

Compilation of Questions and Responses from 11/29 and 11/30 Neighborhood Leadership Meetings

On November 29 and 30, 2016, the City held two meetings with neighborhood leadership to discuss the proposed Neighborhood Improvement Areas. Below is a compilation of questions and responses from the two meetings.

Process

1. What will the Neighborhood Improvements bond pay for?
 - a. Bond funds would be used to make sites ready for redevelopment as single-family, multifamily, or mixed use development. This could include land acquisition, demolition of dilapidated/unusable structures, street and sidewalk improvements, extension of utilities, and remediation of hazards such as asbestos or lead-based paint. Bond funds would not be used for the construction of any housing units.
2. Why do we need to identify target Areas?
 - a. The City Charter currently prohibits the issuance of bonds for housing construction. However, bonds may be issued through the Office of Urban Redevelopment San Antonio (OUR SA) for certain activities which facilitate private and non-profit development of housing. Such activities include land acquisition, demolition of dilapidated/unusable structures, right-of-way improvements, extension of utilities, and hazard remediation. The Urban Renewal statute (Chapter 374 of the Texas Local Government Code) requires the identification of geographic areas (Neighborhood Improvement Areas) where Bond funds can be spent. Per the statute, the Neighborhood Improvement Areas must be incorporated into an Urban Renewal Plan approved by City Council prior to the Bond Election.
3. Why don't we change the charter language?
 - a. The last Charter amendment took place May 9, 2015. State law requires at least two years between Charter amendments, which will fall after the May 6, 2017 election.
4. How and by whom were the Neighborhood Improvement Areas chosen?
 - a. Staff identified the initial 15 recommended Areas based on state criteria and strategic considerations, with input from stakeholders and respondents to a Request for Information (RFI). The Community Bond Committee, consisting of three representatives from each Council district and two co-chairs, added, removed, and modified Areas over the course of five meetings and a bus tour.

Each Area, by law, must contain at least one of the following: dilapidated, deteriorated or obsolete structures or improvements; inadequate streets, street layout or accessibility; unsafe or unsanitary conditions; or open space/vacant lots.

Other factors for consideration of Areas include the presence of publicly owned parcels, eligibility for additional leveraged funding sources, proximity to public transportation, alignment with SA Tomorrow, and not projected to result in resident displacement.

Following the Bond Committee recommendation, City Council will give final approval to the Areas on December 15, 2016.

5. Will the property owners be forced to sell, or eminent domain be used?
 - a. No. A cornerstone of the Neighborhood Improvements Bond proposal is that it will not result in any permanent residential displacement. Eminent domain will not be used to force property owners to sell.
6. How will the specific properties be chosen?
 - a. Following a successful bond election, staff will analyze availability and price of properties within Neighborhood Improvement Areas to determine which Areas present the most potential for success. After purchasing property, the City will then solicit responses through a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of the site, to include workforce housing.
7. Who will be given first opportunity to purchase improved properties from the City?
 - a. A Request for Proposals will be posted with specific criteria to determine what development entities are selected.
8. How will zoning be addressed for the properties?
 - a. The program does not grant relief from the standard zoning change process as administered by the Development Services Department (DSD). Proposed re-zoning cases are advertised to the general public via onsite signage and a notice placed in the newspaper. Additionally, the City will send a notice to property owners and neighborhood associations within 200 feet. The case is considered by the Zoning Commission and City Council in an open public hearing.
9. How can citizens be involved in the process after the election?
 - a. In preparation for the Neighborhood Improvements Bond, community members from each City Council district and two co-chairs were appointed to a committee to help make a recommendation to City Council on where bond funds could be spent. That committee finished its work on December 8, 2016. Following a successful bond election, City Council must approve any properties to be acquired with bond funds. Citizens may address City Council at the meeting(s) during which property acquisitions are being considered.
10. Will neighborhoods be able to have a say in choosing development?
 - a. City staff is evaluating options in which public and neighborhood involvement would continue after the election.
11. How can we be sure the developments will be compatible with the neighborhoods?
 - a. Resident input will be an important part of the development process. The City will review adopted plans to ensure any proposed development is compatible with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.
12. Will there be a target goal of owner-occupied housing vs rental housing?
 - a. The Urban Renewal Plan will discuss potential development types and tenure (own/rent). The scoring system for evaluating Proposals could include bonus points for owner-occupied proposals.

Use of Bond Dollars

1. Will funds be available to fix existing homes that need repair?
 - a. No, the City may not currently issue bonds for the construction or rehabilitation of housing units. The Urban Renewal statute prohibits rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes. However, if the Charter is amended, a future bond could include funds for housing rehabilitation.
2. Are any other options available to address funding single-family home rehabilitation?
 - a. The City currently offers Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Minor Repair programs for qualified homeowners through the Department of Planning and Community Development. For more information on these programs, please call (210) 207-6459.

Affordability

1. What will be the definition of "affordable"?
 - a. The City considers housing to be "affordable" if it meets the definition that is approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); that is, housing that is available for those earning less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and with housing expenses that do not exceed 30% of the household's monthly income.
2. What percentage of "affordable" units will be required?
 - a. The Urban Renewal Plan will stipulate income restriction, rent restriction, and the minimum number of years that affordability must be maintained.
3. How can we be sure that the housing will be affordable?
 - a. When an improved property is sold to a developer, real estate documents will tie the affordability criteria to the property. This will ensure that the development maintains the required level of affordability, and will provide the City recourse in the case that the owner does not maintain the agreed-upon affordability.

Summary of Meetings with Neighborhood Association Leaders on November 29 and 30, 2016

Below is a summary of the two meetings held with Neighborhood Association leadership on November 29 and 30, 2016, regarding the proposed Neighborhood Improvements Bond.

Attendance and Representation

Meetings were held on November 29 at Pre-K 4 SA East, and on November 30 at Pre-K 4 SA West. All Neighborhood Associations in San Antonio were invited to attend, both by email and regular mail. Combined attendance for the two meetings was 67 participants, representing at least 30 Neighborhood Associations (indicated below as “NA”) and community organizations, including:

Beacon Hill NA	Bowen Center	Donaldson Terrace NA
Eastgate NA	Eastwood Village NA	Five Points Owners Association
General Krueger NA	Government Hill Alliance NA	Highland Hills NA
Ingram Hills NA	Jefferson Heights Association	King William Association
Lakeside NA	Loma Vista	Longs Creek Homeowners’
Association	Los Angeles Heights NA	Mission San Jose NA
Monticello Park NA	Northwest NA	Olmos Park Terrace NA
Prospect Hill Neighborhood	Watch	Rainbow Hills Area NA
River Road NA	San Antonio Conservation	Society
Sunshine Estates	Vance Jackson Neighborhood	Inc.
Villa Coronado NA	Westfort Alliance	Woodlawn Lake Community
Association	Woods of Shavano	

District 1 was most heavily represented with 14 participants. Ten attendees were from District 7, seven were from District 2, and five were from District 5. The remaining Districts each had three or fewer participants present at the meetings. Some attendees did not indicate their affiliation or district information.

Committee Member Participation

Nine members of the Neighborhood Improvements Community Bond Committee were present at one or both of the meetings, including:

Jim Leonard (Co-chair)	Tom Heger (D1)	Tinker Mass Schultz (D1)
Rodolpho Carrizales (D4)	Bill McDonough (D6)	Dominick Dina (D6)
Ana Sandoval (D7)	Colleen Waguespack (D9)	Peggy Sue Wilson-Schmueckle (D10)

Summary of Questions and Comments

Design Guidelines Several attendees recommended adopting design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the surrounding neighborhoods and with existing neighborhood plans. Design/development guidelines will be included in the Urban Renewal Plan and/or the Request for Proposals.

Displacement and Eminent Domain Several attendees asked for an assurance from the City that this program will not involve the use of eminent domain or displace residents. Staff replied that the City will not use eminent domain to acquire properties through this program, nor will the program result in residential displacement.

Post-Election Process For Resident Input Several attendees requested that a process be adopted by which neighborhood representatives can remain involved throughout the implementation of the Neighborhood Improvements Bond. The City is currently reviewing possible models for continued resident input through the development process.

Areas Attendees were invited to comment on the proposed areas, and to mark on District-wide maps to show suggested modifications. Staff continues to evaluate the suggestions as follows:

- A resident from District 7 suggested the addition of the parcels located in the 4800 block of Callaghan Road that are bound by Horseshoe Bend, Majestic Drive, and Woodside Drive. Staff have indicated that the area does not meet the requirements to be included in a Neighborhood Improvement Area.
- Several attendees from District 3 suggested that Area #5 (Southeast) be removed from consideration.
- Several attendees from District 3 expressed support for mixed-income housing in Area #6 (Roosevelt-Mission Reach).