



WESTSIDE COMMUNITY AREA PLAN PLANNING TEAM #1 MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Virtual Planning Team Meeting #1

Date: March 21st, 2022

Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Planning Department: Chris Ryerson, Planning Administrator; Ana Villarreal, Senior Planner

Facilitators: Linda Ximenes, Ximenes & Associates, Inc. and Laura Calderon, Ximenes & Associates, Inc.

Planning Team: The Planning Department sent out invitations for the virtual Planning Team #1 meeting to the 47 community members confirmed to participate in the development of the Westside Community Area Plan. This group is composed of leaders of registered Neighborhood Associations, key business owners, community activists, and stakeholders in the area.

Planning Team Attendees: 25 planning team members signed on for the virtual Planning Team meeting #1. This meeting was attended by some community members that have been part of the Westside planning team since 2017, as well as new members that understand the range of challenges faced by the community today.

City Council Offices: The offices of Council Districts 5 and 6 were invited to the virtual Planning Team meeting. The office of District 5 had Derek Tulowitzky present at the meeting as the Director of Zoning and Planning for Councilwoman Teri Castillo.

Background

In response to the rise of Covid-19 positive cases in the City of San Antonio, the Planning Department had to pause the work on all sub-area plans, including the Westside Community Area Plan in 2020. To resume the work in this community, the Planning Department offered a “Planning 101” information session to all planning team members on March 14, 2022 that covered detailed information on the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the process of the SA Tomorrow Planning program, and updates on the Westside Community Area Plan.

Meeting Purpose

The City of San Antonio Planning Department kicked off the Planning Team Meeting virtually on March 21, 2022. The objective of this first meeting was to introduce new members to the planning team, give an overview of the work completed for this community plan to date,

identify the assets and challenges of the area, and explore new engagement opportunities and meeting formats.

Meeting Format

Participants received a brief presentation from Planning staff but the meeting was largely organized as a group discussion facilitated by Linda Ximenes. The meeting addressed the following:

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Meeting Objectives, Procedures and Agenda
- III. SA Tomorrow and WCAP Planning Process
- IV. Westside Assets and Challenges
- V. Process Updates
- VI. Meeting Evaluation

The meeting began with introductions of the Planning Department staff, lead facilitator Linda Ximenes of Ximenes & Associates, and all planning team members. After a warm-up activity where all meeting attendees shared their personal connection with the Westside, Linda Ximenes explained the objectives of the meeting, discussed the proposed meeting rules with the group, and shared the meeting agenda.

Next, Chris and Ana provided an overview of SA Tomorrow and the Westside Community Area planning process. Following this presentation, Linda Ximenes called on each participant to share what they considered to be the assets and challenges of the Westside.

After an extensive discussion, the group was invited to rethink the planning and engagement process for the Plan moving forward. Planning Department staff proposed hosting a diverse range of additional community engagement events to supplement the regularly scheduled planning team meetings and community meetings and explored some creative ideas and opportunities to share information with the community.

Then, an interactive poll was presented to Planning Team members to understand their availability for future Planning Team meetings and to inform the schedule for the remainder of the sub-area planning process.

Lastly, a meeting evaluation was conducted, to understand what improvements are needed to effectively communicate information and facilitate the exchange of ideas between all members moving forward.

Next Steps

In preparation for the Planning Team meeting #2, all planning team members were asked to provide their top five priorities to focus on during the development of the plan. All answers will be collected and discussed at the following Planning Team meeting.

Planning Department staff will also prepare a draft schedule based on the time availability that was provided during the Planning Team meeting #1.



All comments provided during the group discussion, including those shared on the chat, were compiled by Laura Calderon of Ximenes and Associates on a live document where Planning Team members could see additions and request changes in real time. The full transcription of comments can be found at the end of this document. Following is a summary of the main themes and recurring comments from the group.

Group Discussion

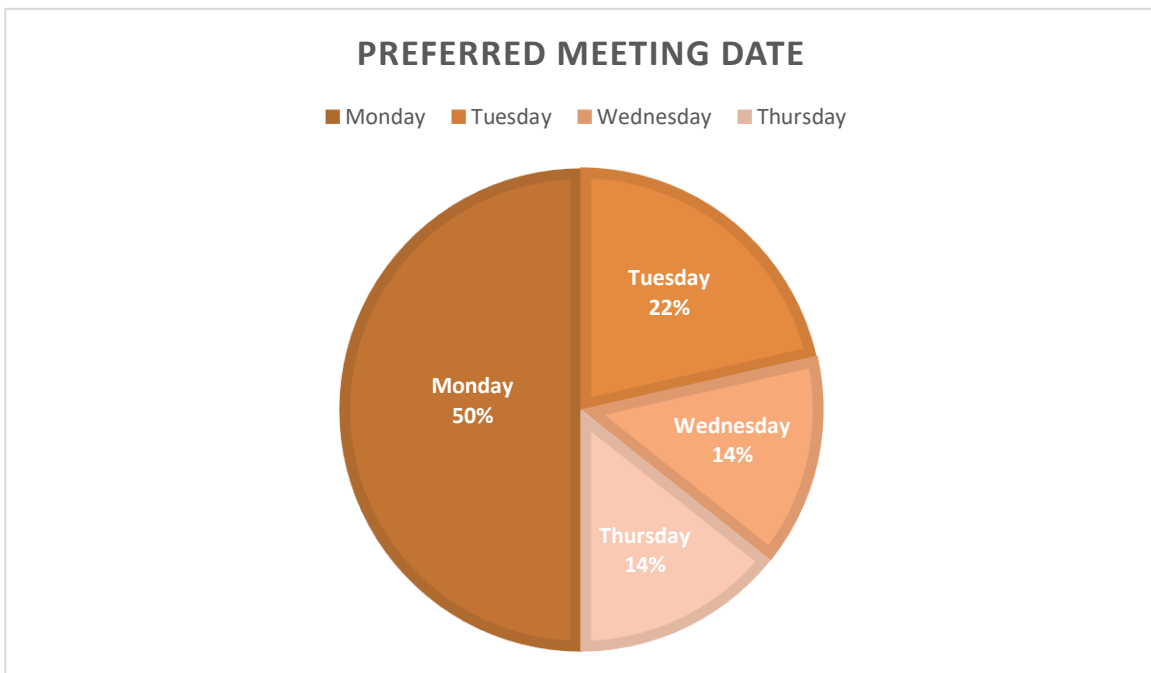
Key assets of the community

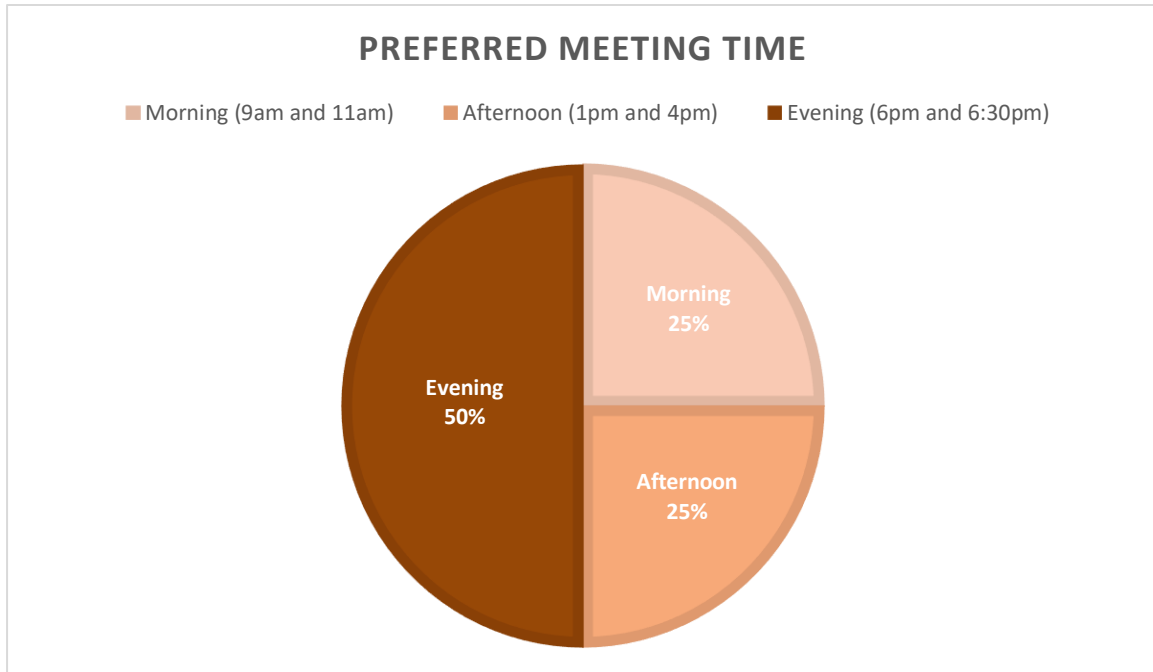
- Rich history, arts, and culture
- Friendly, hardworking, and resilient people
- Natural amenities
- Strong roadway network
- Presence of educational institutions

Most important challenges of the community

- Gentrification
- Safety concerns
- Aged infrastructure
- Street flooding
- Limited transportation options

Preferred day/time to meet





WESTSIDE COMMUNITY AREA PLAN MEETING #1
MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2022

Participant Introductions – How long have you lived or worked on the Westside?

- **Charisma Soriano (Good Sam)** – grew up in the Westside entire life (some at Cassiano Homes) and moved back after school at UT
- **Gabriel Gonzales (Active community member)** – worked in the Westside his entire life
- **Simon Salas (Good Sam)** – lived in in the Westside for over 30 years, both before and after 25 years in New York
- **Lauro de Leon (Los Jardines NA)** – has lived 82 years except during military for nine years
- **Sandra Morales (House of Neighborly Service)** – has worked on the Westside for 13 years, lives near US 90 and Zarzamora
- **Leilah Powell (LISC)** – worked with groups in the Westside for years
- **Steven Garza Guzman (Say Sí)** – 3rd generation Westsider, grew up on Westside, and currently works on the Westside. Westside will always be his home and his heart.
- **Delia Trimble (Friends of Las Palmas Library)** – grew up in the Westside, 10th year with Friends of Las Palmas Library
- **Christine Vina (VIA)** – worked on the Westside plans and has driven all Westside streets
- **Jessica Ann Garcia (Prospect Hill NA)** – born and raised on the Westside; multi-generational Westsider
- **Eiginio Rodriguez (Loma Vista NA)** – lifetime Westside resident
- **Ben Perry (UTSA campus architect)** – very familiar with the area, visits UTSA Downtown campus frequently
- **Cristina Balli (Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center)** – went to OLLU starting in 1990, and has



lived and worked on the Westside for the last five years

- **Meera Keshav (SARA)** – Working on the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project
- **Jeremy Landin (Active community member)** – resident in Prospect Hill; extensive Westside involvement including Library Board (D5), Westside Creeks Oversight Committee, Prosper West Placemaking Committee
- **Richard Garcia (Memorial Heights NA)** – Born and raised on the Westside worked in the Edgewood ISD almost 30 years
- **Brian Mast (SARA)** – has been working on Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project since 2008
- **Darryl Glasscock (OLLU)** – raised in Westside (Collins Garden); Director of Facilities at OLLU for 18 years
- **Erik Estrada (Los Jardines NA)** – majority of life in Westside except for college
- **Dora Gomez (YWCA)** – born and raised and now works in the Westside
- **Derek Tulowitzky (District 5)** – works on the Westside for the D5 Council Office of Terry Castillo as Director of Zoning and Planning
- **Velma Pena (Westwood Square NA)** – resident of the Westside and founding member of WNAC
- **Maria Lopez de de Leon (National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures (NALAC))** – works on the Westside; family has lived on Westside for several generations
- **Robert Acosta (Collins Garden NA)** – has been a lifetime resident of the Westside

When you think about the assets of the Westside, what comes to your mind?

- Hometown feel, feels like family, calming presence
- Culture of the Westside – historical culture, artistic, front porch culture
- Westside creeks and linear parks, neighborhood parks, Woodlawn & Elmendorf lakes
- Creeks and trails recently installed
- Family
- Friendliness of people on Westside; willing to talk to everybody
- Great educational institutions – OLLU, SMU, UTSA
- Cultural bearers – generational creativity and resilience of the community
- Rich history, strong family values, rich cultural history
- OLLU
- Engagement of the community and the heritage that ties them to that
- Westside Training and Education Center (WETC) we have now, new building to be a college campus to cater to every need, will be free
- History, presence of art and culture, murals, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, Westside cultural arts district, feels like home – you know your neighbors and they know you
- Many things already mentioned; Westside settlers; neighbors are unified and respect each other; Westside has hard-working people
- Resilience of people and advocacy for the community; housing stock, last intact community in San Antonio not yet gentrified



- It's all rooted in the people who live and work here, who have stories to tell, memories we share
- Mini "barrio-itos" – bakeries, corner stores, churches. People still walk here.
- Community leaders who have started the nonprofits which have motivated us to maintain integrity of Westside roots. Vibe that we help one another, unity.
- Resilience it takes to live in the barrio. Most people are friendly. Westside is full of potential. Make things accessible so people can reach their potential!
- Cultural assets, deep rich culture. Arts organizations that are respected nationally for contributions are housed here on the Westside. That's why we are designated as a cultural district.
- Pride and dedication to improving opportunities for everyone
- SA Housing Authority – many units they run on the Westside
- Roadway system – HW 90, Callaghan, Castroville, Culebra ...
- Community roadway network one of the strongest in SA, allows transit system to work
- San Antonio ISD is an asset as well as Edgewood ISD
- Barrio clinics and supporting community centers like Madonna Neighborhood Center, Good Samaritan Center, House of Neighborly Service, etc.
- Beautiful things about Loma Park – parks, many activities – walking, Zumba
- The 4 libraries that are in the WCAP: Bazan, Collins Garden, Memorial, and Las Palmas. They obviously exist to enhance literacy (basic + digital), educational pursuits (including after-school help), voting and citizenship information, and much more, changing lives in the process. Significantly, computers, WiFi access, and LEARN centers at libraries assist folks in staying informed/connected about relevant issues like land use (zoning), transportation (Via) and mobility, housing and jobs, etc.

What do you think are challenges we could address through planning on the Westside?

- Vacant lots, vandals, dumping on empty lots
- Many outside investors buying into neighborhood, selling for high prices, then residents can't afford taxes – gentrification.
- North-South rail tracks often stop traffic going east to west
- Los Jardines – density and equity: not enough people living in this community; restrictions per Lackland regarding: 3-story apts. Equity issues – lack of large stores
- Neighborhood association meetings – low attendance; residents don't engage until things blow up. Many homes that investors buy belong to the children who sell because they don't want to live on this side of town.
- Safety of walkways, bus stops, and streets (students come from all parts of city)
- Access to art opportunities and art education in schools
- Gentrification – my rental home was turned into an Airbnb; what it's doing to the working class
- Homebuyer education needed
- Infrastructure
- Public safety issues



- With new Federal funding coming to the Westside Creeks, must be aware of these gentrification issues and bring resources to bear sooner rather than later
- Residual street flooding
- Need for improved streets, sidewalks, handicapped access, drainage, more green spaces and play areas for children, improved public transportation
- We need to protect our Military Mission
- Short loop transportation options to travel through the neighborhood to reach retail centers such as Las Palmas, Commerce, McMullen, to UTSA, OLLU
- Sense of frustration, anger, hopelessness, and helpless that our voice falls on deaf ears. There are no federal and state agencies such as a social security office in our area. A VIA bus line on NW 36th/Esmeralda St. from Port San Antonio to Wonderland of the Americas (formerly) Crossroads mall.
- VIA bus line on NW 36/Esmeralda to Port SA to Crossroads Mall
- Increased substance abuse in the neighborhoods – what can we do planning-wise?
- We all want things fixed, but there’s a right way to fix. Some things need to start in Aquifer zone to change drainage here. Start from lowest point up for drainage. Whoever has the most people, gets their issues fixed. Need a well-designed, comprehensive plan so it’s done the right way, and due diligence.
- Start at the core to have a good foundation because there are many existing conditions underground.
- Curbs on Culebra & Bandera – curbs are not seen & cause accidents/flat tires
- Zarzamora has had a declined in businesses – ramps from Hwy 90 to Zarzamora for better access, better access on Zarzamora for north-south ...
- Educate community on how to get rid of drug houses.
- Changes take money. Much of the land in the Westside is not taxable. Look at the Westside as a place to develop to increase the tax base.
→ In some places there are PILOTs (Payments In Lieu Of Taxes) from non-taxable uses
- Social determinants of health!

Poll #1 Preferred day to meet

User Name	1. Which day of the week do you prefer to meet?
Cristina Balli	Monday
Simon Salas-Good Samaritan	Monday
Eiginio Rodriguez Loma Vista	Monday
Karen	Monday
Charisma Soriano	Thursday
drglasscock	Wednesday
Christine Vina (VIA)	Wednesday



Norbert Landin	Monday
Gabriel D.'s iPad	Tuesday
Meera Keshav	Monday
Lauro's iPhone	Monday
Leilah Powell	Thursday
Brian Mast	Tuesday
robca	Tuesday

Poll #2 Preferred time to meet

<u>User Name</u>	<u>1.What time of day would you prefer to meet?</u>
Cristina Balli	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Simon Salas-Good Samaritan	Afternoon (between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.)
Eiginio Rodriguez Loma Vista	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Karen	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
CharismaSoriano	Morning (between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.)
drglasscock	Afternoon (between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.)
Christine Vina (VIA)	Afternoon (between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.)
Norbert Landin	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Gabriel D.'s iPad	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Meera Keshav	Afternoon (between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.)
Lauro's iPhone	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Leilah Powell	Morning (between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.)
Derek T (he/him)	Morning (between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.)
Brian Mast	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)
Iris Gonzalez	Morning (between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.)
robca	Evening (6:00 or 6:30 p.m.)

Meeting Evaluation

Plusses

- Meeting went well
- Liked meeting virtually – Zoom



Wishes

- Meet in-person – fixed location versus various locations
- Use the Chat more & use as a summary instead of going person-by-person
- At a minimum have hybrid meetings
- Start at 5:30 p.m.

