



City of San Antonio

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In control: Culture and Neighborhood Services Committee

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Title: Briefing regarding the deconstruction and salvage initiative and associated draft policy components. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager; Shanon Miller, Director, Office of Historic Preservation]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

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Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Office of Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Shanon Miller, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: All

SUBJECT:

Briefing regarding the deconstruction and salvage initiative and associated draft policy components.

SUMMARY:

In 2017, Councilman Roberto Treviño initiated a Council Consideration Request (CCR) in response to demolition penalties and neighborhood concerns in San Antonio. One of the recommendations from that effort was to explore deconstruction as an alternative to traditional demolition. Deconstruction refers to the systematic disassembly of a structure in the opposite order it was constructed in order to maximize the salvage of materials for reuse.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since late 2018, OHP staff has worked with stakeholders and the public to draft a potential deconstruction ordinance that would apply to older buildings approved for demolition. Deconstruction is a more sustainable approach to building removal than demolition, and the repurposing of high-quality and valuable historic materials contributes to the local economy. On average, deconstruction employs six times the amount of workers compared to demolition and can contribute to the growth of local salvage, abatement, warehousing, retailing, and creative reuse industries.

More than 30% of existing buildings in San Antonio are of historic age. Maintaining and repairing older buildings is most successful when reclaimed and salvaged historic materials are available. The increased availability of high-quality, salvaged materials such as longleaf pine and old-growth lumber will improve affordability and accessibility for property owners which can help to prolong the life of our historic districts, neighborhood conservation districts, and existing housing stock.

This strategy also aligns with the draft framework for the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan by diverting demolition waste from local landfills. A deconstruction strategy also encourages a circular economy of materials which reduces the demand and consumption of raw materials. This directly aligns with the City's broader goals of achieving climate change readiness by facilitating materials reuse and supporting zero-landfill construction. Deconstruction also improves the likelihood of safe abatement of hazardous materials and prevents harmful dust from permeating within our dense residential neighborhoods.

Deconstruction has proven potential to create stable jobs with low training thresholds, close the consumption loop of building materials, and contribute to more sustainable demolition and construction practices. With a large amount of historic-aged building stock and a growing economy, San Antonio is poised to become the American municipal leader in this effort.

Key anticipated outcomes from the implementation of a deconstruction and salvage ordinance include:

- Reduced water consumption, construction & demolition landfill waste, carbon emissions, and dependency on raw goods;
- Fostering of a local circular economy, where existing materials are given new life;
- Generation of local jobs in deconstruction, warehousing, retailing, trades, and value-added manufacturing sectors;
- Creation of employment pathways for the economically and socially disadvantaged;
- Increase in the availability, accessibility, and affordability of high quality, historic building materials sourced from San Antonio's "urban forest;"
- Inclusion of new participants in salvage exchange market, including those traditionally excluded;
- Increase in the likelihood of safe abatement of hazardous building materials in older structures, among other public health and air quality benefits; and
- Promotion of reuse, upcycling, and other creative and sustainable waste habits.

The former Planning & Community Development Committee was briefed on this item in September 2019. This item provides an update to the initiative and a briefing on draft policy components and proposed phasing.

ISSUE:

Over 400 buildings are demolished in San Antonio every year contributing to more than 3,000 tons of landfill waste. A deconstruction program for select building types in San Antonio would divert waste and provide new opportunities for reuse, job growth, and affordability.

Prior to the proposal of an ordinance, the Office of Historic Preservation has taken several steps to ensure that a local deconstruction program will be successful. This includes hosting trainings and certifications, creating new partnerships, securing grant funding and other resources, and finding creative ways to support a robust local marketplace for reclaimed materials. In February, OHP hosted a deconstruction "think tank" of peer cities and private industry professionals to provide additional input and share new ideas for achieving common waste diversion and materials reuse goals.

Supporting a robust local materials exchange marketplace is imperative to the success of any potential deconstruction program. Staff is approaching this challenge in several ways.

OHP is working with UTSA students toward the creation and development of an online materials marketplace that would connect those seeking reclaimed building materials with those with materials to sell or donate. A test site has been developed and reviewed by members of the deconstruction advisory committee.

Based on feedback received to date, the concept of a **salvage and reuse warehouse** also warrants further exploration. The facility could likely be operated by a non-profit partner or selected third party to facilitate the inventory and exchange of salvaged building materials.

As proposed, the draft deconstruction and salvage policy includes the following considerations:

- Deconstructions will be administered through the existing demolition permitting process.
- Permits will only be issued to certified contractors.
- Contractors must complete a pre-deconstruction materials inventory and salvage plan on a form provided by OHP staff.
- The permit is subject to a random inspection and a final inspection upon submission of a close-out report. For data collection purposes, the close-out report will include information about the quantity of materials that were salvaged and where the salvaged materials went (retail shop, storage, or reuse on either another project or on site).
- Materials must be sorted and secured on site during deconstruction unless otherwise documented by the contractor.
- Buildings subject to the ordinance will be determined based on building **type** and documented **construction date**.
- Applicability of the ordinance will be phased as follows:
 - PHASE 1 - Residential single family, multifamily 4 units or less, and rear accessory structures built in 1920 or earlier, citywide; plus residential single family, multifamily 4 units or less, and rear accessory structures with a historic zoning overlay or located within a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), regardless of age.
 - PHASE 2 - Residential single family, multifamily 8 units or less, and rear accessory structures built in 1945 or earlier, citywide; plus residential single family, multifamily 8 units or less, and rear accessory structures with a historic zoning overlay or located within a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), regardless of age.
 - PHASE 3 (potential) - Any structure built in 1945 or earlier, citywide; plus any structure with a historic zoning overlay or located within a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), regardless of age; plus a requirement or incentive to utilize salvaged materials in the exterior of new construction projects that are receiving City incentives or are located within applicable design overlays: historic districts, individual landmarks, River Improvement Overlays, and Downtown Design District.

Final policy components and draft ordinance language will be presented for recommendation at a future date. In the coming months, OHP will offer additional workforce training which will result in additional contractors in San Antonio that are certified for deconstruction.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only. The review and recommendation of draft policy components bears no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.