



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

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**Agenda Item Number:** 4.

**Agenda Date:** 3/29/2021

**In Control:** Planning and Land Development Committee

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**DEPARTMENT:** Neighborhood and Housing Services

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Verónica R. Soto, FAICP, Director

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Citywide

### **SUBJECT:**

Briefing on the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) progress and next steps.

### **SUMMARY:**

Briefing on the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) progress including the role of the SHIP in relation to other planning initiatives, the definition of affordability, and next steps.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

San Antonio's Housing Policy Framework (HPF) is the City's affordable housing policy document that was accepted by the City Council in 2018; the Framework is the final document produced by the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force (MHPTF). The Framework contained overarching policy areas with a list of potential strategies to address those areas and 10-year affordable housing target goals. In 2020, staff began work on a Strategic Housing Implementation Plan to actualize strategies presented in the HPF by determining timelines, partners, specific action steps and funding approaches. Additionally, the 10-year target goals are being adjusted upward to account for a broader range of community needs and ensure the City met the Framework's requirement to that solutions be data-driven.

The HPF is the foundation for the SHIP and will serve to guide any future framework plan implementation. The SHIP will be developed in collaboration with community and housing stakeholders including but not limited to the San Antonio Housing Trust (SAHT), San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA), South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), VIA, Bexar County and applicable COSA departments. This collaboration also builds on another value of the MHPTF to promote public participation and to value both lived experience and technical expertise. In addition, the SHIP will include an outreach and input process to receive community input that will be overseen by the Housing

Commission.

Staff works closely with an 8-person steering committee and contracted facilitator. Together, this group has created four stakeholder forums to provide feedback on the SHIP progress. The stakeholder forums include:

- Residents and Community Advocates
- Real Estate & Developers
- Affordable Housing Developers
- Housing Policy

Recommendations from the SHIP will go to the Housing Commission then the Planning and Land Development Committee of City Council before being recommended for consideration to City Council, the San Antonio Housing Trust board, and the San Antonio Housing Authority board for review and adoption.

## ISSUE:

The SHIP will be completed in two Phases, 1) Synthesis and Strategy and; 2) Management and Operations and is projected to be presented to City Council in FY 2021. Phase 1 was started in October and included the recalibration of the production goals included in the Framework Plan based on two years' worth of housing data since the Framework was adopted. Economic and Planning Systems, the consulting firm that assisted in the creation of the Framework Report, is overseeing the recalibration. The second phase will identify the strategies required to reach those targets, including identifying lead organizations and timelines. In order to accomplish the housing goals and track their success, the roles of several organizations, including the City, SAHT, and SAHA must be identified.

The Planning and Land Development Committee (PLDC) will receive regular updates to provide feedback on the progress of the SHIP before formally recommending the plan for Council consideration. The Boards of the San Antonio Housing Trust and San Antonio Housing Authority will also receive updates and have the opportunity to provide feedback before adoption.

The original goals included in the Housing Policy Framework are on track to be exceeded much earlier than the projected 10-year timeframe. Because of this, staff has worked with Economic and Planning Systems to evaluate the need for housing in San Antonio by those most vulnerable to displacement and work to determine new housing targets for owner occupied and rental housing including rehabilitation and new construction. In addition, indexes are being created to identify key vulnerability factors by census tract and SA Tomorrow Regional Centers.

Critical to the SHIP is defining affordable housing. The current framework definition includes housing for people with incomes up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for rental housing and 120% AMI for homeownership. Concerns have been raised by Council and the public that this conflicts with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) AMI levels currently used as an industry standard. Because of the larger area the HUD AMI calculation includes beyond the city limits of San Antonio, the concern is that using the HUD definition of affordability (80% or below of AMI) does not address the needs in San Antonio as the AMI levels within the city are lower than for the metro area. Staff has recommended adjusting the level down to more closely align with the City of San Antonio population, using data from the Census while still utilizing HUD information on AMI as the measuring stick. This recommended adjustment has resulted in affordable housing income levels as defined by HUD to be up to 60% AMI for rental housing. For homeownership, staff recommends leaving the existing standard definition of affordable housing remain at

120% as defined by HUD. This is due to the variety of factors that are considered when developing single family housing including qualification for a mortgage, down payment, and credit history. This topic is still being reviewed by the Housing Commission who are also considering the impact other household expenses, including utilities and transportation, have on housing needs. The Housing Commission will discuss the definition of affordability during their meeting on March 24 and will continue their discussion during their annual retreat on April 7. The Housing Commission has issued a one-question survey to the public asking for their input on this issue. Staff and Commissioners have worked together to distribute the survey which closes Monday, March 29 at 9 am. Their recommended definition of affordability will be included in SHIP document.

As a starting point for implementation strategies, staff is working with our stakeholder forums to build off other housing related initiatives that have taken place over that last few years, mainly those identified in the framework. Other documents that are being referenced include the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, ForEveryoneHome initiative, COVID-19 Community Action Working Groups, Homeless Strategic Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Opportunity at Risk Report, among others. In addition to these reports and their strategies, there have been other issues raised through community groups, council offices, and city departments that have led to the consideration of additional policy issues for possible inclusion.

The four stakeholder forums received a survey with a list of the strategies outlined in the Housing Policy Framework and other initiatives listed above. Respondents were asked to prioritize the strategies they would like the City to focus on in the next 3-5 years. Stakeholders also had an opportunity to recommend strategies they believe need to be focused on in the next 3-5 years. The stakeholder groups have divided these strategies among themselves. Each stakeholder forum will be responsible for drafting recommended initiative(s) related to their strategies; however, all stakeholder forums will have the opportunity to comment on and contribute to each of the other forums' recommended initiatives before they are included in the SHIP document. The stakeholder forums will meet during March and April to work on their specific indicative recommendations.

Since staff's last briefing to PLDC, the SHIP team worked with the Department of Human Services to understand the overlap and divergence between the work the SHIP is focused on the and the work of the Homeless Strategic Plan and with the ForEveryoneHome team to align both initiatives. The SHIP is focused on keeping current residents housed and helping those exiting homelessness become stably housed. The SHIP is not focused specifically on providing temporary housing but should think about strategies to provide permanent supportive housing for vulnerable residents. We have also focused on integrating the strategies from the ForEveryoneHome initiative that is currently underway, tying those prioritized anti-displacement strategies to the implementation plan timeline.

One of the draft implementation strategies for consideration is the creation of a Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance. PLDC has been briefed on this item as is being scheduled for a B Session on March 31, 2021.

Staff will share with PLDC a draft SHIP plan in June.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

This item is for briefing only.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact at this time.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

This item is for briefing only.