

Historic Preservation

Essential to the Economy and Quality of Life in San Antonio February 18, 2015



Prepared for the City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation
by PlaceEconomics, Washington DC



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Historic Preservation in San Antonio	4
San Antonio Vision 2020	9
Arts & Culture	10
Community Safety	12
Downtown Development	13
Economic Competitiveness.....	17
Heritage Tourism	23
Education	27
Family Well-Being	31
Government Accountability & Civic Engagement	37
Health & Fitness.....	39
Natural Resources & Environmental Sustainability	43
Neighborhoods & Growth Management	47
Transportation	53
Conclusions	58
Acknowledgements	59
Methodologies.....	60
The PlaceEconomics Team	61

Executive Summary

The city and the citizens of San Antonio have embarked on a process called SA 2020 that envisions the desired future of this evolving community. SA 2020 has eleven “cause” areas, each with its own vision statement, goals, and measurements to track progress. This analysis was based on a single question – how does historic preservation advance the SA 2020 goals? The findings revealed that historic preservation in general, and historic neighborhoods in particular, are not only compatible with the goals of SA 2020, but are an indispensable component towards achieving them. In other instances, San Antonio’s historic neighborhoods, home to around 2.5 percent of the population, are already fulfilling the SA 2020 goals and should be seen as models for implementation.

Details of the how historic preservation advances the vision of SA 2020 are found on the pages that follow. Significant findings include:

- Historic neighborhoods outperform the city as a whole in a wide range of quality of life criteria including walkability, transit scores, proximity to parks, and bikeability.
- Historic neighborhoods represent high density in a low density city, but at a human scale.
- Historic neighborhoods and buildings are magnets for small businesses, start-up businesses, and firms employing knowledge workers.
- Just the heritage portion of San Antonio’s tourism industry is responsible for \$2.5 billion in visitor expenditures, resulting in nearly 52,000 jobs and \$1.7 billion in salaries and wages.
- Construction in historic districts (both rehabilitation and new construction) have represented an investment of \$1.4 billion over the last ten years generating an average of 1,860 jobs and \$100 million in salaries each year.

- Property values in historic districts have appreciated at a greater rate, were less adversely affected by the real estate crisis, and recovered sooner than did housing in either Neighborhood Conservation Districts or the city as a whole.
- Almost every historic district had foreclosure rates below that of the city of San Antonio.
- Historic neighborhoods are extraordinarily diverse in income, race, ethnicity, age and family structure and are largely a mirror of the demographic characteristics of San Antonio.
- San Antonio’s historic neighborhoods are the epitome of Smart Growth.
- The Office of Historic Preservation is the leader in the nation for active community engagement by a city preservation department.

The evidence is strong, but not surprising to San Antonians – historic preservation is essential to the economy of this city, and even more central to the quality of life.



Historic Preservation in San Antonio

As one of America's oldest cities, it is no surprise that San Antonians value their historic resources. More than 90 years ago, the San Antonio Conservation Society was founded in order "to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow with knowledge of our inherited regional values." Today, it is one of the oldest and best regarded local preservation advocacies and education organizations in the country.

In 1967 the City of San Antonio moved to protect the historic built environment of the city, enacting a historic preservation ordinance and creating a preservation commission. A year later the first local historic district, King William, was established and members of the Historic and Design Review Commission, were appointed.

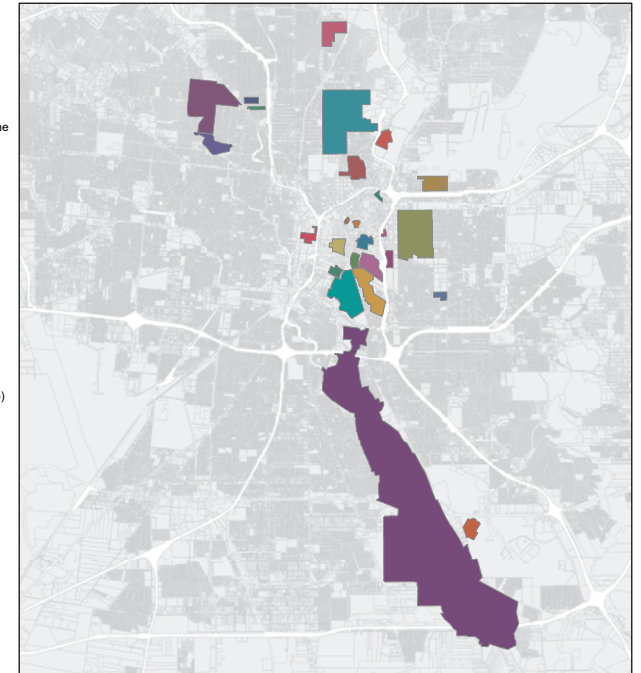
Today the HDRC oversees activity affecting historic properties in 27 historic districts, six River Improvement Overlay districts and more than 2,000 individually designated landmarks.



Local Historic Districts

NAME

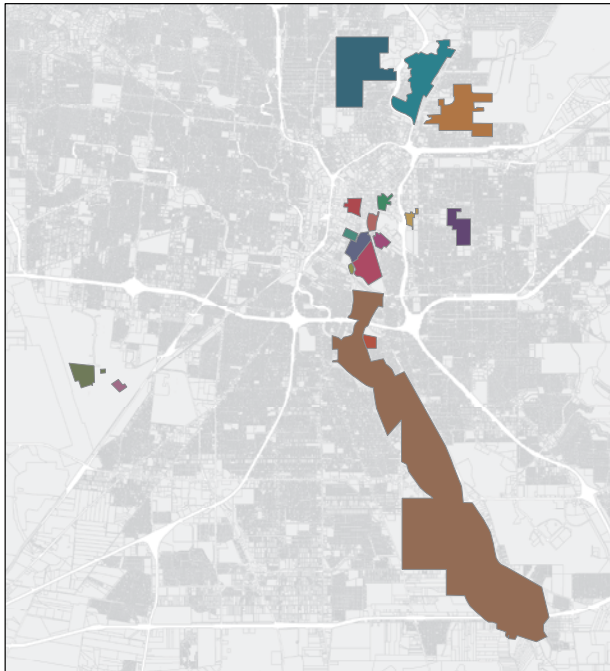
Alamo Plaza
Arsenal
Auditorium Circle
Brooks School of Aerospace Medicine
Cattleman Square
Dignowity Hill
Fulton
Government Hill
Healy-Murphy
Hemisfair
Keystone Park
King William
Knob Hill
La Villita
Lavaca
Leon Springs (not shown in this map)
Main/Military Plaza
Mission
Monte Vista
Monticello Park
Old Lone Star Brewery
Olmos Park Terrace
River Road
St. Paul Square
Tobin Hill
Ursuline
Woodlawn Lake and Park



To understand preservation, however, it is important to understand the phrase, "historic district." In San Antonio, as in many cities in the United States, there are actually two categories of "historic districts." First there are Local Historic Districts identified in the map above.

There are also, however, National Register Historic Districts. National Register Districts (or an elevated category called National Historic Landmark District) are part of a list created and maintained by the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior in Washington. National Register Districts provide the threshold for the use of Federal and State Rehabilitation Tax Credits and for commercial structures, but are not subject to other restrictions. The protection for historic properties comes from local historic designation. In San Antonio, most of the National Register Districts are also local districts. Both fall under the purview of the HDRC.

- National Register Districts**
- Alamo Plaza
 - Blue Star Street Industrial
 - Brackenridge Park
 - Bungalow Colony
 - Fort Sam Houston
 - Kelly Field
 - King William
 - La Villita
 - Lavaca
 - Main and Military Plazas
 - Mission Parkway
 - Monte Vista Residential
 - San Antonio City Cemeteries
 - San Antonio Missions National Historical Park
 - South Alamo Street-South Mary's Street
 - Southern Pacific Depot
 - U.S. San Antonio Arsenal

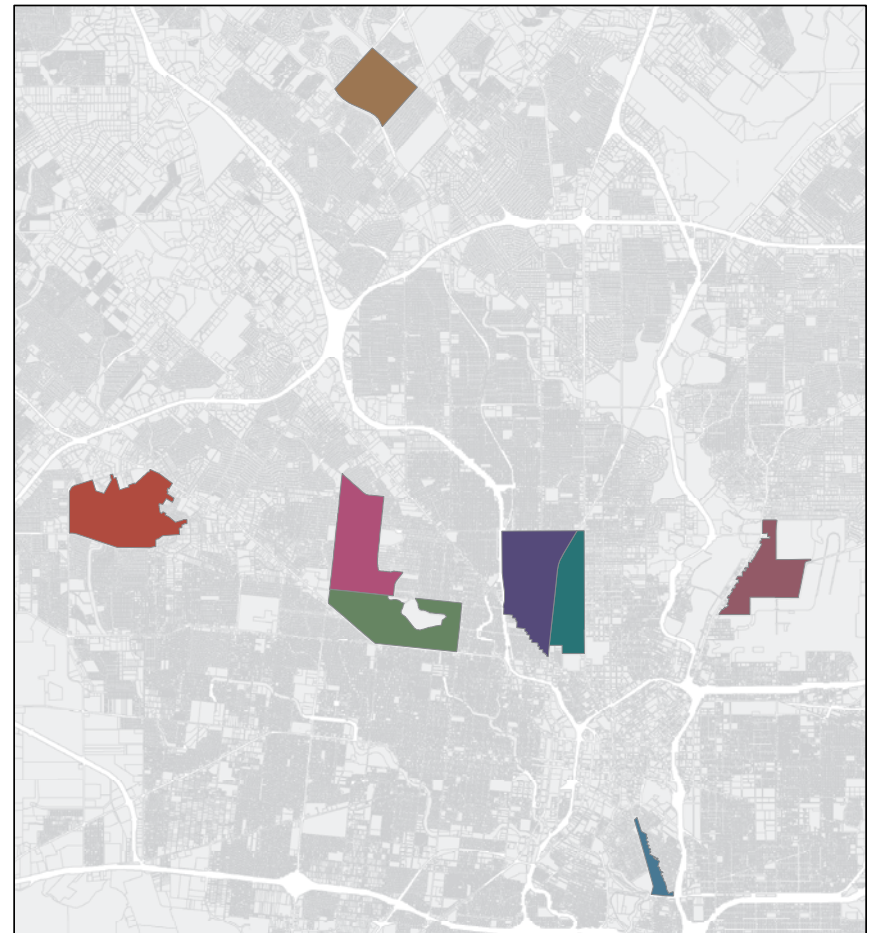


Throughout this report when the phrase “historic districts” is used, it will refer to both local and National Register historic districts unless the data is specifically identified as being distinct for each category of district. When, as is most often the case in San Antonio, an area is covered by both a local district and a National Register district, the findings will be included under the local district. When a National Register district covers part but not all of a local district, the National Register data will include only that information from the area not in the local district.

San Antonio also has Neighborhood Conservation Districts. An NCD is a zoning overlay district that provides for design review of new construction and gives the neighborhood a voice in the protection of its character and can serve as a tool for neighborhood planning. There are eight NCDs in San Antonio, many of which have what would be considered historic properties. But because they are not historic districts, data from those areas are not included in this report

Conservation Districts

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Alta Vista NCD (NCD-2) | Mahncke Park NCD (NCD-6) |
| Beacon Hill Area NCD (NCD-5) | S. Presa St. / S. St. Mary's St. NCD (NCD-1) |
| Ingram Hills NCD (NCD-3) | Whispering Oaks NCD (NCD-4) |
| Jefferson (NCD -7) | Woodlawn Lake (NCD-8) |





In 2010, the San Antonio community began what became a multi-year process to shape the future of the city known as SA 2020. As an outgrowth of this process, and with the active participation of thousands of San Antonians, SA 2020 established a set of eleven “cause” areas: Arts & Culture, Civic Engagement, Community Safety, Downtown Development, Economic Competitiveness, Education, Environmental Sustainability, Family Well-Being, Health & Fitness, Neighborhoods and Transportation.

For each of these areas there is an established vision statement and each has its own set of metrics. Annually a progress report is prepared showing how each of the areas are advancing in obtaining the identified goals. Importantly, but perhaps not surprisingly, historic preservation was a central element in several of the goals.

This report is not intended to be an alternative set of metrics. Rather it uses the excellent SA 2020 framework to ask a simple question: “How does historic preservation advance the goals of each of these cause areas?”

It was that framework that both defined the analytical approach to this study and largely constitutes the titles of the various sections of this report. Each section of this report begins with the vision established for that particular cause area. It is important to note that these “visions” are not descriptions of the current condition but rather the aspirations of San Antonians for what can come to be.

SA 2020 is an important and well-functioning roadmap for the future of San Antonio. Historic preservation is both consistent with and advances each of the cause areas.

Arts & Culture

San Antonio leads the world as a creative community. San Antonio reflects a diverse range of artistic expression that builds on our rich cultural heritage. The arts are integral to our way of life for citizens of all ages and backgrounds. Public and private support spurs a renaissance of artistic creativity where a vibrant cultural economy flourishes. Contemporary art reflects the dynamic nature of San Antonio's artistic, literary and cultural communities and movements.

Historic buildings and historic districts have a long history of incubating the arts in San Antonio. La Villita has been a center for the arts since 1939. In the 1970s, the San Antonio Museum of Art purchased and renovated the historic Lone Star Brewery complex and the San Antonio Conservation Society purchased the Ursuline Academy building to create the Southwest School of Art.

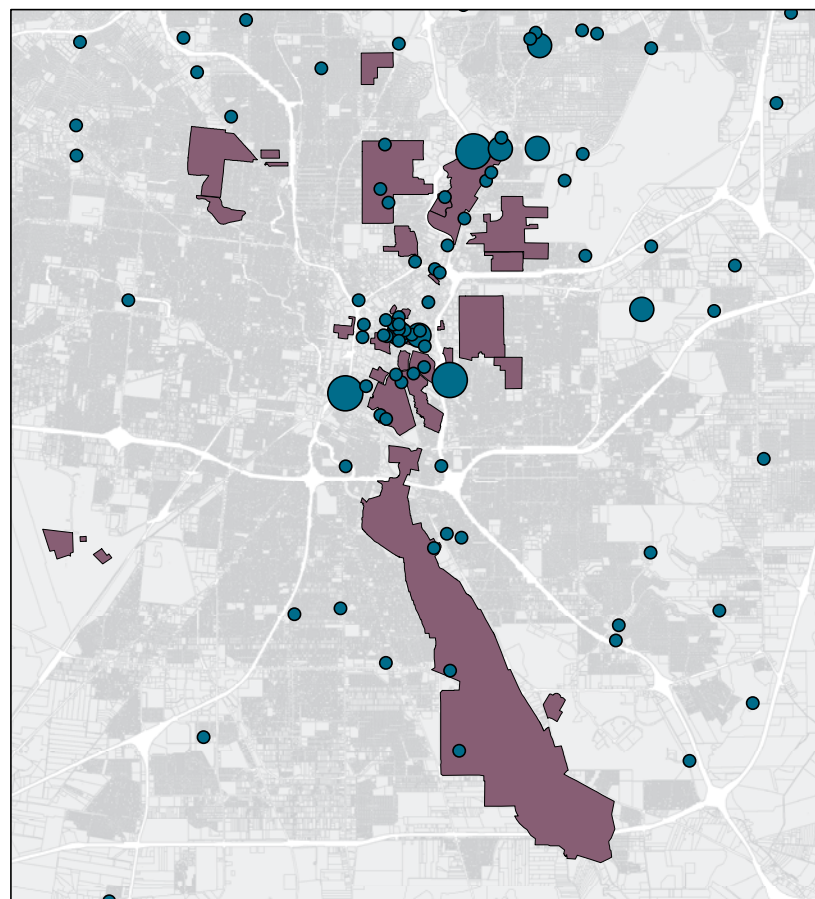
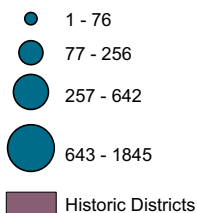
The King William Cultural Arts District, which includes the Blue Star Industrial Historic District, is the only State designated Cultural Arts District in San Antonio.

As can be seen in the map below, arts related jobs in San Antonio are generally concentrated within or clustered around historic districts. This is also true of nonprofit organizations generally, 28% of which are located in San Antonio historic districts.



Arts Related Employment

Number of Jobs

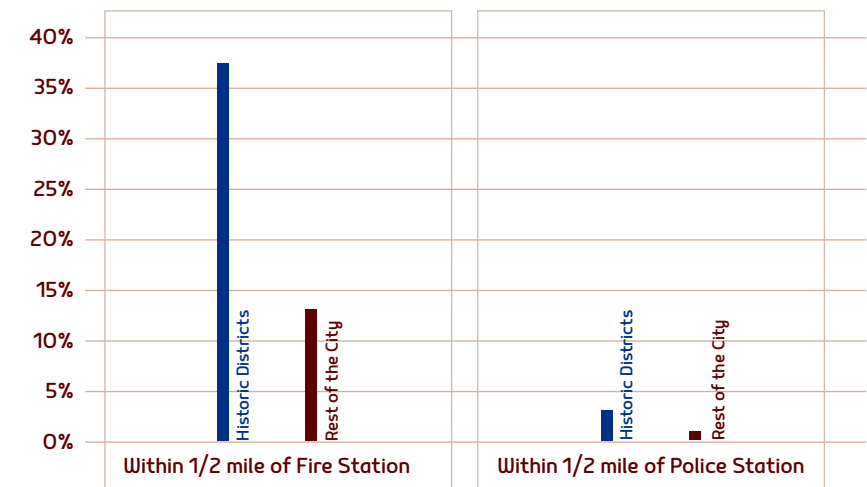


Community Safety

San Antonio is the safest big City in America. Public safety officials, city staff and citizens collaborate through strong, engaged community neighborhood networks to reduce crime and promote a thriving and law-abiding San Antonio. The city’s proactive prevention programs, responsive enforcement efforts, and high state of disaster readiness result in low levels of crime and a high sense of personal safety.

Living in a historic house doesn’t mean immunity from the risks of crime or fire, but proximity to emergency services certainly improves the odds of a rapid response when a problem arises. Over a third of houses in San Antonio historic districts are within one half mile of a fire station. This compares with only one house in seven in the rest of the city. Likewise for proximity to a police station. 2% of historic district residents are within a half mile of a police station, which is twice the rate for the rest of the city. Further, the density, high levels of occupancy, and attachment to neighborhood usually found in historic districts adds to the “eyes on the street” approach as an effective preventive crime strategy.

Proximity to Emergency Services



Downtown Development

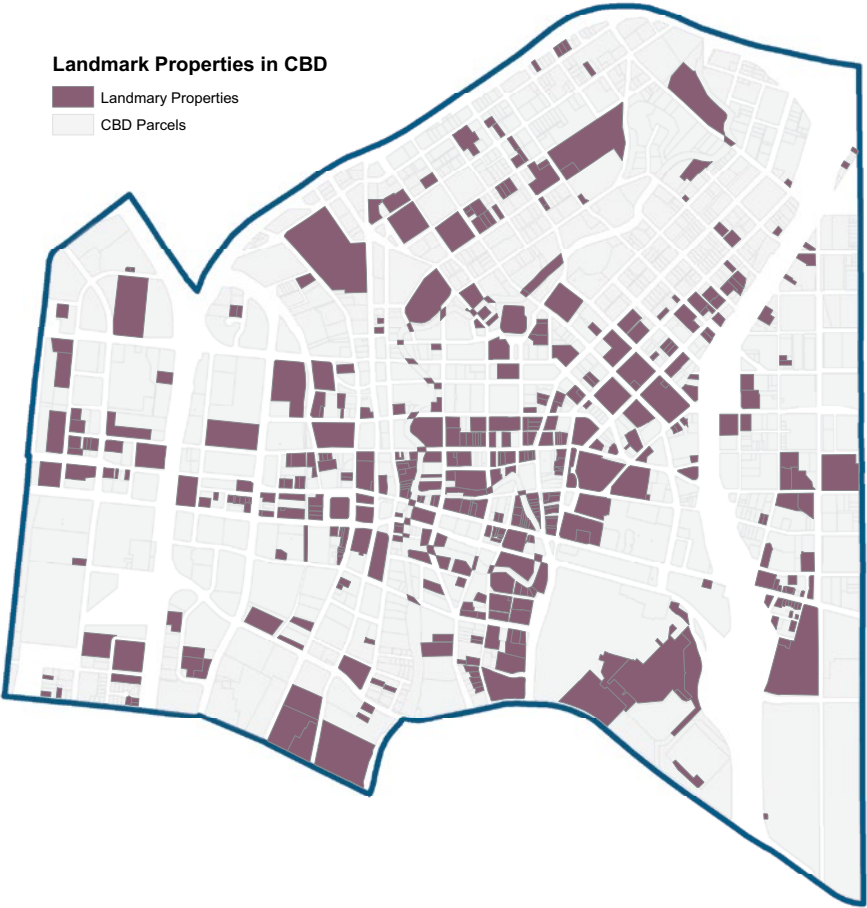
Downtown is the heart of San Antonio and is everyone’s neighborhood. It is a showcase for visitors, a center of vibrant activity for citizens to live, work and play, and an economically inviting locale for businesses to flourish. Downtown’s historic buildings and character are preserved, its parks and green spaces are inviting, and the river continues to be treasured as its defining asset.

Before he left City Hall to become the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, Mayor Julian Castro committed the city to a Decade of Downtown. That was a wise move from economic, cultural, environmental, and fiscal responsibility perspectives. The reasons downtown is important are well enumerated by Centro San Antonio in their list of why downtown matters.

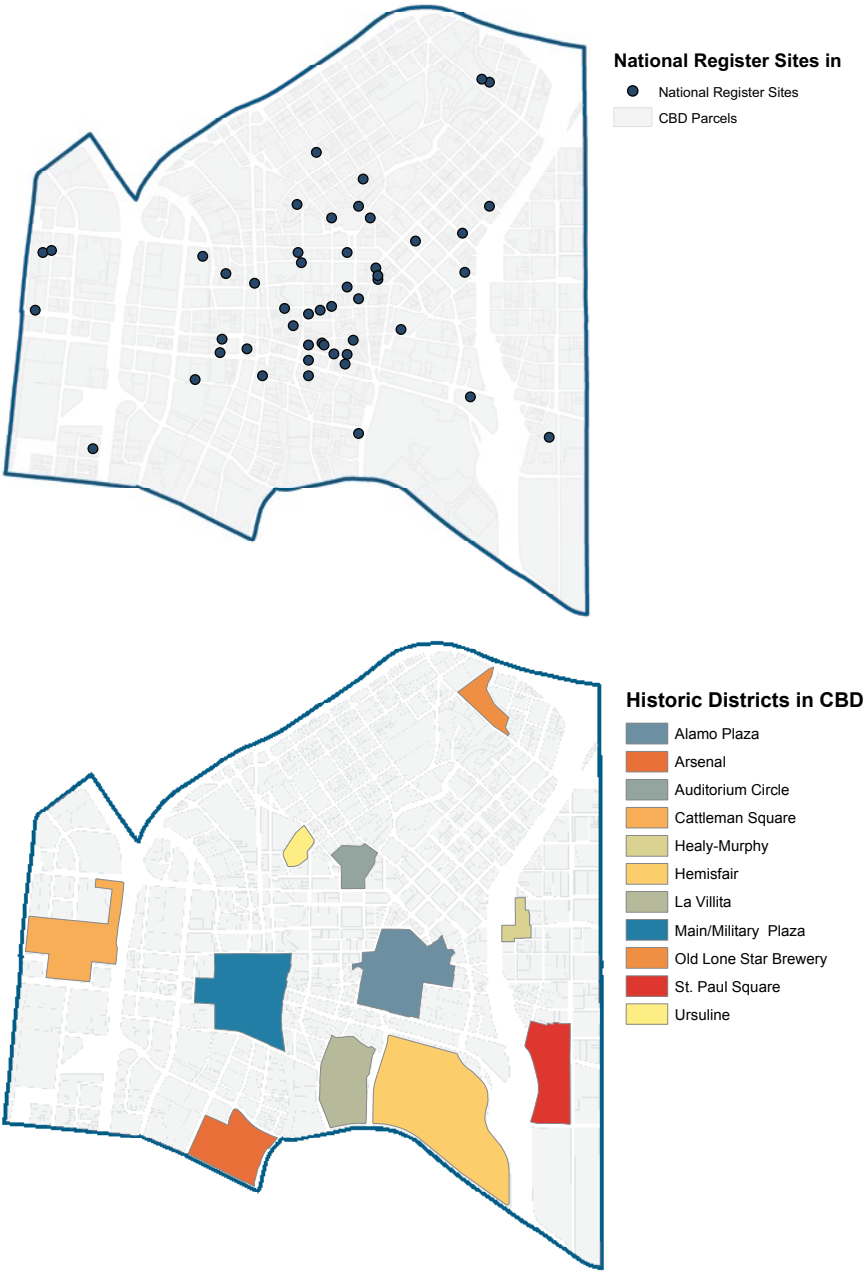
Why Downtown Matters

- Downtown is symbol of economic health, public-private partnerships, quality of life, community pride, community history
- Downtown is important for commercial development and professional recruitment
- Downtown is a good incubator for new small businesses
- Downtown supports locally owned businesses
- Downtown is major employer
- A revitalized downtown protects surrounding residential property values
- Downtown is an efficient use of land
- Downtown revitalization stimulates local economy
- Downtown is the heart of community and civic engagement
- Downtown is important community space
- Downtown attracts visitors and supports unique buildings and businesses
- Downtown is where arts and culture thrive
- Downtown showcases and preserves the rich history of San Antonio
- Downtown’s historic buildings afford San Antonio its distinctive identity

It is worth noting that historic preservation is included both in the vision for the Downtown Development component of SA 2020, and among the reasons Centro San Antonio lists as why downtown matters. Many of the locally designated landmark properties are located in downtown.

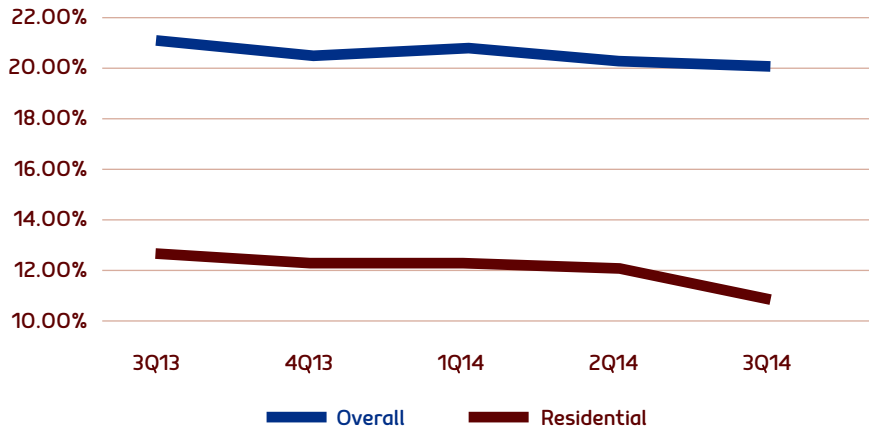


Downtown San Antonio contains both local and National Register historic districts and both local and National Register listings of individual buildings, sites and structures. Downtown is also home to many of the individual listings on the National Register of Historic Places.



The revitalization of downtown is an inherently lengthy process. Thinking in terms of a decade (or longer) is a realistic strategy, and progress is being made. Over the last five quarters, the overall vacancy in downtown San Antonio and the residential vacancy rates have both steadily declined.

Vacancy Downtown San Antonio



But almost under the radar something else is happening. Over the last year, more than a thousand jobs in start-up firms have been added to San Antonio's central business district. And although downtown overall has a relatively small share of the 650,000 jobs in San Antonio, it is home to fully 7% of jobs with small firms - those employing fewer than 20 persons. The majority of small and start-up firms are locally owned businesses. The affordability, the character, and the quality of downtown historic buildings directly add to the identified role of downtown as the place to be the incubator of locally owned, unique businesses.

Economic Competitiveness

San Antonio is recognized as a leader in business that prospers through innovation in 21st Century industries. San Antonio has a highly qualified and educated workforce and provides economic opportunity for all of its residents. The city fosters entrepreneurship as the engine of economic prosperity. It capitalizes on its unique historical and cultural heritage, as well as local institutions like its military bases, universities, medical centers and international airport system to become a leader in the global economy.

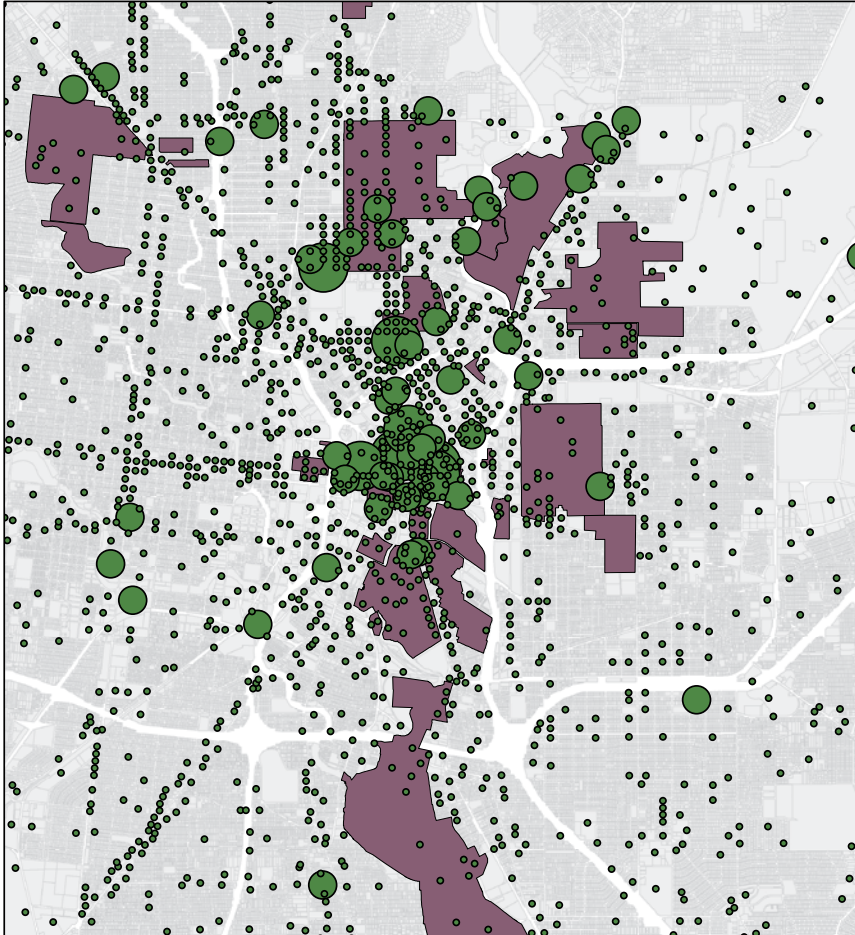
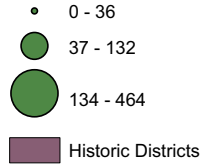
While the role of historic buildings in downtown revitalization is a priority, when the focus of analysis moves from just the central business district to all of San Antonio's historic districts, the vital contribution to the local economy from those areas, including the downtown, become even more apparent.

Reading the headlines of the *Wall Street Journal* might give one the impression that the US economy was dependent on the giant corporations listed in the New York Stock Exchange; however, the real net job growth across the country comes from small firms. This is no less true in San Antonio. While San Antonio is pleased to be host to many of the country's largest corporations, there are small businesses spread throughout the city. But when viewed as clusters of jobs within small firms, the preference of those firms for San Antonio's historic districts becomes all the more evident.



Jobs at Small Firms

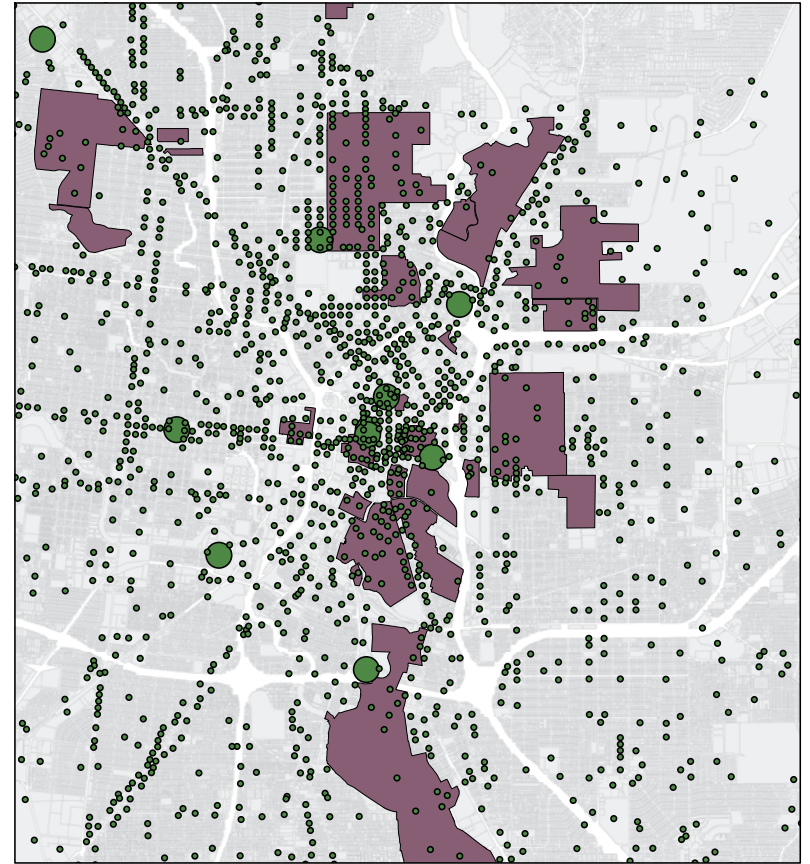
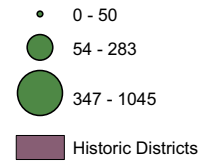
Number of Jobs



Likewise for start-up firms. As earlier noted, a high number of these firms locate downtown, but they are also being established in virtually every historic district in the city.

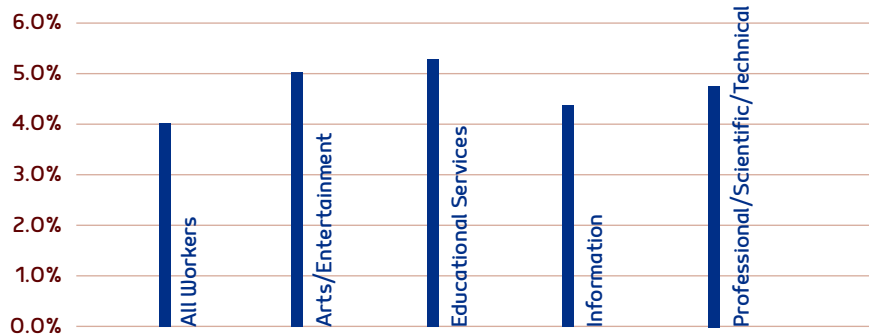
Jobs at Start Up Firms

Number of Jobs



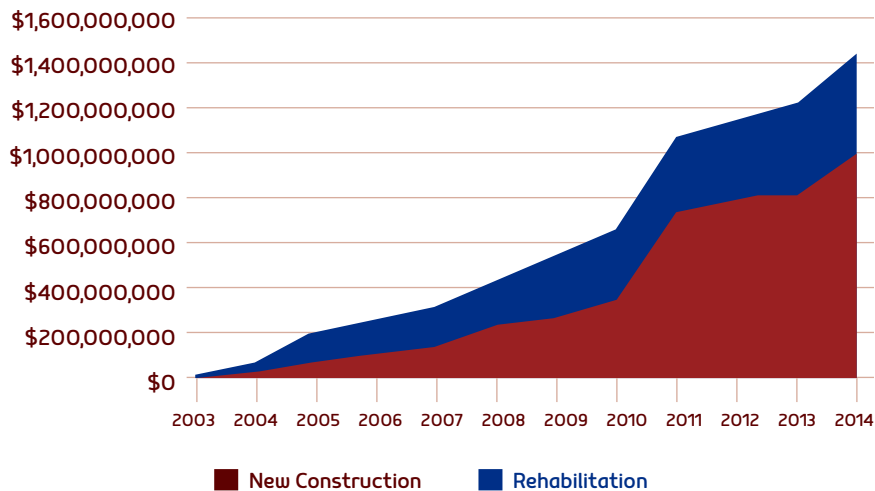
Then there is the sector of the economy known as Knowledge Workers, an increasingly important component of a competitive local economy. While in total San Antonio historic districts are the location for about 4% of all of the city's jobs, employees in the knowledge fields of arts and entertainment, educational services, information, and professional/scientific/technical services are more likely to be in historic districts.

Historic Districts Home to Knowledge Workers



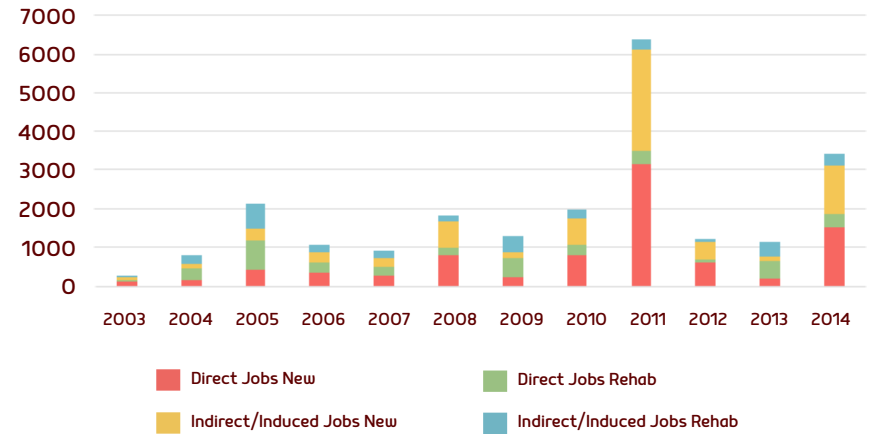
While historic districts have become a location of choice for knowledge industries, they are also a magnet for investment in both rehabilitation of existing historic buildings, as well as new construction. Over the last decade almost \$1.5 billion has been invested in buildings in San Antonio historic districts, almost 70% of which was for new construction. There are two important lessons there. First, San Antonio's historic districts are not museums that can never change and evolve. Rather they are dynamic neighborhoods that can accommodate new construction and still maintain their fundamental character. Second, because the infill construction is in a historic district there is a mechanism for design review to assure the new building is compatible with the existing historic fabric.

Cumulative Construction in Historic Districts



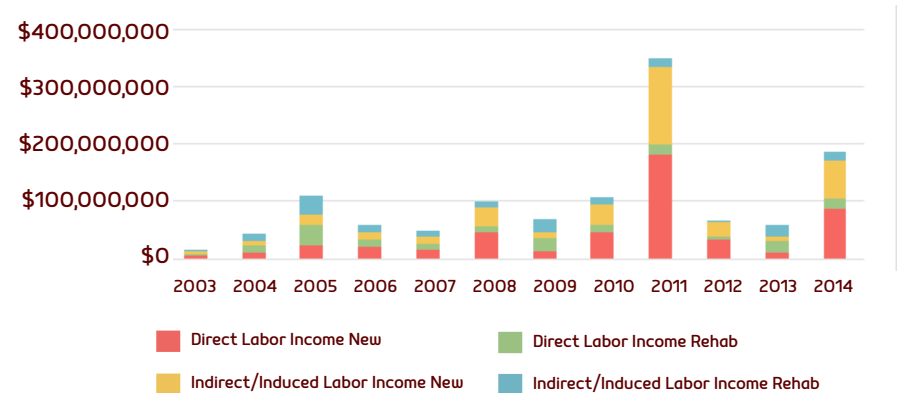
Construction means jobs - generally well paid jobs, particularly for those without advanced formal education. Additionally rehabilitation tends to be more labor intensive than new construction, so work restoring historic buildings will have a greater job creating impact per dollar spent than will new construction. But since 2003, there have been an average of 1,862 jobs each year resulting from construction activity in San Antonio historic districts.

Jobs from Historic District Construction



Workers on those projects took home paychecks averaging more than \$100 million per year. While, of course, there is a sizable difference in the hourly rate for a master electrician and a beginning laborer, on average each job generated through these construction projects received salary and wages of \$54,000.

Salary and Wages from Historic District Construction



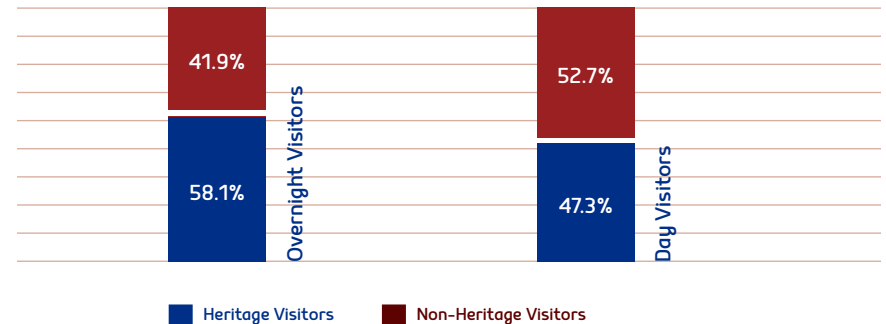


Of course no discussion of economic competitiveness in San Antonio would be complete without consideration of the heritage tourism industry. An excellent economic impact of tourism study was commissioned by the San Antonio Area Tourism Council in 2011. That report showed an overall economic impact in the region of more than \$12 billion and employment generated by the tourism industry topping 112,000 jobs.

Heritage Tourism

For this report, only the heritage share of tourism to San Antonio was considered. Just over 58% of all overnight visitors to San Antonio fall into the “heritage visitor” category as well as 47% of the visitors who only come for the day.

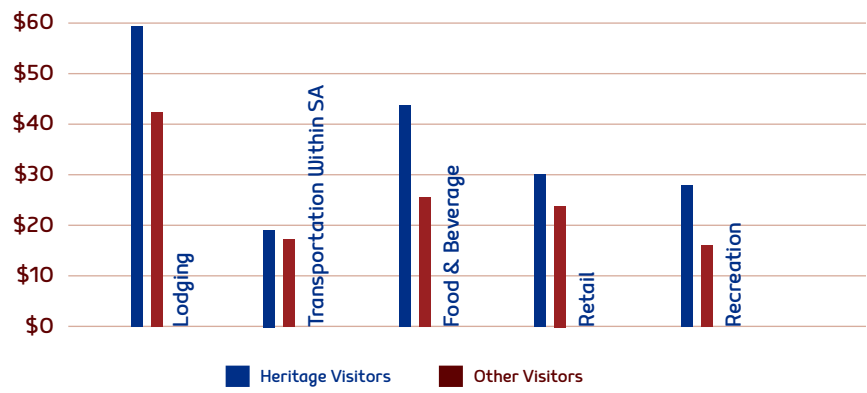
Share of Heritage Visitors in San Antonio



So the sheer number of those visitors means that a sizable economic impact will be realized. But what was also discovered was that the per visit expenditure of heritage visitors was greater than other tourists in all five of the primary expenditure sectors of the industry: lodging, transportation, food and beverage, retail and recreation.

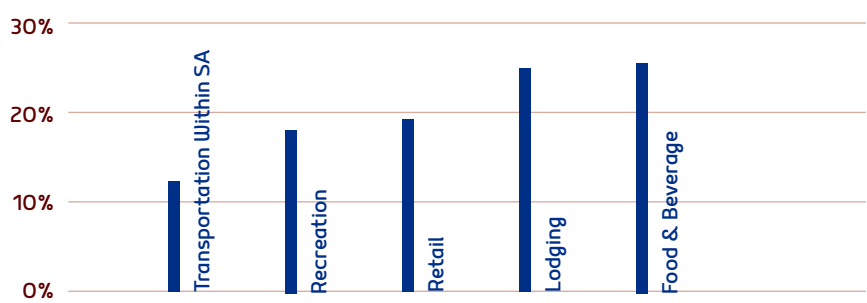


Per Person Per Trip Overnight Visitors to San Antonio

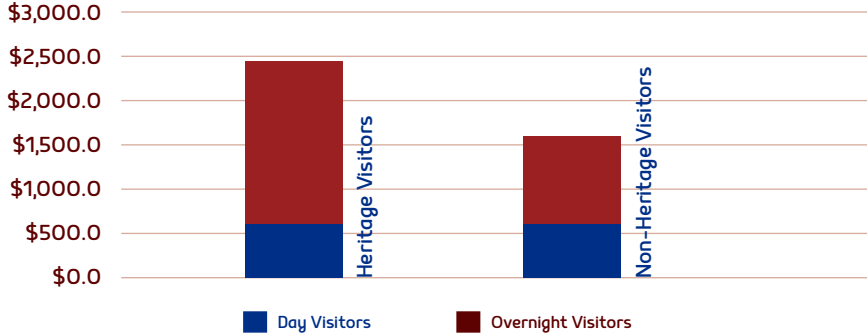


Around half of the heritage visitor expenditures go to food, beverage and lodging, but also a sizable portion to retail.

Heritage Visitor Expenditures in San Antonio

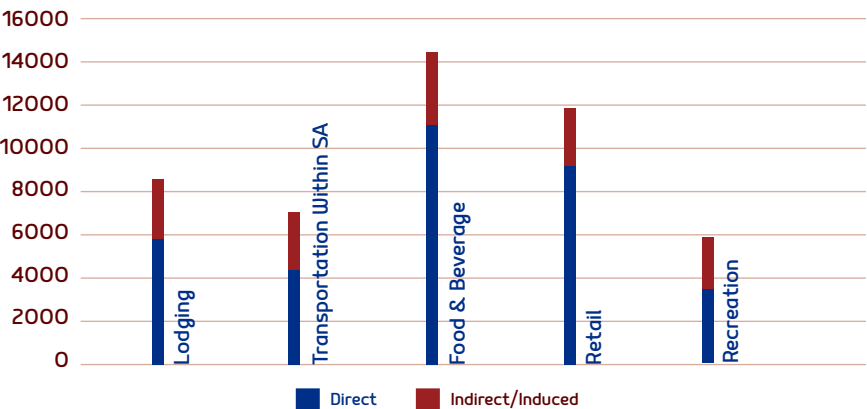


Total Visitor Expenditures (in \$Million)



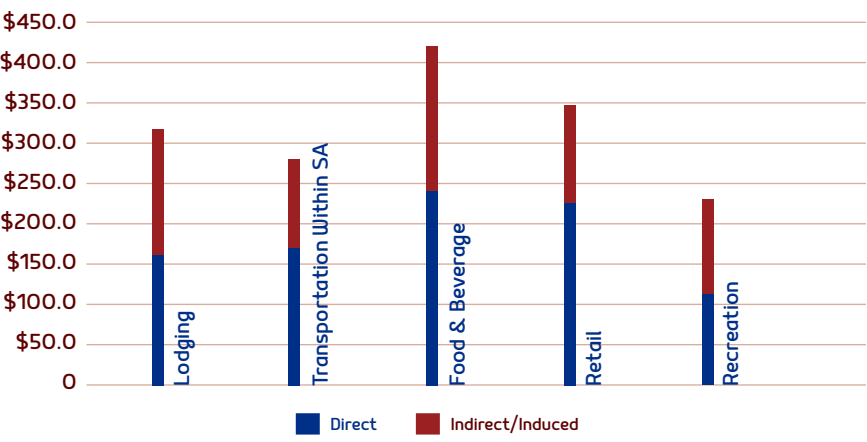
Those tourism expenditures create both jobs and paychecks. Over 14,000 food and beverage workers, nearly 12,000 retail employees, and 9,000 workers in hotels, motels, and B&Bs owe their jobs to San Antonio’s heritage visitors.

Per Person Per Trip Overnight Visitors to San Antonio



Those food and beverage workers take home over \$400 million in salary and wages, \$350 million for those in retail, and an additional \$317 million in paychecks for hotel and motel workers.

Labor Income from San Antonio Heritage Tourism (in millions)



The impact of heritage tourism in San Antonio is among the largest of all industry sectors in the city. The listing of the San Antonio Missions as a World Heritage Site is estimated to add between \$44 and \$105 million in additional economic activity and be responsible for between 465 and 1,100 additional jobs.

Education

San Antonio has orchestrated one of the greatest turnarounds in education in the United States. San Antonio provides access to quality education for all students no matter where they live in our city. The city is propelled forward by an approach where students learn, teachers thrive, parents engage, and citizens contribute to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century in a way that rivals any city in America. This San Antonio approach to education develops citizens who are thinkers, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners, prepared to tackle our society's greatest challenges and proud to call San Antonio their home.

To some extent the historic buildings of San Antonio are a living history lesson. First, dozens of present and former school houses are designated local or national landmarks, including Bonham Elementary, Brackenridge High School, the Fourth Ward School, Jefferson High School, Sam Houston High School and others.

Second, hundreds of teachers in the San Antonio region use the city's historic resources as an extension of their classroom. School visits of thousands of students to the Missions of San Antonio, the Alamo and elsewhere represent the physical manifestation of local history and serve an important educational role in understanding the past, present and future of San Antonio.

For the last eight years the University of Texas at San Antonio has had a graduate certificate program in historic preservation that is highly regarded nationally. That program specifically uses the historic built environment of the city as an integral part of the educational process.

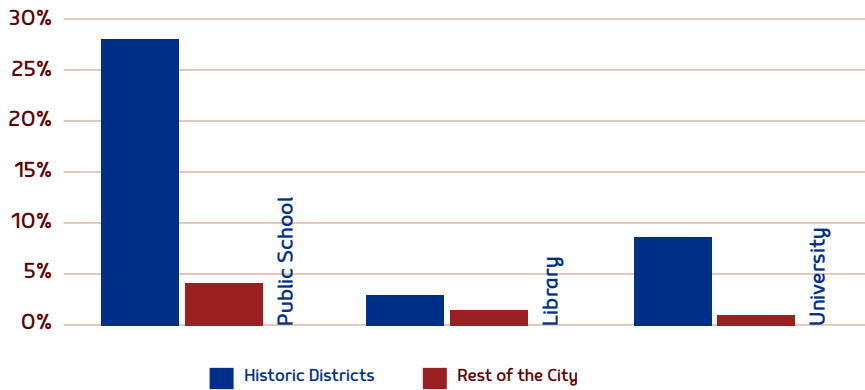
Finally residents of San Antonio's historic districts are simply closer to educational facilities than residents living elsewhere in the city. Twenty-eight percent of historic district residents are within a quarter mile of a public school That is true of only 4% of the population as a whole. Three percent of historic district residents are within a quarter mile of a library and nearly one in ten are that close to a college or university. Both numbers are significantly higher than for the city at large.





1981

Historic Districts and Education Within 1/4 Mile of...



Lifetime learning opportunities are a priority in the SA 2020 education vision, and San Antonio's historic sites, buildings and neighborhoods provide that opportunity daily.

Family Well-Being

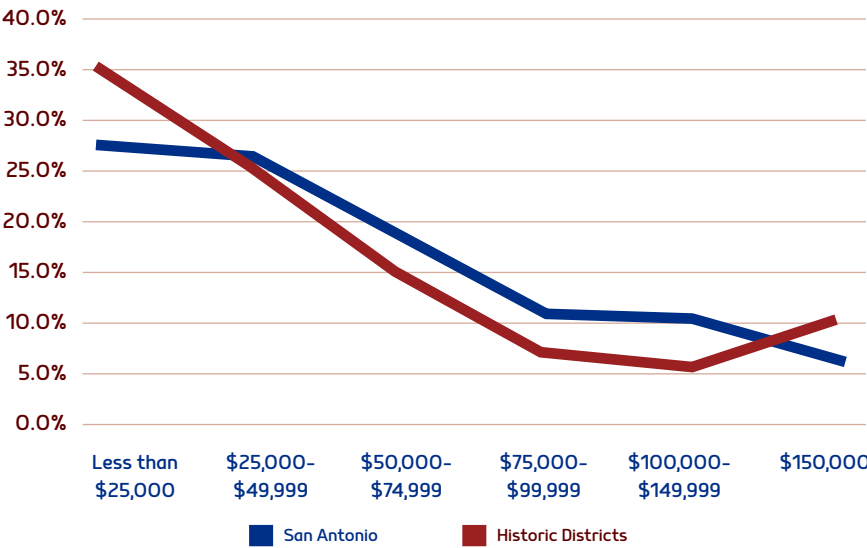
San Antonio is renowned as the best city to raise a family. Its neighborhoods are places where residents thrive in an ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically integrated environment. The entire community – individuals, businesses, local government, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations – takes responsibility for our collective well-being by providing information, access, high quality services and a meaningful sense of stability to residents of all ages and backgrounds. This continuum of caring enhances our residents' quality of life and prepares families for the challenges of the 21st century.

".....thrive in an ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically integrated environment." An important public policy priority – and one that is often not achieved. But San Antonio's historic neighborhoods are the embodiment of integrated environments on all of those measures.

Overall, San Antonio's historic neighborhoods have slightly more households at both the bottom and the top of the economic rungs than the city as a whole, but largely the historic districts are a statistical mirror of the household income distribution of the entire city.



Income Distribution San Antonio and Historic Districts



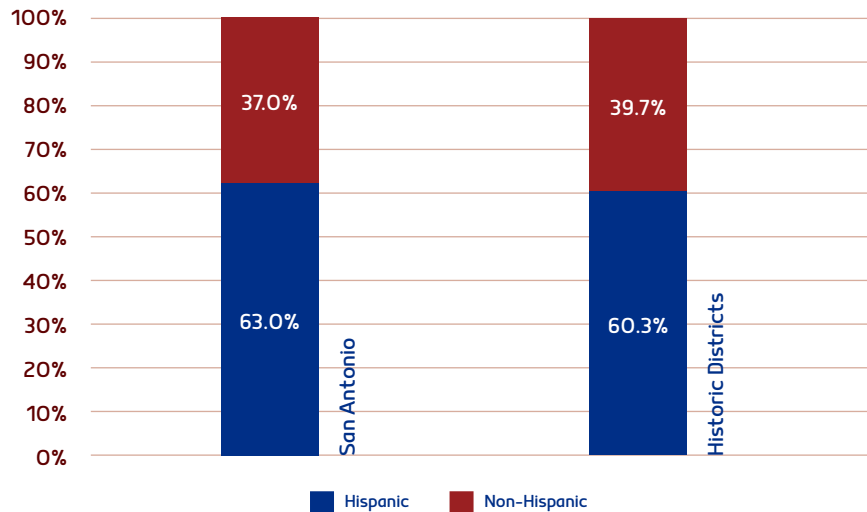
Data lumped together can be deceptive, so it’s important to look at economic and demographic distributions on a district by district basis as well as in total. Even at the district level, these historic neighborhoods are composed of a great diversity of incomes by household. A few - Cattleman Square and Government Hill have a higher percentage of households making \$25,000 and under, while King William and Monte Vista have a greater share of households making more than \$150,000. Most neighborhoods are statistically near the city averages for household in each income category. Even in a perceived wealthy district like King William, there is nearly the share of under \$25,000 households as in the city overall. And in that district there are more than two times as many households earning less than \$50,000 per year than those making more than \$150,000.

Household Income Distribution in Historic Districts



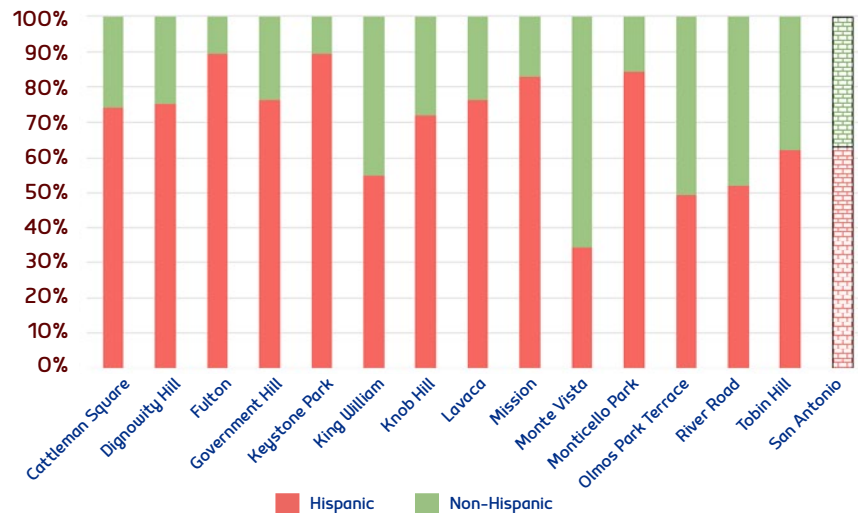
San Antonio is the nation’s seventh largest city, but it is fourth largest in Hispanic population. Hispanic culture permeates every aspect of life in San Antonio, including the historic districts. The ratio of Hispanic to Non-Hispanic residents is nearly the same in the historic districts as in the city as a whole.

Hispanic Population San Antonio and Historic Districts



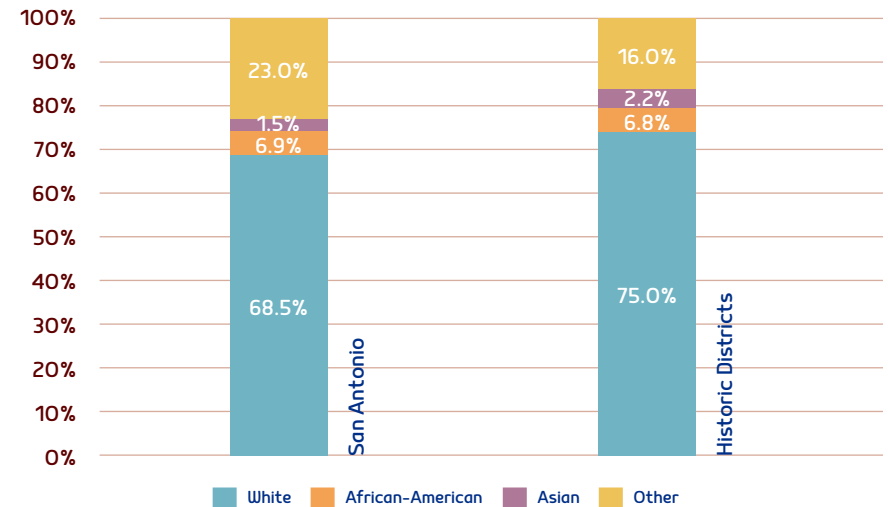
Most of the individual historic districts have a share of Hispanic population similar to San Antonio overall. All but one of the historic districts has a majority Hispanic population.

Hispanic Population in Historic Districts



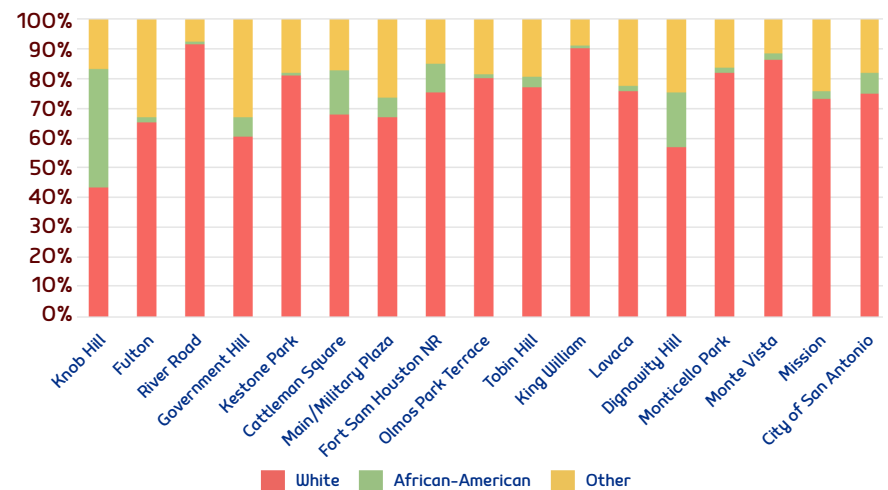
The percentage of African-American population in San Antonio at just under 7% is about half of the share of Black population nationwide. But there is almost an identical percentage of Black population in the historic districts as in the city.

Racial Distribution San Antonio and Historic Districts



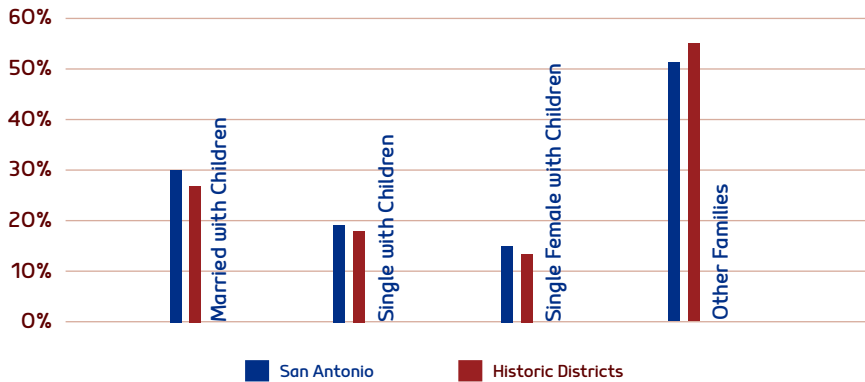
On the district level nearly all historic neighborhoods have a share of Black population comparable to that of San Antonio as a whole with the exception of Knob Hill and Dignowity Hill both of which have a larger share of African-American residents. River Road, King William and Monte Vista have a measurably larger share of white population in the neighborhood.

Racial Distribution in Historic Districts



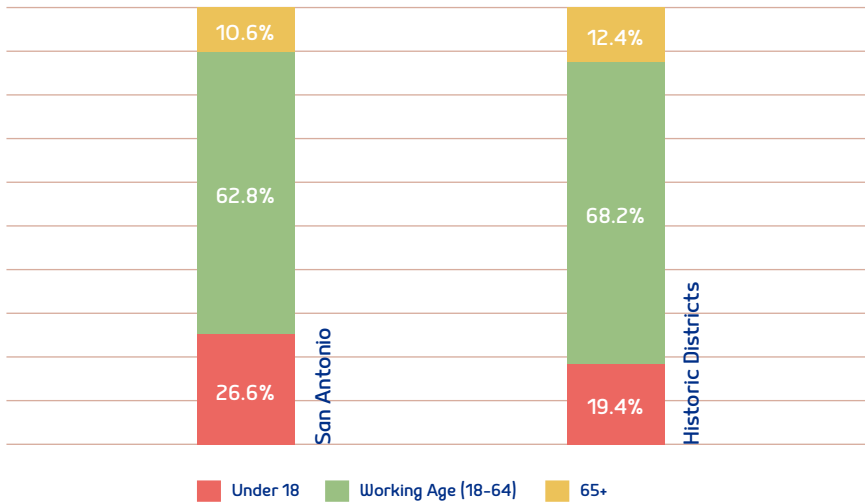
Family composition in San Antonio historic districts is almost an exact copy of the distribution in the city overall.

Family Composition



Similarly the age distribution of the historic districts is statistically little different from that of San Antonio.

Age Distribution San Antonio and Historic Districts



For family well-being SA 2020 has a vision of a city where "... neighborhoods are places where residents thrive in an ethnically, culturally and socioeconomically integrated environment." A noble goal, and one that San Antonio's historic districts have already met.

Civic Engagement

San Antonio's citizens are deeply engaged as elected leaders, business leaders, volunteers, and voters in the process of making government more responsive and accountable to San Antonians. Vibrant grass roots movements, civic organizations, business leaders, city staff, and selfless citizens actively and effectively collaborate in all areas of city operations and governance. Elected officials and city staff take ownership of issues and are accountable for results. City, county and state branches of government coordinate their work to eliminate waste brought about by duplication of effort. The city cultivates inspired and effective leaders in selfless service to the community and is recognized for delivering transparency in government.

There may not be another city preservation office in America that has more, more varied, and more participation in community outreach and civic engagement activities than does the Office of Historic Preservation in San Antonio. Over the course of a year the OHP hosts, sponsors or participates in events averaging more than one per week.

These outreach efforts reach audiences of all ages, from local residents to Texas lawmakers, to Spanish and English speakers, to those who are highly educated and those who are just forming an understanding of historic preservation. The OHP's efforts are not to instruct people on how to preserve but strive to help residents and visitors alike form connections with the historic built environment. The OHP uses the city's historic built resources as its classroom holding events in San Antonio's diverse parks, cemeteries, libraries, and historic buildings in neighborhoods all over the city.

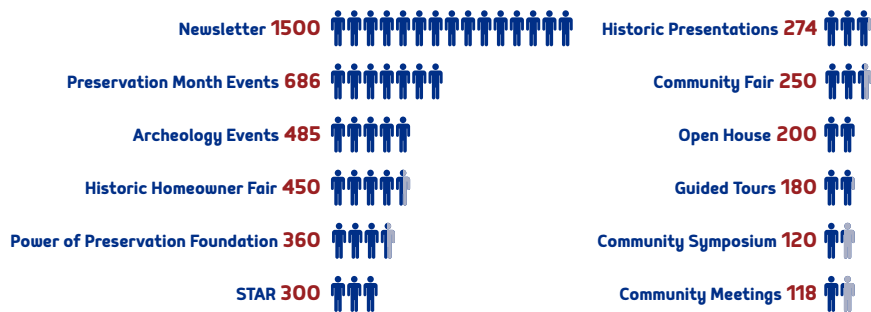
Events range from organizing the Kids Amazing Preservation Race, to a lecture on architectural surveys, to graduate students, to a presentation about San Antonio history at a senior citizens center. The office conducts community meetings about the process for creating a local historic district, organizes public symposiums featuring national and international experts in preservation, and provides training for realtors, preservation, and archaeology professionals. The

Historic Homeowners Fair held annually in the fall brings exhibitors and consumers together to interact on topics such as landscaping, energy retrofitting, and how to finance rehabilitation projects. The free event had over 450 participants in 2014.

Multiple events are held during both Archeology Week and Preservation Month. But the engagement with and assistance to residents of historic neighborhoods isn't limited to PowerPoint presentations. Each year the office organizes S.T.A.R. (Students Together Achieving Revitalization) in conjunction with UTSA and San Antonio College. In the most recent year 300 architecture, planning and preservation students got hands-on preservation experience by assisting with repairs to 17 homes in San Antonio historic districts. With volunteer labor and around \$750 in materials per house, each homeowner benefitted from \$5,000 to \$15,000 worth of repairs and improvements.

Finally social events including the Preservation PROMenade (held in 2014 at the Hemisfair Park) raise money to help support hands-on preservation programs. Cities around the country look to the Office of Historic Preservation in San Antonio to learn how civic engagement ought to be done.

Office of Historic Preservation Civic Engagement



But civic engagement is not limited to the Office of Historic Preservation, through the historic district designation process the residents of San Antonio's historic neighborhoods engage each other. It is through the design review process inherent to a local historic district that residents are given a direct voice about changes that will affect their neighborhoods. Further, ninety percent of all the historic neighborhoods in San Antonio have an organized neighborhood association that serves the area.

Health & Fitness

San Antonio residents are among the healthiest in the country. San Antonio promotes well-being by providing healthy and affordable food choices, convenient access to green spaces and recreational facilities, and a robust network of physical and mental healthcare designed to eliminate existing health disparities in the community.

In 2008 the American Journal of Preventative Medicine reported on a study conducted by researchers at the University of Utah. A key finding of the research was this: "Neighborhoods built a half-century or more ago were designed with 'walkability' in mind. And living in them reduces an individual's risk of become overweight or obese."

In recent years the importance of walkability has emerged among public health professionals, urban planners, municipal officials and the real estate community. Such was the interest that a group of researchers in Seattle developed a tool - Walkscore - whereby any address in America can be entered into the Walkscore.com website and one will be provided with a numerical score ranging from 1 to 100 as to its walkability. Multiple metrics go into creating the Walkscore but the key elements to walkability are identified by the Walkscore researchers as follows:

- A center: Walkable neighborhoods have a center, whether it's a main street or a public space.
- People: Enough people for businesses to flourish and for public transit to run frequently.
- Mixed income, mixed use: Affordable housing located near businesses.
- Parks and public space: Plenty of public places to gather and play.
- Pedestrian design: Buildings are close to the street, parking lots are relegated to the back.
- Schools and workplaces: Close enough that most residents can walk from their homes.
- Complete streets: Streets designed for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit.



It turns out that San Antonio's historic neighborhoods meet those criteria. San Antonio as a whole rates a Walkscore of 34, putting it solidly in the "Car-Dependent" category, while nearly all of the historic districts score higher, most in the range of "Somewhat walkable" to "Walker's Paradise".

90-100 Walker's Paradise Daily errands do not require a car

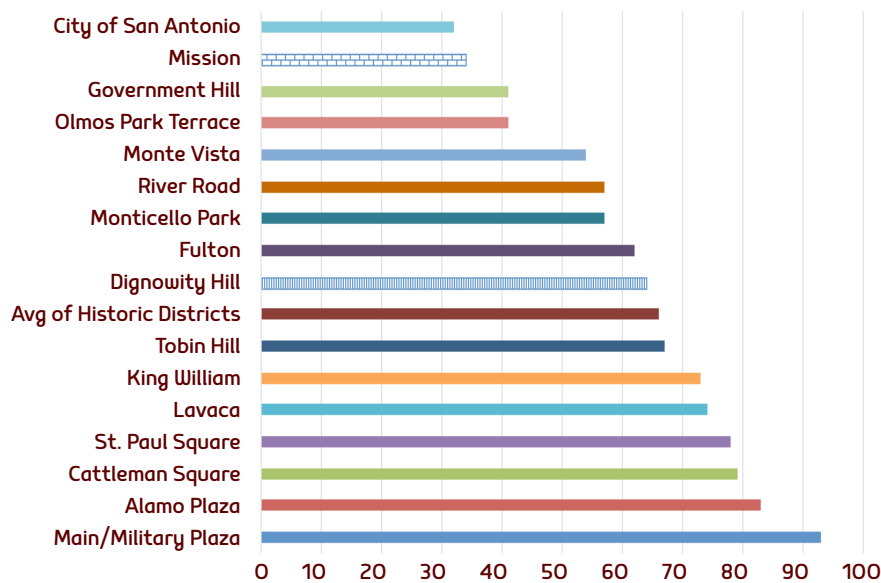
70-89 Very Walkable Most errands can be accomplished on foot

50-69 Somewhat Walkable Some errands can be accomplished on foot

25-49 Car-Dependent Most errands require a car

0-24 Car-Dependent Almost all errands require a car

Walk Scores for San Antonio Historic Districts



Living in a historic house might not automatically make a family healthier. But living in a walkable historic neighborhood can make a substantial contribution to good health.

Natural Resources & Environmental Sustainability

San Antonio is recognized as a respectful steward of its natural resources and a model for responsible resource management. San Antonio promotes responsible growth and the use of sustainable environmental practices. Its strategy is based on an integrated approach that establishes a green economy and focuses on three key areas.

Water: Water resources are plentiful and effectively managed through a combination of conservation, supply development and other practices to support growth and sustainability for the next 50 years.

Energy: The community relies on a well-balanced and affordable energy program combining the best advances in new technology with traditional energy sources to promote economic growth and environmental stewardship.

Land: Development practices are focused on Smart Growth, Low Impact Development and Green Building.

Perhaps the most comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability in the United States is the Smart Growth movement. It is no coincidence that the phrase "Smart Growth" was used in the vision statement above. One of the strengths of the Smart Growth approach is that from the beginning they established a set of principles which would come to define a Smart Growth city and neighborhood. The Principles of Smart Growth are these:

- Mix land uses
- Take advantage of compact building design
- Create a range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

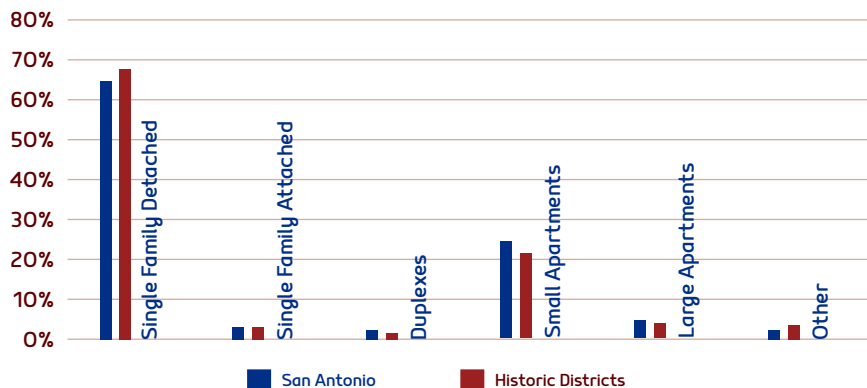
Now consider the attributes of San Antonio's historic neighborhoods.

- Mixed land use
- Compact building design
- Range of housing choices
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Distinctive, attractive, sense of place
- Do not consume farmland, open space or critical environmental areas
- Development is already within the exiting community
- Transportation choices (also discussed later)
- Predictable, fair and cost effective development decisions
- Active community involvement

A public commitment to identify, protect and enhance San Antonio's historic neighborhoods is in and of itself Smart Growth. San Antonio's historic neighborhoods should serve as the model in how to reach the vision established for Environmental Sustainability.

One of the principles of Smart Growth is a range of housing opportunities and choices. Once again the characteristics of San Antonio historic districts is a virtual mirror of the city as a whole and includes single family detached and attached houses, duplexes, and both large and small apartment complexes.

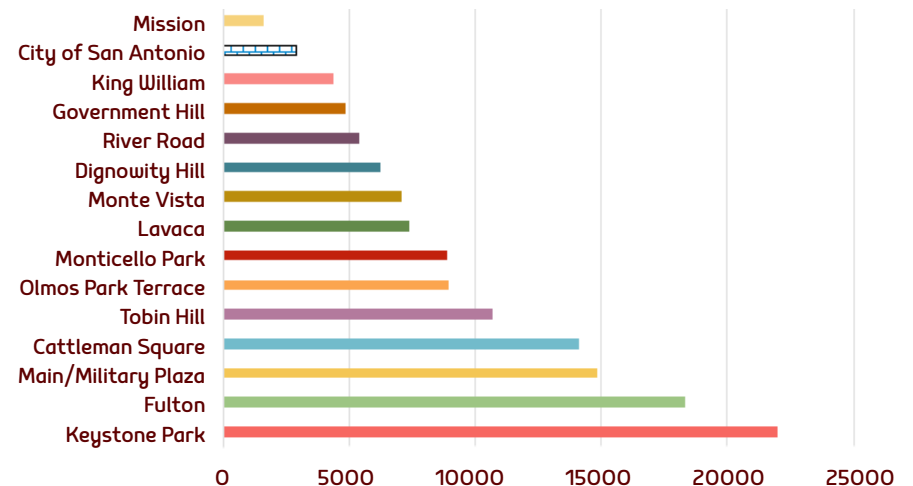
Housing Stock San Antonio and Historic Districts



But there is another component of environmental sustainability as well as fiscal responsibility, and that is density. While popular among city planners, environmentalists, and budget officers responsible for infrastructure development, density is often opposed by neighborhood residents. "If I wanted to live in a dense neighborhood I'd move to New York City" is a phrase that is commonly heard at community meetings. But when the word "density" is taken out of the discussion, it is often discovered that it is not low density that neighborhood residents want to preserve, but density at a human scale.

That is what San Antonio's historic neighborhoods provide. San Antonio is not a dense city overall, with a population of around 2,900 people per square mile. Taken together the average density for San Antonio historic districts is 5,369 persons per square mile. Individually almost every historic district has a density higher than the city wide average. The graph below provides some representative examples.

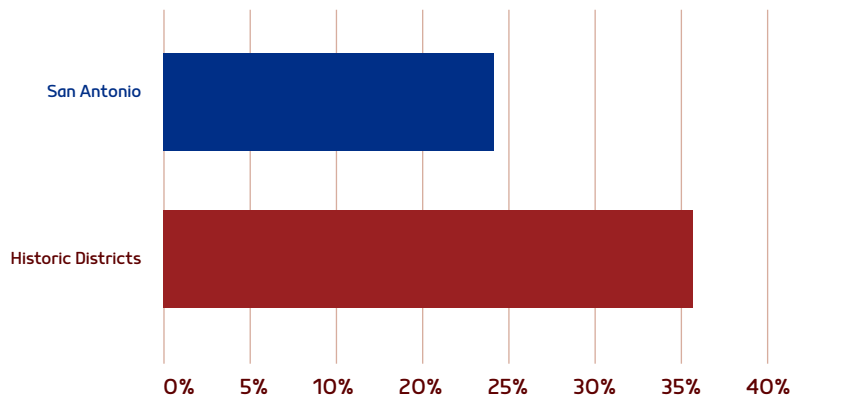
Density (Residents/Square Mile)



Historic neighborhoods in San Antonio are already dense, but at a human scale, and should be used as models as how to achieve desired density rather than simply a strategy of building 20 story condominiums.

A neighborhood that adopted the Smart Growth principles should be expected to benefit from a priority on almost everyone's list - reduced commuting time. That is already happening today in historic neighborhoods in San Antonio. Over a third of historic district residents have commute times of less than 15 minutes. That compares with less than 24% of other San Antonio residents who can make the same claim.

Commute Time Less than 15 Minutes



Neighborhoods & Growth Management

San Antonio is known for its cohesive neighborhoods with compelling and unique personalities. Modern linked mass transit, improved infrastructure and a concerted effort to preserve and maintain our historic buildings, parks and open spaces compliment smart growth patterns. The result is a livable and vibrant community that is strongly connected to its past and maintains its small town feel.

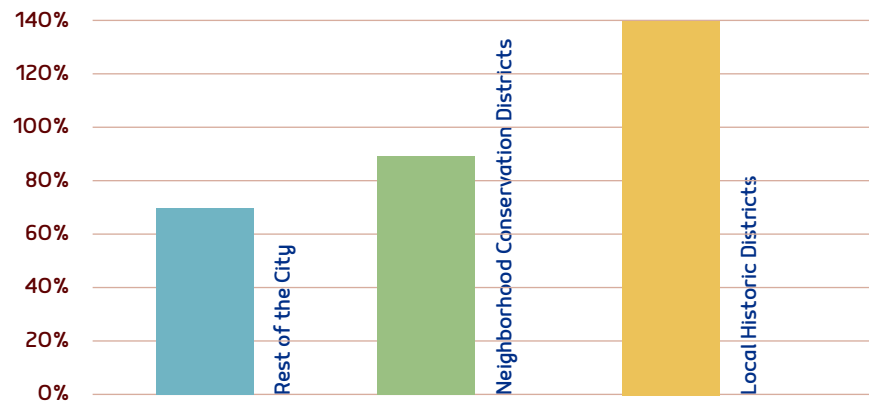
Here in the clearest expression in the SA 2020 document is the recognition of the value of historic resources in making vibrant communities strongly connected to their past and providing a small town feel. Those multiple values are also recognized in the market place, and a premium is paid to live in one of San Antonio's historic neighborhoods.

The first decade of the 21st century was a volatile one for real estate. Late in 2007 the Great Recession began and its first and hardest hit victim was residential real estate. Around the country housing prices fell almost overnight and today, more than seven years later, values in some parts of the country have not yet risen to their pre-recession prices. But earlier in the decade real estate was appreciating at unprecedented rates and far too many were convinced that real estate values could only go up.

So what happened to the values in San Antonio's housing prices over this fifteen year volatile period? By 2013 the average square foot price of a single-family home outside of San Antonio's historic districts was up about 68% from its 1998 value. On average properties in the Neighborhood Conservation Districts did better, seeing a per square foot value increase of 85 percent over the 15 year period. But San Antonio's historic districts outperformed them both with homes valued at 139% over their 1998 values.

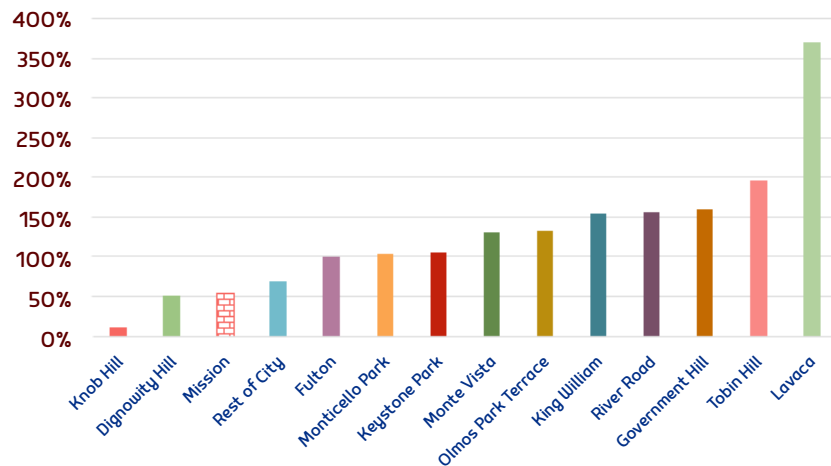


Change in Value 1998 - 2013



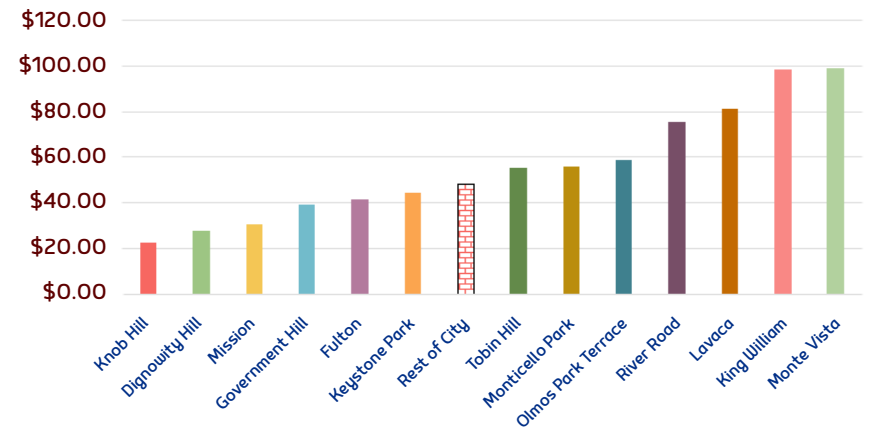
While not every historic district outperformed the market, most did and by a sizable margin.

Local Historic Districts Change in Value 1998 - 2013



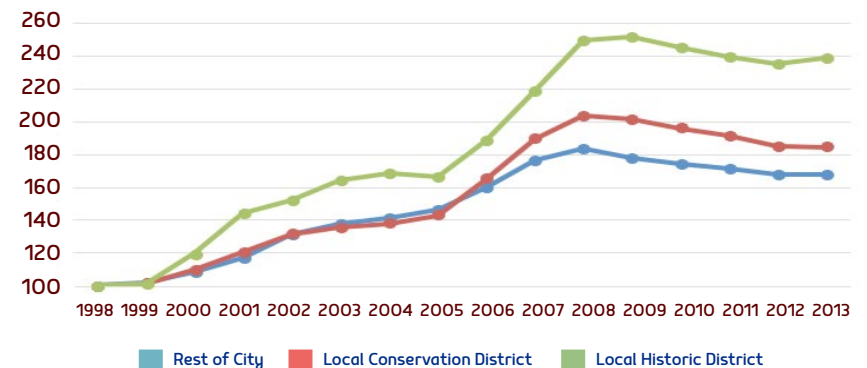
The next concern might be, however, if the historic districts went up in value so much more than the overall San Antonio market, does that mean they are no longer affordable for most people? The answer is, in fact, no. While the rates of value change were greater than the city, the average square foot value is less than the citywide average in nearly half of the historic districts. This is part of the reason that the historic neighborhoods of San Antonio still reflect a high degree of economic integration.

Per Square Foot Property Values - 2013 Local Historic Districts



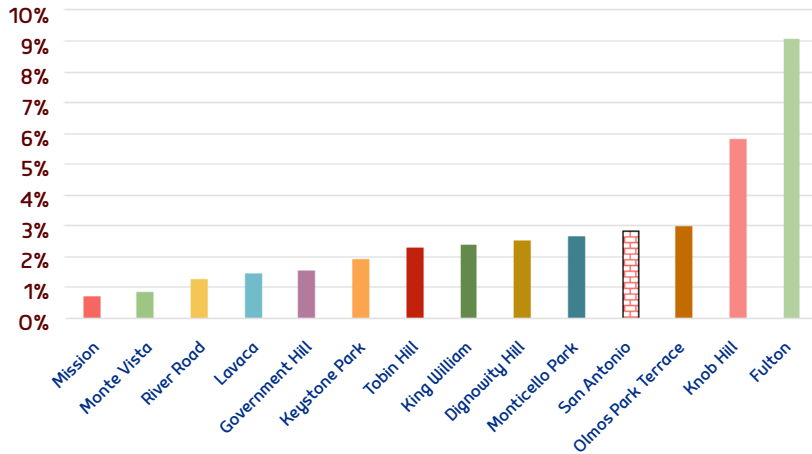
The underlying strength and stability of historic districts can be seen when year to year changes over the fifteen year period are graphed. In up years in the real estate market the local historic districts significantly outperformed both the Neighborhood Conservation Districts and the city as a whole. When the recession hit, there was a minor decline in historic district property values, but less severe than the other two categories of property. Then when the recession was finally over, recovery in the residential real estate sector began first in San Antonio's historic neighborhoods.

Annual Change in Value 1998 - 2013 - 1998 = 100



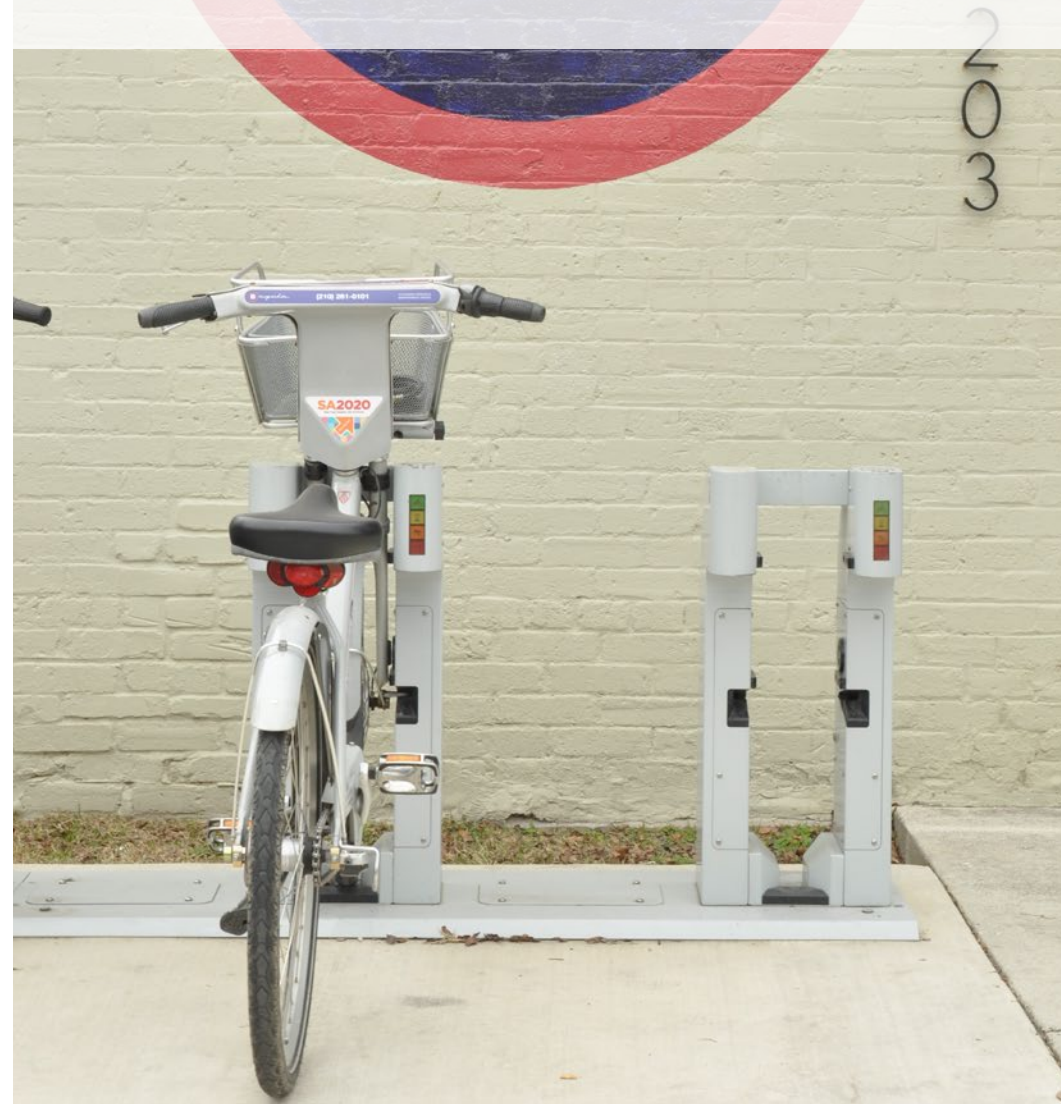
The stability and desirability of houses in historic districts paid another dividend during the recession. The rate of foreclosure of single family houses was less than the citywide average in 10 of the 13 districts that had residential properties.

Historic District Foreclosure Rates 2008 - 2014



Transportation

San Antonio's transportation system is recognized as a model of efficiency and environmental sustainability. San Antonio is served by an environmentally friendly transportation system where everyone is able to walk, ride, drive or wheel in a safe, convenient, and affordable manner to their desired destinations. Frequent and reliable mass transit services connect communities, and transportation infrastructure meets community needs.



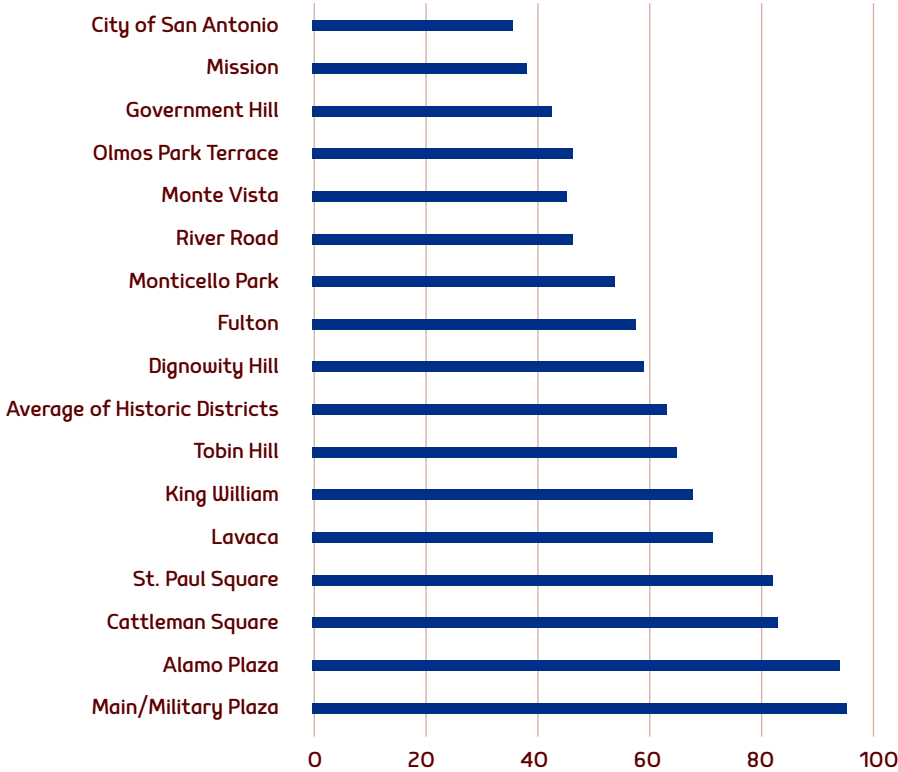
Improving public transportation is high on the list of priorities of the leadership and the citizens of San Antonio. It is a challenge. With an area of 465 square miles, much of it developed at relatively low densities, public transportation is neither cheap nor simple. Further transportation is an issue that must be addressed regionally to be effective. Not only was transportation a core element of SA 2020 but addressing transportation issues is of central consideration in the process, currently underway, of revising the Comprehensive Plan of San Antonio.

So what is the relationship between transportation and historic preservation? One way to measure this is through the use of Transit Scores. Transit Score measures how well a given address is served by public transportation. Scores range from 0 to 100 and are based on frequency, distance to the transit stop and type of transportation. San Antonio as a whole has considerable room for improvement receiving a Transit Score of 34, putting it in the “Some Transit” category.

San Antonio’s historic neighborhoods all perform better than the citywide average, with scores ranging from 38 to 95. The Average Transit Score for San Antonio Historic Districts is nearly twice the citywide average.

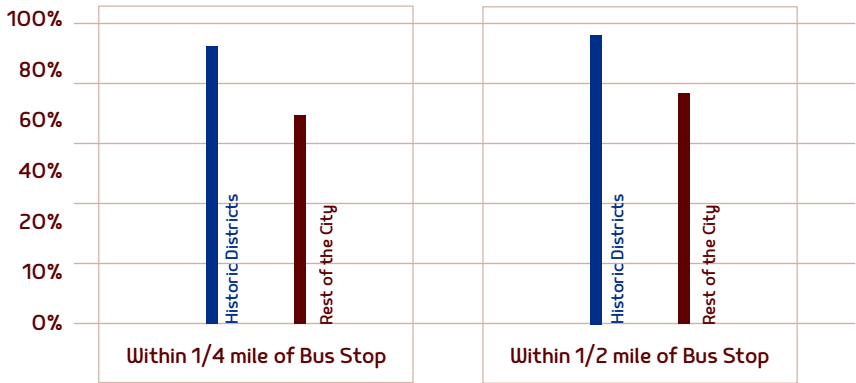
Transit Score®	Description
90-100	Rider’s Paradise World-class public transportation.
70-89	Excellent Transit Transit is convenient for most trips.
50-69	Good Transit Many nearby public transportation options.
25-49	Some Transit A few nearby public transportation options.
0-24	Minimal Transit It is possible to get on a bus.

Transit Scores for San Antonio Historic Districts



One of the reasons historic neighborhood receive higher Transit Scores is the relative distance to a bus stop. While around two-thirds of San Antonio households are within a quarter mile of a bus stop, more than 90% of historic residents have that convenience.

Historic Districts and Transportation



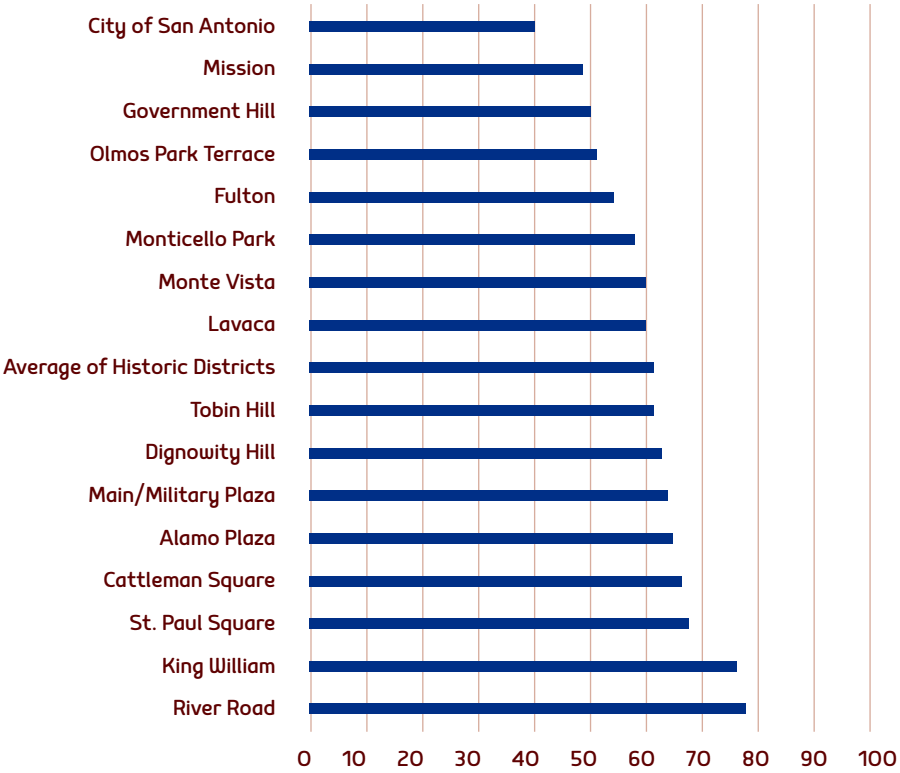
Too often discussions of transportation revolve only around public transportation. While buses, light rail, street cars, trolleys and other means are potentially part of the response to transportation needs, the far less costly, privately funded, and environmentally superior transportation – biking – is playing a bigger role in transportation planning around the country. The same organization that created Walk Score and Transit Score has also developed a metric called Bike Score. Bike Score is calculated consider hills, bike lanes, road connectivity and bike commuting mode share.

As with Transit Score and Walk Score, San Antonio’s historic districts outperform the city as a whole for biking. While the city receives an overall Bike Score of 40, every historic district scores higher, ranging from a low of 48 for the Mission District to a high of 77 in the River Road district. The average Bike Score for San Antonio Historic Districts is 61.

Bike Score®	Description
90-100	Biker’s Paradise Daily errands can be accomplished on a bike.
70-89	Very Bikeable Biking is convenient for most trips.
50-69	Bikeable Some bike infrastructure.
0-49	Somewhat Bikeable Minimal bike infrastructure.



Bike Scores for San Antonio Historic Districts



So what is the link between transportation and historic preservation? Are these significantly higher transportation metrics simply because there are historic buildings there? Of course not. These scores reflect the central location, the density, the walkability and in many cases the block sizes of these historic neighborhoods. But there are three important lessons from this link: 1) for families for whom public transportation is particularly important, historic neighborhoods are an excellent choice to call home. 2) The greater the availability of public transportation and ease of use of bicycles, the reduction in the need for automobiles. This has significant and positive environmental, infrastructure, public health and fiscal consequences. 3) San Antonio’s historic neighborhoods are already fulfilling the transportation outcomes envisioned for the entire city in SA 2020.

Conclusions

The recognition of the importance of historic preservation in San Antonio began nearly a hundred years ago. Over that century San Antonio citizens have simply grown to recognize and appreciate historic buildings as part of their daily life. Appreciate, but not take for granted. There is not “Cause Area” within SA 2020 entitled “historic preservation,” but several of the vision statements specifically cited San Antonio’s historic resources as an important component of their broader goals.

Much of this report is neither new nor surprising to San Antonians. The contribution to the economy and the quality of life in San Antonio is simply acknowledged as a fact of life here. What the report does demonstrate is that the contributions of historic preservation to San Antonio are both significant and measureable. And perhaps also this report identifies ways that preservation enhances the city that were not considered before.

In some cities in America historic preservation is an interesting diversion for a few committed advocates. In San Antonio the historic fabric of the city and the rich multi-cultural meanings that are embodied there are not the esoteric concerns of a few, but central to the daily life of everyone. Historic preservation in San Antonio is the physical manifestation of the history, the economy, the quality of life, and most importantly the future of one of the New World’s great cities.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following persons and organizations for providing data, information, and valuable insight for the report:

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SA2020

Methodologies

This analysis relied on data from the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, state and federal databases, online research platforms, on-site tours, and in-person and phone interviews.

- Jobs and employment industry data based off Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Center for Economic Studies at the US Census Bureau

- Property and Parcel data from Bexar County Appraisal District.

- Construction investment data from City of San Antonio Development Services Department

- Tax Credit investment data from the National Park Service

- Housing Affordability data based off US Census and Housing + Transportation Affordability Index

- Walkability based on Walkscore.com

- Heritage tourism data from Longwoods International based on their 2013 surveys of business and leisure travelers.

- Historic District data from City of San Antonio GIS

- Neighborhood level data from PolicyMap

Calculations for jobs and income created through rehabilitation based on IMPLAN, an input-output econometric model. Within the model are identified direct, indirect and induced jobs. The simplest explanation of those distinctions are as follows:

- A direct job in construction, for example, would be a carpenter working on the building.

- An indirect job would be a worker at the lumber yard who sold materials to be incorporated into the building.

- An induced job is a job created by the expenditures that take place because the project takes place. So part of a job of a barber, for example, exists because a carpenter has a paycheck that allows him to get a haircut.

- A job is a full-time equivalent job for one year. Therefore two plumbers who each work on a project for six months would be counted as 1 job.

The PlaceEconomics Team

This report was prepared and written by Donovan Rypkema and Briana Paxton with research assistance from Reina Chano. Rypkema is principal of PlaceEconomics, a Washington D.C.-based real estate and economic development consulting firm. He is author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide* and an adjunct professor in the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Pennsylvania. Paxton is Director of Research at PlaceEconomics. She holds a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and an undergraduate degree from the College of William and Mary. Chano is a GIS specialist and a recent graduate in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
**OFFICE OF HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**