

WESTSIDE STRATEGIC AREA STUDY

Las Palmas Area | At-a-Glance Summary



PROJECT OVERVIEW



The Las Palmas Area Study focused on the area around Las Palmas Park, the YWCA Olga Madrid Center, and the Las Palmas Branch Library. The concepts and recommendations build upon a foundation of previous public input, investments, and coordination by the Public Library, Metro Health, Parks and Recreation, and the YWCA Olga Madrid Center. Community stakeholders from the Las Palmas Neighborhood Association and the Friends of Las Palmas Library organization were integral to the process, helping to reaffirm previous objectives and suggesting new ones. The process included an evaluation of community and public assets in each area; multiple stakeholder interviews and discussions; and three Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings, all resulting in the identification of needs and opportunities as well as recommendations for facility, park, street, and public space improvements that may be candidates for the 2022 Bond Program. In addition, the study sought to establish a coordinated approach among City departments and partner organizations and agencies for more coordinated community service provision and use of shared spaces and resources.

City Council District 5 secured funding in the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget for focused studies of three strategic community hubs on the Westside of San Antonio. The goal of the studies was to enhance community appeal and connectivity, and to identify and implement investments and programs that will help create a unified sense of place in each area. The three community hubs include:

- The Las Palmas Area;
- The Madonna Neighborhood Center and Gardendale Elementary Area; and
- The Good Samaritan Center/Cassiano Homes Apartments Area.

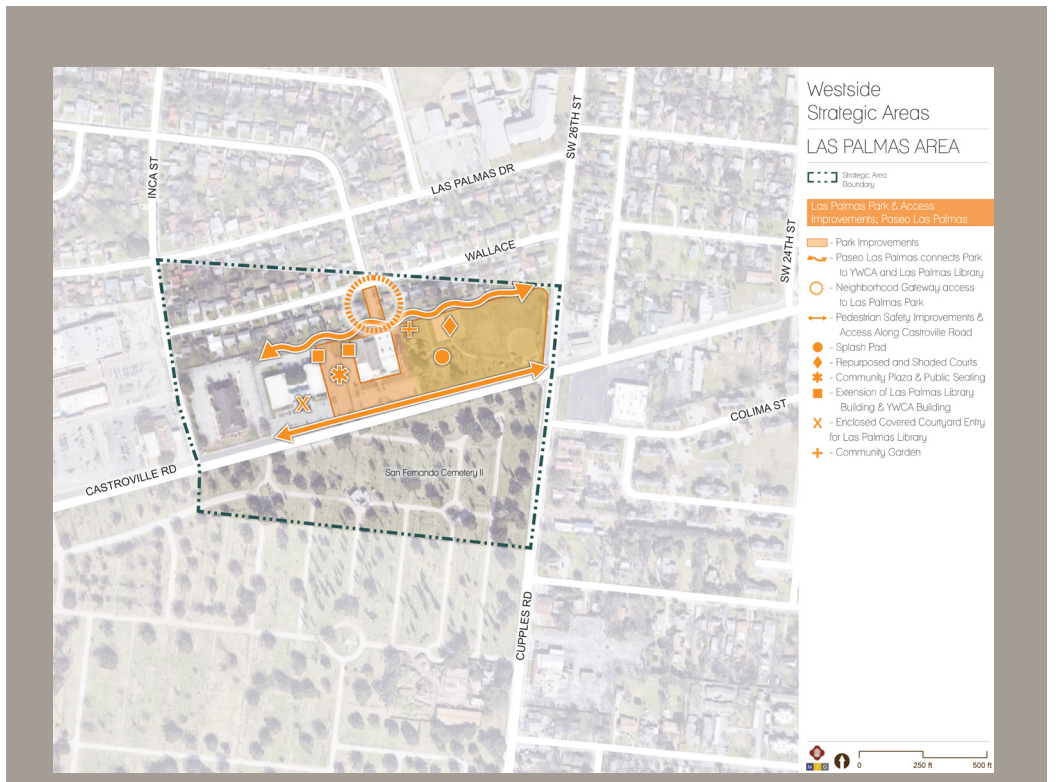
The Las Palmas area community members and stakeholders expressed a vision for a more cohesive community hub that is safe and easy to access from all directions. They envision the area as a destination, not just for the adjacent neighborhoods, but for all of the Westside and for visitors from other areas of the city. They described a dynamic space with ongoing activities and programming that reflect the history and culture of

the area while also serving the important needs of the surrounding community, including:

- Health and wellness programs;
- Recreation and active mobility opportunities;
- Childcare and other services for young parents and families;
- Indoor and outdoor public meeting spaces; and
- Flexible multi-use spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities and events.

The concepts and recommendations outlined in this report reflect these goals and provide insight into the design intent and objectives of the community. Everyone understood throughout the process that a more detailed public input, design, and engineering process will occur if this project is approved and funded in the 2022 Bond Program.

For more detailed descriptions and full-sized images, please see the full project report available by scanning the QR Code below and/or by visiting the link to the right.



CONCEPT OVERVIEW AND DESIGN INTENT

The Las Palmas conceptual design is intended as a cohesive whole. For the purposes of being considered for the 2022 Bond Program as currently structured, the recommended improvements are grouped to align with typical Bond propositions such as Parks, Streets, and Facilities. Although each category of improvements reflects important community objectives and can stand alone, the design intent and recommendation of the community stakeholders is that a comprehensive and holistic approach is taken to ensure each of these mutually supportive concepts is integrated into the final investment and design. Each category is briefly described below. For more detailed descriptions and full-sized images, please see the full project report available at <https://www.sanantonio.gov/Planning/Resources#13357794-policies-special-studies>.



Castroville Road - Aspirational Illustration

Pedestrian Safety And Accessibility Improvements

Two key improvements for the Las Palmas area focus on creating better mobility options and access to the public facilities and amenities. Sidewalk, roadway, and crosswalk improvements along Castroville Road include widening the sidewalk; providing more shade trees, vegetation, and lighting; and defined walkways from the sidewalk to the entrances of the Library and the YWCA. Improvements along Castroville Road would include the narrowing (but not elimination) of travel lanes to provide pedestrian refuge islands in new crosswalks aligned with the building entrances, and a new bus slip lane for safer boarding and alighting.

To accommodate the widened sidewalks, the parking lots servicing the Library and the YWCA would be leveled and reconfigured for more efficient parking and automobile ingress/egress locations.

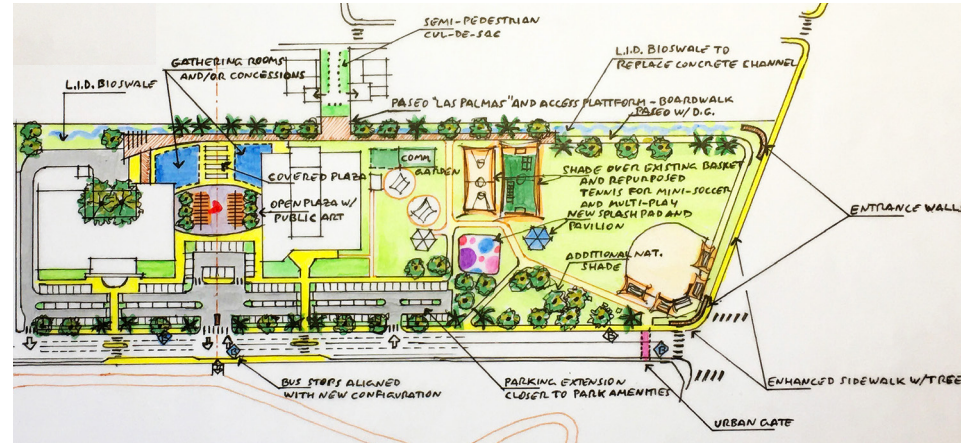


Las Palmas Park - Aspirational Illustration

Park Improvements

Park improvements are a high priority for the community stakeholders. Recommended improvements include more shaded bleachers and seating for viewing the sports/baseball field, converting the current tennis court into a multi-use court and adding a shade structure, refurbishing the basketball court and adding a shade structure, installing a splash pad, and building a larger community garden facility.

Please note: illustrations and example photographs included throughout this document are meant to convey design intent and provide examples of how the recommended concepts and features might look. Future community input, design, and engineering processes should use them as a starting point for guiding their conversations, but final details could certainly vary from exactly what is shown here within.



Paseo de Las Palmas - Concept Plan View Sketch

Credit: Daniel Leal, Urban Designer, Parks and Recreation

Paseo las Palmas

A "Paseo las Palmas" along the northern "back" side of the buildings will link to the existing trail around the park, providing a safe, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing continuous walking path connecting the park, the YWCA, the new zocalo, and the Library. Shade trees, vegetation, high quality materials, and pedestrian scaled lighting will enhance the safety, comfort, and appeal of the paseo.



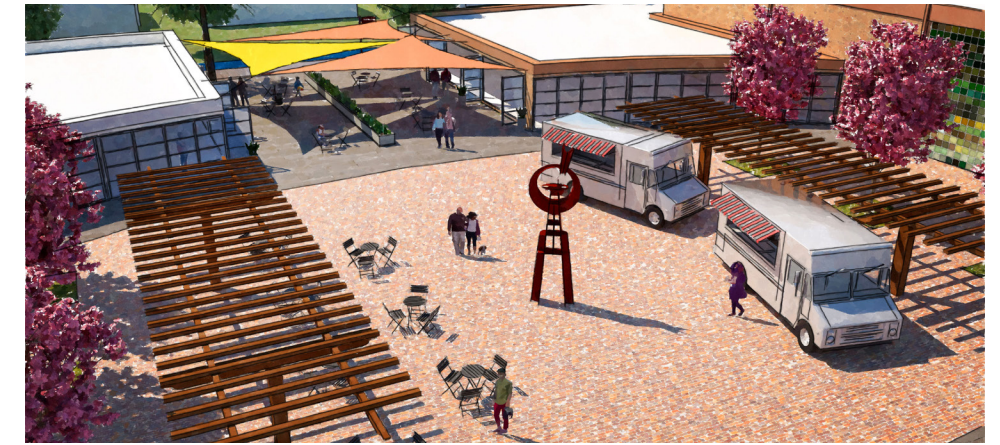
Neighborhood Gateway Access to Las Palmas Park

Neighborhood Gateway And Access Improvements

The community also stressed the desire for improved gateway and wayfinding elements, particularly at the two corners of the site along SW 26th Street/Cupples Road and at the rear alleyway from Wallace Street on the north side of the site. Noticeable, distinctive, and well-lit signage (perhaps built into new retaining walls or small monuments) will enhance the entrances to the park along SW 26th Street and create a better sense of identity for the area. The northern entrance from Wallace Street near the back side of the YWCA should include improvements for pedestrian safety, seamlessly link into the "Paseo las Palmas," and provide public art and wayfinding signage to help create a clearer and more welcoming approach to the Las Palmas community amenities.

CONCLUSION

The Las Palmas area has a rich history and many memories for longtime Westside residents. It is an area that deserves a vibrant community gathering space that serves the needs of all ages, abilities, and interests and that brings neighbors together for both everyday activities as well as special events. Las Palmas Park, the Public Library, and the Metro Health offices serve important public roles in the health, wellness, education, and community camaraderie of area residents. The YWCA has been serving San Antonio



Las Palmas Plaza Aerial View



Las Palmas Plaza

Community Plaza And Public Facilities

There are several public space and facilities improvements recommended, some of which are new to this process, and some that build on the improvements from the 2017 Bond Program. The creation of a new plaza or zocalo located between the YWCA and Library buildings is a key aspect of the design that will help connect these two important community institutions and create a vibrant, flexible, multiuse space that anchors the site. Building additions on the northeast corner of the Library building and on the northwest corner of the YWCA building will provide much needed flexible public meeting and activity space. The two building additions would frame the continuation of the new zocalo and provide a more intimate, shaded community gathering space. Enclosing the front portico of the Library to create additional meeting space and remodeling the interior of the building to better accommodate and align the needs of the Public Library and Metro Health (which utilizes the eastern portion of the building) should also be explored as follow-ups to community goals not achieved with the 2017 Bond Program improvements.

for 111 years and specifically at the Westside's Olga Madrid Center for 44 years. It embraces that history and legacy, and yet constantly strives to adapt to both perpetual as well as new needs it perceives in the community, tackling persistent challenges for young women and mothers, providing much needed childcare and early education, empowering youth and teens, and addressing racial justice and gender equity.