

**State of Texas**  
**County of Bexar**  
**City of San Antonio**



**Meeting Minutes City**  
**Council Special Meeting**

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

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**Wednesday, October 27, 2021**

**9:00 AM**

**Municipal Plaza Building**

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The City Council convened a regular meeting in the Norma S. Rodriguez Council Chamber in the Municipal Plaza Building beginning at 9:00 AM. Interim City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

**PRESENT:** 11 – Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, Perry

1. **Briefing on City Staff's 2022 – 2027 Bond Proposition allocation recommendations and possible action to provide the Bond Committees preliminary guidance on proposition allocations.** [Roderick Sanchez, Assistant City Manager; Razi Hosseini, Director, Public Works]

City Manager Erik Walsh introduced the staff presentation and Assistant City Manager Rod Sanchez provided an overview of the 2022 – 2027 Bond Program (Bond Program), including a timeline, the Bond

Committee process as well as the appointment of members and chairs to the Committee. Sanchez provided an update which included changes to the proposed dollar amounts within the Bond categories as well as a detailed listing of changes to individual projects. Sanchez outlined staff's proposal to move some of the projects into alternative funding sources such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ). Sanchez described the community outreach process for the Bond Committee Meetings as well as staff committee assignments. City Manager Walsh explained that the Bond Committees would provide a prioritized list of projects to City Council so that adjustments could be made by City Council in an orderly fashion which would culminate in the approval of the Bond Program and Call for Election at its meeting on February 10, 2022.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Mitsuko Ramos, representing the owner of the Republic Golf Course spoke in favor of improvements at Salado Creek Linear Park to make the space an all-inclusive accessible park in City Council District 3.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Mayor Nirenberg expressed support of the commitment by the City to restore equity to our community and stressed that the Bond Program should reflect this commitment while balancing the need within limited funding resources. Mayor Nirenberg outlined three pillars beyond Equity which included 1) Increased Resilience; 2) Improved Public Health Outcomes; and 3) Increased Connectivity. The Mayor expressed support for the use of Mid-Town TIRZ for the cultural partners on Broadway.

Councilmember Pelaez moved to approve the proposition amounts and projects included in the staff memo and as presented to move forward to the Bond Committees for further refinement and prioritization. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion and thanked staff for making the changes requested by City Council in the last meeting.

Councilmember Viagran expressed support for the current project list including the Salado Creek Linear Park and all Council District 3 Projects, adding that she did not want to further reduce the Parks Proposition. She thanked the Council District 3 appointees to the Bond Committees and felt confident that they would do the work of removing remnants of redlining. Councilmember Viagran asked City Manager Walsh about the strategy of removing projects. City Manager Walsh replied that Assistant City Manager Lori Houston and Chief Financial Officer Ben Gorzell scrubbed the Mid-Town TIRZ in order to relieve the Bond Program from having to fund the Broadway Cultural projects.

Councilmember Castillo noted that Public Comment was not included on the Posted Agenda. Castillo stressed that the needs of Inner City and Council District 5 residents were not being met in the proposed Bond Program, citing street/sidewalk and drainage issues. Councilmember Castillo added that basic infrastructure/drainage improvements were some of the most expensive.

Councilmember Castillo moved to amend the original motion by reducing the funding for Parks Proposition, reducing funding for Greenway trails by \$60 million and reallocating \$40 million to streets, sidewalks and \$20 million into drainage position equitably into the Council Districts. Councilmember Perry seconded the motion. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Aye:** McKee-Rodriguez, Castillo, Sandoval, Courage, Perry

**Nay:** Nirenberg, Bravo, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez

Councilmember Cabello Havrda spoke in support of the staff recommended list. Councilmember Cabello

Havrda opposed the reduction of funding for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and explained that the trails provided safe transportation alternatives as well as improved life safety, health and decreased crime due to opportunities for fully accessible recreation as well as a safe commute.

Councilmember Perry supported moving funding from the Parks Proposition into Streets and Drainage as proposed by Councilmember Castillo and provided a chart that compared the 2017 Bond investments by Proposition with the Proposed Bond Program investments by Proposition and cited a \$6.6 billion backlog of streets and drainage projects. Councilmember Perry stated that the Committees would not move money between Propositions and needed more guidance from the City Council and he recommended more funding to go toward streets and drainage infrastructure.

Councilmember Courage expressed concern that the Housing Proposition was cut from the originally discussed \$250 million to \$150 million and \$126 million was added for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System. Councilmember Courage maintained that there was not adequate discussion on the funding for the trail system. Councilmember Courage disagreed that the trails would offer better mobility because the trails did not have lighting and were closed after dark. Councilmember Courage expressed support for funding for the trails in a reduced amount and suggested other funding should be identified and utilized.

Councilmember Courage referenced a February 19, 2020 City Council meeting where it was expected that Bexar County would be asked to pay \$183 million for 26 miles of trails. Councilmember Courage suggested that other funding options be utilized to complete more trails and noted that if there were no funding in the Bond Program for trails, it could be included in 2027 – 2032 Bond Program. City Manager Walsh clarified that on slide 14 of the February 19, 2020 presentation, there was an estimated cost of \$279 million for 71 miles of trails and since that time City Council policy discussions were held on having the Transportation Department include the Greenway Trails for transportation. Walsh stated that conditions changed since February 2020 due to COVID-19, including the sales tax conversation and bond capacity.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez noted that voters in Council District 2 had requested improved streets and drainage and cited this as a need, versus a want. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed support for the amendment to move funding from the Parks Proposition to Streets and Drainage.

Councilmember Sandoval asked for clarification on the timeline and number of miles and Sales Tax funds previously planned for the Greenway Trails as an emerald band around the City. Homer Garcia, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that the target was to build 180 miles of trail and noted that the 2015 Sales Tax provided \$80 million and the 2010 Sales Tax provided \$45 million. Councilmember Sandoval expressed support for additional funding for Streets and Drainage noting that the Bond Program included more funding than historically provided to the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System .

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that Council District 6 residents had requested funding for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and noted that in Council District 6, residents rode their bicycles to work.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the City had previously applied for Federal Grants to fund the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and had not received grant funding because the City had not provided funding and had not received funding from partners. He indicated that there had been a recent request to the Federal Government that made the case for trails being a mobility project at the Federal level in order to receive grant funding. Councilmember Pelaez supported the funding for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System adding that they were drainage projects.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez explained that the northeast sector of Council District 2 needed funding for streets and drainage and asked staff to consider a new list that provided more funding for Council

District 2. City Manager Walsh suggested that the Council District 2 appointees to the Bond Committees be allowed to determine funding allocations. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez mentioned that Council District 2 had lost funding in the Bond Program with every iteration of the list.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about the Lackland Connection to the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and mentioned that there were Toyota deed restrictions that should be included in the budget for the Greenway Trails in the Bond Program. Homer Garcia explained that the alternative route through Port San Antonio was a design-only project in the Bond Program and was proposed at \$1.9 million. City Manager Walsh stated that the parks conversation with Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) would be held after the Bond Program was passed. Councilmember Rocha Garcia questioned the reduction in Parks to \$50 million but did not state a position.

Councilmember Bravo stressed that the Bond Program should be balanced and noted that the Bond Program funding for each Council District had increased over the 2017 - 2022 Bond Program amount. Councilmember Bravo noted that there were other ways to fund drainage projects including potential exploration of the Stormwater Fee-In-Lieu charged to developers. Councilmember Bravo supported moving the staff proposed project list forward to the Bond Committees.

Councilmember Perry stressed that the amendment still added plenty of funding to the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System. Councilmember Perry suggested that the Bond Committees develop a project list. Councilmember Perry stated that \$50 million for the Greenway Trails was included in the original document provided to City Council and that amount was still an increase in funding for the trails. He asked for the balance of the Sales Tax funding. City Manager Walsh stated that there was \$80 million from the 2015 Sales Tax for Linear Creekway trails and all but \$160,000 was committed. City Manager Walsh explained that the Sales Tax was implemented under a “pay as you go” system, not like a Bond debt-financed program. City Manager Walsh clarified that the original staff proposal for trails was \$200 million, not \$50 million.

Councilmember Castillo explained that originally, the Housing Proposition was \$250 million and requested a discussion regarding the process. Councilmember Castillo stated that the Housing Proposition decreased and the Parks Proposition increased. Councilmember Castillo added that the Westside Creeks Project was not really a drainage project but was nice to have.

Councilmember Courage requested the status of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Federal Grant funding. Sanchez stated that the grant was a highly competitive grant and would provide \$25 million for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and staff would be notified in approximately one month if the City of San Antonio’s Grant Application was approved. City Manager Walsh clarified that the RAISE Grant would impact the Bexar County funding commitment to the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System more than the City.

Councilmember Sandoval requested goals or a vision for drainage with metrics on how many homes would be taken out of the flood plain. Councilmember Sandoval recommended an equity approach to drainage as well as to streets, sidewalks and parks. Councilmember Sandoval felt that the future of the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System deserved to have further discussion in the public. City Manager Walsh explained that \$280 million was required to finish the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System when the policy decision was made to change the Sales Tax from funding the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System and Edwards Aquifer to Ready to Work and VIA Transit. Councilmember Sandoval noted that at that time, the commitment was made to finish the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System. Councilmember Sandoval added that the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System did not need to be completed in the Bond Program.

Councilmember Viagran noted that over half of the Bond Program funds were allocated to streets. She stated that if the City funded all the streets, the State and Federal Government would not provide funding, citing experience with Roosevelt Avenue. Councilmember Viagran recommended taking the funding recommendations to the Bond Committees.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that setting proper expectations for the work of City Council had been a challenge to this and the prior City Council with their commitment to Equity in order to change multiple generations of redlining and the “rough proportionality” policy that followed. Mayor Nirenberg encouraged his colleagues to consider quality of life and other modes of transportation and not allocating Bond Program funding into infrastructure as Bond funding was a delicate balance. Mayor Nirenberg added that the City needed to change the way the City was built and developed.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez stated that the original Bond Program allocation for the Linear Creekways/Greenway Trail System was \$50 million, then, \$100 million was moved from the Housing Proposition. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez moved to amend the original motion by decreasing the Parks Proposition by \$30 million with \$20 million reallocated to the Streets Proposition and \$10 million to the Drainage Proposition, which he felt was a compromise. Councilmember Sandoval seconded the motion. The motion failed by the following vote:

**Aye:** McKee-Rodriguez, Castillo, Sandoval, Courage, Perry

**Nay:** Nirenberg, Bravo, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez expressed opposition to the process.

Councilmember Castillo asked what percentage was allocated to administration in the Proposed Bond Program. Razi Hosseini, Director of Public Works, replied that 9% was allocated for Capital Administration.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked why 50% of those projects in the 2017 - 2022 Bond Program had not been completed. Razi Hosseini, Director of Public Works responded that Parks and Facility projects did not usually have savings, but some of the Streets and Drainage projects might have savings. Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that trails projects seemed to get completed more quickly than streets and drainage. Hosseini explained that it was due to need to keep streets open or redirect drainage, which Parks could be fully shut down to allow for no interruptions to the construction contractor.

Councilmember Sandoval urged the City Council to consider a policy to mitigate displacement of residents when investments were made in trails or other improvements. Assistant City Manager Lori Houston responded that the For Everyone Home Program which was expected to go to City Council Committee tomorrow addressed displacement.

Mayor Nirenberg reminded the City Council that the motion was only to take the list to Bond Committees, not to approve the list of projects or call for the election.

Councilmember Perry and Courage were pleased with the discussion but did not support the main motion.

Councilmember Pelaez moved to approve the Proposed 2022 – 2027 Bond Program as presented. Councilmember Viagran seconded the motion. The motion prevailed by the following vote:

**Aye:** Nirenberg, Bravo, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Cabello Havrda, Pelaez, Courage

**Nay:** McKee-Rodriguez, Castillo, Perry

**Abstain:** Sandoval

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Approved**

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**Ron Nirenberg**  
**Mayor**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
**Debbie Racca- Sittre**  
**Interim City Clerk**