

City of San Antonio



Minutes Planning and Community Development Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5
Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

10:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

The Planning and Community Development Council Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:02 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Chair*
Teri Castillo, *Member*
Manny Pelaez, *Member*
John Courage, *Member*

Members Absent: Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from January 23, 2024 Planning and Community Development Committee Meeting

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Planning and Community Development meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage
Absent: Viagran, Pelaez

Public Comment

None.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing and possible action on the 2024 Status of Poverty in San Antonio Report, the Status of Poverty Dashboard, and the Community Wellbeing Survey Results [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services].

Patrick Steck, Assistant Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS), provided an overview for the 2024 Status of Poverty in San Antonio Report (Report), the Status of Poverty Dashboard and the Community Wellbeing Survey results. He noted that the Poverty Report was first completed in 2008 and the Report format was updated in 2022, and the 2022 Report was frequently used by stakeholder organizations for research, data and metrics used for application of funding grants and development of programs.

Steck reviewed the 2019 Status of Poverty Report and the status of goals set in that Plan. He noted that under the Report, there were five key recommendations which included: 1) Focus on highest need geographies and populations; 2) Fostered integration of asset building and social safety net services with community partners; 3) Enhance safety net for low-income families; 4) Expanded access to products and services that support asset building and preservation; and 5) Offer organizational support to non-profits to enhance long-term viability and outcomes. Steck provided an overview for each recommendation of programs and partnerships to include those with the Alamo Area Community Network (AACN), Benefits Navigation Program, San Antonio Community Resource Directory (SACRD), SA-Ready to Work and the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA).

Steck provided an overview of the U.S. Census poverty measure and thresholds which was used for the 2024 analysis. He noted that the Census Bureau used five years of data to project poverty rates and stated that the U.S. poverty rate was 12.5% and that Texas overall was at 13.9%. He noted that since 2017 to 2022 each Texas City had a reduction in their poverty rates but San Antonio had the smallest decrease of all Texas Cities.

Steck reviewed data on poverty by race, ethnicity and age in San Antonio. He noted that African Americans had the largest percentage of poverty population and that adults over the age of 65 had an increase of living in poverty but that children under the age of five were the largest segment in poverty with 27%. He added that 74.4% of households in poverty were families with 62.2 of families in poverty being single parent households.

Steck stated that median household income in San Antonio grew at a slower rate of 20% than in Texas at 28%. He reviewed income disparity data within all Texas cities in relation to gender and education. He noted that women with less than a high school degree in San Antonio earned 62 cents for every dollar a man earned.

Steck reviewed the impact of education on poverty data from the 2022 Report and noted that individuals living in poverty in San Antonio had 32.4% with less than a high school degree, 32.2% with a high school degree, 25.1% with some college and 10.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Steck noted that the correlation of disability status and poverty and showed that 23.1% of people disabilities lived in poverty in San Antonio. He stated that a third of the population 16 years and older with a declared disability was employed while the remaining 67% were not in the labor force. Steck spoke to the Poverty Dashboard and stated that it was updated regularly as data was

collected. He noted that DHS had conducted a community survey to fill the gap for data not provided under the Census. Of the 983 respondents, he reported that results showed that 353 respondents could cover their basic needs for food, clothing, housing and medical expenses but did not have any discretionary funds after paying for them. He added that 80 respondents stated that they could not cover these basic needs.

Steck noted that survey results reported that individuals were not knowledgeable of where to find available social services. He stated that they would mostly search for services through faith based organizations, friends and through the City of San Antonio services.

Steck spoke to the City's funding by social determinants of health framework with services delivered by City Departments such as Human Services, Metro Health, SA Ready to Work, Neighborhood and Housing Services, Parks and Recreation, Pre-K 4 SA and the Library. He noted that over \$750 million was allocated under the FY 2024 Adopted Budget for the delivery of these services. Steck added that over \$240 million of the ARPA investment was used to deliver service categories for housing security, small business, utility assistance, mental health, domestic violence, youth and senior services and digital connectivity.

Steck reviewed the key findings of the Status on Poverty Report which found that San Antonio did not have the highest poverty rate in Texas but did have the slowest pace compared to other cities on reducing poverty. He added that housing affordability was the largest challenge for individuals and families in poverty categories. He added that multiple vulnerabilities affected low income families with the most vulnerable being children, older adults, African Americans and people with disabilities. He reiterated that housing affordability was the largest challenge for those in poverty.

Steck provided an overview of staff recommendations as a result of study findings to include an emphasis on services to the most vulnerable residents and continuing collective impact strategies among service providers in the same field and across systems. He spoke to an increase in promotion of resident referral collaboration between service providers under the Alamo Area Community Network. He stated that DHS would establish Social Lab to conduct social analysis on local poverty trends and sharing with service providers.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia recognized students from Southwest Independent School District at the meeting who were shadowing her to learn about government and problems the City was facing.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke to the development of an action plan to address the most vulnerable populations facing poverty. She spoke to the City of Dallas and how they were able to lower the rate of poverty and asked if staff had learned how they were doing that. Steck stated that staff was still evaluating data for all cities and would update the Committee once finalized.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke to how the poverty rate in the older adult population was increasing and wondered if the digital divide had an impact on the poverty rate. She addressed the population rates of families with small children and asked that staff address strategies for the four largest populations in poverty. She noted that workforce and training programs were crucial in getting people escape poverty and it was important to share these statistics with the community.

Councilmember Courage shared his observations on the issue of poverty and noted that poverty was still a huge issue for the population of San Antonio. He stated that the community as a whole needed to look to how they could assist people to emerge out of poverty. He stressed the importance of providing adequate housing and obtaining education for all individuals to get out of poverty.

Councilmember Courage stated that competitive wages and better jobs were also crucial in the lowering of poverty and that the City could not afford to not invest in these services.

Councilmember Castillo stated that the data reported was not surprising but sobering to the levels of poverty in the community. She spoke to the need for services for youth and older adults that were most vulnerable to poverty. Councilmember Castillo stated that it was important to support delegate agencies that assisted these populations and asked that these presentations be provided to the San Antonio Youth Commission and the City/County Joint Commission on Elderly Affairs so that they could make recommendations to the City Council.

Councilmember Castillo supported the development of the Social Lab and requested that it have a goal to address public housing inventory and availability due to the high need for quality housing for vulnerable populations. She requested consideration of a Bexar County and City collaborative to address housing and increased opportunities for workforce training for previously incarcerated individuals.

Chair Rocha Garcia suggested revisiting the Senior Services Plan and supported collaboration efforts between Bexar County, the San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) and City departments to address opportunities for previously incarcerated individuals and providing training opportunities. She requested follow-up data for implementation efforts and measures for delegate agencies supporting these populations. In addition, she requested educational outreach on services that delegate agencies could provide such as prescription assistance to the elder community and mental health support to youth provided by the non-profit Any Baby Can.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested additional data and research on the impact of financial literacy and asset building opportunities for those vulnerable to poverty. Steck noted that the Poverty Dashboard and Report would address some of these items and associated recommendations.

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston reiterated the importance of the Poverty Report and impact to the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) which also assisted in implementation of policies for supportive housing and homelessness.

The Item was for briefing only.

3. Briefing and possible action on the San Antonio Community Resource Directory (SACRD) Housing Services Portal [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department]

Veronica Gonzales, Assistant Director of the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD), provided an overview of the San Antonio Community Resource Directory (SACRD) Housing Services Portal (Portal) and noted that in 2021 City Council approved the Housing Plan which developed a “One Stop Housing Stop” which was managed by SACRD. She also noted

that SACRD had a Mental Health Portal that was launched in November 2021. Gonzales spoke to the expansion of housing resources which were to be made up of a Housing Stability Portal and Housing Base. She spoke to the Housing Stability Portal which would provide service locator services and would feature a guided interview to help uncover the holistic needs of individuals. She add that the Housing Base Portal would provide a locator tool for publicly funded affordable housing that would be searchable by location, desired amenities, voucher acceptance, screening criteria, proximity to transit and other criteria.

Gonzales stated that the Housing Stability Portal had identified 120 housing stability categories with 1,271 programs identified which were included in the portal. She noted that there were more than 270 programs new to SACRD which had been added since November 2023.

Gonzales spoke to feedback received during focus groups and Advisory Committee sessions in the development of the Housing Stability Portal which would be publicly launched in April 2024. She reviewed feedback received which included requests for updated resources information, updates to closure of application acceptance periods and an AMI calculator and education.

Gonzales stated that SACRD provided use cases for available services and programs. She reviewed a case of individuals needing better jobs and services needed. She stated that the Portal identified resources for users and community stakeholders who worked with individuals/families.

Gonzales reviewed the timeline of the Portal release to include testing from January to February 2024, Public launch in April 2024 and post-launch feedback/review which would be continuous to ensure that meaningful resources were available to the public. She spoke to the promotion efforts for the portals which would include email blasts, newsletter articles and communications at user group meetings and community events.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia stated that she had reviewed the tool and was pleased with the SACRD Portal site and she thanked staff and SACRD Executive Director Bill Neally for their work on the Portal and service directory implementation. She was supportive of the sites but expressed concern on the lack of a physical location outlined in previous services report. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston stated that in the implementation of recommendations and that they spoke specifically to access and it was found that a “one stop” physical facility for service providers to support individuals and housing developers had not been seen as essential since current services were still being provided by NHSD housing navigators and outside agencies such as churches and non-profits. NHSD Director Veronica Garcia spoke to the success of the portals in providing information on available services with over 1.2 million views per year with 80% of views coming from professionals who work in housing service fields and used the site to navigate services and inquiries on behalf of persons seeking services.

Chair Rocha Garcia stressed the need for focus to services providers and services. She asked if housing navigators could be located at council district offices to support individuals referred to

them to find supportive services. She also spoke to educational materials to provide the community of where to find supportive services at a physical space.

Councilmember Pelaez agreed that the faith community was a vital component to provide education and information of services but stated that it was important to utilize stores and shopping areas for marketing of services. Assistant City Manager Houston stated that staff would consider expanded marketing to retailers. Gonzales stated that staff welcomed input from council districts on how to best promote services and noted that educational materials were provided to City facilities such as libraries, senior centers and community centers.

Councilmember Pelaez requested conversations with retailer organizations and grocery retailers for the Spanish community. Assistant City Manager Houston reiterated that the outreach campaign had been developed with input from users and providers for outreach recommendations and based on that input, staff was now implementing recommendations and strategies which could include outreach to retailers and other entities. She noted that input received from the Committee would also be taken into consideration for the outreach campaign. Councilmember Pelaez spoke to the distribution of information at high traffic intersections and Bexar County Central Jury Duty rooms.

Assistant City Manager Houston stated that many times calls were received by NHSD Staff and staff would coordinate meetings with individuals seeking information at facilities such as libraries, community centers and other areas to offer assistance.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke to challenges with the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT) for installation of directional street signage at right of ways to facilities for services. She spoke to TXDoT's recommendation of billboards at high traffic intersections but she questioned the effectiveness of billboards. Chair Rocha Garcia stated that it was important to work in partnership with TXDoT and to get buy in from them on outreach efforts.

Councilmember Castillo stressed the importance of managing advertising and available resources. She supported the request for housing navigator staff at Council District Offices. Councilmember Castillo asked if the dashboard was updated on available resources so that individuals were aware of available funding. Garcia stated that the dashboard would be updated regularly to make sure that site visitors were aware of available resources. Garcia stated that staff would look into how to update the dashboard and seek opportunities for outreach and education of available resources.

Councilmember Castillo requested that staff meet with Constituent Staff to gain feedback on the dashboard.

Councilmember Courage expressed concern regarding the capacity of some individuals being able to navigate a digital site and emphasized the need for a physical location for individuals to come in and request services. He recommended that staff be available at City libraries and senior centers for individuals to come into for services and address the need in the Budget process. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston stated that under the SHIP and the Mayor's Housing Report staff had identified libraries and other centers to provide resources at a physical site for both navigation of the digital portal in order to provide multiple sites to gain information. She highlighted that SACRD was available to provide options at multiple locations being coordinated by staff and

SACRD.

Bill Neally of SACRD stated that the portal site was available to users and community professional users/partners to research and provide services. He stressed that the SACRD portal was not meant to replace a physical meeting with individuals but to enhance meetings for services. Councilmember Courage reiterated the need for services to be expanded at library sites and senior centers for all services available for individuals and the need for trained staff at each of those sites for both English and Spanish. Garcia provided an overview of resources and training provided at the Court System, eviction hearings, libraries and senior centers. Assistant City Manager Houston spoke to referral services with Opportunity Home.

Chair Rocha Garcia recommended that the model of Resiliency Hubs be used with school districts and Ready to Work partner sites. She stated that there were opportunities to research for options for outreach and services. She spoke to opportunities and office space at council district offices for resource staff to work from on a regular basis.

Councilmember Pelaez spoke to the need for improvements to the Spanish version of the SACRD site. Assistant City Manager Houston stated that this would be a priority to address and remedy. She stated that SACRD and City staff would address the website's Spanish translations. Chair Rocha Garcia reiterated the need for translation services throughout the dashboard and City website.

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked City and SACRD staff for their work on the Portal.

The Item was for briefing purposes only.

Consent Agenda

4. **Resolution of No Objection for Palladium San Antonio, Ltd.'s application for 2023 Non-Competitive 4% Housing Tax Credits (HTC) from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) for the construction of a 288-unit affordable multi-family rental housing development named Palladium San Antonio, located at 4770 Military Drive West in Council District 4, allowing the construction of the development to be located within one linear mile or less from another development, and acknowledgment that more than 20% of the total housing in the census tract is supported by HTC.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage
Absent: Viagran

5. **Resolution of No Objection for Union Park Apartments, LP's application for 2024 Non-Competitive 4% Housing Tax Credits (HTC) from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) for the rehabilitation of a 100-unit affordable multi-family rental housing development named Union Park Apartments, located at 4622 South**

Hackberry Street in Council District 3. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage
Absent: Viagran

6. **Resolution of No Objection for Union Pines Apartments, LP's application for 2024 Non-Competitive 4% Housing Tax Credits (HTC) from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) for the rehabilitation of a 152-unit affordable multi-family rental housing development named Union Pines Apartments, located at 1707 Pleasanton Street in Council District 3.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Pelaez, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Courage
Absent: Viagran

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 AM.

Approved

Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair

*Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk*