The Metro Priority Plan describes San Antonio’s international strategy to:

1. Focus efforts on key global markets;
2. Increase San Antonio’s access to the outside world through diplomacy, business, culture, and education; and
3. Elevate San Antonio’s reputation as a global leader.
San Antonio has a long history of merging cultures—a history that laid the foundation for the city that we enjoy today. Rooted in the Native American settlement of “Yanaguana,” San Antonio became the first municipality in what is now Texas when it was established by settlers from the Canary Islands in 1718. It thrived as the capital and largest city of Spanish and Mexican Texas in the 18th and 19th centuries. San Antonio continued to grow throughout the 1800s, absorbing a large number of immigrants around the turn of the century—especially families from Germany and Mexico. Long considered a frontier town, the city entered a new era when it hosted the World’s Fair in 1968, catapulting itself on to the global stage. Nowadays, San Antonio is home to a 21st-century economy, playing a leadership role among metropolitan areas worldwide.
International Ties

Cities with which San Antonio has Sister City or Friendship City status or other formal agreements

- 1953 Monterrey, Mexico
- 1974 Guadalajara, Mexico
- 1975 Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain
- 1983 Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain
- 2016 Windhoek, Namibia
- 2017 Darmstadt, Germany
- 2019 Mexico City, Mexico
San Antonio maintains a portfolio of global relationships in the form of Sister City Agreements, Friendship City Agreements, and other formal ties.

San Antonio is a member of Sister Cities International, an organization that recognizes, celebrates, and magnifies the catalytic power of people-to-people transactions. In 2019, Sister Cities International recognized San Antonio as having the best overall Sister City program.
Strategic location, business-friendly climate, and a strong, growing workforce
The Role of Trade

Trade has played an important role in this region since the first Spaniards arrived in 1691. In 1992, San Antonio hosted leaders of the federal governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States to sign the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). San Antonio has maintained a continuously active presence in Mexico through the trade and foreign office program better known as “Casa San Antonio” for over 25 years.

Since 2001, the City also has had consistent representation in Japan through the Texas Japan Office, which has played a pivotal role in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japanese companies.

At the center of major east–west and north–south commercial supply chains, San Antonio provides companies with a strategic location, a business-friendly climate, and a strong, growing workforce. In 2019, the San Antonio City Council affirmed its support for free trade by adopting a resolution in support of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).¹

¹ The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement was signed in 2018 but has yet to be ratified as of the publication of this plan.
San Antonio has received two major designations from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that have transformed the city’s presence on the global stage. In 2015, UNESCO recognized five Franciscan missions as World Heritage sites. UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world that is considered to be of outstanding value to humanity.

As San Antonio builds on its international relationships and focuses its outreach, the time to take a holistic approach to San Antonio’s global strategy is now. By deepening diplomatic, business, cultural, and educational ties within targeted cities and regions, the City will realize its goals of elevating its global reputation and expanding residents’ access to global information.

San Antonio’s designation can be found on the UNESCO website at whc.unesco.org/en/list/1466.
In 2017, UNESCO further recognized San Antonio as a Creative City of Gastronomy, adding it to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).3 The UCCN was created in 2004 to promote cooperation among cities that strategically utilize creativity for sustainable urban development. The 180 cities that make up this network collaborate together towards a common objective: placing creativity and cultural industries at the heart of their development plans at the local level and cooperating actively at the international level.4 The UCCN has become a global movement reflecting a new planning paradigm for cities.

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3 San Antonio’s designation can be found on the UCCN website at en.unesco.org/creative-cities/node/1063.
4 Description taken from the UCCN website at en.unesco.org/creative-cities/home.
PRIORITY
MARKETS
Global Reach
There are over 190 countries in the world. Over time, the City and its partners have expanded their global reach with respect to economic development by participating in investment missions, hosting inbound delegations, and executing diverse economic agreements. These efforts require substantial investment of increasingly scarce resources and often produce mixed results.

Since 2013, the San Antonio economic development community has made a concerted, data-driven effort to better understand its assets and channel its limited resources.

Through the Global Cities Initiative, the Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase have supported these efforts.

San Antonio published preliminary results in the 2014 Export Strategy and the 2015 Trade and Investment Strategy. The report highlighted thirteen countries as top markets for FDI and exports. It soon became apparent that the City would need to narrow the focus to targeted cities to build and manage strategic relationships.
Between 2017 and 2019, the City participated in the Brookings Market Prioritization Exercise, which

- Defined San Antonio’s world-leading industry specializations;
- Identified markets that show potential for economic linkages with its industries;
- Assessed foreign markets based on macroeconomic, political, educational, and cultural factors;
- Compiled the data to sort priority cities by target industry; and
- Solicited industry and community feedback to validate the data.

We searched for markets that have a critical mass in the following areas:
San Antonio’s specialty industries included:

- Cybersecurity
- Life Sciences
- Advanced Manufacturing (Automotive & Aerospace)
- New Energy

The chief economist of the SABER Research Institute verified the specialty industries by using data provided by the Brookings Institution and performing independent research into businesses as classified by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

The San Antonio Economic Development Foundation (SAEDF) convened its International Advisory Council and scheduled meetings with industry liaisons and representatives such as Cybersecurity San Antonio, BioMed SA, the San Antonio Manufacturing Association, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce Aerospace Council, and the CPS Energy New Energy Consortium Partners to solicit feedback.

We used the following criteria to rank foreign markets:

- Open trading relationships;
- Income tax treaties;
- Economic size, growth, and stability;
- Ease of doing business;
- Geographic proximity;
- Existing official relationships with San Antonio;
- Higher education assets; and
- Local, cultural, and intercultural assets and organizations.
Geography – 5%
- Flight Distance
- Number of Flights

Cultural Proximity – 5%
- Foreign Students
- Foreign Faculty
- Foreign-Born Population
- English Proficiency
- Student Exchanges

Political – 10%
- Allies (NATO)
- Mutual Military Defense Treaty
- Foreign Diplomat Representation
- International Relations
- Connections/Relations
- Official Relations
- Nonformal Partnerships
- Past Missions
- Foreign Diasporas
Data Weighting Factors

Macroeconomic Factors – 40%
- Exchange Rate Stability
- Country GDP Growth Forecast
- Ease of Business
- Country GDP Growth
- Tax Rate
- IMF Classification
- Exchange Rate Change
- Free Trade Agreements/ Bilateral Investment Treaties
- Metro GDP Growth

Industry Priorities – 40%
- FDI & Export
- FDI into Texas
- FDI into San Antonio
- U.S. Export into Country
- Country’s Import Value
- Country’s Export Value
- Local Interest in Market
- Awareness of San Antonio Industry
- Market Presence
- Existing Industry Cluster
- Number of Foreign-Owned Entities in Texas
As a result of the Metro Prioritization Exercise, we identified the following cities and countries to build our international strategy going forward.

Each of these cities ranked highly in multiple target industries.

- Foreign Direct Investment
- Trade
- Collaboration

Toronto
Montreal

Tokyo
Nagoya
Kumamoto

Seoul
Gwangju
San Antonio will tailor specific tactics to build on its existing relationships with these target metros. These tactics will be customized to each metro in ways depending on factors such as diplomacy, business, culture, and education. Based on the framework outlined in this plan, San Antonio’s priority cities will move from introductory to intermediate and—ultimately—advanced relationships.
Team San Antonio

One of San Antonio’s strengths is its residents’ desire to collaborate. San Antonio comprises an enormous group of individuals and organizations that strive to continuously improve their community; this is “Team San Antonio.” Typically, we have referred to Team San Antonio for economic development purposes; however, Team San Antonio is growing to encompass a broader network of local and international influencers that can support the mission of connecting our target metropolitan economies.

Through partnerships with allied entities such as the chambers of commerce and local international and ethnic organizations, we can educate San Antonio residents on the importance of international trade and investment, as well as culture and education.

By narrowing San Antonio’s strategic collaborations to priority metros, opportunities arise to identify and make deeper connections within those metros.
Team San Antonio members and San Antonio ambassadors will build connections in key markets.

Canada
Japan
Korea
Mexico
Germany

Other markets with existing formal relationships with San Antonio
As we embark on a more tailored approach, we will take the following steps to advance our strategic relationships:

**Stage 1**

- **Identify local and global influencers by key category, country, and city (“Network”).**
  - Include small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and incubators interested in international operations.
- **Share the Metro Priority Plan with the Network.**
- **Create an international communication hub through an online platform.**
- **Standardize data collection efforts relating to the Network.**
- **Design surveys to solicit feedback and encourage international interactions.**
Stage 2

- Prepare tailored briefing materials for each priority city and share with the Network.
- Leverage important international conferences and forums held in San Antonio.
- Leverage regional major events by hosting international visitors in San Antonio.
- Encourage local Network participation in international events and initiatives.
- Highlight Network members during inbound missions.
- Host conferences and forums promoting business, cultural, educational, and diplomatic initiatives, including World Heritage and the UCCN.
- Develop a leadership program highlighting priority metros.
Stage 3

Facilitate ongoing exchanges relating to diplomacy, business, culture, and education.

Foster the growth of exports and foreign direct investment (FDI) between the two metros.
GLOBAL RECOGNITION
A Gateway to the World

Even with its diverse assets, San Antonio is a hidden gem. It is our privilege and responsibility to market and leverage these key industries and assets, connecting investors, employees, students, and visitors to international opportunities. Our effort will elevate San Antonio’s reputation by framing the city in a new light—educating audiences in new and innovative ways.
San Antonio is a gateway to the world. At the center of North America on interstate highways 10 and 35, San Antonio is the launch point for businesses entering the U.S. market or considering expansion into Central or South America.
TACTICS TO BOOST GLOBAL RECOGNITION

Stage 1

Utilize standard template (Passport San Antonio) to promote the City’s international initiatives.
- Catalogue testimonials of foreign-owned businesses about their experiences doing business in San Antonio.

Leverage our partners such as the SAEDF to promote San Antonio.
- Identify San Antonio “alumni.”
- Identify San Antonio “ambassadors” to promote the city.
- Hire lead-generation and site-selection firms in target markets.

Prepare an international guide to doing business in San Antonio.

Prepare a San Antonio newsletter to share with the Network.

Prepare customized maps demonstrating existing ties to San Antonio for strategic use on outbound missions or with inbound delegations.

Translate collateral to the languages of target metros.

5 San Antonio residents who are expatriates.
Stage 2

Promote San Antonio soft-landing resources.

Promote traveling exhibits highlighting San Antonio (i.e., the “San Antonio Story”).

Conduct outbound missions to priority metros.
- Actively engage in specialized events promoting target industries.
- Participate in global UNESCO forums.
- Participate in conferences promoting sustainable urban growth.
- Participate in conferences and forums promoting Sister City relationships, diplomacy, and cultural relations.

Become a member of key networking and thought leadership organizations in target markets.
- Actively participate in organizations and projects:
  » Brookings Institution Global Cities Initiative
  » UCCN
  » Global Climate Heritage Network
  » Charter for Compassion International
  » Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy
  » Carbon Disclosure Project
  » Sister Cities International
  » U.S. Chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites
  » Urban Environmental Accords
  » C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group
  » World Heritage Cities Organizations
  » International branches of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (“AmChams”)

San Antonio residents who are expatriates.
Facilitate ongoing exchanges relating to diplomacy, business, culture, and education.

Facilitate San Antonio’s participation in ongoing global initiatives.

By utilizing these tactics, the City will improve and expand San Antonio’s recognition and renown as a world-class city.
MEASUREMENTS
The key to any initiative lies is determining metrics for success. We will measure increases—in both quantity and quality—of the following to define our success through 2025:

**Metrics for Success**

**Outputs**

- Network Members
- Residents Involved
  - Youth
  - Adults
    - Students, Employees, Employers, Owners, etc.
    - Seniors
- Entities Involved
  - Diplomacy
  - Business
  - Culture
  - Education
- Inbound Visitors
- Events by Category
  - Diplomacy
  - Business
  - Culture
  - Education
- Meetings w/ International Focus
  - Outbound Missions
  - Inbound Delegations
  - Unique Hosts
  - Unique Participants
- Connections Made by Lead Generators
  - Casa San Antonio
  - Texas Japan Office
  - Other
- Company Leads
  - Suspects
  - Prospects
  - Projects
- Formal Agreements in Effect
  - Letters of Intent
  - Memoranda of Understanding
  - Friendship Agreements
  - Sister City Agreements
- San Antonio Impressions in International News Feeds
- San Antonio Social Media Followers
Outcomes

• Knowledge Shared
• Hotel Occupancy
• Investment
  » Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) activations
• International Business Development Center (IBDC) Clients
• Other International Soft Landing Clients
• Foreign Trade Offices in San Antonio
• Permanent Representation by Consular Corps in San Antonio (e.g., career or honorary consuls)
• Exports
  » Certificates of Origin Presented
• Non-stop Flight Routes
CONCLUSION
Summary

The San Antonio Metro Priority Plan focuses resources and attention on key markets to deepen market connections with respect to diplomacy, business, culture, and education. **Successful business exchanges take place on a stage enriched by culture, diplomacy, flexibility, and nimbleness.** Team San Antonio can play a powerful role in building international connections to last for generations.
Join us as we embark on the San Antonio Metro Priority Plan

To learn more about San Antonio and our international strategy, please contact the City of San Antonio Economic Development Department at (210) 207-8080 or visit sanantonio.gov/edd.

If you would like to join the Passport San Antonio Network, please fill out a brief online survey at surveymonkey.com/r/passportsanantonio.