

Pairing Housing + Transportation to Uplift Communities Across San Antonio

A Housing Typology Survey

July 2023–June 2024



**THRIVING
COMMUNITIES**
PROGRAM



San Antonio

About

Urban Land Institute

Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprised of more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries.

The Terwilliger Center for Housing

The goal of the ULI Terwilliger Center for Housing is to advance best practices in residential development and public policy and to support ULI members and local communities in creating and sustaining a full spectrum of housing opportunities, particularly for low- and moderate-income households. Established in 2007 with a gift from longtime member and former ULI chairman J. Ronald Terwilliger, the center integrates ULI's wide-ranging housing activities into a program of work with three objectives: to catalyze the production of housing, provide thought leadership on the housing industry, and inspire a broader commitment to housing.

Terwilliger Center activities include the development of practical tools to help developers of affordable housing, engagement with members and housing industry leaders, research and publications, a housing awards program, and an annual housing conference.

Homeless to Housed Initiative

Homeless to Housed (H2H) recognizes that ULI members are well positioned to help address homelessness. With generous support from a growing number of ULI members, the initiative works to explore real estate solutions to the growing crisis affecting communities everywhere. Core elements of this work include conducting research, promoting cross-sector collaboration, providing local technical assistance through ULI's network of district councils, and sharing knowledge and expertise for addressing housing challenges for individuals and families. This initiative began through the 2022 research report *Homeless to Housed: The ULI Perspective Based on Actual Case Studies*. Driven by the generosity and guidance of Preston Butcher, the report explores the role the real estate community can play in addressing the issue of homelessness. It includes a summary of lessons learned, a blueprint for how to replicate best practices in U.S. communities, and a series of case studies that demonstrate how the development community can be an active partner in addressing the critical shortage of housing in the United States. See the full report and companion case studies at uli.org/

Cover photo: Downtown San Antonio (Visit San Antonio)

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Summary

ULI San Antonio embarked on its Homeless to Housed journey with the intention of enhancing education around the range of housing types San Antonians must begin to embrace to ensure that everyone in the city has a place to call home.

Homelessness in San Antonio is a community challenge, with 3,155 people living unhoused in the city using 2023 point-in-time calculations. Housing every San Antonian, however, will require systemic change that will need to include emergency shelters and more transitional housing as well as additional affordable, attainable, and accessible housing units built across its landscape.

In a city quite comfortable with the traditional single-family home, new housing policies are finally taking hold and stretching building configurations to accommodate new modes of living, owning, and renting in San Antonio. A recent accessory dwelling (ADU) ordinance gained approval, representing significant progress for the city; yet residents are still wary of proximate density and of homes that do not fit the traditional single-family format.

Knowing that single-family homeownership can be difficult to achieve for a significant number of people, ULI San Antonio and Local Initiative Support Corporation–San Antonio (LISC) partnered to create a survey tool that would expose community members to a wider range of housing typologies and gather feedback on potential housing types of interest.

Program Overview

Building Community Capacity to Take Transformative Projects from Concept to Completion

Funded with an initial \$25 million through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) new [Thriving Communities Program \(TCP\)](#) aims to ensure that disadvantaged communities adversely or disproportionately affected by environmental, climate, and human health policy outcomes have the technical tools and organizational capacity to compete for federal aid and deliver quality infrastructure projects that enable their communities and neighborhoods to thrive. Recognizing the importance of this transformative new program, Congress appropriated an additional \$25 million to USDOT through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023.

TCP facilitates the planning and development of transportation and community revitalization activities and provides tools to ensure that under-resourced communities can access the historic funding provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).



The Thriving Communities Program is administered by the Build America Bureau as part of its broader efforts to provide technical assistance to communities.

The Thriving Communities Program is part of the larger Federal Thriving Communities Initiative. USDOT is coordinating with other federal agencies through the Thriving Communities Network, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, along with the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others. USDOT also invites partnerships with local and national philanthropic organizations to ensure that all communities can access funding resources and implement programs that help them to thrive.

[Thriving Communities Program: Guiding transportation projects from concept to completion.](#)

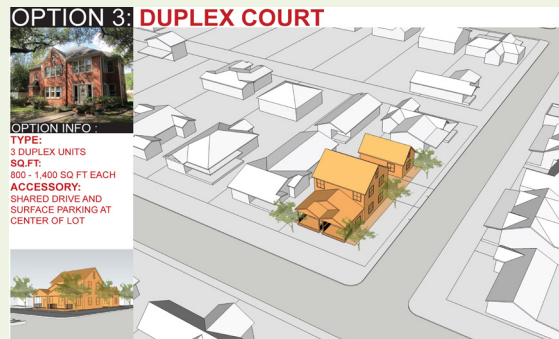
The goal of the work was to open doors to familiarity with and acceptance of diverse housing typologies—from duplexes to triplexes, cottage courts to townhomes, and more—laying the foundation for the broader introduction of these housing types across the market. The work would also demonstrate that design can influence community acceptance of buildings of greater density and expand housing opportunities for more San Antonians.

In April 2023, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) selected VIA Metro Transit as a recipient of technical assistance through the Thriving Communities Program, which will provide technical assistance, planning, and capacity-building support to VIA, the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, and LISC over the next three years. This special designation will better position VIA and the City of San Antonio to attract additional federal funding, adding fuel to the pursuit of making San Antonio a better place to live and work. The USDOT grant will also assist VIA in robust public engagement, ensuring that the community participates in the development of the proposed east-west “Silver Line” corridor.

In May 2023, ULI San Antonio and LISC organized a collaborative event with community partners—The Future of Housing and Transit in San Antonio as a Thriving Community from Vision to Implementation—featuring Maria Zimmermann, USDOT’s Strategic Advisor for Technical Assistance and Community Solutions. This focus, combined with the H2H funding for housing typology exploration, led the combined partners (ULI, LISC, COSA, Bexar County, VIA Metropolitan Transit) to focus the housing

Survey Housing Typologies

The survey includes five typologies of housing. Participants will scan the QR code in the phone to access the survey and engage with the Hello Lamp Post AI assisted app. They will be asked to indicate if they would like to live or are currently living in the different housing types.



COURTESY OF ALAMO ARCHITECTS

conversation on the geographies and communities surrounding the proposed transit alignment.

While San Antonio has had Transit Oriented Development (TOD) regulations in place for years, the lack of robust transit citywide has limited TOD growth, leaving the public with little familiarity with or understanding of how housing, transit, and development can ideally align to create more attainable and economically sustainable communities in the long run. The relationship with VIA is a continuation of work from a different ULI grant through the Curtis Infrastructure Initiative focusing on future for mobility hubs in San Antonio.

About the Survey

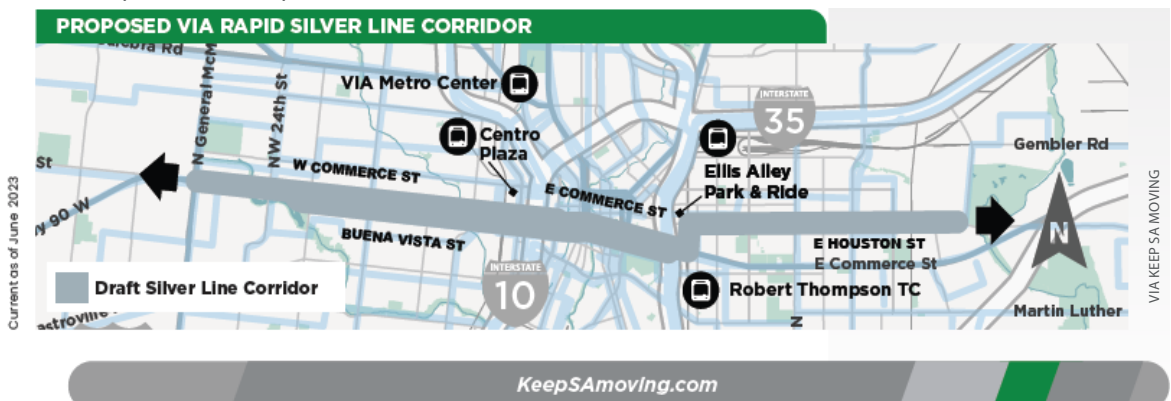
ULI San Antonio has designed a virtual visual housing typology survey in partnership with the Thriving Communities team to explore the housing opportunities along the east-west rapid transit line. The Homeless to Housed Initiative grant has funded the use of the [Hello Lamp Post](#), an AI digital assistant public survey engagement tool. This technology will inform and impact the local housing ecosystem in two ways. First, it will allow broader outreach, engaging communities along this proposed transit line to participate where they live, play, and work. It will also help expand local understanding and expand awareness of different housing typologies. This will also increase the possibility for San Antonians to benefit from future infrastructure investment. ULI expects to engage between 500 and 2,500 members of the community directly. Secondly, the information gathered from this effort will inform policymakers and developers to address community wants and needs more directly. It would allow the Thriving Communities team, the city, and VIA to continue using this technology in the next phase of capacity building and development of the rapid transit lines.

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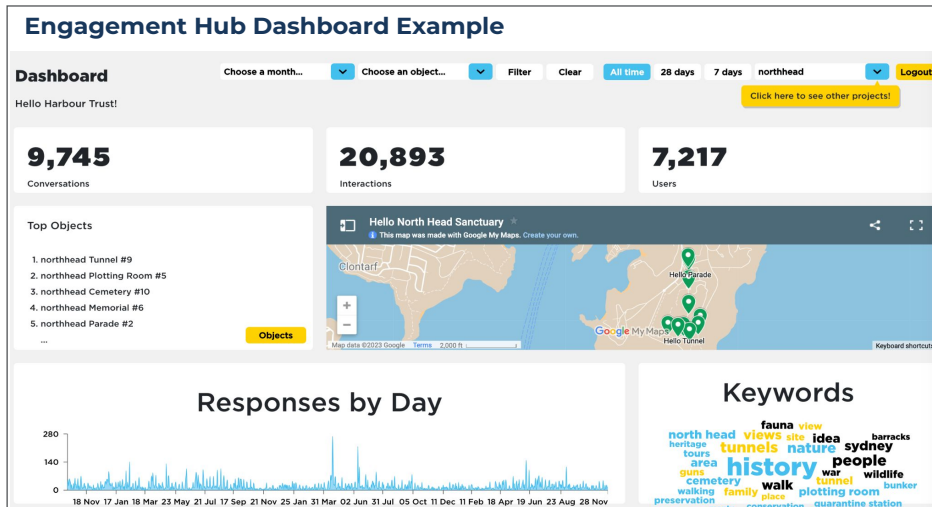
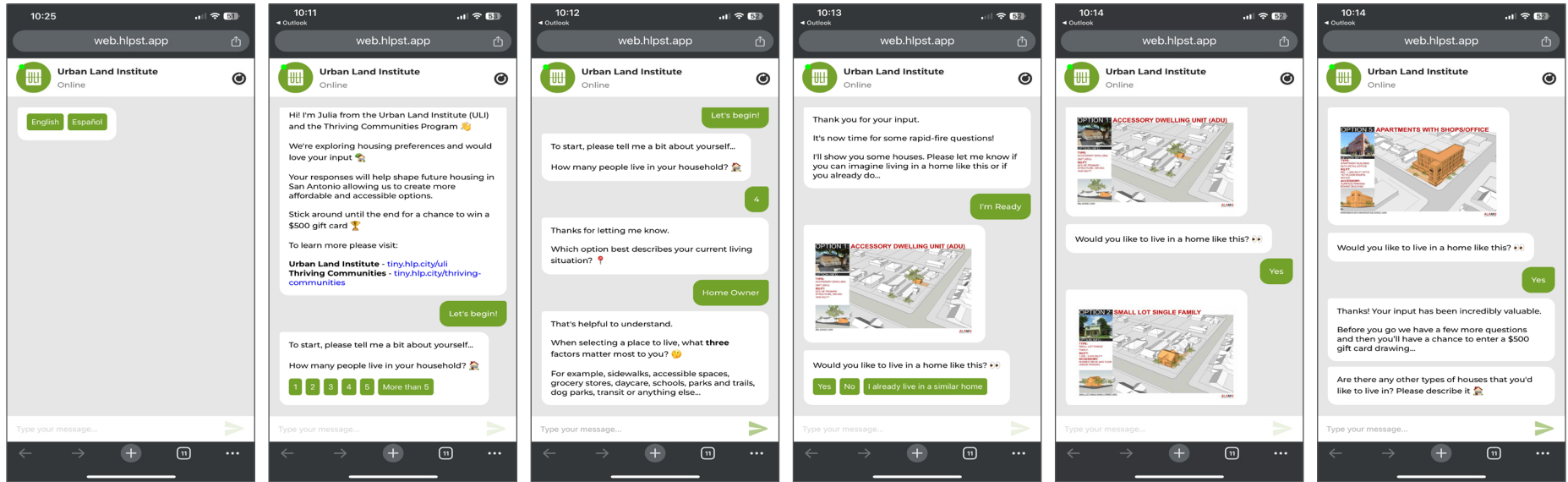
“As a city, San Antonio already has a strong local partnership that connects housing needs and transit. This grant brings the resources needed to develop a mobile two-way engagement tool that can expand local understanding of housing choices.”

Working Group

This work is creating systems-level change for the city and its transit lines and providing meaningful community engagement. It is accelerating communities' ability to participate in the wealth-building creation and expand housing choices that transit infrastructure needs. Systemic change takes time, however, and only moves at the speed of trust. This work will continue well into 2025 and beyond with the continued support of ULI San Antonio and the Terwilliger Center for Housing.



Survey and Dashboard



Questions & Responses

Choose a month... Filter Clear All time 28 days 7 days northhead Logout

Filter By Question Theme... Filter

Click here to see other projects!

Rank	Question	Responses
1.	On a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied were you with your visit to North Head Sanctuary today? 5 = Very satisfied, 1 = Dissatisfied. Please also explain your answer.	979
2.	Out of 5, how satisfied are you with this public domain incl. the amenities? 5 = Very satisfied, 1 = Dissatisfied. Please also explain your answer.	786
3.	North Fort is a historic army base established here in 1936. A defining feature of the now demilitarised fort is its underground tunnel system. Can you guess what it was used for?	682
4.	Take a look at the camouflaged, shed-like entrance to the Plotting Room and consider its name. Now, guess - what do you think this military facility was used for?	378

Thriving
Community
Partners

LISC San Antonio • VIA Metropolitan Transit • City of San Antonio Housing and Transportation Departments • Bexar County

Acknowledgments

Support for this survey was provided by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation San Antonio (LISC) and ULI's Homeless to Housed Initiative.

Thriving Community Partners

LISC San Antonio
VIA Metropolitan Transit
City of San Antonio Housing and
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