

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, November 3, 2021

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 2:08 PM. Interim City Clerk Debbie Racca-Sittre took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Council Members present:

PRESENT: 10 – Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee-Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello

Havrda, Pelaez, Courage, Perry

ABSENT: Sandoval

ITEMS

1. Briefing and update on the City's Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) [Lori Houston,

Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

2. Briefing and update on the strategic plan to respond to homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Human Services]

Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager introduced the item and noted that both Items 1 and 2 would be briefed back-to-back. Houston gave an overview of the three strategic areas for Housing: Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), the Priority Categories and Housing Strategic Objectives, and the Housing Bond Evaluation Framework. Houston went into detail about the Priority Categories and Housing Strategic Objectives and stressed that the Housing Bond Committee would not select the projects but would prioritize the categories and strategies in the SHIP that would be included in the Housing Bond Proposition. Houston recognized the participants in the SHIP planning development process and explained that there was an extensive public engagement process for the Plan.

Ian Benavides, Assistant Director of the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD) provided a detailed presentation on the SHIP which complied with the Housing Policy Framework. Benavides discussed the plan approach, 10-year funding plan and goals, as well as 24 strategies, metric targets and the overall status. Benavides listed and described the work of partner organization and departments with programs designed to increase availability of affordable housing and implement workforce development strategies to increase wages along with the targeted metrics. He closed his presentation with a timeline for adoption of the SHIP which was expected on December 2, 2021.

Melody Woosley, Director of the Department of Human Services (DHS) provided an overview of the strategic plan to respond to homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County including data, strategic plan development process and timeline with key priority recommendations updates in the areas of street outreach, affordable and specialty housing options, leadership impact group, connect unsheltered through low-barrier options, frequent user system engagement (FUSE) study, increased consumer engagement and equity. Woosley closed the presentation with a timeline and next steps.

Erik Walsh, City Manager welcomed Chief Housing Officer Mark Carmona and explained how the team worked together on the implementation of the Housing Policy.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Nirenberg provided background on Mark Carmona's involvement with the Housing Policy Framework and acknowledged the extensive work of the Housing Commission and expert housing organizations. Mayor Nirenberg affirmed that the City was committed to improving accessibility

and availability of affordable housing as well as the leveraging of other funding types and asked about transparency using a dashboard. Benavidez explained that a dashboard would be ready for the public by February 2021.

Mayor Nirenberg added that economic mobility, educational access and job training must be boosted in order to improve access to housing, not just build more housing. Woosley explained that both affordable housing and permanent supportive housing was key to placing homeless persons. Mayor Nirenberg noted the City had signed onto President Biden's Federal Housing Challenge that included housing 2,300 additional homeless persons this year and asked about the use of hotels: Woosley responded that the City's lease of a hotel operated by San Antonio Metropolitan Ministries (SAMB) was a low barrier housing option with a focus on housing first. City Manager Walsh noted that Hotels had a high operating cost and suggested being careful with using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding as it was one-time.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia noted that having a plan would help with accountability for all the funding, particularly Bond funding. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked about public input access to the SHIP planning process, particularly for persons with multiple barriers; which Benavides explained that the SHIP was a roadmap that consolidated strategies with their own public engagement process and provided a general overview of the process for engaging specific communities within each area. Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested Saturday meetings as well as hosting the meetings in locations accessible to public transportation such as community centers rather than learning institutions like UTSA and Libraries that might be intimidating. Investment in affordable housing was proven to improve survival and outcomes for unhoused population, and requested that staff address homeless prevention and mitigation strategies within the plan.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda provided statistics on the Foster Youth population and requested inclusion of Foster Youth who had aged out of the system in the Housing Plan and suggested that the opportunity might lie within multifamily units specifically for this population. Councilmember Cabello Havrda recommended that investments to close the digital divide such as adding fiber to be mentioned in the SHIP.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked about the selection process for houses to be include in the Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program. NHSD Director Veronica Soto explained that a single application which used an equity scoring matrix to determine which residents/homes could best benefit from the limited funding had been developed which replaced the past practice of using a lottery. Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked for a copy of the Equity Matrix for the Owner-Occupied Housing as well as the Infill Housing numbers which Soto said she would provide. Councilmember Cabello Havrda suggested that the number of LGBTQIA+ community that were houseless should be identified specifically in the next homeless count. Including a consideration of houseless person with pets was also recommended by Councilmember Cabello Havrda; which Woosley replied that there had been some coordination with Animal Care Services Department.

Councilmember Pelaez noted that the Battered Women's Shelter invested in a pet kennel thanks to a donation from Petco and was pleased that family violence victims were included in the strategies.

Councilmember Pelaez asked Assistant City Manager Jeff Coyle to provide an overview of Federal Housing program updates currently going through the legislative initiative. Coyle reported on proposed legislation that included an increase of almost \$7 billion to the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) which was currently in front of Congress as well as earmarks for home repair and funding for San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) resident WiFi and reported that \$150 billion was still on the table for vouchers and increased housing options. Coyle noted that the SA to DC mission would happen end of January 2022. Councilmember Pelaez recommended more work with Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) on land trusts and suggested that palliative and hospice care for homeless people should be included in the plan; which Woosley explained was a medical care issue which required multiple partnerships.

Councilmember Pelaez also wanted to ensure that LGBTQIA+ homeless population assistance was more intentional and Woosley replied that the Youth Homeless Strategic Plan included those specialty option strategies which would be reported within the dashboard.

Councilmember Bravo asked Eric Epley, Executive Director of Southwest Texas Regional Advisory Council (STRAC) to explain their approach to crisis mental health as it related to the frequent user system engagement and the statistics on emergency room usage by homeless persons. Councilmember Bravo asked for a more comprehensive description of the work being done related to homeless encampments, which Woosley replied DHS that worked with of Haven for Hope and other partner, as appropriate. Councilmember Bravo spoke about the increasing costs of housing which caused 76,000 households to become at risk of homeless and wondered how Ready to Work might help. The planned target was 28,000 affordable units over 10 years per Benavides even though housing costs outpaced growth of wages in San Antonio. Assistant City Manager Alex Lopez explained that the number of households estimated to be impacted by Ready to Work was a conservative estimate. Mayor Nirenberg agreed with Councilmember Bravo and suggested that City Council consider how to break the cycles of generational poverty.

Councilmember Viagran expressed that District 3 residents may have communicated that they did not want housing but she felt that perception could stem from a fear of adding more street traffic to their neighborhoods. Domestic Violence, mental health and trauma should be considered as well as geographic locations of clusters of seniors and persons with disabilities, stated Councilmember Viagran. She invited the team to host a community meeting at the Southside Lions Community Center. Councilmember Viagran asked how often the Housing Dashboard would be updated which Benavidez replied would be done quarterly. Councilmember Viagran suggested tracking within the dashboard, apartments that let units stay unrented as this could indicate that they were looking to sell their property.

Councilmember Viagran suggested inclusion of rehab costs for properties owned by Seniors. Councilmember Viagran asked about whether the street count included questions on domestic violence or emotional abuse particularly experienced by the LGBTQIA+ community.

Encampment sites continue to grow, especially at Military/Goliad/I-H 37 and asked for statistics on this area adding that Public Art might help with activation of these sites; which Woosley stated maps would be provided.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked how Bond funding would be used to buy down rent in apartment projects; Houston responded that it would be a project-based Request for Proposal (RFP) and at least 10-year commitment to affordable housing would be required. Houston added that the apartments would have to be near employment centers and they would be tied to SA Tomorrow Regional Centers. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez thought the affordable housing should be permanent for the Bond units. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that the people who lived in affordable housing units in the apartments should be verified as income-eligible; which Houston replied that the contract requirements would be tracked by staff. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez wanted to ensure there were programs tailored to serve special populations such as LGBTQIA+ and Youth who have aged out of Foster Care. Benavidez added that his department was creating a digital platform that would connect people to the housing that fits their needs.

Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked for data on demolitions, the anti-displacement initiative, LISC targets, and SAHA waiting list for Section 8 housing. Benavidez stated the data would be provided. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez recommended that infrastructure for high speed internet should be funded. Councilmember McKee-Rodriguez asked Benavidez to highlight some innovative approaches; which Benavidez responded that Limited Equity Cooperatives and programs that transition mobile home communities to home ownership as well as the community land trust model outlined in a Council Consideration Request by Councilmember Pelaez in concert with land banking initiatives.

Mayor Nirenberg asked Mark Carmona to provide his thoughts about where opportunities might exist across all the strategies; which Carmona suggested that creating a strong foundation for affordable housing would be key including ensuring there was a skilled workforce locally as well as a review of best practices in other cities and recommended keeping flexibility in the Bond Program.

Councilmember Castillo asked about the production of rental units at above the 80% AMI Level, which Benavidez responded he would provide to the Council Committee. Councilmember Castillo wanted to ensure that goals were focused on deep affordability and noted that the SHIP included production of homeownership at up to 120% AMI; which Benavidez said homes in the 120% AMI range were in high demand. Councilmember Castillo recommended shifting away from a incentivizing housing that was already being built in the private sector and added that Public

Housing was a huge component that should be prioritize for rehabilitation and building to provide that deep affordability.

Councilmember Castillo mentioned that her office had helped residents apply for Section 8 housing only to have received notice that the resident would be placed on a 1-2 year wait list, and implored that there should be more focus on affordable housing for lower AMI levels especially preservation of Public Housing. Councilmember Castillo voiced citizen concerns about the public participation noting that the SHIP was only published one day in advance of the community meeting. She asked to add more time and community engagement with a vote in February instead. Houston noted that the goal was to create 7,000 homes at 30% AMI, plus 1,000 units of 30% AMI that need to be preserved. Houston stressed that this was a roadmap to follow which would go through their own policy review and engagement as this was just a beginning.

Councilmember Courage stated that his research indicated that persons at 120% AMI could afford to buy a \$500,000 home; which Benavidez responded that NHSD's data indicated \$200,000 homes would be affordable within the 120% AMI. Benavidez said he would meet with Councilmember Courage to provide more details on the source of this information.

Councilmember Courage recommended Housing Bond priorities include access to transit, high speed internet as a part of Connectivity and Public Health. Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the Bond Housing Proposition; Houston explained that City Council would approve a resolution consistent with recommendations from the Housing Bond Committee which would define the priorities and strategies rather than a list of projects and include flexible, yet clear language in the ballot for the Housing Proposition. City Manager Walsh reminded City Council that the results of the work of the Bond Committees would come to City Council in January 2022.

Councilmember Courage asked about street outreach work that might be duplicated by DHS and Haven for Hope; which Woosley explained that Haven for Hope had updated their strategies, therefore, the DHS assigned homeless specialist was the person to contact for outreach coordination. Councilmember Courage wanted to know which agencies helped homeless persons by providing services or activities during the daytime; Woosley listed Corazon Ministries Day Center, Christian Assistance Ministries and Haven for Hope as service providers.

Councilmember Perry wanted to see more community input noting that there had not been long enough review time citing the Tier 1 Neighborhood letter regarding all the items needed to be reviewed such as Bond, Unified Development Code (UDC) Amendments, ARPA, as well as the SHIP. Councilmember Perry requested a chart that showed total cost of providing the homes, the price per home, and asked if the stakeholder forum included San Antonio Board of Realtors, Real Estate Council of San Antonio and San Antonio Apartment Association. Benavidez confirmed these organizations were included.

Councilmember Perry asked for clarification on the 5-year and 10-year Funding Plan, particularly as it related to SA Ready to Work Plan which stated 23,798 households would be impacted. Councilmember Perry noted that the expectation in the Nivin report was 40,000 households, but in reality it was 18,568. Benavidez reminded the Committee that the targets were specific to the homeless program goals and Houston explained that the job training was relative to the 95,000 cost burdened individuals and included Ready to Work as well as other job training programs. Councilmember Perry asked for a breakdown of the goal by partner and Houston replied that the numbers would be tracked.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia recommended a Displacement Analysis Study in Fiscal Year 2022 and asked if supply chain issues would affect projections. Houston said that supply chain issues would be taken into consideration for the Housing Bond and added that the Bond Committee had received the SHIP presentation and they would work on priorities at their next meeting.

Councilmember Castillo asked if policies related to evictions were being explored and whether the City was partnering with Bexar County. Benavidez replied that NHSD staff had been present at eviction courts and NHSD would continue to work with Bexar County to review potential changes to state law. Councilmember Castillo asserted that workforce policy tended to burden the tenant, rather than a conversation about increasing wages.

Councilmember Castillo requested more resources to mitigate displacement due to eviction as well as resources for mental health crisis after 5pm. Woosley said Haven for Hope would accept people in the courtyard after hours, the Center for Healthcare Services Crisis Care, Hospital Emergency Rooms and San Antonio Police Department each operated after hours.

Councilmember Castillo asked if ARPA Funding could be used to connect houseless persons to housing. Woosley responded that Federal CARES funding had been used for rapid rehousing and ARPA was proposed moving forward.

Councilmember Viagran expressed that job training was key and recommended more education, programs to address trauma, and other opportunities that would help get people out of generational poverty.

Councilmember Perry noted that Bexar County was planning to reduce tax burdens for single family homeowners and suggested that the document should indicate the City was a partner in that effort. Councilmember Perry asked staff to look into including the amount of funding from faith-based community into the homeless investment data. Councilmember Perry did not want the plan to include more funding for homelessness and suggested that the costs appeared to be high per person served. Councilmember Perry also asked for partner agency metrics which Woosley said would be provided.

Councilmember Courage asked how would the private sector unburden those cost-burdened

residents. Benavidez replied that staff was recommending policy changes to allow for accessory dwelling units, ability to rent out rooms in their homes, and policy incentives for developers to build affordable units.

Councilmember Bravo recommended more investment in STRAC.

Mayor Nirenberg closed the discussion stressing the importance of housing in making the City more resilient.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At any time during the meeting, the City Council may recess into executive session in the Presidio Conference Room or the B Room to consult with the City Attorney's Office (Texas Government Code Section 551.071) and deliberate or discuss any of the following:

- 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).

There was no Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 5:14 PM.

Approved

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Attest:

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk