



NEAR NORTHWEST COMMUNITY AREA PLAN

PLANNING TEAM MEETING #2 SUMMARY

Topic: PT2: Vision & Goals of the Plan, Introduction to Land Use, & Concept of Focus Areas.
Date: Thursday, April 10th, 2025
Time: 5:30 – 7:30 pm
Location: St. Mary's University, St. Louis Hall, Room #330

Attendees:

Attendees consisted of City of San Antonio staff and Near Northwest (NNW) Planning Team members. Planning Teams consist of a wide variety of stakeholders from the SW area including neighborhood associations, residents, business owners, and community leaders.

- Zack Magallanez, COSA Project Manager
- Chris Ryerson, COSA Planning Administrator
- Jay Renkens, MIG Principal
- Marco Hinojosa, MIG Project Consultant
- Carissa Cox, Mosaic Principal Planner
- Diane Duesterhoeft, St. Mary's University
- Dan Rossiter, Thunderbird Hills NA
- Don Rios, Culebra Park NA
- Rosita Lira,
- Thomas Medina, VIA Metropolitan Transit
- Mike Phillips, Ingram Hills NA
- Dr. Patricia Jaramillo, St. Mary's University Professor
- Sierra Salas-Dunn, St. Mary's University Student

I. MEETING PURPOSE & AGENDA

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the first draft of the Vision & Goals statement, introduction to land use and discuss the concept of Focus Areas. The agenda for the meeting included:

- 5:30 – 5:40 Welcome and Introductions & Review Public Input
- 5:40 – 6:15 Draft Vision and Goals
- 6:15 – 6:30 Introduction to Land Use
- 6:30 – 7:30 Introduction to Focus Areas & Discussion

II. SUMMARY MEETING

The meeting began with a round of staff introductions and a recap of the Plan timeline. We then highlighted the key discussion topics from Planning Team Meeting #1 and Community Meeting #1. After presenting the main themes to the planning team, our project consultant Jay Renkens overviewed the preliminary draft of the Vision and Goals. Following the Vision and Goals discussion, Jay introduced land use, followed by the introduction of focus areas and the planning team was encouraged to discuss potential focus areas within the community area boundary.

VISION AND GOALS DISCUSSION

The planning team provided feedback on the current draft of the vision and goals for the community area. Overall, the group felt that the content should be more visionary and tailored, as the existing language seemed too general and could apply to many areas across the city. Planning team members

emphasized the importance of crafting a vision that reflects the unique identity, opportunities, and challenges of this specific community. Key themes from the discussion included:

- **Mobility and Infrastructure**
There was a strong emphasis on the need for expanded mobility options, particularly walking, biking, and public transit. The group stressed the importance of investing in safe and accessible bike and pedestrian infrastructure to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can move around easily and safely.
- **Third Places and Community Spaces**
The team highlighted the need for more third places—informal gathering spaces beyond home and work/school—especially those that serve students, families, and young people. These local spaces reduce the need for residents to travel far and can strengthen community ties.
- **Public Art and Cultural Identity**
The area was described as an “art desert”, with limited access to public or community art. The group expressed interest in exploring ways to identify local artists from within the community and collaborate with nonprofits and city partners to bring more public art to the area. This could help foster local pride and identity.
- **Leveraging Anchor Institutions**
The team discussed the strategic importance of St. Mary’s University as a major anchor institution in the area. There was interest in exploring how the university could play a larger role in supporting community goals through partnerships, programming, or physical improvements that benefit surrounding neighborhoods. Below are comments from the vision and goals discussion.

Vision comments:

- Replace “maintains” with “enhances”
- Replace “protects” with “celebrates”

Goals comments:

- There are unique homes in the NNW area, we should celebrate and encourage it
- Goals should be more visionary; the language now can apply to any area
- There should be a focus on non-vehicular options (walking, biking, public transit)
- There is an “art desert” in the NNW area; emphasize a need for more art
- Related to Goal #2: “Lots of creeks in the area – add connections”
- Related to Goal #3: “Emphasize third spaces, especially for students, parents, families, young people”
- Related to Goal #5: “Connection for elderly too”
- Related to Goal #6: “St. Mary’s University should be named at the institution to partner with”

+ Unique homes - Celebrate + encourage!

+ Make more visionary
► Could apply to any area

NEAR NORTHWEST COMMUNITY AREA PLAN

Draft Vision and Goals

+ Focus on non-vehicular options
(walking, biking, transit)

+ More art! (ART DESERT)

The Near Northwest Community Area ^{ENHANCES} (maintains) access to regional assets and ^{CELEBRATE} (protects) existing neighborhoods for people of all ages, while offering a range of expanded housing options, recreational amenities, and business opportunities, that are strengthened by improved safety and maintenance efforts.

GOAL 1

Protect established neighborhoods and residential character that recognizes the affordability and diversity of existing housing stock.

GOAL 4

Promote a greater range of creative housing options that offer opportunities for all, at a range of prices and locations throughout the area.

GOAL 2

Maintain ~~(existing parks and green spaces)~~ while determining opportunities to increase the range of green spaces, recreational facilities, and community amenities.

Lots of creeks in area - add connections!

GOAL 5

Retain access to regional connections while addressing safety concerns, improving aging infrastructure, and offering additional options to travel throughout the area.

For elderly too

"Third Spaces"

GOAL 3

Attract a larger range of commercial development to the area including small businesses and fresh food options.

For student, families, parents, everyone!

GOAL 6

Enhance connections between community members and strengthen partnerships with nearby ~~(institutional partners)~~ and community organizations.

+ Linear Parks

GOAL 7

Improve safety throughout the area by addressing flooding and environmental concerns, light and noise pollution, overdue maintenance, and gaps in facilities and amenities to serve community members.

+ Expand healthy ~~athletic~~ + cultural amenities

St. Marys



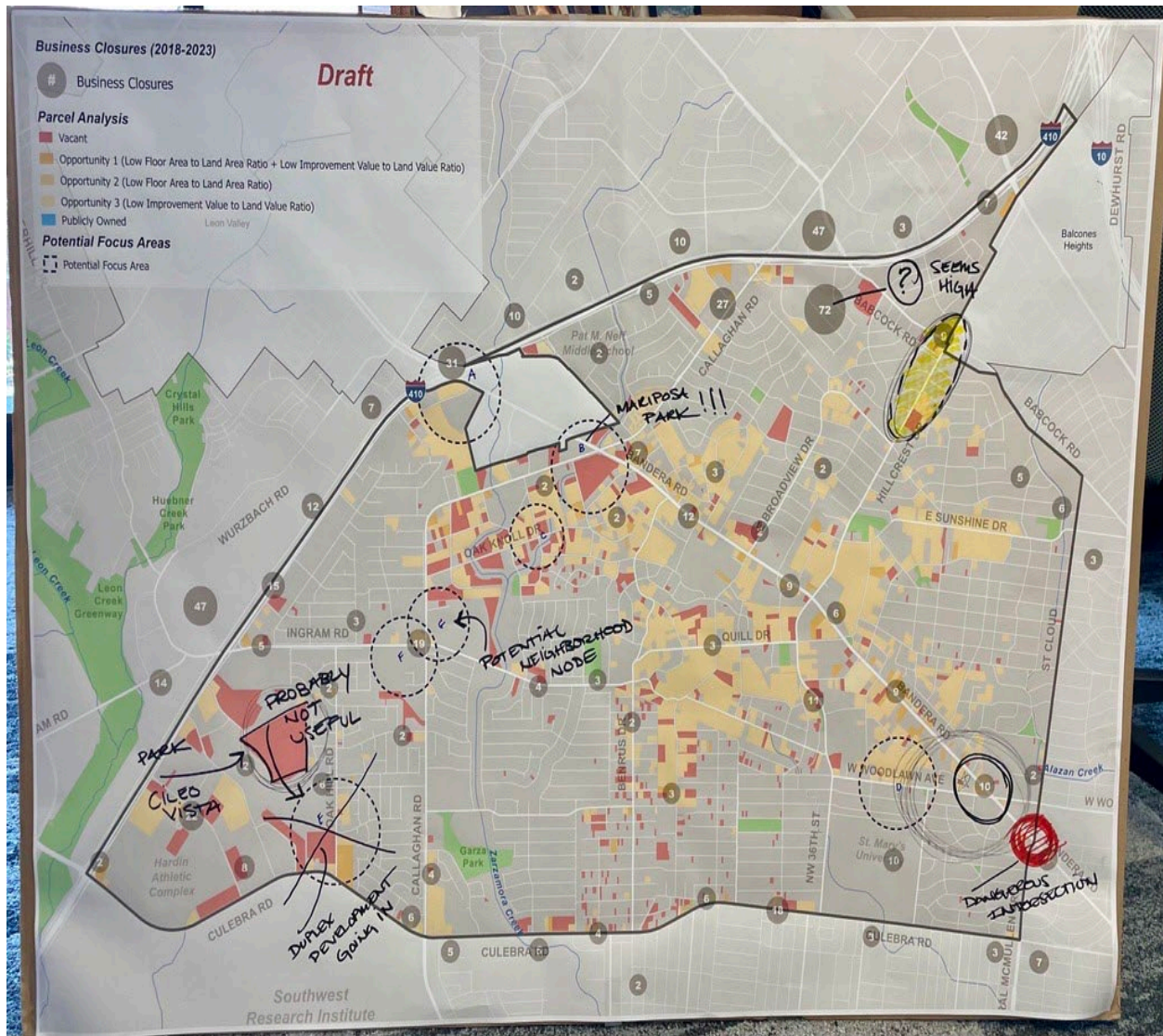
FOCUS AREAS IDENTIFICATION & DISCUSSION

Beginning the Focus Areas discussion, Jay Renkens, project consultant described what focus areas are and what they could include. The project manager described potential Focus Areas are areas of opportunity to direct future investments, support, or improvements. Support for focus areas could also include preservation. When analyzing potential focus areas, staff will study vacant or underutilized parcels, commercial strips, former industrial sites, areas along transit corridors, major intersections or nodes and special districts that may need investment or support.

The Planning Team was shown a map of the area with vacant sites, underutilized sites, publicly owned land and business closed during 2018 - 2023. The opportunity 1 sites are ones that have both a low floor area to land area ratio and low improvement value to land value ratio. Opportunity 2 sites are ones with just low floor area to land area ratio (FAR less than or equal to 0.2). And opportunity 3 sites are low improvement value to land value ratio (building coverage is less than 0.5 of the entire parcel). The last category is Publicly Owned, are sites that are publicly owned but would be attractive for development. This means they do not currently have a major use or purpose, are undeveloped or underdeveloped.

The planning team generally agreed with the focus areas identified by planning staff and provided thoughtful feedback on how they might be refined:

- The group suggested combining Focus Areas F and G, noting that they are in close proximity along Ingram Road and Callaghan Road, and could be addressed together as a single area of opportunity or concern.
- There was consensus that Focus Area E could be removed, as the entrance to the Southwest Research Institute at Culebra Road and Oak Hill Road is already clearly identified and does not require further focus within this planning process.
- The team proposed relocating Focus Area D to the intersection of W. Woodlawn and Bandera Road, which was described as a problematic and unsafe area for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. They emphasized the need for improvements to traffic flow, safety, and multimodal access at this location.
- Additionally, the group shared that some residents are actively working toward the creation of a new park behind the Cielo Vista movie theater. The proposed park will be named Cielo Vista Park. While details are still emerging, the group expressed interest in integrating this future amenity into the broader planning effort. Design and construction updates are expected to develop alongside the planning process.



IV. NEXT STEPS

- **The Near Northwest Community Area** project website will be used to post Planning Team and Community Meeting resources, communicate dates for public engagement opportunities, and draft plan content. Near Northwest Community Area link: <https://nearnorthwest.sacomplan.com/>
- **Planning Team Meeting #3:** Thursday, May 8th at St. Mary's University
- **Planning Team Meeting #4:** Thursday, June 5th (virtual)

Contact Information

Zack Magallanez, Project Manager

San Antonio Planning Department

Email: zack.magallanez@sanantonio.gov

Phone: (210) 207-7681