

**PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 10:00 AM
CITY HALL MEDIA BRIEFING ROOM**

Members Present:	Councilmember Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Mario Bravo, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Phyllis Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Teri Castillo, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember John Courage, <i>District 9</i>
Members Absent	None
Staff Present:	Lori Houston, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Jameene Williams, <i>City Attorney's Office</i> ; Aurora Perkins, <i>Deputy City Clerk</i> ; Bridgett White, <i>Director, Planning Department</i> ; Veronica Soto, <i>Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department</i> ; Doug Melnick; <i>Director, Office of Sustainability</i> ; Tomicka Monterville, <i>Director, Transportation Department</i> ; Melody Woosley, <i>Director, Housing Services</i> ; Mike Shannon, <i>Director, Development Services Department</i> ; Veronica Garcia, <i>Deputy Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department</i> ; Ian Benavidez, <i>Assistant Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services Department</i> ; Rudy Nino, <i>Assistant Director, Planning Department</i> ; John Stevens; <i>Assistant Director, Center City Development and Operations</i> ; Mark Carmona, <i>Chief Housing Officer; City Manager's Office</i> ; Sara Womsely; Jonathan Butler; <i>Manager, Office of Sustainability</i> ; Sarah Serpas, <i>Senior Housing Officer; Planning Department</i> ; Ana Villareal, <i>Planning Department</i> ; Iris Gonzalez, <i>Special Projects Manager</i> ; Allison Beaver; <i>Housing Policy Manager; Neighborhood and Housing Services</i> ; Christopher Lazaro; <i>Neighborhood and Housing Services</i> ; Bobbye Hamilton; <i>Assistant to the Director; Planning Department</i>
Others Present:	Rebecca Flores, <i>Citizen</i> ; Maureen Galindo, <i>Citizen</i> ; Caroline "Molly" Aguero; <i>Citizen</i>

Call to order

Chair Rocha Garcia called the meeting to order.

Public Comment

Rebecca Flores voiced her frustration with the City's lack of progress in implementing the 2018 Housing Policy Framework despite experiencing a housing crisis. She stated that the City should focus on providing more affordable housing to families making less than \$25,000 annually and should not be granting SHIP tax credits to developers.

Rebecca Flores voiced her frustration with the City's lack of progress in implementing the Mayor's 2018 Housing Policy Framework despite experiencing a housing crisis. She stated that the City should focus on providing more affordable housing to families making less than \$25,000 annually and should not be granting SHIP tax credits to developers.

Maureen Galindo spoke against increased housing costs and displacement and stated that land along the San Pedro Creek was erroneously being assessed based 2030 tax revenue assumptions. Ms. Galindo reported that the City's Budget did not allocate funding for anti-displacement programs and that the needs of the community have not been considered.

Caroline "Molly" Aguero stressed the need for City Council to find solutions for individuals and families facing eviction and requested that the City Council reinstate the program allowing for evicted renters the ability to pay landlords past due rent within 60 days as individuals no longer were protected from eviction.

Briefing and Possible Action on

1. Briefing and possible action on the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan Implementation [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Bridgett White, Director, Planning]

Bridgett White provided an overview of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and noted that policy goals included methods for mitigating anticipated challenges resulting from projected growth by prioritizing the City's planning, design, and investments. She stated that the City would be leveraging the resources of internal and external partners in the implementation of the nine Plan Elements and that partners would be responsible for implementing programs, policies, and initiatives using the Building Blocks included in the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. Ms. White explained that the Building Blocks would guide partners in incorporating the actionable strategies identified in the Community Areas, Regional Centers, Urban Centers, and Corridors.

Ms. White reported that the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan was being completed in 5 Phases with 6 Plans per Phase and noted that 5 Regional Center Plans had been adopted to date. She stated that equity was one of five themes incorporated in the goals, policies and strategies of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and that the Office of Sustainability was assisting in identifying methods for incorporating equity in the planning process, public outreach and community engagement efforts. Ms. White stated that by addressing inequity, the City could remove historical barriers and policies that has resulted in the concentration of people of color and low-income households as well as inadequate/housing stock and prohibitive land use regulations.

Ms. White stated that the 13 Regional Centers and 17 Community Areas identified as having a history of discrimination and that public outreach and community engagement efforts would be customized to area residents and workforce. She highlighted outreach and engagement tools to be utilized and stakeholders to be invited to meetings and events and noted that the intent was to obtain the community's vision, goals and needs.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested information on the process utilized for identifying Regional and Community Areas and plans for ensuring that barriers were not repeated. Ms. White clarified that the 13

Regional Centers represented employment centers and that the 17 Community Areas represented parts of the City with commonalities such as Council District and Neighborhood Associations. boundaries.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked of other City policies that could have created inequalities and plans to ensure that these barriers were not repeated. Ms. White stated that barriers, specifically land use policies, in each of the Regional Centers and Community Areas had already been identified and that the City would be collaborating with internal and external partners to develop actional strategies that would remove the barriers.

Councilmember Courage voiced concern with the progress in the Plan development and implementation and requested a status. Ms. White stated that implementation was delayed as the City lacked a future Land-use Map and that the creation of the Sub-area Plans would serve as the foundation for the land-use framework. She addressed the challenges Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) encountered in identifying Plans to include the lack of Neighborhood Associations with Master Plans and inconsistencies in zoning and land-use designations along shared corridors between adjacent area with Master Plans.

Councilmember Courage asked for the number of Sub-area Plans approved by the community, number approved by the City Council, and actions still pending. Ms. White stated that 5 of the 6 Regional Center Plans in Phase One had been approved by the City Council since 2017. She noted that Regional Center Plans reflected in Phase Two would be approved by the summer of 2022, Phase Three Plans between January and early spring of 2024, Phase Four Plans in 2026 and Phase Five Plans in 2028. Ms. White stated that approximately 40% of Regional Plans had been implemented and highlighted the difficulties encountered in making more progress. She clarified that as part of the implementation component of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, impacted internal and external partners would be provided a list of strategies and initiatives recommended for implementation and that the recommendations would be monitored for 10 years.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on the information reflected in the Comprehensive Rezoning Map. Ms. White clarified that the bottom map reflected the 2019 adopted Land-Use Map for the Brooks City Base Regional Center and that the shaded areas reflected areas that did not align with the land-use identified in the future Land-Use Map. She noted that new development could result in the destabilization of neighborhoods as developers were issued building permits based on the land-use regulations in place at that time of the issuance of the permit, not based on anticipated regulations.

Councilmember Bravo highlighted a housing policy implemented in the City of Atlanta that protected homeowners from being displaced due to gentrification and subsequent tax burden increases. He requested clarification on the department that would be responsible for implementing and monitoring a Homeowner Tax Relief Program. Ms. White reported that the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) would be responsible for implementing this type of program and noted that the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan included affordable housing initiatives. Councilmember Bravo requested to meet with NHSD to discuss the creation of a Fund that would support homeowners facing increased property taxes.

Councilmember Viagran stated that Regional Centers, especially those located in the southern portion of the City, also served as Regional Centers for South Texas and requested that staff start reporting the benefits to the State. She noted that being recognized beyond Bexar County could assist the City when applying for State and Federal grant funding.

Councilmember Viagran requested that equity data be broken down by Council District. Ms. White reported that during community engagement events, residents requested that political boundaries not be considered when identifying Regional Center boundaries and mentioned that census data could change the Council District boundaries. Councilmember Viagran stressed the importance of identifying current Council Districts in order to ensure that Regional Center boundaries remained proportional after the realignment of Council District boundaries.

Councilmember Castillo requested information on the Westside Community Plan reflected in Phase One of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. Ms. White noted that the process utilized for this Plan was different than for other Plans as additional engagement tools and topics for discussion were included which resulted in the delay of the Plan being approved. Councilmember Castillo requested the delay of the implementation of the Westside Community Plan in order to resolve previously identified inconsistencies and other concerns addressed by residents.

Councilmember Castillo requested a status of the Westside Community Plan reflected in Phase One of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. Ms. White noted that the process utilized for the Plan was different from other Plans as additional engagement tools were requested by the community and topics discussed resulted have resulted in the Plan being approved. Councilmember Castillo requested the delay in the implementation of the Plan in order to resolved previously identified incontenences and other constituent concerns.

Councilmember Castillo requested information on the impact of areas not having a zoning designation on market values and property values. Ms. White responded that zoning did impact market and property values.

2. Briefing and possible action on the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and Eviction Prevention Update. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Veronica Soto provided an overview of the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) and noted that the EHAP was created in April 2020 in response to the challenges caused by COVID-19. She reported that eligibility criteria for receiving federal assistance had been relaxed. Ms. Soto provided an overview of the EHAP dashboard since September 20, 2021 and noted that 75,989 applications had been processed with 47,605 approved for a total award of \$140,523,151 in rental/mortgage assistance, utility assistance, internet assistance and other cash allocations.

Ms. Soto stated that the State was also providing additional resources to residents under the Texas Rent Relief Program and that 11,833 households had received \$67,633,383 in assistance. She mentioned that the State was providing 12 and 15 months of assistance resulting in the award of \$5,700 per household. Ms. Soto stated that since February 18, 2021, individuals with an AMI of 50% or less were eligible for 9 months of rental/mortgage, utility and internet assistance and that individuals with an AMI between 50 and 80% AMI were eligible to receive the same EHAP assistance offered by the City for 6 months. She reported that the City had awarded \$2,952 per household and provided an overview of EHAP assistance allocated per Council District.

Ms. Soto reported that the City had a total EHAP Budget of \$189.8 million and that funds would be disbursed over Four Phases and that all Plans would be implemented by 2028. She noted that the City was currently in Phase Four and highlighted allocations by type per Phase. Ms. Soto stated that the City would start accepting mortgage assistance applications and detailed the process to include providing legal referrals. She stated that another assistance program available was the Eviction Intervention Program (EIP) and noted that the goal of the Program was to prevent and mitigate evictions by targeting outreach efforts at Justice of the Peace (JP) Courts. Ms. Soto highlighted the outcomes of eviction hearings conducted at each of the JP Courts and noted that staff would continue to track eviction filings.

Ms. Soto mentioned that the City had applied for the (Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Eviction Protection Grant Program and that funds would be used to support eviction mitigation programs. She stated that award notification would be released in October.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the eviction notification process. Ms. Soto stated that tenants were provided a list of their rights which provided additional resources available to include legal aid assistance. She noted that the Eviction Team asked tenants of their receipt of the Notice of Tenant's Rights and stated that tracking the issuance and receipt was difficult as Notices to Vacate were not required to be filed with the JP unlike Eviction Notices. At the request of Councilmember Courage, Sara Wamsley reported that approximately 25% of respondents contacted reported receiving the Notice of Tenant's Right and stated that staff was not able to contact all tenants as contact information was not always provided by the landlord. She clarified that a Notice of Tenant's Rights was required to be provided when the eviction was for non-payment of rent or due to a having a criminal record. Ms. Soto added that the eviction list provided by Bexar County did not reflect the reason for the eviction.

Councilmember Courage voiced concern with the lack of data available that identified the reason for evictions Ms. Soto addressed steps NHSD was taking to resolve this challenge to include partnering with housing advocates. She noted that NHSD staff informed landlords of compliance requirements for the eviction notification process.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested that the Eviction Team make follow-up calls to tenants in order to determine the reason for eviction.

Councilmember Castillo asked about coordination efforts with CPS Energy in implementing a similar mitigation plan. Ms. Soto confirmed that NHSD was communicating with CPS Energy and that SAWs was being provided with information on the City's assistance programs. Councilmember Castillo voiced concern with the increase in the eviction rate and requested that each Council Office be assigned a Housing Navigator.

Ms. Soto reported that the City had sent a letter to the Office of Court Administration (OCA) of the Texas Judicial System, the entity charged with court oversight, requesting that Notices of Eviction filed with the JP be sealed so that tenants would not be further impacted. She stated that the Texas Supreme Court was the proper authority to review and respond to the request.

Councilmember Viagran requested that the Eviction Team ask tenants additional questions to include challenges faced leading up to eviction and if requests for assistance were made. She addressed the importance of partnering with stakeholders to facilitate these discussions based on the long-term impact of personal and social challenges.

Councilmember Bravo asked of the impact of the digital divide on the number of households applying for EHAP assistance. Ms. Soto reported that households in some Council Districts such as Districts 4 and 5 qualified for different assistance programs resulting in the submission of fewer EHAP applications and stated that other factors also contributed to the variance in the number of households seeking assistance in each Council District.

3. Briefing and possible action on the City's Strategic Housing and Implementation Plan (SHIP) progress and next steps. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Ian Benavidez provided an overview of the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) and noted that the Plan was created to implement the five Action Items outlined in the 2018 Mayor's Housing Policy Framework (HPF). He reported that one of the objectives of SHIP was to increase the availability of affordable housing to cost-burdened and vulnerable populations and this goal could be achieved by increasing household wages or subsidizing incomes through available public assistance and training programs, using AMI to determine rent, and offering more income-restricted units through the issuance of tax incentives and use of grant funds.

Mr. Benavidez reported on tracking mechanisms to be implemented and highlighted methods to be used to implement the five HPF Action Items to include updating the Unified Development Code (UDC), establishing a land bank, increasing the number of Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) units, increasing educational and outreach efforts, and applying public engagement principles.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested to be provided with a list of completed projects.

Councilmember Viagran highlighted income challenges and stressed the importance of counting each person in the household in order to identify all available assistance opportunities.

Councilmember Courage spoke in support of actions undertaken by NHSD in identifying the need for more affordable housing and implementing a tracking tool as the data could be used in Bond Program outreach efforts. He asked if the 95,000 housing units identified as being needed were available today. Mr. Benavidez highlighted the methodology used to identify the number of affordable housing units needed for vulnerable populations and stated that the number was based on supply and demand at the time the study was conducted. He reported that the units were not available at this time but could be if the cost-burden was lessened and stated that it was difficult for developers to finance and build as well as landlords to offer housing at 30 and 50% AMI.

Councilmember Bravo requested that NHSD provide information on tax exemptions available to homeowners and on the process for protesting property valuations. He asked Chair Rocha Garcia about the possibility of discussing this topic at future Committee Meetings. Councilmember Bravo highlighted the strategy regarding increasing the number of Accessory Dwelling Units and stated that the City should provide incentives to homeowners. He asked of strategies to use Federal funds for the purchase and conversion of old apartment complexes into tenant-owned townhomes and similar homeowner assistance programs. Mr. Benavidez noted that the City was reviewing the feasibility of implementing a similar concept.

Councilmember Bravo asked for information regarding collaboration with Bexar County on the use of GAAP funding. Mr. Benavidez reported that the City had reached out to Bexar County and discussed partnering in some capacity.

Councilmember Castillo stressed the importance of partnering with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) and leveraging their resources and partnerships in order to prioritize the availability of housing at 30% AMI. She noted that NHSD did not recommend that public housing providers receive their fair share of investment opportunities nor included landlord accountability provisions. Councilmember Castillo spoke in support to the creation of a Demolition Prevention and Mitigation Program and for focusing on preservation over gentrification. She stressed the importance of SHIP including recommendations for mitigating displacement and requested support from the Committee in ensuring the implementation and compliance of provisions and other housing policies. Mr. Benavidez reported that the City was partnering with SAHA and would address specific strategies recommended by City Council at a future Commission Meeting. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston added that the City Council was scheduled to be briefed on the 2022 Bond Program at the September 29, 2021 “B” Session and that the allocation of \$250 million for housing would be highlighted. She mentioned that the HPF was a 10-year Program and projects would be funded through the issuance of two Bonds each totaling \$250 million.

Councilmember Viagran asked about housing programs available for seniors. Mr. Benavidez reported that the City incorporated universal design and accessibility standards when single and multi-family housing units designated for seniors were being renovated. Councilmember Viagran requested that seniors be included in discussions in order to determine their needs.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the impact of UDC updates on the availability of affordable housing opportunities. Mr. Benavidez confirmed that the removal of barriers for affordable housing also removed barriers to other housing development opportunities. Councilman Courage voiced concern with the blanket removal of housing barriers and asked for more information on the Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Program. Melody Woosley reported that the PSH targeted and focused on providing housing assistance to the most vulnerable populations to include the chronically homeless, homeless with high acuity or high mental illness needs or physical disabilities who were able to support themselves. At the request of Councilmember Courage, Ms. Woosley stated that she would provide the Committee with a list of co-chairs that were identified from each of the four forums held.

4. Briefing and possible action on the process and timeline for updating the City’s policy for the issuance of Resolutions of Support or No Objection for applicants seeking Housing Tax Credits from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and priorities for the updated policy. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Ms. Soto noted that NHSD was in the process of updating the City’s policy on the issuance of housing tax credits and provided an overview of the Federally funded program to include the City’s role, types of housing credits available, scoring process and frequency of policy updates. She highlighted community engagements tools and events used to solicit input on the City’s process to include creating surveys and conducting Practitioner meetings. Ms. Soto reported on the different methods used to gather policy input thus far and stated that initial recommendations addressed the need for improvement in the areas of public engagement and scoring. She highlighted next steps to include public hearings and presentation to the Housing Commission.

Chair Rocha Garcia requested that the policy include transit access to public areas and other community hubs.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the connection between the SHIP and the Housing Tax Credits Policy. Ms. Soto stated that the SHIP incorporated tracking mechanisms and development policies while housing tax credits supported the creation, preservation, and rehabilitation of affordable housing based on AMI. Councilmember Courage requested to be provided with targeted improvement areas based on scoring.

Councilmember Castillo voiced concern with the SASpeakUp Survey not requesting feedback on using tax credits for the development of housing opportunities below 30% AMI and addressed the importance of providing the community with all the options available for producing affordable housing. She recommended offering scoring points to projects that used local contractors and the services of local businesses as well as to developers that implemented tenant protection programs and included community benefit agreements in exchange for public money. Councilmember Castillo requested clarification on the public engagement process to be used going forward. Ms. Soto stated that a public hearing was scheduled for September 30 and that in-person and virtual community engagement events would also be held. She mentioned that NHSD staff could hold focused meetings within each Council District.

Councilmember Castillo asked for additional information on the scoring process. Ms. Soto stated that a meeting would be scheduled to provide her with the methodology on the scoring process and to gather input prior to the presentation of the draft Policy.

Councilmember Viagran asked for additional information to be included in the policy such as definitions and availability of transportation options as well as details on how to make amendments to the scoring process. She requested that NHSD and pertinent departments hold community public engagements events in District 3.

Councilmember Bravo stated that more than five points should be allotted for having transportation options close to the proximity of jobs and work centers. Ms. Soto clarified that additional community participation events would be held with the intent of collecting recommendations for changes to the current draft Policy recommendations and could include the availability of transportation options.

5. Briefing and possible action on the City of San Antonio Fee Waiver Policy Update. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; John Jacks, Director, Center City Development and Operations]

Veronica Garcia noted that updates to the Fee Waiver Policy were being recommended as Policy goals were being achieved through other programs to include the SHIP and that the updates would focus on incentivizing various affordable housing projects and projects that addressed equity. She provided background information on the Program to include funding from the City totaling \$2.5 million and \$3 million from SAWs for five years and that the collection of other waivers were on hold since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Garcia stated that waivers issued could only be used to offset construction costs and that the typical waiver allocated totaled 2% which equaled between \$7,000 and \$8,000 per single family home and between \$250,000 and \$300,000 per multi-family home. She highlighted the types of assistance provided to developers, small businesses and homeowners and noted

that fee waivers could be used in addition to other City housing programs. Ms. Garcia stated that City Council was scheduled to approve Policy updates in November and that the application period would be for four weeks starting in December.

Councilmember Castillo requested that the Policy also include waivers for housing offered at 30% AMI and guidelines for tenant protection. Ms. Soto stated that waivers could be issued for 30% AMI and would research the inclusion of tenant rights.

Councilmember Courage concurred with the inclusion of incentives for housing offered at 30% AMI and recommended that incentives be issued for housing offered as low as 10% AMI.

Councilmember Courage moved to forward the Fee Waiver Policy updates to the full City Council for approval. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion prevailed unanimously by those present.

6. Housing Dashboard Overview

Chair Rocha Garcia reported that details on the Housing Dashboard were a standing agenda item and that the Committee would be reported with the report. She stated that the item would be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 PM.

Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk