

SAN MARCOS



AREA PLAN





Gen. C. Jack Hays
1817-1883



SAN MARCOS

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



“

Through the work of the Downtown Area Plan, the San Marcos community envisions downtown as the cultural and economic heart of San Marcos where all community members are welcomed to gather, live, work, and enjoy the charm, walkability, and vibrancy of downtown. This Downtown Area Plan creates our game plan for how to foster a downtown that is a unique and culturally vibrant destination, where local businesses thrive, and people of all ages can connect, create and celebrate.

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SAN MARCOS

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

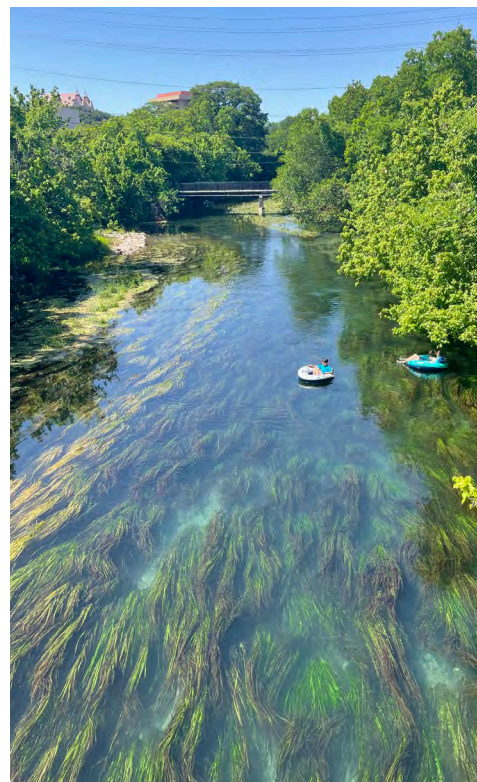
WELCOME DOWNTOWN(ER)S!

Downtown San Marcos provides a memorable, unique experience through its community, history, and vibrancy. As the heart of the City, Downtown serves many different users and needs including residents, employees, business owners, students, and visitors. Created based on about a year of analysis and engagement, the Downtown Area Plan seeks to strengthen Downtown for decades to come by identifying improvements, investments, and opportunities that can be pursued through public and private investment to ensure Downtown best serves all people in the San Marcos community and has a vibrant and resilient future.

What's in the Plan?

The Downtown Area Plan has five chapters including:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** - Provides highlights from the Existing Conditions Assessment covering topics like development history, demographics, land use, zoning, mobility infrastructure, natural resources and more.
- **Chapter 2: Engagement Overview** - Includes a summary of community and stakeholder engagement conducted throughout the Downtown Area Plan process.
- **Chapter 3: Downtown Vision** - Reflects a community-driven vision statement, plan goals, and Downtown opportunities organized by topic.
- **Chapter 4: Recommendations** - Provides overarching and specific recommendations for improvements and investments by topic to enhance Downtown for all over the next several years.
- **Chapter 5: Implementation** - The “how-to” guide containing action items and coordination considerations for implementing recommendations outlined within the plan.



VISION AND GOALS

Through stakeholder and community engagement early in the Downtown Area Plan process, the following vision and goals were established for the effort.



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.



Attract people of all walks of life including families, aging adults, young professionals, visitors, students, faculty, and staff with a greater diversity of shops, restaurants, housing, and employment options.



Provide an inclusive, welcoming, safe heart of the community for people of all ages, incomes, abilities, religious beliefs, and cultures.



Promote a vibrant and thriving Downtown through local business support, fostering entrepreneurship, mixed-use development, and a variety of housing options.



Increase sustainability and resiliency by prioritizing multimodal transportation, supporting green infrastructure and buildings, and providing community programs and amenities.



Elevate equity in the Downtown experience through accessibility, affordability, and cultural programming.



Educate about, reflect on, and celebrate history while adapting to new needs and planning ahead for growth and change over time.

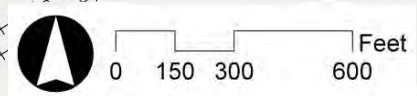
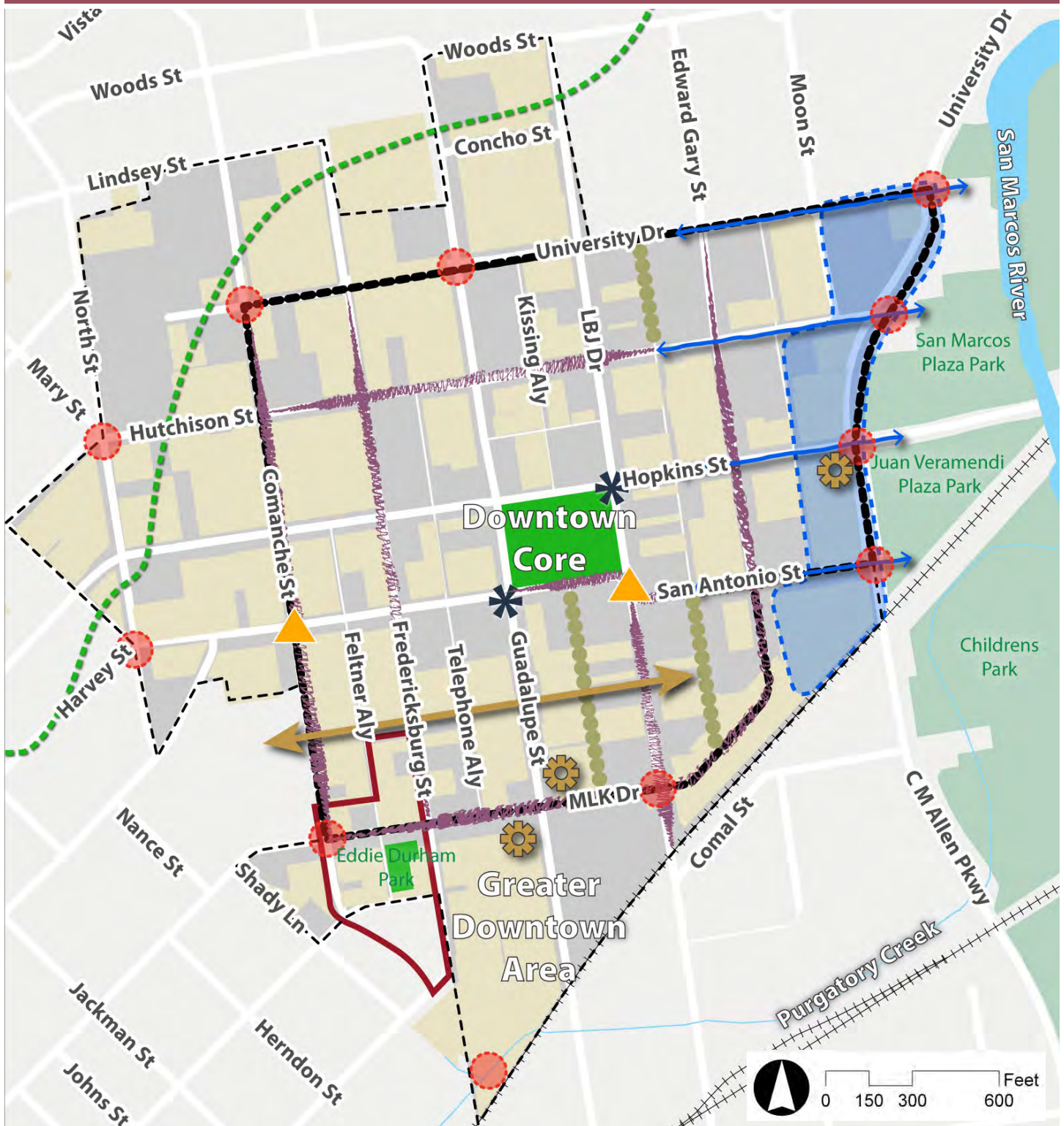


Strengthen Downtown's unique identity through an atmosphere of eclectic arts, small business, diverse cuisines, recreational opportunities, Historic architecture, and lively events in a riverfront, hill country community.



Better connect Downtown both physically and programmatically to Texas State University, the San Marcos River, and other surrounding neighborhoods.

DOWNTOWN HIGHLIGHTED RECOMMENDATIONS



Legend

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Downtown Core | | Opportunities for Housing | | Streetscape Improvements |
| | Greater Downtown Area | | CM Allen Parkway District/
Riverfront Park Connections | | Courthouse Square Transit
Stops |
| | Railroad | | Existing Park for Improvement
New Park Area | | Priority Intersection
Improvements |
| | Streets | | Mid-Block Connections | | Priority Green Alleys |
| | River and Creeks | | Downtown Gateways | | Infill Development Sites |
| | Parks | | | | Cultural District |

HIGHLIGHTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4, Recommendations, is organized by seven key topics with two cross-cutting themes, as listed to the right. Highlights from these topics are included on the map to the left and this page.

1. Downtown Housing Options
2. Building Form & Infill Development
3. Multimodal Connectivity & Parking
4. Priority Streetscape Improvements
5. Public Spaces & Amenities
6. Small Business Support
7. History, Art, & Culture
8. Town/Gown Relations
9. Sustainability



Opportunities for Housing

Multi-family and mixed-use housing types are the primary products recommended in and near Downtown and “missing middle” housing types (such as townhomes, duplexes, or accessory dwelling units) around the outer edges of Downtown, especially adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

CM Allen Parkway District/ Riverfront Park Connections

A “CM Allen Parkway District” should 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.

Mid-Block Connections

Mid-block connections and street crossings should be implemented for east/west connections between San Antonio Street and MLK Drive to reduce long road block lengths and travel time for multimodal users.

Infill Development

Concepts in this section reflect a vision to better utilize privately-owned vacant properties in Downtown while providing development types desired by the community.

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.

Streetscape Improvements

Several Downtown streets should be redesigned to improve safety and comfort for all modes of transportation and to support adjacent businesses.

Cultural District

A State Cultural District near Eddie Durham Park should be applied for to further support and elevate arts and culture.

Green Alleys

Additional alleys have been identified as priority alleys for enhancement of pedestrian spaces and sustainability.

Improvements for Existing Parks and New Park Space

While Downtown is conveniently located near several parks, these existing public spaces could use more/better amenities to serve their users, and a new park in the northwest, especially as Downtown’s resident population grows.

Courthouse Transit Stops

More convenient transit access should be provided immediately adjacent to the Courthouse Square in the heart of Downtown.

Intersection Improvements

Improvements to Downtown intersections can increase safety for all modes while contributing to Downtown placemaking.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Downtown San Marcos provides a memorable, unique experience through its community, history, and vibrancy. As the heart of the City, Downtown serves many different users and needs including residents, employees, business owners, students, and visitors. This Plan seeks to strengthen Downtown for decades to come by identifying improvements, investments, and opportunities that can be pursued through public and private investment to ensure Downtown best serves all people in the San Marcos community and has a vibrant and resilient future.

ABOUT DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS

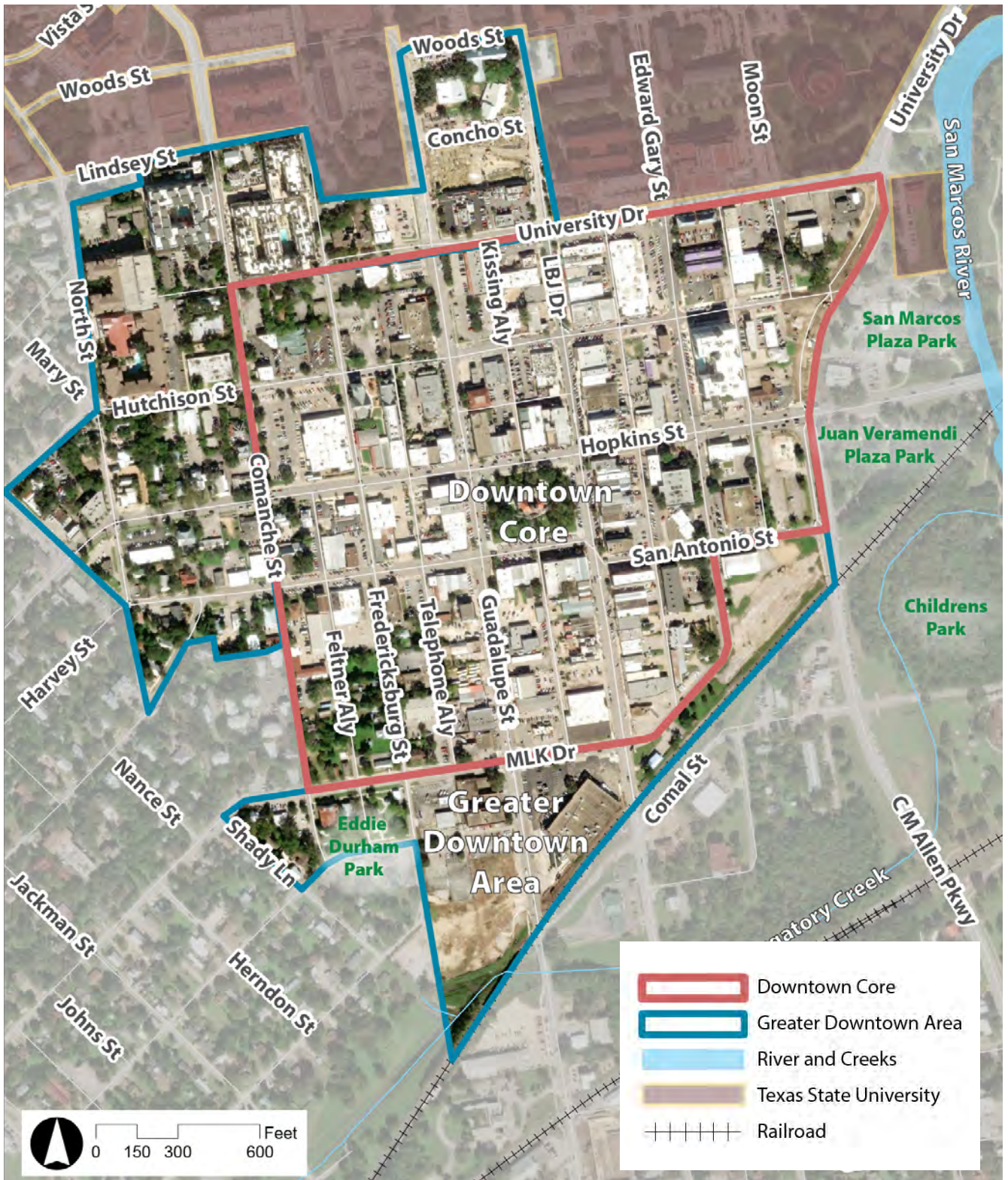


The Downtown Area Plan will be focused primarily on an area called the Downtown Core which is made of 20 blocks (84 acres) in the heart of San Marcos, Texas. The Downtown Core is bounded by Comanche Street on the west, MLK Drive/Edward Gary Street/San Antonio Street to the south, CM Allen Parkway to the east, and University Drive/Pat Garrison to the north. The Historic County Courthouse is central to Downtown, immediately surrounded by a green space and connected to the rest of Downtown through a formal grid of streets. Immediately surrounding the Courthouse are commercial and mixed use buildings with active storefronts and historic, artistic, and creative facades. Radiating out from the Courthouse Square, historic character continues while intersecting with new mid-rise residential and mixed-use buildings, undeveloped lots, and locally oriented services.

The southern portion of the Downtown Core includes two primary mixed use/commercial corridors which have historic character and several local businesses, but noticeably less public investment in recent years. The Downtown Core is most active on nights and weekends during river tubing season and the Texas State University school year. Several vacant buildings, properties, and ground floors currently exist. Downtown block lengths are typically 375 feet, but north/south blocks are much longer south of San Antonio Street at 700 feet.

Aspects of the plan regarding transitions, surrounding context, and connections will consider larger areas including the Riverfront Parks, Greater Downtown Area, and the area south of Downtown. The “Greater Downtown Area” includes areas immediately proximal to Downtown and comprises an additional 61 acres. To the west of Downtown are historic low-density residential neighborhoods. To the north of Downtown is the Texas State University (Texas State) campus, located on a hill above Downtown. East of Downtown slopes down toward the Riverfront Parks along the San Marcos River, a significant recreational, natural, and historic resource for residents and visitors. A multi-generational neighborhood with rich culture and community lies south of two lines of Union Pacific railroad tracks and north of Interstate 35.

DOWNTOWN AREA MAP



DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Downtown San Marcos is a unique and important geography in the San Marcos community. It is bounded by several of San Marcos' key attributes including the San Marcos river and headwaters, Texas State University, the gateway to the hill country, historic and cultural neighborhoods, and the IH-35 Interstate. Downtown is the most dense and unique parts of the community which is defined by short blocks, and pre-automobile compact development patterns that are conducive to walking or biking.

It is important to understand the forces which have shaped Downtown San Marcos. William W. Moon, reportedly the earliest Anglo settler to the area that would become San Marcos, arrived in 1845 and constructed a log cabin near today's downtown. In 1851, Moon opened a hotel that developed into a stagecoach stop between San Antonio and Austin. The town of San Marcos was officially platted in 1851.

The largely agricultural community developed slowly during the mid-nineteenth century. In 1880, an economic boom and growth in population was stimulated by the construction of a railway line for the International and Great Northern (I&GN) Railroad. In 1887, commercial and residential development flourished. Commercial buildings of limestone and brick masonry replaced earlier frame structures downtown. The existing (fifth) courthouse was constructed in 1908. By 1912, San Marcos Sanborn maps indicate further commercial and industrial development downtown and near the railroad lines, as well as significant residential development north and west of downtown primarily along San Antonio, Comal (Martin Luther King [MLK] Drive), Fredericksburg, Comanche, E. Hutchison, and Colorado (University) streets.



Bird's eye view of San Marcos, 1881 – Augustus Koch (Photo reproduced from the San Marcos-Hays County Collection at the San Marcos Library)

After more than a decade of very limited development throughout the Great Depression and WWII, much needed commercial and residential construction occurred during the post-war years in San Marcos. Returning GIs purchased houses and new suburban neighborhoods developed to meet housing needs. San Marcos's economy transitioned during this time from primarily agricultural to more diverse industries. The growth of Southwest Texas College (Texas State University) further stimulated and guided development throughout the mid- to late twentieth century. The central courthouse square, once lined



with specialty stores and local businesses, began to change in the 1960s as suburban development drew shoppers elsewhere and local stores were replaced with larger retailers. Businesses around the square began to cater to local college students, with bars and restaurants replacing former “mom and pop” stores. The construction of IH-35 in the 1960s further contributed to these changes.

In recent decades, there is growing recognition of the intrinsic value of culture and history. In that vein, San Marcos was designated in 1986 as an official Main Street City by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and remains one of the oldest Main Street programs in the state. In addition, San Marcos has been named a National Main Street City by the National Trust and the Texas Historical Commission since the recognition was established in 1999. The program is one of only a few cities in Texas to receive this honor. Additionally, the locally designated Downtown Historic District was established in 1986.

The Central Texas corridor is booming. San Marcos is projected to see an additional 42,000-64,000 new housing units by 2050. The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan (2023) creates a community vision for the future and provides goals and strategies for how to achieve the community’s vision amongst rapid growth. This Downtown Area Plan provides recommendations for the role of Downtown in meeting the broader community vision.



*Hays County Courthouse, circa 1910
(Photo reproduced from the San Marcos-Hays County Collection at the San Marcos Library)*



Aerial photo of Downtown San Marcos, undated (Photo reproduced from the San Marcos-Hays County Collection at the San Marcos Library)

EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

DOWNTOWN DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

San Marcos is diverse in culture, race, ethnicity, age, and household income. Downtown is the heart of the city and a place to celebrate that diversity, providing a place for all San Marcans to come together, feel represented, and equitably served. During the Downtown Area Plan process, feedback was solicited from San Marcans of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

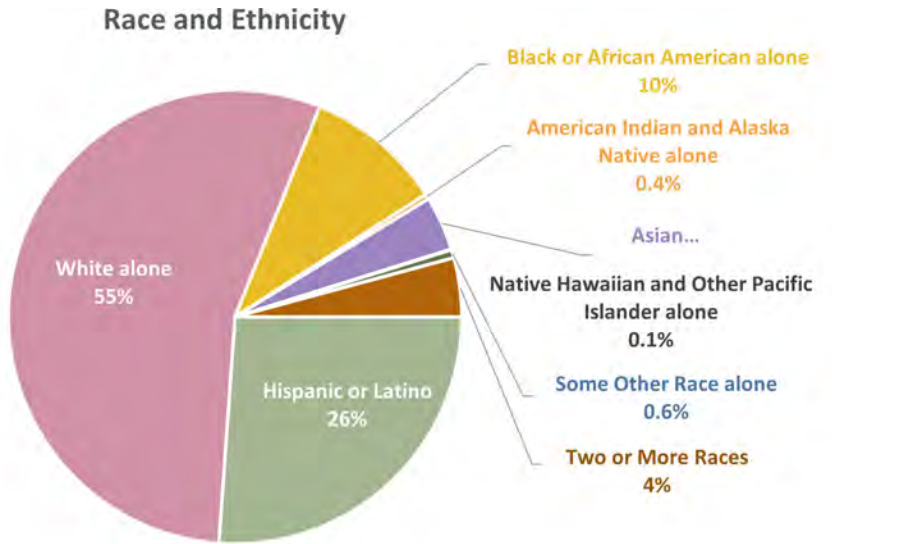
POPULATION

The total population of the Downtown Core is approximately 1,905 people, which accounts for about 3% of the city’s total population (67,553 people).

Approximately 41% of Downtown Core residents identify as male and 58% identify as female. San Marcos has a higher female to male ratio than Texas and the nation as a whole.

RACE & ETHNICITY

Downtown San Marcos residents self-report as 55% White alone, 26% Hispanic or Latino, 10% Black or African American alone, 4% Asian alone, and 4% two or more races. This is more diverse than the rest of the city and Texas as a whole.



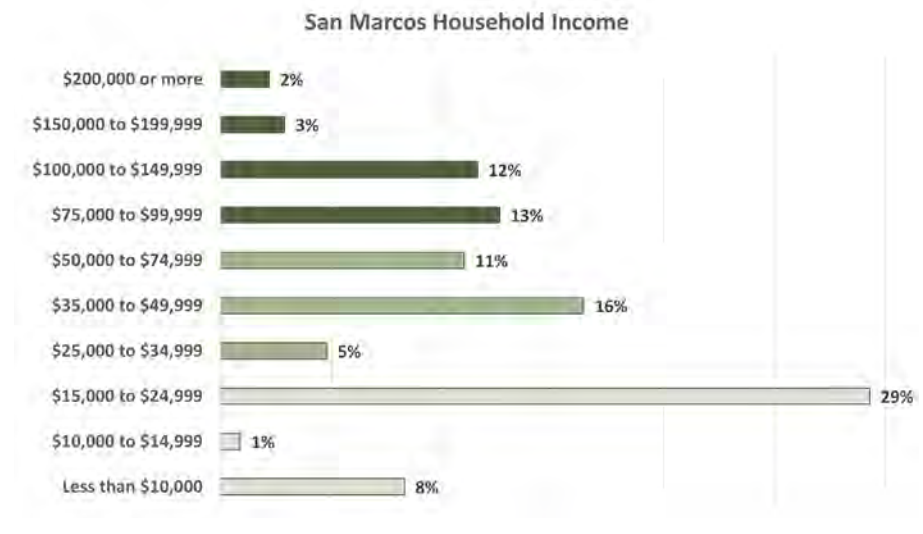


AGE

The age distribution in San Marcos is heavily weighted towards young adults aged between 18-29 years, which likely reflects the presence of Texas State. Downtown San Marcos is younger than the city as a whole but has fewer young children and teenagers.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in San Marcos is \$42,500 (2020 Census) with 30.6% (2020 Census) of households earning below the poverty line. In Downtown, the percentage of households earning below the poverty line are even higher with the median household income at \$39,408. This may be due to many Texas State students living Downtown, many of whom may not have full-time or high-paying employment while enrolled at the University.

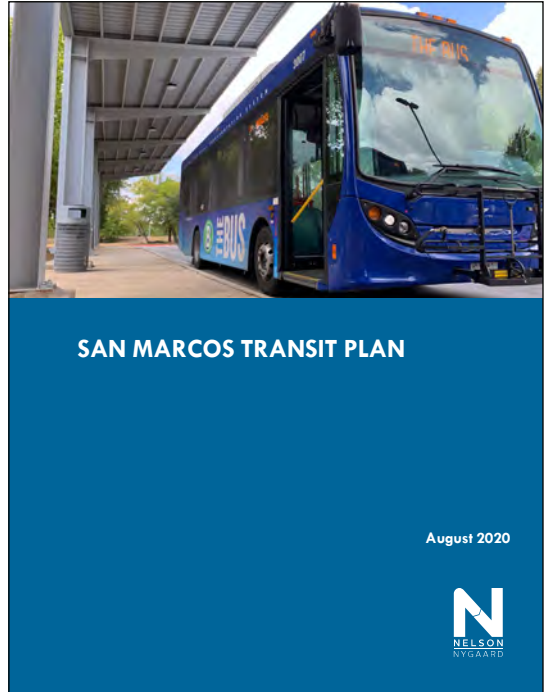


EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS & REGULATIONS

A thorough review was conducted of past and concurrent planning initiatives and City efforts that identify recommendations salient to Downtown. The list below outlines the initiatives that helped set the stage for the San Marcos Downtown Area Plan. For the complete review, please refer to the Downtown Area Plan Existing Conditions Assessment (Appendix).

- Vision San Marcos, A River Runs Through Us Comprehensive Plan (2013)
- Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan (2023)
- Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines Update (2021)
- My Historic SMTX – Historic Resources Survey (2019)
- Transportation Master Plan (2018)
- Transit Plan (2020)
- Capitol Area Metropolitan Organization (CAMPO) San Marcos Transportation Corridors Study (2021)
- Arts Master Plan (2022)
- Riverfront Parks Preliminary Design Report (2022/ongoing)
- 10-Year Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
- Parking Program Framework Plan (2018)
- On-Street Paid Parking Implementation Plan (under discussion)
- Great Springs Project Trails Plan
- Administrative Downtown Pattern Book (2021)
- Downtown Master Plan (2008)
- Parks Master Plan (2018)



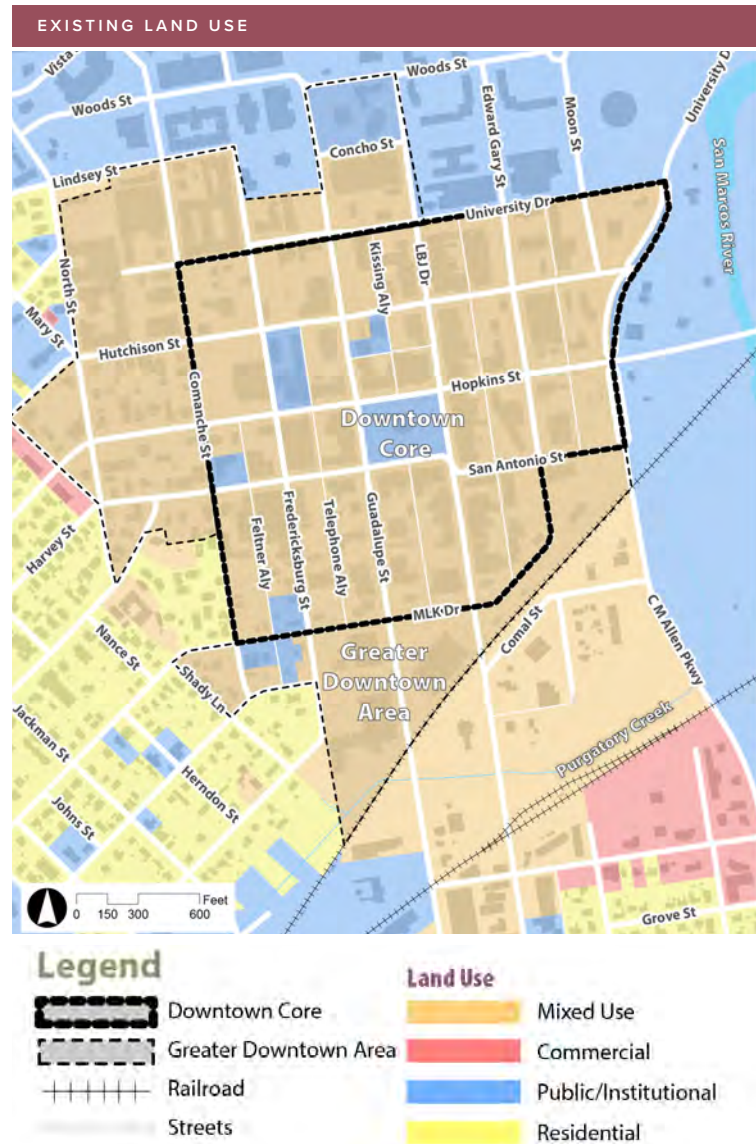
EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

LAND USE, ZONING, & BUILDING FORM

EXISTING LAND USE

Land uses in the Downtown Core are primarily mixed use with five locations of public/institutional uses including fire/police department facilities, the Courthouse Square, the Price Center, and the Calaboose Museum. Mixing of uses in the Downtown Core is primarily horizontal around the outer edges and vertically integrated surrounding the Courthouse Square and in newer developments.

The Greater Downtown Area continues to be primarily mixed use. North and east of Downtown are public/institutional uses serving Texas State and the Riverfront Parks. South of Downtown is mixed use with some commercial south of the railroad tracks, transitioning to residential further south. West and southwest of Downtown is primarily residential, including two Historic neighborhoods and many historic homes. A separate ongoing effort is the development of Neighborhood Area Plans for the Dunbar /Heritage Neighborhood and for the area South of Downtown (Victory Gardens & East Guadalupe Neighborhoods and the portion of downtown located between the railroad tracks and IH-35).





HOUSING

Housing types in the Downtown Core are a blend of mixed use, multi-family, and single-family. The Greater Downtown Area contains several large multi-family developments, with densities falling in the same range overall as the Downtown Core. West and southwest of the Greater Downtown Area is a lower-density neighborhood of primarily single-family detached housing, but also containing a mix of multi-family and duplex developments.



BUILDING FORM

Most building heights are typically limited to three to five stories maximum in Downtown, however, alternative compliance options are available and to date have resulted in one building taller than five stories in the Downtown Core and one building taller than five stories in the Greater Downtown Area. The adjacent neighborhood southwest of Downtown is largely limited to two stories.



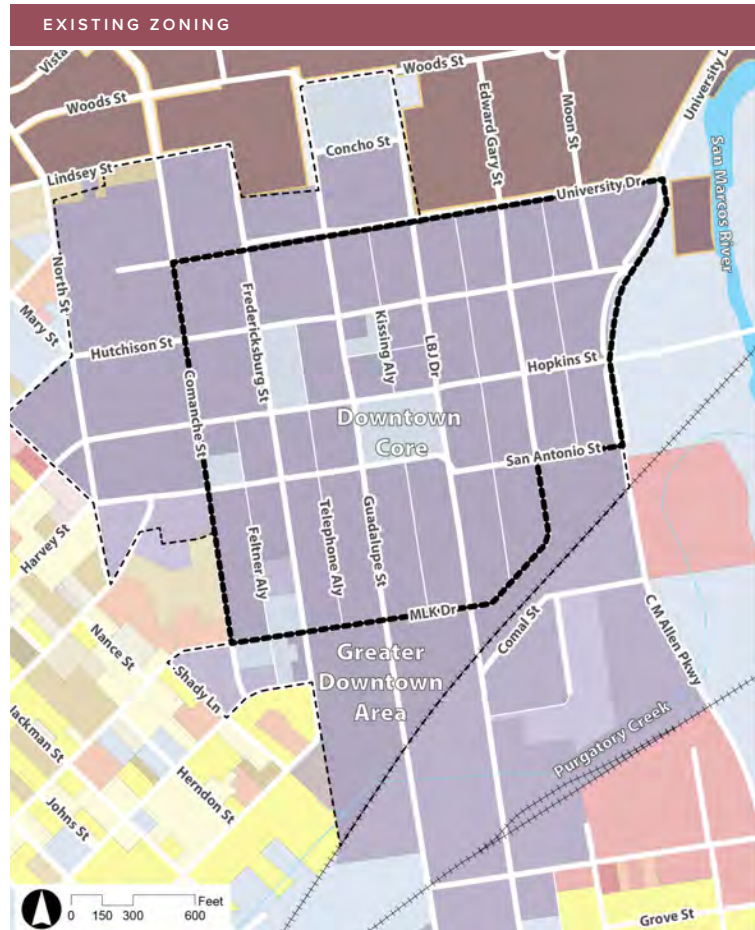
Ground floors in the Downtown Core are mixed in design, and often contribute to an engaging pedestrian experience and sense of place through high levels of transparency, storefronts, and small setbacks. Yet, not all ground floors share the same treatment. Several streets have frontages that do not contribute positively to the pedestrian experience through expansive blank walls, large setbacks with surface parking lots, a lack of an articulated, transparent, human-scaled façade, and lack of buildings.
























EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

ZONING

Zoning in the Downtown Core is primarily CD-5D (Character District – 5 Downtown) with pockets of P (Public). According to the City’s development code, “The CD-5D district is intended to provide for mixed use, pedestrian-oriented development in Downtown and its five design contexts that reflect historical development patterns. To promote walkability and to encourage street level retail activity, auto-oriented uses are restricted” (See Downtown Design Manual). This district generally allows for buildings between two to five stories (three stories maximum in the Downtown Historic District), minimal setbacks, and reduced private parking. Building types allowed in CD-5D include townhouses, apartments, live/work units, mixed use storefronts, and civic buildings.



Legend

	Downtown Core		P		SF-6		DR		NC
	Greater Downtown Area		CD-4		TH		MF-12		CC
	Texas State University		CD-5D		MR		MF-18		GC
	Rivers and Creeks		SF-4.5		D		MF-24		OP
	Railroad						MU		LI

CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

PEDESTRIANS

Sidewalks in the Downtown Core are mostly continuous but do have several small gaps throughout. They vary from wide, buffered, landscaped, and comfortable to narrow, with steep slopes and cross slopes, and without buffers from vehicle traffic. Corner bulb-outs are frequent Downtown, allowing space for amenities, reduced crossing distances, and greater pedestrian visibility. Despite corner bulb-outs, pedestrian crossings feel unsafe and there is a lack of pedestrian crossing priority and visibility. ADA accessibility is actively being improved through additional curb ramps, but the topography of Downtown continues to create challenges for people with disabilities. *See map on page 89 for existing and proposed sidewalks and pedestrian connections.*



BICYCLISTS & MICROMOBILITY

Dedicated bike facilities that exist in the Downtown core include a new two-way cycle track on the east side of Guadalupe Street that is separated from traffic by a buffer and safety bollards, a one-way bike lane on North LBJ Drive from Hopkins Street to University Drive, bike lanes on both sides of the street on MLK Drive from Fredericksburg Street to LBJ Drive and then continuing onto Edward Gary Street (ending at San Antonio Street), and one west-bound bike lane on Hutchison Street from CM Allen Parkway to Guadalupe Street. Sharrows exist on San Antonio Street west of the Courthouse Square and along a portion of Pat Garrison, west of Fredericksburg Street. One vendor (Spin) currently offers micromobility options Downtown including scooters and bikes. *See map on page 87 for existing and proposed bicycle facilities and connections.*



EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

TRANSIT

Downtown is served by both Texas State and CARTS transit services. Plans are underway to combine the two services, which would consolidate routes and stops. Insufficient frequency and limited technology are two key issues with the transit service identified by staff for transit service Downtown. Currently, no transit stops exist directly within the Courthouse Square, requiring walking a couple of blocks from transit to access the heart of Downtown. A couple of blocks from the Courthouse Square, a new transit plaza is being planned along Edward Gary Street between Hutchison Street and University Drive. The Get Around Downtown Pilot Shuttle Program launched in November 2022 and features an electric shuttle to assist residents in getting to downtown destinations within the Main Street District boundary. Longer term, Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan contemplates high performance transit between Downtown and the Second City Center (near the San Marcos High School), as well as connecting to Austin and San Antonio.



VEHICLES AND PARKING

There are multiple paid parking opportunities in the Downtown core. These consist of city-owned parking lots, privately owned but publicly accessible parking lots, and a Texas State owned parking garage. On-street parking exists throughout Downtown and is free with two-hour limits. All streets Downtown are City-owned rights-of-way, with the exception of Guadalupe Street south of Hopkins Street and Hopkins Street east of Guadalupe Street. These are Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) highways. Dedicated loading zones do not exist in Downtown, making delivery trucks utilize the alleys for deliveries. While left turn pockets are helping to alleviate traffic congestion, an increase in vehicular traffic occurs Downtown during peak times. 2021 traffic counts included:

- 3,500 vehicles on Hutchison Street west of the Downtown Core
- 3,000 vehicles on Hutchison Street west of Edward Gary Street
- 3,100 vehicles on Edward Gary Street south of Hopkins Street
- 4,100 vehicles on MLK Drive at Telephone Alley

PARKS, PUBLIC SPACES, & NATURAL FEATURES

PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES

Two public parks exist in the Downtown Core, including the Courthouse Square (County-owned) and the Mobility Hub. Parks within the Greater Downtown Area include the Depot, which is a “pocket park” on city owned property, and Eddie Durham Park, named after local San Marcos resident and pioneer of the electric guitar in jazz music, which is located in the southwest corner of Downtown on MLK Drive. The large riverfront parks and San Marcos River are located immediately east of Downtown. These parks provide many recreational amenities, river access, and river crossing points. Kissing Alley is being designed as a green alley with public spaces, landscaping, and enhanced permeable paving.



TOPOGRAPHY & STORMWATER

The topography of Downtown generally slopes from Texas State downward to the river and south of Downtown. This topography is significant for accessibility, building access, and stormwater drainage. CM Allen Parkway was reconstructed in 2021 as a CIP Project to incorporate green stormwater infrastructure to help capture and treat stormwater runoff from the roadways in the downtown area. The water table in Downtown varies and can be as shallow as two feet below ground during periods of high rainfall. San Marcos is subject to both drought and significant storm events, resulting in runoff and water quality concerns for the San Marcos River, adjacent to Downtown and downstream.

EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

HISTORIC, CULTURAL, & PUBLIC ART ASSETS

Downtown San Marcos is rich with history, culture, and public art. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Hays County Courthouse Historic District is central to Downtown. There are several other historic markers and buildings throughout Downtown as well.

Cultural and community amenities include museums, galleries, a senior center, religious institutions, and several performance and event venues.

Public art varies in style, medium, and theme, but a motif of mermaids is repeated through statues and murals. Public art is particularly plentiful along Hutchison Street east of LBJ Drive, around the Courthouse Square, and along MLK Drive. Downtown outdoor events include the monthly Art Squared arts market from March-December, weekly year-round Farmers Market, and other County and City sponsored events including Concerts on the Square, Movies on the Square, cultural festivals, and holiday events. These events take place on the Courthouse Square. Additionally, pop-up vendor events occur at the Mobility Hub, the Eddie Durham Park, the Price Center, and at the adjacent Riverfront Parks.





SAFETY, MAINTENANCE, & OPERATIONS

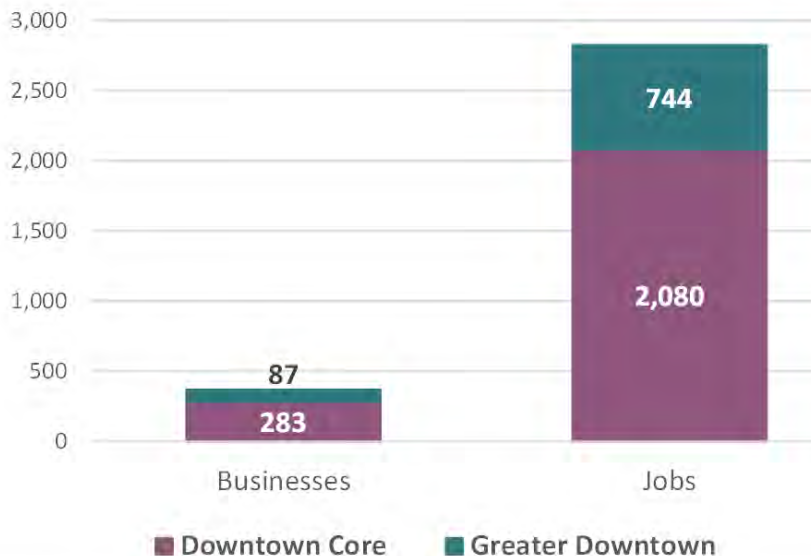
Approximately 6,000-8,000 people are in or pass through Downtown San Marcos every week Thursday-Saturday. Maintenance has been identified as a key issue between both City staff and stakeholders. Given the active nightlife scene, vandalism is frequent in Downtown and affects signage, public furnishings, tree grates, and landscaping. Litter is also prevalent. The City currently has limited staff capacity to keep up with repairs related to vandalism in addition to regular maintenance that is required in the public realm.



DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

EMPLOYMENT

Downtown San Marcos is the entertainment, historic, and cultural center of the community. The Downtown Core is home to 283 businesses and 2,080 jobs. The Greater Downtown Area (surrounding the Downtown Core) contains an additional 87 businesses and 744 jobs. In total, the Downtown Core accounts for over 7% of Citywide employment. Economic activity in Downtown is driven by its major assets including the presence of Texas State, the San Marcos River and associated parks and open spaces, the cultural and historic attractions, and a variety of restaurants, bars, and shops.



EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

The largest industries in Downtown (Downtown Core and Greater Downtown Area combined) are food services and retail trade (see chart below). These two industries account for 1,276 jobs, which is 45% of Downtown employment. The accommodation and food service businesses in Downtown make up approximately 20% of citywide employment in the accommodation and food services industry. Service providers are also a major component of the Downtown economy.



CONSUMER SPENDING

Consumer spending in Downtown is driven primarily by visitors, Texas State students, and the Downtown workforce. The potential spending that can be captured in Downtown is estimated at:

- Permanent Residents living with in one mile of Downtown: 25%
- Students living within one mile of Downtown: 16%
- Texas State Campus generated spending (excluding students living within one mile): 46%
- Visitors and other San Marcos residents: 13%

The Greater Downtown area has a relatively small population that also contributes to consumer spending. In total, the Greater Downtown area accounts for approximately 10% of citywide retail sales including over 20% of sales from eating and drinking establishments.





INVENTORY & VACANCIES

The Downtown Core has an inventory of 650,000 square feet of retail space and 250,000 square feet of office space.

Downtown retail space rents for an average of \$22.64 per square foot and office space rents for an average of \$14 per square foot. The inventory of actively leased or marketed retail and office space indicates low vacancy rates for space in Downtown (5% for retail and less than 1% for office).

Despite the reported data of low vacancy in Downtown commercial space, this is not an accurate reflection of the utilization of Downtown buildings. There are several properties in Downtown that have been used or could be leased to retail or office users but are currently vacant or unused. Students at Texas State completed an inventory of ground floor buildings and their vacancy status. This primary survey of space found that there are over 80 vacant ground floor spaces, which account for over 20% of the spaces inventoried. The vacant spaces found in the survey were generally located along LBJ Drive and south of San Antonio Street.

While the Greater Downtown Area has no hotel uses, there is an existing Bed and Breakfast located on West Hopkins Street. Additionally, in the Downtown Core, there are ten active AirBnB listings, which may be helping to fill the hotel gap.



EXISTING CONDITIONS HIGHLIGHTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND PROGRAMS

The City’s Economic Development Division and its partners support businesses Downtown through a variety of local grant opportunities and programs, and support for state, federal, and non-profit grant opportunities and programs. Local grant opportunities include the Business Improvement and Growth Grant, the Legacy Business Program, Small Business Growth Program, Sustainable Resource Grant, Chapter 380 Agreements, Downtown Co-Marketing, Main Street Incentive Grant, and the ReviveSMTX Grant. Local programs offered include small business counseling, 1 Million Cups Greater SMTX, Downtown social media promotion & education, library workforce programs, business location services, and the City Liaison, who serves to connect businesses and property owners to appropriate City of San Marcos departments and resources.

MAIN STREET DISTRICT

San Marcos was designated in 1986 as an official Main Street City by the Texas Historical Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation and remains one of the oldest Main Street programs in the state. Objectives of the program include design, economic vitality, organization, promotion, and works to beautify Downtown, plan events, organize volunteers, support small businesses, communicate Downtown news, and provide support to/partner with the City’s Economic Development Division.



TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE

The Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) is a Tax Increment Financing Fund (TIF) that was created in 2011. At the end of fiscal year 2022, there was \$617,000 total revenue available in the Downtown TIRZ fund, but the projected revenue for fiscal year 2023 is \$2.3 million. The TIRZ board (made up of primarily City and County representatives) is responsible for decisions regarding the distribution of the funds for projects and financing. The TIRZ has been approved through 5-year terms and is currently approved through December 2027.





STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES SUMMARY

The Downtown Stakeholder Committee and the broader community provided input on Downtown’s strengths and weaknesses during the first phase of the community engagement process (highlighted in the next section).



STRENGTHS

- History
- Character
- Nature
- Sense of community and a regional location
- Local Events
- Unique and Local Identity
- Texas State University
- Proximity to the San Marcos River
- Historic Architecture
- Character of Downtown
- Access to amenities such as daycares, a grocery store, and restaurants

WEAKNESSES

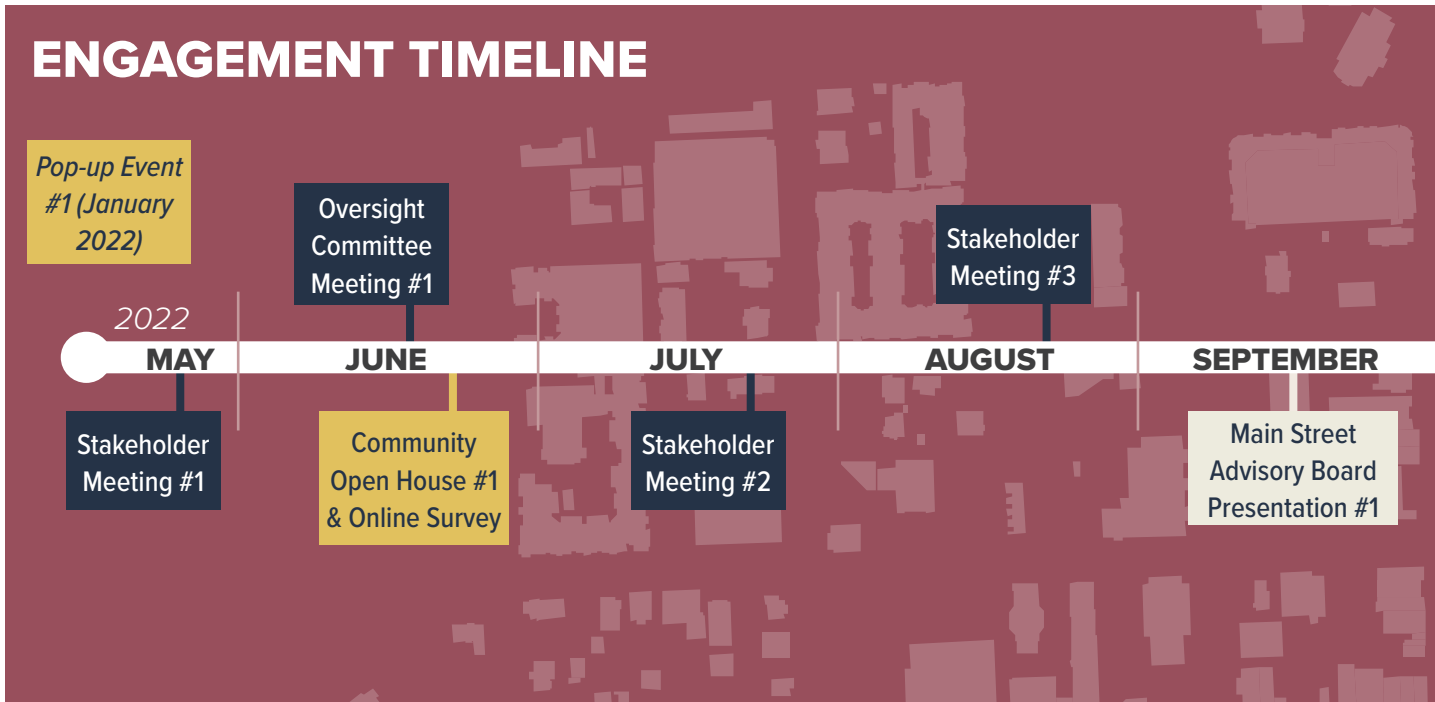
- Lack of Business Diversity and Businesses that Attract Tourists
- High Building Vacancy Rate
- Lack of Family-Friendly Spaces
- Barriers to Opening a Small Business
- Limited Downtown Transportation Options
- Sidewalk Gaps
- TxDOT-Owned Major Roads/Corridors
- Limited Parking
- Maintenance and Vandalism
- Lack of Well-Maintained Landscaping



ENGAGEMENT

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

To ensure this Downtown Area Plan reflects the needs and desires of all Downtown stakeholders, several opportunities for input were provided. This included two open houses, one online survey, a series of Downtown Stakeholder Committee meetings, Comprehensive Plan Downtown Oversight Committee Meetings, pop-up intercept events, 1-on-1 conversations, and more. As such, this plan reflects the feedback of a diverse Downtown and San Marcos population.



DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Downtown Area Plan is a focused effort within the larger San Marcos Comprehensive Plan Rewrite. Goals, measures of success, and equitable engagement action items from the Comprehensive Plan’s Public Participation also apply to participation within this Downtown effort.

The Public Participation Plan for the Downtown Area Plan was intended to provide additional detail for the Downtown Area Plan and each phase therein including timeframe, planning and engagement objectives, engagement techniques, meeting/engagement event descriptions, and communications.

The Downtown Area Plan is specifically relevant to certain community groups within the downtown area including residents, small business owners, property owners, the East Guadalupe Neighborhood, Centro Hispano de San Marcos, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association San Marcos, Parking Advisory Committee, Board of Realtors, Texas State University (students, professors, administrators), and others identified during the plan development process. Extra efforts were made to direct targeted outreach towards these groups and ensure their voices were represented in the planning process.

The Downtown Stakeholder Committee (DSC) has been involved throughout the planning process and have been a key group that has provided guidance and feedback. Additionally, they’ve served as ambassadors for the project, informing the community on the Downtown Area Plan process.

The Downtown Oversight Committee (DOC) was designed to be a subcommittee of the concurrent project, Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan, Steering Committee. The DOC’s main role was to ensure alignment between the Downtown Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan.



Throughout the planning process, different public engagement tools and methods were employed to help break down complex concepts and enable people to understand the content and provide feedback.

A variety of meeting tools were used to engage with the public. In a virtual or hybrid setting, software tools included Zoom, Mural, Mentimeter, and Konveio. Customized creative activities such as sticky note exercises, comment cards, map and dot exercises, and drawing activities were developed for use in each stakeholder and public meeting depending on the format, subject matter, and desired types of feedback.



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Throughout the span of the project, five Downtown Stakeholder Committee (DSC) meetings were held to learn from and present information to committee members. The DSC was composed of downtown small business owners, property owners, downtown-related board/commission chairs or members, and non-profit leaders in downtown. These meetings were held both in person and virtually. Summaries of each meeting are included below.

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #1

The DSC first met on Wednesday, May 25, 2022 to discuss the San Marcos Downtown Area Plan. The presentation included a review of the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Area Plan, project scope and timeline, roles and responsibilities of DSC members, and next steps in planning process and community engagement.

Feedback was gathered through four different group discussions/activities regarding Downtown strengths/weaknesses, opportunities/constraints, the creation of a 20-year vision, and metrics of success.



STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #2

The second DSC meeting was held on Tuesday, July 26, 2022 and presented the draft downtown vision statement and downtown goals, along with an overview of four of the seven key concepts being addressed in the plan:

- History, Art, Culture
- Multimodal connectivity & Parking
- Public Space & Amenities
- Priority Streetscape Enhancements

For each of the key concepts, MIG staff presented existing conditions, summarized stakeholder and community feedback received, and highlighted areas of opportunity. Committee members provided input on various guiding questions related to each topic and participated in an online poll to prioritize streetscape amenities along key streets.





STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #3

During the third DSC meeting on Wednesday, August 17, 2022, MIG staff presented the remaining three key concepts and two additional topics:

- Downtown Housing Options
- Fostering Small Businesses
- Building Form & Infill Development
- Town/Gown Relations and Sustainability

Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the key concepts and rank preferences related to ground floor design and aesthetics of different development types.

The sticky notes contain the following text and icons:

- Top Left:** "Increase connectivity/walkability to open spaces and the river in order to attract more residents downtown." Icons: trees, water, a bench.
- Top Right:** "Find a way to attract more than just residents downtown. Should we be allowing more people to have housing options that can help increase tourism?" Icons: house with star, dollar sign, fork and knife.
- Bottom Left:** "Parkfront housing is missing, businesses along park would be nice too"
- Bottom Right:** "How can we increase a diversity of people that can spend their money downtown? Is a hotel needed downtown?"

STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #4

The fourth meeting with the DSC was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022. Committee members reviewed and discussed the draft recommendations for the 7 key concepts. Members also completed a prioritization worksheet to identify their ten highest and lowest priority action items. Items that were ranked the highest included open air markets and food halls, flexible/ festival street, streetscape improvements, implementing a parking program, and CM Allen Parkway District.



STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #5

The final DSC meeting on Thursday, November 17, 2022 focused on presenting the draft recommendations chapter and reviewing the implementation plan/timeline. The DSC then had an opportunity to review the draft recommendations chapter in detail after the meeting. Comments collected were incorporated into the Public Review Draft released in January, 2023.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS/ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The San Marcos community was invited to participate in two Downtown Community Workshops that were held in-person. During the workshops, the community was able to provide feedback and participate in activities that were programmed for each meeting. The following describes brief summaries of each meeting that took place. Opportunities to provide feedback online about the same materials were offered in conjunction with each open house.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

The first Downtown Community Workshop was held on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at the San Marcos Price Center. Approximately 80-100 attendees came out to provide approximately 260 written comments on their vision for the future of Downtown San Marcos. The attendees were greeted with a brief presentation that provided an overview of the project.

Following the presentation, attendees visited 13 unique stations to provide feedback on the specific topics. To capture feedback received, each station was equipped with a unique feedback activity. Additionally, attendees were provided an open comment card and a bingo card that was filled in by participants. Members of the community who were not able to attend the in-person event could participate online via a virtual survey.

ONLINE SURVEY

Approximately 205 respondents participated in the survey, with 36% of them living downtown. Eating/dining was the number one activity respondents do when visiting Downtown. 54% of respondents stated that Downtown is currently tailored towards students and they would like Downtown to appeal more towards families. Concerning art and culture, the majority of respondents stated that they wanted to see more murals and live music. They would also like Downtown to be more pedestrian-friendly with wider sidewalks and additional crosswalks. Additionally, 72% of them would like more plazas, and seating areas. Townhomes/rowhouses were the primary housing types that they would like in the area and highlighted the need for a bookstore or natural food store.





COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2

The second Downtown Community Workshop was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at the San Marcos Activity Center. Approximately 80-100 attendees participated in the event and provided approximately 400 written comments at the various visual board stations.

The workshop focused on presenting draft 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, discussions with appointed boards, and direction received from elected officials so far in the process.

To capture feedback received, each station was equipped with a unique feedback activity. Additionally, attendees were provided a Key Concepts Prioritization Worksheet to identify their top priority action items presented at the workshop along with an open comment section on the back of the worksheet. Members of the community who were not able to attend the in-person event could participate in a virtual open house through November 1, 2022. An additional 40 written comments were received in the virtual platform.



JANUARY OPEN HOUSE & PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

On January 12, 2023, a joint Open House of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Area Plan was held at the San Marcos Price Center. The event kicked off the public review period of the Draft Plans and included approximately 50 attendees. To capture feedback, the event included boards to collect notes on the plan as well as a separate comment card to capture what attendees were most excited about in the plans and any remaining comments. Members who were not able to attend in person could provide comments online through an interactive platform or by filling out a take-home toolkit version of the plans. Comments were collected through February 3, 2023.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

KISSING ALLEY GREEN ALLEY OPEN HOUSE

On January 18, 2022, the City hosted a pop-up booth at the Kissing Alley Green Alley reconstruction Open House. The event collected input on strengths and needs in the downtown area and advertised for the upcoming plan kick-off.



EDDIE DURHAM JAZZ FEST POP-UP EVENT

On October 15, 2022 the City hosted a pop-up public input booth at the Annual Eddie Durham Jazz Fest located in the Eddie Durham Park. At the event, staff advertised the Virtual Open House associated with Community Workshop #2 and asked specific questions to the community regarding how to elevate cultural and historical stories through downtown art and signage and what additional improvements, amenities, and programming could be envisioned in Eddie Durham Park.



FARMERS MARKET POP-UP EVENT

On January 21, the City hosted a pop-up public input booth at the San Marcos Farmers Market to collect in-person comments on the Draft Downtown Area Plan during the public review period.





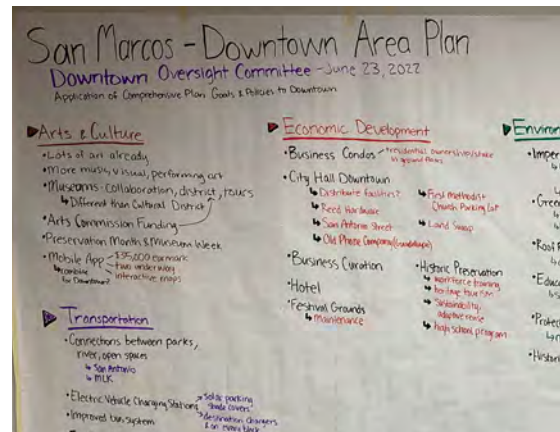
DOWNTOWN OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

In order to ensure that the Downtown Area Plan closely aligns with the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan Rewrite, the Downtown Oversight Committee was formed to provide feedback on the application of Vision SMTX goals in the Downtown.

OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE #1

The Downtown Oversight Committee met on Thursday, June 23, 2022 at the San Marcos City Hall. The meeting discussed the role of the Oversight Committee, the Downtown Area Plan process, and provided a summary of the input received from key stakeholders. The discussion centered around the Comprehensive Plan Elements and their relation to the Downtown Area Plan. The Vision SMTX Plan Elements included:

- Arts and Culture
- Economic Development
- Environmental & Resource Protection
- Housing + Neighborhoods
- Land Use + Community Design & Character
- Parks & Public Space + Health, Safety & Wellness
- Transportation



OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE #2

The Downtown Oversight Committee met on Thursday, January 19 at the San Marcos City Hall to review the Draft Downtown Area Plan. The committee discussed the draft plan organization and key recommendations included in the plan. In addition, the Committee provided additional comments or feedback on the plan for consideration to ensure that the plan aligned with the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan in development.



DOWNTOWN VISION STATEMENT

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.

GOALS



The goals listed below were developed in collaboration with the Downtown Stakeholder Committee to guide development and organization of the Downtown Area Plan.



Attract people of all walks of life including families, aging adults, young professionals, visitors, students, faculty, and staff with a greater diversity of shops, restaurants, housing, and employment options.



Provide an inclusive, welcoming, and safe heart of the community for people of all ages, incomes, abilities, religious beliefs, and cultures.



Promote a vibrant and thriving Downtown through local business support, fostering entrepreneurship, mixed-use development, and a variety of housing options.



Increase sustainability and resiliency by prioritizing multimodal transportation, supporting green infrastructure and buildings, and providing community programs and amenities.



Elevate equity in the Downtown experience through accessibility, affordability, and cultural programming.



Educate about, reflect on, and celebrate history while adapting to new needs and planning ahead for growth and change over time.



Strengthen Downtown's unique identity through an atmosphere of eclectic arts, small business, diverse cuisines, recreational opportunities, Historic architecture, and lively events in a riverfront, hill country community.



Better connect Downtown both physically and programmatically to Texas State University, the San Marcos River, and other surrounding neighborhoods.

OPPORTUNITIES



Early in the process, these key opportunities for Downtown San Marcos were established in collaboration with the Downtown Stakeholder Committee. Additional opportunities were identified and included throughout the planning process. Recommendations related to these opportunities appear in the following chapter.

HISTORY, ART, CULTURE

- Provide more public art of various mediums, that is tied to the history, culture, and nature of Downtown San Marcos, especially by students and other local artists.
- Highlight historic and cultural assets through interactive urban design of public places as interpretive signage, a mobile app, and a branded loop trail.
- Collaborate with Texas State to leverage existing performing arts facilities and showcase performing arts and music events on the City's arts and culture website.
- Provide opportunities for managed pop-up art and vendor sales.



MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

- Build and enhance infrastructure that supports walking, biking, and using micromobility options within Downtown and to nearby destinations, prioritizing network connections, park access, and mid-block connections on long blocks.
- Increase pedestrian comfort and safety through shade, lighting, a higher priority in public right-of-way, and traffic calming.
- Continue to implement and expand the San Marcos Green Alley Initiative, particularly for livable public spaces and stormwater management.
- Identify strategies to bring transit access into the central Downtown Core, accelerate the implementation of the San Marcos Transit Plan and integrate the municipal bus with Texas State Bobcat Shuttle in Downtown.
- Implement the adopted 2018 Parking Framework Plan
- Create a Downtown Parking Benefit District to manage public parking demand and invest parking revenues to accomplish the goals and recommendations of this Downtown Area Plan.
- Increase safety and placemaking through intersection redesigns throughout Downtown.

PUBLIC SPACES & AMENITIES

- Expand public space opportunities for children’s play, events, passive recreation, community garden, gathering, and dog use.
- Explore strategies to improve existing public spaces, utilize other publicly owned property, pursue land acquisition/swap/donation, and/or encourage pocket parks with large scale redevelopment.
- Increase connection between built and natural environment within Downtown through additional green spaces, trees, landscaping, and connections to the riverfront.
- Strategize an approach to sustainable maintenance of public spaces and amenities and design to discourage vandalism and increase safety.



PRIORITY STREETScape ENHANCEMENT

- Reconsider right-of-way allocation and priorities within the streetscape for key corridors in Downtown.
- Enhance arrival experience and Downtown identity through gateways for all modes.
- Increase streetscape beautification through materials, landscaping, amenities, and public art while assuring sustainable upkeep and maintenance.
- Reimagine San Antonio Street as a flexible street easily closeable to cars for events and periodic pedestrian days or seasons.



DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

- Pursue strategies to increase housing affordability within Downtown.
- Establish opportunities for “middle housing” and diverse housing options desired by the community in appropriate locations Downtown.
- Broaden housing type options and explore City-provided support for housing ownership opportunities.



FOSTERING SMALL BUSINESSES

- Pursue strategies to support and continue to support vitality of small and local businesses, especially those which are historically-underserved businesses, in permitting, renovation/upkeep, and access to entrepreneur and business education programs.
- Establish a clear role of the City in curating downtown business and identifying opportunities to increase business diversity.
- Collaborate with the University to strategize about retaining talent post-graduation to bolster Downtown’s economic diversity and skilled labor force.



BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

- Reduce vacant lots, buildings, and storefronts and utilize temporary and permanent activation strategies.
- Identify strategies to incentivize development types desired by the community including a variety of affordable and diverse housing types, curated retail, green building systems, performing arts and office uses.
- Envision catalytic development within vacant lots within Downtown.



OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve town/gown relationship and collaboration throughout City programs.
- Prioritize sustainability through solar power generation, green building, stormwater management/green infrastructure, rainwater collection, rooftop/vertical gardens, and pervious surfaces.





RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Downtown Area Plan’s recommendations cover seven primary topics including:

1. Downtown Housing Options
2. Building Form and Infill Development
3. Multimodal Connectivity and Parking
4. Priority Streetscape Improvements
5. Public Spaces and Amenities
6. Small Business Support
7. History, Art, and Culture



Each topic includes overarching recommendations applicable to all of Downtown, as well as specific projects and programs or additional details and action items related to a particular overarching recommendation. Additionally, Town/Gown Collaboration and Sustainability are two cross-cutting topics that are indicated with icons throughout the chapter. These concepts were informed by community and stakeholder engagement throughout the Downtown Area Plan process. This chapter represents the big ideas stemming from the vision, goals, and opportunities that the City of San Marcos can pursue to improve Downtown.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

All San Marcans should have options if they desire to live Downtown, and a diverse Downtown population is part of what ensures Downtown San Marcos is vibrant and thriving. Downtown residents support local businesses, attend Downtown events, and add more liveliness during different times of the day and week than business patrons alone. The City can support this population by encouraging development of diverse, affordable housing types and making Downtown a great place to live. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- A.1. Promote a high quality of life for Downtown residents through the provision of daily community amenities, goods, and services which support a complete neighborhood.
- A.2. Prioritize multi-modal transportation improvements on all Downtown streets. 
- A.3. Complete an updated Downtown housing inventory to gather a complete understanding of the Downtown housing supply to assist in making policy decisions.
- A.4. Support the development of multi-family and mixed-use housing products within Downtown designed for all demographics and all stages of life to provide contextually appropriate density and affordability.
- A.5. On the outer edges of Downtown and adjacent to existing neighborhoods support “missing middle” housing types to provide diverse housing options and affordability.
- A.6. Incentivize affordable for sale- and rental housing units.
- A.7. Reduce development barriers to housing development through streamlined development processes and development code amendments for recommended housing types.
- A.8. Pursue strategies to increase home ownership opportunities in Downtown for low to medium income households.
- A.9. Pursue updates to/adoption of the Strategic Housing Action Plan (2019).
- A.10. Work with Texas State University to identify opportunities for on-campus student housing to relieve the pressure on Downtown. 
- A.11. Conduct a Downtown resident or visitor travel survey, to measure any increase in non-car travel as housing opportunities increase Downtown.



Sustainability



Town/ Gown Collaboration

DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

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, 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:

Community amenities are important to serve a growing population of Downtown residents. Several key amenities already exist in Downtown, but the list of amenities below should be prioritized to promote quality of life for Downtown residents. *(Recommendation A.1)*

- 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

Transportation-related improvements such as traffic calming, pedestrian connections, bicycle network, frequent/reliable/convenient transit service, and parking management. See other sections of this chapter (3. Multimodal Connectivity and Parking and 4. Priority Streetscape Improvements to learn more about recommendations related to transportation. *(Recommendation A.2)*



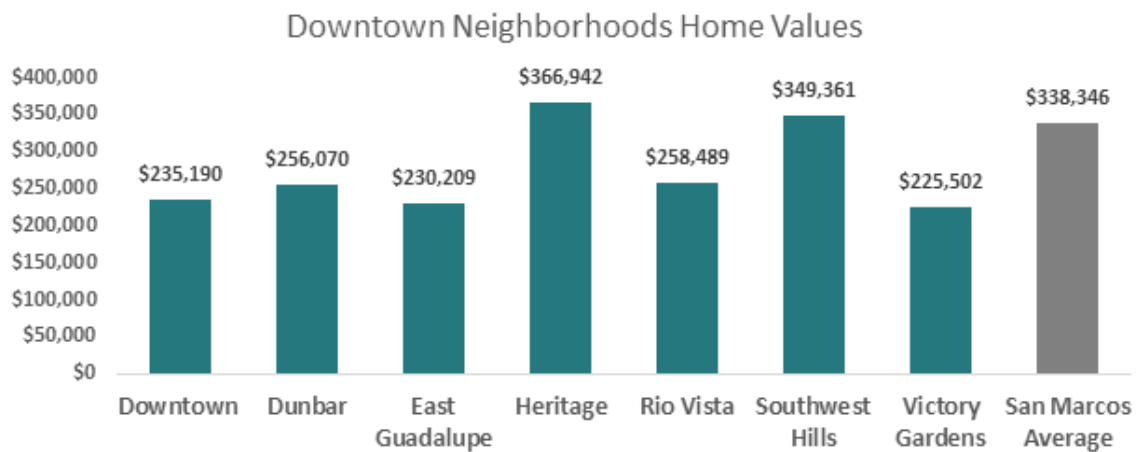
AFFORDABILITY *(Recommendation A.7)*

For-Sale Housing

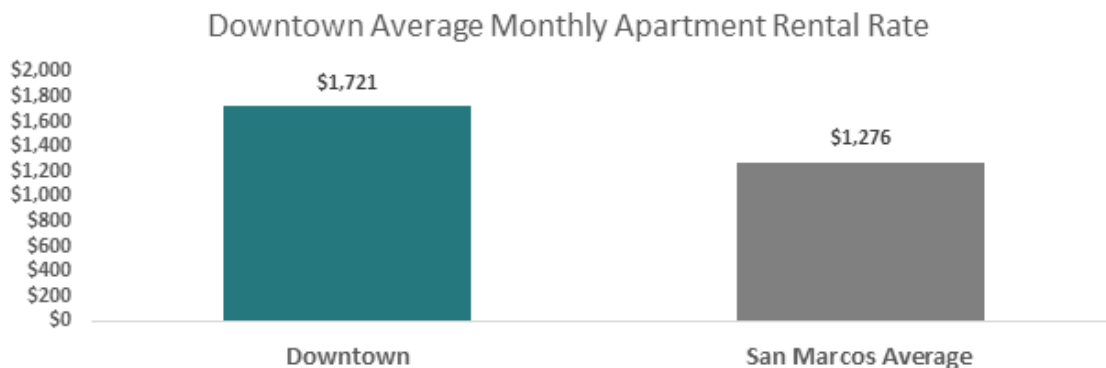
The Downtown area lacks existing many for-sale housing options. For-sale homes in and around Downtown have values at or below the city-wide average. However, based on the Draft Strategic Housing Action Plan (2019), one of San Marcos’ housing needs is for an ownership option below \$200,000.

For-Rent Housing

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



Data source: Zillow



Data source: CoStar

DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

OWNERSHIP *(Recommendation A.8)*

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

- Downtown lacks sufficient for-sale housing options. The Greater Downtown Area is 9.7% owner occupied, 85.1% renter occupied, and 5.2% vacant (source: ESRI Business Analyst)
- 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: expanding housing opportunities, preserving and enhancing existing housing, leveraging community and regional partners, and quantifying the future needs of the community. *(Recommendation A.9)*

STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR DOWNTOWN AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS *(Recommendation A.6, A.7, A.8)*

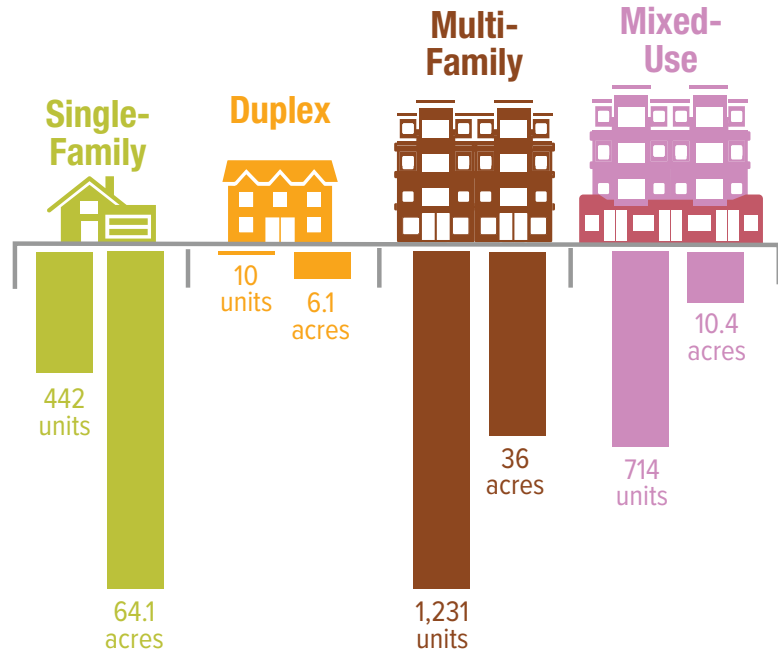
- Owner occupied unit rehabilitation support programs
- Senior and low-income home maintenance fund
- Enhanced code enforcement to address problem properties
- Infill housing incentives for attracting for-sale housing product types such as townhomes and condos
- Down-payment assistance for homebuyers
- 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 for desired projects (e.g. parking requirements, height restrictions, density caps) in Downtown



HOUSING OPTIONS

Existing housing unit estimates within one-half mile of the Downtown Core are represented in the graphic below. The majority of existing housing units in this area are multi-family or mixed-use (75%), but single family parcels take up 28% more land.

Data in this section is only an estimate based on available data. It is recommended that the City complete an updated housing inventory to get a complete understanding of existing Downtown housing. *(Recommendation A.3)*



RECOMMENDED HOUSING TYPES *(Recommendation A.4, A.5)*

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 in and near Downtown, and should be marketed to all demographics (not just or primarily to students). Around the outer edges of Downtown, especially adjacent to existing neighborhoods, “missing middle” housing types are needed. These include accessory dwelling units (ADUs), multiplexes, and townhomes.

Examples of Missing Middle Housing Types:



Townhomes



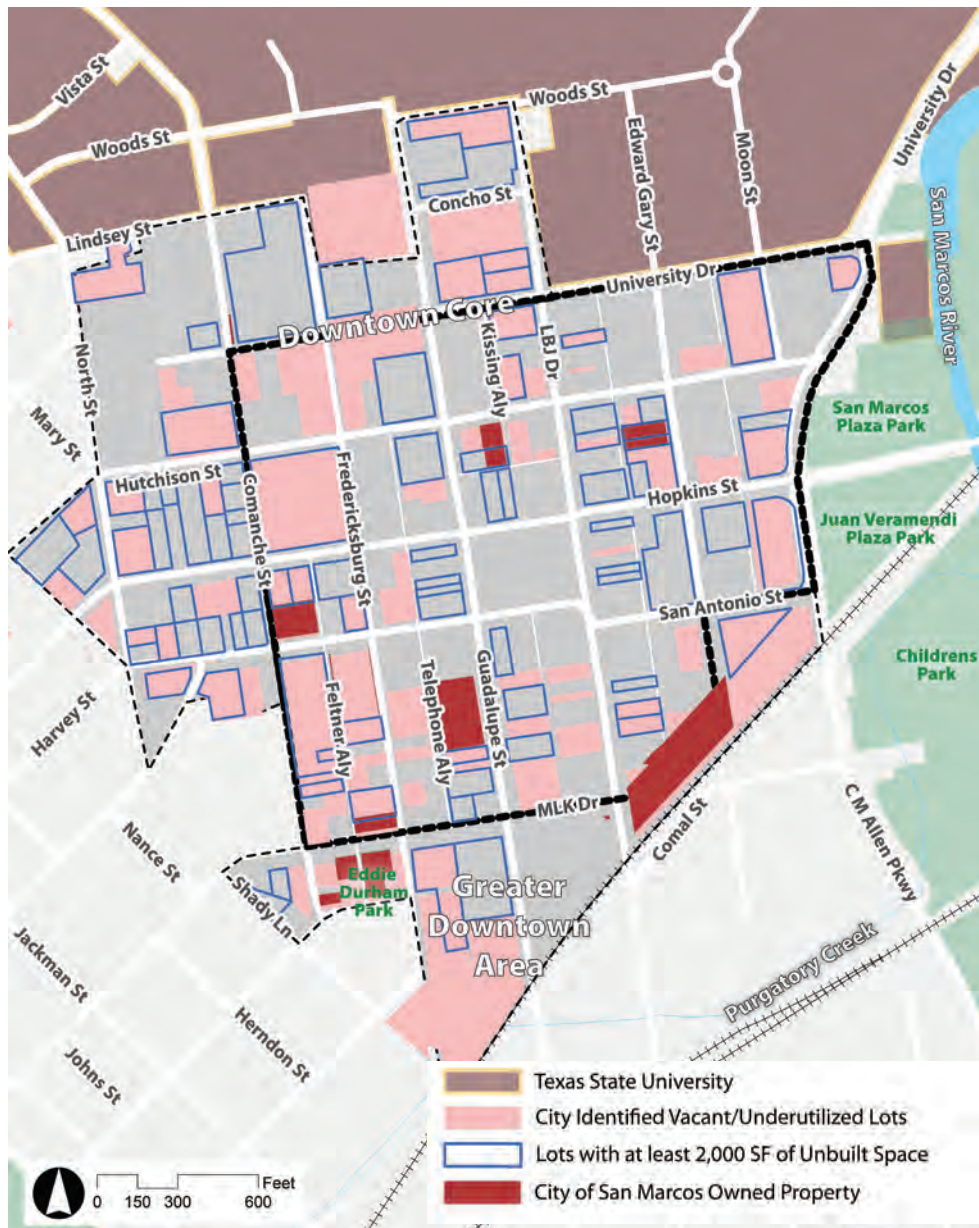
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)



Quadplex

DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES MAP





DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS *(Recommendation A.7)*

To promote the development of recommended housing types in Downtown (see page 57), existing barriers should be considered for change. Strategies may include:

Streamlined Development Process

- Identify one or two key points 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 to ensure standards are both capable of being met and would achieve the desired building design for downtown
- Evaluate the process and impact of existing and proposed utility easements (Ex: width, location,)
- 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
- Evaluate and adopt additional regulatory exemptions to financially justify missing-middle development, and differentiate exemptions from large-scale multi-family projects

BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown San Marcos is largely built-out but still offers several opportunities for infill development and redevelopment. Vacant buildings/lots, surface parking lots, and City-owned land provide the primary opportunities. Refer to the Development Opportunities map on page 58. New development should positively contribute to the Downtown experience, economy, and sense of place. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- B.1. Update Development standards/guidelines to ensure that ground floors are designed to contribute to an active pedestrian realm by implementing inviting storefronts, transparency, façade detail/visual interest, lighting, signage, art, and amenities.
- B.2. Pursue strategies to activate vacant storefronts in the near-term and reduce vacancies in the long-term, especially through the arts and Texas State University tenants. 
- B.3. Attract catalytic development desired by the community incentives, removal of development barriers, or other partnerships with property owners.
- B.4. Encourage incremental development along the west side of CM Allen Parkway that promotes desirable land uses, building design, streetscape, and sustainability improvements to celebrate the relationship between downtown and the river. 
- B.5. Attract a downtown hotel that provides multiple economic benefits and assets to Downtown and serves visitors to San Marcos and Texas State University. 
- B.6. Continue to utilize/refine the Downtown architectural design standards and guidelines for buildings in downtown and allow for flexibility while maintaining architectural quality and cohesion with existing downtown buildings.
- B.7. Encourage rooftop activation through the use of green roofs and publicly accessible patios. 
- B.8. Incentivize green building techniques in all new development and update development codes, building codes, or energy codes to implement sustainable building practices. 
- B.9. Continue to replace aerial electric and telecommunications lines downtown for underground services.
- B.10. Evaluate development codes for utility conflicts and create necessary code or process updates to resolve potential conflicts.
- B.11. Evaluate the feasibility of locating a new city hall in downtown.
- B.12. Consider vacancy abatement strategies through ordinance updates such as a vacant building registration or minimum standards of care and vacancy fees.



Sustainability



Town/ Gown Collaboration

BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

GROUND FLOOR DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

(Recommendation B.1)

Ground floors should be designed to contribute to an active pedestrian realm including inviting storefronts, transparency, facade detail/visual interest, lighting, signage, art, and amenities.

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





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 Texas State 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



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.



BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

VACANT STOREFRONT/BUILDING ACTIVATION PROGRAM *(Recommendation B.2)*

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
- Generate public interest in vacant storefronts by allowing local artists to showcase work.
- Create a pilot program for grant funding. Businesses can apply for grants through the City to fund the construction and lease of pop-up shops.
- Encourage/ work with Texas State University to encourage student start-up businesses downtown.
- 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.

BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPTUAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT *(Recommendation B.3)*

During the Downtown Area Plan, 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 in this section 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 conversations and study prior to implementation.

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.)





BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

#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 for and 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.

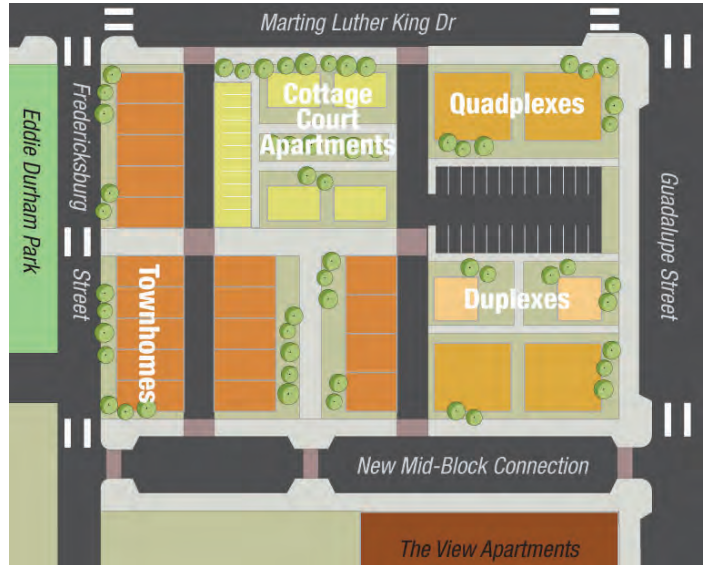




Existing Conditions



Conceptual Illustrations



BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

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

The northeast corner of Guadalupe St. and MLK Dr. currently has a vacant building with an auto-oriented site design (drive-thru, parking in front of both sides of building, lack of sidewalks and street trees) that does not meet the current Downtown zoning requirements. This property 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 to the mini storefronts. It is recommended that the space be open-air but shaded overhead.

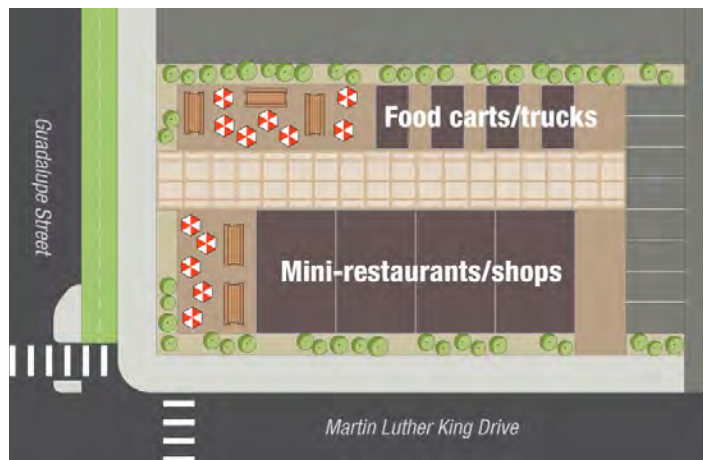




Existing Conditions



Conceptual Illustrations



BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

#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, across from 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.

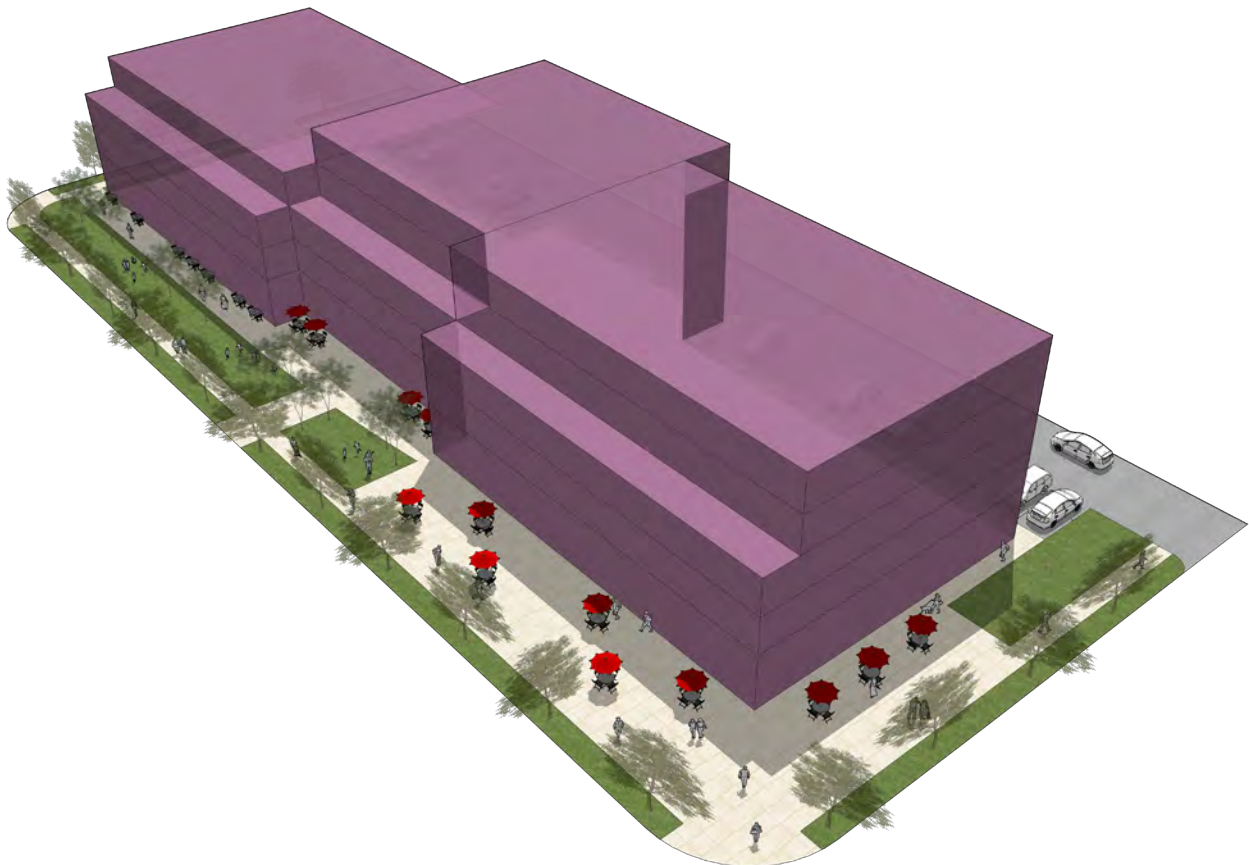
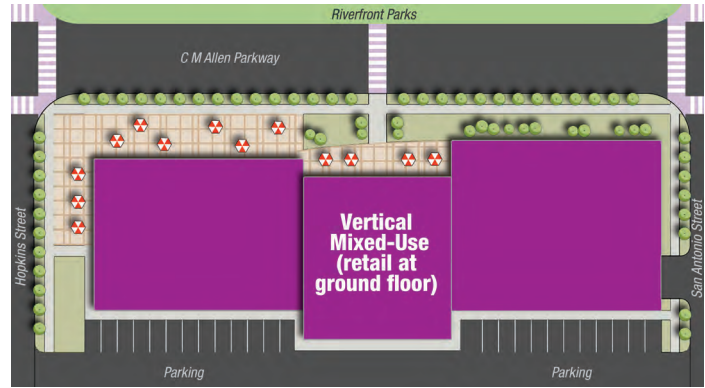




Existing Condition



Conceptual Illustrations



BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

CM ALLEN PARKWAY DISTRICT *(Recommendation B.4)*

The majority of properties that front the west side of CM Allen Parkway include surface parking lots and older 1-story structures, some of which have vehicular drive thrus or are 100% dedicated to a surface parking lot. These older properties do not meet current codes and significantly contrast the positive pedestrian experience that is achieved closer to the Downtown Core. 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 Parkway District would include:

- Opportunity for higher density, mixed use buildings given distance from single-family neighborhoods
- Buildings with minimal setbacks or that incorporate public plaza space adjacent to the street.
- Ground floor design oriented towards the street and the riverfront
- Enhanced 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
- Implementation of green building design characteristics on new development such as green roofs.

Existing Conditions



Conceptual Illustration





BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

POTENTIAL DOWNTOWN HOTEL *(Recommendation B.5)*

The addition of a hotel downtown would provide economic benefits to downtown and provide an additional lodging option for visitors to San Marcos. A downtown hotel would help diversify the consumer base by adding activity downtown throughout the day to businesses and restaurants. Key elements that should be incorporated include meeting/conference/event space and a full-service restaurant. A partnership with Texas State University should be considered in order to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

Existing Conditions

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

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.

Downtown Hotel History

San Marcos previously had a hotel in the Downtown Core. The Hofeinz Hotel was located across from Sean Patrick’s on E San Antonio Street. Part of the building still stands today.



“Hofeinz Hotel 1906”
 Photo Credit: San Marcos Public Library



Existing building today



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

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














MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

As the heart of the city, Downtown San Marcos should prioritize a walkable and bikeable environment that is well served by transit. A walkable Downtown supports physical and mental health, social interactions, local businesses, the natural environment, and more. That said, parking will continue to be an important amenity in Downtown given the City and region's existing development patterns. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- C.1. Prioritize accessible pedestrian infrastructure including strollers and wheelchair users on all Downtown streets, alleys, and in public spaces with appropriate widths and safety improvements such as sufficient lighting. 
- C.2. Bicycles, transit, and other multimodal options should also be prioritized on key corridors. 
- C.3. Enhance sidewalks and fill gaps in the pedestrian network downtown where there is significant pedestrian use, especially on the south and west sides of Downtown and connections to the riverfront. 
- C.4. Complete a network of bicycle facilities that are safe and comfortable, especially routes that connect to a larger bike/trail network and to Texas State University.  
- C.5. Continue to allow for micro mobility options such as scooters in Downtown to provide first/final mile options to/from downtown. 
- C.6. Implement mid-block street crossings and pursue necessary land acquisition or pedestrian easement opportunities for mid-block east/west trail connections between San Antonio Street and MLK Drive to reduce long road block lengths and travel time for multimodal users. 
- C.7. Provide transit access and improved transit stop amenities in Downtown, especially within immediate proximity to the Courthouse Square. 
- C.8. Collaborate with Texas State to combine transit systems and share resources to better connect the city with Downtown and the University.  
- C.9. Consider adoption of the San Marcos Green Alley Initiative as a guide for construction of green alleys and their locations. 
- C.10. Provide adequate parking to support existing uses and projected growth in Downtown, but new parking, and the replacement of existing parking lots, should be implemented using on-street parking, parking garages, or satellite lots outside of the core of Downtown.
- C.11. Adopt the On-Street Paid Parking Program Implementation Plan.
- C.12. Establish a parking benefit district to generate revenue and utilize this revenue to implement recommendations of this Downtown Area Plan.
- C.13. Ensure adequate traffic flow for vehicles in Downtown while slowing down traffic to prioritize other modes of transportation.
- C.14. Explore opportunities to provide dedicated locations for rideshares drop-offs and pick-ups in Downtown as an incremental mobility option as transit level of service increases.



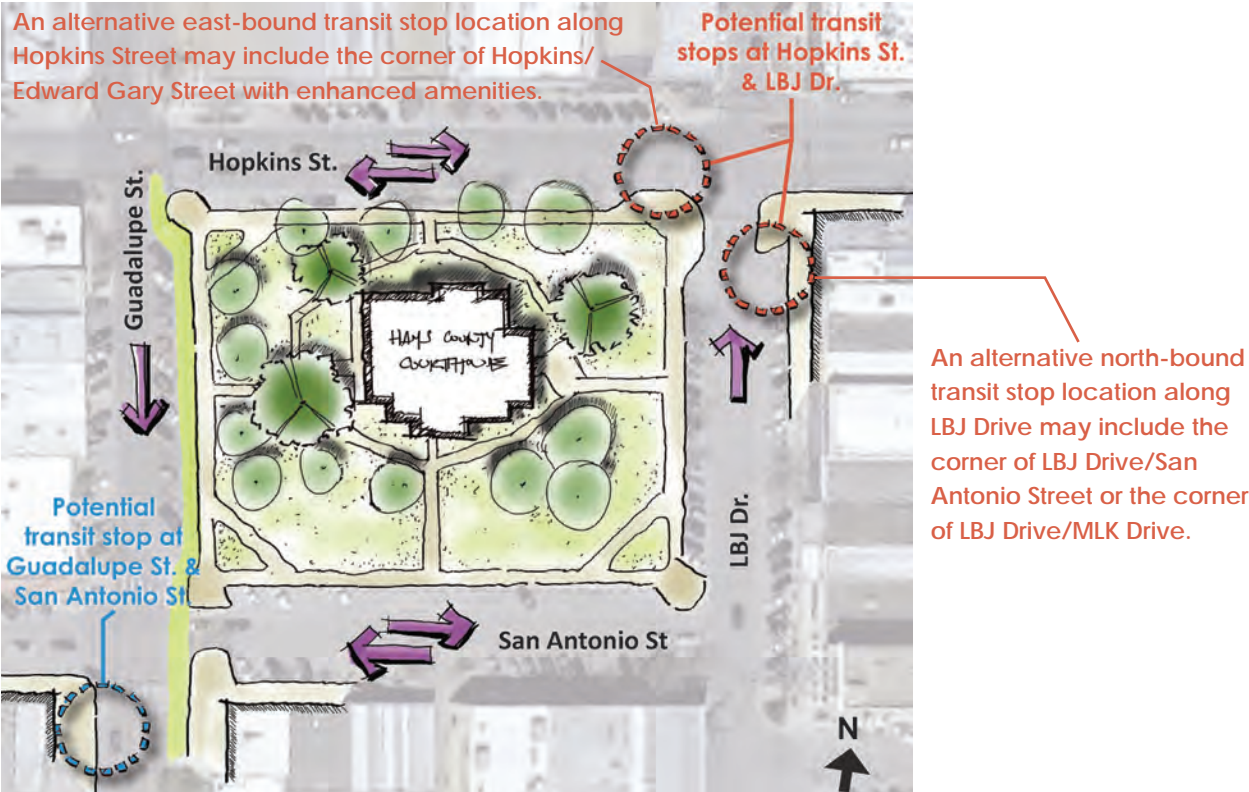
MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

TRANSIT ACCESS & AMENITIES *(Recommendation C.7, C.8)*

Transit facilities are an important service in Downtown to ensure people can access downtown from other parts of the community without having to drive. This service is particularly important for members of the San Marcos community who do not have access to a vehicle. Transit facilities should be convenient and comfortable for all users.

POTENTIAL TRANSIT STOP LOCATIONS ON COURTHOUSE SQUARE

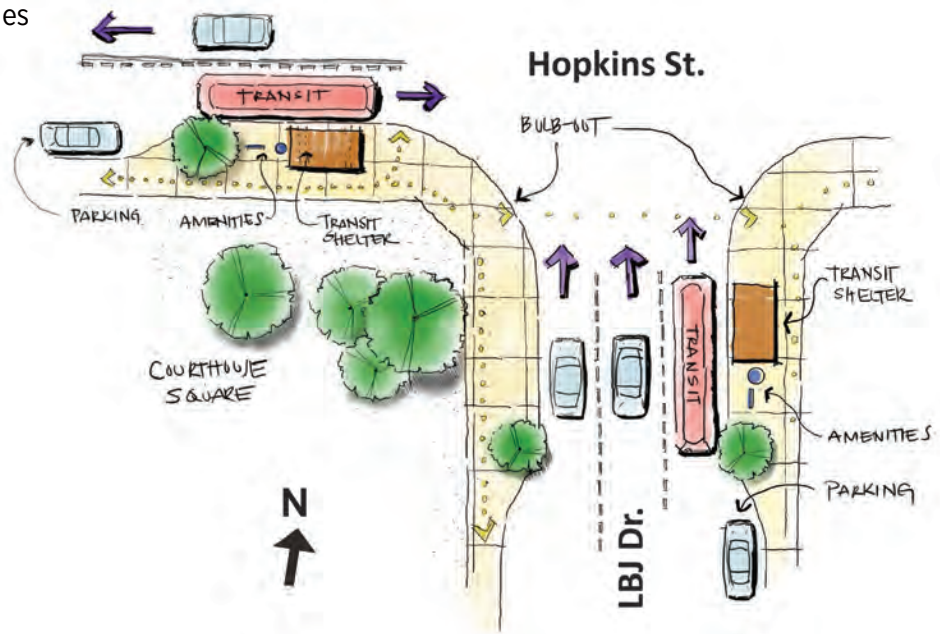
Despite the planned transit plaza, on Edward Gary Street between University Drive and Hutchison Street, convenient transit access is not provided immediately adjacent to the Courthouse Square in the heart of Downtown. The diagram below illustrates potential transit stop locations on and adjacent to the Courthouse Square that should be considered as transit demand increases over the next 20 years. One of the locations is on the northeast corner of the Courthouse Square. The other two are within close proximity of the Square, with one on the southwest corner of Hopkins Street and LBJ Drive and the other on the southwest corner of Guadalupe Street and San Antonio Street. These are detailed in the diagrams to the right. Additional opportunities for locating transit stops should be considered as downtown develops or to coordinate with infrastructure projects.





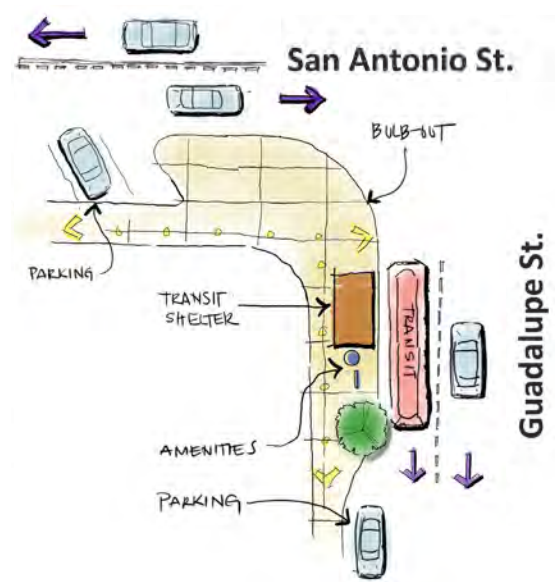
Potential Transit Stops at Hopkins Sreet & LBJ Drive

Conceptual design includes a sidewalk bulb-out 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 Street & San Antonio Street

Conceptual design includes a sidewalk bulb-out 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.



MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

TRANSIT STOP SHELTER DESIGNS AND AMENITIES *(Recommendation C.7)*

Many transit stops in Downtown San Marcos lack amenities and shade. It is recommended that transit stops downtown be enhanced with shelters, route information, and other improvements that would improve comfort and convenience for transit riders as indicated below. Transit stops are proposed in the Downtown Historic District and include opportunities for embedding history, art, and thoughtful design.



Shelter resembling historical character of an area



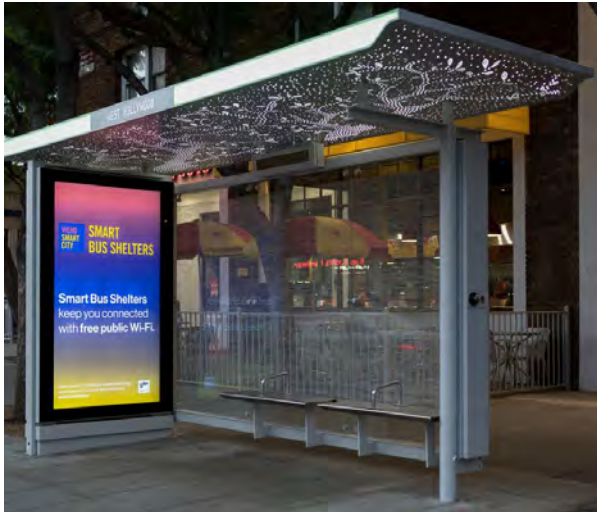
Public art and local history embedded onto metal panels



Green roof and solar panel to charge power source



Secure bike parking and seating



Digital signage with real-time arrival information and lighting



Panel showcasing local history and route/arrival information



Artistic roofing on bus shelter



Shelter with artistic bench and wood materials

MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

PARKING *(Recommendation C.10, C.11, C.12)*

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 categorized and listed below, based on feedback from the Downtown Area Plan process.

Top Priorities

- Create & Empower Parking Management Organization
- Establish Parking Benefit District(s)
- Manage On-Street Parking More Efficiently
- Connect Parking Management & Economic Development
- Embrace Parking as Mobility Management

Additional Action Items

- Invest in Parking Management Technology
- Seek Opportunities to Expand Parking Supply
- Program Branding & Marketing
- Develop Staff Parking Management Expertise
- Continuous Improvement in Parking Enforcement
- 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 below)
- 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, transportation infrastructure or parking investments such as a multi-story parking garage. This funding source would be a tool to implement many of the recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan.

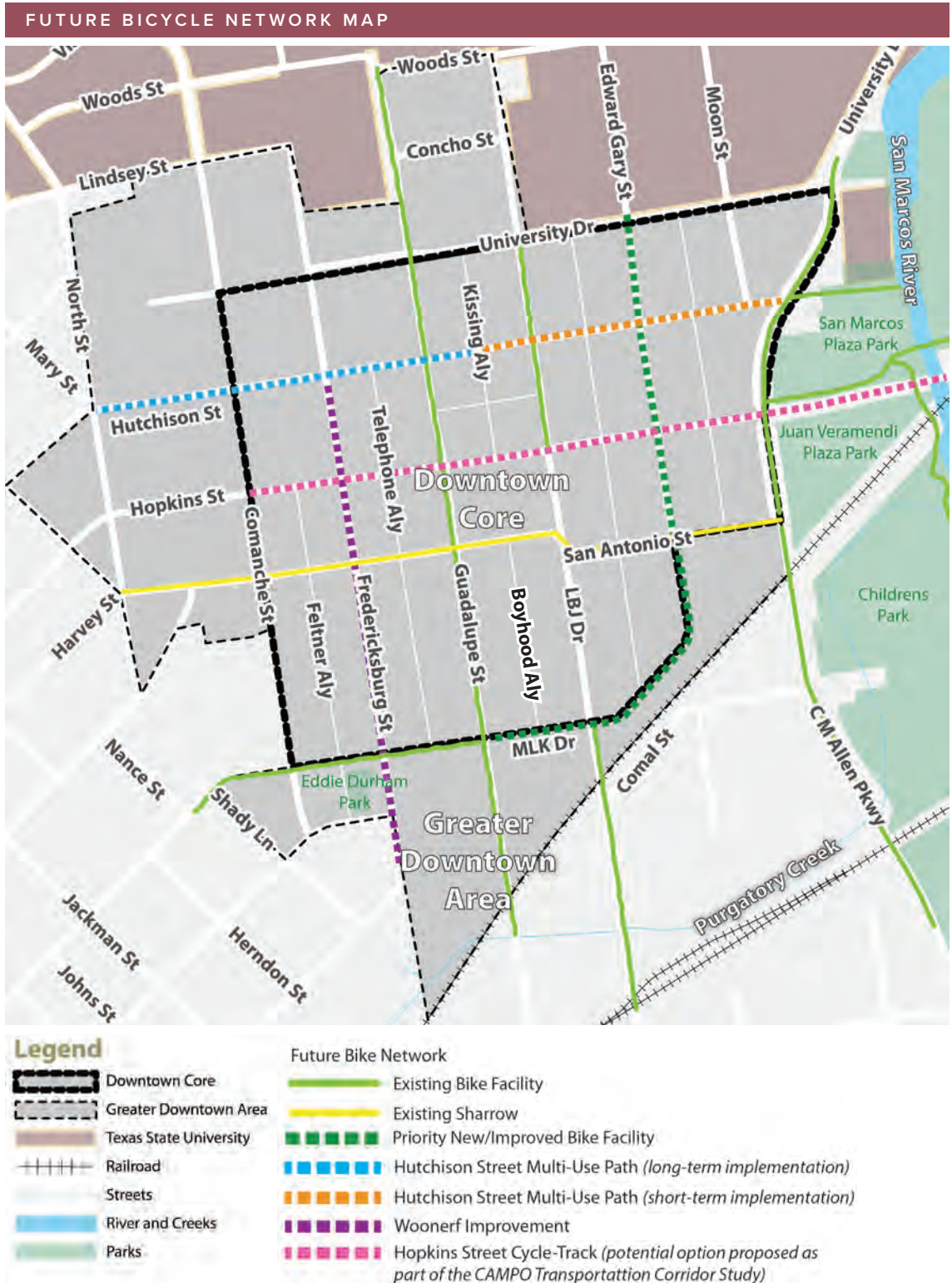
MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

COMPLETE MULTIMODAL NETWORKS *(Recommendation C.4)*

Bicyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and other micromobility users should have priority within Downtown San Marcos. In order for these modes to be as attractive for travel as cars, the networks need to be complete and provide for direct, safe, and comfortable travel between major destinations. While pedestrians should be prioritized on all streets, bicyclists, transit riders, and other micromobility users should be prioritized on specific streets.

The map on the next page 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 and 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.





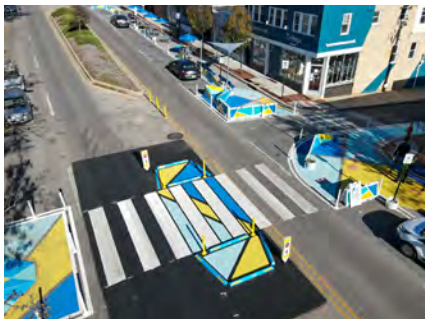
MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

SIDEWALKS *(Recommendation C.3)*

The map on the next page illustrates priority streets for new and 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. Sidewalk construction and design should incorporate existing zoning code requirements related to their construction, including larger widths to allow for significant pedestrian traffic and sidewalk amenities, and tree or landscaping buffers between the sidewalk and street to increase pedestrian comfort and safety.

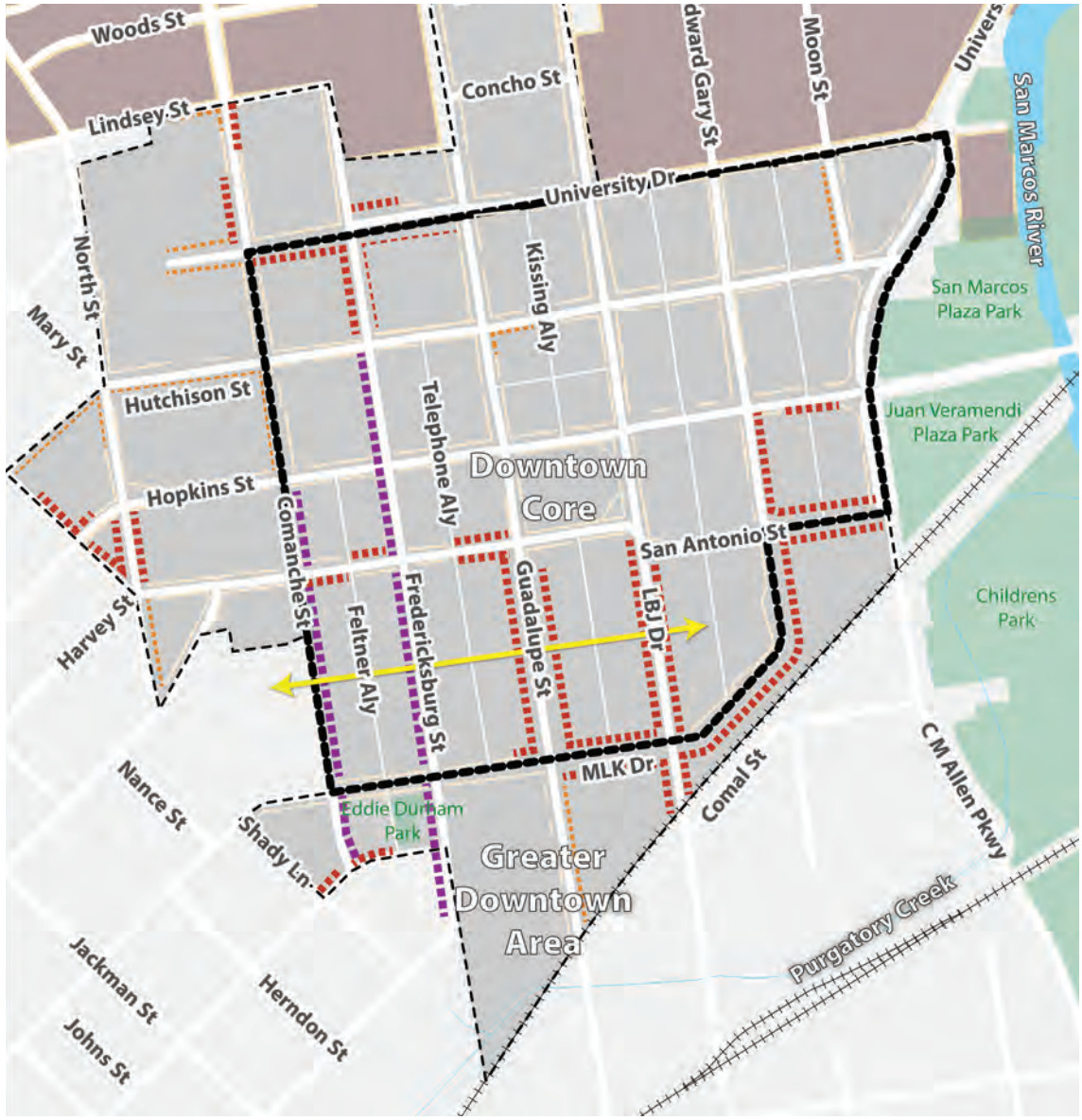


MID-BLOCK CROSSING EXAMPLES *(Recommendation C.6)*





FUTURE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK MAP



Legend

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|---|
| | Downtown Core | | Existing Sidewalk |
| | Greater Downtown Area | | Priority New/Improved Sidewalks |
| | Railroad | | Additional Missing Sidewalks |
| | Streets | | Woonerf Improvement |
| | River and Creeks | | New Mid-Block Connections and Crossings |
| | Parks | | |

MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

GREEN ALLEYS/ PEDESTRIAN ALLEYS *(Recommendation C.9)*

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.



The San Marcos Green Alley Initiative document was prepared by Colorspace and is a collaborative effort between multiple downtown and environmental stakeholders.

PRIORITY FUTURE GREEN ALLEYS FOR CONSIDERATION

The following alleys were identified as priority alleys for enhancement as a first phase of a Green Alley initiative. Such improvements should be evaluated based on timing of CIP funding or other utility projects. Additional alleys may be considered for enhancement pending detailed evaluation and availability of funding sources.



Boyhood 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



Key Opportunities to Consider in Green Alleys Implementation

- Placemaking assets such as unique paving/pavers (stamped colored concrete), 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/ compactors for the block or half block with 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
- Maintenance costs associated with improvements and strategies for maintenance management.









PRIORITY STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Streetscapes are one of the primary ways people experience Downtown San Marcos as they travel between destinations or are just out for a walk or bike ride. Streetscapes also typically take up 1/4 or 1/3 of all land downtown making them a key opportunity to achieve the goals of downtown. Certain streets have been identified as priorities in this section to improve safety and the public realm experience for all users. While all streets prioritize pedestrians in Downtown, certain streets are also prioritized for bicyclists and transit. Rights-of-way in Downtown are limited, and greatly varied, so different opportunities exist accordingly. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

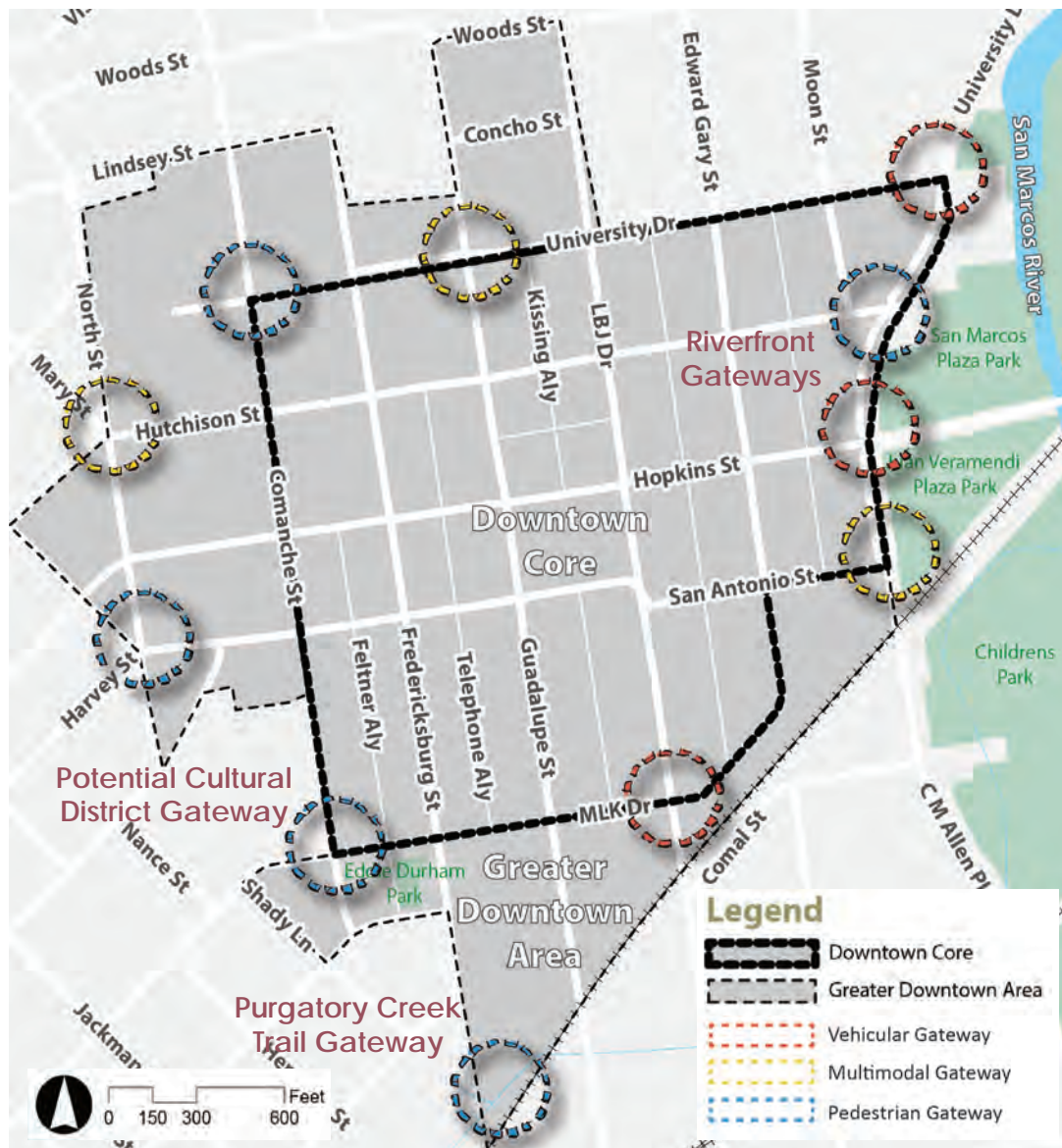
- D.1. Create coordinated efforts for infrastructure improvements that also include streetscape improvements that achieve the Downtown Area Plan vision.
- D.2. Pursue priority streetscape improvements for Edward Gary Street, South LBJ Drive, MLK Drive, and Hutchison Street.
- D.3. Design and implement shared street designs for the narrow rights-of-way along Fredericksburg and Comanche Streets to provide safer travel for all modes, network connections, and public gathering space.
- D.4. Design and implement a flexible festival street along San Antonio Street between Guadalupe and Edward Gary Streets to allow for easy street closures to cars during special events and/or at select times of the week/year.
- D.5. Construct a shared use path along Hutchison Street in two phases to help complete the future bicycle network and better connect Downtown to the riverfront while leveraging recent streetscape design work done on Hutchison Street east of Kissing Alley. 
- D.6. Continue streetscape improvements and green infrastructure along CM Allen Parkway to the south. 
- D.7. Create vehicular, multimodal, and pedestrian gateways into Downtown to provide an arrival experience and increase sense of place within Downtown for all modes of transportation and focus priorities on potential riverfront gateways, purgatory creek trail gateways, and cultural district gateways.
- D.8. Increase safety at intersections through streetscape design, public art, crossing improvements, lighting, and traffic control.
- D.9. Consider acquiring State-owned rights-of-way in Downtown to allow for more flexibility in streetscape design and ease of change over time.
- D.10. Study feasibility and conduct community engagement regarding the potential conversion of one-way to two-way streets for LBJ Drive and Guadalupe Street, including revised streetscape designs if deemed feasible.
- D.11. Enhance streetscape design along connections between Downtown and Texas State, the riverfront, and to adjacent neighborhoods. 
- D.12. Create a Downtown urban plant, amenities, and materials palette/guide to streamline implementation of public and private installations and repairs. 
- D.13. Incorporate on-street rain gardens, green infrastructure, and additional street trees into streetscape design as much as possible to achieve street and system wide watershed and stormwater impacts/benefits and communicate the environmental, social, and economic benefits. 
- D.14. Create a dedicated management strategy that incorporates a permanent funding stream and/or staffing increases to account for maintenance needs associated with green infrastructure and enhanced streetscape improvements including amenities, landscaping, and materials. 



PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS *(Recommendation D.7)*

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.





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 images below show 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 below 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.



PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

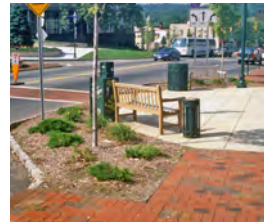
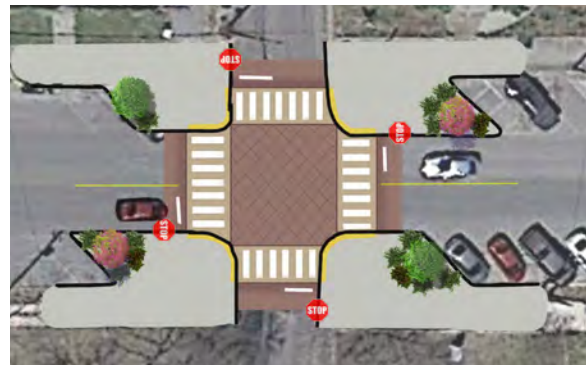
INTERSECTIONS *(Recommendation D.8)*

It is recommended that the City evaluates safety and streetscape improvements for various unique conditions in the street network such as the connections between wide and narrow streets and a unique “dog-leg” turn on San Antonio Street that momentarily requires traversing the wrong way on the one-way LBJ Drive. Improvements to these intersections shown below can increase safety for all modes while contributing to Downtown placemaking.

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 to improve intersection safety
- Permanent, landscaped curb extensions/bulb-outs to shorten crossings for pedestrians
- Unique crossing paving
- Painted mural in the intersection or unique stamped concrete



In conjunction with additional recommendations in the plan, various intersections downtown should be improved to further the goals of this Plan. The below intersections identified in yellow are observed to have significant pedestrian traffic and could be envisioned as priority locations to improve safety and comfort. Further refinements to priority intersections should be made as future public works or transportation projects are installed or as issues are identified by traffic and police departments.



PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

FLEXIBLE/FESTIVAL STREETS *(Recommendation D.4)*

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, community and cultural festivals, or pop-up events. Key design elements of flexible streets include: 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.



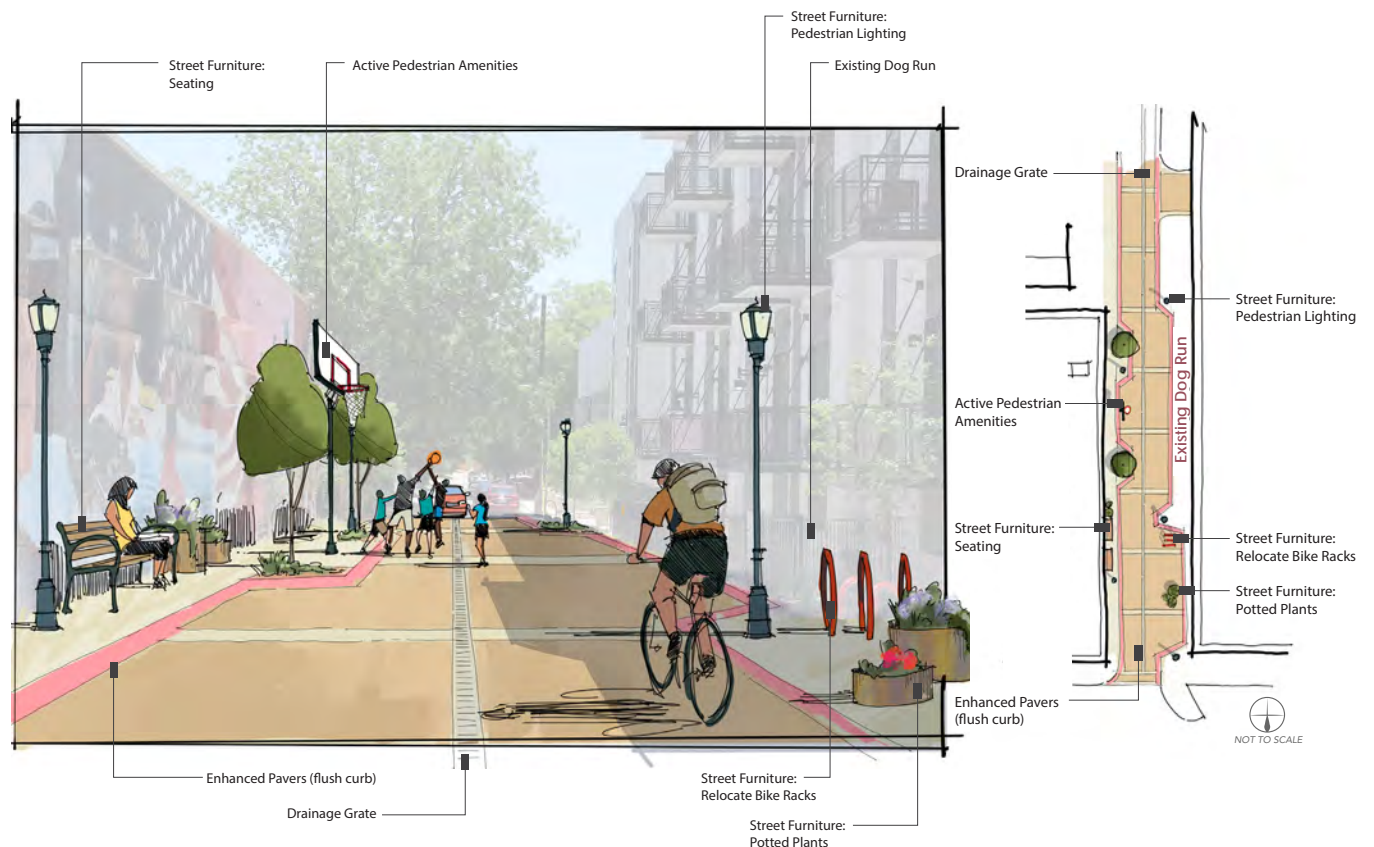
Examples of existing use of flexible street in San Marcos include but are not limited to the weekly Farmers Market, the Mermaid Festival, car shows, and the St. Patrick's Day Block Party.



SHARED STREETS *(Recommendation D.3)*

FREDERICKSBURG STREET AND COMANCHE STREET

Fredericksburg Street and Comanche Street are good candidates for shared streets, also known as woonerfs, 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 remainder of the street as well as certain green alleys.



PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

CONCEPTUAL STREET SECTIONS *(Recommendation D.2)*

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. The following pages include a few priority streets identified by the community which can be improved to meet the community’s goal. Many of these street improvements would assist in making certain streets, such as South LBJ Drive, more attractive to pedestrians due to slower vehicular traffic, wider sidewalks, and additional shade. Streetscape improvements can spur additional shopping and visitation to existing or new small businesses along the street.

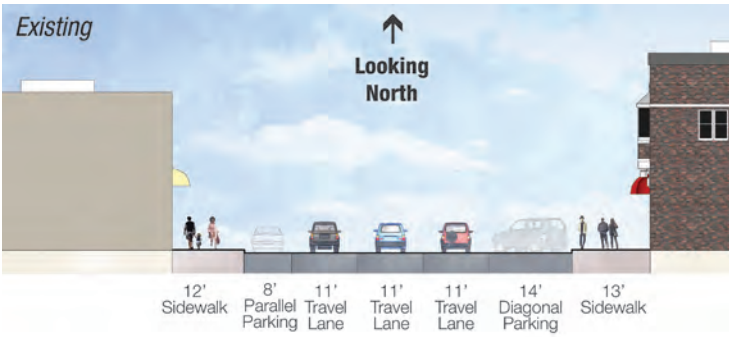


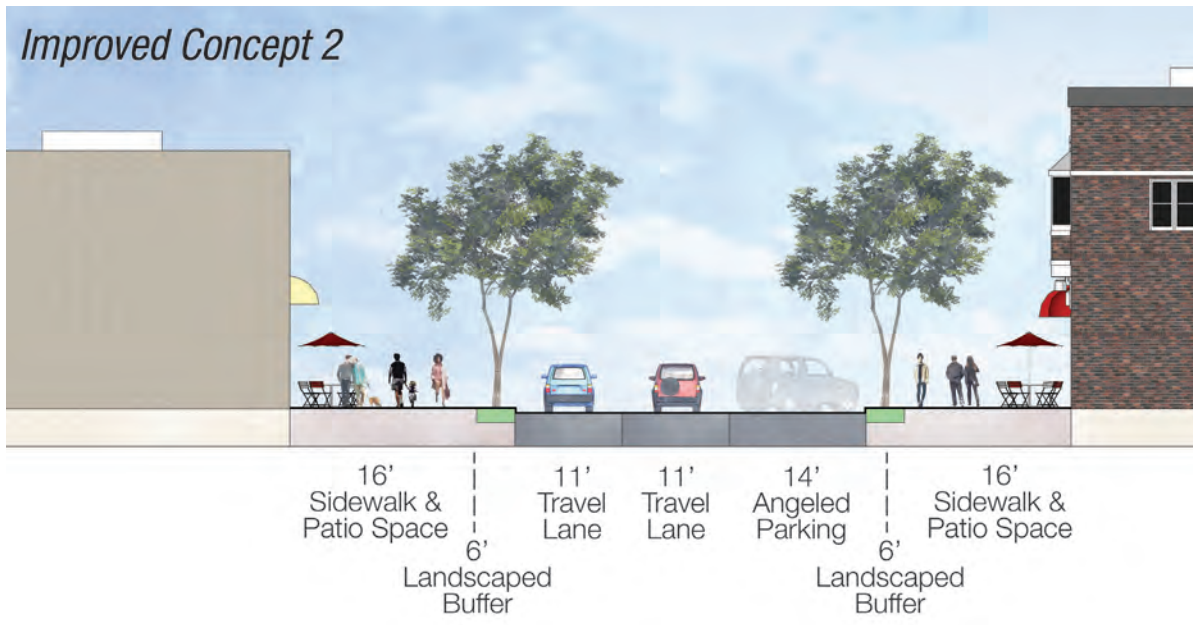
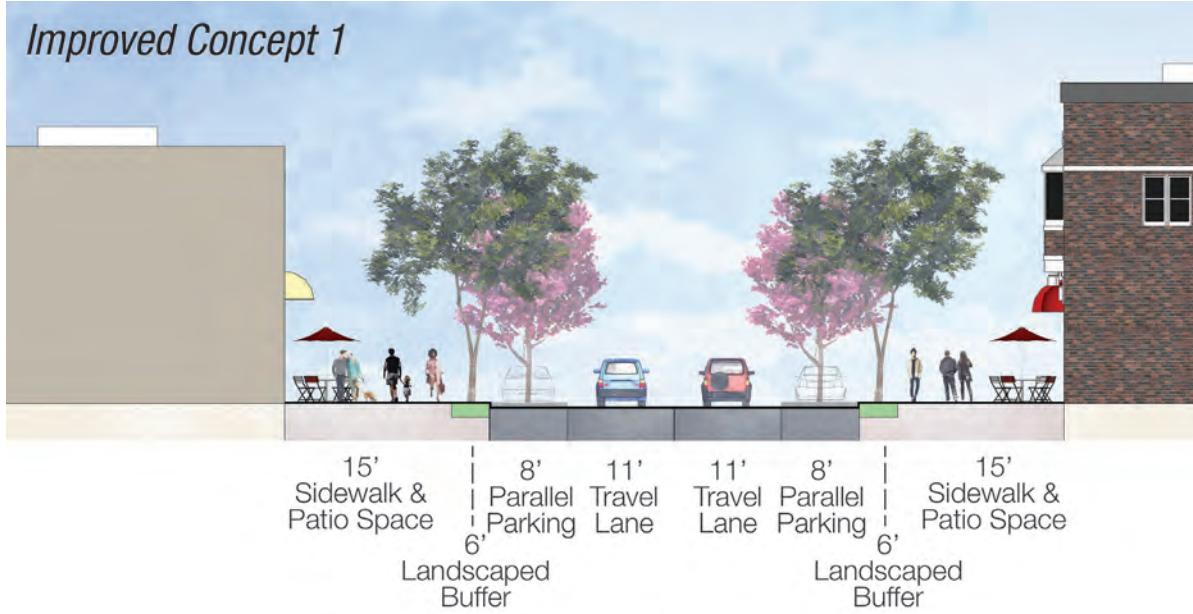
1 SOUTH LBJ DRIVE

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 conversion





PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

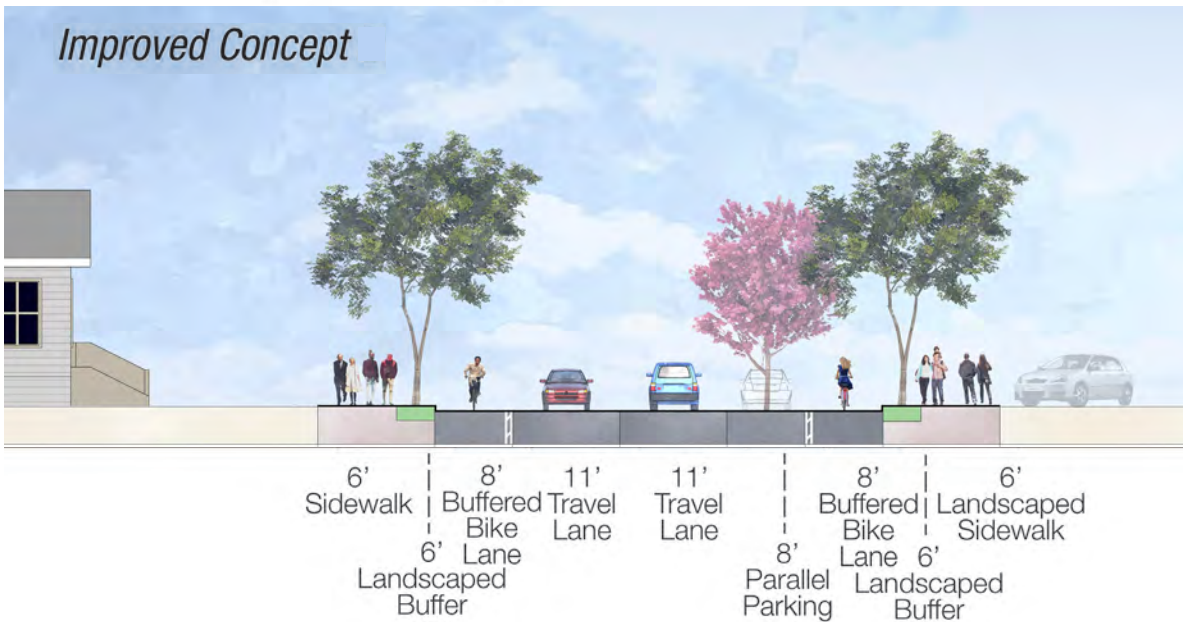
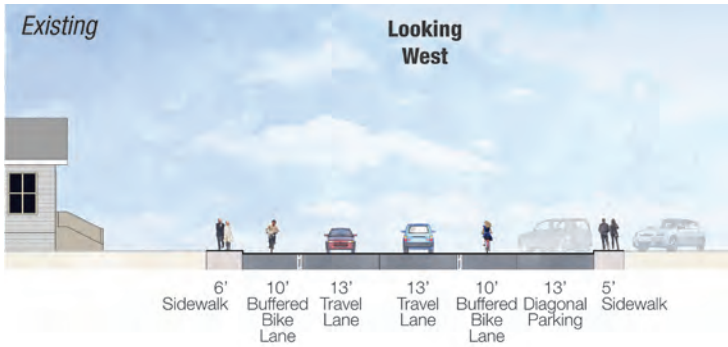


2 MLK DRIVE

Right-of-Way: 70'

Proposed changes:

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



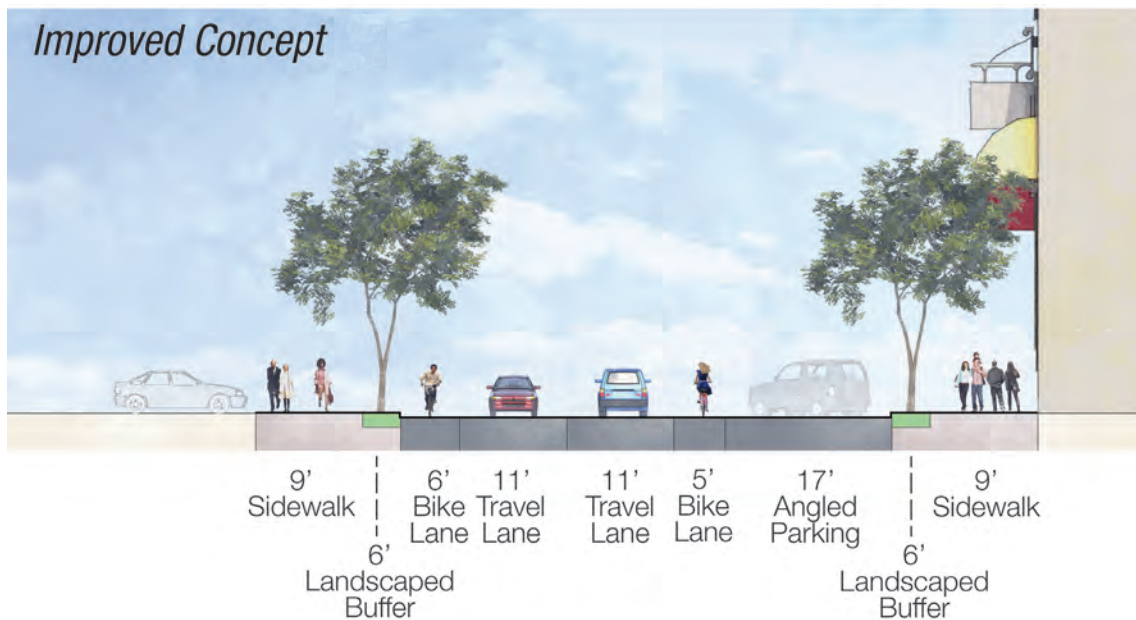
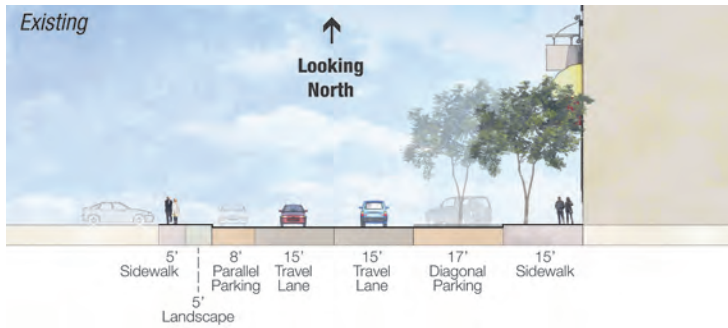


3 EDWARD GARY STREET

Right-of-Way: 80'

Proposed changes:

- Expansion of sidewalks
- Buffered bike lanes
- Additional landscaping and street trees
- Travel lane width reductions to slow traffic through areas where people are walking
- Diagonal to parallel parking conversion



PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

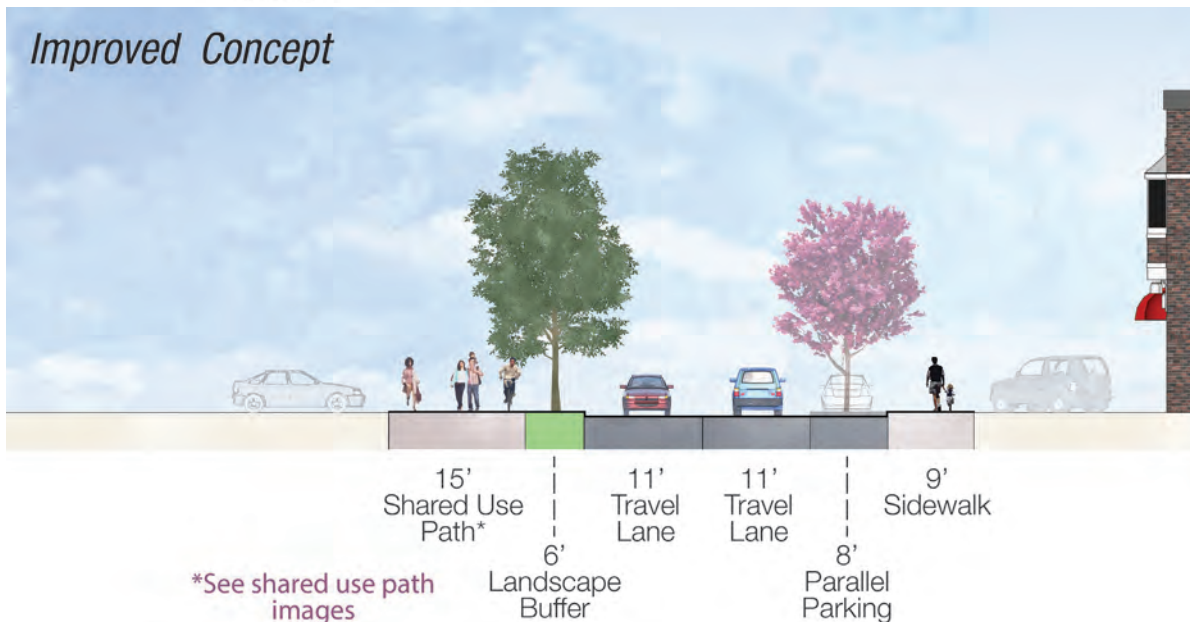
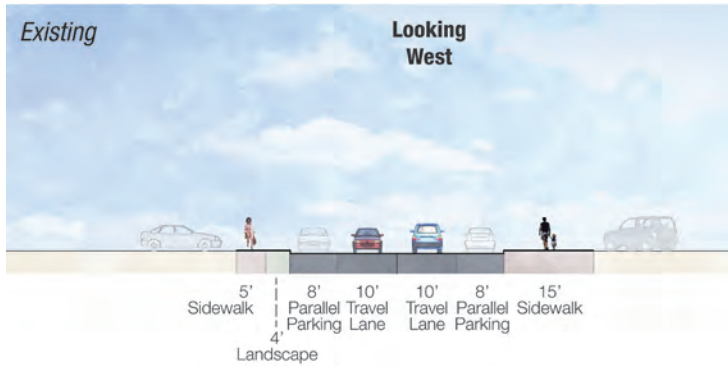


4 HUTCHISON STREET

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 to accommodate safer travel for pedestrians and bikes.





Hutchison Street Shared Use Path *(Recommendation D.5)*

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. 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 the left 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 images below show examples of how the path could look and feel.







PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

A major asset of Downtown is its adjacency to the Riverfront Parks and the San Marcos River. Better connections between these areas would help Downtown's vitality. Public space within Downtown is somewhat limited to public rights-of-way, the Courthouse Square, and Eddie Durham Park. Public spaces can be improved in Downtown through additional amenities, additional space, and sustainable infrastructure. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- E.1. Inventory and expand Downtown's tree canopy in order to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with careful species selection soil and planting considerations for drought, stormwater, and groundwater. 
- E.2. In places where additional trees may not be feasible due to hydraulic or drainage concerns, prioritize additional building elements that provide shade such as canopies, awnings, or other creative artistic sculptures which provide shade.
- E.3. Prioritize sustainability with supplemental educational information in public spaces, streetscapes, and private spaces as feasible through permeable pavements, rain gardens, green infrastructure, native landscaping, and additional shade trees. 
- E.4. Better connect Downtown to the Riverfront Parks and the San Marcos River through east-west parkway connections, art, signage and wayfinding, multimodal infrastructure, and landscaping. 
- E.5. Consider new amenities, programming, and/or a redesign of the Courthouse Square to provide the community's priority desired amenities rather than just passive lawn space.
- E.6. Study the potential for new parks throughout Downtown to serve the density of residents in northwest Downtown, either on the Texas State University campus, on City-owned property and right-of-way, on purchased property, or through publicly accessible plaza space. 
- E.7. To better serve a broader demographic in Downtown, provide the community's priority desired amenities throughout Downtown in existing and new parks, plazas, and parklets.
- E.8. Prioritize existing park improvements in Eddie Durham Park to promote the cultural and historical stories of the area and to align with recommendations and goals of an Arts and Cultural District.



Sustainability



Town/ Gown Collaboration

PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SPACES *(Recommendation E.3)*

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.

Additional techniques such as permeable rubber sidewalks, rubber tree wells, silva cells, or additional sustainable stormwater technologies should be implemented and evaluated as they emerge. A management strategy for maintenance of sustainable green infrastructure and pavements should also be created.

PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

Permeable pavements can provide for stormwater drainage and filtration, rather than direct runoff into the San Marcos River. These options may be most appropriate for pedestrian walkways, alleys, parking lots, and low-traffic roadways.

Permeable Concrete Pavements

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
- Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions
- drought resistance

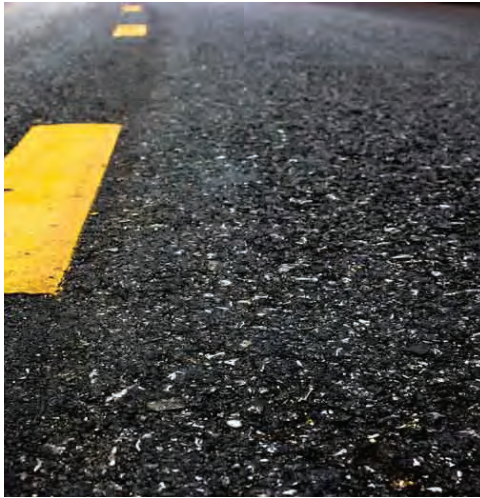
Cons:

- 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
- drought resistance

Cons:

- Potentially harmful chemicals are sometimes added to increase durability

Permeable Pavers:

Ideal use for pedestrian walkways in urban settings



Pros:

- Attractive - high quality appearance, unique character from other places in City
- Versatile - can be arranged in varying patterns
- heat island mitigation
- drought resistance

Cons:

- Can be cost prohibitive
- Higher maintenance cost

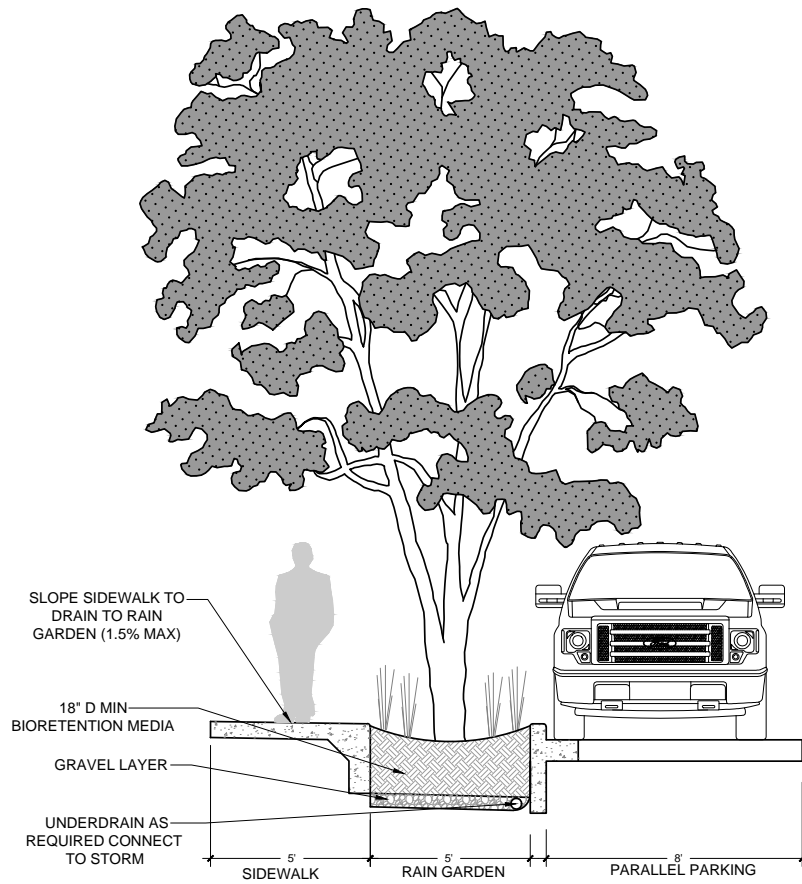
PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

RAIN GARDENS

Rain gardens are on-street landscaped areas used for trees and native plants that are designed to capture and treat stormwater through highly permeable engineered soils. Stormwater flows from the sidewalk or street into the rain gardens where it is filtered, stored, and released slowly to the soil or storm drain. Various design options are possible as shown on the next two pages. Appropriate designs will depend on the available right-of-way and other infrastructure considerations.

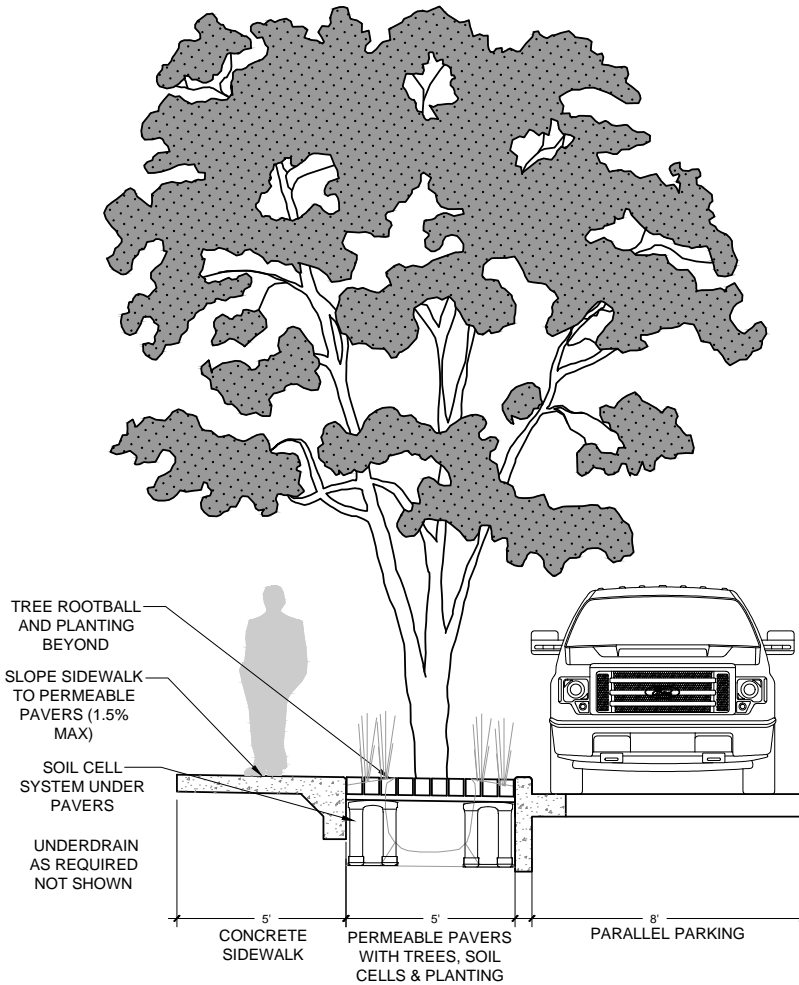
A Downtown Urban Plant Palette and Design Guideline Document for both City and private developer use should be created to ensure consistency, appropriateness, and best practices for installation and design throughout downtown.

Maintain Existing Streetscape Dimensions with Rain Garden



MAINTAIN EXISTING STREETScape DIMENSIONS WITH RAIN GARDEN

Sidewalk with Permeable Pavers, Soil Cell System and Trees

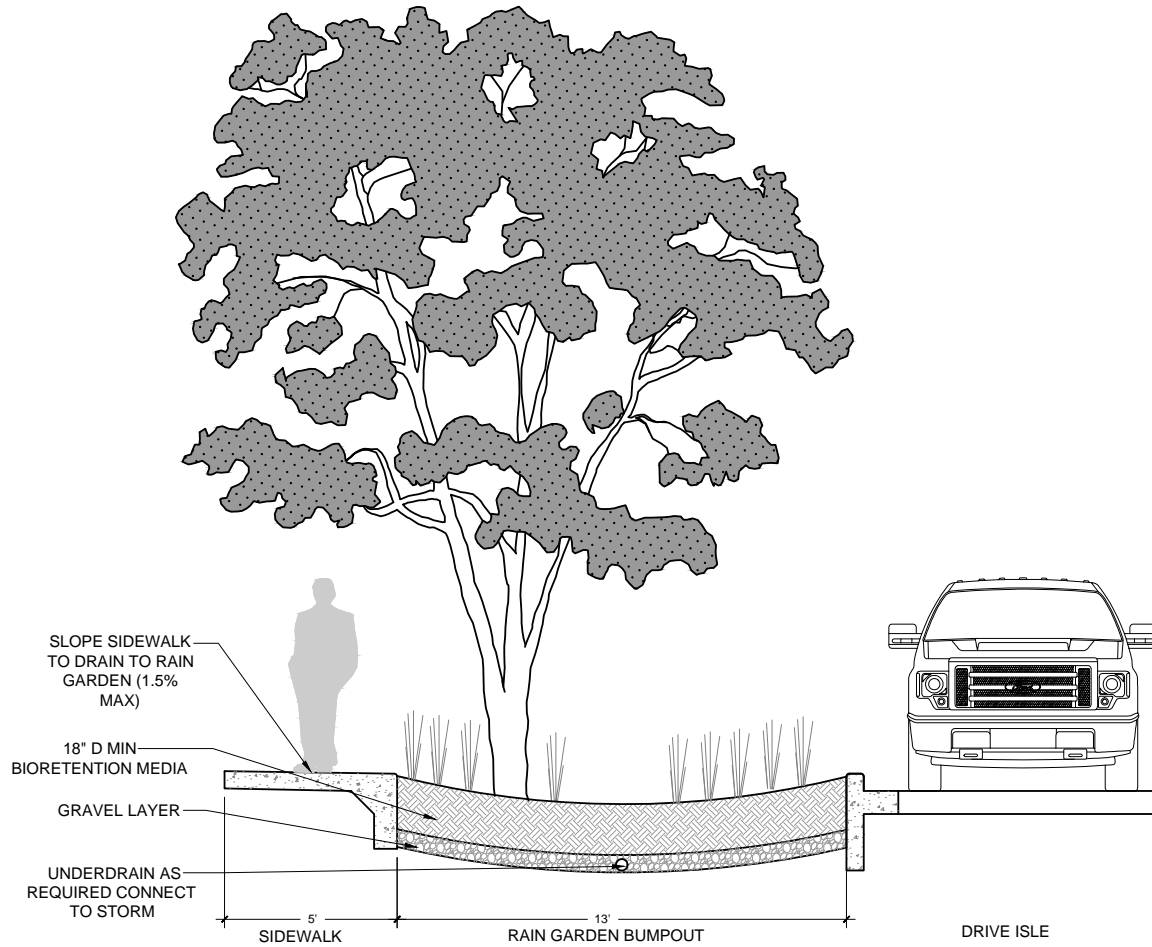


SIDEWALK WITH PERMEABLE PAVERS WITH TREES & PLANTING



PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

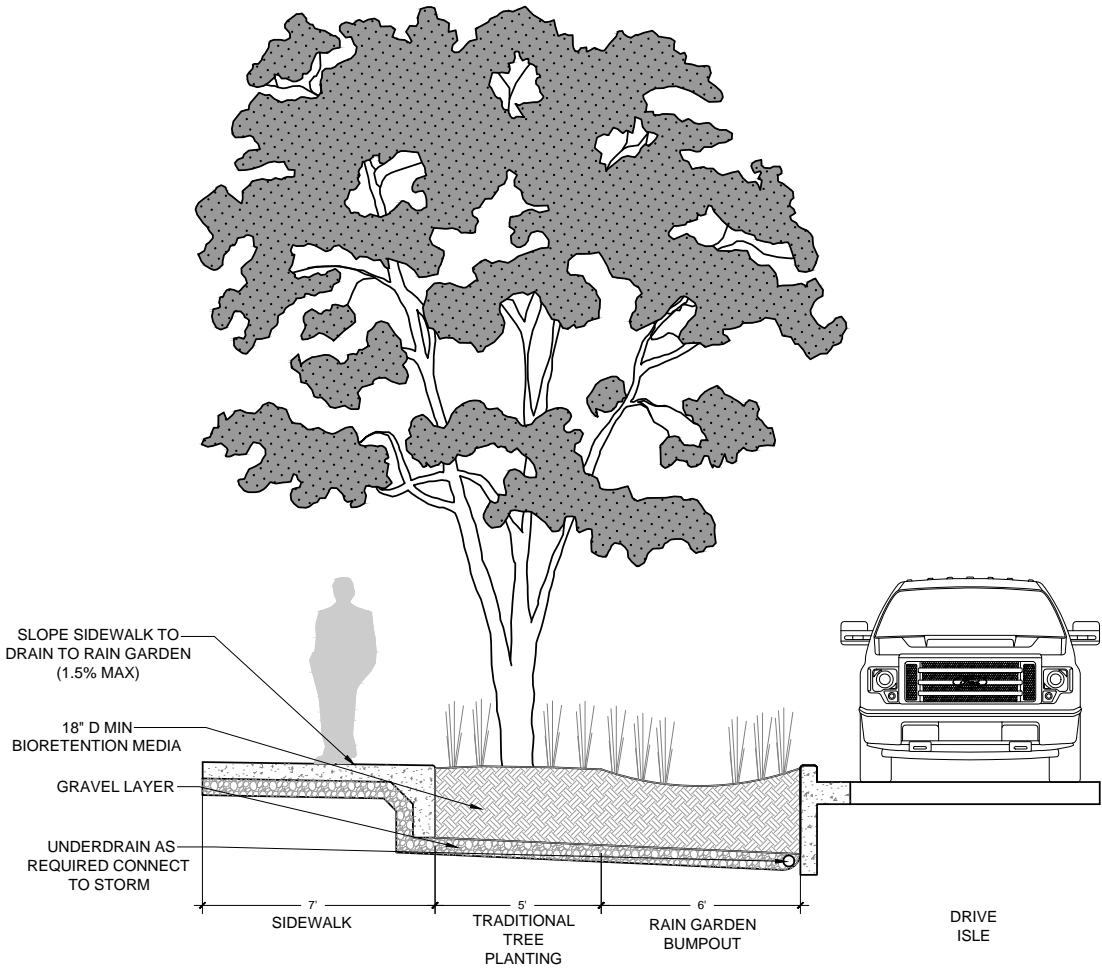
Maintain Existing Streetscape Dimensions with Rain Garden Bulb-outs



MAINTAIN EXISTING STREETSCAPE DIMENSIONS
ADDING RAIN GARDEN BUMPOUTS



Widen Sidewalk and Add Traditional Tree Planting and Rain Garden Bulb-out



WIDEN SIDEWALK ADD TRADITIONAL TREE PLANTING & RAIN GARDEN BUMPOUT



PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

SHADE TREES *(Recommendation E.1)*

The hot Texas climate also necessitates shade, especially in areas where many people are walking or gathering, such as Downtown. Downtown has limited street trees, in part, due to the high water table. In addition, an inventory of existing trees should be established downtown along with identifying priority areas for new trees. Options for preserving famous trees in Texas such as the Log Cabin Oaks on Moon Street and the Kissing Tree in the riverside park should be considered. The trees recommended below could be used to increase Downtown's tree canopy while being sensitive to the unique environmental stressors. Recommendations for trees and minimum soil volume and media characteristics to enhance tree growth should be included in the Downtown Design Manual, Downtown Urban Plant Palette, or other adopted plant palette.

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

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

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.

PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

While Downtown is conveniently located near the Riverfront Parks, Eddie Durham Park, and the Courthouse Square, these public spaces could use more/better amenities to serve their users, especially as Downtown’s resident population grows. The amenities below are key community desires and should be accommodated within public spaces throughout Downtown.

PRIORITY AMENITIES *(Recommendation E.7)*

Open Plazas/Gathering/Event Spaces



Children’s Play Areas



Community Garden/Botanic Garden





Dog Parks and Dog Waste Facilities



Seating



Shade



Native Landscaping



PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

CONNECTIONS TO RIVERFRONT PARKS *(Recommendation E.4)*

The Riverfront Parks are a great amenity that are directly adjacent to Downtown San Marcos. Despite their location, they currently feel disconnected from the Downtown Core. Below are potential routes that could serve as parkway connectors through the use of trails, bike lanes, signage, landscaping and are priority locations for additional place-making or pedestrian improvements.



Trail/ Multi-Use Path



Bike Lanes



Signage



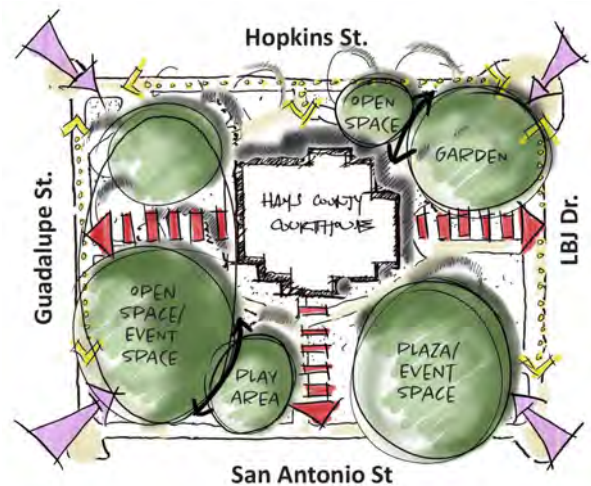
Landscaping



COURTHOUSE SQUARE

(Recommendation E.5)

The Courthouse Square is a Historic and beloved landmark that is located in the heart of Downtown San Marcos. It is well-used today but there is an opportunity for it to be further programmed and better serve community desires for active and passive recreation and social gathering. The conceptual diagram at right shows examples of different ways the Courthouse Square could be utilized to accommodate these uses and priority amenities. Priority recommendations for the space include places to congregate and sit, planting of native plants, plaza/event space, expanded sidewalks along the courthouse border, kids play area, and the use of permeable pavement for walkways. Installations should balance the need for priority amenities while also complementing the existing Historic context.





EDDIE DURHAM PARK IMPROVEMENTS *(Recommendation E.8)*

It is recommended that the area surrounding the Eddie Durham Park be envisioned as a Cultural District. A Cultural District would preserve and promote historic and cultural stories in the area, attract artists and cultural enterprises, encourage business development, enhance tourism, and provide opportunities for state funding.

During the Eddie Durham Jazz Fest (2022) the community provided input on their vision for the park and detailed the types of improvements, amenities, or programming that would enhance the public's use of the space. Recommendations that emerged for the park include:

- Additional park lighting to enhance safety while in the park or walking by
- Addition of exercise equipment
- Installation of an information board with community events
- Directional signage from/to downtown to draw people to park
- Enhance communications of upcoming park or cultural events in the Dunbar Neighborhood
- Additional City events hosted in the park (Movies in the Park, etc.)
- Additional native plants and green infrastructure rather than turf grass
- Pop-up community theatre or local bands
- Partnerships with schools to provide kid's art in the park
- Specific events or movies related to cultural history



Eddie Durham Park activated during the Eddie Durham Jazz Fest with music, a pedestrian street, vendors, and food.

PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

POTENTIAL NEW PARK(S)

(Recommendation E.6)

While Downtown has some great existing parks that serve the community well, there are also opportunities to improve park access and install priority amenities through the creation of new parks, including small public spaces and a full-size park. In addition, the community desires to have downtown be a place for families and kids. Improvements to existing parks should consider the needs of kids and families who live in or in close proximity to downtown.

POCKET PARKS/ PLAZAS

Pocket parks and plazas are small public spaces that are built in places that are often underutilized. Because of their size, they are less expensive and easier to find a location for within a largely built-out environment, such as within a parking space, in front of a building, in a parking lot, in an alley, or behind a building. They're intended to serve residents and visitors within close proximity of the park, and can provide unique amenities or designs not being offered nearby. This might include a small plaza with seating, a children's play area, a dog run, a garden, an art or sculpture park, outdoor fitness equipment, or more. Pocket parks and plazas can either be provided by the City, in partnership with a private property owner, or required with new development. These types of public spaces would well serve the community needs and desires for Downtown in a cost-effective manner.



Pocket park with swing seating and artwork



Urban park with sandpit play area



Plaza with raingarden and permeable pavers



Downtown pocket park with play area



Parklet providing shade and seating



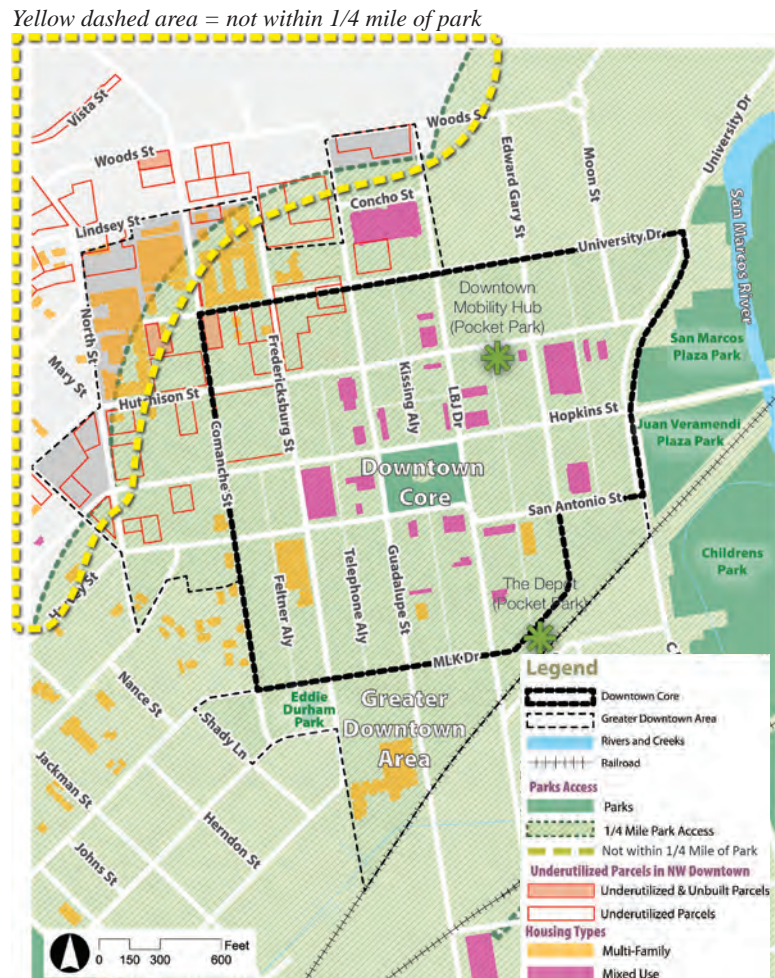
PARK ACCESS IN NORTHWEST DOWNTOWN

With the Riverfront Parks, the Courthouse Square, and Eddie Durham Park, people in Downtown San Marcos have good access to parks within a 5-minute walk. Studies have found that people are more willing to walk to a destination if it is within 1/4-mile, which is the typical distance a person can walk in 5 minutes.

The only area without walkable park access is the northwestern corner of the Greater Downtown Area. This area is also where many multi-family residential units exist, indicating a high density of residents without private yards. This section of Downtown also includes several parcels that are indicated as “underutilized” based on City data, some of which are also “unbuilt” (do not have a building on them).

To improve equitable park access for all Downtown residents, development of a new public park should be explored in this area. Since there is no publicly-owned, undeveloped land in this area, land purchase, land swap, or a land donation to the City would need to be explored.

The parcels outlined in red with a light red fill are the best potential location options, given their underutilization and lack of buildings. The underutilized parcels that do have buildings, outlined in red with no fill color, are the next best potential options. Elements of a new park or parks in this area should include a dog park, passive gathering/recreation space, and potentially a community garden.







SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the Downtown Area Plan process, community members expressed a desire to maintain primarily small/local businesses in Downtown and to diversify the mix of businesses. Today, most Downtown businesses are eating and drinking establishments. The business mix is measured by supply but driven by demand – who the shoppers are. The City can leverage different resources to diversify shoppers, work with Downtown economic partners, and provide support for entrepreneurs and diverse business owners. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- F.1. Support residents, workers, and visitors of all backgrounds through a mix of convenience-oriented retail such as grocery stores, health/beauty stores, and pharmacies.
- F.2. Diversify retail offerings to attract an increased mix of shoppers including families, young professionals, older adults, students, visitors, by targeting employers and promoting desired uses.
- F.3. Diversify the mix of people in Downtown by supporting additional housing options downtown, diversified events, and tourism.
- F.4. Collaborate with Downtown economic partners including the City of San Marcos, the Downtown Association, the Greater San Marcos Partnership, the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce, and Texas State University to develop strategies to best support small/local businesses in Downtown San Marcos and new entrepreneurs, in particular through a Downtown incubator space. 
- F.5. Provide entrepreneur funding/finance support, especially to people who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, Women, and Students. 
- F.6. Create a “how-to” guide for starting a business in Downtown and permitting processes.
- F.7. Streamline licensing/permitting for small/local business owners and entrepreneurs within downtown.
- F.8. Provide a simplified process for businesses to share leases and subdivide large buildings/spaces. 
- F.9. Create a program to allow short-term business licenses and pop-up businesses, both indoor and outdoor, to support new and micro businesses, including student ventures. 
- F.10. Support existing businesses by creating or providing access to business retention programs and small business resources and best practices.
- F.11. Support rehabilitation of vacant storefronts by creating a grant program to fund renovations which bring vacant properties into compliance with building codes, or other strategies.



Sustainability



Town/ Gown Collaboration

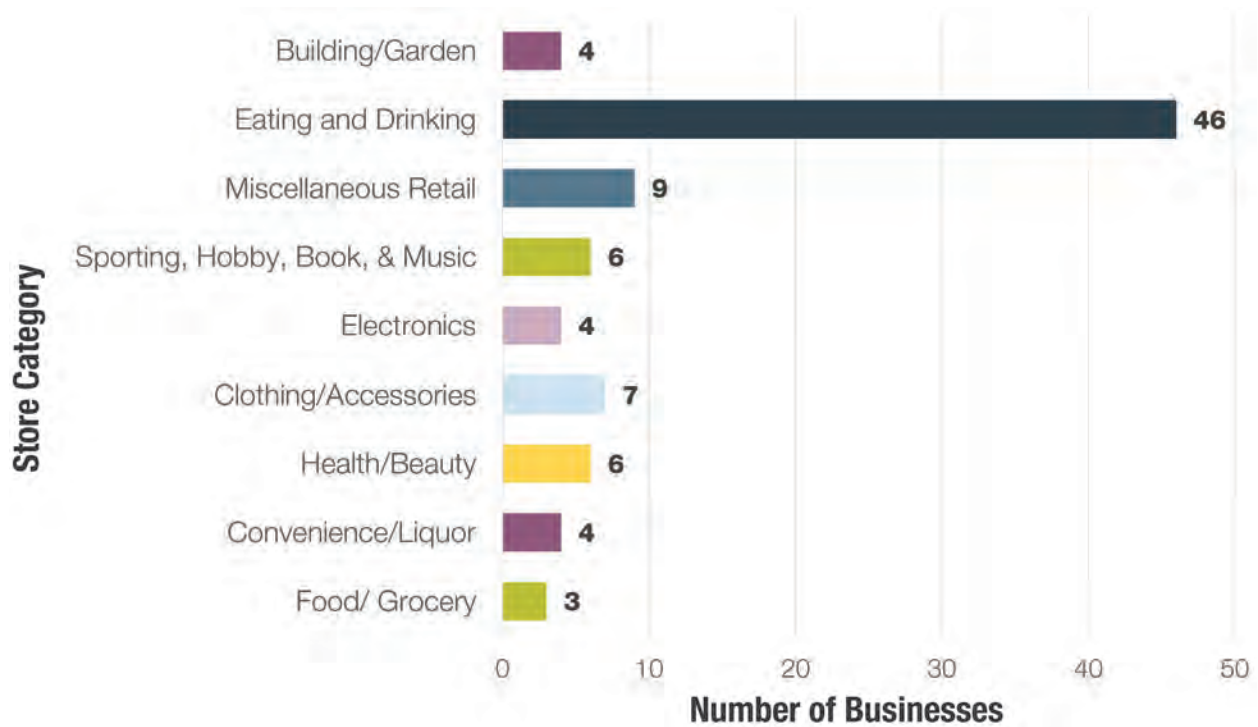
SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

BUSINESS VARIETY *(Recommendation F.1, F.2, F.3)*

Downtown San Marcos has a 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

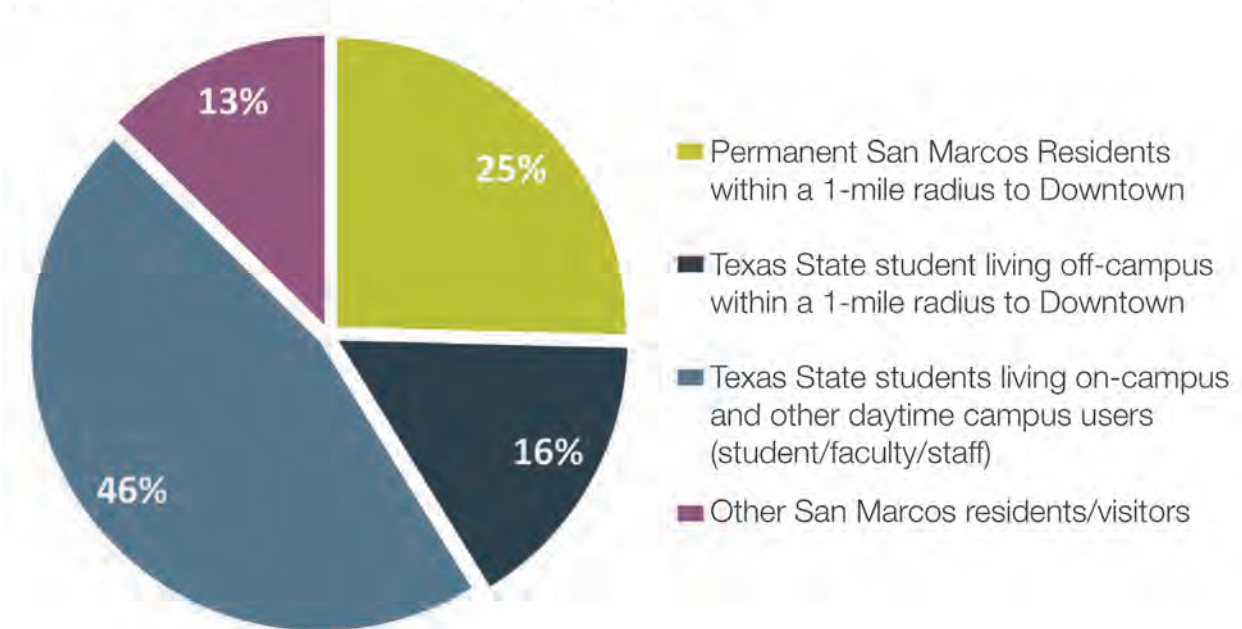




RETAIL DEMAND MAKE-UP

The proximity of Texas State 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 and 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



SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

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:

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
 - Support 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

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 including vacant buildings
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 *(Recommendation F.4)*

Downtown San Marcos is fortunate to be served by several economic agencies and organizations who can parter to help serve the Downtown businesses and entrepreneurs.



City of San Marcos

- Economic Development Manager
- Main Street Program
- Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone
- Proposed Downtown Parking Benefit District
- San Marcos Convention and Visitor Bureau



Downtown Association

- Membership organization
- Services include advocacy, networking, and events



Other Partners

- Greater San Marcos Partnership
- San Marcos Chamber of Commerce

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT & DIVERSITY

SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS FOR ENTREPRENEURS *(Recommendation F.4)*

- Provide business start-up incentives or improvement grants to historically under-served entrepreneurs such as people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (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

(Recommendation F.6)

- 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 *(Recommendation F.7)*

- 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 *(Recommendation F.4)*

- Create a Downtown incubator space and new business support program
 - 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.
 - Explore options to use city-owned parcels and buildings for incubator spaces.
- 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 *(Recommendation F.8)*

- Explore creation of a pop-up business program that connects new businesses with vacant retail spaces within Downtown.
 - Offer short-term, flexible leases and seed capital to prospective businesses in partnership with building owners.
 - Provides opportunity for businesses to gain exposure and experience with low barrier to entry.
 - Provides an activating use for a vacant space while the owner is seeking a long-term tenant.





HISTORY ART & CULTURE



OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

Downtown San Marcos has an extensive history and is rich with art and culture. Information on the arts is communicated on a variety of platforms including the smtxarts.com and visitsanmarcos.com websites, social media platforms, and outreach from local arts groups such as the San Marcos Art League or San Marcos Price Center. These assets should be further elevated to contribute to a unique and genuine experience in Downtown. Overarching recommendations for this topic are outlined below, with key concepts explored in more detail on the following pages.

- G.1. Continue to encourage public art in Downtown of various mediums, by local artists, students, and other creatives. 
- G.2. Provide interpretive opportunities for education and understanding of historical elements.
- G.3. Activate Downtown's art scene, support San Marcos artists, and make art accessible for all through events, programming, interpretive signage, and public funding support for art galleries.
- G.4. Enhance the existing Arts website to interact with the built environment, and provide additional interpretive opportunities that link pedestrians at a location to online information.
- G.5. Create a cultural trust for Downtown.
- G.6. Apply for a State Cultural District near Eddie Durham Park to further support and elevate arts and culture.
- G.7. Collaborate with Texas State University to better connect Downtown residents, visitors, and businesses with the University's students, art programs, and performing arts center by developing a coordinated communication effort and exploring opportunities to partner on history, art, and culture initiatives. 



Sustainability



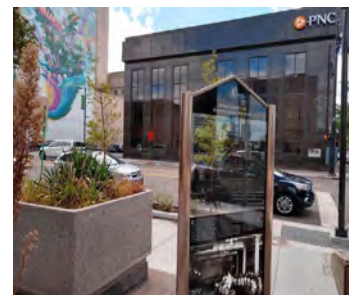
Town/ Gown Collaboration

HISTORY, ART, & CULTURE

DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS HISTORY & ART WALK

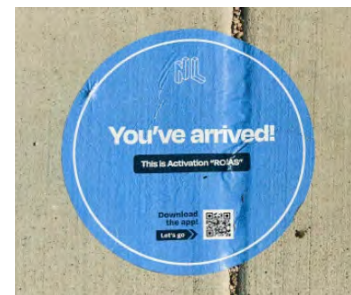
(Recommendation G.4)

Downtown San Marcos is full of rich history and unique public art that showcases local culture and identity. These assets are not well identified or clearly connected today. An art trail, a history trail, digital information, and mobile maps would help locals and visitors alike navigate Downtown to learn about these sites and amenities. The Art Walk shown below, could be mentioned on the existing San Marcos Art Map website, and the route and identification features can be updated as public art features shift and add over time. The San Marcos Art Map website is also intended to be updated and show more information about each public art location, including an artist biography, history of the piece, and other interesting facts. Wayfinding signs would 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.





SMTX
ART
WALK



MOBILE INTERFACE

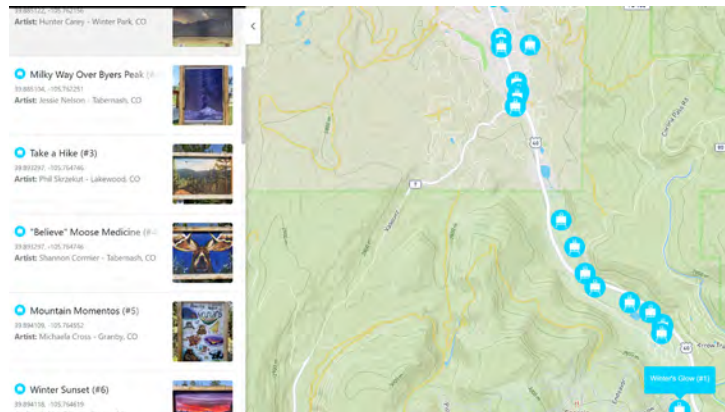
San Marcos' Art/History Walk webpage could include a number of functions:

- 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 in-app videos
- 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 additional public and non-profit art and history walks in downtown or San Marcos as a whole

HISTORY, ART, & CULTURE

DIGITAL MAP

Embed the Art, History, or any other identified walks 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 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's the darling of [Pearl Street](#), and you'll often see that someone has placed a flower in her right hand.

Artist: George Lundeen
 Broadway and Pearl St.

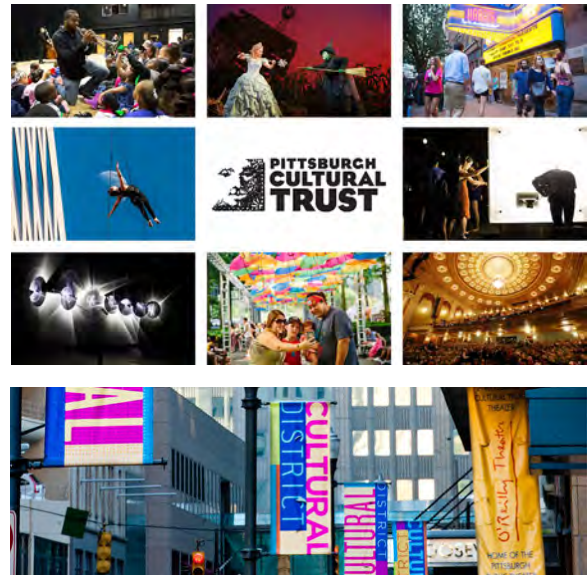




CREATING A CULTURAL TRUST & CULTURAL DISTRICT *(Recommendation G.5, G.6)*

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

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 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 communities in Texas that have successfully created a cultural district:

- Bastrop
- Denton (shown)
- Wimberley
- Smithville



5 IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENTATION

To fully realize the vision of the Downtown Area Plan, an organized and actionable approach will be essential. This chapter outlines how to implement the Plan’s key recommendations, who to coordinate with, and how timing should be considered. The below overarching recommendations should also be considered when pursuing implementation of recommendations.

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- H.1. Determine management strategy and appropriate staff updates for the Downtown Area to ensure overarching management of project priorities, use of TIRZ funds, CIP and other funding sources, and tracking of implementation/action items.
- H.2. Coordinate Plan recommendations with on-going and future Master Plan and policy documents such as the Transportation Master Plan, Parks Master Plan, Arts Master Plan, downtown economic development strategies, and other downtown strategic initiatives.
- H.3. Evaluate recommendations for incorporation into the CIP or utilization of TIRZ funds.
- H.4. Regularly analyze potential funding sources including Federal and State Transportation Funding (CAMPO), Local (CIP Projects), developer contributions, and additional funding sources as they arise.
- H.5. Coordinate with City departments, downtown partners, and proposed downtown development to coordinate the implementation of the recommendations on an incremental scale. Examples of coordination opportunities include roadway re-striping, private development occurring on individual parcels, new purchases of city property, police department safety initiatives, mural and arts installations, and non-profit or community organization initiatives.
- H.6. Convene regular recurring meetings between the City of San Marcos and Texas State University to coordinate implementation and partnership efforts.

IMPLEMENTATION

ACTION PLAN

This action plan outlines what steps the City can begin to take immediately to implement the Plan's vision and recommendations. Included are several elements of consideration (see legend below). Some recommendations are not fully driven by the public sector. These are included at the end of the action plan, including a reflection of what steps the City may be able to take in order to kickstart the implementation process. This plan is a first step to inform City staff workplans over the next several years. It should be considered as a starting point as additional funding, partnerships, and creative tactics may arise over time.

Legend of Action Plan Elements

- **Topic:** Key topic from Chapter 4 of the Downtown Area Plan
- **Community Priority:** Based on feedback
 - Low/Medium/High
- **Difficulty of Implementation:** Ranging from low difficulty (administrative/ few steps) to high difficulty (private sector driven/ many steps)
 - Low/Medium/High
- **Catalytic Impact:** Likelihood of resulting in greater change/ improvements
 - Low/Medium/High
- **Public Cost:** Full cost (public funds only) to complete
 - \$ = < \$50K
 - \$\$ = \$50K - \$250K
 - \$\$\$ = \$250K - \$1M
 - \$\$\$\$ = > \$1M
- **Timeframe to Completion:** From start time, publicly-initiated elements only. Additional private investment may be required.
 - 0-1 years, 2-5 years, 6+ years
- **Downtown Geography:** General location within Downtown.
- **Potential Leaders/Partners:** Who will champion/lead and partner to implement this project. City Council assumed partner in most actions.
- **Short Term Action Items:** High level overview of how to implement the item.
- **Driver:** Responsible party or leader of a particular task or improvement.



Building Form & Infill Development

GROUND FLOOR DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Community Priority: Low

Difficulty of Implementation: Low

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Main Street Program, Downtown Association

Short Term Action Items: Review and update design standards/guidelines and/or code according to plan recommendations

Driver: City of San Marcos

CM ALLEN PARKWAY DISTRICT

Community Priority: Low

Difficulty of Implementation: Medium

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: East

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Engineering, P&DS, Parks, Public Works, private developer, private property owner

Short Term Action Items: Begin design work for streetscape and intersection improvements on CM Allen south of Hopkins Street and on roadways connecting from Riverfront up to central Downtown such as University Drive, Hopkins Street, or San Antonio Street.

Driver: Private development

VACANT STOREFRONT/BUILDING ACTIVATION PROGRAM

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: Low

Catalytic Impact: Medium

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Economic Development, CVB/Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program

Short Term Action Items: Collaborate with partners, develop program, receive program approval, create promotional materials, initiate pilot program.

Driver: City of San Marcos

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Community Priority: Medium

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: South Central

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Housing Authority Board, private developer, private property owner

Implementation Notes: Follow plan recommendations for “Attracting Desired Development”. Completion is not fully publicly-driven and will require interest and investment from private sector developer and property owner.

Driver: Private development

IMPLEMENTATION

OPEN AIR MARKETPLACE AND FOOD HALL

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: Medium

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: South Central

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, private developer, private property owner

Implementation Notes: Follow plan recommendations for “Attracting Desired Development”. Completion is not fully publicly-driven and will require interest and investment from private sector developer and property owner.

Driver: Private development

POTENTIAL HOTEL

Community Priority: Low

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Northeast

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Economic Development, Texas State University, private developer, private property owner, San Marcos Convention and Visitor Bureau

Implementation Notes: Follow plan recommendations for “Attracting Desired Development”. Collaborate with Texas State University.

Driver: Private development

VERTICAL MIXED USE

Community Priority: Low

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: Medium

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: East

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, private developer, private property owner

Implementation Notes: Follow plan recommendations for “Attracting Desired Development”. Completion is not fully publicly-driven and will require interest and investment from private sector developer and property owner.

Driver: Private development

Downtown Housing Options

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Community Priority: Medium

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: Low

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: Private developer, private business owner, CoSM Economic Development, Parks Department, CVB, Downtown Association, GSMP

Short Term Action Items: Assess existing amenities and growth amount triggers for additional needs. Establish incentive framework. Implementation is not fully publicly-driven. Private sector will ultimately drive new businesses.

Driver: City of San Marcos/private development coordination

PROMOTE & SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: Medium

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, private developer

Short Term Action Items: Pursue adoption of Strategic Housing Action Plan. Establish programs and incentive framework. Review and update code.

Driver: City of San Marcos/private development coordination

PROMOTE & SUPPORT HOME OWNERSHIP

Community Priority: Medium

Difficulty of Implementation: Medium

Catalytic Impact: Medium

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, private developer

Short Term Action Items: Pursue adoption of Strategic Housing Action Plan. Establish programs and incentive framework. Review and update code.

Driver: City of San Marcos/private development coordination

REMOVING DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS TO PROVIDE HOUSING OPTIONS

Community Priority: Medium

Difficulty of Implementation: Low

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Departments

Short Term Action Items: Review and update code according to plan recommendations.

Driver: City of San Marcos

Fostering Small Business

BUSINESS VARIETY STRATEGIES

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: High

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: Private developer, private business owner, CoSM Economic Development, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program

Short Term Action Items: Pursue strategies listed in “Diversify the retail business mix” within Downtown Plan. Implementation is not fully publicly-driven. Private sector will ultimately drive new businesses.

Driver: City of San Marcos (program creation)

IMPLEMENTATION

ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT AND DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: Low

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Economic Development, Downtown Association, GSMP

Short Term Action Items: Outline how programs will work, pursue options for a City-owned incubator space, collaborate with Texas State University, review and update code/licensing/permitting processes.

Driver: City of San Marcos

History Art Culture

CREATE CULTURAL TRUST & CULTURAL DISTRICT

Community Priority: Medium

Difficulty of Implementation: Medium

Catalytic Impact: High

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Southwest

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program, HPC, Heritage Association, local non-profits and community organizations in the area

Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with partners, determine cultural district boundaries,

outline how cultural district will work, what city role is, etc., solicit community feedback.

Driver: City of San Marcos

CREATING HISTORY AND ART WALKS

Community Priority: High

Difficulty of Implementation: Medium

Catalytic Impact: Low

Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program, HPC, Heritage Association, local non-profits and community organizations in the area

Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with partners, finalize routes, begin signage design, put together materials for online use.

Driver: City of San Marcos

ENHANCED WEB PRESENCE AND DIGITAL MAP

Community Priority: Low

Difficulty of Implementation: Low

Catalytic Impact: Low

Public Cost: \$ (<\$50,000)

Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)

Downtown Geography: Throughout

Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program, HPC, Heritage Association

Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with partners, finalize routes, begin signage design, put together materials for online use.

Driver: City of San Marcos



Multi-Modal Connectivity & Parking

COMPLETE MULTI-MODAL NETWORKS

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Long (6+ years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Engineering, P&DS
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

GREEN ALLEYS

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Sustainability, Engineering, P&DS, Stormwater
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

IMPLEMENT PARKING PROGRAM FRAMEWORK PLAN

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Parks, Transit/Parking
Short Term Action Items: Pursue adoption of Parking Program Implementation Plan. Begin implementation of “top priorities” as listed in Downtown Plan
Driver: City of San Marcos

TRANSIT STOPS NEAR COURTHOUSE SQUARE

Community Priority: Low
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)
Downtown Geography: Central
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works
Implementation Notes: Implementation is not fully City-driven. Complete following combination of transit services in case stops move. Coordinate with Texas State University.
Driver: City of San Marcos

IMPLEMENTATION

TRANSIT STOP SHELTERS AND AMENITIES

Community Priority: Low
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works
Implementation Notes: First complete combination of transit services. Coordinate with Texas State University.
Driver: City of San Marcos

Priority Streetscape Enhancements

DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Low
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Engineering, CVB/Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

FLEXIBLE/FESTIVAL STREET

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Low
Public Cost: \$\$\$\$ (> \$1M)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Central
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Engineering, Main Street Program
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

HUTCHINSON STREET MULTI-USE PATH

Community Priority: Low
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: North
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Engineering, P&DS, Main Street Program
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos



INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Engineering, CVB/Destination Services, Main Street Program
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$\$\$ (> \$1M)
Timeframe to Completion: Long (6+ years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Engineering, Main Street Program, private developer
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos

SHARED STREETS

Community Priority: Low
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$\$\$ (> \$1M)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: West
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Main Street Program, private developer
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, begin design work, outreach to adjacent businesses and residences.
Driver: City of San Marcos/private development

Public Spaces & Amenities

EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: Medium
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$\$ (\$250,000- \$1,000,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Parks and Rec, CVB/Destination Services
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with Parks and Recreation, begin design work
Driver: City of San Marcos

IMPLEMENTATION

PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Low
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Sustainability
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with green alleys efforts, assess feasibility in City-owned parking lots
Driver: City of San Marcos

POTENTIAL NEW PARKS

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: High
Catalytic Impact: High
Public Cost: \$\$\$\$ (> \$1M)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Northwest/ Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM P&DS, Parks and Rec
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with Parks and Recreation, assess property acquisition opportunities
Driver: City of San Marcos/private developer

RAIN GARDENS

Community Priority: Medium
Difficulty of Implementation: Low
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Short (0-1 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Sustainability
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, align and prioritize with other streetscape design improvements, begin design work
Driver: City of San Marcos

SHADE TREES

Community Priority: High
Difficulty of Implementation: Low
Catalytic Impact: Medium
Public Cost: \$\$ (\$50,000- \$250,000)
Timeframe to Completion: Medium (2-5 years)
Downtown Geography: Throughout
Potential Leaders/Partners: CoSM Public Works, Sustainability
Short Term Action Items: Coordinate with public works and CIP, align and prioritize with other streetscape design improvements, begin design work
Driver: City of San Marcos/private developer



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SMTX 
VISION