

MEETING SUMMARY

Texas A&M San Antonio Regional Center Planning Team Meeting #9: Amenities and Public Spaces

Meeting Date: November 6, 2019

Time: 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM

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

Attendees:

Brandon Herman, SARA

Todd Mocabee, Texas A&M-SA

Chris Villa, District 3

Raul Olveda, District 4

Irma Duran, NHSD

Trevor Liddle, Texas A&M-SA

Tim Mulry, VIA

Sara Beesley, Mitchell Lake Audubon Center

Michael Taylor, Habitat for SA

Krystin Ramirez, MIG

Meeting Objectives:

The purpose of Planning Team Meeting #9 was to discuss amenities and public spaces, followed by a group discussion and mapping activity to identify possible amenities and trail connections within the plan area, and identify appropriate place types in the Focus Areas.

Meeting Format

The meeting began with staff introductions and an update on the plan’s process and schedule. Consultant staff presented background information on complete communities, amenities, then a group discussion and mapping exercise on the Focus Areas.

Complete Communities- Amenities and Public Space

Jay Renkens of MIG presented Complete Communities, to the team, as a guiding principle for the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. Community Health and Wellness, Natural Resources, and Public Facilities & Community Safety are 3 of the 9 SA Tomorrow Plan elements focused within the Amenities and Public Space section of the plan. The plan elements help guide city wide goals, policies and strategies for implementation.

What is an Amenity?

Amenities are public features that enhance the quality of life of residents. Amenities enhance the comfort, enjoyment, or convenience of a public place for gathering in or spending time with other community members. Amenities and Public Spaces could include: Parks/Plazas, Trails/Trailheads, Social Gathering and Community Event Spaces such as community centers, schools, colleges, libraries, community gardens, and main streets. Amenities could also include Public Art. The team was also encouraged to consider amenities as not always being a physical place, such as high-speed internet access, or food access.

Place Types Discussion

The planning team participants were presented a boundary map of the Texas A&M-San Antonio Area Regional Center. The team was briefed on the Focus Areas, and was asked to apply the SA Tomorrow

Texas A&M-SA Planning Team Meeting #9 Summary

Place types, ma specific urban design, amenities and public space elements within each focus area. The annotations on the Focus Areas will be incorporated into the Focus Area narrative. The Place Types the team was asked to consider were: Trails, Parks and Open Spaces which include, trail-oriented development, community/regional park, natural historic cultural asset, and green neighborhoods; Adaptive Re-Use Place Types such as industrial site reuse; and Multimodal, Mixed-Use Place Types which include Regional/Commuter rails, high capacity transit corridors, institutional and campus mixed uses, community corridors, and neighborhood main streets. Participants were asked to apply Urban Design, Amenities & Public Space elements for each Focus Area to consider priority connections, improved streetscapes, priority street frontage, mobility hubs, existing plazas, proposed plazas, proposed parks and open spaces, public art, signage and wayfinding and improved lighting.

The team discussed community hubs could be a public service partnership, such as a fire station/library/park. These types of community hubs could make the community more engaged and familiar with public safety departments.

The team also brought up dark skies as serving as an amenity for the area. Given the rural character of most of the area, consideration for dark skies and appropriate lighting could create a distinct area amenity for stargazers, astronomers, and A&M-SA student clubs or organizations.

Focus Areas Exercise:

Focus Area #1: University and Jaguar Parkway is the intersection of Jaguar Parkway and University Way, including the vacant property north of campus. The most recent plan, Vida! San Antonio identifies the area as supporting a mix of housing options north of campus and a mixed-use town center immediately north of campus.

Results: Amenities could include: walkable blocks, a town center, and a greenway trail on both ends of university way. Buildings and landscaping should face University Way to provide a distinct gateway into campus. The Vida! San Antonio Plan incorporates town homes and mixed uses within the focus area.

Focus Area #2: Jaguar Parkway East is located on the east end of Jaguar Parkway. VIA's Metropolitan Transit's Vision 2040 Long Range Plan identifies a final stop on the planned Zarzamora Corridor that will connect the Texas A&M-SA Area to South Park Mall, numerous Southside and Westside communities, and other planned rapid transit routes serving employment centers such as Downtown and the Medical Center. Future projects could provide a safe and comfortable gathering place for transit riders, however; extending Jaguar Parkway to the west could be a challenge due to the adjacent rail road and floodplain.

Results: The focus area is undeveloped and has a floodplain on the east side. The Future Land Use designation for the area is Urban Low Density and Urban Mixed Use. The team discussed trail oriented development and a linear park around the floodplain. Consideration should include, bike repair facilities, drinking fountains, and pet waste clean-up stations, and public art. The area is also close to the El Camino Real Trail, which was a thoroughfare from the 18-th century Spanish colonial area in what was Spanish Texas. Future public art should consider this unique heritage and incorporate appropriate elements to honor its history. Future development could use Pleasanton Road as an access and should consider the lack of food and health clinic access in the area.

Focus Area #3: Pleasanton Road and Medina River Greenway is generally located where Pleasanton Road intersects the Medina River Greenway Trail near the southern end of Mitchell Lake. The nearby



Texas A&M-SA Planning Team Meeting #9 Summary

area is mostly underdeveloped and lacks amenities that might serve the users of the natural area. The boundary has a small parking lot to the east, outside the plan boundary, and signage to identify the trail. In the future, the area could support trail-oriented development for the future.

Results: The area is mostly rural and underdeveloped. The planning team encouraged enhancing the natural amenities and improving access to the area. The area has a pedestrian bridge on the area that, in the future, could be used to support birdwatching or providing a viewpoint along the Medina River Trail. SAWs has recently purchased property to the east (outside the plan boundary) to build wetlands to improve the area's water quality. The wetlands could create an attractive avian habitat, which could also provide an amenity for bird watchers and nature enthusiasts. The focus area could be an attractive trailhead and have different modes of access for equestrian, kayaking, cyclists, and pedestrians. Future developments should encourage the above recreational activities as well as the sensitive natural areas in the area.

The full meeting presentation is available in the document library of the sub area website:

<https://texasam.sacompplan.com/documents/>

NEXT STEPS: Planning staff will analyze the discussion and exercise results as well as provide updates to the planning team.

Planning Team Meeting #10: Mobility Pt. 2

Tuesday, December 10, 2019; 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Texas A&M SA Campus, Building 108B; 1 University Way, San Antonio Tx, 78204

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

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

If you have any questions about the Texas A&M San Antonio Regional Center Plan, please contact:

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