



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:
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Agenda Item Number: {{item.number}}

Agenda Date: July 26, 2023

In Control: Planning Commission Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Planning Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Bridgett White

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Annexation and Growth Management Policy

SUMMARY:

Consideration of a resolution recommending the Growth Management Policy to City Council to become a component of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan is one of three growth-related plans addressing how the City of San Antonio's expected population growth will be balanced with social, economic, and environmental resources. The Comprehensive Plan includes six policies related to annexation and growth management.

Growth and City Form:

- GCF P15: Work with AACOG (Alamo Area Council of Governments), AAMPO, and other regional partners to determine a consistent approach for forecasting growth in the region and develop a strategic, proactive approach to annexation that is consistent with the adopted growth forecast.
- GCF P16: Ensure the City's annexation policy supports desired city form.
- GCF P17: Ensure that newly annexed residents of the city receive the same level of service as current residents.
- GCF P18: Ensure that annexation decisions do not create an undue fiscal burden on the City or utilities providers, SAWS and CPS.
- GCF P19: Ensure that the City's growth and annexation plan provides guidance for growth plans and policy decisions made by the major utility providers, SAWS and CPS.

Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability:

- NRES P2: Develop a growth and annexation plan that reduces negative environmental impacts of new development.

The 2016 Annexation Policy, Program, and Plan was adopted as part of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan; however, it is no longer applicable due to changes to State law in 2017 and 2019 related to how cities annex. As such, the City began updating its policy in 2019 to conform to changes in State law. Although the process was put on hold during the early period of the COVID-19 pandemic, Planning Department staff resumed stakeholder engagement in September 2021, including focus groups in the Real Estate and Development community and the Cultural, Environmental, Historic preservation community.

Across meetings with various stakeholder groups, the Planning Department drafted the Annexation and Growth Management Policy to address some of the concerns relating to rapid development in the City's ETJ, which can affect the City's financial health and impact economic, military, and environmental assets critical to the City and region. The policy proposes an integrated regional approach to growth management and provides criteria for consideration when weighing requests relating to annexation and development in the City's ETJ, in accordance with State law.

ISSUE:

The Annexation and Growth Management Policy was developed with input from multiple stakeholder groups:

- **Community Advisory Group – a broad group of stakeholders from neighborhood groups, advocacy groups, the real estate community, Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA), and economic and business development entities that provides periodic review and feedback on the draft policy update, as well as serve as liaisons to their respective organizations.**
- **Working Group – technical group made up of representatives from City departments and other governmental agencies including Bexar County, SAWS, CPS Energy, Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) and the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) that provides frequent, in-depth, and consistent guidance throughout development of the policy update.**

- **Focus Groups – provides topic-specific input, guidance, and feedback related to the impacts of growth on services, infrastructure, and quality of life as well as protection of natural, environmental, and cultural resources.**
 - **Environmental, Cultural, and Historic Focus Group – made up from various natural, cultural, and historic resource preservation organizations including Alamo Sierra Club, Green Space Alliance, Edwards Aquifer Alliance, and Trinity Glen Rose Conservation District.**
 - **Real Estate and Development Focus Group – consisting of representatives from local legal firms, real estate companies, and the development community. Some focus group meetings were facilitated by The Real Estate Council of San Antonio (RECSA) and The Greater San Antonio Builder's Association (GSABA).**

In addition to providing input throughout the process, these stakeholder groups reviewed and commented on the draft policy prior to the Planning Department beginning the adoption process.

The Planning and Community Development Committee of City Council received a briefing on May 5, 2022, wherein staff was directed to complete additional work relating to the City's utility providers SAWS and CPS. The SAWS Board received a briefing on February 7, 2023. The Planning Commission received briefings on March 22, 2023 and July 12, 2023. The item is tentatively scheduled for a City Council B Session briefing on August 9, 2023, and to be considered by City Council for adoption on August 31, 2023.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Recommend Denial of the proposed resolution recommending the Annexation and Growth Management Policy to City Council.
2. Make an alternative recommendation.
3. Continue to a future date.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a resolution recommending the Annexation and Growth Management Policy to City Council to become a component of the City's Comprehensive Master Plan.