Assessing Smart Growth in San Antonio, Texas

by

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Abstract

Urban sprawl is a negative condition that many of the cities throughout the United States face. Sprawl wastes resources, has adverse effects on the environment, and leads to degradations of parts of a city. Smart Growth is an answer to controlling and managing this growth and sprawl. The reviewed scholarly literature lends insight to the ideal aspects of Smart Growth.

This research will focus on examining San Antonio, Texas, and its explosion of growth over the last few decades, and how the City has managed this growth. City and other local government documents were observed as well as direct observation of certain aspects of Smart Growth within the City.

The observed documents and areas within the City suggest that the City of San Antonio is right on track with some aspects of the ideal Smart Growth plan, but its lacking in other areas of the ideal. The recommendations should assist the City in attaining a higher level of Smart Growth compliance.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Urban sprawl is a condition that affects many of the medium to large cities in the United States, and has been attributed to the lose of two million acres of fields, forests, and farms a year (Ross-Flanigan 2003, 162). Sprawl is the growth of low-density, residential developments along outer city boundaries. According to Schmidt (2004, 623), sprawl is the outcome of four related factors: low residential density; a poor mix of homes, jobs and services; limited activity centers and downtown areas; and limited options for walking or biking. Many times sprawl is unplanned, unregulated, and leads to a great waste of resources, both economically and environmentally. Peiser (1989, 183) states that, "urban sprawl leads to inefficiencies and costly patterns of development…low density urbanization equals an increase in transportation costs, consumes excessive land, and adds to the cost of providing utilities".

Sprawl is characterized by pockets of development away from the city's Central Business District, and with gaps of land in-between. The three most common types of sprawl include leapfrog development, commercial strip development, and large expanses of low density or single-use development. Leapfrog sprawl is characterized by Heim (2001, 45), as the act of developers skipping over properties to obtain tracts of land further out and thus leave vacant tracts wasted behind. Communities must then provide utilities to the patches of development. This causes redundant infrastructure that is then underutilized. Meredith (2003, 454) notes that sprawl increases the need for services to areas that do not currently have service and requires more miles of road, water pipes, sewer lines, and other infrastructure.

Sprawl has been attributed to upper and middle-income households leaving cities for what they consider improved living conditions. Katz (2000, 67) noted that, "from 1989 to 1996, 7.4 million upper and middle income households left cities for suburbs, while only 3.7 million moved from suburb to city." Rybczynski and Linneman (1999, 35) found that 26 of the 77 largest cities in the United States had shrinking populations; all the while the overall population for the United States was increasing. They attributed this to middle-income residents leaving the city for the suburbs. With this type of deficit of people, many cities start to lose an important tax base, which then leads to neighborhood and downtown degradation. This takes a negative toll on a municipality's ability to raise operating revenue through taxes. As people shift outwards towards the suburbs, so does the tax base. As a municipality tries to recover this tax base, it must provide infrastructure (i.e. sewer, water, police, and fire) to these areas. The cities often have become strained to provide services to these new areas, all the while maintaining service to the old and declining areas without the additional tax revenue. Ultimately, the city's expense in infrastructure has expanded while its tax revenue has remained stagnant. Speir and Stephenson (2002) contend that the more dispersed the development, the more costly it is to provide city services. Many governments and organizations have identified the problem of urban sprawl, and have developed theories and practices to combat it. One of these theories is "Smart Growth". According to the Environmental Protection Agency website, "Smart growth is about being good stewards of our communities and of our rural lands, parks, and forests. It is about ensuring that the best of the past is preserved, while creating new communities that are attractive, vital, and enduring."

Purpose

The purpose of this research is two fold. The first purpose is to review the literature on smart growth programs across the United States in order to develop an ideal model of smart growth policies. The second purpose is to gauge the City of San Antonio's recent development practices against this practical ideal model. Through the results we will see how well San Antonio is handling managing its growth, and make any recommendations for changes. The findings should assist city planners and managers in developing and leading their smart growth programs.

Chapter Summaries

Chapter II reviews the scholarly literature and develops the practical ideal type and modes for implementation. Chapter III describes the City of San Antonio, its demographics, and its current growth situation. Chapter IV provides the research methodology for this project. Chapter V presents the results of the document analysis and direct observation of the City of San Antonio's growth policies. Chapter VI summarizes the findings and offers suggested future policies for the City of San Antonio.

Chapter II: Literature Review: Modern Smart Growth Programs

The purpose of this chapter is to review components of various smart growth (new urbanism) literature. Through this process of review, this chapter will develop an ideal model of smart growth for controlling urban sprawl.

Limiting Growth

It should be noted that, "anti-sprawl is not anti-growth, the question is not whether our communities will grow, but how they grow" (Moe 1995, 7). As populations continue to grow, more homes and spaces will be needed. Due to cheaper land and fewer restrictions, developers tend to build outside of the city and thus keep facilitating sprawl. However, cities tend to have many options to help control this sprawl. These options, though, can be difficult to enact and may take many years, even decades to show signs of progress. The theory of Smart Growth as described by Arigoni (2001, 9) is, "[smart growth] as a package, provides better housing, transportation, economic expansion, and environmental outcomes than do traditional approaches to development". These measures must be undertaken and administrators must move to redevelop preexisting space into an attractive, livable area for all.

Growing Existing Communities (Urban Revitalization)

City downtowns and existing neighborhoods already contain established infrastructure and transportation modes to facilitate life. A first major project is to make the housing and neighborhoods of existing areas attractive. Simply put by Schmidt

(2004, 625), smart growth seeks to make existing communities places that people want to live. Arigoni (2001, 15) states, "Housing acts as the figurative and literal building block for communities in rural, suburban, and urban areas. It affects how we interact with our neighbors whether across a shared fence or in the building lobby, influencing the social networks and social capital that constitute the community fabric." To create this community fabric, there is a need for more compact and larger urban groupings covering less area with more urban amenities (Kohn 1968, 186). The city of Baltimore, Maryland, for example, has developed "Maryland Smart Sites". According to its website, smart sites are underutilized, abandoned, or idle sites in designated growth areas. The city then turns these "brownfields"[1] and "grayfields"[2] into prime redeveloped neighborhoods. This in-turn attracts not only people back from the sprawl areas, but retains those people who were thinking of moving out from the city. The state of New Jersey has eased renovation codes for existing buildings located in struggling areas. These "smart codes" level the playing field of existing renovation construction as compared to new construction (Katz 2002, 19). City policies must also direct funds towards pre-established communities. This redirection of funds will help to reduce fiscal disparities, and save budgets by not having to greatly expand transportation and utility services (Katz 2002, 18-19). One of the greatest expenses to a city is providing new utility infrastructure to sprawling areas, while existing infrastructure sits underutilized.

Density Through Growth Boundaries and Purchasing Greenspace

A smart growth plan calls for creating a higher density of people. Density is the number of people living in a certain area, typically measured in square miles. A prime

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[1] According to the EPA, "brownfields" are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.

[2] Grayfeilds are considered to be a blighted or obsolete building sitting on land that may not necessarily be contaminated.

example, of density, is an apartment building on one acre of land with 100 units as compared to an acre of land in the suburbs occupied by only two single-family homes. Planners can utilize urban growth boundaries to stymie growth and force a more dense development. According to Schmidt (2004, 625), the city of Portland, Oregon established an " urban growth boundary " in 1980. This boundary tightly limited development in outlying areas, and forced development to be more upwards rather than outwards. Schmidt quotes a spokesperson for the City of Portland Office of Transportation, "Because of the urban growth boundary, Portland has successfully assimilated a sharply rising population without encroaching on its valuable land resources. We make solid investments to create lively districts and neighborhoods that people are attracted to." (Schmidt 2004, 625). There should be no infrastructure (i.e. water lines, sewer lines, other utilities, and schools) provided outside of the boundaries (Daniels 2001, 232). Gurwitt (2000, 35) backs this with, "The hand that controls boundaries also controls the location, timing, and cost of the public facilities and services upon which private development depends". The boundary tool gives cities an upper hand in developing more dense area. This directed growth within a set boundary could facilitate in-fill and multi-family dwellings. Growth boundaries are flexible and can be expanded as population and development growth dictates (Daniels 2001, 232). This change in philosophy goes from "unplanned sprawl" into "phased growth" (Daniels 2001, 232).

Key to any boundary program is the purchasing of greenspace. Greenspace is considered to be any undeveloped land, more specifically, undeveloped land bordering a city. Through the purchasing of development rights, local governments can limit the amount of potential growth around their city (Daniels 2001, 232). Simply put by Leo et

al. (1998, 196), "the farmer retains the right to sell or transfer the land; it remains subject to the deed restriction, precluding any future development or activities that may reduce its agricultural viability". This benefits the city threefold; by buying these rights no developer can make any changes to this land. This keeps new sprawling neighborhoods from being created. Second, buying only the development rights is much cheaper monetarily and liability wise on a city than is purchasing the entire property (Daniels 2001, 235). Third, it environmentally preserves forests, farmland, and water tables (Katz 2002, 18-19). Cash strapped cities have different options on obtaining the funds to buy greenspace. One such way is to issue bonds specifically for the purchase of greenspace (Katz 2002, 18). Meredith (2003, 450) notes that, "public awareness has increased, many localities and states have initiated legislation to combat the problems associated with urban sprawl...allocating more than $7.5 billion of additional state and local spending for sprawl related issues". According to Daniels (2001, 233), purchasing developmental rights will produce a growth boundary that will assist in compelling growth within only certain planned directions. Again, here the city planners can facilitate their policies by purchasing certain developmental rights and forcing expansion only where they see feasible.

Affordable Housing

To draw people into an area, housing must be affordable and attractive. Downs (2003, 1) describes how to accomplish affordable housing, for producing cheap housing

units for low-income families, yet maintaining a quality to meet middle-class standards. He suggests that this is achieved through modifying building codes[3], speeding up the development process, and raising residential densities. Arigoni (2001, 9-10) offers the following criteria to provide for affordable housing:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing by loosening restrictions against low-cost housing such as townhouses, live-work spaces, and accessory dwelling units.

- Provide more scattered affordable units and promote mixed-income neighborhoods.

- Create incentives for regional cooperation on affordable housing.

Providing tax incentives along with looser restrictions creates a more attractive environment for developers. These more affordable homes, closer to where people work and shop, help to entice them from moving to the suburbs and contributing to the sprawl. Katz (2002, 22) suggests accomplishing this by "growing counties should consider adopting inclusionary zoning ordinances that require a portion of all major subdivision developments to be affordable to low and moderate income renters". According to Meredith (2003, 480) Montgomery County, Maryland uses a mandate and reward system by requiring housing projects of more than 50 units to provide at least 15% of them as low- to moderate-income housing.

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[3] Downs suggests here that typical building codes be modified to be less restrictive for these developments.

New Urbanist Neighborhood

Though working to curtail growth, smart growth advocates realize that some growth is inevitable. To handle the pressures of new growth, planners have developed what is being hailed as the ideal neighborhood. A New Urbanist Neighborhood attempts to solve the problems of sprawl by adhering to four guiding principals: diversity, pedestrian orientation, accessible public spaces and community institutions, and a celebration of unique local elements (Meredith 2003, 478). A New Urbanist Neighborhood attempts to solve the problems of sprawl before they even have a chance to happen. The idea of mixed-use dictates the majority of the New Urbanist philosophy. These developments are typically monocentric and allow people to shop, work, and interact within the community without ever needing a car (Meredith 2003, 479).

Design

The New Urbanist community stresses pedestrian and transit orientation. Their design revolves around a five minute walk by using the "critical limiting factor" of a quarter-mile from the neighborhood center to any part of its edge (Meredith 2003, 480). In the New Urbanist design, pedestrian traffic comes first. The idea of mixed land use is an important factor for this design. New Urbanists want residents to be able to walk from their house to the grocery store, to the flower shop, to the café, to the park, and back home again. According to Meredith (2003, 481) the subject of the pedestrian predominates in the New Urbanist ideas for movement, "New Urbanists propose narrower travel lanes to slow traffic, street landmarks to orient pedestrians, large sidewalks to encourage pedestrian activity and outdoor seating, on-street parking to create a buffer between automobile and pedestrian traffic, and intersections that allow for

both pedestrian and vehicular movement". This quick "on foot" accessibility is in line

with Peiser's (1989, 203) idea that greater accessibility begets a higher density of people.

The New Urbanist model of increased accessibility also tries to attack the problem that

transportation burden disproportionately affects the poor and working poor (Katz 2002,

12). The idea here again is to not provide parking lots, and to steer people towards

having to use public transportation or to walk. The New Urbanist Neighborhood strives

to limit the fossil fueled powered options for movement all the while increasing the

"green options"[4].

The New Urbanist design also has maximum length business building setbacks.

This produces a kind of in your face design that invites pedestrians to come in. Another

function of New Urbanist neighborhoods is to build the community around public spaces.

At the center of any New Urbanist neighborhood are civic centers, government buildings,

post offices, libraries, and others (Meredith 2003, 481). The New Urbanist model also

encourages the promotion of a park within two blocks of any residence. This idea is to

provide a place for community interaction and thus evoke pride and participation in

public life.

Another piece to the New Urbanist neighborhood is the evocation of public pride.

This can be obtained as Meredith (2003, 482) states by celebrating unique local elements

such as local history, climate, ecology, and building practice. New Urbanists suggest

designing around natural landscapes to create distinct landmarks, or combining local

elements with building practices to create a distinct feel for each community. The New

Urbanist design also provides the idea of mixed-housing. According to Ross-Flanigan

(2003, 162) the New Urbanist design provides for different housing types. Having

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[4] Green options, in this regard, comprise walking, biking, or taking some form of mass transportation. The New Urbanist design depends greatly on removing the peoples' dependency on the automobile.

apartments, row houses, and detached homes all occupying the same neighborhood encourages cross-class understanding and long-term residency. The New Urbanist idea is to create a community much like the "main street" design that was indicative of the early to mid nineteen hundred American towns.

Traditional Neighborhood Development

New Urbanists have even taken their agenda a step beyond just detailed neighborhood planning. To facilitate the New Urbanist neighborhood model, they advocate the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) Ordinance. There is no single model for a Traditional Neighborhood Development, but a certain set of principals guide the planners for TND. Here, the New Urbanists are fulfilling their destiny just as Dear and Flusty (1998, 60) describe, "the assumption that urbanism is made possible by the exercise of instrumental control over both human and nonhuman ecologies". According to Meredith (2003, 485) the Ordinance sets forth specific zoning requirements to fill the objectives of a New Urbanist neighborhood. The Ordinance is so detailed that it emphasizes pedestrian orientation through provisions that include size limitations on neighborhoods and block lengths. It also includes a requirement for street lamp intervals, minimum sidewalk widths, and maximum setback allowances (Meredith 2003, 485). There is even a minimum portion of land that must be set aside for park space, child-care facilities, and a one-acre central square that can be no farther than two thousand feet from any edge of the neighborhood. In Richmond, Virginia, a program called Neighborhood's in Bloom is responsible for taking preexisting rundown neighborhoods and turning them into New Urbanist neighborhoods (Arigoni 2001, 31). This program identifies neighborhoods with an abundance of vacant properties, abandoned buildings, and a

declining quality of life. Through code enforcement and revitalization loans, the city was able to facilitate New Urbanist design by local citizens. Results in these neighborhoods yielded a 3.9% increase in aggregate assessed property values, a reduction in violent crime by 37%, and a reduction of 19% in property crimes (Arigoni 2001, 31). Another method for designing Traditional Neighborhood Development can be found in the Roxbury Neighborhood in Boston, Massachusetts. Here, according to Jennings (2004, 20), the Boston Redevelopment Authority tasked with redesigning and revitalizing the Roxbury neighborhood relied heavily upon the Roxbury Neighborhood Council. The council served not only as the representative body of the neighborhood to the city, but also allowed many of the sub-neighborhoods within Roxbury to project their most impressive needs. "The plan would reflect the ideas of residents regarding relationships between zoning and physical space and strategies for enhancing the social and economic fabric of the neighborhood and its connections with other neighborhoods and the city" (Jennings 2004, 20). With the Roxbury model, Traditional Neighborhood Development comprises a blend of the New Urbanist design and the greatest concerns of the residents of the neighborhood.

Accessibility and Mobility

According to Katz (2002, 5) five in ten Americans live in the suburbs, this is up from three in ten in 1960. And of this half, much of the population drives many miles from home to work each day. This could be attributed to the fact that many cities have become polycentric. As Small and Song (1992, 891) explain, "employment and housing are distributed in a pattern that has many centers, not just one". The Environmental Protection Agency's website explains that after World War II the common practice was

to separate the different types of land uses (i.e. work places, shopping, and home). This separation increases the reliance upon driving and makes it difficult to walk or bike places. This no doubt clogs the nations roadways, consumes immense amounts of energy (oil and gasoline), and creates tons of pollutants each day. A major component to any smart growth plan is the increased accessibility and mobility of the citizenry. Building more roadways is part, but not the answer alone.

Transportation Options

Besides walking or biking (which will be discussed later in this chapter) cities must develop their public transportation systems and make them as accessible and attractive as possible to their citizenry. Most public mass transit systems are comprised of bus operations and some form of rail operation[5]. Pucher and Buehler (2003, 200) note other forms of transit, the paratransit[6]. This research will only focus on the main types of mass transit.

Accessibility of Mass Transit

The first concern for any mass transit system is its accessibility. Walking is the most important access mode to transit stops (Pucher and Buehler 2003, 202). If persons are unable to quickly and easily access transit stop points, they will choose other means of transportation, most commonly a car. This is true of bus stops and urban rail systems alike. According to Pucher and Buehler (2003, 202) and Horner and Grubesic (2001), a number of guidelines have been established for locating the park and ride aspect of rail

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[5] Most notably light-rail, heavy-rail, subway, elevated, or trolley systems.
[6] These include vanpools, car pools, taxis, and demand responsive dial-a-ride systems.

transit facilities and can be adapted for bus facilities as well. These criteria are as follows:

- Park-and-ride lots should be located on major transportation corridors served by roadways of major arterial or expressway standards.

- Facilities should be located so as to intercept motorists upstream of the heavier traffic congestion and should be in corridors with good roadway access directly to the facility.

- Access and egress should be quick and easy.

- Total transit travel time from the park and ride lot to the central business district should be less or equal to travel time by car.

- The park-and–ride facility should be no closer than five to six kilometers to the downtown, although there may be exceptions as a result of natural and man-made geographic barriers.

- Park-and-ride lots should be viewed not only as a transportation focal point, but also a community asset in terms of attractive station design, landscaping, and passenger security.

Enticing rider-ship is vital to a successful mass transit system. As Murray and Davis (2001, 501) state, the quality and regularity of service, travel-time from origin to destination, and employment or services that may be reached are key to establishing and maintaining a consistent rider-ship. Increasing the benefits of using mass transit also rely on the placement of the pick-up locations. Forecasts must be completed on using statistics for downtown employment rates and secondary markets should be determined using downtown-destined non-work trips or destinations with limited/costly parking such as sport arenas, airports, and universities (Horner and Grubesic 2001, 59). Pucher and

Buehler (2003, 221) also provide a blue print to accomplish a speedy, reliable, and frequent servicing transit system:

- Wide spacing between bus stops to increase operating speeds.

- Passenger loading platforms and curb extensions to ease bus reentry into traffic streams.

- Prepaid tickets and passes to expedite passenger boarding.

- Low-floor buses with wide, multiple doorways to speed loading and unloading.

- Transit priority in mixed traffic[7].

- Vehicle locater system to facilitate on-time service and provide real-time information to riders.

- Extensive light rail, metro, and suburban rail systems with exclusive rights-of-way.

Value-Added Service

While the pick-up and drop-off destinations and the efficiency at which the customer arrives to his/her desired location are important in a mass transit system, the little details also have a tremendous impact. To entice those riders from their automobiles to mass-transit, the "little things" must be addressed. Riders want safe, clean stops and conveyances. Transit fare and ticketing procedures can also affect rider-ship. Pucher and Buehler (2003, 205) state, "Fare technology has improved through the use of smart cards (with computer chips), magnetic-stripe fare cards, and proof-of-payment tickets (self ticketing). The diversification of fare offerings and more customer-friendly

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[7] This includes bus lanes, special turning provisions, and priority traffic signals.

ticketing have surely promoted greater transit usage". Nowhere is this more apparent than in New York City. According to Pucher and Buehler (2003, 205) when in 1997 New York City introduced it's discounted Metro Card, providing a variety of quick pay and discount options, rider-ship increased 30% with no other new services added. Transit systems must focus on these value-added services if they plan to entice a broad range of rider-ship. Again, Pucher and Buehler (2003, 221) offer their insight to improving the comfort, safety, and convenience of mass transit systems:

- Amenities at transit stops and stations[8].

- Clean, comfortable vehicles with knowledgeable, friendly drivers.

- Widespread ticket purchasing places accepting all forms of monetary payment.

- Extensive bike parking along with safe bike lanes leading to the transit stop.

- Uniform and simple fare structure.

- Wide variety of deeply discounted transit passes tailored to the riders needs.

- Real-time information at transit stops and onboard information screens.

- Fully integrated service network, with transit stops, schedules, and fares of different transit modes fully coordinated to ensure seamless transfer among modes and routes.

Mixed-Use

Already addressed above in the New Urbanist section is the theory of mixed-use planning. This thought of smart growth can remove persons totally from their vehicle and provides them with a majority of their travel necessities within walking distance.

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[8] This includes shelters, clocks, telephones, and various shops.

Mixed-use development allows people to shop, to work, and to interact with the community without needing a car (Meredith 2003, 479). Everything in mixed-use communities is under one quarter of a mile, well within the acceptable walking distance. For any needs beyond that, a mass-transit outlet is located within walking distance and is easily accessible.

Free Parking

Pucher and Buehler (2003, 219) find that all of the trips by car in the United States in 1990, over 95% benefited from free parking. Many countries other than the United States have discovered that if free parking places are removed, so then is the ease of traveling by car. This in turn forces people to rely more upon the mass transit system and less on their automobile. **Figure 2.1** references Pucher and Buehler's (2003, 219) findings about the number of available parking spaces, per 1000 jobs, in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Figure2.1: Number of Parking Spaces

Parking Spaces per 1000 Jobs
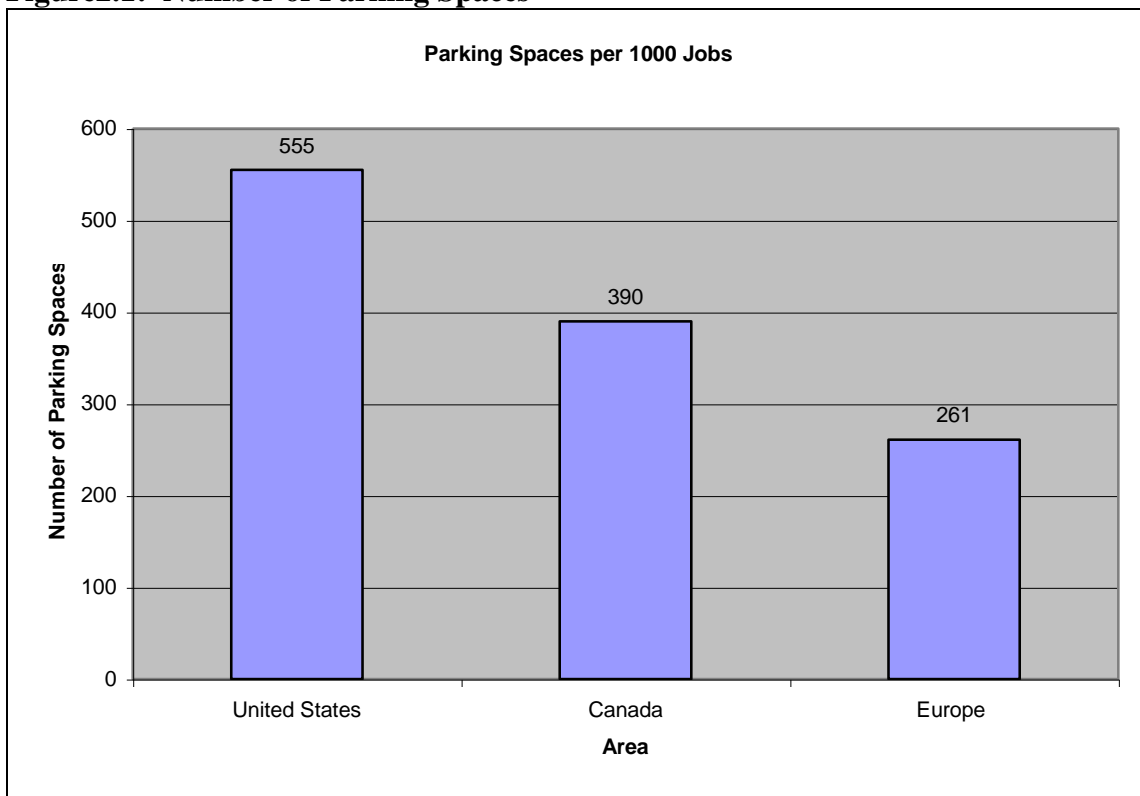
As shown above, the United States relies heavily upon public parking. The Europeans

have half the parking places than the Americans, and thus they have greater percentage of

rider-ship on their mass-transit system. According to Pucher and Buehler (2003, 219),

the Europeans accomplished this by sharply reducing the supply of on-street parking

spaces, greatly increasing parking rates, limiting parking to short term only, and reserving

parking for neighborhood parking only.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to develop a practical ideal model for gauging Smart Growth programs based on benchmarks established from a review of various sources of literature. The review of this literature yielded key elements to any successful Smart Growth program and a framework for developing a practical ideal type. **Table 2.1** details each of these categories and sub-categories and shows how each is linked to the literature.

Table 2.1: Summary of Conceptual Framework Linked to the Literature

Ideal Type Categories	Literature
Limiting Growth • Growing Existing Communities • Density Through Growth Boundaries • Purchasing Greenspace • Affordable Housing	Argoni 2001; Gurwitt 2000; Kohn 1968; City of Baltimore, Katz 2002; Daniels 2001; Leo, Beavis, Carver, and Turner 1998; Meredith 2003; Downs 2003; Environmental Protection Agency; Moe 1995; Schmidt 2004
New Urbanist Neighborhood • Design • Traditional Neighborhood Development	Meredith 2003; Peiser 1989; Katz 2002; Dear and Flusty 1998; Arigoni 2001; Heim 2001; Ewing 1979; Ross-Flanigan 2003; Jennings 2004
Accessibility and Mobility • Transportation Options • Accessibility of Mass Transit • Mixed-Use • Value Added Service • Free Parking	Katz 2002; Small and Song 1992; Environmental Protection Agency; Pucher and Buehler 2003; Bolgar and Morral 1996; Horner and Grubesic 2001; Murray and Davis; Meredith 2003; Katz 2000;

Chapter Summary

Some type of sprawl is affecting every medium to large size city in the United States. To combat this sprawl, city administrators and city planners must adopt some form of smart growth as discussed above. The commitment to a smart growth program must be 100% and must contain areas of urban revitalization, mixed-use neighborhoods,

denser developments, and more public oriented transit. Looking ahead to the next one hundred years, land will become a scarce commodity in many parts of the United States and populations will continue to rise. We must draw some form of sustainable living and continue to move towards that mark. Katz (2002, 28) best sums this up by saying that, "In many respects, smart growth is a movement whose time has come. The changing demographics of the country, the restructuring of the market economy, the rise of congestion, the backlash to excessive suburbanization- all support the desire for a different pattern of growth, a different ethos about growth, than the one that has dominated the American landscape since the end of the second world war".

The next chapter outlines the City of San Antonio's growing population, expanding borders, and current situation. It provides the ideal setting for demonstrating why Smart Growth programs are vital for guiding the growth of expanding cities.

Chapter III: City of San Antonio Setting

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a background for the City of San Antonio in regards to sprawl and development. This chapter will examine the City's current demographics, including the dynamic growth experienced over the past five to ten years, issues the City faces as a result of this rapid growth, and the city's structure in regards to managing growth.

City on the Grow

In the past, San Antonio was known as a sleepy community that depended heavily on its military installations and tourism. It was known as a city rich in its Texas history, culture, and downtown beauty. Located less than a half a days drive north of the Mexican/United States border, San Antonio is home to one of the busiest interstates in the United States. Along with Interstate 35, two other interstates as well, Interstate 37 and Interstate 10 serve San Antonio. Geographically, San Antonio has vast ranges of open space to it's south and west borders. These areas of wide-open Texas Hill Country contain not only beauty, but also the virgin undeveloped land.

Growing Population

The perceptions of San Antonio being a mid-sized, sleepy community has changed over the past couple decades. The modern day boom of San Antonio has been attributed to the relocation of the AT&T headquarters. In the early 1990's, AT&T moved its corporate headquarters to San Antonio and has recently been followed by a Toyota truck manufacturing plant, a National Security Agency headquarters, the corporate

headquarters for USAA, and demilitarized business moving into old military bases(like

KellyUSA). Like many of the cities spread across the southern part of the United States,

and especially Texas, San Antonio is experiencing an expanding population. According

to the U.S. Census Bureau, San Antonio has grown in population by 20.2% from 1990 to

2000. **Figure 3.1** demonstrates just how San Antonio compared in growth to other U.S.

cities during this same time period.

Figure 3.1: Comparison in % change in population from 1990-2000[9]

City	Percent Change
Austin	47.7%
Boston	5.5%
Dallas	31.5%
Detroit	5.2%
Philadelphia	3.6%
Portland	10.3%
Sacramento	21.5%
San Antonio	**20.2%**
San Diego	12.6%
San Francisco	8.0%

And the population boom shows little signs of slowing. According to the U.S. Census

Bureau, from 2000 to 2006 San Antonio grew by more than 13.2%. This is an increase

from 1,144,646 persons in 2000 to 1,296,682 in 2006. San Antonio has since become the

second largest city in Texas, behind Houston, and the seventh largest city in the United

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[9] Information from www.uscensusbereau.gov

States. 58% of San Antonio's population is Hispanic. San Antonio's poverty rate of 17.3% is slightly higher than the rest of the state of Texas's 15.4%. San Antonio also lags behind other Texas cities in median household income and higher education.

Areas of Growth

With the growing populations, it is inevitable that development will follow. In his 10 June 2006 *San Antonio Express News* article "No end in sight for San Antonio growth", Roy Bragg reports that there was a 27% increase in the number of new homes built in 2005 over 2004. He also found that real estate has become the second-largest industry in San Antonio, behind only the healthcare industry. In the 1990's, San Antonio experienced growth on the North and West sides of town. From 2000 to 2006, growth was concentrated even further out along these previous growth lines and also new growth beyond the existing border to the south. **Figure 3.2**, copied from San Antonio Planning Director Emil Moncivias's 2006 power point presentation titled "San Antonio Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities", shows the sprawling growth of San Antonio over the decades.

Figure 3.2: San Antonio Growth [10]
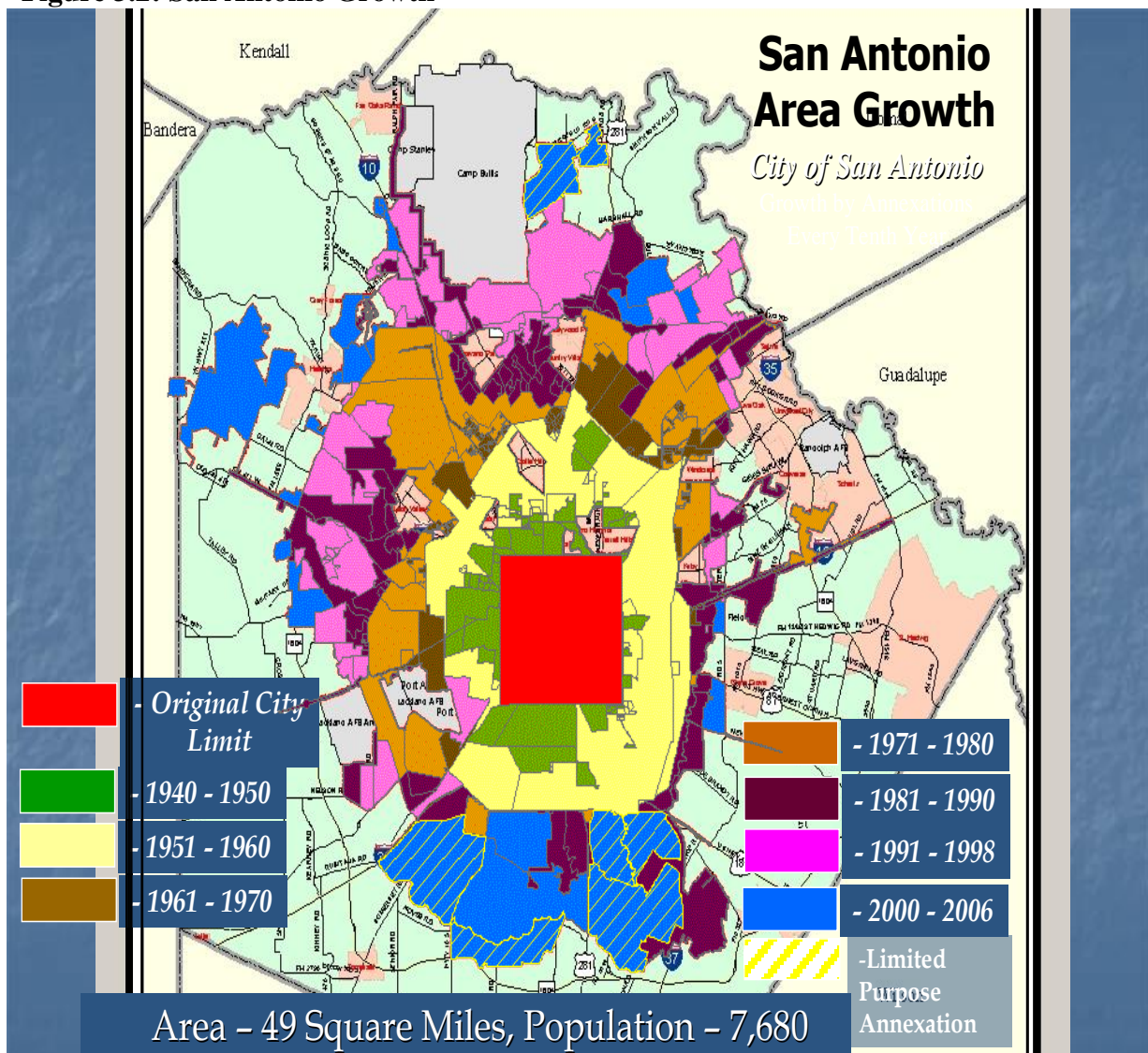
This map demonstrates the severity of growth and sprawl San Antonio has experienced over the years. As reported by the Brookings Institute (2003), "increasingly… San Antonio's households are settling in neighborhoods at the city's edge, while neighborhoods in the urban core depopulate amid fast growth citywide". The total square

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[10] Table 3.2 taken from City of San Antonio Planning Director Emil Moncivias's power point presentation San Antonio Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

miles that encompasses San Antonio has increased from 333 square miles in 1990 to 408 square miles in 2000. The City of San Antonio is facing the dilemma of how to incorporate this growing population into the city without expanding urban sprawl and contributing to conditions of urban decay in its downtown and older areas.

Government

The city of San Antonio has taken steps to manage its growth and develop plans to combat the ill effects of sprawl. This includes affordable and fair housing policies, revitalization programs, bond packages, metro-authority improvements, and an array of other programs.

Affordable and Fair Housing

Housing in San Antonio has been relatively cheap in comparison to large cities in Texas and the United States. In 2000, the median value of a home in Texas was $82,500, as compared to only $68,800 in San Antonio[11]. In 2007, the median value of a home in San Antonio increased to $96,300 and remained slightly above half of the national average. Even with lower housing costs, homeownership in San Antonio was below the Texas average, with homeownership in San Antonio at 58.1% compared to Texas at 63.8%[12]. To improve this situation, San Antonio has created multiple resources to assist its population. The Target 2000 Operating Support Collaborative is a partnership between the city, the Enterprise Foundation, and Fannie Mae. This partnership funds grants to non-profit, affordable housing providers to improve operations within the city.

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[11] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4865000.html

[12] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/48/4865000.html

Through an Incentive Scorecard System, the City can grade affordable housing developments based on a certain criteria and award waivers on water and sewer impact fees. The City has also established a Housing Trust to help revitalize owner-occupied housing. This Housing Trust can provide direct soft money to developments in the inner city and assists in delivering more affordable homes for purchase by low income and first time homebuyers.

Bond Program

On May 12, 2007, San Antonio voters overwhelmingly approved five bond propositions totaling just over $550 million dollars. According to the City of San Antonio's website, the bond proposals are to be achieved without any increase in property tax and are based on continued economic growth to pay down the debt. While these bonds encompass many different street, park, and facility acquisitions and improvements, this evaluation only focuses on a few that are directed towards the criteria of Smart Growth. Bond Program 1 includes installation of bike facilities on Bulverde road, and close to $2 million for multiple pedestrian mobility and traffic calming initiatives throughout District 4, 6, and 7.[13] There is also over $10 million dollars allocated for pedestrian mobility improvements for the Downtown area.[14] The bulk of Bond Program 3's $80 million dollars is for over $33 million for the acquisition of 204 acres of greenspace to be developed into an urban park.

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[13] www.sanantonio.gov/2007bond/proposition1.asp

[14] www.sanantonio.gov/2007bond/proposition1.asp

Neighborhood Conservation

The City of San Antonio, through the use of zoning, has created the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD). The NCD was created to protect and preserve the many unique and distinct neighborhoods in San Antonio that may not necessarily fall under the protection criteria of historical, architectural, or cultural significance. According to Article 3, the purposes of the Neighborhood Conservation District in residential neighborhoods or commercial districts are as follows:

- To protect and strengthen desirable and unique physical features, design characteristics, and recognized identity and charm.

- To promote and provide for economic revitalization.

- To protect and enhance the livability of the city.

- To reduce conflict and prevent building blighting caused by incompatible and insensitive development, and to promote new compatible development.

- To stabilize property value.

- To provide residents and property owners with a planning tool for future development.

- To promote and retain affordable housing.

- To encourage and strengthen civic pride.

- To ensure harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and the redevelopment of the City.[15]

To accomplish all of this, the NCD has implemented Planned Development Districts and Conservation Districts. The NCD also incorporates urban design guidelines that involve neighborhoods in developing neighborhood-specific plans. The NCD was established to

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[15] City of San Antonio Article 3: Zoning p. 3-136

help protect what San Antonians felt made San Antonio special. To give the NCD

"teeth", there are also special provisions for violations to be prosecuted in municipal

court whether civil or administrative.[16] These NCDs help not only to preserve

neighborhoods, but also through community involvement, evoke civic pride in the City

and the neighborhood.

Operation Facelift

The city of San Antonio has a commercial revitalization effort known as

Operation Facelift. According to the city of San Antonio website,

> A key element to the design-planning component of a
> revitalization effort is the return of business activity to the
> commercial corridor. Fresh paint, new awnings, or complete
> façade rehabilitation are the first signs that something positive is
> happening. These first few steps can be the spark to ignite interest
> and spur new commercial excitement. Operation Facelift provides
> a catalyst for these first steps.[17]

This program is designed to reverse the deterioration of structures in targeted areas and

enhance efforts to market vacant space. This program assists areas that are becoming

dilapidated and helps to improve the area and keep more business from moving out. Key

to spurring any economic growth in an area is to provide a clean and aesthetically

pleasing area. The City offers grants from $500 to $15,000 for renovations under this

program. To assist in offsetting costs of this program, the City partnered with Citibank to

help fund this initiative.

Revitalization Projects

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[16] City of San Antonio Article 3: Zoning p. 3-139
[17] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/devdiv/ncr/opfacelift.asp

Each year, many different revitalization organizations partake in different revitalization projects around the city. Studying the value of these organizations, the City has established a Revitalization Project that selects one of these third party projects and assists them. The numerous benefits bestowed upon the selected organizations include the following:

- $60,000 per year over a six-year period.

- Insider access to City departments, such as Development Services, Code Compliance, Planning, and Economic Development.

- Training sessions.

- Financial incentives including other City benefits like Operation Facelift.[18]

A main criteria for awarding the assistance is based on the project including public improvements, like streetscapes, drainage work, parking and sidewalks, and other visible signs of revitalization. This incentive allows the City to assist those projects they view as the most beneficial in renewing certain parts of the City.

Transportation

Mass Transit

In 1978, VIA Metropolitan Transit began providing public transportation service to the City of San Antonio. Today, VIA has 454 buses running to 6,960 bus stops along 91 bus lines. VIA carried 43.5 million passengers in 2005 and 42.3 million passengers in 2006.[19] VIA's plan for 2014 is to increase rider-ship to 50 million passengers a year. VIA has five Park & Ride locations spread throughout the city. These locations range in

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[18] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/devdiv/ncr/rp.asp

[19] www.viainfo.net/organization/facts.aspx

parking accessibility from 50 spaces to 500. VIA also has three transit centers that serve more like bus stations than actual Park & Rides. The transit centers offer enclosed waiting areas, restrooms, vending machines and actual staff to assist the riders. VIA plans to open three more of these transit centers in 2008.[20]

Pedestrian Travel

In 1997, the City of San Antonio audited its pedestrian friendly infrastructure and found that existing pedestrian facilities were incomplete, inadequate, and inaccessible.[21] As a result the Pedestrian Amenities Plan was developed, and set forth the following 5 goals:

- Provide pedestrian facilities that are safe for general pedestrian travel and for extraordinary travel circumstances.

- Unite parts of thru pedestrian facilities system into a whole, workable system by completing the gaps, providing linkages to activity centers, and connecting with other modes of travel.

- Increase pedestrian access to, and around, intermodal facilities by providing new linkages and improving existing connections.

- Employ accessible, barrier-free, state-of-the-art design for all new and replacement pedestrian facilities.

- Effectively utilize resources to provide for basic pedestrian mobility and accessibility needs before providing enrichments.[22]

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[20] www.viainfo.net/busservice/pandr.aspx

[21] City of San Antonio Mobility 2030 Plan 5
[22] City of San Antonio Mobility 2030 Plan 5

These are long-term goals and the City has slowly worked to enact as much as it can each year. The Pedestrian Mobility Task Force (PMTF) monitors and evaluates matters dealing with pedestrian mobility and accessibility.

The next chapter describes the methodology used to survey the City of San Antonio's existing urban growth and smart growth policies.

Chapter IV: Methodology

Chapter IV is the centerpiece of this research project. The purpose of this research is gauging and the conceptual framework that will be used is a practical ideal type. A review of the literature establishes three main components of an ideal smart growth program. The components comprising the practical ideal type are Managed Growth, The New Urbanist Neighborhood, and Accessibility and Mobility[23]. These components contain certain sub-components, and together they will be used as crosschecks to gauge how the City of San Antonio's management practices measure against a practical ideal model of a Smart Growth program. **Table 4.1** details how each of the categories and subcategories is operationalized through document analysis and direct observation. By using these methods the strengths of one method can offset the weaknesses of the other.

Research Technique

Table 4.1 lists the components and sub-components of the practical ideal model for Smart Growth. Much like Sara Danse Lewis's work, *An Assessment of Smart Growth Policies in Austin, TX,* the operationalization table will list each component of the conceptual framework to be observed. If the component is observed to be in place within the City of San Antonio, a 1 will be assigned. If the component is not observed, or is observed to not be in place, then a 0 will be assigned.

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[23] The components and sub-components for the practical ideal type model were created in Chapter II of this work.

Table 4.1: Operationalization of the Conceptual Framework

Ideal Type Categories	Research Methods	Document Evidence	Sources
Managed Growth • Growing Existing Communities • Affordable Housing • Density Through Growth Boundaries • Purchasing Greenspace	Document Analysis	Redevelopment of vacant/unutilized land In-fill programs in place City incentives for neighborhood revitalization Greenspace purchased Community development Zoned for mixed housing Affordable housing programs Any existing growth limits Current zoning for mixed use	City of San Antonio's website Reports on smart growth Planning department documents 3rd party reports
New Urbanist Neighborhood • Design • Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)	Document Analysis Direct Observation	Neighborhood designs to reflect TND Unique San Antonio elements in neighborhoods Mixed-use neighborhoods Mixed housing ¼ mile walking limit from neighborhood center Pedestrian and bicycle oriented Specific neighborhood ordinances City incentives for New Urbanist design Mixed-use neighborhoods	Planning department Website reports on neighborhoods 3rd party reports The Alamo Quarry Area

| Accessibility and Mobility

• Transportation Options
• Accessibility of Mass Transit
• Value-Added Service
• Mixed-Use
• Parking | Document Analysis | Multiple types of public transportation available
Incentives for increased mass transit use
Value added service at mass transit locations

Bike and pedestrian friendly areas
Bicycle lanes in downtown area
Reduction in free parking to curtail automobile use | VIA documents

Texas Regional Mobility Authority documents

Planning department website

Municipal Code |
| | Direct Observation | Value added service at mass transit locations | Different bus routes and stops around the city |

Document Analysis

The first research technique will be document analysis. Document analysis will be used to assess the City of San Antonio's smart growth program against the practical ideal type. Document analyses are excellent for corroborating evidence, and according to Babbie(324), "the concreteness of materials studied in content analysis strengthens the likelihood of reliability". The weaknesses of document analysis are retrievability, document originator bias, and selectivity bias. The documents needed for this research can be retrieved from the city's website, through the City of San Antonio's planning department, major media outlets, and open records within the city. Any perceived issues

with retrievability, or bias should be offset with the other research technique (direct observation).

Direct Observation

Direct observation will be used to assess one current development within the City of San Antonio and the value-added service of its mass transit system. Through field research and direct observation, this work will determine if current policies are being implemented and followed in accordance with the policies laid forth in the practical ideal type and if these policies demonstrate signs of effectiveness. Direct observation is perfect for studying items in their natural environment and assessing actual implementation as compared to what was proposed merely on paper. Babbie (282) states, "field research is especially appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviors best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys". A major weakness of the field research and direct observation technique is that it can be very time consuming, especially for only one researcher. In this regard, the area being researched and observed is about 2 hours away from the researcher's home. This work will locate specific areas to observe from the document analysis and structured interviews. If Smart Growth policies are observed in the certain areas, then a 1 will be assigned and a 0 will be assigned if not.

Statistics

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data. Simple nominal and ordinal data will project the results of the research techniques. These are relayed in the form of percentages and means.

Human Subjects Protection

This research has been approved as exempt from full or expedited review by the Texas State Institutional Review Board (approval request #31-92318). No human subjects were harmed during this research

The next chapter will assess the current growth policies of the City of San Antonio and determine if the observed data can be considered Smart Growth as guided by the practical ideal type.

Accessibility and Mobility

- Transportation Options
- Accessibility of Mass Transit
- Value-Added Service
- Mixed-Use

Chapter V: Results

There are two purposes to this research. First, a review of multiple sources of scholarly

literature on the topic of smart growth assisted in developing a set of benchmarks to

create a practical ideal type model of smart growth for controlling urban sprawl.

Secondly, this practical ideal type model was used to gauge the City of San Antonio's

development practices against sprawl. This research used document analysis and direct

observation to gauge the City of San Antonio's development practices.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the results of the research, and to

provide evidence for or against the City of San Antonio's practice of those elements laid

out in the smart growth practical ideal type. The three main ideal type categories

measured accompanied by their sub-categories are as follows:

Managed Growth

- Growing Existing Communities
- Affordable Housing
- Density Through Growth Boundaries
- Purchasing Greenspace

New Urbanist Neighborhood

- Design
- Traditional Neighborhood Development   (TND)

Document Analysis:

Managed Growth

The first component of the practical ideal type is managed growth. In all, San Antonio shows strong support for the sub-categories in this area of the ideal type. By controlling growth and directing growth into already established areas, the city is able to conserve much needed resources and fully utilize its existing resources.

Growing Existing Communities

San Antonio is committed to growing existing areas and urban renewal with multiple city programs. In 1998, through the Mayor's Initiative, CRAG[24] was created. CRAG was designed to assist those areas of the city that were experiencing the effects of urban decline. The Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program[25](NCRP) was born from CRAG. The NCRP is committed to improving the physical appearance of each community, attract and retain business by promoting the destination for shopping and entertainment, and create jobs and investments. Since its inception, the NCRP has helped create a net of 224 businesses, a net of 3,074 new jobs, and has spurred $86,538,919 in private investment. One such accomplishment came in the City's Deco District. After years of decline, the city issued grants to various businesses and in a matter of a few years; old decrepit buildings were replaced by vibrant business and a re-born neighborhood. The NCRP is also dedicated to revitalizing those brownfields in the downtown area that are capable of being rectified. Many of these areas have been

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[24] Community Revitalization Action Group
[25] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/ncr.asp

transformed from contaminated, vacant eyesores, to being productive vibrant areas of their neighborhoods. See appendix C for a map of the current areas benefiting from the different revitalization efforts throughout the city.

Operation Facelift[26] is committed to reversing deterioration of commercial areas and attracting new business and spurring economic growth to these areas. This simple plan assists commercial and retail businesses that are in need of a little "revitalization". Through grants from $500 to $15000, eligible properties are able to replace broken windows, repaint buildings, replace awnings or canopies, improve exterior lighting, and any other host of improvements to the exterior façade. This in turn helps to revitalize the area through appearance, deter crime, and promote consistency in design. Since 1998, Operation Facelift has granted $413,040 for completed projects and $98,860 for current projects.[27]

Perhaps the City's greatest asset to promoting its urban growth policies came on June 15, 2006 with the inception of the new San Antonio Incentive Scorecard System[28]. This incentive system is used by the City to entice:

- Redevelopment of property.

- Restoration or rehabilitation of historic/heritage.

- Neighborhood and downtown revitalization.

- New business development in targeted industries.

- Affordable and market rate housing[29].

Through fee waivers, tax incentives, regulatory reduction, and financing incentives; the City is able to promote aspects of a smart growth plan. The scoring system assigns

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[26] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/devdiv/ncr/opfacelift.asp
[27] NCR Highlights Newsletter Vol. 13, Issue 3, summer 2007.
[28] www.sanantonio.gov/incentives/
[29] This area of the Incentive Scorecard System will be touched on more later in the chapter.

different levels of points for different variations of mixed-use housing, affordable

housing, mixed-income housing, specific location need (located in a MUD, TOD, NCD,

ect.[30]), number of permanent jobs within the living wage created for the area, amount of

capital investment, and other variables conducive to slowing sprawl and promoting

revitalization. Certain types of developments, meeting multiple criteria, may even

qualify for a 100% fee waiver[31]. To streamline this process the City has completely

automated the scoring system and has posted the interactive Development Project

Scorecard on-line[32].

Affordable Housing

In 1995, the City of San Antonio not only created a program to promote

affordable housing, but the program also promoted high-quality subdivisions of

affordable housing. The Affordable Showcase of Homes[33] (ASOH) is committed to

promoting new affordable housing, producing in-fill opportunities, reusing land, and

providing a mix of socioeconomic families.[34] Since 1995, the ASOH has had a

tremendous impact not only on the citizens of San Antonio, but on the government

revenues as well. Some of its accomplishments include:

- An increase in affordable housing units by 232.

- An $18,388,880 increase to the tax base.

- 56% reduction in crime and safety issues in those areas.

The ASOH is directly responsible for creating the Coliseum Oaks, Villas de Esperanza,

Historic Gardens, Pasadena Heights, and Arryo Vista subdivisions.

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[30] Mixed Use District, Transit Oriented Development, Neighborhood Conservation District
[31] For a total listing of incentives, go to the incentive catalog located at www.sanantonio.gov/incentives/
[32] A copy of the Development Project Scorecard can be found on Appendix B.
[33] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/devdiv/asoh.asp
[34] www.sanantonio.gov/nad/devdiv/asoh/goals.asp

Like the previous section on Growing Existing Communities, the Incentive Scorecard System plays a vital role in San Antonio's affordable housing program as well. Through the scorecard system, the city awards incentives to developers for offering certain amounts of affordable housing in their developments. The city even offers waivers for providing infrastructure (water and sewer) to new developments that meet certain affordable housing criteria.

Growth Boundaries

There is no real evidence that the City of San Antonio participates in developing growth boundaries through ordinances and purchasing developmental rights beyond those areas to specifically protect the Edwards Aquifer. While the preservation and protection of the water table is important (San Antonio owns 8,622 acres over the recharge zone[35]), it does not follow the scope of this research beyond the fact that it is land purchased for non-development only in respect to the aquifer. It does however play a part in the next section for purchasing greenspace.

In *Development Sprawl in Texas,* Rachel Jeffers finds that many city mangers in Texas prefer to annex the sprawling suburbs around their cities to help control growth. San Antonio is no different. Unfortunately, the reasoning behind this approach is typically to support a city's dwindling tax base. The City then justifies annexation as now being able to control development in the annexed areas. In actuality, the City is only perpetuating sprawl by continuously incorporating these sprawling areas into the city.

Purchasing Greenspace

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[35] www.tpl.org/tier3_cd.cfm?content_item_id+19920&folder_id=264

The City of San Antonio supports purchasing greenspace and has done a fairly good job protecting greenspace. The City has 17,837 acres of parkland. With all of this parkland, the city still lacks adequate parks on the south and west sides of town, specifically in the lower income neighborhoods. This deficiency has been addressed and is in the process of being remedied. Through the 2007-2012 Bond Program Proposition 3, the city plans to purchase multiple tracks of land for over $35,000,000[36]. These land acquisitions will be used for parks and other green spaces. A Land Acquisition Team has been assembled and is comprised of city employees and members of non-profit land conservation trusts. This team is tasked with identifying and acquiring land through purchase, donation, and perpetual conservation easements[37].

Table 5.1 summarizes the managed growth results. Each criterion is equally important in comprising an ideal smart growth plan. At an 88% met criteria, the documents generally support policies for managing growth within the City of San Antonio. Some areas show strong support for the smart growth policies like growing existing communities, while a few, like growth boundaries, fared weaker.

Table 5.1: Managed Growth, Results

Managed Growth	1=Yes 0=No	Document
Redevelopment of underutilized land	1	Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization
	1	Operation Facelift
	1	NCR-Revitalization Projects
	0	Main Street Model

[36] www.sanantonio.gov/2007bond/proposition3.asp
[37] Proposition 1: Edwards Aquifer Protection Program p. 19

In-Fill Programs in place	**1**	NCR-Revitalization Projects
	1	Housing and Community Development Study
City Incentives for Neighborhood Revitalization	**1**	Operation Facelift
	1	NCR-Revitalization Projects
	1	City of San Antonio Development Project (Scorecard)
Zoning for Mixed Housing	**1**	Rebuilding Together
	1	Housing and Community Development Study
Affordable Housing	**1**	Housing and Community Development Study
	1	Target 2000 Operating Support Collaborative
	1	Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program
	1	City of San Antonio Development Project (Scorecard)
	1	Affordable Showcase of Homes
	1	The Homeownership Incentive Program
Growth Boundaries	**0**	Regulatory Barriers Clearinghouse
	1	Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Proposition One
	0	2007-2012 Bond Program Proposition Three
	1	The Trust for Public Land
Purchasing Greenspace	**1**	Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Proposition One
	1	2007-2012 Bond Program Proposition Three
	1	The Trust for Public Land
Seven variables	**88%**	**Fifteen documents**

New Urbanist Neighborhood

The next component of the practical ideal type is the New Urbanist

Neighborhood. Until 2002, San Antonio had not developed, nor had much in plans to

develop, any true neighborhoods that fully reflect the ideal of Traditional Neighborhood

Development. At this time, the city council developed its blueprint for its first true New

Urbanist Neighborhood. The South Side Initiative Community Plan was established as the blueprint for an 80 square mile area bordered to the north by Loop 410, to the east by I-37, to the west by I-35, and to the south by the Medina River[38].

Design

The downtown area of San Antonio has always relied upon its easy walk-ability and accessibility for tourists and those citizens living here. The focus of this research, is those neighborhoods away from the downtown area and those new, expanding neighborhoods on the city's edge. City South, as it is known, has a very thorough set of guidelines and plans to focus growth. Its guiding principles have established transit-oriented development, density, mixed-use housing, walk-able town centered neighborhoods, all the while preserving 25% of the area's green space and character. It is the model for compact design that promotes a sense of community and focuses on being pedestrian friendly. Utilities are hidden from sight, buried underground rather then being exposed above ground. The plan uses the Commercial Village Concept[39] as compared to the strip-mall concept. **Figure 5.1**[40] is a model of the Commercial Village Concept used in City South and demonstrates the use of density allowing for the same amount of commercial properties to be fit in an area that would be twice to three times as large if designed around the strip-mall design. In **Figure 5.1** the red and brown areas represent a dense mix of different commercial zones. The stores are all centralized and within walking distance of one another. The stores are surrounded by a parking area, which

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[38] www.sanantonio.gov/citysouth/story.asp
[39] www.sanantonio.gov/planning/southside.asp City South Community p. 30   This concept is a concentrated commercial development situated around a central green zone. All commercial areas are in one dense area as compared to the sprawl of a strip development.
[40] **Figure 5.1** was taken from www.sanantonio.gov/planning/southside.asp City South Community p. 30

results in quick and easy access from any parking spot. In the center of the Commercial

Village is a small park-like greenspace.

Figure 5.1 Commercial Village Concept
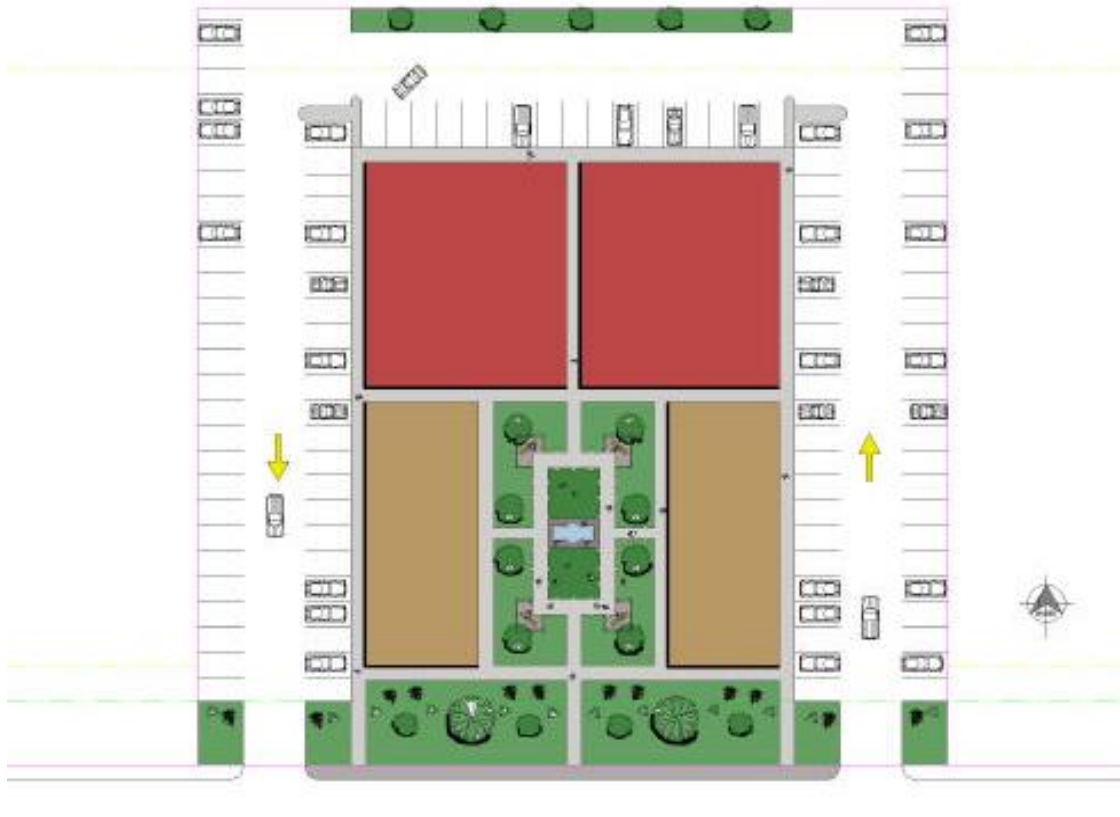
        In 2001, the City developed the Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD)[41].

This classification for certain neighborhoods is used to protect unique areas in the city

that may not fully meet the criteria for protection as a historical district. While the NCD

is a step in the right direction, it does fall considerably short when compared to the New

Urbanist Neighborhood designs laid forth in the practical ideal type. The NCD code calls

for broad planned development and urban design policy. There is a lack of specific

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[41] City of San Antonio Unified Development Code Article 3: Zoning p. 3-136

guidelines that set-forth New Urbanist policies for developing neighborhoods. The ordinance does refer to the developments having to follow the city's infill development guidelines, but again, this ordinance lacks the true rigor of the New Urbanist policies.

Division 5 of Special Districts of the City's Municipal Code[42] does contain a section for Mixed-Use Districts (MXD), Transit Oriented Development District (TOD), and an Infill Development Zone (IDZ). These special districts are not overlay codes; they replace traditional codes in those areas they are enforced. A weakness of the MXD code is that it only protects areas with aspects of Traditional Neighborhood Development, but does not directly promote it. If an area demonstrates the one-quarter mile limiting factor or has TND patterns proposed, then it can be designated as a Mixed-Use District[43]. The Transit Oriented Development does go a bit further and is assigned to a one-half mile radius around all transit stations. In the TOD, development standards are restricted to development that provides for a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment through an intensive area of shops, activities, benches, kiosks, and outdoor cafes[44]. The Infill Development Zones provide flexible standards for the development of underutilized land[45]. This code is much more intense than the previous two codes and provides strict guidelines for the development of this land. This code refers back to policies in the master plan that promotes New Urbanist Neighborhoods.

Over the past five years, the City has become more aware of its need to be more pedestrian and bicycle oriented. It is by no means close to achieving this goal yet, but has made some strides. Over these past five years the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization along with the City of San Antonio has planned and

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[42] Section 35-340 to 35-356
[43] Municipal Code 5. Sec. 35-341
[44] Municipal Code 5. Sec. 35-342
[45] Municipal Code 5. Sec. 35-343

completed bicycle and pedestrian facilities at State Highway 218, added bicycle lanes on

North West Military Highway and Tezel Road (among others), and have added various

bicycle markings and signage on multiple shared roadways[46].

Traditional Neighborhood Development

To provide for their desired development, the City of San Antonio has

incorporated using "flex" codes in its municipal zoning ordinances. The "flex" codes

used in City South Community area of development reflect those values of the

Traditional Neighborhood; with specific easement setbacks, a one-quarter to one-half

mile walking distances for the town center and parks, and multiple transit stops focused

on mass transit. The City South Community is the perfect example of TND policies at

work. The South Port development is the beginning stages for City South. The

development will be a mixture of shops and multi-family dwellings. South Port is

committed to developing under the guise of the Traditional Neighborhood policies.

Table 5.2 summarizes the New Urbanist Neighborhood design results. The City

of San Antonio met only 67% of the criteria established in the practical ideal type. City

South has become San Antonio's flagship development for the New Urbanist design, but

many other sections of the city fall behind in developing this important ideal to

combating sprawl.

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[46] San Antonio- Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007

Table 5.2: New Urbanist Neighborhood-Results

New Urbanist Neighborhood	1=Yes 0=No	Document
Neighborhood designs to reflect Traditional Neighborhood Development	**1**	City South Community Plan
	0	Housing and Community Development Study
	1	Unified Development Code (Neighborhood Conservation District)
Mixed-use neighborhoods	**1**	MuniCode Division 5. Special Districts
	1	City South Community Plan
¼ mile walking limit from neighborhood to center	**1**	City South Community Plan
	1	MuniCode Division 5. Special Districts
Pedestrian and Bicycle Oriented	**1**	City South Community Plan
	1	MuniCode Division 5. Special Districts
	1	Proposed 2007-2012 Bond Program
	1	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2004
	0	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2005
	0	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2006
	0	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2007
Specific Neighborhood Ordinances	**1**	City South Community Plan
	1	MuniCode Division 5. Special Districts
City Incentives for New Urbanist Style Neighborhoods	**0**	Rebuilding Together
	0	Housing and Community Development Study
Six Variables	**67%**	**Ten Documents**

Accessibility and Mobility

The third component of the practical ideal type for smart growth is Accessibility and Mobility. The recent growth experienced by San Antonio has brought awareness to the importance of accessible and mobile forms of transportation in addition to the automobile. There is evidence that San Antonio has started the process to become more transit oriented, but the evidence also reveals that San Antonio is behind the curve in transportation.

Transportation Options

The San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been working in the past few years to upgrade the transit situation in San Antonio. The MPO is part of the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail District and has pledged $10 million in 2011 and another $10 million in 2012[47] to the Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail project. The rail district is working to establish a commuter rail line that will connect San Antonio to Georgetown, Texas, and all of the cities and towns in-between. This is proposed to lessen the congested highways in the connected cities and to provide alternative transportation. More locally, the MPO is working with VIA Metropolitan Transit to provide Bus Rapid Transit[48]. This endeavor works closely with VIA's Priority Access for Transit by equipping certain buses with the ability to change oncoming red lights to green and thus increasing their route efficiencies. VIAtrans Service started in 2004 and is a demand-responsive service for elderly and disabled persons. This service currently runs about 3500 trips per day serving the citizens of San Antonio[49]. There currently is no real support among the citizenry or government to establish a light rail or

[47] Spotlight on Mobility Vol. 2 Number 1 p.2-3
[48] Spotlight on Mobility Vol. 2 Number 1 p.3
[49] Mobility 2030 Ch. 6 p. 6-7 to 6-8

commuter rail system within San Antonio. In 2000, the public voted not to pursue light rail.

In 2004, the City created the Regional Bicycle Master Plan as part of the City's Master Plan. Later the city created a full time staff position as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. Bicycle transportation is now a topic in discussions on planning and designing projects and subdivisions. Evidence of this was previously presented in this chapter[50]. There are many different projects in the developmental stages totaling millions of dollars to help increase bicycle rider-ship and bicycle mobility throughout the city.

Accessibility of Mass Transit

The Pedestrian Amenities Plan of 1997 found that many of the existing pedestrian facilities were inadequate, incomplete, and inaccessible. This poor pedestrian mobility around the city has a direct impact on the accessibility of mass transit as well. After the plan was concluded, the Pedestrian Mobility Task Force (PMTF)[51] was created. The PMTF is tasked with making recommendations and keeping abreast of pedestrian mobility throughout the city. The Mobility 2030 study ranked San Antonio as pedestrian "unfriendly" and while some advances have been made, it will take many years to improve all of the existing conditions. In 2004, the Advanced Transportation District was created and funded with a one-quarter cent sales tax increase. The net result is expected to yield $188 million for transportation over the coming ten years[52]. This money will need to be invested in upgrading the accessibility of the mass transit system. This research found that partial systems are in place to improve the accessibility of the

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[50] See the New Urbanist Neighborhood subchapter Design (p.47-50) for more information on upcoming bicycle mobility improvements.
[51] Mobility 2030 Ch. 5 p.5-6
[52] Mobility 2030 Ch. 6 p.6-15

mass transit system, however the system, as a whole, is in such dire circumstances it will take some time before this category is to the standard of the ideal.

Value-Added Service

The results show that the City of San Antonio and VIA have done a great job over the past few years identifying needed amenities for mass transit and accomplishing them. Through millions of dollars of investments, such amenities as: longer service (including some 24 hour routes), additional benches and shelters, "super stops" to handle high-boarding numbers, electronic payment systems, and real time bus information[53]. There are continued improvements planned on the Fiscal-Year 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program budget as well.

Parking

No evidence is found that the City of San Antonio uses parking as a tool to remove people from their cars and usher them onto public transportation. The city has affordable parking located throughout. A parking location guide can be easily accessed on the City's website with information on where to park and how much the parking will cost. Parking for the most part remains inexpensive in San Antonio, in particular to developments away from the City's center. The ideal model is for parking to be difficult and costly to help usher people towards mass transit.

Table 5.3 summarizes the results for the City of San Antonio's Accessibility and Mobility. At only 69% completion of the criteria put forth in the practical ideal type, the documents support the fact that the City has quite a bit more it can do to accomplish the

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[53] Mobility 2030 Ch. 6 p.6-15

ideal. Major improvements need to be made to transform San Antonio into a more walk-

able and bike-able city.

Table 5.3: Accessibility and Mobility- Results

Accessibility and Mobility	1=Yes 0=No	Document
Multiple types of public transportation available	**1**	Mobility 2030
	1	Spotlight on Mobility
Incentives for increased mass transit use	**0**	Mobility 2030
	1	VIA Corporate Transit Benefit Program
Value added service at mass transit locations	**1**	Mobility 2030
	1	Spotlight on Mobility
Bike and Pedestrian Friendly Areas	**1**	MuniCode Division 5. Special Districts
	1	Proposed 2007-2012 Bond Program
	1	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2004
	0	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2005
	0	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2006
	1	MPO Completed Roadway and Transit Project List 2007
Reduction in free parking	**0**	Parking Location Guide
Five Variables	**69%**	**Ten Documents**

The previous categories demonstrate general support by the City of San Antonio

for smart growth policies. In addition to the document analysis, direct observation is

used to examine actual implementation of two sub-categories of the practical ideal type.

The following results will depict if smart growth policies are followed at two select

locations.

Direct Observation:

Mixed Use Housing

The Alamo Quarry Market was observed due to its fairly new status. The Alamo Quarry Market was opened in 1998 and has become one of the showcases of a new and expanding San Antonio. This new market development lacked many of the desired aspects of a smart growth program. Many of the commercial stores are laid out in strip mall fashion and lack a more structured, dense approach. The layout is more automobile accessible and even causes longer walking distances between store locations due to parking places. There are areas for mass transit stops, but they are geared more toward automobile friendly and transit oriented. While the area has a wide variety of stores, there is no visible housing within the one-half mile-limiting factor. The Alamo Quarry failed to meet the standards as a smart growth development.

Value Added Service

The second observed sub-category is the value-added service of the mass transit system. I chose to ride and observe a VIA streetcar route in the downtown area. The bus stop area was covered and had very plain easy to understand route directions. On the streetcar was an electronic screen that displayed what the next stop was and approximately how much time until the stop was reached. This quick and simple observation gave proof that, at least this car, was equipped with many rider friendly features along the lines of the practical ideal type.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Smart Growth can be a useful tool to combat sprawl and the many negative effects that follow it. Smart Growth policies may be difficult to initiate at first due to public perception, cost, and a lack of expertise in the area. However, this should not discourage practitioners from completely adopting smart growth policies. There must be a total commitment to smart growth, partial polices will do little in the big picture to control growth and combat sprawl.

The City of San Antonio recognizes that it must enact policies to control its tremendous growth and fight the effects that sprawl and years of unbridled growth have caused to its infrastructure and land. However, the City has chosen to enact partial policies and does not seem fully committed to all aspects of smart growth, or must overcome certain obstacles associated with Smart Growth. San Antonio's population is majority Hispanic, of which many are of Mexican origin. City administrators must focus on this demographic and package certain Smart Growth policies in a way that is attractive to this population. The City has done a very good job with its array of revitalization projects and continues to redevelop land including brownfields. San Antonio also does a fairly good job of providing mixed and affordable housing. Areas like Coliseum Oaks and Arroyo Vista prove what San Antonio can accomplish once it wholeheartedly adopts a smart growth plan. The example of City South has become a model of smart growth and New Urbanist policies in San Antonio. This area showcases the types of communities that can be created in San Antonio and should serve as an example for other local neighborhoods and developments.

As San Antonio continues to grow, there must be more involvement in developing New Urbanist Neighborhoods. Other than City South, there are no other developments following the Traditional Neighborhood Development guidelines. The city has ordinances in place with New Urbanist ideals, however they only act to protect neighborhoods that have certain aspects of TND present. The ordinances fail to be proactive and push for their types of development. San Antonio's rapid and continued growth has resulted in traffic congestion and rush hour gridlock. The City is unfriendly to bicycle and pedestrian traffic. While the city has had a mass transit system for quite a while, the system seems to be caught in the old ways of servicing San Antonio back when it was a small sleepy city. Public transportation in San Antonio must become more pedestrian friendly and much more accessible to a broader range of the population. There are some initiatives in the works to remedy these problems, but the current situation calls for greater and more decisive action (see next paragraph for suggestions). **Table 6.1** summarizes the results of the research.

Table 6.1: Results for Support of Smart Growth Principles

Smart Growth Principal	Percent Support
Managed Growth	88%
New Urbanist Neighborhood	67%
Accessibility and Mobility	69%

Research Suggestions

The City of San Antonio could benefit from following two suggestions from the findings of this research. First, the city must work at establishing new developments as Traditional Neighborhood Developments and to provide incentives to transform existing neighborhoods into TND. A prime example of missed opportunity is the Alamo Quarry Works (AQW). The AQW has everything except some type of dense housing mixed-in. Perhaps some apartment complexes, or condos would fit perfectly in this immediate area. This housing would also facilitate more mass transit out to this area and could turn the many parking lots into a concentrated, central parking garage. The second area the city must focus on is its mass transit system, with particular emphasis on upgrades to its pedestrian accessibility. A truly efficient and accessible transit system will attract more riders and will support additional revenues through increases in fares. Locating more transit stops in accessible areas in the neighborhoods and designing neighborhood improvements around these transit stops would be an acceptable first step. Next, the city needs to evaluate and rework many of the stops in the downtown and commercial areas to be more pedestrian friendly and accessible. An aggressive plan for a light rail system should be created and fast tracked to serve the city and alleviate some of the growing traffic congestion. To help with costs, a light rail system could be implemented in parts to serve the areas with the greatest need first. The system should be designed anticipating the growth and addition of more lines as funds become available.

To decrease the amount of urban sprawl, pollution, and uncontrolled growth, the city of San Antonio must become more proactive in adopting and enforcing the New Urbanist ideals. If the City continues to revitalize its established communities, they

should end their practice of annexing suburban areas in an attempt to regain tax base. The City should focus more on purchasing greenspace and limiting development while it focuses its priorities on increasing the population density within its city limits. The City must focus on making its inner-core more attractive to residents to not only entice them back, but to keep them from moving out in the first place.

Appendix A

Observed Document

Observed Document	Date of the Document
Affordable Showcase of Homes/ Program Goals	2007
Homeownership Incentive Program	2007
Conserving Land for People: San Antonio Program	2008
Affordable Showcase of Homes/ Accomplishments	2007
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program	2008
NCR: Revitalization Projects	2008
Spotlight on Mobility	Winter 2008
NCR: Operation Facelift	2008
NCR Highlights	Summer 2007
2007-2012 Bond Program Proposition 1	2007
Housing and Community Development Studies Analysis	07/10/2006
Proposition One Edwards Aquifer Protection Program	02/09/2007
City of San Antonio Development Project Scorecard	2007
Public Transportation Services	12/06/2004
Pedestrian System	12/06/2004
Division 5 Special Districts	2006
City South Urban Design	2004
City South Implementation	2004
City South Parks and Open Space	2004
City South: The Story	2004
City South Community Vision	2004
City South Land Use	2004
2007-2012 Bond Program Proposition 3	2007
Neighborhood Conservation District	July 2004
Fiscal Year 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program	10/23/2007
San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program Completed FY 2006 Roadway Projects	2007
San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program Completed FY 2007 Roadway Projects	2008
San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Area Transportation Improvement Program Completed FY 2005 Roadway Projects	2006

Appendix B

City of San Antonio Development Project Scorecard

City of San Antonio Development Project Scorecard

Please take a few minutes to tell us about yourself and your development project.

The information you provide on the Application Form will be used by the City's Incentive Advisor to make contact with you after submitting your project information. While, the purpose of the Scorecard is to develop a Total Project Score based on the proposed project's ability to meet the goals and priorities established by the San Antonio City Council and other desired development criteria that reflects best practices. The Project Score may qualify a project to receive specific incentives based on the criteria.

Development Type/Geographic Area (choose one):

Commercial/Industrial Development	○
Residential/Mixed-Use Development	○

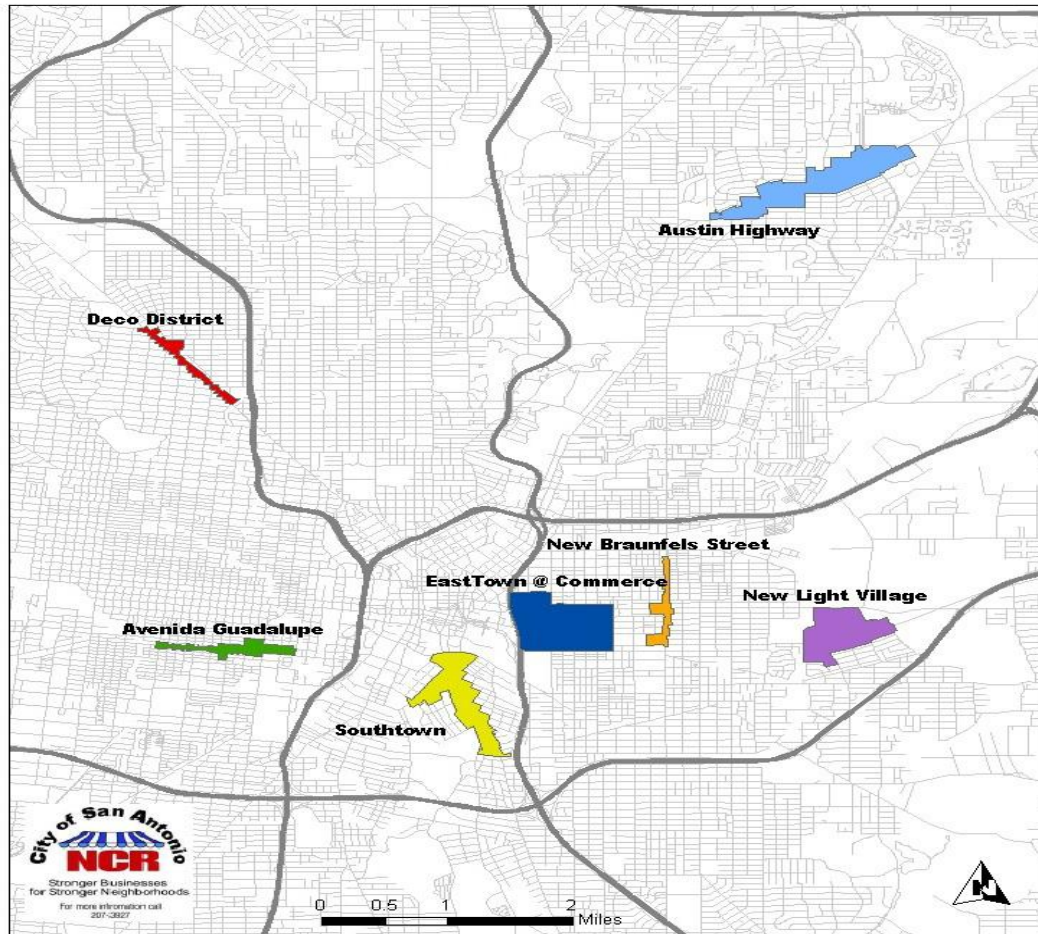| Specific Type of Residential/Mixed-Use Development		Points Available
Market Rate Housing within CBD	○	50
Affordable, Single-Family Housing outside Loop 410	○	50
Mixed-Use, Multi-Family Housing Projects city-wide	○	40
Market Rate Housing within CRAG but outside CBD	○	40
Mixed-Income, Multi-Family Housing outside Loop 410	○	40
Market Rate Housing south of Highway 90	○	40
Affordable, Multi-Family Housing outside Loop 410	○	35

Mixed-Income, Multi-Family Housing inside Loop 410 but outside CRAG	○	35
Mixed-Income, Single-Family Housing outside Loop 410	○	35
Affordable, Multi-Family Housing inside Loop 410 but outside CRAG	○	30
Mixed-Income, Multi-Family Housing inside CRAG	○	30
Mixed-Income, Single-Family Housing inside Loop 410 but outside CRAG	○	30
Affordable, Single-Family Housing inside Loop 410 but outside CRAG	○	30
Market Rate Housing inside Loop 410 but outside CRAG and north of Highway 90	○	25
Mixed-Income, Single-Family Housing inside CRAG	○	25
Affordable Housing within CRAG	○	25
Affordable Housing with CBD	○	20
Capital Investment		
Over $50 Million	○	20
$26-$50 Million	○	15
$11-$25 Million	○	10
$1-$10 Million	○	5
Less than $1 Million	○	1
Quantity of Housing Units (select only one, as applicable)		
Over 100 Housing Units	○	10
11-100 Housing Units	○	7
1-10 Housing Units	○	5
Quantity of Permanent Jobs Created with Living Wages (select only one, as applicable)		
Over 501 FTEs	○	30
251-500 FTEs	○	25
101-250 FTEs	○	20
26-100 FTEs	○	10
5-25 FTEs	○	5
Public Enhancement (select all applicable)		
Infill Housing with character of neighborhood design	☐	30
Restoration or Rehabilitation of a Historic Property	☐	20
New Public Improvement contiguous to project site with an investment of $1M or greater in the public right-of-way or a 99-year public easement	☐	20

Commercial or Mixed-Use Development within 1/4 mile of an NCR Project Area	☐	20
New Development or Substantial Improvement within a designated Neighborhood Conservation District or NCR Corridor Revitalization Project area	☐	20
Trail Blazer or Regional Draw Development	☐	15
New Development or Substantial Improvement that utilizes the following UDC Use Patterns or Special Districts: Conservation Subdivision, Commercial Retrofit, Traditional Neighborhood Development, Transit Oriented Development, Mixed Use District or Infill Development Zone.	☐	15
Restoration or Rehabilitation of a Heritage Property	☐	15
Applicant is, or is partnered with, a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)	☐	15
Adaptive Reuse of existing non-Historic, non-Heritage Property	☐	10
New Development or Substantial Improvement within a designated Reinvestment Zone (Federal Empowerment, State Enterprise, or Defense Economic Readjustment Zone)	☐	10
New Development or Substantial Improvement within a designated Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ)	☐	10
Affordable, Multi-Family Senior Residential Development	☐	10
New Development or Substantial improvement in which the boundary of the development is within 1,000 feet (about 2 blocks) of a transit station or VIA bus stop	☐	10
Exceeds requirements under the City's current Tree Preservation Ordinance	☐	5

Green Building Programs and Practices (select only one, as applicable)		
LEED Certified Building - Silver and above	○	30
LEED Certified Building - Basic Certification	○	20
LEED for Homes - Any Certification	○	30
Build San Antonio Green Certified	○	15

Total Project Score   `0`

[Fill out Application and submit Score]   [Reset]

Appendix C

NCR Revitalization Project Areas

NCR Revitalization Project Areas

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