

# City of San Antonio



## Minutes Planning and Community Development Committee

### 2023 – 2025 Council Members

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4  
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Teri Castillo, Dist. 5  
Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8 | John Courage, Dist. 9

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

10:00 AM

Council Briefing Room

The Planning and Community Development Council Committee convened a regular meeting in the City Hall Council Briefing Room beginning at 10:00 AM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Committee Members present:

**Members Present:** Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, *Chair*  
Phyllis Viagran, *Member*  
Teri Castillo, *Member*  
John Courage, *Member*

**Members Absent:** Manny Pelaez, *Member*

### Approval of Minutes

#### 1. Approval of minutes from December 11, 2023 Planning and Community Development Committee Meeting

Councilmember Viagran moved to Approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023 Planning and Community Development meeting. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage

**Absent:** Pelaez

### Public Comment

Kathleen Trenchard spoke in opposition of the digital signage associated with Item 2.

Bianca Maldonado spoke of her concerns associated with digital signage and off premise billboards

proposed in Item 2. She noted that critical discussions were needed with the Texas Department of Transportation and historic conservation stakeholders.

Gemma Kennedy spoke in opposition of digital signage and media platform media overlay proposed in Item 2. She supported inclusion of Arts and historic components to the Entertainment District.

Edward Jacobs spoke in support of Item 2 and the promotion of Arts within the proposed policy.

David Ehrlich with Urban Activation, was in support of Item 2 and the positive impact to the Arts as was done in Denver, Colorado which his organization manages.

### **Briefing and Possible Action on**

#### **2. Briefing and possible action on the proposal to create an Urban Entertainment District in the City of San Antonio [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Michael Shannon, Director, Development Services]**

Michael Shannon, Director of the Development Services Department, provided an overview of the Urban Entertainment District and a proposal to create the district. He noted that the City was approached by Outfront Media and the Urban Activation Institute to create an Urban Entertainment District in 2023. He stated that this district would allow installation of enhanced digital displays on building and structures for arts and advertisements.

Shannon noted that there were existing districts in the cities of Atlanta, Denver and West Hollywood which included display time shared for the City's usage and at no cost to the City for advertisements. He noted that digital signage did already exist within the City.

Shannon spoke to the community benefits of digital signage to include activation of spaces, revenue sharing used for arts or other initiatives, time on digital media for art and messaging and the City would control design and content through contracts and address safety issues with additional lighting associated with brightness and operating standards.

Shannon noted the challenges to include community support for digital signage, the identification of areas or buildings appropriate for signage, enforcement and regulations of signage and the protection of certain community areas and assets such as the Riverwalk and historic districts.

Shannon stated that the program would require changes to the City's Sign Code (Chapter 28) and would propose allowance of off-premises advertising on digital screens. He spoke to the creation of an Ordinance to address these concerns.

Shannon recommended additional community meetings over the next 3-4 months to obtain feedback on creation of one or more Urban Entertainment Districts. He stated that he would include specific locations to be included in the district and restrictions associated with those districts. He stated that the results of community meeting and staff recommendations would be presented to the Committee with a proposed Ordinance and proposed locations for a pilot program.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia stated that San Antonio was unique with great respect to its historic value and supported additional conversations to address concerns and stakeholders' input. She asked if an entity such as Centro San Antonio would take over a program such as this. Shannon stated that Centro could manage the program but that changes to the Sign Ordinance would be needed. Chair Rocha Garcia stressed that the City needed to maintain control or regulations.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke to the inclusion of arts and development services for shared time. She requested individual meetings with stakeholders and concerned parties on the subject.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification of off-premise signage. Shannon provided clarification on off-premise and on-premise signage. Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on time restraints of signage and when allowed to advertise. Shannon stated that additional research was recommended to include benchmarking with other cities.

Councilmember Courage asked if staff had been to other cities who had Urban Digital Districts. Shannon stated that City staff had not visited the sites but had performed research and conducted phone interviews to gain data and did not rule out future visits to the sites. Councilmember Courage expressed concern on the installation of digital signage within the Alamo and historic districts.

Councilmember Castillo supported the recommendation of staff to continue research and discussion for 3-4 months and the need to address brightness and lighting concerns.

Councilmember Viagran noted that there were many cities that did Urban signage very well and it did not take away from those cities' character. She supported these districts within all of the City and not just within the downtown area to include the Southside growing urban areas. She supported continued conversation on the Item and the elevation of the Arts Community in digital form.

Councilmember Courage stated that he did not support districts in residential areas and requested the inclusion of stakeholders impacted by the proposed signage. He requested data on percentages of advertising in relation to arts and specific advertising. He stressed the need for safety components and adding lighting to dark areas within the downtown areas.

No action was taken on this Item.

### **3. Briefing and possible action on the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) Implementation** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department]

Mark Carmona, Chief Housing Officer, introduced the Item which provided an update on the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) and provided an overview of the SHIP's shared vision for housing affordability in San Antonio with community partners such as the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD), Opportunity Home, The Housing Trust, school districts and Bexar County.

Carmona spoke to ongoing local coordination efforts to include those with the San Antonio Independent School District, the Texas Department of Transportation, Thriving Community Grant stakeholders, and Bexar County. Discussion included the need for affordable housing, homelessness issues to include permanent supportive housing and grants to support transportation from residential areas to work.

Carmona noted that housing would be a concentration for the upcoming SA to DC meeting from February 5-8, 2024. He stated that major agenda items for those meetings would include expanded availability of housing tax credits to include renter's and workforce housing; increased support for HOME, CDBG and ESG funding focused on supportive housing for older adults and people with disabilities; renter support services, and expanded tax credits for climate resilient home programs.

Carmona introduced Veronica Garcia, Director of NHSD, who provided an overview of community metrics gathered under the SHIP. She noted that metrics included the housing outlook in San Antonio in relation to income and cost burdens and included data in poverty statuses, median housing income and median housing prices. She stated that NHSD used both Federal and local grant funds to assist and provide housing services to include eviction education, relocation assistance, homelessness supportive housing and housing improvements.

Garcia reviewed staff's progress toward the SHIP's 10-year goals to include an increase in housing stock and shared percentages for the different types of housing stock. She noted that data could be gained at the NHSD dashboard available on line.

Garcia reviewed housing strategies initiated by NHSD to include a property tax help campaign and noted that 1,928 households were served in FY 2023. She added that FY 2024 sessions were scheduled between February 24 through May 11, 2024. She stated that individual meetings were also available through partnership with legal partners.

Garcia stated that REntWise SA provided support to residents who were rent tenants and sessions made them aware of their rights as renters. She spoke to land ban activities and community land trust strategies and partnerships with Bexar County and the San Antonio Housing Trust.

Garcia spoke to the SHIP strategy associated with Auxiliary Dwelling Unit (ADU) initiatives with elements to UDC amendments and ADU design competitions. She spoke to the development of a digital One-Stop Shop in partnership with the San Antonio Community REhouse Directory (SACRD) to include housing portal and housing programs. She added that an additional presentation on the initiative would be provided to the Committee in the future.

Garcia reviewed the next steps for available housing funding initiatives to include a Request for Proposals (RFP) for \$10 million for permanent supportive housing targeted for Spring 2024 and 13 projects.

Garcia reviewed data associated with the Rental Assistance Program to include the receipt of over 4,400 applications received in October 2023. She noted that \$5.1 million was available in FY 2024 which was funded by U.S. Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance Grant and the City's

General Fund. She stated that a concentrated effort was being conducted to identify residents in most need of assistance for the remaining funds.

Ed Hinojosa with Opportunity Home, provided data on the need for housing in San Antonio. He stated that 1 in 10 individuals in the City were in need of affordable housing. He reviewed the housing inventory of Opportunity Home and the council districts in which they were located. He noted that public housing and voucher programs served over 18,000 households and he provided demographics of residents in Opportunity Home housing. Hinojosa noted that there were currently nine housing developments in construction totaling almost 2,000 units.

Pete Alanis, Director of the San Antonio Housing Trust (SAHT), provided an overview of the efforts of SAHT to include over 12,000 home built or in construction. He added that 659 homes were awaiting financial closing and 3,500 homes were in the predevelopment pipeline. He reviewed the various community partnerships providing services and funding to residents in need of housing. Alanis noted that increased interest rates and lack of available soft funds hindered more projects being brought forward.

Alanis provided an overview of the development of disability accessible housing which was both affordable and permanent. He reviewed the goals of a 20 acre VIDA project and noted that a future presentation on the project would be presented to the Committee. Alanis noted that the goals of SAHT was to identify continued housing opportunities for teachers, disabled and search for strategic land acquisition opportunities.

Assistant City Manager Lori Houston noted the efforts of the City departments and community partners to provide quality housing to residents.

## DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia recognized the SHIP efforts to provide quality housing and noted that San Antonio was recognized nationally for their efforts. She highlighted the development of a disability board addressing the need of accessible housing.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on the individuals assisted in the Rental Assistance Program and of individuals not approved for assistance. Garcia stated that reasons for disapproval included residents being over income, nonresponsive to providing required documentation, or already receiving max assistance. Garcia added that staff assisted with education on other sources for assistance and/or housing.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked if the Department of Human Services (DHS) and NHSD were going to consolidate areas where staff was available to residents seeking assistance. Garcia stated that there was a high level of coordination within the departments and inclusion of a unified portal for information to residents.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke in support of the City's efforts in rental assistance programs.

Councilmember Castillo noted her support of the City's housing assistance programs and gains to providing affordable housing to residents. She spoke to the Federal grant application for

transportation supported housing to include efforts from the City and VIA Metropolitan Transit. She asked how the City could increase Federal grant submissions addressing transportation needs along residential areas. Carmona stated that staff researched and brought forward transportation needs for residents within transportation corridors. Councilmember Castillo noted the need to address recidivism issues to include housing for low income but also other prior incarcerated individuals.

Councilmember Viagran requested data on what hotels were really being used as low barrier housing throughout the City. She asked that staff provide financial income education to individuals who were contesting their taxes or how they can budget better to address their financial needs. Additionally, she requested education efforts to residents in the areas of the Ready to Work Programs and other resources to keep individuals in their homes.

Councilmember Courage stressed the need for providing individuals with a safe place to live and thanked City staff and partners in providing quality programs to address the need. He spoke to the continued need for education of programs and services and that housing needs should be addressed at SA to DC.

No action was taken on this Item.

**4. Briefing and possible action related to Affordable Single-Family & Multi-Family Gap Funding Solicitations** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood & Housing Services Department]

Veronica Gonzales, Assistant Director of NHSD, provided a briefing on the Affordable Housing Development Funding recommendations to approve four housing projects receiving \$7 million in funding. Gonzales provided an overview of the solicitation which was U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-funded single-family and multi-family affordable development projects in need of gap funding. She noted that the solicitation was released in October 2023 with seven respondents submitting applications. She reviewed the evaluation criteria of the solicitation and points associated with each criteria and noted that SBEDA and Local Preference did not apply to this solicitation due to Federal funding. Gonzales reviewed the evaluation committee and summarized the proposals for each category.

Gonzales reviewed the scoring matrix for the multi-family homeownership proposals and stated that the projects would provide 151 units. She noted that the projects approved were the Village at Perrin Beitel (\$600,000 award recommended) and Rainbow Lofts (\$2,744,000 award recommended). She added that the projects included services such as a food pantry and other affordable housing amenities.

Gonzales reviewed the single-family homeownership proposals submitted and spoke to the scoring matrix of the two proposals submitted. She noted that the projects recommended for approval were the Chandler Road Housing Project (\$3,4 million award recommended) for 36 homes and Apache Creek Affordable Homes (\$274,500 award recommended) for single family homes.

Gonzales spoke to the next steps to include approval by the Planning and Community Development Committee (PCDC) and final consideration by the City Council in February 2024.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia recognized Natalie Griffin with Habitat of Humanity who was retiring after 30 years of service.

Councilmember Viagran expressed her support of the proposed projects and recommended funding.

Councilmember Courage expressed his support of the Rainbow Lofts project in his council district which addressed the need for affordable housing throughout the City.

Councilmember Castillo expressed her support of the projects recommended by staff.

Councilmember Viagran moved to recommend and forward the Item to City Council for consideration. Councilmember Courage seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage  
**Absent:** Pelaez

**Consent Agenda**

- 5. Resolutions of Support for multifamily rental housing developments seeking 2024 Competitive 9% Housing Tax Credits from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage  
**Absent:** Pelaez

- 6. Resolution of No Objection for Pedcor Investments-2023-CXCVII, LP’s application for 2024 Non-Competitive 4% Housing Tax Credits (HTC) from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) for the construction of a 312-unit affordable multi-family rental housing development named The Orion Apartment Homes, located at approximately 13107 SW Loop 410 in Council District 4, allowing the construction of the development to be located within one linear mile or less from another development, and acknowledgment that more than 20% of the total housing in the Census Tract is supported by HTC.** [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Veronica Garcia, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve on the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Courage

**Absent:** Pelaez

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 AM.

**Approved**

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*Adriana Rocha Garcia, Chair*

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*Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk*

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