

State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes
City Council B Session

City Hall Complex
105 Main Plaza
San Antonio, Texas 78205

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

2:00 PM

Municipal Plaza Building

The City Council of San Antonio convened in the City Council Chambers of the Municipal Plaza Building.

ROLL CALL

City Clerk Leticia Vacek took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Gonzales, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry.

1. Briefing on the ConnectSA comprehensive transportation plan. [Henry Cisneros, Hope Andrade, Jane Macon, ConnectSA Tri-Chairs; Jeff Arndt, President and CEO, VIA Metropolitan Transit]

Secretary Henry Cisneros reviewed the history of transportation efforts made in San Antonio. He noted that there were 276 Vision 2040 events; 131 VIA Reimagined engagement opportunities; and 76 ConnectSA meetings held. He stated that the ConnectSA Transportation Plan (Plan) goals included: 1) Provide more choices; 2) Increase safety and efficiency; 3) Connect to jobs; 4) Leverage technology; 5) Manage congestion; 6) Enhance access; 7) Integrate mobility networks; and 8) Promote sustainability. He noted that the Plan extends from 2020 to 2040 and the near-term part of the Plan (2020-2025) would be discussed today. He stated that the Plan included 225 miles of constructed sidewalks. He noted that new construction methods would be employed to reduce costs and provide more miles of sidewalks and the construction of sidewalks would complete the top three of five safety priority categories of the City.

Secretary Cisneros stated that the Plan called for completion of a world-class trails network which would encircle the City. He noted that the network of trails would create a premier recreational asset for health and fitness and a unique visitor attraction and would provide flood control and drainage solutions throughout Bexar County. He stated that the Plan would include micro mobility lanes with the goal of completing 45 miles of separated lanes for bicycles and scooters. He noted that safety barriers would be installed on the most frequented routes and first-mile/last-mile service connections would be provided. He stated that the Plan would address congestion and make mobility safer and more efficient and continue expansion, reconstruction, and modernization of our streets and roads with a focus on traffic flow through computerized light synchronization.

Secretary Cisneros noted that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) allocated \$3.8 billion to expand the capacity of area highways and interchanges, including High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes wherever possible to include:

- Loop 1604 across northern Bexar County
- IH-35 to Comal County line
- Interchange at Loop 1604 and US 281
- Loop 1604 South from US 90 to IH-10 East

Secretary Cisneros stated that VIA Link, a mobility on demand, application-based pilot program located in northeast San Antonio, began in May 2019. He noted that the second pilot area would be located in northwest San Antonio, and VIA expects to extend this service to six additional neighborhoods in five years. He stated that this would provide transportation from door-to-door and door-to-transit. He noted that VIA would continue to increase frequency on its most utilized routes with increased funding from the City. He stated that VIA Reimagined would place 76% of the region's population within a 10 minute walk of VIA services and would put 85% of jobs within a 10 minute walk of VIA Services. He noted that the Plan included Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) which would connect major employment centers with residential development. He stated that ART included dedicated bus lanes and would cost one-third to 40% of the cost for light rail. He noted that the ART network would place more than 250,000 residents within 10 minutes of a station and would connect with more than 275,000 jobs.

Secretary Cisneros stated that two routes would be initiated; one which would run from east-west; and one which would run from north-south. He noted that the Plan required a commitment of \$1.36 billion by the community and there was no tax increase associated with this commitment. He stated that part of the proposed commitment would include the reallocation of 1/8-cent sales tax when the Edwards Aquifer and Linear Creek Tax expire. He noted that this would produce \$39.1 million in revenue annually and would pay for operational aspects of the Plan. He stated that the 1/8-cent sales tax would require voter reauthorization before 2021 and the tax would produce \$195.5 million between 2021 and 2025. He noted that the City's share of the Advanced Transportation District (ATD) Tax (1/16) for the Aquifer Conservation Easement could be reallocated to the Plan. He stated that the ATD Tax was approved by voters in 2004 and if reallocated, would produce \$8.5 million in new revenue for VIA annually or \$42.5 million in new revenue over five years.

Secretary Cisneros noted that a plan was developed which included SAWS generated revenue to fund the Aquifer Program which would not result in a rate increase. He stated that future General Obligation Bonds should set aside funding for ConnectSA projects. He noted that this was not a new tax and the

next City bond could be up to \$950 million with \$665 million included for transportation and capital projects. He stated that the \$665 million would fund: 1) Micro mobility (\$45 million); 2) Sidewalks (\$85 million); 3) Streets (\$191 million); and 4) ART (\$344 million). He noted that future Bexar County Certificates of Obligation should set aside funding for ConnectSA projects and would not be a new tax. He stated that the 2022 bond could allocate \$105 million for transportation and capital projects in Bexar County. He noted that the City would maintain the trail system and Bexar County would construct the remainder of the trail system. He stated that currently, the City was not receiving the Federal funds that it could if an ART System was employed.

Rey Saldaña stated that a better bus system, ART, and smart transit were very important elements of the Plan. He spoke of the role of the VIA Board to connect a disconnected city.

Hope Andrade stated that ConnectSA was a great plan which has taken every mode of transportation into consideration.

Jane Macon stated that the City Council, City Staff, VIA Staff, and County Commissioners would make the plan work.

Jonathan Bean stated that currently, \$2 billion in construction was underway in the San Antonio region with over \$3 billion planned in the future. He noted that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) would address the top 100 most congested corridors in the State which included IH 35, Loop 1604, US 281, and Loop 410 in the San Antonio region. He stated that one component on some of the corridors was High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes.

Secretary Cisneros reviewed the results of polling for use of the 1/8-cent for transportation noting that the results were favorable.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that ConnectSA was a feasible strategy to address a problem which has not been addressed before. He noted that there was no space for additional highways and roads and congestion has risen sharply over the last 15 years. He stated that due to the lack of operational funds, VIA did not qualify for several levels of Federal funding.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how VIA Link could be expanded to the seasoned population before 2025. Secretary Cisneros replied that VIA Link would be expanded over the next five years. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that residents had expressed concern over the reallocation of funds supporting the Aquifer Program to transportation. Secretary Cisneros reviewed the two options which were being explored to address funding of the Aquifer Program.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that without the reallocation the Plan could not begin and the path forward would include Aquifer protection and transportation.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how the equity lens was applied to the Plan. Secretary Cisneros replied that every part of the city was considered in the Plan. Councilmember Rocha Garcia requested a briefing on how the equity lens was applied and the demographics of poll respondents.

Councilmember Viagran asked of the funding which supports current TxDOT projects in Houston. Mr. Bean stated that a lot of the formulas which allocate funds were based on population so funding for

TxDOT projects in Houston would probably exceed that of San Antonio. Councilmember Viagran asked of the amount funded by TxDOT for Loop 1604 South. Mr. Bean stated that approximately \$80 million was allocated for Loop 1604 South. Councilmember Viagran requested a list of stakeholders, the number of meetings held, the dates of the meetings, and a list of other funding options considered in the Plan. She requested the demographics of survey respondents.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if Federal funding was dependent on the reallocation of the 1/8-cent sales tax from the Aquifer Program to transportation. Secretary Cisneros replied that Federal funding was dependent on the local match by VIA and the City. Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if the Plan would provide access to services with greater frequency in neighborhoods. Jeff Arndt replied that the ultimate goal was to increase the frequency of service to every 20 minutes during the rush hour period and to every 30 minutes for the rest of the time. He added that routes which provide service every hour would be considered for VIA Link service.

Councilmember Gonzales expressed support for the Plan and asked if additional right-of-way had to be acquired. Secretary Cisneros replied that it would. She suggested that an increase in parking fees be considered as an alternate funding option.

Councilmember Courage expressed support for the Plan.

Councilmember Pelaez asked if VIA Link was subsidized rideshare. Mr. Arndt replied that it was and was an appropriate response to suburban development.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if the City would have to call an election for the ART. Mr. Arndt replied that the VIA Board would have to call an election for the ART. Councilmember Sandoval requested Unified Development Code (UDC) recommendations which would make development patterns more supportive of transit.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that VIA's corridor system was aligned with the land use priorities of the City, density, and more sustainable approaches to urban development.

Councilmember Perry requested information on the ridership on existing bike lanes. He asked of the ridership for VIA Link in Council District 10. Mr. Arndt stated that the ridership for VIA Link in Council District 10 was 600-700 people per day.

Mayor Nirenberg noted that the Plan would not impact the Infrastructure Management Program (IMP).

Councilmember Treviño spoke of the need to utilize the Plan to challenge how infrastructure was accomplished.

Secretary Cisneros stated that the ability of people to move from place to place was as essential as any other function in a city.

The Public Hearing for Substantial Amendment Number One to the Fiscal Year 2020 HUD Action Plan and Budget began at 6:20 PM.

Antonio Diaz spoke in support of the Substantial Amendment Number One to the Fiscal Year 2020 HUD Action Plan and Budget.

Diana Uriegas encouraged the City Council to do the right thing.

Michael Taylor spoke in support of the recommendation of CDBG funds for Habitat for Humanity.

2. Public Hearing for Substantial Amendment #1 to the FY 2020 HUD Action Plan and Budget awarding up to \$6,478,760 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding; up to \$1,849,000 in HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funding; and up to \$182,001 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Verónica R. Soto, Director, Neighborhood and Housing Services]

The Public Hearing for Substantial Amendment Number One to the Fiscal Year 2020 HUD Action Plan and Budget closed at 6:25 PM.

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting to convene in Executive Session at 6:25 pm.

At any time during the meeting, the City Council may recess into executive session in the "C" 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. Deliberate the appointment, evaluation and duties of public officers and discuss legal issues pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters) and Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).
- F. Discuss legal options pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney)

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting at 6:45 pm and announced that no action was taken in Executive Session.

CEREMONIALS

PRESENTATION: Compassionate San Antonian Awards

Richard Sepulveda and Ronald Poole, VIA Operators on separate routes stopped to assist an elderly woman whose motorized wheelchair had stalled in the middle of the street. Each will receive the Mayor's Compassionate San Antonian Award, which recognizes individuals who serve our community through acts of kindness and compassion. The purpose of the Award is to celebrate local area citizens who perform a good deed(s), and have impacted the lives of others in a positive way.

PROCLAMATION: San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

The 71st Annual San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo will be held February 6-23, 2020, at the AT&T Center/Freeman Coliseum Grounds. The San Antonio Livestock Exhibition (SALE), Inc. sponsors the annual event. The Stock Show & Rodeo has been awarded “Large Indoor Rodeo of the Year” by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association for 14 consecutive years.

PROCLAMATION: San Antonio Heart Association Heart Month

The American Heart Association will celebrate the month of February 2020, as American Heart Month. The annual observance is held to raise awareness of heart health. Their signature event is “National Wear Red Day” on February 7, 2020, which encourages citizens to learn the warning signs of heart attack and stroke.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nazirite Ruben Flores Perez stated that the Coronavirus is impacting us because we have been cursed according to the Book of Revelation.

Rudolph Wratten – *Open Policy* – [comment were unintelligible]

Enriqueta Coronado submitted written testimony for the record.

Antonio Diaz spoke about Edwards Aquifer protection and against the Vista Ridge project and increasing water rates to pay for it. He noted that rates that people are paying are being used to bring in water instead of using water from the Edwards Aquifer. He stated that elected officials are dishonest and corrupt like they were in the past.

ADJOURNED

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

APPROVED

**RON NIRENBERG
MAYOR**

Attest:

LETICIA M. VACEK TRMC/CMC/MMC
City Clerk