidelines and criteria for allocating the appropriations for the Neighborhood Reinvestment Program.

E-14 Expenditure of Tobacco Settlement Revenue in San Diego County: Establishes that revenue received from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (1998) shall be allocated to support a comprehensive tobacco control strategy, to increase funding for health care-based programs, and to supplement, but not replace, existing health care revenue.

M-13 Legislative Policy: State-Mandated Local Program Costs: Calls on the State and Federal Legislatures to encourage equitable reimbursement of mandated program costs.

Administrative Manual

0030-01 Procedure for Fees, Grants and Revenue Contracts for Services Provided to Agencies or Individuals Outside the County of San Diego Organization: Establishes a procedure within the framework of Board of Supervisors Policy B-29, to serve as guidance in the process of recovering full costs for services provided to agencies or individuals outside the County of San Diego organization under grants or contracts or for which fees may be charged.

0030-06 State Mandated Cost Recovery: Establishes guidelines to attempt full recovery of all State-mandated costs resulting from chaptered legislation and executive orders.

0030-10 Transfers of Appropriations Between Objects within a Budget Unit: Establishes a procedure authorizing the Auditor and Controller, under the direction of the CAO, to transfer appropriations between objects within a budget unit (department).

0030-14 Use of One-Time Revenues: Establishes that one-time revenue will be appropriated only for one-time expenditures such as capital projects or equipment, not for ongoing programs.

0030-18 Establishing Funds and Transfer of Excess Cash Balances to the General Fund: Establishes the procedure for approval and establishment of funds and a policy to transfer cash balances into the General Fund, as authorized by California Government Code Section 25252.

0030-22 Revenue Management - Auditor and Controller Responsibilities: Establishes the Auditor and Controller as responsible for reviewing and evaluating revenues from all sources in order to maximize these revenues within legal provisions and to institute internal controls and systems to be used by departments to estimate, claim, and collect revenues.

0030-23 Use of the Capital Program Funds (CPFs), Capital Project Development and Budget Procedures: Establishes procedures for developing the scope of capital projects, monitoring the expenditure of funds for capital projects, timely capitalization of assets and closure of capital projects within the CPFs.

Strategic Initiatives and Achievements

Strategic planning communicates the County's strategic direction for the next five years. The Strategic Plan explains the County's four strategic initiatives, in addition to its vision, mission and values. The four strategic initiatives focus on how the County achieves the vision of a region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving.

The five-year Strategic Plan is developed by the Chief Administrative Officer, the Assistant CAO, the five General Managers and the Strategic Planning Support Team based on the policies and initiatives set by the Board of Supervisors and a countywide review of the risks and opportunities facing the region.

The four strategic initiatives are:

- **Building Better Health** - ensure every resident has the opportunity to make positive healthy choices, that San Diego County has fully optimized its health and social service delivery system and makes health, safety and thriving a focus of all policies and programs.
- **Living Safely** - make San Diego the safest and most resilient community in the nation, where youth are protected and the criminal justice system is balanced between accountability and rehabilitation.
- **Sustainable Environments/Thriving** - strengthen the local economy through planning, development and infrastructure, protect San Diego's natural and agricultural resources and promote opportunities for residents to engage in community life and civic activities.
- **Operational Excellence** - promote continuous improvement in the organization through problem solving, teamwork and leadership, focus on customers' needs and keep employees positive and empowered.

Strategic planning starts with audacious visions, which are bold statements detailing the impact the County wants to make in the community. Enterprise-wide goals (*EWGs*) support the audacious visions by focusing on collaborative efforts that inspire greater results than any one department could accomplish alone. Audacious visions and *EWGs* are developed to support each of the strategic initiatives.

Within the structure of the two-year operational planning process, the County plans for and attains interim progress toward achievement of the Strategic Initiatives. Some of the highlights over the last year include:

Building Better Health

- The County increased opportunities for the public to recreate by constructing 11 new park and park improvement projects, including: Sweetwater Bike Park, Fallbrook Community Center Electrical Upgrades, Morrison Pond Interpretive Loop, Estrella Park, Pine Valley Pavilion, San Diego Botanic Garden Buildings, Rainbow Park Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvements, Flinn Springs Bridge Replacements, Sweetwater

Community Garden, and Patriot Park Water Conservation upgrades, and Woodhaven Well and Fitness Trails.

- HHSA integrated the Access Customer Service Center, Aging and Independence Services, and Child Welfare Services into a new single call center - a cloud-based, omnichannel routing, AI embedded, customer experience platform. The software will expand opportunities for staff to work from home and will provide a streamlined and consistent experience for customers.
- HHSA launched the Test, Trace, Treat (T3) strategy to help address the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19, through a large-scale effort to protect the public's health and ensure continuity of such protection throughout all stages of the county's reopening. Woven throughout all three elements is a health equity lens to ensure services address those disproportionally effected by COVID-19. The three elements are providing accessible COVID-19 testing (now available at 30 sites); culturally competent contact tracing (tracers of various backgrounds and languages are among the nearly 1,000 total case investigation and contact tracing staff); and treat by providing assistance with safe isolation and individualized services (including over 1,700 hotel rooms secured so that individuals who do not have a safe place to isolate and quarantine have a temporary place to stay and be connected to resources and support).

Living Safely

- The Office of the District Attorney implemented a community partnership and problem solving model dedicating prosecutors to each region of the county to work with local government, schools, law enforcement and the community in addressing the underlying causes of crime and solutions to enhance and maintain public safety. This partnership included the development of Power League youth mentorship program in each region to encourage student participation in school and healthy lifestyles.
- The Sheriff's Department created the Homeless Assistance Resource Team (HART). The deputies were tasked with conducting homeless outreach operations in the unincorporated areas of the San Diego County. These operations were used to identify the population of the homeless, conduct environmental cleanups, and work with service providers to offer resources to assist homeless individuals with a path to permanent housing. Deputies worked in partnership with several agencies and service providers during these operations.
- The Probation Department implemented the CHOICE Program and opened Achievement Centers to support youth success in exiting the justice system through community-based case management, mentoring, and vocational and educational support.
- HHSA Child Welfare Services: Collaborated with the Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board to enhance our child welfare system and ensure the appropriate level of intervention needed for families through the development of a Child Abuse Hotline multidisciplinary response team. On December 10, 2019, the Board approved the Family Strengthening and Prevention initiative and the program Review, Assess, and Direct (RAD) was launched as a pilot on January 15, 2020 in North Central Region to improve screening, decision making and connect families to prevention services. This exciting partnership between CWS and 2-1-1 San Diego provides families who do not meet criteria for investigations, with a 2-1-1 navigator to provide enhanced outreach that includes additional resources, such as housing, food, and utilities.
- HHSA Live Well Mobile: Launched Live Well on Wheels, a mobile office that allows for health and community services to be delivered directly to residents in their neighborhoods. The vehicle is equipped with the latest technology and tools required to provide a variety of services in the field, such as: disaster response, public assistance benefits, immunizations, veterans' services, public health services, behavioral health services, homeless services, and much more. Live Well on Wheels makes it possible for the County and community partners to deliver indispensable services in a coordinated and integrated manner, in full alignment with the Live Well San Diego vision for healthy, safe and thriving communities. Since its inception, Live Well on Wheels has met the needs of residents by providing support to nurses providing mobile COVID-19 testing for more than 3,500 individuals.

Sustainable Environments/Thriving

- A Climate Action Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 14, 2018 lays out how the County will reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the unincorporated areas of the region. The plan encourages installing solar photovoltaic panels on existing homes and on County facilities; increasing renewable energy overall; diverting more trash away from landfills; and installing electric vehicle charging stations throughout the region. As part of a $2 million tree-planting program, the County planted more than 6,518 trees on public lands. County inspectors inspected 9,579 detection traps for invasive pests last year that could have damaged our $1.77 billion agriculture industry. South county beach water monitoring was increased from four to nine water-sampling locations to monitor health standards at the region's beaches and increased the frequency of testing in all south county locations to twice weekly. In addition, County programs are in place to remove high-polluting vehicles and engines from service throughout the region. During the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) measures to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 132,000 metric tons by 2020 to meet State targets, the County prepared its first CAP Annual Progress Report to describe progress on implementing the CAP; developed a CAP website to communicate with residents about programs and progress towards implementation; supported Countywide efforts to explore renewable energy program options; developed an Electric Vehicle Roadmap, that included strategies to increase electric vehicle ownership and use and to install electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the unincorporated community and at County facilities, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in September 2019, and developed a Landscaping Ordinance to reduce water usage for consideration by the Board of Supervisors in June 2020.
- HHSA Aging and Independent Services: Launched Great Plates Delivered: Home Meals for Seniors and provided over 176,000 home-delivered meals to adults 65+ and those 60-64 with certain health conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 36,000 meals provided weekly as of the end of Fiscal Year 2019-2020. Initiated by Governor Gavin Newsom, and supported by FEMA, State, and local funds, this program pairs older adults with local restaurants to provide 3 meals per day so recipients can stay safely at home.

Operational Excellence

- The Department of Purchasing & Contracting received the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement from the National Procurement Institute (NPI) for the 20th consecutive year. The NPI recognizes organizations that are leaders in the public procurement sector. A total of 40 counties hold this designation in 2020.
- HHSA Behavioral Health Services: Established a process to improve access for clients seeking substance use disorder treatment using the Third Next Available Appointment (TNAA) data. TNAA is an industry standard that most closely reflects a program's true access time as the first and second next available appointments might be due to client cancelation or another event that is not predictable or reliable.
- The County of San Diego's new Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's (ARCC) Office & Archive building was awarded the 2020 Orchid award for outstanding architecture by the San Diego Architectural Foundation. The foundation honors the best in local architecture, historic preservation, interior design, urban planning and landscape architecture. The East County Office and Archives opened to the public in February 2020. It is a zero net energy, LEED gold-certified, state-of-the-art facility that offers ARCC and TTC services for the east county region.
- The County Communications Office won nine Government Programming Awards including second place in overall excellence at the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) conference in Tampa, Florida in September. NATOA awards recognize excellence in broadcast, cable, multimedia and electronic programming produced by local government agencies.

Certificate of Achievement

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the County for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. In order to be awarded a Certificate of

Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized CAFR. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

A Certificate of Achievement is valid for a period of one year only. We believe that our current comprehensive annual financial report continues to meet the Certificate of Achievement Program's requirements and we are submitting it to the GFOA to determine its eligibility for another certificate.

Other Awards and Recognitions

The County of San Diego workforce continually plans to cut costs, streamline processes, incorporate the newest technology and expand services to improve the lives of residents and save taxpayer dollars. While the goal is to improve communities, it is gratifying to be recognized for those efforts. The following is a sample of the recognition the County received during the past fiscal year for its leadership and excellence in operations:

The County earned 54 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its innovative programs. Some of the award-winning programs include:

- The Planning & Development Services CEQA Training for Community Members and Stakeholders program: The department developed a training program that explains how CEQA, a technical and complex process, works in a simplified way. One of the primary goals of CEQA is to disclose to the public the significant environmental effects of a proposed project and to avoid or mitigate those impacts if feasible. The goal of the program is to give the public the tools to participate in County-initiated planning efforts and discretionary permit applications, provide meaningful, impactful input in the process and to engage in their community planning process.
- Best in Category, Criminal Justice and Public Safety: The Office of the Public Defender's Fresh Start Criminal Record Relief Program. Fresh Start is the Office of the Public Defender's Comprehensive Criminal Record Relief Program designed to educate and advocate for community members in all areas of conviction relief. The goal of the program is to remove barriers to successful community reintegration, improve individuals' access to employment, housing, education, and other forms of civic engagement and thus reduce recidivism and improve community safety.
- Better Outreach and Education: Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption. Through intergovernmental coordination and private industry support, the Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk's (ARCC) improved outreach and education to qualify more 100% Service-Connected Disabled Veterans or their surviving spouses for the Disabled Veterans' Property Tax Exemption. ARCC increased the number of qualified disabled veterans by 75% (4,183) in 2019 which saves veterans and surviving spouses over $5,850,000 in property taxes annually. ARCC's Taxpayer Advocate collaborated with the Office of Military and Veterans Affairs (OMVA) to enrich public understanding of the tax exemption; ARCC trained their staff on the tax break, and promoted it using their resources. ARCC also created a referral pipeline for taxpayers to benefit from both offices. Through an innovative public-private partnership with real estate agents, ARCC provided the agents education on the exemption break for their clients and gained media to promote the tax break on Veterans Day and Memorial Day.
- The Probation Department's Resilience is Strength and Empowerment (RISE) Collaborative Court. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is one of the fastest growing epidemics in the United States, and in San Diego County. A significant number of children in the juvenile justice system are, or are at risk of, becoming victims of commercial sexual exploitation. The trauma-informed court uses a multidisciplinary approach to address the needs of youth who may have a history of, or may be at risk for, commercial sexual exploitation.
- The Encinitas Branch of San Diego County Library partnered with the City of Encinitas to provide Service and Celebrating a City - Art Night Encinitas, a year-long art and culture series. The series sought to connect residents with galleries up and down the San Diego coastline through bi-monthly events that utilized the library and selected galleries as a jumping off point. Art lovers could meet at the library to view

special art exhibits that were guided by docents, enjoy live performances and purchase books from the Friends of the Library. Visitors could then board County-sponsored transportation to visit other art destinations, which resulted in over 1,000 attendees per event.

- The County of San Diego has developed Green Streets Guidance for developers of public and private projects for the design, construction, and maintenance of Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategies that can be implemented into the road right of way. GI Strategies are designed to mimic the natural water cycle within the built environment through innovative use of vegetation, mulch, and engineered soils. These strategies reduce pollution and the amount of runoff that reaches our rivers and ocean. This helps developers comply with strict stormwater rules and by making GI Strategies easier to implement, their use will become more widespread and water quality in the region will improve. The County is the only agency in the region, and one of the few in the nation, to develop Green Streets Guidance.
- The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health Vector Control Program staff developed and implemented a new Simultaneous Dengue Virus 1-4 Testing method in 2016 that could analyze invasive Aedes aegypti mosquito samples for all four dengue types in one test. Using control standards provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the new DENV1-4 test was proven to perform as well as the single individual virus tests. This process improvement saved staff time and overall costs, obtained results faster, and enhanced the ability of the Vector Control to protect public health through early detection.
- Best in Category, Information Technology: The Department of the Medical Examiner's Open Data Portal. The Department of the Medical Examiner's primary mission is to work with the medical and law enforcement community to understand each person's story of death, to seek justice, and to bring closure to families. Each story contributes to an important bigger picture that is the health and well-being of our community. Understanding the value in these stories and the data collected, the San Diego Medical Examiner released more than 22 years of death record information onto San Diego County's searchable public internet portal in March 2019.
- The County of San Diego's Department of Agriculture, Weights and Measures Software Development for Water Submeter Test Bench program will allow for cost savings and increased efficiency in testing time for water submeter inspections and will significantly improve service to customers. The department inspects water submeters that measure the amount of water used by certain businesses and multi-unit residences. Inaccurate operation of these submeters could potentially overcharge users. The new innovative software is easy to use and is programmed to perform on many different platforms and operating systems.
- Department of Child Support Services Super Saturday Program. The San Diego Department of Child Support Services' Super Saturday Program offers services on Saturdays where all members of the community, not only individuals with a child support case, can visit the Child Support offices to apply for services, as well as meet with various community partners. Launched in late January 2019, the events are set up as resource fairs where attendees can interact with a variety of other social service providers, potential employers, and child support staff to address their needs. Attendees can meet with the Family Law Facilitator's office, Public Defender, and the YMCA as well as potential employers.
- HHSA earned 15 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for its innovative programs spanning multiple service areas, including but not limited to an Alzheimer's Response Team to provide specialized response to those living with dementia and their caregivers, and a Family Visit Coaching program in Child Welfare Services to help parents develop skills so that they can reunify more quickly.

- HHSA Received 2019-20 CSAC Merit Award for launching a dynamic multifaceted Affordable Housing Program, leveraging local resources to provide stable living situations for thousands of low-income residents. The County anticipates an increase in affordable housing production by 55% over the next five years by infusing local resources with State and federal funding.

Acknowledgments

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Respectfully,

TRACY M. SANDOVAL
Deputy CAO/
Chief Financial Officer

TRACY DRAGER
Auditor and Controller