

**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, February 19, 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, Peláez, Courage, and Perry.

- 1.** Staff Presentation on the ConnectSA comprehensive transportation plan. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Maria Villagomez, Deputy City Manager]

Maria Villagómez stated that on January 29, 2020, Secretary Cisneros, ConnectSA Tri-Chair, presented a comprehensive transportation plan for modern mobility in San Antonio. She noted that the plan goals included providing more choices, increasing safety and efficiency, connecting to jobs, leveraging technology, managing congestion, providing enhanced access, integrating mobility networks, and promoting sustainability. She stated that the ConnectSA proposal called for an investment of \$1.36 billion in the following seven transportation modes over the next five years:

1. Sidewalks
2. Greenway Trails
3. Micromobility
4. City streets and County roads
5. Mobility on demand
6. Better Bus
7. Advanced Rapid Transit (ART)

Ms. Villagómez reported that the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT) allocated \$3.8 billion to expand the capacity of area highways and interchanges including installation of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. She stated that the proposed strategy for funding the \$1.36 billion included the reallocation of the City's 1/8-cent sales tax to VIA, a portion of the City's 2020 Bond Program, and assigning the City's Advanced Transportation District (ATD) tax to VIA. She noted that the other alternatives included in the proposal by ConnectSA included funding from Bexar County and the leveraging of Federal funds.

Ms. Villagómez provided an overview of the San Antonio sales tax distribution and stated that the Edwards Aquifer Protection and the Greenway Trails shared 1/8-cent sales tax which was approved by the voters in 2000. She noted that the City Council determined the allocation between the two programs and the total amount to be collected over a period of five years. She stated that 70% of the \$180 million which was approved in 2015 had been collected for both programs and the remaining 30% would be collected by February 2021.

Ms. Villagómez noted that the goal of the Edward's Aquifer Protection Program was to protect the quality and quantity of water recharging into the Edwards Aquifer through land acquisition and conservation easements. She stated that with the current funding, 253,000 acres would be protected targeting the most sensitive and scientifically significant properties. She reported that the current annual operating cost for the program was \$487,000. She detailed that the Conservation Advisory Board (CAB) was comprised of nine members which were appointed by the City Council for two-year terms. She noted that the Board reviewed the properties which met the criteria for aquifer protection and made recommendations to the City Council for acquisition of land in conservation easements.

Ms. Villagómez reported that the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) was asked to potentially take over the program whereby they would issue revenue bonds in the amount of \$52 million over five years. She noted that SAWS proposed that the debt service on the bonds be repaid by reducing the City's payment from SAWS by .25%. She stated that another option was for the City to continue the program by issuing \$109 million in self-supporting debt over 10 years which would be paid by the City's payment from SAWS. She noted that staff recommended that the City continue the program.

Ms. Villagómez highlighted that the goal of the Greenway Trails System was to enhance the quality of life of the community by creating pedestrian and bicycle mobility alternatives, park connectivity, open spaces, and habitat conservation. She noted that the Linear Creekway Parks Advisory Board was comprised of 11 members which were appointed by City Council. She stated that with the current funding, the City would have completed or funded 109 miles of

trails. She detailed that the annual operating costs were \$6.4 million of which \$1.3 million was funded by sales tax and the remainder was funded from the General Fund. She stated that to continue funding Greenway Trails Program, staff worked on a partnership with Bexar County by which they would fund the capital construction of approximately 26 miles of trail at a cost of \$83.7 million over five years. She stated that the City would continue to provide security and maintenance of the trails. She noted that this option had not been finalized with Bexar County but needed to be by spring 2020.

Ms. Villagómez reported that when the 26 miles were completed there would be 45 miles left to complete and the City would work with Bexar County to fund them or the City would recommend funding from a future City Bond Program beginning in 2027.

Ms. Villagómez stated that the establishment of the Advanced Transportation District (ATD) was approved by the voters in 2004 and was funded by $\frac{1}{4}$ cent sales tax. She noted that the funds were restricted for transportation and mobility and were distributed to the following:

- VIA (50%)
- City of San Antonio (25%)
- TxDOT/Bexar County (25%)

Ms. Villagómez reported that the operating investment of the ATD Tax was \$6.3 million which included 36 City positions and \$11.8 million in capital projects. She noted that in 2018, the City Council authorized \$4.3 million in funding for VIA from the General Fund and \$10 million in funding was provided to VIA in FY 2019 and FY 2020. She stated that the funding supported increased frequency, improved travel time, and capacity in specific corridors and routes within the VIA system. She noted that ConnectSA recommended assigning the ATD Tax to VIA which would result in a revenue loss of \$8.5 million to the City. She stated that if the City Council considered reallocating the $\frac{1}{8}$ cent sales tax from the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program and the Greenway Trails System to the ATD Program $\frac{3}{8}$ of a cent would be dedicated to the ATD.

Ms. Villagómez stated that if approved by City Council, residents would vote on this measure in November 2020. She reported that ConnectSA recommended that streets, micromobility, sidewalks, and Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) be funded from Bond Programs. She detailed the street network and street network conditions and noted that \$1.5 billion would be needed to bring all streets into excellent condition. She stated that ConnectSA recommended funding of \$191 million from the 2022 City Bond Program over five years and funding of \$105 million from Bexar County for streets.

Ms. Villagómez noted that the City had 5,056 sidewalk miles and 1,877 gap miles of sidewalk. She reported that the goal of the City was to fill sidewalk gap miles citywide in prioritized areas such as those close to schools, bus stops, healthcare, community spaces and in areas which would ensure pedestrian safety. She stated that a total of \$17 million in funding was provided in FY 2020; \$5 million was funded by the ATD Tax; and \$12 million was funded by the FY 2017 Bond Program. She provided an overview of the sidewalk project types and the costs associated with each. She reported that ConnectSA recommended that \$94.5 million be invested in sidewalks over the next five years. She stated that the goal of ConnectSA was to develop 326

miles of sidewalk at \$55 per linear foot. She noted that there were 358 miles of bike facility inventory with 260 in the city limits on city roadways; 28 miles inside the city limits on TxDOT right-of-way; and 70 miles on the greenway trails. She reported that ConnectSA recommended funding of \$9.5 million from VIA over five years and \$45 million in funding from the 2022 Bond Program which would provide approximately 48 miles of bike lanes across the city.

Ms. Villagómez noted that two routes were proposed for the ART; one running east to west from General McMullen to the AT&T Center (7.5 miles); and one running north to south from the Airport to Steves Avenue with a dedicated lane for connectivity to the Airport (10.5 miles). She stated that the ART was estimated to cost \$566 million to be funded over the next five years. She noted that VIA would leverage \$222 million in Federal grants; and \$344 would be funded by local funds. She reported that the 2022 Bond Program was estimated to be up to \$950 million and ConnectSA recommended that \$665 million be utilized for the following transportation projects:

- Streets (\$191 million)
- Sidewalks (\$85 million)
- Micromobility (\$45 million)
- ART (\$344 million)

Ms. Villagómez provided a historical analysis of previous and current bond programs. She reviewed the impact of ConnectSA on the City's Operating Budget, and presented recommendations to address the impacts. She stated that in March 2020, VIA would present details regarding the ART, Better Bus, mobility on demand, the Federal grant process, and the timeline for the project and the City Council would consider the Edwards Aquifer Funding Plan. She noted that in May 2020, a Resolution of support could be put forth for ConnectSA and an ILA with Bexar County for the greenway trails to be considered by City Council. She stated that in July/August 2020, the City Council would call for the election for the ATD to reallocate the 1/8 cent sales tax. She noted that City Council could consider the ILAs between the City, VIA, and Bexar County in September 2020 and the election would be held in November 2020. She stated that if passed, the effective date for the increase to the ATD tax was in April of 2021.

Mayor Nirenberg reported that ConnectSA was intended to improve equity, efficiency, sustainability, and overall economic mobility in the community. He noted that the Greenway Trails System was a fundamental part of ConnectSA and 35% of the remaining trails would be completed in just five years. He stated that the administrative infrastructure and public input process would remain the same under the Edward's Aquifer proposal including the requirement for City Council to approve of individual easements.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked if the contract with Bexar County to complete 26 miles of trail would be extended beyond the first five years. Erik Walsh replied that the term of the contract was for five years and when the term was over the City could partner with Bexar County for completion of the last 45 miles or it could be included in the 2027 Bond Program.

Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked if streets could be maintained with the decrease in funding of the Street Maintenance Program (SMP). Ms. Villagómez replied that they could and the City

Council could consider other alternatives other than the utilization of funds from the SMP. Councilmember Rocha Garcia asked when other alternatives would be presented. Ms. Villagómez replied that the alternatives would be presented in March 2020. She requested information on the history and percentage of impervious cover required and expressed support for the proposal.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked if the proposal would result in a rate increase from SAWS. Ben Gorzell replied that staff did not contemplate a rate increase as the result of the proposal. He stated that the City would issue bonds to fund expenditures and would pay for the bonds with the payment received from SAWS.

Councilmember Courage stated that he was pleased that the proposal included protection for the Edward's Aquifer and would not result in a tax increase. He asked if the Linear Creekway Parks Advisory Board's functions would remain the same. Mr. Walsh replied that the City's involvement would continue and would be an important element of the ILA with Bexar County. Councilmember Courage expressed support for the proposal.

Councilmember Peláez asked how the proposal would increase the amount of Federal funds available. Jeff Arndt replied that VIA would qualify for increased Federal funds through the Capital Improvement Grant Program.

Councilmember Gonzales asked if the Edward's Aquifer Protection Plan would be administered as it was now. Mr. Walsh replied that the staff would remain the same and the Plan would be implemented utilizing the same methodology.

Councilmember Perry asked what percentage of the gross revenues for SAWS the City received in 2019. Mr. Gorzell replied that the City received 2.7% of SAWS gross revenues in 2019. Councilmember Perry asked how much was allocated for streets in the 2017 Bond Program. Mr. Hosseini replied that \$445 million was allocated for streets, bridges, and sidewalks in the 2017 Bond Program. Councilmember Perry expressed concern that funds allocated for streets in the 2022 Bond Program were half of that allocated in the 2017 Bond Program.

Councilmember Viagran stated that the CAB should review parts of the proposal and equity should be defined. She requested a meeting with SAWS to confirm the expectations for the City Council and residents. She stated that SAWS advised the City Council during the budget process that a rate increase would be possible. Mr. Gorzell stated that SAWS indicated that for the next two years there would not be an impact on SAWS' rates. He noted that the payment from SAWS to the General Fund was not built into a rate requirement for SAWS. Councilmember Viagran requested information on Linear Creekways funded by Bexar County.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that requests from SAWS for a rate increase would not be impacted by the Aquifer Program.

Councilmember Sandoval asked if VIA would build the sidewalks which they were partially funding. Ms. Villagómez replied that VIA would partner with the City and the City would probably build the sidewalks.

Councilmember Treviño spoke of the importance of infrastructure in the City and the need to address outstanding infrastructure needs.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan spoke of taking advantage of Federal resources and having the right grant writers.

Councilmember Peláez asked of the number of miles of sidewalks which would be constructed. Ms. Villagómez stated that 393 miles of sidewalks would be constructed.

Henry Cisneros stated that the proposal required no new property tax or increased rates from SAWS. He noted that the proposal contained sidewalks, new bicycle lanes, streets, highway programs, increased frequency of bus routes, and the application of buses on dedicated lanes. He stated that the Aquifer would be protected for a longer period of time and completion of fewer streets in the 2022 Bond Program was a one-time proposition.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that a Transportation Plan would increase economic mobility and stability. He noted that for 20 years, the City had underinvested in public transportation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 5:05 pm to discuss the following items:

- 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, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of public officers or employees and discuss related legal issues pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters) and Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (consultation with attorney).

Mayor Nirenberg reconvened the meeting at 6:16 pm and announced that no action was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Molly stated that the City did not care about homeless individuals and was not compassionate.

Rachell Tucker, Kyle Kennedy, and Jacob Tucker submitted written testimony regarding border security.

Stephen Versteeg expressed concern regarding the rezoning process for a property in Council District 2. He stated that the residents of Government Hill did not want any property rezoned from residential.

Rhett Smith stated that the current administration's immigration policy violated human rights by denying entry to asylum seekers.

ADJOURNED

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg adjourned the meeting at 6:31 pm.

APPROVED

RON NIRENBERG
MAYOR

Attest:

TINA J. FLORES
Acting City Clerk