



City of San Antonio Sustainability Plan

Natural Resources

Draft

Vision

San Antonio serves as a national model for respectful stewardship of the city's natural resources and values them for their social, ecological, and economic benefits.

Outcomes

NR1: San Antonio's streams and waterways meet swimmable, fishable quality standards

NR2: Tree canopy is enhanced and coverage is increased

NR3: San Antonio secures clean, sustainable, and reliable drinking water resources now and into the future

NR4: Water use in San Antonio is efficient and per capita consumption does not increase over time

NR5: San Antonio meets or exceeds attainment status for all measured criteria air pollutants

NR6: San Antonio is a leader in the preservation of critical habitat for native and migratory species

The Natural Resources Focus Area emphasizes the value and quality of existing natural resources, including air, surface and ground water, tree canopy, open space, and biodiversity from an ecosystem standpoint.

Strategies

- Evaluate and adopt ordinances to create buffer zones around floodplains, riparian areas, and other natural priority areas

Buffer zones are areas where development is restricted due to its function in protecting a valuable water or natural resource.

- Adopt conservation development friendly ordinances that minimize development in natural greenways, floodplains, near waterways in order to protect watershed and allow for more greenspace

This will preserve open space and water quality, prevent flooding, and encourage the development of more compact communities.

- Develop a Street Tree Strategic Plan

This strategy focuses on developing a plan to enhance the quantity and value of street trees in an effort to reap the full benefits that trees can offer, such as creating shade and minimizing stormwater runoff.

- Issue a municipal bond for the development of bike trails, sidewalks, paths, greenways, and other open spaces that allow for density while also protecting natural spaces

Increased bike trails, sidewalks, paths, greenways, and other open spaces will enhance the walkability, bikeability, and overall livability of San Antonio and help to promote more active, healthy lifestyles.

- Develop a plan to address non-critical impervious cover

The plan will include short and long-term strategies for addressing non-critical impervious cover, which is any area, such as a parking lot, that could be converted back to a natural state without impacting its function. Impervious surfaces can be significant factors in exacerbating flooding as water is not able to penetrate through it. Natural areas of grass or soil allow water to filter down through it, helping reduce the impacts of flooding.

- Implement a citywide anti-idling program

The anti-idling ordinance will specify where and for how long a parked car can idle its engine. Emissions from vehicles have been linked to certain respiratory and other diseases.

- Update water efficiency standards in city building codes

The City will update building codes to align with current national water efficiency standards.

- Adopt a program to phase large commercial buildings off of potable water use for landscaping.

The program will include strategies and incentives for encouraging commercial buildings to use drought tolerant landscaping and to harvest rainwater for landscaping.

- Develop incentives for onsite stormwater management through rain gardens and rain barrels

The incentives will target both residential and commercial properties and subsidize the cost of implementing rain gardens and rain barrels. The City will pilot the program in targeted areas.

- Change landscape ordinances to support integrated pest management and reduced use of pesticides and insecticides.

Integrated pest management techniques will reduce pesticides and insecticides entering and contaminating the water system.

- Meet the requirements of and apply to become a National Wildlife Federation certified Wildlife-Friendly Community

Wildlife-Friendly Community Certification involves education and outreach, along with a certain number of homes, schools, and common areas becoming NWF Certified Wildlife Habitats by providing the 4 basic elements that all wildlife need: food, water, cover and places to raise young.

- Expand incentives for native plants/low-water use landscaping and other residential water conservation strategies

Incentives will be designed to promote residential water conservation and enhanced onsite stormwater management with native plants.

- Develop and implement a strategy to protect and enhance native habitat (i.e. milkweed) of the monarch butterfly and other migratory or endangered species

The strategy will promote biodiversity in San Antonio and preserve critical habitats.