



## Community Action Network Community Council 06/21/10 Meeting Minutes

**Attendees:** Sylvia Blanco, Michelle Casanova, Terry Cowan, Rebecca Cobos, Nancy Gilliam, Kirsha Haverlah, Anne H. Harutunian, Linda Kokemor, Gloria Mejia, Stefan Molina, Jim Reed, Marquis Williams, Amy Wong Mok

**CAN Staff:** Chantel Bottoms, Mary Dodd, Cristell Laurel, and Vanessa Sarria

**Unable to Attend:** Kevin Coleman, James Cornish, Jason Earle, Shawn Lemieux, Penny Lichenstein, Mary Moran, Lesley Ramsey, Esther Reyes, Ruby Roa, Clint Smith, Kelsey Stutzman, Helen Watkins, Willie Williams

**Call to Order, Introductions, and Announcements:** Marquis Williams, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

**Citizen's Communication:** None.

**Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2010:** Minutes were reviewed and approved as presented.

**Election of Class of 2013 Nominating Committee:** Marquis Williams asked if any Community Council members were interested in serving on a Membership Nominating Committee to review and recommend applicants for the election to the class of 2013. Nancy Gilliam, Sylvia Blanco, and Kirsha Haverlah expressed interest in serving on the nominating committee. According to the by-laws, the Membership Nominating Committee is comprised of the chair-elect, the past chair, and up to three additional members appointed by the chair. The members present approved the Membership Nominating Committee of Jim Reed, Terry Cowan, Nancy Gilliam, Sylvia Blanco, and Kirsha Haverlah.

**Report on CAN Board Meeting:** Vanessa Sarria stated that the Community Council will present to the CAN Board on their indicator forums quarterly and that the Board will consider taking action annually. Jim Reed proposed several actions to improve communications between the Community Council and other CAN bodies: 1) For CAN staff recommendations to the Board pertaining to the Community Council, the Community Council will be briefed prior to the Board meeting, 2) For CAN Board agenda items pertaining to the Community Council, the agenda item will be sent to the Community Council membership prior to the Board meeting, and 3) The Community Council recognizes the three CC Chair positions (Past Chair, Chair, Vice Chair) as the executive committee of the Community Council, and this committee may consult with staff when more immediate correspondence is needed. The motion was passed by the Community Council.

**Follow-up on last Quarter's recommendations from the Community Council to the CAN Board of Directors:** Jim Reed reported that the CAN Board dedicated much of its May 14th meeting to learn what CAN partners are currently doing to support the Community Council's recommendations made to the Board in April. CAN action can either be: 1) individual partner action or action by a sub-group of partners, 2) a Board resolution in support of a policy or initiative, or 3) Board adoption of an initiative as part of the CAN work plan (thereby committing substantial staff and other resources to its formulation and implementation). Community Council recommendation number one was:

*Find or create a dropout study with an emphasis on barriers to continuing school or reasons for dropping out. Consideration should be given to whether any of the following supports would assist: 1) offering a trade track in secondary education, 2) providing conferences that showcase resources in the community, 3) offering a work and school alternative, 4) reentry services for juvenile detainees, and 5) single mother resources.*

After this recommendation was made, several of the CAN partners began meeting to discuss how they better work to address this problem. The second community council recommendation resulted in the CAN Board passing the following motion:

*CAN Board Members are charged with considering what their organization can do over the next year to provide one of the following supports and to bring information about what they are currently doing to provide one of the following supports: 1) offering a trade track in secondary education, 2) providing conferences that showcase resources in the community, 3) offering a work and school alternative, 4) reentry services for juvenile detainees, and 5) single parent resources (child care and early childhood development).*

The CAN Community Resources 101 initiative will serve, in part, as a response to this recommendation. Jim Reed noted that last quarter was the Community Council's first run at the indicator forums and recommendation process. The group should consider how they can make the best use of the Board's valuable time moving forward. Terry Cowan noted that the CAN Board has demonstrated that they are working together and taking the Community Council's recommendations seriously. He stated that the discussions that the Board has between now and the retreat will help shape CAN's workplan for next year. Vanessa Sarria stated that by the retreat we will have had monthly presentations to the Community Council on the dashboard indicators and quarterly reports to the Board. CAN stakeholders can examine the results of the forums cumulatively to consider cross-cutting issues and to think about what actions could potentially have the biggest impact. Rebecca Cobos stated that she continues to be confused about the whole process and how the Community Council can best act moving forward.

**Proposal for next year's forums:** Not discussed.

**Goals for today's meeting:**

- Prioritization of key recommendations to bend the curve on the indicators
- Recommendations for CAN collaborative action

**Second quarter forum highlights and stakeholder recommendations:**

- **Housing "cost burdened":** Thirty-seven percent or 143,542 households in Travis County pay 30% or more of their income on housing. Seventeen percent or 64,704 households in Travis County pay 50% or more of their income on housing. The City of Austin Housing Market Study found that there is a need for an additional 37,600 units affordable to the 45,000 households in Austin that earn less than \$20,000 a year. A joint study by HousingWorks, the Austin Area Research Organization, the Urban Land Institute, and the Real Estate Council of Austin found that economic segregation creates housing pockets of poverty and negatively impacts schools, public safety, and employment. The [City of Austin Department of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development \(NHCD\)](#) is one stakeholder working to improve this indicator. Their 2009-2010 fiscal year plan included \$51 million for homeless and housing services. Most (\$32 million) went to Housing Developer Assistance and the majority of programs assisted households at or below 80% of the median family income. To read NHCD's Comprehensive Housing Market Study and learn about their recommendations to improve this indicator, visit <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/housing/apr08chms.htm>. [HousingWorks](#), another stakeholder working to move the needle on this indicator, advocates for all kinds of housing in all parts of town. To read HousingWorks joint study and their recommendations to improve this indicator, visit [http://www.housingworksaustin.org/docs/BRAA\\_Final\\_Report\\_0610.pdf](http://www.housingworksaustin.org/docs/BRAA_Final_Report_0610.pdf).
- **Homelessness:** The proposed homeless dashboard indicator is currently under review. In 2008, more than 6,000 clients received HUD funded homeless services in Travis County. The [Ending Community Homelessness Coalition \(ECHO\)](#) reported a need for 1,889 additional permanent supportive housing units and more services for people who are homeless or at risk for being homeless. ECHO is one community stakeholder working to improve this indicator. ECHO recently released a Plan to End Community Homelessness. To read ECHO's plan and their recommendations for improving homeless indicators in our community, visit <http://www.caction.org/homeless/10YearPlan.htm>.
- **Vehicle miles traveled per capita:** In 2008, people drove approximately 25 vehicle miles per capita in Travis County. Lowering vehicle miles traveled per capita could indicate positive community changes such as mixed-use developments, greater use of alternative modes of transportation, or

freight being shipped by rail instead of truck. However, lower vehicle miles traveled per capita could also indicate fewer people working and a slowing economy. [Capital Metro](#) is one organization working to move this indicator by providing options to private vehicle travel. The [Regional Transit Coordination Committee](#), an issue area group of CAN, works to improve this indicator by promoting full mobility and access to community services for all people. The [Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (CAMPO) is also working to improve this indicator through their new 2035 plan that will fund transportation centers in a way that supports high density “activity centers” connected by public transit. Read more about this indicator and recommendations to improve this indicator by visiting [http://www.caction.org/councils/Community\\_Council/Presentations/May2010\\_RTCC.pdf](http://www.caction.org/councils/Community_Council/Presentations/May2010_RTCC.pdf).

- **Air quality:** The Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is in attainment of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ozone standards for 2009, but the EPA is setting new standards for 2010 and our community is expected to be in non-attainment. Austin’s ozone levels have been steadily decreasing just as EPA standards have required lower and lower levels. Ozone causes such problems as irritation to throat and lungs, diminished lung capacity, aggravation of asthma or other respiratory problems, increased health care costs and school absences, and damage to sensitive vegetation and trees. Ozone is caused by a chemical reaction between natural and man-made emissions. Common sources of ozone-causing gasses are: motor vehicles, industrial processes, electric power plants, construction equipment, lawn and garden equipment, and fueling facilities. During August to September, the high ozone months, up to 80% of the ozone in our area is from outside sources. A nonattainment designation has significant, and long lasting implications for the region’s transportation planning, economic development and quality of life. However, the increased cost of meeting EPA standards is expected to be off-set by reduced health care expenses. One stakeholder working to improve this indicator is the [Clean Air Coalition](#). This collaboration of local governments in our five county metropolitan statistical area works to develop plans to comply with the [Eight Hour Ozone Flex Plan](#). [Commute Solutions](#), a program of CAMPO, educates public and employers on benefits and options for alternative transportation. The [Austin Climate Protection Program](#) has the goal of making Austin #1 in leading the fight against climate change.

#### Discussion:

- What are the key themes or commonalities in the stakeholders’ recommendations?
- Which recommendations do you think are most critical to bending the curve on these indicators?
- What cross-jurisdictional solutions would benefit the most from CAN collaborative action?

Jim Reed started the discussion noting a key theme that it is important to insure that there are all kinds of homes in all parts of town. This issue impacts housing, transportation, and air quality. It also reduces economic segregation. Our community could consider how to encourage housing density with a relaxation of zoning restrictions that allow types of housing such as attached homes, dual residency, garage apartments, etc. Kirsha Haverlah pointed out that this issue is also about the financing of mixed-use developments. Mr. Reed suggested that perhaps the language should focus on both mixed-use and multi-family developments. Ms. Haverlah stated that the issue of financing mixed-use developments may be one that has to be tackled by breaking down legislative barriers. Michelle Casanova pointed out that multi-family housing is not always an ideal goal as it impacts victims in our community. Victims cannot get restraining orders against people who are living on the same lot. Vanessa Sarria suggested that perhaps our community should do an examination of housing finance models. Sylvia Blanco stated that the Housing Authority of the City of Austin (HACA) is researching the feasibility of a community land trust which would make it more affordable for people to purchase a home, but not necessarily purchase land. Linda Kokemor stated that another key issue that arose from presentations on the dashboard indicators was preventing homelessness. She stated that it would be helpful to see a cost-analysis on providing emergency assistance to the homeless vs. working to re-house the homeless. Anne Harutunian stated that it might be more strategic for the Community Council to craft any new recommendations that they make to the Board in such a way that they tie into any recommendations that they have already brought forward. Marquis Williams noted that one way new recommendations could be tied to previous recommendations is to examine the issue of housing cost burdens and how it increases family mobility which in turn increases the odds of students dropping out of school and can cause homelessness. Housing cost burdens can also impact the amount of vehicle miles traveled by families. He questioned whether there are any studies in existence that tie these issues together. Mary Dodd stated that HousingWorks has held multiple summits on the connection between housing and education and the City,

Travis County AISD Task Force efforts to decrease student mobility were created partly due to these efforts. on these issues a couple of years ago and has since been working on reducing student mobility. She re-emphasized that to solve this issue HousingWorks recommends that there be all kinds of housing in all parts of town along with mixed-use developments. Vanessa Sarria said the concept of providing a mix of housing affordable to multiple incomes along with connections to transit, services and jobs is referred to as a "complete community" concept. Terry Cowan noted that there are many organizations in our community that are working diligently to resolve housing issues, but their planning processes are not coordinated. He asked, "What are the barriers preventing the housing agencies from working together and how can we overcome these barriers?" Sylvia Blanco noted that there are frustrations in the housing planning process such as provisions that allow developers to contribute dollars for projects rather than incorporate affordable housing into their own projects. She suggested that our community apply for "Close Neighborhoods" to revitalize areas. Stefan Molina questioned whether our community needs to set tangible goals related to housing issues or if such goals have already been created. He stated that it seems that there should be some architectural guidance to improve mixed-use and multi-family developments so that they are more desirable and attractive options. He suggested that architects be engaged to design a "complete community" to demonstrate its attractiveness to the community. Sylvia Blanco suggested that this is an area where "Close Neighborhoods" would be a good fit. Vanessa Sarria stated that HousingWorks had a competition such as the one Stefan suggested, and that perhaps the results of the competition could be built upon. Kirsha Haverlah stated that there is also research related to "complete communities" that has already been done by community stakeholders such as Sid Galindo. Jim Reed stated that the CAMPO's concept of development centers fits into a complete community concept. He noted that since transportation entities are already planning around centers, then that could be used to push the concept of "complete communities." He noted that a lot of our community's ozone emissions come from non-road vehicles and questioned whether this is something we could crack down on in our community by either charges or by providing incentives to purchase environmentally friendly non-road mobiles. Terry Cowan stated that he supports Jim Reed's recommendation to reduce non-road mobile emissions. He stated that such an initiative has worked in the City of Sunset Valley. Anne Harutunian reiterated that it might be wise to tie the issues of housing and transportation to recommendations that have already been posed to the board such as providing single parent resources. Amy Wong Mok questioned whether governmental entities and businesses could provide housing for their own employees. Michelle Casanova said law enforcement officers may not want to live in communities where they were arresting people or teachers may not want to live too close to their students. She suggested that to make the most impact our community needs to provide assistance to those who need it the most, and those people are not necessarily our teachers, police force, etc. She added that some people choose to live far from where they work so they can have a bigger home or because of a variety of other issues. It is not always because they cannot afford to live closer. Kirsha Haverlah noted that a key finding of the presentation was that our community could encourage the use of rail to transport freight. Michelle Casanova stated that this is doable and would have immediate impact. Marquis Williams recommended that we address all of these transportation and housing issues regionally.

The Community Council members shared a number of recommended areas of focus. After discussion, members were invited to "vote" on the issues they would most like to see CAN address.

**Recommendations:** The following recommendations were proposed:

- Provide incentives to limit the use of non-road mobiles such as agricultural and construction equipment, lawn and garden equipment, and other gas and diesel powered machines. (This recommendation relates to the air quality indicator.)
- Expand efforts to prevent homelessness by providing emergency assistance to those at risk of becoming homeless, with a cost-benefit analysis. (This recommendation relates to the homelessness indicator.)
- Promote better coordination and planning across the housing continuum, encouraging the "Complete Communities" development model. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Affordable/mixed-income housing in all communities (e.g. the extension of multi-family, attached homes, mixed-use to increase density and promote affordability)
  - Mixed-use and commercial properties in all communities for services and employment that is convenient to where people live

- Communities designed with local access to public transit, schools, services, and employment
  - Financing models to assist homeowners in purchasing affordable housing
  - Targeted “Choice Neighborhood” to revitalize depressed areas
- (This recommendation relates to the housing cost-burdened, homelessness, vehicle miles traveled per capita, and air quality indicators.)

The following key finding was identified:

- Our community should encourage freight traffic to shift away from roadways. (This relates to the vehicle miles traveled per capita and the air quality indicators.)

The Community Council motioned to approve the recommendations with the understanding that CAN staff will improve the wording and that Community Council members would have the opportunity to suggest further amendments through e-mail. The motion was passed with Sylvia Blanco noting her opposition. Rebecca Cobos asked that there be a room set-up more conducive to an interactive discussion with flip-charts at the Community Council's next discussion meeting.

**Adjournment:** Marquis Williams, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. The next Community Council meeting will take place on July 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30 at City Hall. All Community Council documents can be found online here: [http://www.caction.org/councils/Community\\_Council/index.php](http://www.caction.org/councils/Community_Council/index.php)