City Heights gears up for a fight: Communities in the neighborhood are organizing against service cuts

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As city officials prepare to slash from an already-tight budget, residents in City Heights are organizing a "united front" in protecting services from cutbacks.

The city faces a $73 million deficit for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

In City Heights, residents began establishing lines of communication among "a group of individuals who do things in the community — rather than talk," said Guy Mock, co-chairman of the City Heights Town Council.

"The first phase of getting together is to present a united front, for lack of a better term," Mock said. "We worked really hard to get the community where it is, and we don't plan to backtrack on that."

After voters rejected a proposed sales tax increase on the Nov. 2 ballot, most city officials say they have no choice but to make cuts. Proposals include laying off 162 police officers and 60 firefighters, shutting down two libraries and closing all but one public pool.

Last month, La Jolla and University City residents gathered to learn how proposed cuts could affect their neighborhoods. Mayor Jerry Sanders and his deputies also stopped off in Clairemont, Logan Heights and other neighborhoods. Additional discussions on the city's budget are being planned for several other communities.

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