

City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
Street, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

6:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

Street, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board

A majority of appointive members, other than ex officio, shall constitute a quorum.

Table with 4 columns: Name, District, Name, District. Rows include John Bailey (Mayoral), Arturo Veliz (District 1), Jamie Coleman (District 2), Suzanne Baker (District 3), Eduardo Reyes (District 4), Mark Camann (District 5), David Zachary Magallanez (District 6), Matthew Baiza (District 7), Michael P. Kennick (District 8), Arthur Downey (District 9), Jonathan Melendez (District 10).

6:01 P.M. - Call to Order, Municipal Plaza Building B-Room

Advisory Board Chair, John Bailey called the meeting to order:

- Attendance of Advisory Board Members: 9 members attended
- Non-Attendance of Advisory Board Members: 1
- Head count of general attendance: 4
- Razi Hosseini, P.E., R.P.L.S., Public Works Director/City Engineer; Nick Olivier, Public Works Public Relations & Marketing Manager; Jessica Shirley-Saenz, Public Works Assistant to the Director, and Brenda Navarro, Public Works Senior Management Analyst were present.

I. Opening Comments and Meeting Procedures

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 P.M. and opening comments were made by Chair John Bailey who addressed the Board members for the approval of the minutes from February 13, 2024 meeting.

Mark Camann (District 5) - Referenced and recommended revisions on page 4 of the February 13, 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Camann provided his written revisions to city staff (Brenda Navarro and Jessica Shirley-Saenz).

John Bailey (Chair) - Requested if the meeting minutes could be updated to incorporate his revisions before the next meeting. Jessica Shirley-Saenz replied that she will update and provide to the members before the next meeting.

John Bailey (Chair) - Inquired if there were any citizens to be heard, to which Jessica Shirley-Saenz replied that there no citizens to be heard. Mr. Bailey introduced Razi Hosseini, Public Works Director/City Engineer to begin staff presentation portion of the meeting.

Mr. Hosseini began his presentation with welcoming everyone and provided an overview of his presentation, which included updates on the 2017/2022 Bond Programs and Street Maintenance and Sidewalks Programs as well as some other various other city funded projects. Summarized below are the various programs Mr. Hosseini addressed:

Street Maintenance and Sidewalk Maintenance Programs (SMP)

Mr. Hosseini explained Public Works maintains 4,242 miles of roadway and manages and maintains an average of 10% annually and of those, 78% is in Fair to Excellent Condition (Grades A-C) and the other 22% are in either poor or failed condition (Grades D-F). Mr. Hosseini stated that the FY 2024 Budget for Street Maintenance Program is \$116 Million of which a total of \$102 Million is distributed based on 100% condition and is not equally divided amongst the Council Districts. Of this amount, \$14 Million, 50% is based on condition, and 50% based on size. For those streets that are outside of the 100% (in bad condition) additional funds can be allocated toward improvements.

Mr. Hosseini stated that in FY 2024, Public Works is anticipating to complete 1,409 projects. To-date, Public Works has completed 612, with another 20 under construction, and 777 anticipated to be done in FY 2024 and the remaining in FY 2025. Public Works Sidewalk Maintenance Program is a two-year program, but a significant amount is done in the first year and some roadways classified as Failed Roadways or F-Streets, are two-year projects that are design in the first year and constructed in the second year.

Sidewalks Program

Mr. Hosseini explained the City has a sidewalk network consisting of 5,417 sidewalk miles, of which 1,445 are gap miles, and 22% are in poor to failed condition (Grades D-F). The FY 2024 Budget is \$21.5 Million, which provides \$14.5 Million to complete 29 gap miles of which 50% is based on equity atlas and 50% based on gap miles; and the remaining \$7 Million will be used for 43 useable repair miles of which 50% is based on equity atlas and 50% based on distressed miles. Mr. Hosseini provided a usable mile's completion status stating a total of 17.75 miles has been completed of which 12.74 miles are sidewalk gaps and 5.01 miles are sidewalk repairs.

Sidewalk Condition Assessment Index

Mr. Hosseini stated that Public Works is working to award a consultant in Spring 2024 to conduct a Sidewalk Condition Assessment Index to assess sidewalk conditions and develop an index to prioritize sidewalk improvements. The FY 2024 Budget is \$500,000 for a total program cost of \$1,500,000. This program will be done as a three-phased approach, with Phase 1 focusing on the Central Area of the City; Phase 2 Continuation of Phase 1 extending to Loop 410; and Phase 3 extending from Loop 410 to City limits. Mr. Hosseini referenced the map shown on slide 5.

Traffic Improvements

Mr. Hosseini summarized the City's FY 2024 adopted budgets for traffic improvements noting the approved \$700,000 for up to 100 Radar Feedback Signs; and \$300,000 for up to 100 Flashing Stop Signs for a total budget of \$1,000,000. Mr. Hosseini stated that the locations are a combination of staff and city council recommended locations across all ten districts.

2017 & 2022 Bond Program

Mr. Hosseini presented that Public Works is 97% complete or under construction for the 2017 Bond Program, with 11 projects remaining in construction through 2024. For the 2022 Bond, a total of 89% of

projects are under design or under construction. Public Works has completed two projects (Greater Love Multigenerational & Recreation Center (D2) and Meals on Wheels (D3), with a good number of projects slated to complete design and begin construction in FY 2025.

Streets, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Boards

Mr. Hosseini stated the first Street, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board meeting was held mid-February 2024, and April 16, 2024, was the second. The meetings will be quarterly, and it is Public Works intention to consider hosting a field visit to one of the projects that is of interest to the Advisory Board. This will provide an opportunity to see the best practices on the communication on these projects.

2022 Bond Dashboard

Mr. Hosseini thanked Jessica Shirley-Saenz on leading the effort on creating the first of three phases for the 2022 Bond Dashboard. Phase I was launched earlier this year in January 2024, with Phase 2 anticipating launching by Summer of 2024, and the final Phase 3 by the Fall 2024. Mr. Hosseini reminded everyone that the dashboard is a good reference to find and/or review project data, schedules, maps, and links to other project related information. Mr. Hosseini completed his presentation and introduced, Mr. Olivier Olivier, Public Works Public Relations & Marketing Manager to discuss the Public Works Public Communication & Resident Engagement Plan.

Communication

Mr. Olivier thanked Mr. Hosseini and the Advisory Board members. Mr. Olivier began his presentation with the last time the Communication Plan was updated, in 2019, when Public Works was formally Transportation & Capital Improvements Department. Mr. Olivier commented that the plan was a work in progress and is still evolving, and Public Works welcomes any feedback or questions from the Advisory Board to improve the plan. Mr. Olivier went on to say that he has met and presented to all of the City Council District members and staff to receive their feedback. Mr. Olivier stated this communication plan is a good starting point and again welcomes any input from the Advisory Board members. Mr. Olivier then elaborated on the Communication Plan, which serves as a comprehensive guide to Public Works' standard communication requirements. He detailed how the plan strategically uses various communication channels for projects with different timelines. Mr. Olivier went on to explain how Public Works categorizes projects based on their construction duration: short (0 to 6 months), medium (6 to 12 months), and long (over a year). Mr. Olivier highlighted the plan's adaptability, explaining that smaller projects can be escalated if they significantly impact stakeholders. For instance, if a 3-month sidewalk project unexpectedly affects stakeholders, Public Works is ready to allocate more communication resources to address the situation promptly and effectively.

Short Duration Projects (0 – 6 Months)

- Construction notices (door hangers or mailers)
- Mailed brochures
- Signage at project site
- Outreach to neighborhood associations and other stakeholders (i.e., Council District offices)

Medium Duration Projects (6 – 12 Months)

- All of the above including:
 - Pre-construction public meeting
 - Dedicated project page on SASpeakUp for citizens to get more information, updates and provide feedback.
 - Mr. Olivier further explained that we provide regular updates via e-mail and social media to canvass area businesses and work with developing EDD & CCDO.

Projects lasting one-year or more

- All of the above including:
 - Second public meeting during the design phase
 - Additional signage at the project site
 - QR Code Sign (take citizens to dedicated project pages)
 - Potential ceremonial event (i.e., groundbreaking or a ribbon-cutting)
 - News releases (as needed)

Mr. Olivier further explained the communication tactics categorized into three groups, each managed by different Public Works personnel. The first category involves in-person communication, which Public Works Capital Projects Officers primarily handle. This includes distributing door hangers, sending mailers and brochures, canvassing local businesses, and organizing public meetings. Second category involves external and mass communication efforts such as media relations, social media and website updates that he and five public relations team members manage. Lastly, he discussed that over the past year, Public Works has collaborated closely with partner departments like the Economic Development Department, Center City Development and Operations, the City's Communication Department, and others to enhance the reach of Public Works messaging and ensure that Public Works engages with all relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Hosseini requested a moment and mentioned a few new communication initiatives either recently completed or in the process of being rolled out. He described the launch of the dashboard, updated project pages on SASpeakUp.com, newly provided QR code on project signage and notifications, and commented on staff updating Waze navigation application with road closures related to Public Works managed projects. Mr. Olivier explained how Waze application is linked to Google Maps, which many people use, so placing those lane and road closures into Waze helps people get where they need to go. We're working with other departments to increase that usage as well. He also added that over the last six months, Public Works has piloted a chatbot program in partnership with the Communications & Engagement and Innovation offices on the Lower Broadway construction project. He explained how the chatbot uses some artificial intelligence to provide 24/7 responses to submitted questions by anybody along that corridor. He elaborated on how stickers were posted on the sidewalks and project signs along the project limits where people could access, scan the provided code and begin texting to start that conversation. He mentioned that in the next month or so, Public Works is considering rolling out a 2.0 version of that technology that includes more artificial intelligence (AI). Mr. Olivier stated that this pilot program is new and he along with Communications & Engagement and Innovation departments are learning a lot and want to ensure the departments are using all available communication tools. He also mentioned the recent roll out in conjunction with the Economic Development Department and the Center City Development and Operations Department the implementation of additional wayfinding stickers along South Alamo to help redirect pedestrians to the street crossings and a QR code for people to get more information about the area. Mr. Olivier concluded his presentation and opened it up for questions from the advisory board members.

II. Commission Discussion

John Bailey (Chair) – Addressed Advisory Board if there were any questions for staff.

Matthew Baiza (District 7) – Mr. Baiza, thanked the Public Works Department for having goals and metrics to track civic engagement with your projects. Mr. Baiza stated he would be interested to see counts for things like public meeting turnout, e-mail sign-ups for each project, public comments, site visits, etc. He said this would be helpful for the board and for Council Offices to identify communities or projects that may not get the amount of civic engagement we would hope to see.

Mr. Olivier responded, yes, Public Works tracks that type of information and attendance at public meetings, and e-mail sign-ups you mentioned. The next step is to utilize that information to better inform our actions moving forward and I know that we do that in conjunction with the council districts. For example, when there is a public meeting that is less well attended, we'll look at different opportunities to improve.

Mr. Hosseini also responded that 100% attendance is our goal; however, that does not always happen. Mr. Hosseini provided an example of the Police Substation that Public Works sent 500+ flyers and fewer than 50 people attended, which can be disappointing as Public Works wants to hear from the public. He further stated that the department continues to put forth its best efforts to communicate and receive communication.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) Mr. Veliz, asked what is Public Works doing to protect the public against scammers, and how will we protect the public from placing non-authentic codes over the existing QR Codes?

Mr. Olivier acknowledged Mr. Veliz comment was a great question, but stated he hasn't heard of a widespread problem, but Public Works will look into it. Mr. Olivier further commented that San Antonio has a engaged citizenry particularly on social media and believes he would be informed pretty quick if there was a misuse of the QR code directing people to an inappropriate or inaccurate website.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) – Mr. Veliz, asked a follow up related question, if Public Works or the City's signage is protected to elevate scammers from being able to easily access the signage or how could the public tell the difference between an authentic City QR code from a non-city one. Mr. Veliz mentioned that on a recent national news broadcast it was presented how scammers are placing similar looking QR codes over existing codes.

Mr. Olivier responded that project signage is temporary like the previously mentioned floor stickers. Mr. Olivier author stated the new project signage being put up at construction sites will be larger which may make it more difficult for people to access without notice or not easy for them to manipulate but reaffirmed that he and his team will continue to keep an eye on this issue.

Eduardo Reyes (District 4) – Mr. Reyes commended Mr. Hosseini on the department's focus on safety with the installation of the radar speed feedback signs and asked, if the existing signs could be easily detached and moved to a hotspot?

Mr. Hosseini responded maybe not all of them, but some of them if there were a sign in the right location, Public Works would put one. Mr. Hosseini further stated that he anticipated a good number of the signs would more permanent however he went on to state that if is determined that a sign should be relocated that sign is removable.

Eduardo Reyes (District 4) – Mr. Reyes additionally, asked, if the radar speed signs would be mounted below an existing regulatory sign or would be a stand-alone sign.

Mr. Hosseini responded it would depend on the location and sign intent of the existing regulatory sign. But ideally the signs are standalone signs that are strategically located a head existing regulatory signs to provide advance notification to drivers.

Eduardo Reyes (District 4) – Mr. Reyes asked if it would be helpful for the larger projects lasting 18 months or longer to develop a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for the public to reference reoccurring

questions regarding soundwalls, landscaping, signal work, sidewalks, etc. He commented that a large number of the public is not able to read a schematic design plan, project layout or understands construction terminology or is familiar with the construction process.

Mr. Olivier responded, yes. Public Works is currently working on a standard FAQ. He added Public Works has recently experienced the need with the Concepcion Creek Drainage project. Given the community meetings and outreach for this project, he and the team had noticed several similar questions were being asked. Public Works is working to consolidate these questions, provide responses, and place them on the project's website. He added that over 200 project page websites have been created for projects that Public Works manages. Mr. Olivier shared that each of these pages contains a lot of great information related to the project, such as copies of public meeting presentations, maps, dates for upcoming community meetings, information on associated street closures (if applicable), and links to other helpful resources. Mr. Olivier stated there are plans to develop pages for specific programs that execute smaller projects to provide critical FAQ information pertinent to typical street, sidewalk, and drainage maintenance projects.

Mr. Hosseini added that Public Works also encourages the public to attend design input community meetings to learn more about the projects, discuss any particular needs of the residents, or allow the public to ask questions or communicate concerns. These meetings allow the impacted community to provide input for the project's design and provide Public Works an opportunity to learn from the public, which, in turn, lends the public a chance to learn from Public Works.

Suzanne Baker (District 3) – Mrs. Baker, thanked Mr. Olivier for the update and for incorporating Waze. Mrs. Baker stated that she uses the application quite frequently during the week. Mrs. Baker asked if Public Works engages with Homeowners Associations, community, churches, schools, shops to disseminate meeting information. She stated that she is from District 3 and knows her community is active and communicates through various neighborhood applications on a variety of things (i.e, potholes, stray animals, etc.).

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works coordinates closely with the Council District Office particularly regarding project community meetings, since they are significantly more familiar with their constituents and organizations. Public Works consults with Council on where, when, and what time meetings should occur. Public Works creates the notifications, flyers and also provides to Council District Office to help disseminate information. Public Works also creates a sign-in to gather public contact information for future communication notifications on the project and community meetings.

Suzanne Baker (District 3) – Mrs. Baker asked a question on projects happening in the inner-city and where she could get a list of what is being addressed with prior bonds, and what is going to be done in 2024.

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works has a master schedule on every project managed by Public Works, which he reviews with staff every month. He also mentioned that these schedules are subject to change and hence are reviewed on a monthly basis. To facilitate easy access to these schedules, Mr. Hosseini, stated that Jessica M. Shirley-Saenz will provide the members with the most current spreadsheet of the projects and a link to the dashboards for accessing the most current schedules for the bond, streets, sidewalks, drainage and alley projects.

Suzanne Baker (District 3) – Mrs. Baker asked if Public Works has hired a consultant to complete the sidewalk assessment and when the assessment report will be ready.

Mr. Hosseini replied that Public Works selected a firm earlier this year. After a little over a month of

negotiations, Public Works had to go with the second recommended firm. The contract award is anticipated to be presented to City Council for approval on Thursday, May 2, 2024, and he anticipates on having the report completed later this year.

Matthew Baiza (District 7) – Mr. Baiza, stated that City Council offices and the department have an index for streets and asked how Public Works plans on providing that information to the public not only for street, but sidewalk condition assessment. Will an index be made accessible to the public so they can see how their street and sidewalks are?

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works will look at how to convey and ensure that information that is subject to change is not only accessible but also illustrated so that the public understands how to read and interpret the index.

Mark Camann (District 5)- Mr. Camann stated he had three questions on sidewalks. The first one concerns sidewalk miles and how they're calculated. Mr. Camann stated, "Let's imagine two hypothetical streets, one mile long. One of them has sidewalks on both sides, and the other half of the sidewalk on one side." If there are sidewalks on both sides, is that counted as two miles or one mile, and do those streets count as the same number of sidewalks?

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works counts for each sidewalk. Mr. Hosseini added that three years ago we were paying \$70 (+/-) per linear foot for a 4-foot sidewalk, but the costs have increased to \$90 per one-foot-long 4-foot sidewalk. The cost is done based on linear foot, so we calculate for both sides since we spend money twice.

Mark Camann (District 5) – Mr. Camann asked if sidewalk condition criteria includes whether a sidewalk is wide enough for a wheelchair?

Mr. Hosseini responded yes. Stating, sidewalks have to be wide enough to accommodate for ADA requirements. He also added that the sidewalk slope or cross slope has to be 2% or less; and, added that the criteria also takes into consideration the presence of any obstacles, such as a tree, a mailbox or any other obstruction.

Mark Camann (District 5) – Mr. Camann commented and asked about garbage cans being allowed on the sidewalk which can be an obstacle for those in a wheelchair using a sidewalk not wide enough to accommodate both.

Mr. Hosseini responded that garbage cans should be placed in the street and not on the sidewalks, as per Solid Waste Management. However, Mr. Hosseini did acknowledge that some residents may place garbage cans on the sidewalk to accommodate for their vehicles parked in the street or to intentionally block access to the sidewalk in front of their residence—which he reiterated they should not do.

David Magallenez (District 6) – Mr. Magallenez asked when public input can be provided on the 2022 Bond dashboard.

Mr. Hosseini responded that public input is ongoing and there is no set time. He encouraged anyone who notices areas for improvement or sees something not working to please share their comments. Mr. Olivier added that a phone number and e-mail option are available on the dashboard to provide comment and feedback that goes directly to him.

Jaime Coleman (District 2) – Mr. Coleman asked if Public Works has communicated with Code Compliance to address garbage cans being placed on the sidewalks so they can redirect residents to place them on the streets where they're supposed to be. Mr. Coleman commented that this is an on-going problem in his neighborhood. Mr. Coleman stated the garbage cans continue to be emptied even though they are not placed in the street and no one from Solid Waste is educating the homeowners on why garbage cans should not be put on the sidewalks.

Mr. Hosseini responded that he will follow up with Solid Waste to ask them about their communication efforts on educating homeowners about the correct placement of garbage cans.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) – Mr. Veliz, asked Mr. Hosseini if the Sidewalk Assessment was approved for \$1.5 Million.

Mr. Hosseini responded yes. He explained that the \$1.5 million is for three years, with \$500,000 for FY 2024 (the first year), \$500,000 for the second year, and the remaining \$500,000 for the third year.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) – Mr. Veliz asked if the data on the dashboards by year end will be retained or modified. Specifically, will Public Works place the last five years of projects in addition to newly approved projects or will projects be dropped off to reflect current five years or will projects be displayed a rolling five years.

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works does not intend to drop off any projects.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) – Mr. Veliz asked on how many clicks has Public Works received on the SASpeakUp project pages.

Mr. Olivier responded that he did not have that information readily available at the moment but would attempt to retrieve it.

Arthur Veliz (District 1) – Mr. Veliz also asked if the clicks are going up or click staying static.

Mr. Olivier responded that Public Works is getting more engagement and there is a feedback form on every project page, which is becoming an increasingly popular way for people to get a hold of Public Works.

Eduardo Reyes (District 4) – Mr. Reyes asked about architectural barriers within a sidewalk such as utilities within sidewalks. He asked, how much leverage does Public Works have with the utility to remove that architectural barrier.

Mr. Hosseini responded that there are two challenges with utilities in conflict with sidewalks: (1) is not having sufficient space to relocate the utility and construct the sidewalk; (2) Secondly, is the stage line access of the utility in some cases the utility cannot be moved due to quantity (i.e. too many to relocate) or if it can be relocated it will very costly.

Suzanne Baker (District 3) – Mrs. Baker asked about non-service alleys for trash pickup. Commenting that using them for trash pick up may free up space on the street side because the trash cans block the flow of traffic on the streets.

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works has two types of alleys: service alleys, which Public Works manages and Solid Waste Management picks up garbage from; and non-service alleys which Public Works now manages with the FY 2024 funding received. Mr. Hosseini explained there is no trash pickup on non-

service alleys. He added non-service alleys typically are not fitted for Solid Waste Management trucks and some have utilities.

David Magallanez (District 6) – Mr. Magallanez asked Mr. Olivier if there were any opportunities to provide additional lighting at downtown project sites and how often debris was cleaned. He commented that his concerns were regarding forth-coming Fiesta events and the public not being able to see the debris or that the dark may encourage more debris.

Mr. Olivier responded that, yes, the plan is to implement additional lighting, particularly at the South Alamo project currently in construction. Mr. Hosseini added that it is Public Works' policy to keep our streets clean and safe. He explained that every project has an inspector to ensure the contractor is complying with keeping the construction area clean and safe and that the appropriate traffic controls for motorists and pedestrians are also in place.

John Bailey (Chair) – Mr. Bailey stated that Public Works has done many projects over the years. He asked Mr. Hosseini what has caused what is perceived to be a communication breakdown. What does Public Works think is happening, and what are some of the gaps in communication?

Mr. Hosseini responded that Public Works has done quite a bit to improve their communication. He further explained that the issue is not necessarily the communication or lack of it, but it is likely what is being communicated to the public. He elaborated on how construction can be intrusive and inconvenient. The public expects project construction to go quickly, but some projects can be complex and complicated. Mr. Hosseini offered an example of Hemisfair Civic Park, where the utilities were 100 years old. During the project's construction, unforeseen environmental and archaeological issues and issues with the building foundations built in the 1800s were encountered. This required additional time to address to ensure compliance with various historical and environmental requirements, which slowed and delayed construction completion. He added that although unfortunate and despite communication efforts to explain the reasons for delays, the impacted public was not receptive to why the project was behind. They understandably wanted the project completed. He also highlighted that Mr. Bailey was correct; Public Works has managed several projects and has learned a lot from managing those projects on what has worked and what hasn't that can be improved. He stated that he and Public Works staff remain committed to improving communication, such as providing regular project updates, informing residents of forthcoming changes, maintaining community meetings, and continue using various communication tools.

John Bailey (Chair) – Mr. Bailey, thanked Mr. Hosseini and Mr. Olivier for their presentations and for addressing the advisory board members' questions.

III. Announcements

No announcements.

IV. Next Meeting (Potential Topics)

John Bailey (Chair) asked the Board members on topics for the next Street, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board Meeting to be held on June 25, 2024.

Eduardo Reyes (District 4) – An update on crack seal schedules, initiatives, federal grants, and safety related projects.

Matthew Baiza (District 7) – Requested to see more information on the metrics around bond

program project but also maybe look at the 2017 **Bond** meetings and projects.

V. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. by John Bailey (Chair). The next meeting will be at 6:00 P.M., on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, in the City Tower Conference Room B.

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