

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

Council Briefing Room
City Hall
100 Military Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6
Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Briefing Room

The City Council convened a B Session meeting in the Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:00 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 10 – Nirenberg, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Alderete Gavito, Courage, Whyte

ABSENT: Pelaez

ITEMS

1. Post-solicitation briefing on services to promote community capacity-building, healthcare navigation, and reproductive and sexual healthcare. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the Item and reminded the Council that they had already heard a pre-solicitation briefing in June 2024. Walsh introduced Dr. Claude Jacob, Director of Metro Health who provided an overview of the selection process that began in October 2024. Jacob said that Texas led the nation in uninsured women and for low-cost/no-cost family planning services, cancer screening and sexually transmitted infections (STI) testing. Funding had been reduced and some were denied access due to immigration status and abortions had been banned. Jacob outlined services provided by comparison cities.

The City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District solicited to award multiple community-based agencies with funding to promote Reproductive Justice through community capacity-building, healthcare navigation, and reproductive and sexual healthcare services. Contracts resulting from this solicitation were expected to bolster “upstream” and “midstream” drivers of reproductive and sexual health through education, training, collaborations, and outreach, as well as provide “downstream” free culturally and linguistically appropriate direct services to residents in geographic scarcity areas and/or to populations most in need in San Antonio.

Jacob said of 3,748 vendors that were notified about the Request for Proposals (RFP), 10 vendors attended the pre-submittal conference and responded to the solicitation. Responses were evaluated on experience (20 points), proposed plan (30 points), budget (15 points), non-profit status (10 points), Small Business Enterprise Prime (5 points), Minority or Woman-owned Business Enterprise (5 points), local preference Program (10 points) and Veteran-owned small business (5 points). Jacob listed evaluation panelists and the respondents. Jacob provided the initial evaluation scoring and said only five of the ten respondents were invited to interview. After completion of interviews, the top four scoring agencies were recommended for funding: YWCA of San Antonio, San Antonio AIDS Foundation, Empower House SA, and Latched Support Inc.

Jacob introduced Metro Health Medical Director Dr. Junda Woo who provided an overview of the framework of the program. Woo defined “upstream” services agency and support network capacity building, “midstream” services included access to trusted medical care and a full range of family planning options and reproductive health education/training, and “downstream” services happened after the woman was pregnant including home pregnancy tests, emergency contraception, transportation to prenatal care, subsidized doulas, targeted health care visits for African American women, STI testing and treatment, and transportation to obtain abortion care.

Woo explained that none of the four recommended awardees proposed abortion transportation or navigation. Two respondents included those services as an element of a broader package but were not recommended. Woo recommended the contracts move forward to City Council A Session for approval.

DISCUSSION:

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed disappointment that none of the selected respondents proposed assistance with travel for an out-of-state abortion and proclaimed that abortion was healthcare and requested the three respondents that could provide that service be interviewed noting they did not make it to the interview phase. He asked why so many vendors were outreached and suggested many were not relevant. Deputy Chief Financial Officer Troy Elliott said the City typically cast a wide net and then the vendors self-selected. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked if the City provided assistance with the application. Jacob said there was technical assistance available during the process through the pre-solicitation conference. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez requested a copy of the applications and suggested more application assistance and workshops could have been provided.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito commented that reproductive policies affected everyone and supported a large allocation of funding to go toward midstream and downstream services; upstream service made an impact long-term but not immediate. Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the staff recommendations but wanted to ensure adequate due diligence on the evaluation. Elliott said that Suenos Sin Fronteras de Tejas was identified as a for-profit organization and was headquartered in Austin so did not meet local preference.

Councilmember Courage asked how much Metro Health funded related to reproductive care. Jacob said last year was \$16 million and \$19 million this year with the majority for the Women Infants and Children (WIC) nutrition program and the STD clinic. Councilmember Courage requested a list of outside organizations that partnered with Metro Health outside of this RFP. Councilmember Courage commented that the state had outlawed a woman's right to choose and has defunded sex education; he agreed that government should be out of the bedroom. Councilmember Courage supported the staff's recommendation.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on the allocation for downstream, midstream, and upstream efforts and the scoring rubric to ensure the proper mix was achieved. Woo explained that the application included a breakdown, but the proposals were scored in their totality. Councilmember Kaur suggested the only chance to get a score for the work they were proposing was in the Propose Plan score of 30 points and recommended the scoring rubric had broken down the different categories to be able to better align with the goals. Walsh clarified that the City Council had discretion in these awards and could choose to award a different configuration.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if only Northside Independent School District (NISD) and San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) had been targeted for services and suggested there were other districts that could benefit. Woo said those district were confirmed but another was under negotiation. Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked about the top criteria for points related to proposed plan and recalled that travel for abortion was a service requested by Council earlier this spring. Jacob said

applicants provided the list of services and aligned those with the framework. Walsh explained that the respondents chose the types of services they wanted to propose.

Councilmember Castillo thanked the procurement team for their due diligence and supported double checking the process. Councilmember Castillo asked if transportation to out-of-state abortion was addressed by any respondent. Jacob said only BEAT AIDS and Parenting Plus proposed those services as a part of their packages but were not recommended for contracts. Councilmember Castillo understood that the services were requested in the RFP but the City just did not get the proposals. She supported the STI services noting there were high levels in San Antonio.

Councilmember Whyte noted that only two of the ten respondents proposed to provide travel for out-of-town abortions and suggested there were good reasons for this. He preferred more money go toward upstream services that could reduce the need for downstream services.

Councilmember Viagran noted that women and single mothers had a higher poverty rate than that of men. She asserted that women in Texas were targets and women of color faced challenges that no man could ever understand; women were waiting and needed to hear their City tell them “We support you.” Councilmember Viagran suggested what was brought forward was a best effort and recommended moving forward with the staff recommendation.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested clarification on the definition of a high-profile contract and what the designation meant. Elliott said the designation was based on dollar amount, and in this case, high community interest and triggered campaign contribution restrictions. She asked if it automatically set up the workshops for applications. Elliott said it did not trigger more technical assistance, but that help was always offered individually.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted there were several homeless encampments in District 4 and expressed concern that a memorial was removed. She asked if homeless women and persons experiencing substance abuse were prioritized as these could be symptoms of abuse. Woo said no applications were received from groups addressing these issues.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the services that were proposed to be provided, however, he noted that the community asked for this fund which was a response to the Dobbs Decision and Texas’ subsequent abortion ban so logistics support to travel out of state was an important component of the Reproductive Justice Fund.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked Metro Health and Procurement Division for their work. However, he suggested it was important that women’s health access was included in the Fund. Mayor Nirenberg recommended moving forward with the staff recommendation but urged councilmembers to make a decision as to whether the funding of travel for out-of-town abortions needed to be addressed and recommended issuing an RFP specifically

for that purpose so the City would receive proposals for that service. He stressed that this was an urgent issue where the women should have the loudest opinions.

2. Briefing on the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework and Update to the Transit-Oriented Development “TOD” Zoning District. [John Peterek, Interim Assistant City Manager; Catherine Hernandez, Director, Transportation Department]

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the Item and Director of Transportation Catherine Hernandez who provided an update on the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) which aimed to bring down housing and transportation costs. The process to develop a draft framework included over 75 meetings and events and a community survey with 1,073 respondents as well as over 23,000 visits to the website. Hernandez said the TOD policy framework supported goals of Council Consideration Request (CCR) 2023-0018: Creation of a Transit Oriented Development Plan authored by Councilmembers Kaur (District 1), Castillo (District 5), and Whyte (District 10).

The San Antonio Housing Commission (SAHC) had a Technical Working Group to recommend changes to the Unified Development Code (UDC) and another subcommittee worked to remove barriers including affordability and displacement. A TOD Task Force made recommendations on TOD Zoning. Hernandez outlined the process noting that the plan was in phase one with approval by City Council expected in December 2024 and implementation to begin in 2025.

Hernandez said that the Policy Framework (Phase 1) included development of a “roadmap” that with recommendations to address issues such as connectivity, economic opportunities, walkability, and quality of life, recommendations from the Technical Working Group, strategies for Affordable Housing as highlighted in the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), and recommendations from the Removing Barriers Subcommittee.

Hernandez outlined the Policy Framework Document as follows: 1) Introduction to TOD, 2) Existing Conditions, 3) Community Engagement, 4) Shaping the Future with core collaborators through policy development and implementation, and 5) Road Map to Implementation through the TOD Zoning Code and Housing Policy Document.

The process to develop the recommendations provided in the draft Framework included our review of citywide plans to document key themes and principles residents prioritized since 2016, according to Hernandez. These plans were developed over several years with over 1000 stakeholders, over 600 events, over 200 meetings and conversations with residents, and over 10,000 survey responses. The recommendations in the policy framework were guided by this feedback from the community. Throughout twelve citywide plans, staff found Housing Affordability, Connectivity, Economic Opportunity, Equity, Health & Quality of Life, Resilience, and Walkability to be the core principles residents have consistently expressed over the past eight years. These principles guided transit-oriented policies and the implementation of the Framework along the VIA Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) corridors.

Guiding principles for the TOD Policy Framework included: housing affordability, multi-modal connectivity, health and quality of life, economic opportunity, and resilience, according to Hernandez. Hernandez introduced Director of Housing & Neighborhood Services Veronica Garcia who continued the presentation.

Garcia said the Technical Working Group Recommended the following under TOD eligibility: 1) Create a wider eligibility boundary in areas expected to see greater growth; narrower boundary in areas with less expected growth, 2) Context sensitivity: Introduce TOD districts of varying scale and character to reflect the different station areas. Take into context historical precedent for TOD. 3) Support ‘missing middle’ housing in areas between TOD districts. 4) Create balance by using form-based regulatory approaches, 5) Affirm Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs) and Historic Districts, 6) Plan & Collaborate on Public Improvements through station area planning, 7) Maximize Housing Affordability in TOD Areas by exploring development bonuses along the corridor, and 8) Reduce barriers to development along rapid transit corridors: Additional transit-supportive UDC amendments (2027 UDC Update).

Garcia reported that the Removing Barriers Subcommittee recommended utilizing an equity score which measured the proportion of people of color and people with low incomes and a land capacity measure that included factors such as amount of vacant or underutilized land, station area topology, and future land use plans. Three objectives of housing affordability and livability included protection of land, homeowners and renters, as well as production of affordable and middle housing, according to Garcia.

According to Hernandez, TOD benefits included: compact, livable and walkable neighborhoods, multimodal transportation access, and stronger established neighborhoods. Hernandez explained that TOD Zoning Codes written in 2001 would be updated to ensure rezoning for TOD respected neighborhoods as the current TOD Zoning District allowed anyone to request a rezone with half mile of any bus stop.

The Taskforce which began meeting in February 2024 included representation from each Council District, 13 Neighborhood Associations, and 13 residents, according to Hernandez. The Taskforce did include recommended standards to protect neighborhoods from incompatible development. The Code would incorporate standards that currently exist in the UDC, including height restrictions to ensure height compatibility with abutting single-family homes, however, the Taskforce also recommended unique standards that included characteristics to create pedestrian environments such as minimum distances between doors along the corridor and window requirements to create transparency instead of large amounts of blank walls.

Hernandez said that the Taskforce recommended boundaries to identify applicability for public input, provide opportunities for TOD development, and be sensitive to areas already built out with established neighborhoods. The proposed Code would start with the Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) Green line and as new corridors became ART corridors, such as the potential for the Silver Line, the process would require the Code to be updated to create the boundary maps along that corridor. Hernandez closed the presentation by

listing upcoming community meetings and outlining the next steps leading to policy adoption in December 2024 and implementation in 2025.
DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Kaur noted this was a very hot topic for District 1 that would support public transportation, affordable housing, and walkability. Councilmember Kaur asked about exclusions for TOD designation for residences and historic neighborhoods. Hernandez said the recommendation was to exclude any single-family zoned lot smaller than half an acre was not eligible and historic districts required approval by the Historic and Design Review Commission. Councilmember Kaur noted that people were concerned about height and large-scale rezoning. Hernandez said the recommendations included updating the Code, not rezoning and that there were height restrictions.

Councilmember Kaur recommended a review of other cities with TOD in place. Hernandez said other cities were reviewed and details were considered in the development of the proposed TOD policy framework. She thanked staff for addressing the concerns of residents and recommended video recording the community meetings and adding tracked changes on the policy as it was development and refined.

Councilmember Courage supported TOD but expressed concern with increased property values that raised property taxes near the development, and wanted to ensure community support for building of apartment complexes near single family residences. Hernandez commented that improvements generally increased property values but noted there was a subcommittee that focused on affordability. Garcia said property values were increasing with or without TODs, so NHSD would help with tax protests and building more affordable housing to stabilize rents and pricing overall. Councilmember Courage suggested mitigating the tax increase which might be a state legislature item. Hernandez suggested one way to address the rising property values was to utilize a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ).

Councilmember Cabello Havrda commented that she had been involved in the conversations with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and VIA and supported the thorough framework recommended by the TOD. However, she expressed concern with community engagement as people were worried about forced rezoning and loss of business such as losing a liquor license when the Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) came in and recommended engaging with businesses on the proposed ART Green and Silver Lines. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended door-to-door conversations with businesses in addition to attending Neighborhood Association meetings. Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked Hernandez what she thought was the biggest hurdle. Hernandez said the zoning code was the greatest challenge as there was misinformation on the issue.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia appreciated the comprehensive plan and liked the approach to increase density that aligned with the goal of creating a vibrant mixed-use community. She asked why the Task Force only focused on the ART lines and not all bus lines. Hernandez said this code focused on ART to create a public process for people to

engage suggesting that other zoning districts could meet the program goals through other transit lines.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended revisiting the restrictions as it could limit future ART development since it was mostly geared toward the Green Line.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia commented that requiring parking was counterintuitive to the walkability goal. She noted there was nothing slated to happen in District 4 and suggested considering Port San Antonio or Joint Base San Antonio as a key place of interest. Councilmember Rocha Garcia supported Community Land Trusts and Land Banking for TOD.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked who was on the Task Force and noted that the Planning and Community Development Committee recommended Councilmember Castillo; Hernandez said elected officials were avoided but a council-appointed member of the San Antonio Housing Trust (SAHT) was on the Task Force.

Councilmember Whyte noted that the funding for the ART line was allocated in 2020 and wanted to give that ART line the greatest chance of success while ensuring all dollars were spent wisely. Councilmember Whyte recommended a diverse mix of housing along the ART lines which would include market rate housing to help sustain businesses in the area. Garcia said the TOD framework and SHIP recommended a variety of housing options from deeply affordable, to workforce, to market rate.

Councilmember Whyte clarified that there was no forced rezoning in the plan. He asked about the town halls that were being proposed. Hernandez confirmed this was a code update, so it required public hearings and the plan included open houses in partnership with VIA as well as briefings to the Planning & Zoning Commissions, Historic & Design Review Commission (HDRC), Board of Adjustment, and Housing Commission.

Councilmember Whyte recommended continuing to keep all stakeholders involved.

Councilmember Castillo expressed concern with displacement, land speculation and predatory practices and recommended support for current homeowners and renters to help combat those practices. She was excited to support the new ART lines and wanted to communicate to the community that NHSD was seeking resources to help residents.

Councilmember Castillo thought the TOD zoning would allow short term rentals but would prohibit affordable housing and auto repair and tire shops. Hernandez said adjustments could be made to the list of allowable uses and noted auto sales and repair lots were not consistent with public transportation goals; however, tire shops were still allowed under the specific use.

Councilmember Castillo requested a detailed conversation with staff on housing projects that needed to move quickly to ensure her residents continued to be able to access public transit and not be pushed away. She noted the Green Line was North/South but the Silver line was East/West. Hernandez clarified there was more community engagement needed and the code was applicable once the eligibility areas were determined, and maps drawn.

Walsh committed to taking the Plan to the Transportation Committee. Walsh also suggested the 2027 Housing Bond consider TOD corridors.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito thought it was important that other neighborhoods get to spend time reviewing the TOD policy framework and recommended more opportunity for public input and requested examples of when public input changed the plan. Hernandez explained that the building height restrictions and maps/boundaries were informed by the public. Councilmember Alderete Gavito supported the plan as a necessary step to support growth and our neighborhoods.

Councilmember Viagran recommended more collaboration with VIA noting the City could create the opportunity but if the bus lines were not there or were unreliable, they would fail. Councilmember Viagran suggested walkability was important including shade and sidewalk condition. She wanted to see more housing opportunities.

Councilmember Castillo expressed concern with the removal of the requirement for a traffic impact analysis which would be a small investment up front versus mediation and correction of traffic issues in the future.

Mayor Nirenberg supported the plan including the proactive and aggressive community outreach noting the entire plan was community-driven and an extension of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**