

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205
2021 – 2023 City Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, 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
Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 9:00 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting aquorum with the following Council members present:

PRESENT: 10 - Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo
Cabello Havrda Pelaez, Courage, Perry

ABSENT: 1 - Sandoval

ITEMS

1. Staff presentation on the FY 2022 Proposed Budget focusing on, but not limited to, the following City Departments or Initiatives: [Erik Walsh, City Manager, Scott Huizenga, Director, Management & Budget]

A. Planning

Bridgett White, Director, Planning Department, presented an overview of the Planning Department including mission statement, organizational chart, and Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Proposed Budget.

Ms. White noted that the Department's budget was \$4.6 million which was an increase of approximately \$800,000 due to increased personnel costs and the addition of two proposed program enhancements for the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and the FY22 Work Plan.

Ms. White reviewed the citywide planning strategy for the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan which would continue the sub-area planning process for 30 plan areas, including the completion of the six Phase 2 sub-area plans and the beginning of development of the six Phase 3 sub-area plans. She noted that the Plan included the completion of the Bandera Corridor Plan Phase I.

Ms. White provided an overview of the five phases of the SA Tomorrow Sub-Area Planning which began with community kick-off meetings in 2017 and would complete all plan adoptions in FY 2028. She stated that regional planning component of the Plan included: 1) Finalization of the City's Annexation and Growth Policy; 2) Process of Special District requests in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) that sought City Council consent; and 3) Annexation and zoning of properties with voided Development Agreements.

Ms. White highlighted the comprehensive rezoning process and the Northeast Corridor Revitalization Program and the proposed enhancements of the Bandera Road Corridor Plan Phase II and the Goliad Road Corridor Revitalization Plan.

Ms. White provided an overview of the Department's performance measures: Completion of 12 sub-area plans; hosting of 75 SA Tomorrow related sub-area planning stakeholder/community meetings; and the completion of an updated land use map of 27% of the City.

B. Library

Ramiro Salazar, Director, San Antonio Public Library (SAPL), reported that the Library Department and Library Board of Trustees was created through the City's Charter which provided Board policy-making authority and established the Department budget. Paul Stahl, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, stated that the Board Trustees were grateful to the City management for the SAPL Proposed Budget and noted that any additional funding identified would be used for increased outreach and marketing of SAPL services.

Mr. Salazar provided an overview of the SAPL organization, and its work plan and objectives met during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. He added that the SAPL would continue to focus efforts on gathering and using data to make decisions regarding service efforts and operations. Mr. Salazar stated that the SAPL provided a safe and user-friendly space to fill the digital divide gap and advance literacy in all areas to include digital, financial, and educational literacy.

Mr. Salazar stated that SAPL would continue to restore library use to pre-pandemic levels but noted that that Library System could not offer in-house programming for children due to COVID-

19 vaccinations not available for children under the age of 12. He added that in-house programming for adults and teens would continue to strive to meet pre-pandemic levels with a focus efforts on data-driven decisions regarding service efforts and operations.

Mr. Salazar reviewed the SAPL FY 2022 Proposed Budget of \$45.2 million which was a \$2.1 million increase from the previous fiscal year. He stated that an enhancement of the Proposed Budget included making permanent a pilot project which specifically eliminated fines for youth materials and would be expanded to all library materials.

Mr. Salazar reviewed FY 2022 program enhancements which included:

- Expansion of Library Services - \$922,000
 - Operational funding to improve library services to include additional Learning Centers at McCreless and Memorial Branch Libraries.
- Library Safety - \$775,000
 - An additional \$200,000 in funding for contract security at library locations.

Mr. Salazar provided an overview of the proposed facility improvements:

- Capital Improvements Projects
 - Forest Hills Branch - \$1.5 million
 - Central Library - \$1.1 million
- Scheduled Maintenance Projects
 - Cortez Branch - \$400,000
 - Bazan Branch - \$390,000
 - Westfall Branch - \$246,000

Mr. Salazar reviewed the SAPL efforts and services in COVID-19 pandemic response which included: Expanded & Promoted Wi-Fi Access; Virtual Planning; Digital Library; Contact-Free materials pick-up; and In-Person browsing. He noted that SAPL services and performance measures were on the up-swing, and he anticipated increased usage of the SAPL services in FY 2022.

Mr. Salazar noted that in engineering the future of SAPL would include:

- Continue and complete pandemic recovery
- Update Strategic Plan
- Facilitate access to SAPL resources
- Increase access to information and technology

C. Parks and Recreation

Homer Garcia, Director, Parks and Recreation Department, introduced the Parks and Recreations leadership staff and presented an overview of the Department to include its mission statement, organizational responsibilities, and types of park facilities. He reviewed the Departmental FY 2022 Proposed Budget which totaled \$105 million, including the elimination of three staff positions.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the FY 2022 program enhancements which included \$3.1 million for scheduled maintenance at various parks, and \$502,000 for funding mandates that supported newly completed trail projects, including additional staff and equipment.

Mr. Garcia provided an overview of the Department's FY 2022 Workplan components and associated category specifics that included:

- Recreation program participation
- Community involvement
- Urban tree canopy focused efforts
- 10-minute walk to a park

Mr. Garcia highlighted the workplan efforts which included community center programming and open houses, thoughtful park activations and drive-thru tree adoptions. He noted that the Tree Preservation and Mitigation Fund was to be funded at \$4.2 million and reviewed the various educational plans associated with the Fund.

Mr. Garcia stated that the Department would continue to protect the Edward's Aquifer in the Proposed Budget initiatives. He noted that a Sales Tax Issuance was completed in March 2021 and that acquisition expenditures were estimated to be completed in 2022. He added that a 10-year, \$100 million program would begin in 2023 to create the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation which was approved by City Council in September 2020.

Mr. Garcia provided updates of the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System to include sales tax collection funding sources, completed miles of trail and proposed expansions. He stated that San Antonio was among the top three cities with greatest increase of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the FY 2022 Departmental performance measures to include:

- Recreation Facility Preparation – 404,281
- Trees planed and adopted – 9.785
- Additional acres protected under Edwards Aquifer Protection – 5,000
- 85% of service level agreements completed within established timeframes
- 25% of diversion from waste to recycling collected in parks

Mr. Garcia added that the Departmental priorities were excellence, equity, and engagement. He introduced a video highlighting the Parks and Recreation Department.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Nirenberg commented on the great work completed by the Parks and Recreation Department and that even though it had accomplished great things, the Department did not rest on its laurels and kept striving for excellence. Mayor Nirenberg asked how the Department would continue to move forward and positively in the future. Mr. Garcia stated that strategic partnerships with schools, other City departments, and community partners would be key.

Mayor Nirenberg asked if land easements and rights-of-ways in partnership with the utility providers could be used for new trailways. Brandon Ross, Parks Administrator, stated that the Department continually looked at ways to use these areas and worked closely with CPS Energy to identify possible areas.

Mayor Nirenberg asked for information on Phase II of the Edwards Aquifer Program. Mr. Garcia stated that the program was a voluntary participation program which was anticipated to grow acreage protected over the Aquifer, but that alternative funding was needed in order to obtain more land. City Manager Walsh provided clarification on sales tax and other funding and noted that an update of available funding would be provided at the mid-year Budget adjustment.

Mayor Nirenberg stressed the importance of the Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) priorities which included Aquifer easements and where City funds would be spent in a way that was most impactful. He requested that the Science Evaluation Team and CAB be engaged in making agreed upon decisions especially in the area of Aquifer protection.

Mayor Nirenberg noted the importance of aligning the SA Tomorrow Initiative with planning studies due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. He asked when an update would be provided on the Management Policy analysis conducted. Ms. White stated that discussions would resume in later September 2021, including a review of the Annexation Growth Policy and other ETJ components, and discussion with partners such as San Antonio Water System (SAWS).

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how the Parks Department would address flooding issues at park facilities and also at Recreation Centers requiring improvements. Mr. Garcia stated that as a part of their accreditation process, the department would be doing an assessment of all their facilities by an outside organization.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked of the expansion of recreational programs within Parks and Recreation facilities, including boxing. Mr. Garcia stated that important factors to consider were the location and availability of space within recreational facilities or in outdoor park spaces, and stressed that adequate staff and instructors were needed for programs/activities.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia acknowledged the accomplishments by the SAPL at the facilities in District 4 and asked of partnerships with the Department of Human Services. Mr. Salazar confirmed that the Departments provided joint programming at senior centers.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked what the criteria was for a street to be considered for a corridor plan such as the Bandera Road Corridor Plan. Ms. White stated that the Bandera Corridor was identified with District 7 due to on-going work being done in the corridor by the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT). She added that many other corridors were identified when other agencies such as TXDoT, VIA Metropolitan or the utility organizations were conducting larger scale improvements. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for additional clarifications on the comprehensive rezoning process. Ms. White stated that Planning worked closely with the Development Services Department (DSD) for adopted subarea plans.

Councilmember Courage asked if the Planning Department reviewed proposed development projects within SA Tomorrow Plan areas. Ms. White stated that rezoning projects would be coordinated through DSD, and the Planning Department would ensure that neighborhood plans would be considered. Councilmember Courage asked what impact or effect community meetings had on the planning process. Ms. White stated that the community had a high degree of input, especially when addressing neighborhood plans within the SA Tomorrow Initiative.

Councilmember Courage requested that the SAPL provide information on how library facilities were graded in different categories and stated that expansion of library facilities was important.

Councilmember Courage asked what was the amount of the Tree Mitigation Fund (TMF). Mr. Garcia stated that the FY 2020 ending balance would be \$6.25 million, with adopted spending in FY 2022 of \$1.7 million. Councilmember Courage asked if the TMF could be utilized to replace dead trees in common space areas that died due to the recent extreme weather. Mr. Garcia confirmed that the Fund could be used for that purpose. Councilmember Courage voiced his support of the Department's agreement with Northeast Independent School District to create school areas for local park areas.

Councilmember Castillo commended SAPL staff for their efforts in providing enhanced library cards to the community. Mr. Garcia stated that library cards provided a form of identification for vulnerable populations to navigate services in the community. City Manager Walsh noted that the City was in discussions with SAWS and CPS Energy for acceptance of the library card as a form of identification. Councilmember Castillo asked what the impact to service would be when construction improvements occurred at the Las Palmas and Memorial Branch Libraries. Mr. Salazar stated that community feedback called for branches to remain open and provide services and programming continuously available for all age groups during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Councilmember Castillo recognized City staff planning efforts for the Westside and collaboration with community stakeholders. She asked how housing was being integrated into corridor plans for roads in sub-area plans. Ms. White stated that specific profiles and priorities for each neighborhood plan included neighborhood associations engagement. Councilmember Castillo stressed the importance of multimodal development plans and asked if the City was engaged with the State on transportation development. Ms. White stated that the staff met regularly with the Transportation Department and associated transportation entities.

Councilmember Castillo asked for clarification on annexation practices and policy in the community, specifically surrounding military installations. Ms. White stated that State annexation policy had changed somewhat in recent years which allowed for voluntary annexation or annexation through an election process.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda thanked the Departments for their presentations and stressed the importance of libraries in the community. She requested that SAPL have a dialogue with the Westside Educational Training Center at Edgewood Independent School District in order to execute a similar partnership as the one with Alamo Community Colleges. Mr. Salazar confirmed that conversations had already begun to form a possible partnership.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stressed the importance of parks to the residents of District 6 and noted safety concerns due to adjacent homeless encampments. Mr. Garcia stated that Community Engagement Team consisted of at least six organized business platforms and the Park Stewardship Division that patrolled parks and trail systems seven days a week in support of park safety efforts. He added that the Stewardship Team notified the Department of Human Services when encampments were encountered in order to clean the areas and provide services to homeless individuals. Councilmember Cabello Havrda highlighted park improvements in Council District 4.

Councilmember Viagran asked if there was enough staff to manage the three planning phases of the Regional Center Development. Ms. White stated that Phase 1 was almost complete with no staffing concerns. Councilmember Viagran asked how large-scale rezoning could be achieved and requested a follow up meeting offline. Ms. White stated rezoning could be achieved through a Council Consideration Request (CCR) or by a development request coordinated by the Development Services and Planning Departments.

Councilmember Viagran stated that she was pleased with the SAPL successful transition from in-person to virtual service delivery during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She asked the impact of waived late fees had to the General Fund. Mr. Salazar stated that the fees collected did not go into the General Fund but to the Library Enterprise Fund. Councilmember Viagran expressed her support for the Enhanced Library Card Program and recognized the library safety efforts at the Southside facilities.

Councilmember Viagran asked how public safety was provided on the City's Trail System and recreational facilities. Mr. Garcia stated that the Department worked closely with Park Police and the Trail Stewards Program to patrol areas and incident rate data was reviewed regularly to adjust patrolling needs. Councilmember Viagran expressed concern for the need of additional Patrol Officers at the Mission Reach Trail. Mr. Garcia confirmed that a standing relationship with Kaboom was in place, as well as with other community/corporate stakeholders and service providers.

Councilmember Pelaez requested an offline discussion regarding digital divide efforts related to seniors and of collaboration with Oats Senior Planet. He thanked the City Council for their approval of the Dan Markson Park which included ADA Accessible equipment. City Manager Erik Walsh stated that future parks improvements would follow ultra-accessible park concepts.

Councilmember Perry asked of the \$4 million increase in General Budget. Mr. Garcia stated that the majority of the amount was directly driven by the increase in personnel services and proposed Citywide pay increases, and \$500,000 was driven by program mandates. Councilmember Perry asked how much funding was received from sales tax over the term for the Aquifer Protection Program. Mr. Garcia stated that approximately \$200 million would be received over the 20-year term and noted that additional funding could be provided from other sources, including a joint collaboration with Bexar County in overlapping projects.

Councilmember Perry asked about the Library facility grading system and requested that it be shared with the City Council. Mr. Salazar stated that the grading system was based on industry best practices in order to assess SAPL facilities, conditions, maintenance, and needed

improvements. He asked about joint collaborations with Bexar County. Mr. Salazar stated that SAPL had a very good working partnership with the County and worked closely with them in extending services for individuals who lived outside the City limits.

Councilmember Bravo expressed his support of the increased funding of TMF and associated programs. He requested tree placements in larger median areas to be included in upcoming Bond Improvement projects and other street infrastructure improvements. Mr. Garcia stated that conversations had been initiated with the Public Works Department to increase tree planting on street projects. Councilmember Bravo asked the Planning Department identify tree planting opportunities in its projects.

Councilmember Castillo requested the expansion of Casiano Park restroom facilities and shade structures. She noted that parks and libraries were public spaces that had been previously defunded and called for their additional funding.

Councilmember Perry requested a copy of the SAPL Customer Service Survey. He requested information on the City's Annexation and Growth Policy and its impact to military installations. Ms. White observed that the State took a closer account of military installations with voluntary annexations. She noted that the City needed to formalize the policy associated with development provisions and related fees.

Councilmember Perry requested information on the completion of sub-area plans. Ms. White stated that five plans were completed in 2020; 12 were anticipated to be completed in FY 2022; and six plans would be completed each year thereafter for a total of 30 sub-area plans anticipated to be completed by mid-2028.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg stated that there would be no Executive Session and items posted for today would be carried over to the City Council meeting set for September 9, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 4:37 PM.

Approved

Attest:

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk**