executive sunnary Brooks Area Regional Center Plan







Brooks Area Regional Center Plan Overview

The Brooks Area Regional Center Plan is the first in a series of sub-area plans that implement the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2016. Sub-Area Plans will be completed for 30 geographies across the city to provide for more equitable planning and the development of one citywide land use map.

Anchored by the developing Brooks campus, the Brooks Area Regional Center is one of San Antonio's emerging activity centers and is already a major catalyst for growth on the south side. This Regional Center has experienced slower population and household growth than other parts of San Antonio in the past, but recent investments have spurred growth and redevelopment. Demand for housing and community amenities is growing, while institutional and large businesses are increasingly drawn to the south side. Opportunities abound to improve mobility, housing, and employment while protecting and restoring natural resources.

The Brooks Area contains the Highland Forest, Highland Hills, and Hot Wells neighborhoods, as well as Brooks (formerly known as the Brooks City Base), and the Mission Historic District. Major institutions include Mission Trail Baptist Hospital, Brooks Development Authority, and University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) School of Osteopathic Medicine.

The long-range, sub-area planning effort was led by a dedicated Planning Team made up of area neighborhood leaders and residents, as well as partners representing major businesses and agencies in the area. These included the Brooks Development Authority, the South San Antonio Chamber, the San Antonio River Authority, VIA, and various City departments.

Plan Framework

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

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

Vision

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

In 2040, the Brooks Area Regional Center is a friendly, prosperous, healthy, engaged, and educated family. The Brooks Area is strong and supportive; pulling together not only in times of crisis, but celebrating wins—big and small.

Its evolution will be a leading example of how innovation, equity, quality growth, and environmentally-responsible practices paired with the inherent traits of the South-eastside, no longer born of necessity but a continued community identity—pride, hard work, perseverance, tolerance, gratitude and a desire to be of service to one another, will have phenomenal positive impacts.

The Brooks Area Regional Center cultivates positive and authentic human experiences and seeks to improve both day-to-day living in conjunction with the long-term quality-of-life for the community.







Goals

Based on input, several themes emerged throughout the process and these are reflected in the five goals noted on this page. These goals were developed and then refined by Planning Team members as well as participants at the second community meeting.

The Vision and Goals reflect the strong sense of pride and history in the area that the community wishes to build on. Stakeholders want an area that is inclusive, provides options for transportation and community amenities. There is also a desire to promote economic opportunity that builds community prosperity, while ensuring a healthy and safe environment for area residents.

• BELONGING, BONDING & BALANCE

• ATTACHMENT, ACCESS, AUTHENTICITY & ACCOUNTABILITY

REINVESTMENT, RETENTION & RESPONSIBILITY

• COMPETENCE, COLLABORATION & COLLECTIVE RESILIENCE

 PRIORITIZE PARKS, PUBLIC HEALTH & PRESERVATION OF GREEN













Land Use

The identified land uses support stability in existing neighborhoods, enhancement of mixed-use corridors and destinations within the Regional Center, preservation of both agricultural/floodplain and employment uses, and development patterns sensitive to natural and open space assets such as the San Antonio River and Salado Creek.

Generally speaking, as directed by the goals and policies of the adopted SA Tomorrow plans, the land use plan encourages growth and increased density at various scales in mixed-use centers and focus areas and along key transit and community corridors.

- Prioritize City-initiated rezoning for single-family residential areas that are currently over zoned.
- Use City-initiated large area rezoning in mixed-use focus areas and corridors to support implementation of designated new land uses, support catalytic development, and encourage transit-supportive development near future VIA stations.
- Evaluate, and update as needed, zoning and development regulations that impede implementation of Brooks Area Regional Center Plan land uses and desired urban form.
- The Planning Department should continue to work with the Brooks Development Authority and developers of the State Hospital Focus Area to provide land use and zoning designations that facilitate the growth, vitality, and economic prosperity.









Focus Areas

The focus areas were identified by the community and project team as those most suited for growth and change in the Brooks Area Regional Center. The five identified areas, while each unique, all present opportunities to take advantage of their strategic location with the City and Regional Center to accommodate growth while furthering the SA Tomorrow goals of creating compact walkable places where San Antonio residents can live, work, and play. The five areas identified range from commercial corridors, such as the Goliad Corridor, to larger areas that currently have considerable areas of undeveloped open space, such as the San Antonio State Hospital site.

The recommendations focus on providing mixed-use destinations that are safe and easily accessible by various modes of transportation. They speak to ensuring adequate transitions between newer development and existing single-family neighborhoods and also balancing development with the protection of open spaces.

- Create mixed-use community destinations that increase residential, employment, and recreational opportunities throughout the Brooks Area Regional Center.
- Ensure focus areas can be easily and safely accessed by a range of travel modes including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options.
- Ensure adequate buffers and transitions between new, higher-intensity development in focus areas and single-family neighborhoods.
- Balance development and investment in focus areas with protection and enhancements of open spaces, including parks, natural resources, and other sensitive areas.





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Catalytic Projects

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

#1 SAN ANTONIO STATE HOSPITAL SITE



The first area is a 55-acre lot on the San Antonio State Hospital site, which has potential to be developed in many different ways given that this property is a greenfield site. To meet a growing demand for housing, the property should be thoughtfully developed to provide a mixture of housing types, retail uses, and community amenities, creating an asset for both current and future Brooks Area residents. Natural features should be preserved, abundant open spaces should be provided, and development should be sensitive to the nearby San Antonio River Mission Reach, historical context, and surrounding neighborhoods.

This conceptual design shows a 13 dwelling unit-per acre-development that would include a variety of residences, including single-family homes as well as other options like townhomes. Twenty percent of the area in this design has been dedicated to open space and there is local retail, access to the San Antonio River, and recreational and social spaces included. The creek that runs through the site is preserved and enhanced as a valued amenity.

Existing Site

#2 GOLIAD ROAD AND HOT WELLS



The second catalytic site is Goliad Road, which is an established, commercial corridor with strong potential for implementation of complete streets and redevelopment at key intersections. The streetscape environment should be reoriented towards pedestrians; development should integrate new buildings with existing structures; and businesses should become a greater asset to the surrounding neighborhoods. The catalytic site at Goliad Road and Hot Wells Boulevard is the midpoint of the Goliad Corridor. It is not currently pedestrian friendly and contains several vacant buildings and parcels. Right now, it is simply a place where people pass through on their way to something else.

The reimagined intersection is a mixeduse node with space for owner and renter-occupied housing, medical offices, cafes, and other retail. The node would also have social spaces for art galleries and a farmer's market. In the future, it becomes a place where people live, work, and play.

Existing Site







Mobility

Brooks' emergence as a developing Regional Center for growth increases the importance of emphasizing mobility and transportation solutions that align with and support various aspects of the Brooks Area Regional Center Plan, including land use, amenities, focus areas and catalytic sites, and economic development.

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

- Continue implementing the San Antonio Vision Zero Action Plan.
- Complete the multimodal layered network and trail system and work with partners to establish new connections.
- Alleviate congestion with multimodal solutions.
- Consider freight movements and needs in land use and transportation planning activities.
- When VIA Rapid Transit Corridor service is implemented in the Brooks Area, prioritize improvements that provide safe connections to the transit line for people walking, bicycling, or getting dropped off in a vehicle.















Amenities and Infrastructure

The community has expressed strong desires for improved access to existing amenities and a variety of improvements to make the neighborhoods within the Brooks Area more complete and livable.

From improved tree canopy, gateway features and public art, to recreational opportunities and healthy food options, participants in the planning process clearly articulated the need for improving established neighborhoods while planning to ensure new neighborhoods include the essential components of a healthy and vibrant community.

- Enhance the experience for pedestrians and bicyclists moving along and across major thoroughfares through safety and streetscape improvements.
- Increase active and passive recreational opportunities throughout the Brooks Area Regional Center, consistent with the SA Parks System Plan.
- Maintain and enhance the tree canopy and other shade elements in existing and new development.
- Improve opportunities to grow, purchase, and share healthy foods.
- Create additional nodes of activity with flexible community gathering spaces.















Housing

The Brooks Area Regional Center has not advanced as quickly as other parts of the city in terms of investment and new housing options over the past few decades. However, the redevelopment of the former Brooks Air Force Base has attracted new employment, catalyzed new multifamily development, and generated momentum for further progress.

As demand continues to grow, there is a need to maintain and create some affordable housing options along with the market-rate development in order to address impacts of rising property values and rental rates, particularly for lower-income renters. Generally, the Brooks Area plan strives to balance both owner and renter-occupied housing while increasing the number of housing options overall. The Planning Team agreed with the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of the need to add new housing at 80-120% of Area Median Income (AMI) in order to provide a better mix of housing in the area.

- Support neighborhood stability and a balance of homeownership and rental opportunities.
- Increase the diversity of housing options within the Brooks Area Regional Center in order to support and attract residents at all stages of life and income levels.
- Strive to have at least 25% of housing units affordable to households earning less than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Economic Development

Compared to other employment centers across the city, the Brooks Area has a relatively small workforce of people living in close proximity to the area, and generally with more modest educational attainment. The large employers in the area are an asset, but the area lacks a diversity of job opportunities and employers outside of major institutions such as hospitals and schools and retailers. As a new growth area, existing infrastructure and amenities needed to attract new businesses may not be present when certain opportunities arise.

The area has just begun its renaissance and growth into a major employment center in the city. The State's first investment project under the Opportunity Zones Program, which was designed to encourage long-term investment in low-income communities, will be in the Brooks Area Regional Center.

- Continue to invest in infrastructure and amenities that build on the Live, Work, Learn, Play, Stay environment in the Brooks Area.
- Diversify employers and job opportunities in the Brooks Area Regional Center.
- Create an environment that fosters innovation and small business development by leveraging the health, science, and education networks present in the Brooks Area.







Neighborhood Profiles & Priorities

Neighborhood Profiles and Priorities were developed to provide special attention to prior planning efforts and address specific priorities from participating neighborhoods. Each recommendation aligns with either a previously adopted plan, a sub-area plan recommendation, or with other neighborhoods in the Brooks Area. More information about the Neighborhood Profiles and Priorities can be found within the Brooks Area Plan.

HIGHLAND FOREST

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

Priority Examples

- Sidewalk and Curb Reconstruction
- Tree Canopy

HIGHLAND HILLS

The Highland Hills Neighborhood Priorities shown here were developed using key recommendations from the Highlands Community Plan and through the SA Tomorrow outreach process.

Priority Examples

- Trails and Connectivity
- Community Reinvestment
- Home Rehabilitation

HOT WELLS

The Hot Wells Neighborhood Profile and Priorities were developed from the key recommendations of the South Central San Antonio Community Plan and through community outreach.

Priority Examples

- Trails and Connectivity
- Complete Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Identity



Implementation

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

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



OPPORTUNITIES PROXIMITY TO CORE

PRESA - SMALL Biz

NEW DEVELOPMEN NOTRBY

- Commercial @ PREST & MILITARY

-"ASYLUM"

- TOPOGRADAMY

CREEK

- MISSION PROXIMITY

- FOND IMPEONEMENT

RIVERFRONT

CONSTRAINTS

- TOPOGRAPHY
- STATEHOSPITAL
- CEMETERY
- FLOOD PLAIN
- NO DIRECT TRANSIT
- . ENVIRONMENTAL
- PECAN TREES
- UTILITIES
- RAIL PROXIMITY
- - - AREA - WORKFORCE &
 - AFFORDABE HOSING - CONSORVATION
 - PARK/05 - MIBSION REACH HOTWELLS
 - SUPPORT









