

**INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, APRIL 24, 2018
1:30 PM
MEDIA BRIEFING ROOM**

Members Present:	Councilmember Manny Peláez, Chair, <i>District 8</i> Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Rebecca Viagran, <i>District 3</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i> Committee Member Dirk Elmendorf, <i>Citizen</i> Committee Member Will Garrett, <i>Citizen</i> Committee Member DeAnne Cuellar, <i>Citizen</i>
Members Absent:	<i>None</i>
Staff Present:	María Villagómez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Jose De La Cruz, <i>Chief Innovation Officer</i> ; Craig Hopkins, <i>Chief of Technology</i> ; Alicia K. Beckham, <i>Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Jo Ana Alvarado, <i>San Antonio Housing Authority</i> ; Martin Hernandez, <i>San Antonio Housing Authority</i> ; Munirih Jester, <i>San Antonio Housing Authority</i> ; Kimberly M. Britton, <i>EPIcenter</i>

1. Approval of the minutes from the March 27, 2018 Innovation and Technology Committee Meeting.

Committee Member Will Garrett moved to approve the Minutes for the March 27, 2018 Innovation and Technology Committee Meeting. Councilmember Treviño seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

Councilmembers Gonzales and Viagran and Committee Member Cuellar entered the meeting at this time.

2. Briefing and possible action on the SmartSA Innovation Zones [María Villagómez, Assistant City Manager; Jose De La Cruz, Chief Innovation Officer]

Jose De La Cruz reported that the City of San Antonio was developing Innovation Zones to incorporate new and developing Smart City Technologies. He stated that the focus was to understand the data it produced and to leverage the information. He noted that other U.S. Cities implemented Innovation Zones to pilot and these cities had partnered with private sector companies to test Smart City Technologies. He added that staff met with stakeholders in the Brooks City Base (Brooks), Medical Center, and Downtown Areas to discuss challenges and opportunities in developing a Zone.

Mr. De La Cruz stated that the creation of a Zone would allow the City to analyze and predict programs that can be solved by the City and its partners. He noted that the Zones would serve as pilot areas to test various Smart City Technologies in a defined geographic area prior to city-wide implementation. He added that the benefits to a Zone would be immediate actionable insights; low cost proof of concepts; and growth and new ideas.

Mr. De La Cruz stated that the Public-Private Partnership and the Request for Proposals (RFP) were two approaches to developing Zones and staff was moving forward with an RFP. He noted that the criteria for a Zone included:

- Fiber readily available
- Access to existing and planned public transportation
- Growing residential district
- Surge in development or redevelopment
- Attractiveness to innovative companies
- Well-defined grid within the Innovation Zone focus

Mr. De La Cruz stated that staff recommended presenting the creation of a Zone within Brooks that would allow testing various emerging technology; and using the Medical Center as a Zone to pilot transportation technology at a B Session.

Councilmember Treviño stated that the Downtown Area was being overlooked and asked of the process for selecting Brooks and the Medical Center as Zones. Mr. De La Cruz responded that the stakeholders from each area provided the feedback and recommendations.

In response to Councilmember Viagran, Mr. De La Cruz stated that there were areas in the City that fiber was not easily accessible to position. He noted that Brooks and the Medical Center had areas that were fiber-ready. Craig Hopkins added that the recommended areas had the fiber-backbone needed. Councilmember Viagran stated that that it was clear why the Brooks Area was recommended.

Committee Member Cuellar stated that Brooks was a good area for a Zone in that it permitted growth and there were various land use options in that area.

Committee Member Elmendorf asked why staff suggested an RFP over a Public-Private Partnership. Mr. De La Cruz responded that staff suggested an RFP because a Public-Private Partnership would limit the City to one vendor while the RFP would provide for a variety of alternatives.

Councilmember Treviño stated that he could not support staff's recommendation because the Downtown Area had just as much potential to be a Zone.

Chairman Peláez stated that of the three highlighted areas; Brooks presented the best proven ground because it had unique infrastructure. He noted that the Medical Center was another good area because it displayed an example of all the challenges that the City faced with drainage, traffic, and employment. He added that there were innovative companies in the area, the medical school, hospitals, and research centers.

Councilmember Gonzales asked of the funding amount. Mr. De La Cruz replied that staff would allocate funding when they begin the decision on projects. In response to Councilmember Gonzales, Mr. De La Cruz stated that funding could come from grants or the City's Budget Process. María Villagómez stated that there were \$3 million in the budget for Smart City

Technology. She noted that they were contacting VIA Metropolitan Transit, San Antonio Water System, the San Antonio River Authority, and CPS to become partners.

Councilmember Viagran moved that the recommendation to create Innovation Zones within Brooks and the Medical Center be forward to the full City Council at a B Session for consideration. Councilmember Gonzales seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Peláez, Viagran, Gonzales, Elmendorf, Garrett, and Cuellar

NAY: Treviño

3. A briefing by the San Antonio Housing Authority regarding the Mozilla Foundation Award to create a proof of SAHA Solar Mesh Wi-Fi Concept. [Jo Ana Alvarado, San Antonio Housing Authority Director of Innovative Technology]

Martin Hernandez provided a briefing on the prerequisites that San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) needed to provide internet access to their residents. He stated that in 2013, SAHA was seeking to address digital inclusion and had placed 200 refurbished computers into 50 community rooms with free Wi-Fi. He noted that in 2015, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Julián Castro, and Former SAHA CEO, Lourdes Castro Ramirez, started the ConnectHome Initiative. He added that the Initiative was unfunded but in 2015, they were able to partner with Google and local banks for funding. He mentioned that because of the diverse demographics of their residents, it was important for residents to have access to the internet.

Jo Ana Alvarado reported that SAHA submitted an application as part of the Mozilla Foundation's 20 Big Ideas to Connect the Unconnected Program. She stated that they chose Cassiano Homes to build a working prototype as part of the second stage of the competition. She noted that in the first stage, SAHA was awarded a \$10,000 Honorable Mention Grant to create a proof of their Solar Mesh Wi-Fi Concept. She added that the Mozilla Foundation Challenge was to connect the unconnected where fiber or an internet service provider was not present.

Ms. Alvarado stated that Solar Mesh Wi-Fi integrates access points into solar-powered light poles to provide connectivity to residents. She noted that they were using low cost equipment to assemble the Solar Mesh Technology. She added that the stage two of the Challenge would be to work on a prototype by June 22, 2018. She mentioned that the Demo Event would be August 14, 2018 and that the grants would be awarded in fall 2018. She stated that the potential prize would be between \$50,000 to \$400,000.

In response to Councilmember Gonzales, Ms. Alvarado stated that Solar Mesh Technology was a sustainable project and could be easily assembled.

In response to Committee Member Elmendorf, Mr. Hernandez stated that the life span of the batteries were two years and affordable to replace.

Committee Member Cuellar asked if residents were paying for the services. Ms. Alvarado stated that the services were intended to be free. Committee Member Cuellar asked of the maximum

access speed of the Solar Mesh Network. Ms. Alvarado replied that the maximum access speed was 25 megahertz. Committee Member Cuellar stated that this was an opportunity for the City's Tech Industry to become problem solvers and assist SAHA in developing a way to increase access speed to the Solar Mesh Network.

Chairman Peláez stated that Spectrum offered a program for low income families to access data at minimal cost. Munirih Jester noted that SAHA had educated their residents of the program but many of them did not have the resources to pay for the services.

No action was required for Item 3.

4. A briefing on the EPIcenter. [Kimberly M. Britton, EPIcenter Chief Executive Officer]

Kimberly Britton provided a briefing on the EPIcenter Organization and its areas of focus. She reported that the EPIcenter Building was over 100 years old and owned by CPS Energy (CPS). She stated that it was a functional power plant that was closed in 2004. She noted that the facility had been remediated to residential standards in 2009. She added that in 2015, CPS partnered with OCI Solar Power, Silver Spring Networks and Landis+Gyr to form the EPIcenter as a separate 501(c)(3) organization.

Ms. Britton stated that the vision was for an energy innovation center. She noted that the Think Tank, New Energy Incubator, Fab Lab, Exhibit Space, and Conference Center were the five elements of the EPIcenter. She added that there were indoor and outdoor venues on the grounds.

Ms. Britton stated that in 2017, they finished the schematic design phase of their Mission in Motion 2017. She added that the project amount was \$74.5 million and that they need to raise \$53.3 million. She noted that the funds would come from philanthropies and non-philanthropies across the nation. She added that they would strategically partner with other organizations to become advisers.

Ms. Britton stated that the EPIcenter had launched its incubator at Geekdom. She noted that New Energy Incubator and Accelerator were working with start-up businesses to establish growth. She added that they were in pursuit of grant funding for operational expenses.

Councilmember Gonzales suggested that the EPIcenter utilized the Smart Cities Funding for initiatives.

In response to Councilmember Viagran, Ms. Britton stated that the EPIcenter would be hosting a call for Resilient Week in October 2018 and they had meetings with CPS and the City to discuss sustainability.

No action was required for Item 4.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Manny Peláez , Chairman

*Alicia K. Beckham,
Office of the City Clerk*