

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
San Antonio, Texas 78205

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Mayor Ron Nirenberg

Mario Bravo, Dist. 1 | Jalen McKee-Rodriguez, Dist. 2
Phyllis Viagran, Dist. 3 | Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4
Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6
Ana Sandoval, Dist. 7 | Manny Pelaez, Dist. 8
John Courage, Dist. 9 | Clayton Perry, Dist. 10

Wednesday, June 22, 2022

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 2:11 PM. Deputy City Clerk Aurora Perkins took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 10 – Nirenberg, Pelaez, Courage, Bravo, Perry, McKee-Rodriguez, Rocha Garcia, Viagran, Castillo, Cabello Havrda

ABSENT: 1 - Sandoval

ITEMS

1. Briefing on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and its implementation. [Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager; Sally Basurto, Director, Government Affairs]

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the Item and Sally Basurto, Government Affairs Director, who

provided a briefing on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) updates and its implementation. Basurto provided an overview of the BIL, COSA strategy, released opportunities and new opportunities associated with BIL. She noted that the COSA strategy was to maximize opportunities to secure funding through grant program analysis and projects that furthered existing City initiatives.

Basurto stated that 2022 released opportunities included airport infrastructure grants for \$15 billion and Airport Terminal grants for \$1 billion. She noted that 2022 released opportunities included bridge improvement and bus mobility funding opportunities. Basurto stated that there was State pass-through funding and direct competitive grant opportunities for broadband, equity and infrastructure. Basurto discussed additional upcoming grant funding opportunities in the areas of RAISE grant opportunities, infrastructure, railroad, mobility improvements, connectivity, etc.

Basurto stated that potential projects for COSA were downtown San Antonio core area improvements for improved connectivity from all sectors of the city to the downtown corridor. She added that potential projects included improvements at the Hemisfair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation and Port San Antonio areas.

DISCUSSION

Mayor Nirenberg thanked Basurto for the presentation and noted that he felt that the City should submit grant applications for all the grant funding opportunity categories. Mayor Nirenberg asked if City staff had a plan for the workflow of grant submittal process. Basurto discussed the coordination process within the City organization and with partner stakeholder groups to ensure that identified projects are brought forward in the grant process.

Mayor Nirenberg asked why the City had not submitted any grants in the bus facility improvement funding. VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) Government Relations Coordinator Peter Arguello stated that VIA was coordinating future funding opportunities in future rounds of funding and reviewed the funding that had already been awarded to VIA at the State and Federal level.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that a drought had been broken in terms of transit funding from the Federal Government and in terms of transit priorities, and that the east/west line should be accelerated.

Mayor Nirenberg asked for clarification in the Mega Infrastructure Grant submittals. Basurto stated that those type of grants were submitted through the Texas Department of Transportation and that City staff had provided feedback and consideration for future grant submittals to assure that San Antonio was included in future funding opportunities.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that he was supportive of rail crossing submittals to improve connectivity within the City and surrounding communities.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked which grants were considered repetitive grant funding opportunities. Basurto provided an overview of repetitive grant opportunities to include RAISE grants. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that it was important to be innovative in grant

opportunity funding for the lesser served areas to include the Eastside. Basurto committed that the administration was made aware of needs in the areas most in need of infrastructure improvements and mobility connectivity. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stressed that it was important to address the underserved communities and requested information on the proposed projects that would be included in future grant submissions.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for clarification on the status of eastside mobility project, east/west corridor expansion and if Federal or new funding could be identified for project funding. Arguello stated that opportunities would be continuously evaluated and sought for the expansion of the east/west corridor and eastside infrastructure improvements.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that residents continuously inquired about improvements associated with Rittiman and Eisenhower Roads. He requested data on improved access to the downtown corridor, railroad wait time issues information and requested that staff meet with eastside community organizations to gain further data. City Manager Walsh stated that he did not know if data was available on railroad wait times but would follow up on that data.

Councilmember Courage reiterated that it was important to apply for every available grant opportunity. Councilmember Courage asked if Vision Zero and the Master Bike Plan would be included in grant submittal opportunities. Basurto confirmed that Vision Zero and the Master Bike Plan would be considered for future grant funding. Councilmember Courage requested a report on the current and existing projects that grant funding would be considered for. Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle stated that each grant opportunity would be evaluated to better identify relevant projects and that these priorities would be briefed to the City Council Committees when identified.

Councilmember Courage stated that he was concerned with the value of grant submittal requests in the areas of airport infrastructure and airport terminal program improvements. Coyle clarified that grant submittals were prepared taking into consideration airport and service levels as identified by grant criteria. Councilmember Courage asked for information on potential projects in broadband digital equity. John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager, stated that a report would be provided to the City Council for review.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia reiterated the importance of digital and broadband equity for all communities. She expressed support for funding for connective corridors and improvements at Port San Antonio. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there was a mileage limit of consideration for mobile connectivity. Basurto stated that grant specifics were still being finalized and would be provided once confirmed.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a list of all projects considered for potential funding opportunities. City Manager Walsh stated that a report would be repackaged for the City Council's review. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if there were opportunities for Councilmembers to provide additional input on potential projects. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that there was an opportunity to partner with Tier 1 higher education institutions such as the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and Texas A&M University-San Antonio (TAMU-SA) in projects such as the Middle Mile Digital Program. Peterek stated that the City had been

working with community stakeholders and would explore opportunities to work with higher education institutions. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked for clarification on which staff would be working on gathering data and grant opportunities. City Manager Walsh stated that individuals in each department would work with Government Affairs to work on potential opportunities.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how areas had been identified for long term digital improvements and the criteria used to identify. Peterek stated that criteria were provided at the State level and would be evaluated once released and then coordinated by staff to submit grant applications. City Manager Walsh stated that staff was continuously working with community partners and stakeholders to submit joint applications and build support for projects.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked how criteria would be identified for affordable housing and housing improvements. Basurto stated that the process was similar to the digital divide process in that the State would be providing criteria and would be evaluated once provided. Councilmember Cabello Havrda requested a presentation on the Reconnecting Communities Projects to learn of project identification and opportunities. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that General McMullen Road had been previously discussed at the Transportation & Mobility Committee level and asked how the road could be prioritized in upcoming funding opportunities. Juan Antonio Flores with Port San Antonio stated that General McMullen Road was already included in Port San Antonio plans for improvements of sidewalks, streets and other infrastructure areas.

Councilmember Castillo asked that environment remediation projects be included in future consideration to certain Westside communities and be considered in Build Better America Project funding applications.

Councilmember Castillo asked if there was gap funding for the Zarzamora Street Project. Public Works Director Razi Hosseini stated that he did not believe there was a funding gap and that the project was currently in the design stage. Councilmember Castillo expressed concern regarding the degree of needed improvements and that she was pleased to hear that Port San Antonio was including General McMullen Road in future funding improvements.

Councilmember Perry asked for clarification on the grant submittal and review process by City Council. Basurto stated that projects based on subject area would be briefed at the City Council Committee level and then would be briefed to the full City Council. Councilmember Perry requested a report on potential projects that could be considered for grant submittals.

Councilmember Perry asked why VIA had not submitted for funding in the current funding cycle. Leroy Alloway, Chief Government and External Affairs Officer, stated that VIA was currently replacing the bus fleet and was currently evaluating a true picture of need and wanted to make sure that they were fully competitive. Alloway noted that a report would be provided on potential projects and reasoning for not applying in the current round of funding.

Councilmember Perry asked why TXDoT had not submitted for this cycle of funding. Basurto stated that projects were being identified for future rounds and that projects for this round were not sufficient.

Councilmember Perry asked if grants applications could be submitted at the City level for large

scale street infrastructure improvements. Basurto stated that the City could apply but that major projects were normally submitted by TXDoT and not at the local level and staff confirmed that TXDoT submitted projects for the Austin and Dallas areas. Coyle stated that staff worked with TXDoT to communicate the need for projects in the San Antonio area and would continue to advocate for those projects. City Manager Walsh stated that the City would continue to push for TXDoT projects in the San Antonio area and Mayor Nirenberg stated that the executive leadership team needed to meet to further plan and advocate for projects in San Antonio area.

Councilmember Pelaez stressed that it was important to communicate and advocate for TXDoT projects in the San Antonio area and not in other areas of the State. He noted that VIA funding was also an area that needed to be lobbied and advocated for at the State and Federal level. Councilmember Pelaez stated that it was important to utilize City lobbyists to build awareness of City transportation and mobility needs.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if projects such as those proposed by Velocity Corporation would be appropriate for grant submittals. City Manager Walsh confirmed that the proposed projects were appropriate and would be further vetted for future submittals. Councilmember Pelaez asked if there were other opportunities for grant submittals other than those briefed today. Coyle confirmed that there were numerous opportunities for grant submittals and that staff would continue to seek input from the City Council to better identify priorities.

Councilmember Viagran stated that additional work was needed on the digital divide and bridge infrastructure was a priority for her to address. Councilmember Viagran also noted that weatherization funding was needed particularly due to the extreme temperatures in San Antonio. Councilmember Viagran stated that good work was performed by the City Council at the SA to DC Capital visits but that additional work was needed at the State level. She stressed the importance of the “last mile” issue of digital divide delivery in many of the underserved City communities which should be a focus of staff.

Councilmember Bravo stressed that staff needed to obtain funding for San Antonio.

Councilmember Perry asked if there were currently a list of projects identified for grant categories and related submittal deadlines. Basurto reviewed the categories where projects had been identified and those still pending. Councilmember Perry requested a chart of all grant submittal processes and potential processes to assure that deadlines were met.

Mayor Nirenberg thanked staff for their presentation and reiterated that it was vital to get grant submissions in as soon as possible.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 3:55 PM to enter into Executive Session to discuss the following items:

- A. Economic development negotiations pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087 (economic development)

- B.** The purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.072 (real property).
- C.** Legal issues related to collective bargaining pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- D.** Legal issues related to litigation involving the City pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- E.** Legal issues relating to COVID-19 preparedness pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting in Open Session at 5:22 PM and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 5:22 PM.

Approved

**Ron Nirenberg
Mayor**

**Debbie Racca-Sittre
City Clerk**