



Contact – Melissa S. Sparks, 210-207-1011, melissa.sparks@sanantonio.gov

City recognizes that urban living provides convenience, community, culture
Multimodal Transportation Plan looks at lifestyle trends for living, working, and playing

SAN ANTONIO (September 17, 2015) – Transportation isn't the only thing under review by the City of San Antonio during its *SA Tomorrow* Multimodal Transportation planning effort to prepare for the additional 1.1 million people expected in San Antonio by 2040.

According to Ray Lopez, District 6 Councilman and Chairman of the Alamo Area MPO, "Knowing there are an additional 1.1 million people is one thing, but reviewing the data is another critical component in our planning. We need to examine where the additional people will live and work, and how they will get around."

One of the ways *SA Tomorrow* planners are looking at the relationship between transportation and land use in San Antonio is to focus on walkable communities and transit-oriented development, specifically, areas that don't require a car to get around. People can live, work, shop, study, socialize, and seek recreation and entertainment all within walking distance or with access by transit and/or bike. "Part of what we do in transportation planning is to find ways to make it attractive for people to choose alternative modes of transportation, such as transit, walking, and biking, to ease congestion on our roadways, improve air quality, and create a better quality of life," said Trish Wallace, Transportation Planning Manager for the City of San Antonio.

The downtown area is an example of a walkable community that is served by transit. "Our central city is becoming more popular for people who don't want to travel very far for work or leisure, and people who want the kind of lifestyle that encourages more walking, less driving, and greater use of public transportation," according to Wallace. "As our population grows, we are working to manage congestion. One way to do this is to reduce the number of vehicular trips by encouraging people to live close to work and recreational activities."

Fred San Miguel moved downtown from outside of Loop 410 eight years ago to take advantage of the cultural, social, and musical opportunities that living in the center of the city provides. "As a kid, going downtown with my parents was a big deal. As an adult, I spend a lot of time going to Jazz Alive, the Majestic, Fiesta events, King William activities, and First Fridays," San Miguel said. He waited two years to get the apartment he wanted at the Exchange Building, a historic 10-story building on Pecan Street at North Saint Mary's. "This is an exciting time to live downtown," he said.

San Miguel, 60, an electrical estimator for a local contracting firm, works at home. "Because I'm here all day, I tend to be the eyes and ears of the building. Other residents call me 'the mayor' of The Exchange Building. We're a tight-knit community, we get together regularly, and we look

after each other,” he said. San Miguel even grows sprouts in Mason jars in his apartment to share with other residents and with restaurateur Michael Sohocki of Restaurant Gwendolyn and Kimura, also located in the Exchange Building.

Walking and riding the VIA bus are San Miguel’s principal modes of getting around. “Since I got rid of my car, my transportation costs are around \$5.40 per month. I pay \$1.35 for a round trip on a VIA bus once a week to the grocery store,” he commented.

Veronica Davila recently moved back to San Antonio after living in Washington DC for five years. “I work for an international company in corporate security, and I can live anywhere that has access to an airport,” said Davila, 33. “Having grown up on the north side, it never occurred to me to live downtown. Then I discovered the Pearl area, and moved to the Can Plant, which has the urban feel I was looking for.”

Like San Miguel, Davila now considers the area beyond 410 to be outside of her bubble. When she’s not traveling for her job, she works from home. “The Pearl area is great for working at home, because if I need social interaction, I just walk out the door and head to the coffee shop. The easy access to restaurants, clubs, and the River Walk is really important to me,” said Davila. Though she still owns a car, she walks, cycles, and uses VIA busses. “I used ridesharing a lot when it was here, and if it comes back to San Antonio, I’m thinking of getting rid of my car.”

Davila mentioned that she appreciates the diversity and the open feeling that exists in the downtown area. “It feels more like a bigger city, even though friends wonder why I live in San Antonio rather than, say, Austin. I can sincerely report that there’s always something going on here. I’m proud that San Antonio is my hometown. And though we are very different from Austin, San Antonio is still cool.”

City of San Antonio staff will be at Siclovía on September 27 to talk about the Multimodal Transportation Plan, as well as at other events around the city. For more information, visit www.SATomorrow.com, and follow *SA Tomorrow* on [facebook.com/SATomorrow2040](https://www.facebook.com/SATomorrow2040) or twitter.com/SATomorrow2040.

###