

Version curated for the SA Smart Mayor's Challenge 2024 on the topic of Environmental Quality.



SEPTEMBER 1, 2016



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

Comprehensive Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Prepared by:



In association with:

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.
WSP | Parsons Brinkerhoff
Ximenes & Associates, Inc.



Vision for 2040

Recognizing our city's assets and challenges, we launched SA Tomorrow to help our community define necessary steps to lead responsible development and guide us towards a better future. The vision for San Antonio in 2040 is based upon the robust foundation provided by SA2020. That landmark effort resulted in an overarching vision for our community, as well as detailed targets and strategies.

SA Tomorrow is the story of a great American city.

San Antonio is a **dynamic city with neighborhoods** that are complete with **unique places** that define their **character** and **celebrate our history**. Our corridors **unite our residents** and our businesses, using **cutting-edge multimodal options** that **connect our neighborhoods to vibrant regional destinations**. Our infrastructure supports a **healthy and safe** lifestyle while making **San Antonio an efficient, resilient city**. Our economy is the envy of the country, with a **thriving and ever expanding business sector**. San Antonio maintains an elite status in the country, **supporting the military missions** that keep our country safe while supporting the vast number of **military personnel** that call San Antonio **home**. We **nurture our future**, with a **thriving natural environment** as well as **quality education** and opportunities for all children... they will inherit a **truly great and sustainable city**.

San Antonio is a **diverse and thriving** community, with a local government that's **accountable, innovative and responsive**.

This is the story of a great American city...SA Tomorrow.

The vision articulated in SA2020 has been augmented to reflect the community's values and integrated into our 2040 goals. The identification of these goals, and recommendations to realize them, was achieved through the development of a Comprehensive Plan. Our Comprehensive Plan is a coordinated, community-based process and strategic planning and investment document that helps us determine appropriate growth patterns and locations while preserving our vital historic, cultural, social and natural resources.

Guiding Principles

These principles establish a higher order decision-making framework to guide the growth and evolution of the City of San Antonio for the next 25 years. They articulate the overarching direction for the plan recommendations while also framing a set of criteria for evaluating unanticipated opportunities.

1. Maintain the character and integrity of existing San Antonio neighborhoods, parks, open space and trails by focusing growth in mixed-use regional centers and along attractive multimodal corridors with high performing transit service.

2. Ensure that all residents living in existing and new neighborhoods have safe and convenient access to jobs, housing, and a variety of amenities and basic services including great parks, strong schools, convenient shopping and nearby regional centers.

3. Connect safe and stable mixed-income neighborhoods with a system of walkable and bikeable streets, trails and pathways that celebrate and link natural greenways and drainage ways.

4. Ensure an inclusive San Antonio by providing affordable housing and transportation choices throughout the City.

5. Encourage a variety of amenity-rich places throughout the City with a balance of live, work and play opportunities.

6. Conserve, protect and manage San Antonio's natural, cultural and historic resources and open space.

7. Encourage and integrate innovative and sustainable ideas and development.

8. Provide an ongoing planning framework for more detailed and timely planning and design of regional centers, corridors and neighborhoods with continued opportunities for participation and partnerships, prioritization, and performance measurement.

9. Provide the residents of San Antonio, including youth, seniors, and disabled populations, with enhanced levels of authentic engagement.

Cross Cutting Themes

In order to ensure that the identified strategies of SA Tomorrow are specific to the needs of San Antonio, five cross cutting themes were identified through the Sustainability Plan process that address high priority issues for the community. The cross cutting themes are important to every aspect of the SA Tomorrow planning efforts, including each of this Plan's major components and elements.



These priorities create the lens through which potential recommendations in the Plan were evaluated to ensure that the themes are considered through prioritization, implementation and future re-evaluation.

Our Cross Cutting Themes for SA Tomorrow are:

- Economic Vitality;
- Air Quality;
- Water Resources;
- Equity; and
- Resilience.



The guiding principles and cross cutting themes, along with the building blocks and plan elements described in the following sections all help to achieve the following goals of the Comprehensive plan effort:

- Update the 1997 Master Plan Policies;
- Re-affirm the community's vision for the future;
- Implement and expand on the SA2020 vision for the built environment;
- Articulate the form of future physical growth;
- Accommodate and distribute projected population growth;
- Guide strategic decision making;
- Guide infrastructure investments and incentives;
- Reconcile existing plans, policies and assumptions; and
- Update the City's current Comprehensive Planning Program.

The SA Tomorrow cross cutting themes promote sustainability and address water resource, resiliency and diversity of our energy-related and other resources, as well as clean options for multi-modal transportation and other services.

Neighborhoods

Our neighborhoods are the backbone of the community, an essential element of San Antonio's city form and a source of pride for most residents. They occupy the areas between regional and urban centers and the corridors that connect them. In some cases, neighborhoods fall within or overlap boundaries of regional centers, and corridors frequently serve as the boundary between two or more neighborhoods. The SA Tomorrow approach of encouraging many of the new housing units and jobs in regional centers, urban centers and corridors is largely a way to maintain and protect existing neighborhoods and to ensure neighborhood housing options continue to be available in the coming decades.

We must focus on providing a variety of complete neighborhoods to all our residents, existing and future. Complete neighborhoods provide residents safe and convenient access to the activities, goods and services they need on a daily or regular basis. This includes a range of housing options, grocery stores and other neighborhood-serving commercial services, quality public schools, public open spaces and recreational facilities, and access to frequent transit. They also include an interconnected network of streets, sidewalks and trails, which makes walking and bicycling within and to these places safe and relatively easy for people of all ages and abilities.

A neighborhood can be enhanced with improved connectivity to nearby amenities and services. In many cases, amenities may be nearby, but are not accessible via safe and comfortable linkages for one or more transportation modes. In addition, making active transportation and transit more viable options for a greater proportion of the community requires larger network connectivity between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to nearby centers. For these reasons it is critical that our communities focus resources on improving neighborhood connectivity through a variety of infrastructure enhancements.

The design of existing and planned neighborhoods can result in varying levels of connectivity and accessibility. More traditional suburban development patterns include large arterials feeding into relatively disconnected subdivisions with a large number of cul-de-sacs. While this traditional development pattern does have impacts on traffic for motor vehicles, it does not necessarily preclude good pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. In fact, pathway and trail connections combined with on-street and sidewalk facilities can make these more traditional developments quite supportive of pedestrians and bicyclists accessing transit or other nearby amenities. The use of drainage ways and utility corridors can provide pathway opportunities that link disconnected portions of a neighborhood.

Similarly, more compact development can be difficult to traverse as a pedestrian or bicyclist if infrastructure is missing or inadequate. Major arterials often separate neighborhoods from commercial destinations, civic amenities and other neighborhoods. Well connected and maintained sidewalks, bike facilities and crossings are critical elements that help make a neighborhood more complete and navigable by all residents.

Another key aspect of a complete neighborhood is ensuring housing choice and diversity within and across neighborhoods. The majority of housing in San Antonio is currently detached single-family homes. A complete neighborhood should have a range of housing types and sizes (single-family detached, single-family attached and multifamily housing) for rent and for sale. Additional variety should be provided with a range of home sizes in the form of overall square footage and number of bedrooms.

San Antonio Place Types

The place types established through this process help to identify and provide the design intent and key planning and design principles related to the development of places with a desirable mix of uses, city form, public spaces, roads, trails, and parking. Each of these established place types will designate the appropriate and desired development patterns for the major building blocks – regional centers, urban centers, corridors, and neighborhoods.

All place types were defined with an eye toward how they transition to existing single-family neighborhoods that may be nearby. The City considered land use, scale and massing to ensure that each of the place types will be developed in a manner that is harmonious and complementary with existing and future neighborhoods.

We used four major determinants to explore and define place types: land use, mobility, sustainability, and natural topography and other natural features. An exploration of the determinants resulted in twelve place types organized into three categories.



Legend



3D massing model of a Regional/Commuter Rail station area with a mix of uses focused closest to the rail station.



MULTIMODAL MIXED USE

Multimodal Mixed Use place types are transit supportive and address all levels of transit service, from broader regional commuter rail station areas and larger institutions, to smaller scale places such as short segments along community corridors and neighborhood main streets. Place types in this category include:

- Regional/Commuter Rail;
- High Capacity Transit Corridor;
- Institutional/Campus Mixed Use;
- Community Corridor; and
- Neighborhood Main Street.



TRAILS, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Trails, Parks and Open Space place types are designed to create stronger connections among our community's active and passive recreational and cultural assets by both leveraging and protecting these important community features. Place types in this category include:

- Trail-Oriented Development;
- Community/Regional Park;
- Natural/Historic/Cultural Asset; and
- Green Neighborhood.



ADAPTIVE REUSE

Adaptive Reuse place types offer solutions for areas still in transition that will need to evolve to remain relevant either in their current use or change to a new use. Place types in this category include:

- Shopping Mall Retrofit;
- Office Park Infill; and
- Industrial Site Reuse.

Plan Elements

To help guide future growth strategy and create a more sustainable, livable and economically competitive San Antonio, we identified nine elements that help us define and achieve our desired long range goals.

The inclusion of elements is typical in comprehensive plans, but what distinguishes our plan from others is the need to move beyond the standard elements, such as transportation and housing, and incorporate more nuanced elements that reflect our City's unique context and history. The

addition of the Historic Preservation and Cultural Heritage and Military elements do just that.

Each one of these elements was formed with input from our community and presents a series of goals and policies we can utilize to achieve our desired future. Our nine elements are:

- Growth and City Form (GCF)
- Transportation and Connectivity (TC)
- Housing (H)

- Jobs and Economic Competitiveness (JEC)
- Community Health and Wellness (CHW)
- Public Facilities and Community Safety (PFCS)
- Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES)
- Historic Preservation and Cultural Heritage (HPCH)
- Military (M)

The main concepts informing each element are described on the following pages, along with lists of each element's goals and policy themes.



Downtown (left) and the River Walk (right) are unique San Antonio assets and just two examples of the many physical and cultural amenities valued and protected through the goals and policies outlined within each of the plan elements.

GROWTH AND CITY FORM (GCF)

San Antonio is the seventh largest city in the country, having surpassed Dallas as the second largest city in Texas in the early 2000s. With an estimated population of 1.44 million, our population and employment growth is expected to continue. The City is proactively addressing the challenges and opportunities of growth. Some of the issues we face include changing demographic trends, effectively utilizing our land supply and development patterns to ensure we develop sustainably and remaining economically competitive so all of our residents may experience and benefit from a high quality of life. The following Goals show a willingness to consider new, progressive approaches that will ensure we grow and develop in ways that benefit our existing and future residents, our businesses, and our environment. The eight Growth and City Form goals are:

GCF Goal 1: Higher density uses are focused within the City's 13 regional centers and along its arterial and transit corridors.

GCF Goal 2: Priority growth areas attract jobs and residents.

GCF Goal 3: Strategic annexation benefits existing and future City residents and does not burden the City fiscally.

GCF Goal 4: Sustainable infill and mixed-use development provide walkable and bikeable destinations for all residents.

GCF Goal 5: Growth and city form support improved livability in existing and future neighborhoods.

GCF Goal 6: Growth and city form support community health and wellness.

GCF Goal 7: Development practices that minimize, mitigate or avoid negative impacts on the city's natural resources, water supply, water quality, surface waterways, and air quality.

GCF Goal 8: Students throughout San Antonio have enhanced educational access and perform at a high level. (See also PFCS Goal 4)

The 37 Growth and City Form (GCF) Policies are organized under the following themes: Priority Growth Areas; Infill and Revitalization; Annexation; Transit; Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability; and Schools and Education.



Goals within the Growth and City Form element of the plan promote sustainable infill and mixed-use development, as well as development practices that support community health and wellness.



The five goals outlined in the Jobs and Economic Competitiveness element include supporting traditional industries and the skilled and educated workforce they need.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS (JEC)

San Antonio is an attractive place to do business. We're business friendly, with an affordable tax environment and government supportive of new and developing businesses. There's no doubt that our City has strong assets and emerging economic opportunities.

We're strategically located near the major sea ports of Houston and Corpus Christi and on the roadway and railway corridors that connect with Mexico, Canada, and the East and West Coasts. We must focus on opportunities and challenges that have been uncovered in an honest assessment of our City's economic competitiveness and the jobs available to our residents. Our economic geography lacks modern planning, the airport is constrained, our workforce lags behind in education and wages, college graduates are leaving the City and there's a lack of diversity in jobs and wage levels. The following Goals show a willingness to question the status quo and consider alternative approaches that will allow us to remain nationally competitive and leverage our unique polycentric pattern of regional center development. The five Jobs and Economic Competitiveness goals are:

JEC Goal 1: Employment is focused in the City's 13 Regional Centers, in site-specific locations in Urban Centers and along mobility corridors, providing easy connectivity for San Antonio's residents and businesses.

JEC Goal 2: Traditional and targeted growth industries support San Antonio's diversified economy and provide a wide range of job opportunities.

JEC Goal 3: San Antonio's skilled and educated workforce supports the City's traditional and emerging growth industries.

JEC Goal 4: San Antonio's economic environment fosters innovation and attracts new and innovative businesses, investment and industries.

JEC Goal 5: San Antonio plays an important role in the regional, national, and international economy.

The 39 Jobs and Economic Competitiveness (JEC) Policies are organized under the following themes: Economic Diversification and Target Industries; Education and Training; Business / Economic Climate: Business Attraction and Retention; **Workforce Attraction**; Land Use and Connectivity; and Infrastructure Investment.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS (CHW)

Safe, healthy and well-educated citizens of all ages are the basis of a prosperous and high-quality city. Policies and programs that increase access to multimodal transportation, parks and open space, recreation activities, healthy foods, health care services and educational opportunities all enhance community health in San Antonio.

Healthcare is a major economic driver in Bexar County, and San Antonio residents have access to numerous high-quality healthcare resources. In spite of that, many in the San Antonio community face serious health challenges. In 2016, of 241 measured counties in Texas, Bexar County ranked 81st in overall health outcomes, 31st in health behaviors, 61st in length of life and 148th in quality of life. In 2014, almost 1 in 3 residents was obese, while 1 in 7 had diabetes. Health outcomes in San Antonio must improve. The following Goals show a desire to not only improve community health but demonstrate how the health of our citizens is intrinsically linked to our land use patterns, transportation network, urban design, and environmental and economic sustainability. The seven Community Health and Wellness goals are:

CHW Goal 1: Healthy food, health services, health literacy and proven education programs are easily accessible to all residents, regardless of location, income, age, race, ethnic background or ability level.

CHW Goal 2: San Antonio residents are physically active and have safe and convenient access to recreation opportunities.

CHW Goal 3: All San Antonio residents and businesses have access to sufficient clean, sustainable and affordable water during foreseeable conditions.

CHW Goal 4: San Antonio provides a range of convenient, safe and comfortable active transportation options for all users and abilities and many regularly use multimodal options such as walking, biking, and transit. (See also TC Goal 5)

CHW Goal 5: San Antonio is a Vision Zero city that is committed to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

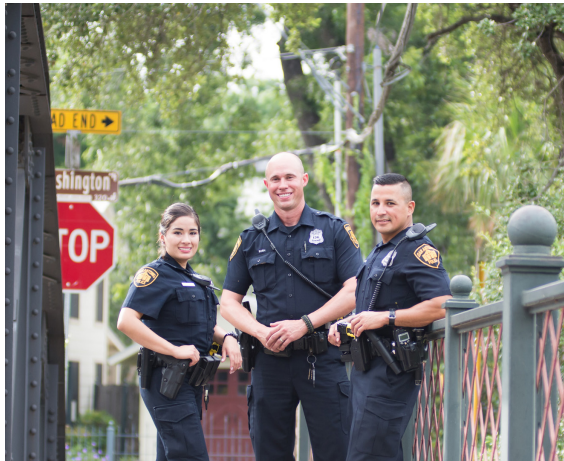
CHW Goal 6: All San Antonio residents enjoy a high level of safety, physical and mental health, and well-being.

CHW Goal 7: San Antonio's air quality is better than state and national standards. (See also NRES Goal 7)

The 40 Community Health and Wellness (CHW) Policies are organized under the following themes: Health and Wellness Coordination and Integration; Access; Healthy Food; Active Living; Active Transportation; Air Quality; and Water.



The goals for Community Health and Wellness encourage healthy foods (top) and a wide variety of opportunities to be physically active and engaged in the community (bottom).



Goals within the Public Facilities and Community Safety element support neighborhoods that are safe and resilient with high quality facilities and services (top), as well as a variety of park, trail and open space amenities (bottom).

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY (PFCS)

The safety of our residents must always be a priority. As we continue to grow and develop, we will work to accommodate this growth sustainably so we always maintain a safe and healthy community.

Community services and facilities are vital to our economic prosperity and quality of life. Crime prevention, maintaining reliable energy supplies, schools, parks, flood protection and green infrastructure provide an essential foundation for stable, prosperous communities. Failing to plan for the impact of growth on our public facilities is not an option. Given that 1.1 million more people will live in the area by 2040, it's clear that "business as usual" can't be continued. The following Goals show our commitment to providing safe, vibrant places for our citizens to live, work and thrive in. The seven Public Facilities and Community Safety (PFCS) goals are:

PFCS Goal 1: San Antonio has a 21st century infrastructure that supports the existing and future growth of the City.

PFCS Goal 2: The city has an environment of continuous quality improvement that ensures its facilities and services adequately support the existing and future growth of San Antonio.

PFCS Goal 3: All San Antonio residents have the opportunity to live in safe and resilient neighborhoods.

PFCS Goal 4: Students in San Antonio have access to quality education and perform at a high level. (See also GCF Goal 8)

PFCS Goal 5: San Antonio is a leader in energy conservation and providing clean, renewable energy for residents and businesses. (See also NRES Goal 5)

PFCS Goal 6: San Antonio is a model for innovative recycling and solid waste diversion programs that deliver ongoing benefits to the community. (See also NRES Goal 8 and Sustainability Plan Goal SW2)

PFCS Goal 7: All San Antonio residents have equitable quality of and access to a variety of park, trail and open space amenities.

The 39 Public Facilities and Community Safety (PFCS) Policies are organized under the following themes: Parks, Libraries and Other Civic Facilities; Infrastructure and Utilities; Schools and Education; Recycling, Compost and Waste Reduction; Energy; and General Policies.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (NRES)

A sustainable community aligns its built environment and socioeconomic activities with nature's constraints and opportunities. Central to this concept is meeting our present and future needs by balancing protection of the environment and ongoing prosperity of the local economy. The two components are interrelated and equally important—one component should not succeed at the expense of the other.

The following Goals demonstrate our community's dedication to preserving our natural resources and environment through the reduction of impactful human actions. The eight Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) goals are:

NRES Goal 1: San Antonio protects the natural environment and ensures sustainable land use and development.

NRES Goal 2: San Antonio balances environmental goals with business and community needs.

NRES Goal 3: San Antonio maintains a sustainable balance between the conservation, use, and development of the City's energy and natural resources.

NRES Goal 4: San Antonio has an adequate, diversified, high quality water supply and is a national leader in water conservation.

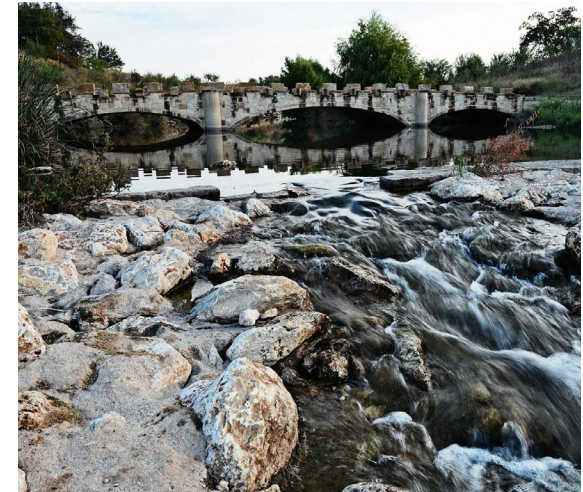
NRES Goal 5: San Antonio is a leader in energy conservation and providing clean, renewable energy for residents and businesses. (See also PFCS Goal 5)

NRES Goal 6: San Antonio is a national leader in stormwater management best practices and low impact development (LID) design.

NRES Goal 7: San Antonio's air quality is better than state and national standards. (See also CHW Goal 7)

NRES Goal 8: San Antonio is a model for innovative recycling and solid waste diversion programs that deliver ongoing benefits to the community. (See also PFCS Goal 6)

The 43 Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES) Policies are organized under the following themes: Land Use and Development; Water; Stormwater Management; Energy; Air Quality; and Recycling, Composting and Waste Reduction.



Goals related to Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability include maintaining a diversified, high quality water supply and improved air quality.



Prepared by:



In association with:

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.
WSP | Parsons Brinkerhoff
Ximenes & Associates, Inc.

