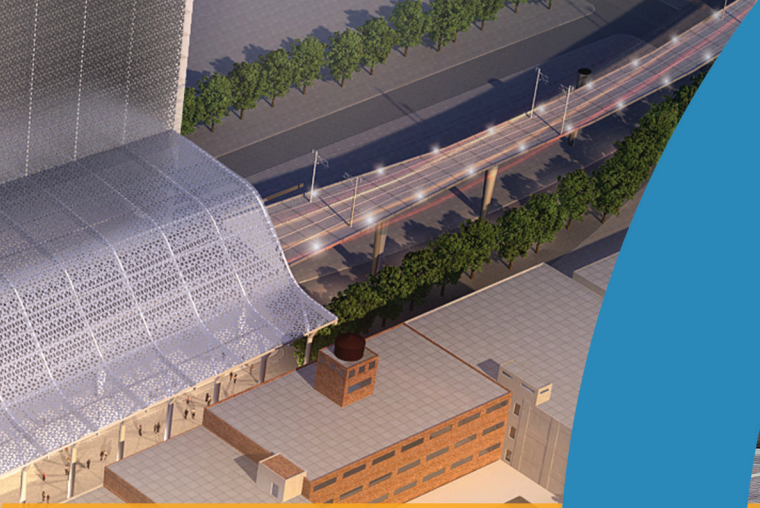

VIA VISION 2040

VIA VILLA VISION PLAN

DECEMBER 2016

About this Document

VIA Villa – the full service transit center, which includes the inspired design of the newly constructed Centro Plaza and rehabilitation of The Grand, a 1907 transportation terminal – represents over $35.0 million of investment on the near west side of downtown San Antonio. To ensure this investment is fully leveraged and maximized with multimodal transit-oriented development, VIA Metropolitan Transit developed the **VIA Villa Vision Plan**, a land use and connectivity plan, which includes an informed market analysis and considers opportunities associated with major infrastructure improvements.

The **VIA Villa Vision Plan** is a guide to inform future land use and neighborhood planning efforts as well as facility and infrastructure design in and around VIA Villa. The guide is meant to inspire the community and act as a tool for facilitating dialogue about future development in the area.

While this guide is not an adopted master plan or policy document, it can be used to suggest insights into future planning efforts when considering major land use or infrastructure changes, and can be modified as necessary, to adapt to changing conditions. It includes a number of 'best practice' planning concepts and opportunities to reflect the culture and spirit of the near west side of San Antonio. The vision plan is flexible enough to allow for change, while complementing existing guidelines and concepts that the community has deemed important.

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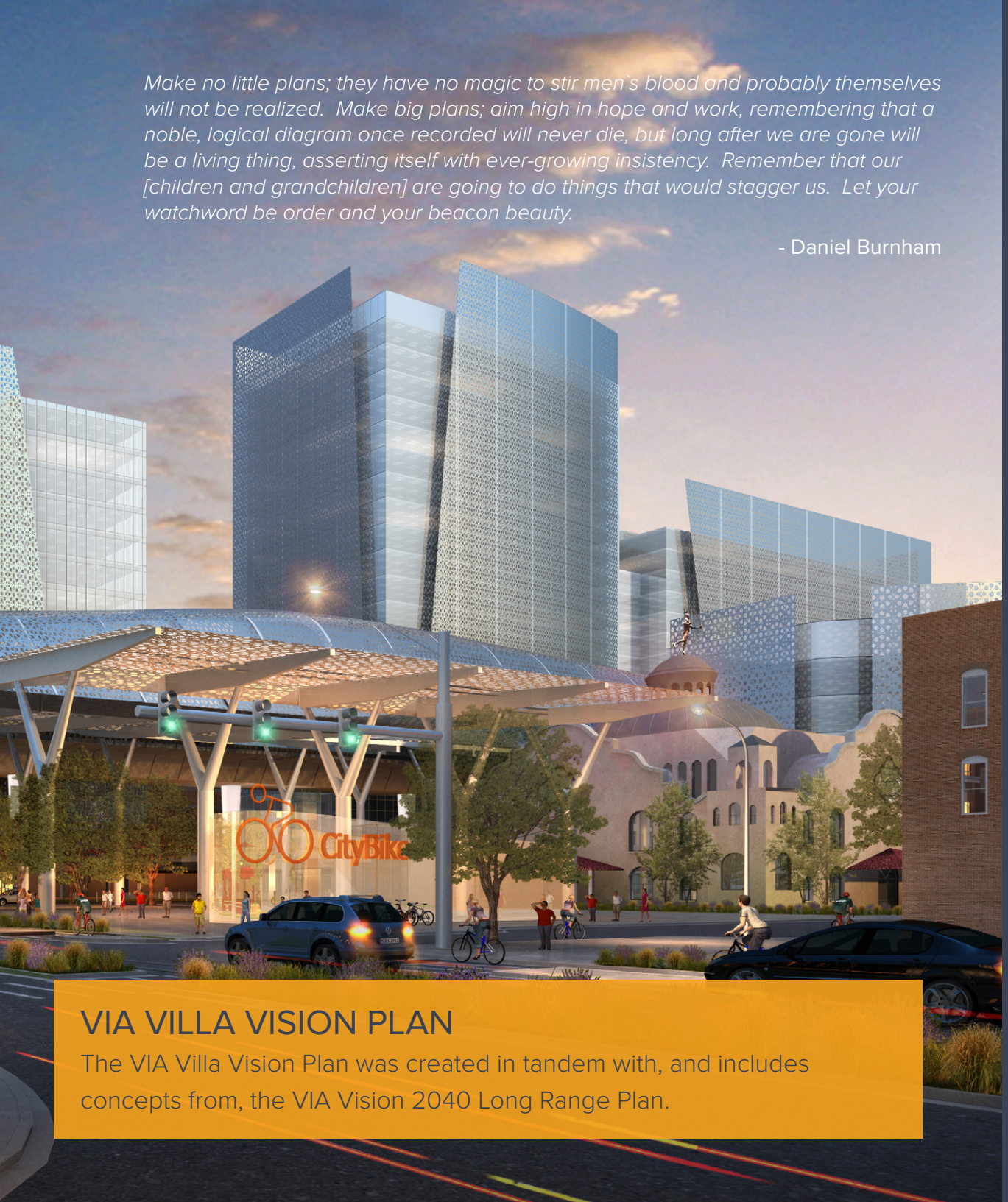
First Edition
December 2016

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men`s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our [children and grandchildren] are going to do things that would stagger us. Let your watchword be order and your beacon beauty.

- Daniel Burnham



VIA VILLA VISION PLAN

The VIA Villa Vision Plan was created in tandem with, and includes concepts from, the VIA Vision 2040 Long Range Plan.

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VIA VISION 2040

SECTION 1

PLANNING IN A GROWING REGION

WELCOME TO VIA VILLA

VIA Villa is the naming convention initiated by VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) to identify the area immediately surrounding the historic International & Great Northern train depot (The Grand) and the adjacent transit plaza (Centro Plaza), located just west of downtown San Antonio.

In the fall of 2010, VIA purchased the depot from Generations Federal Credit Union, who had previously purchased the long-vacant building in the mid-1980s and initiated a complete building rehabilitation. After the VIA purchase and additional renovation, VIA staff moved into the building – now known as The Grand at VIA Villa – in fall of 2014. In 2013, the transit authority also purchased five properties that comprise an adjacent city block (bounded by Medina, Travis, Frio and Houston Streets), across Medina Street from The Grand. VIA bus service began full operations on Centro Plaza in January 2016.

VIA Villa

VIA Villa is located within the boundary of a City of San Antonio Historic District – Cattleman Square. The name dates to a time when San Antonio was a starting point for cattle drives along the famed Chisholm Trail. A vibrant commercial district flourished around the depot through the end of World War II, during which San Antonio service members departed and returned by way of the rail depot.

While Cattleman Square hosts several civic institutions, and some of the district has fallen into disrepair over the past few decades, it continues to boast a variety of late 1800s and early 1900s commercial and industrial structures.

STATION AREA HISTORY

The International and Great Northern Railroad (I&GN), was an integral part of what became the future Missouri Pacific System (MoPac), spanning 1,106 miles at its peak use in 1881. The expansion of the railroad created a bustle of real estate activity, including new residential, industrial, and commercial buildings. One of the most significant buildings – The Grand – is the former I&GN Railroad Passenger Station, designed in 1907 by architect Harvey L. Page. By the turn of the 20th century, a mule-drawn streetcar served the original depot building.

The railroad eventually linked Austin to Laredo, providing a route into Mexico. MoPac operated at the depot, in the area known as "Cattleman Square," until 1979, when the depot closed, and remained vacant until 1986, when it was purchased by the San Antonio City Employees Federal Credit Union. VIA purchased the landmark property in 2010, completed a renovation, and relocated its administrative headquarters there in 2014.

The redevelopment of The Grand and Centro Plaza, or the collective reference as VIA Villa, is envisioned as a return to the area's historical use and its development as a modern multimodal transportation hub.

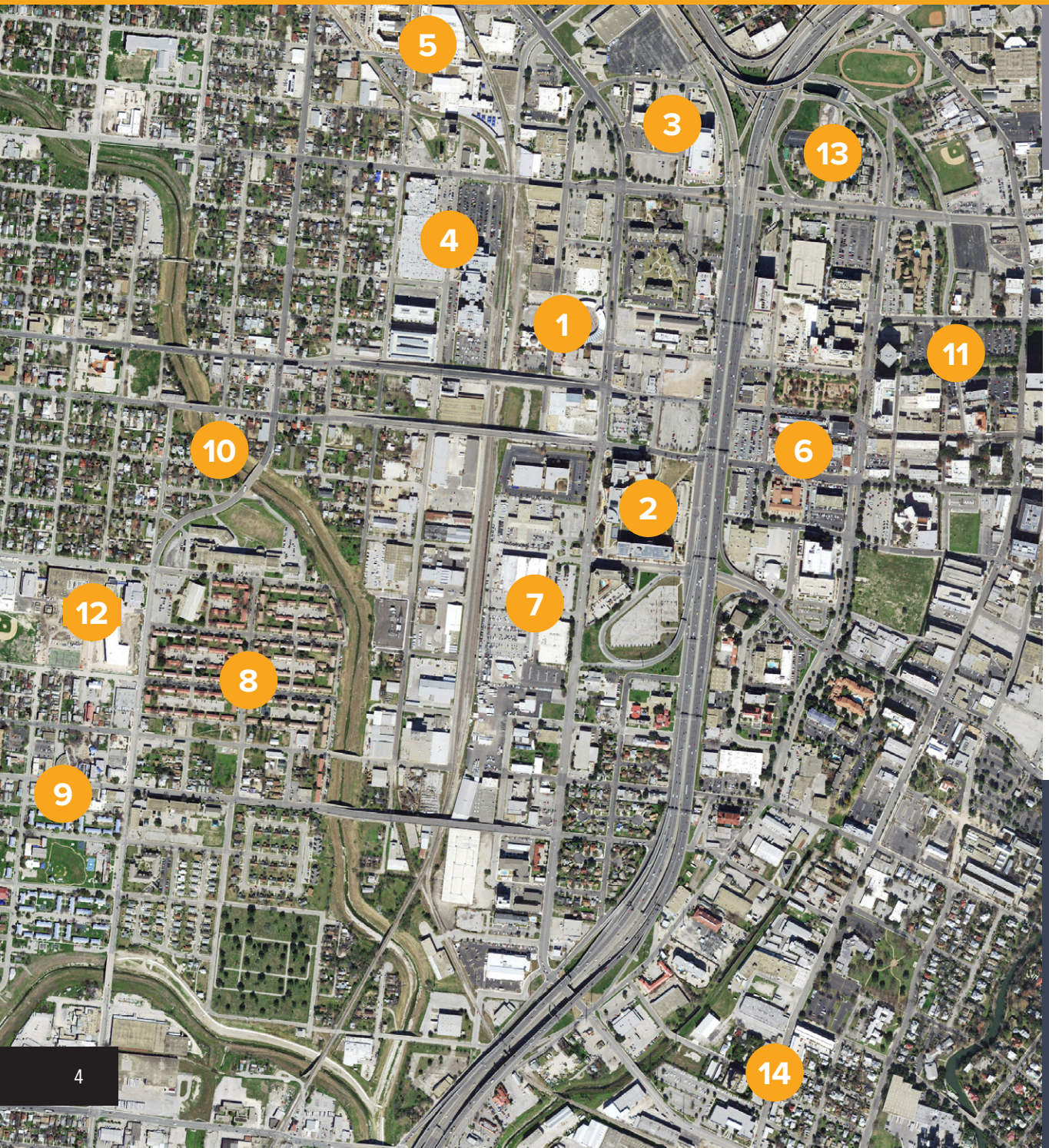
Centro Plaza in 2016

Centro Plaza at VIA Villa began providing bus service in fall of 2015 with full operation starting in January 2016. The facility hosts as many as 66 buses per hour, serving as a Prímo transfer facility, and as a point of intersection for many routes served by VIA's hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles.

Instead of providing patron bus transfers on downtown streets, patrons are now able to comfortably wait indoors in a high quality, easily maintained new facility or relax under tree shade, using the tables and chairs available throughout the plaza. These spacious facilities offers commuters a range of useful services and activities on the plaza.

The transit center also provides a customer service office where assistance with bus tickets, passes, identification cards, and trip planning is available. Restrooms, an indoor waiting area, vending machines, and 24-hour on-site security are also present on the plaza.

The design of the Centro Plaza Station focuses on creating a transit-friendly environment for passengers as well as acknowledging its location and context within the existing historic district assets.



THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The VIA Villa Vision Plan can serve as a platform to coalesce any existing specific planning goals and future investments in the VIA Villa study area. Currently, there are several master planning efforts and/or goal and policy documents that have been identified by neighboring institutions and planning partners in the study area.

Through extensive coordination and planning, funding opportunities can be leveraged, ideas exchanged and plans implemented, to bring the greatest short- and long-term benefits to adjacent neighborhoods, downtown and the Greater San Antonio Region.

VIA Villa Study Area: Neighboring Institutions & Assets

1. Centro Plaza
2. University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Downtown Campus
3. Robert B. Green Medical Campus – UHS
4. Bexar County Adult Detention Center
5. Haven for Hope
6. Market Square
7. San Antonio Municipal Court
8. Alazán Courts
9. Avenida Guadalupe
10. Alazán Creek
11. San Pedro Creek
12. Lanier High School
13. Little Italy
14. South Flores Corridor

COORDINATION OF PLANNING EFFORTS

Public transit is often referenced as an 'organizing element' for the movement of people to place. It also can be used to assist in the implementation of planning goals, enabling plans to more readily be implemented through the coordination of infrastructure, planning and funding.

VIA, through its extraordinary level of investment in the VIA Villa study area, is interested in maintaining a key partnership role by continuing to support redevelopment goals of other institutions in the area, while maximizing its own investments in VIA Villa.

Planning efforts – either recently completed, or soon to be in progress, e.g., SA Tomorrow or a new Downtown Master Plan, can use the tenets of this VIA Villa Vision Plan as input to more efficiently establish outcomes. The following include examples for how this document could complement related efforts by others:

West Commerce Economic Master Plan: This District 5 plan for social and economic activity can be incorporated as a first phase complement to the VIA Villa Vision Plan effort for both Commerce Street and Centro Plaza.

Zona Cultural: Celebrates Commerce Street as an important transit node and a cultural, historic, commercial, open space, and entertainment linkage to downtown and near west side.

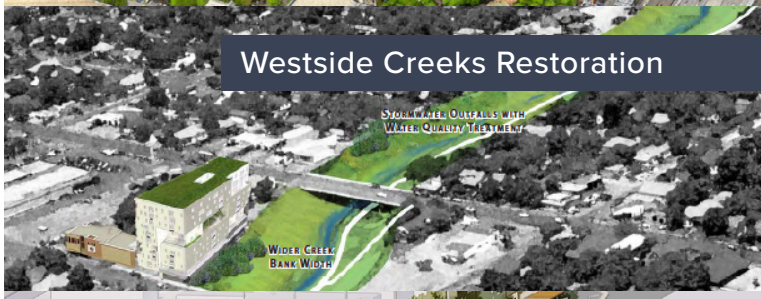
Westside Creeks Restoration Project: Provides an important direct link between the Creek asset and community/ transit/education.

UTSA Master Plan: New east/west public street axis linking Alazán Creek to UTSA, through a green, transformed tree-lined boulevard.

San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA): Transit-supportive housing that mirrors the SAHA intent to apply mixed-use concepts.

Bexar County Adult Detention Center: Incorporates County expansion plans, and includes several tall office towers, adjacent to the Detention Center.

Haven for Hope: Provides important, robust transit access as an important opportunity for resident reintegration into community.



INVESTMENT IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

While the near west side of San Antonio has not enjoyed substantial investment activity or revitalization historically, the last several years of activity have provided for renewed development interest.

The integration of the VIA Villa investment has played a tremendous effort in the transformational outlook of the near west side. For the past few years, development incentives have focused on the downtown core. This fueled revitalization efforts in the core, but there is now a newfound effort to 'move west.'

The ability to assemble larger tracts of land, and the considerably lower land cost (currently at almost 20 percent of that in the CBD), have fueled much of the development just west of downtown.

A proposed new high rise tower, along with the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project, have fueled a resurgence of interest in the VIA Villa study area. Residential, for-rent product that has recently come online, offers a proven development precedent for the apartment rental market, e.g., Vistana, Peanut Factory, and the proposed Vitré.

Unlike housing or office development projects, the process for implementing major transportation infrastructure is more complex in terms of the amount of coordination, environmental clearances, land assembly, and funding cycles, which often consume many years, if not decades. Planning for the inclusion of long-term infrastructural investment for the benefit of maintaining economic competitiveness is equally important to the shorter-term process of developing a single parcel.

The strategic planning role of a transit agency is to anticipate transportation demand and identify the best solutions for public transit options to meet that demand, then identify projects, operations, land assembly and funding that will allow transit projects to be constructed in the future.

Note: Use of photo pending permission.

Vitré Apartments

Peanut Factory Lofts

This VIA Villa Vision Plan identifies bold recommendations to catalyze development; however, the market trends for investment in this area are well supported, providing for market confidence. Some of the more recent investments in the downtown and near west side include the following:

San Pedro Creek Improvements: San Pedro Creek Improvement plan will enhance creek and creek frontage and revitalize the areas adjacent to the creek.

Frost Bank Tower: Proposed iconic tower reinforces pedestrian circulation with connections to San Pedro Creek and Alameda Theater.

Center For Health Care Services: New clinic utilizes existing historic building with 100,000 square feet of office space, parking, and ground floor retail.

Vitré: With the UTSA downtown campus student as target market, the almost $30M investment, includes 242 units and over 5,000 square feet of retail.

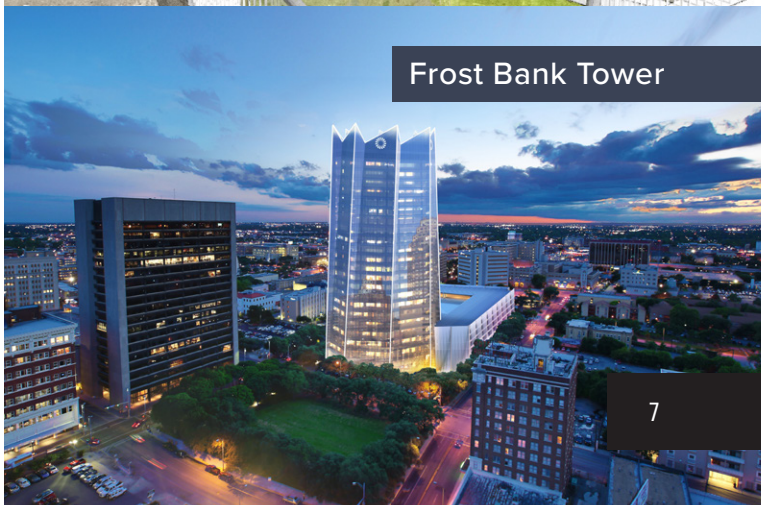
Agave: The market rate 349 unit project with an expansive footprint has provided a true market test for the 4 story product.

Peanut Factory Lofts: Adaptive reuse of industrial silos, with new construction, in an area on Frio Street that has yet to revitalize, but 102 unit project still able to command market rate rents.

Vistana: This 14 story, 247 unit, well designed new construction successful project 'set the bar' for downtown market rate projects and parking ratios.


Center for Healthcare Services


San Pedro Creek


Frost Bank Tower

SECTION 2

A TRANSPORTATION HUB

INTERCITY GROUND TRANSPORTATION

To support economic activity and growth, high-quality transportation options must provide intercity connections between major cities. Connections include the existing highways, air routes and rail systems that connect the state's urban areas. Intercity bus and rail are a critical component to support the current and future demand for intercity trips. The large number of people living in urban areas, and the projected population and employment growth, suggests the demand for intercity travel will increase.

Benefits of intercity travel by rail and bus include improved mobility, congestion relief, emissions reduction, and reduced roadway maintenance costs. As demand on airports grow, intercity ground transportation can relieve the burden of shorter flights, allowing air travel to capture longer distance flights.

To provide for seamless travel, intercity transit operations and facilities must be designed to integrate with existing urban and pedestrian transportation systems at both trip origin and destination. They should also be organized in a manner that facilitates infrastructure investment and meets the transportation demand facing the region and state. This VIA Villa Vision Plan addresses these requirements, and plans for the appropriate transit and urban infrastructure, including intermodal connections, complete streets and the integration and linkage to existing and new development.

To augment economic activity at transit locations, VIA has conducted a market/feasibility analysis to determine the type and level of development response that will best support the transit investment of VIA Villa (see Section 4).

Union Station – Denver, Colorado

The Union Station bus concourse, a 22-gate underground bus facility, serves 16 bus routes. The rail station provides end-of-line service for three routes, as well as the origin point for three routes, including one that serves the Denver International Airport.

Intercity Passenger Rail

High-Speed Rail

Intercity Bus

INTERCITY TRANSIT SERVICES

VIA Villa could potentially be served by connections to a variety of intercity transit services. Each type of service would require a physical connection to the station to facilitate boarding, ticketing, and baggage handling. Each type of service also functions differently in terms of their distance, capacity, trip type, and needs at a station.

Intercity passenger rail serves long-distance trips between major urban areas and is typically operated by a national or regional passenger railroad, such as Amtrak or Lone Star Rail District. Trains operate at speeds of at least 30 to 60 mph (often higher), and stations are typically located in downtowns of major cities along the line.

High-speed rail (HSR) is intercity passenger rail service operating significantly faster than traditional rail traffic, using an integrated system of specialized vehicles and dedicated, grade-separated tracks, built specifically for high-speed travel or upgraded for high-speed travel. HSR is typically considered to run at speeds in excess of 125 to 150 mph, and is most applicable on lines in excess of 100 miles in length with stations spaced at least 50 miles apart.

Intercity bus (private service), such as Greyhound, Megabus, and Turimex, currently have connections to other cities, including some international connections to Mexico. It is feasible that the VIA Villa location can provide operational space for intercity bus to develop their own infrastructure.

THE ROLE OF FREIGHT RAILROADS

Nearly every purchase one makes is moved by freight railroad, aircraft, or truck. As the population and economy grow, so will the need for movement of freight. Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) owns all the railroad right-of-way within Bexar County. They plan for and move freight throughout Texas to help deliver goods across the nation. As demand grows, UPRR will need additional track and vehicle stock.

To continue the efficient movement of freight, the VIA Villa Vision Plan accommodates the presence of freight below grade in an underground capped rail trench. Freight and commuter rail are able to share the same track but require timing coordination that can cause delays for either service type. Therefore, the VIA Villa Vision Plan calls for separated freight and commuter rail tracks at the station with separate platforms, allowing passengers sufficient time to get on and off a commuter train.

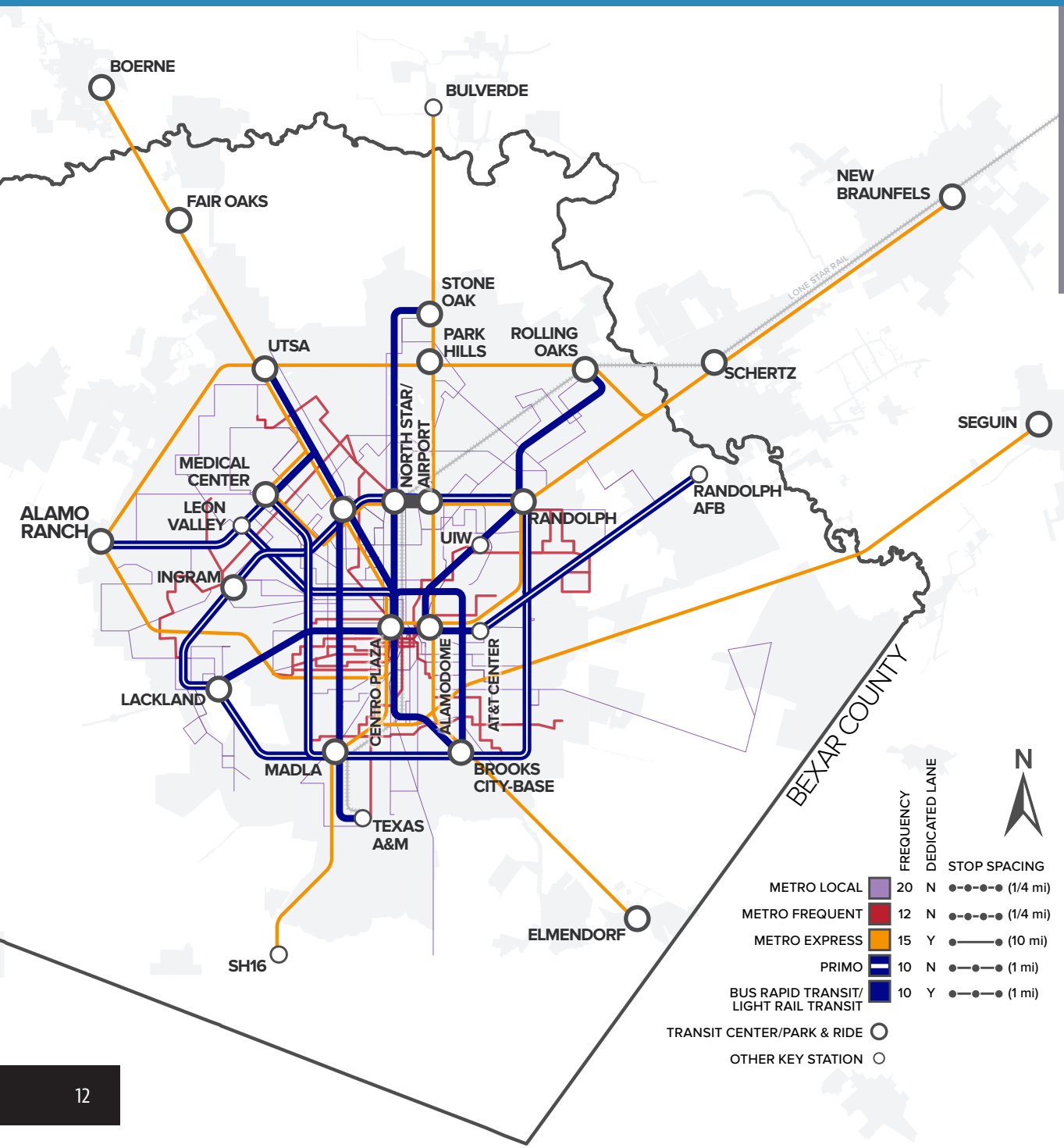
VIA Villa is adjacent to two UPRR freight railroad routes: the 'Austin Mainline 1' and the 'Kerrville Subdivision.' These routes provide the potential for implementing passenger rail service with shared track, or having new tracks installed adjacent to the existing freight tracks. However, these routes currently carry a significant amount of freight traffic.

Two studies conducted in 2008 examined the freight rail system within the Greater San Antonio Region and suggested truck and rail freight tonnage are expected to double over the next 20 years.[1] These studies noted that approximately 100 freight trains per day travel through/within the Greater San Antonio Region, but serve relatively few freight customers along San Antonio's inner-city routes.

The movement of freight below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, provides a safer and better connected pedestrian network spanning both sides of the railroad, creating an environment that catalyzes both public and private investment.

[1] Central Texas Rail Relocation Study, Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), 2008 and San Antonio Region Freight Study, TXDOT, 2008

FUTURE VIA SERVICE CONNECTIONS TO VIA VILLA



Increased population means more people utilizing transit and road systems every day. Moving more people with greater efficiency can be achieved by investing in public transportation elements such as 1) a better bus system; 2) a rapid transit network; and 3) innovative technological solutions.

One of the most significant VIA Vision 2040 Long Range Plan recommendations is the decrease in wait times and providing faster and more convenient trips for the core bus system users.

The VIA Vision 2040 Long Range Plan also includes recommendations for enhancing transit centers and local bus stops in the system.

Improved sidewalk and pedestrian facilities with covered waiting areas, make stops easier to access, safer, and more comfortable. An expanded network of support and maintenance facilities allows for a continuous level of service. A better bus system allows for more frequent service and new routes, resulting in an increase in VIA transit passenger activity at facilities such as Centro Plaza.

In addition to local route service, other VIA services that are provided at Centro Plaza include VIA Express and Prímo. As of 2016, there is a single Express route, and one Prímo route connecting South Texas Medical Center to Centro Plaza. In the future Vision 2040 network, VIA Villa could be a key connection for additional Express and Prímo routes, along with Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT).

Express routes have the ability, when coupled with a regional High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) road network, to make regional commute trips fast and easy.

BRT is similar to Prímo, but with its own dedicated travel lanes (not shared with automobiles) throughout most of a route. BRT is the fastest, most efficient bus service possible. In addition to traveling in their own lanes, buses have priority at traffic signals to improve reliability.

LRT is the most reliable component of the VIA Vision 2040 Long Range Plan, which would connect the region's busiest destinations and corridors of major growth. Rail tracks in dedicated travel lanes provide congestion-proof access to major community destinations and employment centers.

LRT and BRT routes serving VIA Villa may, in the future, have direct connections to UTSA, South Texas Medical Center, Brooks City Base, Our Lady of the Lake University, Downtown San Antonio, and the AT&T Center.

ORGANIZING TRANSIT SERVICES AT VIA VILLA

In a future scenario with multiple local and regional transit options accessible at VIA Villa, bus routes would serve Centro Plaza from Frio and Medina Streets, and both intercity bus and LRT would be located between The Grand and the UPRR right-of-way. Passenger facilities in this part of VIA Villa would be served at three levels, all with different types of rail service or intercity bus.

Each rail mode serving or bypassing the station would need to operate on a separate track. Providing for the different types of service in a vertical (stacked) arrangement uses less horizontal space at this station area, creating a compact, efficient transit center that can easily be accessed on foot or bicycle, by car, ride-hailing service, or through a connecting transit route.

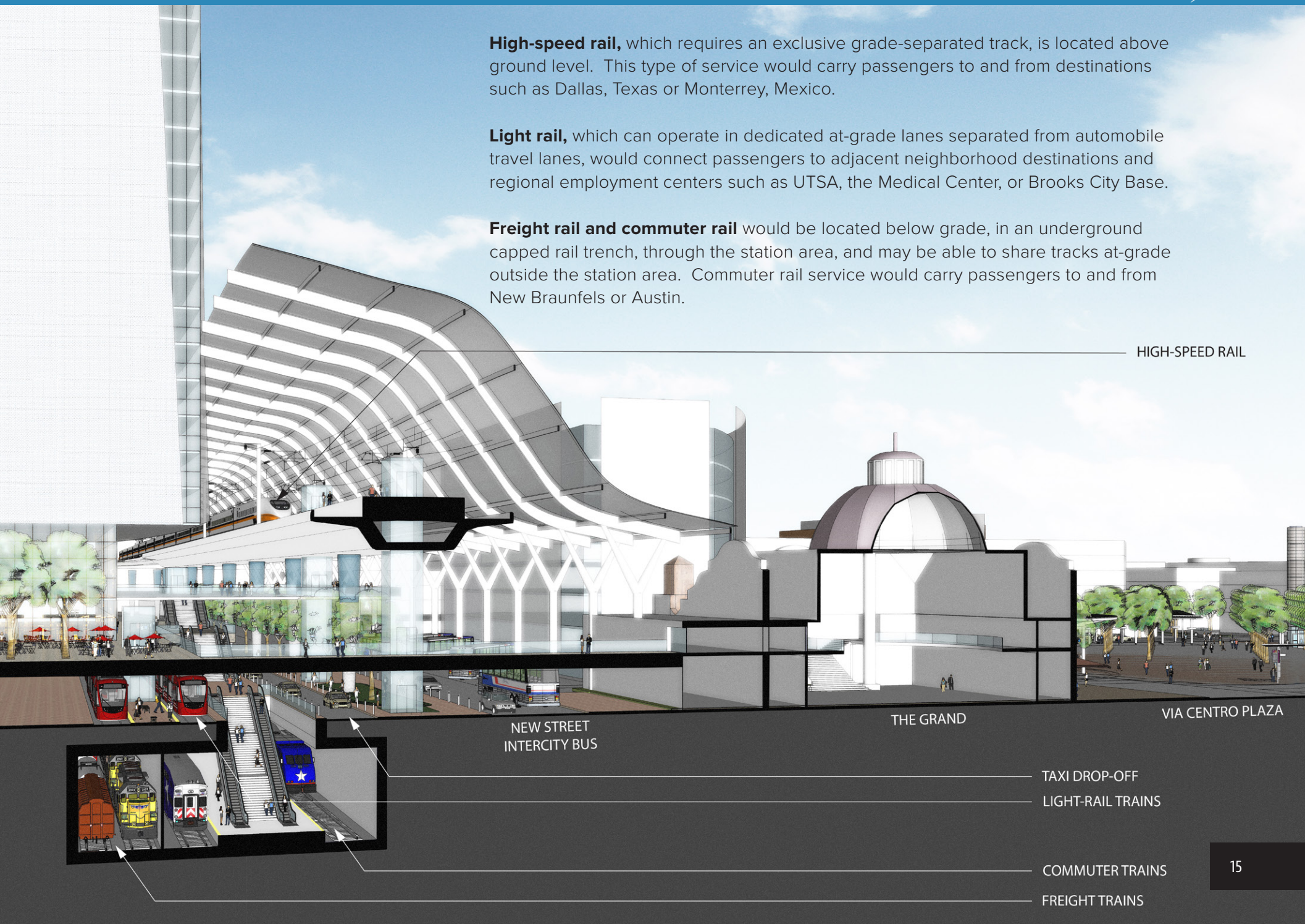
Placing the freight traffic and commuter rail underground also serves a safety function. A train crossing at street level, an "at-grade" crossing, not only causes delay for cars and people, but can be hazardous to pedestrians trying to cross the rail. A common safety practice is to limit this type of conflict where possible. Locating the freight and commuter rail service underground allows better-connected neighborhoods surrounding VIA Villa, and the street grid can become more continuous, which is a key quality of great places with successful economic development energy.

Without seamless connectivity, retail activity typically skips over several blocks, whereas places with continuous active streets are more economically competitive. The vision outlined in this VIA Villa Vision Plan creates a place that not only provides for a variety of excellent transit service options, but offers a station area that is economically vibrant, contributes to the economic health of the Greater San Antonio Region, and offers great places for nearby residents to visit, work, play, and learn.

High-speed rail, which requires an exclusive grade-separated track, is located above ground level. This type of service would carry passengers to and from destinations such as Dallas, Texas or Monterrey, Mexico.

Light rail, which can operate in dedicated at-grade lanes separated from automobile travel lanes, would connect passengers to adjacent neighborhood destinations and regional employment centers such as UTSA, the Medical Center, or Brooks City Base.

Freight rail and commuter rail would be located below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, through the station area, and may be able to share tracks at-grade outside the station area. Commuter rail service would carry passengers to and from New Braunfels or Austin.



OPPORTUNITIES FROM INFRASTRUCTURE

The feasibility of implementing passenger rail operations on the existing UPRR tracks, or reconfiguring operations through the VIA Villa study area is at the discretion of the railroad itself, and dependent upon the willingness of regional partners to invest in such an endeavor. During the research phase of this planning effort, numerous options were considered in order to integrate the UPRR crossing by pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles at a separate level. The options for going over or under the existing tracks are diagrammed on the left. For the purposes of this exercise, the option of placing the UPRR below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, was considered to be the safest passage for people using the street level, while at the same time expanding the capacity for freight, with the expectation and understanding that UPRR will have an increase in freight demand in the coming decades. This approach to the freight location also would allow for future continuous commercial development to be located along Martin, Commerce, and Buena Vista Streets, along with a new connection along Cesar Chavez Boulevard across Alazán Creek.

A relocation of freight rail to a below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, would be an expensive proposition, but not unprecedented. However, the enhancements it would catalyze to the immediate VIA Villa study area, surrounding neighborhoods, civic facilities and road network efficiency, combined with the overall improvement and safety to the regional freight railroad network, are extremely significant and well worth the investment.

Alameda Corridor, California

By locating the freight and commuter rail below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, the potential for Commerce Street to provide a new “address” for VIA Villa can be realized. In conjunction with a new multimodal transit hub that connects commuter rail, light rail, intercity bus and future high-speed rail with VIA bus services, the new Commerce Street commercial corridor could serve as the central spine for a new destination district that will stitch together the near west side neighborhoods of San Antonio with the center city. The Grand would serve as a destination along a new pedestrian-oriented vibrant street that reflects the history of San Antonio, respects and complements Zona Cultural and provides new opportunities for private development. By removing the bridge infrastructure, which creates a visual and economic barrier, the opportunity for a robust, transit supportive catalytic investment can be realized.

View looking west along Commerce Street

SECTION 3

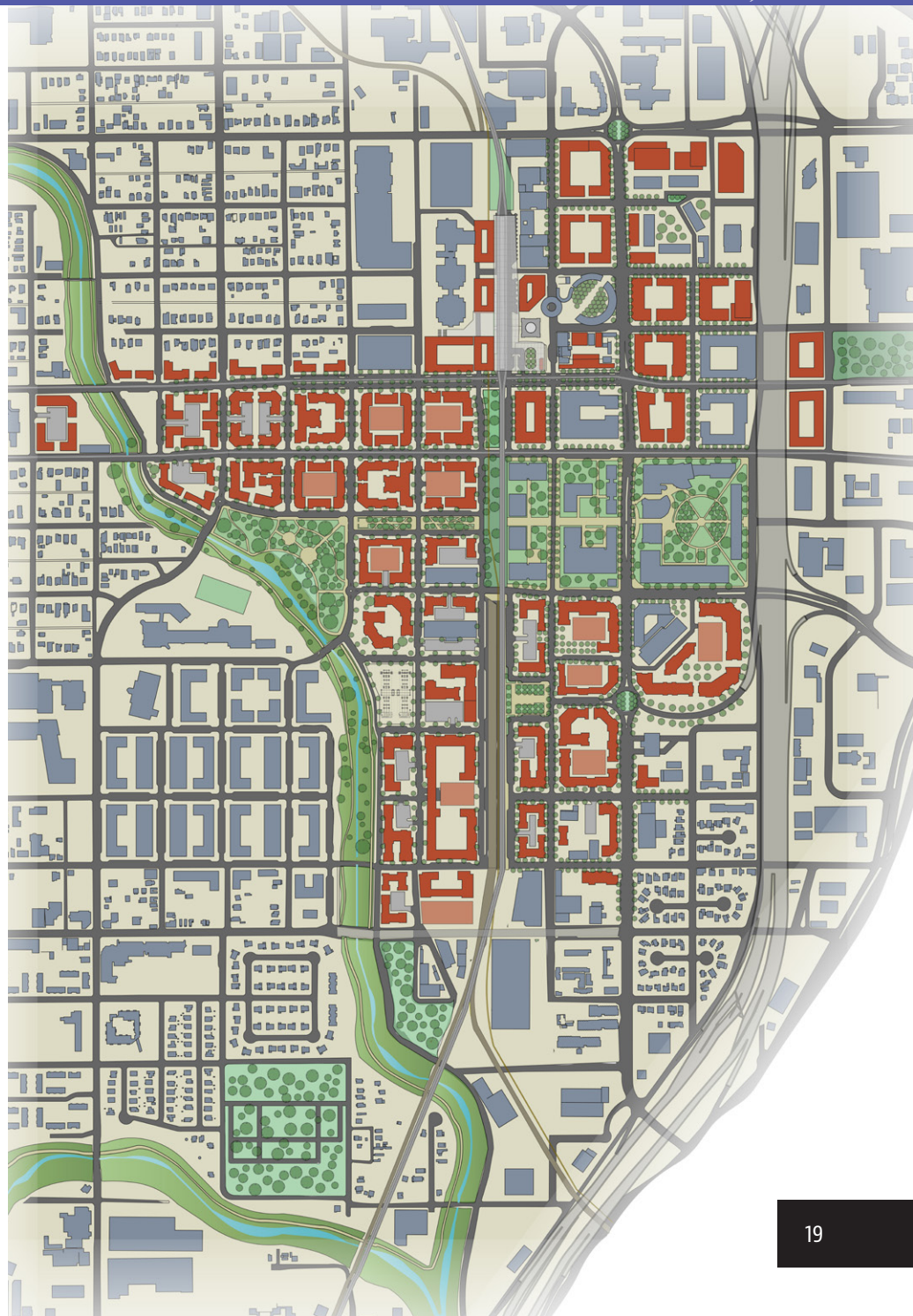
A VISION FOR VIA VILLA

A VISION FOR NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

The transit vision for this area will help to serve the transportation needs for the Greater San Antonio Region in the future. By relocating the UPRR below grade, in an underground capped rail trench through this area, Cesar Chavez Boulevard could be extended across Alazán Creek. This new connection, in addition to removing the Commerce Street and Buena Vista Street bridges, would greatly improve the connectivity between near west side neighborhoods and downtown San Antonio.

Proposed infill developments that include a mix of affordable housing, market rate housing, retail and office uses along with new small urban parks that are linked together will help to define a series of new potential districts surrounding VIA Villa. This vision also acknowledges future plans for the various institutions in the area. Emphasis is on the urban realm in terms providing development schemes that focus on accommodations for pedestrians, transit, and bicycles.

The ideas presented in this document are neither prescriptive nor limiting; rather, they are concepts for discussion. These concepts represent a place to begin imagining a bold and exciting future for VIA Villa and the near west side.



RESTORING NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity has been a longstanding challenge for the near west side community. The Alazán Creek served as an early barrier in the landscape, and over time, the railroad and Interstate were added as new barriers, further separating the near west side neighborhoods from access to employment opportunities in downtown San Antonio. Separation often results in a fragmented community that feels disconnected from desired community destinations.

The vision for the VIA Villa Vision Plan aims to restore connectivity between the near west side and downtown by converting such barriers into gathering places where people can come together from any direction. Once the Buena Vista Street and Commerce Street bridges are removed, these new 'at-grade' streets are reimagined as pedestrian-focused boulevards that also serve light rail, bicycles, buses, and cars. With the railroad placed below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, continuous commercial activity and safe passage along east-west streets is facilitated. An extension of Cesar Chavez Boulevard allows people traveling on foot, on bike or by car to enjoy new connectivity between neighborhoods of the near west side, VIA Villa, and downtown.

View looking East

1. **VIA Villa** is a multimodal transportation hub that could offer many planned transportation services for the Greater San Antonio Region.

2. **Vehicular traffic circles** at two ends of Frio Street perform as gateways into the redeveloped vision area. Frio Street should be improved as a true 'complete street,' prioritizing a pedestrian-friendly environment.

3. **Medina Street** could be reintegrated into the neighborhood, bisecting the large parcels currently owned by the City of San Antonio (COSA) and UTSA. This concept would reduce the size of the city blocks, reflecting the original street grid configuration. New developments along a restored Medina Street could create a mixed-use neighborhood composed of housing, retail, and office space.

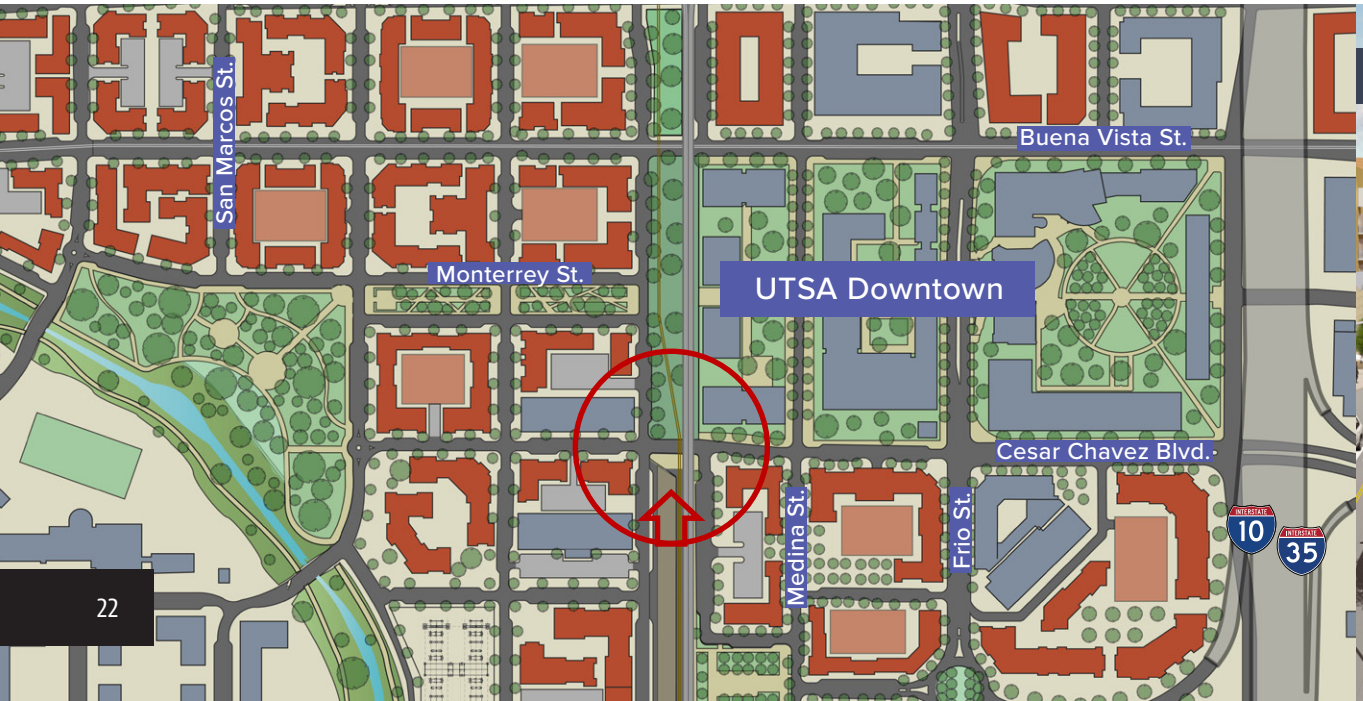
4. **Potential housing revitalization.** While a potential redevelopment of the Alazán-Apache Courts public housing complex is not directly addressed in this VIA Villa Vision Plan, in the future, the SAHA may offer recommendations that address the integration of these areas into this overall vision. Cesar Chavez Boulevard would provide the opportunity for a direct connection from the SAHA neighborhood to VIA Villa, downtown, Hemisfair Park, and the east side.

View looking northwest

CESAR CHAVEZ BOULEVARD

Cesar Chavez Boulevard, formerly recognized as Durango Boulevard, serves as the primary east-west corridor through the southern part of downtown San Antonio. It links I-37 and the new Hemisfair development on the east side of downtown to I-35/I-10 on the near west side of downtown, and extends west, for one block, to Frio Street; reintegration of the historic street grid would provide a continuous connection across Alazán Creek.

This important connection would cross a new light rail line at-grade where a boarding station would be located, and offer pedestrian, bike, and auto connectivity, across a deck constructed above the freight and commuter rail tracks. Cesar Chavez Boulevard would continue west from the tracks across Salado Street to a traffic circle at a possible Alazán Creek Park on San Marcos Street. The connection would continue southwest across a new Alazán Creek bridge, making a direct connection to Alazán Courts, Tefolla Middle School and Lanier High School. By extending this connection into the near west side, there is also connectivity to Brazos and Colorado Streets, which connect active industrial employment centers north and south of the VIA Villa study area, to neighborhoods such as Beacon Hill, Garnedale, Avenida Guadalupe, and Collins Garden.



MEDINA STREET

Similar to the improvements suggested for Cesar Chavez Boulevard, the opportunity to make a 'new' connection, by reintroducing a historic street alignment – in this case, Medina Street – is a key factor in making the connectivity between VIA Villa and the surrounding communities more complete.

While Frio Street serves as a prominent north-south connection through the VIA Villa study area, it also is one that is not currently conducive to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure needs. A 'new' connection along Medina Street offers the means to introduce a slower speed street that is targeted to the pedestrian, cyclist, and transit rider, thus allowing Frio Street to function primarily as a route for car access to the area from the Interstate.

With a modified Cesar Chavez Boulevard/ Frio Street exit ramp from the southbound Interstate, vehicles would be directed to Frio Street with the option to continue west to Medina Street, where there is opportunity for a new active open space for the neighborhood.

Medina Street provides a strong, direct connection between VIA Villa, UTSA and a new neighborhood just to the south, which intersects other direct connections at Cesar Chavez, Monterey Street, and the connection to the Interstate.

Most of the land where Medina Street would be located, west of Frio Street, is publicly owned. It would be at the land owner's discretion how to use each respective property. That said, this VIA Villa Vision Plan depicts how 23 acres can contribute to the transformation of a vibrant neighborhood.

View looking North along Medina Street

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The San Antonio community is significantly underserved with respect to open/green space. San Antonio's Westside Creeks run through the heart of San Antonio's near west side, and are rich in culture and history. These creeks have also been subject to some of San Antonio's worst flood events. The San Antonio River Authority is actively working to sustain and enrich life in the San Antonio River Watershed.

The restoration work on the San Antonio River Improvements Project has continued into the Westside Creeks. The vision is founded on four core philosophies – Water, Restoration, Connections, and Security. Redevelopment nodes created along these connections capitalize on new and enhanced recreational amenities and on economic development opportunities.

The concepts depicted in this VIA Villa Vision Plan envision a new park system for the near west side, providing green, shaded corridors between destinations, and enhance existing green spaces such as the Alazán Creek.

A newly envisioned Alazán Creek Park provides a direct gateway into the greater linear park system, from which a bold new parkway aligning Monterrey Street establishes a direct connection to the UTSA Downtown campus at Salado Street. By placing the railroad below grade, in an underground capped rail trench, through to Cesar Chavez Boulevard, the 'lid' atop the railroad would provide a green connection to VIA Villa along Salado.

While not a new concept, restoring creeks and rivers for the purpose of community

View looking East along Monterrey Street

enhancement, recreation, and economic development has been implemented in San Antonio with much success.

By restoring the Alazán Creek into a linear park and improving the access points underneath the freeway to the east, this area would no longer be an isolated and underutilized part of downtown. New, medium density mixed-use projects could be developed along the Creek and adjacent to UTSA and VIA Villa, creating a range of two to four story commercial and residential buildings. With new housing facing the enhanced park, a new set of housing choices for near west side community residents become available.

Restoration of the Alazán Creek could provide connections to an enlarged and enhanced public open space, with cultural and recreational amenities. The enhanced park could be served by both the Monterey Street parkway connection, and the Cesar Chavez Boulevard connection, with direct access for the students of Tafolla Middle School and Lanier High School as well as the residents of Alazán Courts.

View looking east across a newly envisioned Alazán Creek Park

Westside Creeks Restoration Project Conceptual Plan

SECTION 4

CATALYZING DEVELOPMENT

Centro Plaza has already had a major impact on VIA Villa by increasing visitation to the area and attracting private development. Additional transit investments will build on this impact, continue to attract attention to the near west side, and reduce risk for potential developers. VIA's transit investments, along with policies and actions of other local partners, can catalyze redevelopment around the transit station to drive ridership, increase the utilization of the transit amenities, and revitalize the area.

NATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Peer cities have successfully galvanized development activity and increased transit use by investing in large-scale multimodal transit hubs. Four such facilities were evaluated to illustrate the range of impact transit hubs can have on their surrounding areas and to understand how the strategic framework and investments generated the benefits: Denver, Colorado: Union Station; Charlotte, North Carolina: CTC Station; St. Paul, Minnesota: Union Depot and Memphis, Tennessee: Central Station.

In these cases, transit has made a measurable impact on market opportunity by increasing access and exposure to the local area and city as a whole.

Active commercial market conditions and the presence of and community uses in and around the station itself helped to increase development momentum.

Public-public partnership in Denver between the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and the City and County of Denver, and public-private partnership in Charlotte between Bank of America and Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), had far-reaching benefits. Investments in St. Paul and Memphis were standalone efforts by their respective transit agencies. As such, they were slow-moving and provided little motivation for development.

The integration of public financing tools with redevelopment and transit plans enabled the transit agencies to incite value premiums in the surrounding areas. These were invested back into the subarea to further drive investment. Hubs in Denver and Charlotte were redeveloped with the momentum of larger plans and were supported by the ability to leverage development slated for those areas.

NAME	DENVER UNION	CHARLOTTE CTC	ST. PAUL UNION DEPOT	MEMPHIS STATION
TRANSIT OPTIONS (MODE)	Commuter Rail, Light Rail, Amtrak, Local/ Regional Bus	Light Rail, Local/ Regional Bus	Light Rail, Amtrak, Local/ Regional Bus, Intercity Bus	Amtrak, Trolley, Local/ Regional Bus
PLAYERS	Public-private partnership	Public-private partnership	Transit Authority	Transit Authority
FOCUS AREA	Station and 19.5-acre master plan	Station	Station	Station and 17-acre master plan
RESIDENTIAL CAPTURE	6% (=3,425 units)	2% (=2,014 units)	20% (=1,663 units)	4% (=557 units)
COMMERCIAL CAPTURE (% OF CITY, 2000-2015)	39% (3.2 million square feet)	15% (3.1 million square feet)	0% (0 square feet)	0% (3,330 square feet)

Source: Economic & Planning Systems, VIA Villa Development Analysis and Strategic Investment Plan, 2016

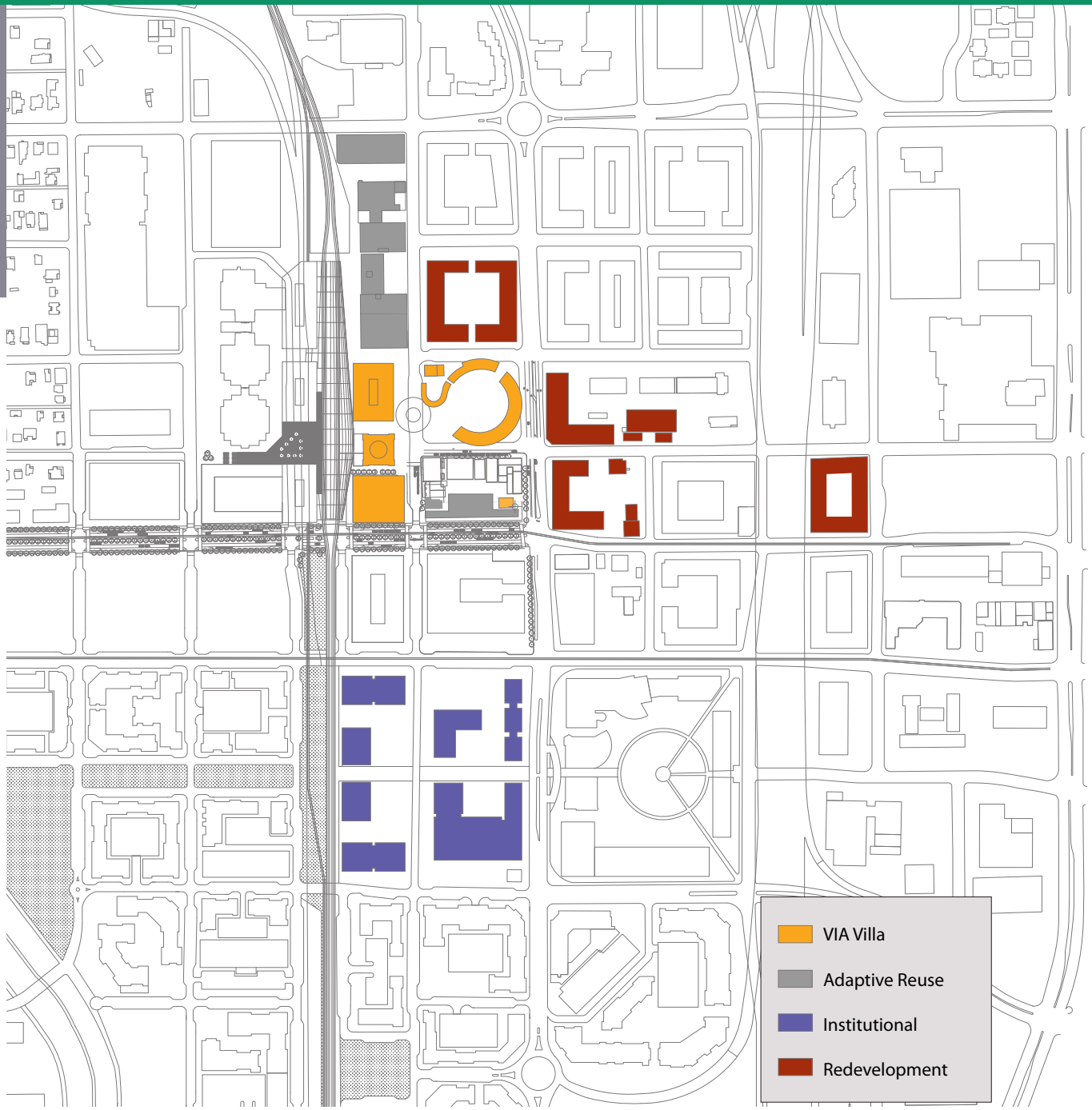
Case Study Findings

"Multimodal hubs," while not new in concept, are new in terms of recent implementation. Many cities are now considering consolidation of transit modes into one major hub in the city.

The combination of modes at hubs has the largest impact on spurring activity. No specific transit mode appears to be more or less helpful to catalyze real estate development. Transit modes were phased in over time.

PHASE 1: DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN 2016

VIA investments in the VIA Villa study area have set the stage for creating a transit-oriented environment. Over the next five years; investments in quality pedestrian amenities are needed to further support the area's potential. With The Grand serving as VIA's headquarters, and the investment in Centro Plaza, there has been a reorganization and increase of transit service. The additional activity of 2,500 riders per day through Centro Plaza in 2016, signals to retail and service markets that many potential customers will be present in VIA Villa as this presence continues to grow. A major public investment, such as Centro Plaza, reduces investment risk and provides developers and businesses with a degree of certainty that their investment in VIA Villa will be a good business decision.

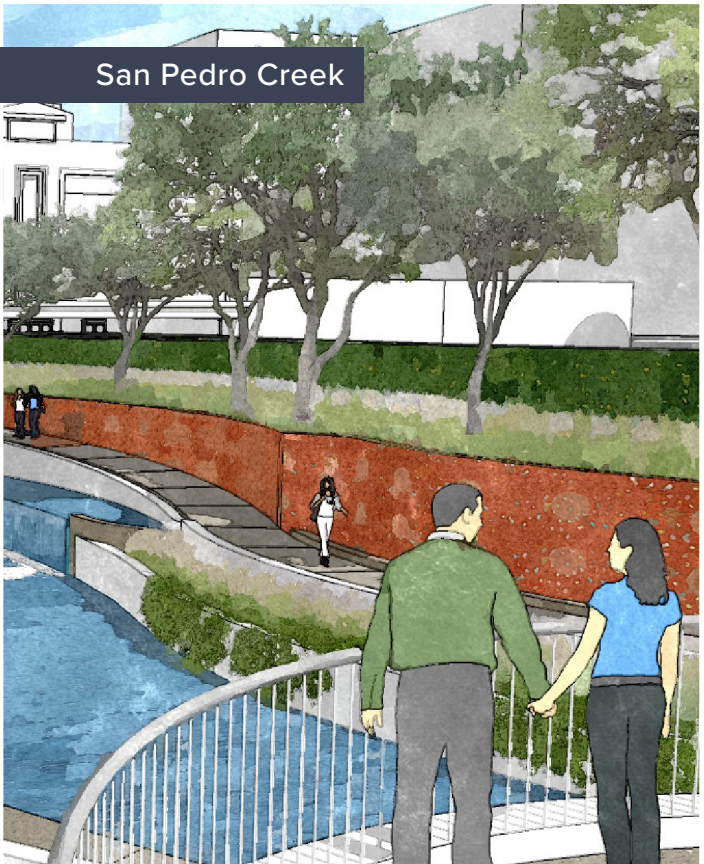


Note: Sites identified for redevelopment and reuse equate to potential market demand capture for a five-year period if investments in transit and the built environment occur as outlined in Phase 1

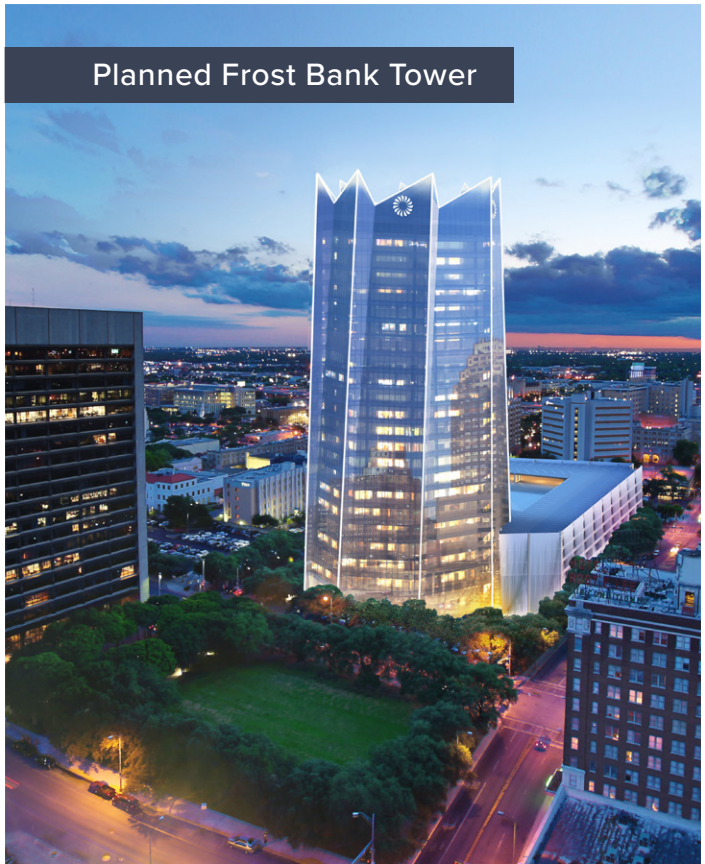
KEY ENHANCEMENTS

In combination with VIA's investment in VIA Villa and Prímo service, other public and private investments in the area have the ability to catalyze further development. Street enhancements and other place making improvements can also lead to increased interest in the production of residential development and retail spaces, to support UTSA and other employers. Office users looking for cheaper, 'edgy' office space within historic industrial buildings will likely seek out VIA Villa. Examples of improvements currently underway or under consideration that could spur new development include:

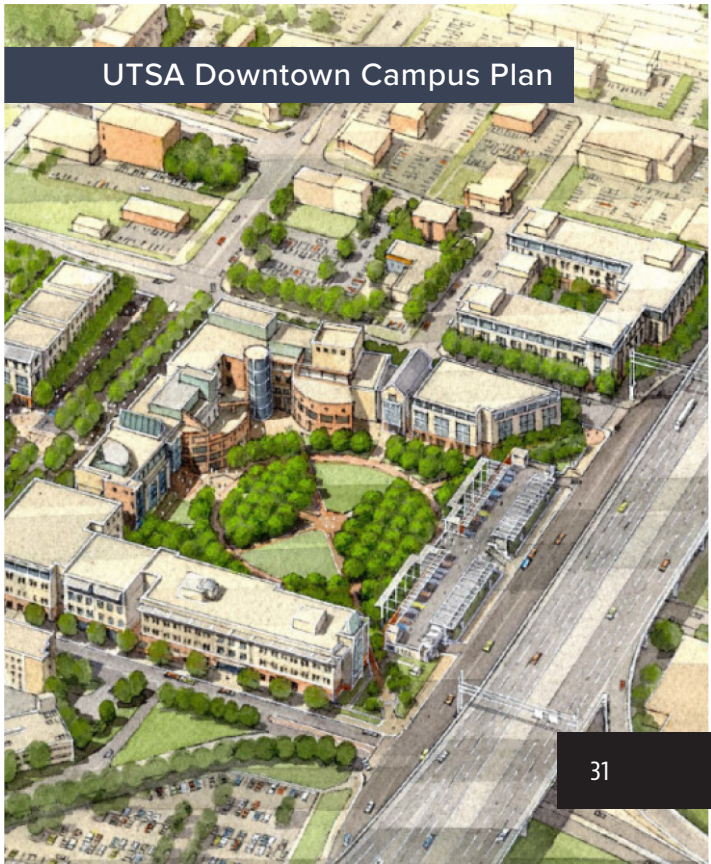
- Increased investment within the near west side of Downtown, including the planned Frost Bank Tower and the linear park improvements of the San Pedro Creek project.
- Increased UTSA activities, with the possible downtown location of the UTSA School of Education.
- Streetscape improvements along Houston Street and Frio Street.
- Proactive investment by VIA to support future transit services.



San Pedro Creek



Planned Frost Bank Tower

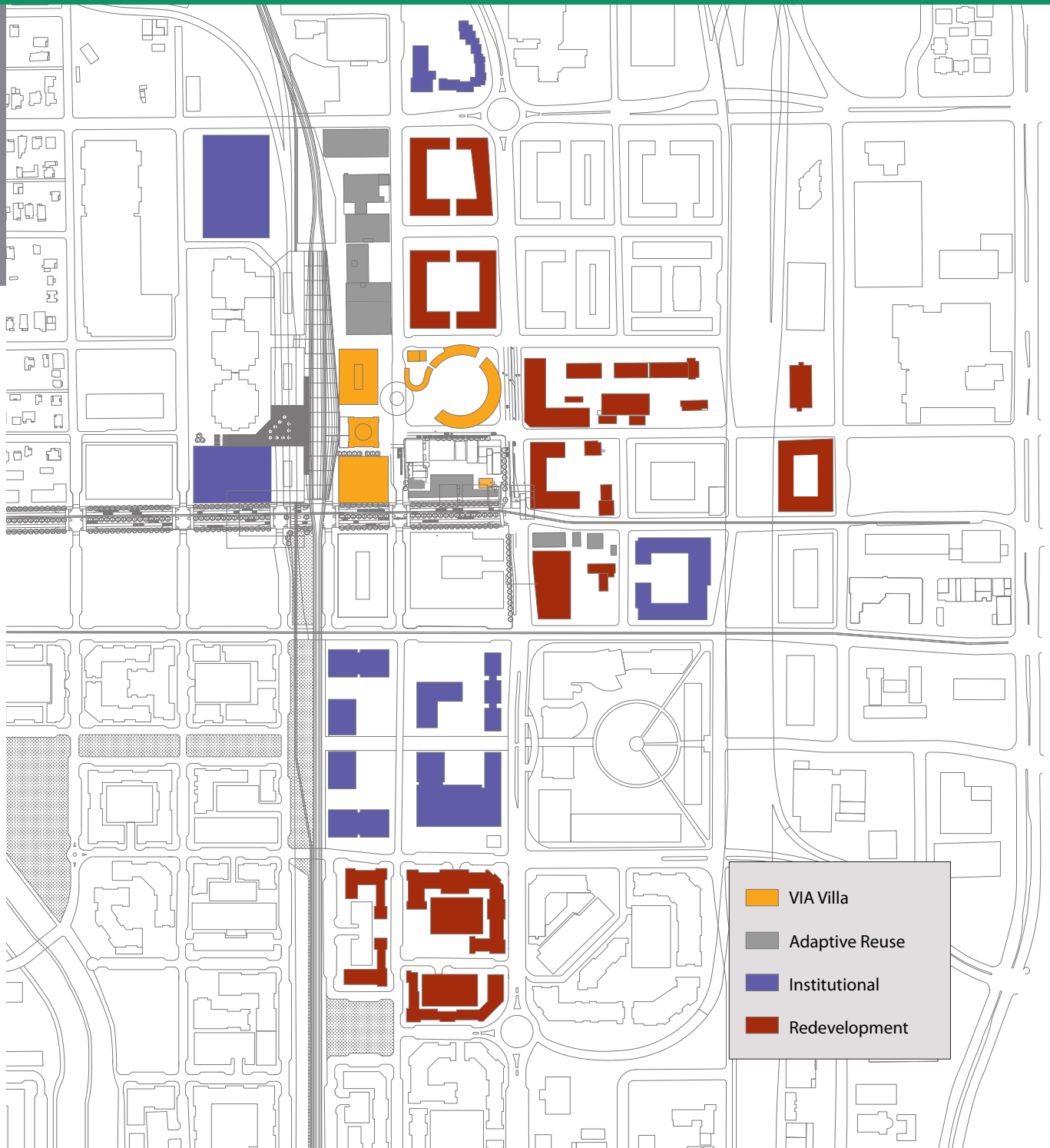


UTSA Downtown Campus Plan

PHASE 2: BEGINNING TO IMPLEMENT VISION 2040

Phase 2 is the introduction of fixed guideway, rapid transit service, such as LRT or BRT. The introduction of modern transit service to the Greater San Antonio Region with a central station at VIA Villa can help drive market pressure and lead to significant public-private development projects, reshaping Frio Street.

Relocating COSA facilities along the west side of Frio Street to other areas, such as the historic Civic Center, would facilitate the creation of a large catalytic development site, shown on the map. The relocation of COSA uses to the Civic Center could aid in buffering the edges of the jail on Commerce Street, making the street frontage more appealing to pedestrians and businesses.

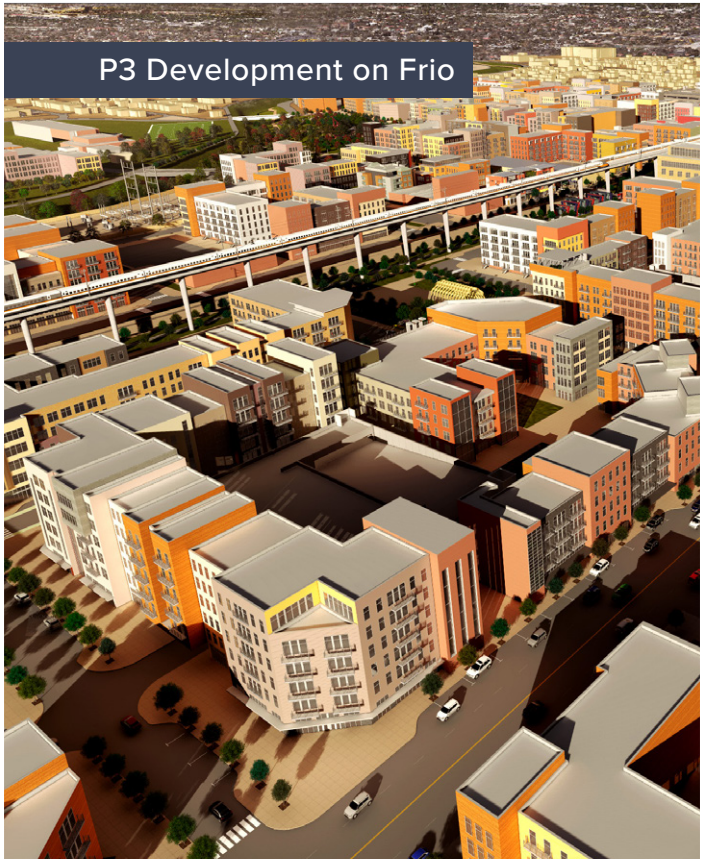


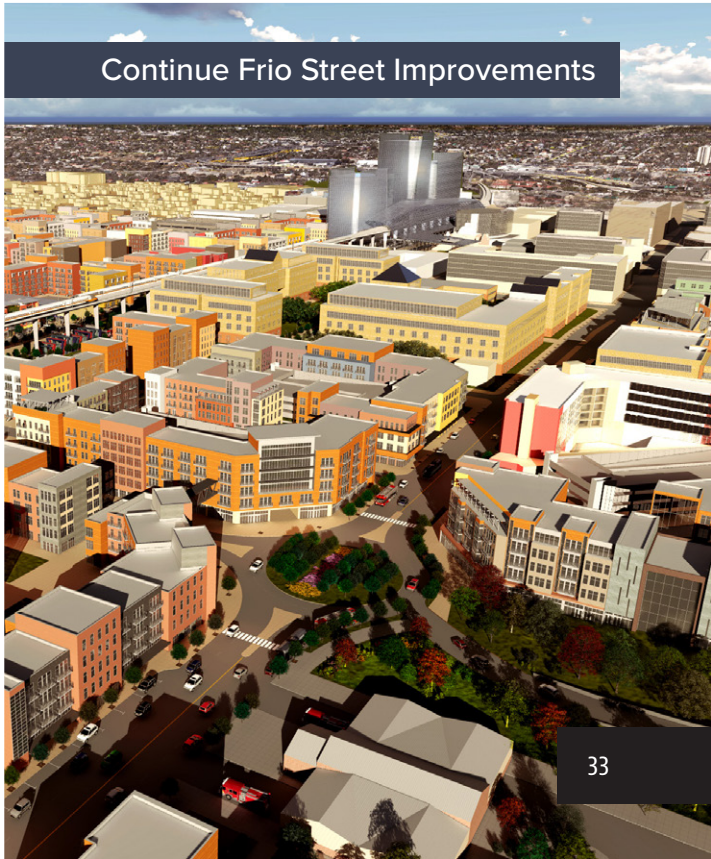
KEY ENHANCEMENTS

In Phase 2, key investments could lead to the increased capture of additional residential development (estimated potential of 10 percent of larger downtown market or 150 units per year), and the attraction of office development (estimated potential of 5 percent of larger downtown market or 30,000 square feet per year). These investments could also result in a mixed-use commercial and residential catalytic development. The necessary types of key investments and enhancements that could lead to these results include:

- Introduction of LRT or BRT.
- Partnership with local government to create catalyst redevelopment site on Frio Street.
- Continued investment in Frio Street to the South of Centro Plaza.

Rapid Transit Access


P3 Development on Frio


Continue Frio Street Improvements

PHASE 3: INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE & INTERCITY TRAVEL

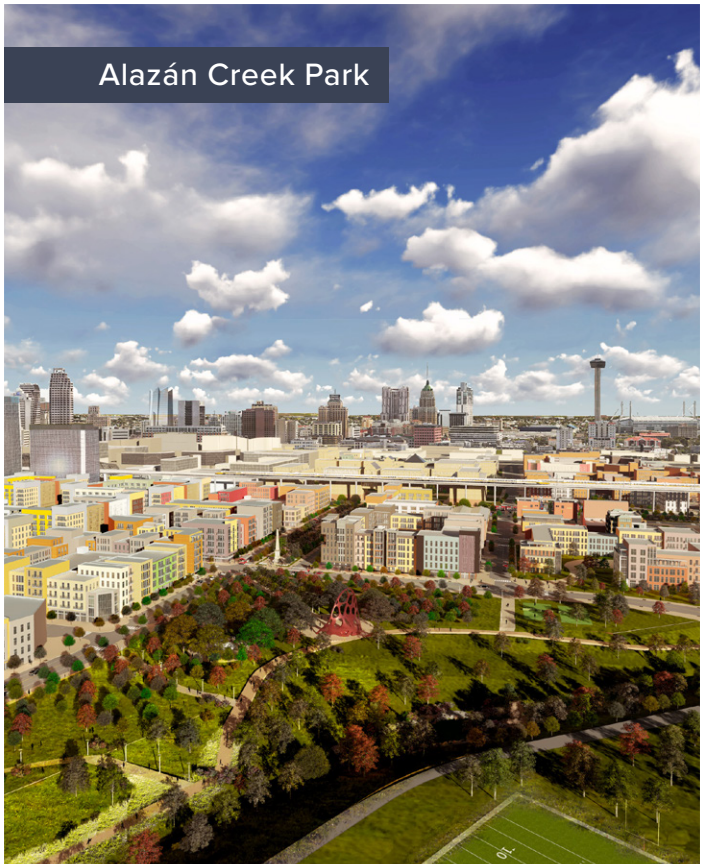
In Phase 3 of investments, VIA would coordinate with UPRR to locate freight rail service underground, eliminating at-grade rail crossings and allowing for Commerce Street and Buena Vista Street to return to at-grade only streets, with much enhanced streetscapes. The underground capped rail trench would link VIA Villa with the near west side neighborhoods. The at-grade streets would enable one of the key requirements of any commercial area success – continuous development along a street front. Commuter rail service connecting San Antonio to Austin could travel in the underground capped rail trench alongside the freight rail in the study area. These investments would spur major reinvestment in the area and would make development possible at densities matching downtown San Antonio.

KEY ENHANCEMENTS

In response to key Phase 3 investments, development activity in the greater downtown San Antonio area would increase and the VIA Villa study area would capture an even greater share of this development. There would be an estimated potential capture of 20 percent of residential or 300 units per year, and potential capture of 15 percent of commercial/office or 90,000 square feet per year. The necessary types of key investments and enhancement that could lead to these results include:

- Introducing commuter rail service to Austin.
- Moving freight and commuter rail to a shared, underground track, within the study area.
- Return Commerce Street and Buena Vista Street to ground level.
- Restore Alazán Creek and improve the greenway.
- Create a greenway system that connects Alazán Creek, UTSA, and VIA Villa.

Restored Commerce – Buena Vista Streetscapes


Alazán Creek Park


Freight Traffic Below Grade

PHASE 4: THE VISION FOR BEYOND 2040

Phase 4 represents a potential full build out of the study area, after high-speed rail is introduced to VIA Villa, which would connect the Greater San Antonio Region to destinations across the nation and to Mexico. Ultimately, the introduction of high speed rail would make VIA Villa the front door to the Greater San Antonio Region. The incorporation of large-scale development with the high-speed rail would link the business community and residents – via a seamless connection – to the high-speed rail.


GREYHOUND
VIA

REALIZING THE VISION

The choices that are made as a region about investment in transportation infrastructure and the patterns of community growth, will have far-reaching significance for the next several decades. As investments are contemplated in VIA Villa, the level and type of opportunities should be assessed as well as an examination of any opportunities that would be precluded by such an investment. This is especially true in VIA Villa, where significant investments are needed to encourage growth, to better connect VIA Villa with the rest of downtown San Antonio and to the near west side. These investments will enhance the walkability of the community and enable productive transit to serve the Greater San Antonio Region.

By coordinating plans, and planning together, all those that have a role and a stake in the community can create a VIA Villa that is an extraordinary place for locals, visitors and the people of the Greater San Antonio Region.

VIA VILLA PARTNERS	ROLE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNER ACTION
Municipal Planning, Economic Development, Transportation Staff	City governments have land use authority; they establish and implement type and location regulations for development. VIA Metropolitan Transit makes recommendations that land use regulations require high-quality pedestrian-oriented design for future uses, a mix of uses which allow for additional density. Cities make investments through programming and Bond initiatives to enhance and connect the community. Cities also have public financing tools that can help capture new tax dollars generated in the area and reinvest them into new infrastructure improvements within the area.
County	The County owns a number of public parcels in the study area and operates the County Adult Detention Center. There are a number of opportunities for the County to redevelop parcels and benefit from connectivity improvements.
San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA)	Since 2014, VIA has been coordinating with SAHA through the VIA/SAHA Interagency Committee to leverage planning, programming, and investment opportunities for the purpose of preserving and producing affordable housing near VIA station areas. This committee will consider and address current and future affordable housing opportunities at VIA Villa.
San Antonio River Authority (SARA)	VIA will coordinate with SARA, a partner with plans to enhance the beauty and function of the San Pedro and Alazán creeks, seeing the creeks as a potential community asset that can be enjoyed by citizens and visitors.
Developers & Businesses	Developers are encouraged to seek opportunities to stake a claim in the emerging near west side, VIA Villa. Developers are a major partner in revitalizing the area. The public investments made in the area help to create value for developers and reduce risk for developers. With the concepts in this vision plan, developers will be the major implementers of the vision.
University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)	UTSA can contribute to VIA Villa by implementing its Master Plan and making investments in the UTSA Downtown Campus.
Union Pacific (UPRR)	As the owner and operator of freight in Bexar County, UPRR will be an essential partner to the implementation of transit options shown in this VIA Villa Vision Plan.
Lone Star Rail District	This public agency should continue to take steps to advance the implementation of a passenger rail connection between San Antonio and Austin.

PARTNER ROLES TO IMPLEMENT VIA VILLA

1. **Developers –** While COSA policies and regulations will dictate development regulation, market forces and developer response will determine actual outcomes as to how much development is constructed or rehabilitated.

2. **VIA Metropolitan Transit –** Responsible for planning, developing, and constructing the transit station, with partner support, and participates in development partnerships. VIA will also plan, build, and operate on-street transit.

3. **COSA –** Establishes development regulations as well as policies and investments for complete streets and stormwater management. COSA investments in place-making will have a significant impact on the function and aesthetic of VIA Villa.

4. **Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) –** Has purview over state roadways and intercity rail oversight.