

MINUTES
Regular Meeting
San Luis Economic Development Commission
San Luis Council Chamber
1090 E. Union Street
April 16, 2025
4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION WILL ATTEND EITHER IN PERSON, TELEPHONE, OR VIDEO CONFERENCE COMMUNICATION.

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL BY THE CLERK OF THE BOARD** Chairman Jesus Carrillo called the San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Jesus Carrillo, Chairman
Salma Marrufo, Vice Chairman
Abraham Andrade, Commission Member
Oscar Franco, Commission Member
Eric R. Jones, Commission Member
Mary Carmen Lopez, Commission Member

OTHERS PRESENT: Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development & Government Affairs
Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant
Sonia Cornelio, City Clerk
Megan Adornetto, Project Manager & Historic Preservationist at Designing Local (joined virtually)
Anna Talarico, Project Manager & Public Art Coordinator at Designing Local (joined virtually)
Georgina Escamilla, Owner of Panchita's Restaurant

ABSENT: Linda Padilla, Commission Member

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commission Member Eric R. Jones.

3. **CONSENT AGENDA.**

- 3.A. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- Meeting Minutes from Meeting held April 16, 2025.

Chairman Jesus Carrillo

MOTION: Chairman Jesus Carrillo to approve the meeting minutes for the Regular San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting held on January 29, 2025. Commission Member Jones called a motion to approve the minutes, Commission Member Franco second it. Motion passed unanimously.

The vote was as follows:

Chairman Carrillo	Aye
Vice Chair Marrufo	Aye
Commission Member Andrade	Aye
Commission Member Franco	Aye
Commission Member Jones	Aye
Commission Member Lopez	Aye

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

4.A. Discussion and possible action on any and all matters regarding the Historic, Cultural, and Heritage-Based Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee and Designing Local's Historic Survey and Public Art Policy Project. (**Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development and Designing Local**)

Mr. Esparza introduced Designing Local consultants' Ms. Adornetto and Ms. Talarico, then provided a brief overview with a timeline highlighting: October 2024, when discussion regarding the Historic Preservation and Public Art Policy first took place; January 2025, when the San Luis Economic Development Commission (SLEDC) discussed Historic Preservation as an Economic Development Strategy; March 2025, when City Council approved the Ad Hoc Committee and a \$30,000.00 budget transfer; April 2025, project kickoff with Designing Local; May-June 2025, use of an Historic Survey and Community Engagement; July-August 2025, Public Art Policy Development; and August 2025, Final Deliveries for Council Approval. Mr. Esparza then gave the floor to the consultants from Designing Local.

Ms. Adornetto provided a presentation on the project and background information on the work performed by Designing Local, their team, and completed projects. Ms. Adornetto then provided information to Commission Members on the timeline and processes that have taken place to connect with stakeholders to obtain feedback about what they believe could enhance the community.

Mr. Esparza opened the floor for any questions from Commission Members regarding the project.

Commission Member Lopez expressed excitement to work together with Designing Local to highlight art that describes the community.

Commission Member Jones inquired about the art programs created by Designing Local and if the Commission could obtain access to any statistics, outcomes, and/or revenue information about other locations where similar programs have been implemented. Ms. Talarico responded by stating that they will be providing funding recommendations based on internal case studies, and other national models often used in the development funding recommendations, to tailor a model that fits the community in San Luis, for example a "Perfect Per Art Model", which can be applied to both capital or private development projects to fund public art for a city.

Mr. Esparza invited Commission Members to share their feedback as soon as possible with either Economic Development Staff or the Designing Local consultants.

Commission Member Andrade suggested looking at the Cesar Chavez Cultural Center, Main Street, agricultural fields, and irrigation stations, to name a few.

Vice Chair Marrufo expressed her desire to have mural art that reflects the culture and history from the community such as migration, family, agricultural field work, binational pride, Native American heritage, and suggested reaching out to local artists and/or reach out to San Luis High School. Suggestions for locations to place said murals are walls along the canal on Main Street, restrooms located at parks, and existing murals that are located close to the border.

Mr. Esparza requested feedback from Commission Member Lopez on which businesses can benefit from this project. Commission Member Lopez responded by suggesting collaboration with owners of empty buildings on Main Street that could be renovated and better suited to lease to business owners, in addition to adding artwork to the exterior of the building or the sidewalk, for example a mural displayed along Urtuzuastegui Street. Mr. Esparza agreed and added that façade improvement will be included in future discussions with the consultant.

Mr. Esparza requested comments from Commission Member Jones on historic buildings or historical information that can be utilized in this project. Commission Member Jones responded by emphasizing the importance of historic preservation of both buildings, such as Cesar Chavez' home, and locations, for instance the original City Hall buildings that were located on Urtuzuastegui Street. Commission Member Jones advised on creating a strategic plan to share with the Mayor and Council that includes information from: the City's archives highlighting historical sites that have already been identified; suggested art for new developments (parks, buildings, parking lots, public restrooms, etc.); and reaching out to business owners who have vacant spaces and what assistance they need to fill said spaces.

Commission Member Lopez invited Georgina Escamilla, Owner of Panchita's Restaurant, to approach the podium and provide her feedback as a local business owner on what her business needs to attract more customers and what is needed to help beautify the community. Ms. Escamilla mentioned and recognized that the recent support she has received from both the City and local organizations such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), has been beneficial to her business, but emphasized that even though her business has been in operation for 30 years, she was not aware of the help that is locally available for business owners. Ms. Escamilla noted the importance of increasing awareness and promoting all programs, projects, and services that the City and other organizations have at their disposal that can benefit existing and future businesses.

Commission Member Franco mentioned that from a tourism perspective, the historic preservation project should integrate the use of technology, digital campaigns and digital components to promote any businesses and buildings that are selected as part of this project. Commission Member Franco stated that "locals may know where to go, but visitors should be routed to those locations we are looking to promote", therefore the use of Quick Response Codes (QR Codes) strategically located across the City can help disseminate the history and future of the City. Mr. Esparza agreed and confirmed that the use of technology has been included and will be further discussed for this project.

Chairman Carrillo requested a "call to the public" for the next meeting to gather additional feedback and input from business owners. Mr. Esparza agreed and will include the item for the next meeting.

Mr. Esparza informed and invited members from the Commission to be part of the community engagement that will take place on April 25th, 2025, at the Arte En La Calle event. The Economic Development Department will have a booth with information about the historic preservation project and will gather feedback from the community. Commission Member Lopez inquired about the methods on how the information will be gathered. Mr. Esparza replied that Designing Local will place a public comment box at the booth so attendees can submit surveys, poster boards will be

displayed where the public will be able to add comments/notes via use of sticky notes, and the use of QR codes to collect surveys digitally. Commission Member Jones confirmed attendance and support for this event.

Mr. Esparza concluded this item by revisiting the timeline for the Historic Preservation and Public Art Policy and by informing Commission Members that based on this current project, a 12-month timeframe will be observed for future projects assigned to the Commission as this allows sufficient time for project proposal, work and gathering of information, presentation of possible actions, report on updates, and submission for approval.

4.B. Discussion and possible action on any and all matters regarding updates from the Economic Development Director, followed by discussion among San Luis Economic Development Commission (SLEDC) members. **(Armando Esparza, Director of Economic Development)**

Mr. Esparza provided Commission Members with a presentation on upcoming projects, starting with a focus on the evaluation of the Business Incubator Program and possible action on adjustment of lease rates. Mr. Esparza informed that Council approved a \$25,000.00 fund to hire a consultant to evaluate current use and operations, tenants, and market rates of similar programs. Mr. Esparza stated that this project is expected to be completed within six to eight months.

Mr. Esparza continued the presentation by introducing the Cesar Chavez Boulevard Commercial Development project, which would be the next 12-month project for the Commission. The goal is to promote 36 acres of commercial land to attract commercial development that can benefit from the current road expansion project of Cesar Chavez Boulevard. Mr. Esparza informed that both the Economic Development Department and the Commission will coordinate the creation of a “Master Plan” proposing the best use for the commercial land based on generation of tax revenue, community wants and needs, and an analysis of potential companies that are interested in coming to San Luis but were unable to be established due to limited availability of commercial land.

Commission Member Franco inquired about any evaluations or studies made that consider the impact to the area as it is a known school traffic zone. Mr. Esparza noted that the road expansion project included the analysis of the school traffic zone.

Mr. Esparza concluded the presentation by updating Commission Members on the Economic Development Marketing Collateral project; the project is scheduled for completion by June 2025.

Mr. Esparza opened the floor for discussion or questions by Commission Members.

Chairman Carrillo noted on revision the Business Incubator program and the importance of the Ad Hoc Committee, then asked Commission Members for any additional questions or concerns.

Commission Member Lopez asked if the new commercial land will be suitable for the construction of hotels. Mr. Esparza agreed on the need for a hotel in the community and stated that it will be addressed by the developer upon further discussion of the project.

Commission Member Jones inquired about options for inviting the community to voice their opinion and give input on projects being addressed by the Commission. Mr. Esparza and Chairman Carrillo agreed that the “call to the public” item that will be included in the agenda for the next Commission meeting will be used to gather community input and feedback. Commission Member

Lopez suggested that Commission Members provide suggestions to Mr. Esparza for review and possible action for approaching the public.

Commission Member Jones inquired about what the process will be for gathering input from the community on active and future projects. Mr. Esparza responded that the methods would vary depending on the stage of the projects and the discussions conducted with both consultants and developers. Commission Member Lopez offered her support with the promotion surveys when available. Commission Member Jones expressed concern about the importance of gathering community input first before the community becomes aware of any potential developments that could conflict with what the community wants.

Vice Chair Marrufo proposed a future project to create a market-type event where home vendors can have an opportunity to get more information on new laws in Arizona, permits, and requirements for having a home-based business, and give them an opportunity to promote their business. Vice Chair Marrufo suggested the name “Hecho En Casa Market” for the event. Mr. Esparza agreed on the need to educate about the Cottage Food Program and what is allowed and restricted for home-based business owners. Commission Member Lopez commented on a recent event that took place at a park where the Food Cottage Program was presented by the Yuma County Health Department.

Commission Member Jones acknowledged a past presentation from the Greater Yuma Port Authority and asked if the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation (GYEDC) would be presenting in the next meeting. Mr. Esparza responded by stating that GYEDC gave a presentation during the meeting held in March 2025, but Mr. Esparza will reach out to invite them for the next meeting.

Commission Member Jones requested an update on the Fuerza Local Business Accelerator Program. Mr. Esparza informed that the first cohort from the program is halfway completed and that the 12 participants are still active within the program. Mr. Esparza mentioned and invited Commission Members to the graduation ceremony in July 2025 and informed that the recruitment for the second cohort will begin next month. Mr. Esparza also noted that the Mayor and Council approved funding for a third cohort.

Commission Member Jones inquired about the status of the empty buildings located on Main Street and whether any discussions have taken place with the owners to house businesses in them. Mr. Esparza responded by stating that a list of stakeholders has been shared with Designing Local so that the owners of those facilities can be approached and asked for the status on potential uses for those empty buildings and/or available land.

5. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Chairman Carrillo, Commission Member Franco and Vice Chair Marrufo to adjourn the meeting at 5:02p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

The vote was as follows:

Chairman Carrillo	Aye
Vice Chair Marrufo	Aye
Commission Member Andrade	Aye
Commission Member Franco	Aye
Commission Member Jones	Aye
Commission Member Lopez	Aye

APPROVED:

Jesus Carrillo, Chairman

ATTEST:

Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the San Luis Economic Development Commission meeting of the City of San Luis, Arizona, held on April 16, 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Yigal Duarte, Economic Development Assistant