

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Intergovernmental Relations Committee 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8, Chair  
Dr. Sukh Kaur, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Marina Alderete Gavito, Dist. 7

Wednesday, September 25, 2024

10:00 AM

City Hall

The Intergovernmental Relations Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:05 AM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Manny Pelaez, *Chair*  
Dr. Sukh Kaur, *Member*  
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*  
Marina Alderete Gavito, *Member*

**Members Absent:** Phyllis Viagran, *Member*

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from September 6, 2024 Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve the minutes of the September 6, 2024 Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Pelaez, McKee-Rodriguez, Alderete Gavito

**Absent:** Kaur, Viagran

### Briefing and Possible Action on

#### 2. Briefing and possible action on the City's Legislative Program for the 89th State Legislative Session. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Sally Basurto, Director, Government Affairs]

Director of Government Affairs (GA) Sally Basurto explained that the City of San Antonio's 89th State Legislative Program outlined the community's policy priorities and legislative goals. She noted that the Program aimed to improve residents' quality of life through policy and funding. Basurto indicated that the GA Department's role was to advocate on behalf of San Antonio residents to secure the authority and resources needed to deliver quality services. She asserted that the City of San Antonio's legislative priorities could only be accomplished in collaboration and alignment with community partners and the State of Texas.

Support for the development of an East-West roadway across the southern region of San Antonio providing access to major manufacturing employers was a significant initiative, according to Basurto.

Under the Protection of Community Interests pillar, Basurto stated, the City's overarching legislative priority was to preserve the voice of the community (as expressed through the City Charter and other voter-approved amendments) and maintain a fiscally sound and well-managed organization to allow for continued high-quality services to our residents and local businesses through support for Local Governance. She added that the Program would support legislation that protected the municipal utility model for CPS Energy and the San Antonio Water System (SAWS).

The Protection of Community Interests pillar, according to Basurto, supported the goals of Military City USA which included support for increased funding for the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant (DEAAG) and other programs that add military value to missions in San Antonio and Texas, support basing actions that would increase the number of Department of Defense and Texas National Guard military missions in the San Antonio region. Basurto stated that the agenda would oppose legislation that undermined the City's ability to sustain and enhance Joint Base San Antonio's (JBSA) and the Texas National Guard's mission readiness to ensure the long-term protection of its military bases.

Basurto listed Community Development as another pillar with a goal to ensure that the City of San Antonio was prepared for growth in a way that was compatible with the community's vision. She noted that this vision included investments in a strong local economy, increasing housing stability for residents, and an educated and trained workforce. Basurto stated that the Program would also support the continuation of local and State incentives to supplement local economic development strategies to recruit and retain employers and compete for major sporting events and conventions that would grow the local and State economy and support additional funding for the arts and the film industry, increased flexibility in grant programs, and protecting the current Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program (TMIIIP) guidelines.

Basurto stated that also included in Community Development was a goal of housing stability through legislation that helped local governments to increase affordability, quality, accessibility, and choice in housing and provided sustainable property tax relief to San Antonio residents. Workforce legislation that invested in educational and job placement programs and increased access to childcare to provide support for our growing workforce was also included in the Community Development agenda, according to Basurto.

Under the Public Health and Safety pillar, Basurto stated that San Antonio's healthcare mission was to

protect and improve the health of our community so that all people thrived in a healthy and safe environment. She noted that the strategic priority areas were access to care, nutrition and food insecurity, violence and crime prevention, health equity and social justice, and mental health. Basurto noted that this would support funding to expand San Antonio's psychiatric and behavioral health system and add facilities to provide additional mental health services to our community, legislation that improved access to healthcare services, additional funding for services and programs that provided food assistance, increased access to nutritious foods, and promoted food security.

Basurto stated that the Public Health and Safety agenda also supported improved State funding and access to comprehensive and timely mental health care in Texas and legislation that encouraged responsible pet ownership and improved the health, safety and welfare of our residents and pets. She included violence prevention and efforts to prevent and mitigate domestic and targeted violence in order to ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens as well as responsible firearm safety practices and additional resources to help aid in the prevention of gun violence in our community.

Basurto stated that expanding infrastructure was needed to create a resilient future for San Antonio. She indicated that San Antonio's priorities were to make strategic investments that acknowledged the need for digital inclusion as a necessity in a rapidly changing society; create transportation infrastructure that incorporated safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists; and prepare for the impacts of extreme weather events and natural disasters.

Basurto closed her presentation by noting that the City of San Antonio coordinated with local, State, and national partners in support of their legislative agendas that enhanced the health, safety and vitality of the community, provided that it did not conflict with the City's own legislative agenda.

#### DISCUSSION:

Chair Pelaez thanked Basurto and her team for their work. Councilmember Alderete Gavito asked how she could help advocate for the east-west business corridor. Basurto stated that GA would coordinate conversations at the State Capital. Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle reported that a State parkway linking IH-37 to IH-35 on the South Side was envisioned and staff would bring in the City Council at the appropriate time. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended partnering with the Bexar County Economic Development Department.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito was pleased to see prioritization of violent crime prevention and wondered if other cities were prioritizing this issue or whether State leaders would be receptive. Basurto stated that staff would begin to identify key partners such as the Texas Municipal League (TML) and the Police Chief's Association. Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended a continued push for reducing the residential speed limit as a safety measure.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended including nutrition, reproductive, and gender-affirming care in the Health Care pillar and asked if it would include opposition legislation that reduced access to health care. Basurto stated that the City was trying to keep its language more positive and focused on supporting rather than opposing whenever possible in the agenda. Coyle added that whether the City's language stated oppose or support, actual position statements on bills would depend on the specific language in bills that were filed in the State Legislature.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez suggested that the agenda include clear and strong support for the LGBTQ+ community. Coyle explained that those issues fell under the policy to protect our Non-Discrimination Ordinance. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stressed that he wanted to see during the Legislative Session the City taking an official position to protect LGBTQ+ rights.

Basurto stated that her office coordinated with the City of San Antonio LGBTQ+ Advisory Commission and other community partners such as the SA Pride Center and the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center, on this issue. Coyle clarified that the City's Non-Discrimination Ordinance opposed discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation and the Legislative Program was related to specific bills that directly impacted the City rather than other jurisdictions such as school districts.

Chair Pelaez stated that it seemed that we were explaining this too much and noted that the City did not use the term LGBTQ+ in the Non-Discrimination Ordinance or in our legislative agenda and it was important to include this terminology specifically. Chair Pelaez insisted that the agenda include opposition to taking away rights from our residents, particularly the LGBTQ+ population and asked Basurto to work with Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez on this issue.

Councilmember Kaur suggested that social justice issues fell under the heading of Protection of Community Interest but asked if taking a conflicting position on a social justice issue could adversely impact other areas such as the protection of municipal utilities. Coyle confirmed that taking a strong stand on one issue, might result in punishment on another unrelated issue and taking a strong stand on issues nonrelated to City business might dilute the City's legislative agenda and ability to advocate.

Chair Pelaez reiterated that advocating for something that State leaders might oppose, could result in punishment of cities and our community which is why the City's legislative agenda was kept general. Councilmember Kaur did not want the City to lose its negotiating power. Coyle noted that the State had been trying to ban cities from lobbying at all. Councilmember Kaur recommended inclusion of language allowing the City to manage its zoning. Basurto indicated that this was included in the Protection of Community Interest.

Councilmember Alderete Gavito recommended a balanced approach. Chair Pelaez agreed that it was a delicate balancing act but it was important to ensure that our agenda matched our values. Chair Pelaez supported the development of partnerships with other local entities to get reciprocal support for legislative agendas. Chair Pelaez requested a presentation from UTSA and UT Health on their legislative agenda and also suggested that the Committee hear from the school districts. Basurto noted that the Bexar County Education Coalition had previously presented and could possibly present in the future.

Chair Pelaez asked if there was a specific charge to support Animal Care Services (ACS) work. Basurto stated that responsible pet ownership was an initiative that was being targeted. Last session, the Dangerous Dogs Bill by Representative Campos and Senator Menendez which passed through the House and Senate but was vetoed would likely be refiled. Interim Animal Care Services (ACS) Director Mike Shannon stated that the target of the legislation was to keep complainants anonymous to avoid retaliation. Basurto noted that the official veto statement was related to property tax relief unfinished business.

Chair Pelaez asked the members of the Committee to share requests for future Committee presentations with Basurto. He noted that the Federal program was coming up as well. Basurto stated that the next Committee meeting would include a briefing on the upcoming Federal Legislative Session. Coyle added that the next step for the State Legislative Program was the B Session.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to forward the State Legislative Agenda to City Council B Session pending strengthening of language related to non-discrimination for LGBTQ+.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to Approve. Councilmember Alderete Gavito seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Pelaez, Kaur, McKee-Rodriguez, Alderete Gavito  
**Absent:** Viagran

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

**Approved**

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*Councilmember Manny Pelaez, Chairman*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre  
City Clerk*