



Housing Commission Planning Retreat Report 2020



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
NEIGHBORHOOD & HOUSING
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

City of San Antonio Housing Commission
2020 Planning Retreat
January 10, 2020
San Antonio Botanical Gardens

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The Housing Commission

Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, Chair
Robert Abraham
Pedro Alanis
Paul Furukawa
Jessica O. Guerrero
Keith Hom
David Nisivoccia
Susan Richardson*
Sarah Sanchez

Housing Commission Charge

The Housing Commission serves as a public oversight Board to guide the implementation of the Housing Policy Framework and engage the public. This includes an annual report of the implementation progress made for the Affordable Housing programs and projects included in the City's annual budget as well as other affordable housing issues and polices in the City's Affordable Housing Work Plan.

Retreat Purpose

- Renew our understanding & commitment as Commissioners and champions of our shared, overarching vision for the work of the COSA Housing Commission
- Examine and level-set our shared understanding of the COSA housing policy & operations eco-system, what our unique role is within that, and how to most effectively fulfill our charge in a manner that leverages collective efforts
- Review the status of progress on Housing Policy Framework and articulate a vision for how we most effectively prioritize and focus our work as a commission to advance its implementation
- For the members of the commission to become more familiar with each other's gifts, constituencies, and individual commitments to the collective effort

* Commissioner Richardson was sworn-in on January 22nd.

Opening Remarks

Chair's Welcome

To set the stage for the day, Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, Chair of the Housing Commission, shared some opening thoughts:

- Remember the Housing Policy Framework's call for comprehensive and compassionate responses to San Antonio's housing needs.
- Meeting local needs requires shared responsibility across many entities.
- Use today to focus on what we as a Commission do in 2020

City Manager's Welcome

Erik Walsh built off Chair Castro-Ramirez's comments and added:

- Policies at the state level will continue to require us to be creative
- Recognizes the Commissioners & staff for their hard work
- The Chief Housing Officer hiring process is underway

Public Comments

Mike Gately offered suggestions for reducing evictions.

Members who were present but did not comment included representatives from the San Antonio Board of Realtors (SABOR), the San Antonio Apartment Association (SAAA), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Council Districts 1, 10, 5 and the Mayor's Office.

Director's Remarks and What This Moment Represents

Verónica Soto, Director of the Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) offered her opening comments:

- Housing Commission is a partnership between staff and community
- None of us alone can meet San Antonio's housing needs
- Purpose of today is to revisit our charge, get in touch with why each of us are here, and make our partnership work better

Facilitator's Opening Comments

Francisco Gónima, the retreat facilitator, provided an overview of the day's agenda and invited the commission and participating staff to move through three phases of the day:

- Context: What is our common operating picture?
- Possibilities: What's possible? Put it all out on the table: we're looking for innovations, not commitments
- Action: What will we do in 2020 to advance our shared vision?

Francisco also explained levels of leadership thinking; micro, macro, and meta. He challenged the group to spend the day engaging one another at the 'meta' level.

Micro (Output)	Macro (Outcomes)	Meta (Impact)
What's happening at the individual level? What do people need and expect from me? What do I expect from them? What people know that I don't know, and what I know that they don't know?	What happens at the program/ agency level? Are goals clear? What resources do we have to work with? How do we structure & organize to deliver service?	What's emerging at the broader eco-system level? What forces drive the needs we serve? Where is the system hindering us?

Reframing Our Shared Context

“Building shared vision is the capacity to unearth shared pictures of the future we seek to create. This process enrolls people in adopting a common identity and sense of destiny that fosters genuine commitment rather than compliance.” - Peter M. Senge

Who's in the Room?

Participants share what brings them to this work and their “spider bite” moment:

Participant	What Brings Them to Work
Commissioner Furukawa	With a background in social work, Paul knows the important role of shelter and housing. No particular ‘spider bite’ moment.
Commissioner Nisivoccia	Seeing Henry Cisneros speak compelled David to leave the private sector and put his development skills to work in affordable housing. He grew up in a military family and values service.
Commissioner Sanchez	Sarah grew up on the west side and recognized early in life the pride people taken in their homes. Those spaces should be affordable for all. She comes to the work to honor home and the way people honor their homes.
Chair Castro-Ramirez	Lourdes has a background in urban planning, but her work with farmworkers made her consider community planning, housing stability, importance of community actions and activism.
Verónica Soto	Vero has firsthand experience with affordable housing and housing instability.
Commissioner Richardson	Susan's background in education had her visiting households with no utilities; as a long time renter in San Antonio, she wants renters to have a voice.
Ian Benavidez	Ian has spent time in Toronto which has a much more visually apparent challenge of homelessness than San Antonio. He focuses on affordable housing because it is what makes sense to him.
Lori Houston	For Lori, motherhood has shown her how children need the sense of safety and self, and wishes that for all mothers.
Commissioner Alanis	Pedro saw the number foreclosures on any given day in the city and knows the need for highly impactful housing policy.
Commissioner Guerrero	The displacement of residents of Mission Trails Mobile Home Park compelled Jessica to get involved in housing. She assisted with translating for the community and believes keeping people in their homes through a grassroots effort is important.

Commissioner Hom	Keith's family where small business owners who moved from Brooklyn to the New York suburbs at a young age. He saw the difference that move made in his life, and is compelled to work in housing and transportation so others can have the same opportunities.
Commissioner Abraham	When Robert moving to San Antonio noticed other areas didn't have the same type of housing- the visual economic segregation piqued his interest in housing.

What is Our Charge?

One of the goals for the retreat was to revisit the nature and purpose of the commission. Commissioners and staff wanted clear and shared understandings of the Commission's role, accountabilities, & possibilities.

Mayor Nirenberg shared his view of the Housing Commission's charge one year from their appointments:

- Other cities and communities are looking to us. Whether they adopt our policies are not, we are teaching them how to listen to the community and people.
- Guide the implementation of compassionate, comprehensive policy.
- Challenge bureaucracy and know that takes a lot of self-awareness and effort.

The Commissioners put their charge in their own words:

- *Guiding implementation of compassionate policy; accountability with heart*
- *Report to the community on how we are progressing and engage with the public to ensure their voices are heard*
- *Review the housing budget*

A Shared Mental Model

Commissioners requested a draft logic model ahead of the retreat. The version created by staff included both the commission and their support staff within NHSD. Commissioners were asked to continue providing feedback and input to discuss at the January 22 meeting. Enlarged versions of the first draft and completed version can be found in Appendix A.

Goals	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-term Outcomes	Medium-term Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee the implementation of the HPF... • Implement anti-displacement strategy... • Engage the public... • Cultivate partnerships... • Focus on Equity and Advocate ... • Define Outcomes and People-Focused metrics ... 	Commissioner time Staff time Accessible spaces Web content: meeting postings agendas Translation Services Commissioner Packets: Minutes, Presentations & Memos, Follow-ups	Regular meetings Work Sessions Public Comment Commissioners representing HC in other spaces	Policy Recommendations for Staff and Council Feedback & Guidance for staff and Council Annual Report	Housing-specific public forum Additional oversight on Housing Policy Framework implementation Definition of success and key performance metrics are people-focused	Clarified policy process Connections & partnerships form across sectors Impacted communities are engaged more frequently	San Antonio's housing efforts are coordinated & equitable. The housing needs of San Antonians, especially those with low incomes, are documented, tracked, & met. Policy decisions are made and evaluated with impacted community and shared metrics Fewer San Antonians face displacement pressure and there are adequate resources for those that do.

For further context on logic models, Francisco explained they are a product of the shift from charity-based funding to impact or results-based funding. “The genesis of societal change is when we engage with people who need change.”

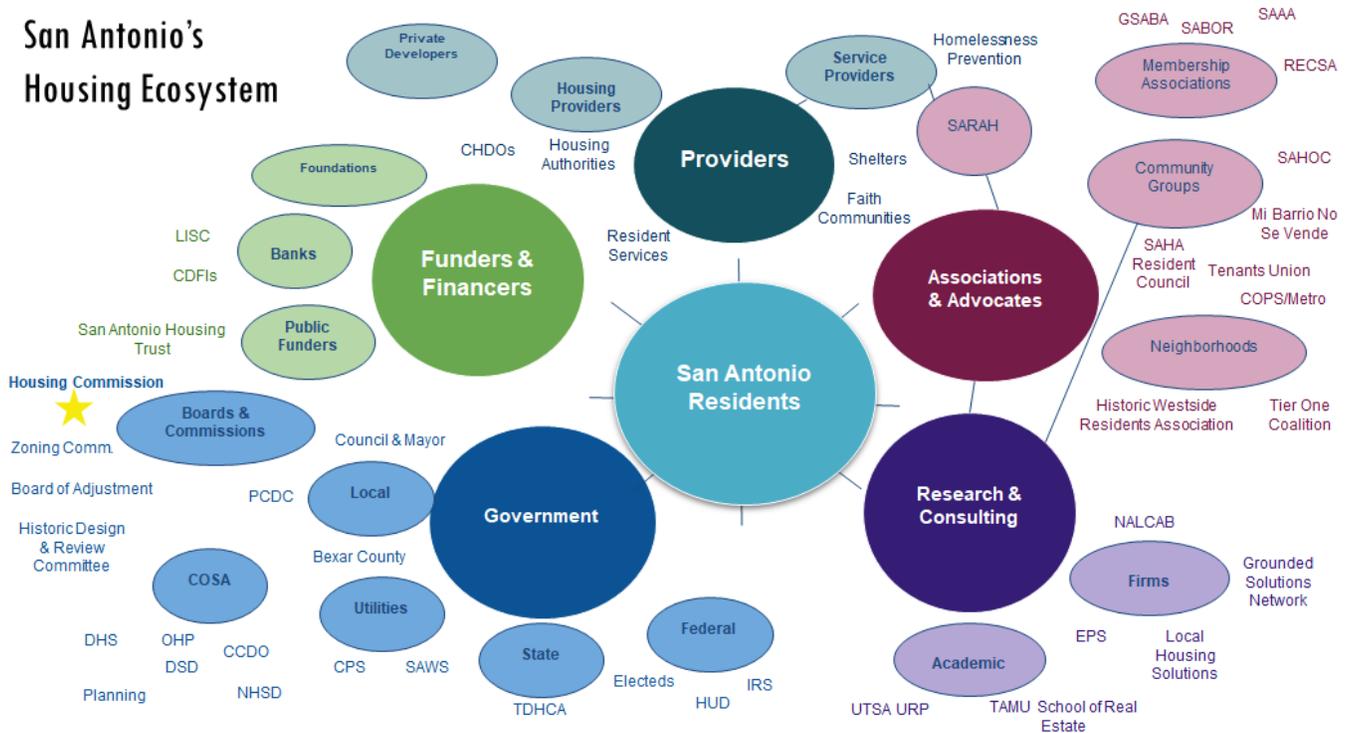
Responses to the draft logic model included:

- Citizens to be Heard (now referred to as public comment) should be included on the model
- What does ‘oversight’ mean? Do we develop policy as Commissioners?
- Do we monitor progress on outcomes and activities of different groups?
- Is it our role to identify gaps? If so, how do we?
- Defined roles and activities will help us understand what should go into our work plan

Clarifying Our Landscape & Collective Impact

In this moment the participants are asked to ‘zoom out’ from the Commission’s work and identify other key entities in the San Antonio housing policy space.

Staff created a draft visual of San Antonio’s housing Ecosystem with input from Chair Castro Ramirez and Commissioner Guerrero (Enlarged Version is available as Appendix B.)**



The ecosystem visual called the following responses:

- *How do individuals navigate such a complex system?*
- *Role could be to proselytize the importance of affordable housing, reinforce it through the ecosystem.*

** Entities named on the ecosystem are examples. This visual is not comprehensive.

- *What are the people’s roles? There should be a two way ‘arrow’ from “residents”*

Representatives from non-NHSD city departments that touch housing spoke about the work they do. The departments meet for bi-weekly meetings called “Housing Huddles” with Assistant City Manager Lori Houston.

	Role in Housing	Boards & Commissions	Relevant Policies and Programs
Center City Development & Operations (CCDO)	Incent development of new market & affordable housing in the inner core plus regional centers	Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee	City Fee Waiver Program, Center City Housing Incentive Policy, Brownfields Program, Inner City Incentive Fund
Development Services (DSD)	Approves new development and changes to existing development in accordance with City regulations	Planning Commission Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustments, Building Standards Board, Building-Related Fire & Advisory Board	Land Development (zoning, platting, engineering), Tree preservation, Permit issuance and review, Inspections, and property maintenance
Department of Human Services (DHS)	Funds homelessness and other human services	South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless, Community Action Advisory Board, Joint Commission on Elderly Affairs	Consolidated Funding, Utility Assistance, Senior Centers, Family Assistance Centers, Homeless Encampment Outreach
Planning	Focuses on proactive and effective land use planning in the City and ETJ, including promoting a wider range of housing options	Planning Commission, Zoning Commission	Comprehensive Plan, Sub-Area Plans
Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)	Preservation of historic sites and neighborhoods. Design Review through the HDRC process.	Historic Design Review Committee	Historic tax certifications and fee waivers, Vacant Buildings Program, Rehabber Club, “Opportunity At Risk” Affordable Housing Report

Highlights from the dialogue between the departments and Commissioners include:

- **Development Services:** Working to create a process that supports the Commission's efforts, need assistance in defining Affordable Housing.
- **Office of Historic Preservation:** Want their policies to be consistent with the Commission's plans. Idea to highlight unused building inventory that could become housing.
- **Planning:** How can planning be done holistically? How can the variety of housing options available be illuminated?
- **Center City Development & Operations:** What are the issues the department should take into account with incentives? How do they weave the considerations into the market rate?
- **Department of Human Services:** How can the department's focus line up with the commission's focus?

Establishing a Common Operating Picture

Reviewing Our Progress & Setting Our Course

Verónica Soto gave a status update on the implementation of the Housing Policy Framework and FY 2020 housing initiatives. Leilah Powell, Executive Director of LISC, gave a brief update on LISC's work with the City and in housing generally.

During the lunch break, participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- What is the 'Critical Path' to stay on track in 2020 and what does it require of us as a commission and as commissioners?
- What shared vision could articulate our north star as a commission for the work ahead in 2020? What is OUR key performance indicator?

The Commission's Value Add

Francisco asked the participants to consider what their focus should be so the Commission can have the biggest value-add.

- *Public engagement & education- integrating many ideas into one well-crafted story*
- *Set models, standards, and methods for what good public engagement looks like*
- *Develop an umbrella policy for shared outcomes, tracking, and understanding of major objectives*
- *Land on a definition of affordable housing*
- *Help streamline, simplify housing systems so they're decipherable to a lay person*
- *Be a mouthpiece for affordable housing to communicate it's importance*
- *Organizations within the ecosystem should be coming to us for guidance*
- *Communities need to be a part of housing commission conversations and asked how they can be a part of every 'flower' in the ecosystem*

Organizing Ourselves for the Year Ahead

Keep, Stop, Start

Given all that was discussed, the participants turned their focus to what would be the highest and best use of the commission? Commissioners walked in teams of three to identify things they would like to keep doing, things they'd like to stop doing, and things they'd like to start doing in 2020.

Keep	Stop	Start
Flexibility, Adaptability	Information 'dump' –busy agendas	Hearing from other Departments
Dashboard	Monthly Reports on numbers/widgets unless requested	Community Engagement
Annual Report	Focus on Policy and not on program implementation	Define Affordable Housing
Budget Review		Monitoring stakeholders/ other departments
Community Engagement		Legislative Impact

Key questions from “keep, stop, start”

- *What do we mean when we say ‘community engagement?’*
- *When do we take up these issues?*

Next Steps

Commissioners were asked to provide feedback on the logic model and ecosystem. Staff will create a draft calendar (Appendix C), and update the drafts of the logic model and ecosystem for continued discussion at the January 22nd regular meeting.

Closing Reflections

In closing, Francisco asked the participants to share what ‘rang a bell’ for them during the day.

- *“Keep, stop, start” and getting an understanding of the lay of the land.*
- *Defining who we are and who we aren’t*
- *Commonalities across the three groups in ‘keep, stop, start’*
- *We have direction for 2020 but also flexibility*
- *Meeting the ‘Housing Huddle’ attendees*
- *The year itself has been a success- looking back, we see how we’ve influenced policy*
- *Pride in the staff*
- *A warm, fuzzy feeling*

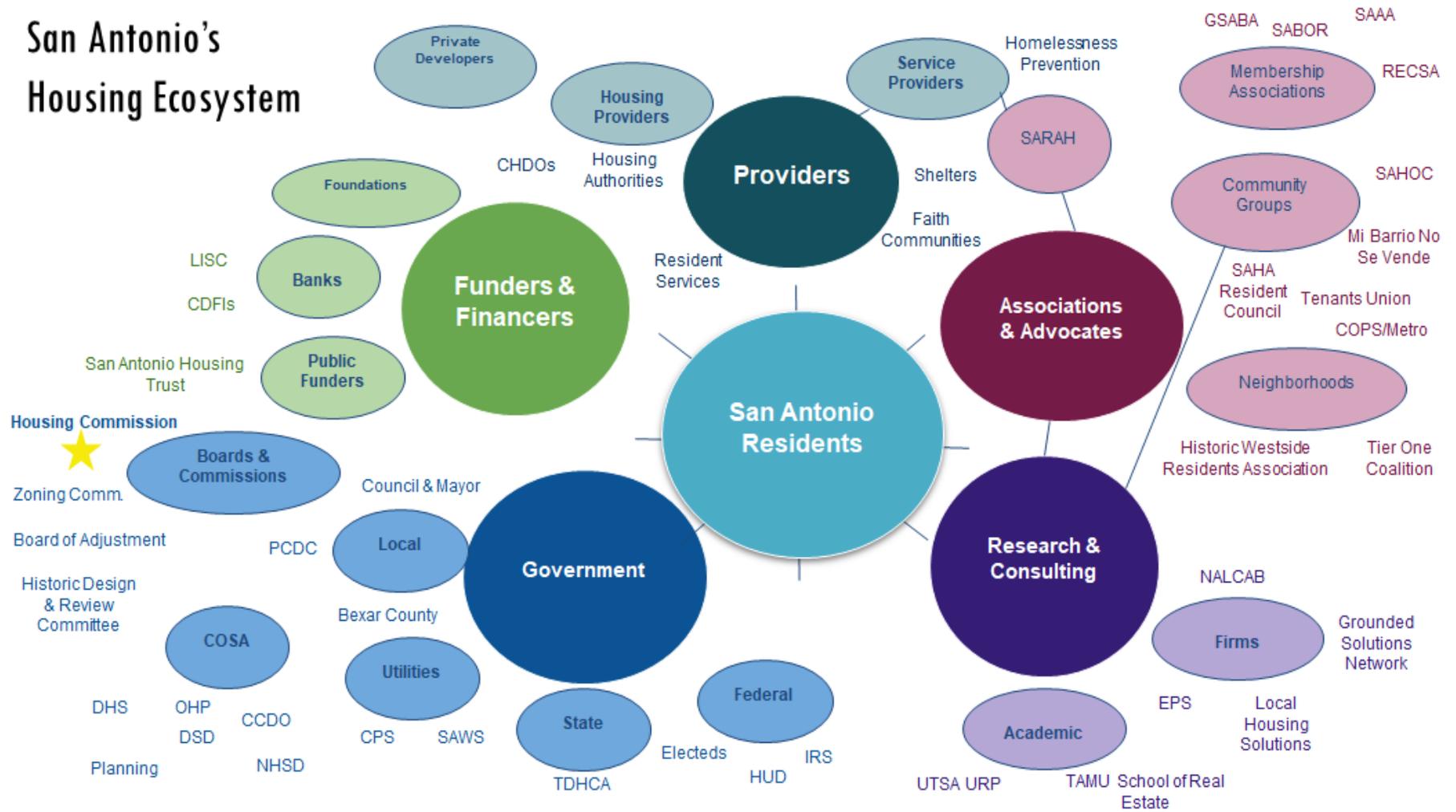
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Appendix A: Housing Commission Logic Model: Updated with Commissioner Feedback in Bold

Input	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Medium-Term Outcomes	Impacts
<p>Commissioner time</p> <p>Staff time</p> <p>Accessible spaces</p> <p>Web content: meeting postings agendas</p> <p>Translation Services</p> <p>Commissioner Packets: Minutes, Presentations & Memos, Follow-ups</p> <p>Public Comment</p> <p>Keep/Start Items</p> <p>Views of all elements of housing production, sales, uses</p> <p>20-year view</p> <p>Data, Studies and plans provided by City and Community</p> <p>Experienced and community driven commissioners with relevant knowledge and experience of historic housing issues</p> <p>Dashboard</p>	<p>Regular meetings</p> <p>Work Sessions</p> <p>Commissioners representing HC in other spaces</p> <p>Community Education</p> <p>Deliberately seek out and collect viewpoints of homeless, homeowners, renters, landlords, builders, developers, elected officials and key staff</p> <p>Consider all policy decisions through a 20 year lens for impacts (long term)</p> <p>Facilitate Public input and comment on all housing related activities to be inclusive of all perspectives</p> <p>Monitor City housing system through strategic implementation plan: includes production, preservation, tenant and market forces</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Reduce amount of in-depth information reports by COSA staff; more focus on policy</p> <p>Look at legislative impact (to and from)</p> <p>Invite outliers within housing ecosystem to present on their effect on affordability</p>	<p>Policy Recommendations for Staff and Council</p> <p>Feedback & Guidance for staff and Council</p> <p>Annual Report</p> <p>Altruistic and self-interest opinions</p> <p>Perspectives from two decades into future on all issues with strategic planning implications spelled out</p> <p>Budget Review with timely feedback from Commissioners</p> <p>Increased public awareness of assistance available for making housing more affordable</p> <p>Set standards and model for other departments and agencies involved in 'Housing Huddle'</p>	<p>Housing-specific public forum</p> <p>Additional oversight on Housing Policy Framework implementation</p> <p>Definition of success and key performance metrics are people-focused</p> <p>Voices of all stakeholders sought and heard</p> <p>Stakeholders required to think about consider and state impacts of viewpoints two decades into future</p> <p>Ensure Coordination of efforts by City/ Stakeholder groups</p> <p>Set one (1) year goals on HPF and SHIP implementation</p> <p>Implement solutions to negative gentrification effects in low income neighborhoods</p> <p>Provide public definition of 'affordability'</p>	<p>Clarified policy process</p> <p>Connections & partnerships form across sectors</p> <p>Impacted communities are engaged more frequently</p> <p>Criticism blunted that all views have not been considered</p> <p>Short and medium term outcomes can be addressed and adjusted</p> <p>Establish three (3) to Five (5) year housing goals through SHIP</p> <p>Curb negative impacts of gentrification in low income neighborhoods</p> <p>Non-COSA commissioners able to provide more guidance with policy; more engaged in process</p>	<p>San Antonio's housing efforts are coordinated & equitable.</p> <p>The housing needs of San Antonians, especially those with low incomes, are documented, tracked, & met.</p> <p>Policy decisions are made and evaluated with impacted community and shared metrics</p> <p>Fewer San Antonians face displacement pressure and there are adequate resources for those that do.</p> <p>Community wide consensus achieved</p> <p>Long-term strategic planning achieved</p>

Appendix B: San Antonio's Housing Ecosystem

San Antonio's Housing Ecosystem



Appendix C: Housing Commission Annual Work Plan and Timeline

The Commissioners put their charge in their own words:

- *Guiding implementation of compassionate policy; accountability with heart*
- *Report to the community on how we are progressing and engage with the public to ensure their voices are heard*
- *Review the housing budget*

Priorities identified by the Housing Commission for 2020 include:

- **Flexibility and Adaptability** to respond to community needs
- **Online Dashboard** to show progress to community
- **Annual Report** to keep accountability for housing issues
- **Budget Review** to prioritize housing funding
- **Community Engagement** to continue community dialogue
- **Updates from other departments** to understand city-wide housing impacts
- **Define Affordable Housing** to have a common understanding of the issue
- **Legislative Agenda** to support housing policy from the Federal and State levels

Timeline

Risk Mitigation Policy/Right to Counsel	January
Recalibration Briefing	February
ForEveryoneHome Needs Assessment	February
Define Affordable Housing	March
Annual Report	March
Implementation Plan Approval	April
Dashboard Release	April
CCHIP Briefing	May
Annual Report	May
Public Listening Session	May
UDC Amendments	June
FY2021 Budget Priorities	June
ForEveryoneHome Anti-Displacement & Inclusive Growth Agenda	July
Funding Strategy for Five Year Consolidated Plan & FY 2021 Action Plan	July
Public Listening Session	July
Legislative Agenda	August
Affordable Housing Campaign	September
Public Listening Session	September
ForEveryoneHome Final Deliverable	October

Other Options:

- “Housing Huddle” debriefs, quarterly or monthly