



**28th Street/Little Portugal Community Working Group Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** May 15, 2024 (4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.)

**Location:** Zoom

**Attendees:**

Members in Attendance: Chris Esparza, Davide Vieira, Damone Jordan (on behalf of Isamar Gomez), Helen Masamori, Luis Munoz, Marisa Diaz

Members not in Attendance: Bill Rankin, Chris Patterson-Simmons, Danny Garza, Dee Barragan, Ed Berger, Elma Arrendondo, Elsa Oliveira, Jesus Flores, Justin Triano, & Terry Christensen

Speaker Attendees: Bernice Alaniz (VTA), Christina Gotuaco (VTA), Erica Roecks (VTA), Jessie O'Malley Solis (VTA), Josselyn Hazen (VTA), Marissa Sanchez (VTA), Matt Derby (VTA), Melissa Cerezo (VTA)

Other Project Team in Attendance: Adriano Rothschild (VTA), Brent Pearse (VTA), Monica Tanner (VTA)

Project Team not in Attendance: Kristen Mei (VTA)

**Meeting Agenda:**

- Welcome and Introductions
- Transit-Oriented Communities Grant Update
- Community Working Group Pulse
- VTA Board Referral
- Early Construction Activities
- CWG Member Report Out
- Next Steps

**Follow-Up Items:**

- Connect with Elsa Oliveira
- Invite Mike Smith to give an update on the financial plan at a future meeting

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	
Please change my organization to School of Arts and Culture at the Mexican Heritage Plaza. I know it's long, but I want	Comment noted.

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
to get that one right. I'm the Director of Community Development.	
Riccardo should be replaced with Elsa from the Portuguese Community Center. I believe she contacted Kristen a while back. But I'll resend it to you, Erica. Terry is travelling in London until July.	Thank you for that note there, Davide. Davide, can you pass along Elsa's contact info so we can make sure that we get her on the list? (Elsa's contact info was provided during the meeting)
I'm with Five Wounds Brookwood Terrace Neighborhood Action Coalition. Today I'm also here on behalf of Connie Alvarez because I am also co-president of Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association.	Comment noted.
Isamar is not here, but I am here on her behalf. And yes, I have Artificial Intelligence (AI) that I am bringing to meetings to help me capture notes and summarize, so if you see my AI in the chat, it's intended to help track things and keep notes.	Comment noted.
<b>Transit-Oriented Communities Grant Update</b>	
How do the qualifications work?	For eligibility for the Community Resilience, Education & Engagement, and Placemaking & Activation programs, applicants must be 501(c)(3) non-profits operating in Santa Clara County or partnering with 501(c)(3) non-profits. Cities or public agencies in Santa Clara County can also apply for the Planning & Policy Implementation as well as the Education & Engagement and Placemaking Arts & Activation program.
Did you reach out to the 501(c)(3)s in the immediate area?	We have been reaching out. We have an extensive list of area-based community organizations that operate in Santa Clara County. We've also seen some representatives of CBOs attend some of our pre-application workshops including some members of the Portuguese band.  And, Davide, the list of people we have been interfacing with for the Design Development Framework, so all of the

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
	<p>organizations such as the “Si Se Puede” collective, groups from 28th Street/Little Portugal were added to distribution lists. I also want to note that the deadline for this is next Wednesday, but this is the inaugural grant and we anticipate this being an annual grant program available. There will be additional opportunities in future years.</p>
<p>What is the maximum money a non-profit can get?</p>	<p>Maximum program funding depends on the program itself. For Community Resilience, that maximum is \$100k per application. For Education &amp; Engagement, it’s \$27,500. For Placemaking, it’s \$15,000.</p>
<p><b>VTA Board Referral</b></p>	<p>No comments.</p>
<p><b>Community Working Group Pulse</b></p>	
<p><b>Davide:</b> I think we have to ask ourselves why are there so few members of the CWG attending this meeting. When Danny Garza doesn’t show up to a meeting, when Danny Garza may have given up on this group, it’s not a good sign. And others with whom I’ve had conversations, including myself, have also questioned the viability of this group moving forward. The contributions that we may be making BART Phase II, whether we’re being useful, whether what we’re contributing is taken seriously and we’re being useful.</p> <p><b>Helen:</b> I agree with Davide. We just want to make clear what is our role? How can we engage? And attendance as well, too.</p> <p>Yes, maybe if the meetings were in-person we could ask more questions, we can engage better? But that’s true. It’s a lot of information in a short time.</p> <p><b>Davide:</b> Agreed, it helps to see body language and impromptu reactions, and you lose that with these. Zoom served a</p>	<p><b>Brent:</b> Understood. To sum that up, can we say something like there’s attendance concerns because of maybe questions about members’ role/contributions. That’s helpful, thank you. Let’s put a note up there, team, that reads “serious feedback and how that is incorporated into the project”.</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Some things we’ve heard is that a lot of information is delivered in these meetings and maybe not enough time to sit with this information and an opportunity to ask questions. Is that an accurate reflection? I see some heads nodding.</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Pivoting off of that, are there any ideas that our CWG members have to make the meetings more interactive? Anything specific?</p>

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<p>purpose when we didn't have other options, but it's helpful to be in-person.</p> <p><b>Damone:</b> I'll jump in. One concern is ensuring that our community is aware of the things that are directly going to impact them. Let's say our next meeting is two months from now, I would hope that in this meeting, that we were made aware of changes related to traffic, for example, that VTA knows about that will impact our community and so it doesn't impact our families at the very last minute and that it doesn't just come via email and it doesn't become aware to our families at the very last minute. I think that information can be shared in these meetings. I'm sort of talking in code, but there were two instances that affected our community. One example is that construction is starting next week next to our school and we were not made aware of the construction nor the times of construction. I believe it's super important that that information gets shared at these meetings. I believe it's VTA job to overcommunicate. It needs to happen in all of the modes necessary so our community is aware. I believe information is received in different ways, whether it's mail, email, in meetings, etc. So, one of the things that I'm looking forward to in this meeting is what do our families need to account for in the next couple of week and months? I'm hoping that this meeting will provide me with that type of information that I can take back to my community. Even just the traffic change on Capitol that started today impacts our families and students' arrival time, so even if it doesn't seem like it directly impacts this group, again I think more communication the better because it does directly impact us.</p>	<p><b>Brent:</b> Yes, and I want to acknowledge what you're relaying. We were going to have a section later in the meeting regarding how we can have more personal conversation with the school and community. We'll get into that later, but hearing from you directly is so important.</p>

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
<p><b>Chris:</b> Some of the issues not just related to this project or this group, but the meetings with the community about this project have been going on for two decades now, and the people in different roles have all shifted, and the world has changed in two decades, so it makes for an interesting understanding. Is this a meeting? Are we having a VTA report back? Is it a conversation? What is the strategy? Making the community's investment is meaningful. One of the last issues is with regards to value engineering versus what entities have been saying, VTA is not a little entity and there are lots of different conversations going on, even within VTA that half of VTA might not know about at the same time. We need to rethink the model, especially for something so long and large scale.</p> <p>I don't think I'm smart enough to let VTA know what to change into, but I do know that in general, my consensus from the neighbors I talk to is the feeling of low-income and communities of color get walked on. And decades of the way it has been has not led to empowerment and leaving communities better, and just wanting that to make that different.</p> <p><b>Marisa:</b> I'm the student representative. As a new member, there are a lot of different email threads that I'm not a part of. And I hear things from other people about information I wasn't aware of. Just having more clarity on where I can find all of the information. Not being a part of it (email threads) is very confusing because then I'm left out of some meetings and activities. Where and who I can contact to get all this information. And people on the outside of this group, where can they find this information. It's something that</p>	<p><b>Brent:</b> Agreed, and that's why we wanted to start the meeting off like this tonight, Chris. We've had a similar format of these meetings for many years. Community members and VTA staff have come and gone. Many of you have been here the entire time. You mentioned change... do you have any specifics for us on ways we can engage you differently or have a different model for conversation going forward?</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Identifying a clear, streamlined point of contact/resource with information. What's the best way to contact students? Is email the best way? Probably not Facebook. Are there other methods that could be helpful for us?</p>

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
<p>everyone should have access to, not just us. Whether it's a clear point of contact or just information on the project itself. For the student crowd, we use a lot of email. Facebook is not the way to go for the younger crowd. Maybe Instagram? But email is the most universal way to get through.</p> <p><b>Davide:</b> Going off of that, we really don't know about all the other efforts going on. Are there other working groups or whatever, like one that Damone was eluding to, about infrastructure changes in the area, construction news, etc. Perhaps a group or VTA calendar that shows the whole community what is coming up as far as public-facing meetings? Because they're all public, anyone can show up! I'm thinking a calendar that publishes upcoming events (like City of San Jose).</p> <p><b>Davide:</b> We need something more than just a two-month meeting to find out what's coming up. We should know what the clear plan is. We need to be made aware. We need this information, and we need you to tell us rather than us prompting you to tell us.</p> <p><b>Helen:</b> The businesses are going to be affected by the project. Businesses are going to be relocated.</p>	<p><b>Brent:</b> Yes! Maybe it would be helpful if we revisit what communication streams we have for this project and finding out what is the most helpful for the community. How we distribute information is far and vast, and we recognize that not everyone has subscribed to all these channels but reminding you all as leaders what avenues are available to you all could be helpful.</p> <p>To answer the second part of your question, Davide, the only other engagement groups are the Design Review Committees, but there are no other outside groups part of the project except the CWG. If the CWG changed in some way to help better facilitate what you just shared, such as communicating more information moving forward, does that sound like it would be helpful?</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Understood. We're going to have a portion of the project where before the contractor mobilizes the site, we'll be here next to the community before the properties transition. It sounds like the community would like more details about how we'll maintain that site.</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> As a public agency, as we're negotiating on relocations and what not, there is some information that we can share publicly and some information we cannot because it's private. But that</p>

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<p>Yes, because if we work with the community, how are we going to be able to help them if we don't know what's going on?</p> <p><b>Davide:</b> We need to know what VTA is going to secure the site once these businesses move out and proactively address things before they go wrong. We need an insurance that things will be done promptly. It's the "broken window theory", and we adhere to the "broken window theory".</p>	<p>doesn't mean we can't commit to being more transparent. Is that correct?</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Understood. Since we're talking about transparency, we're going to be meeting internally every two weeks to discuss the properties before the contractor takes control of them. We have a team that we're mobilizing internally that includes our program management, external affairs, and real estate folks to talk about how to manage those more effectively. I'm hearing from you, Davide, to report back out what we talk about. So, we will note that.</p> <p><b>Jessie:</b> The property being discussed a moment ago, the Monarch site, a portion of that changed hands to VTA today. We received keys for the first time today. Facility staff met out at the site and walked the site, get a better perspective of what's needed. There is a plan in the works, and I can report that out at a future event but it's in process right now. The BSVII project is working on something, too, so if we've not already coordinated, we will be.</p> <p><b>Brent:</b> Really thank you for your thoughts—this is helpful. When we next meet, we will have more time for conversation and hopefully some check-ins in-between possibly. Can I get a thumbs up if we thought this exercise was helpful?  <i>*Thumbs up all around*</i>  Thank you for that feedback.</p>
<p><b>CWG Discussion &amp; Poll</b></p>	<p>Would you like to resume in-person CWG meetings? <b>100% said yes.</b></p> <p>If you would like in-person CWG meetings, how often would you like to attend? <b>4 prefer to have an option between in-person &amp; virtual; 4 would</b></p>

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
	<p><b>commit to meeting in-person for every meeting; 4 would commit to meeting in-person for every other meeting.</b></p> <p>Would you be interested in a pre-meeting networking time with CWG members, Project staff, and invited presenters? <b>100% said yes.</b></p> <p>This is my preference on the CWG meeting format. <b>63% would prefer a shift in meeting format towards external facilitation.</b></p> <p>Would you like to review Project documents prior to the presentation at the Board of Directors meeting? <b>100% said yes.</b></p>
<p>If all meetings are in person, will there be virtual options? Hybrid options? I think hybrid would be ideal, personally.</p>	<p>I think we're open to that. Do we want all in-person? Hybrid options? Damone, please put your preference in the chat and we'll record that.</p>
<p><b>Board Referral Update</b></p>	<p>No comments.</p>
<p><b>Early Construction Activities</b></p>	
<p>Can you define who are the "stakeholders" included in the project's MailChimp?</p> <p>And you said there is a 1,000 ft radius that you provide flyers to? I don't think all families who will be directly impacted will get this notice. How would you account for that in your communications strategy?</p> <p>Okay, and then timing. One of the concerns around this is timing. What is your ideal timeframe to communicate information like this moving forward?</p>	<p>The stakeholders are the folks that have signed up to get updates about the project. We have a general distribution list; we also include the emails of the CWG members.</p> <p>So that is something that we would coordinate with you all on what's the best way to communicate that information to your families/communities. Happy to coordinate with you on what is the best way to get that information out sooner.</p> <p>As soon as we learn information, we will reach out to you.</p> <p>Are you asking how far in advance?</p>



<b>Comments, Issues, and Questions</b>	<b>Response</b>
<p>I was asking how far in advance, yeah.</p> <p>I think we can take this offline, but if there are things as close to our school as this is, we probably want to set up a system so the right stakeholders from our school are informed about these types of activities prior to when the impacts happens.</p>	<p>Generally, we have a two-week minimum for when notices are distributed. Depending on the activity, some things we know much farther in advance and some things we only learn a day or two before we need to post the notice. So, as soon as we find out, we would coordinate with you. Does that help clarify?</p> <p>We consistently internally remind our contractor and construction management team there is work that needs to be done before the notice gets put out so we need to be notified well in advance. We will continue voicing that.</p> <p>Definitely. We can set up a time to get that figured out.</p>
<p>Additionally, the church and the hall need to be apprised of these construction activities. Please don't do anything the last weekend of June. That's the annual festival. In fact, this weekend there is an activity--we're processing from 27<sup>th</sup> and Sant James all the way down to North 28<sup>th</sup> and down to the church. Stuff happens. I'm not sure if I put that one on your radar.</p>	<p>Agreed. Yes, you should recall that we came and did some access and service needs interviews with the adjacent business and institutions and we gathered information such as that, and we have included it in our construction management transportation plans and it's our team's top of mind for activities happening in the area so we can alert contractor teams so they can avoid days like that. I was not trying to say that we would know everything, but I wanted to point out that we do reach out and we do care and track that as much as we can.</p>
<p><b>Phase II Update</b></p>	
<p>We used to have a financial update from the financial guy. Questions that come to mind - it's an election year, if a new administration comes in, does it tank this project?</p>	<p>That's a good question, and that's why we're trying to get this agreement locked in before the end of the year in case there are any changes in the administration. There is not any history of any project with a full grant agreement in place where any administration has changed those... it's like a contractual agreement. That's why a good pre-administration execution is critical to the project. And back to the finance, it was Mike Smith. When we</p>

Comments, Issues, and Questions	Response
	<p>submit that application for the grant agreement, that is our set budget. We are planning to have one summer meeting, and I'd be happy to invite Mike Smith to give an update on the financial plan, if you're interested?</p> <p>It's a similar report out that the committee will get, so the information is available and we can provide an update to the CWG.</p>
<b>CWG Member Report Out</b>	
<p>It's been interesting sharing among each other so we're on the same page. People are still asking is it going to happen? When is it going to happen? Because they're seeing businesses leave and obviously there is stuff going on. There's construction, but people are asking what the current status is. At least I'm still answering with the current status.</p> <p>There are newsletters, we have a newsletter. It doesn't have a ton of space for additional news or a brief blurb. We have a Portuguese radio station that we can get updates out on. There are many different outlets to communicate with our constituents. We have a bulletin. I'm the conduit for that too—my parents own the radio station. There are a lot of different conduits. Over communicate and let us decide what we release to our constituents.</p>	<p>What do you think needs to happen there to get up-to-date project status information to the public?</p> <p>If I could ask, maybe some informal in-between 100-150 word project updates to be shared with respective constituents? Maybe that would be more helpful for the leaders here. Maybe just little tidbits it sounds like.</p>
<p>As a co-president of the Alum Rock Santa Clara Street Business Association, we do a lot of business walks and let the businesses know. More information we collect, it's easier for us to pass to the businesses. We had a business mix with all the businesses in the corridor and we had almost 85-90 people there, and somebody from VTA was there, so that was helpful for information.</p>	<p>That's great insight. Thank you. What else are people gauging? Further conversations?</p>

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<p>We walked at Alum Rock and they said that business is already decreasing because people think VTA is starting work there already. People stopped going there, so we need more information to pass that along. Those businesses need more information.</p>	<p>That's helpful to know.</p> <p>And have a single point of contact for you all, so if you were to hear something, you would know that you could call me, or Marissa, or whoever that is for you and direct that information, especially as we start construction.</p>
<p>Yes, that sounds good. If you could send me your contact information by email it will be easier for us to reach you guys.</p>	<p>What I'm hearing is a phone "tree" is helpful for this group.</p>
<p><b>Upcoming Meetings</b></p>	
<p>Thank you for the meeting, it was great.</p>	<p>There is an additional VTA Board Meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup>, so we will get that added to this list before we distribute it electronically.</p> <p>Thank you all for attending and sharing this evening.</p>

**Next CWG Meeting:** July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 4:00 PM, TBD & Zoom (Hybrid)

**Prepared by:** Kristen Mei (VTA)  
**Concurred by:** Monica Tanner (VTA), Matt Derby (VTA), Erica Roecks (VTA)  
**Distribution:** CWG Members  
Project Team  
City & Public Agency Staff  
Distribution List