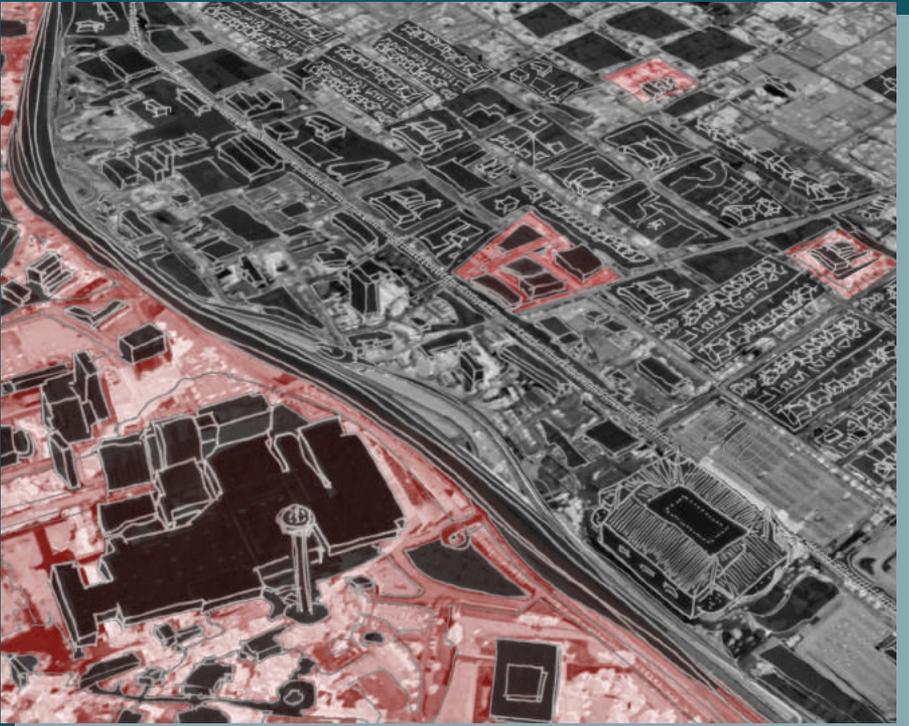


# Industrious Intermediaries

Displacement, Community Wealth Building, and Industrial Rehabilitation in San Antonio, TX



Jason Anthony Azar

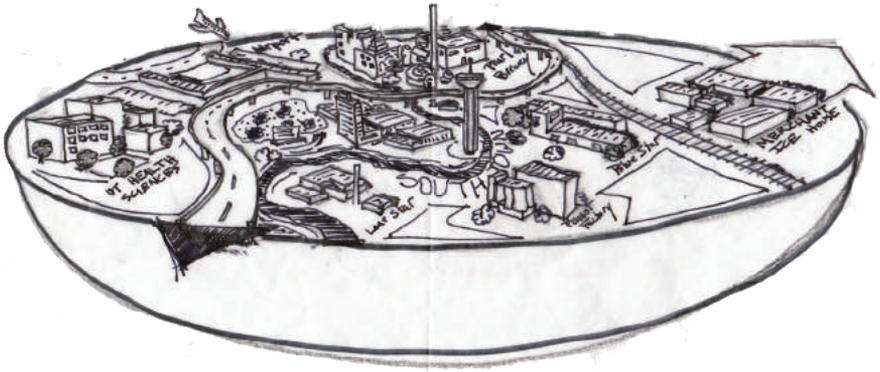
Parsons School of Design  
MS Design and Urban Ecologies '18

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Jason Anthony Azar

Parsons School of Design, School of Design Strategies  
MS Design and Urban Ecologies '18

New York, NY & San Antonio, TX  
May 2018

Jason is a designer and researcher based in Austin, TX and New York City. He is a graduate of Parsons School of Design with a Master of Science in Design and Urban Ecologies. His web portfolio can be found at [www.jasonazar.com](http://www.jasonazar.com). He can be reached at [jasonazar40@gmail.com](mailto:jasonazar40@gmail.com).

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## Abstract

*Today in San Antonio, Texas the geographic distance between rich and poor is shrinking as former industrial sites, often located in neighborhoods identified as being most susceptible to residential displacement, are rehabilitated and converted into high-end mixed use districts that cater to a desired creative-class and that colonize and gentrify pockets of the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods. The result of this development pattern, fueled by growing financial and political support of local government, is the piecing together of hermetically sealed secessionary enclaves radiating outwards from Downtown. This report works to complement and build on an existing and growing body of literature surrounding downtown development trends in San Antonio and their spread and impact on adjacent neighborhoods. First, I argue that the policies that fuel the current model of industrial rehabilitation are tied with class and race-based residential displacement, and put these observations in conversation with recent findings on neighborhood residential vulnerability by the National Association For Latino Community Asset Builders and the Vecinos de Mission Trails. Second, I put Graham and Marvin's (2001) concept of secessionary enclaves in dialogue with trends surrounding the redevelopment of industrial sites. These observations and analyses then inform a set of criteria and tools to be leveraged in municipal establishment of an "urban intermediary" system to address directly the roots of displacement in downtown San Antonio: large, external, and extractive private investment into vulnerable neighborhoods.*

## Key Words

Industrial Rehabilitation  
Displacement  
Urban Intermediaries  
Secessionary Enclaves  
San Antonio TX

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## Introduction

Today in San Antonio, Texas the geographic distance between rich and poor is shrinking as former industrial sites, located in neighborhoods identified as being most susceptible to residential displacement, are rehabilitated and converted into high-end mixed use districts that cater to a desired creative-class. These rehabilitated sites are the geographies where the city's "Decade of Downtown" policies and the investments they incent meet and touch-down within the cities most vulnerable neighborhoods. These spaces have proven to be highly successful in attracting the growing population of relatively young, affluent, and upwardly mobile professionals into downtown adjacent neighborhoods made up of comparatively low earning and service class communities of color. Transformations to these neighborhoods have resulted in rapid and substantial increases in property values and taxes, displacing and fracturing long-standing communities. The language and self-stated values of these enclave developments emphasize revitalization, proximity to downtown, and embracing a future derived from New Urbanist discourse. Architecturally, these values are manifested through the use of symbolic ornament alluding to the sites' industrial past. In such developments, as is the case across the world in cities competing on an international scale for investment, the goal is to maximize profitability by carefully packaging total environments encompassing a range of uses aimed at a desired demographic of user.

The first generation of rehabilitation projects was concentrated along hydrological and transportation arteries, their positioning due to their former industrial activity. These arteries historically served as dividing lines between peoples, economies, cultures, and histories in San Antonio, but in the wake of the "Decade of Downtown" agenda of job growth and investment in the city center the lines are being redrawn and transformed by the construction of targeted infrastructures and the seeding of major investment. An examination of proposed projects reveals that the riverfront-model of conversion has been divorced from major arteries and is now being applied further into vulnerable neighborhoods. The result of this development agenda, fueled by growing financial and political support of local government, is the piecing together of a network of hermetically sealed enclaves radiating outwards from Downtown. This political and financial support takes form in municipally drawn target zones that provide private development tax incentives and abatements and permitting "fast-lanes". San Antonio's Inner City Reinvestment Infill Policy (ICRIP), Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ), and the Center City Housing Incentive Program (CCHIP) are of particular focus.

Current patterns of enclave development are actively displacing existing residents, businesses, and institutions, and are fracturing and transforming the economic, cultural, and social networks that underpin their communities. In exploring the phenomenon of high-end rehabilitation this report works to complement and build on an existing and growing body of literature surrounding downtown development trends in San Antonio and their spread and impact on adjacent neighborhoods. First, I demonstrate how the policies that fuel the current model of industrial rehabilitation are tied with class and race-based residential displacement, and put these observations in conversation with recent findings on neighborhood residential vulnerability by the National Association For Latino Community Asset Builders and the Vecinos de Mission Trails. Second, I put Graham and Marvin's (2001) concept of secessionary enclaves in dialogue with trends surrounding the redevelopment of industrial sites. These observations inform recommendations for the municipal establishment of an "urban intermediary" to address directly the one of the primary roots of displacement in San Antonio: large, external, and extractive private investment into vulnerable neighborhoods via the rehabilitation of former industrial facilities.

The intermediary proposed is a possible plan of action for the city to get in front of and address the growing trends of displacement around its downtown. As an independent body sitting between "Decade of Downtown" governance and communities facing displacement this intermediary's mission would be to forge new relationships and alliances between residents, businesses, and institutions at risk of displacement and build community wealth by utilizing the unique geographies and architectural configurations of the sites to support existing businesses and social and cultural institutions. The proposed intermediary, which I imagine as the San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission, would work to achieve these goals by facilitating the transformation of former industrial sites into community-oriented hubs of business, social, and cultural activity. The criteria and tools presented are inspired in part by a study of the Richmond, Virginia Office of Community Wealth Building; a new and particularly noteworthy intermediary working to address poverty at its root.

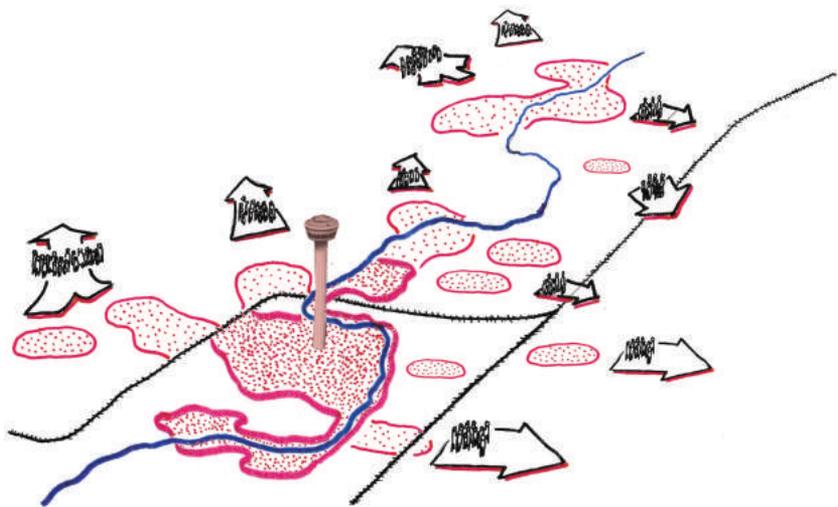
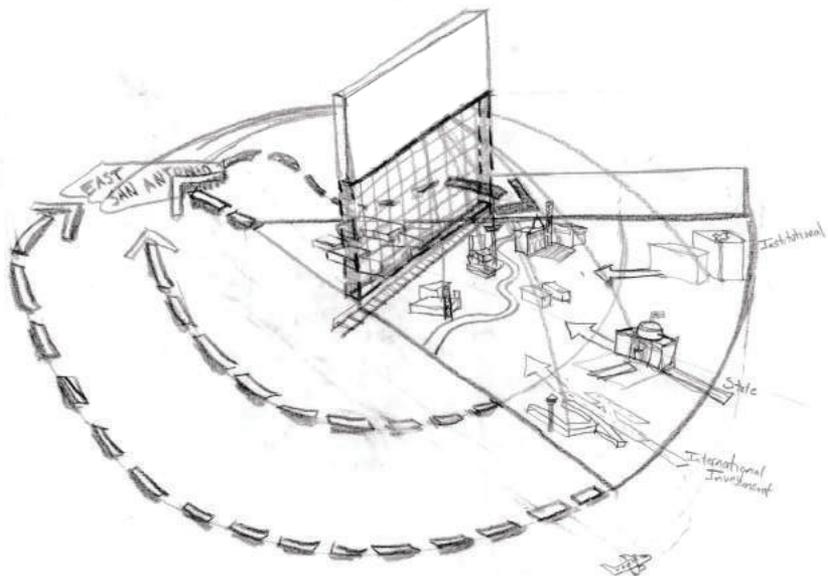
This report aims to provide an intervention into the ongoing discussions about the future of San Antonio's vulnerable downtown-adjacent neighborhoods by shedding light on what I identify to be a pressing and particular phenomenon in San Antonio. The report builds on eight months of research into the history of San Antonio's industrial economies, current strategies for economic growth, and the municipal policies at play in the intentional transformation of downtown neighborhoods to attract a desired creative-creative population. The focus of the research and the accompanying proposal has been an attempt to understand how the "Decade of Downtown" agenda touches down in neighborhoods identified as the most

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vulnerable in the city and to offer recommendations for how the intensifying trend of displacement might be addressed by the local government. My hope is that the observations and recommendations presented in this reading, based on an analysis of existing literature regarding neighborhood vulnerability, interviews and conversations with professionals working in the fields of design and community development, engagement with major theoretical texts, an investigation of existing and future rehabilitation projects, and my personal experience as a San Antonian will serve as a springboard to generate discussion and acknowledgment around the issue of displacement in communities surrounding rehabilitated industrial sites.

I begin the report by contextualizing the “Decade of Downtown” policy agenda with regional trends of economic and residential growth. It is in the texture of municipal policy and development trends that I identify former industrial sites as the geographies where “Decade of Downtown” policies and private investment touch down into vulnerable downtown-adjacent neighborhoods. I argue that the current standard for industrial rehabilitation projects, established by highly commercially successful projects like the Pearl Brewery, is intertwined with the municipal agenda of attracting a desired population of creative-class professionals into downtown San Antonio. I then move to consider an alternative future, one where existing populations are supported and strengthened by these sites. I suggest that one route toward this alternative strategy to industrial rehabilitation would be through the municipal establishment of a displacement-focused commission, which I frame as an “urban intermediary.” In this section I argue that a forward thinking and ecological approach to rehabilitation would particularly benefit the residents who have suffered the economic and health consequences of living near blighted buildings and contaminated lands and that former industrial sites, currently used to fast-track the “Decade of Downtown” development agenda, ought to serve as not only great new centers of activity, culture, and business development, but should acknowledge through implementation and design the layered histories, geographies, triumphs, and struggles of the local communities that they have the potential to anchor and support.



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## Enclave Development and San Antonio's "Decade of Downtown"

In 1992 the city of San Antonio, TX started to appear among the top ten travel destinations in the world, ranking at number nine between Paris and Venice, and in the United States behind only Santa Fe and San Francisco.<sup>1</sup> When Lonely Planet ranked San Antonio #8 on its list of "Unexpectedly exciting places to see in the United States in 2016", they had this to say about the city of the Alamo:

*"Take a hearty stew of Mexican culture, add a dash of Austin weird and a big dollop of pure Texas 'tude, and you get San Antonio: the Lone Star State's most compelling city right now. The River Walk, long an attraction for travelers, has been transformed from the previous three-mile walk to a whopping 15 miles, connecting museums in the north to downtown and the historic missions in the south with river views and parkland in between. San Antonio's five Spanish colonial missions, the largest concentration of missions in North America, were recently named UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The high-design Pearl Brewery District, continues to evolve with top-notch restaurants, a cooking school and outdoor events throughout the year."*

Today, San Antonio's tourism and hospitality industry is one of the strongest in the nation, and has had an economic impact of over \$13.5 billion over the past 10 years.<sup>2</sup> While many of San Antonio's historically famous attractions provide an ambiance that is difficult or impossible to recreate elsewhere, it is a wholly new set of attractions that are drawing the attention of tourists, and investors, to San Antonio today.<sup>3</sup> Not mentioned in the Lonely Planet report are the city's downtown hotels, the Alamo, the River Walk barges, or the multiple theme parks, all attractions that for decades served as the most dominant elements of the city's tourism and hospitality economies. Rather, recent travel reviews of San Antonio praise the city's newest developments, chief among them being rehabilitated and converted industrial sites transformed into high-end mixed-use districts with an industrial-ruin aesthetic, designed to cater to Downtown's growing "creative class" populations.

While the rehabilitation and conversion of industrial facilities around downtown is nothing new in San Antonio, with examples of such projects starting in the 1970s, the phenomenon reached a new fervor around 2010 with the commercial success of recent high-profile projects such as the Pearl Brewery, the San Antonio Museum

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1 Fisher, Lewis F. *Saving San Antonio: the precarious preservation of a heritage*. Texas Tech University Press, 1996. p. ix

2 McCandles, James. "Study Reveals \$13.6 Billion Impact of San Antonio Tourism in 2015." Rivard Report, Rivard Report, 2 Nov. 2016, [therivardreport.com/visit-san-antonio-holds-first-annual-meeting-as-nonprofit/](http://therivardreport.com/visit-san-antonio-holds-first-annual-meeting-as-nonprofit/).

3 *An Evaluation of Expansion Opportunities for the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center*, Urban Land Institute, 1995. Washington D.C.

of Art, and numerous loft and apartment developments in the shells of former industrial facilities.<sup>4</sup> The Pearl Brewery, perhaps the most highly praised and most regionally established example of such a development, has been the catalyst for its zip code being the fast growing by population; a rate of 16% annually: double that of the next fastest growing zip code.<sup>5</sup> It is with this clear demonstration of the tremendous transformative potential of rehabilitated industrial sites on the neighborhoods surrounding them that I put Graham and Marvin's concept of "secessionary networked spaces" and "enclaves" in dialogue with current municipal and private development trends in downtown San Antonio.<sup>6</sup>

Enclaves, in this case former industrial sites rehabilitated to attract new affluent and upwardly mobile creative class populations, are the geographies where external and extractive capital investment touches down. They can only exist when they are connected to the networked infrastructures that allow them to sustain their necessary or desired socio economic connections with spaces and people in discrete and similar elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> In the context of San Antonio, the Riverwalk Mission and Museum Reach expansions represent the most distinct example of these infrastructures. Secessionary enclaves and the infrastructures supporting the city's growing cultural-tourism economies and creative-class job centers are rapidly transforming the demographic and business character of the neighborhoods they enter into a homogenized regional interpretation of New Urbanist philosophy. This network of "Decade of Downtown" infrastructures and developments play a major role in the increasingly vulnerability of downtown adjacent neighborhoods, a fact which will be explored in the following sections.

The production of enclave networks, according to Graham and Marvin, "requires an intricate assembling of urban design, financial, infrastructural, and state practices in combination in an attempt to further separate the social and economic lives of the rich from those of the poor while compressing the physical distance between them."<sup>8</sup> San Antonio's network of rehabilitated industrial enclaves has been made possible through a combination of growth-focused policies and significant public and private investments in and around the city center. In a cooperative effort by local government and the region's economic elite to provide the necessary physical amenities to initiate

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4 Fischer, p. 445

5 Zip code 78285, in which the Pearl Brewery sits at the center, has seen an average annual growth of 16% between 2010 and 2017. For comparison, the next fastest growing zip-code has seen an average growth rate of 8% in the same time span.; Hernandez, Kim. "Fastest Growing ZIP Codes in San Antonio MSA: Ranked by 2010-2017 Population Growth Rate." San Antonio Business Journal. January, 2018

6 Graham, Stephen, and Simon Marvin. *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. Psychology Press, 2001.

7 *Ibid*, p. 228

8 *Ibid*, p. 222

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and maintain a heavy stream of investment into the neighborhoods around Downtown, the aim has been to create networks and spaces that are customized specifically to the needs of the upper-income social and economic groups who are the target users.<sup>9</sup> Herein lies one of the roots of neighborhood vulnerability; the pinpointed seeding of large capital investment in low income and historically neglected neighborhoods. Former industrial facilities are where those seeds of transformative investment are planted. The other roots of neighborhood vulnerability are intertwined with a municipal agenda of becoming one of the nation's top ten economies.<sup>10</sup>

The rehabilitation and conversion of industrial sites in and around downtown is situated within a national push to extensively redevelop downtowns and central business districts, in this case spurred by a local visioning process known as SA2020. These changes have been promoted by city leadership following New Urbanist discourses about creating revitalized, dense, environmentally sustainable, and walkable districts that attract both people and investment back to the central city. The "Decade of Downtown", as was named by then-Mayor Julian Castro soon after his election in 2009, implicitly also promises to address decades of uneven development and racialized neglect created by deliberate policy decisions to promote Northside growth and development at the expense of basic infrastructure and quality of life on the city's largely Mexicana/o and Black West, East, and Southsides.<sup>11</sup> However, as recognized by urban scholars as far back as the 1970s, the sort of urban renaissance imagined by the "Decade of Downtown" is more accurately described as "a back to the city movement by capital, not people."<sup>12</sup> In the case of San Antonio this movement of capital is directed at the creation of creative-class job centers and infrastructures to support the economies of cultural tourism. As with other cities globally since the 1960s, the push to attract investment to downtown San Antonio has been framed by neoliberal theories of wealth generation through the attraction of creative class professionals and private investment. For the historically neglected neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, redevelopment has come hand in hand with the various displacements of gentrification: land grabs, privatization of parks and public spaces, demolition of historic landmarks, and the financial displacement of the poorest and most vulnerable residents from the urban landscape; the brunt of these displacements falling primarily on the low income and service class of San Antonio's majority Hispanic populations.<sup>13</sup>

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9 Graham and Marvin, 2001. p. 235

10 Nirenberg, Ron. "2018 State of the City" Address, San Antonio, TX, March 31, 2018.

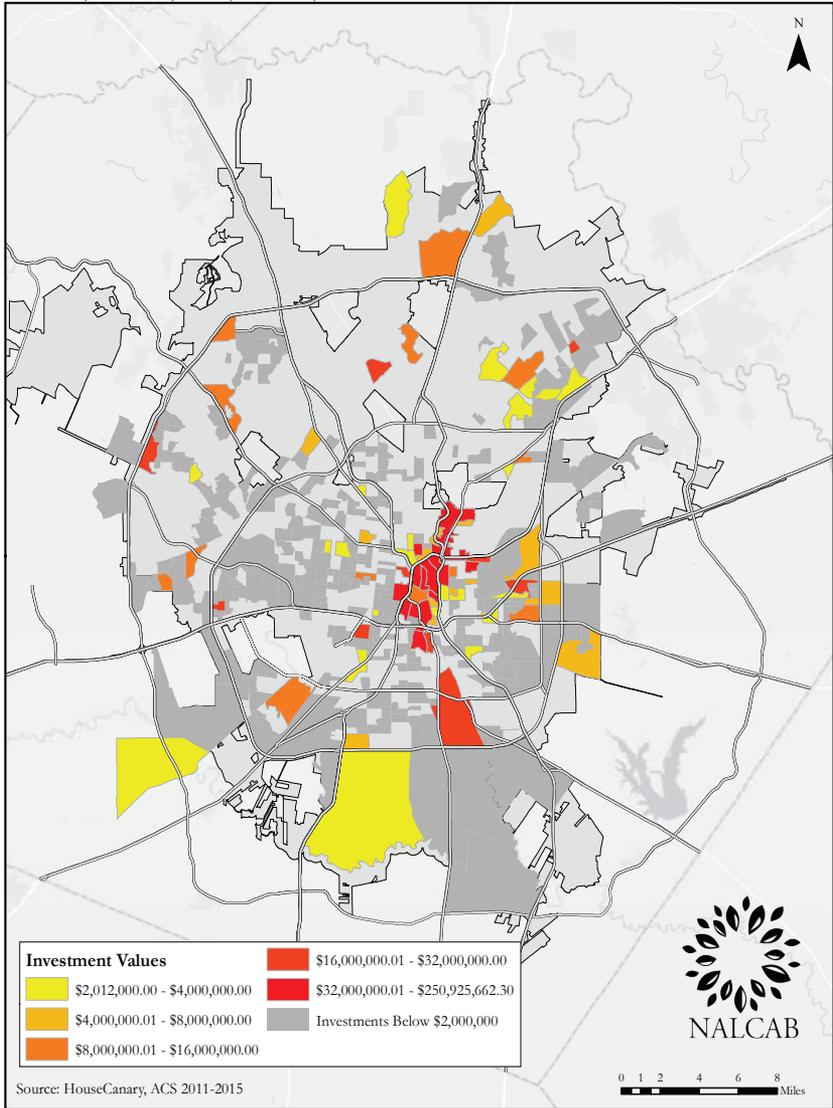
11 Cortez, Marisol. "Making Displacement Visible: A Case Study Analysis of the "Mission Trail of Tears". Vecinos de Mission Trails, 2017. p. 4

12 Smith, Neil. "Toward a theory of gentrification a back to the city movement by capital, not people." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 45, no. 4 (1979): 538-548.

13 Cortez, 2017 p.4

### Aggregate City of San Antonio Investments

Bond 2012, Bond 2017, CCDO, 2011-2017, HOME 2011-2016



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Aggregate City of San Antonio Investments 2011-2016, courtesy of NALCAB

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The “Decade of Downtown” also emerged as a response to the growing acknowledgment that the city’s historically northbound development had compromised one of the city’s most essential resources: the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone that lies beneath the hills of North San Antonio, providing spring water for the agricultural, industrial, recreational, and domestic needs of almost two million users in San Antonio and throughout south central Texas. Mayor Castro’s “Decade of Downtown” in some ways has responded to these entwined patterns of uneven development and the environmental degradation of the aquifer recharge zone, seeking to reverse sprawl to the North and return investment to the center city. Both the name and the concept emerged from the SA2020 visioning process, the purpose of which was to bring together hundreds of community leaders, selected with the help of the Greater Chamber of Commerce, to examine “the city’s challenges and goals for the next decade.”<sup>14</sup> Much of the emphasis focused on revitalizing downtown to create a, “lively 24-7 urban vibe”, marked by walkable sidewalks and bike lanes; a “world class” performing arts center coupled by a “world class” park at Hemisfair Plaza; a downtown grocery store; a streetcar connecting two major mixed-use development projects; and, most importantly, the construction of multifamily housing that would add 7,500 units and attract new residents to the downtown area.<sup>15</sup> These residents would be young, upwardly mobile, and professional: “It’s the ‘Decade of Downtown’...It’s making our city more attractive to the creative class” Julian Castro commented.<sup>16</sup>

## Regional Trends and “Decade of Downtown” Governance

The strategy is working. San Antonio is experiencing a long-term trend of population growth consistent with that of South-Central Texas, including the rapidly inflating Austin, TX. According to the US Census the population of the City of San Antonio’s grew by approximately 26% between 2000 and 2016, and has been projected by ESRI Community Analyst to grow by an additional 88,000 additional residents by 2022. Projections for the city’s population growth in the SA Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan suggest an increase by as many as 1 million people by 2040. Parallel to the rapidly increasing population San Antonio is experiencing broad-based appreciation in housing values. According to Marcus Millichap, a real estate brokerage and data firm, in the 4th quarter of 2017 the average effective rent for multifamily apartments in San Antonio rose year-over-year by 4.5%, with the highest year-over-year increases in Central San Antonio (including downtown) of 10.2%.<sup>17</sup> The National Association of Home

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14 Hiller, Jennifer. “Giving Downtown a Future; Mayor plans to map out the route to area’s revitalization.” San Antonio Express News, June, 2010.

15 Cortez, 2017 p. 4

16 Davila, Vianna. “New Streetcar route is mapped.” San Antonio Express News, September, 2011

17 National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders. “An Analysis of Housing Vulnerability in San Antonio”. 2018. pp. 2-9

Builders/ Wells Fargo Opportunity Index indicates that the median sale price for a home in the Q3 2017 was \$216,000, the highest average quarterly sales price in San Antonio since the Index began in 1991. The highest rates of home and rent appreciation are occurring inside Loop 410, and the neighborhoods experiencing double the median rate of appreciation were all clustered near the center city.<sup>18</sup>

Rehabilitated industrial sites have proven to be highly successful in attracting the growing number of relatively affluent and upwardly mobile creative class into neighborhoods considered by many to have been underutilizing valuable downtown-adjacent property. They are, however, just one of the intertwined strategies employed by the city's public and private urban planning and development agencies to compete entrepreneurially for international investment and tourism on a regional and increasingly global market. Among these strategies include the extension of the famous San Antonio Riverwalk north, named the "Museum Reach" for its connecting to the San Antonio Museum of Art, itself an early example of industrial use in the body of a former Lone Star Brewing Company brewery. To the south the Riverwalk landscape was extended to a network of Spanish missions that now hold a UNESCO World Heritage Site designation. Completed in 2013 and dubbed the "Mission Reach", the \$271 million project transformed almost overnight the character of south side neighborhoods and dramatically increased property appraisal and rental values.<sup>19</sup> Efforts of greater extravagance have been undertaken simultaneously. Negotiations by the city in 2014 with the NFL to host the then Oakland Raiders football team, including talks to construct a new stadium on the north side of town off of Interstate-35, where nearby Austin's 1.88 million people would have easy access to the proposed stadium, further demonstrated the city's desire to compete with other regional cities for tourism, subsequent investment, and favorable media exposure.<sup>20</sup> In 2018 municipal and private investment is now focused intensely on the Central Business District and its periphery. The most recent realization of this focus is the 1.6-million square-foot Henry B. Gonzalez convention center. Completed in January of 2016 the \$325 million project marks the largest capital improvement initiative in the city's history.<sup>21</sup>

The completion of the convention center was the first phase in a massive public-private effort to redevelop and update Hemisfair Park, site of the 1968 Hemisfair World's Fair and impetus behind the city's iconic Tower of the Americas, into a landscape that reflects the city's mission for vibrant downtown mixed use districts. In April of 2018 the University of Texas in San Antonio (UTSA) announced plans to

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18 National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders. 2018 p. 2

19 Cortez, 2017 p. 17

20 Solomon, Dan. "The Oakland Raiders Are in Talks to Move to San Antonio." Texas Monthly. July 2014. The deal was abandoned in 2015.

21 Gruber, Sara. "San Antonio Opens Transformed Henry B. González Convention Center." Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. January, 2016

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increase its downtown campus enrollment to 15,000 from the current 5,000 with a westward expansion plan that the UTSA president says will require major partnerships with the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and downtown developers. “The presence of a major downtown campus would be catalytic for sustainable development of the city,” Mayor Ron Nirenberg said.<sup>22</sup> These, just being a small sampling of downtown initiatives, demonstrate the city’s appetite to reshape and transform the downtown periphery into an aesthetically, infrastructurally, and economically unified network of places and economies.

As demonstrated by the nearly \$1 billion in public and private investment concentrated into developing downtown, infrastructural investment and development in San Antonio has become less and less a basic means to sustain and improve the lives of its residents and more and more a means to support and construct particular cultural and civic identities to attract new residents to the city. Investments in the expansion of the Riverwalk, the Museum Reach to the north and the Mission Reach to the south, have exceeded \$380 million. The City of San Antonio and Bexar County have made significant investments in numerous other parks and greenways over the past decade, including Hardberger Park, Salado Creek, Woodlawn Lake, Alazán and Apache Creeks, and San Pedro Creek, among others. The Center City Development Office (CCDO) reports that \$46,321,876 in development incentives between 2012 and 2016 leveraged nearly \$600 million in private sector real estate investment around downtown. More than \$50 million in additional federal and private investment through the Eastside Promise and Choice Neighborhood Fund has flowed into the neighborhoods immediately east of Downtown.<sup>23</sup>

These incentives are deeply entwined with the “Decade of Downtown” agenda, intended to attract private capital and job centers to the downtown core; remaking historically disinvested neighborhoods so as to attract workers from new creative-class professional sectors. To facilitate these transformations, the city created new organizations, passed new ordinances, and developed new policies to attract investment and job centers, the most significant of which has been the Inner City Reinvestment Infill Policy (ICRIP). Created in February of 2010, ICRIP identified large areas inside Loop 410 within which development projects would be eligible for fee waivers, tax abatements, grants, and loans. It is important to note that the ICRIP map and the map of income segregation in San Antonio are virtually the same, meaning the lowest-income neighborhoods are those most incentivized for redevelopment and thus prime for the appearance of rent gaps.<sup>24</sup> Simultaneously, the city created Centro Partnership,

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22 Donaldson, Emily. “UTSA Downtown Expansion Could Add 10,000 Students to San Antonio’s Urban Core.” *The Rivard Report*. January, 2018

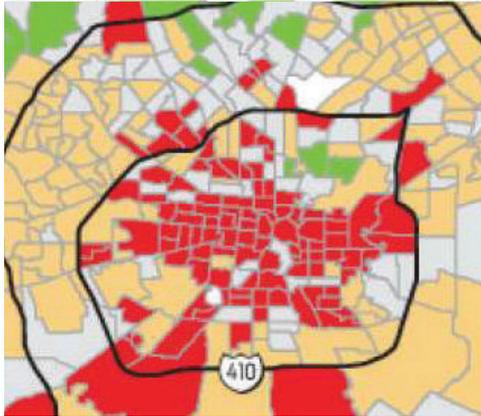
23 NALCAB, 2018, pp. 2-16

24 Cortez, 2017 pp. 13-15; Hamilton and Hicks 2012, “Income is S.A.’s Great Divider.” See [http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local\\_news/article/Income-is-S-A-s-great-divider-3755547.php](http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Income-is-S-A-s-great-divider-3755547.php)

**Residential segregation by income in 2010**

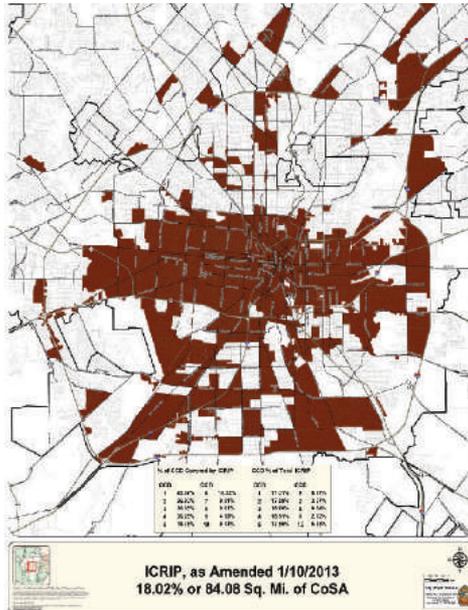
Census tracts in Bexar County and surrounding counties shaded based on income, with \$49,221 being the median household income for this area in 2010.

■ Majority upper-income (above \$98,442)    
 ■ Majority middle-income (\$32,814 to \$98,442)    
 ■ Majority lower-income (below \$32,814)    
 ■ Mixed-income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau     Research by Joe Yerardi, Data Editor

San Antonio Forward Alliance



Comparison of Income Segregation and ICRIP Zones, Courtesy of Vecinos de Mission Trails and COSA Office of Economic Development

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a private-public partnership charged with undertaking downtown redevelopment. This was followed in June of 2012 by the creation of the Center City Housing Incentive Program (CCHIP), which updated the incentives offered by ICRIP specifically to encourage the construction of apartments and condos in the central city. Originally inscribing a target zone that covered roughly the original 36 square mile footprint of the city, CCHIP offered low-interest loans to housing developers, along with real property tax reimbursement grants, San Antonio Water Supply (SAWS) fee waivers, and a more streamlined, guaranteed process for accessing incentives.<sup>25</sup>

Under CCHIP the city relaxed its permitting process so that developer incentives would be more automatic, a technicality rather than a matter for public discussion, and center city development projects would move through the permitting process more quickly, in 2-6 weeks instead of 3-12 months. This dramatic shortening of the application and permitting process has resulted in residents finding out about major urban projects only after the massive construction plans have been approved by the city, effectively eliminating the potential for community organizing and input on the projects. Adding insult to injury the city has historically imposed utility rate hikes within the incentive areas, containing some of the most vulnerable households and businesses in the city, to offload the costs of the enclave network expansion lost through development incentives.<sup>26</sup> To sum up, an ecology of enclave development is being wholeheartedly endorsed and supported by official local government. High-dollar investment projects in the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods are made possible and facilitated by municipal policy, which, in addition to the massive public investments made in extending the Riverwalk north and south, has provided substantial tax incentives and expedited and hassle free permitting approval processes in areas identified by the real estate industry as being favorable for development. The residents of the targeted areas are, in addition to facing rising property values and transformation of their neighborhoods, literally paying for the growth of the enclave network that is displacing them through the municipal application of utility rate increases meant to make up for the tax revenue loss stemming from the development incentives.

The effects of such incentives and the accompanying development are striking. Overlaying housing data published in a January of 2018 housing vulnerability study conducted by the National Association For Latino Community Asset Builders on bequest of the City of San Antonio's Neighborhood and Housing Services Department with the official boundaries of the city's 2010 ICRIP zones reveals

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25 In June 2016, in part due to San Antonio urban scholar Marisol Cortez's concerns that these incentives were promoting gentrification, the CCHIP zone was restricted geographically from 36 square miles to the 5.2 square mile Central Business District (see <http://www.mysanantonio.com/real-estate/article/Council-shrinks-coverage-area-of-downtown-8247682.php>).

26 Cortez, 2017 pp. 11, 14

that over 90% of downtown block groups that have experienced the fastest increases in both municipal appraisal value and market defined appreciation values for residential properties fall within pre-2016 ICRIP boundaries.<sup>27</sup> For those living within these vulnerable neighborhoods, defined by NALCAB as experiencing change faster than the city as a whole not only in housing costs, but also in median income, percentage of residents with college degrees, and the percentage of non-Hispanic white residents, this change is most immediately realized in rapidly increasing property taxes and rent prices. There is extensive research that demonstrates the connections between housing instability and negative social outcomes in the areas of health, youth educational performance, and economic mobility.<sup>28</sup> From a larger perspective, when the appreciation of real estate values negatively impacts vulnerable populations and affordable housing stock, cities and counties experience social and economic consequences, including constrained economic growth and increased economic segregation. This is especially significant in San Antonio as the city has already been identified as one of the most economically segregated cities in the United States.<sup>29</sup>

Of six selected existing or in-progress rehabilitation projects, comprised of the Pearl Brewery, the Bakery Building on Broadway, the Blue Star Arts Complex, the Steelhouse Lofts, the Peanut Factory Lofts, and the Merchant Ice House (breaking ground in 2018), all fall within ICRIP zones.<sup>30</sup> Examining the intersections between Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) and the most vulnerable downtown neighborhoods identified by NALCAB reveals that 70% of the downtown block groups that have experienced the fastest increase in municipal appraisal value are within TIRZ boundaries. For the downtown block groups that have experienced the fastest increase in market defined property appreciation, the figure is 72%.<sup>31</sup> Each of the previously mentioned selected rehabilitated projects are located within TIRZ zones, in addition to falling within pre-2016 ICRIP zones. Pairing this observation with the fact that at least 70% of the neighborhoods experiencing the most change overlap with TIRZ zones, and that upwards of 90% of the most vulnerable downtown block groups fall within pre-2016 ICRIP boundaries, indicates a clear correlation between the presence of large capital investments, including

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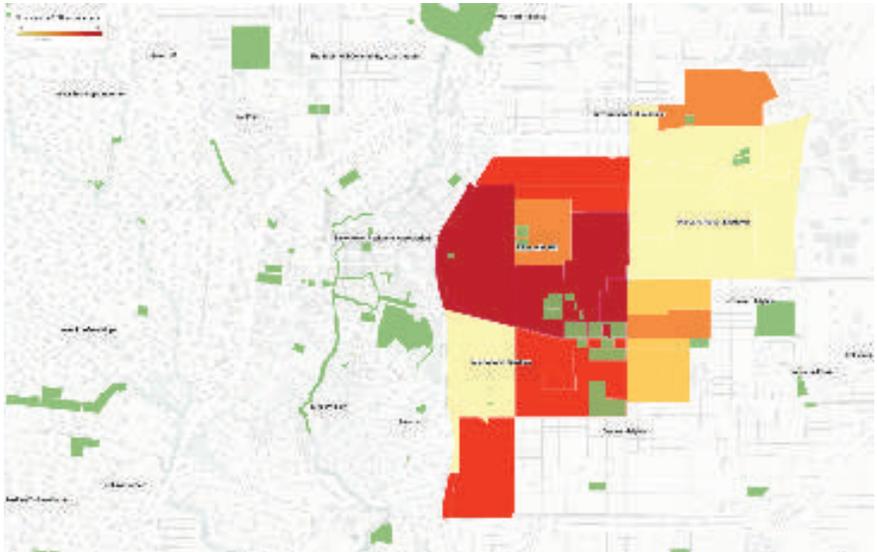
27 Reyes, Marcella (Program Assistant at the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders); Esparza, Ana (Special Assistant to the Executive Director at the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders), Phone interview with author, February 21, 2018 ; NALCAB, 2018. p. 22-23

28 NALCAB, 2018. p. 3; Fullilove, Mindy. Root shock: How tearing up city neighborhoods hurts America, and what we can do about it. One World/Ballantine, 2009.

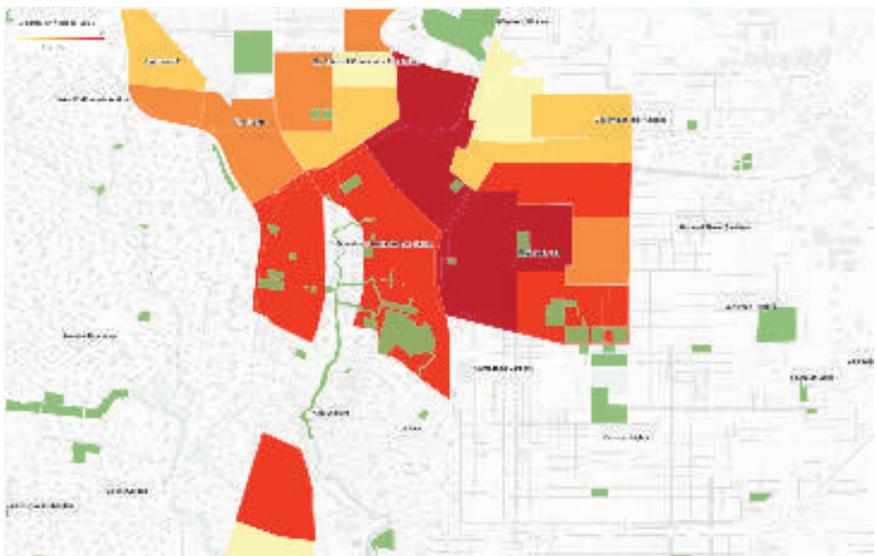
29 Taylor and Fry, "The Rise of Residential Segregation by Income." Pew Research Center. 2012. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/01/the-rise-of-residential-segregation-by-income/>

30 ICRIP zones sourced from the City of San Antonio's online ICRIP Fee Waiver Program Map <http://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/EDD/ICRIPMap.pdf>

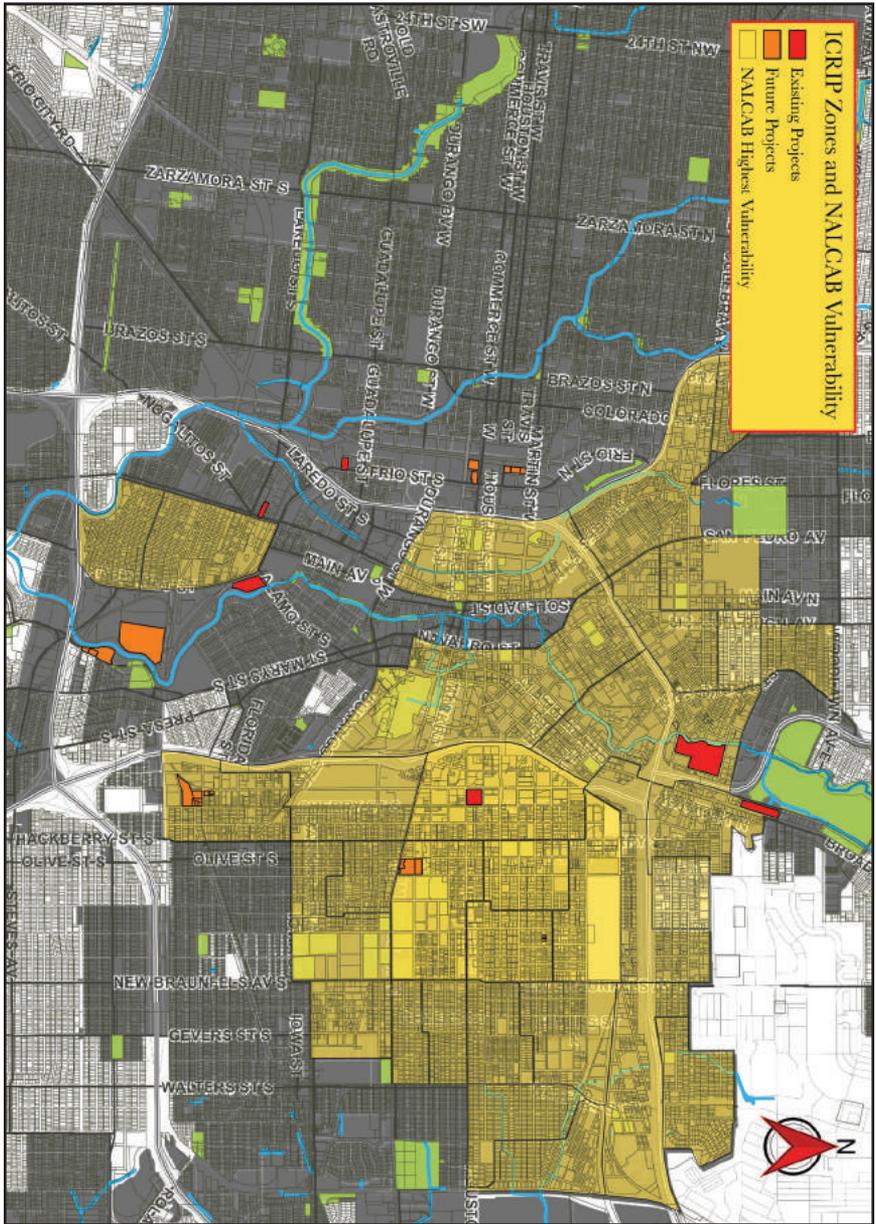
31 TIRZ data sourced from the City of San Antonio's online data portal. <http://www.sanantonio.gov/GIS/GISdata>



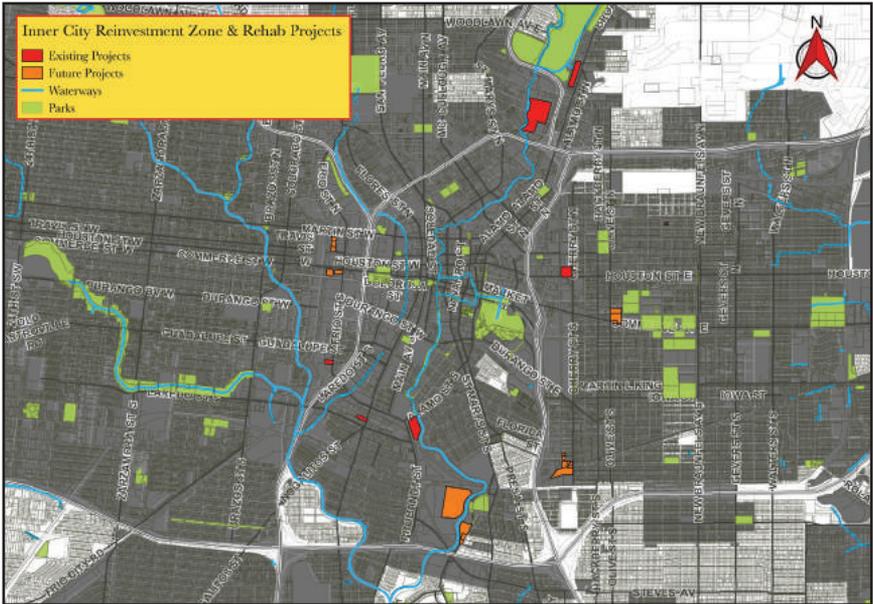
Block groups experiencing the fastest increase in market defined appreciation, data via NALCAB's 2018 Housing Vulnerability Analysis



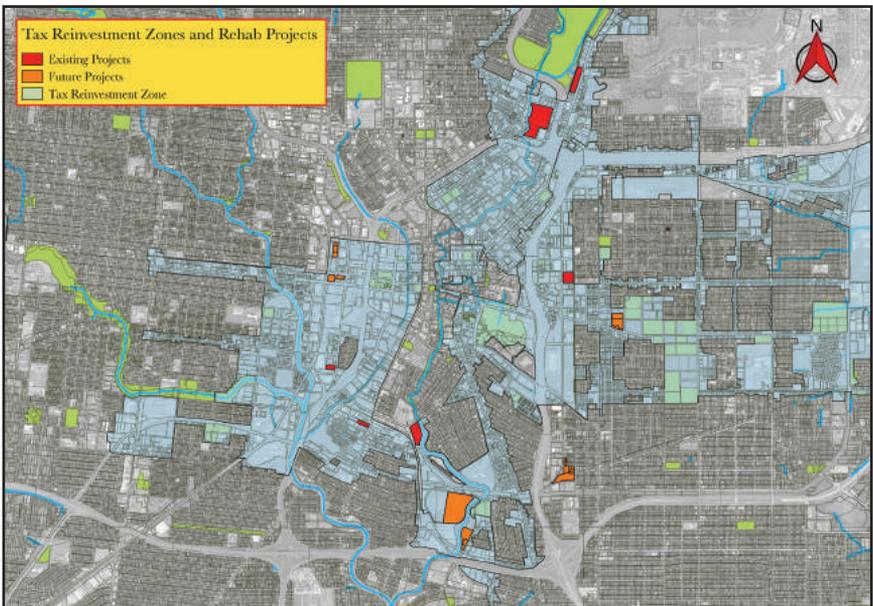
Block groups experiencing the fastest increase in municipally defined appraisal value, data via NALCAB's 2018 Housing Vulnerability Analysis



Comparing the locations of 12 selected industrial rehabilitation projects with the neighborhoods identified by NALCAB as being most vulnerable



Comparing the locations of 12 selected industrial rehabilitation projects with ICRIP Zones around downtown



Comparing the locations of 12 selected industrial rehabilitation projects with Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones.

especially the rehabilitated industrial facilities where external private investment touches down, incentivized by local government policy and the increasing vulnerability of the neighborhoods around such incentive areas.

## **Symbols of Constructed Futures**

The secessionary enclaves of converted and rehabilitated industrial facilities appeal because they are situated within and against an outside and opposing world against which they define their separation.<sup>32</sup> They are symbols of a future constructed by economic development groups and credit rating agencies, their value exemplified by their stark contrast to the neglected areas surrounding them. While the programming of the sites varies, with uses ranging from dedicated professional office space and multi-family residential complexes to mixed use pseudo-districts with arts, living, and retail combined, San Antonio's rehabilitated industrial facilities share underlying values and architectural, geographic, and user bases that are building a growing network of high-end spaces within some of San Antonio's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Boutique hotels, high end retail, coffee shops, top rated restaurants and bars, art galleries, and high price office space are encapsulated within these tightly managed enclaves, themselves existing simultaneously within and apart from neighborhoods dominated by auto-body shops, boarded up storefronts, and family owned grocery stores. These enclaves, networked together by infrastructures and municipal policies, are rapidly transforming the demographic and business character of the neighborhoods they inhabit into a homogenized regional interpretation of New Urbanist philosophy.

Predictable nomenclature around urban-core revitalization and adaptive reuse is common across the sites' stated values and self-descriptions:

*"Urban vibe + riverside, gritty edge + sleek interiors, downtown access + proximity to main highway arteries"*<sup>33</sup>; *"...revitalizing a neighborhood and growing into a communal gathering space. We thank...the citizenry who have brought this neighborhood back to life"*; *"reflects a vivid past while embracing the future with LEED-certified complexes mixed with historic architecture."*<sup>34</sup>

Architecturally, these values are manifested through the use of symbolic ornament alluding to the sites' industrial past. While the symbols used are unique to individual locations, from apartments in grain silos in the case of the Peanut Factory Lofts or brewing tanks as private cocktail rooms in the Pearl Brewery's Hotel Emma, the

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32 Pope, Albert, and Pier Vittori. *Ladders*. Rice School of Architecture, 1996. p. 96

33 "About the Neighborhood." The Flats at Big Tex. <http://www.bigtexflats.com/#Neighborhood>

34 "About the Pearl." Pearl Brewery. <http://atpearl.com/about>

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sites maintain a consistent palette of exposed brick, metal I-beams that appear weathered and untreated, faded building names painted across facades, old machinery displayed in lobbies, and double-height ceilings capped with ribbon windows.

The efforts of developers and city authorities to secure major architects and high style design serve to encourage further construction of high status edifice buildings as symbolic capital to demonstrate city's dynamism as a node on global networks of flow.<sup>35</sup> In such developments, as is the case across the world in cities competing on an international scale for investment, the goal is to maximize profitability by carefully packaging enclave style total environments encompassing a range of uses differentiated according to the logics of geodemographic marketing.<sup>36</sup> Riverfront locations, representing the first wave of industrial conversion projects starting in the late 1980s, employ a landscape designed to join the sites and their users to the water, connecting the sites simultaneously to their industrial past and cultural-tourism driven present. The newly extended Riverwalk, the networking denominator among the first wave of industrial rehabilitation projects, now stretches fifteen miles north to south through downtown and allows users to move between and through downtown neighborhoods along a carefully landscaped route that sits twenty feet below street level in some places; bypassing the neighborhoods, both physically and visually, and instead connecting the former industrial sites to one another and to downtown. However, an examination of proposed rehabilitation projects reveals that the riverfront-model of conversion has been divorced from major arteries and is now being applied further into vulnerable neighborhoods in enclave-style total environments. In order to understand the dynamics between these two forces, one being the "first-wave" phenomenon of industrial rehabilitation and conversion along the city's waterways, the other being the city's efforts to build new or strengthen secessionary enclave networks, and their impacts on existing networks and infrastructures, it is necessary first to examine how these facilities came to be situated along the city's most defining boundaries and within its most vulnerable neighborhoods.

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35 Dunham-Jones, E., *Capital Transformations of the Post-industrial Landscape*. Mimeo. 2001

36 Crilley, D., 'Megastructures and urban change: aesthetics, ideology and design'. In P. Knox (ed.), *The Restless Urban Landscape*, Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993, pp. 127–64.; Knox, P. (ed.), *The Restless Urban Landscape*, Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993



San Antonio Museum of Art

*"Celebrating our industrial past"*



Steel House Lofts

*"Revitalizing the neighborhood"*



Pearl Brewery

*"Easy Access to Downtown"*



Peanut Factory Lofts

*"Urban Vibe + Gritty River's Edge"*



Blue Star Brewery & Arts

Photos and descriptions of rehabilitated industrial sites. Photographs and language sourced from their respective websites





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## A Brief Account of San Antonio's Industrial Economies

The site that now plays host to San Antonio's central Downtown was once a Coahuiltecan Indian settlement on the banks of the San Antonio River; high enough in elevation to avoid the river's period flooding while remaining in close proximity to access the waters for drinking water, fishing, bathing, and washing. With the arrival of the Spanish to the Texas territory in 1690 many existing native settlements, including the Coahuiltecan's, were destroyed, either directly through military force or indirectly through the transmission of disease.<sup>37</sup> The Spanish soon after established a network of missions along the San Antonio River in the early Eighteenth Century; a network that today is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and that has been the focus of an emerging body of literature documenting and analyzing the displacing effects of the city's push for cultural tourism. The so called "Mission Reach" heritage site encompasses a group of five frontier mission complexes situated along the San Antonio River basin and includes architectural and archaeological structures, farmlands, residences, churches and granaries, and perhaps most importantly, the system of hand-dug acequias that diverted the waters of the river for over two hundred years.<sup>38</sup> The abundant water supplies of the San Antonio River and the offshooting San Pedro Creek was absolutely critical to Spanish presence in Central Texas, a fact made evident in the siting of the Presidio de San Antonio de Bexar between the two waterways. With the construction of the acequias also came the construction of Spanish water and land rights distribution systems, originally introduced to Spain by the Moors in the Second Century. With the establishment of the Pueblo de San Antonio de Bexar the three-legged foundation of civil (pueblo), military (presidio), and religious (mission) institutions was complete, and formed the foundation of Spanish civilization in Texas.<sup>39</sup>

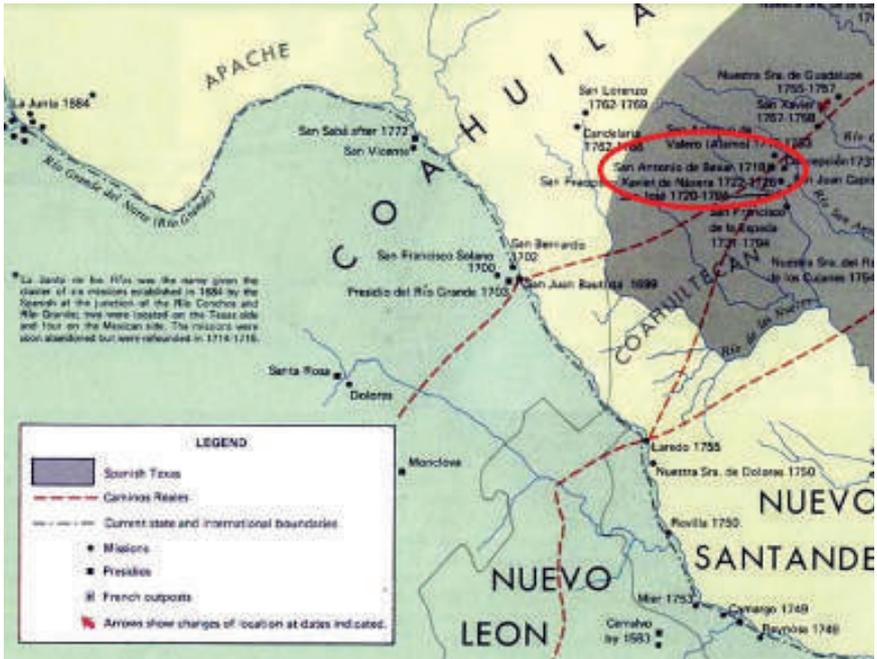
The growth and economic and religious success of San Antonio was owed in part to the construction of the Camino Real, which served to connect the northern frontier of Spanish territory to the heart of Spanish power in the Americas in Mexico, connecting the outpost with the financial, military, and political resources of the Spanish empire. The city's primary economic stimuli at the turn of the Nineteenth Century was cotton and cattle hides from the Presidio-adjacent farms, shipped south along the historic Camino Real into Mexico. The Spanish and Mexican upper classes built their homes to the west and north of the Presidio, along the San Pedro Creek and San Antonio

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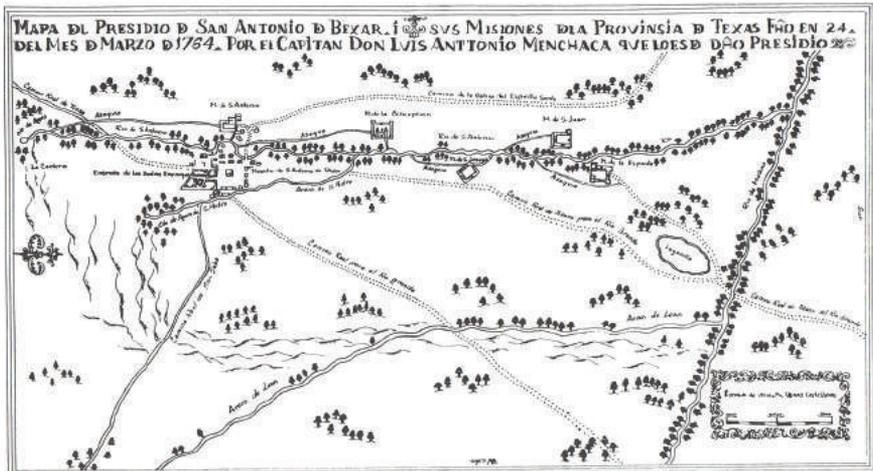
37 McComb, David G. *The City in Texas: A History*. Univ of Texas Pr, 2015. 16

38 UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "San Antonio Missions." UNESCO World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, 2015, [whc.unesco.org/en/list/1466](http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1466)

39 Miller, Char, and Heywood T. Sanders. *Urban Texas: Politics and Development*. Texas A&M University Press, 1990.



Spanish Missions, Presidios, and Roads in the 17th and 18th Centuries  
From Atlas of Texas. Courtesy of the University of Texas at Austin



1764 Map of the Camino Real and its intersection with the Presidio  
of San Antonio Bexar. Courtesy of the El Camino Real de los Tejas  
National Historic Trail Association

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River respectively.<sup>40</sup> The dynamics of the city's economic elite began to shift with the arrival of Irish and especially German immigrants in the early 1800s, seeking employment at the growing now US Army Depot at the Alamo.

The German immigrants settled in the East and South along the Aquencia Maria, adjacent to the downtown business district. They named their enclave "King William" after the Prussian Emperor Wilhelm I and constructed their homes in the High Victorian style, a characteristic that makes the neighborhood one of San Antonio's most desirable today.<sup>41</sup> The German community, which as a whole had greater access to wealth than their Mexican counterparts, rapidly transformed Commerce Street, the city's primary commercial artery, into their private economic domain. German merchants, now wielding greater political power than the Spanish and Mexican communities that they usurped, developed profitable relationships with the U.S. Army's Quartermaster Depot, supplying on contract the cotton and cattle hides that fueled the city's development some hundred years earlier. Their political power ultimately resulted in the siting of a new larger military installation, replacing the now highly desirable downtown location, at the far East side of town, thus situating themselves between the city's economic center and its primary flow of capital, being the U.S. military.<sup>42</sup>

The city's rapid economic growth was hindered around 1850, as the mercantile cities of the Northeast, by way of canal and railroad construction, expanded their economic influence throughout the Western and Southern United States and broke the mercantile power of the Mississippi port of New Orleans, to which San Antonio's agricultural outputs were dependent. San Antonio, now an outpost on America's Western Frontier, was limited in its potential for capital growth.<sup>43</sup> The economy began to recover through the development of German immigrant funded smuggling routes into Mexico and the development of a fledgling commercial sector which supplied finished goods from the Northeast to the growing number of ranches and farms of Central and Southern Texas. It was not until the Civil War that trading experienced a real boom, as the war temporarily broke the strangle of the Northeastern commercial centers in the South, stimulating sudden opportunities for economic leveraging and growth. Texas' cotton was greatly in demand abroad, but was embargoed by the Confederacy and blockaded by the Union. German merchants smuggled cotton into Mexico along the same Camino Real that once connected San Antonio to the seat of Spanish power, where it was then shipped to England and elsewhere abroad. By the end of the Civil War the fruits of both the legal and illegal Mexican trade

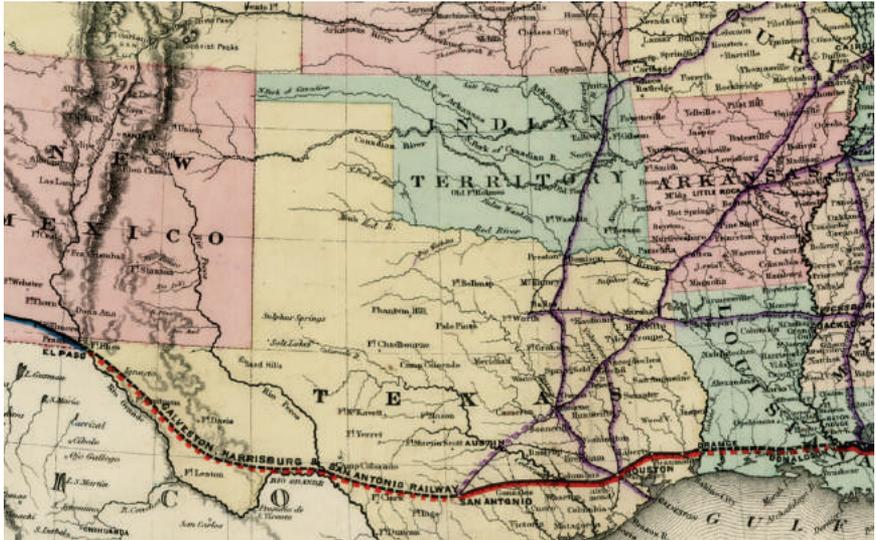
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40 McComb, 2015 p. 70

41 Ibid, p. 70-73

42 Miller, Char, and Sanders, 1990. p. 56

43 Johnson, David Ralph, John A. Booth, and Richard J. Harris. *The Politics of San Antonio: community, progress, & power*. Univ of Nebraska Pr, 1983. p. 5



The Southern Pacific Railroad, c. 1880. Courtesy California State Library

had put the city's commercial elite firmly on their feet, and the Anglo merchants now possessed the essential element for putting their newly restored power to work: vast sums of actionable capital.<sup>44</sup>

Following the Civil War the business elite of San Antonio began to invest in new industrial and civic infrastructures that the dominant merchants of the time, who were almost entirely dependent on the military presence in the city, had largely ignored. Business ventures as diverse as a produce exchange, trolley companies, a municipal water system, several major breweries, and industrial facilities were among the investments made by the city's new economic elite. However, none of the investments would prove as fruitful as those made in bringing the Southern Pacific intercontinental railroad to the city. The rails brought prosperity from two directions. Cattle from surrounding ranches, combined with newly invented barbed wire and cold storage facilities, gave rise to a livestock commission business and eventually to meatpacking. As cattle, beef, and hides were shipped out, tourists were shipped in. San Antonio's freshwater springs and pleasant climate attracted huge numbers of visitors and a great deal of Eastern investment.<sup>45</sup>

The growing cattle, tourism, and shipping economies fueled the city's post-Civil War growth, and by 1880 the population of San Antonio had increased to over 20,000 people; a 210% increase from its population

<sup>44</sup> McComb, 2015, p. 6

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-15

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at the end of the Civil War.<sup>46</sup> The infrastructures supporting the expanded commercial activity, being beef packing and shipping, brewing, and manufacturing, were situated along the city's primary arteries for transportation and processing: the San Antonio River, San Pedro Creek, and the railroads that connected San Antonio with the booming processing and shipping centers of Dallas, Houston, and Galveston. These arteries became dividing lines between the city's increasingly economically-divided Anglo and Mexican populations, with business owning Anglos settling around the downtown district to the North and South along the banks of the San Antonio River and the acequias, and the increasingly service-based Mexican and Black populations settling to the East, on the opposite side of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the West, on the opposite side of the San Pedro Creek.<sup>47</sup> These dividing lines persist to this day, but are blurring in the wake of city-endorsed rehabilitation and conversion initiatives along the arteries.

In the late 1920s San Antonio's socio-economic and political elite, following a tradition already fifty years old, persistently and successfully persuaded the Federal government to expand its military presence in the city, by way of increasing the size and significance of Fort Sam Houston to one of national importance. This strategy provided a continuous boost to the economy as the Fort Sam Houston grew, first during the Mexican Revolution and even more during the First and Second World Wars. The growing material needs of the expanding military infrastructure fueled the growth of industrial and manufacturing businesses, the most notable being those involved in meat packing and shipping, light manufacturing, and brewing. In the Postwar era of economic growth, however, the role of industry began to shrink in Downtown, replaced by a surge of investment in real estate, construction, and tourism. By the late 1920s, following the construction of a series of locks and dams to protect downtown against flooding, the city began to understand the potential of the now tame San Antonio River as an economic tool to promote tourism and boost land value along the water's edge.<sup>48</sup>

Tourism, being the most visible and geographically concentrated pillar of the city's Post-War growth agenda, was increasingly encouraged by the city's economic elite as means to bring investment into the downtown business district. But beyond sight-seers and private investment, San Antonio had begun to attract and build relationships with key members of Federal administrations, Franklin D. Roosevelt being among them. Then mayor Maury Maverick had been a staunch supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal during his time as state representative, and successfully leveraged his political connections to secure millions of dollars for the creation of the Riverwalk and other

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46 Johnson, Booth, and Harris, 1983. p 7

47 Miller, Char, and Sanders, 1990. p. 59; Fisher, 1996. p. 532

48 Johnson, Booth, and Harris, 1983. p 7



NYA workers rebuild the historic La Villita plaza, 1939. Courtesy of the University of Texas at San Antonio Historical Archives

public works around downtown. The presence of New Deal dollars, and the accompanying oversight and management, marked the beginning of the end of Downtown's industrial dependency. Though there had long been a significant Federal presence in the city with the siting of five military bases within Bexar county, the city's economic trajectory had since the colonization of the area been controlled by the city's economic elite and was fundamentally regional in scope. The introduction of major Federal influence into the city's economic planning upended established business hierarchies, and set the stage for a new era of national and internationally reaching economic strategies.

Federal assistance through the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration led to the construction of the San Antonio Riverwalk and the reconstruction of historic districts and plazas.<sup>49</sup> Simultaneous with the construction of the Riverwalk, San Antonio was connected to the growing network of national interstate highways under the Federal Highway Administration in 1944. The two massive Federally financed initiatives were crucial factors in San Antonio's transitioning economy, and made the city's hospitality and construction industries among the most influential players in

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<sup>49</sup> San Antonio mayor Maury Maverick (1939-1941) was professionally close with Franklin D. Roosevelt, a connection developed during Maverick's tenure as a House Representative, where he ardently supported the New Deal.; Johnson, David Ralph, John A. Booth, and Richard J. Harris. 16-20

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the city's economic decision making. Federal monies in the form of Urban Renewal funds would again be used to transform San Antonio's downtown in preparation for the 1968 Hemisfair World's Fair. Using federally subsidized Urban Renewal funds the city acquired large portions of the King William neighborhood and the historic La Villita district through eminent domain, displacing 1,600 people and fracturing the community base of Southtown.<sup>50</sup> In the prioritizing the growth of tourism, convention, and leisure infrastructures over the manufacturing and agricultural industries that had been the economic mainstays since the early 19th Century, Hemisfair '68 marked a climax in the transition of San Antonio's economic purview from a supporting regional role to a vanguard economy that was increasingly national and international in scope.

San Antonio's was further stripped of its former industrial lifeblood as manufactures closed operations in the latter half of the twentieth century, leaving industrial facilities vacant along the downtown-adjacent hydrologic and rail arteries. The retreating industry in downtown was replaced by office space, hotels, and arts districts that developed near the newly completed San Antonio Riverwalk. The Anglo communities that were once sustained by the presence of large industrial employers receded alongside the operations, and the resulting low-value downtown-adjacent neighborhoods filtered down to primarily Hispanic and Black populations that are remain largely employed in the vast service economy that supports downtown tourism and retail. Studies of municipal service delivery demonstrate patterns of inequities in which these downtown-adjacent neighborhoods consistently received lower levels of some services than Northside and inner-loop neighborhoods. These services include those supported by Federal revenue sharing funds, responsiveness of the zoning commission to neighborhood association requests, street paving and repairing, drainage infrastructure, and public libraries.<sup>51</sup>

In a well formulated self-fulfilling cycle, construction and real estate interests have worked hard politically to influence the siting of government capital investment and the introduction of development facilitating policy in places signaled by them as likely candidates for development. To this end, the late 1990s and early 2000s brought a new development trend to downtown-adjacent neighborhoods, directing energies and investment at an increasing rate away from the city's northern reaches and towards the former industrial sites abutting the city's historic arteries of waterways and rail-lines. Developers, companies, and other real estate interests, recognizing the potential value of waterway-adjacent property and the desirable architectural configurations of early 20th century industrial facilities, began rehabilitating and converting these former industrial sites into luxury mixed-use complexes with an industrial-ruin aesthetic to

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<sup>50</sup> McComb, 2015. p. 266

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, Booth,, and Harris, 1983. p. 76



A view of the monorail at Hemisfair 1968. Courtesy of San Antonio Express News

cater towards young creative class professionals. These developments are situated within the “Decade of Downtown”, fueled by a growing population seeking close access to the emerging social hot spots developing in and around downtown. The rehabilitated sites cater to the industries most heartily encouraged by the city and offer downtown-adjacent locations (and thus within close reach of hotels and convention centers) and a large supply of low-cost land in their immediate vicinity.<sup>52</sup>

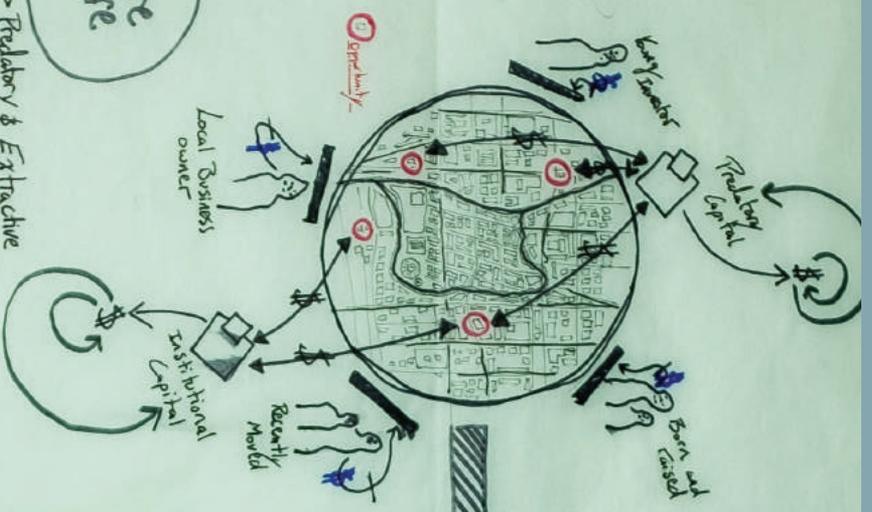
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<sup>52</sup> “City of San Antonio Business Climate.” The City of San Antonio - Official City Website, 2017, [www.sanantonio.gov/EDD/Business-Climate](http://www.sanantonio.gov/EDD/Business-Climate).



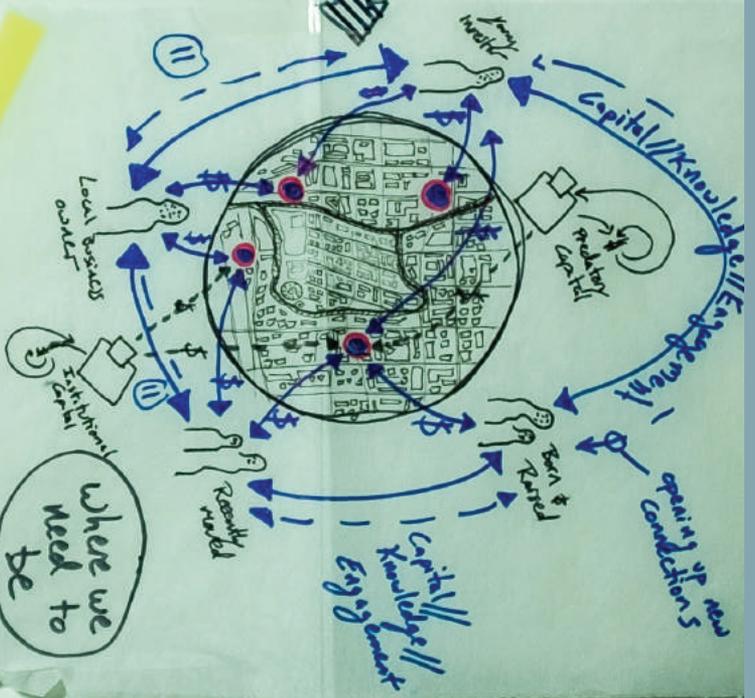
Where we are

↳ Regulatory & Extractive



Where we need to be

Circulatory, local, & relational mechanisms



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## What ecologies, and at what cost?

The restoration and inhabitation of these often abandoned sites is an exciting prospect, made more enticing with beautiful designs that satisfy the public's growing affinity for the industrial ruin aesthetic symbolic of "revived" urban space. There are strong arguments to be made for the ability of these projects to preserve historic buildings; changing their use rather than demolishing and starting from scratch. However, this rationale falls flat in the wake of recent decisions made by the city's Historic Design and Review Commission to strip two sites of their historic status, allowing for the demolition of existing structures, in response to the developer's insistence that the preservation standards presented financial obstacles for the intended development of the site.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, rehabilitated and decontaminated, these properties have the potential to house businesses, manufacturing operations, and community-oriented services alongside living space, retail, and cultural spaces.

Adapting them to new uses should not restore only the buildings and their physical environment, but also build and fortify the livelihoods and vitality of the communities surrounding them, the same communities that have lived with these sites in their backyards for decades. The business as usual approach to industrial rehabilitation projects does create jobs; for example, the various stores, hotels, and restaurants at the Pearl Brewery employ hundreds of San Antonians and its office space plays hosts to many more. However, these jobs, like the spaces themselves, are part of the creative-class attracting enclave network; the wages from these jobs do not stay in the neighborhood. While a comprehensive study would be required to determine precisely the relationship between local residents and employment at the Pearl, it has been clearly established that the project has had an enormous transformative effect on the racial and economic class of the neighborhoods surrounding it. This scale of neighborhood transformation affects not only families and homes, but existing local businesses as well. Locally owned and staffed small and medium sized businesses are subject to the same pressures, and perhaps more, than the residents of the community in the wake of these large investments and the new business climate they introduce to the neighborhoods. A changing customer base and the corresponding change in customer preference and expectations and rising tax rates are two of the most significant factors.

In the most recent addition to the "Decade of Downtown" agenda Mayor Ron Nirenberg proudly proclaimed in his 2018 State of the City Address that his administration has committed to creating 70,000 jobs in the next four years, more than any other mayoral initiative

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<sup>53</sup> Dimmick, Iris. "Historic Designation Stripped From Merchant's Ice House, Friedrich Building." *The Rivard Report*. December 2015

in the city's history.<sup>54</sup> This explosive growth, according to the mayor, will be made possible by creating and maintaining a regulatory environment that promotes investment. This report has worked to demonstrate how these same policies and incentives, which by and large target the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown, have resulted in rapidly increasing property values which in turn are displacing the residential and business communities within those policy and incentive boundaries, transforming the cultural, social, and economic characteristics of those neighborhoods. In the same address, the mayor implicitly acknowledged the rising vulnerability of downtown adjacent neighborhoods, but sidestepped the topic of displacement. Stating that the issue is centered around a lack of affordable housing, the construction of new affordable housing is now a primary objective of his administration. This agenda is not only complicit with the transformation of the neighborhoods into creative-class attracting job centers, but works to facilitate the transformation through the relocation of the city's poor to locations determined and approved by the city and the real estate industry.

The city's 55,000 existing small businesses employ nearly 95% of the privately employed workforce and are an integral part of San Antonio's social and economic ecologies.<sup>55</sup> These local businesses, often owned and staffed by neighborhood residents, play a critical role in the social, cultural, and economic foundation of the communities around them. Research shows that small businesses such as these and the entrepreneurship of those businesses, though falling outside of the constructed vision of creative-class job centers, respectively play a vital role in innovation, regional economic development, and the pursuit of new markets.<sup>56</sup> In fact, Glaeser and Kerr of Harvard Business School show that regional economic growth is highly correlated with the presence of many small, entrepreneurial employers.<sup>57</sup> The existing small businesses are in fact the key drivers of job growth statewide and contribute positively to the economic climate that helps attract employers of all sizes to the state. In the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown these essential businesses are being displaced along with the residents.<sup>58</sup> While the extent of business displacement is currently not quantified, the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders will be publishing a report in 2018 on the impact of neighborhood change on small businesses.<sup>59</sup>

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54 Nirenberg, Ron. "2018 State of the City" Address, San Antonio, TX, March 31, 2018.

55 Halebic, Maya and Steve Nivin. "Small Business Study: A Profile of Small Businesses in San Antonio Metro Area" Saber Research Institute, San Antonio, TX, 2012

56 Moutray, Chad. "Looking Ahead: Opportunities and Challenges for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Owners". Small Business Research Summary, Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, October 2008

57 Glaeser, Edward and William R. Kerr, "The Secret to Job Growth: Think Small". *Harvard Business Review*, July 2010.

58 Halebic, Maya and Steve Nivin. 2012

59 The upcoming report was described in an interview with NALCAB staff by the author

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## Potential Futures

Job growth is not predicated on bringing in new businesses and populations. Gentrification is not the inevitable result of investment in a neighborhood. For many community residents, gentrification appears to be the result of uncontrollable private sector investment. In fact, the flood of interest from private developers and investors that drives gentrification is often catalyzed by public policies or major public investments, which both require decisions by elected leaders. When public sector decision-making is informed by market data, historical context, and community voice, more equitable policies and investments can be made. Investments aimed at revitalization and growth can be balanced with policies and investments that address the needs and opportunities of low- and moderate-income people and other populations that are potentially vulnerable in an appreciating real estate market. It is critical to the city's ecological future that neighborhood revitalization efforts work toward asset-building opportunities for existing residents.<sup>60</sup>

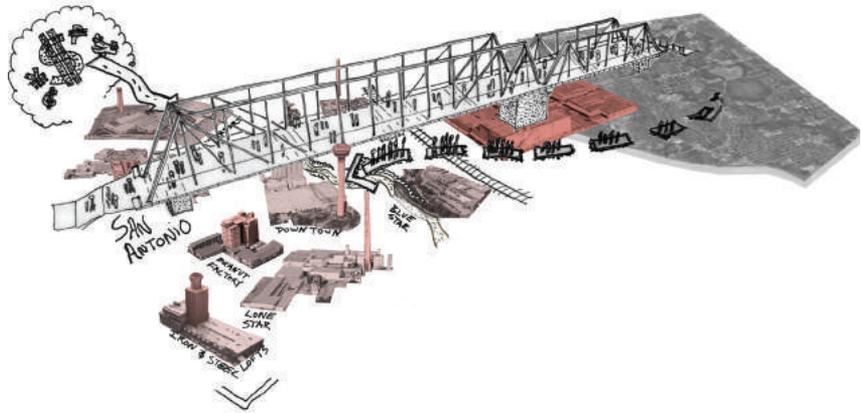
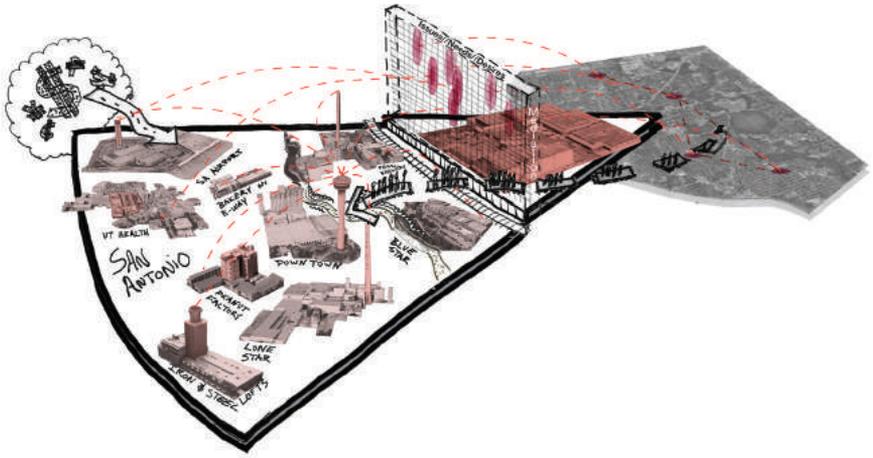
Economic and cultural vitality is not dependent on the addition of new businesses or the transformation of business types. There are 55,000 existing small businesses that have already built the complex knot of relationships and networks needed for sustained success; a process that takes years to come to fruition. These small businesses have been demonstrated to be some of the most critical components in city-wide economic growth, and in the wake of large and capital intensive rehabilitation projects, these businesses, their relationships, their networks, and their cultural and social contributions to the communities around them, are displaced alongside their residential neighbors. NALCAB has identified five key factors that lead to business displacement in the face of increasing real estate prices. These include a dependence on local clientele, renting space, limited access to capital, informality, and the prioritization of national brands as tenants.<sup>61</sup> The combined loss of both residents and businesses is an unrecoverable disaster for San Antonio's downtown communities, home to many thousands of San Antonians. The "Decade of Downtown" is the easiest possible route toward downtown transformation and job growth, but an economic and political agenda that fractures the foundation of the city's economies and communities does not build a healthy, equitable, or sustainable urban ecology.

As high-end rehabilitation projects increase in frequency it is essential that the city of San Antonio and its citizens understand the critical and precarious potentials that hinge on the development and management of these places. Due to their siting along the city's earliest economic arteries, which in turn acted as some of the first and most long-lasting

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60 National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders. "Guide to Equitable Neighborhood Development". 2017. p 8

61 Ibid, p. 46



Conceptualizing the potential futures of former industrial sites and the forces that dictate their transformation.

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boundaries between communities and histories in San Antonio, these sites occupy a unique position as intermediaries between the two “sides of the tracks (or river in San Antonio’s case).” And it is precisely because of their siting along these boundaries, and their unique capacity to transform those boundaries, that these rehabilitated sites ought to serve as not only great new centers of activity, culture, and business development, but also to acknowledge through implementation and design the layered histories, geographies, triumphs, and struggles of the places and peoples they connect. A forward thinking and ecological approach to rehabilitation would particularly benefit the residents who have suffered the economic and health consequences of living near blighted buildings and contaminated lands.<sup>62</sup>

There is a tremendous potential for these sites to be locales of community wealth building. By recognizing former industrial sites as strategic assets and with the proper guidance and capacity, the city could support existing businesses or groups of businesses by utilizing these places as sites of expansion and restructuring, increasing their employment capacity, keeping the revenues from that expansion circulating within the community, and ensuring that their businesses are prepared for the transforming economic landscape of downtown. Non-profits, religious institutions, and community groups can use these spaces and their key geographies to provide social services, educational programs, and other initiatives that advance their collective and respective missions. Local schools can partner with San Antonio’s numerous universities to create gardens, learning centers, and exercise facilities, and implement extracurricular programs that provide experience and build relationships for university students entering the workforce along with healthy and educational extracurricular options for neighborhood families. The possibilities all allow for greater creativity in use, increase the and connect engaged populations, and are limited only by willingness and imagination.

A shift in the understanding of rehabilitated industrial sites’ potential as community and business hubs, paired with the energies and backing of local residents and impact investors, can restructure the way local economies adapt to a changing economic landscape. Action taken to make this shift a reality will work to build and highlight relationships between citizens, institutions, and businesses, united in their mission to improving the lives and staying power of existing populations. It will simultaneously prevent the seed of predatory and extractive investment from touching ground in the city’s most vulnerable neighborhoods, preserving and strengthening the foundation of the region’s social and cultural ecologies. And perhaps most importantly, they will set a new national standard for equitable and forward-thinking governance in a time when it is so desperately needed.

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62 Collaton, Elizabeth, and Charles Bartsch. "Industrial site reuse and urban redevelopment—an overview." *Cityscape* (1996): p. 17.

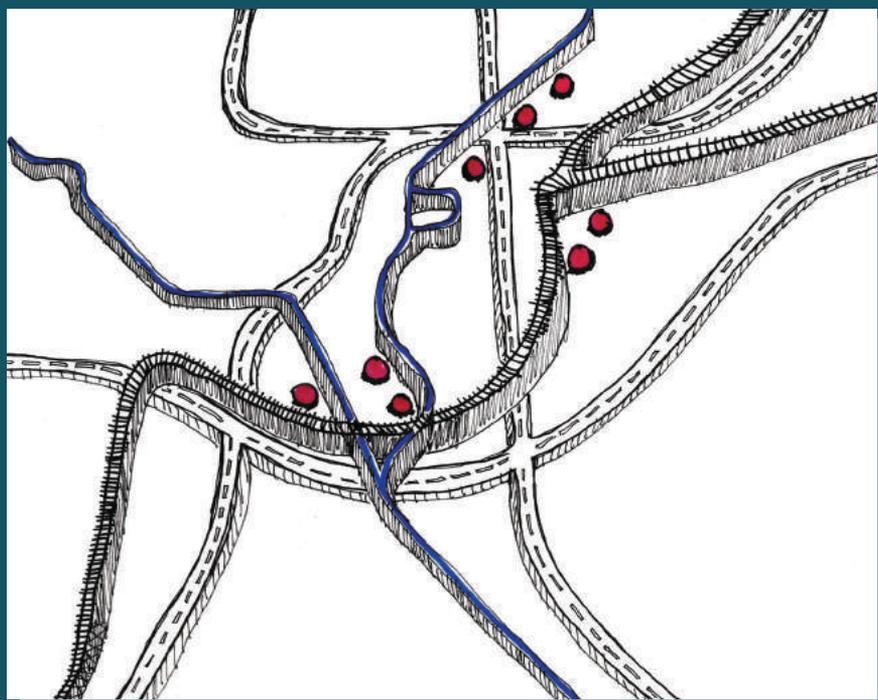
There is a corresponding and opposite potential that hangs in the balance as well. High-end, “Decade of Downtown” rehabilitation projects are increasing in frequency, spreading further and further into vulnerable neighborhoods and becoming increasingly varied in scale; from massive Pearl Brewery scale proposals for an old pallet making facility to the transformation of dilapidated single-story equipment warehouses into “arts hub”, the seeds of displacement are being sown.<sup>63</sup> The current model of growth, one that is complicit and in fact facilitates the displacement of downtown-adjacent communities, one that refuses to acknowledge the root of displacement and instead promises more government subsidized affordable housing, will injure San Antonio’s foundation beyond repair and place the city firmly in the top position for the most economically segregated city in the country. To avoid this version of the future, and to realize the potential of former industrial sites not as opportunities for “Decade of Downtown” growth but as locally focused hubs of business, social, and cultural activity for the people that live there now, there are structural issues insurmountable at the current state that must be addressed.

A multi-scale municipal policy restructuring and realignment would work towards making this shift possible; it is the keystone of the move toward an equitable and sustainable ecology and future for San Antonio. The framework developed is illustrated as four cascading, complementary, and parallel restructurings to guide the investigation and realignment of existing assets, the building of new relationships and affiliates, and the formation of an alliance to bring together the many organizations, businesses, and citizens already working toward the building of community wealth and staying power.

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63 Guenther, Rocio. “Zoning Commission Greenlights ‘Arts Hub,’ Apartments on Eastside.” *The Rivard Report*. July 2017; Webner, Richard. “\$150 million mixed-use development coming to near East Side.” *San Antonio Express News*. March 2017





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## An Urban Intermediary To Address Enclave Development and Displacement

The existing “Decade of Downtown” policy agenda must be recognized by the city and its residents as a catalyst of neighborhood vulnerability. Municipal government’s ability to acknowledge and respond to the reconfiguration of the networked infrastructures that underpin downtown-adjacent neighborhoods depends on the development of a credible and trusted mediator with the ability to stitch together various actors across scales and disciplines--from “both sides of the tracks.”<sup>64</sup> While more comprehensive analysis is necessary to quantify the impact of high-end rehabilitation on the residential and business communities that surround them, this report has worked to demonstrate a clear correlation between these types of projects, the policies that make them possible, and vulnerability status of those neighborhoods as identified by NALCAB in January of 2018. As there does not yet exist an official body with the mission, capacity, or funding to take on this role, it is necessary to assemble a new intermediary body to sit between “Decade of Downtown” governance, development interests, and communities facing displacement. Here I drawing from Simon Guy, Simon Marvin, William Peter Medd, and Timothy Moss’s notion of “urban intermediaries”.<sup>65</sup>

Urban intermediaries play the role of knowledge and relationship brokers and are necessary to navigate today’s complex market and policy restructurings, new models of regulations, and to fill the institutional gaps resulting from an asymmetrical development agenda. In the context of privatized provision of resources and new pressures on infrastructures, strategic urban intermediaries provide the critical context for attempting to develop alternative social, ecological, and territorial priorities into market-based systems of resource provision. They are network based rather than bilateral, supervised systems instead of organizational bodies, and can be understood as transition managers within their particular local contexts.<sup>66</sup> A new San Antonio urban intermediary focused on addressing displacement at its root would work to investigate the interactions between the personal and organizational qualities of involved and affected groups and networks, bridging the gap between the interests of local circumstances and the economic needs of surrounding publics. By examining the space between the socio-economic and political dimensions that define the use of space, it would be capable of identifying, conceptualizing, and promoting the forms of innovative business activity which leads to place-appropriate economic practices; an issue of particular urgency in San Antonio in response to the “Decade of Downtown” agenda.<sup>67</sup>

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64 van Lente, Harro, Marko Hekkert, Ruud Smits, and Bas van Waveren. "Roles of systemic intermediaries in transition processes." *International Journal of Innovation Management* 7, no. 03 (2003): pp 247-279.

65 Guy, Simon, Simon Marvin, William Peter Medd, and Timothy Moss, eds. *Shaping Urban Infrastructures*. Taylor & Francis, 2012.

66 *Ibid*, pp. 58, 214

67 *Ibid*, pp. 27, 94

The key feature of a resilient ecological system is its ability to absorb incremental change. It is only when a series of incremental changes accumulate or a massive shock is imposed that the capacity of the system is exceeded, creating traumatic and unexpected changes in ecological make-up.<sup>68</sup> A San Antonio intermediary, what I imagine as the San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission, would work to build this necessary resilience by assembling, translating, and addressing the needs of vulnerable communities, official local government, and private interests with mutually beneficial strategies, tactics, and relationships. It would work toward the realization of former industrial sites as a strategic asset for existing businesses and social and cultural institutions, helping to expand their capacity, keep revenues circulating within local contexts, and bridging the gap between vulnerable residents and business on the ground, private development interests, and the local government. Shifting the current standard of gentrifying economic development in downtown-adjacent neighborhoods to one of ecological equity and long-term sustainability is of key importance as high-end enclave rehabilitation projects increase in frequency, and an intermediary in the form of an official commission is the first step in realizing this shift. Examples of rehabilitation projects that exemplify these desired traits can be found in literature related to sustainable and equitable development and economic growth. My touchpoint into this body of work was the *Compendium to the Civic Economy: What our Cities, Towns, and Neighborhoods Can Learn from 25 Trailblazers*, an authoritative collection, including numerous adaptive reuse and rehabilitation projects, that explores the possibilities and diversity of ecologically-based projects that recognize, reorganize, and deploy existing assets.

Authorities on the role of urban intermediaries argue that unique geo-demographic or economic conditions and niche opportunities are ideal territory for intermediary development; the interrelations of economies and systems of scale that are established around a single phenomenon are more easily identified and understood than those of a wide-reaching condition.<sup>69</sup> In the case of San Antonio that unique and niche phenomenon is the current enclave model of rehabilitating former industrial facilities. An intermediary tasked with understanding and managing the rehabilitation and conversion of these spaces would make possible the institutional and organizational restructures necessary to realizing their capacity as community wealth building hubs. By sitting between vulnerable communities, city government, and real estate interests, the intermediary would investigate and quantify both the root causes of San Antonio's increasing rate of downtown residential and business displacement, the extent to which these roots have fractured social, economic, and cultural bases in affected neighborhoods, and propose policy recommendations and facilitate the creation of community-oriented business and social hubs in former industrial sites.

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68 Holling, Crawford S., and Michael Arthur Goldberg. "Ecology and planning." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 37, no. 4 (1971): 221-230.

69 Guy, Marvin, et al. 2012, p. 42



# Unit 10 - 2008

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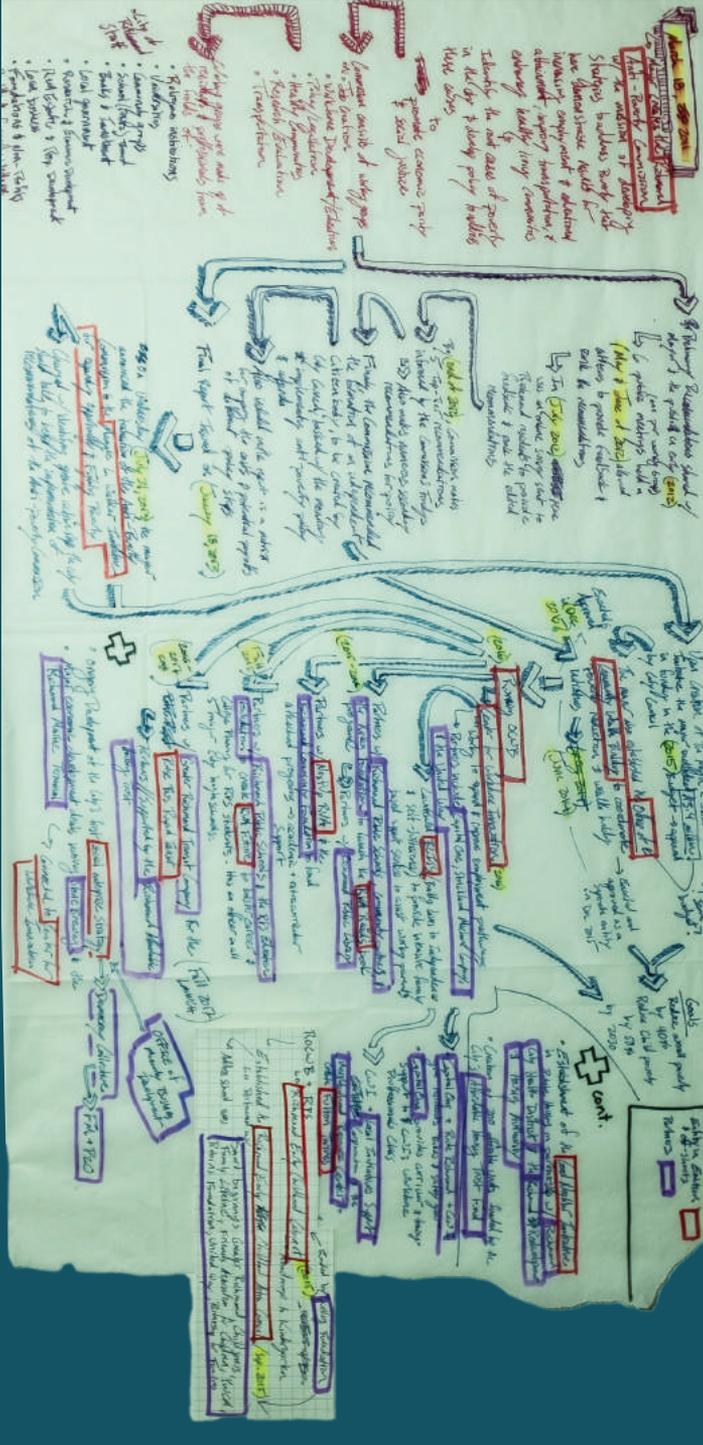
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## **Institutional Restructuring & The ROCWB**

In order to build the capacity for a new strategic intermediary in the form of the San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission, a tripartite restructuring and realignment of existing assets and energies toward a community-wealth building agenda will likely be necessary. My investigation into precedent models of the ternary institutional, organizational, and financial restructurings undertaken in the creation of urban intermediaries and conversations with professionals in the fields of infrastructural development led me to the recently established City of Richmond, Virginia Office of Community Wealth Building (ROCWB). In the following pages I trace the development of the ROCWB from its beginnings as a municipal research and policy taskforce to its current role as a strategic urban intermediary working to fight poverty by building community wealth. The ROCWB serves as my primary point of inspiration for criteria and recommendations I present for the establishment of a San Antonio intermediary to fight displacement through the building of community wealth.

### **The Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building**

The ROCWB is product of circumstances not dissimilar of those of San Antonio. My goal in tracing the history and actions behind the formation of the ROCWB is to provide a recent and developing precedent for how the city of San Antonio can move forward in creating systems that build from existing assets to create ecologies that support, rather than displacing, current residents, businesses, and institutions.

In March of 2011 the then mayor of Richmond Dwight Jones, responding to the alarming rate of poverty in Richmond, 25% of all residents and nearly two fifths of the city's children, created the Richmond Anti-Poverty Commission (RAPC) to identify the root causes of Richmond's high poverty levels and to develop strategies to aggressively address the issues. Since its formation, the ROCWB has entrenched itself within the city's support networks, and has partnered with dozens of organizations, companies, and other municipal offices, as well as creating new initiatives and groups, to address poverty at its root in Richmond. These innovative and locally sourced initiatives and partnerships speak to the significance, success, and potential of such an office to address critical issues at their root and to build new support networks by building capacity within municipal government and utilizing local systems and residents.

Under the Richmond Anti-Poverty Commission six working groups were formed to examine in greater depth issues related to poverty. The working groups, made up of leaders of community organizations, public officials, academics, neighborhood activists, religious leaders, and leaders of the Richmond business community,

presented their preliminary findings and recommendations to the Mayor and the public in early 2012. In May and June of the same year six public meetings were held to provide a platform for citizen feedback, concerns, and suggestions, in addition to ranking the preliminary recommendations of the RAPC. The following month, an online survey was sent to Richmond residents to provide an additional opportunity for feedback and ranking of the updated recommendations.<sup>70</sup> Published in January of 2013, the RAPC's "Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission Report" presented five "top-tier" recommendations and numerous secondary recommendations for policy and implementation strategies. In addition to the specific policy recommendations the commission recommended the formation of an independent citizen body, to be created by the mayor and legitimized by the city council, tasked with the monitoring and implementing of the anti-poverty agenda.

In late July of 2013 the RAPC was transitioned into the Maggie L. Walker Initiative for Expanding Opportunity and Fighting Poverty, and was granted an operating budget of \$3.4 million. The initiative was charged with identifying specific action steps the city should take to begin the implementation of recommendations of the RAPC.<sup>71</sup> Simultaneous to the transition of the RAPC to the Maggie L. Walker Initiative the Mayor also established the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building (ROCWB) to coordinate with local partners poverty reduction and wealth building initiatives. The ROCWB began operations in the summer of 2014 under the management of the Maggie L. Walker Initiative, and was enacted as an independent and separate entity in December of 2015. The establishment of the office was a critical step towards the city's announced policy goals of reducing overall poverty by 40% and child poverty by at least 50% in Richmond by 2030.<sup>72</sup> This goal is compartmentalized into yearly objectives of moving 1,000 people out of poverty every year.<sup>73</sup>

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70 About Us - Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building." Richmond, VA Office of Community Wealth Building > About. <http://www.richmondgov.com/CommunityWealthBuilding/About.asp>; "Anti-Poverty Commission." Richmond, VA Office of Community Wealth Building > Maggie L. Walker Initiative History.

71 City of Richmond, Virginia. "Office of Community Wealth Building Year One Annual Report." April, 2016.

72 Maggie L. Walker Initiative History, Richmond, VA Office of Community Wealth Building

73 City of Richmond, VA. "2018 Adopted Annual Fiscal Plan". 2018. [http://www.richmondgov.com/Budget/documents/BiennialPlans/2018\\_AdoptedAnnualFiscalPlan.pdf](http://www.richmondgov.com/Budget/documents/BiennialPlans/2018_AdoptedAnnualFiscalPlan.pdf)



Photos and initiatives from the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building Year One Report



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## Building the San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building

The model set by the city of Richmond and precedent cases of issue-focused research initiatives can be examined and their strategies cherry-picked to best suit San Antonio's unique contexts. The groundwork for such an initiative is currently being laid by an existing task force; the Mayor's housing taskforce and their partnership with NALCAB and other special interests groups and local affiliates has already started the process of investigating and reporting the increasingly vulnerability of the city's transforming neighborhoods.<sup>74</sup> This task force, and others like it across the country, are already functioning as urban intermediaries; they are the systems and networks by which knowledge and actors are connected, translated, and applied to solve particular problems. The existing taskforce is a preliminary step, and one that is primarily reactive to the lack of affordable housing in San Antonio. While the implemented measures might relieve housing needs in the short term, they will not address the underlying factors that are causing the affordable housing shortage. In order to shift from a strategy of reaction and mitigation to one of proactive prevention, I propose that another urban intermediary be assembled: a San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission (SAADC).

Urban ecological systems are non-linear and dynamic networks of interaction.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the proposed intermediary body should be understood not as an object or a toolkit, but as an ongoing and dynamic system that works alongside and between vulnerable communities, private interests, and local government to make a more equitable and sustainable model for local economic development. It would have the expertise and capacity to recognize and identify vulnerable geographies and form partnerships with local leaders and engaged professionals from its own network to develop place-based and contextualized strategies. The SAADC intermediary would generate new policy recommendations to address issues of displacement and vulnerability on a rolling basis, and would have built into its internal structure feedback loops that allow for reflection and readjustment. The city has the capacity already to make this a reality. It is a matter of restructuring existing and pigeonholed assets to meet the needs of today's citizens.

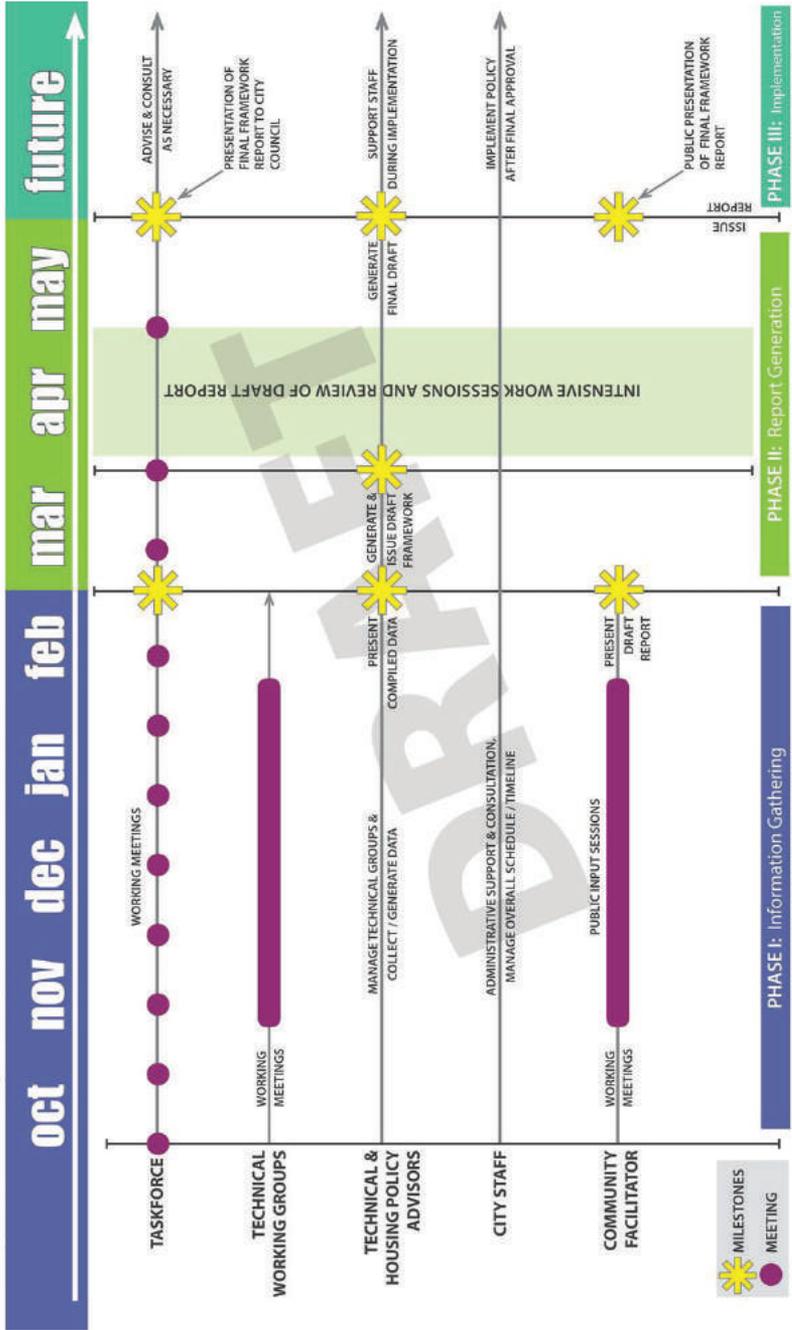
In the following pages I will borrow from Guy, Marvin, Medd, and Moss's phases of intermediary creation (Exploration, Take-Off, Embedding, and Stabilization) and apply these phases to the creation of the SAADC and a San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building (SAOCWB).

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<sup>74</sup> "Timeline of the Mayor's Housing Taskforce." San Antonio, TX Mayor's Housing Policy Taskforce. 2017 <http://www.sanantonio.gov/HousingTaskForce/About#234602884-timeline>

<sup>75</sup> Holling and Goldberg, 1971, p. 228

**Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force** TIMELINE 2017-18



Timeline for the Mayor's Housing Task Force, Courtesy of the San Antonio Office of the Mayor

Within these phases, three key systematic processes of innovation and transition are embodied. The first of the three is articulation. Clarity and agreement on the issue, the needs and desires of involved parties, and the options or routes available to address the issue are first and foremost in the creation of new strategic intermediaries. The second key process, alignment, initiates and strengthens the linkages between various parts of the innovating system. In the context of San Antonio the innovating system is comprised of the many residents and organizations that are already working toward addressing the historical and ongoing issue of displacement. Lastly, the process of supporting the learning process enhances feedback mechanisms by stimulating and facilitating experimentation and initial adaptations of a new model.<sup>76</sup> Using these phases of intermediary creation, the systematic processes of innovation that they involve, and key lessons from the ROCWB and other case studies, I then outline a set of criteria and tools to be leveraged in the creation of the SAADC and the subsequent establishment of the SAOCWB; the urban intermediaries needed to ensure an equitable, sustainable, and ecologically prioritized future for San Antonio's vulnerable downtown adjacent communities.

## **Exploration**

Putting equitable development principles into practice requires organizing, policy, and investment strategies that are based on knowledge about how and why neighborhoods change over time, including data-driven projections of how real estate market activity and the location of residents vulnerable to displacement pressures might shape neighborhoods moving forward.<sup>77</sup> It requires a nuanced understanding of existing residents, businesses, and institutions along with the pressures they face. The first step in this process of assembling, translating, and restructuring is a comprehensive analysis of the problem at hand. Numerous cities across the United States have undertaken similar research projects to address pressing threats to their most vulnerable citizens, including Richmond, VA, New York City, NY, Athens and Savannah, GA, Nashville, TN, San Francisco, CA, and San Antonio itself.<sup>78</sup> Each study began with a public recognition of a problem and the creation of a strategic intermediary in the forms of task forces, commissions, or municipal offices to investigate the issue and generate recommendations for its mitigation.

The formation of the SAADC depends first on a commitment of local government to pro-actively address the underlying factors of displacement: predatory and displacing investment touching ground in former industrial facilities and other large parcels in the

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<sup>76</sup> Guy, Marvin, et al. 2012. pp. 39-42

<sup>77</sup> National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders. "Guide to Equitable Neighborhood Development". p 20

<sup>78</sup> Richmond Anti-Poverty Commission. "Mayor's Anti-Poverty Commission Report." January 2013. p 129

city's most vulnerable neighborhoods. A willingness on the part of the city to approach growth and development with innovation and a commitment to improve the standing of existing residents underpins the entire initiative. With this commitment, and the establishment of the SAADC by the Mayor, the new intermediary will begin its role as "transition-manager" by facilitating dialogue, advocating for reform, and pioneering innovative forms of interaction between local residents, businesses, and institutions.<sup>79</sup> In order to maintain the momentum, relationships, and trust established during the existing Housing Task Force, the SAADC should be established and operational soon after the completion of the current initiative. This new intermediary should build from the structural model and strategic relationships already established, but with the addition of changes and internal restructurings brought about by a close examination of the successes and failures of the existing Housing Task Force and other similar initiatives across the country.

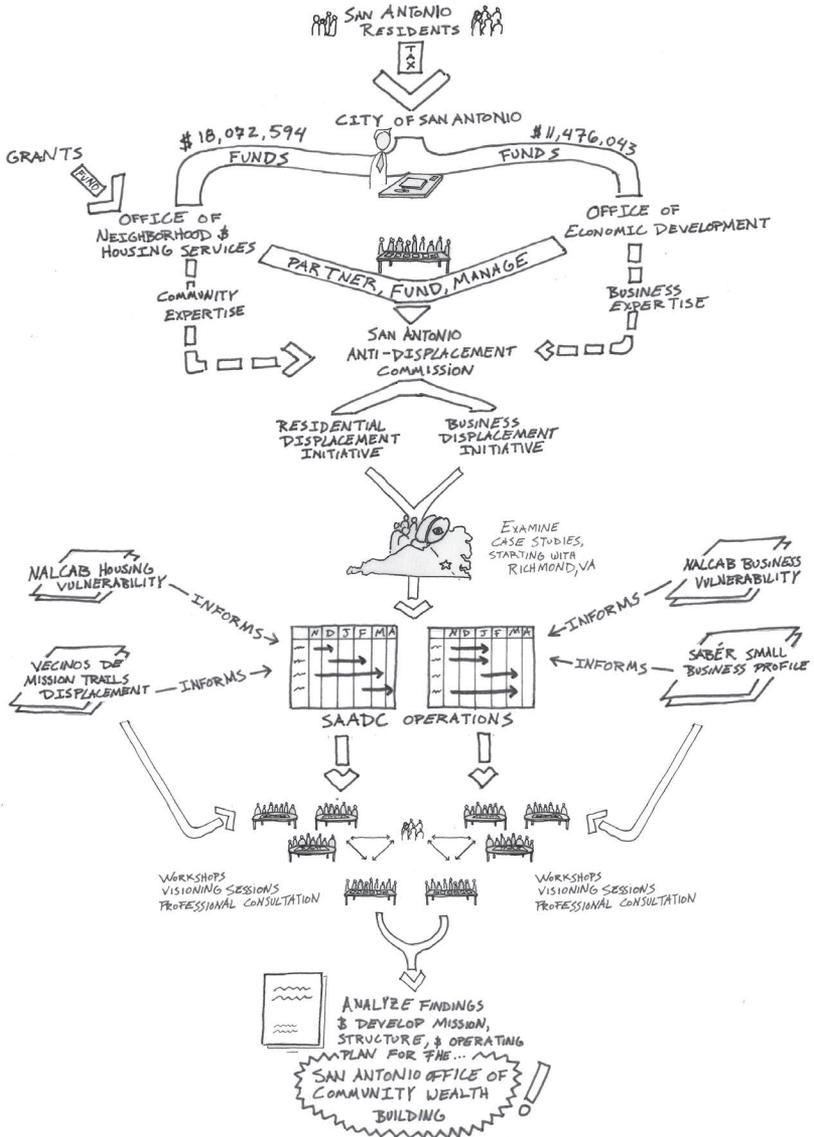
In examining existing municipal departments, their missions and objectives, and their budgets for FY 2018 as published in the city's 2018 Adopted Operating and Capital Budget, I have identified the Office of Neighborhood and Housing Services and the Office of Economic Development as the two existing offices that have the capacity, funding, and expertise to oversee and fund the SAADC. The two offices, with 2018 budgets of \$18 million and \$11 million respectively, would collaboratively develop and manage two parallel research initiatives.<sup>80</sup> The first would focus on residential and institutional displacement, and would be spearheaded by the Office of Neighborhood and Housing Services. The second and simultaneous initiative would be led by the office of Economic Development, and would center around business displacement. But before these focused research efforts, the necessary first act of the SAADC will be overseeing a process of reflection on the current Housing Taskforce by the core groups involved. Participants should include the core task force of city staff, field professionals, local partners, technical working groups, technical policy advisors, city staff, and community facilitators. Additionally, an outreach initiative to the members of the public that participated in forums, working groups, and surveys should be undertaken to gauge the level of satisfaction with policy outcomes and the organization and quality of their participatory experience. The aim of these reflections is to identify gaps or inefficiencies in the Housing Task force organizational structure and its outreach and research strategies, and to use those reflections to inform the design of the SAADC research initiatives. Using the timeline set by the existing Housing Taskforce as a point of reference, the exploration phase of the SAADC can be tentatively assumed to span nine months.<sup>81</sup>

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79 Ibid. p. 58

80 City of San Antonio, TX. "Fiscal Year 2018 Adopted Operating and Capital Budget". 2018 <http://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/budget/FY2018/FY2018BudgetDocument.pdf>

81 San Antonio, TX Mayor's Housing Policy Taskforce. "Timeline of the Mayor's Housing Taskforce."



Exploration

The exploration phase is also where the criteria for identifying target geographies are established. The work of NALCAB in identifying the neighborhoods experiencing change at the fastest rate in the city is a great place to start. As the SAADC would be involved in ground-level operations in the identification of former industrial sites, it is crucial that clear metrics and criteria for target areas and site selection are cooperatively developed and established early in the intermediaries creation. With the information gleaned from these reflections by key members of the initial task force and the public, the SAADC can confidently and collaboratively establish the values and goals of the San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building, and the means by which it intends to reach them. In the exploration stage it is crucial to craft a vision with values that all involved parties sincerely believe in, and enthusiastically share that vision with others. The bigger the vision, the more room for individuals and organizations to imagine their part in it.

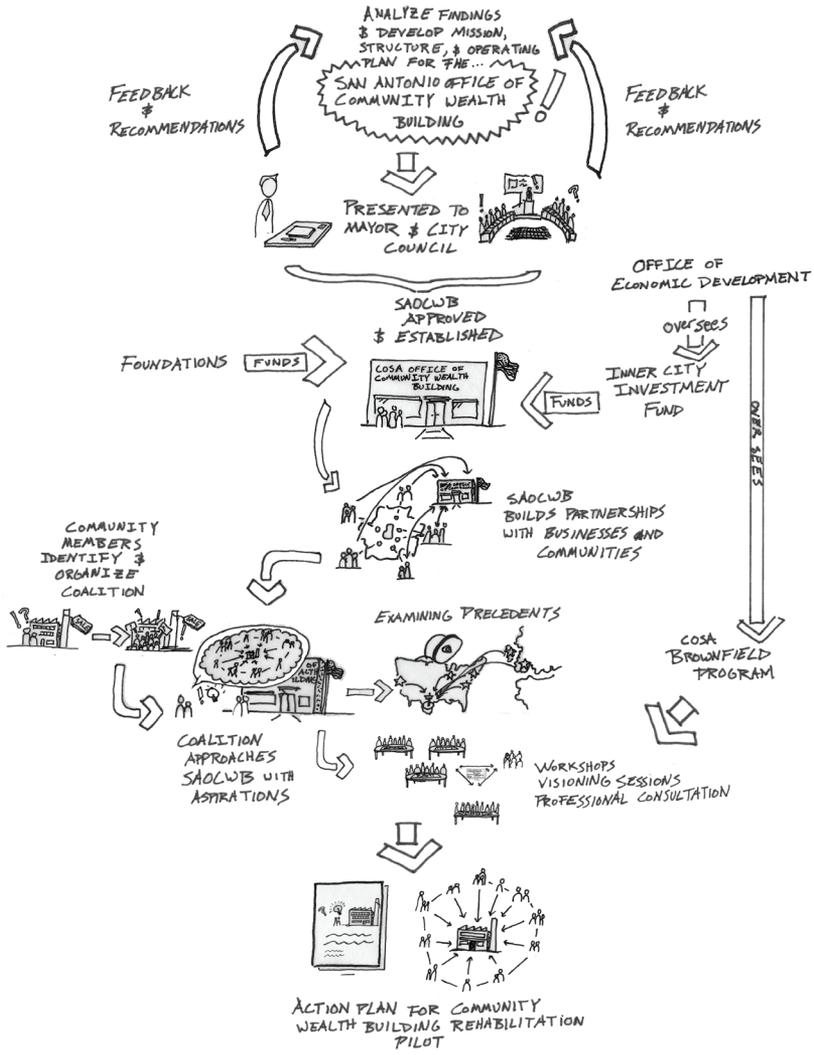
Taking the Richmond Anti-Poverty commission as a point of departure, the SAADC will culminate in a series of short-term and long-term recommendations to address displacement around downtown San Antonio. In the short-term the SAADC will produce a series of high-impact policy recommendations which, taken together, will have the potential to make a significant dent in the rate of displacement in the City and improve the quality of life for its most vulnerable residents. In the long-term, the commission will set out an action plan for the establishment of a San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building to address the roots of displacement.

## **Take-Off**

With the values, goals, and action plan for the SAOCWB identified and articulated, the SAADC will be ready to transition into a municipal office of community wealth building. There are two essential types of activity that must occur during the take-off of the new intermediary: the new system should get a critical mass of stakeholders, supporters, and affiliates, and it should develop a strategy to avoid competition with established systems. Intensive and separate outreach strategies directed at stakeholders, participants, and vulnerable publics are key to satisfying both of the necessary activities. Scenario workshops, charrettes, technological roadmapping, asset management, and back casting projects are all tools that have proven to be highly effective in this process.<sup>82</sup> A distinct but equally intensive engagement should be implemented internally within municipal offices to identify gaps or overlaps in service and to avoid competition for resources between departments. This internal engagement can and should serve as a springboard from which overdue and necessary restructurings and realignments can begin to take place, helping local government become more effective, efficient, and prepared for the future. The

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82 Guy, Marvin, et al. 2012, pp 42-55



Take-Off

co-production of tangible outcomes during the take-off phase is key, and will demonstrate capability and visible indications of success and progress toward addressing displacement. These visible outcomes, in combination with an ongoing and intensive public outreach effort, will work to engage and attract more users and partners to the initiative.

Take-off is also the phase in which initial operating logistics, funding, and hierarchies are made clear. I use the word initial here intentionally, as feedback mechanisms established in the exploration phase of development will allow for periodic consideration and restructuring as is demonstrated necessary. The new community wealth building office could be positioned under the Office of Economic Development, and funded at its onset by a combination of the \$2 million Inner City Incentive Fund and foundational investment. The Inner City Incentive Fund already oversees and financing the city's Brownfield Program. Under the Brownfield Program, the City provides free or low cost environmental assessments to facilitate the redevelopment of sites with potential environmental contamination. Subject to funding availability, the program can cover the entire cost of environmental site assessments and cleanup planning.<sup>83</sup>

If one of the objectives of a new office of community wealth building is to facilitate the transition of former industrial sites into hubs and support systems for existing local businesses, institutions, and residents, a close proximity to the Brownfield Program and the office of Economic Development will be crucial. Using the Richmond Office of Community Wealth Building as a reference in terms of operating cost, the ROCWB has an operating budget of \$2,101,414 for FY 2018, including \$1.5 million for workforce development and \$95,000 for social enterprise initiatives.<sup>84</sup> A similar figure devoted to community wealth building in San Antonio would be met with immediate and substantial success in fighting displacement and supporting local businesses and institutions through the utilization of former industrial sites and other suitable locations. .

## **Embedding and Stabilization**

The embedding process that follows take-off is centered around the alignment of perspectives, activities, and options at play. The organizing of strategic workshops, supported by the expertise and practices of engaged professionals, is central to the embedding process.<sup>85</sup> This outreach should emphasize the fact that what is being fundamentally offered is the possibility of being involved in a movement to change the way local economies and relationships with local decision making

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<sup>83</sup> City of San Antonio, TX. Fiscal Year 2018 Adopted Operating and Capital Budget. p. 78

<sup>84</sup> City of Richmond, VA. "2018 Adopted Annual Fiscal Plan". 2018. [http://www.richmondgov.com/Budget/documents/BiennialPlans/2018\\_AdoptedAnnualFiscalPlan.pdf](http://www.richmondgov.com/Budget/documents/BiennialPlans/2018_AdoptedAnnualFiscalPlan.pdf)

<sup>85</sup> Guy, Marvin, et al. 2012, pp 42-55

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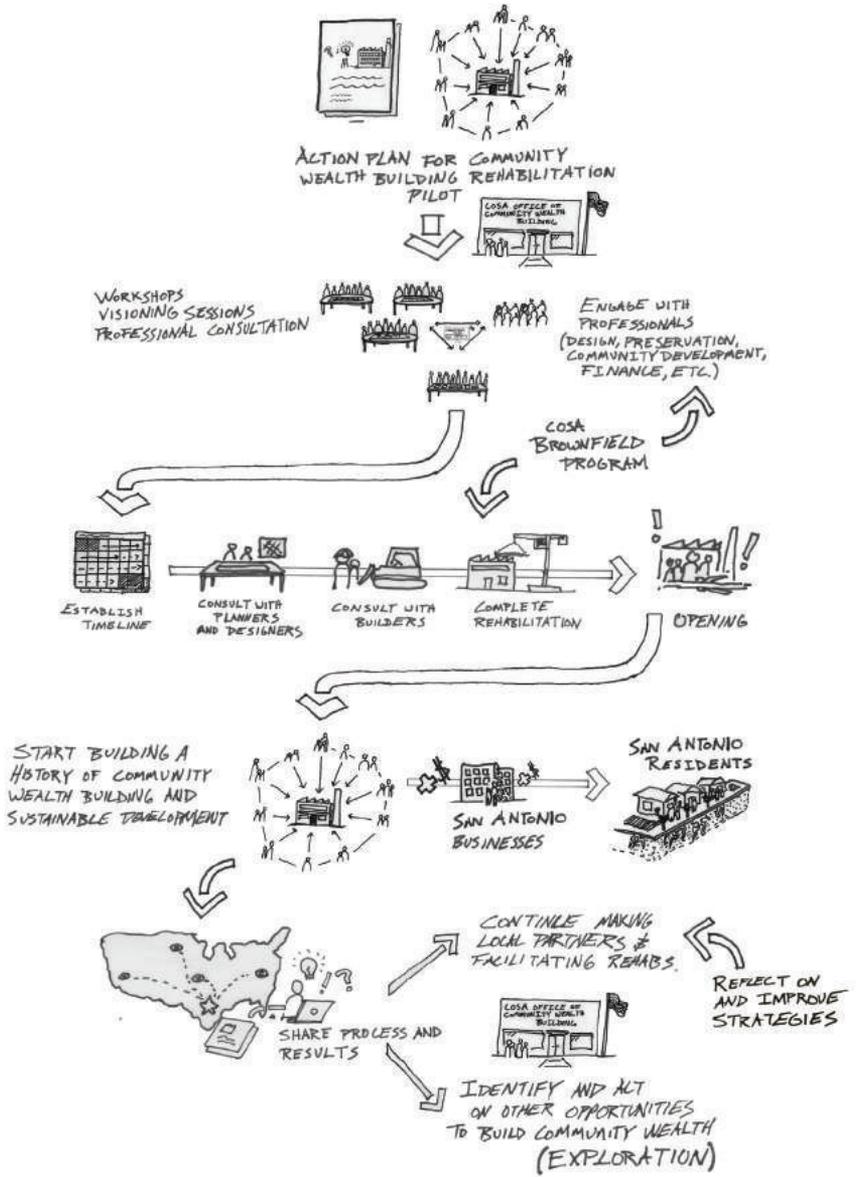
bodies works. In the embedding and stabilization phases, continuous reinvestment in outreach and the spread of knowledge is key to building the critical mass of participants and partners necessary for ongoing success. Engaged professionals in the context of this outreach process refers to external consultants, including experts in the fields of engagement design and facilitation, finance, historical preservation, land use and planning, infrastructural development, economic development, and community organizing. Being proactive in seeking advice and expertise from these professionals will enable the development of a more solid operating plan and facilitate access to additional investment streams, in addition to enriching the design and programming process and building capacity for future partnerships along the way. These workshops should be targeted at a more specific audience: the partners, affiliates, and municipal agencies directly involved in the management and operation of the intermediary. It is within this phase of entrenchment that feedback mechanisms are cooperatively established, codified, and integrated into decision making systems. This codification works to improve internal and external transparency and ensures that the capacity for reflection and readjustment is built and operating from the intermediary's start.

Examining some of the initiatives and alliances established by the ROCWB in its first years of operation demonstrate the ability of an issue-focused strategic intermediary to entrench itself within existing economic and social networks. These alliances range from partnering with Capital One and the United Way to launch the Center for Workforce Innovation, partnering with Richmond Public Schools, Public Libraries and the Kellogg Foundation to launch the RVA Reads book program, and partnership with the Greater Richmond Transit Company and the Richmond Affordable Housing Trust to launch the Pulse Bus Rapid Transit system.<sup>86</sup> Most recently, the ROCWB has enlisted the services of a peer-peer community system development firm to build community wealth through the support of existing businesses with local investment from Richmond residents, foundations, and private businesses. These innovative and locally sourced initiatives and partnerships speak to the significance, success, and potential of such an office to address critical issues at their root and to build new support networks by building capacity within municipal government and utilizing existing local systems and assets.

By forming similar partnerships with local businesses, foundations, and municipal offices, the SAOCWB has the potential to help local businesses, residents, and institutions prepare for their futures in the changing downtown social and economic ecologies. In forming these partnerships the City would be creating an ecology that simultaneously builds from existing assets, including former industrial sites and existing businesses and institutions, and works to

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86 City of Richmond, VA. "Office of Community Wealth Building Year One Annual Report"

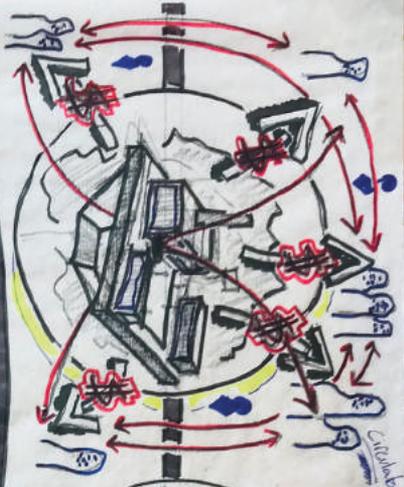


Embedding and Stabilization

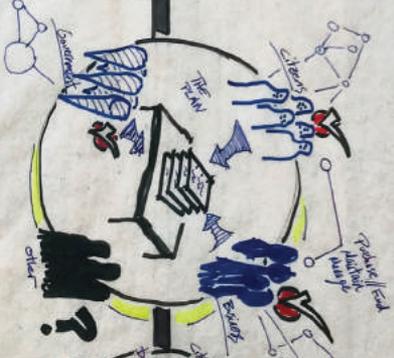
transition the City out of an ecology of enclave production as means of economic expansion. This process of ecologically centered economic growth would also serve as a platform to unite and align the existing and ongoing efforts of many groups already working toward building equitable and sustainable growth systems in the City.

Following the establishment and entrenchment of new alliances, programs, and communication networks, new routes need to be explored that fall beyond the scope of the newly established system. The stabilization process that explores these routes is ongoing, and should be designed to identify new opportunities or issues that have been made visible or were created by the intermediary. In this way, the phases of exploration, take-off, embedding, and stabilization are not linear, as are most municipal initiatives, but are cyclical and ongoing. This recurring system of engagement, action, and reflection will allow the responsiveness and capability necessary in San Antonio's dynamic and transforming economic and political landscape.

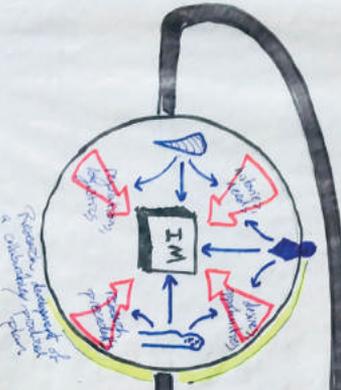
Imagine turning a bicycle upside down and spinning one of the wheels as fast as possible with your hands. In the beginning big, powerful movements are necessary--you use much of your upper body to get it started. As the wheel gains momentum, it takes less and less energy of the body to maintain that speed. Soon, the wheel is spinning very fast, requiring only brief and calculated pushes to keep it at top speed. In this metaphor the wheel is the proposed system to address displacement at its root. The body moving the wheel, the new urban intermediary, is the SAADC. The big and powerful initial movements, the actions that get the wheel turning, are the exploration and take-off phases outlined above and the small, calculated adjustments to maintain speed are the embedding and stabilization phases.



**Duration**  
 activity  
 aimed to assist in the creation of a network of people who are spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area.



**Interlocking**  
 This is like a network of people who are spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area. The network is spread in a wide area.



**IM**  
 Reason, treatment of a community problem.



**IM**  
 we could... it would...  
 we could... it would...  
 we could... it would...

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## Conclusions

People have always come to San Antonio to see things that are not found anywhere else. The objects of this attention has shifted from municipal scale infrastructure projects and historical icons, like the Riverwalk or the Alamo, to pinpointed enclaves that together form a network of creative-class and cultural tourism attracting total environments in the shells of former industrial facilities. This report has worked to demonstrate that these enclaves, coupled with the policies and growth agendas of the “Decade of Downtown” that make them possible, are actively displacing existing populations and are creating an increasingly divided city. Given the fact that San Antonio is already one of the most economically segregated cities in the country, this pattern of municipality facilitated property development and infrastructure investment must be recognized as short-term strategy for economic growth with devastating long-term effects on the communities within their reach. Downtown neighborhoods are changing and they will continue to change, regardless of enclave rehabilitation projects. But while there are many factors that affect neighborhood change, I argue that the current pattern of enclave-style rehabilitation projects is working to transform vulnerable neighborhoods at a rapid and unmanageable rate.

Due to their siting along the city’s earliest economic arteries, which in turn acted as some of the first and most long-lasting boundaries between communities and histories in San Antonio, the first generation of rehabilitated industrial sites occupied a unique position as intermediaries between the two “sides of the tracks (or river in San Antonio’s case).” These “pilot” projects provided the proof of concept that has encouraged similar development strategies totally separated from the hydrological and transportation arteries tied with the first generation. I frame this new generation of rehabilitation projects as secessionary enclaves that exist simultaneously within and against the economic, social, and cultural systems that support the neighborhoods they enter into. Comparing recently released data on the neighborhoods experiencing the fastest change, the major incentive and abatement zones associated with the “Decade of Downtown” strategy for economic growth, and the locations of selected existing or proposed high-end rehabilitation projects, I have argued that former industrial sites are the particular geographies where major private investment meets municipal growth policy to form enclaves within the city’s most vulnerable neighborhoods. This pattern of enclave development is actively displacing existing residents, businesses, and institutions through property value and tax increases, rate-hikes in the incentive and abatement zones to offset lost tax revenue, and fracturing and transforming the economic, cultural, and social networks that underpin any community.

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Building from the momentum gained in the current and ongoing Mayor' Task Force on Housing, I propose that an "urban intermediary", what I have imagined as the San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission" (SAADC), be established to investigate and address the particular phenomenon of high-end rehabilitation projects in the city's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Taking the Richmond Anti-Poverty commission as a point of departure, the SAADC will culminate in a series of short-term and long-term recommendations and action plans to address displacement around downtown San Antonio. In the short-term the SAADC will produce a series of high-impact policy recommendations which, taken together, will have the potential to make a significant dent in the rate of displacement in the City and improve the quality of life for its most vulnerable residents. In the long-term, the commission will set out an action plan for the establishment of a San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building to address the roots of displacement.

Drawing from contemporary theory and precedent examples on the role of strategic intermediaries as transition managers in changing urban ecosystems, I outline a set of criteria and tools to build a new intermediary system to address displacement at its root. I frame this intermediary not as an object or singular body, but as a managed and dynamic network of relationships and revenue streams that works to transform former industrial sites into hubs of community-oriented business, social, and cultural life by aligning and bundling existing businesses and institutions toward a new ecology of community wealth building. Moving forward, a comprehensive research and action plan will require first the restructuring of municipal capacity, and second intensive engagement with professionals from a range of disciplines. In the meantime, the four phase creation framework I outline can serve as a conceptual guide for understanding the objectives and opportunities of the intermediary building stages.

Mayor Ron Nirenberg opened the 2018 State of the City Address saying, "Big ideas, bold ideas are what move our city forward. Big ideas are San Antonio's legacy, and it is time to put more big ideas into action."<sup>87</sup> The goal of this report has been to identify and describe what I identify to be a pressing and particular problem in San Antonio, and a big idea to address it. I believe the timing could not be better for the execution of such an idea. As San Antonio moves toward becoming a top ten economy in the country, it should also work to set a national and international precedent for equitable and ecologically sustainable growth. My hope is that the observations and recommendations presented in this reading, based on an analysis of existing literature regarding neighborhood vulnerability, interviews and conversations with professionals working in the fields of design and community development, engagement with major theoretical texts, and an investigation of existing and future rehabilitation projects, will serve

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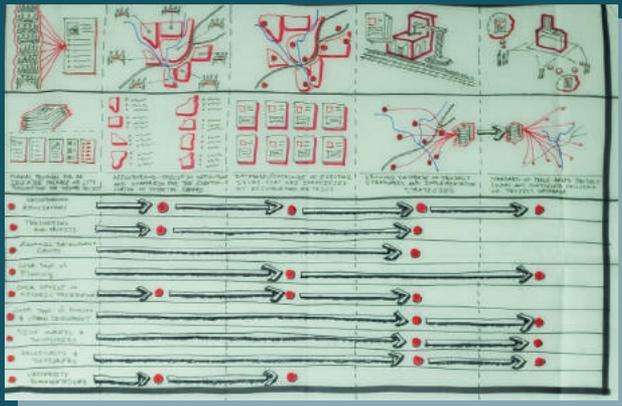
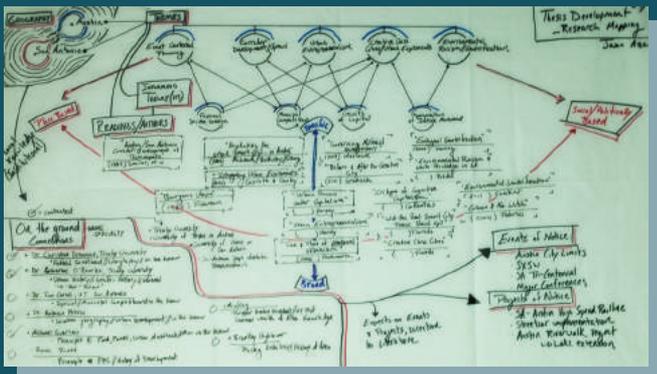
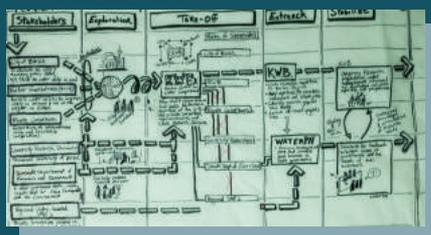
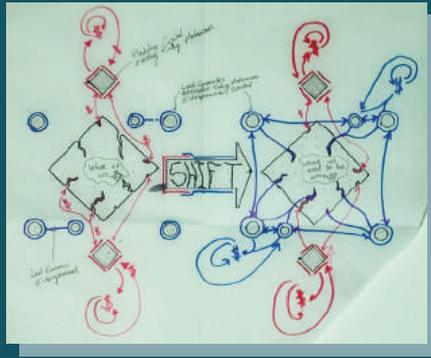
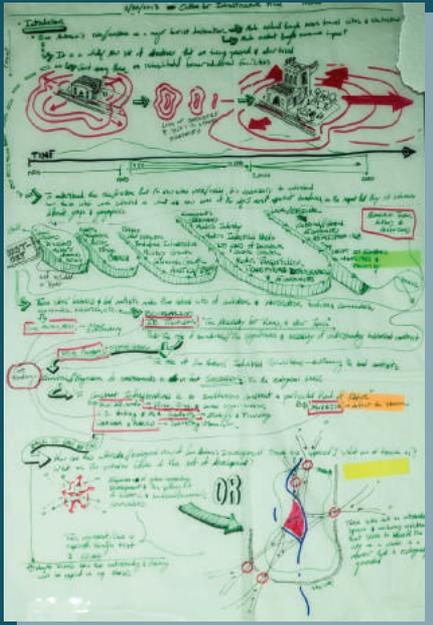
87 Nirenberg, 2018

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as a springboard to generate discussion and acknowledgment around the issue. I argue that a forward thinking and ecological approach to rehabilitation would particularly benefit the residents who have suffered the economic and health consequences of living near blighted buildings and contaminated lands. The unique geographies and architectural configurations of former industrial sites, currently used to fast-track “Decade of Downtown” style development, ought to serve as not only great new centers of activity, culture, and business development, but should acknowledge through implementation and design the layered histories, geographies, triumphs, and struggles of the local communities that they have the potential to anchor and support. I believe that the formation of the San Antonio Anti-Displacement Commission, and the subsequent establishment of the San Antonio Office of Community Wealth Building, is a viable and exciting path toward this goal.





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**Primary Advisor:**

William Morrish, Professor of Urban Ecologies at Parsons School of Design

**Secondary Advisors:**

- David Lopez Garcia, PhD Candidate in Public and Urban Policy at the New School
- Miguel Robles Duran, Associate Professor of Urbanism at Parsons School of Design
- Miodrag Mitrasinovic, Associate Professor of Architecture and Urbanism at Parsons School of Design

**Contributors:**

- Ana Esparza, Special Assistant to the Executive Director at the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders (NALCAB). (San Antonio)
- Marcella Reyes, Program Assistant for Equitable Neighborhood Development at NALCAB (San Antonio)
- Brett Sechrest, CEO/Senior Interpreter at Pathways2Ownership and FuelingMain
- Michael Guarino, Former Principal at Ford, Powell & Carson Architects (San Antonio), President of the King William Neighborhood Association (downtown San Antonio), Board Member of the San Antonio Historic Design and Review Commission
- Kathryn O'Rourke, Professor of Art History at Trinity University (San Antonio), Secretary of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vice-chair of the State Board of Review of the Texas Historical Commission.
- Christine Drennon, Director of Urban Studies at Trinity University, Project Manager for the "Trinity Project" -- one of the early efforts that led to the creation of a Promise Neighborhood Grant in Eastside San Antonio
- Brantley Hightower, AIA, LEED AP, Founding Partner at HiWorks Architecture (San Antonio)
- Margaret Sledge, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, Project Architect at Lake|Flato Architects (San Antonio)
- Jenness Gough, Marketing and Communications Coordinator at VelocityTX (San Antonio)
- Kiersten Nash, Founder of Public Works Collaborative, Professor of Design Methods Parsons MS Design and Urban Ecologies
- Avva Bassiri-Gharb, Asset Valuation Specialist



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# **Industrious Intermediaries**

**Displacement, Community Wealth Building, and  
Industrial Rehabilitation in San Antonio, TX**