

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Community Health Committee

2023 – 2025 Council Members

Chair: Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

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Thursday, June 27, 2024

2:00 PM

City Hall

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The Community Health Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 2:01 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Teri Castillo, *Chair*  
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Member*  
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

### Approval of Minutes

1. **Approval of minutes from the Community Health Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 5, 2024.**

Councilmember Rocha Garcia moved to Approve the minutes of the June 5, 2024 Community Health Committee meeting. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Castillo, Kaur, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Alderete Gavito

### Public Comments

There were no public comments.

### Briefing and Possible Action on

**2. Briefing on the status of the Healthy Food Access Roadmap by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District to establish a plan to address disparities in food access across San Antonio.** [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Claude A. Jacob, Director, Health]

Director of Metro Health Dr. Claude Jacob provided background on the Item including a Council Consideration Request (CCR) filed by Councilmembers Jalen McKee-Rodriguez and Ana Sandoval on January 11, 2022. He noted that the CCR directed City staff to establish a roadmap to address disparities in food access across San Antonio. Jacob indicated that Metro Health had presented the following recommendations to the Community Health and Equity Council Committee (CHECC) in October 2022: 1. Plan and administer food insecurity assessment, 2. Convene partners to address food insecurity in a holistic way, 3. Develop metrics to gauge progress in addressing food insecurity, and 4. Support coordinated action among partners.

Jacob defined the problem of food insecurity noting that 17.6% of San Antonio residents were living in poverty, 14% of Bexar County residents experienced food insecurity, 20% of children in San Antonio experienced food insecurity, approximately 250,000 children participated in the National School Lunch Program and approximately 150,000 children participated in School Breakfast Programs.

Jacob stated that some of the tradeoffs for food insecurity were that 60% had to choose between food and utilities, 67% had to choose between food and transportation, 66% had to choose between food and medical care, 57% had to choose between food and housing, and 31% had to choose between food and education.

As a part of the initiative, Jacob reported that the University of Texas (UT) Health Houston School of Public Health conducted a Food Assessment including a Data Dashboard: State of Food Insecurity, Law & Policy Review, and analysis/map of Lived Experience and Community Assets. According to Jacob, the study included a review of over 180 Federal, State, and Local Laws and Policies which were graded based on their evidence.

Jacob stated that collaboration with other partners to address food insecurity aligned with the SA Forward Strategic Plan. He reported that Metro Health had created a Policy and Civic Engagement (PaCE) Office with 11 full-time staff that would utilize its \$2.7 million annual Budget to advance equitable systems, conditions, and policies. He mentioned that PaCE was intended to prioritize funding for programs and services that would provide food assistance, increase access to nutritious foods, and promote food security.

Jacob stated that the goals were to decrease food Insecurity from 14.6% to 10% for all Bexar County residents by 2030, and coordinate with cross-sector partners to reduce the food insecurity rate. Jacob provided a roadmap for implementation and listed partner commitments as well as metrics. He noted that the Urban Farm Pilot Project was underway with the Food Policy Council of San Antonio, the Foodways Program that was intended to increase people's accessibility and connectivity to healthy food was designated as a Smart Cities Initiative in 2023, the Million Gardens Project and Healthy Neighborhoods Teaching Gardens were also underway. He reported that the Healthy Corner Stores and resource Center at Villa Coronado had been successful.

Chair Castillo recognized Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez who was not on the Committee to speak

regarding the CCR. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the efforts and staff recommendations, but requested development of a plan specific to food insecurity that could develop strategic partnerships and creative solutions.

#### DISCUSSION:

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested metrics on the number of individuals served and the cost of pop-up markets. Jacob invited Metro Health employee Sean Greene who oversaw the Program to respond. Greene stated that the pop-ups cost a little more than \$10,000 per market and the attendance was fluid. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that the SA Forward dashboard included Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation but recommended a more inclusive measure as many did not apply or qualify for SNAP. She appreciated the difficult tradeoffs for families and requested a list of Health Equity Network participants as well as the City's expenditures related to access to healthy food. As Chair of the National League of Cities (NLC) Human Development Committee, Councilmember Rocha Garcia offered to share stories and funding opportunities.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito expressed concern that one in five children in the City faced food insecurity and asked how it compared to the entire nation. Jacob reported that our area was ranked 51st overall so more work was needed. Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested a list of partners and identification of the funding that might be needed. Jacob stated that the health pop-up markets were partnerships with the YWCA, Gardopia, and the San Antonio Food Bank. Councilmember Alderete Gavito requested a pop-up market at Woodlawn Lake Park.

Councilmember Kaur requested clarification on the portions of the assessment that would be completed in 2024. Jacob stated that phases 1 and 2 were completed and the next phase was data collection and seeking funding opportunities. Councilmember Kaur asked how the dashboard data could be used and the value of the data. Greene stated that the dashboard was used by departments to make funding decisions and provide seed grants. Councilmember Kaur supported the goals and noted that they might change over time. Greene committed that strategies were being updated. Councilmember Kaur requested a list of partners and spoke in support of more urban farms.

Councilmember Viagran commented that Padre Park in Council District 3 had fruit and nut trees and supported the process of the committees to help identify resources and needs such as the Healthy Neighborhood Stores that were piloted in Council District 3. She requested a list of the larger for-profit organizations that could help us meet the needs of the community, noting that there were both food and healthcare needs which could begin with nutrition education and promotion. She noted that heart disease, diabetes, kidney problems could all be related to eating habits.

Chair Castillo thanked the community partners and residents in attendance at the meeting for their contributions and feedback. She highlighted the significant tradeoffs of food insecurity and commented that long-term solutions included chipping away at the food deserts in a larger way as the pop-ups and farmer's markets were short-term solutions.

Chair Castillo asked if there was information on what was being bought at the healthy corner stores and how much. Jacob offered to share the metrics on the healthy corner stores. Chair Castillo recommended a mobile food van similar to other mobile health or other City services. Jacob stated that

there would be a convening of partners to help develop solutions and he thanked his staff at Metro Health for their work as well as partners such as the San Antonio Food Bank.

The Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

**3. Briefing on Brackenridge Park Reconciled Plan and proposed project evaluation tool.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Shanon Miller, Director, Office of Historic Preservation]

Corey Edwards, Deputy Historic Preservation Officer with the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) provided background information on the evaluation tool which was intended to ensure that decisions were informed and representative of the community. He stated that the TIRZ Project allocated \$150,000 for the Reconciled Plan that would consolidate the goals and objectives of the plans, provide an inventory of uncompleted projects that were identified in the plans, and deliver a new evaluation tool and process that would inform future decisions. Edwards noted that a contract was awarded to Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, Inc. to conduct the study with a focus on future capital projects.

Edwards stated that the Brackenridge Park Stakeholder Advisory Committee (BPSAG) was a standing committee established by the City Manager, co-chaired by Assistant City Manager Lori Houston, and Brackenridge Park Conservancy (BPC) President Terry Brechtel and included a wide range of representation and the Committee's role was to advise City of San Antonio (CoSA) staff on projects impacting the park; they advised on the development of the reconciled plan and included a public engagement strategy and meeting format recommendation.

Edwards described the evaluation tool and stated that the evaluation criteria helped with understanding project prioritization and design/re-design needs and would be used by BPSAG and CoSA to recommend and prioritize future capital projects.

Edwards listed the guiding principles that all projects were required to meet including Respect for People and Nature, Respect for History and Culture, and Respect for Compromise. The entire process was informed by public feedback at three public meetings as well as over 2,000 SA SpeakUp survey responses from across the city. Edwards noted that the Plan had been endorsed by the Midtown TIRZ Board and, following this briefing to the Community Health Council Committee, staff would begin implementation.

**DISCUSSION:**

Councilmember Kaur noted she had been following along with the work and asked what types of decisions might be made in the future. Edward stated that the proposed evaluation criteria and adherence to the guiding principles would become a requirement for future projects including bond or TIRZ funded. Director of OHP Shanon Miller stated that the criteria would inform staff recommendations but ultimately, City Council would make final funding decisions. Councilmember Kaur supported the baseline but felt it could be subjective.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that Brackenridge Park was a Regional Park and considered an asset of the entire City and noted that there was no response in the survey from Council Districts 4, 5, and 6 which was a concern since many residents from those districts camped out for Easter celebrations at Brackenridge Park. She requested a breakdown of demographic information on the respondents as

well as the stakeholders. She asked who was facilitating the community engagement for the upcoming projects. Edwards stated that OHP would continue to work with the advisory committee but there could be other departments involved depending on the funding sources or type of project.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked why the evaluation tool would not be used with Phase 1. Edwards stated that Phase 1 was already too far along to benefit from the tool, but Phase 2 would include it. Councilmember Rocha Garcia stated that the responses seemed consistent with the goals of the community but wanted more representation.

Councilmember Viagran noted that Brackenridge Park had a layered history and any decisions made now would be part of the history as well as the future so she wanted to ensure that diverse voices were heard. She appreciated that the Parks Foundation had a major stake in what happened since they funded many of the improvements but wanted to ensure that residents from throughout the community were heard. She was relieved that all funding decisions would be brought before the full City Council and felt that this was a good start.

Chair Castillo shared concerns about a lack of diversity on the Board and wanted to ensure residents who used the park were heard as this was a community asset. She noted that community stakeholders had been concerned that the Midtown TIRZ only had two residents on the Board and the rest were city staff. Edwards assured the Committee that there would be more stakeholder input for each project.

The Item was for briefing only so no action was taken.

### **Consent Agenda**

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.

**Approved**

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*Teri Castillo, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*