



FINAL REPORT

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO AND THE WESTSIDE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



WESTSIDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMITS
APRIL 30, 2011
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Executive Summary¹

The City of San Antonio and the Westside Development Corporation held four economic development summits over a six-month period to accomplish three objectives, which were to:

1. discover what Westside residents and businesses thought were the economic development corridors and projects that could be most readily developed (Participants at Summits #1, 2 and 4 were residents and business owners and other interested stakeholders.);
2. ask developers and other investors to review and give feedback on those potential projects and development corridors; and
3. inform summit participants of the economic development activities and incentives the City of San Antonio (COSA) is currently engaged in and future planned activities on the Westside.

For purposes of these summits, the area was originally established as the Westside boundaries of the Westside Development Corporation (WDC). After the first summit, as a result of community requests to expand the boundary, it was expanded to the west to NW Loop 410. This larger boundary was used for the remaining three summits.

Each of the summits had a particular focus:

- Summit #1, April 30, 2011 asked participants to identify assets on the Westside, corridors on the Westside they thought were ripe for investment and economic development projects they thought would create jobs and be of benefit to the Westside.
- Summit #2, June 18, 2011 provided participants with the opportunity to see the corridors and potential projects identified in Summit #1, refine them and prioritize them. The top ten projects and top five corridors were identified at this summit.
- Summit #3 was a meeting with developers and investors to ask them to review the prioritized corridors and projects and give feedback on them. Data on the informal economy, demographics and other information pertinent to the growth and economic development of the Westside was shared with participants at this meeting.
- Summit #4 focused on sharing the results of Summit #3 and highlighted the projects that were already in process in the five corridors and which of the ten projects selected by the residents and business owners at the first and second

¹ This summary is intended to provide a concise view of the intention, process and outcomes of the four economic development summits. More information on each of the summits is available in a separate set of appendices referred to later in this summary report.

summits were being considered for implementation either in the 2012 bond package or in other ways.

The five corridors selected by the community were:

1. Buena Vista/Commerce
2. General McMullen
3. 36th Street
4. Frio Street
5. Guadalupe Street

The ten projects selected by the community were:

1. Westside Creek Enhancement
2. UTSA, Market Square Gateway (Frio Street, Market Square, UTSA)
3. Union Stockyards
4. Las Palmas Enhancement
5. Housing Revitalization (in specific areas)
6. Westside Corridor (Commerce, Buena Vista and Guadalupe Streets)
7. 36th Street Redevelopment
8. Intra-neighborhood Shuttle to Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stops
9. Westside Parks Development
10. Westside Education and Training Center Site Improvement

The end result of the four summits was a list of viable economic development projects suggested by the residents and business owners who attended the meetings. These projects will be supported by COSA in a variety of ways: incentives for developers and investors; inclusion in the 2012 bond; inclusion in the FY 2011-2012 budget and future investments by COSA.

The WDC has agreed to provide a follow-up in six months (June 2012) with the community to update them on the progress of the projects. They will provide an update again in 12 months (November 2012).

Summary of Economic Development Summit #1

The first of four economic development summits for the Westside began the process of seeking economic development projects that would successfully generate new jobs and enhance the area. The first summit was held at Lanier High School on April 30, 2011. Approximately 224 people attended the first summit.

Participants were asked to identify assets that needed to be preserved and/or enhanced and corridors that were ready for development as well as projects that would create jobs and benefit the Westside.

Assets, projects and corridors were identified by participants working in small groups using worksheets and assisted by facilitators at each table. There was interest and enthusiasm by the participants and they showed a readiness to find projects that would significantly impact the economic situation of the Westside, ultimately benefitting residents and improving the community.

For additional information and copies of handouts and other materials used at the summit, please see Appendix A- Report on Summit #1.

Summary of Economic Development Summit #2

The second of four economic development summits for the Westside was held at the Frank Garrett Center on June 18, 2011. Approximately 270 people attended this summit.

As a result of concerns expressed at the first summit, the boundaries used for this second summit were expanded further west beyond the WDC boundary to NW Loop 410.

Participants continued the process of seeking economic development projects that would successfully generate new jobs and enhance the area. Using the list of projects and corridors generated at Summit #1, they were asked to prioritize the top five corridors ready for development and then to select their top ten projects from the list.

Generally, corridors received priority based on proximity to existing community assets, major highways, and proposed improvements to transit and connectivity as major gateways to the Westside. In terms of projects, the Westside Creeks Enhancement Project received double the support of any other single project. The rationale listed for support included progress already being made and the current US Army Corps of Engineers Investment Study as well as its potential to stimulate the area by attracting new businesses, increasing the tax base, providing

connectivity, and overall quality of life improvements for the community. Other projects were centered on transportation corridors and leveraging existing plans for transit and university improvements as well as improving existing community assets.

Additional information on this summit is available in Appendix B- Report on Summit #2.

Summary of Economic Development Summit #3

The third of four summits was held at the San Antonio Food Bank and approximately 80 people attended.

This summit centered on stimulating economic development on San Antonio's Westside, was held with the intention of having developers and investors evaluate the top ten potential projects identified at the first two summits. While the meeting was open to the public, participation was limited to developers and investors alongside key Westside employment center representatives. In addition to the information related to the process to date and the prioritized projects, the participants were also provided information related to Westside demographics, its informal economy, the San Antonio River Authority's (SARA) Westside Creeks improvements project and VIA's major Westside investment initiatives. They also received information on the City's existing incentive programs and redevelopment opportunities.

Many participants found the number of obstacles and challenges the Westside community faces disconcerting in terms of public perception (crime, safety/security) as well as current realities (educational attainment and teen pregnancies). However, they seemed impressed by how the Westside's informal economy begins to bridge the economic gap when compared to the rest of San Antonio.

In terms of SARA and VIA's investment initiatives, the participants were pleased and excited about the possibility for these projects to be economic development catalysts. Many were also pleased to find out about the City's development incentives such as fee/permit waivers, grants/loans, historic preservation tax abatement and the creation of a City Land Bank. They were also surprised to find the Westside Development Corporation's area has been designated as a State Enterprise Zone and a Federal Empowerment Zone.

Overall, the project with the most appeal was the Westside Creeks Enhancement Project followed by the UTSA/Market Square Gateway Project. The third project garnering the most interest among the group was the Westside Corridor Initiative for Guadalupe Street, Commerce, and Buena Vista. Housing Revitalization around

the educational institutions and the 36th Street Redevelopment came in fourth and fifth for generating the most interest in the group. While the Intra-neighborhood Shuttle with Service to Bus Rapid Transit came in number six, the Las Palmas Enhancement and the Westside Education and Training Center Site Improvement Projects came in seventh and eighth respectively.

The selection of the projects appeared to be based on the current progress of the project, the surrounding existing/planned amenities and assets, and connectivity to employment and retail centers. There was an overall concern about the ability to fund and the amount of time it would take to fully develop these projects.

More information on this summit is available in Appendix C-Report on Summit #3.

Summary of Economic Development Summit #4

This summit was the fourth of four summits hosted by the City of San Antonio and the Westside Development Corporation to identify priority economic development projects and corridors on the Westside that were supported by the community residents and business owners. One intent of this meeting was essentially to report to the community the results of Summit #3, which was held with developers and other investors to get feedback on the priority projects and corridors identified by the community at Summits #1 and #2. The other objective was to inform members of the community about the types of economic development incentives that will be used on the Westside and the investments the City is either planning or has already initiated to support the projects and the development of the corridors.

Specifically, over the past four years, the City has invested \$59.3 million in public improvements with a current budget (FY 2011-2012) allotment for the same geographic area of over \$17 million. The current budget corresponds to the community-identified priority corridors and projects. Additionally, City staff has recommended that the 2012-2017 bond contribute \$51.5 million for Westside projects.

After the presentation, participants at each table group were asked to agree on two questions they would like to ask about the Westside economic development activities, present and future. The questions asked fell into the following general categories:

- Opportunities and incentives for businesses and other investments on the Westside
- Graffiti, code compliance and public safety
- Specific projects and situations
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Communicating to a wider audience

- Job training possibilities
- Marketing activities
- Maintaining specific values

Ray Flores answered the questions that were related to economic development and others not related were directed to the appropriate City Department to be addressed more completely.

Additional information on this summit is available in Appendix D- Report on Summit #4.

