

City of San Antonio



Minutes

Transportation and Mobility

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6, Chair

Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5

Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | John Courage, Dist. 9

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

1:30 PM

City Hall Complex

The Transportation and Mobility Committee convened a regular meeting in the Council Briefing Room in the City Hall Complex beginning at 1:30 PM. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

Members Present: Melissa Cabello Havrda, *Chair*
Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, *Member*
Teri Castillo, *Member*
Ana Sandoval, *Member*

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the November 29, 2022 Transportation and Mobility Committee meeting.

Councilmember Sandoval moved to Approve the minutes from the November 29, 2022 Transportation and Mobility Committee meeting. Councilmember Castillo seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Cabello Havrda, Castillo, Sandoval, Courage
Absent: McKee-Rodriguez

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing by the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority on their regional mobility authorities as an independent governmental agency created by the Texas Transportation Commission and the Bexar County Commissioners Court. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Tomika Monterville, Director, Transportation]

Renee Green, Bexar County Director of Public Works, provided background and an overview of the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority (ARMA) noting that the organization was a political subdivision formed by one or more counties to facilitate transportation systems and regional planning. Green stated that ARMA had the authority to issue bonds, the power of eminent domain, to utilize mobility funding, and was designated as the primary organization allowed to administer toll related projects.

Green stated that from 2007 to 2013, ARMA operated as a separate entity. Green noted that Bexar County took over staffing of ARMA in May 2013. Green reported that ARMA was a seven member board with six members appointed by the County Commissioners Court and the chair appointed by the Governor of Texas. Green added that in August of 2013, Bexar County began collecting an additional \$10 vehicle registration fee that would be used to fund ARMA projects which were partnerships with Bexar County and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

Green stated that projects were based on mobility needs, capacity needs, connectivity, anticipated development (population growth) and commercial/industrial growth. She provided a list of the projects that had been completed since 2013 and a map of the amount of funding that was paid through the vehicle registration fee.

Green introduced Reggie Fountain, Bexar County Project Engineer, who oversaw most of the ARMA projects and provided information on ARMA projects.

DISCUSSION:

Chair Cabello Havrda thanked Green for providing an overview and background on ARMA and recommended that the City and County work more closely on infrastructure. Green stated that a call for projects might be an opportunity for the City to participate with ARMA but noted that there was a cost savings associated with Bexar County taking over staffing of ARMA which could leverage other resources from the County.

Chair Cabello Havrda commented that many of the ARMA projects benefitted residents of the City. Chair Cabello Havrda requested more information on the proposed Austin to San Antonio tunnel project. Green commented that the project was being led by a private company that was not required to disclose their plans.

Councilmember Courage asked if ARMA had the power of eminent domain.

Councilmember Castillo expressed support for collaboration between the City and ARMA.

Councilmember Sandoval requested clarification on the debt capacity and project selection

criteria. Green stated that the board had not made a recommendation on projects and clarified the debt capacity. Councilmember Sandoval requested a list of ARMA Board Members. Green listed the members as: Michael J. Lynd, Jr. (Chair), David Starr, Liza Barratachea, John Agather, Lou Miller, Baltazar Serna, Jr. and Bobby Perez.

Councilmember Sandoval recommended that ARMA engage the community to develop a list of new projects. Green stated that Bexar County already had a list of vetted needs that were approved the first time but suggested that more community involvement could occur in the future.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if ARMA could condemn City-owned property or right-of-way. Green stated that was unlikely as the tunnel project was targeted to US Highway 281 which might require condemnation of adjacent properties. Green provided information on the status of the tunnel boring project which began as an unsolicited proposal and was converted to a Request for Information to generate funding and provide transportation options.

No action was required for Item 2.

3. Briefing by VIA Metropolitan Transit on the VIA Advanced Rapid Transit Project Interlocal Agreement with the City of San Antonio. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Tomika Monterville, Director, Transportation]

Kammy Horne, Senior Vice President of Development for VIA Metropolitan Transit, provided an update on the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City. She reported that the business points had been developed and she provided an updated schedule which would have the agreement being finalized and executed in April 2023.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked Horne for the definition of a “betterment.” Horne stated that a “betterment” was something added to the project that was not integral to the operation of the service such as a landscaping or pavement treatment in the location of the VIA service. Chair Cabello Havrda spoke in support of both North-South and East-West Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) Corridors and requested an update on the East-West ART Corridor. Horne announced that the East-West ART Corridor was in the early planning stages but was included in the Federal Transportation Program.

Councilmember Courage asked if there were any barriers to the ILA moving forward. Horne stated that there were no concerns from VIA on the ILA but the initial agreement was very high level. Councilmember Courage stated that people who lived along US Highway 281 and San Pedro were very concerned about the impact to their travel related to the North-South corridor route.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if the ILA would be ready for review by the Committee at its February 2023 meeting. Horne stated that it was too soon to tell but she hoped it would be ready next month. Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez stated that the ILA would need to be reviewed by City staff before coming to the Committee.

Councilmember Sandoval noted that VIA was required to demonstrate that it had the funding available to operate the East-West corridor before Federal funding could be allocated. Horne

stated that a full funding program for planning, construction and operations were required before any Federal dollars could be allocated. Councilmember Sandoval recommended that the Advanced Transportation District (ATD) funding be allocated 100% to VIA to demonstrate that they had the money to operate the East-West Corridor.

Councilmember Castillo recommended that VIA commit to helping develop deep affordable housing within the ART areas and perhaps include it in the ILA. Horne stated that VIA was limited to only working on transportation and housing was not an allowable scope for them.

No action was required for Item 3.

4. Briefing by VIA Metropolitan Transit on the VIA Link, VIA's on-demand ride-sharing program. [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Tomika Monterville, Director, Transportation]

Kammy Horne, Senior Vice President of Development for VIA Metropolitan Transit, provided an overview of the VIA Link Program which was a tool using emerging technology to provide improved passenger services within designated zones. The VIA Link application allowed riders to book, pay, meet and ride the VIA link vehicles in the zone. Horne reported that 10-15% of the trips connected to fixed routes with a high customer service rating of 4.8 out of 5 with an average wait time of eight minutes. Horne stated that the VIA Link vehicles were five passenger vans and had bike racks.

Chair Cabello Havrda commented that seniors had found VIA Link to be very helpful and requested data on user demographics and origin/destination of the passengers. Horne stated that VIA did not have demographics but did have the origin/destination information. Chair Cabello Havrda requested that VIA begin collecting demographic information and more information regarding the high rating. Chair Cabello Havrda recommended a follow up briefing in a few months but wanted to ensure that riders could access the service if they did not have the application on their phone.

Councilmember Courage requested clarification on the zones and expressed support for allowing riders to pay once they got on board rather than only through the application. Councilmember Courage requested information on the cost-benefit of the VIA Link Program and asked for analysis on the loss of riders due to fixed route service transition to link program service in certain zones, particularly in Council District 9.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if the VIA Link Program had received national attention. Horne stated that it had received some.

Councilmember Castillo suggested a review of the traffic in the areas where VIA Link was operating and recommended that VIA explore adding electric vehicles to the VIA Link fleet.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez thanked VIA for their work on the VIA Link Program.

Councilmember Courage suggested that the VIA Link Program was a great way to provide extra

services to the senior community.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda clarified that the VIA Link Program cost was the same as a VIA bus fare.

No action was required for Item 4.

5. Briefing on the staff recommendation to sunset the City Bond Oversight Commission and Neighborhood Improvements Advisory Board related to the 2017 Bond Program and establishment of a new 11-member Streets, Bridges, and Sidewalks Advisory Committee.
[Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Razi Hosseini, Director, Public Works]

Razi Hosseini, Director of Public Works and City Engineer, recommended sunset of the City Bond Oversight Commission (CBOC) and Neighborhood Improvements Advisory Commission (NIAC) which were created to provide oversight of the 2017 Bond Program. Hosseini proposed continuation of the bond dashboard and a streamlined oversight of all future bond programs by a new Streets, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board and a new Storm Water Management Advisory Board as well as existing boards such as the Parks Board, Linear Creekways Board, Library Board, Historic & Design Review Commission and the Housing Commission.

Councilmember Courage asked about the current composition of the CBOC. Hosseini stated that there were 15 members of CBOC and the new Streets, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board would have 11 members. Councilmember Courage asked what work the new Advisory Board would do. Hosseini stated the new Board would help identify pedestrian mobility projects and help with the Bicycle Master Plan.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez supported the creation of a new commission to oversee streets, bridges and sidewalks and asked how many 2017 Bond projects were not completed.

Hosseini stated that 90% of the projects were either complete or under construction but those that had been delayed were due to design issues or leveraged funding issues. Councilmember McKee- Rodriguez recommended free parking and childcare for Board Members. City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre stated that there was a childcare assistance program operated by the Department of Human Services and a parking program was also available.

Councilmember Castillo recommended there be more City Council oversight for the Housing projects.

Councilmember Sandoval supported the staff recommendation so that the commission members could focus on their areas of expertise split between streets and drainage. She did not support the Housing Commission only providing oversight of the Housing Bond and recommended the cultural facilities be reviewed by the San Antonio Arts Commission. Councilmember Sandoval requested more clarification on the new Streets, Bridges & Sidewalks Advisory Board and suggested they could focus on pedestrian safety.

Chair Cabello Havrda asked if there were any lessons learned from the last bond. Hosseini stated that those lessons were taken into consideration with the staff recommendation of the new advisory

board to help oversee the Bond Program.

No action was required for Item 5.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, Chair Cabello Havrda adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Approved

Melissa Cabello Havrda, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk