

# *Cape's Dam, Mill Race, Thompson's Island & San Marcos River*

## *Visioning Study*

*City Council Work Session  
October 15, 2019*



# Presentation

Receive presentation from Hays County regarding Cape's Dam and seek Council direction on proposed project and possible partnership opportunities with Hays County and the Hays County Historical Commission.

# Background

## February 22, 2016: Capes Dam Workshop

- Presentation by Dr. Thomas Hardy
- Effects of changing height of Cape's Dam on recreation, Texas wild rice and fountain darter habitat (Hardy Report – 10/12/15)

## August 15, 2016: Capes Dam Council Presentation

- Presentation by Mike Montagne, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Capes Dam Removal Analysis (Hydraulic Hardy Report – 3/27/2017)
- Supplement Cape's Dam and Mill Race Assessment (Supplemental Assessment-Hardy Report – 5/23/17)

## January 11, 2019: Capes Dam Memo Staff Update

# Background

January 15, 2019: City Council briefed in executive session to discuss possible partnership opportunities with Hays County and the Hays County Historical Commission.

January 29, 2019: City Council considered an item designating Cape's Dam as a historic landmark. This action was postponed for up to 6 months while staff gathered more information related to the project.

June 18, 2019: City Council briefed in Work Session on status of possible partnership opportunities with Hays County and the Hays County Historical Commission. Presentation from County on proposed project anticipated in fall 2019.

## City Council Direction Needed

- Does Council want to proceed with an agreement with Hays County to partner on renovation/rehabilitation of Cape's Dam?
- Does Council want to explore the larger visioning/master plan concept with Hays County?



# A note regarding this presentation:

**A master plan** by its very nature and definition seeks a broad perspective from as many voices as possible to craft a plan and strategy that serves the most amount of residents in the best possible manner.

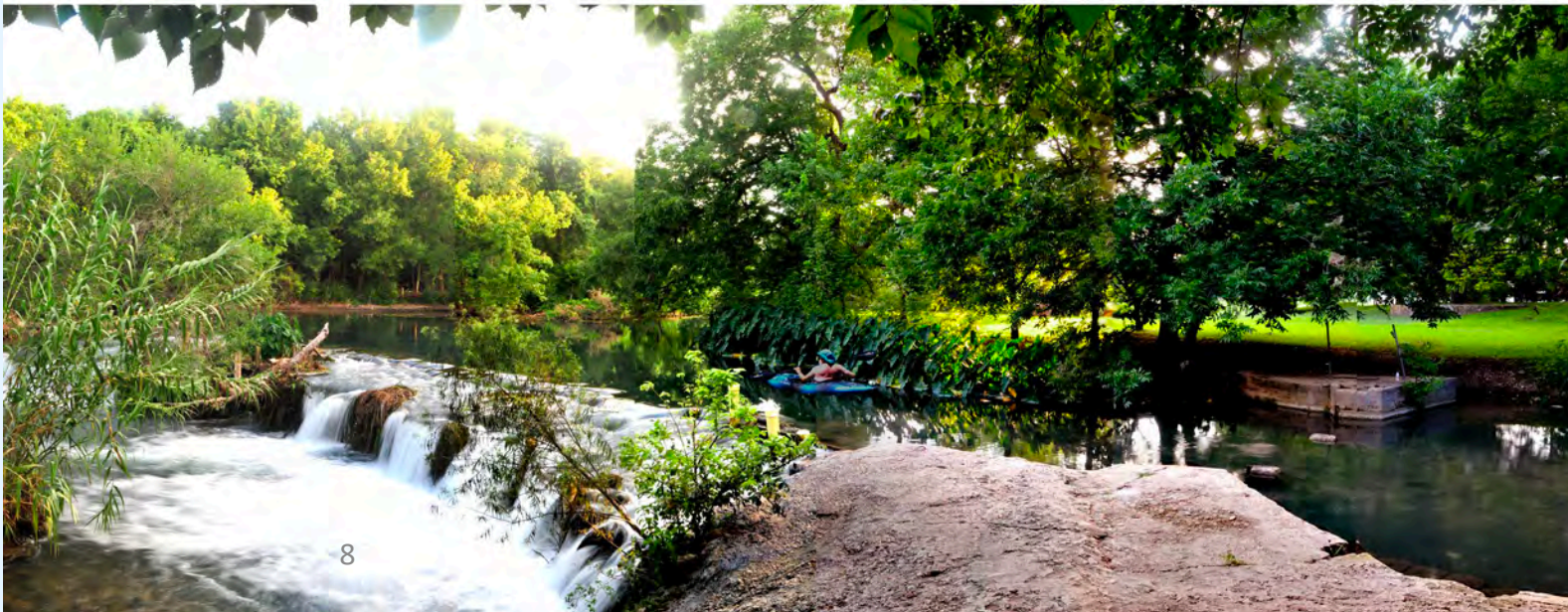
**This presentation** and the maps, comments, and strategies are conceptual only. The information contained in the work is only to explore the potential of a more comprehensive master plan.



The vision presented here;  
Seeks to promote the rehabilitation and interpretation of the Thompson/Cape dam, mill race, Thompson/Cape mill site and turbine structure, as a special place;  
*the very beginning of San Marcos industry.*







## Thompson/Cape Dam & Mill Race Gate,

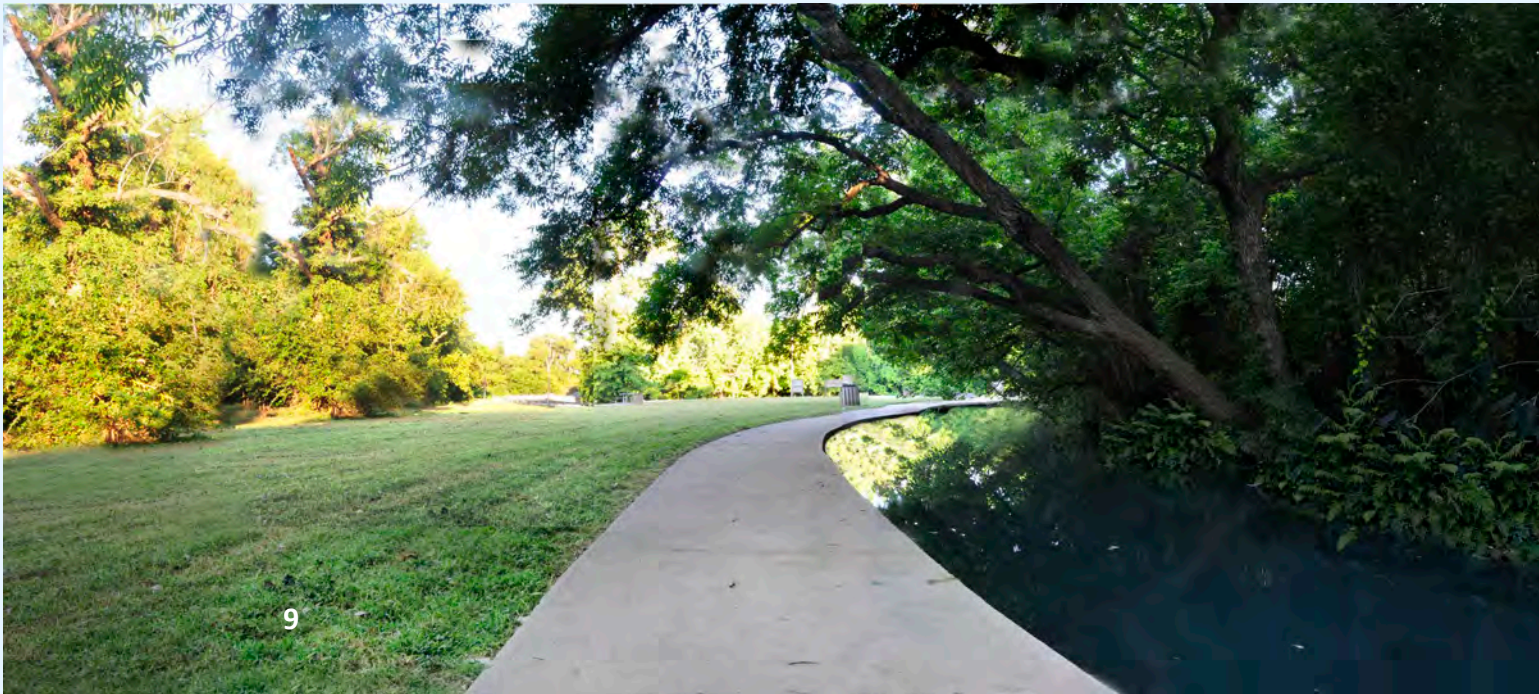
- Crib dam  
rehabilitation
- Limited River  
Access points
- Historic  
interpretation





## Mill Race

- Higher water level in the Mill Race
- Safety access
- Passive, low level development

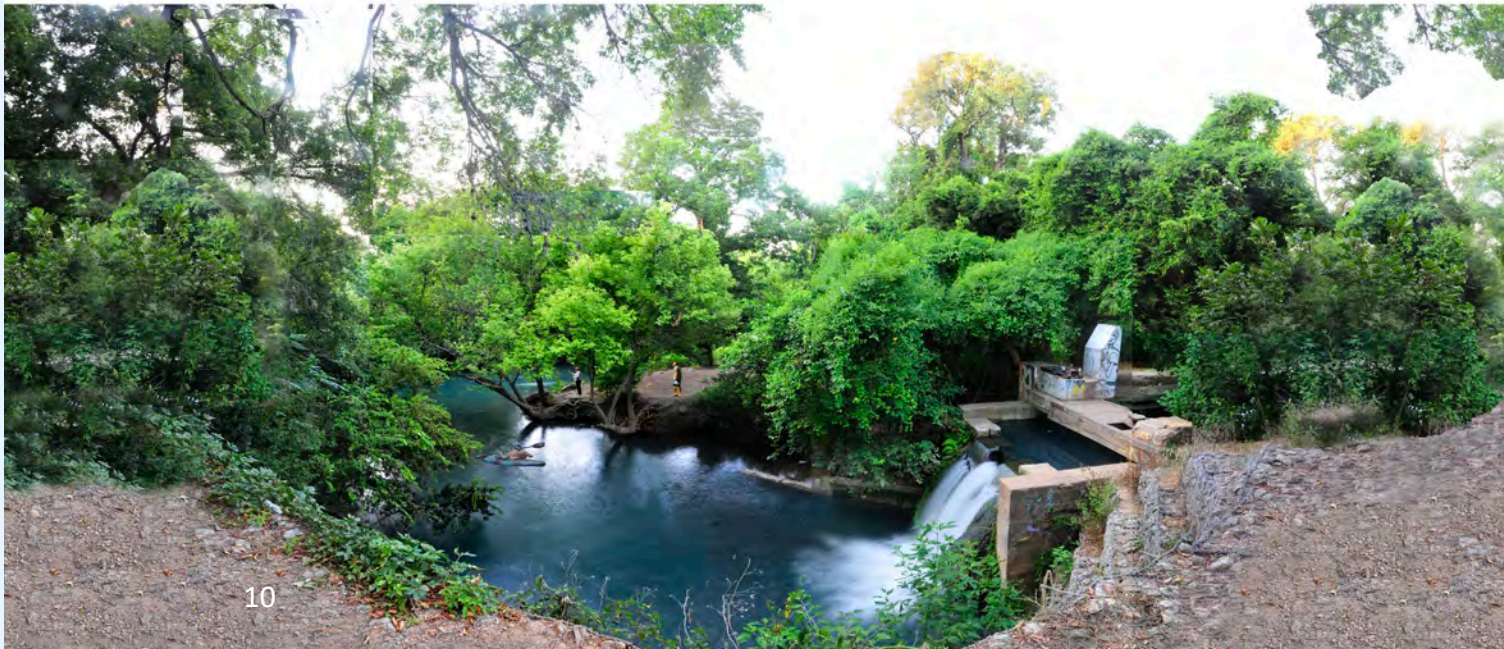






## Thompson Dam & Mill Pond

- Safety railing & Access
- Observation platform
- Kayak ingress/egress
- Bank Stabilization





# Overall Goals:





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*Prioritize historic features &  
environmental beauty*



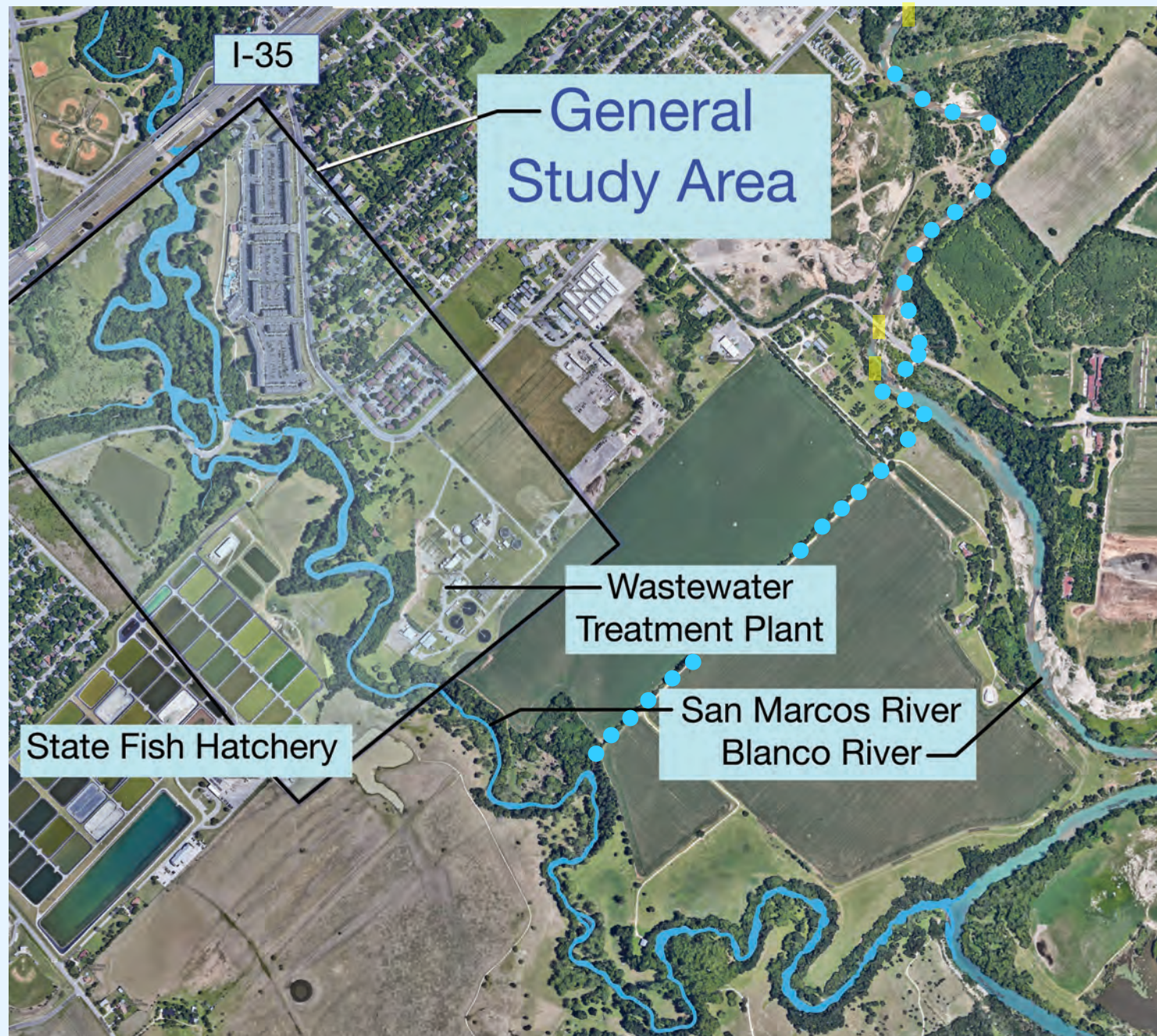
# Overall Goals:

*Achieving a balanced approach* for historic structure rehabilitation, educational interpretation, and leisurely activities while preserving the ecological integrity of the San Marcos River through pragmatic conservation and restoration initiatives.

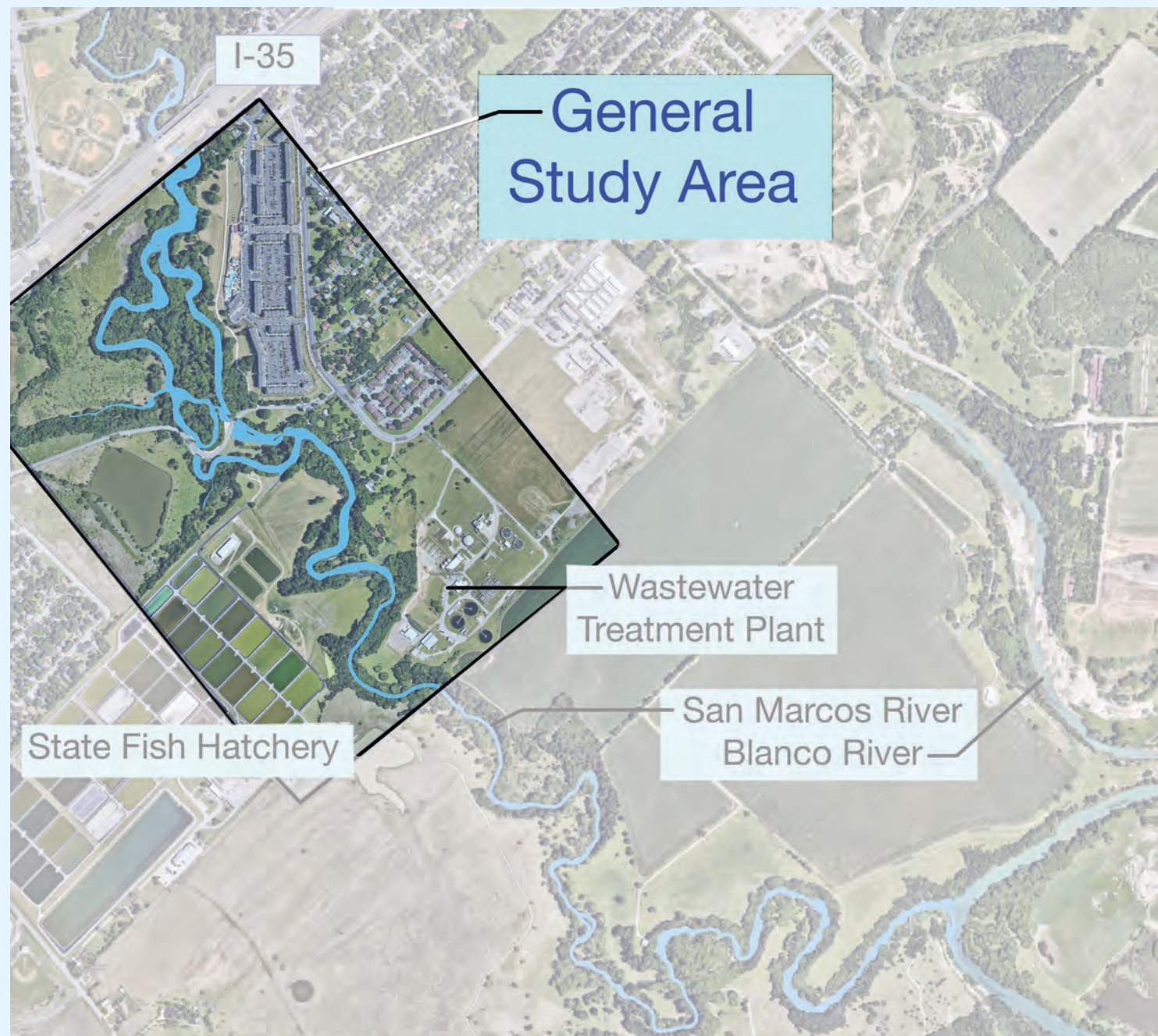
*Providing a special & diverse asset* to be enjoyed by San Marcos and Hays County residents, accessed by trails reaching out in all directions.

*Providing comprehensive safety and access,* focusing on ADA, EMS servicing, Trails, & Water Access.











# *#1 Achieving a Balanced Approach:*

Vision Study Caters to Three Main Areas:

*Environmental Integrity;* A level of respect and action for the habitat and the sensitive species that exist there.

*Historic Rehabilitation + Interpretation;*  
Understanding our history to learn and guide us forward.

*Social and Leisure Access Equity;*  
New asset for an underserved area of San Marcos.

## *#1 Achieving a Balanced Approach:*

*Environmental Integrity;* A level of respect and action for the habitat and the sensitive species that exist there.

## Analysis & Strategies

- Coordination with all necessary City and County departments
- Existing conditions assessment
- Flow-through design modeling of a rehabilitated Cape's Dam as part of the assessment informing design
- Post assessment after first phase improvements completed
- Monitoring to include recreational activity seasonal levels
- Establishment for strategies including river access points
- Terrestrial survey conducted on sensitive landscapes.
- Invasive species removal



## *#1 Achieving a Balanced Approach:*

### *Historic Rehabilitation + Interpretation;*

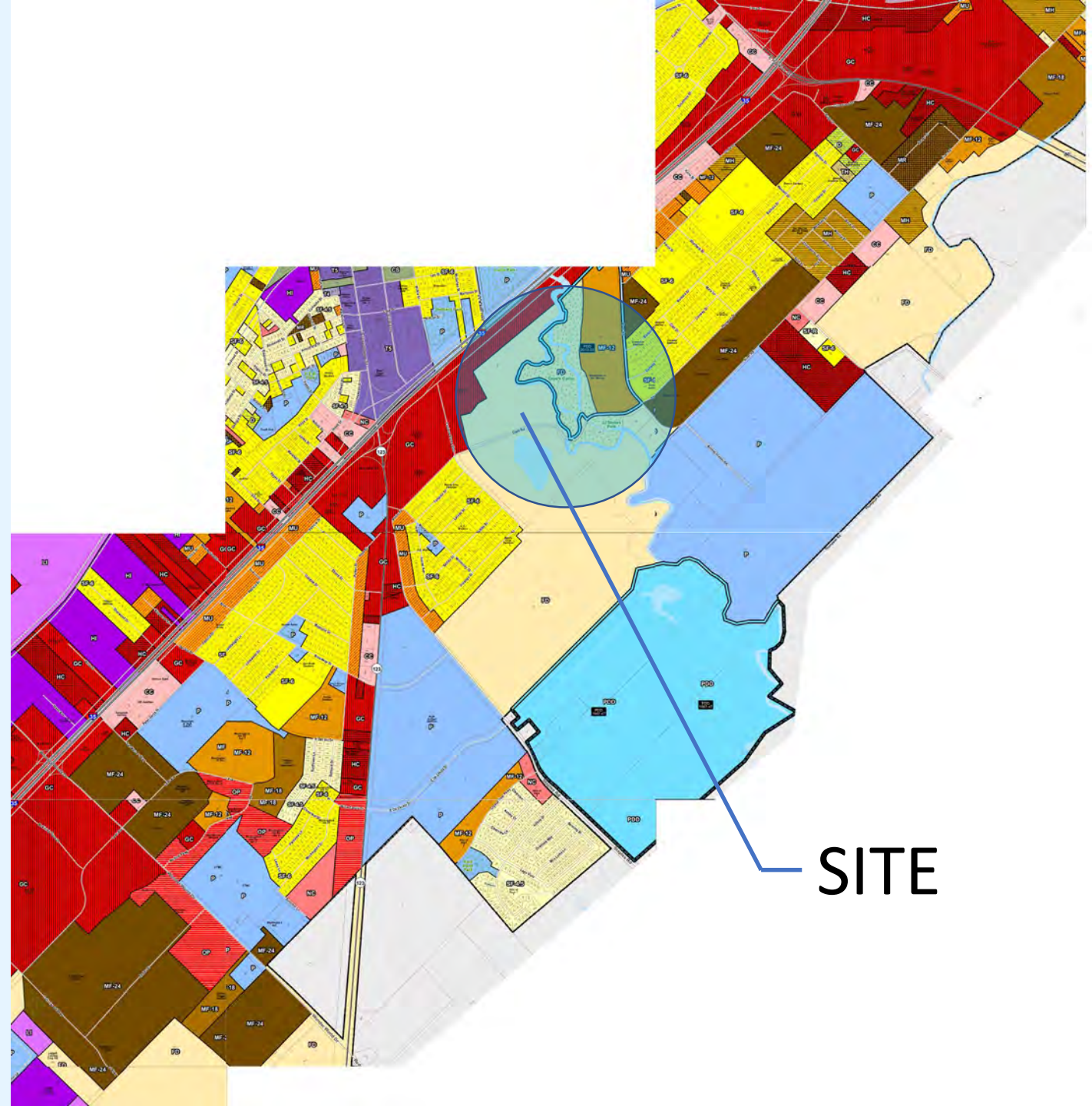
Understanding our history to learn and guide us forward.



## *#1 Achieving a Balanced Approach:*

### *Social Equity;*

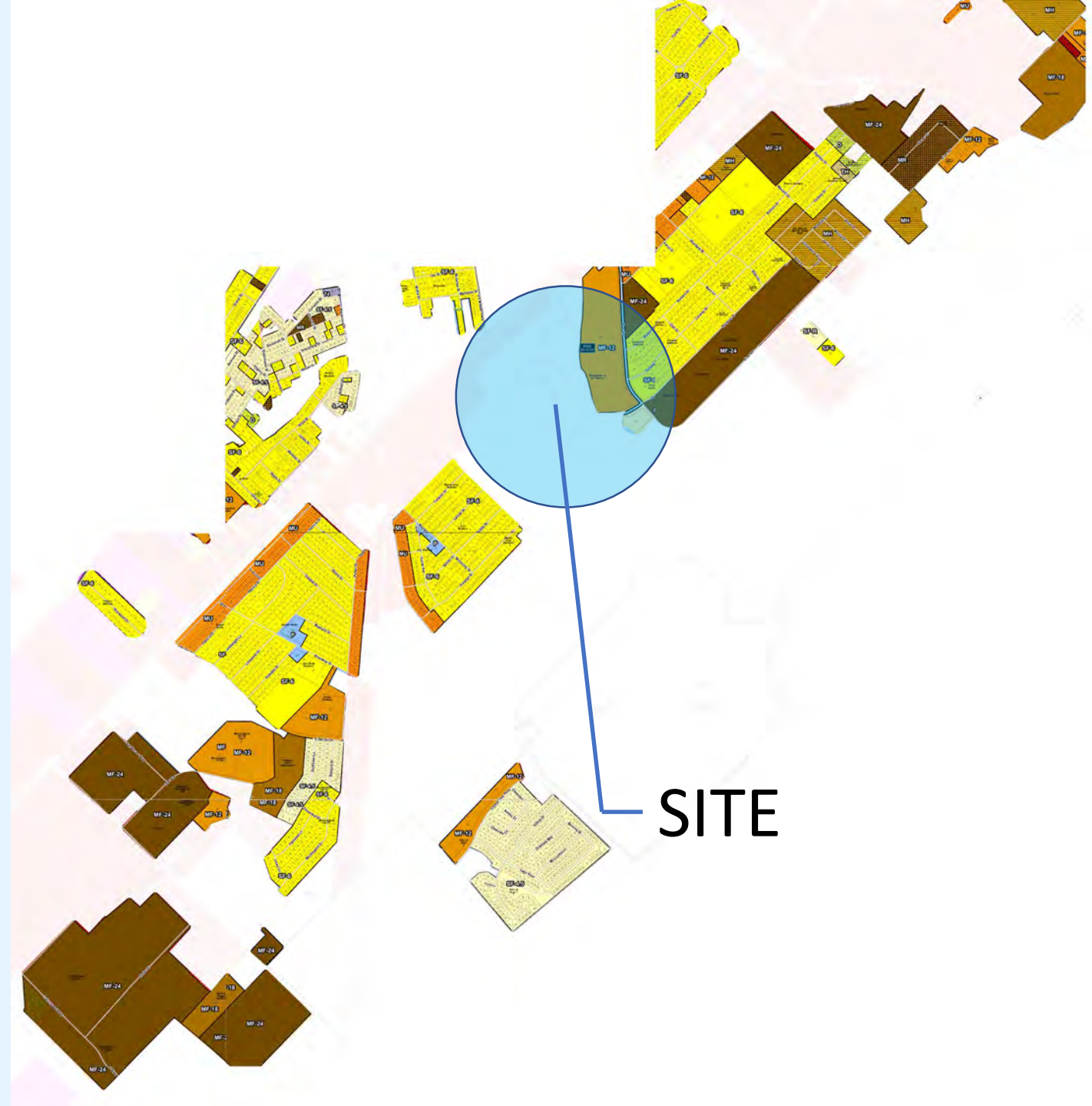
New asset for an underserved areas of San Marcos.





## *Social Equity;*

## New asset for an underserved areas of San Marcos.



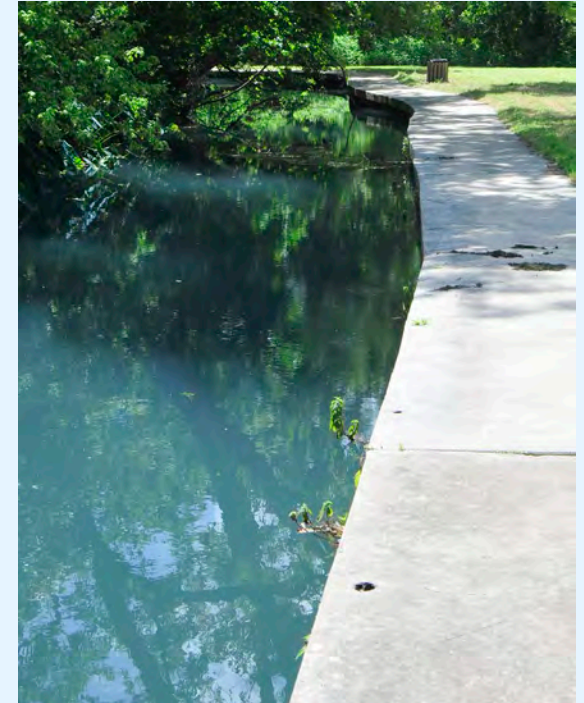


## *#2 Providing a Special and Diverse Asset:*

- A place for historians to understand San Marcos History better
- A place for people interested in natural places for bird watching, hiking, relaxing, environmental study
- A place to learn about urban impacts on the environment
- A place to relax and enjoy being outdoors

## #3 Access & Safety:

- Mill race water level to low; ingress/egress challenges
- Cape Road, sight distance, speed, dangerous edge.
- Waterfall; tragedy
- Cape's Dam; swimming and boating hazard
- ADA access upgrades on Cape's Road
- Comprehensive ADA review necessary





### *#3 Access & Safety:*

A master planning process includes the lens of emergency services and stakeholder discussions.

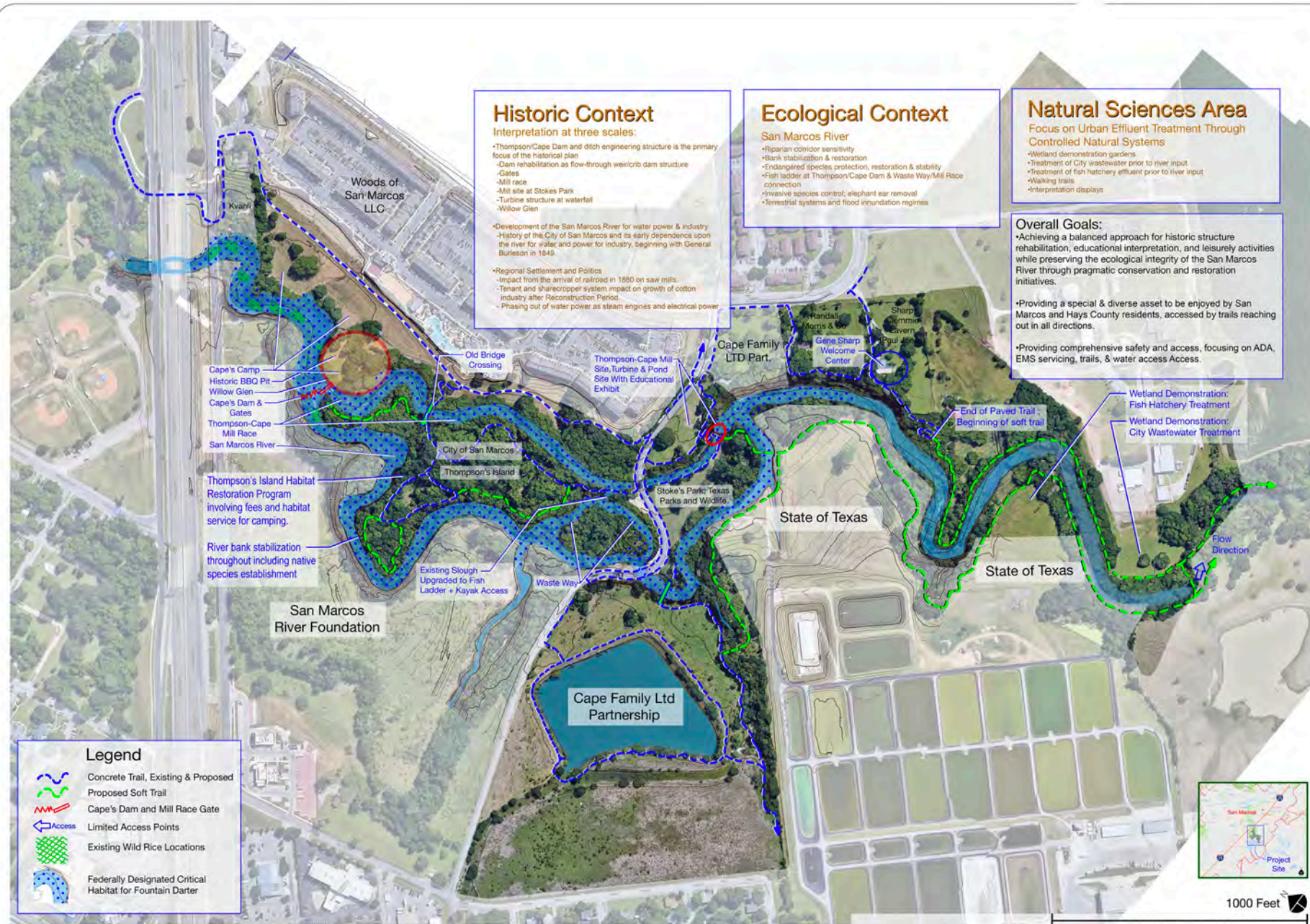
- Structural systems for natural grass EMS drives
- Emergency call boxes
- Safe ingress/egress places
- Traffic calming
- Addressing existing unsafe conditions
- Lighting as appropriate



First Map:

# Historic & Ecological Framework





**vista**  
Planning  
&  
Design

Vista Planning & Design  
Landscape Architecture  
Site Planning  
Master Planning  
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**San Marcos River Vision Study**  
San Marcos, Texas

9-30-19

Exhibit





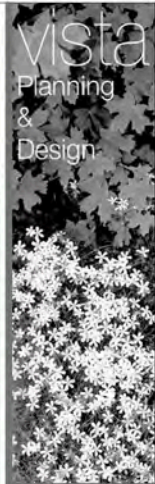
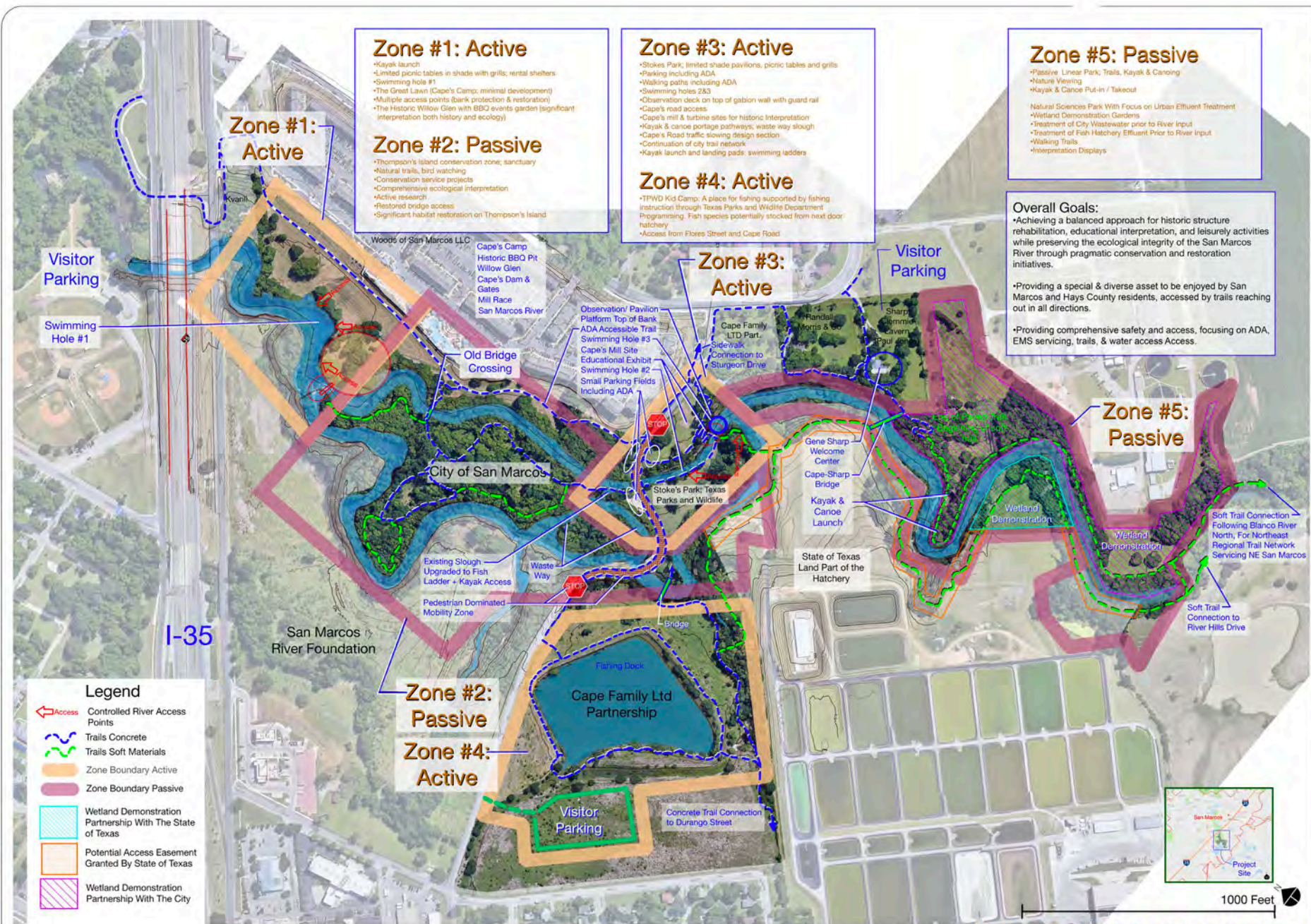




Second Map:

# Leisure Activity Framework



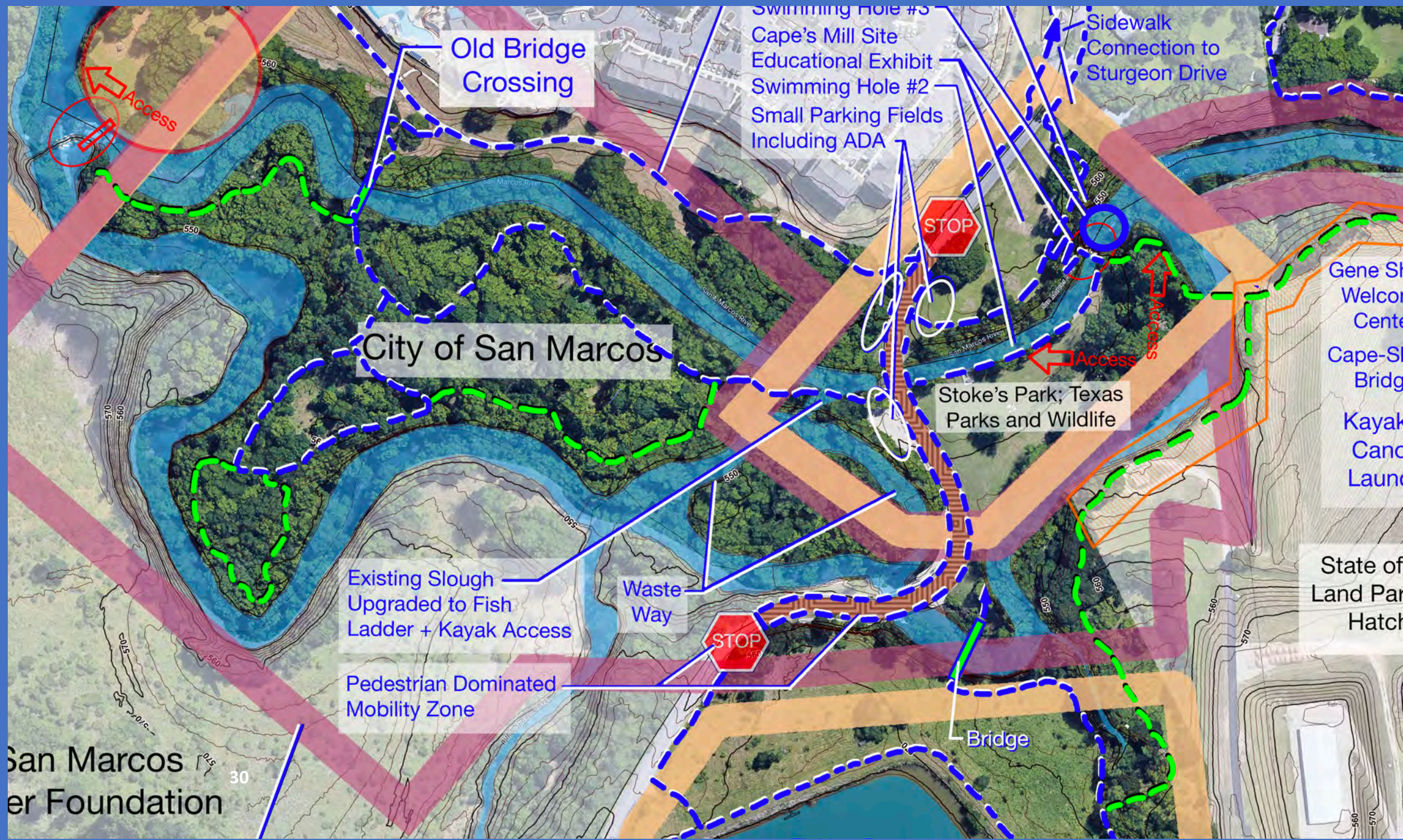


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San Marcos River Vision Study  
San Marcos, Texas







Old Bridge Crossing

Swimming Hole #3  
Cape's Mill Site  
Educational Exhibit  
Swimming Hole #2  
Small Parking Fields Including ADA

Sidewalk Connection to Sturgeon Drive

City of San Marcos

Stoke's Park; Texas Parks and Wildlife

Gene S. Welton Center  
Cape-San Marcos Bridge  
Kayak Launch

State of Land Park Hatch

Existing Slough Upgraded to Fish Ladder + Kayak Access

Waste Way

Pedestrian Dominated Mobility Zone

Bridge

San Marcos River Foundation

30



# Leisure Activity Goals:

Z1

## Zone #1: Active

- Kayak launch
- Cape's Camp- The Great Lawn; minimal development)
- Multiple access points (bank protection & restoration)
- The historic Willow Glen with BBQ events garden (significant interpretation both history and ecology)

- Prioritize local residents by limited parking areas
- Prioritize safety
- Controlled river access
- Provide wide variety of experiences
- Low level improvements not detracting from natural beauty

Z3

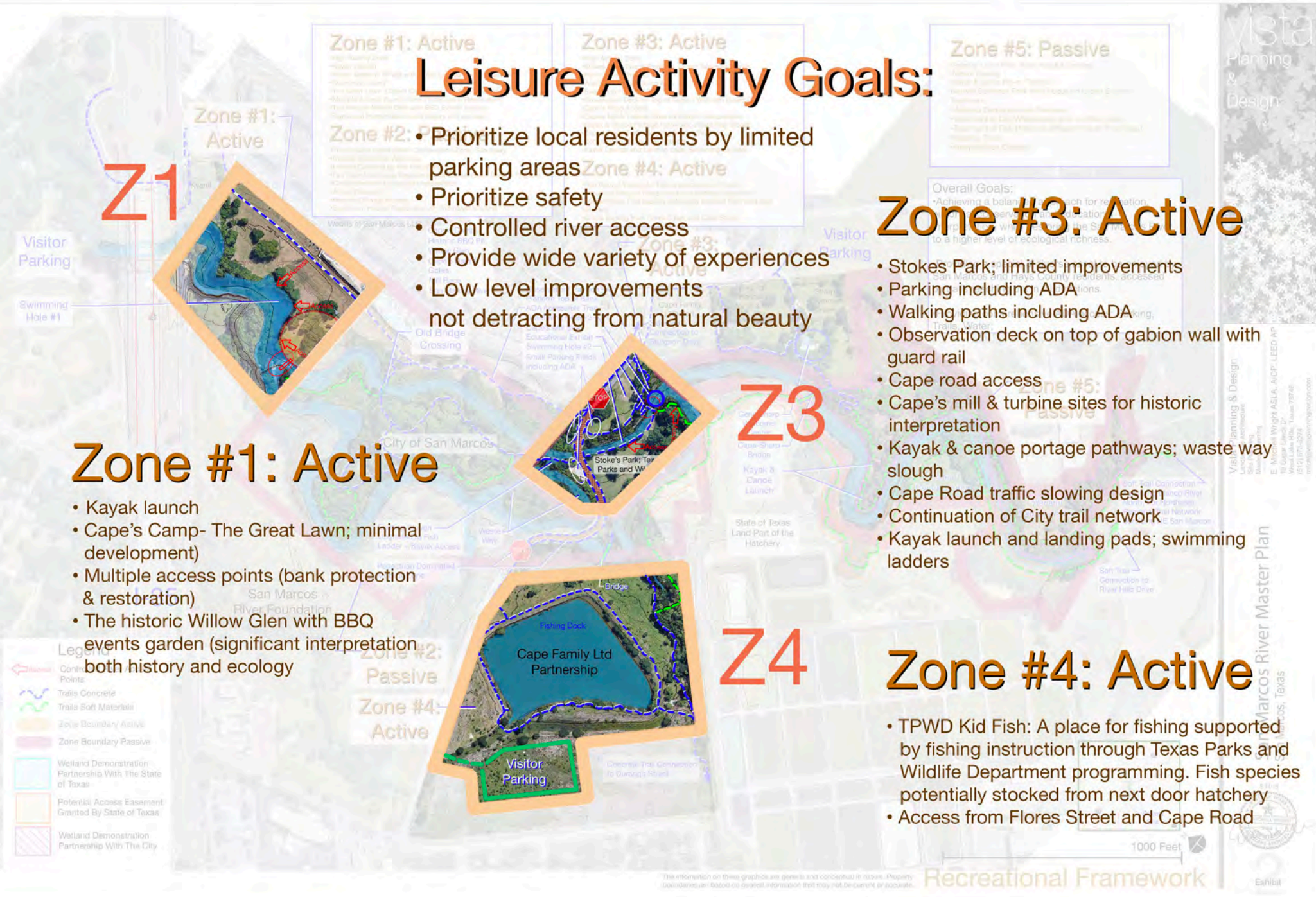
## Zone #3: Active

- Stokes Park; limited improvements
- Parking including ADA
- Walking paths including ADA
- Observation deck on top of gabion wall with guard rail
- Cape road access
- Cape's mill & turbine sites for historic interpretation
- Kayak & canoe portage pathways; waste way slough
- Cape Road traffic slowing design
- Continuation of City trail network
- Kayak launch and landing pads; swimming ladders

Z4

## Zone #4: Active

- TPWD Kid Fish: A place for fishing supported by fishing instruction through Texas Parks and Wildlife Department programming. Fish species potentially stocked from next door hatchery
- Access from Flores Street and Cape Road





# Leisure Activity Goals:

- Prioritize local residents by limited parking areas
- Prioritize safety
- Controlled river access
- Provide wide variety of experiences
- Low level improvements not detracting from natural beauty

## Zone #5: Passive

- Passive linear park; trails, kayak & canoing
- Nature viewing
- Kayak & canoe put-in / takeout
- Natural sciences park with focus on effluent treatment with wetland demonstration gardens
- Interpretation displays





A scenic river flows through a lush green forest. In the foreground, a small waterfall cascades over rocks, creating white foam. A person in a blue kayak is positioned in the middle of the river, just downstream from the falls. The banks are lined with dense trees and foliage, with sunlight filtering through the leaves. A large, flat rock sits in the lower right foreground. A blue banner with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

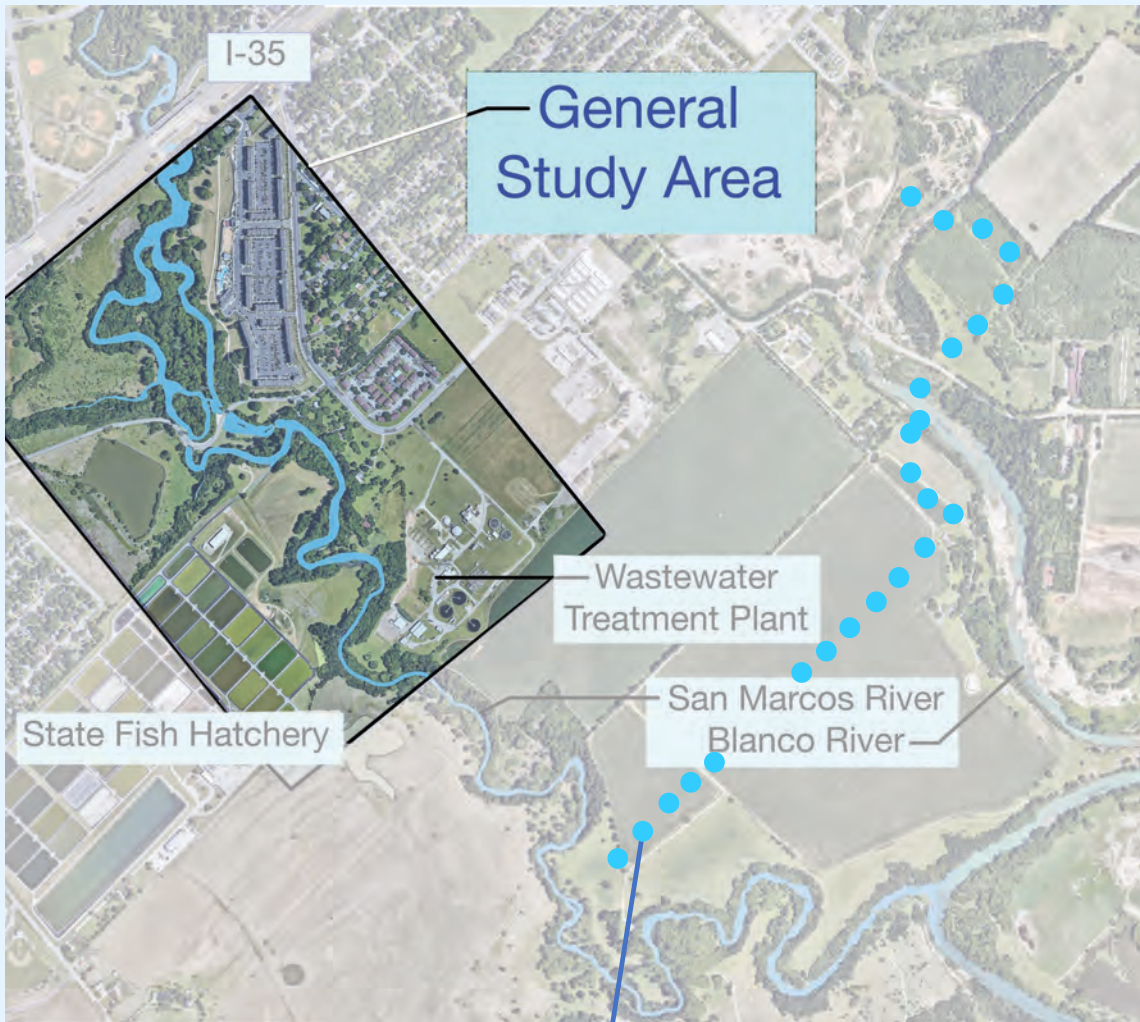
*Opportunities!*



# Unique Leisure Opportunities

- Multiple Public Jurisdictions working together.
- Providing a beautiful asset to an underserved area of San Marcos
- Creating potential trail linkages, including the Emerald Crown Trail.
- An area for educational aspects of natural and cultural interpretation, demonstration, and restoration to a high value environmental quality, and leisure activities.





Emerald Crown Trail

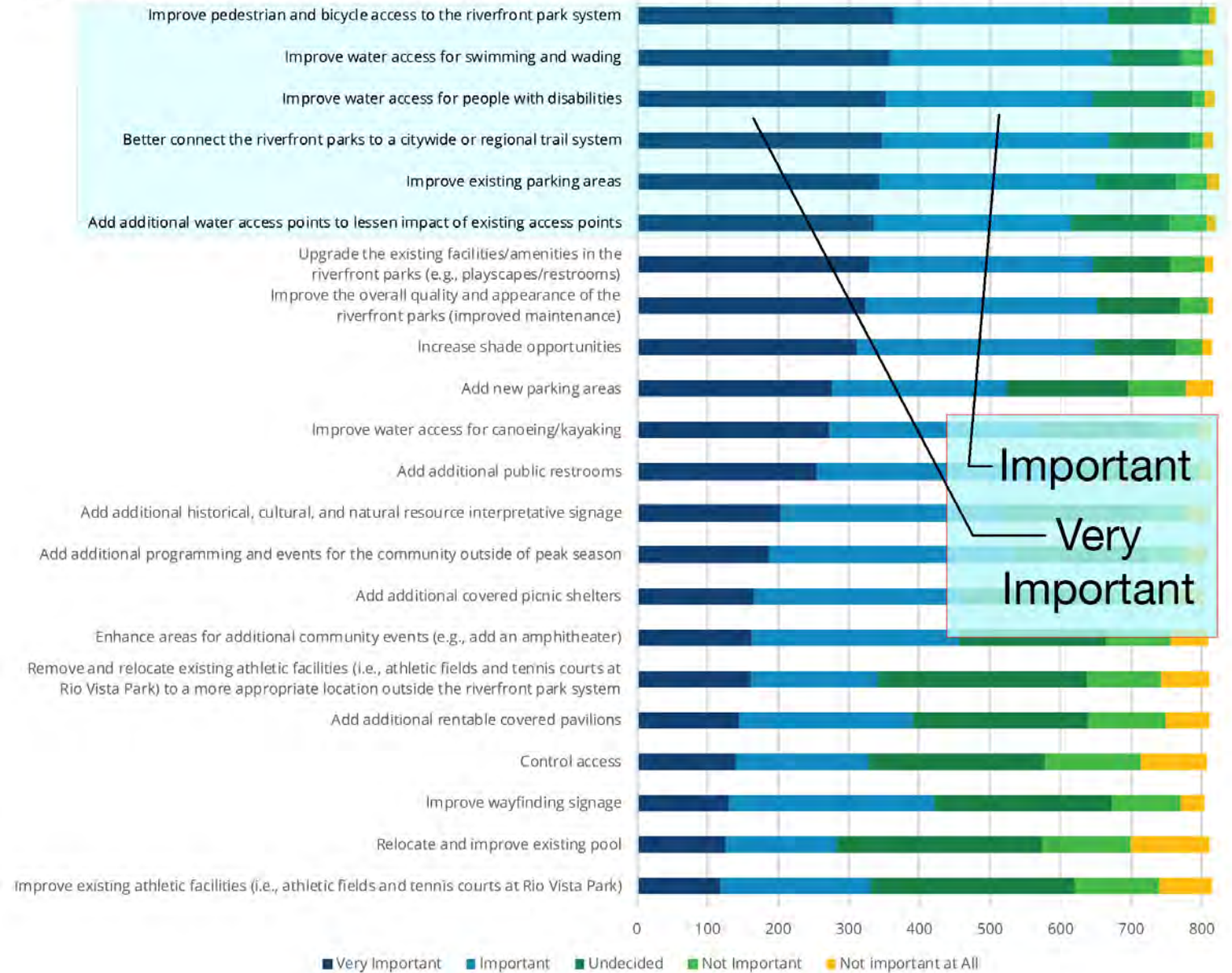




# San Marcos

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

**Figure 3.18, How Important Is It For the City to Address the Following Parks, Recreation, and Trail Issues?**





# *How Important Is it For the City to Address the Following Parks, Recreation, and Trail Issues?*

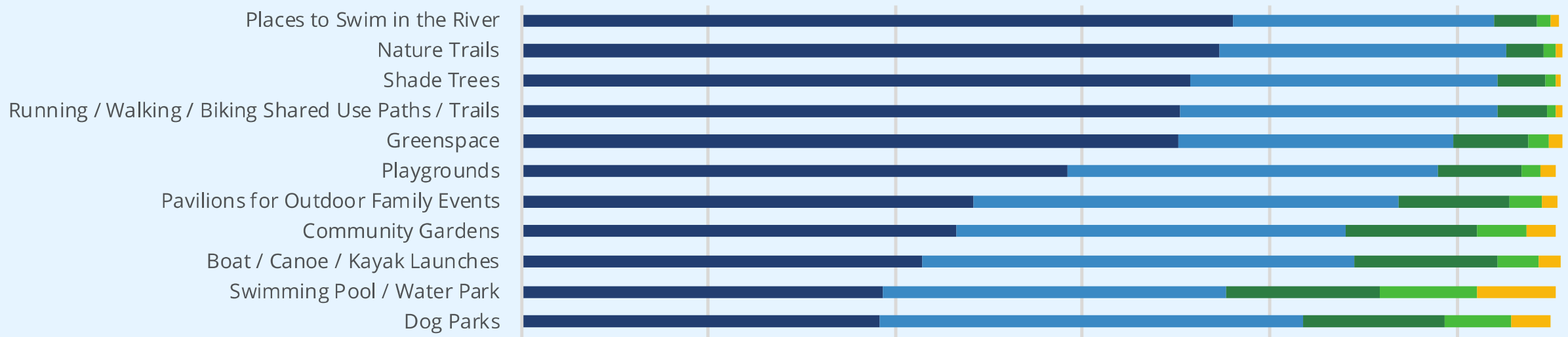
- 1) Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the riverfront park system
- 2) Improve water access for swimming and wading
- 3) Improve water access for people with disabilities
- 4) Better connect the riverfront parks to a citywide or regional trail system
- 5) Improve existing parking areas
- 6) Add additional Water access points to lessen impact of existing access points

# On a separate survey...again...

- 1) Places to swim in the river
- 2) Nature trails
- 3) Shade trees
- 4) Running/walking/biking shared use paths/trails

to be provided or added in San Marcos.

**Figure 3.16, Importance of Park Facilities to be Provided or Added in San Marcos**





## City Council Direction Needed

- Does Council want to proceed with an agreement with Hays County to partner on renovation/rehabilitation of Cape's Dam?
- Does Council want to explore the larger visioning/master plan concept with Hays County?



# Next Steps

- If Council provides direction on proposed project concept at a future council meeting, the City would negotiate an interlocal agreement designating the terms of the partnership covering items such as:
  - Financial participation of City
  - Design, permitting, and construction participation and responsibilities
  - Termination clause
  - Land acquisition and/or related leases
  - Compliance with HCP conservation measures
  - Operation and maintenance responsibilities
  - Safety of park users and emergency access
  - Park Rules and Enforcement
  - Neighboring developments and conflicts with access or alcohol
  - Public participation, outreach and engagement in master plan
- Any special considerations or concerns from Council?
- Future work session to review formal plan?

*QUESTIONS?*