

Community Conversation Feedback

This spreadsheet includes comments from citizens provided at Community Conversations. Staff categorized these comments into 8 themes.

	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8
Complete Comment written by citizen	Infill Housing	Meeting Housing Needs	Transportation	More Housing / Density / Diversity	Subsidized Housing / Partnerships	Tenants Rights	Event Feedback	Other
The city must learn to properly balance the socially and environmentally negligent desires of the vocal few with the needs of communities that are absent from these processes and the distress signals of the ecosystems that support us but lack voices. Prioritizing infill housing opportunities across the entire city - not just greenfield development at the city limits where no one is there to complain - are a must to create opportunities for more accessible housing, improved quality of life, and public transportation-served living. The city also has an obligation to prioritize fiscally-responsible housing policies, and compact, connected development forms are the only long-term way to achieve this.	Should be in all places	Prioritize the needs of many over vocal few	Compact / Dense Housing is needed					
When we were first married we qualified for housing. Thank you for housing/Section 8. As we got better paying jobs, we were able to afford a FHA home and met their guidelines.					Wealth Building Opportunity			
I don't live in the City--only work for the City.								
One thing that was mention was a lack of advertisement for the programs currently available to San Marcos residents. Maybe SMTX 4 All could get involved with local interagencies.					Difficult to find service providers			
San Marcos is growing. We need to think about transportation and traffic.			Consider transportation with housing					
Make transportation more available and affordable.			More accessible and affordable					
There are so many apartment complexes being built, and so many people want to live there, that others have no choice but to live in an apartment.				More Housing Options other than apartments				
We need to have more programs to help families get into houses, but we also need more types of options for home ownership.				More options for home ownreship	More housing programs for families			
We need to make sure there is affordable housing for all, especially more family housing.		Housing for all		More options for families				
Everything!							Encouragement	
Continued excellent work! One aspect it would be great to further flesh out as part of this process is defining and communicating the challenge of building new housing stock that is affordable to residents making less than \$25,000. The cost structure of even the most efficient new construction makes producing a unit that can rent for \$650 nearly impossible. We need a combination of income growth, policy change to remove process costs and land waste, and probably some level of subsidy for the remaining gap (in that order). There is also education that would be helpful to discuss the effect of increasing supply at all price-point levels as it reduces the price pressure on older product that should be more affordable than it is in our community but pricing is driven up by the scarcity of housing overall.				Increase supply with policy changes that reduce land and time costs	Some subsidy needed for lowest income		Great Work	Need to include income growth
Very hopeful to see an increase in affordable housing							Feeling Hopeful	
Thank you!							Thank you	
Monitor investors who are purchasing homes vs homeowners						Investors buying up homes vs. homeowners		
San Marcos is positioned to act differently, to act with dignity, to truly respond to all its members, both current and future. We have the opportunity to truly be a model for the nation on this critical issue.		Dignity and true response to all current and future residents					Opportunity to be a model City	
Affordable housing is an issue. I appreciate the meeting							Appreciate the City addressing a complex topic	

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Why is the city allowing apartments to go up in already jammed packed places? (Cheatham st & where Tuttle Lumber Co. used to be. That is ridiculous!				Downtown too dense				
Zoning codes need to change for housing in San Marcos- Homelessness issues need to be addressed New homeless shelter; besides south-side.				zoning codes should change to better meet needs	Need shelter for homeless			
Fixed rent or rent ceiling caps to avoid escalating rental cost vs income						Rent caps to avoid escalating costs		
Not being able to afford housing in sm has personally affected me and I would like to be able to move back but need an affordable alternative.		Ability to Live and Work in SM						
Thank you for coming, I appreciate this information and data.							Thank You / Appreciate Information	
Great Presentation							Great Presentation	
- Incentive programs for developers and builders - More flexibility w/ rezoning and restrictions - Maybe more flexibility w/ ADU requirements	More Flexible with ADU's			Incentivize new development / More flexible zoning				
Please let SUPO know if you ever need help with outreach for the plan. I think the group would be interested in the completed plan as well as a case study for proactive intervention. Additionally, please let me know if you are in need of an intern to help with the project. You can contact me by email or phone. slh290@txstate.edu 512-815-6572							Thanks for addressing and being proactive	
Investors buy up most of the existing affordable housing to rent out, leaving few options for residents. How can we address this?						Investors buy up housing options		
If the city wants the market to create more diverse housing types they should be incentives to do so.				Incentivize diverse housing				
Hi this is LMC ive spent 30 years protecting everyone's house and the city came for mine								
My husband and I went to school at TXST and love this town! We have such a heart for the college students and the community at large. We currently serve as missionaries to the university and strive for building relationships with the community!					Building partnerships			
Family of 6. Finding an affordable home for my family to be comfortable in. Space is a huge deal with us, although we love our duplex on Lockhart St. Our neighbor is the sweetest and we look out for one another. He's been living there for 10 years, since we've lived here we have yet have been able to find an affordable family home. We've decided to stay in our 2 bedroom with our 4 children and just making it work, we plan on saving up to buy some land so the kids can have affordable living spaces when they get older. We love San Marcos, we love our neighbors, our library, our schools and all the other activities that goes on around here. My boys mowe lawns in the area with hope to expand their business as they get older. With me being a stay at home momma bear, and living on one income it's tough. Everytime we search the internet for a bigger affordable home we find most rentals being rented out by the rooms. Making college kids pay per room rather than splitting a solid rent fee makes it tough on alot of us.		More options for families						
My housing story is that I worked very hard for 25+ years and saved up money for a down payment to buy a home. I decided to buy a house in San Marcos because I could not afford to buy a house in Austin where I had lived since 1990. I love San Marcos because it has a small town feel. I hope that SM does not start looking like Austin any time soon.		Rising costs pushing people out						

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<p>I came to San Marcos as a student nearly 20 years ago, and I hope I never leave. I love it here. San Marcos is my people. San Marcos is my place. I bought a new home in Blanco Vista in 2010, more or less peak recession. After living there for nearly 9 years, I've found that my heart is in downtown and purchased a 1930s home in desperate need of love in Dunbar to renovate. I love the funky character of the surrounding downtown neighborhoods. I like rich & poor near each other. I like cultural variety. My home is nearing completion, and I can't wait to move in.</p> <p>The important part of this story is why I purchased it... I will conceivably be able to ride my bike to work (though some safer infrastructure would be nice). We can easily ride our bikes to the CBD, university, university athletic events, library, river/parks, etc. We are having a kid soon, and I'm excited that she'll get to grow up in that environment. I can do things without the required blessing of a HOA or HOA dues. I can have a home with real character and history.</p> <p>The second reason is that the property is large enough to subdivide. Both my parents and my inlaws are aging. I would very much like to have them live on our property in an accessory dwelling or on an adjacent lot. This is because it makes it easy for me to care for them as they age, and there is enough around and nearby (even groceries!) that taking away the car keys won't be a big deal. Medical services are also nearby.</p> <p>The third reason is what I THOUGHT CodeSMTX was going to do. I thought it was going to actually encourage housing diversity. It has codes for more diverse housing types (though they have some impediments that I won't bore you with right now), but it is increasingly apparent that San Marcos likes the IDEA of addressing housing affordability & diversity but is fundamentally NIMBY and unwilling to actually do anything for it. Study rather than do, and kick the can onward. I would like to divide my property so that I could put three small cottages in a cottage court arrangement in addition to my own home, all on fee simple lots. Based on what I've seen, despite my property meeting the description to be appropriate for the zoning district to allow this, I'm skeptical the City would approve it. Decision makers appear fearful of any change, not realizing that the failure to change is actually exacerbating the issues of housing affordability and displacement. Approving rezonings like this would allow me to help provide affordable housing for rental or purchase in addition to caring for my parents in the future. Household sizes are small in San Marcos, and the national trend is shrinking household sizes. People don't need large homes and don't need large lots. I want to help be part of that solution, as these smaller cottages would be far more affordable. What's more, the people living in them could reduce or eliminate their transportation costs given proximity to major employers and services.</p> <p>I want more neighbors. I want more housing diversity. I want San Marcos to stop the red herrings regarding students with every zoning case other than basic suburban single-family homes. I want San Marcos to recognize that the most environmentally conscious approach to growth is to encourage infill development rather than auto-centric neighborhoods with fertilizer-filled suburban yards on the fringe. There is gentrification, but with good policies and zoning you can have "gentle-fication" in which the neighborhood can improve and current & future residents lives can be enriched without displacement. I want San Marcos to focus on the real causes of displacement, which fundamentally come down to wage stagnation. A household making \$45,000 or less (honestly \$60,000 or less, given escalating home prices & transportation costs) has and will always struggle to achieve home ownership and stability.</p>	<p>More housing on existing lots that is in scale with surrounding neighborhood / ADUs</p>	<p>Rich and poor live near each other / Resist appeasing the voices of a few to the detriment of affordability for all / Focus on policies that allow a neighborhood to improve incrementally and add more options while avoiding displacement</p>	<p>Important to have housing option close to jobs and services</p>	<p>More flexible zoning to allow additional infill housing</p>				<p>Need to lift wages</p>

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My husband and I moved to San Marcos in July 2015. First, we shared a rental home off Holland with a friend who was still in school at Texas State. It was the best way for us (poor newlyweds) and our college student friend to find affordable housing. Once she graduated, we knew we wanted to start aggressively saving to buy in this area. That meant trying to find cheap housing in the interim. We ended up in a really poorly run, "updated" apartment complex east of i35. It was less than ideal, but eventually we saved enough to buy the beautiful home we bought in Feb 2017. We love our location (just off Hunter) and our friendly, quiet neighborhood. San Marcos really feels like home for us two, non native Texans and we are thrilled to live here!										
There is a segment of the SM population who are single older women with no family members left. We want simple, affordable places to live since we're on a fixed income, places quiet and peaceful. We don't need fancy gyms, programmed activities, shiny equipment, upscale furnishings or swimming pools. I'm a native San Martian and am appalled at the housing choices available for someone in my situation. The rents have been pushed out of reach. I want to keep living here and die here, but it's almost impossible now. and die here, but palled at the housing choices for someone in my situation. I want to stay here and die here, but the rents are way too high(due to this city letting the university take over and pushing rents out of reach.)		Options for elderly on fixed incomes								
As a retired person, I've found that San Marcos is being ruined by the glut of student housing that permeates the landscape, while not offering a wider range of prices and options for people of all ages. I'm single, with no local family except a daughter who doesn't live with me or provide support. I'm currently looking for an apartment for myself and am shocked by the outright greed of landlords here. I grew up in Houston and never saw anything there like the money-grabbing that goes on here. I hate to talk badly about San Marcos because I hope to stay here, but the city must do something quickly to keep San Marcos from turning into a city of under-40 white kids, serviced by low income workers having to commute from miles away.		Options for elderly on fixed incomes								
I have been living in a studio with a roommate for 9 months. We each pay \$450 a month which includes utilities. I am disabled and receive \$881 a month, and I went to the housing authority for help. I was told there's a FOUR YEAR waiting list! I asked about finding a house and a landlord that would be willing to work with me and was told the waiting list for that program is FIVE YEARS ! I can't afford to move but I can't make it under these conditions. We absolutely need more affordable housing for seniors and disabled individuals.		Options for elderly on fixed incomes			Options for elderly on fixed incomes					

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<p>After the May flood of 2015, when I lost all of my belongings during the flooding, my landlady kept my security deposit. I could not prove how much I had paid as a security deposit so she did not reimburse any of it. She also accepted assistance from local churches and organizations who assisted her with work on her property under the pretense of assisting a single mother of three return to the home after improvements were made. Instead of allowing our family to move back into the home after it was remodeled, she raised the rent and rented the house to someone else. We were not reimbursed for the work we did when we and our neighbors removed the mud drenched carpet to protect the floors and helped clean the house. Despite our efforts, and the efforts of local charities, to help her get the house prepared to rent again, she did not reimburse us for our time. There were no protections for me except to take her to civil court. She was a respected business owner, and I was a single working mother in college. I did not have the resources to take her to civil court and she refused to give me a copy of our lease agreement after mine was destroyed in the flood. There should be protections in place for those who rent and there should be a website where complaints can be made about these issues and cases like this can be reviewed.</p>						Need more resources and protections for renters.		
<p>After the October 2015 flood, I rented a house. The landlord had recently raised the rent from \$1025 to \$1175. The family that was living in that house moved out because of the rent increase. I rented it in December for \$1175 per month. Midway through the year, he broke our contract and raised the rent by \$100 without notifying me. When I discovered the change, he stated that he would keep the rent at the \$1175, but would increase it in December when my lease ended. He raised the rent to \$1300. I was a single mother of three, a college student and was working at the time, but could no longer afford the rent. My family moved into a motel room, I worked 60 hours per week while finishing college and could not afford housing in San Marcos. The apartment managers require proof of income that proves that the income for the household is three times the cost of rent. So, a 2 bedroom duplex at \$750 was not accessible to my family because I would need \$2500 per month income. My income was a few hundred less than that. Instead, I paid \$1100 per month for a motel room until I was finally able to get public housing assistance and finish college that spring. My family lived in a motel for 6 months while waiting to get assistance through public housing because of the long waiting lists and we still live in an area prone to flooding. These low income apartments also flooded in 2015. Although I am moving forward, and will hopefully be living out of the flood zone soon, the uncertainty of housing for low income families takes an emotional toll and financial toll. San Marcos needs more low income options that are stable and not prone to flooding. There also need to be efforts made to cap how much rent can be raised, especially after a flood or crisis. There are efforts being made to help alleviate the housing problems, but I fear there needs to be much more progress that includes holding landlords accountable and protects the lower income members of our community.</p>					Need more options for low income housing that is secure and not prone to flooding			
<p>I hope that in the futures, all families will have housing options that will fit their individual needs. Whether you're a young couple just starting out, a family with children, a student, or a senior citizen, you should have access to the type of home that you need.</p>		Need options for all types of people						
<p>During my time as a resident of San Marcos I lived in apartments, town homes and a single wide trailer. I moved around a lot due to the every rising costs of housing in our community. 2.5 years ago I purchased my home, in large part, because it was cheaper to pay mortgage, insurance and do my own repairs that it was to live in a decent apartment as a single person with 2 dogs. I loved my apartment life, it was close to everything i needed in town. Now living on the outskirts of town my housing is much more affordable but all of the things I loved about San Marcos require a car ride, instead of being within walking distance or public transport. I'm excited to see how this goes and what becomes of this initiative!</p>			More housing options close to town	More types of housing for single people in town				

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I spent many years in San Marcos, mainly in apartments, and I just love the young, vibrant life of the town and all the options of places to live.		Happy with apartment life						
I visited San Marcos way back in 1990 and knew I wanted to go to school here. In 2002 my wishes came true and I moved here to attend TxState. When I graduated, I did not want to leave because I loved it so much and it had become home for my daughters and I. When I was in school, I lived in Public Housing, and eventually moved up and off assistance and have lived all around the city. I have always felt safe here and love the small town vibe you get. You can know everyone yet meet new people at every turn. I have seen San Marcos grow so much. There is something for everyone. However, if you need more, Austin & San Antonio are just a short drive away. I can't imagine living anywhere else. #sanmartianforlife		Something for everyone			Ability to move up and out			
I have rented for all eight years that I have lived in San Marcos. I love living in town; riding bikes with friends to the river, catching live music downtown, meeting friends for brunch at one of the many amazing local restaurants. And it's all 10 minutes away from wherever you are! I have finally reached a point where I am ready to consider becoming a first-time home buyer, and I have always imagined I would settle down here in San Marcos. However, with the skyrocketing home values, it seems that purchasing a reasonable starter home in town is no longer a possibility for individuals/families earning an average, or even slightly above-average income.			More options to buy in town	Need more types of housing close in to meet different needs				
I've lived in a variety of housing types in San Marcos, all with their own positives and negatives, but I truly love living in San Marcos!								
It would be nice if the city wouldn't let the university dictate the rents and housing while shutting long term residents out.		Need options for long term residents not just students						
	A single family home could offer so many more opportunities while respecting the character							
It's a single family home, but it could be so much more while still maintaining the historic home and respecting the character of the neighborhood.								
Don't put price caps on development. The market will dry up. Basic Economics						No Price Caps		
A happy healthy neighborhood is ... A skilled and educated workforce / Strong code enforcement / Access to basic services / Affordable taxes / Excellent schools / Infrastructure is maintained - throughout the City / zoned for use with few variances	strong code enforcement		access to basic services	zoned for desired use				Affordable taxes / excellent schools / infrastructure maintained/ code enforcement /Skilled and educated workforce
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is ... I look forward to seeing some of the early 50's housing torn down - that seems to stay in a state of disrepair / Crack down on the the duplexes that are a mess and have lots of weeds and unmowed grass	Old housing in disrepair should be replaced / Enforcement on dilapidated duplexes							
I love living in San Marcos because of the University environment - academics, lecturers, sports, and fine arts								
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is... headed toward recovering affordability and preserving neighborhood communities / decreasing displacement		decreasing displacement						

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A happy and healthy neighborhood/ City is ... One where all families and people can thrive according to their own diverse dreams		all families and people can thrive according to their own diverse dreams						
Some Housing Challenges I've experienced are ... Quality vs. Affordability as well as appeal.	Focus on quality as well as affordability							
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is ... Diverse and Inclusive I love living in San Marcos because because I like to float the river and be close to all you can eat sushi		Housing policy should be inclusive		More diverse housing				
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is ... affordable for our families so everyone can enjoy our beautiful community		affordable to current families						
A happy and healthy neighborhood / city is ... One where residents own their homes and condos and actively participate in keeping their neighborhood healthy by volunteering to help those in the neighborhood who become in need of assistance, marketing their neighborhood, and modeling their pride.		More Homeownership						
I hope we don't water down code / ordinances just to incentivize developers (eg. variances on drainage, codes, and flood control) / I hope we don't spend tax dollars on subsidizing home purchases. If you can't afford it, find somewhere else. That's just economics.				Don't incentivize developers	Tax dollars should not be sent on subsidies			
I chose my current home/apartment because... it's in a highly sought community with appreciating values and has sweet neighbors who maintain their property / home.								
I think housing should be ... accessible to all income groups and communities / close to essential amenities / an issue with extensive community outreach / diverse and varied.		accessible to all income groups	Close to amenities	diverse and varied housing				
Some housing challenges I've experienced are ... lost bid to an investor with bid substantially over the asking price						Investors buying homes before homeowners		
Some housing challenge I've experienced are ... I'd like to buy a home to live in permanently with my family, but it is difficult to compete with investors who buy the homes to rent out. I'm planning to try again next year.						Competition from investors		
A Happy Health Neighborhood is ... Living in a home that is comfortable, safe and community - centered								
Some housing challenges I've experienced are ... giving out social security number to apply for an apartment then became the victim of identity theft. Flooded twice in 2015								Flooding
Some housing challenges I've experienced are ... need housing for the elderly and more accessible housing		elderly on fixed incomes / accessible housing						
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is ... We need more housing for people				More housing to keep up with growth				
Some housing challenges I've experienced are ... finding low income housing not geared towards students / finding housing or programs geared towards people with problem rental histories / lack of "open" programs for lower income families / lack of programs for individuals with low income but no young children in the "house"		low cost housing not geared towards students			Need more programs or low income families / and people with no children in the home.	assistance for people with problem rental histories		

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I love living in San Marcos because... it feels like home. San Marcos is like no other city I've ever been to. The people are welcoming, the river brings people together.								
I think housing should be ... affordable for everyone. That rent and property taxes reflect the true wages that people are making. That all housing shouldn't be only for high end earners but for regular 9 to 5, 40 hr. / week workers.		Housing for all						
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is for homeless people								Assistance to homeless
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is... more affordable for low income folks. There should be options for the average person. The university continues to buy up properties and build high end apartments that are not in the budget for people. The City should stand up and put a moratorium on the Universities grab and level of the older homes to build offices and such. The citizens of San Marcos should demand a plan of some sort that gives them a voice in the process.		more affordable for low income folks / less student housing						Need a housing plan with community input
I think housing should be .. a little more diverse - I am not a student or retired senior (for nursing home) it's hard to find single family housing - not an apartment - I have handicapped relatives limited income and mobility issues.		More accessible options		More diverse options other than single family or apartment				
Some housing challenges I've experienced are ... affordable housing (houses, not apartments) has been difficult to find for my family that contains adequate # of rooms and space. / Finding affordable housing on safe streets that contain sidewalks, stop signs or other means of safe accommodations has been difficult to find. / sky-rocketing rent prices on a year to year basis puts financial strains on our family. The majority of our income goes to rent. / Housing that is pet-friendly with no breed or weight restrictions is almost impossible to find.		Larger houses to accommodate families. / Pet Friendly	Safe streets					
Some housing challenges I've experienced are lack of traditional apartment housing				more traditional apartment units				
I love living in San Marcos because ... of the river and the small community								
I love living in San Marcos because it's my hometown, my favorite thing is SWT and Aquarena								
In the future I hope housing in San Marcos is more "home - looking" diversity in design				Diversity in design of housing				
I chose my current home/apartment because .. I was living in a dilapidated trailer and needed to leave that situation. Now, I am a disabled Veteran barely making ends meat. I have a degree, yet have been unemployed since November 2016								
Some housing challenges I've experienced are Too much student housing and housing for families is hard to find.		More housing for families / Less housing for students						
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is... Hoping for more shelters for homeless.								Need a homeless shelter
A happy and healthy neighborhood / city is ... Affordable, good housing with safe streets and sidewalks for children and families to be able to use / Pet-friendly housing with no breed or weight restrictions, Housing that is not just apartments, but housing for families with yards.		Housing for families / Pet friendly	Safe Streets and Sidewalks					
In the future , I hope housing in San Marcos is ... is not all catered to students only		Less Student Oriented						
A happy and healthy neighborhood / city is... Diverse products inhabiting diverse human beings where the neighborhood store is just a short walk or bike ride away.		Diverse people	Walkable and close to amenities	Diverse Housing types				

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I chose my current home / apartment because... it was a perfect combination of space and yard for myself and my daughter and it felt safe as I am a single mother.								Safety
I chose my current home / apartment because ... it was affordable and there were trees								
I chose my current home/apartment because... When I was trying to buy a home in San Marcos in 2006 we could not find a home big enough that we could afford. We ended up buying in Kyle because we were able to get more housing for the money. WE we want to downsize and come back to San Marcos		Need larger homes for families						
I love living in San Marcos because it is vibrant, active, diverse and beautiful								
I think housing should be based on the changing needs of the community and incoming population, not on the views and wants of existing homeowners		Add housing based on community needs not desires of homeowners						
I think housing should be market driven				Less restrictions on adding more housing				
I found a rental property for \$750 a month. We has previously rented from them and because we were good tenants they gave us a good price; instead of \$950 a month. Good neighbors and tenants come in all shapes and sizes!								
A happy and healthy neighborhood / city is walkable			Walkability					
I think housing should be affordable and available for all peoples rent and ownership		Housing for all						
I chose my current home/ apartment because it was affordable with room to grow with an acre of land. We have to live multi-generationally because it is not affordable to live separately.				multi-generational living				
I think housing should be an affordable right with diverse neighborhoods		Housing is a right		Diversity				
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is Considered for everyone with creative options to grow into. I hope San Marcos can be the City that gets it right and example for everyone.		Housing for all		Creative housing types to grow into				
I love living in San Marcos because it's safe and everyone is nice!								
A happy healthy neighborhood/city is inclusive to all people in all stages of life		Housing for all						
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is diverse & accessible active & public to transportation		Housing for all	Public transportation easily accessible					
I love living in San Marcos because the people here encourage environmental quality as well as a genuine care for how we are all living								The people and the attitudes
I love living in San Marcos because I can ride my bike anywhere and it is beautiful			Bikable					
I chose my current home/apartment because it was affordable		Affordability						
I love living in San Marcos because a river runs through it and San Martians are devoted to keeping it flowing								The people and the location
In the future, I hope housing in San Marcos is compact, connected and within existing city limits			Able to get around easier public transport as well as biking and walking	More city like				
I love living in San Marcos because it is filled with awesome people with awesome values								The people and the attitudes

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A happy and healthy neighborhood/city is economically diverse		Housing for all								
Total	7	45	14	25	12	8	9	12		132