

AN ADVISORY SERVICES PANEL REPORT

Avenida Guadalupe San Antonio, Texas



Urban Land
Institute

Avenida Guadalupe San Antonio, Texas

A Redevelopment Plan

February 6–11, 2005
An Advisory Services Panel Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201

About ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a non-profit research and education organization that promotes responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment.

The Institute maintains a membership representing a broad spectrum of interests and sponsors a wide variety of educational programs and forums to encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experience. ULI initiates research that anticipates emerging land use trends and issues and proposes creative solutions based on that research; provides advisory services; and publishes a wide variety of materials to disseminate information on land use and development.

Established in 1936, the Institute today has more than 26,000 members and associates from 80 countries, representing the entire spectrum of the land use and development disciplines. Professionals rep-

resented include developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians. ULI relies heavily on the experience of its members. It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of America's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

This Advisory Services panel report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the field of urban land use.

Richard M. Rosan
President

©2005 by ULI—the Urban Land Institute
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Suite 500 West
Washington, D.C. 20007-5201

All rights reserved. Reproduction or use of the whole or any part of the contents without written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.

ULI Catalog Number: ASS089

Cover and text photos by Carol M. Highsmith

About ULI Advisory Services

The goal of ULI's Advisory Services Program is to bring the finest expertise in the real estate field to bear on complex land use planning and development projects, programs, and policies. Since 1947, this program has assembled well over 400 ULI-member teams to help sponsors find creative, practical solutions for issues such as downtown redevelopment, land management strategies, evaluation of development potential, growth management, community revitalization, brownfields redevelopment, military base reuse, provision of low-cost and affordable housing, and asset management strategies, among other matters. A wide variety of public, private, and nonprofit organizations have contracted for ULI's Advisory Services.

Each panel team is composed of highly qualified professionals who volunteer their time to ULI. They are chosen for their knowledge of the panel topic and screened to ensure their objectivity. ULI panel teams are interdisciplinary and typically include several developers, a landscape architect, a planner, a market analyst, a finance expert, and others with the niche expertise needed to address a given project. ULI teams provide a holistic look at development problems. Each panel is chaired by a respected ULI member with previous panel experience.

The agenda for a five-day panel assignment is intensive. It includes an in-depth briefing day composed of a tour of the site and meetings with sponsor representatives; a day of hour-long interviews of typically 50 to 75 key community representatives; and two days of formulating recommendations. Many long nights of discussion precede the panel's conclusions. On the final day on site, the panel makes an oral presentation of its findings and conclusions to the sponsor. A written report is prepared and published.

Because the sponsoring entities are responsible for significant preparation before the panel's visit, including sending extensive briefing materials to each member and arranging for the panel to meet with key local community members and stakeholders in the project under consideration, partic-

ipants in ULI's five-day panel assignments are able to make accurate assessments of a sponsor's issues and to provide recommendations in a compressed amount of time.

A major strength of the program is ULI's unique ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of its members, including land developers and owners, public officials, academicians, representatives of financial institutions, and others. In fulfillment of the mission of the Urban Land Institute, this Advisory Services panel report is intended to provide objective advice that will promote the responsible use of land to enhance the environment.

ULI Program Staff

Rachelle L. Levitt
Executive Vice President, Policy and Practice

Mary Beth Corrigan
Vice President, Advisory Services and Policy Programs

Nancy Zivitz Sussman
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

Nicholas Gabel
Associate, Advisory Services

Jason Bell
Panel Coordinator, Advisory Services

Yvonne Stanton
Administrative Assistant

Nancy H. Stewart
Director, Book Program

Laura Glassman/Publications Professionals
Manuscript Editor

Betsy VanBuskirk
Art Director

Martha Loomis
Desktop Publishing Specialist/Graphics

Kim Rusch
Graphics

Diann Stanley-Austin
Director, Publishing Operations

Acknowledgments

The ULI panel would like to extend its special thanks to San Antonio Mayor Edward D. Garza for supporting the proposal to bring a ULI Advisory Services panel to the city of San Antonio to focus on the redevelopment of Avenida Guadalupe. The panel also recognizes District 5 Councilwoman Patti Radle, who spearheaded this effort for her community and was particularly generous with her time, as were members of her council office staff (Santiago Garcia, Lourdes Rodriguez, Cecilia Rodriguez, Jennifer Cantu), and former Mayor Henry Cisneros. The panel also thanks Rolando Bono, interim city manager, and Jelynne LeBlanc Burley, assistant city manager, both of whom met with the panel to share their views. Burley served as a liaison between the planning department staff, headed by Emil Moncivias as director, and Neighborhood and Urban Design Manager Nina Nixon-Méndez, and the city council. Considerable time was spent with David Garza, director of the Neighborhood Action Department, and the panel thanks him for his time and input, along with that of his staff. ULI appreciates the city of San Antonio's confidence in the Advisory Services Program, which has sponsored several other panel studies for the city.

ULI's primary Planning Department contacts—Christine Viña, special projects coordinator, and Andrew Holubeck, planner II—were responsible for preparing the panel application and briefing materials, organizing the study area tour, scheduling interviews with key stakeholders, and arranging for the presentation. These components of the process all serve to assist the panel in addressing the issues and functioning efficiently within a limited time period. The panel gained significant insights from the briefing materials and the extensive bus and walking tour along Avenida Guadalupe and its surroundings.

Special thanks go to the many community representatives, including Dr. Jesse Zapata, University of Texas at San Antonio vice provost for the downtown campus; Avenida Guadalupe Association (AGA) board member Theresa De La Haya, AGA Executive Director Roger Carrillo, and AGA staff members Manuel Leal and Carlos Aguirre; Sylvia Zamarripa and Fr. Martin Elsner of the Social Justice Committee of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church; Graciela Sanchez of MujerArtes/Esperanza Peace and Justice Center; staff of the of the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center and theater, including Maricela Espinoza-Garcia and Pedro Ramirez; the University Center for Community Health; and Victor Azios of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

In addition, the panel would like to thank the neighborhood residents and business owners; local housing providers and developers; arts, cultural, and preservation organization representatives; numerous community development organizations; representatives from the San Antonio Independent School District; and planners from VIA Metropolitan Transit.

In all, the panel had the opportunity to interview more than 70 area stakeholders, all of whom provided useful information. These interviewees included representatives from many of the organizations mentioned above. Their individual perspectives were crucial to the panel process. These stakeholders serve as a major asset for advancing and maintaining the interests of this community.

Contents

ULI Panel and Project Staff	6
Foreword: The Panel’s Assignment	7
Overview and Summary of Recommendations	10
Market Potential	12
Planning and Design	17
Development Strategies	26
Implementation	33
Conclusion	41
About the Panel	43

ULI Panel and Project Staff

Panel Chair

Richard J. Dishnica
President, The Dishnica Company, LLC
Point Richmond, California

Panel Members

Guillermo Aguilar
President, Aguilar & Associates
Dana Point, California

Cesar Garcia-Pons
Senior Associate, EDAW, Inc.
Miami Beach, Florida

Anish Kumar
Associate Principal, Hillier Architecture
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mary Miller
Deputy Director, Downtown Norfolk Council
Norfolk, Virginia

Sue Southon
Principal, Strategic Planning Services
Detroit, Michigan

Nathan Watson
President, Watson Developments
New Orleans, Louisiana

Walter Winius, Jr.
Managing Director, Integra Winius Realty Analysts
Phoenix, Arizona

ULI Project Director

Nancy Zivitz Sussman
Senior Associate, Advisory Services

ULI On-Site Coordinator

Jason Bell
Panel Coordinator, Advisory Services

Foreword: The Panel's Assignment

Avenida Guadalupe is the main east-west corridor serving the study area and connecting the neighborhood to downtown San Antonio. This neighborhood was included in the original 36-square-mile area defining the city of San Antonio in the charter of 1837. It has long been the heart of the Hispanic community and contains the institutions that reflect the rich cultural heritage of its population. The neighborhood was a popular place of settlement, particularly for Mexican immigrants, when political turmoil during the Mexican Revolution led to increased migration and the availability of affordable housing could accommodate the majority of immigrants. In spite of generally poor living conditions, the area became the cultural center of the community in the 1920s, when life centered around Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish Church and School. By the mid-1940s, with the development of restaurants and theaters, the area became well known as the civic and cultural center of the Hispanic community. The first federally funded public housing project in the country, the Alazan Apache, was built in the area during that time.

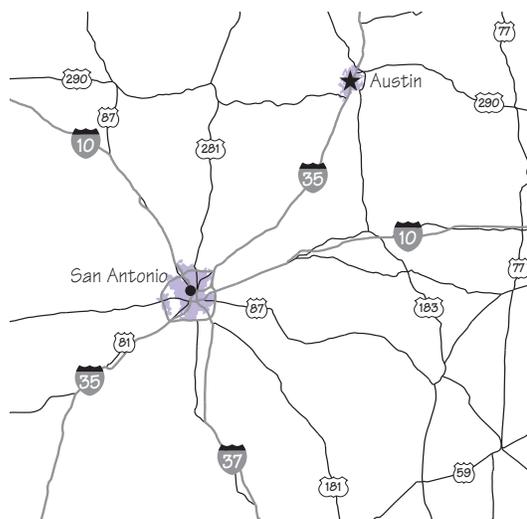
Existing Conditions

Although conditions have improved in the Avenida Guadalupe area, it continues to be confronted by a host of social, physical, and economic challenges. Many commercial buildings along the corridor are deteriorated, and pockets of substandard housing exist throughout the area. Crime and vandalism are major concerns.

In 1979, the Avenida Guadalupe Association (AGA) was incorporated to bring community members together in an effort to revitalize the neighborhood and encourage economic growth while protecting the distinctive quality of the neighborhood and the personality of the Avenida Guadalupe. As the local community development organization, AGA has been successful in securing private and



Location map.



Regional map.

public grants, resulting in an impressive array of studies and building projects.

Today, the corridor consists primarily of small neighborhood uses and some single-family homes. Near the eastern edge of the corridor at the intersection with South Brazos Street is a cluster of community, cultural, and office uses in newly constructed and rehabilitated buildings. A small busi-

ness incubator program, an office building, a community plaza, a theater, and a cultural arts center are concentrated there, where the vitality of the neighborhood can be experienced. These buildings and their uses resulted from the efforts of AGA.

At the western edge of the corridor is South Zarzamora Street, the major north-south commercial corridor for the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. Just north of the intersection is the University Center for Community Health—Texas Diabetes Institute. This new complex provides space for diabetes research as well as for education and treatment. The facility epitomizes economic development and serves as a major economic engine in this part of the city. The approximately 300 employees and annual clinic visitors provide demand for improved services in the area. The intersection of South Zarzamora Street and Avenida Guadalupe, a short distance to the south, is anchored by fast-food restaurants, a meat market, and a gas station. Over time, this area has potential to evolve into an upgraded commercial district.

Between these two nodes of development—the University Center for Community Health and the Guadalupe cultural arts/community facilities area—lies an area of small neighborhood restaurants and shops interspersed with single-family homes. Many of the buildings are in need of repair, and some of the current uses, such as auto repair shops and bars, are inappropriate for this corridor. Apparently, residents want to return to the community but hesitate because of the lack of basic services and market-rate housing. Although some of the small businesses are certainly struggling, others have remained for generations, indicating a strong sense of pride in the community.

In 1998, AGA, in partnership with the Division of Architecture and Urban Design of the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), created the 2020 Master Plan for the Avenida Guadalupe area. The plan included a number of potential development initiatives. UTSA, located just east of the study area, provides the other major economic generator and anchor in this part of the city. With the University Center for Community Health, these two area facilities enjoy a regional draw. UTSA

has the potential to grow and further influence future development in the study area.

The Assignment

The city of San Antonio, under the direction of Mayor Ed Garza and the city council, asked the ULI Advisory Services panel to help develop a corridor plan for Avenida Guadalupe. Development strategies were to reflect the desires of neighborhood residents, offering revitalization without displacement. Analysis of various market segments would be undertaken to determine market potential of the area, with particular emphasis on building upon the area's special characteristics. The panel was asked to recommend improvements necessary to promote development while safeguarding the historic fabric of the Hispanic community. Financing and incentives to encourage growth and fund investment were to be identified within the context of a redevelopment strategy. The panel was also asked to consider how connections to the downtown area might be improved.

A broader question is whether planning and economic development can begin to address the social issues in the area. Given that the population is primarily unskilled, job opportunities are limited. Economic development is needed to provide new job opportunities for the population. Many residents travel downtown to work in the hospitality industry or north to the suburbs to provide domestic help. Crime, teenage pregnancy, drugs, diabetes—issues that generally accompany poverty—must be taken into consideration because these ills negatively affect the perception of the area, thereby limiting private development interest.

Community stakeholders hope to revitalize the neighborhood while exhibiting sensitivity for its cultural heritage. Although code enforcement is available as a strategy, the bigger question is whether to renovate or demolish. That question leads to the issue of relocation. The panel recognized the importance of these issues—particularly because many Mexican Americans claim longtime roots in the Westside.

In an effort to attract private sector investment and market-rate housing, relying on the prevalent, existing cultural arts and Hispanic heritage

to draw interest in the area is a reasonable strategy. Providing “move-up” quality housing, so that more residents will remain in the community after their income levels begin to rise, was presented as a priority that will help spur economic development activity. The community would like to see an increase in the supply of quality housing products. The potential of land assemblage for larger development opportunities should help increase private development interest. New development must restore the historic pattern that has been lost in many sections of the community.

Specific problems were identified by the sponsor and noted as priorities for the panel to address. Infrastructure development is needed to improve the streetscape and address issues of drainage and flooding. Circulation problems caused by one-way streets, together with the effect of a high concentration of public housing, need to be remedied. Even new housing “turns its back” on the corridor, developed instead behind walls and fencing and thus providing no benefit to the streetscape. These factors affect the dynamic of the neighborhood.

Stakeholders recognize the need to provide a greater diversity of housing in the area and encourage more small business development. In addition, the community believes a need exists for more recreational facilities. Improved services and facilities, as well as upgraded housing conditions and business opportunities, will help address the issue of a transient population. Residents whose incomes rise tend to leave the area. Many stakeholders consider housing to be the issue that will turn the area around, but some fear increased housing prices may lead to displacement. Other stakeholders consider commercial revitalization as a more viable solution.

The panel was asked to consider the preceding issues. In formulating its recommendations for revitalization, the panel reviewed the briefing materials, toured the study area, interviewed more than 70 stakeholders, and had conversations with many more members of the community. This report presents the panel’s findings.



This beautiful mosaic is the work of local artist Jesse Trevino and serves as an icon for the neighborhood.

Overview and Summary of Recommendations

Avenida Guadalupe is a neighborhood in transition. In fact, it is a neighborhood that has always been in transition. When the first workers located here in housing built by the lumber company, known as “shotgun houses,” the physical conditions were very different. Flooding occurred regularly. If a homeowner missed a house payment, that family was displaced. No discretion was allowed in dealing with individual situations, resulting in virtually no support for homeowners.

Nevertheless, workers and their families survived. Many of these primarily immigrant and first-generation Mexican-American families began to thrive; however, as their economic situations improved, they moved out of the neighborhood. As these families moved out, new families moved in. Many were new immigrants coming across the border from Mexico. In this way, the area’s Hispanic fabric was born, giving the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood its history and its sense of pride. Many of the former residents of the neighborhood have fond memories of growing up here, and some long to return.

To facilitate revitalization of the area in light of its history of continuous transition, the city asked the ULI Advisory Services panel to evaluate the current situation and give an unbiased, independent review of the development potential of this community. The panel identified the area’s assets and liabilities and formulated recommendations to help the community establish a vision for the future.

Formulation of these strengths and weaknesses is designed to identify and build upon the strengths. The panel’s goal is to provide ideas that will enable the stakeholders of this area to move forward in harmony as a community. This type of commitment by the community’s stakeholders can facilitate the changes necessary to accommodate the needs of residents and business owners as well as

those who would like to either relocate or return to the neighborhood.

The panel prepared planning concepts that intensify commercial activity at two nodes on both ends of the study area along Avenida Guadalupe: one at the intersection of South Zarzamora Street and the other at South Brazos Street. The panel recommends linking these two nodes along the corridor and designates this area as a Conservation District. The focus should be on providing a mix of housing with the potential for neighborhood commercial uses at various other intersections; development will evolve as market demand increases. New infill housing within the blocks should be compatible with the existing scale and style of current buildings. Mixed-income housing, with some single-family detached and some shotgun styled, with or without an expansion, can provide additional housing along the corridor and begin to fill in some of vacant parcels along the frontage of Avenida Guadalupe. Small businesses providing convenience goods and services for the neighborhood should accompany new housing development.

Proposed development strategies show how to intensify development at the commercial nodes and how to improve the existing housing stock in the host environment—the area north to Durango Street and bordered by the Apache and Alazan creeks. Illustrations of various types of new residential housing are included that can serve the diverse needs of the community including clean, safe, and affordable housing.

The key implementation strategy proposed by the panel to facilitate these changes is the establishment of a new organizational entity—the Avenida Guadalupe Community Action Committee (AGCAC). This entity is modeled on the previous ULI Advisory Services panel proposal for the Eastside. This panel not only concurs with the potential effectiveness of the community action committee but also believes it will simplify the

process and strengthen redevelopment initiatives. The organization is distinguishable from a non-profit in that it is intended to serve as a task force, established to serve temporary development needs. Its effectiveness should be reevaluated on an annual basis.

The AGCAC should be established by an ordinance of the San Antonio City Council. Composition of the group, as recommended by the panel, should be specified by the council, and participants will serve on a voluntary basis. The AGCAC should be charged with creating a strategic action plan, establishing priorities, and securing funding. The plan should be presented to the city council for endorsement, and periodic progress reports should be required. The plan should be an overall development strategy for the area. A designated “champion” should be chosen from among the committee members. This person will be the liaison between AGCAC and the council. Staff assistance should come from public agencies working as a team to provide input and assistance and guarantee that all agencies are on board. A program manager should be designated in the city’s Neighborhood Action Department to lead this team.

In addition, the AGCAC should have input into the planning and review process of prospective publicly funded projects. The panel hopes that the AGCAC can achieve its purpose of bringing together the diverse community interests to focus on the needs of the area. The panel believes in the potential for redevelopment of this area and recommends the community-based organization described to spearhead redevelopment.



Many of the buildings in the area have been decorated with elaborate murals.



Left and below left: The small neighborhood businesses reveal their character in their artistic exteriors. The barbershop provides a needed service, and the Tacos and More restaurant is one of several eating establishments in the neighborhood.



Market Potential

The Avenida Guadalupe community is rich in history and proud traditions. It is a cradle of Hispanic migration into the United States, where thousands of Mexican Americans claim their roots and share fond memories of this important passage. The rich heritage of the community is of world-class proportion.

The panel was consistently impressed with the pride the residents and expatriates express in the Avenida Guadalupe community. The strength of the area's citizens and organizations and their commitment to the community's success are impressive. The caring and achievements of a wide range of locally based organizations are a reflection of community pride.

Community Assets

Because so many members of San Antonio's Hispanic population claim roots in the Avenida Guadalupe area, there are *strong connections* to family, friends, and the place itself. This factor is probably the single greatest strength of the area, and it gives the community a competitive advantage in capturing its share of economic growth.

Recent developments have brought new *economic growth engines* to the east and the west of Avenida Guadalupe. The University of Texas at San Antonio's downtown campus in the Cattlemen Square area to the east, and the University Center for Community Health to the west, have been added to the community in the last few years, bringing employees, students, visitors, and additional spending into the edges of the area.

The area's proximity to downtown is a significant asset, providing access to employment and transportation through a sufficient street network with reliable bus service. This *linkage* also provides a potential for connection to the city's 20 million annual visitors.

Cultural and community anchors are grouped near Avenida Guadalupe and South Brazos Street where the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, the Guadalupe Theater, and Plaza Guadalupe are situated. These facilities celebrate the heritage of the community, serving as an icon for the community and a gathering place for residents and visitors alike. The community's connection to the church and the affiliation many share with Our Lady of Guadalupe church serves as a strong social bond. Area businesses are few, but some proprietors such as the Davila and Segovia families have followed their community affinity with large financial commitments. The Davila Pharmacy is a third-generation business, while the Segovia candy business has been operating for more than 60 years. Also in this vicinity are the El Progreso Community Center; El Parian, which houses a number of local nonprofit organizations and small businesses; and Oficinas de la Avenida, the home of the Avenida Guadalupe Association and other lease space.

Other factors provide a competitive advantage for development in Avenida Guadalupe, including the comparatively *low cost of land and labor*. Efficient public transportation provided by VIA, the area transit system, supports the many working families in the area who must travel around the city and to the downtown area for job opportunities. Many of the residents in the area work in the hospitality industry, necessitating travel to the hotels in the downtown; others tend to work in the northern suburbs.

Community Liabilities

Discussion of Avenida Guadalupe requires a full acknowledgment of the wider range of issues that beset San Antonio and this neighborhood in particular.

Unfortunately, the *image* of Avenida Guadalupe among many San Antonians and visitors is that the area is a rough-and-tumble place, full of crime and poverty—a virtual no-man’s land. Whereas this perspective shows little awareness of the community’s assets, it does exhibit a condition that needs to be reversed.

Evidence shows that the Avenida consistently ranks high in *crime* statistics that include assaults, murders, illegal drug activity, and prostitution. One statistic shows that in the area more than 400 youths between the ages of 10 and 16 had gone through the juvenile justice system in a recent year.

The 2000 census shows the three census tracts in which the study area is located have a high concentration of very-low-income households, with an average household income of approximately \$19,000. This level is far below that of the city as a whole, where the average household income is about \$36,000. Almost 40 percent of the population is living below the *poverty* level. This situation results in low disposable income among residents, reducing the support for neighborhood retail services. Illiteracy is high, and unemployment is also understandably high; at 15 percent, it is more than three times the city’s average unemployment rate.

Surveys conducted by others and by this panel, coupled with inspections by code enforcement officials, reveal an aging inventory of housing and commercial stock. A significant portion of these buildings lack architectural appeal. Still other buildings are in such a dilapidated condition that they create blight along the major corridors, imposing safety hazards that may include potential environmental pollutants that would require substantial remediation. The area has lost 25 percent of its households over the past 20 years. Code violations, including curbside car repairs, junk piles, outdoor storage of appliances, and debris on vacant lots along Avenida Guadalupe and adjacent streets, degrade the community and present the appearance of blight and neglect.

Although the city has invested in upgrading the infrastructure around the Alazan and Apache creeks, the Avenida’s infrastructure, including sidewalks, lighting, parks, signage, and, in places,



Segovia’s candy store, a neighborhood landmark, is known for its praline candies that are shipped around the country.



Davila Pharmacy is a formidable business presence along Avenida Guadalupe where it has served the community for generations.

drainage, fall below the standards of a major U.S. city. These conditions deter development and add to the overall impression that the area is neglected.

One of the most significant physical barriers to the community is a series of railroad tracks, which requires the exceedingly long Guadalupe Street bridge that channels vehicular traffic from the central business district to the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. Significant challenges exist for the construction of an entry and exit gateway that would improve the image created by the 50-year-old structure.

City government’s resources are strained, making it difficult to deal with the range of physical, social, and economic problems in the area. The conditions have been created over time by a lack of public investment as well as a certain degree of inertia exhibited by property owners within the neighborhood.

Opportunities

In order to capture a larger share of San Antonio’s booming housing market, it will be necessary to capitalize on Avenida Guadalupe’s particular op-

portunities. The area possesses a large stock of vacant lots. It offers relatively low land costs that will enable more-affordable new development. The area's Empowerment Zone designation affords general income tax benefits, real property tax benefits, and job credits.

Additional opportunities include forging partnerships between the Parks and Recreation Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for redevelopment of the Alazan Creek area. The recent joint venture of nonprofit organizations—such as Alternative Housing, AGA, and Neighborhood Housing Services—in partnership with the San Antonio Development Authority (SADA) on the affordable Parade of Homes project may be replicated in other sections of the community. The ability of SADA to partner in order to undertake land assemblage affords opportunities to accelerate new housing development and a repopulation of the area. Additional partnerships with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) have brought about positive change and represent additional opportunities for repositioning the Avenida Guadalupe community as an affordable, pleasant place to live.

Development projects in the area have the potential to offer additional employment opportunities and increase the population in the community. These projects include the training facility for nurses and expansion of UTSA, already serving more than 6,000 students, and the University Center for Community Health facilities.

The panel believes that the Avenida Guadalupe community can and must build upon its strengths and opportunities. Most of its weaknesses can be mitigated through the commitment and caring attention of the residents, business owners, and other stakeholders.

Development Potential

As is typical of any redevelopment, limitations are imposed by the availability of financing, that is, both funds that may be attained through conventional sources and those that are provided through public funding. Neither financial element can be considered independently of the other, at least not until momentum has been established by achiev-

ing some development goals, and risk has been reduced.

In the initial stage, an inventory of readily developable lots must be determined through careful investigation of ownership and assessment of the condition of each parcel. Apparently, a number of the existing lots that contain homes or retail structures or both cannot be economically preserved and will, of necessity, need to be razed in preference to stabilizing and improving the health and welfare of the balance of the community. The city should clear the units that cannot be salvaged at no cost or penalty to the landowner. By pinpointing those lots available for redevelopment, a strategy for the type and intensity of improvements can best be programmed.

Currently, the panel envisions that the city will participate through the acquisition of only those lots to be held for redevelopment. The city should pay market value for the land. The private developer should be selected based upon experience and track record in comparable situations.

This inventory of lots should be categorized in two segments. The first is a block of contiguous vacant lots off Avenida Guadalupe suitable for single-family construction. Some consideration could also be given to including duplex or triplex construction as part of the mix.

The second segment of housing opportunity is along Avenida Guadalupe. Given the quality of some of the structures, coupled with the potential need for remediation to meet residential standards, a different dwelling unit design is considered appropriate. Avenida Guadalupe would fall within a Conservation District, as discussed in more detail in the Planning and Design section of this report. Such units would have design flexibility to be used for both residential and commercial purposes.

Land dedicated strictly for retail use is not considered justifiable at this time. The number of rooftops and the neighborhood's purchasing power are simply inadequate today to support retail development along Avenida Guadalupe. However, the panel recommends flexibility in design in order to accommodate changing market conditions. Space

can be converted to commercial use if and when demand warrants.

Residential Development

The greater San Antonio area is experiencing substantial new residential development in the northern area and increasingly to the outer edges in other directions. In 1999, annual new housing starts exceeded 10,000 units. Even new multifamily construction has increased in recent years, with another 600 market-rate rental units proposed in various locations in and around the downtown.

Market demand for new housing in the study area is harder to estimate. New for-sale housing is limited, with scattered new small-scale development and the new affordable Parade of Homes project along the Alazan and Apache creeks being the primary examples. Bringing in larger-scale, market-rate infill housing developers will require a substantial partnership with the city. The market is untested at this point. However, the panel believes that the most effective ways to accomplish an increase in market absorption are the following:

- Increasing supply of quality product;
- Providing for larger tracts of contiguous developable land; and
- Eliminating the blighted conditions predominant in the area.

It is the panel's belief that a highly visible market-rate (albeit affordable) housing development will dramatically accelerate development interest in the area. This development, in turn, will help prove the capacity of the market for additional development throughout the wider study area.

Medical Services

Medical-related services are anticipated to expand within the study area. The University Center for Community Health-Texas Diabetes Institute, located at South Zarzamora just north of Avenida Guadalupe, provides an anchor for the western edge of the community. This new development is large in size, scale, and prominence. The location for this facility was partially determined by the high percentage of Hispanic persons suffering from diabetes, which is the mission of this major



Above: An example of the quality of redevelopment in the neighborhood. Left: Terraza's Tire Shop could be considered an incompatible use along the main corridor.

medical facility. Demand for corollary medical services and supporting retail services will follow this direct investment. Additional development will further serve the resident population by creating greater demand for various convenience support services.

UTSA/Cattlemen Square Area

In the midterm, the dramatic growth of the UTSA downtown campus will bring new accessory development, including faculty and administrative office space, additional academic facilities, and, perhaps, student housing. The proximity of the UTSA downtown campus to Avenida Guadalupe will create the potential for new renters and patrons for an expanded offering of small businesses and commercial services.

Avenida Guadalupe Cultural District

Another significant market potential exists in the study area between South Brazos Street and the Avenida Guadalupe bridge. Because of the proximity to downtown and the existing cultural anchors at the intersection of South Brazos Street

and Avenida Guadalupe, this area affords additional opportunity for new artist's and craft studios along with other indigenous-focused retail.

The frontage opposite Brackenridge Elementary School has some attractive housing stock appropriate for rehabilitation. Improved marketing, well-publicized transit, and wayfinding for tourists will be essential to capitalize on the development potential along this eastern edge of Avenida Guadalupe.

Area leaders should reach out to the creative community to attract artist and artisan residents to locate their businesses along the Avenida. The goal should be to create a destination that not only focuses on indigenous expression but also encourages a broad variety of artistic energy.

Planning and Design

The physical character of Avenida Guadalupe played a significant role in the panel's assessment of the area. Its physical attributes present both opportunities and constraints to the implementation of a revitalization plan. In defining opportunities for redevelopment, the panel first analyzed the existing fabric and then considered planning options, which culminated in the definition of five overarching planning principles. These principles should be adhered to in guiding future redevelopment actions.

Existing Fabric

In devising its recommendations, the panel focused on four key physical aspects of the study area: development pattern, land use, open space, and access and circulation.

Development Pattern

The panel identified four significant aspects of the current development pattern of the community:

- The entire study area is closely connected with neighborhoods to the north and south by a street network based on a grid pattern defining 150-foot by 300-foot blocks.
- The Apache and Alazan creeks form a natural boundary along the east, south, and west edges of the study area, separating it from other parts of the city.
- Durango Boulevard is the northern boundary, representing a natural divide characterized by a different development pattern of larger lots and a slightly higher housing quality.
- Generally, the blocks throughout the area were developed of a similar pattern with one- or two-story detached buildings. This pattern differs from the pattern found along the corridor.

Land Use

Although the predominant pattern of land use in the study area was originally single-family residential with small-scale retail scattered throughout the neighborhood, redevelopment activities have yielded a new pattern. Parcels around the intersection of South Brazos Street and Avenida Guadalupe are generally occupied by new cultural and institutional uses. The land parcels at the South Zarzamora Street and Avenida Guadalupe intersection are occupied by highway-oriented commercial uses, such as fast-food restaurants, a meat market, and a gas station.

Between these two intersections, the pattern of land use along the corridor is characterized by commercial and residential uses, isolated by a



A particularly elaborate mural covers the side of a building facing San Fernando Street just off South Zarzamora Street.



This mural shows the quality of the artwork found in many neighborhood buildings.

significant amount of vacant land interspersed between these uses and scattered along the length of the corridor. In addition, several recent developments are inconsistent in use and pattern with the traditional fabric.

Beyond the natural boundary of Alazan Creek, the Avenida Guadalupe corridor at the east end is developed as an industrial/employment area. At the west end, beyond Apache Creek, the corridor is developed with low-density, highway-oriented commercial uses. However, the creeks separate these areas from the bulk of the study area.

Open Space

Open space is one of the most significant components of any community. However, even though a number of public open spaces exist within the study area, community access is constrained for various reasons:

- Significant open space along the creek beds is separated from the neighborhood by a major grade change. Cassiano Park, in the southwestern corner of the area, is the only developed open space along the creeks.
- Neighborhood schools and other institutions provide developed open space (soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and so on). However, with the exception of the city-owned natatorium, public access is time constrained.

Access and Circulation

A fully developed roadway grid throughout the area provides excellent connectivity between the study area, adjacent residential neighborhoods, downtown, and areas farther west. However, the streets are generally in poor condition and do not provide comfortable conditions for pedestrians. Existing sidewalks are narrow and do not afford universal accessibility. Telephone poles are located in the middle of sidewalks. In addition, most streets lack adequate lighting, street trees, signage, and street furniture such as benches and bus shelters. An exception to this pattern is the area immediately adjacent to the South Brazos Street and Avenida Guadalupe intersection. That area serves as a good example of an appealing pedestrian environment.

Five Planning Principles

The panel's recommendations suggest how the city can prepare the Avenida Guadalupe community for successful revitalization. With a combination of time and the help of public and private sector development partners, the panel believes that the following five planning principles can guide the area's revitalization.

Principle #1

Develop the Avenida Guadalupe corridor as an integral part of the larger community. Traditional corridors such as Avenida Guadalupe have deteriorated because of the emergence of newer, larger, automobile-oriented retail centers and the decline of the adjacent neighborhoods. The panel believes that successful revitalization of the corridor requires two modes of action:

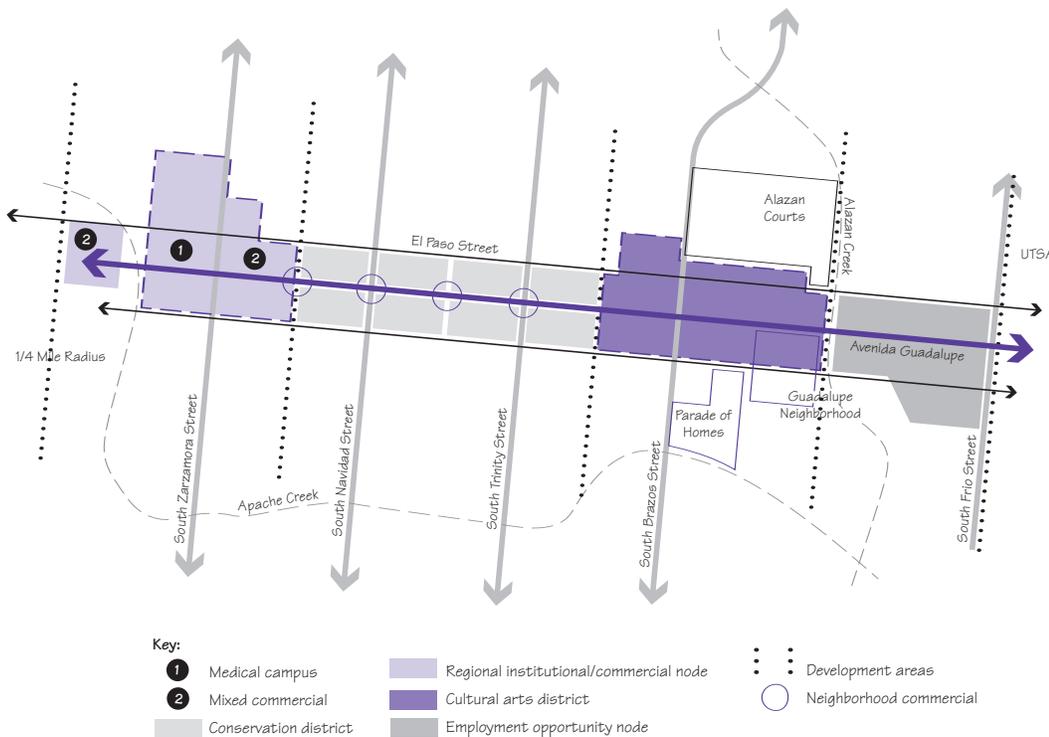
- Simultaneous revitalization of the larger area defined as the natural host neighborhood for the corridor—the area between Durango Boulevard and the creeks;
- Development of strong physical, economic, and functional connections between the corridor and the host neighborhood.

Principle #2

Create a forward-looking, community-based vision to guide planning and implementation initiatives. The panel recognizes that multiple options exist for revitalization of the study area. Implementation of revitalization initiatives will be spread out over several years and involve multiple public and private entities.

Community needs and market conditions change over time and all plans undergo modifications and transformation. To ensure that short- and long-term actions do not conflict with each other or produce undesirable results, the panel recommends that a vision statement be created with significant community and stakeholder input. The vision statement will serve as a guide and benchmark to evaluate proposals and projects proposed for the neighborhood.

The vision statement should address three aspects of the area's revitalization:



Long-term development framework.

- **Image and identity:** The vision statement must guide creation of a unique image and identity program for the area, and specifically include the design of infrastructure improvements such as bus shelters, banners, and streetscapes.
- **Marketing:** The vision statement must also provide direction for a multiyear marketing program for the corridor and the neighborhood. The panel believes that sustained marketing activities are essential to ensure the effectiveness of revitalization initiatives and to counter negative perceptions.
- **Themed special events:** The vision statement must establish a theme for frequent and regular special events to be organized in the corridor for residents of the area and for those from other neighborhoods in the city. These events could be small scale and more frequent, such as a “Cultural Friday” event; or larger in scale, offering a Cinco de Mayo parade along Avenida Guadalupe in addition to the existing a Diez y Seis (September 16) parade.

Principle #3

Establish a land use development framework to guide all development activities within the study area. The Avenida Guadalupe corridor presents opportunities for a diverse and rich mix of uses.

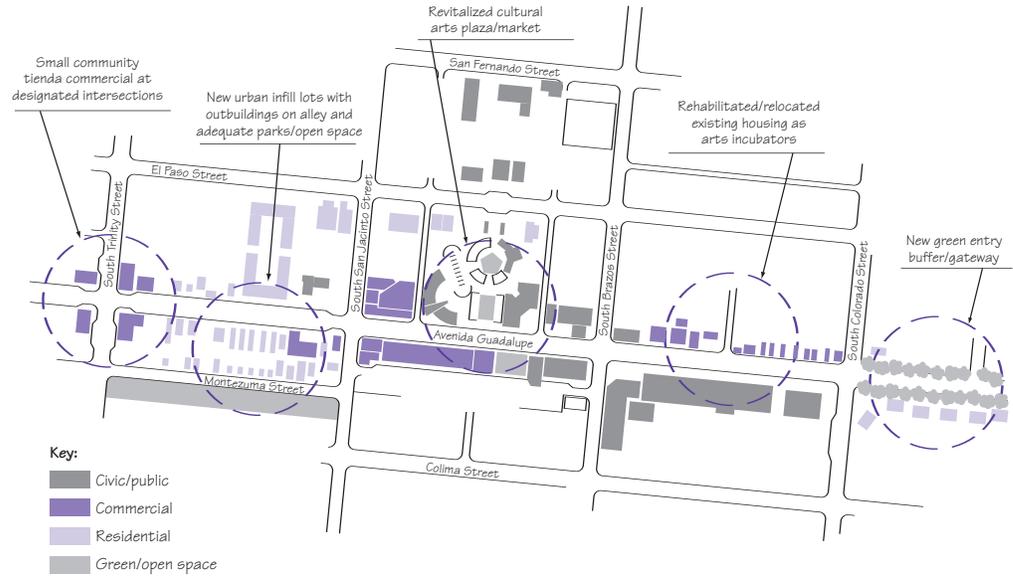
Analysis of existing conditions indicates that, although dispersed, the corridor is currently home to institutional uses, new and old residences, businesses, and regional and local retail establishments. The panel recognizes that this mix can be sustained if a critical mass is reached for each of the different uses. The corridor is also very long, and creation of distinct “places”—such as the AGA complex—at key intervals will help make it an attractive destination for investors and visitors.

The panel recommends the following four distinct districts along the corridor. Boundaries of the districts are based on preliminary analysis and should be further investigated through a community-based neighborhood planning process.

Employment Opportunity Node. This district is located at the entrance into the study area from the Central Business District. The area is bounded on the north by El Paso Street, on the east by South Frio Street, by Vera Cruz Street to the south, and by Alazan Creek to the west. The area is bisected by a wide swath of railroad tracks, over which spans the long Avenida Guadalupe bridge.

This area is currently composed of warehouse and light industrial uses and has recently seen an influx of trendy cafés and coffeehouses. The panel recommends that the existing pattern of employment-oriented uses be continued. The panel encourages the city to promote the area for addi-

Cultural arts district.



The Avenida Guadalupe Association fills most of the office space at the newly constructed Oficinas de la Avenida building that adds to the concentration of community and cultural services.



tional development with employment-generating businesses.

The Avenida Guadalupe bridge is perceived as a barrier between the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood and the greater downtown area. The height and length of the bridge is a visual barrier and is uninviting to residents and visitors from outside the neighborhood. The panel recommends that the bridge be modified; the width of the span was originally determined by the width of the railroad tracks, which are now underutilized. Given the current situation, it is possible that the height could be lowered or the length could be shortened, or both. In addition, the potential exists for using the bridge to create an attractive entry into the neighborhood. Enhancements could include a pedestrian/bicycle path, added design features, and lighting and signage welcoming visitors into the Avenida Guadalupe area.

Cultural Arts District. The purpose of this district is to memorialize and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the neighborhood and provide a living experience of the Hispanic community’s past, present, and future. Centered at the intersection of South Brazos Street and Avenida Guadalupe, this district builds upon the existing cultural infrastructure—Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, Guadalupe Theater, Plaza Guadalupe, El Parian and El Progreso Center, and the Oficinas de la Avenida—to create a cultural arts “center” for the neighborhood.

The entrance into the neighborhood truly begins when one has crossed over the Avenida Guadalupe bridge. The area between the bridge and South Brazos Street should be designed as a heavily landscaped gateway entrance to create an attractive first impression of the neighborhood and soften the edges of the recent SAHA development. The SAHA development turns its back on the Avenida through its use of fenced walls along the street. Farther along the block, between South Brazos and South Jacinto streets, however, is a good stock of existing historic structures. These buildings should be rehabilitated and adaptively reused as incubator artisan work/live spaces. Any vacant lots should then be infilled with rehabilitated, relocated housing stock from elsewhere in the neighborhood or with new, appropriately designed structures.

The area to the north of Avenida Guadalupe up to the Alazan Courts public housing complex should be developed with new, middle-income residences in order to enhance the first-impression aspect of the gateway/arts district and bring a critical mass of residents into this district.

Closer to the South Brazos intersection, revitalization of Plaza Guadalupe could provide a number of benefits to the community. If the plaza were opened up to the street it would help enliven this section of Avenida Guadalupe. Activities occurring within the plaza would be visible to the surroundings and would help draw more people into the area. Redesign could also improve the connection between the plaza and Our Lady of Guadalupe church so that the open space relates better to the church.

Regional Institutional/Commercial Node. The intersection of Avenida Guadalupe and South Zarzamora Street is currently home to a large number of high-traffic-oriented commercial uses and the new University Center for Community Health. These high-traffic community-serving uses should be expanded.

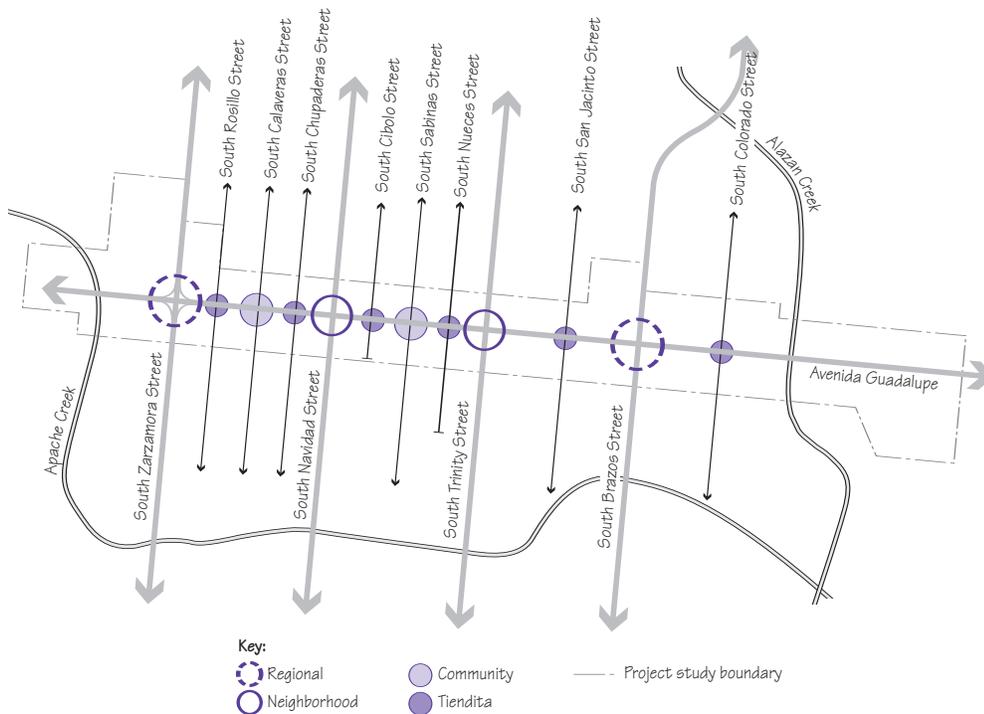
Additional commercial development along the South Zarzamora Street corridor should be encouraged. New development will help define the corridor and enhance the area. Site-planning considerations should include minimal building setbacks to encourage construction closer to the sidewalk, with parking in the rear. Also, medical-

related uses should be expanded south across Avenida Guadalupe, with auxiliary uses (such as professional medical services) developed west toward Apache Creek and farther south along South Zarzamora Street.

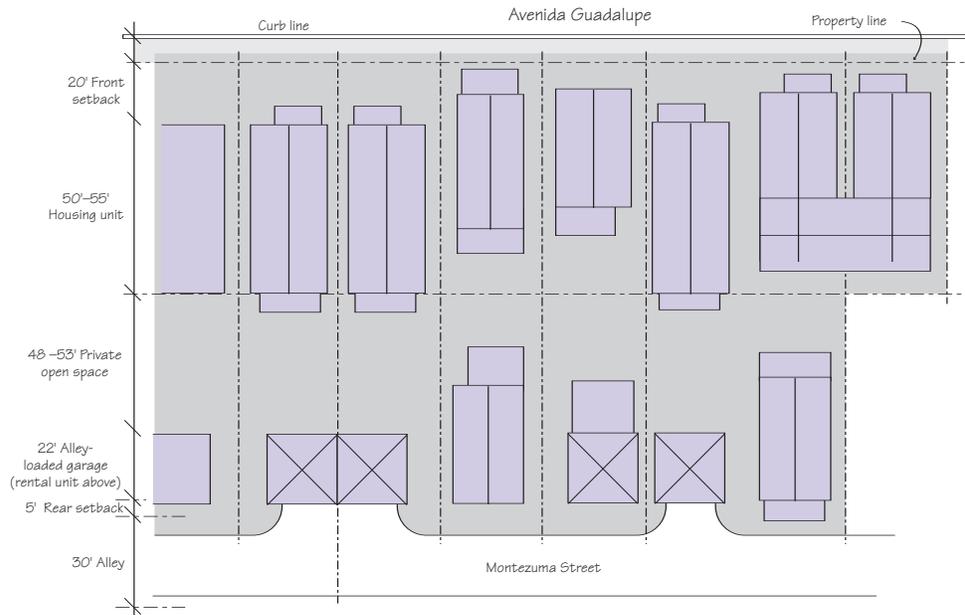
Commercial development along Avenida Guadalupe should vary in terms of scale and services. The Commercial Node diagram shows a range of services at strategic intersections, varying in intensity from regional offerings at South Zarzamora Street to small stores (*tienditas*). This concept allows for the development of major services while supporting small family businesses. It is also designed to bring a variety of convenience goods and support services into the neighborhood that will blend with the existing scale of development.

Conservation District. The panel recommends that the formerly residential pattern of development along the portion of Avenida Guadalupe between the Cultural Arts Activity and Regional Institutional/Commercial nodes be conserved through carefully designed infill housing and the reestablishment of small *tienda*-style businesses. The square footage of some housing units could be increased to better accommodate large, intergener-

Commercial node diagram.



Infill housing strategy.



Right: This home, recently built by a former resident returning to the community, illustrates residents' commitment to the neighborhood. Far right: No major grocery stores are located in the study area, but a few small markets, like the Guadalupe Food Mart, serve the basic needs of the community.



ational families. Increased lot size is also possible in certain sections, particularly in the area south of Avenida Guadalupe. The panel recommends a variety of housing options that maintain the existing fabric defined by the street grid and bring life back to the alleys.

The predominant scale of development along the corridor is composed of one-story buildings. However, two-story units could be built at the intersections where live/work spaces could be developed above commercial uses.

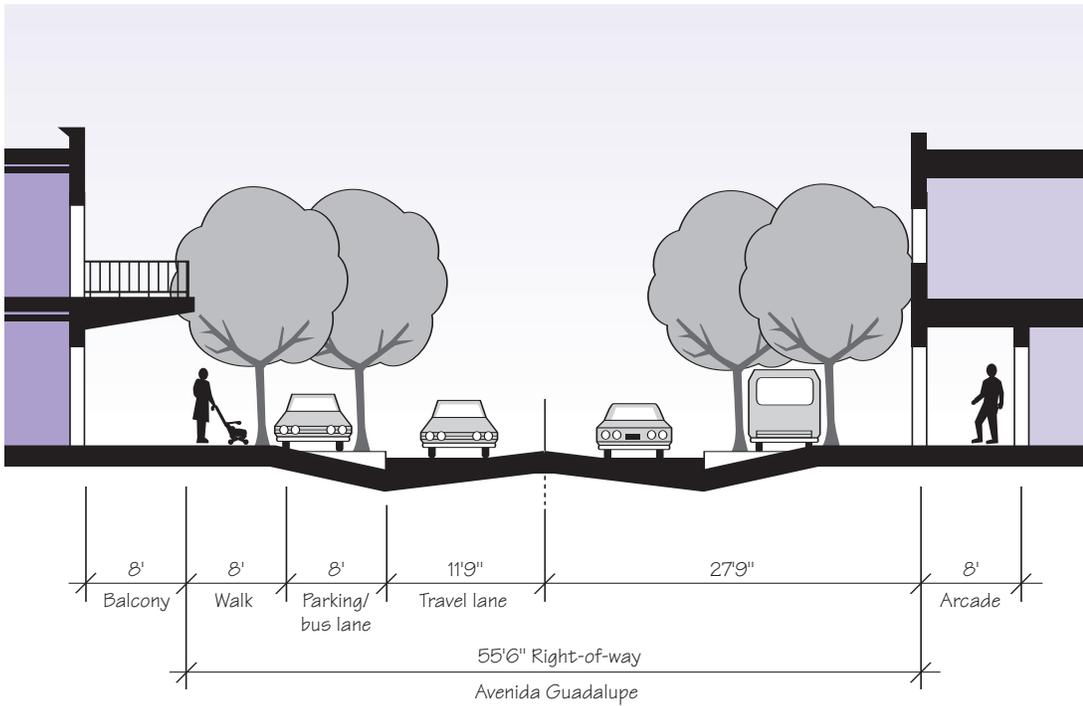
Structural condition permitting, the existing historic structures along Avenida Guadalupe should be preserved and maintained. Also, some of the structures along the corridor have been renovated by current residents and have yielded creative rehabilitation/redevelopment strategies. These renovations should be assessed and the zoning code appropriately amended to allow continuation of some of these more creative solutions.

Where vacant land exists or existing structures are deemed unsuitable for rehabilitation, these

parcels should be developed with new infill housing in keeping with the historic character of the existing housing stock. The panel recommends a new development strategy based on traditional neighborhood design to exploit opportunities for combining the existing platted 33 feet by 74 feet back-to-back lots between Avenida Guadalupe and Montezuma Street and creating new lots with sufficient depth (± 150 square feet) to permit an 1,800-square-foot home on the Avenida, a rear yard, and an alley-loaded garage with an approximately 400-square-foot rental unit above.

The continuous grid pattern in the neighborhood provides ready access to and through the Avenida. The hierarchy of the north-south cross streets provides a variety of potential commercial node intersections that could include neighborhood services such as restaurants and drugstores as well as the smaller, more typical *tienditas*.

To adequately serve residential and commercial uses along the Avenida, ample on-street and appropriate off-street and on-site parking must be provided. Parking must be available to serve all



Avenida Guadalupe street section.

potential users, including employees, residents, and visitors. Off-street parking facilities should be located at the rear of the property and have adequate, well-signed, and well-lit pedestrian connections.

Principle #4

Balance pedestrian and automobile needs within the Avenida Guadalupe right-of-way. The panel has observed that the current travel lane width of Avenida Guadalupe appears to be in excess of present-day traffic needs. If this observation is confirmed by detailed traffic studies, the panel recommends that the street be redesigned as a more pedestrian- and commercial-friendly corridor. This redesign would include reducing the existing four-lane arterial roadway to two travel lanes with on-street parallel parking and widening the existing sidewalks to an eight-foot width.

As part of the necessary infrastructure improvements, and coupled with the need for neighborhood image enhancement, the streetscape should be significantly redesigned to include pedestrian-oriented street lighting (similar to the South Brazos Street intersection), the addition of street trees, signage, sidewalk bump-outs at intersections with pedestrian crosswalks, and attractive bus shelters. Particular emphasis could be placed on the bus stop locations, all of which coincide with adequately sized north-south crossings and potential commercial nodes. These bus stop and commercial intersections should be designed as “safe

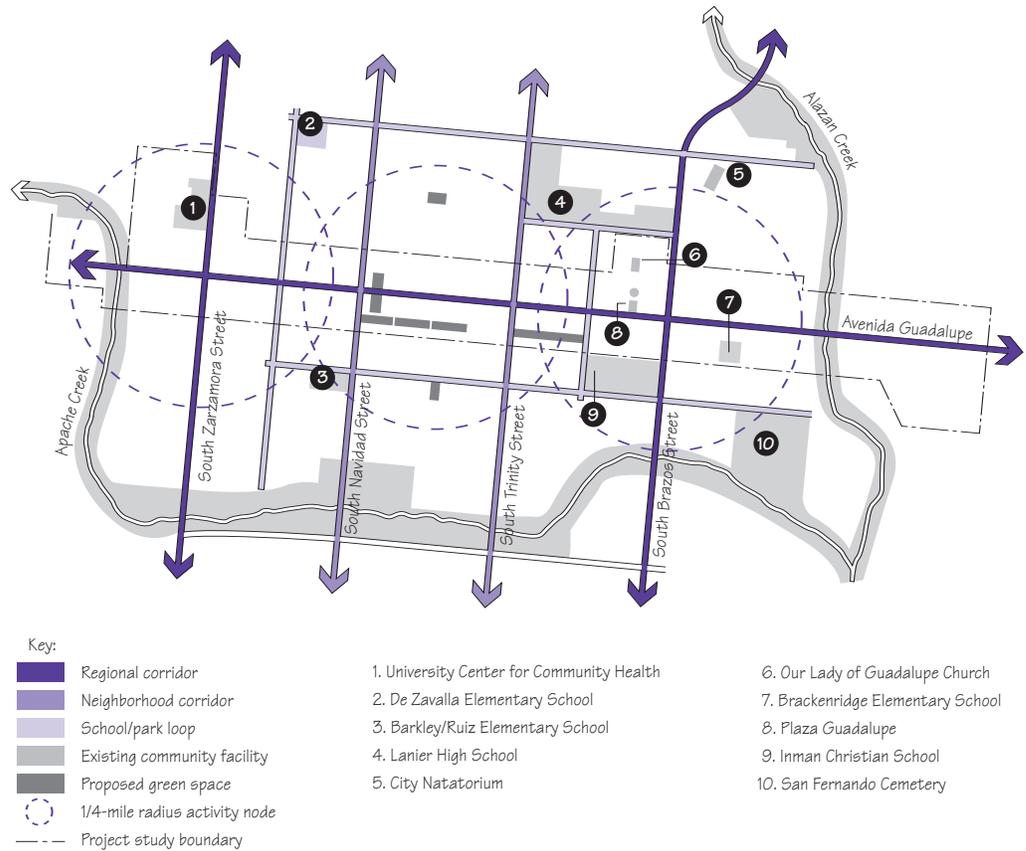
havens,” with neighborhood image-enhancing lighting, signage, and security features. These enhancements have the potential to increase pedestrian activity on the corridor and encourage high-quality private investment on adjacent development parcels.

Principle #5

Establish a well-rounded open-space network that serves the study area and the host neighborhood. Although a variety of active and passive open-space resources are currently available in the area, they are usually colocated with neighborhood schools outside the study area and do not appear to be uniformly distributed throughout the neighborhood. The streets that connect the schools (Calaveras, San Jacinto, and Vera Cruz streets and Durango Boulevard) are inadequately designed to encourage travel between the varied recreational facilities. These streets should be improved to support an infrastructure greenway linking the existing neighborhood resources and providing amenities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and slow-moving automobiles.

Because the open spaces and recreational facilities are mostly colocated with the neighborhood schools, the residents appear to have limited access to recreational resources during school hours. The city’s Department of Parks and Recreation or other appropriate agencies should conduct a survey to determine the open space/recreational needs of the residents. The survey should also

Linkages.



Right: Chain-link fencing used mainly for security purposes is a predominant characteristic of the housing along Avenida Guadalupe and throughout the neighborhood. Far right: Development of infill sites will help mend the fabric of the neighborhood, particularly along the major corridor.



identify the types and preferred locations of new public parks or play areas. Another deficiency appears to be a lack of passive, small-size, open spaces within easy walking distance for use by younger children or older residents. A series of vacant parcels should be identified, acquired, and developed as “pocket parks” in conjunction with any new residential infill development.

Summary

Redevelopment of the Avenida Guadalupe corridor itself could prove the biggest challenge. Development activity concentrated at the intersection of the corridor with the major north-south streets—at South Brazos and South Zarzamora streets—is already underway, as noted in the

Cultural Arts and the Regional Institutional/Commercial nodes. However, focus on the Conservation District between these two nodes is critical to the success of the overall redevelopment of the neighborhood. The corridor must maintain its integrity—its existing fabric—as defined by the scale of its buildings and the existing street grid.

Infill development along the corridor will help eliminate vacant parcels—the gaps in the street fabric—with the addition of housing and neighborhood commercial services. A reduction from four to two lanes of traffic and the improved

streetscape and linkage with a network of open spaces will create a better environment for pedestrians.

Greater efficiency for vehicles will result from better signage and an improved parking plan. A community-based vision should be translated into a redevelopment plan that will guarantee a continuation of the area's distinctive image, most notably influenced by development along Avenida Guadalupe.

Development Strategies

The city of San Antonio requested assistance in making the Avenida Guadalupe community a “neighborhood of choice”—a good place to live, work, and raise a family—while respecting and preserving its rich cultural heritage. The panel believes that reaching this goal will require working partnerships between community stakeholders and the private sector.

Strategies should capture the vision and preserve the cultural heritage of the community, address the needs of current residents and business owners, and use a bold and comprehensive approach to address the challenges that currently face this community. The panel believes that its proposed development strategies, if held to strict timelines with clearly defined responsibility for implementation, will create the infrastructure and resources—both physical and human—to make the community a vibrant, cultural hub for San Antonio’s Hispanic families.

Initial Actions

The planning process must include an inventory of existing conditions to determine community needs. Following that data collection phase, a plan can be formulated to address shortcomings and exhibit the range of possibilities.

Property Inventory

The first task is to complete a comprehensive inventory of all the property within the target area, including homes, businesses, and vacant lots. A checklist should be developed that identifies property condition, current use, permitted use, ownership, and historical significance.

In addition, the process used to create this inventory allows surveyors an opportunity to make contact with the residents and business owners occupying these buildings. Family demographics, including number and ages of children, employment status of family members, educational at-

tainment levels, and health and social service needs, should also be compiled. Business owners can be queried on their customer base, number of employees, expansion plans, and financing needs. Banks could be queried on the number of commercial and residential loans that have been applied for and approved or denied, and schools could be identified by their enrollment trends. Given the extensive involvement of the Annie E. Casey Foundation in this area, the foundation is in an excellent position to provide the leadership and guidance for this activity, assisted by city staff (for building-condition assessments) and university students, and supplemented by staff of local nonprofit organizations.

A Revitalization Plan

When the property inventory has been completed, a plan for neighborhood commercial revitalization, which may well include some of the contiguous residential areas, can be created. The plan is critical. To ensure community and city support, the group given the task of creating this plan should include an array of public, private, and resident representatives. The challenge of any revitalization program is to focus efforts on creating a visible effect. Small efforts to address large problems will not be sufficient. A convergence of interests and resources must be leveraged to create significant improvements for the Avenida Guadalupe community.

Suggested Strategies

To produce a vision and a plan to address community needs, the panel recommends a number of strategies that will help create significant neighborhood revitalization for the Avenida Guadalupe community. These strategies include a range of activities from human capital investment to more process-oriented actions.

Invest in Human Development and Engage Local Resources

This neighborhood appears well endowed with many human services agencies. Collaboration and coordination of the programs available to the neighborhood should be encouraged to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that scarce resources are well leveraged. Programs should address the challenges facing the residents and business owners of the Avenida Guadalupe community, as documented by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's efforts of the past several years.

Residents should be given the opportunity to enroll in education and training programs that can provide them with access to employment opportunities at family-sustaining wages. Optimally, linkages with the workforce investment system could enable residents to receive on-the-job training; currently, many residents already work two or three jobs, leaving little time for educational pursuits. Target industries for job training should focus on opportunities within the community, such as medical services and construction. Homeownership counseling, financial education programs, home maintenance, and minor home repair workshops can provide residents with the skills they need to develop and maintain their personal assets.

Reportedly, this community is largely “unbanked,” providing significant opportunity to engage local lenders in retail banking services as well as larger community investments. Partnership with Federal Home Loan Bank members to develop housing in the neighborhood is an excellent way of encouraging lenders to see this market as viable for their services.

Eliminate Blight

Blighted properties should be identified and the owners given a clear deadline for remediation, rehabilitation, or demolition. Public and private agencies responsible for the administration of owner-occupied and rental rehabilitation assistance programs should facilitate access to these programs for any owners needing these resources. During the initial assessment stage, priority should be given to families living in the target area. If remediation is not accomplished within the allotted time, the San Antonio Development Authority (SADA) should condemn and acquire the property.

The process by which these properties are then reconveyed for redevelopment should be clearly defined, and performance measures and capacity for reuse should be documented. A memorandum of agreement between the Dangerous Structures Determination Board and the city and state historic preservation offices should be created to expedite the demolition of these blighted structures. Environmental issues must also be addressed before redevelopment can occur. The city's brown-field redevelopment program can assist with site assessment. Sites within the Empowerment Zone are eligible for federal tax credits for remediation.

Streamline Development—Remove Barriers

The report of the Community Revitalization Action Group (CRAG 2000) provides excellent guidance for streamlining development. Some of the recommendations in that report should be revisited, such as expediting services and resources for inner-city development projects, waiving permit fees, streamlining the process for residents and business owners to access city incentive and assistance programs, implementing the “Super Sweep” program in targeted neighborhoods, and assembling parcels for development of affordable housing in targeted areas. The Avenida Guadalupe community could be used as a pilot for some of these initiatives, with a follow-up assessment to determine which had the most effect in encouraging reinvestment in the community.

The city of San Antonio's Incentive Scorecard promotes targeted development and community growth in both residential and commercial/industrial projects that meet priorities and goals set by the city council, by location, type of project, or both. The evaluation and application is an automated process that is used to facilitate and expedite the award of targeted development incentives. The scorecard offers incentives through reductions or waivers of fees for street closures, sidewalk closures, preliminary review fees, and San Antonio System Water & Sewer impact fees. The city has amassed an impressive array of incentives for its incentive toolbox. However, it is difficult for smaller-scale developments to “score” sufficiently high to access those resources.

These two local businesses provide a range of services.



Coordinate Existing Programs and Resources

Making a significant and lasting impact on the project area will require targeting both public and private resources. The shortest path to redevelopment success requires that the city's leadership be willing to dedicate what may be, in the short term, a disproportionately large share of resources to this area. Long term, this investment will attract the private sector investment necessary to sustain community revitalization.

Clean and Safe. It is critically important to the success of any redevelopment effort to initiate a "Clean and Safe" program within the neighborhood. The staff members of the San Antonio Fear-Free Environment (SAFFE) program unit have an excellent grasp of the neighborhood's specific areas of concern and can provide guidance in crime-prevention activities. A comprehensive street-lighting program can enhance neighborhood safety. SAFFE staff members should be able to quickly enlist the assistance of the city's code enforcement staff to curtail illegal dumping and inappropriate uses of private property. VIA has expressed a willingness to consider additional development of its transportation infrastructure along the Avenida Guadalupe corridor, including development of shelters, signage, and lighting. A mechanism for community input should be put into place so that community members can work with VIA toward improving the transit service environment.

Development Funds. The proposed Section 108 application, along with Community Development Block Grant and Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME) dollars, creates a significant potential resource pool that can be used to facilitate development within the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. These funds should be thoughtfully allocated in a way that will induce additional public and private investment—perhaps by funding some of the infrastructure for the new affordable-

housing developments proposed for either the Parade of Homes or the El Paso/Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. In that way, development costs per lot are reduced, enabling nonprofit developers to offer new homes to residents at a further reduced cost.

As mentioned previously, the city's owner-occupied rehabilitation programs and rental rehabilitation programs need to be heavily targeted to this area during the initial redevelopment phase in order to preserve the properties when financially feasible. The panel strongly recommends that this activity be given priority for completion within the next 24 months so that it becomes a tangible demonstration of the city's commitment to the community, its residents, and potential investors.

The city's HOME-funded downpayment assistance programs should also be an integral part of all housing development programs in this community. Subsidy layering can be achieved by using the Affordable Housing Program and the Homebuyer Equity Leverage Program of the Federal Home Loan Bank to further reduce housing costs. The city and the Housing Trust Foundation offer housing counseling programs certified by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that prepare first-time homebuyers to purchase a home. This service can be provided at locations within the neighborhood to facilitate access by community residents.

The city has a number of small business loan programs to assist those business owners within the target area wishing to grow their businesses. The Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization designation creates access to the city's business facade improvement program funds, through Operation Facelift. These funds, coupled with traditional Small Business Administration loan programs, provide financial products that can be used to help local businesses grow. The Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas also has the Economic Development

Program Plus Small Business Grant program, designed to promote and enhance small business development, foster relationships between local lenders and the business community, and create and retain jobs.

Other Potential Sources of Assistance. Both Fannie Mae and the Enterprise Foundation are active in San Antonio. The panel suggests that the city contact these organizations to investigate available assistance. It should be noted, however, that Fannie Mae has recently suspended all foundation grant-making activity. A Fannie Mae Partnership Office is located in San Antonio, however, and typically its programs at the local level are delivered through a network of lenders. The largest current commitment is the “American Dream Commitment” of expanding access to homeownership for first-time homebuyers, with a particular interest in increasing the rate of minority homeownership. This assistance can take the form of new mortgage products, relaxed underwriting requirements, and the like. Fannie Mae also engages employers in Employer Assisted Housing Programs and has educational programming to address predatory lending. The city should inquire whether Fannie Mae has any funding specifically targeted for Avenida Guadalupe.

The Enterprise Foundation has both an office and an initiative in San Antonio—Enterprise San Antonio. The foundation has been in San Antonio since 1994 and has invested more than \$29 million to create almost 8,000 affordable homes. It leads a collaborative of local and national funders—the San Antonio Community Development Partnership—that provides operating support to community-based nonprofits. It also provides technical assistance and specialized training. Furthermore, the foundation supports a group called Community Leadership Institute that provides free leadership training classes and networking opportunities for people interested in building support and consensus for neighborhood change.

Business Development Assistance. San Antonio’s newly acquired Empowerment Zone (EZ) designation also brings with it business-focused incentives and bond financing:



El Parian provides a home for many small businesses with ties to the community. It is part of the concentration of services near the Avenida Guadalupe and South Brazos Street intersection.

- *Wage credits* are especially attractive to businesses looking to grow. These businesses are able to hire and retain Empowerment Zone residents, applying the credits against their federal business tax liability. Businesses located within the new EZ enjoy up to a \$3,000 credit for every newly hired or existing employee who lives in the EZ
- *Work opportunity credits* provide businesses located in EZs up to \$2,400 against their federal tax liability for each employee hired from groups with traditionally high unemployment rates or other special employment needs, including youths who live in the EZ.
- *Welfare to work credits* offer EZ businesses a credit of up to \$3,500 (in the first year of employment) and \$5,000 (in the second year) for each newly hired long-term welfare recipient.

To take full advantage of these programs, small businesses need assistance with business planning, loan applications, and the use of financing tools. AGA should take a more active role in “brokering” these programs to the businesses within El Parian and the larger community in partnership with local lenders. Students from UTSA and the members of the local Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) program may be available to provide additional support for AGA’s business assistance staff. SCORE operates out of local Small Business Administration offices.

The panel understands that the local chambers of commerce lead economic development efforts in their quadrants of the city. AGA, in partnership with the West Chamber and the South San Antonio Chamber, should try to use some of the enormous economic effect of the new Toyota manufacturing plant and its spin-off development to build the local business base, both in terms of existing firms and for attracting business and development. Procurement opportunities should be iden-

The area's Hispanic heritage is celebrated at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center.



tified and assistance provided for local companies to take full advantage of these. In addition, a concerted effort should be made to ensure that the residents of this neighborhood have access to the new jobs created in the course of this economic growth.

Expand Cultural Events

The Guadalupe Theater and Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center together form the heart of the neighborhood—both literally and figuratively—and are responsible for preserving the cultural heritage and traditions of this historic Hispanic neighborhood. AGA and other community organizations should take the lead in preserving this heritage through the organization and implementation of an increased program of cultural events, such as Cinco de Mayo and Diez y Seis de Septiembre parades, and las carretas in Plaza Guadalupe.

Thought should be given to more broadly marketing these cultural activities as a way of heightening awareness of the rich traditions and history of the neighborhood—attracting visitors, potential residents, and businesses to celebrate Hispanic culture and heritage. This activity will give the Avenida Guadalupe community greater visibility within the city of San Antonio, attracting new customers for local businesses.

Involve UTSA

UTSA intends to expand its downtown campus current enrollment of 6,000 students in the coming years. The university will be developing new facilities and may begin to develop housing for students. The proximity of the university to the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood provides poten-

tial new renters, as well as patrons for local businesses. The AGCAC organization formed to oversee redevelopment (and which is discussed in the Implementation section of this report) should include a representative from UTSA.

Expand Job Opportunities

The far southeast part of the study area, bounded by Avenida Guadalupe on the north, South Medina Street on the east, Tampico Street on the south, and Alazan Creek on the west, is currently a center for warehousing and distribution. The city's Economic Development Department should be encouraged and supported in its efforts to locate additional job-generating employers in this area, providing easy physical access to new job opportunities for the residents of Avenida Guadalupe.

Targeted Development

The panel recommends that the city target specific areas for development. Two prime development opportunities were identified and are discussed below. The panel suggests that the city focus its efforts on the development potential in two specific areas, one for mixed-income housing development and the other for an expansion of the institutional-related uses and neighborhood commercial district at South Zarzamora and Avenida Guadalupe.

Develop Mixed-Income Housing

Through a collaboration of San Antonio Alternative Housing, Neighborhood Housing Services, and local nonprofit housing developers, the Parade of Homes affordable housing project is planned for an area bounded by Vera Cruz and South Colorado streets, Apache Creek, and South Brazos Street that was formerly owned by SAHA. Focus groups have been held with community residents to guide the design and determine desired amenities to be included in this development. The effort is well underway and should be strongly supported by the city and local lenders.

As additional development is undertaken in the study area, efforts should be made to develop homes of varying sizes and price points to meet the income limits and housing needs of the people already living in the neighborhood, as well as their friends and families.

In February 2000, SAHA initiated a study for the rehabilitation of several neighborhood areas along the Avenida Guadalupe corridor. A group was formed of interested agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the community to focus on a large-scale redevelopment of the 17-acre site bounded by Torreon Street on the north, the Alazan Creek on the east, Avenida Guadalupe on the south, and South Brazos Street on the west. Focus on this area was prompted by the availability of developable property, ease of land assemblage, and proximity to the Alazan Courts public housing complex.

The SAHA concept was simple. Restore the historic fabric of the neighborhood by infilling single-family homes to blend with the existing stock. The panel determined that this area is preferable for larger-scale development and, perhaps, one in which the private sector in conjunction with the city should participate. According to SADA, 52 vacant lots or structures exist in the area, and only 20 percent of the existing structures are in “presentable condition.” Therefore, the panel recommends that this area be designated a target for neighborhood redevelopment.

A visual survey of the area confirmed reported conditions. The panel recommends that a master developer be selected to undertake the redevelopment of this area. This strategy will ensure that a “market” approach will be introduced that includes different housing types, uniformity of development and design guidelines, ability to market and ultimately sell the homes, and ability to attract lenders to tailor financing to the buyer market.

The plan suggested by SAHA does not recognize the Avenida Guadalupe corridor and lines up the housing units sidewise to the street, making the possibility of any street connection mostly impossible. In the process, the traditional narrow-lot fabric of the street with units oriented to the main street has been lost. The panel noted that a similar approach was taken in the new single-family homes developed by SAHA across the street on Avenida Guadalupe.

In contrast to SAHA’s approach, the panel recommends that the north side of Avenida Guadalupe be developed with a strong orientation toward the

main corridor. Redevelopment should follow the existing historic street fabric and current lot sizes. Apparently, SAHA is planning to undertake a study for a new plan of the Alazan Courts complex in the spring of 2005. That plan is anticipated to address the overall improvement of this housing project and its relationship to the Avenida Guadalupe corridor. The panel strongly recommends that the Alazan Courts project be integrated into the master development plan of the extended area described above so that the master developer can more comprehensively address a wider portion of the neighborhood. This strategy will also ensure that a mix of housing products is offered that includes subsidized rentals and market-rate housing. Market-rate units will accommodate the needs of the nascent middle class so that they can become a part of the community. In addition, a mix of housing types will provide opportunities for families who want to return to the neighborhood, as well as USTA students who may be attracted to living here.

The lack of profit incentive, together with the challenging, existing market conditions and the difficulty of navigating the political process, suggests that the private sector would be reluctant to participate. However, the panel believes that the city, through its redevelopment agencies, could promote involvement of the private sector in the development of this area. A heavy subsidy program should be established, including the city’s participation in land assembly, infrastructure development, waiver of permits, and subsidies to reduce purchase and rental rates.

Develop a Regional Institutional/Commercial District

The new University Center for Community Health–Texas Diabetes Institute and Research Center encompasses 153,000 square feet of medical and research space located on the westernmost edge of the study area. The center represents a significant capital improvement that offers a critical element of change for the community.

Situated just north of Avenida Guadalupe and South Zarzamora Street, the University Center for Community Health influences the area with spillover demand for support services. These services may include medical-related facilities as well

The intersection of South Zarzamora Street and Avenida Guadalupe, now characterized mainly by fast-food restaurants, has the potential to become a regional commercial node.



as convenience shopping for doctors, nurses, employees, visitors, and patients. South Zarzamora Street has already experienced change in land uses. Fast-food providers such as McDonalds and Jack in the Box have already located nearby. These operations have caused a deterioration of the neighborhood residential scale of the adjacent area.

The panel believes that the University Center for Community Health in conjunction with the UTSA downtown campus just east of the study area together represent an opportunity for community transformation and urban renewal of the Avenida Guadalupe corridor. In choosing to remain focused on the study area, the panel proposes that a Regional Institutional/Commercial District be implemented by ordinance. This area should encompass the land surrounded by El Paso Street on the north, South Zarzamora on the east, Colima Street on the south, and the Apache Creek on the west—an area of approximately 12.9 acres.

This zone should capitalize on the University Center's ability to attract other comparable uses such as medical office buildings, research and development facilities, and other uses needed to expand the services of the center itself. Expansion services might include the proposed Women's Center and an allied health career training facility. In addition, the panel recommends that a drug rehabilitation center, together with geriatric and mental health services, be added to the program. These

services will add to those currently serving the local population, which is most affected by these conditions, together with the San Antonio population at large.

The University of Texas might be approached to assist in securing land contiguous to the Avenida Guadalupe redevelopment area, and could serve, as several other urban universities have, as the master developer.

The panel has proposed that a convenience retail/support services development be located at the South Zarzamora Street/Avenida Guadalupe node, incorporating existing retail uses. The University Center for Community Health is a significant community anchor, and the panel encourages the center to continue to work with the neighborhood to identify additional needs for goods and services. SADA can then assist in the acquisition and clearance of land.

If a retail center is deemed feasible, it should be offered for development to a neighborhood/retail private developer through a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process. The development should have adequate surface parking in accordance with the city ordinance and should project at least 25,000 square feet of retail space to attract a seasoned retail developer.

This more detailed description of two specific areas for redevelopment should help guide the city's effort in moving forward with plans for the area. The development opportunity on the east side along Avenida Guadalupe provides a significant mixed-income housing opportunity, whereas, the University Center for Community Health serves as an anchor and an impetus for additional institutional and commercial services at the western edge of the study area.

Implementation

The panel assessment of market factors and planning and urban design considerations led to suggested development strategies for the study area. This section of the report presents a series of recommendations for the implementation and phasing of a redevelopment plan.

Organizational Structure

After reviewing the various entities that exist in the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood, the panel concluded that one overarching body must be established to represent all the stakeholders in the area. With this need in mind, the panel consulted the previous ULI Advisory Services panel study undertaken in November 2004 for the St. Paul Gateway District of the Eastside of the city. After reviewing the recommendation to create a community action committee in the Eastside study, this panel decided to align its recommendation with that for the Eastside for ease of implementation and consistency of organizational structure.

Existing Entities

Established in 1979, the Avenida Guadalupe Association is the recognized organization working on behalf of neighborhood interests. AGA has been responsible for numerous projects, such as development of Plaza Guadalupe, construction of the El Parian complex as a small business incubator, rehabilitation of the Guadalupe Theater as a community center, and most recently construction of a 17,000-square-foot office building known as Oficinas de la Avenida. The Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center is also very active in the community, along with the San Antonio Alternative Housing Corporation and Our Lady of Guadalupe church. Although all of these organizations are effective in their own right, the panel determined that a sole source of communication must be used for the neighborhood as a whole.

Proposed Avenida Guadalupe Community Action Committee

Numerous plans and recommendations have been developed for the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood. However, recommendations from these efforts have not been carried out. A process must be developed to better match completed planning efforts with implementation of recommendations.

In following the recommendation for the St. Paul Gateway District by suggesting the formation of the AGCAC, the panel anticipates that this organization will oversee private and public development, infrastructure improvements, and ongoing programs within the neighborhood. AGCAC should be proactive, responsive, and accountable to the city, the residents, and the area stakeholders. AGCAC should serve as the oversight and monitoring entity for the city's commitments in the neighborhood. As an organization, it will be of finite duration. The panel recommends that initially the organization be instituted for a period of five years, with the right to renew for additional years as appropriate.

Toward this end, AGCAC should have the following operational parameters:

- AGCAC should be established by an ordinance of the San Antonio City Council. The ordinance should specify the composition of the AGCAC membership, the framework for responsibilities, and the tenure of the members.
- AGCAC should be the city's "agent" for organizing and executing an overall development strategy for the area. AGCAC staff should include a program manager in the Neighborhood Action Department.
- AGCAC should act as liaison between the community and the city council to address the needs of the neighborhood.

Right: A view of the interior of Plaza Guadalupe frames Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic church in the distance. Far right: Plaza Guadalupe, built in 1984, provides an attractive facade but does not bring activities into view along the street.



AGCAC would initially be charged with specific mandates, such as the following:

- AGCAC should create a strategic action plan for the first two or three years of operation. This plan would focus exclusively on tasks to improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood. The strategic action plan should establish priorities and the funding needed for implementation. AGCAC should also work to ensure an inclusive and ongoing public involvement process. It should work with city staff to track the return on investment.
- Following development of a strategic action plan, AGCAC should present the plan to the city council for its endorsement. Periodic reports should be made to the city council and an annual report outlining progress should be submitted.
- AGCAC should have input into the proposed plans and designs of prospective publicly funded or incentivized neighborhood projects for appropriateness with the overall design objectives as determined by the community.

The panel suggests that AGCAC be composed of nine members, including the following:

- The city council representative from the area;
- A representative from a faith-based organization;
- An experienced housing developer who is not a stakeholder in the neighborhood;
- A representative from the University Center for Community Health;
- A representative from UTSA;
- A representative from a nonprofit institution in the area;
- Two neighborhood representatives (ideally one homeowner and one renter);
- A major neighborhood business owner; and
- A school district representative.

Individuals appointed to AGCAC should serve on a volunteer basis. The members will effectively serve as a board of directors representing the neighborhood as a whole. One member of AGCAC must be identified as the champion for the group.

This role is important, crucial to the success and effectiveness of the community action committee.

AGCAC's meetings should be open to the public. These meetings must be held in the community, at a time that is convenient for residents and business owners. Representatives from city departments associated with projects in the neighborhood should also attend. A team composed of staff members from various public agencies could be formed to advise the Program Manager. This team would ensure public sector involvement and coordination with AGCAC.

Program Manager

The position of program manager must be created to serve as staff support to AGCAC and should be located in the Neighborhood Action Department. Responsibilities of the program manager should include the following:

- Assist in organizing AGCAC and preparing a strategic plan, which is the detailed action plan needed to implement a master plan for the overall area (note that the conservation and urban renewal plan, discussed below, is one component of a master plan);
- Be the primary contact for residents and business owners in the neighborhood;
- Be responsible for communication between AGCAC and city council;
- Be responsible for communication between AGCAC and city departments;
- Provide budget oversight for projects within the community;
- Provide staff support to AGCAC; and
- Provide staff support for the Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization program.

Implementation Tools

To support these recommendations, the panel identified a number of implementation tools. These are discussed in the following sections.

Conservation and Urban Renewal Plan

First, the panel suggests that the city proceed with the necessary studies to move forward with a Conservation and Urban Renewal Plan. The plan should be designed to effectively deal with the existing blighted conditions and the negative economic activities that are occurring in the neighborhood.

Manageable and realistic boundaries for the Conservation and Urban Renewal Plan should be established. Following this action, a survey of all the structures within those boundaries should be conducted to determine the physical condition of each. A land use plan for the area then needs to be developed. On the basis of the condition survey, properties should be designated for rehabilitation or demolition. Demolition should be used to meet plan objectives only for blighted properties where rehabilitation is not economically feasible.

Funding sources must be designated to align with rehabilitation, demolition, relocation of residents (due to demolition), and reconstruction. A memorandum of agreement with the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer should be written to enable use of federal funds for historic structures within the project area.

City Participation and Responsibilities

The leadership of the city of San Antonio must ensure that first and foremost the Avenida Guadalupe neighborhood attains the image of a clean and safe community and overcomes negative perceptions. Secondly, effective and coordinated communication among all relevant city agencies must be established. In addition, the city must take the following steps to support the panel's recommendations:

- Streamline the development process, especially with respect to the time required for processing of applications and project plans.
- Waive permit and processing fees in the project area until substantial economic investment exists.
- Develop materials in English and Spanish that clearly identify all the resources available within the project area to support projects.

Bienvenidos—painted on the side of a building on Avenida Guadalupe near South Brazos Street—welcomes visitors to the neighborhood.



- Have these materials readily accessible within the community. Consider using AGA as a resource for dissemination of this information.
- Ensure that the Program Manager is recognized as the liaison for this neighborhood.
- Enforce code compliance within the neighborhood. Such action may require that the city hire additional enforcement officers. Provide property owners with information on the financial resources available for them to bring their properties up to code.
- Provide subsidies to renters and homeowners if necessary.
- Work with SAHA to upgrade the appearance of Alazan Courts by painting the housing units, adding porches, and landscaping.
- Support University Center for Community Health and UTSA as economic generators for the neighborhood.
- Refer to the CRAG 2000 report for implementation tools.
- Recognize that in the short term financial resources must be targeted to focused areas to overcome obstacles to development.
- Develop an open space plan for the corridor and environs.
- Assist in land assemblage efforts and infrastructure development.

The city needs to provide incentives to attract private development interest. Ultimately, the overall

community should benefit from an increase in amenities associated with new development.

Zoning

Zoning is one of the key tools necessary to implement the recommendations put forth by the panel study. The city must take the following steps:

- Support the city council’s adoption of the zoning district that will permit development on 3,000-square-foot lots. This action will ensure a level of architectural compatibility with existing buildings. The city council should act on this proposal sooner than the scheduled July 2005 hearing date.
- Examine the permitted uses in the commercial zoning category along Avenida Guadalupe to determine whether they are compatible with the proposed improved pedestrian environment, and rezone inappropriate commercial uses. Concentrated commercial services will enable and encourage pedestrian movement between establishments and along the corridor.
- Create a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District that will encourage appropriate design standards for residential development and neighborhood-oriented commercial uses. Concentrated commercial services will enable and encourage pedestrian movement between establishments and along the corridor. The scale of development should be conducive to pedestrian activity rather than automobiles. The overlay district should be seen as a tool to support and protect public improvements and investments made, or planned, to enhance the pedestrian environment.
- Have SADA work with owners of business operations located on the Avenida Guadalupe corridor that are not considered appropriate uses. These businesses should be relocated to an area that will permit their activities to flourish economically. The city must then conduct an environmental assessment of the properties and, if necessary, coordinate cleanup efforts and remediation to prepare these sites for reuse.

Public Infrastructure

Numerous public infrastructure improvements are needed in the community, and a clear time-

table for implementing the recommendations must be established. Appropriate street lighting should be installed throughout the neighborhood to reduce crime and provide a safe pedestrian environment. All new developments should provide adequate lighting and other public amenities on and around their site. Apparently, stormwater management has been a problem throughout the area. The necessary stormwater improvements should be made, where needed, throughout the neighborhood and commensurate with development.

It is important to coordinate the phasing of streetscape and infrastructure improvements with the anticipated redevelopment activities. Available funding sources for street improvements should be identified. In particular, discussions with VIA should begin in an effort to work together in providing attractive bus shelters, signage, and the like.

Marketing the Area for Development

Creating a brand image and marketing program for Avenida Guadalupe is an effective method for supporting the revitalization efforts. The panel recommends that AGCAC establish a branding partnership with VIA. This branding could include, for example, a colorful and easily recognizable logo incorporated in the signage advertising and identifying the area. It could be repeated on banners and even on the sides of city buses with routes along Avenida Guadalupe. This action would support VIA's neighborhood identity program.

The panel further recommends that a special events plan be devised. This plan can include any number of activities: a farmer's market the first Saturday of each month at Plaza Gaudalupe; parades along the corridor signifying certain holidays; arts and crafts fairs, advertised citywide, that will promote and exhibit work done by residents of the neighborhood; and other similar activities designed to highlight the distinctive cultural aspects of the area.

Another effective marketing strategy is to target the real estate community, particularly realtors. The idea is to get realtors interested in selling property in the area by keeping them up to date on the continuing improvements. Advertising the restaurants, special events, and shops with goods

specific to the Hispanic community will further attract consumers from beyond the edges of the neighborhood. Success will be judged by creating greater interest in the community and attracting visitors to the area by highlighting its many assets.

Timeline

The panel divided the timeline according to major activities and time periods ranging from immediate to long term. The timeline has been established as a guide for the city to follow. It allows the city to assess its progress and maintain control of the redevelopment process.

First and foremost, the area must change its image and gain attention for its cleanliness and safety. A range of other immediate actions, those to be completed by December 2005, needs to occur. The Avenida Guadalupe Community Action Committee should be formed. This action requires appointing a city employee as an interim program manager, identifying funding sources, and establishing communication among all the stakeholders. Marketing efforts should also begin right away by establishing a partnership with VIA to prepare marketing materials and begin special-events programming. An inventory and assessment of all property within the bounds of a conservation and urban renewal plan area will require oversight by AGCAC and participation by city staff members and perhaps UTSA students.

The public should be involved in the planning process, which should be immediately followed by a comprehensive rezoning effort to support the plan's objectives. A neighborhood conservation overlay district should be adopted as part of the rezoning process. It is important that the immediate community, the host environment, and the city all become aware of improvements taking place. Toward this end, streetscape planning should begin immediately and should include attention to open space and recreation. A program for special events should begin and gradually build over the long range.

Short-term actions should occur within one to two years. Recommended actions entail hiring a permanent program manager for AGCAC, imple-

Implementation Timeline

Activity Groups	Immediate (End 2005)	Short Term (1–2 Years)
Organizational development	<p>Organize the AGCAC</p> <p>Appoint city employee as interim program manager</p> <p>Identify funding resources</p> <p>Establish format for ongoing communication with area residents, businesses, institutions, and government agencies</p>	<p>Hire permanent program manager for AGCAC</p>
Marketing	<p>Establish branding partnership with VIA and prepare marketing materials</p> <p>Create special events plan</p>	<p>Implement VIA neighborhood identity program</p> <p>Continue regularly scheduled special events in the neighborhood</p>
Development	<p>Complete property survey for code compliance, historic significance, property condition, ownership, and rehabilitation/adaptive reuse potential</p> <p>Complete historic resource survey</p> <p>Create conservation and urban renewal plan for the study area and the influence area</p> <p>Adopt neighborhood conservation overlay zoning district</p>	<p>Identify private development opportunities</p> <p>Assemble land and relocation housing opportunities</p> <p>Attract private developer(s) for market-rate housing projects on publicly owned parcels using a competitive RFP/RFQ process</p>
Infrastructure	<p>Create neighborhood streetscape design standards and identity program</p>	<p>Increase street-lighting levels on all streets within the study area and influence area</p> <p>Create plan for redesign of the Avenida Guadalupe corridor</p>
Open space	<p>Establish recreation facility-sharing partnerships with the University Center for Community Health, area schools, and other existing entities</p> <p>Organize weekly or monthly outdoor market for neighborhood craftsmen and ethnic produce/food vending</p>	<p>Work with the Department of Parks and Recreation to develop a neighborhood open-space action plan</p>
Quality of life	<p>Clean and safe sweep</p> <p>Increase visible police presence on streets</p> <p>Partner with Annie E. Casey Foundation to prepare human capital investment plan</p> <p>Coordinate available support services for neighborhood residents and businesses</p>	<p>Target neighborhood for enhanced owner-occupied rehabilitation funds allocation</p> <p>Increase visible police presence on streets</p> <p>Initiate workforce development program for area residents</p> <p>Establish small business development funding and training programs</p>

Midterm (3–5 Years)**Long Range**

Increase resident/business owner participation

Evaluate need for AGCAC to continue

Initiate targeted marketing efforts to realtors and consumers

Continue to market area business and housing opportunities to consumers and investors

Expand regularly scheduled special events in the neighborhood

Continue regular special events in the neighborhood

Attract private developer(s) for commercial and mixed-use development projects on publicly owned parcels using a competitive RFP/RFQ process

Facilitate expansion of the University Health Center and UTSA

Facilitate development of student housing

Facilitate private development of regional commercial at the South Zarzamora Street node

Implement necessary stormwater improvements

Implement Avenida Guadalupe street improvements

Enhance Plaza Guadalupe to provide open space and street-fronting outdoor market opportunities

Create school/park loop

Create neighborhood pocket parks

Target neighborhood for enhanced owner-occupied rehabilitation funds allocation

Target neighborhood for enhanced owner-occupied rehabilitation funds allocation

Create a neighborhood small business incubator

menting a VIA neighborhood identity program, and providing developable parcels for private development opportunities. Continuation of streetscape improvements and a plan for redesigning the corridor and devising an open space plan should be undertaken during this time frame. Rehabilitation of properties should begin, including a focus on business development.

Within three to five years, the midterm, residential and business development should increase through marketing efforts aimed at realtors and consumers. Through the RFP/RFQ process, the city should begin to solicit plans for publicly owned parcels. UTSA should be encouraged to consider the development of student housing in the area. Infrastructure improvements should be continued. A small business incubator space should be developed to complement plans now underway next to the Dollar Store in the area north of South Brazos Street.

Long-term projects include a continuation of previously recommended activities with the reevaluation of an ongoing need for AGCAC. The marketing effort should continue to promote the area for additional business and housing opportunities. The panel hopes that expansion of the University

Center for Community Health and UTSA will continue as the major anchors and economic engines for continued community development. Private development should further define the Avenida Guadalupe/South Zarzamora Street area as a regional retail district. In terms of infrastructure, Avenida Guadalupe street improvements should be completed and should include a greenway connecting school-affiliated recreation areas and public open space as well as neighborhood pocket parks. Rehabilitation should continue to increase residential and commercial ownership opportunities.

This plan is ambitious, but it should succeed in safeguarding and upgrading the Avenida Guadalupe community. Enhancement of neighborhood assets will serve to strengthen and ensure the continued viability of this area.

Conclusion

To facilitate redevelopment of the community, the panel proposed establishing AGCAC as the organization in charge of facilitating change. Modeled after the recommendation for the St. Paul Gateway District by a previous ULI Advisory Services panel, the committee will help simplify the process for the city and prove effective in dealing with the myriad issues involved in the redevelopment process. A champion from among the participants of the AGCAC will serve as the liaison between the community and the city council. A program manager should be appointed to represent the public agencies involved in redevelopment and serve as staff support for AGCAC. AGCAC should have input to the planning and review of prospective publicly funded projects. This organization is intended to represent all community stakeholders.

Diversity of housing products and small business development will benefit the neighborhood in terms of adding choices and creating more vitality. The panel suggests that action begin with the identification of land assemblage and relocation opportunities so that, ultimately, publicly owned land can be offered to private developers through the RFP/RFQ process.

The panel believes that the Avenida Guadalupe area can be revitalized in a way that exhibits sensitivity to the community's Hispanic cultural heritage. This cultural aspect of the community will ultimately serve to attract private sector development interest. Construction of new quality housing—both affordable and market rate—will address the need for both workforce housing and move-up housing. Additional housing will create greater demand for and support of expanded retail services. Given the number of vacant parcels, the potential for land assemblage for larger residential development opportunities should increase private development interest.

Development must also balance the need for neighborhood convenience services, modest job growth within the area, expansion of medical and commercial uses, an increase of community and cultural events, and an improved pedestrian and vehicular environment. Redevelopment of the corridor must include the comprehensive consideration of overall neighborhood needs. In other words, this plan is more than just a corridor plan—it is a plan that requires the community to come together in determining a vision for the area.

Numerous problems and constraints must be overcome, beginning with a change in the perceptions of the area. With immediate public intervention, a higher level of safety and cleanliness can surely be reached. Infrastructure improvements to the streetscape and solutions to drainage and flooding problems must also be addressed. Circulation issues caused by one-way streets can be adjusted, and two-way traffic in single lanes along Avenida Guadalupe is recommended. Parking should be clearly marked and conveniently located to attract customers to new commercial offerings. Some modest changes in the circulation system can also help improve connections to the downtown through signage and other wayfinding means.

New development must address the street and thereby add presence and vitality to the street-



Drainage channels protect the neighborhood from flooding.

The fully occupied, 150-unit San Jacinto Senior Citizen Community, low-income housing for seniors, was developed by AGA in 1996 with major support from the state of Texas.



scape; new development should not turn its back on the street. The panel envisions two primary nodes of development along Avenida Guadalupe: one at South Brazos Street, and the other at South Zarzamora Street. A Conservation District should be established between the two nodes. This area will support new development of housing and convenience retail in scale with the existing buildings.

An employment opportunity area exists just east of the study area. It is composed of warehouse and light industrial uses and has recently experienced an influx of small businesses and entertainment uses. The panel urges the city to promote this area for additional employment-generating businesses. Eventually, the bridge that connects this potential employment area to the study area to the west, and to UTSA and the downtown farther to the east, could be redesigned to appear less as a barrier and more as a link between the Hispanic community and the downtown.

The Avenida Guadalupe area needs to be promoted. Regularly scheduled events held throughout the year can begin to showcase the attributes of the area. Avenida Guadalupe businesses and housing opportunities should be marketed to consumers, realtors, and investors.

The expansion of major economic activity in the area will benefit the study area. AGCAC should help facilitate university expansion plans at the downtown campus and at the health center on South Zarzamora Street. Encouraging redevelopment requires considerable front-end investment by the public sector. The city council should be prepared to make this investment, which may mean targeting this area for a disproportionate share of public expenditures to provide the incentives for redevelopment. Zoning revisions may be required. The panel also suggests that design and development standards be prepared to ensure a high quality of planning, design, and construction.

The goal of these recommendations is to build upon the area's historic and cultural resources. As more people are accommodated in better housing and new businesses present additional services and employment opportunities, a better standard of living and an improved physical environment will become available to the existing population and attract new investment into the area.

About the Panel

Richard J. (Rick) Dishnica

Panel Chair

Point Richmond, California

Rick Dishnica is President of The Dishnica Company, LLC. The Dishnica Company was formed in 1999 to pursue Dishnica's individual investment goals; to develop infill housing, both for sale and for rent in the Bay Area; and to provide real estate consulting services. Current major development projects include obtaining entitlements for (1) the final phase of a residential project next to the Lafayette BART station in downtown Lafayette (the first phase of 75 apartment units was successfully completed and leased in 2001), and (2) the adaptive reuse and conversion of the San Francisco Armory, a building on the National Register of Historic Places located in the Mission District of San Francisco.

Dishnica was an executive vice president and the chief operating officer of American Apartment Communities, a privately held REIT, from 1994 through March 31, 1999, with responsibility for all apartment operations, development, and rehabilitation. Until its merger with United Dominion Realty Trust on December 7, 1998, American Apartment Communities owned and managed directly or through subsidiaries in this portfolio 54 apartment communities containing a total of 14,141 units in nine states.

Since 1982, Dishnica was also an executive vice president of the Klingbeil Company, predecessor to American Apartment Communities, with operating responsibilities for the western United States. During this period he was directly responsible for the development of 304 apartment units in San Francisco on the site of the former Winterland Auditorium. In addition, he was involved in developing three other apartment projects comprising 1,012 units in the San Francisco Bay Area. He was responsible for obtaining lower floater tax-exempt

bond financing for all of these projects, a new financing technique for financing apartments in the 1980s. All of these projects were in infill locations. During the period 1989–1993, he also served as the chief financial officer and chief operating officer of K/W Realty Group, a Klingbeil-affiliated company in the for-sale housing business. His role in this company included overseeing the joint venture development of 42 subdivisions with more than 4,000 units of housing for sale, most of which were located in three major metropolitan markets.

From 1980 to 1982, Dishnica was a principal of Comstock Ventures Limited, a real estate venture capital company. From 1978 to 1980 he was vice president of Fox and Carskadon Financial Corporation where he was responsible for the solicitation, analysis, negotiation, and management of real estate development joint ventures. From 1973 to 1978, Dishnica was an assistant vice president with Union Bank in San Francisco, California, with responsibility in the areas of commercial lending, real estate construction lending, and loan workouts. Prior to his employment with Union Bank, he served as an officer in the U.S. Navy, achieving the rank of lieutenant, with assignments in Vietnam and as the officer-in-charge of a minesweeper. Dishnica received his MBA from the University of Southern California in 1974 and his BS degree from Ohio State University in 1968.

Guillermo Aguilar

Dana Point, California

Guillermo Aguilar, AIA, has more than 25 years of experience managing and developing large, complex projects. As a project executive, he has provided professional services, including development services, architectural design, program management, environmental planning and design, master planning, and real estate development, for construction projects totaling over \$3 billion.

With his strong management approach, extensive development planning, design, and construction experience, Aguilar has successfully completed projects to meet program, design, and aesthetic goals, simultaneously meeting timetables and budgetary requirements. The types of projects he has worked on include but are not limited to area-wide development strategies and project implementation, retail/mixed-use development, medical/hospital facilities, hotels and resorts, residential multifamily buildings, and office and multiuse developments. Aguilar has proven his knowledge, professionalism, and ability to work in various areas of the development and program management field in multiple projects with many types of private and public institutions, including The Irvine Co., Walt Disney Co., the city of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Schools Bond Program, and several economic development non-profit organizations.

Aguilar received a bachelor's of architecture from the National University of Mexico, a master's of architecture from Tulane University, and a master's of landscape architecture from Harvard University.

Aguilar is a registered architect in California, full member of the Urban Land Institute, council member of ULI's Residential Neighborhood Development Council, and a thesis adviser for the Graduate School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. In addition, he serves as a member in the Blue Ribbon Citizens Oversight Committee for school construction in Los Angeles, overseeing more than \$15 billion of school bond construction.

Aguilar's work has been published in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Women in Architecture Magazine*, *Landscape Architecture*, and *California Architects*.

Cesar Garcia-Pons

Miami Beach, Florida

Cesar Garcia-Pons, a senior associate at the Miami Beach office of EDAW, Inc., is an urban designer specializing in community revitalization and redevelopment of existing neighborhoods. He has

more than 14 years of urban regeneration experience emphasizing downtown planning, master planning, site planning, and transportation/corridor studies.

His project experience includes creating a land use plan and comprehensive plan amendment for the annexation of unincorporated areas into the city of Port Saint Lucie, Florida; the urban design and exploration of residential alternatives to convert an existing "event" parking lot along a major corridor into a mixed-use commercial project in the Gulf Park Master Plan in Miami, Florida; the planning and design of an 800-unit new town development in a first-ring suburb of downtown Jakarta, Indonesia; the urban design and landscape architecture study to explore and enhance existing alternatives to improve the Interstate-395 corridor in downtown Miami; an urban design study in Wilmington, North Carolina, to enhance the existing central business district by improving the relationship between the downtown and the riverfront and to explore potential downtown growth options; and site planning and landscape architecture for several mixed/multiuse condominium/office towers and riverwalks in the greater Miami and Miami Beach area.

Garcia-Pons is a member in the American Planning Association, ULI—the Urban Land Institute, and the International Downtown Association. He currently serves on the boards of the Miami Beach Community Development Corporation and the Miami Beach Transportation and Parking Committee.

Garcia-Pons received a BA in architecture from the University of Miami, Florida, in 1990 and maintains a relationship with the university as adjunct faculty.

Anish Kumar

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Anish Kumar directs Hillier's Urban Design Practice Group. As a Registered Architect and member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, Kumar brings a special combination of skills and experience to his clients. His experience spans the boundary between architecture and

planning, and he has played a leadership role in projects ranging from developing master plans for large-scale projects in the United States and abroad to planning and design of complex infrastructure projects.

Kumar's practice focuses on a wide range of urban revitalization projects. He has prepared neighborhood plans, corridor development plans, and strategic downtown development plans. His recent experience includes projects in Florida, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Kumar writes and lectures extensively on sustainable development, sprawl, waterfront reuse, transit system design, and brownfields rehabilitation. He is regularly invited to speak at the annual conventions of the American Institute of Architects and the American Planning Association. Videotapes of his lectures *Leveraging Infrastructure for Smart Growth* and *Reimagining Cities* were selected for distribution on the Web site of the American Institute of Architects. His contributions as an urban designer have received national recognition through prestigious professional awards and faculty appointments at the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel University.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and of the School of Architecture at Ahmedabad, Kumar lives in Center City Philadelphia where he is active in the leadership of his community through the Center City Residents' Association and the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation.

Mary Miller

Norfolk, Virginia

Mary Miller is the deputy director of the Downtown Norfolk Council, Norfolk, Virginia. The Downtown Norfolk Council, established in 1979, is committed to effectively serving its members, the Business Improvement District Ratepayers, the city, and the region by ensuring that downtown is a safe, clean, attractive, and vital place. Current projects Miller is working on include a commercial office space initiative and the creation of a responsible hospitality panel to manage issues related to restaurants and entertainment

uses. In addition, she manages the Operations Staff of the organization.

Miller has 19 years experience in city planning. She began her career with the city of Norfolk, Virginia, Planning Department, where she served as staff to the city's Design Review Committee and numerous City Council-appointed task forces. Miller managed the work programs for various city consultants, assisted in the development of the first Pedestrian Commercial Overlay District for the city, and served as the neighborhood planner for several areas in the city.

From 1999 until 2001, Miller briefly left municipal planning and served as vice president of the Langley Group in Kansas City, Missouri. While with the Langley Group, she managed tourism marketing programs and public involvement projects.

After brief employment with the city of Chesapeake, Virginia, as the preservation and urban design planner, she returned to the city of Norfolk in October 2001. As a senior planner, Miller was responsible for managing preservation projects for the city, managing the Commercial Corridor Program, staffing the Design Review Committee, and several task forces.

In July 2002, she was appointed as the housing services planning manager for the city of Norfolk Department of Planning and Community Development. She served in that capacity from July 2002 until August 2004 and was responsible for overseeing and managing the administrative and housing services programs and activities that included opening the city of Norfolk's Neighborhood Design and Resource Center. The center provides architectural design and renovation services to Norfolk residents. She also managed the preparation and publication of *A Pattern Book for Norfolk Neighborhoods*.

Miller holds a BS in architecture from Catholic University of America and a master's of community planning from the University of Rhode Island. She is a forum member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation a member of the American Planning Association and Urban Land Institute.

Sue Southon

Detroit, Michigan

Sue Southon is a development professional, trainer, and strategic planner. In 1992, she founded Strategic Planning Services to provide strategic planning, site consultation, organizational development, project management (including construction project management), and grant-writing assistance to industry, government, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions. Southon has extensive experience in community, economic, and housing development. She has also served as project manager for HUD-funded affordable housing projects in Wayne, Oakland, and Genesee counties (Michigan). Strategic Planning Services has offices in southeastern Michigan and New Orleans, Louisiana. Prior to 1992, Southon was with the Michigan Department of Commerce, responsible for comprehensive strategic planning in distressed communities as well as assisting local municipalities to develop and implement a range of business development and retention programs in Michigan's 83 counties.

From 1995 to 1996, Southon served as the senior director of business development for Michigan First, the state's public/private business attraction and marketing organization. From 1980 through 1990, she was the executive director of the Independent Business Research Office of Michigan. Housed within the School of Business at the University of Michigan, the office was created as a public-policy research resource for small business interests.

Southon holds a real estate license in the state of Michigan. She has authored federal, state, and foundation grants resulting in awards in excess of \$33 million. Southon is on the Training Faculty of the International Economic Development Council, Professional Certification Program, the Economic Development Institute, and the National Association of Workforce Boards. She is a technical assistance provider for the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, Detroit, and Michigan LISC. She is currently serving as interim executive director of Community Development Advocates of Detroit, the trade association of Detroit's community-development organization.

Southon received an MS in social work from the University of Michigan in 1970 and a BA in English and psychology in 1968.

Nathan Watson

New Orleans, Louisiana

Nathan Watson has been active in real estate development in New Orleans for more than 13 years. His company—Watson Developments—focuses on bringing innovative solutions to both urban and suburban real estate development needs. Currently, Watson is developing planned communities in the New Orleans area.

Prior to starting his own firm, Watson was responsible for the development and marketing of a 74-acre mixed-use development in downtown New Orleans named River Park, on behalf of Columbus Properties. The master-planned urban development—a former rail yard—included more than 700 luxury apartments (complete), an expansion of the Convention Center (complete), and 1,250 hotel rooms (still in planning). Watson was also responsible for the review of project development opportunities including multifamily, office, hospitality, and storage uses.

Earlier in his career, Watson founded FirsTrust Community Development Corporation, a for-profit real estate development bank subsidiary that focused on urban infill multifamily housing through a variety of public/private financing sources.

Watson has been a member of the Urban Land Institute since 1995. He has served on four ULI Advisory Service panels—Sparks, Nevada; Oakcliff in Dallas, Texas; Port Charlotte, Florida; and Lowell, Massachusetts. Watson holds a degree in architecture from Auburn University and an MBA from Columbia University.

Walter Winius

Phoenix, Arizona

For more than 45 years, Walt Winius has conducted real estate and economic market research, analysis, and real estate appraisals. His work for hundreds of clients has involved market identifica-

tion and analysis, demographic trend analysis, economic trend analysis, absorption rates, project feasibility and land use mix recommendations, and valuation studies in 20 states plus Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Mexico, and Slovakia.

Currently, Winus is providing consulting services to the International Real Property Foundation, a State Department–funded organization. He has worked with public and private sector entities in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slova-

kia, and Ukraine to assist in the privatization of real property and provides teaching assistance to valuers and associated groups in these countries.

Winus is a member of the Appraisal Institute (past national president), the Counselors of Real Estate, and ULI—the Urban Land Institute’s Sustainable Development Council. He received BA and BSBA degrees from the University of North Carolina. He received an MBA from Washington University.