

Downtown Area Plan | October 12, 2022

Open House Summary

A Downtown Area Plan Open House was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at the San Marcos Activity Center. Approximately 80-100 attendees came out to provide comments on their vision for the future of Downtown San Marcos. The attendees were greeted with an initial social gathering and feedback activities that they could elect to participate in during the open house.

The workshop focused on presenting recommendations for various topics being addressed in the plan. These recommendations were developed using community feedback from the Community Workshop in June, pop-up events, appointed boards, and elected officials so far in the process.

Attendees had the opportunity to visit each of the 7 stations to provide feedback on specific topics. The station topics included:

- Station 1: History, Arts, and Culture
- Station 2: Downtown Housing Options
- Station 3: Small Business Support
- Station 4: Building Form and Infill Development
- Station 5: Public Space and Amenities
- Station 6: Multimodal Connectivity & Parking
- Station 7: Priority Streetscapes

To capture feedback received, each station was equipped with a unique feedback activity. Additionally, attendees were provided a *Key Concepts Prioritization Worksheet* to prioritize their top priority items presented along with an open comment section on the back of the worksheet.

Images of the workshop boards along with event photos can be found at the end of the Summary.



Participants at the Open House event



Participants completing the Prioritization Worksheet

Station 1: History, Arts, and Culture

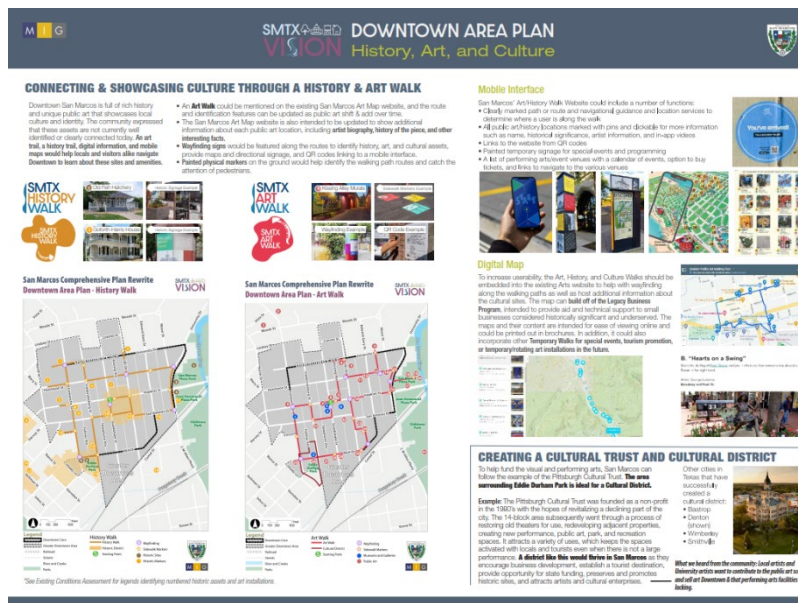
Throughout the Downtown Area Plan process, the community has expressed that history, arts, and culture are not currently well identified or clearly connected today. The first interactive station at the Open House presented recommendations related to connecting and showcasing culture through a history and art walk with interactive digital maps and wayfinding as well as a recommendation to create a cultural trust and cultural district potentially near the Eddie Durham Park. When asked what stories should be elevated in Downtown through art, signage, or another form of expression, common comments were made on a more in depth history of our river, telling the stories of black, indigenous, and peoples of color (BIPOC) histories, building histories, and more art murals and galleries.



Staff and participants at the History, Art, and Culture board

Attendees were also asked how the city should reflect/communicate these stories to the community: suggestions included **signage, art festivals, local events, alley pop-ups, and murals**. Additional written comments from the community at this station included:

- The desire for a community theatre;
- Using sidewalks and stone paving to tell histories and stories;
- Using existing light poles as places for art kiosks or QR codes; and
- Using art to tell the stories of movies filmed in San Marcos;



CONNECTING & SHOWCASING CULTURE THROUGH A HISTORY & ART WALK

Downtown San Marcos is full of rich history and unique public art that showcases local culture and identity. The community expressed that these assets are not currently well identified or clearly connected today. An art walk, a history trail, digital information, and mobile maps would help locals and visitors alike navigate Downtown to learn about these sites and amenities.

- An **Art Walk** could be mentioned on the existing San Marcos Art Map website, and the route and information features can be updated as public art with it add over time.
- The San Marcos Art Map website is also intended to be updated to show additional information about each public art location, including **artist biography, history of the piece, and other interesting facts**.
- **Wayfinding signs** could be featured along the routes to identify history, art, and cultural assets, provide maps and directional signage, and QR codes linking to a mobile interface.
- **Painted physical markers** on the ground would help identify the walking path routes and catch the attention of pedestrians.

Mobile Interface

San Marcos Architecture Walk Website could be built a number of functions:

- Clearly marked path or route and navigational guidance and location services to determine where a user is along the walk.
- All public art history locations marked with pins and clickable for more information, such as name, historical significance, artist information, and image videos.
- Links to the website from QR codes.
- Detailed temporary signage for special events and programming.
- A list of performing arts events with a calendar of events, subject to bug tickets, and links to respective venues.

Digital Map

To increase accessibility, the Art, History, and Culture Walk should be embedded into the existing Arts website to help with wayfinding along the walking paths as well as local additional information about the cultural sites. The map can build off of the **Legacy Business Program**, intended to provide art and tech that support to small businesses considered historically significant and underrepresented. The map and their content are intended for ease of viewing on the and could be printed out in brochures. In addition, it could also incorporate other **Temporary Walks** for special events, tourism promotion, or temporary/instant art installations in the future.

CREATING A CULTURAL TRUST AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

To help fund the visual performing arts, San Marcos can follow the example of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. **The new surrounding Eddie Durham Park is ideal for a Cultural District.**

Example: The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust was founded as a non-profit in the 1980s with the hopes of revitalizing a declining part of the city. The 14-block area subsequently went through a process of restoring old theaters for use, redeveloping adjacent properties, creating new performance, public art, park, and recreation spaces. It attracts a variety of uses, which keeps the spaces activated with friends and family over where there is a large performance. **A district like this would thrive in San Marcos** as they encourage business development, establish a cultural destination, provide opportunity for state funding, preserves and promotes historic sites, and attracts artists and cultural enterprises.

Other sites in Texas that have succeeded at cultural district:

- Denton
- Denton (shown)
- Midway
- Greenville

What we heard from the community: local artists and university artists want to contribute to the public art scene and art in Downtown & that performing arts facilities are lacking.

History, Art, and Culture board

Station 2: Downtown Housing Options

The second station focused on making downtown a better place to live and described strategies related to expanding downtown housing options, additional for-sale housing, removing development barriers, and providing transportation-related improvements and community amenities.

Community input throughout the plan development highlighted that to make Downtown a better place to live improvements related to **Transportation, Community Amenities, Additional Housing Options, Housing Affordability, and Homeownership**.

At this station, participants were asked what additional strategies would make Downtown a better place to live, work, shop, and play. Overall, there **was support for mixed use housing products, however, there is a strong desire for housing to be affordable and accessible to all residents, not just Texas State student populations.**

Comments made related to these some of the topics were:

- **Types of Businesses:** Desire for non-chain restaurants and family friendly restaurants or establishments; a desire for less vacant storefronts.
- **Transportation:** a focus on bikes, buses, and slowing vehicular traffic when downtown, and some desire for a parking garage.
- **Housing:** support for mixed use buildings and denser housing, discouragement of student housing and support for housing affordability for all incomes and residents.
- **Streetscapes:** desire for landscaping and parklets or other places to sit; some comments on improving maintenance of downtown sidewalks and landscaping.



Community comments from the Downtown Housing Options board

Station 3: Small Business Support

This station had the purpose of providing attendees with information regarding the types of existing businesses Downtown and recommendations to help increase business diversity including creating a “How-to guide” for starting a small business Downtown, modification of licensing/permitting regulations, incubator spaces to support and provide services to new businesses, and offering shares leases or division of large spaces for short-term and flexible lease opportunities



Staff and open house participants at the Small Business Support board

At this station, participants were asked what else a City and/or incubator space could do to encourage the creation of new small businesses in downtown. Comments included:

- Educating mobile food entrepreneurs on how to operate;
- Startup grants for high priority businesses;
- Affordable rent for vendors;
- Focus on business attraction through incentives; and
- Include high quality public space with seating which will incentivize businesses to locate downtown.

Lastly, downtown events can be a technique for drawing in more people downtown, this station prompted participants to share what types of events they would like to see. Comments included:

- Culture Festivals
- Music & Film Festivals
- Local Food and Wine Tasting Festivals
- Local History Events
- Earth Day Fair
- Flower Shows or Environmental festivals
- Block Parties with Local Vendors
- Family-friendly events (ex: Bubble Fest)

Additional comments and ideas from the community at this station included:

- Desire for more live music downtown;
- Focus outreach and advertising on small businesses and local events;
- Desire to activate vacant storefronts with temporary murals; and
- Comments on types of businesses desired included small grocery stores, art spaces/venues, resale or consignment stores.

Station 4: Building Form and Infill Development

At this station, attendees were provided with information on possible ideas for new development and infill development.

Topics throughout the station were:

- Enhancing the CM Allen Parkway District
- Potential Downtown Hotel
- Attracting desired developed at the following locations:
 - Missing Middle Housing (200 S Guadalupe)
 - Open-Air Marketplace/Food Hall (101 E MLK Dr)
 - Vertical Mixed-Use (312 E Hopkins)



Rendering of example buildings along a proposed "CM Allen Parkway District"

Participants were asked whether they **support the construction of a downtown hotel** and participants overwhelmingly answered **"yes"** with some comments related to also having **local and diverse retail/restaurant incorporated, a comment related to a potential "boutique size"**.

Participants were also asked how the city should further connect with the community to activate sidewalks and storefronts. Comments included a desire for **additional bus routes, wider sidewalks, shade trees, closing streets on weekends for pedestrians only, converting parking for cars into parklets for people and businesses, improved and safer crossings, and strengthened partnerships and collaboration amongst businesses to encourage visitors in one shop to also visit another shop downtown.**

Of the three catalyst sites proposed, the **Missing Middle Housing concept located at 200 S Guadalupe received the most support.** Some additional comments at this station included:

- Support for a University/hotel conference center
- Suggestions for open air market examples: Downtown temple and Santa Fe plaza.
- Park and ride at I-35 which drops off at CM Allen



Project team, MIG, representative and Mayor

Station 5: Public Space and Amenities

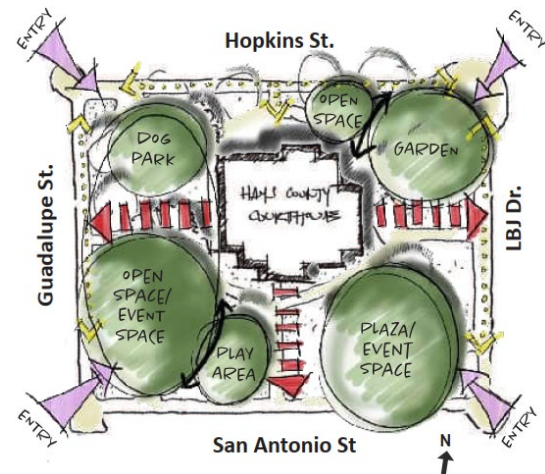
This station presented community ideas to enhance and create new downtown parks/public spaces that are a **place for everyone**. The station provided creating connections from Downtown to the riverfront parks, adding more pocket parks/plazas, and technical implementations such as permeable pavements and Low Impact Development (LID) like rain gardens throughout downtown.

Attendees were asked whether they agree or disagree on a redesign of the Courthouse Square to include more public amenities similar to the rendering to the right. **The majority (77%) of respondents were in support of Courthouse redesign to provide improve public space.**

Participants identified the following improvements as most important to a potential courthouse redesign:

- Public ADA restrooms
- Plaza + event space
- Care/maintenance for existing trees
- Installation of new trees and native landscaping
- Garden space
- Permeable surfaces
- Dedicated funding and staff for trash pick-up
- Desire for reduced traffic around courthouse to enhance safety of the area
- Potential amphitheater setting for public meetings or events
- Connect Courthouse to other public park space
- Seating/tables under shade to enjoy scenery or eat lunch
- Some disagreement with dog amenities
- Comments that the current lawn is a barrier
- Desire to open the public sidewalk to the square to better connect the front near Hopkins
- Some concerns with crowding

Other downtown park improvements suggested by the participants included: a dog park, 24 hour public restroom, exercise equipment, longer/better connected greenways, more public seating outside of private businesses, Fully accessible park installations for those with disabilities, desire for alley improvements, rain gardens, green infrastructure, water fountains, and the desire for additional trees between the stage and Hopkins at Plaza Park.



Staff and open house participants at the Parks & Public Spaces board

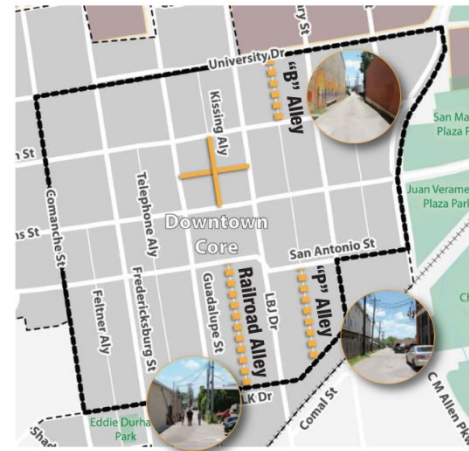


Station 6: Multimodal Connectivity and Parking

This station presented recommendations for:

- Additional transit stops and amenities downtown;
- Converting existing alleys into green alleys with landscaping, water quality, and pedestrian improvements such as seating and lighting;
- Improved bike/ped connections downtown;
- One-way versus two-way streets; and
- Parking availability and options.

Priority Future Green Alleys



- **Railroad Alley**- outstanding potential for public space activation and moderate potential for green infrastructure activation.
- **"B" Alley**- moderate potential for public space activation and outstanding potential for green infrastructure activation.
- **"P" Alley**
- Other alleys with planned undergrounding utility work

At this station, participants were asked whether they would willing to pay for parking downtown and what the biggest struggle (time limits, supple, etc.). for parking may be in downtown. **The majority (61%) of participants were in favor of paid parking.** Other opinions were to construct a paid parking garage instead and improve public transportation. Barriers to paid parking discussed by participants were:

- Supply
- Needing another option besides driving into downtown
- Issues with visibility when backing out of on-street parking
- Concerns that street parking causes dangerous situations for bicyclists
- There is currently too much free parking downtown
- Cars utilize too much public space downtown
- Desire to enforce 2 hour parking before considering paid parking

The majority of comments made by participants on the boards were **not in support of a one-way to two-way conversion of downtown streets.** Participants **supported the installation of the proposed transit stops adjacent to the Courthouse Square.** Additional comments at this station included:

- Proposed park-and-ride on the outskirts of City
- Promotion of less cars downtown
- Desire for additional alternative modes of transportation (busses, bikes, scooters, etc.)
- Make a parking lot for night outside the city so people can park and walk around
- Desire for improved transit system in terms of ease of use, how to plan routes FAQ, and expanded service in the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ), higher bus frequency, and increase stop visibility
- Idea to have businesses face/front alleyways.

Station 7: Priority Streetscapes

This station focused on recommendations to create a welcoming downtown by creating:

- Creating Downtown Gateways
- Flexible/Festival Streets
- Shared Streets
- And improving design of downtown streets

ALL participants were in favor of the idea of flexible/festival streets. One participant suggested that **“the concept could bring people together and change (improve) the perception of our community!”**

The community expressed a desire for improving downtown streets to be comfortable for all San Marcos residents and to accommodate all modes of transportation. Four priority street improvements with two different roadway cross-section concepts were considered and voted on by attendees. (See summary table to the right).

	Edward Gary St	South LBJ Drive	MLK Drive
Improved Concept 1	17	13	7
Improved Concept 2	7	10	17

Additional comments at this station included:

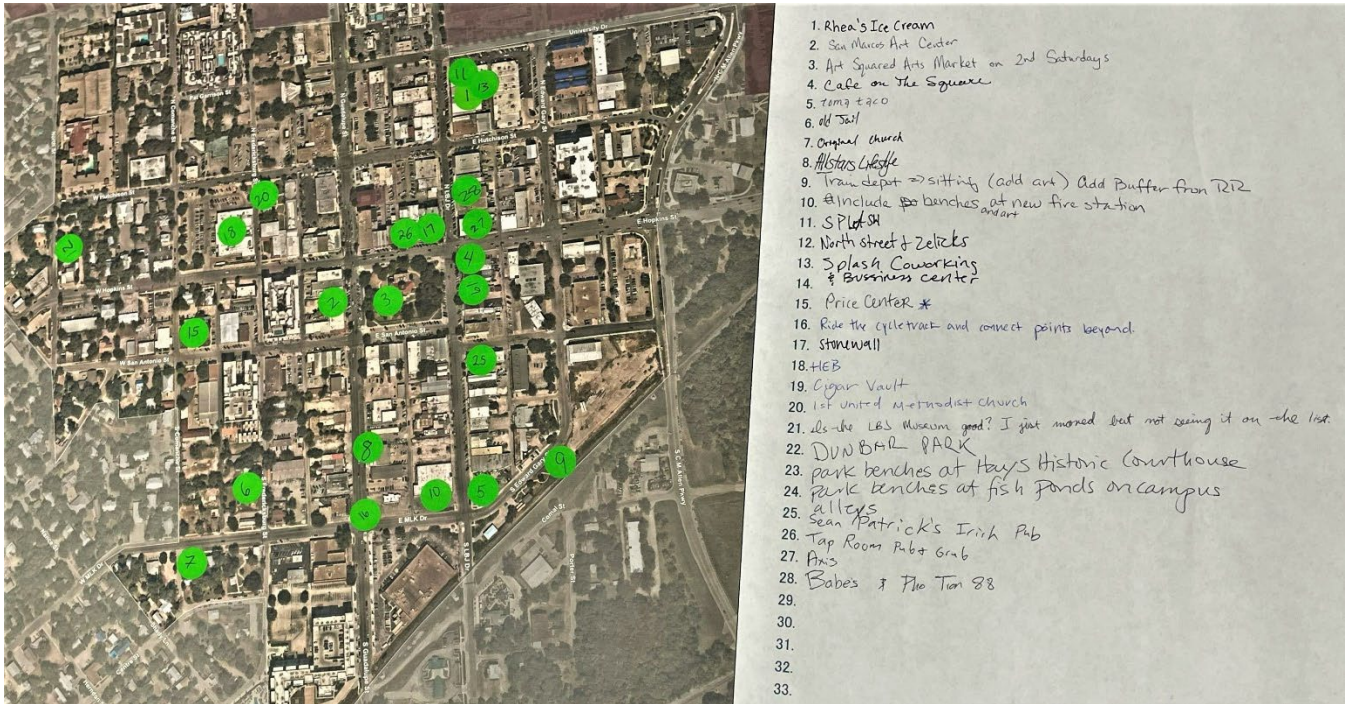
- Suggestion to use parked cars to protect bike lanes
- Ensure trees are installed in streetscape designs
- Use streetscapes to slow cars through downtown
- Use car parking to protect bike lanes
- Move parking next to traffic and bike lane next to sidewalk (ex: Guadalupe St)
- Desire for wider sidewalks and better bike lanes to bring people downtown
- Support for vehicular gateways
- Improve safe cycle routes at University Drive intersections
- Support for intersection improvement at Comanche and San Antonio Streets.



Open House participant at the station board

Points of Interest Activity & Map

At the final interactive station, attendees were encouraged to add their own points of interest to a map. This could be favorite spots to sit or walk, unique locations to visit, or recommendations for someone to explore on a Saturday in San Marcos!



Completed Points of Interest map



Priority Worksheet Summary & Comment Cards

In addition to the open house board activities, participants were asked to pick their 10 highest priority recommendations and their 10 lowest priority recommendations. 86 Prioritization Worksheets were submitted by attendees. The below table shows the net responses.

Category	Concept	Net
Public Spaces & Amenities	Shade Trees	58
Building Form & Infill Development	Open Air Marketplace & Food Hall (101 E MLK Dr, Former old Golden Chick now vacant)	48
Public Spaces & Amenities	Existing Public Space Improvements	45
Building Form & Infill Development	Vacant Storefront/Building Activation Program	38
Fostering Small Business	Entrepreneur Support and Diversity Strategies	38
History Art Culture	Creating History and Art Walks	38
Fostering Small Business	Business Variety Strategies	37
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Flexible/Festival Street	39
Downtown Housing Options	Promote & Support Affordable Housing	33
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Intersection Improvements	34
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Streetscape Improvements	34
Public Spaces & Amenities	Rain Gardens	28
Downtown Housing Options	Community Amenities	27
History Art Culture	Create Cultural Trust & Cultural District	26
Multi-Modal Connectivity & Parking	Complete Multi-Modal Networks	26
Downtown Housing Options	Promote & Support Home Ownership	18
Multi-Modal Connectivity & Parking	Green Alleys	19
Public Spaces & Amenities	Permeable Pavements	19
Downtown Housing Options	Removing Development Barriers to Provide Housing Options	18
Multi-Modal Connectivity & Parking	Implement Parking Program Framework Plan	18
Building Form & Infill Development	Missing Middle Housing (200 Guadalupe St, existing CenturyTel Building)	16
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Downtown Gateways	14
Building Form & Infill Development	Vertical Mixed Use (312 E Hopkins St, existing parking lot)	11
Multi-Modal Connectivity & Parking	Transit Stops Near Courthouse Square	10
Building Form & Infill Development	Ground Floor Design Considerations	7
Public Spaces & Amenities	Potential New Parks	6
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Hutchinson Street Multi-Use Path	5
Building Form & Infill Development	CM Allen Parkway District	-6
Priority Streetscape Enhancements	Woonerf/Shared Streets	-10
Building Form & Infill Development	Potential Hotel	-11
History Art Culture	Enhanced Web Presence and Digital Map	-17



Additional comments included the below themes as indicated by quotes from the comment cards:

- *"I like the unique design on San Antonio street & LBJ drive. Painted mural yes!"*
- *"I like the building design by the river by the existing local apartment complex. I think it's a great use of space and will continue the growth upward in the downtown area. I feel it could be apartments with offices under or bars or boutiques. For example how target is under aspire apartments."*
- *"We need to develop downtown area in a more permeable/pervious manner by putting more permeable pavement, raingarden etc.. with a minimum amount of gray and black surface features. Going green is not enough. We need to go greener!"*
- *"Trolley system! Bus routes being amazing, I want to ride the bus. Public indoor hangout space. I want to know my community and have downtown be a second home."*
- *"PLEASE bring a bookstore. I would be downtown 24/7"*
- *"Hutchinson multi-use path is important but Hopkins could use better bike infrastructure as well especially on the bridge over the river. Maybe less people would drive there if better bight connection existed (especially as the higher density housing is added there along cm allen!)"*
- *"The hiking trail off prospect street is beautiful and only a little over a mile from downtown. It would be great if there were better bike/pedestrian connections here."*
- *"Extend bike lane on Guadalupe further south and develop more density near the train station. We NEED a bike lane on university by Sewell park. This will connect bike lanes on Aquarena and CM Allen, and the sidewalks there are crowded and narrow and the road is high speed."*
- *"Requiring developers to include pocket parks would be great!"*
- *"Please put lights in pavement on crosswalks and lots of signs about bikes/pedestrians. Please promote walkability always, safe walkable pathways."*
- *"Walking spaces for elderly folks. Parking closer to parks for elderly."*
- *"Boutique hotels downtown, not massive block long hotels"*
- *"People don't come from river into DT (typically don't have money). People MIGHT go from DT to river"*
- *"Connect tubers (lions club) and river users w/ place to dry off + lock up stuff"*
- *"The need to encourage student use or high density multifamily housing in close proximity to Texas State University campus. The continued growth of TSU needs to be addressed and encourages with living units in close proximity to campus. This will reduce traffic and allow for more pedestrian uses in the Downtown Area."*
- *"Downtown parking – create more options besides driving into downtown, perhaps offsite parking at library/activity center lots with a shuttle during weekends."*
- *"Add pickleball court downtown!"*
- *"I think downtown would benefit and the city would benefit tremendously from relocation of city hall to the downtown core."*
- *"Off-street parking garage will be needed to accommodate the new businesses."*

SMTC VISION DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN
KEY CONCEPTS PRIORITIZATION WORKSHEET
Wednesday, October 10, 2018

Name: _____ Email or Phone #: _____

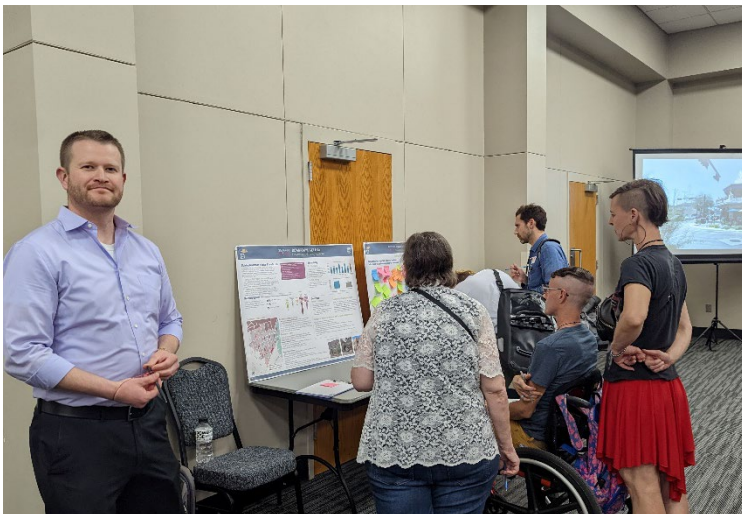
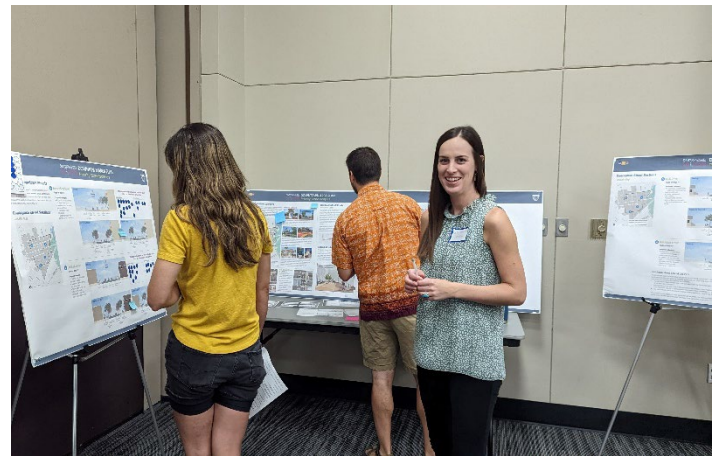
HOW TO USE THIS WORKSHEET:

- Circle H or L for up to 10 of your **Highest** and up to 10 of your **Lowest** priority items.
- Write any comments on the back of this page.
- Turn this in to staff at the end of the open house for a chance to win a raffle prize.

Item	H	L
HISTORY, ART, CULTURE		
Creating History and Art Walks	H	L
Enhanced Web Presence and Digital Map	H	L
Create Cultural Trust & Cultural District	H	L
DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS		
Community Amenities	H	L
Removing Development Barriers to Provide Housing Options	H	L
Promote and Support Affordable Housing	H	L
Promote and Support Home Ownership	H	L
FOSTERING SMALL BUSINESSES		
Business Variety Strategies	H	L
Entrepreneur Support and Diversity Strategies	H	L
BUILDING FORM & FILL DEVELOPMENT		
Mixing Middle Housing	H	L
Open Air Market/Lots & Food Hall	H	L
Vertical Mixed Use	H	L
Potential Hotel	H	L
Riverfront District	H	L
Vacant Townhome/Building Activation Program	H	L
Ground Floor Design Considerations	H	L
PUBLIC SPACES & AMENITIES		
Permeable Pavements	H	L
Shade Trees	H	L
Rain Gardens	H	L
Existing Public Space Improvements	H	L
Potential New Parks	H	L
MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING		
Transit Stop Near Courthouse Square	H	L
Implement Parking Program Framework Plan	H	L
Complete Multi-Modal Networks	H	L
Green Alleys	H	L
PRIORITY STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS		
Hutchinson Street Multi-Use Path	H	L
Streetscape Improvements	H	L
Downtown Gateways	H	L
Intersection Improvements	H	L
Flexible/Festival Street	H	L
Wooden/Shared Streets	H	L

Prioritization Worksheet

Appendix: Event Photos & Workshop Boards





WELCOME TO THE **DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE**

Come envision the future of
Downtown San Marcos! Check
out the progress made on the
Downtown Area Plan.

Virtual Open House Boards | Post-Event
(From the Oct 12, 2022 In-person Open House)



SMTX 
VISION



VISION SMTX DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN | PROJECT OVERVIEW



The City of San Marcos is embarking on a Downtown Area Plan to take a closer look at the future of Downtown San Marcos!

PLAN PURPOSE:

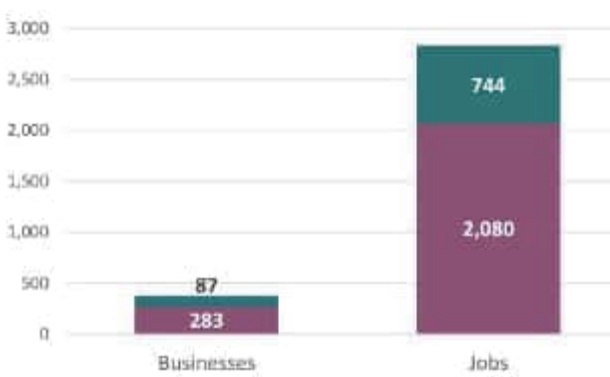
- To establish a community & stakeholder led **vision** specific to Downtown;
- Help **guide development** and **infrastructure investments** for the next 20 years;
- To strategically align investments with Downtown **needs/desires**;
- To identify Downtown **assets** and **character** that should be preserved or enhanced as the plan is implemented;
- Position Downtown relative to existing and new **employment areas** & **mixed-use centers**;

TOPICS BEING DISCUSSED



- Historic & Cultural Character
- Building Form & Infill Development
- Public Spaces & Amenities
- Downtown Housing Options
- Fostering Small Businesses
- Multimodal Connectivity & Parking
- Priority Streetscape Enhancements

PROJECT TIMELINE



1 Existing Conditions

May 2022

2 Vision & Goals

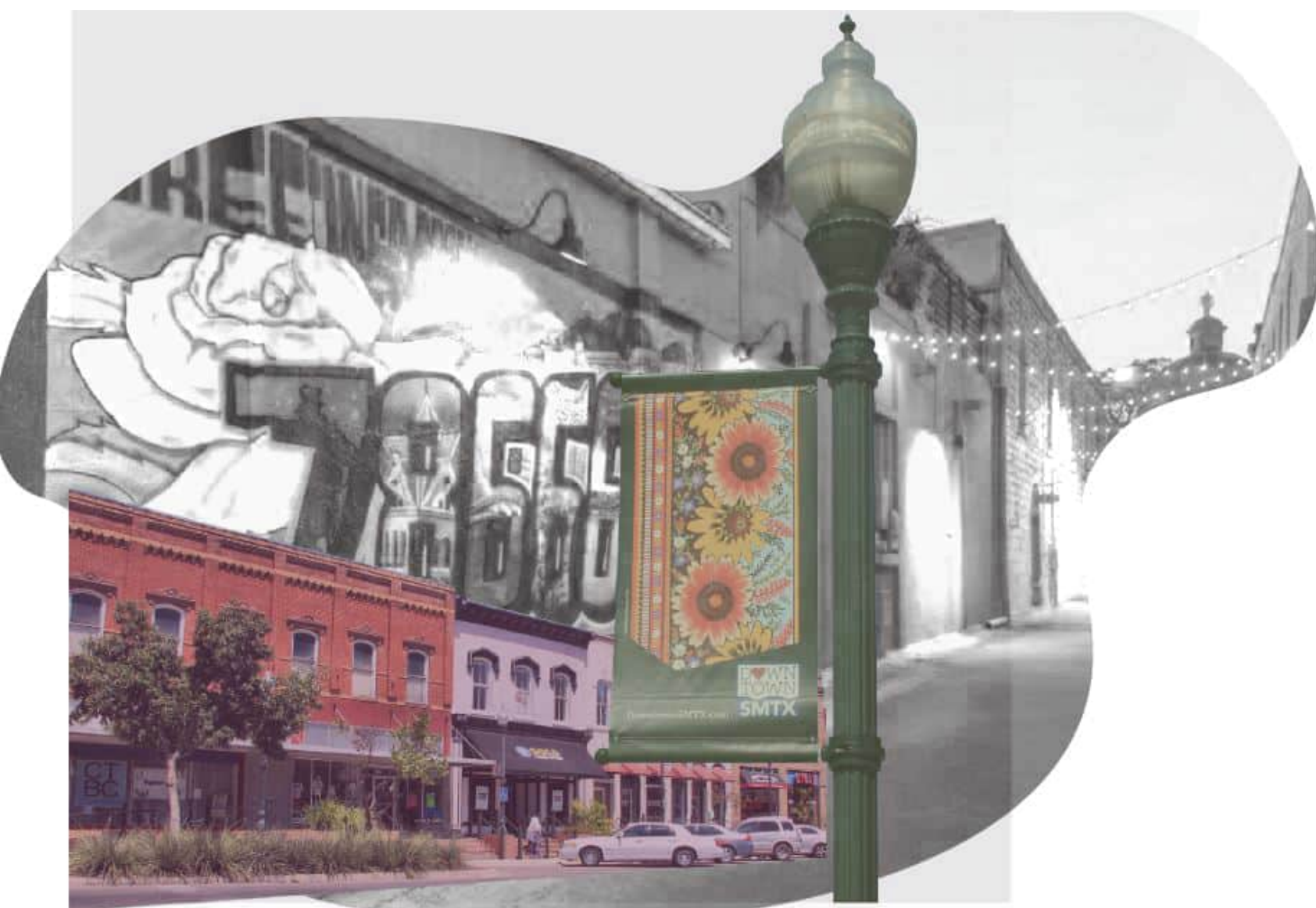


3 Key Concepts & Recommendations

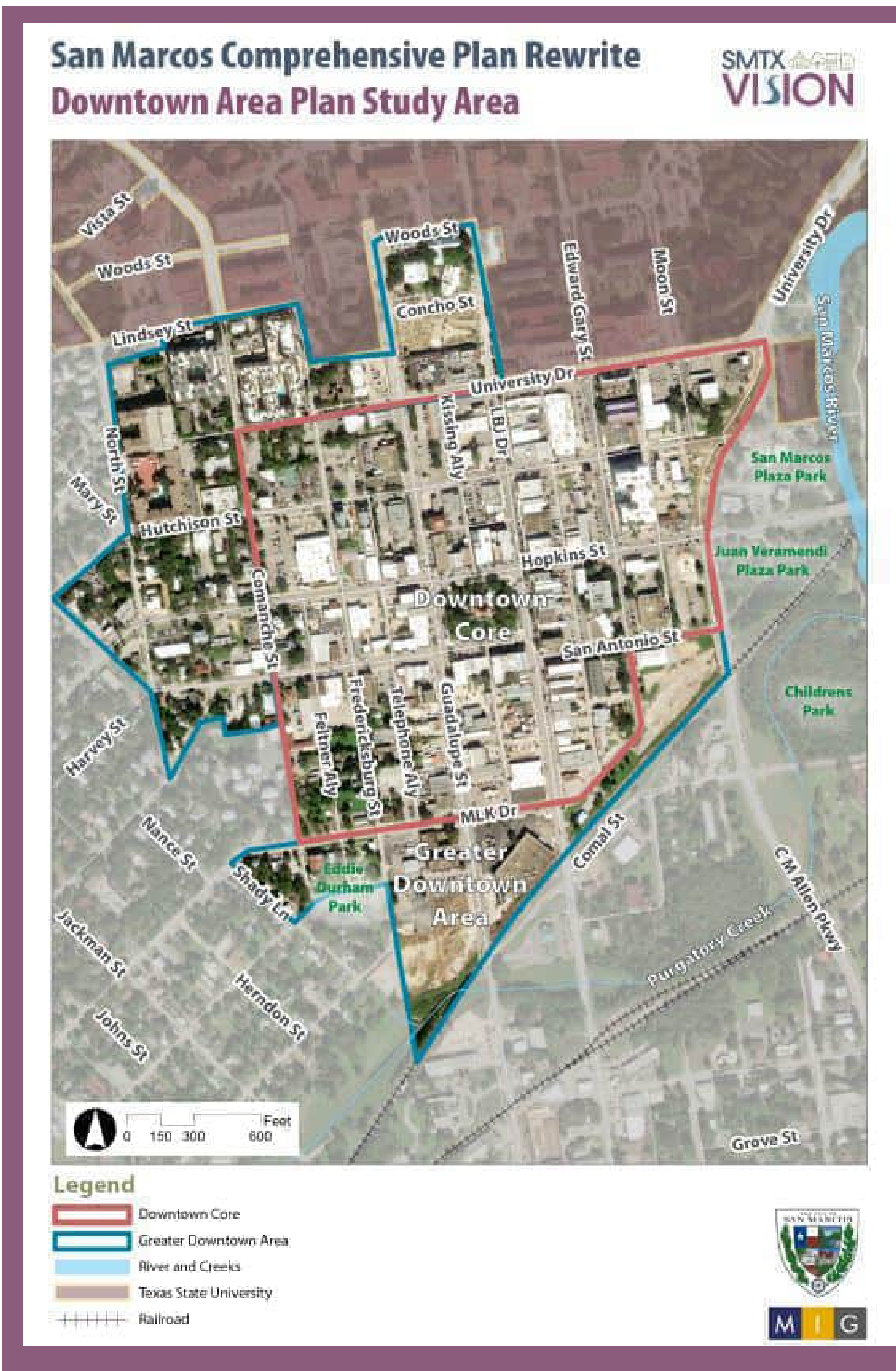


4 Draft & Final Downtown Plan

What we've heard from the community: Downtown Area Plan Vision



San Marcos' vibrant Downtown is the cultural and economic heart of the city where all community members are welcomed to gather, have fun, live, work, and enjoy the small-town charm in a safe, inclusive, and walkable environment. A beautiful intersection between past, present and future, Downtown San Marcos is ever-evolving, celebrates diversity, values history, supports local business, leads in sustainability, and provides a sense of connectedness to other neighborhoods, the San Marcos River, Texas State University, and beyond.



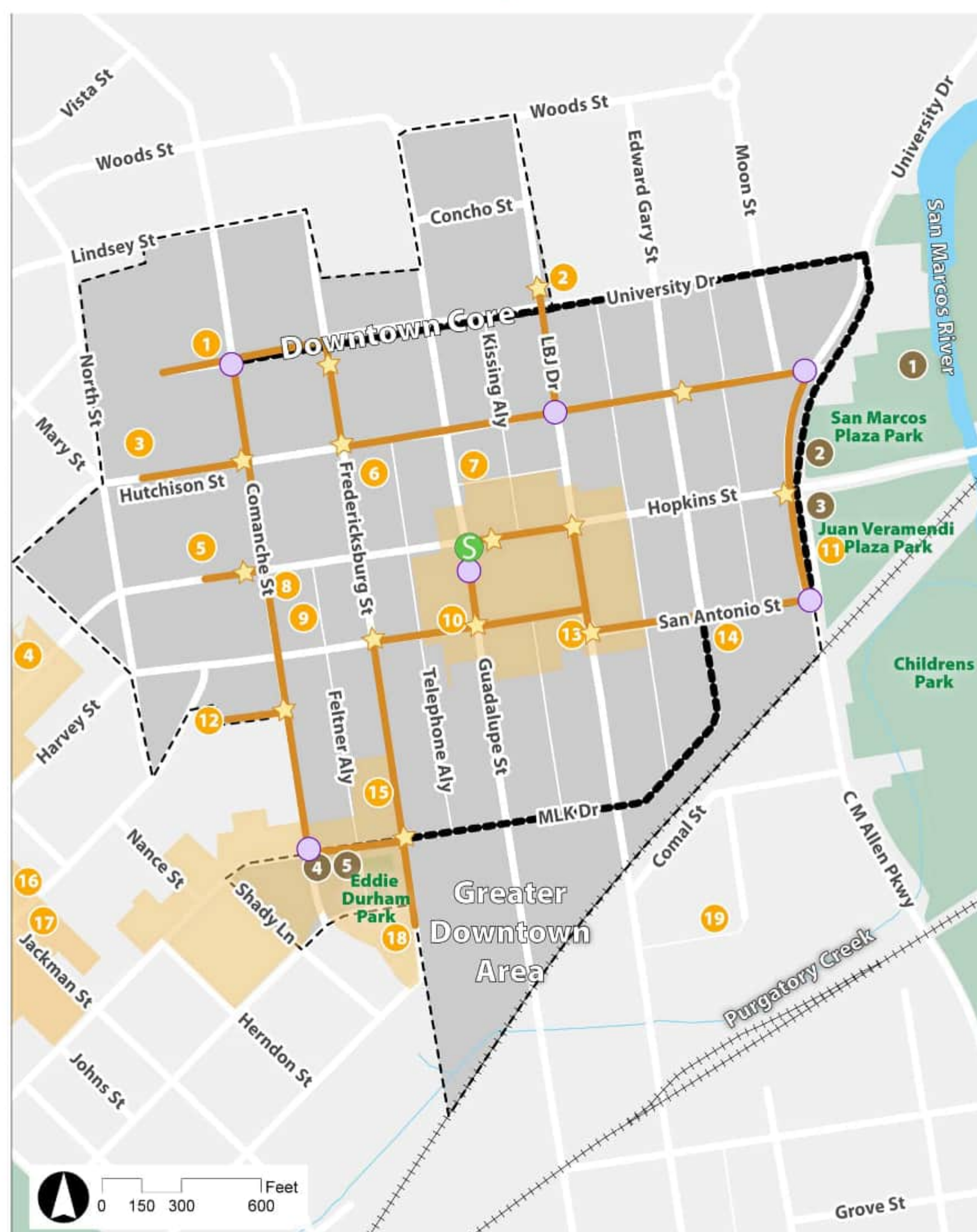
CONNECTING & SHOWCASING CULTURE THROUGH A HISTORY & ART WALK

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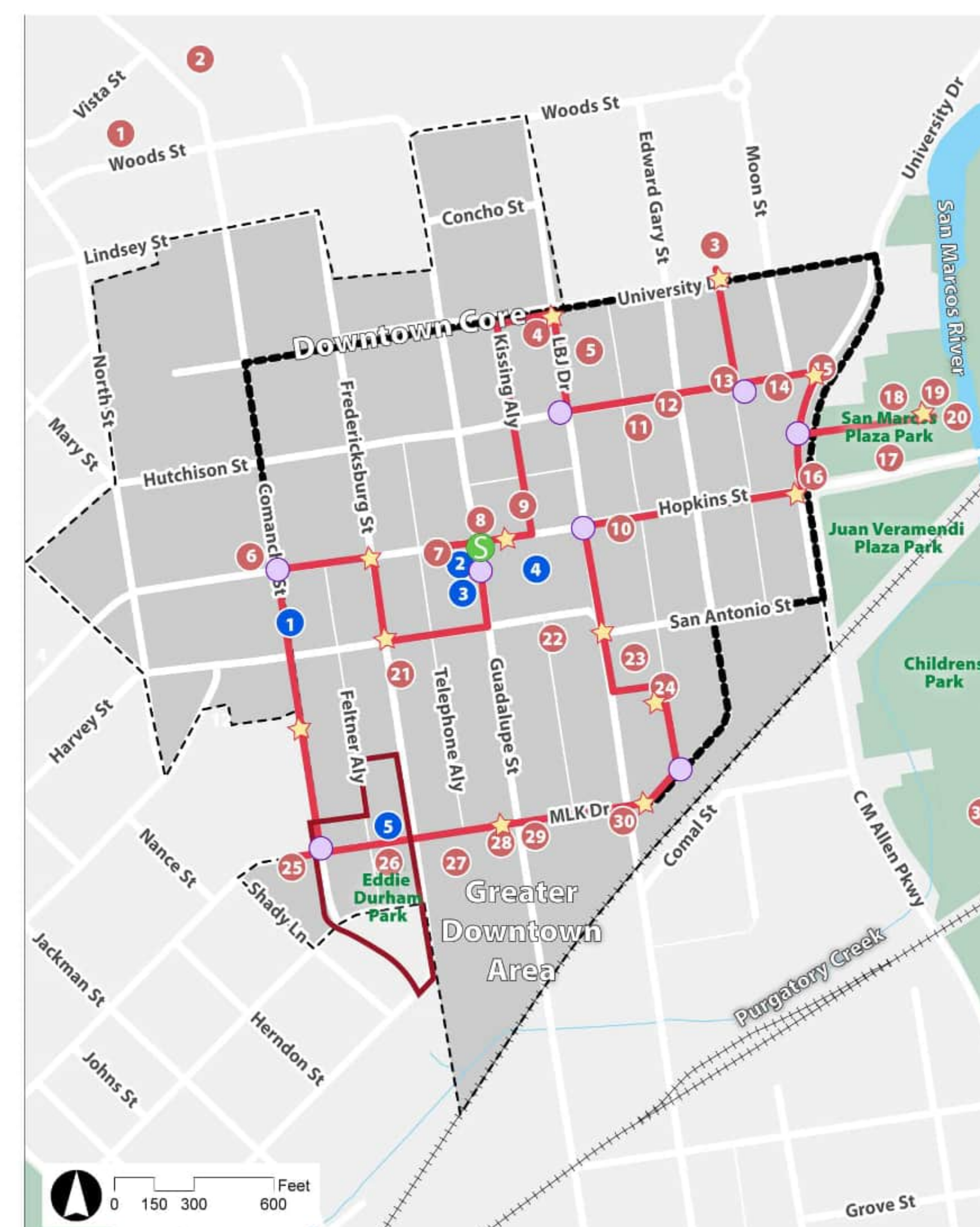
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San Marcos Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Downtown Area Plan - History Walk



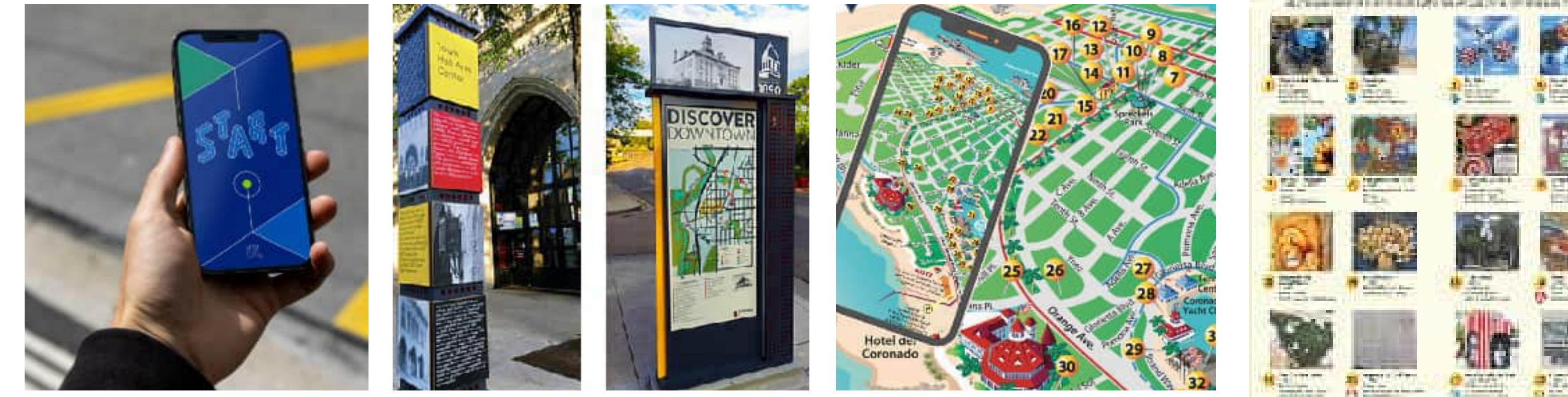
San Marcos Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Downtown Area Plan - Art Walk



Mobile Interface

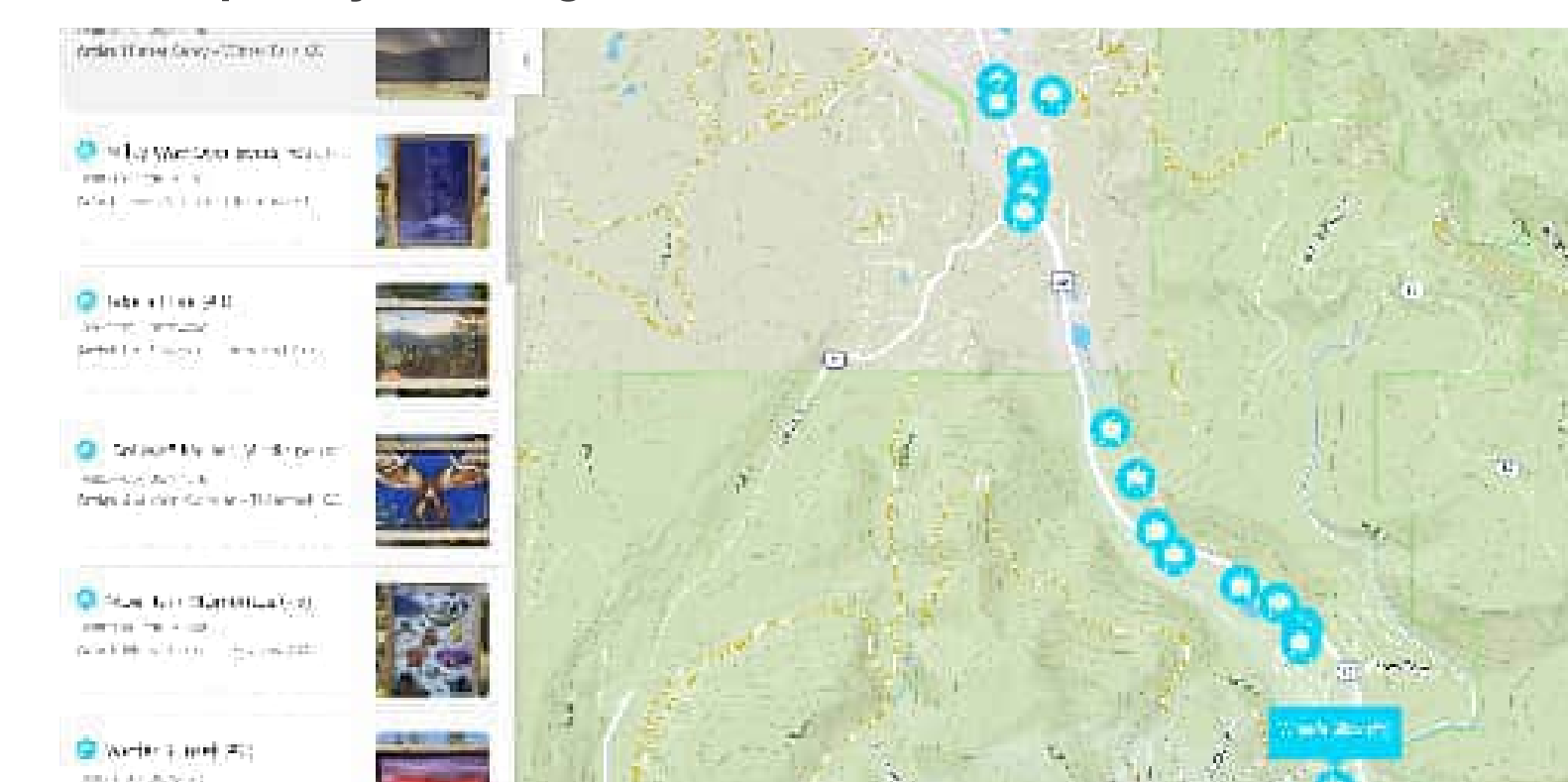
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- Links to the website from QR codes
- Painted temporary signage for special events and programming
- A list of performing arts/event venues with a calendar of events, option to buy tickets, and links to navigate to the various venues



Digital Map

To increase usability, the Art, History, and Culture Walks should be embedded into the existing Arts website to help with wayfinding along the walking paths as well as host additional information about the cultural sites. The map can **build off of the Legacy Business Program**, intended to provide aid and technical support to small businesses considered historically significant and underserved. The maps and their content are intended for ease of viewing online and could be printed out in brochures. In addition, it could also incorporate other **Temporary Walks for special events, tourism promotion, or temporary/rotating art installations in the future.**



B. "Hearts on a Swing"

She is the darling of **Pearl Street**, and you. I often see that someone has placed a flower in her right hand.

Artist: George Lundeen
Broadway and Pearl St.



CREATING A CULTURAL TRUST AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

To help fund the visual and performing arts, San Marcos can follow the example of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. **The area surrounding Eddie Durham Park is ideal for a Cultural District.**

Example: The Pittsburgh Cultural Trust was founded as a non-profit in the 1980's with the hopes of revitalizing a declining part of the city. The 14-block area subsequently went through a process of restoring old theaters for use, redeveloping adjacent properties, creating new performance, public art, park, and recreation spaces. It attracts a variety of uses, which keeps the spaces activated with locals and tourists even when there is not a large performance. **A district like this would thrive in San Marcos** as they encourage business development, establish a tourist destination, provide opportunity for state funding, preserves and promotes historic sites, and attracts artists and cultural enterprises.

Other cities in Texas that have successfully created a cultural district:

- Bastrop
- Denton (shown)
- Wimberley
- Smithville



What we heard from the community: Local artists and University artists want to contribute to the public art scene and sell art Downtown & that performing arts facilities are lacking.

*See Existing Conditions Assessment for legends identifying numbered historic assets and art installations.



DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

History, Art, and Culture



Place sticky notes below questions

What stories do you think should be elevated in Downtown through art, signage, etc.?

Other Comments on This Topic

How should the City best reflect / communicate these stories to the community?

Making Downtown a Better Place to Live

Compared to other neighborhoods in San Marcos, the Downtown neighborhood has the most diverse mix of housing types and services. However, we heard that there is a **desire to have additional housing and ownership opportunities Downtown**. Two primary methods to make Downtown a better place to live have been identified through the Downtown Area Plan process to date:

- 1. Transportation-related improvements** such as traffic calming, pedestrian connections, bicycle network, frequent/reliable/convenient transit service, and parking management. See the boards called “Multimodal Connectivity and Parking” and “Streetscapes” to learn more about recommendations related to transportation.
- 2. Community amenities** are important to serve a growing population of Downtown residents. Many key amenities already exist in Downtown, but the list of amenities to the right should continue to be prioritized to ensure quality of life for Downtown residents.

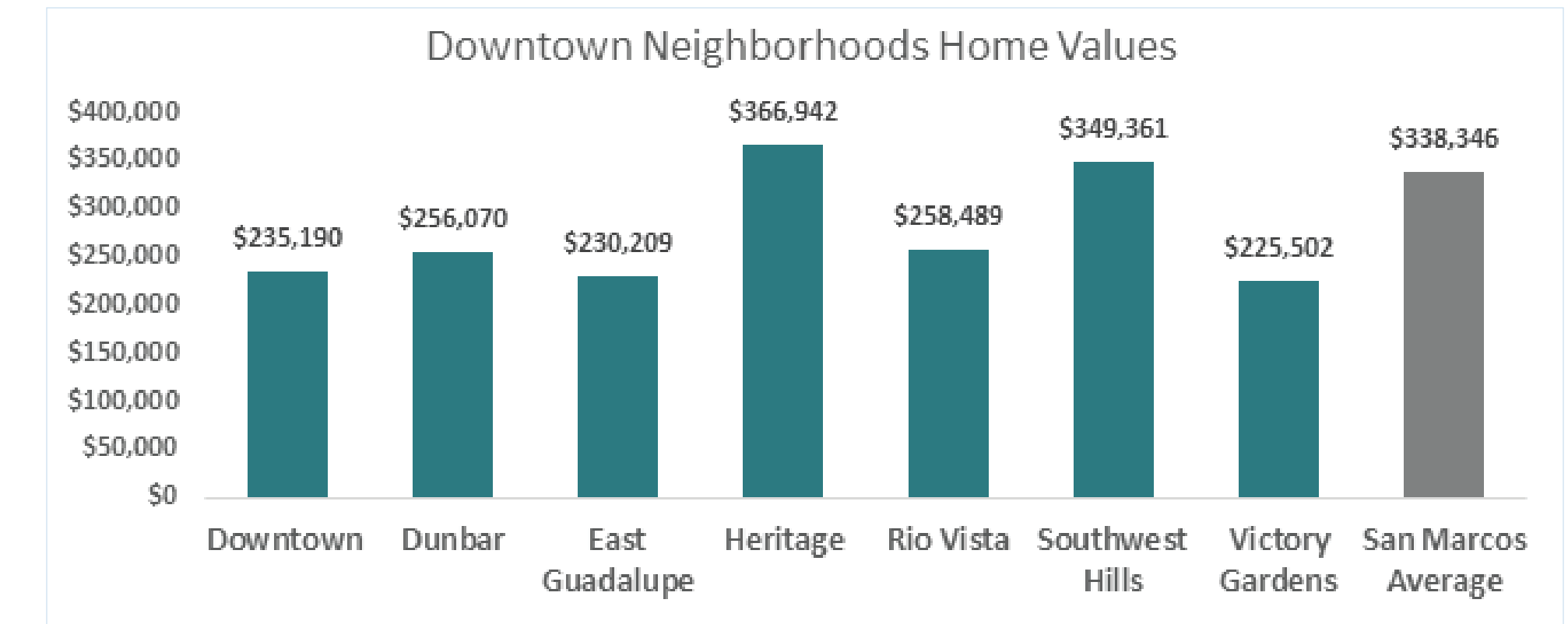
Key Community Amenities to Serve Downtown Residents:

- Groceries and fresh/healthy food options
- Parks and public gathering spaces
- Daycares, early childhood development centers, and children's play areas
- Health care and pharmacies
- Well-maintained public realm
- Daily services such as post office, laundromats, financial services, and a variety of restaurants
- Shopping such as clothing, shoes, general goods, bookstore, and hardware

Affordability

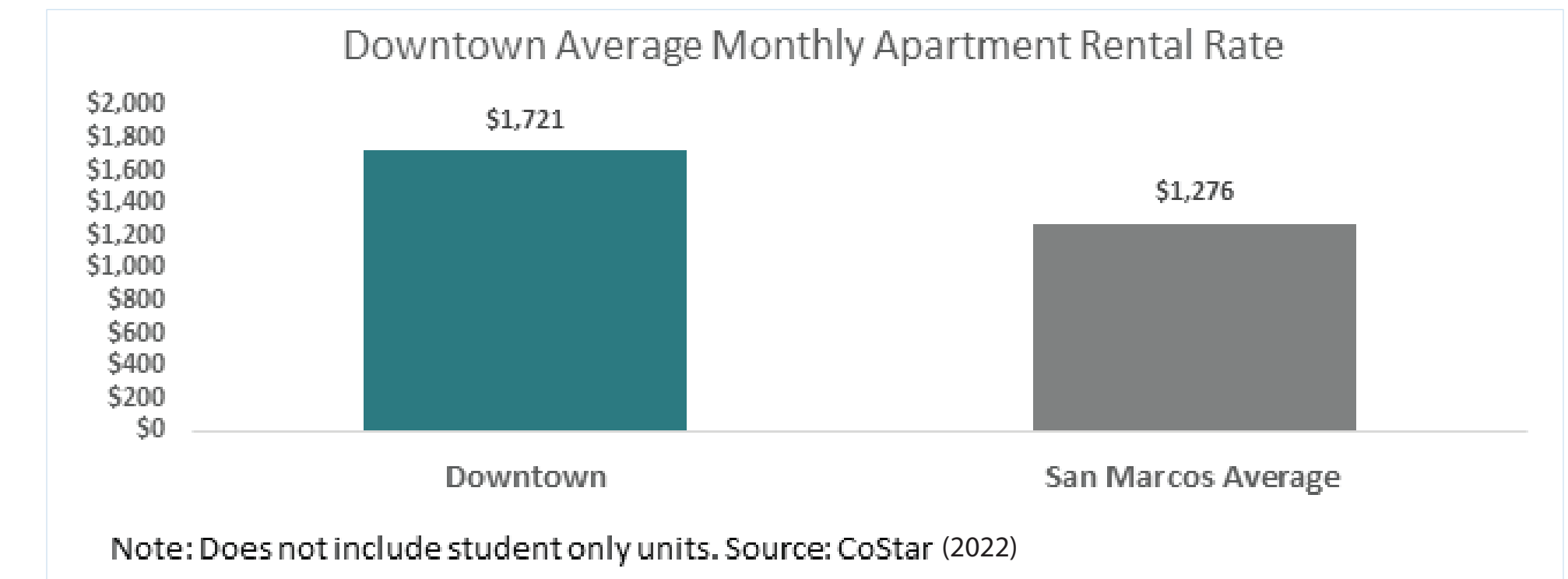
For-Sale Housing

The Downtown area lacks existing for-sale housing options. For-sale homes in and around downtown have values at or below the city-wide average. However, based on the Draft Strategic Housing Action Plan (2019), one of San Marcos's housing needs is for an ownership option below \$200,000.



For-Rent Housing

Most of the rental housing options in downtown are student oriented. Average rental rates for all units in downtown are higher than citywide averages.

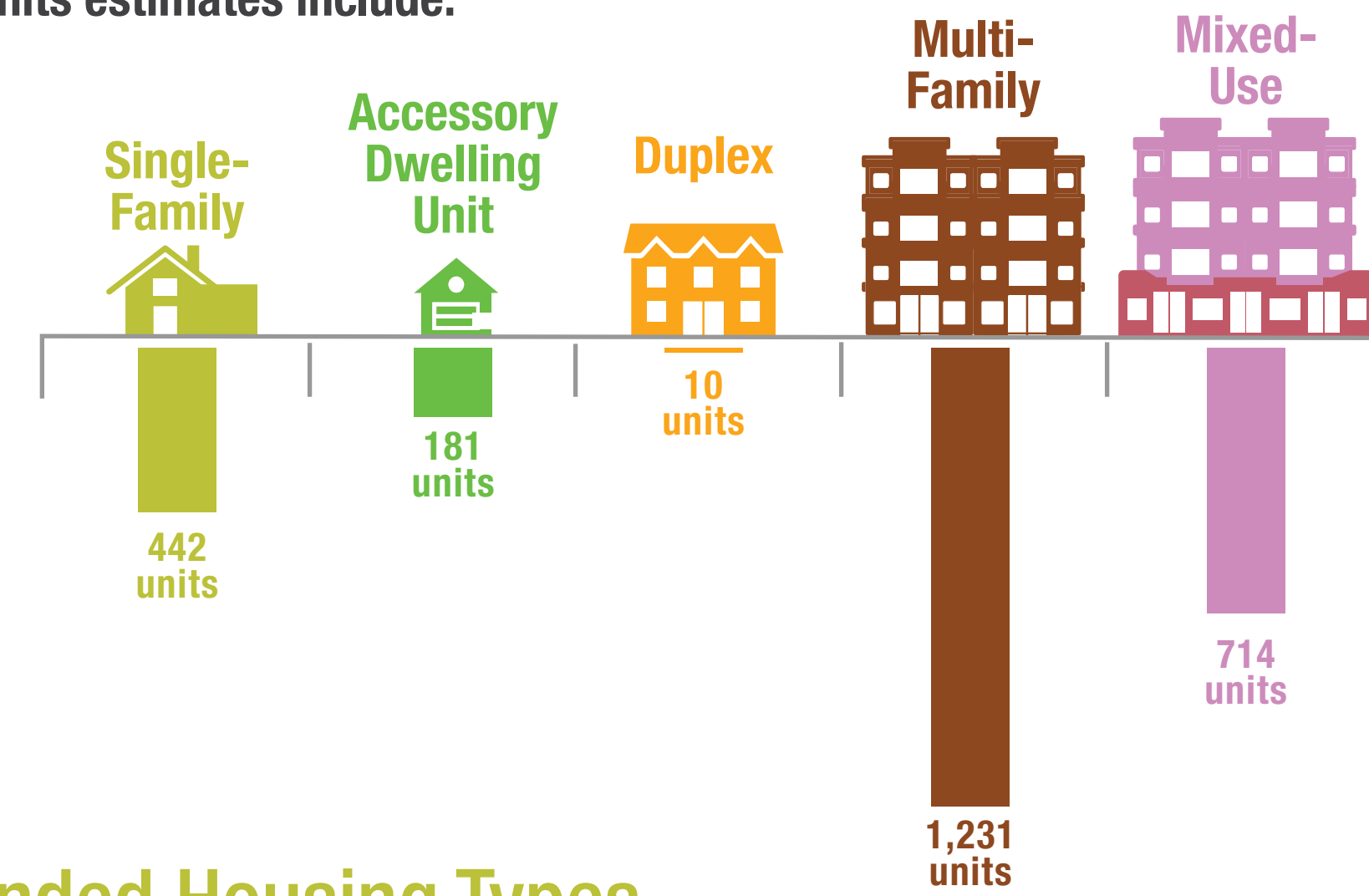


Housing Options

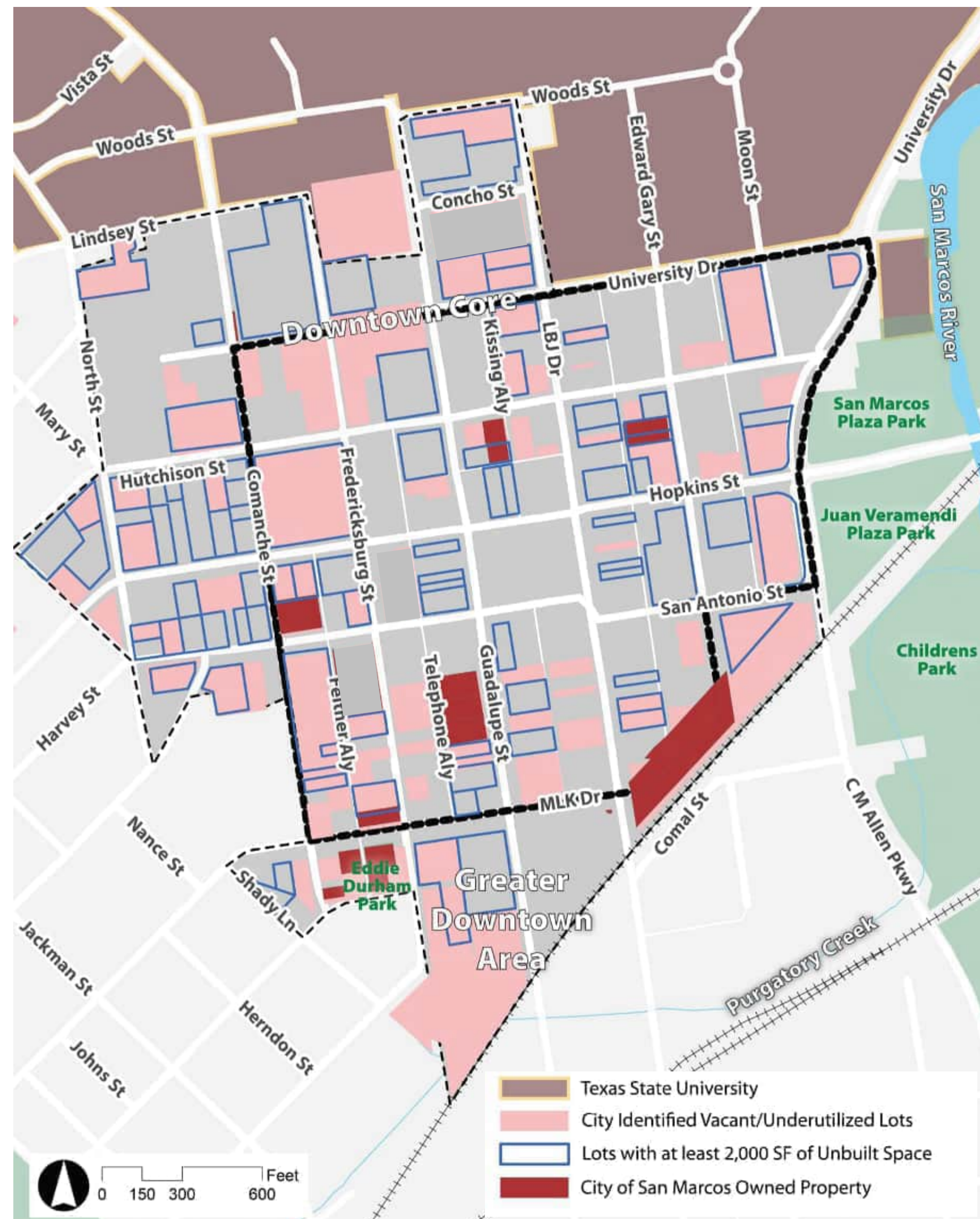
Within 1/2 mile of the Downtown Core, existing housing units estimates include:

**Data in this section regarding existing housing units is not 100% accurate. The City should complete an updated housing inventory to get a complete understanding of existing Downtown housing.*

75% multi-family or mixed-use
17% single-family
8% middle housing types



Development Opportunities



Recommended Housing Types

In order to **keep up with population growth**, Downtown should be one of the **most dense residential areas** of San Marcos. Multi-family and mixed-use housing types are the primary products recommended for in and near Downtown, and should be marketed to **all demographics** (not just students). Around the outer edges of Downtown, especially adjacent to existing neighborhoods, “missing middle” housing types are needed. These include ADU’s, multiplexes, and townhomes.

Development Barriers

To promote the development of “missing middle”, multi-family, and mixed-use housing in Downtown (within CD5D zoning), **existing barriers should be considered for change**. Strategies may include:

Streamline Development Process

- Identify a single City point of contact for navigating development process
- Provide technical assistance/resource guide
- Provide expedited permitting especially for resubmittals
- Improve timeliness of pre-development meetings and notes

Development Code Standards

- Reduce parking requirements or utilize parking maximums rather than minimums
- Consider/ Evaluate reduced impact fees
- Reassess build-to, setback, and lot size requirements
- Evaluate the process and impact of existing and proposed utility easements
- Consider providing watershed-level engineering modeling for downtown to assist with meeting engineering requirements
- Expand platting exemptions
- Offer solar or other sustainability incentives for new construction and re-development
- Provide exemptions similar to single-family development to financially justify missing-middle development, and differentiate exemptions from large scale multi-family projects

Ownership

What are the issues?

- Downtown lacks for-sale housing options
- Residents in surrounding stable neighborhoods may be vulnerable to impacts of rising homes prices and land values
- Homes in and around Downtown are typically older and in many cases in need of reinvestment
- There is a growing use of homes for short term rentals near Downtown

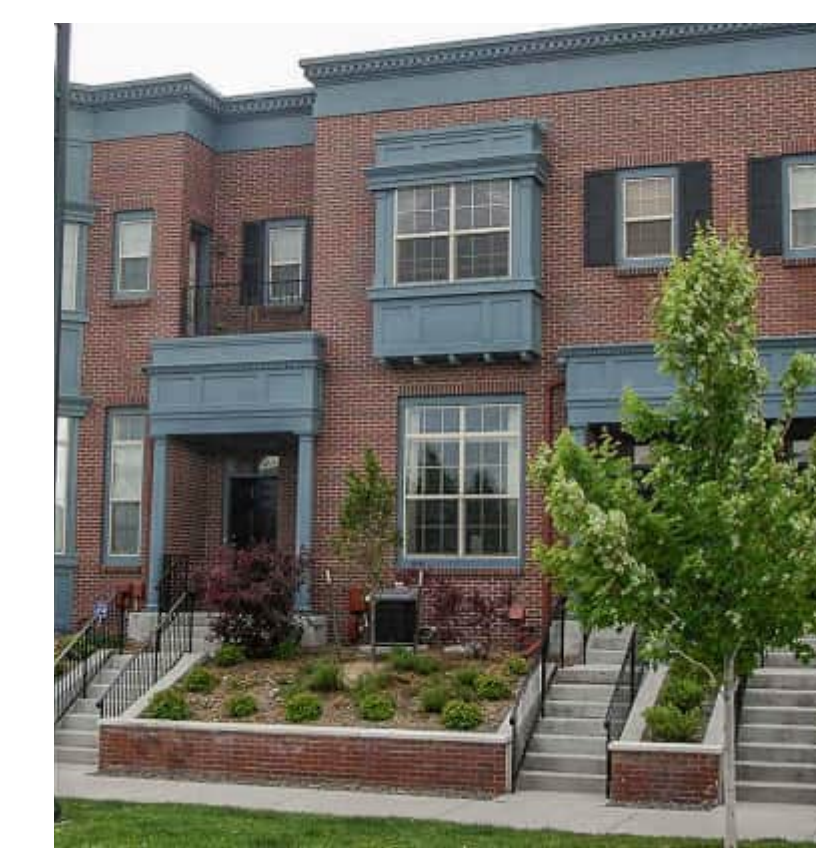
Draft Strategic Housing Action Plan

The City of San Marcos developed a draft Strategic Housing Action Plan in 2019 to guide workforce and affordable housing efforts in the city. The Action Plan is still pending reconsideration to address issues in the community, however **many of the proposed action steps can help address housing issues in downtown**. The Action Plan has four main goals of expanding housing opportunities, preserving and enhancing existing housing, leveraging community and regional partners, and quantifying the future needs of the community.

Strategies to Consider for Downtown and Surrounding Neighborhoods

- Owner occupied unit rehabilitation support programs
- Senior and low-income home maintenance fund
- Enhanced code enforcement to address problem properties
- Infill housing incentives for attracting for-sale housing product types such as townhomes and condos
- Down-payment assistance for homebuyers
- Density and regulatory bonuses for inclusion of affordable housing units in Downtown
- Use of financial incentives including tax increment financing to support non-student and for-sale housing developments in Downtown
- Reduce regulatory barriers to desired projects (e.g. parking requirements, height restrictions, density caps) in Downtown

Examples of missing middle housing types:



Townhomes



Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



Quadplex



DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

Downtown Housing Options



Place sticky notes below questions

What other strategies do you think would make Downtown a better place to live and allow more people to live in Downtown?

Other Comments on This Topic

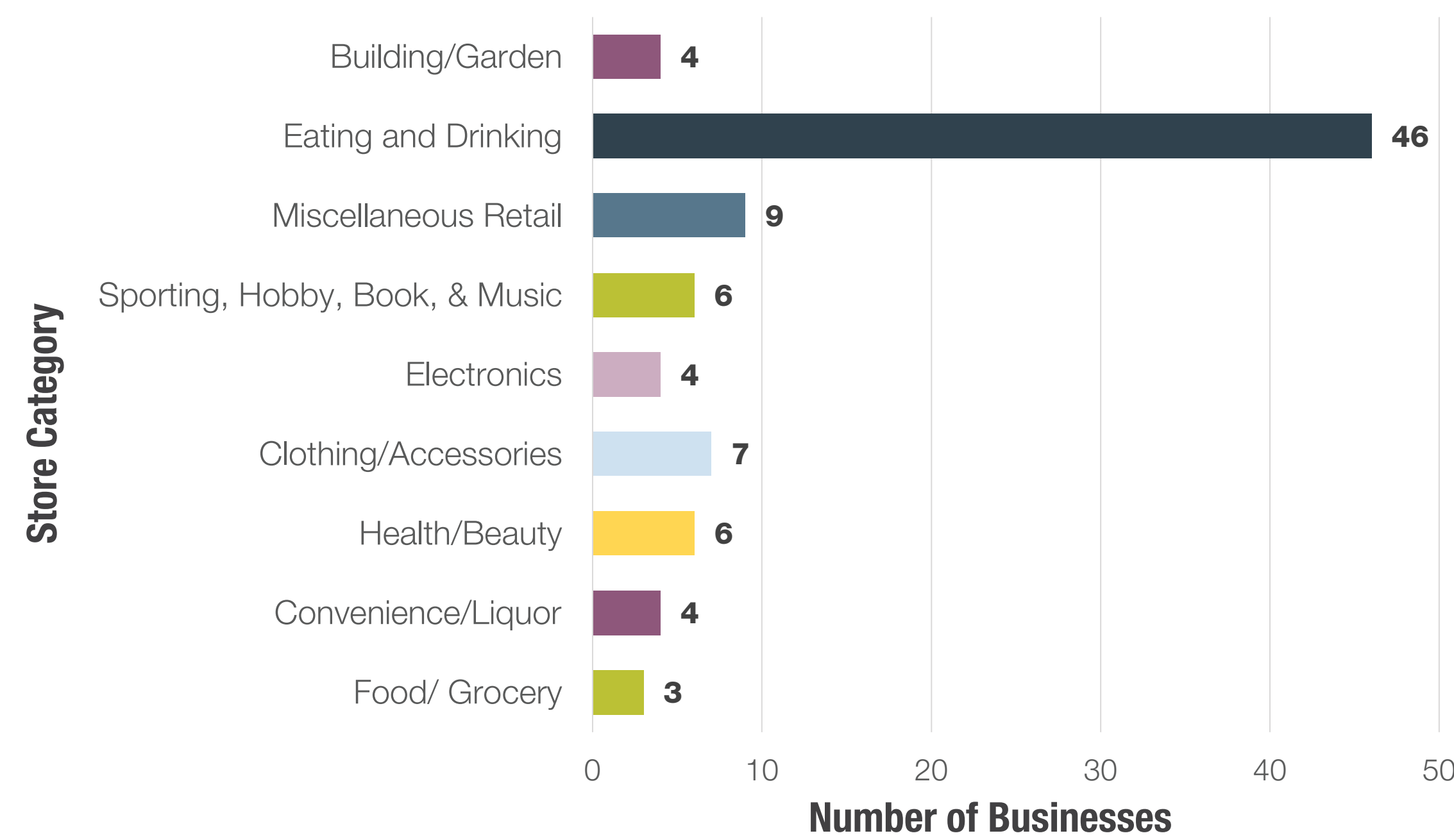
Should downtown promote uses where people can live, work, and play or should its uses be more for business?

Community desire for increased Business Variety

Downtown San Marcos has a diverse mixture of stores, however, eating and drinking establishments are the predominate store category. These account for over half of Downtown retail businesses.

A **strong downtown retail mix** means there is a diverse presence of convenience-oriented retail (e.g. grocery stores, health/beauty stores, pharmacies, beer/wine store), which support residents, workers, and visitors. A greater diversity of retail offerings can help attract a more diverse shopper base and provide a **greater diversity of activity throughout the day**. San Marcos should strive to continue to attract and support more retail businesses to augment and support the eating and drinking establishments.

Downtown Retail Businesses by Store Category



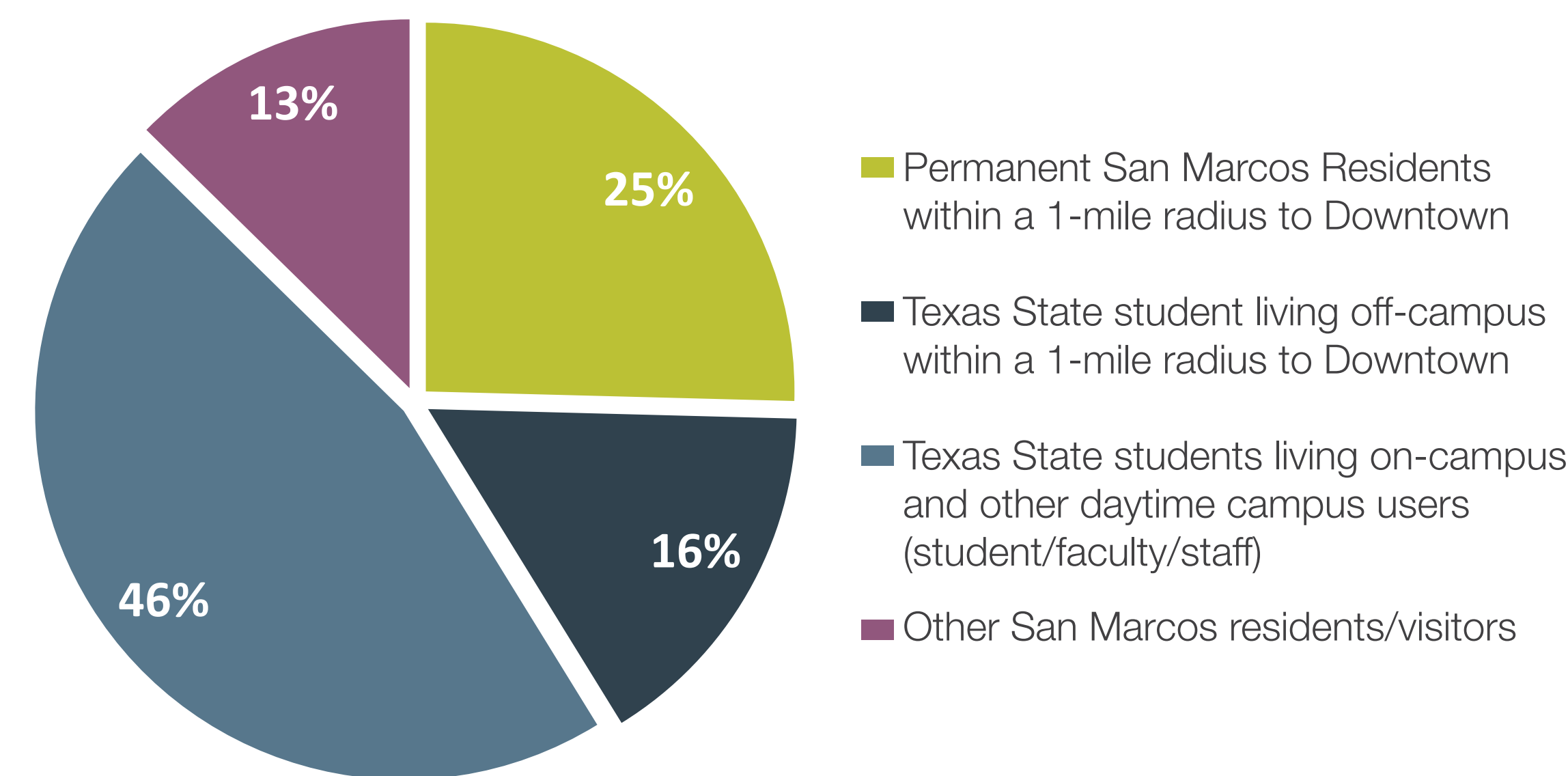
Retail Demand Make-Up

The proximity of Texas State University to downtown San Marcos and the size of the consumer base generated by the university has a major impact on retailers attracted to Downtown. **An estimated 60+% of retail demand comes from two sources**

- 1) Students who go to school at the campus and live within a 1-mile radius of Downtown
- 2) Students/faculty/staff who go to school at the campus but don't live within 1 mile of Downtown.

Given the size and consumer power of these groups, the retail mix in Downtown can be overly influenced by the spending habits of students.

Percent of Estimated Retail Demand by Shopper Type



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems

Strategies to Achieve Greater Retail Diversity

Greater diversity of retail options in downtown can be generated through both demand and supply strategies. To help diversify the retail offerings, the City of San Marcos should strive to:

1. Diversify the types of people who are spending money in Downtown to counterbalance the influence of student spending.

Potential Strategies Include:

1. Increase number of non-students living in and around Downtown by supporting a variety of housing options in Downtown including non-student apartments, condos, townhomes, and other housing options
2. Increase the number and type of visitors to Downtown
 - Increase the number and types of events held in Downtown
 - Increase lodging options in Downtown

2. Diversify the retail business mix in Downtown by adding more retail options that appeal to visitors and non-student San Marcos residents.

Potential Strategies Include:

1. Work with the Downtown Association to develop a desired retailer list and identify spaces for the retailers to occupy
2. Provide incentives for rehabilitation of retail spaces
3. Provide incentives for target retailers
4. Work with property owners and developers to provide a greater diversity of sizes and types of store front spaces for lease
5. Provide greater flexibility for use of retail buildings and spaces within City regulatory use and code standards
6. Support and attract a greater diversity of business owners and entrepreneurs through targeted programs and efforts

Downtown Economic Partners



Entrepreneur Support and Diversity

Supportive Programs for Entrepreneurs

- Provide business start-up incentives or improvement grants to historically **under-served entrepreneurs** such as people who identify as BIPOC.
- Working with community finance partners to create funding/financing programs targeted to under-served business.

“How-to guide” for starting a business in Downtown

- Create a new/small business resource program that provides guides and **technical support** for new and expanding businesses.
- Host a central physical and digital hub for resources within Downtown
- Explore creation of a business navigator or **mentoring program** that connects new businesses with navigators or mentors for support.

Licensing/Permitting

- Modify regulations and create permitting programs to allow for businesses to expand beyond their front door into sidewalks and/or parking spaces to blur line between public and private realm.
- Modify business permitting process to allow for greater allowances for temporary businesses or mobile businesses.
- Explore a registered vendor program for businesses wanting to host a temporary vending location in Downtown during events and high-traffic days.

Incubator Spaces

It is recommended that San Marcos create a Downtown incubator space and new business support program. Key Steps include:

- Identify a central building/space in Downtown that can serve as a hub for entrepreneurship and innovation. Potential project elements include new/small business resource center, co-working space, maker space, event and conference space, education classrooms, new business office space
- Create a partnership with Texas State University, Greater San Marcos Partnership, and other support entities to create and program the facility.

Potential Program/Services Include:

- New/Small Business resource providers
- Business mentoring
- Business/entrepreneur networking events
- Educational classes and programs
- Investor and funder network

Shared Leases/Division of Large Spaces

It is recommended that San Marcos explore creation of a popup business program that connects new businesses with vacant retail spaces within Downtown. Key Components of the space include:

- Offering short-term, flexible leases and seed capital to prospective businesses in partnership with building owners.
- Providing opportunity for businesses to gain exposure and experience with low barrier to entry.
- Providing an activating use for a vacant space while the owner is seeking a long-term tenant.



Strengthening partnerships downtown and creating additional creative partnerships will assist in achieving a greater business diversity.

Place sticky notes below questions

What else could the City and/or incubator space do to encourage and support the creation of new small businesses in Downtown?

Other Comments on This Topic

Downtown events can be a technique for drawing more people downtown. What types of events would you like to see downtown?

Enhance the CM Allen Parkway District

A “CM Allen Parkway District” could be established with the intent of better connecting Downtown to the river and riverfront parks, as well as better utilizing land along CM Allen Parkway facing the riverfront. Key design considerations of the CM Allen Parkway District would include:

- Opportunity for higher density, mixed use buildings given distance from single-family neighborhoods
- Buildings with minimal setbacks or setbacks used for public plaza space
- Ground floor design oriented towards the street and the riverfront
- Enhanced and mid-block bike/pedestrian crossings across CM Allen Parkway
- “Parkways” or well-landscaped streets and signage to aid in wayfinding between the Riverfront and Downtown - Embracing the street name of CM Allen Parkway.

Existing Conditions



Pedestrian, landscaping, and water quality installations on CM Allen Parkway

Conceptual Illustration



Potential Downtown Hotel

Existing Conditions

- The downtown area currently has no hotels as most hotel options are along I-35.
- San Marcos also has a only a limited amount of event and conference space associated with hotels.
- The Embassy Suites San Marcos Hotel and Conference center is the only hotel with a sizable amount of space (ie over 3,500 square feet) for events and meetings. San Marcos has limited luxury/full-service hotel options.

Market Conditions

- The hotel room inventory in San Marcos has increased by 50% in the past decade with the city attracting 739 rooms.
- Average daily rate (\$125 in July 2022) for hotels in San Marcos have rebounded from COVID-19 Pandemic and are the highest levels the city’s hotels have achieved.
- Occupancy rates for the summer months of 2022 were at or above 70% indicating demand.

Hotel Case Studies

University of Colorado On-Campus Hotel and Conference Center

- 250 room hotel with 25,000 square feet of meeting space including a 15,000 square foot ballroom
- Designed to be publicly accessible with a community plaza gathering space
- Located on edge of campus next to the University Hill commercial district where City of Boulder is hoping to diversify retail and food offerings to be less student centric.

Metro State University Hotel and Hospitality Learning Center

- Partnership with Metro State University of Denver, Sage Hospitality, and Marriott International
- The project includes a 150 room SpringHill Suites Hotel on edge of campus next to major entertainment attractions in downtown Denver.
- Project also includes the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation Conference Center, an academic building with 30,000 square feet and learning laboratories.
- Hotel is operated in partnership with Metro State and staffed by students

The Thomas Hotel

- Tyler, Texas
- Boutique hotel built into historic buildings fronting the city's main square
- The project has 8 rooms and a ground floor restaurant/bar



"Hofheinz Hotel 1906" Photo
Credit: San Marcos
Public Library

Did you know San Marcos used to have a Downtown Hotel?

The Hofheinz Hotel was located across from Sean Patrick's on E San Antonio Street. Part of the building still stands today.



Existing building today

A hotel can bring visitors that will help diversify the consumer base in downtown and add activity to downtown throughout the day.

Strategy: Attract a downtown hotel that provides multiple benefits and assets to downtown. Key elements of a downtown project include meeting/conference space and a full-service restaurant. A partnership with Texas State University is worth exploring to achieve mutually beneficial goals.



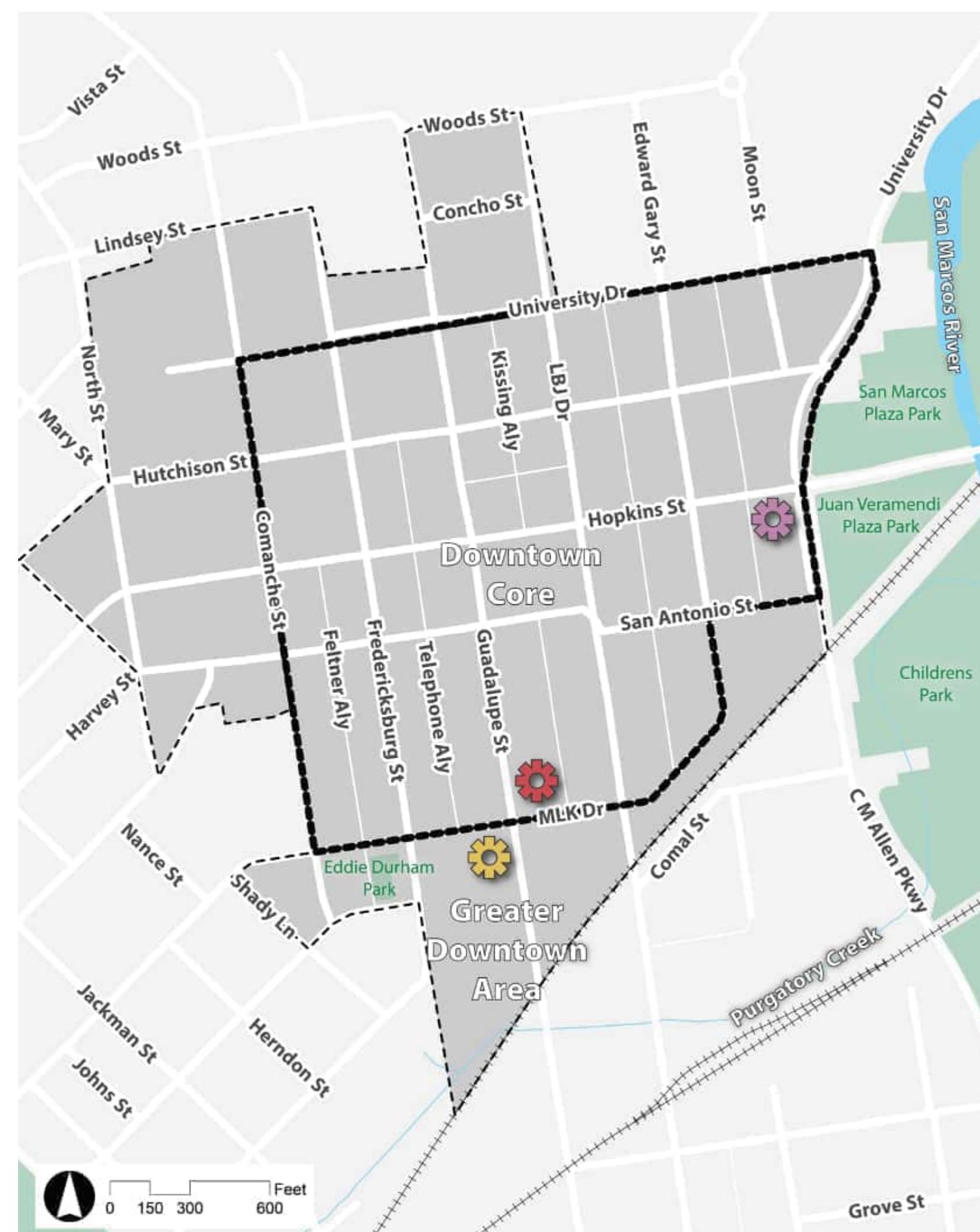
Conceptual Infill Development

During the Downtown Area Plan process to date, an interest has been expressed for **new types of development that currently don't exist or are lacking in Downtown**. These include “missing middle” housing options, small business startup/incubator spaces, additional restaurants and retail, and vertical mixed-use buildings. Concepts on this page reflect a vision to **better utilize privately-owned vacant properties in Downtown while providing development types desired by the community**. The ideas are purely conceptual and would require further study to assess feasibility.

Attracting Desired Development

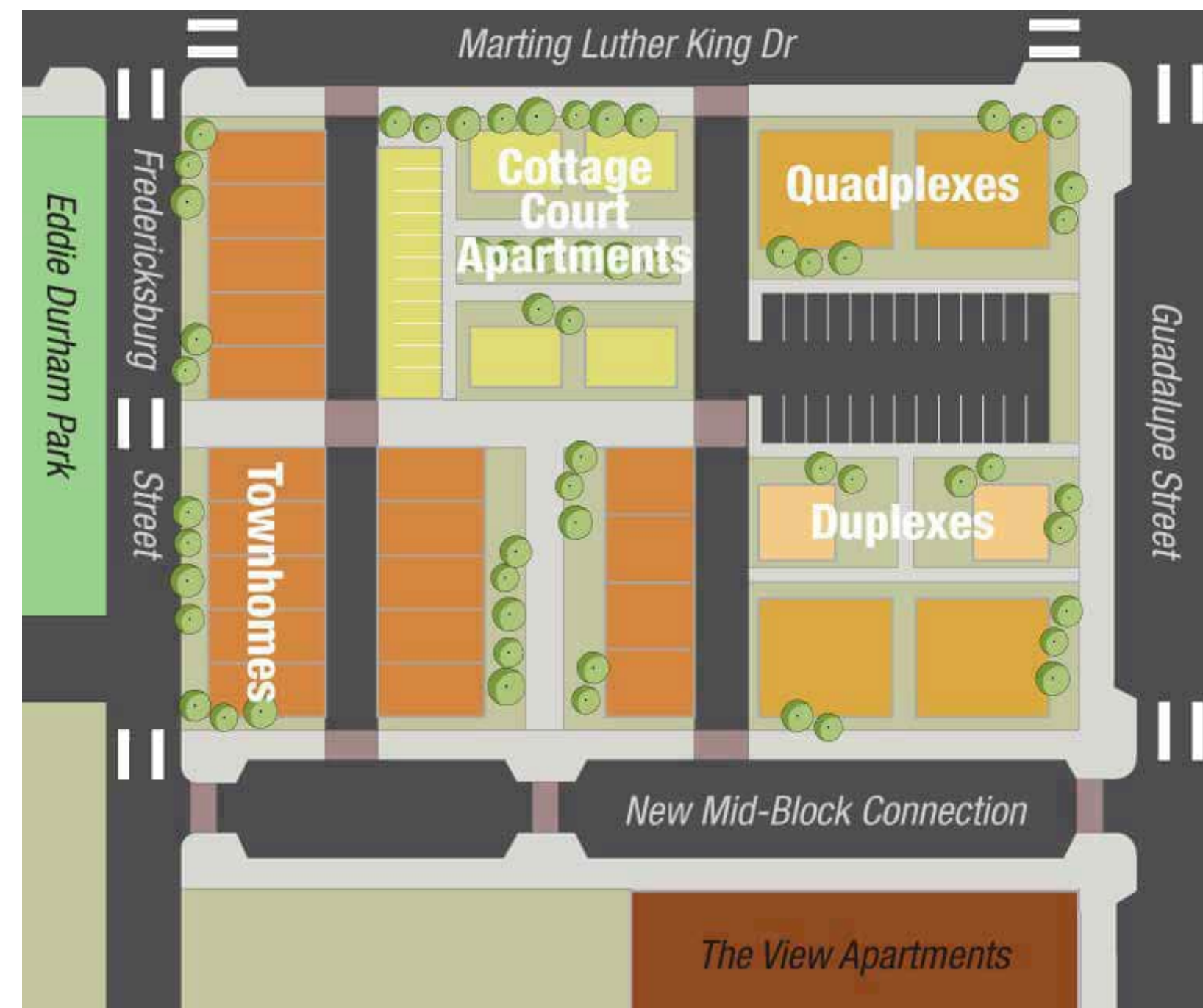
While these conceptual development ideas are located on private property, there are tools the City can use to attract the development that is envisioned. These strategies include:

- Provide interested developers with these visions to provide predictability of public sentiment and streamline development process
- Refine the vision for these sites in partnership with existing property owners
- City purchase of properties and then either donating land or selling land at a reduced cost in exchange for developer commitment to implementing the vision
- Provide incentives for property owners or developers interested in implementing concept (ie: expedited permitting, reduced fees, modified site/zoning requirements, etc.)

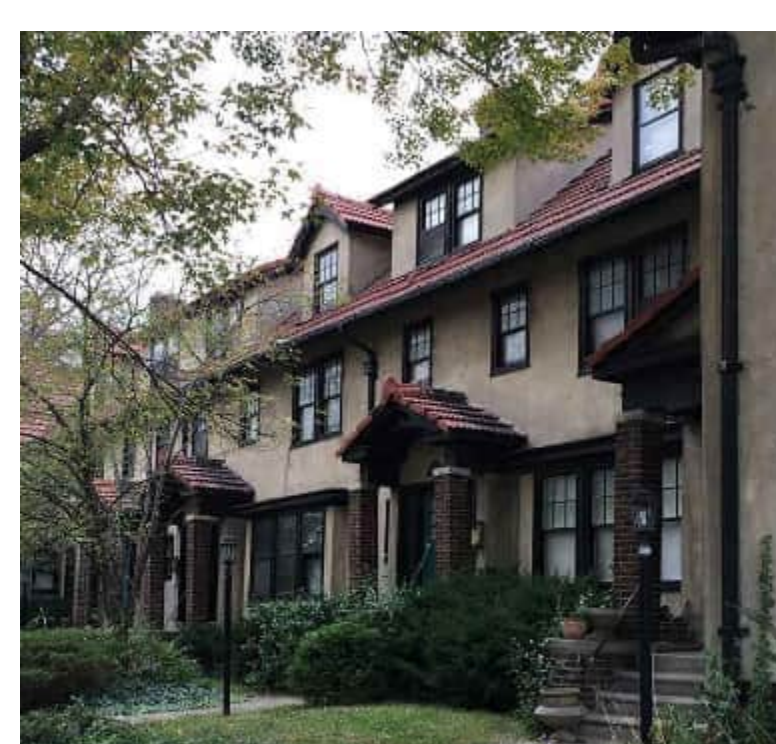


#1 Missing Middle Housing (200 S Guadalupe)

The southwest corner of Guadalupe St. and MLK Dr. is currently occupied by an aging office building, small utility buildings, and a surface parking lot. The community has a need & interest in **additional housing types** that provide “middle” options between single-family homes and apartments. This location could fit a significant amount of housing with convenient access to Eddie Durham Park and the rest of Downtown.



*Graphics above are for illustration purpose only



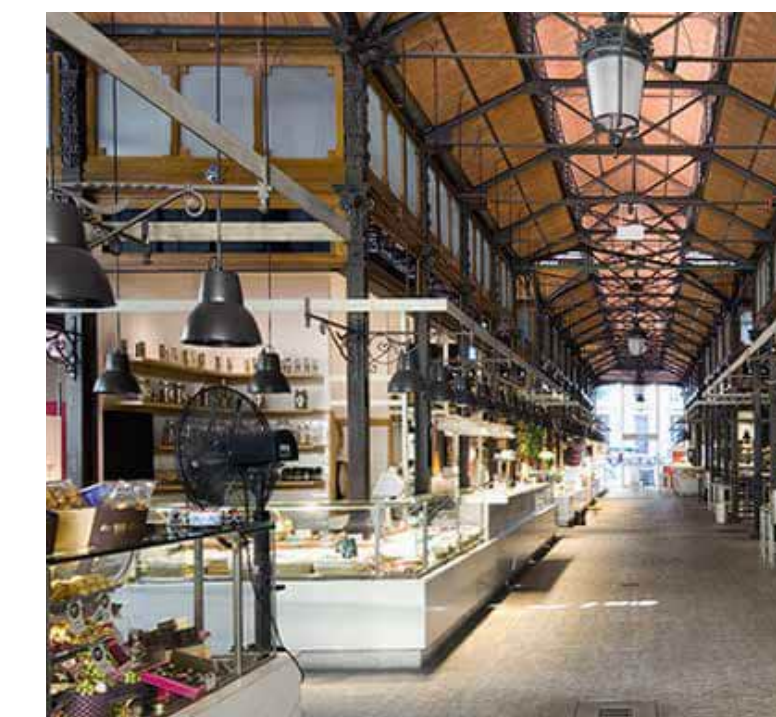
#2 Open-Air Marketplace/Food Hall (101 E MLK Dr)

The northeast corner of Guadalupe St. and MLK Dr. could be redeveloped into an open-air marketplace/food hall or food incubator that would provide startup space for small businesses and a unique **community gathering place** different from what exists today.

- Food carts and trucks can be paired with mini-restaurants and shops to provide a variety of offerings within one relatively small site.
- Parking would be located along the alley and the Guadalupe cycle track also connects to this location.
- Landscaping would provide buffering/screening to adjacent properties and traffic noise.
- A central paseo would provide space for pedestrian connectivity and visiting the mini storefronts. The space would be open-air but shaded overhead.

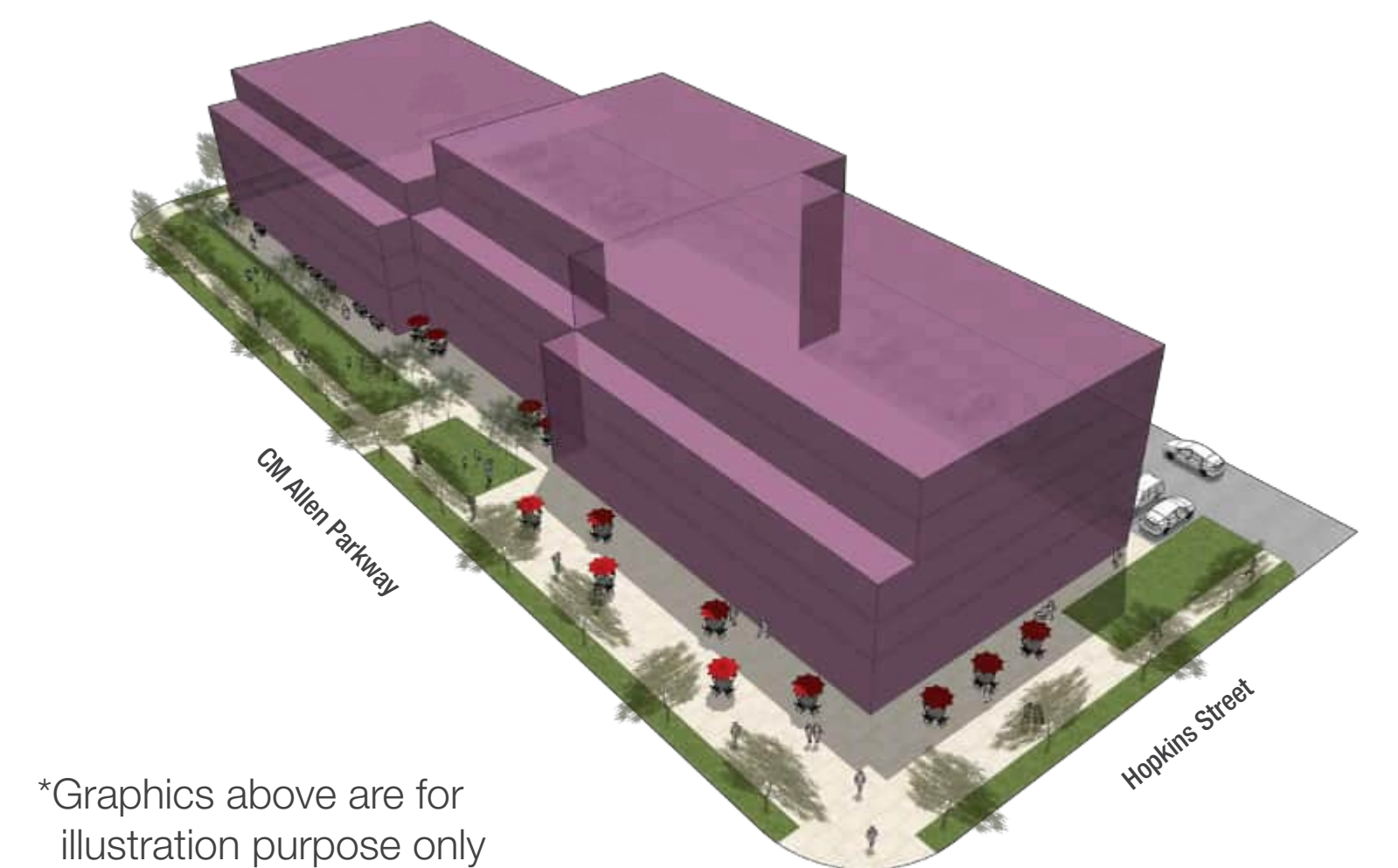
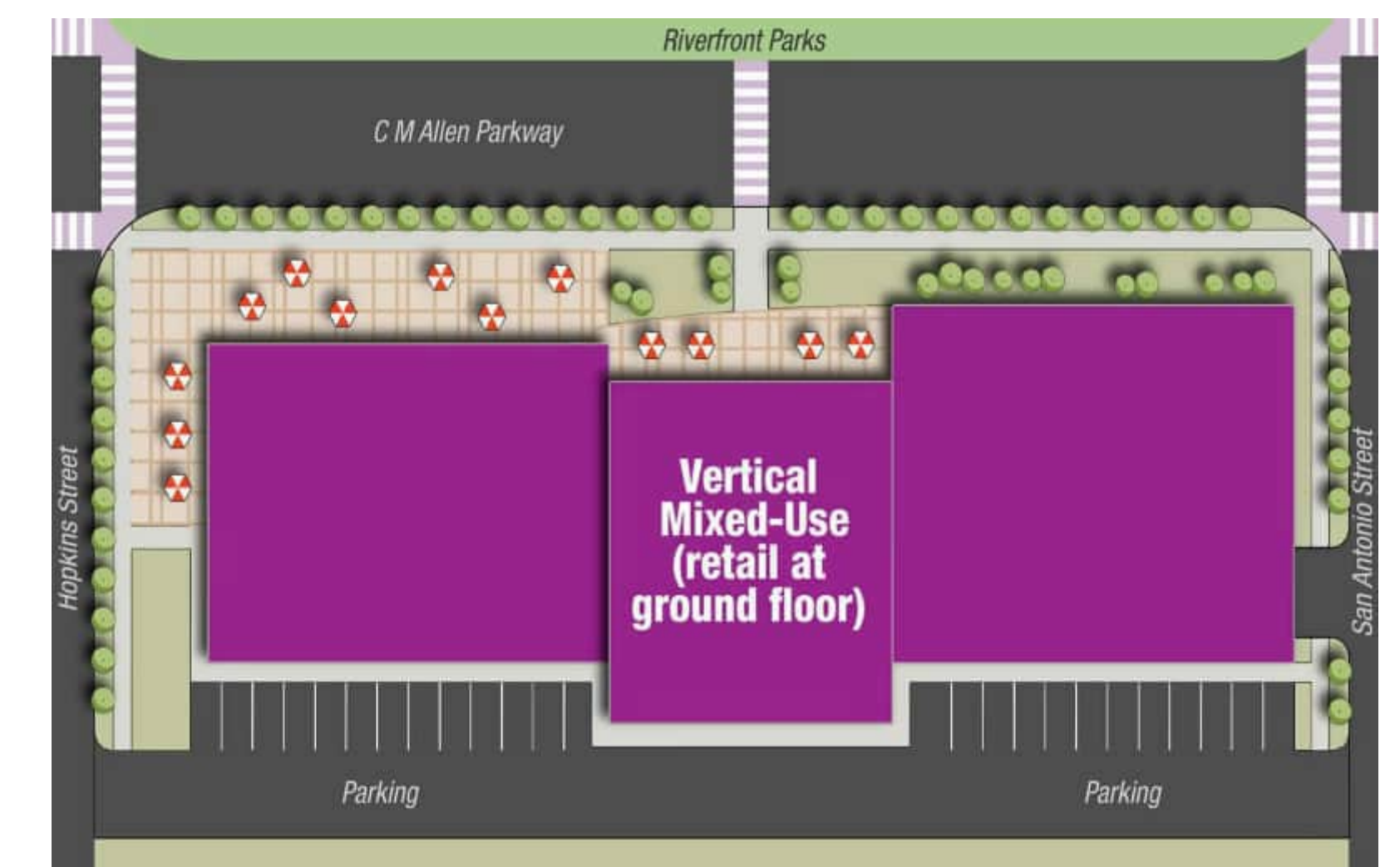


*Graphics above are for illustration purpose only



#3 Vertical Mixed-Use (312 E Hopkins St.)

This site is currently a parking lot and is located along CM Allen Parkway between Hopkins and San Antonio Street, adjacent to Veramendi Park. Given the close proximity to the San Marcos River, this development has the opportunity to provide **community amenities** at the ground floor and attract people into Downtown. A public plaza along CM Allen Parkway could serve as an inviting gateway for both residents and visitors.



*Graphics above are for illustration purpose only



Ground Floor Design Considerations

Inviting Buildings

Successful retail environments contribute to the Downtown economy, energy, and experience. The street level design of buildings are essential to ensure a positive retail environment.

Key Design Elements:

- Structural improvements such as building articulation, transparency/ windows, door aesthetics, seasonal flexibility, and accessibility
- Facade enhancements such as color, varied materials, lighting, awnings, historic restoration
- Amenities outside the storefront such as signage, art, seating, lighting, landscaping, and outdoor displays



Residential

Residential ground floors should provide privacy to the residents while still creating an interesting pedestrian environment in the public realm.

Key Design Elements:

- Entryways and windows elevated by 1/2 story
- Small front porches, patios, and front lawns
- Maintained landscaping
- Address demarcation
- Lighting



Office/Professional

Office/professional uses can utilize many of the same techniques as inviting storefronts, despite having fewer customers/ visitors.

Key Design Elements:

- Structural improvements such as building articulation, transparency/ windows, and door aesthetics
- Visually interesting screening to provide privacy as needed
- Facade enhancements such as color, varied materials, lighting, awnings, historic restoration
- Amenities outside the entrance such as signage, art, seating, lighting, and landscaping.



Garden Level Residential

Garden level apartments occur half a story below the street. These units could be a good way to provide additional affordable housing options to the Downtown community. Additionally, garden level apartments work well on terrain where steep hills occur, like the geography that leads to campus.

Key Design Elements:

- Defined entryways along the primary street and below ground by 1/2 story
- Minimum daylighting and transparency/windows
- Address demarcation
- Lighting



Vacant Storefront/Building Activation Program

Vacant storefronts can have a negative impact on the public's perception of a town's vitality. It is important to program and revitalize these spaces, even in temporary turnover periods, through creative municipal and non-profit strategies. San Marcos would benefit from considering the following activation strategies for existing vacant storefronts, to ensure the economic viability and community investment in the Downtown.

- Provide temporary-use retail permits through a Pop-Up Retail Ordinance while complying with existing zoning code.
- Generate public interest in vacant storefronts by allowing local artists to showcase work.
- Create a pilot program for grant funding. Companies can apply for grants through the City to fund the construction and lease of pop-up shops.
- Encourage/ work with University to lease unoccupied spaces
- Partner with non-profit resources to provide services such as relieving tenants from the first three months of their rent in an effort to boost them into a successful long-term lease.
- Alleviate temporary retail insurance woes by facilitating partnerships between shops and firms providing insurance.



Seattle's Office of Economic Development launched "Seattle Restored" program to activate vacant storefronts.



CultureHouse Harvard created a space for gathering for unhoused and housed folks.



Melbourne revitalized vacant storefronts with a \$2.6 million dollar grant program for local businesses and artists.



SpaceUs partners with local officials and landlords to transform vacant spaces for community and art.



DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

Building Form and Infill Development



Place sticky notes below questions

Could you see a Downtown hotel being successful?

Other Comments on This Topic

How should the City connect with the community to activate sidewalks and storefronts?

The community expressed a desire for Sustainable Public Spaces

Downtown San Marcos has a unique ecosystem with specific challenges.

The adjacent San Marcos River necessitates **stormwater management** to maintain **water quality**. Water quality ensures that polluted water does not flow through Downtown's streets and into the river. Despite a dry climate, San Marcos also experiences **significant storm events**.

Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management strategy that works to replicate the predevelopment hydrologic processes and reduce the harmful impacts of urban runoff. LID techniques have been shown to **improve water quality**, **reduce localized flooding** and, when incorporated into a project's design early in the process, **reduce overall costs**. The use of permeable pavements and rain gardens, as recommended below, are two ways we can implement LID in Downtown San Marcos.



Rain garden along CM Allen Parkway

Permeable Pavements



Redpoint Apartments, River Road



No existing San Marcos example



Lively Lane townhomes, Dutton Drive

Permeable Concrete Pavements (PCPs): Ideal use for light traffic low use roads (alleys), local roads, and pedestrian walkways in urban settings.

Pros:

- Reduction in stormwater runoff
- Improved water quality
- Heat island mitigation
- Traffic noise reduction
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Cons:

- Clogging of pervious material
- Durability
- Sensitivity to chemical exposure or heavy use

Permeable Asphalt Pavements: Ideal use for driveways and parking lots.

Pros: Reduction in stormwater runoff

Cons: Potentially harmful chemicals are sometimes added to increase durability

Permeable Pavers: Ideal use for pedestrian walkways in urban settings.

Pros:

- Attractive
- Versatile

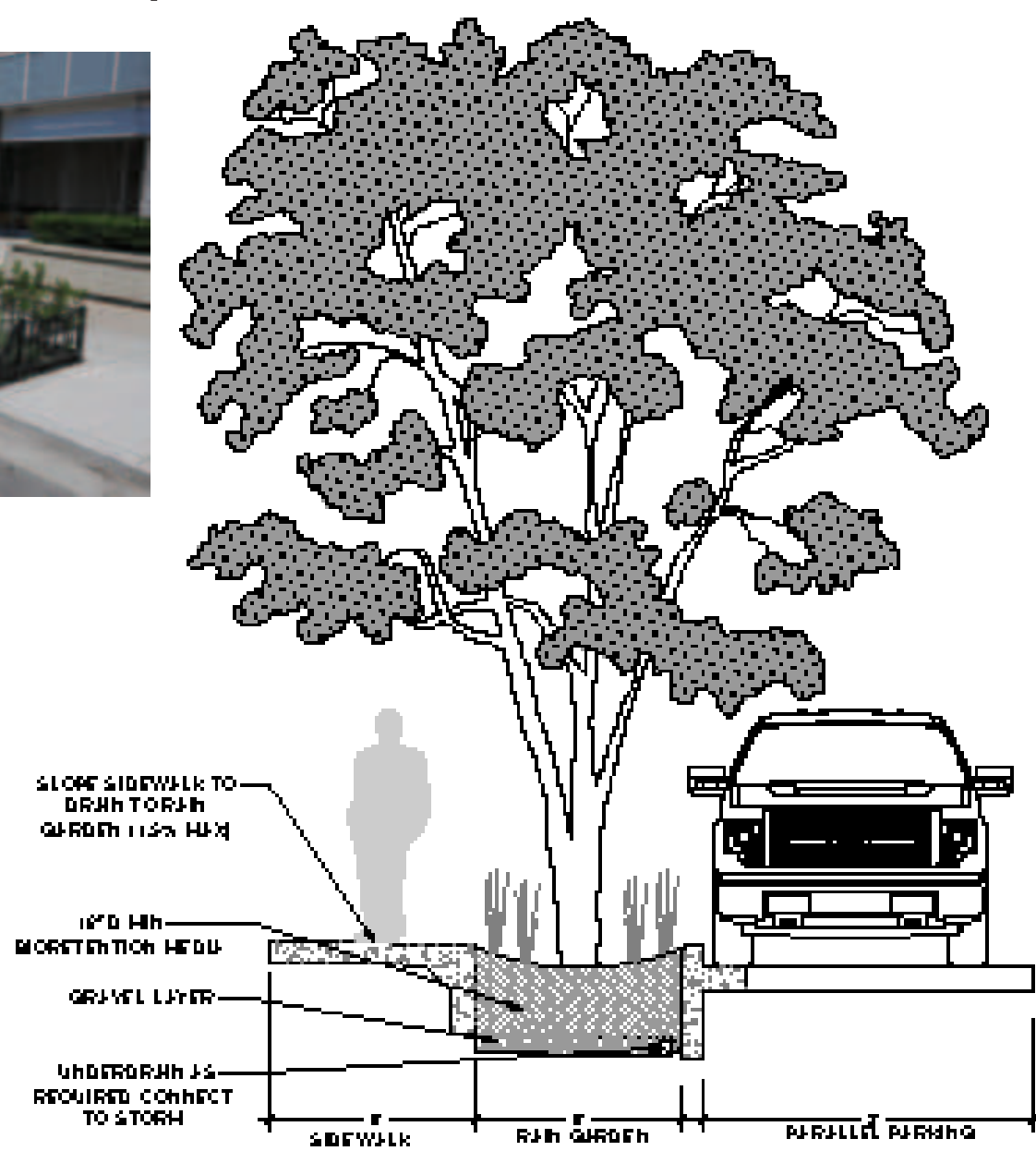
Cons:

- Can be cost prohibitive
- Higher maintenance cost

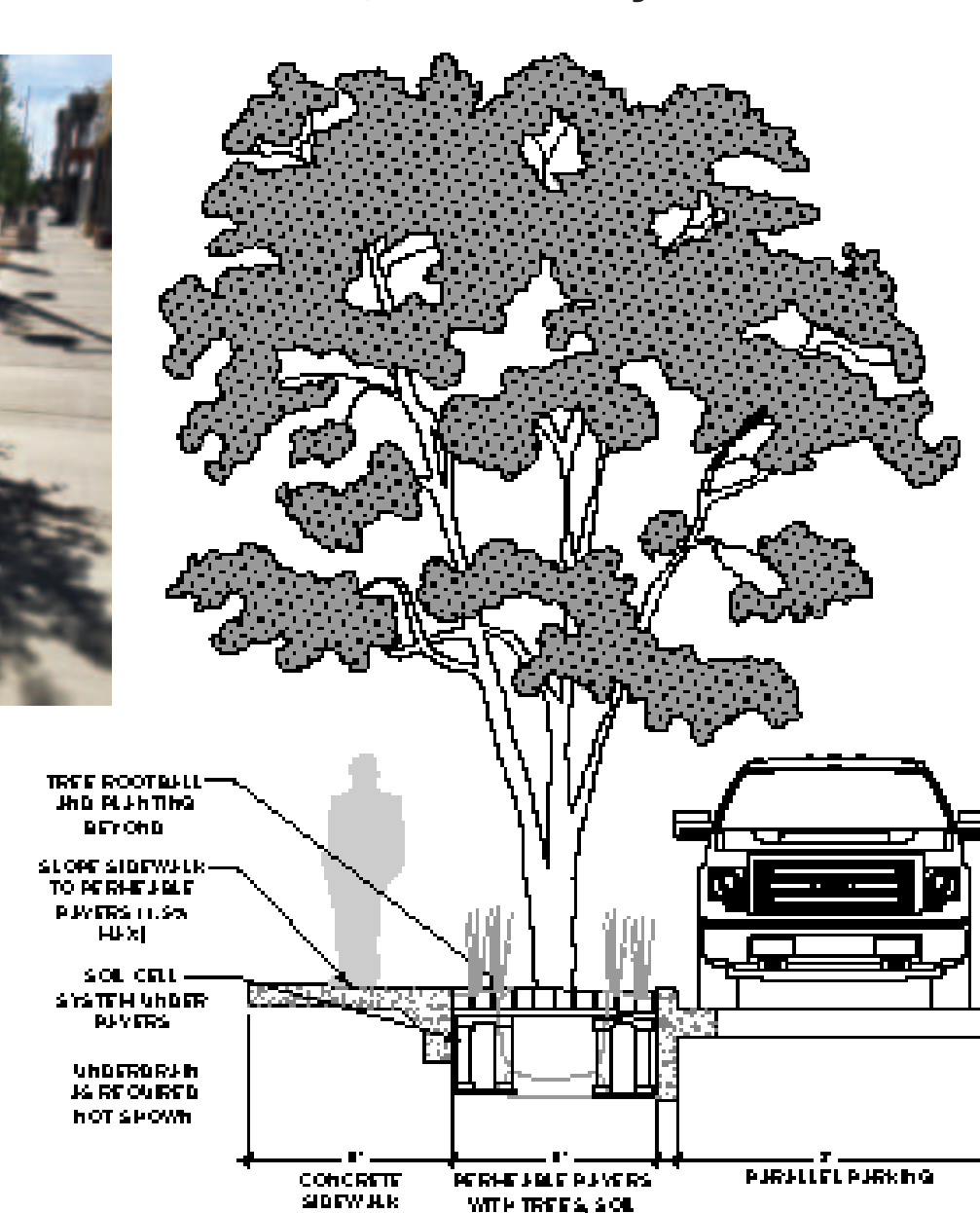
Rain Gardens

Key Recommendation: A *Downtown Urban Plant Palette and Design Guideline Document* for both City and private developer use should be created in coordination with the City Horticulturalist, Arborist, and Engineering team.

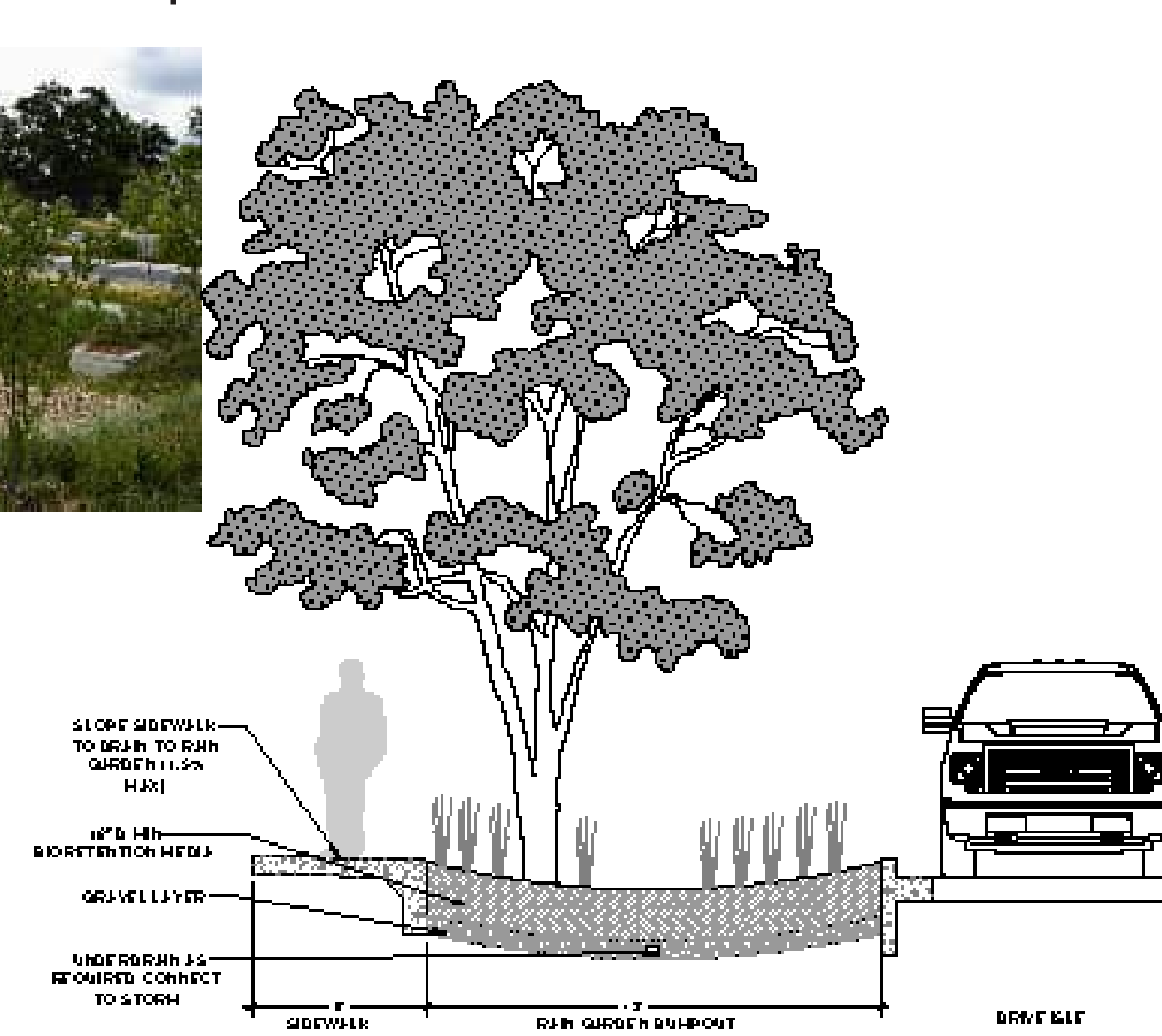
1) Maintain Existing Streetscape Dimensions with Rain Garden



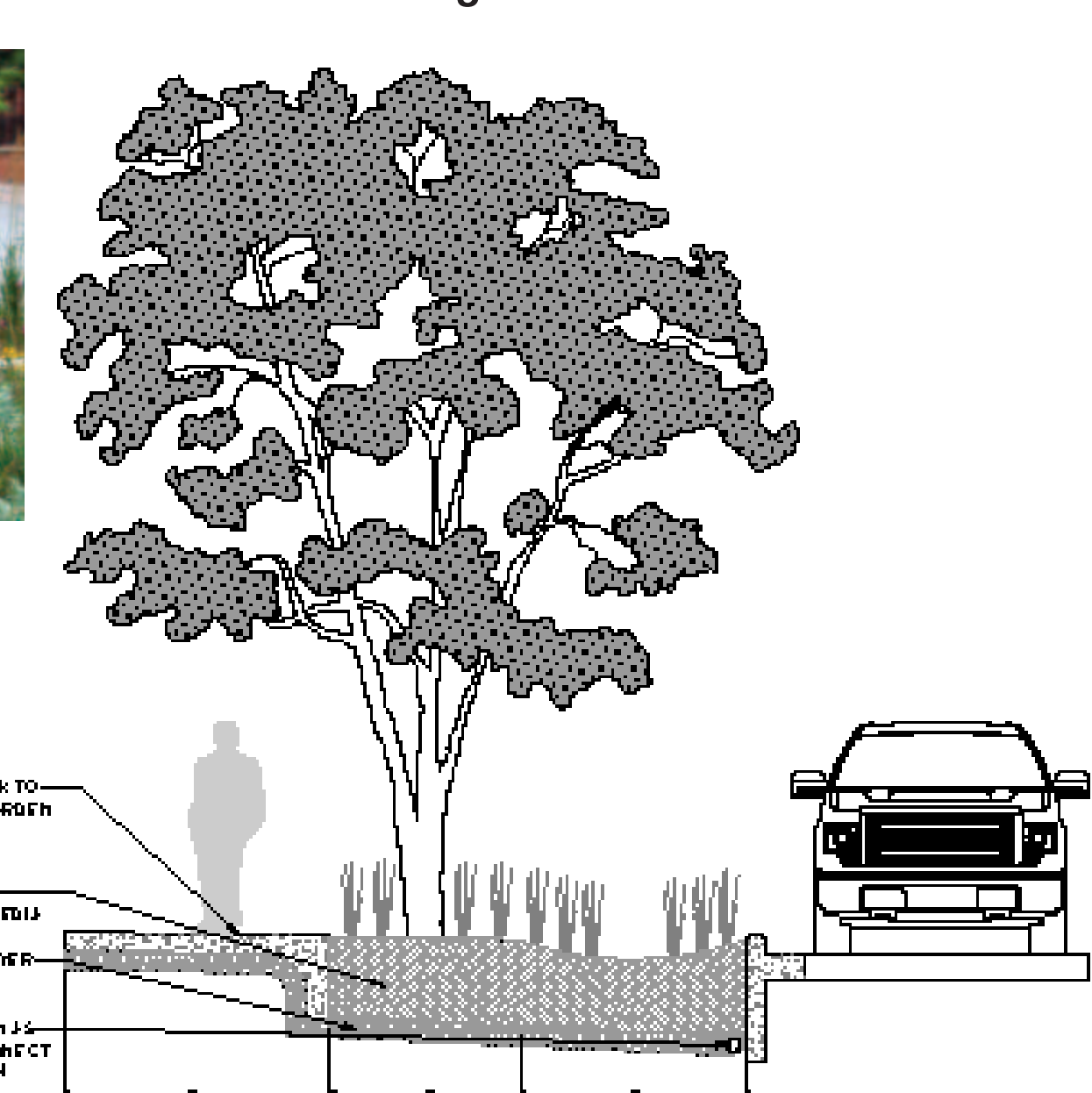
2) Sidewalk with Permeable Pavers, Soil Cell System and Trees



3) Maintain Existing Streetscape Dimensions with Rain Garden Bulbouts



4) Widen Sidewalk and Add Traditional Tree Planting and Rain Garden Bulbout



“Downtown Needs Shade Trees!”

Large



Bur Oak (Mossycup Oak)

Growth Rate: Slow

Attributes: Texas native, reliable fall color, attractive seeds or fruit, seeds or fruit eaten by wildlife

Features: Unique leaf shape; large acorn is enclosed in a fuzzy cap.

Comments: Excellent, drought-tolerant native tree, with rough texture and large acorn

Problems: Acorns and leaves can pose a significant clean-up chore.



Cedar Elm

Growth Rate: Moderate

Attributes: Texas native, reliable fall color

Features: Fine textured leaves turn yellow in fall.

Comments: Tough, drought-tolerant shade tree, well-adapted to a variety of conditions.

Problems: Drooping branches may require pruning; aphids, powdery mildew, and mistletoe are notable pests.

Medium



Western Soapberry

Growth Rate: Moderate

Water Needs: Moderate

Attributes: Texas native, reliable fall color, showy or fragrant flower, attractive seeds or fruit, seeds or fruit eaten by wildlife

Features: Bright yellow fall color

Comments: Amber berries in fall through winter

Problems: Sucker growth; fleshy fruits can be messy



Eve's-Necklace (Texas Sophora)

Growth Rate: Moderate

Attributes: Texas native, showy or fragrant flower, attractive seeds or fruit

Features: Pink pea-shaped flowers are followed by black, bead-like fruits.

Comments: Requires well-drained site; fruits are avoided by wildlife.

Problems: Nursery availability may be limited.

Small



Possumhaw

Growth Rate: Slow

Attributes: Texas native, attractive seeds or fruit, seeds or fruit eaten by wildlife

Features: Orange or red berries on gray branches give interest through winter.

Comments: Striking native plant. Choose female plants in the nursery for the berries.

Problems: Thin bark is susceptible to mechanical injury.



Anacacho Orchid-tree

Growth Rate: Rapid

Attributes: Texas native, showy or fragrant flower

Features: Fragrant, white, orchid-like flowers.

Comments: Delicate-looking native tree with showy flowers.

Problems: Seed pods can be unsightly and create a mess when they drop.

Note: Other potential street trees species include: Montezuma Cypress, Canby Oak, Arizona Cypress & Black Locust



Do you support a redesign of the Courthouse Square to provide improved public space? Place a dot sticker in one of the boxes below

YES

NO

If yes, what types of improvements do you think are most important for the Courthouse Square?

Place sticky notes below

Are there any other existing parks downtown that you would like to see improved? If yes, what amenities or improvements would you like to see?

Other Comments on This Topic

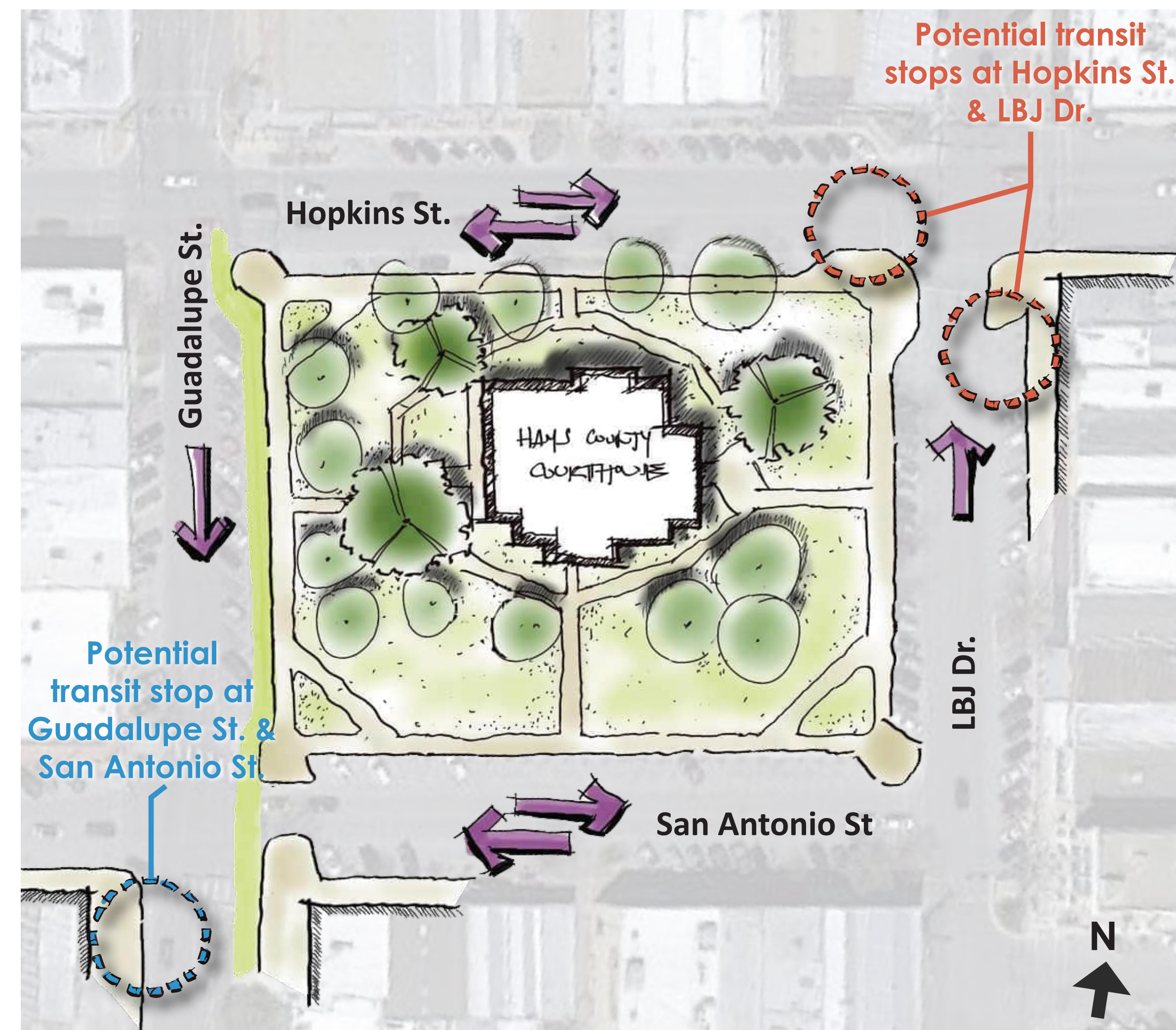
Place sticky notes below



Transit Access and Amenities

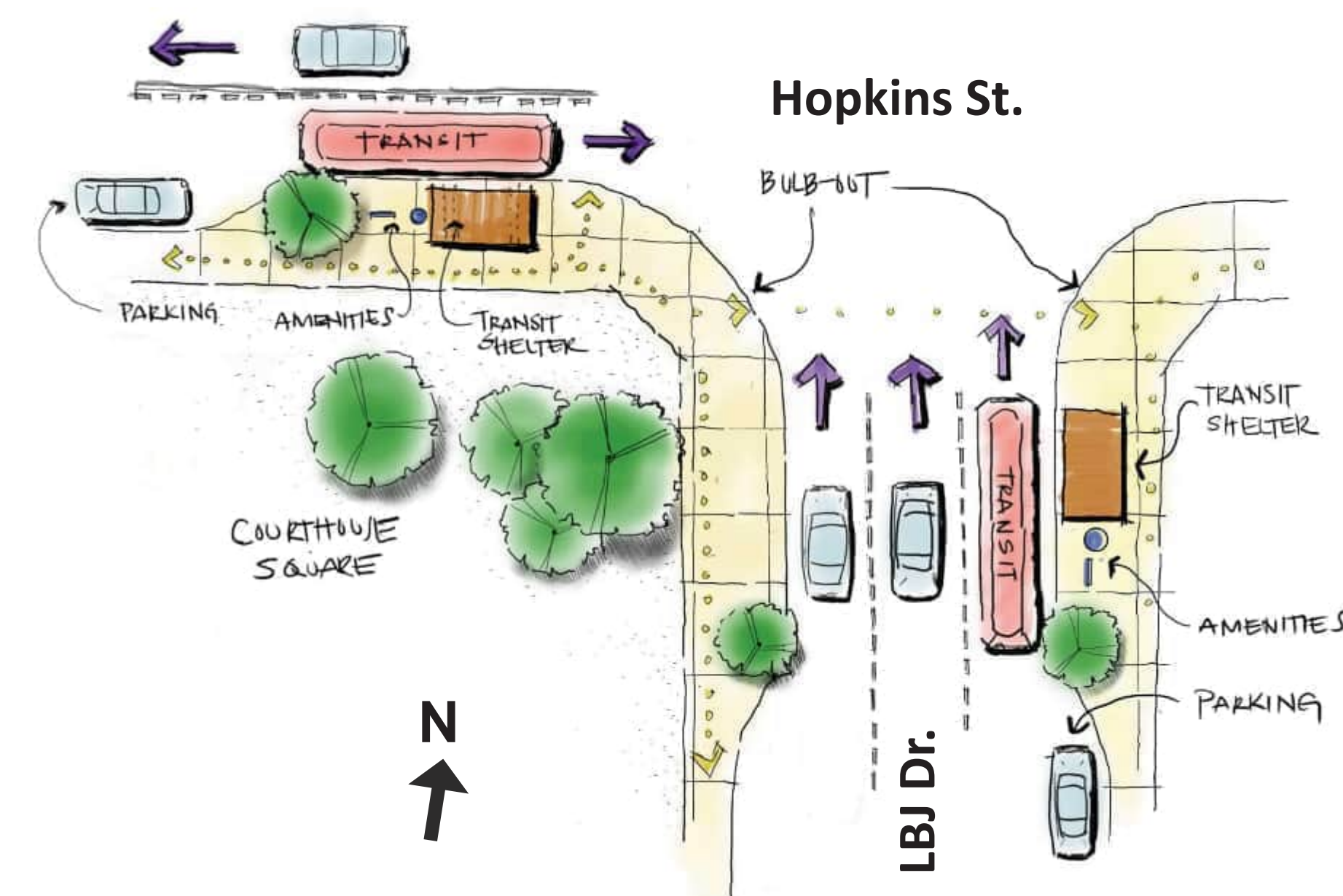
Potential Transit Stop Locations on Courthouse Square

Despite the proposed Transit Plaza on Edward Gary Street between University Drive and Hutchison Street, the community expressed a desire for *more convenient transit access on the Courthouse Square* in the heart of Downtown. The diagram below illustrates potential transit stop locations on and adjacent to the Courthouse Square. These are detailed in the diagrams to the right.



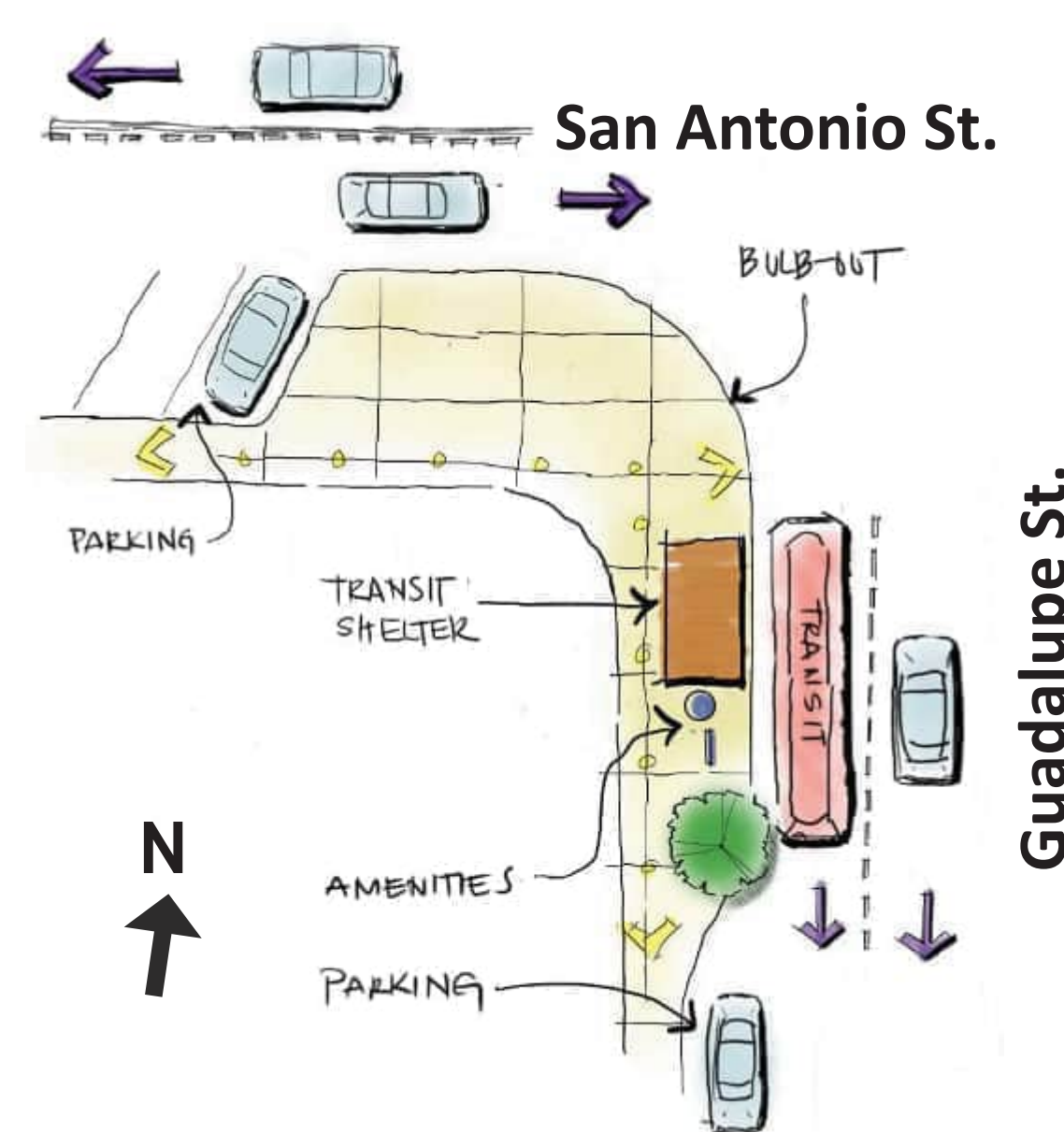
Potential Transit Stops at Hopkins St. & LBJ Dr.

Conceptual design includes a sidewalk bulbout for transit shelters and an in-lane stop that enables buses to stop without merging in and out of traffic, which improves speed and safety.



Potential Transit Stop at Guadalupe St. & San Antonio St.

Conceptual design includes a sidewalk bulbout for a transit shelter and an in-lane stop that enables buses to stop without merging in and out of traffic. Sidewalk bulbs help improve speed and reliability and provide space for waiting passengers, furnishings, bike parking, and other pedestrian amenities.

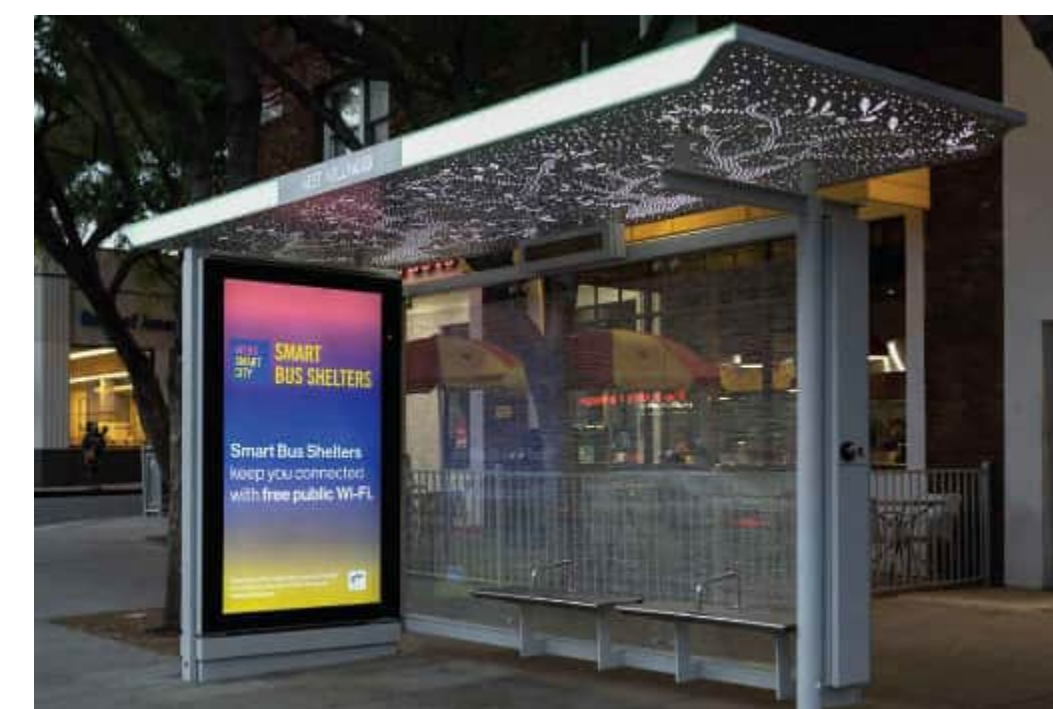


Transit Stop Shelter Designs and Amenities

Many transit stops in Downtown San Marcos lack amenities and shade. Transit shelters shown in the images below incorporate elements that would improve comfort and convenience for transit riders. Transit stops are proposed in the Downtown Historic District and opportunities for embedding history, art, and thoughtful design into the transit stops exist.



Public art embedded onto metal panels



Digital signage with real-time bus arrival information and lighting



Panel showcasing local history



Secure bike parking and seating



Shelter resembling historical character of the area



Green roof and solar panel to charge power source

Parking

The City of San Marcos adopted the **Parking Program Framework Plan** in 2018. It “provides a high-level program overview for the development of a comprehensive and strategic approach to managing parking in the Downtown area of San Marcos, TX.” The plan identifies how downtowns can typically only have two of three desired parking characteristics: convenient, inexpensive, and enough. The plan provides strategies to balance those objectives and includes 11 primary action items for San Marcos’ Downtown parking. These are listed to the right, with those in **green** as the highest priority based on feedback to date from the Downtown Area plan.

1. Create & Empower Parking Management Organization
2. Establish Parking Benefit District(s)
3. Invest in Parking Management Technology
4. Manage On-Street Parking More Efficiently
5. Seek Opportunities to Expand Parking Supply
6. Connect Parking Management & Economic Development
7. Program Branding & Marketing
8. Develop Staff Parking Management Expertise
9. Continuous Improvement in Parking Enforcement
10. Embrace Parking as Mobility Management
11. Establish Mobility Management Enterprise Fund

An **On-Street Paid Parking Program Implementation Plan** is currently under discussion with the Parking Advisory Board. It provides guidance to the City for how to move forward with the phased implementation of paid parking recommendations from the Parking Program Framework Plan. Implementation recommendations include:

- Location
- Paid hours
- Time limits
- Meter costs
- Utilization studies
- Parking Advisory Board administration
- Residential permits
- Technology
- A phased implementation timeline
- Parking benefit district (see description to right)
- And additional items

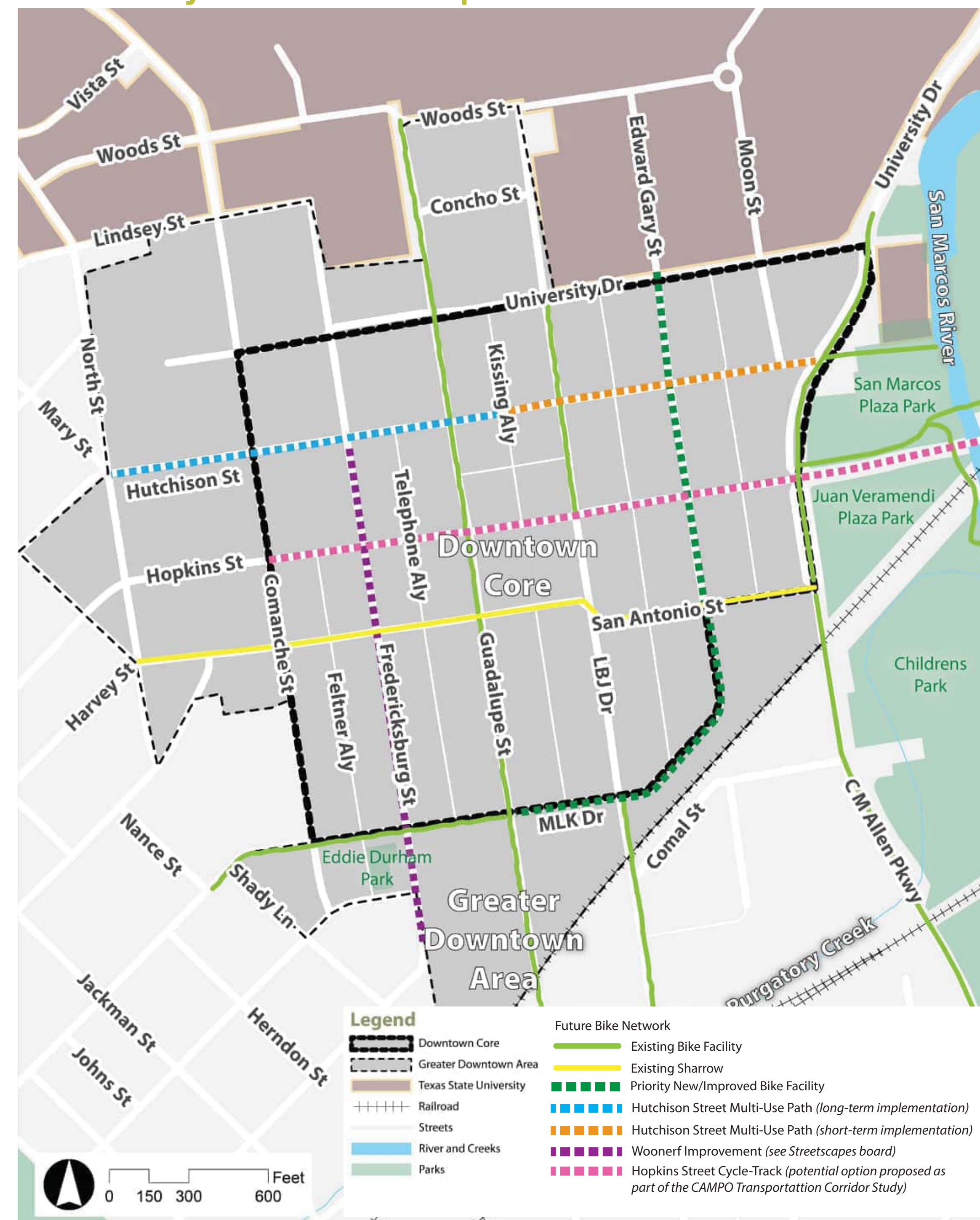


A proposed **Downtown Parking Benefit District** would create a geographic area from which a percentage of the future net meter revenue could be dedicated to investment in the Downtown area for things like sidewalk/walkability improvements, district beautification, and transportation or parking investments. This funding source would be a tool to implement many of the recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan.



Complete Multimodal Networks

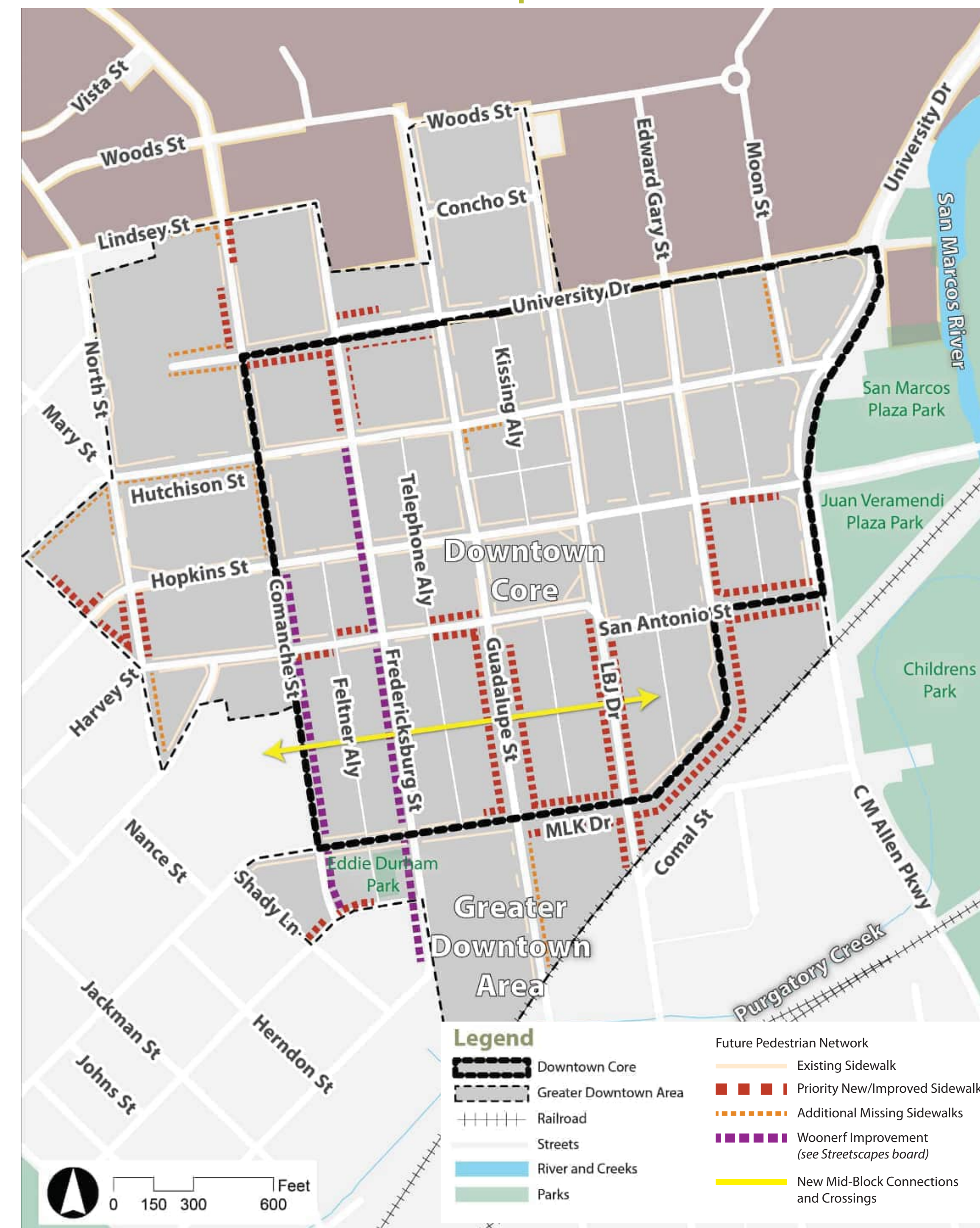
Future Bicycle Network Map



This map identifies priority routes for new/improved bike facilities. Priority routes are focused on connecting the bicycle network and include areas where bike facilities are missing or in poor condition. New / Improved bike facilities are intended to be provide to complete a network rather than exist on all streets. Shared lanes/sharrows are appropriate on all other minor streets.



Future Pedestrian Network Map



This map illustrates priority streets for new/improved sidewalks and other gaps in the sidewalk network that need to be filled. Priority improvements are focused on areas where sidewalks are missing, inaccessible, or inconsistent on both sides of the road. Sidewalks are also prioritized for completion/improvements near parks.



Green Alleys

The City's 10-year Capital Improvement program includes Downtown Alley Reconstruction for the alleys between LBJ, Guadalupe, Hopkins, and Hutchison (Kissing Alley and Jacks Alley). This effort will include pavers, "undergrounding" of overhead utilities and may include green infrastructure.



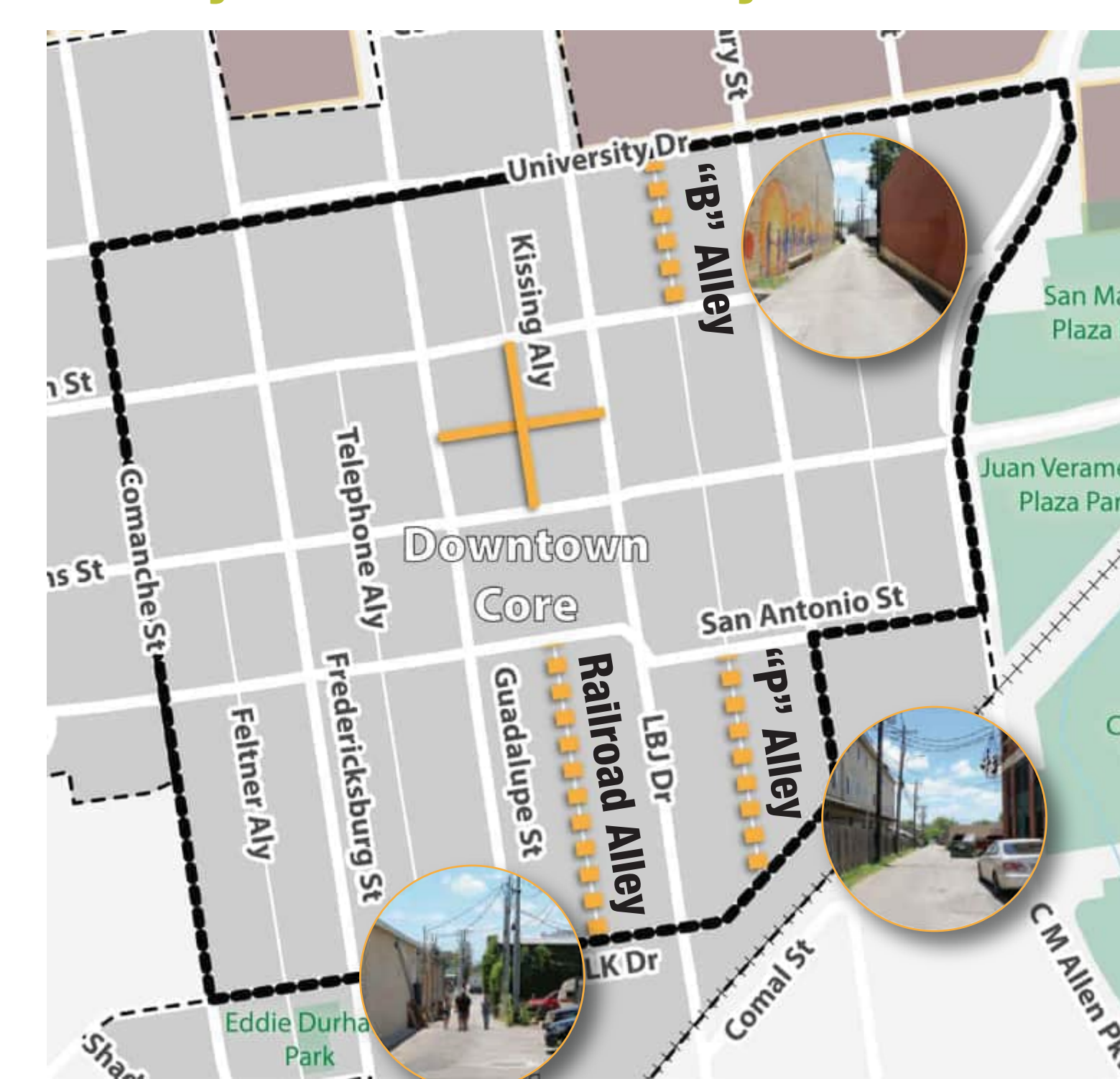
The San Marcos Green Alley Initiative provides research, analysis, goals, and a vision for a green alley network in Downtown San Marcos. The study includes considerations of design elements for public space activation and stormwater drainage provides a conceptual design for alley rebuilds. The study can also be used as a model for grant writing for stormwater funding and lists many funding sources, industry resources, and metrics/outcomes.

Key opportunities to consider in green alleys include:

- Placemaking assets such as unique paving/pavers, art, seating, and other furnishings and amenities
- Green infrastructure such as stormwater drainage, water quality enhancement, permeable surfaces, and storm drain connectivity
- Multimodal access for pedestrians, bikes, commercial deliveries, municipal services, and parking/building connections.
- Rear-building access, welcoming back doors, and back patios
- Nighttime lighting and visibility
- Landscaping, native plants and trees, and raised planters
- Co-locating and screening dumpsters for the block or half block and consolidated pick-up dates
- Oil reclamation from restaurants
- "Undergrounding" of overhead utility lines
- One-way or yield vehicular traffic
- Alley identification and interpretive signage
- Adjacent property enhancements
- Events and programming
- Creation of a joint/shared/public parking off of alleys using permeable pavement treatments
- Potential for pre-designed spaces for grease traps or other building code needs to allow buildings to transition
- Potential to embed local history



Priority Future Green Alleys



- **Railroad Alley**- outstanding potential for public space activation and moderate potential for green infrastructure activation.
- **"B" Alley**- moderate potential for public space activation and outstanding potential for green infrastructure activation.
- **"P" Alley**

- Other alleys with planned undergrounding utility work

Place sticky notes below questions

Exploring One-Way to Two-way Conversion:

We have heard some input from the community about exploring the possibility of converting LBJ and Guadalupe Street into a 2-way street. In 2014 we hosted we hosted a "2-Way For A Day" event on S LBJ Drive & converted the street to 2-way traffic, activated the street with bike lanes, pop-up vendors, and parklets!



Pros of One-Way Streets

- Pedestrians only need to look one way to cross the street
- Fewer potential turning movement conflicts
- Streamlined vehicular signal timing
- Up-front cost of two-way vehicular signals are more expensive

Cons of One-Way Streets

- Increased vehicle speeds and decreased safety for all modes (two-way traffic in itself is a traffic calming element)
- Creates a vehicle thoroughfare rather than a pedestrian destination
- Reduced business visibility due to one-directional exposure, especially for nearside businesses at intersections.
- Reduced access points to a Downtown
- Bike movement limited to two-way facilities or in-direction of traffic
- Limits transit routes and service.
- Increased navigation confusion for drivers, visitors in particular
- Fewer options for redirecting traffic during a street closure such as an emergency or special event
- Slower emergency response

In what ways do you think the conversion of one-way to two-way streets (LBJ & Guadalupe) in Downtown would help or hurt Downtown San Marcos?

Do you agree/disagree that the proposed transit stops are convenient for downtown use? Do you have ideas about alternative stops?

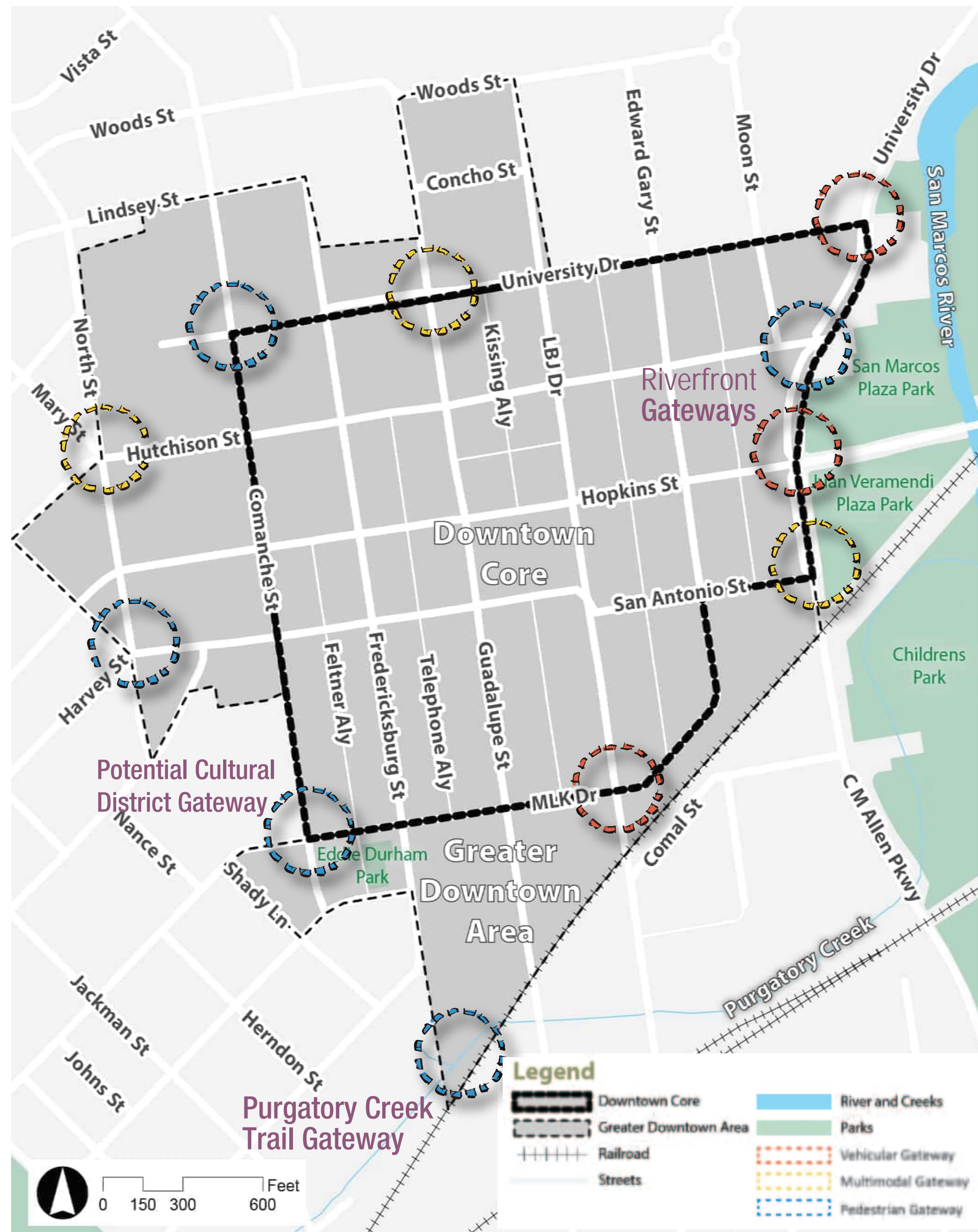
In your opinion, what is the biggest struggle with downtown parking? This can include time limits, supply, time limits, etc.

Would you be willing to pay for parking downtown as a way to fund recommendations in the Downtown Plan?

Other Comments on This Topic

Creating Downtown Gateways

A gateway can be designed in many different ways and serves as a landmark that tells you that you've arrived in a new place while expressing the identity of that place. Examples of include, but are not limited to, a sign, landscaping, a park, monument or public art piece, or a park or distinctive architecture within an area. Improvements to private property adjacent to gateways is also important to show invested residents and businesses. The map below illustrates potential locations for gateway elements into Downtown San Marcos by mode of travel that would improve the sense of arrival for visitors and residents alike.



Intersections Comanche Street & San Antonio Street

This intersection is a major connection from multiple neighborhoods to Downtown, and is a particularly crucial intersection for traveling to the HEB grocery store. This intersection can be improved by:

- Raised intersection to slow traffic
- Marked crosswalks
- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions to shorten crossings
- Unique paving materials
- Stop signs on all four corners



San Antonio Street & LBJ Drive

This intersection is a major entrance to Downtown from the southern part of town and IH-35. This intersection can be improved by:

- A left-turn only from the western portion of San Antonio Street to LBJ Drive
- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions/bulbouts to shorten crossings for pedestrians
- Unique crossing paving
- Painted mural in the intersection



Vehicular Gateways



Vehicular gateways provide a quick first impression and lets drivers know they are entering a distinct place. These can often include larger signs adjacent to or above streets.

Multimodal Gateways



Multimodal gateways are meant to be experienced by pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and users of other modes. The image on the left shows how streetscape elements like signs and banners can mark a gateway. The image on the right shows how intersection and crosswalk art can be used to let people know they are entering a distinct place.

Pedestrian Gateways



Pedestrian gateways have the opportunity to be more interactive since people walking are moving slower and can stop more easily. Public art can be a creative way to announce an entrance to a destination. The sculpture on the left serves as a landmark gateway and provides shade for pedestrians. Wayfinding signage including maps and walking distances to major destinations can be used for navigating through a portion of a city.

Flexible/Festival Streets

San Antonio Street

Flexible/Festival streets are designed to be safe for all modes of transportation, look like a plaza, and be easily closed to cars to accommodate events and prioritize pedestrians, while allowing for more resiliency and flexibility over time than a permanent pedestrian mall. A flexible/festival street could allow events at the Courthouse Square to overflow into the street and easily close these segments for block parties and community or pop-up events. Key design elements of flexible streets include infrastructure like moveable furnishings and planters, retractable or removable safety bollards, enhanced paving materials, unique lighting, access to power, and in some cases a curbless street with center drainage.

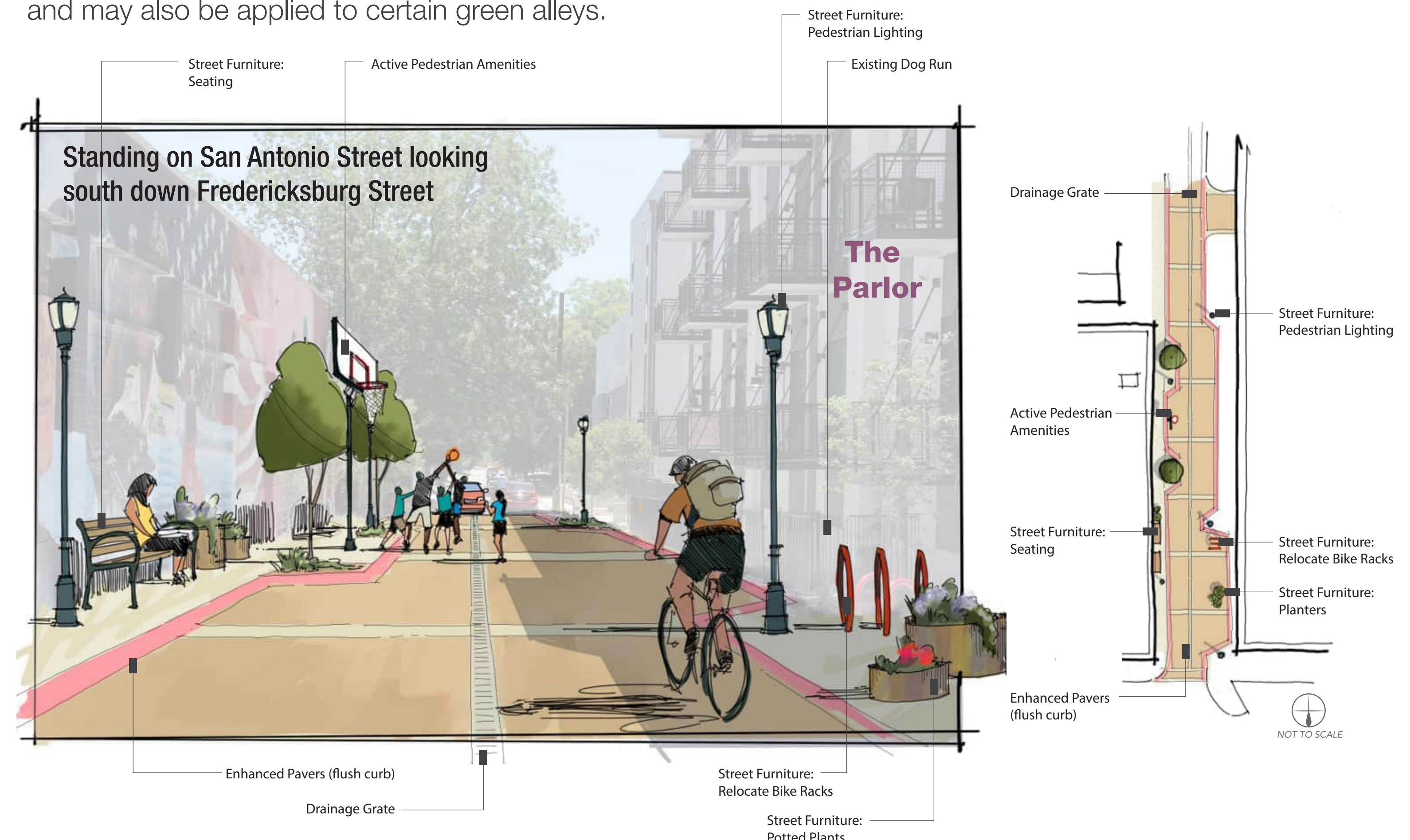
Two sections of San Antonio Street would be a good location for this design given their proximity to the Square, adjacent active businesses, lighter vehicle traffic, and lack of transit routes. The two segments could be closed together or one at a time, depending on the size of the event.



Shared Streets

Fredericksburg Street and Comanche Street

As shown on the Multimodal board, Fredericksburg Street and Comanche Street are good candidates for shared streets, given their narrow rights-of-way of 20-30 feet. A shared street is a street designed to slow traffic and treat all users equally while providing safe, shared, active space. San Marcos' first shared street was recently installed on Fredericksburg Street south of San Antonio Street just east of The Parlor apartment building. The graphic below shows how that shared street can be improved and serve as a prototype for the rest of these two narrow corridors and may also be applied to certain green alleys.

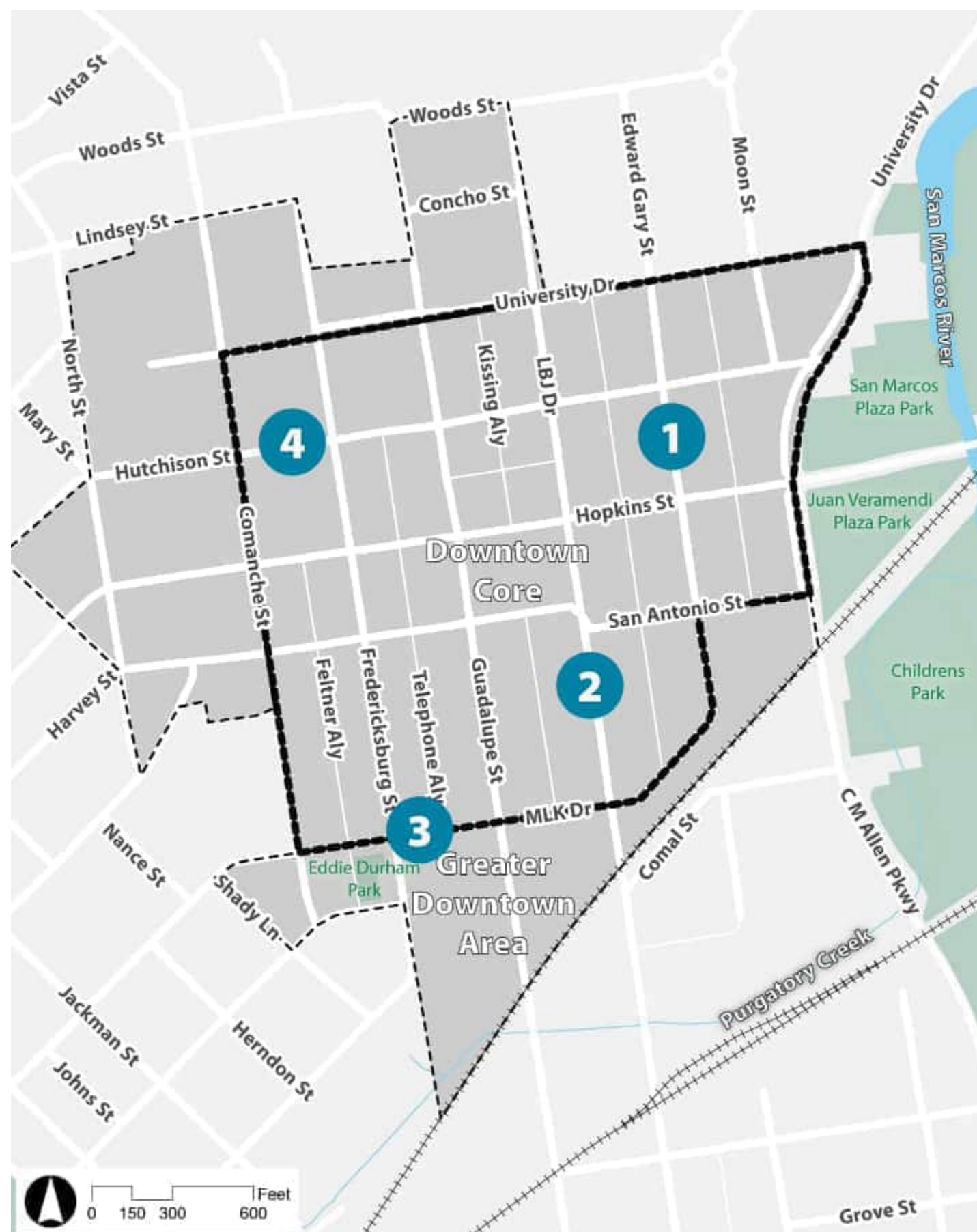


Improving Downtown Streets

The community expressed a desire for improving downtown streets to be comfortable for all San Marcos residents and to accommodate all modes of transportation, including pedestrians and bikes. We've proposed a few priority streets identified by the community which can be improved to meet the community's goal.

Conceptual Street Sections

Locator Map

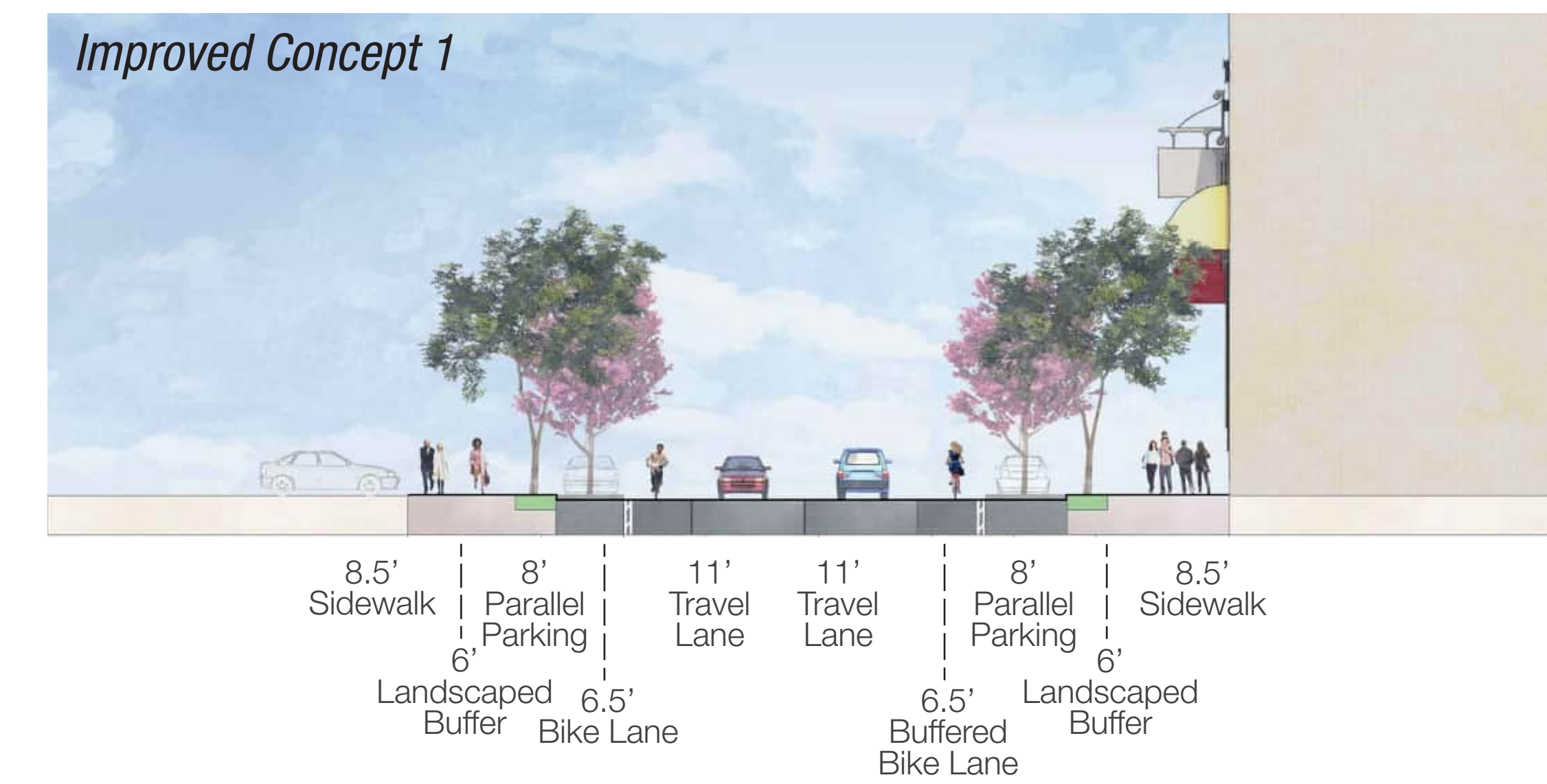
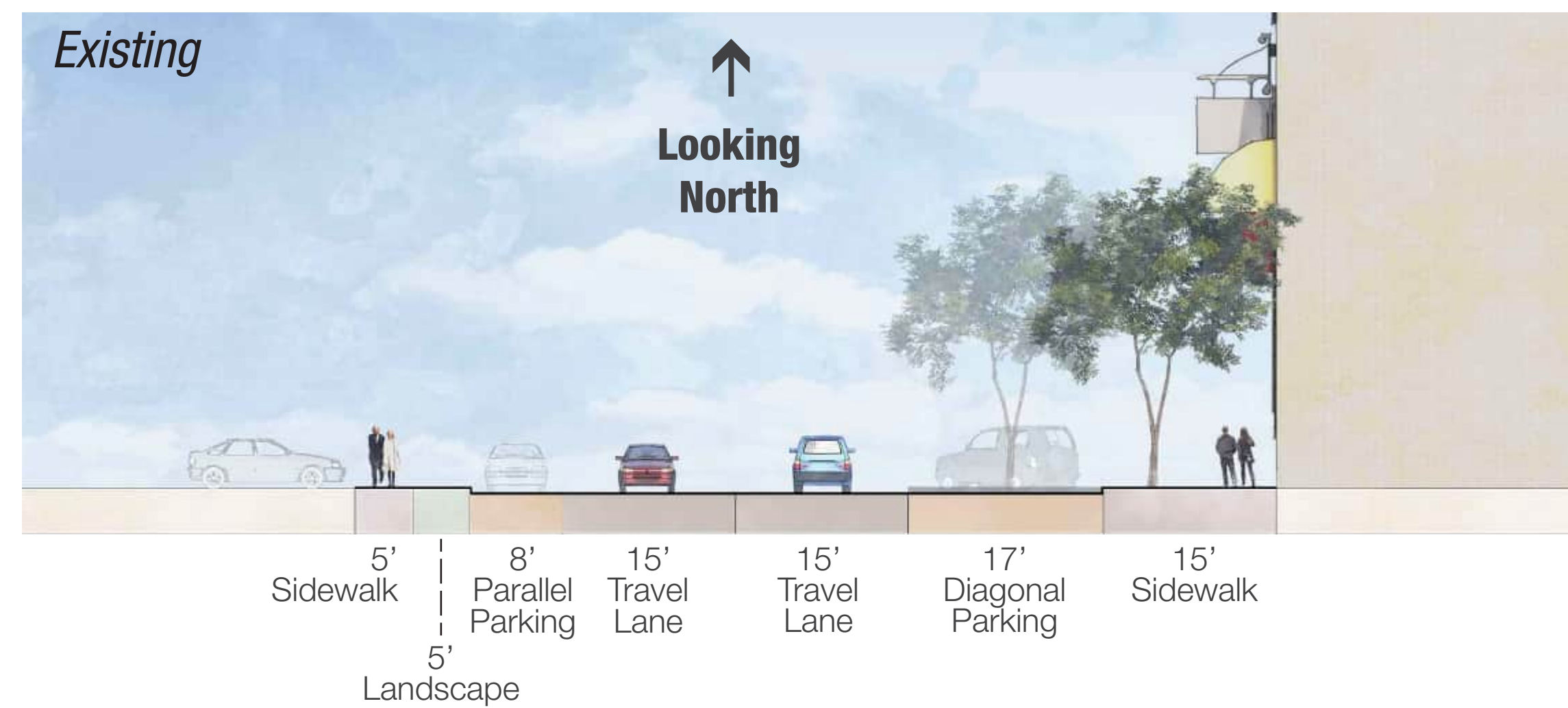


1 Edward Gary Street

Right-of-Way: 80'

Proposed changes:

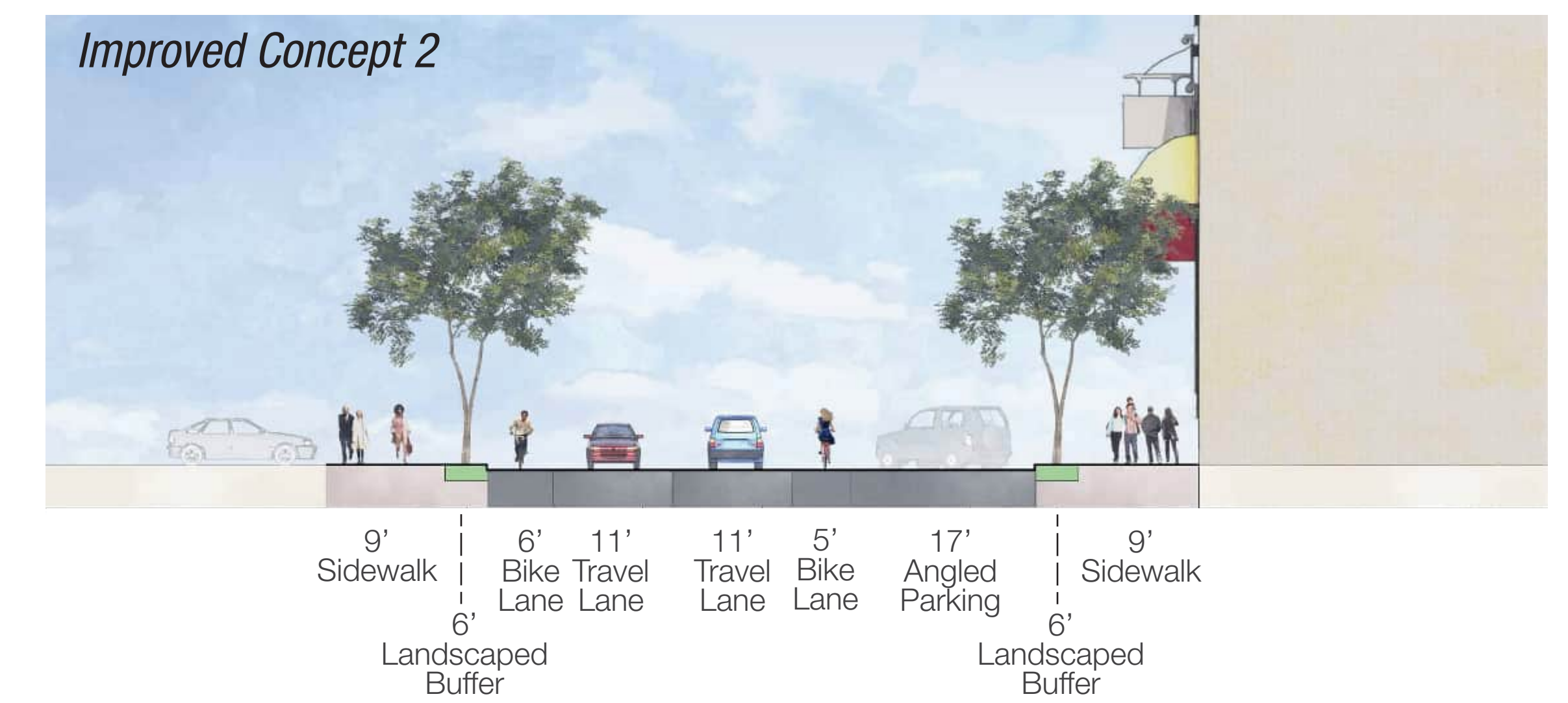
- Expansion of sidewalks
- Buffered bike lanes
- Additional landscaping and street trees
- Travel lane width reductions
- Diagonal to parallel parking lane conversion



Which improved concept do you prefer for Edward Gary Street?
Place a dot sticker in one of the boxes below.

Improved Concept 1

Improved Concept 2

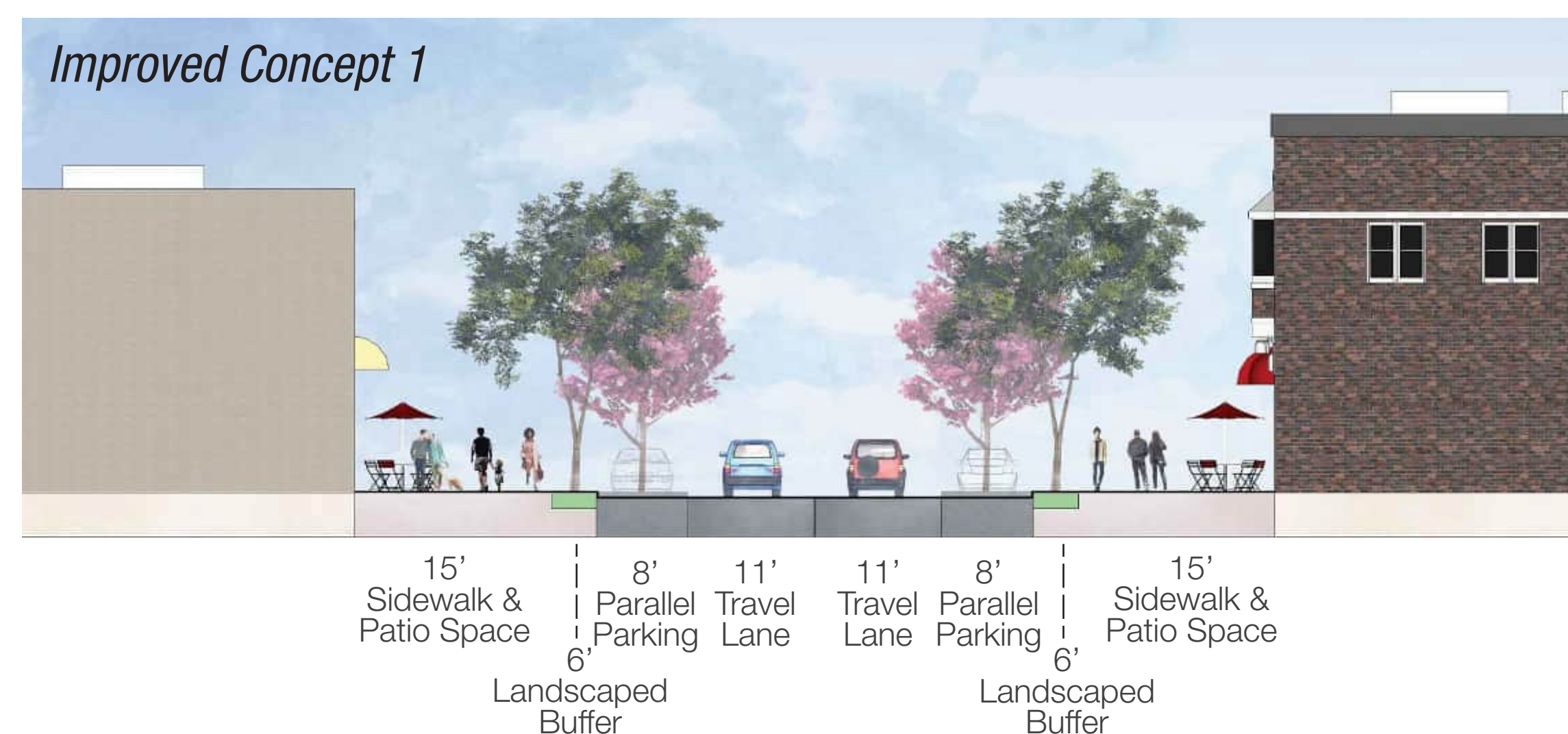
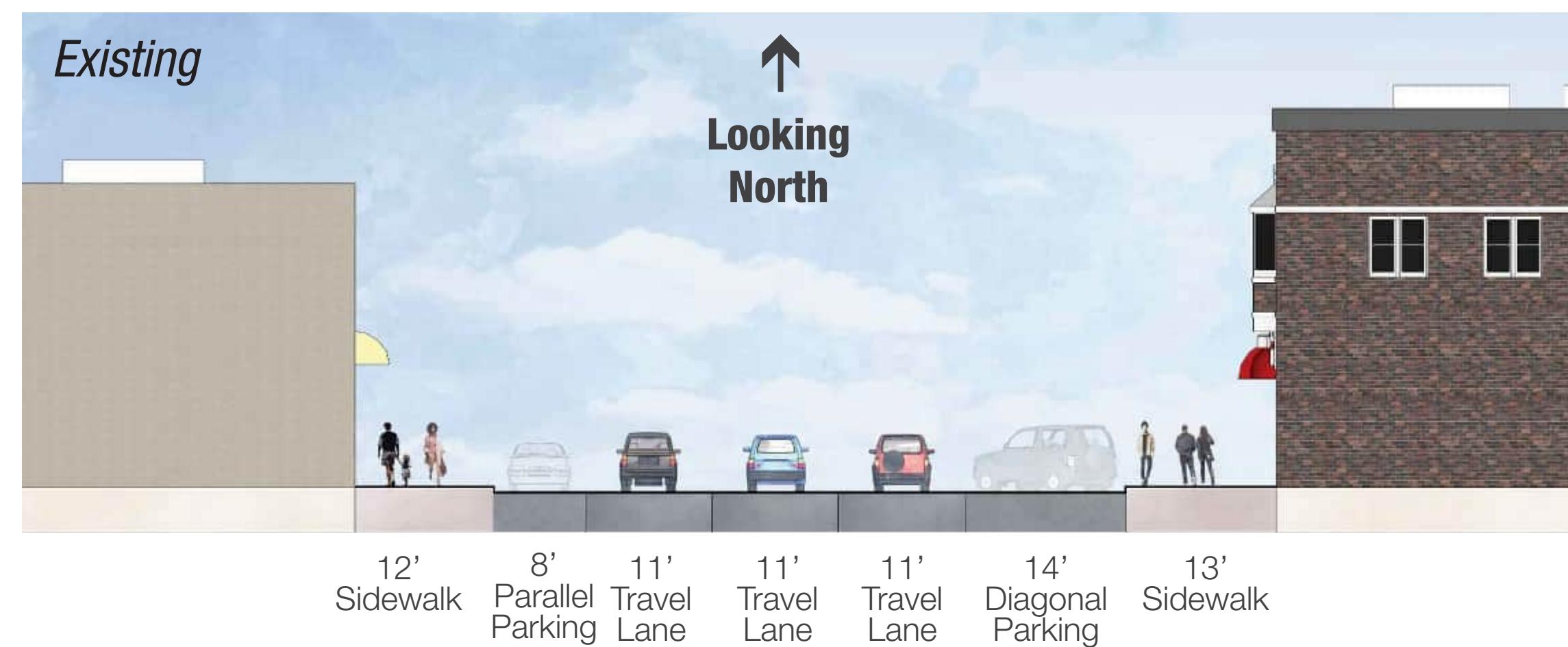


2 South LBJ Drive

Right-of-Way: 80'

Proposed changes:

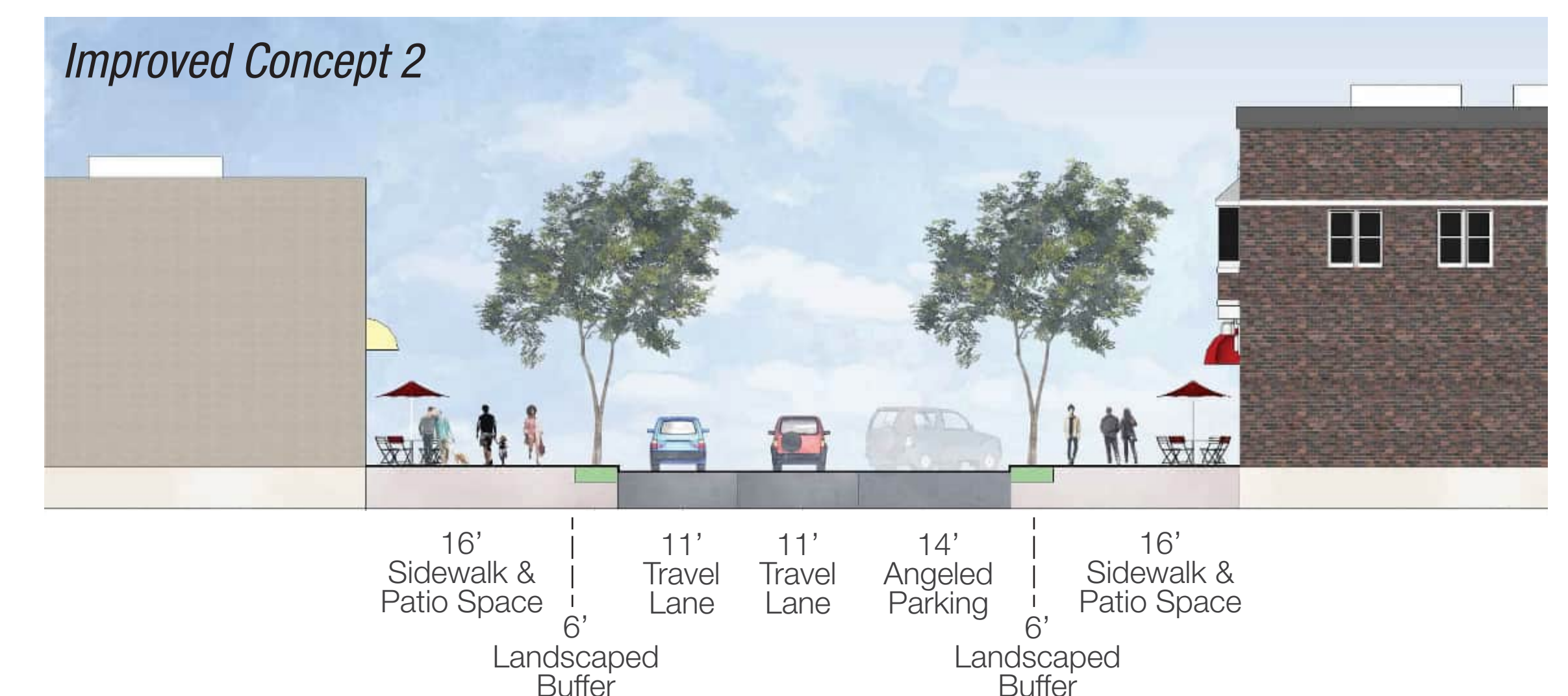
- Expansion of sidewalks and patio space
- Additional landscaping and street trees
- Fewer travel lanes and reduction in width
- Diagonal to parallel parking lane conversion



Which improved concept do you prefer for South LBJ Drive?
Place a dot sticker in one of the boxes below.

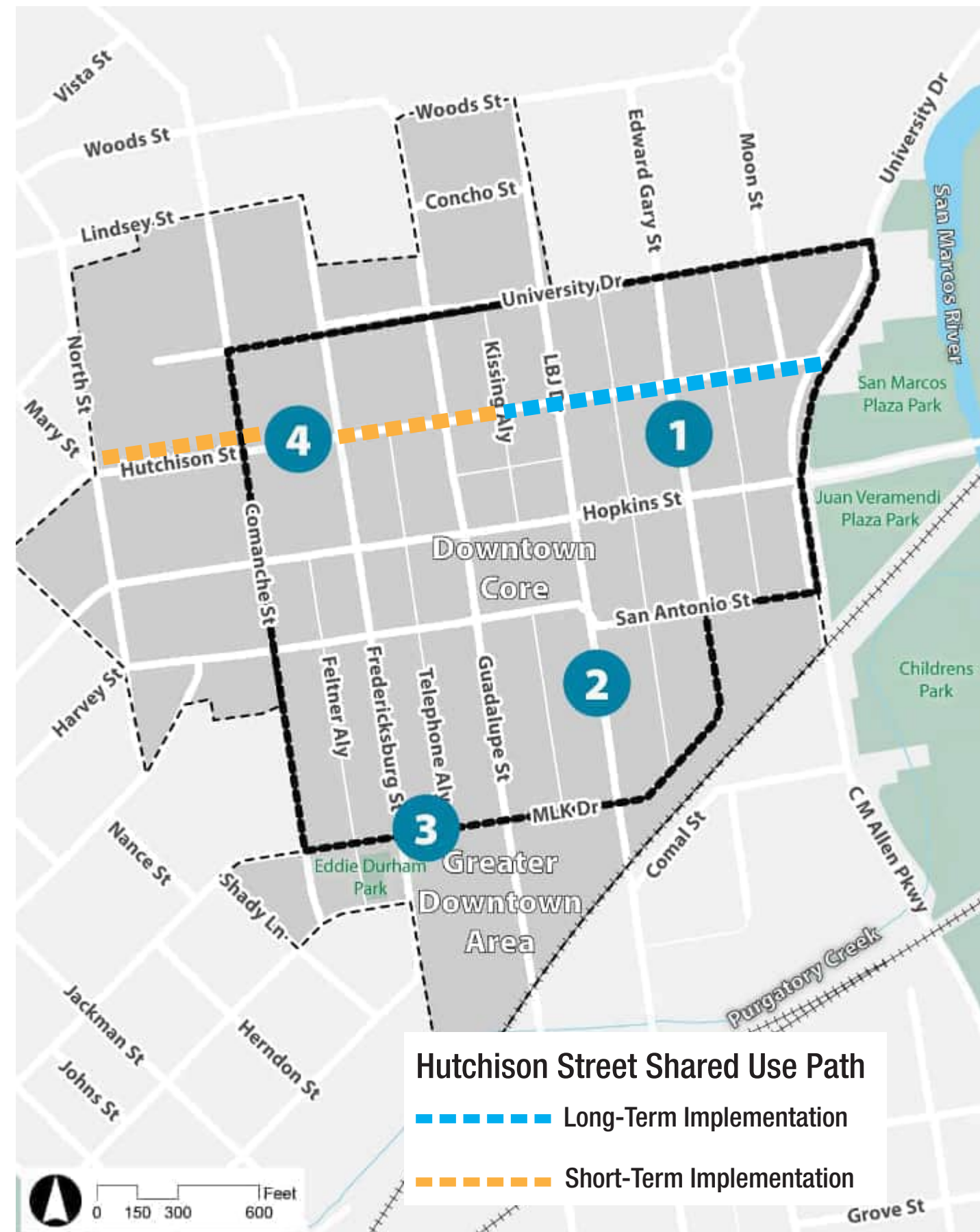
Improved Concept 1

Improved Concept 2



Conceptual Street Sections

Locator Map

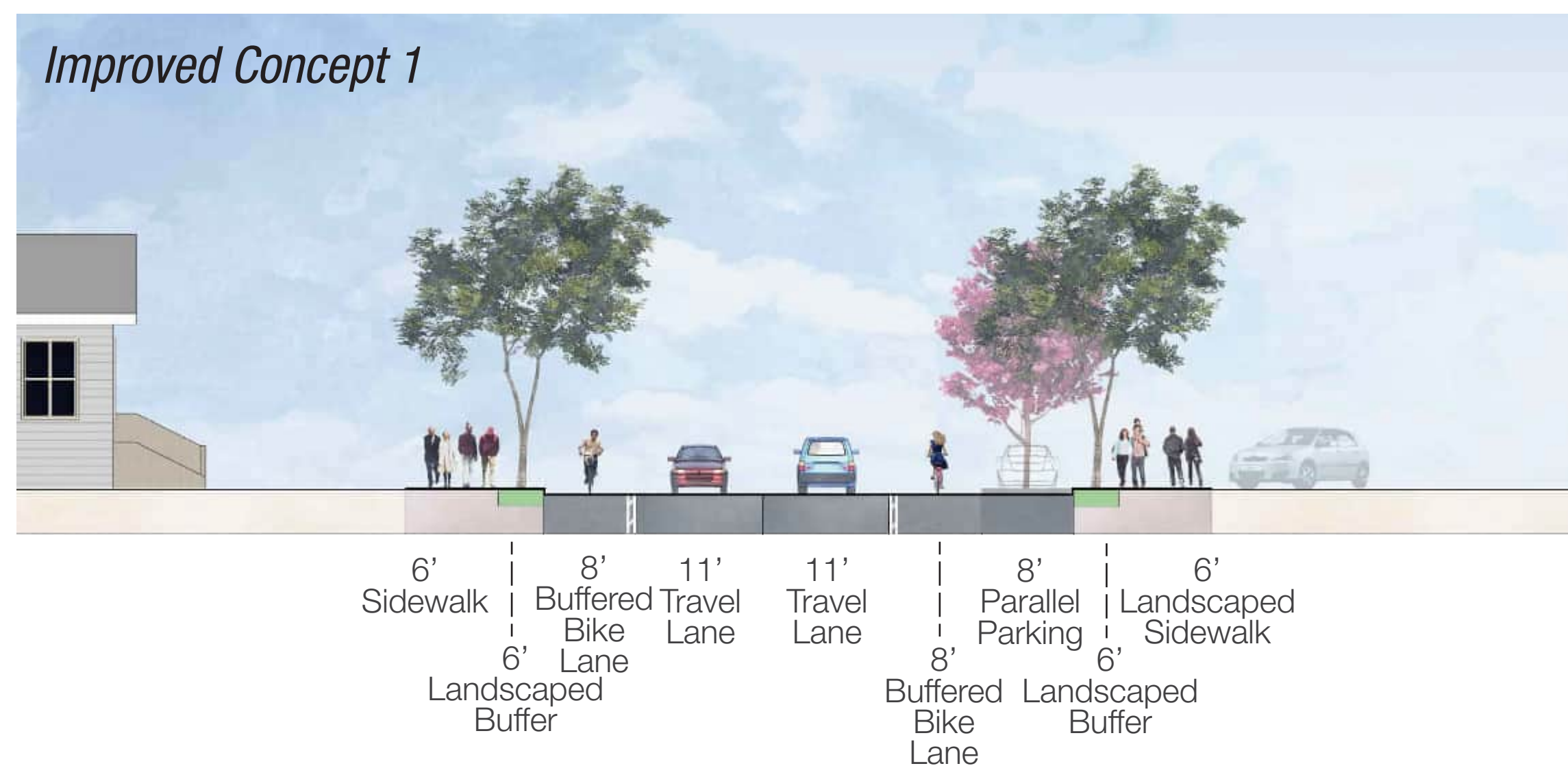
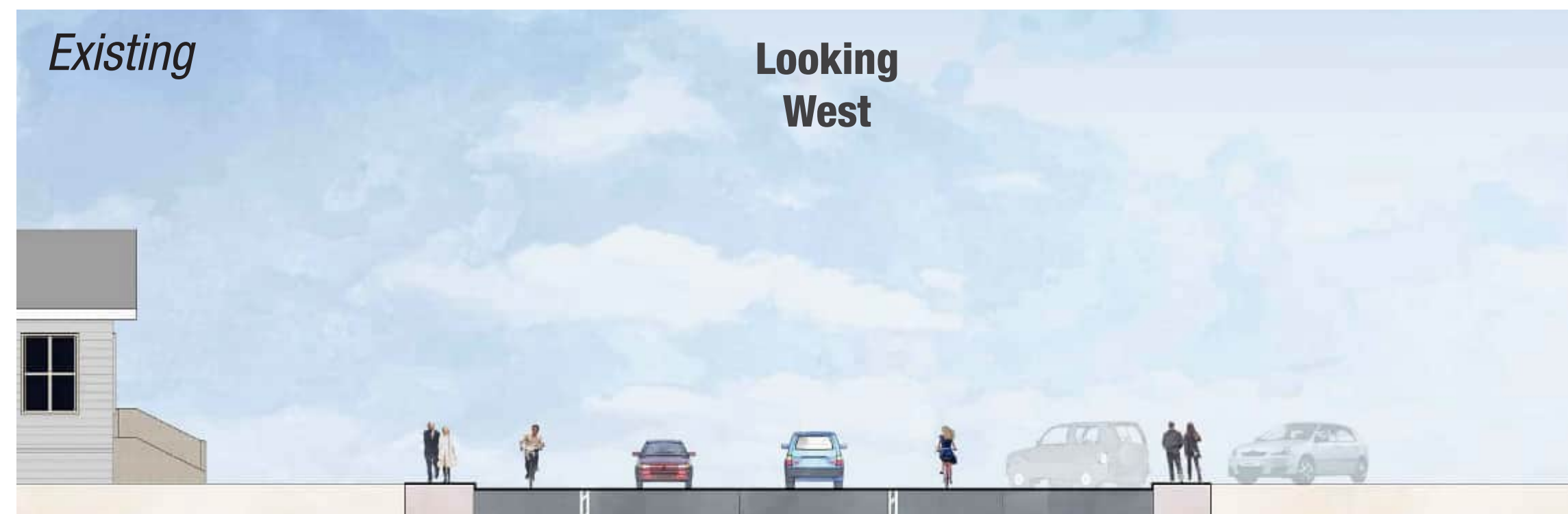


3 MLK Drive

Right-of-Way: 70'

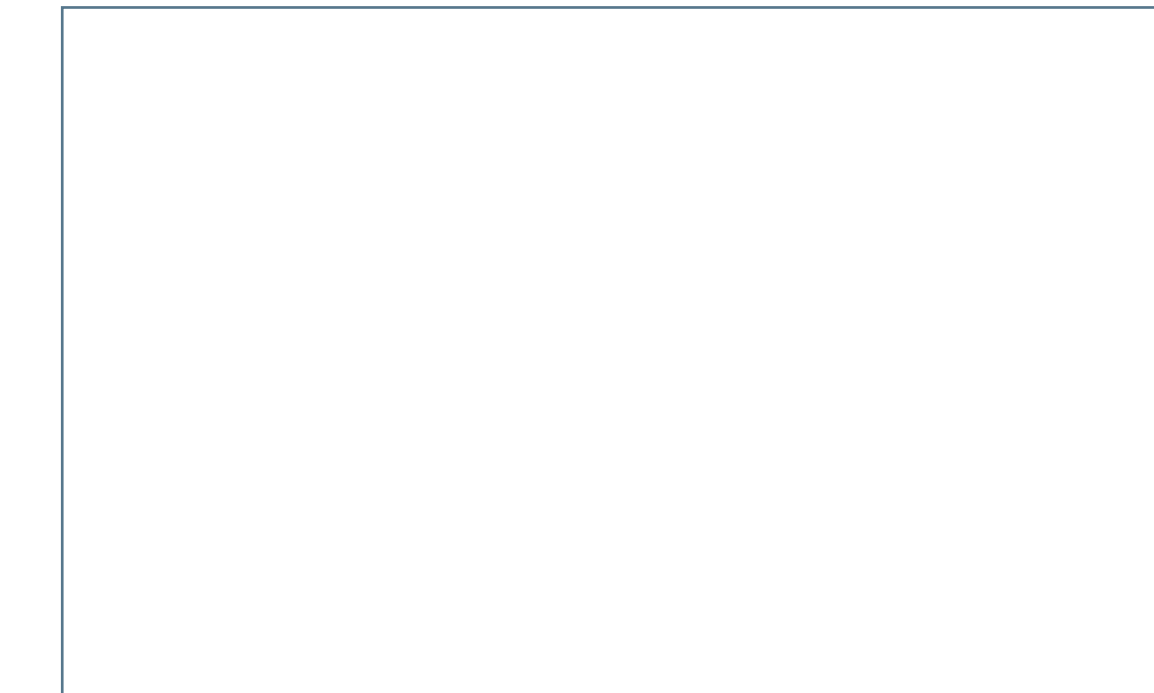
Proposed changes:

- Expansion of sidewalks
- Additional landscaping and street trees
- Travel lane width reductions
- Diagonal to parallel parking lane conversion
- Right-sized buffered bike lanes

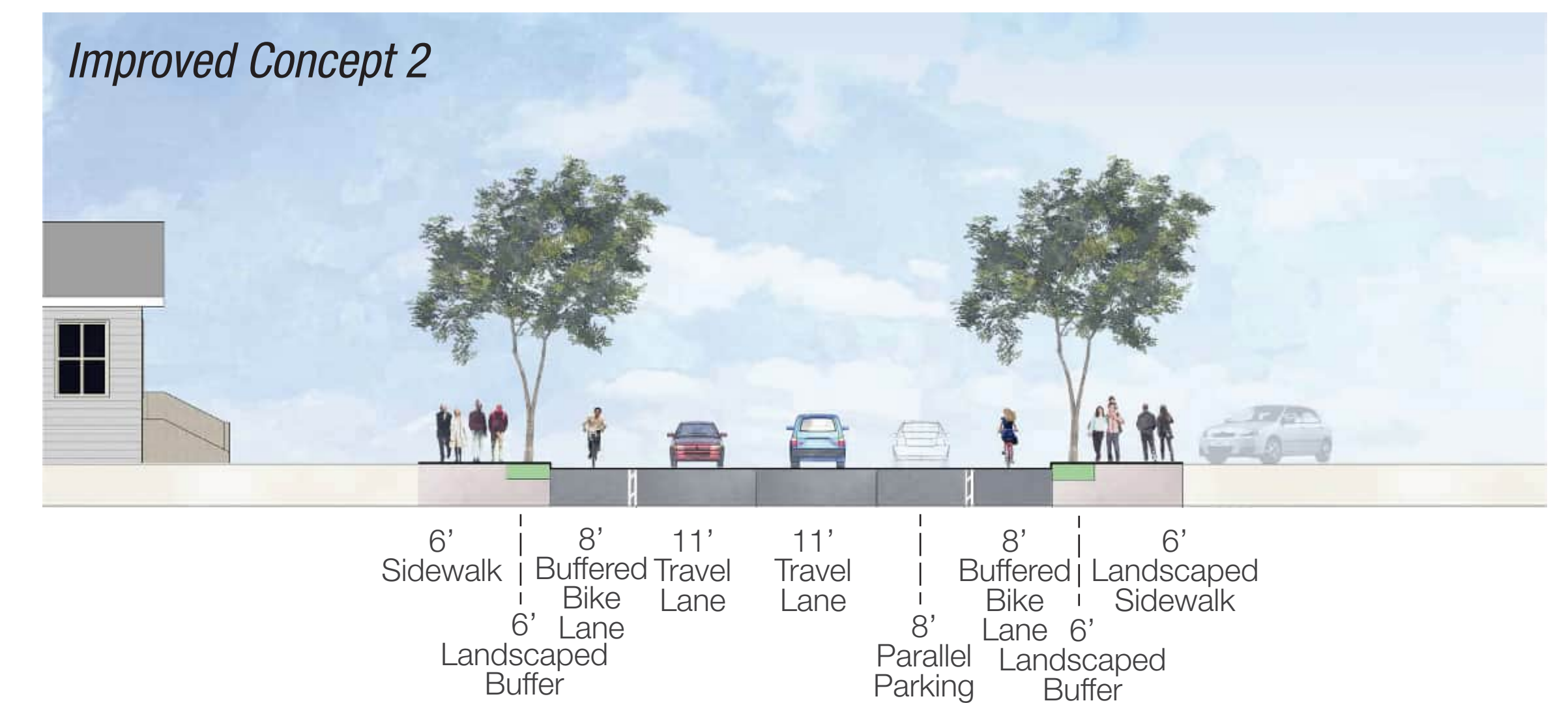
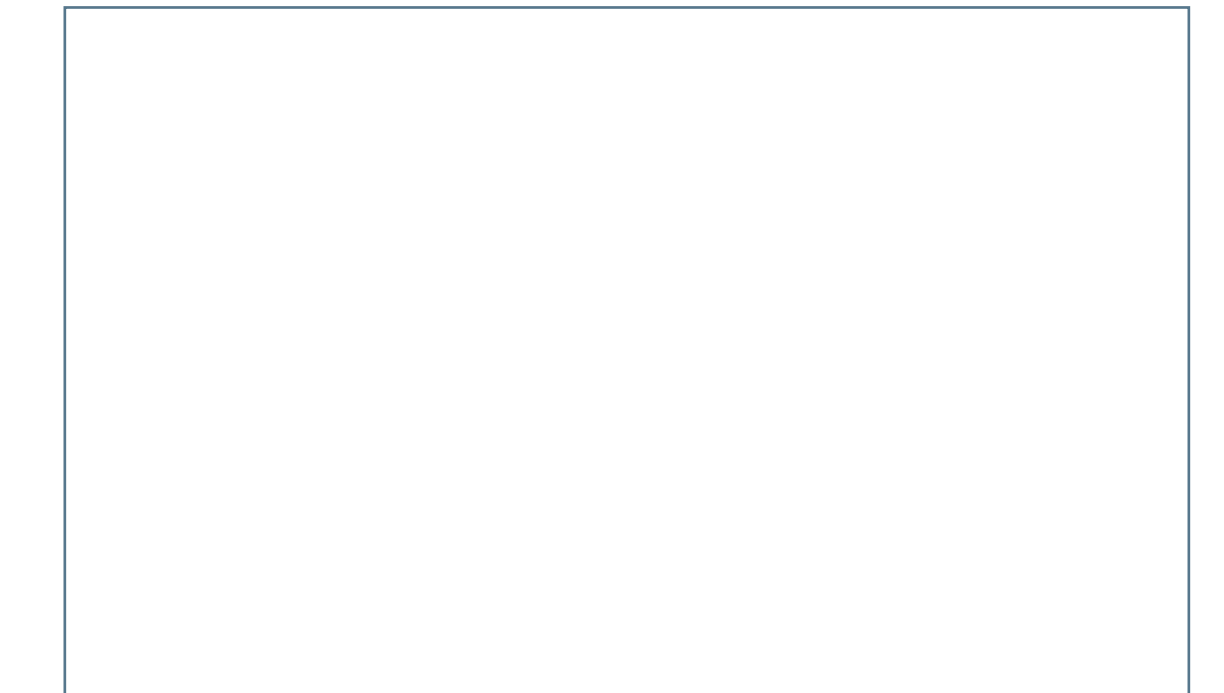


Which improved concept do you prefer for MLK Drive?
Place a dot sticker in one of the boxes below.

Improved Concept 1



Improved Concept 2

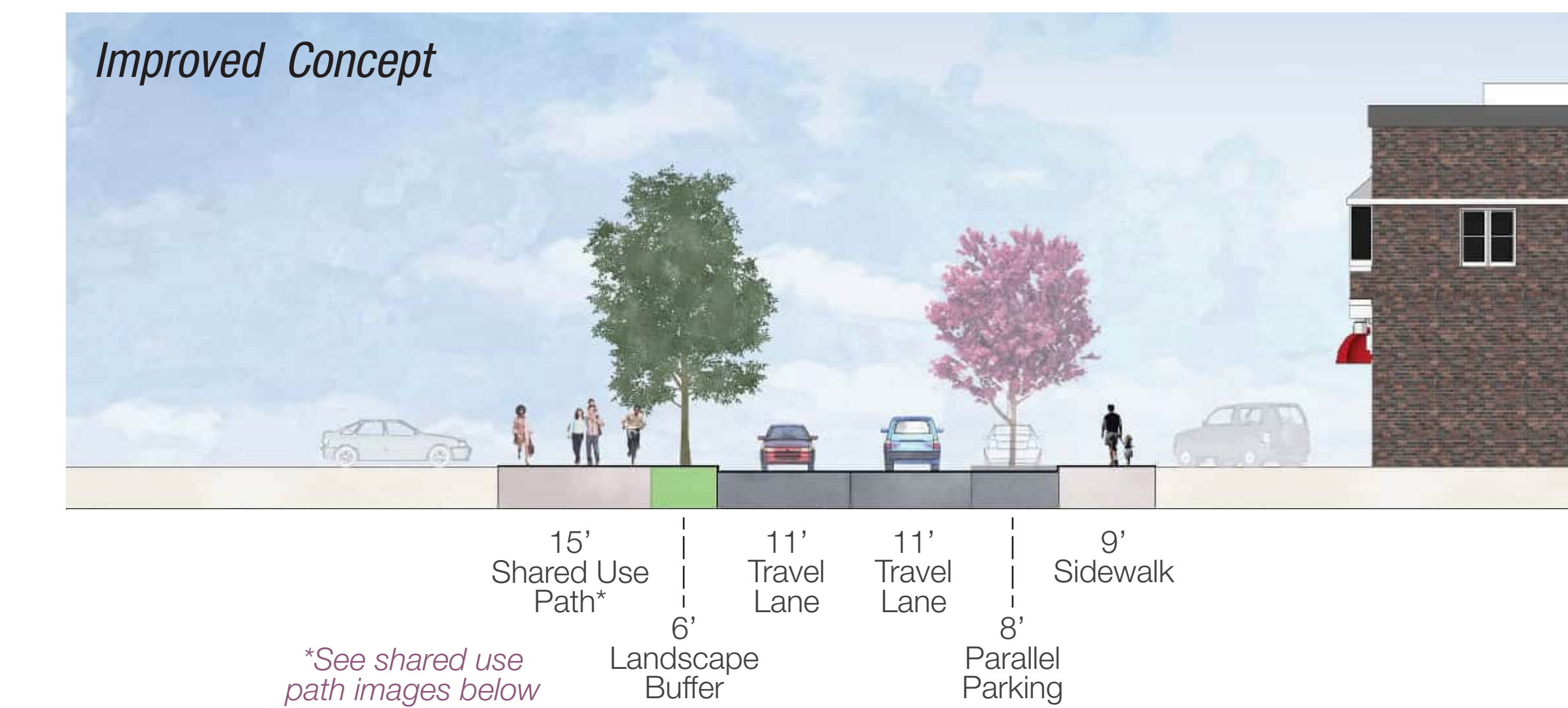
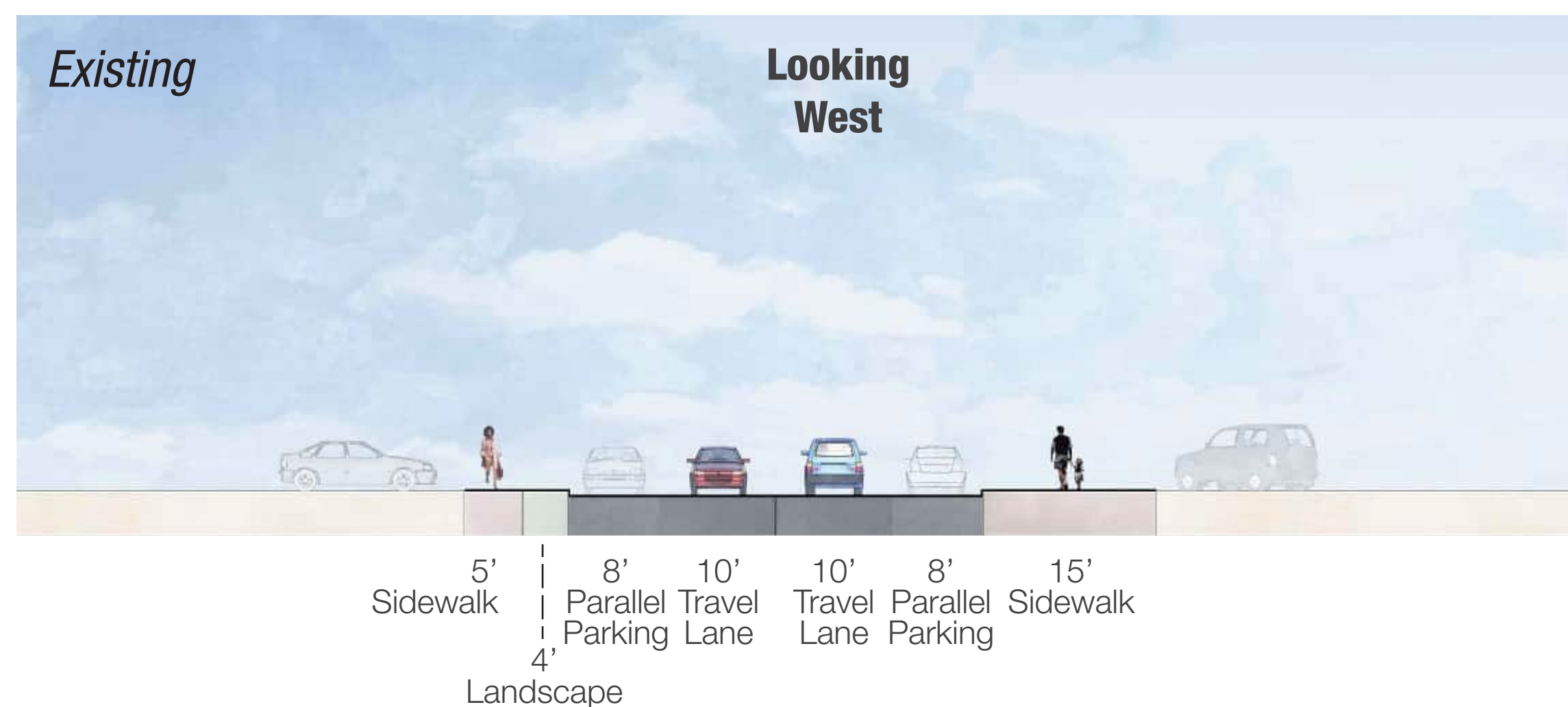


4 Hutchison Street

Right-of-Way: 60'

Proposed changes:

- Expansion of sidewalks
- Additional landscaping buffer and street trees
- Addition of a multi-use path on north side to align with bike lane to the east
- Removal of parallel parking on north side



Hutchison Street Shared Use Path

A multi-use path along Hutchison Street can provide a critical bicycle network link in the form of an on-street facility that is comfortable for all riders and safe to be shared by bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users, particularly families or other residents who need a safe route to the riverfront parks from existing neighborhoods.

- The path would replace the bike lane to the east and connect the Riverfront Parks/CM Allen Parkway to residents and neighborhoods on the west side of Downtown.
- Hutchison Street is an ideal route for all levels of bike riders because unlike Hopkins Street, it is not the major vehicular thoroughfare in the Downtown area and is less congested. This creates a more comfortable and inviting experience for users.
- This multi-use path would also connect to enhanced bike facilities on Edward Gary Street and the woonerf on Fredericksburg Street.

The proposed section graphic to above shows how this would fit in the most constrained part of Hutchison Street by replacing vehicle parking along the north side of the street. The image to the right shows an example of how the path could look and feel.





Place sticky notes below questions

What do you like about the idea of the flexible/festival street design and occasionally closing the street to cars on San Antonio Street?

Other Comments on This Topic