

Infrastructure

Street Maintenance

In 2008, City Council adopted a Street Maintenance Plan that schedules the maintenance of all city streets over a 20-year period. The plan recommends funding all such improvements through the recurring street maintenance sales tax and other general fund revenue rather than the issuance of long-term debt.

Water Lines

The city is developing a long-term plan to replace and/or relocate a number of water lines that are either dead-end mains, undersized or in close proximity to existing sewer lines. The city has recently determined that some of its water lines are located in the alleys closer than the minimum nine foot of horizontal distance permitted by the and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and will need to either be relocated to the street or within the alley if the permitted distance can be achieved between the water and sewer lines.

Sanitary Sewer

Although the city currently owns and operates the water distribution and sanitary sewer system, it does not operate its own treatment plant and contracts with the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) for wastewater treatment. Best management practices require the City to replace about two percent of the sewer system each year. The city proposes to meet this requirement by televising the sewer lines prior to maintaining each street in the Street Maintenance Plan and making any necessary repairs or

replacements. Long term, the City should consider developing a Distributed Neighborhood Based System. This is a more ecological and sustainable program that allows waste water to be treated in constructed wetlands. SAWS is currently developing a pilot program and Alamo Heights should consider participation.

Regional Stormwater Drainage

Bexar County has initiated a SAFE project in Olmos Basin. Coordination with the Bexar County on this and other similar projects would be advantageous for Alamo Heights. Coordinated projects might include installation of a debris collection facility at Basse and Jones Maltsberger and participation in the High Water Detection System.

Action Step

- Implement the first year of the 20-year Street Maintenance Plan in 2010.
- Implement a long-term plan for water line replacement and/or relocation.
- Properly maintain the city's sanitary sewer system
- Explore participation in a Distributed Neighborhood Based System for water treatment.
- Partner with San Antonio and Bexar County on mutually beneficial projects, such as their SAFE program, High Water Detection System and debris filtering.

Overhead Lines

Overhead lines along the streets of Alamo Heights disturb the natural landscape and hinder the vibrant urban vistas. To achieve the vision for a beautiful and vibrant community, alternative solutions for the placement of utility lines must be explored.



Local Stormwater Drainage

Two localized drainage issues should be addressed: 1) Alamo Heights Boulevard to Jones Maltzberger and; 2) Albany at Kokomo. A drainage study and implementation plan should be established and recommendations completed.

Cleveland Court was identified at the Community Design Charrette as an important link for the Montclair and Madeline Terrace neighbors to Broadway. The design group imagined this street to become a more important, tree-lined, pedestrian-friendly environment to encourage neighborhood residents to walk to downtown.

Patterson Ave is a wide street often used for a cut-through to the dam and Olmos Park. Narrowing the street and providing a pedestrian path on one side, along with a bio-swale (See Water and Drainage) would slow traffic, provide a safe walking path and assist with storm water run-off.

Solid Waste

Alamo Heights provides exceptional garbage and brush pick-up services to residential customers. Commercial customers contract for their own waste management services. Conflicts between residential properties and abutting commercial often center around waste management issues. Developing standards for solid waste pick up, enclosures and locations would alleviate many of the problems.

Action Step

- Initiate priorities for burying utilities.
- Initiate a drainage study and implement recommendations for Alamo Heights Boulevard and Albany drainage issues.
- Improve Cleveland Court as a pedestrian and vehicular link to Broadway.
- Create a pedestrian path and bio-swale on one side of Patterson Avenue.

Action Step

- Continue the excellent level of solid waste services to residences.
- Maintain alley service for solid waste pick-up
- Develop standards for garbage enclosures for commercial establishments abutting residential districts.

Parking

While some urban environments with good mass transit options can become totally pedestrian-dominated, Alamo Heights will always have a need for adequate and available parking. Parking is essential to a healthy retail environment and to multi-family developments. In the past, conflicts have arisen between residential neighbors and both retailers and institutions. The following policies will help guide the management of parking in an effort to alleviate most of the conflict:



Customer first

Always available on-street parking is of primary importance if businesses are to succeed. Short-term parking creates rapid turnover and allows a driver to park on a whim, adding to the retailers' profits. Business owners and their employees must give up the best spots to customers and park in all-day outlying parking spots on the edge of commercial districts, where parking can be less expensive.

As the retail center transforms into a thriving center, parking should also transition from free to paid to keep the turnover rate high. Parking validation must be set to reward short-term, sales tax-generating customers.

Maximizing Existing Parking

Encouraging and incentivizing shared parking takes advantage of the already adequate number of parking spaces. Early studies indicate that the current number of parking spaces in Alamo Heights would adequately support over twice as much retail development. The problem is that the spaces are either in the



wrong place, unseen or at businesses that only use parking during the day and are unwilling to share with businesses that operate mainly in the evenings. As owners and retailers begin to understand the business synergy of working together (See Economic Sustainability), the idea of opting into a shared parking scenario will become more plausible. Shared maintenance and liability will benefit the greater good and would allow for alternative on-site parking code requirements.

Public Parking Garages

In the future, a new development may be contemplated that would choose to provide structured parking. The City may choose to enter into a public/private partnership that would provide additional spaces for public use. Or the City might partner with a developer to construct a parking facility that is wrapped in retail and/or housing units, affording the opportunity for customers to park-once and stroll between shops and businesses. A public parking improvement district might be formed to provide adequate parking management for the entire business district and finance the shared parking structures.

Parking Permit Program

Curbside parking on streets is part of the Public Realm, not the Private Realm. Residents do not "own" the parking spaces in front of their homes. Parking permits can be used to relieve many of the perceived conflicts of "ownership," but parking is a shared resource that needs to be managed for the good of the greater whole.

In multi-family districts, the City should issue guest passes to each residence and the prohibition of "No on-street parking from 2:00 am to 5:00 am" should be lifted for residences with proper passes.

A two-hour parking limit in the first full block adjacent to commercial zones should be implemented again in conjunction with issuing guest permits for each residence, so that guests may exceed the 2-hour limit. Adequate enforcement may be subsidized by creating a parking district or by charging a fee for the guest permits.

An on-street parking ban within a one quarter mile radius of the high school should also be established in conjunction with the issuance of guest parking permits to the residences. It is believed that the quarter mile distance from the high school will encourage students to carpool and for those living within the zone to walk, rather than drive to school (See Walkability/Connectivity).



Shared Parking would benefit more businesses

Unbundling the Cost of Parking

The cost of two parking spaces in Multi-Family development, such as condos, is embedded (or bundled with) the cost of the unit, which in structured parking can cost up to \$10,000 a space. A person who wants to live a transit-oriented urban lifestyle, or a person with only one car, could end up subsidizing a parking structure they do not want or need. The true cost of parking should be visible to the user or buyer, so that the user can make a choice. Additional parking that might accumulate would become available for other users, thus, adding to the shared parking strategy and making it possible to recover the full cost of the parking.

Action Step

- Encourage “Customer First” parking solutions.
- Incentivize shared parking arrangements.
- Explore “park once” concepts including municipally owned garages
- Improve current parking permit program
- Create parking districts
- Give new owners the option of a structured parking

