

City of San Antonio



Meeting Minutes City Council B Session

No in-person access to this meeting

Wednesday, June 17, 2020

2:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

Acting City Clerk Tina Flores took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: 11 - Mayor Nirenberg, Treviño, Andrews-Sullivan, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Gonzales, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry.

1. Briefing on the San Antonio/Bexar County Complete Count Committee and local efforts to ensure a complete count for the 2020 Census in response to COVID-19. [Carlos Contreras, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Coyle, Director, Government & Public Affairs]

Ms. Berta Rodriguez provided an update of the combined San Antonio/Bexar County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee (Committee). Ms. Rodriguez explained the impact that COVID-19 has had on maximum participation in the 2020 Census. She stated that the U.S. Census had postponed field information and in-person data collection.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the purpose of the San Antonio and Bexar County Complete Count Committee was to support the U.S. Census Bureau to achieve a complete count of all residents living in San Antonio/Bexar County with a focused effort on population at risk of being undercounted.

Ms. Rodriguez reported that the targeted population at risk of being undercounted included: 1) Racial and ethnic minorities; 2) Households with children under five years of age; 3) Seniors; 4) Households in the lower socioeconomic demographic status; and 5) Those with a language barrier.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the goal of the U.S. Census Bureau was to achieve 67% self-reporting before going door-to-door to collect data on August 11, 2020. She indicated that nationally, the U.S. Census Bureau reached its goal of 60% self-responding but Bexar County and the City of San Antonio fell short of the national average with a 58.1% self-respond rate and Bexar County at a 59.8% self-respond rate.

Ms. Rodriguez reported that 171 out of 372 total census tracts in San Antonio/Bexar County had a self-response rate of less than 58%. She reviewed the Committee structure and noted that the COVID-19 Pandemic altered the census efforts which required the following pivoting strategies:

- Analyze data: targeted and equitable strategies
- Shift from high-touch grassroots to high-media communications
- Evaluate existing media, identify targeted and equitable mediums, and diversify media mix
- In-house media planning/buying
- Encourage self-response and “Get Counted Now”
- Ensure messaging and communications were mindful of crisis facing community

Ms. Rodriguez stated that the work of the Committee had been data-driven and they collaborated with Community Information Now (CI:NOW) who developed a dashboard and data would be utilized to inform the selection of targeted and equitable media strategies. She indicated that lower self-response rates were observed in the inner core of the City and southern Bexar County. She added that there were pockets with a low self-response rate on the northwest side of the City which had a high immigrant population.

Ms. Rodriguez stated that last Fall, the Committee procured the services of an agency which provided a social media campaign that gave the Committee the ability to geo-target our population and geo-fence community organizations in areas with a lower self-response rate. She noted that a variety of social channels and content would be available to draw in target populations and self-response rates would be utilized to optimize the target and message. She added that 30% of the \$500 million that the U.S. Census Bureau allocated for the Census was for digital media.

Ms. Rodriguez reported that 4,942,574 impressions, 22,825 engagements, and 13,752 post link clicks were received. She noted that the audience was responding positively to multiple content types and Facebook continued to receive most of the social activity, with growing engagement on Twitter as the content was frequently shared or re-tweeted.

Ms. Rodriguez provided examples of the social media content available which was in English and Spanish. She stated that the website included over six different types of content, such as videos, video series, carousels, stories, geo-filters and GIFs. Ms. Rodriguez stated that the targeted and equitable media strategies included door hangers, over the street banners, cash register receipt ads, gas pump ads, and VIA transit.

Ms. Rodriguez reported that a diversified media mix was available and included: 1) Print media: 12-week campaign; 2) Junior billboards: 8-week campaign; and 3) Mobile marketing texting: 8-week campaign. She indicated that the diversified media mix would be utilized to communicate with those that were not likely to be engaged digitally, neighborhoods in low self-response rate census tracts, and in geo-fenced site locations and geo-targeted populations.

Ms. Rodriguez indicated that there was no way to reach Higher Education Students to communicate to them where they should be counted but a strategy for that would begin next week. She reported that

private foundations contributed \$320,000 in awards and they would deliver the census message with either their COVID-19 relief efforts or through their daily operations. She provided some examples of the outreach incorporated into the daily efforts of the organization.

Ms. Rodriguez reviewed the community efforts to promote response to the census such as those from school districts, elected officials, government entities, and media partners. She indicated that San Antonio was performing well among cities with populations of more than 1,000,000 in completing the count and was ranked fourth in the nation. She added that a decline in the self-response rate was observed and the COVID-19 Pandemic continued to present challenges to obtaining a complete count.

Councilmember Treviño asked how the progress this year so far compared with that of 2010. He requested a list of the census tracts with a low self-response rate. Ms. Rodriguez stated that she would provide that information. She noted that comparing the self-response rate with that of 2010 was challenging due to the extended timeline.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the Committee was partnering with Meals-on-Wheels and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) to ensure that seniors without digital access receive information on the census. Ms. Rodriguez replied that AARP had a national partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau and the Committee had partnered with Meals-on-Wheels.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked how much the community would lose if the population was undercounted. Ms. Rodriguez replied that approximately \$300 million dollars would be lost if 1% of the population was undercounted.

Councilmember Viagran suggested that information be distributed on the Census through the Parks and Recreation Summer Food Program and at COVID-19 testing sites.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia suggested that postcards be utilized for the campaign and noted their success in political campaigns.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if there was an opportunity to fill the gap left by summer jobs with jobs working on the Census. Ms. Rodriguez replied that the U.S. Census Bureau was still accepting applications for Enumerators.

Councilmember Sandoval asked how the response rate was determined. Ms. Rodriguez replied that on a daily basis, the U.S. Census Bureau tracked online responses, mail return rate, and incoming calls. Councilmember Sandoval asked what the response rate was compared to. Ms. Rodriguez replied that the response rate was compared to the total number of households in the community which was approximately 600,000 households.

Councilmember Courage asked if the City had the ability to send a reverse 9-1-1 message to mobile phones in the community. Government and Public Affairs Director Jeff Coyle replied that the City had that capability through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), but that method was reserved for emergencies. Councilmember Courage noted that the loss of billions over the next 10 years would create an emergency and he requested further consideration to send a reverse 9-1-1 message to mobile phones in the community.

2. Pre-Solicitation Briefing on Resident Connection Platform [Ben Gorzell, Chief Financial Officer; Laura Mayes, Assistant Director, Government and Public Affairs]

Laura Mayes stated that staff had taken a resident centric approach to engagement with the City of San Antonio. She reported that the SASpeakUp Campaign began in 2015 with Councilmember Sandoval filing a Public Participation Council Consideration Request (CCR) in February 2018. She noted that the City implemented Public Participation Minimum Standards in July 2018 and the City Council adopted the Guiding Principles of Public Participation in December 2019. She added that the City Manager issued the Public Participation Administrative Directive in February 2019 and Virtual Comment was initiated in June 2020.

Ms. Mayes noted the guiding principles:

- Meaningful – Ensure that public input was appropriately considered in the decision-making process; use public participation to improve City programs, policies, and Ordinances.
- Respectful – Consider all input received, including differing viewpoints, while balancing the interests of all stakeholders.
- Transparent – Be open and clear by communicating the decision-making process to the public, including the role of the public in the process, what type of input was sought, and how the input would be used; provide a public record of the input received and the range of views and ideas expressed.
- Inclusive – Engage a broad range of stakeholders, with emphasis on those who did not normally take part in City public participation processes; make every effort to ensure that stakeholder groups did not feel left out of the process.
- Accessible – Ensure that anyone who would like to participate in the process can provide input; overcome barriers to participation, whether they were geographical, physical, socioeconomic, or language barriers.
- Responsive – Communicate outcomes to all who participated and provided input.
- Informative – Educate through public participation; use the opportunity to help people understand how the City organization works and to enhance both the public’s and the City’s understanding of issues, policies, and challenges; strive to ensure that opinion were informed with facts.
- Timely – Seek public input well ahead of key decisions; engage the public proactively.
- Convenient – Make it as easy as possible to engage with the City; provide multiple opportunities for the public to provide input; when possible, meet people where they were instead of requiring them to show up to a public meeting; utilize the power of digital communications while being mindful of technology gaps.

- Continuous – Treat all input provided by the public as another step toward a more engaged community by developing the infrastructure to foster sustained participation; resident who made the effort to participate should be continually engaged in future efforts; residents who would like to share an opinion with their City organization should be able to do so at any time.

Ms. Mayes noted the following core components of the Resident Connection Platform:

- Constituent Management – A way for residents to proactively manage their relationship with the City
- Boards and Commissions – New and improved application process
- Agenda Management – City Council meeting agenda building
- Survey Management – City-wide standardized survey management and analysis
- Calendar Management – Comprehensive master calendar

Ms. Mayes stated that the operational impact would provide for holistic and deeper understanding of residents, better targeting of information to residents, operational continuity for departments and Council offices, and streamlined processes. She noted that consideration must be made for:

- Privacy and security
- Overcoming the digital divide
- Accessibility
- Integration with other City of San Antonio systems

Ms. Mayes reported that in Phase One the Constituent Management Tool would be created and outreach would be performed for Boards and Commissions to include departmental processes, staff training, marketing, and promotion to residents and stakeholders through a comprehensive communications campaign. She added that Phase Two would include Survey Management, Agenda Management, and Calendar Management.

Ms. Mayes reported that success would be measured by: 1) Number of engagements with the City through applications, surveys, and participation in events; 2) Number of applicants to Boards and Commissions; 3) Diversity of participants; 4) Attendance and participation at meetings and events; and 5) Email list sign-up.

Ms. Mayes stated that the solicitation type was a Request for Competitive Sealed Proposals (RFCSP) with an estimated value of \$300,000 annually. She noted that the proposed term was for three years with two, one-year options. She reviewed the evaluation criteria, additional requirements, and membership of the Solicitation Evaluation Committee.

Ms. Mayes reported that a Solicitation Evaluation Advisory Committee would be created to include one staff member from each Council District, and City staff assigned to Boards and Commissions, the

Council Meeting Agenda Process, Survey and Event Management Technology. Ms. Mayes reviewed the solicitation timeline and noted that the solicitation would be brought before City Council on October 29, 2020.

Mayor Nirenberg proposed that the Evaluation Committee be updated to include representatives from the Office of Equity, SA2020, and the Office of Innovation. Ms. Mayes noted that Stan Gibbs served in an advisory capacity on the solicitation and she maintained correspondence with Molly Cox of SA2020. Mr. Walsh stated that Matt Llewellyn worked previously in the Office of Innovation.

Councilmember Courage requested more information on the privacy issue. Information Technology Services Department Director Craig Hopkins replied that any information provided by the constituent would remain private. City Attorney Andy Segovia added that exceptions in the Open Records Act allowed the City to redact Personally Identifiable Information.

Councilmember Pelaez stated that it would be more meaningful if sentiment and satisfaction could be measured along with increasing the number of residents who were better informed. Mr. Walsh stated that the Resident Connection Platform was an effort to improve community expectations and raise awareness and trust with the local government.

Councilmember Sandoval recognized the need to understand how people felt immediately following their engagement with the City.

Councilmember Gonzales expressed concern that the City did not respond to the basic needs of the community at times. She noted that she was reluctant to believe that this method would build trust with the community.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked how Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access would be integrated into the system. Ms. Mayes replied that proposals received would be evaluated for ADA accessibility and incorporation of other languages.

Councilmember Viagran stressed the importance of helping the local community.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the Boards and Commissions application process could be accessed through a mobile device. Ms. Mayes replied that the solicitation included a requirement for access through a mobile device.

Councilmember Treviño recognized the efforts to streamline communication components and added that the proposed platform could provide and maintain a level of continuity.

Councilmember Perry expressed concern that the timeline would hinder the quality of the product.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that he looked forward to accomplishing this quickly.

ADJOURNED

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 4:29 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
MAYOR

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk

DRAFT