

(FINAL DRAFT) ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_

# SAN MARCOS



# AREA PLAN

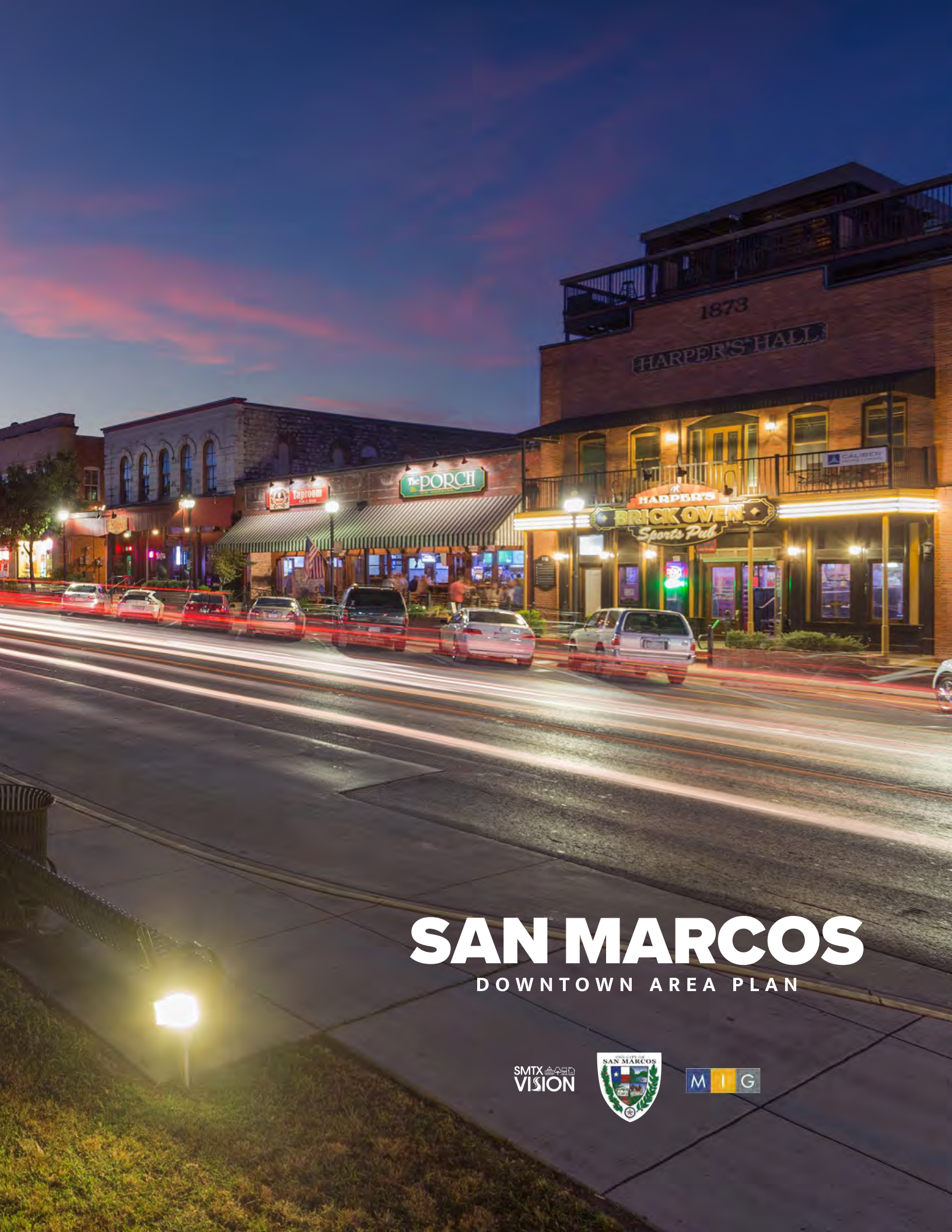






John C. "Jack" Hays  
1817-1883





# SAN MARCOS

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

SMTX  
VISION



M I G

“

*The San Marcos community envisions downtown as the 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 a downtown that is a unique and culturally vibrant destination, where local businesses thrive, and people of all ages can connect, create and celebrate.*



# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>12</b>
About Downtown San Marcos .....	14
Highlights of Existing Condition .....	18
<b>2 ENGAGEMENT</b>	<b>34</b>
Engagement Summary .....	38
<b>3 DOWNTOWN VISION</b>	<b>44</b>
Goals .....	46
Opportunities .....	47
<b>4 RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>50</b>
Downtown Housing Options .....	52
Building Form & Infill Development .....	60
Multimodal Connectivity & Parking .....	78
Priority Streetscape Improvements .....	92
Public Spaces & Amenities .....	106
Small Business Support .....	122
History, Art, & Culture .....	130
<b>5 IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>136</b>
Action Plan .....	138

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# SAN MARCOS

## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

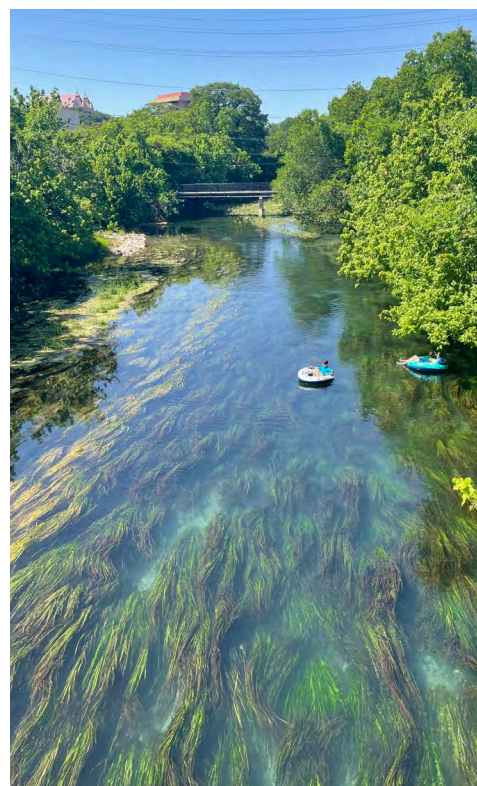
## WELCOME TO DOWNTOWN!

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 including residents, employees, business owners, students, and visitors. Based on 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. This plan is 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.
- **Chapter 4: Recommendations** - Provides overarching and specific recommendations for improvements and investments to enhance Downtown for all over the next several years.
- **Chapter 5: Implementation** - Contains action items and coordination considerations for implementing recommendations outlined within the plan.



San Marcos River



78666 Mural, Kissing Alley



Family biking on Guadalupe Street



Downtown San Marcos



# 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 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, demonstrates sustainability, and provides a sense of connectedness to other neighborhoods, the San Marcos River, Texas State University, and beyond.*



Attract people of all ages and walks of life with a greater diversity of shops, restaurants, housing, and employment options.



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



Promote a vibrant and thriving Downtown through local business support, fostering of 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.



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



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



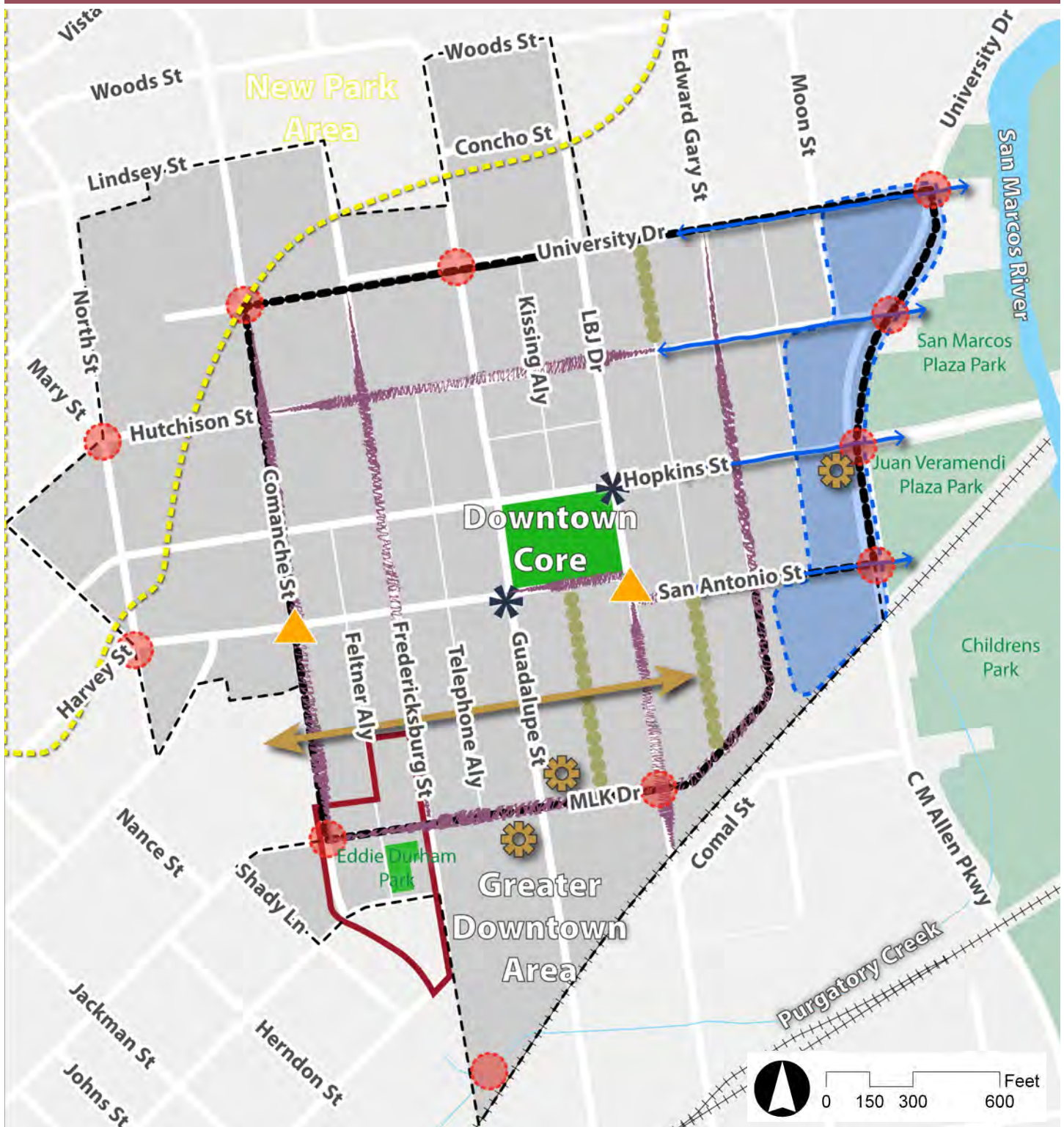
Strengthen Downtown's unique identity through an atmosphere of eclectic arts, small business, diverse cuisines, recreational opportunities, historic architecture, and lively events in a riverfront, hill country community.



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



## DOWNTOWN HIGHLIGHTED RECOMMENDATIONS



### Legend

- Downtown Core
- Greater Downtown Area
- Railroad
- Streets
- River and Creeks
- Parks

- CM Allen Parkway District/Riverfront Park Connections
- Existing Park for Improvement
- New Park Area
- Mid-Block Connections
- Downtown Gateways
- Streetscape Improvements

- Courthouse Square Transit Stops
- Priority Intersection Improvements
- Priority Green Alleys
- Infill Development Sites
- Cultural District

# HIGHLIGHTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 4, Recommendations, is organized by seven key topics with two cross-cutting themes (Town/Gown Relations and Sustainability) as listed to the right. Highlights from these topics are included on the previous map and this page.



*Valentino's Pizza*



*City staff installing wayfinding signs*



*Crosswalk at LBJ Drive and San Antonio Street*

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

## 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

A “CM Allen Parkway District” should be established with the intent of celebrating the river, better connecting Downtown to the riverfront parks, and to better utilize 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

The City should apply for a State Cultural District near Eddie Durham Park to further support and elevate arts and culture.

## Green Alleys

Some 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 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

## **SAN MARCOS CITY COUNCIL**

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Alyssa Garza

Mark Gleason

Saul Gonzales

Matthew Mendoza

Jude Prather

Shane Scott

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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 including residents, employees, business owners, students, and visitors. This Plan seeks to strengthen Downtown by identifying improvements, investments, and opportunities that can be pursued through public and private investment to ensure Downtown best serves everyone in San Marcos with a vibrant and resilient future.



# ABOUT DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS

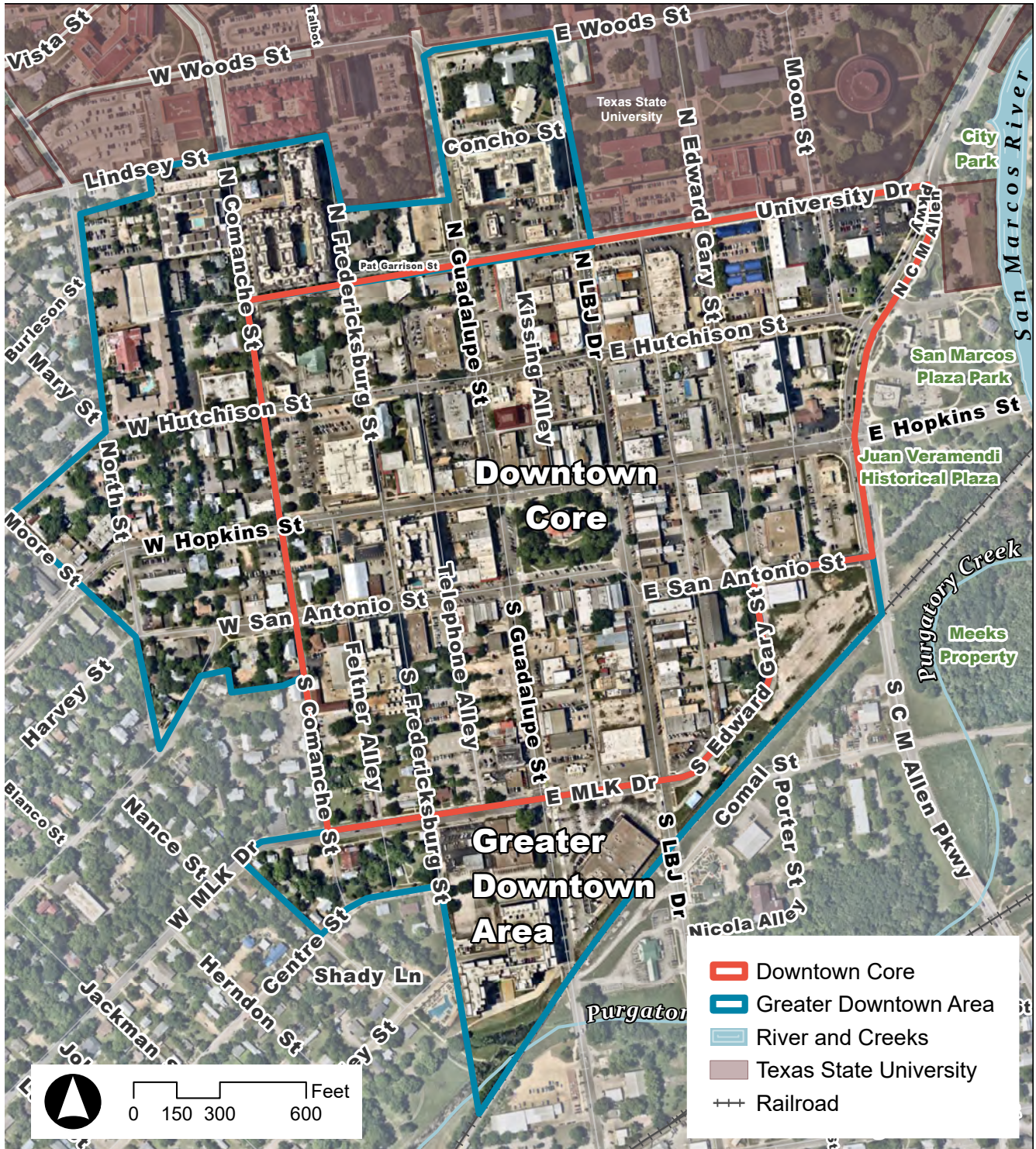


The Downtown Area Plan will be focused primarily on an area called the Downtown Core which includes 20 blocks (84 acres) in the heart of San Marcos. The Downtown Core is bounded by Comanche Street on the west, MLK Drive/Edward Gary Street/San Antonio Street to the south, CM Allen Parkway to the east, 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 is mixed with new mid-rise residential, mixed-use buildings, and undeveloped lots.

The southern portion of the Downtown Core includes two primary mixed use/commercial corridors which have historic character and 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 areas outside of the Downtown Core including the Riverfront Parks, Greater Downtown Area, and the area south of Downtown. The “Greater Downtown Area” includes areas adjacent 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. Multi-generational neighborhoods with rich culture and community lie 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, historic and cultural neighborhoods, and IH-35. Downtown is the most dense and unique part of the community and is defined by short blocks, and pre-automobile compact development patterns that are conducive to walking or biking.

Historic forces 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 Fire Insurance 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, East 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 WWII and the post-war years in San Marcos. Returning military veterans 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 construction of IH-35 in the 1960s further contributed to the changing economy and location of businesses. The growth of Southwest Texas State 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 1980s 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.

In recent decades, there has been 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)*

*\*Hays County Forecast to grow by 212,500 housing units by 2050. San Marcos has historically captured 20%-30% of Hays County growth. The average household size in Hays County is approximately 2.75 people per household. (U.S. Census, State of Texas Demographer, and Economic & Planning Systems)*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## DOWNTOWN DEMOGRAPHICS

Source: 2020 U.S. Census

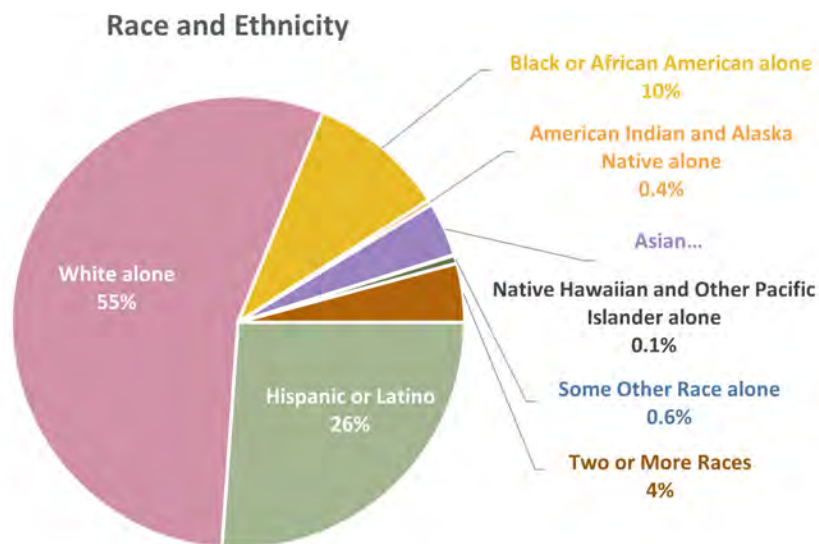
San Marcos is diverse in culture, race, ethnicity, age, and household income. Downtown is the heart of the city and should reflect that diversity, providing a place for all residents to come together, feel represented, and equitably served. During the Downtown Area Plan process, feedback was solicited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

### POPULATION

The total population of the Downtown Core is approximately 1,905 people, which accounts for about 2.5% of the city's total population (approximately 72,000 people).

### 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. (2020 US Census)



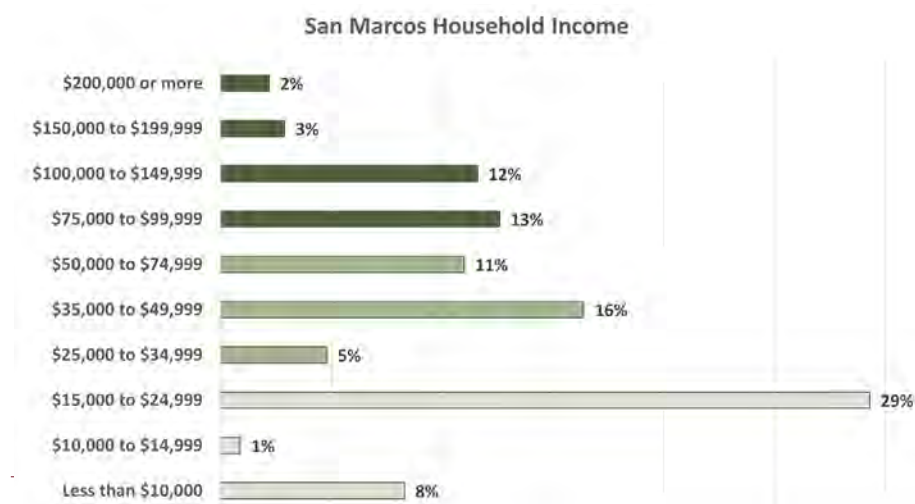
2020 US Census

## 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 University. The population Downtown San Marcos is younger than the city as a whole but has fewer young children and teenagers. (2020 American Community Survey)

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in San Marcos is \$42,500 (2020 Census) with 30.6% (2020 US 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 University students living Downtown, many of whom may not have full-time or high-paying employment while enrolled at the University. (2020 American Community Survey)



2020 American Community Survey

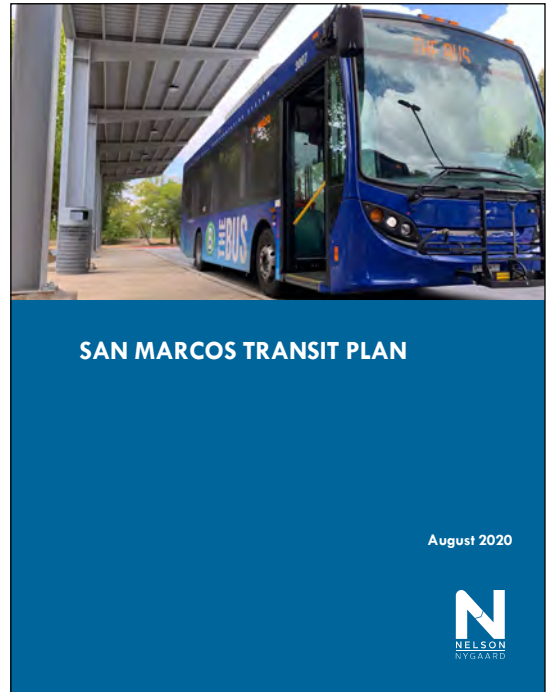


# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS & REGULATIONS

A thorough review was conducted of past and concurrent planning initiatives and City efforts that identify recommendations relevant 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.

- 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 (2022)
- Administrative Downtown Pattern Book (2021)
- Downtown Master Plan (2008)
- Parks Master Plan (2018)



Cover pages of various City Master Plans

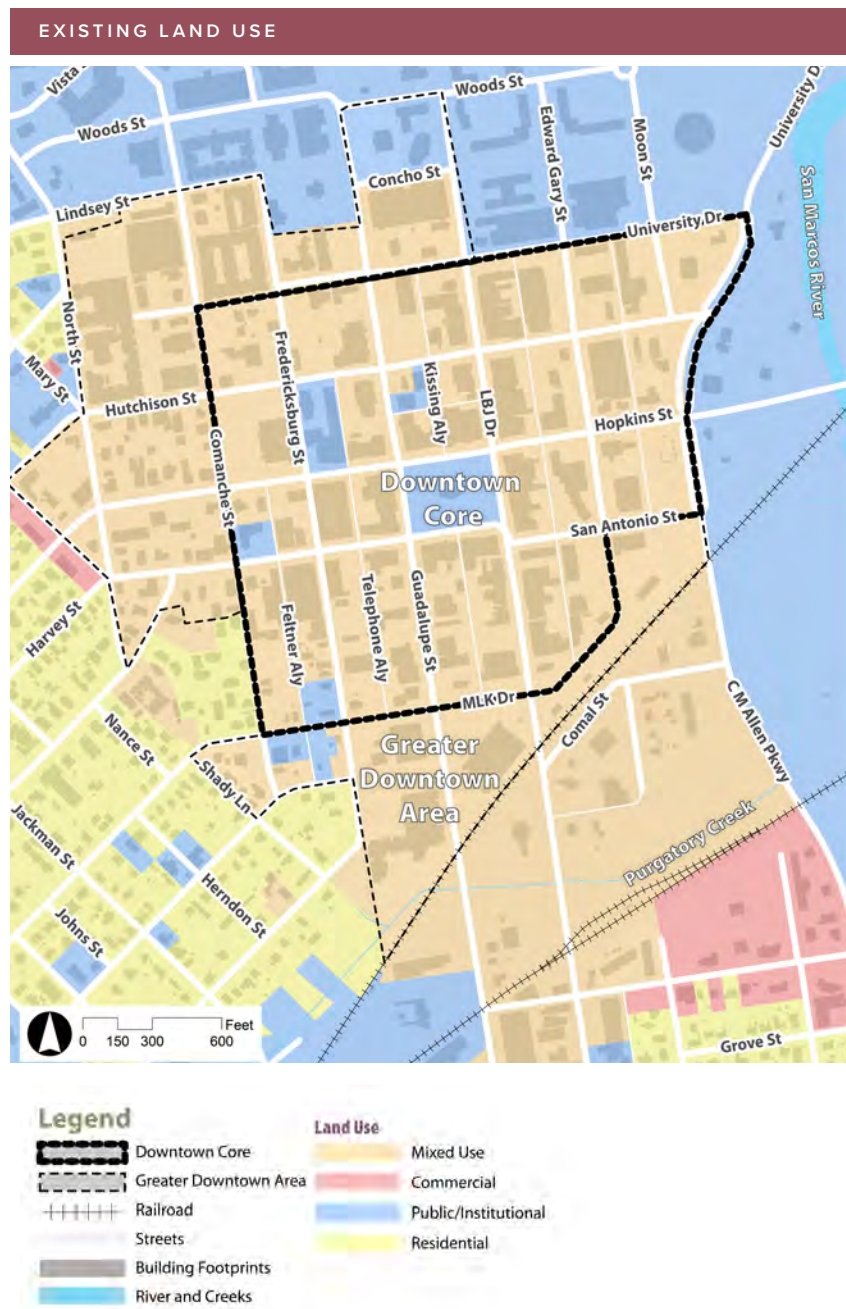
# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## 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 University 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.







## HOUSING

Housing types in the Downtown Core are a blend of mixed use, multi-family, and a few single-family homes. 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 limited to either a maximum three stories or a maximum of five stories in Downtown based on zoning, 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 Dunbar and Heritage neighborhoods southwest of Downtown are 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 with expansive blank walls, large setbacks with surface parking lots, a lack of an articulated facade, and a lack of buildings on a lot. These frontages are an opportunity to implement physical improvements to the facades which will create a more positive pedestrian experience for residents and visitors.



*The Local Downtown, 210 N Edward Gary St*



*210 W San Antonio St*

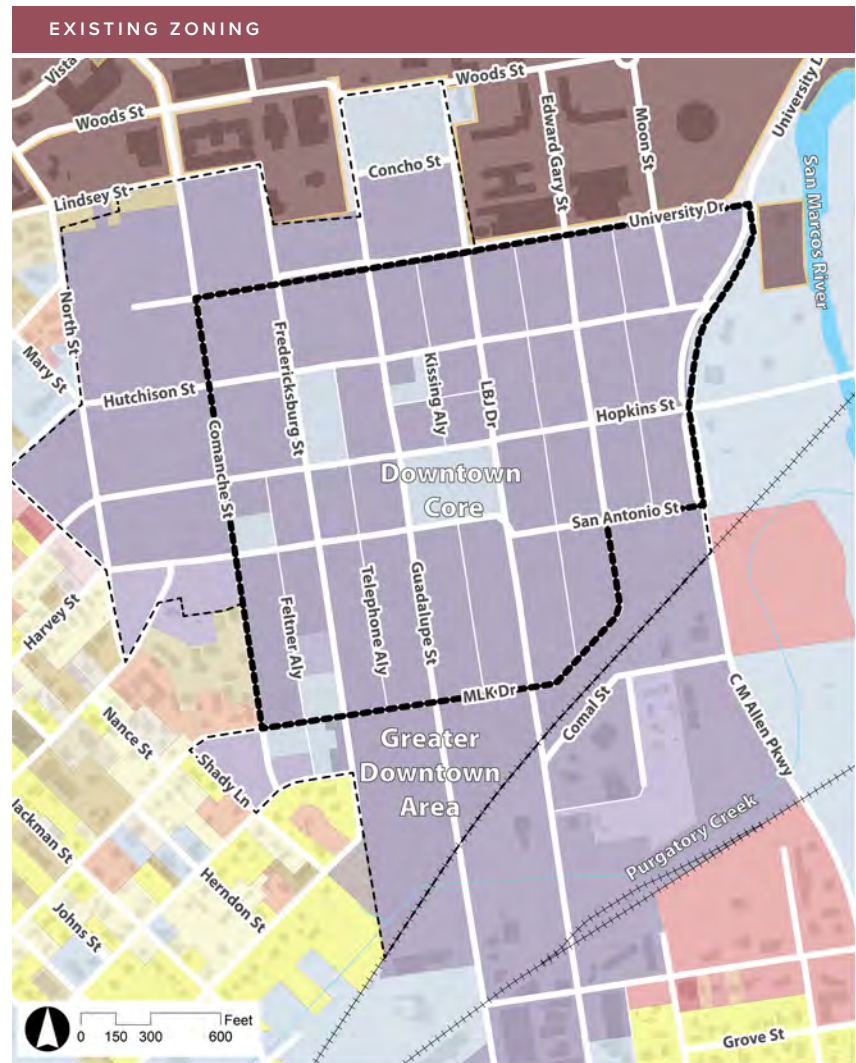


*Ford Jackman Building, 211 E Hutchison St*

# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## 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”. 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

Greater Downtown Area

Texas State University

Rivers and Creeks

Railroad

### Zoning Categories

P

CD-4

CD-5D\*

SF-4.5

SF-6

TH

MR

D

DR

MF-12

MF-18

MF-24

MU

NC

CC

GC

OP

LI



## CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

### PEDESTRIANS

Sidewalks in the Downtown Core are mostly continuous but do have several small gaps. 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.*



*Community members and staff walking on MLK Dr*



*Community members crossing LBJ Dr*

### BICYCLISTS & MICROMOBILITY

Dedicated bike facilities 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 in Chapter 4, Multimodal Connectivity & Parking, for existing and proposed bicycle facilities and connections.*



*Community members riding bikes on MLK Dr*



# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## TRANSIT

Downtown is served by both Texas State University 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 on the Courthouse Square, requiring walking a couple of blocks from transit to access the heart of Downtown. Two 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, 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 East Village (near the San Marcos High School), as well as connecting to Austin and San Antonio.



*Downtown E-Cab*



*Bus Stop in front of "Little" HEB, 200 W Hopkins St*

## 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 University owned paid parking garage which is open to the public. 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. In some cases, left turn pockets are helping to alleviate traffic congestion. An increase in vehicular traffic occurs Downtown during peak times. 2021 City of San Marcos traffic study daily 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. The park 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 University 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 nearby San Marcos River.



*Mobility Hub, 214 E Hutchison St*



*Downtown Music on the Square event*



*Eddie Durham Jazz Fest, Eddie Durham Park*



*Family walking on CM Allen Parkway*



# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## 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, religious institutions, and several performance and event venues.

Public art varies in style, medium, and theme, and 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.



*Cephas House, 213 W MLK Dr*



*San Marcos Farmers Market*



*Mermaid statue, 222 W San Antonio St*



*Concert in Kissing Alley*



*Old African American Baptist Church, 219 W MLK Dr*



## 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 by both City staff and stakeholders. Vandalism is frequent in Downtown and affects signage, public furnishings, tree grates, and landscaping. Litter is also prevalent. The City has been focusing on increasing cleanliness and beautification initiatives downtown and has added temporary staff to address issues. However, additional full-time staff and resources to keep up with repairs related to vandalism in addition to regular maintenance in the public right-of-way is an important need.

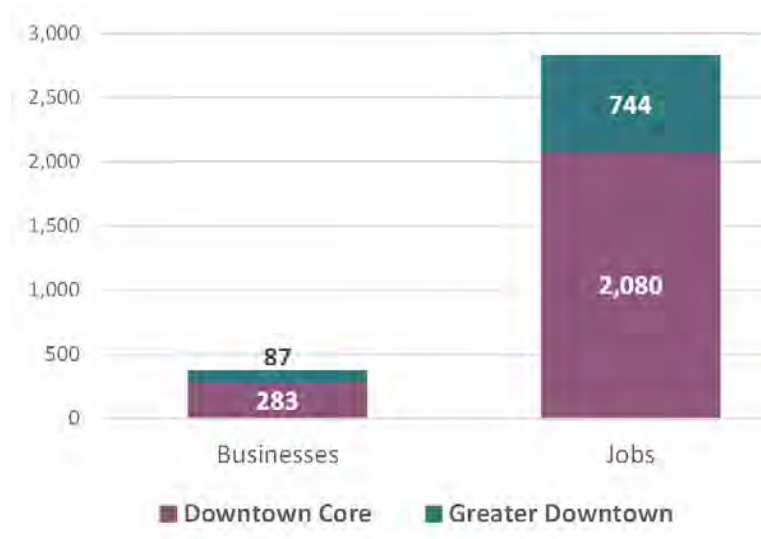


*Volunteers assisting with downtown maintenance*

## DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

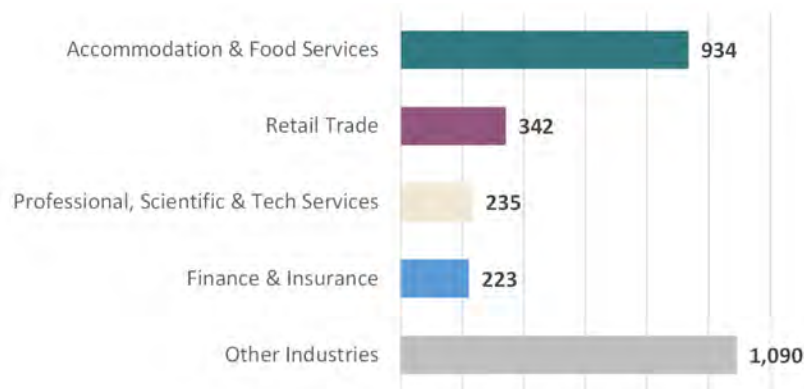
### EMPLOYMENT *Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022*

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 University, the San Marcos River and associated parks and open spaces, the cultural and historic attractions, and a variety of restaurants, bars, and shops.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

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. (Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022 and Economic & Planning Systems)



### CONSUMER SPENDING

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

- Permanent Residents living within one mile of Downtown: 25%
- Students living within one mile of Downtown: 16%
- Texas State University 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. (Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2022 and Economic & Planning Systems)



Old Soul Exchange, 123 S LBJ Dr



Vagabond, 320 N LBJ Dr



Root Cellar Cafe, 215 N LBJ Dr



## INVENTORY & VACANCIES

The Downtown Core has an inventory of 650,000 square feet of retail space and 250,000 square feet of office space (2022). Downtown retail space rents for an average of \$22.64 per square foot per year and office space rents for an average of \$14 per square foot per year.

There are several properties in Downtown that have been used by or could be leased to retail or office users but are currently vacant or unused. Students at Texas State University 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.

The Greater Downtown Area has no hotel uses other than a Bed and Breakfast located on West Hopkins Street. Additionally, in the Downtown Core, there are ten active Short Term Rental listings.

*Source: CoStar; Economic & Planning Systems.*



*S LBJ Dr*



*Hays County Annex Building, 102 N LBJ Dr*



*Ford Jackman Building, 211 Hutchison St*





# HIGHLIGHTS OF EXISTING CONDITION

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS AND PROGRAMS

The City's Economic Development Division and its partners support businesses Downtown through a variety of local, state, and federal 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, and Main Street Incentive Grant. Local programs offered include small business counseling, 1 Million Cups Greater SMTX, Downtown social media promotion and education, library workforce programs, business location services, and the City Liaison, the Main Street Manager, 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.



*Former Showplace Movie Theatre, 321 N LBJ Dr*

## TAX INCREMENT REINVESTMENT ZONE

The Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) is a Tax Increment Financing Fund (TIF) that was created in 2011. Projected revenue for fiscal year 2023 is \$2.3 million. The TIRZ board (made up of two City Council members, two County Commissioners, and one representative from the downtown business community) 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.



*City staff installing wayfinding signage downtown*

## 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).



*Downtown Area Plan Stakeholder Committee*



*Comments from a Downtown public engagement event*

### STRENGTHS

- History
- Character
- Natural Assets
- 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 child care centers, 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 Major Roads / Corridors
- Limited Parking
- Maintenance and Vandalism
- Lack of Well-Maintained Landscaping

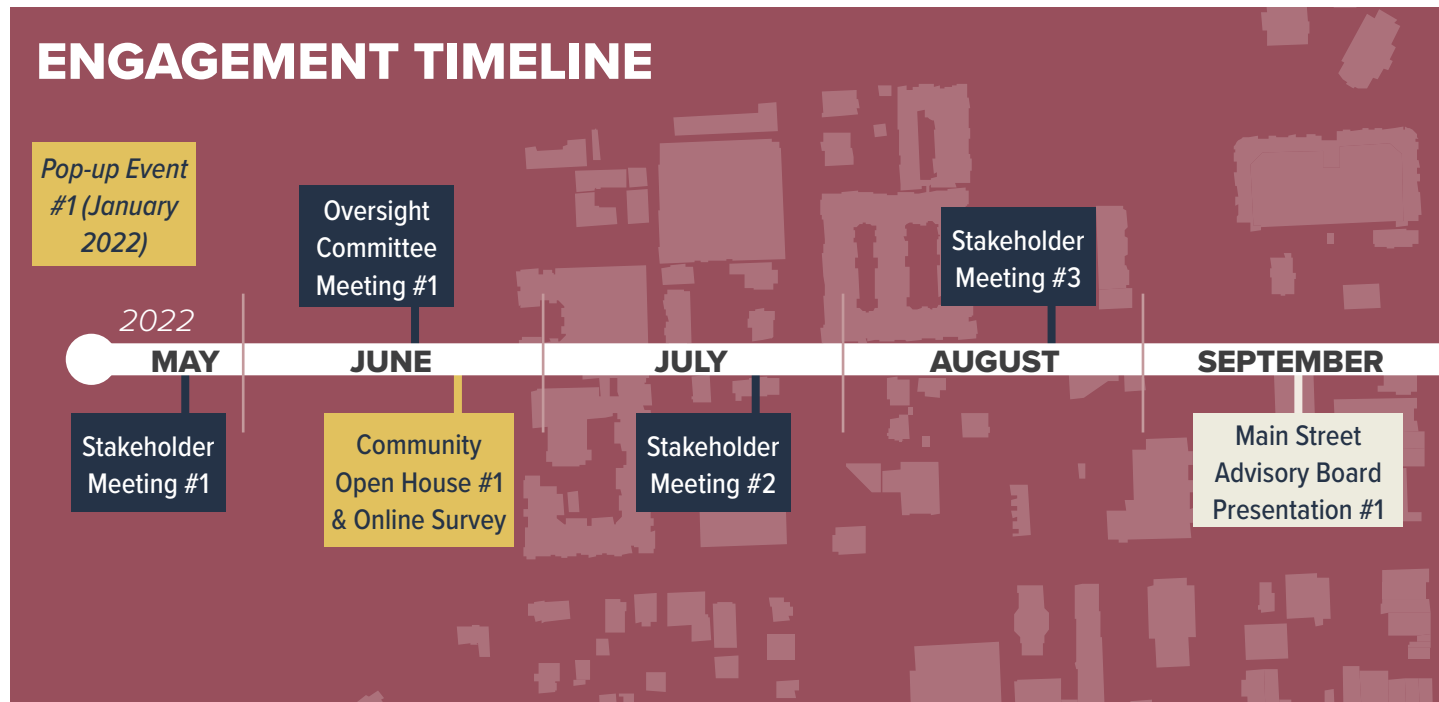
# 2

ENGAGEMENT



## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

To ensure this Downtown Area Plan reflects the needs of all Downtown stakeholders, several opportunities for input were provided, including 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 Comprehensive Plan’s public engagement goals, measures of success, and overall initiative to ensure that a diverse range of people participated in plan, were also used in the Downtown Area Plan 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, surrounding neighborhoods, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Association of 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 a key group that has provided guidance and feedback. Additionally, they have 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.



*Comments from a Downtown public engagement event*



*The project team touring downtown*



*City staff talking to community members at a Downtown Area Plan community workshop event.*



# ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

## STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Throughout 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.



Visual board of DSC comments

### 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, the project team 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.



Visual board of DSC comments



### STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE MEETING #3

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

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



### 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. The draft recommendations were developed by the project team based on past DSC meetings and community input at workshops and events. 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.



*Downtown Stakeholder Committee Meeting*

### 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. 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 respondents would like more plazas, and seating areas. Townhomes were the primary housing types that respondents would like in the area and respondents highlighted the need for a bookstore or natural food store.



*Photo of community members at a Downtown Community Workshop*



## 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.



*Photo of community members at a Downtown Community Workshop*

## 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.



*Community members at the pop-up event*

## 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.



*Eddie Durham Jazz Fest Pop-up event*

## FARMERS MARKET POP-UP EVENT

On January 21, 2023, 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.



*Farmers Market pop-up event*



## 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

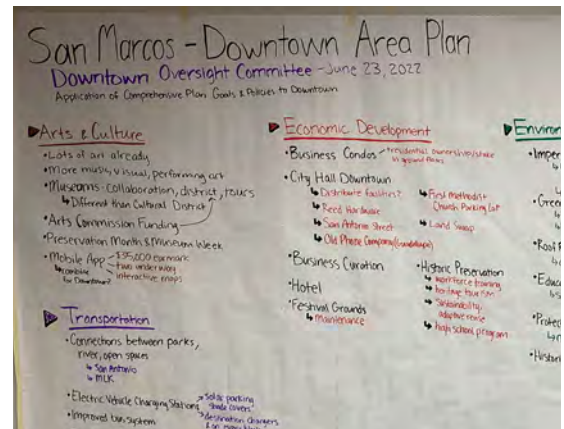


Photo of comments from Oversight Committee Meeting

### OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE #2

The Downtown Oversight Committee met on Thursday, January 19, 2023 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 to determine whether the plan aligned with the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan in development.





## **DOWNTOWN VISION STATEMENT**

San Marcos' vibrant Downtown is the 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, demonstrates 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 ages and walks of life with a greater diversity of shops, restaurants, housing, and employment options.**



**Provide an inclusive, welcoming, safe place for people of all ages, incomes, abilities, religious beliefs, and cultures.**



**Promote a vibrant and thriving Downtown through local business support, fostering of 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.**



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



**Educate about, reflect on, respect, 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.**



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



# OPPOR- TUNITIES



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 media, 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 looped trail that is branded with consistent signage and markers to elevate historical and cultural assets.
- Collaborate with Texas State University 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, and traffic calming. This is done by installing street trees or canopies/awnings to provide shade for pedestrians and installing on-street lighting such as pedestrian light poles or lights on intersection traffic poles.
- 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, continue the on-going effort to integrate the municipal bus with Texas State Bobcat Shuttle in Downtown.
- Implement the adopted 2018 Parking Program Framework Plan which provides a comprehensive and strategic approach to managing parking in the downtown area.
- Create a Downtown Parking Benefit District to manage public parking demand and invest parking revenues to implement and fund parking initiatives downtown.
- Increase safety and placemaking through intersection redesigns throughout Downtown.

## PUBLIC SPACES AND 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.
- Develop and strategy for sustainable maintenance of public spaces and amenities to discourage vandalism and increase safety.



*Downtown Music in the Park event*

## 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 the 100 and 200 blocks of East San Antonio Street as a flexible street easily closeable to cars for events and periodic pedestrian days or seasons.



*Hutchison St streetscape*

## 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.
- Explore City-provided support for housing ownership opportunities.



*165 S Guadalupe Street*

## FOSTERING SMALL BUSINESSES

- Pursue strategies to continue to support vitality of small and local businesses, especially those which are owned by minority or other historically-underserved entities, in permitting, renovation/upkeep, and access to entrepreneur and business education programs.
- Establish a clear role of the City in cultivating downtown business and identifying opportunities to increase business diversity. This could include the City analyzing what business types are missing downtown and using a recruitment or attraction strategy to help those businesses locate in downtown.
- Collaborate with the University to strategize about retaining talent post-graduation to bolster Downtown's economic diversity and skilled labor force.



*Pho Tran 88, 212 N LBJ Drive*

## 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.



*North Street Curry Shop, 216 North St*

## OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance 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.



*CM Allen Parkway rain garden*





**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 residents 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 western edges of Downtown, support diverse housing types (e.g. townhomes, duplexes, etc.) to transition/buffer Downtown from existing neighborhoods while also providing housing options to those who desire to live downtown.
- A.6. Incentivize affordable for sale- and rental housing units.
- A.7. Streamline development processes and development code amendments for recommended housing types.
- A.8. Pursue strategies to increase home ownership opportunities in residential building types such as condos, townhomes, cottage courts, single-family homes in Downtown for low to medium income households.
- A.9. Pursue updates to/adoption of the Housing 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 and many are identified below such as grocery services, but the list of amenities below should be prioritized and/or maintained to promote quality of life for Downtown residents. *(Recommendation A.1)*

- Groceries and fresh/healthy food options
  - The “Little” HEB and Target are both located downtown and the community identified them as a key service that should be maintained over the lifetime of this Plan.
- Parks and public gathering spaces
  - Several existing parks exist in downtown including the Courthouse Lawn, Mobility Hub, and Eddie Durham Park. Enhancements to these parks and the addition of other pocket parks is an opportunity in the future.
- Child care centers, early childhood development centers, and children’s play areas
  - The United Methodist Church offers childcare services, however, expanded childcare services and children’s play areas would help make downtown more inviting to families.
- Health care and pharmacies
  - The “Little” HEB and the Downtown Target both have existing pharmacies. An Urgent Care exists at the corner of Hutchison and Guadalupe Street. Additional health care and pharmacy services are desired.
- Well-maintained public realm
  - Continual maintenance of the public realm should be a priority downtown.



*Mural in Kissing Alley*



*Family riding bike on S LBJ Drive*



*Wayfinding signs on N LBJ Drive*

- Daily services such as post office, laundromats, financial services, and a variety of restaurants
  - Downtown has a variety of these services and additional diversity/ options are desired.
- Shopping such as clothing, shoes, general goods, bookstore, and hardware
  - Downtown has a variety of these services and additional diversity/ options are desired, including a book store.

**Transportation-related improvements** such as traffic calming, pedestrian connections, bicycle network, frequent/reliable/convenient transit service, and parking management should be priorities. 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*)



*San Marcos Bus*



*Community members on Bike to Work Day*



# DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

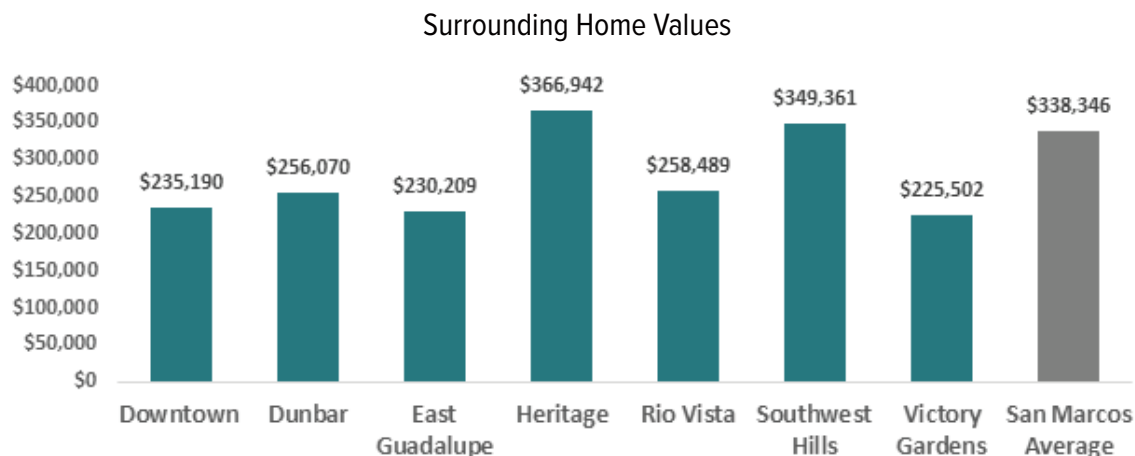
## AFFORDABILITY *(Recommendation A.7)*

### For-Sale Housing

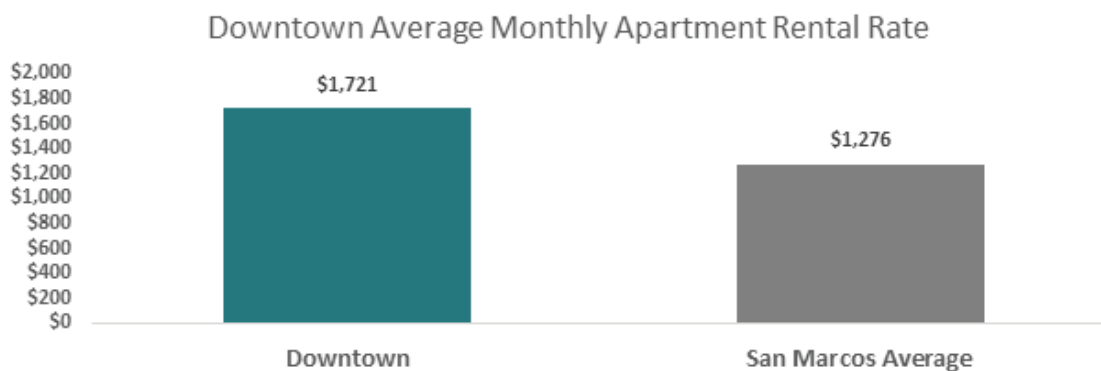
The Downtown area lacks many existing for-sale housing options. For-sale homes in and around Downtown have values at or below the city-wide average. However, based on the Draft Strategic Housing Action Plan (2019), one of San Marcos' housing needs is for an ownership option below \$200,000.

### 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 Q2 (April-June) 2022



Data source: CoStar Q2 (April-June) 2022



## 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 home 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)*

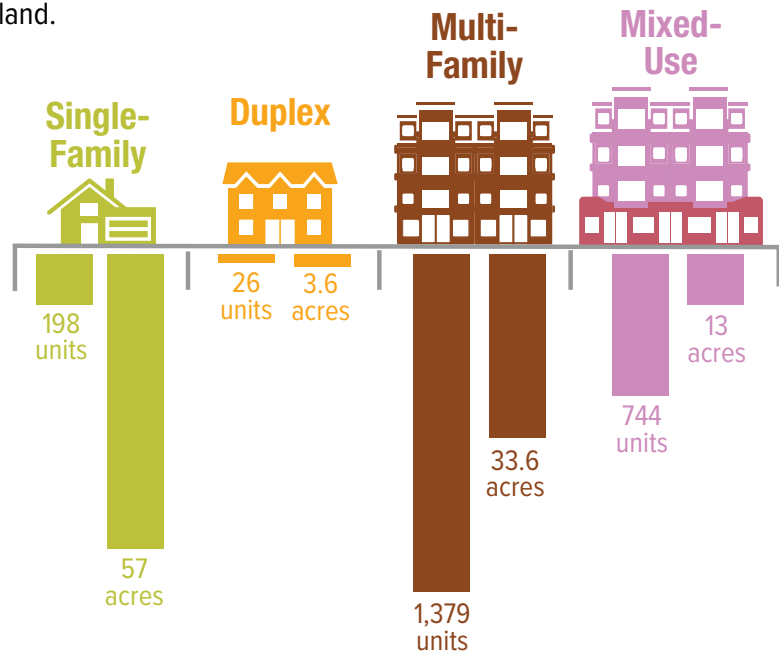
- Density and regulatory bonuses (e.g. parking requirements, height restrictions, density caps) for inclusion of affordable housing units or other desired projects in Downtown
- Owner occupied unit rehabilitation support programs and expansion of low-income home maintenance fund
- Enhanced code enforcement to address problem properties
- Infill housing incentives for attracting for-sale housing product types such as townhomes and condos
- Expand down-payment assistance for homebuyers

# DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

## HOUSING OPTIONS

Existing housing unit estimates within one-half mile of the Historic Courthouse are represented in the graphic below. The majority of existing housing units in this area are multi-family or mixed-use (90%), but single family parcels take up 18% more land.

Data in this section is only an estimate based on available City GIS 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 western edges of Downtown, diverse housing types should be supported to transition/buffer Downtown from existing neighborhoods while also providing housing options to those who desire to live downtown. Diverse housing types include accessory dwelling units (ADUs), multiplexes, and townhomes.

*Examples of Diverse Housing Types:*



*Townhomes*



*Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)*



*Quadplex*





## DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS *(Recommendation A.7)*

To promote the development of recommended housing types in Downtown, 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






- Analyze reducing parking requirements for commercial uses
- 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 small-scale diverse housing types and 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. New development should contribute positively 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. 
- B.3. Attract development desired by the community through the use of incentives 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 in accordance with the Development Code and Design Manual. 
- 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. Consider vacancy abatement strategies through ordinance updates such as a vacant building registration or minimum standards of care and vacancy fees.





# 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. Downtown architectural design standards currently exist in the Development Code and Design Manual.

### 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:

- 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



*Example photos demonstrating various building design elements*

### 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
- Clear and well-defined addresses for units at residential entrances
- Lighting



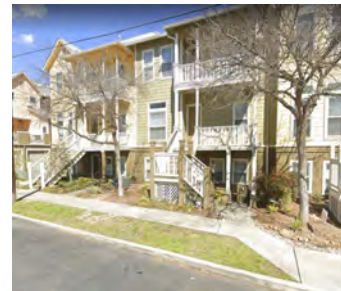
*Example photos of residential ground floors with key design elements*

### 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 the Texas State University campus.

#### Key Design Elements:

- Defined entryways along the primary street and below ground by 1/2 story
- Minimum transparency of windows to allow natural light in the building
- Clear and well-defined addresses for units at residential entrances
- Lighting



*Example photos of garden-level residential buildings with key design elements*

### OFFICE/ PROFESSIONAL:

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

#### Key Design Elements:

- 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.



*Example photos of office buildings with key design elements*

## 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.





*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 conceptual ideas to provide predictability of public sentiment and streamline development process
- Refine the conceptual idea for these sites in partnership with existing property owners
- Purchase properties and partner with developer or entity through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) to implement the conceptual idea
- Provide incentives for property owners or developers interested in implementing concept (ie: expedited permitting, reduced fees, modified site/zoning requirements, etc.)







*Example photos of infill development*



# 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 diverse housing types, often referred to as “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.



*Example photos of diverse housing types (often referred to as Missing Middle housing)*

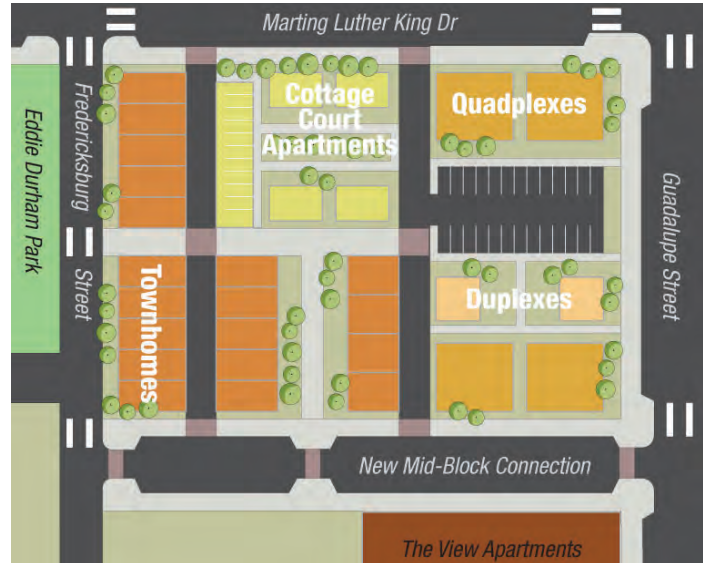




Existing Conditions



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.



*Example photos of an open-air marketplace / food hall*

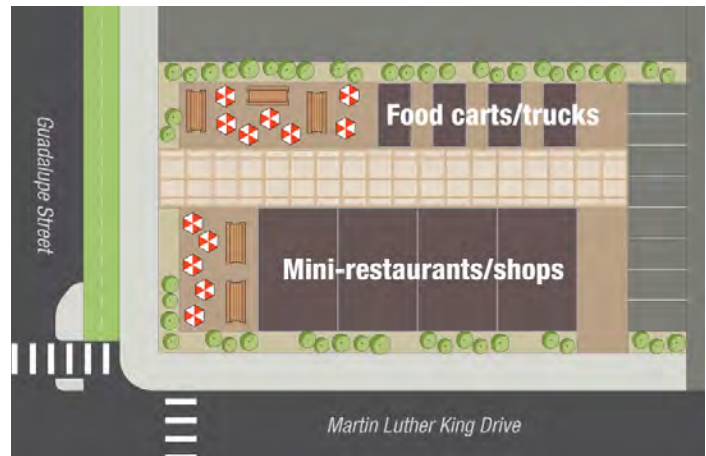




*Existing Conditions*



*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.



*Example photos of vertical mixed use buildings*

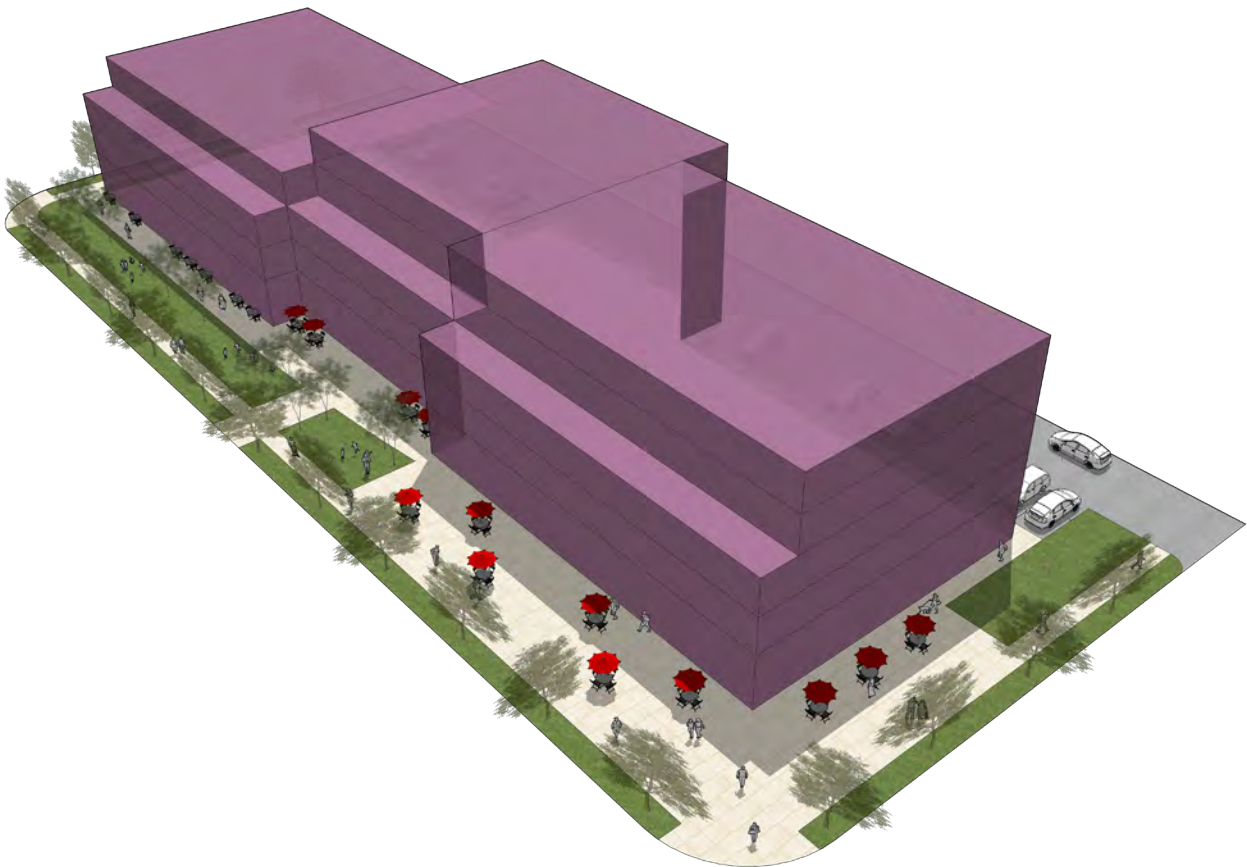
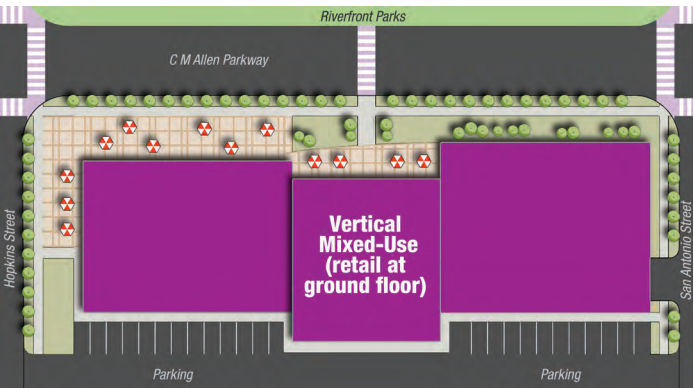




Existing Condition



Conceptual Illustrations



# BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

## CM ALLEN PARKWAY DISTRICT

(Recommendation B.4)

A “CM Allen Parkway District” could be established with the intent of preserving the natural environment along the San Marcos River while better utilizing land across the street. This interface is an opportunity for green stormwater infrastructure to protect Downtown from flooding and protect the river from polluted stormwater runoff. This district can provide a better transition and connection between Downtown and the River Parks. The below image shows the River Parks east of CM Allen Parkway, the area to be preserved and celebrated, and the Downtown Transition west of CM Allen Parkway which could redevelop to improve the connection to Downtown.

### River Parks

The east side of CM Allen Parkway is outside of the Downtown Area Plan boundary, but it is important to acknowledge as part of the valuable public riverside park system. This side of the street should be preserved as open/ park space to equitably serve a growing population, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to include green stormwater infrastructure for both flood mitigation and water quality benefits. The City should seek grant funding or other financially responsible methods to fulfill this need for its residents. This district would ensure the preservation and celebration of the San Marcos River and adjacent green spaces, crown jewels of the community.

### Downtown Transition

Most properties that front the west side of CM Allen Parkway include surface parking lots and older, one-story structures, some of which have vehicular drive thrus or are fully dedicated to a surface parking lot. These older properties do not meet current codes and significantly contrast both the positive pedestrian experience that is achieved closer to the Downtown Core and the greenspace across the street. Key design considerations of the west side of the CM Allen District would include:

- Opportunity for mixed use buildings given distance from single-family neighborhoods
- Open/green spaces between buildings enhancing the transition between Downtown and the River Parks
- Buildings that incorporate public plaza space adjacent to the street.
- Ground floor commercial oriented towards the street and the River Parks which encourage visitors to downtown.
- Enhanced mid-block crossings across CM Allen Parkway for safety.
- “Parkways” or well-landscaped streets and signage to aid in wayfinding and connectivity between the River Parks and Downtown
- Implementation of green building design characteristics on new development such as green roofs.







Existing Conditions



Conceptual Illustration



Painted crosswalk



Park Place, Leawood, KS



San Jacinto Plaza, El Paso, TX



The Pearl, San Antonio, TX



Imagination Alley, Cincinnati, OH



Mary Elizabeth Branch Park, Austin, TX

# BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

## 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.
- With over 32,000 square feet of event space, the Embassy Suites San Marcos Hotel and Conference Center is the only hotel with a sizable amount of event 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 (2023)*



## 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.



*University of Colorado Hotel and Conference Center*

### 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



*Metro State University Hotel & Hospitality Learning Center*

### 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



*The Thomas Hotel*
















# 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. 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. Prioritize bicycles, transit, and other multimodal options 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. Continue to collaborate with Texas State University 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, created by a local community group, as a guide for construction of green alleys and their locations. 
- C.10. Require adequate parking to support existing uses and projected growth in Downtown. New parking could consist of new parking garages, satellite lots, and on-street parking.
- C.11. Consider adopting the On-Street Paid Parking Program Implementation Plan.
- C.12. Establish a parking benefit district to generate revenue and utilize this revenue to implement and fund parking initiatives downtown.
- C.13. Ensure adequate traffic flow for vehicles in Downtown while slowing down traffic to prioritize other modes of transportation such as promoting multimodal transportation, using the traffic light system, and traffic calming installations.
- 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. Implementation of these recommendations should coordinate with the Transportation Master Plan, Transit Plan and planned Transit Plaza on Edward Gary Street.

### POTENTIAL TRANSIT STOP LOCATIONS ON COURTHOUSE SQUARE

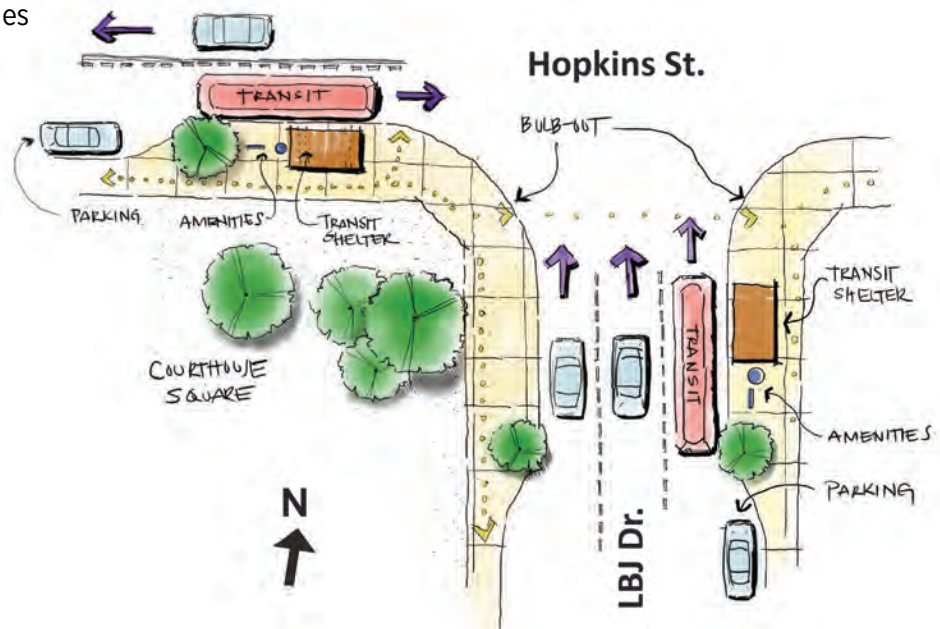
Despite the planned transit plaza, on Edward Gary Street between University Drive and Hutchison Street, convenient transit access is not provided immediately adjacent to the Courthouse Square in the heart of Downtown. The diagram below illustrates potential transit stop locations on and adjacent to the 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 southeast 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.





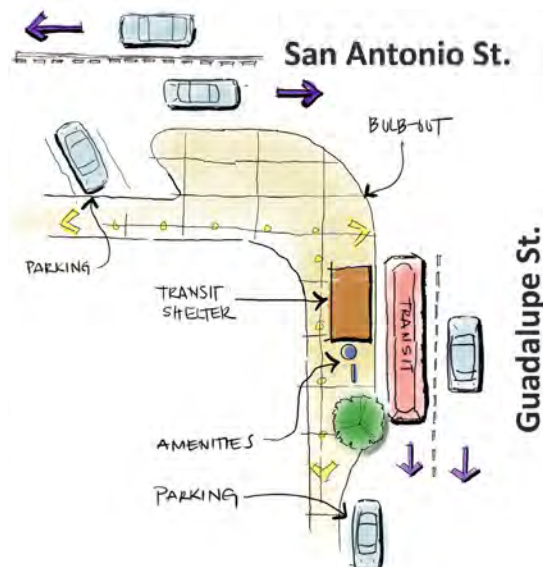
### Potential Transit Stops at Hopkins Street & LBJ Drive

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*

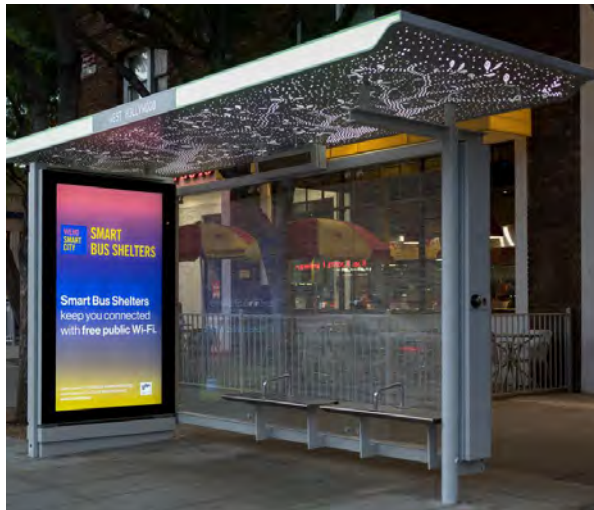


*Secure bike parking and seating*





*Typical existing transit stop*



*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)*

Over the past few years, the City has striped several on-street parking spaces in Downtown, implemented an e-cab shuttle, and partnered with local businesses to contribute funds for a downtown business employee parking lot. The City of San Marcos adopted a 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

- Seek Opportunities to Expand Parking Supply
- Create & Empower Parking Management Organization
- Establish Parking Benefit District(s) to generate revenue
- Manage On-Street Parking More Efficiently
- Connect Parking Management & Economic Development
- Embrace Parking as Mobility Management

### Additional Action Items

- Continue to invest in Parking Management Technology
- Program Branding & Marketing
- Continue to 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 review as of the date of this plan (2023) 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



*Edward Gary Street Parking Garage*



*Downtown San Marcos*

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 to implement and fund parking initiatives. This funding source would be a tool to implement many of the recommendations of the Downtown Area Plan.

# MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

## COMPLETE MULTIMODODAL 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 the safety of pedestrians should be prioritized on all streets, bicyclists, transit riders, and other micromobility users should be prioritized on specific streets.

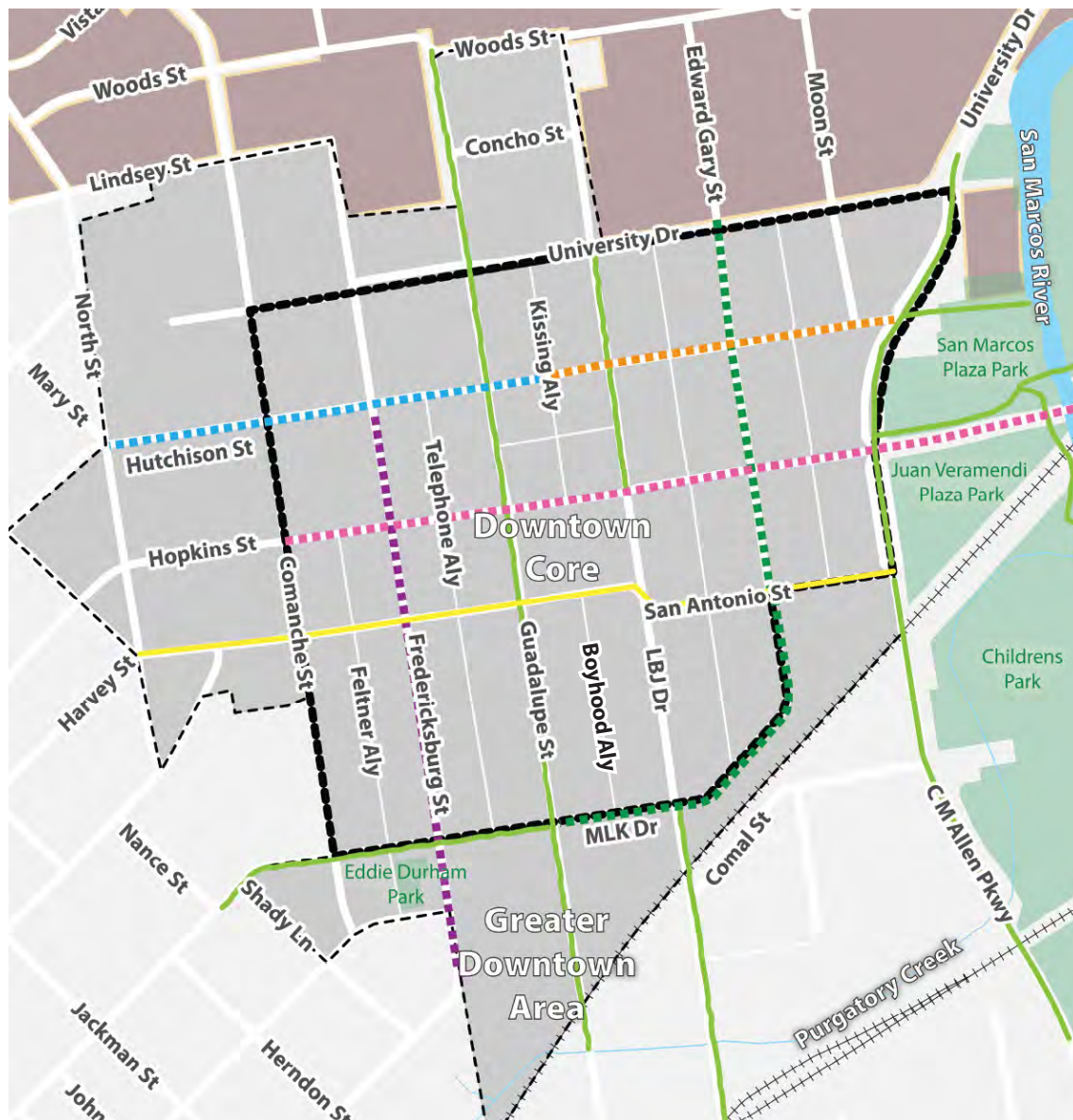
The map on the next page identifies priority routes for new/improved bike facilities. Priority routes are focused on connecting the bicycle network and include areas where bike facilities are missing or in poor condition. New and improved bike facilities shall be provided to complete a network rather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



*Example photos of downtown bike lanes*



## FUTURE BICYCLE NETWORK MAP



## Legend

- |  |                        |  |  |
|--|------------------------|--|--|
|  | Downtown Core          |  | Existing Bike Facility   |
|  | Greater Downtown Area  |  | Existing Sharrow   |
|  | Texas State University |  | Proposed Expanded Bike Network   |
|  | Railroad               |  | Proposed Priority/Improved Bike Facility Based on Transportation Master Plan |
|  | Streets                |  | Proposed Hutchison Street Multi-Use Path (long-term implementation)          |
|  | River and Creeks       |  | Proposed Hutchison Street Multi-Use Path (short-term implementation)         |
|  | Parks                  |  |  |

# MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

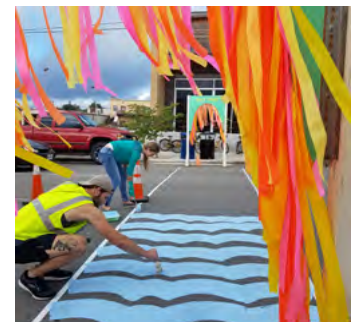
## SIDEWALKS *(Recommendation C.3)*

The map on the next page illustrates priorities for new and improved sidewalks. 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.



*Sidewalk conditions in downtown San Marcos*

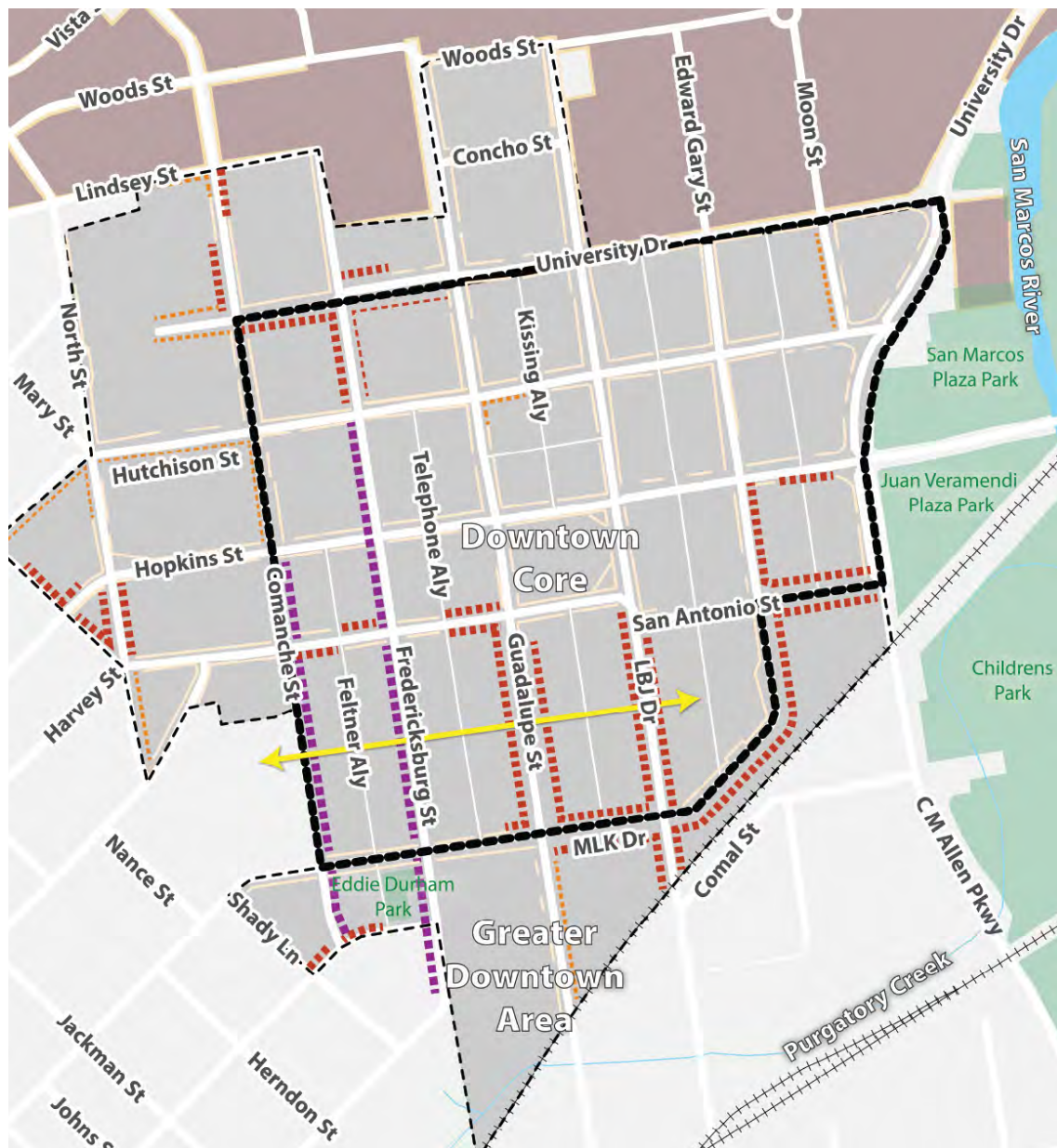
## MID-BLOCK CROSSING EXAMPLES *(Recommendation C.6)*



*Examples of mid-block crossings*



FUTURE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK MAP



Legend

- Downtown Core
- Greater Downtown Area
- Railroad
- Streets
- River and Creeks
- Parks

Future Pedestrian Network

- Existing Sidewalk
- Priority New/Improved Sidewalks
- Additional Missing Sidewalks
- Shared Street
- New Mid-Block Connections and Crossings



# 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 and 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. The below names of Alleys are identified in the Green Alley initiative, however, many alleys will be renamed by the City as part of future efforts. Many alleys will be named after movies filmed in San Marcos.



### 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 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.



*Example of a painted sidewalk*



*Example of a stamped concrete sidewalk*







# **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.

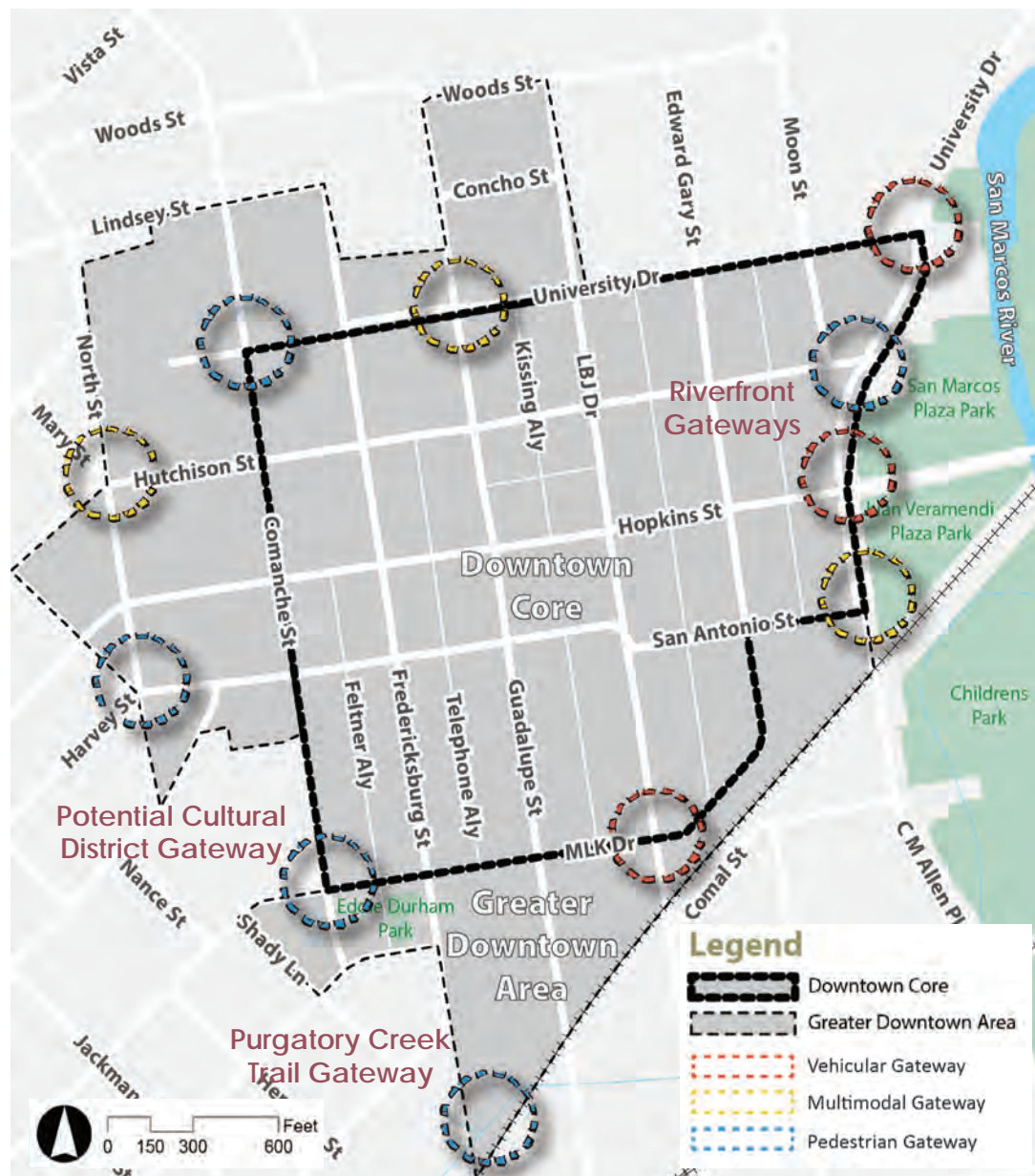
- D.1. Create coordinated efforts for infrastructure improvements that also include streetscape improvements that achieve the Downtown Area Plan vision.
- D.2. Pursue priority streetscape improvements for Guadalupe, Edward Gary Street, South LBJ Drive, MLK Drive, and Hutchison Street.
- D.3. Design and 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 CM Allen Parkway to allow for easy street closures to cars during special events and/or at select times of the week/year with considerations to traffic on S LBJ Drive.
- 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 amenities, and materials, and recommended plant 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. 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 let drivers know they are entering a distinct place. These can often include larger signs adjacent to or above streets.



*Vehicular gateway examples*

## 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.



*Multimodal gateway examples*

## 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.



*Pedestrian gateway examples*



# PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

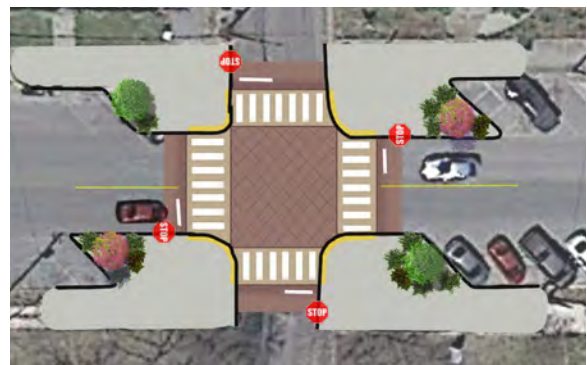
## INTERSECTIONS *(Recommendation D.8)*

The City should continue to evaluate 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. 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. 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



*Examples of sidewalk bulb-outs*

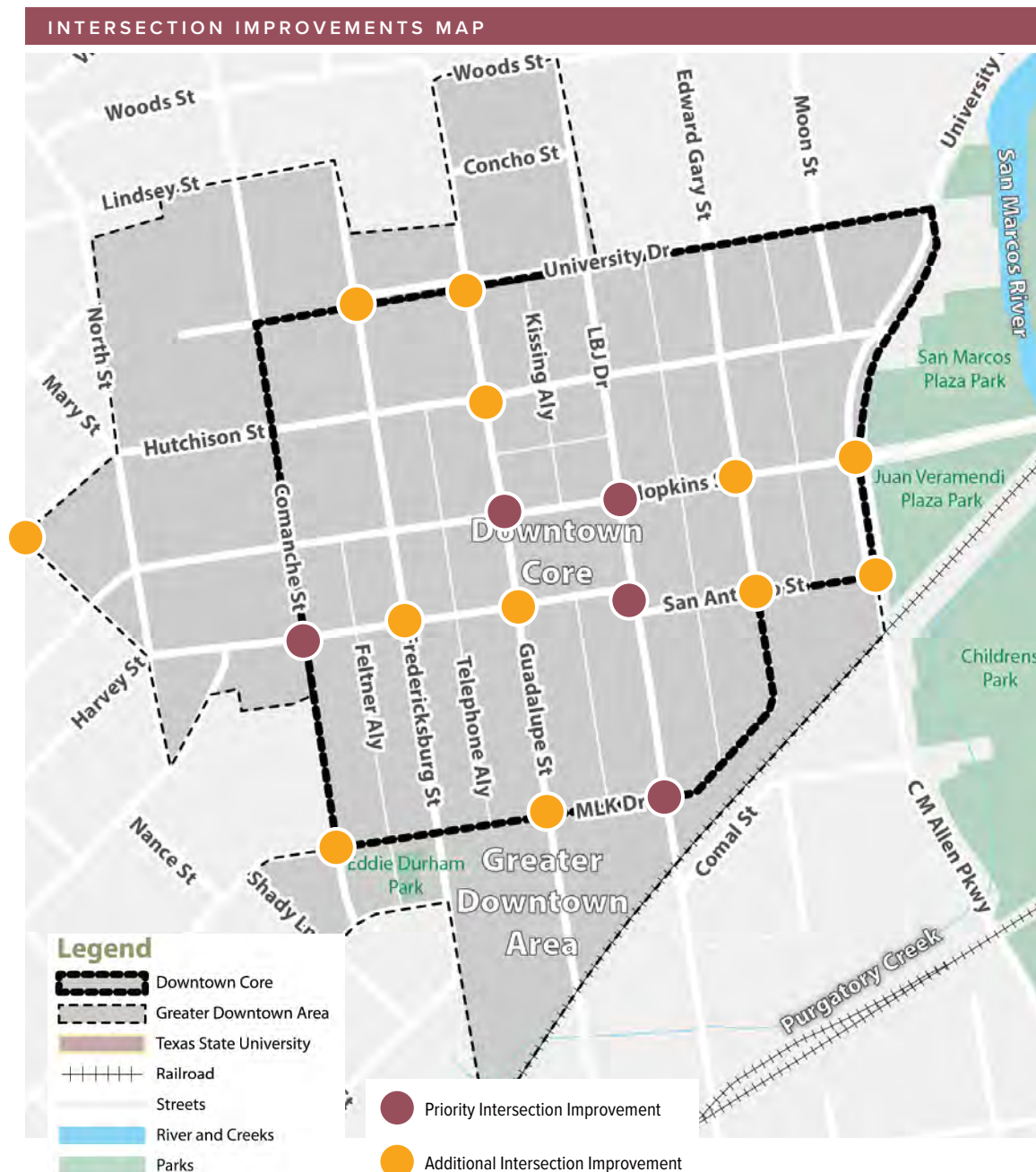
### SAN ANTONIO STREET & LBJ DRIVE

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

- Study the traffic pattern at the intersection of San Antonio Street and LBJ Drive to improve traffic 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 multiple 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 toward the river. It should be easy to 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 duration and size of the event.



*Flexible street examples*



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.





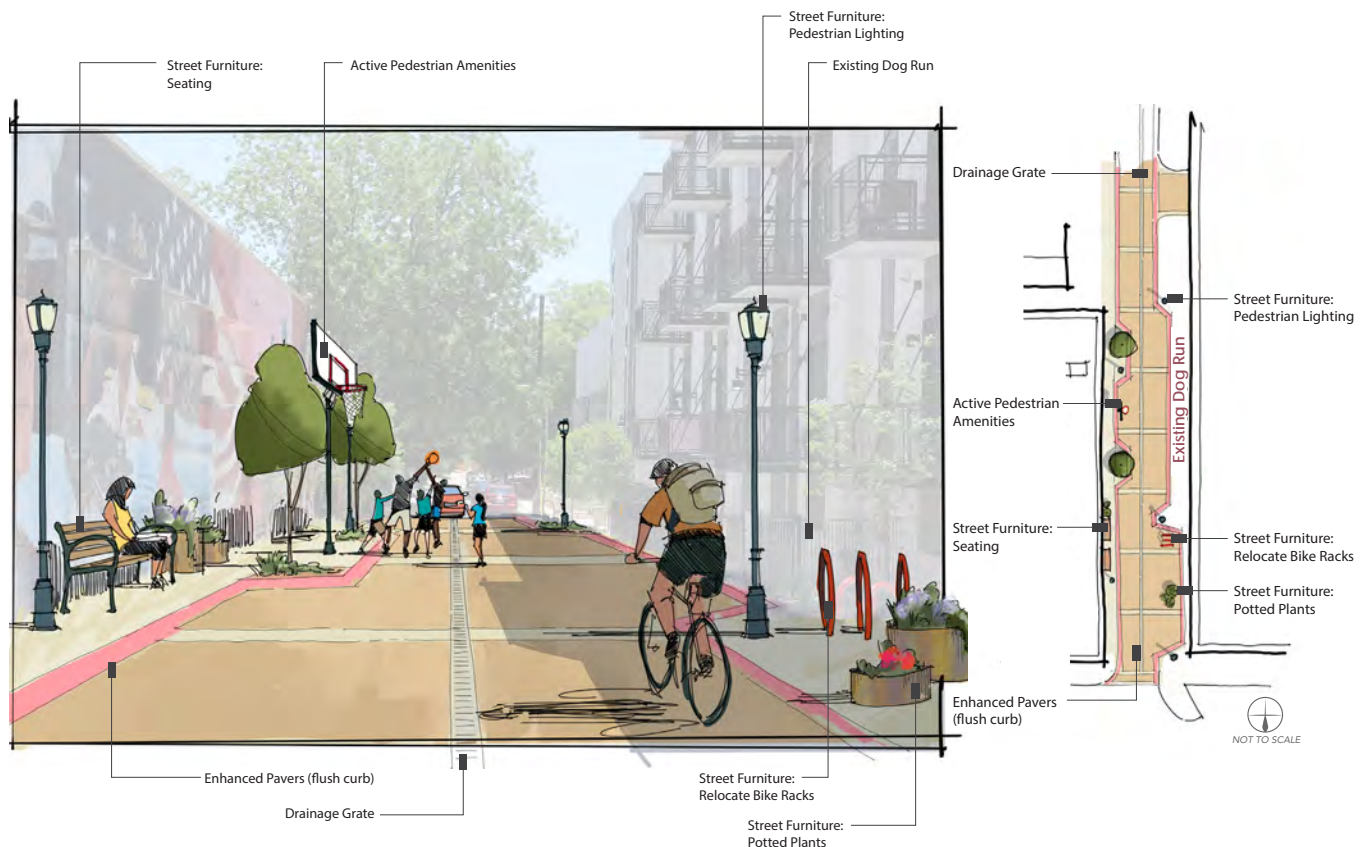
## SHARED STREETS *(Recommendation D.3)*

### FREDERICKSBURG STREET AND COMANCHE STREET

Fredericksburg Street (from Hopkins Street to MLK Drive) and Comanche Street (from San Antonio Street to MLK Drive) are good candidates for shared streets given their narrow rights-of-way of 20-30 feet. A shared street is a street designed to slow traffic and treat all users equally while providing safe, shared, active space. San Marcos' first shared street was recently installed on Fredericksburg Street south of San Antonio Street just east of The Parlor apartment building. The graphic below shows how that shared street can be improved and serve as a prototype for the remainder of the street as well as certain green alleys.



*Shared Street example*



# 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.

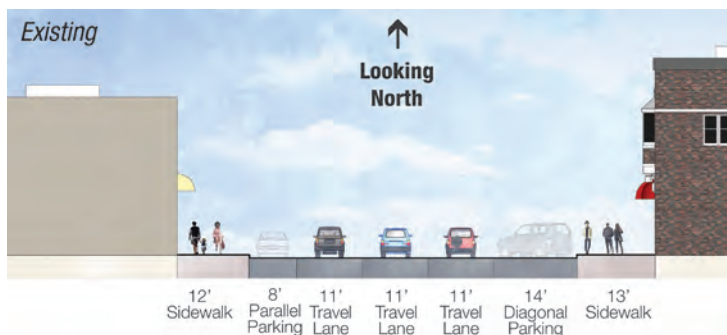


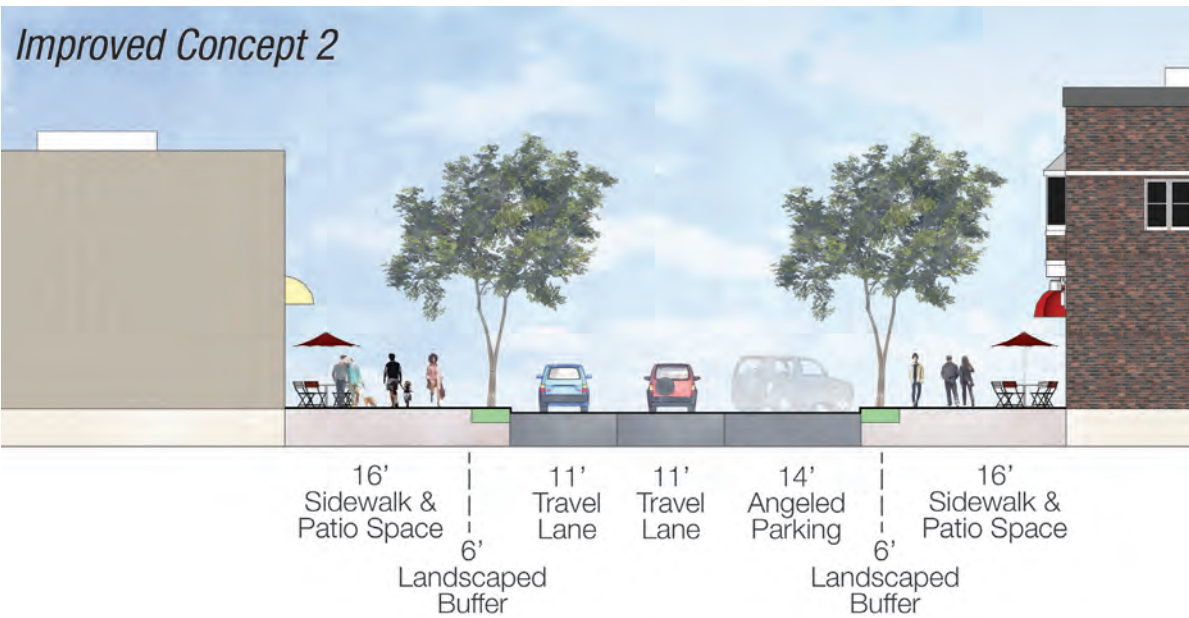
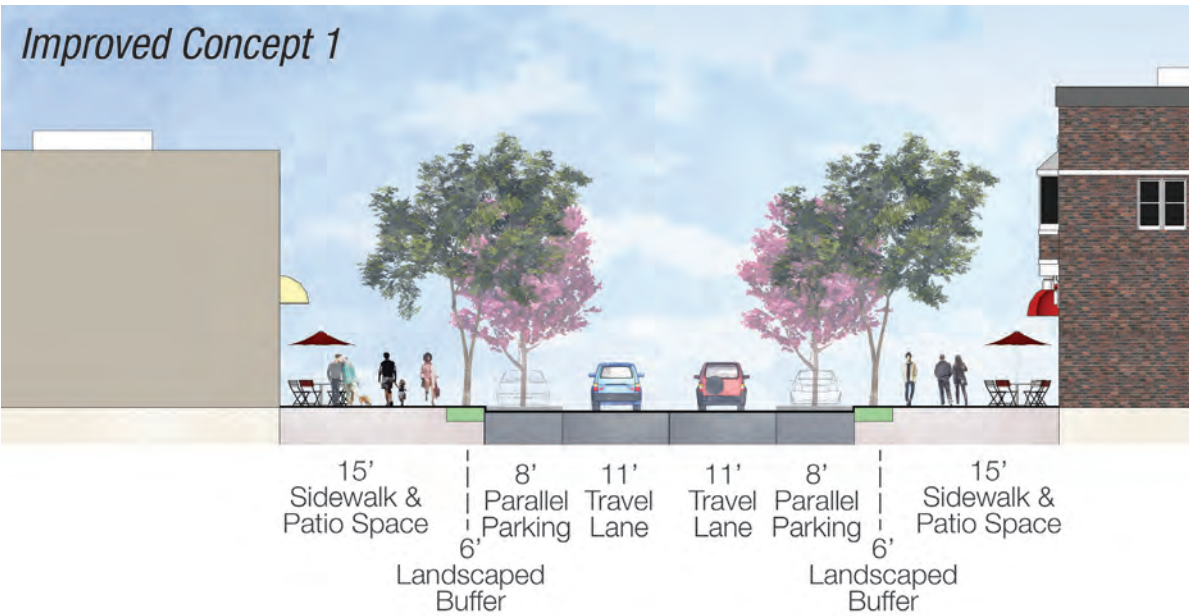
### 1 SOUTH LBJ DRIVE *(MLK Dr to San Antonio St)*

**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

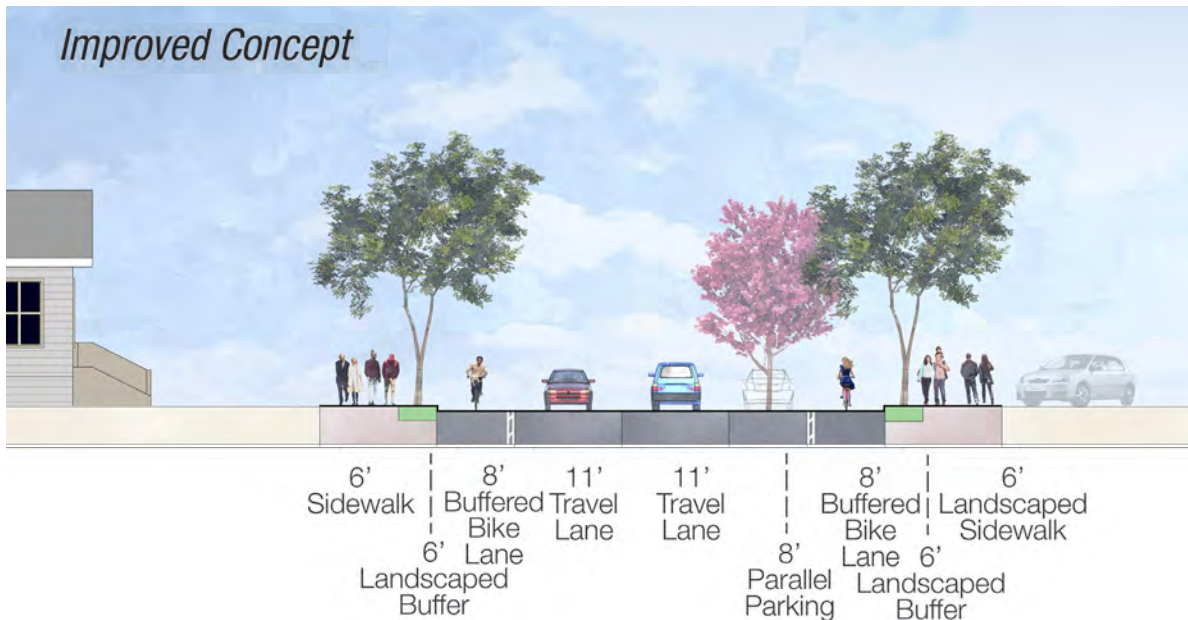
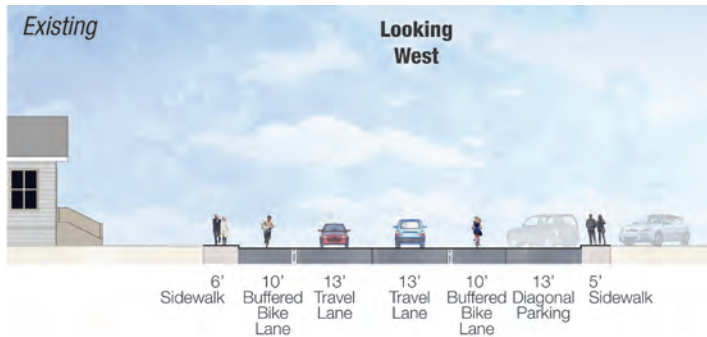


## 2 MLK DRIVE (Comanche St to LBJ Dr)

**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



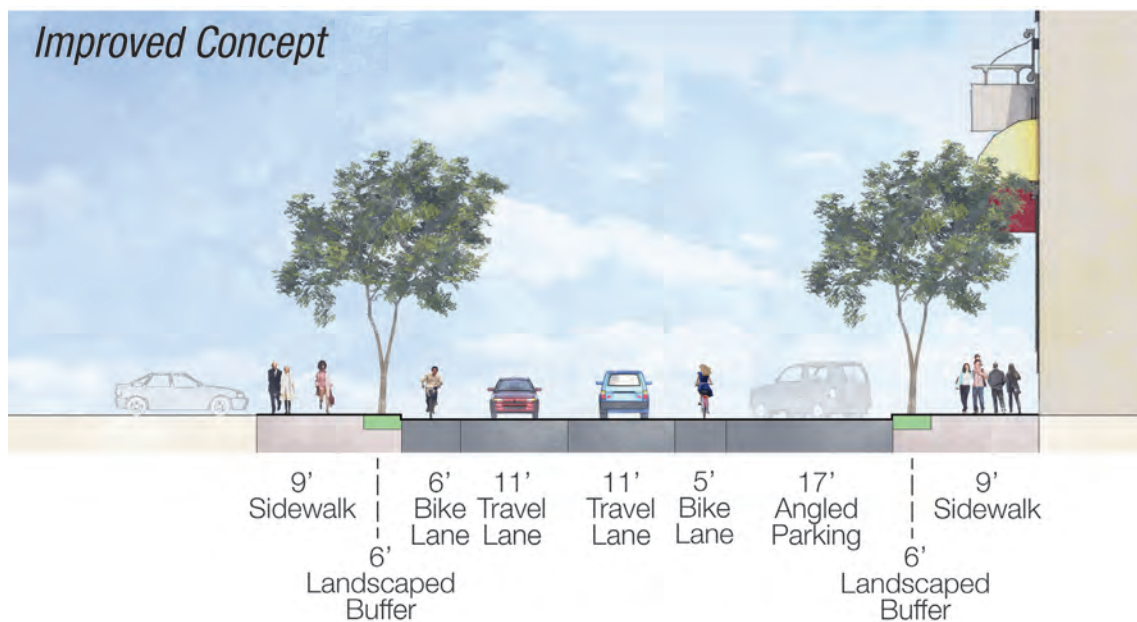
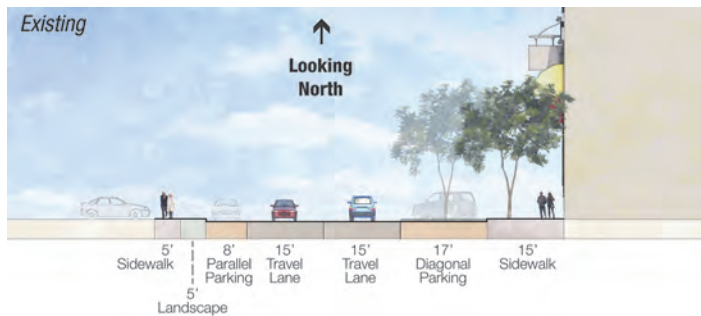


### 3 EDWARD GARY STREET (Hopkins St to Hutchison St)

**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

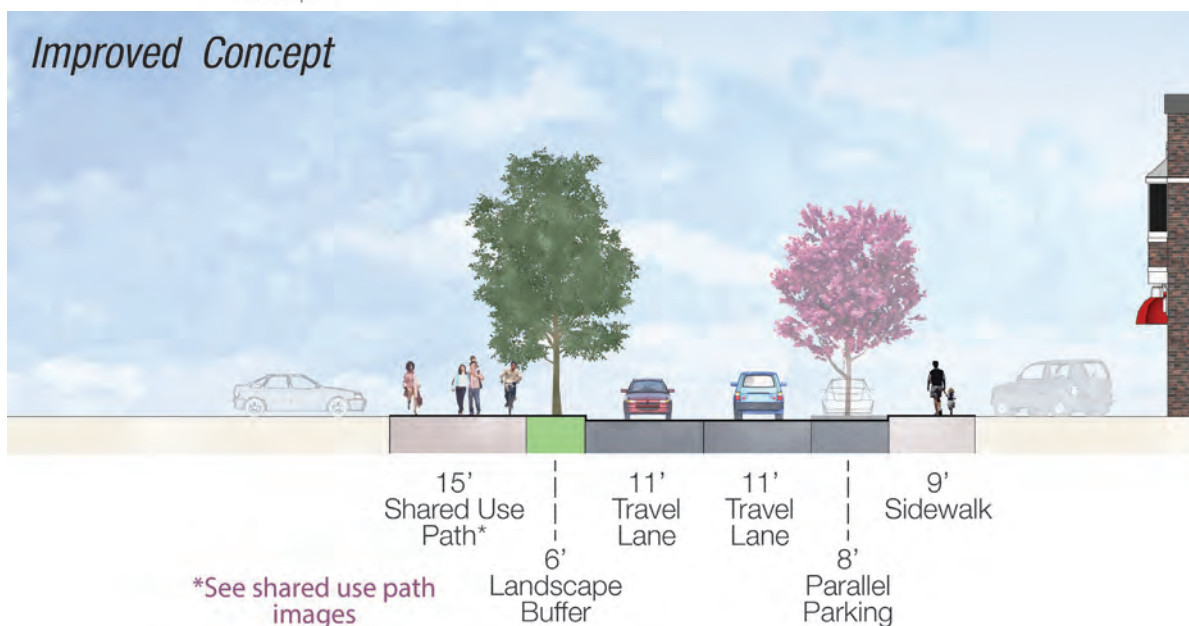
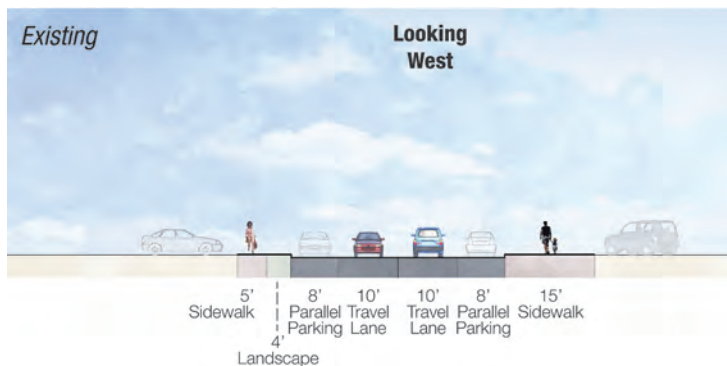


## 4 HUTCHISON STREET

**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 shared street 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.



*Indianapolis Cultural Trail*







*Shared Use Path in Boulder, CO*

# **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. Prioritize additional building elements that provide shade such as canopies, awnings, or other creative artistic sculptures which provide shade in places where additional trees may not be feasible due to hydraulic or drainage concerns.
- 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. Create better connection from 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 additional 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. Provide the community's priority desired amenities throughout Downtown in existing and new parks, plazas, and parklets to better serve a broader demographic in Downtown.
- 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 acceptable water quality. This requires 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 and could be installed where feasible. 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

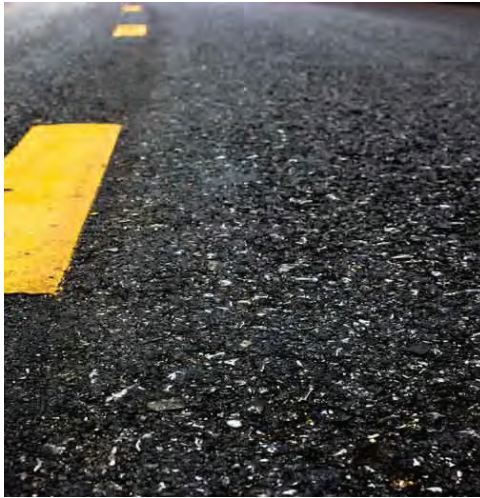
#### Cons:

- 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 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

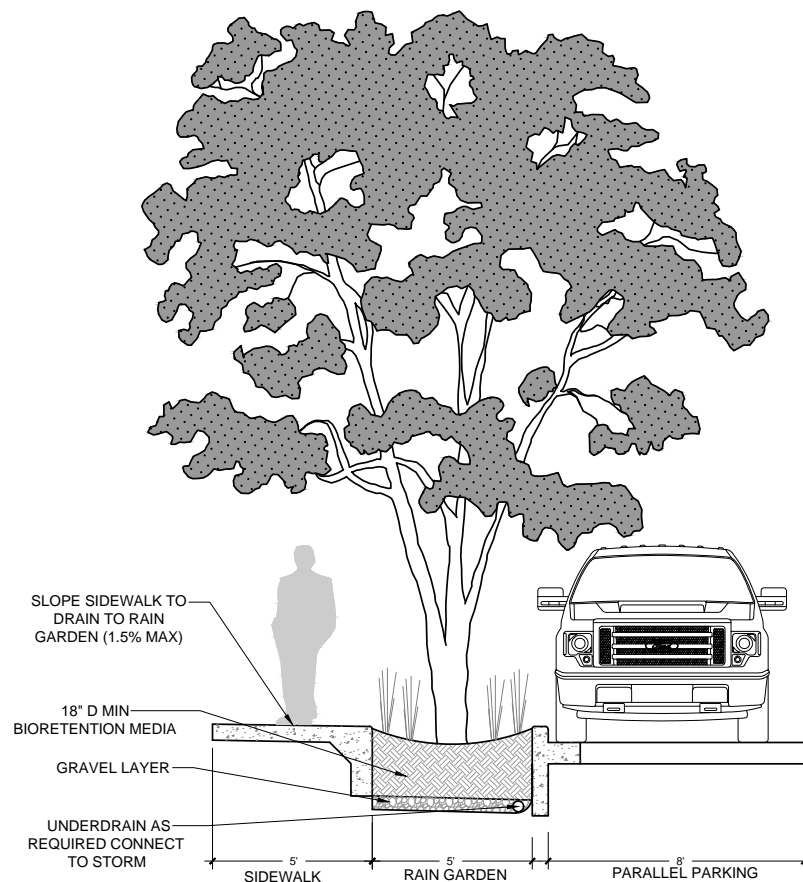
# PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

## 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. The City has installed rain gardens and water quality features along CM Allen that have been successful and well-received by the community. Additional similar enhancements are recommended throughout Downtown.

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

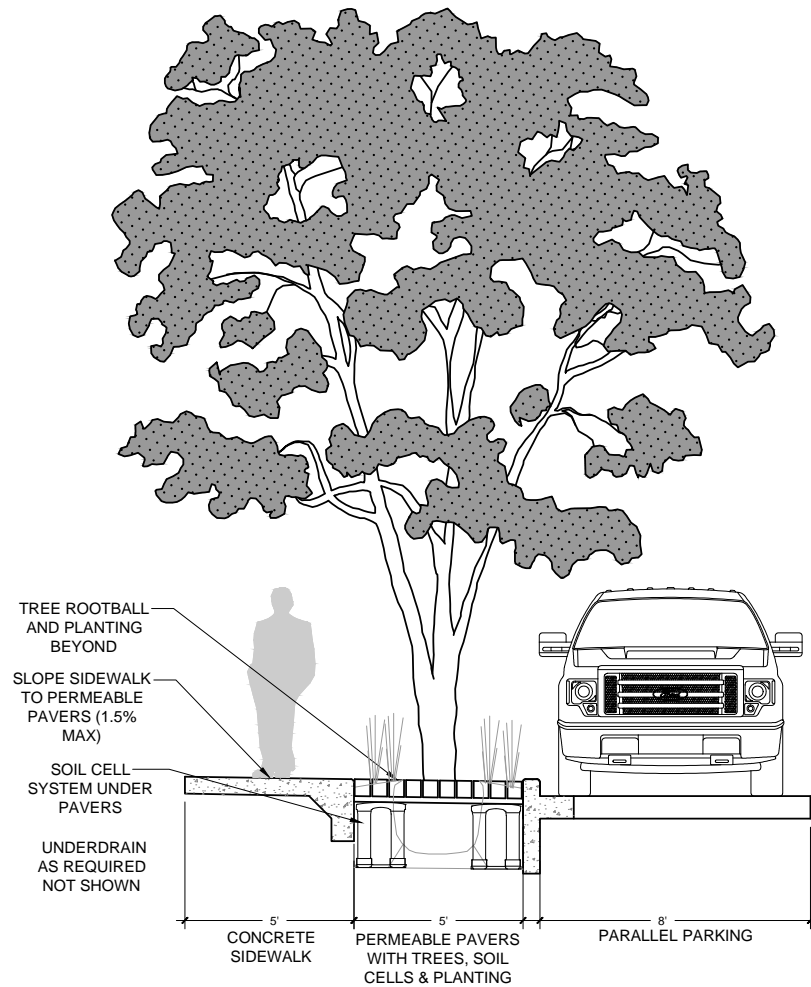


MAINTAIN EXISTING STREETScape DIMENSIONS WITH RAIN GARDEN





## Sidewalk with Permeable Pavers, Soil Cell System and Trees

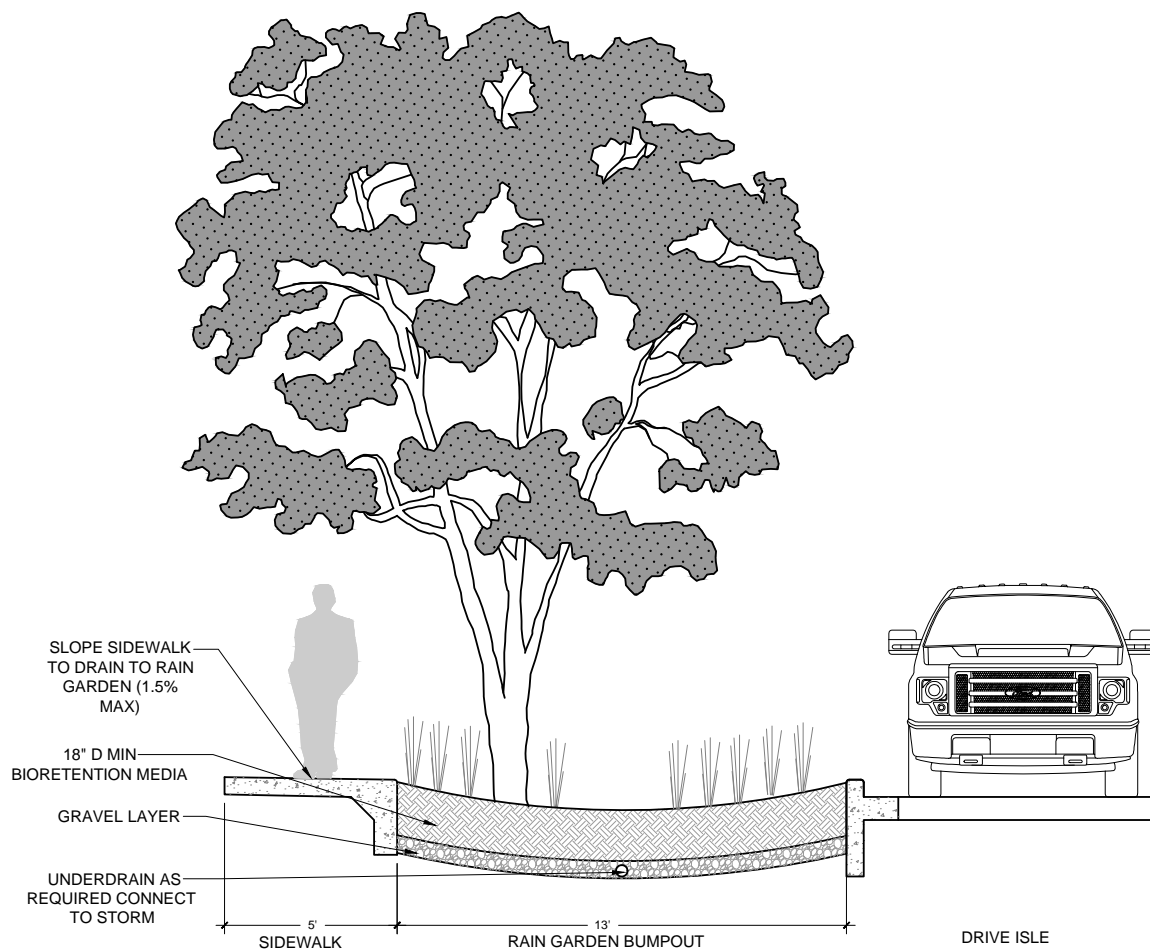


SIDEWALK WITH PERMEABLE PAVERS WITH TREES & PLANTING



## PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

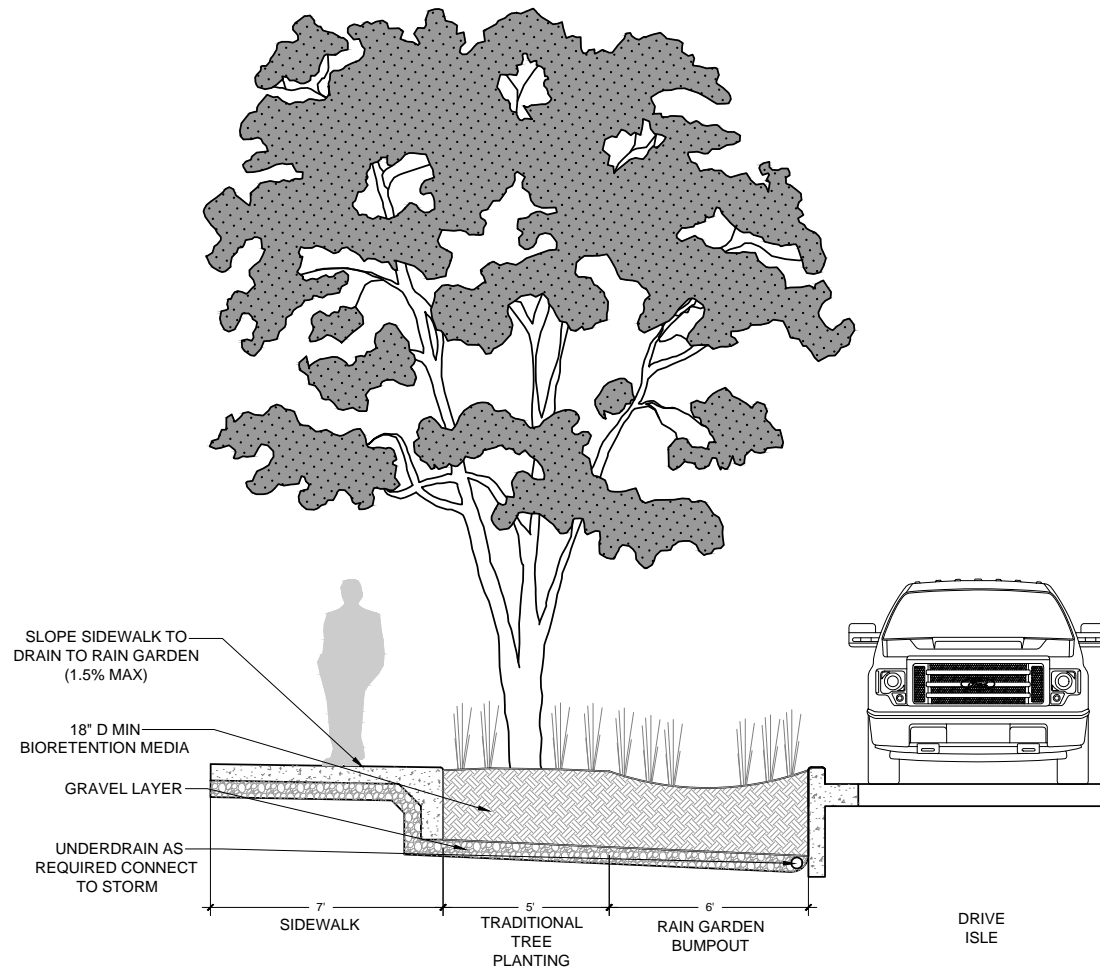
### Maintain Existing Streetscape Dimensions with Rain Garden Bulb-outs



MAINTAIN EXISTING STREETSCAPE DIMENSIONS  
ADDING RAIN GARDEN BUMP-OUTS



## 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

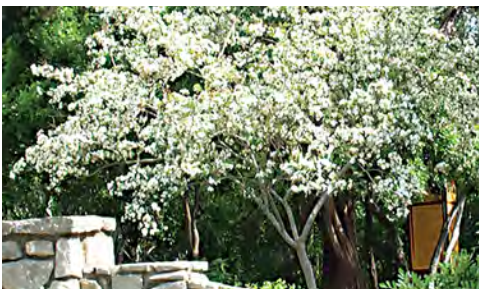
**Growth Rate:** Slow

**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 as new or expanded amenities.

### 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, some residents feel that the parks are 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**



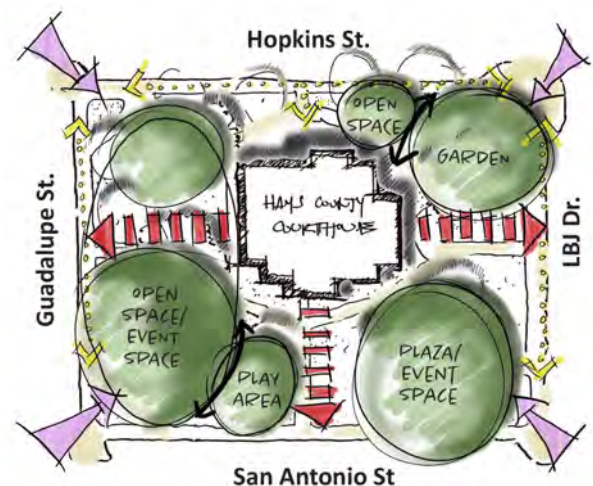
**Landscaping**



## 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, children's 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)*

The area surrounding the Eddie Durham Park can become 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
- Additional native plants and green infrastructure rather than turf grass
- Pop-up community theatre or local bands
- Partnerships with schools to provide children'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 children. Improvements to existing parks should consider the needs of children 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. The Mobility Hub located on Hutchison Street is an example of an existing pocket park in Downtown and includes a variety of amenities. 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*

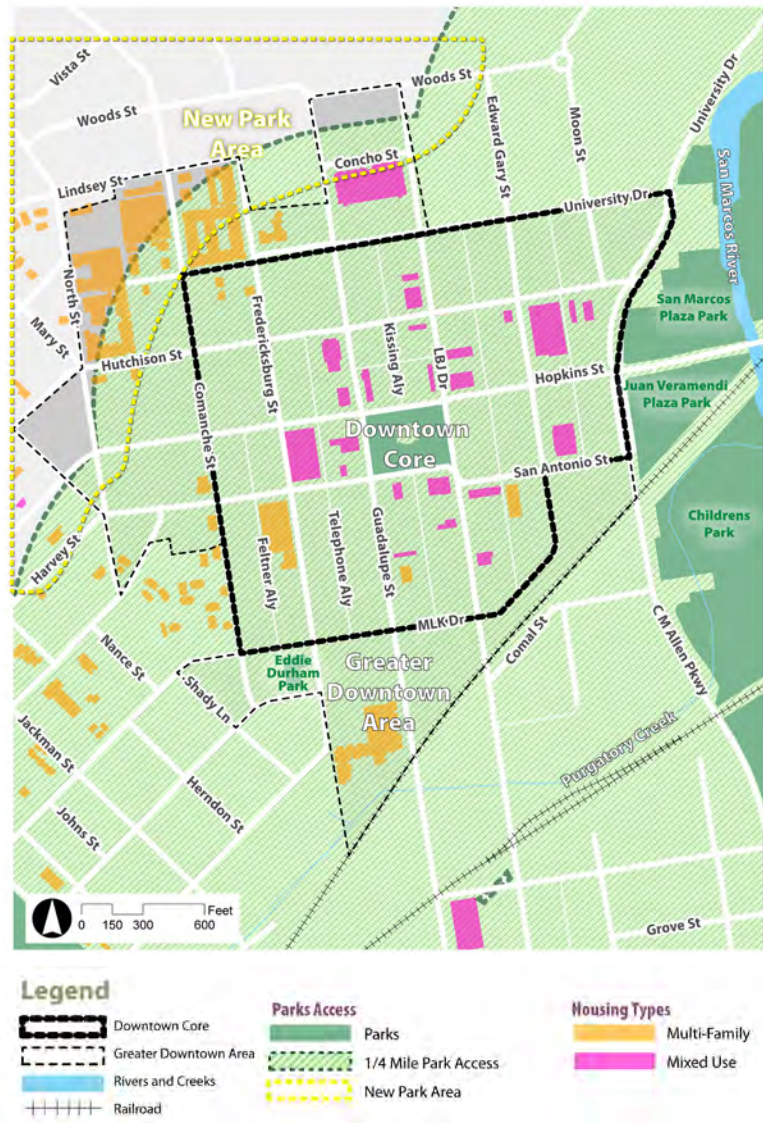
## PARK ACCESS IN NORTHWEST DOWNTOWN

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.

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.

*Yellow dashed area = not within 1/4 mile of park*



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 such as the existing HEB and Target downtown.
- F.2. Diversify retail offerings to attract an increased mix of shoppers of all ages and walks of life 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 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, focusing on 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 and build a more collaborative process for downtown business owners to help them through the development process and/or providing resources for opening and sustaining a business.
- 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

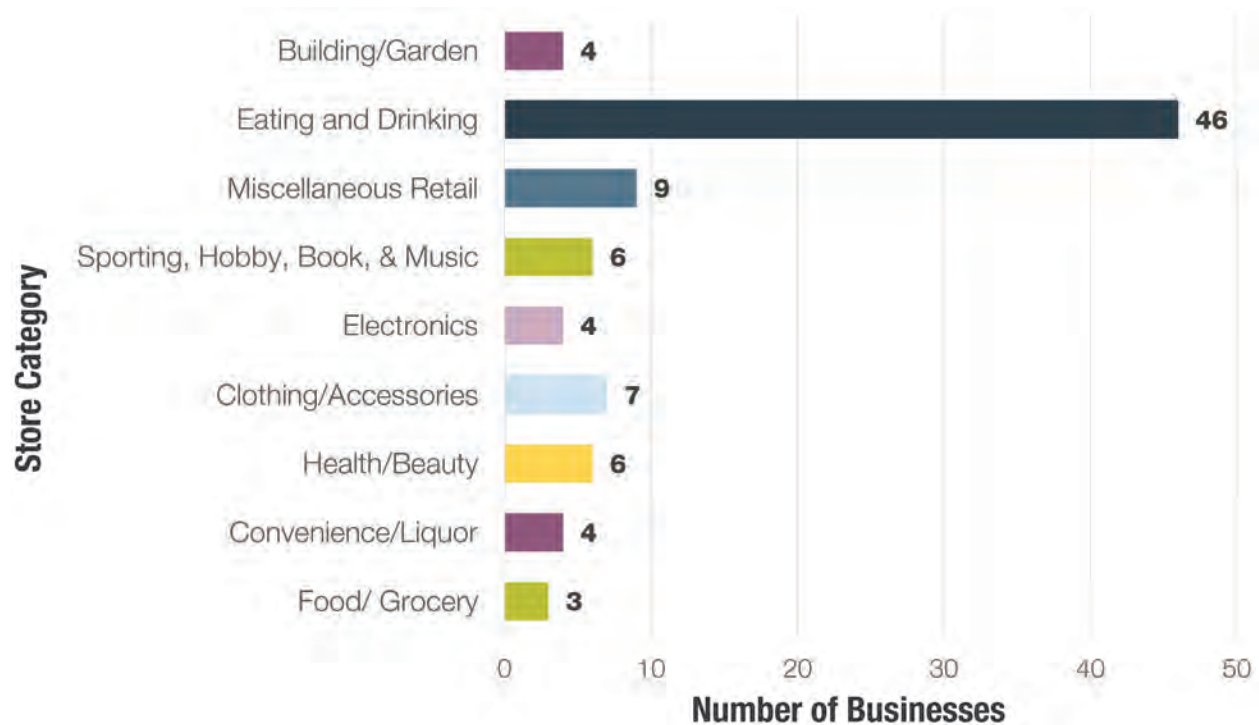
## BUSINESS VARIETY *(Recommendation F.1, F.2, F.3)*

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 diverse presence of convenience-oriented retail (e.g. grocery stores, health/beauty stores, pharmacies, beer/wine store), which support residents, workers, and visitors would mean there is a strong retail mix. 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.



*Douglas Smith Soap Company, 208 N LBJ Dr*

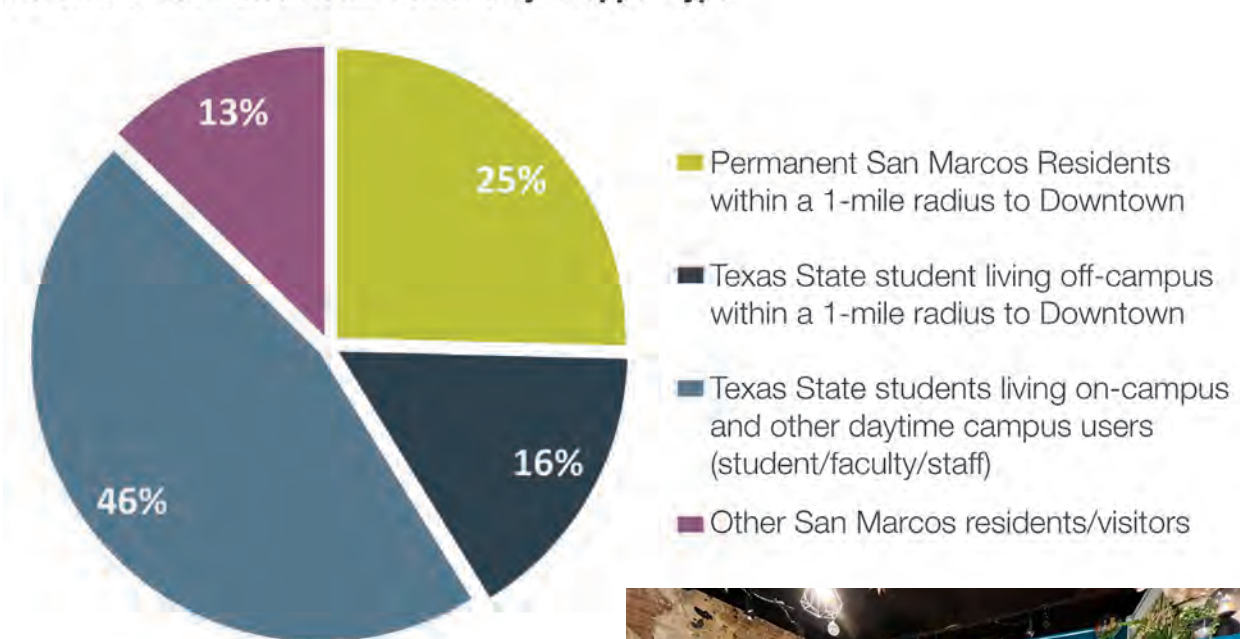
## DOWNTOWN RETAIL BUSINESSES BY STORE CATEGORY



## 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 is strongly influenced by the spending habits of students. *(Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, 2022)*

**Percent of Estimated Retail Demand by Shopper Type**



*(Source: ESRI Business Analyst, Economic & Planning Systems, 2022)*



*Daughter of the Wild, 218 Guadalupe St*



# 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:

### Attract Downtown shoppers in addition to students.

Potential Strategies Include:

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

### 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



*Everyday Zen Gifts & Tea, 165 S Guadalupe St*

## DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC PARTNERS *(Recommendation F.4)*

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



### City of San Marcos

- Economic Development Manager
- Main Street Program
- Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone
- San Marcos Convention and Visitor Bureau
- Parking Advisory Board



### 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 underserved entrepreneurs such as people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)
- Work with community finance partners to create funding/financing programs targeted to Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBS).



*Rhea's Ice Cream, 318 N LBJ Dr*

### “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.



*Art Squared event, Downtown San Marcos*

### 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)*

- Support 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.
  - Provide opportunity for businesses to gain exposure and experience with low barrier to entry.
  - Provide an activating use for a vacant space while the owner is seeking a long-term tenant.





*Buildings on Hopkins Street*

# **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](http://smtxarts.com) and [visitsanmarcos.com](http://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 media, 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 using partnerships such as San Marcos Art League and other entities.
- 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 to promote preservation and culture (arts, humanities, and heritage) through donations, partnerships, agencies, fundraisers, and grants, and the creation of a Cultural Arts District designation.
- 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*

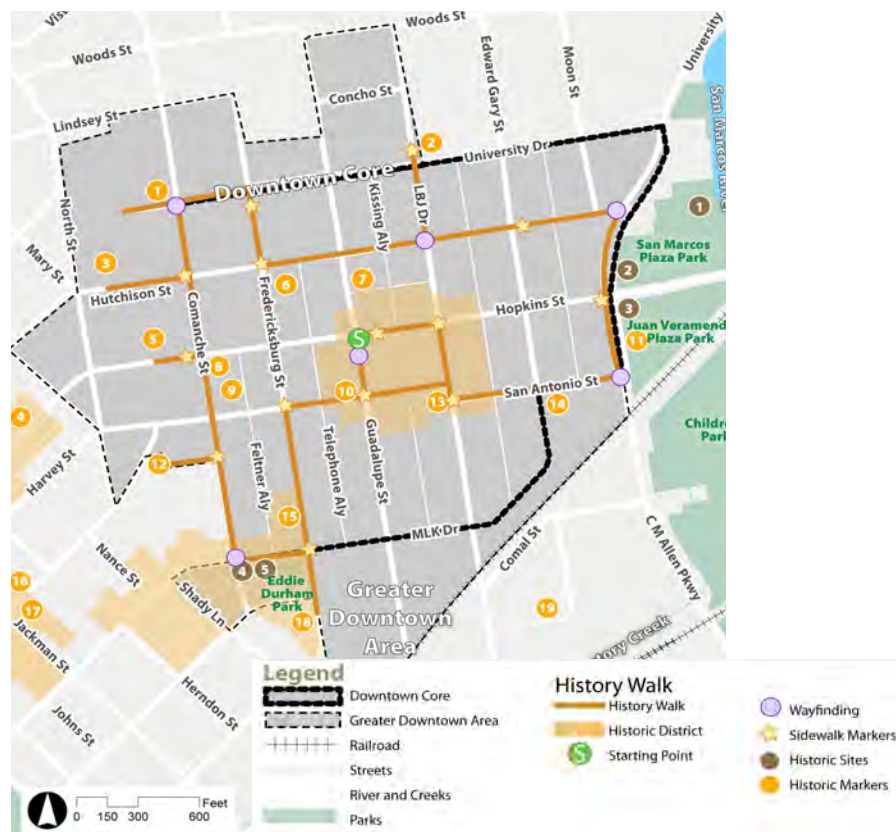


# HISTORY, ART, & CULTURE

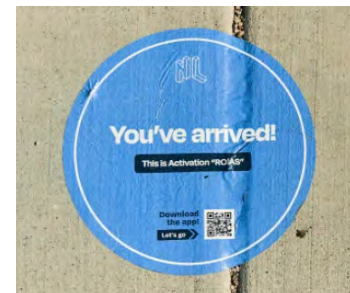
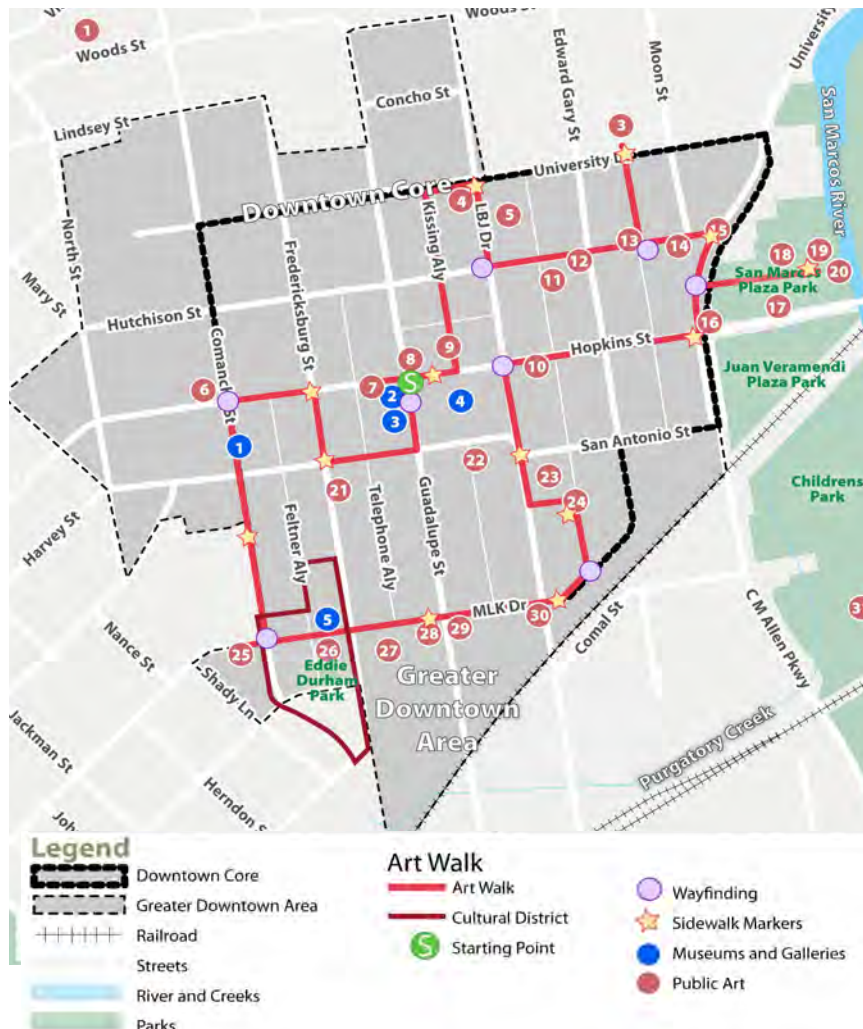
## DOWNTOWN SAN MARCOS HISTORY & ART WALK

(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.



Examples of interpretative kiosks and signage



Examples of informational signage for art / history walk

## MOBILE INTERFACE

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

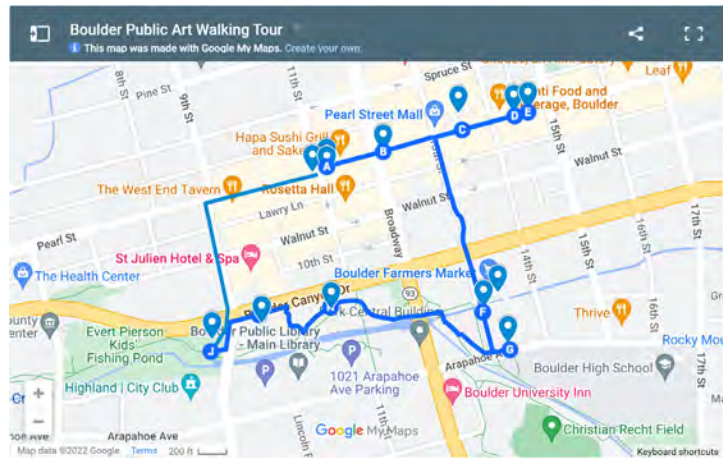
- Clearly marked path or route and navigational guidance and location services to determine where a user is along the walk
- All public art/history locations marked with pins and clickable for more information such as name, historical significance, artist information, and in-app videos
- Links to the 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



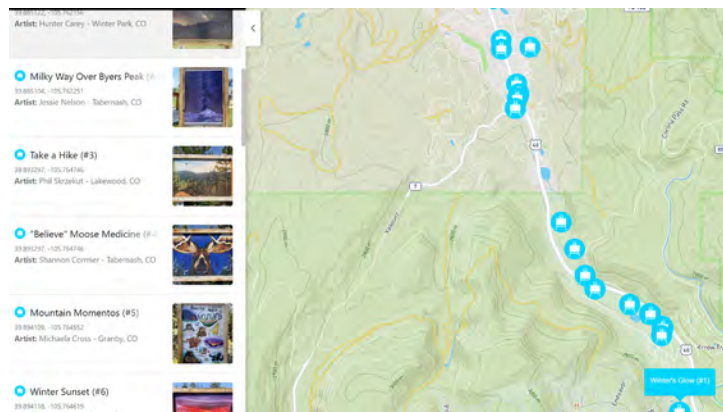
# HISTORY, ART, & CULTURE

## 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 expand upon 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. In addition, it could also incorporate other temporary walks for special events, tourism promotion, or temporary/rotating art installations in the future.



*Art Walk Tour, Boulder, CO*



*Winter Park Art Trail, CO*

## 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.



*Excerpt from Boudner County, CO, art information*

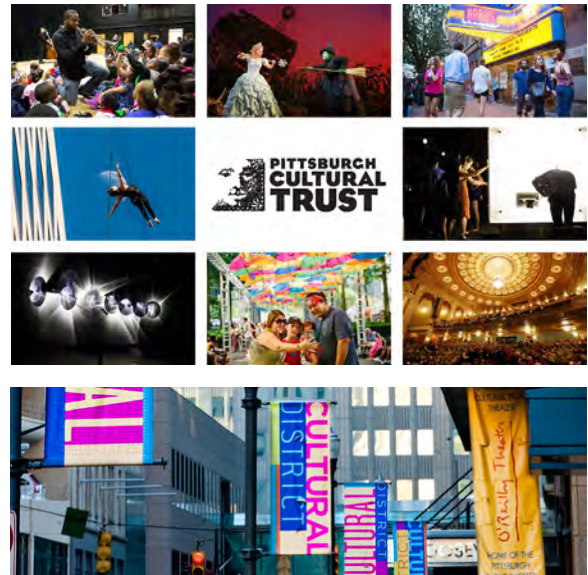


## CREATING A CULTURAL TRUST & CULTURAL DISTRICT

(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 encourage business development, establish a tourist destination, provide opportunity for state funding, preserve and promote historic sites, and attract artists and cultural enterprises.



Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

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

- Bastrop
- Denton (shown)
- Wimberley
- Smithville



Downtown Denton, TX



# 5

## IMPLEMENTATION

# IMPLEMENTATION

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

## OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- H.1. 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.2. 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.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 downtown developers to implement 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. Continue regular meetings between the City of San Marcos and Texas State University to coordinate implementation and partnership efforts.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## ACTION PLAN

This action plan outlines steps the City can begin to take immediately to implement the Plan's vision and recommendations. Included are several elements to consider (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.

## DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPTIONS

### COMMUNITY AMENITIES

**Community Priority:** Medium

**Difficulty of Implementation:** High

**Catalytic Impact:** Low

**Public Cost:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** Private developer, private business owner, CoSM Economic Development, Parks Department, CVB, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership

**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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**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

# IMPLEMENTATION

## BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

### GROUND FLOOR DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Low

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**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:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, Economic Development, CVB/Destination Services, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership, 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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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





## BUILDING FORM & INFILL DEVELOPMENT

### OPEN AIR MARKETPLACE AND FOOD HALL

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** High

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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, City of San Marcos

### HOTEL

**Community Priority:** Low

**Difficulty of Implementation:** High

**Catalytic Impact:** High

**Public Cost:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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

*(Corner of CM Allen Parkway/Hopkins St/San Antonio St.)*

**Community Priority:** Low

**Difficulty of Implementation:** High

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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

# IMPLEMENTATION

## MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

### COMPLETE MULTI-MODAL NETWORKS

**Community Priority:** Medium

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** High

**Public Cost:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Long

**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:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**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:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**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



## MULTIMODAL CONNECTIVITY & PARKING

### TRANSIT STOP SHELTERS AND AMENITIES

**Community Priority:** Low

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Texas State University

**Implementation Notes:** First complete combination of transit services. Coordinate with Texas State University.

**Driver:** City of San Marcos, Texas State University



# IMPLEMENTATION

## PRIORITY STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

### DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS

**Community Priority:** Medium

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** Low

**Public Cost:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, Public Works, Engineering, CVB/Destination Services, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership, 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:** \$\$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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

### HUTCHISON STREET MULTI-USE PATH

**Community Priority:** Low

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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:** \$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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



## PRIORITY STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

### STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** High

**Public Cost:** \$\$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Long

**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:** \$\$\$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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

# IMPLEMENTATION

## PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

### EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

**Community Priority:** High  
**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium  
**Catalytic Impact:** High  
**Public Cost:** \$\$\$  
**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium  
**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

### PERMEABLE PAVEMENTS

**Community Priority:** Medium  
**Difficulty of Implementation:** Low  
**Catalytic Impact:** Medium  
**Public Cost:** \$\$  
**Timeframe to Completion:** Short  
**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:** \$\$\$\$  
**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium  
**Downtown Geography:** Northwest/East/Central, 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:** \$\$  
**Timeframe to Completion:** Short  
**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





## PUBLIC SPACE & AMENITIES

### SHADE TREES

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Low

**Catalytic Impact:** Medium

**Public Cost:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**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

# IMPLEMENTATION

## SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

### BUSINESS VARIETY STRATEGIES

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** High

**Catalytic Impact:** High

**Public Cost:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** Private developer, private business owner, CoSM Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Coworking businesses, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership, 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)

### ENTREPRENEUR SUPPORT AND DIVERSITY STRATEGIES

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Low

**Catalytic Impact:** High

**Public Cost:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM Economic Development, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership

**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:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**Downtown Geography:** Southwest

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Commission, 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

### ENHANCED WEB PRESENCE AND DIGITAL MAP

**Community Priority:** Low

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Low

**Catalytic Impact:** Low

**Public Cost:** \$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Short

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, Greater San Marcos Partnership, Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Commission, 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

### CREATING HISTORY AND ART WALKS

**Community Priority:** High

**Difficulty of Implementation:** Medium

**Catalytic Impact:** Low

**Public Cost:** \$\$

**Timeframe to Completion:** Medium

**Downtown Geography:** Throughout

**Potential Leaders/Partners:** CoSM P&DS, CVB/ Destination Services, Downtown Association, GSMP, Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Commission 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



# SMTX VISION

