

REVITALIZATION AT THE TOWN CENTER

Following adoption of the Sustainability and Commercial/Industrial Overlay District Standards in December 2009, the redevelopment planning process in Leon Valley moved into its second phase, which will result in a master plan for the Town Square and Town Center areas of the City.

The following map provides a closer look at how the Revitalization Strategies may inform Town Square and Town Center redevelopment. Stakeholders can use the strategies and maps presented here to discuss what elements should be incorporated into the master plan.



Figure 9: Planned and Proposed Development Initiatives at the Town Center

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

- Focus street greening efforts on Poss, Grissom and Bandera Roads.
- Identify funding for a natural drainage pilot project to connect Raymond Rinkus Park to the Town Square.
- Integrate bike lanes and signage along Poss and Grissom Roads to draw regional greenway users and other pedestrians and cyclists into the Town Center.
- Purchase a parcel to use as green gateway into the Town Center; programming could include green space, a paved trail, and/or an outdoor farmers market.
- Create marketing materials for the Town Center that emphasize an integrated recreational-commercial sense of place.

Recommendations for Continued Reuse Planning

ALIGN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS

Leon Valley's Economic Development Department could seek to align economic development analysis from the Buxton Company report with the strategies and recommendations of this reuse assessment.

IDENTIFY PILOT PROJECTS

The City of Leon Valley could identify and pursue sources of funding for green infrastructure pilot projects that support the proposed future use strategies.

INTEGRATE STRATEGIES INTO REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The City of Leon Valley could use the strategies as a discussion tool with stakeholders during the second phase of redevelopment planning for the Town Center and adopt elements of the strategies into the Sustainability Overlay District Standards as appropriate.

ADDRESS LIABILITY CONCERNS

EPA could provide information on Superfund liability and the steps necessary to obtain a comfort letter to the City of Leon Valley and local property owners who may be interested in expanding or selling their property.

COLLABORATE WITH SOURCE AREA SITE OWNERS

The City of Leon Valley and EPA could collaborate with source area site owners on aligning site-specific redevelopment or revitalization plans with remedial design.



This report was funded by the EPA Superfund Redevelopment Initiative and produced by E² Inc. for EPA Region 6, the City of Leon Valley and the Leon Valley Community. For more information on SRI and reuse planning, please contact Casey Luckett Snyder, EPA Region 5 reuse coordinator (214.665.7393, Luckett.Casey@epa.gov). For more information on the Bandera Road Superfund Site, please contact Chris Villarreal, EPA Remedial Project Manager (214.665.6758, Villarreal.Chris@epa.gov).

REUSE PLANNING

Bandera Road Superfund Site | Leon Valley, TX



PURPOSE OF REUSE PLANNING

1. Identify reasonably anticipated future land uses and associated remedial considerations to inform EPA's cleanup plans.
2. Identify interim revitalization strategies for the City of Leon Valley given the long-term nature of groundwater cleanup and the potential for stigma related to the Site.

LEON VALLEY LAND USE GOALS

- Protect the municipal water supply from contamination by the groundwater plume and/or future industrial activities.
- Guide and support reinvestment and redevelopment along Bandera Road.
- Promote sustainable development and sustainable living through City initiatives.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

- Bandera Road is a major travel route between downtown San Antonio and surrounding centers.
- Leon Valley is well-positioned to attract economic development based on the residential growth areas and key employers, attractions and universities located within a 5 mile radius.
- North Leon Creek Greenway is a regional recreational asset.

ZONING & REDEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN AREAS

- Bandera & Grissom Roads are primary commercial corridors.
- Sustainability Overlay District standards guide development in most areas with business, retail or commercial zoning.
- Town Square and Town Center areas are the desired locus of sustainable reinvestment and redevelopment.

NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Recent residential developments attract young professionals.
- Bexar County floodplain annexation could increase recreational amenities.
- Walkable, neighborhood-oriented commercial centers are desirable in future commercial areas.
- Potential transportation projects include landscaping of the Bandera Road median and extension of a Town Center road.

SITE OVERVIEW

- Groundwater plume with at least two sources in Leon Valley
- Source sites include the Savings Square Shopping Center and Pilgrim Cleaners
- EPA investigation into plume extent is ongoing

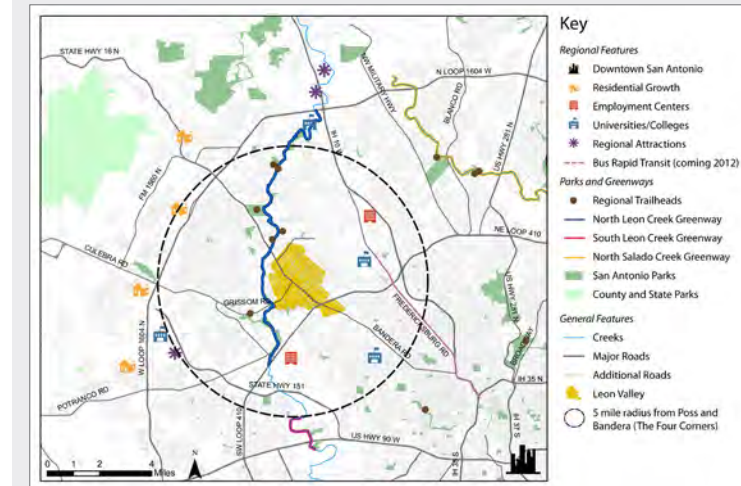


Figure 1: Regional Context

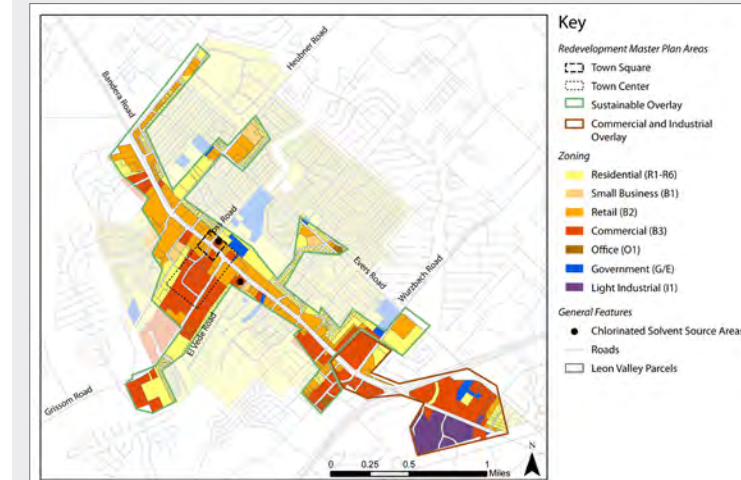


Figure 2: Existing Zoning + Redevelopment Master Plan Areas

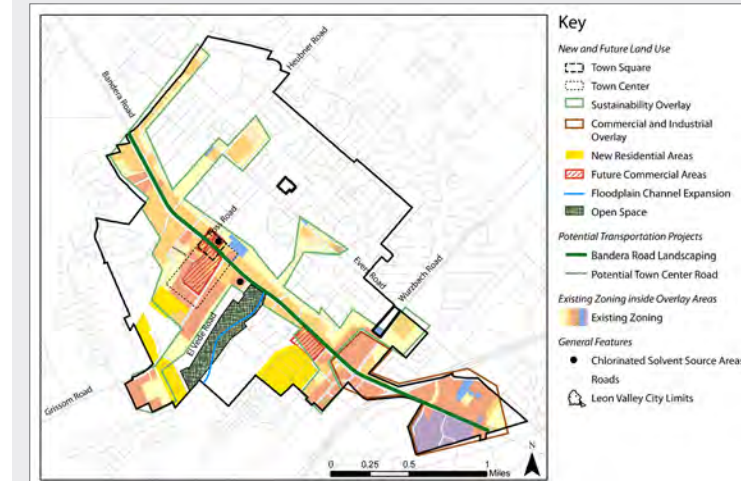


Figure 3: New Development Projects

FUTURE LAND USE

LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

EPA uses reasonably anticipated future land use to inform decisions regarding cleanup methods and remedial design. Key considerations include:

- Future land use in the area of the Bandera Road Superfund Site is likely to continue to include residential, recreational, commercial and industrial uses.
- Current land use plans and initiatives seek to green the city and increase the amount of time residents and visitors spend outdoors.
- One source area is located inside Leon Valley's Town Center area, which is targeted for redevelopment.



REMEDIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Potential remedial features at the Site include flush mounted wells across the plume area and groundwater treatment wells at the source sites. Key considerations include:

- Remedial features are likely to be located at the source sites and may create minimal constraints on use at those sites.
- Reuse in areas beyond the source sites is more likely to be impacted by potential Superfund stigma than by remedial features.

MOVING FORWARD

The revitalization strategies outlined on the adjacent page leverage the value of existing assets and the momentum of planned revitalization projects to counter potential Superfund stigma. Leon Valley's image as the "Greenest Little City in Texas" could be enhanced by proactive sustainability measures that provide a physical basis for prosperity, support demand for products and services, and create a sense of place.

Flush-mounted wells are installed with a cover at ground level and can be integrated into sidewalks, parking lots and recreational fields.

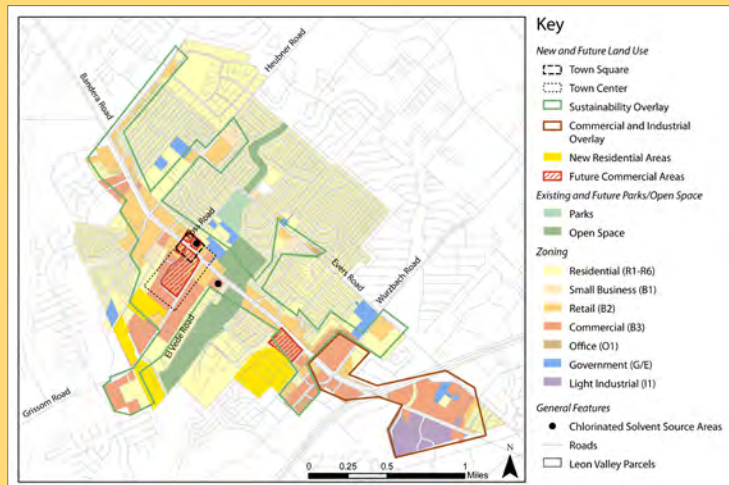


Figure 4: Reasonably Anticipated Future Land Use

Revitalization Strategies: Green Infrastructure and Economic Development



WHAT IS GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE?

Definition

Green infrastructure (GI) is a framework for understanding the valuable services that nature provides for the human environment and integrating these natural assets into city and regional planning. Much like the grey infrastructure (street networks, water and sewer systems, etc.) that supports development, GI helps create a sustainable foundation for development in our communities.

- At a regional or municipal scale, GI forms a network of open space that can guide growth and preservation.
- At a site scale, GI integrates functions and utilizes natural processes to make communities more healthy and enjoyable.

Economic Benefits

Investing in GI can yield tangible economic benefits for community members, businesses and municipalities.

- Property values increase near green spaces.
- Green spaces near places of work increase productivity, and businesses attract and retain more motivated staff in greener settings.
- GI can reduce energy costs by countering soaring summer temperatures and alleviate pressure on stormwater management systems by reducing the velocity and amount of runoff.
- Shoppers stay longer and spend more in commercial areas with GI.

Leon Valley's Natural Assets

Cataloguing existing natural assets can be the first step in long-term planning for a GI network. Figure 5 illustrates the natural assets in and around Leon Valley, including the North Leon Creek Greenway and a "spine" of planned and existing open space in the City.

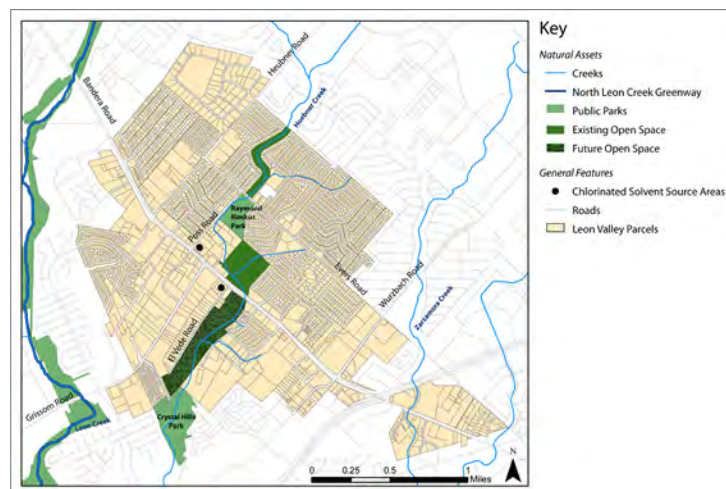


Figure 5: Natural Assets in Leon Valley

STRATEGY ONE: Create Huebner Creek Greenway

Use existing and planned open space to create a greenway along Huebner Creek. By ensuring a safe Bandera Road crossing for pedestrians and cyclists, the City will create multi-modal access to commercial centers and recreational amenities for City residents.

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

- Coordinate with San Antonio to support development of Crystal Hills Park.
- Coordinate with Bexar County to integrate a paved trail into the floodplain project.
- Improve accessibility of the trails in the Leon Valley Historical Society natural area in order to continue greenway.
- Seek funding to ensure full connectivity and to add entrance signage to the greenway.

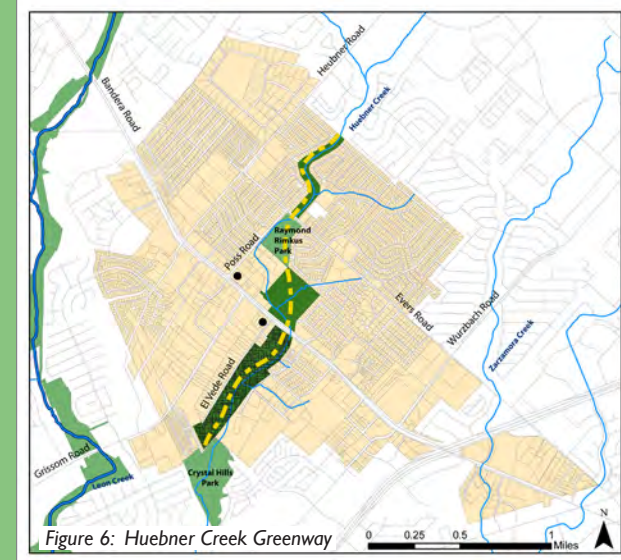


Figure 6: Huebner Creek Greenway

STRATEGY TWO: Select a Green Streets Network

Target a green streets network for tree planting and natural drainage features to improve walkability, aesthetics and stormwater management. Criteria for green streets could include streets that (1) intersect Bandera Road, (2) connect to the proposed Huebner Creek Greenway and (3) provide access to an existing amenity or attraction. The map at right suggests a primary set of streets where initial greening efforts could be focused and a secondary set for further expansion of the network.

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

- Negotiate with TxDOT to integrate bike lanes, natural drainage and tree planting into Bandera Road
- Target tree planting to designated streets connecting neighborhoods to Bandera, Huebner Creek Greenway and local amenities
- Apply for grant funding to ensure all green streets have connected trails or sidewalks.
- Integrate natural drainage to improve stormwater management on green streets draining to creeks.
- Coordinate with new developments to ensure street improvements facilitate green street vision.

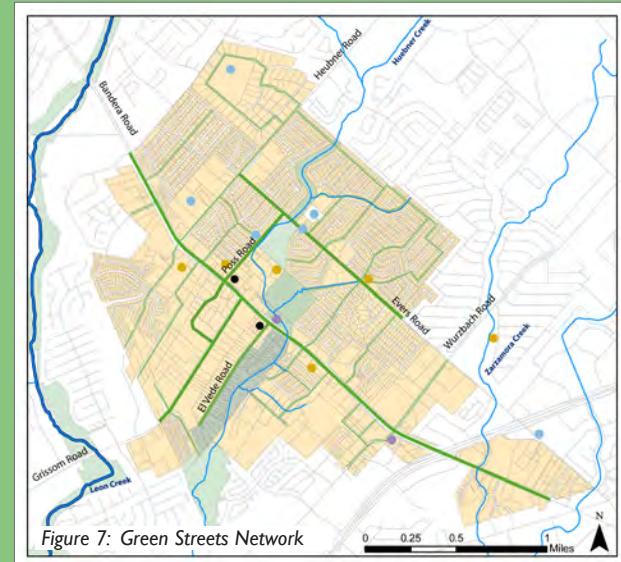


Figure 7: Green Streets Network

STRATEGY THREE: Build Regional Green Links

Create regional links between the North Leon Creek Greenway, the Town Center and the proposed Huebner Creek Greenway. Integration of commercial centers and recreational amenities could help create a unique sense of place in Leon Valley and attract regional recreation users and shoppers.

POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

- Conduct feasibility study to determine most suitable trail access and connector points to the North Leon Creek Greenway.
- Apply for funding to acquire land or easements and construct connectors and signage.
- Add Huebner Creek Greenway to regional greenway maps and signage.
- Integrate bike lanes and signage along Grissom and Poss Roads.
- Initiate recreational programming in the Town Center to create a destination for greenway users and shoppers.

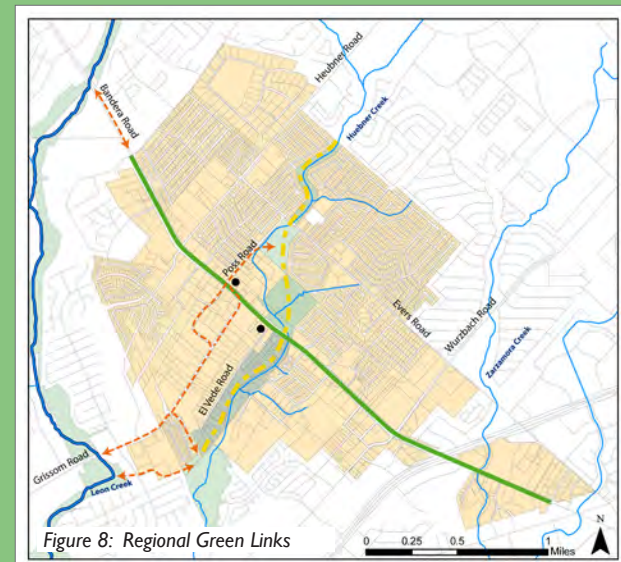


Figure 8: Regional Green Links

