

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Economic and Workforce Development Committee

### 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Chair: Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

**Tuesday, March 25, 2025**

**2:00 PM**

**City Hall Complex**

The Economic and Workforce Development Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:03 p.m. Assistant City Clerk Jamie Nieto took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Manny Pelaez, *Chair*,  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
Marc Whyte *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

Councilmember Whyte moved to Approve the appointment of Councilmember Rocha Garcia as Chair Pro Tem in the absence of Chair Pelaez. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Whyte  
**Absent:** Pelaez, Viagran

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of the minutes from the Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting on February 25, 2025.

Councilmember Whyte moved to Approve the minutes of the February 25, 2025, Economic and Workforce Development Committee meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Whyte  
**Absent:** Pelaez, Viagran

## Public Comments

There were no public comments.

## Briefing and Possible Action on the following items

2. **greater:SATX Regional Economic Partnership (gSATX) 2025 Operations Plan and Foreign Direct Investment Attraction Plan.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Brenda Hicks-Sorensen, Director, Economic Development]

gSATX Chief Economic Officer, Sarah Carabias Rush, stated that the vision of gSATX was to bring San Antonio to the forefront of the world's leading economies, by working specifically within the organization to drive the component of that vision, which was focused on jobs. She noted that gSATX was working to drive job creation in San Antonio through new or expanding projects and businesses that were ultimately providing economic opportunity and economic mobility for San Antonio residents.

Rush reported that the strategy was to invest in people and place to secure quality jobs. She stated that gSATX had set ambitious goals of driving impact into our regional economy of \$55 billion, resulting in new jobs, a \$5 billion investment and 25,000 new target degrees and certifications, which was intended to drive economic mobility.

Rush stated that the following 10 initiatives were identified to drive results:

1. Workforce Readiness
2. Talent Retention
3. Talent Pipeline Management (TPM)
4. Regional Sites
5. San Antonio International Airport
6. Marketing & Brand Recognition
7. Advocacy & Influence
8. Regional Partnerships
9. Targeted Corporate Recruitment
10. Business Advancement

Rush reviewed the positive outcomes related to wage growth, population growth, job creation, educational attainment, passenger travel, U.S Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, unemployment rate, and the Texas market for job creation. He reviewed the exceeded goals, on-track goals, and the focus goals for 2021-2025, and recent wins.

Rush reported that the target industry sectors focused on developing technology and specifically cybersecurity, biosciences, financial and professional services, aerospace and defense, and advanced manufacturing.

Rush stated that the 2025 Operations Plan for jobs included the priorities of closing deals, industry alignment, global development, regional partnership and growth, and site readiness. Rush indicated that the 2025 Operations Plan for place included the priorities of stakeholder and community

engagement and air service development. Rush reported that the 2025 Operations Plan for people included the priorities of talent pipeline management, workforce readiness, and talent retention.

Rush stated that the City of San Antonio and gSATX would continue to partner to elevate economic development this year and the proposed areas would include: 1) Local/domestic recruitment and retention; and 2) FDI Attraction Plan.

Alfred Breuer, Economic Development Department Assistant Director, stated that the work plan was part of a pay for performance agreement, which was renewed in 2024. He indicated that this year was the second year and was the first of two, one-year renewals. He reported that there were two components of the agreement, the recruitment and retention, which was a performance scorecard with a value of up to \$635,000, and the FDI Attraction Plan that was introduced last year was an effort to extract and recruit 14 investments to San Antonio.

Breuer stated that each year, goals were set based on strategy and the impact to San Antonio's strategic initiatives and industries. He noted that this year, goals were set accordingly based on conversations with gSATX, with funds tied to certain metrics, and this year gSATX had earned \$483,483 out of the total \$635,000.

Councilmember Viagran spoke of the stereotypes of Texas and stressed the need to address those stereotypes. She requested an update to the Committee at month six or eight.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there was a comparison set similar to the 16,700 jobs from the \$6.6 billion investment for the cities of Dallas, Fort Worth and Houston. Rush stated that she would provide that information. She spoke of the data on the three economic development pillars of state of workforce, electricity, and water supply and how gSATX would promote that. Rush stated that gSATX would provide data to policy and decision makers.

Councilmember Whyte stated that there was optimism that the U.S. economy was soaring and there was no better place to do business in America than right here in Texas. He wanted to ensure that future City funding was tied to the delivery of good paying jobs here for San Antonians.

Councilmember Castillo stated that she would like to see how many high wage jobs that were created in terms of feeling confident and making a decision to fully support an Item. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez stated that the challenge was when the company was not required to report that information. Councilmember Castillo asked of the highest wages by industry. Rush stated that the highest wages were in cybersecurity, technology, life sciences, financial and professional services, and manufacturing. Councilmember Castillo requested that data be provided.

Chair Pelaez asked if the City was losing more jobs than it created. Rush reported that in 2024, San Antonio was the number one job creation market and the number three job creation market in the United States. He asked of the number one attraction to companies coming to the region. Rush stated that the number one attraction was the State business climate followed by talent. Chair Pelaez asked what kept the City from meeting the 200 Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) visit goal. Rush replied that last year, it was a capacity issue in terms of staffing and prioritizing.

### **3. Professional services agreements between the City of San Antonio and Ready to Work**

**Pledged Employers to provide on-the-job training and incumbent-worker training.**

[Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development Office]

Mike Ramsey, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Office, stated that Ready to Work currently offered tuition support and wraparound services for participants to attend courses and apprenticeship programs approved by 76 college and training providers. He noted that by expanding training opportunities to employers, Ready to Work could shorten the gap between qualified workers and hard to fill roles, resulting in career growth opportunities for workers and increased job retention for employers. He stated that work-based learning programs were a win-win in that employers improved business outcomes and workers could earn while they learned.

Ramsey reported that there were 77 employers for a total of 105 contracts worth \$5.9 million to serve 2,532 workers. He provided data for on-the-job and incumbent worker training. He provided an overview of on-the-job training which was capped at \$100,00 per employer, and \$10,000 per worker, but the averages were much lower than that, earning at least \$20.00 per hour which was a great return on investment for participants. Ramsey stated that the overall cost per participant was \$2,104 for a total funding amount of \$2,901,350. He reported that there were 44 employers who would be recommended for awards, and registered apprenticeship programs would be under this program, through companies seeking to improve through the City's investment. Ramsey provided the list of employers.

Ramsey stated that the City reimbursed employers for upscaling their existing workers. He noted that employers earned more skills, made more money to circulate through the economy and created additional roles for participants to roll into. Ramsey indicated that 1,153 workers would be up skilled through this investment through 61 employers.

Ramsey stated that staff recommended funding to support the contracts through the San Antonio Ready to Work Fund and full City Council consideration of a template agreement to enter into a professional services contract with 77 employers, 105 contracts in total, to implement Ready to Work on-the-job training and incumbent worker training programs.

Councilmember Whyte asked of information about job retention, wage growth, and career advancement. Ramsey stated that 1,500 jobs at \$20 an hour were the direct result of the investment in on-the-job training. He noted that for the incumbent worker training, the direct investment of those employees who were already working in these San Antonio companies allowed those businesses to achieve their outcomes and ensured that those individuals were equipped with skills that the company needed in order for them to be retained by that company. He noted that retainment was going to be tracked by each of those companies for one year post delivery of those education and training services.

Councilmember Castillo asked of employer outreach. Ramsey stated that to be eligible for funding, the employer must be a business pledged to the San Antonio Ready to Work Program.

Councilmember Viagran stated that she wanted employees to know that San Antonio was where they could stay and see a career path forward.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia stated that she would like to see the progress in adjusting salary

levels year over year. She expressed concern regarding the number of restaurants that had closed, and she asked that the industry be reviewed. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested the turnover rate for the companies with more than 50 on-the-job training positions. She asked for the revenue amounts for each of the employers that would be recommended.

Chair Pelaez asked how the Ready to Work Program accounted for failure rates of restaurants. Ramsey stated that the Program looked at longevity, and how long a restaurant had been in business. He noted that if a restaurant made it past the first year, they were likely to stay open beyond that.

Councilmember Viagran moved to recommend and forward the professional services agreements between the City of San Antonio and the Ready to Work Program pledged employers. Councilmember Rocha Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

<b>Aye:</b>	Pelaez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Whyte
<b>Abstain:</b>	Castillo

Lopez advised the Committee that the follow up items would be sent to the Committee prior to A Session. She noted that during A Session staff would not be executing and attaching all contracts.

**4. Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) 2025-2028 Local Plan.** [Alejandra Lopez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Ramsey, Executive Director, Workforce Development Office]

Adrian Lopez, Chief Executive Officer, Workforce Solutions Alamo, stated that Workforce Solutions Alamo (WSA) was required by law to provide a local plan to reflect dynamics and changes of the labor force in the 13-County Alamo Region, develop strategies to better serve the regions' employers, job seekers, and the overall economy, and identify emerging in-demand industries and occupations aligning with The Texas Workforce System Strategic Plan goals 2024-2031, and compliance with Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) requirements and goals.

Lopez reported that the components of the Plan included economic and workforce analysis, core programs and one-stop service delivery, individualized career services, employment services, training programs, educational services, employer services, workforce investment initiatives, and others. He reviewed the timeline for local Plan input, which included listening sessions, one-on-one data sessions, employer focused sessions, strategic partner presentations, and public comment feedback. Lopez reported that the audience included business partners, local government officials, educational institutions, economic development partners, school districts, chambers of commerce, employers, and associations.

Lopez compared the local plans for 2020-2024, 2022-2024, and 2025-2028. He indicated that the proposed industry clusters included healthcare, information-computer technology/cybersecurity, construction/utilities, oil and gas/warehousing and transportation/finance/others, and education/hospitality and reviewed the occupations for the same.

Lopez stated that the Plan had received initial approval from Councilmembers Rocha Garcia and Pelaez, the Board of Directors, and Bexar County and was presented to the Committee today and would be presented to the City Council on April 17, 2025. He mentioned that the Plan would be

presented to area Judges on March 26, 2025. Lopez noted that upon completion of all approvals, the Plan would be submitted to the Texas Workforce Commission.

Councilmember Whyte asked how goals would be measured. Lopez stated that staff would review the return on investment, and he provided an example of childcare where \$120 million in investment yielded approximately \$200 million plus in return. Councilmember Whyte asked of the result of not meeting the goals by 2026 or 2027. Lopez indicated that if metrics were not met, the TWC would de-obligate funding or the Plan would be put on a plan to improve performance.

Councilmember Castillo thanked WSA for the work they had accomplished.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the decision to include oil and gas. Lopez stated that while there was less job growth in oil and gas, the economic impact to communities was significant. He noted that skills developed to operate a fracking machine could also be applicable to manufacturing or other types of jobs within the region.

Councilmember Viagran requested the number of individuals needed in the sectors. She spoke of the need for court reporters. Lopez stated that the local Plan outlined the research in the six clusters and included the occupations supported.

Chair Pelaez asked if WSA had reached out to the property management industry. Lopez indicated that WSA had discussions in the past, but WSA has not had an initiative to address that. Chair Pelaez expressed concern that some occupations would cease to exist. He stated that opportunities with intersections between housing and workforce or a CTE program and workforce would increase the opportunities for people to have something that they could rely on.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

**Approved**

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***Manny Pelaez, Chair***

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***Debbie Racca-Sittre***  
***City Clerk***