



**Work Session Meeting Minutes
City Council**

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

3:00 PM

City Council Chambers

630 E. Hopkins St. - Work Session

I. Call To Order

With a quorum present, the work session of the San Marcos City Council was called to order by Mayor Hughson on Tuesday May 5, 2026 at 3:06 p.m. The meeting was held both in person and online.

II. Roll Call

Mayor Pro Tem Scott arrived at 3:39 PM Deputy

Mayor Pro Tem Garza arrived at 4:31 PM

Present: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Shane Scott, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Alyssa Garza, Council Member Amanda Rodriguez, Mayor Jane Hughson, Council Member Lorenzo Gonzalez, Council Member Matthew Mendoza and Council Member Josh Paselk

III. Citizen Comment Period

Lisa Marie Coppoletta addressed the Council stating the City Hall mural contains sacred imagery from a single faith, in this case Indigenous. She argued that displaying one religion's creation story on a tax-funded public building is inappropriate and asked Council to consider this during discussion of the Public Arts Policy and future public art.

Virginia Parker, San Marcos River Foundation, expressed support for the upcoming Edwards Aquifer HCP presentation. She highlighted improvements funded through the plan—Dog Beach, Rio Vista steps, Cyprus Island, and Ramon Lucio Park—and urged Council to support its renewal.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Receive a Staff presentation regarding the Edwards Aquifer Habitat Conservation Plan and the US Fish and Wildlife Service Incidental Take Permit renewal process, and provide direction to staff.

Assistant City Manager Joe Pantalione introduced the item, explaining that since 2013 the city has partnered with Texas State University, the Edwards Aquifer Authority, New Braunfels, and SAWS on the Edwards Aquifer

Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which manages the impacts of aquifer pumping and river uses endangered species. The current Incidental Take Permit (ITP) expires in 2028, and partners are preparing a revised plan and new permit application.

HCP Manager Mark Enders gave an overview of the program and renewal effort, noting that the ITP provides liability protection for incidental impacts on listed species and that partners are seeking a renewal of up to 30 years. He summarized the regional plan area, partner agencies, and key permit requirements.

He reviewed spring-flow targets and EAA drought measures. He also outlined local conservation measures carried out by the City and Texas State University and noted that the renewed HCP may include controlled access during extreme low-flow conditions.

Manager Enders briefly summarized costs funded through Aquifer Management Fees, and noted that cost-sharing discussions for San Marcos measures continue. He outlined next steps, including draft submittals in 2026 and a return to Council in 2027 for final approval before the 2028 permit expiration.

During Council discussion, Council Member Paselk asked about renewal costs, and Manager Enders estimated approximately \$2 million to date. Council Member Rodriguez highlighted the benefits of the program and asked about capacity to continue required measures; Manager Enders confirmed they reflect ongoing work. Mayor Hughson asked about potential access restrictions during low flows and about past Council direction to stop promoting summer river recreation. Staff confirmed promotional content had been removed and will research the history of that directive. Council Member Scott asked about fencing along the river, and Manager Enders reported that most fencing has been in place for years, with newer, more visually compatible segments installed through HCP funding. Mayor Hughson asked for confirmation that those newer segments were paid for by the HCP program.

2. Receive a Staff presentation on the City's Water and Wastewater Impact Fees.

Assistant City Manager Joe Pantalione introduced the impact fee update, noting that significant construction costs have increased since the City's last update in 2018 require revisiting the fee to ensure new development pays its proportional share. He introduced engineering consultants Freese and Nichols (wastewater)

and Plummer and Associates (water).

Assistant Director of Engineering Richard Reynosa explained that recent legislative changes have added procedural steps, delaying the update by about a year. Consultant Ethan Shires (Freese and Nichols) outlined the impact fee process, emphasizing that impact fees are one-time charges on new development to recover costs of expanding infrastructure capacity. He clarified that the study does not affect existing customer rates.

Mr. Shires reviewed eligible fees, the Council's role in adopting land use assumptions and capital improvement plans (CIPs), and the methodology used. The city selected the detailed credit method to calculate the maximum allowable fee. He summarized land use assumptions, current and projected service unit equivalents, and noted that wastewater customers are expected to surpass water customers over the next decade due to development trends.

Mr. Shires reviewed proposed and existing CIP projects and explained how growth related cost allocations are calculated. He outlined the timeline: Impact Fee Advisory Committee (IFAC) reviews underway, public hearings scheduled for June and July, and anticipated fee adoption in August 2026.

During Council discussion, questions focused on fee comparisons with neighboring cities, growth projections, potential incentives for water reuse, reclaimed water considerations, and whether Texas State University pays impact fees (it does). Mr. Reynosa noted staff will research water reuse incentives and that a phased fee rollout is being considered. He also mentioned that the IFAC's procedural rules are on the current consent agenda.

- 3. Hold a discussion regarding the creation of a new Public Arts Policy and provide direction to City Manager.**

Assistant City Manager Rodney Gonzales provided background on the City's 2005 Art in Public Places policy, noting it was originally focused on accepting donated art. He explained that the 2022 Arts Master Plan called for a comprehensive update to reflect the arts program's significant expansion, including commissioning, acquisition, murals, loans, maintenance, and deaccession. He also noted that various City departments now procure art independently, raising questions about policy scope, and offered to return for further feedback after Council reviews existing materials.

Director of Destination Services Rebecca Ybarra and Creative and Marketing Manager Charlotte Wattigny presented the growth of the arts program since

2018 and the goals of the updated policy. Wattigny highlighted the need to clearly define roles, approval processes, artist compensation, maintenance expectations, deaccession procedures, and standards for public engagement.

Ms. Wattigny also reviewed the mural commissioning process, including site identification, public input, calls for qualifications, artist stipends for concept designs, and Arts Commission selection. An example of a recent large mural project was discussed.

Assistant City Manager Gonzales asked whether the new policy should require coordination with other boards and commissions and whether art procured by other City departments should follow the same process.

Council discussion centered on public engagement, Council’s role in reviewing high-visibility projects, and the need to avoid interfering with artistic decisions. Some members supported early conceptual review by Council, while others preferred leaving final design authority with the Arts Commission. Several members emphasized the importance of setting clear triggers—such as size, cost, or visibility—for when Council review should occur. There was also interest in developing community-informed guiding themes for future artwork rather than prescribing specific design elements.

Council discussed codifying practices for murals on private property, including the existing five-year display requirement. Staff noted that the new policy will also address gaps such as defining major versus minor projects and required public engagement levels.

Assistant City Manager Gonzales encouraged Council to provide early input as staff prepares the draft policy in coordination with the Arts Commission. Council directed staff to proceed with drafting the updated policy and return to Council for review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 4. The San Marcos City Council will convene in executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) and Section 551.072 (Real Property) to receive legal advice and deliberate regarding the lease of City-owned real property located at 201 South LBJ Drive.**

A motion was made by Council Member Rodriguez, seconded by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Garza to convene in Executive Session pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) and Section 551.072 (Real Property) of the Texas Government Code to receive legal advice and deliberate regarding the lease of City-owned real property located at 201 South LBJ Drive.

The motion to convene carried by the following vote:

The Council convened in Executive Session at 5:13 PM.

The Council returned from Executive Session at 5:58 PM. No action was taken.

For: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Scott, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Garza, Council Member Rodriguez, Mayor Hughson, Council Member Gonzalez, Council Member Mendoza and Council Member Paselk

Against: 0

IV. Question and Answer Session with Press and Public.

There were no speakers signed up for the Question and Answer Session.

V. Adjournment.

There being no further business, Mayor Hughson closed the Work Session meeting at 6:00 PM.

Elizabeth Trevino, City Clerk

Jane Hughson, Mayor