VACANT

AN ANALYSIS OF SAN ANTONIO'S VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM
AND THE IMPACTS ON SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

This report discusses how the City of San Antonio's (COSA) Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Vacant Building Program (VBP) has impacted surrounding properties and communities around neglected and abandoned structures since the program's 2014 launch. The study area focuses on Dignowity Hill, a historic district and neighborhood that has the second-highest number of vacancies in San Antonio. After background research and statistical data was collected from VBP specialists, a market and demographic analysis was conducted on the study area. This data was retrieved from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems (NHGIS) website to determine the changes of the housing market and demographics before and after the VBP launch. Data shows that there is a correlation between the high number of vacancies and the revitalization of certain areas within Dignowity Hill. The analysis also concluded that most registered vacant properties lie near San Antonio's downtown core. This area is experiencing the highest number of new constructions, which is bringing in diversity. The data also shows that there is a migration of the Hispanic population moving further away from the city core in Dignowity Hill. It is concluded that the VBP preserves the architectural aspects of the neighborhood but does not preserve the intangible elements -- therefore displacement and gentrification are bound to happen. The findings of this paper will help understand not only how programs like the VBP can help discover areas of redevelopment through vacancies within the city but also shed light on how these programs must find ways to preserve the intangible elements of a neighborhood as well.

INTRODUCTION

Old, abandoned, empty, scary, crime-ridden, deteriorating, ugly, eyesore; all are words describing that one vacant building down the street that has been falling over for years. Although these negative descriptions are physically accurate, blight can be a blessing in disguise. These vacant liabilities can become a community's most significant asset for future development.

Cities are discovering the positive outcomes that can come from having areas of high levels of vacancies. By implementing programs that help rid of vacant structures, neighborhoods are returning to not only a visually appealing environment but one that also reduces crime. Vacancies can bring revitalization. However, revitalization can also bring displacement. Cities must plan carefully in order to benefit long term residents without dis-inclining them.

The City of San Antonio's (COSA) Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), in collaboration with other departments within the government municipality, launched a pilot program in order to bring dilapidated properties back into productive use in 2014. The program was called the Vacant Building Registration Pilot Program (VBP). Six years later, it is still being used.

This paper begins with San Antonio's vacancy history. It then goes into the methodology used to understand the purpose of the VBP, how the study area was selected and explains why specific data was collected to analyze the changes of the VBP. The research includes the VBP impacts, process, city solutions, incentives and VBP Hot Spots. The paper then goes into a market and demographic analysis of the main study area of Dignowity Hill, a historic district and neighborhood that has the highest number of vacancies in San Antonio. The paper closes with the success rate of the VBP and how the findings of this paper can help locals understand how programs like the VBP can lead to the discovery of areas for redevelopment through vacancies within the city.

WHAT CAUSES VACANCY?

What causes housing vacancy? While each community has unique characteristics that lead to abandonment, there are common factors such as supply and demand, ineffective legal systems, sprawl, institutional racism, and the lack of private investments that cause vacancy rates to skyrocket.

When a population of a city rises, there is a need for additional housing. There is then a rapid increase of the housing stock. In this same time frame of construction, a large-scale population loss can occur, leading to excess housing supply, which in turn results in vacancy. In order to avoid an imbalance in the housing market, "there must be positive population growth, providing demand for additional housing, and where local government regulation does not unduly constrain development." (Schuetz, 2018).

Legal systems are ineffective when there is a lack of property tax enforcement, code enforcement systems, and foreclosure systems. In a strong government, these systems can help minimize or even prevent the decline of neighborhoods that are suffering from housing overstock and weak housing markets. An example used from the Center for Community Progress is land banks, which are "intended to acquire title to these problem properties, eliminate the liabilities, and transfer the properties to new, responsible owners in a transparent manner that results in outcomes consistent with community-based plans."

Sprawl is probably the most common factor for vacancies. Technological advances in transportation and the construction of highways led to suburban residential areas. This caused both commercial and residential activities to move away from urban cores. Existing land and zoning regulations also "encourage[d] such flight from the cities, as fresh development in previously open lands is cheaper and readily districted [for new development]. Conversely, the preexisting urban neighborhoods, already built and zoned, discouraged redevelopment." (Lungdren, 2004). Property taxes fell within the central cores of cities, making it harder for communities to maintain a public infrastructure that was aging.

Institutional Racism is also tied to sprawl and vacancies. As Tarik Abdelazim stated in a Community Press Blog for the Center for Community Progress on December 1, 2016, that "not all neighborhoods are treated equally. Over multiple decades, institutional racism in housing and community development policies at all levels of government and within the private sector have seriously disadvantaged communities of color." There is a historical division between races within cities, causing class inequalities. In the late 19th and early 20th century, government and private entities were prohibiting people of color

from purchasing property in specific neighborhoods, predominantly white. Race-based zoning was struck down in Buchanan v Warley in 1917, but cities found alternative ways to keep segregation through exclusionary zoning, which prohibited the construction of multi-family housing or small lots with single-family homes. This practice was then affirmed in the landmark case of Euclid v Ambler in 1926, "finding that zoning ordinances were reasonable extensions of police power and potentially beneficial to public welfare." (Kahlenber & Quick, 2019). Practices like redlining, areas marked "high-risk" for mortgage lenders, also segregated racial groups within the city during the 1930's.

Because of this there became a lack of private investments in these neighborhoods. This disinvestment caused the area to slowly deteriorate to where even public investment is close to slim. However, "in a desire to revitalize disinvested neighborhoods, policy-makers frequently introduce laws that entice wealthy individuals and investors into the area but ultimately underserved or harm current residents." (Kahlenber & Quick, 2019).

San Antonio's vacancy occurrence can be tied to all the above. These factors that impacted San Antonio's vacancy rate can be seen in an article titled San Antonio 360: The Rise and Decline of the Concentric City 1890-2010 by Ian Caine, Rebecca Walter, and Nathan Foote. The figure below has been extracted from the article. It shows the number of construction completions in Bexar County between 1890 and 2009.

Decade	Buildings (Count)	Developed Land (Acres)	Avg. Distance from Center (Miles)
1890s	438	17	2.8
1900s	2393	100	2.8
1910s	5148	188	2.6
1920s	19,392	681	2.9
1930s	18,830	643	3.7
1940s	47,824	1663	4.2
1950s	69,709	2929	5.5
1960s	64,887	3622	7.8
1970s	80,062	4849	9.9
1980s	91,343	5720	11.0
1990s	76,727	4452	12.2
2000s	126,421	8242	12.8
Total	603,174	33,106	

Figure 1: Number of Construction Completions, Bexar County 1890-2009. Caine, Ian, Foote, Nathan, and Walter, Rebecca. 2017. Sourced from Bexar County Property Appraiser 2015.

This data shows a dramatic increase in housing stock over the years that were constructed to keep up with San Antonio's growing population. The figure above also shows that construction was moving further away from the city center over time. As San Antonio's transit system developed and evolved into new parts of town, the city grew around transit lines. As the automobile came into play, highways and interstates caused a greater expansion outside its core.

The Housing Act of 1949, Title I provision in particular, "pushed the city to demonstrate its commitment to planning." (Fairbanks, 2002). Robert B. Fairbanks speaks about the city's planning process in a hostile political environment in his Research Article title The Texas Exception: San Antonio and Urban Renewal, 1949-1965. In San Antonio's redevelopment plan, there was a focus on the slum clearance and urban redevelopment in the downtown area while addressing the needs of the poor. Public housing was the answer in the 1950's, with the addition of 2,584 units (Fairbanks, 2002). This caused an uproar due to the new housing units being built on vacant land that, according to realtors, were "better suited for first class subdivisions" (Fairbanks, 2002). Nevertheless, the clearance of slums did not take effect until January 2, 1959, just west of downtown. The areas that were erased were ones that showed signs of blight, areas that consisted of low-income, minorities. Private investors were drawn to this area "because of its closeness to the business district and its access to highway and railroad facilities." (Fairbanks, 2002). In total, 274 families, 131 businesses and 223 individuals were displaced from the area.

The "Decade of Downtown", mentioned in Caine's article, has brought investments back into the city core. Neighborhoods around the central district are becoming revitalized. Density is increasing and growth in public infrastructure can be seen. Growth in general, can benefit cities, and revitalization can be wonderful, when done right. However, when development leads to displacement, alternative solutions must be formed. This report shows how San Antonio is enhancing neighborhoods through the VBP but is also causing change that can lead to displacement.

METHODOLOGY

The research was done on the VBP online through the COSA website. Public documents, such as past PowerPoints of presentations to the City Council, maps of program areas, and city ordinances, were obtained to study the origins and the need for the VBP. There were numerous discussions with OHP staff members who gave insight into the process, statistics, and recommendations on how the VBP could be improved. Once there was an understanding of how the VBP worked, GIS data was collected from OHP staff members. The data consisted of shapefiles with the VBP areas, VBP parcels and an excel file of all registered vacant properties in the VBP that dated from its initial launch up until January 21, 2020. This data was then merged with shapefiles obtained from the COSA GIS website, which included San Antonio boundaries, streets, addresses, historic districts, and neighborhood associations. From this data, a heat map was created in order to find hotspots within the VBP. The East side of San Antonio had the most vacancies, according to the map produced. The East side was then broken down into neighborhood associations to discover which neighborhoods had the most vacant properties registered in the VBP. Alamo Gardens consisted of the highest number of vacancies, but due to the lack of information on the neighborhood and the size of the neighborhood, Alamo Gardens was not analyzed. Dignowity Hill had the second-highest number of vacancies registered in the VBP, therefore, was selected as the study area for this project. The neighborhood was broken down further into block groups in order to understand better the demographics and housing market within the neighborhood and its changes over time. Data for demographics and housing were retrieved through the NHGIS website for the years 2010, 2014, and 2018. The impact of the VBP on Dignowity Hill can be seen below.

RESEARCH

VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM (VBP)

In 2014 the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), in collaboration with the Development Services Department (DSD), the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) and the Center City Development and Operations Department (CCDO), launched a pilot program in order to bring dilapidated properties back into productive use (COSA, 2000-2020). The program was called the Vacant Building Registration Pilot Program. It encompassed 35 square miles of San Antonio that included historic districts, historic landmarks, the San Antonio Central Business District, and areas within a half-mile around active military base's (Figure 2). Along with efforts of revitalization, the program focused on reducing negative impacts in the community such as criminal activity, code violations, arson, pest harboring, low property values, and the risk to public health and welfare (COSA, 2000-2020). The goal was to make sure all vacant buildings that fell within the program's boundaries were registered with the city, met a minimum standard of care, and were left in good condition (COSA, 2000-2020).

In the first 90 days of the program, 1,380 letters were sent out to property owners who were notified to register their vacant property (Rivard, 2015). According to an article produced by mySA on November 27, 2015, almost two years after the initial launch, 111 properties had been registered, 32 homeowners had been given extensions, 23 homes were in the 90-day grace period and 134 sites were nonresponding that most likely resulted in a $500 fine (Olivo, 2015). Although progress was slow, the 18-month pilot program was effective. Notices sent out by the city prompted property owners and motivated them to act on meeting the minimum standards for their vacant building. Council members were hopeful that eventually, the program would cover all districts and not just sections within the city (Thompson, 2016).

In 2016 the Vacant Building Program (VBP) expanded from the original boundaries and was officially adopted into the Code of Ordinances (Chapter 12). The incorporated areas included Neighborhood Conservation Districts, the Eastpoint and Choice Neighborhoods, and City-initiated Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ). A half-mile buffer was placed not only around all these new areas, but Port SA, Brooks City Base, the original Central Business District, and all historic districts. The new area totaled 112 square miles, seen in Figure 3 (COSA, 2000-2020).
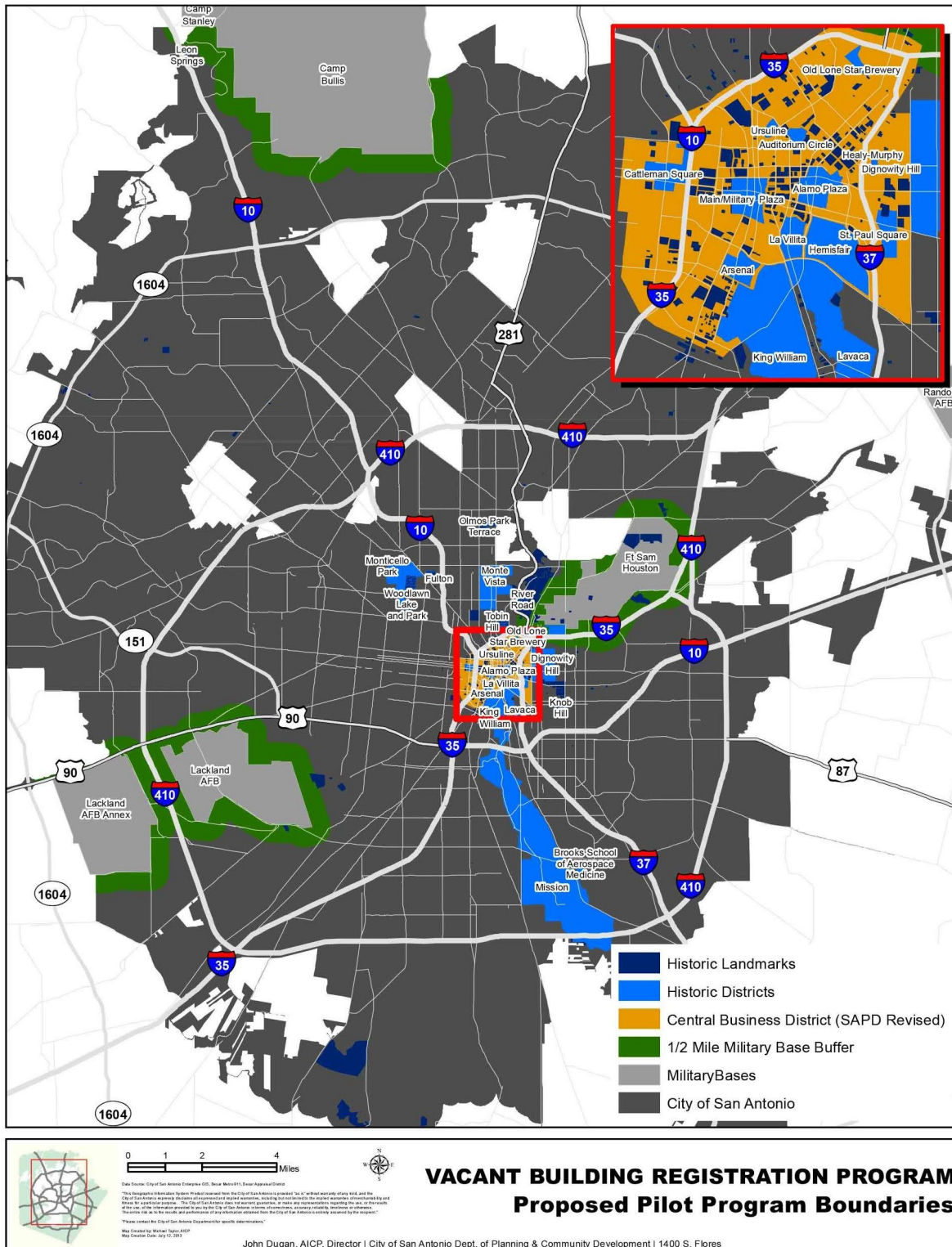
Figure 2: Vacant Building Registration Program Proposed Pilot Program Boundaries. John Dugan, AICP, Director City of San Antonio Dept. of Planning and Community Development. July 12, 2013.
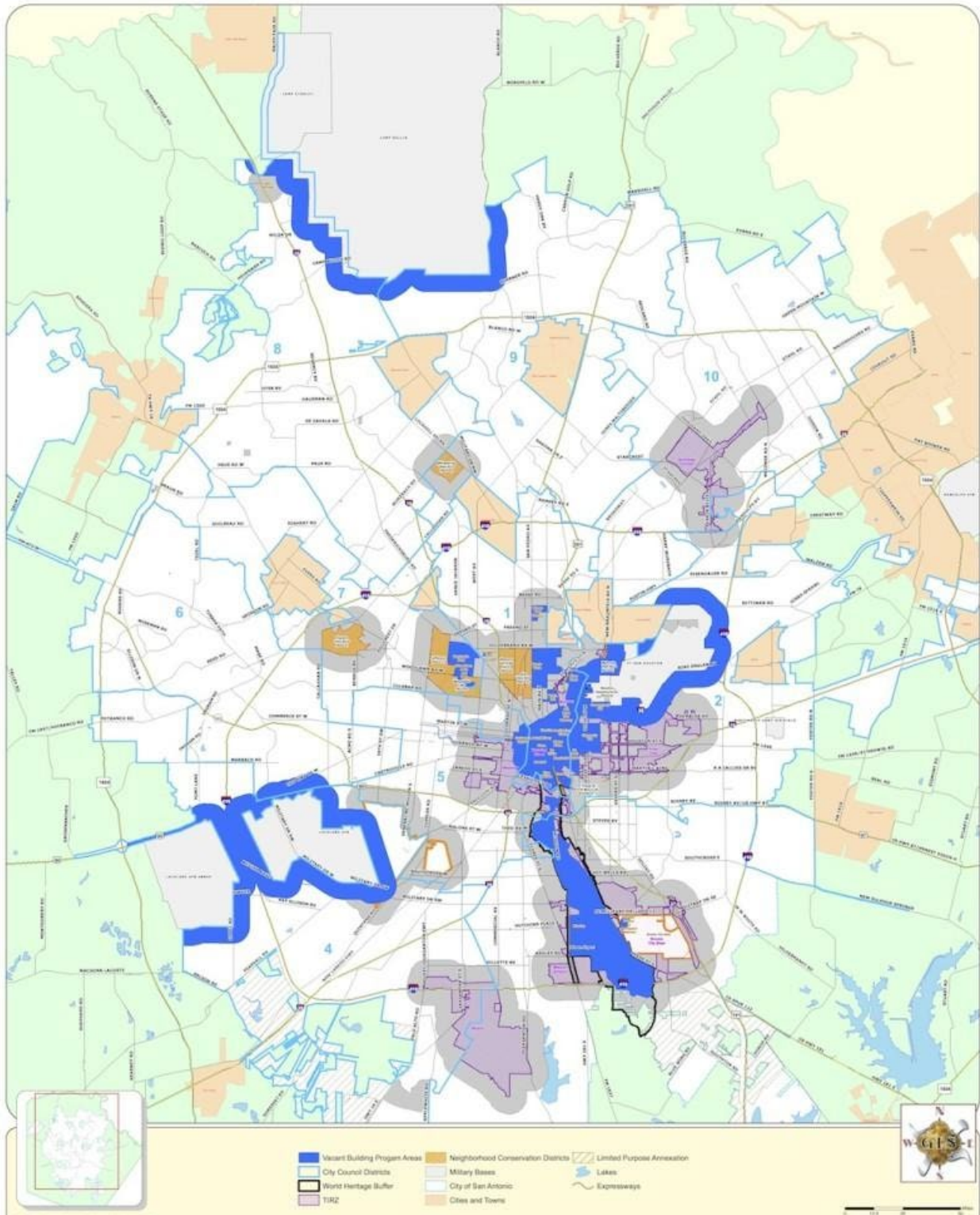
Figure 3: City of San Antonio VBP-Phase I Expansion. Sm12209, City of San Antonio Information Technology Services Department GIS Public Services Division. July 2, 2016.

As of January 2020, the program now has a total of almost 800 properties registered with the city (Figure 4).
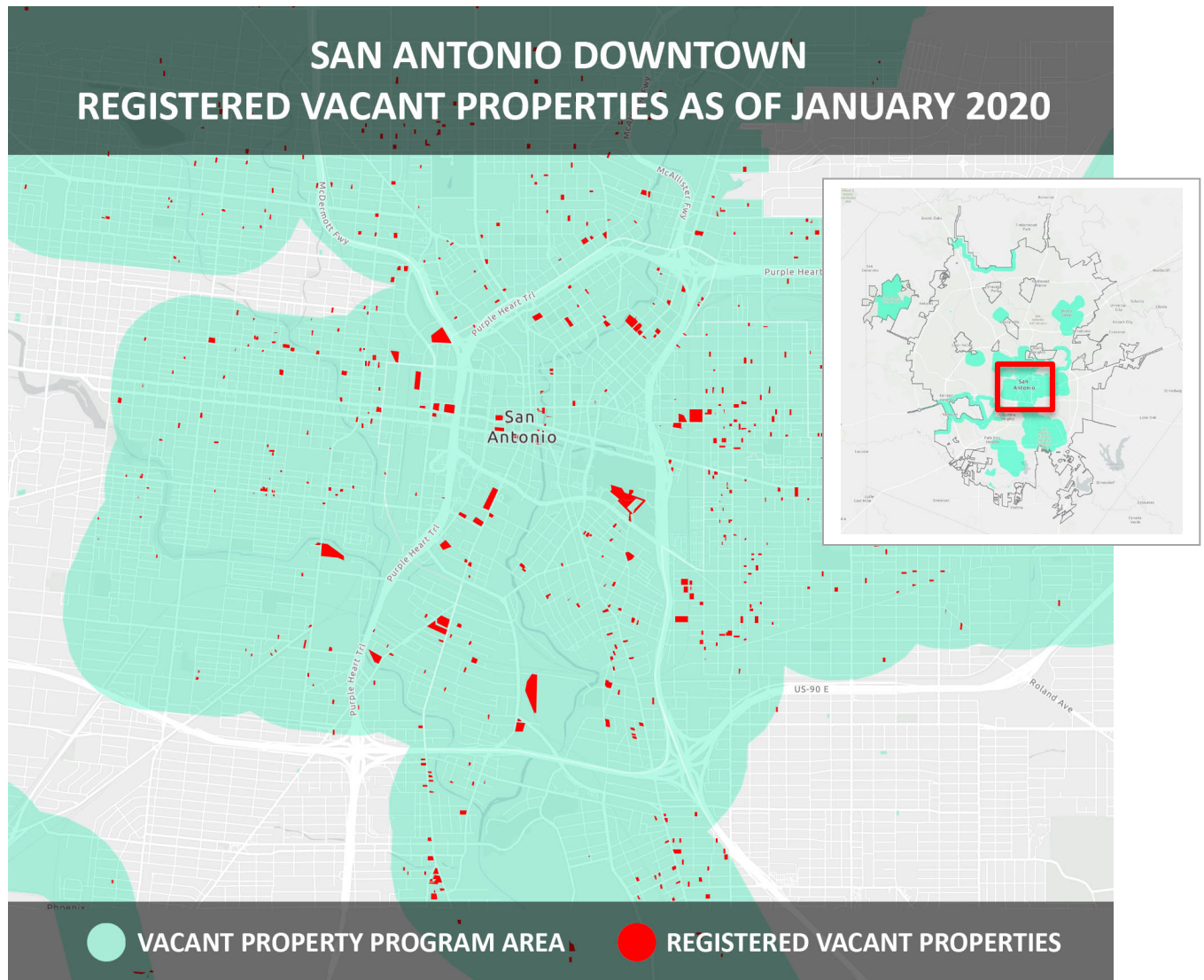
Figure 4: Registered Vacant Properties as of January 21, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Map created April 15, 2020 by Selina Angel

IMPACTS

Why is registering a vacant property important? As stated above, years can go by until something happens to a vacant building. What happens if a fire starts? Who is contacted? Who owns that empty building? The point of contact on a local deed record is insufficient information in the case of an emergency. Often, most property owners may not reside in the same county, city, state, or country. With registration into the VBP, a database is created and maintained not only with current owners' contact information but the name, phone number, and address of a designated agent, residing in Bexar county. The agent is selected by the property owner and is responsible for and accepting of legal services (COSA, 2014).

SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES | **NON-SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTIES**

SINGLE-FAMILY PROPERTIES: 12%, 88%
NON-SINGLE FAMILY PROPERTIES: 14%, 86%

■ Local Property Owners ■ Non-local Property Owners
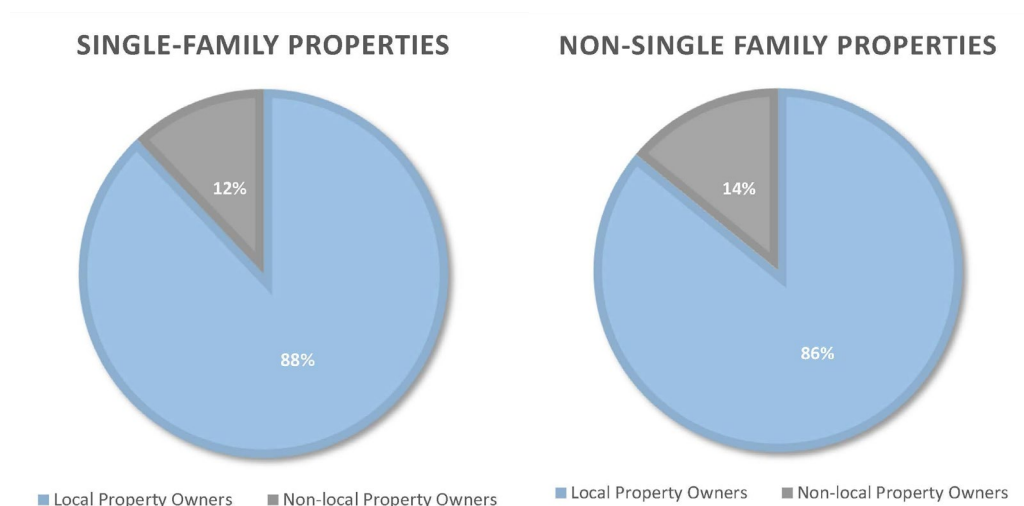
Figure 5: Single-Family and Non-Single-Family Properties. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Pie charts created by Selina Angel March 8, 2020.

Surprisingly, San Antonio's VBP has a low number of non-local property owners. According to Anitra Henning, a Senior Management Analyst for the Vacant Building Registration Program at San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation, only 12% of single-family properties and 14% of non-single-family properties are owned by people that do not reside in San Antonio. This is a positive! Having most vacant property owners living within the city increases the chances that an owner will act once notified. It also makes communication between the citizens and the city easier, and the process runs smoother.

VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM PROCESS

What is the process for the VBP? First, we must understand the definition of a vacant building. Written in Chapter 12 of San Antonio's City Code, a "vacant structure means that all lawful activity has ceased, or reasonably appears to have ceased for thirty (30) days." (COSA, 2016).

Who determines if a property is vacant? Residents in the area can notify the city if a property seems to be vacant either in person, by phone (the 311 Customer Service Office), or via the online form on the VBP's city website. VBP staff or any other city employee can determine if a property is vacant through research and field studies. Once information is received for a potential vacant building, VBP staff then examines the property by searching for records that include deeds, recent water bills, electric bills, and property taxes. A site visit is also necessary in order to confirm vacancy and rank the severity and threat of the vacant building. After 30 days of research, a notice of registration is sent out to the property owner. The owner then has 90 days to register their property. Registration includes a registration form, a trespass affidavit, floor plans, and proof of liability.

When filling out a registration form, a plan of action also must be submitted. The plan of action must provide a timeline that details how the current violations on the property are to be fixed, how the property will meet the minimum standards of care, the measures of maintenance while vacant, and a detailed plan on the rehabilitation of the building and its future use (COSA, 2020). The Trespass Affidavit allows the San Antonio Police Department to make arrests to anyone who trespasses on the property when a property owner is not on the premises (COSA, 2020). "Private Property" signs must be posted on the lot (Figure 6).

NO TRESPASSING

THIS PROPERTY IS REGISTERED WITH THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO VACANT BUILDING REGISTRATION PROGRAM
ORD. 19-0461

REMOVING OR VANDALIZING THIS PLACARD IS PUNISHABLE BY LAW

Property Owner or Agent:_____

Phone Number:_____

City of San Antonio | Office of Historic Preservation

Figure 6: No Trespass Place Card. City of San Antonio Office of Historic Preservation. March 2. 2015.

Security services may be necessary per the director of the VBP. For commercial properties a Proof of liability insurance is necessary, "no less than one hundred thousand dollars" according to the City of San Antonio's Code of Ordinances. For residential properties, proof of liability insurance is not needed. A floor plan, for both residential and non-residential properties, is also required, either drawn professionally (architectural drawings) or hand drawn. Registration fees consist of $250 for single family homes and $750 for non-single families (COSA, 2020). The city does provide waivers for these fees in the instance that the property has experienced damage from a fire or flood, if the property owner is suffering from financial hardships, defined as "indigent", if a property owner is deceased and is being represented by someone else, or if the vacant property is actively in the process of preparing the building for occupancy, with proof of a building permit (COSA, 2020). A one-hundred-dollar discount is possible if all registration work is submitted in its entirety within forty-five days of the initial registration notice from the city (Municode, 2014).

The Office of Historic Preservation does not intend for the VBP to be a burden on property owners. The program is lenient by providing fee waivers and extensions for registration. According to a 2019 VBP PowerPoint presentation given by Kathy Rodriguez, a Deputy Historic Preservation Officer for the program, the program assists with marketing properties for lease or sale, connects property owners with resources and programs, facilitates action by first responders in case of an emergency and creates a network for owners (Rodriguez, 2019).

Once registration is completed a property owner is assigned to a case manager. The case manager helps guide owners to repair and occupy the building by helping with retrieving the appropriate permits, a Certificate of Appropriateness and notifying the property owner of available incentives. Throughout the process of repair, if any is completed, inspections are done to monitor progress. Both residential and non-residential properties under 5,000 square feet require a $50 inspection fee. If a property is over 5,000 square feet, $0.01 per square foot over 5,000 is applied to the fee (COSA, 2020).

Every six months, the property owner's action plan must be updated until the property meets the minimum standards of care. If a property owner fails to make changes to their building, a "written notice of violation will precede the issuance of a criminal citation, in which the vacant property owner will be given a reasonable length of time, as determined by the director, to remedy the violation." The violation is registered as a Class C misdemeanor with a fine that is not to exceed five hundred dollars (Municode, 2014). Owners also may be taken to municipal court that could result in a sentencing agreement to repair the vacant building per judge's order.

As stated above, the VBP is understanding and flexible. If a property owner is actively working on their property, fee waivers will be given, and once a property is listed for rent or sale, registration extensions are issued.

Property owners are removed from the program in the event of four situations; a property becomes occupied, a property is sold, a property is rehabilitated, or a property is demolished. Demolition should be the last option, according to Anitra Henning, and there are multiple incentives for alternative solutions that the Office of Historic Preservation highly recommends.

SOLUTIONS AND INCENTIVES FOR VACANT BUILDINGS

What resources can the City of San Antonio provide to help a homeowner revive a vacant building? Since the VBP falls within the historic districts of San Antonio, there are incentives for rehabilitation through local programs, such as a local tax exemption, that may be available to historic property owners. Substantial rehabilitation must be executed in order to claim this exemption which, according to the City of San Antonio's website, "includes improvements that extend the life of a building such as:

- Roof Work
- Foundation Work
- Siding Work
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- HVAC system work
- Other structural work
- Interior work"

Property taxes are frozen at pre-improvement value for up to ten years after rehabilitation (COSA, 2020). There is a 5 zero/5 fifty tax exemption that is available to commercial properties. Property taxes are not owed until after five years, and for the five years that follow, city taxes are assessed at 50% of the rehabilitated property appraisal (Clites, 2017). The Conservation Society of San Antonio, a community preservation group, also has a grant that typically funds $5,000 to the restoration or rehabilitation of either a residential or commercial building that is historic and is over 50 years old. The program has been available since the early 1990's and has granted more than $2.5 million dollars (The Conservation Society of San Antonio, 2020). The state gives a State Historic Preservation Tax Incentive if a building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and federal programs offer a Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit that can cover up to 10% for non-historic buildings (Texas Historical Commission, 2020).

Because the VBP covers areas outside of historic districts, there are other programs that the city has in place to help homeowners repair their building. There is the citywide Under 1 Roof Program that helps homeowners of a certain income "fully replace worn and damaged roofs with new, energy-efficient asphalt shingle roofs" (COSA Neighborhood and Housing Services Department, 2019). District four and five share a Let's Paint program that assists with exterior paint and minor exterior repairs (COSA< 2000-2020). The Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation program is available once a vacant residential property becomes occupied. This provides homeowners "deferred forgivable loans to cover the cost of the needed repairs." The repairs must be of significant concern dealing with accessibility, health and safety. This program is also citywide (COSA, 2000-2020).

VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM HOT SPOTS

To determine what areas within the VBP are experiencing the highest level of vacancy, a heat map was created to identify hot spots (Figure 7). According to the map below, San Antonio's core has the most vacancies, within the VBP boundaries, specifically the East side of downtown. This can be seen in bright yellow on the map.

Figure 7: Vacant Property Heat Map as of January 21, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Map created April 15, 2020 by Selina Angel

Focusing on the central and east side of the previous map, the next heat map shows what neighborhood associations have the highest number of vacancies. Dignowity Hill has one of the highest densities of vacant buildings, according to the map below. This neighborhood will be the focus of this study. Why is it that Dignowity Hill is experiencing such a high level of abandonment in building stock?
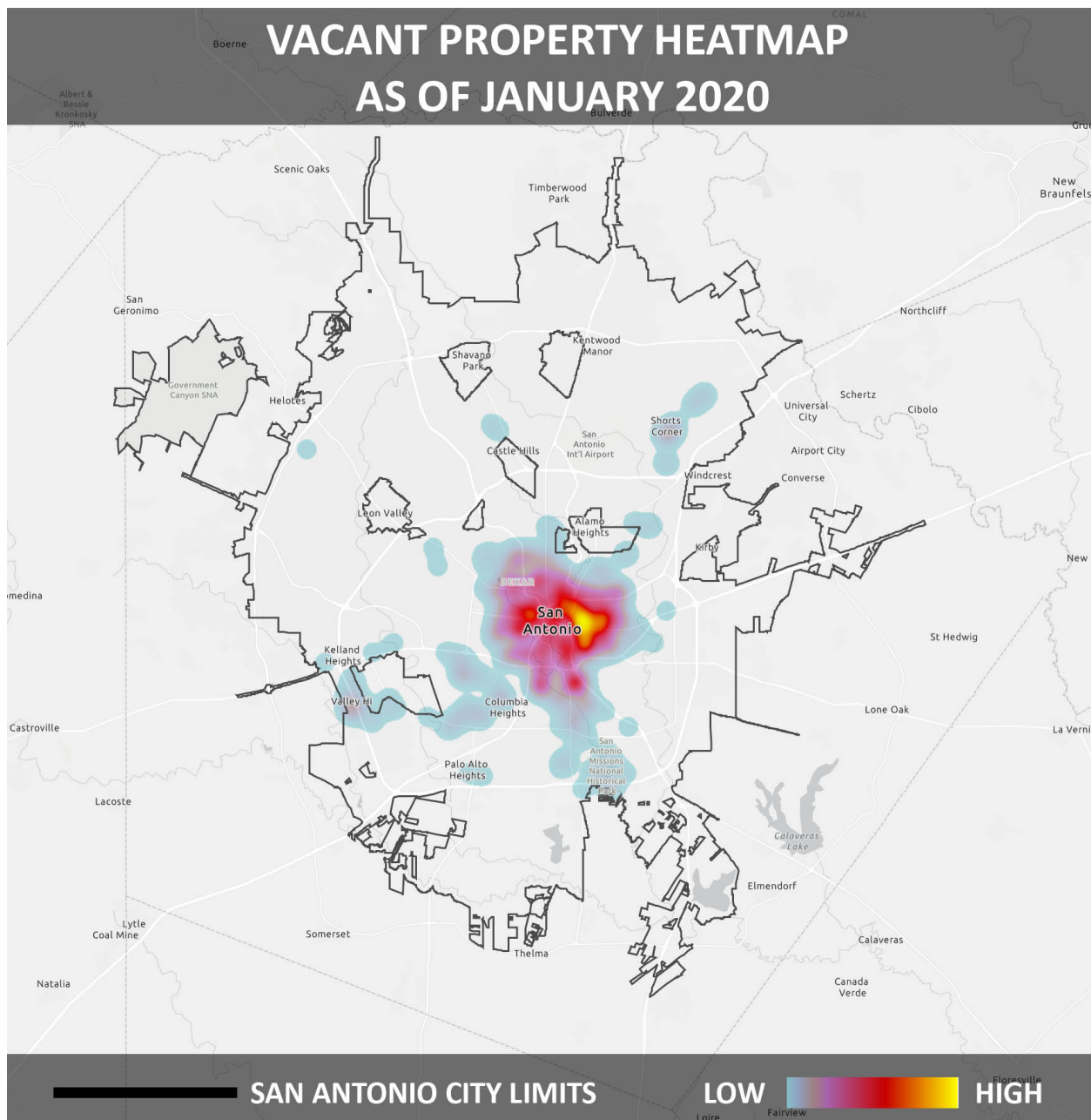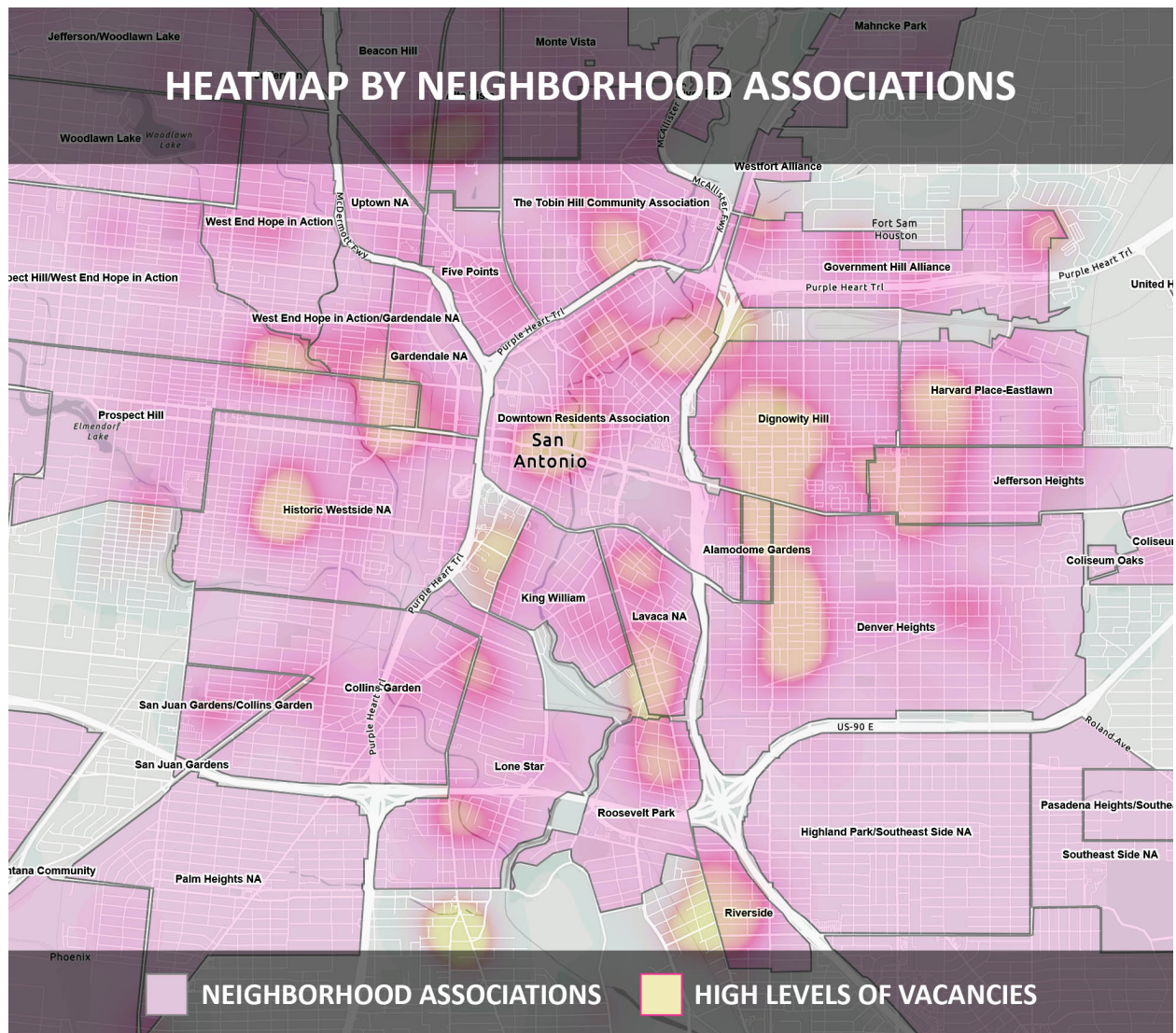

Figure 8: Heat Map by Neighborhood Associations as of January 21, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program and CoSAGIS_Opendata Neighborhood Associations. Map created April 15, 2020 by Selina Angel

DIGNOWITY HILL

HISTORY

To understand the current state of Dignowity Hill, one must examine the history of the neighborhood and how it came to be. Named after a Czech-American writer, public official, abolitionist, and physician, Dr. Anthony Michael Dignowity immigrated to the United States in 1831 to volunteer in San Antonio for the Mexican War (Garcia, 1997-2020). He built his house in what is now Dignowity Park around the 1850's, making it, according to the Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association, the "first exclusive residential area in San Antonio, preceding King William and Laurel Heights. Due to its high elevation, proximity to downtown, the size of the lots, and the lack of water, which required residents to construct large water collecting systems, Dignowity Hill began as an upper-class residential area." (Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association, 2020). The area attracted prominent business owners and merchants. Large estates, often two-story homes, were built on lots that plotted out to be an entire block.

Figure 9: South elevation of "Harmony House," former residence of Dr. Anthony Dignowity, Nolan and N. Olive Streets, on Dignowity Hill. Source: Zintgraff Studio Photographic Collection, MS 355, University of Texas at San Antonio Libraries Special Collections

A change in the neighborhood occurred after the landmark United States Supreme Court case, Shelley vs. Kraemer, which found that the "enforcements of the racially restrictive covenants in the state court violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment." (Oyez, 2020). As a result, Dignowity Hill began attracting families of all races and ethnicities into the neighborhood. The oldest black congregation in San Antonio was founded in 1866. St. Paul United Methodist Church was established by freed slaves and is today considered, according to an article by Robert Rivard, "the mother of all African-American churches in San Antonio." (Rivard, 2015).

As the Southern Pacific Railroad arrived, in 1877, the neighborhood saw its second change in demographics with a booming population. The development of the streetcar trolley line also dramatically increased the population in 1891, along with new sewer and water lines that extended into the neighborhood in 1903 (Berger, 2019). Substandard housing formed in the neighborhood, bringing industry workers along the way. Wealthy families began to move away to newer elite neighborhoods and sold off their land, subdividing their property into smaller lots in the 1920's. By the 1930's a transformation from grand estates to small Craftsman Bungalows and Folk Victorian-style houses was visible (Dignowity Hill Neighborhood Association, 2020). Most of the original homes that created the neighborhood had been demolished, including Dr. Dignowity's "Harmony House." It was not until the 1940's and 50's that the community decided to save the remaining character of the early 1900's (Unknown, 2008). However, by this time the construction of I-35 was taking place, cutting off the neighborhood, which soon slowly became forgotten from isolation. As another highway, U.S. 281 was completed in 1978, and it became yet another barrier to the community. The neighborhood was ignored and was left to a minority, mainly African Americans and Hispanics, to deal with the blight that was to come (Rivard, 2015).

ANALYSIS

To go more into depth of the neighborhood, an analysis was done researching the demographics and market of Dignowity Hill. Block groups were used as the geographic spatial scale in order to break down the neighborhood into smaller areas. There are five block groups within Dignowity Hill. The map to the right differentiates the five block groups by color: block group 1 being turquoise, block group 2 being light blue, block group 3 being orange, block group 4 being pink, and block group 5 being gray. These colors will remain the same for each block group throughout this paper and will be referenced in future charts, tables, and graphs.

DIGNOWITY HILL BY BLOCK GROUPS

DIGNOWITY HILL BOUNDARY

BLOCK 1   BLOCK 2   BLOCK 3   BLOCK 4   BLOCK 5
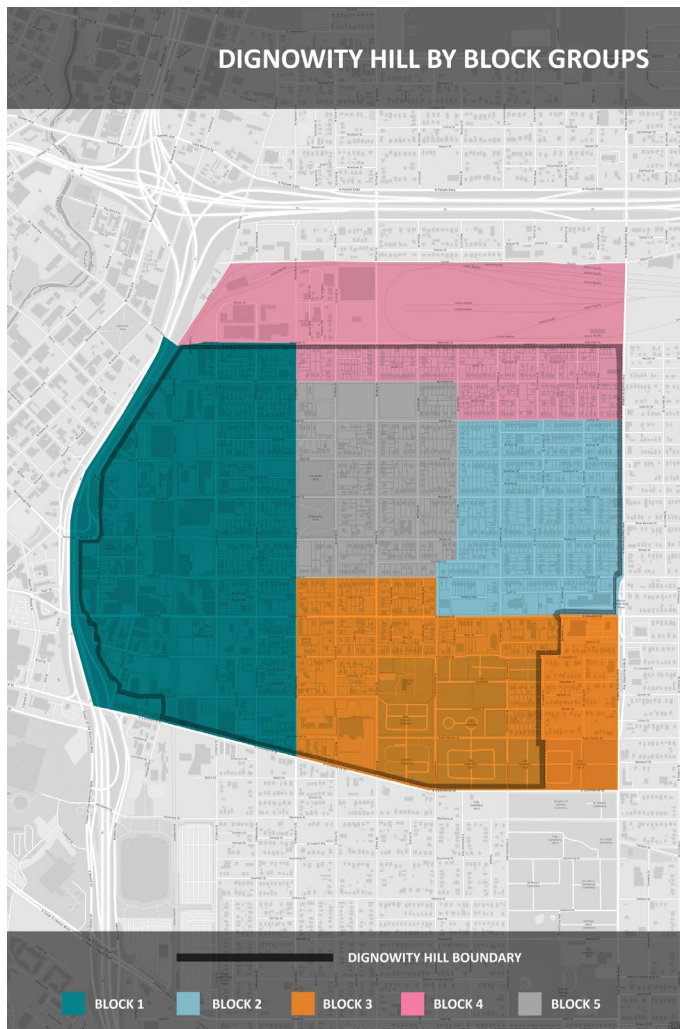
With these five block groups, the registered VBP breakdown can be seen below in Figure 11. Block 1 has the highest number of VBP registries (23), followed by Block 3 with 14 properties and Block 5 with 7 registered vacant properties. Block 2 and 4 both possess the lowest amount of vacant properties (4 each).

Figure 10: (To the left) Dignowity Hill by Block Groups. Data sourced from esri_demographics Popular Demographics in the United States. Map created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

Figure 11: (Below) Dignowity Hill Registered Properties in the Vacant Building Program by Block Groups. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 22, 2020.

DIGNOWITY HILL REGISTERED PROPERTIES IN THE VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM BY BLOCK GROUPS

Block 1   Block 2   Block 3   Block 4   Block 5

23   14   7   4   4
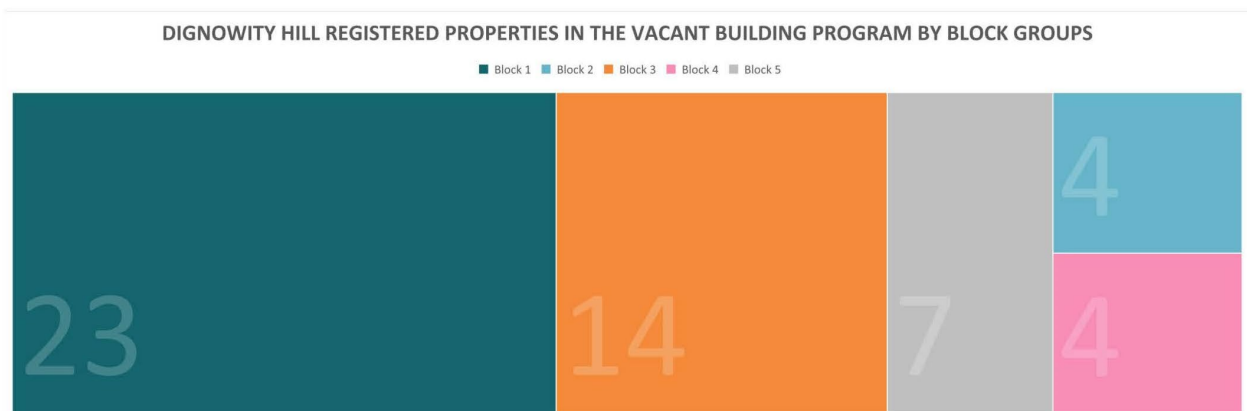
HOUSING DATA

Housing data was collected from the NHGIS website for the years 2014 and 2018. This includes data for Housing Units, Housing Unit Vacancies, Year Structure Built, and Occupancy Status for Dignowity Hill by Block groups. These results show the market of Dignowity Hill and how it has changed within the four years (2014-2018) since the VBP was created.

OCCUPANCY STATUS

Overall, the Occupancy status in Dignowity Hill has stayed the same from 2014 to 2018. Compared to the City of San Antonio, Occupancy status has also stayed consistent in the four-year span. However, when focusing on Dignowity Hill, the neighborhood has double the vacancy rate compared to the city of San Antonio as a whole. This can be seen in the charts below (Figure 12 and Figure 13).
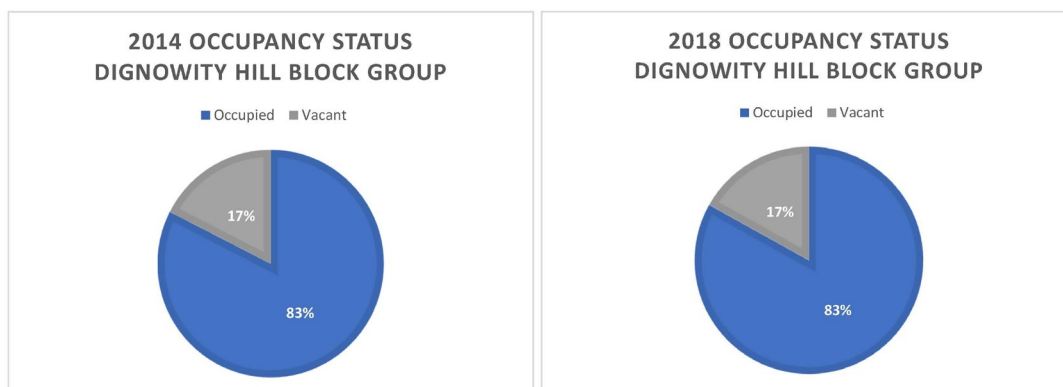
Figure 12: 2014 and 2018 Occupancy Status Dignowity Hill Block Group Dignowity Hill. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Tenure, for the years 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 10, 2020.

Figure 13: 2014 and 2018 San Antonio Occupancy Status. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Tenure, for the years 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 10, 2020.
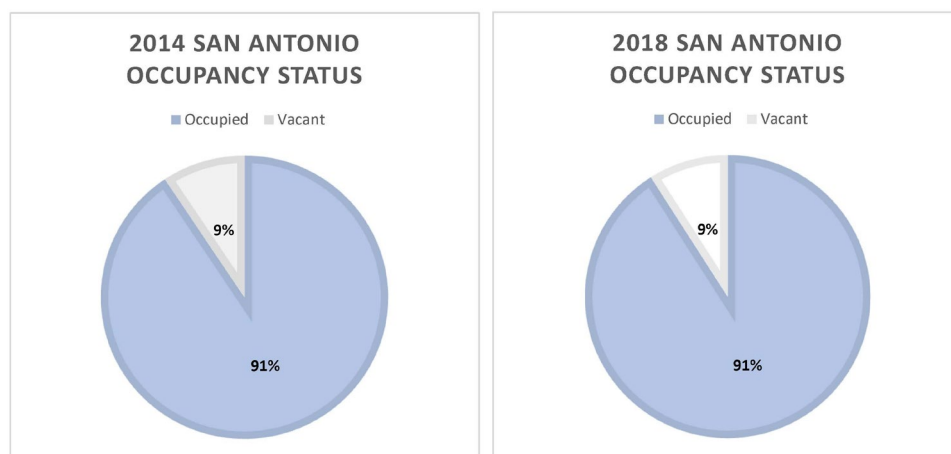
HOUSING UNITS

According to the chart below (Figure 14), Block 1 has always had the most amount of housing units. This may be the reason why this area of Dignowity Hill has the most amount of registered vacancies. The same can be said for Block Group 4. It has had the least amount of housing units in 2014 and 2018, making it the Block group with the least amount of registered vacancies as well. Although this correlation can be seen with Block 1 and 5, the same cannot be said with the rest of the block groups. It is strange that Block 3 has had a decline in housing units, from 408 to 297, but has the 2nd highest amount of vacancies in Dignowity Hill. Block 2 and 5 are also similar in housing units but block group 5 has double the number of registered vacancies than block group 2.

Figure 14: Housing Units. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Housing Units, for the years 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 22, 2020.

HOUSING UNIT VACANCIES

Because only registered vacant properties and not all vacant properties are listed in the VBP, data was collected from the NHGIS website on housing unit vacancies for each block group in the study area of Dignowity Hill. NHGIS data provides a more comprehensive source to understand the vacant building problem. Figure 15 below shows that Block 1 has the highest number of vacancies in both 2014 and 2018. It has only dropped by 4 properties within 4 years. Block 5 had the lowest number of vacancies in 2014, with 6 properties, but in 2018 has almost seven times the amount, with 41 properties. Block 2 and 3 have experienced a decline in the number of vacancies, while block 4 has seen an increase in vacancies. Comparing this to the VBP registered properties, Block 1 has the most properties registered, which corresponds to the chart below but it's the other block groups that do not relate. Block 3 has the

second-highest amount of registered vacant properties in the VBP. In 2014 Block 3 also had the second highest amount of properties according to NHGIS data. Nevertheless, in 2018, this is not the case. Block group 3 housing unit vacancies fell to almost half of what it was in 2014. This could be due to the high amount of properties registered in this block group that has been successfully revitalized. Block 5 had the third-highest amount of vacant properties registered, but there were only 6 housing unit vacancies in 2014. Interestingly enough, in 2018, the housing unit vacancy skyrocketed in block group 5.
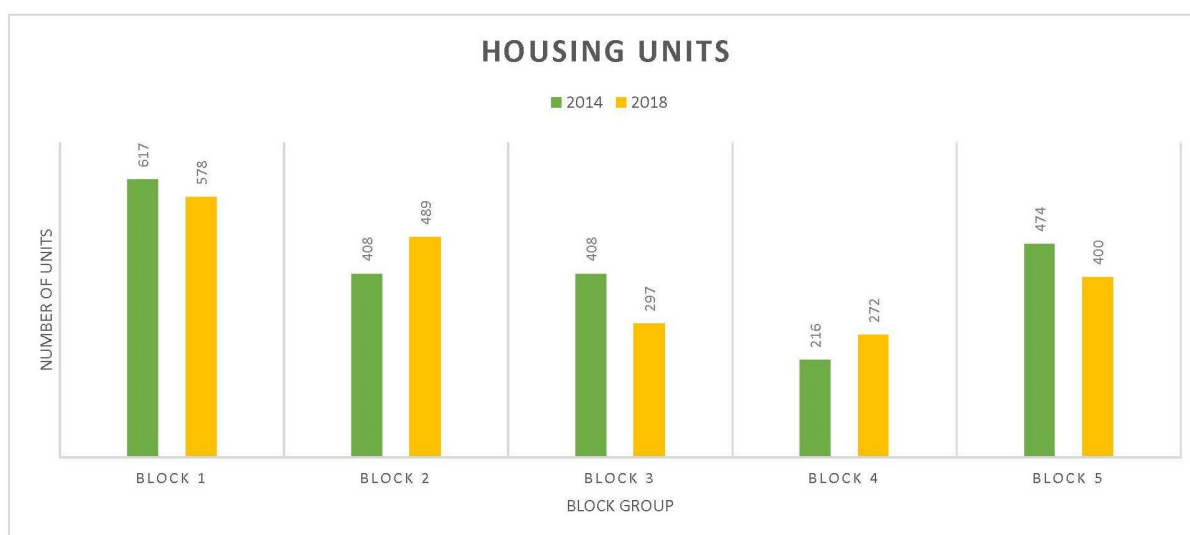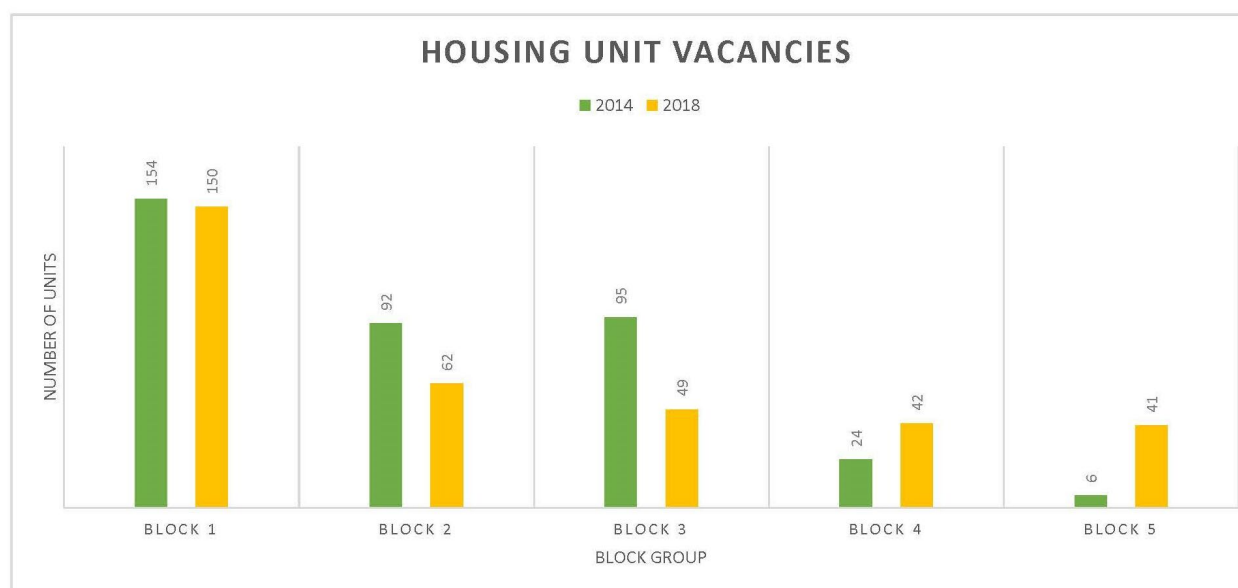

Figure 15: Housing Unit Vacancies. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Occupancy Status, for the years 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 22, 2020.

YEAR BUILT

As stated above in the background information of Dignowity Hill, most buildings were built in 1939 or earlier. Based on the Year Built data below, collected from the NHGIS website, Block 1 has seen the highest number of structures added in the most recent years. Between 2010 and 2013, Block 1 was the only block group that had 27 new structures built. Block 1 has also had the highest amount of new structures built in 2000-2009, 1990-1999, 1980-1989, and 1950-1959. This could be due to the proximity to San Antonio's downtown core. Block group 2, the furthest away from downtown, has not had a new structure built from 1990-1999. Block 3's 20 most recent structures were built between 2000 and 2009, with 9 properties before that added in 1980-1989 and the rest of Block 3's housing stock being before the 1970's. Block 4 had 30 of its newest properties in 2000-2009, a thirty-year gap from the 21 additional properties between 1970-1979. Most of Block 5's property was built pre-1939, with a few new additions from 1940-1969. New stock was not added until 1990-1999, with 8 new properties and then in the years 2000-2009, 103 new buildings were built in block group 5.

YEAR STRUCTUE BUILT

Block 1 ■ Block 2 ■ Block 3 ■ Block 4 ■ Block 5

	2014 or Later	2010-2013	2000-2009	1990-1999	1980-1989	1970-1979	1960-1969	1950-1959	1940-1949	1939 or Earlier
Block 1	0	27	245	27	45	0	0	41	18	175
Block 2	0	0	0	24	23	26	34	17	98	267
Block 3	0	0	20	0	9	0	48	31	56	133
Block 4	0	0	30	0	0	21	21	8	42	150
Block 5	0	0	103	8	0	0	10	15	13	251

YEAR BUILT

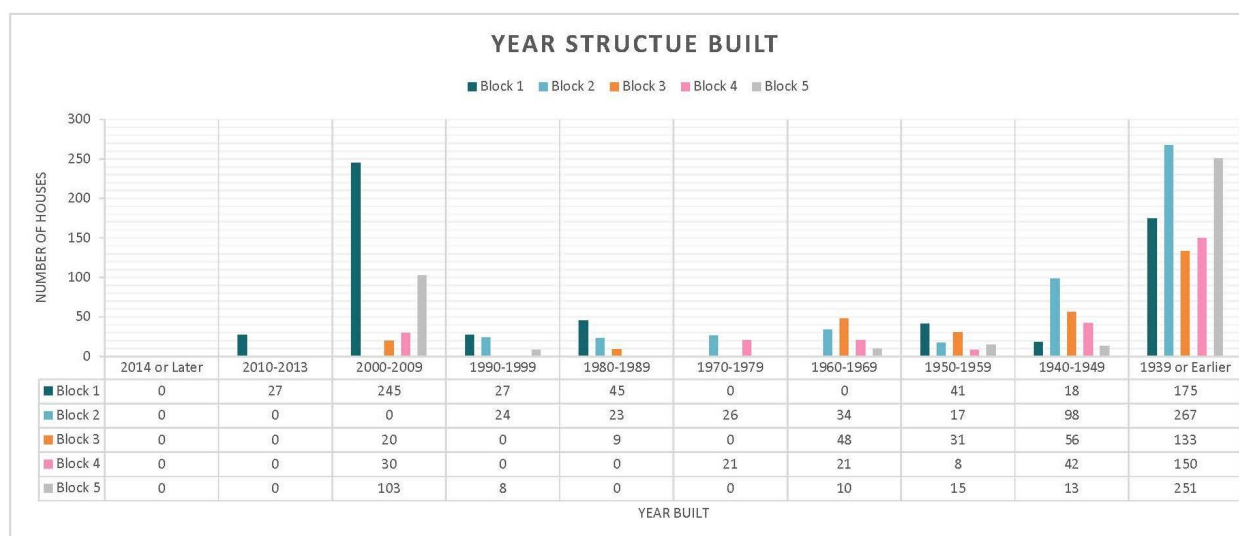**Figure 16:** Year Structure Built. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Year Structure Built, for the year 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 22, 2020.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Demographic data was also collected from the NHGIS website for the years 2014 and 2018. In some cases, 1990, 2000, and 2010 data was collected to analyze the demographic status of Dignowity Hill before the VBP. This includes data for Population, Race, Gender, Age, Educational Attainment, and Household Median Income by Block groups. These results show a demographic change of Dignowity Hill within the four years (2014-2018).

POPULATION

Population data was collected from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems (NHGIS) site for the years 1990, 2000, and 2010. These timeframes show a consistent gap that often depicts significant change, if any, over time. These decades also show a period before the VBP. The year 2014 is also included in the graph below because this was the year the VBP was launched. To analyze the current status of Dignowity Hill, the most recent data was retrieved for the year 2018. The chart below (Figure 17) shows that each block group has held a consistent population, with an exception in the year 2014, where there was a spike in population in block 5 and smaller gains within block 1 and 3. Block 2 and 4 experienced a decline in population. Move forward to the year 2018, and the opposite has happened. The population of the blocks that rose in population in 2014 (1, 3, and 5) have all fallen and the other blocks (2 and 4) have risen. When comparing the population to the registered vacant buildings blocks 1, 3, and 5 have the most registered vacant properties, and in 2014, the first year of the VBP, these blocks saw a rise in population, 2018 shows that blocks 1,3, and 5

population strangely decreased four years later. Block 2 and 4 have the least vacant properties and have seen an increase in population in 2018.
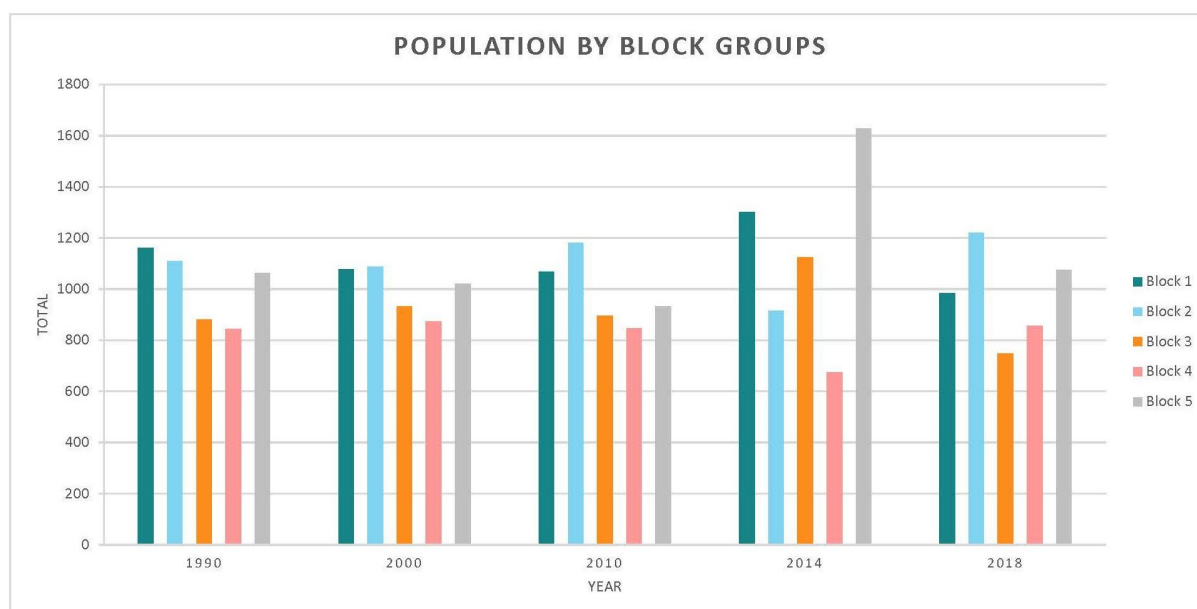

Figure 17: Population by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Total Population, for the years 1990, 2000, 2010, 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

RACE/ETHNICITY

Race was compared between the years 2014 and 2018. Data was collected from the NHGIS website. The charts below (Figure 18 and 19) show that Block 1 is becoming an equally divided part of the community amongst Whites, Black/African Americans, and Hispanics. Block 1 has also seen an increase in the Other race group. Interesting enough, Block 1 is the closest to San Antonio's downtown core and has the greatest number of vacant buildings registered. Block 2's Hispanic population has experienced an increase of 353 people while Block 3 has seen a decrease in its Hispanic population by 530 people. The opposite has happened with the Black/African American population where a decrease can be seen from 2014 to 2018 for Block 2, but an increase is seen in Block 3. Block 2 has also seen an increase in the Other race group. Block 4's population has decreased in all race groups, but the Hispanic population, which gained 100 people. Block 5 experienced the most significant decrease in the Hispanic population by 548 people and in the Black/African American population, by 118 people. One thing that was discovered is that there seems to be a geographic shift in the Hispanic population. The Hispanic population is moving into blocks 2 and 4, areas further away from San Antonio's downtown core. This could be due to the high amount of vacant buildings that are in blocks 1,3 and 5 that are either being purchased,

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renovated, and sold at a higher price, which raises property values and eventually pushes out people who can no longer afford it.
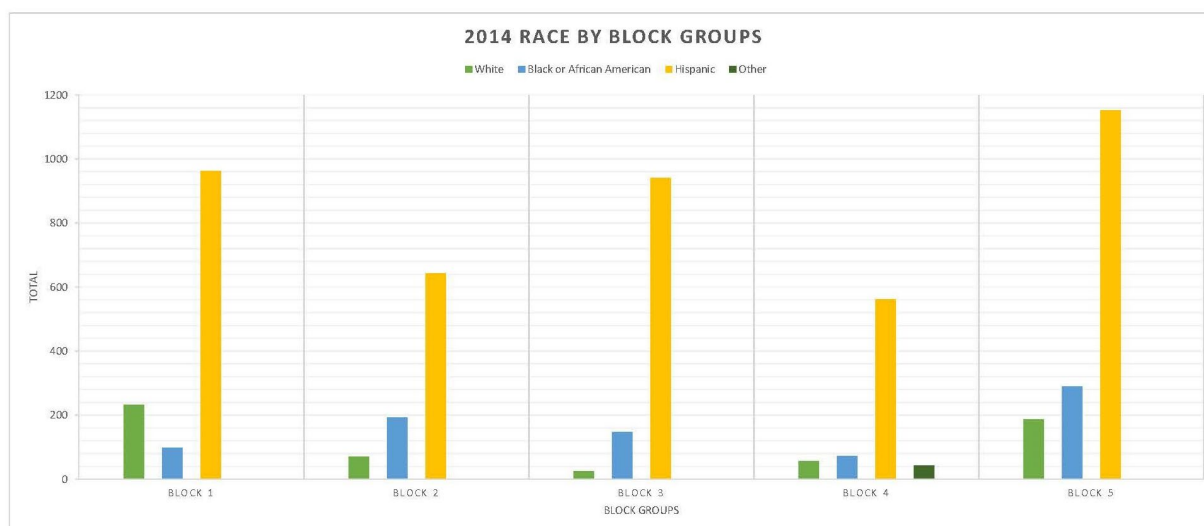
Figure 18: 2014 Race by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race, for the years 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.
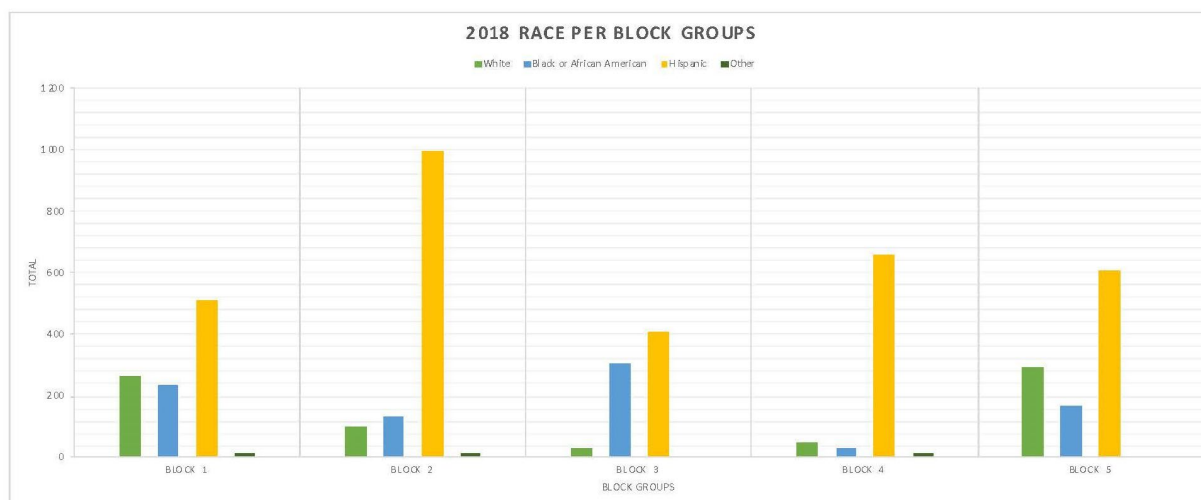
Figure 19: 2018 Race by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Race and Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race, for the years 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

AGE AND GENDER

A simple gender comparison between blocks was analyzed from 2014 to 2018 (Figure 20 and Figure 21). Although there is no correlation between gender and vacancies, there are changes in all block groups except block 3. Block 1 and 5 have seen an increase in the female population and a decrease in the male population, while block 2 and 4 have seen the opposite -- an increase in the male population and a decrease in

the female population. As stated before, blocks 2 and 4 are the furthest away from the downtown core. Could it be that more females are moving into areas that are becoming "revitalized" while the males are moving away? Or does revitalization attract more females than males?

Figure 20: 2014 Gender by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020
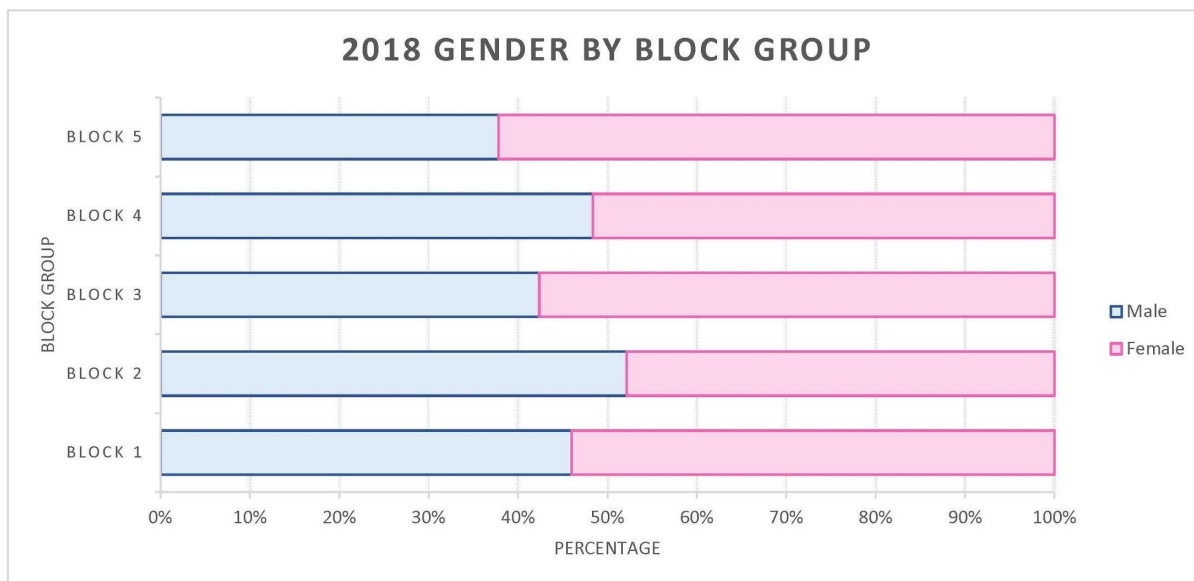
Figure 21: 2018 Gender by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

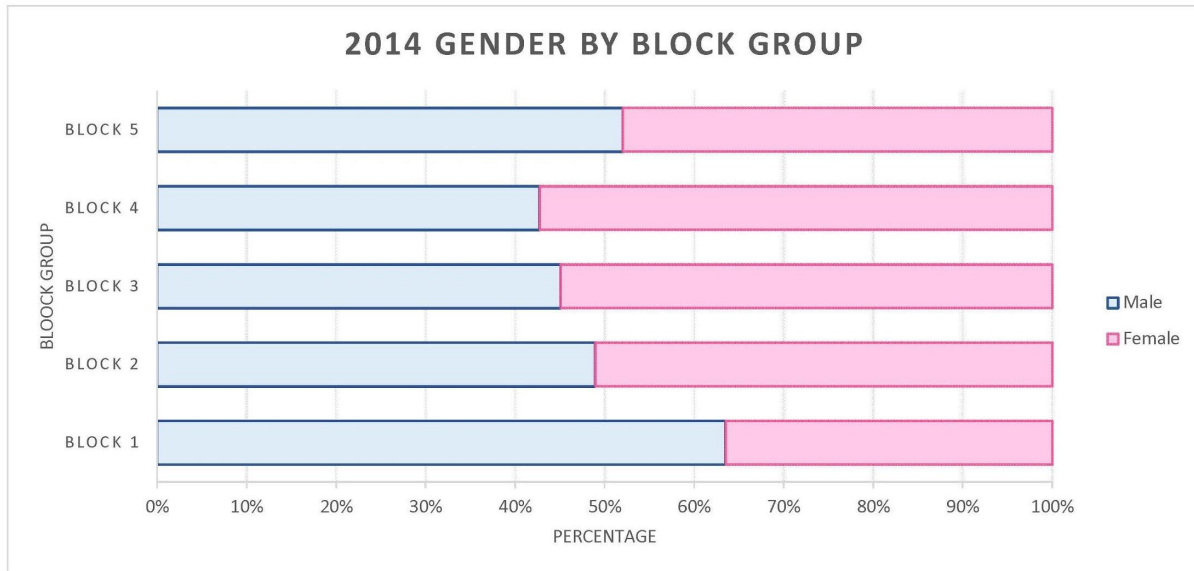Gender was broken down even further, by age per block group (Figure 22 and Figure 23). In block 2014, Block group 1 had a much older male population, 60-64 being the highest percentage. In 2018 all-male age groups between 25 years and 65+ had shrunk in percentage. Male ages 10-24 have entirely disappeared while the 0-9 male age group has stayed consistent. Block 2 has gone from a young adult male population to an equally dispersed age male population, minus the 0-4 male age group, which has disappeared. In 2014 most of Block 3's male population consisted of ages 20-44. In 2018 most of the male population falls between the ages 24-29. There is a low percentage of the young and elderly. Block 4 is still seeing an evenly dispersed male population in the ages 30-65+ in 2014 and 2018 but there is a jump in the younger male population, ages 5-19. Every male age group in Block 5 has shrunk besides the 0-4 age group which has stayed consistent between 2014 and 2018. These results can be seen in the charts below.

Figure 22: 2014 Age of Males by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.
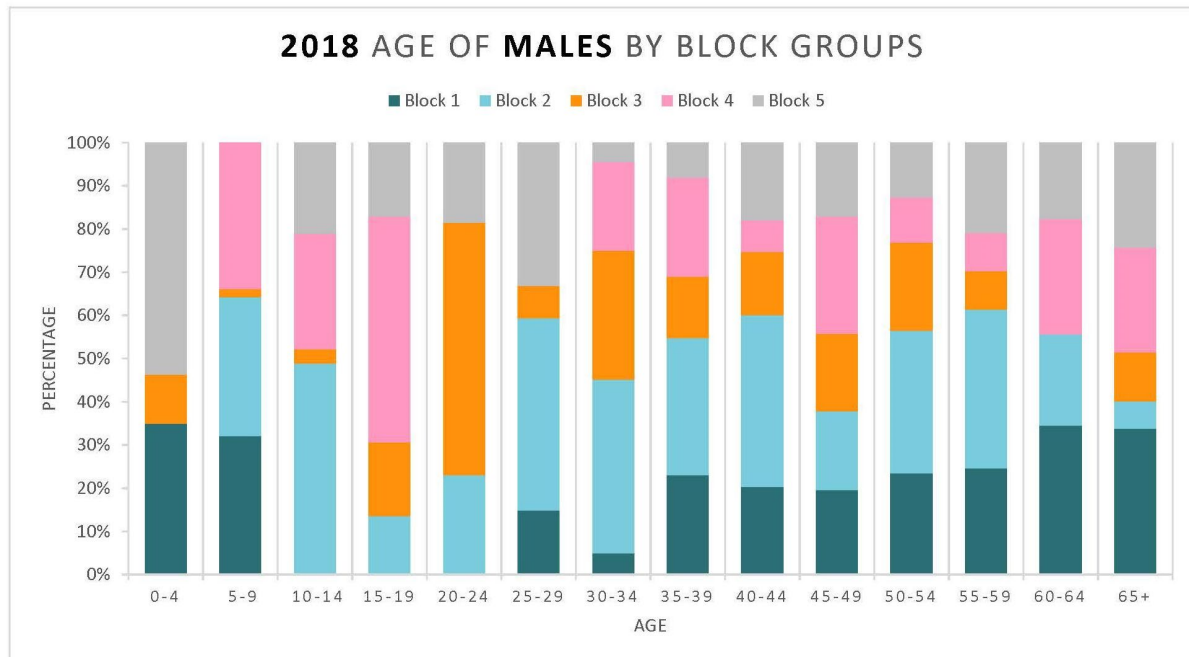
Figure 23: 2018 Age of Males by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

For the female age group analysis, seen in the following two figures below, in Block 1 the female age groups had most of the population in the 0-4 age group and 20-34. In 2018 the female age groups mainly consisted of the 39 and younger and there was a spike in the 55-59 age group. Block 2 was relatively dispersed in ages minus the absence of the 0-4 age group. In 2018 the 15-29 and 40 and over age group, excluding the 55-59 age group, have become the dominant female age groups in block 2. Block 3 did not have any females between the age of 30-39 in 2014 and the female population and in 2018 the 30-39 became the dominant age group. It should be noted that the female population percentage is shrinking in this block group. Block 4 had a high number of older females in 2014, in the 50-65 and over age group but the 5-19 and the 30-39 age group is now the majority in this block as the older generation is shrinking. Block group 5 seems to be slightly consistent between 2014 and 2018 minus the 10-14 and 35-39 age group, which completely disappeared.

Figure 24: 2014 Age of Females by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.
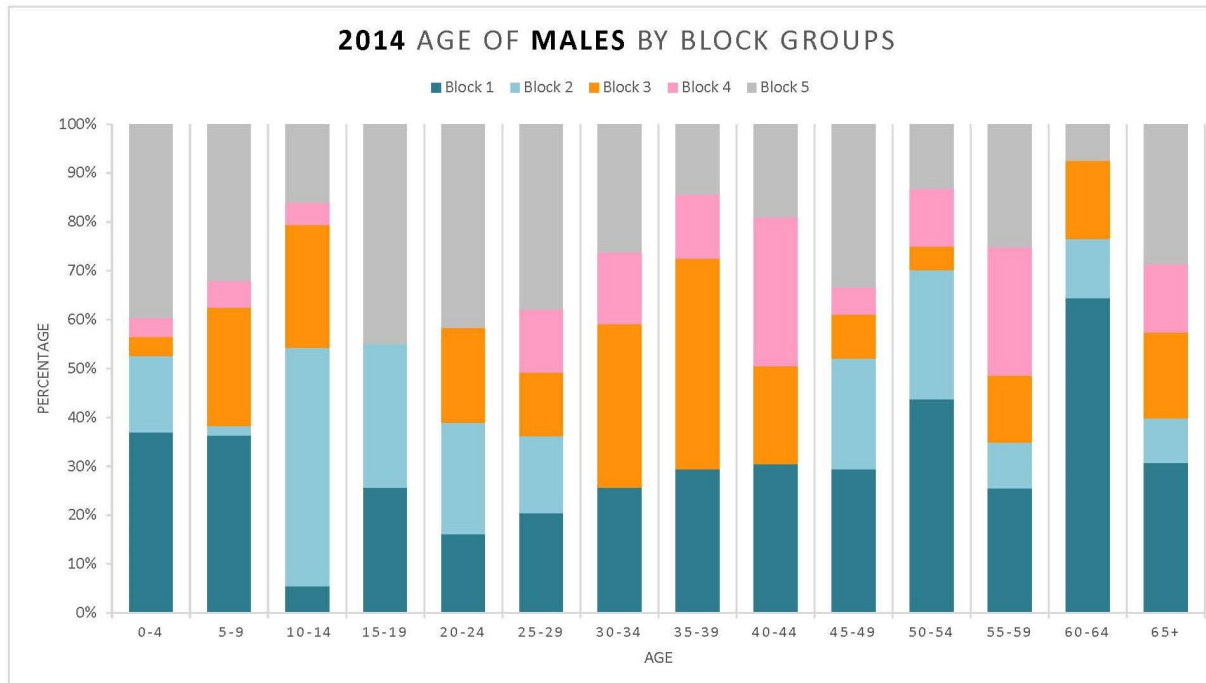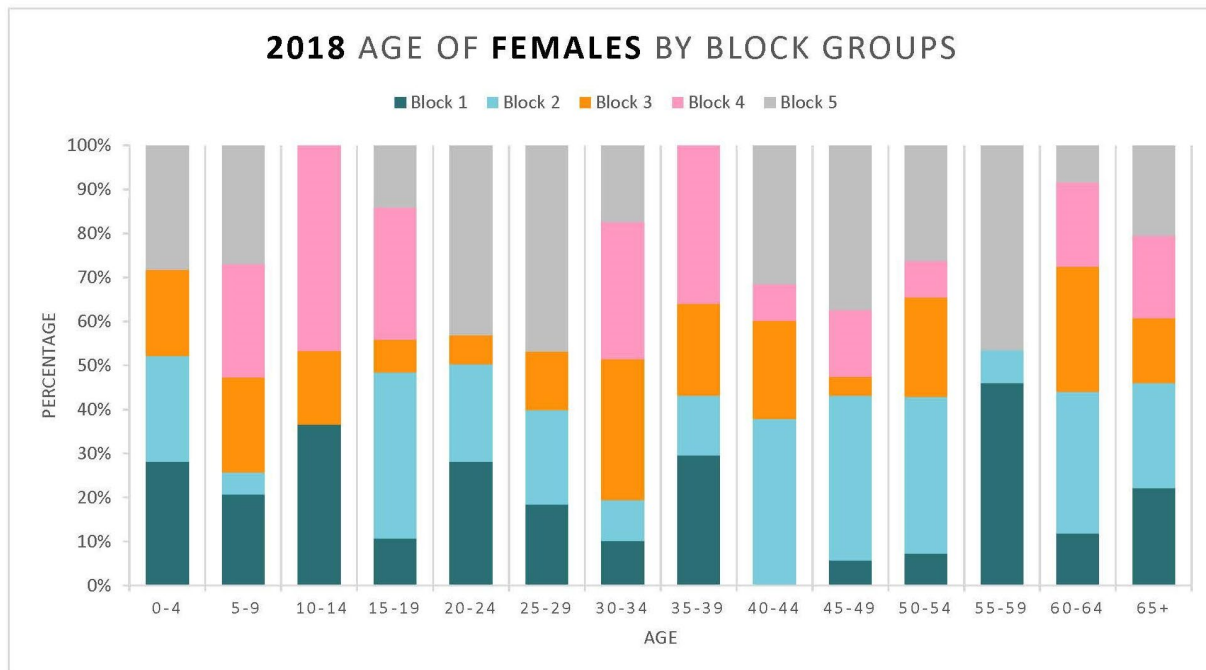

Figure 25: 2018 Age of Females by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

Combining both genders and focusing on the age groups as a whole, from the charts below (Figure 26 and 27), that Block 4 has seen an increase in the 5-19 and the 30-39 age group, Block 2 has grown in every age group except the 10-14. However, it still seems to have similar percentages to every other age group. The other age groups have not drastically changed in the four-year span. When comparing age groups to registered vacant properties, Block 2 and 4 are experiencing the most growth in all age groups. These blocks have the least amount of vacant properties.

Figure 26: 2014 Age by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

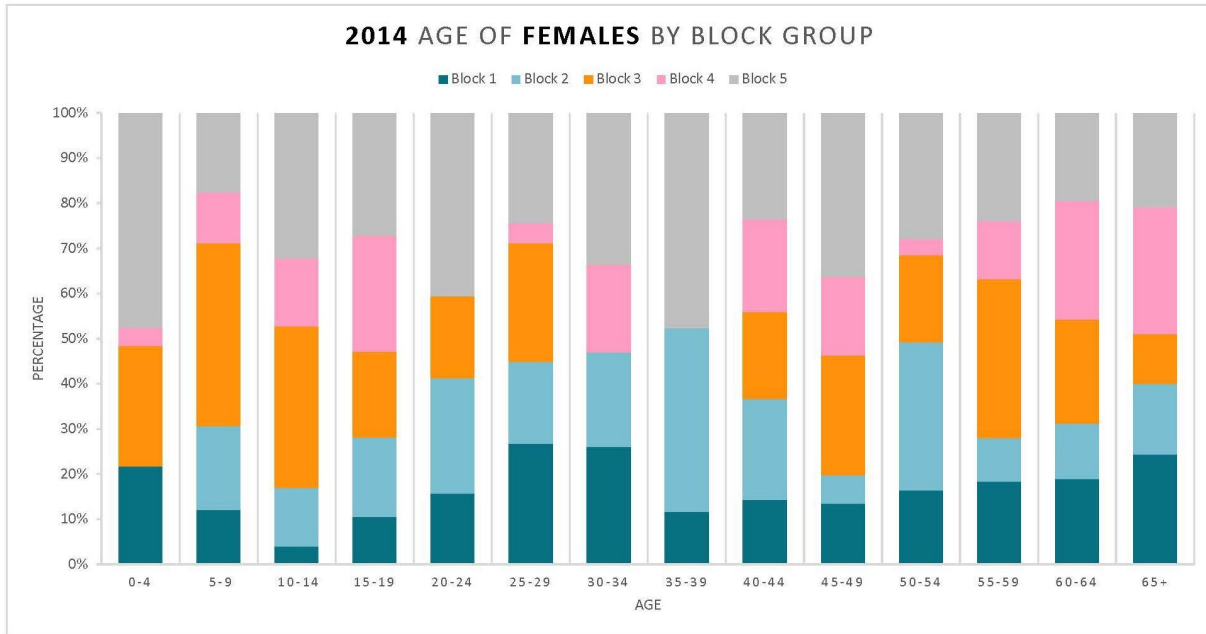**Figure 27:** 2018 Age by Block Groups. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Sex by Age, for the years 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.
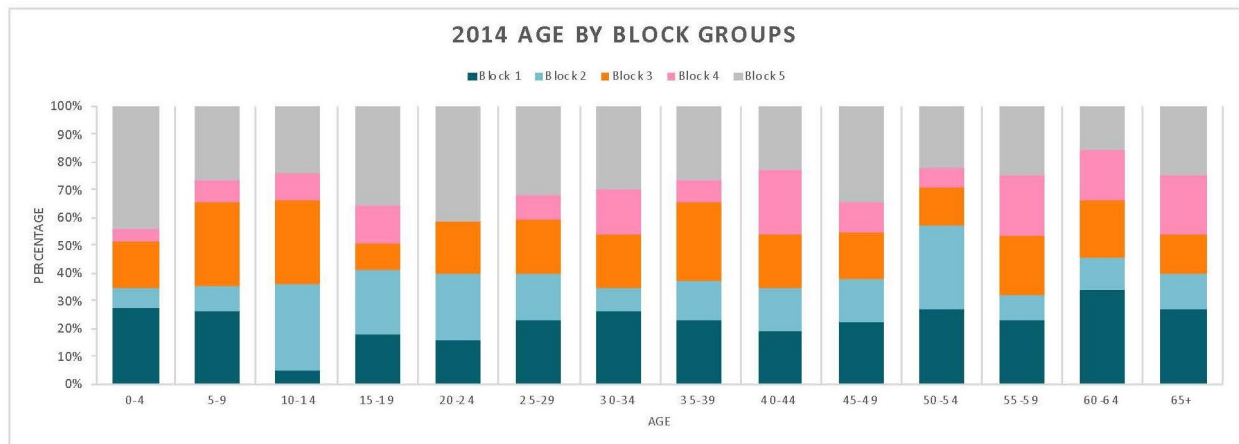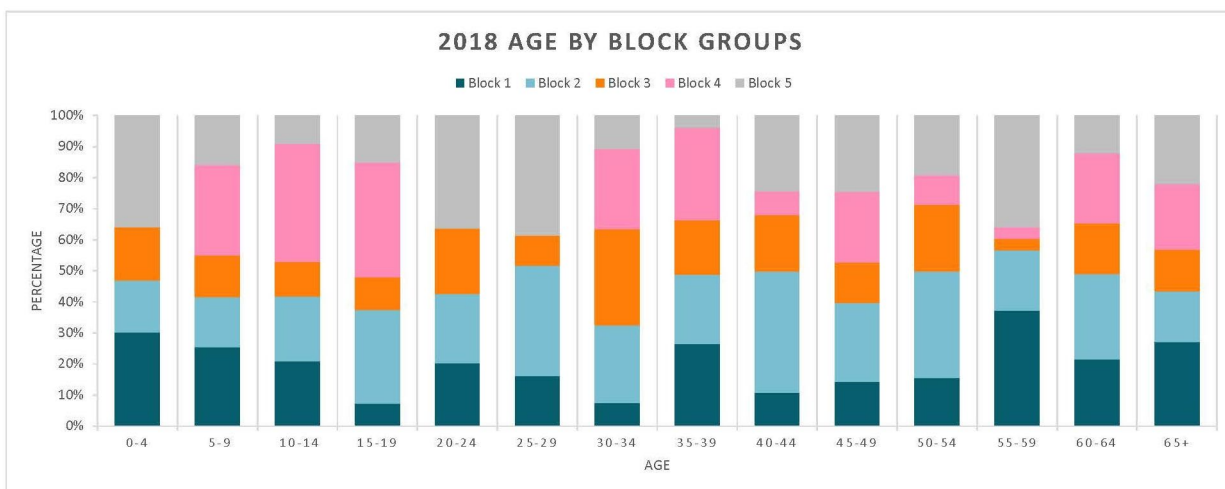
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment information was analyzed for the population 25 years old and over for the year 2014 and 2018. Data was downloaded from the NHGIS by block groups. These two charts can be seen below. In 2014, most of the block group's population over 25 years had a high school diploma or a GED. Block 1, in 2014, had the highest level of educational attainment of some grade school, anywhere between K-12th grade. Educational attainment of a Doctorate was at the lowest, with 14 people in Block group 1. In 2018 Block 1's highest level of educational attainment was either a Masters/Professional Degree or a Bachelor's Degree. The Doctoral Degree was no longer the lowest level of educational attainment, which was now the No Schooling Completed category. Block group 2 also had a high amount of its 25-and-over population have completion of Some Grade School or Some College. Zero people who categorized in the No school completed category for Block 2 in 2014. That changed in 2018 to 16 people. In Block 3, there was an increase in No Schooling Completed and Some College. All other categories dropped in numbers, notice the Associate's Degree attainment went from 26 people to zero in Block 3. Block 4 experienced an increase in all categories except High School Diploma/GED and Bachelor's degree. Block 5 saw a decrease in all categories except for Associate's Degree and Masters/Professional Degree, which increased in numbers. When compared to registered vacancies, Block 1 and 5, the top two block groups with the highest level of vacancies, are showing an increase in higher education (Masters/Professional Degree) but Block 3, another block that has a high number of vacancies, is not showing the same results. Block 3 had one of the lowest numbers in higher education. Block 2 and 4 are also showing varying results when compared to registered vacancies. Block 2 and 4 have the lowest number of registered vacancies but are giving different results. Block 2 has had an increase in degrees, while Block 4 has seen a drop in degrees.

2014 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Block 1 ▪ Block 2 ▪ Block 3 ▪ Block 4 ▪ Block 5

	No schooling completed	Some Grade School	High School Diploma/GED	Some College	Associates Degree	Bachelors Degree	Masters/Professional Degree	Doctorate Degree
Block 1	32	258	186	109	42	138	122	14
Block 2	0	121	201	113	28	68	5	6
Block 3	20	205	227	107	26	62	9	0
Block 4	7	211	202	46	17	43	8	0
Block 5	78	325	231	139	18	100	45	0

TYPE OF SCHOOLING

Figure 28: 2014 Educational Attainment. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over, for the year 2014. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.

2018 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Block 1 ▪ Block 2 ▪ Block 3 ▪ Block 4 ▪ Block 5

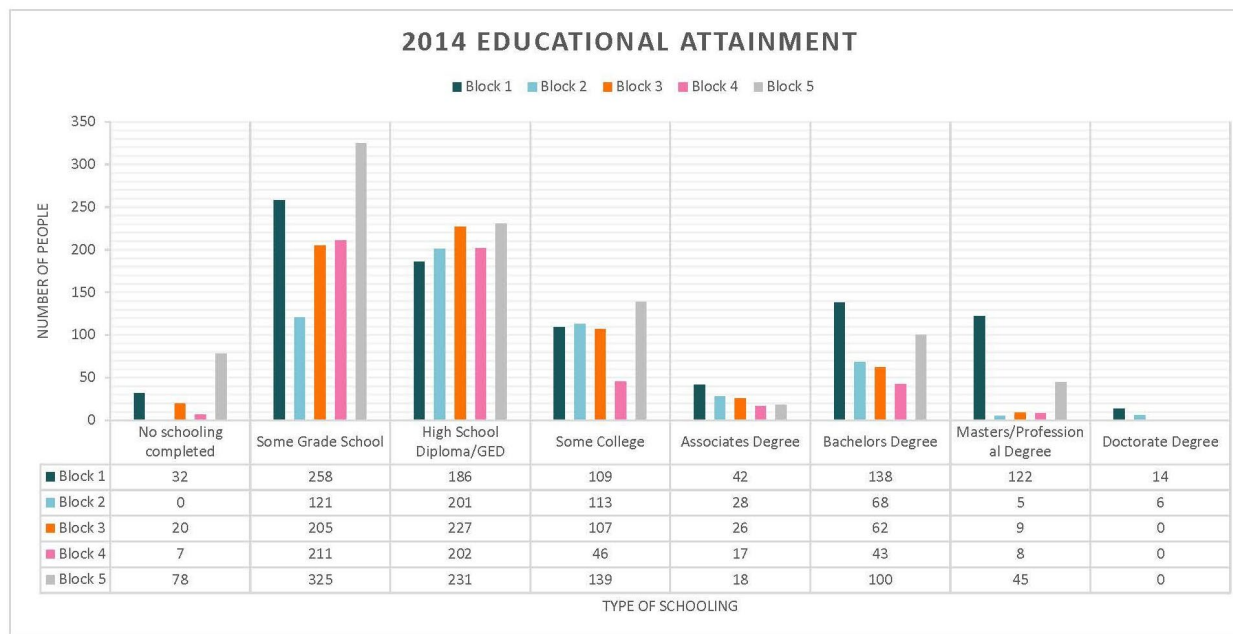|	No schooling completed	Some Grade School	High School Diploma/GED	Some College	Associate Degree	Bachelors Degree	Masters/Professional Degree	Doctoral Degree
Block 1	7	110	74	88	29	174	180	19
Block 2	16	261	294	189	22	91	25	8
Block 3	26	135	210	150	0	9	8	0
Block 4	16	248	139	69	20	25	9	0
Block 5	18	268	130	71	53	69	50	0

TYPE OF SCHOOLING

Figure 29: 2018 Educational Attainment. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over, for the year 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 19, 2020.
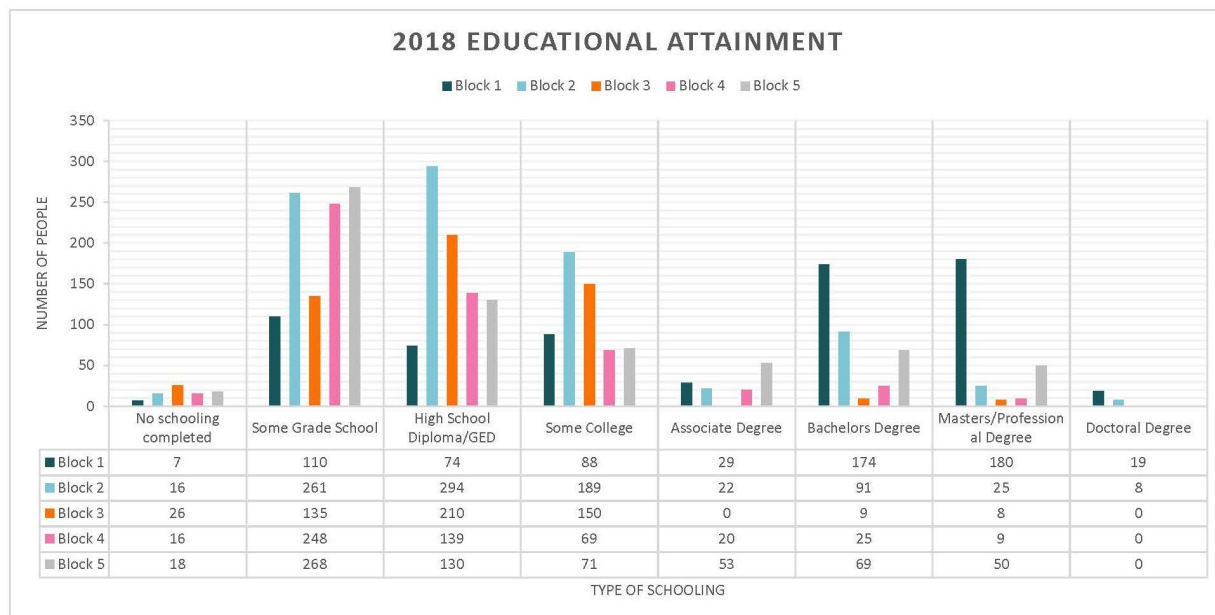
HOUSEHOLD MEDIAN INCOME

Household Income in the Past 12 Months for 2014 and 2018 was analyzed with data from the NHGIS website (Figure 30). Both years were shown in Inflation-Adjusted Dollars. In 2014 Dignowity Hill's Median Income was relatively equal, but in 2018 there was a spike in Block 1's Median Household income, more than doubling from $30,417 to $85,000. With Block 1 having the highest registered vacancies allows for people from elsewhere to purchase a home in this block group. By the results, Block group 1 is attracting a demographic with a higher income level. Block 3 and 5 also have a high number of registered vacancies but have not been affected. In fact, Block 3, with the second-highest level of vacancies, Median Household Income decreased by approximately $3,000 and Block group 5, third in the highest level of registered vacancies, only increased in Median Household Income by approximately $400. Block 2 and 4, who have the lowest number of vacancies, have also not experienced much of a difference, with Block 2 still in the $23,000's and block 4 increasing by $3,000. Block 1 may be experiencing a high median income increase due to its proximity to downtown San Antonio.
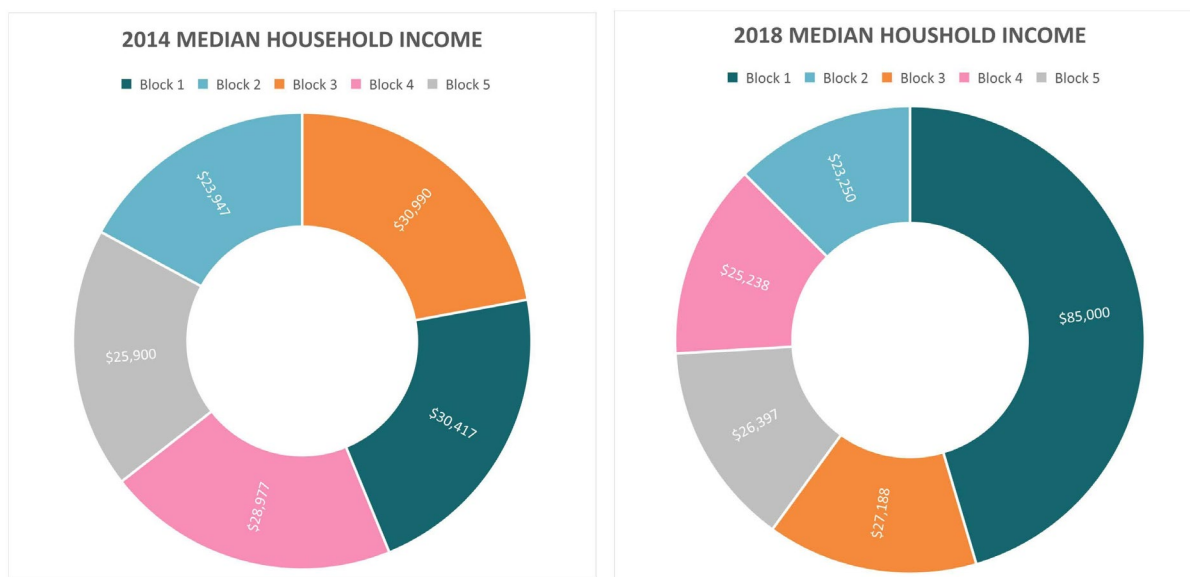

Figure 30: 2014 and 2018 Median Household Income. Data sourced from the National Historical Geographic Information Systems, Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2014 and 2018 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars), for the years 2014 and 2018. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 22, 2020.

VACANT BUILDING PROGRAM IMPACT

Can the VBP be considered successful in Dignowity Hill? How is success determined? According to the Office of Historic Preservation, property owners who are removed from the program are considered successful properties. As we recall in the Vacant Program Building Process section in this report, there are four situations a property is removed from the program; when a property becomes occupied, when a property is sold, when a property is rehabilitated or when a property is demolished. Once again, per the Office of Historic Preservation, demolition should be the last option, and there are multiple incentives for alternative solutions.

The VBP, as a whole, has deemed 552 properties successful as of January 6, 2020. The chart below shows how many properties have been removed from the VBP from 2015 to 2019. There has been an increase in successful properties between 2015 and 2018. There was a small decline in the number of properties from 2018 to 2019, only a drop of eight. However, according to the Office of Historic Preservation, as of January 6, 2020, there have already been a total of 41 registered vacant properties removed from the program!

VBP PROPERTIES REMOVED AS A SUCCESS

Figure 31: VBP Properties Removed as a Success per Calendar Year. As of January 6, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Chart created by Selina Angel. March 29, 2020.

As for the success rate of Dignowity Hill, since the VBP's initial launch, 29 properties have been deemed successful. Out of those 29 properties, only one was demolished. Block group 4 consisted of the most successful properties with a total of 10, while Block group 1 came in second with 9 successful properties. Block Group 3 had 8 properties that were removed from the VBP and Block Group 2 had 3. Block Group 5 has only had 2 properties renovated, removing them from the VBP, making this block group the least

successful out of all block groups within Dignowity Hill. This can be seen in Figure 32 below.

To see the spread of the impact of the VBP in Dignowity Hill, another map was created highlighting the success properties between 2015 and 2020. This data was provided by the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. This map can be seen in Figure 32 below. There was only one successful property in 2015 on Dawson St, two blocks South of Dignowity Park. In 2016 there were no registered vacant properties removed from the VBP list; however, in 2017, just two houses West of the successful 2015 property, one house was deemed successful. Two blocks to the East another property on E Houston Street were also marked successful, along with another property on N Monumental St, nearby the E Houston property. There was a group of properties on the Northeast corner of Dignowity Hill (on Burleson and Buford Street) that also were removed from the VBP list. In total, there were 7 properties in 2017 deemed successful. The year 2018 had 16 successful properties in Dignowity Hill, with all but 4 of them located within one to two blocks away from the previous years' successful properties. In 2019 there were an additional 5 properties that became successful. All 5 properties were located within 1-2 blocks away from previous successful properties.

As we can see from the maps below, properties that are deemed successful have a positive impact on areas within one to two blocks away, by eliminating vacancies thus decreasing crime, code violations, arson, pest harboring and lowering the risk to public health and welfare. Property values also rise when there is a lack of blight within the neighborhood. The VBP's purpose is to prevent properties from deteriorating, thus losing their architectural character of the neighborhood. However, as the housing and demographic analysis show, the VBP is also causing displacement and gentrification, something that is not intended by the program. Preservation is not only about the tangible elements within a neighborhood but also the intangible cultural heritage of the place, "such as customs and practices, artistic expressions, beliefs, languages, folklore, traditions, and even cuisine. Often passed down from generation to generation, it is constantly evolving in response to a communities' religious, political, and social environment, and provides a sense of identity and continuity." (San Francisco Planning, 2020). How can the VBP also find ways to preserve the intangible elements of the neighborhood? For it is the unique, distinct character of a place that brings the VBP into existence. However, it is also that same element of heritage and irreplaceable identity that must be protected from gentrification and displacement of long-term residents.

Figure 32: Dignowity Hill VBP Successful Properties. As of February 18, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Map created by Selina Angel. March 29, 2020.
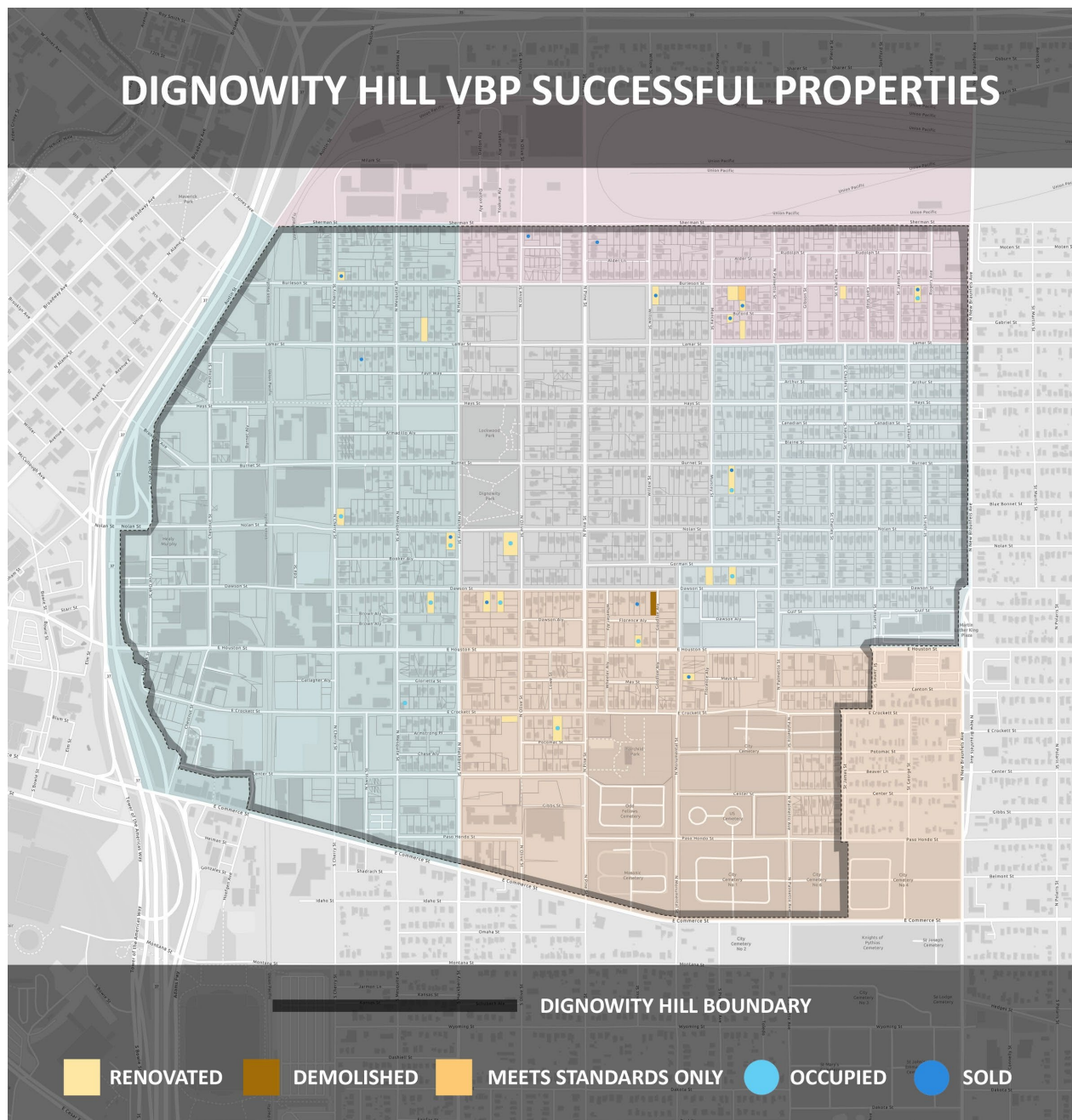
Figure 33: Dignowity Hill VBP Successful Property Yearly Impact. As of February 18, 2020. Data sourced from the City of San Antonio's Office of Historic Preservation Vacant Building Program. Map created by Selina Angel. March 29, 2020.
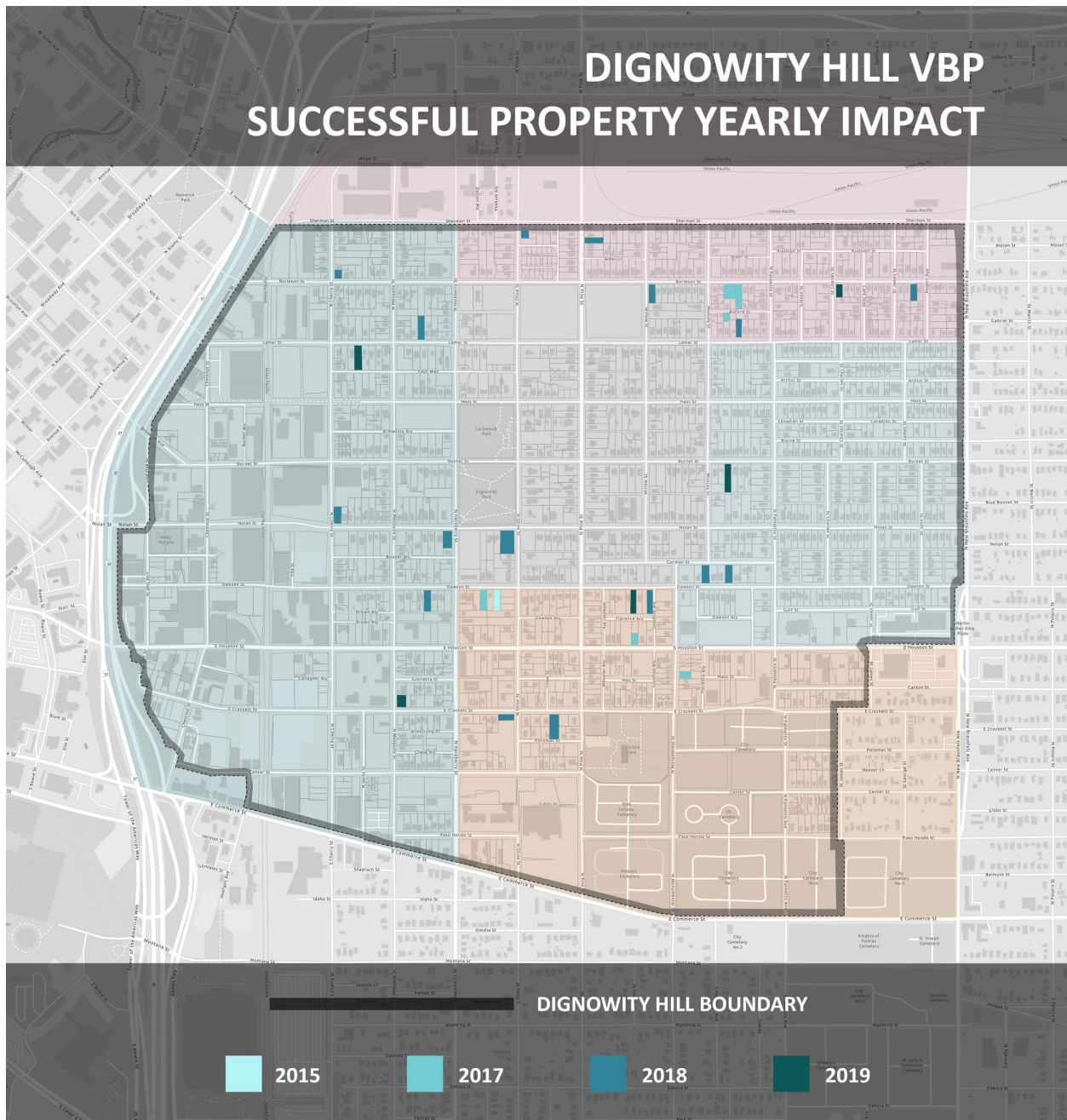
CONCLUSION

Rehabilitated, maintained, inhabited, calming, obedient, improved, pleasing, eyeful; all are words describing that one vacant building down the street that has been surprisingly fixed after all these years. Blight can be a blessing in disguise. With programs like the VBP, these vacant liabilities are becoming San Antonio's greatest asset for future development.

Vacancy is caused by ineffective legal systems, the lack of private investments, high supply with a low demand, but most of all historical institutional racism and sprawl. All are factors that can be fixed through policies and government entities. Areas with high levels of vacancies can be revitalized through redevelopment. Rehabilitation rather than demolition. Enhancement rather than displacement. For the well-being of the community rather than deep pockets of money.

The VBP was created to bring dilapidated properties back into productive use. Based on the research and analysis of Dignowity Hill that was produced, the VBP is working in this neighborhood. The data shows that for every year there is a property that is removed from the VBP list and deemed successful; there is at least one property within one to two blocks that becomes successful as well within the following year. There is a ripple effect happening here. Over time the vacancies in Dignowity Hill will completely be eliminated if this pattern continues.

Is this success of the VBP changing the market or demographics of Dignowity Hill? In a span of four years, 2014 to 2018, we see that the West side of the neighborhood is experiencing the most change but has the third-highest amount of successful properties (7 total). Block Group 1 has seen a dramatic increase in median household income, jumping from $30,417 to $85,000 since the launch of the VBP. It has seen an increase in the female population, it has become the most diversified area in Dignowity Hill compared to the other block groups but has also experienced a population loss. In terms of the market, Block Group 1 has had the most recent construction of new buildings and has always had the greatest number of vacancies and housing units during the four-year span. The location of Block Group 1 can plays a role in why it is experiencing the most amount of change. Because it is near San Antonio's core, revitalization from the downtown area is spreading to this part of Dignowity Hill. Block Group 1 also has the highest number of registered vacancies, which is attracting buyers who want to invest in the area due to its proximity to downtown. Block Group 3 and 5 also have the second and third highest number of registered vacant properties and are experiencing similar results as Block Group 1 but not as dramatic. The changes that Block Group 3 and 5 are seeing also have to do with location. Though these groups

may not be as near downtown as Block Group 1, Block Group 3 of Dignowity Hill runs along E Commerce St, an Arterial street that connects to downtown. Block Group 5 on the other hand, falls between these two block groups. The successful properties of Block Group 1 and Block Group 3 border Block Group 5, thus having spilled over into Block Group 5. As for the North and East side of Dignowity Hill, there has been a small increase in housing units in the four-year span, 2014 to 2018. The population has increased, especially in the male gender, and there is an even mix of all age groups in these areas, pointing to families in the area.

However, the most dramatic change within Dignowity Hill, other than Block Group 1, is the migration of the Hispanic population, moving further East in the neighborhood. In 2014, most of the Hispanic population lived near downtown. Four years later, in 2018, there is a drop of the Hispanic population near downtown and a spike in Block Group 2 and 4. Is the revitalization causing the Hispanic population to move away? Is the drastic change disinclining them? Is this gentrification?

Although the VBP has been successful in Dignowity Hill with rehabilitation efforts to restore historic architecture, the integrity of the neighborhood attracts a different demographic. Diversity is healthy, but the high levels of the Hispanic population in Dignowity Hill moving further East is concerning. Coincidently enough, the East side of Dignowity Hill has the least amount of vacant properties. Further research should investigate the movement of the Hispanic population within the East side of San Antonio. As for the impact of the VBP, successful properties cause a domino effect that, with time, eliminates blight within communities. The VBP is used to enhance rather than redevelop a neighborhood. However, as the analysis shows, the VBP preserves tangible aspects of the neighborhood, not the intangible heritage. Therefore, displacement and gentrification are bound to happen. With the VBP being a program within the OHP, preservation of the character of, not only Dignowity Hill but all historic neighborhoods, is the ultimate goal.

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