



# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS IN THE GREATER SAN ANTONIO REGION

**VIA**

DECEMBER 2016



# Strategic Plan for Transit Station Areas in the Greater San Antonio Region

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**1** | SECTION 1  
PLANNING IN A  
GROWING REGION

**13** | SECTION 2  
PLANNING TRANSIT  
STATION AREAS

**25** | SECTION 3  
REGIONAL FRAMEWORK  
FOR INVESTING IN  
TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE  
LAND USE

This plan provides an explanation of why a station area strategic plan is needed as well as the benefits for the Greater San Antonio Region from implementing the plan's recommendations. It presents the planning concepts that should be applied to station areas and lays out VIA's regional framework for investing in stations for the purpose of creating walkable communities.





➤ **SECTION 1**

**PLANNING IN A  
GROWING REGION**



## INTRODUCTION

A growing community means more people coming and going from new neighborhoods, places of work and commercial centers throughout the region. In preparation for the addition of 1.6 million more residents by 2040, transit is critical to both serve and shape the cities and neighborhoods it links. VIA is inviting innovative partnerships with municipalities and private investors to capture a portion of the tremendous regional growth over the next 25 years in walkable, compact and mixed-use developments with access to frequent transit services.



## Planning for Growth

The steady increase in population means that every long range plan update, every change in service and every new funding mechanism must take the growing population and changing landscape into account. It can take up to two years to envision, plan and implement a new bus route. By this time, over 100,000 new residents will have arrived and new neighborhoods will have developed. It is not enough to meet existing needs; VIA and its regional partners must continuously plan for the future.



## OUR GROWING REGION

The Greater San Antonio Region is experiencing extraordinary growth, with 1.6 million additional residents expected between 2010 and 2040, equivalent to the entire population of Austin.<sup>1</sup> Imagine a region with twice as many housing units and 1.3 million more cars on the road. The region has options for planning where and how this growth occurs, and by creating great walkable places served by transit, some new and current residents will choose these revitalized places near transit stations as home.

<sup>1</sup> Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Model, Texas Department of Transportation Statewide Analysis Model, 2014

### Why does VIA have a plan for transit station areas?

Planning for transit stations and creating walkable communities in transit station areas can help the Greater San Antonio Region grow in a way that makes land more productive and accessible to more people. Well planned stations will contribute to a strong economy and provide multimodal options for reaching daily destinations.

The Greater San Antonio Region is **growing** and **changing**.

Texas is the **fastest-growing** state in the U.S.

The region will add **1.6 million** new residents.

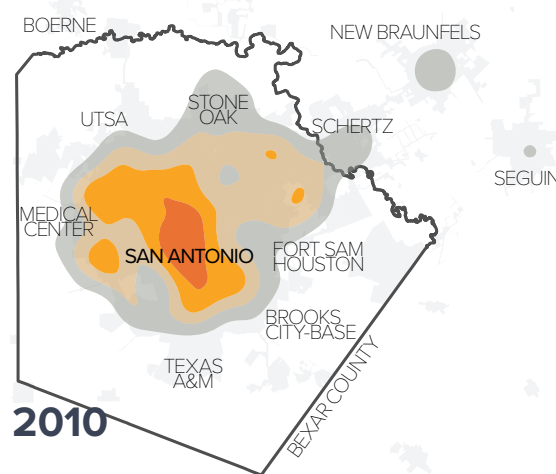
**838,000+** additional jobs

**1.3 million+** additional cars

between 2010 and 2040

Source: Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Model, Texas Department of Transportation Statewide Analysis Model, 2014

### POPULATION GROWTH



Source: Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Model, Texas Department of Transportation Statewide Analysis Model, 2014

As the region grows, moving vehicles will become **more challenging**.

By 2040, the average person

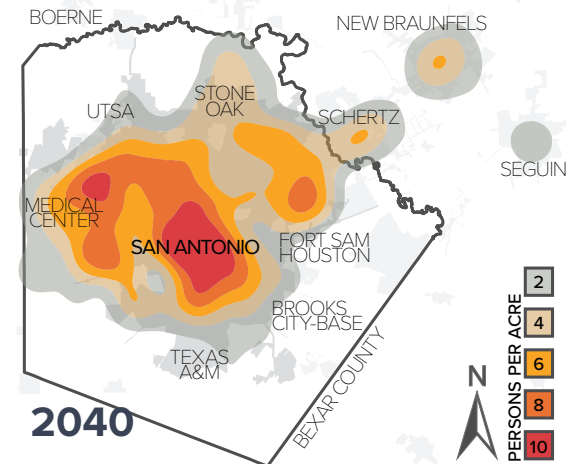
will spend **more time driving**.

**50 minutes** per day

**91 minutes** per day

Source: Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Model, 2014

Note: Average per capita values in 2010 and 2040 for 5-county travel modeling region; 2040 values assume no additional transit investments beyond current short-range planning, but include planned roadway expansions and investments





## TRANSIT CONNECTS COMMUNITIES

When transit service is frequent and rapid, it becomes a viable, reliable, stress-free option that people can use instead of a personal vehicle. This service is possible in areas with enough residents and workers to justify frequent service that is cost-effective.

By enabling walkable development near transit stations, the Greater San Antonio

Region can create transit corridors with nodes of density along the routes. This development approach centralizes growing transportation demand along these corridors and nodes in a manner that justifies frequent and rapid transit service.

This Strategic Plan for Transit Station Areas focuses on the strategies and coordination needed to facilitate walkable development near station areas. This would mean more options for people to locate in walkable, pleasant communities, and more

transportation options. People could live in communities where they could easily reach jobs, medical facilities, and other activity centers by transit, by foot, or on bicycle. Having these walkable communities and transportation choices available helps the region manage congestion, minimize travel delays, and grow a robust economy. At the same time, it will not impact, and actually preserve, single family neighborhoods for those that prefer suburban lifestyles.

## VISION 2040 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### STRENGTHEN **REGIONAL MOBILITY, DEVELOPMENT** AND **SUSTAINABILITY**

#### CONNECT COMMUNITIES



Provide community access to opportunities for jobs, education and other destinations

#### SUPPORT GROWTH



Support sustainable communities and economic vitality

#### PROVIDE CHOICES



Move people using a diversity of transit services and products

#### ENSURE STEWARDSHIP



Enhance and safeguard natural resources and the environment

### PROVIDE AN OUTSTANDING **MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION** SYSTEM

#### ENHANCE ACCESS



Enhance safe routes to transit by foot or bike

#### ENSURING EFFICIENCY AND RELIABILITY



Provide efficient and reliable congestion-proof alternatives

#### PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT



Engage to inform, involve, and empower communities

#### SUPPORT SAFETY



Support safe communities



## TRANSIT SUPPORTS GROWTH

Transit provides mobility for a growing number of our region's residents. Surges in population and economic growth in the region are historically tied to key transportation milestones, including the arrival of the first railroad in the late 1800's, mule-drawn trolley systems, development of the automobile industry, and the rise of the personal automobile. The projected 1.3 million new cars added to the region's roads would require the equivalent of 185 AT&T Center parking lots to provide a parking space for every new vehicle. Using space for cars takes options away

for new businesses, residential units, and retail development.

The ability to respond to increased transportation needs, due to population and economic growth, influences how the region remains economically competitive on a national scale. Many companies see distinctive competitive advantages to locating in vibrant, walkable downtown neighborhoods, attracting and retaining talented workers, supporting collaboration, and providing proximity to partners. Research shows companies also want locations accessible by a range of transportation options, especially commuting choices for employees and convenient access to the rest of the city and the region.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Core Values: Why American Companies are Moving Downtown, by Smart Growth America

The American economy is changing, and the Greater San Antonio Region wants to attract the high-growth industries that will lead the future economy, and the jobs and taxes provided by those companies. To support high-growth industries, the Greater San Antonio Region will need to provide supporting infrastructure. Investment in public transportation and walkable communities can potentially enable economic growth by providing the necessary connectivity desired by these companies.

Source: APTA, *The Role of Transit in Support of High Growth Business Clusters in the U.S.* (<https://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/TransitHighGrowthClustersUS-Final2013-1124.pdf>)

## SYSTEM DESIGN APPROACH

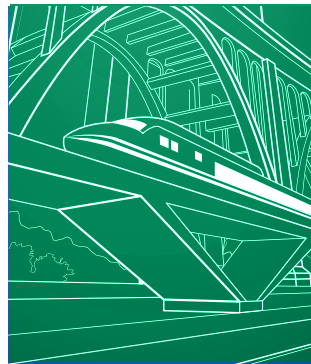
### City-Serving

- Transit network design driven by travel demands from existing population and employment centers
- Existing employment as organizing principle for where to put transit



### City-Shaping

- Transit network design driven by future growth goals and policies
- Transit as organizing principle for where to support growth



As the region prepares for the addition of 1.6 million more residents by 2040, transit is critical to both serve and shape the cities and neighborhoods it links.

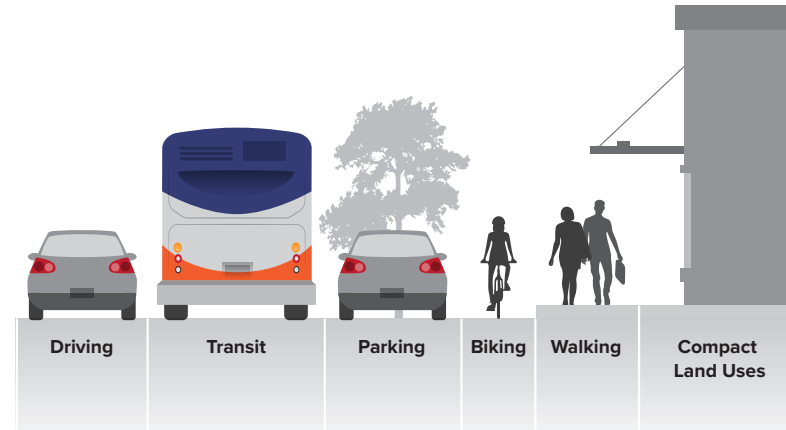


## THE ROLE OF TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

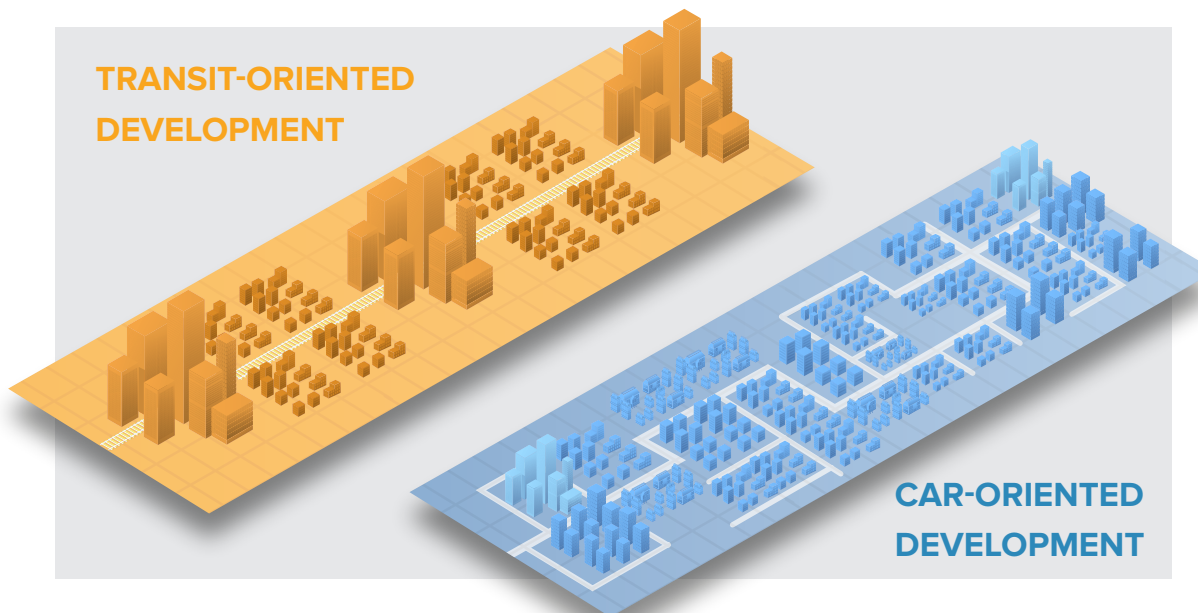
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is a compact, well-designed development style that requires land use patterns focusing on the movement, comfort, and safety of pedestrians while providing easy access to transit and a mix of destinations. To enable TOD, the region must develop a common vision to guide pedestrian-friendly land use in station areas.

This can be achieved by requiring buildings oriented to the sidewalk and by introducing complete streets, including sidewalks and pedestrian crossings, street furniture, lighting, and landscaping.

Compact, pedestrian-oriented land uses create nodes of density along corridors, enabling efficient and rapid transit while creating pleasant public spaces. Public investments can catalyze redevelopment around transit stations, helping create value and reducing risk for developers. Station area and corridor planning will be based on unique station area characteristics and market potential.



## TRANSIT AS AN ORGANIZING ELEMENT FOR GROWTH



## The Street is a Public Space between Buildings

Regardless if a person uses transit, rides a bicycle, or drives a car to their destination, they will spend some time walking, rolling or strolling. Policies that require quality building and pedestrian-friendly urban design will result in enhanced shared spaces for all, however one chooses to get around. Land use and zoning regulations impact the size, use and form of buildings and how they provide for a walkable environment.



## VIA VISION 2040 LONG RANGE PLAN

Increased population means more people utilizing the transit and road systems every day. Moving more people efficiently 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 that match people with the most efficient travel options. This is the regional transit vision for the greater San Antonio community.

Building from the 2035 Long Range Plan and informed by public input at each step along the way, the regional transit Long Range Plan was developed based on an in-depth assessment of transportation needs that identified a range of options and evaluated community priorities to ultimately define an unconstrained vision of projects, plans and policies.

*To view the Vision 2040 system map, see page 8 of this document.*

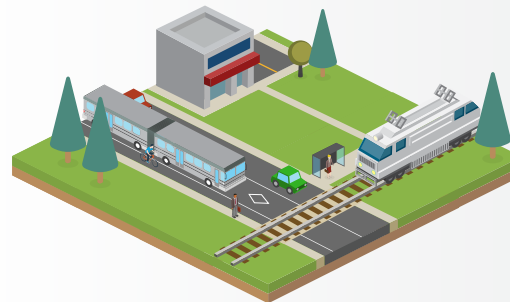
Robust systemwide improvements to the bus network:

- More frequent, reliable transit across the entire network
- Improved frequency on Metro Local and Metro Frequent routes
- More Primo priority bus routes
- Safe routes to transit

### BETTER BUS SYSTEM



### RAPID TRANSIT NETWORK



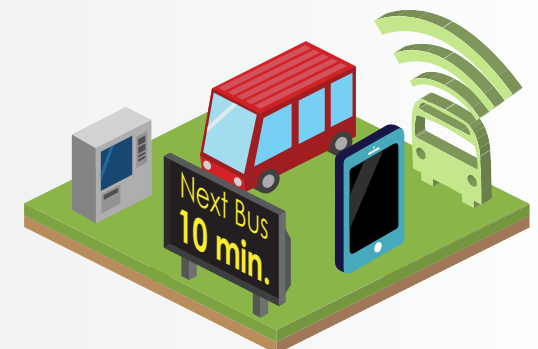
Network of corridors connecting the region's major community destinations and employment centers:

- Rapid transit (light rail or bus rapid transit in dedicated lanes)
- Metro Express in High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes connecting Park & Rides to key destinations

Investments to keep the system smart and flexible:

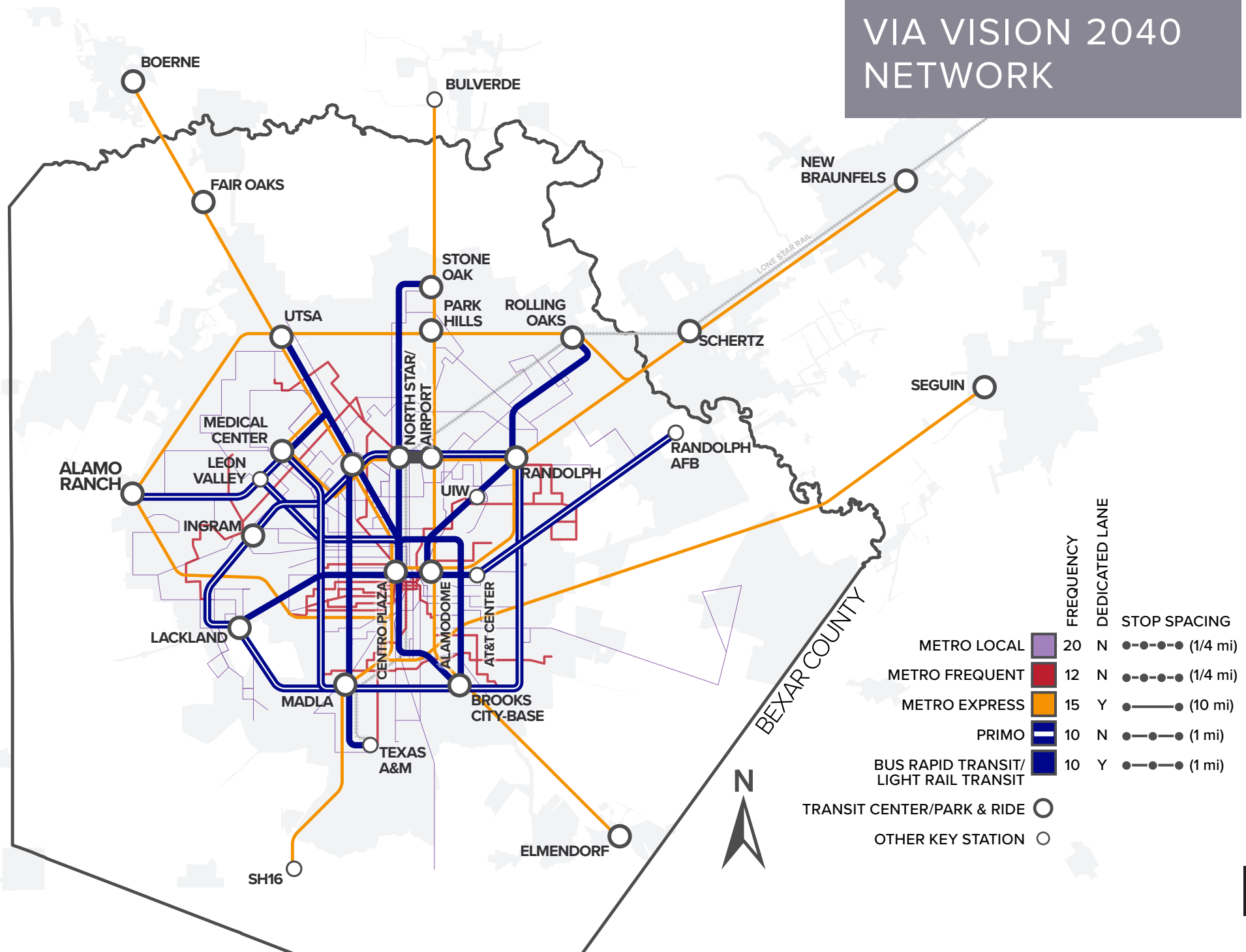
- Emerging technologies
- Mobile applications

### INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS





# VIA VISION 2040 NETWORK





# TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE LAND USE PLANNING

For Transit-Oriented Development to be possible at stations areas, municipalities in the Greater San Antonio Region will need to have land use policies and zoning codes in place that allow and encourage TOD. As this walkable, compact form of development is a critical component of successful transit, VIA has been developing recommendations for various types of stations areas, and the policies, zoning, and investment types that would help to make station areas successful, such as making a place more walkable by improving design quality, reestablishing a street grid, adding a diverse mix of uses and services, and increasing density.



**Density** – Increased neighborhood amenities and destinations near stations and stops influence the type of transit services offered in an area. Transit frequency is directly dependent on density – the more people and jobs within an area, the more transit frequency is justified.



**Design** – Buildings designed for the pedestrian; placed and oriented along the front of the street with parking on-street, placed behind or structured, and with direct access to first floor building activities are vital components of transit-supportive design.



**Mix of Uses** – Providing a mix of residential, employment, and retail uses within walking distance of a transit stop or transit station is beneficial to the community make walking and transit more efficient choices for meeting daily needs.



**Walkability** – Pleasantly designed, walkable places are attractive areas where people desire to travel on foot or by mobility device. Active streets that have development that is continuous along many blocks encourages economic activity. Investments to improve the pedestrian realm include streetscape enhancements in public spaces, such as continuous level surfaces, street furniture, lighting, landscaping, and shading devices.

## Land Use Planning

*How municipalities manage the development of land*

## Transit-Supportive Land Use (TSLU) Planning

*Managing the development of land to enable productive transit service*



## COORDINATING TRANSIT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

To support growth and continue the vibrancy of the region's economic centers, the community needs easy, reliable, and congestion-proof choices for traveling to and from work, school, doctor appointments and other destinations. The key to being able to provide these options is ensuring the way we grow supports the implementation of the Vision 2040 Long Range Plan.

To implement TOD, VIA will coordinate with partners to support TOD through joint development, regional coordination, and by implementing proven strategies to develop successful transit stations. VIA cannot control the mix or type of development that occurs near key transit stations, so coordinated planning is critical to create great places for all people in the Greater San Antonio Region and enable the efficient movement of people by transit.



### TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Targeted development organized around key transit stations and corridors give residents choices on how they live and access their daily services, and routes to key work and entertainment destinations.



#### **Compact Mixed-Use Development –**

Live-work-play style development, at appropriate densities, keeps amenities and activities within reach; thereby eliminating the need for many vehicular trips.



**Complete Streets –** Well designed pedestrian, bicycle and transit-friendly infrastructure makes trips more pleasant, safe and accessible.



*Operating Improvements*



*Capital Projects*



*Policy Goals*



### COORDINATED PLANNING

VIA partnerships with other local governments, local businesses, regional municipalities and peer agencies keep development diverse and the economy strong.



**Joint Development –** Joint development projects bring public and private stakeholders together to stimulate the economy and invest in the region's future.



**Regional Coordination –** Regional coordination ensures all communities are moving in the same direction with a shared vision of future mobility and identify investments that support that vision.



**Land Banking –** Planning for tomorrow's future land acquisition needs today, including buying land early in the planning process and preserving it for later development, ensures additional access to key destinations for years to come.

## BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC GROWTH AROUND TRANSIT FOR THE COMMUNITY

In addition to improving the transit rider experience and moving more people with the same amount of resources, TSLU and strategic growth also provides measurable benefits for the community, increasing quality of life factors like walkability, air quality, and fostering long-term economic development. These benefits are good for people, the community, the economy, and the environment.

Walkable communities can reduce the household transportation costs for the average person, because if people have an alternative to driving alone, transportation costs can be stable even when gas prices rise. By providing transportation options, as some people choose to go to their destination on foot, bicycle or transit, the number of cars on the road will be minimized, reducing traffic delay.

Implementing TSLU, and providing more mobility options, is a real solution for the improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By pursuing strategies to add density to key locations near transit stations, the Greater San Antonio Region can preserve open space, natural resources, and existing neighborhoods.

Among Vision 2040 respondents, there is **high demand** for the ability to link

**work, shopping and entertainment**

...via **transit or pedestrian access:**

live-work-play was identified as a feature that would make transit a more convenient travel choice for thousands of respondents.

Source: Vision 2040 Community Outreach Survey Results, 2015



## BENEFITS FOR PEOPLE

- Reduces household transportation costs
- Provides stable transportation costs even when gas prices rise
- Reduces time spent in traffic
- Increases transportation mobility and housing choices
- Expands access to services, jobs, and other destinations
- Create more attractive, walkable communities.

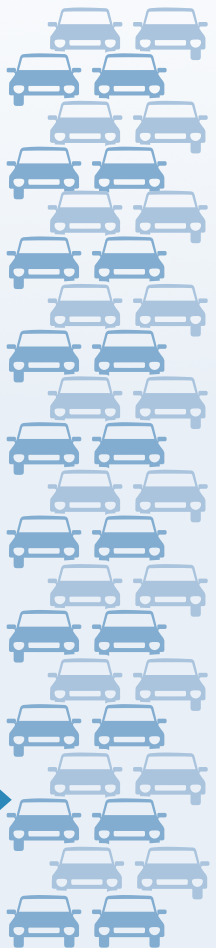
## BENEFITS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions
- Preserves open space and natural resources
- Improves air and water quality

Investing in Transit-Oriented Development can **increase the amount of people using transit**

**16%**

**One full bus**  
can move as many people as 40 cars.



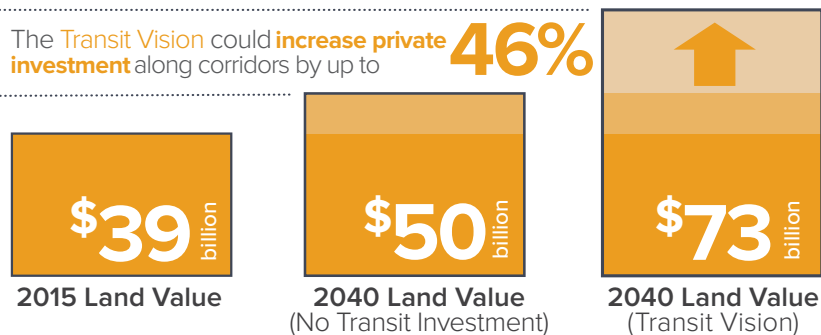


## BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC GROWTH AROUND TRANSIT FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND DEVELOPERS

There are major benefits to TSLU, often generating a significantly higher return on investment through more efficient land use for both developers and municipalities, creating more value out of less land, and by employing strategies that help create value within communities.

TSLU can help municipalities reduce congestion and improve quality of life while providing fiscal benefits. By implementing TSLU through zoning and public infrastructure investments, these more efficient land uses can increase revenue for local governments through infill development and more efficient utilization of land. Implementing TSLU using these methods reduces infrastructure costs since much of the infrastructure is already in place.

The **Transit Vision** could **increase private investment** along corridors by up to **46%**



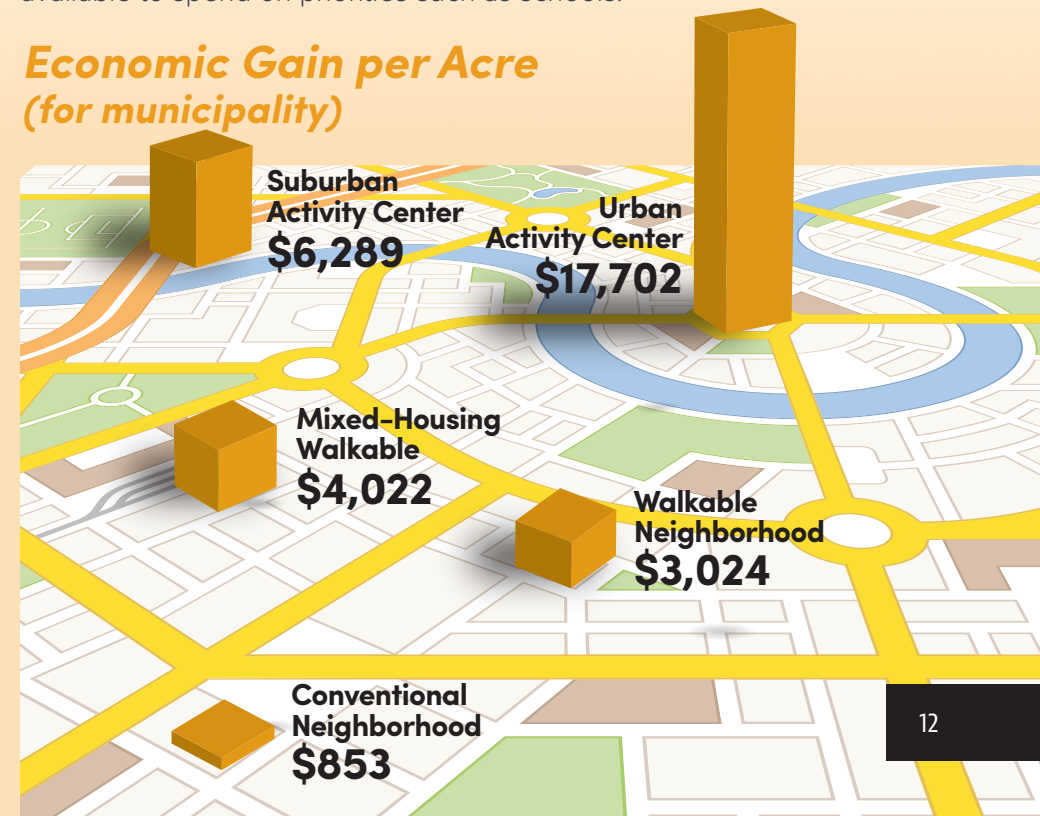
Source: Economic Planning Systems, Comprehensive Plan Initial Studies Component 3: Fiscal Impact of Alternative Growth Scenarios

## BENEFITS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

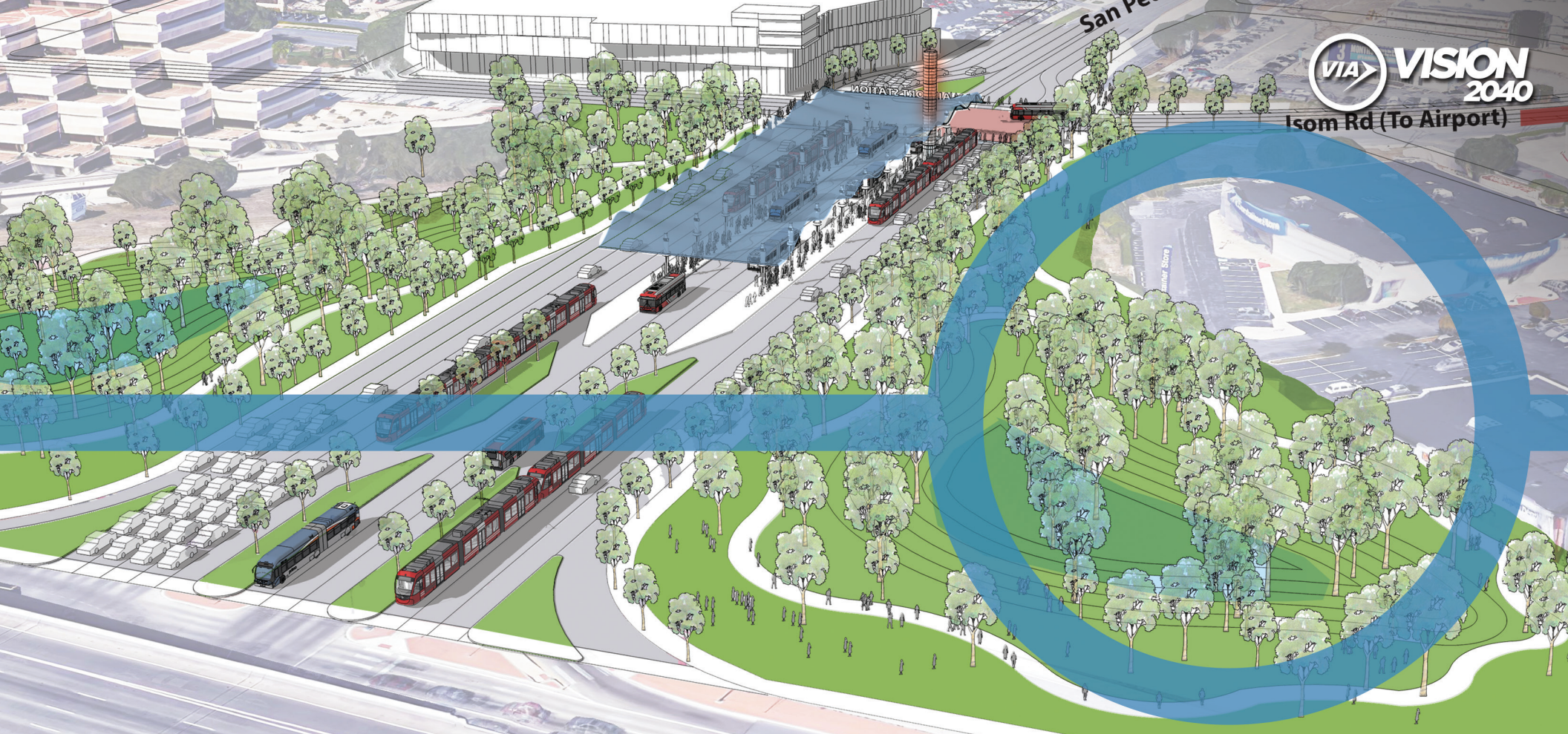
- Promotes redevelopment and reinvestment in existing communities
- Increases revenue generated from more efficient land use and new development
- Leverages existing infrastructure investments
- Reduces the need for expensive roadway expansions

Consider all the expenses related to police and fire services, infrastructure maintenance, schools, and other community services. Next, consider the sales and property taxes along with other fees we all pay to cover those expenses. Compared to other development types, compact, mixed-use development, per acre, is more cost-effective for a municipality. This benefit means more funds are available to spend on priorities such as schools.

### Economic Gain per Acre (for municipality)



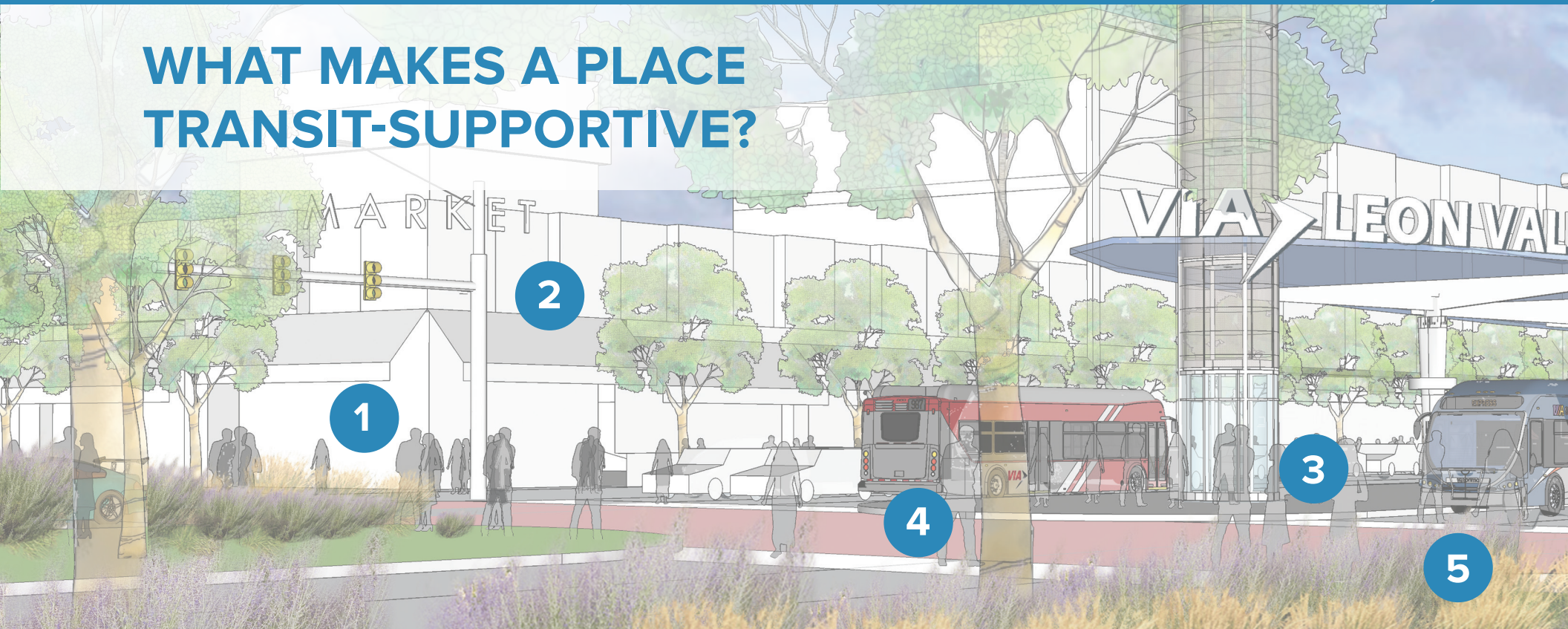




## ➤ SECTION 2 PLANNING TRANSIT STATION AREAS



# WHAT MAKES A PLACE TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE?



- 1 Quality urban design includes buildings placed near sidewalk signs readable for people walking and storefronts with windows at street level.
- 2 Compact mixed-used development provides access to a variety of services reachable on foot, and added density that provides new housing and employment opportunities, creating a successful transit-oriented environment.
- 3 A multimodal environment provides travel options to employment centers.
- 4 Streets designed for people walking are safer for all users – features might include colored walkways, pedestrian islands, or count-down timers.
- 5 Greenscape can make a place more pleasant, provide shade and a cooling function for the built-environment, and function as “green infrastructure,” managing water run off.











## STATION AREA TYPES

Potential station areas were identified through a process that involved the use of data analysis and partner input. Most VIA transit stations along the Rapid Transit Network corridors have been identified as one of the station area typologies, which include:

- Urban Center.
- Community Corridor.
- Neighborhood Main Street.

*Transit Stations are planned throughout the Rapid Transit Network.*

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  Downtown                 |  Regional Activity Centers |  Waterways            |
|  Urban Center             |  Station Area              |  Parks and Open Space |
|  Community Corridor       |  VIA Vision 2040 Network   |  Incorporated Areas   |
|  Neighborhood Main Street |  Major Roadways            |  |

A **stop** is a designated place where VIA vehicles stop for passengers to get on or off to reach destinations.

A **transit station** is a place where passengers access rapid transit or transfer between routes and can be located at key destinations such as hospitals.



## DEFINING TYPES OF STATION AREAS

### TSLU Elements – the Basis of Transit Typologies

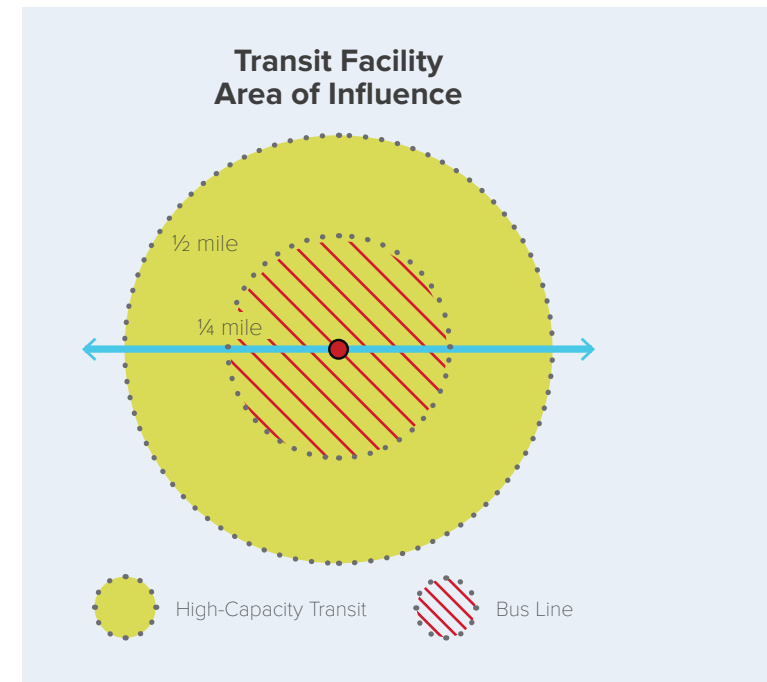
In 2014, VIA established, through the TSLU Guidelines, a series of stations types (typologies) to guide transit facility development and the associated land use patterns necessary to support a facility. These guidelines provide a set of clear and understandable expectations that describe the type of development expected within transit communities.

The goal of using the typologies is to assist local governments in developing specific policies and strategies that consider market forces and engage the private sector to set realistic expectations for development within the transit area of influence.

In general terms, a typology for a station area includes the area surrounding and

adjacent to a transit facility and varies in size, depending on the access priority of the transit facility. For a major transit facility or high-capacity transit station, the area of influence is ½ mile walking distance from a station and ¼ mile walking distance from a bus route.

The transit typologies are presented in relation to these common elements of transit supportive land use, including walkability, pedestrian oriented-design, mix of uses and density. The transit typologies are translated into three categories in the TSLU Guide: people, public realm and physical form.



#### PEOPLE

density of people and the surrounding activity level



#### PUBLIC REALM

public facilities and amenities like sidewalks, landscaping and crosswalks



#### PHYSICAL FORM

physical structures, such as buildings and their attributes, and parking facilities

## RECOMMENDING LAND USE POLICY

There are many different station types, but not every neighborhood in the Greater San Antonio Region will have a transit station. Transit stations and investments will occur over time along the proposed Rapid Transit Network. For those neighborhoods that will have transit stations, the type of station and types of improvements and investments in the station area will depend on many factors such as anticipated growth and market potential near the station, as well as the current type and level of development near the station.

VIA will develop plans for stations through a planning process that will include extensive partner and public input and recognizes that local governments' land use regulations will impact how the region manages growth and travels.

Typologies are a way to communicate with local municipalities about what the different transit stops might look like, how they might function, and the type of development and investments that could be expected in the station area. This development and investment can only occur if each jurisdiction updates their land use policies, developer incentives, and zoning code to permit the types of development associated with the proposed station types.

## STATION AREA TYPOLOGIES

### CENTRAL STATION



### URBAN CENTER



### COMMUNITY CORRIDOR



### NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREET



### COMMUTER



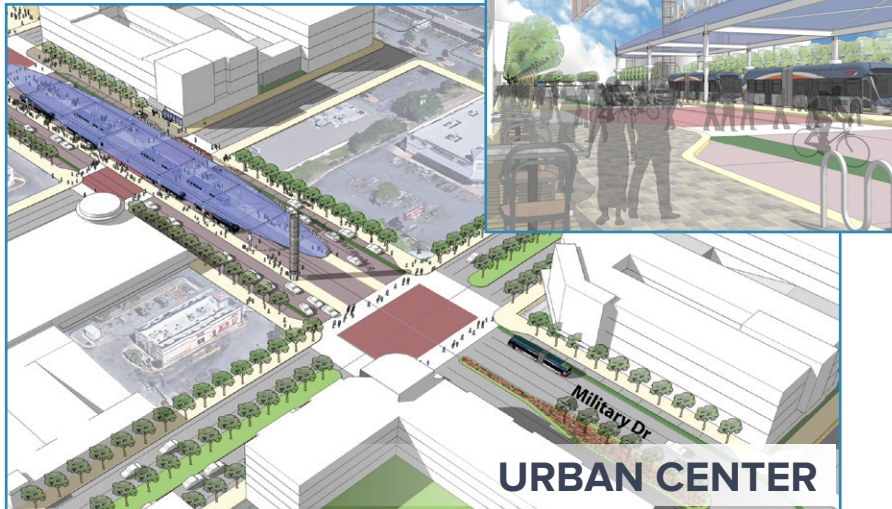
### DOWNTOWN STOP





# STATION AREA CONCEPTS

CONCEPT FOR POTENTIAL TRANSIT STATION AT ZARZAMORA STREET AND SOUTHWEST MILITARY DRIVE



CONCEPT FOR POTENTIAL TRANSIT STATION AT E. HOUSTON STREET AND NEW BRAUNFELS AVENUE



CONCEPT FOR POTENTIAL TRANSIT STATION AT BANDERA ROAD AND POSS ROAD



An Urban Center can support a substantial amount of development and activity. The station's area of influence will likely extend for many blocks catalyzing development and investment up to ¼ mile or ½ mile from the station. Community Corridor and Neighborhood Main Street stations are larger in number but less substantial in their area of influence than their station/urban center counterparts. Community Corridors might be expected to catalyze several square blocks of development, while investment and infill at a Neighborhood Main Street Station might be expected to occur along the blocks immediately adjacent to the transit center.

## STATION AREA HOUSING

Diverse housing choices near frequent transit is key to supporting regional growth and economic activity. Not all station areas will have the same amount, type, and mix of housing, but successful station areas ensure an array of housing types meeting the needs of current and future residents as stations areas are developed.

The VIA station typologies provide recommendations on the type, amount, and cost of housing that could work best at each particular station, serving as guidelines for local municipalities, other agencies, VIA, and the public.

### The Importance of Housing “Balance”

Getting the right mix and balance of housing types is important for many reasons:

**Jobs** – Providing a wide variety of housing means people can choose to live in places where they have options for commuting. The right transit/housing combination can help people reach their destinations more easily.

**Affordability and Equity** – Intentionally preserving and producing affordable housing near stations, and providing a wide variety of housing types can better serve people of all incomes.

**Quality of Life** – Getting the right mix of housing means people can find a neighborhood and transit service that best suits their lifestyle. It means walkable communities where people can reach many of their desired destinations without having to travel great distances.

**Great Places** – With the right amount of well-designed housing the Greater San Antonio Region can see an increase in the number of great places to live, work, and recreate.

**Compact Urban Form** – A cornerstone of TSLU increases the number of potential housing units on each plot of land, yielding more potential revenue from rent. Other aspects, such as quality transit and complete streets, translates into fewer parking spaces, lowering costs associated with those spaces and, therefore, the overall cost of housing units can be lowered.



*Concept for potential Transit Station at  
Zarzamora and Commerce/Buena Vista.*

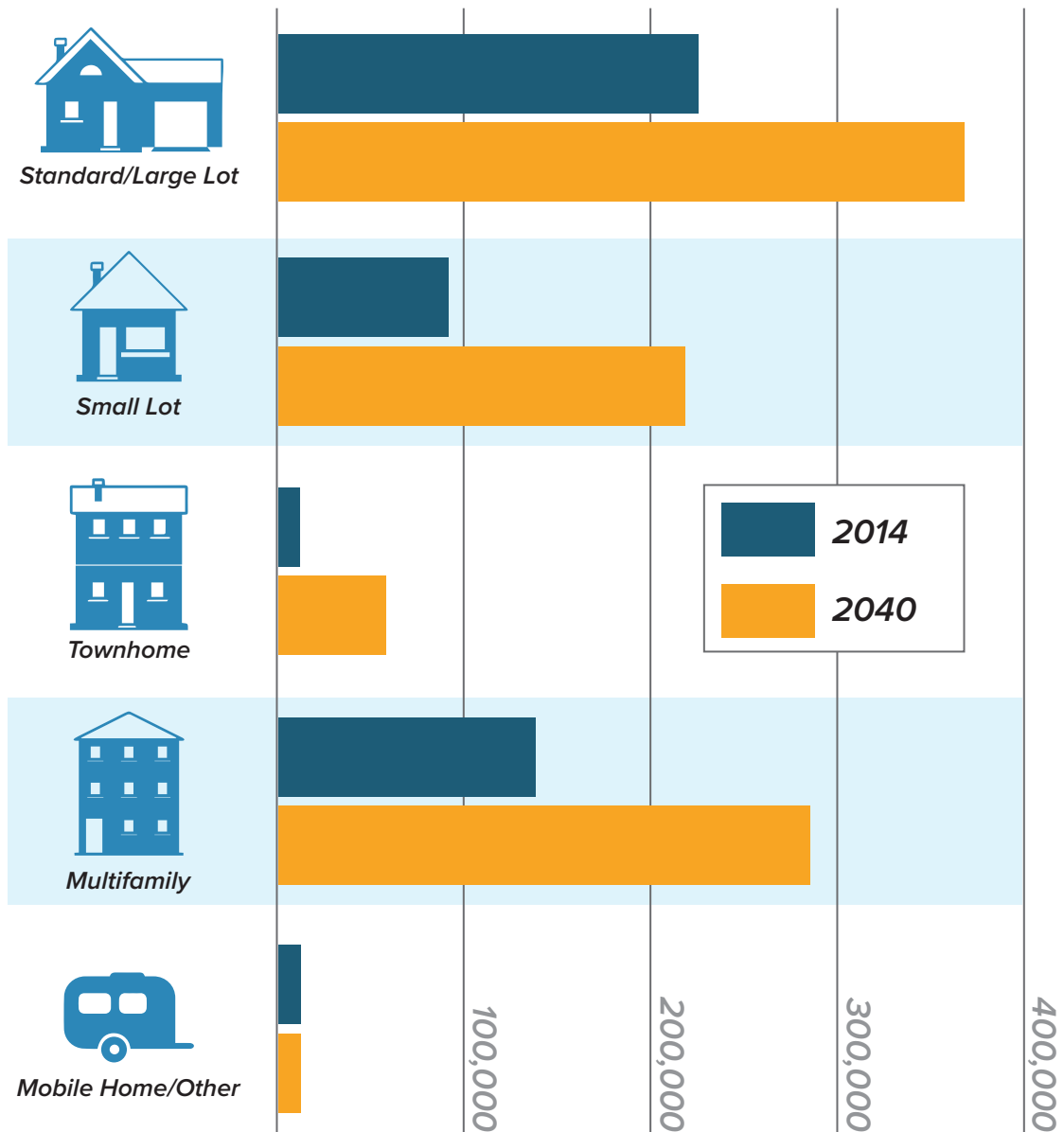


## DETERMINING HOUSING NEEDS

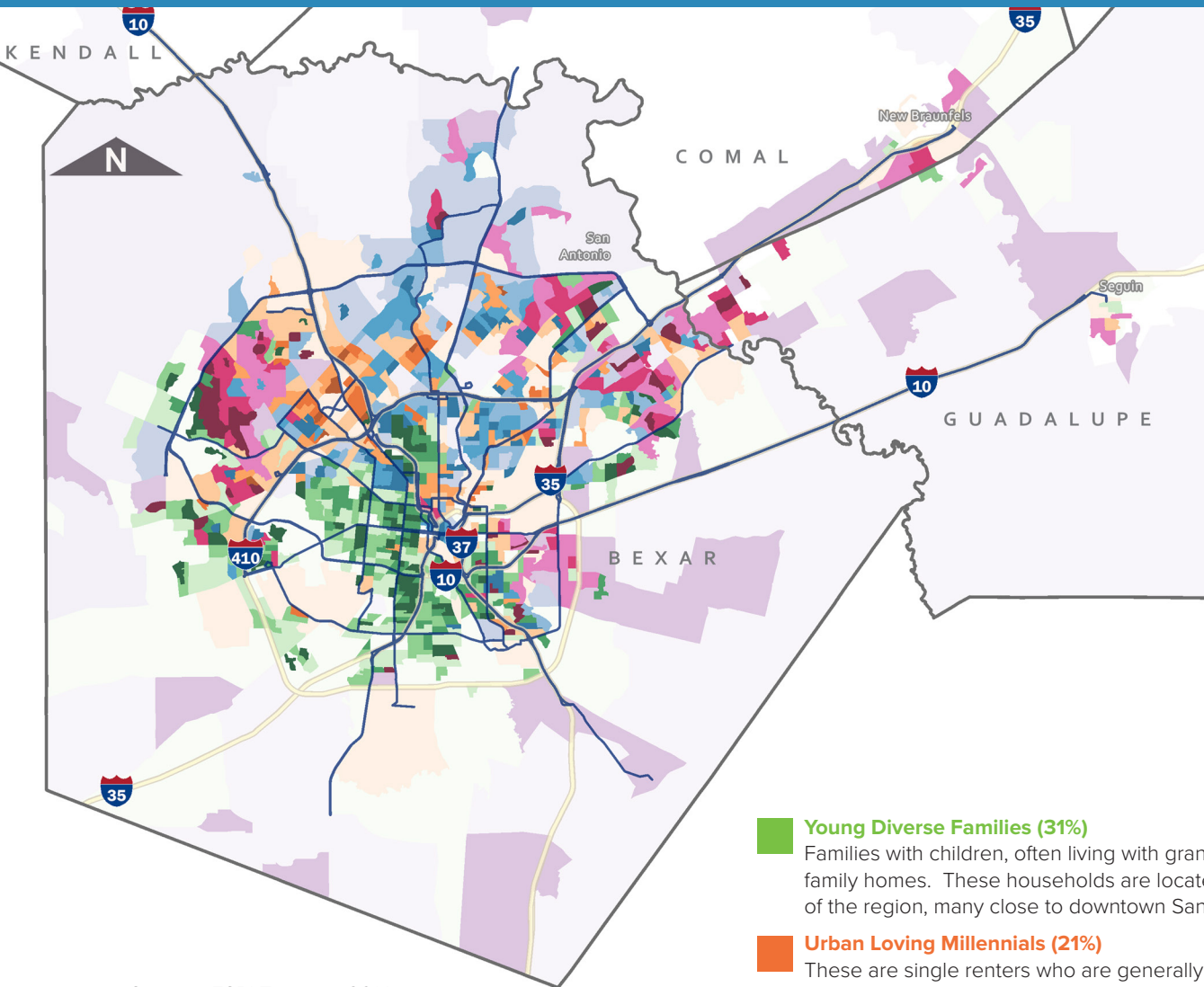
VIA and partners are conducting studies to assess housing needs in the Greater San Antonio Region in the coming decades. One of these is a “balanced housing” study using demographic and market trait data (ESRI Tapestry) to help determine the type, price, and amount of housing needed by 2040 and the types of housing that will likely be built if development patterns remain unchanged.

Predicting where people want to live includes an analysis beyond examining traditional demographic characteristics. Some people want to live in a condominium in the heart of the downtown, while living in a large house far from the city may be ideal for others. Understanding residents’ housing preferences, and how these preferences may change in the future, are important when planning for future development.

## CURRENT VERSUS FUTURE HOUSING MIX



Source: American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2010-2014)/Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model



## REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC TRAITS

Demographic traits and market segment data can be used to identify groups that share a common experience, such as being born in the same generation, immigrating from another county, or a household's income. Understanding these many different types of household types, and their housing choices, helps recognize the region's future housing needs.

Source: ESRI Tapestry, 2014

Note: Group names shown here are developed by ESRI for Tapestry demographic segments

San Antonio Households (2014) = 179,849

### **Young Diverse Families (31%)**

Families with children, often living with grandparents in rental apartments or single family homes. These households are located mostly in the south and western part of the region, many close to downtown San Antonio.

### **Urban Loving Millennials (21%)**

These are single renters who are generally well-educated and environmentally conscious. They live mostly near the Pearl District, South Texas Medical Center, and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

### **Hard Working Households (21%)**

Disproportionately older and predominantly single family households with moderate education and lower paying jobs.

### **Established Families and Boomers (24% of Residents)**

Empty nesters with high-value, single family homes predominantly in far North San Antonio, but also seen in increasing numbers in more urban parts of the region.



## HOUSING + TRANSPORTATION COST

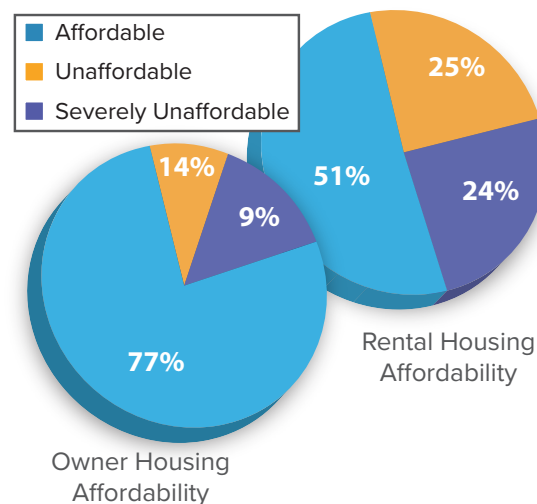
Housing affordability is usually the largest determinant of the location and type of housing households occupy. Having safe, high-quality, affordable housing means people can pay mortgages/rent and have enough money for other necessities like groceries and health care. “Affordable housing” means all housing costs, including utilities, insurance, and taxes, consume no more than 30 percent of gross household income. However, experts recommend the combined cost of housing and transportation to not exceed 45 percent of household income. In the Greater San Antonio Region the average is 53 percent.<sup>3</sup>

The Greater San Antonio Region has the opportunity to collocate housing near employment and transit centers, ensuring

<sup>3</sup> Data generated by Center for Neighborhood Technologies using multiple data sources, including American Community Survey (ACS) 2013 data – for more information see: <http://htaindex.cnt.org>

adequate housing choices are available, while reducing travel time and meeting other regional goals. Vision 2040 can be part of the solution to decrease the combined cost of housing and transportation. VIA recommendations for transit station policy include plans for housing near transit station areas, providing people with economical and frequent transit options to destinations throughout the region.

**23% & 49%**  
of owners & of renters  
are living in housing that is  
unaffordable given their income.

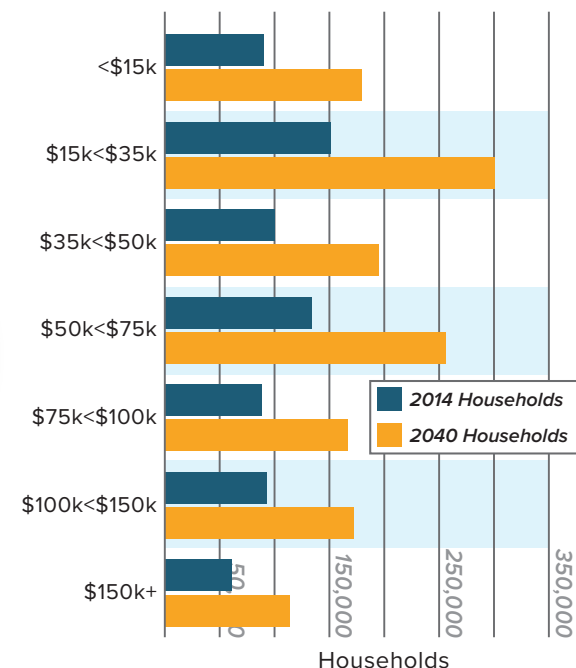


Source: American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2010-2014)

Locating housing and transit together (where appropriate) can lower overall individuals' combined housing and transportation costs, maximize affordability, support health choices, reduce environmental impacts and ensure equitable access to employment centers.

Source: The Center for Neighborhood Technology

## REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME PROJECTION



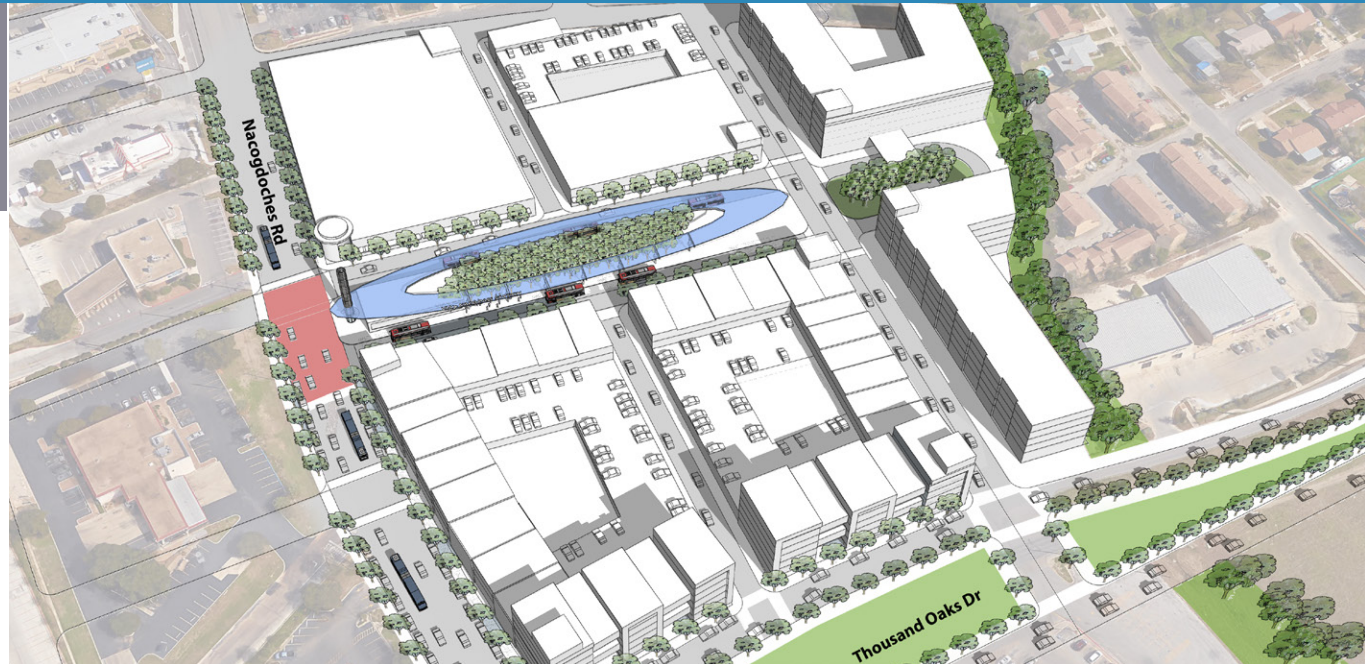
Source: American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2010-2014)/Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model

## LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

VIA, SAHA, private stakeholders, and other partners are working together to pursue a housing vision around Vision 2040 station areas. This supports balanced housing and excellent access to opportunities throughout the region with a broad range of housing for all incomes levels, current and future residents, and in areas serviced by frequent transit.

Although the Strategic Framework<sup>4</sup> identifies a need for a range of housing for all incomes levels, the strategies focus on ways to preserve and produce both market rate and subsidized, affordable housing. These components of balanced housing are the most vulnerable to loss due to market forces (rising land values) and are the most challenging to produce.

<sup>4</sup> Strategic Housing Policy Toolkit for High Level of Service Transit Corridors and Stations, 2014



There are many reasons to create mixed income communities at transit stations.

Benefits include:

- Generating ridership and providing an environment that offers additional mobility and connectivity for all people, including the low-income and very low-income.
- Affordable housing in transit station areas provides people of all income levels with choice of community and form of transportation.

The conceptual station area shown above includes infill development and added commercial/residential density.

Other plan features include:

- New affordable housing options.
- Preserved homes in the neighborhood.
- New commercial amenities for neighborhood.
- Improved creek to enhance beauty of the environment, and manage stormwater.
- New high-end condos.
- Apartments.



## HOUSING NEEDED BY 2040

To meet the needs of future residents, the Greater San Antonio Region will have to sustain a growth target of about 32,000 housing units per year over the next 25 years. To meet this goal, strong housing development, with diverse housing types, will need to occur. Specifically, there will be a strong need for more compact housing. Currently, nearly 50 percent of the region's housing is single family homes on large lots<sup>5</sup>; continuing this trend encourages sprawl and is economically unsustainable. To meet this future demand, local policies should encourage the construction of compact single-family homes, townhouses, and multifamily apartments or condominiums.

Roughly 50 percent of the anticipated population growth will be households earning less than \$50,000 per year.<sup>6</sup> That means at least half of all new development should focus on below-market rate housing.

Residents will increasingly opt for smaller homes in more connected places for reasons of access, neighborhood character, walkability, and affordability. When combined with existing housing stock, a more balanced housing profile meeting the needs of future residents by 2040 emerges.

<sup>5</sup> American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2010-2014)

<sup>6</sup> American Community Survey 5 year estimates (2010-2014) / Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model

## 4-COUNTY SAN ANTONIO REGIONAL HOUSING TARGETS BY TYPE

<i>Housing Type</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2040 Target (Units added)</i>	<i>Annual Target</i>
 <i>Standard Large Lot</i>	<b>361,857</b>	<b>251,102</b>	<b>10,044</b>
 <i>Small Lot</i>	<b>140,986</b>	<b>236,512</b>	<b>9,460</b>
 <i>Townhome</i>	<b>17,216</b>	<b>108,644</b>	<b>4,346</b>
 <i>Multifamily</i>	<b>167,559</b>	<b>203,736</b>	<b>8,149</b>
 <i>Mobile Home/Other</i>	<b>29,582</b>	<b>14,322</b>	<b>573</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>717,240</b>	<b>814,316</b>	<b>32,572</b>

Source: Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model, U.S. Census ACS 2010-2014



## ➤ SECTION 3

# REGIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTING IN TRANSIT – SUPPORTIVE LAND USE



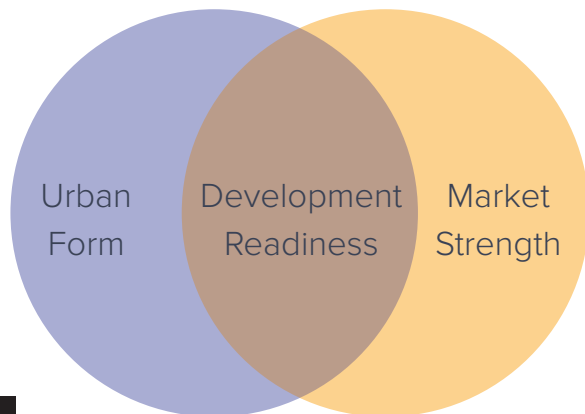
# PARTNER ROLES IN MAKING A PLACE TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE



- 1 Local municipalities establish code regarding form, setbacks, height, type of use, and other urban design and zoning criteria.
- 2 Developers assess development opportunities, risk, and return on investment, and when properly incentivized, invest in station areas. Lenders that provide financing conduct similar assessments. Municipalities can influence these factors through strategies such as development incentives, density bonuses, accelerated development proposal reviews, and by establishing easy to understand regulations.
- 3 VIA is responsible for designing, constructing and operating stations, in partnership with municipalities, and relevant transportation authorities.
- 4 Local and State transportation authorities have authority over design, constructing, operating, and maintaining the region's roadway system to promote safe and convenient access and travel for all users.
- 5 Local and State transportation authorities, or local municipalities, can provide greenscape to enhance the quality of place and create shade for the land within their authority.
- 6 Within and beyond the station areas, housing developers, and local municipalities are encouraged to work together to preserve and produce affordable housing to ensure neighborhoods with station areas serve mixed income communities.

## UNDERSTANDING STATION AREA CONTEXT

VIA transit-supportive land use goals call for more people and jobs located within walking distance to transit. In order to achieve this, VIA and local municipalities have to encourage development in station areas, including use of tools such as transit-supportive zoning, grant programs, and financing assistance. The key to leveraging these tools is knowing where, when, and how to make targeted public investments.



## Development Readiness

Understanding the context of regional transit station areas means having in-depth knowledge of an area's potential or "development readiness." Areas are development-ready when several factors start to align: the market strength and urban form.

## Market Strength

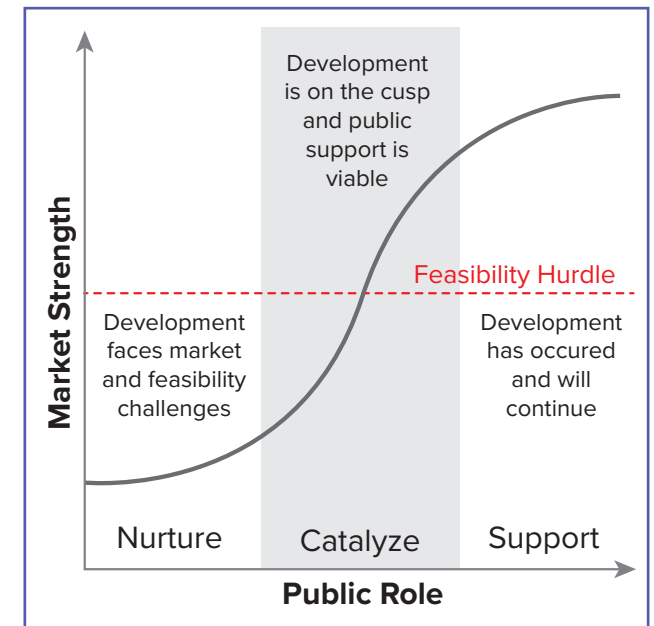
The strength or level of activity of local real estate markets is a driving factor of development readiness. In all but the hottest real estate markets, there is often a financial "gap" that keeps development from occurring. Understanding local market strength is an important component of right-sizing an investment to fill the "gap" and ensuring that scarce public dollars have a tangible impact.

The figure on the right shows how the scale of public investments should change based on the market strength in a given community. Areas with high market strength, may need little to no public assistance, regulatory programs addressing zoning may be

more effective than financial incentives in areas with low market strength.

The station area's market strength was measured using indicators for retail, office, multifamily, and single family residential markets activity. Indicators included vacancy rates, asking rents and recent development activity. Using these measurements, each station area was scored and assigned to one of three market strength categories: static, emerging, and strong.

## DEVELOPMENT READINESS



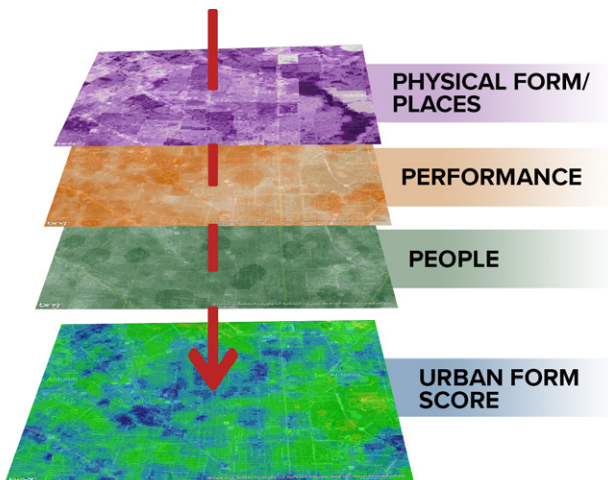


## URBAN FORM

While the “market strength” component of development readiness describes the feasibility of transit-supportive development in and around Vision 2040 station areas, it does not explain the surrounding environment and how residents will access and utilize transit.

Academic research suggests there are a few key attributes that determine how residents choose to travel. For the purposes of scoring the urban form of station areas the following factors were measured:

- **Physical Form/Places:** The presence of sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure,

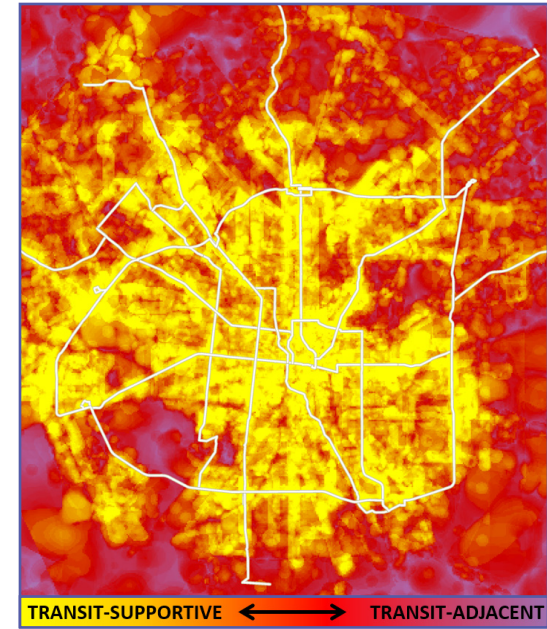


and block size, a major determinant of walkability.

- **Performance:** The existing transit service. Peak hour frequency was measured for every stop and used to score transit performance.
- **People:** The total activity in each station area. Since residents and workers use areas differently, the analysis used a combination of the residents and jobs per acre.

The above factors were weighted to compute an urban form composite score for the region, shown in the upper right. Clearly, there is tremendous variety, from transit-adjacent to transit-supportive. While the majority of transit-supportive land use is near the core, pockets exist outside downtown San Antonio. Using this score, each station was again placed into three categories:

- **Transit-Supportive:** More densely populated areas that more readily accommodate and support the use of



transit. These areas are rich in urban amenities and infrastructure.

- **Transit-Related:** Areas that possess some, but not all, the elements required for transit-supportiveness.
- **Transit-Adjacent:** Areas that are primarily geared toward automobile use, with broad travel lanes, poor street connectivity, and low density.

## STRATEGY CLUSTERS

By mapping individual station areas based on their urban form and market strength scores, it is possible for tailored investment strategies to fit each station area. Station areas strategies are grouped into clusters corresponding to each station's development readiness. As the figure shows, each station falls into either nurture, catalyze, or support.

### Nurture

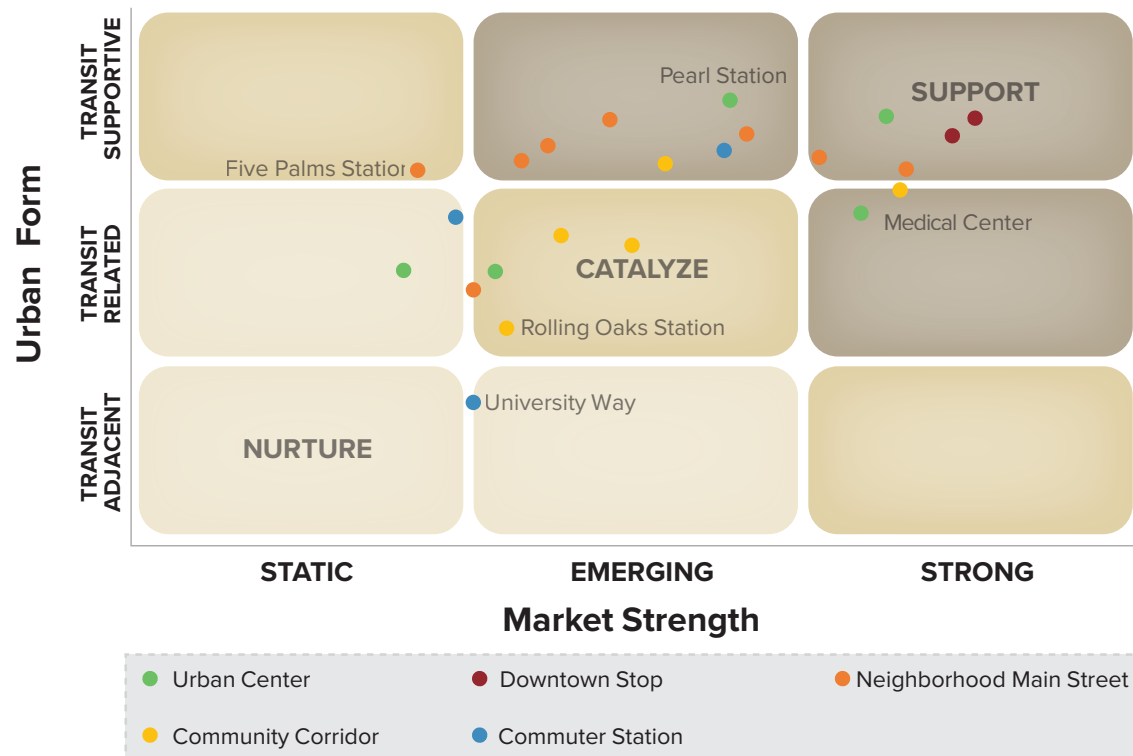
Within the “nurture” cluster are station areas with very low market strength and auto-oriented, transit-adjacent urban form. Strategies in this cluster should focus on long term efforts such as changes to zoning and parking standards, code enforcement, land banking, and basic infrastructure improvements like sidewalks.

### Catalyze

The “catalyze” strategy cluster should be applied in places where the private development community has not yet begun making investments but where high quality urban infrastructure already exists. In these types of station areas, the focus should be on medium-term efforts such as incentive programs, storefront improvements, and loan support.

### Support

Station areas where private investment is already occurring are grouped in the “support” strategy cluster. Station areas of this type will benefit from land assembly and publicly-funded affordable housing development.





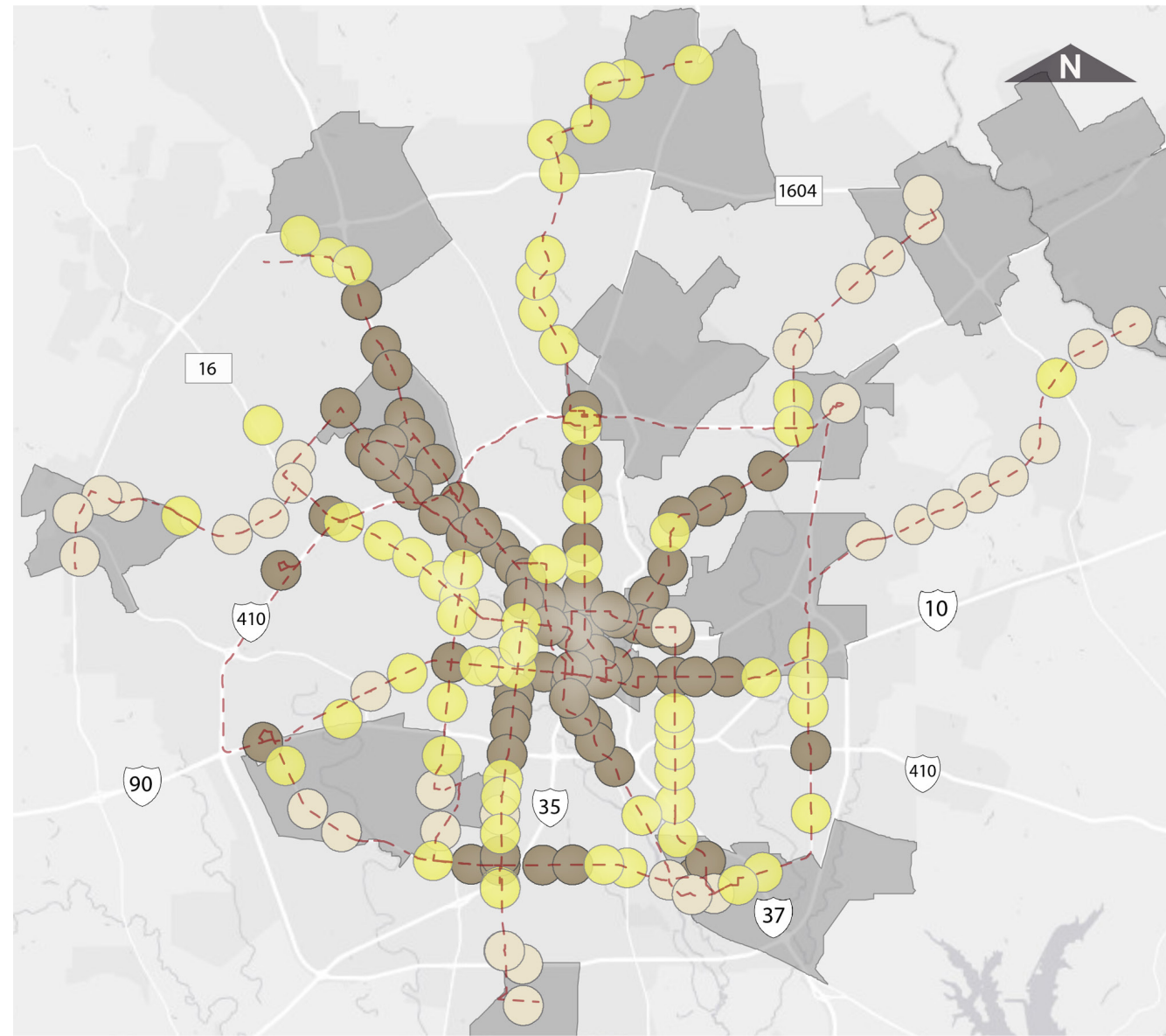
## STRATEGY CLUSTER MAPPING

Based on each station's development readiness (urban form and market strength), a strategy cluster was assigned. This data-driven approach considers the nature, timing, and type of investments appropriate in each station area. Local conditions should always be taken into consideration when targeting the types of investments to undertake.

There is no clear geographic spread to where each cluster is assigned. Rather, there is a concentration of “support cluster” station areas near central San Antonio, with pockets of similarly positioned stations scattered throughout the region.

This evaluation should be updated as communities change and additional investments are made. In the long term, this approach offers an organizing framework for VIA and public agencies to coordinating the full range of TSLU investments.

### GREATER SAN ANTONIO REGION – STRATEGY CLUSTERS



○ Nurture ○ Catalyze ● Support ■ Regional Activity Center - - VIA Vision 2040 Premium Transit Network

## CATALYTIC INVESTMENTS

Together, stakeholders can plan for economically strong, well connected communities served by Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit.

VIA transit investments, along with policies and actions of other local partners, can support growth and catalyze redevelopment around the transit stations to drive ridership, increase the utilization of transit amenities, increase economic development, and revitalize station areas. Transit can make a measurable impact on market opportunity by increasing access and exposure to the activities centers throughout the Greater San Antonio Region.

The integration of public financing tools with redevelopment and transit plans enables transit agencies to incite value premiums in the surrounding areas. This, in turn, can be invested back into the subarea to further drive investment.



	DENVER UNION STATION	CHARLOTTE CTC	ST. PAUL UNION DEPOT	MEMPHIS CENTRAL STATION
<b>Transit Options</b>	Commuter rail, light rail, Amtrak, local/regional bus	Light rail, local/regional bus	Light rail, Amtrak, local/regional bus, inter-city bus	Amtrak, trolley, local/regional bus
<b>Players</b>	Public-private partnership	Public-private partnership	Transit Authority	Transit Authority
<b>Focus Area</b>	Station and 19.5-acre master plan	Station	Station	Station (and current plans for 17-acre master plan)
<b>Residential Capture (% of City, 2000-2015)</b>	6% (3,425 units)	2% (2,014 units)	20% (1,663 units)	4% (557 units)
<b>Commercial Capture (% of City, 2000-2015)</b>	39% (3.2 million square feet)	15% (3.1 million square feet)	0% (0 square feet)	0% (3,330 square feet)

Source: VIA Villa Development Analysis and Strategic Investment Plan, 2016



## REALIZING THE VISION

The choices that are made in the Greater San Antonio Region about investment in transportation infrastructure and the patterns of community growth will have far-reaching significance for the next several decades. By coordinating plans, policies and investments, all those that have a role and a stake in the community can create a well-connected Greater San Antonio Region. Guided by public input, public agencies, private developers, and other partners, each have an important role in realizing the vision of transit station area communities as walkable places where people can easily reach jobs, schools, and other activity centers by foot, bicycle, private auto, or transit.





## VIA

As specific transit station area plans are developed, coordinate with planning partners and seek input from the public.

Collaborate with municipalities to adopt the VIA Station Area Typologies in code.

Provide Strategic Plan for Station Areas and TSLU Guide to municipalities, developers, lenders, and agency partners.

Continue participating in VIA/SAHA Inter-agency Committee to identify opportunities for planning and programming coordination, and to implement priority strategies that preserve and produce affordable housing in transit station areas.

Invest in station areas and serve as a role-model for design, and transit integration in place-making.

Use data to identify, prioritize, and invest in pedestrian improvements in station areas and near stops and stations.

Coordinate major capital investment planning and design with municipalities to maximize investment.

## Municipalities

Consider and adopt transit-supportive development code revisions for transit station areas.

Identify capital improvements to support pedestrian environment and accessibility at stations and stops and develop an approach to prioritizing funds towards station areas.

Create station area and/or corridor plans for areas planned to be served by the rapid transit network that are ripe for development/redevelopment.

Locate new public services in station areas on rapid transit network corridors to ensure improved access to services for all citizens.

Demonstrate high quality pedestrian oriented designs in new construction projects near transit station areas.

Support strategies that reduce the overall transportation and housing cost burden.







## ***Metropolitan Planning Organization***

Continue to develop and evaluate alternative growth scenarios structured around different types of transportation networks.

Support and implement strategies that enable transit stations to capture a portion of the regional population and employment growth.

Continue to encourage investments in walkable places and multimodal transportation.

Support Vision 2040 as a key factor in strategic growth and as a way to attract businesses and employees of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Provide regional transportation funding set-aside to support municipal land use planning for transit-supportive environments and supportive infrastructure implementation projects.

Provide technical support to municipalities in revising plans, codes and tools to support transit.

## ***County***

Demonstrate high quality pedestrian-oriented design in new construction near transit station areas.

Encourage new and relocating employers to locate at station areas with frequent transit to provide high quality access for employees and customers.

Support Vision 2040 as a key factor in strategic growth and as a way to attract businesses and employees of the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Coordinate planning for county roadways near transit station areas with local municipalities and VIA.

Consider implementing Complete Streets on roadways near transit stations, where appropriate.

## TXDOT

Coordinate planning for State roadways and other facilities with local municipalities and VIA.

Support and plan for Complete Streets throughout the Greater San Antonio Region, especially near transit station areas.

Support U.S. DOT New Start, TIGER and other grant applications by VIA Metropolitan Transit.

In station areas, implement best practices in access management to minimize the number of driveways, manage vehicle movements and to minimize pedestrian and vehicle conflict points.

## VIA/San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) Interagency Committee

Consider market affordability and balanced housing approach in station areas.

Identify preservation and maintenance opportunities for station areas.

Understand barriers to affordable housing and initiate implementation of strategies to overcome some barriers.

Implement strategies to preserve and produce affordable housing in stations through coordinated partnerships.

Use the Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing study to identify housing needs in and housing products for station areas.





## ***Lenders***

Communicate with developers producing transit-oriented style development in the region, to update (reduce) parking ratio requirements.

Review VIA Strategic TSLU Guide and this plan to learn about the return on investment (ROI) and other bottom-line benefits of transit-oriented development, and how parking requirement reductions contribute to that ROI.

Review the VIA TSLU Guide to learn about how parking requirements that are based on traditional suburban standards limit opportunity for compact development.

Review this plan and the VIA TSLU Guide to access information about how transit-supportive land uses, such as access to high-quality transit and pedestrian-friendly urban design, translate into the need for fewer parking spaces than conventional development.

## ***Developers***

Review VIA TSLU Guide and this plan to learn about the good return on investment and other bottom-line benefits of transit-oriented development.

Review VIA Strategic TSLU Guide and this plan to learn about design standards and land use patterns of transit-oriented developments.

Connect with VIA to learn about public-private partnership opportunities.

Communicate with peer developers producing transit-oriented style development in the region, to update parking ratio requirements expectations.

Review the VIA TSLU Guide and this plan to access information about how project value can also be positively affected by an increasing demand for the kind of attractive, walkable neighborhoods and expanded range of housing options that TSLU offers, raising attainable rents.

## ***Real Estate Representatives***

While advocating for the real estate industry and supporting efforts to ensure a healthy economy and enhanced quality of life in the Greater San Antonio Region – consider the growing body of knowledge about the types of places employees and businesses look to locate: walkable communities with high quality multimodal transportation options.

Consider the linkage between proposed updates to the development code and the ability of local jurisdictions to create great walkable places.

Work with local municipalities to understand the implications of code revisions, and where they will and will not apply.

Review VIA TSLU Guide and this plan to learn about the good return on investment and other bottom-line benefits of transit-oriented development.





VIA → AIRPORT STATION