



neighborhood

Profile and Priorities

MIDTOWN AREA REGIONAL CENTER PLAN:
UPTOWN

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to every Midtown resident and stakeholder who spent time and energy speaking with Planning Department staff throughout the Midtown planning process and to the following area residents and stakeholders who contributed to this document by meeting with the Planning Department.

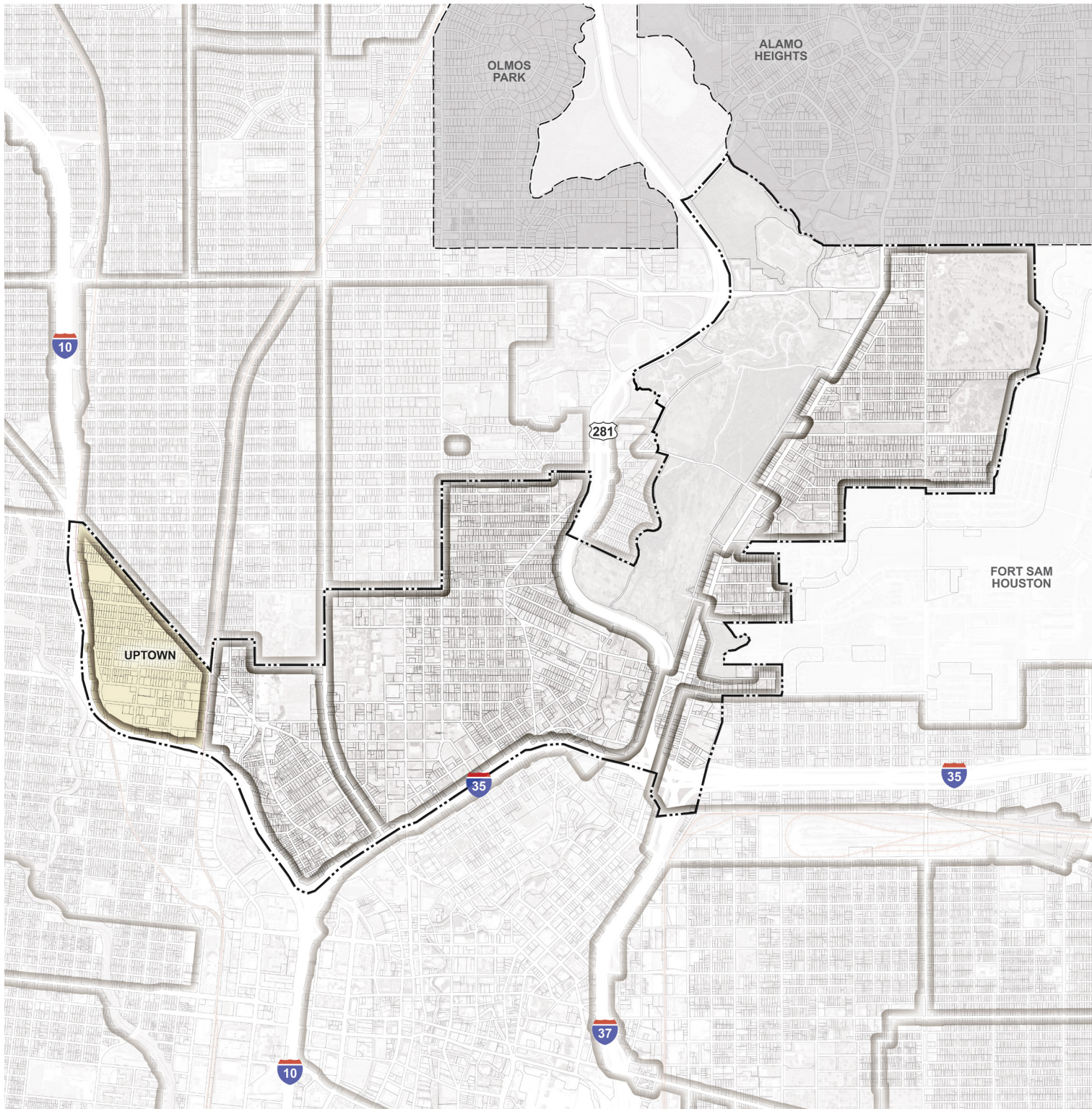
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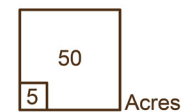
Maria Martinez | Rosa Romero | Mayra Juárez-Denis



NEIGHBORHOOD LOCATION

LEGEND

-  Midtown Regional Center Area Boundary
-  City Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Neighborhood



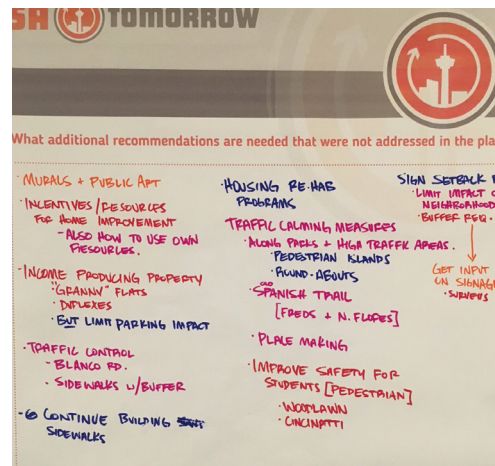
Neighborhood Profile and Priorities



What is the Neighborhood Profile and Priorities?

San Antonio is a city of neighborhoods, each with its own unique history, qualities and character. Many neighborhoods throughout the City have developed Neighborhood Plans that reflect local values and priorities. These plans, adopted by the City, have guided local investments and improvements for many years and helped strengthen the relationship between residents and the City.

The City is currently in the process of creating Sub-Area Plans to implement the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan. These Sub-Area Plans are intended to provide a more coordinated, efficient and effective structure for neighborhood planning. The Sub-Area Plans are intended to increase equity citywide, by ensuring that all of San Antonio's neighborhoods have a base level of policy guidance, as many neighborhoods within the City lack an existing Neighborhood Plan or a registered neighborhood organization. In this way, each Sub-Area Plan will integrate key elements of existing Neighborhood Plans for those neighborhoods that have a plan, while promoting citywide policy consistency and providing key



recommendations and strategies for those neighborhoods currently lacking that direction.

The Neighborhood Profile and Priorities section of the Sub-Area Plans provides special attention to prior neighborhood planning efforts and recognizes the community groups and individuals who were instrumental in their creation. They summarize specific opportunities, challenges, recommendations and priorities from each participating neighborhood, in an effort to more efficiently direct public and private investment within the City to help these neighborhoods achieve their short-term goals and long-term visions.

How was it developed?

At the outset of the planning process, City of San Antonio planning staff reviewed existing Neighborhood Plans that had a shared geography with the Midtown Plan. Each relevant plan was summarized so that staff would have a sound understanding of neighborhood issues and priorities from the time that each plan was created.

The Neighborhood Profiles and Priorities were created using input from neighborhood residents throughout the Midtown planning process. The Planning Department used input from small group conversations, stakeholder interviews, community meetings, planning team meetings and facilitated conversations in neighborhood association meetings.

Planning staff revisited the Neighborhood Plans to identify major projects, programs or other efforts that had been achieved, and those that have yet to be implemented, so they could be reprioritized in this effort. City planning staff met with members of each original neighborhood plan advisory team and current neighborhood association boards (listed on the Acknowledgements page of this document) to help create this Neighborhood Profiles and Priorities document and provide lasting direction in partnership with each neighborhood.

Neighborhood Snapshot

NEIGHBORHOOD STRENGTHS AND CHARACTER



Uptown Neighborhood area's core is a diverse population that cares deeply about the area, including families who have lived there for multiple generations, and newcomers to San Antonio and the United States. Beacon Hill Elementary School and St. Ann's Church are important local organizations and gathering places, for Uptown residents, and many others from surrounding neighborhoods. There are warehousing, construction supply, and manufacturing businesses offering blue collar employment south of Culebra, and Fredericksburg Road hosts a mix of day time uses and services.

Uptown has also been called St. Ann's neighborhood. It was included in the Midtown Neighborhoods Plan adopted in 2000, with Beacon Hill and Alta Vista



neighborhoods, but has not had a neighborhood association until recently. The Uptown Neighborhood Association is a nascent group offering residents a forum for organizing community issues and collective action in the area. In recent years, an informal group of local business owners and people concerned with the future of Fredericksburg Road, named FRED, have also participated in city planning and policy issues. Other forums for addressing community issues have emerged through the Beacon Hill Elementary School Parent-Teacher Association, COPS/METRO Alliance, and others, including even more local and informal groups such as the What's Happening on Cornell group.

Strengths



There is a mix of houses and house like apartments, and housing is relatively affordable and stable compared with other parts of Midtown.



There is a mix of longtime residents, families, and newcomers to both San Antonio and the United States.



Fredericksburg Road has buildings with historic character, and a diverse mix of uses including daytime restaurants, specialty historic and reused building supplies, art venues, and small offices.

Neighborhood Snapshot

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities

- The 2017 bond project on Fredericksburg Road and redevelopment adjacent to Fredericksburg Road can be leveraged to improve walking comfort and safety to transit service and amenities outside the neighborhood.
- There are conceivable locations where public play space can be located, and opportunities to partner with the church or school to ensure play space remains available to children.
- Homeownership and small business assistance programs can help more local residents participate in building wealth with improvements in the neighborhood and surrounding area.
- The vacant Beacon Hill Elementary School building or the space it occupies represent multiple opportunities to satisfy other community goals, from improving public play space, to affordable housing, local small business development, or historic preservation.
- See the Midtown Neighborhoods Plan (2001), and multiple sections of the Midtown Regional Center Plan for additional information and policy recommendations related to the Uptown Neighborhood.
- Deteriorated houses and apartments can be rehabilitated to maintain the neighborhood's diverse housing stock.

Challenges

- Maintaining affordable family living options and maintaining rental housing availability and affordability as the area improves will be a challenge.
- Highways, rails, busy roads, narrow sidewalks, long cross walks, slip lanes and few street lights and trees make walking between the neighborhood and surrounding areas feel uncomfortable.
- See the Midtown Neighborhoods Plan (2001), and multiple sections of the Midtown Regional Center Plan for additional information and policy recommendations related to the Uptown Neighborhood.
- Neighborhood and Beacon Hill Elementary School stakeholders feel that children's safety is jeopardized by automobiles during Beacon Hill Elementary School pickup and drop off times.
- Children use St. Ann's Church's parking lot to play basketball, but this space is not technically a public play area dedicated for the long term. Children use Beacon Hill Elementary school playground, however it is not always open when school is not in session.. The Trust for Public Land identified Uptown areas as having a "very high" need for park access.

Previous Neighborhood Plans

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS



The Midtown Neighborhoods Plan recommended preserving the historic character of Fredericksburg Road, while improving pedestrian and bicycle safety on Fredericksburg Road with traffic calming, improved sidewalks, landscaping, and decorative street lighting. The plan intended for Fredericksburg Road to have a thriving mixed-use, small business retail environment. It recommended Unified Development Code (UDC) updates to support mixed-use development, reduced parking requirements, short setbacks, live/work units, appropriate signage, and

zoning that respects the era of existing buildings. In addition to recommending the application of city-funded rehabilitation and façade improvement programs, the plan recommended exploring the formation of a local district such as a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone or Public Improvement District to pool resources towards economic revitalization.

The neighborhood plan recommended maintaining the character of neighborhood residential areas and preserving the existing housing stock

using zoning tools, education, and city funded home rehabilitation programs. The plan connected this recommendation to promoting housing affordability, recommending that the neighborhoods explore the creation of a local housing rehabilitation revolving loan fund, financed by neighborhood residents and banking partners. The plan supported a local housing trust that existed at the time, called UU Housing. The future land use category applied to residential areas in Uptown was Low Density Residential, which supported single family homes with accessory dwelling units and duplexes.

The Midtown Neighborhood Plan supported rapid transit service on Fredericksburg Road, and associated amenities such as sheltered stops, and improved pedestrian networks in surrounding areas. The plan connected this recommendation to the area's history as a streetcar suburb with transit service running along Fredericksburg Road between downtown and areas to the northwest. The plan also recommended mitigating perceived local impacts of enhanced transit service, and capturing added value from enhanced transit service for the local economy.

Previous Neighborhood Plans

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS



The plan recommended repurposing the old Beacon Hill Elementary School building for a community use or demolishing the building and using the land for a community center or public playground or open space. Recent community meetings organized by Beacon Hill Elementary School parents and teachers indicated that this outstanding priority from the neighborhood plan is a primary concern in the area.

The Midtown Neighborhoods Plan also recommended studying and improving traffic flow around Beacon Hill Elementary School at pickup and drop off times. Recent community meetings hosted by Beacon Hill Elementary School parents indicate that this remains a top priority in the area. The PTA and school identified potential solutions to implement in partnership with the Transportation and Capital Improvements Department, and Union Pacific Rail Road.



Previous Neighborhood Plans

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Accomplishments in Uptown since the completion of the 2001 neighborhood plan include:

- New Beacon Hill Elementary School buildings.
- Several new sidewalks.
- Establishing the Beacon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District, which includes both sides of Fredericksburg Road.
- Neighborhood character has been mostly maintained.
- Transit stop advertising has been removed.
- Urban corridors overlay zones have prevented a greater proliferation of billboards.
- A neighborhood association has formed to organize and represent neighborhood resident interests.
- In recent years businesses along Fredericksburg Road have informally organized as the FRED Committee and have convened to address common issues.
- Bicycle lanes were added to Cincinnati Street.
- A Street light was installed at University and Kensington.

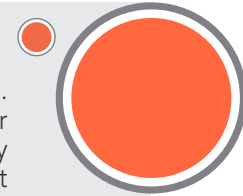


Neighborhood Priorities



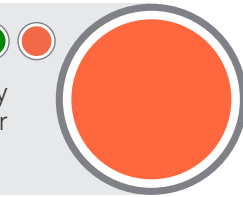
Childrens' Play Space

- Make long term play space(s) for neighborhood children. Make an agreement with Beacon Hill Elementary School or St. Ann's church to ensure long term public access to play spaces, or leverage Fredericksburg Road redevelopment or old Beacon Hill Elementary School building solutions to create a publicly accessible playground, place to play basketball, or community center.



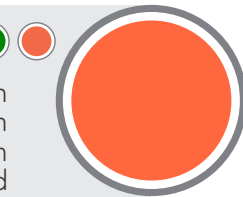
Former School Building

- Rehabilitate or remove the old Beacon Hill Elementary School building, and use the rehabilitated building or available land for a community serving use.



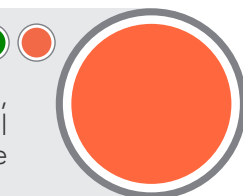
Westside Connections

- Improve walking comfort, safety, and convenience between West End Hope and Action neighborhood and Uptown neighborhood and Beacon Hill Elementary School in particular, with improved I-10 crossings at Cincinnati and Woodlawn Avenues.



Neighborhood Forest

- Plant trees in front yards and between streets and sidewalks, so that walking in the daytime is more comfortable. Install additional street lights so that walking in cooler night time temperatures feels safe.



Priority from Previous Neighborhood Plan



Aligns with Sub-Area Plan Recommendation

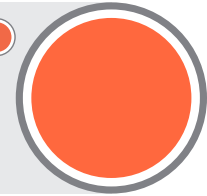


Aligns with other Neighborhood Action Plan Recommendation

Neighborhood Priorities

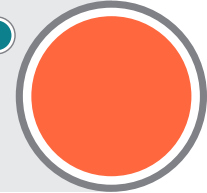
School Pedestrian Access

- Use Union Pacific Railroad right of way and adjacent commercial land, if they become available, for improving pedestrian access between Beacon Hill Elementary School, Cincinnati Avenue, Woodlawn Avenue, and West End Hope and Action neighborhood.



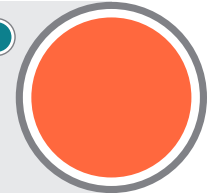
Neighborhood Conservation

- Conserve buildings in the neighborhood and on Fredericksburg road that have historic character.



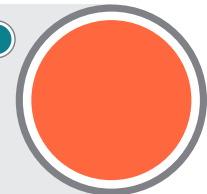
Affordable Housing

- Use recommendations from the Mayor's Housing Policy Taskforce to maintain and increase housing affordability.



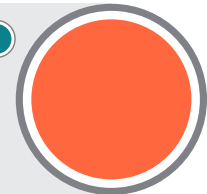
Fredericksburg Road Character

- Preserve and activate buildings on Fredericksburg Road that have historic character. Prevent a proliferation of billboards.

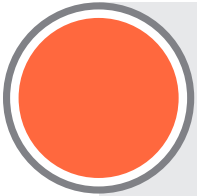


Adaptive Reuse and Backyard Infill

- Support opportunities for residents to develop accessory dwellings or convert their homes into duplexes.



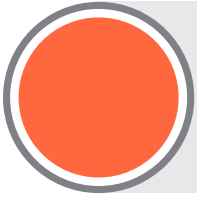
Neighborhood Priorities



River and Open Space Connections



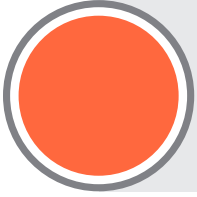
- Improve pedestrian connections to Martinez Creek, and pedestrian and bicycle connections to San Pedro Springs Creek and San Pedro Springs Park. San Pedro Springs Creek and San Pedro Springs Park connections may be improved through multimodal streetscape improvements to Fredericksburg Road funded through the 2017 Bond, and alternative improvements following local streets.



Lighting, Street Maintenance, and Drainage

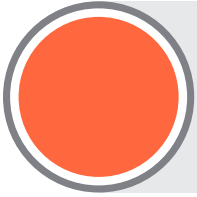


- Install additional street lighting, rehabilitate streets, and improve street drainage.



Sidewalks

- Construct sidewalks on Culebra Avenue and Kensington Avenue, improve sidewalks on Colorado Street.



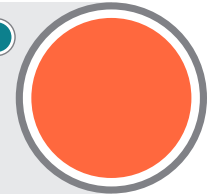
Alleys

- Improve alleys and alley maintenance between Culebra and Cornell Avenues.

Neighborhood Priorities

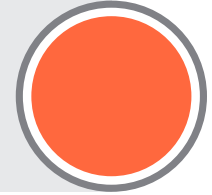
Rails to Trails

- Use Union Pacific Railroad right of way, if it becomes available, for pedestrian and bicycle trail connections that serve local residents accessing local destinations such as Beacon Hill Elementary School, and the larger community and regional destinations such as UTSA Downtown.



Place Naming and Identification

- Create signs or other means of naming and identifying the neighborhood at its boundaries.



Public Engagement in Spanish

- Public engagement processes for public projects affecting Uptown Neighborhood should provide ample opportunities for the up to 24% of residents who speak Spanish and who speak English less than very well to provide meaningful input.

