



SanMarcosTexas.com

2025 - 2027

STRATEGIC ACTION PLANNING



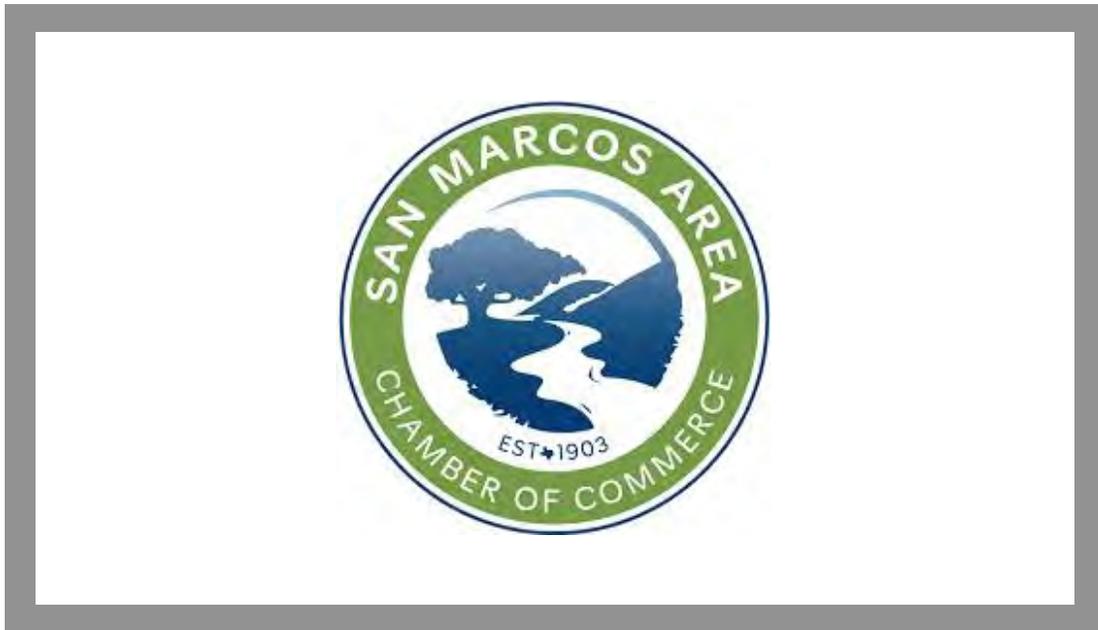
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The Idea Loom Group

ABOUT THE SAN MARCOS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



BACKGROUND

San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce improves the economic prosperity and quality of life of our members through leadership, education and business advocacy.

For more than 120 years, the San Marcos Area Chamber has been the “voice of business.” Seeking to improve the economic prosperity and quality of life of the community, members of the Chamber work together in areas of education, literacy, business development, government affairs and more to continually improve San Marcos.

SUMMARY

On October 23, 2024, the board and staff of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce met in a facilitated strategic action planning retreat to set a path forward for the next three years, and answer the question: how can the board help the Chamber deliver value to its members and to the community?

In preparation for the retreat, the Idea Loom conducted a survey with members of the board, and met with the President and CEO.

The strategic action planning retreat was designed to reach group consensus on future directions for the Chamber and the Board of Directors, and begin creating an actionable workplan.

PRE-SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the strategic planning retreat, board and staff members were surveyed to gather feedback on the impact of the Chamber, priorities, anticipated challenges, and trends. Eighteen responses were received, and the full responses are in the appendix.

Highlights:

In response to the question *"What aspect or achievement of the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce are you most proud of?"* two major themes emerged: **education initiatives** and **community engagement**. Other responses centered around economic development, organizational growth, and partnerships.

Business support and **community connection** were named as the top ways the community is impacted by the Chamber's work. The top 2 priorities named for the next three years were: a **new location/building** and **membership growth**.

Top Challenges for the Chamber over the next 3 years:

- Financial growth
- Adaptation to growth

What are you worried about on behalf of the Chamber?

- Future building needs
- Maintaining relevance
- Financial stability

Where do you see opportunities we aren't taking advantage of?

- Digital Marketing (n=3)
- Other responses were tied with n=2
 - Grant opportunities
 - Tourism
 - Partnerships
 - Community events

Other things to share included:

- Positive sentiments
- Suggestions for improvement
- Growth potential

WALL OF WONDER



The first exercise the group undertook was reflective and designed to orient the group to the recent history of the San Marcos Chamber (and societal trends impacting it), and to identify the key shifts or trends that drive our current reality.

Wall of Wonder: What are the key trends or shifts driving our current reality?		
	Pre - 2020	2020 - 2024
San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shining Stars (2011) Steam Fair (2013) Teacher externships (2015) Young professionals Intercity trips Youth Leadership (v1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chamber Strategic Plan (inc. building & relocation study) New Chamber President/CEO (Page Michel) 501(c)3 status granted TX State in national news - record enrollment, football team, Presidential debate, new campus in Mexico Corridor Women's Network Membership halved by COVID COVID test kit distribution COVID grant funds (Revive SMTX program) Governor's State of State address (with Chamber) - 2023 Business Development Committee (2022-2023) Education Committee (2024) Business expo revamped and reenergized (2023) Youth Leadership v2 Back the Bobcats Rally for the Rattlers
San Marcos area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amazon facility (2015) Flooding and anti-development sentiment (2015 - 2018) Development code - didn't pass (2017) New residential development - Blanco Vista, Trace, La Cima, Kissing Tree (2014 - 2018) Regionalism focus Mermaid fest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New University President (2022) New City Manager (2023) SMTX Comprehensive Plan (2024) Presidential debates scheduled for SMTX (2024) New HEB coming Tesla impact on region Downtown Master Plan approved Buccee's coming Highway 110 - new segments open Iron Club Lockhart - voter support for ACC campus
Texas		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winter Storm Uri (2021) Power Grid Concerns Eclipse - 2024
USA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID



REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN



After creating the Wall of Wonder, the group reviewed the **Opportunity San Marcos Strategic Plan**, as the three main goals named in the document served as the practical vision for the remainder of the afternoon.

Opportunity San Marcos



SanMarcosTexas.com

2023-2027 Strategic Initiative

Opportunity San Marcos is a five-year Strategic Initiative designed to address specific challenges facing business in San Marcos and Hays County

**Initiative Summary and Case for Support -
FALL 2023**







Board of Directors

<p>Tommy Curtis, Past Chairman CHUCK WASH AUTO GROUP</p> <p>Justin Payne, Chairman of the Board FROST BANK</p> <p>Keely Hennig, Education Committee Chair CORRECH TITLE COMPANY</p> <p>Cassidy Berenato, Chair Elect SAN MARCOS REGIONAL AIRPORT</p> <p>Brooke Damron, Treasurer THE DAMRON GROUP REALTORS</p> <p>Alfonso Silvaentes, Secretary CENTRAL TEXAS SERVICE</p> <p>Crystal Leigh Dixon EDWARD JONES</p>	<p>Cassie Frow AMAZON SATZ</p> <p>John Hardy DIVIDED SKY ROOFING AND SOLAR</p> <p>Josh Paselk CORRECH HOME & COMMERCIAL</p> <p>Kristin Williams WONDER WORLD GOLF AND PARK</p> <p>Lee Colon PGM OF TEXAS</p> <p>Eddie Glidewell COMFYAIR</p> <p>Hondo Powell LOWER COLORADO RIVER AUTHORITY</p>	<p>Elva Zlot GARY JOE CORPS CENTER</p> <p>Jo Anna Gilland BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE</p> <p>Dominic Encinias THE HEART CHURCH</p> <p>Kevin Wolf CORB, FENLEY & ASSOCIATES</p> <p>Will Conley GREATER SAN MARCOS PARTNERSHIP</p>
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GOAL 1 Develop, Align and Retain San Marcos Talent
[Role: CONVENER/CATALYST]

GOAL 2 Strengthen the Business Climate
[Role: LEADER]

GOAL 3 Create a Centralized Business and Entrepreneurship Hub
[Role: LEADER/CONVENER]

TEAMBUILDING: PROBLEM SOLVING





IMPLEMENTATION

After reviewing the strategic directions and the underlying contradictions, the group worked on setting one-year accomplishment goals, then developing workplans to achieve those goals.

The group agreed that success one year from now would include these indicators of success:

1. Every city council member is familiar with the Chamber's vision
2. When asked what the Chamber stands for, councils and commissioners know and use Chamber talking points.
3. A google search for business or residential resources in San Marcos results in positive reviews and recommendations (more "good stuff" online).
4. Chamber will have successfully launched new education projects and gained more local business engagement.

Partially developed workplans and blank implementation documents are both available in the appendix.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



The focus of this section was on the innovative, practical, substantial actions that will deal with the obstacles identified earlier (underlying contradictions) and move the organization towards the vision outlined in the Opportunity San Marcos strategic plan. After brainstorming individually, we split into small groups to come up with the best ideas, which were grouped and named on the sticky wall.

Strategic Directions: What innovative, substantial actions will address the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?

Create GRC engagement plan	Develop pro-business messages and consistent talking points	Marketing SMTX as a viable home for business and residential	Leveraging the 501(c)3 to pursue additional resources	Form an exploratory committee for business hub/home	Empowering members to utilize Chamber (give and get)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GRC enlarged with engaged members Show up at every city council meeting 	Roundtable discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business communication City staff/officials "No growth-ers" Build shared vision 	Organize an effective PR campaign to gain pro-business support	Invest in chamber resources	Revisit the urgency around strategic plan, specifically #3	New enhancements to membership growth tactics
Hold elected officials accountable through business collaborations	Strategic plan updated to build shared vision	Growth PR campaign	Identify ways to pursue grants to achieve goals	Develop timeline for updated feasibility with deadlines and milestones	Continuously increase membership engagement
Board to give 100% (shows buy in) Board accountability	Shared visioning committee with 2-3 council members	Promote business success stories	Explore grant funding for staff through 501(c)3	Establish deadlines for a clearer sense of urgency	Digital marketing education
Voice pro-business opinions/initiatives with elected officials	Host/conduct shared vision retreat with community partners	Team up with CVB or city to showcase SM businesses/QOL	Gather support from local businesses		Become the source for authentic business advice
Start endorsement process. Form a PAC.	Advocacy and Connections for Business to Thrive (ACT)	Capture testimonials from Board and business leaders			Boost communications to members about benefits
Change zoning, specifically housing related	Grow Foundation - programs and leadership				Board to engage more with members
Engage new council members and city staff during onboarding	Create a culture of innovation				Board word-of-mouth promotion for community impact
Educate city leaders					
Consistent chamber representation at council					
Endorse pro-business candidates					
Hold city leaders accountable					

WORK PLANS

The work plans seek to achieve these goals in the next 12 months:

1. Create a GRC engagement plan.
2. Develop pro-business messages and talking points for consistent use by the board, GRC and business members.
3. Identify point people for each sector able to represent policy priorities (e.g. public education, water, development, housing development, and healthcare).
4. Market San Marcos, Texas as a desirable option for new residents and businesses, through SEO, Chamber programming, visibility, and reviews.
5. Work with the Foundation to plan and launch a capital campaign.

Strategic Vision:

As a result of our actions, in 3 years the San Marcos Area Chamber will:

1. Further Develop, Align, and Retain San Marcos Talent (*Education/Workforce*)
2. Strengthen the business climate (*Advocacy*)
3. Create a centralized business and entrepreneurship hub

NEXT STEPS

Implementation plans were started at the retreat, and will be completed by board and staff. The group will gather again in Spring 2025 to check in on the strategic action plan and create implementation charts for the next 90 days.

The “home” for the Chamber (centralized business hub) is as yet amorphous, as several possibilities are emerging.



The process used in this strategic planning was based on the Technology of Participation (ToP) methodology. This methodology is an integrated approach to strategic planning that results in strong consensus and commitment. The resulting plan is realistic, achievable and easy to monitor.

**SETTING SMART
(SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE,
ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC,
TIME LIMITED) GOALS
WILL HELP MEASURE
PROGRESS.**