



## VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY

Highway 151 and Loop 1604 Area Regional Center  
Draft Plan

**Date:** October 7, 2021 | **Time:** 6:00 – 7:30 pm | **Location:** Zoom

### Draft Plan can be viewed:

- Virtually on the plan website <https://highway151.sacompplan.com/>
- Physically at the Council District 6 Field Office, Potranco Library, and Great Northwest Library

### CITY OF SAN ANTONIO STAFF & CONSULTANT TEAM:

Sarah Serpas, AICP, Senior Planner/Project Manager  
Chris Ryerson, AICP, Planning Administrator  
Iris González, Special Projects Manager  
Ana Villareal, Senior Planner  
Bridgett White, AICP, Planning Director

Linda Ximenes, Ximenes & Associates  
Laura Calderon, Ximenes & Associates  
Gretchen Roufs, APR, Auxiliary Marketing Services

### MEETING OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the Virtual Community Meeting was to inform the public of the Draft Highway 151 and Loop 1604 Area Regional Center Plan, and to provide a brief tutorial on where and how to access the draft document, and other plan information, on the plan area website.

### MEETING FORMAT

The Community Meeting was held virtually through Zoom. Including planning and consultant staff, the total number of attendees was 45. The meeting began with instructions on how to ask questions or provide discussion through the chat function, followed by an option for Spanish speaking attendees to join a separate break-out room with the live Spanish language presentation. The meeting continued with staff introductions, including a foreword by the Planning Department Director, Bridgett White, AICP. The meeting continued with an overview of the Highway 151 and Loop 1604 Area Regional Center Plan, a live Question & Answer Session, as well as “next steps” in the planning process, and information on how to access both the website’s draft planning document including physical copies which are available at the District 6 Field Office, the Great Northwest Library, and the Potranco Library.

### DRAFT PLAN OVERVIEW

The Project Manager began the PowerPoint presentation with an overview of the regional center, followed by a description of the planning team and the timeline the group has worked on thus far to develop the draft plan document. Over the course of two years, the planning team-made up of area stakeholders and neighborhood representatives, developed the draft plan by analyzing the existing conditions of the area and creating a vision and set of goals for the area. The planning process also includes establishing a set of recommendations to address several plan elements within the community

including Land Use, Focus Areas, Mobility, Amenities and Public Space, Economic Development, and Transformative Projects.

## **PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

While all the recommendations and strategies in the plan are important, the Planning Team and community identified some priorities that are either: most critical to achieving the plan vision and goals; are more likely to be funded and implemented in the short-term; build upon other existing or ongoing initiatives; or are a necessary first step to provide a foundation for other projects and investments. These priority recommendations were presented to the attendees. These include strategies related to Land Use, Focus Areas, Mobility, Amenities and Public Space, and Economic Development. The strategies are accessible through the PowerPoint associated with this Community Meeting, which is available on the website's document library: <https://highway151.sacomplan.com/documents/>

## **LIVE Q&A SESSION**

Following the overview of the regional center plan, the project manager described questions commonly received at previous community meetings. The questions were answered by Planning Staff and the responses in italics are as follows:

*Example Question #1: Why are we planning for the Highway 151 and Loop 1604 Area?*

**Response:** Planning for the Highway 151 and Loop 1604 Area is part of a bigger effort to plan for the entire City as part of implementing the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. As mentioned earlier, the Comprehensive Plan identified 13 Regional Centers (including this area) that are the main employment centers of the City. The City is growing quickly, and we know a significant number of new homes and jobs will locate in these Regional Centers. So, we want to proactively plan for these areas to ensure infrastructure, community amenities, and housing and transportation choices are in place to meet the needs of current and future residents. Planning for these areas ahead of time can also help guide new development to certain corridors and focus areas where higher density housing or commercial uses make sense, and encourage the preservation of existing neighborhood areas.

*Example Question #2: How will these improvements and projects be paid for?*

**Response:** Public projects and initiatives recommended in the plan may be funded through typical mechanisms such as the City's annual budget, the five-year Bond cycle, the City's Infrastructure Management Program (IMP), or designated areas such as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ). In some cases, Federal funding programs, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) may be appropriate funding options. In addition, partner organizations and agencies such as Bexar County, VIA Metropolitan Transit, the San Antonio River Authority, or the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization may also contribute to or support funding for certain projects. While the funding sources just mentioned may be used for public investments and amenities, or in some cases, Public-Private Partnerships, it is important to remember that private developers with private funding sources will ultimately be the ones to build housing, commercial, and mixed-use projects.



## Questions from Attendees

After the example questions, the project manager asked the attendees to provide their own questions in the chat, and the questions would be answered by planning staff. The questions were noted by the consultant team and compiled into a word document, which the project manager read off and so that planning staff could answer the questions. The questions are below and the response to each question is accessible through the meeting recordings on the project website: <https://highway151.sacomplan.com/>

## FOLLOW UP ANSWERS FROM DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The following Questions were asked at the meeting about specific development projects and land owners. Planning Staff was unable to provide detailed answers, and followed up with the Development Services Department after the meeting and received the following answers:

### Question Related to Vacant Parcels and public-approval process:

- *“Vacant tracts within this area are owned by various companies, when will they be identified by owner and their vision plans?”*
  - **As parcels are developed, they do go through the Development Services Department for approvals such as building permits and any rezoning requests. If there is a rezoning necessary for development, this triggers a public process involving Planning Commission, City Council, and public comment. If the rezoning request is in a Regional Center, the Development Service Department does send the information of that rezoning for review by the Planning Department. However, if the property is already zoned for the development the property owner wishes to construct, there is no public process necessary, and the property owner can build as-of-right.**
  
- *“Vision says: Experience Texas Hill Country Feel; Vision further says, “Preserve Hill country Character.” Since we started meeting, Microsoft has cleared almost all the trees and built their Data Centers. Microsoft purchased another tract on Wiseman from Valero, and they plan to clear over 75% of the trees. When we met with them, they stated they paid millions of dollars in mitigation fees to do this legally with the City. Wells Fargo clear a large tract to build their Solar Farms and they planted dead trees. Another tract along Ellison near Sear World has been cleared.”*
  - **The City of San Antonio enforces the City Code Chapter 35 (also known as Unified Development Code) Sec 35-523 – Tree Preservation of the Unified Development Code on all properties being permitted within the City Limits and San Antonio ETJ. The sites referenced is currently going through the review process and will comply with all applicable codes.**



- *“When will the City stop these companies from clearing the trees which adversely affect wildlife and the environment. And as far as the Mitigation fees, where does the money go? Microsoft stated they spent millions of dollars.”*
  - **In accordance with the City’s adopted Unified Development a private property owner may develop their property so long as they comply with all applicable regulations. The Tree Ordinance does allow for the removal of trees, it also allow for planting of trees or paying mitigation fees. Any paid mitigation fees are placed into the tree mitigation fund, overseen by Parks Department. This fund is used to plant trees on public property and support tree adoption programs for the residents of San Antonio. Please note that any site over two acres is required to submit a Habitat Compliance Form that US Fish and Wildlife reviews and enforces in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act.**
  
- *“Where do the millions of dollars that Microsoft paid to the city to cut the trees down go? Will that go to our area for further enhancements or to the city general fund?”*
  - **In accordance with Chapter 35, any Tree Mitigation fees collected on a development permit, shall be directed to the City’s Tree mitigation fund, which is managed by the Parks Department. This fund is used to plant trees on public property throughout the City, as well as supports a tree adoption program for the residents of San Antonio.**
  
- *“What will happen to the Quarry area that is located behind Westover Valley & next to Microsoft? Seems to me the City had condemned the area awhile back.”*
  - **This is a privately owned property; Development Services does not have any permits for this site.**
  
- *“When Microsoft or other large developments are planned, isn't there supposed to be a public hearing for local residents can attend and learn what is being built?”*
  - **The public hearing process occurs at the time of board and commission consideration or at the time of City Council consideration. These meetings are open to the public and are live streamed for viewing if you are unable to attend in person. If the projects permits are not required to be heard by any of the board, commissions or by City Council then the applicant is able to proceed to applying for construction permits, which is an administrative review process and does not require a public hearing.**

Other ways to find permit activity in the Development Services BuildSA system can be found: <https://aca.sanantonio.gov/CitizenAccess/Default.aspx>

Open Data link to permit activity:  
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/DSD/Resources/Reports>

## QUESTIONS ANSWERED DURING MEETING



### Questions related to affordable housing and housing quality:

- *“Will there be a wide range of affordable housing options and NOT just those focused at the 80%AMI [Area Median Income]?”*
- *“Are substandard homes part of the plan? I noticed homes out in the Culebra Alamo Ranch homes were build fast and with low quality materials”*

**Summarized Response:** The Planning Department works very closely with the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department (NHSD). After adoption of the Mayor’s Housing Policy Document, they have been working with a Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP). They are using the information that we have for our Regional Centers, looking at targets for the Regional Centers, and looking into how we define AMI and production and preservation for the various AMI levels. For all of our sub-area plans, we work to provide recommendations for affordable housing that NHSD can implement. Once we develop and adopt the sub-area plans, NHSD will look into more detail on opportunities for housing through the SHIP.

### Questions related to traffic and transportation concerns:

- *“Culebra Rd is extremely congested. Is there any plans on improving traffic on that road?”*
- *“Will Hwy 151 eventually merge with the 211 Hwy that is under construction?”*
- *“Are there plans to extend Alamo Ranch Pkwy past Calaveras Way or turn it into a major highway?”*
- *“Can you elaborate more on mobility in this area. Will there be extended bus service or just expanding roads? Any protected bike lanes in the plan?”*
- *“Will there be Via bus service outside the city limits?”*
- *“Are we looking at walking distance school for new housing? Raba backs up onto Westover Hills during pick up time. A 'hill country feel' does not include six lane main drags down the middle of it.”*
- *“As more development takes place in the area, is there a process to ensure roads are already developed to handle additional traffic on the front end instead of on the back end?”*

**Summarized Response:** This plan is an attempt to gather input about the major concerns in this plan area. In collecting information about the traffic and transportation concerns, we will coordinate with the Transportation Department to implement the plan and coordinate responses going forward. The Transportation Department is conducting a Culebra Road study closer to downtown to address pedestrian and mobility concerns. Part of what we are doing in creating these plans is identifying areas like Culebra Road to focus future research or projects in those areas. The first step is identifying those problem areas in plans like this, and it sets up the Transportation Department to do the more detailed work to create a possible bond project or other studies.

The central goal of this plan is to create a future land use map. To realize that future land use map, we also have to have the right mobility strategies in place. We have prioritized some streets for different types of mobility – pedestrians, cars, bikes, mixed. But we have not



designated specific bike routes. This will be a more detailed discussion with the Transportation department.

**Other Development-related Questions:**

- *“How many of these private developers have received tax deferrals or abatements that leave residential property owners “stuck” with higher property taxes?”*
  - **Information on deferrals and abatements could come from the city’s Economic Development Department.**
- *“Is there a plan to open Easterling from wiseman to Culebra?”*
  - **As a long-term goal, the plan did identify Easterling as a potential multi-use trail. When the Culebra Creek trail is developed, this would be a nice connection to the trail. This is detailed in the mobility section of the plan.**

**Annexation Questions:**

- *“Any future attempts to annex Alamo Ranch?”*

**Summarized Response:** At this point in time there are no plans to annex this area. In 2017 the state changed how the city can annex. We are required to have an annexation election for any area we want to bring into the city. In 2018, two areas within the ETJ near Camp Bullis and Lackland AFB, but there are no future plans for Alamo Ranch.

**Parks and Open Space Questions:**

- *“Please talk more about plans for green spaces, parks, trails, increasing walkability in the area, etc”*
- *“Green space?”*

**Summarized Response:** Parks and Open Space were consistently brought up by residents and stakeholders at public meetings and comments. The city cannot designate any privately-owned land as parks space in this plan. While this plan is not designating any specific areas for parkland or open space on the future land use map, there are several recommendations within the plan that aim to address the need for park space in the area. The city has identified Culebra Creek as a continuation of the Leon Creek Greenway, but this is pending Parks Department funding. Recommendations of the plan specifically call for continued coordination with the Parks Department to find ways to increase green space in the area, especially through partnerships and coordination with future developers. Strategies could include easements in floodplain areas for large parcels that could be dedicated toward park space.

**Timeline:**



- “When will the 151/1604 plan be presented to City council for approval?”
- “Will this be included in the city’s 5-year comprehensive plan”

**Summarized Response:** The Administrative Draft for this plan is currently scheduled to be released in January 2022, with a hearing by Planning Commission in February 2022, and possible adoption by City Council in March 2022. This subarea plan would then become a component of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. At its core, this effort is working to create a future land use map for the city as a whole. By dividing the city into 30 subareas (Regional Centers and Community Areas), we are incrementally creating this future land use map for the full city. Previous neighborhood plans have had different sets of future land use categories, but through this process we will have a single map using a single set of future land use categories for the entire city. The subarea plans have a 10-year horizon.

**Recording:**

- *“Is this being recorded and if so can we get transcripts?”*

**Summarized Response:** A recording of this meeting is available on the plan website, along with this document that provides typed responses to questions asked during the meeting, as well as additional information provided by Department staff after the meeting to answer questions more fully.

**Implementation, prioritization, and coordination with other plans:**

- “I appreciate all the work done on this and I think there are lot of great ideas in the plan, but I'm a little unclear on how any of it gets implemented. Is the idea to turn this plan into a vision for some sort of public/private partnership that does have some weight and say so on these things? what is the best case for going forward on this plan?”
- “Not to be too rude but how about fix the urban core before you look at other areas?”
- “If federal funds are in the development mix can those funds be extended out that far”

**Summarized Response:** A central goal of this plan is to collect the major concerns and vision for the area and place this into a document to guide the future growth in the area. Implementation involves continued coordination with other city departments, other government agencies, and important stakeholders. This plan is gathering the community vision and addressing concerns of residents, while also balancing the needs for the city as a whole. Regional Centers are the city’s major economic centers, and these areas will be targeted for policies related to housing and transportation in order to achieve a more sustainable future.

These plans are imagined as useful in creating future bond projects. These plans can identify where there are needed improvements, and then future bond projects can implement those improvements. Federally funded projects will vary.



**Utilities and other services:**

- “How are we prepared for any more CPS or SAWS outages in this whole area given all the developments going on?”
  - **CPS and SAWS have been involved since the start of the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive planning process and have been invited to review sections of the subarea plans as we work on them. For CPS, we provide the future land use maps to CPS along with any anticipated projections for housing and employment. CPS then works to connect their long-term plans to our projected growth for development and where they will need more infrastructure. For example, because of the Midtown Regional Center Plan, CPS is now planning a new substation in that Regional Center. We cannot speak for exactly how CPS and SAWS are preparing, especially given the rare event of Winter 2021, but we do work to coordinate our efforts with them.**
  
- “Plans for Fire and EMS service?”
  - **When areas are annexed into the City we go through a process to determine what fire and police services are needed. Within the city that coverage is there. Outside of the city this is typically covered by an emergency services district. The Planning Department is currently working on an Annexation and Growth Policy to guide growth in our ETJ.**





### Schools Question:

- *“Are there any new charter school requests in the pipeline for the area?”*

**Summarized Response:** In the past there have been requests coming to Council for Charter schools, but at this time the Planning Department is not aware of any planned charter schools for the area.

### Specific Comments:

- “I really don't like many of the future plans for this area. I would want more green areas. Rogers and Wiseman have new empty buildings... why add more. There is already growing congestion on our communities only entrance and exit. Westover Hills Blvd. “
- “I do not want the congestion Alamo Ranch Culebra have in this area. Keep it with the Hill Country feel. Don't over develop.”
- “Development outside the city on 1604 has caused a significant amount of congestion in the Alamo Ranch area -- it is definitely bad enough that it discourages travel in that area... on Culebra not 1604”
- “There should not be substandard homes built in this area. I'm off Westover Hills and Hunt Ln”

**Summarized Response:** The purpose of the sub-area planning process is to guide the future development within this area through the creation of a future land use map that can then be used to decide on future rezonings. Developments outside of the city limits, such as Alamo Ranch, cause congestion within the city limits that the city can work to address through the mobility recommendations in this plan. However, the city cannot regulate land uses outside of our city limits.

### RESOURCES

More information about the draft plan, materials from previous meetings, and other information can be found on the plan website: <https://highway151.sacomplan.com/>

If you have any questions please contact the project manager for this plan:

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