

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Info](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] P&Z Sept. 26 Downtown Area Plan Plus
Date: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 3:22:54 PM

Dear Planning office:

It has come to my attention that you are considering revisions to the city Master Plan regarding the downtown area. PLEASE vote for the second option for CM Allen, p. 72. This would not only allow for flood mitigation, but expand our city parks in an environmentally sensitive manner. Funding for such parks via grants is not necessarily easy, but it is certainly in the best interest of the city, rather than having large buildings near the river. I realize that there is a drive for more dense housing near the city's core, but our river is a precious commodity that can be damaged from short-sighted, profit-driven concepts.

Plan #2 celebrates not only the river, but pays homage to the city forebears – particularly native peoples who lived close to this river for over 10,000 years. Paving it all over so that some out of town corporations can make a bunch of cash is short sighted. What would New York be if the early planners had said “we need more density” rather than “we need the greenspace of Central Park”?

San Marcans need you to consider a quality of life not just in the next 10 years, but in the next 100. Climate change is going to make flash floods more prominent and severe. I have lived though several such events, and the thought of buildings close to the river chills me to the core and will only lead to more catastrophic downstream events, damaging more innocent lives and properties (I hope we haven't forgotten “The Woods”). Please strongly consider Option Two to preserve our river, increase our green spaces and make San Marcos more green than gray.

Sincerely,

Shannon

SHANNON M. FITZPATRICK
Attorney at Law

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Info](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Downtown Master Plan- Comments
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 9:43:39 AM

Hello, I am writing to submit comments on the Downtown Master Plan, ahead of the meeting on 9/26. I will not be able to attend virtually or in-person on this day and would like these comments to be submitted in writing.

In general, I do not think the plan allows for enough greenspace and favors the addition of apartments/housing, paved lots etc, specifically in regards to the changes proposed to CM Allen. Due to its proximity to the San Marcos River, how we choose to make changes to this area is extremely important. Additionally, this is some of the last land available for the city to invest in expanding and creating riverside parks. The parks we have, though lovely, are overcrowded during peak season. It benefits the entire community for the city to invest primarily in the addition of greenspace and the addition of buildings and additional paved surfaces secondarily.

Specifically, I would like to enter comments on the below proposed changes:

Page 48: I am full heartedly in support of additions mentioned on page 48. I wish to see more investments in greenspace throughout this plan.

Page 58: I do not support the use of impervious cover in the city identified lots that are vacant and underutilised. Doing so will have serious water quality impacts to the river.

Page 74: I do not support the addition of buildings on CM Allen, due to the proximity to the river and the encroachment of greenspace. Additionally, if buildings are added, I support the enforcement of a height limit to 2 stories. The current proposed height of these buildings is 4 stories which will not allow for sufficient sunlight to reach the riparian zone of the river, which will ultimately impact water quality. There is also not sufficient parking to support buildings of this size and the addition of parking would not allow for the proposed addition of greenspace.

In short, you can't have both- its greenspace or tall buildings. Let's go with greenspace.

Thank you,

Camille Buzbee

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From: Susan Hanson <
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 2:57 PM
To: Planning Info
Subject: [EXTERNAL] downtown development

Committee Members:

Some time ago, I remember being encouraged to stop by the Activity Center to look at plans for the development of parks and recreation areas in the city. I carefully studied what was presented and noted my preferences, assuming that what I was doing was relevant in some way. What I recall being excited about was the possibility of creating a contiguous green space along the river from "Dog Beach" to Rio Vista and Ramon Lucio Park. Some structures would remain, but otherwise, CM Allen would bisect a *park*.

What I see being proposed now is quite the opposite, however. If the Downtown Development Plan is carried out as written, CM Allen will be lined with multi-story buildings, both commercial and residential, along with the impervious cover required to park even more cars. While the idea of building more mid-level housing is admirable, this sort of development so close to the river is not the answer. Most obviously, more impervious cover plus more car traffic is a very bad combination for the river. Yes, pervious cover and pocket parks are in themselves good things, but they can't mitigate the damage this development would do to water quality. Anyone who questions the traffic problems this plan will create need only drive down CM Allen and note that every available parking place is invariably filled, usually with cars belonging to students at Texas State or to people heading to the river.

Second, this area *will* flood: just give it time. If we doubt the damage that overdevelopment in the floodplain can do, we need look no further than the Woods Apartments and their impact during the 2015 flood. Finally, besides the university and the outlet malls, San Marcos has one thing that brings people to town: its natural beauty. The river is the biggest draw, but the city's green spaces come in next. Twenty-five years ago, the city was forward-thinking enough to create our first natural area--Prospect Park, now part of Purgatory Creek Natural Area. I can't tell you how many times I've run into out-of-town visitors at the river who tell me they've come to the water to cool off after a hike on one of our natural trails. Why would we want to lose *any* green space adjacent to the river?

As the pandemic made quite clear, people have a crying need to get outdoors and connect with the natural world. San Marcos has an opportunity to create something beautiful in response to that need. Let's not squander it.

Yours truly,
Susan Hanson

Susan Hanson
Senior Lecturer, Retired
Department of English
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San Marcos, TX

"We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time." T.S. Eliot, *Little Gidding*

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