



# **TRANSIT- ORIENTED POLICY (TOP)**

## Framework

Administrative DRAFT







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# 01

## INTRODUCTION

The TOP is a policy framework designed to enhance the integration of upcoming transit corridors with surrounding land uses and align development with the needs of both the City and the community. This chapter offers an overview of the framework and its key components.







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# FRAMEWORK BACKGROUND

In 2020, the people of San Antonio approved Proposition A, which rededicated 1/8 cent of local sales tax to public transportation, paving way for the modern Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) network. ART will make it easier to access several parts of the city by connecting different modes of transportation like never before. In 2023, the City Council approved two Interlocal Agreements with VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA), the region's mass transit agency, to kickstart a collaborative partnership by allocating Advanced Transportation District (ATD) funds to enhance the city's transportation and mobility systems. Months later, City Council called for the development of a Transit-Oriented Policy (TOP) Framework and plan - a strategic initiative to ensure that these new ART corridors are effectively utilized, and that San Antonio reaps the full benefits of this investment.

This TOP Framework goes beyond its main goals of promoting affordable housing and multimodal transportation. Integrating economic development, resilience, health, and quality of life objectives creates a comprehensive and equitable approach to development along our most important transit corridors. It consolidates key principles of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC), while also drawing from best practices in transit corridor development nationwide.

This framework outlines San Antonio's vision and strategy for adopting Transit-Oriented Policy initiatives in the years to come, setting the stage for a more connected and thriving community.









# DECODING THE ACRONYMS: TOP, TOD AND TOC

*From a single development with transit access*



## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Picture a development project designed so that all essential amenities are easily accessible via public transit or within a ½ mile of the transit station.

*To a neighborhood where all essentials are at your doorstep*



## TRANSIT ORIENTED COMMUNITIES (TOC)

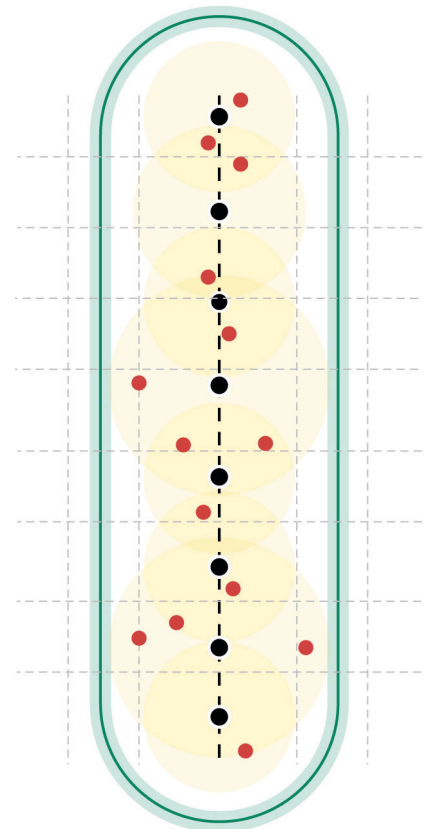
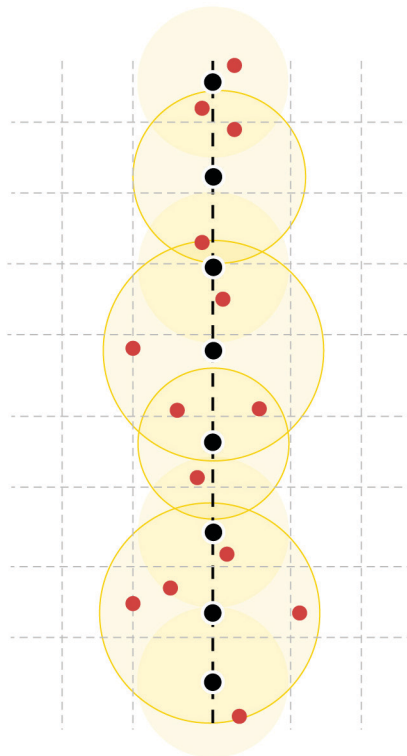
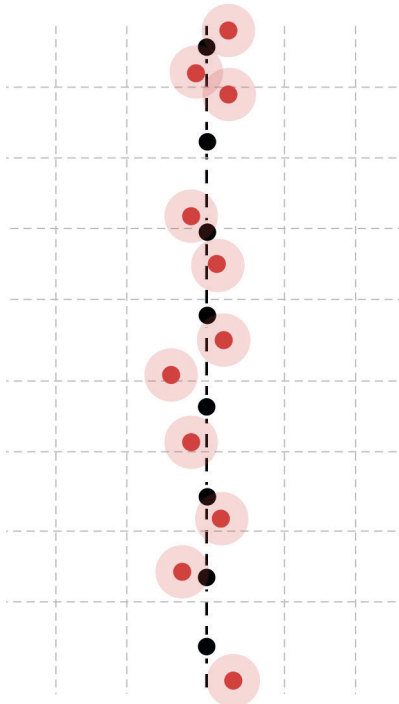
Imagine living in a neighborhood where everything you need - your home, favorite shops, workplace, and even the local movie theater - is just a short walk or bike ride away, served by transit.

*To a city that embraces active living as a lifestyle*



## TRANSIT ORIENTED POLICY (TOP)

Think of a strategic framework that guides the city and investment to ensure that future developments around transit corridors are inclusive, vibrant and accessible for all communities.





# Core Elements of Transit Corridors

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## High-Density Living: Just Steps Away from Transit!

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### Reduced Traffic Congestion

With more people living close to transit options, there's less need for cars, which can reduce traffic congestion and make roads safer for everyone.



### Increased Housing Options

Building more housing near transit stations provides a range of options, including affordable housing, making it easier for people to live near their work or school.



### Environmental Benefits

Higher density supports sustainable living by reducing sprawl and reliance on cars, leading to lower carbon emissions and better air quality.

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## Active by Design: Prioritizing Walking and Cycling!

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### Increased Safety

Pedestrian-friendly design prioritizes safe walking routes, including well-maintained sidewalks, crosswalks, and traffic-calming measures, reducing the risk of accidents and making the area safer for everyone.



### Cost Savings

For people and municipalities, biking is a cost-effective transportation option. People save money on gas, parking, and car maintenance, while cities can reduce the need for costly road expansions and maintenance by promoting cycling.

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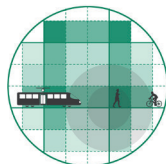
## Mixed Living: Blending Uses for a Thriving Community!

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### Convenient Access to All Amenities:

With a mix of shops, offices, homes, and recreational spaces near transit stations, residents and workers have easy access to everything they need, from groceries to healthcare, all within a short walk or transit ride.



### Economic Resilience

A variety of land uses can attract different types of businesses, creating job opportunities and boosting the local economy. This diversity also makes the corridor more resilient to economic downturns, as it isn't reliant on a single industry or type of business.

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**San Antonio, TOD is more than just building near transit stations; it creates integrated communities without displacing residents. Our TOD Policy can transform the city into a connected, pedestrian-friendly, and lively environment where everyone can thrive.**





# SAN ANTONIO'S LEAP INTO A TRANSIT-ORIENTED FUTURE

San Antonio is poised to implement equitable TOD policies alongside its upcoming generational investment in public transit. The City has a responsibility to ensure that the benefits of rapid transit improvements are shared by those already living and working in the areas along future ART corridors, as well as by future residents.

The City is working to achieve this goal by developing its TOP Framework, which will act as a roadmap to guide this transformation and bring TODs and TOCs to life. This policy framework incorporates key recommendations from the community, committees, and task forces to build on existing policies, support new ones, and update the Unified Development Code (UDC), all to accelerate equitable development around ART corridors. It will also build on VIA's investments by incentivizing development along ART routes, reducing barriers, and enhancing the multi-modal transportation system.

The policy framework will ensure alignment with adopted plans such as “SA Tomorrow,” the “Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP),” the “Economic Development Strategic Framework,” “Climate Action and Adaptation Plan,” and other adopted plans.



Figure 01: TOP Framework ensures alignment with several adopted plans highlighted in this image

## Advanced Rapid Transit (ART) System

The ART system is designed to provide fast, efficient transportation across longer distances in San Antonio, offering a quicker, more frequent, and reliable alternative to traditional buses. ART operates primarily in dedicated lanes, avoiding traffic congestion, and utilizes bus-priority signals for smooth traffic movements. Features like off-board fare collection and level, all-door boarding enable faster, more convenient access for passengers of all abilities. Committed to affordability and equity, ART ensures accessible transportation for everyone in the community. The ART system will provide affordable, equitable access to everyone in the community.

The system is centered around two main transit corridors:

- **RAPID GREEN LINE**
- **RAPID SILVER LINE**

The Rapid Green Line has been approved and is now in the implementation phase, whereas the Rapid Silver Line remains in the conceptual stage. Both ART corridors will benefit the community by providing reliable service every 10 to 15 minutes, simplifying travel with real-time updates and easy boarding, and expanding access to key destinations as a convenient alternative to driving. **Figure 02** provides an overview of the project timelines and implementation phases for both corridors.

Figure 02: ART Corridor Project Timelines

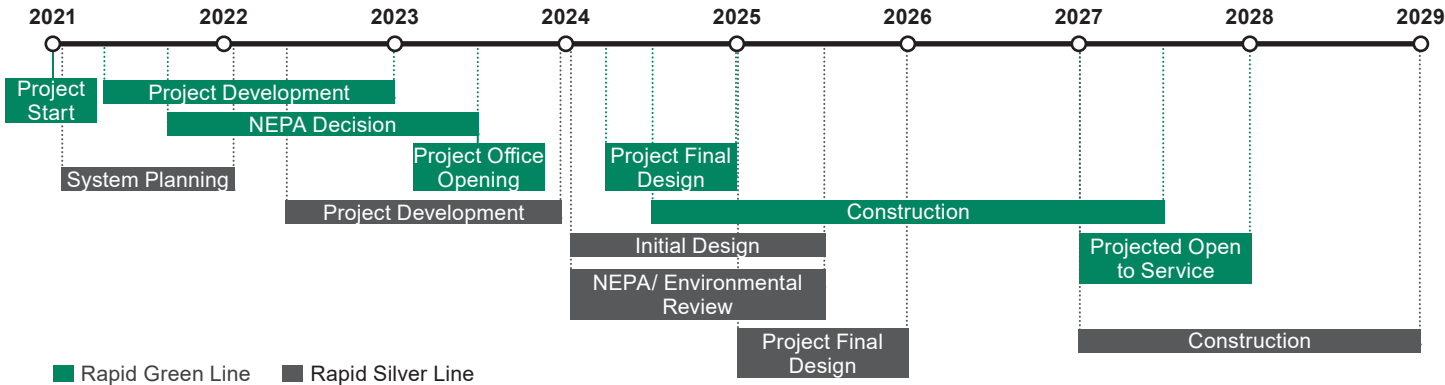
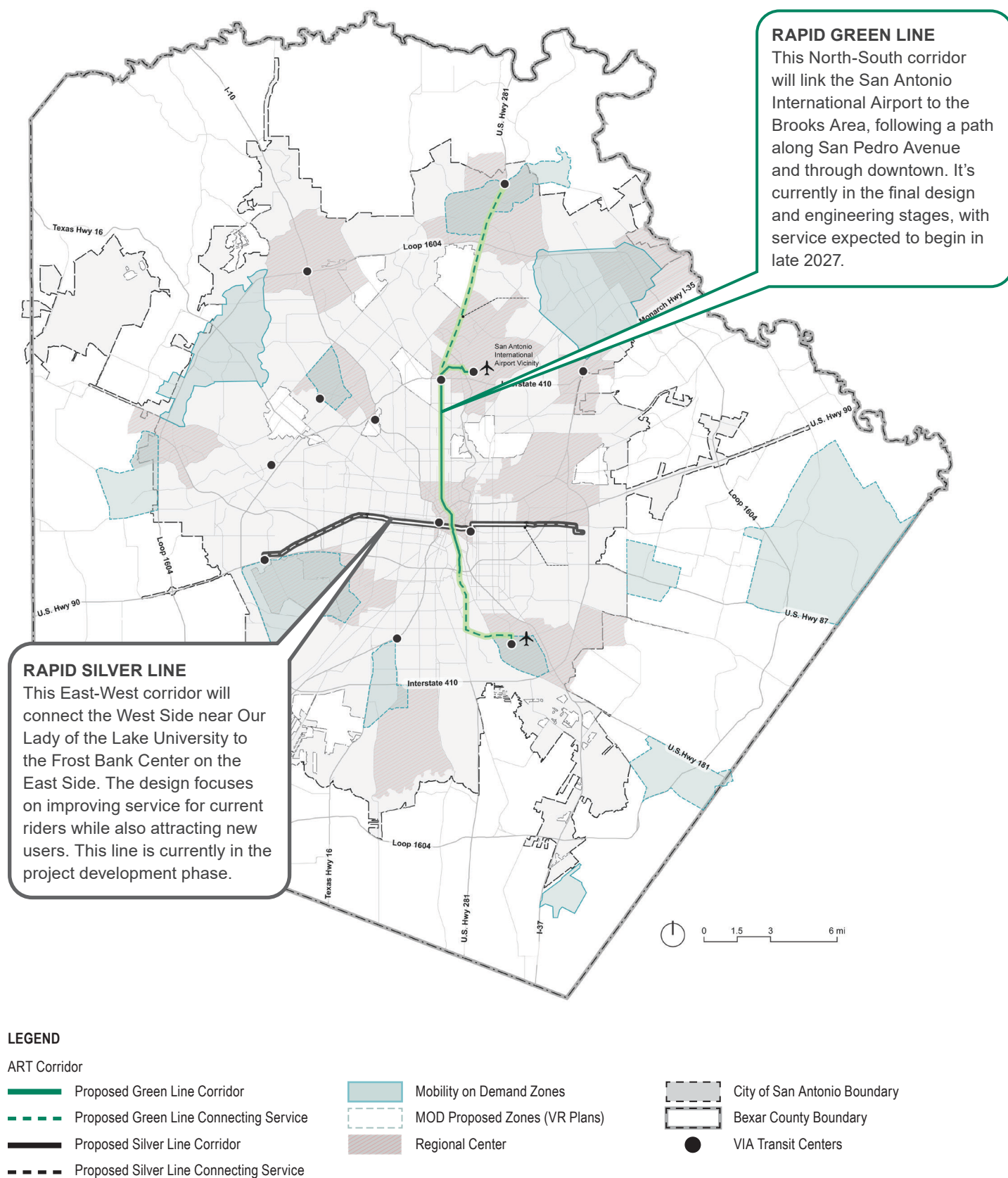




Figure 03: Proposed Advanced Rapid Transit (ART Corridors)





# Harnessing the Power of Transit to Grow and Connect

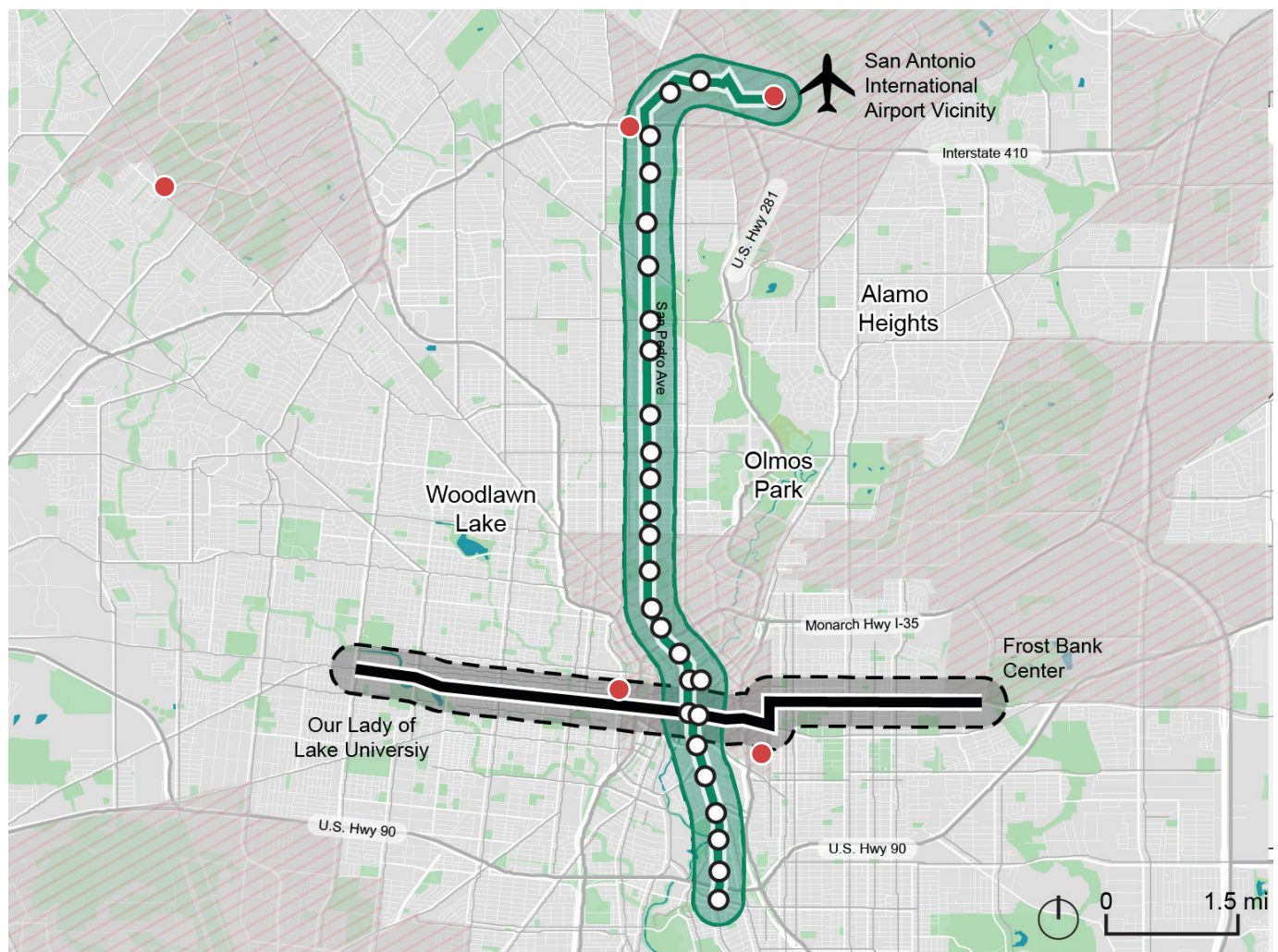
The first step in establishing this framework involves implementing a comprehensive transit corridor policy to better integrate land use and transportation. San Antonio's transit-oriented policies outline strategic initiatives to maximize the potential of new ART transit lines, ensuring the City fully benefits from these investments.

With two ART corridors underway, including the Rapid Green Line in the implementation phase, this framework is

specifically designed to support both current and future development along any future rapid transit corridor. The TOP Framework will prioritize initiatives that support activities within the ½-mile watershed buffer to create cohesive and vibrant areas of active development.

**Figure 04** depicts the TOP Framework's conceptual area of influence, focusing primarily on the ½-mile watershed buffers.

Figure 04: TOP Framework implementation area



## LEGEND

### ART Corridor

	Proposed Green Line Corridor		Proposed Silver Line Corridor		Existing Roads
	Proposed Green Line Stations		Proposed Silver Line 1/2 mile Buffer		Green Space
	Proposed Green Line 1/2 mile Buffer		VIA Transit Facility		Water Bodies
	Regional Center				



# NEED FOR A TOP FRAMEWORK

Imagine living in a vibrant neighborhood where everything you need is just steps or pedals away—a place where your home, work, grocery store, and even the local parks are all seamlessly connected. This is the vision behind the TOP Framework, a smart and sustainable approach to urban planning that is about more than just building around transit lines. It is about creating communities that thrive.

San Antonio's TOP Framework is comprehensive, reflecting the rapidly changing landscape of the city's rapid growth, mobility investments, land use planning, and cultural priorities involved in advancing TOD in San Antonio.

The following trends are expected to support and drive demand for TOD in the near future:

## Population Growth

Bexar County is projected to add over 1.1 million people by 2040, driving demand for efficient, accessible transit options. San Antonio is committed to ensuring that all community members, especially vulnerable populations, can afford to live near transit corridors without being displaced by rising housing costs.

## Infrastructure Improvements

San Antonio is investing in crucial infrastructure upgrades, including sidewalks, bike lanes, tree canopies, and public spaces, to support sustainable urban development. Expanding transportation options and ensuring affordable, reliable public transit for all residents—especially those in historically underserved communities—is a top priority.

## Increasing Housing Growth

As San Antonio continues to grow, demand for housing is expected to increase, especially along major transit corridors. Expanding affordable housing options is crucial to addressing the increased housing needs. Equally important is the need to safeguard existing affordable housing to prevent displacement as the city grows.

## Economic Development

San Antonio's economy benefits from a diverse array of industries that create jobs and drive investment across the city. Recent expansion projects from JCB, Toyota, and Amegy Bank will build on the existing commercial ecosystem led by HEB, Frost Bank, and many others. San Antonio's small businesses also continue to be the key drivers of economic growth and job creation and important community anchors.

## Cultural and Recreational Projects

Exciting projects like the San Pedro Cultural Park and the San Antonio Arboretum are set to complement the city's existing recreational amenities, such as the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails, Mission Reach Trails and the historic Riverwalk. These projects will help ensure that local natural amenities are preserved and enhanced to balance the unprecedented levels of growth Bexar County is experiencing.

## Higher Education Expansion

With the merger of University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and UT Health Science Center San Antonio, the city will soon be home to the third largest comprehensive public research university in the state. As UTSA significantly expands its presence in the urban core, there is a need to provide accessibility and mobility options for students and staff that live throughout the city.







# 02

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRENDS

The purpose of this chapter is to identify opportunities and challenges to creating thriving communities along San Antonio's transit corridors.









# DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

San Antonio, a city rich in history and culture, is at the heart of a rapidly expanding business corridor. With a thriving economy and a growth-focused strategy, the city has become a magnet for businesses and residents alike, building on its strong foundations in key sectors like healthcare, military, energy, and tourism. This blend of economic vitality and cultural appeal makes San Antonio an increasingly sought-after destination for those seeking opportunity and an exceptional quality of life.

Stretching across 511 square miles, San Antonio's vast geography gives it a sprawling character, with a relatively low population density of about 2,829 people per square mile. Home to approximately 1.45 million people as of 2022, the city has grown steadily from its 2010 population of 1.33 million. However, much of this growth has been concentrated along the outer edges of the city, with some urban neighborhoods experiencing population declines since 2010.

As the city continues to grow, transit-oriented policies and investments will focus on sustaining vibrant, diverse communities along ART Corridors, while accommodating new growth that supports transit ridership, ensuring that its rich legacy and dynamic future remain in balance.

## SAN ANTONIO BY NUMBERS



**511** sq Mi

Total Area of City of San Antonio (2022)



**1,445,662**

City-wide Population (2022)



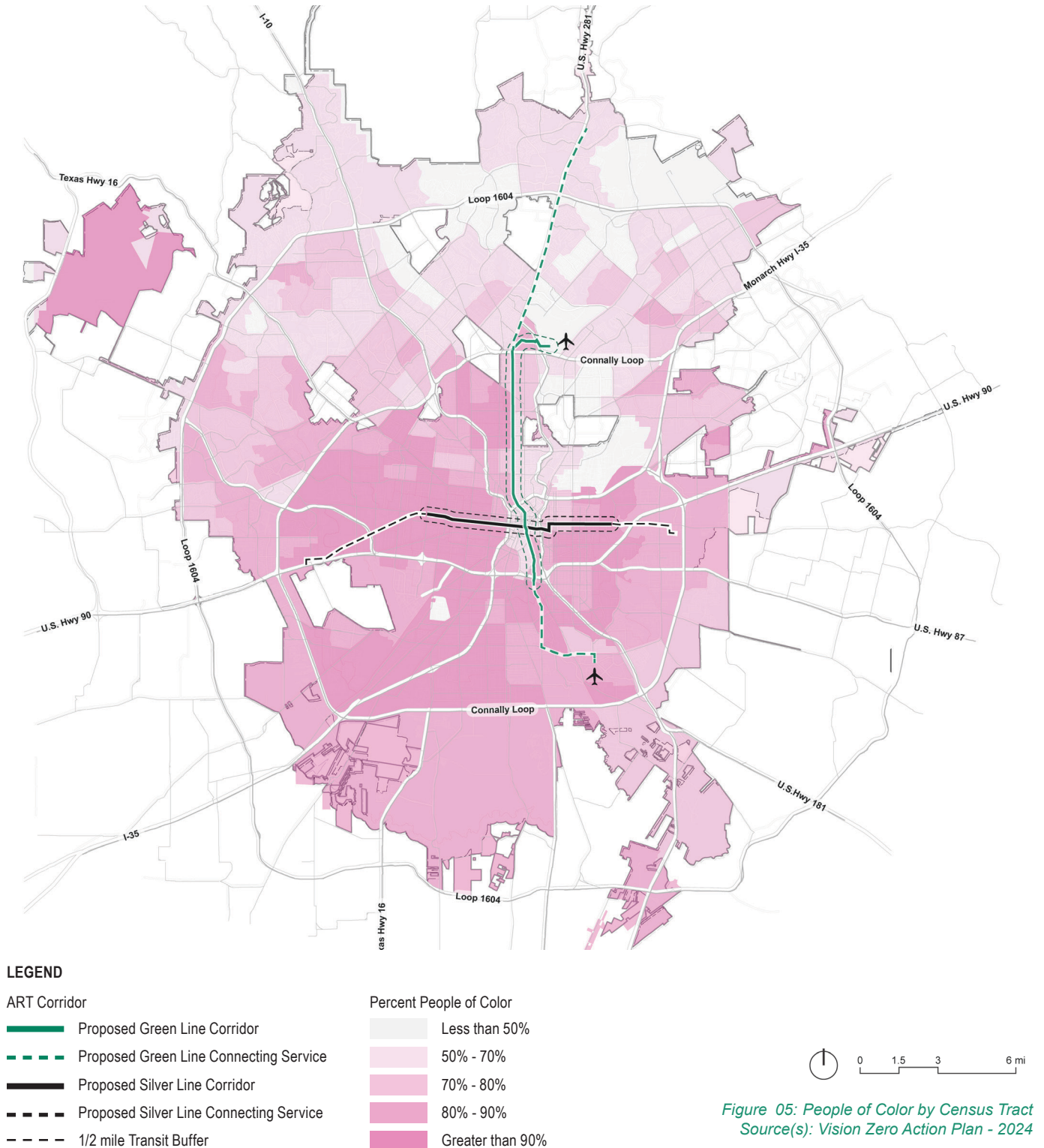
**2,829** pp sqmi

Average Population Density (2022)



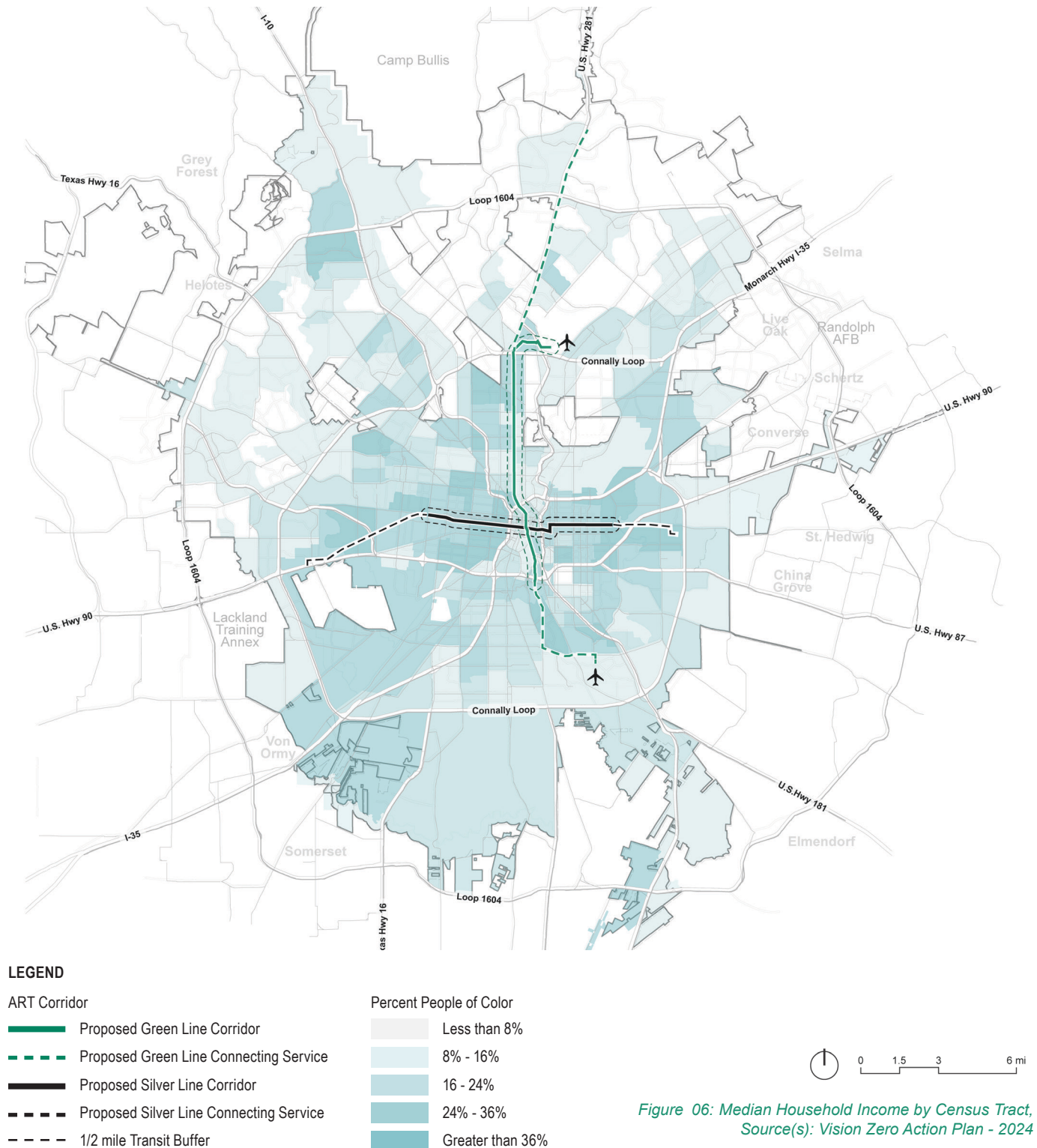
# Racial/ Ethnic Makeup

San Antonio is home to a diverse population. Nearly two-thirds (64.2%) of the population identifies as Hispanic. One-quarter (24.8%) identify as white, 6.4% as Black or African-American. 2.7% as Asian, 1.5% as two or more races, and 0.1% each as American Indian or Alaska Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander or some other race. San Antonio is a majority-minority city. The highest concentration of People of Color is located on the Inner West Side, South Side, and East Side. The TOP Framework can play a crucial role in bridging gaps in the level of access to essential services such as employment, education, and healthcare for all communities. By focusing on these areas, the Framework can help ensure that all residents have equitable opportunities and resources.



# Household Income

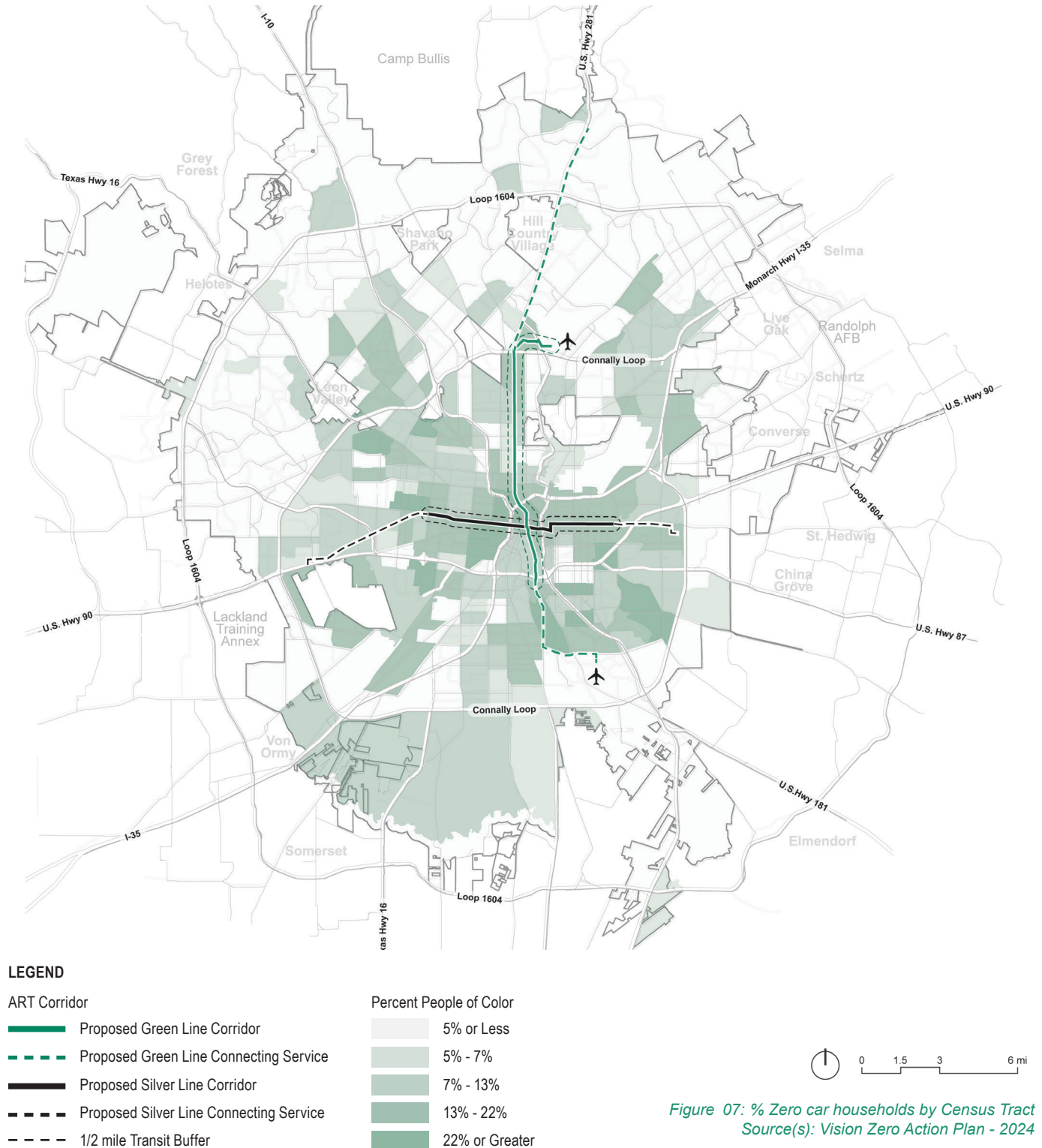
In 2023, the median household income in San Antonio was \$62,322. This is over \$13,000 less than the median household income for the State of Texas of \$75,780. Approximately 17.5% of San Antonio's residents earn an income below the federal poverty level. Most of these households are concentrated in the Inner West Side and East Side neighborhoods. The ART Corridors include areas with a significantly higher proportion of low-income families compared to the broader San Antonio region. This is substantially higher than the citywide average, highlighting the need for affordable and reliable transportation and housing options in these communities.





# Vehicle Ownership

In San Antonio, about 7.5% of households lack access to a motor vehicle, which is higher than the Texas state average of 5.4%. This issue is especially common in neighborhoods on the Inner West Side and Southeast Side of the city. Since people walking or cycling are much more likely to be injured if involved in a crash, it is essential to study the availability of cars for road users when analyzing crash data. Motor vehicles are the most likely mode of transportation to cause severe and fatal crashes, but thanks to decades of safety improvements, they also serve as protection for those inside them. The correlation between the census tracts with the lowest car ownership and those with lower incomes is stark, highlighting the need of many San Antonians for safe reliable transit, sidewalk and bike connections.





# UNDERSTANDING THE MARKET

San Antonio has evolved into one of the most dynamic and culturally rich cities in the nation, known for its vibrant history, diverse economy, and unique regional appeal. While the city has long been a hub for industries stemming from its significant military presence, investments in cultural assets and it is also known for strong World Heritage sites. These have spurred a significant tourism industry.

Other prominent sectors include Mobility, IT Security & Infrastructure, Sustainable Energy, Bioscience Anchors & Catalysts, and Corporate Services.

## Economic Nodes

The Economic Development Strategic Framework (EDSF) has identified ten key economic nodes in San Antonio, each presenting distinct opportunities and challenges. These nodes are strategically situated at key intersections of the city's transportation corridors, activity centers outlined in the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, regional hubs, and communities highlighted by stakeholders as having higher-than-average economic potential and need. Many of these nodes are positioned along major roadways that align with premium transit corridors. **Figure 08** shows the intersection between these important economic activity areas and connectivity that will be provided by the Rapid Green Line and Rapid Silver Line corridors.

San Antonio's economic nodes exhibit substantial differences in key performance indicators like median income, educational attainment, and housing costs. These disparities stem from a long history of systemic inequality, including redlining and discriminatory practices that have hindered some communities' ability to generate and sustain wealth. The City's Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA), with initiatives such as the Equity Atlas, has taken steps to address these challenges by working to dismantle racial and socioeconomic barriers and foster more inclusive economic development throughout the city.

While San Antonio has been successful in creating a few vibrant mixed-use developments, such as Brooks and the Pearl, there is still a need for a structured organizational model to support public-private partnerships (P3) in driving development at strategic locations throughout the city. Stakeholders have identified the East Side, South Side, and West Side as priority areas for focused economic development, where targeted efforts can have the greatest impact in fostering equitable growth and community revitalization.



Figure 08: Economic Nodes identified by EDSF

Source(s): US Census Bureau, ACS 5 year aggregate samples, COSA, TIP Strategies, Inc.



#### LEGEND

##### ART Corridor

- Proposed Green Line Corridor
- - - Proposed Green Line Connecting Service
- Proposed Silver Line Corridor
- - - Proposed Silver Line Connecting Service
- - - 1/2 mile Transit Buffer

##### Economic Nodes

- Brooks
- Downtown & Midtown
- Highway 151 & Loop 1604
- Medical Center
- Stone Oak
- Texas A&M San Antonio
- UTSA
- South
- Eastside
- Port San Antonio & Westside

# Small Business Ecosystem

In Bexar County, small businesses - defined as firms with fewer than 500 employees - account for a smaller share of private sector employment compared to the national average. While small businesses make up 48% of jobs across the U.S., in Bexar County, this figure falls 10 percentage points lower. Although the City of San Antonio already dedicates resources to support local small businesses, there is

potential for improvement. By enhancing business retention and expansion (BRE) programs, streamlining services, and fostering a more innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem, the city can leverage its competitive advantages to create a more vibrant and resilient local economy, including around ART Station Areas.

# Startup Support

San Antonio possesses many components of a thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem, including innovative entrepreneurs, creative professionals, higher education institutions, and collaborative workspaces. To attract more high-growth companies and entrepreneurs, additional efforts are needed to strengthen support systems, including multimodal transportation, that promote San Antonio as a destination for innovation and business development without the congestion typically associated with big cities.

In recent years, the City has leveraged its partnerships with LaunchSA, VelocityTX, Geekdom, Nucleate, BioMedSA, and others to support startups in targeted industries. The development of such partnerships are crucial to ensuring that San Antonio not only attracts talent from other parts of the country but also retains local talent. Furthermore, as these firms grow, so will the demand for housing, office space, and amenities along the ART corridors.

# Who Needs Affordable Housing?

According to the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), in Bexar County, approximately 95,000 households struggled to find housing that fits their financial situation and living needs as of 2021. Factors such as disability, aging, or homes that lack adequate space and amenities, can worsen these challenges preventing families from living comfortably and with dignity.

Both renters and homeowners in San Antonio experience unmet housing needs, but the greatest burden falls on low-income households.

Rising housing costs outpacing wage growth, have impacted families of various sizes, mostly 2- to 3-person households (Figure 09)

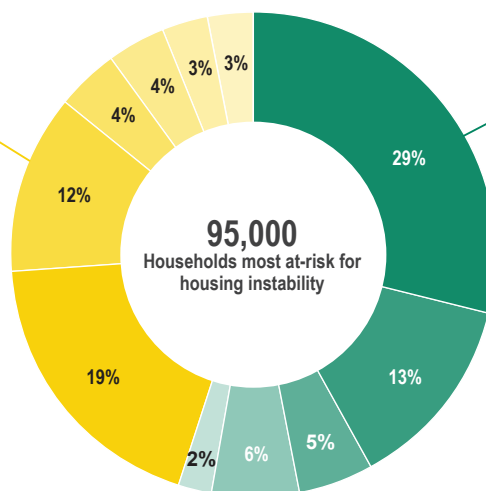
For context, Figure 10 describes a range of households to illustrate income levels that qualify for affordable housing in San Antonio in 2021. It should be noted that households of all sizes and composition face similar challenges and would benefit from expanded affordable housing options in the city.

Figure 09: Households most at risk by income and occupancy type, Source: Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP)

## HOMEOWNERS

45% of overall need

- 0-30% AMI | \$23,900  
17,470 Households
- 31-50% AMI | \$39,850  
11,150 Households
- 51-60% AMI | \$47,820  
3,896 Households
- 61-80% AMI | \$63,750  
3,926 Households
- 81-100% AMI | \$79,700  
2,974 Households
- 101-120% AMI | \$94,800  
2,974 Households



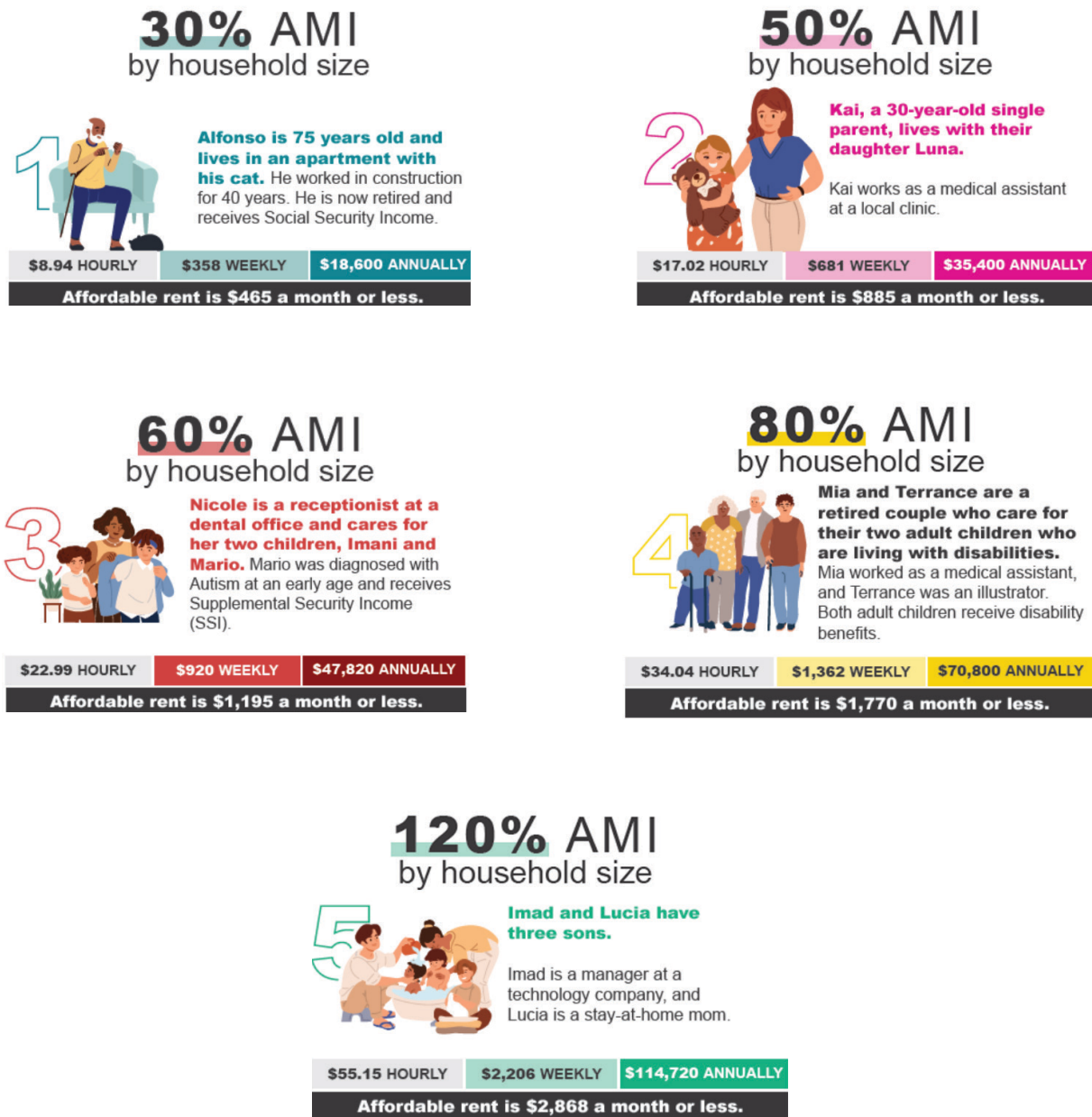
## RENTERS

55% of overall need

- 0-30% AMI | \$23,900  
27,264 Households
- 31-50% AMI | \$39,850  
12,665 Households
- 51-60% AMI | \$47,820  
5,014 Households
- 61-80% AMI | \$63,750  
5,886 Households
- 81-100% AMI | \$79,700  
2,024 Households



Figure 10: Defining Affordable Housing by Area Median Income (AMI), Source: Neighborhood & Housing Services Department





# HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION

The combined costs of housing and transportation (commonly referred to as H+T) are often a large portion of a household's budget. Experts recommend the combined total not be more than 45% of household income, with no more than 30% of household income devoted to housing costs and no more than 15% devoted to transportation costs. For San Antonio, that total on average is 46% (based on 2019 census data) according to the H+T Affordability Index developed by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT). While the current combined H+T cost is close to the overall recommended total, it is important to note that the San Antonio area has traditionally had lower than average housing costs and higher than average transportation costs. Lowering the portion of a household's income spent on housing and transportation can be particularly impactful on those most vulnerable to housing instability.

Using the most recent 2019 data, San Antonio has average housing costs of 24% of household income (compared to the 30% recommendation). In contrast, average annual transportation costs as a percentage of household income are 22%, almost 47% higher than the recommended level of 15%. With housing costs rising in the San Antonio area in recent years, providing affordable mobility options is an important City planning goal. Similarly, the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP) recommends that transportation costs should be considered when deciding where to fund and build affordable housing.

Walkable and bike-friendly communities that provide great transit options can reduce average household transportation costs. Eliminating annual ownership and maintenance costs for one or more vehicles can save over \$10,000 per vehicle from a household budget. In addition, from a resilience perspective, if people have an alternative to driving alone, transportation costs can remain stable even when gas prices rise. As more people choose to go to their destination on foot, bicycle, or public transit, the number of cars on the road will be minimized and can potentially reduce traffic congestion and delays for people who choose to drive.

**46%**

*of household  
income  
dedicated to H+T  
vs recommended  
45%*

**22%**

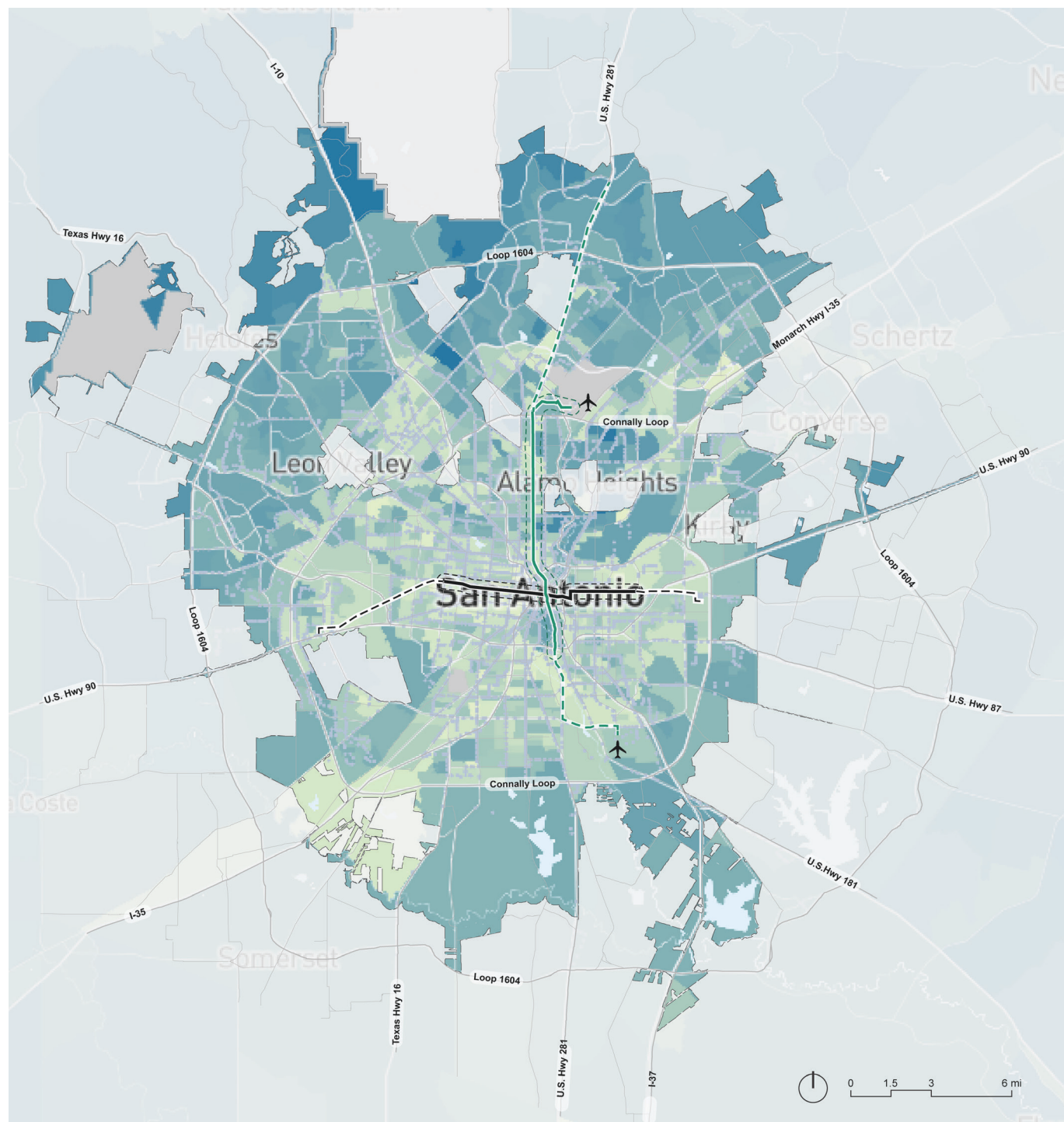
*of household  
income spent on  
transportation vs  
recommended  
15%*

**24%**

*of household  
income spent  
on housing vs  
recommended  
30%*



Figure 11: Housing + Transportation Cost % Income, Source(s): H+T Index (<https://htaindex.cnt.org/>)



#### LEGEND

##### ART Corridor

- Proposed Green Line Corridor
- - - Proposed Green Line Connecting Service
- Proposed Silver Line Corridor
- - - Proposed Silver Line Connecting Service
- - - - 1/2 mile Transit Buffer

##### Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

<span style="background-color: #ffffcc;"> </span> <24%	<span style="background-color: #4682b4;"> </span> 54-66%
<span style="background-color: #90ee90;"> </span> 24-36%	<span style="background-color: #008080;"> </span> 66-78%
<span style="background-color: #3cb371;"> </span> 36-45%	<span style="background-color: #006400;"> </span> 78-87%
<span style="background-color: #2e8b57;"> </span> 45-54%	<span style="background-color: #000080;"> </span> 87%+





# HOW WE TRAVEL

With more transportation options available than ever, it's crucial to understand where people want to go and how they prefer to travel—whether by walking, cycling, driving, or using public transit. Gaining this insight will guide the development of a future transportation network in San Antonio that prioritizes safe, efficient, and comfortable travel for all residents.

**Table 12** uses data from Replica, a software platform that integrates anonymized information from various sources—including physical counts, the U.S. Census Bureau, and mobile location data—to model where, how, and when people travel. Rather than predicting future trends, Replica provides insights into current travel behaviours.

Our travel choices vary based on the purpose of the trip, the day of the week, and the distance to our destination. According to the Replica data, while driving remains the most common mode of transportation in the San Antonio area, walking is the second most frequent choice. This emphasizes the need for reliable, alternative transportation options, such as the Rapid Green and Silver Lines, to serve trips that are too far to walk but don't require a car.

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (AAMPO) Mobility 2050 Plan suggests that both congestion and air quality are expected to worsen despite planned roadway expansions. To manage traffic and prevent San Antonio from being classified as severe for ozone levels, enhancing transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure is crucial. The TOP Framework seeks to improve transit along ART corridors by building a more connected, efficient, and sustainable transportation network, enhancing the experience for all users.

*Table 12: How we Travel (Replica 2022)*

	Travel Patterns (Weekday vs Weekend)						
	Drive	Transit	Bike	Walk	Other	Average Travel Distance [mi]	Average Travel Time [min]
Getting To Work	93.2%	0.6%	0.2%	5.2%	0.7%	10.9	22.4
	93.7%	0.6%	0.2%	4.7%	0.7%	10.7	17.0
Getting to School	76.5%	0.2%	1.7%	21.5%	0.1%	3.7	15.7
	89.8%	0.4%	0.3%	9.2%	0.3%	6.9	19.4
Travel for Goods and Services	83.8%	1.1%	0.8%	11.9%	2.5%	11.4	21.0
	88.4%	0.8%	0.4%	8.5%	1.5%	11.3	20.9
Leisure and Recreation	83.8%	1.1%	0.8%	11.9%	2.5%	12.1	24.1
	87.1%	0.9%	0.4%	0.4%	2.5%	11.9	23.9

Weekday Travel Pattern    Weekend Travel Pattern



Figure 13: Existing Transport Network and Congestion Volumes for 2025, 2035 & 2045  
 Source(s): COSA, VIA and AAMPO







# KEY PLACES OF INTEREST

Picture a transit system that's always within reach—where wait times are minimal and reliable service keeps you moving smoothly throughout the day. The Rapid Green and Silver Lines give you the freedom to travel confidently, knowing that timely reliable transportation is always available.

It's not just about convenience; it's about opening doors to new jobs, better education, and enriching experiences. By enhancing access to more destinations, rapid transit lines help you embrace everything the city has to offer, making daily travel effortless, dependable, and exciting.

The Rapid Green and Silver Lines can connect users to unique destinations such as:

## ■ Historical Sites

- Missions National Historic Park
- Market Square
- Cattleman Square

## ■ Arts & Culture

- San Antonio Museum of Art
- Tobin Center of Performing Arts
- Aztec Theatre

## ■ SA Downtown

- Downtown Riverwalk
- Majestic Theater

## ■ Parks & Open Spaces

- San Pedro Springs Park
- Elmendorf Lake Park

## ■ Transport & City Services

- San Antonio International Airport
- VIA Metro Center
- North Star Mall & Park North Shopping Center
- Baptist Medical Center
- Sunset Station (Amtrak)

The ART corridors will not only serve as a transportation route but also as a gateway to exploring and connecting with some of San Antonio's most iconic destinations, enhancing mobility while fostering cultural and community engagement across the city.



Figure 14: Places of Interest along the Green and Silver Line Corridor







### LEGEND

## ART Corridor

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- - - - 1/2 mile Transit Buffer

### Places of Interest

-  Historical Sites
-  Arts & Culture
-  SA Downtown
-  Parks & Open Spaces
-  Transport & City Services



# DEFINING RESILIENCE

## Heat Relief

Extreme heat is one of San Antonio's most pressing climate vulnerabilities, posing significant concerns for human wellbeing and health. The urban heat island (UHI) effect, where areas with more concrete and asphalt and less vegetation become significantly warmer than their rural counterparts, intensifies these risks. Climate change further exacerbates the problem by altering temperature profiles and changing heat flow patterns through increased heat absorption and retention.

Transit users are especially vulnerable when traveling to and from bus stations in unshaded areas. The [Heat Vulnerability Map](#) (Figure 15) - developed by the University of Texas at San Antonio's Sustainable Pervasive Urban Resilience and the Office of Sustainability - combines heat, income, and racial data to create a Heat Vulnerability Score. Several neighborhoods along the Rapid Silver Line are among the most heat-vulnerable in the city.

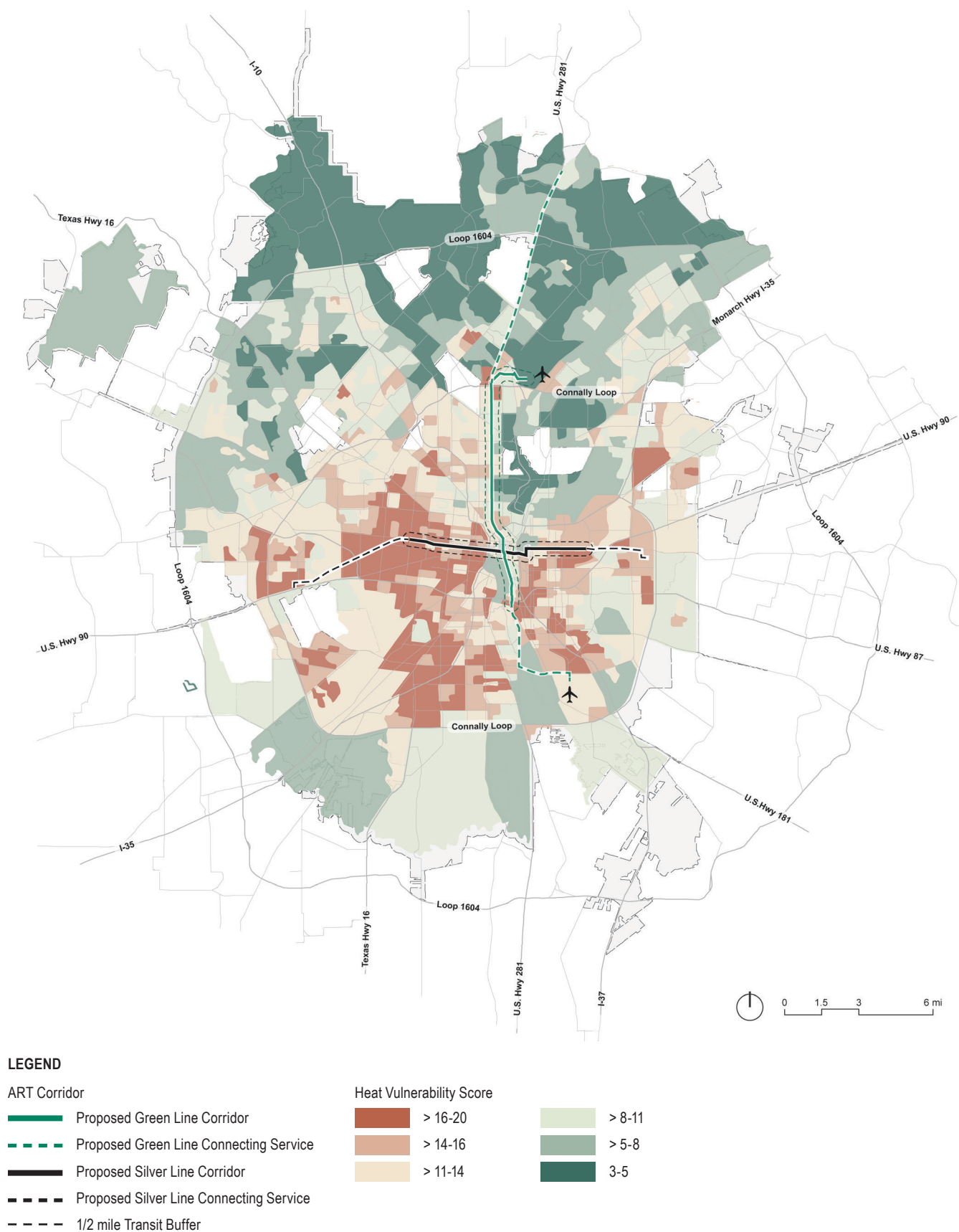
Expanding green spaces and integrating green infrastructure are essential strategies for providing cooling effects in the hottest areas. Tools like tree planting, community gardens, bioswales, and rain gardens offer significant relief during warmer weather and should be incorporated into all major infrastructure projects. The Heat Vulnerability Map enables targeted adaptation efforts along ART corridors, ensuring that TOD not only enhances mobility but also strengthens the resilience of communities most at risk from climate change.

“

**Extreme heat is one of San Antonio's most pressing climate vulnerabilities, posing significant concerns for human well-being and health.**



Figure 15: Heat Vulnerability: Heat, Income, Race  
Source(s): COSA



# Energy Burden and Resource Efficiency Maximization

Social vulnerability significantly influences how heat exposure disproportionately affects the health and wellbeing of certain communities, even under identical temperature and built environment conditions. Household energy burdens illustrate the economic strain of heat events, as increased demand for air conditioning (AC) leads to higher utility bills. Many households in San Antonio, particularly those least able to afford rising energy costs, are considered “energy-burdened,” spending roughly 10% of their income on utilities—an issue affecting one in five Texas families.

Upgrades, weatherization, and increased energy efficiency in new buildings (such as through Build SA Green certification) could help lower energy costs. However, these solutions are often financially out of reach for the families most in need. Most energy-burdened homes are rentals, with renters facing an energy burden 13% higher than homeowners. Landlords typically lack the incentive to reduce their tenants’ energy costs, further exacerbating the problem. Unsustainable utility bills can result in disconnections, which is a common cause of child welfare authorities removing children from homes.

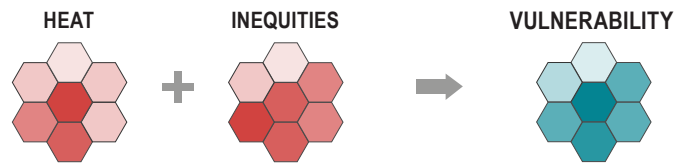


Figure 16: Representation of the multi-faceted determination of heat vulnerable areas.

Consequently, families may endure unsafe temperatures to avoid unaffordable bills, increasing health risks.

Americans living in urbanized areas face an additional \$625 billion in costs due to inefficient infrastructure and higher energy demands. In the Southern U.S., electricity costs are projected to rise significantly—from \$0.57 billion annually in 2050 to \$1.7 billion per year by 2090 under high-emission scenarios. To mitigate these challenges, actions within the TOP Framework should focus on providing retrofit program assistance to vulnerable populations and developing new affordable housing with strong energy efficiency standards, helping to lower utility bills and prevent displacement.

## Flooding & Open Spaces

San Antonio is located in a region known as the Flash Flood Alley (Figure 17), a belt across Texas where flooding is frequent and severe. Because of the increased risk, ART corridors in flood zones must consider the resilience of the neighborhood and how stormwater mitigation measures can be incorporated into TOD. Leaning into green and blue spaces increases resilience to flooding and can provide heat relief.

Policies and programs such as urban agriculture that reduce impervious land in urban areas, combined with strong land use regulations, help preserve natural ecosystems to divert and absorb floodwater, replenish groundwater tables, and reduce heat. Containing urban sprawl and reducing road space through TOD frees up land for green and blue spaces, which act as buffers during extreme weather events.



Figure 17: Flash Flood Alley  
Source: San Antonio River Authority (2021)

## Resilient Communities

A transit-oriented community has pedestrian-friendly public spaces that are thoughtfully designed to foster a vibrant public realm and encourage opportunities for interaction. By increasing the availability of publicly accessible gathering spaces, these areas enhance the overall quality of life through increased recreation and social engagement, contributing to a stronger urban social fabric and improving mental health. Civic spaces also reduce the need for large individual residential units, promoting the development of compact, efficient neighborhoods.

Additionally, these spaces can be leveraged to create a network of neighborhood-scale resilience hubs near transit, activated during extreme heat or climate events. With more robust mobility options and a decreased reliance on fossil fuels and personal vehicles, communities become more resilient. Programs like Climate Ready Neighborhoods, a network of community partners, link climate-resilience information, training, resources, and funding through trusted community groups and spaces called Neighborhood PODs, further strengthen the resilience of transit-oriented communities.



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# 03

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

From the outset, the project team understood the critical need for a well-designed public engagement plan to ensure that the final framework would be practical, achievable, and genuinely reflective of the community's needs. This chapter summarizes the City's community outreach efforts.









# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ANALYSIS

In collaboration with many partners, the City of San Antonio's Neighborhood & Housing Services Department and Transportation Department led the community engagement efforts for this Transit-Oriented Policy Framework. The engagement effort was also supported by VIA Metropolitan Transit and Able City, a community engagement consultant. The objective of the outreach process was to engage the community through traditional and non-traditional outreach methods to gain insight on the community's priorities for Transit-Oriented Development in San Antonio.

## Project Goals for the Transit-Oriented Policy Community Engagement Process

- Provide accessibility and inclusivity
- Facilitate comprehensive understanding and input
- Promote continuous and meaningful engagement
- Ensure transparency and build trust
- Utilize various outreach methods for wider community input

Community Engagement that informed this framework was incorporated into Phase 1 of the overall Engagement Plan. Phase 1 focused on education about TOD and TOD Code updates, framework priorities, and refinement. The community engagement goals guided our Phase 1 engagement to date and will continue to inform our engagement for Phase 2, which focuses on creating the Transit-Oriented Strategic Implementation Plan.

This report summarizes the approach, activities, and key findings from the Phase 1 community engagement for the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework.

## Engagement Approach

The project team created an Engagement Plan that set goals and objectives for Phase 1 Engagement. The plan was not prescriptive but gave the team guidance on target audiences as well as outreach opportunities.

Transit-Oriented Development supports creating a more pedestrian-friendly and inclusive place to live, work, and play along new VIA Rapid transit lines. The goal of having focus group meetings and attending and hosting



various pop-up events was to connect with a wide range of community members throughout the city, especially transit users along the future Green Line route. These activities were conducted in-person knowing that many community members experience a digital divide and cannot access materials digitally. However, for those community members that preferred digital outreach, or whose schedules would not permit connecting with our team in-person, we offered participation through a community-wide survey, shared status updates through our Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter, offered our Transit-Oriented Community Survey digitally, and

## Community Engagement Activities

maintained a website with draft documents and engagement materials at [SASpeakUp.com/TOD](https://saspeakup.com/TOD).

Outreach activities included the following:

- Focus Groups
- Pop-Up outreach events
- Bus Ride-Alongs
- Community Meetings
- Bilingual community-wide survey (English and Spanish), in print and online
- Bilingual Flyers (English and Spanish)
- Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter
- E-mails (mass e-mails to [SASpeakUp.com/TOD](https://saspeakup.com/TOD) subscribers and to technical committees)
- Website Updates

There were nearly 500 in-person interactions with community members during these activities. In addition, over 1,000 community survey responses were received, and our website has been viewed nearly 29,000 times (as of December 2, 2024). The full schedule of engagement outreach touchpoints, including meetings and newsletter releases is shown in the appendix.

### Focus Group Meetings

From June 26, 2024 to September 10, 2024, the project team conducted nine focus group meetings comprised of community organizations and advocates that provided insight on housing, affordability, development, accessibility, and transportation. The purpose of the focus groups was to introduce participants to the project, collect detailed input on the Transit-Oriented Policy framework and the priorities for Transit-Oriented Development.



Figure 18: West Side Community Organizations Meeting on June 12, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.



Figure 19: Tobin Hill Neighborhood Association on July 18, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.



Figure 20: Fair Housing Council of South Texas Focus Group on July 24, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.

We heard from focus groups the following priorities for the Transit-Oriented Policy:

- **Housing:** The housing policy must create affordable housing that UTSA students can rent if they are at the Downtown campus. Additionally, encourage and support missing middle housing and affordable housing along the Green Line. It is most important to incentivize affordable housing.
- **Multimodal Connectivity:** Walkability to VIA Rapid Station Areas is crucial to the success of TODs. Walkability relies upon wide sidewalks and paths accessible to people of all abilities and easily navigable for those who may be visually-impaired. Pedestrian-scaled lighting is another important factor, creating safer environments that enable people to access stations at all hours. Removing parking minimums from development standards can also improve walkability in station areas by limiting the amount of dead space and ensuring more vibrant areas that attract activity that supports local economic development and leads to increased perceptions of safety.
- **Health and Quality of Life:** Developing housing near transit allows more people to walk, leading to better health outcomes. Location of transit is also important since community members need to live near a support system with healthcare, transportation, disability support, and housing that is accessible to everyone. Additionally, the framework should address what accessibility looks like for Historic Districts.
- **Economic Development:** The Green Line service must be fast to convince future renters and customers to utilize, visit and create a community around those spaces.
- **Resilience:** It is not environmentally sustainable to continue developing in areas with low density that require new or more infrastructure to be built over green spaces and aquifers. It is more sustainable to redevelop areas that already have existing sewer and wastewater connections, road systems, and access to emergency services.

## Community Survey

The Transit-Oriented Community Survey opened Monday, July 29th and closed Sunday, September 15th. The bilingual (English and Spanish) survey was available online and in print. The goal of the survey was to gather input on how to update the existing TOD code to complement San Antonio neighborhoods and help shape the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework. 1,073 community members participated in the survey.

The survey included ten questions in total. Analyzing survey responses helped us to understand community members’



*Figure 21: Project Team meeting with community members during bus ride-alongs on August 28, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.*

priorities, and preferences for land uses and types of new housing within or near their neighborhood. We also gained insights from the survey about the type of experience respondents desire near Green Line bus stations. The full community survey analysis is located in the Appendix.

## Pop-Up Outreach Events

The project team participated in planned community events to divert from traditional outreach activities. This included the following events from July – September: Sueños of San Pedro Springs Park on July 27, Mission Marque Farmers Market on August 17, World Heritage Festival on September 7, and The McNay Museum’s Second Thursday on September 12. During these pop-up outreach events our staff met with over 145 community members and shared information about Transit-Oriented Policy efforts and Transit-Oriented Community Survey.

## Bus Ride-Alongs

On August 27th beginning at 7 AM and August 28th beginning at 4 PM, we conducted bus ride-alongs along the northern portion of the proposed Green Line Route. The ride-alongs were on the VIA Number 3 bus line starting at VIA Metro Station on San Pedro Ave northbound to the North Star Mall VIA Station and then back south to the VIA Metro Station. During our rides, we talked with bus riders and shared information about TOD. We conducted in-person surveys with riders that had time and were interested in offering their input. During our conversations we learned that most bus riders are supportive of a faster, more reliable public transit option (the Green Line) along San Pedro, as most relied on public transit daily. Additionally, they were supportive of improvements along San Pedro, including improved roads and more commercial uses, like grocery stores.



## Community Meetings

The City of San Antonio hosted two community meetings on Transit-Oriented Policy. All members were welcome to attend, and over 10,700 notices on the Community Meetings were mailed to residents within ½ mile of the Green Line route. The first meeting was held Tuesday, October 22, 2024 from 6 – 8 PM at the Central Library at 600 Soledad Street. The second meeting was held Saturday, November 2, 2024 from 9 – 11 AM at the Woodlawn Lake Gym at 1103 Cincinnati Avenue.

Approximately 80 community members attended these two Community Meetings, and some members even attended both meeting dates. To begin the meetings City staff gave a presentation on Transit-Oriented Policy, including an introduction to the Transit-Oriented Policy principles and the proposed TOD zoning code updates. Community members were able to ask presenters and VIA staff questions following the presentation. They also had the opportunity to ask City and VIA staff questions and provide input during display board activities. These events provided important feedback from community members regarding which principles in the Transit-Oriented Policy take priority over others, as well as ways to improve each principle.

The display boards focused on various aspects of economic opportunity, housing affordability, health and quality of life, multimodal connectivity, and resilience in the neighborhood. Participants expressed a desire for greater economic opportunities, emphasizing the importance of supporting local businesses along corridors like San Pedro and incentivizing affordable housing for all community members. For the housing affordability and livability principle there was strong support to increase the amount of housing units available in developments while preserving existing homes, with calls for promoting “missing middle” housing and ensuring adequate parking. Health and quality of life responses highlighted the need for improved traffic management, enhanced walkability, tree-shaded pathways, and increased connectivity through public spaces and recreational activities. For multimodal connectivity community members advocated for better bike infrastructure, wider sidewalks, and safer bus transit options.

In addition to the City hosted Community Meetings held, the project team also participated in various meetings hosted by neighborhood associations, community organizations, council district offices, and VIA Metropolitan Transit.

These meetings occurred from June to November and were in addition to all of the other community engagement activities described. The project team participated by providing presentations on Transit-Oriented Policy and proposed TOD code updates. Alternatively, some organizations requested the project team participate in meetings by hosting a table and sharing handouts and information to meeting participants. The information shared in these presentations varied based on the stage of development the policy and code updates were in.

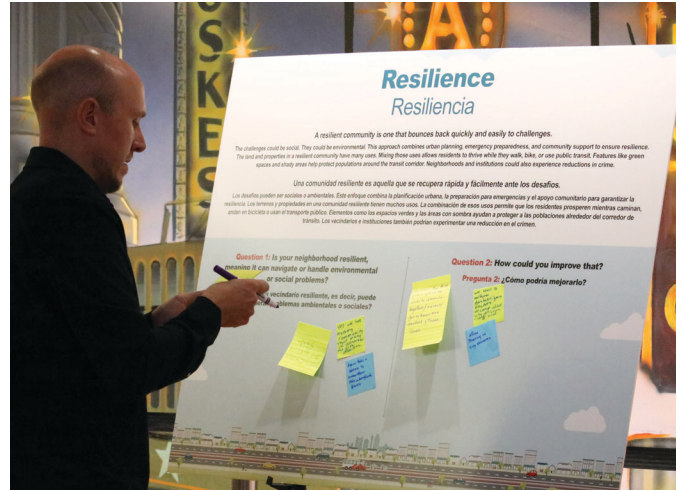


Figure 22: Community Member participating in the TOP Community Meeting on October 22, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.



Figure 23: Martinez Creek Neighborhood Association Meeting on August 8, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.



Figure 24: Community member completing TOP Community Survey at the World Heritage Festival. Source: City of San Antonio.



## Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter

The Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter currently has more than 519 subscribers who read it for updates on the TOD's transformation, community engagement and technical meetings that were held. There have been nine issues of the Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter and each provides a schedule of upcoming and past events as well as a summary of each meeting / event. The newsletter is expected to continue as TOD is implemented.

## Project Website

Another way the project team shared information and updates with the community was through the Transit-Oriented Development Policy website (<https://saspeakup.com/tod>). To date the website has had nearly 29,000 views. Over 940 of those views resulted in the community member interacting with the website by answering questions to surveys, subscribing, commenting, emailing, and more. The website offers updates on the progress of the project, including the draft framework, draft code update, newsletters, draft zoning maps, and presentations and documents presented to each technical committee (Transit-Oriented Development Task Force, Technical Working Group, and Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Subcommittee (RBSC)).

## Key Findings

The project team engaged a variety of community members including residents, property owners, advocacy groups, organizations, neighborhood associations, community leaders, bus and bike riders to collect input on the community's priorities for the Transit-Oriented Policy Framework and TOD code update. We learned what the community values and would like to preserve, as well as what they also want to improve. These included a broad range of categories from residential preservation, zoning and future land uses to transportation access, sidewalk enhancements and safety.

Additionally, during the development of the



Figure 25: TOD Task Force Meeting on August 22, 2024. Source: City of San Antonio.



Figure 26: Image of October 11, 2024 Transit-Oriented Policy Newsletter. Source: City of San Antonio.



Transit-Oriented Policy Framework, the project team created and engaged residents on the project website (<https://saspeakup.com/tod>). The project team developed open ended questions that mirrored questions posed to the public at two public meetings. To identify themes and keywords, the online comments and public meeting comments were reviewed and grouped by their similarities. The method used to identify themes was iterative and comments were sorted by keywords. After a second round of sorting a set of

themes were chosen. Some themes include subthemes when keywords revealed a deeper relationship after sorting. Those themes were placed within five groups: Multimodal, Housing, Preferences, Concerns and Obstacles, and Improving Places for People. Figure 27 provides a summary on the comments categorized by topic. The appendix includes more detailed Venn diagrams that highlight the dynamics and relationships of public comments.

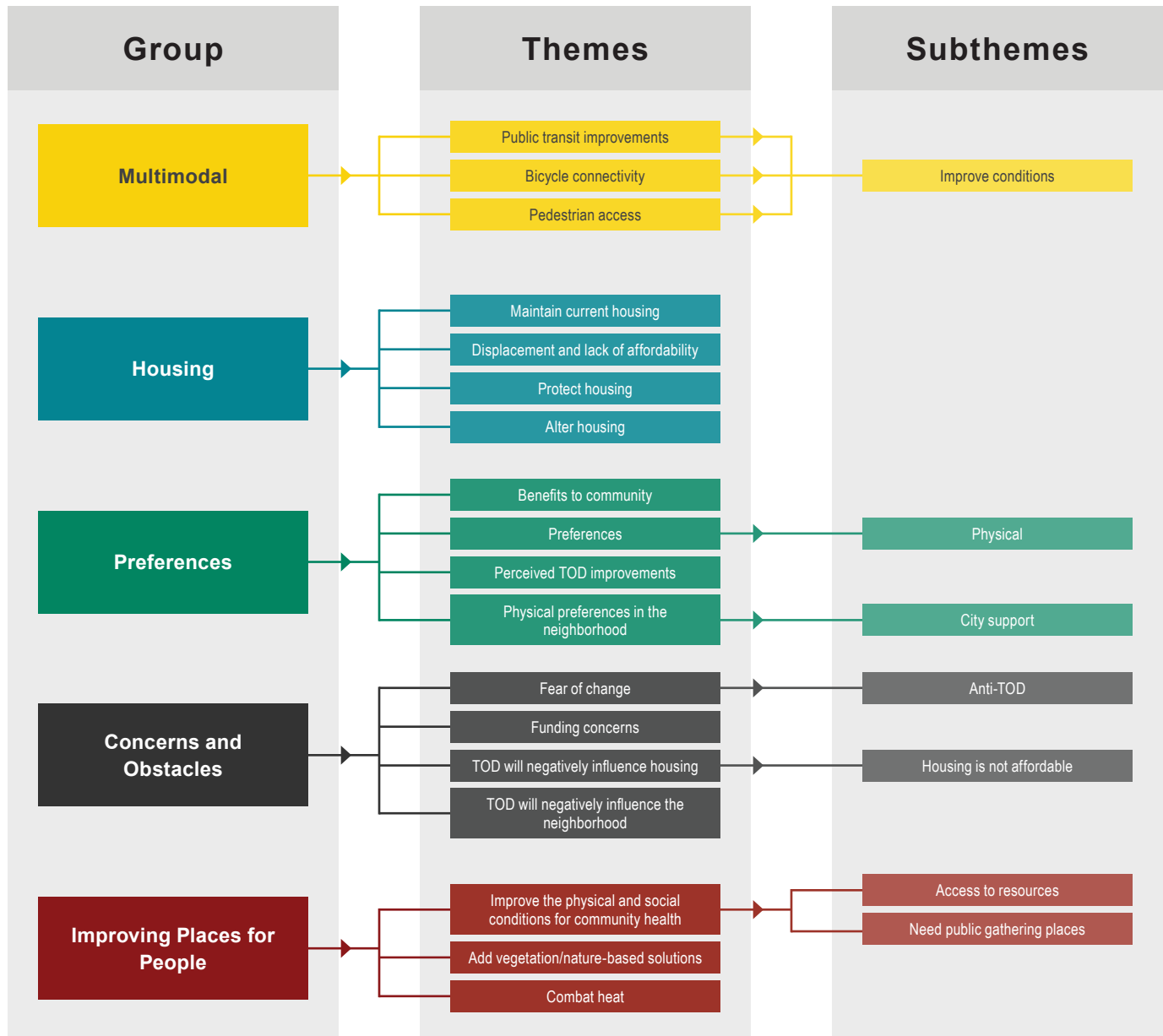


Figure 27: Reflections on Transit-Oriented Development.

Overall, the project team analyzed the total collected input and identified key findings and themes from all the various engagement activities shared before. These key findings are summarized below:

**Housing Affordability & Livability:** Transit-Oriented Development and Transit-Oriented Communities need to have a variety of housing options that meet the needs of all income levels and abilities. There should be opportunities to provide

new affordable housing and preserve existing housing.

**Multimodal Connectivity:** There should be opportunities for multiple modes of travel, such as biking and walking, along or adjacent to the VIA ART corridors. Increasing walkability and providing safe pedestrian environments for all abilities needs must be prioritized in the framework.

**Health and Quality of Life:** Transit-Oriented Communities must reflect the existing character and support the neighborhoods along VIA ART corridors. The framework must create opportunities for gathering spaces and community connections near stations.

**Economic Opportunity:** Existing business must be supported, while also providing new economic development opportunities for business suitable to the existing neighborhood. Existing or new businesses must also serve daily needs of residents.

**Resilience:** The framework must support providing shade and expanding green spaces along and near stations. This will enhance the experience for all users and ensure that Transit-Oriented Communities are usable throughout the year.

## What We Heard...

*I'd like to be able to have a drugstore to pick up medicine on the way to my bus stop before going to work.*

*Shade needs to be heavily addressed as it is a consistent comment, primarily along San Pedro Ave. This can be done through multiple approaches, such as trees, custom artwork structures, buildings allowed to use awnings, and third spaces.*

*I support a strong TOD policy with no parking minimums, no setbacks, and no prescribed outdoor amenity space. It should be a wide corridor to encourage missing middle housing.*

*San Antonio and its residents need less car-dependent infrastructure, are in a dire need of an efficient Light-Rail System, and to implement more mixed use and walkable zoning.*

*Protect existing neighborhoods from impactful development using appropriate zoning and other development restrictions.*

*We need all the car lanes we have. There is way too much car traffic to delete them as we continue to grow. More cars on the roads than people riding VIA. VIA is needed but not smart to lower lanes. The city is still doing construction all over the city currently adding and fixing lanes so why change now. Waste of money, resources & common sense.*

## Snapshot

**100+** Meetings & Outreach Touchpoints to Date

**1,073+** Community Survey Respondents

**~29K** Visits to SASpeakUp.com/TOD

## Next Steps

Community input from outreach efforts shaped the draft “TOD” zoning code update and Transit-Oriented Policy Framework, along with insights from technical groups (see Chapter 4) and previous City plans (see Chapter 1). After adopting these updates, the project team will implement the Framework’s recommendations.

To keep the community informed, the city will produce a video, flyers, and social media content about Transit-Oriented Policy. This effort will raise awareness about the Transit-Oriented Policy’s goals, purpose, and progress. Additionally, community meetings will be held in Summer 2025 and late 2025 to early 2026 to share updates and gather feedback on priorities for Station Area Plans.

Key 2025 initiatives include creating Station Area Plans, developing Missing Middle Housing typologies, launching a Strategic Property Acquisition program, and exploring a TOD Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ).



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# 04

## SHAPING OUR FUTURE!

This chapter uses insights from the existing conditions overview, along with priorities from previously adopted plans, to develop guiding principles, policy objectives, and priority action items. That sets the stage for how the TOP Framework will evolve into concrete action steps, outlining what transit corridors will look like in the future and how they will function.







# POLICY DEVELOPMENT

## Core Collaborators

The TOP Framework has been shaped by the collaborative efforts among three key groups: the Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Subcommittee (RBSC), the Technical Working Group (TWG), and the TOD Task Force. These groups worked together to develop recommendations that explore ways to align transit, housing, and economic development initiatives with the goal of enhancing connectivity and promoting sustainable development.

The RBSC and the TWG, both appointed by the Housing Commission, focus on addressing housing affordability, preventing displacement, proposing changes to the Unified Development Code (UDC), and overcoming other housing-related challenges. The TOD Task Force operates independently, with a specific focus on understanding and formulating recommendations related to TOD zoning.

### Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Subcommittee (RBSC)

The RBSC is charged with recommending improvements to the UDC and other city processes to facilitate affordable housing development and protection in San Antonio. This work began in 2019 with the goal of reducing the cost burden of development regulations, removing barriers to Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) development, and other policies related to affordable housing. Neighborhood & Housing Services Department (NHSD) established this technical working group for the production and preservation of affordable housing as recommended by the Mayor's Housing Policy Framework. The group became a subcommittee of the Housing Commission in October 2021.

Current priorities of the RBSC are to develop recommendations supporting the linkage of housing and transportation, and models to support affordability amidst growth, such as Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and land banks. The RBSC is also exploring recommendations on Universal Design- and Visitability-related UDC amendments. The RBSC also plays a lead role in crafting housing-related policy recommendations as part of the TOP framework development.

### TOD Task Force

The TOD Task Force includes 26 members representing the San Antonio community. Representation includes city registered Neighborhood Associations along the Rapid Green and Silver Lines including representation from Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10, and residents representing expert organizations in the transportation and housing industries.

The TOD Task Force reviewed the City's TOD zoning ordinance and recommended amendment considerations for fostering a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within a transit-friendly environment. For more information on the TOD Task Force, refer to the TOD Zoning Code Update section in "TOD Zoning Update" in Chapter 5.

### Technical Working Group (TWG)

The Technical Working Group (TWG) is a nine-member group formed under the RBSC. The TWG focuses on making recommendations for development code amendments to support housing affordability near transit. These recommendations will help foster a mix of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces within a transit-friendly environment. An example of is highlighted here to explain TWG's focus of recommendations.

**Example of TWG's Recommendation:** The TWG recommends that TOD zoning have a wider area of eligibility in areas expected to see greater growth and narrower eligibility in areas with less expected growth. This will enable TOD related efforts to be focused on areas with the greatest increase in population and job growth.



# Aligning the TOP Framework with City Priorities

Providing feedback on a new concept like ART, which currently doesn't exist, can be difficult and overwhelming. To help guide the process, the City's Transportation Department reviewed citywide plans to document key themes and principles residents have prioritized since 2016. Throughout thirteen citywide plans, staff found **Affordable Housing, Connectivity, Economic Opportunity, Equity, Health & Quality of Life, Resilience, and Walkability** to be the core principles residents have consistently expressed over the past eight years. These principles will guide transit-oriented policies and the implementation of the Framework along the ART corridors.

Each of these citywide planning initiatives is outlined below, along with their connections to the TOP Framework:

## 1 SA Tomorrow Multimodal Transportation Plan

**About the Plan:** The Multimodal Plan is a forward-looking blueprint for travel and mobility across San Antonio and Bexar County, emphasizing a shift from vehicle-centric movement to prioritizing the movement of people. It outlines the City's transportation vision and provides a framework for evaluating transportation priorities aligned with community objectives.

**Relationship to TOP Framework:** Through its outreach efforts, the Multimodal Plan secured the community's agreement on inducing "transit-supportive development" with an emphasis on Regional Centers for mixed-use development to enhance transportation options in alignment with the goals of the TOP Framework.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

## 2 SA Tomorrow Sustainability Plan

**About the Plan:** The Sustainability Plan centers on the three pillars of sustainability—economic, environmental, and social—and serves as a guide for both the community and municipal government to realize the overarching vision of a sustainable San Antonio.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** The Sustainability plan aims to enhance quality of life and community health by improving air quality, reducing heat-related illnesses, and ensuring access to green spaces. It also outlines strategies to help individuals and communities adapt to and thrive amidst natural and manmade hazards, focusing on infrastructure resilience, community programs, and social equity.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

## 3 SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan

**About the Plan:** The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes land use, urban design, and municipal policies to strategically coordinate city resources and incentive programs. Its goal is to proactively guide future development while providing a broader array of choices for both present and future residents.

**Relationship to TOP Framework:** The Comprehensive Plan's principles align with all of TOP Framework's goals and strategies by highlighting the need for integrating "affordable housing and transportation choices throughout the city."

The Plan outlines nine principles that reflect the target areas of our framework:

- Maintain the character and integrity of existing San Antonio neighborhoods, parks, open space and trails by focusing growth in mixed-use regional centers and along attractive multimodal corridors with high performing transit service.
- Ensure that all residents living in existing and new neighborhoods have safe and convenient access to jobs, housing, and a variety of amenities and basic services including great parks, strong schools, convenient shopping and nearby regional centers.
- Connect safe and stable mixed-income neighborhoods with a system of walkable and bikeable streets, trails and pathways that celebrate and link natural greenways and drainage ways.
- Ensure an inclusive San Antonio by providing affordable housing and transportation choices throughout the city.
- Encourage a variety of amenity-rich places throughout the city with a balance of live, work and play opportunities.
- Conserve, protect and manage San Antonio's natural, cultural and historic resources and open space.
- Encourage and integrate innovative and sustainable ideas and development.
- Provide an ongoing planning framework for more detailed and timely planning and design of regional centers, corridors and neighborhoods with continued opportunities for participation and partnerships, prioritization, and performance measurement.
- Provide the residents of San Antonio, including youth, seniors, and disabled populations, with enhanced levels of authentic engagement.

This plan supports the development of affordable housing within transit corridors, enhancement of multimodal transportation options, and inclusion of policies to increase the city's resilience to future shocks.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 4 SAN ANTONIO FORWARD

**About the Plan:** This is a strategic plan by the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, focusing on improving public health through initiatives like expanding access to healthy food, mental health services, and domestic violence support.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** This plan also aims to improve community health and wellbeing through various public health initiatives by bolstering economic opportunities in underserved areas. It aligns with the principles of economic opportunity and health and quality of life.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 5 SA CLIMATE READY

**About the Plan:** This climate action and adaptation plan commits the City to meeting the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing the community, particularly the most vulnerable, for climate impacts like drought and heatwaves. It includes strategies for both mitigation and adaptation.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** This plan prioritizes clean air, public health, and access to green spaces through strategies for community adaptation and resilience against natural and manmade hazards. It aims to enhance overall quality of life and community health.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 6 HOUSING POLICY FRAMEWORK

**About the Plan:** The framework organizes and simplifies housing policy options to create and preserve affordable housing, align housing supply with market conditions, and prevent displacement.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** Housing Policy Framework emphasizes creating affordable housing options and preventing displacement, ensuring that housing meets the diverse needs of the population, which can be combined with mixed-use and affordable housing strategies defined in the TOP Framework.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 7 STRATEGIC HOUSING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (SHIP)

**About the Plan:** Developed to implement the Housing Policy Framework, the SHIP outlines specific action steps, timelines, and funding approaches to increase affordable housing production, rehabilitation, and preservation.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** This plan focuses on meeting the diverse housing needs of the population and preventing displacement to ensure community stability. It supports the principle of affordable housing.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 8 SA CORRIDORS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK PLAN

**About the Plan:** SA Corridors is a collaborative effort to guide future development around transit, walking, and biking corridors. It focuses on enhancing multimodal transportation options and supporting TOD.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** This plan connects key employment, residential, and retail areas through improved transit alignments and infrastructure investments to enhance multimodal transportation options. It aligns with the principle of multimodal connectivity.

Access Plan [HERE](#)

#### 9 VIA'S KEEP SA MOVING

**About the Plan:** Keep SA Moving is a plan to improve the transit system by expanding trip options, investing in capital projects, and exploring new technologies. It aims to connect more people to jobs and opportunities with faster, more reliable transit services.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** Aimed at improving transit service and speed, this plan focuses on enhancing overall connectivity across the city, making it easier for residents to access various parts of San Antonio. It supports the principle of multimodal connectivity.

Access Plan [HERE](#)



## 10 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**About the Plan:** This framework sets a roadmap to position the City of San Antonio on the path toward a more resilient economy, to provide direction on competing with national and global peers, and to specifically define the role that the City of San Antonio should play in that effort.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** This framework supports economic growth and opportunities in all neighborhoods through strategic investments and policies that foster economic resilience. It aligns with the principle of economic opportunity.

**Access Plan** [HERE](#)

## 11 SMART CITIES ROADMAP

**About the Plan:** The Roadmap provides a vision for using technology to improve public services and residents' quality of life. It focuses on equity, inclusivity, resilience, and sustainability, and positions San Antonio for competitive federal grant funding.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** Emphasizing equity, inclusivity, and resilience, this roadmap focuses on connectivity and sustainable development to create a more integrated and adaptive urban environment. It supports multiple principles, including affordable housing and multimodal connectivity.

**Access Plan** [HERE](#)

## 12 SA PARKS SYSTEM PLAN

**About the Plan:** The Plan guides future planning decisions for the expansion, capital improvement, and programming of over 250 city-owned parks and recreational facilities, and enhancement of green spaces and trails.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** By expanding green spaces and recreational facilities, this plan aims to enhance community health and quality of life by providing accessible outdoor areas for all residents. It aligns with the principle of health and quality of life.

**Access Plan** [HERE](#)

## 13 VISION ZERO ACTION PLAN

**About the Plan:** The Action Plan aims to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by improving public safety and connectivity through better road design, enforcement, and education.

**Integrating with TOP Framework:** Aimed at improving public safety and connectivity, this plan aligns with health and quality of life principles by reducing traffic-related injuries and fatalities and making the city safer for all residents.

**Access Plan** [HERE](#)



## Common Goals from Previous Plans

This Framework aims to integrate the lessons learned from previous citywide initiatives while addressing the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the ART corridors. The TOP Framework builds on the success of earlier plans, allowing for continuity in urban development while adapting to new priorities around equitable growth, improved connectivity, and sustainable land use practices.

Each strategy and action within the framework was designed to reflect these goals, ensuring alignment with both historical objectives and new insights from ongoing public engagement efforts. Community needs such as access to jobs, housing affordability, and environmental resilience were foundational in shaping the framework's priorities.

To ensure consistency and cohesion, the Transportation Department conducted a detailed review of each strategy, analyzing whether it aligned with the overarching goals outlined by the City Council and prior plans. This systematic review was critical in maintaining the integrity of the TOD framework, ensuring that each action step would contribute to long-term objectives for equitable and sustainable development.



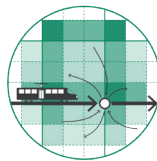
## Support development strategies that accommodate multiple modes of travel.

The framework should encourage development that integrates various forms of travel, including walking, cycling, public transit, and vehicular traffic, creating a multimodal, connected network, to promote transportation flexibility.



## Incorporate retail and small businesses into development.

Blend retail and small businesses into transit-oriented areas, to transform these corridors into hubs of economic activity and vibrant community gathering spaces that support local entrepreneurship.



## Reduce barriers to mixed-use development along ART corridors.

Remove obstacles to mixed-use development, allowing for a seamless blend of residential, commercial, and recreational spaces that promote dynamic and sustainable communities along ART corridors.





## Encourage a variety of housing choices near transit facilities.

The framework should prioritize creating inclusive and diverse neighborhoods by increasing housing options near ART facilities, ensuring that people of all income levels have access to affordable, convenient living spaces near transit.



## Be compatible with other adopted plans.

All strategies should align with existing citywide initiatives, ensuring coherence with the City's Comprehensive Plan, SHIP, and other key plans to create a unified, citywide development approach.



## Support transit ridership located within easy walking distance of transit stops.

The framework should prioritize increasing transit ridership by ensuring that residents can easily access ART stops within a short walk, making transit a more convenient and appealing option for daily commutes.



## Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along the ART routes.

Community inclusion and investment is the key to fostering neighborhood pride and identity through placemaking initiatives that reflect local culture and enhance the sense of ownership along ART routes.



## Take steps to ensure a return on the City's prior investment in the ART.

Safeguard and enhance the City's investment in the ART system by driving growth and development that maximize the benefits and long-term value of the transit infrastructure.



## Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs.

This goal focuses on fostering vibrant, pedestrian-friendly communities along ART routes, where residents can meet their daily needs—such as accessing places of employment, schools, and other essential services—within a lively, walkable environment.

# POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines how the TOP Framework will transition into actionable steps, offering a vision of how the future of transit corridors will look and function as integral parts of San Antonio's urban landscape.

To align the overarching Framework goals with future implementation actions, Transit-Oriented Policies are organized across three levels:

- **PRINCIPLES:** A diverse group of stakeholders collaboratively developed five guiding principles by reviewing community feedback gathered from multiple city plans and aligning these insights with the framework's goals. These principles provide a comprehensive "roadmap" for addressing key areas such as connectivity, economic opportunity, walkability, and enhancing quality of life within the transit corridors.
- **OBJECTIVES:** For each of the five principles, strategies were defined to chart the next steps, offering clear desired outcomes that will shape the future development process within the TOP Framework. These strategies serve as the critical bridge between principles and implementation.
- **PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS:** To activate the framework immediately, specific action items were outlined for each strategy. These actionable steps are designed for immediate implementation, ensuring that progress can begin swiftly in transforming the transit corridors according to the TOP Framework's goals.

This approach will ensure a structured and strategic approach to developing San Antonio's transit-oriented future, providing a clear path from planning to implementation.

**Figure 28** illustrates the process of developing the guiding principles, strategies, and action plan.

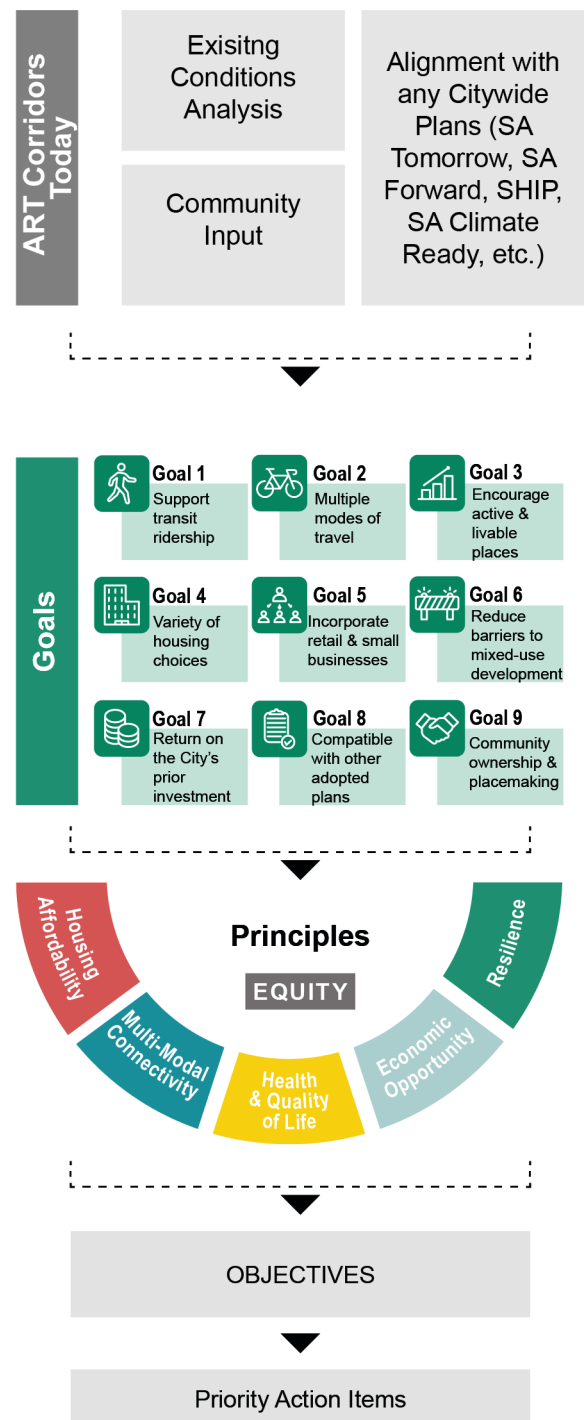


Figure 28: Transit Oriented Policy Framework Development Overview

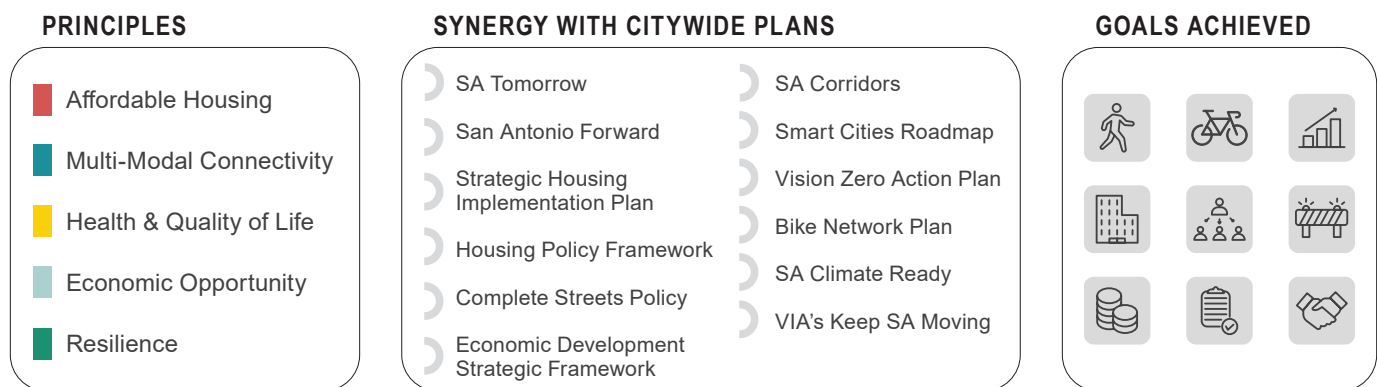


# Reading the Recommendations

In the subsequent pages, each principle is presented with a concise description, emphasizing the specific strategic directions and immediate action items associated with it. Each principle is accompanied by a key that illustrates how it contributes to at least one of the overall goals established for this framework. Additionally, relevant citywide plans are highlighted to show their role in the development of each principle.

These elements are represented by icons and a brief explanatory text. The diagram here serves as a visual guide to help readers understand and navigate the components of each of the five principles to ensure that readers can easily grasp the connections between the principles, strategies, goals, and supporting citywide plans, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the framework's structure and objectives.

## 1 KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PRINCIPLES



## 2 UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY



















# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND LIVABILITY

Transit improvements and the development that it spurs will impact the affordability of existing housing as well as create new housing opportunities. The TOP Framework aims to ensure that these changes positively impact the diverse needs of the people of San Antonio, by providing strategies to ensure there are homes that are affordable to everyone, including people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.





Communities in the urban core that have been historically and systematically disinvested in for generations are most likely to be impacted by negative effects of gentrification, especially when faced with major investments like the proposed rapid transit lines. These communities also house many of San Antonio's low-income households who are most at-risk for displacement, which impacts communities for generations. The TOP framework provides strategies not only to prevent displacement but to maintain stability and grow opportunities so everyone has a place to thrive.

The strategies in this section clarify how to protect low-income community members from being priced out of their neighborhoods and to generate affordable housing development. This two-pronged approach will make sure all residents, regardless of their economic status or identity, have the opportunity to live in safe, affordable, accessible and stable communities. This holistic approach ultimately supports the City's goal of building a resilient and inclusive community for all.

## Synergy with Other Citywide Plans:

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  SA Tomorrow-Comprehensive Plan           |  Strategic Housing Implementation Plan |  Housing Policy Framework |
|  SA Tomorrow - Multimodal Plan            |  SA Tomorrow-Sustainability            |  Smart Cities Roadmap     |
|  SA Climate Ready                         |  SA Corridors                          |  VIA's Keep SA Moving     |
|  Economic Development Strategic Framework |  Complete Streets Policy               |  Vision Zero Action Plan  |
|  San Antonio Forward                      |   |  Bike Network Plan        |

## Goals Achieved

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs. |  Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along ART routes. |
|  Encourage a variety of housing choices near transit facilities.                         |  Be compatible with COSA Master Plan, the SHIP, and other COSA adopted plans.      |





“

The TOP Framework will ensure there are homes that are affordable to everyone, including people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

## Proposed Objectives

- **Protect and Support Current Residents:** Ensure existing residents can remain in their homes and communities by safeguarding affordable housing options against displacement and loss of affordability, especially the most vulnerable populations.
- **Produce More Affordable Housing Near Rapid Transit:** Encourage development of new affordable housing units in proximity to rapid transit systems and enhance accessibility by reducing commuting costs for residents.
- **Balance Production and Preservation:** Strike a balance between building new affordable housing and preserving the existing affordable housing stock in ART areas.

## Priority Action Items

- **Community Land Trusts:**  
A Community Land Trust (CLT) is an entity created for the purpose of purchasing and retaining ownership of land to ensure its ongoing use for community purposes, such as affordable housing. CLTs support the long-term affordability of both rental and ownership housing, and are especially effective in areas that have, or expect to have, escalation of land costs.
- **Land Banking / Strategic Property Acquisition:**
  - Land banking is a tool that can be used as a vehicle for holding land strategically purchased for future affordable development - especially near planned ART corridors.
  - It can also be used to repurpose tax-delinquent properties and to support housing preservation goals. San Antonio's relatively low land cost compared to other major metros makes land banking an attractive strategy for our area.
  - Land banking can be especially effective when coupled with shared and limited equity models like Community Land Trusts.



# MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY






The multimodal connectivity principle ensures that an integrated transportation network connects employment, residential, and retail hubs along ART corridors. This principle seeks to make transit stations highly accessible for people walking and cycling while still accommodating vehicular traffic. It strengthens connectivity, providing residents easier access to jobs, services, and amenities across the region.

This principle is beneficial for stations in both new development and existing neighborhoods. As each station extends its reach into the broader community, it enhances access to the region's economy, making it easier for residents to connect with education and job opportunities, services, and amenities. By fostering a well-connected, multimodal transportation system along ART corridors, we can improve overall mobility, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and support sustainable urban growth.

## Synergy with Other Citywide Plans:

- |   |  |                             |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| SA Tomorrow-<br>Comprehensive Plan          | Strategic Housing<br>Implementation Plan | Housing Policy<br>Framework |
| SA Tomorrow -<br>Multimodal Plan            | SA Tomorrow-<br>Sustainability           | Smart Cities Roadmap        |
| SA Climate Ready                            | SA Corridors                             | VIA's Keep SA Moving        |
| Economic Development<br>Strategic Framework | Complete Streets Policy                  | Vision Zero Action<br>Plan  |
| San Antonio Forward                         |  | Bike Network Plan           |

## Goals Achieved

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Support transit ridership located within easy walking distance of transit stops.        |  Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along ART routes. |
|  Support development strategies that accommodate multiple modes of travel.               |  Be compatible with COSA Master Plan, the SHIP, and other COSA adopted plans.      |
|  Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs. |  |





“

An integrated transportation network will connect employment, residential, and retail hubs along ART corridors.

## Proposed Objectives

- **Elevate TOD Prioritization:** Integrate TOD as a key focus within COSA's organizational structure.
- **Improve First/Last Mile Connectivity:** Strengthen coordination and implement targeted infrastructure improvements to enhance first and last mile connections.
- **Adopt Transportation Demand Management:** Implement transportation demand management programs to expand mobility options and reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

## Priority Action Items

- **Utilize the standing Transportation Committee to oversee the implementation of the TOP Framework and related TOD projects:**
  - The standing Transportation Committee will be responsible for providing oversight and recommendations on TOD development and implementation.
  - The standing Transportation Committee will also act as collaborators and initiators to push and support TOD through the process of implementation.
- **Perform a walkshed survey within a half-mile of all advanced rapid transit stations:**

Identify locations with unsafe, missing, or non-accessible sidewalk infrastructure including deficiencies such as ADA ramps absent or not flush with the roadway pavement or missing clearly striped crosswalks.

















# HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The health and quality of life principle emphasizes enhancing the well-being of residents along the ART corridors. A key focus of this principle is transforming transit station areas into lively, vibrant spaces that encourage people to stop, linger, and interact. By designing public spaces that are accessible, visually appealing, and pedestrian-friendly, the city can foster a sense of safety, community, and belonging. These activated spaces become destinations where people can engage with one another, ultimately contributing to a more livable and attractive urban environment.

Moreover, well-designed public spaces offer both mental and physical health benefits by providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction. This principle also prioritizes walkable urban areas, mixed-use developments, and efficient public transit systems. Together, these elements reduce the need for single-mode transportation, lower carbon footprints, and encourage healthier, more active lifestyles. By integrating transit with community spaces, the overall quality of life is enhanced for all residents, supporting a holistic approach to urban well-being.

## Synergy with Other Citywide Plans:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  SA Tomorrow-Comprehensive Plan            |  Strategic Housing Implementation Plan |  Housing Policy Framework |
|  SA Tomorrow - Multimodal Plan            |  SA Tomorrow-Sustainability           |  Smart Cities Roadmap    |
|  SA Climate Ready                         |  SA Corridors                         |  VIA's Keep SA Moving    |
|  Economic Development Strategic Framework |  Complete Streets Policy              |  Vision Zero Action Plan |
|  San Antonio Forward                      |  |  Bike Network Plan       |

## Goals Achieved



Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs.



Be compatible with COSA Master Plan, the SHIP, and other COSA adopted plans.



Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along ART routes.





“

An emphasis on enhancing the health and well-being of residents along the ART corridors.

## Proposed Objectives

- **Promote Equitable Access:** Ensure that all residents have equitable access to vibrant, people-centered public spaces.
- **Strengthen Placekeeping:** Preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods by aligning new developments with the community's identity and history.
- **Cultivate Healthy Communities:** Support the development of healthy, vibrant communities by expanding access to healthcare services, improving air quality, and creating programs that promote mental health and well-being around ART corridors.

## Priority Action Items

- **Encourage Public Gathering Spaces Around Transit Stations:**
  - Anchor transit stations with inviting, vibrant civic spaces (e.g., civic squares, park space) that provide flexible areas, opportunities for social engagement, and a range of activities that instill a sense of pride and belonging for diverse communities.
  - Evaluate potential financial or administrative incentives, that could be provided for TOD projects that design public spaces and public amenities to facilitate community gathering, neighborhood commerce, festivals, and sustainability.
- **Utilize Health and Equity Impact Assessments for each Transit-Oriented Policy:**

Applying health and equity impact assessments to the development of policy to ensure that benefits are equitably distributed.



# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY








Economic opportunity along transit corridors means fostering inclusive growth and innovation throughout all neighborhoods. By leveraging the TOP Framework, San Antonio can create environmentally sustainable communities that are also socially and economically vibrant. Active public spaces along ART corridors not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also offer broader social and economic benefits. These vibrant areas encourage foot traffic, which supports local businesses, stimulates economic activity, and fosters a stronger sense of community.

Implementing this framework will also revitalize various areas of San Antonio by expanding the customer base for existing businesses and creating new opportunities for growth along transit corridors. This approach is particularly attractive to creative entrepreneurs and high-wage companies, who are drawn to dynamic, culturally rich environments that offer urban living amenities. By prioritizing sustainable development and innovative urban design, San Antonio can ensure that economic growth benefits all residents, positioning the City as a leader in building equitable, thriving communities.

## Synergy with Other Citywide Plans:

- |  |                                       |                          |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| SA Tomorrow- Comprehensive Plan          | Strategic Housing Implementation Plan | Housing Policy Framework |
| SA Tomorrow - Multimodal Plan            | SA Tomorrow- Sustainability           | Smart Cities Roadmap     |
| SA Climate Ready                         | SA Corridors                          | VIA's Keep SA Moving     |
| Economic Development Strategic Framework | Complete Streets Policy               | Vision Zero Action Plan  |
| San Antonio Forward                      |                                       | Bike Network Plan        |

## Goals Achieved

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Incorporate retail and small businesses into development.                         |  Be compatible with COSA Master Plan, the SHIP, and other COSA adopted plans.            |
|  Take steps to ensure a return on the City's prior investment in the ART.          |  Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs. |
|  Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along ART routes. |  Reduce barriers to mixed use development along the ART corridor.                        |
|  Encourage a variety of housing choices near transit facilities.                   |  |





“

Focus on expanding the customer base for existing businesses and creating new markets for growth along the transit corridor.

## Proposed Objectives

- **Protect and Support Small Businesses:** Help bolster both new and existing businesses, while supporting the retention of small businesses.
- **Maximize Financing Opportunities:** Use existing incentive programs to address financing gaps for place-based development projects.
- **Leverage City Resources:** Apply the City's tools and resources to encourage developments that provide broad benefits to the community.

## Priority Action Items

- **Provide additional support to small businesses along the ART corridors:**
  - Connect with business development organizations to help entrepreneurs have brick and mortar storefronts along the transit corridors.
  - Create a program that supports local businesses impacted by an ongoing active construction period.
- **Identify retail and small business amenities that are necessary to have within a 15-minute walk/ transit of each station in order to decrease reliance on personal vehicles to travel for such amenities:**
  - Support existing small local businesses throughout the ART corridor and compliment the corridor with new ones to fill gaps where identified to keep dollars locally and sustain/build the city's sales tax and property tax base.
  - Work with business development organizations to identify business owners that can fill geographic gaps in services (e.g., restaurateurs, artisans, artists, grocers).
  - This action will require a market analysis.

















# RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems that are exposed to natural and manmade hazards to survive, adapt, and thrive in ways that improve outcomes to everyday stressors and future shocks. Building resilient communities within the TOP Framework involves developing strategies that empower individuals, neighborhoods, institutions, and systems along transit corridors to thrive despite natural, technological, or human-caused challenges. This principle aims to ensure that all sectors within these corridors can adapt and flourish, even in the face of everyday pressures and unexpected disruptions. It integrates urban planning, climate action, emergency preparedness, and community support systems to create a comprehensive foundation for resilience.

By promoting a balanced mix of land uses and activities within close proximity, we can enhance livability, enabling residents to meet their needs through walking, cycling, or public transit. This mix keeps our streets active, minimizes crime, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and helps ensure long-term resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges. In addition, the TOP Framework provides an opportunity to increase resilience through the promotion of low carbon materials, heat reducing infrastructure, green building technologies, publicly accessible electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE), renewable energy and microgrids, equitable mobility options, and the establishment of community-focused resilience hubs.

## Synergy with Other Citywide Plans:

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  SA Tomorrow-Comprehensive Plan            |  Strategic Housing Implementation Plan |  Housing Policy Framework |
|  SA Tomorrow - Multimodal Plan            |  SA Tomorrow-Sustainability           |  Smart Cities Roadmap    |
|  SA Climate Ready                         |  SA Corridors                         |  VIA's Keep SA Moving    |
|  Economic Development Strategic Framework |  Complete Streets Policy              |  Vision Zero Action Plan |
|  San Antonio Forward                      |  |  Bike Network Plan       |

## Goals Achieved



Support transit ridership located within easy walking distance of transit stops.



Encourage community ownership and placemaking for neighborhoods along ART routes.



Support development strategies that accommodate multiple modes of travel.



Be compatible with COSA Master Plan, the SHIP, and other COSA adopted plans.



Encourage active and livable places along ART routes that serve residents' daily needs.





Ensure that all sectors within these corridors can adapt and flourish, even in the face of everyday pressures and unexpected disruptions.

## Proposed Objectives

- **Design for Heat Relief:** Ensure that public spaces within TOD zones incorporate heat relief strategies in both design and operations, prioritizing the needs of the most vulnerable populations.
- **Enhance Green Spaces:** Preserve and expand green spaces while implementing nature-based solutions to manage stormwater and reduce extreme heat.
- **Adopt a Resilient Communities Approach:** Develop and promote a comprehensive Resilient Communities strategy that supports individuals, households, and the broader community through enhanced connectivity, resilient social and economic systems, and robust support mechanisms for addressing disruptions.
- **Boost Climate Resilience:** Advance climate resilience by incorporating renewable energy sources, developing microgrids, improving energy efficiency, enhancing local food security, and fostering cross-sector collaboration and community self-reliance.

## Priority Action Items

- **Explore every opportunity to increase tree canopy coverage along ART corridors:**  
Examples include exploring opportunities to fund planting and maintenance of trees that are planted in Right of Way (ROW) corridors and to fund tree mitigation fees for affordable housing developments.
- **Prioritize scientifically supported cooling solutions for bus stations within a walkshed:**  
Cooling solutions could include water fountains, shaded bus stations, and misters.



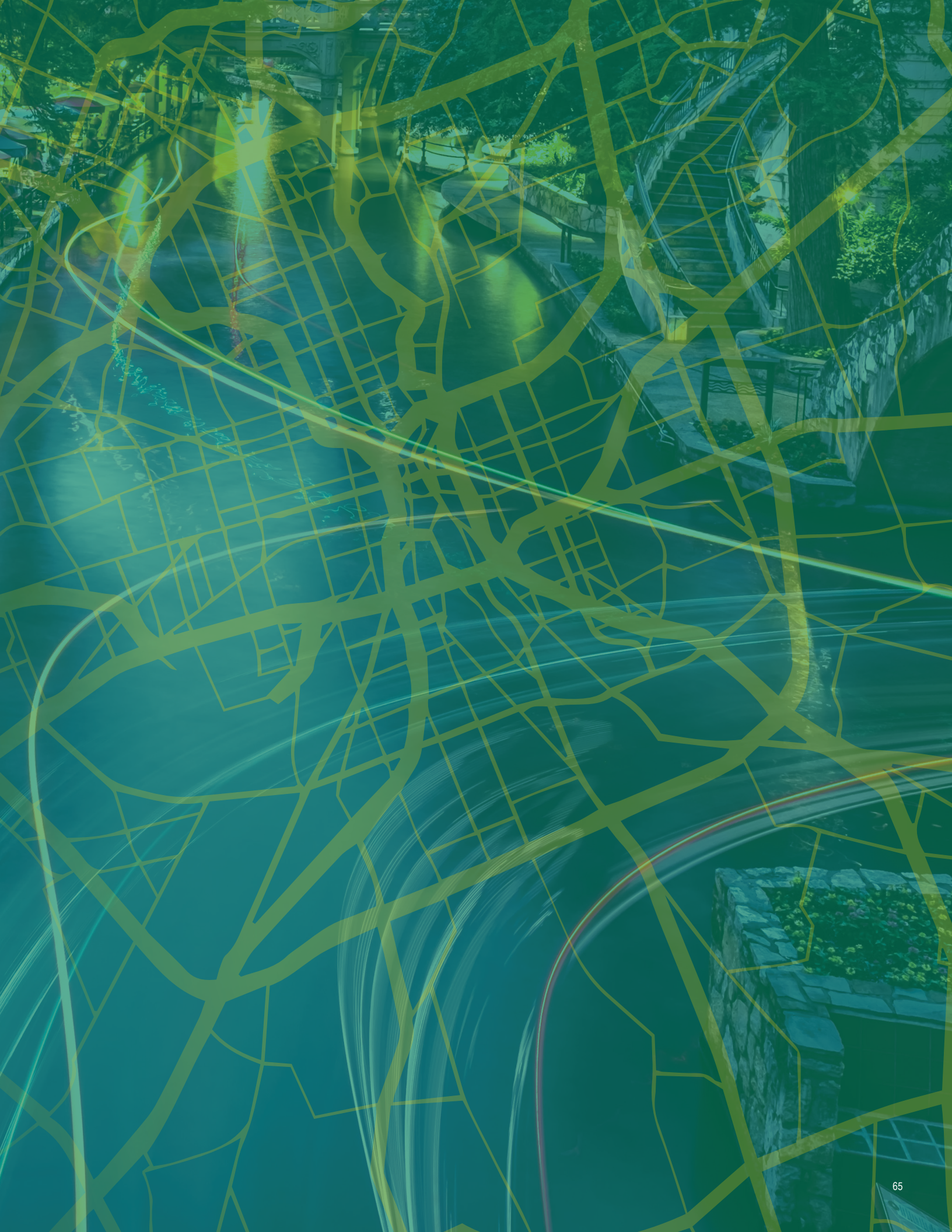


# 05

## ROADMAP TO IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter outlines an implementation plan with four key next steps to initiate progress once the framework is adopted. These steps serve as a starting point to put the framework into action effectively.





# OVERVIEW

The TOP Framework is a forward-looking policy to ensure that the new ART corridors are effectively integrated into the urban fabric. This Framework is designed to maximize the benefits of ART investments by providing a roadmap for aligning growth and development around ART corridors with the principles of TOD and TOC.

This chapter outlines a series of strategies and action items that will guide development and public investments over the coming years. These strategies focus on creating walkable neighborhoods, expanding affordable housing options near

transit, fostering economic growth, and enhancing community resilience.

The successful implementation of these strategies will require collective action and coordination among various stakeholders, including city agencies, developers, community organizations, and residents.

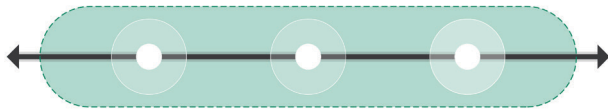
Together, these will provide a comprehensive approach to ensuring the City's transit investments lead to long-term, positive impacts on mobility, housing, and quality of life.

The framework identifies key next steps essential for advancing these efforts:

1

## TOP Implementation Plan:

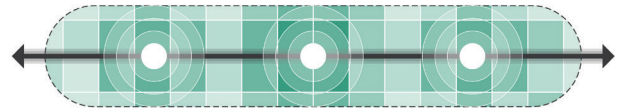
To align TOP principles with the City's broader development goals, applicable along the ART Corridors.



2

## Unified Development Code (UDC)

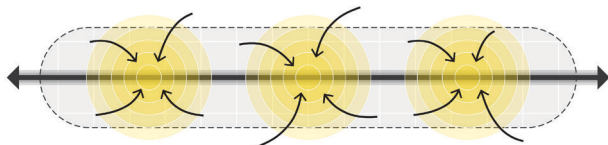
To ensure that the city's built-form regulations and policies support the growth and sustainability of TOCs along the ART Corridor



3

## Station Area Plans:

To design and develop vibrant, accessible, and well-planned areas around ART stations.



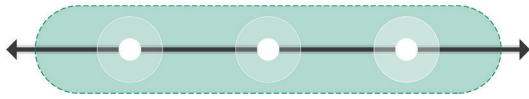
4

## Housing Policy Toolkit

To promote equitable and affordable housing development along transit corridors and ART stations.







# TOP IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Within a year of adopting the TOP Framework, the Transportation Department will begin developing an implementation plan to activate the objectives and actions outlined in the framework. The implementation plan will consist of the following components:

## EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

A comprehensive awareness campaign and communication plan will be developed to educate the public and keep all stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the project. The community will have multiple opportunities to help shape the implementation plan through:

- **Public Meetings and Workshops** – Gathering input and building community support for the project.
- **Focus Groups** – Ensuring that feedback is inclusive and representative of diverse community voices.
- **Surveys** – Collecting broad-based community input to inform the decision-making process.

## CORRIDOR EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS:

A detailed analysis will be conducted along the Green and Silver Line corridors to assess **current market conditions**. This study will evaluate demand for residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments, helping guide the strategic growth of these transit-oriented areas. An analysis will also be conducted to examine and evaluate each of our five principles—Housing Affordability, Multimodal Connectivity, Health and Quality of Life, Resilience, and Economic Opportunity—to establish a foundation for identifying and prioritizing implementation actions.

“

...begin developing an implementation plan to activate the objectives and actions outlined in the framework.

## STATION AREA PLAN PRIORITIZATION:

Based on existing conditions and community feedback, Rapid Green Line and Rapid Silver Line station areas will be evaluated and prioritized for future Station Area Plans.

## IMPLEMENTATION TOOLKITS:

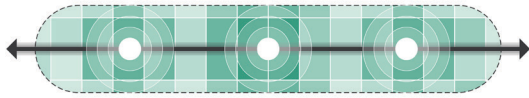
The policy toolkit will guide the implementation plan by focusing on:

- **Implementation Actions** – Identifying and outlining key actions from the TOP Framework, focusing on housing, transportation, health, resilience, and economic development.
- **Funding and Financing** – Exploring various funding sources, including grants, tax incentives, and private investments, to support the implementation of key actions.
- **Partnership Development** – Building collaborations between the City, VIA, SAWS, CPS Energy, developers, and other key stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach.
- **Work Plan** – Creating a step-by-step plan with actionable timelines, responsible parties, approach (i.e. applicability to corridor vs citywide) and metrics to ensure efficient execution.

## MONITOR PERFORMANCE:

To ensure the implementation plan stays relevant and effective over time, a comprehensive monitoring approach will be developed that includes:

- **Performance Metrics** – Defining specific goals for each action to measure the success of transit-oriented development.
- **Annual Reporting** – Regular reporting intervals will be established to track progress, assess outcomes, and make necessary adjustments.



# UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT CODE (UDC)

The City is dedicated to making urban development more streamlined, efficient, and attuned to community needs. A key element in these improvements is the UDC, which regulates land use and development. The UDC sets guidelines for zoning, land use, and infrastructure, ensuring that San Antonio's growth benefits everyone. Whether you're a resident, business owner, or developer, the UDC addresses issues that affect daily life. Every five years, the UDC is updated through a collaborative process involving community members, developers, and city officials, shaping the future of our neighborhoods together. Following are some implementation strategies.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

The Housing Commission formed the TWG with the charge of recommending changes to the Unified Development Code that facilitate the creation of affordable housing near and along transit corridors. While some recommendations may be implemented as part of the ongoing TOD update, many will require extensive deliberation and public discussion due to their complexity.

## UDC AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY TWG:

- Ensure transit supportive zoning districts, including TOD, provide an option for zero setback from the property line where the property line abuts rights-of-way.

**Outcome:** The ability to build directly on the property line will help to create more walkable urban spaces, especially in infill development contexts, which are needed to support transit use.

- Update or eliminate Urban and Metropolitan Corridor zoning overlay districts, in particular the "UC-6" San Pedro Urban Corridor Overlay District. (Section 35-339 "Urban Corridor Districts")

**Outcome:** The San Pedro Urban Corridor Overlay District currently requires a 25-foot setback, which is in conflict with the standards and intent of the proposed TOD zoning districts. If the overlay district is not eliminated, it should at minimum be updated: the required setback should be eliminated and the regulations concerning signs should be relocated to Chapter 28 "Signs" of the City Code.

- Reform Parking Standards Citywide (Section 35-526 "Parking and Loading Standards") and eliminate parking minimums (excepting accessible parking spaces)

**Outcome:** Updating parking standards by eliminating parking minimums/instituting parking maximums will help to produce more affordable housing by lowering the cost of development. It will also aid in creating more walkable, transit-supportive urban spaces.

- Update Landscape and Tree Planting Standards (Sections 35-511, 512, and 523)

**Outcome:** Updating landscape and tree planting standards for housing development on rapid transit corridors will lessen the cost of development and encourage more affordability in housing.

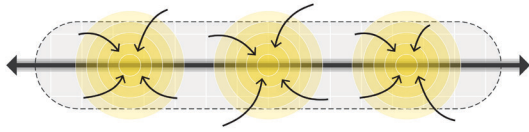
- Streamline Street Construction and Dedication Requirements (Section 35-506 Transportation and Street Design)

**Outcome:** Identify gaps and implement complete pedestrian connectivity through the entire rapid transit corridor. Additionally, improve bike connectivity to and from the corridor. Avoid a patchwork approach to infrastructure improvements.

- Remove requirement for Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA) in TOD zoning districts and mixed-use zoning districts. (Section 35-502 Traffic Impact Analysis and Roughly Proportionate Determination Study)

**Outcome:** Eliminating the TIA requirement can remove barriers to developing high-density, transit-focused communities, making it easier, faster, and cheaper for developers to build projects that support sustainable urban living.





# STATION AREA PLANS

The City, in collaboration with VIA, will develop station area plans along the Rapid Green and Silver Lines, with a focus on the following:

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

A detailed communication plan will be created to involve neighborhoods and local businesses along the corridor, while conducting visioning workshops with stakeholders to ensure the station area plan aligns with both community and citywide goals.

## UNDERSTANDING EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Analyzing current conditions and trends within the ART corridors is essential for creating an effective station area plan. This will involve:

- **Collecting data** on the area's demographics, transit infrastructure, land use, and environmental factors.
- Conducting a **transportation analysis** to assess transit ridership patterns and connectivity gaps, which may include:
  - Evaluating the accessibility, frequency, and ridership of existing transit services.
  - Mapping current pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular connections.
  - Identifying land use and zoning regulations around the station area.
  - Spotting opportunities for mixed-use development.
  - Reviewing population trends, housing types, and economic indicators.
  - Assessing the natural environment, open spaces, and potential sustainability efforts.
- **Understanding the market trends:** Thorough analysis will be conducted within the station areas to assess the demand for housing, retail, and office spaces. This study will also evaluate the financial feasibility of various development scenarios, with a focus on affordable housing and the retention of small businesses.

## TOOLKIT COMPONENTS:

A comprehensive toolkit will be developed to guide the station area plans, which will include:

- **Land Use and Zoning Review** to assess transit-supportive development locations and necessary transitions to lower intensity uses.
- **Public Realm and Infrastructure Design:** Identifying community-supported pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, public spaces, and green infrastructure for consideration into future Bond Programs. Projects could include infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit connections, to enhance first/last mile access.
- **Housing and Economic Development Strategies:** Highlight Affordable Housing and Economic Opportunity strategies in the TOP Framework to prioritize and implement.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

- A phased strategy will be developed for public space, urban design, and infrastructure investments.
- Key partners, including public agencies, private developers, and community organizations, will be identified for implementation.
- Funding will be secured through a mix of local, state, federal resources, and private investments.

## MONITOR PERFORMANCE:

A monitoring system will be established to ensure the station area plans are developed thoroughly and incorporate community input. This system will include:

- Evaluating station area development by tracking key metrics such as mode split for each station, housing production, transit ridership, and community satisfaction.
- Adjusting the plan as needed to address changing market conditions or community needs.



# HOUSING POLICY

By adopting this framework, San Antonio is working to ensure that the advantages of ART and TOD policies are distributed fairly and widely. By carefully addressing differences in access to opportunities based on race, neighborhood, income, and disability, we can allocate our limited resources more effectively, making the most significant impact where it's needed most.

The goals of the Housing Policy Toolkits are to enhance affordability and minimize displacement by preserving existing and producing new affordable housing in developments along the ART corridors. Prioritizing deep affordability is essential, particularly for units affordable to households with incomes less than the area median income.

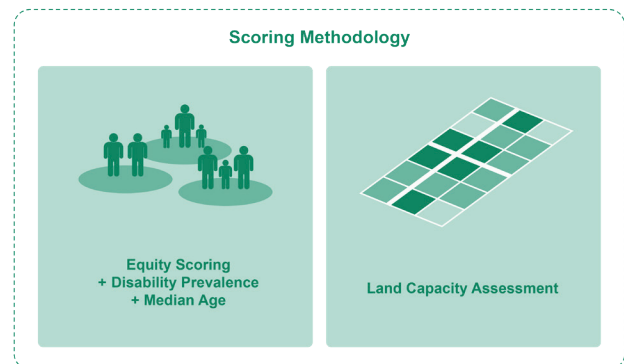
## UNDERSTANDING EXISTING CONDITIONS AND POTENTIAL IMPACT OF TOD:

Growth around station areas could impact existing and new community members in many ways. Positive impacts may include attracting new jobs and businesses, shops and restaurants, increased property values as the area becomes more desirable from proximity to transit, and an influx of community amenities as development occurs. Increased demand to live in walkable urban areas, and limited supply of these areas and housing within them, have driven up costs and reduced affordability in many metropolitan areas, underscoring the need for policies that prioritize affordable housing near transit. Understanding today's conditions helps us know which policy tools are most helpful to encourage the positives of growth while preventing or mitigating potential negative impacts.

As rezoning and development occur, the land use of some properties around a station area could change. In some cases, this may not have any effect on conditions in the area around a station. Other areas, especially areas with vacant land, could experience development and change over time. Assessing what areas are likely to experience change can guide what policies are most needed.

## SCORING METHODOLOGY:

We recommend utilizing human and land use metrics to describe both existing and potential future conditions, around which several housing policy toolkits are organized. To achieve this, we classify our scoring methodology as follows, with NHSD staff set to analyze these metrics during the Phase 2 Station Area Planning process, beginning in 2025.



### Equity Scoring + Disability Prevalence + Median Age:

The Equity Score is a City-developed scale that measures various indicators such as race and income, ranking them from 1 to 10. A low combined score (e.g., 2 or 3) indicates a lower concentration of people of color and households with lower average incomes, while a higher score (e.g., 9 or 10) indicates a higher concentration of these groups. Additional demographic information such as age and prevalence of persons with disabilities can tell us about the people living the community today.

**Land Capacity Assessment:** Evaluating areas likely to undergo change helps determine which policies are most needed. This assessment includes measurements such as the amount of vacant or underutilized land, station area typology, and future land use classification, which is determined through ongoing planning work led by the Planning Department.



## TOOLKIT COMPONENTS:

The proposed toolkits can potentially be mapped using human and land use measures, by giving both equity and land use capacity scores, highlighting the focus (Protection, Production, Balancing) of each strategy. The housing-related policies listed here reflect the combined input and guidance of the Strategic Housing Implementation Plan (SHIP), Housing Policy Framework, SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, ForEveryoneHome, and others. The Policies are also guided by the work of Housing Commission and the Removing Barriers Subcommittee. A full description of the policies can be found in the Appendix.

### Toolkit 1: Protection

Ensure existing residents can remain in their homes and communities by safeguarding affordable housing options against displacement and loss of affordability. Protection policies include:

- Community and Organizational Support
- Financial Assistance and Incentives
- Planning Strategies and Impact Assessment

### Toolkit 2: Production

Encourage development of new affordable housing within proximity to rapid transit systems and enhance accessibility by reducing commuting costs for residents. Production policies include:

- Financial Incentives and Funding Mechanisms
- Policy and Planning Strategies

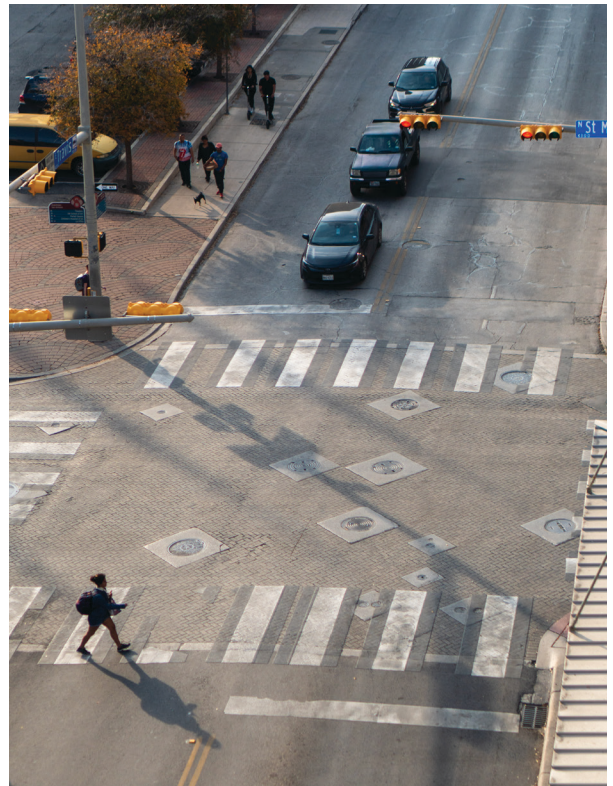
### Toolkit 3: Protection + Production

Strike a balance between building new affordable housing and preserving the existing affordable housing stock which community members call home in ART corridors. Protection + Production policies include:

- Direct Support
- Strategic Initiatives

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The goals of the Housing Policy Toolkits are to enhance affordability and minimize displacement by preserving existing and producing new affordable housing in developments along the ART corridors.



# “TOD” ZONING UPDATE

## BACKGROUND:

On June 22, 2023, City Council approved the execution of two Interlocal Agreements with VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) that established a cooperative partnership with the City of San Antonio to deliver the VIA Rapid Green Line as well as Advanced Transportation District (ATD) funds for advanced transportation and enhanced mobility purposes.

A Council Consideration Request (CCR) was submitted regarding the creation of a Transit- Oriented Plan and Program that would incentivize and reduce barriers to development along the ART routes and improve our multi-modal transportation system. Governance Committee considered the CCR on January 22 and recommended staff move forward with a Task Force for the first phase to review the UDC and make recommendations to update the “TOD” zoning, coordinating this work with the TWG and Removing Barriers to Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Subcommittee under the Housing Commission.

The Task Force includes 26 members representing the San Antonio community. Representation includes city registered Neighborhood Associations along the Green and Silver lines including District representation from Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10, and residents representing organizations that are experts in the transportation and housing industries. The Task Force met monthly on the 4th Thursdays of the month at the Development and Business Services Center Boardroom, 1901 South Alamo, from 4pm to 6pm. These meetings were open to the public to allow for a public comment portion at the end of every meeting, and were heavily attended. The list of Task Force members is located in the Appendix.



**The Task Force includes 26 members representing the San Antonio community.**

## PROCESS TO UPDATE THE ZONING CODE:

In 2018, VIA received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). With these grant funds, VIA acquired a consultant and began working with the City on a proposed update to the current “TOD” zoning code. In 2020, the community engagement process was to begin when it was stalled by the pandemic. This document was used as a basis for the Task Force since the research and creation of a proposed code language was already started, allowing the city to leverage this work.

The Task Force began meeting in February 2024 with an orientation on their roles and responsibilities. Each Task Force Member was asked to participate in review of the code language and report back to their organization to collect feedback and promote the community engagement process. They were provided a background of the initiative, and introduction to transit-oriented development, and an overview of the current “TOD” zoning district and the work ahead of them to update it.

Since March 2024, the Task Force met monthly, with the exception of April, to review and discuss the proposed changes to the current “TOD” zoning code. Task Force members representing neighborhoods relayed concerns with incompatible development adjacent to established residential neighborhoods. Their requests included ensuring that proper setbacks, and appropriate height respect homes that the corridors are adjacent to. Staff recommended proposed standards such as appropriate standards for side and rear setbacks that are similar to the city’s more traditional districts and ensure protection of homes. Additionally, the proposed standards build in the 50 foot rule for height which is a wedding cake approach after the 50 foot rule that height is consistent with the same height as the abutting residential zoned property.

The Task Force started discussing the applicability of “TOD” along the corridors. Typical “TOD” applicability, as seen in other cities, is applied along corridors either through a node approach using a ¼ to ½ mile distance from each station area or a corridor approach using a ¼ to ½ mile distance from the centerline from the roadway. However, Task Force members were concerned that this approach would impact neighborhoods, and language was developed to exclude from the applicability and protect single family zoned, single family used properties less than half an acre, as well as language that would not allow “leapfrogging” into an established residential neighborhood blockface. However, there were still concerns with the applicability along the corridor and the Task Force suggested the creation of a subcommittee of members and other community members to further explore this. The list of the subcommittee members can be found in the Appendix.



The results of the subcommittee's work is a context-sensitive approach to the corridor. Proposed changes were made to focus on the ART project along the Green Line as a result of action taken by the VIA Board adopting it as an Advanced Rapid Transit Corridor, and any additional corridors would require a UDC change to be added. Lastly, the approach to create maps that illustrates the applicability, or eligibility of properties to request to rezone to the updated "TOD" zoning districts, is proposed as a requirement with a stakeholder process codified in the UDC. This allows neighborhoods to be directly involved in the applicability of "TOD" along corridors abutting their communities.

The maps proposed for the Green Line, were developed starting with a view of the ½ mile walkshed. There are areas where more opportunities for appropriate "TOD" development can be implemented, and there are areas along the corridor that are residential with small non-residential lots. The subcommittee met for over a month to review the areas along the corridor and developed a boundary that expands and contracts in width that respects established residential neighborhoods and focuses the applicability of "TOD" eligibility in our Regional Center Plan areas. The Task Force acknowledged the hard work of the subcommittee and members of the Task Force representing the neighborhoods along the corridor. Additionally, the Task Force recommended approval of the proposed boundary for public input during the consideration and adoption process.

### **ADOPTION PROCESS:**

The process to consider and adopt the recommended amendments to the current "TOD" zoning districts will begin in October 2024 and last through December 2024 with a briefing to City Council, presentations and public hearings to Boards and Commissions, Community Meetings and Council consideration in December. Property owners, residents and registered Neighborhood Associations within a ½ mile of the corridor will be invited to provide comment and input on the draft Policy Framework and the proposed amendments to the "TOD" zoning code by attending two Community Meetings or share their feedback online through [SASpeakUp](https://saspeakup.com).

