



CAN Retreat 10/11/24 Notes

Location: Austin Energy Headquarters, Mueller

Present: Celso Báez III, CapMetro; Chris Cervini, ACC; Korey Darling, Travis County; Aaron DeLao, United Way for Greater Austin; Mike Gerber, Austin Housing Authority; Suchitra Gururaj, UT Austin; Liz Johnson, St. Edward's University; Laura G LaFuente, Austin Public Health; Jeremy Martin, Austin Chamber of Commerce; Regan G. Moffitt, St. David's Foundation; Caroline Reynolds, CAN Community Council; José Velásquez, City of Austin; Ara Merjanian, CAN Community Council.

Other guests: Patricia V Hayes, PVH Consulting

CAN staff in attendance: Raul Alvarez, Carlos A Soto, Jelina Tunstill

Call to order, Introduction: Liz Johnson, CAN Board Chair, welcomed folks and started the meeting.

Executive Director's Report: Raul Alvarez thanked folks for attending and mentioned we are doing our retreat earlier this year to get ahead with strategic planning. This is CAN's 29th year. Earlier this year we had the CAN Celebration where we recognized groups and individuals with Butler Awards in the areas of Community Leadership, Collaboration, and Impact. In April we had the 6th Central Texas Regional Summit on Expanding Opportunity in Round Rock, with a focus on upskilling through earn & learn opportunities. The Mental Health First Aid initiative phase 1 goal has been met. Phase 2 goals consist of training 3000 individuals by 2025, and training 30 to 50 individuals to be certified MHFA trainers. The Language Access Project for Mental health/Wellness developed toolkits and collateral materials for Spanish speakers, Arabic speakers, and Vietnamese speakers. Our Race Equity Principles in Practice (REPP) hosted its sixth cohort going through the trainings, with nearly 100 individuals trained overall. We will be holding 1 alumni session per year for the REPP program and scheduling 1-2 dialogue opportunities per year. The Community Council updated the Person-Centered Community framework and will be sharing it next month with the board and next year to the public.

Retreat Dialogue Summary: Refer attached document.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Community Advancement Network (CAN)

Board Retreat Summary

October 11, 2024

AGENDA (SEE ATTACHED)

STRATEGIC PLANNING FUNNEL (see strategic plan 2025-2027 folder for 12.13.24 board meeting)

MISSION

CAN is a partnership of governmental, non-profit, private and faith-based organizations which leverage mutual resources to collectively improve social, health, educational and economic opportunities in our community.

VISION

CAN seeks to support a community in which we are safe, just and engaged; our basic needs are met; we are healthy; and we achieve our full potential.

CAN GOALS/VALUES

WE ARE SAFE, JUST & ENGAGED

- We are safe and free from abuse, neglect, crime, violence, and injustice.
- We respect and value diversity and inclusion.
- We are civically engaged and use our talents, passions and interests to improve the community.

OUR BASIC NEEDS ARE MET

- We live in a community where the basic needs of all are met.
- We live in affordable and stable housing with access to open space and public amenities.
- We have affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation.

WE ARE HEALTHY

- We live, work, learn, and play in accessible, safe, clean, and healthy physical environments.
- We have access to goods & services to achieve and maintain optimal physical & emotional well-being.

WE ACHIEVE OUR FULL POTENTIAL

- We have the education, skills and opportunities to achieve our full potential and lead meaningful, joyful lives.
- We have adequate income, resources, and supports to live independent lives.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The attendees were broken into groups of 4 or 5 to discuss the following questions in the context of CAN's existing mission/vision/ goals for the next 30 years:

- What are the greatest opportunities for growth/improvement?
- What is the greatest concern/challenge facing CAN?
- What is CAN's unique value proposition?
- Who/what is missing from the discussion?

Summary of small group reports:

Table 2

Growth/Improvement – There's a need to define regional perspective. Need to think about the collective impact of our organizations. CAN is a great convener, but how do we (partner organizations) work together? What would it look like if each board member laid out 3 to 5 priorities relating to CAN and then look at Venn diagram of responses to see where we overlap.

Concerns/Challenges – Differentiate between issues/challenges for community and issues/challenges for CAN. For community, housing affordability is a big issue. For CAN members, attendance and use of proxies for meetings. Need to answer question: are we issue aligned or organization aligned?

Value Proposition – Cross sector collaboration. Convening component. Earn & Learn (workforce) focus is valuable because it potentially helps all partner organizations.

What's Missing? Broader community awareness of what CAN does. That may be true even within our own organization. Need a clearer regional role because it will help identify what or who is missing. May want to engage religious organizations more since they focus on basic needs so much. Public safety and emergency response may also need more attention.

Table 3

Goals/priorities. Also had question about being organization aligned, priority aligned, or issues aligned? Consider regional mobility as a priority. Maybe focus on knowledge transfer from older residents to new residents as a way to galvanize the community. What is the role of the community council in this?

Value Proposition – Convening thought leaders on important topics.

Who's missing? What entities are not represented (i.e., other cities)?

Table 5

Goals/priorities. CAN is a trusted convener. It's a good forum for bringing people together. Also, thinking about the regionality of the group. How we've been doing that with the Regional Summit. We should bring in more groups outside of Travis county because folks from Travis County are moving to those areas and need support and may have a need to connect.

Who's missing? /Role of CAN. –An opportunity might be with Tech Pros coming to Texas. There's a lot of them but they are not connecting to the community. Is CAN able to connect with this group of folks to introduce them to Austin culture, history, challenges so that they can play a more active role as community members? Provide that community orientation.

Maybe create more opportunities for other members of partner organization to engage with CAN.

Value Proposition. Is CAN able to create a civic infrastructure for dialogue? Is CAN able to use its data so that members use the information to drive their mission in an effective way to solve problems? CAN we pinpoint who needs help ... where they live and what they need. Dashboard is great, but how can we show people what to do with that data/information?

Table 1

Goals/priorities.

Concerns/challenges. Competing demands for time and attention. Post COVID challenges linger. Information/disinformation (around politics; around climate change). Service providers need good information so that they know how to respond. Technology has been used as a divisive tool.

Communication is a challenge at a community wide level. This will be critical to address in era where we have crisis after crisis or might even get to the point where we have multiple crises at once. This information should be available regardless of the language that you speak.

Who's missing? Including voices from other parts of the region.

Value Proposition. It's so important to have a venue like CAN where people come together from different sectors to look at community needs, to identify what is around the corner.

PILLAR ISSUES

NOTE: The bulleted items under each Pillar are raw notes stated by CAN board members in attendance at the retreat. The number in parentheses indicates additional board members agreeing with the statement as presented at the time. For example, a statement with (5), indicates the original drafter plus 5 other attendees agreed with this statement. A statement without a number indicates the support of one person, the original drafter. The goal was to synthesize concepts and ideas without staff/ facilitator having to interpret subjectively if concepts/ideas should be lumped together.

PILLAR 1: INTERNAL ENGAGEMENT—RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Improve email communications to executive committee (1)
- Regular opportunities for relationship building and alignment across CAN members (4)
- Include member spotlight and networking at each board meeting
- Member organization priorities awareness related to CAN scope (1)
- Inject fun into organization, e.g., mixers, networking, but focused on a mission/cause (like MHFA) (1)
- Small group (4) lunches once a month to learn what your colleagues do (most of the time; are best at; don't like to do) (1)
- Greater understanding of individual priorities and overlapping opportunities (3)
- Decide model of partnership; what model of partnership, or theory of change can be effective to implement
- Work to balance CAN's networking and relationship building activities with the need for setting goals and priorities, and taking action on them (2)
- Clarity of partner goals
- CAN presentations on partner initiatives
- Members need to add stakeholders from their organization (succession planning (2)

PILLAR 2: EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT: VISIBILITY, MARKETING, OUTREACH

- What we do for social media, email, campaign (1)
- More visibility with AISD
- Define what we do so it can be easily shared
- Each member engage over lunch with a NEW non- CAN organization and describe what we can do (3)
- Need to get specific to who we are trying to reach and why (7)
- Collaborate with new media and traditional media (3)
- Collaborate with specific groups (Leadership Austin, AARO, Chambers, One Voice Central Texas) (4)
- Clarify why someone in the community would need to know about CAN: are we looking for more volunteers, are we looking for engagement (1)
- CAN as a vehicle for driving action on issues (housing, transportation) use MHFA as a model (3)
- Work with Chambers/ Visitors' Bureaus (?); Make CAN part of the orientations for new Austinites (2)
- Provide more opportunities for subject experts to come together, dig deeper, and develop strategies and solutions (1)
- Need to better engage with the public and business community to gain knowledge of emerging trends and mutual issues and to counter dis/misinformation and engage folks as citizens (1)
- Embrace subject matter expertise (research, convene) to add value to community organizations.

PILLAR 3: CAPACITY BUILDING

A. Regional Expansion

- Identify other regional collaboration efforts and issue area collaborations to ensure that there is not duplication of effort (1)
- Engage with churches, PTAs, civic organizations (4)
- Source nonprofit or higher ed regional internships
- Focus on specific topic or project or issue area (1)
- Pick one area only in which to grow (suggest Williamson County) and build deep relationships with key leaders to then evaluate (1)
- No to expansion; yes to inclusion (2)
- Add all regional ISDs, including Round Rock ISD (4)
- Broaden membership, including Wilco, Hays, Bastrop, Coldwell

B. CAN Advisory Groups Utilization

- Revisit charters for committees (i.e., still needed, for what) (5)
- Clarity on connection between Community Council and Board
- Encourage each member to bring an interested friend (2)
- Lean into current impact (1)
- Focus on one or two priority areas of need (2)
- Define how do those with lived experience lead or contribute to impact (1)
- Could do focused assessment/ strategic planning process to refine roles, build on successes, expand utilization of advisory groups (1)
- Report to Board regularly
- Mobilize students and student interns (1)
- Focus priorities
- Do more orientation outreach to help people understand CAN and how it can be supported and be a going concern during turmoil and rapid change (i.e., bring more people into the circle (3)

PILLAR 4: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Standardize membership model and pricing (3)
- Collaborate with I Live Here I Give Here for endowment (1)
- Reimagine how philanthropy plays a role in support of CAN (2)
- Leaders should check in with each CAN member to discuss problems and solutions and ask if there is an existential threat (1)
- Celebrate and honor commitment by City of Austin and Travis County
- Member organizations advise and support
- How to attract resources beyond our members (i.e., state, national resources) (4)
- More dues paying members equals more sustainable organization (1)
- Explore what does our new governance structure (TUNA) afford us regarding fundraising
- Consider whether we need a development board
- Do we need a grant writer (2)
- Do succession planning and develop a “farm team” of emerging CAN leaders especially to plan for turnover (1)

CAN Strategic Planning Retreat
Austin Energy Community Room (4815 Mueller Blvd.)
October 11, 2024

12:00 noon	Lunch & Icebreaker
12:30 pm	Introductions and Welcome Liz Johnson, CAN Board Chair Raul Alvarez, Executive Director
12:40 pm	Retreat begins <i>Strategic Planning Facilitator — Patricia V. Hayes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitator Level Setting: plan/ goals for the day outlined
12:50 pm	The Next 30 Years: Mission, Vision, & Goals—Small Group Discussion Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the greatest opportunities for growth/improvement?• What is the greatest concern/challenge facing CAN?• What is CAN’s unique value proposition?• Who/what is missing from the discussion?
1:20 pm	Full Group Facilitated Discussion on Mission, Vision, Goals
1:30 pm	Strategic Plan Priorities & Development Topics
1:45 pm	BREAK
1:50 pm	Strategic Plan Development & Priorities Small Group Walk-About (15 min each) <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Internal Engagement—Relationship Building2. External Engagement: Visibility, Marketing & Outreach3. Capacity Building<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) Regional Expansionb) CAN Advisory Groups Utilization4. Organizational Sustainability
2:45 pm	Full Group Facilitated Discussion on Priorities
3:00 pm	Close out/ Next Steps