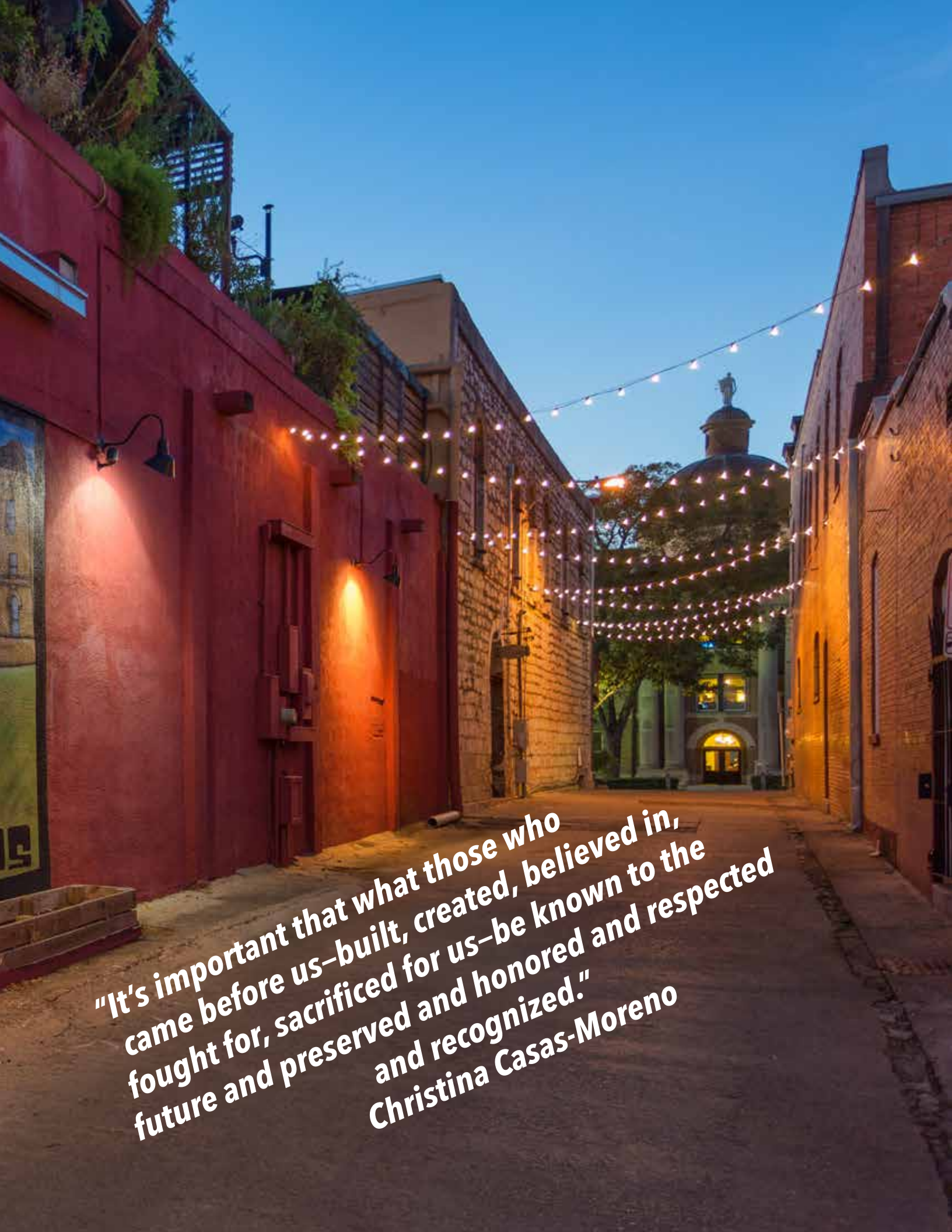


CITY OF SAN MARCOS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN



DRAFT SEPTEMBER 23, 2025



**"It's important that what those who
came before us—built, created, believed in,
fought for, sacrificed for us—be known to the
future and preserved and honored and respected
and recognized."
Christina Casas-Moreno**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*This project has been funded in part by a grant from the
National Trust Preservation Fund
of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.*

*Cover page: Ms. Ollie's Mural
(Source: City of San Marcos [COSM])
Left page: Kissing Alley (COSM)*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HONOR OUR PAST

The San Marcos River and abundant springs, which run through Hays County, attracted the first inhabitants of the City of San Marcos. Underwater archaeological investigations in Spring Lake in the late 1970s and 1980s uncovered artifacts dating back over 12,000 years to the Clovis people, indicating a long history of human habitation in the area. San Marcos derives its name from the early Spanish settlement of Villa San Marcos de Neve, established in 1808 at the junction of the Camino Real de los Tejas and the San Marcos River as part of Spain's broader efforts to strengthen its presence in Texas. Designated as the county seat in 1848 and platted in 1851, the city has grown over nearly two centuries, from its origins along the riverbank to the development of the Courthouse Square, Texas State University, and the surrounding areas.

Local historic preservation efforts in San Marcos began formally in 1972 with the formation of the Heritage Association as part of the Bicentennial Commission, established to plan celebrations for the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial. The movement gained momentum in 1973 when the Charles S. Cock House became the city's first property listed in the National Register of Historic Places, followed by the establishment of the Belvin Street Historic District in 1974. Significant institutional frameworks were put in place during the 1980s, including the creation of the Historic Preservation Commission in 1984 and San Marcos' designation as a Main Street city in 1986.

After achieving Certified Local Government status in 1990, the City conducted several historic resources surveys throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, notably in 1996 focusing on the Dunbar and East Guadalupe neighborhoods, which documented historically Black and Mexican American communities. The city continued to expand its preservation efforts by establishing multiple historic districts, including Burleson Street (2005), Lindsey-Rogers (2005), and Hopkins Street (2008), while also designating various individual landmarks such as the Old First Baptist Church (219 West MLK Drive) in 2018 and the Calaboose African American History Museum Building (200 West MLK Drive) in 2021. These efforts were supported by evolving design guidelines and sustainability measures, demonstrating the city's ongoing commitment to preserving its diverse cultural heritage.

LIVE IN THE MOMENT

Located on the I-35 transportation corridor between Austin and San Antonio, San Marcos is the largest city in Hays County. The population has doubled in the past 20 years to [approximately 72,000 in 2023](#), and in 2025 over 40,000 students attend Texas State University. Residents live in apartments near Downtown, in historic homes in neighborhoods like Dunbar or Hopkins Street, in mid-century subdivisions outside of the original town plat, and in new residential developments on the outskirts.

Events like the Spring Powwow and traditional Tejano dances celebrate and sustain the City's Indigenous and Spanish heritage. Historic buildings, like the Charles S. Cock House, Merriman Cabin, and Hays County Courthouse give a glimpse of San Marcos from its earlier days thanks to an early interest in historic preservation in the community. History museums, cultural centers, and memorials include the Calaboose African American History Museum, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, LBJ Museum of San Marcos, Hays County Historic, Dunbar Park, Chief Placido Memorial Statue, LBJ MLK Crossroads Memorial, and the Commemorative Air Force Central Texas Wing Exhibit at the San Marcos Regional Airport. Other amenities include the San Marcos River, San Marcos Springs, parks, trails, activity centers, and libraries.

A robust public art program supports storytelling through thematic murals and sculptures, including a series of mermaid statues inspired by underwater performers at the Aquarena Springs amusement park in the mid-20th century. Appearing throughout this plan, mermaids have come to symbolize the City. Together, San Marcos' natural and cultural assets ultimately cultivate civic pride and create of a unique sense of place where residents can reflect on its past while envisioning its future.

GUIDE OUR FUTURE

Although San Marcos holds the distinction of being one of the oldest settlements in the country, its preserved history does not represent the city's diverse population. Recognizing the opportunity to be more inclusive and tell a more complete story, the City of San Marcos engaged Stantec Consulting Services Inc. (Stantec) in 2024 to develop its first stand-alone Historic Preservation Plan to evaluate past preservation efforts and to guide future policies in balance with broader planning and community development objectives. Protecting and enhancing the natural, cultural, and historic resources of all San Marcos communities through neighborhood stabilization, thoughtful growth, and compatible development was a goal of the [2024 Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan](#). Adopting a citywide Historic Preservation Plan was an action item identified to achieve that goal which is echoed in City Council's Strategic Plan. Stantec and City staff began collaborating on this important project in May 2024.

Historic preservation plans provide municipalities an opportunity to engage and inform their communities. Identified community stakeholders and the general public play a leading role in shaping and guiding the future of historic preservation through their time, insights, and active participation. Through digital platforms, such as the Planning and Development Services Department newsletter and City social media, printed materials, stakeholder interviews, a community-wide survey, and open houses, the City of San Marcos regularly engaged its residents who know the community's important places, events, and people best. To maximize its reach to all residents at the beginning of development of this plan, the City of San Marcos launched a web page and a social media campaign. Staff also printed and distributed copies of digital content giving residents multiple ways to participate. A summary of the Historic Preservation Plan public outreach components is presented below. More detail can be found in the appendix.

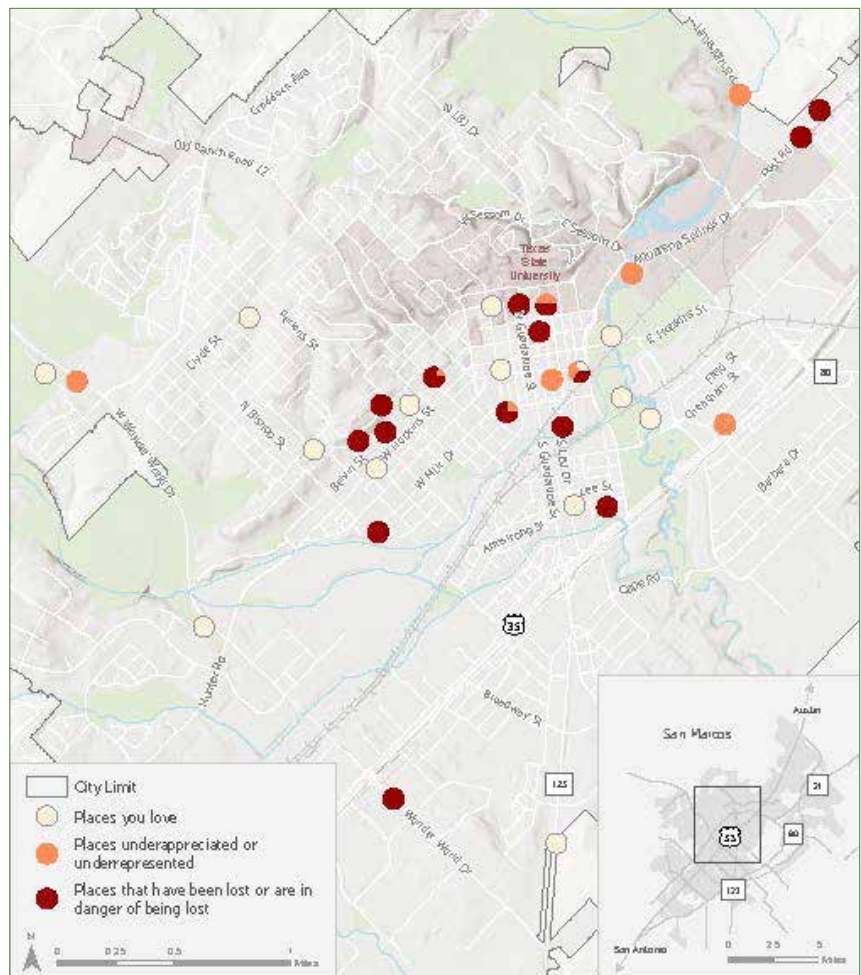
Based on public outreach and community feedback, the resulting Historic Preservation Plan considers all members of the San Marcos community. It is task oriented and prioritizes short- and long-term goals and objectives to advance and strengthen the program while celebrating San Marcos' historical and cultural resources over the next decade. The plan will serve as a key tool for planning, economic development, urban design, heritage tourism, and place-making.

PUBLIC OUTREACH MILESTONES

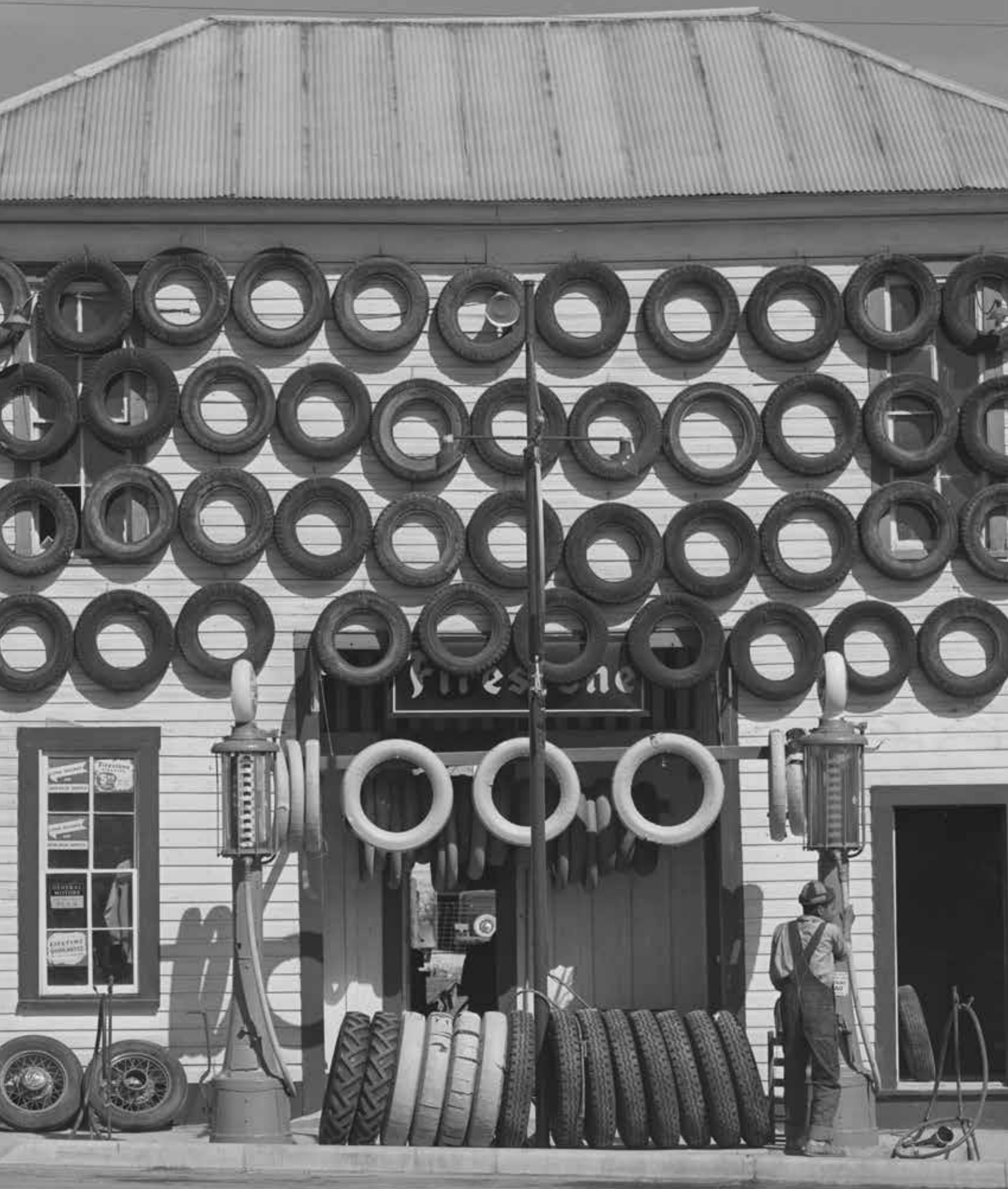
July 18 - August 9, 2024	Stakeholder Interviews
August 2, 2024	Website Launch
August 24, 2024	Social Media Launch
August 26 - September 30, 2024	Community Survey
September 25, 2024	Open House at the San Marcos Activity Center
July 9, 2025	Pop-Up Event at San Marcos Public Library
July 16, 2025	Community Workshop at San Marcos Activity Center

Results of the [Mapping the Future](#) activity during Public Outreach for the Historic Preservation Plan which enhanced public engagement with the planning process, and the results informed recommended solutions.

The City welcomes continuous updates to this interactive online map:
<https://arcg.is/1iun94>.



Instagram Post during Winter Social Media Campaign (Photograph Courtesy of Texas State University Special Collections & Archives, San Marcos Daily Record Photographic Negative Collection [TXST SMDR]).



WHAT'S IN THE PLAN?

THE PLAN

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Learn key terms, its many forms, why it matters, and how federal and state preservation policies and programs shape local efforts.
- 2. CULTURAL & HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....25**
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- 3. PRESERVATION IN THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS.....51**
Discover when preservation began in the City, why it matters in this community, and how local efforts take shape.
- 4. POLICY & PROGRAMS ANALYSIS.....89**
Learn about City leadership, departments, boards, and commissions who manage current programs and implement policies.
- 5. CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS.....113**
Explore the vision for San Marcos' future—goals and strategies—which balance growth with keeping what makes the City unique.

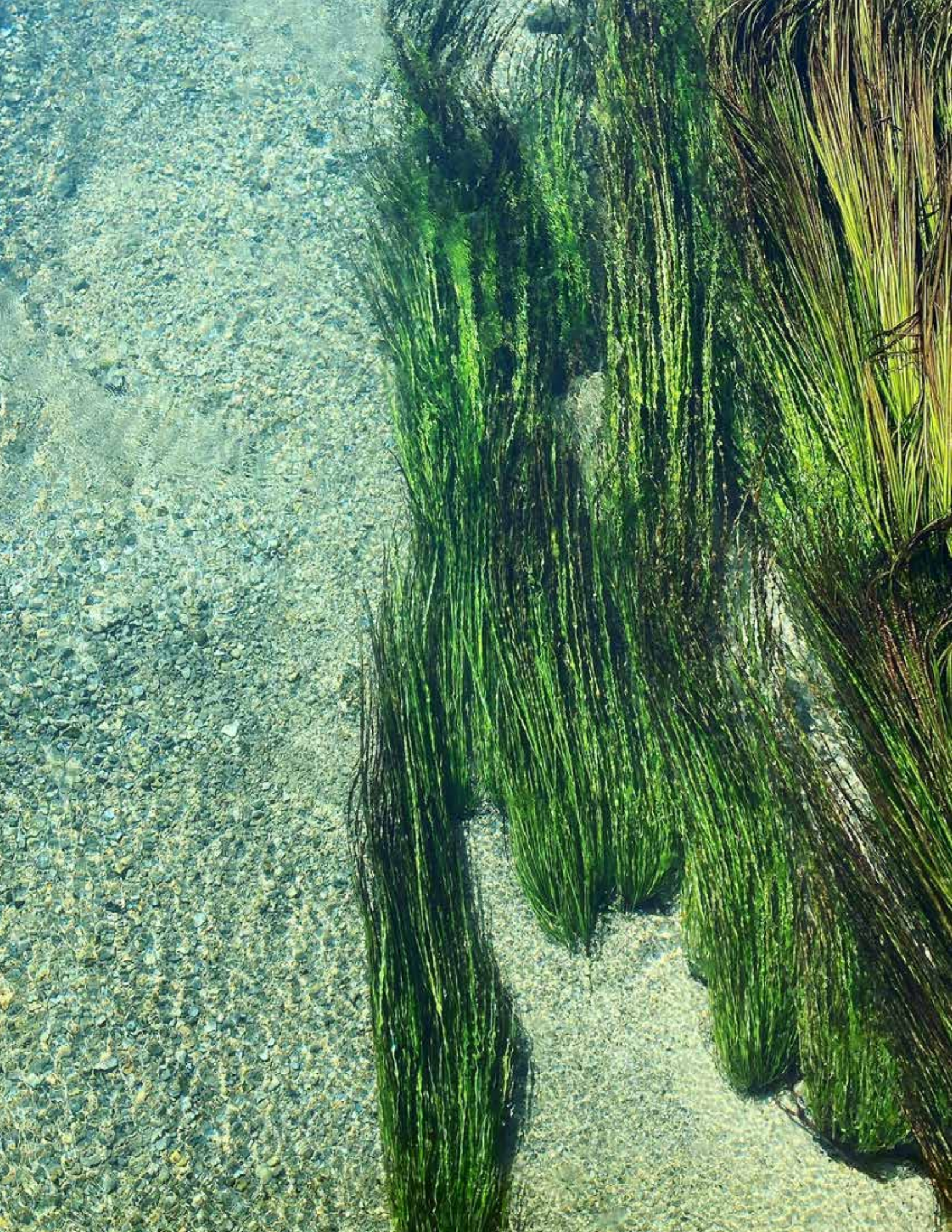
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Left: Secondhand tires displayed for sale, March 1940, on a building that once stood on the southeast corner of S. Guadalupe and E. San Antonio St. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, U.S. Office of War, Farm Security Administration Collection [LOC, Office of War, FSA]).





PRESERVATION IN THE U.S. & TEXAS

VISION STATEMENT

Using the ability, resources available, and knowledge of preservation to save and acknowledge our cultural landscape and living heritage, foster a strong a sense of place and pride, and protect and promote the unique identity of San Marcos.

ABOUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The practice of identifying and protecting buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts that have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance. The movement is both grassroots and legislated in communities across the globe. It requires advocacy, vision, and action with consideration and respect for a broad group of interests in building and development, parks and recreation, economic development, the arts, and most importantly, the public. It can also encompass the stewardship of culturally significant natural resources—such as rivers, springs, and landscapes.

PRESERVATION PLANNING

A proactive process that involves the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. This process is integrated into broader planning efforts to ensure that historic resources are considered in decision-making and development projects.

Preservation planning aims to balance the needs of growth and development with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage in tangible and intangible ways in partnership with local non-profits, other City Departments, and private property owners.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

A process that ensures proposed projects adhere to federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and standards designed to minimize harmful effects to the environment, including natural resources, archaeological sites, and historic properties.



CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Involves research to identify basic information about cultural resources—such as landscapes, archaeological sites, and above-ground resources; survey to record details about historic-age properties; evaluation to discern the significance of resources; planning to set priorities and ensure this information is used in decision making; and stewardship, whereby resources are registered, preserved, protected, and/or interpreted for the public.

MITIGATION PLANNING

Required when a federally funded or permitted project will have an adverse effect on a historic resource. It can also be required by local government when developers seek rezoning or special exceptions from City Council. For example, mitigation may require data recovery before an archaeological site is compromised or destroyed, architectural documentation, such as photographs and measured drawings, or creation of interpretation and educational materials.

LAND CONSERVATION

Involves the responsible management of natural resources to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. It focuses on the sustainable use and management of resources to ensure their availability for future generations. It can also apply to easements that protect both landscapes and above-ground resources. Conservation benefits from Historic Preservation, which encourages reuse of existing cultural resources and infrastructure over development of open land.



COMPARISON OF KEY TERMS

Throughout this plan refer to these key terms, which will be used frequently in this plan. These are primarily defined by the [National Park Service](#) (NPS) and the [National Register of Historic Places](#) (NRHP), created by the [National Historic Preservation Act](#) (NHPA). [Abbreviations/Acronyms/Initialisms](#) and a larger [Glossary](#) supplement these terms in the Appendix.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The traditional and more common spelling of the investigation of past civilizations, originating from the Greek *arkhaios* meaning “ancient” and historically using the “ae” digraph. Used with a lowercase throughout the plan or an uppercase when part of an entities’ official name.



ARCHEOLOGY

In the 1890s, the US Government Printing Office eliminated the ligatured ae. Many prestigious universities adopted the new spelling, resulting in its frequent use in scientific journals and various entities’ official name. Used in the plan when it is part of a legal name.

HISTORIC-AGE

Resources that are at least 50 years old, an age which the NPS generally requires for listing in the NRHP unless a newer building is extraordinary.



NONHISTORIC-AGE

Resources that are less than 50 years old and generally excluded from survey unless a historic district is being nominated.

RESOURCE

A building, structure, object, site, or district per the NPS regardless of age.



PROPERTY

One or more legal parcels containing a single resource or a group of related resources. A resource that is designated is called a “historic property.”

SURVEY

Recording a resource or group of resources, including photo-documentation and observations about its style, materials, condition, and integrity. Being surveyed is one step in an architectural investigation and does not mean a resource has been evaluated.



EVALUATE

Reviewing field survey materials, conducting research, and recommending whether a resource is eligible or not eligible for designation. Being evaluated does not mean a resource is automatically determined eligible for designation.

SIGNIFICANT

Resources that are important to local, state, or national history because of an important person, event, design, or ability to reveal new information about the past. Being significant does not necessarily mean a property is eligible for designation, because it must also have integrity.



NOT SIGNIFICANT

Resources that are not important to local, state, or national history, because they are not associated with an important person, event, design, or do not have the ability to reveal new information about the past. A historic-age building that is not significant may still have value to the sustainability and culture of a community.

CONDITION

The physical state of a resource—excellent, good, fair, poor, ruinous--which may not affect whether a building is eligible for listing in the NRHP. For example, a building may be in poor condition due to vacancy and vegetative growth but still have integrity of materials, design, and workmanship.



INTEGRITY

The ability of a resource to convey its significance, based on seven points of integrity defined by the NRHP—location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. After concluding that a resource is significant, a historian must assess whether it meets at least a few of these points.

ELIGIBLE

A resource that has significance and integrity. Being eligible does not mean a resource is automatically designated.

HISTORIC

Something important in history. A resource that has been determined eligible to be eligible for local, state, or NRHP designation is called a "historic resource."

NOMINATE

Preparing an application with the property owners' permission, including mapping, photographs, and a report about the history of a resource after it has been surveyed, evaluated, and recommended eligible. Submitting a nomination does not mean it will automatically be designated.

REVITALIZE

Improve the quality of life in neighborhoods through collaborative local investment in neighborhoods and buildings without displacing residents, jobs, and amenities.

TANGIBLE

Things that can be physically touched, experienced, or viewed, including buildings, structures, objects, and sites associated with history.



NOT ELIGIBLE

A resource that does not have significance, or a resource that has significance but does not have sufficient integrity.

HISTORICAL

Anything from the past, important or not, such as aerial imagery, maps, land records, and various collections.

DESIGNATED

A property whose nomination has been reviewed by a committee and approved by a local, state, or national agency.

GENTRIFY

Process in which the character of a neighborhood changes through the influx of more affluent residents and investment, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process.

INTANGIBLE

Things that have no physical presence but are expressed through heritage festivals, cultural traditions, oral history, and knowledge.

NRHP SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY

ASSOCIATION	The direct link between an important person or event and a historic resource. To retain integrity of association, a resource must have enough surviving physical features and be in its historical location.
LOCATION	The particular point or position where a historic resource was constructed, where a significant person made their contribution to history, or a historic event occurred.
SETTING	The character of the place where the historic resource is located, including man-made and natural features.
DESIGN	The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, style, and structure of a resource.
MATERIALS	For buildings, structures, and objects, the physical elements that were used to construct the resources, such as nails and wood. For archaeological sites, the physical elements that were deposited during a particular period of time in a particular pattern or configuration.
WORKMANSHIP	The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular people or culture during any given historical period. Workmanship includes things like joinery, painting, and carving.
FEELING	The resource's expression of the historic sense or aesthetic of a particular time period. To retain integrity of feeling, a resource must have enough surviving physical features to express its historic character.

PRESERVATION IN ACTION

Historic preservation can take many forms - it's not just about saving old buildings. It can mean restoring a historic home, reusing an old storefront in a new way, or sharing stories that connect us to the past. Here are a few examples that show how preservation helps keep San Marcos' heritage alive in creative and meaningful ways (Photograph Sources: COSM and Stantec).



CITY STAFF AND CONSULTING PLANNERS

exchanging ideas with the public at the San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan Open House.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

advocating for historic preservation in consideration of broader interests on YouTube.



AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWEE

sharing intangible history with a historian.



ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

documenting tangible buildings, structures, and objects through architectural survey.



AN ARCHITECT AND PLANNER

discussing design of a building in consideration of neighboring resources.



A CONSERVATOR

taking paint samples from a historic wall.



NEIGHBORS

shopping at the San Marcos Farmer's Market.



YOUNG TOURISTS

viewing cultural and natural resources at Spring Lake.



LOCALS

performing Ballet Folkórico at Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos.

PRESERVATION IN ACTION

Preservation shows up in many ways we can see and touch—like buildings, structures, objects, sites, and historic districts. These are the traditional ways preservation has celebrated and protected the past. It's also important to remember the stories, traditions, languages, and cultural practices that bring these places to life (Photograph Sources: COSM and NRHP nominations).



BUILDINGS shelter human activity.
Moore Grocery Company, ca. 1981



SITES are landscapes where significant events, occupation, or activity occurred; or landscapes, buildings, or structures that have historic, cultural, or archaeological value.
Belger-Cahill Lime Kiln



STRUCTURES facilitate human activity but does not shelter them.
Sewell Park Bridge



DISTRICTS are definable areas with a significant concentration of buildings, structures, objects, or sites, historically or aesthetically united. Sometimes one can be separated geographically but linked by association or history.
Dunbar Historic District



OBJECTS are primarily artistic, relatively small, and simply constructed. Though it may be movable, it is associated with a specific setting or environment.
San Marcos Mermaid March



INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that are recognized as part of a community's cultural heritage and passed down through generations.
Sacred Springs Powwow

PRESERVATION MATTERS

CIVIC AWARENESS & PRIDE

Historic preservation honors our shared heritage and fosters civic pride. By investing in and maintaining a community's historic character, we make places more enjoyable for all. These tangible links to history help community members connect with the past, creating a strong sense of place. Preservation projects play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining this sense of place, reinforcing a community's shared identity and collective memory.

A sense of place and historic character retains residents and attracts newcomers. [A 2020 study by PlaceEconomics found that even in cities with a shrinking population, more people moved to neighborhoods designated as historic districts than to nonhistoric neighborhoods.](#) The same study found that historic-age houses are often more affordable, making homeownership more attainable for first-time buyers, young buyers, new families, and low-income residents. Walkable, historic areas make excellent venues for festivals and events.



Citizen input board, September 2024 Open House (COSM)



San Antonio Street Local Historic District Sign (COSM)

Preserving historic places fosters interest in and awareness of local history. Heritage tourism –travel to experience places, artifacts, and activities connected to the past– helps community members and visitors understand a place's historical significance by using interpretive signage at historic sites or events celebrating history. This interaction with history can ignite curiosity and a desire to learn more. When community members are aware of and invested in their shared history, they support preservation activities, creating a cycle of education and preservation.

For example, the Sacred Springs Powwow offers a meaningful way for residents and visitors to explore San Marcos' Indigenous heritage, while the annual Mardi Gras Parade brings vibrant celebration through Downtown and the city's historic districts.



Downtown San Marcos (COSM)

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Historic preservation can be a major boost to the economy; it creates jobs, generates income and development, attracts visitors, and benefits small businesses. Because [historic preservation projects are generally more labor-intensive than new construction, they create more jobs](#). In 2013, [historic preservation activities supported more than 79,000 jobs in Texas](#). Some of these jobs are high paying, as historic preservation projects often require highly skilled craftspeople. Preservation projects also attract private investors through programs like federal Historic Tax Credits, and communities benefit from the investment. [In 2015, the rehabilitation of designated historic buildings in Texas spurred the investment of more than \\$770 million, and between 1978 and 2015, federal Historic Tax Credits led to private-sector investment of \\$1.78 billion in Texas](#). Historic preservation projects have a proven track record for bringing employment and investment to communities.

Heritage tourism generates significant revenue for states and communities. Heritage tourism destinations are wide-ranging, encompassing natural areas, museums, buildings, and more. [In 2013, more than 10.5 percent of all travel to Texas was related to heritage tourism, and these visitors generated \\$7.3 billion](#). [In the Texas Hill Country Trail Region alone—encompassing the rich heritage and cultures of Hays County and 18 other counties—visitors generated \\$21.8 billion in 2022](#). [Visitors to the Texas Hill Country Trail Region also supported 167,200 jobs](#).

When a community commits to and invests in heritage tourism through historic preservation projects, it bolsters its local economy.

Small business owners reap economic benefits from historic preservation. Historic districts often house small businesses where they can thrive because historic buildings are more accessible and attract visitors offering entertainment and boosting the economy. Older, smaller buildings tend to be more affordable to rent or purchase, and their unique features draw creative industries. Small business owners also prefer storefronts that reflect the quality and character of their products or services, which historic buildings can provide. Additionally, the walkability of historic districts brings foot traffic to small businesses, unlike areas dominated by automobile traffic. The concentration of small businesses in a downtown area can create a vibrant nightlife, encouraging residents and visitors to spend more time and money locally.



Music on the Square Main Street Event (COSM)



Left to Right: 105 E Hopkins St, Duke & Ayres circa 1940 (TXST) and vacant in 2024 (Google Street View)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Example of demolition debris (Adobe Stock)

Preserving and reusing historic buildings is an environmentally friendly and sustainable approach to development. Rather than demolishing buildings and creating waste in landfills, historic buildings can be rehabilitated for new uses. Between 2010 and 2020, [nearly 170,000 tons of waste were added to San Antonio's landfills from the demolition of residential buildings](#). Rehabilitation could have prevented that waste from ending up in the landfill.

Rehabilitating historic buildings also reduces greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, [it takes about 65 years for a new, energy-efficient office building to recover the energy lost from demolishing a comparable existing building](#). The demolition of an existing building and the production and transport of new construction materials is a carbon-intensive process. Rehabilitating historic-age buildings for new uses and incorporating sustainable measures like efficient appliances and systems is a smarter environmental choice.

Rehabilitating historic buildings not only benefits the environment but also fosters more sustainable communities. Many of these buildings are in commercial centers with walkable streets and businesses. When historic-age buildings are rehabilitated for mixed-use—with commercial spaces at street level and residences above—they contribute to a vibrant community, providing space for local businesses and housing. A 2020 national study of historic preservation benefits revealed that [the most walkable areas of cities are consistently historic districts](#). Walkable cities reduce reliance on vehicles, thereby decreasing individual carbon footprints.

PRESERVATION POLICY

Preservation Policy is embedded in a wide range of federal, state, and local policy. This section describes in brief federal and state acts that apply to San Marcos and its Historic Preservation Plan.



NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES ACT 1935

The [HSA](#) expands the role of the NPS, established by the Organic Act of 1916. The early twentieth century was a period of growing interest and commitment to preserving the nation's natural, cultural, and historic resources. This culminated with HSA, formally establishing a national policy for preserving historic buildings, objects, and sites for the benefit of the American people. The Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior through the NPS to operate and manage historic sites; create a public education program; restore historic sites; erect commemorative plaques; collect ephemera and objects associated with historic sites; work with states, organizations, and individuals to operate and preserve historic sites; and survey, research, and acquire nationally significant archaeological and historic sites. The HSA resulted in a significant expansion of the NPS's historic preservation duties.

NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT 1968

The [NTSA](#) was passed in 1968 to establish a system of national trails comprised of recreation trails, scenic trails, historic trails, and connecting trails. The nation's growing population and growing interest in recreation spurred the act, and it aimed to promote the preservation of and public access to outdoor areas and historic resources in urban and remote areas of the country. The NTSA authorized both the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to establish and designate national trails. The designation of two national scenic trails was included in the NTSA: the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Today, there are [more than 30 designated national trails](#), managed by the NPS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and jointly by the two agencies.

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT 1966

The [NHPA](#) was enacted in reaction to the loss of important historic places during the building boom after World War II and has been amended over time. It created State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), the precursor to Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and the NRHP covered under Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 36 CFR Part 60. It contains Section 106 and Section 110, which regulate proposed development and redevelopment. In 1978, detailed regulations outlining the 106 process were published in [36 CFR Part 800](#). Federally owned, funded, and permitted projects must consider the effects of proposed projects on historic properties before moving forward. Section 110 requires that all federal agencies designate a Federal Preservation Officers (FPO) and establish programs to identify and evaluate historic properties.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT 1970

[NEPA](#) requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impacts of their proposed actions, which includes impacts on historic properties, and consider public input. NEPA applies to a wide range of actions, such as permit applications for crossing federal lands or impacting navigable waters, federal land management, and construction of highways and other public facilities. If a private company is undertaking a project that involves federal permits, funding, or land, the company may be required to pay for an environmental analysis; however, the federal agency administering the permit, funding, or land is ultimately responsible for the accuracy and scope of the analysis. The Act also established the Council on Environmental Quality, which oversees NEPA implementation and coordinates with federal agencies to ensure timely permitting and environmental reviews.



ANTIQUITIES CODE OF TEXAS 1969

[Natural Resources Code, Title 9, Chapter 191](#) also known [ACT, protects archaeological sites and historic buildings on public land in Texas](#). The Code requires state agencies and political subdivisions of the state – including cities, counties, river authorities, municipal utility districts, and school districts – to notify the THC of ground-disturbing activity on public land and work affecting state-owned historic buildings. The law also established [State Antiquities Landmarks \(SAL\)](#), a designation that can be applied to buildings and archaeological sites. The THC must review projects affecting SALs and issue a permit for the work.

TEXAS ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 1977

[Government Code, Title 10, Subtitle A, Chapter 2002](#) established a [TAC](#), which is a compilation of administrative laws created by state agencies like THC, while legislative acts are statutory laws. TAC contains 17 titles, each representing a category and related agencies. Titles 10, 13, and 31 relate to local conservation and preservation planning efforts. Developed in 1998, [Historic Texas Cemetery \(HTC\) Designation](#) is the result of a THC administrative law in [Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 22, Rule 6](#).

TITLE 10	<i>Community development</i>
PART 1	Housing and community affairs
PART 5	Office of the governor, economic development and tourism office
TITLE 13	<i>Cultural resources</i>
PART 1	Texas state library and archives commission
PART 2	Texas historical commission
PART 3	Texas commission on the arts
PART 4	Records management interagency coordinating council
PART 5	Texas state cemetery committee
PART 6	Texas emancipation Juneteenth cultural and historical commission
PART 7	State preservation board
PART 8	Texas film commission
TITLE 31	<i>Natural resources and conservation</i>

HISTORY, CULTURE, & EDUCATION 1983

[Government Code, Title 4, Subtitle D, Chapter 442](#) established the Texas Historical Commission (THC) as a state agency to serve as a “clearinghouse” for historic preservation work in the state, and Chapter 443 established the State Preservation Board. Chapter 442 allows the THC to provide matching grants for historic preservation, conduct educational programs, and heritage tourism, among other responsibilities. It also established the [Historic Courthouse Preservation Program](#) and the [State Historical Marker Program](#), including protection of [Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks \(RTHL\)](#) and [Historic Texas Cemeteries \(HTC\)](#).

PUBLIC PARKS & RECREATIONAL LANDS 1983

[Parks and Wildlife Code, Title 3, Chapter 26](#) provides protections to publicly owned parks, recreational lands, and historic sites. Public lands designated as parks, recreation areas, scientific areas, wildlife refuges, or historic sites cannot be used by public entities for other projects unless certain criteria are met. The entity must show that there are no reasonable alternatives and that the project minimizes harm to the land or site. This decision must be made after providing notice, holding a public hearing, and considering local preferences.

MUNICIPAL ZONING AUTHORITY 1987

[Local Government Code, Title 7, Subtitle A, Chapter 211](#) grants municipalities the power to use zoning to regulate locally designated historic districts and landmarks. The City of San Marcos has used this authority to adopt ordinances designating seven local historic districts and nine local historic landmarks. In 2021, this law was amended to require approval of 75% of the governing body of the municipality and the relevant commission for historic designation if the property owner does not consent, making it more challenging to designate local landmarks and districts without owner consent.

PRESERVATION AGENCIES

Government agencies collectively are responsible for implementing historic preservation. Primary players include federal, state, tribal, and local agencies.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Established by an act of Congress in 1849, the [DOI and the Secretary of the Interior \(SOI\)](#) are responsible for land management, wildlife conservation, and historic preservation via the [Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\)](#), [United States Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#), [Bureau of Indian Affairs \(BIA\)](#), and the [National Park Service \(NPS\)](#), which administers the NRHP.

The DOI is directly responsible for the management of cultural resources on federal lands and develops national historic preservation policies, guidelines, and standards to assist in state and local cultural resources management, including:

[SOI's Standards and Guidelines for Preservation Planning](#)

[SOI's Standards for Professional Qualifications](#) for History, Archeology, Architectural History, Architecture, and Historic Architecture

[SOI's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties](#) establishes the following four methods of treatment, which differ from renovations widely promoted by realtors and contractors in popular media:



PRESERVATION	Maintains existing historic materials and features through stabilization and repair materials and features. Preservation results in retention of the most historic materials.
REHABILITATION	Retains historic character while allowing sensitive repairs, alterations, and additions. Rehabilitation often results in adaptive reuse of a property for current needs.
RESTORATION	Removes materials and features added to a historic property after a significant period to replicate when an important person lived there or an important event took place.
RECONSTRUCTION	Replicates the appearance of a lost historic property through new construction. Reconstruction is generally used as a tool for education on public properties.

SOI publishes a series of technical [Preservation Briefs](#) to assist owners in meeting these treatment standards.

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Established in 1829 and incorporated into the DOI in 1849, the [BIA](#) works with tribal governments and members to administer natural and cultural resources management programs; employment and job training assistance; law enforcement and justice; agricultural and economic development; and tribal governance. BIA does not maintain land holdings in San Marcos, and no federally recognized tribal lands exist within the City, according to the [Trust Asset and Accounting Management System \(TAAMS\)](#). While San Marcos retains significant Indigenous cultural heritage, particularly associated with Coahuiltecan, Tonkawa, and Lipan Apache peoples, these groups are not federally recognized. The three federally recognized tribes in the state, the Alabama-Coushatta in East Texas, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe in the South Texas Plains, and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in West Texas, do not have ties to San Marcos. The City falls under the BIA's Southern Plains Regional Office, which may engage in consultation if tribal interests arise.





NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Established by the Organic Act in 1916, the [NPS](#) is a bureau within the DOI that provides guidance, funding, and support for historic preservation and manages historic preservation programs and historic sites. The agency works with other groups, including state and local government, tribes, and nonprofits. The NPS manages the NRHP. The Keeper of the NRHP, an NPS official, is the final reviewer of all nominations.

The NPS also works with SHPOs, THPOs established by federally recognized tribes, and administers the CLG Program in coordination with SHPOs. The Historic Preservation Planning Program of the NPS develops related national policy to assist SHPOs, THPOs, and CLGs; its goals are to:



1. strengthen the integration of historic preservation into the broader public policy and land-use planning and decision-making arenas at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels;
2. increase the opportunities for broad-based and diverse public participation in planning for historic and cultural resources;
3. expand knowledge and skills in historic preservation planning;
4. assist states, tribes, local governments, and federal agencies in carrying out inclusive preservation planning programs that are responsive to their own needs and concerns.



ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Established by the NHPA in 1966, the [ACHP](#) is a federal agency that advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy and provides guidance on the implementation of the NHPA. The ACHP issues regulations that outline the specific procedures that federal agencies must follow to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA (36 CFR Part 800). The ACHP may participate in the Section 106 review process if a project is complex or controversial and may help develop programmatic agreements for resolving adverse effects. The ACHP ensures that historic preservation is considered in federal project planning, but the federal agency has the final decision on whether and how to proceed with a project affecting historic properties.

TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES

In 1966, the NHPA granted federally recognized tribes formal responsibility for the preservation of significant historic properties on tribal lands. Established in 1990, the NPS's [Tribal Historic Preservation Program](#) assists Indian tribes in preserving their historic properties and cultural traditions through THPOs and annual grant funding programs. THPOs serve the same function as a SHPO for tribes who choose to participate. THPO coordinators facilitate preservation of historic properties and cultural traditions and may choose to advise federal, state, and local agencies on tribal land management and Section 106 reviews. Because there are no federally recognized tribes associated with San Marcos, there has been no THPO involvement in local preservation efforts.



STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

Established as the [Texas State Historical Survey Committee](#) in 1953, before the NHPA mandated the creation of SHPOs, the survey committee began to serve as the SHPO in 1966 and was renamed Texas Historical Commission (THC) in 1973. The THC manages historic preservation at the state level and works with the NPS, federal agencies, local government, and private organizations to implement federal programs and policy. The Office of the State Archeologist (OSA) is within the THC and manages archaeological sites on non-federal public lands under the Antiquities Code of Texas.

The THC works to preserve the architectural, archaeological, and cultural landmarks of Texas through a variety of programs, such as the Historical Marker, Courthouse Preservation, and Cemetery Preservation programs. The THC administers the NRHP and historic tax credit program at the state level in coordination with the NPS, maintains a State Historic Preservation Plan, and provides guidance for local Historic Preservation Plans.

To receive federal funding, states must [produce a Statewide Historic Preservation Plan within five-to-ten year cycles](#). THC generally updates them every ten years to align preservation efforts at the local, regional, and state levels and to guide CLG's development of local Historic Preservation Plans, like this one. The [2022–2032 State Historic Preservation Plan](#) emphasizes community engagement, disaster resilience, and the importance of preserving Texas' unique cultural heritage through the following six themes:

1. Public engagement with preservation's community benefits.
2. Protection of diverse historic sites from battlefields to midcentury buildings.
3. Economic and cultural revitalization through preservation.
4. Disaster preparedness for vulnerable historic resources.
5. Building preservation expertise and broadening partnerships.
6. Representing Texas' diverse historical narratives.



CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Certified by the NPS through the THC, a CLG is a municipality that has demonstrated a commitment to historic preservation. The CLG program was established as part of an amendment to the NHPA in 1980, and the City of San Marcos was certified in 1990. To become certified by the NPS, a municipality must have established a qualified historic preservation commission; created and enforced local ordinances for the designation and protection of historic properties; maintained a system for the survey and inventory of local historic resources; facilitated public participation in historic preservation; and followed requirements outlined in the THC CLG Program. As a CLG, a municipality has access to Federal Historic Preservation Fund grants for surveys, NRHP nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies. NPS and the SHPO can also provide technical assistance for a CLG historic preservation commission, building assessments, surveys and nominations, and general preservation issues. CLGs are also entitled to participate in the Section 106 process for NHPA compliance. Under Section 106, the local government of an area in which the effects of a project may occur is entitled to be a consulting party.



PRESERVATION PARTNERS

In addition to government agencies, non-profit partners play a critical role in advocacy, education, celebration, and funding of historic preservation. Key national and state partners are profiled below.



PRESERVATION ACTION

PA is the only national nonprofit dedicated exclusively to lobbying for the best preservation friendly policies at the national level. Since 1974, it has shifted from formulating policy and programs to supporting those initiated by legislators. Its mission is to make historic preservation a national priority by advocating to all branches of the federal government through grassroots constituents empowered with information and training and direct access to elected representatives.



AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

[APA](#) and the Texas Chapter (APATX) offer several resources for local Historic Preservation Planners, including policy guides, principles, and statements on historic and cultural resources and a forum for planners, local officials, and other community stakeholders to establish goals and prioritize actions to protect and enhance historic resources.



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PRESERVATION COMMISSIONS

[NAPC](#) provides a forum for preservation commissions across the country to communicate and provides technical support to commissions to help them accomplish their preservation goals. NAPC offers education and training programs for commission members and advocates at all levels of government on behalf of commissions. The NAPC holds a biannual conference, FORUM, to discuss preservation issues at all levels with an emphasis on local level preservation.



NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

[NTHP](#) lobbies for preservation policies and funding, stewards almost 30 historic sites open to the public, and provides resources and support for local preservation efforts through grants, technical assistance, and training. To assist with economic development, it established the [Main Street America](#) program in 1980 and recently created the Building Opportunities on Main Street (BOOMS) Tracker application for gathering, storing, and showcasing information about buildings and lots. Its state partner is Texas Main Street under the THC.



PRESERVATION TEXAS

[Preservation Texas](#) protects and promotes the cultural heritage of Texas through direct investment, grants, education, advocacy, and collaboration. Established in 1985 as a nonprofit overseen by a volunteer board of directors representing regions across the state, the organization supports statewide preservation efforts by empowering individuals and communities to safeguard historic places. In 2024, Preservation Texas released a Strategic Vision to guide its work over the next decade, focusing on five Strategic Directions that strengthen professional capacity and expand restoration initiatives. Preservation Texas programs include Preservation Services, Texas's Most Endangered Places List, Texas Rural African-American Heritage Grants Program, and Public Policy Programs.



TEXAS COMMISSION ON THE ARTS

The mission of [TCA](#) is to advance the state economically and culturally by investing in a creative Texas. TCA supports a diverse and innovative arts community in Texas, throughout the nation, and internationally by providing resources to enhance economic development, arts education, cultural tourism and artist sustainability initiatives. Programs include [Arts Create and Arts Respond grants](#), [Texas Touring Roster](#), and [Cultural Districts](#). TCA also offers numerous resources to the arts and cultural industries including [specialized services](#) on [fundraising](#), [marketing](#), [nonprofit basics](#), and [leadership transitions](#).



TEXAS DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION

The [TXD](#), or Texas Downtown, is dedicated to connecting and serving downtown professionals and advocates. The TXD's mission is to provide resources, advocacy, education, and connections to help develop vibrant and economically sustainable downtown districts. Key activities and programs include: the Annual Texas Downtown Conference, Annual President's Awards Program, and the Anice Read Fund, which provides grants for projects and programs in member communities.



TEXAS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The [TMSP](#) provides technical expertise, resources, and support to Main Street communities in Texas following the Main Street America's Four Point Approach® of organization, economic vitality, design, and promotion. Following a pilot project of the national center that studied the decline of America's downtowns, the TMSP accepted its first communities in 1981 and became one of the first six statewide coordinating programs in the nation. Using a team-centered approach, the TMSP strives to understand the challenges facing Texas' 81 designated programs to help each reach their revitalization and preservation goals. The TMSP is part of the Community Heritage Development Division of the THC.



PRESERVATION PROCESS

HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEYS

Surveys are a common tool used to identify and evaluate a property's significance before a property is awarded a national, state, or local historic designation. Surveys are generally completed to support proposed projects in compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA or as an NPS-THC grant-funded preservation planning project, while other specialty surveys may be developed in support of economic development and cultural arts and natural resources initiatives promoted by agencies and groups such as the NTHP, TCA, and conservation groups. Once designated, properties become eligible for a variety of national, state, and/or sometimes local incentives depending on the property's use and locality.

SURVEY TYPES	DEFINITION
Desktop Survey	A preliminary review of readily available and accessible information about a defined area, including municipal parcel data and historical maps and aerial photographs in preparation for on-site investigations.
Windshield Survey	A driving survey through a community that does not comprehensively document every property within a boundary. This type of survey allows coverage of a broad geographic region in a short amount of time and the identification and documentation of a survey area's most important resources.
Reconnaissance Survey	A detailed inventory of all historic-age and if for a historic district nomination nonhistoric-age properties within a defined area. This involves taking exterior photographs and making preliminary recommendations regarding the historic significance and eligibility of a resource for historic designation.
Thematic Survey	A type of historic survey that focuses on a specific theme, rather than a geographic area. It identifies and evaluates historic properties that share a common historical, architectural, or cultural significance.
Intensive Survey	A detailed examination of a property, which involves taking exterior and interior photographs, preparing a resource-specific historic context, and other intensive research like tracing ownership over time through deed records. The goal of an intensive survey is to arrive at a conclusive recommendation of eligibility for historic designation.

Migrant worker's windshield by Dorothea Lange, 1936 (Courtesy of LOC, Office of War, FSA).



HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

After a property is surveyed, evaluated, and recommended eligible for a designation, it must undergo formal nomination to be designated at the national, state, or local level. Note, though a property might qualify for local designation, it may not necessarily qualify on the state or national level, and vice versa. Each type of national and state designation has different criteria and administrative processes with property owner consent for individual resources or percent of owner's consent in a district. Application and nominations may be completed by the owner, a volunteer, or professional consultant. If a property qualifies for different types of designation, the national, state, and local survey, evaluation, and nominations for designation can be streamlined.

DESIGNATION TYPES	PROCESS	MARKER TYPES
<u>National Historic Landmark (NHL)</u>	<u>NHL Nomination</u> for Building, Structure, Object, Site, or Historic District	NPS-issued bronze plaque
<u>National Historic Trails (NHT)</u>	<u>NHT Certification</u> for trail sites, segments, museums, or visitor centers	NPS-regulated rounded triangular metal signs
<u>National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)</u>	<u>NRHP Nomination</u> for Building, Structure, Object, Site, or Historic District <u>NRHP Modified Continuation Sheet</u> for amending Building, Structure, Object, Site, or Historic District designations Nomination under <u>Multiple Property Documentation</u> , formerly known as Multiple Resource Area	Privately sourced and varied
<u>Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL)</u>	RTHL Application	THC-issued
<u>State Antiquities Landmarks (SAL)</u>	<u>SAL Nomination</u> for buildings and other aboveground resources listed in the NRHP or significant archeological sites	THC-issued
<u>Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC)</u>	<u>HTC Request for Designation</u>	THC-issued
<u>Historic Texas Lands (HTL)</u>	<u>Historic Texas Lands Nomination Form</u> for private archaeological site in a conservation easement or transferred to the state or non-profit, an archeological site designated as a SAL, or a property where substantial and significant archeological research has been allowed	THC-issued
<u>Official Texas Historical Markers (OTHM)</u>	<u>OTHM application</u> for RTHLs, SALs, HTCs, Untold Markers, and Subject Markers for important aspects of local history or places that have are not listed or designated resources	THC-issued

NATIONAL HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

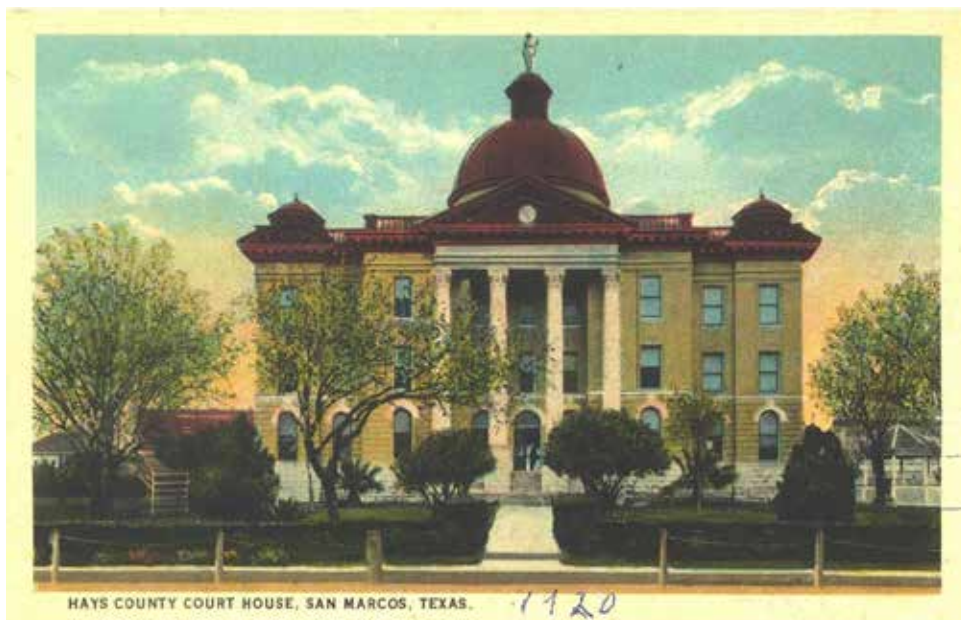
	NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK (NHL)	NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL (NHT)	NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES (NRHP)	NATIONALLY CERTIFIED STATE OR LOCAL DISTRICT
Authority	HSA of 1935	NTSA of 1968	NHPA of 1966	36 CFR § 67.9
Signatory	U.S. Congress	U.S. Congress	Keeper of the NRHP	SOI
Administrator	NPS	NPS	NPS	NPS
Resource Types	Building, Structure, Object, Site, or District	Routes of exploration, migration, struggle, trade, and military action	Building, Structure, Object, Site, or District	Building, Structure, Object, Site, or District that may have a boundary that differs from an locally designated resource
Significance	National heritage of the United States	National heritage of the United States	National, State, or Local	National, State, or Local
Eligibility	Meet 1 or more of 6 criteria and retain integrity.	For trails: meet 3 criteria. For associated historic sites and interpretive facilities: meet 5 criteria.	Meet 1 or more of 4 criteria and retain integrity.	Meet 1 or more of 4 criteria of the NRHP.
Regulations	Federal projects' effects under NHPA and impacts under NEPA considered.	Must allow public access. Federal projects' effects under NHPA and impacts under NEPA considered.	Federal projects' effects under NHPA and impacts under NEPA considered.	None
Benefits	Grant funding and tax credit eligible. Conservation easement eligible. Effect of federal projects considered.	Grant funding. Connect disparate cultural and historical locations. NPS technical assistance available.	Grant funding and HP tax credit eligible. Effect of federal projects considered. NPS technical assistance available.	Areas that meet the NRHP Criteria but are not listed in the NRHP qualify for the same federal and state tax incentives as listed properties.

Official NHT Trail Sign (Courtesy of NPS)



STATE HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

	RECORDED TEXAS HISTORIC LANDMARKS (RTHL)	STATE ANTIQUITIES LANDMARKS (SAL)	HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY (HTC)
Authority	NTSA of 1968	ACT 1969	THC, Administrative Code 1998
Signatory	THC and County Historical Commission	THC	THC
Administrator	THC	THC	THC
Resource Types	Buildings and structures	Archaeological sites, Shipwrecks, Caches and collections, Buildings, and Structures	Cemeteries
Significance	National, State, or Local	National, State, or Local	National, State, or Local
Eligibility	At least 50 years old. Possesses architectural significance AND “equally significant historical association,” and must have physical integrity.	Buildings and structures must be listed in the NRHP.	Meet 1 or more of 4 criteria and retain integrity.
Regulations	Proposed exterior changes may undergo a delay period of up to 90 days and are subject to THC review. Unsympathetic alterations to RTHL properties may result in the removal of the designation and marker.	Proposed changes require a State permit and are subject to THC review.	Subject to Cemetery Laws regardless of designation.
Benefits	Eligible to apply for Texas Preservation Trust Fund. Eligible for technical preservation assistance from the THC.	Protected under the ACT from relocation, alterations, and other damage through a permit review process by the THC.	Documents boundaries in local deed records to ensure present and future landowners know of the cemetery's existence.



Courthouse Postcard (Courtesy of San Marcos-Hays County Collection at the San Marcos Public Library [SMPL, SM-HCC])

PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

The first federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program was created in 1976 to incentivize the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Following its success, in the 1980s, state agencies and local municipalities began offering incentives such as state credits modeled on the federal program and local tax credits, exemptions, freezes, and incremental financing.

The NPS and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) administer the [Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit](#) program. THC administers the Texas [State Rehabilitation Tax Credit](#) program. The federal and state HTCs can be used together and are outlined below.

FEDERAL REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT		STATE REHABILITATION TAX CREDIT
Credit Applied To	Federal Income Tax	Texas Franchise Tax or Texas Insurance Premium Tax
Percent Credit	20% of qualified expenditures	25% of qualified expenditures
Credit Recipient	Current owner(s)	Current owner(s); can be sold and used against Texas Business Franchise Tax or Texas Insurance Premium Tax
Eligible Applications	Individuals, companies, and partnerships	Individuals, companies, partnerships, and nonprofits
Eligible Resources	Income-producing historic properties	Income-producing, nonprofit, or public university historic properties
Required Designation	NRHP (individual or district)	NRHP (individual or district), RTHL, or SAL; required when credit is claimed
Minimum Project	\$5,000 or value of building (whichever is greater)	\$5,000
Application Structure	3-part federal application	3-part application that mirrors federal
Recapture Period	5 years	No recapture period
Time Limit for Use	20 years	5 years
Architectural Oversight	Must follow SOI Standards; NPS certifies with THC's recommendation	Must follow SOI Standards; THC certifies; NPS reviews first if combined with federal HTC
Financial Oversight	Credit managed by IRS; qualified consulting CPA recommended	Credit managed by Texas Comptroller; qualified consulting CPA recommended
Application Deadline	Must apply before project completion	Must apply before project completion

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR HISTORIC SITES IN TEXAS

Local taxing units (like counties, cities, or school districts) may exempt in whole or in part the assessed property value of a historic resource or archaeological site—as well as the land necessary to access it—if it is:

Designated as a RTHL or as a SAL.

Designated by local ordinance or law as historically or archaeologically significant and designated for preservation via a local ordinance or law.

HISTORIC DESIGNATION ALTERNATIVES

Below are a selection of alternatives to traditional local, state, and national Historic districts with a summary of how they work.

	CHARACTER DISTRICT	CONSERVATION DISTRICT*	CORRIDOR DISTRICT
Authority	San Marcos Development Code	Local Ordinance	San Marcos Development Code
Administrator	City Council	City Council	City Council
Resource Types	Local Zoning District	Local Zoning District	Local Zoning Overlay District
Eligibility	Well-planned areas with utilities and infrastructure capable of supporting increased development in a walkable and mixed-use environment.	Varies by municipality; generally, an established neighborhood with a distinct character.	Major transportation corridor.
Regulations	Specific land uses are limited or conditional, specific to each individual character district.	Commonly regulate design elements like lot size, building height, setbacks, and streetscape.	Driveway standards and frontage types dictating allowable uses, setbacks, parking, and pedestrian access.
Benefits	Preserve, protect, and enhance the character of established neighborhoods of various types regardless of their eligibility for designation as a historic district.	Maintains the character of established neighborhoods of various types regardless of their eligibility for designation as a historic district; often seen as a counterpart to historic preservation.	Highway Corridor—enhances economic value of the City by maintaining attractiveness of designated tourism and trade roads. Conservation Corridor—preserves the natural and scenic beauty of designated roads.

* Not yet enacted in San Marcos. Local Zoning Conservation Districts differ from conservation easements and areas.

	CULTURAL DISTRICT	OPEN-SPACE VALUATION
Authority	H.B. 2208, 79th R.S.	Texas Tax Code Chapter 23, Subchapter F
Administrator	TCA	County Appraisal District (CAD) under the Texas Comptroller's oversight
Resource Types	Honorary District (unrelated to zoning)	Land used for historical, archaeological, or scientific sites, or for the conservation and preservation of scenic areas
Eligibility	Established Arts Organizations, including those of Color, Local Arts Agencies, Government Local Arts Agencies, Government Agency or Department, College Arts Institutions.	Land contains historically or archaeologically significant site (e.g., NRHP, SAL, RTHL, or formally recognized by THC/local ordinance) and is actively managed for preservation (e.g. fencing, signage, monitoring, or restrictive access that protects the site)
Regulations	None	Commit to manage the land for preservation, not for other development uses.
Benefits	Generate economic development; support community vitality regardless of their eligibility for designation as a historic district.	Land taxed based on special use valuation instead of market value, lowering taxes





CULTURAL & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

CONTEXT STATEMENT

Present-day San Marcos has been inhabited for thousands of years. Paleo-Indian people, including over 200 distinct groups, lived near its river and springs northwest of the Courthouse Square at least 12,000 years ago. By the seventeenth century, bands of the Sana, Cantona, Emet, Toho, and Tohaha of the Tonkawa occupied Central Texas when Spain and other European countries began to eye the region. At the turn of the eighteenth century, the Sana lived in present-day San Marcos, and during the nineteenth century, various bands of the Comanche and Apache resided in the region until the influx of European immigrants after the end of Spanish rule in 1821. While part of Mexican Texas (1821-1836), Anglo Americans from the East introduced new diseases, instigated conflict, and contributed to the decline and displacement of Indigenous peoples. In the 10 years that Texas was an independent republic, the first permanent European settlements were established in San Marcos, triggering development that continues today. The U.S.-Mexico War of 1846-1848, though not fought locally, secured Texas' annexation and accelerated Anglo settlement in Central Texas. By 1850 the San Marcos population was 378, including 128 enslaved people; by 1860, Hays County had nearly 800 enslaved individuals. Juneteenth in 1865 marked the delayed enforcement of emancipation in Texas, two and a half years after Lincoln's proclamation. Following emancipation, many landowners in the region turned to recruiting Mexican laborers to replace enslaved workers, reshaping the area's labor force and demographics. This history is illustrated and organized in the following order:

STATEWIDE HISTORICAL CONTEXT PERIODS

Description of historical events in the United States and Texas

Description of historic preservation milestones in the United States and Texas

Year of historical events

Description of historic preservation milestones in San Marcos

Description of historical events in San Marcos

*Previous two pages: A view of the San Marcos River postmarked January 6, 1912 (edwardsaquifer.net)
Traditional Tejano Dancers (COSM)*

PRE-CONTACT TEXAS (BEFORE 1528)

EARLY EXPLORATION (1528-1684)

FRENCH TEXAS (1684-1689)

SPANISH TEXAS (1690-1821)

Paleo-Indians, Archaic cultures, and early Native American societies used or occupied the region.

Beginning with Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's, Spanish explorers encountered Native Americans

Robert Cavelier de La Salle attempted to colonize part of Texas for France.

Spain established Catholic missions and presidios to colonize and attempt to convert Native people.

Pre-contact **1528** **1684** **1690**



1562 Diego Gutiérrez, Map of America
(Courtesy of LOC, Geography and Map Division)

COAHUILA Y TEJAS, MEXICO (1821-1836)

Mexico gained independence from Spain spurring Anglo American settlement in the Texas Hill Country.

1750 **1808** **1812** **1821**

San Xavier Mission established in future San Marcos; relocated within a year.

Felipe Roque de la Portilla established San Marcos de Neve on the San Marcos River.

Mission abandoned during War of 1812.

REPUBLIC OF TEXAS (1835-1845)

Texas won the war for independence against Mexico.

1831

Juan Martín de Veramendi obtained two-league land grant including parts of San Marcos.

1834

T.J. Chambers obtained eleven-league land grant containing portions of San Marcos.

1835

1844

Edward Burleson purchased land including San Marcos River headwaters, founding San Marcos.

1848 Burleson Cabin Post Card (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



The United States annexed Texas. It became the 28th state admitted December 29.

1845



1846

William W. Moon became first Anglo resident; built a multipurpose log cabin.

1847

Cayton Erhard opened a post office and store. First Methodist Church organized as San Marcos's first church. Private schooling for Black children began.

1848

Hays County established with 387 residents. The Spanish name of the county seat was retained. Edward Burleson built cabin near the river headwaters.

Tarbox and Brown stagecoaches connected San Marcos to Austin and San Antonio.

28-star Great Luminary U.S. flag (Courtesy of Lubbock Museum)

EARLY STATEHOOD (1845-1861)

1849

Edward Burleson built dam creating Spring Lake; established first gristmill and sawmill. Sawmills and cotton mills boosted economy, often using enslaved labor.

1850

Hays County population 387, including San Marcos.

1851

Burleson, Lindsey, and Merriman platted original Town of San Marcos on 640 acres of Veramendi Survey.

William W. Moon opened hotel on Austin-San Antonio stagecoach route.

1858

First Black school opened. It was likely located in a home, but its exact location is unknown.



1851 Burleson, Lindsey, and Merriman Plat of San Marcos (Courtesy of Texas General Land Office [TX GLO])

CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)

Railroad expansion contributed to westward movement while African Americans began to establish their own communities and make political advances before Jim Crow.

Freedom for the enslaved people in Texas was announced on June 19, thereafter known as Juneteenth.

Texas seceded from the United States and joined the Confederacy.

1860

Hays County population increased fivefold to 2,126, including San Marcos.

1861

C. E. Millett of Austin built the first Hays County Courthouse (40' x 36' stone foundation, two stories tall, pine wood) on designated block in original town plat.

1865

1866

Black community established the Colored Baptist Church Zion.

RECONSTRUCTION & RAILROADS (1866-1891)

1868

First Hays County Courthouse burned.

Coronal Institute opened as Methodist co-educational high school.

Lindsey & Harvey Addition, the first subdivision, platted.

1869

Second Hays County Courthouse (45' x 53' soft stone) completed.

1870

Hays County population increased to 4,088. Enumerated separately for the first time, San Marcos population is 742.

McGehee Addition subdivision platted.

El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church established; recognized today as the oldest Hispanic Church in the City.

1874

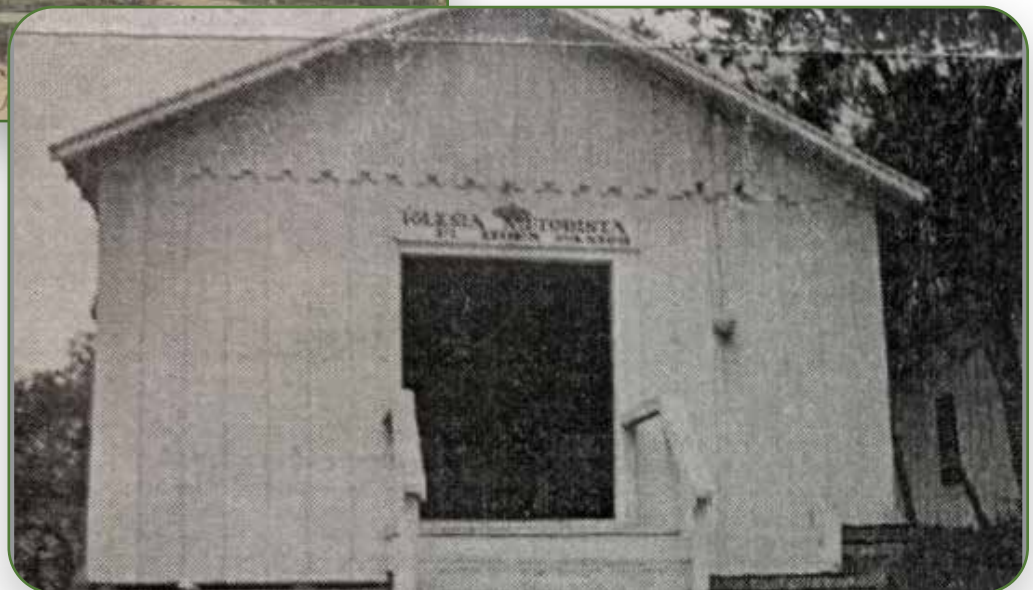
City of San Marcos incorporated.

City Cemetery established for White residents.



1868 Coronal Institute Postcard
(Courtesy of Portal to Texas History)

1948 Photograph of El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church est. 1870 (Courtesy of TXST)



*Texas constitution
authorized statewide
preservation initiatives
during the United
States Celebration of its
Centennial*

*Texas began to shift
from agrarian to
industrial due to oil
and manufacturing.
This spurred urban
development
and expansion of
universities throughout
the state.*

1876

First recorded burial in San Marcos Cemetery; Cemetery Association organized.

1877

San Marcos Colored School District established for 50 Black children.

1880

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 7,555 and 1,232, respectively.

1881

International & Great Northern railroad connected San Marcos to major cities.

Second courthouse, which partially burned in 1876 then deemed hazardous, was ordered sold and removed from the square.

San Marcos Cemetery and Chapel est. 1874 (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1959 photograph of stopped postal train at depot built in 1881 (Courtesy of TXST, SMDR)

RECONSTRUCTION & RAILROADS (1866-1891)

First segregationist "Jim Crow" law in Texas passed, requiring African Americans to ride in separate railroad cars.

1882

Frederick Ernst Ruffini designed the third courthouse, which was limestone, in the Second Empire Style similar to Robertson and Williamson counties.

1884

Belvin Addition subdivision platted.

1890

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 11,352 and 2,335, respectively.

San Marcos Electric Light and Power Company organized.

Two-story brick public school built for White children.

McAllister Addition subdivision platted.

1891



1883 Court House Postcard designed by Ruffini (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1893 Fish Hatchery Postcard (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

JIM CROW & INDUSTRIAL GROWTH (1891-1930)

1893 1899 1900 1902

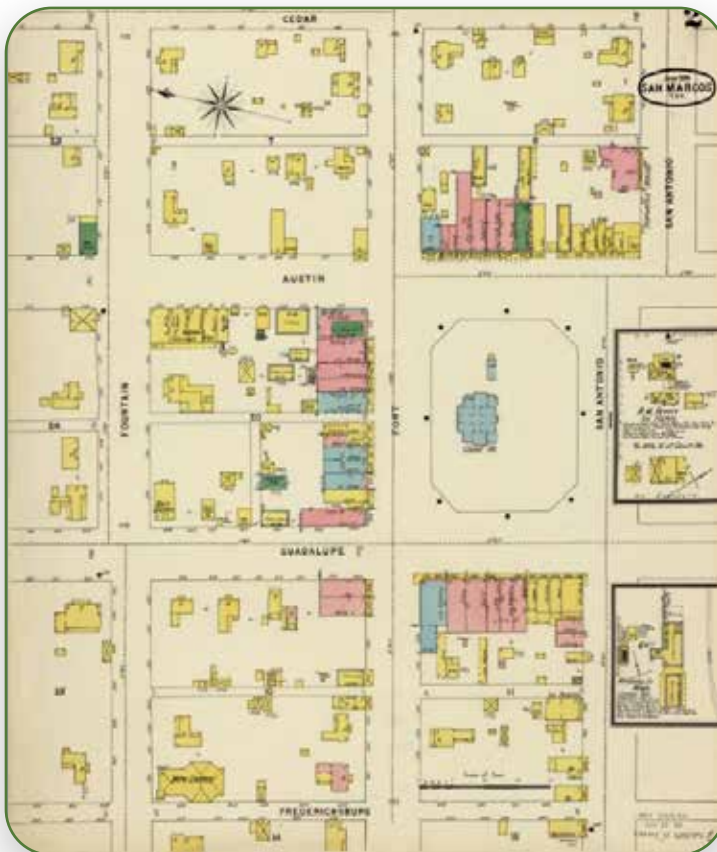
First fish hatchery west of Mississippi built in San Marcos.

San Marcos Telephone Company opened with 61 subscribers.

Hays County population increased to 14,142, and San Marcos slightly decreased to 2,292.

Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad connected San Marcos and San Antonio.

A building previously used by the San Marcos Colored School or by the El Buen Pastor United Methodist Church is repurposed as first school for Mexican American students.



1896 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map of downtown San Marcos and nearby industrial areas; Austin is now Hopkins St (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1899 San Marcos Telephone Company Building (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

*American Antiquities
Act passed to protect
archaeological
sites and nationally
significant landmarks.*

1903

Southwest Texas
State Normal School,
present-day Texas
State, opened.

1906

African American jazz
legend Eddie Durham
born in San Marcos.

1907

C.L. Hopkins platted
the Park Addition
subdivision and
expanded twice by
1908.

1908

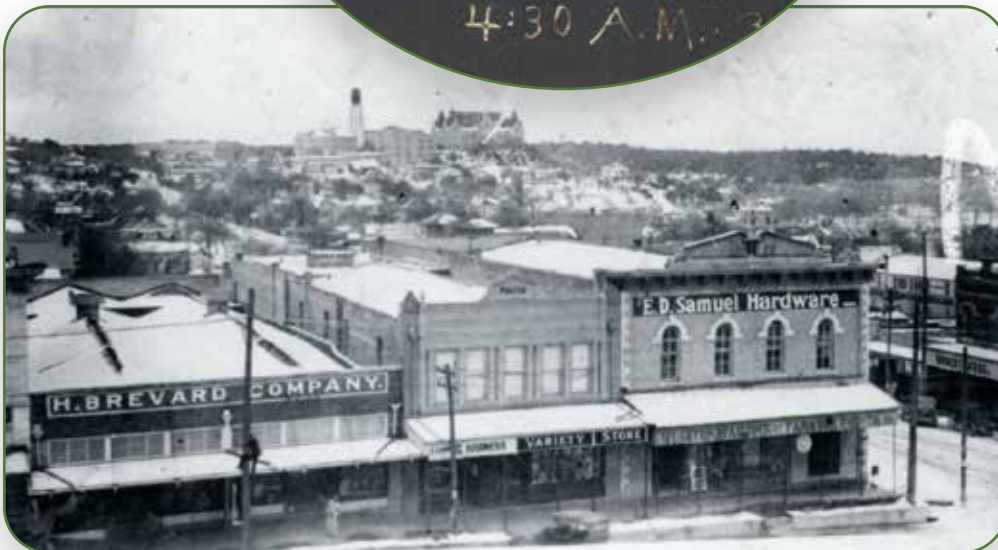
First Baptist Church
rebuilt after KKK arson.
The African American
neighborhood,
present-day Dunbar
neighborhood,
expanded due to
segregation.

San Marcos Baptist
Academy opened.

George A.
McNaughton platted
his First Addition.

C. H. Page and
Brother designed
the fourth Hays
County Courthouse
with Renaissance
Revival and Beaux
Arts influences after
the third burned.
Francis Fisher and R.C.
Lambie constructed
the three-story gray
and buff Elgin brick
and Cedar Point
limestone structure on
a rusticated brick base.

*1908 Courthouse
fire (Courtesy of
SMPL, SM-HCC)*



*ca. 1910 Snowy day view of H. Brevard Company Dry Goods and E.D. Samuel Hardware
stores on Hopkins Street from northside of courtsquare with Old Main and College buildings in
distance (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)*

National Park Service
established.

1910

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 15,518 and 4,071, respectively.

Mexican Revolution triggered immigration to San Marcos. Immigrants established the area now known as the East Guadalupe neighborhood; El Barrio de la Victoria (now Victory Gardens); and El Barrio del Pescado (now Wallace Addition).

1912

West End Public School and brick high school constructed.

1915

San Marcos City Hall and Fire Station completed. This is the present-day NRHP-listed Fire Station Studios

1916

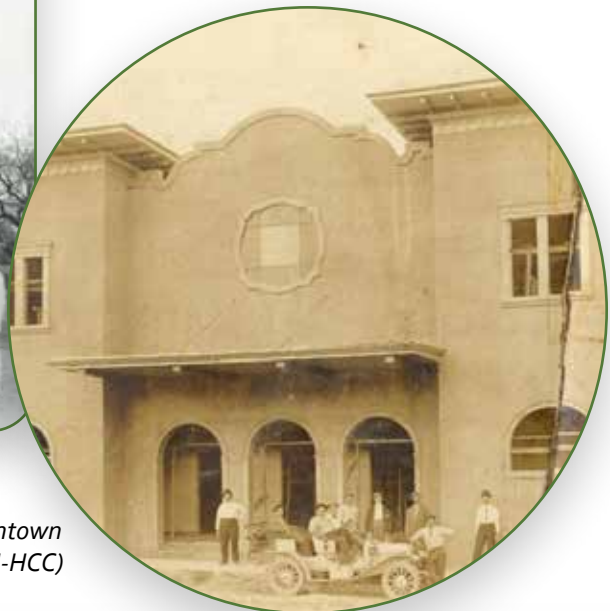
A.B. Rogers purchased Wonder Cave which would later be developed as an amusement park.



1915 City Hall and Fire Station Postcard
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1912 First Baptist Church N.B.C (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1915 Old Palace Theater Downtown
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

WORLD WAR I & GREAT DEPRESSION (1930-1945)

*U.S. involvement in
World War I (1917-
1918)*

Texas State Parks
Board established.

1918

San Marcos Colored School relocated to Martin Luther King Dr and S Endicott St.

The Texas State Normal School is renamed the Texas State Normal College.

1920

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 15,920 and 4,527, respectively.

Ulysses Cephas, son of individuals enslaved by Burleson began investing in rental property.

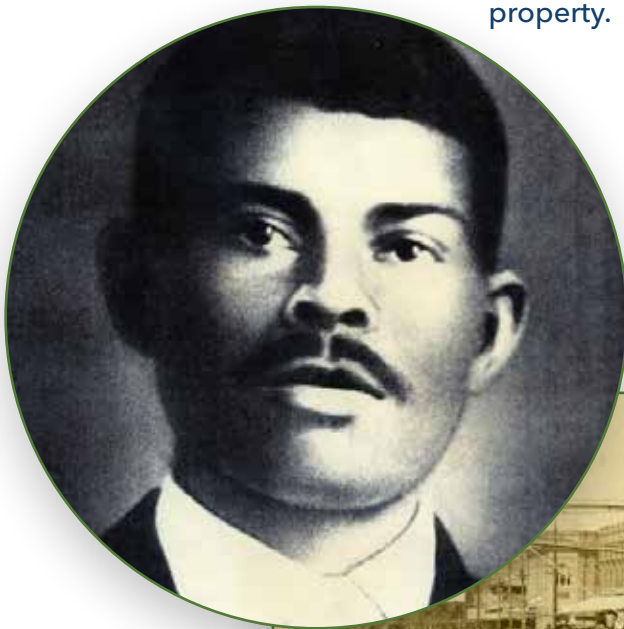
1923

The Texas State Normal College is renamed the Southwest Texas State Teachers College.

1925

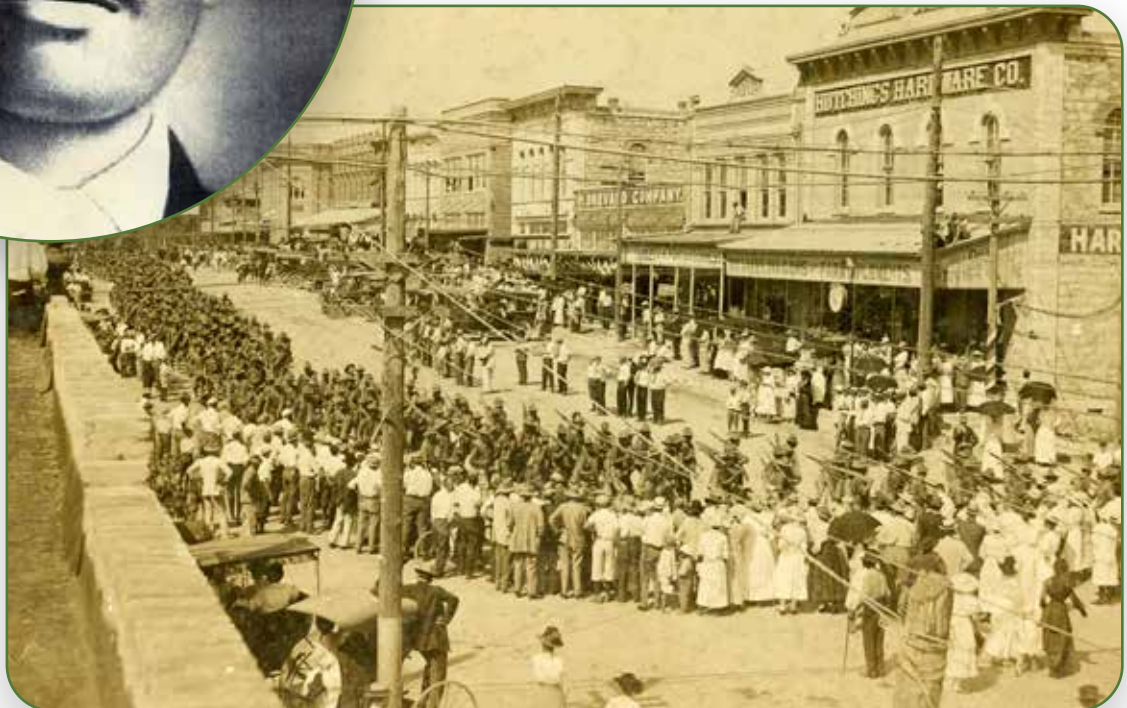
Coronal Institute closed and sold to San Marcos School District.

W.M. Reed platted College Courts Addition subdivision.



ca. 1920 Ulysses Cephas

*1918 WW1 Troops on East Hopkins & N. LBJ
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)*



Texas Archeological Society (TAS) founded for professional and avocational archaeologists and began publishing bulletin in 1929.

During the Great Depression, the industrial economy suffered until the U.S. became involved in World War II (1941-1945).

First local historic district created in Charleston, South Carolina.

1928

A.B. Rogers built Spring Lake Hotel to serve his amusement park.

1930

Hays County population declined for the first time to 14,915, and San Marcos population increased to 5,134.

1931

TAS Bulletin noted potential significance of "prehistoric" sites around San Marcos due to rivers and springs.

1935

Combs Addition subdivision platted.



"Rogers' Spring Lake Park Hotel" opened to a crowd on April 22, 1929. The Caguarena Springs Inn is still a stopping place for Texans and

1928 Spring Lake Hotel (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

1928 A.B. Rogers (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



WORLD WAR I & GREAT DEPRESSION (1930-1945)

*Historic Sites Act
authorized by the
Secretary of the
Interior.*

*U.S. involvement in
World War II (1941-
1945).*

1939

All White elementary classes consolidated in laboratory school at the Southwest Texas Normal School.*

1940

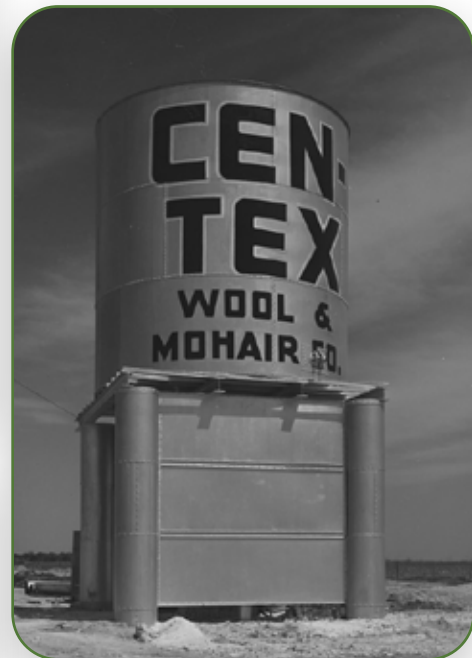
Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 15,349 and 6,006, respectively.

1941

White public high school classes moved to college campus.*

1942

San Marcos Army Airfield opened; trained 10,000 navigators during WWII. The Calaboose housed the United Service Organization (USO) for Black soldiers.



Left to Right: 1939 County Jail and 1940 Wool and scouring plant water tank
(Photographs by Lee Russell, Courtesy of LOC, Office of War, FSA)

1943 Army Airfield (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

**School consolidations and relocations during this period applied primarily to white students, reflecting the segregated nature of San Marcos' educational system at the time.*

POSTWAR GROWTH & MODERN TEXAS (1945-1992)

During the Cold War (1947-1992), Vietnam War (1955-1975), and other conflicts, Texas emerged as a leader in various sectors, including technology, energy, and education.

National Trust for Historic Preservation established.

1946

A.B. Rogers added glass bottom boats to Spring Lake attractions.

1948

City approved bond for new Mexican American school despite segregation protests.

Forest Hills Addition and College Heights Addition subdivision platted.

1949

Segregated Southside School completed for Mexican American students.

1950

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 17,840 and 9,980, respectively.

Paul Rogers added Aquarena Springs 125-seat submarine theatre to the amusement park founded by his father.



1947 Pedagog, Yearbook of Southwest Texas State Teachers College, Tom Sumners Ford Dealership on the courtsquare advertisement (Courtesy of TXST)

ca. 1950 Mexican American Students at Southside School (Courtesy of TXST SMDR)



POSTWAR GROWTH & PRESERVATION MOVEMENT (1945-1992)

*Texas State Historical
Survey Committee
established.*

1951

New high school for white students built at former Coronal Institute site.

1953

The Army Airfield was renamed Gary Air Force Base for the first local soldier killed in WWII.

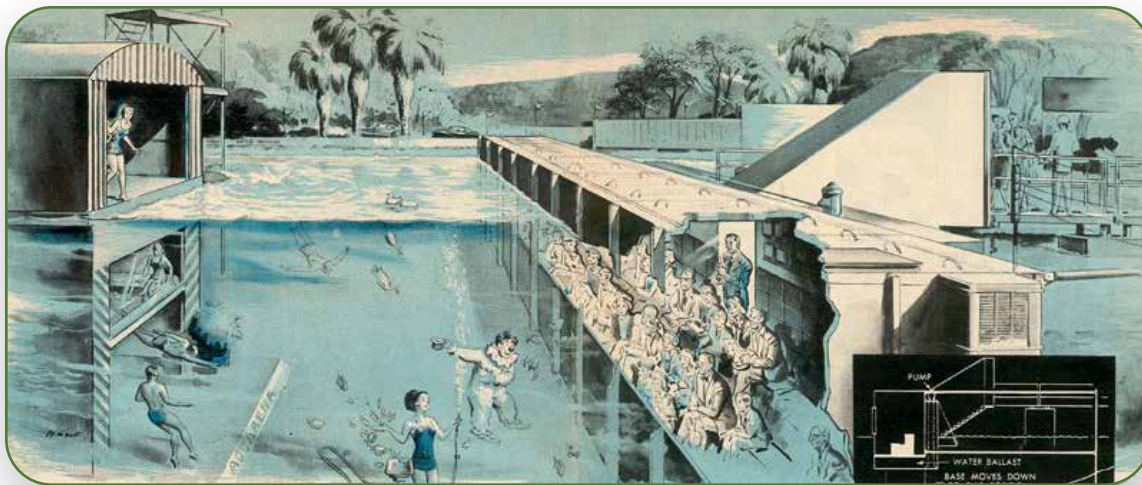
1954

Travis Junior High and Bowie Elementary opened for White students.

Paul Rogers platted Spring Lake Hills subdivision.

1955

School Board voted to integrate African American students with Anglo American and Mexican American students a year after Brown vs. Board of Education.



1952 Aquarena Theatre (*Popular Mechanics*)

1953 ROTC Parade
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



*Texas Historical Marker
Program formally
established.*

1959

The Southwest Texas State Teachers College is renamed Southwest Texas State College.

1960

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 19,934 and 12,713, respectively.
Forest Hills Addition and College Heights Addition platted.

1961

San Marcos Colored School renamed Dunbar School.
Interstate 35 construction began, shifting business from downtown.

1962



*1961 I-35 and SH 123 construction
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)*



*A 1959 Yard of the Month in front of a
typical post-World War II ranch house
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)*

POSTWAR GROWTH & PRESERVATION MOVEMENT (1945-1992)

Legislature expanded Survey Committee's mandate with authority to protect significant buildings.

National Historic Preservation Act passed and created State Historic Preservation Offices, the National Register of Historic Places, and Section 106 to require environmental compliance.

1963

Five Black women desegregated Texas State.

Gary Air Force Base decommissioned.

1964

Dunbar School closed during desegregation.

Integrated Crockett Elementary opened.

1965

San Marcos Urban Renewal Agency began buying property around Texas State and demolishing historic-age buildings.

Former airfield became the Municipal Airport and Gary Job Corps Training Center.

San Marcos schools fully desegregated.

1966

San Marcos Urban Renewal Agency gave Alumni House where LBJ lived as a student to Texas State.

First course in Mexican American Culture taught at Texas State.

Bonham School (formerly Southside) pioneered bilingual education in Texas.



1963 first women to desegregate Texas State
(Courtesy of TXST, SMDR)



1968 Purgatory Creek flooding at S LBJ Dr
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

Fair Housing Act within the Civil Rights Act prohibited housing discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, and familial status, leading many White City residents to move to suburbs.

National Environmental Policy Act passed environmental law to promote the enhancement of the environment due to increased flooding and other factors.

1967

The Bethke family won a suit against the San Marcos Urban Renewal Agency regarding eminent domain and the value of commercial land they had owned near Texas State and Alumni House since 1913.

1968

After it was moved 100 feet to its original location, Texas State Historical Survey Committee designated Alumni House a RTHL.

1969

Heritage Association of San Marcos formed to coordinate U.S. bicentennial celebration.

Allen Woods housing constructed with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding.

Southwest Texas State College is renamed Southwest Texas State University.

1970

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 27,642 and 18,860, respectively.

Forest Hills Addition and College Heights Addition subdivision platted.

In May, more than 16 inches of rain fell in less than 24 hours, allowing 21 alligators to escape from a pond into Spring Lake.



1968 Texas State moving Alumni House 100 feet back to its original 19th-century location (Courtesy of TXST)



1969 Allen Woods affordable housing under construction at Thorpe Ln near Bugg Ln, E Hopkins, and I-31 (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)

POSTWAR GROWTH & PRESERVATION MOVEMENT (1945-1992)

*Texas Historical Survey
Committee became
Texas Historical
Commission.*

1972

San Marcos Urban Renewal Agency transferred undeveloped land to the Heritage Association for Veramendi Plaza while redeveloping historic-age houses in Mexican American neighborhoods.

Luciano Flores became first Hispanic mayor of San Marcos.

San Marcos High and Goodnight Junior High School students staged walkout protesting lack of diversity in teachers and curriculum.

I-35 accelerated downtown businesses move to the suburbs.

1973

Charles S. Cock House became first San Marcos property listed in the NRHP.

Dunbar Park became first San Marcos municipal park.

Hays County and San Marcos added to Austin Metropolitan Area by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

John R. Koos platted Windmill Addition subdivision.

1974

San Marcos designated Belvin Street as first local historic district.

A historic-age grocery warehouse was converted into a music hall on Cheatham Street and launched the progressive country movement.

Emmie Craddock became first female mayor of San Marcos.

1975

Professional archaeologists began to refer to the "Late Prehistoric" period in Central Texas as the San Marcos Phase after the first professional investigations occurred in the area in the 1970s.



George Thomas McGehee House in Belvin Street Historic District, designated as the City's first local district in 1974 (NRHP)

1973 Charles S Cock House (Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



Historic Preservation Fund established for preservation grants.

Secretary of Interior's Standards for Historic Properties published.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation created Main Street America program.

Texas Main Street Program organized under Texas Historical Commission.

1977

1978

1980

1981

Dr. Joel Shiner conducted the first underwater archaeological investigations at Spring Lake.

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 40,594 and 23,420, respectively.

Over 400 businesses operated in San Marcos.



1975 George Strait performed his first gig ever at the Cheatham Street Warehouse with His Ace In The Hole Band (Restored and colorized photograph by Chad Cochran posted on COSM Instagram)

Numerous Pre-contact artifacts have been discovered since the 1970s due to the river and springs. Begun in 1978, underwater archaeological excavations continue at Spring Lake today (Courtesy of TXST CAS)



POSTWAR GROWTH & PRESERVATION MOVEMENT (1945-1992)

The National Trust for Historic Preservation created Main Street America program.

Texas Main Street Program organized under Texas Historical Commission.

1982

Heritage Association completed National Register Multiple Resource Area survey for 31 buildings and 1 district.

San Antonio Street Historic District locally designated.

1983

Belvin Street Historic District is listed in the NRHP.

1984

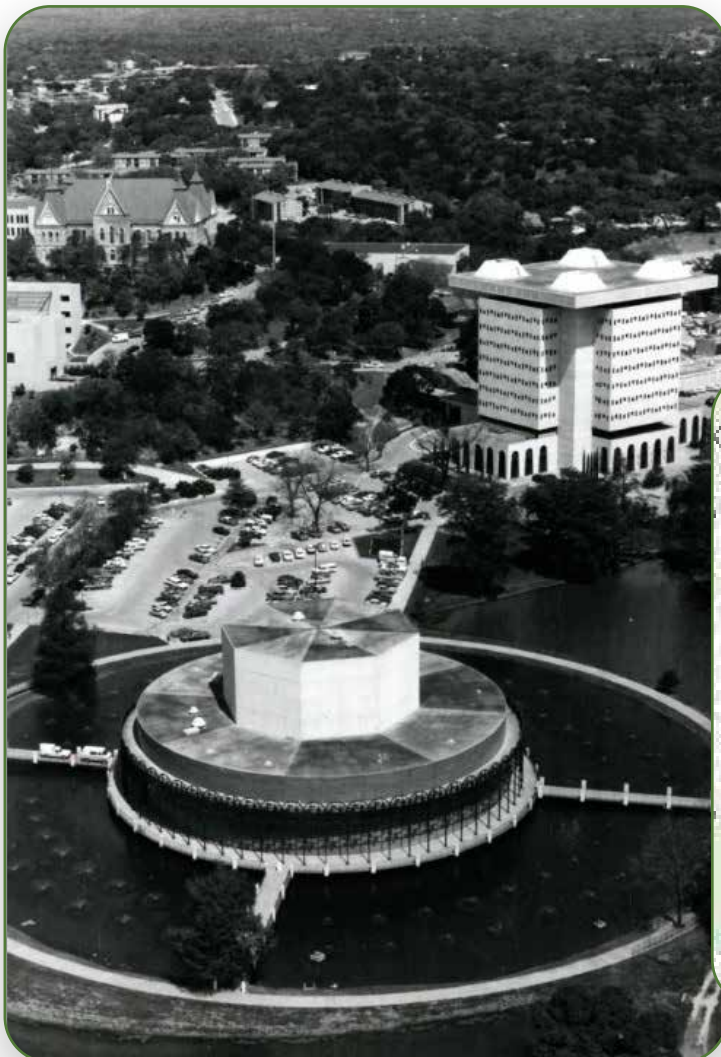
City Council established Historic Preservation Commission by adopting a Historical Zoning Ordinance.

1986

Downtown Historic District locally designated.

Oak Heights Live Oak Tree designated as first local landmark.

San Marcos designated an official Texas Main Street City.



ca. 1980 round Texas State Theater and skyscraper Library Administrative buildings dedicated in 1971 and 1979 illustrate Modern and Postmodern urbanization and architectural movements in the City
(Courtesy of SMPL, SM-HCC)



1983 Past Resources Surveys

URBANIZATION & PRESERVATION ADVANCES (1992-PRESENT)

*Texas created Texas
Historic Preservation
Fund.*

*NPS added Traditional
Cultural Properties as
landscape that can be
listed in the NRHP.*

1989 1990 1992 1994

San Marcos
designated a
Certified Local
Government.

Hays County and San
Marcos populations
increased to
65,614 and 28,738,
respectively.

City received a Texas
Historical Commission
Certified Local
Government grant
to survey historic
resources in three
districts.

Hays County
Courthouse Historic
District listed in the
NRHP.

Southwest Texas
State University, now
Texas State University,
acquired Aquarena
Springs and removed
amusement park
infrastructure.



1992 Past Resources Surveys



1996 Past Resources Surveys

URBANIZATION & PRESERVATION ADVANCES (1992–PRESENT)

1996 1997 1999 2000

City received a Texas Historical Commission Certified Local Government grant to survey the Dunbar and East Guadalupe Neighborhoods.

Main Street Program received national accreditation.

Heritage Neighborhood Survey documented 260 properties around historic districts.

Historic District Guidelines authored for San Marcos Design Manual.

Center for Archaeological Studies at Texas State founded.

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 97,589 and 34,733, respectively .

David Chiu became first Asian American mayor in San Marcos and in Texas.

1997 Past Resources Surveys



Preserve America created to recognize communities that celebrate and preserve their heritage and use historic and cultural resources for economic development.

2001 2003 2004 2005

San Marcos celebrated 150th birthday.

Dunbar Historic District designated as first historically Black local district.

Texas State University–San Marcos renamed Texas State University.

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 65,614 and 28,738, respectively.

Four buildings designated as local landmarks: the Dunbar School Home Economics Building, The Charles S. Cock House, The Merriman Cabin, and the Old Fish Hatchery Building.

City Council adopted sign guidelines for locally designated historic resources.

Burleson Street and Lindsey-Rogers Historic Districts locally designated.

2006 2007 2008 2009

San Marcos was designated a Preserve America community making it eligible for grants when approved by Congress among other benefits. The national program was not renewed after 2016.

Commemorative Air Force Hangar and Graham Tower designated local landmarks.

Hopkins Street Historic District locally designated.

Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos established headquarters in former Bonham School.



2019 Past Resources Surveys

U.S. signed UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People.

2010 2014 2018 2019

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 157,107 and 44,894, respectively.

Sustainability guidelines added to Historic District Guidelines.

Old African American Baptist Church designated as a local landmark.

City received grant for My Historic SMTX Resources Survey.

2020 2021 2024

Hays County and San Marcos populations increased to 241,067 and 67,553, respectively.

Calaboose African American History Museum Building designated as a local landmark.

San Marcos initiated preparation of its first stand-alone Historic Preservation Plan.

City Council adopted Resolution 2021-146 to establish the Mexican American and Indigenous Heritage and Culture District to honor neighborhoods founded by the first Mexican American families in San Marcos.

Dunbar Historic District and the San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building listed on the National Register.

AQUARENA SPRINGS
San Marcos, Texas





PRESERVATION IN THE CITY OF SAN MARCOS

PRESERVATION STATEMENT

Partly due to its location on the I-35 transportation corridor between Austin and San Antonio, the population of San Marcos has doubled in the past 20 years to [approximately 72,000 in 2023](#), and in 2025 over 40,000 students attend Texas State University. Residents live in apartments near Downtown, in historic homes in neighborhoods like Dunbar or Hopkins Street, in mid-century subdivisions outside of the original town plat, and in new residential developments on the outskirts of the City. Prior to this growth, local historic preservation efforts began formally in 1972 with the formation of the Heritage Association as part of the Bicentennial Commission, established to plan celebrations for the 1976 U.S. Bicentennial. The movement gained momentum in 1973 when the Charles S. Cock House became the city's first property listed in the NRHP. Significant institutional frameworks were put in place during the 1980s, including the creation of the HPC and San Marcos' designation as a Main Street city. After achieving CLG status in 1990, the City conducted several historic resources surveys throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, notably in 1996 focusing on the Dunbar and East Guadalupe neighborhoods, which documented historically Black and Mexican American communities. The city continued to expand its preservation efforts by establishing multiple local and national historic districts in the 2000s. These efforts were supported by evolving design guidelines and sustainability measures, demonstrating the city's ongoing commitment to preserving its diverse cultural heritage. In tandem, preservation partners helped establish parks, memorials, museums, events, public art, and preservation projects that have given San Marcos a unique sense of place.

While San Marcos has taken steps to preserve its history, it's important to note that much of what has been preserved does not fully represent the city's diverse population. There is an opportunity to be more inclusive and tell a more complete story.

*Previous two pages: Mike Roberts postcard of aquatic star drinking a soda pop (edwardsaquifer.net)
Showplace marquis of events (COSM)*

DEMOGRAPHICS

San Marcos is a growing and diverse community. The city's population increased by an estimated 5.6% percent between 2020 and 2023, higher than the 4.7% population increase in the state of Texas for the same period. Twenty percent of San Marcos residents identify as two or more races, compared to the state percentage of just 2.3%. San Marcos also has a higher educational attainment compared to the state. As of 2020, 90.9% of San Marcos' residents had a high school degree or higher and 37.3% had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared 85.7% and 33.1%, respectively, at the state level.

Census data indicates that San Marcos has economic challenges to overcome. The median household income in San Marcos is \$51,030, about \$25,000 lower than the state median income. Less homes in San Marcos are owner-occupied compared to state statistics: 30.5% of San Marcos residents are owner-occupied, while the state rate is 62.6%. The poverty rate in San Marcos is also nearly double the state average, at 26.7% compared to 13.7% in Texas.

Table 1. Demographics

	2010 SAN MARCOS	2020 SAN MARCOS	2020 TEXAS	2020 U.S.
Population	44,894	67,553	29,145,505	331,449,281
People per Square Mile	1,485.6	1,898	111.6	93.8
Owner Occupied Housing Unit Rate	Not Available	30.5%	62.6%	63.1%
Median Household Income	Not Available	\$51,030	\$76,292	\$78,535
Persons in Poverty	36.9%	26.7%	13.7%	11.4%
High School Graduate or Higher	83.3%	90.9%	85.7%	89.4%

Source: United States Census, QuickFacts 2025; Cromwell and Mazur 2023; Shirder et al. 2020.

Table 2. Race and Ethnicity

	2010 SAN MARCOS	2020 SAN MARCOS	2020 TEXAS	2020 U.S.
White*	78.5%	63.3%	76.8%	75.3%
Black*	5.5%	5.6%	13.6%	13.7%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.9%	0.6%	13.6%	1.3%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%
Hispanic or Latino**	--	41.9%	39.8%	19.5%
Two or more	--	20%	2.3%	3.1%
Asian	1.6%	2.1%	6%	6%

**Alone, not Hispanic or Latino.*

***Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories (United States Census, QuickFacts 2025.)*

VACANCIES & YEAR BUILT

Vacant buildings are often excellent candidates for future historic preservation efforts depending on when they were constructed. As of September 2025, the Neighborhood Enhancement Department reported that 1,900 buildings are vacant in San Marcos, many of which were built before 1990.

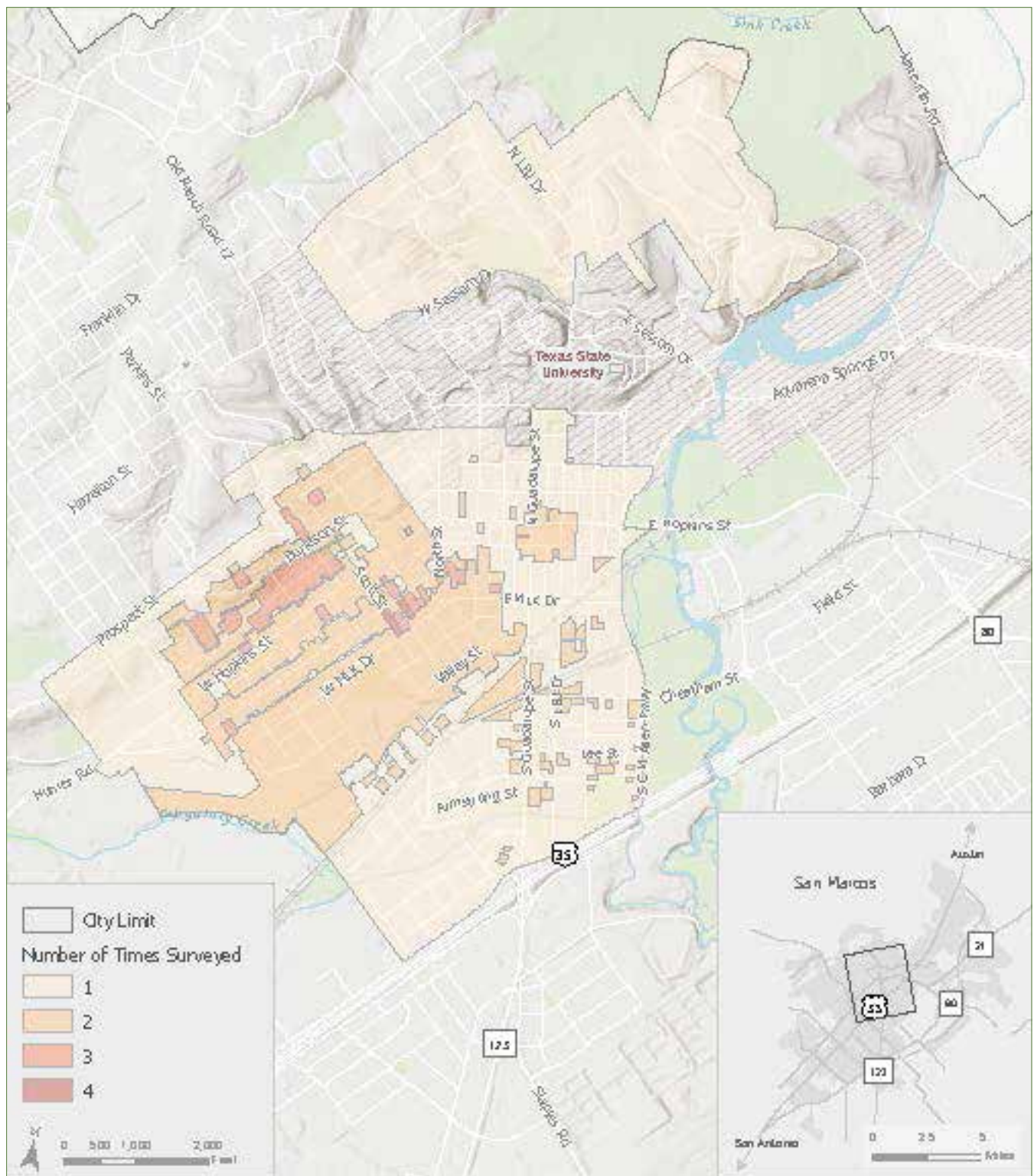
Hays County Assessor building data shows that most parcels with year-built data in San Marcos were built in 1990 or later, illustrating how rapidly San Marcos has grown in the last 35 years of its nearly 225-year history as well as the importance of preserving those that are over 50 years of age.

The map on the following page illustrates the following:

- Parcels with buildings constructed in 1990 or later represent 84% of parcels with year-built data, and 57% of all parcels.
- Parcels with buildings constructed between 1950 and 1989 represent 14% of parcels with year-built data.
- Parcels with buildings constructed in 1949 and earlier represent only about 2% of all parcels.



Old African American Baptist Church in the Dunbar Historic District which has sat vacant for years (Courtesy of THC). The community identified it as an opportunity during public outreach.



Five major historic resources surveys have been conducted in San Marcos, beginning in 1983. Many properties have been surveyed multiple times.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The significance of cultural resources in the City of the San Marcos has been recognized since at least the 1930s, while modern professional investigations, including archaeological and architectural surveys, began in earnest in the 1970s after passage of the NHPA and NEPA.

PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Professional archaeological investigations in San Marcos span over five decades, beginning in the 1970s and continuing through present day. Of note, around 1975, what was then referred to as the Late Prehistoric period became known as the San Marcos Phase in Central Texas due to discoveries around the San Marcos River Watershed. Beginning in 1978, underwater archaeological excavations at Spring Lake, then owned by the Aquarena Amusement Park, uncovered Paleoindian artifacts and Ice Age megafauna remains, revealing over 13,000 years of human occupation in the region. In addition to pre-contact archaeological sites, numerous historic archaeological sites have been discovered in San Marcos during this period, either during regulatory compliance surveys or during field schools held by the University of Texas at San Antonio and Texas State University's Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS). The latter was founded in 2000 and certified by THC as a Curatorial Facility, where over 100 archaeological collections are Held-in-Trust for the State of Texas.



Pre-contact and historic archaeological artifacts from the D.E. Arnold Cabins site (Courtesy of TXST CAS)

PREVIOUS ARCHITECTURAL SURVEYS

While local historic districts and landmarks were designated, beginning in the 1970s, a citywide survey did not occur until the 1980s. Thereafter, San Marcos sponsored multiple historic resources surveys, documenting neighborhoods, districts, and individual landmarks illustrated in mapping in this chapter. From the first citywide inventory in 1983 to the 2019 My Historic SMTX Survey, these studies have identified hundreds of resources, recommended new designations, and shaped the City's preservation priorities. The following pages provide detailed descriptions of these surveys.

1983 HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PROPERTIES PARTIAL INVENTORY

FUNDING	Heritage Association of San Marcos (HASM)
SURVEYOR	Lissa Anderson
SCOPE	Prepare a Multiple Resources Area (MRA).
GOAL	Streamline listing of multiple discontinuous resources in the City.
SURVEYED	The entire city limits (not all documented).
RECOMMENDED	NA
RESULTS	Historic Resources of San Marcos Multiple Resources Area (MRA) NRHP nomination 31 resources and one district were listed in the NRHP using the MRA.

1992 CITY OF SAN MARCOS HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY

FUNDING	City of San Marcos
SURVEYOR	City staff and a Texas State student.
SCOPE	Individually document each “property” within the three designated districts, which had been designated without an inventory.
GOAL	Assist the City and HPC in issuing COAs (locally designated but not previously surveyed).
SURVEYED	49 “properties” in the Belvin Street Historic District (1974). 80 “properties” in the San Antonio Street Historic District (1982). 44 “properties” in the Downtown Historic District (1986).
RECOMMENDED	NA
RESULTS	City of San Marcos, Texas Historic District Survey Report and Forms

131 N Guadalupe St in local and NRHP historic district, 1986 (downtowntx.org)



1996 DUNBAR AND EAST GUADALUPE NEIGHBORHOODS SURVEY

FUNDING	HPF-THC CLG Grant
SURVEYOR	Newlan Knight and Associates, Inc.
SCOPE	<p>Survey and provide NRHP and/or local landmark and district eligibility recommendations for historic-age properties in four areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dunbar neighborhood (historically African American). 2. East Guadalupe neighborhood (traditionally Mexican American). 3. Small portion of Victory Gardens (Barrio Victoria) along Invasion and MacArthur Streets (traditionally Mexican American). 4. Small industrial area north of East Guadalupe along the railroad tracks (Railroad Sector).
GOAL	Phase One of a comprehensive survey of San Marcos and categorize properties with low, medium, or high preservation priorities.
SURVEYED	264 resources.
RECOMMENDED	<p>East Guadalupe Neighborhood: recommended not eligible as an NRHP district; identified 6 high priority properties that could be designated local historic landmarks.</p> <p>Railroad Sector: recommended not eligible as an NRHP district; identified 6 high priority properties that could be designated local historic landmarks.</p> <p>Dunbar Neighborhood: Small area including both sides of MLK Drive and north side of Centre Street (between Fredericksburg and Herndon Streets), including Wesley Chapel recommended for "consideration as a historic district."</p> <p>Buildings to "consider for individual designation":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1885 Hays County Jail at 168 South Fredericksburg Drive Former 1873 Jail (now Calaboose African American Museum). Old First Baptist Church (African American). Residences at 711 and 600 MLK Dr. and 321 South LBJ Drive. Jackson Chapel United Methodist Church at 524 Centre Street.
RESULTS	<p>Historic Resources Survey of the Dunbar and East Guadalupe Neighborhoods</p> <p>Dunbar Historic District (2003).</p> <p>Old First Baptist Church Local Landmark (2018).</p> <p>Calaboose African American Museum Local Landmark (2021).</p>

1997 SAN MARCOS HERITAGE NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

FUNDING	HPF -THC CLG Grant
SURVEYOR	Keystone Architects, PLLC
SCOPE	Intensive-level survey to identify significant properties in the Heritage neighborhood, approximately 3 blocks surrounding the Belvin Street and San Antonio Street Historic Districts.
GOAL	Categorize properties with low, medium, or high preservation priorities.
SURVEYED	260 primary buildings (mostly residential). 200 secondary structures. 6 commercial buildings. 6 industrial buildings. 12 resources previously listed on NRHP or designated as RTHLs.
RECOMMENDED	22% high priority, 38% medium priority, 40% low priority. NRHP or local historic district designation for most of the survey area. Evaluate potential historic district boundary expansions for the Belvin and San Antonio Street Historic Districts. Develop design guidelines for new construction and rehabilitation.
RESULTS	San Marcos Heritage Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey Design guidelines adopted in 1999 and incorporated into the San Marcos Design Manual in 2018. Lindsey-Rogers Historic District (2005). Burleson Street Historic District (2005). Hopkins Street Historic District (2008).

2019 MY HISTORIC SMTX CITY OF SAN MARCOS HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

FUNDING	HPF -THC CLG Grant
SURVEYOR	Hicks & Company with Terracon
SCOPE	Reevaluate 1992, 1996, and 1997 surveys; survey resources not previously documented within the survey boundary built in 1975 or earlier; windshield survey for an area north of the Texas State University Campus.
GOAL	Document changes in neighborhoods, recommend new and expanded local, state, and national designations, and diversify types of listings.
SURVEYED	2,044 properties.
RECOMMENDED	<p>204 individual resources classified as high preservation priority.</p> <p>1 new Historic District.</p> <p>6 potential Historic District Expansions for local, state, and/or national designation.</p> <p>Noted significant losses in East Guadalupe Neighborhood Survey (7 of 18 resources identified as significant in that survey no longer exist).</p>
RESULTS	<p>My Historic SMTX City of San Marcos Historic Resources Survey Report</p> <p>San Marcos Development Code amended to include a demolition review for historic-age resources (2019).</p> <p>Local landmark designation criteria updated (2023).</p> <p>San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building (also known as the Dunbar School Home Economics Building), which was recommended NRHP eligible, was subsequently listed in the NRHP (2024).</p> <p>Dunbar Historic District, which was recommended NRHP eligible, was subsequently listed in the NRHP (2024).</p>



DESIGNATED HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Historic resources can be designated on three levels: local, state, and federal, the benefits of the last two of which were compared in Chapter 1. While state and federal designation is largely honorary and can qualify properties for certain grants and tax credits, local designation provide more protection and long-term benefits for property owners.

FEDERALLY DESIGNATED

The City has 41 historic resources listed in the NRHP, including individual resources and districts. Resources designated in the NRHP are significant at the local, state, or national level, and meet the specific NRHP criteria. San Marcos is also bisected by a National Historic Trail, the El Camino Real de los Tejas. National Historic Trails are historic travel routes significant at the national level.

Table 3. Total number of federally designated historic properties in San Marcos.

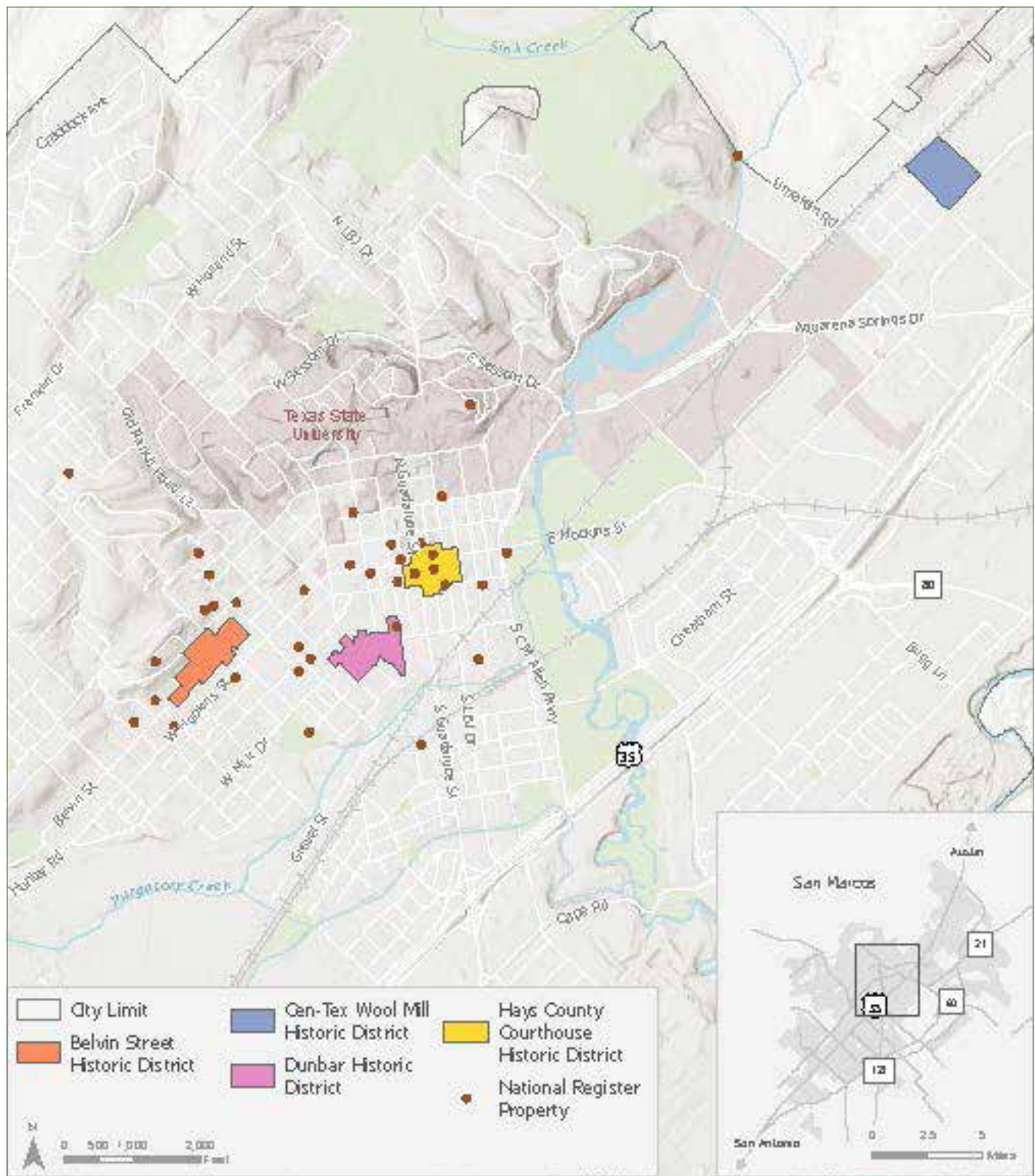
DESIGNATION TYPE	#
National Historic Landmarks (NHL)	0
National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)	42
National Historic Trails (NHT) (El Camino Real de los Tejas)	1

STATE DESIGNATED

The City of San Marcos has 47 resources designated under Texas's three state programs—Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, State Antiquities Landmarks, and Historic Texas Cemeteries—and 54 Official Texas Historical Markers. These designations and historic markers capture and recognize the important history and cultural of San Marcos.

Table 4. Total number of state designated historic properties and state historical markers in San Marcos.

DESIGNATION TYPE	#
Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL)	38
State Antiquities Landmarks (SAL) (Architectural)	4
Historic Texas Cemeteries (HTC)	7
1936 Centennial Historic Markers	4
Subject Markers, including 1 Undertold Marker recognizing Eddie Durham's impact on jazz music.	50



Federally designated historic properties in San Marcos..

FEDERAL TAX CREDIT PROJECTS

Established in 1976, a 20 percent federal income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. The following NRHP-listed properties in San Marcos took advantage of NPS Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits after listing.



*John Matthew Cape House (316 W. Hopkins Street) Rehabilitated 1985
Source: downtowntx.org*



*San Marcos Fire Station and City Hall (224 N. Guadalupe Street) Rehabilitated 1986
Source: downtowntx.org*



*Episcopal Rectory (255 W. Hopkins Street) Rehabilitated 1989
Source: atlas.thc.texas.gov*



*Hardy-Williams Building (127 E. Hopkins Street) Rehabilitated 1989
Source: downtowntx.org*



*Fort Street Presbyterian Church (516 W. Hopkins Street) Rehabilitated 1990
Source: atlas.thc.texas.gov*



*McKie-Bass Building (111 N. Guadalupe Street) Rehabilitated 1992
Source: atlas.thc.texas.gov*



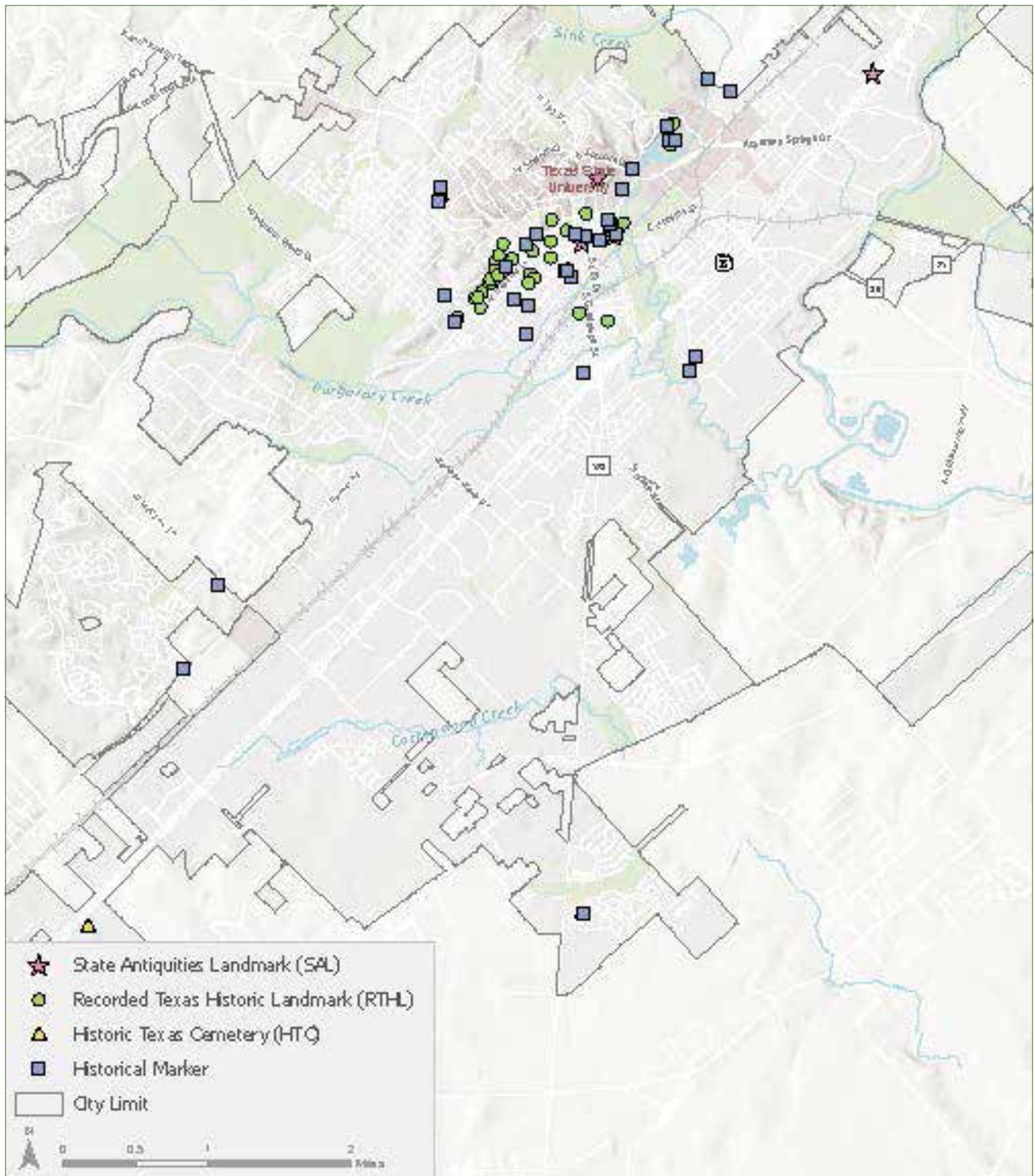
*110 E. San Antonio Street
Rehabilitated 2001
Source: downtowntx.org*



*Old State Bank Building (100 W. Hopkins Street) Rehabilitated 2004
Source: downtowntx.org*



*A.B. Rogers Building (202 N. LBJ Drive) Rehabilitated 2009
Source: downtowntx.org*



State designated historic properties and state historical markers in San Marcos.

LOCALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS & LANDMARKS

Locally designated historic landmarks and historic districts help define the unique character of San Marcos. Historic designation does not change the underlying zoning and has no effect on permitted land uses. It does however have an effect on what property owners can do to the historic resources on the property.

10 REASONS TO SUPPORT LOCAL DESIGNATION

1. These designations protect the investments of owners and residents of historic properties.
2. Properties within local districts appreciate faster than the local market overall as well as faster than similar, non-designated neighborhoods.
3. Local districts encourage better quality design.
4. Local districts help the environment (reuse of materials avoids excessive debris in landfills).
5. Local districts are energy efficient (buildings were typically constructed with local climate-appropriate materials, sunlight orientation, and natural airflow in mind).
6. Historic designations are a vehicle for education.
7. Historic designations can positively impact the local economy through tourism.
8. Protecting historic districts can enhance business recruitment potential.
9. Local districts provide social and psychological benefits.
10. These designations give communities a voice in their future.

Adapted from National Trust for Historic Preservation

A LOCAL DISTRICT

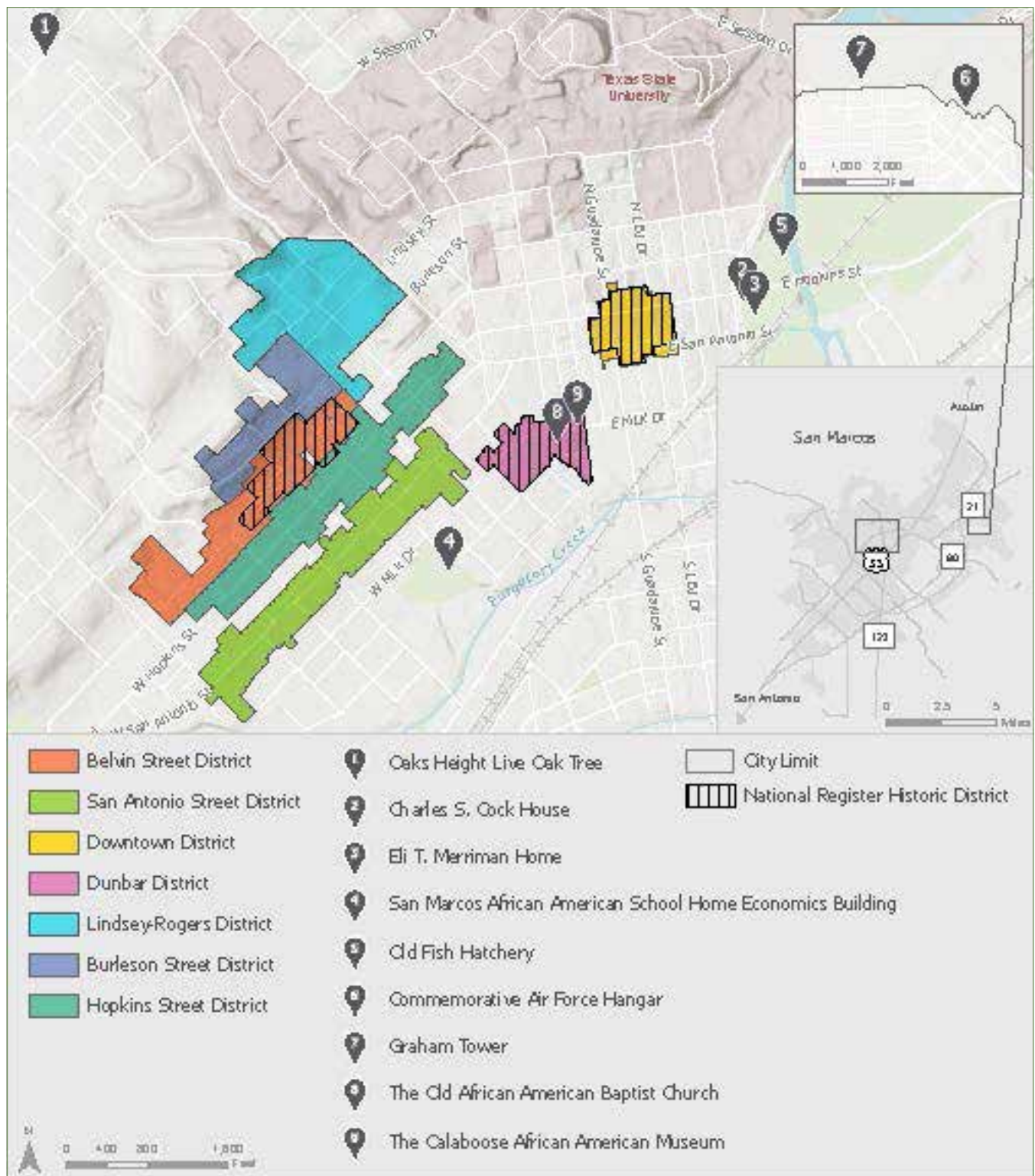
In the San Marcos Development Code is defined as a Historic Structure, Thoroughfare(s), and neighborhood(s) that serve as visible reminders of the history and cultural heritage of San Marcos, Texas, and the United States. A district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Local designation of a historic district encourages the appreciation and preservation of the physical evidence of the past - the memory infrastructure.

YEAR-ORDINANCE #	HISTORIC DISTRICT
1974-47	Belvin Street Historic District
1982-31	San Antonio Street Historic District
1986-59	Downtown Historic District
2003-21	Dunbar Historic District
2005-54	Burleson Street Historic District
2005-54	Lindsey-Rogers Historic District
2008-4	Hopkins Street Historic District

A LOCAL LANDMARK

In the San Marcos Development Code is defined as a historic resource that has been officially recognized by the City of San Marcos for its outstanding historical, cultural, architectural, or archaeological significance. Any individual site, building, structure, object, or cultural landscape may be designated.

YEAR-ORDINANCE #	LANDMARK
1986-81	Oak Heights Live Oak Tree
2004-16	Dunbar School Home Economics Building
2004-16	The Charles S. Cock House
2004-16	The Merriman Cabin
2004-16	Old Fish Hatchery Building
2007-20	Commemorative Air Force Hangar
2007-20	Graham Tower
2018-46	Old African American Baptist Church
2021-15	Calaboose African American History Museum Building



Local landmarks and historic districts designated by City Council since 1986 with NRHP historic districts overlapping.

AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Beyond the work of the City of San Marcos Historic Preservation Program, the City and local partners in preservation, listed in the following pages, have successfully restored, rehabilitated, and reused buildings, protected natural landscapes, and recorded community history for nearly 75 years since the creation of the Hays County Historical Commission (HCHC), established (est.) in 1953. The following table provides a snapshot of preservation friendly activity in the City with approximate number of cultural, historical, and art assets in the community.

	2010	2020	2024-2025
DOWNTOWN CORE BUSINESSES	Not Available	198	283
LEGACY BUSINESSES	0	0	11
WEEKLY OR MONTHLY MARKETS	Not Available	Not Available	12
PUBLIC PARKS	263 acres	309 acres	450 acres
NATURAL AREAS	1,033 acres	1,486 acres	2,100 acres
PUBLIC TRAILS	5 miles	32 miles	40 miles
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	13	15	16+
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS	0	0	2
ANNUAL CULTURAL EVENTS	Not Available	Not Available	25+
LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS	7	7	7
LOCAL LANDMARKS	7	8	9



Rio Vista Falls, San Marcos River (COSM)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



SAN MARCOS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 1903

A business development center providing access to resources, visibility, and opportunities to serve the San Marcos community. With community investors, resource connections, and members, the Chamber of Commerce serves the community through economic development, tourism, workforce development, education, transportation and public policy development.

<https://sanmarcostexas.com/>



HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION, 1953

Supports the preservation of historical and cultural resources throughout the county. The HCHC seeks to preserve and share the history and heritage of Hays County through implementing the State Historical Marker program at the local level, participating in NRHP nominations, maintaining the county cemetery inventory, and providing educational resources.

<http://www.hayshistoricalcommission.com/>



COMMEMORATIVE AIR FORCE CENTRAL TEXAS WING, 1974

Responsible for the maintenance and restoration of World War II-era airplanes. In addition to housing seven aircraft, the facility has a museum and holds events, including an annual dance.

<https://www.centraltexaswing.org/>



HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF SAN MARCOS, 1975

Supports the preservation of buildings and perpetuates traditions that beautify and enrich the cultural and community life of the city. Encouraged restoration of private homes; initiated protection of the environment; and encouraged the continued safeguard of the San Marcos River. Maintains the Charles S. Cock House, and hosts the Annual Heritage Home Tour. The organization awards: Landmark Awards to 140 projects since 1976, Member of the Year since 1998, Volunteer of the Year since 1998

<https://www.heritagesanmarcos.org/>



The local history room houses the San Marcos-Hays County Collection. Serves as a center for gathering and preserving books, photographs, maps, documents, newspapers, and other archival materials related to the history, geography, and cultural life of the City and County.

<https://www.sanmarcostx.gov/641/Local-History>



DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION OF SAN MARCOS, 1978

Property owners, businesses, and citizens that aims to enhance the vitality and value of Downtown San Marcos while preserving its unique character through advocacy, its Downtown Restaurant Alliance, festivals, and special projects like the Celebrate Diversity mural.

<https://www.downtownsanmarcos.org/>



SAN MARCOS RIVER FOUNDATION (SMRF), 1985

Protects land over the recharge zone, collaborates with trail building groups, protects SMRF's East Side Preserve, educates landowners on best practices, and more. For the last decade, the organization has advocated for protective development codes in critical aquifer recharge areas and has made conservation areas and easements its immediate concern with the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance and the Hill Country Alliance.

<https://www.sanmarcosriver.org/>



CALABOOSE AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM, 1997

Through preservation, events, and education, the museum strives to preserve and honor the legacy of the African American experience in Hays County. After establishing the museum and gaining designation as an RTHL and OTHM, founder Johnnie Armstead sought and received grant and city funding to restore the building, which was constructed in 1873. While the current building is not the original jail, it stands on the site of the original jail's site. .

<https://www.calaboosemuseum.org/>



TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, CENTER FOR PUBLIC HISTORY, 1997 CENTER FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES, 2000 THE WITTLIFF COLLECTIONS, 2007

Brings together community partners, faculty, and students to research, interpret, and ultimately share histories centered around Texas. The Public History Program provides students with opportunities to engage in hands-on public history projects and work through collaboration, public programming, and internships that have benefited San Marcos. CAS provides opportunities to conduct archaeological investigations in the community and beyond. The Wittliff Collections provides a research center, archives, and museum dedicated to the collection, preservation, and presentation of the culture heritage of Texas, Mexico, and the Southwest. The Lonesome Dove Collection, the production archives of the television miniseries, is one of the many resources among the Wittliff Collections.

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txst.edu/>

<https://publichistory.history.txst.edu/>



SAN MARCOS GREENBELT ALLIANCE, 1998

A nonprofit organization which coordinates with City Parks and Recreation, SMRF, and the Hill Country Alliance among other statewide groups to protect the quality of life for the people of San Marcos by creating interconnected natural areas and parks. The organization holds conservation areas and easements in trust for thousands of acres in the City.

<https://smgreenbelt.org/>



DUNBAR HERITAGE ASSOCIATION, 1999

Founded by Harvey Miller, it aims to preserve and celebrate Black culture in San Marcos. The organization hosts an annual march honoring Martin Luther King Jr., and Black History Month and Juneteenth celebrations; advocates for bringing awareness to the historical and cultural contributions made by the members of the San Marcos Black community; and educates the community about Black culture through events, workshops, and seminars.

<https://dhasmtx.com/about/>



HILL COUNTRY ALLIANCE, 2004

Builds community support and raises awareness of the need for preserving the Central Hill County's nature and heritage through advocacy, education and outreach, research, and building partnerships and networks with other organizations in the region. Annual events include the Texas Water Symposium, the Hill Country Leadership Summit, the Hill Country Night Sky Month, and the Spring Water Revival.

<https://hillcountryalliance.org/>



LYNDON B JOHNSON MUSEUM OF SAN MARCOS, 2006

Showcases Lyndon B. Johnson's, the 26th President of the United States, time as a student at Texas State University, in a historic downtown building. Through permanent exhibits, digital exhibits, and guided tours, the museum engages and educates visitors about the contributions the president made toward civil rights, voting rights, education, and the elimination of poverty.

<https://lbjmuseum.com/>



CENTRO CULTURAL HISPANO DE SAN MARCOS, 2010

An organization that serves as a leader for the preservation, promotion, development, and celebration of Hispanic arts, heritage, culture, and values. The organization's headquarters are in the former Southside School, the City's Mexican American school built in 1949. The organization moved into the building in 2009 and opened its doors to the public in 2010.

<https://www.sanmarcoscentro.org/>



SAN MARCOS ART CENTER, 2019

Created by the San Marcos Art League in the Downtown Historic District, it promotes and encourages the arts in the City and partners with other creative organizations to celebrate and grow the community's arts and culture scene. Provides a community art space with a gallery, sales floor, workshops, and artist demonstrations.

<https://www.sanmarcosartcenter.com/>



COUNCIL FOR THE INDIGENOUS & TEJANO COMMUNITY, 2021

Aims to preserve the culture, history, and tradition of the Indigenous and Tejano community of Hays County through collecting oral histories, sponsoring historical markers, and promoting arts and culture.

<https://www.citc.us>

WAYFINDING & INTERPRETATION

Residents and visitors alike benefit from the City's wayfinding efforts and interpretive markers. The city features numerous interpretive signs that highlight important historical sites and resources, providing valuable context.

WAYFINDING

Wayfinding physically helps people navigate through places (urban, suburban, rural, and wild) using signs, maps, symbols, and landmarks. The City of San Marcos and its partners have undertaken several wayfinding projects, including:

2011

The City installed 60 wayfinding signs aimed to promote tourism, help control traffic, and recognize and honor the community's identity.

2022

Led by Destination Services and Downtown Design Task Force, the City installed a series of pedestrian wayfinding signs in Downtown, which include an area map with directional info, public parking, parks and cultural institutions, and a scannable QR code for more information.

2024

The Greenbelt Alliance and San Marcos Parks & Recreation Department placed new displays at eleven trailheads in five of the City's natural areas. The displays feature maps with scannable QR codes that take users to a digital version of the map showing their location.

GREAT SPRINGS PROJECT, ONGOING

This project aims to create a greenway of protected lands between Austin, San Marcos, and San Antonio over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. This green corridor will be connected by a network of spring-to-spring trails, linking the four iconic springs of Central Texas: Barton Springs, San Marcos Springs, Comal Springs, and San Antonio Springs. It will unify existing local efforts to address the most critical water, land, wildlife, and public health challenges facing the Central Texas region.



Great Springs Interactive Website Map

INTERPRETATION

In addition to traditional historical markers, NPS-style interpretive panels, interpretive installations, and public art help people navigate historical narratives in a meaningful, accessible, and engaging way. The City features numerous interpretive signs that highlight important historical sites and resources, providing valuable context. Active partners in interpretation include:

EL CAMINO REAL DE LOS TEJAS
HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF SAN MARCOS
SAN MARCOS MURAL ARTS PROGRAM
TEXAS STATE MEADOWS CENTER &
CENTER FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDIES



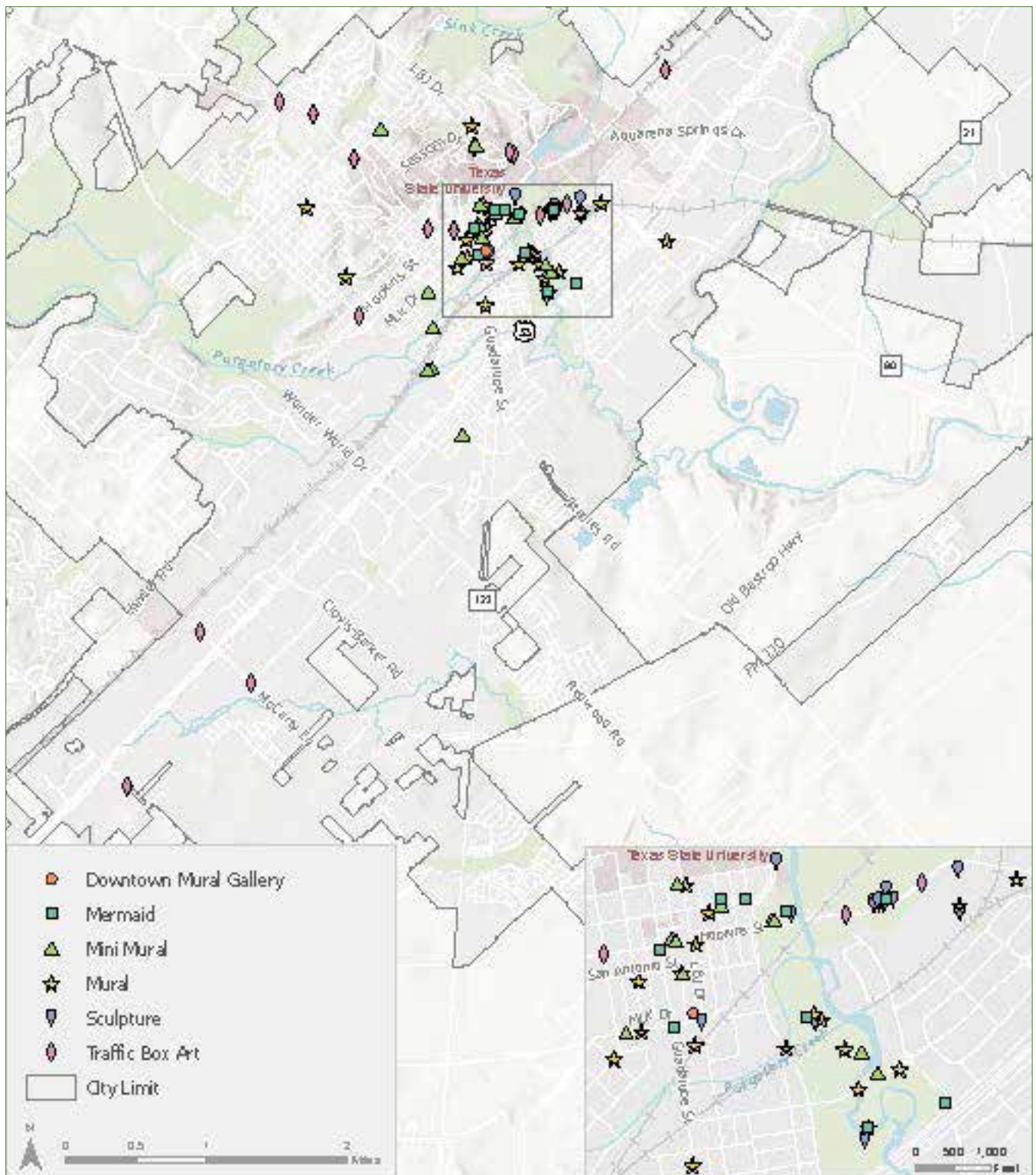
1808 Don Felipe Roque De La Portilla
Historical Marker (Courtesy of Richard
Denney, hmdb.org)



Wayfinding signs being installed Downtown
(COSM)



Interpretation at Texas State Meadows Center
(Courtesy of TXST)



The City of San Marcos Mural Arts Program both commissions murals, sculptures, and other public art and provides grants and design assistance to artists in an effort to place murals on private property throughout the city. Much of the work is inspired by natural and cultural resources and benefits historic preservation, wayfinding, and interpretation. [Art Map of San Marcos | Murals, Galleries & Installations](#)

PROTECTED PLACES

Federal, state, and local government and non-profits help protect San Marcos' cultural and natural heritage, including the San Marcos River and the Blanco River, through a variety of tools from local parks and trails to state monitored conservation easements.

NATURAL AREAS

The City of San Marcos has six natural areas consisting of more than 1,200 acres with more than 22 miles of trails. Some of this land is in permanent conservation easements held by the state, non-profit partners, and private individuals, helping to preserve natural resources that help illustrate San Marcos' pre-contact context.

PROSPECT PARK NATURAL AREA, 1999

The first natural area created in San Marcos, Prospect Park (Prospect Street) was established as nine acres in reaction to developers planning to clear the land, which sits on a porous section of the Edwards Aquifer. The park contains ashe juniper groves, grassland meadows, ephemeral wetlands, and oak mottes. Interpretive signs, a large compass, and The Learning Tree provide seating and education opportunities in the lower meadow.

SCHULLE CANYON NATURAL AREA, 1999

Schulle Canyon Natural Area was established in 1999 after the City of San Marcos traded land along I-35 in order to protect 21-acres of greenspace from subdivision development. The area is home to a variety of birds such as Kinglets, Thrushes, Wrens, Chickadees, and Cardinals.

BLANCO SHOALS NATURAL AREA, 2002

The Blanco Shoals Natural Area is an undeveloped 89 acres of undeveloped land along the Blanco River, east of I-35. In 2002, the Holt family donated the land. The area consists of bluffs and shoals along the river; Pecan, Cottonwood, Sycamore, and Anancuas trees.

PURGATORY CREEK NATURAL AREA, 2003, AND PURGATORY CREEK NATURE PRESERVE, 2022

The Purgatory Creek Natural Area is adjacent to the Prospect Park Natural Area. Hays County acquired Purgatory Creek Natural Area to create a 1,068-acre conservation easement proposed and sponsored by the Hill Country Conservancy to be funded through the 2020 Hays County Parks and Open Space Bond.

RINGTAIL RIDGE NATURAL AREA, 2007

The Ringtail Ridge Natural Area is on the former site of the Hughson Meat Company off of Old Ranch Road 12. The 41-acre natural area includes three ponds that provide birding and bug observations that differ from the drier Purgatory Creek Natural Area. In 2007, the City of San Marcos and SMGA received a National Trails Grant from TPWD for accessibility improvements.

STATE RESOURCES

Texas State manages the vast majority of state resources in San Marcos, including its scenic campus, historic buildings and structures, Museums, and parks.

SEWELL PARK, 1917

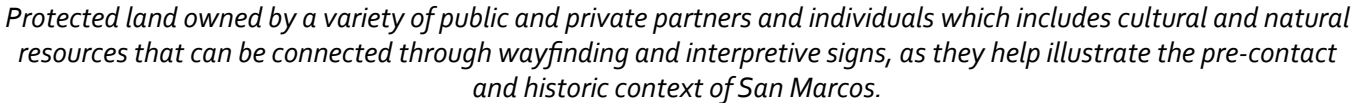
In 1916, Dr. S.M. Sewell at present-day Texas State conceived of a park and swimming hole for In 1917, the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries leased the college four acres of land along the river, then only three feet deep. Using mules, college students cleaned the river bottom, built up the banks, and smoothed the slopes. It was called Riverside Park until 1946, when it was renamed in honor of Sewell.

THE MEADOWS CENTER FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT, 2002

Texas State University's The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment is connected to the Spring Lake Natural Area and is the former site of the Aquarena Springs Amusement Park, which was the subject of a Texas State Public History Project and archaeological investigations by the school's Center for Archaeological Studies (CAS) established in 2000. The historic amusement park hotel was remodeled and reopened as the Texas Rivers Center, now The Meadows Center.



San Marcos River (COSM)



CITY LAND

The Parks and Recreation Department maintains over [2,600 acres of park land and almost 40 miles of trails](#) in San Marcos as well as the historic City Cemetery.

CITY CEMETERY, 1874

Before the creation of public parks, city cemeteries also served as recreational spaces where residents picnicked and strolled on weekends. The [San Marcos City Cemetery](#), founded in 1874, is located on 45 acres at 1001 Ranch Road 12 in San Marcos and is the burial ground for many Texas pioneers and veterans dating back to the War of 1812. The cemetery chapel was designated a RTHL in 1973 and listed in the NRHP in 1983.

JUAN VERAMENDI PLAZA, 1972

In June 1970, the Urban Renewal Agency of the City of San Marcos purchased this property and transferred it to the Bicentennial Commission, which later became the HASM. The [Juan Veramendi Historical Plaza](#), located at the southeast corner of C.M. Allen Parkway and Hopkins Street contains a gazebo, the Charles S. Cock House Museum, a local historic landmark that is also listed in the NRHP (1973), the Dr. Eli T. Merriman Cabin Museum, a local historic landmark, the Dr. Gwen K. Smith Fountain, the Memorial Grove, and a path to the San Marcos River. A "Liberty Tree", a large Texas Pecan planted on the first Arbor Day in 1976, was a gift to San Marcos from the Texas Forest Service, distributed to recognize Bicentennial Cities in Texas. This tree presently centers the [Memorial Grove](#) located between the Charles S. Cock House Museum and the railroad tracks.

DUNBAR PARK, 1973

[Dunbar Park](#) is located within the greater Dunbar neighborhood. It contains typical park amenities, and a local historic landmark, San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building (Dunbar School Home Economics Building), is currently under restoration with funding from the CIP and a National Trust Preservation Fund grant. In January 2025, Dunbar Park was named a [Lone Star Legacy Park](#), a park that holds special prominence in the local community and the state

of Texas. Parks of this status have endured the test of time and become iconic to those who have visited, played, and rested on their grounds. Parks and Recreation staff recently accepted the award at the Texas Recreation and Parks Society annual conference. An official plaque has been installed.

EDDIE DURHAM PARK

Eddie Durham was born on August 19, 1906. He was a local San Marcos resident and pioneer of the electric guitar in jazz music. He was also a trombonist, composer, and arranger for the orchestras of Bennie Moten, Jimmie Lunceford, and Count Basie. He died on March 6, 1987. This park, located within the local Dunbar and NRHP historic districts, and a mural have been created in his honor.



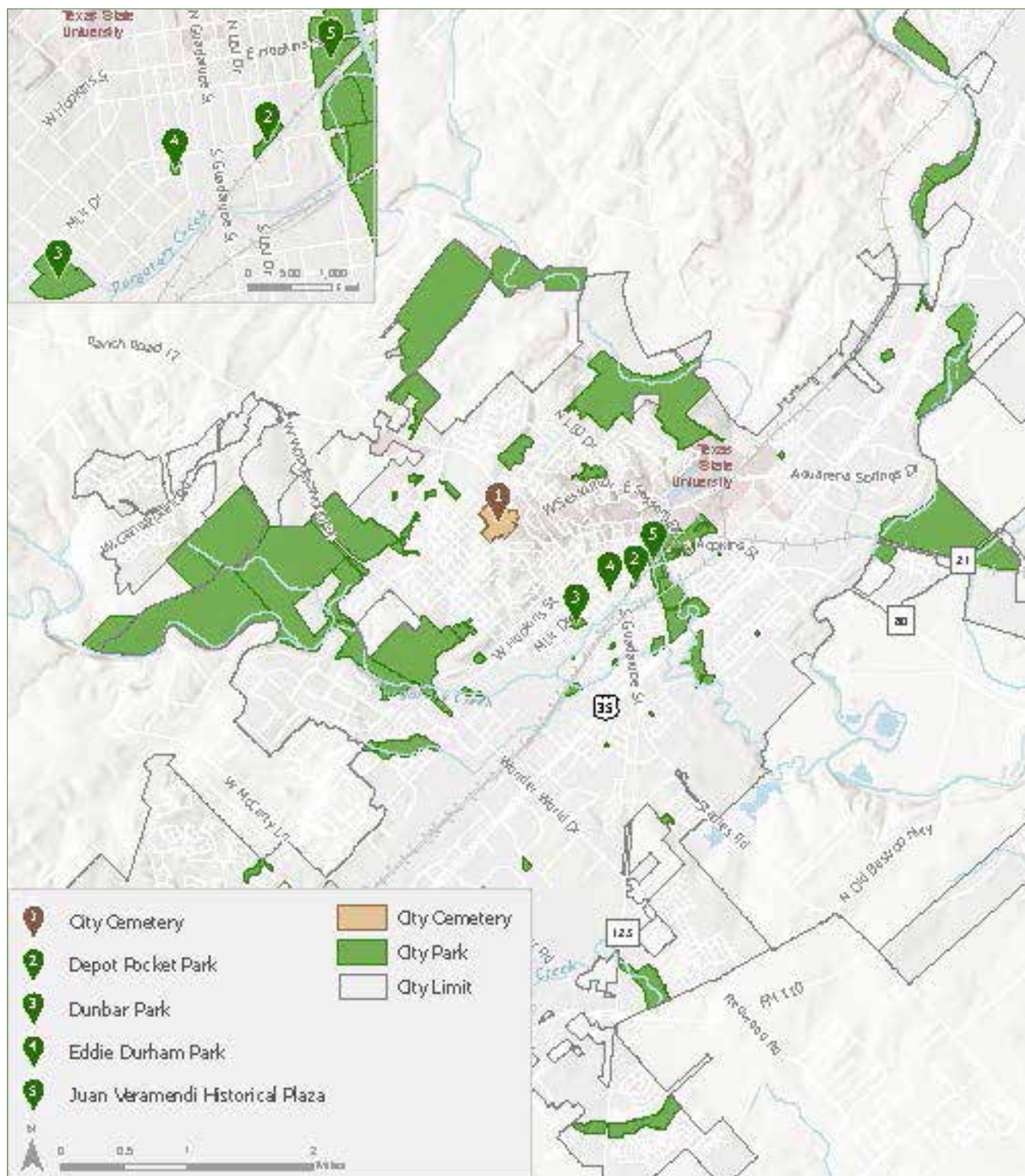
SAN MARCOS PLAZA PARK

On the banks of the San Marcos River, the 5.1-acre plaza is home to a pavilion and stage where many of San Marcos' annual festival are held, including the popular Summer in the Park music series. It includes hike/bike trails, wooden deck, the historic Fish Hatchery Building, and public art:

- *Before Us* (mermaid sculpture) by Dianna Weems
- *Squirrel with Trumpet* (mini mural) by Rene Perez
- *Plaza Park Stage* (mini mural) by Morgan Haberle Egan

THE DEPOT POCKET PARK

San Marcos historically had two railroad depots. The Missouri-Kansas-Texas (MKT) depot once located at the current pocket park site was demolished after passenger service ended in the 1960s. A different depot was relocated and adapted as a restaurant. While the relocated depot survives, the City-managed pocket park commemorates the site of the demolished depot, and the Parks and Recreation Department helps maintain the grounds.



PUBLIC HISTORY

ORAL HISTORIES

Oral histories collect and preserve the history of past events, people, and places, through personal memory and experience. The collection of oral histories involves recording planned interviews with individuals. Oral histories are primary sources, as they provide first-hand insight into history. The collection of oral histories is a particularly powerful tool for understanding the history of underrepresented communities, whose stories are often absent from the historic record.

Texas State University houses oral histories produced by Public History students, accessible in-person at the university's [Special Collections and Archives](#). The San Marcos Public Library houses oral histories conducted by the HASM and the HCHC. In 2024, the San Marcos Public Library published [33 oral history interviews on YouTube](#) from the HASM and HCHC.

HERITAGE ASSOCIATION OF SAN MARCOS

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 1973-2015

The HASM has compiled [over 50 audio interviews](#) and several video interviews with local residents to help preserve the history and culture of the City. Many of these are available at the San Marcos Public Library or available for purchase through the organization.

HAYS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

VOICES OF HAYS COUNTY HISTORY, 2007-ONGOING

The HCHC has collected [16 oral history interviews](#) with residents of Hays County since 2007. Interviewees include several long-time San Marcos residents. The HCHC continues to conduct oral histories to add to the Voices of Hays County History. Interested participants can [contact the HCHC](#).

COUNCIL FOR THE INDIGENOUS AND TEJANO COMMUNITY

STORIES OF OUR PEOPLE, BY OUR PEOPLE, 2021

A proclamation was adopted by Hays County Commissioners Court recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month and the contributions of Indigenous and Tejano first families in Hays County. To mark the occasion, Indigenous and Tejano community members read aloud their family histories and experiences. The recorded meeting, titled "Stories of Our People, by Our People" is available at the [Council for the Indigenous and Tejano community website](#).

A CENTURY OF TEJANO HISTORY, 2023- ONGOING

This ongoing project by the CITC included oral history interviews with eight families, six of which are being made into short films highlighting the history of Indigenous and Tejano families in Hays County. After editing the raw footage into a short film, each interview is screened at a public event, then added to the CITC website, while the raw footage and transcripts are archived at Texas State University. To date, three films have been completed and publicly screened, with additional films in progress.

SAN MARCOS MURAL ARTS PROGRAM

MS. OLLIE'S STORE MURAL AND ORAL HISTORY, 2024

The San Marcos Mural Arts Program commissioned a mural, seen below, and oral history collection to honor the legacy of Ms. Ollie Hamilton. Ms. Ollie owned and operated Ollie's Store, a general store, in the Dunbar neighborhood for 46 years. She was known for her willingness to help others by providing shelter, food, and kindness to those in need. Ms. Ollie passed away in 1985, and the store was willed to her family members. In 2017, it was sold to its current owner. The mural and oral history project was completed in 2024. The mural includes a QR code to listen to [eight oral history interviews](#).

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

CRADDOCK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 1974-1978

Dr. Emmie Craddock and Texas State University History graduate students conducted [59 oral history interviews about the local and regional history of San Marcos](#) and the surrounding area, families and genealogy, and working at or attending the university.

TEXAS SESQUICENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 1985-1986

Dr. Ron Brown and Texas State University History students conducted oral history interviews with former faculty, staff, alumni, and community members from San Marcos and its surrounding areas. The interviewees shared their [memories about the university, city, and life in Central Texas](#).

LBJ 100 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEWS, 2008

To celebrate the [centennial of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's birth](#), the Lyndon Baines Johnson Museum and Texas State University collaborated to record 45 oral history interviews related to the life and legacy of the president. The interviews included 49 participants and an exhibition, displayed through 2009.

Miss Ollie's Store Mural, 404 Centre Street (COSM)



DOCUMENTARIES

Documentaries are traditional and effective tools to combine oral history with clips of video and imagery to place in museums as well as to broadcast. Among other groups, the HCHC began producing short documentaries in 2008. Richard Kidd directed most, and Kate Johnson produced them. They include Hays County residents as interviewees and sources of information. The documentaries are available on the HCHC [website](#), on YouTube, and physical copies can be purchased at the Kyle Railroad Depot.

HASM

MEMORIES OF THE SQUARE, NOT DATED

The HASM Oral History Committee produced a documentary featuring narrators Shirley Rogers, Bill Pennington, Nicci Harrison, Beth Morrisset, Charles Waldrip, H.C. Kyle III, Joel Cliett, Ross King, Jane Latham, Terry Serur, John Serur, Nova Festervan and Lee Festervan sharing their [memories of Courthouse Square and the downtown businesses that have come and gone](#) over the years.

HCHC

HAYS COUNTY IN WORLD WAR II, 2024

The HCHC published the documentary "[Hays County in World War II](#)" on YouTube in 2024. The documentary uses interviews with Hays County World War II veterans and discusses the San Marcos Army Airfield, present-day San Marcos Airport and Gary Jobs Corps Center.

A ROAD REMEMBERED, 2024

The HCHC documentary "[A Road Remembered](#)," published on YouTube in 2024, was created in collaboration with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and tells the history of the Camino Real de los Tejas, a historic trail that linked Mexico City to present-day Texas and Louisiana. The Camino Real de los Tejas was the central route for the Spanish colonization of Texas and is a designated NHT.

OTHERS

PROFILE OF A BOOM TOWN: SAN MARCOS IN THE '70S, 1972

Produced by the KTBC News Department, this special looks at the [City's rapid growth](#). Speaking City leaders, reporter David Jarrott explores some of the reasons behind the growth from business opportunities to higher education to urban renewal projects. Covers certain 'growing pains,' including community resistance to change. While it mentions discrimination against Mexican Americans as a possible factor, the special places more focus on the generation gap, fielding concerns about transient, young voters.

THE RIVER OF INNOCENCE: THE STORY OF THE SAN MARCOS RIVER, 1983

Ron Coley directed a documentary presented by KHUT about [The San Marcos River](#) and its importance to the Central Texas Region.

YAKONA, 2014

Created by Paul Collins and Anlo Sepulveda, Yakona is an award-winning documentary that tells the story of the San Marcos River from the river's own perspective. Using powerful imagery rather than narration, the film captures the river's role as a sacred place for Indigenous peoples, a source of life and recreation, and a witness to cultural change.

THE LAYERED HISTORIES OF SAN MARCOS' TOWN SQUARE, 2015

With support from THC, a narrated slideshow presents an introduction to the cultural history of San Marcos' town square. Produced for the heritage travel app, Texas Time Travel Tours, the program is also on the [THC YouTube site](#).

STORYMAPS

As technology has evolved, more and more stories are being shared online via interactive Esri Geographic Information System (GIS) StoryMaps that allow viewers to explore maps of resources and digitized historical imagery including snapshots and old newspapers among other items. These projects are not static and can be updated with new information about projects as they proceed.

DUNBAR HISTORIC DISTRICT & DUNBAR SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS BUILDING STORYMAP, 2023

The City [Historic Preservation Program created a StoryMap](#) to document the NRHP nomination and designation process and timeline. Project background was shared and feedback was solicited from the public on this project funded through the NPS Underrepresented Communities grant and a CLG grant.

DUNBAR PARK THROUGH THE AGES STORYMAP, 2024

City Parks and Recreation staff created a StoryMap to highlight the park's history and development from the early nineteenth century to the present-day. The StoryMap includes the designation of the Dunbar Historic District, the creation of the San Marcos Dunbar and Heritage neighborhood plan, and the park's recognition as a Lone Star Legacy Park in 2025.

[Draft Nominations](#)[Process & Timeline](#)[Project Background](#)[NRHP](#)[Past Events](#)[Get Involved](#)

Explore the Draft Nominations!

The Texas State Board of Review meets three times each year to advise the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding National Register nominations. This review is required by federal law and provides an opportunity for public comment.

The draft nominations were presented to the Texas State Board of Review on **January 13, 2024**, and were approved. In the coming months, the Texas Historical Commission will finalized the nominations and send them to the National Park Service for acceptance and inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places!

Click the buttons below to read the draft nominations.



- Black ownership starting in the 1860s
- Black ownership starting in the 1870s
- Black ownership starting in the 1880s
- Black ownership starting in the 1890s
- Indicates partial lot ownership

City lots owned by known Black San Marcos residents in the 19th century

OUTREACH

CULTURAL EVENTS

[Visit San Marcos](#) highlights cultural, arts, and heritage tourism events, which are often held in historical locations and/or celebrate culture and are sponsored by various City departments and partners.

EVENT	TIME OF YEAR	LOCATION	SPONSOR	ESTABLISHED
History Happy Hours	Multiple	Rotating locations	Heritage Association of San Marcos	2024
Art Squared Arts Market	Second Saturday March–December	Courthouse Lawn and Downtown	San Marcos Art League	2014
Monthly SaturPLAY	Third Saturday	Courthouse Lawn and Downtown	COSM	2024
Annual Heritage Home Tour	Varies	Rotating Private Homes	Heritage Association of San Marcos	1976
Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration and Walk	Third Monday of January	Varies	Dunbar Heritage Association	2022
Annual Mardi Gras Parade	February or March	Historic Residential Districts	Mistick Krewe of Okeanos	2014
Annual Black History Month	February	Varies	Dunbar Heritage Association	2021
Annual Arts Fest	April	Downtown San Marcos	San Marcos Main Street Program	2025
Annual Mermaid Festival Parade and Street Fair	May	Downtown Promenade and Plaza Park	Mermaid Society of Texas	2017
Annual Spring Garden Tour	May	Rotating Private Gardens	Keep San Marcos Beautiful (COSM)	2024
Annual Preservation Month	May	Rotating Events and Locations	COSM	1973–2021 (a week), 2022
Annual Juneteenth Celebration	June	San Marcos Plaza Park	Juneteenth Foundation Inc.; Dunbar Heritage Association	2020
Annual Hispanic Heritage Month	September–October	Hays County Historic Courthouse	COSM; Hays County; Hispanic Heritage Exhibition Walk	2021–2022 (an event), 2023
Annual Eddie Durham Jazz Fest	October	Eddie Durham Park	Calaboose African American History Museum	2004
Indigenous Peoples Day	October	Spring Lake and rotating location	Indigenous Cultures Institute	2018
Sacred Springs Powwow	October	Meadows Center	Indigenous Cultures Institute	2011
Veteran's Day Dinner Dance	November	Commemorative Air Force Exhibit	Commemorative Air Force	2024
Annual Merry on the Square Holiday Market	December	Downtown San Marcos	San Marcos Main Street Program	2024

PRESERVATION MONTH

The City celebrates [Preservation Month](#) annually in May. Preservation Month's precursor was a National Preservation Week established in 1973. In 2005, the NTHP expanded the celebration and declared May national Preservation Month. Each May, the Mayor issues a proclamation recognizing Preservation Month, and the City has hosted related events since at least 2022.

2022	<p>One-day event held at the historic Cephas House.</p> <p>Programming highlighted underrepresented stories of San Marcos.</p> <p>Presentations from Johnson Planning & Preservation, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, Dunbar HASM, and local archivist Beth Grayson.</p> <p>Walking tour of the Dunbar Historic District.</p> <p>Guided tour of the Calaboose African American History Museum.</p>
2023	<p>Historic Home Collective event at the Price Center.</p> <p>Presentations from local speakers about historic residential architecture, energy efficiency in historic homes, and wood window benefits, maintenance, and repairs.</p>
2024	<p>Historic Property Collective event at the Dunbar Recreation Center.</p> <p>Presentation from Edgar Dobson on the efforts to stabilize the Dunbar School Home Economics Building.</p> <p>Guided tour of the Dunbar School Home Economics Building.</p> <p>Updates on the ongoing project to list the San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building and the Dunbar Historic District in the NRHP.</p> <p>Presentations highlighting preservation economics, including the Hotel Occupancy Tax and Legacy Business Programs.</p>
2025	<p>Historic Preservation Plan Pop-Up at the San Marcos Public Library.</p>



COMPLEMENTARY PROJECTS

PUBLIC HISTORY PROJECT AQUARENA SPRINGS AMUSEMENT PARK, 1998-2009

In 1994, Texas State purchased Aquarena Springs Amusement Park and the surrounding 90 acres with an objective to restore Spring Lake and establish [The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment](#). As they removed the majority of the park's amenities, Dr. Cynthia Brandimarte and her students undertook an extensive Public History Aquarena Springs Project four years later. The public history collection covers the [history of the San Marcos area, tourism, and other information related to the park](#).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION THE MEADOWS CENTER FOR WATER AND THE ENVIRONMENT, 2002

Texas State University's [The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment](#) is connected to the [Spring Lake Natural Area](#) and is the former site of the Aquarena Springs Amusement Park, which was the subject of a Texas State [Public History Project](#). While underwater archaeology has been ongoing since 1978, the historic amusement park hotel eventually as The Meadows Center.

NATURAL AREA CONSERVATION SPRING LAKE NATURAL AREA AND CONSERVATION LANDS, 2007

The [Spring Lake Natural Area](#) features meadows and woodlands typical of the Edwards Plateau ecoregion and is part of the Sink Creek Watershed. It is at the headwaters of the San Marcos River, its upper portion extending nearly 4 miles through the city. Half of the area is in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone. The San Marcos Springs flows from Edwards Aquifer in Austin and includes more than 200 outflows into Spring Lake. The water source has attracted inhabitants for over 12,000 years. Spring Lake was created when Edward Burleson built a dam across the San Marcos River in 1849. In the twentieth century, A. B. Rogers operated Aquarena Springs Resort at the site. Over half a century later, Texas State University acquired the Aquarena Springs amusement park and later sold 252 acres for residential development. Through bonds, grants, and donations the city was able to purchase the land in 2007.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT THE REAL MERMAIDS OF SAN MARCOS, 2013

Hunter Oatman-Stanford, a senior producer at Collectors Weekly, [authored an article](#) on the history of Spring Lake centered on the sites tourism development and the real life mermaids that were part of Aquarena Springs attractions. The article uses historical research and interviews with Peggy Sparks, a former Aquarena mermaid and the great-aunt of the article's author.

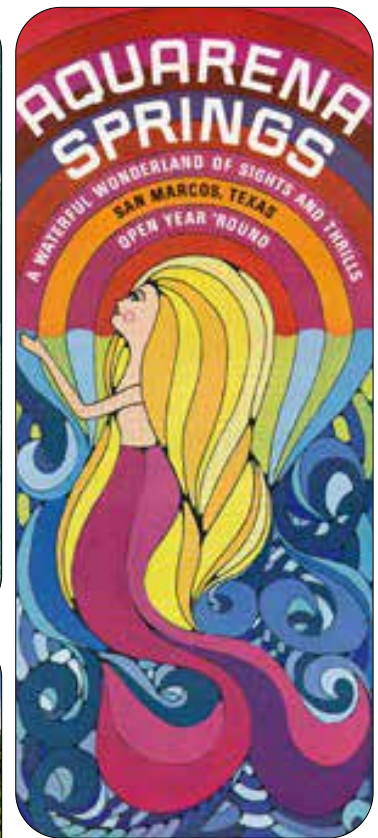
DOCUMENTARY ABANDONED AMUSEMENT PARK SLOWLY BECOMES NATURE PRESERVE IN TEXAS, 2023

Architect and Historian Scott Dailey produced an eight-minute video on [YouTube](#) presenting a brief history of Aquarena Springs. The video discusses the development of Spring Lakes from colonization to the closure of the Aquarena Springs Amusement Park.

STORY MAP SAN MARCOS MERMAID STATUES

City GIS staff produced a [StoryMap of San Marcos' mermaid statues](#) in 2024. The interactive map features ten mermaid statues. Each statue includes its location, creator, a brief description of the statue, a photograph, and its pinned location on a map.





1950s Aquarena postcard and 1968 psychedelic brochure collected in public history project; The Meadows Center at TXST; and the City of San Marcos Mermaid March Story Map.





4



POLICY & PROGRAMS ANALYSIS

POLICY & PROGRAMS STATEMENT

The City of San Marcos is a home rule city with a council-manager form of government. While general law cities can only exercise powers granted to it by the state, a home rule city has the authority to make its own local laws, policies, and ordinances, as long as they do not conflict with state or federal laws. City staff develop their goals and plans at the direction of Mayor and the City Council and other appointed boards and commissions in consideration the community at large and public input. This chapter includes a summary of leadership hierarchy and of the departments, boards, and commissions most involved with planning for, maintaining, and celebrating cultural and historic resources and analysis of the relevant programs and policies they implement.

Previous two pages: President Lyndon B. and Lady Byrd Johnson greet locals; San Marcos Courthouse (Courtesy of SMPL-HCC)

GOVERNMENT OVERVIEW

LEADERSHIP & CITY STAFF



View of Courthouse from Kissing Alley (COSM)

[Mayor and City Council](#)

Composed of a Mayor elected at-large by the people for a 2-year term and 6 Council Members elected at-large for staggered 3-year terms. Enacts policies, adopts ordinances and resolutions, establishes the annual budget to provide services to the public, and sets the city tax and utility rates for San Marcos.

[Boards and Commissions](#)

Advisory or regulatory bodies whose members are appointed by the City Council to focus on or oversee specific areas.

[City Manager](#)

An appointed official who develops the budget and is responsible for the day-to-day administration and operations of the city.

[City Attorney](#)

An appointed official who regularly advises the City Manager, City Council, and members of City Boards and Commissions.

[City Departments](#)

Carry out the day-to-day operations of the government. Implement policies and provide services to the public.

[Planning and Development Services Department](#)

Implements City Council enacted ordinances related to zoning and development and oversees Historic Preservation Program.

[Economic Development Department](#)

Oversees the Main Street Program and champions historic preservation in many ways, such as through supporting the Legacy Business Program.

[Public Works Department](#)

Oversees operations of infrastructure services. The Facilities Division maintains historical public/city-owned buildings.

[Parks and Recreation](#)

Oversees the park and recreation system and fosters stewardship of rivers and natural environments. Maintains city-owned cemeteries and historic resources within parks.

[Destination Services](#)

Identifies and implements marketing opportunities to promote historic, heritage, and cultural tourism to potential overnight visitors. Manages the Visit San Marcos website (visitsanmarcos.com).

CITY BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

[Arts Commission](#)

Provides oversight for the expenditure of city Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds for the promotion of the arts and oversees the Mural Arts Program, annual Arts and Cultural Grants, and the placement and funding of public art. The commission receives support from the Texas Commission on the Arts, which reviews Cultural District applications.

[Cemetery Commission](#)

Gives recommendations to the City Council for budget, maintenance projects, and special programs for the historic City Cemetery.

[Convention and Visitors Bureau Board](#)

Provides advice on the promotion of tourism on the Visit San Marcos website, which promotes cultural resources, arts, businesses, and events.

[Economic Development San Marcos Board](#)

Works with the Economic Development Department, which supports the Legacy Business Program and other local incentives that can be used for historic preservation such as the Business Improvement & Growth Grants and the Downtown Co-Marketing Fund.

[Historic Preservation Commission \(HPC\)](#)

Works with the Historic Preservation Program of the Planning and Development Department, has final authority on COAs in established historic districts and historic landmarks, and is advisory in establishing new local historic landmarks and historic districts.

[Main Street Advisory Board](#)

Collaborates with Main Street Program staff to advise the City Council on recommended goals and priorities for the Main Street Program.

[Neighborhood Commission](#)

Advises the City Council, other Commissions, and staff to seek solutions to common problems and issues within neighborhoods throughout the city.

[Parks and Recreation Board](#)

Provides advice and recommendations to the City Council in matters regarding acquisition, development, improvement, equipment, and maintenance of all City parks, playgrounds, and facilities, including those with historic resources.

[Planning and Zoning Commission \(P&ZC\)](#)

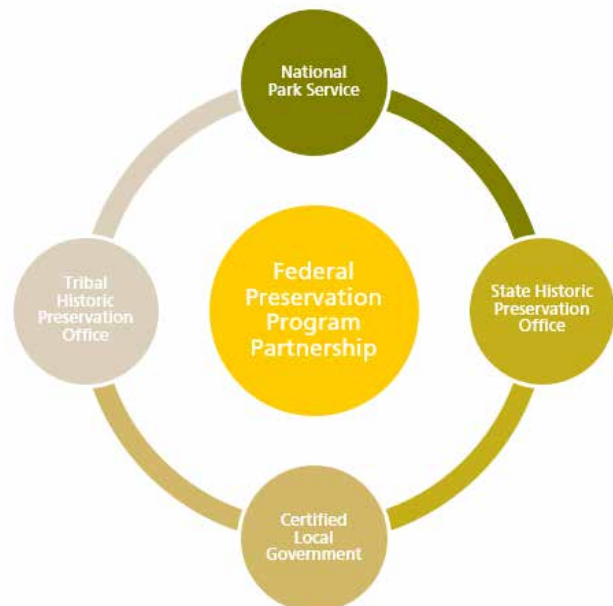
Advises the City Council to ensure planned and purposeful development of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, to protect the integrity of our natural and cultural resources and neighborhoods, and to enforce State and local statutes and ordinances.

[San Marcos Industrial Development Corporation](#)

Considers and authorizes the issuance of bonds for the purpose of promoting and developing commercial, industrial, and manufacturing enterprises, some of which may be able to reuse historic resources.

[Zoning Board of Adjustments](#)

Considers variances and special exceptions to the standards established in the San Marcos Development Code and considers HPC appeals.



CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG)

The City of San Marcos became a CLG in 1990. Requirements for participation in the program have remained relatively consistent, including comprehensive planning addressing historic preservation, which is handled by the Historic Preservation Program within the Planning and Development Services Department in the City of San Marcos.

CLG REQUIREMENT

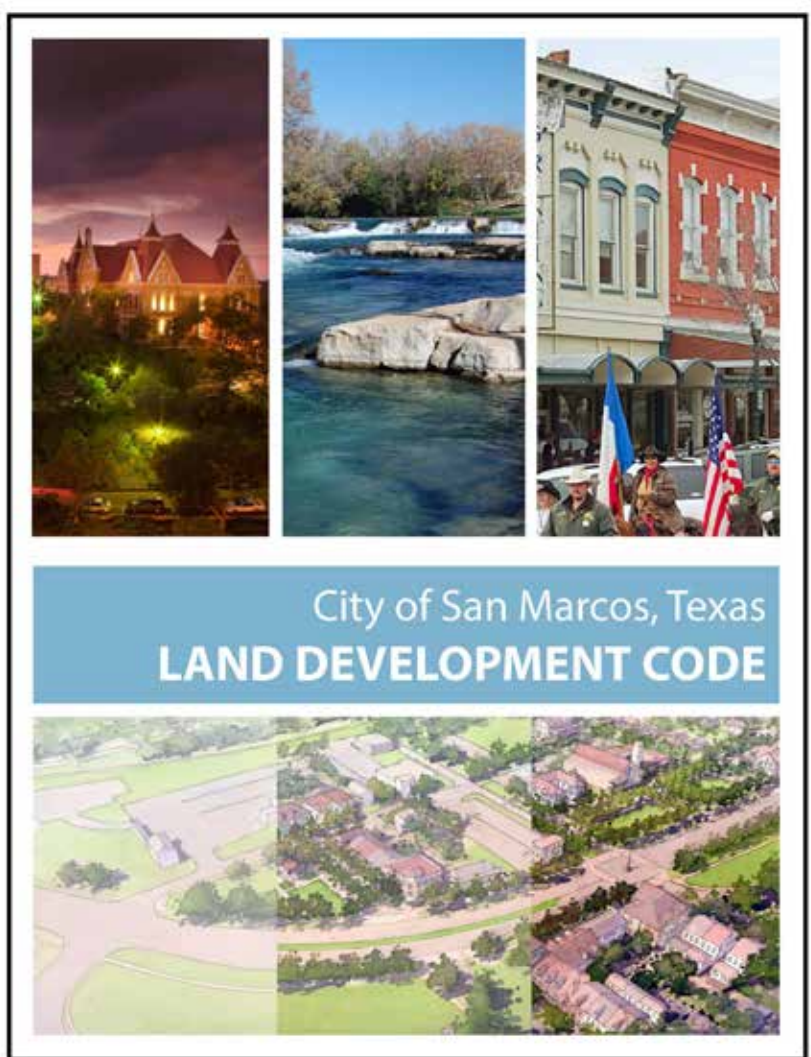
CITY COMPLIANCE

✓	Adopt and enforce a local preservation ordinance that meets THC's CLG Program requirements.	The City Council adopted a preservation ordinance in the City of San Marcos Land Development Code (SMDC), thus national and state designations are not the sole basis for land use decisions.
✓	Establish a preservation commission with design review authority.	The HPC reviews COAs for activities involving local historic districts or a local historic landmark.
✓	Review alterations to (and demolitions of) designated properties following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards (SOI).	SMDC directs the HPC to consider SOI standards , among other criteria, such as the Historic District Design Guidelines in Appendix C of the San Marcos Design Manual.
✓	Establish criteria for local designation of historic properties.	City Council adopted updated designation criteria for historic districts and landmarks in 2023 based on the recommendation in the 2019 My Historic SMTX historic resources survey.
✓	Enforce a minimum 60-day stay of demolition for landmarks or contributing properties located within a historic district.	SMDC requires a 90-day review period for demolition permits for properties with high or medium preservation priorities, designated as an RTHL, listed in the NRHP, or at least 80 years of age.
✓	Appoint a Historic Preservation Officer (HPO). The HPO must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards.	Alison Brake has served as the HPO since 2017 and meets SOI Standards under History.
✓	Adopt and maintain a local preservation plan, or statement of goals and objectives for the local preservation program.	San Marcos developed historic preservation goals and objectives as early as 2017. Although a standalone Historic Preservation Plan is not required for CLG compliance, this planning investment is a best practice.

CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC)

The HPC considers applications for the designation of local historic districts and historic landmarks, applications for Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) related to designated properties and discusses certain requests for demolition. Having an HPC is one of the requirements for a community to establish and maintain participation in the CLG program. On the following page, the CLG requirements for preservation commissions are presented alongside the status of the HPC in San Marcos. In addition to these requirements, the HPC operates under a set of approved by-laws.



In Texas, the City Code of Ordinances is a comprehensive compilation of all local laws, regulations, and ordinances passed by the city council. Often a subsection of the Code of Ordinances, Land Development Code addresses regulations for development procedures, subdivisions, zoning, land use, environmental compliance, and supplemental development standards. [San Marcos City Code of Ordinances](#) establishes the HPC under Chapter 2, Article 3, Division 7, which sets the composition and terms of office, and Property Maintenance Code, which applies to all properties historic or not, under Chapter 14, Article 4. The [City of San Marcos Land Development Code \(SMDC\)](#) is located in Subpart B of the City Code of Ordinances. The SMDC includes regulations for development procedures, subdivisions, zoning, land use, environmental compliance, and supplemental development standards. It outlines HPC procedures in Chapter 2 and Demolition by Neglect and alternative district types in Chapter 4.

CLG REQUIREMENT

HPC COMPLIANCE

✓	The preservation commission shall have a minimum of five members	HPC consists of seven members.
✓	All commission members must be appointed by either the chief elected official or City Council.	HPC members are appointed by City Council.
✓	All commission members must have a demonstrated interest, knowledge, or training in historic preservation.	HPC roster indicates position/role (e.g. property owner in district).
✓	All commission members are required to complete Texas Open Meetings Act training provided by the Texas Attorney General's Office.	San Marcos requires this training; certificates must be completed within 90 days of taking office.
✓	All commission members must attempt to remain current concerning historic preservation issues and techniques. At least once a year, one or more commission members must attend a THC-led or THC-approved training.	HPC members typically attend multiple training sessions per year.
✓	At least 60 percent of the commission membership shall be drawn from the preservation related professions defined by the NPS. This requirement may be waived if the local government can provide written documentation to the THC that it has made a reasonable effort to fill those positions.	Professions of HPC members are not on the roster but occupational information is included on the City Boards and Commissions applications. City Council tries to appoint members from the disciplines of architecture, history, archaeology, or other disciplines related to historic preservation. HPO reports that there has been a small applicant pool for the HPC in years past.
✓	Terms of office of commission members shall be staggered and of at least two years duration. There need not be a limit on the number of consecutive terms served by one member.	The members of the HPC serve three-year staggered terms.
✓	The local appointing authority shall act within 60 days to fill a vacancy, including expired terms. The THC shall be provided with the résumés and qualifications of new appointments.	HPC vacancies are promptly filled by City Council with qualified candidates.
✓	All meetings of the commission shall be open to the public. Minutes shall be kept of each meeting and shall be available for public inspection. A copy of the minutes of each meeting shall be sent to the THC following approval at the next regularly scheduled meeting.	HPC meetings are recorded and available for viewing online. Approved and signed minutes are sent to the THC and are available online through the City's website.
✓	The commission must meet no less than six times a year. All commission meetings shall be properly posted and conducted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act.	HPC generally meets once per month (i.e. twelve times per year)
✓	All responsibilities and duties assigned to local preservation commissions shall be complementary to and carried out in coordination with those assigned to the State in 36 CFR 61.6 (e) Procedures for State, Tribal, and Local Government Historic Preservation Programs.	HPC procedures align with 36 CFR 61.6.

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE

San Marcos City Code of Ordinances adopts the International Property Maintenance Code under [Chapter 14, Article 4](#) including amendments that add local requirements such as the artistic boarding up of vacant structures. [Section A105.1](#) requires that doors and windows of vacant buildings and structures be boarded in accordance with standards for securing and artistic board-up. The City defines artistic boarding as “painting material used to secure door, window, or other openings to resemble the opening which they are covering.”



Example of a vacant building located at 752 Gravel Street that followed the artistic board up guidelines.

SAN MARCOS DEVELOPMENT CODE (SMDC)

LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION

Where is this addressed in the SMDC? [Chapter 2, Article 5, Division 2](#)

Can a property be designated without owner consent?

Per [Chapter 211, Section 211.0165](#) of the Texas Local Government Code, a property cannot be designated a local landmark or be included in a local district without property owner consent.

What is the application process?

HPC, groups, property owners, or owner’s agent follow the Universal Application Procedures, per [Chapter 2, Article 3, Division 1](#).

What does the Application report require?

Guidance is unclear, stating only that it should describe the historic significance and current characteristics of the area and demonstrate that a resource meets NRHP criteria and 3 of 16 additional criteria in [Chapter 2, Article 5, Division 4](#); shown on the following page.

How long does historic designation take?

Staff and HPC schedule are unclear, because scheduling varies, dependent upon the various calendars of the HPC, P&Z, and City Council. P&Z and City Council schedules can be found in subsequent sections of [Chapter 2 Article 4](#). Staff reviews the application for completeness, schedules a public hearing before the HPC, and prepares a report for the HPC, per [Chapter 2, Article 5, Division 4](#). Prior to the public hearing, notices are mailed, posted, and published. The HPC’s recommendation is forwarded to P&Z. Another public hearing is held, and the P&Z’s recommendation, along with HPC’s recommendations, is forwarded to the City Council.

Who decides if properties or districts are designated?

City Council votes to pass an ordinance to enact a zoning overlay that designates a local landmark or historic district after receiving recommendations from HPC and P&Z.

What are the implications of designation?

Certain activities require a Certificate of Appropriateness (see next section).

CRITERIA FOR LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION

1. Have value as a visible or archaeological reminder of the cultural heritage of the community, or national event;
2. Location as a site of a significant local, county, state, or national event;
3. Identification with a person or person who significantly contributed to the development of the community, county, state, or nation;
4. Identification as the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or landscape architect whose individual work has influenced the development of the community, county, state, or nation;
5. Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style valuable for the study of a period, type, method of construction, or use of indigenous materials;
6. Historical, architectural or cultural character as a particularly fine or unique example of a utilitarian structure, including, but not limited to, bridges, acequias, gas stations, transportation shelters, or other commercial structures;
7. Unique location or singular physical characteristics that make it an established or familiar visual feature;
8. Historical, architectural, or cultural integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship;
9. Character as a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of historically, architecturally or culturally significant sites, buildings, objects or structures united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development;
10. Character as an established and geographically definable neighborhood, united by culture, architectural style or physical plan and development;



San Marcos Colored School Home Economics Building

11. Distinctive character, interest or value; strongly exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, ethnic or historical heritage of San Marcos, Texas, or the United States;
12. Important example of a particular architectural type or specimen;
13. Important and significant relationship to other distinctive structures, sites, or areas, either as an important collection of properties or architectural style or craftsmanship with few intrusions, or by contributing to the overall character of the area according to the plan based on architectural, historic or cultural motif;
14. Significant archaeological value that had produced or is likely to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest;
15. Representation as a resource, whether natural or man-made, which greatly contributes to the character or image of a defined neighborhood or community area; or,
16. Designation as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark or State Archeological Landmark or including in the NRHP.



Charles S. Cock House

KEY TAKEAWAY

Local historic landmark designation is achieved through overlay zoning, a process that can be initiated by anyone but must have owner consent, is reviewed by the HPC and P&Z, and established by the City Council. What goes into the report and how long the process takes is unclear. As written, integrity is implied but not necessarily required.

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

Design review ensures that any proposed alterations to local designated historic resources whose façades are visible from public rights-of-way will not impair their historical significance.

Where are COAs addressed in the SMDC?	Chapter 2, Article 5, Division 5
What is the application process?	Property Owner or Owner's Agent follows the Universal Application Procedures, per Chapter 2, Article 3, Division 1 .
When is a COA not needed?	COAs are not needed for ordinary repair and maintenance activities or for interior work. An administrative COA is required for painting a structure in the Downtown Historic District.
When can Staff give Administrative Approval?	When painting buildings and/or structures in historic districts.
When does the HPC have to approve a COA?	Any proposed construction, alteration, relocation, signage, parking lot construction, outbuilding construction, demolition, and addition or alteration of features to a local landmark or resources in a local historic district visible from public rights-of way. E.g. changes to windows, new sheds, additions, exterior signage, fences, changes to roofing or siding material, etc.
How long does HPC COA approval take?	Staff reviews and forwards to HPC when application is complete. HPC reviews in their monthly meeting and approves or requests more information. There is approximately 60 days between submittal of an application and the decision by HPC.
What is considered in review of a request for a COA?	The effect on the historical, architectural, or cultural character of the resource; compliance with regulations; owner hardship; and the construction and repair standards cited in Section 4.5.2.1 of the SMDC, the Historic District Design Guidelines in Appendix C of the Design Manual, and the SOI Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
Can decisions about COAs be appealed?	While not common, an approved COA could be appealed to the Zoning Board of Adjustments.
What do COAs have to do with permits?	A COA is required regardless of the need for other permits. However, a COA must be approved before any other permits like a building permit or sign permit are issued. COAs expires one year after approval if the work has not started and two years if the work is not completed.

KEY TAKEAWAY

COAs are required for exterior changes to local landmarks and resources whose façades are visible from the public right of way within local historic districts.

DEMOLITION REVIEW

Where is demolition addressed in the SMDC?

[Chapter 2, Article 7, Division 4](#)

When is a demolition permit required?

Prior to demolition of a structure on a lot, tract or parcel, regardless of the age of the property.

What is the application process?

Property Owner or Owner's Agent follows Universal Application Procedures, per [Chapter 2, Article 3, Division 1](#).

When can Staff give Administrative Approval?

When buildings or structures are not listed in the NRHP, RTHL, or are younger than 80 years of age, or are not high and medium preservation priorities in the 2019 My Historic SMTX survey.

When does demolition delay occur?

When buildings are listed in the NRHP, RTHL, or are 80 years of age or older, or are high and medium preservation priorities in the 2019 My Historic SMTX survey.

How long does HPC demolition review take?

Within 20 days of receiving a complete application, Staff will send notice of the request and of a public hearing. If the HPC determines the building is not historically significant, a demolition permit may be issued. If the building is determined to be historically significant, the commission may extend the demolition permit delay up to a total of 180 days.

What is the point of a demolition delay?

The delay allows time for researching historic significance as well as time to explore alternatives to demolition.

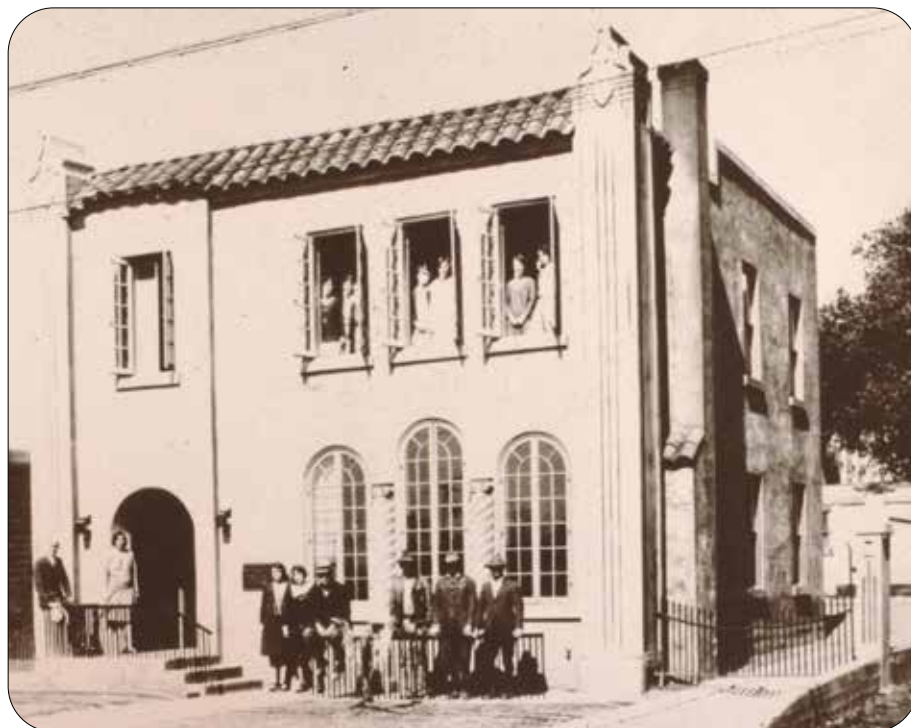
What if a building is demolished without approval?

The violator may be fined \$2,000 or the city may seek other legal remedies.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The 2019 demolition of the National Register-listed San Marcos Telephone Company Building prompted creation of Demolition Review.

Demolition of any building requires a permit, and a permit for demolition of a historic-age building will typically not be granted until at least 90 days after the application, in hopes that an alternative to demolition may be identified.



San Marcos Telephone Company Building, 1930

DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT

Where is demolition by neglect addressed in the SMDC?

[Chapter 4, Article 5, Division 2](#)

What is demolition by neglect?

It refers to the gradual deterioration of a property when a property owner does not perform minimum maintenance or repairs.

How does the City address demolition by neglect?

City inspectors, the HPC, the HPO, and/or other residents can prepare a report.

The City notifies the owner via certified mail.

The owner has 30 days to submit a stabilization proposal.

It then goes to the HPC.

If there is no response after holding public hearings, the matter is turned over to municipal court.

COMMON CONDITIONS OF NEGLECT

The following could indicate serious disrepair or significant deterioration:

1. Deterioration of exterior walls, foundations, or other vertical support that causes leaning, sagging, splitting, listing, or buckling.
2. Deterioration of external chimneys that causes leaning, sagging, splitting, listing, or buckling.
3. Deterioration or crumbling of exterior plaster finishes, surfaces or mortars.
4. Ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs, and foundations, including broken windows or doors.
5. Defective protection or lack of weather protection for exterior wall and roof coverings, including lack of paint, or weathering due to lack of paint or other protective covering.
6. Rotting, holes, and other forms of material decay.
7. Deterioration of exterior stairs, porches, handrails, window and door frames, cornices, entablatures, wall facings, and architectural details that causes delamination, instability, loss of shape and form, or crumbling.
8. Deterioration that has a detrimental effect upon the special character of the district as a whole or the unique attributes and character of the contributing structure.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Enforcement of demolition-by-neglect provisions is limited under the current complaint-based system. Many residents are reluctant to report neighbors, which reduces the effectiveness of this approach.

OTHER ZONING DISTRICT TYPES

CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICTS

SMDC [Chapter 4, Article 5, Division 3](#) defines Corridor Overlay Districts. They are established in order to ensure a consistent pattern of development, scenic gateways, and efficient access management along major transportation corridors. The conservation corridor overlay district is intended to preserve the sensitive environmental region and natural and scenic beauty along designated conservation corridors.

A corridor overlay may pass through or border historic districts, requiring special design considerations that respect historic character while managing transportation needs. It may have historic significance, such as historic parkways, scenic byways, or routes with cultural importance to the community. The “scenic gateway” objective of corridor overlays aligns with preserving historic viewsheds or approaches to historic areas.

KEY TAKEAWAY

SMDC includes historic preservation tools like the Corridor Overlay, which haven't been used.

NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICTS & CHARACTER DISTRICT-1

SMDC [Chapter 4, Article 1, Division 2](#) defines Neighborhood Districts as zoning classifications primarily intended for infill or re-development in medium or high density residential or commercial areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan and as allowed by the SMDC. The following zoning classifications can benefit historic preservation because they promote preservation and enhancement of neighborhood character while providing options for diverse and affordable housing or limited neighborhood oriented commercial uses.

ND-3, ND-3.2, & ND-3.5 Districts:

Intended primarily for residential living and accommodate single-family detached housing, townhouses, and, in ND-3.5, small-scale multifamily. These districts encourage and provide opportunities for affordable home ownership and diverse housing types.

ND-4 District: Intended primarily for residential living in areas where the land use pattern is predominately multifamily or townhouse with some commercial. Small-scale multifamily living that fits in with a single-family character and some limited neighborhood-oriented commercial on corners can be accommodated.

N-CM District: Intended to serve as a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use corridor located within close proximity to primarily residential areas and along predominately commercial corridors. This creates pedestrian-friendly corridors and gateways to predominantly residential areas and provides appropriate buffers and transitions to adjacent residential uses.

In addition, Character District-1 is a zoning classification intended for the preservation of open space and to protect the most sensitive natural resources. It may include widely dispersed rural single-family homes but is primarily characterized by extensive, undisturbed landscapes. This type of district may be appropriate around rural historic assets and natural features to help preserve archaeological resources.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Neighborhood and Character Districts are zoning classifications that are established through rezoning property. While they may be used to rezone culturally cohesive neighborhoods that do not qualify for historic designation or do not want to be designated, this is a process that is reliant upon private property owners to undertake.

SAN MARCOS DESIGN MANUAL

The [San Marcos Design Manual](#) applies to new development, improvements, land, structures, construction, substantial modifications, uses, buildings, and lots, both public and private. Appendix C contains the Historic District and Local Landmark Design Guidelines. It addresses the document's purpose, provides guidance on renovating previous modifications, commercial buildings, residential buildings, new construction in historic districts, priority planning, maintenance, and relevant references. City Staff and the HPC use these rules and guidelines in decision making processes, such as the approval of COAs.

PROJECT TYPES	GUIDANCE OVERVIEW BY PROJECT TYPE
RENOVATING PREVIOUSLY MODIFIED BUILDINGS	<p>HPC should refer to old photographs and physical evidence of design and details as available.</p> <p>Commercial: Reestablish storefront relationship to sidewalk; replace modified storefronts with appropriate materials and proportions; open blocked windows; reinstall canopies.</p> <p>Residential: Return porch to original design; replace modified columns with compatible materials and design; consider restoring replaced elements such as siding and windows.</p>
NEW CONSTRUCTION	<p>Maintain overall height, width to height ratio, relationship to the street, established rhythms of the structural piers, etc.</p> <p>Seek guidance and assistance early in a project.</p>
RENOVATION	<p>Prioritize the most important work, identify character defining features, retain as much original building material as possible; match material, dimension, and profile of unrepairable features; focus on what will extend the life of the building.</p>
MAINTENANCE	<p>Use gentle cleaning methods, never sandblast.</p> <p>Perform regular maintenance tasks such as roof, gutter, and downspout cleaning; clean and repair windows as needed; repaint; ensure canopies and signs are secured.</p>



Historic Courthouse Square at night

CITY PRESERVATION ALIGNMENT

The City of San Marcos has a dedicated Historic Preservation Program under the Planning and Development Services Department, however, consideration of cultural and historic resources are integrated into almost every other City department and division's goals, plans, and decision-making processes. In addition to the Planning & Development Services Department, Destination Services, the Economic Development Department (which oversees the Main Street Program), and the Parks and Recreation Department work closely with cultural and historic resources. A review of citywide plans, codes, and programs indicate how well other departments and division align with the Department of Planning and Development Historic Preservation Program.

DEPARTMENT	PLAN / PROGRAM	ALIGNMENT WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Engineering & Capital Improvements	Master Plans, 2018-2023	Considers connectivity between historic resources among other resources in its thoroughfare, bicycle, and greenway plans.
Parks and Recreation Department	Open Space Master Plan, 2019	Among its many goals, the plan aims to add additional historical, cultural, and natural resource interpretative signage.
Arts Commission	Master Plan, 2022	Deeply considers historic assets in its plan and defines the role of the City in supporting arts and culture to improve quality of life and economic development.
Economic Development	Economic Development Policy, 2022	Encourages and supports high quality new business development and the expansion of its business community through retention, expansion, and recruitment endeavors; includes numerous incentives for use in historic redevelopment.
Community Forestry	Programming	Strives to conserve, protect, and enhance existing resources, in particular trees and natural landscapes and to establish and maintain new trees on more than 2,004 acres.
Neighborhood Enhancement	Resource Recovery Program	Strives to preserve and encourage cleanup of natural resources which is essential to pre-contact and historic settlement interpretation; promotes native habitats; helps manage stormwater run-off, which benefits cultural landscapes; and highlight historic and non-historic gardens through the Keep San Marcos Beautiful Spring Garden tour.
Main Street	Programming	Actively preserves and promotes the historic identity of downtown San Marcos through a balanced focus on design, economic vitality, organization, and promotional activities. It also supports a dedicated Downtown Clean Team, who handle litter removal, landscaping maintenance, amenity upkeep, graffiti management, and minor repairs, reinforcing the visual integrity and heritage character of the district.

COMPREHENSIVE & AREA PLANS

DEPARTMENT	ALIGNMENT WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2024)	Includes specific policy recommendations for historic preservation, interpretation of historic and cultural resources, and new development compatibility including the adoption of a Historic Preservation Plan.
Downtown Area Plan (adopted 2023)	Includes NRHP-listed Hays County Courthouse Historic District and Main Street San Marcos. Identifies area around Eddie Durham Park as a potential location for a Cultural District.
Blanco Gardens Area Plan (adopted 2025)	Addresses preservation concerns with the aim of ensuring that current residents are not displaced. Recommends the creation and implementation of a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan identifying historic and cultural resources in the Blanco Gardens Neighborhood. Recommends providing guidance for the protection, preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of identified resources.
Dunbar and Heritage Neighborhood Area Plans (ongoing)	Recommends the creation and implementation of a community-wide Historic Preservation Plan. Includes portions of six of the seven local historic district in San Marcos; Dunbar and Belvin Street are also listed in the NRHP. Evaluates preservation and conservation concerns. Recommends a preservation strategy including identifying locations best served by Neighborhood Conservation Districts, identifying areas to install interpretive materials to relay the neighborhoods' broader history, and focusing on appropriate infill that does not alter neighborhood character.
North of Campus Neighborhood Area Plan (ongoing)	Includes the Sessom Creek Natural Area, which is covered by a cultural overlay, and identifies one potentially NRHP eligible dwelling at 918 Chestnut Street. Identifies architectural styles in the plan area as Minimal Traditional, New Traditional, Ranch, and Craftsman. Recommends preserving neighborhood character through design guidelines.
South of Downtown (ongoing)	Includes the East Guadalupe and Barrio Victoria (Victory Gardens) neighborhoods along with a commercial corridor which runs south along South Guadalupe Street from the train tracks to I-35. Residents have identified housing, maintenance of existing properties, retention of neighborhood character, and celebration of the Mexican American and Indigenous culture as key areas to be addressed.
East Village Area Plan (ongoing)	Area is envisioned to include a series of public spaces, parks, trails, and open spaces that make it a desirable community gathering place in San Marcos.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SAN MARCOS MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The [San Marcos Main Street Program](#) maintains downtown San Marcos' historic and unique nature by recognizing the area's history and assisting in appropriate planning for its future. Through a revitalization program based on the National Main Street Center's Four Points of Main Street—design, economic vitality, organization, and promotion—the San Marcos Main Street Program works to ensure economic stability in the downtown area.

AWARDS BESTOWED TO THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

YEAR AWARDED	PRESERVATION PARTNER	AWARD	RECIPIENT
2016	National Main Street Center	Most Romantic Downtown	San Marcos Main Street
2018	APA, Texas Chapter	Great Neighborhood in Texas	San Marcos Main Street
2022	Texas Downtown Association	Best Business, Over 50K Population	The Davenport
		Best Event, Over 50K Population	Music on the Square

Bestowing awards is an effective means of preservation celebration, education, and promotion. In addition to receiving recognition, the Main Street Program bestows Love Downtown Awards each year.

LOVE DOWNTOWN AWARDS BESTOWED BY THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS OF THE YEAR
DOWNTOWN LEGEND
OUTSTANDING NEW BUSINESS
DOWNTOWN PARTNER OF THE YEAR*
KELLY FRANKS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR
INNOVATION AWARD
REVITALIZATION AWARD

**City of San Marcos Planning & Development Services Department was recipient in 2023 and City of San Marcos Planning & Development Services Department. Historic Preservation Program was recipient in 2025.*



LEGACY BUSINESS PROGRAM

The [Economic Development Department](#) in collaboration with the Planning and Development Services Department and San Marcos Main Street Program champions Legacy Businesses and maintains a [Legacy Business Program Registry](#). The program launched in 2024 with the goal of ensuring that Legacy Businesses can expand their customer base, access potential business incentives, keep community members employed, and increase visibility of their architectural, historical, and cultural significance. To qualify as a Legacy Business, businesses must be locally owned in operation for at least 20 years and serve as historical or cultural assets to the community. Businesses less than 20 years old may be considered on a case-by-case basis with at least two letters of support from the community. Benefits of Legacy Business designation include a marketing tool kit with information on how to make the most of this status, priority admission into the City's [Small Business Counseling Program](#), assistance with [Texas Treasures Business Award](#) applications—a state program that recognizes businesses 50 years or older—for eligible businesses, and those located in the Main Street District receive architectural guidance. The program has no state or national partners and is administered wholly by the City.

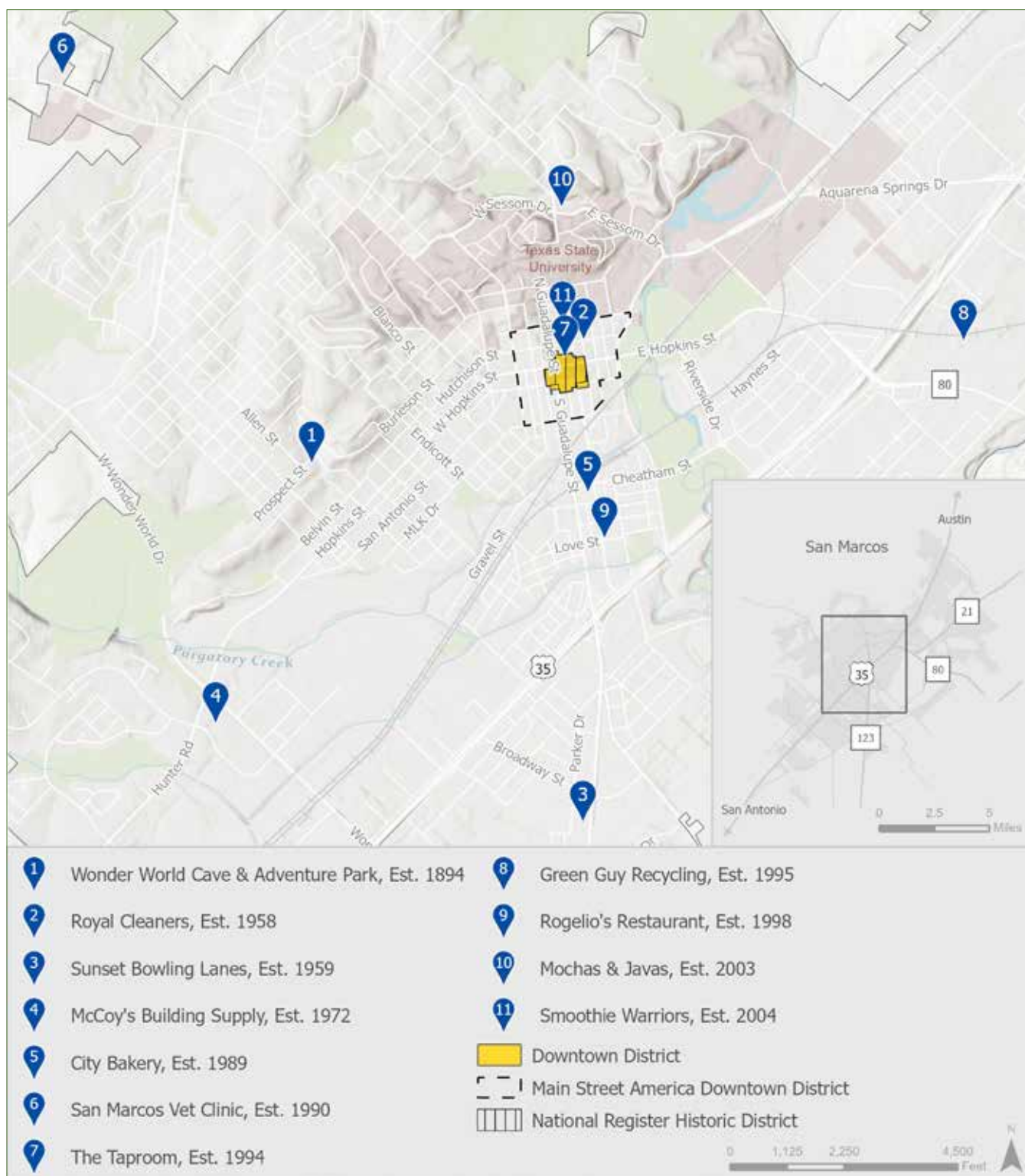
A LEGACY BUSINESS IN SAN MARCOS IS A LOCALLY OWNED ESTABLISHMENT THAT HAS BEEN OPEN FOR AT LEAST 20 YEARS AND SERVES AS A HISTORICAL OR CULTURAL ASSET TO THE COMMUNITY.

MAP KEY NUMBER	LEGACY BUSINESS	YEAR ESTABLISHED	YEAR DESIGNATED
1	Wonder World Cave & Adventure Park	1893	2024
2	Royal Cleaners	1958	2024
3	Sunset Bowling Lanes	1959	2025
4	McCoy's Building Supply	1972	2025
5	City Bakery	1989	2025
6	San Marcos Vet Clinic	1990	2025
7	The Taproom	1994	2024
8	Green Guy Recycling	1995	2025
9	Rogelio's Restaurant	1998	2024
10	Mochas & Javas	2003	2025
11	Smoothie Warriors	2004	2024

Legacy Businesses as of September 2025



Sunset Bowling Lanes



Historic preservation in San Marcos is supported through the Legacy Business Program and the [Main Street America District Downtown](#) Program. The Legacy Business Program is citywide, while the Main Street America District encompasses a larger area than both the National Register and local Downtown Historic Districts.

PRESERVATION FUNDING

Federal and state government funds and non-profit funds benefit the Historic Preservation Program and its partners.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND (HPF)

NPS gives federal money to THPOs and SHPOs like THC from the [HPE](#), established in 1976, each fiscal year. SHPOs must internally match 40% of the HPF received.

SHPOs must pass 10% of the HPF received to CLGs like San Marcos in the form of [CLG Grants](#) and [Competitive Grants](#) for NRHP nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, to name a few.

CLGs must internally match 50% of the HPF passed through the SHPO to the CLG with non-federal money from the City [Capital Improvements Plan](#) or with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), which benefit various other programs in addition to historic preservation when granted. The following are recent HPF Grants, which passed through THC to San Marcos and required 50% match.

YEAR AWARDED	HPF PROJECT	HPF-THC GRANT	CLG MATCH
2018	CLG Grant— <i>My Historic SMTX</i> Historic Resources Survey	\$39,290.85	\$39,290.85
2022	Underrepresented Communities Grant—Dunbar Neighborhood National Register Nomination, Calaboose African American Museum, and Ulysses Cephas House to the NRHP	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00

Based on a [THC-produced summary](#) of National HPF CLG grants administered by THC and awarded between 2013-2022, the average grant award per project was about \$15,000, which represented about 47% of the total project cost. The number of grants awarded to the City of San Marcos was slightly below the average for all other communities (2.7). Georgetown, a city of similar size, was awarded two projects totaling about \$40,000 during the same period.

TEXAS PRESERVATION TRUST FUND (TPTF)

The [TPTF](#), established in 1989 and administered by the THC, is managed by the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company. Investment earnings are distributed as matching grants, typically between \$10,000 and \$50,000, to qualified applicants for acquisition, survey, restoration, preservation, planning, and heritage education activities leading to the preservation of historic architectural and archaeological properties and associated collections of the State of Texas.

Applicants for grant assistance must provide a minimum of \$1 in cash to match each state dollar of the project's approved cost, and \$1 is reimbursed for every \$2 spent until the grant amount is reached. CLGs must internally match 50% of TPTF grants. San Marcos' Historic Preservation Program accomplishes this through allocations set in the [Annual Budget](#) and [Capital Improvements Plan](#).

OTHER STATE GRANTS

In addition to the THC, other state agencies provide grants that can benefit historic preservation and related initiatives in San Marcos.

YEAR AWARDED	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	PROJECT(S)	TOTAL
2014-2025	Texas Commission of the Arts	91 City organizations and individuals	Multiple	\$195,388
2024	Texas Parks and Wildlife Recreational Trails	Hays County	San Marcos Outer Loop Trail Presa Grande Segment	\$300,000
		Texas State University	San Marcos Outer Loop Trail Freeman Ranch Segment	\$135,740



Wildflowers along trail in Blanco Shoals Natural Area

NON-PROFIT GRANTS

Non-governmental preservation partners have provided a variety of grants to the City and San Marcos preservation partners.

YEAR AWARDED	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	PROJECT(S)	TOTAL
2016	The Meadows Foundation Grants	HCHC	Old Hays County Jail Restoration	Unknown
2020-2021	Humanities Texas Grants	Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos		\$2,500
		Texas Archeological Society in San Marcos		\$2,500 and \$7,200
		Lyndon Baines Johnson Museum of San Marcos	Coronavirus pandemic emergency relief	\$9,600
		Calaboose African American History Museum		\$12,000
		Indigenous Cultures Institute		\$12,000
2021		SMRF	Property acquisition of a conservation easement by San Marcos Springs and the San Marcos River	\$250,000
2024	Texas Historical Foundation	Shumla Archaeological & Research Center	Establish a public archive at their San Marcos location	Unknown
	NTHP Partners in Preservation	San Marcos Colored School Home Economics	Building Restoration	\$150,000
		City of San Marcos	Historic Preservation Plan	\$5,000

CITY OF SAN MARCOS GRANTS

Local level grants from the Economic Development Department and Arts Commission have supported historic preservation and preservation adjacent projects throughout the city.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PROGRAMS	YEAR EST.	APPLICANTS SINCE EST.	TOTAL SINCE EST.
Façade Improvement Business Improvement & Growth (BIG) Grant	2016	29	\$216,000*
Downtown Co-Marketing Fund	2012	45	\$257,013
Main Street Incentive Grant	2012	80	\$117,608

*Includes façade grant and public health grant

DESTINATION SERVICES

2023 ARTS, CULTURAL, HERITAGE, AND TOURISM GRANTS

Healing Through Art	\$1,464	SM Fest	\$13,071
Kissing Alley Concerts	\$2,300	Honoring Our Dead	\$4,000
Own Your Own Universe	\$3,121	SMART Orchestra	\$10,600
Art Squared	\$20,055	Broke Thespians	\$9,000
Walkers Gallery	\$11,000	First Tuesday Film Series	\$9,500
Love Lock SMTX	\$3,500	Indigenous Peoples Day 2023	\$2,200
Indigenous Arts & Summer Encounter	\$15,000	Juneteenth	\$4,500
Sacred Springs Powwow	\$32,700	Mermaid Promenade & Downtown Street Faire	\$18,700
Roberto Rios Exhibition	\$8,900	Sights and Sounds of Christmas	\$100,000
SMTX Pride	\$6,200	Centro Cultural de Hispano	\$25,000
ArtSpace	\$10,081	Price Center	\$25,000
Centro Diversity Programs	\$22,469	San Marcos Art Center	\$25,000
Summer in the Park	\$28,000	LBJ Museum of San Marcos	\$25,000
The Personhood Project	\$3,500	Calaboose African American History Museum	\$25,000



Youth participants in the Indigenous Arts & Summer Encounter (Courtesy of the Indigenous Cultures Institute)

DESTINATION SERVICES

2024 ARTS, CULTURAL, HERITAGE, AND TOURISM GRANTS

Broke Thespians Summer Musical in the Park	\$8,000	Community Through Dance and Film	\$2,000
Centro Diversity Programs	\$21,000	Art Squared	\$22,500
Cheatham Street Weekly Shows	\$1,440	SMART Orchestra	\$8,000
Dunbar Cultural Programming	\$2,800	Standup Comedy Series	\$657.00
First Tuesday Film Series	\$7,000	San Marcos Philharmonia 2023-24 Season	\$4,000
Foundation Songwriter Series	\$720	Sights and Sounds of Christmas	\$100,000
Indigenous Arts & Summer Encounter	\$14,500	Summer in the Park	\$27,200
Kent Finlay Songwriter Circle	\$2,340	Sacred Springs Powwow	\$32,700
KZXM Kissing Alley Concerts	\$1,800	Centro Cultural de Hispano	\$25,000
Lost River Film Fest	\$16,000	Price Center	\$25,000
New Works Series	\$400	San Marcos Art Center	\$25,000
Own Your Own Universe Snowbird Concert Series	\$2,000	LBJ Museum of San Marcos	\$25,000
Papakō: The Journey	\$13,000	Calaboose African American History Museum	\$25,000
Rough Draft From the Inside Out	\$3,000	Commemorative Air Force Central Texas Wing	\$25,000



CITY HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

GOALS STATEMENT

Goals are based on public engagement, feedback from city staff, and successful Historic Preservation Planning strategies nationwide. They are particularly informed by the public's desired preservation efforts and by places, people, and stories identified as important to the community. This information was gathered through a robust public engagement plan that encompassed digital platforms, including a project webpage and social media campaign, printed materials, stakeholder interviews, a community-wide survey, and open houses and workshops. In addition to considering the community's historic preservation aspirations, the goals are based on an assessment of the current state of historic preservation in the City.

Findings from the assessment in prior chapters are recapped here along with goals and action items tailored to the strengths and weaknesses of the City's current historic preservation processes and programs.

ADMINISTRATIVE GOALS

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

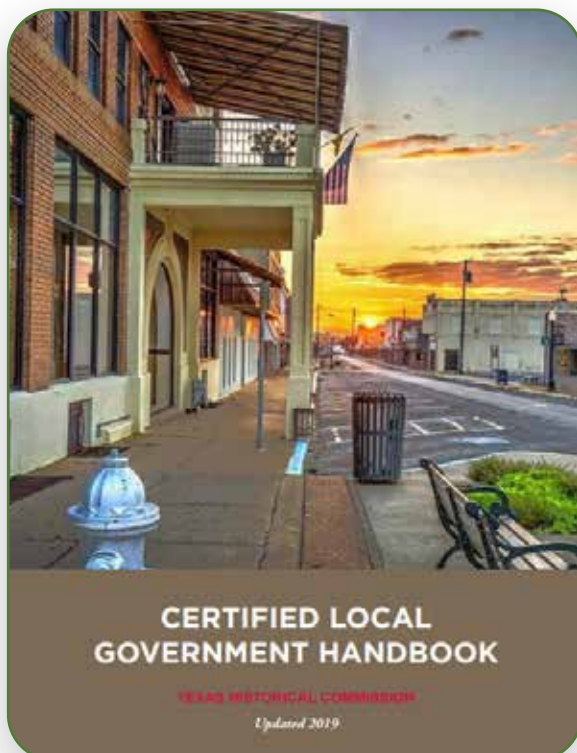
FINDINGS

SOLUTIONS



1. San Marcos is compliant with CLG requirements and expectations and remains in good standing.
2. San Marcos has an opportunity to become more involved in the Section 106 process for the review of federal projects occurring within the City.
3. CLGs are charged with coordinating with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) regarding actions affecting any Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL) or State Antiquities Landmark (SAL). While changes to local landmarks and districts are monitored through the City's COA process, changes to RTHLs, SALs, and National Register properties are not necessarily reviewed at the City level.

1. Continue to follow the CLG Program Requirements for Cities in the THC's CLG Handbooks [CLG Handbook](#).
2. Increase collaboration with regional contacts in the environmental compliance department at federal agencies and their partners (such as US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Department of Transportation, etc.) to strengthen relationships and ensure Section 106 consultation opportunities for the City as a CLG.
3. Consider adding a checkpoint in the building permit process for RTHLs and NRHP properties in the City to assist the THC in ensuring historic resources are protected.



CITY STAFF & RESOURCES

FINDINGS



1. Historic preservation work is primarily carried out by the City Historic Preservation Officer (HPO).
2. Implementing the recommendations of this plan will require increasing demands on City staff time to manage the historic preservation program.
3. City funding available for historic preservation programs is unpredictable.
4. Data regarding the volume and types of permits granted relating to historic preservation is not readily available to the public.
5. "Value as a visible or archaeological reminder" of heritage and "significant archaeological value" are criteria for local designation, but the City is not currently equipped to evaluate archaeological significance.
6. Many organizations and individuals are not fully aware of available preservation programs or need additional guidance.

SOLUTIONS



1. Consider drafting a hiring plan to address the need to carry out the goals of the Historic Preservation Plan. The hiring plan should consider the need for additional City staff positions, like a City Archaeologist.
2. Consider retaining a qualified cultural resources firm or group of firms with staff through an indefinite deliverable contract, so the HPO can outsource certain services on an on-call basis, including archaeology.
3. Consider allocating funding in the City budget to the historic preservation program that can be used for surveys, educational programs, events, and other initiatives.
4. Offer a seasonal internship to Texas State students interested in archaeology, architecture, history, and cultural studies to contribute to the City's initiatives.
5. Evaluate the number of COAs and building permits (demolitions, relocations, etc.) for historic-age buildings processed by the City and the HPC each year and analyze for trends (e.g. whether they are primarily residential or commercial or are concentrated in certain neighborhoods.)
6. Establish a proactive communication process between the City and other governmental entities when they are considering disposal of surplus property that may have historic value.
7. Explore adding archaeological review to the predevelopment process for projects located in areas with known or high potential for archaeological resources.
8. Offer preservation program orientation sessions or small workshops in the community's languages to help organizations and individuals learn key preservation terms, align projects with City goals, and prepare strong applications.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

FINDINGS



1. The HPC is compliant with CLG requirements.
2. An orientation session and printed materials including copies of pertinent City code sections, the HPC bylaws, design guidelines, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and relevant NPS publications are provided for new HPC members.
3. The HPC has efficient meetings guided by the HPO and HPC chair.
4. HPC members feel that the agenda for each meeting is manageable.
5. Parliamentary procedure reminders to HPC members are sometimes required.
6. There is adequate legal support for the Commission from the City.
7. The HPC membership does not reflect the diversity of San Marcos, but progress is being made.

SOLUTIONS



1. Actively work to fill HPC positions with individuals that reflect the diversity of San Marcos by working with neighborhood associations, residents, and other community groups. Presenting City Council members with demographic information and the types of representation sought can be helpful.
2. Actively seek a professional archaeologist to join the HPC to review and recommend policy and procedures for the preservation of significant archaeological sites.
3. Consider offering childcare for HPC (and other City boards and commissions) to make membership more accessible for working parents. Flexible meeting times can also be considered to better accommodate those with standard 8-to-5 work schedules.
4. Provide annual training on parliamentary procedure and provide each HPC member with a Robert's Rules of Order "cheat sheet" handout.
5. Provide training for the HPC on evaluating "extreme hardship" for consideration in granting COAs, and publish it on the City's website.
6. Consider establishing a goal identification roundtable with the HPO and HPC to develop an annual work plan that will guide objectives and priorities and publish it on the City's website.

LOCAL DESIGNATION PROCEDURES

FINDINGS



1. [Section 2.3.1.1](#) regarding Universal Applications does not provide guidance specific to the historic designation application “report” or a timeline for the HPC review before forwarding to P&Z and City Council.
2. Local designation requires meeting at least 3 of 16 criteria. Possessing integrity is one of the criteria and is not addressed separately; thus, integrity is not technically required for a property to be designated.
3. The statement “Historic districts shall consist of at least two (2) or more structures within a legally defined boundary that meet at least three (3) of the criteria,” could be interpreted to mean that each individual resource in the district must be evaluated for meeting the criteria, rather than considering the district as a whole.
4. The SMDC uses key terms that conflict with NPS definitions (such as “structures” rather than “resources”).
5. The SMDC does not indicate whether there is a minimum percentage of contributing resources required within a potential local historic district.
6. The SMDC does not clearly indicate how it complies with [Chapter 211 of the Local Government Code](#), which requires approval of 75% of the governing body of the municipality and the relevant commission if the property owner/s does not consent to local historic designation.

SOLUTIONS



1. Consider revising [SMDC Section 2.5.4.2](#) and Section 2.3.1.1 to illustrate clearly the steps in the local landmarks and districts designation process, including required report content and the HPC review period.
2. Consider revising the [SMDC Section 2.5.4.5](#) to require that all landmarks and districts must possess integrity.
3. Consider revising the [SMDC Section 2.5.4.5](#) to explain the designation criteria for districts more clearly.
4. Provide an application form and/or step-by-step instructions for nominating a resource for local historic designation on the Historic Preservation Program website to supplement the revised SMDC. Prioritize inclusive outreach to raise broad awareness and ensure these materials are widely accessible.
5. Revise language in the SMDC regarding historic properties to align with terms used by the NPS.
6. Update the SMDC to establish criteria for owner opposition or consent regarding designation of local historic landmarks and districts.
7. Update the SMDC to align with [Chapter 211 of the Local Government Code](#).
8. Amend narratives of local landmarks to add information about additional significant associations, including building stewards. This could be accomplished using a form like the [NRHP Modified Continuation Sheet](#).

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS

FINDINGS



1. COAs are only required for some types of work on local historic landmarks and in local districts.
2. The current design review procedures are compliant with CLG requirements.
3. Most activities that require a COA follow the process. In instances where work is performed without the required COA, the owner was often not aware of the requirements.
4. The Historic District Design Guidelines are due for an update.

SOLUTIONS



1. Ensure broad access to the existing "Guide to Preservation" by uploading it to the City's website and distributing printed copies at key public locations such as the San Marcos Public Library, the Activity Center, and other accessible community spaces. Consider adapting the document into a brochure to facilitate easier distribution in public spaces and at events.
2. Add clarifying language to the historic preservation website to explain that while a COA is generally not required for ordinary repair and maintenance activities at a landmark or within a historic district, coordination with City staff is strongly encouraged prior to beginning any project to confirm compliance and avoid potential issues.
3. Explore amending SMDC Section 2.5.6.1 to expand the applicability of Administrative COAs to include topics such as fence installation and roofing material changes.
4. Consider establishing a Design Review Committee of the HPC to assist applicants with the design of their projects prior to application submittal. This resource would provide applicants with the opportunity to meet with staff and HPC members to ensure projects align with the required standards and guidelines, reducing the need for design adjustments during the HPC meetings.
5. Consider updating the existing Historic District Design Guidelines to reflect best practices, including guidance on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), appropriate replacement materials, and site elements like walkways.
6. Establish a City policy or process to ensure that City-sponsored projects follow the Historic District Guidelines where applicable.



DEMOLITION DELAY

FINDINGS



1. The demolition delay ordinance does not specifically address contributing resources in National Register districts that may not fall under any of the other criteria for delay.
2. In practice, the demolition delay rarely results in avoidance of demolition and alternatives are rarely identified.
3. There is no clear process and assignment of responsibility for 1) conducting additional research on properties subjected to the demolition delay and 2) developing demolition alternatives.
4. There is no mechanism to stop demolition after the delay period.

SOLUTIONS



1. Consider amending Section 2.7.4.1(B)(2) of the SMDC to clarify that contributing resources in National Register Historic Districts are also subject to the delay period.
2. Provide property owners who submit a demolition permit with a packet of resources, including information on funding, grants, tax credits, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, as applicable.
3. Create an HPC committee to meet with property owners after a demolition delay has been issued to brainstorm alternatives to demolition, and facilitate collaboration with preservation stakeholders, such as local advocacy groups.
4. Require a documentation package as mitigation for all demolition permits that are issued after a delay as a condition of the demolition permit, to include at minimum photographs and a brief history of the property. A Story Map and/or measured drawings could also be required on a case-by-case basis, scaled to the resource's significance. In cases of financial hardship, consider City subsidization or partnership with Texas State or other organizations like Preservation Texas for documentation.
5. Establish a process and responsible parties for research during the 90-day delay window to determine if a property meets local landmark designation criteria.
6. Consider updating the SMDC to allow denial of the demolition for properties meeting the landmark criteria unless hardship is demonstrated. Clarify that determinations of whether a building is structurally unsalvageable remain the responsibility of the Building Official, while decisions about historic or cultural value are the responsibility of the HPC.

DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT

FINDINGS

SOLUTIONS



1. Demolition by neglect to circumvent historic preservation is not a common practice in San Marcos.
2. There are unclear components of the notification procedures as written in the SMDC (for example, the number of days that must elapse before additional notices are sent is not specified).
3. Mailings to property owners are to include information on “various incentive programs that may be available for repair,” but these programs are not readily identifiable.
4. Unclear titles and lack of wills can create ownership complications that may prevent property owners from accessing funding or authorizations for repair, which can hinder preservation efforts.



1. Revise SMDC Section [4.5.2.1\(N\)\(2\)\(c\)](#) to add the number of days that the second notice may be sent after posting the first certified mail notice and the number of days after posting the second certified mail notice.
2. Consider partnering with a non-profit organization or establishing a volunteer maintenance crew who could be available to assist in repairing properties when the owner is experiencing hardship. See ‘Potential Partners’ on this page for potential collaboration opportunities.
3. Continue to foster a strong relationship between the Code Compliance Office and the HPO and HPC to address hazardous conditions before they threaten public safety (at which point a COA or demolition review may be bypassed).
4. Encourage neighborhood associations and preservation groups to report at-risk properties and provide clear guidance on reporting at-risk properties to the City. As part of this collaboration, consider establishing a schedule for several groups (including the City) to conduct surveys to proactively identify properties that are showing signs of neglect.
5. Consider more stringent penalties, like adding the property to a probationary list where no permits will be issued for 3-5 years to discourage neglect by developers wanting to replace a historic building.
6. Explore establishing a revolving fund to purchase, rehabilitate, and resell neglected properties, such as programs in Baltimore, Maryland and Providence, Rhode Island.
7. Consider City-supported title clearing and estate planning legal clinics, workshops, or partnerships with local nonprofits to help property owners resolve ownership issues and unlock access to preservation funding and repair programs. Workshops and materials should be offered in multiple languages, including Spanish.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Habitat for Humanity
[Construction Science and Management Program](#), Texas State University
[Bobcat Build](#), Texas State
[Mission Able](#), First Baptist Church San Marcos
[Operation Triage](#)

SOLUTION SOURCES

City of Baltimore’s “[Vacants to Value](#)” program
Providence, Rhode Island’s [Providence Revolving Fund](#)

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY

FINDINGS



1. San Marcos is committed to fostering a sustainable and resilient community through environmental conservation and resource efficiency.
2. The Design Manual addresses Sustainability.
3. Historic preservation policies can be updated to promote sustainability related to the built environment.

In a study for the City of San Antonio, done as part of the process to establish their Deconstruction & Circular Economy Program (see the Case Study on the following page), PlaceEconomics determined that material reuse industries are anticipated to grow faster than the national economy as a whole.

- Between 2009 and 2021, over \$1.4 million of salvageable building materials were sent to the landfill in San Antonio.
- Demolitions in 2020 could have resulted in salvaged framing for more than 600 houses.
- Reuse and refurbishment create 300 jobs per 10,000 tons of waste, compared to 1-6 jobs created by the traditional landfill and incineration process for the same amount of waste.
- A national survey showed that labor income from deconstruction is about four times as much as labor income from demolition.
- Mechanical demolition presents health hazards to residents.

SOLUTIONS



1. Consider developing and adopting a deconstruction ordinance that would require building material salvage, recycling, and reuse when buildings are demolished or renovated. Implementation of this goal could include partnerships between private property owners and the City to store materials at a designated city facility or could include exemptions in the city code relating to the storage of historic materials.
2. Consider charging higher fees (possibly scaled to square footage) for demolition permits to discourage demolition when preservation may be possible.
3. Explore partnerships with organizations like Habitat for Humanity and its ReStore program to spearhead architectural salvage and the reuse of historic building materials.
4. Educate property owners about the sustainability benefits of historic buildings, including the energy saved from reusing and rehabilitating older properties rather than demolishing them. Consider publishing a handout in English and Spanish with statistics and examples, and mailing it directly to property owners.
5. Consider featuring practical and affordable strategies for enhancing building energy efficiency in the Planning & Development Services monthly newsletter as well as on the City's website.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

[Hays County Historical Commission](#)

[Heritage Association of San Marcos](#)

[Habitat for Humanity](#)

SOLUTION SOURCES

Galveston's [Architectural Salvage Warehouse](#), which is operated by the non-profit Galveston Historical Foundation.

CASE STUDY: SAN ANTONIO DECONSTRUCTION & CIRCULAR ECONOMY PROGRAM

In 2022, the City of San Antonio adopted a [deconstruction ordinance](#) that requires the full deconstruction—instead of mechanical demolition—of certain properties in the city. The ordinance is part of the city's Deconstruction & Circular Economy Program, which aims to develop policies and partnerships to advance building material recovery and reuse. The Office of Historic Preservation developed the program in collaboration with a Deconstruction Advisory Committee, community stakeholders, and the City Council. The City Council began exploring strategies for reducing demolitions in 2017, recommended a deconstruction ordinance in 2019, and the ordinance was adopted in 2022.

Applicable to residential buildings (up to 8 units) and rear accessory buildings that:

- Were built on or before December 31, 1945, and are within city limits, or
- Were built on or before December 31, 1960, and are designated historic or within a Neighborhood Conservation District.
- The Office of Historic Preservation reviews all applications for demolition to determine if the ordinance is applicable.
- A certified Deconstruction Contractor (any person doing work within the building trades or construction profession that has completed a city sponsored deconstruction training) must perform the work. They disassemble the building and salvage any reusable or recyclable material.

[Deconstruction Ordinance](#)

The Office of Historic Preservation and [Port San Antonio](#) partnered to establish the MIC in the NRHP-listed Bungalow Colony at the Port.

[Material Innovation Center \(MIC\)](#)

MIC includes a warehouse for materials salvaged through the deconstruction ordinance.

Accepts donated historic-age and new surplus building materials from city residents. Acts as the hub of the city's Deconstruction & Circular Economy Program and anyone can purchase materials from the MIC.

[Living Heritage Trades Academy](#)

Comprehensive training program managed by the Office of Historic Preservation. Based in the MIC.

Offers training in traditional crafts and skills through apprenticeships, courses, and hands-on training.

Open to all applicants, including homeowners, contractors, realtors, and students.

[Community Tool Library](#)

Proposed pay-what-you-can tool rental program in the MIC.

Aims to provide an opportunity for all city residents to access tools to repair and improve their communities.

Will accept donated tools.

SURVEY & RECOGNITION

SURVEY & STUDY

FINDINGS



1. With the exception of a 22-year gap between 1997 and 2019, San Marcos has conducted regular surveys of historic resources.
2. Older surveys often lack conclusive findings and are missing documentation components. For example, the photographs and contact sheets for the 1992 survey cannot be found.
3. The most recent survey (2019) appropriately re-evaluated previous survey findings and found that many historic resources were lost since the last survey, including 7 of 18 resources identified as significant in the East Guadalupe Neighborhood.
4. Prior surveys have typically been funded with grants, which typically require matching funds or prioritize projects with matches.
5. San Marcos has not prepared any historic context statements, aside from those within survey reports.
6. San Marcos contains hundreds of historic-age properties that have not yet been surveyed or evaluated for historic designation, potential cultural districts, heritage trails, and interpretation.
7. Prior studies have focused on architectural resources and have not inventoried or surveyed potential cultural landscapes in San Marcos.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Texas State University
Council for the Indigenous and Tejano Community
Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos
Calaboose African American Museum
Dunbar Heritage Association

SOLUTIONS



1. Develop thematic context statements to document history and facilitate designation. Topics could include mid-century modern architecture, dams and associated mill/irrigation features along the San Marcos River, women's history, Latino history, and Black history.
2. Consider developing and implementing a Survey Plan to identify areas that have not been surveyed and a survey plan to identify cultural landscapes. The 2019 My Historic SMTX historic resources survey can serve as a reference.
3. Schedule survey updates of properties that have been previously documented at least every 10 years to capture condition and reevaluate significance and integrity as necessary. Plan now for a 2028 survey.
4. Conduct additional research on properties identified as "Medium Priority" in the 2019 survey to assess potential historic significance, with particular attention to those located in the East Guadalupe neighborhood and Barrio Victoria. Additional neighborhoods east of IH-35, such as Barrio Pescado and Sunset Acres, should also be surveyed to identify potential historic resources that may not have been previously documented.
5. Consider funding surveys with City budget rather than grants to allow more flexibility in the type of data collected and eliminate unnecessary, costly, and time-consuming tasks that may be required by grant terms.
6. Focus on eligibility for designation or candidacy for other historical interpretation (such as story maps and interpretive signage) rather than "preservation priorities" in survey documentation. For example, surveys can recommend to document a property that has lost historical integrity with a StoryMap entry instead of a designation.

NOMINATION & DESIGNATION

FINDINGS

1. 2019 My Historic SMTX provided solid recommendations for one new NRHP district and multiple district expansions.
2. There is over a 15-year gap between the NRHP listing of three of the found NRHP Historic Districts in San Marcos.
3. Currently, City Code and available resources do not provide a clear path to local designation.
4. Since the criteria for eligibility for local landmark designation was updated after 2019, many more properties are likely eligible for local designation.
5. Currently, only one local historic landmark is privately owned, suggesting incentives and/or information about designation is lacking.

CASE STUDY:

AUSTIN'S TREE ORDINANCE

Administered by the [City Arborist](#) appointed by the Planning and Development Review Department. Defined by the ordinance, a Heritage Tree has a diameter of 24 inches or more, measured 4.5 feet above natural grade, and is one of a list of species. A Protected Tree has a diameter of 19 inches or more and measures 4.5 feet above natural grade.

Protected trees can only be removed after the Planning and Development Review Department has issued a permit. Heritage Trees can only be removed if an Administrative Variance or Land Use Commission Variance has been approved by Planning and Development Review Department. Prior to the Planning and Development Review Department review of a removal application, for either a Protected or Heritage Tree, the tree must be inspected by the City Arborist.

Protected and Heritage trees may be removed without a permit if the tree is damaged and presents an imminent hazard to life or property. It may only be removed without a permit within 7 days of being damaged.

SOLUTIONS

1. Re-evaluate the findings of the 2019 My Historic SMTX survey to apply the updated local landmark criteria. This may require engaging a consultant.
2. Empower residents to engage in and seek designation by developing clear, accessible handouts and website content that explain its implications, outlines the COA process, and provides guidance on participating in HPC meetings.
3. Encourage Legacy Tree designation inspired by the City's first historic landmark to promote the preservation of historic landscapes. The [Massachusetts Legacy Tree Program](#) could serve as a model.
4. Design a local landmark application that can be completed by individuals or the HPC. See Solution Sources below.
5. Establish an HPC subcommittee to communicate the benefits of preservation to owners of high-priority properties, and to provide owners with information about their properties and designation differences and processes.
6. Establish an HPC subcommittee to provide technical support, including guidance and/or assistance in researching, writing, and/or editing nomination reports.
7. Establish an HPC subcommittee to evaluate the feasibility of expanding the boundaries of existing local and NRHP districts. This may require additional survey and engagement with property owners.
8. Consider creating a rolling schedule to evaluate local and NRHP designation of individual properties districts reaching 50 years of age.
9. Consider streamlining nomination processes to maximize benefits and protection.

LOCAL SOLUTION SOURCES

See [Longview](#) and [Denton](#), Texas for local landmark PDF applications that are user friendly and easily accessible.

ALTERNATIVE LOCAL ZONING

FINDINGS



1. The 2019 My Historic SMTX survey noted that historic district designation may not be successful for areas with cultural significance that have experienced demolitions, alterations, and infill.
2. Character Districts are local zoning classifications and Conservation Corridors are local zoning overlays that are regulated in the San Marcos Development Code; however, Neighborhood Conservation Districts are not included in the SMDC.
3. San Marcos City Council adopted an ordinance for Corridor Overlay Districts in 2018, but it has not been used yet.

Neighborhood Conservation Districts are similar to Character Districts and allow for controlled growth without imposing the more rigid restrictions of a historic district. They typically regulate residential neighborhoods' character-defining features such as building height, lot size, streetscapes, and setbacks through development standards and design guidelines. These standards and guidelines are tailored to maintain the overall character of the area. Some neighborhood conservation districts also regulate uses, like the City of Bryan's Residential Neighborhood Conservation District, but this is not typical of Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Neighborhood Conservation Districts can also regulate demolitions through certificates of appropriateness or commission review; the City of Dallas [regulates demolitions](#) in its Conservation Districts.

SOLUTIONS



1. Explore the use of preservation tools such as Neighborhood Conservation Districts to retain distinct neighborhood characteristics (including but not limited to general form, style, and scale) as recommended by the 2019 historic resources survey, My Historic SMTX. Conduct a spatial analysis to draw a detailed district boundary to determine if alternative local zoning is appropriate.
2. Consider amending the SMDC to establish a formal process for the designation and implementation of Neighborhood Conservation Districts, and explore creating design guidelines that balance flexibility and compatibility of design.
3. Develop educational resources to distinguish between historic districts and alternative zoning districts, while also highlighting the advantages of establishing alternative conservation districts.
4. Determine whether creating Neighborhood Conservation Districts add value to the Historic Preservation Program goals.
5. Consider creation of the first Corridor Overlay District using the existing tools in the SMDC.



CASE STUDY: NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

BRYAN

SAN ANTONIO

Population	The population of Bryan was 89,615 as of a 2023 U.S. Census Bureau estimate, similar to the estimated population of San Marcos, 71,569 in 2023.	The population of San Antonio was 1.5 million as of a 2023 U.S. Census Bureau estimate.
Economy	Bryan has a diverse economy with significant contributions from the education, healthcare, and retail sectors. Like San Marcos, the economy of Bryan benefits from its proximity to a major higher education facility.	As the seventh largest city in the country, San Antonio has a diverse and growing economy. The city is a major hub for aerospace, cybersecurity, and healthcare industry.
Educational Institutions	Texas A&M University is in the City of College Station adjacent to Bryan. The development of both Bryan and San Marcos have been shaped by the presence of universities.	Several colleges have campuses in San Antonio, including The University of Texas at San Antonio and Texas A&M University-San Antonio.
Culture and Recreation	Bryan is home to various cultural events, recreational activities, and historic properties similar to those located in San Marcos.	San Antonio has numerous cultural and recreational opportunities and a variety of historic and natural resources.
Conservation Districts	<p>In 2006, Bryan City Council approved an ordinance creating Residential - Neighborhood Conservation District (R-NC).</p> <p>At least 51 percent of the land area in R-NC zoning districts must be developed.</p> <p>Only two (2) individuals that are not related to each other (by blood, marriage or adoption) can legally live in a single-family dwelling.</p>	San Antonio developed a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) Program to address neighborhood sustainability. The concept was developed after the city's 1997 Master Plan and 1998 Community Revitalization Action Group Report. NCD's are zoning overlays that help regulate compatible infill and rehabilitation in areas of the city with unique characteristics. San Antonio adopted its first NCD in 2002; today, it has ten NCDs. Each NCD is tailored to the specific characteristics of its district. For example, the city's most recent NCD, Monte Vista Terrace, regulates building height and setbacks but does not regulate uses and permits accessory dwelling units for increased density.

HONORARY CULTURAL DISTRICT FINDINGS



1. The 2019 Survey [and the HPC](#) have recognized the value of alternatives to official landmark designation, including cultural heritage districts.
2. Texas Cultural District eligibility criteria is minimal and may be pursued by the City or its partners.
3. The 2023 [Downtown Area Plan](#) and 2024 [Comprehensive Plan](#) identified creating cultural districts as a goal.
4. San Marcos areas could benefit from Cultural District designation, such as the area around Eddie Durham Park.



*First Friday event in Downtown Bryan, Texas (above)
and Bryan, Texas mural (right)
Courtesy of Destination Bryan
Downtown Bryan is a designated TCA Cultural District.*

SOLUTIONS



1. Identify and coordinate with partners, such as local cultural or historical organizations, to apply for TCA designation of Cultural Districts. Potential areas include the larger Dunbar neighborhood extending beyond the NRHP district boundaries, areas near Texas State, and around Eddie Durham Park, identified in the [Downtown Area Plan](#) as a potential Cultural District.
2. Consider creating a task force including the Arts Commission, HPC, City staff, and local partners to identify potential Cultural Districts.
3. Ensure Cultural District programming emphasizes local community identity and participation by prioritizing events led by local organizations, involving community representatives in advisory roles, directing funding support toward neighborhood-based initiatives, and balancing marketing to highlight benefits for residents as well as visitors.

Cultural Districts serve to celebrate and promote community culture and heritage, similar to Main Street America programming. However, unlike Main Street programs, Cultural Districts are not restricted to downtown areas. Designated Texas Cultural Districts are eligible for Arts Respond Project grants and Arts Respond Cultural District Project grants administered by the [Texas Commission on the Arts \(TCA\)](#). Arts Respond Project grants are competitive grants that provide funding for projects that address education, health and human services, economic development, public safety and criminal justice, and/or natural resources and agriculture. Arts Respond Cultural District Project grants are competitive grants that provide funding for cultural tourism projects that use the arts to diversify local economies, attract investment and visitors, and generate revenue. Establishing a Cultural District should thoughtfully address staffing needs, as maintenance and accreditation require significant program and reporting capacity.



CASE STUDY: BRYAN, TEXAS CULTURAL DISTRICT

2014	TCA designated Downtown Bryan as a Texas Cultural District .
2015	<p>\$3,000 TCA Arts Respond Project grant to support the Downtown Street and Art Fair with over 30 artists.</p> <p>Texas Downtown Award for Best Renovation in Cultural District.</p>
2016	\$425 TCA Arts Respond Project grant to support the Downtown Street and Art Fair that featured artists and artisans from across the region.
2018	<p>APA-TX named Downtown Bryan a "Great Place in Texas," recognition given to cities that have utilized planning to create healthier and stronger communities.</p> <p>\$2,400 TCA Arts Respond Performance Support grants awarded to subsidize fees for artistic performers.</p>
2019	Texas Downtown Award for Best Downtown Business for a Population over 50k award in Cultural District.
2022	<p>As part of a study for new development in Bryan, the city assessed tourism statistics for downtown Bryan. Key takeaways included:</p> <p>Visitors typically spent 1.7 hours at points of interest in Downtown Bryan.</p> <p>86.5% of visitors returned to points of interest in Downtown Bryan.</p> <p>Visitors typically spent 2 days in Downtown Bryan.</p>
Annual Events in the Downtown Cultural District	<p>Cinco De Mayo</p> <p>Dia de los Muertos</p> <p>Downtown Bryan Street & Art Fair</p> <p>Festa Italiana</p> <p>Fiesta Patrias</p> <p>First Fridays: first Friday of each month and includes live music, art demonstrations, performances, and vendor market.</p> <p>Holiday Stroll & Lighted Parade</p> <p>Main Street Holiday Market</p> <p>Maroon & White Night: third Friday of each month for Texas A&M University and System employees, includes discounts at local businesses.</p> <p>Wine & Wassail</p>
Resources in Downtown Cultural District	<p>Individually NRHP-listed: 18</p> <p>NRHP Districts: 2</p> <p>OTHM: 11</p> <p>Any NRHP or RTHL-listed resource is eligible for local designation per Historic Preservation - City of Bryan, Texas.</p>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

FINDINGS



1. Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits have been used in San Marcos, but Texas Rehabilitation Tax Credit have not.
2. The majority of designated properties are not eligible for federal and state tax credits because they are residential and non-income-producing.
3. There are no local tax incentives for historic preservation. In 2001, the City drafted an ordinance proposing ad valorem tax incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings. This ordinance would have exempted any increase in property taxes resulting from qualifying preservation projects for a period of 10 years after project completion.
4. In 2019, [the HPC issued a recommendation resolution](#) encouraging City Council to consider local incentive programs to support historic preservation in San Marcos.
5. No local historic preservation incentives have been adopted as of this plan.
6. Inherited historic homes are often at risk of sale, demolition, or loss because heirs face financial burdens and legal barriers that make it difficult to remain in the property.

Certified Local Districts (CLDs) are historic districts certified by the Secretary of the Interior as meeting the criteria for listing in the NRHP, but they are not officially listed. With this certification, properties within a district that are contributing can qualify for the same tax incentives as listed properties, including the state rehabilitation tax credit.

SOLUTIONS



1. Develop local tax incentives that would apply to both individual landmarks and historic districts.
2. Consult with the NPS about Certified Local Districts for local districts not in the NRHP, which would allow both income-generating and nonprofit-owned properties to use state historic tax credits.
3. Educate residents on the benefits of listing in the NRHP and designation as RTHLs, including eligibility for Texas Preservation Trust Fund grants.
4. Consider developing a program that provides more zoning flexibility for owners or developers who agree to retain historic buildings on a property where new development is proposed.
5. Explore development of carbon footprint incentives for reusing buildings, such as fee reductions, tax abatements, or expedited permitting for projects that retain and rehabilitate existing structures.
6. Explore the feasibility of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to preserve smaller-scale downtown buildings, commercial corridors, and historic districts in growth areas.
7. Consider amending the SMDC to allow for a preservation bonus similar to the City of Austin's HOME Initiative.
8. Develop resources for properties that could be relocated as an alternative to demolition, potentially including funding for moving, contacts for movers, and advertising buildings as available for relocation.
9. Explore incentives to help descendants retain inherited historic properties, such as tax relief, repair assistance, or legal aid for title clearing, with emphasis on supporting low- and moderate-income families.

CASE STUDY: AUSTIN, TEXAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES

Program	Description	Eligibility Requirements
<u>Tax Abatement Historic Districts</u>	Offers abatement of 100% of City property taxes assessed on the added value of a property as a result of a rehabilitation that complies with any applicable design standards.	Contributing resources in local historic districts
<u>Tax Exemption Historic Landmarks</u>	Offers annual tax exemption to owners of historic landmarks that file an annual application and maintain their property to <u>certain standards</u> . If a property is a homestead that was designated as a landmark after 2004 and/or has changed ownership since 2004, the exemption is capped at \$8,500 annually.	Local Historic Landmark Individual NRHP property Recorded Texas Landmark State Antiquities Landmark
<u>Heritage Preservation Grant</u>	Grants up to \$250,000 for historic properties that attract out-of-town tourists. Funding can be used for capital work, signage, planning, marketing, and education projects.	For-profit, government, or nonprofit applicant registered as a City vendor Designated historic landmark operating as tourist attraction
Preservation Bonus	Increases allowable floor-to-area ratio (FAR) when an older home is preserved, making space for up to two additional housing units. Recent code changes raised the FAR cap from 0.55 to 0.65 for qualifying projects.	Home built in 1960 or earlier Preserve 100% of street-facing façade Preserve at least 50% of original structure

COMPARISON OF LOCAL TAX INCENTIVES

FORT WORTH	Tax Exemption: up to 100% property tax exemption for 10 years on substantial rehabilitation of designated historic properties.
GALVESTON	Tax exemption for a rehabilitation equal or more than 50% of the improvement value. 35% exemption on city property taxes for five years for all new individual landmarks and new historic districts. 25% exemption on city property taxes for five years for all new conservation districts.
NEW BRAUNFELS	Tax exemption for a rehabilitation that costs at least 10% of the improvement value and extends the life of a local landmark. 20% reduction in city assessed ad valorem taxes for properties located within a locally designated historic district. Reduced exemptions with COA approval (e.g., 50% for rehabilitation/maintenance; 5 years at 100% for compatible new construction)
SAN ANTONIO	10-year 20% tax exemption for owner occupied homes in new historic districts (with the possibility to extend five years). 10 years tax-free for qualifying low-income rental properties.

MAINTENANCE INCENTIVES

FINDINGS



1. The City's Historic Preservation website includes valuable information and links, which could be supplemented with additional resources (see also: Historic Preservation Website Enhancement Goals).
2. The City of San Marcos offers a [Home Rehabilitation / Repair Program](#), but applicants must meet HUD income eligibility guidelines, which can be restrictive and may exclude some individuals.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Austin Habitat for Humanity (serves San Marcos) Home Repair Program

Non-profit and church organizations, such as [Mission Able](#), with regular service projects for members

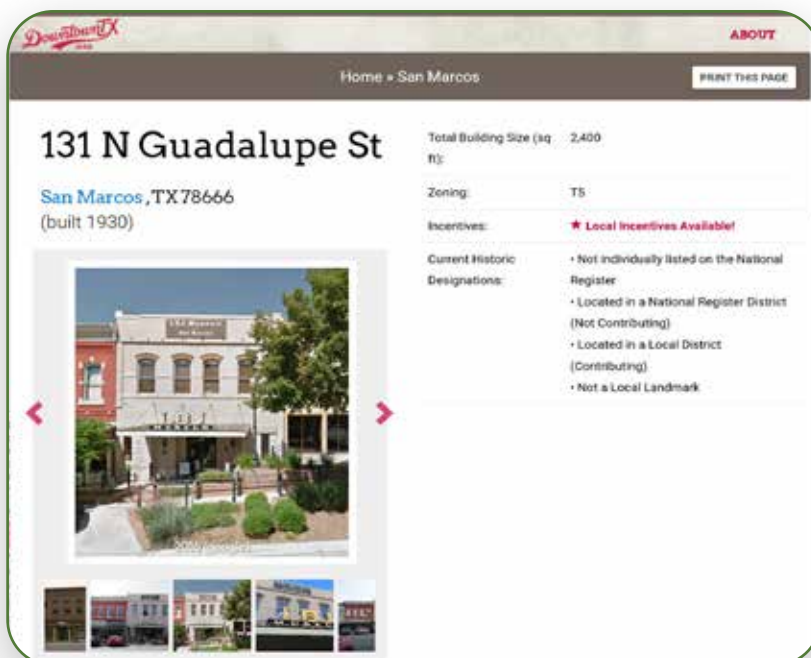
Local businesses

Texas State University

SOLUTIONS



1. Host workshops for citizens interested in: pursuing historic designation (at any level), grant funding, proper maintenance of older buildings, and researching the history of a building. Some workshops may be hosted with City staff while others may require external experts (paid or pro bono). These workshops can be brief and do not need to be full-day sessions.
2. Explore creating a virtual Maintenance and Preservation Resource Center with links to resources and database of vendors to connect property owners with qualified contractors and specialists for building repair and renovation. This can be modeled after the San Antonio's Rehabber Club list and include a link to [Scott's Historic Home Improvement Contractors List](#).
3. Consider starting a city-funded program to offer significant financial incentives for home improvements to owners of buildings that are historic age but are not designated or necessarily historically significant. This could supplement the City's Community Development Block Grant Program. The Richardson Home Improvement Program highlighted on the next page can be used as an example.



CASE STUDIES: MAINTENANCE INCENTIVES

Austin Programs for Older Homes

Eligibility Requirements

Architectural Barrier Removal	Grants for up to \$20,000 to help make homes accessible for people with disabilities and seniors.	Homeowners or renters in City limits At least 62 years old or verified to be severely disabled Gross annual income at or below 80% Median Family Income
GO REPAIR! Grant Program	Grants up to \$20,000 to help fix dangerous conditions for homeowners and to make homes more accessible for homeowners with disabilities.	Homeowners living within City limits Gross annual income at or below 80% Median Family Income
Home Rehabilitation Loan Program	Offers 0% interest loans to help make owner-occupied homes safe, focusing on interior and exterior repairs to bring homes up to code.	Homeowners of single-family detached homes within City limits Applicant not discharged from bankruptcy less than two years before application date Gross annual income at or below 80% Median Family Income
Minor Home Repair Grants	Grants up to \$7,5000 to help homeowners make repairs that pose an immediate threat to their health and/or safety.	Homeowners living within City limits Gross annual income at or below 80% Median Family Income
Plumbing Program	Grants up to \$15,000 to help homeowners with plumbing repairs and water savings.	Single-family home or duplex Principal place of residence. Austin Water customer

[Richardson Home Improvement Program](#)

Incentive

Eligibility Requirements

One-time payment equal to 10 times the increase in city taxes based on the property's pre- and post-construction appraised value.

Paid to the homemaker on April 1 of the first full calendar year after the completion of the project.

All homeowners in areas zoned as single-family, unless they are delinquent in taxes or other fees.

Reconstruction or remodeling of a single-family home at a cost of at least \$20,000 to be completed within 24 months.

Purpose

Application

Encourage reinvestment in residential areas.
Distinguish Richardson from other communities by giving prospective home buyers an economic incentive for buying a home in Richardson.
Increase the value of the city's housing stock.
Ease the financial burden of house improvements for homeowners.

Submit a [Home Improvement Incentive Program application](#) before beginning construction.
Provide a cost estimate for the project.
Consent to periodic inspections during construction.
Execute an economic development agreement with the city, prepared and approved by the city attorney.
Verify final construction costs.

VACANT BUILDING PROMOTION

FINDINGS



1. The 2023 Downtown Area Plan noted that high vacancy rates can threaten historic buildings.
2. Anecdotal data suggests that high vacancy rates in historic buildings and/or in downtown San Marcos are not prevalent.
3. Based on data from DowntownTX.org, San Marcos has a slightly higher percentage of inventoried properties currently listed as available than other similarly sized cities in the database; however, many of the data entries are outdated.
4. San Marcos City Code of Ordinances [Section 14.061](#) requires owners maintain all vacant buildings in a locked or closed condition and post a no-trespassing sign on the property. The code states that buildings vacant for more than six months can be re-occupied by a conforming use.
5. Policies targeting vacant buildings can complement historic preservation objectives.

SOLUTIONS



1. Create educational materials to inform residents about mothballing and its best practices for preservation.
2. Promote awareness of the Artistic Board-Up Ordinance by publishing it on the City website, developing and distributing informational brochures, and hosting outreach meetings with property owners to encourage understanding and compliance.
3. Confirm that data on available properties in San Marcos listed on DowntownTX.org is up to date to better understand trends.
4. Consider establishing a Vacant Building Registration Program to identify and monitor unoccupied historic and older buildings, requiring owners to register, maintain, and share plans for future use. Pair this with policies, funding, and incentives—such as rehabilitation grants, adaptive reuse programs, or partnerships—to return buildings to active use, preserve historic resources, and support community vitality.

The THC developed an online downtown building inventory, [DowntownTX.org](https://downtowntx.org), featuring historic property listings. This site is hosted by the Texas Main Street Program and local programs manage their individual listings. Although the site may not reflect all current listings, it provides a tool to compare San Marcos to similarly sized cities. Based on this data, San Marcos has a slightly higher percentage of inventoried properties currently listed as available.

Table 5. Buildings inventoried on DowntownTX.org in similarly sized cities September 2025.

CITY	POPULATION	BUILDINGS INVENTORIED	AVAILABLE TO RENT OR BUY	PERCENT AVAILABLE
Victoria	62,592	290	10	3%
Harlingen	65,022	200	8	4%
San Marcos	71,569	192	7	4%
Mansfield	75,697	189	6	3%
Georgetown	79,604	236	0	0%
Longview	81,728	147	0	0%

CASE STUDY: VACANT BUILDING PROGRAMS & ORDINANCES

Dallas Central Business District

Registration of vacant buildings (vacant for more than 45 days); \$79 application fee.

Inspection fee of \$185.64 plus the building square footage multiplied by \$0.009282.

Proof of insurance is required.

Proof of payment of ad valorem taxes is required.

Within 30 days of receiving certificate of vacancy registration, property owners must submit a vacant building plan including plans of action for:

- Correcting violations of any city ordinance.
- Maintaining the building and its premises in compliance with all city ordinances.
- Maintaining the building and its premises in a safe and secure manner.
- Occupying or selling the building, including a schedule for renovation and repair and schedule for marketing, advertising, etc.
- Demolition of the building.

Registration must be renewed annually unless the building is sold, becomes occupied, or is demolished.

Failure to register results in a daily fine between \$500 and \$2,000. The city may also impose administrative penalties, fees, and court costs.

El Paso

Registration of vacant buildings (vacant for two or more years) through an application including:

Period of time building is expected to remain vacant.

Estimated date for returning the building to 60% occupancy, if applicable.

- Date of demolition, if applicable.
- Date of rehabilitation or renovation commencement, if applicable.
- Measures to be taken to reduce adverse impacts on the value of adjacent properties if the building will be retained.
- Measures to be taken to meet all applicable zoning, property maintenance, historic preservation, and building codes.
- Plan for regular maintenance during period of occupancy.

Proof of insurance is required.

Application fees ranging from \$159 to \$477.

Registrations must be renewed annually.

Failure to register results in a daily fine up to \$2,000.

San Antonio

Registration of vacant buildings (vacant for more than 30 days) through an application including:

- Detailed timeline for correcting all violations.
- Identification of measures to be taken to maintain property during vacancy.
- Plan for the property's future use.
- Proof of Liability Insurance is required.
- Detailed plan to meet the minimum standard of care for vacant properties which applies to exterior surfaces, premises identification, structural components, doors, windows, porches, decks, balconies, exterior ornamentation, roofs and drainage systems, awnings, chimneys and towers, handrails and doors, and basement hatchways

Registration fee of \$250 for single family properties or \$750 for non-single-family properties.

Application fee of \$50 for single family properties or \$150 for non-single-family properties.

Registrations must be renewed annually.

Failure to register results in a fine up to \$500. The city may seek administrative, civil, or criminal enforcement.

ADAPTIVE REUSE PROMOTION

FINDINGS



1. There have been several adaptive reuse projects in San Marcos, including the Sanctuary Lofts (350 North Street), the Price Center (222 West San Antonio Street), and the Crossroads Center (110 East Martin Luther King Drive).
2. As part of this plan, the community presented several ideas for other buildings that could be adaptively reused, including the Lamar School (500 West Hutchison St.), the Mitchell Center (715 Valley Street), La Victoria Grocery () and 101 S. Edward Gary Street.
3. The International Existing Building Code (IEBC) was adopted in 2021 as part of an amendment to the City's Building Code, but awareness of this change remains limited among property owners and professionals.

CASE STUDY: THE DELUXE THEATER, HOUSTON

Opened in 1941 as Houston's first African American movie house, the DeLuxe Theater closed in 1969 and sat vacant for decades. When acquired by the City of Houston with federal funds, Section 106 review led to a decision to rehabilitate the building rather than demolish it. Through adaptive reuse, the theater's Art Deco façade was restored while the interior was transformed into a modern cultural and arts center. Completed in 2015, the \$5.7 million project—undertaken with Texas Southern University and the Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation—revived a neighborhood landmark as a hub for community life.

The DeLuxe Theater project demonstrates how adaptive reuse can honor historic character while meeting contemporary community needs.



DeLuxe Theater, Houston (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation)

SOLUTIONS



1. Continue crowd sourcing ideas for building reuse candidates via the City's website; supplement with high-priority properties; and apply metrics like size of building and programming capabilities (e.g. vacant commercial, industrial, and institutional).
2. Educate property owners and developers with information about federal and state tax credits and other incentives.
3. Consider taking advantage of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Building Opportunities on Main Street (BOOMS) [application](#).
4. Educate and provide resources to property owners, design professionals, and contractors on appropriate rehabilitation strategies, including the use of codes such as the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), to support the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures.
5. Using the information outlined in Solution 1, consider adding a "Reuse Opportunity" data layer to the ArcGIS Permit & Zoning Map available under the Planning & Development Services Department webpage and linked on Economic Development Site Selection Resources webpage.

CASE STUDY: SAN ANTONIO INCENTIVIZED ADAPTIVE REUSE & REDEVELOPMENT

Historic Name	The Pearl Brewing Company
Historic Use	Industrial: Brewery and Distribution Factory 1883 to 2001.
Current Name	The Pearl
Current Use	Mixed-use: 432 residential units, 121,000 sf office, 56,000 sf restaurants, 53,000 sf retail, 31,000 sf culinary school, and 18,000 sf meeting/banquet.
Site and Setting	21-acre site north of downtown San Antonio.
Developer	Developer Silver Ventures combined Center City Housing Initiative Policy and State of Texas Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) incentives. TIRZ is an area where property tax revenue is collected in a Tax Increment Fund (TIF) used to reimburse developers for public improvements. A digital map of San Marcos' TIRZ areas is available through the City's GIS open data.
Urban Design Team	Planners, landscape architects, and architects created a sustainable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use district that honored the brewery's history and repurposed key elements for new uses.
Consultant	Historic preservation consultant surveyed each building on the site and strategized how to best integrate them into the redevelopment.
Total TIRZ	\$3.3 Million: Two current TIRZ agreements for Pearl redevelopment projects: a \$190,129 10-year tax increment reimbursement grant and a \$3,285,170 15-year tax increment reimbursement grant .
Total Fees Waived	\$435,109: Total current fees waived through the Center City Housing Incentive Policy and the City of San Antonio Fee Waiver Program .
Loan	\$100,000: Chapter 380 Economic Development loan through the Inner City Incentive Program Loan, granted as part of the developer's Center City Housing Initiative Policy incentive agreement with the city.
Awards	<p>2010 AIA San Antonio Design Award</p> <p>2011 Texas Society of Architects Design Award</p> <p>2012 EcoStructure Evergreen Award</p> <p>2012 END Best Retail Mixed-Use Development</p> <p>2013 AIA COTE Top Ten Green Award</p> <p>2014 AIA Institute Honor Award for Regional & Urban Design</p> <p>2015 Congress for New Urbanism Global Character Award</p> <p>2017-2018 Urban Land Institute Global Award for Excellence</p>
Benefits	<p>Catalyst for other redevelopment and revitalization projects in San Antonio, including more than 2,300 housing units in vicinity of the Pearl.</p> <p>Increased tax benefit for San Antonio Independent School District.</p> <p>Increased tax increment revenue for the TIF to support additional improvement.</p>

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING

LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKERS

FINDINGS



1. The City and partners like the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance have installed many interpretive panels throughout the city and at trailheads.
2. The City has installed interpretive signs at some City-owned landmarks and in parks.
3. While the City has designed a local historical marker for local historic landmarks, these markers have not been installed.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

See 'Community Partners' in Chapter 3

SOLUTION SOURCES

San Antonio's [Historic Plaque](#) program and [History Here Markers](#) program.

City of Alexandria, Virginia, Redevelopment Requirements in local historic districts.

Incorporate local history into wayfinding in neighborhoods like the [Prairie Line Trail](#) in Tacoma, Washington.

SOLUTIONS



1. Using crowd-sourced information from the "Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past" activity, consider creating a local historical signage program and committee comprised of HPC members and Arts Commission members to provide markers for locally designated resources and resources associated with underrepresented stories.
2. Install the approved local landmark marker at each existing local historic landmark and offer a city-paid marker for future landmarks as an incentive to designate private property.
3. Consider working with the Arts Commission and Parks Department to help fund the initiative to install interpretive materials that tell the story of San Marcos, especially of Black residents and other historically underrepresented groups.
4. Continue to foster partnerships with groups like the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, Council for the Indigenous and Tejano Community, and the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association to install more local interpretive panels on trails and in parks.
5. Incorporate local history at prominent street corners and crossings within signage, sidewalk pavers, and crosswalks to emphasize the City's rich cultural heritage.
6. Consider requiring developers seeking rezoning, special permits, platting, and demolition fund on-site interpretive panels and incorporate site-specific history in naming roads or other features within the development.

STATE HISTORICAL MARKERS

FINDINGS



1. Official Texas Historical Markers and Registered Texas Historic Landmark markers have been an important component of documenting the history of San Marcos
2. Since 1970, 71 state historic markers including RTHLs have been erected in San Marcos, an average of 1.9 markers per year.
3. The Council for Indigenous and Tejano Community (CITC) spearheaded the La Sociedad Mutualista Cuauhtémoc state historic marker placed in 2019 and the pending application for a state historic marker for the East Guadalupe Neighborhood.
4. The Riverhead Farm marker was also placed in 2019. No additional markers have been installed since then

SOLUTIONS



1. Establish a connection for San Marcos residents and the Hays County Historical Commission to apply for OTHM and RTHL designations.
2. Connect citizens interested in markers with resources like the [THC's Marker Research Guides](#) and promote the [Undertold Markers Program](#) for city residents or groups interested in documenting underrepresented history.

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MARKERS

FINDINGS



1. The number of historic properties with NRHP markers are unknown.
2. The Old Bastrop Trail is part of the El Camino Real de los Tejas, which spans Texas and Louisiana. In 2004 U.S. Congress designated part of the El Camino Real (including the portion in San Marcos) as a National Historic Trail.

SOLUTIONS



1. Educate the public on how to obtain National Register markers.
2. Ensure all publicly owned designated properties have visible markers.
3. Explore funding opportunities and interpretation options with NPS NHT Regional Office for the [El Camino Real de los Tejas](#) NHT in San Marcos.

LINKING CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES

FINDINGS



1. City departments have funded a variety of plans to guide developing trails, urban walkability, and expansion of arts and economic development.
2. The City Parks Department, Destination Services and Arts Commission, and partners like Texas State and the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance have installed wayfinding throughout the downtown, parks, natural areas, conservation easements, and at trailheads.
3. The Greenbelt Alliance and other non-profit partners take advantage of regional resources for wayfinding in and beyond San Marcos in a cohesive way.



Historic Stockyards wayfinding signage along street in Fort Worth, Texas

SOLUTIONS



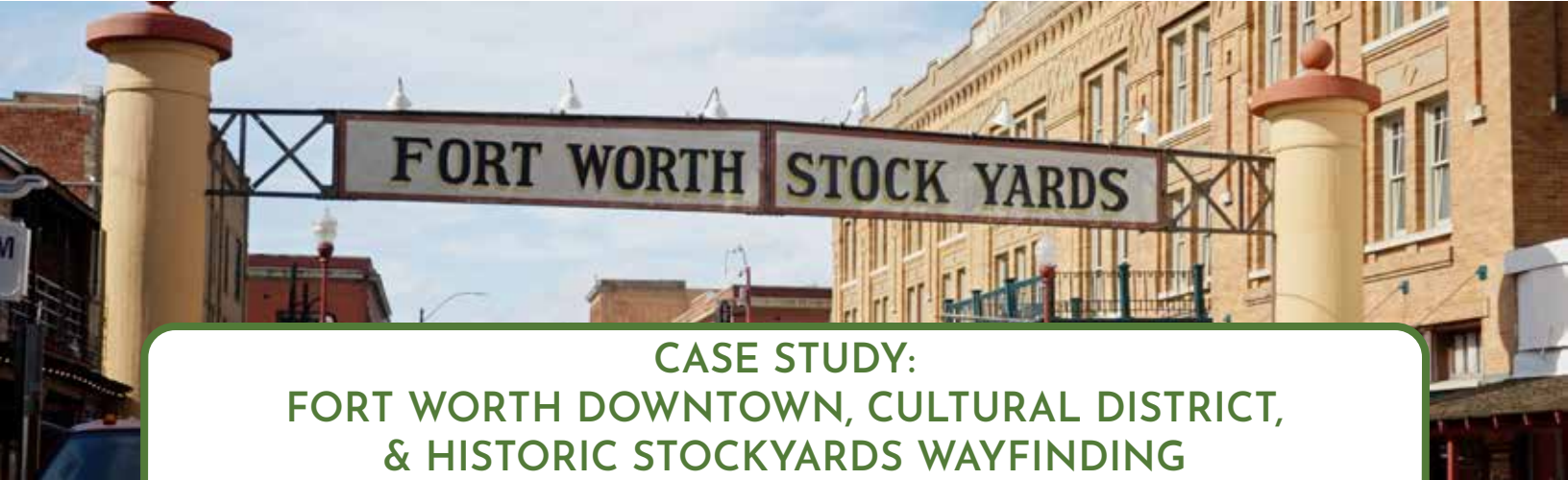
1. Consider creation of a consolidated plan in coordination with other City departments to connect the City's wide array of publicly and privately owned cultural and natural Resources and the ways in which they are currently interpreted.
2. Create unified wayfinding graphics between City-funded and public and private partners' wayfinding, interpretative signage, and state and national markers.
3. Explore developing a bilingual local wayfinding program and consider participation in the Texas Heritage Trails Program.
4. Enhance the historic El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT through San Marcos using signage, wayfinding, and public art. Using information regarding trail design as well as trail awareness and experience from the NPS-created Conceptual Strategy for Development of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California NHTs would be particularly useful as guidelines for the development of the El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT throughout the City. Any added elements should be thoughtfully integrated into the streetscape and designed to complement—not distract from—the surrounding character.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

See 'Community Partners' in Chapter 3
NPS NHT Regional Office

SOLUTION SOURCES

[Texas Heritage Trails Program](#)



CASE STUDY: FORT WORTH DOWNTOWN, CULTURAL DISTRICT, & HISTORIC STOCKYARDS WAYFINDING

Historic Names	Downtown, museum district, Fort Worth Stockyards Company.
Historic Uses	Commercial, Industrial, Entertainment/Recreation.
District Names	Downtown & Sundance Square District, Cultural District, and Stockyards National Historic District.
Current Uses	Commercial, Entertainment/Recreation, Mixed-Use.
Project Scope	<p>2015: Wayfinding project in its Downtown, Cultural District, and the Stockyards Historic District, the city's three most popular tourist areas. Installed 125 wayfinding signs in total; 69 in downtown, 33 in the Cultural District, and 23 in the Stockyards.</p> <p>2021-2023: Additional wayfinding signage, interpretive panels, a Heritage trail, and a walking path in the Stockyards.</p>
Project Lead	<p>2015: City of Fort Worth</p> <p>2021-2023: Majestic Realty Co.</p>
Design Team	<p>2015: City hired design consultants to devise the wayfinding plan and vision in 2010, and a manufacturer to produce the signs in 2014. The city's Planning and Development office worked with the three districts and their consultants to choose designs that would complement the character of the city.</p> <p>2021-2023: Private developer hired a design consultant who worked with local historians, historic preservation experts, and other developers in the Stockyards to develop interpretive and wayfinding signage using repurposed building materials.</p>
Funding	2015: \$790,000 in city and federal funds, \$240,000 raised by the three districts, and \$156,620 from Downtown Fort Worth Inc
Recognition and Awards	2021-2023: Creative Communication Awards Honorable Mention for Functional Typography & Wayfinding, International Design Awards bronze award in Print / Wayfinding & Environmental Graphics, and Society for Experiential Graphic Design award Finalist.
Benefits	<p>2015: Orients drivers and pedestrians in the main tourism areas in the city. Signs geared toward vehicles show the direction to each district, major attractions and hotels, and parking garages. Pedestrian-oriented signs show visitors attractions within a five-minute walk, public transit stops, and bike-share locations.</p> <p>2021-2023: Tells the story of the Historic Stockyards to visitors and follows a path that aligns with historic circulation and brings visitors to lesser-visited historic resources.</p>

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECOGNITION

FINDINGS

SOLUTIONS



1. There is an opportunity to be more inclusive and tell a fuller, more representative story by exploring creative and innovative approaches to interpretation and engagement.
2. The San Marcos Legacy Business program has been a great success to advocate for the long-term viability of business that are historical and cultural assets to the community.
3. Community partners like the Heritage Association of San Marcos give awards for historic preservation projects and volunteers.
4. Community members emphasized the importance of art in San Marcos that reflects its unique culture and heritage.



1. Continue to implement the Legacy Business program and proactively recruit additional businesses each year while celebrating and promoting members.
2. Consider establishing a grant or monetary award for Legacy Businesses to use towards improvements, signage, lighting, etc.
3. Establish a recognition program for older homes (not just in historic districts or at landmarks), that have been successfully renovated/repared to contribute further to the retention of the City's cultural heritage.
4. Use crowd-sourcing to support the City's Mural Arts Program in telling the story of the City in highly visible locations.
5. Annually identify existing spaces—such as fences, retaining walls, and blank walls of public facilities—that can be enhanced with public art or interpretive materials. Parks and playgrounds may offer opportunities for creative expression and storytelling through art and themed play equipment.
6. Find and engage local artists that can create family-friendly works ranging from murals to sculpture for future use as public art to tell the history of the City. Explore projections and movable canvases that can be affixed without damaging historic materials.
7. Approach residents and businesses around the City about “adopting” nearby pieces of public art. This responsibility is minimal and entails only observing its condition and reporting any vandalism, deterioration, or damage to the City. This also encourages community “ownership” of public art.
8. Develop educational materials, interpretive signage, school curriculum content, or public programs that highlight local archaeological findings and their cultural significance, in collaboration with local organizations actively engaged in this work.
9. Explore a photo banner program to highlight local heritage in the public realm to celebrate community history and identity. San Antonio's Fotohistorias del Westside project could be used as a model.



Mural on Rogelio's Restaurant, 625 South LBJ Drive

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

See 'Community Partners' in Chapter 3

SOLUTION SOURCES

The Austin Case Study featured on the following page offers a model for honoring and celebrating both existing and new Legacy Business Program members.

HERITAGE MARKETING EXPANSION

FINDINGS



1. The 2024 Comprehensive Plan expressed the goal of leveraging heritage tourism.
2. San Marcos is successfully promoting heritage tourism across multiple platforms.
3. The City's website highlights historic preservation events, experiences, and destinations through the City's Destination Services Department.
4. Guided or self-guided walking tours do not appear to be regularly offered or marketed.
5. The City has provided the Spark Tourism Grant and Tourism Grant to encourage heritage tourism.

CASE STUDY: AUSTIN LEGACY BUSINESS MONTH

Austin City Council officially proclaimed October as Legacy Business Month in October 2023. This annual month-long event celebrates locally owned businesses that have been operating for 20 years or more, highlighting their significant contributions to Austin's cultural and economic history. Local non-profit Preservation Austin leads the annual event by recruiting business participants and features them on their website and social media. Participants can collect a "passport" stamp at each business and are entered into drawings for prizes provided by Preservation Austin. The celebratory month culminates in a wrap-up party typically hosted at a legacy business.

SOLUTIONS



1. Continue to highlight heritage tourism events and attractions on [VisitSanMarcos.com](https://www.visitanmarcos.com) and update it to showcase local landmarks and historic preservation efforts.
2. Establish a Virtual Exhibit Platform to highlight historic preservation work in the community highlighted in Chapter 2.
3. Invest City funding to develop a series of walking and driving tours available on paper and through apps, like the [Downtown Walking Tour on the Visit El Paso App](#).
4. Partner with community stakeholders to develop a walking tour program. Design tours spread throughout the City highlighting diverse communities, cultures, and backgrounds. Aim to conduct at least one in-person tour annually and develop a digital version using StoryMaps.
5. Continue to award the Spark Tourism and Tourism Grants and expand the amount of available funding or number of recipients.
6. Consider leveraging participation in the [Texas Heritage Trails Program](#) for statewide marketing and add content and destinations to [Texas Time Travel's page on San Marcos](#).
7. Continue to foster a partnership with the El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT Association and consider participation in the El Camino Real Day facilitated by the NHT Association on an annual basis.

Table 6. Comparison of Legacy Business Programs as of September 2025

CITY	POPULATION	LEGACY BUSINESSES	PER CAPITA
Austin	961,855	23	.00002
San Antonio	1,434,625	100	.00007
San Marcos	71,569	11	.00009

PRESERVATION WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT

FINDINGS



1. Generally, the City's website provides helpful, detailed information regarding historic preservation. However, information regarding how to locally designate a property or district is not readily available.
2. The City's social media is graphically pleasing and attracts public interaction.

SOLUTIONS



1. Consider updating the Historic Preservation Program website. Updates may be guided by incorporating recommendations outlined on the following page.
2. Encourage crowd-sourced identification of potentially significant places through Story Maps, the City's social media platforms, and other innovative tools, including the continued use of the mapping activity "Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past." In-person, paper-based, and bilingual methods for gathering this information should also be considered to ensure broader accessibility and participation.
3. Publish regular, engaging historic preservation content on the City's social media on a regular schedule.
4. Use ArcGIS StoryMaps as a tool to educate the public about underrepresented histories in the City, including Indigenous, Mexican American and Black history, by highlighting significant places, people, and cultural narratives. These StoryMaps can be linked on the City's website.

VISIT SAN MARCOS WEBSITE MENU

PROPOSED UPDATES

[Museums & History](#)

Add Wittliff Collection to list of Museums & History.
Add historic districts to interactive maps.

[Museums & History brochure PDF](#)

Add historic districts.

[Events](#)

Add a category for history and include events like the Heritage Homes Tour.

[San Marcos, Texas Tours](#)

Add self-guided tours of historic attractions.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEBSITE	PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS
<u>Historic Preservation Home Page</u>	<p>Add contact person, phone number, and email for Historic Preservation staff to the "Contact Us" block rather than linking to a citywide directory.</p> <p>Add links to the most sought out information such as COAs and Design Guidelines</p>
<u>Historic Resources Map</u>	<p>Add the layers listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wiki layer to crowd-source resource identification NRHP designations State designations Local designations Cultural Districts (if created). Legacy Businesses Survey Areas <p>Clarify "historic landmark" and "local landmark" language.</p> <p>Provide links to local landmark designation files from the points on the map.</p>
<u>Completed Historic Resources and Historic Resources Surveys</u>	<p>Link to the 1983 MRA</p> <p>Provide summary information for each survey (City could pull the summaries of each survey from Chapter 3 of this plan).</p>
<u>Historic Landmarks and Districts Page</u>	<p>Link to previously developed flowchart "Local Historic Landmark or Local Historic District Designation Process."</p> <p>Add information detailing how an individual could nominate a local landmark or local historic district and/or a link to an application form with instructions.</p>
Historic Preservation Benefits and Incentives (new section)	<p>Provide table of all types of incentives included in the Appendix.</p> <p>Provide links to federal and state historic tax incentives information.</p> <p>Link to <u>Legacy Business Program</u> webpage.</p>
<u>Certificates of Appropriateness</u>	<p>Link to <u>SMDC code section dealing with COAs</u>.</p> <p>Link to the existing "Guide to Preservation," which explains the COA process.</p>
<u>Commission Recommendation Resolutions</u>	<p>Add information under each resolution explaining the current status (e.g. adopted by City Council with changes, abandoned, etc.).</p> <p>Rename this page "Historic Preservation Commission" and add links to <u>Historic Preservation Commission City of San Marcos, TX</u> and the HPC's bylaws.</p>
<u>Preservation Projects</u>	<p>Highlight completed historic preservation projects, including both City-sponsored projects and preservation projects by community partners.</p>
Events and Outreach (new section)	<p>Add Historic Preservation Month events.</p> <p>Add other preservation related events in the City hosted by other City Departments or preservation partners.</p>
News and Public Meetings (new section)	<p>Link to City press releases.</p> <p>Link to historic preservation projects in the news.</p> <p>Link to the calendar of HPC meetings.</p>

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

FINDINGS SOLUTIONS



1. The City of San Marcos and local organizations host many events related to historic preservation throughout the year.
2. The City has hosted events and activities for Preservation Month in May since at least 2022.
3. San Marcos' rich and diverse history presents ongoing opportunities to collaborate with preservation and community partners to further celebrate and elevated underrepresented stories and communities.
4. Community members noted that people who purchase property in historic districts do not realize that they are subject to design review.
5. Some City boards and commissions make decisions affecting historic resources but currently do not receive preservation training, which could improve understanding of its role in economic development, tourism, and planning.

1. Create a historic preservation network for property and business owners.
2. Educate realtors about the implications of purchasing designated historic properties and educate contractors about working with historic buildings. Consider establishing a certificate program for both topics, like San Antonio's Rehabber Club Contractor & Professional Certifications.
3. Consider creating a City History Network for history teachers in public and private schools, as well as homeschool groups. Consider a virtual or in-person networking event and/or establish a listserve to connect teachers to share resources.
4. Build on the success of past Preservation Month events and continue robust programming in the future. Future topics can highlight underrepresented histories including Indigenous, Mexican American, and Black history to ensure a more complete and factual narrative of the City's heritage.
5. Collaborate with preservation and community partners to establish or support equitable City celebrations for events such as Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, 16 de Septiembre, and other cultural events, including sponsoring cultural heritage activities for children.
6. Strengthen collaboration with other City departments and programs to ensure work supports the historic preservation program. This may include regular meetings with department leaders on projects affecting historic and cultural resources, and ongoing communication with Council about preservation program achievements.
7. Widely promote historic preservation events (not limited to City-sponsored events) on the City's website, social media, and visitsanmarcos.com. Strengthen partnerships so that the City is aware of relevant events.
8. Create an educational plan and public information campaign about the historic preservation program. Share information via a variety of outreach methods, including connecting with existing networks to reach people of all ages and backgrounds without the use of jargon and "legalese".
9. Expand City board and commission training to include a basic module on the economic and cultural value of historic preservation.

SOLUTION SOURCES

[San Antonio's Rehabber Club Contractor & Professional Certifications](#)

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & MAINTENANCE

This Historic Preservation Plan (Historic Preservation Plan) is intended to guide the City's Historic Preservation Program for up to 10 years. In coordination with the HPO, the HPC should, annually, discuss progress on the plan and establish priorities for the year through creation of an Annual Work Plan. Unforeseen events or new initiatives that were not included in this document may require the City and/or HPC to amend the plan or create internal policies, or guidelines prior to the next update cycle. The City should initiate a review and update of this plan five years after its adoption to maintain its impact and alignment with evolving community needs.

As its final goal, the City of San Marcos should consider establishing a permanent Historic Preservation Stakeholder Committee to build on the success of public involvement and investment in this plan. The committee would include representatives from key non-profit groups involved in the drafting of this Historic Preservation Plan, such as the Dunbar Heritage Association, the Calaboose African American History Museum, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, Indigenous Cultures Institute, and Council for the Indigenous & Tejano Community, Heritage Association of San Marcos, and Texas State University, and would support implementation by tracking progress on goals and metrics, sharing updates, coordinating programs, and advising on potential amendments to the Historic Preservation Plan.

In conclusion, the Historic Preservation Plan for San Marcos, Texas, affirms the community's commitment to safeguarding its rich cultural heritage while supporting sustainable growth and resilience. By protecting historic resources, San Marcos not only preserves its unique character but also leverages it's past to enhance quality of life, economic vitality, and environmental stewardship. Through continued collaboration among residents, city officials, and preservation partners, San Marcos will ensure that its historic places remain vibrant, meaningful, and relevant for generations to come.



Cheatham Street Warehouse adapted from a grocery warehouse into an iconic music venue in 1974 (COSM)





IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

WHAT'S IN MATRIX?

- 152. ADMINISTRATION
- 159. SURVEY & RECOGNITION
- 163. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- 166. SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING
- 169. ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

ORGANIZATION

The accompanying matrix details the steps the City of San Marcos (CoSM) can take to begin implementing the Solutions identified in Chapter 5. If all fields in a row are shaded, it indicates that the item is ongoing throughout the life of the Plan. It is organized as follows:

FOCUS AREA	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
GOALS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SOLUTIONS	Anticipated to begin within 1-2 year of adoption	Anticipated to begin within 3-5 years of adoption	Anticipated to begin within 6-10 years of adoption	Who could take the lead on each solution	Who could help implement each solution	How will each solution could be funded

This plan is a first step to inform City staff workplans over the next several years and should be considered as a starting point as additional funding, partnerships, and creative tactics may arise over time. While the City's Planning and Development Services Department will likely lead the implementation of many Solutions, other City departments and partner organizations will also have important roles. These organizations should be consulted prior to implementation to assess their capacity and willingness to participate. Those identified as leads or partners represent key participants, though others may be engaged as needed.

In addition to the abbreviations throughout the Plan and in the Appendix, the following appear in the table for sake of brevity:

AC	Arts Commission
CoC	Chamber of Commerce
CONA	Council of Neighborhood Associations
CoSM	City of San Marcos
CMO	City Manager's Office
LP	Local Professionals
NPO	Non-Profit Organizations
P&DS	Planning and Development Services Department
SMCISD	San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District
SMPL	San Marcos Public Library
TXST	Texas State University

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Continue to follow the CLG Program Requirements for Cities in the THC's CLG Handbooks CLG Handbook .				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
2.	Increase collaboration with regional contacts in the environmental compliance department at federal agencies and their partners (such as US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Department of Transportation, etc.) to strengthen relationships and ensure Section 106 consultation opportunities for the City as a CLG.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, LP, NPO, THC, TXST	N/A
3.	Consider adding a checkpoint in the building permit process for RTHLs and NRHP properties in the City to assist the THC in ensuring historic resources are protected.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
COSM STAFF & RESOURCES GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Consider drafting a hiring plan to address the need to carry out the goals of the Historic Preservation Plan. The hiring plan should consider the need for additional City staff positions, like a City Archaeologist.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, Consultant	N/A
2.	Consider retaining a qualified cultural resources firm or group of firms with staff through an indefinite deliverable contract, so the HPO can outsource certain services on an on-call basis, including archaeology.				CoSM P&DS	Consultants, LP	CoSM, Grants
3.	Consider allocating funding in the City budget to the historic preservation program that can be used for surveys, educational programs, events, and other initiatives.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, Consultants	CoSM
4.	Offer a seasonal internship to Texas State students interested in archaeology, architecture, history, and cultural studies to contribute to the City's initiatives.				CoSM P&DS	TXST	N/A
5.	Evaluate the number of COAs and building permits (demolitions, relocations, etc.) for historic-age buildings processed by the City and the HPC each year and analyze for trends (e.g. whether they are primarily residential or commercial or are concentrated in certain neighborhoods.)				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
6.	Establish a proactive communication process between the City and other governmental entities when they are considering disposal of surplus property that may have historic value.				CoSM	HPC, NPO, TXST, SMCISD, County Governments	CoSM
7.	Explore adding archaeological review to the predevelopment process for projects located in areas with known or high potential for archaeological resources.				CoSM P&DS	THC, TXST, LP, NPO	CoSM, Grants
8.	Offer preservation program orientation sessions or small workshops in the community's languages to help organizations and individuals learn key preservation terms, align projects with City goals, and prepare strong applications.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, Consultants, TXST, THC, NPO, LP, SMPL	N/A
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC) GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Actively work to fill HPC positions with individuals that reflect the diversity of San Marcos by working with neighborhood associations, residents, and other community groups. Presenting City Council members with demographic information and the types of representation sought can be helpful.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, LP, TXST, THC, CoC	N/A
2.	Actively seek a professional archaeologist to join the HPC to review and recommend policy and procedures for the preservation of significant archaeological sites.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, TXST, THC, NPO, LP	N/A
3.	Consider offering childcare for HPC (and other City boards and commissions) to make membership more accessible for working parents. Flexible meeting times can also be considered to better accommodate those with standard 8-to-5 work schedules.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, THC, TXST	CoSM
4.	Provide annual training on parliamentary procedure and provide each HPC member with a Robert's Rules of Order "cheat sheet" handout.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	CoSM
5.	Provide training for the HPC on evaluating "extreme hardship" for consideration in granting COAs, and publish it on the City's website.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
6.	Consider establishing a goal identification roundtable with the HPO and HPC to develop an annual work plan that will guide objectives and priorities and publish it on the City's website				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION PROCEDURES GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Consider revising SMDC Section 2.5.4.2 and Section 2.3.1.1 to illustrate clearly the steps in the local landmarks and districts designation process, including required report content and the HPC review period.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
2.	Consider revising the SMDC Section 2.5.4.5 to require that all landmarks and districts must possess integrity.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
3.	Consider revising the SMDC Section 2.5.4.5 to explain the designation criteria for districts more clearly.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
4.	Provide an application form and/or step-by-step instructions for nominating a resource for local historic designation on the Historic Preservation Program website to supplement the revised SMDC. Prioritize inclusive outreach to raise broad awareness and ensure these materials are widely accessible.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, CMO	N/A
5.	Revise language in the SMDC regarding historic properties to align with terms used by the NPS.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
6.	Update the SMDC to establish criteria for owner opposition or consent regarding designation of local historic landmarks and districts.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
7.	Update the SMDC to align with Chapter 211 of the Local Government Code .				CoSM P&DS	N/A	N/A
8.	Amend narratives of local landmarks to add information about additional significant associations, including building stewards. This could be accomplished using a form like the NRHP Modified Continuation Sheet .				CoSM P&DS, HPC	CoSM Depts., HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, LP	CoSM, Grants

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA) GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Ensure broad access to the existing "Guide to Preservation" by uploading it to the City's website and distributing printed copies at key public locations such as the San Marcos Public Library, the Activity Center, and other accessible community spaces. Consider adapting the document into a brochure to facilitate easier distribution in public spaces and at events.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	N/A
2.	Add clarifying language to the historic preservation website to explain that while a COA is generally not required for ordinary repair and maintenance activities at a landmark or within a historic district, coordination with City staff is strongly encouraged prior to beginning any project to confirm compliance and avoid potential issues.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
3.	Explore amending SMDC Section 2.5.6.1 to expand the applicability of Administrative COAs to include topics such as fence installation and roofing material changes.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM, THC Grants
4.	Consider establishing a Design Review Committee of the HPC to assist applicants with the design of their projects prior to application submittal. This resource would provide applicants with the opportunity to meet with staff and HPC members to ensure projects align with the required standards and guidelines, reducing the need for design adjustments during the HPC meetings.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
5.	Consider updating the existing Historic District Design Guidelines to reflect best practices, including guidance on accessory dwelling units (ADUs), appropriate replacement materials, and site elements like walkways.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
6.	Establish a City policy or process to ensure that City-sponsored projects follow the Historic District Guidelines where applicable.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	N/A

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
DEMOLITION DELAY GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Consider amending Section 2.7.4.1(B)(2) of the SMDC to clarify that contributing resources in National Register Historic Districts are also subject to the delay period.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
2.	Provide property owners who submit a demolition permit with a packet of resources, including information on funding, grants, tax credits, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, as applicable.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
3.	Create an HPC committee to meet with property owners after a demolition delay has been issued to brainstorm alternatives to demolition, and facilitate collaboration with preservation stakeholders, such as local advocacy groups.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A
4.	Require a documentation package as mitigation for all demolition permits that are issued after a delay as a condition of the demolition permit, to include at minimum photographs and a brief history of the property. A Story Map and/or measured drawings could also be required on a case-by-case basis, scaled to the resource's significance. In cases of financial hardship, consider City subsidization or partnership with Texas State or other organizations like Preservation Texas for documentation.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, LP, TXST	N/A
5.	Establish a process and responsible parties for research during the 90-day delay window to determine if a property meets local landmark designation criteria.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, LP, TXST	N/A
6.	Consider updating the SMDC to allow denial of the demolition for properties meeting the landmark criteria unless hardship is demonstrated. Clarify that determinations of whether a building is structurally unsalvageable remain the responsibility of the Building Official, while decisions about historic or cultural value are the responsibility of the HPC.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	N/A

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Revise SMDC Section 4.5.2.1(N)(2)(c) to add the number of days that the second notice may be sent after posting the first certified mail notice and the number of days after posting the second certified mail notice.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	N/A
2.	Consider partnering with a non-profit organization or establishing a volunteer maintenance crew who could be available to assist in repairing properties when the owner is experiencing hardship. See 'Potential Partners' on Page 121 for potential collaboration opportunities.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, LP, NPO, TXST	N/A
3.	Continue to foster a strong relationship between the Code Compliance Office and the HPO and HPC to address hazardous conditions before they threaten public safety (at which point a COA or demolition review may be bypassed).				CoSM P&DS, CoSM Code Compliance	HPC	N/A
4.	Encourage neighborhood associations and preservation groups to report at-risk properties and provide clear guidance on reporting at-risk properties to the City. As part of this collaboration, consider establishing a schedule for several groups (including the City) to conduct surveys to proactively identify properties that are showing signs of neglect.				CoSM P&DS, CoSM Code Compliance	HPC, CONA	N/A
5.	Consider more stringent penalties, like adding the property to a probationary list where no permits will be issued for 3-5 years to discourage neglect by developers wanting to replace a historic building.				CoSM	HPC, THC, Consultants	N/A
6.	Explore establishing a revolving fund to purchase, rehabilitate, and resell neglected properties, such as programs in Baltimore, Maryland and Providence, Rhode Island.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, THC, NPO, LP, Consultants	CoSM
7.	Consider City-supported title clearing and estate planning legal clinics, workshops, or partnerships with local nonprofits to help property owners resolve ownership issues and unlock access to preservation funding and repair programs. Workshops and materials should be offered in multiple languages, including Spanish.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, NPO, LP, Consultants	CoSM

ADMINISTRATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCY GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Consider developing and adopting a deconstruction ordinance that would require building material salvage, recycling, and reuse when buildings are demolished or renovated. Implementation of this goal could include partnerships between private property owners and the City to store materials at a designated city facility or could include exemptions in the city code relating to the storage of historic materials.				CoSM P&DS, CoSM Code Compliance	HPC, NPO, LP, THC, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
2.	Consider charging higher fees (possibly scaled to square footage) for demolition permits to discourage demolition when preservation may be possible.				CoSM	CoSM P&DS, CoSM Code Compliance	N/A
3.	Explore partnerships with organizations like Habitat for Humanity and its ReStore program to spearhead architectural salvage and the reuse of historic building materials.				CoSM P&DS, CoSM Code Compliance	NPO, LP	CoSM, Grants
4.	Educate property owners about the sustainability benefits of historic buildings, including the energy saved from reusing and rehabilitating older properties rather than demolishing them. Consider publishing a handout in English and Spanish with statistics and examples, and mailing it directly to property owners.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Code Compliance, HPC, NPO, LP	N/A
5.	Consider featuring practical and affordable strategies for enhancing building energy efficiency in the Planning & Development Services monthly newsletter as well as on the City's website.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Code Compliance, NPO, LP	N/A

SURVEY & RECOGNITION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
SURVEY & STUDY GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Develop thematic context statements to document history and facilitate designation. Topics could include mid-century modern architecture, dams and associated mill/irrigation features along the San Marcos River, women's history, Latino history, and Black history.				CoSM P&DS, HPC	THC, HCHC, HASM, Calaboose, CAF, Centro, CITC, DHA, SMPL, TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
2.	Consider developing and implementing a Survey Plan to identify areas that have not been surveyed and a survey plan to identify cultural landscapes. The 2019 My Historic SMTX historic resources survey can serve as a reference.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPO TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
3.	Schedule survey updates of properties that have been previously documented at least every 10 years to capture condition and reevaluate significance and integrity as necessary. Plan now for a 2028 survey.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
4.	Conduct additional research on properties identified as "Medium Priority" in the 2019 survey to assess potential historic significance, with particular attention to those located in the East Guadalupe neighborhood and Barrio Victoria. Additional neighborhoods east of IH-35, such as Barrio Pescado and Sunset Acres, should also be surveyed to identify potential historic resources that may not have been previously documented.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, HCHC, HASM, Calaboose, CAF, Centro, CITC, DHA, SMPL, TXST, Consultants	CoSM
5.	Consider funding surveys with City budget rather than grants to allow more flexibility in the type of data collected and eliminate unnecessary, costly, and time-consuming tasks that may be required by grant terms.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments	CoSM
6.	Focus on eligibility for designation or candidacy for other historical interpretation (such as story maps and interpretive signage) rather than "preservation priorities" in survey documentation. For example, surveys can recommend to document a property that has lost historical integrity with a StoryMap entry instead of a designation.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPO TXST, Consultants	N/A

SURVEY & RECOGNITION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
NOMINATION & DESIGNATION GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Re-evaluate the findings of the 2019 My Historic SMTX survey to apply the updated local landmark criteria. This may require engaging a consultant.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM, TXST, HPC, Consultant	CoSM, Grants
2.	Empower residents to engage in and seek designation by developing clear, accessible handouts and website content that explain its implications, outlines the COA process, and provides guidance on participating in HPC meetings.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants	N/A
3.	Encourage Legacy Tree designation inspired by the City's first historic landmark to promote the preservation of historic landscapes. The Massachusetts Legacy Tree Program could serve as a model.				CoSM P&DS	Parks & Recreation	N/A
4.	Design a local landmark application that can be completed by individuals or the HPC. See Solution Sources on Page 125.				CoSM P&DS	HPC	CoSM
5.	Establish an HPC subcommittee to communicate the benefits of preservation to owners of high-priority properties, and to provide owners with information about their properties and designation differences and processes.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC	N/A
6.	Establish an HPC subcommittee to provide technical support, including guidance and/or assistance in researching, writing, and/or editing nomination reports.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
7.	Establish an HPC subcommittee to evaluate the feasibility of expanding the boundaries of existing local and NRHP districts. This may require additional survey and engagement with property owners.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
8.	Consider creating a rolling schedule to evaluate local and NRHP designation of individual properties districts reaching 50 years of age.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants	N/A
9.	Consider streamlining nomination processes to maximize benefits and protection.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC	N/A

SURVEY & RECOGNITION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
ALTERNATIVE LOCAL ZONING GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Explore the use of preservation tools such as Neighborhood Conservation Districts to retain distinct neighborhood characteristics (including but not limited to general form, style, and scale) as recommended by the 2019 historic resources survey, My Historic SMTX. Conduct a spatial analysis to draw a detailed district boundary to determine if alternative local zoning is appropriate.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, THC, TXST, Consultant	CoSM, Grants
2.	Consider amending the SMDC to establish a formal process for the designation and implementation of Neighborhood Conservation Districts, and explore creating design guidelines that balance flexibility and compatibility of design.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, THC, CONA, Consultant	CoSM, Grants
3.	Develop educational resources to distinguish between historic districts and alternative zoning districts, while also highlighting the advantages of establishing alternative conservation districts.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, TXST, Consultant	CoSM, Grants
4.	Determine whether creating Neighborhood Conservation Districts add value to the Historic Preservation Program goals.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CONA, NPO, LP, TXST	N/A
5.	Consider creation of the first Corridor Overlay District using the existing tools in the SMDC.				CoSM P&DS	N/A	N/A

SURVEY & RECOGNITION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
HONORARY CULTURAL DISTRICT GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Identify and coordinate with partners, such as local cultural or historical organizations, to apply for TCA designation of Cultural Districts. Potential areas include the larger Dunbar neighborhood extending beyond the NRHP district boundaries, areas near Texas State, and around Eddie Durham Park, identified in the Downtown Area Plan as a potential Cultural District.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
2.	Consider creating a task force including the Arts Commission, HPC, City staff, and local partners to identify potential Cultural Districts.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, HPC, AC, LP, NPO, TXST	N/A
3.	Ensure Cultural District programming emphasizes local community identity and participation by prioritizing events led by local organizations, involving community representatives in advisory roles, directing funding support toward neighborhood-based initiatives, and balancing marketing to highlight benefits for residents as well as visitors.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, HPC, AC, LP, NPO, TXST	N/A

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
HISTORIC PRESERVATION INCENTIVES GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Develop local tax incentives that would apply to both individual landmarks and historic districts.				CoSM P&DS HPC	CoSM Depts., THC, SMCISD, County Tax Assessors & Gov't, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
2.	Consult with the NPS about Certified Local Districts for local districts not in the NRHP, which would allow both income-generating and nonprofit-owned properties to use state historic tax credits.				CoSM P&DS, HPC	THC, NPS, NPO	CoSM, Grants
3.	Educate residents on the benefits of listing in the NRHP and designation as RTHLs, including eligibility for Texas Preservation Trust Fund grants.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, HCHC, THC	N/A
4.	Consider developing a program that provides more zoning flexibility for owners or developers who agree to retain historic buildings on a property where new development is proposed.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM
5.	Explore development of carbon footprint incentives for reusing buildings, such as fee reductions, tax abatements, or expedited permitting for projects that retain and rehabilitate existing structures.				CoSM	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM , Grants
6.	Explore the feasibility of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program to preserve smaller-scale downtown buildings, commercial corridors, and historic districts in growth areas.				CoSM	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM , Surrounding Counties
7.	Consider amending the SMDC to allow for a preservation bonus similar to the City of Austin's HOME Initiative.				CoSM P&DS, HPC	HASM, HCHC, THC	CoSM , Grants
8.	Develop resources for properties that could be relocated as an alternative to demolition, potentially including funding for moving, contacts for movers, and advertising buildings as available for relocation.				CoSM P&DS, HPC	HASM, HCHC, LP, NPO, THC	N/A
9.	Explore incentives to help descendants retain inherited historic properties, such as tax relief, repair assistance, or legal aid for title clearing, with emphasis on supporting low- and moderate-income families.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, Consultants	CoSM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
MAINTENANCE INCENTIVES GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Host workshops for citizens interested in: pursuing historic designation (at any level), grant funding, proper maintenance of older buildings, and researching the history of a building. Some workshops may be hosted with City staff while others may require external experts (paid or pro bono). These workshops can be brief and do not need to be full-day sessions.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, LP, NPO, HCHC, THC, Consultants, TXST	CoSM, Grants
2.	Explore creating a virtual Maintenance and Preservation Resource Center with links to resources and database of vendors to connect property owners with qualified contractors and specialists for building repair and renovation. This can be modeled after the San Antonio's Rehabber Club list and include a link to Scott's Historic Home Improvement Contractors List .				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, LP, NPO Consultants, THC, TXST	CoSM, Grants
3.	Consider starting a city-funded program to offer significant financial incentives for home improvements to owners of buildings that are historic age but are not designated or necessarily historically significant. This could supplement the City's Community Development Block Grant Program. The Richardson Home Improvement Program highlighted on the next page can be used as an example.				CoSM	HPC, CoSM Departments	CoSM
VACANT BUILDING PROMOTION GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Create educational materials to inform residents about mothballing and its best practices for preservation.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	CoSM, Grants
2.	Promote awareness of the Artistic Board-Up Ordinance by publishing it on the City website, developing and distributing informational brochures, and hosting outreach meetings with property owners to encourage understanding and compliance.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, LP, CoSM Code Compliance	CoSM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
3.	Confirm that data on available properties in San Marcos listed on DowntownTX.org is up to date to better understand trends.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments	N/A
4.	Consider establishing a Vacant Building Registration Program to identify and monitor unoccupied historic and older buildings, requiring owners to register, maintain, and share plans for future use. Pair this with policies, funding, and incentives—such as rehabilitation grants, adaptive reuse programs, or partnerships—to return buildings to active use, preserve historic resources, and support community vitality.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM P&DS, CoSM Departments	N/A
ADAPTIVE REUSE PROMOTION GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Continue crowd sourcing ideas for building reuse candidates via the City's website; supplement with high-priority properties; and apply metrics like size of building and programming capabilities (e.g. vacant commercial, industrial, and institutional).				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, NPO, Local Businesses, Citizens	N/A
2.	Educate property owners and developers with information about federal and state tax credits and other incentives.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC	COSM, THC Grants
3.	Consider taking advantage of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Building Opportunities on Main Street (BOOMS) application .				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, THC	COSM
4.	Educate and provide resources to property owners, design professionals, and contractors on appropriate rehabilitation strategies, including the use of codes such as the International Existing Building Code (IEBC).				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, NPO, LP	COSM, Grants
5.	Using the information outlined in Solution 1, consider adding a 'Reuse Opportunity' data layer to the ArcGIS Permit & Zoning Map and link on both the Planning & Development Services and Economic Development webpages.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments	N/A

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
LOCAL HISTORICAL MARKER GOALS SOLUTIONS						
1. Using crowd-sourced information from the "Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past" activity, consider creating a local historical signage program and committee comprised of HPC members and Arts Commission members to provide markers for locally designated resources and resources associated with underrepresented stories.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, HPC, AC, NPO, Consultants	N/A
2. Install the approved local landmark marker at each existing local historic landmark and offer a city-paid marker for future landmarks as an incentive to designate private property.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, Property Owners	CoSM
3. Consider working with the Arts Commission and Parks Department to help fund the initiative to install interpretive materials that tell the story of San Marcos, especially of Black residents and other historically underrepresented groups.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, AC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, Local Businesses	CoSM, Grants
4. Continue to foster partnerships with groups like the San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance, Council for the Indigenous and Tejano Community, and the El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail Association to install more local interpretive panels on trails and in parks.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, HPC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, Local Businesses	N/A
5. Incorporate local history at prominent street corners and crossings within signage, sidewalk pavers, and crosswalks to emphasize the City's rich cultural heritage.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, HPC, HCHC, THC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, Local Businesses	CoSM, Grants
6. Consider requiring developers seeking rezoning, special permits, platting, and demolition fund on-site interpretive panels and incorporate site-specific history in naming roads or other features within the development.				CoSM P&DS	Developers, NPO	N/A

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
STATE HISTORICAL MARKER GOALS						
SOLUTIONS						
1. Establish a connection for San Marcos residents and the Hays County Historical Commission to apply for OTHM and RTHL designations.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPO	N/A
2. Connect citizens interested in markers with resources like the THC's Marker Research Guides and promote the Untold Markers Program for city residents or groups interested in documenting underrepresented history.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPO	CoSM, Grants
NATIONAL HISTORICAL MARKER GOALS						
SOLUTIONS						
3. Educate the public on how to obtain National Register markers.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC	N/A
4. Ensure all publicly owned designated properties have visible markers.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC	CoSM
5. Explore funding opportunities and interpretation options with NPS NHT Regional Office for the El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT in San Marcos.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPS, NPO	CoSM
LINKING CULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES GOALS						
SOLUTIONS						
1. Consider creation of a consolidated plan in coordination with other City departments to connect the City's wide array of publicly and privately owned cultural and natural Resources and the ways in which they are currently interpreted.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	CoSM
2. Create unified wayfinding graphics between City-funded and public and private partners' wayfinding, interpretative signage, and state and national markers.				CoSM Departments	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPS, Consultants, Design Professionals	CoSM, Grants
3. Explore developing a bilingual local wayfinding program and consider participation in the Texas Heritage Trails Program.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, CoSM Departments, THC	CoSM, Grants

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
4. Enhance the historic El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT through San Marcos using signage, wayfinding, and public art. Using information regarding trail design as well as trail awareness and experience from the NPS-created Conceptual Strategy for Development of the Santa Fe, Oregon, and California NHTs would be particularly useful as guidelines for the development of the El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT throughout the City. Any added elements should be thoughtfully integrated into the streetscape and designed to complement—not distract from—the surrounding character.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC THC, NPS, NPO Consultants, Design Professionals, CoSM Departments	CoSM, Grants

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS RECOGNITION GOALS SOLUTIONS							
1.	Continue to implement the Legacy Business program and proactively recruit additional businesses each year while celebrating and promoting members.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	N/A
2.	Consider establishing a grant or monetary award for Legacy Businesses to use towards improvements, signage, lighting, etc.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments	CoSM, Grants
3.	Establish a recognition program for older homes (not just in historic districts or at landmarks), that have been successfully renovated/repared to contribute further to the retention of the City's cultural heritage.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, CoSM Departments	CoSM
4.	Use crowd-sourcing to support the City's Mural Arts Program in telling the story of the City in highly visible locations.				CoSM Departments	HPC, AC, TXST, Consultants, NPO, NPO, Local Business, Residents	N/A
5.	Annually identify existing spaces—such as fences, retaining walls, and blank walls of public facilities—that can be enhanced with public art or interpretive materials. Parks and playgrounds may offer opportunities for creative expression and storytelling through art and themed play equipment.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, AC	CoSM, Grants
6.	Find and engage local artists that can create family-friendly works ranging from murals to sculpture for future use as public art to tell the history of the City. Explore projections and movable canvases that can be affixed without damaging historic materials.				CoSM Departments	HPC, AC, NPO, Local Businesses, Residents	N/A
7.	Approach residents and businesses around the City about "adopting" nearby pieces of public art. This responsibility is minimal and entails only observing its condition and reporting any vandalism, deterioration, or damage to the City. This also encourages community "ownership" of public art.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, Local Business, Residents	N/A

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
8. Develop educational materials, interpretive signage, school curriculum content, or public programs that highlight local archaeological findings and their cultural significance, in collaboration with local organizations actively engaged in this work.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, THC, TXST	CoSM, Grants
9. Explore a photo banner program to highlight local heritage in the public realm to celebrate community history and identity. San Antonio's Fotohistorias del Westside project could be used as a model.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, AC, NPO, THC, TXST	CoSM, Grants
HERITAGE MARKETING EXPANSION GOALS SOLUTIONS						
1. Continue to highlight heritage tourism events and attractions on VisitSanMarcos.com and update it to showcase local landmarks and historic preservation efforts.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments, LP, NPO	N/A
2. Establish a Virtual Exhibit Platform to highlight historic preservation work in the community highlighted in Chapter 2.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, NPO, THC, TXST	N/A
3. Invest City funding to develop a series of walking and driving tours available on paper and through apps, like the Downtown Walking Tour on the Visit El Paso App .				CoSM	HPC, THC	CoSM, Grants
4. Partner with community stakeholders to develop a walking tour program. Design tours spread throughout the City highlighting diverse communities, cultures, and backgrounds. Aim to conduct at least one in-person tour annually and develop a digital version using StoryMaps.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, NPO, LP, CONA	CoSM, Grants
5. Continue to award the Spark Tourism and Tourism Grants and expand the amount of available funding or number of recipients.				CoSM	HPC, THC	CoSM
6. Consider leveraging participation in the Texas Heritage Trails Program for statewide marketing and add content and destinations to Texas Time Travel's page on San Marcos .				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	N/A
7. Continue to foster a partnership with the El Camino Real de los Tejas NHT Association and consider participation in the El Camino Real Day facilitated by the NHT Association on an annual basis.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, NPO, LP	N/A

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION		NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT GOALS							
SOLUTIONS							
1.	Consider updating the Historic Preservation Program website. Updates may be guided by incorporating recommendations outlined on Page 145.				CoSM P&DS	N/A	N/A
2.	Encourage crowd-sourced identification of potentially significant places through Story Maps, the City's social media platforms, and other innovative tools, including the continued use of the mapping activity "Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past." In-person, paper-based, and bilingual methods for gathering this information should also be considered to ensure broader accessibility and participation.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, LP, NPO, CoSM Departments	N/A
3.	Publish regular, engaging historic preservation content on the City's social media on a regular schedule.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments	N/A
4.	Use ArcGIS StoryMaps as a tool to educate the public about underrepresented histories in the City, including Mexican American and Black history, by highlighting significant places, people, and cultural narratives. These StoryMaps can be linked on the City's website.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, THC, TXST, CoSM Departments	N/A
EDUCATION & ADVOCACY GOALS							
SOLUTIONS							
1.	Create a historic preservation network for property and business owners.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, NPO, CoC	N/A
2.	Educate realtors about the implications of purchasing designated historic properties and educate contractors about working with historic buildings. Consider establishing a certificate program for both topics, like San Antonio's Rehabber Club Contractor & Professional Certifications.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HCHC, THC, NPO, LP, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
3.	Consider creating a City History Network for history teachers in public and private schools, as well as homeschool groups. Consider a virtual or in-person networking event and/or establish a listserv to connect teachers to share resources.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, SMCISD, THC, TXST, Consultants	N/A

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION	NEAR TERM	MID-TERM	LONG TERM	LEAD(S)	PARTNER(S)	FUNDING
4. Build on the success of past Preservation Month events and continue robust programming in the future. Future topics can highlight underrepresented histories including Indigenous, Mexican American, and Black history to ensure a more complete and factual narrative of the city's heritage.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, CoSM Departments, CONA, NPO, HCHC, THC	N/A
5. Consider collaborating with preservation and community partners to establish or support equitable city celebrations for events such as Juneteenth, Cinco de Mayo, 16 de Septiembre, and other cultural events, including sponsoring cultural heritage activities for children.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, HASM, HCHC, THC, CoSM Departments, LP, NPO	N/A
6. Strengthen collaboration with other City departments and programs to ensure work supports the historic preservation program. This may include regular meetings with department leaders on projects affecting historic and cultural resources, and ongoing communication with Council about preservation program achievements.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM Departments	N/A
7. Widely promote historic preservation events (not limited to City-sponsored events) on the City's website, social media, and visitsanmarcos.com. Strengthen partnerships so that the City is aware of relevant events.				CoSM P&DS	HPC, CoSM Departments, LP, NPO	N/A
8. Create an educational plan and public information campaign about the historic preservation program. Share information via a variety of outreach methods, including connecting with existing networks to reach people of all ages and backgrounds without the use of jargon and "legalese".				CoSM P&DS	HPC, LP, NPO, Consultants	CoSM, Grants
9. Expand City board and commission training to include a basic module on the economic and cultural value of historic preservation.				CoSM P&DS	CoSM City Clerk	N/A

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APPENDIX

WHAT'S IN THE APPENDIX?

A-3. ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, & INITIALISMS

A-4. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

A-9. PUBLIC OUTREACH METHODS & RESPONSES

A-64. FUNDING SOURCES

ABBREVIATIONS, ACRONYMS, & INITIALISMS

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	NCD	Neighborhood Conservation District
ACT	Antiquities Code of Texas	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
AOS	Area of Significance	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
APA	American Planning Association	NHL	National Historic Landmark
BCL	Business and Community Lenders	NHT	National Historic Trail
BIG	Business Improvement & Growth	NPS	National Park Service
BOOMS	Building Opportunities On Main Street	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	OTHM	Official Texas Historic Marker
CHC	County Historical Commission	PDF	Portable Document Format
CLD	Certified Local District	POS	Period of Significance
CLG	Certified Local Government	P&Z	Planning and Zoning Commission
GSA	Government Services Administration	RTHL	Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
COA	Certificate of Appropriateness	SAL	State Antiquities Landmark
DOE	Determination of Eligibility	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office (see THC)
DOI	Department of the Interior	SMDC	San Marcos Land Development Code
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	SMGA	San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance
FLP	Federal Lands to Parks	SOI	Secretary of the Interior
GIS	Geographic Information Systems	TCA	Texas Commission on the Arts
HASM	Heritage Association of San Marcos	TDA	Texas Downtown Association
HOT	Hotel Occupancy Tax	THC	Texas Historical Commission (Texas SHPO)
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission	TIRZ	Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone
HPF	Historic Preservation Fund	TMSP	Texas Main Street Program
HPO	Historic Preservation Officer	TPTF	Texas Preservation Trust Fund (Grants)
HTC	Historic Texas Cemetery	TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
MIC	Material Innovation Center	TXD	Texas Downtown
MPD	Multiple Property Documentation (superseded MRA)	TxDOT	Texas Department of Transportation
MRA	Multiple Resource Area (preceded MPD)	ZBOA	Zoning Board of Adjustments
MSA	Main Street America		

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following definitions of select historic preservation terminology is primarily drawn from the NPS, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, the San Marcos Development Code, and the San Marcos Design Manual.

Archaeology	The traditional and more common spelling of the investigation of past civilizations, originating from the Greek <i>arkhaios</i> meaning “ancient” and historically using the “ae” digraph.
Archeology	In 1890 or 1891, the US Government Printing Office eliminated the ligatured ae. Many prestigious universities adopted the new spelling, resulting in the shorter name being more associated with the profession and scientific study.
Carbon Footprint	The total amount of greenhouse gas emissions caused directly or indirectly by an individual, organization, event, or product, including construction and demolition of built environment.
Character-defining Element	The overall plan and style of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment that contribute to its historic integrity. Also called Character-defining feature.
Certificate of Appropriateness	A codified document required before a permit approved by the HPC after a property owner prepares an application to complete construction, alteration, restoration, relocation, or demolition of a building or structure, or alterations to the site or appurtenances in a local historic district or at a local historic landmark.
Condition	The physical state of a property, such as poor, fair, good, or excellent.
Conservation	Involves the responsible management of natural resources to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. It focuses on the sustainable use and management of resources to ensure their availability for future generations. It can also apply to easements that protect both landscapes and above-ground resources. Conservation benefits from Historic Preservation, which encourages reuse of existing cultural resources and infrastructure over development of open land.
Cultural Resource	Any indicator of past human activities, including building, site (archaeological or landscape), structure, object, or district regardless of significance in prehistory or history.
Cultural Resource Management	Involves research to identify basic information about cultural resources—such as landscapes, archaeological sites, and above-ground resources; survey to record details about historic-age properties; evaluation to discern the significance of resources; planning to set priorities and ensure this information is used in decision making; and stewardship, whereby resources are registered, preserved, protected, and/or interpreted for the public.

Cultural Landscape	A geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.
Deconstruction	The careful removal and salvage of parts of a resource to reuse and reinterpret it or present it differently. A building is usually deconstructed in the reverse order it was built to increase material reuse.
Demolition by Neglect	The process of allowing a building to deteriorate to the point where demolition is necessary to protect public health and safety.
Design Guidelines	A set of standards developed by a municipality with public input to preserve and maintain the character of various types of resources including historic buildings in a jurisdiction.
Designation	The official recognition status of a resource's historic significance at the local, state, or federal level.
Easement (Preservation or Conservation)	Partial interest in property that can be transferred to a nonprofit organization or governmental entity by gift or sale to ensure the protection of a historic resource and/or land area in perpetuity.
Effect	The potential for a federally funded, owned, or permitted project to alter, directly or indirectly, the character defining features of a resource that is eligible for or listed in the NRHP May include reasonably foreseeable or cumulative effects.
Effect, Adverse	When a federally funded, owned, or permitted project diminishes characteristics qualifying a property eligible for or listed in the NRHP, directly or indirectly.
Effect, No	When a federally funded, owned, or permitted project does not diminish characteristics qualifying a property eligible for or listed in the NRHP, directly or indirectly.
Effect, No Adverse	When a federally funded, owned, or permitted project affects a property eligible for or listed in the NRHP, directly or indirectly, but does not diminish qualifying characteristics.
Environmental Compliance	A process which ensures proposed projects adhere to environmental laws, regulations, and standards designed to minimize harmful effects to the environment, including natural resources, archaeological sites, and historic properties.
Extant	Refers to a resource that is still present and existing.
Heritage Tourism	The business and practice of attracting and accommodating visitors to a place or area based especially on the unique or special aspects of that locale's history, landscape, and culture.
Historic Context	A narrative that considers the history of a resource's geographical area and the history of related themes, trends, and events within a specific chronological period.

Historic Preservation	The practice of identifying, protecting, and enhancing buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts that have historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance. The movement is both grassroots and legislated in communities across the globe. It requires advocacy, vision, and action with consideration and respect for a broad group of interests in building and development, parks and recreation, economic development, the arts, and most importantly, the public.
Infill Development	New buildings or additions on land that may or may not have been previously developed adjacent to other buildings.
Integrity	The authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's period of significance. The seven aspects of integrity are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.
Karst	A type of landscape consisting of limestone eroded by water that creates unique features like caves and sinkholes.
Let Date	The date by which bids on a construction project are opened, which determines the age of buildings surveyed for proposed TxDOT projects in compliance with NHPA.
Local Historic District or Landmark	Any individual site, building, structure, object, cultural landscape, historic landscape, or historic resources which has historic architectural, or cultural significance, as determined in accordance with Chapter 2, Article 5, Division 4 of SMDC.
Mitigation Planning	Required when a federally funded or permitted project will have an adverse effect on a historic resource. It can also be required by local government when developers seek rezoning or special exceptions from City Council. For example, mitigation may require data recovery before an archaeological site is compromised or destroyed, architectural documentation—such as photographs and measured drawings, or creation of interpretation and educational materials.
Multiple Resource Area (MRA)	Precursor to Multiple Property Submission (MPS) and Multiple Property Documentation or Listing (MPD and MPL), which is a NPS umbrella form, whereby Thematic Resources (TR) can be surveyed and nominated at different times using the same context.
Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD)	Tool that preserve the character of residential areas by regulating features like building height, lot size, streetscapes, and setbacks. NCDs offer more flexibility than historic districts, though some cities also use them to regulate demolitions or land uses.
Parcel	A lot, tract, or plot of land.
Property	An area of land containing a single resource or a group of resources on one or more parcels.
Property, Historic	Prehistoric or historic resources that have been listed in the NRHP, either individually or as contributing, in an area of land on one or more parcels.

Preservation Planning	A proactive process that involves the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. This process is integrated into broader planning efforts to ensure that historic resources are considered in decision-making and development projects. Preservation planning aims to balance the needs of growth and development with the preservation of cultural and historical heritage in tangible and intangible ways in partnership with local non-profits, other City Departments, and private property owners.
Resource	A building, site, structure, object, or district.
Resource, Building	Created principally to shelter any form of human activity, e.g. a house, barn, church, etc.
Resource, Contributing	Adds to the historic significance of a single property, such as a detached garage next to a house, or historic district.
Resource, District	A significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.
Resource, Historic	Has significance, and in regulatory contexts, is eligible for designation in the NRHP.
Resource, Historic-age	Is at least 50 years of age, which the NPS generally requires for listing in the NRHP unless a newer building is extraordinary. TxDOT applies term to buildings at least 45 years of age to survey based on the project let date.
Resources, Historical	Does not have an official local, state, or federal designation but is old and may or may not contribute to the culture. Historical sources may also be used to describe “historical” maps or imagery.
Resource, Noncontributing	Does not add to the significance of a single property or historic district due to a lack of historic significance, alterations, or age.
Resource, Nonhistoric-age	Is less than 50 years of age.
Resource, Object	Primarily artistic in construction, small in scale, and/or simply constructed, e.g. statue, fountain, boundary marker, etc.
Resource, Site	Location of an event, occupation or activity, or building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value.
Resource, Structure	Not designed to provide human shelter, e.g. bridges, canals, etc.
Secretary of the Interior (SOI) Standards	Four regulatory treatments of historic buildings—preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction—for projects funded through grants from the NPS, and properties that receive tax credits the NPS and THC.
Significance	The importance of a historic property as defined by four NRHP criteria and seven criteria considerations.
Significance, Areas of	The specific themes or categories a resource is significantly associated with for NRHP eligibility, such as the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture.
Significance, Period of	The year or span of years when a property attained significance for which it meets the NRHP criteria of eligibility.

SOI Preservation	The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment.
SOI Reconstruction	The act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.
SOI Rehabilitation	The act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. This treatment is most often used in local preservation.
SOI Restoration	The act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.
Survey, Historic Resources	A planned process of identifying and gathering data on a community's historic resources through fieldwork and research that results in an inventory of historic resources.
Survey, Intensive	A detailed examination of a property, which involves taking exterior and interior photographs, preparing a resource-specific historic context, and recommending eligibility or nominating a property for designation.
Survey, Reconnaissance	A detailed inventory of all historic-age and possibly nonhistoric-age properties within a defined area, which involves taking exterior photographs, preparing site plans, and making preliminary recommendations regarding significance, and preservation priority.
Survey, Thematic	A detailed inventory of all historic-age and possibly nonhistoric-age properties with a specific theme, such as industrial resource types or Tejano culture, which involves taking exterior photographs, preparing site plans, and making preliminary recommendations regarding significance.
Survey, Windshield	A driving survey through a community that does not comprehensively document every property within a boundary. This type of survey allows coverage of a broad geographic region in a short amount of time and the identification and documentation of a survey area's most important resources.
Zoning	A set of laws regulating the use of land and buildings, which generally specify allowable uses, such as residential or commercial, and restrictions on development such as minimum lot sizes, set back requirements, maximum height and bulk, etc. Historic designation in San Marcos is an overlay on underlying zoning.

**Definition from the [United Way](#) and the [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#).*

ONLINE PUBLIC OUTREACH

WEBSITE

The Historic Preservation Program webpage provides an introduction to the project, anticipated timeline, major components of the plan, and staff contact information. The webpage also features a call to action from the City's HPO, along with community quotes highlighting the importance of historic preservation. The City updated the page as the project progressed and promoted public outreach and activities: social media mini-polls, community survey, community open house, open house take-home toolkit, Mapping the Future activity, and historical photographs submission activity.

Upon completion, the City shared an interactive copy of the Draft Historic Preservation Plan during the Public Review Period (June 27 - July 27, 2025) and collected comments through this platform along with in-person events to collect feedback. More on the results are included below.

SOCIAL MEDIA

To keep the public engaged during the drafting of the preservation plan, a social media plan was developed, including posts before Stakeholder Interviews and mini polls after the Open House. Each planned post contained a historical photograph along with one solicitation or question to draw attention to the Historic Preservation Program project and gather data on what matters to people in San Marcos. The following pages provide an overview of this effort and the insights gained from the community.

INSTAGRAM POSTS, AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2024

6 Posts August 2024 - September 2024
1,128 Post reactions
65 Post comments
192 Post shares
7 Mini-polls December 2024 - January 2025
669 Post reactions
17 Post comments
34 Post shares



cityofsanmarcos • Follow

Original audio



cityofsanmarcos Are you passionate about the culture & history of San Marcos, TX? 🕒 Help us shape the City's first ever Historic Preservation Plan by taking our quick community survey (Link in bio). #HonorOurPast #GuideOurFuture

25w



mrosecoy13 Be nice if it didn't go so fast 🙄👎 but love seeing our town from the old days 🥰

23w Reply



shopeverydayzen ❤️ -this!

24w 1 like Reply



norma.m.gil 🥰

24w Reply



starryeyestara Those look like the San Marcos Daily Record historical photos of SM. I am very familiar with them.

24w Reply



241 likes

August 30, 2024



Add a comment...

Post



cityofsanmarcos • Follow

Original audio



cityofsanmarcos 🗣️ Are you passionate about the culture & history of San Marcos, TX?

Hear from Alison Brake, Historic Preservation Officer, on why your input matters as we develop the City's first Historic Preservation Plan. Take our quick survey and help shape the future of our community at sanmarcostx.gov/hpp #HonorOurPast #GuideOurFuture

23w



meaganlavender Just completed the survey 🙌

23w Reply



naturalgroove Outstanding!!! Best wishes for this awesome project!

23w Reply



sparklewithjennfit ❤️🥰❤️

23w Reply



109 likes

September 6, 2024



Add a comment...

Post



cityofsanmarcos • Follow

cityofsanmarcos Are you passionate about the culture & history of San Marcos, TX? 🏡 Help us shape the City's first ever Historic Preservation Plan by taking our quick community survey (Link in bio). #HonorOurPast #GuideOurFuture
22w

jackierenell They need to make a 5 Below in that corner to complete the cycle
22w · Reply

sanmarcostxguide I sure am and I sure will! ❤️
22w · Reply

195 likes
September 13, 2024

Add a comment...



cityofsanmarcos • Follow

cityofsanmarcos We need your help to create our community's first-ever Historic Preservation Plan (HPP)! 🏡 We invite you to attend our HPP Community Open House at the San Marcos Activity Center (501 E Hopkins St) on 9/25 @ 5:30 to meet our team and provide input on the places you care about. Learn more at the link in our bio.
21w

allan.lopezz long live Ralph
21w · Reply

porkchop_expresso Save the Wells Fargo ATM booth at University and N Edward's Gary!
21w · Reply

199 likes
September 20, 2024

Add a comment...



cityofsanmarcos • Follow



cityofsanmarcos 🏠 Help Shape Our Historic Preservation Plan!

Join us at the Historic Preservation Plan Community Open House tomorrow, September 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the San Marcos Activity Center, 501 E Hopkins St. Meet the team and share your thoughts on the places that matter to you! Let's preserve our history together.

Click the link in our bio to learn more.

21w



93 likes

September 24, 2024



Add a comment...



FACEBOOK POSTS, AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2024



9	COMMENTS
	City of San Marcos TX - City Hall: Citations for the photos used in our Reel may be found at sanmacostx.gov/hppcite
	Dunbar Heritage Association: Great video, however, the citation for the MLK march is incorrect. The City of San Marcos does not host the MLK march. The Dunbar Association has hosted this event for over 20 years. Please email us if you have questions ahasmtx@gmail.com . Thank you for the wonderful video!
	City of San Marcos TX - City Hall: Hello! We apologize for the confusion. The citations are for the photographs themselves. This particular photo was captured by the City. However, er updated the name of the photo to "MLK Day March hosted by the Dunbar Heritage Association" so that we may still spotlight your organization. Thanks for letting us know!
	Dunbar Heritage Association: appreciated and thank you for the clarification.
	Very Neat
	Great job ignoring the Native Americans that lived here before any of that and are still part of our present community
	Maybe speed the photos up a little more so we can't see any of them at all
	Wonder Cave! You'll wonder why you went!
	Derek Tanner



City of San Marcos TX - City Hall

September 13, 2024

Are you passionate about the culture & history of San Marcos, TX? ⌚ Help us shape the City's first ever Historic Preservation Plan by taking our quick community survey at sanmarcostx.gov/hpp.
#HonorOurPast #GuideOurFuture



141

40 comments 29 shares

I really wish we could get it restored back to the days of those original photos. I don't even remember the individual side window awnings. I'm guessing those came down sometime before he 70s when I remember it as Duke & Ayres. Even just getting the plywood off the window would be a big improvement. It makes me sad seeing it hat condition every time I drive by.

Downtown San Marcos must have been great back then with actual useful stores. It's a shame what has happened to the square.

Why is their plywood nailed over the windows? Really looks bad.

Who ever owns this property needs to be put on notice to fix this eyesore on the square.

Maybe publish the owners name?

Take the boards off the windows and maybe make it so the building doesn't look abandoned

I loved this place. My mom had a shop downtown and as a kid I would walk around downtown by myself (probably no older than 6 years old). I would go stare in the window at Easter at the little brightly colored chicks they would sell. I wanted one so bad. Becci Lacy got one...I was so jealous 😊

I would also go stare at the Barbie clothes at Wackers (fyi hey had a much better selection than Benjamin Franklins 😊). Mr. dees at Wuest would give me fig newtons. Ms. Seur would shake his finger at me if he caught me jay walking. There were no less than 9 clothing stores downtown (3 of them were my parents).

I love this Alan Jackson song:

<https://youtube.be/qBh-m1yTZS0>

I'll try to find the survey. I love old San Marcos.

My dad lived upstairs with his 2 sisters and parents. Played basketball up and down the hallway.

Reply: Thank you for sharing. That's a long hallway.

I remember going there when I was younger n it was like going to the Mall of me when was growing up here in San Marcos bcuz there wasn't many place back in the Days. That place n the 2 movie theaters we had around the square was basically ur trip downtown, Lol San Marcos isn't anything like what it was in the late 60's and 70's but t's my Hometown n I'm glad that 've seen it grow into what it is today

Reply: positive thinking!

Late 60's and 70's was my favorite place o go growing up memories

I remember the creaky wooden floor as a little kid. I wonder how long they were in business.

Sorry to be a comment hog...but I couldn't find the survey either. There is a meeting coming up in November...but it says Wednesday November 25th but if I'm not mistaken the 25th is a Monday. Please direct us and clarify. I want to participate. 😊

Used to work there great memories, couldn't find the survey

One more thing...my dad built the building where Chimeys is now. I recently found out from my mom that my dad put a time capsule in the building somewhere. It would be so fun to find that...but he probably put a candy bar in t! 🍬👩🏻👨🏻

Use to shop here.

Now that a lot of our local history is either gone, forgotten or endangered, let's start a preservation plan

I remember my mom used to take us there in the 70s we would walk from our house to the square I have beautiful memories of that store what was our old shopping area growing up in San Marcos is not the same which it's understandable because of its growth it's the best city to live at since I was born and raised there. Go Bobcats and Rattlers. God bless America.

The link doesn't go to the survey just your homepage

I used to stop after school, while attending campus elementary and buy 10 cents worth of candy

I think the old curtains were still hanging in the top floor windows

This building is an example of 'Jane's Legacy'

Jean Grisham Aiken


What survey????????!!!!!!!

Robert Rose Moreno

Glad to see some progress happening. Looks so much better

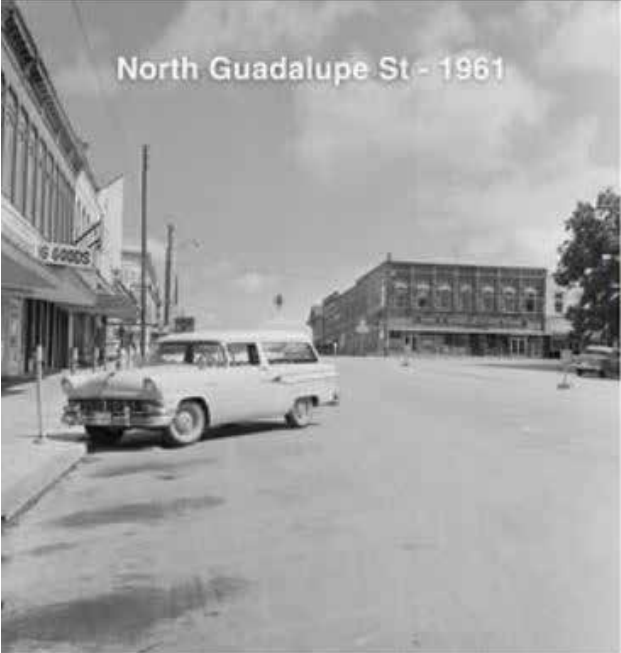


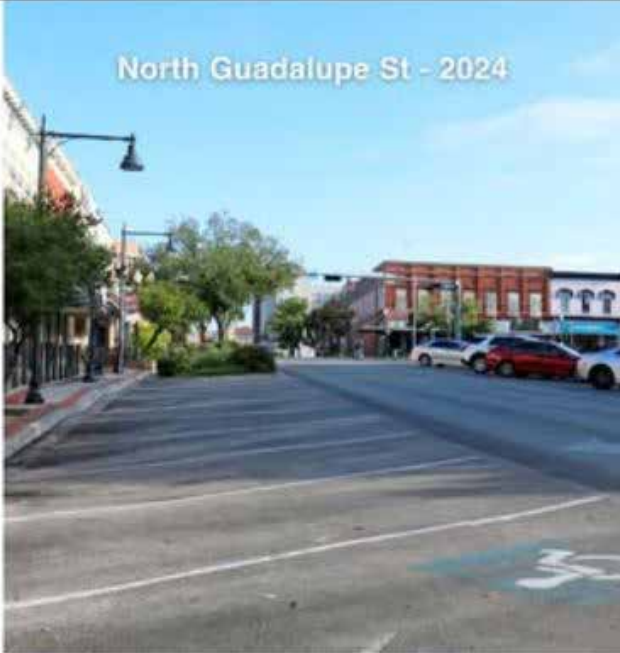
Reply: Yes!!



City of San Marcos TX - City Hall
created an event.

September 13, 2024

North Guadalupe St - 1961


North Guadalupe St - 2024


Wed, Sep 25, 2024

Historic Preservation Plan Community Open House

San Marcos Activity Center

53 people interested

☆ Interested

11

2 comments

2

COMMENTS

Web site says meeting is Wednesday, November 25 not September. Which date s correct?

City of San Marcos TX - City Hall: Thank you. The date s September 25, 2024 and the website has been updated. We hope to see you there!



City of San Marcos TX - City Hall

September 20, 2024

We need your help to create our community's first-ever Historic Preservation Plan! 🏡
We invite you to attend our [Historic Preservation Plan Community Open House](#) at the San Marcos Activity Center (501 E Hopkins St) on 9/25 @ 5:30 to meet our team and provide input on the places you care about. Learn more at sanmarcostx.gov/hpp.



17

12 shares

Like

Comment

Send

Share




City of San Marcos TX - City Hall

September 24, 2024 · 🌐

 Help Shape Our Historic Preservation Plan!

Join us at the [Historic Preservation Plan Community Open House](#) tomorrow, September 25, at 5:30 p.m. at the San Marcos Activity Center, 501 E Hopkins St. Meet the team and share your thoughts on the places that matter to you! Let's preserve our history together.

Learn more at sanmarcostx.gov/hpp.



 17

INSTAGRAM POSTS, DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025



cityofsanmarcos • Follow



cityofsanmarcos 📖❤️ Happy Holidays! San Marcos' first-ever city-wide Historic Preservation Plan will help us preserve our important historic and cultural resources as gifts to future generations. So we ask, why does historic preservation matter to you? #HistoricSanMarcos #smtx #sanmarcostx

📷 Photograph source: Festervan Church (1940s or 1950s) by an unknown photographer found in the San Marcos Daily Record Photographic Negative Collection at Texas State University Special Collections & Archives and licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/txstate-smdr/38430197164>

Edited · 9w



cedge1389 For me, preserving history through preserving our historic and cultural resources is valuable because it helps provide a sense of place and offers a relatable way to share our stories. I look forward to hearing more about the plan! ❤️

9w · 1 like · Reply

— Hide replies



cityofsanmarcos @cedge1389 Thanks for sharing! ❤️



48 likes

December 13, 2024



Add a comment...

Post



cityofsanmarcos • Follow

In our third week of the San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan social series, we're looking for old photos from any era in our city's history! Post here with a caption or submit on our project webpage (Link in our bio). Share your favorite old photo of a building, place, or people—like these kids participating in the 1959 Kiwanis Kid Parade through Downtown San Marcos. Your photo may be featured in the HPP or be archived in the city's historic photo inventory! #HistoricSanMarcos #SanMarcosPhotos

¡En nuestra tercera semana en la serie de redes sociales de San Marcos HPP, estamos buscando fotografías antiguas de cualquier era en la historia de nuestra ciudad! Siéntase libre de ponerla fotografía aquí en los comentarios, incluyendo un título o mándelas por nuestro sitio de internet: San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan (has clic nuestro bio). Comparta su fotografía antigua de cualquier edificio, lugar, o personas- como estos niños participando en el desfile de niños de Kiwanis en el centro de la ciudad. Su fotografía será presentada en el HPP o guardada en el inventario histórico de fotografías de la ciudad.

Photo source: Kid Parade (1959) by an unknown

250 likes
December 27, 2024

Add a comment...

8

COMMENTS

Love this !! 🥰❤️🔥🐱

This is AWESOME. Any idea who some of these kids are? Also what street are they on?

Reply: Looks like Hopkins near the alleyway between Fredericksburg and N. Guadalupe

Reply: thanks. Thought maybe that was it but didn't know how long the tiny but mighty H-E-B had been there

Is this the little HEB on Hopkins?

This is LBJ st. That HEB use to be in the building that's right across from Toma Taco, soon to be a fire station.

Reply: you're right, it looks like this was taken right outside of what's now Sean Patrick's

Reply: yes that's exactly where that's at? Lands shoe shop s right across from sean patrick, believe landis shoe shop was there any back then. They've been in business forever




cityofsanmarcos • Follow



cityofsanmarcos 🇺🇸❤️ Did you know that San Marcos has seven local historic districts, including downtown and residential areas? Our historic neighborhoods are unique and vibrant parts of our city. In our seventh installment of the HPP social series, we ask, what's your favorite neighborhood in San Marcos and why? 📍 Reply with your answer! #SanMarcosHPP #SanMarcosMatters #SanMarcosPreservationPost #HistoricSanMarcos #SanMarcosNeighborhoods

📷 Photograph source: Flags (1961) by an unknown photographer found in the San Marcos Daily Record Photographic Negative Collection at Texas State University Special Collections & Archives and licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/txstate-smdr/51751823300>

5w






104 likes

January 15



Add a comment...

Post




cityofsanmarcos • Follow



cityofsanmarcos 🎉 Historic preservation can mean many things, from formally recognizing an important building to creating educational opportunities, hosting cultural celebrations and events, and spreading awareness about our city's history. In our eighth installment of the HPP social series, we're asking, what do you think is the best way for San Marcos to celebrate its history? Reply with your answer! #SanMarcosHPP #SanMarcosMatters #SanMarcosPreservationPost #HistoricSanMarcos #CelebrateSanMarcos

📷 Photograph source: Jaycees (1959) by an unknown photographer found in the San Marcos Daily Record Photographic Negative Collection at Texas State University Special Collections & Archives and licensed under CC BY-NC 4.0. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/txstate-smdr/28567452278>

3w



grammypinkey Oldie

3w Reply






176 likes

January 24



Add a comment...

Post

FACEBOOK POSTS, DECEMBER 2024 - JANUARY 2025





6

COMMENTS

Love this beautiful picture. Some of my school mates in San Marcos School. Those were really the Good old days. Love my Hometown. 🙌💕

My cousin Sara Wood on the far right and Kay Posey in the middle!

Reply: and my aunt Lynn is in the middle in white! Those were the days 😊

B.f.good rich great tires

SWTS

No address



Campaign Results at a Glance:

- Number of Posts: 7
- Total Reach: **38,871** (Number of times our content was viewed)
- Total Interactions: **731** (Like, comments, & shares)

Post #1: Why does historic preservation matter to you?



Date Published:

- December 13, 2024

Insights:

- Reach: 2,300
- Interactions: 58

Comments:

- Cedge1389 says "For me, preserving history through preserving our historic and cultural resources is valuable because it helps provide a sense of place and offers a relatable way to share our stories. I look forward to hearing more about the plan!"

Post #2: Map What Matters! (Mapping the Future – Storymaps)



Date Published:

- December 18, 2024

Insights:

- Reach: 513
- Link Clicks: 13

Post #3: Submit Your Old Photos!



Date Published:

- December 27, 2024

Insights:

- Reach: 5,500
- Interactions: 286

Comments:

- Barb_varvarita says "This is LBJ st. That HEB use to be in the building that's right across from Toma Taco, soon to be a fire station."
 - Sweetdanetattoo says "@barb_varvarita you're right, it looks like this was taken right outside of what's now Sean Patrick's"
- Happycloudsatx says "Love this!!👍👍👍"
- Uniteststyle says "Is that the little HEB on Hopkins?"
- Itsthefurrys says "This is AWSOME. Any idea who some of these kids are? Also what street are they on?"
 - Porkchop_expresso says "Looks like Hopkins near the alleyway between Fredericksburg and N. Guadalupe."
 - Itsthefurrys says "thanks. I thought maybe that was it but I didn't know how long the tiny but mighty H-E-B had been there"

Post #4: Name Your Favorite Destination



Date Published:

- January 4, 2025

Insights:

- Reach: 715



City of San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan
Winter Social Media Campaign Report

Post #5: What historic site matters to you?



Date Published:

- January 9, 2025

Insights:

- Reach: 414

Comments:

- Erinwhatis says "Church on MLK Dr across from the Calaboose Museum."
- Maybe_birds says "The San Marcos River"
- Erickst says "Old Main"
- Hawaiian_life24 says "First Baptist Church (Dunbar Neighborhood)"

Post #6: Name your favorite neighborhood.



Date Published:

- January 15, 2025

Insights:

- Reach: 11,400
- Interactions: 129

Comments:

- None

Post #7: How should we celebrate San Marcos



Date Published:

- January 24, 2025

Insights:

- Reach: 29,300
- Interactions: 245

Comments:

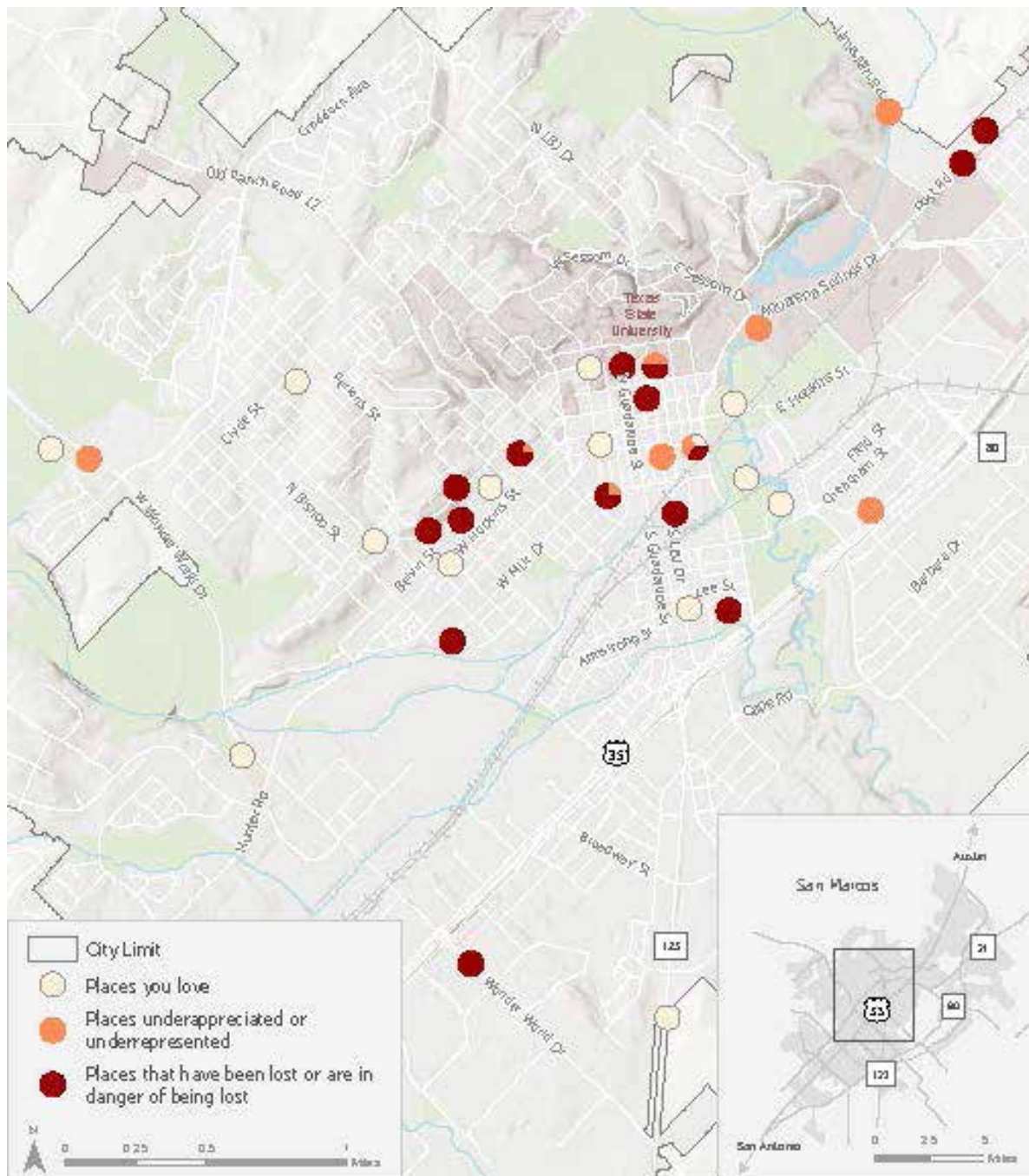
- Mary Colgin Williams says "My cousin Sara Wood on the far right and Kay Posey in the middle!"
- Cindy Ray says "Mary Colgin Williams and my aunt Lynn is in the middle in white! Those were the days"
- Lupe Lopez says "Love this beautiful picture. Some of my school mates in San Marcos School. Those were really the Good old days. Love my Hometown. 🙌💜"



City of San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan
Winter Social Media Campaign Report

MAPPING THE FUTURE

The Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past activity was presented online and at the community open house. It used a digital map to identify important historical places in San Marcos. The City asked residents to place pins on the map online and on paper copies at the open house, representing three categories: places you love (in green), places underappreciated or underrepresented (in yellow), and places that have been lost or are in danger of being lost (in red). Participants also had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback. This activity enhanced public engagement with the planning process, and the results informed recommended solutions.



Mapping the Future Results

SAN MARCOS MEMORIES

(HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH SUBMISSIONS)

The San Marcos Memories activity asked residents to share their historical photographs of San Marcos online and at the community open house. Old photographs of buildings, places, or people were encouraged. This activity aimed to engage the public and provide an opportunity for reflection. Below are the photos that were submitted.



Baile ranchero at Parque Cuauhtemoc 1948



*802 West San Antonio Street
(McMichael-Weatherford Mortuary)*



Cleto Rodriguez, Dinner at Alex Cafe 1945



Dr. Daniel Rojo, First National Bank, 102 North LBJ Drive, circa 1930s



Dr Daniel Rojo House, 700 South Guadalupe Drive, circa 1950s



*Dr Daniel Rojo Snowy Day
1940s*



*Dr Rojo performing an exam,
no date*



*Dr Rojo, Sociedad Cuauhtemoc and
Queen 1940-50s*



South Side School 1965 Students

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

City staff identified important stakeholders with a vested interest in Historic Preservation to be interviewed by the consultants. These stakeholders represented a cross-section of the community, including homeowners, representatives from underrepresented groups, architects, realtors, contractors, city and university staff, economic development experts, cultural organizations, preservation advocates, and members of the Historic Preservation Commission. Through these interviews the consultants were able to gain understanding of the community's experiences and preservation values as well as the current preservation climate. The questions developed for these interviews were customized for specific groups and guided discussions. The information and insight gathered from these interviews were used to craft the community-wide survey.

Stantec sent invitations to the identified stakeholders on July 17, 2024, and July 26. Of the 24 interviewees identified, 14 replied. Stantec also invited two others identified by fellow stakeholders in the first round of interviews. Four Stantec historians interviewed these 16 stakeholders during 14 sessions. The three stakeholders who represent the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) were interviewed in one joint session and provided additional input via email.

Each interview began with an introductory script, which included a request for permission to record the interviews and a confidentiality statement that only Stantec staff would review the recordings. This resulted in honest feedback that helped inform the content of the Community Survey and the Historic Preservation Program. Each interviewer then asked a set of general questions followed by questions tailored to each stakeholder group. As an interview progressed, some questions were eliminated or adapted based on the flow of the conversation. Due to anonymity, a bulleted summary of perspectives and ideas shared during the interviews is provided.

BY THE NUMBERS, JULY 18 - AUGUST 9, 2024

24	Invitations
16	Interviewees
14	Individual interviews
1	Group interview

Table 7. Interviewed Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Interviewee	Affiliation & Role	Interviewer	Date
Architects/ designers/ contractors	Andrew Nance	Local architect	Anna Maas	7/25/2024
Architects/ designers/ contractors	Jeff Kester	Local architect	Althea Wunderler-Selby	7/31/2024
City personnel in key departments	Griselle Perez-Carey	CoSM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator; City Manager's Office	Jenya Green	7/30/2024
City personnel in key departments & Economic Development and Arts and Culture organizations	Amy Thomaides	Council of Neighborhood Associations; CoSM Resource Recovery Community Enhancement Initiatives Manager	Anna Maas	7/29/2024
Economic Development and Arts and Culture organizations	Emily Mathes	Greater San Marcos Partnership Director of Business Development	Jenya Green	7/18/2024
HPC members	Jennifer Rogers	HPC Chairperson	Emily Reed	7/23/2024
	Diana Baker	HP Commissioner		
	Thea Dake	HP Commissioner		
Preservation advocates	Dr. Justin Randolph	Texas State University, History Dept, Assistant Professor	Anna Maas	7/25/2024
Preservation advocates/ organizations; City rep	Robert Eby; cc' Yvonne Palacios	City of San Marcos Neighborhood Commission Sector 2 Rep	Althea Wunderler-Selby	7/26/2024
Preservation advocates/ organizations	Samantha Hunick	Preservation Texas Central Texas Program Officer & Communications Manager	Jenya Green	7/30/2024
Preservation advocates/ organizations	Ryan Patrick Perkins	Former Chair of HPC; Hopkins Street HD Resident	Jenya Green	7/29/2024
Realtors/brokers	Brooke Damron	The Damron Group Realtors Broker Associate	Anna Maas	7/22/2024
Underrepresented & Marginalized Communities	Belinda Arrendondo	Daughter of Dr. Daniel Rojo (first Hispanic doctor in San Marcos)	Althea Wunderler-Selby	7/26/2024
Underrepresented & Marginalized Communities	Christina Casas-Moreno	Victory Gardens Neighborhood Advocate	Jenya Green	7/31/2024
Underrepresented & Marginalized Communities/ Preservation advocates/ Arts and Culture	Gina Alba-Rogers	Council for the Indigenous and Tejano Community Chairperson	Jenya Green	8/9/2024

TELL ME ABOUT A PRESERVATION SUCCESS STORY IN SAN MARCOS.

- The Courthouse
- Vibrancy of Downtown Square
- Indigenous and Tejano oral history projects
- Threatened Old Methodist Church on Hopkins Street converted to offices
- Dunbar Historic District
- Dunbar Rec Center
- Mural on Miss Ollies Store in Dunbar
- The Cephas House
- The Cock House
- The Historic Jail
- Victory Gardens (Hispanic Heritage)
- Chapel in Barrio Victoria (aka Victory Gardens)
- 1. Cuauhtémoc Hall (Hispanic Heritage)
- St. Vicente Cemetery (Hispanic Heritage)
- Centro Cultural (Hispanic Heritage)
- The Mural Committee
- The Old Mill Business Park
- Bigger businesses and industry reuse brownfields because they are already zoned as needed
- Center for Texas Music History at Texas State

WHAT PRESERVATION OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU SEE IN SAN MARCOS?

- Barrio Pescado
- S. Guadalupe
- Sunset Acres
- Spring Lake Hills
- Vacant county-owned corner building downtown with an unfulfilled timeline on the side of it
- Vacant African American Baptist Church on MLK (for Performing Arts Center or venue)
- Vacant Lamar High School with significant desegregation history
- Vacant Southside School
- The Mitchell Center
- The El Camino Real trails and their interconnection to the waters of San Marcos
- Houses on San Antonio and Hopkins Street
- More murals
- More oral history and interactive intangible project with diverse communities
- Interpretive trails with pavers and signage
- Heritage Plant Trails

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST PRESSING PRESERVATION NEED IN THE COMMUNITY?

- Inclusive tours: “Heritage Neighborhood” tours focus on historically wealthy white communities.
- Numerous historic preservation organizations are focused on one thing they care about (Architecture or Anglo, Black, Indian, Tejano, Hispanic Culture) instead of uniting and working together to make San Marcos and Hays County better as a whole.
- Piecemeal efforts by multiple groups
- Perception that Preservation is at odds with Sustainability
- Developers buy whole rows to rent to students or tear down for high-density development.
- Council and developers ultimately have final say despite best intentions of city staff, advisory boards, and volunteer committees involved.
- Realtors have to disclose HOAs but do not have to disclose that historic districts have restrictions; thus, many buyers don’t know what they’re getting into with COA process and HPC.
- There are no real penalties or fines for not following historic district guidelines.
- Consider carbon counting to show the greenest building is the one that’s already built.
- Keep preservation at the forefront while allowing growth and expansion.
- Take advantage of Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) to buy buildings downtown and encourage non-college uses
- Be more proactive than reactive by identifying important properties and educating people on why they matter before they are torn down.
- Do more to retain legacy businesses.
- Attract small businesses into historic commercial areas like New Braunfels, Wimberley, and Dripping Springs do nearby.
- Create a resource database of vendors experienced with historic homes.
- Create new non-profit partnerships.
- Create guidelines for existing neighborhoods outside of the local zoning historic districts that are more flexible than HPC - something like form-based codes and cultural districts.
- Acknowledge living heritage and cultural heritage.
- Extend historic districts.
- Reevaluate Belvin Street Historic District and the Downtown Historic District significance to acknowledge marginalized groups who built them.
- Add mid-century Modern districts.
- Expand public notification boundaries for projects.
- Add historic preservation requirements in performance agreements.
- Codify more historic preservation rules on top of guidelines.
- Create local incentives for things like updating mechanical, electrical, and plumbing.
- Create 10-to-15-year tax abatements for rehabbed properties.
- Create a vacancy tax to incentivize landowners to keep buildings occupied and prevent demolition by neglect.
- Revamp the demolition process to disincentivize it.
- Have more community activities to connect young people such as events, activities, and celebrations for holidays like 16 de Septiembre and 5 de Mayo.

EDUCATION FOR:

- School-age children via a school community liaison or a city liaison
- Owners about what zoning in their neighborhoods and what it means
- Owners, architects, contractors, and realtors on local zoning historic districts, COA process, and HPC meetings

EDUCATION ABOUT:

- The difference between National Register and Local Zoning Historic Districts
- Secretary of Interior Guidelines
- Federal and state tax incentives and funding
- The benefits of creating more incentives or abatements
- Hispanic Heritage
- Indigenous Cultures

COMMUNICATION VIA:

- Door to door especially for elderly without transportation or internet
- Direct mailings
- Emails
- Neighborhood newsletters
- Tables at public events
- Website
- Workshops for realtors, contractors, architects, etc.
- Social Media including TikTok

ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

People do not or cannot buy historic properties in or out of the historic districts, because:

- Lack of money
- Inflation
- Cost of historic property upkeep
- 70-plus% of the city population rents

- Texas State students rent by the room in historic houses
- Gentrification
- Private property rights

Interviewees in each group with awareness of the HPC or experience consulting or living in a Local Zoning Historic District, shared that the HPC:

- Has good training opportunities.
- Needs training on what is good infill.
- Needs training on member roles and when they do and do not have to recuse themselves.
- Has difficulty recruiting more diverse members (age, socio-economic, race, etc.).
- Receives ample information from staff on COA cases.
- Needs more hard copy resources.
- Does not have enough “teeth” (no fines).
- Defaults to moving buildings rather than preserving in place.
- Oversees a very small part of the community.
- Is more involved in homes than businesses.
- Is perceived as not involved with economic development.
- Is perceived to be locked in the past and not open to adaptive reuse.
- Is perceived as overly restrictive to some residents.
- Is perceived as elitist.
- Is unattractive to join due to backlash and slander.
- Takes too long for approvals (partly due to city-imposed review period).
- Should revise rules to allow things like solar panels and modern sustainable materials.



COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

Stakeholder interview results helped inform a community survey to engage a wider audience representative of the entire City. Digitally available in English and Spanish on the webpage and in hardcopy at the San Marcos Public Library and the Planning and Development Services Department office, the City solicited participation through traditional and digital platforms. In an effort to broaden participation, the City organized a Survey Pop-Up at the San Marcos Public Library midway through the survey period. The survey, available from August 26 – September 30, 2024, resulted in 426 responses that provided essential insight into the community's preservation goals, knowledge, and perceptions.

BY THE NUMBERS, AUGUST 26 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2024

31 Questions

423 English Responses

3 Spanish Responses

SAN MARCOS



City of San Marcos Historic Preservation Plan Community Survey



HONOR OUR PAST. GUIDE OUR FUTURE.

The City of San Marcos is creating its first ever citywide Historic Preservation Plan (Historic Preservation Plan), and your input is needed to make sure the plan reflects the community's values and opinions.

What is historic preservation?

- Identify places that matter to you and our community
- Formally recognizing important buildings, structures, sites, objects, or districts in the city
- Restoring or reusing buildings to improve economic development and heritage tourism
- Creating educational opportunities to spread awareness about public history and improve

The community's understanding of its history

As part of this project, we have gathered information from a small group of community members who represent homeowners, underrepresented and marginalized communities, architects, realtors, contractors, city personnel, university personnel, economic development, cultural organizations, preservation advocates, and the Historic Preservation Commission. Their input has helped create this survey for the entire community. Your answers will help us determine what you would like to see preserved for future generations.

Submitting Your Completed Survey

You can submit your completed survey at the San Marcos Public Library's Front Desk or Book Drop (625 E. Hopkins Street) or drop it off at the Planning & Development Services Office on the 2nd floor of the Municipal Building #3 (630 E. Hopkins Street), Attn: Alison Brake.

If you have any questions about the survey or need help completing it, please contact Historic Preservation Officer Alison Brake abrake@sanmarcostx.gov or 512.393.8232.

Completed surveys are due by September 30, 2024.

Responses Overview Closed

Responses

426



Average Time

16:22

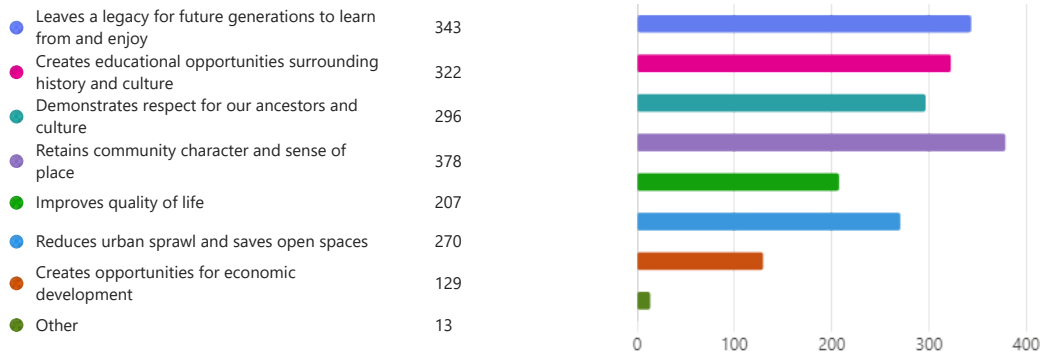


Duration

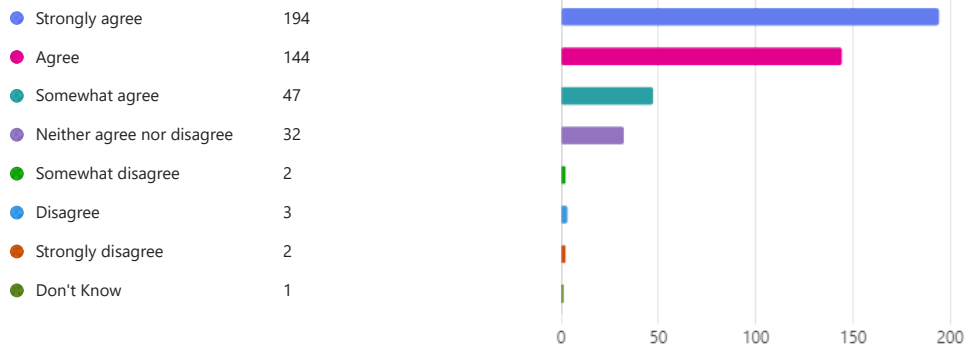
130 Days



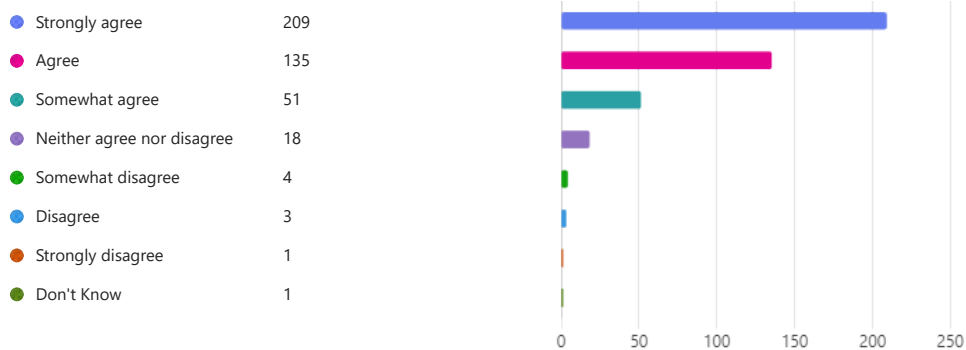
1. In your opinion, why is it important to preserve San Marcos's culture, buildings, sites, and neighborhoods? Please select all that apply.



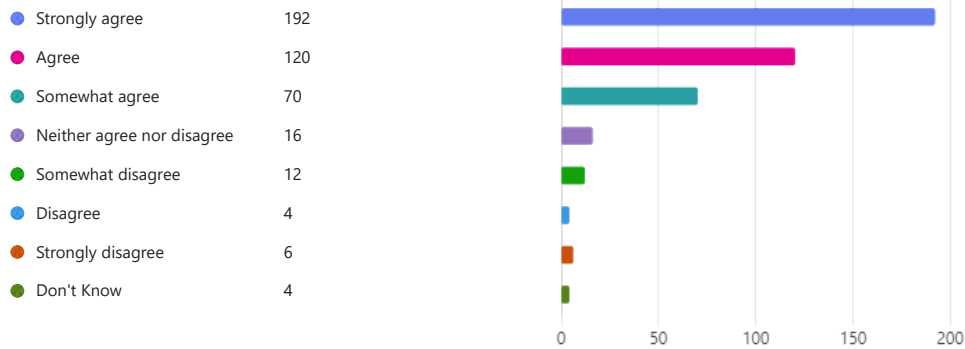
2. When new people move here, it is important for the City to help them learn about San Marcos's historic preservation program.



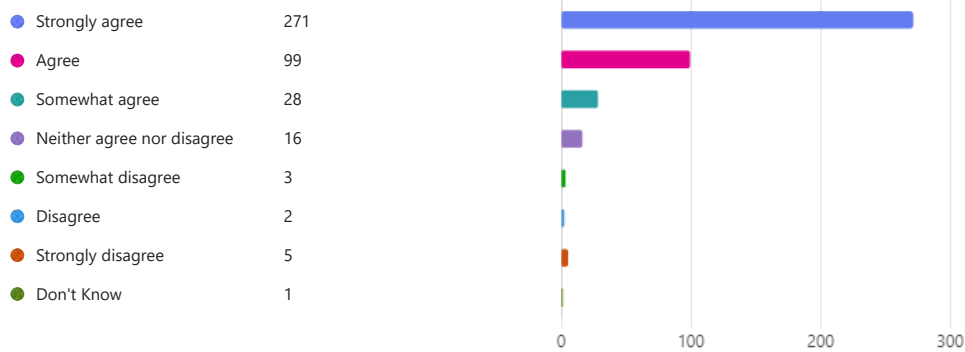
3. The City should create more opportunities for residents and visitors to learn about its history and its historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods.



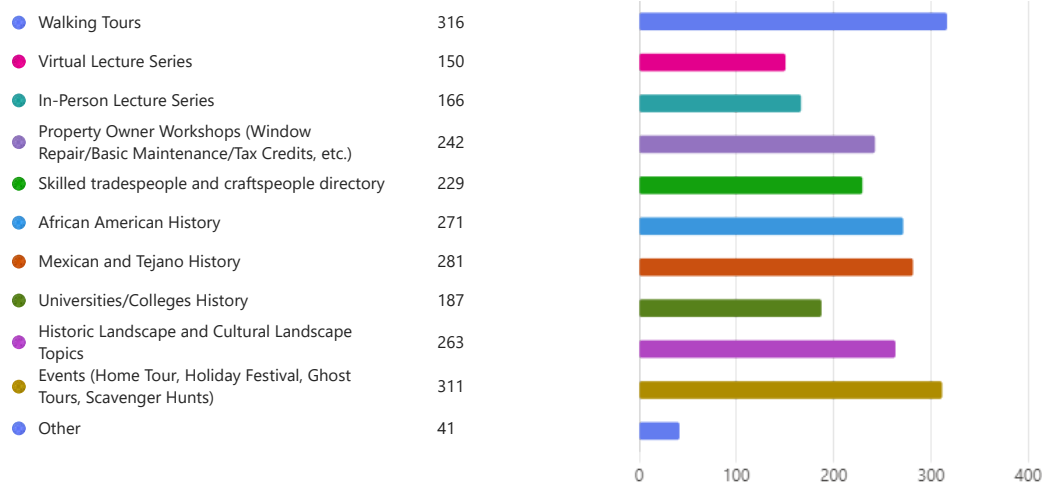
4. Depending on their history, buildings and neighborhoods constructed 1950s-1970s are worth preserving.



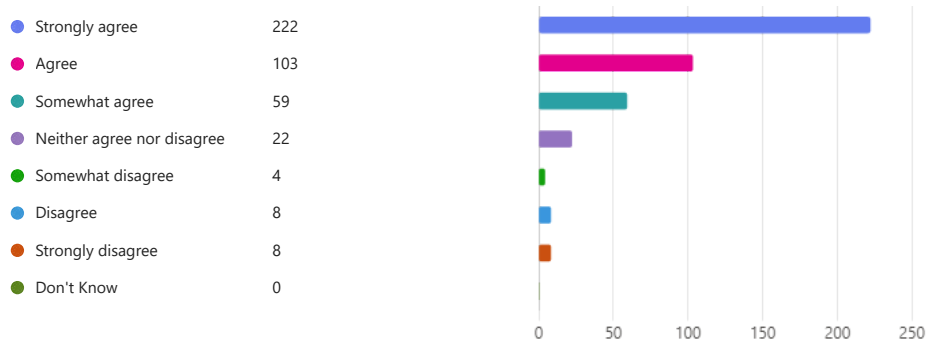
5. Depending on their history, historically Mexican American and African Americans buildings and neighborhoods are worth preserving.



6. What kind of activities/topics would you like the City to sponsor related to historic preservation and San Marcos History? Check all that apply:

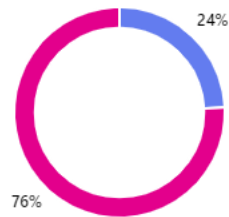


7. The City should provide financial incentives (grants, low-interest loans, tax abatements) to help property owners rehabilitate historic buildings.



8. Are you aware of the State and Federal Historic Tax Credits available for qualified rehabilitations to income-producing buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places either individually or contributing buildings in districts?

Yes	103
No	322



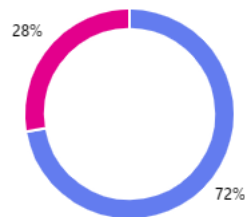
9. Do you know the difference between a local zoning landmark/historic district and a National Register of Historic Places property/historic district?

Yes	164
No	259



10. Are you aware local zoning historic districts limit what you can do to a property with guidelines?

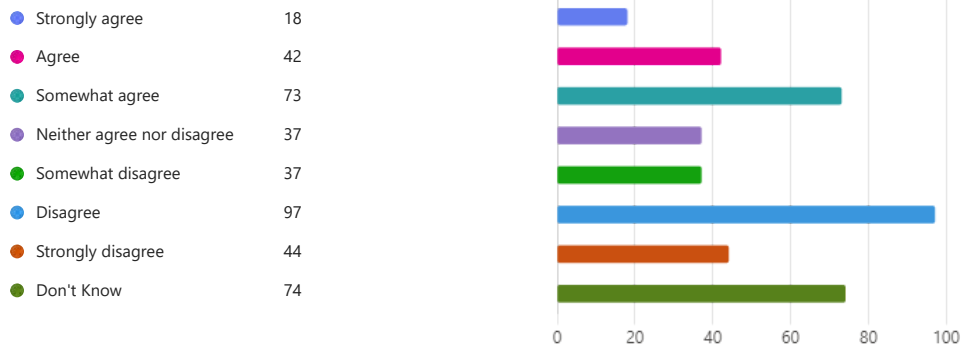
Yes	306
No	117



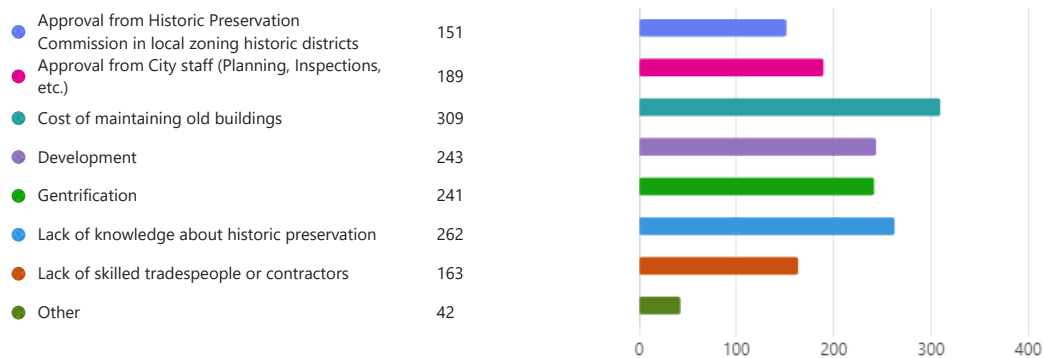
11. If you are experienced with them, are guidelines user friendly?



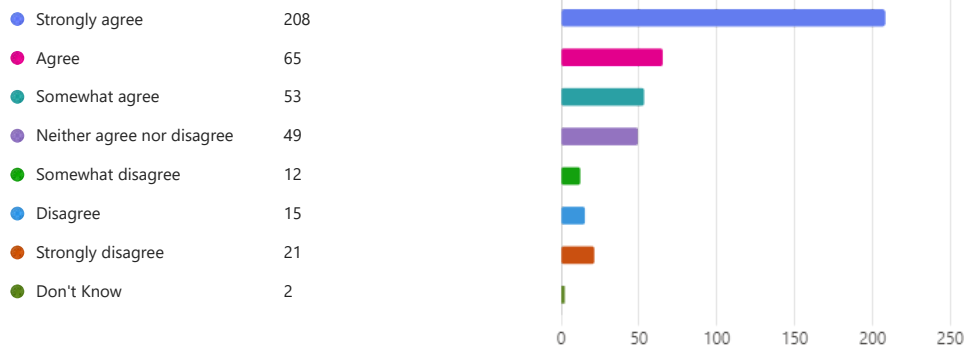
12. I know how to find and receive information on proposed changes to or demolition of properties that are designated historic through San Marcos Local Zoning Overlays and/or the National Register of Historic Places.



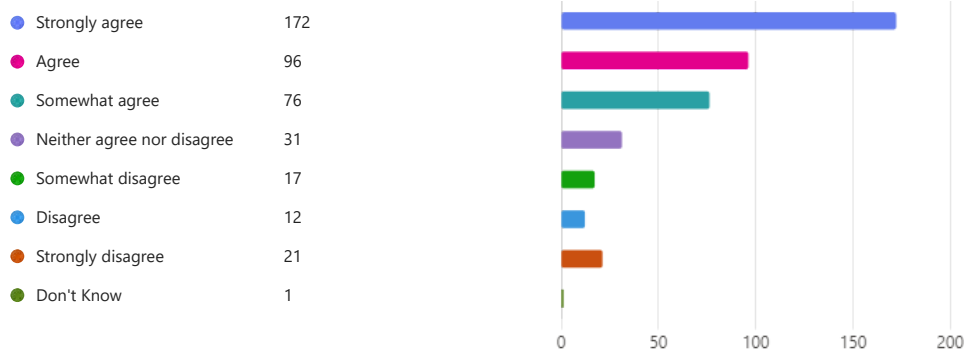
13. What obstacles or concerns do you think might hurt historic preservation in San Marcos? Check all that apply:



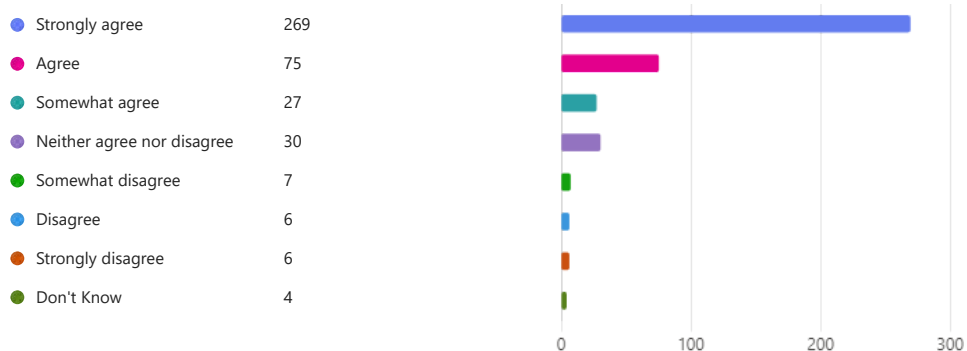
14. New buildings in San Marcos in older and historic neighborhoods should not be significantly larger than those in the surrounding area.



15. New buildings in San Marcos in older and historic neighborhoods should have similar architectural styles or architectural details (the small elements of a building's design and construction that contribute to its overall character, e.g. window trim, roof shape, doors, etc.) to those in the surrounding area.



16. San Marcos needs ways to protect longtime residents of historic neighborhoods from development pressures/being priced out.



17. If you agree with Question 16, what measures should the City implement in order to achieve this?

244

Responses

Latest Responses

...

37 respondents (15%) answered home for this question.



18. How would you like to receive information from the City about historic preservation programs and opportunities to participate in history-related activities? Please rank these choices in order of preference, 1 being your most preferred method.



19. What places, stories, events, etc. have been lost, almost lost, or are not appreciated?

222

Responses

Latest Responses

...

50 respondents (23%) answered buildings for this question.



20. Is there anything else you would like for us to know about Historic Preservation in San Marcos?

136
Responses

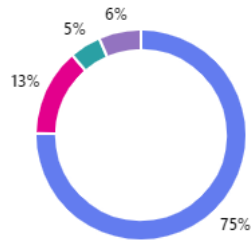
Latest Responses
...

26 respondents (19%) answered San for this question.



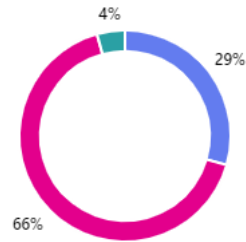
21. Where is your primary residence?

City of San Marcos	313
Hays County	56
Prefer not to answer	20
Other	27



22. Select if you rent or own:

Rent	124
Own	279
Prefer not to answer	18



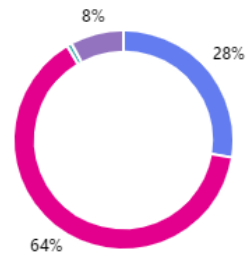
23. Do you have a disability?

Yes	26
No	373
Prefer not to answer	23



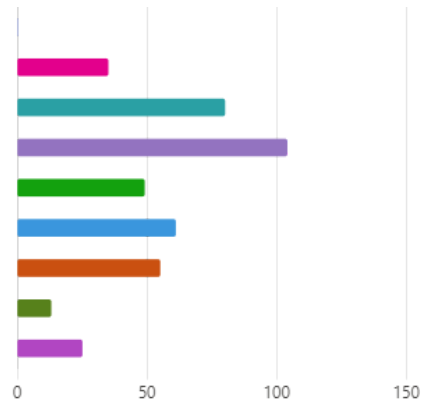
24. Select the gender you identify with:

Male	116
Female	269
Non-binary	3
Prefer not to answer	33



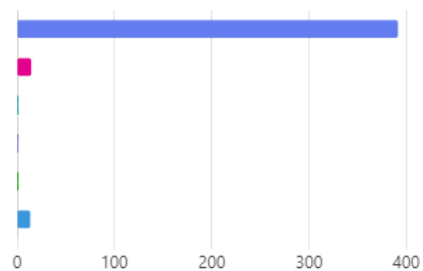
25. Select your age:

Under 18	0
18-24	35
25-34	80
35-44	104
45-54	49
55-64	61
65-74	55
75 or older	13
Prefer not to answer	25



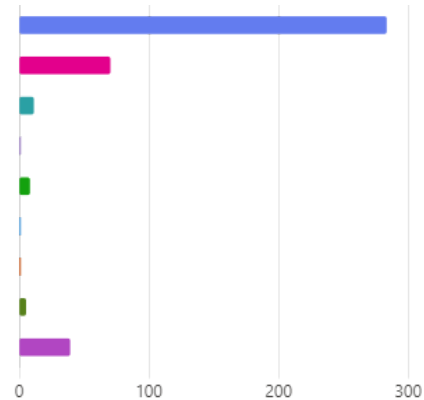
26. How well do you speak English?

Very well	391
Well	14
Okay	1
Very little	1
Not at all	1
Prefer not to answer	13



27. Which category best describes you?

White (e.g., German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.)	283
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (e.g., Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican,...	70
Black or African American (e.g., African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian,...	11
Asian (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)	1
American Indian or Alaska Native (e.g., Navajo nation, Blackfeet tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native...	8
Middle Eastern or North African (e.g., Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan...	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (e.g., Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan,...	1
Some other race, ethnicity or origin	5
Prefer not to answer	39



28. What language do you speak at home?

364

Responses

Latest Responses

"English"

"English"

...

351 respondents (97%) answered English for this question.

Update

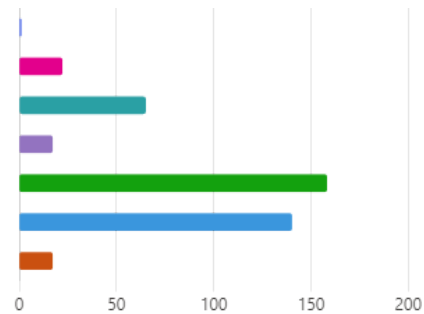
English

English & Spanish

Spanish and English

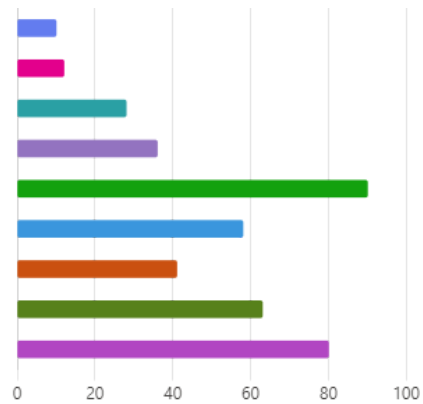
29. Select your highest level of education attainment:

Some high school	1
High school graduate	22
Some college	65
Associate degree	17
Bachelor's degree	158
Master's degree or higher	140
Prefer not to answer	17



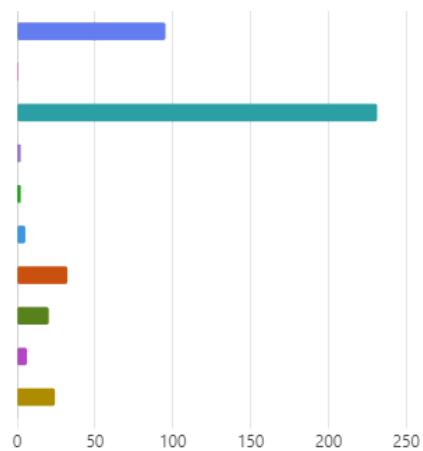
30. What is your approximate annual income?

● Less than \$12,000	10
● \$12,000 - \$19,999	12
● \$20,000 - \$30,999	28
● \$31,000 - \$46,999	36
● \$47,000 - \$69,999	90
● \$70,000 - \$93,999	58
● \$94,000 - \$117,999	41
● \$118,000 or greater	63
● Prefer not to answer	80



31. How did you hear about this survey?

● Email	95
● Mail	0
● Social media	231
● Newsletter	2
● Flyer	2
● Project website	5
● Friend/Neighbor told me about it	32
● Community organization leader told me about it	20
● Prefer not to answer	6
● Other	24



Resumen de respuestas Cerrado

Respuestas

426



Tiempo medio

16:22



Duración

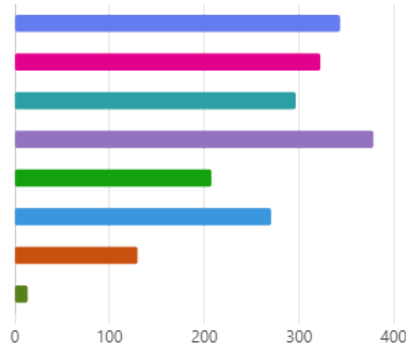
130

Días



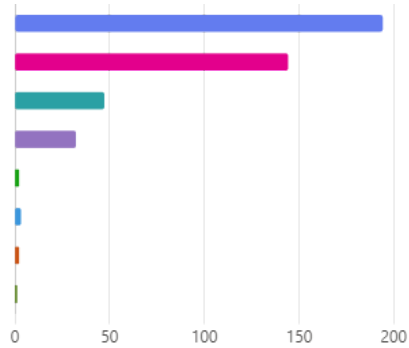
1. En su opinión, ¿por qué es importante preservar la cultura, edificios, sitios y barrios de San Marcos? Seleccione todas las que correspondan.

- Deja un legado para el aprendizaje y disfrute de las futuras generaciones 343
- Crea oportunidades educativas en torno a la historia y la cultura 322
- Demuestra respeto por nuestros antepasados y cultura 296
- Conserva el carácter comunitario y sentido de pertenencia 378
- Mejora la calidad de vida 207
- Reduce la expansión urbana y conserva los espacios abiertos 270
- Crea oportunidades para el desarrollo económico 129
- Other 13



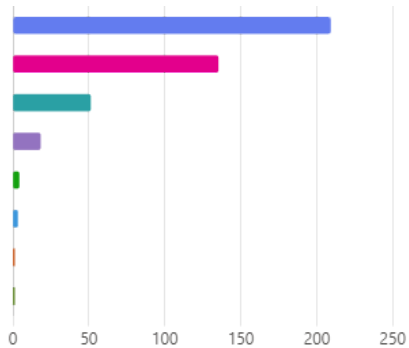
2. Cuando nuevas personas se mudan aquí, es importante que la Ciudad les ayude a aprender sobre el programa de preservación histórica de San Marcos.

- Totalmente de acuerdo 194
- De acuerdo 144
- Algo de acuerdo 47
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 32
- Algo en desacuerdo 2
- En desacuerdo 3
- Totalmente en desacuerdo 2
- No lo sé 1

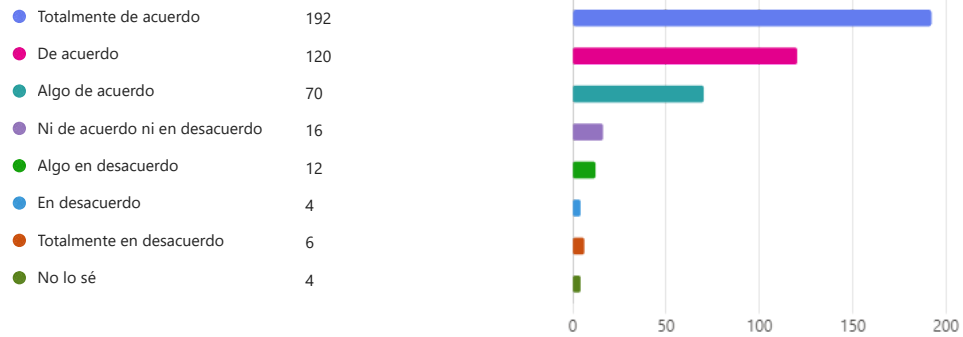


3. La Ciudad debería crear más oportunidades para que los residentes y visitantes aprendan sobre su historia y sus edificios, sitios y barrios históricos.

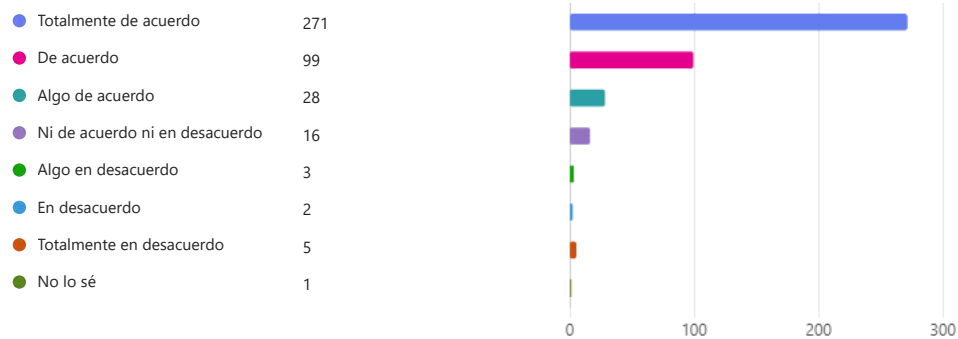
- Totalmente de acuerdo 209
- De acuerdo 135
- Algo de acuerdo 51
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo 18
- Algo en desacuerdo 4
- En desacuerdo 3
- Totalmente en desacuerdo 1
- No lo sé 1



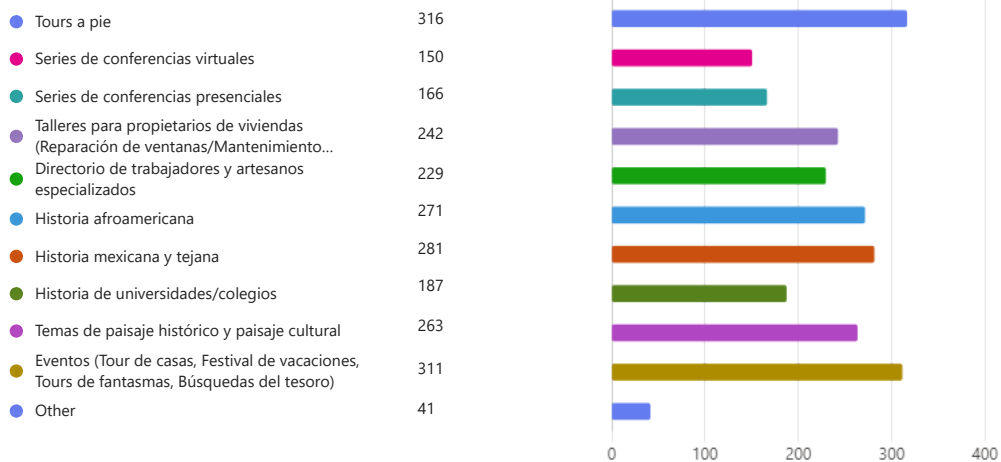
4. Dependiendo de su historia, los edificios y barrios construidos en las décadas de 1950-1970 son dignos de preservarse.



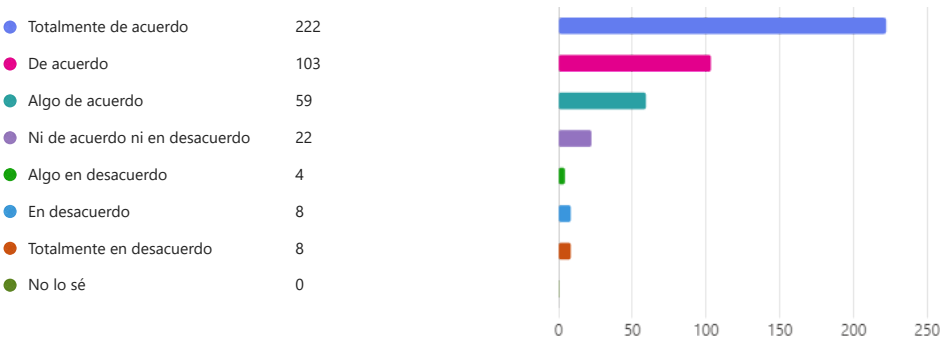
5. Dependiendo de su historia, los edificios y barrios históricamente México-americanos y afroamericanos son dignos de preservarse.



6. ¿Qué tipo de actividades/temas le gustaría que la Ciudad auspicie con relación a la preservación histórica y la historia de San Marcos? Marque todos los que correspondan:



7. La Ciudad debería ofrecer incentivos financieros (subvenciones, préstamos a tasas de interés bajas, exenciones fiscales) para ayudar a los propietarios a rehabilitar edificios históricos.



8. ¿Está al tanto de los créditos fiscales históricos estatales y federales disponibles para rehabilitaciones calificadas en edificios destinados a la producción de ingresos listados en el registro nacional de lugares históricos, ya sea individualmente o como edificios contribuyentes en distritos?



9. ¿Conoce la diferencia entre un monumento/ distrito histórico local de zonificación y una propiedad/distrito histórico del registro nacional de lugares históricos?



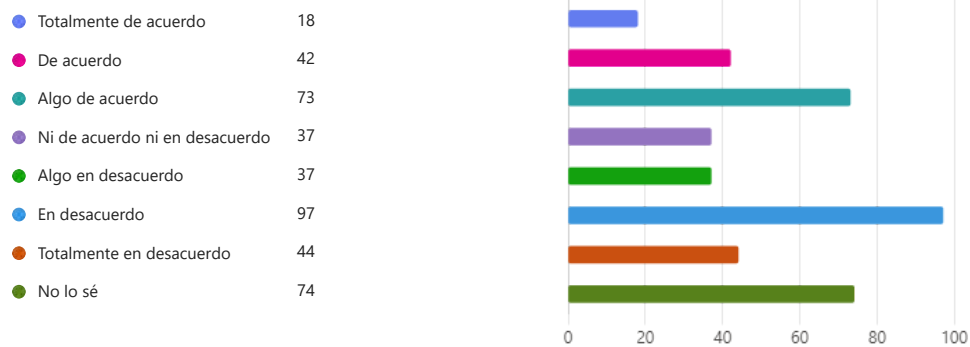
10. ¿Está al tanto de que los distritos históricos de zonificación local limitan lo que puede hacer en una propiedad con directrices?



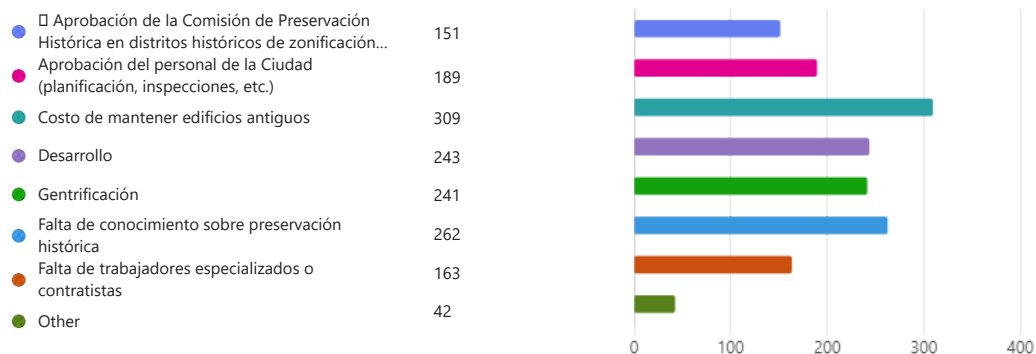
11. Si tiene experiencia con ellas, ¿son las directrices fáciles de utilizar?



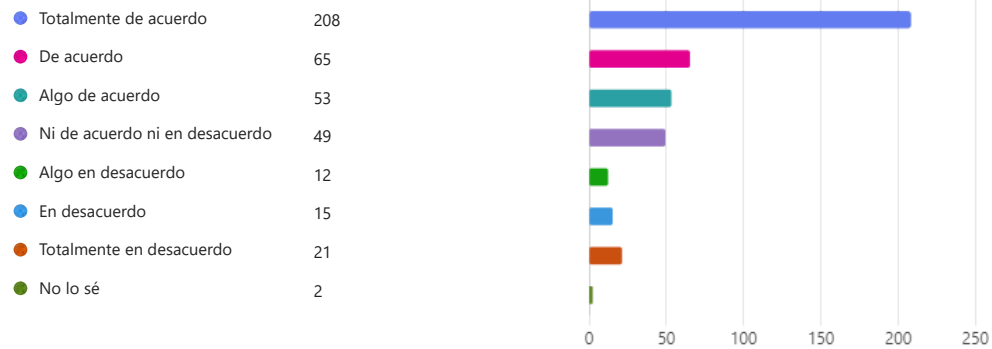
12. Sé cómo encontrar y recibir información sobre los cambios propuestos o la demolición de propiedades que están designadas como históricas a través de las superposiciones de zonificación local de San Marcos y/o el registro nacional de lugares históricos.



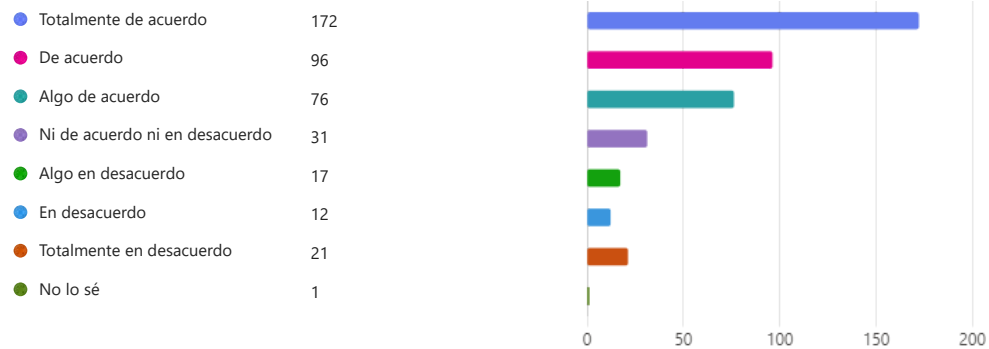
13. ¿Qué obstáculos o preocupaciones cree que podrían afectar la preservación histórica en San Marcos?
Marque todos los que correspondan:



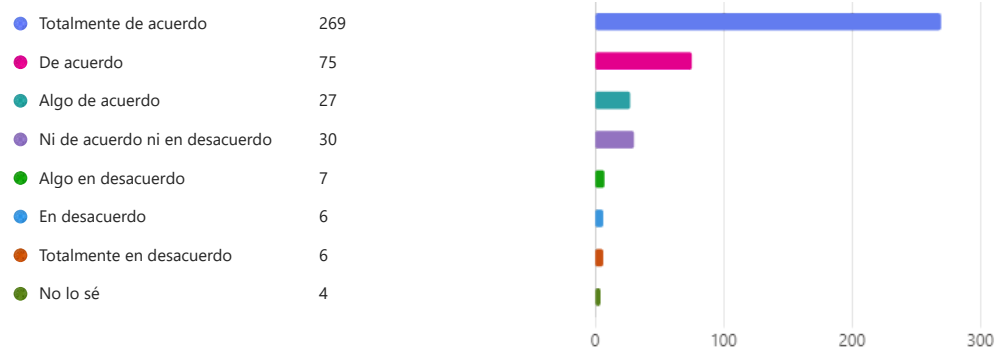
14. Los nuevos edificios en San Marcos en vecindarios antiguos e históricos no deberían ser significativamente más grandes que los de la zona circundante.



15. Los nuevos edificios en San Marcos en vecindarios antiguos e históricos deberían tener estilos arquitectónicos similares o detalles arquitectónicos (los pequeños elementos del diseño y la construcción de un edificio que contribuyen a su carácter general, como molduras de ventanas, forma del techo, puertas, etc.) a los de la zona circundante.



16. San Marcos necesita formas de proteger a los residentes de muchos años de los barrios históricos de las presiones del desarrollo/de ser expulsados.

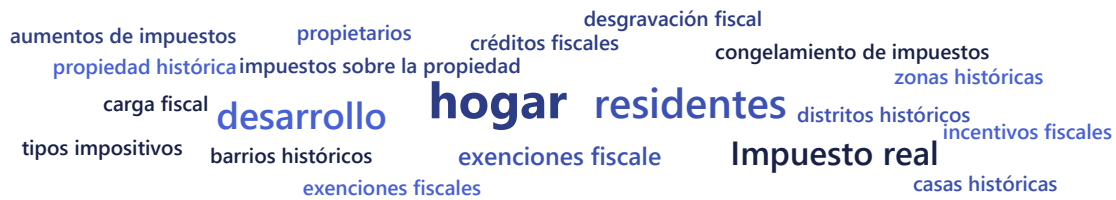


17. Si está de acuerdo con la Pregunta 16, ¿qué medidas debería implementar la Ciudad para lograrlo?

244
Responses

Últimas respuestas
...

37 encuestados (15%) respondieron a esta pregunta.



18. ¿Cómo le gustaría recibir información de la Ciudad sobre programas de preservación histórica y oportunidades para participar en actividades relacionadas con la historia? Clasifique estas opciones en orden de preferencia, siendo 1 su método el más preferido.



19. ¿Qué lugares, historias, eventos, etc. se han perdido, casi se han perdido, o no son apreciados?

222
Respuestas

Últimas respuestas
...

50 encuestados (23%) respondieron a esta pregunta.



20. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría que supiéramos sobre la preservación histórica en San Marcos?



21. ¿Cuál es su residencia principal?



22. Seleccione si alquila o es propietario:

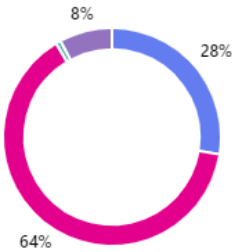


23. ¿Tiene alguna discapacidad?



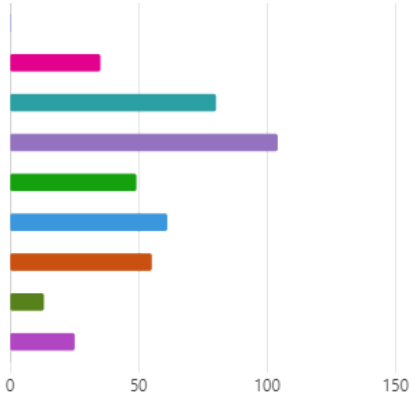
24. Seleccione el género con el que se identifica:

Masculino	116
Femenino	269
No binario	3
Prefiero no responder	33



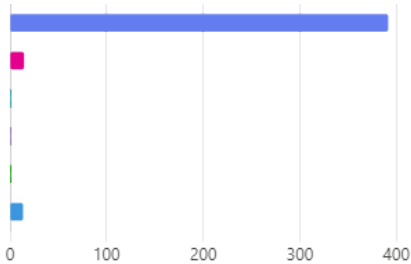
25. Seleccione su edad

Menos de 18	0
18-24	35
25-34	80
35-44	104
45-54	49
55-64	61
65-74	55
75 años o más	13
Prefiero no responder	25

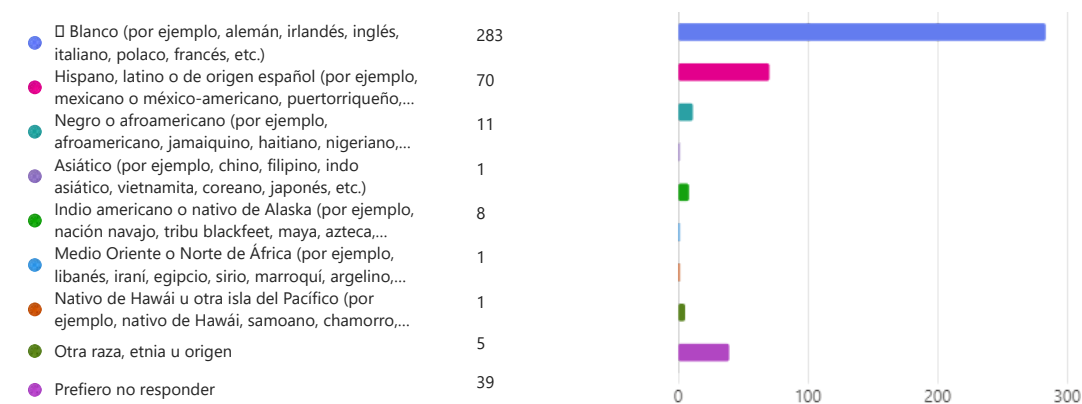


26. ¿Qué tan bien habla inglés?

Muy bien	391
Bien	14
Regular	1
Muy poco	1
Nada	1
Prefiero no responder	13



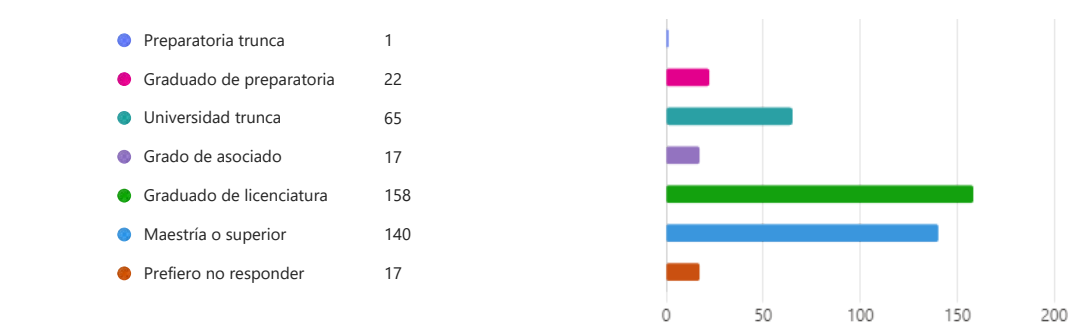
27. ¿Cuál de las siguientes categorías lo describe mejor?



28. ¿Qué idioma habla en casa? (respuesta abierta)

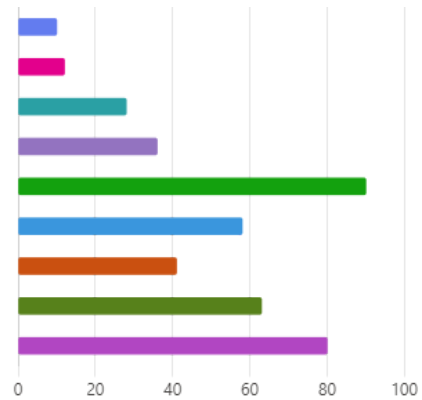


29. Seleccione su nivel más alto de educación alcanzado:



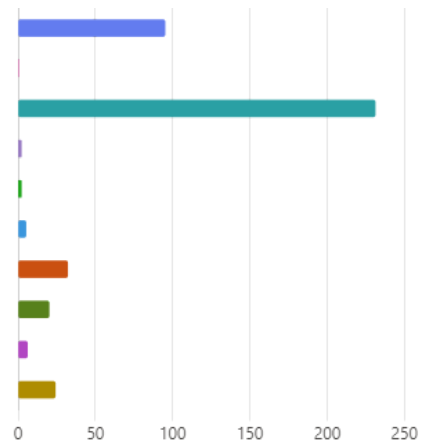
30. ¿Cuál es su ingreso anual aproximado?

Menos de \$12,000	10
\$12,000 - \$19,999	12
\$20,000 - \$30,999	28
\$31,000 - \$46,999	36
\$47,000 - \$69,999	90
\$70,000 - \$93,999	58
\$94,000 - \$117,999	41
\$118,000 o más	63
Prefiero no responder	80



31. ¿Cómo se enteró de esta encuesta?

Correo electrónico	95
Correo postal	0
Redes sociales	231
Boletín informativo	2
Folleto	2
Sitio web del proyecto	5
Un amigo/vecino me lo comentó	32
Un líder de la organización comunitaria me lo comentó	20
Prefiero no responder	6
Other	24



2024 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The City hosted an Historic Preservation Program Open House at the San Marcos Activity Center on **September 25, 2024**. The project consultants and City staff presented a PowerPoint about historic preservation, preservation planning, background on the City program in Planning and Development, the goals for the event, and the project's next steps. After the presentation, group activities were organized to identify historic preservation benefits, successes, challenges, solutions, and goals. Attendees were able to tell their stories, submit historical photographs, and/or map the future of preservation.

Residents who were not able to attend were provided with the opportunity to complete a [Take-Home Toolkit](#), available online and at the Planning and Development Services Department office. Accepted through **October 9, 2024**, input gathered from the meeting, and the toolkits helped ensure that the preservation plan reflects the community's vision for historic preservation.



City Staff at the Open House



Event welcome board

BY THE NUMBERS, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

48 Attendees

151 Total comments

26 What does preservation mean to you?

25 My favorite preservation project in the City is:

26 The biggest preservation challenge in the City is:

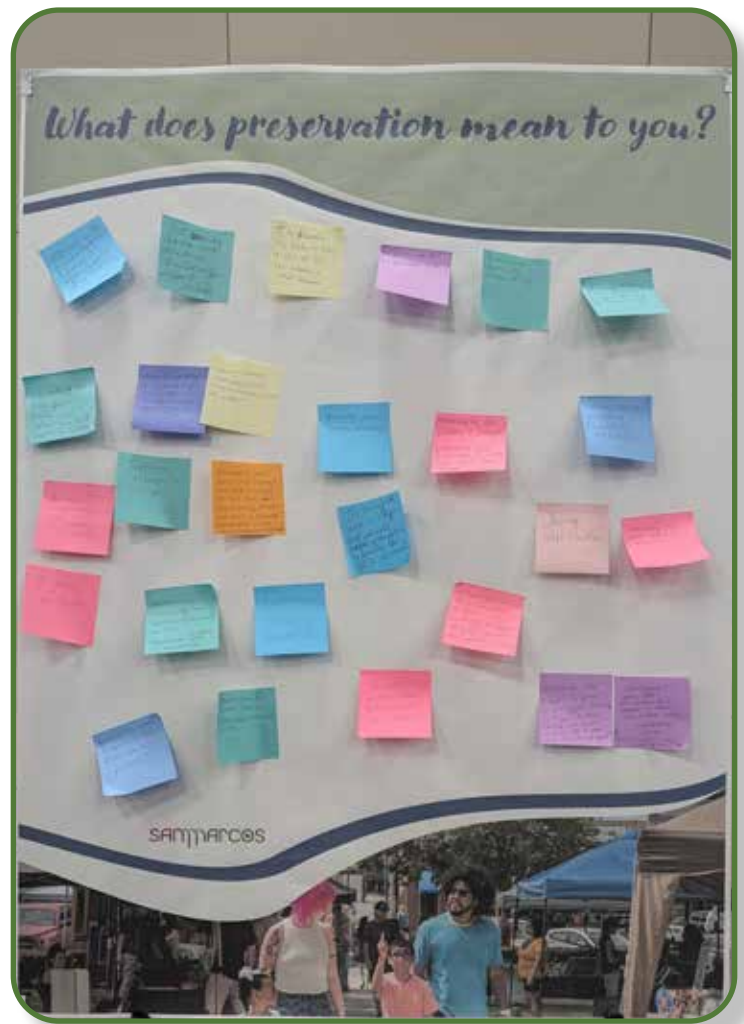
28 The City can help me preserve a place or story that matters by:

33 My dream future preservation effort in the City is:

13 A favorite memory in my neighborhood is...

WHAT DOES PRESERVATION MEAN TO YOU?

- Preserve the river. Too many out of towners polluting the river. The city should charge non-locals to float the river. Local tax paying people should have a yearly pass. New Braunfels charges to float river there. It costs money to keep the river clean.
- Connecting with past and future generations.
- Saving what exists.
- Maintain Truly Historic Buildings, not stifle new development that makes sense
- Reminder of a time when craftsmanship was valued.
- Preserve/promote history, protect and remember historical stories.
- Protecting and preserving the past for our future.
- Valuing culture, history, beauty and architecture.
- Try to keep old historic buildings but educate people of the future by marking the spot if you cannot.
- Protecting historic locations and buildings.
- CON: Racism, Pro: true to hx
- Evidence of the past
- Maintaining, preserving the historic ambiance of sm. Minimize student apts downtown.
- Preserving the past for the future to see.
- Protecting historic locations and buildings.
- Protecting and restoring places that are unique to our city and tell a story about our past so future generations can enjoy/experience.
- Keeping as much as we can exactly how it was.
- Saving history from being lost, bringing history into present.
- Not tearing down our historic buildings, support rehab
- Looking into the past seeing what others have built/inspired for future
- To me preservation means protecting our historic and natural spots from future development/inevitable destruction.
- Grow up with building as a child-afternoon funtime.
- Repairing "legacies" in buildings
- Remembering our history and culture. Preserving our buildings in ways that work for today.
- Ensuring history remains alive and appreciated by the community.
- Ensuring and maintaining cultural identity.



Board with citizen input from September 2024 Open House

MY FAVORITE PRESERVATION PROJECT IN THE CITY IS:

- Price Center
- 504 Burleson St
- Future bird sanctuary at Dunbar or Eastside of freeway
- The adaptive reuse of the Square, like the two record stores in town
- Continued preservation of Cock House
- San Marcos Masjid Prayer Hall
- Wetlands by Meadows Center
- The Courthouse
- Historic Neighborhoods / Hopkins
- Dunbar School
- Old Main
- Expanding Historic Districts before it's too late
- Courthouse
- My House - 1103 W Hopkins
- Historic neighborhood districts / keep neighborhoods for neighbors!
- Price Center
- Lloyd Johnson House
- Church preservation
- Price Center
- Area by the Courthouse / Old Main
- Dunbar - Cephas House - Calaboose - Colored School
- Expanding preservation efforts to houses between 50 to 75 years
- That Dewitt Sr Ctr
- Price Center / Cock House / Courthouse / Merriman Cabin
- 727 Belvin

THE BIGGEST PRESERVATION CHALLENGE IN THE CITY IS:

- Unrealistic neighbors who attempt to stop all development, even of derelict land. They claim it has historical value when there is none.
- Keeping historic neighborhoods from being destroyed for multifamily/AirBNB. Keeping historic neighborhoods for families and avoiding the homes turned into rental properties for students
- Profitability. Money is the challenge.
- All of the apartments being built in every green space.
- Outside interests who put short term profits over long term sustainability and preservation.
- Gentrification, keeping local knowledge alive. Unchecked Development.
- Economic support for home owners.
- Lamar school
- How to save Lamar school MLK church post road gas station.
- Divvying up the \$\$ equally
- Keeping houses and buildings from being torn down
- Development. Student housing. University Expansion.
- City talks a good game but has issues getting over the finish line.
- Lamar Annex
- Demolition for development
- Funding
- Funding
- Money
- The lack of public awareness is what historic preservation is and it's positive benefits that are sometimes overshadowed by misinformation from outside interests.
- How do we get business owners to want to make their building historically rehabilitated.
- "Funding options." Over reach of personal Property
- Money! How to afford the needed repairs on historic buildings.

- Not selling out to apartment investors!
- Dunbar district is under development pressure. Balancing renovation with rehabilitation will be important.
- Turn Lamar/Coronal into community events center.
- How about keeping grounds & the building in good condition



HPO Alison Brake speaking with community members at the September 2024 Open House

THE CITY CAN HELP ME PRESERVE A PLACE OR STORY THAT MATTERS BY:

- Oral Histories conducted across generation that highlight both our uniqueness and shared memories.
- Old Service station on Post road.
- Using social media to highlight historic properties and successful preservation efforts so that locals are aware and can develop a sense of pride and community.
- COSM apply for more grants or provide assistance for property owners.
- Not tearing down old homes to build high rise apartments.
- What are other cities doing that have the same problems as us.
- Cristies Jewelry store.
- Developing robust tax incentive for maintenance and rehabilitation of historic properties.(residential, commercial). Have planning staff trained to educate and aid businesses in applying for state and federal grants and local programs related to historic rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings
- Less money to development projects. More to restoration.
- Continue funding preservation of the Cock House + "Merriman" cabin.
- Prioritizing Contributing Properties.
- Programs and parties that support preservation.
- Document the stories of places and let everyone know.
- Provide tours and educational programs.
- Connecting younger generations to older business
- Do some serious thinking about how to educate people on Cape's Dam's history but then remove it because it harms the river. It is a dangerous dam.
- Provide incentives for preserving old buildings.
- Guadalupe Chapel
- Show non-residents that San Marcos is more than the outlets. It is a place to experience history.
- Connecting us with contractors and other resources. Ex. Foundation services, window services. A/C, Electric. Making city employees more accessible.
- Lamar middle school
- Trying to help, not trying to prevent. Support what makes sense.
- Talk to funeral homes for historic pics.
- Reach out and study other cities that have preservation right.
- COSM: please enforce code on high weeds especially on Hopkins St. Craddock!

- Provide funding/help finding grants that preserve old buildings/historic buildings downtown.
- I would like to see San Marcos develop a strong preservation community like Galveston. Perhaps we should study how they achieve and maintain their strong participation.
- More effort towards historic ghost tours.



Board with citizen input and Stantec presentation from September 2024 Open House

MY DREAM FUTURE PRESERVATION EFFORT IN THE CITY IS:

- Grant for building improvements, i.e. plumbing, AC, windows, roof
- Historic preservation through zoning!
- More downtown local biz, parking, less bars & loan sharks
- Renovate movie theater for local shows, videos of Old SM, etc. (Don't know who owns it)
- Bird sanctuary ordinance
- More \$\$ for low income home restoration in historic districts
- Museum District & Heritage Trail Downtown - All San Marcos historical/museum organization work together
- Educated, Informed HPC / Emphasis on Economic Tourism
- A better looking building (repairs!) at corner of Hopkins & Guadalupe. (Happening now to a certain extent)
- Preserve Historic Businesses in the LBJ / Guadalupe area (Hispanic businesses)
- Ace Hardware / Steward's Building - Restore
- Building a robust residential community of historic home and business buildings with educational and social organization to rival Galveston. We have a very large catalogue of historic properties for relatively small city.
- Expand Legacy Business Plans!
- Regenerate the old movie theater just across from campus on LBJ
- More tourism in SM akin to what NB does with its River (Historic Tourism)
- Would love to see a few more family oriented businesses downtown on or near Square
- Preserve historic homes along Hopkins
- Driving online "tour" of historic houses & sites
- Stop building apts in town. I want our town back

- Rest stops for migrating birds & insects / wildlife corridor
- That it be like downtown Fredericksburg cute & touristy
- Renovate Showplace Theater
- Historical tours / Living history of San Marcos maybe month long on weekends
- Expand Legacy Business Program support small business!
- Keeping farmland historic
- Preserving the San Marcos River's ecosystem and providing river access to everyone
- I would like to see preservation become a priority in San Marcos
- Grants: Facelift for Downtown buildings - especially those that are businesses!
- Preserve the river, push back against new developments by the water
- I would like to see the Lamar School turned into a community event center. It could be a place for festivals & we could use the beautiful auditorium for music & concerts.
- Preserving the water spaces and ensuring Edwards Aquifer is thriving for years to come. Making sure wildlife can thrive. Stop building so many apartments/shopping centers on any little green space
- Dunbar Neighborhood Museum District
- An interactive online space where people can engage with San Marcos history through oral histories, exhibits, and stuff (use your imagination)



Map and boards with citizen input from September 2024 Open House

A FAVORITE MEMORY IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD IS...PLEASE SHARE UNIQUE HISTORY, INTERESTING LOCAL KNOWLEDGE, FAVORITE MEMORIES, OR FAVORITE PLACES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

- My favorite story/ memory involves the 2021 snowstorm. I decided to walk to Texas State University so I could tell people, decades from now, about the time I walked three miles up a hill to get to school. Yes, I wanted to be that old guy. It was a great walk, the town looked beautiful, the water looked pleasant, school was boring.
- Taking both my kids as newborns to the river for their first time in the water, special memories and we continue to take them as frequently as we can
- One of my favorite memories is dipping in the river by the lions club with my small kiddos and having our baby shower at the price center. We also love walking around Sewell park.

One of my favorite things to do in the neighborhood is...

- No responses

One of my favorite places in the neighborhood is...

- Veramendi Plaza, Concerts in City Park, Heritage Events at Cock House, Courthouse Sq. Events
- The river, and local businesses.
- Dunbar School on MLK. How are you the City keeping the building to be used

An interesting fact about my neighborhood is...

- No responses

Other

- New to SM
- Seems the childhood building still striving to exist
- I like to make little stories about the walking path I go on daily. I go from Lamar School to wonder world to the graveyard and back. Our town is a magical place full of mystical history and unknown mysteries. I feel like protecting this magic is absolutely imperative for the future of mankind

- The ability to walk downtown from Campus. I love the old houses converted to other uses or preserved.
- I love the one iron loop left on Pr. Ctr. SA street sidewalk that was used for tying up horses and buggies. All the rest are gone.
- San Marcos has a large catalogue of historic properties, esp. for a small city. As (a) growing town, development pressures from multinational investment corporations is intense, particularly with a growing University. Working with University to preserve historic building in their ownership may be helpful. Working with owners and potential owners to educate about and help access federal and state grant and loan programs for rehabilitation and maintenance of historic properties along with a city program (perhaps with tax incentives - money talks) may be helpful. Maintaining neighborhoods for neighbors (not investment properties) is important. Developing a community with strong preservation identity, like Galveston, would be great.
- To help with pride in preservation, one tool may be educational programs and seminars which inform citizens, but also brings them together away from their solo computers or Facebook comments to see like-minded people and to brainstorm ideas. We had a few seminars before COVID which may be good to continue. Its also important to do something about historic properties that are rotting. One is on Belvin St. Another is on LBJ near RR tracks (old Dental office) - I think both are owned by the same person. Rotting properties are terrible for historic pride in our community. The old Lamar School on Hutchinson has a wonderful gymnasium. It would be great if the city could purchase and rehabilitate that part of the property.

2025 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DRAFT PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The Draft Historic Preservation Plan was the result of a collaborative effort between City staff and consultants from Stantec, built on the voices of the community described above in this Appendix: online feedback, stakeholder interviews, community-wide survey, and a 2024 public open house and pop-up events at the library.

Upon completion, the City held a public comment period **June 27 - July 27, 2025** through an Interactive Community Engagement website hosted by Konveio and at in-person events, including a another library pop-up event and community open house.

Staff hosted the pop-up event at the San Marcos Public Library on **July 9, 2025** to share a hard copy of the plan with the community and publicize the July 16 Open House. Attendees asked questions and discussed how the plan will guide historic preservation policy for the City with the staff.



The Open House Welcome Team



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The City hosted the second Historic Preservation Plan Open House at the San Marcos Activity Center on **July 16, 2025** to explore the draft Historic Preservation Plan, share feedback, and connect with others who care about protecting the places that matter in San Marcos. For those who could not attend, Take-Home Toolkits were made available for download or pickup from the Planning and Development Services Department through **July 28, 2025**. They could also provide input into the ongoing mapping activity, "[Mapping the Future: Preserving Our Past](#)".

BY THE NUMBERS, JULY 16, 2025

41 Attendees

173 Total comments

8 What positions or duties would be most valuable to carry out historic preservation?

13 Which groups, organizations, or individuals should the City work with to ensure that the HPC reflects the city's diverse population?

12 Are there other Administrative priorities you want the plan to consider?

12 What topics should be documented by context statements? (Ex. dams & associated mill/irrigation features along the San Marcos River, women's history, Latino history, and Black history)

12 What neighborhoods could benefit from preservation tools such as Neighborhood Conservation Districts to retain their distinct characteristics? (Ex. the larger Dunbar neighborhood beyond the NRHP district boundaries, areas near Texas State, and around Eddie Durham Park)

9 Are there other Survey & Recognition priorities you want the plan to consider?

9 What topics would you like to see at a workshop? Suggestions: Pursuing historic designation, grant funding, maintenance of older buildings, etc. Others?

3 Which types of industry professionals would you like to learn from?

12 What sort of projects should financial incentives for historic home improvements cover?

11 Are there other Economic Development priorities you want the plan to consider?

8 What type of signage, locations, or mapping would you like to see around San Marcos?

9 Are there other areas you would like to see more interpretive signage in? What type of information would you like to see?

9 Are there other Signage & Wayfinding priorities you want the plan to consider?

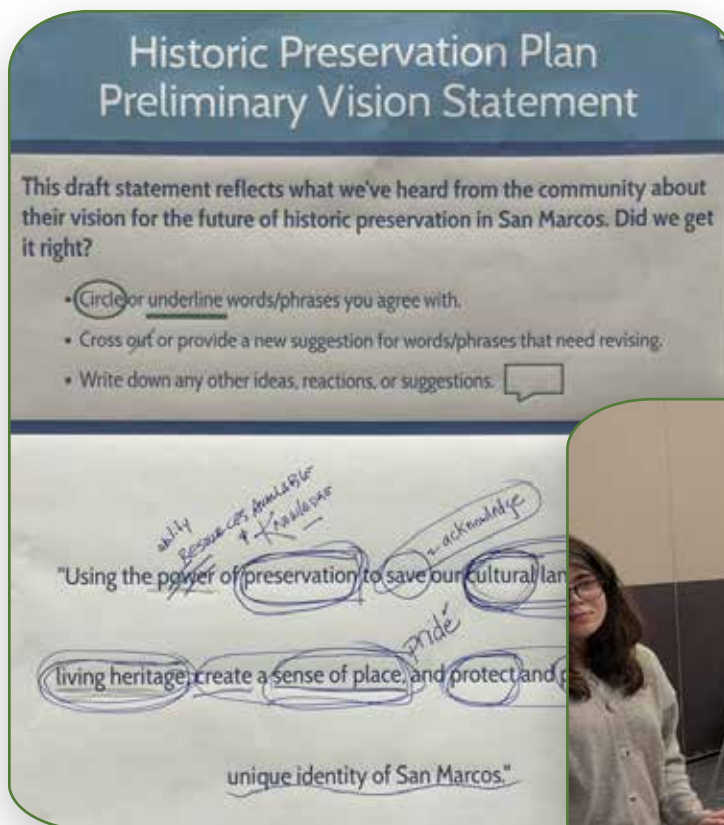
13 What historic events and places do you want to be better showcased throughout the city? What types of public art or interpretive materials should be used to achieve this?

12 What types of historic preservation events would you like to attend? How frequently would you like to see reminders prior to an event?

10 Are there other Engagement & Education priorities you want the plan to consider?

7 Where Should We Start? (Ranking Community Priorities)

4 What ideas from the plan are you most excited about?



PRELIMINARY VISION STATEMENT

Using the power of preservation to save our cultural landscape and living heritage, create a sense of place, and protect and promote the unique identity of San Marcos.

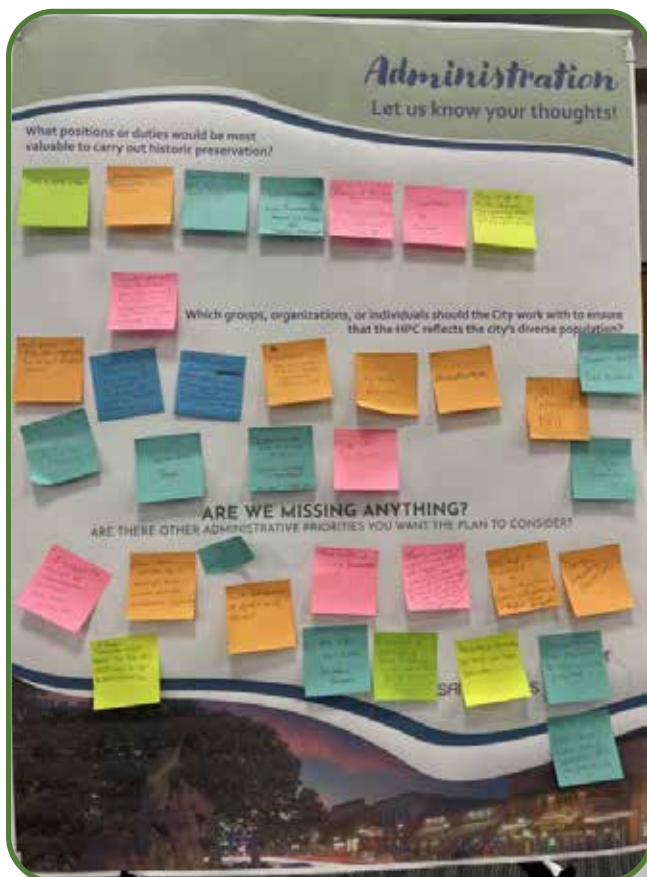
Circle words/phrases you agree with.	preservation, save, cultural, cultural landscape, living heritage, create, create a sense of place, protect, promote, protect and promote
Underline words/phrases you agree with.	power, living heritage, create, sense of place, unique identity of San Marcos
Cross out words/phrases.	power
Suggest new words or rephrasing.	Instead of "power" add "ability" and "resources available & knowledge"
	Add "and acknowledge" after "save"
	Add "pride" after "sense of place"
Any other ideas, reactions, suggestions	None

WHAT POSITIONS OR DUTIES WOULD BE MOST VALUABLE TO CARRY OUT HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

- Comply with CLG
- Allow staff to make design recommendations. HPC committee is not always available
- Demolition by Neglect
- Regulate demolitions by neglect
- Imperative that you have community impact
- Connect more with residents of areas-many don't think of as historic. Cultural preservation important isn't always connected to a "historic" building
- Code Enforcement. Historic Preservation OFFICE under city manager not planning department
- Positions- Board of Residents expanded (interested hobbyist) and historian consultants duties-Public information/marketing about programs

WHICH GROUPS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR INDIVIDUALS SHOULD THE CITY WORK WITH TO ENSURE THAT THE HPC REFLECTS THE CITY'S DIVERSE POPULATION?

- Texas Freedom Colonies Project. Place Economics
- All cultural NPO
- Preservation Texas
- Indigenous Cultures Institute
- Centro Cultural Hispano
- Longtime residents
- K-12 Students know their city and could offer valuable insight on what is important to them
- Calaboose African American History Museum. Centro Cultural de San Marcos. Indigenous Cultures Inst.
- Preservation Texas
- Want someone on HPC who represents the original hispanic families
- Council to the Indigenous and Tejano community
- City/County grants to help elderly low income age in place in established neighborhoods such as MLK and Victory Gardens
- Expansion of historic districts to help lower tax evals (but established neighborhoods) survive outside developers



ARE THERE OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE PRIORITIES YOU WANT THE PLAN TO CONSIDER?

- The 5 mile dam doesn't have many amenities unless you play soccer
- Slow traffic in several neighborhoods
- Actual enforcement of demolition by neglect
- New staff -HPO & Assistants - Architectural Historians
- Charge punitive charge (fee)
- A means of salvaging wood + other historical materials for re-use
- Preservation and parks plan need to align + consider each other
- Salvage of material + deconstruction work with neighborhoods to reflect City's character
- Preemptive demolition by txst and their developers
- There should be a requirement that when a house- structure- is sold in historic district that the owners are notified before act of sale and information is given at act of sale. I did not know about COA when I bought my house
- Texas State University is exempt from historic district/landmark regulations
- I support the concept of deconstruction ordinance. Think twice, destroy once.

WHAT TOPICS SHOULD BE DOCUMENTED BY CONTEXT STATEMENTS? (EX. DAMS & ASSOCIATED MILL/IRRIGATION FEATURES ALONG THE SAN MARCOS RIVER, WOMEN'S HISTORY, LATINO HISTORY, AND BLACK HISTORY)

- Cultural landscapes
- Cheatham/LBJ role home
- LBJ- Funeral Home- near David Surgis office and church
- 211 Lee Street
- Vasquez House -> Cheatham + LBJ -Southside thrift and Cheatham St Warehouse -whole intersection of Cheatham and Guadalupe
- Rochwalls along Holland Street and North LBJ
- Old Lamar school is an icon and needs to NOT be turned into anything retail, commercial, or apartments, or parking garages!!
- Swales along El Camino Reale
- Capes Dam- Fix it W/O another damn survey or consultant
- Archeology cultural landscapes cape's dam
- History of ranching, agriculture, gins, etc
- Expand notion of historic to include recent or near recent events. River history/events + usage

WHAT NEIGHBORHOODS COULD BENEFIT FROM PRESERVATION TOOLS SUCH AS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS TO RETAIN THEIR DISTINCT CHARACTERISTICS? (EX. THE LARGER DUNBAR NEIGHBORHOOD BEYOND THE NRHP DISTRICT BOUNDARIES, AREAS NEAR TEXAS STATE, AND AROUND EDDIE DURHAM PARK)

- Historic Cemeteries within city limits
- I would like to find out more information who initiate or external historic district
- Commerical + retail must never be allowed to cross Moore Street! The minute that happens, we are sunk. Keep it all on the city side of RR 12
- Spring Lake Hills "downtown" TXST-Interstate
- Limit Use
- Old First Baptist Church
- University Owned Property
- LBJ St. Corridor (downtown to I-35) (Downtown to TXST)
- Centro Cultural Area Lee St. LBJ Guadalupe St
- Guadalupe St. Corridor
- Victory Gardens
- East Guadalupe St., Riverside, Dunbar, Harvey Street, Post Road

ARE THERE OTHER SURVEY & RECOGNITION PRIORITIES YOU WANT THE PLAN TO CONSIDER?

- Active documentation of historic buildings. This could be done by partnering with TXST to increase awareness
- Indigenous, Tejanos, Freedmans
- Archeology
- SMCISD History
- Where do we begin... will send email (gonna need a bigger post-it)
- Museum of history of San Marcos inclusive of all cultures
- Area plans, neighborhood narratives, street corridors and viewsheds
- Need to see the preservation of hispanic communities + places (start on pg. 23). The culture + history of hispanics feels like it's being ignored. at the beginning of the plan
- Lamar school needs to be an arts center. Preserve the auditorium



WHAT TOPICS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT A WORKSHOP? SUGGESTIONS: PURSUING HISTORIC DESIGNATION, GRANT FUNDING, MAINTENANCE OF OLDER BUILDINGS, ETC. OTHERS?

- Opportunities for volunteers to work on preservation
- CLG -NRHP -RTHL -Local Landmarking
- Wood Window Rehab
- Fee Generation
- Pursuing a local historical marker
- Change a Demo fee to developers for demos of structure. High priority or designation to fund rehab and repair program
- Grant funding and education
- Historic Tax Credits
- Historic Tax Credits

WHICH TYPES OF INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN FROM?

- Professional with experience in historic preservation 1) painters 2) Carpenters 3) Brick Repair 4) Window Repairs
- The city's historic preservation officer!
- Indigenous community values, rituals, and elevate the history of the indigenous and mexican communities

WHAT SORT OF PROJECTS SHOULD FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC HOME IMPROVEMENTS COVER?

- Grant funding: preservation and stabilization of historic homes
- How can we incentivize private home repairs and renovations? That is so important. The big old gorgeous homes need saved but are so expensive to retain
- Incentivize downtown to create opportunities biz district
- incentivizes more of - for downtown district businesses
- For opportunities in the downtown district
- Stabilization/foundation - window rehabilitation -Roof replacement -Accessibility
- Local banks donate money
- Look to san antonio historic preservation
- Opportunities for createices, or pop-ups to use vacant downtown spaces
- Landscaping
- Resources for arts/createive original to rehab and use unused buildings for gallery, performance, studio space
- This^



ARE THERE OTHER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES YOU WANT THE PLAN TO CONSIDER?

- What are the opportunities for economic dev for helping improve entrances?
- It is important to ensure historic structures meet ADA compliance
- Partnering with TV or other media programs (this old house) to see if they could help with renovation costs
- Give tax breaks to legacy businesses and homes within the historic district that have been owned by the same family through generations
- City provide land to move structures too instead of demoing the building
- Acknowledgement or showing history through art displays that could be incentivized through tax credits or a grant
- Build an indigenous cultrue center (need grant funding)
- Need program to with grants to help low income property owners repair paint exterior property in historic district
- Historical properties promoted as film locations through the Texas Film Convention
- We need an implementation plan!
- HPO dedicated to research and preservation of History of Mexican, Indigenous, and Black communities

WHAT TYPE OF SIGNAGE, LOCATIONS, OR MAPPING WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AROUND SAN MARCOS?

- Mexican-American Indigenous Cultural Heritage District
- Sacred Springs
- Courthouse Grounds
- More of the signs on buildings siilar to those downtown (on board to left)
- Sacred Springs at Meadows
- Avoid Cluttering of Signs
- Welldesigned signage inclusive of all areas
- Include other stakeholders for additional programs

ARE THERE OTHER AREAS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE IN? WHAT TYPE OF INFORMATION WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

- Boyhood Alley Description- film locations labeled in general
- 1936 Centennial Marker on I-35 frontage road needs to be highlighted somehow
- Capes dam/mille race- Lime Kiln
- Historic Church on MLK (Baptist Church)
- Downtown District
- Coahuiltecan People- routes used and areas lived
- History of CISD Buildings
- Former West End School- Hopkins and Mitchell
- Rock wall on Holland (Research required)

ARE THERE OTHER SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING PRIORITIES YOU WANT THE PLAN TO CONSIDER?

- Luciano Flores lived across from Rogelios (little white house) How do we elevate that history? Create marker?
- To work with HCH to correct existing historic markers
- Signs on outside of historic buildings. ex: Centro Cultural 211 Lee St
- Maps and walking or driving routes to see related or closely grouped signs
- Signage to be in English, Spanish, and Coahuiltecan
- Historic Markers
- Landscaping improvements in every area controlled by SMTX. Landscaping, public art and real sidewalks. Help "vibe" tremendously
- Interactive map of local historic signs
- San Marcos Heritage Association as a partner

WHAT HISTORIC EVENTS AND PLACES DO YOU WANT TO BE BETTER SHOWCASED THROUGHOUT THE CITY? WHAT TYPES OF PUBLIC ART OR INTERPRETIVE MATERIALS SHOULD BE USED TO ACHIEVE THIS?

- The hispanic areas have been given less attention in the past. Cemeteries have stories to tell
- Showplace Theatre
- Cemeteries
- I wish there was a historic property club in San Marcos
- Publish in TXST newspaper to share stories about the city and the University
- Books and Publications of local history and architecture
- Tour of historic buildings and stories about them (especially old hospital)
- Historic areas outside the traditional historic district in Belvin area. Better focus on importance of south guadalupe and dunbar

- archives at library. a lot bldgs + ppl's cox books display @ library engage with the library
- oral histories + keeping records
- partner with TXST to put historic markers on old bldgs on campus
- Old gonazles grocery bldg
- Plays at the courthouse about the history or a certain time period (like Aquarena Springs Park)

WHAT TYPES OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION EVENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND? HOW FREQUENTLY WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE REMINDERS PRIOR TO AN EVENT?

- Preservation workshops: landmarking-becoming district window restriction. Tombstone restoration. CLG + Code Information
- Publish events + articles about historic places get store is in SM Daily Record
- Symposiums on regional history and historic architecture
- ^agree with this suggestion
- Utilitze the city community radio station KZSM to have educational shows
- Course/workshop to teach and education kids about SM History (class or demonstration)
- Workshops or Seminars that feature speakers for an afternoon or morning
- Promote pow-wows via school district get kids involved
- partner with Tejanos for oral histories cits.us (archived @ txst)
- City-run tour of historic places not just buildings (Wonder Cave + river; feed center, vacant lots) - what they were used for before development
- Expand historic home tour + incentive for homeowners to open their homes
- Host evening events + preservation workshops. Recordings of stories and histories (like the moth podcast). Put interactive display in library. More on native Americans



ARE THERE OTHER ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION PRIORITIES YOU WANT THE PLAN TO CONSIDER?

- Priority list of vacant buildings to be preserved, reused
- Paintings that can be removed are much better than paintings on walls that can actually deface the property. Maybe billboard type cloth that can be removed rather than painting on historic walls
- How can historic homes be showcased through film
- Historic talks at the library by local residents
- (standardize) For consistency, needs to be a packet of information or video that will education potential property owners before act of sale on property in the historic district re: reules and requirements, and advantagees of being in historic district
- Brown building above Duke and Ayres Dimestore
- Please don't put murals in historic district. Murals are better for playground and more modern area. The architecture should tell the story in historic districts. Murals can be inappropriate with repect to time and not everyone agrees on what is good or bad art
- I love the murals! They are engaging for kids. More kids programs to get them involved and helping with preservation
- San Marcos does not have a local history museum
- Concern that federal grant funding will go away- more stable funding sources

WHERE SHOULD WE START? (RANKING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES)

Stickers

8 Administration

6 Survey & Recognition

13 Economic Development

4 Signage & Wayfinding

8 Engagement & Education

WHAT IDEAS FROM THE PLAN ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

- Action Items
- Clear lead/responsible parties. Budget/funding sources. Performance metrics
- More marketing + engagement for community including signage and way finding. gets kids excited
- Making historic preservation a PRIORITY

Where should we start?

What action items from the plan should the City prioritize?
Place a sticker next to the category you think should be top priority

ADMINISTRATION
Ex. Staffing, Commission Diversity, Demolition Regulation Amendments, etc.

SURVEY & RECOGNITION
Ex. Context Statements, State Cultural Districts, etc.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Ex. Tax Incentives, Promoting the Artistic Board-Up Requirements, etc.

SIGNAGE & WAYFINDING
Ex. Interpretive Materials, Crowd-Sourcing Information, etc.

ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION
Ex. Recognition Program, More Mural Arts to tell San Marcos History, Promote Preservation Events, etc.

What ideas from the plan are you most excited about?

San Marcos

FUNDING SOURCES

FEDERAL SOURCES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX INCENTIVES PROGRAM

NPS oversight; tax credit of 20% of qualified expenditures; applies only to income-producing properties ([Technical Preservation Services U.S. National Park Service](#)).

HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

- [African American Civil Rights Grants*](#)
- [Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund \(HPF\) Grants](#)
- [History of Equal Rights Grants*](#)
- [Save America's Treasures Grants](#)
- [Semiquincentennial Grants](#)
- [Tribal Historic Preservation Office \(THPO\) Grants*](#)
- [Underrepresented Communities Grants*](#)

Additional [NPS Grant Programs](#) for specific properties and/or project types.

**Potential for funding historic resources surveys and/or historic context development. There is the possibility an agreement could be made with certain local sources for funding surveys and development of historic contexts.*

OTHER FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#)
- [HUD Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Program*](#)
- [National Endowment for the Humanities Grant Programs](#) for specific properties and/or project types.
- [National Trust Preservation Funds](#)
- [HUD HOME Investment Partnerships Program](#)

**Potential for funding historic resources surveys and/or historic context development. There is the possibility an agreement could be made with certain local sources for funding surveys and development of historic contexts.*

STATE SOURCES

TEXAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS PROGRAM

State tax credit of 25% of eligible expenditures; costs must have a minimum investment of \$5,000. Properties may be listed or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP individually or as contributing to a district, as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, or as a State Antiquities Landmark. The projects must follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Buildings must be income-producing or non-profit. ([Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program Texas Historical Commission](#).)

STATE GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- [Texas Commission on the Arts Grants](#)
- [Texas Department of Agriculture Texas Capital Fund \(TCF\) Downtown Revitalization Program Grants](#)
- [Texas Downtown Anice Read Fund](#)
- [Texas Enterprise Zone Program](#)
- [Texas Hotel Occupancy Tax](#)
- [Texas Historical Commission \(THC\) Certified Local Government Grants](#) (Funded by the NPS HPF)*
- [Texas Neighborhood Stabilization Program](#)
- [Texas Parks and Wildlife Recreational Trails Grants](#)
- [Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grants](#)
- [THC Courthouse Preservation Program Grants](#)
- [Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone](#)
- [Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs \(TDHCA\) Housing Tax Credit Program](#)

**Potential for funding historic resources surveys and/or historic context development. There is the possibility an agreement could be made with certain local sources for funding surveys and development of historic contexts.*

REGIONAL AND STATE NON-PROFIT FUNDING SOURCES

- [Albert and Ethel Herzstein Charitable Foundation Grants](#)
- [Business and Community Lenders \(BCL\) of Texas Community Impact Loans](#)
- [The Brown Foundation Grants](#)
- [Communities Foundation of Texas Grants](#)
- [Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country Community Impact Fund Grants](#)
- [Cullen Foundation Grants](#)
- [Humanities Texas Grants](#)
- [The Meadows Foundation Grants](#)
- [Summerlee Foundation Texas History Program Grants](#)
- [Texas Historical Foundation Grants](#)

LOCAL SOURCES

CITY GRANTS AND INCENTIVES

- [Arts, Cultural, and Event Grants](#)
 - Community Grant
 - Signature Event Grant
 - Spark Tourism Grant
 - Tourism Grant
- [Business Improvement & Growth \(BIG\) Grant](#)
- [Downtown Co-Marketing Fund](#)
- [Economic Development Supplemental Fund \(the Fund\)](#)
- [Main Street City Incentive Grant](#)
- [Small Business Retention Incentive](#)
- [Sustainable Resources Grant](#)

NON-PROFIT SOURCES

NATIONAL NONPROFITS

- [African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund](#)*
- [Bank of America Charitable Foundation](#)
- [Clinton Foundation](#)*
- [Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors](#)**
- [Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation](#)**
- [Kresge Foundation Grants](#)
- [Latinos in Heritage Conservation Grant Program](#)
- [The Moe Family Fund for Statewide and Local Partners](#)
- [The National Fund for Sacred Places Grants](#)
- [Partners in Preservation Grants](#) (via American Express & the National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- [The 1772 Foundation Historic Properties Redevelopment Program Grants](#)

**Potential for funding historic resources surveys and/or historic context development. There is the possibility an agreement could be made with certain local sources for funding surveys and development of historic contexts.*

***Requires work to be completed on a National Historic Landmark.*

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