

Midtown Area Regional Center Plan Overview

Anchored by historic neighborhoods, cultural and natural assets, large educational institutions, and proximity to Downtown, the Midtown Area Regional Center has experienced faster population and household growth than other parts of San Antonio in recent years, following a decade of population loss. Demand for housing, higher quality public spaces, and improved access to local amenities and transportation choices is growing.

The Midtown area contains the Uptown, 5 Points, Tobin Hill, Westfort Alliance, and Mahncke Park neighborhoods, and a small portion of Government Hill. It also includes portions of the Broadway Cultural Corridor, San Antonio River, and San Pedro Springs Creek. Major institutions include Metropolitan Methodist Hospital, University of the Incarnate Word, and San Antonio College.

The long-range planning effort was led by a dedicated Planning Team made up of area neighborhood leaders and residents, as well as partners representing major businesses and agencies in the area. These included the Witte Museum, Brackenridge Park Conservancy, Pearl, the San Antonio River Authority, VIA, and various City departments.

Throughout the nearly 24 month process, the Planning Department conducted and facilitated 10 formal planning team meetings, 3 community meetings, and reached out to the community through intercept events, focus group meetings, and by attending community events and other meetings out in the area. Social media such as Twitter and Facebook and a project specific website were also utilized.

Plan Framework

Most of the Plan is organized around the Plan Framework, which outlines key improvements and concepts that will shape development in the Midtown Area. Each element (shown at right) was studied in order to understand the history and development of the area as well as existing conditions. The Planning Team shared their input regarding area assets, opportunities, and challenges to develop a more nuanced understanding of the Regional Center and to identify the community's values and priorities. City staff also conducted additional stakeholder and public outreach to capture input from a broad range of Midtown Area residents. Throughout the process, City Staff and the Planning Team worked to build the framework, identify key priorities, improvements, and strategies to guide growth, development, and investment in the Midtown Area.

- Land Use
- Focus Areas
- Mobility
- Amenities and Infrastructure
- Catalytic Projects
- Housing
- Economic Development

Vision

One of the first tasks accomplished as part of the planning process was establishing a shared community vision. The Planning Team worked together to draft the vision that was then reviewed and refined at a community meeting. This vision sets the stage for the goals and strategies recommended later in the plan.

In 2040, the Midtown Area will reflect the diversity of San Antonio's people and families. Historic neighborhoods, rooted communities, iconic waterways and parks, and places of culture and learning will continue to characterize the area.

Unique destinations will each include an abundance of places to live, work, learn, and enjoy, yet each will have a distinct character, featuring—and growing from—local culture and landscape.

The Midtown Area's neighborhoods will continue to convey historic character and will have affordable homes and apartments for a diverse population. People of all ages and circumstances will be able to choose, stay, and call the Midtown Area home.

The Midtown Area's multiple-purpose streets, trails, and public places will offer comfortable and convenient choices for walking, biking, and transit riding, and make it easy to get exercise, socialize, and experience nature in a healthy environment.







Goals

Based on community input, several themes emerged throughout the planning process. These goals were developed and then refined by Planning Team members as well as participants at a community meeting.

The Vision and Goals reflect the value of the Midtown Area's unique neighborhoods and main streets, and respond to the area's unique assets and challenges. Stakeholders want an area that's inclusive, prosperous, and healthy, and where future improvements reflect the local culture and landscape.

- PRESERVE THE MIDTOWN AREA'S DISTINCT CHARACTER
 - CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS AND DESTINATIONS
 - SUPPORT GREAT TRANSIT
 - SUPPORT UNIQUE, MIXED ACTIVITY AREAS
 - BROADEN HOUSING CHOICES
 - IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN- AND TRANSIT-ORIENTED RETAIL AND SERVICES
 - STIMULATE A THRIVING ECONOMY
 - IMPROVE OUTDOOR AND NATURE EXPERIENCES
 - PROMOTE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY
 - PURSUE TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS
 - GROW UNIQUE DESTINATIONS











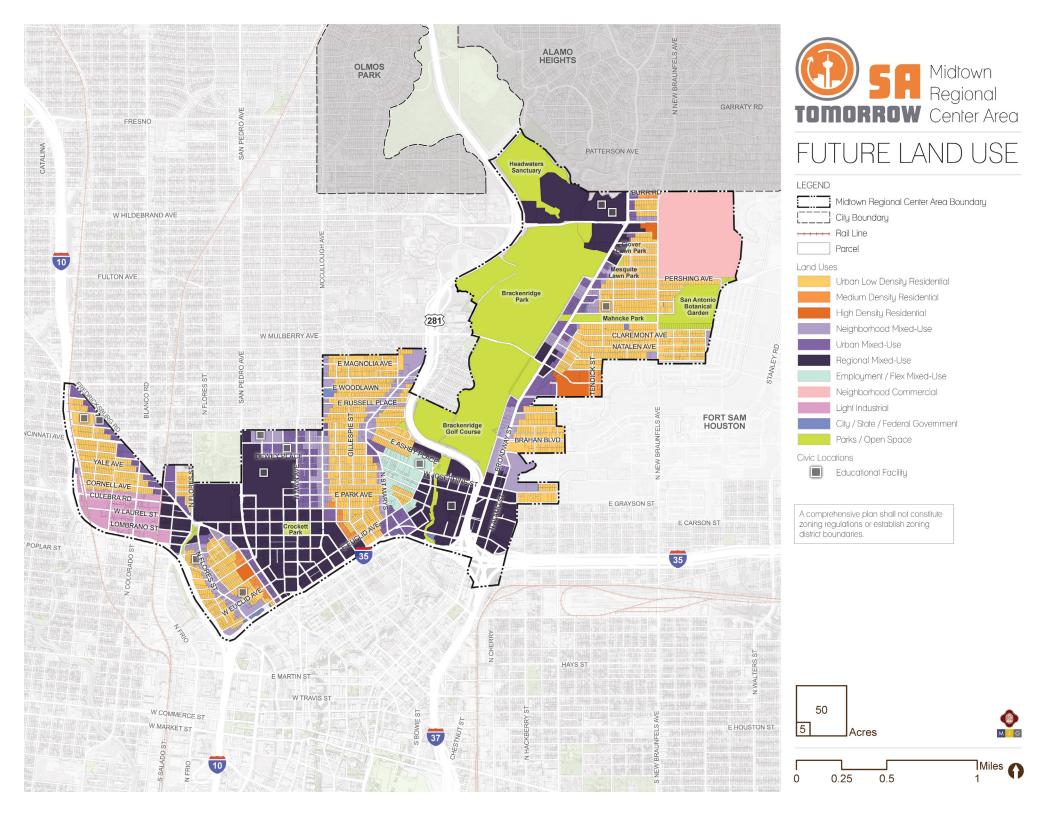


Land Use

The land use policies support stability in existing neighborhoods, public realm improvements and additional housing supply and housing diversity to complement the Midtown Area's employment anchors, main streets, as well as natural and cultural assets.

Generally speaking, as directed by the goals and policies of the adopted SA Tomorrow plans, the land use plan encourages growth and increased density at various scales in mixed-use centers and focus areas, and along key transit and community corridors. The four Land Use recommendations include the rezoning of property in selected mixed-use corridors and focus areas, and stability in zoning within neighborhood residential areas.

- Initiate rezoning in selected mixed-use corridors and focus areas and update the Unified Development Code to support transit-oriented development, mixed-use corridors, and centers with a high-quality public realm.
- Encourage zoning that supports the maintenance of neighborhood character while encouraging affordable housing, housing for all stages of life, and housing that is accessible to people with mobility impairments.
- Discourage rezoning (both up-zoning and down-zoning) in neighborhood areas.
- Land use decisions should support the continued use or adaptive-reuse of existing structures that contribute to the essential character of the Midtown Area.







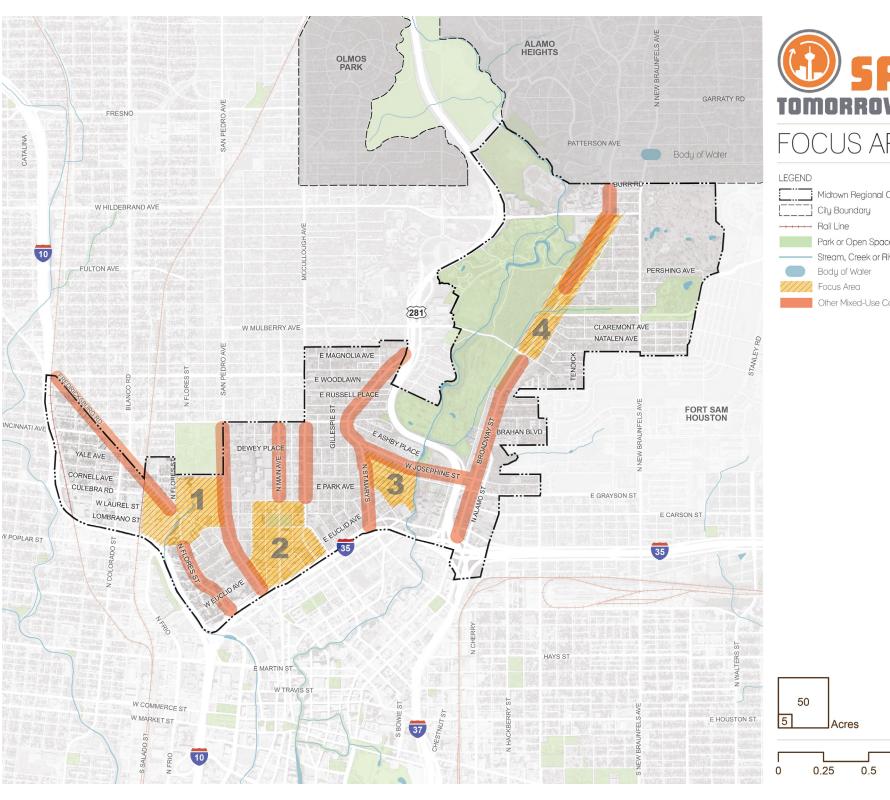


Focus Areas

The focus areas were identified by the community and project team as those most suited for growth and change in the Midtown Area Regional Center. The four identified focus areas all present opportunities to take advantage of their strategic location within the City and the Regional Center to accommodate growth while furthering the SA Tomorrow goals of creating compact walkable places where San Antonio residents can live, work, and play. The Midtown Area Regional Center Plan also identifies seven corridors that present themselves as opportunities for future mixed-use areas.

The recommendations support housing and employment opportunities, as well as enjoyable public spaces that are accessible by multiple modes of transportation; and that complement existing or potential future amenities.

- Prioritize major amenity and infrastructure improvement projects that support growth in focus areas and mixed-use corridors.
- Update zoning and design standards to support the unique vision for each focus area and mixed-use corridor, create high-quality places, support transportation choices, and avoid impacts to sensitive areas nearby.
- Implement housing and economic development programs and incentives to support focus areas and mixed-use corridors as inclusive places of housing, employment, and recreational opportunity for a diverse population.
- Support fine-grained, incremental redevelopment intended to serve many people in mixed-use corridors and focus areas.





FOCUS AREAS

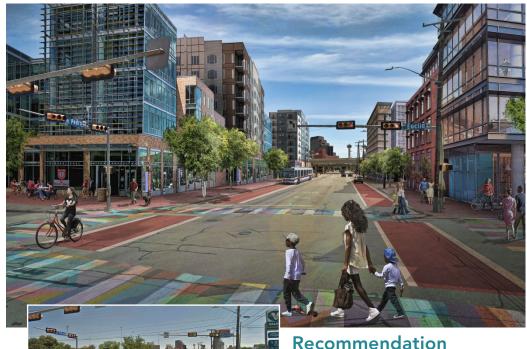




Catalytic Projects

Two catalytic sites were identified in the Midtown Area Regional Center and selected for more detailed conceptual designs. If implemented in the future, the development concepts depicted in the following images will help achieve a number of goals, including the creation of compact, walkable, mixed-use places; a wider variety of housing options for area residents; and transit supportive land uses and streetscapes.

#1 SAN PEDRO GATEWAY



• Support the developm

 Support the development of a residential mixed-use neighborhood along the San Pedro Gateway.

Existing Site

The first area is comprised of the blocks adjacent to San Pedro Avenue, immediately north of I-35. The project has a mixture of housing types and streetscape improvements. Additional dwellings in this area would complement enhanced transit service on San Pedro Avenue and a mixed-use retail node to the north around the intersection of Cypress and San Pedro Avenue. This project would provide housing opportunities in close proximity to some of the Midtown Area's and Downtown's major amenities, such as the San Pedro Springs Park and the Central Library.

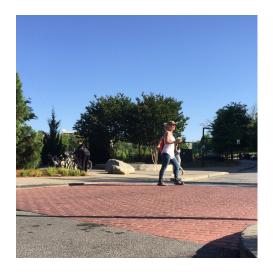
#2 SAN PEDRO VIA SITE

Existing Site



• Support the development of housing and community amenities that complement San Pedro Avenue, San Pedro Springs Park, and ongoing VIA facility operations. The second catalytic site is the San Pedro VIA site which is primarily used for VIA's bus maintenance, office, and employee parking needs. The site also has a gas station, drivethrough restaurants, and drive-through alcohol sales.

The concept includes transit supportive land uses concentrated particularly near the intersection of Cypress and San Pedro Avenue. A public plaza is aligned at the western terminus of Evergreen Street. Additional development on the property's northern edge would complement the southern edge of San Pedro Springs Park. Although this concept would accommodate bus maintenance and fueling activities for the foreseeable future, the long term vision would include daylighting San Pedro Springs Creek, and providing continuous creek access from San Pedro Springs Park to the north, to 5 Points intersection to the south, with complementary trail oriented development.





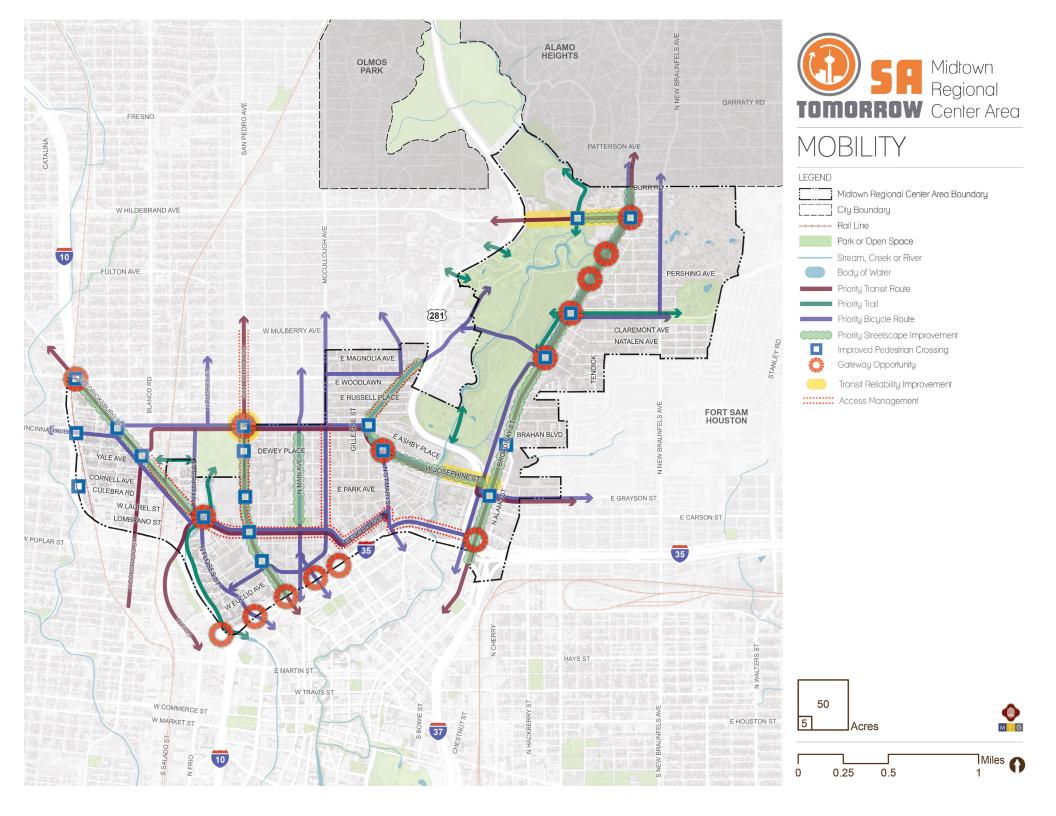


Mobility

The Midtown Area has an established street grid and development patterns. Here, instead of expanding roadways, it will be important to diversify transportation options so that residents and visitors have affordable, convenient, and safe transportation choices.

Mobility recommendations focus on continued implementation of the City's Vision Zero Action Plan for pedestrian safety, creating more safe and comfortable mobility options throughout the area, and supporting enhanced transit services.

- Continue implementing the San Antonio Vision Zero Action Plan.
- Complete the multimodal network by investing in critical corridors, leveraging existing assets, and establishing partnerships to implement critical connections.
- Manage transportation demand by creating walkable places and supporting efficient transit operations through targeted interventions.
- Support VIA Metropolitan Transit Rapid Transit Corridor service by prioritizing transit supportive policies and infrastructure near transit stations.







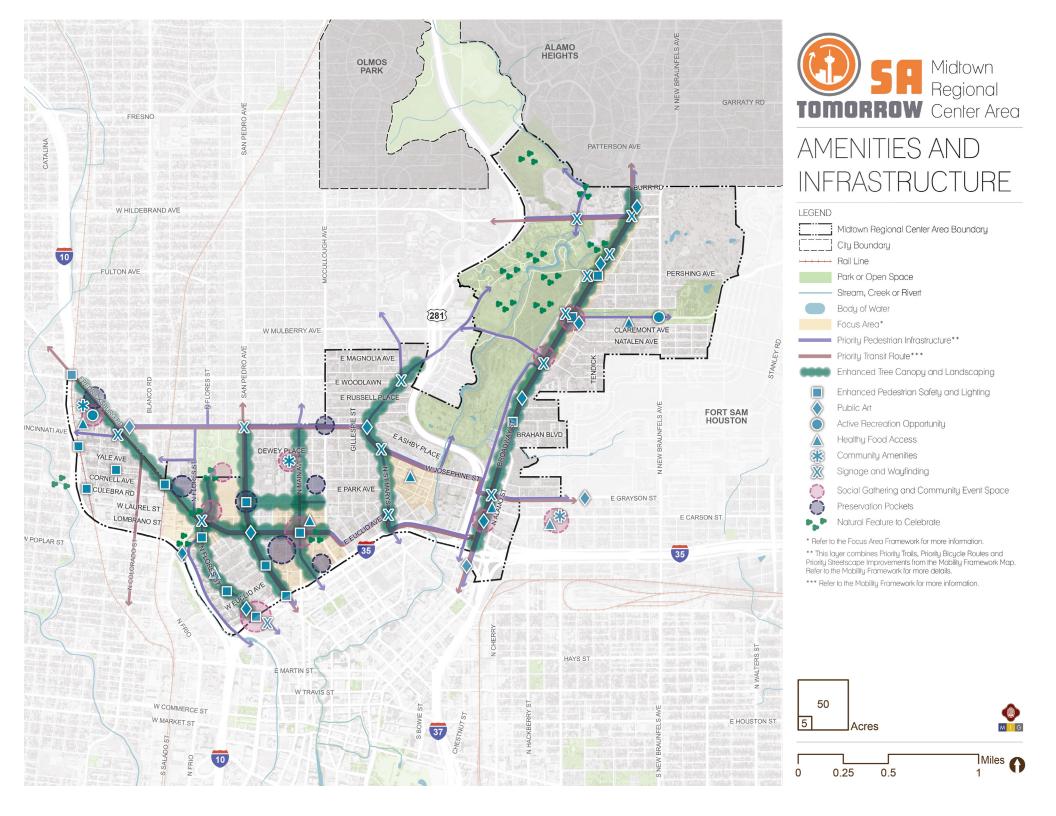


Amenities and Infrastructure

Community input emphasized that public spaces, including parks, plazas, and streetscapes should be improved to serve the Midtown Area's growing resident and workforce population.

From improved tree canopy, green infrastructure, and public art, to healthy food options and support of local educational institutions, participants in the planning process articulated the need for improving established neighborhoods while planning to ensure new neighborhoods include the essential components of a healthy and vibrant community.

- Construct drainage improvements to reduce flood risk on and around the Broadway Cultural Corridor.
- Restore ecological functions of and improve public access to the Midtown Area's waterways.
- Improve the health and ecological function of the Midtown Area's watersheds by incorporating water features and green infrastructure into new development.
- Improve existing parks and create new plazas for gathering and community events.
- Include trees and lighting with mixed-use corridor and focus area redevelopment to create comfortable places to walk, explore, and stay.
- Use Public Art that reflects local culture and landscape to create unifying identities for unique places in the Midtown Area.
- Offer more convenient choices to residents who want healthy food.
- Offer a diverse and high-quality range of education choices for families and adults.
- Parking should be shared amongst users with complementary schedules, not publicly subsidized, and adaptable to new uses as parking demand changes.









Housing

The Midtown Area Regional Center's housing supply and housing diversity has increased since 2010, following a decade of decline in the number of housing units and population.

As demand continues to grow, there is a need to maintain and create affordable housing options along with the market-rate development to ensure that the Midtown Area's employment opportunities, amenities, and transportation options are accessible to a diverse population. Participants emphasized the importance of maintaining existing affordable housing, and that new affordable housing should include housing for people with low and very low incomes.

- Ensure that zoning supports a context-sensitive supply of diverse housing to support the Midtown Area's expected household growth.
- Expand the Midtown Area's housing as affordable to households with diverse income levels, including households earning less than 60% of Area Median Income.
- Maintain affordability and a diversity of housing options by accommodating additional housing in neighborhoods and transition areas through context-sensitive design and small-scale, infill housing.
- Support San Antonio's Housing Policy Framework

Economic Development

The Midtown Area has a healthy mix of large and small employers offering jobs for a diverse range of skill sets and education levels. The Regional Center includes large development sites, and existing leasable buildings for small businesses and community organizations.

Future employment growth will come from leveraging existing large employment sectors such as health care and education, and ensuring entrepreneurial opportunities to complement the Midtown Area's cultural assets. The Planning Team emphasized the importance of maintaining opportunities for businesses to offer blue-collar employment opportunities in the industrial and construction supply area south of Culebra Avenue.

- Ensure the Midtown Area has a diversity of buildings and amenities to support the existing variety of jobs through the creation of missing development types, and the preservation of desired building types and commercial and industrial areas at risk for redevelopment.
- Support and grow awareness of the Midtown Area as a destination for commerce, arts, culinary, and cultural attractions and activities.
- Support the continued growth and integration of the education and health institutions within the Midtown Area, so that campuses serve as community resources and amenities, and surrounding mixed-use areas serve students and workers.







Neighborhood Profiles & Priorities

Neighborhood Profiles and Priorities were developed to provide special attention to prior planning efforts and address specific priorities from participating neighborhoods. Each priority aligns with either a previously adopted plan, a sub-area plan recommendation, or with other neighborhoods in the Midtown Area.

UPTOWN

The Uptown Neighborhood Association met with the Planning Department to discuss key priorities and a lasting direction for the neighborhood.

Priority Examples

- Children's Play Space
- Neighborhood Conservation
- River and Open Space Connections

FIVE POINTS

The 5 Points Neighborhood Priorities were developed using recommendations from the 5 Points Neighborhood Plan and through input and engagement with area residents, neighborhood association members and prior plan advisory team members.

Priority Examples

- San Pedro Springs Creek at Fredericksburg Road
- Monument for Historic Acequia
- Neighborhood Conservation

TOBIN HILL

The Tobin Hill Neighborhood Profile and Priorities were developed from the key recommendations of the Tobin Hill Neighborhood Plan and through community outreach with prior plan advisory team members, neighborhood association board members and area residents.

Priority Examples

- Neighborhood Plan Development Guidelines
- Neighborhood Design Standards
- San Pedro Avenue Transit and Pedestrian Improvements

WESTFORT ALLIANCE

The Westfort Alliance Neighborhood Profile and Priorities were developed from the key recommendations of the Westfort Alliance Neighborhood Plan and through community outreach.

Priority Examples

- Balanced Housing
- Broadway Street Character and Uses
- Pedestrian Access

MAHNCKE PARK

The Mahncke Park Neighborhood Profile and Priorities were developed from the key recommendations of the Mahncke Park Neighborhood Plan and through community discussion with area residents, prior board members, and neighborhood association members.

Priority Examples

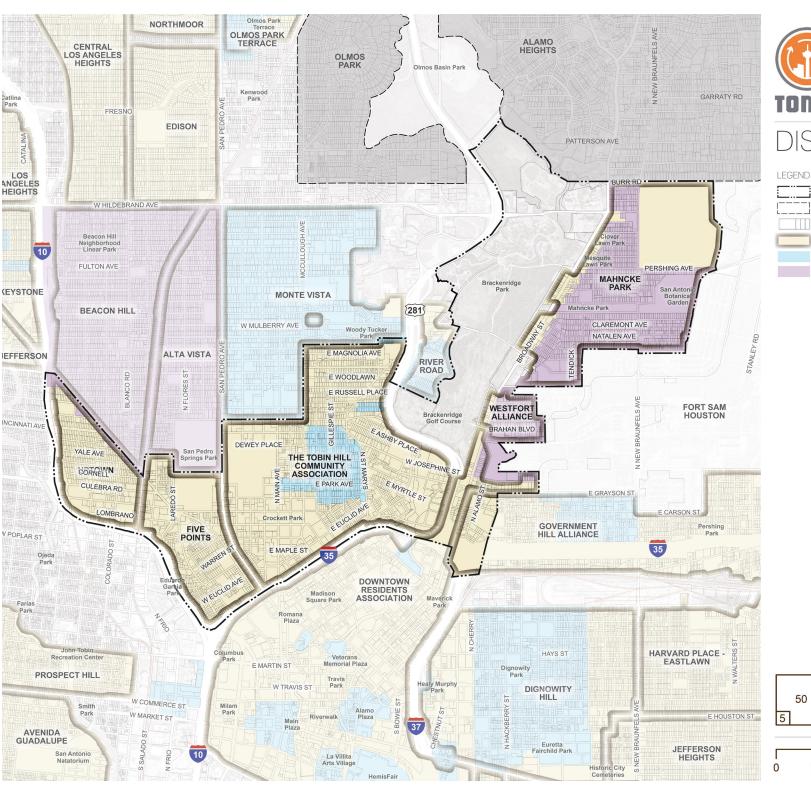
- Housing Adjacent to Broadway
- Prevent Commercial Encroachment
- Mahncke Park Improvements

GOVERNMENT HILL

The Government Hill Neighborhood Profile and Priorities were developed from the key recommendations of the Government Hill Neighborhood Plan and also through community outreach.

Priority Examples

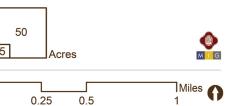
- Transition to Neighborhood
- SA Tomorrow Eastside Community Plan





DISTRICTS





Implementation

Since the Midtown Area Regional Center Plan is an implementation component of the City's SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, it proposes a mid-term vision with recommendations and strategies for improving and developing the Regional Center over the next ten years. The Implementation section of the Plan lists the Recommendations by topic, followed by Strategies formulated to achieve each Recommendation, and thus work towards the area's developed Vision.

In looking ahead to next steps after Plan adoption, the Department is working with partner agencies, organizations and City departments to develop an Implementation Matrix tool that will help guide follow-up efforts. The matrix will identify each plan recommendation and its associated strategies, which include whether it is a Regulatory and Policy strategy, a Partnership-related strategy, or a strategy that may require some form of Investment. The matrix will also identify potential funding sources that currently exist, partners, an anticipated timeframe, and indicate alignment with other major plans and initiatives. It should be noted that the Implementation Matrix will not be a component of the Plan but will be used by staff in following up with implementation of the Plan. We anticipate an annual review and update regarding the status of Plan recommendations and strategies.

