

San Antonio activist group COPS/Metro blasts economic impact study on Project Marvel

COPS/Metro also criticized Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones for rescheduling a public comment session on the controversial report.

By [Michael Karlis](#) on Sat, Aug 2, 2025 at 10:09 am

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Michael Karlis

COPS/Metro organizer Father Jimmy Drennan speaks during a press conference at San Antonio City Hall on Friday.

During an impassioned Friday afternoon press conference, community watchdog group COPS/Metro lambasted San Antonio Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones for cancelling a public comment session on the new [Project Marvel economic impact study](#).

Initially, the public comment session was scheduled for Thursday's City Council meeting. However, Jones [cancelled the session](#) shortly after Wednesday's release of the report, which has [drawn criticism](#) from economists over its [sunny forecasts and murky data](#).

Instead, discussion of the report has been rescheduled for the Wednesday, Aug. 6, B Session, which means council can enter executive session at any time, closing the public out of discussions about the report.

"Our voices matter," COPS/Metro organizer Father Jimmy Drennan told reporters gathered outside City Hall. "The citizens of San Antonio demand to be heard."

The group also demanded that Project Marvel — a proposed \$4 billion sports-and-entertainment district — not be placed on the November ballot. Instead, they called on City Manager Erik Walsh to add a \$5 billion infrastructure bond to the ballot to address more pressing city needs, including building affordable housing, fixing sidewalks and dealing with the city's stray dog problem.

Jones' office didn't respond to the Current's request for comment on why the mayor rescheduled the meeting.

[Economists this week told KSAT](#) the economic impact report, created by Minneapolis-based CSL International, is essentially "useless" and paints an overly optimistic picture of the development's economic benefit.

"You don't get to be wealthy as a consultant by telling the people who hire you that their ideas are bad," University of Maryland-Baltimore County professor Dennis Coates told the TV station.

Among the report's rosy projections is a forecast that a 5,000-seat concert venue planned for the former John H. Wood Court House would have an economic impact of \$1.2 billion in today's money over the next 30 years — greater than that of the renovated Alamodome.

Drennan said COPS/Metro officials are amazed the impact report excluded any mention of possible downsides caused by Project Marvel. The group is calling on the city to bring in an independent consulting group to conduct a new economic analysis.

Specifically, Drennan and his colleagues zeroed in on the last line of CSL International's letter to City Manager Erik Walsh, in which the consulting firm wrote that they "look forward to contributing to the next phases of the project development and implementation."

"They're no longer an objective opinion," Drennan told the Current. "We want someone who's going to come and lay fresh eyes — never been here and done this. And then they're going to be able to provide something, knowing they're not getting anything in return, other than what they've been contracted to do."

Drennan said he and others from COPS/Metro are scheduled to meet with Jones next Friday. In the meantime, the group will continue to gather signatures for a "No Public Funding for Project Marvel" petition, which Drennan said has garnered thousands of signatures.

"We're not the only group opposed [to Project Marvel]," Drennan told the Current. "There are groups across the city, neighborhood associations, the Bexar County Republican Party. Why are their voices being eliminated?"