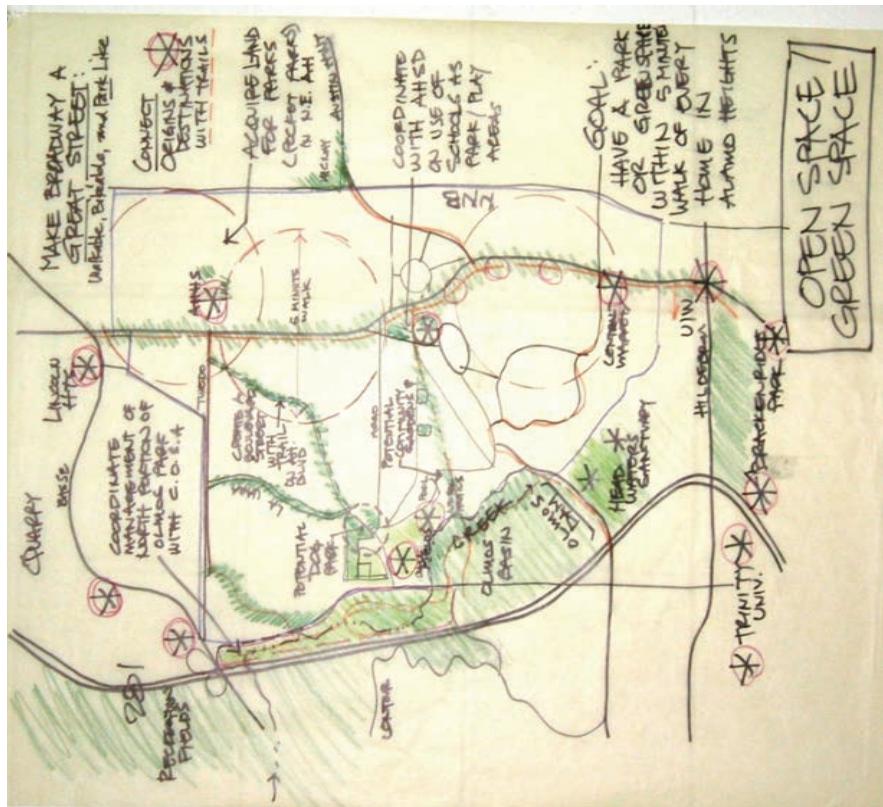


Open Space & Green Space

Open Space and Green Space

Linking to Nature

Alamo Heights has an abundance of open space and green space for a town of its size. The interface of nature with the community creates some of the most spectacular and unique home sites in the city. Torcido, La Jara, Crescent, Penny Lane, and Canyon offer wonderful views and direct connections to Olmos Basin, melding



unique architecture with natural landscapes. Lush landscapes, large trees and shady streets continue into the neighborhoods, creating a sense of green that pervades Alamo Heights. In community meetings, the citizens overwhelmingly identified this quality of nature, trees and landscaping as the one thing that they love most about the community.

Hondondo Creek offers opportunities to link even more residents directly with nature. This long drainage way reaches deep into the Cottage District, facilitating the possibility of linking this community through a series of trails to the Olmos Basin natural area. La Jara Boulevard, one of the great streets in America,

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already links to the Olmos Basin Park. This link can serve as a precedent for bringing nature into neighborhoods. Alamo Heights Boulevard once had a tree-lined median similar to La Jara. Restoring the median would create more green space and a scenic link to Olmos Basin.

Action Steps

- Create a series of trails to link neighborhoods to nature at Hondoindo Creek.
- Restore the center median to Alamo Heights Boulevard.

Olmos Creek Restoration

Olmos Creek, along the western edge of Alamo Heights, is surrounded by a dense wooded area. As an urban forest, some areas have become overgrown with invasive, second-growth species, such as hackberry, ligustrum, and wooded vine. These non-native plants will eventually choke out or severely jeopardize the health of the native Cedar Elm, Pecan and Live Oak trees. Removal of non-native plants will enhance and protect the integrity of the natural area.

The undergrowth collects trash and debris during high water causing an unsightly and potentially hazardous condition. Over the years, the creek bed has become filled with silt and debris as a result of flooding. Low areas have been carved out that now collect stagnant water. Restoration of the forest and the creekway would greatly enhance this area, facilitate flood management, and create a more environmentally-sensitive area.



Action Step

- Restore Olmos Creek and the surrounding urban forest.

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Headwater Coalition projects and the Bishop Jones Center restoration projects south of the dam. Other new multi-use trails could be designed to accommodate walking and bicycling. Eventually, these new trails could link with the greater San Antonio hike and bike trail system. Citizens of Alamo Heights would be able to access the new trails and connect with Brackenridge Park, the San Antonio Riverwalk and the Mission Trail.

A non-profit foundation should be formed to raise money to maintain and enhance the existing bird sanctuary, create new trails and to offer opportunities to increase citizen involvement.

Action Steps

- Improve the Jack Judson Nature Trails and facilities.
- Create new trails that connect to the work of the Headwater Coalition and the Bishop Jones Center creek restoration.
- Build new multi-use hike and bike trails to link with the San Antonio system.
- Consider the establishment of a non-profit foundation.

Trails for Everyone

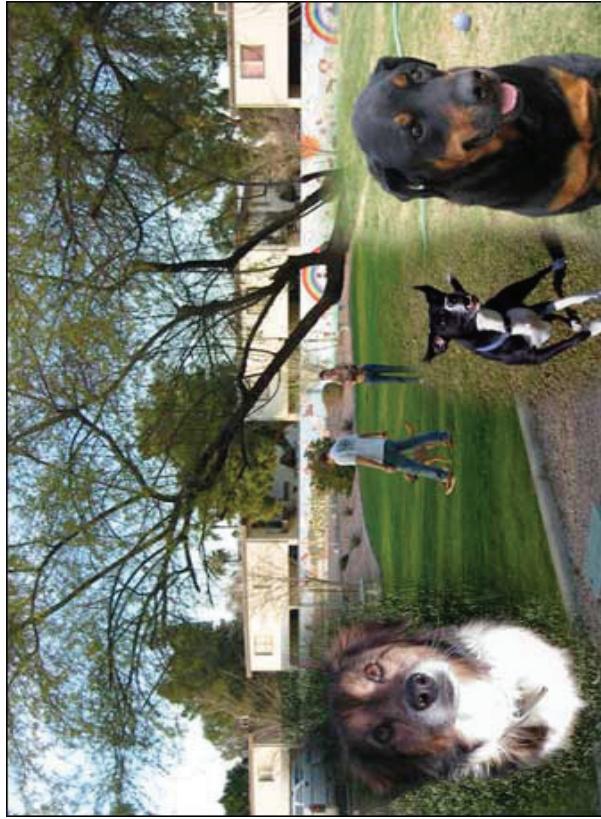
The Jack Judson Nature Trails currently provide the citizens of Alamo Heights with an opportunity to walk through nature in a quiet environment filled with birds and beautiful species of native trees. The area has long been maintained by the Audubon Society, volunteers, and countless numbers of Boy Scouts. Located at the confluence of Hondo and Olmos Creek, the trails are primitive and prohibit wheeled vehicles in order to provide a setting conducive to bird watching. Protecting an environment for birding is an important part of the vision. The existing paths should be improved and enhanced with native plants to attract birds and butterflies. Facilities currently on the site include restrooms, a meeting space and an office.

The opportunity exists to create new trails that would link with the

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Create Parks for Everyone

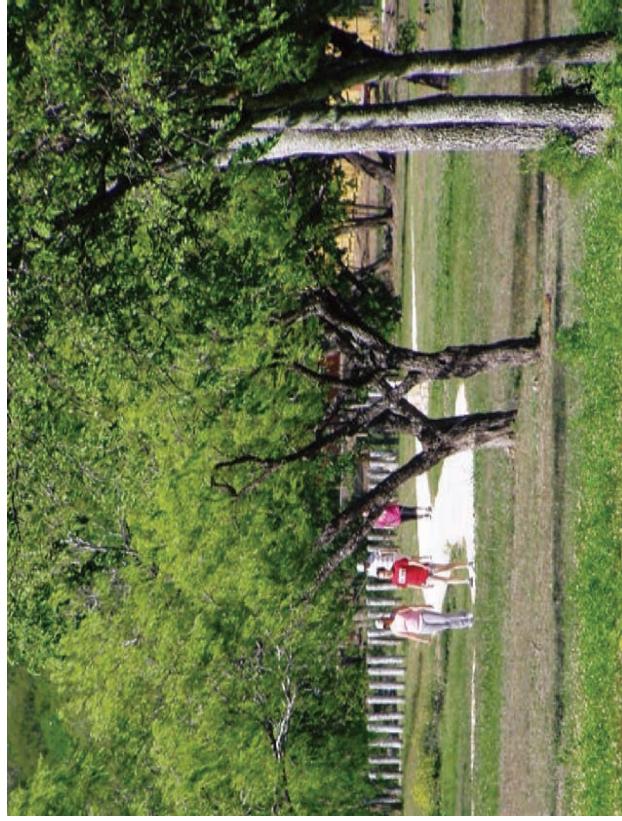
A major concept that emerged from the public meetings was the goal of providing a park or green space within a 5-minute walk of every home in Alamo Heights. The green space could be a pocket park, a playground, a dog park, a walking trail or walking track, but everyone would have the opportunity to have an outdoor space to share with neighbors. It would not only benefit the health of the community but would enhance the social opportunities for creating community. A park would be a place where neighbors could meet neighbors and children could play safely outdoors.



Dog Park

A common goal mentioned by a number of community meeting participants was the desire to develop a dog park. Dog parks are fenced in, controlled environments where dogs are allowed to be

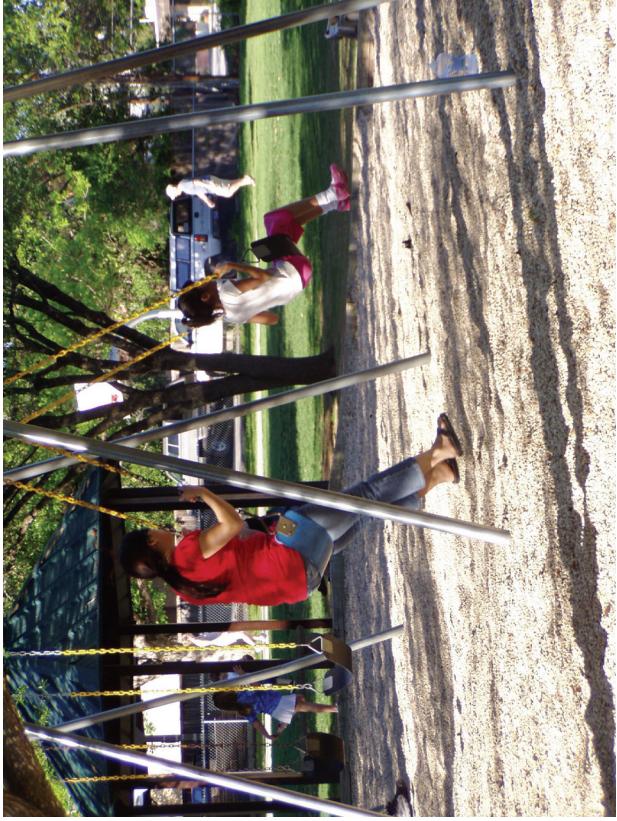
"off leash." Increasingly popular throughout the country, dog parks have proven to be extremely successful as a place where dogs can interact, run free and enjoy the company of other dogs without concern by their owners about territorial canine instincts ruining the fun. People also tend to enjoy dog parks, since they create a social network of like-minded individuals who share the same love for dogs.



Walking Track

A Walking Track was identified as another park amenity that citizens would like to have the opportunity to enjoy. Usually designed in a closed irregular-shaped circuit and often in a natural setting, walking tracks typically contain a smooth walking surface. Amenities, such as benches and water fountains, tend to provide desirable places to rest and hydrate, while other adjacent physical

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challenge courses can create opportunities for pull ups, stretching, balance and various other inexpensive fitness facilities along the track.

Playgrounds

The Cambridge Elementary playground currently provides the only such facility for Alamo Heights children. Small pocket parks located throughout the community would provide an opportunity for simple playground equipment to be utilized by neighborhood children close to home. Playgrounds are also ideal places for families to meet other families and provide an opportunity to enhance the feeling of community.

Pocket Parks

When asked what kind of parks they wanted, fourth grade students who participated in the City of Alamo Heights input process, said



that they wanted big fields and open spaces. Specifically, they were referring to a place where they could run free, rather than structured athletic fields or basketball courts.

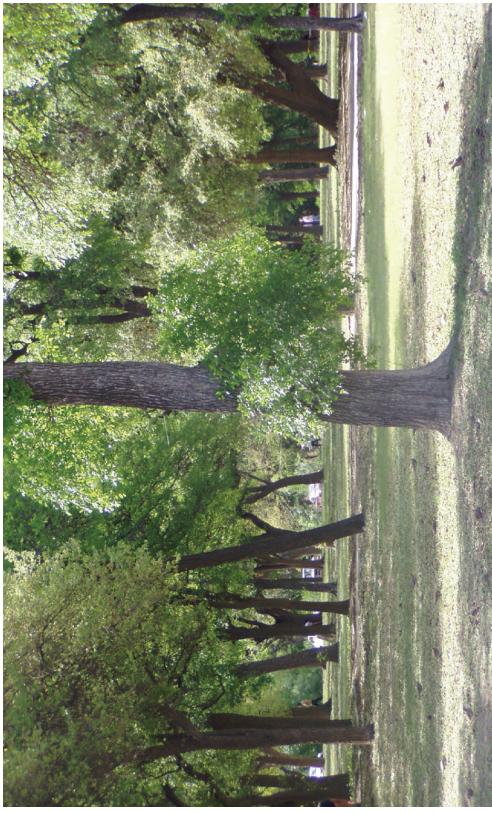
Action Steps

- Build walking and dog parks.
- Develop a green space within 5 minutes of every House, such as pocket parks and playgrounds.

Acquisition of Green Space

The City of San Antonio owns land within the City of Alamo Heights boundaries, which Alamo Heights leases for the swimming pool, ball fields and nature trails. It would be in the long-term best interest of Alamo Heights to acquire the property from the City of San Antonio.

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A small portion of the City of San Antonio's "Olmos Basin Park," located on the east side of Olmos Creek and adjacent to the western boundary of Alamo Heights, is an isolated piece of the greater Olmos Basin Park facility. The fact that Olmos Creek serves as a western boundary, the park is surrounded on two sides by Alamo Heights, is isolated from the rest of Olmos Basin and is only accessible from Alamo Heights road ways, suggests that the potential acquisition of this parkland should be discussed with the City of San Antonio. By acquiring this property, the City of Alamo Heights would be able to provide policing in the park. It is important to note that the workload for the Police Department may increase as a result of any park acquisition. Maintenance responsibilities would also shift to Alamo Heights, thereby increasing the costs for the Public Works Department. Both of these issues should be considered as part of the acquisition.

Action Steps

- Acquire leased land from the City of San Antonio.
- Acquire Olmos Basin Park from the City of San Antonio.