



City of San Marcos

City Council Regular Meeting

October 21, 2025

New City Hall/Hopkins City Center Project

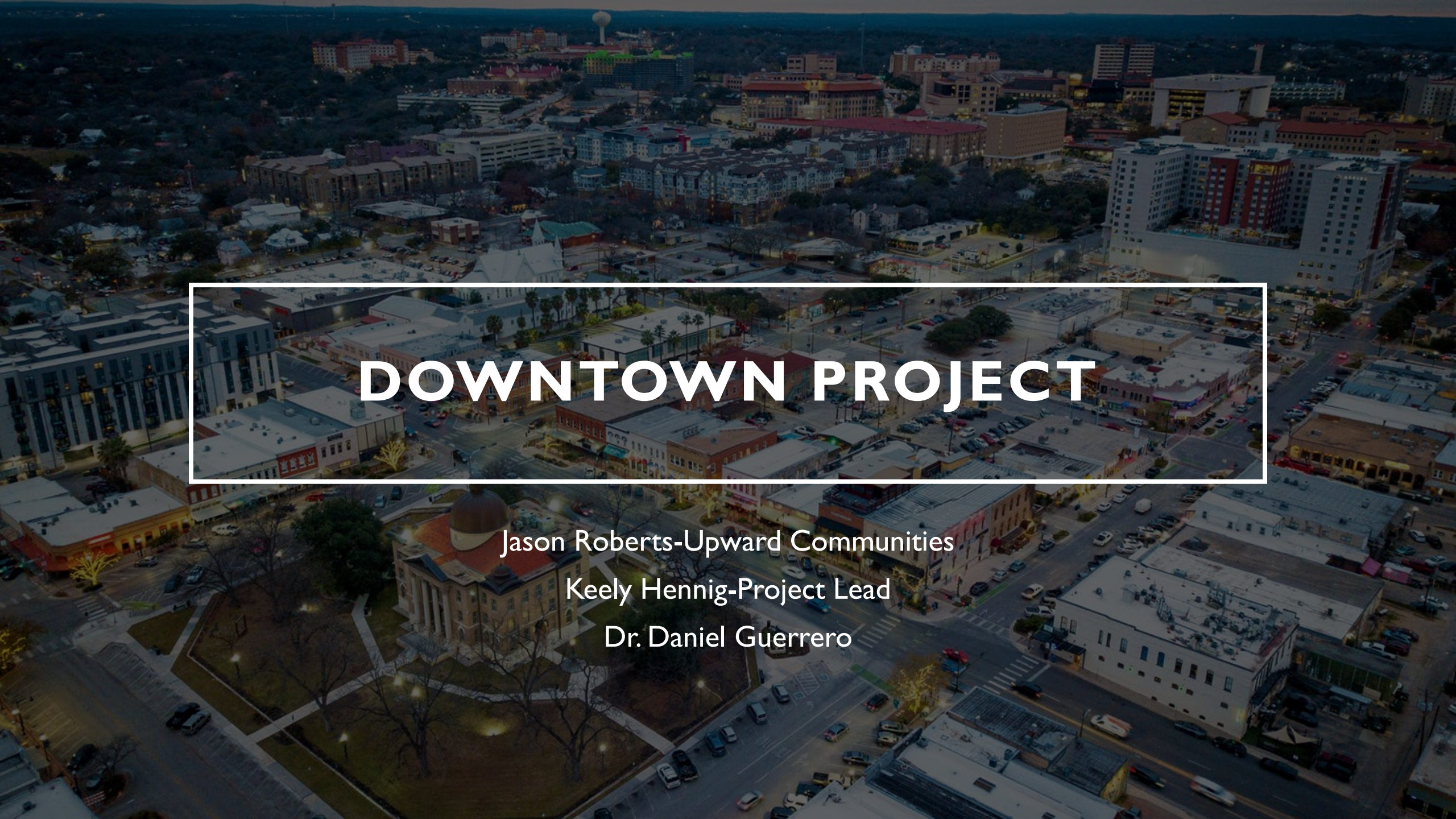


- **November 2024: City Council appointed Advisory Committee**
- **November 2024: Hired Transactional Advisor & Land Planning Consultant**
 - Economic & Planning Systems, Freese and Nichols, McCann Adams Studio
- **Advisory Committee met in February, March, and May 2025 to discuss project**
- **Summer 2025: Received unsolicited proposal that included new city hall, other development**
- **August 2025: Issued Request for Information (RFI); two proposals received**
- **October 2025: Presentation of proposal from Upward Communities**



Current Proposal Considerations

- **Council direction from 2022**
 - **Look at City presence in Downtown** – staff analysis at the time determined locating Downtown was infeasible due to space needs/costs
 - **Explore partnerships and alternative funding mechanisms** – monetizing site will help reduce financial burden on taxpayers
- **Meets larger purpose of activating downtown** – can include other City-owned lots
- **Downtown Area Plan approved in Fall 2023**
- **Arts Master Plan update approved in Spring 2022**



DOWNTOWN PROJECT

Jason Roberts-Upward Communities

Keely Hennig-Project Lead

Dr. Daniel Guerrero

WHO WE ARE

Jason Roberts

Upward Communities

- SMHS Graduate 1999
- TXST Graduate
- Local Developer
- Lives & Works in San Marcos

Keely Hennig

Project Lead

- SMHS Graduate 1996
- SWT & TXST Graduate
- Former San Marcos Chamber of Commerce Board Chair
- Former Main Street Advisory Board Member
- Lives & Works in San Marcos

Dr. Daniel Guerrero

- SMHS Graduate 1995
- TXST Graduate
- Former Mayor of San Marcos
- Lives & Works in San Marcos

- Meet City Hall space needs
- Address site constraints
- Feasible delivery with limited impact on tax rate
- Connect the civic corridor to the river, parks, and downtown
- Create more welcoming “gateway” experience
- Enhance public land and civic amenities (Hotel, Convention Center, Open Air Market/Farmer’s Market, Arts & Culture District)
- Efficient phasing/financing
- Activate City-owned property
- Use public investment to catalyze nearby redevelopment
- Respect the watershed plan
- Respect Community perspectives



PROJECT GOALS



GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- The Project will be comprised of a mixed-use, multi-phase development along the Hopkins Street Corridor
- As currently envisioned, the Project includes a new City Hall, a potential public-private partnership for the redevelopment of land the City Hall complex is currently on, corridor improvements along Hopkins Street, and improvements to the civic corridor on the north side of Hopkins Street

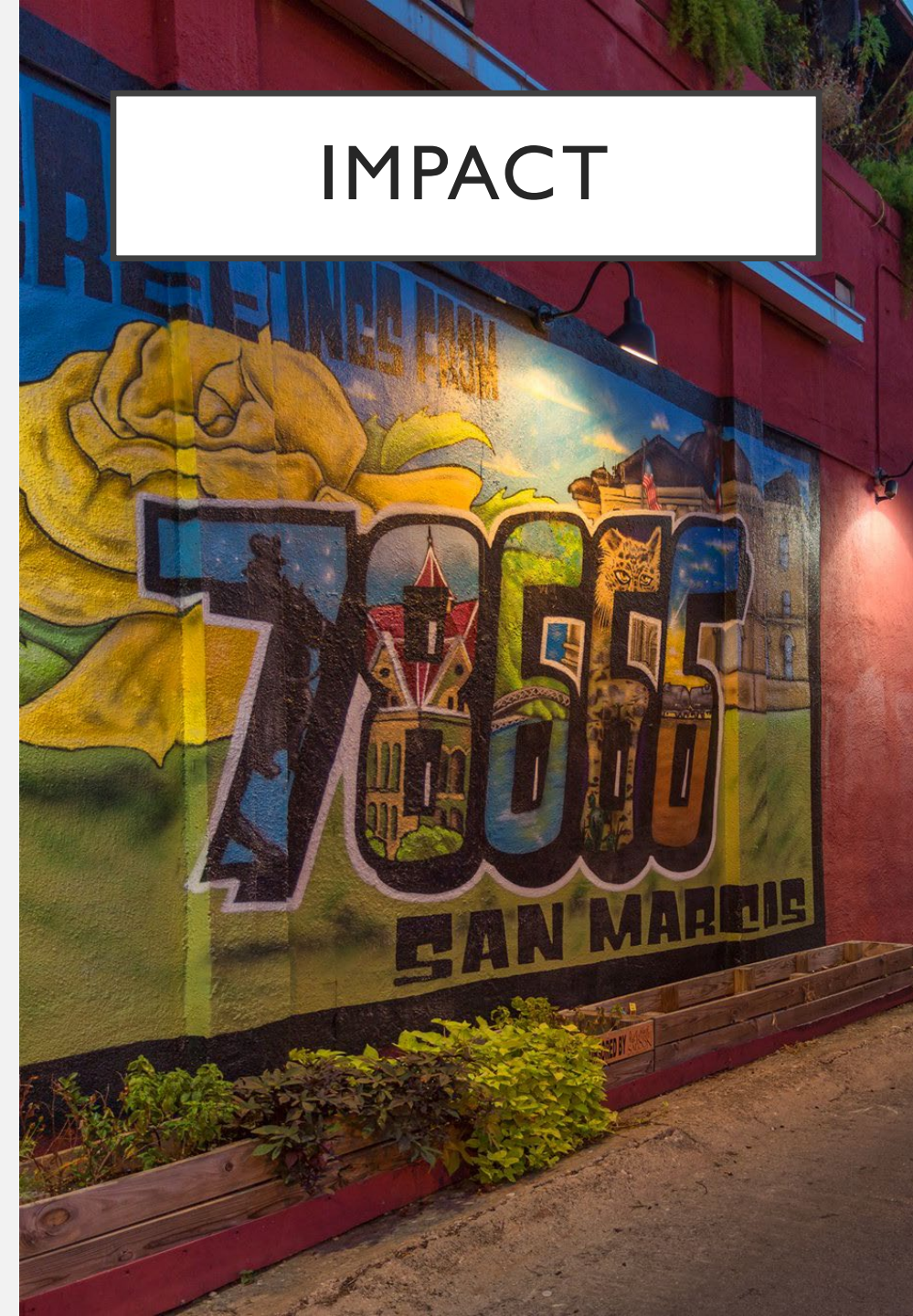
IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Guided by the Downtown Area Plan and Arts Master Plan, and in close collaboration with the City, we intend to deliver meaningful, privately funded development that not only benefits the community, but also provides the City with long-term resources to support and maintain public assets. This approach ensures that vital community infrastructure and amenities can be enhanced without placing additional financial burden on taxpayers.

- New City Hall Building
- Downtown Hotel
- Downtown Conference Center
- Arts & Cultural Center/Museum (Possible partnership with TXST)
- Open Air Market/Farmer's Market
- Botanical Garden/Outdoor Space
- Parking Garage
- Trees & Shading
- Children's Interactive Museum
- Maintain Skate Park
- Explore options to enhance or relocate the Dog Park
- Retail
- Performing Arts Center

- Increased visitor traffic benefits nearby local businesses and encourages new business openings.
- Attracts tourism, business travelers, and events, boosting local spending at restaurants, shops, and attractions.
- Remove vacant land and provide amenities for the community, while also reducing impervious cover and expanding downtown's tree canopy to provide shade for pedestrians.
- Offers a venue for local events, conferences, weddings, and educational gatherings.

IMPACT



IMPACT

- Generates hotel occupancy taxes and sales taxes, increasing funds for city services and improvements.
- Connect Downtown both physically and programmatically to TXST, the San Marcos River, and other surrounding neighborhoods. (Downtown Area Plan Goal page 46)
- Strengthen Downtown's unique identity through an atmosphere of arts, small businesses, recreational opportunities, historic architecture, and lively events in a riverfront hill country community. (Downtown Area Plan Goal page 46)



IMPACT

- Creates a landmark destination that reflects and promotes the culture and character of San Marcos.
- Improved quality of life for San Marcos residents.
- Cohesion in architecture and design.
- Sparks investment in surrounding areas, improving infrastructure, walkability, and aesthetics.
- Attract people of all ages and walks of life with a greater diversity of shops, restaurants, and employment options. (Downtown Area Plan Goal page 46)



Downtown Area Plan

Page 48 Opportunities-Priority Streetscape Enhancement

Enhance the arrival experience and downtown identity through gateways for all modes of transportation.

Page 92 Priority Streetscape Improvements-Downtown Gateways

A gateway can be designed in different ways and **serves as a landmark that tells you that you've arrived in a new place** while expressing the identity of that place. Examples include, but are not limited to, a sign, landscaping, a park, a monument or public art piece, a park, or distinctive architecture within an area.

CITY HALL



Downtown Area Plan

Page 105 Public Space & Amenities-
Overarching Recommendations

Inventory and **expand Downtown's tree canopy** to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with careful species selection, soil, and planting considerations for drought, stormwater, and groundwater

Create better connections from Downtown to the Riverfront Parks and the San Marcos River through east-west parkway connections, art, signage and wayfinding, multimodal infrastructure, and landscaping.

CITY HALL



Downtown Area Plan

Page 116 Public Space & Amenities Connections to Riverfront Parks

The Riverfront Parks are a great amenity that are directly adjacent to Downtown San Marcos. Despite their location, some residents feel that the parks are disconnected from the Downtown Core.

CITY HALL





HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Downtown Area Plan

- Page 46 Goals
 - Educate about, reflect on, respect, and celebrate history while **adapting to new needs and planning for growth and change over time.**
 - **Connect Downtown** both physically and programmatically to Texas State University, the San Marcos River, and other surrounding neighborhoods.
- Page 49 Building Form & Infill Development
 - **Reduce vacant lots, buildings,** and storefronts and utilize both temporary and permanent activation strategies.
- Page 61 Form & Infill Development-Overarching Recommendations
 - Attract a **downtown hotel that provides multiple economic benefits and assets** to Downtown and serves visitors to San Marcos and Texas State University

HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Downtown Area Plan

- Cont. page 61
 - Continue to utilize/refine the Downtown architectural design standards and guidelines for buildings in downtown and allow for flexibility while maintaining architectural quality and cohesion with existing downtown buildings.
- Page 74 Building Form & Infill Development-Downtown Hotel
 - The addition of **a hotel downtown would provide economic benefits to downtown & provide an additional lodging option for visitors to San Marcos.** A downtown hotel would help diversify the consumer base by adding activity downtown throughout the day for businesses & restaurants. Key elements that should be incorporated **include a meeting, conference, or event space, as well as a full-service restaurant.** A partnership with Texas State University should be explored to achieve mutually beneficial goals.





HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Downtown Area Plan

- Cont. page 74
 - The downtown area currently has no hotels, as most hotel options are along I-35.
 - San Marcos also has a **limited amount of event and conference space** associated with hotels and a limited number of luxury/full-service hotel options.
- Page 105 Public Space & Amenities-Overarching Recommendations
 - Inventory and **expand Downtown's tree canopy** to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with careful species selection, soil, and planting considerations for drought, stormwater, and groundwater.



HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER

Downtown Area Plan

- Cont. page 105
 - Create better **connections from Downtown to the Riverfront Parks and the San Marcos River** through east-west parkway connections, art, signage and wayfinding, multimodal infrastructure, and landscaping.
- Page 116 Public Space & Amenities-Connections to Riverfront Parks
 - The Riverfront Parks are a great amenity that are directly adjacent to Downtown San Marcos. Despite their location, some residents feel that the parks are disconnected from the Downtown Core.
- Page 139 Implementation- Building Form & Infill Development

PARKING GARAGE

Downtown Area Plan

- Page 49 Opportunities-Building Form & Infill Development
 - Envision catalytic development within **vacant lots**. (City Hall & Parking Garage)
- Page 77 Multimodal Connectivity & Parking-Overarching Recommendations
 - **Enhance sidewalks** and fill gaps in the pedestrian network downtown where there is significant pedestrian use, especially on the south and west sides of Downtown and **connections to the riverfront**.
 - Require **adequate parking to support existing uses and projected growth in Downtown**. New parking options could include new parking garages, satellite lots, and on-street parking.



PARKING GARAGE

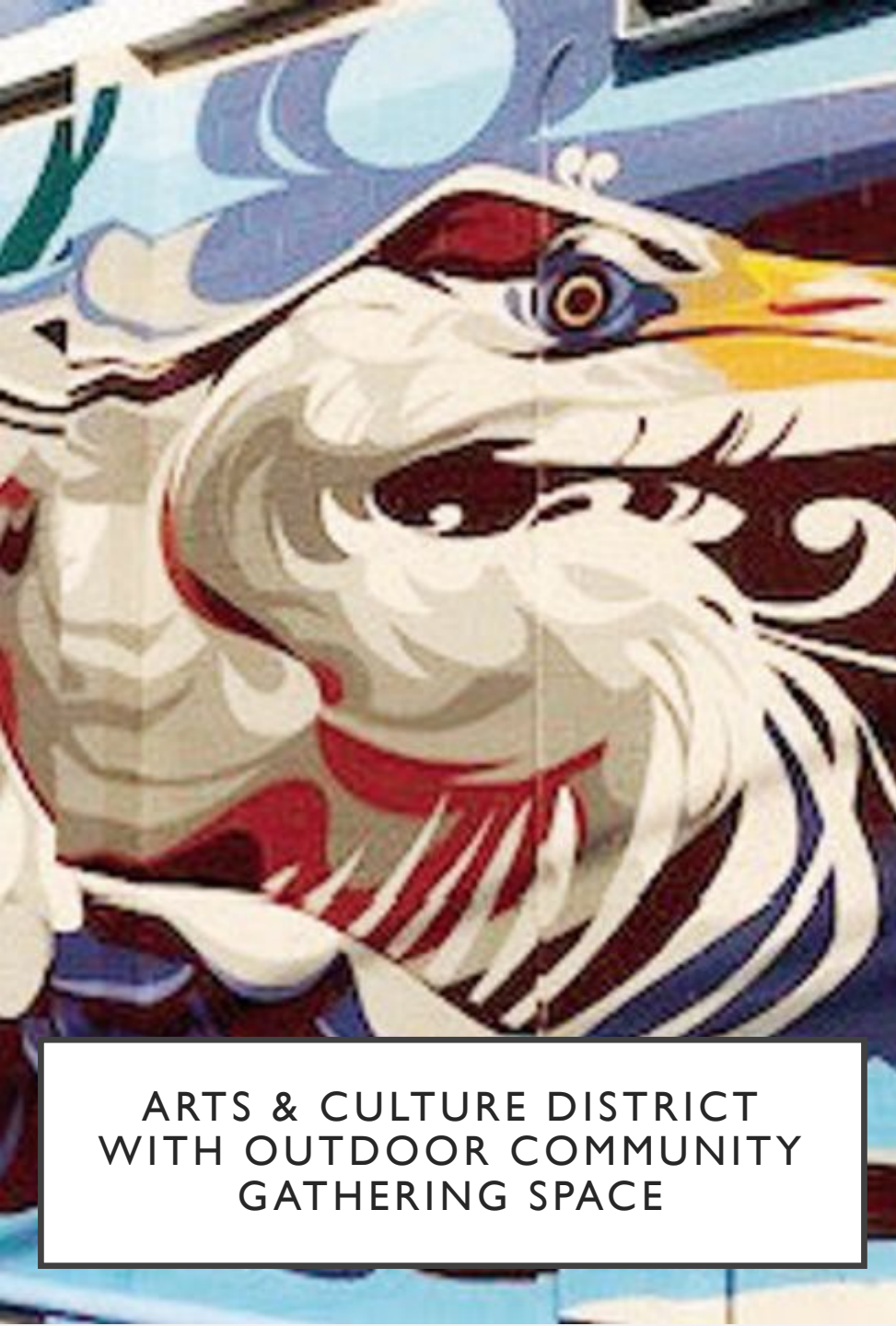
Downtown Area Plan

- Page 82 Multimodal Connectivity & Parking-Top Priorities
 - Seek Opportunities to Expand Parking Supply
- Page 105 Public Space & Amenities-Overarching Recommendations
 - Inventory and expand Downtown's tree canopy to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with careful species selection, soil, and planting considerations for drought, stormwater, and groundwater.

Arts Master Plan

- Page 11 Key Findings
 - **Parking is a significant barrier to participation.**





ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT
WITH OUTDOOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING SPACE

Downtown Area Plan

- Page 47 Opportunities-History, Art, Culture
 - **Provide more public art of various media** that is tied to the history, culture, and nature of Downtown San Marcos, especially by students and other local artists. (Museum partnership with TXST)
- Page 47 Opportunities-Multimodal Connectivity & Parking
 - **Increase pedestrian comfort and safety through shade, lighting,** and traffic calming. This is achieved by installing street trees or canopies/awnings to provide shade for pedestrians, and by installing on-street lighting, such as pedestrian light poles or lights on intersection traffic poles.
- Page 48 Opportunities-Public Spaces & Amenities
 - Explore strategies to **improve existing public spaces, utilize other publicly owned property,** pursue land acquisition/swap/ donation, and/or encourage pocket parks with large-scale redevelopment.

Downtown Area Plan

- Cont. page 48
 - Increase connection between built and natural environment within Downtown through **additional green spaces, trees, landscaping, and connections to the riverfront.**
- Page 54 Downtown Housing Options-Community Amenities
 - **Parks and public gathering spaces**
- Page 62 Building Form & Infill Development-Inviting Buildings-Key Design Elements
 - Amenities outside the storefront, such as signage, art, **seating, lighting, landscaping,** and outdoor displays
- Page 105 Public Space & Amenities-Overarching Recommendations
 - Inventory and **expand Downtown's tree canopy** to provide shade for pedestrians and a more pleasant outdoor experience with careful species selection, soil, and planting considerations for drought, stormwater, and groundwater



ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT
WITH OUTDOOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING SPACE



ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT
WITH OUTDOOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING SPACE

Downtown Area Plan

- Cont. page 105
 - Prioritize sustainability with supplemental educational information in public spaces, streetscapes, and private spaces as feasible through permeable pavements, rain gardens, green infrastructure, native landscaping, and additional shade trees.
 - Create better connections from Downtown to the Riverfront Parks and the San Marcos River through east-west parkway connections, art, signage and wayfinding, multimodal infrastructure, and landscaping.
 - Provide the community's priority desired amenities throughout Downtown in existing and new parks, plazas, and parklets to better serve a broader demographic in Downtown.



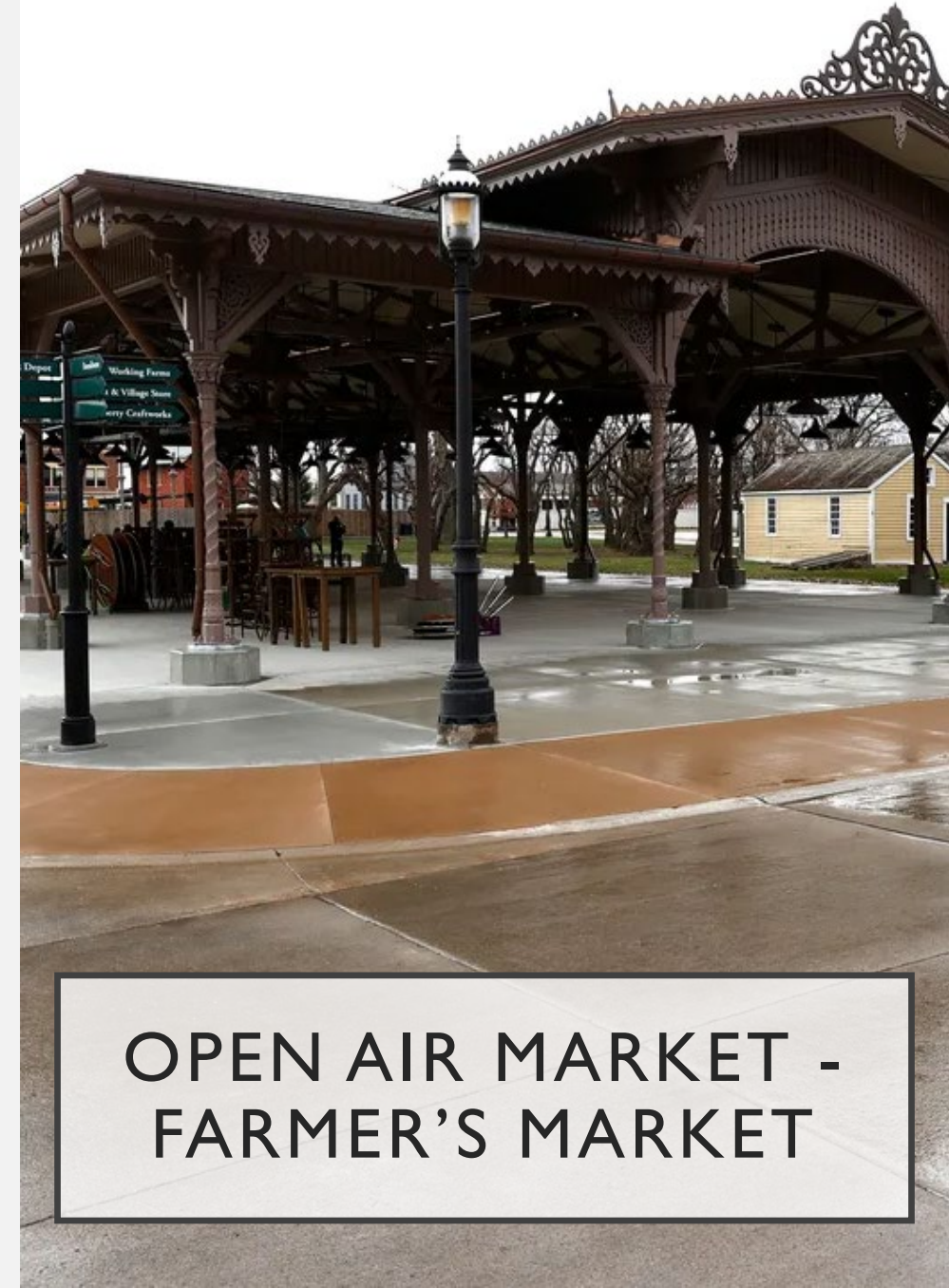
ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT
WITH OUTDOOR COMMUNITY
GATHERING SPACE

Arts Master Plan

- Page 11 Key Findings
 - **Arts and culture offerings are perceived** to be sparse outside of the downtown area.
 - There is a perceived geographic and **cultural disconnect between the university and city residents.**
- Page 13 Goals & Strategies
 - Make San Marcos a leading destination for arts and culture.
 - Foster the continued growth of arts and culture organizations so that their impact can be felt throughout the City.
- Page 19 Recommendations
 - Encourage and support partnerships with the City and Texas State University.
- Page 20 Recommendations
 - **Establish arts, cultural,** and historic districts.

Downtown Area Plan

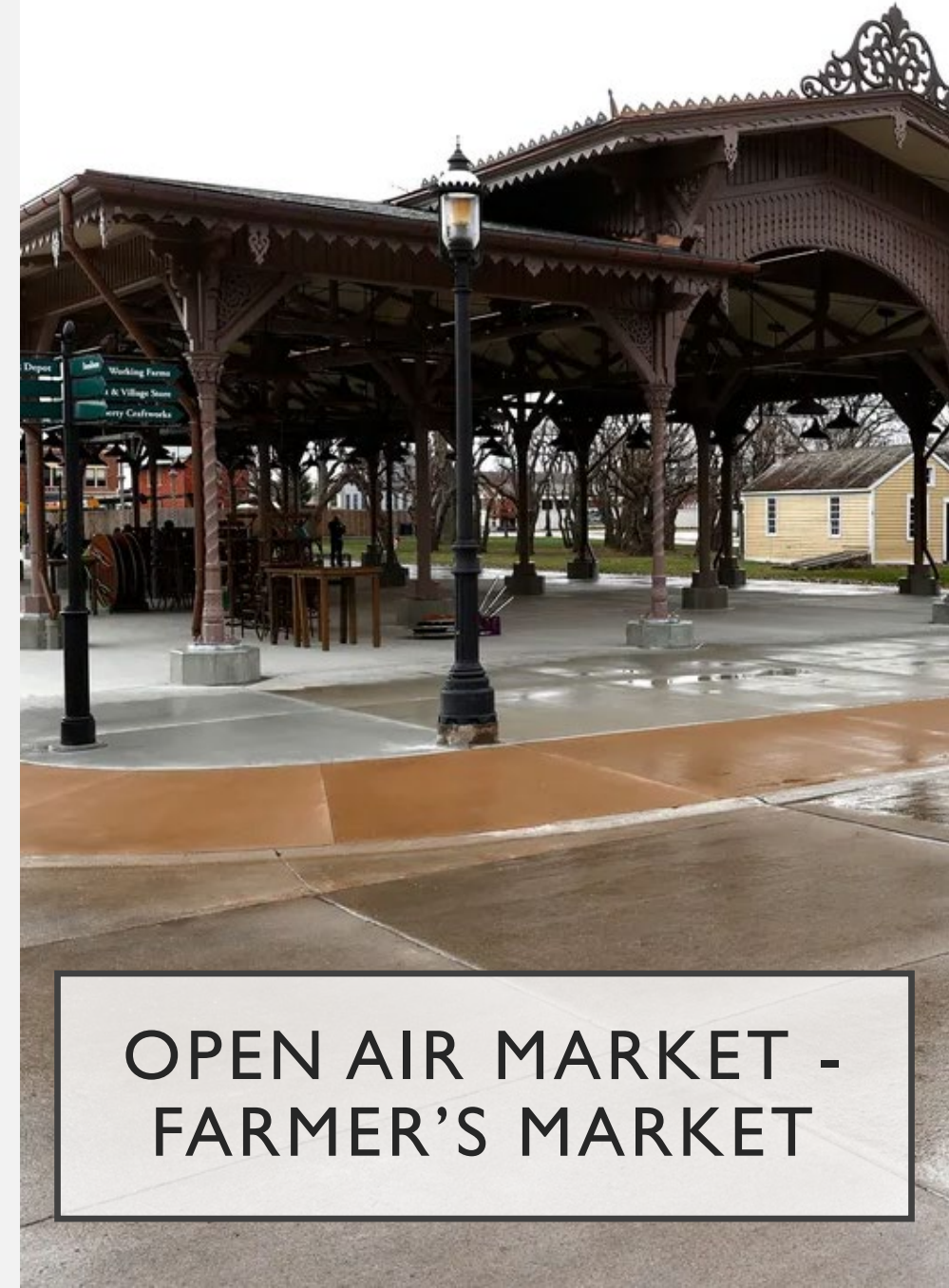
- Page 46 Goals
 - **Provide an inclusive, welcoming, safe place** for people of all ages, incomes, abilities, religious beliefs, and cultures.
 - **Promote a vibrant and thriving Downtown** through local business support, fostering of entrepreneurship, mixed-use development, and a variety of housing options.
- Page 47 Opportunities-History, Art, Culture
 - Provide opportunities for managed pop-up art and vendor sales.
- Page 48 Opportunities-Public Spaces & Amenities
 - **Expand public space opportunities** for children's play, events, passive recreation, community garden, gathering, and dog use.
 - **Explore strategies to improve existing public spaces, utilize other publicly owned property**, pursue land acquisition/swap/ donation, and/or encourage pocket parks with large-scale redevelopment.



OPEN AIR MARKET -
FARMER'S MARKET

Downtown Area Plan

- Page 49 Fostering Small Businesses
 - Pursue strategies to continue to support the vitality of small and local businesses, especially those which are owned by minority or other historically-underserved entities, in permitting, renovation/upkeep, and access to entrepreneur and business education programs.
- Page 49 Building Form & Infill Development
 - **Reduce vacant lots**, buildings, and storefronts and utilize both temporary and permanent activation strategies.
- Page 70 Building Form & Infill Development-Open-Air Market/Food Hall
 - *The Downtown Area Plan specifically references 101 E MLK Drive as a possible location for an open-air market, but this could also be developed on the empty lot behind the Breed Ace Hardware Building
- Page 138 Implementation-Building Form & Infill Development



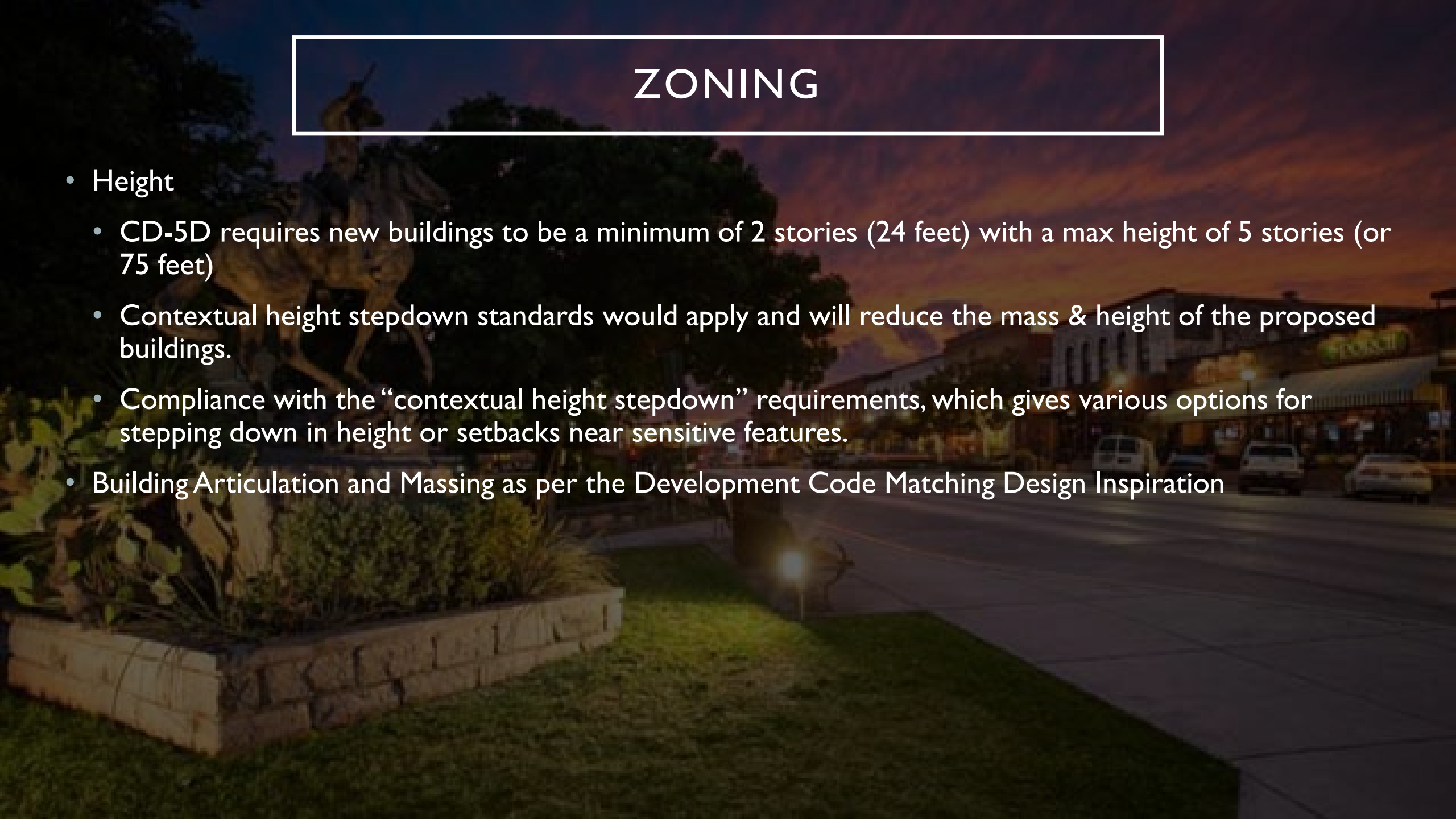
OPEN AIR MARKET -
FARMER'S MARKET

LOCATION



ZONING

- Character District-5 Downtown
 - The CD-5D district is intended to provide for mixed use, pedestrian oriented development in downtown and its five design contexts that reflect historical development patterns. To promote walkability and to encourage street level retail activity, auto-oriented uses are restricted.
- Building Types Allowed
 - Civic (City Hall, Museums, Performing Arts)
 - Mixed Use Shopfront
- Parking
 - Parking Garage
 - Lodging: 1 space per room
 - Civic: 1 per 1,000 sq. ft. Gross Floor Area

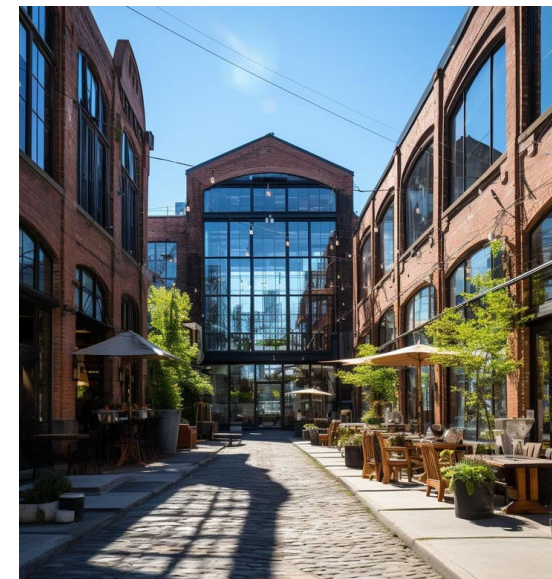
A nighttime photograph of a city street. In the foreground, there is a stone planter box with various plants. Behind it, a large statue of a person on a horse is visible. The street is paved and has a crosswalk. In the background, there are buildings, some with lit signs, and cars parked or driving. The sky is dark with some light from the city lights.

ZONING

- Height
 - CD-5D requires new buildings to be a minimum of 2 stories (24 feet) with a max height of 5 stories (or 75 feet)
 - Contextual height stepdown standards would apply and will reduce the mass & height of the proposed buildings.
 - Compliance with the “contextual height stepdown” requirements, which gives various options for stepping down in height or setbacks near sensitive features.
- Building Articulation and Massing as per the Development Code Matching Design Inspiration

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN INSPIRATION

VISUALS ARE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE
PURPOSES ONLY AND DO NOT
REPRESENT FINAL HEIGHT
SPECIFICATIONS.









CONCEPTUAL PHASE NEXT STEPS

- Public reading of resolution and sign Preliminary Development Agreement (October 21, 2025)
- Property procurement: Letters of Intent sent/received
- Site Due Diligence
- Determine Financial Feasibility
- Continue meetings with City (City Manager's Office, Planning Department)
- Watershed Protection Plan, Platting, Public Improvement Construction Plan, Traffic Impact Analysis
- Additional Steering Committee meetings as needed

CONTACT
INFORMATION
-
KEELY HENNIG





Keely Hennig

Project Lead

Upward Communities



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Save Contact

Council Direction



- **Does City Council approve of entering into a Conceptual Planning Agreement with Upward Communities to further explore a public-private partnership for a development Downtown that includes a new city hall?**

Questions and Discussion