

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes

### Planning and Community Development Committee

#### 2021 – 2023 Council Members

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3  
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | John Courage, Dist. 9

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**Thursday, May 26, 2022**

**10:00 AM**

**Council Briefing Room**

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**Members Present:** Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Chair*  
Mario Bravo, *Member*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

**Members Absent:** None

#### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from May 9, 2022 Planning and Community Development Committee Meeting

Councilmember Courage moved to Approve the minutes from the May 9, 2022 Planning and Community Development Committee meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage

**Absent:** Bravo

#### Consent Agenda

#### Briefing and Possible Action on

**2. A briefing and possible action on an update on the strategic plan to respond to homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Human Services Director]

Melody Woosley, Director of the Department of Human Services, provided a status update on priority focus areas and timeline for the Homeless Strategic Plan for the entire San Antonio community. Woosley detailed the following strategies and progress made: to enhance and improve street outreach efforts, developing affordable and supportive housing options, increase consumer engagement and equity, improve public awareness, reduce stigma and diverting from criminal justice system.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked about the purpose of the Texas Creative Public Awareness Campaign and its length and type of media to be used. Woosley explained that it would begin with an overview of the program and then go into community education and last for an initial 6 months using mostly social media. Chair Rocha Garcia requested the progress on the goals to be included in the dashboard as well as plotting how much affordable housing had been created in the past five years.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested the number of arrests and a description of and amount of training provided to San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) Officers in handling homeless populations and suggested more help for the Officers and collaboration with the District Attorney's Office. SAPD Deputy Chief of Police Benavidez stated that San Antonio Fear Free Environment (SAFFE) Officers received additional training on handling homeless populations and resources available and would provide information on coordination with the District Attorney and the amount of permanent supportive housing units.

Councilmember Viagran expressed concern regarding wages for the outreach workers and suggested tracking of wages and retention by staff and partners. Councilmember Viagran recommended an expanded outreach campaign to include specific outreach and awareness to Veterans, runaways, youth, mentally ill, and those struggling with finances. Councilmember Viagran also suggested educating the public on the definition of low barrier and high barrier housing.

Councilmember Castillo shared the concern for providing competitive wages for the outreach workers, noted their difficult task, and asked if they had been surveyed on resources that they might need. Woosley stated that the homeless team met regularly and their input regarding protocols was taken in all instances. She noted that there was a high turnover and the department was making efforts to retain staff. Councilmember Castillo recommended developing a solution rather than moving problems from neighborhood to neighborhood which included more affordable housing, destigmatizing and including homeless experts in developing the outreach. Councilmember Castillo asked if the Safety Needle Exchange Program was legal. Woosley confirmed that the program was legal in Bexar County. Councilmember Castillo

requested a briefing on the outreach plan.

Councilmember Courage recommended consistent protocols and tools between the City and its partners. Councilmember Courage requested information about the type of outreach being performed and whether all outreach was in the field. Woosley stated that the outreach was a hybrid. Councilmember Courage asked about the process to report a homeless encampment. Woosley explained the process generally started with a 3-1-1 call, then led to an assessment and multiple visits to help service the encampment and coordinate with Solid Waste Department for abatement having given them a two-day notice at minimum but a two-week notice was ideal.

Councilmember Bravo asked how much money was needed to create needed detox beds. Woosley replied that the Center for Health Care Services (CHCS) committed to providing a detox bed within 24 hours and they are working to coordinate with another provider using ARPA funds for this purpose. Councilmember Bravo asked if the Housing Bond would provide enough permanent supportive housing over the next two years and wanted to meet to discuss the issue. Ian Benavidez, Deputy Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, stated that they expected to provide 500-750 units.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on the number of hotels being utilized for housing. Woosley stated that the hotels were temporarily utilizing FEMA funding and would be slowly ramping down. Councilmember Courage noted a meeting in his Council District with the Chief of Police who stated that the District Attorney simply released the homeless and did not jail them dismissing the warrants. Woosley described the Haven for Hope Jail Diversion Program and Christian Assistance Ministries Program to prevent incarceration. Councilmember Courage asked if the availability of temporary and supportive housing would be included in the SARAH Dashboard. Woosley stated that the South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) dashboard would include this information as it was their data. Councilmember Courage recommended creating more daytime options like Corazon Ministries in other parts of downtown. Woosley stated that there were pop-up resource centers in other parts of the City.

Councilmember Bravo recommended more training for SAPD on mental health issues and coordination with the expert organizations. Deputy Chief of Police Benavidez stated that he would take the request back to the Police Chief.

Councilmember Castillo requested information about transports to Haven for Hope and recommended alignment with Ready to Work SA. Woosley stated that there were opportunities for coordination being explored and implemented. Councilmember Castillo recommended supporting a request for funding for a mobile unit for Corazon Ministries. Councilmember Castillo wanted to have consistent messaging with all partners including SAPD.

Councilmember Viagran asked for the information about actual releases by the District Attorney and Personal Recognizant Bonds. Deputy Chief of Police Benavidez stated that he

would provide that information.

Councilmember Viagran expressed support for permanent supportive housing and affordable housing afterward. Councilmember Viagran recommended more collaboration.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested a timeline for the Housing Bond implementation. Mark Carmona, Chief Housing Officer, stated that funds would not be available until October 2022, but the program would follow the SHIP. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended a field trip for the Committee to a partner organization. Councilmember Courage stated that on June 3, 2022 he was arranging a trip for citizens to SAMMinistries, Haven for Hope, and the Center for Healthcare Services and invited Chair Rocha Garcia to join him.

**3. Briefing on the Annexation and Growth Policy Update.** [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Bridgett White, Director, Planning Department]

Rudy Nino, Assistant Director of Planning, provided background and information on the existing Annexing and Growth Policy as well as statutory limitations. Nino provided growth policy tools, listed types of annexation and the tools that would become available when a property was annexed, and new options for land near military bases. Nino presented information on the different types of Special Districts including Public Improvement Districts, as well as Development Agreements and Strategic Partnership Agreements. Nino explained the different regional planning and coordination efforts with regional partners and stakeholders. Nino listed the next steps and a timeline for the Policy Update.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested the number of PIDs and a comparison with other Cities such as Houston. Nino stated that San Antonio had 18 PIDs and the other large Texas Cities had more special districts. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended bringing areas up to code before annexation, so the City did not have to take on all those costs.

Councilmember Courage expressed concern about the State Laws limiting the City's ability to grow and expand and noted the number of new PID's being created as a result in areas outside the City along with the inability of the City to collect enough revenue to pay for all the costs to the City for those outside the City who used our infrastructure. Councilmember Courage stated that the legislation prevented the City from providing its best services due to lack of funding.

Councilmember Castillo noted that current residents have waited decades for new infrastructure such as sidewalks which should be prioritized. Councilmember Castillo requested information on how much it would cost to run utilities into new areas as well as the types of developments going up in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

Councilmember Viagran noted that there were some ETJ cases coming before the City Council Zoning and Land Use Session and was concerned about education of those residents and suggested improved coordination with other jurisdictions. Nino stated that they worked with

developers in the ETJ to negotiate compliance with the tree ordinance and land use limitations when they apply for a PID. Councilmember Viagran provided examples of developments that were partially in the City and partially outside which needed to be fully annexed as a neighborhood. Nino stated that plans were being developed to include necessary tools to address those issues.

**4. Briefing and possible action on Consideration of Substantial Amendment #3 to the FY 2022 Annual Action Plan and Budget to reprogram \$4,520,807 in HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible affordable housing development activities [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Interim Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]**

Veronica Garcia, Interim Director of the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) provided background on the HOME Investment Partnership. Garcia described the State Tax Credit Program that would help create two new affordable housing projects. The first was Cattleman's Square Lofts in City Council District 5. Garcia noted that the project costs had increased since it was initially approved and received HOME funds, SAWS Impact Fee Waivers and Inner-City Incentive Fund (ICIF) loans. The amendment would authorize \$1.6 million in CDBG and ICIF Funds. The second project in Council District 7 was Country Club Village which was an older adult rehabilitation project seeking to fill a funding gap of \$2 million in CDBG and converting the existing HOME funding to CDBG.

Chair Rocha Garcia expressed concern about rising construction costs and the negative impact on housing and other projects. Chair Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the amendments.

Councilmember Castillo noted that the original Cattleman's Square Lofts only had 35% affordable units and was pleased that the project was now a 100% affordable project, that it was near the VIA Centro Station and could be the first Transit Oriented Development and that it was near job opportunities.

Councilmember Courage expressed concern that these projects were going to take two more years to be built and the costs could still change and recommended keeping the structure with more loans rather than converting to a grant so that the City could recoup funds allocated if costs decreased. Garcia explained that some of the funding was a loan and the CDBG Funding would be granted to the San Antonio Housing Trust and they could determine how to award the funding whether a loan or a grant.

Councilmember Viagran expressed support of the Item and recommended Bexar County to support the Cattleman's Square Project as well and was encouraged that the project was 100% affordable.

Chair Rocha Garcia closed the discussion by expressing support of the Item.

Councilmember Castillo moved to recommend and forward to full City Council following the

HUD required public comment period. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage

**Absent:** Bravo

**5. Briefing and possible action on available fair housing resources for San Antonio tenants subject to housing challenges including inadequate living conditions, evictions, and significant code compliance violations.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Interim Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services]

Veronica Gonzalez, Housing Access & Stability Administrator with the Housing & Neighborhood Services Department, presented information on existing fair housing resources for tenants including the Housing Assistance Program, Resident Relocation Assistance Program, Eviction Intervention & Right to Counsel Program, and Fair Housing Counseling Services.

Michael Shannon, Director of the Development Services Department, described the Multitenant Inspection Team, the Boarding Home Team and the Mobile Living Park Teams which were a part of Code Enforcement and worked to assist tenants in those living conditions. Shannon also provided information on the Dangerous Assessment Response Team which was a coordinated team of individuals from the City Attorney's Office, SAPD, Code Enforcement, NHSD, Department of Human Services, Animal Care Services, Metro Health and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Uel Trejo, Tenant Advocate, spoke on behalf of some tenants that had experienced problems with the poor condition of their units and were even facing eviction.

Linda Garcia spoke regarding the condition and crime at her apartment complex and recommended more education for SAPD and property managers on how to handle people and their concerns.

**DISCUSSION:**

Chair Rocha Garcia stated that staff would be available after the meeting to provide assistance to the public speakers. Chair Rocha Garcia recommended training of property managers on handling vulnerable populations, and ensuring mobile homes be brought up to City Code without the tenants being threatened with the loss of their homes for speaking out. Chair Rocha Garcia asked about the registration process for mobile home properties. Shannon stated that those mobile home properties that were not registered had received citations and four were currently under review. Shannon stated that the process for complaints was to call 3-1-1. Chair Rocha Garcia asked about the number of Dangerous Assessment Response Team (DART)

inspections. Jose Nino, Deputy City Attorney, stated that there was one-two per week. Chair Rocha Garcia suggested developing a policy related to cyber security of properties. Assistant City Attorney Jameene Williams stated that cyber security was a part of the State Penal Code and should be handled by SAPD.

Councilmember Courage asked about staffing levels for Code Compliance Officers. Shannon stated that there were 100 Officers that reviewed four calls per day per Officer, and the calls were inspected and finalized within two to three days with a typical 10-30 day required response time for the landlord with the penalty of a citation.

Councilmember Castillo mentioned that her constituent services staff was helping build code compliance and fair housing cases for tenants and often ended up with the tenant being evicted. Councilmember Castillo was concerned about the process of sweeps in the urban core that often resulted in displacement and mental stress for residents. Shannon stated that the process for multi-family property owners was essentially the same as described for other calls. Councilmember Castillo asked for recommendations for her staff to better assist residents. Shannon offered to directly work with the Councilmember's team on specific properties.

Councilmember Courage asked how much money was allocated for Rental Assistance. Gonzalez stated that \$5.5 million was allocated and more potential funding allocations from Bexar County and the Federal Government were coming. Councilmember Courage requested information on the number of requests for EHAP or Relocation. Gonzalez reported that 100-300 calls were received per day.

Councilmember Castillo recommended that applicants for Bond funding housing projects should be required to clear up all City Code violations prior to moving forward with their application.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia closed the discussion.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:22 PM.

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*Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair*

**Respectfully Submitted**

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*