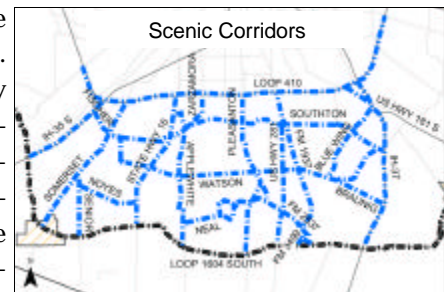


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A combination of regulatory tools, public infrastructure improvements, public/private partnerships, and active citizen participation are necessary to implement the plan. A variety of regulatory tools and incentives should be considered by the City of San Antonio to implement the City South Community Plan. Factors that will be used to recommend appropriate zoning include consideration of the public health, safety, and general welfare and protection of historical/cultural areas. The City shall consider the size, shape and characteristics of parcels and their suitability for different types of development intensity. In addition to the factors that may be set out in the land use plan, general Master Plan goals to promote affordable housing, economic development, mixed-use, and pedestrian oriented development also may guide the zoning decisions.

Regulatory Tools

Regulatory tools to implement the land use plan are found in the *Unified Development Code* (zoning and subdivision ordinances). Zoning tools include base districts, special districts, and overlay districts that provide specific development standards. Special districts address unique situations and replace the standards and requirements of the base districts. Special districts offer creative alternatives to rigid parcel based zoning. Overlay districts provide specific development or conservation standards for areas with several different base zones without changing the underlying use in the base zoning district. Examples of overlay districts are historic districts, river overlay districts, and corridor overlay districts. Development approval is subject to specific requirements for parks, open space, floodplains, street design, landscaping, tree preservation, and parking areas. Other tools such as the signs and billboards ordinance can provide additional appearance controls. For example, in April, 2003, the City Council amended the scenic corridor provisions of the signs and billboards ordinance to prohibit new billboards along arterials, state highways and freeways in the Southside Initiative planning area.



Providing an alternative to urban sprawl, sustainable development focuses on creating more resource efficient and livable communities, with more accessible land use patterns. The City finds that vast acreages of single-use zoning produces uniformity with adverse consequences such as traffic congestion, air pollution and social alienation. Accordingly, zoning designations which promote mixed uses subject to high degrees of design control are not necessarily deemed inconsistent and shall be considered. Special districts designed to address the unique economic, environmental, and historical qualities of the planning area may be drawn from current zoning and subdivision tools in the *Unified Development Code*. Provisions pertaining to walkable neighborhoods, scenic corridors, access management, buffers, and urban design may be included in the special district design to address the vision articulated in the community planning process.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

Future residential development should be planned to protect the area's valuable resources while enhancing property values. The establishment of traditional, mixed-use communities that are pedestrian and transit friendly and consume less resources are desired. One of the use patterns that could be applied is the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND). TNDs feature a highly interconnected street network and setbacks appropriate to create a public realm built on a human scale. A TND should be developed such that the street network recognizes and complements a site's topography and other natural features.



Conservation/Cluster Subdivisions

The conservation or cluster subdivision is a zoning tool that protects valuable greenways and rich ecological resources by providing bonus densities for land preservation. The cluster subdivision permits a reduction in lot area and bulk requirements when the remaining land area is devoted to open space, preservation of environmentally sensitive areas, recreation or agriculture. Conservation subdivisions generally are used in conjunction with a regional plan for a network of trails, bikeways, wildlife corridors or riverside areas. Often utilized with cluster subdivisions, conservation easements protect stream and riverbanks while sometimes providing public access and ad valorem tax benefits. In these cases, the owner keeps the land while providing a guarantee for open space in the area. These innovative zoning and development regulations help shape urban development while retaining natural scenic resources. Large lot zoning and Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) are other methods that preserves rural ambiance and protects natural features.



Open Space



Open space regulation is instrumental in preserving habitat, protecting the quality and quantity of water resources, providing an alternative means to manage storm water runoff, promoting good air quality and creating opportunities for recreation and education. New subdivisions of 25 lots or greater are subject to parks/open space standards. The extension of a regional system of greenways along creeks and the Medina River to connect parks and recreation areas should be promoted. Likewise, buffer zones could be created along the floodplains to protect water quality and riparian habitat. The protection and development of natural areas would promote a clean environment, eco-tourism and provide opportunities for recreation.

Storm Water Protection

Regulations pertaining to flood plain protection and storm water management will provide adequate measures for the retention, detention and distribution of storm water in a manner that minimizes the possibility of adverse impacts of both water quality and water quantity during development. To further protect the area's natural character, natural storm water conveyance systems including earthen drainage channels, temporary ponds and on-site retention currently are options provided for in the City's Unified Development Code.

Aesthetics

Protecting the outstanding scenic and rural qualities of corridors and historic landscapes would provide an impetus for heritage tourism. Corridors that could merit protection are areas along roads with outstanding vistas, historic bridges and railroad rights-of-way. Historic districts or historic site designation would ensure historic and archeological resource preservation while promoting compatible development. Zoning and development standards could control the installation of new signs, billboards, and utilities; eliminate visual clutter; protect scenic views and preserve historic sites.





Historic Resources

Historic structures in the southern Bexar County area are endangered by unregulated development, traffic, deterioration or vandalism. The City's Unified Development Code provides mechanisms to preserve elements of our cultural heritage including buildings, monuments, *acequias* and other features. The study area was surveyed in 1973 and in 1999. The two surveys indicate a loss of historic resources, a process that could be abated by the implementation of zoning. Ad valorem tax exemptions would also be available for newly designated historic districts and for the substantial rehabilitation of historic sites.

Agricultural Lands

Farm and ranch lands on the urban fringe can be maintained through resource protection districts, farmland conservation easement programs, and agricultural and wildlife management valuation by local appraisal districts. Resource Protection Zoning Districts are composed mainly of unsubdivided lands that are vacant or in agricultural use with a limited number of dwellings and accessory uses. Through this type of zoning, productive farm and ranch land near the metropolitan area is kept in use and the rural character is preserved.

Conservation easements may be donated by the property owner with the stipulation that the farming, ranching, or wildlife management practices will continue, and the property owner will receive a tax benefit. Other conservation easement programs purchase any development rights from the property owner while allowing the agricultural practices to continue.

Commercial

Zoning districts would permit commercial activities designed to serve the neighborhood, community or region, while ensuring compatible development and appropriate buffers between residential and commercial uses. Nodal commercial development should be encouraged, and commercial strips that create traffic problems and unsightly corridors should be discouraged.

Industrial

Industrial districts promote the safe storage of hazardous materials in locations that do not endanger neighborhoods and ensure that land uses and development are compatible in their use, character and size to the site and surrounding areas. The industrial districts will require convenient access to existing and future thoroughfares and accommodate uses that are environmentally severe or generate high volumes of truck traffic. Incentive programs available through the Environmental Protection Agency encourage eco-industrial parks that provide on-site recycling of manufacturing byproducts.

Commercial Village Concept



Environmental

Petroleum and natural gas extraction activities are located throughout the planning area. A special overlay zoning district for oil and gas extraction and production permitting is a regulatory option for this area that would protect the public health, safety and welfare of persons in present and future residential developments. An overlay district may provide for registration of existing wells; distance requirements from residences, schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, cemeteries and parks; inspections; drilling operations; re-entry; well servicing; screening; bonding and insurance requirements for well operators; pipeline safety; and well-plugging and abandonment processes. Illegal dumpsites and other potential environmental hazards could be controlled through the city's development and nuisance codes. The City's Brownfield Redevelopment Program, funded by the national Environmental Protection Agency, provides technical assessment assistance to promote the mitigation and redevelopment of contaminated sites.



In summary, the regulatory tools and incentives will support the sustainable development of the Southside through adherence to the following *Master Plan* policies:

- Support and encourage efforts to diversify the economic base of San Antonio (*Economic Development, Policy 1e*)
- Promote the safe storage of hazardous materials in locations that do not endanger neighborhoods (*Natural Resources, Policy 1g*)
- Achieve a sustainable balance between the conservation, use and development of San Antonio's natural resources (*Natural Resources, Goal 3*)
- Encourage retention of the 100-year floodplains as natural drainage ways without permanent construction, unnecessary straightening, bank clearing, or channeling (*Natural Resources, Policy 1d*)
- Develop urban design policies and standards which integrate and coordinate planning for historic and cultural resources, public facilities and services, and private development, infrastructure, transportation, arts and cultural resources (*Urban Design, Policy 1b*)