

Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods
Combined Commentary and Questions
Public Meetings, March 18, 19, 26 and April 1, 2015

Preservation, Renovation, Demolition, Relocation

Comments

Stop demolition of historic buildings.

Provide financial assistance for repairs, adaptive reuse, renovations etc. to qualified (in financial need) owners so they can stay in their homes.

Train building code enforcement personnel so they will be able to recommend repairs vs. demolition.

Lots of conversation about helping with relocation, but please keep in mind those who don't want to be removed or leave their home.

Para mi en lo personal. No me gusto por que no estuvieron [sic] bien preparados en primer lugar en traduccion y otra que tampoco estan preparado para seguir [sic] haciendo rezonificaciones. Ustedes no tienen idea de cuanto sufre la gente. Mejor de rezonificar ayuden a las familias ha [sic] reparar sus casas.

Translation: For me, personally, I didn't like it because they weren't well prepared, first of all, with translation and also are not prepared to continue rezoning. You have no idea how much people are suffering. Instead of rezoning, help families to repair their houses.

The feeling that the recommendations don't acknowledge the problem, the feeling that recommendations are assuming relocation. Be specific that relocation is the option only after all other options are exhausted.

The clear preference is for people to stay in place as owners or renters.

Develop ideas to prevent displacement

Develop ideas to avoid negative impact

Citizens have lingering concerns that prevention of displacement is not being addressed through policy in the draft document

Citizens mentioned that the "Development Without Displacement" platform was not integrated into the document

There is a request that the recommendations include a review of existing policies as a means of identifying those that may result in displacement

Please consider implementing a “Habitat for Humanity” model for renovating abandoned and vacant property. Add to the tax base rather than eliminating or deferring developer taxes. Use resources to create more resources.

The language of the report treats displacement as inevitable --the position should be to keep people in their homes

Displacement is the main issue. Moving incentives are not sufficient--recommend policies to avoid displacement.

Make policy recommendations more specific. The report should include a review of existing ordinances and polices affecting the displacement of people and other adverse impacts on inner city neighborhoods.

Look at rezoning policies and how they affect families and neighborhoods

People choose to remain in areas targeted for reinvestment. We want to encourage people from the area to buy the properties and reinvest in them.

There is a need for an education program for working class people on how to keep their property or rental home in compliance with city regulations.

Policies are needed to protect the rights of people to stay in their homes.

Cultural and historic neighborhoods of the working class need to be protected in our community.

Home repairs and rehabilitation moneys cannot wait until the 2017 bond. Need to invest money used for demolition on repairs instead

Don't provide incentives to developers, instead offer incentives to the residents to repair their homes.

The Westside needs a beautification program and needs to be a designated Historic District

The Right To The City People's Platform on Development Without Displacement was not acknowledged or included in the notes or online

Draft report has parts that needs strengthening: Relocation Policy --the emphasis should be on preventing displacement not relocation

Mitigate or prevent displacement and rising property taxes to keep people in their homes

Some neighborhoods have grown beyond their capacity.

When developers sell buildings and property, they have received incentives. Use those taxes to help the neighborhood stabilize the area and benefit people who need help stabilizing their homes.

The city should buy up vacant houses and move them onto vacant lots to help stabilize neighborhoods.

Business leaders should come to the table with sustainable resources to revitalize neighborhood

The draft report does not discuss the issue of homeowners struggling to upkeep their homes, who then may be targeted by realtors for code compliance violations.

Tearing down homes w/o replacement should be eliminated. Moving expenses alone is unacceptable

Displacement of businesses and seniors because of higher rents including Bank of America-- which citizens in the area used

There is no consideration of the preservation of the neighborhoods we have now--to preserve the flavor of what we have now

Mitigate the cost of displacement, but know that some things cannot be mitigated no matter what the amount of money or help.

Preserve families and save the flavor of the neighborhoods.

District 2 has had over 250 calls demolitions/compliance issues, District 5 has had 180 calls, District 1 has had many calls--these areas in the inner city are being targeted

The Vacant Building Ordinance talks about giving land and buildings to developers.

Revitalization needs to be affordable for people who already live in the area--so they don't get displaced

The objective of this Task Force is to eliminate revitalization in the future; it should never be required again if addressing the charge of the Task Force.

Displacement policy is not only short-term; it must be seen as the very last possible band aid. And it must be seen as a failure when we turn to it. And we must commit to making policy that doesn't even consider a fair displacement process acceptable as a permanent policy.

City staff erred in portraying the purchase of mailing lists of renters within 200 feet of a zoning change as prohibitively expensive. As a direct marketer I know this is not too expensive. Besides, it could be incorporated into developer's fees.

The Vacant Building Ordinance is about speeding up gentrification. The Vacant Building Ordinance and the Building Standards Board and code compliance allow demolitions to be speeded up. HDRC's mission is not just about historic and architectural preservation. They don't understand their charge--it is about preservation of places and culture.

One model is--make money and materials available to families and people to allow them to improve their houses. COSA does not follow through on policies in low income neighborhoods,

so this opens the areas up for gentrification. The city enforces code compliance in low income neighborhoods, but does not maintain parks or city services in low income neighborhoods

Preservation, Renovation, Demolition, Relocation

Questions

Has the Task Force developed ideas to avoid displacement?

Has the Task Force identified ideas to avoid negative impact on history, culture and quality of life?

What is the city's policy on relocation assistance in cases where the residents are displaced due to code compliance violations?

What happens if there is displacement due to commercial encroachment? Is there a policy for this type of displacement?

Have policies on vacant buildings been reviewed?

Does developer provide relocation assistance, provide moving costs or the difference between old the rental rate and the new rental rate for 12 months? This language is not clear.

Will all or only some moving costs be covered?

The report needs context: How does the existing neighborhood landscape lead to the current policy recommendations? How do the recommendations address the needs? What additional work will the Commission need to do in the future to address what isn't already addressed through the work of the Task Force?

What is the goal ratio of tenant –occupied vs. owner-occupied homes?

What are the incentives for people who live in low income neighborhoods?

How will Neighborhood Empowerment Zones work for homeowner and for land owners?

The draft report does not discuss the issue of homeowners struggling to upkeep their homes, who then may be targeted by realtors for code compliance violations.

How does the Task Force plan to address this issue?

What are your policy recommendations to make sure that we are not forced out of our homes by new development? We do not want relocation assistance. We do not plan on going anywhere.

How can you help us stay in our homes?

The entire community benefits when residents have the resources to keep up and maintain their homes. It makes little sense to provide incentives to developers and to not provide sufficient resources to residents for home rehabilitation. What are specific ways to ensure that more resources are made available for low income residents for home repair?

The **Task Force Charge** includes this **Goal**: “Identify policies and programs that encourage investment in inner city neighborhoods but minimize or prevent displacement of people or

adverse impacts related to history, culture, and quality of life of unique neighborhoods.” It appears that the only recommendations addressing displacement of current residents are those relating to new housing construction. Why doesn’t the report recommend aggressive and creative ways to enable residents to remain in their own homes?

The first item in the Task Force Charge subsection entitled “Task Force Purpose” is “*review current policies,*” referring to current City policies that relate to the Goal of “*Identifying policies and programs that encourage investment in inner city neighborhoods but minimize or prevent displacement of people or adverse impacts related to history, culture, and quality of life of unique neighborhoods.*” We have a series of questions about this aspect of the Task Force’s work:

- a. Why doesn’t the report include a review of existing ordinances and policies affecting the displacement of people or other adverse impacts on inner city neighborhoods?
- b. It is clear that the recent Vacant Building Ordinance will enable the City to acquire and demolish buildings more rapidly than in the past which will accelerate gentrification. Why doesn’t the report recommend repeal or amendment to that ordinance?
- c. The Task Force report notes that there was discussion of how rising property taxes can force out current residents. Why doesn’t the report review current ordinances and policies regarding the City’s property tax revenues and recommend the use of some of those revenues for property tax assistance for current inner city residents who are at risk of being forced out?

The population and culture of the Westside is and always has been Mexican and Mexican-American, with residents, being both documented and undocumented. What recommendations has the Task Force made to minimize or avoid displacement of undocumented residents?

For a significant number of inner city residents, their culture and quality of life include the uniquely close-knit community life in mobile home parks. What recommendations has the Task Force made to minimize or avoid displacement of mobile home park residents?

In recent years, more City demolition orders have been issued for the Eastside and Westside properties than in other parts of the City and we know that demolitions pave the way for gentrification. Yet the City spends between \$10,000-\$20,000 to carry out each of those demolitions. Given all of this, why doesn’t the Task Force recommend that this money instead be made available to homeowners to maintain and preserve their homes?

How can diversifying neighborhoods not displace people?
Diversifying sounds like displacement.

Preservation or gentrification?

Community Input

Comments

I have attended every Task Force meeting/panel discussion thus far and this was the first one where people really had dialogue and discussion on the real issues and the communities we want create and sustain. People need to be heard. This will save time and money in the long run--

developing a system now of real community dialogue that can continue with the long life of the commission.

You cannot in good faith present recommendations yet! These two/three town hall events are not enough! I have attended Task Force meetings and can say that there has not been enough- research, community input, conversation on the issues within/among the Task Force, or any recommendations for how there can be FUNDING to make real change happen! it was an INSULT to come to one of the most affected communities with a PRESENTATION--instead of coming to HEAR THE VOICES OF THOSE AFFECTED FIRST!

Original draft of proposal (had) no plan for public input

Thanks for addressing this issue. Seems that a community needs assessment would be appropriate.

Developers are getting across the board incentives with no regard to neighbors. No one asks the neighbors what they want

The Task Force should actively and aggressively go to those in greatest need to discuss and develop success measures. Task Force should do due diligence and focus on the people who need it the most

Raising [sic] communities is cultural genocide. People put down roots and then they are ripped out. Lower income people are not represented on the Task Force

The structure of the Task Force is top down, does not reflect the people who are affected

Slow down the process

Public input was demanded for the process, it was not part of the original plan

The process of informing people of what is going on in their neighborhoods needs to change to include more of the neighborhood not just those close by the affected property.

The Task Force has not reached consensus on what is included in the draft report, but there is a commitment from Task Force members that public input will be discussed and considered.

Involve the neighborhood associations in the process

The community feels the staff has too much influence on the development of the report.

Each neighborhood should be represented by a representative

Each university should survey all neighborhoods to assess needs

Need more input, time, planning & active participation from mental health, clergy, state reps should be included city wide

Still no opportunity for real interaction with the community & Task Force. Obviously need more Task Force meetings before releasing a report.

What I do understand is that the Mayor's Task Force is moving too fast to finalize these recommendations. It feels like the "results" are being railroaded. Please postpone the recommendations and take meaningful measures to address some of the concerns raised by both citizens who spoke up & some of the Task Force members. We need immediate action to prevent land speculation & property flipping; we need prioritization of protecting viable communities as communities. COSA needs to be required to give just as much (or more) attention & service to residents & ordinary citizens as it gives to the developers who profit from destroying our communities.

The new meeting of 4-1-15 should be rightfully held at these targeted areas
More time is need to fairly and objectively address this unneeded project.
Action will follow for rest.

By the time information gets to the working people it is all a "done deal"--it is exhausting and demoralizing. The Zoning process needs amending.

Need more opportunities for ongoing input to the process

The representative for the councilperson (in the speaker's district) said the scope of the Task Force should be extended to include renters--so they are also protected

The gatherings (public meetings) are all reactive not proactive. We are acting as though the fight has been lost and that gentrification is unavoidable.
Neighborhood Associations are organizations that should get more involved in the process

I disagree with the language of the policy goals-- to increase the number of mixed income areas throughout the city-- the language is discriminatory and I ask that it be changed

The previous comment leads to this comment: the Task Force must be given the opportunity to scrutinize staff reports in detail and question they're [sic] presentations. (Marianne Kestenbaum, 493-9654)

Review and ask why the Securities and Exchange Commission Recommendations for Accountability of Economic Development Corporations and others not wanted. We need foresight and time to learn from the errors of others and the past.

We have been watching with great interest as the Mayor's Task Force has gone through its paces. The report to the Quality of Life Subcommittee was good, as far as it went but we have concerns:

- that more detail was not presented on policy recommendations.
- There doesn't seem to be an actual report from the Task Force, only a Power Point Presentation
- Citizen input has been stifled, written reports are not included in what has been presented
- There is no process on the Task Force for reaching consensus
- The report that was submitted to the Quality of Life Subcommittee was a report from City Staff and not representative of all the members of the Task Force

In addition, the procedures put forth by City Staff for the process of these two Town Hall meetings appears to be designed to stifle citizen input rather than promote a healthy exchange of ideas. Given the long history in San Antonio of disenfranchising people of color and low income, we respectfully state that more input from those very people must be sought.

Traducción: Hemos observando con gran interés, como el Grupo de Trabajo del Alcalde esta cumpliendo su tarea. El informe del Subcomité de la Calidad de Vida estaba bien, en la medida en que salió, pero tenemos problemas:

- No se presentaron suficientes detalles sobre las recomendaciones de política.
- No parece que hay un informe real del Grupo de Trabajo del Alcalde, sólo hay una presentación en Power Point.
- Aportación de los Ciudadanos ha sido sofocado, informes escritos no están incluidos en lo que se ha presentado
- No hay un proceso en el Grupo de Trabajo para el logro de un consenso
- El informe que fue presentado al Subcomisión sobre la calidad de Vida es un informe de Personal de la ciudad y no es representativo de todos los miembros de la Grupo de Trabajo
- El informe que se presentó a la Subcomisión Calidad de vida era un informe de Personal de la ciudad y no es representativo de todos los miembros del Grupo de Trabajo

Además, los procedimientos de personal de la ciudad para el proceso de estos dos Ayuntamiento reuniones parece estar diseñada para sofocar ciudadano en lugar de promover un sano intercambio de ideas. Dada la larga historia de San Antonio de marginar las personas de color y de bajos ingresos, solicitamos respetuosamente que más aportaciones de las personas debe ser buscado.

Want to remind the Task Force and the community that the discussion needs to be extended and we need to continue to talk about the matter. The report is underdeveloped and it focuses on displacement as the only effect of gentrification, but it is only one aspect. Gentrification has different faces, stages and effects-- we have discussed education, higher wages, privatization and public spaces. This report is our future; forget the politics--think about the effects on people.

From watching the process the Task Force is driven by an artificial deadline. It will take longer than a 2 hour meeting to discuss all the comments and questions. Two things need to happen--- a context needs to be created for why there is a Task Force, and as the Task Force or Commission continues to do its work, the original Task Force members should be able to continue or select their own replacements.

Community members have been blindsided by change. La Gloria was the speaker's first experience with racism. People have been coded out of their homes. Push the deadline forward (further out) for the recommendations--we need more time to discuss.

We need to think of the conceptualization of the issues of gentrification. You are working with an artificial deadline. Don't let developers and other wealthy interests be the privileged force that influences the process. The inequalities are on the table; recognize them.

City attorneys are not always right, you need to consult an independent counsel to try to help keep people in their homes. It is OK to ask for another opinion.

Community Input

Questions

How can we get more representation for our affected neighborhoods for this process?

Who are the decision makers? The people who live in the areas are not involved in the decisions.

There is no representation of the people who live in the areas being talked about.

Is there a forum for commentary online?

How can public meetings which no one in San Antonio knows about or have ever heard of constitute a serious attempt to engage the citizens of this city in a dialogue about the displacement of vibrant communities?

As we stated before, we know that we have the right to fully participate in this process. Will you give us a seat at the table on the city commission that will track implementation of these policies?

Why were statements and comments submitted by the Right to the City SA Coalition and the Mission Trails Community to this Task Force not acknowledged or incorporated into the Plan?

Why are we rushing the process to finalize this report?

Developers and Residents

Comments

I understand more fully every day that this city is more moved by developers than gente. This makes me sad because so many great people who could be making our city a model for this world are ignored.

University area by Santa Maria→ received letter wanting to buy house, do you [sic] if someone is trying to take advantage

There is a belief that the Task Force is not focused enough on the people, but rather on buildings and investment

One concern is the prevalence of investors asking to purchase homes in inner city neighborhoods that are not for sale

Neighborhood empowerment zone

Developers sell the building and all the agreements are nullified with the new owners

Developers, code compliance and CBDG money is going to harass people and move them out of their homes and neighborhoods

Harassment is an issue--developers are coming into neighborhoods and knocking on doors asking to see the owner who is often sick and elderly and trying to convince them to sell their homes that are not for sale. If the houses are sold they are often being flipped by the developers.

The Peanut Factory is an example of incentives for development that is promoted as student housing, a 450 sq ft space is renting for \$859. The Peanut Factory project got incentives, but it is not affordable

The focus is on investment in inner city neighborhoods rather than the neighborhoods that already exist and what the issues are in those neighborhoods. Focusing on investment rather than on the issues intimates there is something wrong with the neighborhoods and the people who live there.

New business seems more important than people--the most vulnerable are being ignored

Establish a mediation process for developers and residents with an outside, unbiased 3rd party--the city cannot mediate

Large security deposits are being used as a way to discriminate and discourage some renters

Increasing the number of mixed income neighborhoods does not mean re-making existing neighborhoods. Not by fiat- but naturally. Emphasis should move from corporate-centered when pursuing economic development. It should be neighborhood centered, so neighborhoods can benefit from the multiplier benefit of keeping economic transaction dollars in the neighborhoods, letting markets lift the economic well-being and evolve into mixed income neighborhoods naturally.

We the citizens living in the West End, support economic development and reinvestment, but not at the cost of involuntary displacement of our neighbors and tearing at the family friendly fabric of our community. **Traducción:** Nosotros, los ciudadanos que viven en el Lado Oeste, apoyamos el desarrollo económico y la reinversión, pero no al costo del desplazamiento involuntario de nuestros vecinos y rompiendo el tejido familiar de nuestra comunidad.

Zoning and planning must be geared toward maintaining the general fabric of the neighborhood. Building three story townhouses scattered throughout more historic neighborhoods tears at the fabric. **Traducción:** La zonificación y planificación debe estar orientada hacia el mantenimiento de la estructura general del barrio. Edificios de tres pisos entre casas dispersas en barrios históricos desgarran el tejido de esa vecindad.

Gentrification is happening across the country and is affecting low and moderate income families. How can there be a balance for people when they must compete with wealthy corporations, developers and contractors? Suggests there needs to be a rule that city council persons cannot accept any donation from any proposed developers or construction companies -- then there will be some balance.

Nothing in the federal or state constitutions requires you alter the master plan for a developer.

Developers and Residents

Questions

What communities are being looked at for best practices?

Inner City Reinvestment and Infill policy identifies target areas (map) for private reinvestment. How does this tie-into the long-term recommendations re: the land trust mentioned in the recommendations?

Why are incentives given to developers for new apartments for middle and upper income people in working class neighborhoods?

What is the city's policy in cases where a developer forgoes incentives? Will the developer avoid paying relocation assistance?

What are the recommendations by members of this task force that will ensure that developers are required to offer quality jobs, neighborhood improvements, environmental protections, and benefits to local small business on any new development projects?

Seniors

Comments

Not enough info in SA, where is money coming from. Seniors cannot live downtown, what are we doing for us (seniors).

Senior housing component is missing

Concern about how seniors can afford to live in downtown. They have lived in their homes for decades. Where will they go?

There is not senior advocate from [sic] a commission on the Task Force.

Information is not getting out to seniors and people who are not online.

1 in every 4.5 people are seniors and that number is growing. There should be a specific senior housing component addressed in the recommendations

Include a senior housing component as a part of the discussions.

Glad for downtown revitalization, SA 2020 and all that is happening, but the city needs rent control--here is a huge impact on seniors, the impact is massive

We request that a dedicated funding source for Rehabilitation and alteration of elder-owned housing, be established which will allow for our elderly neighbors to continue to live safe and healthy lives in their own homes without going into debt. This fund must be substantially more than the amount which has been budget for home repairs in recent years. ***Traducción:***

Solicitamos que una fuente dedicada de fondos para la rehabilitación y alteración de las propiedades y viviendas de personas mayores que permitirá a nuestros ancianos vecinos que sigan viviendo vidas seguras y saludables en sus propios hogares sin entrar en deuda. Este fondo

debe ser mucho más que la cantidad que se ha presupuesto para las reparaciones de hogares en los últimos años.

The elderly lose their will to live when they are displaced. There should be a system of checks and balances for the city to weigh options and consequences. Commissioners are the first link between people and government. People make a lifetime commitment to a place and then they are forced to start over.

Seniors

Questions

Are the elderly and certain areas being targeted by developers? What can the Task Force do about this?

Seniors cannot live downtown, what are we doing for us (seniors)?

Concern about how seniors can afford to live in downtown. They have lived in their homes for decades. Where will they go?

How can seniors afford to live downtown?

Southside and Mission Trails

Comments

Strong demand for a Southside meeting

Include the history of Mission Trails as the impetus for the Task Force. The history needs to be acknowledged as informing the recommendations.

6 Southside groups signed asking to slow down the process

Historical/report on Mission Trails must be in the in final report

Yes we need a Spanish language meeting, preferably on the Southside, and it needs to have information translated into English.

The Task Force recommendations should reflect Mission Trails being at the root of their creation. It should also pay attention to the hybrid type neighborhoods such as mobile home parks. If the recommendations had been in place before Mission Trails-would it have been helpful? That should be a question that is answered before the Task Force dismisses.

Include the testimony and recommendations of the Mission Trails residents included online and in the report

Provide historical context in the report that names Mission Trails as the impetus for convening the Task Force. Context is missing from the draft.

Thank you for doing the meeting at South San --it should have been one of the meetings from the beginning. Thank you for doing the meeting.

Southside and Mission Trails

Questions

Six Southside groups submitted petitions to the Task Force for a meeting on the Southside. Why was there not a meeting scheduled on the Southside?

The Task Force recommendations should reflect Mission Trails being at the root of their creation. It should also pay attention to the hybrid type neighborhoods such as mobile home parks. If the recommendations had been in place before Mission Trails--would it have been helpful? That should be a question that is answered before the Task Force dismisses.

Inequality and Living Wage

Comments

When thinking about a Relocation Conference for 100s -1000s of individuals, who thought to have a conference with developers to pay a livable wage before breaking ground on major developments where working class people will work? (so they can stay in their homes) Who feels good about paying hard working people sub-standard wages? You eat their food; they clean your toilets and take care of your children. Pay a dignified wage or those businesses can go elsewhere.

Presentation/report add why there is a big gap in income?

Recognize, act, re-act livable wage

Recognize, Act, React---The city does not recognize that not everyone can afford to fix their homes. The city was built on underpaid labor. Pressure needs to be put on the local and state entities for a livable wage in Texas

Success measures for 2017 bond ---economic disparity, affordable housing

People cannot afford the basic services so how can they keep up their homes and the [sic] where they live?

The proposed housing bond recognizes potential to help with affordable housing, but the need should also be addressed today—not just in 2017

There is no safety net for people who live in sub-standard housing, they cannot afford to go anywhere else.

San Antonio has the highest income disparity in the nation according to a 2014 report. There is no contextualization for this disparity in the draft recommendations. This needs to be included.

Focus the 2017 Bond on those with the greatest need

People cannot afford to move back to their old neighborhoods and their old family homes

The Comprehensive Plan document refers to the "creative class" as living on the Northwest side of town and the other parts of town as where service and other workers live.

78202 and 78208 are below the poverty line Homelessness and poverty are still huge issues in this community

There is no protection for renters--some have seen a 25% increase in 3 years

There is too much poverty, neglect and discrimination. No one cares about humanity or the recognition of the West side of the city and what the people need

Do not just consider permanent housing as the main focus, apartment dwellers are in need of affordable rents. The downtown market hot and rents are not affordable.

Additional Policies and Support from the City in the following areas also need to be addressed if we are to bring about the goals and indicators listed:

- Support for coalition building to improve job quality in terms of wages, benefits, and career ladders, training and education tailored to the needs of the local residents.

Traducción: Apoyo para formar coaliciones para mejorar la calidad del empleo en términos de salarios, beneficios y escaleras de carreras, en la formación y la educación a la medida de las necesidades de los residentes locales.

Gentrification is a symptom--Mission Trails and poverty are a symptom. There is a bigger thing; it goes back to education and the education system. As a community we should be focusing on how to get people out of low income housing. How do we get people to an income level where they can afford the developments that are being developed? I agree we need to implement affordable housing-- at the same time don't blame the city. When it comes down to it we can't build our own communities. As a person from the Eastside who moved back to the Eastside, it is annoying to hear the city being blamed for conspiring against people. Go to your school board meetings and tell them what is needed.

People want to make the money to be able to afford nice homes in our communities.

Feel an obligation to speak --the Task Force speaks to gentrification and the policies speak to profit. Economic growth is not a solution to poverty. What we do in the US impacts the world (refers to a book ---*Confessions of An Economic Hit Man* by John Perkins).

The report lacks focus on economic inequality-- the perspective is that economic integration will help create economic integration. It is like busing rich people to poor neighborhoods and then there is integration.

Inequality and Living Wage

Questions

What exactly is being done to fix the problem of discriminatory redistricting? For example, Alamo Heights ISD allows a wealthy neighborhood to pool tax money. People within that school district get the benefits of a top-level education and the advantage of living near the heart of the city. Also, why is housing more affordable in suburban districts/areas like Marbach than in urban areas with dense poverty (i.e. West and East sides)?

People cannot afford the basic services so how can they keep up their homes and the [sic] where they live?

The following questions were delivered verbally at the meeting by one speaker and were submitted to the facilitator via e-mail:

What are the future policy goals in which you plan to create, specifically, for any future developing that creates gentrification, which creates more poverty?

With that in mind, In what ways will we see that happen? [sic]

Infrastructure

Comments

Street improvement/drainage need to be addressed

Too high-level, no details given; The city needs to protect homes from being raised [sic] for parking; Homes need to be maintained by their owners; What is the goal ratio of tenant – occupied vs. owner-occupied homes? Speeding cars are a problem for all inner-city neighborhoods and should be addressed city-wide

Property owner responsible for alley ways

Background Statement from TOP

San Antonio's Westside has extremely poor residential infrastructure compared to more affluent neighborhoods. These conditions have negative impacts on our health and cause our communities to be less safe. Leaders at Texas Organizing Project (TOP) have been organizing for better lights, sidewalks, roads, drainage, and home rehabilitation. We also know that we have the right to participate fully in this process and we have a right to stay in our homes. Most TOP leaders have lived on the Westside all of their lives. Our collective family history here goes back over 1,000 years.

Drainage problems at Five Points, Warren and Flores St., handicapped access is a problem Marshall St. has big potholes --repave the street and make it better--bus stops and sidewalks get flooded

Housing Policies do not address the problems of old and decaying infrastructure. We need curbs and sidewalks in our older neighborhoods, water mains and sewers are breaking down. The residents of the inner city have been paying taxes for many decades and have not fully benefitted from their investment in the City. *Traducción:* Las políticas de vivienda no abordan los problemas relativos a la edad y deterioro de la infraestructura. Necesitamos bordillos y aceras en nuestros barrios más viejos, red de agua y cloacas se están rompiendo. Los residentes de la

ciudad han estado pagando impuestos durante muchas décadas y no han sacado provecho de su inversión en la ciudad.

Additional Policies and Support from the City in the following areas also need to be addressed if we are to bring about the goals and indicators listed:

- Transportation concerns: ensure that residents of one community have practical access to jobs throughout the metropolitan area. **Traducción:** Transporte: asegurar que los residentes de una comunidad tengan acceso práctico a puestos de trabajo en toda la zona metropolitana.
- Public Health related issues: improve healthy food access, safe parks, and walkable streets. **Traducción:** Cuestiones relacionadas con la salud pública: mejorar acceso a alimentos sanos, parques seguros, y calles donde se puede caminar.

Make our dynamic and diverse traditional neighborhoods strong and stop those city policies that make life in those neighborhoods difficult. Give a little support to homeowners and businesses. Businesses are going to want to be in those neighborhoods as long as there are people in the neighborhoods. It is a huge mistake to tear down the old and put in subsidized housing.

Infrastructure

Questions

What can be done about street flooding/drainage and lighting in the neighborhoods through this process?

Alley behind houses originally for garbage pick-up were maintained by the city, now property owners are expected to maintain them. Why should property owners have to maintain these areas when it is not their property?

Existing and Suggested Programs

Comments

There is a question about the decision making process and transparency of Westside Development Corporation and San Antonio Growth on the Eastside (SAGE). Decisions are being made by people not living in the area.

People who do not qualify for programs-Casa Verde or other programs

Develop local programs with universities to develop neighborhood mentors.

Texas A & M Extension Program offers research-based educational programs such as Children, Youth and Families at Risk (CYFAR) to teach nutrition, horticulture and sustainability so residents can give back to their neighborhoods such as with community gardens.

The Alamodome Garden NH has been tremendously “neglected” by this city. Our area has been neglected since they stopped the plans to complete 6 phases. We were separated from the Historical Denver Heights neighborhood and since then we’ve been totally left out.

Finish/complete the neighborhood next to the Alamodome as you complete the convention center.

Potential partnerships:

- Habitat For Humanity--temporary housing for people while their house is being rehabilitated
- UTSA or other university with Urban Studies---do surveys to assist in assessing vacant, owner occupied, rental, in-fill and demographics information
- Texas A & M Extension Program CYFAR

NOTE----There was a program that was referred to as a model by speaker Gabriel Gonzales (recording was garbled)

Businesses, loans, innovative projects to raise funding for families should be a priority
College students, professors and business people should discuss sustainable projects to better improve community

There is not accountability for monies being spent on development

The demographic study for the Westside needs to recalculate and remove the affordable housing, SAAHC, SAHA properties etc. that give the area as a whole percentage wise an image with need. Because it is beginning to look like non-profits create such areas for their own benefit. This in turn overwhelms the existing citizens that own homes and are higher income levels. We are mixed income but because most projects are placed in our area the demographic is skewed. City of San Antonio checks and balances process is flawed at many levels. Our area has mixed income but the demographic study is flawed.

Regarding small lots, it was realized that the courts system of housing is not conducive to a healthy & safe environment. High density went to single homes. High density areas elsewhere once prosperous are no slums. Stop the abuse of empowerment zones. One reached the Castroville HEB but bypassed La Fiesta.

We especially support the Policy Goals and Key Indicators as stated in the Task Force presentation. Of the Long-term Recommendations we would especially support the Creation of Neighborhood Empowerment Zones similar to those established in Ft. Worth. **Traducción:** Apoyamos de forma especial los objetivos de las políticas y los indicadores clave como se indica en el Grupo de Trabajo. De las recomendaciones a largo plazo, apoyaríamos la creación del empoderamiento de Zonas de la Vecindad similares a los establecidos en Ft. Worth.

Additional Policies and Support from the City in the following areas also need to be addressed if we are to bring about the goals and indicators listed:

- Support for inner city neighborhoods that wish to become a neighborhood association and recognized by City Government. This should be a neighborhood driven decision, not determined by City Staff. **Traducción:** Apoyo a los barrios céntricos que desean

convertirse en una asociación de vecinos y reconocida por el Gobierno de la ciudad. Esto debe ser una decisión impulsada por el barrio, no por personal de la ciudad.

Economic policies of COSA Empowerment Zone ---dollars from the federal government went to build the Grand Hyatt. Cities are supposed to use federal money to help the zones in need---small businesses for upgrades etc.-- when the company was asked for a commitment to pay a living wage, they did not want to do it.

Existing and Suggested Programs

Questions

Concern about the Westside Development Corporation. What are they doing to help the people?

What happened with Phase 6 of the Alamodome?

Glad to see houses being fixed up. Are there low interest loans or incentives for people who do not qualify for Casa Verde programs?

Disaster accommodations--tornadoes, earthquakes.

What is the housing policy for residents who are affected by a disaster?

What is the city's plan of action for families on public assistance, or Section 8? Is it to transition a home or subsistence housing? [sic]

What is the plan of action to prevent homelessness? What is going to be done to prevent homelessness?

Specifically, What other types of support will be provided for those effected [sic]?

Ideas like Rent Stability, production/preservation of education centers for adults and for young future IT students with grant funding, etc are only a few ways that will allow us to develop together.

Is the Task Force in communication with the people planning the consolidated plan?

If the city is receiving \$80 million dollars over the next 5 years- why can't some of those funds be allotted to the Task Force recommendations? Perhaps to get a fund started that the bond \$ will only replenish. Also- if the consolidated plan is planning for housing for the next 5 yrs+ and the new "1 million people" that are expected to be in SA, is the Task Force working with that in mind. Both are coming out of the same office (planning) it should reflect that.

I have attended most of the meetings of the Mayor's Task Force on Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods since November, as well as the Quality of Life Committee meeting at which an overview of issues was discussed. I'd like to submit this question for tonight's Town Hall meeting: What is the staff's plan for complying with the Quality of Life Committee guidance to account for all comments at these public meetings, as well as their disposition, in the final report to City Council?

General Comments

To persons in charge of this meeting please note that a group called TOPS is using this meeting for their specific needs. Carlos Mata (210) 433-3345 Please contact me

A great deal of suspicion regarding where the money is coming from to revitalize the older parts of San Antonio.

Suspicion that there is a hidden agenda that citizens do not find out about until things are already happening

Long-term residents need PROTECTION

The Task Force needs to be on-site to witness development when a house is being knocked down- need to be there to witness the process

No sirvio

Translation: it was not useful

Not enough substance to the recommendations, too vague

People in the older neighborhoods see themselves as Urban Pioneers.

Thanks for everything. It was a pleasure for me to be here.

The meeting was a good idea. Lots of good comment. Sorry it wasn't better prepared.

Happy to have the Task Force

Zachry-invented and built modular motel rooms. I think someone could invent houses in this manner that would gut the infrastructure and update and easily bring up to code these older neighborhood homes.

Idea--city buys old houses and moves them to vacant lots to fill-in spaces in existing neighborhoods

Jose Gallegos, 214 W. Academy, San Antonio, TX 78226, 210-363-9160 wants hard copy mailed to his address

Lisa Ortega lortega@mhm.org

Carlos Manriquez, MA HA, 1610 Buena Vista, San Antonio, TX 78207 copy RE: event (minutes) summary

To ignore people is wrong- silence kills...

Only "Jesus" can help us, Blessed be "God" From a truly knowledgeable concerned citizen. It appears to me and other concerned citizens that they (the powers that be) has [sic] already made their decisions and recommendations and all these public meetings are for the concerned citizens

to vent their frustrations, when everything has already been done and completed. They are going to move forward on what they have already agreed upon. These meetings are just pretend, as if their voices are still being heard, when in reality everything has already been done and completed.

This is the most unjust project to hit S.A. in years it is not going to be easy on the contrary [sic]

There are Adult Education Centers that are being closed down when developing happens that strip us of our development. In order to start a new business we need to educate ourselves, as you do, we need to learn new technologies, as you do. I believe that it is important to develop a city from the inside out! In practicality, a gentleman can create a business for himself and provide for his family when there is support from the city to do so. This creates a developing economy inside out. This creates common unity within our marginalized community.

(Referring to Task Force recommendations) I understand that the Task Force didn't write them! –especially that the Task Force didn't even write the recommendations!!

Police officers in presence, alienating people of color, hardly helping the community feel welcome & valued

There are many renters on the North side as well as other parts of the city

Three uniformed policemen at the meeting was viewed as excessive and unnecessary

The Task Force exists to protect people who do not have a voice and cannot be here today

Look at Salt Lake City as an example --they have eliminated homelessness

Long term renters have given stability to downtown

Issue of health concerns? Most use one of the best hospital systems known: UTHS world known doctors.

Yes this is such an important topic. The Task Force & guests had a lot of good ideas to share.

Position Statement from the West End Hope in Action Organization Regarding Preserving Dynamic and Diverse Neighborhoods presented to the Public Meeting March 18, 2015.

The history and people of West End Community of San Antonio are testaments to survival and strength in San Antonio. The roots of the community go back even before the establishment of the city itself and are as widely diverse as any person could imagine. Much of that history is becoming lost in the growth of our city. We, the current residents are proud of our neighborhood and have pulled together in order to make it a safer, more prosperous place to live and raise our families. We are interested in improving conditions in the neighborhood but not at the cost of displacement or the suffering of our neighbors. We wish to be neighbors helping our neighbors to realize a better life.

Traducción: Declaración de la posición de la organización West End Hope in Action

En cuanto a preservación de vecindarios diversas y dinámicas presentado a la reunión pública el 18 de marzo de 2015.

La historia y la gente de la comunidad de West End de San Antonio son testamentos a la supervivencia y la fuerza en San Antonio. Las raíces de la comunidad vuelven incluso antes del establecimiento de la propia ciudad y son tan ampliamente diversas como cualquier persona podría imaginar. Gran parte de esa historia se está perdiendo en el crecimiento de nuestra ciudad. Nosotros, los residentes actuales estamos orgullosos de nuestro barrio y nos hemos unido a fin de que sea un ambiente más seguro y más próspero para vivir aquí y criar a nuestras familias. Nos interesa mejorar las condiciones en el barrio pero no al costo del desplazamiento o el sufrimiento de nuestros vecinos. Queremos ser vecinos que ayudan a nuestros vecinos para lograr una vida mejor.

Additional Policies and Support from the City in the following areas also need to be addressed if we are to bring about the goals and indicators listed:

- Strong social networks that bring neighbors together-whether to advocate for change, or provide support for neighbors- can strengthen community ties and build leadership. **Traducción:** Fuertes redes sociales que reúne a los vecinos, ya sea para promover cambios, o brindar apoyo a los vecinos- esto puede fortalecer los lazos con la comunidad y construir liderazgo.
- Develop a Comprehensive Healthy Development Monitoring Tool to be utilized by stakeholders, neighborhoods, developers, and City Departments. **Traducción:** Desarrollar una herramienta comprensiva y sana de monitoreo para ser utilizado por los interesados, en los barrios, los desarrolladores y departamentos municipales

We wish to thank the members of the Mayor's Task Force for their continued concern and determined efforts under pressure to produce a viable product under changing leadership and tight time frames. Their efforts have been admirable. Special thanks to Maria Berriozábal and Susan Sheeran for assisting us and keeping us up to speed on the process. **Traducción:** Queremos dar las gracias a los miembros del Grupo de Trabajo del Alcalde por su constante preocupación y esfuerzos decididos bajo presión para producir un producto viable durante un tiempo de cambios en el liderazgo y plazos muy estrechos. Sus esfuerzos han sido admirables. Gracias en especial a María Berriozábal y Susan Sheeran por ayudarnos y por asistirnos y mantenernos informados al tanto de las novedades sobre este proceso.

(Graciela Sanchez and Antonia Castaneda ceded their time to Amy Kastely)

The result of term limits is that council people will not be in their positions very long and that city staff will then make the decisions.

Referring to April 1 meeting at South San High School:

Yesterday, at the Town Hall at South San High School, many comments were made that those of us who spoke at this particular meeting "elevated the discourse," were "clear and concise," and

“got to the point.” In a respectful and appreciative tone, you thanked Amy Kastely and me by name. With each of these comments, I nodded and said thank you, but each time I thought my stomach would fall to the floor. To be honest, your attitudes were very blatant. Did anyone notice that Amy and I are both white, college-educated women? Did anyone notice that the majority of residents affected by displacement and gentrification are poor and working class people of color? Yes, everyone noticed.

These attitudes are the crux of the issues you are called to address, and they should be called out for what they are. Quite simply, this is racism. I will remind you that racism is not so much something that we intend, but something that we inherit – all of us – as a society. It is insidious and pervasive. It is a set of attitudes and assumptions that inform our opinions and actions, sometimes in subtle, unconscious ways. The only defense against it is self-examination, and from what I have seen at these four meetings, we need to go much deeper with our self-examination, and hold one another and ourselves much more accountable. It is also a matter of systems and institutions, like the policies that you have been tasked with examining. If we cannot question policies and practices that we think of as “the way things are” or “the way things have to be,” then we cannot challenge racism. Though surely unintentional, your comments made it quite clear that you prefer the voices of white, college educated people over the voices of the residents who attended the previous three meetings to tell you how these issues **DIRECTLY IMPACT THEIR LIVES**. Those of you who made these comments must call your attitudes into question. You didn’t mean to be hurtful, but you were. Additionally, many people of color have brought up the same issues, again and again, without this level of respect and acknowledgement. Those who have spoken in ways you found pleasing were told, “You’re so articulate!,” which I’m sure you can see is quite patronizing! No matter the situation, it is always rude to respond with surprise to another person’s intelligence.

This particular meeting at South San High School, due to poor community outreach, was the **ONLY** meeting NOT attended en masse by residents from neighborhoods affected by gentrification and displacement. As we’ve seen on the maps, these are neighborhoods of high poverty, comprised mostly of black and brown residents. We are really elevating the discourse!” you exclaimed. “A breath of fresh air!”

There is more to “access” and “inclusion” than translation between Spanish and English. You also need respect. You need to listen. And you must respond, with your work and not just your words, to the actual issues that community residents have raised. You cannot serve a community that you are inconvenienced to hear.

Your gratefulness last night implied a gross lack of respect for the voices of those “OTHER” people... the ones you have deemed too angry, emotional, uneducated, ignorant, or inarticulate. The ones who are too brown, too black, too poor to matter.

I stand by my statements from yesterday, that the problem is a local and a global one, a problem of empire, colonialism and profit, couched in the discourse of development, investment and growth. I would like to add one more big word to my “analysis,” though, and that word is **RACISM**.

There's no need to thank me... plenty of people have said it before. But it is something I couldn't live without saying. You are tasked with representing ALL OF US. You cannot pick and choose the voices that "matter."

Thank you for reading. Amanda Haas, (210)667-5695

General Questions

Why didn't the task force report evaluate the impact of City policies on parks and other open space on gentrification and changing neighborhoods?

The Task Force Charge includes consideration of how to "minimize or prevent ... *adverse impacts related to history, culture, and quality of life of unique neighborhoods.*" Why doesn't the Report even mention this part of the Task Force Charge?

Current neighborhood master plans were created with significant community input, yet in recent years, we have seen those master plans disregarded by Council Members, City Staff and developers courting support from a small group of neighborhood association officers. This raises two questions:

- a. Did the Task Force review the City's policies regarding neighborhood associations, particularly the policies regarding recognition of neighborhood associations and evaluation of their internal procedures?
- b. Did the Task Force review the City's policies regarding the influence of lobbyists on City Council decisions?

The Report's First Long-Term Recommendation, on page 12, is to develop a [sic] "Inclusionary Housing Policy for City-Incented Residential Development" which would provide City funding to subsidize inner city construction of residential units, the vast majority of which would go to middle or upper income families. So this would directly subsidize gentrification. How does the Task Force justify this?

Five members of the commission have said that this report was not their work product? So who did write this report and how was the Task Force involved in the drafting of this report?

Is the document the work of the Task Force or the staff? (the speaker implied to audience it is the staff's work)

The city needs to enact rent stabilization/rent control to protect tenants, especially seniors, fixed income and disabled tenants. I realize that Texas law overrides this, but with some creative thinking, we should be able to push back against greedy apartment owners. Can zoning laws be used? Can incentives and tax rebates be used to twist their arms? Can Texas laws be changed (Diego Bernal should be on the case.) We need to think of the rights of tenants as civil rights and come up with some good ideas. San Antonio is growing fast and we need to protect owners and tenants.

Translation

There should not be a separate meeting for Spanish speakers-we all live in the same community. The city needs to provide adequate Spanish/English interpretation at all public meetings. If the city receives federal funds, in fact, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires it.

Very confusing. And the city needs to invest in translation equipment for 200 folks and pay translators to do simultaneous translation so we don't have to waste time in translation after each person speaks. It's 2015 and SA should be fully prepared for its Spanish speaking population.

Simultaneous translation please.

Como no hubo buena traducción, no mucho. La traducción debe de ser perfecta, por favor. Porque se manejan muchos tecnicismos que al traducir los no lo hagan correctamente la traducción y nosotros no los entendemos bien. Y para entender bien, que sea alguien que habla muy bien las 2 lenguas.

Translation: Since there wasn't good translation, (the meeting did not help) much. The translation should be perfect, please. Because many technical terms are used and when the translation is not done correctly, we don't understand well. And to understand well, it should be somebody who speaks the two languages very well.

Simultaneous translation was the expectation for the meeting

Need translation equipment, issues with Spanish translation

A meeting with power point and written materials in both English & Spanish, simultaneous interpretation

Yes but we will need English translation for those of us who do not speak Spanish

Yes-simultaneous translation

Yes-and please make it clear to these people that we (Task Force) discussed this (translation + Spanish) in a previous meeting and we were told there would be translation and all literature in Spanish

Yes we need a Spanish language meeting, preferably in the Southside, and it needs to have information translated into English. Retain a professional translator who will translate exactly what is being said. And it should just be for input.

Draft report in Spanish, not very accessible for everyone

Community gardens should be in consideration for the recommendations. There should be an option to request simultaneous Spanish translation

The DRAFT report needs to be accessible and available in Spanish

Everything -- oral translations, draft documents, online information and comments should be completely bilingual

Release the Draft report in Spanish and make the language of the report in English and Spanish more accessible for the public.

Translation much improved.

Without translation (in the Westside)

Councilman Saldaña's opening remarks were not translated--the equipment did not work.

Meeting Format

Would like to see more town halls, especially those that allow people to interact with recommendations Task Force. Also if Mayor and council people do not come they HAVE TO SEND reps. are obligated to speak on behalf of Mayor or council person- I mean you Mayor Taylor and Rebecca Viagran [sic]

Que se presente la mayor. A escuchar nos.

Translation: The mayor should attend to listen to us.

The Mayor should be at the public meetings, the community wants to see her engaged with the citizens.

Residents of Westside need to speak first [sic]

Have all speakers to identify who they are with and what their interest are [sic]

Written question to be submitted are insult. [sic]

Consider using the "platica" format. Platica -conversation is a traditional format for meeting in a community.

Very confusing. The community needs to speak first. City staff has controlled the entire process and the written plan. City needs to hold day long community meetings on this issue as it is attempting to do for developers during their housing summit.

Please don't cut off peoples mic [sic]; it's really rude and doesn't help your standing in the community

Why are speakers only allowed 3 minutes to speak as such topics that require more in depth discussions.

We should not limit people on the microphone when asked to speak to the panel.

The panel should have addressed specific questions. I understand time was an issue tonight (Tafolla) but there still should have been time set aside for at least some of the Task Force members to speak as their own person in addition to being on the Task Force.

Elevators, restroom signs, table, prepackaged materials--be familiar with the layout of the building

Meeting was informative to the present public. I believe the presence of officers was unnecessary [sic]. Also, some of the the [sic] present task force members lacked their listening skills and there

was not enough time for public to voice their thoughts. Three minutes is not enough and that is not helping community voice themselves as the meeting was for that purpose. LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND!!

Overly rigid time restrictions on speaking

Information Online

Comments

Put the People's Platform (A "Development Without Displacement" Policy Platform for The City of San Antonio) on the website and acknowledge the platform in the minutes.

Put the pre-submitted questions and the answers on the questions on the website in English and Spanish

We need an avenue to address concerns of this city online (open avenue)

Forum through internet/email

There is not enough opportunity to comment--citizens want an opportunity to comment online.

The DRAFT report is not easy to find online--make it more obvious.

The Esperanza and TOPS questions and answers and the Right to the City document needs to be posted on the website

Information Online

Questions

Is there a forum for commentary online?