

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Brooks Area Regional Center Planning Team Meeting #1

Date: June 28, 2017

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Location: San Antonio College, Nursing & Allied Health Complex

Attendees:

- Andrew Anguiano, South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
- Joanie Barborak, District 3 Neighborhood Bond Representative
- Leo Gomez, Brooks Development Authority
- Belinda Gonzalez, Pre-K for SA Brooks location
- Nicole Hoyt, SCOOP
- Pamela Morganroth, Highland Forest NA
- Katie Otten, Hot Wells NA
- Patti Rangel, San Antonio State Hospital
- Dolores Rios, Parents as Partners
- Liz Trainor, Highland Hills

Meeting Purpose

The first meeting of the Brooks Area Regional Center Planning Team aimed to accomplish these objectives: provide an overview of the Brooks Area Regional Center Plan project and timeline; describe potential outreach approaches and get input on Brooks-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 including Bridgett White, Director of the Department of City & Regional Planning; Rudy Nino, Assistant Director; and Chris Ryerson, Planning Administrator, as well as a project overview by Jay Renkens, MIG, Inc. Planning Consultant. Following this introductory presentation, Planning Team members and other participants broke into smaller Sub-Area-based groups for focused discussions.

Following the large-group presentations, Kimberly Collins, City of San Antonio Project Manager for the SA Tomorrow Brooks Regional Center Project and Ellie Fiore, Project Manager with the consulting team and MIG, Inc., presented project-specific context and facilitated a Planning Team discussion. Comments from the discussion were recorded on a large wall graphic (see photo at end of summary). This memo provides highlights of the meeting discussion organized into sections that reflect primary discussion topics:

- Assets
- Challenges
- Opportunities
- Brooks Regional Center Engagement Ideas
- Next Steps

Assets

To begin the group discussion, Planning Team members were asked to identify assets in the Brooks Regional Center and to name community resources they are proud of. Many of the assets discussed tended to fall into one of two categories: brand-new, tangible developments and amenities on Brooks City Base or intangible, legacy assets such as well-established natural, recreational, cultural, and historical resources, many of which are co-dependent or mutually influential to one another. Participants also prioritized educational and environmental features. The full list is organized by topic below.

Natural Resources

- Acequia
- Green space
- Salado Creek
- San Antonio River

Educational Institutions

- UIW Medical School
- Pre-K for SA
- Charter schools

Legacy Assets

- Established neighborhoods
- Hot Wells
- Sulfur Springs
- San Antonio River
- Military heritage
- Ice Houses along S. Presa
- Local pride in “Southside” identity

New Development and Amenities

- New hotels
- New businesses at McCreless
- Brooks City Base aka Brooks
- Dining and entertainment destinations
- Hangar 9 rehabilitation

Health and Community Service

- SCOOP (Southeast Community Outreach for Older People)
- University Health Clinic
- Mission Baptist Hospital
- SA State Hospital
- Texas Center for Infectious Disease

Recreational Resources

- Republic Golf Course
- Mission Reach

Infrastructure

- Highway 37
- Loop 13



Challenges

Next, the group discussed challenges that may impact the planning process. The Southside, including the Brooks Area Regional Center, has experienced less recent investment than other parts of the City. As a result, many community members distrust the City government and other organizations and there are fewer resources including mechanisms for the community to work together as a collective network. Often, typically undesirable projects, which would have faced resistance from neighbors in other parts of San Antonio, have landed in this area. This resulted in the area historically experiencing a higher exposure to environmental risk and damage from such projects. These projects, combined with past military activities have resulted in constrained land use opportunities. There are a disproportionately high number of negative socio-economic determinants of health in this planning area. For example, there is a lack of safe, walkable neighborhoods and poor access to parks and other natural amenities. Flooding and drainage are also major issues. Finally, the group also discussed how to support housing that is affordable for those who work in the Brooks area without further concentrating subsidized housing projects in the area.

Infrastructure and Flooding

- Acequia
- Floodplain
- Lack of infrastructure
- Drainage issues cause flooding

Transportation

- Existing transportation networks create auto-dependency
- Many sidewalks are incomplete or missing
- Poor sidewalk and roadway maintenance
- Traffic patterns cause congestion in some areas

Housing and Development

- Lack of quality workforce housing
- Too much low-income housing
- Industrial uses are very close to residential neighborhoods
- Some communities have a “no-growth” attitude
- Fast growth without appropriate management
- It is difficult to finance development (market data doesn’t reflect recent growth)

Demographics and Economics

- Low incomes compared to the City average
- Relatively few business options means there is “economic leakage” to other parts of the city

Other

- Reputation
- Crime levels
- Mistrust of City
- Lack of council support



- Lack of volunteers

Opportunities

Next, the group discussed opportunities that the plan should leverage or build upon. It was noted that many of the area's challenges are now opportunities and because Brooks has historically been a less desirable neighborhood, there is now room for growth and large green spaces which have not been developed. Additionally, of note, the area has a strong collective identity not present in other parts of the city; the community should build upon the Southside identity to form a community network of resources which in turn builds the entire community's capacity. The Brooks planning area contains a large variety of public and private, state and local organizations resulting in prime opportunities for partnerships. Collective strategic collaboration on shared issues could create a larger, and otherwise unrealized, beneficial impact.

Housing and Development

- Create a town center
- Revitalize older homes
- Add workforce housing options
- Home ownership opportunities
- Culturally-sensitive, community-driven development
- Offer more variety of housing options
- Garden homes and non- income capped retirement communities are desired

Economic and Funding Opportunities

- Leverage Mission Reach economic development
- Capture Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT)
- TIRZ extension
- Look at how money is being spent and invested
- Attracting jobs that pay \$50,000 or more

Education

- Improve education opportunities
- Encourage partnership with new superintendent of SAISD
- Encourage partnerships with UIW and continue to foster their investment in the area
- Leverage UIW medical school learning opportunities to help with community health issues

Other

- Improve connectivity within the community
- Focus on health and wellness
- Increase green space, walkability, sustainability, and connectivity across area from east to west
- Opportunities to connect the San Antonio River with Salado Creek
- Focus on sustainability, particularly water issues (inclusive of storm water)
- Create resilient neighborhoods
- Add entertainment options



Brooks Regional Center Engagement Ideas

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

Stakeholders

- Established neighborhoods and residents
- Multi-generational families
- Special needs groups
- Youth
- Spanish speakers
- Schools: board members, teachers, students
- Employers and employees
- Older adults
- Developers—Keep informed and bring into the process for a stronger outcome
- Renters
- Recreational, bicycle, pedestrian, kayak and active transportation groups
- Faith-based organizations

Outreach Strategies

- Use social media, particularly to connect with students and younger generation.
- Ensure that public workshops and events are accessible via public transportation and at times when desired demographic (not at night for seniors) can attend and provide child care if needed
- Restaurants and shopping centers are good spots for intercepts, in particular the HEB
- Use grassroots strategies such as block walks
- Outreach at existing community events
- Local newspapers
- Present to: major employers (100 or more employees), PTA meetings, congregations
- Cinema screen advertising
- Games, Presa Community Center, Town Halls
- Marketing such as yard signs, banners, billboards and stickers
- Direct mail and a dedicated Facebook page were suggested but we discussed that the cost would be prohibitive and a separate page may cause mixed messaging

Other Comments/Questions

As a final discussion item, Planning Team members were asked to use one word to describe how they would like the Brooks Community to be in ten years. Participants used the following terms:

- Vibrant (mentioned multiple times)
- Healthy
- Productive
- Community
- Inclusive
- Heart
- Welcoming
- Proudful
- Prosperous
- Envable



Next Steps

The next meeting will be held Monday July 31, 2017 from 4-6pm at (location). Planning Team Meeting #2 will focus on existing conditions, opportunity areas, vision and goals.

For more information, please contact Kimberly Collins, Senior Planner, 210-207-0249 or Kimberly.collins@sanantonio.gov

