San Antonio is one of the most unique American destinations, tracing her roots to 1691 when Spanish missionaries discovered the beautiful San Antonio River and its springs. Today, the city is the seventh-largest in the U.S., with a population of 1.3 million residents and 25 million visitors a year.

San Antonio’s one-of-a-kind River Walk is the lifeline of this charming city, anchoring a vibrant downtown that sits in the very heart of South Texas. It flows past lively restaurants and clubs, world-class hotels and spas, historic villages and museums. Not far from the River Walk is the iconic Alamo, a Spanish mission that in 1836 was the site of a 13-day battle between the Mexican Army and Texas defenders. The Alamo is one of the most-visited destinations in Texas.

Many cultural groups have influenced San Antonio, including Spanish, Mexican, German, Native American, French, Irish and more. The city’s architecture, industries, food, traditions and customs reflect its multicultural origins, making it a place of contrasts—old world and new, quaint and contemporary.

From the historic downtown area to the surrounding Texas Hill Country, San Antonio embodies the charm and culture of an authentic American city.

San Antonio’s Green Economy

San Antonio’s economy is robust and diverse. Mayor Julián Castro announced that San Antonio would continue to broaden its economic horizon through the “New Energy Economy,” which focuses on recruiting clean energy technology companies to open operations locally as part of a partnership with CPS Energy. The companies that have come to San Antonio are developing clean energy technologies such as home area networks, solar panels, and LED lighting. This effort intends to create several thousand jobs in our economy over the next few years.

The role of CPS Energy is key to attracting clean energy technology companies. CPS Energy provides a launch market for these companies products. As part of the partnership between CPS Energy and clean technology companies, there is to be a permanent presence established by the company that creates new jobs and economic development. This new investment of capital helps San Antonio continue its climb to become one of the most sustainable cities in the United States but also a leader in creating jobs in the accelerating New Energy Economy.
Long Term Water Management
San Antonio Water System establishes and updates a long-term water management plan every five years, responding to changes in population, political climate, weather and environmental demands. The plan is an evolving work including water supply projects and conservation that will meet San Antonio’s water needs for the next 50 years.

Conservation
San Antonio’s water management strategy for the future has included conservation since 1993. These nationally recognized conservation programs represent our cheapest sources of water - water we don’t use now but can be used in the future. Residential and commercial rebates and indoor and outdoor water-saving programs keep San Antonio water rates among the lowest in the nation.

Diversification
Twenty years ago, most of San Antonio was completely dependent on one source of water, the Edwards Aquifer. With focus on planning for the future, San Antonio has made great strides in diversification by adding new water supply sources like the Twin Oaks Aquifer Storage and Recovery plant that stores more than 91,000 acre feet of water underground. By 2015, San Antonio will add brackish desalination to it’s water supply portfolio.

Recycling Trifecta
With the largest direct recycled water system in the United States, San Antonio delivers recycled water to golf courses, parks, commercial and industrial companies, and the famous River Walk in downtown San Antonio. Additionally, SAWS processes residual biosolids and gas at the wastewater treatment plant attaining a recycling trifecta. Up to 200 tons per day of biosolids are composted and reused and nearly one million cubic feet per day of methane gas is sold on the open market.

CPS Energy is a national leader in renewable energy, with resources that include solar, wind, and landfill gas. In 2012, generation from renewable resources exceeded 12% of CPS Energy’s native load energy requirements. CPS Energy has a goal of reducing 771 MW by the year 2020 through its Save for Tomorrow Energy Program (STEP). STEP offers energy efficiency and solar rebates, and demand response programs to residential and commercial customers. Customer options include the Home Manager (home area network) and Smart Thermostat programs. Through January 31, 2013, the STEP program has reduced an accumulation of 318.2 MW of energy since its inception in 2008.

Wind & Solar Power
CPS Energy is the leading community-owned utility in wind capacity, purchasing 1059 MW of wind power from farms in west and south Texas and along the state’s coast. Solar generation includes 44.3 MW in commercial operation and 400 MW under development, with 40.7 MW of the latter mentioned project scheduled to come online by the end of 2013. Current solar generation comes from two 9.9 MW and a 14 MW solar facility in south San Antonio, and a 10.6 MW solar facility just southwest of the city. CPS Energy’s planned and current solar capacity exceeds all municipal utilities in Texas and will rank among the top in the nation.

Goals
The utility is on its way to achieving a Vision 2020 goal of 1,500 MW of renewable energy capacity, approximately equal to 20% of total generation capacity by 2020; and to have 65% of generation resources be no- or low-carbon emitting. CPS Energy is projected to reduce about 5.3 million tons of carbon dioxide by the year 2020 with utility scale solar, LED lighting projects, deactivation of two coal units, and other projects.
Public Transportation
VIA Metropolitan Transit is the City’s public transportation agency covering 1,226 square miles of Bexar County. Since 1999, VIA has seen an average of 65% reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions and an 85% reduction in particulate matter emissions per transit vehicle. The current fleet consists of 311 buses (including 53 hybrid, compressed natural gas and fully electric buses), 14 streetcars and 94 paratransit vans.

Buses operate seven days a week from 4 a.m. to 1 a.m. along 90 bus lines with more than 7,000 bus stops. Because the transportation industry is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in the United States (28%), moving people more efficiently and in mass, can reduce carbon emissions by more than 4,800 pounds in a year. VIA provides over 140,000 passenger trips daily which translates into hundreds of thousands of cars kept off San Antonio roads and over 7 million fewer pounds of soot, carbon monoxide, hydrocarbons, and other toxic substances released each year into the city’s air. Since 2010, VIA has steadily increased the number of alternative fuel vehicles in the fleet (29% alternative fuel as of May 2013) and is committed to continuing that trend.

A natural gas engine offers the latest advances in engine technology to provide for operation with the lowest emissions, lowest fuel costs and lowest noise levels. This advance in fuel and fleet coupled with San Antonio’s first bus rapid transit line and plans for downtown streetcar progressing quickly, VIA is poised to continue contributing to a greener San Antonio.

B-Cycle Program
The City’s new B-cycle program provides a state-of-the-art bike share system with kiosks throughout downtown and the inner city, including the San Antonio River’s Mission Reach project. According to program data, riders logged over 90,000 B-Cycle trips - burning 15 million calories and offsetting over 370,000 pounds of carbon in just the first two years. Customers can interface the system in English or Spanish and download a smart-phone application that provides system details.

San Antonio’s Green and Healthy Homes (SAGHH)
The City of San Antonio’s Green and Healthy Homes (SAGHH) provides assistance to owners of residential properties in creating healthy, safe, energy-efficient and sustainable homes for families. The SAGHH is working to prevent and correct housing-related health and safety hazards, such as addressing lead-based paint, mold, asbestos, household asthma triggers and fire hazards.

San Antonio Complete Street Policy
Complete Streets are defined as roadways that take into account all users, including people driving cars, using transit, riding bikes, walking, and using wheelchairs.
Built Environment
This year the City partnered with the San Antonio Food Bank to lease 18 acres of unused City land to cultivate fruits and vegetables that will amount to more than half a million pounds of produce a year that will be distributed to needy families.

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District hosted the first-ever conference to cover the impact of the built environment on public health in March 2013. The conference represented an effort to bring attention to the correlation between the built environment and its impact on obesity and other chronic health conditions. The event brought together public health professionals, architects, designers and other professionals interested in learning more about the correlation between the two.

Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System
The City of San Antonio’s Parks and Recreation Department has preserved over 1200 acres of open space and developed 41 miles of greenway trails that are currently open to the public. Several sales tax initiatives, in combination with secondary funding sources, will eventually provide for the construction of approximately 89 miles of trail with the ultimate goal of encircling the city with approximately 130 miles of hike and bike trails along the city’s creekways. The greenway trails are linked to sidewalks, bike lanes and public transit in an effort to enhance opportunities for alternative transit.

Recycling in City Parks
The Parks and Recreation Department continues to expand the recycling program in City parks. Citizens are invited to pitch-in and go green by utilizing recycling centers now located in 218 City Parks and along the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System.

Tree Planting
The Parks and Recreation Department has implemented the Tree Challenge Program, the Tree Planting Initiative and the Tree Adoption Program resulting in approximately 49,000 trees being planted in our city. The department has also taken important roles in special events such as Earth Day and Arbor Day.

Green Shade Rebate Program
CPS Energy, in partnership with the City of San Antonio, is promoting energy savings by allowing citizens to purchase up to five trees and receive a rebate of $50 per tree. The long term goal of the program is to increase the City’s tree canopy from 38 to 40 percent while also reducing energy consumption.
**Mission Reach**
The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project is transforming an eight mile stretch of the San Antonio River into a quality riparian woodland ecosystem. This unique project restores riverine features and riparian woodlands, reintroduces native plants, enhances aquatic habitat, and reconnects cultural and historical features. Additionally, the Mission Reach will add over 15 miles of hike and bike trails along the San Antonio River. The River as well as the 5 remaining San Antonio Missions are currently in the application process to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Museum Reach**
San Antonio’s world-renowned River Walk, a top tourist destination in the state of Texas, doubled in length on May 30, 2009 with the opening of the Museum Reach. The Museum Reach includes a lock and dam near Brooklyn Avenue, landscaping, overlooks, boat landings, stairs, lighting, directional and interpretive signage, water features and pocket parks. The 1.3 mile stretch of new walkways and public art along the meandering San Antonio River links several downtown historic, commercial and cultural institutions, including the San Antonio Museum of Art, Pearl (a restored former brewery and stables) and VFW Post 76, which is the oldest VFW Post in Texas.

**Waste Reduction**
San Antonio’s Solid Waste Management Department’s (SWMD) goal is to reach a 60% recycling rate by 2025 while continuing to create a pathway to zero waste.

One step the City took toward creating a pathway to zero waste was the amending of the Chapter 14 code in December 2010. The new amendment ensures that all families and individuals living in apartments, condominiums, townhomes, high rise condominiums and San Antonio Housing Authority properties have the opportunity to recycle. This ordinance was the first of its kind in the state of Texas.

In addition, in 2012 SWMD became the first in the state to offer a curbside food collection program with its subscription-based organics recycling program. Another change that the department implemented to reduce items going to the landfills was the separation of brush and bulky item curbside collection. By making this change the department was able to increase their recycling rate of brush from 19% to 28%.

The department continues to launch outreach programs such as SWMD’s school recycling program that focuses on teaching the younger generations of San Antonians about recycling and waste management.