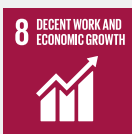




SAN ANTONIO ADVANCING SDGs THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY, AND CREATIVITY
3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
4. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
7. CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING, AND PUBLIC SPACE

DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE, REGENERATION,
CLIMATE CHANGE, RENEWAL, PLANNING, SKILL,
EQUITY, CONSERVATION, HERITAGE

1. Context

San Antonio is the seventh largest city in the United States of America and second largest city in the state of Texas. Approximately 3% of the city (roughly 13,000 parcels) is designated as historic. Given the diverse demographic of the 32 local historic districts, many people are in need of assistance with the skills and resources needed to maintain their homes. The Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) programming outlined in this community initiative serves to advance goals of job creation, workforce development, affordable housing, and community resilience tied to cultural identity.

2. San Antonio and culture

The Office of Historic Preservation became a standalone city department in 2008, and the following year the City Council adopted the Strategic Historic Preservation Plan (SHPP), developed with strong community input and buy in. Despite San Antonio's long history of leadership in historic preservation, the plan was the first adopted by the City Council. The plan made recommendations in six major areas: city planning, zoning, economic development, historic resources, incentives, and education and advocacy. One of the immediate accomplishments was the update of the City's Unified Development Code related to cultural heritage. As a result, San Antonio has one of the strongest preservation ordinances in the USA.

Motivated to address issues of accessibility, equity, and sustainability in the development process, the role of the Office has expanded to include opportunities to educate and engage the community about sustainable development practices through social events, running tours, hands on training, and DIY instruction.



MOTIVATED TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF ACCESSIBILITY, EQUITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS, THE ROLE OF THE OFFICE HAS EXPANDED TO INCLUDE OPPORTUNITIES TO EDUCATE AND ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES.

3. Goals and project implementation

3.1. Main aim and specific goals

The purpose of the City of San Antonio's OHP is to safeguard the cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability that preserves San Antonio's unique sense of place, economic competitiveness, and authenticity. This is accomplished through creative approaches and partnerships that provide learning opportunities and services to the local community.

3.2. Development of the project

Main actions carried out

With 20 full time staff members, the City of San Antonio OHP works collaboratively amongst diverse preservation practice areas, including living heritage and cultural initiatives, design review, and survey and designation. OHP and WHO worked with city departments to map the SDG targets and goals the city is meeting or working to meet, and creating a toolkit for other cities to complete the same analysis.

Concurrent initiatives include:

- Living Heritage Symposium, to develop best practices of cultural and intangible heritage
- Living Heritage Trades Academy, a pilot school to build and sustain a workforce skilled in traditional crafts and historic building trades
- Rehabber Club, a network dedicated to the revitalisation of San Antonio's historic buildings
- REHABARAMA, an event where volunteers complete work to 20 homes in a single day
- Historic Homeowner Fair, educates homeowners about stewardship of their historic homes
- S.T.A.R., a partnership between the Office of Historic Preservation, the UTSA College of Architecture, San Antonio College, and local contractors to provide minor exterior home repairs and maintenance to homeowners within local historic districts
- Climate Heritage, a coordinated approach to climate action that leverages heritage values to support the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

When San Antonio approved its first Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in October 2019, heritage values were explicitly incorporated throughout the plan. The City committed to producing a Climate Heritage Strategic Plan, which recognises that climate change will disproportionately affect the most vulnerable community members and intentionally addresses this disparity through a climate equity framework. Each strategy implemented through the plan must be evaluated by an equity screening tool, which includes a cultural preservation theme. OHP is also currently leading a deconstruction and salvage policy initiative, which aims to bolster a local circularity of building materials, divert landfill waste, and support local repair and maintenance efforts.

THE CITY COMMITTED TO PRODUCING A CLIMATE HERITAGE STRATEGIC PLAN, WHICH RECOGNISES THAT CLIMATE CHANGE WILL DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECT THE MOST VULNERABLE COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND INTENTIONALLY ADDRESSES THIS DISPARITY THROUGH A CLIMATE EQUITY FRAMEWORK.

4. Impacts

4.1. Direct impacts

Impacts on the local government

The City endeavours to protect the quality of life, pride of place, and sense of community by preserving both local landmarks and the eclectic and unique mix of residential and commercial architecture.

Impact on culture and on local cultural actors

OHP programming promotes cultural heritage and preservation efforts as economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

THE CITY ENDEAVOURS TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF LIFE, PRIDE OF PLACE, AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY BY PRESERVING BOTH LOCAL LANDMARKS AND THE ECLECTIC AND UNIQUE MIX OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE.

Impact on the territory and population

The city supports local, family-owned businesses that contribute to local culture and authenticity through programs like the Legacy Business initiative. Public outreach activities including training, events, resource fairs. Older and historic houses provide a quarter of affordable housing units in the city and that number continues to grow. Providing skilled trades training and jobs helps to preserve those critical affordable housing units.

4.2. Evaluation

In the fiscal year 2019, OHP:

- Reached over 11,000 people through department activities
- Hosted the 3rd annual REHABARAMA with over 300 volunteers, students, and contractors working on 20 homes
- Completed five projects at the Kelso House Learning Lab through the first inaugural partnership with the Power of Preservation Foundation and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

4.3. Key factors

The project coordinated with a number of internal departments and external partners, as well as counting on leadership support from the City Council, which underscores the importance of partnerships as outlined in SDG17.

4.4. Continuity

San Antonio continues to incorporate the SDGs into the municipality's organisational goals and supports OHP's efforts to leverage cultural heritage to this end. As reports such as the Affordable Housing Study commissioned by OHP are presented and adopted, City Council is providing support for implementation of the recommendations. Additionally, OHP is currently developing an app to create a virtual marketplace for salvaged goods. Future goals include the following:

- Expand multimedia content and online presence.
- Grow Legacy Business Program to include at least 50 additional businesses.
- Promote storytelling and cultural mapping to identify intangible heritage, places of significance, and other potential Cultural Heritage Districts.

5. Further information

San Antonio was a candidate for the third "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2019 – May 2020). The jury for the award drew up its final report in July of 2020, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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