

**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
INTERDEPARTMENTAL MEMORANDUM
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**PUBLIC HEARING
TIME CERTAIN
ITEM NO. 7
4:00PM**

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Emil R. Moncivais, AICP, AIA

THROUGH: Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager

COPIES: Jelynn LeBlanc Burley, Assistant City Manager; File

SUBJECT: Public hearing and consideration of an Ordinance to adopt the Southside Initiative Community Plan as a component of the City's Master Plan

DATE: June 26, 2003

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Southside Initiative Community Plan consists of approximately 70 square miles and is bound by IH-Loop 410 on the north, IH-37 on the east, a meandering line 1350 feet south of the centerline of the Median River on the south, and IH-35 on the west. 7,641 residents reside in the planning area.

The Southside Initiative Community Plan was developed under the Community Building and Neighborhood Planning Program (CBNP), adopted by Council in October 1998. A summary of the plan's goals is found in Attachment A.

Approval of the ordinance will adopt the Southside Initiative Community Plan as a component of the City's Master Plan as it conforms to the approval criteria set forth in the Unified Development Code, §35-420, pertaining to "Comprehensive, Neighborhood, Community, and Perimeter Plans." Staff recommends approval.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Southside Initiative Community Plan represents a new planning paradigm for San Antonio's future growth and development. The Southside's backdrop of unique natural, historic, and scenic characteristics provides a remarkable palette on which a new economic engine and trade economy can etch a future vision for sustainable, quality growth and development in the city's periphery.

In an effort to create "balanced growth" by redirecting a new type of sustainable development on the Southside, the City Council of San Antonio authorized the Planning Director in the spring of 2002 to prepare a study for the purposes of limited annexation. During recent decades, the City of San Antonio has seen significant residential and commercial development in the northern and

western sectors of the city. In contrast, the southern sector has received limited growth and economic development. The primary goal of the Initiative is to reverse the trend of disinvestments in the southern sector and to encourage the balanced growth of San Antonio. The Initiative seeks to achieve the goals and objectives of the 1997 San Antonio Master Plan Policies, the 2001 San Antonio Housing Master Plan, and the Community Revitalization Action Group (1998, 2000) by utilizing smart growth principles. A secondary goal is to build upon the important investments and unique assets, which already exist in South San Antonio. These include Brooks City-Base, Kelly-USA, Stinson Air Field, Palo Alto College, the historic Mission Trails, the proposed Texas A&M campus and Toyota auto-manufacturing plant.

In October 2002, the Urban Land Institute was engaged by the City to develop a vision, evaluate the market potential, create planning and design concepts and recommend a development and implementation strategy for the Southside Initiative study area. From October 6-11 2002, a 10-member ULI advisory services panel visited our city, toured the Southside study area, and interviewed over 100 area stakeholders. The final report of the Urban Land Institute provided a 25-50 year vision for growth on which the community planning process was based.

The plan's vision is based on the themes that were articulated in the community planning process. To engage the public, three public meetings were hosted in May and June 2003. Notices of the community meetings were provided to all property owners within the planning area and to more than 40 stakeholder organizations with a vested interest in the development of the Southside. On May 6, 2003, a plan orientation meeting was conducted to brief the public on the citizen participation opportunities. An all day planning workshop was held on May 17, 2003, where more than 150 participants identified the lifestyle and character of the Southside, created base maps identifying significant features, and developed proposed visions for the planning area with the assistance of more than 30 design professionals and planners. In addition, the community came up with common, unique and worthwhile ideas as elements of the vision. A plan open house was held on June 10, 2003, to provide an opportunity for additional public involvement. More than 400 persons participated in all community meetings and provided valuable input in the process. Several separate meetings were held with the South San Antonio Chamber of Commerce to solicit further input from the business sector.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The Plan is consistent with the 1997 Master Plan, Neighborhood Goal 2: strengthen the use of the neighborhood planning process and neighborhood plans. The Plan is also consistent with the 1978 Major Thoroughfare Plan and the 1999 Park Systems Plan. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing and take action on the plan on June 25, 2003.

Pursuant to §35-420 (e) of the Unified Development Code, the Planning Commission shall find that the Community Plan:

- Identifies goals that are consistent with adopted City policies, plans, and regulations.
- Was developed in an inclusive manner to provide opportunities for all interest groups to participate.
- Is a definitive statement of the neighborhoods and is appropriate for consultation and reference as a guide by the City Council, Departments, and Commissions for decision-making processes.

Additionally, the Southside Initiative Community Plan will be used to fulfill the requirement for a land use and intensity plan as required by the annexation statutes for conversion to full purpose status.

FISCAL IMPACT

As defined in the Community Building and Neighborhood Planning Program adopted by City Council in October 1998, formal recognition is an acknowledgement of the Plan's use and value without specific financial commitment to immediate action by the City or partnering agencies.

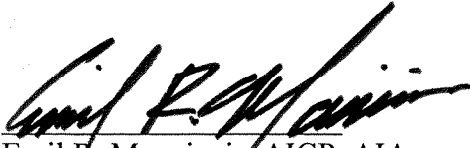
COORDINATION

The community planning process was coordinated with the following city departments: Asset Management, Aviation (Stinson Field), City Manager's Office, Code Compliance, Community Initiatives, Cultural Affairs, Development Services, Economic Development, Environmental Services, Fire, Health, Housing & Community Development, Information Technology Services, Library, Neighborhood Action, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Police, and Public Works.

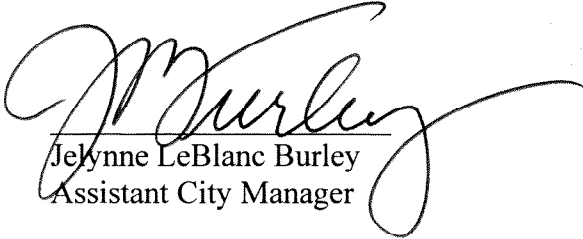
A technical committee with representatives from City of San Antonio departments, the Mayor's Office and City Council Districts 3 and 4, American Institute of Architects -San Antonio Chapter, Bexar County Infrastructure Services, Bexar County Rail District, Bexar Met Water District, City Public Service, East Central Independent School District, Land Heritage Institute, Metropolitan Planning Organization, San Antonio Development Agency, San Antonio Housing Authority, San Antonio Water System, San Antonio River Authority, Southwest Independent School District, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Transportation, and VIA Metropolitan Transit provided assistance throughout the planning process.

SUPPLEMENTARY COMMENTS

All comments received have been considered and addressed in the planning process.

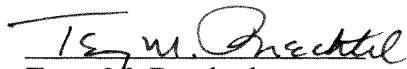


Emil R. Moncivais, AICP, AIA
Director of Planning



Jelynn LeBlanc Burley
Assistant City Manager

Approved:



Terry M. Brechtel
City Manager

COMMON IDEAS

At the May 17, 2003 workshop, over 150 participants established core "character and lifestyle" values, and addressed a future and use vision for south San Antonio.

Each of twelve planning groups presented their Vision Plan and identified the important concepts featured in their plan. The entire group of workshop participants then identified the common ideas among the groups.

Since May 17th, the City has developed a land use plan for south San Antonio, based on the concepts that were derived from the May 17th workshop common ideas. The final Southside Initiative Community Plan will be presented by Mayor Garza in mid-late June.

The common ideas generated from the workshop include:

Greenbelts connecting Rivers and Creeks

Preserve Agriculture

Town Centers with Mixed Use

East-West Roadway Connections

Texas A&M University Campus

Concentrate Industrial Uses

Commercial Nodes

**Public Transportation Connections
(Light Rail, Bus Rapid Transit, etc.)**

Diverse Housing

Parks

CULTURAL & HISTORIC CHARACTER

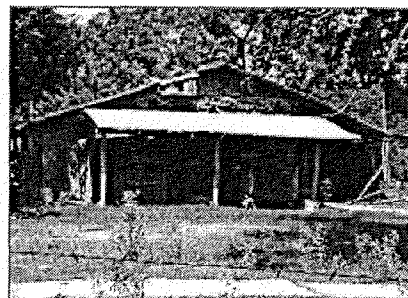
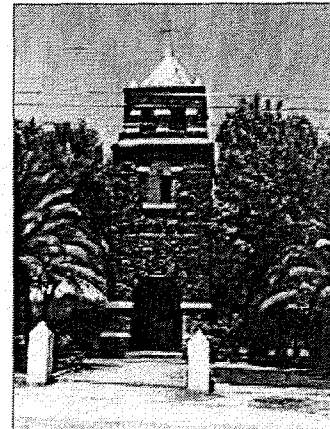


Preserving our historic past is important for the future of south San Antonio. We have a lot of historic buildings out here. We need to make sure they are saved.

PRESERVE and PROTECT the HISTORIC RESOURCES of the SOUTHSIDE INITIATIVE STUDY AREA

- **Identify and designate historic districts and historic landmarks**

- Perform a historic structures survey
- Identify potential historic districts and historic landmarks from the survey information
- Designate historic districts and historic landmarks
- Provide education and design assistance to owners of designated properties
- Provide information on newly designated historic districts and historic landmarks to the public on the Historic Preservation Office's website



CULTURAL & HISTORIC CHARACTER

- **Designate a new RIO District to protect the unique environment of the San Antonio River**

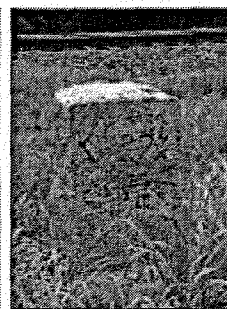
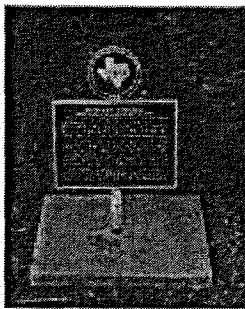
- Perform San Antonio River survey in the SSI study area
- Identify defining characteristics
- Develop design standards and guidelines to protect and enhance the area's defining characteristics
- Designate a new RIO district in the SSI study area
- Provide education and design assistance for owners of designated properties



PROMOTE HERITAGE TOURISM

- **Link all historic sites through open space**

- Perform an analysis of open space, as it relates to historic sites
- Examine linkages between historic sites and open space
- Publish document promoting linkages between historic sites and open space
- Organize publicity events, (i.e., home tours), for historic properties

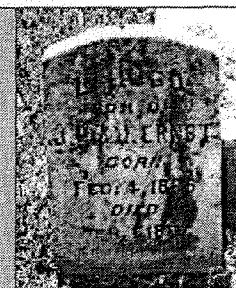


The Community Speaks:

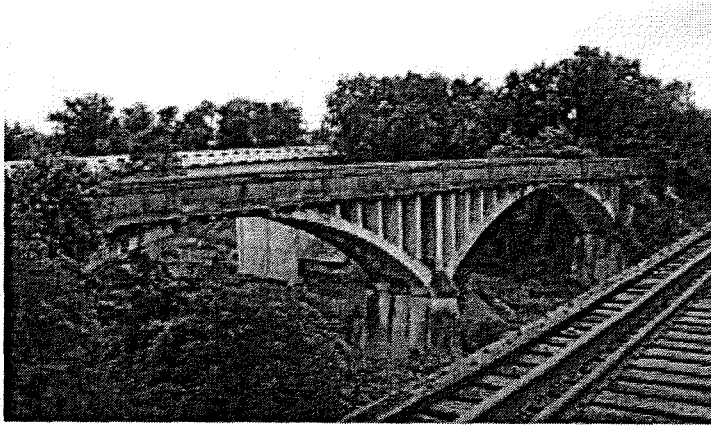
Preserve historic sites and resources

Preserve areas around the Toyota site

Respect for cultural diversity and pride



TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Critical components for south San Antonio's transportation plan include a comprehensive, multi-modal roadway circulation system that implements east-west connections, and protects the rural landscape.

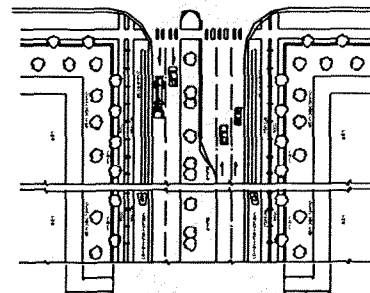
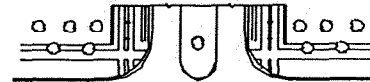
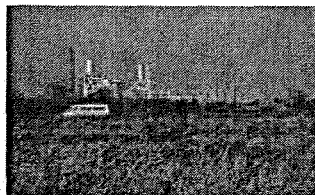
COMPREHENSIVE CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

- Improve hierarchy of major thoroughfare classifications

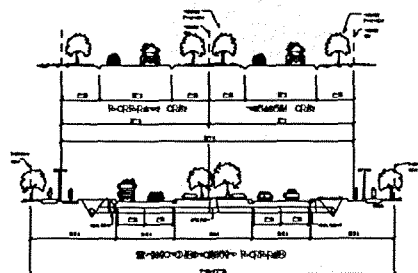
- Provide safe and convenient traffic flow throughout the Southside Initiative Community Plan study area and beyond.



- Utilize the adopted Major Thoroughfare Plan to ensure efficient and desirable connections between major arterials and other thoroughfares and to aid in prioritizing transportation improvement needs.



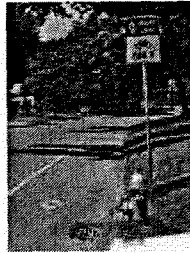
- Improve traffic flow within/between neighborhoods and throughout the community
- Develop a comprehensive circulation system serving local as well as regional needs for existing and future developments within the Southside area.



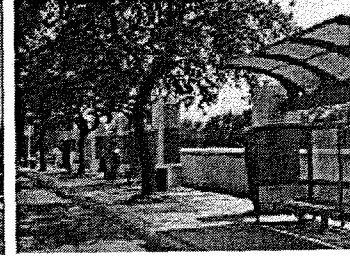
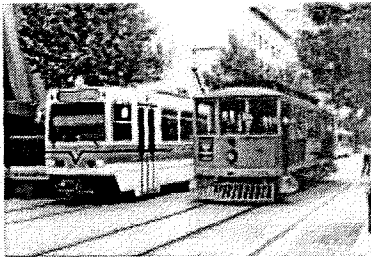
TRANSPORTATION PLAN

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

- Promote alternative modes of transportation and related facilities including pedestrian and bicycle routes, public transit and others.

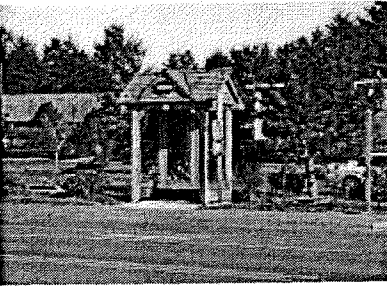
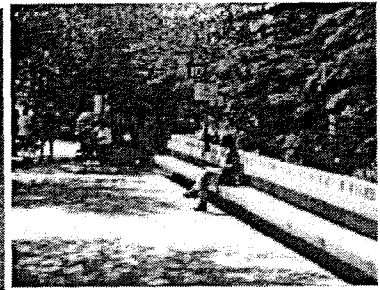
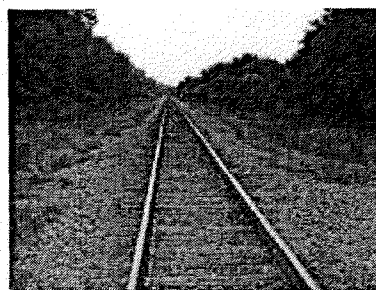
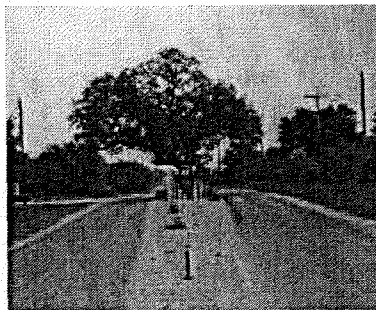


- Expand public transit to encourage greater use of transit, reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, conserve energy, and provide better transportation for those who are unable to, or chose not to drive.



ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

- Provide for the increasing demand for transportation facilities while preserving and enhancing the attractiveness of the environment
- Improve safety conditions of rail lines running through the Southside Community Plan Study area.



TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Community Speaks:

Construction

Must incorporate new east-west connections

New roadway locations should correspond with desired development

Identify specific connections

(e.g., Pleasanton, Mauerman to 410, Watson to IH35, Heinze (continue n-s))

Address new bridge needs (e.g., FM 1937)

Capacity/Congestion

Analyze current and potential vehicular roadway capacities

Analyze existing composting truck and flea market traffic

Address impact of Toyota truck traffic on roadway system

Character

Incorporate sidewalks into road construction design

Use rural parkways or boulevard with planting strip & trees

Incorporate bike lanes as integral part of roadway

Address impact of Toyota on character of area

Street appearance/character is future defining feature

(need screening, no billboards, monument signage only)

Connections

Explore connection alternatives to Toyota (roadway, rail)

Arterial infrastructure connections to local communities

Street connectivity (n/s vs. e/w)

Public transit (e.g., bus, bus rapid transit, commuter rail)

Provide connections to Toyota and A&M

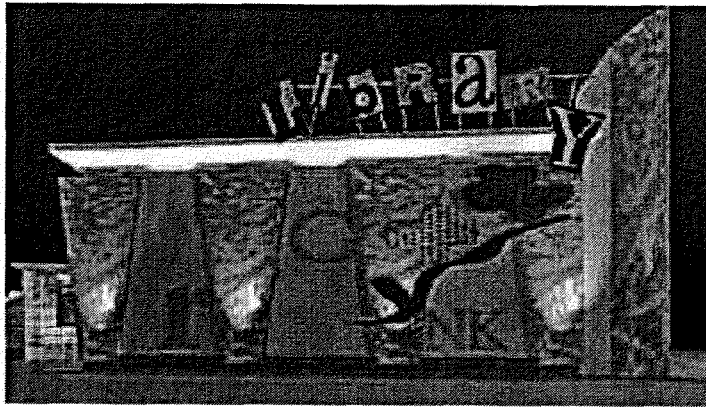
Environment

Integrate solar powered, covered bus shelters

Address Toyota buffer zone concerns (location, environment)

Address flood control/drainage problems (Brooks @ Goliad St.)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN



A traditional community with an entrepreneurial spirit, yet a somewhat neglected one, is positioned for great strides in educational and other community facility opportunities.

EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

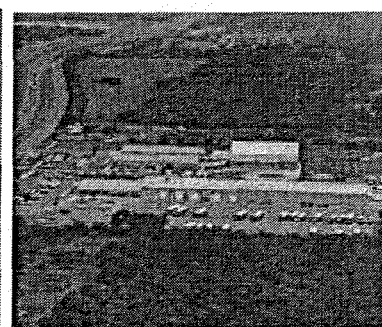
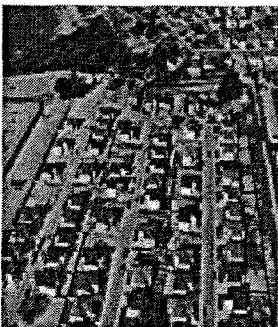


- **Locate a Texas A&M University in the area**
- **Locate schools and libraries in Neighborhood Centers**
 - Set aside infrastructure/land for schools within neighborhoods to allow children to walk to school
 - Locate libraries in neighborhood centers to serve a growing population as neighborhoods develop



EXPAND EMERGENCY AND MEDICAL SERVICES

- **Provide medical facilities, health and safety services, and police and fire services**
 - Consider the location of emergency and medical facilities in centrally located neighborhood centers

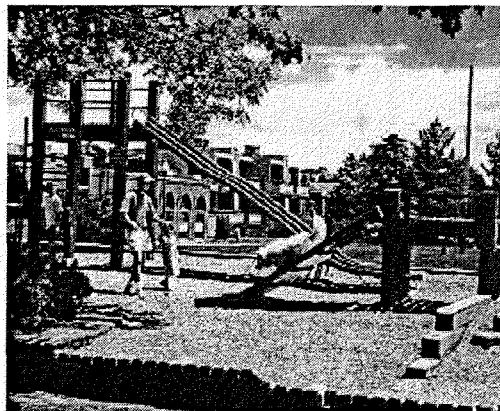
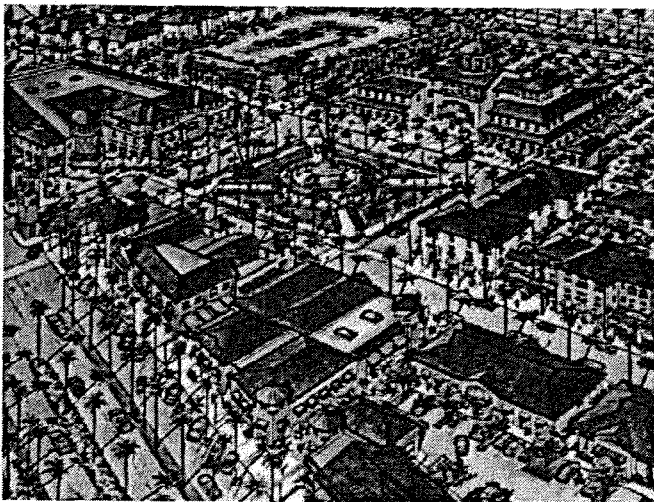


COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

PRESERVE NATURAL CHARACTER OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

- **Provide open space and parks to provide recreational opportunities for families**

- Provide open spaces in town squares
- Develop neighborhood parks
- Provide for hike and bike trails along the Medina River and other waterways



The Community Speaks:

Need for community centers/public services (libraries, medical facilities, health & safety, police & fire)

Locate neighborhood schools that provide connectivity to residential areas

Set aside future infrastructure for school planning needs

Provide hierarchy of open space/neighborhood parks/town squares, hike & bike trails along Medina, and recreational opportunities for children

PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN



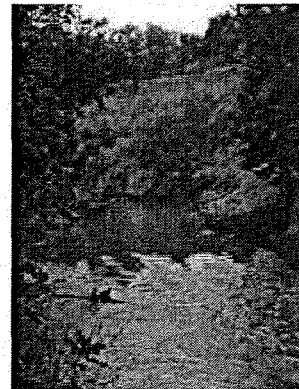
South San Antonio faces an increase in population and urbanization. Without a plan in place for development, it will threaten rural areas and eliminate access to open space.

PROTECT AND PRESERVE NATURAL RESOURCES

(I.E., WETLANDS, STREAMS, LAKES, STEEP SLOPES, WOODLANDS, SIGNIFICANT WILDLIFE HABITATS)

- **Encourage retention of the 100-year floodplain as natural drainage ways without permanent construction, unnecessary straightening, bank clearing or channeling.**

- ? • Develop controls on alterations of the natural flood plains, their protective barriers and stream channels.
- Prevent the construction of barriers that will divert flood waters and subject other lands to greater flood hazards.
- Establish control criteria on development that would cause greater erosion or potential flood damage such as grading, dredging, excavation, and filling.
- Promote alternative stormwater management techniques that preserve the natural characteristics of significant 100-year flood plains.
- Identify significant waterfowl and other riparian habitats within the planning area

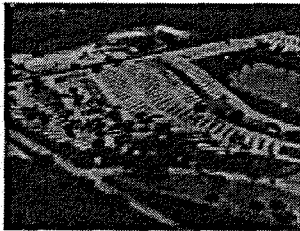


- **Direct intense land development and infrastructure, away from significant natural (including farms and ranches) and cultural resources (including archeological and historic sites) in order to retain the rural and historic character of the planning area.**

- Reduce infrastructure, housing, and construction that require more pavement, wetland crossings, grading of trees and natural areas, and maintenance from lawn and landscaping maintenance.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN

- Promote the conservation of natural landscape buffers to enhance the visual experience of driving along scenic corridors.
- Provide visual relief in the urban environment through preservation of outstanding natural and built landscapes and open space development techniques.



• Mitigate negative impact on important Southside natural and agricultural resources caused by new development within the area.

- Limit impervious cover for new development.
- Develop buffering requirements to filter runoff water from chemicals that would be detrimental to nearby natural resources.
- Prioritize resource conservation based on criteria, (e.g., soil quality) for existing farms and other unique natural resources.
- Conservation efforts for buffering should target preserving contiguous tracts of open space and agricultural land for.

DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN A DIVERSIFIED, BALANCED SYSTEM OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES BASED ON COMMUNITY NEEDS.

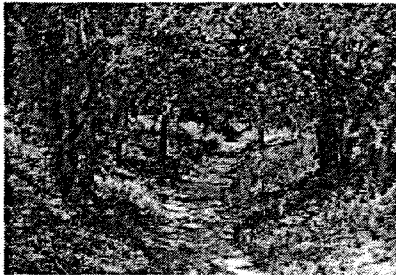
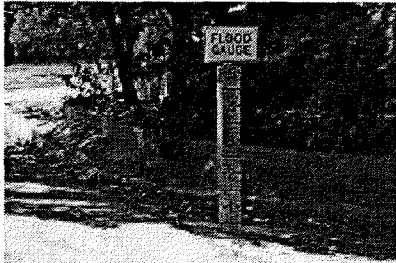
- Use linear parks to connect and serve the entire planning area, while also serving as community focal point.
- Establish a process that encourages civic participation in the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of the Parks and recreational facilities.
- Broaden park acquisition and management priorities to include natural areas and to increase passive recreational opportunities.
- Plan and develop a system of multi-purpose linear parks and greenways.



PARKS & OPEN SPACE PLAN

- **Promote the adaptation of floodplain property as an interconnected network of parks and hike/bike greenways and corridors.**

- Establish criteria to identify, analyze and classify open space preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities.



- Develop criteria for high standards of access, development, use and maintenance of recreational open space.
- Identify uses that promote safety to human life, and property due to flooding and reduce the increase in flood heights or velocities.
- Develop open space areas that provide linkage between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other recreational/cultural facilities including creekway systems that can support trail development and interconnected parkways or linear parks.

The Community Speaks:

Green space corridors along waterways and roads

Preserve views, preserve trees

Do not concentrate green space, spread it throughout the area

Buffers around Mitchell Lake

Parks with amenities in the neighborhoods

Hike-bike trails along Medina River

Create hierarchy of open spaces

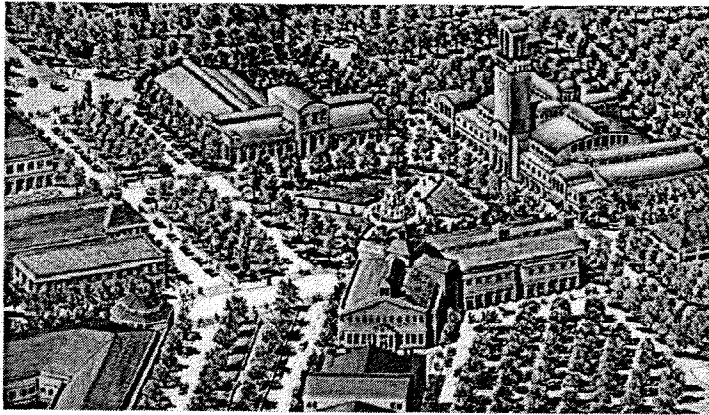
Preserve waterways and floodplains

Protect aquifers, wildlife habitat corridors, and natural riverbanks

Allow access to waterways

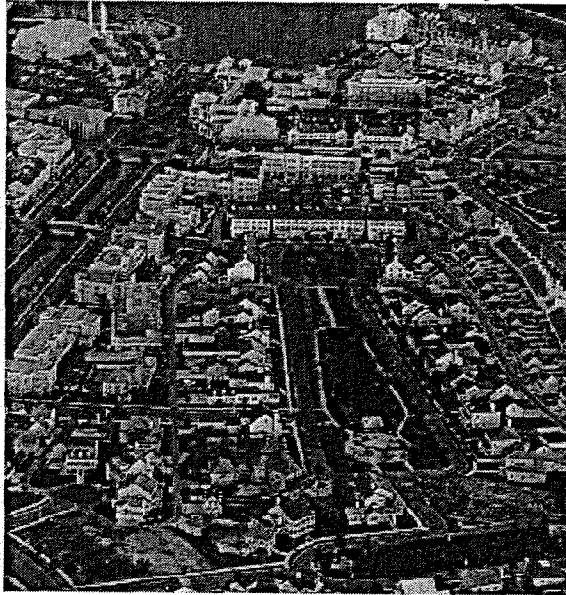
Environmental tourism at Mitchell Lake, Mission Espada, and the Land Heritage Institute

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

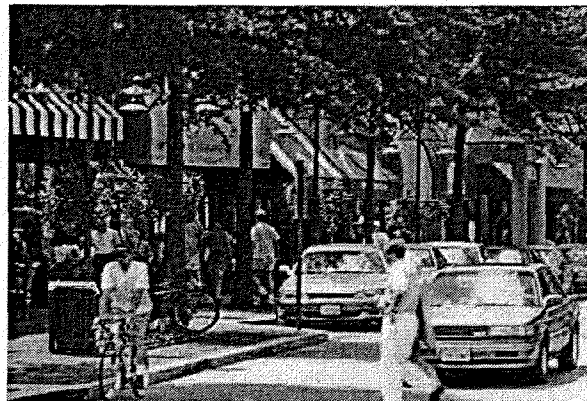


To date, extensive development has not occurred in far south San Antonio; a great opportunity now exists to plan a sustainable pattern of unified development that promotes a healthy lifestyle, protects the environment, preserves the culture and decreases flooding and traffic congestion.

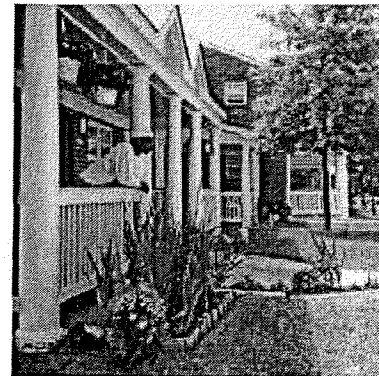
Develop sustainable, compact neighborhoods and centralized commercial areas that promote a sense of community, reflect the character of the region, integrate the environment, are economically mixed, and are pedestrian and transit friendly



- Provide permanently protected agricultural greenbelts, wildlife corridors, or buffered waterways to clearly define edges to each community

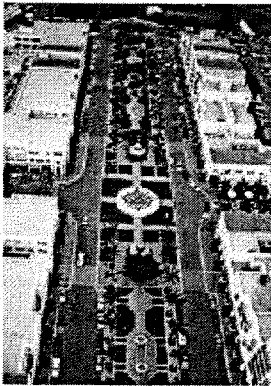
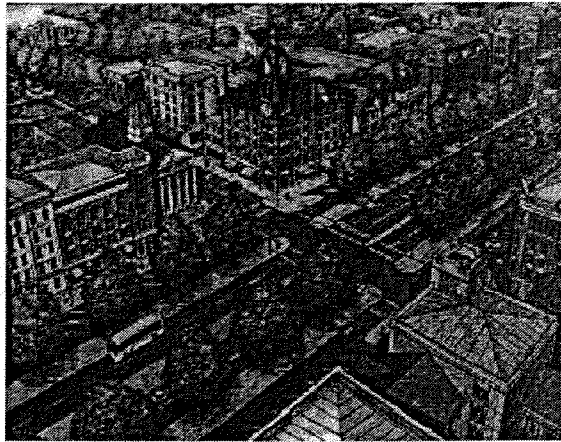


- Provide mixed-use neighborhood centers consisting of residences, retail, small office, and neighborhood services that are accessible by walking, biking or driving from nearby housing.
- Provide a wide variety of quality housing types, sizes, and price ranges in close proximity to one another, including the possibility of mixing them on the same street.



URBAN DESIGN PLAN

- Locate civic and public buildings and public spaces at prominent sites within the neighborhood.
- Locate an ample number of conveniently located public squares, greens and parks to encourage frequent use.
- Integrate the natural environment with the urban environment by including greenbelts, parks and trails to provide green connectivity between neighborhoods, schools and institutions.



Integrate regional centers that include commercial, retail, office and institutional uses into the fabric of the community.

- Cluster high intensity commercial development at major intersections to reduce unsightly "strip development."
- Provide sufficient density to support frequent mass transit service at major office/commercial/institutional/residential nodes.

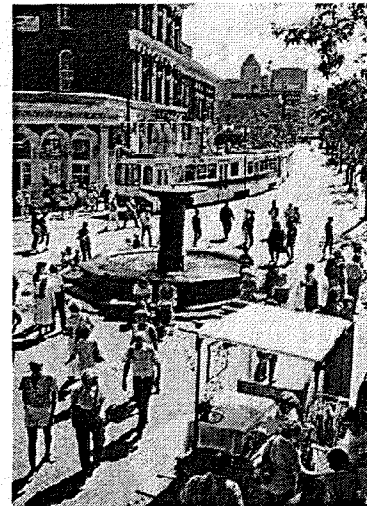
Ensure a pleasant environment by providing street enhancements, plentiful landscaping, unobtrusive signage, ample pleasant lighting, enhanced transit stops, wide sidewalks and safe bicycle lanes.

- Design and coordinate a public enhancements system that respects the character of south San Antonio and encourages art to be incorporated in public spaces.
- Create interconnected, attractive neighborhood streets that have wide sidewalks with tree-lined planting strips.



URBAN DESIGN PLAN

- Create design guidelines for development that promotes safety and a quality pedestrian environment, addressing such things as front porches, recessed garages, limited curb cuts, building setback, etc.
- Integrate accommodations for future transit options in public and civic spaces.
- Incorporate landscaping as an integral priority in every level of design.
- Respect the natural environment through the use of



The Community Speaks:

The Town Center

Locate larger town centers at major intersections.

The Neighborhood Center

Neighborhood centers with schools, commercial shopping, and personal services

Community centers with public services such as libraries, medical facilities, and health and safety services

Neighborhood centers with schools, commercial shopping and personal services

The Neighborhood

Traditional neighborhood development

Sidewalks

Public art

Housing

Diverse, quality housing

Discourage manufactured housing, encourage high-end housing

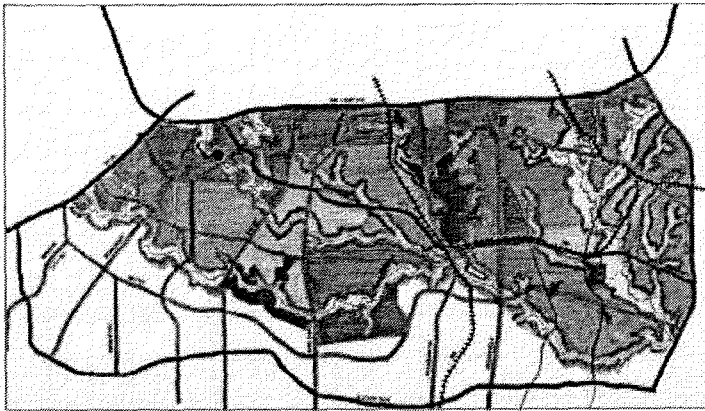
Connectivity

Neighborhood connectivity

Street connectivity

Connectivity between housing and schools.

LAND USE PLAN



A model of balanced growth for south San Antonio can be implemented through progressive land use concepts that challenge current development patterns.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Limit urban sprawl through promotion of:
 - Jobs/Housing balance
 - Regional Retail Development
 - Compact Development
- Support transit oriented development
- Promote low impact industry, high technology and bio-technology, and international trade
- Ensure enforcement of clean industry regulations and noise standards
- Protect floodplains and preserve natural river and creek banks with buffer zones
- Create wildlife habitat corridors

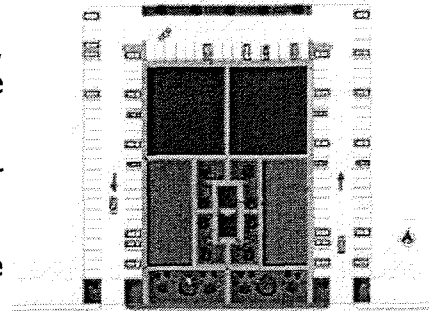


LAND USE ALLOCATIONS

- Preserve as much as 25% of the developable land to maintain the area's rural character and retain agricultural practices
- Provide for large lot and cluster development in rural areas
- Create green space corridors along waterways

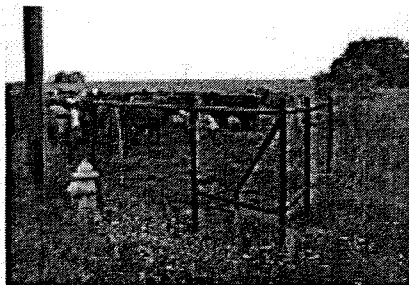
LAND USE PLAN

- Establish town centers near regional commercial nodes
- Concentrate commercial uses in regional, village, and neighborhood nodes to prevent strip development
- Limit industrial uses and concentrate along major highways and arterials
- Ensure buffer zones and transitional areas between industrial and other uses
- Preserve historical and archeological resources
- Develop parkways with hike & bike trails that link to greenways



HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

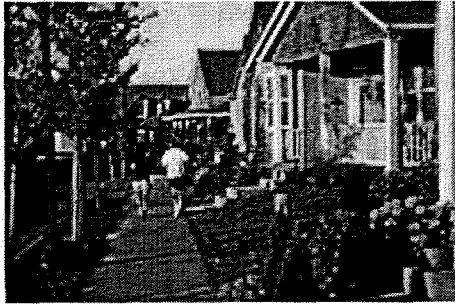
- Encourage a diversity of housing types (single and multi family, affordable and high income)
- Develop neighborhood centers with nearby schools
- Encourage traditional neighborhood character



- Establish community centers that provide public services (health, safety, police and fire)
- Develop town squares and neighborhood parks
- Preserve rural communities
- Expand educational opportunities - Palo Alto College, potential for a Texas A&M University campus, bookstore, etc.
- Continue revitalization of the South San Antonio neighborhoods north of Loop 410

LAND USE PLAN

COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE



- Promote family-oriented commercial development that reflects the character of the region
- Create a regional character incorporating building styles reflecting tradition and nature
- Retain rural roadways promoting scenic views through natural buffers
- Promote tourism capitalizing on Mitchell Lake, Mission Espada, Medina Park, and the Land Heritage Institute
- Provide more restrictive sign standards using only monument signs and prohibiting off-premise signs on corridors
- Screen and buffer industrial uses such as salvage yards



IMPLEMENTATION

Regulatory tools

- Unified Development Code
- Special Districts
- Overlay Districts
- Appearance Controls

Public Infrastructure Improvements

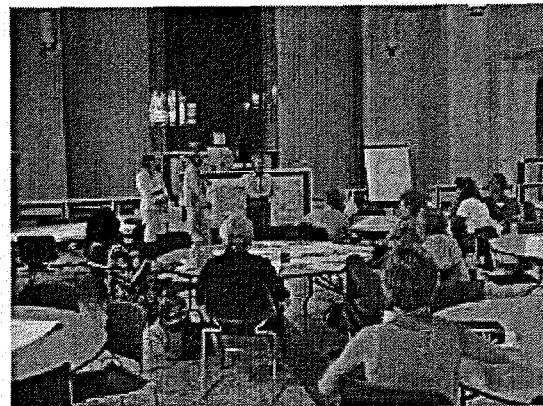
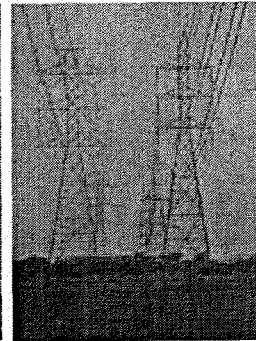
- CIP

Public/Private Partnerships

- Toyota

Citizen Participation

- Sustained Citizen Involvement



LAND USE PLAN

The Community Speaks:

Preserve Rural character

- *Agricultural and ranch land preservation*
- *Allow for farm and ranch*
- *Large lot sizes with low density*

Open Space

- *Control development in the flood plain*

Industrial

- *Encourage high tech, international trade, bio-tech, industries*
- *Encourage low impact and clean industries*
- *Tighten regulations*
- *Concern about noise pollution*
- *Buffer zone between industrial and other uses*
- *Concentrated industrial zones*
- *Keep large steel salvage yards*
- *Blighted areas and salvage yards need clean up*
- *Concern on location of utilities (power lines, gas mains, oil fields)*

Regulations

- *Tighten industrial regulations*
- *Concern about noise pollution*
- *Protect water quality within industrial areas*
- *Current unregulated development is not ideal and leads to incompatibility of uses*
- *Screening visual blight at ROW*