



San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

San Antonio, Texas
State of the City Report



THE LAKOTA GROUP
Urban Development Services



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HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

To be added in next phase

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

To be added in next phase

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To be added in next phase

APPENDICES

To be added in next phase

INTRODUCTION

Plan Purpose

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

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

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

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

Today, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) manages and oversees 24 local historic districts, and approximately 2,000 individually designated local landmarks and over 1,900 archaeological sites. Furthermore, the roles and responsibilities of Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) and OHP have expanded beyond historic resource protection and management and into urban design review of new development along San Antonio's other most well-known historic and environmental resource - the River Walk. The HDRC also conducts design review for the City's public art and design enhancement program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning Process

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

PHASE ONE

The first phase, which began in February 2009, is a comprehensive assessment of the current historic preservation program. The Office of Historic Preservation, Strategic Plan Steering Committee and consultant team have been reviewing relevant preservation planning documents and policies, identifying potential new historic contexts and themes, assessing the effectiveness of existing incentive programs, identifying potential

partnership opportunities with other groups and organizations, and defining challenges and opportunities in achieving historic preservation planning goals. The first phase has also included various focus group and stakeholder interview sessions as well as a community workshop to gain public input and consensus regarding critical preservation planning issues. Document analyses and results of the interview sessions meetings are incorporated into this “State of the City Report”, which summarizes the current condition of historic preservation in San Antonio. Planning activities to date have included the following:

PROJECT START MEETING (FEBRUARY 10, 2009)

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

RECONNAISSANCE TOUR (FEBRUARY 11-12, 2009)

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

INTERVIEW SESSIONS (FEBRUARY 11-12, 2009)

Several interview sessions were conducted with various City Departments, including Capital Improvements Management Services, City Manager’s Office, Downtown Operations, Housing and Neighborhood Services, and Parks and Recreation. Additional interviews were conducted with Office of Historic Preservation staff and members of the Historic and Design Review Commission.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 (MARCH 11, 2009)

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

INTERVIEW SESSIONS (MARCH 12-13, 2009)

The Lakota Team conducted additional interview sessions with various stakeholder groups, including the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, San

Antonio Conservation Society and City Public Works and Environmental Policy Departments. The Team also conducted an interview session with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other Texas Historical Commission staff.

INTERVIEW SESSIONS (APRIL 9–10, 2009)

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

PRELIMINARY STRATEGIES AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2 (APRIL 29–30, 2009)

The Lakota Team conducted meetings with City department directors, the Steering Committee, and Office of Historic Preservation staff to discuss critical historic preservation planning issues and preliminary plan strategies. A community workshop was conducted with approximately 40 community stakeholders providing input and suggestions regarding preliminary preservation planning strategies.

STATE OF THE CITY REPORT

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

NEXT STEPS

The second stage of the planning process, the “visioning” phase is underway designed to explore ideas and concepts for specific historic preservation planning strategies and initiatives. The last “plan-making” phase will describe, in a formal plan document, preferred historic preservation planning goals and strategies based on the community’s vision and consensus for a strengthened, enhanced historic preservation program. The Lakota Team will engage the community in an additional workshop to obtain feedback regarding final goals and strategies

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Historic Resources

San Antonio's Architectural History

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

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

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

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

- Settlement and the Spanish Colonial Period
- The “Gilded Age”
- Early 20th Century Urbanism.
- Expansion and Modernism

Settlement and the Spanish Colonial Period

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

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

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

Significant historic resources from the Spanish Colonial period include the five extant Spanish Missions, the Governor’s Palace, San Pedro Park, the second oldest municipal park in the United States, the acequia systems and a corresponding aqueduct, and La Villita, the “old Spanish town”, of which the Cos House (c. 1800) is the only extant building

from the Spanish settlement period. The Missions flourished mostly in the mid 1700s but experienced decline and abandonment in succeeding decades as raids from neighboring Indian tribes and diseases reduced the Missions' population. Additionally, by the late 18th century, much of the Native American population was acculturated into the existing Hispanic population. Constructed largely of native limestone and detailed with highly ornamental doors, vaulted ceilings, and bell towers, four of the five Missions today continue to be operating parishes of the San Antonio Catholic Archdiocese. Acequias, man-made waterways and canals, were also constructed as part of the Mission complex to distribute water for farming purposes. Today, the Missions Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan and Espada comprise the San Antonio Mission National Historical Park, which was authorized by the US Congress in 1978. The Alamo is owned by the State of Texas and is operated by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

Other resources of the Spanish Colonial period include Alamo Plaza, which was the Mission Valero's formerly enclosed courtyard, and Military Plaza, the drilling ground of the Presidio de Bexar. Main Plaza, or Plaza de la Islas, as it was originally named, was the scene of several historic events including the signing of a peace treaty with the Apache Indians. The Spanish Governor's Palace, a flat-roofed adobe structure constructed in 1749, was purchased from descendants of the last ad interim Spanish Governor of Texas and restored by the City of San Antonio in 1928. San Fernando Cathedral, located along Main Plaza, was constructed in 1738 by the original Canary Islanders, although it had a Gothic Revival style addition in ca. 1868-1873.

The "Gilded Age"

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

Commerce and Houston Streets became important retail streets and in the 1840s and 50s, German and other immigrants began to settle and develop adjacent neighborhood residential areas such as the Lavaca. The King William neighborhood was originally known as "Sauerkraut Bend." Ultimately, the King William neighborhood developed into one of the most fashionable residential areas of the city, with homes designed and

constructed in the high Italianate and Greek Revival styles for wealthy merchants and businessmen. The King William district would later become the first neighborhood to be designated a National Register of Historic District in the State of Texas. Lavaca's primary building types and architectural styles were more modest in scale and design than King William's with vernacular Gothic Revival and Victorian styles predominating, housing merchants, clerks, butchers and teamsters.

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

The arrival of railroads in the 1870s inaugurated a new period of growth and prosperity in San Antonio, sometimes billed as the City's "Gilded Age." Neighborhoods around the city center began to grow dramatically and newly available materials such as steel and plate glass made building taller structures with transparent storefronts more common in the principal commercial districts of San Antonio. In the central core, street-widening projects that made way for streetcars and various other public improvements, especially along Commerce and Houston Streets, often resulted in the loss of earlier, more modest commercial buildings as well as ones dating from the Spanish Colonial area. In essence, San Antonio was being transformed from its frontier beginnings to a modern city eager to capitalize on its fortunes. High-rise buildings began to penetrate the downtown skyline and newer neighborhoods and garden suburbs began to rise beyond the historic core of San Antonio. The Government and Tobin Hill neighborhoods, as well as Laurel Heights, a series of private place neighborhoods at one time, were developing at this time.

Early 20th Century

During the early part of the 20th Century, San Antonio's Gilded Age continued as the City grew and prospered, assisted by the electrification of streetcar lines, the development of hospitals and power plants, the ongoing expansion of Fort Sam Houston (established in 1876) and other military facilities, and the continued influx of new residents from around the country. In 1910, San Antonio became the largest city in Texas with a population of more than 96,000 people. New high-rise commercial buildings continued to be constructed in the downtown core with Mediterranean, Spanish Colonial Revival and Art Deco design influences.

San Antonio Strategic Historic Preservation Plan

Section 2: Historic Resources

The St. Anthony Hotel (1910), the Casino Club Building (1927), the San Antonio Express Building (1929), the Majestic Theater (1929), and the Smith-Young Tower (1929, the current Tower Life Building) are all examples of the architectural eclecticism that prevailed before the Great Depression.

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

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

Modernism

Following the Great Depression, San Antonio architecture became increasingly influenced by Modernism and its tenets of simplifying building form, the elimination of decorative ornament, and the austere expression of steel and glass. One prominent Modernist architect, O'Neil Ford, designed several important buildings and complexes including the campuses of Trinity University and the University of Texas at San Antonio as well as the Tower of Americas, which was the centerpiece of the 1968 World's Fair, otherwise known as HemisFair. Ford advocated for a refined Modernist architecture that expressed structural clarity and economical design while paying special attention to local climate and site conditions. The development of the HemisFair Plaza would prove to

be controversial as the construction of the Tower of the America's and other associated fair buildings would necessitate the clearance of a 92-acre site, streets and 100 plus historic buildings. As in other major US cities during this period, the experience of urban renewal and the loss of historic resources in San Antonio would motivate various individuals and entities to seek new ways to protect historic resources and encourage reinvestment in the City's inner core.

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

STATE OF THE CITY

San Antonio Today

Today, the City of San Antonio has 24 local historic districts, approximately 2,000 individually designated local landmark buildings, sites and structures, and over 1,900 archaeological sites. There are also 19 districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places and seven buildings listed as National Historic Landmarks, including the Alamo, Spanish Governor's Palace, Mission Concepcion, Espada Aqueduct, and Majestic Theater, among others.

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

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

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

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

The inventory and evaluation phase of the plan-making process has produced this State of the City summary of existing preservation conditions, critical issues, challenges, and opportunities for action. It is a first draft and intended for review, correction, and refinement by City staff. Based on the City's review, the Report will be revised and used as a base for generating alternative solutions that address current historic preservation issues as well as opportunities.

Opportunities + Challenges

"We tout ourselves as an old historic place"

"Why do people come here...it's who we are...they come for the history"

"We need to keep in sight what is important to this city"

"We need a collective vision"

"Our historic resources are limited...they are finite...when gone...it's gone"

"Historic preservation is a way to manage change with respect for heritage".

"We need to make historic preservation easier"

"We need to make historic preservation more desirable"

"Economic development planning needs to be more in harmony with historic preservation planning"

The following is an initial summary of critical issues and challenges facing the San Antonio historic preservation program. This summary is based on the conditions observed during on-site stakeholder interview

Section 3: State of the City

sessions and workshops as well as off-site site research conducted by the consultant team. Existing conditions and resources were organized around the following issue areas:

- **Survey and Designation**
- **Design Review**
- **Economic Development & Incentives**
- **Planning and Public Policy**
- **Education and Advocacy**

Survey + Designation

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

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

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

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

- **Designation Process Complexity** - The process for designating individual landmarks and districts is somewhat unclear within Article VI of the Unified Development Code and lengthy compared to other major U.S. cities. Owner consent provisions also hamper the efforts of neighborhood groups in designating districts. Most stakeholders agree, *“current designation processes are backward and time-consuming”* and need to be rethought.
- **Historic Resource Surveys - Relevance** - Over the years, a number of neighborhoods and districts within the 36 Square Mile Survey Area have been surveyed and inventoried. In many cases, these resource surveys were conducted mostly at a reconnaissance level and in collaboration with various organizations, including the San Antonio Conservation Society and neighborhood organizations, as well as with paid interns and volunteers. Several of these existing resource surveys need to be updated to better reflect current conditions.
- **Historic Resource Surveys - Gaps** - There are other areas of the City both within and outside the 36 Square Mile Survey Area that have historic contexts still in need of exploration and documentation, especially San Antonio’s African-American and Hispanic communities, as well as what can be considered “Modern/Recent Past” building resources that are fewer than 50 years old.
- **Historic Resource Surveys - Availability** - The dissemination and overall accessibility of survey and historic district information to the general public is also a critical issue identified by key stakeholders, especially by those that are actively trying to improve their districts or create new ones. For instance, there is an extensive amount of survey and historic district information within OHP’s current website. The question remains whether such information can be organized more effectively and made more accessible through the City’s internal geographic information systems

Sample Photo Caption

or a new online database managed by the Office of Historic Preservation.

Design Review

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

Sample Photo Caption

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

The actual process for property owners and small developers seeking to alter or change a historic resource is not complicated nor long, although there are public perceptions that it is indeed the case. However, in cases of demolition by neglect or emergencies, the deliberation processes for such cases is indeed complicated and cumbersome as it involves other City departments and agencies.. There is confusion as to not only how it works but also whether the process gives neighborhood organizations and City staff enough time to positively influence decision-making regarding demolishing or renovating buildings. There is concern that

the process is focused mostly on demolition without clear paths for early warning or intervention for possible preservation and rehabilitation (see attached chart).

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

- **Certificate of Appropriateness Review Process** - According to stakeholders and City staff, the COA process needs to be “demystified” for the average property owner and local developers as the perception of navigating the approval process has become “*intimidating without professional assistance.*” In addition, City staff indicates there needs to be a more proactive approach in getting ahead of the many buildings that are deteriorating and end up in need of demolition, as well as in early intervention with property owners to encourage and facilitate renovation and rehabilitation.
- **Design Guidelines** - The HDRC currently uses an adaptation of the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* as a base set of guidelines for reviewing COA applications for the alteration and rehabilitation of historic resources. In contrast, the guidelines of COA applications for new development are more detailed with specific standards for façade design, massing, building height and signage. The design standards within the RIO districts also focus specifically on the design of new development. While several U.S. cities use the *Standards for Rehabilitation* as the primary set of standards for reviewing COA applications, a critical concern going forward is whether more substantial, detailed design guidelines beyond the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards* should be developed and adopted for COA reviews for individual landmarks and historic districts. Another question to be answered is whether separate guidelines should also be developed to address distinct design issues for individual historic districts, as have been completed for the Lavaca and Government Hill Historic Districts and Houston Street.
- **Viewshed Overlays** - Viewshed protection overlay districts have been in place to ensure that public views and vistas to important landmarks and resources, such as the Alamo, are not compromised by inappropriate development. The Alamo Viewshed Overlay 1 has been in place for several years. However, the lower Missions within the National Historical Park are not protected under a viewshed overlay. Nearby development currently threatens the viewshed into the Historical Park, especially along the Roosevelt Road Corridor. The city is currently working to protect the viewshed of Mission San Jose with the Texas Historical

Commission in conjunction with the proposed development of the nearby Mission Drive-In Theater property development.

- **OHP Staffing** - The HDRC and OHP currently review building permits for all exterior and some interior work on individual landmarks, public buildings and buildings within historic districts, including electrical and plumbing systems. Given the HDRC's heavy review workload, there may be opportunities to reassign some permit review responsibilities to other permit review staff within the Planning and Development Services Department. As noted earlier the OHP staff also reviews all new commercial and residential development that exceeds five units or five acres in the combined RIO overlays district, including vendor cart design, signage design, and landscape design.

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

City Planning

The preservation of historic sites, districts, and resources needs to be addressed through a variety of methods, techniques, incentives, and programs. Comprehensive plans, as well as plans at the district and neighborhood levels, are vehicles to establish clear goals and policies for encouraging historic preservation activities and ensuring that revitalization and development initiatives carefully consider San Antonio's historic and archaeological resources. The following is a review of current planning policies and initiatives as well as the legal contexts that support planning and historic preservation activities.

State of Texas Local Government Code

Section 213: Municipal Comprehensive Plans

Section 213 of the State of Texas Local Government Code permits local Texas communities and cities to develop and adopt comprehensive plans with specific elements for land use, transportation and public facilities. In addition, a municipality may define the relationship between a comprehensive plan and development regulations and may provide "... *standards for determining the consistency required between a plan and development*

regulations.” Although Section 213 does explicitly require the development and adoption of historic preservation elements to comprehensive plans, municipalities are not limited in the ability to “*prepare other plans, policies, or strategies as required.*” This Strategic Historic Preservation Plan can be adopted as an element of the City of San Antonio’s *Master Plan*.

San Antonio Code of Ordinances

Article IX: Planning Commission

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

San Antonio City Master Plan

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

Encouraging the protection and reuse of historic resources is also mentioned as strategic goals within the Master Plan’s Vision Statement, within Section C, Community Services, in regards to arts and cultural development, and in Section D, Neighborhoods, in regards to the adaptive use and rehabilitation of historic buildings within San Antonio’s neighborhoods and downtown district. In addition, Section F of the *Master Plan Policies* relates to Urban Design with the overall goal of “... *striving for good urban design (that) shapes San Antonio into a cohesive and attractive array of neighborhoods, commercial centers, and public amenities.*”

City South Plan

A *City South Plan* was adopted in 2003, which includes an extensive historic preservation component. The Plan covers the southern half of the City south of Interstate 410. The document notes, “*The Plan is a guide for future capital improvements, bond recommendations, and land development.*” It addresses a vast, mostly rural area that is rich in South Texas history including farms, ranches, cemeteries, and old bridges. The City’s planning

staff is currently updating the document to reflect current conditions with completion expected in 2009. This effort provides an opportunity for OHP staff to update information, assess action items that have been completed, and provide more input regarding policies and directions for historic preservation.

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

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

Objective - Identify and designate historic districts and historic landmarks.

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

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

- Perform a San Antonio River survey of the section of the river in the south planning area.
- Identify defining characteristics.
- Development design standards and guidelines to protect and enhance the area's defining characteristics.
- Designate a new RIO district in the planning area.
- Provide education and design assistance for owners of designated properties.

Goal: Promote Heritage Tourism.

Objective - Link all historic sites through open space.

- Perform an analysis of open space as it relates to historic sites.
- Examine linkages between historic sites and open space.

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

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

River North District Master Plan

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

Within the Plan's *Development Code*, historic resources are classified within three categories of importance in terms of overall district planning and development goals. Resources classified within the "Local Landmark" and "High Integrity" categories cannot be demolished or relocated. Local landmarks are defined as HE, HS or H in the City's zoning map. The third category, "Medium Integrity", concerns historic resources that may need rehabilitation or restoration but could be considered for possible demolition on approval from Historic and Design Review Commission. Apart from landmarked historic resources within the River North district, the planning area also falls within the River Improvement Overlay districts 2 and 3, which subjects new developments under the new *Development Code* to HDRC review (the development code has not been approved as of this report's production).

Strategic Plan for Community Development

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

Reinvestment Plans:

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

Neighborhood Plans

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

Area/District/Neighborhood Plans

- Arena District/Eastside Community Plan
- Camelot I Neighborhood Plan Update
- Downtown Neighborhood Plan Downtown
- West Neighborhood Plan Update
- HemisFair Park Area Master Plan
- Five Points Neighborhood Plan
- Government Hill Neighborhood Plan Update
- Greater Dellview Area Community Plan
- Guadalupe Westside Community Plan
- Highlands Community Plan

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

Goals & Strategy Reports

- University Park Goals & Strategies Report - July 2004
- Terrell Heights Neighborhood Goals & Strategies Report October 1999
- Thompson Community Association Goals & Strategies Report - November 1998
- Los Jardines Goals & Strategies Report - October 2007

Special Studies

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

Plans in Progress

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

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

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

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

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

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

as a Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization District is also specified as a priority.

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

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

Cultural Collaborative Plan

In 2005, the City's Office of Cultural Affairs concluded a public

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

City Zoning

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

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

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

Evolution of Article VI Over Time

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

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

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

Observations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Division 3 of Article VI concerns archeological sites and cemeteries within the City of San Antonio and contains provisions for the review of potential impacts on both inventoried and unidentified archaeological sites. For projects and activities that will have an adverse impact on identified archaeological sites, as determined through a required impact

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

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

Other Relevant Codes + Ordinances

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

a need to expedite repair or demolition, the Historic Preservation Officer must also be consulted and concurrence sought for demolition of historic landmarks and resources within historic districts. For emergency demolitions, the OHP must determine the feasibility of stabilizing and securing the building within a 72 hour time period. It must also notify the San Antonio Conservation Society and the appropriate registered neighborhood association.

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

Design Guidelines

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

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

in COA proceedings, other than a reference to Section 35-608 through 35-613, which are general design guidelines for new construction.

Only two of San Antonio's 24 local historic districts have specific design guidelines, Lavaca and Government Hill. Houston Street also has a specific set of guidelines although the majority of the street is located in the River Improvement Overlay District 3. In general, both the Government Hill and Lavaca design guidelines discuss the conservation of building materials and ornaments/features of older, historic homes found in these neighborhoods.

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

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

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

Other Policies

Title 13, Chapter 15 of the State of Texas Administrative Code outlines the rules and procedures for local Texas municipalities to participate in the Certified Local Government Program (CLG). The CLG Program is administered jointly between the Department of the Interior,

National Park Service, Texas Historical Commission and designated CLG's of which San Antonio is one, with the central purpose of developing a strong, effective historic preservation program at the local level. Title 13 sets out minimum requirements for the certification of local governments including the adoption of a historic preservation ordinance and establishment of a local commission, the qualifications of commission members, and an on-going program for historic resource surveys. In addition, procedures for nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places and securing CLG grants are also outlined within Chapter 15.

Economic Development

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

Economic Development Programs

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

- **Empowerment Zone** - In partnership with the State, enterprise zones allows the City to offer a package of local and state tax and regulatory benefits to assist businesses in locating, expanding or retaining jobs in economically distressed neighborhoods. Within the City, all census tract block groups, in which at least 20 percent of the residents have an income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level, now qualify as State Enterprise Zone areas. Designated projects are eligible for state sales and use tax refunds on taxes paid for equipment and machinery, building materials taxable services, and utilities used in zone business operations. Such projects are also eligible for state franchise tax credits based on job creation and capital investment. The use of Empowerment Zone benefits for historic preservation should be

further explored, especially in neighborhoods where low-income property owners cannot maintain their historic properties.

- **Incentive Scorecard System** - The Economic Development Department manages the Incentive Scorecard System, which is used to evaluate development projects seeking various City incentives. The current scorecard evaluation system places priority on neighborhood infill development and rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties. However, the scoring system places weight on large development projects of \$10 million or more. It is also unclear what current incentives can be used to facilitate historic preservation activities. The scorecard system is currently being evaluated to determine what additional incentives should be created to encourage downtown and neighborhood reinvestment as part of the overall Base Realignment and Closure inner-city reinvestment strategies currently being developed by the Planning and Development Services Department.
- **Economic Development Briefing Team** - The Briefing Team provides technical assistance and troubleshooting services to developers and investors regarding the site development and permitting process. Technical Assistance efforts of the Team may be helpful to the OHP in briefing investors and developers seeking to rehabilitate historic buildings and properties.

Other Housing and Neighborhood Development Programs

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

- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - Tax Increment Financing is a property-tax-based financing tool that is used to underwrite public improvement costs associated with new development, especially in distressed neighborhoods and vacant or under utilized industrial areas. In San Antonio, the area in which TIF is being used is known as a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ). There are currently 26 TIRZ districts in San Antonio. It appears that only the Houston Street TIRZ uses TIF revenues for historic preservation and façade rehabilitation purposes. Further study of the potential of using TIF revenues more extensively to leverage rehabilitation tax credits and other incentives in facilitating adaptive use projects in downtown and in neighborhoods should be considered (*additional information on TIF is provided in the Incentives section*).

- **Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (NCR)**
Revitalizing traditional neighborhood commercial districts within San Antonio is the focus of the NCR Program. It appears that four commercial districts are currently participating in the NCR Program including the Avenida Guadalupe district, Southtown, East Town and Commerce and the St. Mary's University Neighborhood. At one point, the Southtown district was a participating neighborhood in the Texas Main Street Program. It is unclear if the NCR Program provides technical assistance services to participating organizations beyond financial assistance for building rehabilitation and façade improvements. The Operation Facelift Façade Improvement Grant Program (*discussed further in the Incentives section below*) is a key element for design enhancement in the NCR Program. Overall, the NCR Program has resulted in \$125 million in private investment in new and existing businesses. This successful program may be able to be expanded to other commercial districts throughout the City that have a substantial number of historic buildings.
- **The Homeownership Incentive Program** - The Department's Homeownership Incentive Program (HIP) is designed to assist eligible first-time buyers purchase new or existing homes within San Antonio. The Program provides low-interest loans up to \$12,000 to applicants for down payments, closing costs and prepaid interest, amortized over 5 years, as long as the sales price does not exceed \$110,000, the "affordable home price" established by San Antonio City Council. Applicants must be able to qualify for an FHA, VA, or conventional loan from an institutional lender and the applicant's total gross income cannot exceed 80 percent of the area median income. First-time homebuyers must also receive counseling through the Department's Homebuyers' Club and present a certificate of completion upon application.
- **Rental Rehabilitation Program** - Funds from Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnership Act are used as low-interest loans to underwrite the costs of repairs on single-family and multi-family investment rental property. The property must have structural damage to at least one major system component such as mechanical, electrical, roof, foundation or plumbing. Properties must then be maintained as residential rental property for the term of the loan and be rented to low-income families at fair market value. This program has been used to rehabilitate historic downtown residential buildings.
- **Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation Program** - Similar to the Rental Rehabilitation Program, low-income homeowners can seek and apply for financial assistance, through CDBG funds, to

rehabilitate and renovate their homes. Forgivable and low-interest home improvement loans not to exceed \$35,000 or 75 percent of the after rehabilitation appraised value are offered to eligible applicants. A construction specialist assesses the property to determine the repairs necessary to meet local building codes and it must remain a residential property under the existing ownership for the duration of the loan.

Incentives

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

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

Federal Incentives

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

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

the Texas Historical Commission and work must conform to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation*.

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

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

State Incentives

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

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

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

- **Certified Local Government Grants** - Certified Local Government (CLG) grants enable local Texas communities to develop quality preservation programs and fund projects for training for local preservation commissions, completing or updating surveys of historic resources, producing historical walking or driving tour materials, and preparing preservation plans and National Register of Historic Places nominations. CLG grants require a cash or in-kind service match from the local community.

Certified Local Government grants are funded with money appropriated by the federal government for preservation efforts through the National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). By law, the THC must set aside at least 10 percent of its HPF appropriation for CLG grants each year. Grants typically range from \$250 to \$10,000. Over the past several years, CLG monies have been used by the Office of Historic Preservation to fund a homeowner's guide to historic preservation and a survey of 19th Century farm and ranch complexes in San Antonio's extra-territorial jurisdiction area.

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

City-Level Historic Preservation Incentives

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

Owners of a substantially rehabilitated designated historic landmark, either individually designated or by location within a local historic district, that lease 40 percent or greater of all

rental units to low-income tenants, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements for the San Antonio Metropolitan Statistical Area #1 can qualify for an additional tax exemption. It should be noted that the tax exemption is not tied to the property itself but rather to the owner. When the property is sold to a new owner, the exemption does not carry forward.

- **San Antonio Conservation Society Community Grant Program** - The San Antonio Conservation Society offers grants for the restoration or rehabilitation of residential or commercial historic structures that are at least 50 years old, with priority given to historic resources that are architecturally significant and endangered. All exterior work is generally eligible, although interiors can qualify if they are of landmark quality.

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

Other Local Incentives

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

- **City Tax Abatement Program** - The City of San Antonio Economic Development Department offers a substantial Tax Abatement Incentive of up to 100 percent on real estate or personal property taxes on improvement values for a maximum term of up to 10 years. Individual Tax Abatement applications are subject to final negotiation and approval by City Council. Applicants must be engaged in one of the following qualifying industries: aviation and aerospace, biotechnology, creative services, green technology, finance, corporate and regional headquarters activities, or downtown Urban Significant Projects.
- **City Tax-Increment Financing** - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a municipal financing tool that can be used to finance new public improvements and infrastructure, although it is unclear if monies can be directed to the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Tax Increment Financing allows future ad valorem taxes and sales tax revenues to be pledged to finance public infrastructure improvements. In some states, TIF can be used to

underwrite façade improvement programs or equity contributions for substantial historic building adaptive use projects.

- **Community Development Block Grants** - Community Development Block Grant monies are current being used to underwrite several programs within the Housing and Neighborhood Services Department, including the Operation Facelift Façade Grant Improvement Program.
- **Enterprise Zone** - An Enterprise Zone (EZ) is an economic development tool that allows the community to partner with the State to offer a package of local and state tax and regulatory benefits to assist businesses seeking to locate, expand or retain jobs in economically distressed areas. Within the City of San Antonio, all census tract block groups in which at least 20 percent of the residents have an income at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level now qualify as State Enterprise Zone areas.

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

Additional Incentives

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

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

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

be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops and education programs.

- **National Trust Community Investment Corporation** - The National Trust Community Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, works with property owners in making equity investments in substantial building adaptive use projects that qualify for Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and, when available, New Markets Tax Credits. Property owners include for-profit developers, nonprofit organizations and local governments. The Corporation has worked on several tax-credit projects in San Antonio over the last several years and even underwrote the development of Lavaca's design guidelines publication.
- **Save America's Treasures Program** - Administered by the National Park Services and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Save America's Treasures provides grants for preservation and conservation work on cultural artifacts and historic buildings, districts, structures and sites. Artifacts include collections, documents, sculpture, and works of art. Grants are awarded to federal, state, local, and tribal government entities, and non-profit organizations through a competitive matching-grant program.
- **Preserve America Grants** - Preserve America is a federal initiative that supports community efforts to preserve important historic and cultural resources. The goals of the program include a greater shared knowledge about the nation's past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country's cultural and natural heritage assets, and support for the economic vitality of local communities. The Preserve America matching-grant program provides funding to designated Preserve America Communities to support a variety of activities including heritage tourism, surveying and documenting historic resources, interpreting historic sites, planning, marketing, and training. San Antonio has been designated a Preserve America community.

Potential Incentive Models

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

- **Chicago Streamlined Tax Increment Financing Program & Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF)** - The Streamlined-TIF Program provides expedited access to valuable grants for

the improvement of industrial, commercial, retail or residential mixed-use properties in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts citywide. The program incorporates an easy-to-use application form and efficient approval process to pay up to 25 percent of renovation and rehabilitation costs.

Assistance ranges from \$25,000 to \$1,000,000. Grants are paid in annual installments to participants following project completion and do not have to be repaid. Expenses eligible for TIF grants include: certain environmental remediation measures, building rehabilitation and repair, permanently affixed signs or awnings, rehabilitation and remodeling of existing tenant improvements, professional fees related to the redevelopment project, and up to 30 percent of an applicant's construction period interest costs.

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

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

The Revolving Fund, which is currently capitalized at \$2 million in assets, is used to purchase endangered and abandoned properties for resale to responsible owners. In turn, new property owners are eligible to apply for low-interest rehab loans, especially to those

who cannot obtain conventional financing due to income level and/or condition of building and surrounding neighborhood.

The key component of the Revolving Fund is the Neighborhood Loan Program, which provides loans secured by a first or subordinated second mortgage, personal guarantees, and additional collateral as required. Loan terms are usually determined on a case-by-case basis. This program focuses on Providence's low and moderate-income historic neighborhoods in need of revitalization and stabilization. A second component, the DOWNCITY Loan and Grant Program, provides loan and grants to stimulate investment in historic commercial districts. Storefront loans will typically be based on the prime rate with a term no longer than 72 months.

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

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

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

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

In the 1990s, the Historic Savannah Foundation, with an initial investment of \$170,000 in eight threatened historic homes in

the Beach Institute neighborhood, generated a reinvestment amount of \$3 million worth of property rehabilitation. This neighborhood, which is a mixed-income, multi-cultural area on the eastern edge of the Savannah's famed Landmark District, has now seen the rehabilitation of approximately 60 buildings and is an attractive place to live once again.

- **Savannah Mayor's Alliance to Save Historic Houses** - The Mayors Alliance to Save Historic Houses (MASHH) is an initiative by Savannah Mayor Otis Johnson, the City of Savannah Property Maintenance Division, and the Historic Savannah Foundation to eliminate blight, improve public safety, promote economic development, support better land use, and foster better community relations. The Foundation and the City are monitoring and developing strategies to save the historic properties on the Mayor's 100 Worst Properties list, which was first issued in September 2007.

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

City Commissions + Agencies

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

Historic and Design Review Commission

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

historic districts, approximately 2,000 individual local landmarks and over 1,900 archaeological sites.

Office of Historic Preservation

The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) is an independent agency within the Office of the San Antonio City Manager that manages the operations of the Historic and Design Review Commission and other functions related to historic resource surveys, COA permit enforcement, education and advocacy, and archeological activities. The Office is currently staffed by nine personnel including the Historic Preservation Officer, an Architectural Historian, a City Archeologist, a Senior Planner with extensive experience in Code Compliance and Demolition procedures, four planners with expertise in Community Planning, Community and Regional Planning with a specialty in Historic Preservation, Environmental Design, and Public Administration as well as an Administrative Secretary. Staff performs a wide variety of tasks including public education and outreach, archaeological reviews, surveys, plat reviews, tax credit reviews, research, code enforcement, and reviews for demolitions, repairs and maintenance, billboards, telecommunication towers, San Antonio Water System and CPS utility, as well as landmark and district designations, HDRC and sub-committee reviews, and special projects such as bus shelters, NCAA sporting events and other special activities.

Planning and Development Services Department

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

The Department is divided into four divisions including Land Development, which handles environmental planning and engineering issues; Building Development, which concerns itself with subdivision development review; Specialized Planning with focus on regional planning efforts and geographic information systems; and Comprehensive Planning. The Comprehensive Planning Division areas of responsibility include community development, neighborhood planning, urban design, and the management of the Unified Development Code. The Comprehensive Planning Division comprises two different sections, Community Development and Neighborhood Planning and Urban Design.

The Community Development Section focuses on implementing the *2008 Strategic Plan for Community Development*, which documents overall strategies for improving housing, urban environments and economic opportunities within the City of San Antonio.

The Neighborhood Planning and Urban Design Section's primary function is to provide technical assistance and resources to local neighborhoods in the development and adoption of neighborhood plans. Neighborhood plan components include land use, housing economic development, community facilities and transportation. It is unclear if there is a formal policy that all neighborhood plans have to include historic preservation elements although several neighborhood plans have detailed chapters on historic resources. Every five years, neighborhood plans are reviewed and updated, if necessary, to stay current with public improvements and land use trends. This Section also administers the Neighborhood Urban Design program within the existing conservation districts and corridor overlay areas, which assists local neighborhoods create design standards to ensure the compatibility of new development with existing neighborhood character. Conservation districts and corridor overlays are special planning tools used to maintain neighborhood and corridor character while promoting appropriate infill development through the adoption of specific design standards. In addition, the Section also provides assistance for neighborhood organizational development and capacity-building initiatives.

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

Economic Development Department

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

Housing and Neighborhood Services Department

The Housing and Neighborhood Services Department has two major functions — the implementation of housing improvement

and development programs as well as the management of the Code Compliance division which provides administrative support to the Dangerous Structures Determination Board. Major Department initiatives include the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program, focusing on neighborhood commercial districts, and various financial assistance programs for housing rehabilitation and new construction. The Department also manages the City's tax-increment financing program.

Dangerous Structures Determination Board

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

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

San Antonio River Commission

Established in 2007, the seven-member San Antonio River Commission provides comprehensive oversight regarding development and operations of the San Antonio River. The Commission advises the City Council, the Historic and Design Review Commission, Planning and Zoning Commissions, and the Board of Adjustments regarding zoning, land use and design management issues related to both public and private projects within the six San Antonio River Improvement Overlay Districts (RIO's). The Commission also works with the San Antonio River Authority and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the implementation of the \$279 million River Improvement Project, which seeks to restore various

flood control and recreational improvements along 13 miles of the San Antonio River from Josephine Street to Loop 410 South.

Capital Improvement Management Services

Capital Improvement Management Services (CIMS) was formed in 2007 to manage the City's \$550 million Bond Program, which will underwrite various public infrastructure and improvement projects including the construction of new streets, bridges, sidewalks, drainage facilities, parks, athletic facilities, libraries and public health centers. Bond Program construction projects will be funded until 2012. CIMS manages all facets of Bond Program projects including design, construction and inspection, and coordinates consultant selection, construction contractor procurement, and project delivery for all capital improvement construction projects. It works closely with the OHP on archaeological and historic cultural resources compliance requirements and HDRC on permitting reviews.

Public Works Department

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

Parks and Recreation Department

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

Office of Environmental Policy

The Office of Environmental Policy manages several programs and initiatives including the Sustainability Task Force, created to collaborate on citywide efforts to integrate sustainability principles within municipal

operations, and the Mayor’s Sustainable Building Task Force, which was organized to develop and implement the *Mission Verde Plan*. Adopted in early 2009, the *Plan* outlines comprehensive goals and initiatives to invest in green technologies, transportation systems and building retrofitting programs. In particular, Initiative 6 of the *Plan* — “Build a Green Retrofit Program for existing homes and buildings”, recommends that a permanent source of capital be made available to home and building owners wishing to undertake energy efficiency retrofits. Interestingly, the *Plan* does not recognize historic preservation as a significant and viable sustainability strategy. The Office of Environmental Policy will also be managing a new apportionment of Federal stimulus funds for a residential weatherization program.

Office of Cultural Affairs

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

Education + Advocacy

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

Despite the success of private-sector advocacy work, there still is a feeling that “...developers and the general public do not recognize the value of historic preservation or the benefits of being in a historic district.” For others, the City, the OHP, and the Conservation Society need to be “...*facilitators and educators...*” rather than just the “...*design police.*”

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

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

The following is a brief overview of the private sector organizations and entities actively involved in historic preservation advocacy, outreach and education activities. This is not an exhaustive list and other organizations will added in succeeding plan drafts.

San Antonio Conservation Society

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

Over the years, the Society has purchased various historic properties threatened with demolition as permanent holdings of the organization, has accepted easements on others, and has purchased, rehabilitated and redeeded properties to other entities. The Society also conducts a variety of educational and outreach activities such as regular bus and walking tours, an annual awards program and seminar for secondary school teachers, and publishes various books and materials including position papers on important historic preservation issues.

In addition, the Society maintains two house museums and offers grants for the rehabilitation of endangered historic properties and for educational and research purposes. The Society undertakes various fundraising activities including its successful "Night in Old San Antonio" (NIOA).

American Institute of Architects, San Antonio Chapter

The San Antonio Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) is the fourth largest AIA chapter in the State of Texas and provides resources and support services for architects and design professionals

within the 22-county San Antonio region. The Chapter also carries out various education and advocacy activities including the publication of architectural guidebooks, including the recent Traditions and Visions guide, and position statements on current design and preservation issues. A position paper on historic building demolitions was released by the Chapter in May 2008.

Build San Antonio Green

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

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park

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

Los Compadres de San Antonio Missions

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

Neighborhood Associations

There are an estimated 200 neighborhood associations in San Antonio, many of which have been active in local preservation efforts. Various neighborhood associations have advocated for the development and adoption of new neighborhood plans, design guidelines, and historic district designations. There is potential for engaging the neighborhood associations in the variety of planning, education and advocacy activities that build a historic preservation ethic within San Antonio.

University of Texas at San Antonio

The University of Texas at San Antonio currently offers professional degree and certificate programs in historic preservation and has an active

Center for Archaeological Research, which conducts field schools and various grant and research related work. In addition, the San Antonio Conservation Society has endowed a professorship within the University's School of Architecture. The University recently partnered with the Office of Historic Preservation to present an educational workshop on historic window rehabilitation and maintenance.

Other Preservation Planning Issues

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

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

