

REVISED DRAFT: JANUARY 2023



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN











# SAN MARCOS

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

SMTX  VISION

M I G





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# CONTENTS

- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** **4**
  
- 1 A COMMUNITY-BASED VISION** **10**
  - Introduction ..... 13
  - History of San Marcos ..... 14
  - Community Profile ..... 16
  - Why Cities Plan ..... 20
  - The Planning Process..... 22
  - How to Use This Plan ..... 32
  
- 2 OUR VISION FOR EQUITABLE AND COMPATIBLE GROWTH** **34**
  - Introduction .....37
  - Guiding ..... 40
  - Principles ..... 40
  - Policy Framework Overview:..... 42
    - Arts and culture*..... 44
    - Economic Development*..... 48
    - Environmental and resource protection* ..... 52
    - Housing + Neighborhoods* ..... 56
    - Land Use + Community Design and character* ..... 60
    - Parks & Public Space + Health, Safety & wellness* ..... 64
    - Transportation*..... 68
  
- 3 PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO** **72**
  - Introduction .....74
  - Complete Places & Components Of Development.....75

Place Types .....	80
<i>Neighborhood Low</i> .....	84
<i>Neighborhood Medium</i> .....	88
<i>Neighborhood High</i> .....	92
<i>Neighborhood Transition</i> .....	96
<i>Mixed Use Low</i> .....	100
<i>Mixed Use Medium</i> .....	104
<i>Commercial/ Employment Low</i> .....	108
<i>Commercial/ Employment Medium</i> .....	112
<i>Conserve/ Reserve</i> .....	116
Exploration of Alternative Growth Scenarios .....	120
Preferred Growth Scenario .....	122
Relationship to Zoning Code and Other Regulations .....	131
<b>4 AREA PLANNING</b> .....	<b>132</b>
Introduction .....	134
Area Plan Approach .....	135
Area Plan Process .....	140
Relationship to Comprehensive Plan .....	141
Summary of Initial Area Planning .....	142
<b>5 IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	<b>152</b>
Planning Approach .....	154
Key Fiscal Considerations .....	159
Organizational Capacity and Coordination .....	161
Implementation Oversight .....	164
<b>5 GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>166</b>



# A COMMUNITY- BASED VISION



The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan is a vision and policy document intended to guide the growth and evolution of the City for the next 20-30 years. It is based on community input and feedback and includes the community's vision for a variety of physical and programmatic areas that influence how San Marcos evolves and grows in the years ahead. The Plan's recommendations are informed by over two years of community conversations. The Plan's success should be attributed to the unwavering dedication of those residents that participated in the planning process.



“

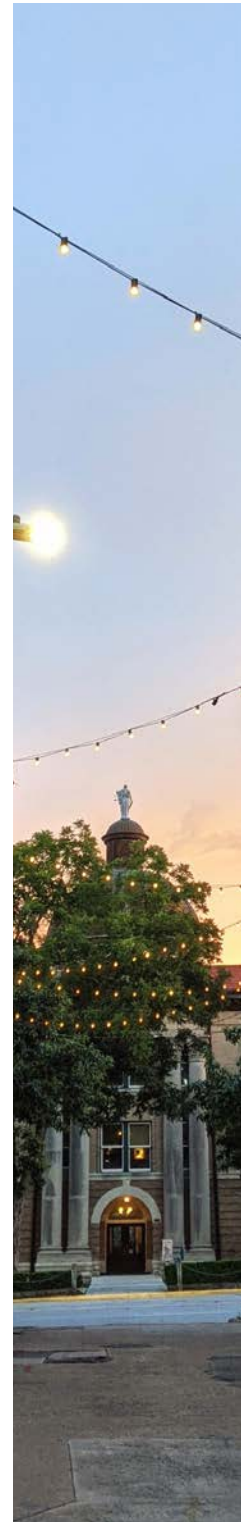
*The policies, projects, and programs in this Plan aim to help shape the future of the places where San Marcans live, work, shop, and play by preserving what’s important to the community and guiding investments that help make San Marcos a vibrant and unique city for all.”*

# INTRODUCTION

The City of San Marcos is located along the I-35 corridor between Austin and San Antonio, one of the fastest growing regions in the United States. While contributing to rapid growth, the interstate geographically divides the City in eastern and western halves and creates an overall connectivity challenge for the community. The nature of highway-oriented development also creates a distinct juxtaposition with the more historic and walkable parts of San Marcos.

The western half of San Marcos contains the original Downtown core of the City, the traditional activity and population center of the community. Despite the rapid growth in other parts of San Marcos, the Downtown area remains a major activity center relying on its many assets, including a walkable street and block pattern; small storefronts; adjacency to Texas State University, the fifth largest university in the state of Texas; proximity to six well-preserved historic districts; and proximity to the San Marcos Springs, the San Marcos River, and a series of riverfront parks. Due to the location of San Marcos at the heart of the Texas Innovation Corridor and presence of Texas State University, the City is expected to continue growing at a relatively rapid rate.

The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan is a vision and policy document intended to guide the growth and evolution of the City for the next 20-30 years. It includes the community's vision for topics such as housing, transportation, arts and culture, land use, economic development, parks, community character, and others. The San Marcos City Council provided direction to rewrite the City's current Comprehensive Plan, Vision San Marcos, originally adopted in 2013. The policies, projects, and programs in this Plan aim to help shape the future of the places where San Marcans live, work, shop, and play by preserving what's important to the community and guiding investments that help make San Marcos a vibrant and unique city for all. As such, the rewrite included significant public engagement to obtain input from the public, stakeholders, and organizations in San Marcos throughout the planning process.





# HISTORY OF SAN MARCOS

The first census of Hays County, the 1850 Federal Census, listed 387 individuals “in or about” San Marcos. Based on the 2022 Census Estimates, the city’s population is approximately 72,000 today. The population grew by approximately 50% between the 2010 US Census and the 2020 US Census from 44,894 residents to 67,553. San Marcos lies at the heart of one of the fastest growing regions in the country and the US Census named Hays County as the fastest growing county in the U.S. with 53% growth from 2010-2020. San Marcos was named fastest growing city in the United States several times during the last decade. Understanding how and why San Marcos has grown over time and why it has grown so quickly in recent years is significant in determining how it will grow in the future.

Archaeological evidence indicates that people have inhabited the area around San Marcos Springs for over 12,000 years. Fertile soils, a constant water supply, and abundant game provided the setting for possibly the oldest continually occupied site in North America. Artifacts discovered at San Marcos Springs indicate that the Clovis culture Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the area. They were followed in later years by the Tonkawa, Lipan, Apache, and Comanche Native Americans. Native American tribes and Spanish settlers still struggled for control of the area at the turn of the 19th century;



long after Spanish explorer Alfonso De Leon had named the San Marcos River on April 25, 1689 (Saint Mark’s Day). The City of San Marcos was founded in 1844 by General Edward Burleson, and the original San Marcos streets were laid out seven years later. The permanence of the town was secured with the extension of the International and Great Northern Railroads through San Marcos in 1880, and the opening of Southwest Texas State Normal School (now Texas State University) in 1903. Five years later, the San Marcos Baptist Academy began operation on what is now the western end of the Texas State University campus.

The tourism industry began in 1928 with the construction of the Spring Lake Hotel by A. B. Rogers near the headwaters of the San Marcos River. The first glass bottom boat, designed to give visitors a chance to “view the beautiful marine garden” in



Spring Lake, began operation in 1947. Texas State University’s acquisition of Aquarena Springs in 1994 marked a shift in emphasis from a “theme park” to one of “ecotourism.” In the early 1990s, the Tanger Outlet Mall and San Marcos Factory Outlet Mall (now Prime Outlets) became another major draw for tourism. Enrollment at Texas State University now exceeds 38,000 students and the student population is projected to increase by nearly 11,000 students by 2035.

The City of San Marcos is situated in a unique natural setting. The Blackland Prairie lies to the east and the Edwards Plateau (commonly known as the Texas Hill Country) to the west. The San Marcos River originating from the San Marcos Springs runs through the city and joins with the Blanco River. The Springs are home to several threatened or endangered species.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The jurisdictional setting of the City of San Marcos includes City Limits and Extraterritorial Jurisdictions (ETJ), Municipal Utility Districts (MUD) and other special districts. The jurisdictional setting also includes areas covered by certificates of convenience and necessity (CCN). The planning process helps to direct where growth takes place within the jurisdictional setting. Cities can grow through infill and redevelopment, through the orderly request for extension of utilities in the ETJ followed by annexation, through “leap frog” development outside the city’s ETJ or in MUDs, or a combination of all of these.

This summary of the review of demographic, income, employment and housing data for the City of San Marcos was gathered from the 2010 and 2020 Census, American Community Survey 2017-2021 five-year estimates, City of San Marcos, Greater San Marcos Partnership, the State of Texas, and other sources.

The 2017-2021 American Community Survey estimates the median household income of San Marcos at \$42,500. The citywide unemployment rate in August of 2020 was 6.9 percent according to the American Community Surveys. This dropped to an estimated 3.6 percent as of August 2022.



Retail services have continued to make up the largest proportion of employment in San Marcos, accounting for 21.5 percent of all jobs within the city. In order, the next largest employment sectors in San Marcos include Accommodation, Food Service (17.9%), Educational Services (14.4%), Health Care and Social Assistance (8.9%), Manufacturing (5.5%), and Construction (5.4%).

The largest industries in Hays County are Education, Retail Trade, Hotel/Restaurant, Health Care, and Construction. The fastest growing industries in the County from 2000 to 2019 were Hotel/Restaurant (6,335 new jobs), Retail Trade (5,904 new jobs), Education (4,162 new jobs), Construction (3,836 new jobs), and Health Care (3,678 new jobs).

Nearly one-fifth of San Marcans commute to Austin and approximately five percent of residents commute to San Antonio. In all, approximately 68 percent of San Marcans commute out of the city for work, which is nearly double the percent of residents that did so 20 years ago.

According to the 2017-2021 American Community Survey estimates, the total number of households in the city was 25,732. Of those, the American Community Survey estimates that 26.2% percent of these were owner-occupied. The same data source indicates that the average persons per household is 2.29. The percent of persons aged 25 years and older with a high school diploma or higher is 90.5% and the percent of persons 25 years and older with a Bachelor’s degree or higher is 34.8%. Approximately 41% of San Marcans identify as Hispanic or Latino. Over 28% of San Marcos residents 5 years or older speak a language other than English at home.



**The top 10 employers according to the Greater San Marcos Partnership are:**

1. Amazon Fulfillment (5,000 employees)
2. Texas State University (3,730 employees)
3. San Marcos Premium Outlets (1,600 employees)
4. San Marcos Tanger Outlets (1,540 employees)
5. San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District (1,400 employees)
6. Hays County (885 employees)
7. City of San Marcos (758 employees)
8. HEB Distribution Center (750 employees)
9. Central Texas Medical Center (675 employees)
10. CFAN (460 employees)

According to the Greater San Marcos Partnership, the population of the region within a one-hour drive of San Marcos is more than 4 million people and Hays County was the fastest growing county with a population 100,000 or more in the country. Hays County experienced 53 percent growth from 2010 to 2020 (83,960 residents to 241,067 residents). As of 2020, Hays County had 82,767 households and 89,176 housing units. Comal County immediately south also experienced 49 percent growth from 2010 to 2020, contributing to the I-35 corridor from San Antonio to Austin the fastest growing region in the country.

San Marcos accounts for approximately 30 percent of the total Hays County population and has captured nearly 27 percent of the population growth in the County since 2000. Because of this high capture rate, San Marcos has grown at a faster rate than the County over the past two decades (55% vs. 45%). The average household size of San Marcos (2.26 people per household) is less than Hays County (2.75 people per household).

According to the San Marcos Consolidated School District (SMCISD) Fall 2022 District Demographics Update (School District Strategies), the 15-year average district growth rate is 1 percent. District enrollment increased by 3.4 percent from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022 with a net growth of 277 students. Growth over the past year represents the largest percentage increase since 2013-2014 and the highest actual growth in students during the past 15 years. Increases in growth stem from new housing construction in San Marcos. The majority of new home construction between Fall 2021 to Fall 2022 is occurring in the Rodriguez, Hernandez, and Bowie Elementary school zones as well as the Miller Middle School zone. Within this time period, the district’s median new home price was a record \$368,104.

The district student yield is an average of 0.49 students per single family home with new home subdivisions producing an average of 0.34 students per home. Apartments in the district produce an average yield of 0.14 enrolled students per apartment unit.

Moderate scenario growth projections for the district are estimated at 2 percent annual growth through 2032.



**68%** of residents commute out of San Marcos for work

Nearly **1/5** residents commute to Austin

Almost **DOUBLE** from 20 years ago

**3.6%**

Estimated Citywide Unemployment rate

Nearly **35%**

Have a Bachelor's degree or higher

**2.26**

Average household size

**25,732**

Households in San Marcos

**26%**

Of houses are owner occupied

**\$42,500**

Median household income

**41%**

of Residents identify as Hispanic or Latino

Over **28%** of residents speak a language other than English at home

## FASTEST GROWING INDUSTRIES

1. HOTEL/RESTAURANT
2. RETAIL TRADE
3. EDUCATION
4. CONSTRUCTION
5. HEALTHCARE



# WHY CITIES PLAN

A comprehensive plan is a tool that allows a city to anticipate changes and to guide those changes in an effective, orderly manner that is consistent with the desires of the community. It directs future development, maps and analyzes neighborhoods and sensitive areas to be protected, and promotes efficient growth of the city. A successful comprehensive plan analyzes trends and alternatives of growth patterns and directs developments in areas where it is most suitable based on existing land uses, available infrastructure and environmental factors. Conversely, a comprehensive plan can also contain strategies for adapting to and/or reversing population and economic declines.

A comprehensive plan, if properly utilized, acts as a tool for managing and directing growth, lends predictability to developers by illustrating the types of development desired throughout the city and locates existing and proposed infrastructure. It gives legal backing to ordinances and development codes while eliminating arbitrary or capricious enforcement of these laws. With input from the community during the comprehensive planning process, the document serves as the record of the city's long-range vision. In the face of constant change, this is the most important reason to plan. A comprehensive plan with extensive community input allows a community's residents to determine what factors will guide development decisions and gives them the opportunity to decide what the future of their city will be.

## PLANNING IN TEXAS

In 1997, the Texas Legislature added Chapter 213 to the Local Government Code allowing cities in Texas the option to develop and adopt comprehensive plans. The Code establishes that the plans must consider land use, transportation and public facilities, and distinguishes between land use plans and zoning regulations. The regulations allow the city to define the relationship between the plan and any ordinances and development codes. This also leaves cities with creative freedom to determine the level of detail of the contents in the plan.

Comprehensive plans across the state include topics such as environmental constraints, demographic projections, infrastructure data, and housing in addition to the required land use and transportation topics. Some cities choose to develop more specialized plans to address a particular issue they are facing. Strategic Plans take a more immediate approach and identify short-term actions to achieve long term goals. Capital Improvements Plans (CIP) guide the use of the city's budget. Public Participation Plans outline when and how citizens will be involved in the city's operations.

## PLANNING IN SAN MARCOS

The City of San Marcos is required through its City Charter to maintain a master plan to guide development in the city. Article VII, Section 7.03 states: “The master plan for the City of San Marcos shall be used to guide the growth and development of the city. The master plan shall be adopted by ordinance. The city council will endeavor to ensure that city ordinances governing growth and development are consistent with the goals and policies contained in the master plan; however, land use maps and descriptions contained in the master plan do not constitute zoning, and do not entitle any property owner to any change in zoning.”

Currently, the City of San Marcos is operating under the Vision San Marcos: A River Runs Through Us Comprehensive Plan which was originally adopted on April 16, 2013. Although it has only been approximately ten years since the current Comprehensive Plan was written, many changes have occurred within the city; populations, land area, and the number of students at Texas State University have all continued to increase. In addition, advances in technology and social consciousness surrounding sustainability, resiliency, and equity provide a new context for planning. The global COVID-19 pandemic and intense regional growth have also impacted how we live, work and play as a society. Ensuring an inclusive and equitable future for existing and future residents of San Marcos requires a new plan that builds on the foundation of Vision San Marcos: A River Runs Through Us, while also engaging new and old voices in meaningful conversations about potential futures and their tradeoffs.



# THE PLANNING PROCESS

The staff and consultant planning team have been collecting input from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC), community, and focus groups on developing the draft vision, goals, and guiding principles which are foundational components for Vision SMTX. These components helped set the stage for the draft Preferred Growth Scenario Map created through this project along with creating strategies and action items for the ten planning elements.

This then led into the creation of more detailed recommendations and strategies for the planning elements and a series of place types that were derived from the combinations of high-level land use and land use intensity included in the Preferred Growth Scenario Map. The Area Plan development process then kicked off while the planning team worked on a strategic implementation strategy for the Comprehensive Plan. The last phase of the planning process included writing, refining, and revising the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan, which was refined in February 2023 based on input and feedback from the community, staff, and leadership.







## FALL 2021: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, SURVEYS, & POP-UP EVENTS

These series of events focused on introducing the development of the Draft Preferred Growth Scenario Map and associated overlays and development types.

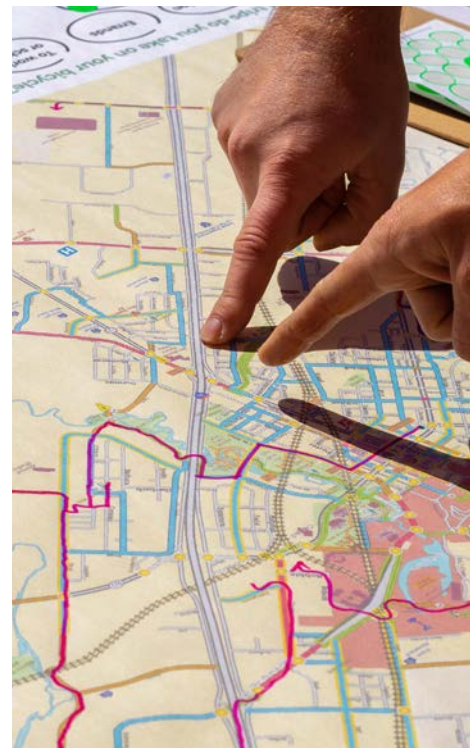
- **September 15, 2021 Community Meeting** – The City hosted an in-person community meeting to present community and CPSC input received so far. The workshop gathered citizen comments through maps, boards, and comment cards. The meeting included a total of 70 community participants and 233 comments were collected. The event was also supplemented with additional ways to participate. A Virtual ArcGIS StoryMap provided the community an option to participate virtually, a physical take-home toolkit was offered to participants who preferred a paper copy of the activities, and an in-person pop-up event was hosted at the San Marcos Farmers Market following the workshop.



## SPRING 2022: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, PRESENTATION, & SURVEY

These events focused on presenting to the community changes made to the Draft Preferred Growth Scenario Map using feedback from the Fall 2021 public outreach period.

- **March, 2022 Map Survey** – The City released a virtual map survey and take-home toolkit to gather input on the revised Draft Preferred Growth Scenario Map. The City also supplemented the survey by hosting a pop-up event at the San Marcos Farmers Market. A total of 143 comments were submitted during this stage of public input.
- **April 6, 2022 Virtual Community Presentation** – The City hosted a virtual presentation on the Draft Preferred Growth Scenario Map via Zoom as a supplement to the virtual map survey.



- **May 4, 2022 Open House** – The City hosted an in-person community Open House to present community and steering committee input received so far. The workshop gathered citizen comments through maps, interactive boards, and comment cards. The meeting included a total of 45 community participants and 460 comments were collected.

### **SUMMER 2022: DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN KICK-OFF**

These events focused on engaging the community in the creation of the Downtown Area Plan, a component of the larger Comprehensive Plan. The events focused on envisioning the future of Downtown San Marcos and discussed topics related to downtown such as housing, public spaces, streetscapes, and mobility. While these events were focused on Downtown, it also provided opportunities to discuss the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan with the community and the role of downtown in the overall future of San Marcos.

- **June 22, 2022 Downtown Workshop** – The City hosted an in-person workshop to kick off the Downtown Area Plan at the San Marcos Price Center. Prior to the meeting, attendees engaged in a social gathering, interactive activities, and a brief staff presentation. Participants were able to visit a variety of interactive stations on topics related to downtown, including historic and cultural character, multimodal connectivity, public spaces, streetscapes, housing, small businesses, and building design. Community input received will help shape the vision and goals for the downtown area. The event included approximately 80-100 total attendees and 280 comments were collected.
- **July 2022, Downtown Virtual Survey** – The virtual survey mirrored the questions and topics of the in-person downtown workshop from June 22, 2022 and provided the community a virtual option for those that missed the event.
- **October 12, 2022 Downtown Open House** – An in-person Open House on the Downtown Area Plan was hosted at the San Marcos Activity Center to present 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, appointed boards, and elected officials so far in the process. The event included approximately 80-100 total attendees and approximately 400 comments were collected.



- **Additional Audiences:** The following committees were formed to help create or “steer” the development of the plan as well as ensure consistency between the Downtown Plan and the overall goals of the Comprehensive Plan.
  - **Downtown Stakeholder Committee** – The downtown stakeholder committee is comprised of downtown business owners, property owners, residents, and other key stakeholders who are assisting in providing guidance and expertise on downtown needs. This committee met for a total of 5 meetings from May – November, 2022.
  - **Downtown Oversight Committee** – this committee is a sub-set of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and ensures that the Downtown Plan aligns with the Comprehensive Plan.



## FALL/WINTER 2022: NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLANS KICK-OFF AND PUBLIC REVIEW OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN AND THE VISION SMTX COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

These meetings focused on engaging community members living and/or interested in the Dunbar, Heritage, and Blanco Gardens neighborhoods in discussions about assets, issues, and challenges facing their neighborhoods. The Public Review Draft Plan event for the Downtown Area Plan and the Comprehensive Plan introduced the draft documents and kicked off the public review period.

- November 16, 2022 Dunbar/Heritage Neighborhood Area Plan Community Meeting** – The City hosted an in-person workshop to kick off the Neighborhood Area Plan process for the Dunbar and Heritage Neighborhoods. After a brief presentation, participants engaged in a series of activities to provide input that will inform the vision, goals, character studies, and other recommendations for the area. The event was supplemented with a Virtual Community Workshop and take-home toolkit activities.
- November 17, 2022 Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan Community Meeting** – The City hosted an in-person workshop to kick off the Neighborhood Area Plan process for the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood. After a brief presentation, participants engaged in a series of activities to provide input that will inform the vision, goals, character studies, and other recommendations for the area. The event was supplemented with a Virtual Community Workshop and take-home toolkit activities.
- January 12, 2023 Draft Plans Open House & Engagement Events** – The City hosted an open house introducing the Public Review Drafts of the Downtown Area Plan and the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan. The event provided opportunities for feedback and discussion, and kicked off the public review period for both plans. The Open House was supplemented with a pop-up event at the San Marcos Farmers Market as well as opportunities for the community to pick-up copies of the draft plans.



## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) is a diverse collective of 31 community members appointed by City Council that represent different districts and varying demographics within the City. Committee members provide input and feedback on each element of the planning process. The Committee has met regularly at a combination of virtual meetings, in-person socials, volunteer events, and provided input via short virtual surveys and emails. Staff has also facilitated virtual 1-on-1 meetings with members to further discuss a variety of topics related to the Plan. In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, subcommittees were formed to refine the Planning Elements outlined in Section 2 of this plan. A total of 23 subcommittee meetings were held.

Past Meetings:

- CPSC Virtual Meeting #1: November 20, 2020
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #2: January 14, 2021
- CPSC In-person Social Event: April 22, 2021
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #3: May 27, 2021
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #4: August 25, 2021
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #5: January 13, 2022
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #6: April 27, 2022
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #7: July 14, 2022
- CPSC Virtual Meeting #8: January 23, 2023

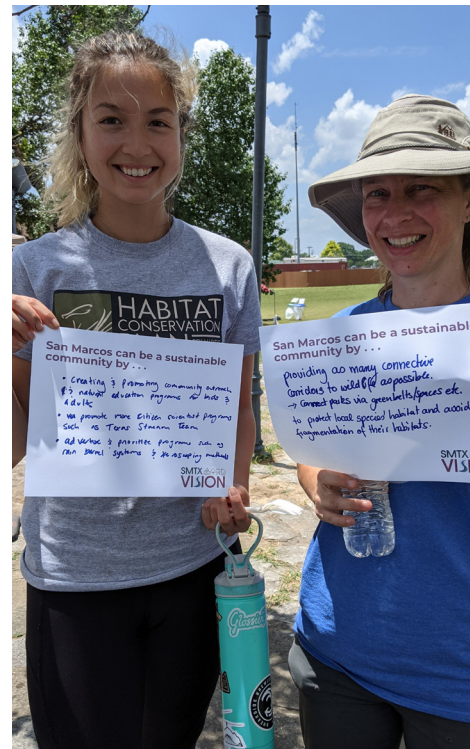




## FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Groups represent a diverse group of direct stakeholders in the Plan’s outcomes, including owners or representatives from San Marcos businesses, organizations, neighborhoods, or institutions. The purpose of these groups is to provide specific input and guidance on each step of the Planning process. The following 9 focus groups were conducted throughout the process:

- **Focus Group #1 – Vision & Goals:** April 28, 2021
- **Focus Group #2 – Guiding Principles:** May 12, 2021
- **Focus Group #3 – Transportation:** November 29, 2021
- **Focus Group #4 – Parks, Public Spaces & Amenities + Health, Safety, & Wellness:** November 30, 2021
- **Focus Group #5 – Economic Development:** December 1, 2021
- **Focus Group #6 – Arts & Culture:** December 2, 2021
- **Focus Group #7 – Environment & Resource Protection:** December 2, 2021
- **Focus Group #8 – Housing:** December 2, 2021
- **Focus Group #9 – Land Use & Community Design & Character:** December 3, 2021



## CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOPS/MEETINGS

Staff and the project team provided updates and received direction from the San Marcos City Council at key stages in the development of Vision SMTX.

- **City Council Work Session #1 –** November 17, 2020
- **City Council Work Session #2 –** September 16, 2021
- **City Council Work Session #3 –** August 2, 2022
- **City Council Work Session #4 –** February 7, 2023

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Public engagement is a critical component to the success of Vision SMTX and ensures that the vision for the future of San Marcos is inclusive of all voices. In addition to scheduled outreach, city staff has attended several events and organization meetings to gather input on Vision SMTX:

Event	Date
Democracy for Texas @ Virtual Event	March 18, 2021
San Marcos Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting @ Virtual Event	April 1, 2021
Sustainable San Marcos Board Meeting @ Virtual Event	April 14, 2021
Student Urban Planning Organization (SUPO) Regular Meeting @ Virtual Event	April 7, 2021
Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA) @ Virtual Event	May 17, 2021
San Marcos Main Street Advisory Board Regular Meeting @ Virtual Event	May 19, 2021
San Marcos Parks Board Regular Meeting @ Virtual Event	May 20, 2021
City of San Marcos Employee Fly Into Summer Event @ Fire Station No. 5	June 22-24, 2021
Neighborhood Commission Regular Meeting @ Virtual Event	June 16, 2021
Summer in the Park Concert Event @ San Marcos Activity Center	July 3, 2021
Sustainable Film Series “Motherload” and Stelos Scholars Event @ Plaza Park	July 16, 2021
Summer in the Park Concert Event @ San Marcos Activity Center	July 22, 2021
Arts Master Plan Open House @ San Marcos Price Center	July 28, 2021
Summer in the Park Concert Event @ Plaza Park	August 12, 2021
San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce Business Expo @ Embassy Suites	August 18, 2021
Kissing Alley Concert Event @ Kissing Alley	August 19, 2021
Sustainable Film Series “Yakona” @ Plaza Park	August 20, 2021
San Marcos Convention & Visitor Bureau (CVB) Regular Meeting @ Virtual	September 15, 2021
San Marcos Farmers Market Pop-up Event @ Downtown Farmers Market	September 18, 2021
San Marcos Food Bank Distribution @ San Marcos Library	September 20, 2021
San Marcos Fall Native Plant Sale @ Discovery Center	October 16, 2021



Belvin Street Block Party @ Belvin Street	November 4, 2021
Dunbar Neighborhood Open House @ Dunbar Recreation Building	November 16, 2021
Kissing Alley Open House @ Kissing Alley	January 12, 2022
Greenbelt Alliance Organization Meeting Presentation @ Wake the Dead Coffee	January 13, 2022
San Marcos Farmers Market Pop-up Event @ Downtown Farmers Market	March 19, 2022
Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Community Presentation @ KAD Store	March 29, 2022
Downtown Association Meeting @ Aquabrew	June 13, 2022
Downtown TIRZ Board Meeting @ Virtual Event	June 23, 2022
Back to School Bash @ Cuauhtemoc Hall	August 14, 2022
Neighborhood Commission Meeting @ Virtual Event	August 17, 2022
San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce Business Expo @ Embassy Suites	August 18, 2022
Main Street Advisory Board Meeting @ Chamber of Commerce	September 21, 2022
Eddie Durham Jazz Fest @ Eddie Durham Park	October 15, 2022
Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Community Presentation @ KAD Store	October 20, 2022
Historic Preservation Commission Meeting	January 5, 2023
Main Street Advisory Board Meeting	January 18, 2023
Parks Advisory Board Meeting	January 19, 2023
Farmers Market Pop-up Booth	January 21, 2023



# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan (Plan) is intended to be a user-friendly plan to guide city staff, elected and appointed officials, the private development community, and the general public. The Plan is organized into five major sections and paired with a series of technical appendices.

## **SECTION 1: A COMMUNITY-BASED PLAN**

This section provides an overview of historical growth and factors driving that growth, especially in more recent years. It also provides an overview of the planning process which was utilized in the creation of this document.

## **SECTION 2: OUR VISION FOR EQUITABLE AND COMPATIBLE GROWTH**

The community's updated vision is introduced in the second section of the plan. It is accompanied by a set of Guiding Principles that were used throughout the planning process to guide decision making and weigh trade-offs. Section 2 also includes a set of goals, policies, and objectives for each of the Planning Elements that support and help to achieve the Vision and Guiding Principles.

## **SECTION 3: PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO**

The third section of the Plan builds on the land use intensity matrix developed as part of the Vision San Marcos: A River Runs Through Us Comprehensive Plan, and advances many of those key concepts with the introduction of overlays and place types. Place types are an expression of the combination of high-level land use and land use intensity that help to communicate desired development qualities and patterns across San Marcos.

## **SECTION 4: AREA PLANS**

The fourth section of the Plan provides an overview of the Area Planning approach employed by San Marcos during the Comprehensive Plan effort and discusses the approach to developing and updating Regional Center plans, as well as Neighborhood Area Plans for areas across San Marcos. The section concludes with a summary of the Fiscal Analysis and an overview of each of the areas included in this initial round of Area Planning.

## **SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTATION**

The last main section of the Plan begins with an overview of the City's overall planning approach. The section then goes on to identify suggested updates to other San Marcos plans to ensure they are aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. The section concludes with a discussion of organizational capacity and coordination, as well as a summary of the metrics for tracking success.

The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan also includes a series of appendices, providing consolidated summaries and more detailed information pertaining to:

- Goals and Objectives;
- Key Findings from the Fiscal Impact Analysis;
- Methodology for Overlays;
- Comparison of the Preferred Scenario to the Trends Scenario; and
- Community Engagement.

# OUR VISION FOR EQUITABLE AND COMPATIBLE GROWTH





**Vision SMTX is a community-based update to the Comprehensive Plan for San Marcos. As part of the planning process, the community’s vision for the city was updated and paired with a set of guiding principles. The vision and guiding principles informed the Policy Framework that follows, as well as the recommendations included throughout the rest of this document.**

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*Using values articulated by the community throughout the early part of the planning process, a vision statement was drafted for San Marcos looking out to 2050. The community vision was created to help inform the guiding principles, goals, policies, and other recommendations included in this Plan.”*

# INTRODUCTION

In order to create a Comprehensive Plan that is successful and meaningful, the values of the community must be central to the process and outcomes. This understanding has been at the heart of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan process. Building on previous engagement efforts, the Plan’s inclusive process focused on hearing from as many voices as possible by providing a variety of opportunities for people to engage with the planning team and a variety of materials. What was learned from the community led to the development of a new community vision and guiding principles that were informed by community input and dialogue. The vision and guiding principles are supported by a set of goals, policies and objectives that nest within Planning Elements. Planning Elements are various topics critical to address when shaping the future of San Marcos and striving for the highest quality of living for all residents.





# COMMUNITY VISION

*San Marcos is a community of diverse and inclusive neighborhoods that protects and celebrates the river and other rich natural, historical and cultural assets; embraces its small-town feel, charm and quality of life; and leverages strategic development to continue building a sustainable community with enhanced access and opportunities for people and businesses.*

Using values articulated by the community throughout the early part of the planning process, a vision statement was drafted for San Marcos looking out to 2050. The community vision was created to help inform the guiding principles, goals, policies, and other recommendations included in this Plan. The vision statement describes how San Marcans picture their city in the future. This vision also establishes the lens through which the Preferred Growth Scenario and associated Place Types, introduced in the next section, were created and analyzed.

This thriving city nurtures the innovation and technology economy that blossomed over the past decade while facilitating equitable growth opportunities that promote diversity and preserve the genuine character of San Marcos.

The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan is based on building on the past while considering future needs to create a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive city comprising complete neighborhoods that provide equitable and people-focused development and amenities for the community.

The San Marcos River is a crucial amenity and natural asset in the City and responsible growth that minimizes environmental impacts to the river and other natural resources is foundational to keeping San Marcos a thriving and sustainable community.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Comprehensive Plan process and direction set throughout that process utilizes a set of guiding principles to navigate and narrow the vast range of options facing the community. The guiding principles presented below were drafted based on community and stakeholder input received during the visioning process. While the guiding principles are distinct in concept, the issues they address are cross-cutting. As such, potential benefits and tradeoffs across the guiding principles should be taken into consideration.







## Sustainable and Resilient

San Marcos strives to promote and balance economic, environmental resiliency, and social sustainability for current residents and future generations.



## Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive

San Marcos strives to maintain and create opportunity, choice and a sense of belonging for all residents, regardless of age, race/color, religious beliefs, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity, ability, income, education, or political affiliation.



## Unique and Complete

San Marcos strives to improve access to employment and essential goods and services throughout San Marcos while respecting individual preferences and protecting the unique character of existing neighborhoods and places.



## Supported and Connected

San Marcos strives to ensure that existing and new development throughout the community has sufficient infrastructure and access to critical amenities to support and connect residents, employees and visitors now and in the future through multiple modes of transportation.



## Strategic and Complementary

San Marcos strives to ensure that new development adds to the greater whole of the community and that the long-term impacts of development are considered in short-term decision making.

# POLICY FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW:

## Element Goals, Policies and Objectives

The Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan’s Policy Framework:

1. Builds upon the community vision and guiding principles.
2. Operationalizes the community’s priorities of improving access, better distributing the costs and benefits for growth, and creating asset-based and culturally rich places.
3. Builds on existing policy guidance provided by the previous Comprehensive Plan and other plans and studies prepared for San Marcos.
4. Establishes new policy direction for the City that will require partnerships and collaboration across departments, organizations, public, private, and non-profit sectors, and the broader community.

For each of the 23 Goals introduced, the Policy Framework includes a set of policy statements and defines success through a set of Objectives.

The table to the right defines each of the Policy Framework components in more detail. For each component, the question answered and a short description is accompanied with direction on how that component is intended to be used.

<b>Policy Framework Overview</b>			
<b>Framework Component</b>	<b>Question Answered</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>How Used</b>
<b>Goal</b>	What do we want to accomplish?	Top 23 critical community goals organized under ten planning elements (some are combined)	Used to communicate the highest priorities for the community; articulate key plan messaging; and provide structure for policies and objectives
<b>Policy</b>	How can we reach our goals?	Statements that identify the specific intent of the policy direction	Articulates specific direction, actions and strategies for achieving a goal/s; provides guidance for CIP and budgeting processes; guides departmental decision making
<b>Objective</b>	How will we know if we're successful?	Metrics for measuring progress of implementing each Goal (must be measurable)	Used for annual reporting on plan implementation progress and used as a community dashboard for reporting on Plan progress



## ARTS AND CULTURE

San Marcos has a diversity of arts, culture, and educational assets. Whether through continued collaboration or new policies, a critical component in the community’s future is the continued advancement of an artistic and cultural identity.

Downtown offers multiple venues within a short walk of the adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, the Texas State University campus has public art, as well as live performance venues, galleries and museums. These spaces provide areas where residents can engage and enrich their lives.

Community events also attract many out of town visitors and are an economic asset to the community. As San Marcos’ population changes and grows, it is important for the city to continue to invest in public art and cultural facilities. Investment in spaces, facilities, improved transportation access, and supportive infrastructure that enable the continuation and expansion of arts, culture, and events should be a priority in the future.





# GOALS AND POLICIES

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## **Goal AC-1: Foster arts and culture citywide to provide enrichment and education opportunities for all residents**

### **Policies**

- AC-1.1 Support existing creative establishments and facilitate the creation of a visual and performance arts and cultural center/district.
- AC-1.2 Identify the need and opportunities for new arts and culture related facilities such as libraries, museums, and community theaters as the city grows.
- AC-1.3 Update the Art in Public Places program and identify priority locations.
- AC-1.4 Approach arts and culture programming and funding with an equity lens to help underserved communities and organizations.
- AC-1.5 Develop a wayfinding and interpretive system for artistic, historic, and cultural resources.
- AC-1.6 Expand the library system and promote equitable access to services through mobile libraries and other tactics.
- AC-1.7 Leverage arts and culture assets for economic development through both tourism and local business growth.
- AC-1.8 Identify, inventory, and prioritize public and private arts and cultural resources for protection and enhancement.
- AC-1.9 Improve and enhance communication, marketing, and promotion of arts and culture programs.

**Goal AC-2: Strengthen the local network of arts and culture organizations and establish a dedicated funding stream**

**Policies**

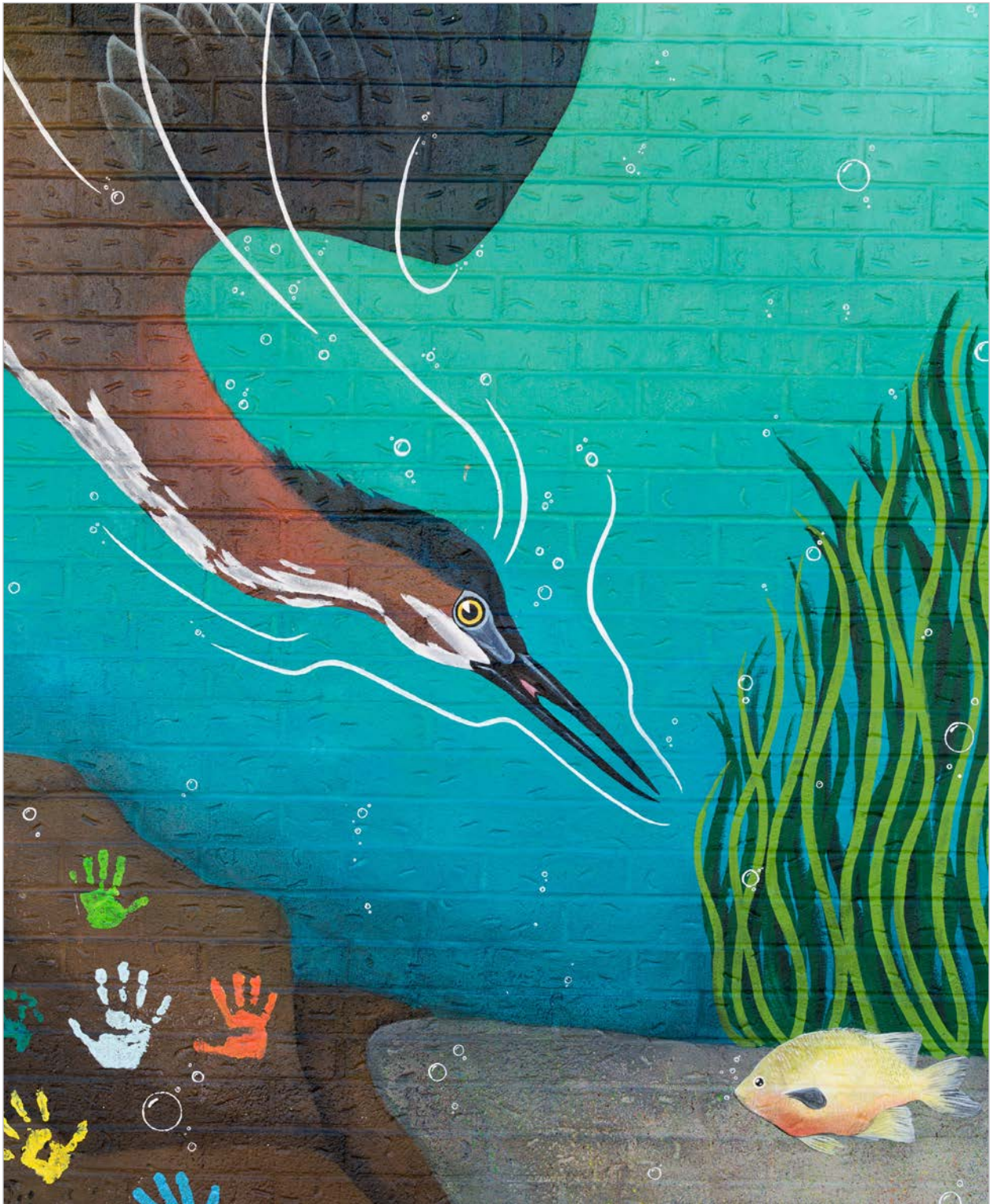
- AC-2.1 Implement the recommendations of the 2022 Arts Master Plan and update the Arts Master Plan Implementation Strategy at least every three years.
- AC-2.2 Develop a strategy for arts and culture funding and investment tied to new funding sources.
- AC-2.3 Improve coordination and collaboration among local arts and culture organizations and public agencies to support effective and efficient funding, programming, and promotion.
- AC-2.4 Establish one or more new City staff positions for arts and culture administration, programming, and outreach.

# OBJECTIVES

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- Number of arts and culture-related City programs and events
- Attendance at arts and culture events
- Participation in arts and culture programming
- Use of dedicated funding streams/ levels
- Economic impact of arts and culture
- Resident and visitor survey data (quantitative and qualitative), including:
  - Awareness of programs and events
  - Perception of San Marcos arts and culture
  - Feedback on programs and events
  - Artist housing needs







## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

San Marcos has a strong economy as well as strong growth opportunities. It is therefore important for the City to support its existing local employers and small businesses, as well as existing growth sectors, while also attracting new business to grow and diversify its employment base. San Marcos is situated in the heart of what has been coined the Texas Innovation Corridor, an area for commercialized innovation.

San Marcos' economy is driven by retail services, accommodations and food service, education, and health care/social assistance. These sectors account for nearly two-thirds of jobs in San Marcos, as well as a large portion of employment growth in recent years. While attracting new employers is an important economic development goal, this should not be done to the detriment of existing businesses.

The economic landscape is changing rapidly, both locally and nationally, and it will be important for San Marcos to anticipate trends, be proactive in responding to changes, and take advantage of positive developments. This is especially critical for retail, one of San Marcos' most important employment and economic sectors.





# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal ECD-1: Leverage local assets, including university, business, historic, natural, and arts and cultural resources, to provide economic opportunities at all income and educational levels**

**Policies**

- ECD-1.1 Support local businesses to encourage job creation and capital investment.
- ECD-1.2 Create opportunities for local companies to procure contracts with governmental agencies and educational institutions.
- ECD-1.3 Increase opportunities for graduating students to work and live in San Marcos.
- ECD-1.4 Coordinate with schools and workforce development programs to expand the talent pool for growing and target industries.

**Goal ECD-2: Strategically grow the San Marcos economy with targeted strategies and investments that attract talent, support local businesses, and create vibrant commercial centers**

**Policies**

- ECD-2.1 Protect and promote land uses that support target industries, support diversification of the City’s tax base, and enhance economic development by using tools such as intentional infrastructure planning, recruitment, and the land use entitlement process.
- ECD-2.2 Create incentive packages to support entrepreneurs, target industries, and growing industry sectors.
- ECD-2.3 Support job creation for all education and income levels.
- ECD-2.4 Review incentive policies with consideration of current economic development strategy.
- ECD-2.5 Address childcare as an essential component of economic development, such as evaluating land use allowances for childcare facilities, childcare as an economic incentive criteria, or expansion of city-sponsored children activities and camps.
- ECD-2.6 Support affordability (e.g., housing, living wages, high quality training programs, and anti-displacement policies) as an essential component of economic development.
- ECD-2.7 Evaluate the feasibility of locating a new City Hall in Downtown.

**Goal ECD-3: Ensure City economic development strategies and programs are aligned with local policies and priorities and position San Marcos to be regionally competitive**

**Policies**

- ECD-3.1 Regularly assess and update target industries and collaborate with all educational institutions to support workforce development for specific industry needs.
- ECD-3.2 Leverage the Greater San Marcos Partnership “Texas Innovation Corridor” identity to attract investment and new employment opportunities.
- ECD-3.3 Plan for commercial land and employment centers consistent with the Preferred Scenario Map, including Class A office, industrial, and other uses to attract target industries.
- ECD-3.4 Develop and implement a standard process for reviewing and scoring prospects for incentives.
- ECD-3.5 Develop partnerships to create transit connections between the community and major airports in nearby cities; and improve connections between the community and the San Marcos Regional Airport through enhanced transit, road, and utility infrastructure.
- ECD-3.6 Continue to coordinate with the Greater San Marcos Partnership and educational institutions.

# OBJECTIVES

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- Jobs-housing balance
- Student retention rate
- Unemployment / employment rates
- Employment opportunities at or above a living wage
- Incomes compared to housing affordability levels
- Percent of San Marcos residents who also work in the city
- Job vacancies in target industries, by income level, and compared to regional data
- Workforce development program placements
- Median household income
- Vacant commercial space in employment centers including Downtown







## ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

There is a wealth of natural resources in San Marcos that warrant environmental sustainability practices, including rivers, watersheds, and endangered habitats. The impact of development on the environment can be positive or negative – development can enhance environmental features for the better or it can take away from the natural environment. Sustainable practices will ensure these resources are maintained as San Marcos continues to grow and develop.

The widely accepted definition of sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the resources needed for future generations to meet their own needs. In recent decades, the concept of sustainability has evolved from discussions on environmental policies and practices to discussions on environmental, economic, and social equity policies and practices (otherwise known as the Triple Bottom Line framework or 3 Pillars of Sustainability).

A sustainable community:

- Utilizes land development methods that minimize impacts to the natural environment (Environmental Sustainability);
- Uses its resources and assets to provide long-term economic benefits (Economic Sustainability); and
- Seeks to provide benefits, opportunities, and services to all members of the community (Social Equity).

The following will focus on San Marcos' goal for environmental sustainability and will discuss the ways in which San Marcos seeks to incorporate environmentally sustainable development practices to achieve balanced growth and explore methods to expand upon its efforts using the recommendations included in this Plan.



# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal ENV-1: Protect, restore, and conserve open spaces and natural systems (particularly waterways, floodplains, watersheds, karst, and recharge features) as growth and development occur**

## **Policies**

- ENV-1.1 Incentivize and/or streamline development in targeted areas based on the Preferred Scenario Map with adequate drainage, water quality, and green infrastructure to accommodate growth.
- ENV-1.2 Establish or update green infrastructure policies, standards, and guidelines and adopt conservation guidelines.
- ENV-1.3 Establish or strengthen best practices for resource protection and preservation in the development process.
- ENV-1.4 Evaluate San Marcos River use and access and help mitigate impacts of recreation to the river and connected waterways.
- ENV-1.5 Establish riparian buffer zones for resource protection of rivers, creeks, retention ponds, and flood mitigation areas.
- ENV-1.6 Enforce the preservation of trees and native habitats.
- ENV-1.7 Mitigate erosion along riverbanks through habitat protection and ecological restoration. Protect and restore sensitive natural areas and habitats.
- ENV-1.8 Incorporate greenway and trails system within new developments that connect to the larger City and regional trail network.
- ENV-1.9 Continue to advance the implementation of the Habitat Conservation Plan, including endangered species and protections associated with river recreation.
- ENV-1.10 Establish goals to minimize water use in each sub-watershed over the period of this plan.

**Goal ENV-2: Ensure adaptability and resilience to natural, climate, and other unexpected events to protect human life and natural resources**

**Policies**

- ENV-2.1 Develop a regional water detention, quality, flood mitigation, and stormwater strategy that includes a fee structure.
- ENV-2.2 Implement Climate Action, Safety, and Hazard Master Plan strategies that mitigate the impacts of climate change and natural disasters.
- ENV-2.3 Establish resilient and sustainable approaches to ensuring a supply of safe groundwater and surface water, including water reuse and reclaim practices to prevent depletion of groundwater sources and minimize impact on regional water systems.

**Goal ENV-3: Facilitate reduced energy use, water consumption, and waste production and encourage green building practices**

**Policies**

- ENV-3.1 Promote the use of re-claimed water within new developments.
- ENV-3.2 Facilitate opportunities for education and outreach centered around the benefits of recycling, water conservation, energy conservation, etc.
- ENV-3.3 Establish Green Building standards that use a rating system for features, such as green roofs, water treatment and reuse, and energy efficiency.
- ENV-3.4 Provide financial incentives to encourage developers to implement green building practices, conservation-style development, and increased density in targeted areas as indicated on the Preferred Scenario Map.
- ENV-3.5 Promote the fiscal benefits of conservation and green building for residents, property owners, and developers.





# OBJECTIVES

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Indicators of success can be obtained by measuring and assessing changes in the following parameters for each sub-watershed:

- Percent impervious cover per subwatershed with quarterly update reports
- Potable water use
- Proportion of open space to population
- Per capita and citywide energy use
- Proportion of new open spaces and parks to new developed land
- Area of urban tree canopy
- Water quality and pollutants data (rivers, etc.)
- Endangered and threatened species protection measures
- Amount of recreational uses of natural spaces
- Flood mitigation





## HOUSING + NEIGHBORHOODS



Through the promotion of diverse housing choices, San Marcos can provide varied neighborhoods that support a high quality of life and enhance and maintain the small-town feel of the community.

As San Marcos grows and expands, the City must ensure continued investment in the traditional core neighborhoods. Continued investment in the form of new parks, public spaces, multimodal and transit infrastructure, and existing housing stock will help preserve the quality and value of these areas. New developments in existing neighborhoods and along existing corridors need to be compatible with the surrounding context. Strategic infill development that is compatible with the adjacent corridors and neighborhoods can enhance areas by infusing new commercial, employment, residential, and recreation opportunities that help make more complete and vibrant places.

New neighborhood parks, commercial amenities, trails, and bike paths are all investments that can be incorporated into existing and new development areas to increase the quality of life of residents. Both existing and new areas offer the opportunity to create more inclusive and equitable spaces that accommodate residents of varying incomes, housing types, transportation needs, ages, and ability levels.

San Marcos should strive for an appropriate mixture of housing types, commercial developments, and mixed-use places that help to enhance existing areas and create new livable neighborhoods. New and revitalized neighborhoods with access to parks and integrated trail networks and a range of other amenities for all ages can help promote healthy and active lifestyles for all residents. Revitalization of a neighborhood should not mean that the residents that have lived there the longest are forced from their homes with no options or choice to remain.



# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal HN-1: Ensure that San Marcos neighborhoods provide safe, affordable, and healthy homes and environments for residents**

## **Policies**

- HN-1.1 Update, review, and adopt a Housing Action Plan using the Workforce Housing Task Force Draft Plan in 2019 as a foundation. (See Plan Appendix)
- HN-1.2 Partner with community and business organizations to promote and inform/educate residents about resources for homeownership, residential upgrades, maintenance, and code enforcement.
- HN-1.3 Address the housing needs of those who are homeless, transitioning out of homelessness, and at risk of homelessness.
- HN-1.4 Partner with Texas State University to continuously gather growth projections in order to plan effectively for the implications of student/faculty/staff housing needs (housing location, types, and transportation needs).



**Goal HN-2: Promote diverse housing choices and attainability at all affordability levels to accommodate household size, preference, and characteristics over residents' life spans**

**Policies**

- HN-2.1 Create, evaluate, and implement tools to incentivize affordable housing and expand resources available for both Affordable (subsidized) housing development and to achieve overall housing affordability in the community, while ensuring quality and sustainable building practices.
- HN-2.2 Streamline the development process for priority housing development and to keep pace with population growth.
- HN-2.3 Encourage and incentivize diverse housing types.
- HN-2.4 Encourage all neighborhood centers identified on the Preferred Scenario Map to allow for multiple diverse housing types.
- HN-2.5 Support programs and resources to prevent displacement of existing neighborhood residents.
- HN-2.6 Strengthen programs and resources for first-time homebuyers.
- HN-2.7 Explore tools that will allow residents to downsize and/or age in place.
- HN-2.8 Support programs and enhance resources to protect renters to ensure affordable, safe, and stable rental housing options and ensure education on tenant rights and responsibilities.

**Goal HN-3: Protect and enhance the natural, cultural, and historic resources of all San Marcos communities through neighborhood stabilization, thoughtful growth, and compatible development**

**Policies**

- HN-3.1 Ensure transition zones, buffers, and other tools to ensure compatibility between buildings and neighborhoods.
- HN-3.2 Maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods by encouraging reinvestment, conservation, and enhancement of existing housing stock.
- HN-3.3 Adopt a Preservation Plan to guide the protection, preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of existing historic residences and resources, and the historic and cultural resources of minority communities.
- HN-3.4 Encourage tools and strategies to promote long-term affordability, such as community land trusts, land banks, shared equity models and developer agreements.



**Goal HN-4: Create walkable “15-minute” neighborhoods that provide easy access to essential services and amenities in both new and existing neighborhoods**

**Policies**

- HN-4.1 Encourage and allow housing in mixed use centers identified on the Preferred Scenario Map with close proximity to schools, employment centers, transit, recreational opportunities, and other community resources.
- HN-4.2 Evaluate parking standards for multifamily housing.
- HN-4.3 Coordinate land use and transportation planning with proposed developments to ensure safe and convenient connections to sidewalk, bike lane, and transit networks from residential neighborhoods.

## OBJECTIVES

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- Number of permits and certificates of occupancy by unit size, type and location
- Jobs to housing balance
- Number of affordable (subsidized) and senior units
- Tenancy rates (proportion of owner-occupied versus rental units)
- Continual update of Housing Needs Assessments (frequency to be determined)
- Vacancy rates of rental units
- Proportion of homes within a 15-minute walk of essential services and amenities (e.g., grocery, pharmacy, parks, etc.)
- Number of new residential units created through infill development
- Number of new diverse housing units built
- Cause for denied applications related to housing and certificates of appropriateness

## LAND USE + COMMUNITY DESIGN AND CHARACTER

A balanced future with equitable provision and distribution of housing, promotion of different types of businesses, and considerations for environmental impacts will help San Marcos continue to be an innovative, prosperous, and attractive community.

San Marcos offers a wide variety of neighborhoods for its residents ranging from historic and highly walkable districts to suburbs and from garden apartments with shared amenities to rural living with ample acreage and privacy. The promotion and integration of new housing types, parks, and other assets into existing and new neighborhoods can provide the community with new housing options and important amenities, but it also can put pressure on the existing community fabric and Historic districts. While change is inevitable, growth and evolution in San Marcos' historic areas must be balanced with preservation efforts and compatible development.

Infill development provides an opportunity to make existing areas of San Marcos more complete and inclusive. It provides the opportunity to infuse new types of housing into an area, thereby diversifying San Marcos' housing stock and providing housing that accommodates the needs of a diverse and growing population. The inclusion of varied housing options ranging from apartments to single family attached homes, such as townhomes, to more compact single family detached homes, provides options for lifelong residents of different backgrounds and abilities to remain in their neighborhoods.

While compatible and strategic infill development can create more complete and equitable neighborhoods, only a portion of San Marcos' future growth will be concentrated into these areas. In order to protect and preserve San Marcos' rural and natural lands, new development should be strategic and located where infrastructure and amenities can be easily planned for and provided as well as maintained fiscally.

Aging neighborhoods that face redevelopment pressures should support restoration and adaptive reuse of significant neighborhood structures because reuse of existing buildings supports sustainability goals and helps to maintain neighborhood character. Conversion of some residential structures at key intersections into supportive commercial or retail can enhance the neighborhood and provide needed amenities without detracting from the character that defines that neighborhood. Additionally, the integration of green spaces, public spaces, and unique design elements helps create identity, encourage resident interactions, and build a sense of community. The City of San Marcos should work with residents in underserved areas to provide these types of amenities.



# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal LU-1: Accommodate future growth throughout the City, with higher densities in mixed-use, compact, connected neighborhood centers consistent with the Preferred Scenario Map**

**Policies**

- LU-1.1 Update the Land Development Code to implement the Preferred Scenario Map.
- LU-1.2 Plan a large mixed-use center east of Interstate 35 and other mixed-use centers to locate businesses and services near residences.
- LU-1.3 Discourage sprawl by facilitating mixed-use development in appropriate locations, clustering development, and encouraging a mix of housing types.
- LU-1.4 Develop a program to identify and prioritize brownfield (potentially contaminated sites) and greyfield (underutilized sites with high impervious cover) sites in the city and ETJ for redevelopment.

**Goal LU-2: Ensure all residents have safe and convenient access to nearby basic amenities, goods, and services**

**Policies**

- LU-2.1 Allow a mix of land uses in neighborhood centers.
- LU-2.2 Require all developments to dedicate adequate public right-of-way or access easements to accommodate all modes of transportation and ensure creek buffers accommodate alternative modes of transportation that are designed to preserve the natural characteristics of the area.
- LU-2.3 Provide multimodal connectivity to and within new neighborhoods and developments.
- LU-2.4 Encourage health care facilities, medical offices, clinics, and pharmacies to locate in city and neighborhood centers.
- LU-2.5 Set aside areas for high quality public spaces during the development process for community and ecological benefit.



**Goal LU-3: Establish a set of tools and programs, including incentives, to direct and manage growth consistent with community goals**

**Policies**

- LU-3.1 Conduct Character Studies for priority areas.
- LU-3.2 Evaluate the fiscal impacts of various development types to ensure fiscal health for the City.
- LU-3.3 Encourage and incentivize a variety of diverse housing types, including, but not limited to accessory dwelling units, attached single-family homes, manufactured homes, and multifamily developments.
- LU-3.4 Establish parking standards that balance mobility and economic needs with best practices for compact, mixed-use development and sustainability goals.
- LU-3.5 Establish or strengthen design standards to ensure compatible development, densities, and transitions.
- LU-3.6 Ensure adequate City staff and resource levels to manage implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and Preferred Scenario Map.
- LU-3.7 Create a tool to analyze the “fiscal sustainability”, defined as the long-term public cost obligations and fiscal productivity, of new development proposals.

**Goal LU-4: Institutionalize and/or incentivize land use policies, development practices, and conservation design elements that protect or improve the natural environment as the City grows**

**Policies**

- LU-4.1 Establish and incentivize conservation development guidelines, green infrastructure practices, and compact development.
- LU-4.2 Encourage and incentivize clustered development to protect open space, provide recreation amenities, minimize impervious surfaces, and reduce flooding.
- LU-4.3 Develop incentives in the Land Development Code and Stormwater Technical manuals for dense housing in new areas of growth and activity centers to preserve land for community and ecological benefit.
- LU-4.4 Adopt standards for impervious cover limits for all of the city and extra-territorial jurisdiction to minimize flooding.
- LU-4.5 Develop a Green Infrastructure Master Plan for the city and extra-territorial jurisdiction to integrate in with new land development, existing neighborhoods, and downtown to minimize flooding.

# OBJECTIVES

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- Share of households within a 15-minute walk, bike ride or transit trip of mixed-use neighborhood centers
- Number of developments using conservation design, low-impact development, and green building practices
- Surface water quality and pollutants (rivers, etc.)
- Fiscal sustainability of city as growth occurs
- Location of growth as it relates to the Preferred Scenario Map



## PARKS & PUBLIC SPACE + HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

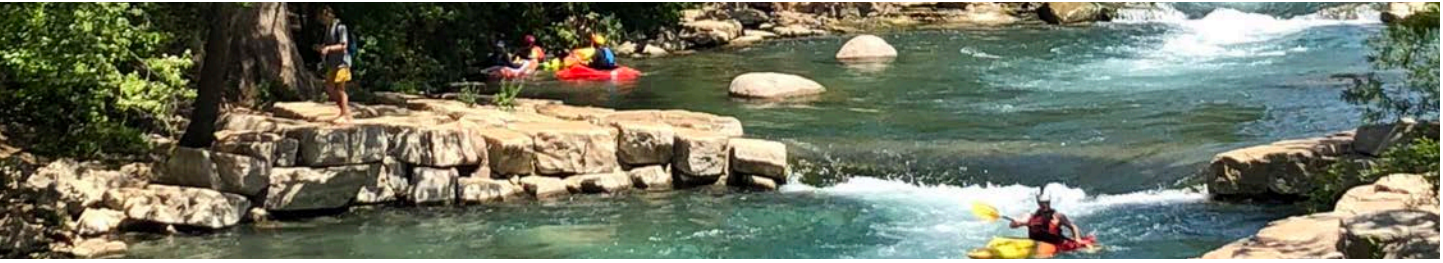
San Marcos has a robust system of parks, open space and trails. By enhancing access and expanding opportunities for active and healthy living, San Marcos will continue to be a highly desirable community that promotes and achieves high levels of resident well-being, satisfaction, and quality of life.

Active residents of all ages are the basis of a healthy and thriving community. Policies and programs that increase access to active transportation, parks and open space, recreation activities, healthy foods, and healthcare services all enhance overall community health and wellness. While San Marcos has a robust parks system, certain areas of the community suffer from access and connectivity issues. While it is not always feasible to provide sidewalk access to all amenities in dispersed areas, trail networks and multi-use paths that use drainage ways could be utilized to provide enhanced connections between parks, open spaces, schools, and neighborhoods.

Planning for and providing infrastructure and services is one of the most important responsibilities of a municipality. Residents' need to be secure in the knowledge that they can rely on quality emergency, community, and public safety services for current populations and that proper plans are developed to provide for future growth.







# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal PPS-1: Provide an accessible, diverse connected network of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities to serve the entire San Marcos community**

## **Policies**

- PPS-1.1 Create a Greenways Master Plan to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connections between parks, open spaces and recreation facilities and to encourage active transportation.
- PPS-1.2 Implement a signage, wayfinding and interpretation system to improve access to and information about parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.
- PPS-1.3 Enhance online information to include transparency about parks and recreation facilities, programs, and bond spending.
- PPS-1.4 Promote the design and programming of facilities and parks that provide multi-generational amenities, adequate shade and heat relief features, and access to water.
- PPS-1.5 Ensure equitable access of parks for residents across the city, particularly east of IH-35 or where park access is currently limited.
- PPS-1.6 Ensure programs and facilities remain affordable to all residents.
- PPS-1.7 Conduct regular outreach on community priorities and update the Parks Master Plan Action Plan accordingly.
- PPS-1.8 Create a community-driven rubric for new connections and existing maintenance of sidewalks and ensure the Sidewalk Plan is reviewed by City Council and the community every five years.



**Goal PPS-2: Ensure stewardship of the rivers, aquifers, and other sensitive lands and natural resources while providing outdoor recreation opportunities**

**Policies**

- PPS-2.1 Prioritize native plants and low-maintenance materials and design of parks, greenways, and facilities.
- PPS-2.2 Create an Urban Forest Management Plan to protect and enhance the city’s tree canopy.
- PPS-2.3 Locate parks, open spaces, and natural areas to protect and benefit the aquifer.
- PPS-2.4 Prioritize acquiring land in the re-charge zone and sensitive aquifer areas.

**Goal PPS-3: Balance investments in maintenance, operations, and upgrades of existing parks and open spaces with conservation and protection of open spaces and acquiring new land and facilities**

**Policies**

- PPS-3.1 Create and implement a policy that ensures adequate resources are identified to develop and maintain parks and public spaces.
- PPS-3.2 Update Park impact fees for developers to ensure a fair and sustainable revenue source for parks.
- PPS-3.3 Establish a park amenities schedule for a maintenance, repair, and replacement program of both public parkland and privately-owned public parks and open spaces.
- PPS-3.4 Plan for recreation, protection, and conservation of the river south of downtown and east of IH-35.



**Goal PPS-4: Provide reliable emergency, community and public safety services**

**Policies**

- PPS-4.1 Ensure emergency, police, and fire services meet or exceed the level of service needs as the population grows.
- PPS-4.2 Encourage the location of health and community service providers in mixed-use neighborhood centers.
- PPS-4.3 Create and regularly update / maintain a fire and police station location plan which identifies the appropriate locations for future fire, emergency and police stations based on response times.
- PPS-4.4 Ensure transparency of bond fund expenditures by reporting to the public on fiscal allocations.

# OBJECTIVES

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- Parks Master Plan Actions completed or underway
- Level of service standards for emergency services
- Number of parks, open spaces and facilities connected to a trail or greenway
- Resident access to parks and open spaces
- Park maintenance funding level and staffing

# TRANSPORTATION

An integrated multimodal transportation network will provide San Marcos with safe and inviting intra- and inter-city pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular, and transit connections that will advance resident access and promote a more inclusive and equitable city and region.

Transportation facilitates trade, travel, exchange, and social interaction. A city's thoroughfare system forms one of the most visible and permanent elements of the community. It establishes the framework for community growth and development that, along with the land use, establishes a physical and somewhat permanent expression of long-range public policy. This element's goals and policies align with recent and current planning efforts to provide a balanced transportation system and examine methods to expand the system to offer further choices for how people travel.

To accommodate and plan for the change and growth in San Marcos over the next 30 years, the City's Transportation Master Plan should be updated, as appropriate, to incorporate the projected growth pattern reflected in the Preferred Growth Scenario and the below goals and policies.







# GOALS AND POLICIES

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**Goal TR-1: Develop a robust, balanced, multi-modal transportation system that provides safe, comfortable, and convenient mobility options for people of all abilities**

## **Policies**

- TR-1.1 Update the 2018 Transportation Plan to be consistent with the Preferred Scenario Map and address current transportation issues.
- TR-1.2 Establish or update Complete Streets policies, standards, and guidelines.
- TR-1.3 Plan and design Complete Streets in, around, and to new developments, redevelopments, subdivisions, the University, Downtown, and other high-density residential areas.
- TR-1.4 Coordinate with local and regional agencies to meet the goals of this plan.
- TR-1.5 Use transportation modeling and analysis to inform decision-making and garner community support.

**Goal TR-2: Create a multi-modal, well-connected, and efficient transportation network that minimizes congestion, energy use, and climate pollutants**

**Policies**

- TR-2.1 Improve transit coverage, frequency, and marketing throughout the city and to adjacent cities, with emphasis serving places where people live, work and access basic services as well as major employment areas.
- TR-2.2 Evaluate the need for a City staff position to manage Transportation Demand Management programs to encourage active transportation, transit, and services such as rideshare and park and ride systems.
- TR-2.3 Identify, promote, and incentivize “first and last mile” solutions to better connect people to their destinations.
- TR-2.4 Incorporate the Sidewalk Master Plan into other mobility initiatives and plans and review/ updated as needed.
- TR-2.5 Create a community-driven rubric for new connections and existing maintenance of sidewalks and ensure the Sidewalk Plan is reviewed by City Council and the community every five years.
- TR-2.6 Continue to plan for and invest in bicycle infrastructure including protected bike lanes, off-street paths, and end of trip facilities.
- TR-2.7 Improve transit stops and related amenities including shade, shelter, signage, wayfinding, seating, route and schedule information, and safety improvements.



**Goal TR-3: Coordinate land use and transportation planning to support a healthy economy, viable transit systems, and healthy neighborhoods**

**Policies**

- TR-3.1 Ensure a well-integrated, connected transportation network that includes a hierarchy of roadways appropriate for adjacent land uses and development types.
- TR-3.2 Prioritize filling gaps in existing transportation infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades) consistent with area plans, needs assessments, and local priorities.
- TR-3.3 Incorporate local arts and culture into transportation infrastructure such as transit centers and stops.
- TR-3.4 Incorporate Vision Zero goals and objectives into transportation plans, programs, and projects.
- TR-3.5 Establish/ update green infrastructure policies, standards, and guidelines for roadways.
- TR-3.6 Evaluate and update parking policies, code requirements, and/or management plans.
- TR-3.7 Develop and implement a parking fee structure for high-demand areas.
- TR-3.8 Ensure safe crossing options under I-35 corridor and other major arterials/high traffic roadways to connect neighborhoods and residents.

## OBJECTIVES

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- Mode share
- Congestion
- Miles of continuous pedestrian / bike infrastructure
- Crashes and injuries
- Transit ridership and frequency
- Number of Transportation Management Plan actions implemented
- Share of homes within a 15-minute walk of a transit stop
- Improved “walk score” grades



# PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO



A key aspect of the update to the Comprehensive Plan was revisiting the Preferred Growth Scenario directing future investments and development in San Marcos. Vision SMTX builds on the community's previous Preferred Growth Scenario, but also adjusts to the development of the past decade, new community ideas, and national best practices. This section also introduces a framework for helping to ensure that development in San Marcos is contributing to complete places and communities.

# INTRODUCTION

During the Comprehensive Plan engagement process the community communicated a desire for all areas of San Marcos to meet the daily needs of nearby residents and employees. San Marcans expressed the need for access to their everyday essentials as well as amenities such as parks, shops, restaurants, trails, and community spaces near where they live. Most notably, people from all over San Marcos identified the need to provide better access to goods and services for those living and working on the east side of IH-35. In addition, many participants cited examples of newer neighborhoods east and west of IH-35 that lack sufficient amenities and services within a reasonable distance. In turn, residents in many of these newer neighborhoods have no choice but to drive for nearly all of their trips. Neighborhoods that provide people with safe and convenient choices for a variety of goods and services, jobs, and housing options are more equitable and contribute to complete communities. As expressed throughout the public engagement, a key objective for this updated Comprehensive Plan is to leverage future public and private investment to help ensure all areas of San Marcos can become complete places.



# COMPLETE PLACES & COMPONENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Complete Communities are made up of a variety of places that provide opportunities for people to live, work, and play. Many areas in San Marcos today are single use. For example, residential neighborhoods that have no nearby goods and services, or employment areas that are far removed from the housing where employees live. These homogenous areas mean that the average San Marcan has to travel farther and longer to access all of their needs. This contributes to unnecessary demands on the roadway network, traffic congestion, environmental impacts, and a higher cost of living for many households. It also means that those who are not able to drive, bike, or use transit may not have their needs met. More simply put, an incomplete community with few or poorly distributed amenities and services is inequitable and impacts transportation, health, quality of life, and the environment.

By locating a variety of places near each other and promoting a more equitable distribution of mixed use places, communities can benefit from the proximity of complementary uses, such as homes adjacent to opportunities to shop and dine, or employment centers close to commercial areas where people can access services after work. In addition to a variety of places, a Complete Community should include a variety of amenities and benefits within each place. This means embedding high-quality parks,



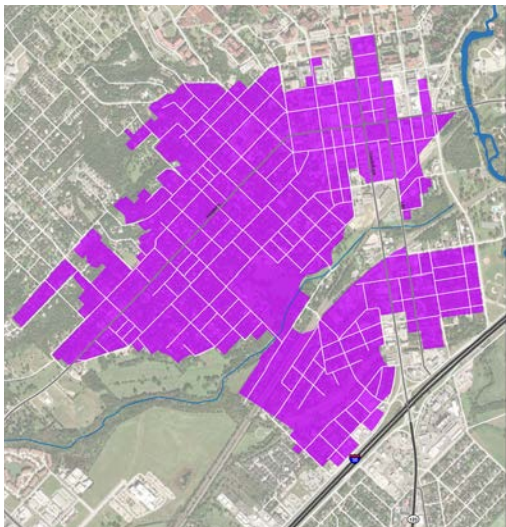
open space, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, parking, and other community benefits within each place that make up a neighborhood or area of the city.

Many of San Marcos' original neighborhoods, especially those closest to Downtown, benefit from access to shops, restaurants, cultural amenities, employment opportunities, civic offerings, and recreation. The streets are well connected and for the most part, daily needs can be obtained on foot, by bike, or by car. While new development cannot replicate the treasured Historic character of these neighborhoods, they do provide a model and inspiration for what new development and future investments in San Marcos can strive to achieve.

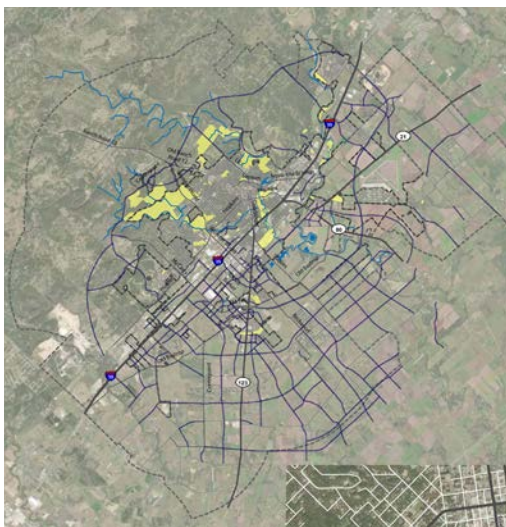


## COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND OVERLAYS

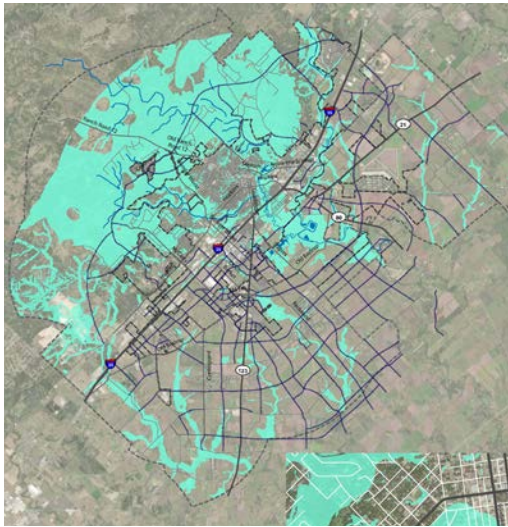
As San Marcans articulated the desire to learn from the DNA of the oldest parts of the community, they also expressed a strong desire to minimize the impacts of new development on historic, cultural, and environmental assets. As a result, the data from the previous Comprehensive Plan’s land use suitability map was updated and reorganized to better understand and more explicitly illustrate the various assets and constraints that must be considered when planning for future growth and development. Prior to drafting any detailed growth scenarios, it was important to identify those areas with historical, cultural, and environmental assets. The result was three distinct overlays that influenced the allocation of employment and housing, as well as the composition and assignment of various high level land uses and land use intensities (described in the next sections).



**Historic Resource Overlay:** The My Historic SMTX Resources Survey was utilized to help shape the overlay. A contiguous area was created that included all properties ranked medium and high priority in the Historic Resource Survey. For the scenario mapping and modeling exercise, jobs and housing were only allocated to vacant parcels within the Historic Resources Overlay. In addition, the assignment of high-level land uses and land use intensities largely reflected what already exists today.



**Cultural Resource Overlay:** To help inform the boundaries for the Cultural Resource Overlay, the Cultural Resource data layers from the prior Land Use Suitability map were used. These did not include Historic Districts as those were included in the Historic Resource Overlay. Items that were included in the overlay were city parks, fish hatcheries, and cemeteries. As such, no housing or jobs were allocated to any area mapped within the Cultural Resource Overlay.



**Environmental Overlay:** For the Environmental Overlay, updated portions of the City’s Land Use Suitability Map (LUS) were utilized. The input layers included in the LUS were related to:

- The Edwards Aquifer;
- Endangered and Threatened Species;
- Floodplains;
- Priority Watersheds;
- Sensitive Feature Protection Cone;
- Steep Slopes;
- Erosive Soils;
- Vegetation;
- Water Quality Zone and Buffer Zone; and
- The River Corridor Protection Zone

These inputs were used to recalculate environmentally constrained areas on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the least constrained and 5 being the most constrained. The Environmental Overlay includes all areas scoring a 5 within the City Limits and all areas scoring a 4 or 5 outside the City Limits, but within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). For scenario planning, a maximum of 50% of areas within the environmental overlay were “developed” with allocations of housing and jobs. In addition, high level land use and land use intensity were assigned strategically to minimize the amount of land within the environmental overlay necessary to accommodate projected development.

## HIGH-LEVEL LAND USE

Building on the previous Comprehensive Plan, the scenario planning process utilized a simplified set of high-level land uses in an attempt to strike a balance between providing direction and flexibility for future land use. High level land use is intended to provide a certain degree of clarity and certainty for the community, developers, property owners, staff, and decision makers without being overly prescriptive. The four high-level land use categories used to articulate future land use in the detailed scenario planning process and in the preferred growth scenario include:

- **Neighborhood:** The Neighborhood high-level land use category includes existing and new areas of the community that are primarily, but not exclusively residential in nature. While the majority of these areas should focus on housing, the best versions of the Neighborhood high-level land use category include strategically located commercial, cultural, and recreational uses.
- **Mixed Use:** The Mixed Use high-level land use category includes existing and new areas of San Marcos that are characterized by a horizontal or vertical integration of multiple uses in close proximity to each other. These areas are envisioned to include a combination of residential, commercial, cultural, and recreational uses. Sometimes these uses will be stacked within individual buildings, but often they will be located adjacent to one another with building use seemingly changing from one structure to the next.
- **Commercial/Employment:** The Commercial/Employment high-level land use category includes single use commercial areas, light industrial, heavy industrial, manufacturing and distribution, and a variety of campus uses (civic, educational, medical, and office). Similar to the above categories, commercial/employment areas benefit from some integration of cultural and recreational uses.
- **Conservation/Reserve:** The Conservation/Reserve high-level land use category includes larger parks, open spaces, natural areas, and agricultural areas, or compact residential development that minimizes the use of land by clustering housing to preserve open space. These areas are intended to include minimal development during the life of the Comprehensive Plan.

## INTENSITY

The other major factor that informed the scenario planning process and the resulting place type designations (described in the next section) is land use intensity. Land use intensity is paired with high-level land use designations to provide a certain level of direction related to the characteristics of development beyond the use of a building or property. Land use intensity provides general direction for the density and form of development.

- **Low Intensity:** Low Intensity areas are generally lower in scale and have a lower proportion of the land area covered by buildings. In the case of Neighborhoods, this is generally reflected in detached and attached single family and smaller scale multiplex development. Accessory Dwelling Units fit within Low Intensity residential areas. For Mixed-Use areas, Low Intensity is generally reflected in one to two story development that is usually horizontally mixed. In Commercial/Employment areas, Low Intensity is usually reflected in larger separation between buildings with larger footprints. Low intensity areas that require parking normally rely on on-street parking and/or off-street surface parking lots.
- **Medium Intensity:** Medium Density areas typically have taller buildings in closer proximity to each other than Low Intensity areas. In Neighborhoods, the Medium Density intensity largely includes small to medium scale attached homes and multifamily residential products. In Mixed Use and Commercial/Employment areas, Medium Density typically includes 3-5 story development in a more urban format with buildings near or attached to each other. Parking in Medium Intensity areas is typically a combination of on-street parking, smaller off-street surface parking lots, and some parking structures.
- **High Intensity:** High intensity areas are intended to reflect the tallest and/or most closely situated development in San Marcos. Most simply put, High Intensity areas include the most development per acre. The result in residential areas are taller buildings typically requiring elevators that are closely situated to each other. Community input gathered through the scenario planning process resulted in the High Intensity designation only being applied to the Neighborhood high-level land use designation. The maximum land use intensity of Mixed Use and Commercial/Employment areas is envisioned as medium.



# PLACE TYPES

Most comprehensive planning documents provide direction for future growth through only a land use map. Future land use, which informs parcel-based zoning, does not give guidance on the aspects of place like building form, streets, multi-modal facilities and connections, and open space, that make it comfortable for those who use it. To achieve the goal of truly Complete Communities, the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan introduces Place Types, which provide direction beyond just land use at the parcel level. A Place Type thinks about a place more holistically and at a larger scale, incorporating guidance for land use, transportation, layout, design, and more. A Place Typology defines a set of Places that are unique and authentic to the community and its needs. Utilizing combinations of High-Level Land Use and Intensity (both described above), a set of nine Place Types were developed through the planning process, including:

- **Neighborhood Low**
- **Neighborhood Medium**
- **Neighborhood High**
- **Neighborhood Transition**
- **Mixed Use Low**
- **Mixed Use Medium**
- **Commercial/Employment Low**
- **Commercial/Employment Medium**
- **Conserve/Reserve**

## COMPONENTS OF PLACE TYPES

Each of the nine Place Types is depicted and described in the following section. Before presenting each, it is important to understand the organization and approach to articulating the unique combinations of high-level land use and land use intensity that comprise the nine Place Types.

**Overview:** Each Place Type includes an overall objective and description. The overview also includes a handful of summary characteristics related to land use, built form, mobility, and amenities.

**Existing and Proposed Models:** The next component of the Place Types is a graphic depiction of the types of places that exist today in San Marcos and a similar illustration of the aspirational expression of the Place Type. While much of the growth in housing units and employment will be accommodated with new development, it was important to explore how existing places can improve to better achieve the vision and goals of the Plan.

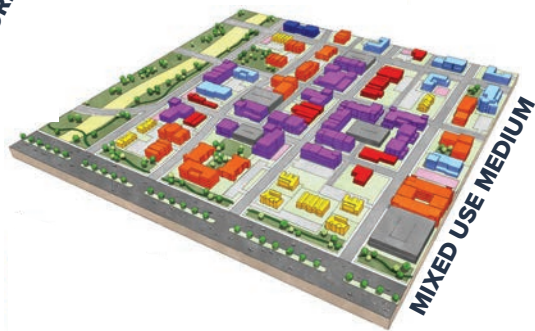
**Place Type Highlights:** The Existing and Proposed models are followed with an annotated version of the proposed Place Type highlighting key features and relationships. While it is highly unlikely that any development will look just like the proposed Place Type illustration, the graphic depictions should be used as a guide and inspiration to achieve the larger and more nuanced objectives and intent for each type of place.



**Place Type Characteristics:** The description of each Place Type concludes with a table more clearly delineating the key characteristics and parameters of the place in several important categories.

- **Primary Land Uses:** Primary land uses summarize the main uses that will be found in each Place Type. This section also provides some insight as to how those uses may benefit those living, working and visiting that place.
- **Secondary Land Uses:** Secondary land uses provide a list of additional land uses that are appropriate within this type of place, but in lower numbers, smaller concentrations, and less frequency overall.
- **Mobility Characteristics:** Mobility characteristics describe how people travel to and within Place Types. This category includes guidance for the street network, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, transit facilities, and access for each Place Type.
- **Parking:** This characteristic describes the main approaches to automobile parking in each Place Type.
- **Parks and Open Space:** Parks and open space characteristics describe the types of active and passive recreation spaces typically located within a Place Type, including private open space, public open space, parks, greenways, and natural or preservation areas. Parks and open space also often include “placemaking” elements which may include amenities and physical attributes that make the park a desirable place to visit.
- **Desirable Transitions:** This characteristic identifies the other Place Types that tend to accommodate the most appropriate and desirable land use and built form transitions from one place to another.
- **Fiscal Considerations:** The fiscal considerations briefly summarize the fiscal implications of each place type at a high level, comparing costs associated with developing and serving a particular type of place to the expected revenues that would likely be generated by that place.

**Overlay Characteristics/Considerations:** The overlay characteristics/considerations identify how the Place Type characteristics may be modified when developed in historic, cultural, or environmental overlays. It also indicates when a Place Type should not be developed in a particular overlay.





# NEIGHBORHOOD LOW



*To recognize existing neighborhoods which are primarily single family detached housing, guide development of new “traditional neighborhoods”, and promote a thoughtful introduction of other housing types in these areas in ways that maintain their character.*

The Neighborhood Low Place Type is an aspirational version of what most people likely picture when they think of a residential neighborhood in a smaller community. In order for San Marcos to achieve many of the goals related to high quality environmental assets and open spaces and the desire for a more connected community, Neighborhood Low places should integrate additional housing options, multimodal transportation connections, a small degree of commercial development within or nearby, recreational opportunities, and water quality features. Neighborhood Low areas include opportunities for greater housing diversity that should include accessory dwelling units (ADUs), small multiplexes such as a duplex, and certain attached single-family products that do not represent a significant departure from the scale, bulk and massing of the predominant building forms.

**Land Use:** Primarily detached single-family residential with ADUs, attached single-family residential, small-scale commercial, and civic/cultural uses

**Built Form:** Generally, 1-2 story development set back from the street with side and back yards. Some Neighborhood Low areas may have alleys with garages in the rear of housing; the typical density of these areas is 3-7 units per acre

**Mobility:** A well-connected network of walkable, local streets providing strong linkages within the Place Type and to surrounding areas with transit on key corridors

**Amenities:** Parks (with integrated stormwater features), trails, public art, and small-scale civic facilities

Existing locations of Neighborhood Low contain primarily low-density, single-family residences with limited additional uses. Community or Institutional uses, such as schools or public services, may be present in the neighborhood. Riverfronts, creeks, and major roadway frontages are typically underutilized.



**LEGEND**

-  SINGLE-FAMILY
-  INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
-  PARK/OPENSOURCE
-  GREENWAY
-  PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
-  SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY



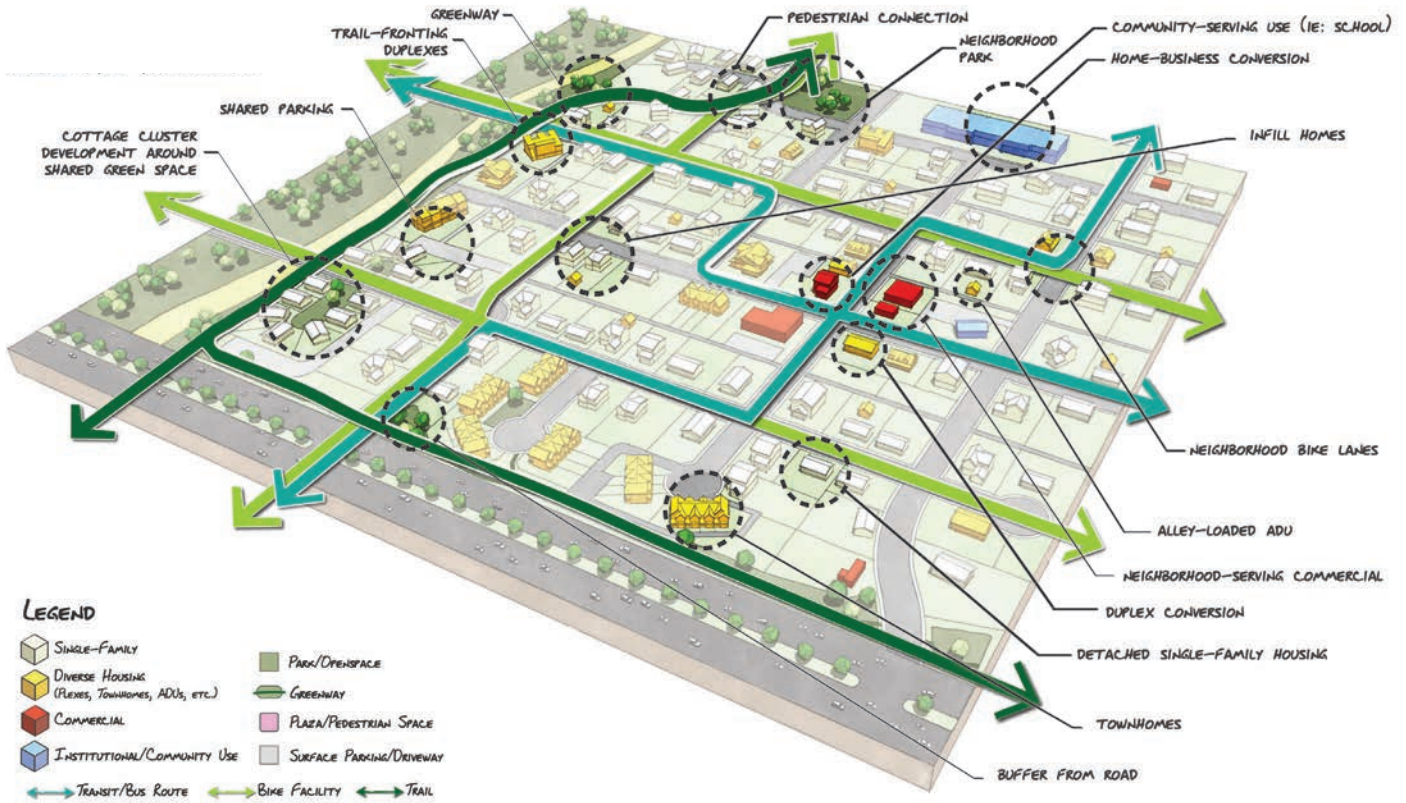
**LEGEND**

-  SINGLE-FAMILY
-  DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
-  PARK/OPENSOURCE
-  GREENWAY
-  PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
-  SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
-  TRANSIT/BUS ROUTE
-  BIKE FACILITY
-  TRAIL

To create a better connected and lively neighborhood, the neighborhood should include a mix of housing options such as detached single-family homes, townhomes, and ADUs. In addition to more dwelling units and housing options, small-scale commercial development in strategic locations serving the neighborhood should be included.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Cottage cluster neighborhoods with shared green space



High-quality pedestrian connectivity



Trail-oriented middle housing



Well marked bike lanes and transit routes on key corridors



Green space buffer with off-street trail along major roadways



Neighborhood-serving commercial development



<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached Single-Family Residential</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attached Single-Family Residential and Multiplexes (ex: duplex, triplex)</li> <li>• Accessory Dwelling Units</li> <li>• Small-Scale Commercial</li> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> <li>• Parks</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower density road network, primarily local streets</li> <li>• Sidewalks and/or multi-use pathways and shared streets</li> <li>• Transit connections typically on larger key corridors in or around neighborhood</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily self parked in garages, carports and driveways</li> <li>• Also on-street</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Parks as an organizing element of development</li> <li>• Pockets Parks to provide small-scale recreational opportunities closer to more residents</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features, passive recreation amenities, and/or gathering spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Transition</li> <li>• Neighborhood-Medium</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Conserve/Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$1,113 per acre, \$176 per new person)</li> <li>• Higher tax revenue due to greater presence of single-family homes, but highest cost to serve (per new person) of all Place Types; generates largest increase in new streets to maintain</li> <li>• Greater cost to serve if located far from existing fire stations, outside of Hays County, or outside existing water and sewer service areas</li> </ul>

**Overlay Characteristics/Considerations**

Historic Resource	Adaptive reuse, additions and new development should be contextually sensitive
Environmental	Clustered and Low Impact Development with overall development limited to 50% of land area
Cultural Resource	No Development





# NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIUM



*To recognize existing neighborhoods which are primarily attached single family and multi-family housing and to guide the development of new medium density neighborhoods that are better connected to amenities, goods, and services.*

The neighborhood medium Place Type can take multiple forms, but generally includes a combination of townhomes or rowhouses, smaller apartment and condominium buildings, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and some mixed use commercial development. While some Neighborhood Medium places may continue to be more auto-oriented, even those developments should better integrate connectivity to surrounding areas, water quality features and other amenities. Rather than being their own isolated communities, measures should be taken to complement and strengthen the larger community areas where they are located. Ideally, Neighborhood Medium areas should be highly walkable with well-designed circulation and ground floors that engage with the streets and development nearby, as well as enhance the pedestrian experience.

**Land Use:** Primarily attached single-family residential development, ADUs, low to medium-scale multifamily residential with some mixed use commercial

**Built Form:** Generally, 2-5 story development that is ideally oriented to the surrounding streets with minimal setbacks, but some Neighborhood Medium may be set back from major roads; the typical density of these areas is 6-12 units per acre

**Mobility:** Strong connections to surrounding areas; ideally with a well-connected network of walkable, local streets, but potentially with internally focused pathways and private shared access drives with transit provided on key corridors

**Amenities:** Parks (with integrated stormwater features), public art, civic facilities

Existing locations of Neighborhood Medium tend to include small concentrations of townhomes and/or multifamily residences intermixed with housing types more typical of Neighborhood Low areas. Neighborhood Medium development tends to take the form of “walk-up” or garden-style apartments whereby small-scale apartment buildings sit in the middle of surface parking lots. Riverfronts, creeks, and major roadway frontages are typically underutilized.



**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY



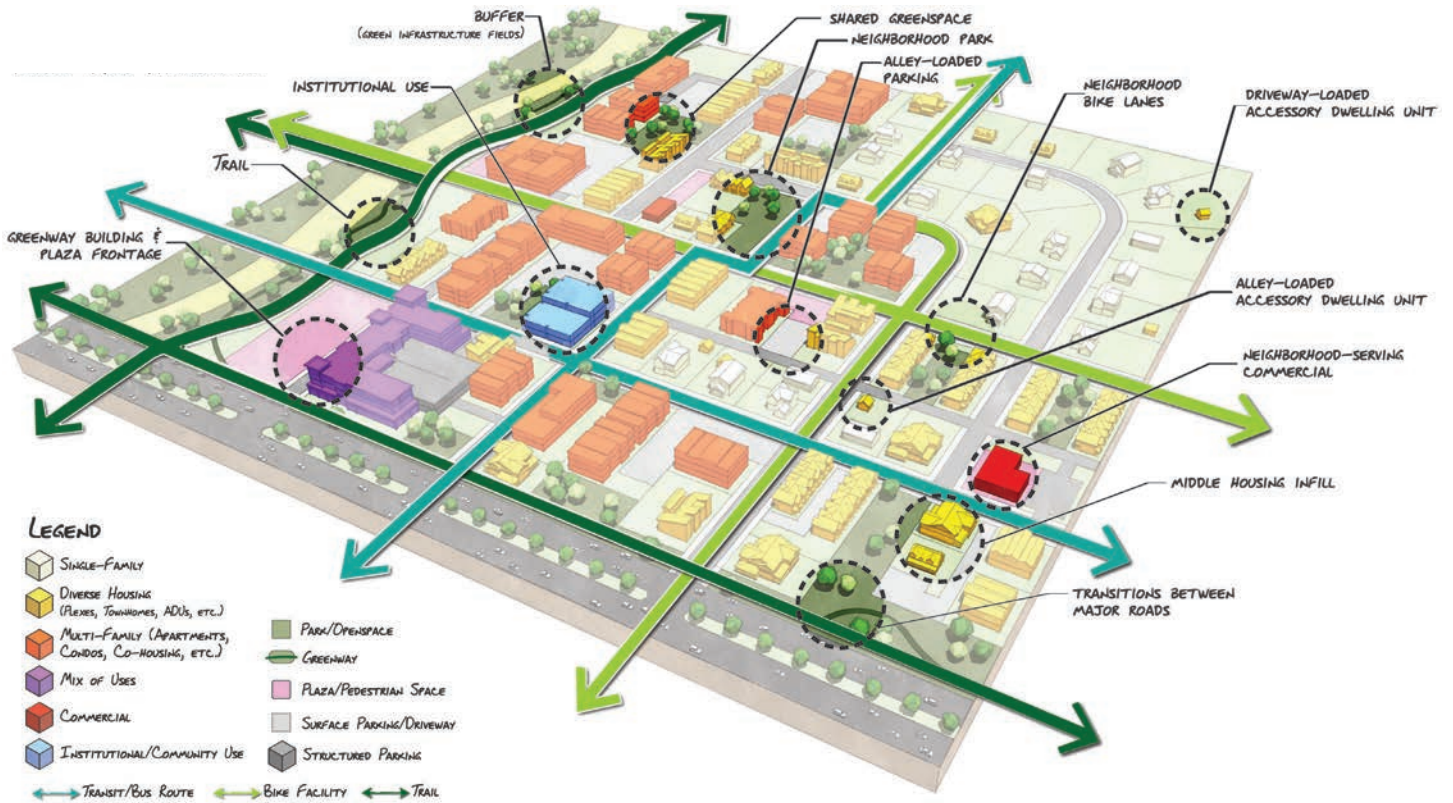
**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING

To achieve a more connected and walkable neighborhood that helps to fill the “missing middle” or diverse housing options in the community, a more cohesive development pattern should be encouraged in terms of the size and scale of housing types, as well as the relationship that the Neighborhood Medium structures have to each other. Parks, plazas, greenways, and trails should be integrated to strengthen the sense of community and quality of life for residents and visitors to the area. Riverfronts and street frontages are better utilized with building facades along the street edge, trails, and public spaces.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Accessory dwelling units



Middle housing options



Neighborhood parks and shared green spaces





<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attached Single-Family Residential</li> <li>• Accessory Dwelling Units</li> <li>• Low to Medium-Scale Multifamily Residential</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Institutional; Parks and Open Space; Small to Medium Scale Commercial</li> <li>• Mixed Use Commercial</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium density road network, primarily collector and local streets</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Dedicated bike facilities on higher order streets</li> <li>• Transit connections on collectors and on larger key corridors in or around neighborhood</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily self parked in garages, carports and driveways</li> <li>• Small off-street parking lots</li> <li>• Small structured parking</li> <li>• Also on-street where feasible</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Parks to provide active and passive recreation opportunities for nearby residents</li> <li>• Community Parks to provide recreational opportunities, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to help activate smaller interstitial spaces and provide opportunities for placemaking elements</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features and green infrastructure, flood mitigation, passive recreation amenities, and/or gathering spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> <li>• Higher Density Neighborhood</li> <li>• Neighborhood Transition</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Lower Density Neighborhood</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Consideration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$1,669 per acre, \$219 per new person)</li> <li>• Higher housing diversity and density generally reduces cost to serve; location of development can vary impact significantly</li> <li>• Greater cost to serve if located far from existing fire stations, outside of Hays County, or outside existing water and sewer service areas</li> </ul>

### Overlay Characteristics/Considerations

Historic Resource	N/A
Environmental	Clustered and Low Impact Development with overall development limited to 50% of land area
Cultural Resource	No Development



# NEIGHBORHOOD HIGH



*To guide the development of moderate to higher intensity housing types to meet a range of housing needs in proximity to medium and high intensity mixed use centers. They require adequate transportation facilities to connect residents to jobs and services.*

The Neighborhood High Place Type represents the highest intensity version of residential development envisioned for San Marcos. With mostly medium to higher-scale apartments and condominiums and some townhomes, this neighborhood type concentrates a large number of residents in a smaller geography. As such, Neighborhood High areas should include some mixed use commercial on ground floors and be in close proximity to concentrations of other mixed use and commercial development, as well as civic and recreational amenities. Development should be largely urban in format and character with buildings that create pleasant streetscapes, include engaging and pedestrian-oriented ground floors, and include primarily structured parking.

**Land Use:** Primarily medium to higher-scale multifamily residential and attached single-family residential with mixed use commercial

**Built Form:** Generally 5 story development that is oriented to the surrounding streets with minimal setbacks; parking tends to be structured with some smaller off-street parking lots; the typical density of these areas is 12+ units per acre

**Mobility:** A well-connected network of streets accommodating all modes of transportation with a combination of dedicated and shared facilities

**Amenities:** A full range of parks with integrated stormwater elements and features for residents and visitors, public art, civic facilities

Existing locations of Neighborhood High development tend to be auto-oriented in nature with buildings set back from the street with surface parking lots primarily fronting the street. Amenities such as playgrounds or open areas tend to be entirely private and intended only for residents. Most Neighborhood High areas, especially those downtown and in other areas close to campus, are mainly for-rent developments that cater to students and some young professionals. In addition, nearby commercial amenities tend to be limited with the exception of downtown.



**EXISTING**

**LEGEND**

- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY



**PROPOSED**

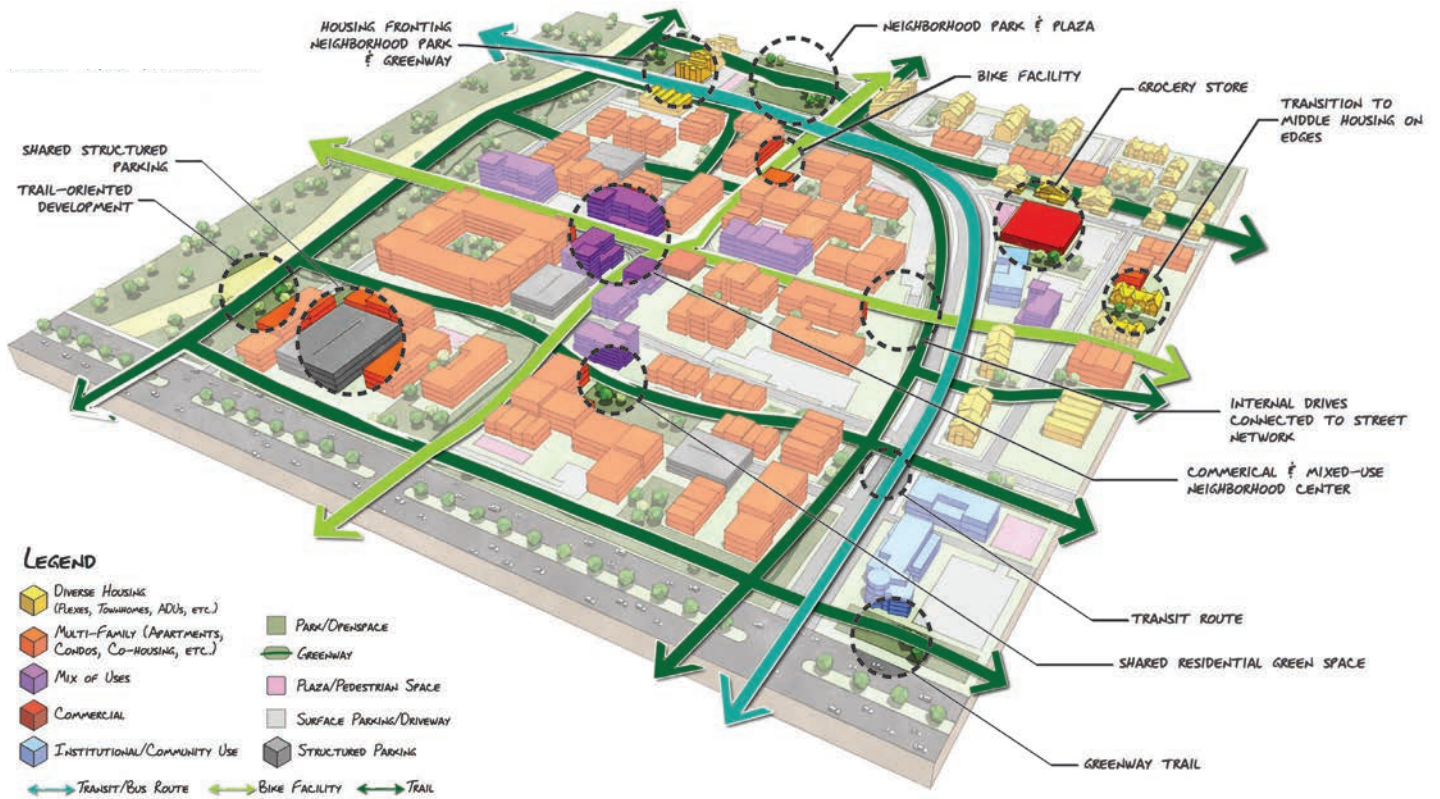
**LEGEND**

- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING

The ideal Neighborhood High development should be a mostly self-sufficient area with plentiful housing options, well-situated shopping and dining options, walkable streets, and well-integrated recreational amenities. The place type provides an opportunity for a large number of residents to live in close proximity to a concentration of amenities and services. When strategically located with good transitions in land use and intensity, the Neighborhood High Place Type is an important component to accommodating projected residential growth in San Marcos in a manner that helps preserve and conserve natural areas and land in agricultural use.



# HIGHLIGHTS



*Neighborhood center providing mixed-use and commercial development*



*Development oriented towards river front and trail*



*Connected multi-use greenway trails*



*-Active building frontages*



*Community-serving retail*



*River-front plaza and community space*





<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium to Higher-Scale Multifamily</li> <li>• Attached Single-Family</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> <li>• Mixed Use Commercial</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High density road network, with full complement of street types</li> <li>• Wide sidewalks with landscape strips between streets and dedicated bike facilities throughout</li> <li>• Transit stops throughout with connections at mobility hubs (transfer stops)</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily structured parking and small dispersed off-street parking lots</li> <li>• Also on-street parking on most streets</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Parks to provide recreational opportunities, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Regional Parks to locate a large number of residents close to major amenities and make higher density apartments and condominiums more attractive</li> <li>• Community-Scaled Plazas to create social gathering spaces for formal and informal events and programming</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to help activate smaller interstitial spaces and provide opportunities for placemaking elements</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> <li>• Medium Density Neighborhood</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$3,348 per acre, \$220 per new person)</li> <li>• Most efficient Place Type in terms of infrastructure demand; generates highest concentration of potential service needs</li> <li>• Greater cost to serve if located far from existing fire stations, outside of Hays County, or outside existing water and sewer service areas</li> </ul>

### Overlay Characteristics/Considerations

Historic Resource	New development not identified for these areas
Environmental	N/A
Cultural Resource	No Development



# NEIGHBORHOOD TRANSITION



*To provide appropriate transitions between mixed use, non-residential place types and neighborhood place types. Transitions should be achieved in the form of both use and built form.*

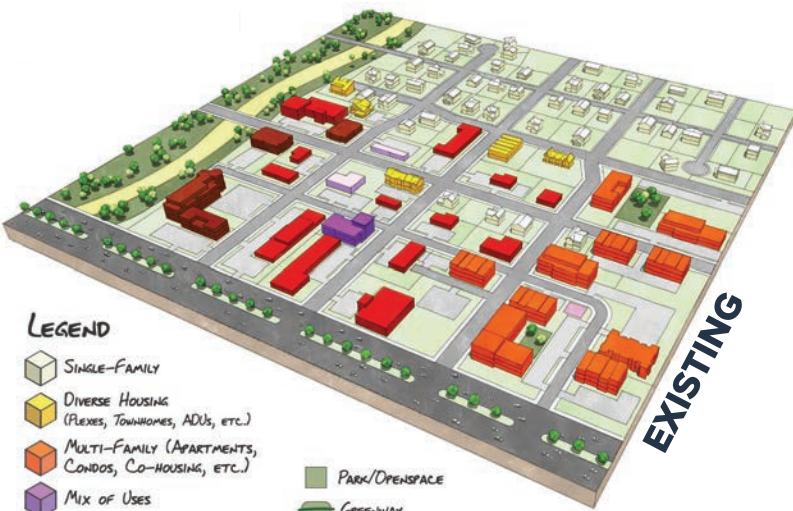
Even with the three intensities applied to the Neighborhood high level land use, the transition from one place type to the next can sometimes be jarring and lead to visual and other conflicts. The Neighborhood Transition Place Type is intended to provide a more gradual transition to Neighborhood Medium and Neighborhood Low areas in terms of development form and land use between higher intensity neighborhoods and non-residential place types. The Place Type borrows elements from the adjoining neighborhoods to provide more desirable adjacencies for people living near more intense and/or active areas.

**Land Use:** One or more of small-scale commercial uses, mixed use, live-work (where someone has a designated work space in the same structure as their residence), and townhomes or multiplexes

**Built Form:** Typically 2-4 stories depending on whether the transition is to Neighborhood Low or Neighborhood Medium. Buildings are taller and more closely engaged with the adjacent roadways closer to the higher intensity place and shorter with larger setbacks closer to lower intensity neighborhoods; the typical density of these areas is 6-12 units per acres

**Mobility:** The transition areas are typically long and narrow and often located along collectors and arterials; streets should accommodate all modes of transportation with amenities for bikes and transit

**Amenities:** A wide range of parks and other amenities are appropriate, but these areas may rely on nearby amenities due to their smaller footprint



**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- OFFICE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING



**LEGEND**

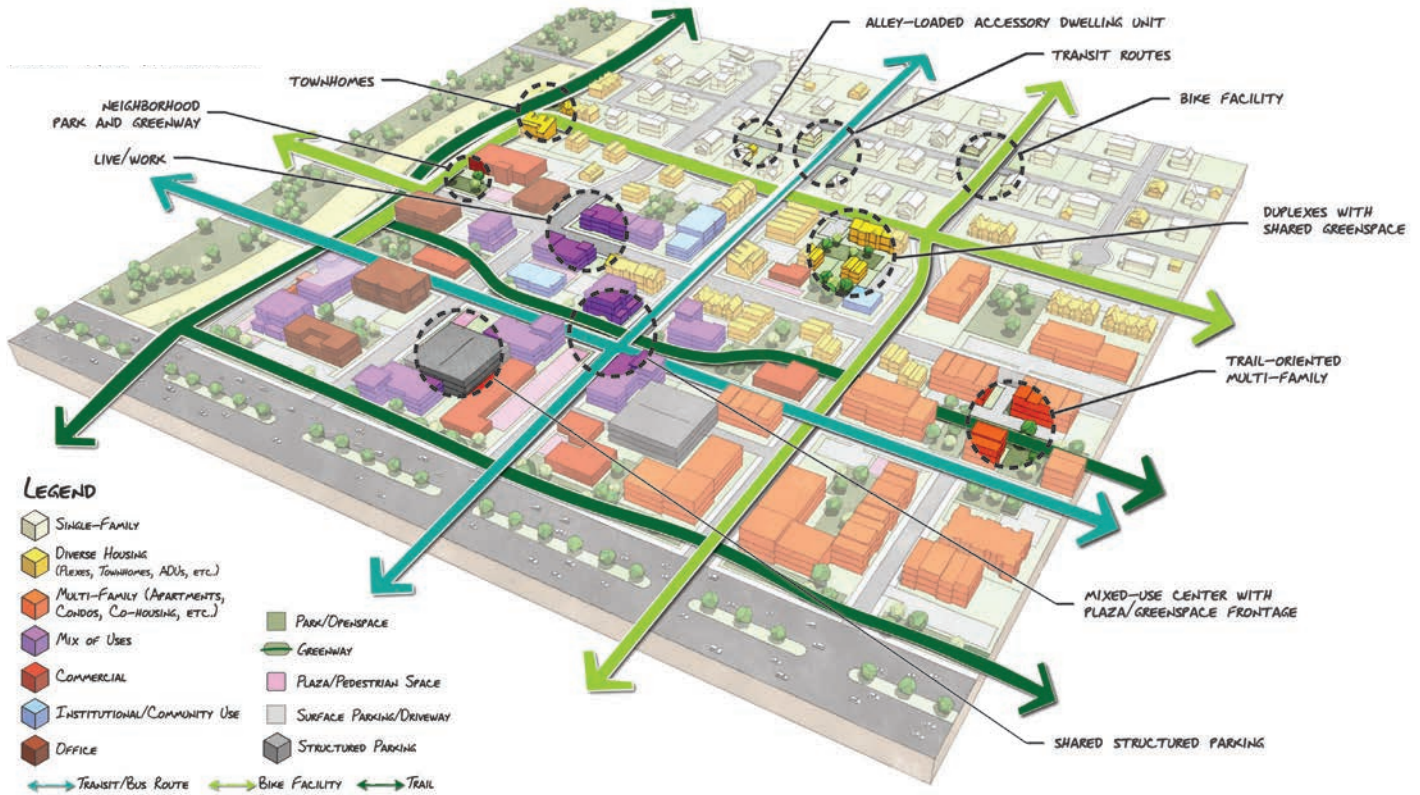
- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- OFFICE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING

Neighborhood Transition areas that exist in San Marcos today often feel like a “hodge podge” of uses or a “no man’s land.” As these areas tend to lack a strong identity, it is often difficult to delineate where a Neighborhood Transition place starts and stops. In fact, these areas typically feel like the frayed edges of the neighborhoods and districts nearby. In certain instances, a higher intensity area may appear to loom over or even encroach on lower intensity neighborhoods nearby.

As Neighborhood Transition areas develop with stronger policy and regulatory guidance, there will be a more incremental transition in terms of intensity and land use from one area to another. Higher intensity multi-family housing, mixed use development and commercial development should transition to lower intensity mixed use, commercial and residential development. The heights of buildings should decrease within the Neighborhood Transition areas as they approach lower intensity Neighborhoods. Ideally, the height, lot coverage, and setbacks within the Neighborhood Transition area are approaching or matching the lower intensity Neighborhood where the two different areas meet.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Multi-family housing oriented towards shared green spaces and trails



Mixed-use center with active frontage



Live/work development



Transition towards existing single-family residential



Active transportation options and transit routes



Accessory dwelling units in single-family residential areas



<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-Scale Commercial</li> <li>• Mixed Use</li> <li>• Live-Work</li> <li>• Attached Single Family</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Scale Office</li> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium density road network, primarily collector and local streets</li> <li>• Wide sidewalks;</li> <li>• Dedicated bike facilities on higher order streets</li> <li>• Transit connections on collectors and on periphery</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily on-street and small off-street parking lot</li> <li>• Some self-parked in garages, carports and driveways</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Parks to provide active and passive recreation opportunities for nearby residents</li> <li>• Community Parks to provide recreational opportunities, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to help activate smaller interstitial spaces and provide opportunities for placemaking elements</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features, passive recreation amenities, and/or gathering spaces</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower Density Neighborhood</li> <li>• Medium Density Neighborhood</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited future development potential within transition locations</li> <li>• Fiscal impact dependent on uses and intensity of development</li> </ul>

**Overlay Characteristics/Considerations**

Historic Resource	Focused on the perimeter of areas with Historic/Traditional Overlay and between Lower Density Neighborhood and Other Place Types
Environmental	Focused between Lower Density Neighborhood and Other Place Types
Cultural Resource	No Development





# MIXED USE LOW



*These areas are characterized by smaller commercial centers that are walkable and typically embedded in or near neighborhoods so that residents have convenient, safe, and equitable access to services. They should be distributed throughout the city, such as along corridors and near major intersections.*

The Mixed Use Low Place Type is intended to provide smaller concentrations of shops, restaurants, and neighborhood-oriented services to serve nearby neighborhoods of various intensities. The mix of uses may also include housing next to or integrated with commercial uses. The footprint of mixed use low places can vary from a single intersection to a neighborhood-serving main street. It is less common, but mixed use low places may also include more traditional shopping centers that are smaller in scale and either curated or retrofitted to include a variety of uses (and potentially housing) that are attractive to nearby residents.

**Land Use:** Primarily smaller scale commercial and mixed use development, sometimes with residential condominiums or apartments above the ground floor; also, townhomes and multiplexes may be intermixed with commercial and mixed land uses

**Built Form:** Typically 2-4 stories, but sometimes lower scale at a single story; the height, orientation of buildings, and mix of uses is often determined by the surrounding context and character of adjacent roadways; the typical density is 8-15 housing units per acre and 10 jobs per acre with some housing potentially integrated

**Mobility:** More urban or integrated Mixed Use Low places are typically situated along or at an intersection of roads with a reasonable amount of multi-modal traffic; older shopping centers that have evolved into Mixed Use Low places typically are set back from the street and provide off-street surface parking

**Amenities:** Due to their scale, smaller amenities are typically integrated into the place or immediately adjacent. Small parks, plazas, and public art can help establish a sense of place and strengthen identity





**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- HOSPITALITY

- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY

Existing Mixed Use Low areas tend to be a collection of smaller single use areas with little to no relationship to each other. The lack of identity and organization often results in no real center of gravity for the collection of buildings and uses. In certain instances, the lack of a legible form may be exacerbated by a large number of off-street surface parking lots, making walking to or around the place challenging or undesirable. Connectivity infrastructure is also frequently poor between destinations within the mixed use low place unless you are driving.



**LEGEND**

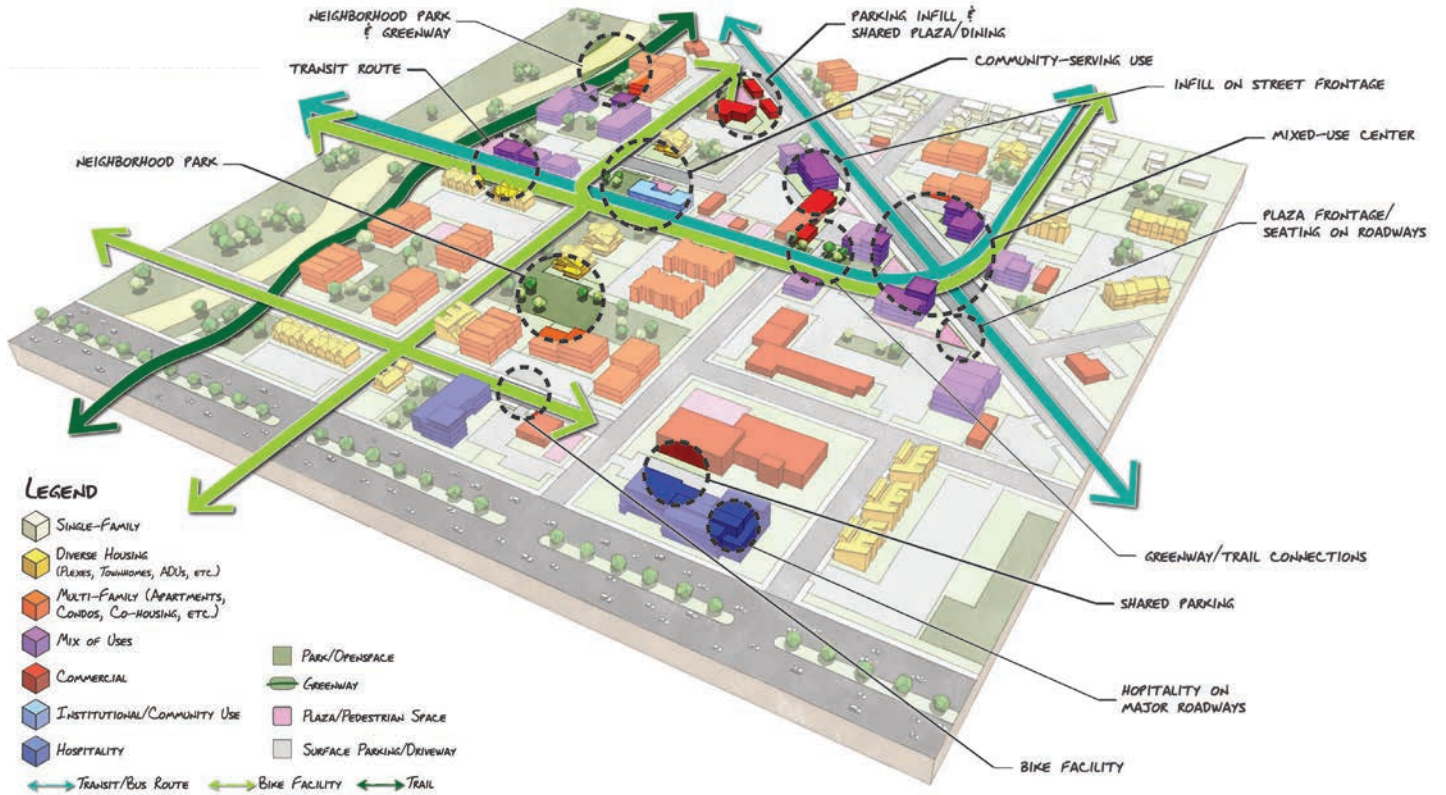
- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- HOSPITALITY

- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY

Mixed Use Low places in San Marcos should have a more legible form that is easy and inviting to navigate no matter how people choose to travel. Mixed Use Low places will provide attractive destinations and services within close proximity to other low to medium intensity places, including neighborhoods and commercial/employment areas. Parking is still provided by on-street options and off-street surfacing parking, but it is not the dominant feature with parking lots typically situated to the side or rear of buildings. Smaller parks and plazas add to the sense of place within Mixed Use Low places.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Neighborhood park



Hospitality along major roadways



Plaza frontage



Well connected bike facilities



Infill of parking lots with street-facing mixed-use buildings



Community serving development



<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small to Medium-Scale General Commercial and Mixed Use Development</li> <li>• Upper Story Residential Condos or Apartments</li> <li>• Single Family Attached Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Scale Office</li> <li>• Live-Work</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically along an arterial or collector street or central intersection</li> <li>• Mobility hub/s with transit connections embedded along or within</li> <li>• Sidewalks along, within and connecting to</li> <li>• Bike facilities typically connecting and parallel to</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily on-street and small off-street parking lots (shared parking highly encouraged)</li> <li>• Some self-parked in in garages, carports and driveways</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Parks to provide active and passive recreation opportunities for nearby residents</li> <li>• Community Parks to provide recreational opportunities, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to create seating and dining opportunities, activate smaller interstitial spaces, and provide opportunities for placemaking elements</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Medium</li> <li>• Neighborhood Low</li> <li>• Neighborhood Transition</li> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Low</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$4,493 per acre, \$398 per new person)</li> <li>• Generates greatest net positive impact (per acre and per new person)</li> <li>• Limited potential for growth in this Place Type</li> </ul>

**Overlay Characteristics/Considerations**

Historic Resource	New development unlikely and only along arterials and collector roadways
Environmental	Consider limiting size to approximately 5 acres
Cultural Resource	No Development





# MIXED USE MEDIUM



*These areas are characterized by a mix of commercial and residential uses in a well-connected and walkable place.*

Mixed Use Medium places are a major element of the Preferred Growth Scenario described in more detail after the presentation of place types. They represent higher intensity places with a mix of housing, employment, shopping, dining, and entertainment. They are highly walkable and bikable with good access by transit and driving. With the exception of downtown, mixed use medium development is a bit of a departure from the status quo for San Marcos. Mixed Use Medium places distributed throughout the community will provide opportunities for people to live, work and play in one area or close by to the neighborhoods where most San Marcans will continue to live.

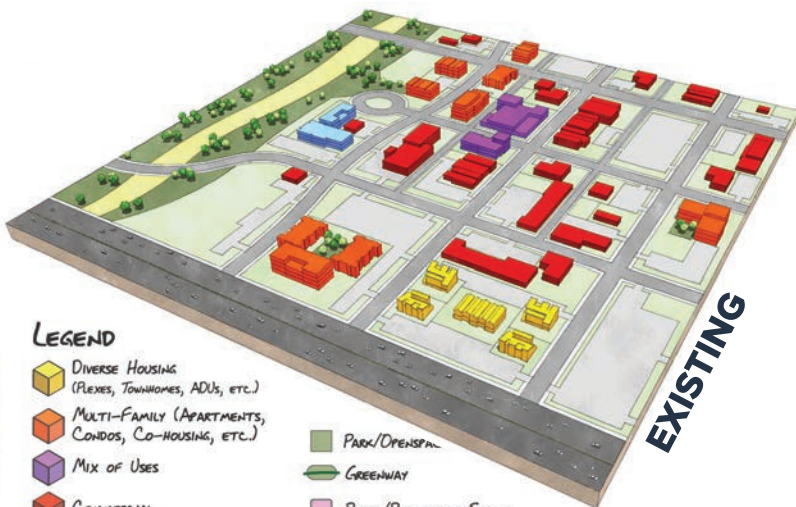
**Land Use:** Medium to higher intensity mixed use, multifamily and hospitality development; typically including a strong residential component above retail or offices uses, but sometimes include office above retail as well

**Built Form:** Typically 4-8 stories with buildings situated closely together and engaging the street to create a series of active ground floor spaces and storefronts; depending on the location, parking will primarily be on-street or in parking structures, but some small off-street parking lots may exist; the typical density is 12+ dwelling units per acre and 25 jobs per acre

**Mobility:** A well-connected network of streets that support multiple modes of transportation; streets and blocks are most typically organized in a grid pattern and walkability should be prioritized

**Amenities:** A range of parks, plazas, and open spaces should be integrated in Mixed Use Medium places, along with civic and cultural uses, public art, and other placemaking elements

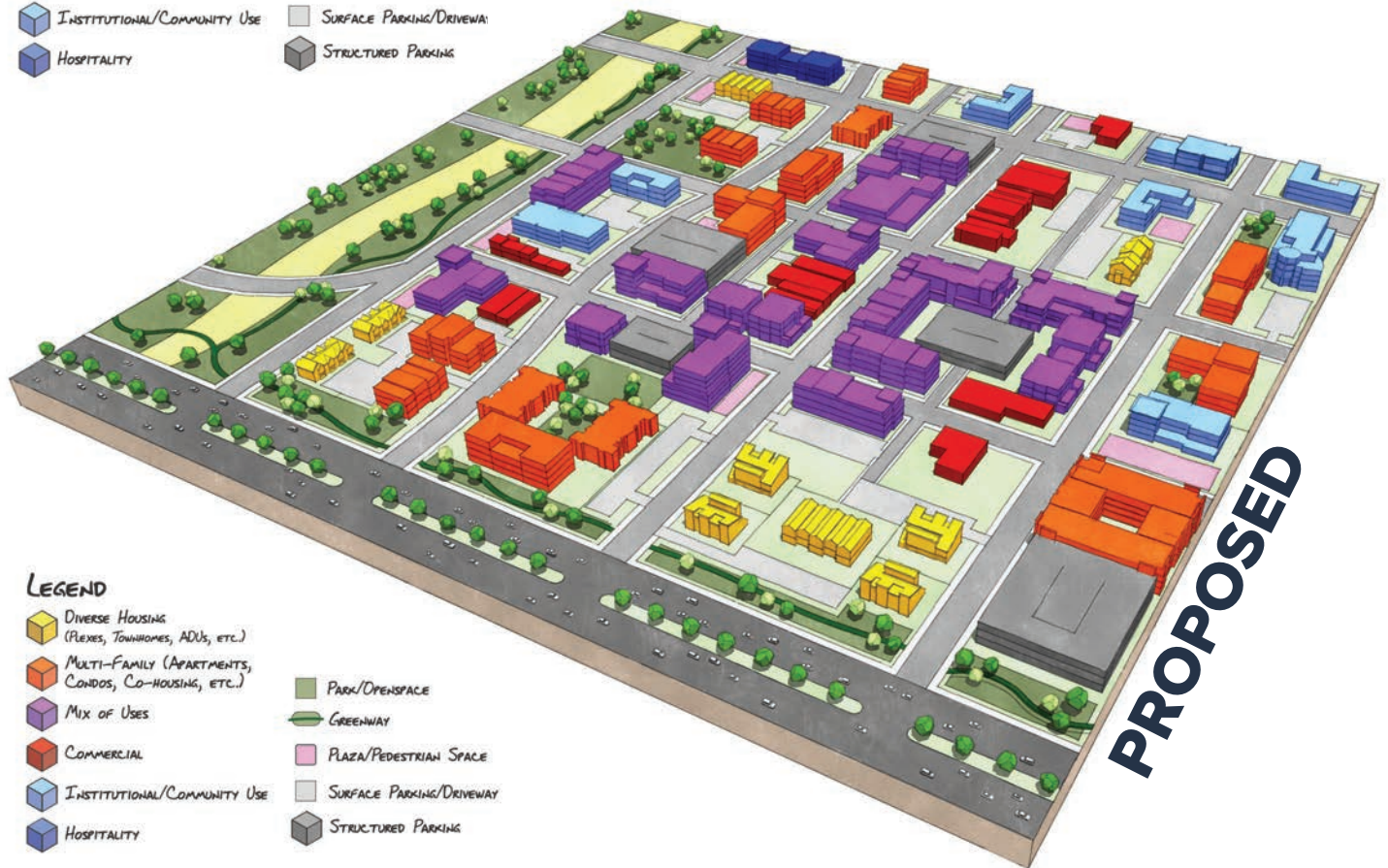
Existing locations of Mixed-Use Medium contain horizontal mixed use with primarily auto-oriented commercial buildings and multi-family housing, and small amounts of vertical mixed-use and other uses. While buildings are somewhat dense, a large portion of land is covered in surface parking lots and walkability is limited. Riverfronts, creeks, and major roadway frontages are typically underutilized.



**EXISTING**

**LEGEND**

- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- HOSPITALITY
- PARK/OPENSPACE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING



**PROPOSED**

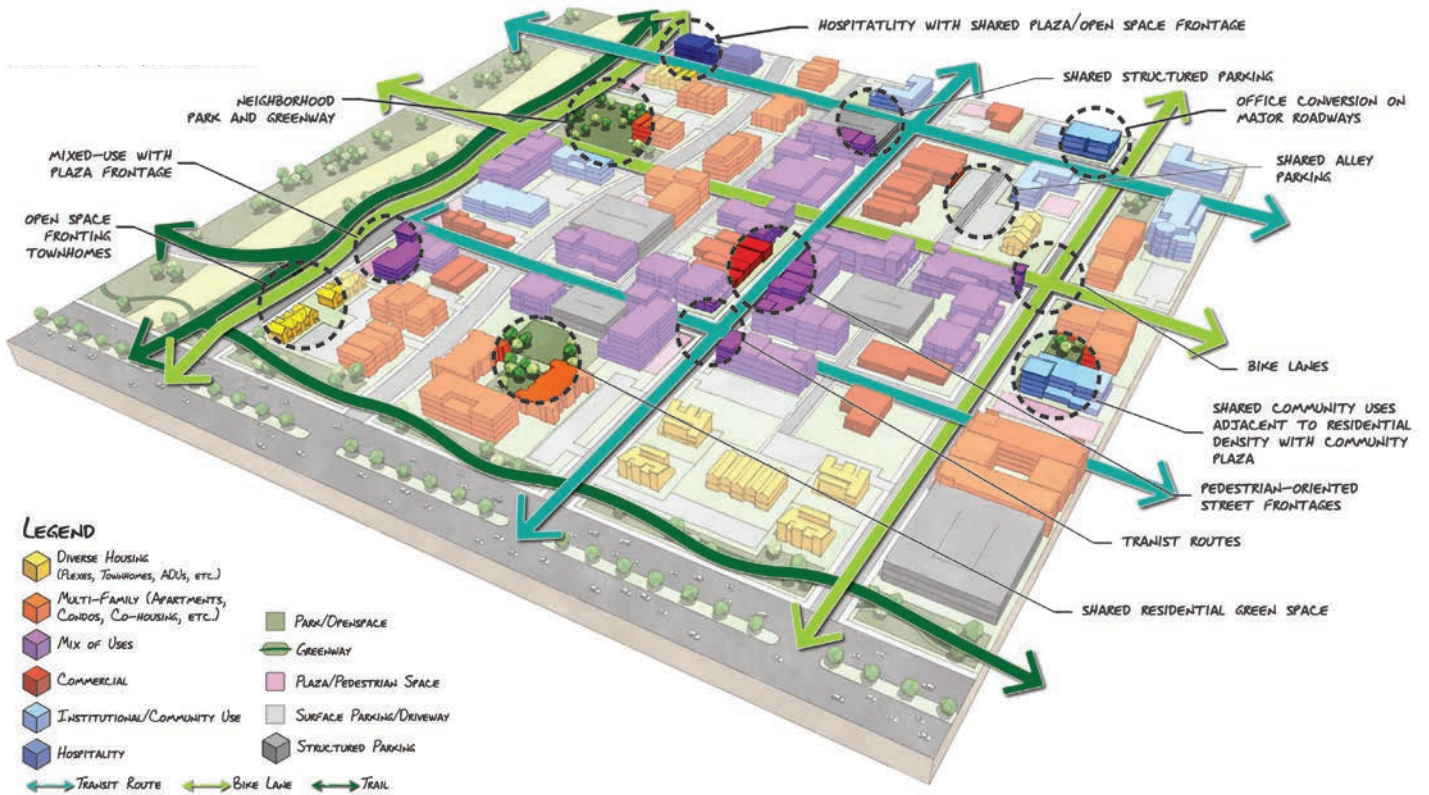
**LEGEND**

- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- HOSPITALITY
- PARK/OPENSPACE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING

To achieve a more connected and walkable neighborhood, the large commercial buildings and surface parking lots should be converted into dense, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use buildings. The addition of small parks, plazas, and bike lanes adds amenities and walkability to the neighborhood. Parking structures allow for less horizontal space dedicated to surface parking. Waterways/drainage areas and street frontages are better utilized with building facades along the street edge, trails, and public spaces.



# HIGHLIGHTS



High quality bike facilities and trails



Active street frontages, public plazas, and event space



Mixed-use buildings with pedestrian-oriented ground floors



Structured parking behind buildings and screened along street edges



Prominent transit access and comfortable facilities



Density and greenways along riverfronts and creeks





<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium to Higher-Scale Mixed Use</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> <li>• Medium to Higher-Scale Multifamily</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> <li>• Mixed Use Commercial</li> <li>• Attached SF</li> <li>• Parks</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High density road network, with full complement of street types</li> <li>• Wide sidewalks and dedicated bike facilities throughout and connecting to nearby neighborhoods and other places</li> <li>• Transit connections at mobility hubs throughout</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured parking and small off-street parking lots (shared parking highly encouraged)</li> <li>• On-street</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Parks embedded within mixed use medium districts</li> <li>• Community Parks that are well connected to surrounding neighborhood streets</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas on irregularly shaped lots or to help with water quality</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to connect neighborhoods to parks and to other neighborhoods</li> <li>• Common Open Space to provide water quality features and passive recreation opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Medium</li> <li>• Neighborhood High</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$1,969 per acre, \$98 per new person)</li> <li>• Generates most value and revenue per acre of all Place Types</li> <li>• Denser concentration and variety of uses also requires a greater level of service</li> </ul>

### Overlay Characteristics/Considerations

Historic Resource	N/A
Environmental	N/A
Cultural Resource	No Development



# COMMERCIAL/ EMPLOYMENT LOW



*To facilitate lower density, more auto-oriented retail, office, and industrial type uses that exist and may still be desired in certain locations in the future.*

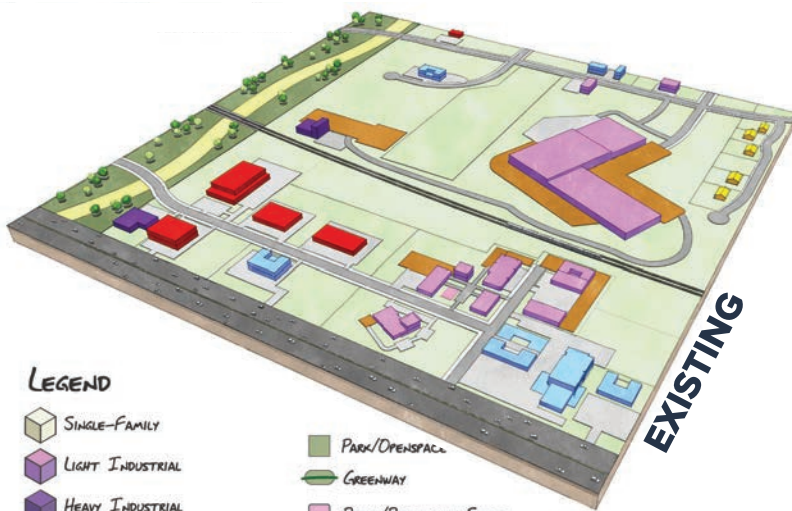
Commercial/Employment Low places comprise much of the non-residential areas of San Marcos today. They tend to include a variety of industrial uses, distribution, auto-oriented retail, and dining options, as well as lower intensity, single use and standalone office uses, including civic, medical, and educational. It is expected that many of these existing areas will not transition to another place during the life of the plan, but there may still be opportunities to make these places better connected and more desirable. New Commercial/Employment Low Areas should be focused on designated areas along or near highways.

**Land Use:** Primarily characterized by light to heavy industrial, warehouse and distribution, lower density office, and general commercial; additional uses may include civic, institutional, and hospitality

**Built Form:** Typically 1-2 stories with buildings situated further from each other and further from the street than in most place types. Larger format retailers are often paired with strip commercial centers and/or pad development (smaller standalone buildings) located closer to the street, but still auto-oriented and frequently including a drive-through; industrial and distribution uses often include large outdoor storage areas; the typical employment density of these areas is 8-15 jobs per acre

**Mobility:** Lower density road network with heavy reliance on frontage roads and internal site circulation, multi-use pathways and sidewalks. Major roadways should include dedicated bike facilities and transit connections

**Amenities:** A range of parks, open spaces and trails can make Commercial/Employment Low areas more attractive, but are not essential to make them a highly functioning place



**EXISTING**

**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- PARK/OPENSPEC
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STAGING/STORAGE

Commercial/Employment Low places included various scales of auto-oriented commercial shopping centers, industrial uses, and offices. Off-street surface parking lots tend to dominate the layout and experience of these developments and there are typically few amenities. Commercial tenants tend to prefer locations along highways or busy arterials to maximize visibility for motorists while light industrial and distribution centers tend to be on lower classification streets with good access to highways and busy arterials. Major transportation infrastructure is attractive to nearly all development within this Place Type, but automobile and freight movement and parking are prioritized over walking, biking, and transit use.



**PROPOSED**

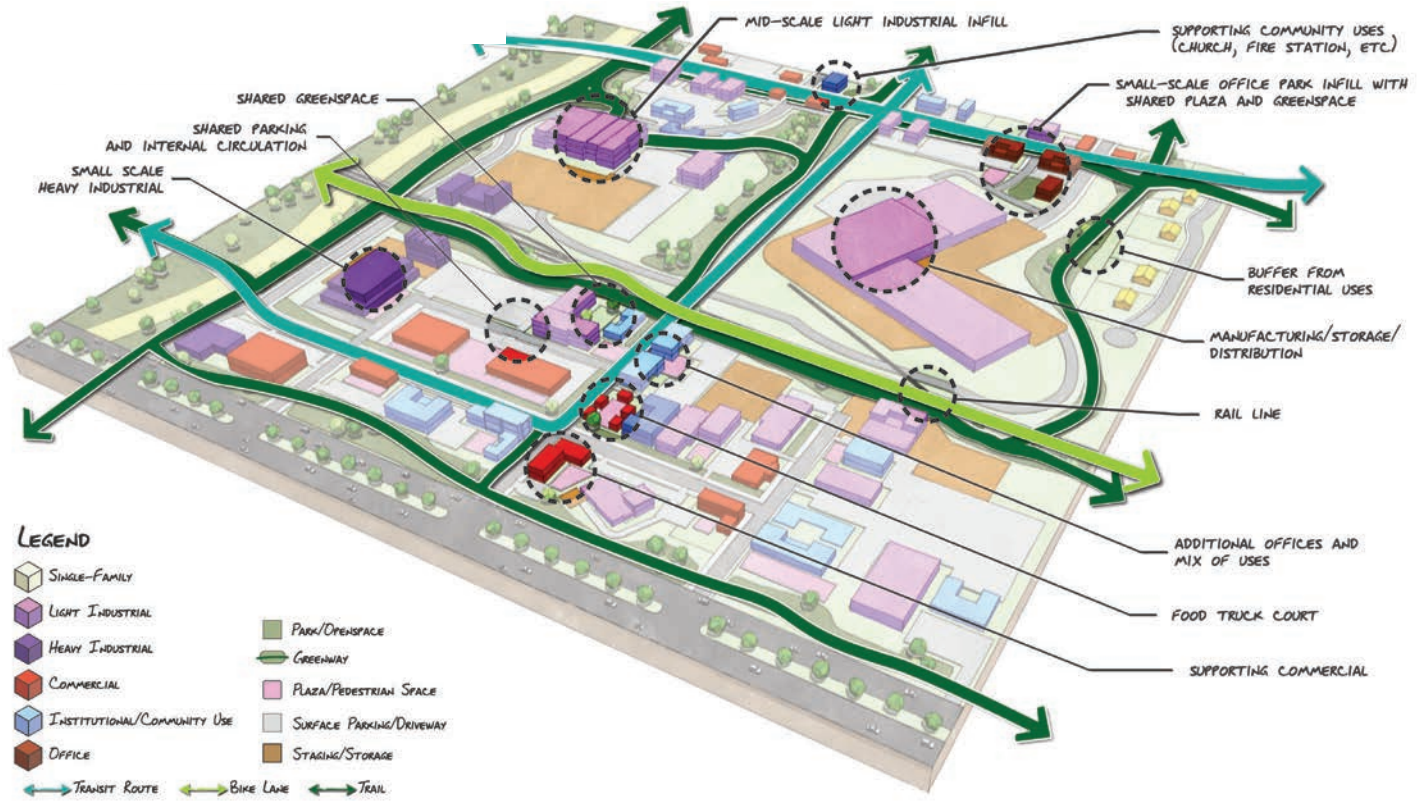
**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- OFFICE
- STAGING/STORAGE
- PARK/OPENSPEC
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY

Commercial/Employment Low places in San Marcos should include better connected development with plazas, trails, and other open spaces helping to better organize the development pattern and provide amenities to those working and visiting the area. Better amenities can also serve residents nearby in certain situations. Small amounts of strategically located dining options can further amenitize areas that are predominately office, light industrial or distribution. Transportation infrastructure should be improved to better support walking, biking, and transit use, while still accommodating automobiles and freight.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Natural buffer and trail from nearby residential



Supporting office space



Community hub



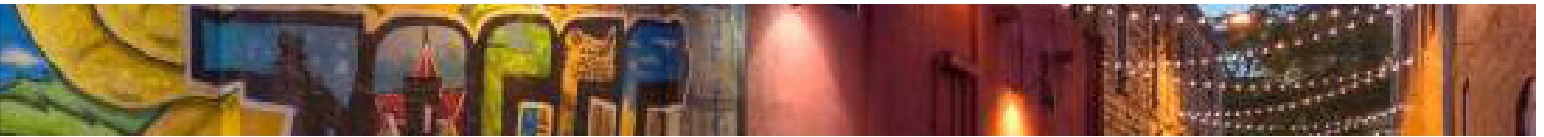
Outdoor event space



Higher density multifamily transition



Community park with multi-purpose athletic field



<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light to Heavy Industrial</li> <li>• Warehouse and Distribution</li> <li>• Lower Density Office</li> <li>• Lower Density Retail</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive Service Commercial</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower density road network with accommodations for large vehicles</li> <li>• Multi-use pathways and sidewalks</li> <li>• Dedicated bike facilities throughout</li> <li>• Transit connections at key nodes</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily off-street parking lots (shared parking highly encouraged)</li> <li>• On-street in certain situations</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Parks to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for employees and residents nearby, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Regional Parks to provide recreational opportunities and to potentially buffer these places from neighborhoods</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to create places for outdoor seating and dining</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features and passive recreation amenities</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Medium</li> <li>• Neighborhood High</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> <li>• Conserve/Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Negative Fiscal Impact (-\$1,652 per acre, -\$288 per new person)</li> <li>• Only Place Type with a net negative fiscal impact, but Place Type with greatest potential to capture employment growth</li> <li>• Lower density uses generate less efficient infrastructure investment, but value of non-residential development will vary fiscal impact</li> <li>• Impact on calls for service varies by use (e.g., retail more, industrial less)</li> </ul>

**Overlay Characteristics/Considerations**

Historic Resource	N/A
Environmental	Consider Low Impact Development (LID) development applying Best Management Practices (BMPs) and other best practices with overall development limited to approximately 50% of land area
Cultural Resource	No Development



# COMMERCIAL/ EMPLOYMENT MEDIUM



*To facilitate higher intensity commercial and employment opportunities that are better connected to each other and the surrounding development types.*

Commercial/Employment Medium places are intended to accommodate better connected and more walkable office, commercial, retail, and hospitality uses. Development tends to be multistory and buildings tend to be organized in close proximity to each other to create small clusters of like uses. These clusters are often organized around a plaza, open space, or parking structure. Parks, trails, open space, and other amenities contribute to the sense of place and provide amenities for employees and visitors, as well as San Marcans living nearby.

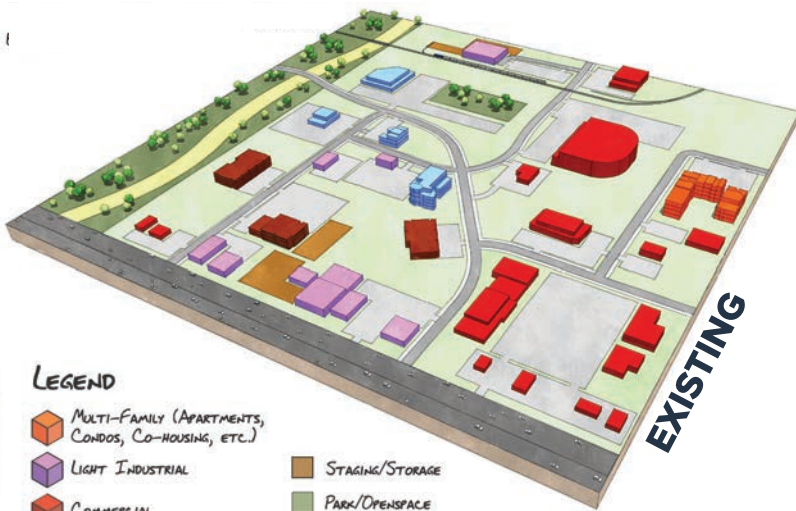
**Land Use:** Primarily characterized by medium to higher-scale office and other commercial, as well as civic, educational, and medical campus uses; parks and open spaces should be integrated throughout; may include medium density light industrial-type uses as well

**Built Form:** Typically 2-5 story buildings in close proximity to each other; parking is sometimes structured and usually located to the sides or rear of buildings; the typical density of these areas is 20-30 jobs per acre and 6-12 housing units per acre (when applicable)

**Mobility:** Medium density roadway network with sidewalks, dedicated bike facilities, and transit access should be included on the periphery of these areas

**Amenities:** A range of parks, plazas, and open spaces should be integrated in Commercial/Employment Medium places, along with civic and cultural uses, public art, and other placemaking elements





**LEGEND**

- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- STRUCTURED PARKING
- STAGING/STORAGE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY

In San Marcos, medical and educational campuses are the best examples of Commercial/Employment Medium place types today. They tend to have multistory buildings organized around open space and circulation amenities. There is also a critical mass of activity to help establish a true sense of place. Many other medium intensity commercial and employment developments in San Marcos are somewhat isolated from other buildings and properties nearby. In essence, the developments largely have the same characteristics as existing Commercial/Employment Low places, but with taller buildings.



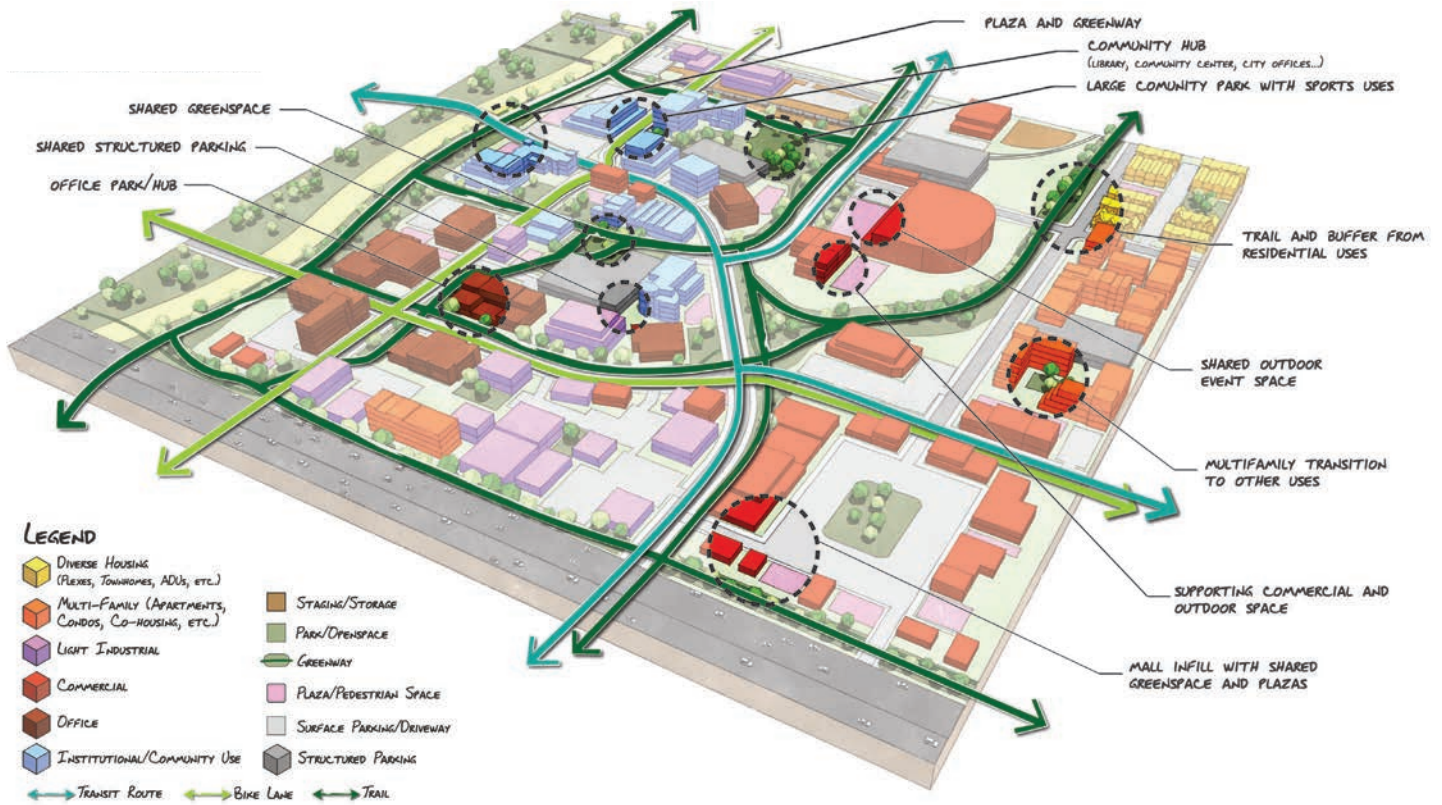
**LEGEND**

- DIVERSE HOUSING (PLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- OFFICE
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- STAGING/STORAGE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- STRUCTURED PARKING

Commercial/Employment Low places in San Marcos should be highly walkable and compact places with concentrations of like uses organized around a variety of amenities. Instead of areas with a disconnected collection of higher intensity buildings, the Commercial/Employment Medium development of the future will work in concert to create a desirable district with employment, shopping, and entertainment opportunities for employees and residents living nearby.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Variety of industrial uses

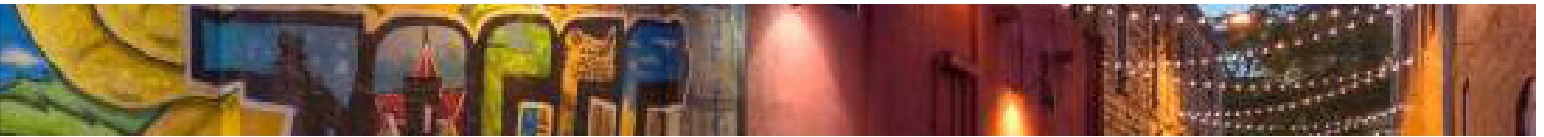


Supporting office spaces



Small-scale parks with shared green space





<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium to Higher-Scale Office and other Commercial</li> <li>• Public/Institutional (Civic, Educational, etc.)</li> <li>• Medical</li> <li>• Parks and Open Space</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supportive Service Commercial</li> <li>• Minimal General Commercial</li> <li>• Medium to Higher Intensity Multifamily</li> <li>• Medium to Higher Intensity Mixed Use</li> <li>• Medium Intensity Light Industrial (maker spaces, such as roasters, brewers, and artisans)</li> <li>• Hospitality</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium density road network, primarily collector and local streets</li> <li>• Sidewalks and multi-use pathways throughout and connecting to the area</li> <li>• Dedicated bike facilities on higher order streets</li> <li>• Transit connections on collectors and on periphery</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured parking and small off-street parking lots (shared parking highly encouraged)</li> <li>• On-street</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Parks to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for employees and residents nearby, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> <li>• Regional Parks to provide recreational opportunities and to potentially buffer these places from neighborhoods</li> <li>• Pockets Parks and Plazas to create places for outdoor seating, dining, public art and other placemaking elements</li> <li>• Trails and Greenways to provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features and passive recreation amenities</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Medium</li> <li>• Neighborhood High</li> <li>• Mixed Use Low</li> <li>• Mixed Use Medium</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Medium</li> <li>• Conserve/Reserve</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Positive Fiscal Impact (\$735 per acre, \$42 per new person)</li> <li>• Higher density of employment uses offsets cost to serve and provide infrastructure compared to Commercial/Employment Low</li> </ul>

### Overlay Characteristics/Considerations

Historic Resource	N/A
Environmental	Consider Low Impact Development (LID) development applying Best Management Practices (BMPs) and other best practices with overall development limited to approximately 50% of land area
Cultural Resource	No Development



# CONSERVE/ RESERVE



*To identify areas to conserve and reserve for future development as a means of focusing more intensive development in other areas of the community. Development that does occur within conservation and reserve areas should be low impact to the natural environment by using a variety of development techniques and strategies.*

The Conserve/Reserve place type was originally developed to identify areas where development would be discouraged over the life of the Comprehensive Plan. As community and stakeholder input and feedback were gathered, the conception of the place type evolved to also include guidance for when development may still occur within areas that are currently open space, farmland, or otherwise undeveloped. Development techniques and strategies to ensure San Marcos retains many of these assets and maintains a high environmental quality include Low Impact Development, clustered development, ranchettes, and small clusters of diverse housing in strategically located areas.

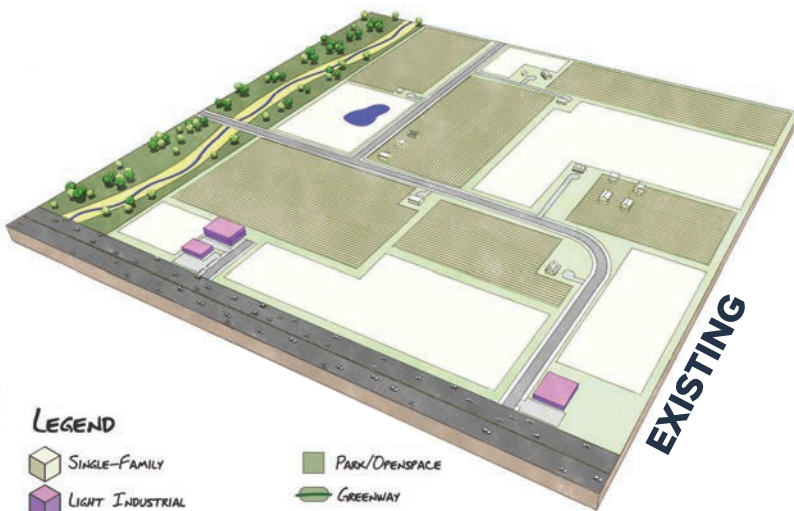
**Land Use:** These areas are primarily characterized by parks, improved open space, agricultural, ranch, and undeveloped land and may have public/institutional uses; development may occur in these areas it should generally be clustered housing and/or mixed-use development

**Built Form:** While little to no development is often desired, typical development includes a diverse range of residential and some small amounts of 1-2 story mixed use, commercial and civic development; the maximum density of these areas should be approximately 6-10 units per acre in developed areas and a typical net density of 1-5 units per acre

**Mobility:** Emphasis on pedestrian facilities, connected trails, and shared use paths. In Reserve areas, utilities should generally be provided locally (e.g., well, septic, etc.) or via city utilities if more compact development is proposed

**Amenities:** Large open spaces and trails are the most common amenities; in most instances, the lack of or limited development is an amenity in and of itself and water naturally flows through vegetation before reaching creeks

Most Conserve/Reserve places in San Marcos have limited development and a relatively sparse roadway network; Development that does exist tends to be standalone rural housing, light industrial or commercial uses; pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure is absent or very limited.



**EXISTING**

**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- VACANT SPACE
- AGRICULTURAL LAND



**PROPOSED**

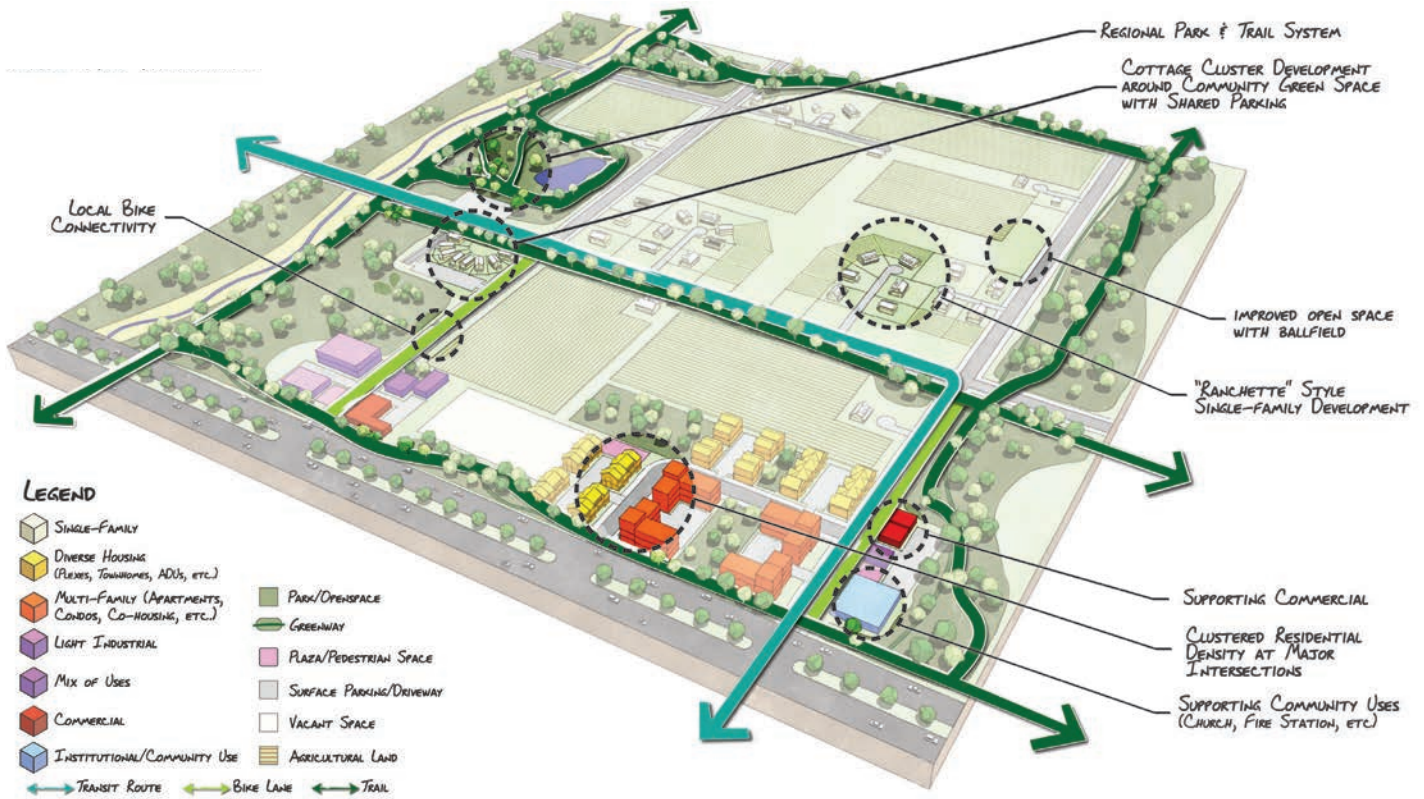
**LEGEND**

- SINGLE-FAMILY
- DIVERSE HOUSING (FLEXES, TOWNHOMES, ADUs, ETC.)
- MULTI-FAMILY (APARTMENTS, CONDOS, CO-HOUSING, ETC.)
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- MIX OF USES
- COMMERCIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY USE
- PARK/OPENSOURCE
- GREENWAY
- PLAZA/PEDESTRIAN SPACE
- SURFACE PARKING/DRIVEWAY
- VACANT SPACE
- AGRICULTURAL LAND

Conserve/Reserve places should remain undeveloped or focus development in small clusters to share the cost and utility of infrastructure and amenities and reduce the impacts on the landscape. Like uses should generally be clustered and the overall transportation network should remain less dense than in other place types. With that said, trails and greenways opportunities are typically prevalent in these areas and can significantly improve opportunities for walking and biking for recreation and transportation. Stormwater features and other Low Impact Development techniques should be integrated in new development to minimize runoff and enhance water quality. Development should be clustered away from creeks allowing the maximum buffer for drainage to flow over land.



# HIGHLIGHTS



Focus on clustered cottage style housing



Supporting commercial



Regional park and open space



Trail and multi-use path connectivity



Higher residential density at key locations



Supporting community uses





<b>Primary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Improved Open Space</li> <li>• Agricultural, Ranch, and Undeveloped Land</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Land Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Institutional</li> <li>• Potential Clustered Housing and/or Mixed-Use Development with large buffer zones around creeks</li> </ul>
<b>Mobility Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited and should typically limit higher order streets</li> <li>• Heavy emphasis on pedestrian facilities, typically in the form of trails and pathways</li> <li>• May accommodate bikes on bike lanes or shared use paths</li> <li>• Transit connections typically on periphery</li> <li>• In developed areas, lower density road network, primarily local streets</li> <li>• Sidewalks and/or multi-use pathways and shared streets</li> </ul>
<b>Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily self parked in garages, carports and driveways</li> <li>• Supplemental on-street parking</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primarily Trails and Greenways to preserve the integrity of natural drainage corridors and provide transportation and recreational opportunities connecting to and through the area</li> <li>• Common Open Space with integrated stormwater features and passive recreation amenities</li> <li>• Also Neighborhood Parks to provide active and passive recreation opportunities for nearby residents, as well as integrated stormwater features</li> </ul>
<b>Desirable Transitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Low</li> <li>• Commercial/Employment Low</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal Considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None or has potential to perform like a Neighborhood Low or Medium Place Type if a cluster-style development is pursued</li> </ul>

### Overlay Characteristics/Considerations

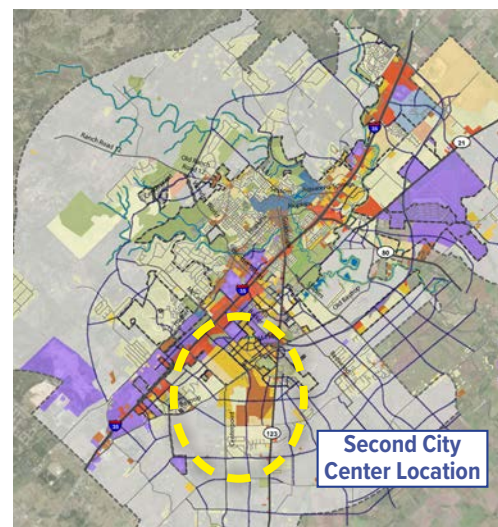
Historic Resource	No difference
Environmental	See above; Primarily clustered development and very low density ranch and ranchette style housing
Cultural Resource	No Development



# EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE GROWTH SCENARIOS

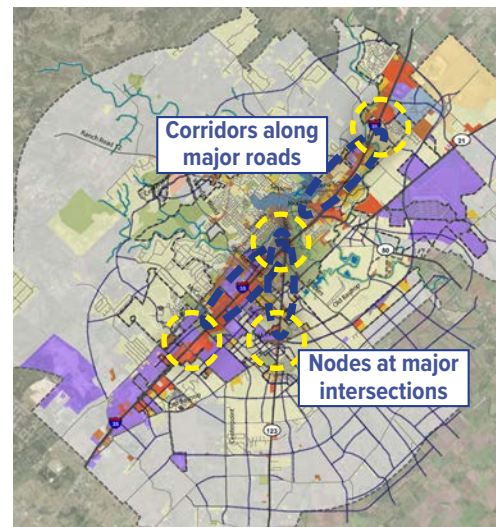
In order to arrive at a Preferred Growth Scenario for the community, several rounds of preliminary growth scenario alternatives were evaluated and compared to a Trend Scenario. The Trend Scenario outlined how the city would likely continue to grow if no updates were made to the Comprehensive Plan or other supporting policies and regulations. The Trend Scenario retained a single larger mixed use core (the existing downtown) with auto-oriented commercial development along major corridors. In the Trend Scenario, traditional subdivisions and multifamily housing would likely develop where opportunities exist or where they can be created, with a suburban style expansion east of IH-35. Vehicular congestion on major and minor roads would continue increasing. Walkability would remain a desired condition that is mainly only realized in downtown or internally within specific subdivisions and projects. San Marcos would likely become even more of a “bedroom community”, with housing demands outpacing employment growth. A large portion of environmentally sensitive areas would likely be impacted as continued pressure to develop in a piecemeal fashion grows and a reactive approach to growth in the ETJ would strain requests for water and sewer services.

The detailed scenario development analysis also included two alternative growth scenarios. The first detailed alternative (Scenario A) included a large concentration of dense development in a “Second City Center” on the east side of IH-35. The second city center would serve as a new employment center with medium and high-density housing integrated within and immediately adjacent to this new mixed use place. The intent of this approach was to relieve development pressures on San Marcos’ existing downtown and existing close-in neighborhoods and would establish a pattern of urban villages connected to the second city center and the



rest of San Marcos. Refer to the supporting documents for a full-page map.

The second detailed alternative (Scenario B) maintained existing downtown assets and core neighborhoods to the extent possible with continued development pressures in and around downtown and Texas State University. There was a strong focus of higher intensity development along the IH-35 corridor, FM 110, and in employment areas. Additionally, there was an emphasis on placing higher density residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments along major arterial, thoroughfare corridors, and at key nodes. This scenario proposed multimodal connectivity along corridors to leverage investments and connect people to their destinations alongside creating safe and comfortable bicycle connections. New employment opportunities were largely focused in existing and emerging employment areas. Refer to the supporting documents for a full-page map.



The community showed support for both alternative growth scenarios. Residents liked the efforts to reduce growth pressures on Downtown and Historic neighborhoods in Scenario A. They also emphasized the need for a new mixed use center east of IH-35 that would be highly walkable with a mix of amenities and encouraged a strong transit connection between the new center and downtown.

The community showed support for some level of small and more distributed neighborhood centers as depicted in Scenario B as well. However, they were concerned that this scenario would not relieve enough pressures in the downtown area. The broad disbursement of medium density development throughout the community was also an area of concern. The community also expressed interest in providing more housing and shopping along FM 110 and responded positively to the disbursement of amenities throughout the city to serve residents in existing neighborhoods.

Overall, the community expressed a general preference to combine scenarios A & B. They thought that the historic resource overlay, cultural resource overlay, and environmental overlay should continue to be priority. They requested to continue exploring placing medium and higher density commercial at strategic locations as well as making places more walkable, not just by adding a sidewalk network, but also creating destinations to walk to. Additionally, there was a strong desire to minimize acres developed and impervious cover and that a heavy emphasis on new growth east of IH-35 would likely require public and private investment in new infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and wastewater treatment plant, which will ultimately be maintained by the City in perpetuity.



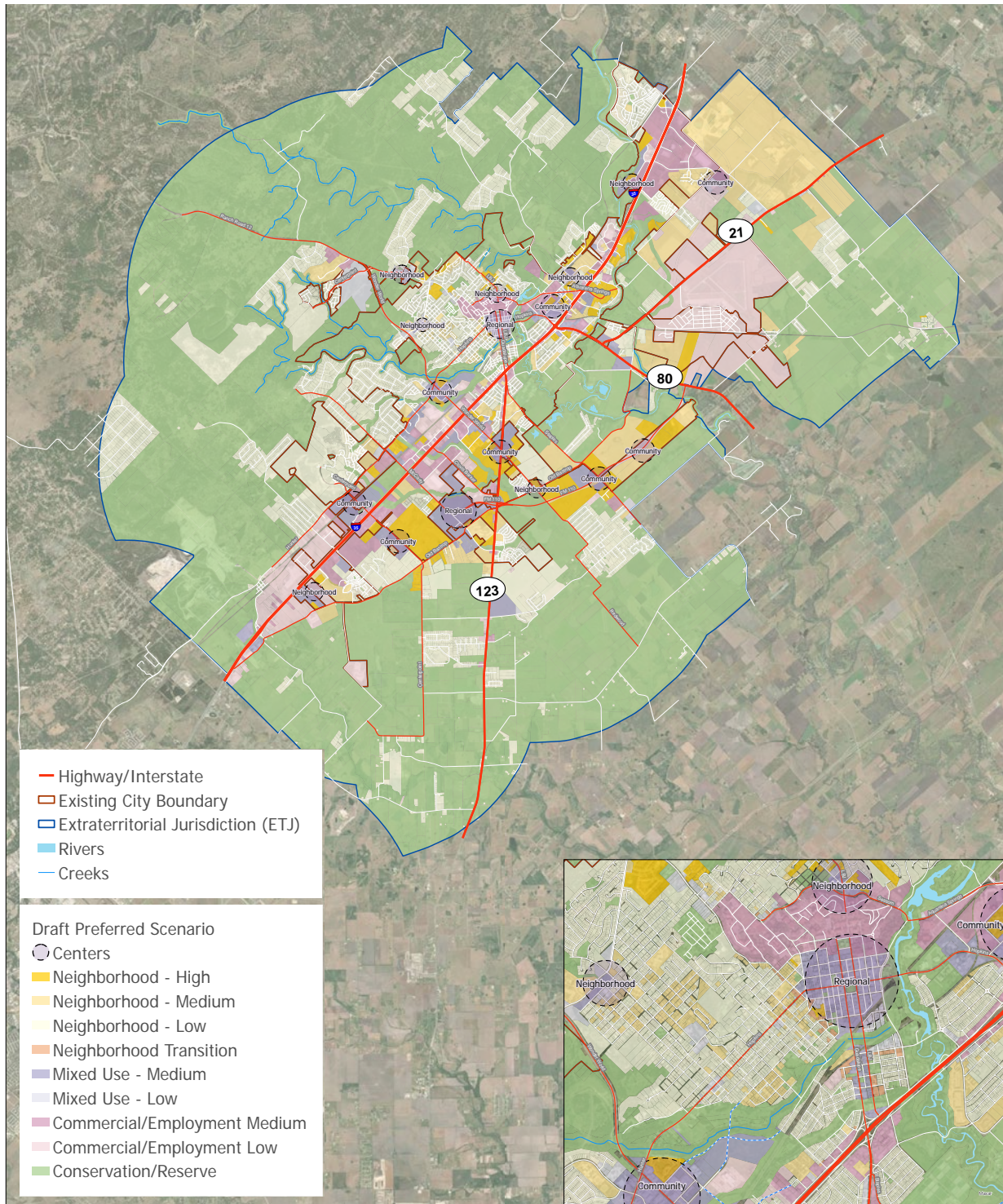
# PREFERRED GROWTH SCENARIO

The Preferred Growth Scenario incorporates the aspects of alternative scenarios A and B by focusing and intensifying new growth east of IH-35 and along corridors and providing better direction on land use while allowing flexibility. The Preferred Growth Scenario minimizes the development of environmentally sensitive areas and reduces the pressure of development in existing established neighborhoods and historic areas. The Preferred Growth Scenario is expected to require approximately 19,000 acres to accommodate the projected growth in housing units and employment through 2050. The proposed higher intensity mixed-use activity center east of IH-35 will help alleviate development pressures by capturing and accommodating a large portion of the future housing and employment needs.



The Preferred Growth Scenario paired with the Place Types help to ensure a high level of walkability with places to walk to near most residences. Creating transit supportive development patterns is a prerequisite to establishing of high-capacity transit corridors. The realization of multiple regional and community centers will support such investment in San Marcos and to other regional destinations moving forward. The Preferred Growth Scenario and associated Place Types also promote a diverse mix of housing types and missing middle housing with townhomes, accessory dwelling units, courtyard apartments, duplexes, etc.

The Preferred Growth Scenario is built on the goal of providing equitable access to amenities. With the creation of a larger and more intense mixed-use activity center east of IH-35, access to amenities and services will be provided to an area that is currently lacking access to these types of services. The addition and enhancement of amenities and services in other parts of the city is also achieved through the designation of multiple mixed use places and centers distributed throughout San Marcos.





## MIXED USE CENTERS

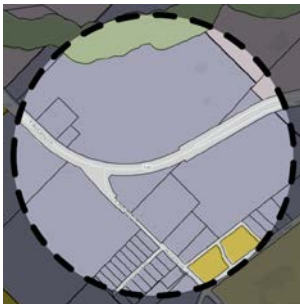
The Preferred Growth Scenario includes 17 mixed use centers distributed throughout the community. While several of these centers already exist, many are only partially developed, undeveloped, or single use commercial areas today. Based upon extensive community input, three scales of mixed use centers were identified and mapped as a critical part of the Preferred Growth Scenario. Regional Centers, Community Centers, and Neighborhood Centers are described below, but the common thread amongst them is that these places provide vibrant destinations and opportunities for arts, culture, dining, shopping, working, and entertainment in close proximity to residences and are critical ingredients in strengthening and creating complete communities in San Marcos.

**Regional Centers:** Regional Centers are large, high-density mixed-use areas, typically along transit corridors or major roadways, that provide access to goods, services, dining, offices, entertainment, and residential for regional residents and visitors. These areas are characterized by higher intensity commercial, residential, and mixed use development in a well-connected, walkable, and bikeable place. Regional Centers have unique offerings to the community and typically attract patrons from across the entire community and potentially the region. The primary place types comprising regional centers include Mixed Use Medium; Commercial/Employment Medium; Neighborhood Medium; Neighborhood High.

Two regional centers are included in the Preferred Growth Scenario and are briefly described below.



**Downtown:** The Downtown Regional Center is centered on the Hays County Historic Courthouse Square in Downtown San Marcos. Place types comprising the Downtown Regional Center include primarily Mixed Use Medium and Commercial/Employment Medium, with Neighborhood High and Mixed Use Low. As part of the Vision SMTX effort, the community is developing an updated Downtown Area Plan to guide public and private investment over the next 20 years.

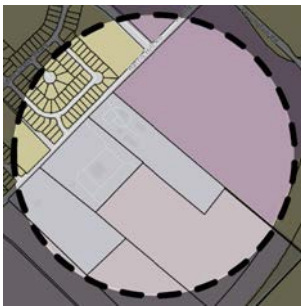


**Second City Center (formerly referred to as East Village):** The Second City Center builds on the previous Comprehensive Plan’s vision of the East Village west of the interchange where SH-123 meets FM-110. The area currently includes a handful of rural homes, light industrial areas (including the City’s Public Services Complex), some newer multifamily style housing and the San Marcos High School. Place types comprising the Second City Center Regional Center include Mixed Use Medium, Neighborhood High, and Commercial/Employment Medium. As part of the Vision SMTX effort, the community is developing a Regional Center Area Plan for the Second City Center.

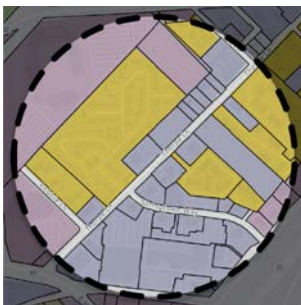


**Community Centers:** Community Centers are mid-sized mixed-use areas, typically along transit corridors or major roadways, that provide access to goods, services, dining, entertainment, and residential for nearby and regional residents. These areas are characterized by a mix of medium-intensity commercial and residential uses in a well-connected and walkable place. Development is vertically and horizontally mixed to achieve a high level of activation and vibrancy. Community Centers typically attract patrons from multiple neighborhoods. The primary place types comprising community centers include Mixed Use Medium; Mixed Use Low; Commercial/Employment Medium; Neighborhood Medium; Neighborhood High; and Neighborhood Transition.

Eight community centers are included in the Preferred Growth Scenario and are briefly described below.



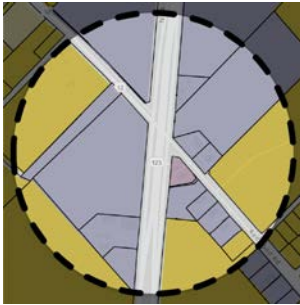
**North of Airport** near the intersection of Harris Hill Road and Yarrington Road is a Community Center envisioned to serve residents in the northern portion of San Marcos. The area is beginning to develop as a residential subdivision (Whisper and Sunset Acres neighborhoods) and some Commercial/Employment Low development. In the future, the North of Airport Community Center is envisioned as a combination of Commercial/Employment Low and Medium, Mixed Use Low, and Neighborhood Medium place types to serve the surrounding neighborhoods.



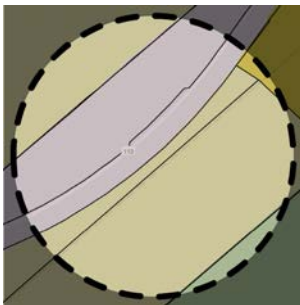
**Midtown** west of IH-35 between Aquarena Springs Drive and Hopkins Street is largely developed today with a mix of residential and commercial uses. The area also includes the Texas State University Bobcat (football) Stadium and Bobcat Track and Field Stadium. In the future, the Midtown Community Center is envisioned as a combination of Mixed Use Medium, Neighborhood High, and Commercial/Employment Medium. While the area is expected to change significantly from its existing condition, there are several opportunities for infill development, redevelopment, and public infrastructure improvements to achieve the vision for the area as a highly walkable, bikeable, transit-focused, vibrant Community Center.



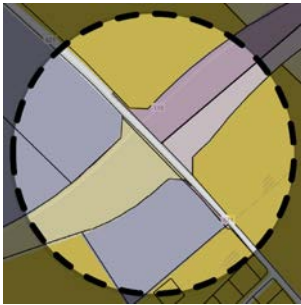
**South End** east of the intersection of Wonder World Drive and Hunter Road was included in the previous 2013 Comprehensive Plan and is a designated Community Center that is already beginning to develop in a manner consistent with the community’s vision for the area. The area includes a variety of commercial and residential developments that are generally consistent with the Preferred Growth Scenario. Place types comprising the South End Community Center include Mixed Use Medium and Neighborhood High.



**Medical District** at the intersection of Wonder World Drive/Redwood Road and SH-123 is a designated Community Center in the Preferred Growth Scenario. Medical uses are already developing in the area, primarily along Wonder World Drive west of SH-123. A small amount of multifamily housing also exists in the area. Place types comprising the Medical District Community Center include Mixed Use Medium, Neighborhood High, and Commercial/Employment Medium.



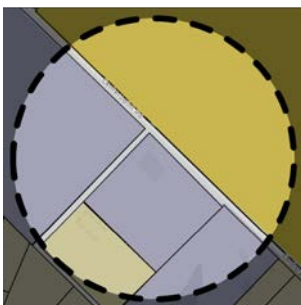
**Northeast Highway 110** is an undeveloped area along FM-110 where the community expressed a strong desire for new mixed use development to serve potential new residential developments. Due to the environmental assets and constraints pervasive in and near this location, the intensity of development is expected to be low to medium. Place types comprising the Northeast Highway 110 Community Center include Mixed Use Low and Neighborhood Medium.



**Highway 110 and Staples Road** is also a largely undeveloped area along FM-110, but the area does include a small amount of commercial and residential development east of FM-110. Place types comprising the Highway 110 and Staples Road Community Center include Commercial/Employment Low and Medium, Mixed Use Medium, and Neighborhood Medium



**Kissing Tree/Centerpoint Drive West** is an envisioned Community Center with limited development today. There are only a handful of commercial and institutional uses today, but the area is envisioned as a mixed use Community Center in the future. Place types comprising the Kissing Tree/Centerpoint Drive West Community Center include Mixed Use Medium, and Commercial/Employment Low and Medium.

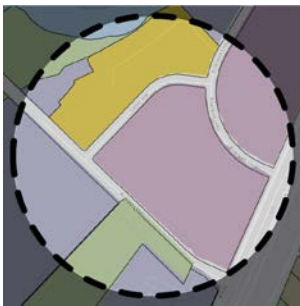


**Centerpoint Drive East** is an envisioned Community Center that is largely undeveloped today. Like the Kissing Tree/Centerpoint Drive West Community Center, the Centerpoint Drive East Community Center benefits from close proximity to the Tanger and Premium Outlets. Place types comprising the Centerpoint Drive East Community Center include Mixed Use Medium, and Neighborhood Medium and High.

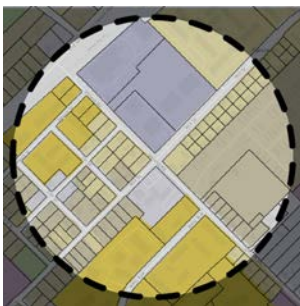


**Neighborhood Centers:** Neighborhood Centers are small, walkable mixed-use areas that provide convenient access to goods, services, dining, and residential for nearby residents. These areas are characterized by smaller commercial centers that are walkable and typically embedded in or near neighborhoods so that residents have convenient, safe, and equitable access to services. They should be concentrated to small geographies and distributed throughout the city. The primary place types comprising neighborhood centers include Mixed Use Low; Neighborhood Medium; Commercial/Employment Low; and Neighborhood Transition.

Seven neighborhood centers are included in the Preferred Growth Scenario and are briefly described below.



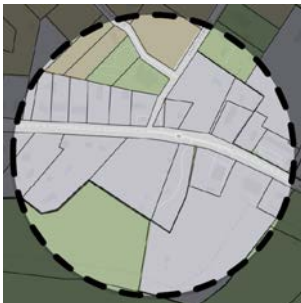
**Riverway Avenue and Cotter Avenue** is an envisioned Neighborhood Center that has minimal development today, although has seen increased development in recent years. Existing uses include a multifamily apartment complex and an auto dealership with nearby office and warehouse uses. Place types comprising the Riverway and Cotter Avenue Neighborhood Center in the future include Commercial/Employment Medium, Mixed Use Medium, and Neighborhood High.



**Mill Street and Uhland Road** is an area that is mostly built out today with a combination of commercial, single-family residential, and multifamily residential uses. With that said, there are opportunities for infill and some strategic redevelopment. Place types comprising the Mill Street and Uhland Road Neighborhood Center in the future include Mixed Use Low and Medium, Neighborhood Low, Medium and High, and Neighborhood Transition.



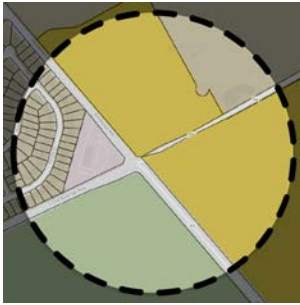
**North LBJ Drive and Sessom Drive** is already functioning as a Neighborhood Center today and is envisioned as a Neighborhood Center in the future. The area mainly includes commercial development and multifamily residential development today. Place Types comprising the N LBJ Drive and Sessom Drive Neighborhood Center in the future include Mixed Use Low and Medium, Commercial/Employment Medium, and Neighborhood Low, Medium and High. As part of the Vision SMTX effort, the community is developing a Neighborhood Area Plan for this area.



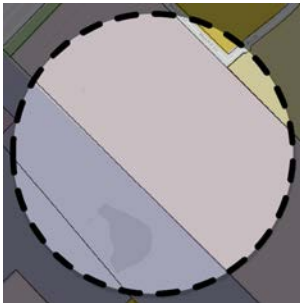
**Old Ranch Road 12** is a collection of commercial and institutional uses today with opportunities to evolve into a true Neighborhood Center. Place Types comprising the Old Ranch Road 12 Neighborhood Center in the future include Mixed Use Low surrounded by Conserve/ Reserve and Neighborhood Low with Neighborhood Medium and High nearby. As part of the Vision SMTX effort, the community is developing a Neighborhood Area Plan for this area.



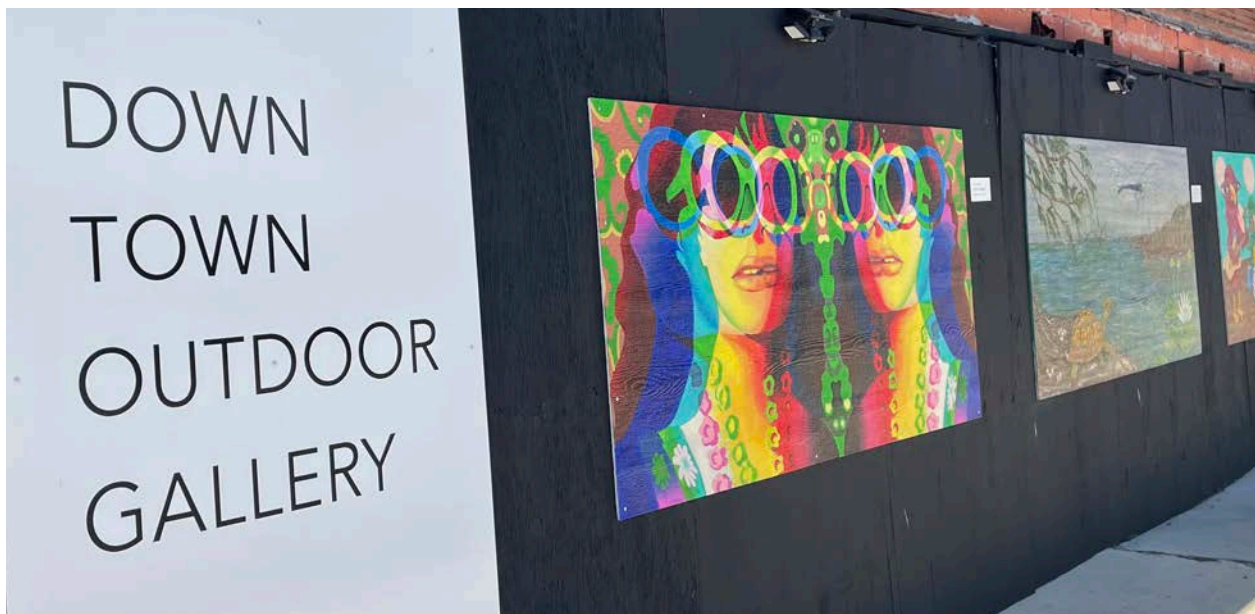
**Craddock Avenue/Bishop Street** is an area that includes a relatively large area of undeveloped land surrounded by a small pocket of commercial development and a combination of single-family residential and multifamily residential. Place types comprising the Craddock Avenue/ Bishop Street Neighborhood Center in the future include Mixed Use Low and Medium surrounded by Neighborhood Low and Medium.



**Old Bastrop Highway and Redwood Road** is an area that is only partially developed. The area west of the Old Bastrop Highway and Redwood Road intersection has a small commercial use at the corner and a large single-family neighborhood west of that. The other three corners are undeveloped. Place types comprising the Old Bastrop Highway and Redwood Road Neighborhood Center in the future include Neighborhood High and Commercial/Employment Low surrounded by Neighborhood Low and High



**El Rio Street (South)** is an area at the south end of San Marcos just east of IH-35 that is undeveloped, but multifamily development is occurring just to the northeast and existing commercial and multifamily zoning exists in and around the area. Place types comprising the El Rio Street (South) Neighborhood Center in the future include Mixed Use Medium and Commercial/Employment Low surrounded by Neighborhood Medium and High.





# RELATIONSHIP TO ZONING CODE AND OTHER REGULATIONS

The Preferred Growth Scenario Map and place types do not explicitly address zoning. The Place Types section identifies desired land uses and a variety of other characteristics for each designation on the Preferred Growth Scenario Map. Both the map and the Place Type descriptions and graphics are generalized tools used to guide development and amendments to the City’s Land Development Code. The Preferred Growth Scenario Map is not a zoning map. This fact is emphasized in Section 213.005 of the Texas Local Government Code: A map of a comprehensive plan shall contain the following clearly visible statement: “A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries”.



Zoning is conservative in nature and has a bias towards maintaining the status quo. Growing cities, though, are not static; new residents move in, new businesses are established, and new technologies change the way people live. These factors create pressures that change the way land is used. The purpose of planning is to anticipate and shape this change in a way that provides opportunities for new development and redevelopment while preserving the community’s cultural and environmental heritage. A comprehensive plan articulates the community’s vision for the future; zoning and other regulatory and budget tools implement that community vision. It follows, therefore, that the first question in any zoning case should be, “Does this request comply with the comprehensive plan?” The plan’s goals, the Preferred Scenario Map and the Place Types provide that first level of guidance.

# AREA PLANNING



A key element of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan is establishing area plans for the first set of geographies across San Marcos. Area planning includes detailed conversations and recommendations for Regional Centers and Neighborhood Areas throughout the community. This section provides an overview of the Area Planning approach to be applied now and moving forward for additional Neighborhood Areas, as well as a summary of the areas being planned as part of the initial Vision SMTX process.



# INTRODUCTION

An important part of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan process was the inclusion of Area Planning. Whereas the Comprehensive Plan articulates a vision, guiding principles, goals, and policies for the entire City and its Preferred Growth Scenario assigns Place Types to smaller areas throughout the community, the citywide guidance provided by the Plan does not address more localized needs within neighborhoods and smaller areas nearby. Place Types and their more robust description of land use, built form, mobility, and amenities establish additional direction for the types of improvements and investments appropriate in existing and new areas of the community, but they do not benefit from more localized discussions and recommendations specific to a specific geography.

The *Vision San Marcos: A River Runs Through Us Comprehensive Plan* (Vision San Marcos) identified Neighborhood Character Studies as an important next step to determine the types of projects that would be supported in existing neighborhoods (referred to as Areas of Stability in that document). According to Vision San Marcos, “neighborhood character studies will be conducted to ensure that each neighborhood maintains its existing character and follows development and redevelopment patterns desired by the residents. These studies will result in specific guidelines for each neighborhood, which are created by the public with technical and professional input from city staff. The DNA of the neighborhoods will be analyzed and recoded back into the regulations for each neighborhood.”

Although a relatively robust effort to develop Neighborhood Character Studies was started in summer 2014 and continued into 2015, the six Neighborhood Character Plans proposed through that process were never completed. Thus, seven Area Plans are included in the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan planning process. While two of those Area Plans focus on higher intensity mixed use regional centers, the remaining five focus on neighborhoods around San Marcos. The Neighborhood Character Studies promised in the Vision San Marcos are included as a major component of the five Area Plans focusing on neighborhoods. The process for four Area Plans began in 2022 and the remaining Area Plans will be completed in 2023. The first five neighborhood-focused Area Plans are establishing a template for community engagement, the approach to analysis, types of recommendations, and documentation that will be utilized in developing additional Area Plans, including Neighborhood Character Studies, in the coming years.

# AREA PLAN APPROACH

Area Plans are intended to provide a coordinated, consistent, and effective approach for the planning of neighborhoods and Regional Centers in San Marcos. A more localized and/or neighborhood-based approach to more detailed planning of San Marcos establishes an achievable approach to developing plans with detailed recommendations for specific geographies of the community.

## TYPES OF AREA PLANS

As suggested above, the Area Planning approach includes two types of Area Plans. The first type is for the two Regional Centers identified and briefly described in the previous section. The second type incorporates Neighborhood Character Studies and is focused on areas of the community with mainly Neighborhood place types assigned in the Preferred Growth Scenario. With that said, there are benefits to not limiting Neighborhood Area Plans to only geographies with Neighborhood Place Type designations. Planning can and should include other Place Types nearby to help ensure connectivity, compatibility, and a cohesive development pattern that will contribute to creating more complete communities throughout San Marcos.



### Regional Center Area Plans

Based upon direction from the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee (CPSC) and City Council, the first type of Area Plans are being developed for the two Regional Centers identified in the Preferred Growth Scenario. There are two primary reasons for developing more detailed and localized direction for the Plan's Regional Centers.

In the case of Downtown San Marcos, the area signifies the historic heart of the community. The existing Downtown Master Plan was adopted in 2008 and there has been a significant amount of change in the Downtown Area and many of the factors influencing its livelihood and long-term success. The focus of that Area Plan is to continue attracting investment and diversity to Downtown San Marcos while retaining the historic character and charm that make the area unique and memorable.

For the Second City Center, the Preferred Growth Scenario and associated modeling project a large amount of residential and employment growth in the area designated as a Regional Center and much of the area nearby. Although the area was already identified as a targeted growth area in the Vision San Marcos, the area is largely undeveloped and development that is occurring is not implementing the vision articulated for the East Village in the previous Comprehensive Plan. A Regional Center Area Plan for the Second City Center will evaluate and update that vision, aligning it with direction from the Preferred Growth Scenario, as well as current and projected market conditions.

The approach to Regional Center Area Plans in San Marcos includes:

- Documentation of existing conditions, including assets and constraints
- Community engagement to provide input and feedback throughout the planning process
- Plans for existing and future higher intensity, mixed use centers in San Marcos
- Focus on land use, built form, connectivity, public spaces, housing and employment
- Specific strategies and recommendations to promote walkability and placemaking
- Prioritization, phasing and other implementation strategies to help ensure that the community's visions for these areas become reality



## Neighborhood Area Plans

The CPSC and City Council also provided strong guidance for the second type of Area Plan included in the overall Vision SMTX planning effort. Area plans for neighborhoods will generally include between one and three formal or informal neighborhoods and the Mixed Use and Commercial/Employment places that are embedded within or located on the edges of these areas. City Council also provided direction indicating that each distinct neighborhood included in a Neighborhood Area will have its own Neighborhood Character Study as a means of recognizing and protecting the unique character of each individual neighborhood in San Marcos.

The approach to Neighborhood Area Plans in San Marcos includes:

- Documentation of existing conditions, including assets and constraints
- Community engagement to provide input and feedback throughout the planning process
- Plans for areas that are primarily neighborhoods with some existing commercial, employment and/or mixed use development
- Inclusion of some adjacent neighborhood centers/commercial areas used by the neighborhood
- Focus on neighborhood character and identity with unique Neighborhood Character Studies for each unique neighborhood
- Direction for context-sensitive amenities, access, and appropriate infill
- Plans for smallest nodes of commercial and mixed use nestled within neighborhoods, as deemed desirable and appropriate by neighborhood residents
- Focus on identity, appropriate scale, transitions, and access
- Prioritization, phasing and other implementation strategies to help ensure that the community's visions for these areas become reality
- Implementation of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan goals and policies on a neighborhood scale

## THE KEY COMPONENTS OF AN AREA PLAN

While the format and organization of Regional Center Area Plans and Neighborhood Area Plans will differ to address the unique needs of these two types of areas, the major components of an Area Plan in San Marcos will be consistent. The following identifies the major components that will be included in Area Plans developed as part of the Vision SMTX planning process and moving forward.

### Documentation of Area Identity and Existing Conditions

- Description of the area, its boundaries, and unique assets and constraints
- Summary of previous and concurrent planning efforts
- An economic snapshot of employment and market conditions

### Area Vision and Goals

- Alignment with the Comprehensive Plan's Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals
- Identify additional unique goals for the Area, if applicable

### Plan Framework

- Recommendations for History, Art and Culture
- Recommendations for Transportation, Mobility and Connectivity
- Recommendations for Streetscapes
- Recommendations for Public Spaces and Amenities
- Recommendations for Housing
- Recommendations for Business Community
- Recommendations for Building form and Development, including place types and transition strategies

### **Neighborhood Character Studies and Recommendations (specific to Neighborhood Area Plans)**

- Summarize character defining elements
- Identify tools and strategies to maintain desirable aspects of Neighborhood Character

### **Implementation**

- Key Investments and prioritization of needed improvements
- Phasing strategy and CIP coordination
- Policy and Regulatory Recommendations





# AREA PLAN PROCESS

Area Plans should protect and enhance the character of San Marcos' Downtown and neighborhoods. The Regional Center Plan for the Second City Center contributes to this charge by providing a market feasible vision and specific direction for creating a new higher intensity growth area that will relieve development pressure on Downtown and neighborhoods throughout the community. Area Plans are developed through resident driven engagement efforts and intended to provide detailed strategies for places, transportation, infrastructure and community facilities and amenities. Area Plans will build on resident and property owner knowledge and feedback to catalog and celebrate community character and develop and enhance places through 1) the further exploration of how an area can achieve the aspirational aspects of place types included in the Preferred Growth Scenario, and 2) protect, enhance, and add community assets to improve access and equity for neighborhoods throughout San Marcos.

Area Plans should integrate previous neighborhood plans and studies, as well as recommendations from citywide system plans (e.g., Transportation Master Plan). The purpose of the Area Plans is to develop actionable strategies for the city's neighborhoods at a manageable and implementable scale. In addition, developing a single plan that represents multiple neighborhoods (or single neighborhoods with larger footprints) is a more effective way to elevate neighborhood-level issues for consideration of policy changes and funding priorities.

The planning process for Area Plans will generally range from six to nine months and should include a robust community engagement strategy. They should be updated approximately every 10-12 years. Criteria for determining prioritization will take into account the Community Area's proximity to regional centers; degree of change reflected in Future Place Type mapping; recent development pressures; existence and age of existing subarea plans; new large-scale development planned, underway or recently completed; new large scale infrastructure planned, underway or completed; and amount and type of public investments recently made in the area or nearby.

At a minimum, the community engagement strategy for Area Plans should include at least one community survey or questionnaire, a series of community meetings, a Steering Committee, and additional meetings and/or pop-up engagement at community events to educate residents, business owners, and property owners about the process, gather input on neighborhood character, assets, and challenges, and solicit feedback on draft recommendations, interim deliverables, and the draft plan report.

# RELATIONSHIP TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As stated previously, Area Planning in San Marcos was deliberately integrated into the rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan. This is to emphasize the importance of neighborhood character and integrity to the current and future success of the community, and to ensure that Area Plans are aligned with and supportive of Vision SMTX. Regional Center and Neighborhood Area Plans should be viewed as critical aspects of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. As such, Area Plans should further operationalize the vision, guiding principles, goals, and policies and apply them in ways that are true to the intent articulated throughout the Comprehensive Plan’s extensive community engagement process, but tailored to the unique conditions within each smaller plan area.

Due to the fact that Area Plans will be developed on a staggered timeline, Area Plans should remain under separate cover from the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan. In addition, it is recommended that Area Plans be adopted as their own standalone policy document as opposed to being amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. While the development of the first seven Area Plans is closely aligning with the Comprehensive Plan process, future Area Plans directed by City Council will likely be completed years after Vision SMTX is adopted. With that said, Area Plans should be reviewed to ensure alignment with the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan and any subsequent amendments to the Plan approved after its initial adoption. Section 5, Implementation, further articulates the relationship between various types of plans in San Marcos.

# SUMMARY OF INITIAL AREA PLANNING

The following sections provide a summary of the planning areas identified for the initial collection of Area Plans, including the two Regional Center Area Plans and the five Neighborhood Area Plans. Due to timing and progress in Area Plan development at the time this is being written, the greatest detail is available for the Downtown Area Plan. The Second City Center Regional Center Plan, Dunbar/Heritage Neighborhoods Area Plan, and the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan have the next level of detail, but planning is still underway and recommendations yet to be developed. The remaining three Neighborhood Area Plans will likely kick off in the first and second quarters of 2023.

## REGIONAL CENTERS

### Downtown

The Downtown Area Plan is focused primarily on an area called the Downtown Core which is made of 20 blocks (84 acres) in the heart of San Marcos, Texas. The Downtown Core is bounded by Comanche Street on the west, MLK Drive/Edward Gary Street/San Antonio Street to the south, CM Allen Parkway to the east, and University Drive/ Pat Garrison to the north. Aspects of the plan regarding transitions, surrounding context, and connections will consider larger areas including the Riverfront Parks, Greater Downtown Area, and the area south of Downtown.

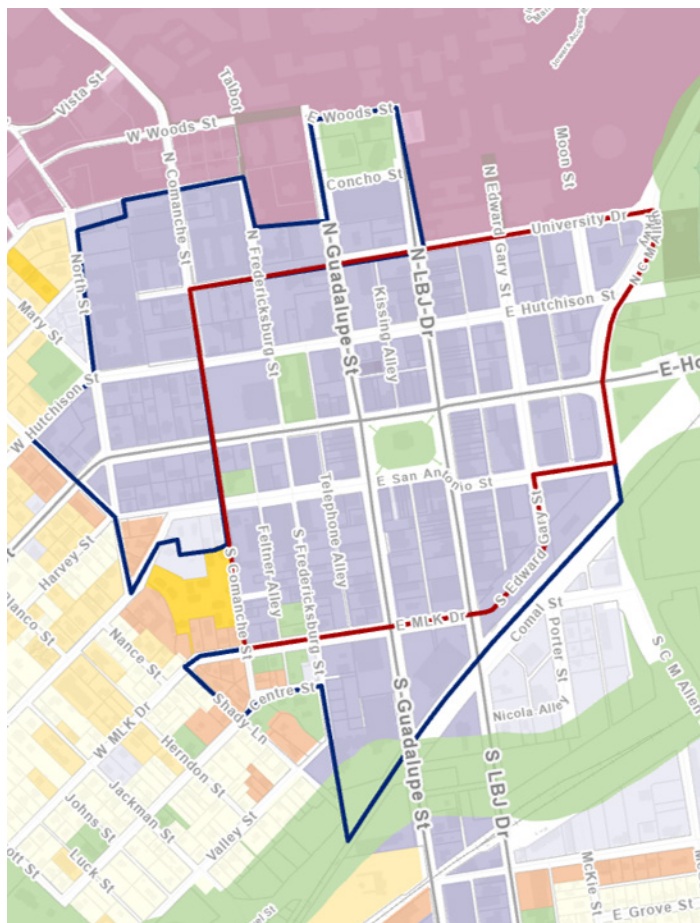
Downtown San Marcos provides a memorable, unique experience through its community, history, and vibrancy. The Historic Hays County Courthouse is central to Downtown, immediately surrounded by a green space and connected to the rest of Downtown through a formal grid of streets. Immediately surrounding the Courthouse are commercial and mixed use buildings with active storefronts and historic, artistic, and creative facades. Radiating out from the Courthouse Square, historic





character continues while intersecting with new mid-rise residential buildings, undeveloped lots, and locally oriented services. The southern portion of the Downtown Core includes two primary mixed use/commercial corridors which have historic character and several local businesses, but noticeably less public investment over recent years. The Downtown Core is most active during nights and weekends during river tubing season and the Texas State University school year. Several vacant buildings, properties, and ground floors currently exist.

The “Greater Downtown Area” defines the immediate proximity of Downtown and includes 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 campus, located on a hill above Downtown. East of Downtown slopes down toward the riverfront parks along the San Marcos River, a significant recreational, natural, and historic resource for residents and visitors. A multi-generational neighborhood with rich culture and community lies south of two lines of Union Pacific railroad tracks and north of Interstate 35.



The vision for Downtown San Marcos that emerged from the planning process includes the following.

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

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

### **Second City Center**

The *Vision San Marcos, a River Runs Through Us Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2013. The new Preferred Scenario Map builds on key elements of the previously adopted Comprehensive Plan, adapting them to current conditions, goals, and priorities. The 2013 Comprehensive Plan identified an area of growth along East McCarty Lane, Rattler Road, and SH-123 as the East Village. The East Village was identified as a Medium Intensity Zone envisioned as a mixed-use district with a variety of residential options, including single family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and small multifamily buildings.

Based on community feedback during the 2022 Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan update, this area is envisioned as the Second City Center, to manage growth and relieve development pressure on Downtown. San Marcos is growing fast; 42,000-64,000 new homes, and 51,000 new jobs are projected in the next thirty years. Without a place to direct this demand, economic pressures could impact the affordability and character of Downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, as well as other areas of San Marcos.

To meet these goals, the Second City Center is designated as a Regional Center to promote the creation of a higher intensity, mixed-use neighborhood. The Regional Center designation promotes multiple uses integrated into a network of urban blocks with complete streets, dedicated bike facilities, public spaces, and transit. Medium to higher scale residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings with pedestrian-oriented ground floors are encouraged to create a vibrant urban neighborhood that complements Downtown.

The intent of the Second City Center is to create a vibrant companion to Downtown, that complements, rather than competes with it. To ensure the creation of this vision, a number of planning and design

considerations are being addressed in the Second City Center Area Plan:

**Building Scale and Height:** Taller building heights can be permitted in the Second City Center to differentiate it from Downtown, provide new market opportunities, and increase density

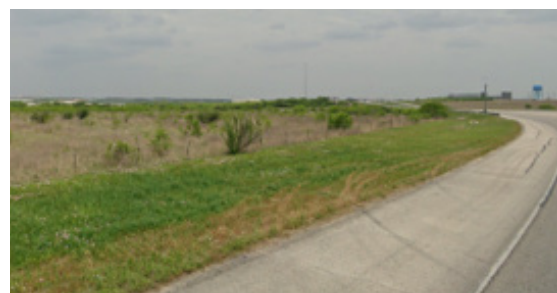
**Building Character:** Design standards and other policies can promote a different, but complementary, architectural character than Downtown

**Transit Connections:** Future transit should make direct, frequent connections between Downtown and the Second City Center to reduce automobile dependency and traffic congestion.

**Land Use:** The Second City Center can accommodate strategic uses to reduce pressure on Downtown, such as student housing.

The vision for the Second City Center that emerged from the planning process includes the following.

*The Second City Center is envisioned as a strategically located and sustainable regional center that accommodates part of San Marcos' anticipated growth and serves the east side of San Marcos through higher intensity, mixed-use urban development. Complementary to Downtown San Marcos, the Second City Center is a unique and vibrant place to live, work and play with pedestrian-oriented ground floors, complete streets for all users, and welcoming public spaces. The Second City Center is a showcase of sustainability, equity, and natural resource protection.*







Key elements of the Dunbar/Heritage Neighborhoods Area Plan will include the Neighborhood Character Study and its recommendations, recommendations to address flooding and water quality (especially in southern portions of the Neighborhoods Area), connectivity and mobility improvements, strategies to preserve and promote arts and culture, park and public amenity improvements and additions, and appropriate transitions to surrounding areas and places.

### Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area

Blanco Gardens encompasses 296 acres on the south side of the City of San Marcos, entirely within Hays County. The area has 4,483 residents, although the actual population is likely higher as Texas State University students living here during the academic year may be counted at their permanent addresses. Blanco Gardens is bounded by IH-35 on the north, River Road on the south, SH-80 on the east, and the San Marcos River, Cape Street, and another portion of River Road on the west. Blanco Gardens is also a racially diverse neighborhood, slightly more than San Marcos overall, and a significant presence of Hispanic or Latino/a ethnic heritage, totaling almost 58% of Blanco Gardens residents of any race, above the citywide average of 41%.

Land uses in Blanco Gardens are primarily residential, with some commercial and retail uses along arterial streets. Residences include one-story detached single-family homes, manufactured homes, and garden-style apartment complexes. Businesses are either standalone in one- and two-story structures or connected in strip-style retail centers. Most face the IH-35 Frontage Road, River Road, Bugg Lane, and SH-80, but a handful are located in otherwise residential areas.



Blanco Gardens enjoys a diverse population, strong connections to natural and open spaces developed infrastructure, and access to many jobs and nearby schools. These qualities should be preserved and improved further when possible. The natural threat of flooding is being addressed with Capitol Improvements Projects (CIP) currently in-design or under construction, but is still a major concern, as is the aging of infrastructure. With mostly renters living in Blanco Gardens, residents move often and the neighborhood identity is not clearly defined.

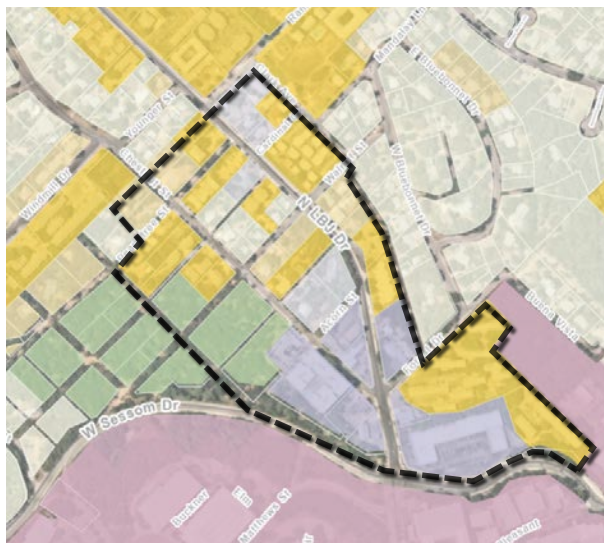
## AREA PLANNING

Key elements of the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan will include the articulation of an identity and brand for the area, recommendations to strengthen neighborhood character, alignment of and recommendations to leverage investments being made in flood mitigation infrastructure, traffic calming and placemaking, improved connectivity to surrounding areas and to natural park and river assets and the addition of neighborhood-serving services and amenities.

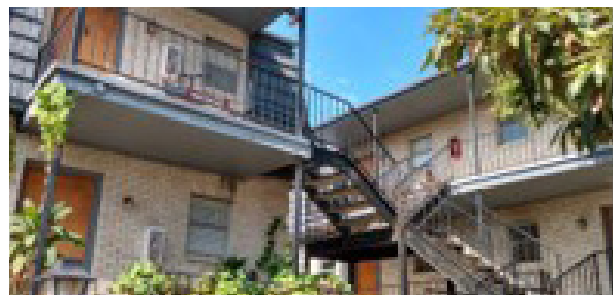


### North of Campus Neighborhood Area

The North of Campus Neighborhood Area is located north of Texas State University (Texas State) campus between Sessom Drive and Ramsay Street, and between one to two properties west of Chestnut Street. The Area includes the commercial shopping center and multifamily housing northwest of the intersection of Sessom Drive and North LBJ Drive. The area serves as a Neighborhood Center for the Forest Hills and Ridgeway-Hillcrest Neighborhoods. Land uses in the Neighborhood Area include restaurants and bars, student housing of various ages, newer small multifamily development, and food trucks. The area also includes an entrance to the Sessom Creek Trail.



In the Preferred Growth Scenario, the North of Campus Neighborhood Area includes a collection of place types, including Mixed Use Low and Medium, Commercial/Employment Medium, all intensities of Neighborhood, and Conserve/Reserve.





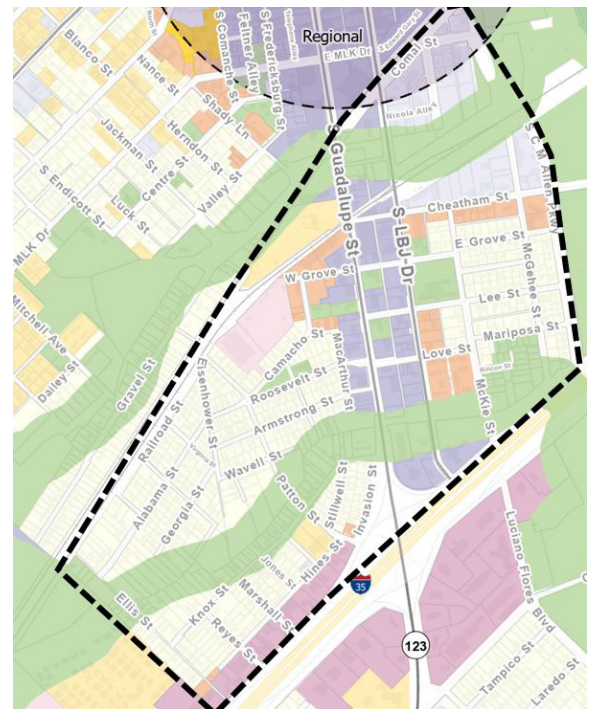
### Ranch Road 12 (RR12) Neighborhood Area

The Old RR12 Neighborhood Area is located along Old Ranch Road 12 and extends from just east of where Old RR12 intersects with Craddock Avenue to where the commercial properties end west of Country Estates Drive. The area already contains a concentration of neighborhood-serving services and destinations, and it is envisioned as a Neighborhood Center serving Sierra Circle, Greater Castle Forest and other newer Neighborhood development in the future. Current land uses in the Neighborhood Area include housing, conversions of housing to commercial, commercial strip center, auto-oriented retail, convenience/gas, and corner commercial. The area also includes portions of and is adjacent to the Ringtail Ridge Natural Area. In the Preferred Growth Scenario, the RR12 Neighborhood Area includes a collection of place types, including Mixed Use Low, all intensities of Neighborhood, and Conserve/Reserve.



**South of Downtown Neighborhood Area**

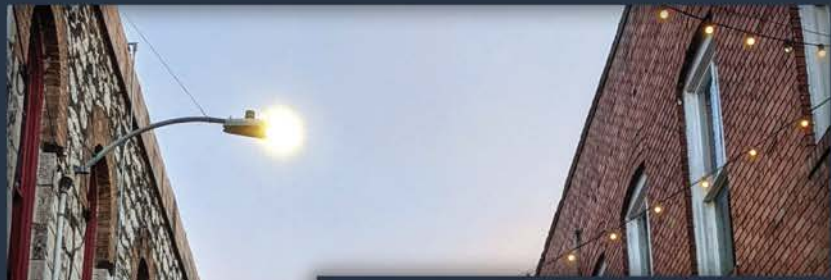
The South of Downtown Neighborhood Area is located between the Victory Gardens and East Guadalupe Neighborhoods, just south of Downtown San Marcos. It is bounded by IH-35 to the southeast, C.M. Allen Parkway to the east, Railroad Street/the railroad/ Comal Street to the northwest, and Ellis Street to the southwest. The plan area includes properties on the west side of Ellis Street. The South of Downtown Neighborhood Area is unique in that it serve multiple roles for residents and visitors, including a gateway to Downtown and Texas State University from IH-35, a hub of auto-oriented businesses near IH-35, a collection of neighborhood-serving commercial uses serving Victory Gardens, East Guadalupe and other residents, and a growingly diverse collection of housing options. The area includes several parks, two greenways, and two railroads. In the Preferred Growth Scenario, the South of Downtown Neighborhood Area includes a collection of place types, including Mixed Use Low and Medium, Neighborhood Transition, Neighborhood Low and Medium, Commercial/Employment Low, and Conserve/Reserve.



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# IMPLEMENTATION



This section clarifies and establishes parameters and priorities for implementation of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan. The Implementation section includes recommendations for an approach to coordinating and aligning planning in San Marcos; key findings from a Fiscal Impact Analysis; a suggested approach to identifying and prioritizing public projects; organizational considerations; and a road map for tracking progress moving forward.

# PLANNING APPROACH

The following provides further articulation of an approach and hierarchy for aligning and guiding planning efforts in San Marcos. Upon adoption, the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan is the overarching policy document that directs the City’s long-range development efforts and the other types of plans critical to realizing the community’s vision and goals. The intent of this more clearly defined hierarchy is to ensure that planning at all levels in San Marcos is completed in an efficient and effective manner with meaningful participation and buy-in from individual residents, neighborhoods, property owners, business owners, partner agencies, major institutions, and other key stakeholders. The four planning levels are summarized and described below:

Level	Plan Type	Example Plans
1	Comprehensive	Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan
2	Citywide Strategic and Action	Parks Master Plan, Stormwater Master Plan; Wastewater Master Plan, Water Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan; Airport Master Plan, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Consolidated Plan and Action Plans; Strategic Housing Action Plan, Arts Master Plan; Transit Plan; Greenway and Trails Master Plan; etc.
3	Area	Downtown Area Plan; Second City Center Area Plan; Dunbar/Heritage Neighborhoods Area Plan; Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan, Additional Area Plans, etc.
4	Specific	Corridor Study/Plan; Site Master Plan or Regulating Plan; Campus Master Plan; Concept Plans; etc.



**Level 1: The Comprehensive Plan** is developed in collaboration with community members, departments across the City, elected and appointed officials, partner agencies, and other community and regional partners to provide the highest policy level guidance for future development and redevelopment, infrastructure improvements and other public investments, transportation and land use connections, and a host of factors contributing to quality of life, affordability, equity and sustainability.

**Level 2: Citywide Strategic and Action Plans** direct specialized components of city planning and implementation such as transportation, infrastructure, economic development, parks and recreation, housing, natural resources, and sustainability. City-wide plans that address a specific system or topic must align with and support the vision, goals, policies, and place guidance in the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan.

Citywide Plans typically come in two varieties, although variations exist and sometimes the two primary types of plans are combined. **Strategic Plans** build on the higher-level policy guidance and direction set in the Level 1 Comprehensive Plan and set more specific goals, objectives, policy direction and performance measures/metrics for a specific topic with consideration for the entire City.

**Action Plans** are guided by the Comprehensive Plan identify and prioritize a particular type of community investment or service. These plans involve analysis and typically the definition, mapping, and listing of specific projects as well as phasing and funding strategies.

As Strategic and Action Plans are updated in the coming years, there are several ways they incorporate direction provided by the Comprehensive Plan Rewrite, including:

- Align with and prioritize the Plan’s vision, guiding principles, goals, and policies (Section 2 of the Plan)
- Utilizing updated projections for population, housing units, and employment
- Basing updated and new infrastructure investments on the Preferred Growth Scenario (Section 3 of the Plan)
- Developing tailored standards and guidelines for various areas of the community utilizing Place Types to inform organization and content (Section 3 of the Plan)
- Evaluate and prioritize specific projects and programs using the Plan’s objectives and metrics (Section 2 of the Plan)

In addition, Strategic and Action Plans should evaluate, coordinate, and incorporate specific direction for topics provided by adopted Area Plans (see below).

**Level 3: Area Plans** provide detailed strategies and recommendations regarding land use, neighborhood character, other aspects of built form, transportation, infrastructure, parks, recreation, open space, and facilities for smaller geographies of the City. The purpose of Area Plans is to engage and unite neighborhoods to plan their own communities within a framework that efficiently and effectively uses the resources available to ensure the entire City has neighborhood level input and guidance for more specific localized recommendations. Guidance for aligning the Area Plans with the Comprehensive Plan is provided in the previous section focused on Area Planning (Section 4 of the Plan).

**Level 4: Specific Plans** Plans address smaller scale, targeted geographies and are focused on implementation. They should be guided by higher order plans (Levels 1, 2, and 3 above), but generally focus on further conceptualizing, planning and sometimes designing a specific small geography. Thus, the Strategic and Action Plans, and Area Plans typically provide the relevant guidance and direction for a single large property, a grouping of properties, or a place. Prioritization of Specific Plan efforts should be informed by the Comprehensive Plan's Preferred Growth Scenario and associated Place Types and Centers framework.

## **EXISTING REGULATIONS**

The City Charter in summary states the Comprehensive Plan must be adopted by ordinance and used as a guide for growth and development as well as preservation and open space. City ordinances should be consistent with the plan. Review of the plan must be ongoing, and any changes must go through the public hearing process outlined in the Development Code.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a multi-year schedule for the construction or substantial renovation of public facilities such as city-owned buildings, utility expansion, drainage and stormwater projects, multimodal infrastructure, including roads. It should be a link between the City’s annual budget and the Comprehensive Plan. Aligning the CIP with the Preferred Growth Scenario is essential to the successful implementation of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan.

Vision SMTX provides substantial direction for the future development of the CIP. In addition, the Plan lays out an updated and comprehensive set of goals the community wants to achieve in the next 20 years. The plan also introduces Place Types and an updated Preferred Growth Scenario for considering where and how investments should be made in the community to achieve desired land use patterns and to address disparities and inequities.



The City’s approach to updating and adopting the CIP should:

- Reflect the vision for the community identified within the Comprehensive Plan’s vision, guiding principles, and goals;
- Prioritize the implementation of the Plan’s policies, Place Types, and the Preferred Growth Scenario; and
- Reference Area Plans as they are adopted to identify and prioritize public infrastructure and amenity improvements.

The CIP can integrate the Comprehensive Plan’s recommendations in two major ways to help achieve the Plan’s goals and objectives. First, the approach to identifying projects can be modified to align with direction provided by the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan and Area Plans as they are adopted. Second, the approach to prioritizing projects and funding the CIP can integrate the Comprehensive Plan and associated Area Plans through the development of new scoring criteria explicitly linked to policy guidance provided by these documents.



## ANNEXATION AND THE EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

Annexation decisions should be policy driven and evaluated in terms of how it fits with the annexation-related goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

San Marcos' ETJ is the contiguous unincorporated land within a 3.5 mile radius extending from and adjacent to the city limits that is not within another city' s ETJ or city limits. The purpose of the ETJ is to allow cities to plan for growth in the area outside their corporate boundaries. The ETJ does this in two ways. First, there is a statutory prohibition against a municipality annexing into another city' s ETJ or any privately owned property without the property owner's consent. Second, cities are authorized to enforce their subdivision regulations and infrastructure standards (and a very limited number of other regulations) in their ETJ. This ensures that development in the ETJ meets the city' s development standards should future annexation occur.

Several of the Best Management Practices for Annexation include:

- ETJ management decisions should support implementation of the Comprehensive Plan; ETJ management decisions support the Comprehensive Plan by directing growth towards the appropriate high-level land use, intensity zone, and Place Types in the ETJ.
- Discretionary actions, including consent to the creation of Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and Public Improvement Districts (PIDs) in the ETJ or approval of development agreements should be evaluated in terms of their impact on implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.



# KEY FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

A fiscal impact analysis was completed to understand the impact of land use decisions on the City of San Marcos' long-term fiscal health. The fiscal impact analysis estimated the increase in revenues and expenditures expected to be generated by new development on an annual basis. The analysis primarily focused on the City's General Fund, which provides funding for major services such as police, fire, streets, and parks. The analysis also considered impacts on other major funds where applicable. The analysis estimated impacts in two ways.

First, the net fiscal impact of the development pattern envisioned in each Place Type was estimated. The analysis helped identify which Place Types were beneficial to the City's fiscal health and the locations within the City's extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) that are more costly to serve. The analysis results illustrate the importance of a balanced land use plan that accommodates real estate market demands, but within land use patterns that are more cost effective to serve for the City. The fiscal impact findings for each Place Type are provided in Chapter 3.

Second, the net fiscal impact of the Preferred Growth Scenario was compared to the Existing Trends scenario that illustrated the continuation of recent development patterns. The fiscal impact analysis of the scenarios found that the Preferred Growth Scenario produces a net positive annual impact on the City's General Fund (\$3.9 million annually, which is 3.9% of estimated total new annual expenditures). The Preferred Growth Scenario also produced a greater net positive fiscal benefit to the City than the Existing Trends scenario. The Preferred Growth Scenario provides for a greater diversity of housing and lower potential for low density/intensity employment uses. This growth pattern produces a more cost-effective built environment for the City to serve.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Lastly, the fiscal impact analysis identified a few major findings related to the location of growth that impact land use and future annexation decisions.

- The City of San Marcos' ETJ is within four different counties (Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe, and Hays). Most of San Marcos and its future growth potential is within Hays County, which is more convenient for service provision since San Marcos is the Hays County seat. Growth in the other three counties produces greater service costs (especially for police service).
- The location of growth significantly impacts the effectiveness and cost of fire service. Fire service effectiveness is driven by a few key factors including response time to calls for service and the utilization of firefighter units and apparatus. Development that is far from existing fire stations (i.e., with a response time greater than four to six minutes) impacts response times and utilization of units. New development outside existing fire station service areas has a much greater cost to serve as it will generate the need for new stations and firefighter staffing.
- Potential growth areas for the City of San Marcos, in some cases, are outside of existing water and sewer service areas for the City's water and wastewater utilities. New development in areas outside of existing utility service areas will generate requests for service even if the new development is not annexed into the San Marcos. If the City chooses to not expand its service boundaries to serve new development, it can create the potential for encroachment of neighboring districts or new, small-scale water and sewer districts to be formed. Encroachment from other districts can limit the City's influence on the direction and pattern of development. Small-scale districts, especially sewer districts, can create the risk for future failure of the small sewer system or inadequate standards that may impact the long-term quality of life for San Marcos residents. The expansion of the City's utility systems should follow the direction and pattern of growth prescribed in this Comprehensive Plan.



# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY AND COORDINATION

In order to implement the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan, it is important to understand the needs for short-term and ongoing organizational capacity and coordination.

## STAFFING

Planning within San Marcos is led by the Planning and Development Services (P&DS) Department. There are several divisions that make up P&DS. These include Planning, Permitting, Building/Inspections, and Community Initiatives and Housing. Staff evaluates plans, tracks area needs, implements the Comprehensive Plan, and ensures compliance with applicable codes. The department also gives staff support and recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Zoning Board of Adjustments, the Historic Preservation Commission, Construction Board of Appeals, Human Services Advisory Board, City Council, and additional various appointed committees and boards. The Planning Department's principal responsibilities are:

- Developing and maintaining a Comprehensive Master Plan and Land Development Code;
- Reviewing applications and development plans to ensure code compliance and compatibility with zoning and land use designations; and
- Providing an information center to assist citizens on projects pertaining to their property, neighborhood and throughout the city
- Administering Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, including Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) and Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funding

## IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to ongoing development guidance and support, the Vision SMTX Plan outlines several initiatives and priorities that will need to be led by P&DS staff, including:

- Project management and coordination of Area Plans, including the seven plans being developed as part of the Comprehensive Plan process and additional Area Plans for other Neighborhood Areas;
- Coordination with other departments to ensure other plans, studies, and investments not led by P&DS are in alignment with and further the vision and goals of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Updates to the San Marcos Development Code to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan’s vision, goals and policies, the Preferred Growth Scenario, and the Place Types; and
- Updates to the San Marcos Design Manual and adoption/initiation of other programs, plans, or projects to ensure alignment with and provide additional detailed guidance for the Comprehensive Plan’s vision, goals and policies, the Preferred Growth Scenario, Place Types, and recommendations included in Area Plans as they adopted.



As such, P&DS staffing should be evaluated to assess overall workload and responsibilities for the department and individual staff. Many of the additional tasks and projects outlined above may be achievable with existing staff, but effective and expedient implementation of the Comprehensive Plan may likely require reorganization of existing staff, the creation of new staff positions, and strategic hiring of consulting expertise.



## CROSS DEPARTMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

The success of the Vision SMTX process can in part be attributed to the fact that the Plan was not only developed by the P&DS Department. Nearly all City departments engaged in the Comprehensive Plan process in some way, and engagement and coordination with staff and leadership occurred throughout the process. In addition, stakeholder and organization engagement occurred throughout the planning process to help develop and review content.

Moving forward into Plan implementations, it will be important to continue collaborating across departments and agencies to ensure that resources are prioritized appropriately, collective impacts are realized, responsibilities are assigned appropriately, and the San Marcos community's short-, medium-, and long-term vision are represented in all local and regional discussions and decision-making.



# IMPLEMENTATION OVERSIGHT

## IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The level of community engagement and cross-department and agency coordination that has occurred in the development of the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan can provide a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration for aligning implementation efforts, leveraging available resources, ensuring maximum collective impact, and ensuring accountability. The composition of an Implementation Committee appointed by City Council should include community representatives and representatives of various departments, agencies and organizations that participated in crafting the plan. The Implementation Committee should meet at least annually, contribute to an annual reporting of implementation progress and evaluation metrics, serve as stewards of the Comprehensive Plan, and ensure future efforts are aligned with the Comprehensive Plan. Additional roles of the Implementation Committee may include:



- Contributing to the measuring and reporting of objectives, metrics, and targets
- Sharing of process and content updates related to Strategic and Action Plans; Area Plans; and Specific Plans
- Participating in Area Planning
- Coordinating existing and new programs recommended in the Comprehensive Plan or targeted at achieving a Plan goal and objectives
- Identifying and/or discussing potential Plan amendments, including adjustments to the Preferred Growth Scenario



## TRACKING PROGRESS

Each element of the Comprehensive Plan includes a set of objectives. These objectives are intended to measure changes that are desired as a result of the goals and policies associated with each goal. A target metric needs to be identified and defined for each objective including the data source and methodology for measurement. The objective measurements should be updated annually to track the success of the Plan. In addition, tracking of implementation by mapping and otherwise illustrating which major policies (from Section 2) and places (from Section 3) have been implemented. The Implementation Committee can help to define the methodology for measurement and tracking of the objectives. The Committee should also provide direction on whom (e.g. which department, agency or organization) is responsible for tracking of each objective. A compiled list of suggested objectives and metrics is provided in an Appendix. In addition, the City should establish an ongoing tool to analyze the “fiscal sustainability”, defined as the long-term public cost obligations and fiscal productivity, of new development proposals.



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS





**Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)**

A structure contained within or separate from the main structure on a single-family or two-family lot that contains separate living quarters, including cooking, sleeping, and bathroom facilities. An ADU can be a separate structure, or attached as in a garage apartment or garden apartment which includes a separate entrance. An ADU may be occupied by extended members of a family (such as a grandparent) or by persons unrelated to the owners or occupants of the main structure on the lot. ADUs can be a relatively inexpensive way to add dwelling units in existing neighborhoods without changing its character.

**Adaptive Reuse**

The use of existing structures, often historic buildings, for new uses. For example, an early twentieth century bank building in the classical style may be renovated and used as a restaurant, or an old office building may be transformed into a hotel. The reuse of a building is often cheaper and generally more environmentally beneficial than tearing down and building a new building and can have significant aesthetic benefits.

**Clustered Housing**

A style of residential development where homes are grouped together on a development site, typically on smaller lots than allowed in typical single-family development, but with no change in maximum number of units. The clustering results in a larger amount of common undeveloped space that is usually retained as open space and used for recreational purposes.

**Cottage Cluster**

A group of homes, generally one or two stories that are clustered and arranged around a common open space.

**Equitable**

While equality implies treating everyone the same, equity includes the understanding that each community and part of a community has different challenges when it comes to access to various opportunities, and adapting our policies and actions based on those differences to respond to unique needs and create more inclusive access.

**Fiscal Sustainability**

The long-term public cost obligations and fiscal productivity, of new development proposals.

### **Goals**

Priority outcomes that the community wants to accomplish.

### **Green (Stormwater) Infrastructure**

The use of measures that allow stormwater to be stored on site and slowly infiltrated into the ground, transpired by plants, or evaporated into the atmosphere, instead of immediately being transported through pipes, drains, and water treatment systems to water bodies or manufactured flood containment systems. Green stormwater infrastructure includes elements such as rain barrels, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavement, planting strips, tree lawns, and green roofs.

### **Historic Property**

A district, site, building, structure or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the national, state, or local level.

### **Historic Structure**

Any structure that is:

1. Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places (a listing maintained by the Department of Interior) or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the requirements for individual listing on the National Register;
2. Certified or preliminarily determined by the Secretary of the Interior as contributing to the historical significance of a registered historic district or a district preliminarily determined by the Secretary to qualify as a registered historic district;
3. Individually listed on a state inventory of historic places in accordance with state historic preservation programs that have been approved by the Secretary of the Interior; or
4. Individually listed on a local inventory of historic places in communities with historic preservation programs that have been certified either by the Secretary of the Interior or by an approved state program as determined by the Secretary of the Interior.

### **Mid-Rise Buildings**

Tends to describe buildings that are five to eight stories in height, but can be used to describe three and four story buildings as well, depending on context.

### **Middle Density (or Missing Middle)**

Development that is built at moderate density, including formats such as two-family housing (duplexes), three-family housing (triplexes), four-family housing (fourplexes), two-or-three story apartment buildings (often with street-level retail on the ground floor), and smaller-scale retail and office development that supports walkable neighborhoods. Middle-density development can be less costly to serve with infrastructure such as water and sewer than lower-density single-family development and often is compatible within and on the fringes of lower-density development such as single-family (detached) homes. The increased population density supports the City’s goal to create walkable neighborhoods that provide housing in a variety of formats, size, and prices and support neighborhood-level retail and smaller parks. Middle-density development fills the gap between subdivisions that are largely single-family detached homes, and large multi-story apartment buildings, large retail complexes, or office parks.

### **Missing Middle Housing**

The residential component of middle density neighborhoods. Missing middle housing includes a range of housing types that are missing in most neighborhoods constructed in the last 70 years because they were prohibited by many zoning ordinances and disfavored by the housing development and financing market. Types of housing that qualify as the missing middle include two-family housing (duplexes), three-family housing (triplexes), four-family-housing (fourplexes), townhouses, cottage homes, smaller two- and three-story apartment buildings, and live-work buildings. This type of housing often supports a variety of different sizes and price points. Individual missing-middle housing projects can be appropriate infill development in existing neighborhoods. They can gently increase density in existing neighborhoods served by utilities without impairing neighborhood identity or charm.

### **Objectives**

Metrics for measuring progress toward implementing goals and/or policies.

### **Placemaking**

Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, placemaking refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.



### **Policies**

Statements that identify how goals can be reached, including the specific intent of the goal direction as it relates to more specific topics or subtopics.

### **Shared-Use Path**

Off-road infrastructure, typically paved, that is designed as part of a transportation network serving persons walking or using micromobility devices such as bikes, e-bikes, wheelchairs, and scooters. A shared-use path may run adjacent to but separated from a street, or operate in a completely separate right-of-way. Shared-use paths serve users who are traveling for recreational, employment, or other purposes.

### **Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)**

A pattern of higher-density residential, commercial, office, and civic uses with an urban design and high-quality support for walking, bicycling, transit use and other forms of non-vehicular transportation, developed near high-performance transit stations. Transit-oriented development (TOD) is often encouraged using special development regulations around transit stations which require a higher-quality public realm, limited parking, and connections to adjoining neighborhoods.

### **Transit Supportive Development**

An alternative name for Transit-Oriented Development (see above) that places an emphasis on linking adjacent land uses and activities to a transit station or station area.

### **Underserved Areas**

A community in which the residents lack resources or the infrastructure (either public or private) is undeveloped, leading to disparities in the ability to access health care, jobs, recreation, social services, housing, transportation services, food, retail, or other elements of daily life.

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Gen. C. "Jack" Hays  
1817-1883





1873

HARPER'S HALL

The PORCH

TAPROOM

HARPER'S  
BRICK OVEN  
Sports Pub

CALIBER

**SMTX**   
**VISION**

