City of San Antonio Sustainability Plan

Green Buildings & Infrastructure

Draft

Vision

San Antonio is a leader in high performance and resilient buildings and infrastructure.

Outcomes

GB1: All buildings meet or exceed high performance building standards

GB2: Water quality is improved due to the implementation of stormwater best management practices throughout the city, particularly within the San Antonio River watershed

GB3: San Antonio demonstrably reduces the impact of urban heat island in the downtown

GB4: Existing buildings are retrofit to withstand climate impacts and new buildings are designed to be resilient to projected changes in climate

The Green Buildings & Infrastructure Focus Area seeks to incorporate more sustainable practices within the physical structures of the city's built environment, specifically buildings, water and sewer lines, stormwater systems, wastewater treatment facilities, and other infrastructure.

Potential Strategies

- Launch a Better Building Challenge

  The Better Building Challenge is a program of the US Dept. of Energy focused on reducing energy use and improving quality of life through high performance buildings.

- Provide incentives for retrofitting existing buildings to a high performance standard

  Financial incentives will be designed to reduce the upfront costs and payback period of energy efficiency retrofits.

- Create incentives for existing developments to manage 100% of stormwater onsite

  This would create an incentive within the existing stormwater fee structure to encourage onsite management of stormwater.

- Adopt a low impact development standard requiring 100% of onsite stormwater management for all new development and significant retrofits.

  Onsite stormwater management reduces strain on the system during severe storms and can reduce the use of potable water for landscaping through rainwater harvesting and drought tolerant landscaping.

- Launch an urban heat island mitigation program to address opportunities for new and existing developments to minimize their impact

  An urban heat island program would encourage the use of cool roofs, tree plantings, etc. to mitigate the impact of the heat on an area.

- Develop a policy requiring all public and eventually all infrastructure projects utilize the Envision™ Rating System or equivalent.

  Envision™ is a sustainability rating system for horizontal infrastructure, everything but buildings.

- Adopt a high performance building standard for new development and provide guidance and training to developers

  Update building codes to meet current standards and train developers and the construction industry on the new standards.

- Pilot a building energy and water disclosure and benchmarking program.

  This program requires facilities over a certain size to report and reduce their energy and water use.

- Initiate a climate education campaign for businesses and property owners, including details about how to make built infrastructure more resilient to existing and projected changes in climate.

  Educate business owners and residents about the impacts of climate change and strategies to enhance their resilience.

- Integrate a climate change questionnaire in the building development review process to assess how climate change could impact new development and major renovations and encourage developers to design their buildings to be resilient to these impacts

  The questionnaire will support the incorporation of climate change projections into the design and review process, to help create more resilient buildings and developments.

- Join FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program

  CRS is a voluntary incentive program that recognizes floodplain management activities that exceed requirements.

- Complete the LED Streetlight Project

  This project started in 2012 and has yet to be completed.

- Update and enforce San Antonio's Dark Sky Initiative

  The current ordinance only applies to areas around military bases.