



MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Westside Planning Team Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Inner City Development, 1300 Chihuahua Street, 78207

Attendees:

*Antonia Castañeda
Westside Preservation Alliance*

*Francesca Rattray
YWCA San Antonio*

*Marisa Diaz
Edgewood ISD*

*Carol Hall
Community Workers Council NA*

*Graciela Sanchez
Esperanza Peace and Justice Center*

*Patti Radle
Inner City Development*

*Dina Serrano
Community Workers Council NA*

*Jaime Macias
West Commerce Business Alliance*

Meeting Purpose

This meeting of the Westside Planning Team aimed to accomplish these objectives:

- Provide a review and discussion of proposed new schedule for 2019
- Present educational overviews of the planning process, the SA Tomorrow Sub-Area Plans, Land Use, and Zoning

Meeting Format

The meeting was structured as a combination of presentation by City staff along with open discussion and questions by the Planning Team members. City Planning Department staff included: Chris Ryerson, Planning Administrator; Ana Villarreal, Senior Planner; and Rudy Nino, Assistant Director.

Chris Ryerson presented a process update outlining the proposed schedule of meeting dates and topics between May and the anticipated draft plan release in mid-October, 2019. The Planning Team provided comments and suggestions for improving the schedule, including potential Planning Team and Community Meeting locations, and topic additions and revisions. The Team also discussed strategies for more effectively reaching members of the westside community for their input and attendance at meetings.

Following the discussion of the plan process and related topics, City staff provided an educational overview of the importance of planning, the City's SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, and the Sub-Area plans currently ongoing. The Team agreed on the importance of covering the "Land Use 101" and "Zoning 101" educational overviews at an upcoming meeting.

This memo provides a summary of key discussion topics and questions from the meeting.

Key highlights from the presentation on Process and Schedule:

- Plan development is tentatively scheduled between May 1 and late September, 2019
- The tentative date for the public draft Westside Community Area Plan is October 10, 2019
- Including this May 1 meeting, there are eight Planning Team Meetings anticipated
- Formal community engagement events will include two Community Meetings (July and October) and two Community Work Sessions (June and August).
 - The community works sessions will be open to both Planning Team members and the wider westside community, staffed by both English and Spanish-speaking staff from the Planning Department, and will provide opportunities to learn about various aspects of the plan and provide feedback and input in an informal and educational environment.
 - The work sessions will be scheduled strategically to allow people with a variety of work schedules and commitments to attend; for example from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, as well as 9:00 am to 12:00 noon on Saturday, providing three opportunities for people to attend throughout the week.
- Planning staff will use many other informal opportunities to meet with community members and seek input.

Planning Team comments and questions:

- It is important that the Spanish-speaking Planning Department staff at the community work sessions is prepared not only to translate information, but to have the ability to explain it as needed.
- The Westside Community Area Plan should have a significant historical/cultural section that reflects the area's uniqueness and importance.
 - The history and culture of the westside cannot just be about institutions; they lose relevance if the people are gone.
 - Scholars have called the near westside the cultural capital of Mexican-American culture – we have to affirm, underscore, and advocate to preserve this.
 - Any recommendations in the plan related to historic and cultural preservation must be implementable.
 - A few initial ideas mentioned were historic markers, wayfinding improvements to places and people of significance, and potentially creating a historic district.
 - Five National Cultural Fellows are from the westside of San Antonio – we should showcase information on where they have lived, studied, worked, performed, etc.
- Related to the discussion about a significant historical/cultural section was a request for a brief presentation on the history and development of land use on the westside. How has the community used land over time? How is the land use pattern a reflection of the history, culture, and aesthetic of the westside community?
 - Note: Planning Department staff committed to coordinating with and supporting Planning Team members who are interested in researching and writing these sections.

- There was a question about why some neighborhoods don't have adopted neighborhood plans.
 - Note: This was explained during the presentation on the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan and Sub-Area Plans.
- There is starting to be a lot of development pressure on the near westside and this will only increase with the expansion of UTSA Downtown Campus and potential investment in Opportunity Zones. Are there any short-term protections against plan amendments and rezonings that could create change not desired by the community during the development of the Westside Community Area Plan?
- Additional methods of effective outreach to community members should include: churches/church bulletins; Spanish-language radio; schools (sporting event bulletins, parent liaisons at each school, and Principal coffees).
- The Planning Department needs to host more regular educational sessions on planning, land use, and zoning both during the development of the Westside Community Area Plan, as well as in the years that follow. This is part of the City's responsibility to help build community capacity to participate effectively in various public processes.
 - The process should include surveying for effectiveness of these efforts.
- The community is concerned of predatory housing buyers that take advantage of sellers who are not aware of their property value and accept offer deals at a price below current market value.

Upcoming Westside Planning Team Meetings will focus on:

- Reviewing existing conditions and existing plans
- Plan Vision and Goals for the Westside Community Area
- Land use
- Transportation and Mobility

If you have questions about the Westside Community Area planning project, please contact:

Chris Ryerson, City of San Antonio Planning Department

Email: Chris.Ryerson@sanantonio.gov

Phone: (210) 207-7833