



# Strategic Historic Preservation Plan San Antonio, Texas



Prepared for:  
**City of San Antonio**

Prepared by:  
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Urban Development Services

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **Executive Summary**

In 2009, the City of San Antonio initiated a public planning process to develop a Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. The Plan's central purpose was to create a set of achievable goals and strategies for strengthening the City's historic preservation program. Specific objectives of the Plan include promoting historic preservation as a tool for revitalizing neighborhoods and commercial districts, enhancing tourism and cultural arts activities, creating new jobs and businesses, and managing effectively the overall design and development of areas and districts within the City of San Antonio. Most of all, the Plan's overall objective is to inspire different stakeholders, including residents, business owners, developers, economic development groups, civic organizations and neighborhood associations, to share in a common ethic and belief that preservation is an essential element to the future growth and prosperity of San Antonio.

### **Plan Approach**

A comprehensive approach to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the current historic preservation program and in devising solutions and strategies for short and long-term actions was utilized by the City for this planning process. Current preservation planning activities and the operations of the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) were examined along with how preservation policies were integrated within the City's planning and economic development initiatives. Opportunities for strengthening existing partnerships and forging new ones among private sector advocacy groups, civic organizations and neighborhood associations were also explored. More novel strategies to achieve preservation planning goals and objectives were also discussed and tested during the planning process. For example, form-based zoning was examined as a useful, practical tool in addressing the issue of encouraging compatible development in and around historic districts. Last, the consultant team conducted research and comparative analysis with other major U.S. cities to measure and assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of San Antonio's preservation program

In terms of public engagement, the City of San Antonio conducted a series of workshops and stakeholder group interview sessions to gauge attitudes and opinions regarding preservation issues and potential planning strategies. A Steering Committee was also appointed by the City to help guide the Plan's development and provide critical feedback on potential planning goals and strategies. A broad range of viewpoints and stakeholder interests were represented on the Committee, which provided useful insights and perspectives on significant issues and concerns.

### Current Conditions

A “State of the City” assessment of current preservation planning activities was conducted during the first segment of the plan development process. As part of this assessment, significant planning issues were examined including OHP and HDRC operations, the historic preservation provisions within the Unified Development Code, historic resources survey and designation activities, design review processes, current preservation incentives and disincentives, and existing education and advocacy efforts undertaken by the OHP and other private-sector partners. Conclusions from the State of the City assessment point to a relatively effective preservation program, especially in terms of the OHP’s regulatory powers, but significant concerns such as various threats to historic resources and the need to fully integrate preservation within the City’s planning and development processes need to be addressed. There is also a recognized need to promote historic preservation as a “growth” and revitalization strategy in San Antonio’s inner-core historic districts and neighborhoods.

### Plan Goals + Strategies

Plan goals and strategies were developed during the second, “visioning phase” of the plan development process presents two principal goals. Presented below are the key goals and strategy areas presented in the Strategic Historic Preservation Plan:

#### City Planning

Incorporating historic preservation elements, such as resource surveys and historic district designations, into neighborhood and district plans should be ongoing activities to ensure that historic resources are identified and reinvestment in them encouraged. Specific strategies include:

- 1. Create one set of goals and objectives that become the City’s official vision and policies for historic preservation.* Two overarching goals and seven planning objectives are presented to guide City and private planning and development initiatives within San Antonio. The first goal is to preserve and protect San Antonio’s historic districts, places, structures, buildings, landscapes, and archaeology. The second is to strengthen the City of San Antonio’s reputation and significance as a special place of American history and culture. Seven preservation planning objectives are also presented.
- 2. Incorporate historic preservation elements in all citywide, district, and neighborhood planning initiatives.* The City of San Antonio has a strong tradition of neighborhood and district-based planning and many recent planning projects have included preservation elements. This tradition should continue and enhanced to include activities

such as undertaking resource surveys, cataloging endangered properties, considering historic public spaces and landscapes within neighborhood plans, and requiring interpretation of archaeological resources on public properties.

*3. Promote preservation as a “green” and sustainable planning and development approach.* Preserving and reusing historic buildings is an effective strategy for achieving sustainability since such resources have measurable environmental values. Historic preservation’s role in achieving the City’s sustainability goals should be promoted.

*4. Plan for the future of key historic areas of the City.* Several significant historic districts need specific preservation attention and assistance from the City. These districts include the River North neighborhood, Market Square, the HemisFair and LaVillita districts, and the outer edges of downtown adjacent to important historic districts such as King William.

### City Zoning

Specific recommendations are made to improve the organization, readability and overall effectiveness of the historic preservation provisions found within the City’s Unified Development Code (UDC). Other city zoning strategies focus on design guidelines and promoting more appropriate development in and around local historic districts and other important areas such as the Missions National Historical Park.

*1. Revise and consolidate all related rules and regulations within the Unified Development Code to improve the effectiveness of the Office of Historic Preservation and Historic Design Review Commission, and the Code’s overall readability.* Recommendations are made to consolidate and revise San Antonio’s historic preservation code such as specifying the types of alterations, repairs, and maintenance that can be approved administratively by the OHP, consolidating district and landmark designation criteria, and revising owner consent requirements for neighborhood-initiated landmark/district nominations.

*2. Consolidate and create standard design guidelines to facilitate Office of Historic Preservation and Historic Design Review Commission reviews of public and private development initiatives and activities.* A comprehensive set of design guidelines is needed to facilitate a review process that ensures higher quality of rehabilitation for local landmarks and resources within historic districts. Additional guidelines could also be developed for individual historic districts seeking to address more particular design management issues. Protecting viewsheds into local historic districts could be and additional design management element within design guidelines.

*3. Ensure zoning in neighborhoods and commercial districts promotes the preservation of and reuse of historic resources.* Various zoning provisions within the UDC should be revised where necessary to ensure that they do not conflict with adopted preservation goals and guidelines within a historic district.

*4. Consider form-based zoning within and nearby local historic districts.* Form-based zoning can be potential tool in encouraging more appropriate development in and around historic districts and resources. The implementation of a form-based code within the River North district is an important test to determine if such zoning can facilitate development that respects historic resources and the surrounding environment.

### **Economic Development**

Historic preservation should receive an equal or comparable consideration in all City-driven economic development initiatives. Furthermore, implementing historic preservation-based economic development initiatives should be high priorities for revitalizing the City's inner-core neighborhoods and commercial districts.

*1. Increase public awareness that historic preservation contributes to the City's economic development.* Communication activities that promote historic preservation's economic impact to the public at large should be undertaken. Publishing an economic impact study is one such activity.

*2. Consider preservation actions as integral components of existing and potential business district and neighborhood revitalization programs.* Existing City-sponsored initiatives that encourage historic preservation-based economic development should be expanded and enhanced. On such initiative is the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization program; expanded efforts in heritage and cultural tourism is another. Historic preservation activities should also be incorporated in priority reinvestment planning areas that have been designated by the City's Planning and Development Services Department.

*3. Create new preservation initiatives that facilitate rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources, revitalization of neighborhoods and commercial districts, and creation of new jobs and small businesses.* Consideration should be given to assisting local neighborhood associations, housing groups and development corporations in undertaking self-initiated building rehabilitation and reuse projects. Such assistance can include providing gap financing or in assembling the financing package needed to make a development deal viable. Potential partnerships with housing development groups should also be explored.

### Historic Resources

Understanding which existing resource inventories need updating and what new areas of San Antonio should be inventoried are important priorities for the City and the Office of Historic Preservation. Additional historic and cultural contexts that have not been considered in past surveying activities should also receive high priority along with identifying endangered and distressed properties that need intervention. Making survey information available through on-line portals and published documents for public access should also be high priorities..

- 1. Update existing surveys and conduct new inventories of historic resources throughout the City.* An ongoing survey and inventory program is critical to gaining a clear understanding of the number of historic and archaeological resources that should be protected, especially if they are and threatened. Specific strategy recommendations include incorporating survey work within neighborhood or district planning activities, prioritizing existing surveys for re-evaluation and re-survey, and undertaking additional thematic surveys that document historic and cultural contexts not explored before.
- 2. Use the new information to designate additional districts and target public and private resources.* To reduce uncertainty for property owners, developers, and City agencies regarding the eligibility of historic resources for designation, a list of eligible historic resources should be maintained and promoted by the City. The City should also prioritize eligible historic resources for designation.
- 3. Use the new information to create an “early warning” system to increase awareness and action regarding endangered sites, buildings, landscapes, and views.* Identifying and cataloging historic resources that are at risk for demolition or loss should be a high priority for the City of San Antonio. Implementing effective intervention actions identified through the cataloging process will also need to be collaborative effort among relevant City agencies, such as Code Compliance, the Fire, Police and Health Departments, the Dangerous Structures Determination Board, and other civic and non-profit partners.
- 4. Make surveys more accessible to the public to promote a greater understanding of significant historic resources.* Survey information should be made more widely available to the public through online access and published survey documents.

### Incentives

Incentives play an important role in encouraging the rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources. Existing incentive programs should be enhanced and new ones created to address specific preservation issues such as endangered properties or to facilitate the adaptive use of

“white elephant” buildings. Disincentives should also be understood and eliminated as obstacles to achieving preservation and revitalization goals.

*1. Enhance the effectiveness of existing historic preservation incentives and create additional programs that encourage reinvestment in historic resources.* Several new incentive programs are recommended for possible development and implementation. These include a special incentive fund for endangered historic resources, a city-wide façade improvement program, permit fee waivers and leveraging the use of tax-increment finance monies to encourage historic building rehabilitations.

*2. Streamline and expand promotion of preservation programs and incentives to property owners, builders, developers, and investors.* Information brochures, workshops and other marketing materials should be developed to inform property owners and developers on available incentives.

*3. Determine and remove disincentives and obstacles to preserving and reusing historic resources.* It appears that some City requirements, such as various permit and right-of-way closure fees for building projects for instance, can act as disincentives to investment in historic resources. A review of possible preservation disincentives should be undertaken by City agencies.

### **Education + Advocacy**

Promoting the importance of historic preservation in safeguarding the City’s unique heritage and in revitalizing neighborhoods should be ongoing activities. Implementing a comprehensive program of education and advocacy initiatives can also be opportunities to forge critical partnerships with other non-profit groups and civic organizations.

*1. Undertake a comprehensive outreach effort to increase awareness of the tremendous value of San Antonio’s architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources, along with the benefits of historic preservation.* Several outreach initiatives are recommended including the development of a preservation lecture series, contractor training in green preservation practices, and “rehabarama” home showcases. Establishing a history museum to be a repository for City archives, artifacts, and other items, is another key strategy recommendation.

*2. Harness public and private resources to market the numerous incentives and programs available to property owners, builders, and developers.* Recognizing the value of historic, archaeological and cultural resources within San Antonio is one way in which to encourage their long-term preservation. Strategy recommendations include organizing an annual historic preservation conference, developing walking tours and podcasts, and creating various educational materials programs for the local schools.

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# INTRODUCTION

### Plan Purpose

The City of San Antonio and its Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) engaged the consultant team of The Lakota Group based in Chicago, Illinois, and Urban Development Services of San Antonio, Texas, to undertake the development of a Strategic Historic Preservation Plan. The primary purpose of the Plan is to create a long-term vision and a set of practical, achievable strategies and programs for improving the City's historic preservation program while building a more broad-based historic preservation ethic within the San Antonio community at-large.

The Plan also seeks to build on past successes by acknowledging what roles historic preservation will play going forward in shaping the City's urban form and character, in contributing to the City's overall economic development, and in sustaining a high quality of life for all San Antonio residents, businesses, and visitors.

The historic preservation movement has a long history in San Antonio. Its early preservation efforts centered on the protection of its most prized architectural and cultural resources, most notably those of the Spanish Colonial period and its famous missions, including the Misión San Antonio de Valero - the Alamo.

Over the years, as preservation efforts focused on protecting other historic resources, such as important commercial and residential structures both within the Downtown district and the surrounding neighborhoods, the City, along with private sector partners such as the San Antonio Conservation Society, have had to develop new tools and mechanisms to preserve such resources. One such tool was the adoption of San Antonio's first historic preservation ordinance in 1939, which protected La Villita, an original Spanish civilian settlement associated with Mission Valero, from demolition. This makes San Antonio's historic preservation program one of the oldest in the nation since the first municipal historic preservation ordinance was adopted by the City of Charleston, South Carolina, in 1931.

Today, the Office of Historic Preservation manages and oversees 25 local historic districts, and approximately 2,000 individually designated local landmarks and over 1,900 archaeological sites. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) and OHP have expanded beyond historic resource protection and management and into urban design review of new development along San Antonio's other most well-known historic and environmental resource - the Riverwalk. The HDRC also conducts design review for the City's public art and design enhancement program.

Interestingly, the City of San Antonio has not adopted nor implemented a comprehensive historic preservation plan, even with the overall development of its historic preservation program over the decades



*The Alamo - a central story of San Antonio.*



*This Place Matters-part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation campaign to highlight historic resources throughout the country.*

and its worldwide reputation as a historic city. Therefore, the process of creating the City's first historic preservation plan represents a timely, unique opportunity for the San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation and its private-sector partners to assess the effectiveness of the current program and to craft a set of action strategies that address critical preservation planning, resource protection, and urban design management issues. Adopting a historic preservation plan will place San Antonio in the forefront with several major U.S. cities that have recently developed plans that integrate historic preservation within overall planning, economic development, and revitalization initiatives.

Clearly, the integration of historic preservation within planning and economic development practices is a central challenge in most American cities seeking to promote and sustain quality neighborhoods and commercial districts. Protecting historic resources from demolition and loss through policy and regulatory means should certainly be a fundamental preservation planning strategy for any municipality. However, a city seeking a more comprehensive approach to preserving, rehabilitating and reusing its historic resources must go beyond just the usual municipal-led preservation planning practices and look toward engaging broader segments of the community in various other initiatives related to economic development, education and advocacy, and partnership building. For example, can partnerships with other entities be forged to undertake specific educational and outreach efforts? Can such partnerships guide the development of a tailored set of incentives to encourage the adaptive use of downtown historic skyscrapers or the rehabilitation of threatened residential and commercial buildings in a historic district? These and other questions should be addressed through a well-researched and prepared historic preservation plan.

A new historic preservation plan for San Antonio is an important opportunity for the City to address the following:

- Review and assess historic resource surveys and inventories to determine and prioritize new historic district and individual landmark designations.
- Identify future survey and preservation planning activities that address other historic contexts and information about properties or resources that share a common historic, architectural, and archaeological significance, geographic area or time period.
- Improve the operations of the Historic and Design Review Commission and the Office of Historic Preservation, including staffing and budget levels and designation and certificate of appropriateness review procedures.

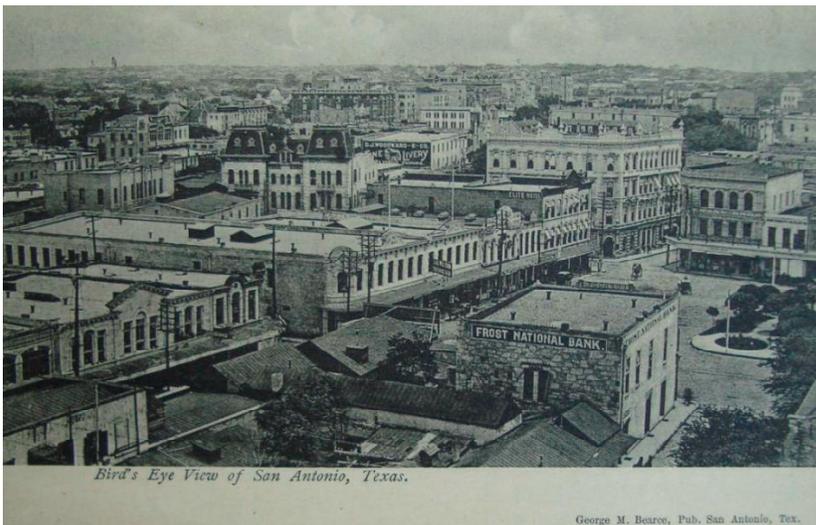
# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 2: Introduction

- Suggest revisions to the San Antonio Unified Development Code, especially Article VI: Historic Preservation and Urban Design, and other related provisions within the City Code.
- Identify potential partner organizations and entities and determine possible roles and responsibilities in implementing broader, more encompassing historic preservation education and advocacy initiatives.
- Establish a set of sound historic preservation goals and policies that can be better integrated within the City's planning, economic development, and code enforcement operations.
- Develop new incentives that encourage and facilitate the rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic commercial buildings, homes and other buildings and structures.
- Identify the need for additional design guidelines and other design management tools to encourage appropriate changes to historic resources and appropriate new developments within historic districts.
- Create an implementation strategy that prioritizes specific actions to be taken to change, strengthen, and promote the historic preservation program. The implementation strategy should identify parties responsible for each action as well as potential mechanisms to fund implementation.

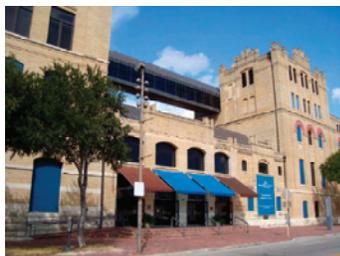


*Joske Pavilion, Brackenridge Park*



*Downtown San Antonio, approximately, 1880s.*

## Planning Process



Lone Star Brewery Complex

The planning process for this Strategic Historic Preservation Plan involves three distinct phases: an assessment of the current historic preservation program, a “visioning” phase where preliminary strategies and preservation planning recommendations are developed and tested, and a final plan-making phase in which final planning goals, strategies and implementation steps are determined and adopted by the City of San Antonio.

### **Phase One: City Assessment**

The first phase, which began in February 2009, is a comprehensive assessment of the current historic preservation program. The Office of Historic Preservation, Strategic Plan Steering Committee and consultant team have reviewed relevant preservation planning documents and policies, identified potential new historic contexts and themes, assessed the effectiveness of existing incentive programs, identified potential partnership opportunities with other groups and organizations, and defined challenges and opportunities in achieving historic preservation planning goals. The first phase also included various focus group and stakeholder interview sessions as well as a community workshop to gain public input and consensus regarding critical preservation planning issues. Document analyses and results of the interview sessions meetings were incorporated into a “*State of the City Report*”, which summarized the current condition of historic preservation in San Antonio. Planning activities to date have included the following:

#### **Project Start Meeting (February 10, 2009)**

A meeting with City Staff and the Strategic Plan Steering Committee was conducted to initiate the planning process, define preservation planning challenges and opportunities, and define initial planning goals. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee is comprised of 30 members representing various City offices and agencies, civic groups and professional organizations, neighborhood associations and other non-profit historic preservation advocacy groups.

#### **Reconnaissance Tour (February 11–12, 2009)**

The consultant team, along with City Staff, conducted a reconnaissance tour of various existing and potential historic districts around San Antonio. Key sites such as the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Pearl Brewery redevelopment, and Riverwalk were also visited.

#### **Interview Sessions (February 11–12, 2009)**

Several interview sessions were conducted with various City Departments, including Capital Improvements Management Services, City Manager’s

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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## Section 2: Introduction

Office, Downtown Operations, Housing and Neighborhood Services, and Parks and Recreation. Additional interviews were conducted with Office of Historic Preservation staff and members of the Historic and Design Review Commission.

### **Community Workshop #1 (March 11, 2009)**

A community workshop was conducted with approximately 80 civic leaders, residents, and business/property owners providing input and feedback regarding historic preservation issues.

### **Interview Sessions (March 12–13, 2009)**

The Lakota Team conducted additional interview sessions with various stakeholder groups, including the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, San Antonio Conservation Society and City Public Works and Environmental Policy Departments. The Team also conducted an interview session with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other Texas Historical Commission staff.

### **Interview Sessions (April 9–10, 2009)**

Additional interview sessions were conducted with various stakeholder organizations and entities including various neighborhood associations, the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Visitors and Convention Bureau, Board of the San Antonio Conservation Society and the Office of Historic Preservation staff.

### **State of the City Report**

Following the completion of the Phase 1 analysis and assessment, the Lakota Team prepared the *State of the City Report*, which summarized the strengths, challenges and constraints to the existing San Antonio historic preservation program.

## **Phase Two: Visioning**

The second phase of the planning process, the “visioning” phase was conducted to explore ideas and concepts for specific historic preservation planning strategies and initiatives including the identification of landmarking and historic districting priorities, enhancements to OHP and HDRC operations, new financial incentives, partnership and outreach activities, and economic development initiatives.

### **Interview Sessions and Community Workshop #2 (April 29–30, 2009)**

The Lakota Team conducted meetings with City department directors, the Steering Committee, and Office of Historic Preservation staff to



*Olmos Park Terrace Historic District*



*HemisFair Park*

discuss critical historic preservation planning issues and preliminary plan strategies. A community workshop was conducted with approximately 40 community stakeholders providing input and suggestions regarding preliminary preservation planning strategies and recommendations.

### **Phase Three: Plan Development**

The third and final phase of the planning process was the development of the formal plan document that describes preferred historic preservation planning goals and strategies based on the community's vision and consensus for a strengthened and enhanced City of San Antonio historic preservation program.

#### **Interview Sessions and Community Workshop #3 (June 30, 2009)**

The Lakota Team conducted meetings with various City department directors, the Steering Committee, and Office of Historic Preservation staff to discuss the preliminary historic preservation plan, goals, and strategies. A community workshop was conducted with approximately 80 community stakeholders providing input and suggestions regarding preliminary preservation planning strategies and recommendations.

#### **Draft Plan and B Session Presentation**

The Lakota Team completed a draft Historic Preservation Plan on July 25 for Steering Committee review and was posted in the project website for public comment. A second draft was prepared on July 29 for distribution to the San Antonio City Council. A presentation on the Plan's major goals and strategies was given to the City Council during the August 5, 2009, B Session by OHP staff and members of the Lakota Team.

#### **Final Strategic Plan**

The final Strategic Historic Preservation Plan was adopted by the City Council on August 20, 2009.



## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

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### City Architecture and Historic Resources

In the preface to the 1986 edition of the *Guide to San Antonio's Architecture*, the editors assert, in a rather emphatic manner, that San Antonio's architecture is imbued with a unique, "epic" dimension, one that is not found nor measured in any other major American city. "Epic" is one word to describe the profound uniqueness of the architectural and archaeological resources that have been preserved and maintained over the decades by the citizens of San Antonio, such as the Alamo and the other Missions that are physical testaments to the birth of the City.

Alternatively, perhaps it is the dramatic forces of history that have transformed the City from its early settlement as a frontier military and missionary outpost to a modern metropolis of almost 1.4 million people that best reflects the epic quality of San Antonio's architecture and built resources. For others, it is the diverse, exotic amalgam of nations and cultures — Hispanic, German, French, American - the people that settled and developed San Antonio that should be celebrated in the preservation of significant architectural and archaeological resources. Still, many more believe it is the craftsmanship and distinctiveness of the architectural design itself, perhaps a high-style Victorian house in the King William Historic District for example, that contributes to the City's significant architecture.

Regardless of how one defines the epic qualities of San Antonio's historic resources, there is no question that the story of San Antonio can only be experienced and understood through the homes, commercial buildings, churches, institutions and archaeological resources that have remained through the decades with the citizens of San Antonio.

San Antonio's story begins in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with the exploration of the San Antonio River area by Spanish explorers and missionaries, an area that was once called Yanaguana — "refreshing waters" by the Native Americans in the region. In 1691, the Teran Expedition accompanied by Father Damian Mazanet named the river and place in honor of San Antonio de Padua after the Saint Anthony of Padova, Italy. In 1718, Spanish missionaries and soldiers who accompanied the Alarcon Expedition established the first mission and presidio in the area of San Pedro Springs. Since its settlement, San Antonio has been shaped by several design influences and historical forces that have contributed to its overall urban form and architecture. These influences can be summarized according to the following contexts:

- Settlement and the Spanish Colonial Period
- The Gilded Age
- Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Urbanism
- Expansion and Modernism



Mission Concepcion



Mission San Juan



*Mission Espada*



*Spanish Governor's Palace*



*La Villita*

### Settlement + Spanish Colonial Period

Soon after the establishment of the first site of the Mission of San Antonio de Valero, known today as the Alamo, the soldiers constructed a presidio near the site, which was later relocated to what is now Military Plaza and built permanent structures including the captain's quarters, later known as the Spanish Governor's Palace, to protect the settlement from incursions and raids from the frontier. Mission San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo (San Jose) was founded two years later, and in 1731 three other missions, Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de la Espada were relocated from East Texas to Christianize the native population. Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) was moved to its third and final location in 1724 at what is now known as Alamo Plaza.

In 1731, the settlement of San Antonio gained royal “villa” status with the arrival of 56 Canary Islanders, settlers who represented the first civilians to arrive in the community. San Antonio itself was planned according to the famous Laws of the Indies, which was used by the Spanish to guide the development of their cities around plazas, presidios, and narrow grid streets. However, due to the lands already owned and controlled by the missions and presidio, and the presence of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek, the actual plan had to be adjusted to fit within the available space, resulting in a somewhat altered configuration. Much of the grid street system is still in evidence today.

Over the next century, the fledgling settlement of Spanish soldiers, priests, civilians and Native American converts endured the rigors and travails of the frontier and the political struggles of rival communities and empires. However, despite these circumstances, San Antonio grew to a community of over 2,000 people and became the most important Spanish settlement in Texas with its elevation to a Spanish provincial capital. San Antonio's Spanish Colonial period ended in 1821 when Mexico won its independence from Spain and San Antonio remained under Mexican rule until the Texas War for Independence in 1836 and the famous Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto.

Significant historic resources from the Spanish Colonial period include the five extant Spanish Missions, the Governor's Palace, San Pedro Springs Park, the second oldest municipal park in the United States, the acequia systems and a corresponding aqueduct, and La Villita, the “old Spanish town”, of which the Cos House (c. 1800) is the only extant building from the Spanish settlement period. The Missions flourished mostly in the mid-1700s but experienced decline and abandonment in succeeding decades as raids from neighboring Indian tribes and diseases reduced the Missions' population. Additionally, by the late 18th century,

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 3: Historic Context

much of the Native American population was acculturated into the existing Hispanic population. Constructed largely of native limestone and detailed with highly ornamental doors, vaulted ceilings, and bell towers, four of the five Missions continue to be operating parishes of the San Antonio Catholic Archdiocese. Acequias, man-made waterways and canals, were also constructed as part of the Mission complex to distribute water for farming purposes. Today, the Missions Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan and Espada comprise the San Antonio Mission National Historical Park, which was authorized by the US Congress in 1978. The Alamo is owned by the State of Texas and is operated by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Other resources of the Spanish Colonial period include Alamo Plaza, which was the Mission Valero's formerly enclosed courtyard, and Military Plaza, the drilling ground of the Presidio de Bexar. Main Plaza, or Plaza de las Islas, as it was originally named, was the scene of several historic events including the signing of a peace treaty with the Apache Indians in 1749. The Spanish Governor's Palace, a flat-roofed structure constructed in stone and adobe, was completed in 1749, was purchased from descendants of the last ad interim Spanish Governor of Texas and restored by the City of San Antonio in 1928. San Fernando Cathedral, located along Main Plaza, was constructed in 1738 by the original Canary Islanders and completed in 1758. The Cathedral was completely rebuilt around 1868 in the Gothic Revival style although the original sanctuary walls were retained, making it one of the oldest Roman Catholic sanctuaries in the United States.



*San Fernando Cathedral*



*Resources from the King William Historic District.*

## The Gilded Age

After the Texas War of Independence and the State's admission into the Union in 1845, the City of San Antonio began to grow with an influx of immigrants from Germany and Mexico and other ethnic groups ranging from French, Italian, English, Irish, among others as well as other Americans from the east. Post American Civil War, the City of San Antonio became a center for trade for the South Texas region and the old Spanish city center, comprising the Alamo, the plazas and the radiating streets, began to grow and prosper.

Commerce and Houston Streets became important retail streets and in the 1840s and 50s, German and other immigrants began to settle and develop adjacent neighborhood residential areas such as Lavaca. The King William neighborhood developed into one of the most fashionable residential areas of the city, with homes designed and constructed in the high Italianate and Greek Revival styles for wealthy merchants and businessmen. The King William district would later become the first



*Lavaca Historic District resources*



*Tobin Hill Historic District resources*



*Nurses Housing at Baptist Medical Center*

neighborhood to be designated a National Register of Historic District in the State of Texas. Lavaca's primary building types and architectural styles were more modest in scale and design than King William's with vernacular Gothic Revival and Victorian styles predominating, housing merchants, clerks, butchers and teamsters.

It was also in this period of the mid-to-late 1800s that a new generation of architects practiced their profession and introduced High Victorian architecture in downtown commercial structures and residences in the outlying residential districts. The Bexar County Courthouse, designed in the Romanesque style in 1891 by James Riely Gordon, and the First National Bank Building by Cyrus L. Eidlitz, which incorporates both Romanesque and Moorish architectural elements, are two such examples of the rise of high style design in San Antonio during this period.

The arrival of railroads in the 1877 inaugurated a new period of growth and prosperity in San Antonio, sometimes billed as the City's "Gilded Age." Neighborhoods around the city center began to grow dramatically and newly available materials such as steel and plate glass made building taller structures with transparent storefronts more common in the principal commercial districts of San Antonio. In the central core, street-widening projects that made way for streetcars and various other public improvements, especially along Commerce Street, often resulted in the loss of earlier, more modest commercial buildings as well as ones dating from the Spanish Colonial area. In essence, San Antonio was being transformed from its frontier beginnings to a modern city eager to capitalize on its fortunes. High-rise buildings began to penetrate the downtown skyline and newer neighborhoods and garden suburbs began to rise beyond the historic core of San Antonio. The Government Hill Tobin Hill, and Laurel Heights neighborhoods were also developing during this period.

### Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

During the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, San Antonio's Gilded Age continued as the City grew and prospered, assisted by the electrification of streetcar lines, the development of hospitals and power plants, the on-going expansion of Fort Sam Houston (established in 1876) and other military facilities, and the continued influx of new residents from around the country. In 1910, San Antonio became the largest city in Texas with a population of more than 96,000 people. New high-rise commercial buildings continued to be constructed in the downtown core with Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial Revival and Art Deco design influences. The St. Anthony Hotel (1910), the Casino Club Building (1927), the San Antonio Express Building (1929), the Majestic Theater (1929), and the Smith-Young Tower (1929, the current Tower Life Building) are all

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examples of the architectural eclecticism that prevailed before the Great Depression.

Outlying neighborhoods such as Monte Vista and Monticello Park came to maturity with a diversity of residential architectural styles ranging from the Tudor, Craftsman, Spanish and Mission Revival, Art Moderne, and Classical Revival, and in scale and size from simple vernacular versions of the styles to elegant mansions. With the onset of the Great Depression, new construction and development ceased for several years. Before Modernism firmly took root in San Antonio in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, flamboyant Art Deco and Moderne styles, as represented in Strauss Nayfach's Alameda Theater and in other vernacular commercial buildings throughout the neighborhoods, continued to be designed and built.

Work on enhancing the San Antonio River also began in earnest during this period of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In response to the disastrous events of the Flood of 1921, a by-pass channel and floodgates were constructed in 1926 to alleviate flooding in the downtown district. As plans proceeded to construct the by-pass channel, the San Antonio Conservation Society was formed as a response to protect the original City Market House from demolition. Although the Society lost the battle to protect the Market House from demolition, the organization has led successful advocacy ever since for the enhancement of the San Antonio River and the protection of other important historic resources. In 1938, a tax levy was approved to leverage an additional \$325,000 in funds from the Works Progress Administration to start the construction of the Riverwalk. Robert H.H. Hugman was the primary project architect. La Villita, the "old Spanish Town" was also reused and restored during this time period.

## Modernism

Following the Great Depression, San Antonio architecture became increasingly influenced by Modernism and its tenets of simplifying building form, the elimination of decorative ornament, and the austere expression of steel and glass. One prominent architect, O'Neil Ford, designed several important buildings and complexes including the campuses of Trinity University and the University of Texas at San Antonio as well as the Tower of Americas, which was the centerpiece of the 1968 World's Fair, otherwise known as HemisFair. Ford advocated for a refined Modernist, context sensitive architecture that expressed structural clarity and economical design while paying special attention to local climate and site conditions. The development of the HemisFair Plaza would prove to be controversial as the construction of the Tower of the Americas and other associated fair buildings would necessitate the clearance of a 92-acre site, streets, and over 100 historic buildings. As in other major US cities during this period, the experience of urban renewal



*Resources from Monte Vista Historic District*



*HemisFair Park*



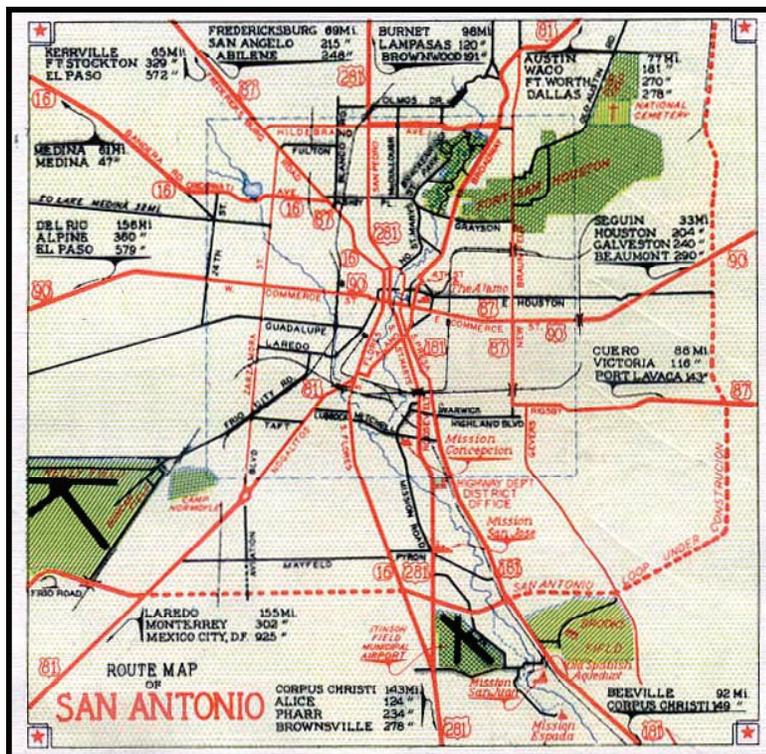
*Volkswagan Dealership, a Recent Past resource, North Broadway Street*



Historic residential resource designed in the International Style.

and the loss of historic resources in San Antonio would motivate various individuals and entities to seek new ways to protect historic resources and encourage reinvestment in the City's inner core.

Other important Modernist buildings and structures of this period include, the Intercontinental Motors Building on North Broadway, the Dunwoody House by architect Milton Ryan, the United States Pavilion at Hemisfair (currently known as the John H. Wood Jr. Federal Courthouse), and the United Services Automobile Association Building, also located on North Broadway (currently known as the AT&T Building).



State of Texas Highway Map, from the 1940s



# STATE OF THE CITY

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### San Antonio Today

Today, the City of San Antonio has 25 local historic districts, approximately 2,000 individually designated local landmark buildings, sites and structures, and over 1,900 archaeological sites. There are also 19 districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places and seven buildings listed as National Historic Landmarks, including the Alamo, Spanish Governor's Palace, Mission Concepcion, Espada Aqueduct, and the Majestic Theater, among others.

The Alamo Plaza and Mission Historic Districts include some of the City of San Antonio's most significant historic resources — the Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) and lower four Missions — Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan, and Espada, as well as the Espada aqueduct and the only two remaining active Spanish Colonial acequia systems. These significant resources document the City's early Spanish Colonial period. In addition, much of the Mission District comprises the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, operated by the National Park Service. Beyond these resources, other local historic districts, such as King William, Government Hill, Monte Vista, and HemisFair, record much of the history and development of San Antonio, from its Spanish Colonial and Gilded Age eras to recent times of modern architecture and urban planning.

San Antonio's historic sites and attractions draw visitors from around the State of Texas, the United States and the world. In recent studies, the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Department indicate that 197 million people visited the state, with approximately 16 million traveling to San Antonio. The number one state tourism attraction is the Alamo, with the Texas State Capitol and the San Antonio Riverwalk, a close second and third respectively. The San Antonio Missions National Historical Park also attracts approximately 1.3 million people a year. The convention industry attracts more than 500,000 people to the City, with many organizations and businesses seeking San Antonio as a desirable place to meet due to its historic attractions, culture, amenities, and hotels and restaurants.

In addition to tourism, historic preservation provides many other economic and community development benefits. In a study conducted by the Texas Historical Commission in 2000, nine major Texas cities with active historic preservation programs documented a measurable increase in property values in designated historic districts and landmarks, some as much as 20 percent. In turn, with availability of state and local incentives, property owners have reinvested over \$172 million in building rehabilitation and adaptive use projects, which also created 4,200 jobs in the State of Texas. Historic district designations, in essence, serve to stabilize property values and encourage reinvestment in neighborhoods and commercial areas that might not have occurred.



*Monte Vista Historic District*



*The acequia system at Mission Espada*



*San Pedro Springs Park*

To develop a comprehensive, historic preservation plan, an inventory and evaluation were undertaken of existing conditions, programs, tools, and resources offered through the City and other public agencies. Several key programs and resources were specifically evaluated, including the current operations of the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) and the activities and initiatives of the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and several other municipal departments including Housing and Neighborhood Services, Planning and Development Services, Downtown Operations, Office of Environmental Policy, Capital Improvement Management Services, Public Works, and Parks and Recreation. In addition, the programs and resources of other entities that have significant roles and responsibilities in historic preservation activities such as the San Antonio Conservation Society, neighborhood associations, community development corporations, and other institutions and organizations were also examined. The inventory and evaluation phase of the plan-making process produced this State of the City summary of existing preservation conditions, critical issues, challenges, and opportunities for action.



*Bexar County Courthouse and Main Plaza, 1890s approximately.*

### Benefits of Historic Preservation

Preserving historic resources provides economic, cultural, and other quality-of-life benefits and is an effective urban design and growth management tool for most municipalities. In this regard, there are over 2,300 municipalities across the country that have developed preservation programs that encourage the protection of important resources through the adoption of local ordinances, design guidelines and incentives. Therefore, historic preservation has long been recognized as a legitimate and important function of the local government.

Clearly, the economic benefits of historic preservation are significant and contribute to the economy in the following ways:

- Stabilization and the improvement of property values in historic neighborhoods and commercial districts.
- Job creation due to increased building rehabilitation activity and neighborhood revitalization.
- Increased tourism and housing choices.
- Provides a focus for cultural and economic development.
- Encourages investment in a city's central core.



*This Place Matters- a campaign by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to highlight historic resources throughout the country,*

### Attracting Investment in the New Economy

Cities and local communities recognize that historic preservation is an essential component to developing and maintaining a strong “sense of place”, which is key to attracting today’s workers in the “new economy”. Revitalized historic commercial districts and neighborhoods also contribute to a sense of identity, authenticity and community that other places cannot. It is these places that attract the “creative class”, the core force of growth in the new economy going forward, who desire authenticity, uniqueness, diversity, historic environments, and a vibrant cultural scene. With the advent of today’s communications technologies, especially in the research and service sectors, creative class professionals can literally locate anywhere to seek employment and establish new businesses and enterprises.

Therefore, maintaining historic districts and commercial areas, the places that attract the creative class, will be important to cities and communities as they attempt to revitalize and re-establish themselves in the new economy. San Antonio has maintained a strong sense of place and vitality along the downtown portion of the Riverwalk, in other neighborhoods such as the Southtown commercial district, and in fledgling areas such as River North. Other neighborhoods and commercial areas in the inner



Military Plaza/City Hall

core have the potential to develop the same urban qualities that can attract a diversity of cultural, social, and economic groups, along with the creative class. In the end, a vibrant and robust San Antonio economy will depend on a robust and effective local historic preservation program along with other economic development initiatives.

### Heritage Tourism

Heritage travelers visit cities and sites to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent, through cultural, historic and archaeological resources, the stories and people of the past and present. Historic resources are the “backdrops on the stage” that allow the stories to be told and experienced. In terms of economic impact, heritage travelers spend approximately \$615 per trip and stay an average of 4.7 days, while other travelers spend \$425 and stay 3.3 days per trip (*source: Travel Industry Association of America*). Therefore, heritage travelers stay and spend almost 50 percent more in historic places in comparison to other forms of tourism. Heritage tourism is an essential component of the San Antonio tourism industry and expanding efforts in this area could pay handsome dividends.

### Building Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of historic buildings requires more skilled and unskilled workers than new construction and, therefore, historic preservation is a significant job generator. As several statewide economic impact studies have shown, the number of jobs created through rehabilitation compares very favorably with the number of jobs created through new construction. A new construction project can expect to spend about 50 percent in labor and 50 percent in materials. In contrast, some rehabilitation projects may spend up to 70 percent in labor costs — labor that is often hired locally, which helps to keep such dollars within the community (Donovan Rypkema. *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*. Washington, D.C., 2007). The total dollars of direct and indirect expenditures in regards to building rehabilitation activity are also considerable. Direct expenditures include construction labor and purchases of building materials and tools. Indirect expenditure impacts are associated with industrial goods and services by firms that provide building materials such as manufacturing labor and purchases of raw materials such as clay, glass, and gravel.

Rehabilitation costs per square foot are often significantly less than with new construction. In general, the costs of rehabilitating historic buildings generally runs 25 to 33 percent less than comparable new construction, according to recent case studies prepared by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In those cases where the costs are

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equivalent, the preservation project provided greater amenities such as time saved in construction and more building space provided in either height or volume. These amenities frequently produced other benefits to a developer through higher occupancy rates and rents. In addition, rehabilitation often times bypasses lengthy development review processes, local neighborhood opposition, and zoning delays (Thomas D. Bever. *Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation*. Center for Urban Policy Research. 1993).

Historic building rehabilitation is more environmentally friendly and cost efficient than new construction. In addition, a government study found that rehabilitation construction uses 23 percent less energy than new construction, since rehabilitation is more labor intensive than material intensive, depleting fewer natural resources. It has also been estimated that over 40 percent of all landfill space comes from construction and demolition debris (Thomas D. Bever).

### Stabilizing Neighborhoods

Historic buildings are critical assets that play important roles in creating value and stabilizing neighborhoods and traditional commercial districts. Recent statewide economic impact studies in Texas, New York, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania corroborate evidence regarding the positive effects that historic district designations have on property values with average increases between 5 and 20 percent. A 2000 study of South Carolina property values show that homes in the City of Columbia's historic districts, for example, increased in value by 21 percent greater sale price. The benefits of district designation also appears to extend to owner tenure with lower owner turnover than in neighborhoods that are not designated (*The Impact of Local Historic Districts on House Prices in South Carolina*, University of South Carolina's College of Business and the State Historic Preservation Office)



*Houston Street from Alamo Plaza, 1940s*

### Opportunities + Challenges



King William Historic District

*“We tout ourselves as an old historic place.”*

*“Why do people come here...it’s who we are...they come for the history.”*

*“We need to keep in sight what is important to this city.”*

*“We need a collective vision.”*

*“Our historic resources are limited...they are finite...when gone...it’s gone.”*

*“Historic preservation is a way to manage change with respect for heritage.”*“

*“We need to make historic preservation easier.”*

*“We need to make historic preservation more desirable.”*

*“Economic development needs to be more in harmony with preservation planning.”*

*“We need to make the development process more predictable.”*

*“It’s about common ground...not property rights versus preservation.”*

— quotations taken from stakeholders during various planning workshops and interview sessions.

The following is an initial summary of critical issues and challenges facing the San Antonio historic preservation program. This summary is based on the conditions observed during on-site stakeholder interview sessions and workshops as well as research conducted by the consultant team. Existing conditions and resources were organized around the following issue areas:

- Survey + Designation
- Design Review
- City Planning
- Design Zoning
- Economic Development
- Incentives
- City Commission + Agencies
- Education + Advocacy
- Other Preservation Planning Issues

### **Survey + Designation**

Currently, the HDRC and OHP oversee the process for conducting surveys and inventories of neighborhoods and districts within the original 1852 city limits. Under San Antonio’s Certified Local Government

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status, the OHP is also responsible for conducting ongoing surveys for cultural resources in areas outside the 1852 36 Square Mile Survey Area. Additionally, the OHP oversees archaeological surveys, including standing structures, required as part of the Master Development Plan process and subdivision platting process, and includes survey work in San Antonio's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction. The OHP has also been actively involved in surveying, recording and designating 19<sup>th</sup> Century Historic Texas vernacular farm and ranch complexes including those within the city limits and the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction. Overall, the HDRC and the OHP are responsible for historic preservation activities in an area of 412 square miles. The Commission and OHP have actively partnered on the survey and designation work with private-sector entities, including the San Antonio Conservation Society.

Significant issues, challenges, and opportunities regarding surveying and designating historic resources so they can be protected and preserved include:

- **Neighborhood/District Erosion** - Real estate speculation, development pressures, and “demolition by neglect” appear to be eroding the character of neighborhood historic districts and resources. Furthermore, the overall volume of historic resources facing threats from demolition is significant and needs to be addressed through new, comprehensive approaches to code enforcement, education, intervention with property owners and developers, and financial tools and resources. For example, a current comprehensive list of endangered historic resources could be developed to assist city agencies and private sector partners in devising possible intervention strategies.

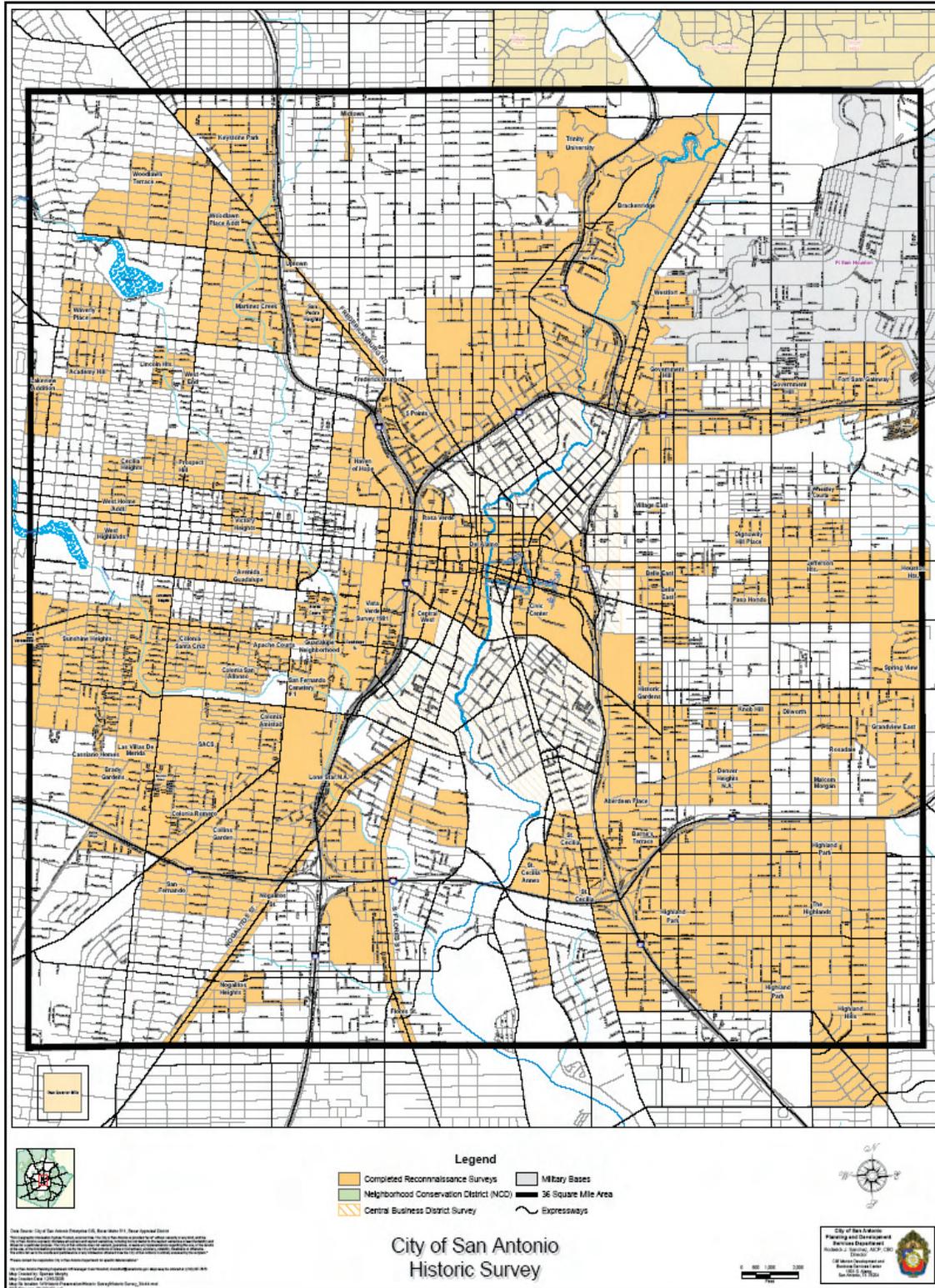
This is a real concern expressed in every interview and workshop session by city officials, civic leaders, and neighborhood that *“we are pecking away at our housing stock, pecking away at our fringes”*. There is also some concern among residents within neighborhood historic districts that investment in properties may lead to significant increases in property tax assessments, thus discouraging improvements to properties. Some residents have indicated property tax increases of up to 200 percent on rehabilitated homes.

- **Designation Process Complexity** - The process for designating individual landmarks and districts is somewhat unclear within Article VI of the Unified Development Code and lengthy compared to other major U.S. cities. Owner consent provisions also hamper the efforts of neighborhood groups in designating districts. Most stakeholders agree, *“current designation processes are backward and time-consuming”* and need to be rethought.

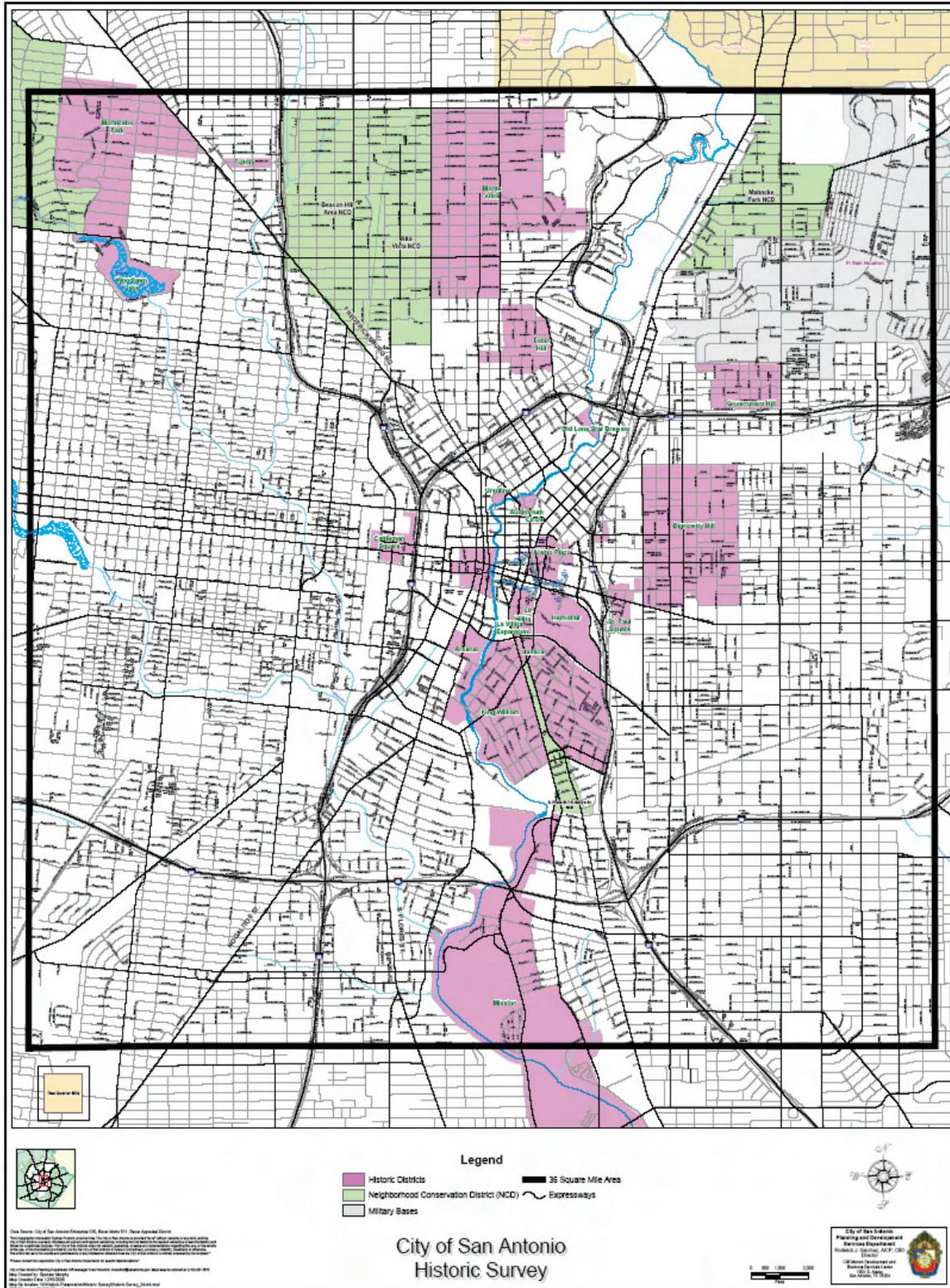


Bexar County Courthouse

## Survey Areas



### Local Historic Districts





*The need for effective enforcement of demolition by neglect and other city code provisions is a significant concern among several stakeholder groups.*

- **Historic Resource Surveys: Relevance** - Over the years, a number of neighborhoods and districts within the 36 Square Mile Survey Area have been surveyed and inventoried. In many cases, these resource surveys were conducted mostly at a reconnaissance level and in collaboration with various organizations, including the San Antonio Conservation Society and neighborhood organizations, as well as with paid interns and volunteers. Several of these existing resource surveys need to be updated to better reflect current conditions.
- **Historic Resource Surveys: Gaps** - There are other areas of the City both within and outside the 36 Square Mile Survey Area that have historic contexts still in need of exploration and documentation, especially San Antonio’s African-American and Hispanic communities, as well as what can be considered “Modern/Recent Past” building resources that are fewer than 50 years old.
- **Historic Resource Surveys: Availability** - The dissemination and overall accessibility of survey and historic district information to the general public is also a critical issue identified by key stakeholders, especially by those that are actively trying to improve their districts or create new ones. For instance, there is an extensive amount of survey and historic district information within OHP’s current website. The question remains whether such information can be organized more effectively and made more accessible through the City’s internal geographic information systems or a new online database managed by the Office of Historic Preservation.
- **Historic Resources: Code Enforcement** - Uneven and inconsistent enforcement of certificates of appropriateness, demolition by neglect provisions and other building code requirements is a significant issue raised by neighborhood associations and several other stakeholder groups. There appears to be lack of coordination between relevant code enforcement agencies and departments within the City of San Antonio and a clear process needs to be determined on who is responsible for enforcing various code provisions that affect historic resources.

### Historic Resource Types

San Antonio’s historic resources can be defined by several types including districts; landmark buildings; and objects, sites, and structures. The following are definitions based upon the National Park Service and from the Office of Historic Preservation:

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- **Districts.** A historic district is defined by the UDC as an area, urban or rural, defined as an historic district by the City Council, the Texas Historical Commission, or the National Register of Historic Places (National Park Service) and which may contain within definable geographic boundaries one or more buildings, structures or objects. Districts may also include accessory buildings, fences and natural resources having historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural significance, and other resources that, while not of special significance, nevertheless may also contribute to the overall visual setting or characteristics of other resources located within the district.

Currently, there are 25 historic districts designated by the HDRC and the City Council including King William, Monte Vista, La Villita, Lavaca, Main and Military Plaza, St. Paul Square and Cattleman Square among others. There are also 19 districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places, which is a federal program administered in Texas by the Texas Historical Commission in partnerships with the National Park Service. National Register districts must have resources of significance and meet certain designation criteria established by the National Park Service. Unlike districts designations by the HDRC, National Register designation provides no protection to historic resources unless they are involved in any federally funded or licensed projects, such as highway construction. In addition to local and National Register designated districts, National Historic Landmark districts (NHL's), administered again by the National Park Service, are nationally significant historic places designated by the Secretary of the Interior due to their exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. There are fewer than 2,500 historic places bear this national distinction. In San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston is a NHL district.

- **Landmark Buildings.** San Antonio has more than 2,000 individually designated landmark buildings such as homes, office buildings, theaters, churches, and hotels. The Municipal Auditorium and the Alameda Theater are just two examples of locally designated landmarks. Local designation does not restrict the use of the property but any exterior changes and alterations, as well as proposed demolition, must be reviewed by the Historic and Design Review Commission. There are also approximately 101 properties listed as individual building in the National Register of Historic Places. Again, National Register listing does not place any restrictions on exterior alterations or land use unless affected by a federally funded



*Fort Sam Houston National Historic Landmark District.*



Iron Bridge at Brackenridge Park

or licensed action. In addition to local and National Register designations, there are also seven properties designated as National Historic Landmarks including the Majestic Theater, the Spanish Governor's Palace, Hanger 9 at Brooks Air Force Base and Missions Concepcion and Espada.

- **Structures/Infrastructure.** These historic resources consist of structures often used for functional uses such as bridges, streets, canals, dams, or architectural elements, such as bandstands, gazebos, and lighthouses. An example of a designated historic structure is the Hays Street bridge.
- **Objects.** These resources are small scale, simply constructed artwork, fountains, sculpture, monuments, and street signs that are specific to certain historic settings or areas.
- **Sites** are locations of significant events or of buildings or structures where the location itself possesses historic value due to events, regardless of the value of any existing structure. Examples of sites include battlefields, campsites, natural features, and landscapes.

## Design Review

Under Article VI of the Unified Development Code, the Historic and Design Review Commission is responsible for conducting Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) reviews for any project that seeks *“to alter, restore, rehabilitate, or add to a building, site or structure, designated a historic landmark or located in a historic district...”* as well as for any proposed new construction or development within a locally-designated historic district. The Commission also conducts reviews for proposed alterations and new construction design of existing and newly planned municipal buildings respectively. In addition to reviewing and issuing COA's for individual landmarks and resources within local districts, the HDRC conducts design review for alterations to existing buildings and new commercial development and residential development that exceeds five units or five acres within the River Improvement Overlays (RIO's), which are six separate overlay districts that extend from the San Antonio River's northern boundary along Hildebrand Avenue to the City's southern corporate boundary near Mission Espada. The purpose of the RIO districts is to ensure that new development is compatible with the overall urban design and character of the Riverwalk corridor and its immediate surroundings.

This combination of design review responsibilities for both historic resources and general urban design along an important environmental

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and cultural resource is unique among most historic preservation programs in other major U.S. cities. As a consequence, the HDRC and OHP have a relatively heavy design review workload as compared to other cities where design review responsibilities are typically divided between a stand-alone historic preservation commission for historic resources and a separate urban design review entity for an overall community, downtown or special district where historic preservation is not a critical concern.

The actual process for property owners and small developers seeking to alter or change a historic resource is not complicated nor long, although there are public perceptions that it is indeed the case. However, in cases of demolition by neglect or emergencies, the deliberation processes for such cases is indeed complicated and cumbersome as it involves other City departments and agencies. There is confusion as to not only how it works but also whether the process gives neighborhood organizations and City staff enough time to positively influence decision-making regarding demolishing or renovating buildings. There is concern that the process is focused mostly on demolition without clear paths for early warning or intervention for possible preservation and rehabilitation.

Significant issues, challenges, and opportunities regarding the COA process and design review include:

- **Certificate of Appropriateness Review Process** - According to stakeholders and City staff, the COA process needs to be “demystified” for the average property owner and local developers as the perception of navigating the approval process has become *“intimidating without professional assistance.”* In addition, City staff indicates there needs to be a more proactive approach in getting ahead of the many buildings that are deteriorating and end up in need of demolition, as well as in early intervention with property owners to encourage and facilitate renovation and rehabilitation.
- **Design Guidelines** - The HDRC currently uses an adaptation of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation as a base set of guidelines for reviewing COA applications for the alteration and rehabilitation of historic resources. In contrast, the guidelines of COA applications for new development are more detailed with specific standards for façade design, massing, building height and signage. The design standards within the RIO districts also focus specifically on the design of new development. While several U.S. cities use the Standards for Rehabilitation as the primary set of standards for reviewing COA applications, a critical concern going forward is whether more substantial, detailed design guidelines beyond the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards should be developed and adopted for COA reviews for individual



St. Paul Square Historic District.



*Viewsheds into the lower Missions are of particular concern although there may be other historic districts and areas where viewshed protection should be explored.*

landmarks and historic districts. Another question to be answered is whether separate guidelines should also be developed to address distinct design issues for individual historic districts, as have been completed for the Lavaca and Government Hill Historic Districts and Houston Street.

- **Viewshed Overlays** - Viewshed protection overlay districts have been in place to ensure that public views and vistas to important landmarks and resources, such as the Alamo, are not compromised by inappropriate development. The Alamo Viewshed Overlay 1 has been in place for several years. However, the lower Missions within the National Historical Park are not protected under a viewshed overlay. Nearby development currently threatens the viewshed into the Historical Park, especially along the Roosevelt Road Corridor. The city is currently working to protect the viewshed of Mission San Jose with the Texas Historical Commission in conjunction with the proposed development of the nearby Mission Drive-In Theater property development.
- **OHP Staffing** - The HDRC and OHP currently review building permits for all exterior and some interior work on individual landmarks, public buildings, and buildings within historic districts, including electrical and plumbing systems. Given the HDRC's heavy review workload, there may be opportunities to reassign some permit review responsibilities to other permit review staff within the Planning and Development Services Department. As noted earlier the OHP staff also reviews all new commercial and residential development that exceeds either five units or five acres in the combined RIO district, including vendor cart design, signage design, and landscape design.

Additionally, OHP currently does not have on staff an architect who is trained in preservation architecture or an urban designer/landscape architect experienced with larger neighborhood context and development planning. The OHP also has limited staff resources to provide direct design assistance on a proactive basis to individual COA applicants who would like to rehabilitate their residential and commercial buildings.

## City Planning

The preservation of historic sites, districts, and resources needs to be addressed through a variety of methods, techniques, incentives, and programs. Comprehensive plans, as well as plans at the district and neighborhood levels, are vehicles to establish clear goals and policies for encouraging historic preservation activities and ensuring that revitalization

## Section 4: State of the City

and development initiatives carefully consider San Antonio’s historic and archaeological resources. The following is a review of current planning policies and initiatives as well as the legal contexts that support planning and historic preservation activities.

### State of Texas Local Government Code

#### Section 213: Municipal Comprehensive Plans

Section 213 of the State of Texas Local Government Code permits local Texas communities and cities to develop and adopt comprehensive plans with specific elements for land use, transportation, and public facilities. In addition, a municipality may define the relationship between a comprehensive plan and development regulations and may provide “*standards for determining the consistency required between a plan and development regulations*”. Although Section 213 does explicitly require the development and adoption of historic preservation elements to comprehensive plans, municipalities are not limited in the ability to “*prepare other plans, policies, or strategies as required*”. This Strategic Historic Preservation Plan can be adopted as an element of the City of San Antonio’s Master Plan.

### San Antonio Code of Ordinances

#### Article IX: Planning Commission

Article IX of San Antonio’s Code of Ordinances authorizes the establishment of a municipal planning commission with the expressed authority to create, amend and extend a city master plan to guide the physical development of the city. Sections 121 to 123 of Article IX outline the procedures for adopting a master plan and its legal effects. A master plan can be adopted as a whole, in parts or in future amendments.

### San Antonio City Master Plan

The growth and development of San Antonio is guided by a variety of plans and policies as well as a set of development ordinances and standards. The City of San Antonio *Master Plan Policies*, which were created in 1980 and updated in 1997, includes five historic preservation planning objectives related to maintaining a comprehensive inventory and survey, funding adequate staff for preservation activities, and encouraging partnerships between the City and neighborhood organizations.

Encouraging the protection and reuse of historic resources is also mentioned as strategic goals within the Master Plan’s Vision Statement, within Section C, Community Services, in regards to arts and cultural development, and in Section D, Neighborhoods, in regards to the



Monte Vista Historic District.



Lavaca Historic District

adaptive use and rehabilitation of historic buildings within San Antonio's neighborhoods and downtown district. In addition, Section F of the *Master Plan Policies* relates to Urban Design with the overall goal of "...striving for good urban design (that) shapes San Antonio into a cohesive and attractive array of neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public amenities."

### City South Plan

A City South Plan was adopted in 2003, which includes an extensive historic preservation component. The Plan covers the southern half of the City south of Interstate 410. The document notes, "*The Plan is a guide for future capital improvements, bond recommendations, and land development*". It addresses a vast, mostly rural area that is rich in South Texas history including farms, ranches, cemeteries, and old bridges. The City's planning staff is currently updating the document to reflect current conditions with completion expected in 2009. This effort provides an opportunity for OHP staff to update information, assess action items that have been completed, and provide more input regarding policies and directions for historic preservation.

The 2003 City South Plan has a specific section - Cultural & Historic Resources - that defines two main historic preservation goals with corresponding objectives and actions:

**Goal:** Preserve and protect the historic resources of the Southside Initiative planning area.

Objective - Identify and designate historic districts and historic landmarks.

- Perform a historic structures survey
- Identify potential historic districts and historic landmarks from 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 Planning Department's website

Objective - Designate a new River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District to protect the unique environment of the San Antonio River

- Perform a San Antonio River survey of the section of the river in the south planning area

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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## Section 4: State of the City

- Identify defining characteristics
- Development design standards and guidelines to protect and enhance the area’s defining characteristics
- Designate a new RIO district in the planning area
- Provide education and design assistance for owners of designated properties

**Goal:** Promote Heritage Tourism.

Objective - 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 documents promoting linkages between historic sites and open space
- Organize publicity events (i.e. home tours) for historic properties

This cultural and historic resources section of the City South Plan also includes an overview of the area’s history as well as its historic roads, bridges, sites, buildings, and cemeteries. It concludes with a review of the need to identify and preserve the area’s unique resources through district designations and zoning protections.

### River North District Master Plan

A new master plan and development code has recently been created for the River North district, which is adjacent to San Antonio’s central downtown district. The Master Plan introduces form-based development standards as a means to shape the form and character of new development as well as the operation and design of streets and other public spaces. Historic preservation is recognized as a key planning goal along with achieving a mix of uses, housing types and pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces within the River North district.

Within the Plan’s *Development Code*, historic resources are classified within three categories of importance in terms of overall district planning and development goals. Resources classified within the “Local Landmark” and “High Integrity” categories cannot be demolished or relocated. Local landmarks are defined as HE, HS or H in the City’s zoning map. The third category, “Medium Integrity”, concerns historic resources that may need rehabilitation or restoration but could be considered for possible demolition on approval from Historic and Design Review Commission. Apart from landmarked historic resources within the River North district, the planning area also falls within the River Improvement



Lavaca Historic District



St. Paul Square, Sunset Station

Overlay districts 2 and 3, which subjects new developments under the new Development Code to HDRC review (the development code has not been approved as of this report's production).

### Strategic Plan for Community Development

The *Strategic Plan for Community Development* documents overall strategies for improving housing, urban environments and economic opportunities within the City of San Antonio. The City Council adopted the Strategic Plan in 2008. The key recommendations of the Strategic Plan include the creation of a Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) and the use of “Reinvestment Plans” to coordinate public and private sector community development activities and resources in targeted areas to stimulate reinvestment. The Strategic Plan appears to be supportive of historic preservation as it lists several possible initiatives within future Reinvestment Plans:

- Targeted disposition of city-owned properties and the establishment of design standards through appropriate programs such as historic and conservation district designations, the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, targeted historic rehabilitation credits, and a future Community Land Trust.
- Leverage the use of national historic rehabilitation tax credits and incentives.
- Develop a rehabilitation showcase program.
- Develop a real estate certification program to assist agents in marketing properties in historic and neighborhood conservation districts.
- Creation of a Community Development Fund to finance a variety of reinvestment activities.

### Neighborhood Plans

In addition to the 1980/1997 Master Plan and 2003 City South Plan, there are numerous district and neighborhood plans that address specific geographic areas of San Antonio and include historic preservation policies and strategies.

These plans include:

#### Area/District/Neighborhood Plans

- Arena District/Eastside Community Plan
- Camelot I Neighborhood Plan Update
- Downtown Neighborhood Plan

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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- West Neighborhood Plan Update
- HemisFair Park Area Master Plan
- Five Points Neighborhood Plan
- Government Hill Neighborhood Plan Update
- Greater Dellview Area Community Plan
- Guadalupe Westside Community Plan
- Highlands Community Plan
- Huebner/Leon Creeks Community Plan
- IH 10 E. Perimeter Plan
- IH 10 E. Perimeter Plan Update
- Ingram Hills Neighborhood Plan
- Kelly / South San P.U.E.B.L.O. Community Plan
- Lavaca Neighborhood Plan
- Mahncke Park Neighborhood Plan
- Midtown Neighborhood Plan
- Near Northwest Community Plan
- Nogalitos/S. Zarzamora Community Plan
- North Central Neighborhoods Community Plan
- Northwest Community Plan
- Northwest Community Plan Update
- Northeast Inner Loop Neighborhood Plan
- Oakland Estates Neighborhood Plan
- Oakland Estates Neighborhood Plan Update
- River Road Neighborhood Plan Update
- South Central San Antonio Community Plan
- South Central San Antonio Community Plan Update
- Tobin Hill Neighborhood Plan
- United Southwest Community Plan
- Westfort Alliance Neighborhood Plan Update

### Goals & Strategy Reports

- University Park Goals & Strategies Report - July 2004
- Terrell Heights Neighborhood Goals & Strategies Report October 1999



*Aztec Theater, 1959*



Otto Koehler House

- Thompson Community Association Goals & Strategies Report - November 1998
- Los Jardines Goals & Strategies Report - October 2007

### Special Studies

- St. Paul Gateway District Report - Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Avenida Guadalupe Report - Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Urban Land Institute Draft Report: Southside Initiative
- Five Points Neighborhood Revitalization & Design Guideline Report
- Planning Design Report & Environmental Assessment for Olmos Creek

### Plans in Progress

- Eastern Triangle Community Plan
- Stinson Airport Vicinity Land Use Plan
- Roosevelt Corridor Reinvestment Plan
- Westside Reinvestment Plan
- Ingram Hills Neighborhood Plan

During the initial phase of the historic preservation planning process, several stakeholders stated the need “...to look at districts more comprehensively”, so that neighborhood plans, zoning regulations, and development review processes are aligned with overall City and neighborhood historic preservation goals in the downtown core and neighborhood historic districts.

There is also a need to better address and promote the “big picture” or larger context of a neighborhood when preserving historic resources. Stakeholders discussed the need to enhance land use mix, building massing, sidewalks, landscape, streetscape, and signage so an overall area becomes more viable and more people see it as a desirable place to live or own a business. For example, some public improvement decisions, such as front lawn embankments and the widening of streets were considered in some cases to have had negative impacts to the overall design character of some historic districts.

The HDRC and OHP also need to be involved earlier and more comprehensively in the City’s planning initiatives processes, whether they involve the downtown core, River Corridor, commercial corridors, neighborhoods, or individual sites and properties.

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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Several neighborhood plans were reviewed to assess whether they incorporated historic preservation goals and initiatives:

- **Downtown Transportation Study Recommendations, Appendix D, 1997** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the possible development and installation of a historic trolley system to connect Sunset Depot to Brackenridge Park. It was also recommended that a parking facility be developed at Chestnut and Center Streets incorporating the preservation of several historic structures within Ellis Alley.
- **Downtown Neighborhood Plan, 1999** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the location of local government offices in historic buildings to form a historic government district. As part of the land use components, it was recommended that within Dignowity Hill, residential uses should be a maximum density of 10 units per gross acre and infill and housing rehabilitation should be encouraged. In St. Paul Square, the rehabilitation of the historic commercial buildings, train depot and VIA parking facility should be considered as an entertainment district and African American heritage complex. Within the Riverbend area, a City museum within a historic civic center area should be considered, along with the installation of special kiosks and historical markers.
- **East Neighborhood Plan, Long-Term Vision** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the connection of the Eastside cemeteries to University of Texas at San Antonio campus with cultural and historical walkways. It also recommended implementing the 1990 Old San Antonio City Cemeteries Historic District Master Plan.
- **South Neighborhood Plan, Long-Term Vision** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the development of a landscaped linear park and jogging trail that would connect to the historic civic center initiative. Furthermore, it recommended that the residential and historic character of neighborhoods be maintained as well as the designation of the Lavaca area as a local historic district.
- **West Neighborhood, Short Term Vision** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the promotion of the neighborhood's history through special publications and projects.
- **Arena District/East Side, 2003** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the significant number of older historic homes that could be rehabilitated and the eligibility



*Alameda Theater*



Guadalupe Theater

of the neighborhood for designation as a local historic district or listing in the National Register Historic District. Recreational lands and open spaces with unique environmental or historical value should be enhanced. Designating New Braunfels Avenue as a Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization District is also specified as a priority.

- **Downtown West Neighborhood Plan Update, 2009** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the proposed re-use of a historic terminal structure to function as a VIA transit center and hub for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which is scheduled for a 2012 service date.
- **Greater Dellview Area Community Plan, 2005** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the rehabilitation of dilapidated historic homes within the planning area. It was recommended that the OHP, the Conservation Society, and other non-profits work together to identify strategies and funding opportunities for housing rehabilitation projects. It was noted within Appendix A of the Plan that the Richard McIlvain Home, circa 1890, was restored by the San Antonio Housing Trust Foundation as a community center for Pasadena Heights.
- **Government Hill Neighborhood Plan Update, 2008** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the rehabilitation of homes and structures within the historic district. The historic commercial district along North New Braunfels Avenue, within the Government Hill Historic District, is noted for its intact stand of commercial buildings.
- **Five Points Neighborhood Community Plan, 2000** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the preservation of the existing housing structures individually through historic landmark designation or through the creation of a neighborhood historic or conservation district. In addition to preservation, the improvement of the housing stock is possible through rehabilitation and infill development.
- **Avenida Guadalupe Westside Community Plan, 2007** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the designation of the area as a Conservation District, as several historically or culturally significant resources were identified during the planning process. Maintaining the historic single-family home development pattern and encouraging sensitive adaptive use are also key planning goals. Interestingly, it was also recommended that statues, plaques and historical photo exhibits of the Westside

## Section 4: State of the City

could improve the corridor experience and provide information about the area's history and culture.

- **Lavaca Community Plan, 2001** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the preservation of historic residential buildings and facilitating compatible infill housing within the neighborhood. The Plan specifically recommended investigating the designation of the neighborhood as a local historic district and developing design guidelines for new compatible infill development. In addition, a survey of residential properties with suspected code compliance violations and identification of available funding sources for rehabilitation of homes along the 500 block of Leigh Street were also listed as action steps.
- **Mahncke Park Neighborhood Plan, 2001** - Specific observations and recommendations were made regarding the need to preserve individual properties of historic and cultural significance in the neighborhood and the possibility of implementing a Neighborhood Conservation District to establish appropriate design standards for new commercial and residential development. The Plan also calls for maintaining the diversity of housing types in the neighborhood and undertaking initiatives to educate local homeowners on the benefits of historic property designation and available tax incentives. It also mentions that efforts should continue on identifying the route of the historic Spanish Acequia Madre and explore its preservation and interpretation. Mahncke Park was successfully designated as an NCD in 2001.
- **Midtown Neighborhood Plan, 2000** - The Midtown Neighborhood Plan lists extensive planning goals and recommendations regarding the preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic residential and commercial resources. However, the revitalization and preservation of the Blanco, Fredericksburg, Hildebrand, Flores, and San Pedro commercial nodes appear to be high economic development and urban design priorities within the Plan. Undertaking architectural surveys of the neighborhood's commercial centers, assessing their conditions, establishing design guidelines, the development of a house paint incentive program, and educating neighborhood stakeholders about proper building rehabilitation techniques and incentives were key planning objectives presented within the Plan. Partner organizations were also identified to carry out specific education initiatives including the development of a historic preservation brochure or educational campaign and an informational restoration guide.



*Lavaca Historic District*



East Side Ice and Cold Storage

### Cultural Collaborative Plan

In 2005, the City’s Office of Cultural Affairs concluded a public planning process to develop a Cultural Collaborative Plan. Several goals and key priorities within Plan include the preservation of the City’s built environment and the support of cultural and heritage tourism initiatives. More specifically, the Plan recommends the development of “cultural districts” in which an emphasis would be placed on supporting local arts related activities that generate jobs and facilitate the reuse of historic resources and revitalization of specific neighborhoods. The *Plan* also recommends creating an active cultural and heritage tourism program and a series of neighborhood “discovery tours” in partnership with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Office has already developed plans for several tours that focus on the heritage resources and cultural amenities of neighborhoods beyond the downtown district.

### City Zoning

Section 211 of the Local Government Code is the zoning enabling act for Texas municipalities and authorizes local communities to adopt zoning regulations for the “*purpose of promoting the public health, safety, morals, or general welfare and protecting and preserving places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance*”. It also states that “*...in the case of designated places and areas of historical, cultural, or architectural importance and significance, the governing body of a municipality may regulate the construction, reconstruction, alteration, or razing of buildings and other structures.*” Section 211 allows local municipalities to adopt and implement historic preservation ordinances to prevent the loss of historic resources, and establish historic preservation commissions to review proposed alterations to historic buildings and structures.

The City of San Antonio’s main zoning document is its Unified Development Code (UDC). The UDC contains the City’s land use regulations with the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. It is also meant to implement the policies, goals, and objectives of the San Antonio Master Plan. The UDC’s General Purpose and Intent section (Section 35-102) specifies that zoning and land use regulations should be designed to promote the preservation and protection of places “*...of historical, cultural or architectural importance and significance.*” Similar to most municipal zoning ordinances, the UDC regulates land use and development through base zoning districts, overlays, special districts and development standards, among other zoning tools. It should be noted that properties belonging to the City of San Antonio, the City Public Service Energy utility, and the San Antonio Water System are exempt from UDC zoning provisions.

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Within the UDC, Article VI outlines the designation and design review processes of the HDRC in relation to individual landmarks, historic districts and new construction within the River Improvement Overlay Districts. Article VI also includes provisions regarding the protection of archaeological sites and cemeteries, the design and construction of new public facilities, and the approval processes for the City's public art and design enhancement program. In some respects, Article VI is the historic preservation ordinance for the City, although there are other provisions within the UDC that deal with other aspects of the historic preservation program and HDRC operations. For instance, Article IV, Division 5 of the UDC outlines general rules and procedures regarding certificates of appropriateness and demolition permit applications. Article VIII describes the composition and general powers and duties of the Historic and Design Review Commission and the respective responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Officer.

### Evolution of Article VI Over Time

Article VI and other historic preservation related provisions of the UDC are successor versions of the first historic preservation ordinance adopted by the City of San Antonio more than 70 years ago. In 1939, the City enacted its first preservation ordinance, primarily to protect the La Villita district, the original Spanish Colonial settlement associated with Mission Valero. The 1939 Ordinance marks San Antonio's historic preservation program as one of the oldest in the United States next to Charleston (1931) and New Orleans (1936).

Over the years, the historic preservation ordinance and the powers of its associated historic preservation commissions and review bodies have been amended several times. In 1967, the City revised the 1938 Comprehensive Zoning ordinance to allow for the establishment of historic districts, creation of a Board of Review, and for new enforcement rules regarding building permits in such districts. The following year, 1968, the City adopted Ordinance No. 36478, which established the King William Historic District, which bears the title, "Historic District #1".

In 1974, Ordinance No 43796 was ratified, which provided additional authorizations for the creation of historic districts and individual historic landmarks, reconstituted the Board of Review for Historic Districts and Landmarks, and provided additional considerations for the review of permits to change, restore and demolish individual landmarks and resources within historic districts. It was not until 1992 when Ordinance No. 76514 was adopted that the current Historic and Design Review Commission was created as a merger between the Board of Review for Historic Districts and Landmarks, Riverwalk Advisory Commission, and Fine Arts Commission.



*East Side- Friedrich Refrigeration*



Historic neighborhood commercial building in Lavaca

### Observations

Article VI provides the HDRC with broad powers to designate landmarks and districts, as well as issue Certificates of Appropriateness (COA), for landmarks and properties within historic districts and the River Improvement Overlays. Specifically, Section 35-102 of Article VI provides (the) “...standards for the alteration, restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures, properties within historic districts, modification of archaeological sites, and development activities on city-owned property, and within public rights-of-way.” It is unique in that the HDRC conducts urban design review in overlay districts that may not necessarily have historic districts. This combined design review authority results in a relatively heavy workload for the HDRC and OHP’s as compared to other similar sized municipal historic preservation commissions.

The UDC’s Article VI, Division 2, outlines the process for historic district and landmark designation and for obtaining a COA for new construction, alterations to existing resources, and demolitions. In addition, requirements for receiving the tax exemption incentive are also specified.

In general, Article VI, Divisions 1 and 2, includes provisions that are standard in many other municipal historic preservation ordinances. These provisions include designation criteria and processes for landmarks and districts, certificate of appropriateness review procedures for alterations to historic resources and new construction, and demolition approval processes for economic hardship and/or unusual and compelling circumstances. It also includes additional features for the municipal historic preservation tax exemption program, treatment of sites following demolition, ordinary building repairs and maintenance, and standards for signs and billboards. Respectively, Divisions 3 and 4 address the treatment and protection of archaeological sites and publicly owned historic resources.

Article VI is lengthy given the multiple responsibilities of the Historic and Design Review Commission. Division 2 could be organized more cohesively to make it more readable, especially the sections related to the designation and certificate of appropriateness review processes. The consolidation of Divisions 1 and 2 would also help make the designation process more comprehensible. Other components of standard historic preservation ordinances include a set of definitions defining important terms such as “historic district,” “rehabilitation,” and “certificate of appropriateness”, as well as provisions that outline the membership, powers and duties of a municipal historic preservation commission. Within San Antonio’s UDC, the definitions component is not included in Article VI but rather in a different section of the UDC in Appendix A. In addition, the composition, powers and functions of the HDRC,

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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along with the duties and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Officer, are outlined within the Article VIII, not Article VI. Perhaps these components could be reorganized within Article VI so that all provisions regarding HDRC operations can be found in one place within the Unified Development Code.

In terms of ways to simplify Division 2 of Article VI, consideration should be given to consolidating the sections on designation criteria and the individual landmark and district designation processes into one cohesive section. First, Section 35-607 of Division 2 outlines two distinct sets of designation criteria, one for the initial evaluation of a potential historic district or landmark and a second set used in a final evaluation process when a property or district meets one or more of the initial criteria. The two sets of criteria presented may not be necessary and perhaps only one set of evaluation criteria could be developed and used to judge the eligibility of historic resources for landmark or district designation

Secondly, in order to streamline the designation process, consideration should be given to eliminating the need for a Zoning Commission hearing, as is required by provisions specified in Division 2. Instead, the Zoning Commission could be required to submit to the HDRC a report outlining any impacts the designation may have on any neighborhood or district-level plans and policies. Third, perhaps the demolition and economic hardship provisions within Division 2 could also be simplified and consolidated.

Owner consent provisions within Article VI weaken the ability of neighborhood groups or other entities to facilitate the designation of local historic districts, especially in areas that can benefit from designation to encourage reinvestment and revitalization. Current provisions require that 51 percent of property owners within a proposed district must approve of designation. According to criteria used to designate a district in the National Register of Historic Places, 51 percent of property owners must object to listing. Last, the requirement that two-thirds of the HDRC membership must approve a designation is not standard to most municipal historic preservation procedures. Although this provision was recently amended in 2009 to require two-thirds approval of HDRC members present, it is typical of most historic preservation commissions that only a majority vote is required.

Division 3 of Article VI concerns archeological sites and cemeteries within the City of San Antonio and contains provisions for the review of potential impacts on both inventoried and unidentified archeological sites. For projects and activities that will have an adverse impact on identified archeological sites, as determined through a required impact study, a treatment or mitigation plan must be developed by a professional



*Historic commercial buildings, downtown San Antonio*



*King William Historic District*

archaeologist for an approval order or a Certificate of Appropriateness to be issued by the Historic Preservation Officer or the Historic and Design Review Commission. Regarding the discovery of unidentified archeological sites, all activities within the site's vicinity are suspended for 30 days until a written order allowing the activity to continue is issued by the Historic Preservation Officer. Within five days after notice of discovery, the Historic Preservation Officer must determine whether an impact study and possible treatment plan is needed or if the proposed work or activity can proceed. In evaluating archeological studies and treatment plans, the HDRC and Historic Preservation Officer will apply review criteria established within the Texas Antiquities Code and guidelines for the treatment of archeological resources defined by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. In the most recent biennial update of the UDC in January 2009, both archeological and historic resource survey reports will be required for master planned development applications within the City and its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction.

Division 4 of Article VI concerns the HDRC's and OHP's role in reviewing the design of new public facilities as well as proposed rehabilitation and restoration plans of existing municipal buildings and facilities including parks and open spaces. General design guidelines for new construction and for existing facilities are specified within Sections 35-642 and 35-644. Construction within the public-rights-of-way are also considered and the HDRC has review authority over street furniture, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, awnings and canopies, streetscape landscaping, and vending carts and kiosks.

### **Other Relevant Codes + Ordinances**

Chapter 6 of the San Antonio Code of Ordinances includes various articles related to building and housing codes and other concerns such as dangerous and distressed buildings, retaining walls and building relocation. According to Chapter 6, the City uses both the International Building Code and International Existing Building Code, the latter of which contains requirements intended to encourage reuse of existing buildings in regards to repairs, alterations, additions, and changes of occupancy. Article VIII of Chapter 6 enables the establishment of the Dangerous Structures Determination Board (DSDB) and outlines the processes and procedures related to the disposition of dangerous buildings that go before the Board. Additionally, Section 6-158 of Article VIII allows for the Historic Preservation Officer to sit as a member of the DSDB; it also requires the Historic Preservation Officer to determine if cases before the Board are eligible for landmark designation. In specific cases where a property might pose an immediate danger to life and safety, and there is a need to expedite repair or demolition, the Historic Preservation Officer must also be consulted and concurrence sought for demolition of

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historic landmarks and resources within historic districts. For emergency demolitions, the OHP must determine the feasibility of stabilizing and securing the building within a 72 hour time period. The OHP must also notify the San Antonio Conservation Society and the appropriate registered neighborhood association.

Chapter 28 of the San Antonio Code of Ordinances addresses the permitting and construction of signs and billboards; Section 28-141 of this Chapter specifically outlaws the installation of billboards within designated historic districts. In addition, billboards constructed within historic districts prior to their official designation receive non-conforming status upon official designation. Article II of the UDC includes several provisions regarding historic and archaeological resources. For instance, in conservation subdivisions, the installation of sidewalks and trails are not mandated if landmarked and protected historic, archaeological or cultural resources are present. Additionally, such historic resources currently listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register or designated as a local landmark, shall be considered part of the “primary conservation area” when reviewing conservation subdivision applications.

### Design Guidelines

The UDC’s Article VI, Division 6 addresses the COA review and approval process in the RIO districts. Significant text and graphic detail regarding design guidelines has been provided to aid the HDRC in their focused review of COA applications for new commercial and residential construction that exceeds five units or five acres in the RIO Districts. Although the design standards and guidelines within Division 6 are detailed and comprehensive, they are focused on new development and there is a lack of supporting narrative for improvements, rehabilitations, and adaptive reuse for historically significant landmarks and buildings. Design guidelines at an overall citywide level that include more direction beyond the *Secretary of the Interior Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation*.

Within the UDC’s Article VI, Division 2, Section 35-605, Item D it is noted that design guidelines for particular historic districts can be developed, adopted and used by the HDRC to conduct COA design reviews. However, Item D does not specifically require that design guidelines be developed for existing and proposed historic districts, nor does it refer to the guidelines that have already been developed for the Lavaca and Government Hill districts. Furthermore, there is no clear statement that additional historic district design guidelines will be used in COA proceedings, other than a reference to Section 35-608 through 35-613, which are general design guidelines for new construction.



*Appropriate design guidelines can assist property owners in making appropriate decisions regarding alterations and additions.*



*Houston Street,  
downtown San Antonio*

Only two of San Antonio's 25 local historic districts have specific design guidelines, Lavaca and Government Hill. Houston Street also has a specific set of guidelines although the majority of the street is located in the River Improvement Overlay District 3. In general, both the Government Hill and Lavaca design guidelines discuss the conservation of building materials and ornaments/features of older, historic homes found in these neighborhoods.

In addition, both sets of guidelines stress affordable, low-cost options for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic homes and resources, possibly reflecting the income and demographic make-up of these neighborhoods when the guidelines were written. Despite their overall strengths in guiding historic building rehabilitation, both neighborhoods' guidelines do not present standards for appropriate new infill construction, which is the opposite of the RIO guidelines that focus on new construction.

The Lavaca and Government Hill design guideline approach could be a model for other similar neighborhoods and historic districts. Combining this approach with standards for infill construction should also be considered. In addition, the guidelines could be made more user-friendly, perhaps placed on a separate "Design Guidelines" tab within the OHP website and possibly translated into Spanish.

The number of design guidelines and the complexity of issues regarding whether some guidelines have provisions for preservation and new construction, and geographic gaps in the City not covered by specific guidelines, needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Ideally, a general set of guidelines for new construction and building rehabilitations that apply citywide should be considered for the residential blocks as well as commercial streets within historic districts to ensure that each retain their sense of place and identity. Specific guidelines could then be added for areas with special characteristics and needs. The new construction criteria for COA reviews, as currently set forth in Division 2, Section 35-609, appear to be focused on commercial infill development. A good set of infill guidelines would consider site development considerations along with scale, height and massing considerations inherent in each historic district for all land uses.

## Other Policies

### **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)**

Enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act established several programs including the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Section 106 review process for protecting historic, cultural and archaeological resources from impacts due to federally funded or

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licensed projects. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural, architectural and archeological places worthy of preservation and is part of a national effort to coordinate public and private resources to protect such resources. The National Register is administered in Texas between the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, the Texas Historical Commission and the San Antonio OHP through its designation as a Certified Local Government. In 1980, the NHPA was amended to implement the Certified Local Government program, which allows for local communities to participate in statewide preservation planning activities including access to grants and resources allocated by the U.S. Congress.

### **Certified Local Government**

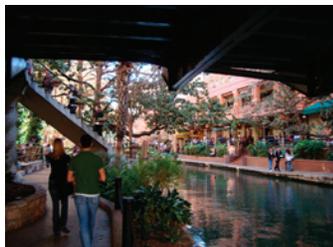
Title 13, Chapter 15 of the State of Texas Administrative Code outlines the rules and procedures for local Texas municipalities to participate in the Certified Local Government Program (CLG). The CLG Program is administered jointly between the U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, Texas Historical Commission and designated CLG's of which San Antonio is one, with the central purpose of developing a strong, effective historic preservation program at the local level. Title 13 sets out minimum requirements for the certification of local governments including the adoption of a historic preservation ordinance and establishment of a local commission, the qualifications of commission members, and an on-going program for historic resource surveys. In addition, procedures for nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and securing CLG grants are also outlined within Chapter 15.

### **Antiquities Code of Texas**

The Antiquities Code of Texas, passed in 1969 and amended in 1997, requires that any action that disturbs historic or archaeological sites on public land must be reviewed by the Texas Historical Commission. Public land can be owned or controlled by governments or agencies at the state, county or city levels. Projects that can be reviewed include, but are not limited to, reservoirs constructed by river authorities and water districts, construction or expansion of city recreational parks and facilitates, energy exploration by private companies construction by a city or county government that exceeds 5 acres or 5,000 cubic yards, whichever comes first. If the activity occurs inside a National Register or locally designated historic district, or affects a recorded archeological site, it needs to be reviewed regardless of project size.



*8100 Broadway, a  
Recent Past resource*



Riverwalk

## Economic Development

An issue that most cities face is the need for the public, and especially elected and appointed officials, to consider historic preservation as a form of “economic development”. It is an awareness and understanding that needs to be incorporated into policies, plans, regulations, and financial incentives/programs so that preservation of a community is seen as an important component of its economy and growth. This is especially critical in cities like San Antonio, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Philadelphia, Paris, and London, which are branded worldwide as historic places that are significant because of their history and culture.

### Economic Development Programs

There are currently several programs and initiatives managed by the City’s Economic Development Department that relate to historic preservation including empowerment zones, downtown development, small business development and financial incentives. The activities and initiatives of this Department include:

- **Empowerment Zone** - In partnership with the State, enterprise zones allows the City to offer a package of local and state tax and regulatory benefits to assist businesses in locating, expanding or retaining jobs in economically distressed neighborhoods. Within the City, all census tract block groups, in which at least 20 percent of the residents have an income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level, now qualify as State Enterprise Zone areas. Designated projects are eligible for state sales and use tax refunds on taxes paid for equipment and machinery, building materials taxable services, and utilities used in zone business operations. Such projects are also eligible for state franchise tax credits based on job creation and capital investment. The use of Empowerment Zone benefits for historic preservation should be further explored, especially in neighborhoods where low-income property owners cannot maintain their historic properties.
- **Incentive Scorecard System** - The Economic Development Department manages the Incentive Scorecard System, which is used to evaluate development projects seeking various City incentives. The current scorecard evaluation system places priority on neighborhood infill development and rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties. However, the scoring system places weight on large development projects of \$10 million or more. It is also unclear what current incentives can be used to facilitate historic preservation activities. The scorecard system is currently being evaluated to determine what additional incentives should be created to encourage downtown and neighborhood reinvestment as part of the overall Base Realignment and Closure

## Section 4: State of the City

inner-city reinvestment strategies currently being developed by the Planning and Development Services Department.

- **Economic Development Briefing Team** - The Briefing Team provides technical assistance and troubleshooting services to developers and investors regarding the site development and permitting processes. Technical Assistance efforts of the Team may be helpful to the OHP in briefing investors and developers seeking to rehabilitate historic buildings and properties.

### Other Housing + Neighborhood Development Programs

There are several programs managed by the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department that focus on housing and infrastructure improvements and commercial district revitalization. The Department's programs and initiatives include:

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - Tax Increment Financing is a property tax based financing tool that is used to underwrite public improvement costs associated with new development, especially in distressed neighborhoods and vacant or underutilized industrial areas. The areas in which TIF is being used are known as Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), which there are currently 26 TIRZ districts in San Antonio. It appears that only the Houston Street TIRZ uses TIF revenues for historic preservation and façade rehabilitation purposes. Further study of the potential of using TIF revenues more extensively to leverage rehabilitation tax credits and other incentives in facilitating adaptive use projects in downtown and in neighborhoods should be considered (*additional information on TIF is provided in the Incentives section*).
- **Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR)** Revitalizing traditional neighborhood commercial districts within San Antonio is the focus of the NCR Program. It appears that four commercial districts are currently participating in the NCR Program including the Avenida Guadalupe district, Southtown, East Town and Commerce and the St. Mary's University Neighborhood. At one point, the Southtown district was a participating neighborhood in the Texas Main Street Program. It is unclear if the NCR Program provides technical assistance services to participating organizations beyond financial assistance for building rehabilitation and façade improvements. The Operation Facelift Façade Improvement Grant Program (*discussed further in the Incentives section below*) is a key element for design enhancement in the NCR Program. Overall, the NCR Program has resulted in \$125 million in private investment in new



Midtown on Blanco NCR District



Lavaca Historic District

and existing businesses. This successful program may be able to be expanded to other commercial districts throughout the City that have a substantial number of historic buildings.

- **The Homeownership Incentive Program** - The Department's Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP) is designed to assist eligible first-time buyers in purchasing new or existing homes within San Antonio. The Program provides low-interest loans up to \$12,000 to applicants for down payments, closing costs and prepaid interest, amortized over 5 years, as long as the sales price does not exceed \$110,000, the "affordable home price" established by San Antonio City Council. Applicants must be able to qualify for an FHA, VA, or conventional loan from an institutional lender and the applicant's total gross income cannot exceed 80 percent of the area median income. First-time home buyers must also receive counseling through the Department's Homebuyers' Club and present a certificate of completion upon application.
- **Rental Rehabilitation Program** - Funds from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Act are used as low-interest loans to underwrite the costs of repairs on single-family and multi-family investment rental property. The property must have structural damage to at least one major system component such as mechanical, electrical, roof, foundation or plumbing. Properties must then be maintained as residential rental property for the term of the loan and be rented to low-income families at fair market value. This program has been used to rehabilitate historic downtown residential buildings.
- **Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program** - Similar to the Rental Rehabilitation Program, low-income homeowners can seek and apply for financial assistance, through CDBG funds, to rehabilitate and renovate their homes. Forgivable and low-interest home improvement loans are not to exceed \$35,000 or 75 percent of the after rehabilitation appraised value are offered to eligible applicants. A construction specialist assesses the property to determine the repairs necessary to meet local building codes and it must remain a residential property under the existing ownership for the duration of the loan.

### Incentives

There are several incentive programs used in San Antonio to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties and resources, including local ad valorem tax exemptions and grant programs operated by the San Antonio Conservation Society and the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR), which focuses on commercial rehabilitation already summarized before.

This section summarizes a wide variety of financial incentive programs that are available for the restoration and rehabilitation of historic resources. Incentives are offered at the Federal, State and local levels. Other incentives that are established to encourage other objectives, such as economic development, but indirectly facilitate the rehabilitation of historic resources are also summarized within this section.

### Federal Incentives

- **The 20 Percent Historic Preservation Tax Credit** - The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit lowers the amount of Federal taxes owed on building rehabilitation expenses. The National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior administers the program in cooperation with the Department of the Treasury and the Texas Historical Commission (the State Historic Preservation Office).

The 20 percent Rehabilitation Tax Credit is available for depreciable properties rehabilitated for commercial, industrial, agricultural, or rental residential purposes, but it is not available for properties used exclusively as an owner's private residence. In addition, a property must have been determined eligible by the Texas Historical Commission for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places or must be located in a locally certified historic district or in a historic district that is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register, may also qualify for the credit. An application to receive the tax credits must be submitted to the Texas Historical Commission and work must conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation*.

- **The 10 Percent Historic Preservation Tax Credit** - The 10 percent building rehabilitation tax credit is available for non-historic buildings placed in service before 1936. As with the 20 percent rehabilitation tax credit, the 10 percent credit applies only to depreciable, commercial buildings and the rehabilitation itself must be substantial, exceeding either \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater. This credit applies only to



Municipal Plaza



Monte Vista Historic District

buildings rehabilitated for non-residential uses, thus rental housing would not qualify. Projects undertaken for the 10 percent credit must meet specific physical tests for retention of external walls and internal structural framework.

### State Incentives

- **State of Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grants.** The Texas Historical Commission (THC) provides grants for a wide range of preservation projects through the Texas Preservation Trust Fund (TPTF). Trust Fund grants pay up to one-half of total project costs to help preserve the State's cultural resources. Grant funds are awarded for acquisition, development, and planning and heritage education. Projects eligible for grant assistance include commercial buildings, public buildings (such as schools, city halls, libraries and museums), unique historic structures, archeological site surveys, and training for individuals and organizations about historic resources and preservation techniques.

The Fund itself is an interest-earning pool of public and private monies, and the earned interest and designated gifts are distributed yearly as matching grants to public and private owners of eligible historic properties and archeological sites. In fiscal year 2007, the THC reviewed more than 70 requests for grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$30,000. The agency awarded 27 matching grants totaling \$477,800. While grant awards are relatively small for use by the HDRC, projects needing financial assistance at the local neighborhood level may benefit from securing a Trust Fund grant.

The OHP has received in recent years, a grant from the TPTF for kiosk signage at Main Plaza that details and illustrates the history of the plaza based on the archaeological investigations that occurred during the Main Plaza redevelopment.

- **Certified Local Government Grants** - Certified Local Government (CLG) grants enable local Texas communities to develop quality preservation programs and fund projects for training for local preservation commissions, completing or updating surveys of historic resources, producing historical walking or driving tour materials, and preparing preservation plans and National Register of Historic Places nominations. CLG grants require a cash or in-kind service match from the local community. Certified Local Government grants are funded with money appropriated by the federal government for preservation efforts through the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). By law, the THC must set aside at least 10 percent of

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its HPF appropriation for CLG grants each year. Grants typically range from \$250 to \$10,000. Over the past several years, CLG monies have been used by the Office of Historic Preservation to fund a homeowner's guide to historic preservation and a survey of 19<sup>th</sup> Century farm and ranch complexes in San Antonio's extra-territorial jurisdiction area.

- **History Museum Grants** - The Texas Historical Commission offers History Museum Grants to assist small museums in the preservation of their collections. The maximum grant amount per museum is \$1,000, with grant funds payable upon completion of the project as reimbursement for expenses incurred.

### City-Level Historic Preservation Incentives

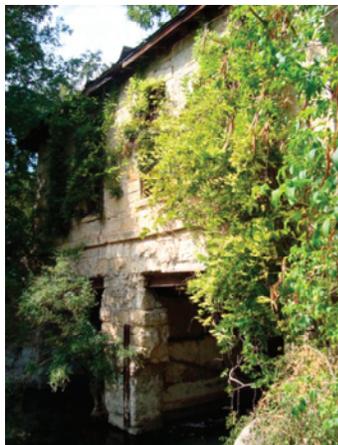
- **San Antonio Historic Tax Exemption** - This program waives any increased property taxes on historic resources in three circumstances - properties that have undergone a substantial rehabilitation, properties located within newly designated historic districts, and for substantially rehabilitated rental properties. For substantially rehabilitated properties, the property shall have no assessed value for ad valorem taxation for a period of five years. Thereafter, the exempt property shall be reappraised at current market value and assessed at 50 percent rate for an additional consecutive five-year period. For new historic districts, all residential properties occupied by the property owner will qualify for an ad valorem tax credit amounting to 20 percent of the assessed city of San Antonio ad valorem property taxes for up to 10 years with an extension of an additional five years grant to qualified property owners.

Owners of a substantially rehabilitated designated historic landmark, either individually designated or by location within a local historic district, that lease 40 percent or greater of all rental units to low-income tenants, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements for the San Antonio Metropolitan Statistical Area #1 can qualify for an additional tax exemption. It should be noted that the tax exemption is not tied to the property itself but rather to the owner. When the property is sold to a new owner, the exemption does not carry forward.

- **San Antonio Conservation Society Community Grant Program** - The San Antonio Conservation Society offers grants for the restoration or rehabilitation of residential or commercial historic structures that are at least 50 years old, with priority given to historic resources that are architecturally significant and



*Olmos Park Terrace Historic District*



Waterworks, Brackenridge Park

endangered. Generally, all exterior work is eligible, although interiors can qualify if they are of landmark quality.

General maintenance, such as painting, is considered to be the responsibility of the property owner and is generally not eligible for grant funding. All work must be done according to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. Requests over \$15,000 are seldom granted under this program; the most commonly granted amount is in the \$5,000 range.

### Other Local Incentives

The following are additional incentive programs offered by the City of San Antonio although not directly related to historic preservation purposes.

- **City Tax Abatement Program** - The City of San Antonio Economic Development Department offers a substantial Tax Abatement Incentive of up to 100 percent on real estate or personal property taxes on improvement values for a maximum term of up to 10 years. Individual Tax Abatement applications are subject to final negotiation and approval by City Council. Applicants must be engaged in one of the following qualifying industries: aviation and aerospace, biotechnology, creative services, green technology, finance, corporate and regional headquarters activities, or downtown Urban Significant Projects.
- **City Tax Increment Financing** - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a municipal financing tool that can be used to finance new public improvements and infrastructure, although it is unclear if monies can be directed to the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Tax Increment Financing allows future ad valorem taxes and sales tax revenues to be pledged to finance public infrastructure improvements. In some states, TIF can be used to underwrite façade improvement programs or equity contributions for substantial historic building adaptive use projects.
- **Community Development Block Grants** - Community Development Block Grant monies are currently being used to underwrite several programs within the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department, including the Operation Facelift Façade Grant Improvement Program.
- **Enterprise Zone** - An Enterprise Zone (EZ) is an economic development tool that allows the community to partner with the State to offer a package of local and state tax and regulatory benefits to assist businesses seeking to locate, expand or retain

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jobs in economically distressed areas. Within the City of San Antonio, all census tract block groups in which at least 20 percent of the residents have an income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level now qualify as State Enterprise Zone areas.

In addition, the area encompassing the City's Federal Empowerment Zone (EZ) qualifies as a State Enterprise Zone. Designated projects are eligible for state sales and use tax refunds on taxes paid for equipment and machinery, materials used in building a new structure, taxable services, and utilities used in zone business operations. Designation projects are also eligible for state franchise tax credits based on job creation and capital investment.

### Additional Incentives

The following are additional incentive programs offered by other entities, primary governmental agencies and non-profit organizations.

- **National Trust for Historic Preservation** - National Trust Preservation Funds provide two types of assistance to nonprofit organizations and public agencies: 1) matching grants from \$500 to \$5,000 for preservation planning and educational efforts, and 2) intervention funds for preservation emergencies. Matching grant funds may be used to obtain professional expertise in areas such as architecture, archaeology, engineering, preservation planning, land-use planning, fund raising, organizational development and law as well as to provide preservation education activities to educate the public.

The Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation provides nonprofit organizations and public agencies grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for projects that contribute to the preservation or recapture of an authentic sense of place. Individuals and for-profit businesses may apply only if the project for which funding is requested involves a National Historic Landmark. Funds may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops and education programs.

- **National Trust Community Investment Corporation** - The National Trust Community Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, works with property owners in making equity investments in substantial building adaptive use projects that qualify for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and, when available, New Markets Tax Credits. Property owners include for-profit developers, nonprofit organizations and local governments. The Corporation has worked on several tax-credit projects in San Antonio over the last



*Homes along Ellis Alley*



Keystone Park

several years and even underwrote the development of Lavaca's design guidelines publication.

- **Save America's Treasures Program** - Administered by the National Park Services and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Save America's Treasures provides grants for preservation and conservation work on cultural artifacts and historic buildings, districts, structures and sites. Artifacts include collections, documents, sculpture, and works of art. Grants are awarded to federal, state, local, and tribal government entities, and non-profit organizations through a competitive matching-grant program.
- **Preserve America Grants** - Preserve America is a federal initiative that supports community efforts to preserve important historic and cultural resources. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of local communities. The Preserve America matching-grant program provides funding to designated Preserve America Communities to support a variety of activities including heritage tourism, surveying and documenting historic resources, interpreting historic sites, planning, marketing, and training. San Antonio has been designated a Preserve America community.

### Potential Incentive Models

The following are innovative incentive programs enacted by other major U.S. cities that could serve as models for future historic preservation incentive programs in San Antonio.

- **Chicago Streamlined Tax Increment Financing Program & Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF)** - The Streamlined TIF Program provides expedited access to valuable grants for the improvement of industrial, commercial, retail or residential mixed-use properties in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts citywide. The program incorporates an easy-to-use application form and efficient approval process to pay up to 25 percent of renovation and rehabilitation costs.

Assistance ranges from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000. Grants are paid in annual installments to participants following project completion and do not have to be repaid. Expenses eligible for TIF grants include: certain environmental remediation measures, building rehabilitation and repair, permanently affixed signs or awnings,

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rehabilitation and remodeling of existing tenant improvements, professional fees related to the redevelopment project, and up to 30 percent of an applicant's construction period interest costs.

The Small Business Improvement Fund helps make improvements to small business properties in select Chicago neighborhoods. The program uses TIF revenues to help owners of commercial and industrial properties within specific TIF districts to repair or remodel their facilities for their own business or on behalf of tenants. Program participants can receive matching grants to cover up to half the cost of remodeling work, with a maximum grant amount of \$50,000. The grant does not have to be repaid. Expenses eligible for a SBIF grant include sign removal and replacement, tuckpointing, new heating, ventilation and air conditioning, improvements to accommodate disabled patrons or workers, and the purchase of adjacent property for building expansion or parking. Grants are provided to property owners after remodeling work is completed and all expenses are paid. Residential property, residential components of mixed-use buildings, and property leased to fast-food chains and certain other businesses are not eligible for the program. Vacant business property is eligible, but grants are not paid until the space is occupied by a business tenant.

- **Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund** - Since 1982, the Providence (RI) Preservation Society has operated a highly successful Revolving Fund that has invested over \$3 million in more than 154 building rehabilitation projects in several neighborhoods including the downtown district. These investments have leveraged over \$7.8 million in additional financing from the private sector.

The Revolving Fund, which is currently capitalized at \$2 million in assets, is used to purchase endangered and abandoned properties for resale to responsible owners. In turn, new property owners are eligible to apply for low-interest rehab loans, especially to those who cannot obtain conventional financing due to income level and/or condition of building and surrounding neighborhood.

The key component of the Revolving Fund is the Neighborhood Loan Program, which provides loans secured by a first or subordinated second mortgage, personal guarantees, and additional collateral as required. Loan terms are usually determined on a case-by-case basis. This program focuses on Providence's low and moderate-income historic neighborhoods in need of revitalization and stabilization. A second component, the Downcity Loan and Grant Program, provides loan and grants to stimulate investment



*Hanger 9, Brooks Air Force Base*



*Neighborhood commercial building in Lavaca.*

in historic commercial districts. Storefront loans will typically be based on the prime rate with a term no longer than 72 months.

The Revolving Fund is managed by an 11-member board comprised of experts in banking, real estate development, law, historic preservation, architecture, and social services; three volunteer committees advise the board on strategies for their respective neighborhoods. Architectural design assistance and a material salvage service are also provided to applicants.

- **Los Angeles Adaptive Reuse Ordinance** - Created in 1999, the Los Angeles Central City Association helped to sponsor a new adaptive reuse policy, which was later adopted and implemented through municipal ordinance. The ordinance helps to streamline the process developers must follow to get projects approved, resulting in substantial time savings.

The program's first component, a set of land use ordinances, relaxes parking, density, and other typical zoning requirements. Through construction guidelines, the program's second component provides flexibility in the permitting process. The program was initially geared for the central downtown but has since been expanded citywide to focus on distressed neighborhoods. The program is coordinated between the Office of the Mayor, the Department of Building and Safety, and the Fire Department.

- **Historic Savannah Foundation Revolving Fund** - Historic Savannah Foundation started its Revolving Fund in 1959, which has saved historic homes and resources throughout several neighborhoods within the City. The Foundation purchases endangered historic structures and holds them for resale to a new owner committed to restoration and rehabilitation. The Foundation retains a restrictive covenant on the property to assure its future preservation and maintenance.

In the 1990s, the Historic Savannah Foundation, with an initial investment of \$170,000 in eight threatened historic homes in the Beach Institute neighborhood, generated a reinvestment amount of \$3 million worth of property rehabilitation. This neighborhood, which is a mixed-income, multi-cultural area on the eastern edge of the Savannah's famed Landmark District, has now seen the rehabilitation of approximately 60 buildings and is once again an attractive place to live.

- **Savannah Mayor's Alliance to Save Historic Houses** - The Mayors Alliance to Save Historic Houses (MASHH) is an initiative by Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson, the City of Savannah Property Maintenance Division, and the Historic Savannah Foundation

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to eliminate blight, improve public safety, promote economic development, support better land use, and foster better community relations. The Foundation and the City are monitoring and developing strategies to save the historic properties on the Mayor's 100 Worst Properties list, which was first issued in September 2007.

The partners meet quarterly to review progress and share information to put these buildings to productive use, which is critical to the sustainability of Savannah's eight residential National Register Historic Districts. Between these meetings, the Historic Savannah Foundation works closely with the City Property Maintenance Division on issues as they develop. The Foundation provides weekly reports to the Mayor's Office regarding home purchases or options made by the Foundation.

### City Commissions + Agencies

The following is a listing of the City agencies and commissions that have primary responsibilities for managing the City's historic preservation program or have a formal or informal involvement with the Office of Historic Preservation and the Historic and Design Review Commission.

#### Historic and Design Review Commission

The Historic and Design Review Commission's central mission is to preserve and maintain the City's historic resources including districts, individual landmarks and archeological sites. Through Article VI of the Unified Development Code, the Commission is specifically empowered to oversee the designation processes for individual landmarks and historic districts, and the Certificate of Appropriateness review procedures for alterations to historic resources as well as for new construction, both within historic districts and in the River Improvement Overlay (RIO) and Viewshed Protection Districts. There are currently 24 designated local historic districts, approximately 2,000 individual local landmarks and over 1,900 archaeological sites.

#### Office of Historic Preservation

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) is an independent agency within the Office of the San Antonio City Manager that manages the operations of the Historic and Design Review Commission and other functions related to historic resource surveys, COA permit enforcement, education and advocacy, and archeological activities. The Office is currently staffed by nine personnel including the Historic



*Produce Row- Market Square*



*Historic resource at HemisFair Park*

Preservation Officer, an Architectural Historian, a City Archeologist, a Senior Planner with extensive experience in Code Compliance and Demolition procedures, four planners with expertise in Community Planning, Community and Regional Planning with a specialty in Historic Preservation, Environmental Design, and Public Administration as well as an Administrative Secretary. Staff performs a wide variety of tasks including public education and outreach, archaeological reviews, surveys, plan and plat reviews, tax credit reviews, research, and code enforcement. Staff also conducts reviews for demolitions, repairs and maintenance, billboards, banners, telecommunication towers, projects in the public right-of-way, projects regarding the San Antonio Water System and the CPS Utility, and utility equipment, landmark and district designations, and reviews for other items such as bus shelters, NCAA sporting events and other special activities.

### **Planning and Development Services Department**

The Planning and Development Services Department is responsible for two basic functions — the creation of both comprehensive plans and neighborhood-level district plans as well as facilitating an efficient development review process. Its primary goal is to implement the planning goals and objectives as specified within the City of San Antonio’s Master Plan Policies.

The Department is divided into four divisions including Land Development, which handles environmental planning and engineering issues; Building Development, which concerns itself with subdivision development review; Specialized Planning with focus on regional planning efforts and geographic information systems; and Comprehensive Planning. The Comprehensive Planning Division areas of responsibility include community development, neighborhood planning, urban design, and the management of the Unified Development Code. The Comprehensive Planning Division comprises two different sections, Community Development and Neighborhood Planning and Urban Design. The Community Development Section focuses on implementing the 2008 Strategic Plan for Community Development, which documents overall strategies for improving housing, urban environments and economic opportunities within the City of San Antonio.

The Neighborhood Planning and Urban Design Section’s primary function is to provide technical assistance and resources to local neighborhoods in the development and adoption of neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plan components include land use, housing economic development, community facilities and transportation. It is unclear if there is a formal policy that all neighborhood plans have to include historic preservation elements although several neighborhood plans have detailed chapters on

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historic resources. Every five years, neighborhood plans are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to stay current with public improvements and land use trends. This Section also administers the Neighborhood Urban Design program within the existing conservation districts and corridor overlay areas, which assists local neighborhoods create design standards to ensure the compatibility of new development with existing neighborhood character. Conservation districts and corridor overlays are special planning tools used to maintain neighborhood and corridor character while promoting appropriate infill development through the adoption of specific design standards. In addition, the Section also provides assistance for neighborhood organizational development and capacity-building initiatives.

The Planning and Development Services Department is currently drafting a set of infill development policies and strategies as a way to encourage reinvestment in the City's historic inner-core. These strategies include the potential development of programs and incentives that could encourage historic preservation activity in downtown and in the neighborhoods.

### **Economic Development Department**

The Economic Development Department is the lead agency in implementing various economic development activities aimed at creating and retaining jobs and diversifying San Antonio's base of industries and businesses. The Department operates several programs and initiatives related to empowerment zones, downtown development, small business development and incentives. The Department uses an incentive scorecard system as an evaluation tool to determine the public benefit of a proposed projects seeking city incentives.

### **Housing and Neighborhood Services Department**

The Housing and Neighborhood Services Department has two major functions — the implementation of housing improvement and development programs as well as the management of the Code Compliance division which provides administrative support to the Dangerous Structures Determination Board. Major Department initiatives include the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, focusing on neighborhood commercial districts, and various financial assistance programs for housing rehabilitation and new construction. The Department also manages the City's TIRZ program.



*St. Anthony Hotel,*



*Endangered historic commercial building*

### **Dangerous Structures Determination Board**

As prescribed by the Texas Local Government Code, and Chapter 6, Article VIII of the City Municipal Code, the Dangerous Structures Determination Board conducts public hearings regarding the disposition of distressed and dangerous properties, in the interest of public health and safety, and recommends actions to remediate condition including repair and demolition. Members of the Board are designated by the City Manager and comprised of staff from Grants Monitoring and Administration, Planning and Development Services, Community Initiatives, Fire, Historic Preservation and Public Works.

Provisions within the codes require that the OHP be informed of historic resources and properties that come before the Board. Within 30 days of notification, the Historic Preservation Officer is required to advise the Board in writing whether or not the property is an individual landmark, located within a historic district or is of historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance and eligible to be landmarked or part of a historic district. If the property has these features, measures will be taken to secure the property and develop a rehabilitation plan. There is a 30-day time limit to develop a feasible rehabilitation plan. In addition, the Historic Preservation Officer must obtain concurrence from the HDRC within 60 days that a historic building having significance should be designated a landmark. There is also a 180-day time limit for the landmark designation to take place after the receipt of the initial notice of the property's review before the Determination Board.

### **San Antonio River Commission**

Established in 2007, the seven-member San Antonio River Commission provides comprehensive oversight regarding development and operations of the San Antonio River. The Commission advises the City Council, the Historic and Design Review Commission, Planning and Zoning Commissions, and the Board of Adjustments regarding zoning, land use and design management issues related to both public and private projects within the six San Antonio River Improvement Overlay Districts. The Commission also works with the San Antonio River Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the implementation of the \$279 million River Improvement Project, which seeks to restore various flood control and recreational improvements along 13 miles of the San Antonio River from Josephine Street to Loop 410 South.

### **Capital Improvement Management Services**

Capital Improvement Management Services (CIMS) was formed in 2007 to manage the City's \$550 million Bond Program, which will underwrite various public infrastructure and improvement projects including the construction of new streets, bridges, sidewalks, drainage facilities, parks,

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athletic facilities, libraries and public health centers. Bond Program construction projects will be funded until 2012. CIMS manages all facets of Bond Program projects including design, construction and inspection, and coordinates consultant selection, construction contractor procurement, and project delivery for all capital improvement construction projects. It works closely with the OHP on archaeological and historic cultural resources compliance requirements and HDRC on permitting reviews.

### Public Works Department

The Department of Public Works consists of several divisions that are responsible for the maintenance and improvement of various public infrastructure systems including streets, storm water management, traffic engineering and operations, rights-of-way management, rail and transit, and accessibility. It is unclear if there are formal operational policies that relate to the treatment of historic and archaeological resources as part of Department projects.

### Parks and Recreation Department

Organized in 1952, the Parks and Recreation Department currently manages a parkland inventory of 193 parks totaling 15,546 acres. Notable parks and plazas with historic resources include Brackenridge, Mahncke, Milam, San Pedro Springs, Voelcker, Roosevelt, and Travis Parks, among others. Within the Department's 2006 – 2016 System Strategic Plan, the *“rehabilitation, maintenance, and operation plans for facilities including, but not limited to, HemisFair Park, La Villita, Market Square, community centers, (and) the Spanish Governor’s Palace...”* are strategic priorities. Another strategic priority is the identification and documentation of *“archeological, cultural, historical, and artistic resources in San Antonio’s parks”*.

### Office of Environmental Policy

The Office of Environmental Policy manages several programs and initiatives including the Sustainability Task Force, created to collaborate on citywide efforts to integrate sustainability principles within municipal operations, and the Mayor's Sustainable Building Task Force, which was organized to develop and implement the Mission Verde Plan. Adopted in early 2009, the Plan outlines comprehensive goals and initiatives to invest in green technologies, transportation systems and building retrofitting programs. In particular, Initiative 6 of the Plan — “Build a Green Retrofit Program for existing homes and buildings”, recommends that a permanent source of capital be made available to home and building owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency retrofits. Interestingly, the *Plan* does not recognize historic preservation as a significant and viable sustainability strategy. The Office of Environmental Policy will also be



*Entrance door at Mission San Jose*



*Fort Sam Houston, Band Building*

managing a new apportionment of Federal stimulus funds for a residential weatherization program.

### **Office of Cultural Affairs**

The Office of Cultural Affairs operates and manages several programs related to supporting and developing the San Antonio creative arts community including local arts and cultural organizations as well as individual artists. Funding for the agency's initiatives comes from the San Antonio hotel accommodations tax and from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Texas Arts Commission. The Cultural Arts Board, whose members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, also guides the Office's operations. One of the main functions of the Office is to provide financial support to cultural and arts related organizations for general operation support, for specific arts projects, maintenance to arts-related facilities and for professional artist development. Another important function is to implement and manage The Cultural Collaborative, a Plan created in 2005 to develop San Antonio's creative economy.

### **Other Organizations + Entities**

#### **Texas Historical Commission**

Established in 1953, the Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the state agency for historic preservation, which consults with counties, local communities, citizens and organizations to preserve the state's architectural, archeological and cultural resources. The Commission manages several programs including the National Register of Historic Places, the Certified Local Government and state archaeology programs. Various other initiatives include heritage tourism, county courthouse preservation, and the state Main Street program for downtown commercial districts. The Commission also reviews project applications for the Federal historic preservation tax credits.

### **Education + Advocacy**

Over the decades, the San Antonio Conservation Society, one of the oldest preservation advocacy organizations in the country, has played a prominent role in the preservation of San Antonio's historic and environmental resources. Neighborhood associations and civic groups have also played significant roles in designating local historic districts and saving various historic resources from demolition.

Despite the success of private-sector advocacy work, there still is a feeling that "...*developers and the general public do not recognize the value of historic preservation or the benefits of being in a historic district.*" For others, the

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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## Section 4: State of the City

City, the OHP, and the Conservation Society need to be “...*facilitators and educators*...” rather than just the “...*design police*”.

The critical concern going forward is the need to promote historic preservation’s value in advancing neighborhood stability, green development and sustainability, tourism and economic development. Broader partnerships and coalitions with other entities throughout San Antonio including developers, brokers and architects should be forged to leverage and harness resources for on-going education and advocacy efforts.

While the need to promote historic preservation as a City “ethic” and stewardship on a broader scale, there is also a more specific need to better market the resources and programs of the City and its partners. Currently, the City web site as well as brochures and pamphlets are used to inform the public about available incentives.

The following is a brief overview of the private sector organizations and entities actively involved in historic preservation advocacy, outreach and education activities. This is not an exhaustive list of existing and potential organizations and entities that can and may play advocacy roles in the future

### **San Antonio Conservation Society**

Founded in 1924, the San Antonio Conservation Society is one of the oldest and most accomplished historic preservation advocacy organizations in the United States. The Society has been responsible for the preservation of many significant structures, districts, and environmental resources including the Spanish Missions, the San Antonio River, the Edward Steves Homestead, and the King William Historic District.

Over the years, the Society has purchased various historic properties threatened with demolition as permanent holdings of the organization, has accepted easements on others, and has purchased, rehabilitated and redeeded properties to other entities. The Society also conducts a variety of educational and outreach activities such as regular bus and walking tours, an annual awards program and seminar for secondary school teachers, and publishes various books and materials including position papers on important historic preservation issues. In addition, the Society maintains two house museums and offers grants for the rehabilitation of endangered historic properties and for educational and research purposes. The Society undertakes various fundraising activities including its successful “Night in Old San Antonio” (NIOA).



*Municipal Auditorium*



*Dionicio Rodriguez- designed bridge, Brackenridge Park*

### **American Institute of Architects, San Antonio Chapter**

The San Antonio Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) is the fourth largest AIA chapter in the State of Texas and provides resources and support services for architects and design professionals within the 22-county San Antonio region. The Chapter also carries out various education and advocacy activities including the publication of architectural guidebooks, including the recent Traditions and Visions guide, and position statements on current design and preservation issues. A position paper on historic building demolitions was released by the Chapter in May 2008.

### **Build San Antonio Green**

Established in 2002, Build San Antonio Green™ is the residential green building program for San Antonio, co-administered with the Greater San Antonio Builders Association. Build San Antonio Green provides technical assistance and workshops on a variety of issues, including green building technologies and energy efficiencies. It also certifies “Green-Built Homes” in San Antonio.

### **San Antonio Missions National Historical Park**

Established in 1983 and managed by the National Park Service, the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park encompasses the four Spanish Colonial Missions, as well as the 84 separate historical sites along the southern branch of the San Antonio River. Portions of the four missions are owned by the Archdiocese of San Antonio and are still run as active parishes. The Park Service conducts regular educational and outreach activities, including archeology open houses, Dia de los Muertos celebrations, and guided tours and field trip opportunities for local schools. Over 1.2 million tourists visit the missions annually with an economic benefit of \$32 million.

### **Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions**

Established in 1983, Los Compadres is a private membership organization that raises funds and provides volunteer support for special projects within the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. Over the years, it has raised over \$4 million for the National Park.

### **Neighborhood Associations**

There are an estimated 200 neighborhood associations in San Antonio, many of which have been active in local preservation efforts. Various neighborhood associations have advocated for the development and adoption of new neighborhood plans, design guidelines, and historic district designations. There is potential for engaging the neighborhood

associations in the variety of planning, education and advocacy activities that build a historic preservation ethic within San Antonio.

### University of Texas at San Antonio

The University of Texas at San Antonio currently offers professional degree and certificate programs in historic preservation and has an active Center for Archaeological Research, which conducts field schools and various grant and research related work. In addition, the San Antonio Conservation Society has endowed a professorship within the University's School of Architecture. The University recently partnered with the Office of Historic Preservation in the summer of 2009 to present an educational workshop on historic window rehabilitation and maintenance.

### Other Preservation Planning Issues

The strategic planning process for historic preservation in San Antonio initiated with this report is focused on policy and process issues at a citywide level. Local issues related to specific historic sites or districts are not a component of this work scope and will be addressed at a later date or in a separate planning process. For record purposes, the following issues and ideas were discussed during community workshops regarding the La Villita and HemisFair districts.

- **The HemisFair District** - Built to hold the 1968 World's Fair, the 15-acre HemisFair Park contains 24 historic homes original to the site including the 750-foot tall Tower of the Americas. The HemisFair site is also the largest piece of undeveloped land in inner-city San Antonio (100 plus acres). Current planning issues for the district include the pending vacation of the United States District Court facility, the former United State Pavilion during the Fair. There has also been interest in securing a master developer to redevelop the site with a dense mixed-use project to activate the area. Although a master plan for HemisFair was developed in 2004, a new planning process is currently underway to determine future revitalization and redevelopment scenarios. It is unclear how historic preservation will be incorporated within future plans for the district.
- **La Villita** – The La Villita District is the original Spanish Colonial settlement associated with Mission Valero and is sometimes called San Antonio's first neighborhood. Today, La Villita is managed as a shopping and arts village district through the City's Downtown Operations Division. A new planning process is being considered to determine potential management and reuse strategies for the district as retailers have struggled to be successful in recent years. One possible reuse strategy is to recreate the district as an arts college.



La Villita



# HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

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### Overview



*This Place Matters- Dignowity Hill Historic District*

The City of San Antonio has one of the oldest municipal preservation programs in the country and is recognized worldwide as a special place of history and culture. The City has achieved many successes including the designation and protection of 24 historic districts, over 2,000 individual landmarks, and 1,900 archaeological sites. There is no question that San Antonio's historic preservation efforts have contributed to enhancing the livability and economic vibrancy of neighborhoods and commercial districts as well as its famous Missions and River Walk. San Antonio is promoted and considered as an important travel destination for those seeking to experience an authentic sense of place, a multi-cultural city with historic urban, suburban, and rural settings.

However, as noted in the preceding comprehensive analysis of the City's historic preservation efforts, there are significant issues that need to be addressed to ensure that San Antonio's past is seriously considered in its future. Going forward, the City and its preservation partners have distinct challenges as well as opportunities to establish historic preservation as a more powerful tool for shaping quality environments, strengthening neighborhoods, and facilitating economic development. The following Historic Preservation Plan presents key goals, strategies, and action items that address critical preservation issues and aims to better integrate preservation into citywide planning, development, and sustainability initiatives.

The implementation of the Historic Preservation Plan will require strong and effective partnerships between the Office of Historic Preservation, Historic and Design Review Commission, elected officials, City departments, and other entities such as the San Antonio Conservation Society, civic groups, and real estate and professional organizations. It is only with strong partnerships that a truly comprehensive and successful city historic preservation program can be realized.

This Strategic Plan is intended to bring together in one place or document, the many and diverse initiatives, programs, needs, opportunities, goals, and principles related to the preservation of San Antonio. The Plan can be used as a work program to change and streamline current historic preservation efforts, as well as a guideline for future planning and development efforts. As a stand-alone document it should represent the City's official policies toward preservation. As community areas are surveyed, and historic and cultural resources further identified, it could be incorporated as a chapter in a future update of the City's 1997 Master Plan Policies.

Following is a summary of the key strategies presented in this San Antonio Historic Preservation Plan. They are organized according to six categories: **City Planning, City Zoning, Economic Development, Historic Resources, Incentives, and Education and Advocacy.**

### A. City Planning Strategies

1. *Create one set of goals and objectives that become the City's official vision and policies for historic preservation.*
2. *Incorporate historic preservation elements in all citywide, district, and neighborhood planning initiatives.*
3. *Promote preservation as a "green" and sustainable planning and development approach.*
4. *Plan for the future of key historic areas of the City.*

The City of San Antonio has developed numerous citywide and area plans over the years that included preservation goals and strategies, such as the implementation of resource surveys and designation of additional historic districts. The City should continue incorporating preservation elements into its plans, but should also consider additional initiatives that encourage reinvestment in and reuse of landmark buildings and districts.

### B. City Zoning Strategies

1. *Revise and consolidate all related rules and regulations within the UDC to improve the effectiveness of the OHP and HDRC, and the Code's overall readability.*
2. *Consolidate and create standard design guidelines to facilitate OHP and HDRC reviews of public and private development initiatives.*
3. *Ensure zoning in neighborhoods and commercial districts promotes the preservation of and reuse of historic resources.*
4. *Consider form-based zoning within historic districts.*

San Antonio's historic preservation code has evolved over time and in some respects is a fairly strong preservation ordinance compared to other major US cities. However, there are still ways in which the UDC can be strengthened in regards to the HDRC powers/procedures and the document's overall organization and readability. Design review procedures can also be enhanced to "demystify" the certificate of appropriateness approval process and streamline the overall workload of OHP staff and the Commission. Consolidated and additional design guidelines can also help the HDRC, neighborhood groups, property owners, developers, and designers make more effective decisions regarding improvements to historic buildings and new infill development in historic districts.



Keystone Park Historic District



Pearl Brewery, 1940s

### C. Economic Development Strategies

1. *Increase public awareness that historic preservation contributes to the City's economic development.*
2. *Consider preservation actions as integral components of existing and potential business district and neighborhood revitalization programs.*
3. *Create new preservation initiatives that facilitate rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources, revitalization of neighborhoods and commercial districts, and creation of new jobs and small businesses.*

Historic preservation should be viewed as an important growth strategy for revitalizing the historic fabric of the City from downtown to outlying neighborhoods and commercial districts. It should not be seen as a negative alternative choice to new development. Historic preservation already plays a significant role in the City's vibrant tourism economy and in neighborhoods and districts such as Lavaca and Southtown. The City can build on these successes by expanding existing initiatives, such as its Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization program, increasing efforts to promote heritage tourism, and supporting other community based activities to rehabilitate and reuse historic resources.

### D. Historic Resource Strategies

1. *Update existing surveys and conduct new inventories of historic resources throughout the City.*
2. *Use the new information to designate additional districts and target public and private resources.*
3. *Use the new information to create an "early warning" system to increase awareness and action regarding endangered sites, buildings, landscapes, and viewsheds.*
4. *Make surveys more accessible to the public to promote a greater understanding of significant historic resources.*

Much of the City's 36 Square Mile Survey Area has been inventoried, although mostly at a basic reconnaissance level. Other areas need to be surveyed and additional historic and cultural contexts explored so that associated building and archaeological resources can be documented. Additionally, some survey information is available online to the public, but in most cases, only histories and context descriptions are provided. Going forward, the City should prioritize which existing resource inventories need updating and what new surveys should be undertaken in other areas and neighborhoods. Efforts should also be undertaken to

integrate survey information within the City’s geographic information systems and publish surveys for public review.

### E. Incentives Strategies

1. *Enhance the effectiveness of existing historic preservation incentives and create additional programs that encourage reinvestment in historic resources.*
2. *Streamline and expand promotion of preservation programs and incentives to property owners, builders, developers, and investors.*
3. *Determine and remove disincentives and obstacles to preserving and reusing historic resources.*

There are currently three historic preservation incentives that are offered at the local level: the City’s Historic Tax Exemption Program and Operation Facelift Grant Program, and the Conservation Society’s Community Grant Program. Each of these programs is effective in their own way but other incentives are needed to address specific historic preservation objectives such as large-scale adaptive reuse projects and early intervention with endangered properties. Incentives must also be marketed and promoted more effectively so that all segments of the community are aware of their availability and how to use them. Consideration also needs to be given to preservation incentives that facilitate property rehabilitation by low-income owners.

### F. Education/Advocacy Strategies

1. *Undertake a comprehensive outreach effort to increase awareness of the tremendous value of San Antonio’s architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources, along with the benefits of historic preservation.*
2. *Harness public and private resources to market the numerous incentives and programs available to property owners, builders, and developers.*

Neighborhood associations and organizations such as the San Antonio Conservation Society have played significant roles in advocating for the preservation of important historic resources throughout the City. These entities will need to continue such efforts. However, additional education and outreach activities should be undertaken to demonstrate the role historic preservation can play in achieving the City’s economic development, neighborhood revitalization, and sustainability goals. Such efforts could include workshops, seminars, training, school programs, and other outreach activities using the latest technologies and various forms of media and communication.



San Antonio River



*Leon Springs Historic District*

### **City Planning Strategies**

The preservation and enhancement of historic and archaeological resources is affirmed as an important goal within the City's 1997 Master Plan Policies (Section F, Urban Design). Policy statements within that document focus on maintaining a comprehensive inventory of historic resources, developing incentives, encouraging building rehabilitation and adaptive use, augmenting staff of the OHP, forming partnerships with other municipal agencies and non-profit groups, and promoting the City's history through various design enhancement projects and educational initiatives. The policy statements were intended to provide guidance in shaping the City's historic preservation program and future decision-making regarding important preservation planning and design issues

Going forward, the 2009 Strategic Historic Preservation Plan builds on the City's 1997 Master Plan Policies with a more comprehensive statement of historic preservation planning goals and policies that provide clear direction to protecting and maintaining San Antonio's historic resources

Beyond the Master Plan Policies, the City has developed and adopted various neighborhood and district plans that have incorporated historic preservation elements, goals and action steps. Neighborhood and district plans have been the preferred method for implementing citywide planning goals since the City does not have a comprehensive plan with typical land use, economic development, housing, and transportation elements. Neighborhood plans have an advantage in that localized historic preservation issues can be examined and addressed more precisely. Additionally, preservation goals can also be better integrated into broader land use, transportation, economic development, housing, and open space elements. The 2003 City South Plan is one such example of how historic preservation can be organized and integrated as a distinct plan element.

### **Issue Summary**

Community stakeholders and City staff have consistently stated the need for historic districts to be examined "more comprehensively" so that plans, zoning regulations, and other improvement and development initiatives are aligned with historic preservation goals. There is also a need to address the larger context of historic districts such as enhancing land use mix, building massing, and streetscape and signage elements to make neighborhood and commercial areas more desirable for residents, businesses, shoppers, and visitors.

### **City Planning Strategy 1: Create one set of goals and objectives that become the City's official vision and policies for historic preservation.**

To guide future public and private planning and development initiatives within San Antonio, the following are the City's goals and objectives for historic preservation.

**Citywide Preservation Goal 1.** Preserve and protect the historic districts, places, structures, buildings, landscapes, archaeology, culture, and stories of San Antonio.

**Citywide Preservation Goal 2.** Strengthen the City of San Antonio's worldwide reputation as a special place of American history and culture.

- **Preservation Objective 1**  
Actively promote to the San Antonio region the value of balanced historic preservation and its link to economic development and environmental sustainability.
- **Preservation Objective 2**  
Actively promote to property owners, builders, and developers the numerous preservation resources available in the public and private sectors.
- **Preservation Objective 3**  
Establish planning processes and urban design standards that integrate and preserve historic, archaeological and cultural resources with planning for public facilities, infrastructure, transportation, parks, and economic development.
- **Preservation Objective 4**  
Compile and maintain a comprehensive historic resource inventory of federal, state, and local landmarks, districts and archaeological sites, which is accessible to City departments and the public at large.
- **Preservation Objective 5**  
Encourage property rehabilitation as a first choice and priority through streamlined City initiatives, existing and new financial incentives, and leveraging of preservation resources.
- **Preservation Objective 6**  
Promote partnerships between public agencies and civic organizations to increase the volume, pace, and quality of historic preservation initiatives.



*San Antonio City Hall  
prior to a 1927 renovation*



*Historic fencing and other landscaping features should be documented during surveying activities.*

- **Preservation Objective 7**

Establish the City as the *leader by example* for considering historic preservation in the planning and designing of public properties, facilities, spaces, and infrastructure.

### **City Planning Strategy 2: Incorporate historic preservation elements in all neighborhood, district, and citywide planning initiatives.**

The Planning and Development Services Department has a tradition of developing neighborhood plans with historic preservation elements. This should continue and future area plans should include historic preservation elements such as resource surveys, identification of special streetscape/landscape elements, and an assessment of land use, transportation, infrastructure, and development character issues that may impact historic resources.

#### **Recommendation 2.1 - Require historic resource surveys.**

Resource surveys should be undertaken as part of neighborhood planning processes, including existing surveys that need updating. The surveys could be completed at a reconnaissance or intensive level if necessary. A summary and map of the survey data should be incorporated into a neighborhood plan within a historic preservation chapter that includes strategies and recommendations. If resources are available, the full survey data could be made available on-line as a separate technical document.

#### **Recommendation 2.2 - Catalog endangered properties.**

While historic resource surveys are undertaken during neighborhood planning processes, properties with code violations or experiencing demolition by neglect should be cataloged. Such “red-flagged” properties should then be incorporated as part of an endangered property list maintained by the OHP, and shared with various City departments, including Housing and Neighborhood Services and other organizations. The list should be used to prioritize which properties should receive immediate attention and intervention (*see Historic Resources Survey section regarding endangered properties program*). While historic survey information as noted earlier would be used to help guide long-range initiatives of a neighborhood plan, the endangered property list would be aimed at short-term, “early warning” of properties in critical need of intervention.

#### **Recommendation 2.3 - Consider public space and streetscape/landscape features.**

Several existing plans, such as the recent Lavaca Neighborhood Plan, incorporate recommendations for maintaining significant and contributing

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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## Section 5: Historic Preservation Plan

streetscape and landscape features, as well as structures and buildings in existing and potential historic districts. These features include garages, outbuildings, carriage houses, curb cuts, street lamps, embankments, special signage, street paving materials, landscape, and gateway elements. Going forward, future neighborhood and commercial district plans should consider special and historic public spaces and features and include specific initiatives to ensure that public improvements are context sensitive to the historic resource or district.

### **Recommendation 2.4 - Prepare design guidelines.**

Design guidelines should be prepared as part of neighborhood/district plans where needed to address architectural and historical elements unique to an area. As discussed later, a standard set of design guidelines should be established as a base for all area planning throughout the City, with specific additional standards incorporated for unique areas

### **Recommendation 2.5 – Consider preservation in other planning initiatives.**

All City departments and affiliated agencies should work together to ensure that the preservation goals and strategies included in this Historic Preservation Plan are addressed and incorporated in other relevant City plans and policies including departmental strategic and operating plans and future bond programs and projects.

### **Recommendation 2.6 – Involve Office of Historic Preservation in relevant decision-making processes.**

The Office of Historic Preservation should be regularly engaged in the decision-making processes of City agencies involved in construction, development, finance, operations, and maintenance to provide ongoing consultation regarding short-term and long-range preservation matters. These agencies include, but are not limited to, City Manager, Planning and Development Services, Economic Development, Housing and Neighborhood Services, Public Works, Downtown Operations, Cultural Affairs, San Antonio River Commission, Capital Improvement Management Services, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Office of Environmental Policy, and Parks and Recreation. The OHP should review departmental decisions that may impact designated landmarks, districts and archaeological sites. It is recommended that City departments engage the OHP in the early stages of design to avoid or minimize impacts to known architectural, archaeological or cultural resources.

### **Recommendation 2.7 – Allocate resources to the OHP to expand its preservation planning initiatives and activities.**

Consideration should be given to adding planning and design staff and other resources to the office assist in:



*Historic preservation should be considered in all planning processes conducted by municipal departments and affiliated agencies*

*- a vacated neighborhood school building.*



*Old Post Office Building*

- Managing surveys of historic districts.
- Participating in neighborhood and commercial district planning with other departments.
- Implementing and coordinating actions recommended in area plans.
- Consolidating and crafting citywide and neighborhood specific design guidelines.
- Assessing deteriorating properties and determining if they merit rehabilitation or demolition actions.
- Assisting property owners and developers with rehabilitation and reuse strategies.
- Assisting property owners and developers with COA applications and design review.
- Conducting educational and training workshops and other outreach activities.

Professional education and training as well as office technology should also be addressed to increase staff effectiveness and capabilities, including planning software programs.

### **Recommendation 2.8 – Establish an advisory council to the Office of Historic Preservation.**

A permanent council comprised of one representative from each of the local historic districts should be established to advise the OHP, HDRC, and other City departments on planning and development activities and impacts, public works and management issues, and overall historic preservation policies. In turn the OHP should provide updates on City initiatives and other activities such as available grant opportunities and educational workshops. Meeting on a regular basis with neighborhood groups could improve information exchange, facilitate implementation of plan recommendations and reduce OHP staff time required for community outreach and liaison activities.

### **Recommendation 2.9 – Require interpretation of archaeological resources on publicly owned property.**

Significant archaeological resources located on property owned by the City or other public agencies should be interpreted where feasible. The OHP and other agencies should work together to develop an approach for documenting and interpreting archaeological resources, especially linear resources such as the City's acequia system. Interpreting these resources can promote public awareness of such resources as well as tell new and compelling stories of San Antonio's early history

### **Recommendation 2.10 – Install specially designed historic district signage.**

All local historic districts should be marked by signage that denotes each area as a special place. Signage could include identity signs at gateways or along streets, decorative street signs, and directional signs leading to a district or place. To ensure that signs are professionally designed and constructed with high quality materials, they should be paid for and installed by the City.

### **City Planning Strategy 3: Promote preservation as a green and sustainable planning and development approach.**

The City’s recently adopted Mission Verde Plan provides an exciting new vision for how San Antonio can achieve long-term sustainability through green technologies, energy conservation, efficient transportation systems, and retrofitting existing buildings. However, historic preservation and the critical need to reinvest in the City’s historic inner core is not mentioned as a sustainability strategy within the *Plan*. Maximizing the life cycle of historic buildings, sites, and districts is an effective strategy for achieving sustainability. Historic preservation’s role in achieving green and sustainability goals should be promoted. Sustainability is also one of the goals of the City’s strategic organizational plan.

### **Recommendation 3.1 – Consider rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings as sustainable.**

The rehabilitation and reuse of buildings should be considered the ultimate in achieving sustainability as it extends the lifecycle of built resources, promotes more culturally and socially diverse neighborhoods, saves resources from being used in new construction, and keeps significant construction waste out of landfills. A historic preservation element should be incorporated within the Mission Verde Plan, which outlines how preservation can promote reinvestment in neighborhoods, contribute to the green economy, and foster a culture of reuse among the citizens of San Antonio. Historic preservation should also be considered in other future planning policies and programs related to energy conservation and sustainability.

### **Recommendation 3.2 – Include historic preservation criteria within Build San Antonio Green building rating system.**

The OHP should work with Build San Antonio Green to ensure that historic building rehabilitation and reuse is considered within its green building rating criteria.



*King William Historic District*



*Donkey Barn, Brackenridge Park*

### **Recommendation 3.3 – City departments should reuse historic buildings for municipal facilities where feasible.**

The Federal Government, as well as several states, has implemented executive orders mandating that agencies and departments consider historic buildings first in facility and office location decisions rather than new construction. The City should consider implementing a similar order that mandates the same for its departments and other agencies. Reusing historic buildings as municipal facilities is an effective sustainable development strategy that also shows how preservation can work effectively. City departments that cannot locate in suitable historic buildings would demonstrate to the City Manager’s office that all possible building reuse scenarios were explored. In addition, efforts should be undertaken to rehabilitate historic buildings already owned and operated by the City and other public agencies according to proper standards and guidelines.

### **Recommendation 3.4 – Salvage building materials from property demolitions where feasible.**

When private contractors demolish a structure they often save and salvage building materials and fragments that would otherwise go to a landfill and could be reused in the rehabilitation of other structures. The City should also salvage and store materials when it needs to step in and demolish a building. A salvage store, where materials from lost historic buildings and residences could be resold, could also be established in partnership with another entity. Consideration should also be given to a mandatory program that requires a percentage of construction debris be diverted from landfills. Such a program would encourage all public and private construction and demolition projects to be more sustainable if materials were recycled and reused, especially on site.

### **City Planning Strategy 4: Plan for the future of several key historic areas of the City.**

During the historic preservation planning process, specific areas and sites throughout the City were discussed as needing preservation attention and assistance. Such locations will be further addressed by the OHP and other city planning agencies in the future as potential landmarks or districts are surveyed and/or addressed through a neighborhood planning effort. Several key areas warranting City involvement and planning, given their location, size and significance, include the River North neighborhood, HemisFair and LaVillita districts, and outer edge of downtown.

### **Recommendation 4.1 – Designate landmarks and significant areas in River North.**

The City has recently prepared a master plan and form-based zoning code for the River North area. The Office of Historic Preservation should pursue designations of landmarks and significant areas of River North as appropriate.

### **Recommendation 4.2 – Prepare a master plan for HemisFair and LaVillita historic districts.**

A detailed master plan for HemisFair and LaVillita should be prepared that addresses building reuse and new development strategies. Land use, building function, urban design, and property management issues as well as development opportunities with these districts should be planned within the larger context of the convention center and overall downtown.

### **Recommendation 4.3 – Prepare a master plan for perimeter blocks around downtown San Antonio.**

Consideration should be given to preparing a plan for the underdeveloped blocks located on the perimeter around downtown to better link the City's core to adjacent neighborhoods. It should encourage downtown visitors to walk to outlying neighborhoods to further experience the historic setting of San Antonio.

### **Recommendation 4.4 – Evaluate conservation districts as future historic districts where appropriate.**

The OHP should collaborate with the Planning and Development Services Department to evaluate and assess which existing conservation districts may merit future consideration as local historic districts where appropriate. Alternatively, consideration should also be given to whether some conservation districts could be eligible for listing as National Register historic districts, which do not mandate design review by the HDRC. National Register designation does provide some benefits including rehabilitation tax credits for commercial properties. The OHP and the Planning and Development Services Department should work with the local neighborhood association, if one exists, to discuss neighborhood interest and support for historic district designation.



*San Fernando Cathedral*



*Historic resource in Lavaca*

## City Zoning Strategies

The Unified Development Code (UDC) is the zoning, subdivision and development code for the City of San Antonio, Article VI, “Historic Preservation and Urban Design”, outlines the procedures for designating landmarks and districts, certificate of appropriateness reviews, protection of archaeological sites, and design review in the River Improvement Overlays. Provisions regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Officer, Historic and Design Review Commission and other review requirements related to archaeological sites are found in other articles within the UDC. Article VI contains the majority of necessary elements found in any standard municipal historic preservation ordinance. Several recommendations are made in this Plan to enhance the UDC’s organization, readability and overall effectiveness. Design guidelines are also addressed in this section.

## Issue Summary

The historic preservation ordinance that governs the powers and procedures of the OHP and HDRC are contained mostly in Article VI of the Unified Development Code. Article VI contains designation procedures for landmarks and districts, as well as the design review process. Other historic preservation provisions are located in other parts of the Code. Article VI also contains general preservation guidelines but new construction guidelines are more in-depth and detailed, especially those that have been developed for the River Improvement Overlay districts. There are other design guidelines that have been produced for individual historic districts independent of the Office of Historic Preservation.

### **City Zoning Strategy 1: Revise and consolidate all related rules and regulations within the UDC to improve the operational effectiveness of the OHP and HDRC, and the Code's overall readability.**

Consolidating UDC sections and provisions should ensure that all historic preservation rules and regulations can be found in one location. Revising and merging sections and divisions within Article VI itself will also improve its overall organization and readability. These revisions should also improve the operational efficiency of the HDRC allowing for a shorter designation process, and a clearer understanding of how the designation process works.

### **Recommendation 1.1 – Consolidate historic preservation sections of the Unified Development Code within Article VI.**

The following concern provisions that are not included in Article VI and are located in articles and sections of the Unified Development Code.

- **Article VIII Provisions.** Article VIII includes provisions regarding the composition, powers and functions of the Historic and Design Review Commission as well as the roles and responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Officer. Most logically, these provisions should be located or consolidated within a revised Division 1 or 2 of Article VI.
- **Article II Reference.** Provisions within Article II of the UDC, regarding conservation subdivisions and the installation of sidewalks and trails when historic resources are present, should be referenced within Division III of Article VI.
- **Article IV, Division 5.** Relocate all related HDRC certificate of appropriateness and demolition permit application and review procedures to Division 2 of Article VI.
- **Appendix A.** Appendix A includes definitions to a variety of planning and zoning terms found throughout the Unified Development Code, not just those mentioned within Article VI. In fact, the listing of terms in Appendix is fairly comprehensive. However, it is recommended that a definitions section of historic preservation terms be included within Article VI, perhaps at the beginning of a newly reconstituted Division 2. Other historic preservation definitions can also be added if currently missing within Appendix A, such as “historic resource survey”, “river improvement overlay district”, or “major” or “minor sign”.
- **Penalty provisions.** Relocate the enforcement, violations and penalties provisions of Article IV, Division 11, Section 35-491 related to historic resources and landmarks to Article VI.

### **Recommendation 1.2 – Specify types of alterations, repairs, and maintenance that can be approved administratively.**

Division 2 of Article VI does not specify what types of repairs, alterations and maintenance projects should be approved by Historic Preservation Office administrative action only, although provisions do define ordinary repair and maintenance for historic resources. A section within Division 2 should be added that defines and explains what projects can be approved administratively by HDRC staff. Section 35-452 of Article IV states that the Planning Director conducts administrative review of certificates for ordinary maintenance. This should be revised to allow the Historic Preservation Officer to conduct such reviews.



*San Antonio Riverwalk bridges*



Mission Espada

### **Recommendation 1.3 - Article VI Introduction.**

The introduction to Article VI lists eleven specific goals for the San Antonio historic preservation program. Three historic preservation Master Plan Policy Goal Statements are also listed as an introduction to Division 2 of Article VI. The introductory goals, as well as those that are listed in Division 2, should be combined and revised as one new introduction to Article VI.

### **Recommendation 1.4 - Article VI, Divisions 1 and 2.**

Both Divisions 1 and 2 include provisions for the designation of landmarks and districts as well as for certificate of appropriateness review procedures. Section 35-602 of Division 1, “Administration”, should be incorporated within Division 2, Section 35-605 “Designation of Historic Districts”, so that it is more clearly understood that notification of affected property owners is required for a district designation.

### **Recommendation 1.5 - Consolidate Historic District Designation Criteria.**

Currently, within Division 2, there are two distinct sets of designation criteria, one for preliminary evaluation, which is based on criteria for the National Register of Historic Places, and a final criteria set specifically for local historic, architectural, cultural and environmental resources. The final evaluation criteria are well detailed and comprehensive, which makes the initial criteria somewhat redundant and unnecessary. Consideration should be given to keeping the second set of criteria as the only set to be used in the landmark or district designation or a new set is developed as an amalgam of the two existing ones. Consideration should also be given to eliminating the Historic Exceptional (HE) and Historic Significant (HS) designations, which are not necessary.

### **Recommendation 1.6 - Revise owner consent requirements for neighborhood initiated landmark/district nominations.**

Section 35-602 of Article VI states that *“a request for historic district designation requires concurrence of a majority of the property owners within the district, while designation of an historic landmark requires concurrence of the property owner.”* It is stated in Division 2 that 51 percent of the property owners within the boundaries of a proposed historic district must concur with a designation request. It is recommended that this requirement be replaced with the standard used for district designations for the National Register of Historic Places. For National Register district nominations, 51 percent of owners must say no to the designation. In this way, the burden of contesting the designation falls to those who oppose it rather than those who favor it.

### **Recommendation 1.7 - Revise two-thirds majority vote for landmark and district designations.**

Several provisions within Division 2 require that two-thirds of the HDRC members are needed for any actions including landmark or district designations. A January 2009 revision to the UDC now specifies that two-thirds of HDRC members present at any given meeting must approve a landmark or district designation. This requirement should be revised to require only a majority vote of the commissioners present at any meeting to grant approval for a recommendation to designate a landmark or district.

### **Recommendation 1.8 - Consolidate sections regarding designation process.**

In general, the various sections between Divisions 1 and 2 that describe the designation processes for both landmarks and districts should be merged or consolidated into one cohesive, complete section. This consolidation should make the designation process more straightforward to readers of Article VI.

### **Recommendation 1.9 - Increase training for HDRC members.**

Article VII, Section 35-803 of the Unified Development Code outlines the composition and qualifications of members for the Historic and Design Review Commission and basic rules and procedures for the selection of officers and the conduct of meetings. Chapter 2, Article IX of the Code of Ordinances recommends that new members of City boards and commissions receive an orientation session and participate in any on-going training and education, if such a program has been established by a department. Training requirements for new and current HDRC members should be outlined within the HDRC's rules and procedures document. An orientation session, developed and delivered by OHP staff, should be conducted for all new commissioners with topics on HDRC rules and procedures, basic preservation principles, state legal issues, and current historic districts and landmarks. Commissioners should also be required to attend any additional training sessions developed by the OHP or that are offered by other organizations such as the Texas Historical Commission, Preservation Texas, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Alliance of Historic Preservation Commissions, San Antonio Conservation Society, and University of Texas at San Antonio.

### **Recommendation 1.10 - Consolidate UDC sections regarding economic hardship.**

Section 35-614 of Article VI describes the processes and requirements for applicants to receive a certificate of economic hardship. A general set of criteria to prove economic hardship is presented in Item B of Section 35-614; a second set for unusual and compelling circumstances



*Old Ursuline Convent*



San Pedro Springs Park

is outlined in Item C. In general, Item's B and C should be revised and consolidated so that there is one cohesive section on the certificate for economic hardship process. A hearing and appeals process should be added to the language of this revised section to ensure that applicants are fully aware of the certificate approval process.

### **Recommendation 1.11 - Require documentation for buildings to be demolished.**

Currently the UDC does not require Historic American Building Survey documentation be undertaken for any demolition permits that are approved for significant historic resources. Consideration should be given to enforcing this requirement for important designated landmarks and historic resources.

### **Recommendation 1.12 - Allow the HPO to initiate rezoning proceedings for landmark or district proceedings.**

Currently, under the UDC, rezoning proceedings can only take place through the property owners or through City Council resolution. Allowing the HPO to initiate the proceeding can and will streamline the designation process.

## **City Zoning Strategy 2: Consolidate and create design guidelines to facilitate OHP and HDRC reviews of public and private development initiatives.**

Section 35-610 outlines a basic set of guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic resources, which have been adapted from the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. As noted, standards and guidelines are much more extensive for billboards and signs and for new construction within Division 2 than they are for historic resources. Only a few major cities use just the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation* for design review purposes while most others have adopted more detailed, descriptive guidelines in addition to the *Secretary of the Interior Standards* both at a citywide level and for individual historic districts.

San Antonio stakeholders noted that a more comprehensive and consolidated set of design guidelines that can be used across the city are needed. Such guidelines would help facilitate a higher level of quality for both the rehabilitation of existing structures and new development. Specific guidelines that address particular district design issues would be created as needed.

### **Recommendation 2.1 - Develop a set of design guidelines that apply to all designated historic resources and districts.**

Review and assess all existing design guidelines and standards to determine gaps and overlaps regarding preservation and new construction within historic districts. Craft one set of well illustrated, descriptive guidelines that can apply to land uses and historic districts across the city.

Such guidelines could be established as a stand-alone City document that is references within Article VI, a consolidated division within Article VI itself, or as a new but separate UDC article. Historic preservation guidelines should expand upon the basic standards presented in Article VI. They should cover preservation issues such as additions, building materials, maintenance, windows, doors, roofs, signs, porches, garages, and commercial storefronts. Other features could also be included such as placement of solar panels and satellite dishes, walkways, curb cuts, landscaping, retaining walls, and color palettes.

### **Recommendation 2.2 - Create design guidelines for individual historic districts as needed.**

The Lavaca and Government Hill neighborhood historic districts have developed their own distinct design guidelines. For Lavaca, guidelines were produced upon recommendation of the neighborhood plan and the initiation of the neighborhood association. Article VI, Item D, Section 35-605 permits the OHP and the HDRC to develop specific guidelines for historic districts. Individual district-based design guidelines can provide additional detail and substance to address local design issues. For instance, such guidelines could explore specific color palettes and special features such as retaining walls, more thoroughly than the citywide historic preservation guidelines. The need for additional historic district-based guidelines should be determined through neighborhood plans, at the request of a neighborhood association or at the discretion of the Office of Historic Preservation. Design guidelines crafted for a specific neighborhood should be added to the overall set of city design guidelines as addenda to make them easy to find and use.

### **Recommendation 2.3 - Revise design review within the RIO districts.**

Within Division 6, Article VI, design standards and guidelines are outlined for the River Improvement Overlay Districts. Certificates of appropriateness are required for new construction and alterations to historic resources located within the overlays. The RIO design guidelines are quite comprehensive for new construction and for other improvements including signage, menu boards, awnings/canopies, trash storage, carts, and boats. The review of these improvements by the HDRC sometimes results in a heavy workload, although the HPO can approve some items, such as incidental signage, administratively. These



*Monte Vista Historic District*



*Downtown San Antonio*

review mandates seem reasonable given the scope and intent of the RIO overlays, but an alternative design review procedure should be considered to lighten the HDRC's workload and improve operating efficiency. For instance, the design of incidental signage, such as menu boards and non-commercial speech signs, garbage and trash receptacles, portable carts and boats, barges and water taxis, could be addressed with concise design guidelines that would allow administrative approval by the Office of Historic Preservation.

### **Recommendation 2.4 - Incorporate green design methods and techniques within design guidelines.**

Sustainable design practices should be incorporated into design guidelines wherever feasible and needed, especially to assist property owners understanding of how a historic building's energy performance can be improved. These guidelines could address issues such as the location of solar panels and what types of green building materials should be considered for additions. Some guidelines can be in the form of simple tips regarding heating and ventilating systems, window glazing and weather-proofing, and conducting basic energy efficiency audits.

### **Recommendation 2.5 – Incorporate historic viewshed restrictions into standard design guidelines.**

Consideration should be given to incorporating historic viewshed restrictions into the citywide and/or individual historic district guidelines. This would consolidate another development requirement into one easy-to-use document and facilitate design review. Viewsheds to historic resources and between individual historic resources should also be considered in conservation subdivision requirements.

### **City Zoning Strategy 3: Ensure zoning in neighborhoods and commercial districts promotes the preservation of and reuse of historic resources.**

Zoning use limitations can sometimes discourage historic preservation. The UDC's base zoning requirements should be revised where necessary to ensure that they do not conflict with adopted historic preservation goals and guidelines within a historic district. In addition, new development in historic areas should be planned to preserve significant sites, structures, landscapes, and local development patterns.

### **City Zoning Strategy 4: Consider form-based zoning within historic districts.**

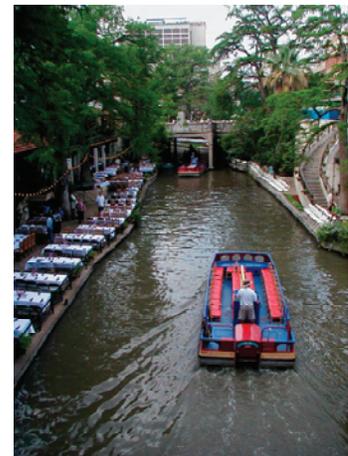
In recent years, form-based zoning codes have been implemented by cities across the country to promote more cohesive, compatible, and predictable development. Form-based codes address the relationship between buildings and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and scale of blocks and streets. The River North District Master Plan and Development Code are the first instance in which the City is implementing a form-based approach instead of conventional zoning as the preferred method for managing the shape and character of new development. Form-based zoning could be a viable tool for guiding new development so that it is more compatible within an overall neighborhood or historic district context. Form-based zoning, along with design guidelines, would also provide more effective tools for the OHP and HDRC and could help streamline the design review process.

## **Economic Development Strategies**

Today, historic preservation is no longer just concerned with saving and maintaining significant historic buildings and resources. It is also regarded as an effective and powerful economic development tool for revitalizing commercial districts and neighborhoods, supporting the cultural arts, creating jobs and incubating small businesses and promoting tourism. Additionally, the rehabilitation of historic buildings for housing, commercial, institutional and civic uses is a legitimate growth strategy that contributes to the City's economic vitality and long-term sustainability. Historic preservation should no longer be viewed as a distinct and different alternative to new development as the primary vehicle driving economic growth — it should receive equal consideration in all City-led economic development and revitalization strategies and initiatives.

## **Issue Summary**

Stakeholders have consistently stated that historic preservation should become an accepted tool to revitalize neighborhoods and commercial districts, which in turn should promote affordable housing and the creation of new jobs and businesses. San Antonio's tourism industry is based on the City's most significant resources — the Alamo and the Riverwalk — although to some, the City could strengthen its tourism by implementing a more extensive heritage tourism component. Despite these viewpoints and challenges, some programs and resources are in place to encourage historic preservation-based economic development



*A significant expansion plan will extend the Riverwalk from its original portion south to the Missions National Historical Park by 2014. This expansion should enhance the City's heritage tourism and economic development efforts.*



*Majestic Theater*

### **Economic Development Strategy 1: Increase public awareness that historic preservation contributes to the City's economic development.**

Ongoing public relation activities and professional studies documenting the economic impact of historic preservation within San Antonio could be some of the activities that are undertaken to communicate preservation's economic value to the public at large. These activities could be organized jointly between the Office of Historic Preservation, the San Antonio Conservation Society and other organizations.

#### **Recommendation 1.1 - Undertake an economic impact and benefits study.**

In recent years, several states, including South Carolina, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Nebraska have undertaken studies documenting the economic impact of historic preservation activities. The Texas Historical Commission commissioned a study in 1999. In addition, the cities of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Richmond, Virginia; and Galveston, Texas have also undertaken such studies in the past. The purpose of commissioning a study is to assess how historic preservation contributes to stabilizing neighborhoods and property values, creating jobs and incomes, increasing tourism, and revitalizing central downtown and neighborhood commercial districts. A study can also document the impact of the City's current property tax-based preservation incentives. The study could be conducted jointly between the OHP, the Conservation Society, the UTSA and other organizations.

#### **Recommendation 1.2 - Publish Yearly Investment Statistics.**

Once a year, in a special year-end newsletter edition or a separate report, the OHP should publish statistics on investment activity in the local historic districts and for individual landmarks. Statistics can include total dollar amounts in building rehabilitation and restoration projects, total number of projects, and the amount of investment that has been leveraged with the use of incentives and the Federal historic preservation tax credit. Tracking such statistics and publicizing them can be one effective way in which to demonstrate how historic preservation generates investment activity in the neighborhoods and commercial areas. The report could be modeled after others that have been developed by Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, which summarizes reinvestment data from its Operation Facelift Program.

#### **Recommendation 1.3 – Establish a benchmarking program.**

Collecting yearly investment statistics can assist the OHP in establishing a benchmarking system that can track the progress of the City's historic preservation program. Benchmark reports could be issued by the

OHP every two, three or five years documenting whether or not certain benchmarks have been met. Some of the benchmarks or performance indicators that could be tracked could include:

- Number of buildings, archaeological sites and districts that were designated by the HDRC;
- Number of designated or eligible buildings, archaeological sites and districts that were lost;
- Number of surveys conducted and oral histories recorded;
- Number of endangered historic properties saved;
- Private capital leveraged from Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit projects;
- Private capital leveraged from all direct historic preservation incentives offered at the local level including the Tax Exemption Program;
- Number of market rate and affordable housing units leveraged through tax credits and local incentives;
- Funding levels for the Office of Historic Preservation;
- Number of “hits” on a heritage tourism website and tours taken through local historic districts;
- Number of educational workshops conducted;
- Leveraged financial and volunteer resources through partnerships with other organizations and entities.

### **Economic Development Strategy 2: Consider preservation actions as integral components of existing and potential business district and neighborhood revitalization programs.**

There are several existing City programs that have encouraged historic preservation-based economic development. These programs should continue to be supported and expanded so economic and historic preservation benefits can be realized.

#### **Recommendation 2.1 - Expand the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program.**

The Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR), managed by the Center City Development Office, is a critically important program to assist neighborhood stakeholders and leaders in developing strong



*Fairmont Hotel, downtown San Antonio*



*Historic resources within the Midtown on Blanco (above) and Southtown NCR districts (below).*

and effective commercial district revitalization programs, modeled much after the National Trust for Historic Preservation's successful Main Street program. Nine neighborhoods have or are currently participating in NCR and Operation Facelift, the façade grant program, which is the key design improvement and historic preservation component of the program. The program should be carefully expanded going forward in neighborhoods that need assistance in revitalizing their historic commercial districts and have demonstrated some organizational capacity to undertake such efforts. However, the NCR program should be expanded in terms of the technical assistance services it can offer participating neighborhoods. Such services should include training in basic building design improvements and maintenance, signage and awning design, storefront merchandising, and more advance topics such as using historic preservation tax credits, adaptive use and navigating building code issues. Additionally, for more mature NCR program neighborhoods, new financial incentives should be developed to facilitate more large-scale adaptive use projects for “white elephant” buildings and other significant historic resources.

### **Recommendation 2.2 - Expand heritage tourism initiatives.**

Collaborative efforts should be developed between the OHP, the Conservation Society, the Office of Cultural Affairs, Public Art San Antonio, and the Convention and Visitors Bureau on identifying opportunities to strengthen and expand heritage tourism efforts. Some of the initiatives that could be considered include expanding the number of tour itineraries that reach other districts, neighborhoods and sites; developing a San Antonio historic tour maps with podcasting, installing more effective wayfinding signage systems to districts, and supporting continued development of the Neighborhood Discovery Tours as part The Cultural Collaborative program. It is also recommended that a heritage tourism development study be undertaken by the Convention and Visitors bureau to fully explore additional ways in which an effective heritage tourism program can be developed. Furthermore, the OHP, the Office of Cultural Affairs and the Convention and Visitors Bureau should partner on the implementation of additional cultural districts to advance heritage tourism initiatives, facilitate historic preservation projects, and promote cultural development activities. Other partnership activities that could be undertaken include initiatives with Public Works on improving appearances and removing clutter within important historic attractions, promoting better wayfinding and leveraging resources with other organizations to promote specific sites and attractions.

### **Recommendation 2.3 – Implement reinvestment plans as part of neighborhood plans and in priority historic districts.**

The City's 2008 Strategic Plan for Community Development specifies the use of reinvestment plans to coordinate and leverage public and private

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resources to stimulate investment activities in certain areas of the City. A Community Development Advisory Committee has been established to carry out the Strategic Plan and to determine what sectors of the City should be addressed with the first reinvestment plans starting in 2010. The OHP should work with the Advisory Committee to advocate and determine what existing or potential historic districts should be addressed through reinvestment plans. Clearly, historic districts in need of revitalization and reinvestment should receive high priority for reinvestment programs.

Perhaps as part of the reinvestment planning in priority historic districts, a “model block” program, similar to the program managed by the San Antonio Housing Authority as well as the Housing and Neighborhood Services Affordable Showcase for Homes initiative, should be considered to facilitate a “critical mass” of historic home rehabilitations. This approach is also similar to neighborhood “rehabaramas”, which is recommended in the Strategic Plan (*see Education and Advocacy, Recommendation 1.9 for further detail on rehabaramas*). A model block program could concentrate available incentives and resources to rehabilitate five to ten homes on a particular block. In addition, designated reinvestment planning areas will be receiving a neighborhood sweep as part of the services provided through this initiative. The City’s Neighborhood Sweep Program is a clean-up and beautification initiative conducted in distressed neighborhoods. Perhaps the sweeps could be undertaken concurrently with neighborhood rehabaramas. Potential corporate partners or “neighborhood buddies” could be sought to underwrite the home rehabilitations, rehabaramas and neighborhood sweeps. Corporate partners may also bring other resources including employees as volunteer resources for the sweeps and other reinvestment planning activities.



*The resources of La Villita, HemisFair and King William historic districts - major anchors for the San Antonio heritage tourism market.*

### **Economic Development Strategy 3: Create preservation initiatives that facilitate rehabilitation and adaptive use of historic resources, revitalization of neighborhoods and commercial districts, and creation of new jobs and small businesses.**

The following are specific initiatives that encourage historic preservation-based economic and community development.

#### **Recommendation 3.1 – Encourage community-initiated development activities.**

Community-initiated development is a process in which neighborhood organizations, in particular non-profit commercial district revitalization organizations or community development corporations, take the initiative



*Historic districts in need of attention should be high priorities for reinvestment planning*



*Potential community-initiated development project in Cattleman Square. The focus of such initiatives is to rehabilitate and reuse such buildings with active participation from community development corporations, housing groups, neighborhood associations and commercial district revitalization organizations.*

in reinvesting and reusing vacant or underutilized buildings when they private sector fails to do so. Such organizations assemble the means and financing necessary, including historic preservation tax credits, grants and other sources of money, to purchase and rehabilitate the property for new uses. The Economic Development, Center City Development Office, the Community Development Division of Planning and Development Services, and the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department should assist commercial district revitalization programs and community development corporations in such initiatives by providing gap financing for projects or in assembling the financing package needed to make a development deal viable. At the least, training in community-initiated development should be provided to local revitalization groups and community development corporations, so that they can gain the technical knowledge needed to undertake such projects.

### **Recommendation 3.2 - Explore partnerships to encourage affordable housing initiatives in historic districts.**

Potential partnerships should be explored between the OHP, Housing and Neighborhood Services, the San Antonio Housing Trust Fund and other local community housing development organizations on encouraging the rehabilitation of historic homes as affordable housing units. Forging such partnerships should assist local housing development organizations secure the financing, including historic preservation and low-income housing tax credits, in which to rehabilitate distressed properties within historic districts.

## **Historic Resources Strategies**

Significant parts of the 36 Square Mile Survey Area have been inventoried while other areas of the City need to be surveyed. Additional historic and cultural contexts also need to be explored so that associated building and archaeological resources can be documented. Additionally, some survey information is available online to the public, but in most cases, only histories and context descriptions are provided. Going forward, the City should prioritize which existing resource inventories need updating and what new surveys should be undertaken in other areas and neighborhoods. Efforts should also be undertaken to integrate survey information within the geographic information systems (GIS) of the City, publishing surveys for distribution to the public and finding ways in which survey data can be available online. Identifying endangered and distressed properties and devising intervention strategies should also be considered a high priority.

### Issue Summary

More than 70 different historic resource surveys have been undertaken by the OHP and other entities over years, mostly at a reconnaissance level. Some existing surveys will need re-evaluation while additional ones will need to be undertaken in portions of the 36 Square Mile Survey Area that have not been inventoried. Public access to survey information is also a key issue to raise awareness of valuable historic resources. Finding ways to preserve endangered historic properties through a more proactive approach is also a significant priority.

### Historic Resources Strategy 1: Update existing surveys and conduct new inventories of historic resources throughout the City.

Thematic groups have surveyed at the neighborhood and corridor levels and significant portions of the City's 36 Square Mile Survey Area. A majority of the neighborhood and corridor surveys were conducted at a reconnaissance level. Others were completed by outside parties and organizations as part of neighborhood planning and historic district designation processes. Although the historic resource survey staff position is currently vacant, the OHP has initiated a process to develop a survey database, which is an immediate priority. The OHP hopes to restart its survey program in the year ahead with a goal to gather more complete information about potential landmarks and districts, which should provide greater certainty to the City on future designations and for property owners and developers contemplating major investment decisions. The long-term goal then is to undertake a more comprehensive and ongoing, historic resources survey program. The OHP should also explore how other partner agencies and organizations, such as the Conservation Society and students at the University of Texas at San Antonio, can assist in the survey effort or in developing a logical plan for undertaking surveys in phases as appropriate.

#### Recommendation 1.1 – Include resource surveys as part of neighborhood plans.

As recommended in the City Planning and Policies section of this Plan, historic resource surveys and inventories should be integral components to neighborhood and district plans when needed and warranted. The OHP should partner with the Planning and Development Services Department to schedule new surveys, or updates existing ones, as a part of upcoming neighborhood planning projects.



*Bird's eye of downtown San Antonio, 1890s*



*Recent past resources - Luby's Cafeteria (top); Non-Commissioned Officers Association (middle) and T. Frank Murchison Memorial Tower, Trinity University (below).*

### **Recommendation 1.2 - Prioritize surveys for re-evaluation.**

Historic resource surveys that need to be re-evaluated or updated due to missing data and information, or simply to reassess the significance of certain properties, should be prioritized. If they cannot be scheduled as part of neighborhood planning projects, the OHP should find ways to secure resources for high priority surveys from CLG grants, the City, or in partnership with the Conservation Society, the UTSA, neighborhood associations, foundations and other organizations. The OHP should also apply for Certified Local Government grant funds to underwrite the costs of resource survey activities.

### **Recommendation 1.3 - Prioritize other areas and districts.**

Other areas of the City that have not been surveyed at all should be prioritized and conducted by the OHP, either as part of a neighborhood planning project or as a separate survey activity initiated by the OHP or with other organizational partners.

### **Recommendation 1.4 - Continue thematic survey approach.**

The OHP should continue to use historical and architectural resources themes if it determines that is the most efficient way to inventory and document resources across the City. Ethnic and racial groups have also been the subjects of past thematic studies and additional ones should be explored going forward including the African and Hispanic American communities and other cultural and ethnic groups whose stories need to be told. These survey efforts could be conducted alongside the development of cultural districts as recommended in The Cultural Collaborative Plan (2005).

### **Recommendation 1.5 - Conduct an inventory of Recent Past resources.**

While preservation of significant resources from the Spanish Colonial period and the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries should remain priorities, buildings and sites from the more recent past, from the years 1940 to 1970, are somewhat less appreciated and are often not considered important preservation priorities. In some respects, these resources can be threatened with alteration and demolition before they are evaluated for their significance. Going forward, the OHP and other partners including the UTSA and the Conservation Society should join forces to conduct a thorough survey, context study and evaluation of Recent Past resources in San Antonio. In addition, a symposium or conference on the City's recent past resources should be organized by the partner entities already mentioned.

### **Recommendation 1.6 – Collect written and oral histories as part of survey activities.**

As part of historic resource survey and research work, written and oral histories of ethnic, majority and minority communities should be collected and documented as feasible. The OHP should seek assistance from other organizations and entities that can help in identifying written and oral histories as well as establishing a system for recording and depositing them where they can be accessible to the public.

### **Historic Resources Strategy 2: Use the new information to designate new districts and target public and private resources.**

The OHP should publish and maintain a list of properties identified through surveys and other efforts as potentially eligible for historic designation, thereby reducing uncertainty for City agencies, property owners, real estate developers and the general public. The list should be updated regularly and made available on the OHP website. The OHP should prioritize eligible resources for designation and inform owners of eligibility and the benefits of designation. The priority list should also become part of the HDRC designation work program.

### **Historic Resources Strategy 3: Use the new resource information to create an "early warning system" to increase awareness and action regarding endangered sites, buildings, landscapes, and viewsheds.**

The purpose for an early warning system is to identify and catalog historic buildings, viewsheds and archaeological resources that are at risk for demolition or loss and to devise and implement intervention strategies before it is too late to preserve such resources. This initiative should be developed and maintained in partnership between the OHP and other City agencies such as Code Compliance, Fire, Police and Health Departments, the Dangerous Structures Determination Board, and other possible private-sector partners such as the Conservation Society. In its basic form, the early warning system would be comprised of the following two elements:

#### **Endangered Properties List**

Historic resources that are either designated or eligible for designation, that are exhibiting signs of deterioration and neglect, are threatened with demolition from development pressures, or have received multiple building code violations should be "red flagged" and included in a list that



*Endangered historic resource*



*Threatened historic resources,  
Tobin Hill Historic District*

is shared and distributed between relevant City departments and agencies including the OHP, or outside organizations as deemed appropriate as necessary. The list should also be posted in the OHP's or Conservation Society's websites for public access. The list can be compiled from the following sources:

- Cataloged from historic resource and archaeological surveys and neighborhood planning processes;
- Citizen call-ins to the OHP regarding threatened resources;
- Demolition permit applications;
- City inspections of properties and resources.

The inventory should be updated on a regular basis with inventories of other districts and areas added as time allows or when surveys are completed as part of neighborhood planning processes. Once the inventory is completed, resources could be rated to the degree of deterioration and neglect such as "highly endangered", or "susceptible to further neglect".

### **Intervention Strategies**

Buildings receiving the most endangered ranking would clearly receive priority for intervention. Intervention strategies and solutions will largely be determined by a variety of factors including the condition of the property, the availability of certain financial incentives and staff resources, the willingness of the property owner to cooperate, the significance of the resource itself, and the possibility of alternative solutions. Intervention activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Providing condition assessments and multiple estimates for property stabilization and repair;
- Providing design and technical assistance to property owners;
- Purchasing the resource through a revolving fund or offering grants to address immediate stabilization issues and building code violations;
- Providing advice on other incentive programs.

Other strategies recommended in this Plan, such as developing a revolving fund and other incentives and programs, will be critical needs for executing effective intervention efforts. Other actions could also be implemented to discourage demolition such as increasing demolition permit fees or prohibiting new construction on demolished sites for a certain period of time longer than two years. Increased demolition permit fees could perhaps be allocated to a special fund used for financial

assistance to owners of historic homes or to protect archaeological resources. Other major U.S. cities prohibit ground level parking lots on demolished sites. To ensure an early warning system is effective, the major partners and stakeholders involved will have to work closely and schedule routine meetings to discuss intervention actions for priority endangered resources and which partner could take the lead in implementation.

### **Recommendation 3.1 – Pursue initiatives that enforce historic preservation provisions of the Unified Development Code.**

Enforcement of certificates of appropriateness and demolition by neglect provisions need to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion. All relevant City Departments including Planning and Development Services, Code Compliance and the OHP will need to work collaboratively to develop specific solutions to enforcement issues. Perhaps an internal task force among the departments can be formed to discuss ways in which COA and demolition by neglect inspections and timely notification of infractions to the OHP can be carried out more effectively. There is also a need to synchronize and update database and information management systems so that all relevant departments in the enforcement process have the most current information on properties with violations.

### **Historic Resources Strategy 4: Make surveys more accessible to the public to promote a greater understanding of significant historic resources.**

Maintain and distribute the inventory of landmarks and historic districts depicting their location of historic in formats that are readily available to the public. Improve the value and effectiveness of the inventories as an educational tool by creating an interactive internet version with photos and descriptive information on all properties. If financial resources are available, consider publishing surveys and historic context research as formal documents that could be distributed to the public. Ideally, an interactive GIS-based version that is accessible to the public should be developed as a high priority for the Office of Historic Preservation.

## **Rehabilitation Incentives Strategies**

The City of San Antonio already has two historic preservation incentive programs, the Historic Tax Exemption Program for historic residential and commercial properties and the Operation Facelift Program for participating neighborhoods in the Office of City Center Development's NCR Program. Although there are only two municipally sponsored



*Villa Finale, a historic property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, King William Historic District.*



*Clifford Building, H.H. Hugman,  
Alamo Plaza Historic District*

incentive programs, there are other financial resources such as tax-increment financing that should be used to leverage other incentives, such as the federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, to facilitate adaptive use and rehabilitation projects. From the non-profit sector, the San Antonio Conservation Society offers small building rehabilitation and restoration grants through its Community Grant Program.

Two primary goals going forward are to increase the effectiveness of existing incentives sponsored by the City and to create others that can facilitate specific historic preservation, economic development and neighborhood revitalization objectives. Ideally, a menu of historic preservation incentives should be created taking the form of direct financial assistance such as grants, administrative relief from zoning or building code requirements, or deferred City revenues such as waiver of building permit fees. Just as important, active efforts to promote and market available incentives must take place and become an important priority for the City, the OHP and its various partners. Last, there is an opportunity with reinvestment plans to target a variety of incentives, not just ones developed specifically for historic preservation, but those that focus on the revitalization of historic commercial districts and neighborhoods and preserving and reusing distressed and endangered properties.

### Issue Statement

Existing local incentives have been effective in facilitating the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic resources. However, there is a need to create new incentives that can encourage additional reinvestment activities in the downtown core and in historic neighborhood commercial and residential districts. Other City resources should be accessed to create such incentives. There is also a need to market and promote all available incentives at the local, state and federal levels to all segments of the San Antonio community.

### **Incentives Strategy 1: Enhance the effectiveness of existing historic preservation incentives and create additional programs that encourage reinvestment in historic resources.**

#### **Recommendation 1.1 - Enhance the effectiveness of City Historic Preservation Tax Exemption Program.**

Within Section 35-618 of Article VI, there is no definition or requirement of the minimum investment that is needed to qualify for one of the exemptions. The section should be revised to require at least \$5,000 or

## Section 5: Historic Preservation Plan

25 to 30 percent of the resource's assessed valuation be invested in a rehabilitation project, whichever is greater. This requirement should encourage reinvestment in historic resources.

### **Recommendation 1.2 - Create a new division on incentives within Article VI of the Unified Development Code.**

The section describing the available Historic Preservation Tax Exemption Programs is located at the end of Division 2, which is somewhat lost among the Division's other sections. A new division within Article VI should be created for the exemption programs, as well as any other preservation incentives that may be created in the future. Consideration should also be given to rewriting the tax exemption provisions in a clearer, concise manner so owners of historic resources can readily understand how the exemptions work as well as the application and certification processes.

### **Recommendation 1.3 - Create special incentive program for endangered historic properties.**

Historic resources that are placed on the endangered list should be made eligible for special stabilization grants to help address building code violation issues or immediate and feasible repairs for resources damaged by fire or other means. Grants could range from \$5,000 to \$10,000. In some instances, grant proceeds should be used to maintain properties for a limited time until the proper repairs are made or a new buyer is found. Additionally, consideration should be given to allocating collected demolition permit fees for use in a historic building stabilization fund.

### **Recommendation 1.4 - Develop a citywide façade grant program or expand Operation Facelift.**

Without doubt Operation Facelift, which is a component of the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, has facilitated building facade rehabilitations in the Southtown, Avenida-Guadalupe, Deco and EastTown commercial districts, among others. Although Operation Facelift targets grant resources in its participating neighborhood districts, consideration should be given to developing a new but limited façade improvement program that can be extended to other neighborhoods, especially historic commercial buildings that may be located in local historic districts. Grant proceeds could range from \$500 to \$10,000 and be offered on a matching basis. Design assistance to applicants could be delivered through a OHP senior planner or designer. It is also recommended that façade improvements funded through this incentive should follow citywide historic preservation design guidelines whether they are eligible for landmark designation or not.



*I. & G. N. Depot, Cattleman Square Historic District*



*Tower Life Building*

### **Recommendation 1.5 - Utilize tax increment financing to leverage large-scale building rehabilitation and adaptive use project.**

Several major U.S. cities use TIF revenues to underwrite façade rehabilitation programs and as loans or equity contributions to major historic building rehabilitation and adaptive use projects. In other cities, TIF can be useful as gap financing to facilitate the adaptive use of significant historic buildings, especially high-rise office buildings, theaters, and hotels, where multiple sources of financing are needed. The gap financing can come in the form of outright grants to the developer or in a low-interest loan. Additionally, in order to receive TIF monies, a developer would be required to first secure a certificate of appropriateness from the HDRC and approval to use Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits from the Texas Historic Commission, and, as a possible alternative, donate a façade easement to the City or a local non-profit organization capable of accepting and monitoring easements. Grants or loans from TIF could be also be used for other rehabilitation expenditures such as environmental remediation, soft cost and professional fees, and other tenant improvements. Nonetheless, TIF revenues should be more extensively used in San Antonio for historic preservation purposes and should be a source of revenues to underwrite various incentives that encourage investment in historic commercial properties in particular.

### **Recommendation 1.6 - Implement an adaptive use ordinance.**

The City should adopt an adaptive use ordinance, similar to the one in use by the City of Los Angeles, to encourage and facilitate the rehabilitation and reuse of underutilized or vacant industrial or commercial buildings. The ordinance would relax certain zoning and building code requirements, such as height, parking, setbacks, disabled access, and residential density in order to streamline the development review process and to lower the costs of adaptive use project itself. Such an ordinance would be useful in downtown San Antonio and in other areas of the city where larger buildings can be converted to new uses such as rental apartments, live/work spaces and hotels. An interdepartmental team from Planning and Development Services, the Office of Historic Preservation and the Fire Department should be formed to implement the provisions of such an ordinance, to determine how the International Existing Building Code (IEBC) can be integrated within such an ordinance, and to facilitate and assist projects that may seek to use the ordinance to undertake an adaptive use project.

### **Recommendation 1.7 - Adopt permit fee waivers.**

Property owners seeking to apply and use one of the tax exemption programs should also qualify for exemption from building permit fees. Alternatively, permit fees should be waived for any building rehabilitation projects over a certain amount of expenditure.

### **Recommendation 1.8 - Develop and operate a historic preservation revolving fund.**

A revolving fund, which purchases properties and resells them to others on condition that they will be rehabilitated, can be a significant, promising program to preserve historic resources that are endangered by demolition by neglect or through other reasons. Ideally, the program could be operated by the City of San Antonio in partnership with other entities and organizations. Beyond the initial purchase and reselling of the property, low-interest loans or outright grants could be offered to owners who may have only secured a smaller first mortgage or are using another form of collateral or personal guarantee. Architectural or design assistance could also be provided by a staff architect employed by the revolving fund or through the Office of Historic Preservation. Other staff, especially people with real estate and financing experience, would need to be hired to manage the fund on behalf of the organization or entity that will house and operate it.

### **Recommendation 1.9 - Partner with equity and tax-credit syndication funds.**

The National Trust Community Reinvestment Corporation, formerly known as the Community Partners Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, has actively participated in historic tax credit syndication projects in San Antonio, most recently the rehabilitation of the historic Heimann Building in Cattleman Square. The Corporation could be active partners in tax credit syndication projects in other historic districts throughout the City. There are other tax-credit and equity fund programs operated by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the Enterprise Community Partners Foundation.

### **Recommendation 1.10 - Include archaeological sites and historic resources as critical areas for transfer of development rights.**

Article III of the UDC allows the City to use transfer of development rights as a way to protect natural resources, agricultural land, and environmentally sensitive areas within the unincorporated parts of Bexar County or other municipalities within the County. Transfer of development rights are used in several cities across the country to promote preservation and protection of land and critical resources by giving landowners the right to transfer the unused development rights of one parcel to another parcel in a designated receiving zone. Surveyed and designated historic and archaeological sites and areas known to contain archaeological resources could be classified as potential sending sites within the unincorporated municipal areas of San Antonio. Historic farms and ranches are other particular historic resources that could be protected through transfer of development rights. Further study will be needed to determine the feasibility of a TDR approach for historic resources.



*Downtown San Antonio*



*Military Plaza, 1850s*

### **Recommendation 1.11 - Create a historic preservation fund as part of the City's density bonus program.**

Within Article III of the UDC a developer is allowed to receive density bonuses, whether in the form added residential units to a subdivision of added height to a new development, if open space and parks are created or housing units within a development project are set aside for low-income housing. A historic preservation fund should be established as another density bonus option for developers in which a financial contribution to the fund can be made in exchange for the bonus. Funds could be used by the HPO for a variety of preservation activities.

### **Recommendation 1.12 – Create an energy efficiency incentive.**

The OHP should partner with CPS Energy or the Office of Environmental Policy to consider developing an incandescent light bulb replacement program or a special incentive to encourage window rehabilitation rather than replacement.

### **Recommendation 1.13 – Leverage incentives for priority historic resources.**

It is recommended that existing incentives such as Operation Facelift and the federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program can be leveraged to achieve reinvestment objectives in neighborhoods or districts addressed by reinvestment plans. The reinvestment plans should target distressed properties including historic homes and significant “white elephant” commercial buildings in need of rehabilitation and adaptive use. For instance, the OHP, Planning and Development Services, Economic Development, or the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department should work with owners of “white elephant” properties to package additional incentives, such as TIF and grants from the Operation Facelift program, to leverage the use of historic preservation tax credits to spur building rehabilitation and reuse. A dedicated stabilization fund could also be developed from Community Development Block Grant funds to assist in securing and stabilizing distressed properties in residential historic districts.

## **Incentives Strategy 2: Streamline and expand promotion of preservation programs and incentives to property owners, builders, developers and investors.**

Promote the use of historic preservation tax credits and other incentive programs that facilitate historic preservation. Presented below are several means in which current and future incentive programs should be promoted and marketed to developers, property owners and other San Antonio stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 2.1 – Revise and develop information brochures and materials.**

Revising the existing OHP incentive brochure to summarize all direct historic preservation incentives that are offered at the local level should be a priority. The current brochure, which can be downloaded from the OHP's website, describes the City's tax exemption programs in detail with some information regarding the federal historic preservation tax credits. A revised brochure should include additional incentive programs including the Conservation Society's Community Grant Program, the NCR's Operation Facelift commercial façade improvement program, and perhaps the State of Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grant. Grant programs should be summarized concisely within the brochure with references or web links added to refer readers to additional information. The brochure should be professionally formatted and designed and distributed widely to other City departments, neighborhood groups and other preservation advocacy organizations. Spanish language versions should also be developed.

### **Recommendation 2.2 – Revise Website.**

The OHP website should be updated to briefly describe all available incentives in addition to the current web links to the National Park Service and their federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program. Additional information should include the Conservation Society's Community Grant Program, the NCR's Operation Facelift commercial façade improvement program, the State of Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grant, and the National Trust Community Investment Corporation. Web links to these incentive programs should also be added.

### **Recommendation 2.3 – Conduct workshops and information sessions.**

Educational workshops devoted to discussing available financial incentives should be developed and organized by OHP staff in partnership with other organizations and entities and undertaken on an annual basis or by request from community and neighborhood groups. Workshops on how to use the federal preservation tax credits should also be developed and targeted specifically to real estate developers and investors. The National Trust Community Investment Corporation should be invited to co-develop the workshop. Additionally, the OHP should offer to conduct an incentives workshop as part of the Planning and Development Services Department Lunch and Learn Series.



*Historic resources within the Historic District*

### **Recommendation 2.4 – Conduct a preservation lecture series session on incentives.**

Historic preservation incentives and their use in facilitating local adaptive use and rehabilitation projects should be a topic of a Lecture Series discussion session (*see Education and Advocacy section*).

### **Recommendation 2.5 – Develop newsletters and publications.**

Information regarding historic preservation incentives should appear on other City of San Antonio newsletters and publications when appropriate and feasible. For instance, the Planning and Development Services produces an electronic newsletter. Highlights of historic preservation incentive programs should be featured within the newsletter.

### **Recommendation 2.6 – Promote conservation subdivisions as a method for preserving historic and archaeological resources.**

The UDC includes provisions for the use of conservation subdivisions as an alternative to standard subdivision design requirements. Current provisions allow for archaeological and cultural resources to be protected as part of a subdivision's primary and secondary conservation areas. This important land management tool should be used more frequently and whenever possible to promote the preservation of significant historic resources in areas of the City undergoing residential development.

### **Incentives Strategy 3: Determine and remove disincentives and obstacles to preserving and reusing historic resources.**

The OHP, in collaboration with other City departments and agencies, should identify and assess what disincentives or obstacles may exist to preserving and rehabilitating historic resources. Some disincentives may include building and zoning code provisions and enforcement procedures, and permit and right-of-way closure fees for building rehabilitation projects.



*Shotgun homes, West Ashby Place*

### Education + Advocacy Strategies

A highly engaged and informed public that understands the values and benefits of historic preservation is a critical component in the foundation of a strong and successful local historic preservation program. Ongoing efforts to educate the citizens of San Antonio about the aesthetic, social, environmental and economic values of historic preservation will be important to promote public and private sector support for a variety of historic preservation activities and initiatives. In return, the preservation of historic and archaeological resources should also contribute to the cultural enrichment of San Antonio citizens and visitors alike. Strong partnerships between important organizations and the City should be forged and developed over time so that resources can be leveraged to mount a powerful and effective education and advocacy effort.



*San Pedro Library*

### Issue Summary

San Antonio has a long history of successful public and private sector historic preservation education and advocacy efforts. For instance, the OHP, neighborhood associations and various other organizations and entities have been active in education and advocacy efforts, especially in the establishment of historic districts and designation of landmarks. Since its founding, the San Antonio Conservation Society has been the leading private-sector advocate and has established several outreach programs and initiatives. Key stakeholder concerns involve the need to undertake a more sustained, comprehensive effort in educating the citizens of San Antonio on the benefits that historic preservation can provide to residents, businesses, investors, developers and visitors.

### **Education/Advocacy Strategy 1: Undertake a comprehensive outreach effort to increase awareness of the tremendous value of San Antonio's architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources and the benefits of historic preservation.**

The San Antonio City Council recently established a Historic Preservation Academy to provide hands-on training and public education regarding a variety of historic preservation issues and policies. The Academy will be an excellent vehicle in which to communicate the value of historic preservation to the community at large. Other training activities could be organized jointly between the Office of Historic Preservation, the Conservation Society and other organizations.



*Commander's House, Arsenal  
Historic District*

### **Recommendation 1.1 - Conduct an annual State of Historic Preservation Address.**

During National Historic Preservation Month in May, the OHP should organize and deliver a yearly public presentation or “State of Historic Preservation Address”, summarizing historic preservation activity within San Antonio, with a special emphasis on investment statistics and other economic impacts. The yearly investment and historic preservation report could also be distributed during the presentation. The OHP should lead this activity.

### **Recommendation 1.2 - Update OHP website.**

A new section should be developed for the OHP’s website that provides information on the general economic impacts of historic preservation as well as yearly investment statistics. A synopsis or highlights from the “State of Historic Preservation Address” should also be included and updated on a yearly basis.

### **Recommendation 1.3 - Develop OHP newsletter and Facebook page.**

The OHP has restarted the production of a regular newsletter, which provides updates on OHP operations and on-going projects. The newsletter is a perfect mechanism to inform stakeholders and property owners on revitalization statistics, trends, significant historic preservation initiatives, and educational workshops and seminars developed by the OHP or by other organizations. The OHP should also develop a Facebook page that citizens can access to learn the latest updates regarding the OHP.

### **Recommendation 1.4 - Develop a Preservation Lecture Series.**

The OHP, the Conservation Society, UTSA, neighborhood associations and development corporations, and the San Antonio Chapter of the AIA, should work cooperatively to develop a monthly lunchtime or early evening lecture series that can discuss various historic preservation topics. Recent historic preservation or adaptive projects that contributed to the revitalization of a neighborhood or commercial district should be featured as a lecture series discussion topic. The lecture series could be held at the AIA’s new Center for Architecture located within the Pearl Brewery district, at the Conservation Society headquarters or other appropriate facilities.

### **Recommendation 1.5 - Workshops on sustainable preservation practices.**

The OHP should develop a seminar for the Build San Antonio Green workshop series specifically for historic homeowners regarding greening methods and techniques for weatherization, building material replacement and energy systems.

### **Recommendation 1.6 - Train contractors in green historic preservation practices.**

The Build San Antonio Green programs has already developed a system for training contractors qualified in designing and constructing buildings that meet green building guidelines. A historic preservation component should be added as part of the curriculum for training local contractors and designers.

### **Recommendation 1.7 - Develop preservation greening toolkit.**

In cooperation between Build San Antonio Green, the Office of Environmental Policy, UTSA and the Conservation Society, an education toolkit should be developed to educate property owners on retrofitting and greening homes. A brief pamphlet should also be developed for historic building owners on how greening can be achieved within the context of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation.

### **Recommendation 1.8 – Establish a San Antonio history museum or facility.**

There is a significant need for a venue to showcase San Antonio's history and significant artifacts. A history museum or similar facility can serve many purposes such as interpreting and illuminating the City's rich past to San Antonio citizens and promoting the need for preserving architectural, archaeological and cultural resources. A history museum can also be a repository for City archives, artifacts, survey information and many other items, which can assist scholars and residents alike conduct research on San Antonio history, homes, archaeology and other resources. Establishing such a facility will clearly take long-term planning but it should remain an important priority for the City and other major institutions and stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 1.9 - Organize a rehabarama home showcase event.**

“Rehabarama” events were first pioneered in Dayton, Ohio, more than 15 years ago as a way to catalyze investment in low to moderate-income historic districts. Community Development Block Grant funds and other sources of money were used by the City of Dayton to rehabilitate five to ten historic homes for resale. Other sponsors, such as local homebuilders, home furnishing and appliance stores donated items to furnish the homes. Homes were showcased as part of organized tours and neighborhood special events; lenders were on hand to provide special financing to qualified buyers. Today, private-sector sponsors largely underwrite rehabarama events. Rehabaramas are similar to the Affordable Showcase of Homes event organized by the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department and is recommended as a revitalization strategy within the City's Strategic Plan for Community Development.



*Espada Aqueduct*



*Craftsman bungalows with Mahncke Park*

### **Recommendation 1.10 – Organize realtor open houses and training activities.**

The San Antonio Board of Realtors should be engaged to organize special open houses that feature homes for sale in neighborhood historic districts. In addition, a training program to educate San Antonio area realtors on the City’s historic districts and preservation procedures, available incentives and the overall benefits of historic preservation should be organized as a joint venture between the OHP, the Board of Realtors, and various neighborhood associations.

### **Recommendation 1.11 – Develop a property owners handbook.**

The OHP should create a brief educational handbook, pamphlet or brochure that could be distributed to owners of historic properties, or those located within historic districts. The pamphlet or brochure could include concise information on the OHP and the HDRC, the certificate of appropriateness review process, good maintenance and rehabilitation tips, available incentives and local resources for assistance. In addition to providing the pamphlet or handbook to those who contact the OHP directly, they should also be distributed to local realtors, neighborhood associations and other groups who may have first contact with new homeowners.

### **Recommendation 1.12 – Create educational materials and programs regarding the preservation and rehabilitation of San Antonio’s historic Craftsman and bungalow homes.**

The significant number of historic Craftsman homes merit special attention and appreciation as a distinctive housing type in San Antonio. Educational materials and workshops that describe and encourage the sympathetic and sustainable rehabilitation of such homes should be developed and undertaken.

## **Education/Advocacy Strategy 2: Harness public and private resources to market the numerous incentives and programs available to property owners, builders, and developers.**

Recognizing and promoting the value of historic, archaeological and cultural resources within the City of San Antonio is one way in which to encourage their long-term preservation. Educating San Antonio citizens on the diversity and significance of its resources represents important opportunities to partner organizations to collaborate on various initiatives and to encourage different groups to communicate with each other regarding preservation issues. Ultimately, by working together, the citizens of San Antonio can build a strong historic preservation ethic.

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

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## Section 5: Historic Preservation Plan

### **Recommendation 2.1 - Organize an annual historic preservation conference.**

An annual one or two-day San Antonio historic preservation conference or summit should be organized with the specific purpose of bringing owners of historic properties, preservation advocates, developers and investors, City departments and other organizations and groups together to take part in educational sessions and discussions about key preservation issues. Educational sessions can range in topics from home maintenance and greening tips, applying for incentives, and how to research a historic property and write a National Register nomination. The Conservation Society's annual award program could be conducted during a formal dinner as part of the conference. Potential partners in organizing the conference include the OHP, other City Departments, the Conservation Society, UTSA, the Missions National Historical Park, and other neighborhood associations. The conference would also be an excellent opportunity to educate the public on the respective resources and responsibilities of the OHP, the Conservation Society and other entities within the City's historic preservation program.

### **Recommendation 2.2 - Develop historic district educational materials.**

Information brochures, pamphlets and online materials are just some of the ways in which the history and architecture of particular San Antonio historic districts can be promoted. At the least, concise brochures explaining the historic contexts and significant architecture of each district should be developed in both print and online formats.

### **Recommendation 2.3 – Develop walking tours and podcasts.**

The Conservation Society has developed a walking tour brochure of the King William neighborhood. Tour brochures for other historic districts should be developed along with companion podcasts. These walking tours could be developed in cooperation with neighborhood associations.

### **Recommendation 2.4 - Develop preservation curriculum and programs.**

The Conservation Society, the OHP and UTSA may be ideal partners to work with the San Antonio Independent School District and other private schools on developing a San Antonio history and architecture curriculum or program that educates students on the significance of the City's historic and archaeological resources. The Conservation Society's existing heritage education tours and seminars for students and teachers can easily be incorporated as part of an ongoing historic preservation curriculum. Ensure that special programs covering archaeology are included within the curriculum such as lectures, slide shows and hands-on demonstrations of Spanish Colonial technologies and lifeways.



*State marker commemorating the El Camino Real in San Pedro Springs Park*



*Monticello Park Historic District*

### **Recommendation 2.5 – Develop a web-based community calendar.**

The OHP or the Conservation Society should develop a comprehensive calendar of historic preservation-related events, neighborhood fairs, seminars, and workshops that can be posted online. A significant number of events including archaeology fairs, festivals, and history-related events occur throughout the year but they are not promoted or advertised in one location that can be accessed by the public.

### **Recommendation 2.6 – Conduct hands-on workshops on preservation methods and practices.**

The OHP and other partners should continue to organize and conduct hands-on workshops focused on building preservation methods and issues such as masonry repointing and maintenance, additions, roofs, and material conservation. The OHP has already conducted one workshop in partnership with the UTSA on window repair and restoration.

### **Recommendation 2.7 – Establish a design assistance center.**

A design assistance center that provides technical assistance to homeowners and neighborhood groups regarding rehabilitation projects and other planning and design needs could be established in partnership with the University of Texas at San Antonio. Workshops and seminars on a variety of preservation, home rehabilitation and green design issues could also be organized and offered through the design assistance center. The UTSA architecture and preservation programs are significant resources, which could be leveraged through a design assistance center to promote the importance of preservation, good design and the quality of living in historic San Antonio neighborhoods. The center could be housed at USTA or possibly a building in one of the historic districts.



# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 6: Implementation Matrix

The following implementation matrix is a suggested list of actions steps and program partners in carrying out the strategies and recommendations made in this Strategic Historic Preservation Plan..

City of San Antonio: Strategic Historic Preservation Plan		
Strategies	Action Steps	Potential Participants
<b>A. CITY PLANNING STRATEGIES</b>		
<b>1. Create one set of goals and objectives that become the City's official vision and policies for historic preservation.</b>	Process plan for HDRC approval. Process plan for City Council approval.	OHP, HDRC, City Council
<b>2. Incorporate historic preservation elements in all citywide, district, and neighborhood planning initiatives.</b>		
Recommendation 2.1 - Require historic resource surveys.	Require surveys to be prepared for future planning initiatives. Assign OHP staff to future planning initiatives. Review existing plans to determine follow-up survey work needed.	PDSO, OHP, OCA, PDSO
Recommendation 2.2 - Catalog endangered properties.	Require creation of "Endangered Properties List" when surveys conducted. Establish "Early Warning" forum for regular review of lists.	OHP, PDSO, City Attorney, CC, DSDB, Fire Dept.
Recommendation 2.3 - Consider public space and streetscape/landscape features.	Require inventories of spaces/features during future planning initiatives. Address spaces/features from historic and urban design perspective in plans.	OHP, PDSO
Recommendation 2.4 - Prepare design guidelines.	Review existing urban design guidelines to determine gaps and overlaps. Consolidate information into one set of citywide guidelines. Prepare additional guidelines to address gaps. Prepare district-based historic preservation guidelines when appropriate.	PDSO, OHP, Neighborhood Associations
Recommendation 2.5 - Consider preservation in other planning initiatives.	Require City agencies to consider preservation policies/guidelines in all City plans. Meet with other public agencies to establish preservation approach.	All City Departments/Agencies School and Utility Agencies
Recommendation 2.6 - Involve Office of Historic Preservation in relevant decision-making processes.	Regularly involve/consult OHP staff in decisions affecting preservation.	All City Departments/Agencies School and Utility Agencies
Recommendation 2.7 - Allocate resources to the OHP to expand its preservation planning initiatives and activities.	Assess OHP staffing, professional development, and technology needs. Identify resources to expand preservation planning initiatives. Meet with Conservation Society and UTSA to review resources.	OHP, City Manager, SACS, UTSA
Recommendation 2.8 - Establish an advisory council to the Office of Historic Preservation.	Establish advisory council with neighborhood association reps. Identify and appoint first members to advisory council. Establish meeting schedule and conduct first meeting.	OHP, PDSO
Recommendation 2.9 - Require interpretation of archaeological resources on publicly owned property.	Prepare standards for interpreting archaeological resources on public property.	OHP, PDSO, PW, CIMS, CCDO
Recommendation 2.10 - Install specially designed historic district signage.	Develop historic district signage program with design approach. Allocate resources to fund first sets of historic signage. Install first sets of signage.	OHP, PDSO, PW, SACS
<b>3. Promote preservation as a "green" and sustainable planning and development approach.</b>		
Recommendation 3.1 - Consider rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings as sustainable.	Incorporate historic preservation element in <i>Mission Verde Plan</i> . Incorporate historic preservation elements in other green policies and plans.	OHP, OEP, other City departments
Recommendation 3.2 - Include historic preservation criteria within Build San Antonio Green building rating system.	Develop historic preservation rating criteria.	OHP, BSAG, AIA, UTSA

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 6: Implementation Matrix

Recommendation 3.3 – City departments should reuse historic buildings for municipal facilities where feasible.	Require consideration of historic buildings for municipal facilities.	OHP, City Manager, City Attorney.
Recommendation 3.4 – Salvage building materials from property demolitions where feasible.	Establish salvage program for City demolitions. Study feasibility of construction waste diversion.	OHP, DSDB, City Manager, City Attorney, OEP
<b>4. Plan for the future of key historic areas of the City.</b>		
Recommendation 4.1 – Designate landmarks & significant areas in River North.	Assess inventory of historic resources in River North Plan. Conduct additional inventory if needed. Prepare appropriate sites/blocks for designation approval.	OHP, DPS, CCDO, HDRC
Recommendation 4.2 – Prepare a master plan for HemisFair and LaVillita historic districts.	Establish Planning Committee. Create new master plan for combined HemisFair & LaVillita districts.	OHP, PDSD, CCDO, DO, DA, ED, PW, HNS, SACS
Recommendation 4.3 – Prepare a master plan for perimeter blocks around downtown San Antonio.	Establish planning process for perimeter blocks with links to neighborhoods.	OHP, PDSD, CCDO, DA, Parks, PW, ED, SACS
Recommendation 4.4 – Consider changing existing conservation districts to historic districts where appropriate.	Evaluate conservation districts eligibility for designation. Work with local neighborhood associations to determine support. Determine schedule for future designations.	OHP, PDSD, Neighborhood Associations
<b>B. CITY ZONING STRATEGIES</b>		
<b>1. Revise and consolidate all related rules and regulations within the UDC to improve the effectiveness of the OHP and HDRC, and the Code's overall readability.</b>		
Recommendation 1.1 – Consolidate historic preservation sections of the Unified Development Code within Article VI	Incorporate related UDC provisions in Article VI.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.2 – Specify types of alterations, repairs, and maintenance that can be approved administratively.	Determine administrative approvals and revise Article VI.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.3 - Article VI Introduction.	Revise Article VI Introduction.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.4 - Article VI, Divisions 1 and 2.	Merge sections regarding administration and COA procedures.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.5 - Consolidate Historic District Designation Criteria.	Revise designation criteria and eliminate HE and HS designation classifications.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.6 - Revise owner consent requirements for neighborhood initiated landmark/district nominations.	Revise owner consent provision in Article VI, Section 35-602.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.7 - Revise two-thirds majority vote for landmark and district designations.	Revise Division 2 to require simple majority on HDRC actions.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.8 - Consolidate sections regarding designation process.	Merge designation processes found in both Division 1 and 2 of Article VI.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney

Recommendation 1.9 - Increase training for HDRC members.	Assess HDRC training needs. Conduct training and orientation sessions. Allocate resources for commissioner attendance at relevant conferences.	OHP, HDRC
Recommendation 1.10 - Consolidate UDC sections regarding economic hardship.	Merge relevant sections on economic hardship.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.11 - Require documentation for buildings to be demolished.	Determine policies and procedures regarding documentation.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
<b><u>2. Consolidate and create standard design guidelines to facilitate OHP and HDRC reviews of public and private development initiatives.</u></b>		
Recommendation 2.1 - Develop a set of design guidelines that apply to all designated historic resources and districts.	Review and assess all existing design guidelines to determine gaps and overlaps. Create citywide urban design guidelines, including historic preservation.	PDSD, OHP
Recommendation 2.2 - Create design guidelines for individual historic districts as needed.	Determine need for neighborhood level preservation design guidelines. Create neighborhood preservation design guidelines as appropriate.	OHP, PDSD, Neighborhood Associations
Recommendation 2.3 - Revise design review within the RIO districts.	Assess/determine design review items that can be approved administratively. Develop standards as needed (signage, vendor carts, etc.).	OHP, DO, CCDO, City Attorney
Recommendation 2.4 - Incorporate "green" design methods and techniques within design guidelines.	Create "green preservation" standards within citywide design guidelines.	OHP, PDSD, OEP, BSAG
Recommendation 2.5 - Incorporate historic viewshed restrictions into standard design guidelines.	Assess viewshed needs in existing/potential historic districts. Incorporate viewsheds into citywide and neighborhood guidelines. Incorporate into conservation subdivision code.	OHP, PDSD, Neighborhood Associations
<b><u>3. Ensure zoning in neighborhoods and commercial districts promotes the preservation of and reuse of historic resources.</u></b>		
	Review and assess base zoning in historic districts as needed.	OHP, PDSD, Neighborhood Associations
<b><u>4. Consider form-based zoning within historic districts.</u></b>		
	Assess need and potential of form-based zoning in historic districts.	OHP, PDSD, Neighborhood Associations
<b>C. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES</b>		
<b><u>1. Increase public awareness that historic preservation contributes to the City's economic development.</u></b>		
Recommendation 1.1 - Undertake an Economic Benefits Study.	Secure resources to undertake study. Conduct study to establish baseline data. Distribute and publicize study results.	OHP, PDSD, CVB, ED, CS, SACS, UTSA
Recommendation 1.2 - Publish Yearly Investment Statistics.	Collect relevant investment statistics/data. Prepare summary similar to NCR program summary. Distribute and publicize data.	OHP, ED
Recommendation 1.3 - Establish a benchmarking program.	Determine benchmark measurements for preservation investment. Assess progress and distribute results.	OHP
<b><u>2. Consider preservation actions as integral components of larger business district and neighborhood revitalization strategies.</u></b>		

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 6: Implementation Matrix

Recommendation 2.1 - Expand the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program.	Assess historic preservation and technical service needs in NCR neighborhoods. Determine neighborhoods that could benefit from program.	OHP, CCDO, PDSD
Recommendation 2.2 - Expand heritage tourism initiatives.	Continue development of Neighborhood Discovery Tours. Determine wayfinding/signage needs for districts. Prepare a heritage tourism study. Consider additional cultural districts where appropriate.	OCA, CVB, OHP, PDSD, PW, Neighborhood Associations
Recommendation 2.3 – Implement reinvestment plans as part of neighborhood plans and in priority historic districts.	Consider "showcase/model block" program to concentrate reinvestment efforts. Determine "priority" historic districts for reinvestment plans. Coordinate neighborhood sweeps with "rehabaramas".	OHP, PDSD, HNS
<b><u>3. Create new preservation initiatives that facilitate rehabilitation and reuse of historic resources, revitalization of neighborhoods and commercial districts, and creation of new jobs and small businesses.</u></b>		
Recommendation 3.1 – Encourage community-initiated development activities.	Provide training in community-initiated development to local organizations. Collaborate with CDC's, CHDO's and other groups to determine projects.	OHP, HNS, ED, PDSD
Recommendation 3.2 - Explore partnerships to encourage affordable housing initiatives in historic districts.	Identify CDC's, CHDO's and other entities for potential partnerships. Identify resources for housing and historic preservation initiatives.	OHP, HNS, PDSD, ED
<b>D. HISTORIC RESOURCE STRATEGIES</b>		
<b><u>1. Update existing surveys and conduct new inventories of historic resources throughout the City.</u></b>		
Recommendation 1.1 – Include resource surveys as part of neighborhood plans.	Require surveys to be prepared for future planning initiatives. Assign staff to future planning initiatives. Review existing plans to determine follow-up survey work needed.	PDSD, OHP, OCA
Recommendation 1.2 - Prioritize surveys for re-evaluation.	Evaluate existing surveys and prioritize survey update needs. Assess and secure resources to update surveys.	OHP, PDSD, UTSA, Conservation Society, AIA
Recommendation 1.3 - Prioritize other areas and districts.	Review and prioritize areas/neighborhoods that have not been surveyed. Assess and secure resources to conduct surveys.	OHP, PDSD, UTSA, SACS, AIA
Recommendation 1.4 - Continue thematic survey approach.	Determine "thematic" or special surveys that may need to be conducted. Assess and secure resources to conduct surveys.	OHP, PDSD, OCA, CVB, UTSA, SACS, AIA,
Recommendation 1.5 - Conduct an inventory of "Recent Past" resources.	Review "Recent Past" sites/areas to determine locations for surveys. Conduct surveys.	OHP, PDSD, HNS, OCA
Recommendation 1.6 – Collect written and oral histories as part of survey activities.	Require written and oral histories as part of resource surveys.	OHP
<b><u>2. Use the new information to designate additional districts and target public and private resources.</u></b>	Prioritize/designate historic sites and districts based on updated and new surveys. Maintain and publish priority survey/property information.	OHP, HDRC
<b><u>3. Use the new information to create an "early warning" system to increase awareness and action regarding endangered sites, buildings, landscapes, and view sheds.</u></b>		
Recommendation 3.1- Pursue initiatives that enforce historic preservation provisions of the Unified Development Code	Formalize Early Warning System for endangered properties. Establish City departments task force to regularly address endangered properties. Develop/maintain Endangered Properties List.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney, CC, DSDB, Fire Dept.

<b><u>4. Make surveys more accessible to the public to promote a greater understanding of significant historic resources.</u></b>	Develop consolidated/accessible formats for public review of surveys/lists.	OHP, HDRC
<b>E. INCENTIVE STRATEGIES</b>		
<b><u>1. Enhance the effectiveness of existing historic preservation incentives and create additional programs that encourage reinvestment in historic resources.</u></b>		
Recommendation 1.1 - Enhance the effectiveness of City Historic Preservation Tax Exemption Program.	Assess need for a lower "minimum" investment requirement. Assess change to "applicability" provisions to extend exemption to the property rather than the owner.	OHP, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.2 - Create a new division on incentives within Article VI of the Unified Development Code.	Draft new incentives division in Article VI when warranted.	OHP, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.3 - Create special incentive program for endangered historic properties.	Determine and secure financial resources to create incentive. Develop incentive program guidelines and procedures. Prepare information and marketing materials.	OHP, PDSD, CC, DSDB, HNS, SACS
Recommendation 1.4 - Develop a citywide façade grant program or expand Operation Facelift.	Assess current capacity and funding needs for Operation Facelift. Assess need and possible funding sources for new citywide grant program.	OHP, CCDO, PDSD
Recommendation 1.5 - Utilize tax-increment financing to leverage large-scale building rehabilitation and adaptive use project.	Review current, or develop new policy, for use of TIF in historic preservation projects.	OHP, HNS, ED, PDSD
Recommendation 1.6 - Implement an adaptive use ordinance.	Determine need for revising codes to encourage adaptive use projects. Revise codes or draft an adaptive use ordinance.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney, Fire Department, Downtown Alliance.
Recommendation 1.7 - Adopt permit fee waivers.	Create fee waivers for preservation projects as feasible.	OHP, PDSD, HNS
Recommendation 1.8 - Develop and operate a historic preservation revolving fund.	Secure capitalization monies. Create program guidelines and procedures. Consider other technical assistance needs. Prepare information and marketing materials.	OHP, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.9 - Partner with equity and tax-credit syndication funds.	Maintain list of potential tax-credit projects and/or vacant properties. Undertake developer workshops with participation from syndication funds. Develop and maintain working relationships with syndication funds.	OHP, NTCIC, LISC, Enterprise, ED, HNS
Recommendation 1.10 - Include archaeological sites and historic resources as critical areas for transfer of development rights.	Revise UDC to include archaeological sites as critical areas. Research possible transfer value of archaeological sites.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.11 - Create a historic preservation fund as part of the City's density bonus program.	Revise UDC to include historic preservation fund within density bonus program.	OHP, PDSD, City Attorney
Recommendation 1.12 - Create an energy efficiency incentive.	Determine type of energy incentive program. Create program guidelines and procedures. Prepare information and marketing materials.	OHP, OEP, Utilities
Recommendation 1.13 - Leverage incentives for priority historic resources.	Target distressed properties through reinvestment planning. Consider building stabilization fund.	OHP, PDSD, HNS, ED, CDC's
<b><u>2. Streamline and expand promotion of preservation programs and incentives to property owners, builders, developers, and investors.</u></b>		

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 6: Implementation Matrix

Recommendation 2.1 – Revise and develop information brochures and materials.	Determine revisions to existing brochures. Create, produce, distribute new brochures and electronic copy.	OHP
Recommendation 2.2 – Revise Website.	Determine and undertake revisions to OHP website regarding incentives.	OHP
Recommendation 2.3 – Conduct workshops and information sessions.	Schedule workshops. Prepare special information materials as needed.	OHP
Recommendation 2.4 – Conduct a preservation lecture series session on incentives.	Schedule presentation. Prepare special information materials as needed.	OHP, SACS, AIA, UTSA Neighborhood Associations.
Recommendation 2.5 – Develop newsletters and publications.	Create special newsletters and publications regarding preservation incentives as needed.	OHP, PDSD, SACS, Neighborhood Associations
Recommendation 2.6 – Promote conservation subdivisions as a method for preserving historic and archaeological resources.	Organize developer workshops and instructional sessions. Develop special brochures, materials and website information.	PDSD, OEP, Build San Antonio Green, SACS, OHP, ASLA
<b>3. Determine and remove disincentives and obstacles to preserving and reusing historic resources.</b>	Conduct assessment of disincentives to preservation. Determine strategies and solutions to eliminating disincentives.	OHP, PDSD, HNS, CC City Attorney, DA
<b>F. EDUCATION/ADVOCACY STRATEGIES</b>		
<b>1. Undertake a comprehensive outreach effort to increase awareness of the tremendous value of San Antonio's architectural, cultural, and archaeological resources, and the benefits of historic preservation.</b>		
Recommendation 1.1 - Conduct an annual "State of Historic Preservation Address".	Compile investment statistics and prepare address and report. Determine venue and date.	OHP, SACS
Recommendation 1.2 - Update OHP Website.	Determine and undertake general revisions to the OHP website.	OHP
Recommendation 1.3 - Develop OHP newsletter and Facebook page.	Create format and production schedules for OHP newsletter. Maintain distribution list for newsletter. Develop and maintain Facebook page.	OHP
Recommendation 1.4 -Develop a Preservation Lecture Series.	Conduct an organizing meeting with partner agencies and groups. Determine funding needs and secure funding sources. Develop and undertake marketing program.	OHP, SACS, UTSA, AIA, STAA, ASLA.
Recommendation 1.5 - Workshops on sustainability and green preservation.	Develop "green" preservation workshop outline and materials. Schedule workshop with Build San Antonio Green.	OHP, BAG, OEP, UTSA
Recommendation 1.6 - Certify green contractors with training in historic preservation.	Develop historic preservation component to Build San Antonio Green. contractor certification program.	OHP, BAG, OEP, UTSA
Recommendation 1.7 - Develop preservation greening toolkit.	Determine components of toolkit. Assess funding needs and secure funding source. Produce and distribute toolkit.	OHP, UTSA, SACS, OEP, BAG
Recommendation 1.8 – Establish a San Antonio history museum or facility.	Form task force of major stakeholders to assess need and interest. Secure resources to conduct feasibility study. Form organizational entity to undertake planning and development.	OHP, OCA, SACS, UTSA, STAA, Missions NHP, Texas State Historical Society

# San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

## Section 6: Implementation Matrix

Recommendation 1.9 - Organize a "rehabarama" home showcase event.	Evaluate and determine potential rehabarama neighborhoods or blocks. Schedule rehabaramas as part of reinvestment planning activities. Identify and secure resources and/or sponsors for rehab activity.	OHP, PDSO, HNS, Neighborhood Associations, SACS
Recommendation 1.10 – Organize realtor open houses and training activities.	Develop training materials and schedule training sessions. Organize and schedule open houses.	OHP, Real Estate Council, Neighborhood Associations, SACS
Recommendation 1.11 – Develop a property owners handbook.	Determine format and draft property owner handbook. Promote and distribute handbook.	OHP, PDSO, HNS, SACS, Neighborhood Associations, BAG
Recommendation 1.12 – Create educational materials and programs regarding the preservation and rehabilitation of San Antonio's historic Craftsman and bungalow homes.	Assess educational and technical assistance needs Seek partner organizations. Develop educational materials and conduct workshops.	OHP, HNS, PDSO, SACS, Neighborhood Associations, AC, UTSA
<b><u>2. Harness public and private resources to market the numerous incentives and programs available to property owners, builders, and developers.</u></b>		
Recommendation 2.1- Organize an annual historic preservation conference.	Seek partner organizations and secure financial resources. Develop conference theme, secure presenters and facility, draft schedule. Market and publicize conference.	OHP, various City departments, UTSA, SACS, AIA, ASLA, STAA
Recommendation 2.2 - Develop historic district educational materials.	Assess current educational and informational materials. Develop plan for producing new information resources. Seek partner organization and financial resources.	OHP, SACS, UTSA, AIA, ASLA, STAA
Recommendation 2.3 – Develop walking tours and podcasts.	Assess need for additional tours and develop podcasts and other media forms as needed.	CVB, OCA, OHP, SACS, Neighborhood Associations, Missions NHP
Recommendation 2.4 - Develop preservation curriculum and programs in local schools.	Form task force to evaluate and determine preservation and local history curriculum needs.	OHP, School District, UTSA, STAA, SACS, OCA
Recommendation 2.5 – Develop a web-based community calendar.	Determine host, coordinator and developer of website.	OHP, SACS, UTSA, AIA, ASLA
Recommendation 2.6 – Conduct hands-on workshops on preservation methods and practices.	Compile and evaluate potential training topics. Seek partners, potential speakers and trainers and schedule workshops.	OHP, UTSA, AIA, ASLA, SACS, various City Departments
Recommendation 2.7 – Establish a design assistance center.	Establish task force or committee to determine purpose and feasibility. Secure funding and location.	OHP, UTSA
<p>OHP- Office of Historic Preservation                      HDRC-Historic and Design Review Commission                      PDSO- Planning and Development Services                      OCA- Office of Cultural Affairs                      CVB- Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau                      CCDO - Center City Development Office                      PW- Public Works                      DO-Downtown Operations                      HNS - Housing &amp; Neighborhood Services</p>	<p><u>DSDDB-Dangerous Structures Determination Board</u>  <u>OEP-Office of Environmental Policy</u>  <u>CIMS-Capital Improvements Management Services</u>  <u>ED-Economic Development Department</u>  <u>AIA- American Institute of Architects-San Antonio Chapter</u>  <u>SACS- San Antonio Conservation Society</u>  <u>STAA- Southern Texas Archaeological Association</u>  <u>UTSA- University of Texas at San Antonio</u>  <u>CDC's- community development corporations</u></p>	<p><u>CC- Code Compliance</u>  <u>DA- Downtown Alliance</u>  <u>BAG- Build San Antonio Green</u>  <u>NTCIC- National Trust Community Investment Corporation</u>  <u>LISC- Local Initiatives Support Corporation</u>  <u>Mission NHP-Mission National Historical Park</u></p>

