



MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Midtown Planning Team Meeting #1
Date: June 28, 2017
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm
Location: San Antonio College, Nursing & Allied Health Complex

Attendees:

<i>Camas Milam, Mahncke Park NA</i>	<i>Lynn Osborne Bobbit,</i>	<i>Jeanette Honerman</i>
<i>Homer Hayes, Mahncke Park NA</i>	<i>Brackenridge Park Conservancy</i>	<i>Lou Fox</i>
<i>Joe Bravo, Westfort Alliance</i>	<i>Tim Cone, NRP Group</i>	<i>Rebel Mariposa, Tobin Hill</i>
<i>Abe Juarez, Five Points NA</i>	<i>Bill Showne, Silver Ventures</i>	<i>Business Association</i>
<i>Mike Austin, Tobin Hill CA</i>	<i>Dee Dee Gonzalez, SA College</i>	<i>Max Woodward, FRED</i>
<i>Marise McDermott, Witte Museum</i>	<i>Armando Saliba, University of the</i>	<i>Mayra Juarez, St. Anne's area</i>
<i>Kim Biffle, Witte Museum</i>	<i>Incarnate Word</i>	

Meeting Purpose

The first meeting of the Midtown Planning Team aimed to accomplish these objectives: provide an overview of the Midtown Regional Center Plan project and timeline; describe potential outreach approach and get input on Midtown-specific strategies; present a preview of existing conditions; discuss assets, challenges, and opportunities; and review next steps in the planning process.

Meeting Format

The meeting began with a welcome by Mayor Ron Nirenberg and opening remarks from key City of San Antonio planning staff: Bridgette White, Rudy Nino, and Chris Ryerson. MIG, Inc. planning consultant Jay Renkens provided a project overview describing foundational background work, population growth projected for San Antonio, and the critical role of community members in shaping the SA Tomorrow Sub-area Plans. Following this introductory presentation, Planning Team members and other participants broke into smaller Sub-area based groups for focused discussions.

Garrett Phillips, City of San Antonio Project Manager for the SA Tomorrow Midtown Regional Center Project, presented project context and facilitated a Planning Team discussion. MIG, Inc. Project Manager Jill Eulate recorded comments from the Midtown session on a large wall graphic and flip chart sheets (see photo reduction at end of summary). This memo provides highlights of the meeting discussion organized into sections that reflect primary discussion topics:

- Midtown Engagement Ideas
- Assets/Opportunities
- Challenges
- Other Comments/Process Suggestions
- Next Steps

Midtown Engagement Ideas

Participants provided the following suggestions for stakeholders to involve in the planning process and potential outreach strategies.

Stakeholders

- Spanish speakers from Saint Anne's and other areas
- Schools: board members, teachers, students, PTAs
- UIW and SAC Students, faculty, staff
- Botanical Garden and Doseum
- Property managers
- Tenants (80% are renters in Five Points)
- Developers—Keep informed and bring into the process for a stronger outcome
- Recreational and active transportation groups
- Bicycle users
- Broadway corridor stakeholders
- LGTBQ community
- Faith community: Temple Bethel and other churches
- Headwaters Sanctuary
- Representatives from Beacon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD)
- Alamo Heights—project basis
- Linear Creekways Advisory Committee

Outreach Strategies

- Use social media, particularly to connect with students and younger generation
- Ensure that public workshops and events are accessible via public transportation
- Connect process to education—Quality education opportunities can help residents stay in school and stay in Midtown over the long term; involve students in the planning process to impact the future of Midtown
- Use property managers' communications with tenants to inform tenants about the plan process
- Reach cyclists through B-Cycle stations or media

Assets/Opportunities

Participants highlighted qualities and features they appreciate about Midtown. Several prospective opportunities for improvement also emerged. The Planning Team will have an opportunity to expand on these suggestions at the next meeting.

Assets

- San Pedro Springs Creek and San Antonio River
- History: neighborhood and commercial architecture; transportation routes such as the Camino Real and Old Spanish Trail; acequias such as those that paralleled Flores and the San Antonio River; and unique places and stories such as those related to the old tunnels and Brackenridge Park
- Broadway cultural corridor
- Cluster of musical venues St. Mary's Street



- The Pearl, a regional/national destination (east end of St. Mary's Street)
- Diversity across the plan area and within each neighborhood; income, education, and ethnic diversity
- Character of neighborhoods
- Strong social capital: people of Midtown, neighborhood and civic organizations

Opportunities

- San Pedro Springs Creek as a publicly accessible amenity (Five Points neighborhood)
- Redevelop properties around the Five Points intersection including VIA's property
- Make the Flores Street underpass connection to Downtown more inviting and connective, and create a well-lighted and safe pedestrian connection between the Five Points neighborhood and the San Pedro Springs Creek improvements being constructed south of I-35
- Protect and promote the music culture on St. Mary's Street
- Expand local housing options for UIW and SAC students
- Explore regional transit solutions for commuters (college students and employees) and visitors to regionally significant local amenities like the museums on Broadway

Challenges

Participants began to identify challenges related to planning in Midtown. The discussion of challenges will be continued at the next Planning Team meeting.

- San Pedro Creek public area maintenance near the Five Points intersection
- Flooding on Broadway challenges new development and daily life
- Maintaining diversity
- Making sure that as redevelopment occurs, people and the things they value in the environment can be a part of the future
- Keeping development balanced
- There are no fresh food stores south of Ashby in the eastern portions of the Midtown Plan Area
- Impacts to some neighborhoods from nearby development such as increased traffic and parking congestion

Other Comments/Process Suggestions

Planning Team members suggested data and process points to enrich the Midtown Sub-area Plan development.

- Data to understand how people travel to, from, and within Midtown
- Update on status of Broadway corridor project—coordinate with the broader Midtown project
- New construction and demolition permits should be used to understand development trends
- Triangulate housing unit demand projections and estimates of recent construction; those presented at Meeting #1 don't align with other sources that suggest higher housing and population growth rates
- Information on the status of homelessness in Midtown; indicators could be used to understand whether homelessness in the area is increasing
- Evaluate access to groceries and fresh foods



- The Plan should be informed by dwellings, employees, and associated traffic generated by planned or under construction projects, including those on Broadway in the Downtown Plan Area
- Zoned density and zoned minimum lot sizes compared with actual density and lot size to understand capacity for development and extent of non-conforming housing under current zoning
- Review San Antonio 2020 principles; the Comprehensive Plan is the foundation for the Midtown Sub-area Plan
- The Midtown planning process should aim to keep cultural and historic diversity
- Examine connection to World Heritage; Abe Juarez to share book at next meeting

Next Steps

The second Planning Team Meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 1st. Objectives for this meeting include:

- Review existing conditions findings
- Brainstorm preliminary vision and goals
- Continue discussion of assets, opportunities, and challenges
- Consider areas of stability and areas of change
- Discuss plans for the upcoming community workshop

A Midtown community-wide workshop is planned on Tuesday, August 22. The purpose of the workshop will be to garner broader public input to the Midtown Sub-area Plan. The workshop will include an introduction to the planning process, a presentation of existing conditions, and an opportunity to gather input on vision and goals for the Midtown Plan area.

If you have questions about the Midtown planning project, please contact Project Manager Garrett Phillips, City of San Antonio Department of Planning & Community Development.

Email: garrett.phillips@sanantonio.gov

Phone: (210) 207-5441

