

**COMMUNITY HEALTH AND EQUITY
COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 7, 2020 10:00AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE**

Members Present:	Councilmember Ana Sandoval, Chair, <i>District 7</i> Councilmember Robert Treviño, <i>District 1</i> Councilmember Jada Andrews-Sullivan, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Shirley Gonzales, <i>District 5</i> Councilmember Melissa Cabello Havrda, <i>District 6</i>
Staff Present:	Dr. Colleen Bridger, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; David McCary, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Andy Segovia, <i>City Attorney</i> ; Shreya Shah, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Tina J. Flores, <i>Acting City Clerk</i> ; Jeff Coyle, <i>Director, Government and Public Affairs</i> ; Laura Mayes, <i>Assistant Director, Government and Public Affairs</i> ; Carlos Rodriguez, <i>Equity Manager, Metro Health</i> ; Julie Sandoval, <i>Public Health Administrator, Metro Health</i> ; Zan Gibbs, MPH, <i>Chief Equity Officer</i>

Call to order

Chairwoman Sandoval called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of the Minutes for the June 16, 2020 Community Health and Equity Committee Meeting.

Councilmember Treviño moved to approve the Minutes of the June 16, 2020 Community Health and Equity Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Christina Cruz submitted written testimony. She requested that City Council reallocate funds from the overinflated police budget to healthcare, housing, and education.

Linda Perez submitted written testimony. She stated that she agreed that racism was a public health crisis which could leave members of the community with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). She requested that the City Council reallocate funds from the overinflated police budget to healthcare, housing, and education.

2. A briefing on updates to the Health Transition Team Implementation Plan [Colleen M. Bridger, MPH, PhD, Assistant City Manager, Interim Health Director]

Dr. Bridger reported that the average number of case investigations completed in one day had doubled to 12 over the past six weeks. She added that case investigators had also doubled the number of persons they were able to contact per day. She reported that the contract tracing system would fully transition to a new contact tracing system, Texas Health Trace (THT), next week. She

noted that the transition to the State system would eliminate data duplication and would sync local data with state data. She added that there were three fixed testing sites: A drive-thru site by appointment only that would take only 10 minutes; and two walk-up sites that did not require an appointment, but required COVID-19 symptoms to be present. She reported of a decrease in the number of individuals seeking testing which could be attributed to a decline of symptomatic individuals or if COVID-19 testing sites needed to be advertised more. She stated the Health Transition Team (HTT) would increase the level of advertising and public engagement next week.

Councilmember Treviño voiced concern about the markup fees associated with the amount of temporary staff employed for contract tracing. Dr. Bridger stated that the long-term plan would be include a COVID-19 vaccine to decrease or eliminate the need for temporary case investigators and contact tracing. She added that the case investigation process would gradually transition to UT Health which was contracted with the City to provide an additional 175 contract tracers, as needed.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan asked of the number of duplicate records detected prior to the transition to the THT system. Dr. Bridger reported that approximately 2,500 duplicate records were detected and eliminated. She added that a team was deployed to search through all 41,000 records that could not be detected through the automated search and the team detected an addition 600 duplicate records. She noted that it was not unusual for the current tracing system to receive 2, 3, or 4 notifications of the same positive test result and the THT system would help avoid future duplicates.

Councilmember Viagran asked for clarification if the Federal Government would no longer report COVID-19 cases to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and asked of the possible impact on the local number of reported COVID-19 cases. She asked if the Mobile Integrated Healthcare Unit (MIH) was still performing COVID-19 testing house calls for some Seniors and if the MIH was also performing testing for the walk-up sites. She requested a map of area house calls performed. Dr. Bridger replied that all local COVID-19 data was submitted to the State, and the State would submit its compiled data to the Federal agency as required. She emphasized that the local process would not change, and the number of local COVID-19 cases reported would not change. She reported that the MIH organized testing at the local walk-up sites, but testing was performed by State staff as part of the State's tracing system. She stated that she would provide data on house calls.

Councilmember Viagran asked how Metro Health was preparing for the flu season and flu immunizations. Dr. Bridger reported that more flu shots were requested than for a typical year. She added that flu shots would be provided for free for individuals who did not have insurance. She stated that Metro Health was employing a Strike Team Concept during the local flu shot deployment, wherein the focus was on delivering flu shots to high risk individuals and vulnerable populations as a way to practice how to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine, once it became available.

Councilmember Gonzales requested that the public continue to be reminded of the COVID-19 crisis situation and the continual need to exercise safety precautions. Jeff Coyle reported that the marketing firm hired by the City was in the process of designing a COVID-19 campaign to be deployed very soon. He added that the marketing funding was provided through the CARES Act.

Chairwoman Sandoval noted that the HTT Implementation Plan originally set aside \$28 million for COVID-19 testing and the current report reflected \$23 million. She asked if the State was providing funding assistance for testing and staff; and if so, how was the difference in cost savings re-deployed. Dr. Bridger confirmed that the State was providing additional funds on a monthly basis for an undetermined amount of time. She reported that the HTT Implementation Plan reflected monthly adjustments to the Budget line item accordingly. She added that some of the funds realized from the cost saving were divested to the COVID-19 Research Project, hiring of additional case investigators, and isolation care facilities.

Chairwoman Sandoval asked of the amount of wages and benefits received by case investigators hired as temporary staff. She referenced a local news article that cited issues with a contact tracing contractor hired by the State and requested more information. Dr. Bridgers reported that the wages ranged from \$15 to \$20 an hour, depending on the type of case investigation, and no benefits were included. She stated that the issues raised in the news article were associated with the contract tracing component of the State's THT system. She clarified that the local transition to THT would not occur for at least another month; in the interim, Metro Health would continue to negotiate terms with THT regarding deliverables and expectations. She added that a very strong Plan B was in place and Metro Health would continue to conduct contract tracing if problems with THT persisted.

Councilmember Sandoval noted that schools would open in a few weeks and asked if there was a Plan B in place should the City experience a spike in cases. Dr. Bridger reported that the Attorney General and Governor clarified that local school districts could not be shut down due to a spike in COVID-19 cases. She noted that Metro Health would conduct case investigations and contract tracings in the event of a spike. She reported that Dr. C. Junda Woo, Medical Director, Metro Health, had issued a guidance to local School Districts that provided guidelines, recommended metrics, and Orders that required School Districts to post COVID-19 data on their websites. She emphasized that if a particular school had an outbreak, it could be closed, but entire school districts could not. She noted that Metro Health had a great deal of contract tracing experience within schools and the investigation of potential exposures, as with past occurrences of childhood measles outbreaks.

3. A briefing with updates on efforts to enhance public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic [Carlos J. Contreras, III, Assistant City Manager; Jeff Coyle, Director, Government and Public Affairs]

Laura Mayes highlighted the guiding principles that were adopted by City Council to guide the public participation process through the COVID-19 response and beyond: Meaningful, transparent, respectful, inclusive, accessible, informative, responsive, timely, convenient, and continuous. She emphasized that social distancing required some physical distancing, but did not mean a disconnection from local government. She reported that the City moved to a virtual setting for many of its meetings, to include City Council, Council Committees, some Boards & Commissions, and most recently, virtual Townhall Meetings. She noted that virtual meetings were much easier to organize than in-person meetings and most importantly, were more convenient for residents as they no longer had to coordinate bus schedules, drive downtown, or pay for parking. She noted that two television stations were able to livestream meetings which increased public awareness and engagement. Mr. Coyle added that the Historic and Design Review Commission reported of a higher level of participation at their virtual meetings than for past in-person meetings.

Ms. Mayes reported that 18,845 individuals participated at the virtual Budget Townhall meetings, more than 5,000 individuals participated in the Mayor's Townhall meeting for children, and more than 6,000 individuals participated in the School Townhall meeting. She stated that the City would continue to provide remote telephonic, video and live audience participation options and would enhance non-digital outreach participation options. She reported of an average of 4,000 livestream engagements of likes, shares and comments on the City's Facebook page when compared to a pre-COVID-19 average of only 1,500 engagements.

Ms. Mayes reported on the City's public comment system. She stated that the City Manager's Office released marketing materials to be distributed to the public and included instructional fliers, video tutorials posted on the City's eComment website at www.sanantonio.granicusideas.com. Mr. Coyle noted that no other levels of government provided the opportunity for the public comment during a virtual meeting as individuals could call in from the comfort of their homes and provide their input; whereas, neither the Texas House of Representatives nor the Texas Senate accepted virtual public comments on the floor.

Ms. Mayes reported on the City's increased ability to provide live video feeds of briefings, press conferences and meetings especially during the COVID-19 response where providing faster access of information to the public was critical. She added that high quality video and providing American Sign Language in both Spanish and English increased the quality of communication and that live Spanish speakers would be available for all media events. Mr. Coyle added that traditionally, press conferences were regarded as conferences for the press and thereafter, the press would distribute messages to the public; however, press conferences were an opportunity to communicate directly with the public.

Ms. Mayes reported that the City's text message subscriber base grew from 1,400 to 26,000. She added that comments and engagement could be solicited during virtual meetings where individuals would be allowed to submit questions via text. She stated that the City would continue to provide engagement options via phone and text and a comprehensive phone list would be developed to strategically engage with residents. She added that non-digital outreach would continue such as robocalls, doorhangers, mailers, flyers, hotlines and video-recorded meetings.

Councilmember Viagran referenced the moratorium on part of the Texas Open Meetings Act that required a gathering space for individuals to watch the meeting and ask questions. She asked if

virtual City Council meetings could continue after COVID-19. She noted that the 87th Texas Legislative Session would begin on January 12, 2021 and asked if COVID-19 accommodations were planned. She asked for staff to consider streaming virtual meetings on YouTube. She stated that representation mattered and encouraged the presence of more women, Latinx, and persons of color at City press conferences.

City Attorney Andy Segovia confirmed that the City was still operating under the State moratorium with no specific end date provided. He noted the advantages of virtual meetings and encouraged strategic planning to make changes to the Open Meetings Act to allow for more virtual meetings post-COVID-19. Jeff Coyle stated that State Legislators were not permitted to enter the Capitol building at this time. He anticipated that the City's legislative team would no longer have the ability to hold conversations in the hallways with legislators as before, and would have to rely heavily on communications through others with direct access to Legislators. Ms. Mayes stated that staff would review livestreaming opportunities on YouTube.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan recognized the diversity of residents and asked what additional language translation services were provided on the City's website besides Spanish. She asked if American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters used by the City were contracted or if they were City employees. She noted that the City Charter required that original, physical signatures be obtained to proposed petitions. She asked if an online platform would be available to allow for digital signatures to be obtained in lieu of original signatures during COVID-19. Mr. Coyle reported that Google Translate provided translation for 109 different languages to the City's webpages. He stated that other languages most likely to be spoken locally were identified as Safe Harbor languages and the City Attorney's Office was in the process of finalizing the City's language access plan to include the Safe Harbor languages. Mr. Coyle reported that the interpretation and translation services were outsourced. He clarified that ASL Interpreters were contracted for live interpretations at live meetings and written communications and meeting materials were contracted out for written Spanish translation. City Attorney Segovia reported that no actions had been taken at the local, State, or Federal levels of government to allow for digital signatures to be accepted for the petition process. He recognized that filing government taxes online via electronic signature was permitted and stated that the City Attorney's Office and the Government & Public Affairs Department would collaborate to consider changes to the City Charter at the time of the next Charter Review Commission. He noted that State laws dictated original signature requirements for many items.

Councilmember Treviño observed that many individuals tended to place their trust in printed and direct mail communications. He asked of engagement with CPS Energy and SAWS to allow for COVID-19 messaging to residents to be included in their monthly billing statements. He noted that the Chief Appraiser of the Bexar County Appraisal District (BCAD) agreed to include inserts in property tax bills so long as the original BCAD postage cost was not affected. Mr. Coyle reported that both CPS Energy and SAWS were great partners of the City and allowed for COVID-19 inserts to be included in their direct mailings during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. He agreed that direct mailing was the best method of engagement but noted it was a very expensive process with an estimated cost of \$120,000 per direct mail piece for approximately 420 households. He agreed that further outreach marketing campaigns should be incorporated into CPS Energy and SAWS bills. He agreed to follow up with BCAD for future marketing campaign inserts.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan recommended that a platform be established wherein citizens could submit their public comments via voicemail, email, or video and that their prerecorded or videotaped comments could be inserted during broadcasting gaps on TVSA livestreams. Mr. Coyle recognized that videotaped public comment to have more appeal during COVID-19 and staff would explore various public comment options and report back to the Committee.

Chairwoman Sandoval noted pre-COVID-19 discussions to assemble a group of members of the public to advise the City on the intake of public comment and asked if such discussions and planning could resume. She asked if a customer feedback survey could be conducted. She made the recommendation that this item be agendaized for the next meeting. Mr. Coyle reported that approximately 7 solicitations for a facilitator were submitted and 5 proposals were received. He added that a facilitator would be hired first to be part of and make recommendations on the process for establishing an advisory group with adequate representation. He stated that a facilitator would be hired in the next few weeks. Ms. Mayes stated that a customer feedback survey would be conducted.

4. A briefing on a draft resolution declaring racism a public health crisis, created in collaboration with Metro Health and Council District 2 and Council District 7 [David W. McCary, Assistant City Manager, Zan Gibbs, MPH, Chief Equity Officer]

Chairwoman Sandoval announced that Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan would lead the discussion for Item 4.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan stated that racism was a public health crisis and noted the uprising of many residents that wanted their voices heard during the current climate of racial unrest. She noted that the history of San Antonio included many forms of racism since the Battle of the Alamo and through the times of segregated water fountains at the Hemisfair Arena and backdoor entrances at the Majestic Theater that her mother encountered during her childhood. She noted that the civil rights movement in San Antonio led to the desegregation of lunch counters, to include a local lunch counter located in the historic downtown Woolworth Building. She emphasized that declaring racism as a public health crisis included all communities across the board.

Public Comment

Written Testimony

Public Comments have been submitted through the eComment system and are attached to the Minutes.

Live Testimony

Marlon Davis stated that he was thankful for the Resolution and the prospects it offered. He noted that racism was not a tangible object that could be pointed to. He noted the correlation between COVID-19 and vulnerable African American populations that were at a greater risk of

death and were most likely to be situated in marginalized communities. He recognized that African Americans and Latinx populations in San Antonio were more vulnerable precisely due to a history of redlining. He noted that San Antonio was recently declared to be the most economically segregated city in the nation. He called for funds from punitive institutional policing to be divested to healthcare.

Celeste Brown stated that the Resolution was exciting and addressed racism in a holistic way with the understanding that racism was embedded within every aspect of the City. She noted that the City Budget did not reflect public health crisis efforts. She added that the City Budget was a living, breathing document that was reflective of the City's priorities and urged City Leaders to continue their advocacy in addressing racism at its root and to apply a level of scrutiny to the City Budget.

Pharaoh Clark stated that he was excited for the passing of the Resolution and described racism as an epidemic that had plagued the Black Community on a daily basis. He urged expediency in passing the Resolution and stated that the time for passing it was now.

Councilmember Treviño stated that the first step in eliminating racism was to acknowledge that it existed. He stated that City Leaders must work hand-in-hand with the community to strengthen local housing, infrastructure, and public safety policies and procedures. He noted that the impact of eviction was a systemic issue and was linked to numerous poor health outcomes and could increase the risk of complications if COVID-19 was contracted. He referenced statistical studies that indicated that African Americans and Latinx constituted 80% of pre-COVID-19 evictions. He cited U.S. Census Bureau poll surveys which indicated that nearly half of African American and Latinx renters had slight or no confidence in their ability to pay their next month's rent on time.

Councilmember Viagran acknowledged San Antonio's past history of racist acts of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and redlining. She acknowledged that lynchings of Mexican Americans occurred at the hands of Texas Rangers in San Antonio's past history of racism and requested that the lynchings be included in Section 2 of the Draft Resolution.

Councilmember Viagran concurred with Councilmember Treviño for the need of healing and reconciliation. She thanked Centro San Antonio and Andrea "Vocab" Sanderson, City Poet Laureate, for painting uplifting poetry on the streets in front of Travis Park which was the historical site where lynchings had taken place and where a Confederate statute was taken down.

Councilmember Viagran referenced a portion of Section 2 of the proposed Resolution that stated, "this Council supports community-based groups and initiatives that promote racial equity and will work with the community to educate and find innovative solutions to address systemic and institutional racism and provide additional resources to specific efforts to dismantle racism." She requested that Section 2 also include the education and sharing of historical racist experiences that have occurred in San Antonio's past.

Councilmember Viagran referenced a portion of Section 4 of the proposed Resolution that stated "the City of San Antonio will visually commit to advancing racial equity efforts by reviewing policies and procedures for the purposes of eradicating implicit and explicit racial bias and

promoting policies and procedures that govern boards and commissions.” She requested that the Resolution also apply to all City Boards & Commissions and be incorporated into their standard operating procedures.

Jordyn Parks encouraged everyone in attendance to not only be part of demanding a solution, but to initiate and push the solution forward. She stated that the marginalized, oppressed community members not only have to request protection, but must also be a source of protection. She stated that members of the local community should educate themselves not only with demanding what should be requested, but to also become active members of the community and show the world what the community would look like when equity was achieved, when all children were safe, when all children obtained a great education, and when all children had great opportunities. She stated that the proposed Resolution was a great start and voiced concern that the Resolution be a tangible accomplishment that pertained to the local community. She expressed her excitement to collaborate on the finalized version of the Resolution and thanked the Committee for being part of the change.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan moved to recommend and forward a draft Resolution declaring racism a public health crisis to the full City Council for consideration, with the following additions made by Councilmember Viagran:

- Section 2 of the proposed Draft Resolution shall include a commitment to education on the past history of racism in San Antonio and the sharing of historical racist experiences that occurred in San Antonio.
- Section 4 of the proposed Draft Resolution shall apply to all City Boards & Commissions as part of their standard operating procedures.

Councilmember Treviño seconded the motion.

Councilmember Viagran referenced a portion of Section 1 of the proposed Resolution that stated, “Council will increase advocacy to include State and Federal legislative priorities for City efforts to further racial equity, and to eliminate all forms of racism, from system, to structural, to institutional, to interpersonal, and individual.” She requested that advocacy for racial justice serve as the umbrella of City Council efforts to further racial equity when planning the City’s State and Legislative Agendas for the 87th Texas Legislature Session and the 117th United States Congress in 2021.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan amended her Motion based on additional feedback from Councilmember Viagran, with the following addition:

- Section 2 of the proposed Draft Resolution shall include the mention of the lynchings of African Americans and the lynchings of Mexican Americans that occurred at the hands of Texas Rangers as part of community education and the sharing of historical racist experiences that occurred in San Antonio.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chairwoman Sandoval requested a date setting for the Draft Resolution to be forwarded to full City Council for consideration. She stated that it was critical that the Resolution be adopted in advance of the adoption of the City Budget in September 2020. City Attorney Segovia stated he would confer with the Mayor's Office and the City Manager to schedule a date as quickly as possible.

Councilmember Viagran recommended that discussion of the Draft Resolution be included in the upcoming Metro Health and Public Health Budget Work Session. City Attorney Segovia stated that he would review the Budget Work Session Calendar and try to schedule the Draft Resolution for full City Council consideration accordingly and before the adoption of the City Budget, if possible.

Councilmember Andrews-Sullivan thanked Dr. Bridger and the Metro Health team for their feedback on the Draft Resolution.

Future Agenda Items

None.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Ana Sandoval, Chair

Respectfully Submitted,

Tina J. Flores
Acting City Clerk