



Presentation

Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan

Receive a staff presentation and hold discussion on the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan.

To view the Draft Plan, please visit <https://arcg.is/0ryPzW>

Area Plan Boundary



SMTX
VISION
BLANCO GARDENS

AERIAL

- Blanco Gardens
- Waterbodies
- Major Creek
- Parks



Role of Neighborhood Area Planning



- Take a closer look at the **needs, challenges, opportunities, and vision** for specific neighborhoods
- Provide a study of the “DNA” or **character of the neighborhood**
- Facilitate more **localized conversations** on key topics
- Identify **specific projects and programs** for the neighborhood
- Engage in **dialogue with residents**



Project Timeline



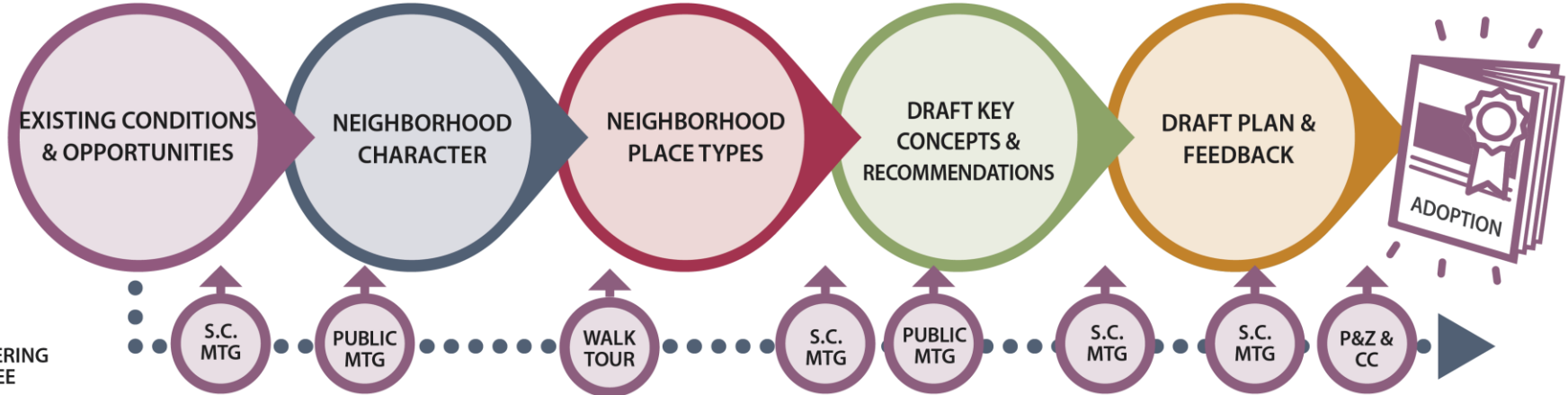
BLANCO GARDENS NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN SCHEDULE

FALL 2022

WINTER 2022

SPRING 2023- FALL 2024

SPRING 2025



S.C. = STEERING COMMITTEE
P&Z = PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
CC = CITY COUNCIL

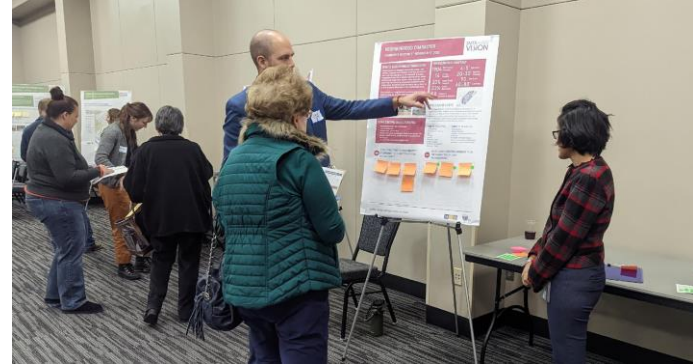
ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WE ARE HERE!

Summary of Community Outreach



- Hosted **5 Steering Committee Meetings**
- Hosted a **Steering Committee Walking Tour**
 - 55 total comments received
- Hosted **2 Community Workshops**
 - 105 attendees across the 2 workshops
 - 200+ comments received
- **5887 Postcards** sent - to every property owner & tenants
- **250 homes visited** during door-to-door outreach campaign
- Attended **2 Public Safety Meetings**
- **Draft Plan Public Review Period**
 - 125 comments received



Anatomy of the Plan

With community & stakeholder events, meetings, and tours completed, the plan was developed with 7 key topics:



Key Topics in the Plan:



Getting Around



History, Art, and Culture



Public Spaces & Amenities



Streetscape Enhancement



Business & Economy



Housing

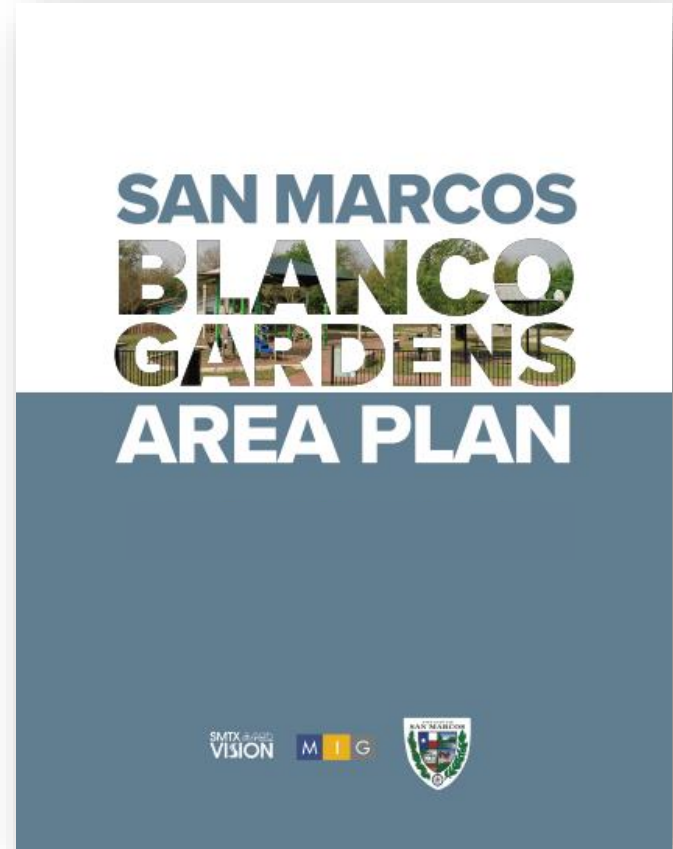


Building Form & Development

Anatomy of the Plan

- Each of the 7 topics:
 - Describes **key concepts and existing conditions** in Blanco Gardens.
 - Describes **community and stakeholder feedback** received as part of the Plan's development.
 - Identifies specific **recommendations** for the Plan Area.

Some sections also include **case studies** of similar communities to San Marcos that have experienced success with a specific recommendation.



Anatomy of the Plan: Section Components

The components of each topic section include:

Key concepts and existing conditions

Community & stakeholder feedback

Specific recommendations for the
Plan Area

Recommendations are intended to be carried out by the City and/or identified partners

GETTING AROUND

4. TRANSIT

Transit service provided by the Capital Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) runs through Blanco Gardens daily, with stops on Linda Drive, Bugg Lane, and Sturgeon Drive. Buses run daily between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. and about 1.9% of workers use this service for their daily commutes⁵. Figure 3.1 displays the bus routes and stops within the Plan Area.

Neighborhood residents indicated during the Area Plan development that they would be more interested in using public transportation if there were bus vehicle improvements, improved information on routes and timetables, and expanded service hours. Maintaining and enhancing transit service was identified as a priority for current and future residents.

Recommendations:

GA 4.1: Improve existing bus stops to provide shelters, lighting, and transit information such as bus routes/times and recommended stops.

GA 4.2: Increase the frequency of monitoring the condition of bus stops, benches, and shelters to ensure they remain usable. Report to CARTS any of these amenities in need of cleaning, repair, or replacement. Ensure that paths to bus stops are clear and accessible.

GA 4.3: Partner with CARTS to evaluate opportunities for additional transit stops within the neighborhood and increased frequency of buses along key routes.



A shaded bus stop with waste receptacles.

Example Recommendations



Big Ideas: The desire to feel safe walking and biking through the neighborhood, and to create safe spaces for kids to play.



ST 1.2: Consider safety improvements at high-traffic intersections and other areas where incidents between pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers are most likely, including the vicinity of Stokes Park along Cape Road.

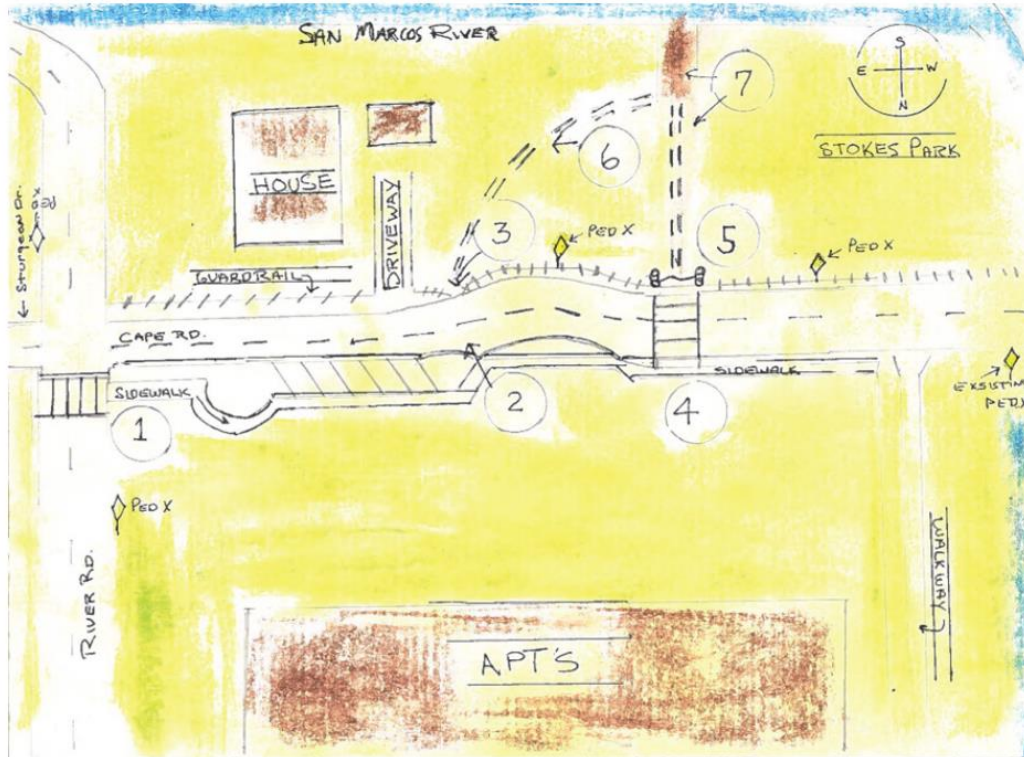


GA 2.1: Install signage or other wayfinding measures to designate a “walking loop trail” along key streets throughout the neighborhood and consider streetscape enhancements to promote the use of this trail for commuting to services as well as an active recreation/ fitness route. A priority route identified by the community is along River Road, Bugg Lane, and Linda Drive. Consider branding the walking loop trail as Cuevas Walking Loop.

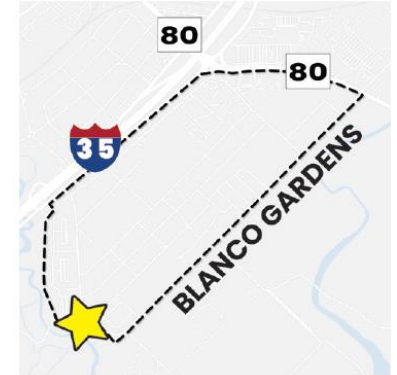
Example Recommendation



Figure 3.3. Sketch of potential pedestrian safety improvements to Cape Road near River Road. Courtesy of Michael Vernon, Blanco Gardens Neighborhood Area Plan Steering Committee Member.



- 1 Enhanced crosswalk
- 2 Unprotected pedestrian crossing
- 3 Unprotected pedestrian crossing
- 4 Enhanced crosswalk
- 5 Break in guardrail marking entrance to J.J. Stokes Park
- 6 Manmade path from unprotected crosswalk to park entrance
- 7 Unpaved entrance to J.J. Stokes Park



Anatomy of the Plan: Case Studies

Case studies in the plan showcase similar communities that have experienced success with specific recommendations.

Santa Fe, New Mexico hosts an annual “**Pop-up Playground**” offering children a day to build forts with donated recycled materials. Pop-up playgrounds can serve as an incremental step towards the construction of a more permanent park.



CASE STUDY

POP-UP PLAYGROUND Santa Fe, NM

Pop-Up Playground is a free annual family-oriented event that allows kids of all ages to build “the ultimate fort city” using recycled materials like logs, pallets, boxes, rope, branches, dirt, and fabric, most of which are donated.

The event is staffed by volunteers who introduce children to themes of risk and freedom in a supervised setting.

Pop-Up Playground has occurred annually since 2015 and has been hosted at both private and city-owned locations, although since 2018 it has taken place at a city-owned park. It is planned through partnerships between a variety of private, nonprofit, and public organizations, as well as area businesses and residents.



Children build forts, wheelbarrows, and play kitchens using logs, pinecones, mud, pallets, stumps, fabric, wooden spoons, and other materials at Santa Fe Railyard's annual Pop-Up Playground events.

Anatomy of the Plan: Action Plan



ACTION PLAN

For each Plan Topic & Sub-Topic:

- Short-term steps to implement recommendation
- Potential leaders/partners needed
- Driver (Leader of the implementation)

PLAN TOPIC: HISTORY, ARTS, & CULTURE

Strategy	Short-Term Action Items	Driver	Potential Leaders/Partners
History	<p>Adopt citywide Preservation Plan to provide guidance for historic preservation policy.</p> <p>Apply for Undertold Marker Program to tell underrepresented history.</p>	COSM	COSM, Existing & Future Residents, Property Owners/Managers & Business Owners, Nonprofit & Grassroots Organizations, Hays County, State
Public Art	<p>Evaluate and identify visible sites to install public art and interpretive materials to tell broader history of Blanco Gardens.</p> <p>Approach residents or businesses in the Plan Area about “adopting” nearby pieces of public art.</p>	COSM	COSM, Existing & Future Residents, Property Owners/Managers & Business Owners, Nonprofit & Grassroots Organizations
Trails and Interpretive Signage	Evaluate and identify visible sites to install interpretive material in Stokes Park and along the existing San Marcos River trail. Collaborate with the Great Springs Project, San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, and other organizations to explore opportunities for educational panels.	COSM/Hays County	COSM, Property Owners/Managers, Hays County, Nonprofit & Grassroots Organizations



Anatomy of the Plan: Financing Tools

- Information on funding/tools that could be applicable to recommendations not funded during normal City operations
- Additional funding sources may arise in the future.

Table 4.2

FINANCING TOOLS

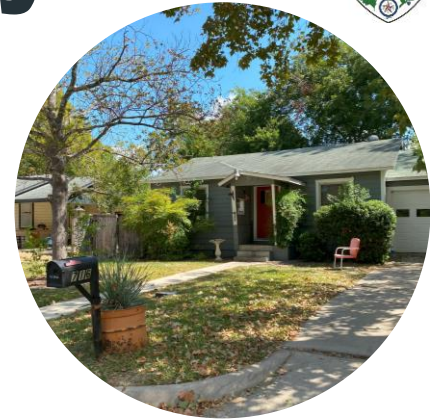
Category	Name	Sponsor or Administrator	Type of Financing	Value of Funding	Eligible Applicants	Eligible Uses	Requirements	How to Apply	Notes and Links
History, Arts, and Culture	Our Town Creative Placemaking Grants Program	National Endowment for the Arts	Competitive grant	\$25,000 - \$150,000	City of San Marcos	Arts, culture, and design projects or programs that strengthen communities and advance priorities including health, community development, environment/climate, and public safety.	Complete requirements for each annual cycle announced in the spring.	Apply online in two parts by late summer; annual cycle.	https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town

Neighborhood Character Study



Directed by City Council to complete with the Area Plan. It achieves the following goals:

- Documents factors that contribute to the neighborhood's character, such as **lot size and coverage, architectural style, building massing, and orientation.**
- Provides descriptions of **quantitative metrics and qualitative factors** that are difficult to express in numbers, to better communicate the Neighborhood's physical characteristics.
- Recommends how City regulations can be adopted or refined to ensure the **Neighborhood's character is respected and maintained.**



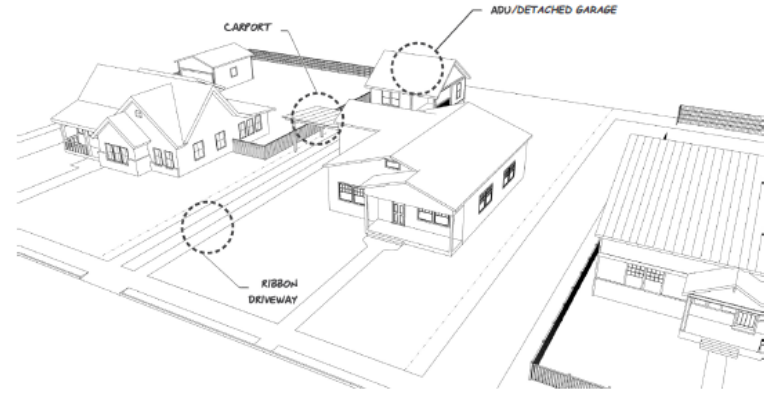
Using the Neighborhood Character Study



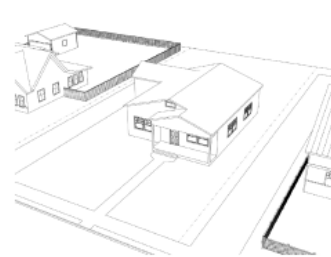
Scenario 3: Varied Parking Orientation/Accessory Structure

Once adopted, for proposed new homes or substantial renovations inside the Plan Area:

- Guidelines made available publicly
- Pre-development meeting with City will provide a chance to explain how to incorporate Character Study guideline(s) into proposed development
- Staff recommendation to P&Z will note if Character Study guideline(s) followed



Existing House for Reference



Following Adoption

- Evaluate & update the **Development Code** as necessary
- Incorporate the Plan into the **Capital Improvement Plan** project selection process
- Evaluate projects, plans, and policies for **short-term implementation**
- Create **Implementation Tracking Tool**



Steering Committee Recommendation



- SurveyMonkey survey provided to the 8-member Steering Committee
 - **4 replies received – all voted “Yes”** to recommending the Area Plan move forward to the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council for consideration.
 - **4 members did not respond**



Adoption Process



Meeting Type	Date
Update to Planning and Zoning Commission	January 14
Update to Neighborhood Commission	January 15
Update to City Council	January 21
Neighborhood Presentation Meeting	January 22
Planning & Zoning Commission Public Hearing & Action	February 11
City Council Public Hearing (no action)	March 4
City Council Public Hearing & Action	March 18
City Council 2 nd Reading & Adoption	April 1

Explore the Virtual Project Storymap



<https://arcg.is/0ryPzW>

- View the **Draft Plan**
- Explore **Past Events**
 - Summary Reports
 - Workshop Boards
- View the **Walking Tour Activity Worksheet**
- Tell your “**Neighborhood Story**”
- Explore on-going neighborhood **Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)**

