

## SA Tomorrow & North Sector Plan Summary

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### New Development Goals within North Sector Plan Boundary

SA Tomorrow plans for new development to accommodate San Antonio's exponential growth in population. Within the North Sector Plan boundaries, SA Tomorrow highlighted six Sub-Area Plans. The Sub-Area Plans within the North Sector Plan include; Stone Oak Area, Greater Airport Area, UTSA Area, The South Texas Medical Center Area, and the Rolling Oaks Area.<sup>1</sup> These Sub-Area Plans focus on development and will be directed by set goals. Relevant goals include achieving higher density in these centers and reducing/avoiding environmental impacts.<sup>2</sup>

### SA Tomorrow Desirable Development

Regional centers are SA Tomorrow's most desirable development zones. SA Tomorrow describes thirteen different regional centers in San Antonio, including the centers within the boundaries of the North Sector Plan, as previously mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The plan will build on these regions' existing patterns of development.<sup>4</sup> Outside of Regional Centers are 17 Community Areas that make up the remainder of land in the San Antonio region. These areas are made up of existing neighborhoods and are less of a priority for development.<sup>5</sup>

### North Sector Land Left Undeveloped or Added to Parkland

SA Tomorrow includes the need for more parks across the region. The insufficient number of parks that exist are unevenly distributed across San Antonio. The areas of concern are mainly in the west and southwest portions of San Antonio.<sup>6</sup> SA Tomorrow mentions Trail-Oriented Development to grow the network of trails and pathways throughout the region. Existing locations for such development within the North Sector include San Antonio Greenway Trails and Mission Ranch. SA Tomorrow's plan for land within the North Sector that should be left undeveloped is included in their Natural, Historic, and Cultural Assets development plan. It is unclear which land is for natural preservation or historical and cultural significance. When comparing the potential park locations<sup>7</sup> to the potential natural, historic, and cultural assets,<sup>8</sup> one may observe that the areas of focus are at the same locations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sub-Area Plans, *SA Tomorrow*. <https://satomorrow.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Growth and City Form (GCF) Goals, *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 155). 2016. [https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Sub-Area Plans, *SA Tomorrow*. <https://satomorrow.com/>

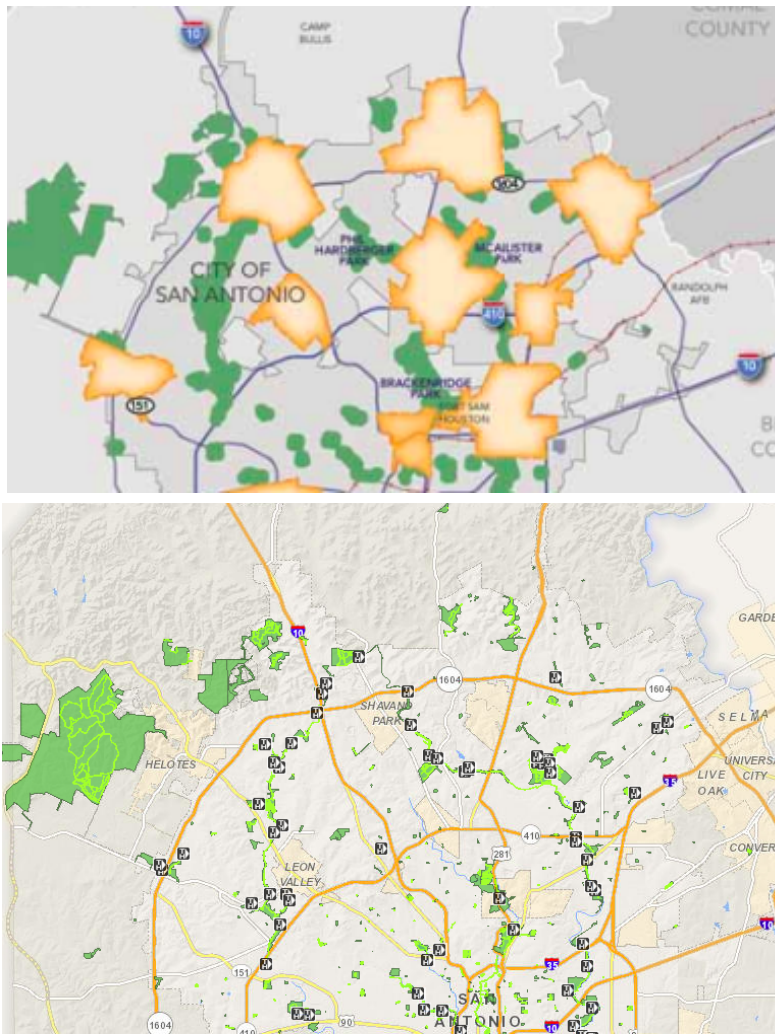
<sup>4</sup> Sub-Area Plans, *SA Tomorrow*. <https://satomorrow.com/>

<sup>5</sup> Community Area Plans, *SA Tomorrow* <https://satomorrow.com/>

<sup>6</sup> Parks, Public Facilities And Community Safety (PFCS) Goal 7, *SA Tomorrow* <https://sacompplan.com/plan-elements/community-safety/parks/>

<sup>7</sup> Community/Regional Park Potential Locations Map, *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 117). 2016. [https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Natural/Historic/Cultural Assets Potential Locations Map, *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan* (Pg. 121) 2016. [https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)



Potential Park Locations (top) vs. Current Park Locations (bottom)

When comparing the potential park locations to the current park locations<sup>9</sup> within the area of the North Sector Plan, one may observe similar locations of park development. As a result, one may conclude that no additional land within the bounds of the North Sector Plan will be added to parkland. Instead of parkland additions, there might be a plan to expand existing parks.

#### Development over Edwards Aquifer

SA Tomorrow mentions challenges of the plan, such as the 27% reduction in the development capacity of San Antonio due to physical and environmental barriers.<sup>10</sup> The majority of these barriers occur in the region of the Edwards Aquifer, which is the northern portion of the

<sup>9</sup> City of San Antonio Parks & Recreation <https://gis.sanantonio.gov/itsd/parksearch/index.html>

<sup>10</sup> Development Capacity, *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 37). 2016.  
[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

city and Bexar County.<sup>11</sup> The discussion of these challenges continues in the Growth and City Form (GCF) section on natural resources. Due to environmentally sensitive natural resources such as the Edwards Aquifer, the Comprehensive Plan Initial Studies exposed that the land available for development was constrained.<sup>12</sup> In addition to development constraints, the topography of the environmentally sensitive regions makes water and sewer service arrangements costly and onerous. Therefore, SA Tomorrow set GCF Goal 7 to address issues of growth to protect and respect natural resources, such as the city's water source. GCF Goal 7 notes:

Development practices avoid, minimize or mitigate negative impacts on the city's natural resources, water supply, water quality, surface waterways, and air quality.<sup>13</sup>

The GCF Goal 7 focuses on natural resource preservation. In addition to land constraints over sensitive areas, SA Tomorrow mentions their effort to develop a sustainable water supply with the help of SAWS through water management, diversification, and conservation.

The Edward Aquifer Recharge Zone and Edwards Aquifer Contributing Zone are recognized by SA Tomorrow's Water's Community Health and Wellness (CHW), Water's Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability (NRES), and Growth and City Form (GCF) Policies. In all three policy section, it states:

Encourage land intensive development patterns to locate outside of the Edwards Aquifer recharge and contributing zones and preservation reaches of rivers and creeks.<sup>14 15</sup>

SA Tomorrow discusses action through a combined effort to implement a land management plan that can be used to protect the critical zones and other area waterways by discouraging land-intensive development patterns in the Edwards Aquifer.<sup>16</sup> Further protection may be provided through a partnership with San Antonio River Authority (SARA) for planning, standards, and regulations for development on or near the watersheds, aquifers, flood zones, and stream restoration areas.<sup>17</sup> In addition, in terms of necessary development on the contribution and recharge zones, the GCF Policies on Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability discuss the possibility of low impact development (LID).<sup>18</sup> Finally, SA Tomorrow mentions identifying aquifer recharge areas so the city can acquire the zones for open space through voter-approved sales tax process.<sup>19</sup> In 2020, the City Council shifted the sales tax funding away from the

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<sup>11</sup> Development Capacity, *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 37). 2016.

[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Natural Resources, Chapter 8: Growth and City Form (GCF). *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 152). 2016.

[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Goal 7, Chapter 8: Growth and City Form. *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 152). 2016.

[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Water (CHW P36), Chapter 12: Community Health and Wellness (CHW) Policies. *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 217). 2016.

[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Water (NRES P11) Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Policies. *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 245). 2016.

[https://www.sacompplan.com/new\\_docs/SA\\_CompPlan\\_FULLDoc\\_Final\\_9-26-16\\_lowres.pdf](https://www.sacompplan.com/new_docs/SA_CompPlan_FULLDoc_Final_9-26-16_lowres.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Water (CHW Goal 3), Community Health and Wellness. *SA Tomorrow*.

<https://sacompplan.com/plan-elements/health-and-wellness/water/>

<sup>17</sup> Water (CHW Goal 3), Community Health and Wellness. *SA Tomorrow*.

<https://sacompplan.com/plan-elements/health-and-wellness/water/>

<sup>18</sup> Water (GFC P24) Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Policies *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 157). 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Water (CHW Goal 3), Community Health and Wellness. *SA Tomorrow*.

<https://sacompplan.com/plan-elements/health-and-wellness/water/>

Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP).<sup>20</sup> To replace the sales tax, funding will be sourced from San Antonio's General Fund.<sup>21</sup>

### SA Tomorrow Process of Plan Amendments

The CHW Water Goals and Policies states their coordinating effort with agencies such as SARA for SA Tomorrow Plan amendments. However, there is no mention of amending plans of the North Sector Plan. Yet, CHW P37 states amending the UDC:

Coordinate with SARA and other agencies to regularly review and update, and as necessary as part of the standard UDC amendment process, plans, standards, and regulations for development on or near aquifers, flood zones and stream restoration areas based on best management practices and scientific studies.<sup>22</sup>

The Unified Development Code (UDC) amendments will affect the North Sector Plan as the UDC encompasses the land included in the North Sector Plan.<sup>23</sup> According to the standard UDC amendments, reviews and updates occur every five years. Although, there was a pause in 2020 due to the pandemic, the UDC update started again in October 2021. As of January 2022, updating the UDC is still in progress.<sup>24</sup>

For the 13 different Sub-Area Plans, each plan mentions amendments to the UDC for new zoning. For instance, the SA Tomorrow UTSA Area Regional Center plan's implementation strategies notes:

Amend the Unified Development Code (UDC) to create new zoning districts that support a range of mixed-use development types and allow these types of developments to be the standard within the focus areas and mixed-use corridors.<sup>25</sup>

### UDC Amendments

While addressing the uneven distribution of parkland, SA Tomorrow discusses the need to review and amend the Unified Development Code. Specifically, the current park dedication requirements to ensure they meet the city's wants for the type and size of the parks.<sup>26</sup> In SA Tomorrow's section on Growth and City Form, there are three modifications to the UDC.<sup>27</sup> First, action GCF A3 is to modify for the purpose of reducing barriers to mixed-use development. Second, the GCF A4 action is for the modification for barrier reduction to higher density development in regional centers. Lastly, the GCF A5 action focuses on the higher density

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<sup>20</sup> Gibbons, Brendan. "San Antonio aquifer, trails advocates lament sales tax vote." *San Antonio Report*, (August, 2020). <https://sanantonioreport.org/san-antonio-aquifer-trails-advocates-lament-sales-tax-vote/>

<sup>21</sup> Gibbons, Brendan. "San Antonio City Council approves new funding plan for aquifer protection." *San Antonio Report*, (September, 2020).

<https://sanantonioreport.org/san-antonio-city-council-approves-new-funding-plan-for-aquifer-protection/>

<sup>22</sup> Water (CHW P37), Chapter 12: Community Health and Wellness (CHW) Policies. *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*, (pg. 217). 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Sec. 35-521. Edwards Aquifer Recharge Protection. Division 5. Natural Resource Protection. *Unified Development Code*.

[https://library.municode.com/tx/san\\_antonio/codes/unified\\_development\\_code?nodeId=ARTVDEST\\_DIV3LATRPR](https://library.municode.com/tx/san_antonio/codes/unified_development_code?nodeId=ARTVDEST_DIV3LATRPR)

<sup>24</sup> UDC Task Force, *City of San Antonio*. 2020. <https://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/CurrentProjects/UDC>

<sup>25</sup> UTSA Implementation Strategy 1.1. *Chapter 6: SA Tomorrow UTSA Area Regional Center*, (pg. 56). 2019.

[https://utsa-area.sacomplan.com/files/UTSA\\_FINAL\\_Adopted\\_10032019.pdf](https://utsa-area.sacomplan.com/files/UTSA_FINAL_Adopted_10032019.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> Parks, Public Facilities and Community Safety. *SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*.

<https://sacomplan.com/plan-elements/community-safety/parks/>

<sup>27</sup> Growth and City Form (GCF), Indicators and Actions. *SA Tomorrow*.

<https://sacomplan.com/plan-elements/growth-city-form/indicators-actions/>

development within a ½ mile of high capacity transit corridors to reduce barriers through UDC modification. The Indicators and Actions section pertaining to Housing also mentions a UDC amendment to increase the ability to develop various housing types.<sup>28</sup>

The SA2020 Vision Report contains no mentions of the amendment process for the UDC and the park dedication requirements.

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<sup>28</sup> Housing, Indicators and Actions (H A3). *SA Tomorrow*.  
<https://sacompplan.com/plan-elements/housing/indicators-actions/>