

# 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

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## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VISION STATEMENT

“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.”

## STRATEGIC GOALS

### **QUALITY OF LIFE & SENSE OF PLACE**

Cultivate a community that promotes inclusivity, equity, and belonging; has a unique sense of place due to our distinct natural, historical, and cultural assets; and commits to a healthy quality of life for families of all types.

### **ECONOMIC VITALITY**

Foster a vibrant economic climate for our community through new commercial and residential uses, education, workforce development, and support of new and existing businesses of all sizes.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY, CORE SERVICES & FISCAL EXCELLENCE**

Deliver quality government services and improve community safety in a fiscally responsible manner with a professional workforce.

### **MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**

Improve neighborhood and regional connectivity to provide a safe, convenient, and efficient multimodal system for goods, services, and people of all income levels and abilities to move throughout the City.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Advance responsible stewardship of the community’s natural, cultural, and historical resources through varied environmentally friendly policies and practices.

## **1. QUALITY OF LIFE & SENSE OF PLACE**

Cultivate a community that promotes inclusivity, equity, and belonging; has a unique sense of place due to our distinct natural, historical, and

cultural assets; and commits to a healthy quality of life for families of all types.

**A. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING** - Utilize the City's Comprehensive Plan and other master plans as our guiding principles for decision-making.

- i. Implement the Comprehensive Plan.
- ii. Ensure master plans align with the current Comprehensive Plan.

**B. STRONG COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** - Engage residents and community partners to promote a sense of belonging.

- i. Cultivate relationships with community partners and neighborhood leaders to engage diverse populations.
- ii. Identify and nurture community champions to advocate for local initiatives.
- iii. Enhance presence in the community through new community engagement initiatives and leveraging the channels which can best reach the targeted audiences.
- iv. Continue to identify and implement participatory budgeting initiatives that promote increased resident engagement both prior to and throughout the budget process.

**C. DOWNTOWN VITALITY** - Continue investment in the Downtown area to preserve its unique and historical character, capitalize on opportunities for redevelopment, and make it a safe and inviting destination for people of all ages and backgrounds.

- i. Utilize the adopted Downtown Area Plan.
- ii. Create, adopt, and implement the Historic Preservation Plan.
- iii. Develop methods and programs to address vacant and neglected buildings.

**D. ARTS, CULTURE, AND SPECIAL EVENTS** - Promote arts, culture, and special events as a driver to improve quality of life, increase tourism, and support local economic development.

- i. Improve aesthetics and public art within public spaces, corridors, and gateways to create a positive visual experience, instilling pride and creating a unique identity.

- ii. Develop and promote programs and activities to increase resident engagement and bring in outside visitors.
- iii. Support arts and culture projects and events to encourage new initiatives and take current ones to the next level.

**E. PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION** - Provide an accessible, diverse, connected network of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities to serve all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

- i. Implement the recommendations included in the Parks and Open Space master plans.
- ii. Provide outdoor gathering places and parks for active and passive places for family activities.
- iii. Explore expanding partnerships with SMCISD to utilize facilities.

**F. NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT** - Protect and enhance the natural, cultural, and historic resources of all neighborhoods through programs, improvements, stabilization, intentional growth, and compatible development.

- i. Create, adopt, and implement the Historic Preservation Plan and Neighborhood Area Plans.
- ii. Develop and promote ways to engage neighborhoods to increase community identity and pride in their neighborhood.
- iii. Work with residents for neighborhood revitalization and safety.

**G. HOUSING AFFORDABILITY** - Facilitate safe and affordable housing for all, including those experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness or displacement.

- i. Update Housing Data and Adopt Strategic Housing Action Plan.
- ii. Continue implementation of the recommendations from the Homeless Needs Assessment.
- iii. Develop and implement strategies and protections to ensure the provision of safe and affordable housing through collaboration with residents. This can include a Tenant's Bill of Rights, continuing the contract with Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, dedicated staffing, and a commission.

- iv. Identify and implement additional methods to provide affordable housing and assess current programs.
- v. Update the Affordable Workforce Housing Policy.

## **2. ECONOMIC VITALITY**

Foster a vibrant economic climate for our community through new commercial and residential uses, education, workforce development, and support of new and existing businesses of all sizes.

**A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY** - Encourage the development of a diverse economy through technical and financial assistance to businesses that invest in the community to enhance the lives of our residents.

- i. Implement incentives adopted in the Economic Development Policy.
- ii. Explore menu of economic development options.

- iii. Develop additional methods by which our Economic Development Policy addresses and categorizes labor force and employment practices, focusing on how the companies receiving incentives plan to assess and prioritize the needs and well-being of its workers.

**B. BUSINESS COMMUNITY** - Actively support and attract diversified business activity, including local and emerging small businesses, to thrive and expand in our community.

- i. Increase exposure of local businesses.
- ii. Continue assisting emerging and existing small businesses, including non-traditional, through retention and expansion activities, including grant assistance, business counseling, and technical support.

**C. SAN MARCOS AS A DESTINATION** - Expand and support responsible tourism programs to promote local commerce.

- i. Identify promotional opportunities with area stakeholders to highlight City attractions.
- ii. Identify areas needing enhancement for a cohesive visual look for the City, including within corridors and gateways.
- iii. Use consistent messaging to promote unique and vibrant experiences to enhance economic impact.

**D. EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT** - Facilitate opportunities for job training and educational programming through partnerships.

- i. Work with community partners on outreach for job fairs and other employment opportunities.
- ii. Identify challenges and unmet needs in the business community that are impacted by workforce development, including off-site opportunities.
- iii. Determine where to invest City funding to mitigate workforce training gaps and barriers that have been identified, including childcare, second chance hiring, industry training, and certification opportunities.
- iv. Continue establishing partnerships with local schools, colleges, universities, and agencies to support community-driven workforce development, aligning educational initiatives with the needs and values of the community.

**E. RESPONSIBLE GROWTH** - Diversify and deliberately expand for a prosperous economy.

- i. Actively participate in the recruitment and retention of businesses in San Marcos utilizing the Economic Development San Marcos (EDSM) board and City Council to vet potential incentives.

### **3. PUBLIC SAFETY, CORE SERVICES & FISCAL EXCELLENCE**

Deliver quality government services and improve community safety in a fiscally responsible manner with a professional workforce.

**A. COMMUNITY SAFETY** - Collaborate to prioritize and enhance public safety services while building resiliency and trust within our community.

- i. Adequately staff and train public safety departments to address community safety.
- ii. Develop a strategic approach that prioritizes the evaluation of current staffing levels, compensation structures, overtime usage, budget allocations, and turnover rates. Focus on optimizing existing resources and improving workforce retention and training.
- iii. Partner with residents and key stakeholders to design and establish an office focusing on underlying factors contributing to crime, such as poverty, lack of education, and limited access to mental health services, through a holistic approach, proactive solutions, community-driven initiatives, and adjusting staffing to support these initiatives effectively.

- iv. Optimize the use of technology to improve community safety. Establish clear guidelines and protections governing the use of technology to ensure transparency, accountability, and respect for the personal privacy of the public.
- v. Expand programs and partnerships that engage the community and strengthen community trust; including employing strategies for reaching diverse populations, addressing mental health, and exploring community-based intervention methods to improve community safety.
- vi. Enhance emergency management through the city's infrastructure by increasing all-hazards and disaster preparedness, response and recovery through coordination and local partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation. Coordinate local social service agencies to assist as they are able.

**B. CORE GOVERNMENT SERVICES** - Ensure operations are funded for the delivery of high-quality customer experiences and community-focused programs and services.

- i. Responsibly plan for and deploy resources and staff using best practices, needs assessments, and fiscal modeling.
- ii. Identify and pursue process improvements and opportunities for increased efficiency, effectiveness, and cost savings.
- iii. Develop a comprehensive community resource guide for the public. Utilize community partners to help disseminate the information.
- iv. Ensure city-provided assistance programs and city-operated portals and systems are easily accessible, navigable, and user-friendly.

**C. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT** - Use strategic financial decision making to meet our community's existing and future needs.

- i. Create a fiscal analysis tool based on the Comprehensive Plan to evaluate fiscal sustainability associated with growth.
- ii. Continue debt management in a financially prudent and strategic manner and take advantage of market conditions when present.
- iii. Pursue grant funding opportunities for applicable projects, including CIP.
- iv. Assess social service funding levels.

**D. WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION** - Invest in the recruitment and retention of an adequately staffed, skilled, and professional workforce.

- i. Continue implementation of the Compensation Philosophy.
- ii. Improve our competitiveness as an employer to attract, hire and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce.
- iii. Develop employees' skills through education and training.
- iv. Design strategies for succession planning at various levels of the organization to maintain direction and management.

**E. SUPPORT SERVICES** - Provide necessary resources to internal service departments to support reliable, consistent, and effective city operations.

- i. Establish and employ streamlined policy and governance processes that align support services with customer expectations and mission requirements.
- ii. Ensure efficient and effective performance of core business functions, enterprise services and data management.

**F. INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT** - Dedicate the financial and staffing resources necessary for capital improvement project planning, construction, operations, and maintenance.

- i. Develop and implement the CIP.
- ii. Invest necessary resources, including in the use of technology and equipment, to maintain and extend the life of the City's infrastructure.

## **4. MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY**

Improve neighborhood and regional connectivity to provide a safe, convenient, and efficient multimodal system for goods, services, and people of all income levels and abilities to move throughout the City.

**A. MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM** - Develop a diverse transportation system to improve multimodal connectivity and capacity by implementing the Transportation Master Plan.

- i. Maintain and coordinate the thoroughfare plan within the transportation master plan with CIP projects.
- ii. Implement multimodal Transportation Master Plan recommendations, including the western loop.
- iii. Continue researching innovative methods, including on-demand service, to provide residents access to basic needs within 5-10 minutes and increase multimodal transportation options, participation, and use.

**B. BICYCLE, SIDEWALK AND TRAIL SYSTEMS** - Increase the accessibility and connectivity of bicycle, sidewalk, and trail systems between parks, river areas, downtown, schools, businesses, services, and residential neighborhoods.

- i. Maintain and coordinate the bike & greenways plan within the transportation master plan with CIP projects and explore including a connected trail system around the community.
- ii. Integrate and connect all modes of multimodal travel.
- iii. Evaluate emerging transportation opportunities for last/first mile connectivity.
- iv. Invest in and maintain existing multimodal facilities.

**C. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC OPERATIONS** - Increase the safety, convenience, and reliability of the transportation system, including investment in technology and maintenance.

- i. Coordinate with Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) to ensure specific San Marcos projects are identified in the Safe Streets for All program.
- ii. Invest in the use of technology and other innovative solutions to increase the safety and efficiency of the existing roadway system and capacity, including mitigating barriers such as railroad crossings.
- iii. Invest in traffic equipment, operations, and maintenance.

**D. PUBLIC TRANSIT** - Prioritize the resources necessary to achieve a seamless, coordinated public transit system through partnerships and implementation of the Transit Master Plan.

- i. Continue partnership with the University for coordinated public transit system.
- ii. Leverage grant funds to replace aging transit fleet with safer, more efficient vehicles.
- iii. Identify and implement short-term Transit Master Plan recommendations.

## **5. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Advance responsible stewardship of the community's natural, cultural, and historical resources through varied environmentally friendly policies and practices.

**A. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP** - Set the standard by demonstrating responsible stewardship of the environment, including our rivers, aquifers, and other sensitive features.

- i. Incorporate green stormwater and water/ energy conservation infrastructure on CIP projects.
- ii. Ensure that applicable City staff is equipped and trained to readily identify and respond to releases (i.e. sewer discharges, chemical spills, etc.) that may cause negative impacts to rivers and aquifers.
- iii. Incorporate environmental stewardship into new and existing City facilities and master plans.
- iv. Develop and promote programs that protect and promote environmental stewardship, including the implementation of a single use beverage container ban on and near the San Marcos River.
- v. Employ strategies to combat air pollution to mitigate health risks to residents.

**B. ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY GROWTH** - Promote environmental protections and sustainable building practices through codes and processes.

- i. Utilize the Preferred Scenario Map to guide growth in the community.
- ii. Incorporate concepts from the currently adopted Comprehensive Plan into the Stormwater Technical Manual and the Land Development Code.

**C. RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE** - Incorporate resiliency into existing and future City infrastructure planning, construction, operations, and maintenance.

- i. Incorporate and anticipate future needs of the City into CIP Projects to mitigate future risks.

- ii. Continue to develop and maintain Emergency Operations and Emergency Preparedness Plans.
- iii. Reinvest in City facilities to improve facility security and resiliency.

**D. ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS** - Promote innovative programs and educate residents about environmental resiliency.

- i. Continue participation and implementation of the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan.
- ii. Explore and implement proactive measures to educate residents and city departments on water conservation strategies.
- iii. Seek out opportunities to secure grant funding and build partnerships to develop environmental education programs and implement environmental improvement projects.