

1.6 Vision for Revitalization

The vision for River North has been developed by studying the existing condition of its public spaces and private buildings – and then designing modifications to those conditions – street by street and block by block. The intended result of these many smaller-scale design and operational improvements is an urban structure comprised of 4 neighborhoods and 1 corridor, as diagramed above and described below.

River Corridor: This one-mile stretch of the Museum Reach of the San Antonio River is fronted by 13 blocks of River North, and passes through each of the four neighborhoods in the Plan area.

Performing Arts Neighborhood: This 19-block area flanks Third Street, Fourth Street and McCullough Avenue from the River to the I-37 expressway at the eastern Plan boundary.

Fine Arts Museum Neighborhood: This area is bounded on the east by the River, on the west and north by the I-35 expressway and the Pearl Brewery, and on the south by Brooklyn Street.

Broadway Neighborhood: This 26-block area along the east side of the River extends from the northern Plan boundary to McCullough Avenue and from the river to Interstate 37.

Madison Square Park Neighborhood: This 35-block area from the west bank of the River to I-35 is anchored on the south by Madison Square Park and the Southwest School of Art and Craft, and on the north by Providence High School.

1.6.1 Place-Specific Objectives

At right, the strategy for revitalizing River North is articulated as objectives aimed at leveraging, directing and coordinating existing resources and future investment.

A River Corridor Objectives

The existing patchwork of parking lots, vacant parcels and the backs of 1- and 2-story buildings is intended to become a series of lively riverfront parks, fronted by mid- to high-rise buildings ~~from 3 to 20 stories in scale~~. The Museum Reach is currently undergoing improvements extending the historic RiverWalk and catalyzing the development of both sides of the river.

1. Link the ~~Pearl Brewery area north of IH 35~~ to Downtown for residents and visitors alike;

2. Articulate the river improvements to express a physically distinct sequence that is reinforced through corresponding landscape, building scale and frontages;

3. Emphasize the different character in River North from downtown, ~~through strategically located figural public/private open spaces and pedestrian connections that span across and link both sides of the river and build on the river improvements project already underway;~~

4. Provide linkages to the River by allowing property owners to connect to River improvements already underway;

~~4. 5. Align the edges of the corridor with buildings and designs that maintain an open and natural character along the river while maintaining solar access through a shade and shadows study to ensure proper vegetative lighting;~~

~~5. 6. Terminate figural open spaces through the placement of key building facades or small, free-standing buildings, and by the vertical extension of building mass to produce slender visual punctuations to enhance a particular view or terminate a vista along a street. Concentrate the placement, massing, and form of new buildings in a manner that shapes open spaces to enhance a particular River view or street level vista;~~

6. 7. Integrate stormwater management into visible landscape design;

7. 8. Provide authentic civic and cultural attractions based in local history and culture that generate visitors to surrounding districts.

B Performing Arts Neighborhood Objectives

The area will be transformed from its current patchwork of parking lots and large buildings to a vital pedestrian-oriented park-once civic district focused on the Performing Arts. It is strategically located to become a regional center for the arts within walking distance of the River Parks, the Broadway Neighborhood, Downtown, and the RiverWalk.

1. Restore/renovate resources such as the Municipal Auditorium and ~~the Scottish Rite Temple other notable underutilized and/or historic structures;~~

2. Enhance the Neighborhood's appeal through ~~frequent trolley service, and a string of both mobile and permanent public art installations;~~

3. Promote mobile and permanent public art installations along city blocks and within parks and open spaces that are visible from street and river levels;

~~3. 4. Generate civic open space that physically complements the functions and presence of adjacent buildings;~~

~~4. 5. Support and connect this Neighborhood with Downtown and the Broadway Neighborhood through mid-rise mixed-use development;~~

~~5. 6. Utilize 'Park-Once' dispersal of strategically located public parking to leverage fewer spaces to the benefit of commercial and office space.~~

C Museum Neighborhood Objectives

The historic former Lone Star Brewery – now the San Antonio Museum of Art – will anchor the transformation of this low-intensity area of vacant and underutilized land to a thriving, arts-oriented, mixed-use neighborhood along the west bank of the River. Schools and historic residences will further enrich the civic and residential fabric and life of this Museum Neighborhood.

1. Link the Neighborhood to Downtown via river bus and trolley service;

2. Generate a civic open space framed by mixed-use development that emphasizes the Museum;

3. Emphasize the incorporation of public art into civic spaces;

~~3. 4. Realize mid- to high-rise mixed-use development to broaden the Neighborhood's functions;~~

~~4. 5. Utilize Park-Once dispersal of strategically located public parking to leverage fewer spaces to the benefit of commercial and office space.~~

D Broadway Neighborhood Objectives

The existing gap-toothed pattern of 1- to 4-story buildings and parking lots, is envisioned as three distinctive urban corridors within this neighborhood – Broadway, Avenue B and Alamo Street – woven into a neighborhood by the cross streets that tie it to the River. An area of relatively high density around Maverick Park anchors the north end of this neighborhood with the Performing Arts Neighborhood anchoring the south boundary.

1. Generate mixed-use development with neighborhood-serving retail and housing or office above;

2. Configure Broadway and its frontages to promote pedestrian activity as well as facilitate the Fiesta San Antonio and its wide range of activity;

3. Enhance mobility to and from the corridor particularly east across I-35 ~~7~~ to the Dignowity Hill area;

4. Provide the Avenue B and Alamo Street areas with local services, promoting east-west mobility;

5. Enhance the visual experience along Broadway by concentrating public art installations along the corridor, culminating in Maverick Park;

~~5. 6. Increase on-street parking to minimize off-street parking, particularly guest-parking;~~

~~6. 7. Utilize Park-Once dispersal of strategically located public parking to leverage fewer spaces to the benefit of commercial and office space.~~

E Madison Square Park Neighborhood Objectives

The neighborhood is currently characterized by a mix of commercial uses, in an uneven mix of 1- to 8-story buildings. With the anticipated investment in the Performing Arts Neighborhood and AT&T corporate center on its eastern boundary and one of San Antonio's great urban parks at its center, this neighborhood has the potential to become a lively and diverse urban neighborhood, within walking distance of the Downtown core.

1. Maintain historic resources to provide physical continuity;

2. Leverage the appeal of the Madison Square Park- 5.67-acre open space through appropriate infill development of low- to mid-rise along its perimeter;

3. Prioritize the concentration of public art installations within the park to promote interest and enhance the visual experience;

~~3. 4. Enhance mobility through transit service to this neighborhood;~~

~~4. 5. Focus more intense development toward the southern end of the neighborhood, adjacent to Downtown;~~

~~5. 6. Increase on-street parking to minimize off-street parking, particularly guest-parking;~~

~~6. 7. Encourage relatively high density along the western edge as a screen across I-35;~~

~~7. 8. Expand employment opportunities to support and be supported by mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhoods.~~