

MEETING SUMMARY

Texas A&M San Antonio Regional Center Planning Team Meeting #2

Meeting Date: February 19, 2019

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Texas A&M San Antonio Campus, Building #108

Attendees:

Jeremy Doege, Big Red Dog

Todd Mocabee, Texas A&M-SA

Bill Spindle, Texas A&M-SA

Tim Mulry, VIA

Thomas Roth, SAHA

Mario Gutierrez, NHSD

Thad Rutherford, Southstar Communities

Chris Villa, District 3

Adrian Perez, EDD

Andy Rutz, MIG

Krystin Ramirez, MIG

Meeting Objectives:

The purpose of Planning Team Meeting #2 discuss the plan area’s assets, challenges, opportunities and draft a vision that will assist in developing goals further in the planning process for the plan area.

Meeting Format

The Texas A&M San Antonio Regional Center Project Manager, Carlos Guerra presented an update on the planning process, and briefly described the existing conditions atlas document. The group was provided copies of the existing conditions atlas and encouraged to provide comments, corrections or edits to the project manager so the document could be updated. The document also contained several maps that described the existing conditions for the area. The maps were used as reference during the discussion. Andy Rutz and Krystin Ramirez of MIG then presented the existing conditions detailed in the atlas, to the group. The discussion was followed by a brief presentation, by the project manager, on the survey and input exercise results from the previous All Residents meeting. The last hour of the meeting was dedicated to a discussion on the area’s assets, challenges, opportunities and vision for the future of the plan area.

Existing Conditions

The Texas A&M San Antonio Plan area has a limited mix of land uses. Nearly half of the area is agricultural use; and there are large industrial uses such as the Toyota Manufacturing plan. The area features vacant and underutilized land, and there are limited commercial and residential uses. The rural nature of the area lends itself to limited transportation and auto-oriented mobility options. The area also features essential natural systems, such as the Medina River Watershed, and the Leon Creek watershed. Parks and public opens spaces are limited and are oriented to the Leon Creek and Medina River systems.

Initial Survey and Community Input Results

A brief survey titled “Vision and Goals Questionnaire-Texas A&M” was made available on-line on January 21. Along with mailed post card invitations to the first open-house on January 30th, participants were encouraged to fill out the survey. During the open-house, attendees were encouraged to provide input to questions similar to the survey questions.

1 Texas A&M-SA Planning Team Meeting #2 Summary

The survey asked a series of questions: *What do you like most about the area?* Many residents appreciated the rural nature, the quietness and the natural open spaces. *What is missing from the area?* Access to grocery stores, entertainment options, retail uses, healthy food options, stable and reliable internet access, assisted living for seniors and off campus housing are among the majority of responses. *What about the community would you like to see different?* Additional growth for retail and residential uses, while maintaining existing and green open spaces, access to transportation and VIA. *What is your vision or "big ideas" for the area?* Additional tech and healthcare uses to develop a tech hub. More activities for entertainment, retail, recreation and housing options were among the majority of responses. Additional comments included requests to maintain and preserve the rural nature and open spaces in the area.

The team generally agreed with the summary of the survey results. Team members offered assistance in getting the survey out to their organizations. The project manager will follow up with the team members and provide the link to the survey. The survey will close on February 28, 2019.

Assets, Challenges, Opportunities, and Vision

The last hour of the meeting was dedicated to a group discussion on the areas assets, challenges, opportunities and vision. Planning Team members were asked to think and provide commentary on the following questions: *What are the assets of the area that we need to protect and leverage? What are the challenges in the area? What are the opportunities for change/improvements? And What would you like the A&M-SA plan area to be like 20 years from now?* Andy Rutz, of MIG, wrote down the ideas on a wall graphic in the room. A photo of the wall graphic is provided at the end of this summary.

The team identified Texas A&M - San Antonio, and its projected campus growth, as well as Toyota as being major assets to the area; also, the "south side culture" that attracts residents to the area. Adequate utilities are available to the area. Although just outside the plan boundary, Mitchell Lake and the Mission Del Lago Golf course were identified as unique assets that contribute to the area. The creek and watershed (Leon Creek and Medina River) are assets that attract people. The members also identified a proposed clinic near the A&M-SA campus. The team also noted that the area is not built out and does not have an aging product, or negative stigma of the area.

The team identified challenges to the plan area. The lack of available and developable land, the history of property ownership-some properties have been owned by the same family for generations so owners may be less likely to make the property available for development. The area near Toyota is undevelopable and discourages development near the facility. The road infrastructure is behind but there are opportunities for walkable elements within the rural system. The cost of recycled water line is high. Understanding opportunity zones was another identified challenge, as well as the lack of proximate housing for faculty (A&M-SA) and the area work force. The team also identified the areas school district reputation; although the district is improving, the negative stigma discourages families from moving to the area. Transportation also poses a challenge, as the railroad serves as a physical barrier and the lack of population density does not justify investing in VIA bus lines and stops at this time.

After discussing the challenges and assets to the area, the group began brainstorming on the opportunities. Several of the "challenges" identified earlier were posed as opportunities for improvement in the future. For example, although there is limited understanding of opportunity zones,



1 Texas A&M-SA Planning Team Meeting #2 Summary

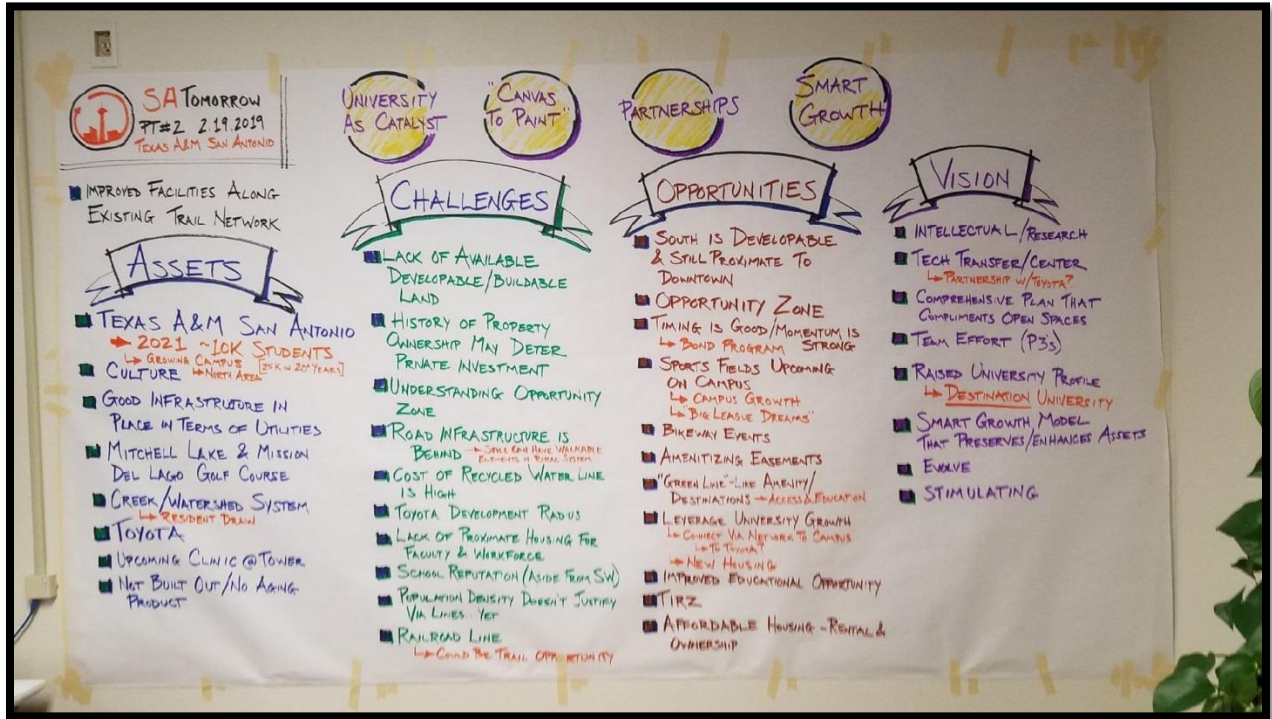
the designation provides incentives to developers that chose to utilize the program. The areas proximity to downtown is an opportunity to attract more residents to the area. A team member suggested recreational opportunities such as bikeway events and recreational leagues could support venue that works in conjunction with the university to act as a regional draw to the area. The team was also positive that the bond program and other initiatives in the city provided positive momentum to encourage more development. The team also saw opportunity to utilize undevelopable easements as additional trails, and continuing to promote “green line” amenities such as the existing greenway. The university’s growth was also a major opportunity as it could facilitate better connections to the VIA network and campus, new housing, affordable housing rental and ownership, as well as improved educational opportunities. The team also identified the existing Verano-Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ), the TIRZ was designed to stimulate development and provide incentives to developing the area.

After the discussion on the areas opportunities, team members were asked what their vision for the Texas A&M San Antonio area are for the next 20, 30 or even 50 years. The team generally agreed that the area could support technical and research industries, through P3 partnerships as well as the university acting as a catalyst to spur intellectual and technical transfer. The area could support “smart growth” by absorbing growth while maintaining the natural and rural features in the area and set an example for an urban setting that preserves and enhances natural assets. In the future, the university will be a destination university that embraces the local culture and provides high quality education.

Overall, the discussion was very productive and the team portrayed the area as a “canvas to paint” an example of smart growth through partnerships and utilizing the Texas A&M San Antonio University as a catalyst to encourage quality development to the area. A photo of the final wall graphic is provided on the next page.



1 Texas A&M-SA Planning Team Meeting #2 Summary



NEXT STEPS:

Planning Team Meeting #3 Week of April 8th, 2019

Planning Team Meeting #4: Week of May 6th, 2019

Meeting summaries and presentations will be available on the sub area plan website:

<https://texasam.sacomplan.com/>

If you have any questions about the Texas A&M San Antonio Regional Center Plan, please contact Project Manager: Carlos Guerra II, City of San Antonio Planning Department.

Email: Carlos.Guerra2@sanantonio.gov

Phone: (210) 207-5425

