

SWOT Analysis – Summary

Tracts 1105, 1106, 1701.02

Session 1

July 11, 2019

Session 1B

July 18, 2019

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July 2019

Tract 1105

Strengths

- Creek – Linear Park
- ** - Mixed Residential and Business
- Diverse Demographics
- Jobs
- Walkability
- ** - Accessibility
- Housing Choices
- Police Presence
- ** - Cultural Arts Organizations
- All Schools Nearby
- ** - Historic Houses and Buildings
- Cultural History

Weaknesses

- Not Much Inside Activity (Mostly in and out)
- Transient Traffic
- Condition of Cemetery
- ** - Bad Reputation
- Concern for Drug Abuse
- Too Many Bail Bond Establishments
- Code Violations (Apartments) – Too many visits by Code Officers
- ** - Street Traffic Plan (One Way Streets)
- ** - City Never Invested in Area

Opportunities

- ** - Huge Business Potential
- Sort of “Hidden Jewel”
- Southtown/So Flo Potential (East of Creek)
- “Not Scary”
- ** - Untapped Arts District
- ** - UTSA Proximity
- Incubator Potential (Warehouses)

Threats

- Redevelopment of Alazan Courts
- ** - Development of Alazan Lofts Without Community Participation
- UTSA Expansion
- ** - Opportunity Zone
- ** - Displacement of Residents, Businesses, etc.
- Deterioration of Oldest San Fernando Cemetery
- ** - Disconnect/ Isolation of Area

****Priority Areas**

Tract 1106

Strengths

- ** - Cultural Component
- ** - Expanding Higher Education (UTSA)
- Strong Transportation
- ** - Proximity to Downtown
- Easy Access to Freeways/Interchange
- ** - Hospitals/Medical
- Parks
- Road Improvements
- Strong Sense of Community
- Tourism
- Resilient Community
- History
- Natural Waterways
- Police Presence
- Lots of Potential
- ** - Strong Sense of Activism
- Nonprofit Cultural/Community Input

Weaknesses

- Leadership/Action (Lack of)
- ** - Historically Underfunded Area
- Low Income Area
- High Mortality Rates
- High Crime
- Lighting
- Public Safety
- ** - Lack of Affordable Housing
- No Unity in Activity
- ** - COSA Needs to Channel Resources to Area
- Arts/Culture Needs to be on the Table
- Malt House Sign
- Lack of Waterway Infrastructure/Flooding in Area
- Not Talking About Homelessness, Poverty, Gentrification
- Housing in Poor Condition/Lack of Housing
- Perception of Crime
- ** - Lack of Educational Resources (K-12) or Improvement
- People Not Staying in Community
- Declining Enrollment in Public Schools
- Low Test Scores

****Priority Areas**

- ** - No Accessible Walkways for Disabled
- Lack of Daycare Centers
- Stray Animals
- Food Desert/No Healthy Choices
- Limited Products in Stores/HEB
- ** - Digital Divide

Opportunities

- ** - Community Reinvestment
- Economic Development
- ** - Public/Private Partnerships
- Leadership Agents (Change)
- ** - Housing Incentives
- Improve Educational Opportunity
- Combined School District
- Expanding City Resources for Revitalization
- ** - Internet Connectivity
- Senior Community Center
- Safe Place for Day Laborers (Congregate/Check in-Out)
- ** - Accessibility
- Improved Parks
- Land to be Redeveloped
- Educate to Safeguard Against Gentrification
- Student Housing
- Affordable Housing
- Job Opportunities (UTSA)
- Research Partnerships
- Expansion of Mental Health Coalitions
- Community Restroom Facilities
- Immigrant Community
- ** - Small Business Environment
- Union Pacific Infrastructure/Grants

Threats

- Church Hypocrisy/Lack of Programming
- ** - Investors/Developers/Big Business
- ** - Neglecting Community/Education
- Inaccessible Parks
- Political Hypocrisy/Bureaucracy
- ** - Population Decrease
- Lack of Restorative Justice

****Priority Areas**

- Lack of School Support
- ** - Lack of Capacity for Social Services/Access
- Lack of Educational Equity
- Student Misdiagnosis of Mental Health
- Train Impact
- ** - Lack of Infrastructure
- Lack of After School Activities
- ** - Crime
- Drug Use, Prostitution

Tract 1701-02

Strengths

- Resiliency
- Proximity to Center City
- ** - Census Tract is a Priority – Underserved Area
- Rich Culture – History/Pride
- ** - Alazan Creek
- Community Desires to Get Better
- Community Vision/Engagement
- Commerce/Buena Vista Corridor
- ** - UTSA – Downtown/ Our Lady of the Lake University/St. Mary’s University
- ** - Central to All Points of San Antonio
- Housing Stock (Quality Housing in Area)
- Small Businesses
- Cultural Identity
- ** - Designation as an OZ
- Rail – Location
- Lot Parcels With Development Potential
- Concentration of Nonprofits

Weaknesses

- Sub-Standard Housing – Dilapidated and Deteriorated
- ** - Fear of Change/Resistance to Change
- Brain Drain
- Poverty
- Haven for Hope and Jail
- ** - Long Standing Negative Perception of Area
- ** - Poor Infrastructure – Sidewalks and Drainage
- Lighting
- Empty lots- Overgrown With Weeds

****Priority Areas**

- ** - High Crime
- Homelessness
- Poor Aesthetics
- Lack of Curb Appeal
- Substance Abuse
- Lack of Economic Opportunity
- ** - Lack of Affordable and Market Rate Housing
- Workforce
- Lack of Market Rate Rents
- Under Performing Schools
- Lack of Business Diversity
- Business Owners Failing to Repair Their Own Businesses/Facades

Opportunities

- Bexar County Trail Mural – Gateway
- West Commerce Bridge Redevelopment
- ** - Positive Mind-Set of Community Leaders – (“The Time is Right Now”)
- ** - The Parish – Young Artist Group -WHS Coffee Shop, Brownstone
- Opportunity Zone
- Creeks
- Connectivity to San Pedro Park
- UTSA Development
- Lift Fund
- Buena Vista Bridge – Gateway to Downtown
- Rail Crossings
- VIA Stop – Possible HUB
- ** - Economic Revitalization
- Future Homeowners – Opportunity to Buy
- Rehabilitation Opportunities
- Very Few Properties Are Designated Historic
- Mexican American Unity Center – Housing Center
- Bond Proposal for 2022

Threats

- ** - Resistance to Change
- Unmitigated Development
- Crime
- UTSA Expansion
- Displacement
- Gentrification
- Predatory Practices
- Newcomers
- Population Migration

****Priority Areas**

- Homelessness (Squatters and Substance Abuse)
- Continued Stigma – Negative Perception
- Lack of Communications Within/Between the City Government and Nonprofits
- ** - Ourselves – “We can sabotage our own development for fear of the unknown.”
- ** - Lack of Community Participation
- Lack of Information Distribution
- Zoning Issues – (Industrial Next to Residential)

July 18, 2019 Makeup Focus Group Session (1105, 1106, and 1701.02

Strengths

- History of the Near West Side
- ** - Culture and Pride
- Public Art – Existing
- Potential public spaces
- ** - Alazan and Apache Creek – Redevelopment Potential
- ** - Beautiful Historic Housing Stock
- ** - Relative location to downtown
- Mass transit – VIA, infrastructure
- Eclectic businesses
- Business diversity
- Access to social services, network in the area
- ** - Multigenerational families residing in the area

Weaknesses

- ** - Limited access to grocery stores/quality food in the area “food desert”
- Lack of adequate parks
- ** - Infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, lighting, drainage)
- ** - Accessibility for pedestrians
- ** - Decades of disinvestment
- Access to medical and social services. There is a need for more mental health services to address the area’s homeless population.
- Lack of security for safety in the area’s neighborhoods
- ** - Older housing stock – most in need of maintenance

****Priority Areas**

Opportunities

- ** - Grocery store development
- ** - Creekways – linear park improvement
- ** - Available workforce to build assets in the community
- ** - Public/Private Partnerships to rehab owner occupied houses
- Need for library to serve Near West Side
- Partnership with UTSA – outreach to public to utilize campus facilities

Threats

- Gentrification
- ** - Displacement of residential population and existing small businesses
- ** - Predatory buying practices
- ** - UTSA Downtown Campus expansion
- ** - NIMBY* projects implemented without public input or support
- Apathy of the local population

*Not In My Backyard

****Priority Areas**

Priority Areas

Tract 1105

Strengths

- This tract has a good mix of businesses and residential areas.
- This tract is very accessible to other parts of San Antonio.
- The area encompasses a number of cultural arts organizations.
- The area includes several historic houses and buildings.

Weaknesses

- This area has a bad reputation.
- The street traffic plan in this tract is focused on one-way streets.
- The City of San Antonio has never invested in this area.

Opportunities

- This area has a huge business potential.
- It is a untapped arts district.
- UTSA Downtown is a tremendous asset for the area.

Threats

- The area is included in the OZ.
- The development of the Alazan Lofts may occur without adequate community input and participation.
- There may be a displacement of businesses, residents and others because of new development in this tract.
- The tract is poorly connected to the Downtown District and other parts of the City leaving it isolated.

Tract 1106

Strengths

- The tract has a strong cultural component with several important cultural areas.
- The expanding UTSA Downtown Campus is an important strength for the tract.
- The tract's proximity to the Downtown District is an important asset for the area.
- The hospitals and medical facilities in the Census Tract add to the strength of this area.
- There is a strong sense of activism in the area which contributes to its strength.

Weaknesses

- Census Tract 1106 has been historically underfunded by the City of San Antonio.
- There is a lack of affordable housing in the area. This needs to be addressed if development is to take place in the tract.
- The City of San Antonio needs to channel more resources to the area to improve its infrastructure, housing and local businesses.
- There is a lack of education resources (K-12) in the tract. This is reflected in our low education attainment levels, high dropout rates and lower educational rating of schools in the area.
- There are no walkways designed for the disabled in the area. Accessibility is a major concern.
- The Digital Divide is a major concern in the area. Access to the internet and computer literacy is a problem for homeowners and others in the Census tract.

Opportunities

- Community reinvestment in the Census Tract provides additional opportunities for spurring development in the area.
- The facilitation of public/private partnerships in the tract is a plus for the area.
- Housing incentives put forth by the City of San Antonio provide additional support for more affordable housing in the area.
- Increased internet connectivity is an important need and opportunity for the area.
- Accessibility to the Downtown District and the West Side provides the Census Tract with a tremendous asset for long-term development.
- The area is ideal for small business development given its location relative to the Downtown District and the Near West side.

Threats

- Investors, developers and big businesses pose a major threat to area residents, small business owners and others through displacement and gentrification.

- The community and the area's educational assets has been neglected in recent years due to development and changing environment.
- There has been an overall population decrease in the tract due to new development.
- There is a general/severe lack of capacity for social services in the area. Access to such services has also been a concern.
- Infrastructure needs are a major concern for residents and business owners in the area.
- Crime is a problem in the area.

Tract 1701.02

Strengths

- This tract is a major priority for the City of San Antonio given that it is largely underserved. Because it is a priority area we can expect additional resources in the coming years.
- Alazan Creek is a major environmental/cultural asset for the area. This area is being planned to provide additional park and recreational facilities for the tract and the larger Near West Side.
- The Downtown Campus of UTSA is a major asset for the long-term development of the area.
- The area is centrally located relative to the Downtown District and the West Side.
- The area has easy access to several major institutions of higher education including UTSA-Downtown, Our Lady of the Lake University and St. Mary's University.
- The area is also central to all points of San Antonio.
- A key strength is the Census Tract's designation as being part of the Near West Side OZ.

Weaknesses

- There is a fear of change in the area leading to a resistance to change.
- There is a long-term negative perception of the area reducing the prospects for any substantive change or development in the tract.
- The area has poor infrastructure. This is reflected in the condition of the streets, sidewalks and drainage.
- There is a lack of affordable and market rate housing in the area.

Opportunities

- There is a positive mindset among community leaders on the Near West Side that is setting the stage for new development – “The Time is Right Now.”
- Several new businesses are opening up in the Census Tract – local entrepreneurs are beginning to see new opportunities for business development.
- The area is entering a new period of economic revitalization because of its inclusion in the Near West Side OZ.

Threats

- The resistance to change mindset may be too deep to bring about any major development in the Census Tract.
- We may sabotage our own development because of the fear factor.
- There has been an overall lack of community participation in the area, thereby lessening the possibility of change and new development.

Focus Group – All Census Tracts (1105.1106, 1701.02)

Strengths

- There is a strong sense of cultural solidarity and pride on the Near West Side.
- Alazan and Apache Creek provide great potential for creating additional park and recreational facilities for the area.
- The Near West Side contains a number of beautiful homes that are historic.
- The area’s relative location to the Downtown District/Central Core provides additional incentives to invest in the Near West Side.
- The area houses a large number of inter-generational families providing stability to the Near West Side.

Weaknesses

- There is limited access to grocery stores and quality food in the area creating a “food desert.”
- Infrastructure needs are critical in this area.

- Accessibility for pedestrians on the Near West Side is limited due to a lack of sidewalks, signage and lighting.
- The Near West Side has suffered from decades of disinvestment. This is reflected in its housing and infrastructure needs.
- The area, for the most part, has a very old housing stock. Many of the homes are in need of maintenance and rehabilitation.

Opportunities

- There is a great need for additional grocery and retail type stores to serve the local population on the Near West Side.
- The development and improvement of the creekways within the three Census Tracts provide a great opportunity for generating additional jobs and providing more park and recreational facilities for the local population.
- There is a diverse workforce residing in the area. This workforce can be mobilized to build assets in the community.
- A public/private partnership should be formed in the area to help rehabilitate existing owner-occupied homes. This would not only provide jobs for local workers but help to revitalize the area.

Threats

- The potential displacement of residential properties and existing small businesses in the area poses a threat to those now residing and working on the Near West Side.
- Predatory buying practices by realtors and investors pose a real threat to homeowners and businesses on the Near West Side.
- The expansion of UTSA's Downtown Campus poses yet another possible threat to the area's homeowners and businesses.
- The possibility of building "Not In My Back Yard," i.e., NIMBY projects without public input and/or support is enhanced if that input is not obtained by the COSA and its agencies.