

Comprehensive Plan Update and Downtown Architectural Standards

Need for Comprehensive Planning

We need to figure out where we want to go, before we try to figure out how we are going to get there.

- So many initiatives underway or close to being underway.
- Vision and goals may have changed.
- Moving forward with other initiatives before an update to the comprehensive plan could be challenging.

Recommendation

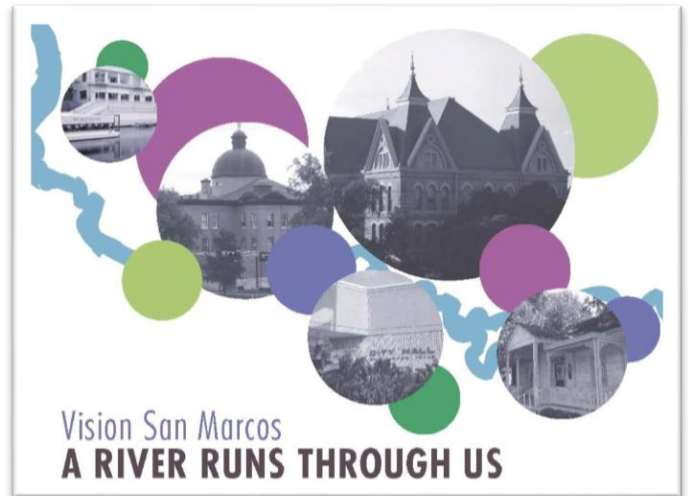
Completing the comprehensive plan will provide direction on key City policies and strategies that relate to the future of our community (e.g. development patterns, resource protection, etc.).

Recommendation - Perform an update to the comprehensive plan before moving forward with other initiatives.

City Council Direction

At their work session on December 17, 2019, the City Council directed staff to proceed with a Comprehensive Plan update.

The first step of this process was to prepare a scope for consideration and approval.



Draft Scope

The proposed scope has several components:

- 1) **Purpose / Intent**
- 2) **Project Management**
- 3) **Public Participation**
- 4) **Vision and Goal Setting**
- 5) **Guiding Principles**
- 6) **Planning Elements**
- 7) **Critical Area Plans**
- 8) **Implementation**
- 9) **Presentations and Communications**
- 10) **Final Plans**

Purpose / Intent

The purpose of this project is to provide an update to the City of San Marcos Comprehensive Plan “*Vision San Marcos*” that is highly graphic and relatively jargon-free.

The plan should be easily interpreted by the general public, with an addendum housing all of the technical data to be used by City staff.

With oversight from City staff, as well as guidance from the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council, the successful consultant(s) will lead the planning process and develop project deliverables as outlined within this RFP.

Purpose / Intent cont.

The intent of the Scope of Services is to serve as a framework, which consultants can use to develop a more detailed scope of services based on their professional expertise and knowledge.

The following Scope of Services serves as a general framework and must be incorporated into the consultant(s) proposed scope of work; however, the proposed scope of work is not limited to these services.

The final Scope of Services will be developed in collaboration with the selected consultant(s) and the City prior to contract approval.

Purpose / Intent cont.

The consultant(s) shall have a prior understanding of the historic background of the development of San Marcos. The consultant(s) shall also have a firm understanding of the context, trends, and related information that have shaped the community.

The consultant(s) shall analyze the assumed effects of external forces (physical, social, economic, and political) and trends on the future of the local community. Issues and forecasts of local and regional growth shall be included.

Project Management

A team of City staff will lead the overall project to ensure that the project objectives are met.

Staff will provide continuous updates to the City Council and/or other governing boards on the development of the plan.

Additionally, City staff will assist in facilitating interactions with appropriate City staff members, Planning and Zoning Commission members, City Council members and other key stakeholders.

Public Participation Plan

The consultant(s) shall be responsible for developing a comprehensive participation program that encompasses the public and stakeholders, and incorporates local knowledge and experience.

Key to the development and success of the plan, the consultant(s) must facilitate participation and interaction of residents, property owners, business owners and leaders, churches and key community organizations, university officials, students, elected officials, utility providers, City staff, and other key stakeholders.

Allows City Council to designate a committee / committees to act as community liaisons and provide oversight of plan and process.

Public Participation Plan

At a minimum the public participation plan should utilize traditional media, social media, virtual open houses, online polling, and should take advantage of the many groups who meet regularly through a speaker's bureau.

The participatory process must also be creatively designed to seek out and involve residents and other stakeholders that are unlikely to participate in a standard workshop style community engagement process.

Additionally, the process must ensure that participation is reflective of both the current and future citizenry.

The overall goal of the participatory process is to increase the ownership of the final product.

Vision and Goal Setting

The consultant(s) will work with the City and project stakeholders in developing a broadly supported and achievable vision or alternative vision(s) of the long-term future design and character of the community, along with related goals that help accomplish the same.

Vision and goal setting shall be a component of the plan that is officially approved by the City early on in the process.

The vision and goal setting shall also include the identification and approval of the guiding principles.

If alternative visions are created, the consultant(s) shall include the cost/benefit implications of each alternative.

Guiding Principles

As part of this process, the consultant will work with the City and project stakeholders in developing supported guiding principles that will guide the formation of related goals, objectives, and actions.

Planning Elements

At minimum, the plan shall include planning elements that cover: land use (including a Preferred Scenario Map and fiscal impact analysis, see below), environment and resource protection, economic development, housing, parks and public facilities, transportation, and intergovernmental cooperation.

The consultant(s) is encouraged to include other applicable elements that are beneficial to the process.

As part of the land use planning element, a Preferred Scenario Map (future land use map) and fiscal impact analysis that clearly describes the costs associated with the anticipated growth shall be developed.

Planning Elements cont.

As part of the development of the planning elements, emphasis shall be placed on recently approved plans that relate to such planning elements, such as the Parks and Open Space Master Plan, Housing Needs Assessment, Historic Resources Survey, Transportation Master Plan, etc.

In addition, other ongoing planning efforts, such as the Workforce Housing Action Plan, Downtown Architectural Design Standards, etc. shall be incorporated into the planning process.

Critical Area Plans (Small Area Plans)

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the consultant(s), through a highly participative process, shall also identify critical areas within the community that will need a further planning focus due to the nature of their importance in the community and/or their relationship with other areas within the community.

The consultant(s) will need to identify appropriately sized planning areas, study the character of the area, and provide recommendations for the future of each area.

These plans may have an emphasis on keeping the stability of the area, or an emphasis on change. This will depend on the area and the vision and goals for the community.

Critical Area Plans

The types of critical area plans shall include at minimum:

- Neighborhood Plans
- Corridor Plans
- Center Plans
- Downtown Plan

As part of the caps area plans, it will be critical that the consultant(s) gain consensus from the City and stakeholders on what each of these plans are, and their intent.

Neighborhood Plans

These plans are designed to look at existing neighborhoods and create a plan for their continued existence and preservation, and/or their emergence within the community.

Special attention shall be placed on how to avoid adverse impacts from new development on existing residential neighborhoods.

Corridor Plans

These plans are intended to look at corridors and what role they will play in the overall community.

Corridors may provide a linkage link between neighborhood plans and/or center plans.

While many of the corridors may be transportation related, others may include natural corridors, such as the rivers.

Center Plans

These plans are areas of significance or of great potential within the community.

These plans will provide a special focus on center areas to ensure that they are complete, in that, they may provide a node or nodes of activity, a mix of opportunities for living, working, and recreating/entertaining.

Downtown Plan

This plan is intended to be an overall master plan for Downtown San Marcos.

While it can also serve as a center plan, an enhanced focus shall be placed on the downtown to ensure its proper redevelopment and preservation.

New or expanded historic districts should be identified as part of this portion of the planning process.

Implementation Strategy / Action Steps / Comprehensive Decision-Making Packages

The consultant(s) shall develop a list of strategies and implementation measures to accomplish the short, mid and long-term goals and objectives of the plan.

The consultant(s) will be innovative and proactive in their approach to implementation, in order to ensure the highest chance for success.

Implementation Strategy / Action Steps / Comprehensive Decision-Making Packages cont.

As part of this strategy, the consultant shall develop comprehensive decision-making packages. Comprehensive decision-making packages are a set or group of actions, that while done together, provide a greater degree of success than when actions are done individually.

The implementation strategy shall also include a strategy for review and maintenance of the goals, objectives, and actions, as well as the overall comprehensive plan.

Presentations and Communications

The consultant(s) and City staff will present the final plan and implementation strategy to the Planning Commission and City Council along with other applicable committees as defined in the final scope of work.

Additionally, the consultant will work with staff to communicate with project stakeholders throughout the process, and to present intermediate deliverables and related information.

Final Plans



A project management plan with milestones and timelines for the completion of various aspects of the project.



A participation plan that includes objectives, activities, methods, roles, and timeframes.



A coordinated implementation plan that includes roles, timeframes, and monetary solutions.



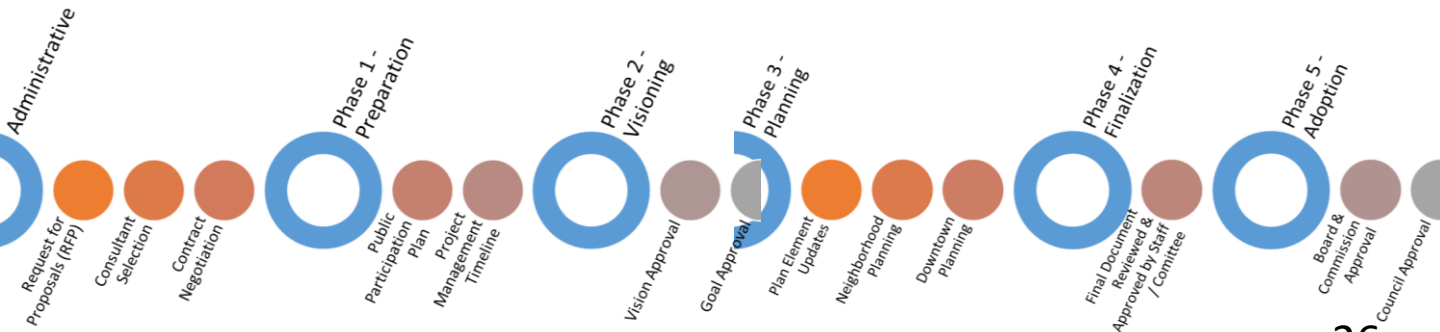
A highly graphic and interactive complete comprehensive plan that can be easily disseminated and understood by the public, with addendum housing all of the technical data to be used by City staff for future planning efforts.



Timeline

Staff anticipates the Comprehensive Planning process can be completed in around 18 months, following the award of a contract. It is estimated the procurement process may take up to six months to get to a signed contract, which would equate to about 24 months in total.

Timeliness of completion can be part of the review criteria for the selection of consultants.



Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the draft scope for the request for proposals (RFP) relating to the comprehensive planning process.

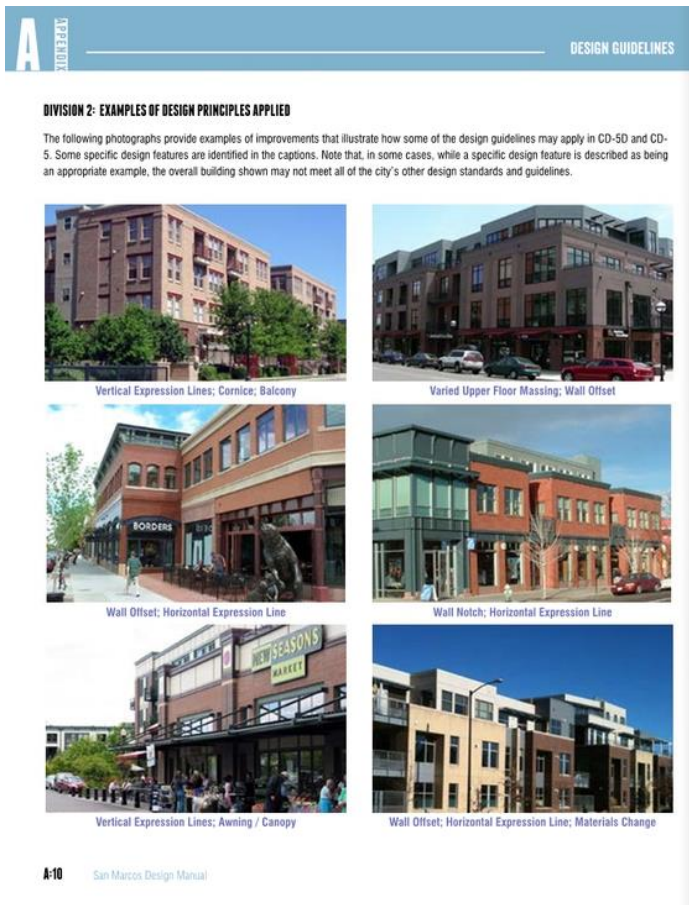
Downtown Architectural Standards

During the previous City Council work session, staff was directed to proceed with the Downtown Architectural Standards prior to the Comprehensive Plan update.

A contract for these services will be considered at the City Council meeting.

Background

- **2012:** City contracted with Nore Winters to develop architectural standards
- **Purpose:** “enhance the effectiveness of the Smartcode in downtown by adding context-sensitive design standards...”
- **2012 Components**
 - Included code standards and design guidelines
- **2018 Development Code update**
 - Carried over all design standards and guidelines
 - Expanded upon to new districts
 - New architectural standards added
- **2020 Downtown Architectural Standards Update**
 - Utilize existing guidelines as starting point
 - Revisit workshop material, strategy paperwork from 2012
 - Compare building imagery over time
 - Incorporate new illustrations using new design technology



Winter and Company: Scope of Services

Key Topics

- Massing of larger building to promote compatibility
- Variety of articulation of facades
- Treatment of building materials
- Street level design to create a sense of place
- Transitions from higher density to sensitive edges

Outreach Levels

- Community Workshops / Open House
- Focus / Stakeholder Groups

Scope of Services

- Step 1: Set the Stage
- Step 2: Develop the Strategy
- Step 3: Develop the Design Standards and Guidelines
- Step 4: Adoption

Contract Cost: \$68,160

DESIGN GUIDELINE SERVICES

PLANO, TEXAS



Downtown Plano has a vibrant future with an engaging atmosphere. The streetscape is pedestrian friendly, and has potential to generate a significant amount of income for the community.



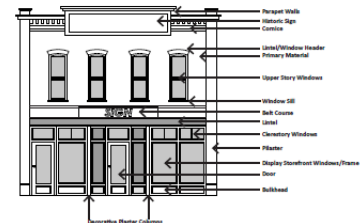
The historic presence of Downtown Plano is still strong throughout the character in each building. This character creates an exciting juxtaposition between the past and present, and is critical in preserving to increase the vitality of the Downtown Heritage District.

Downtown Heritage Resource District Design Standards

Downtown Plano is the heart of the community. It is rich with buildings that serve as links to the city's heritage. These properties symbolize the past and set the stage for a vibrant future.

Winter & Company was tasked with creating historic Design Standards in response to preservation issues the community was experiencing in its Downtown. Some of the topics addressed include additions, awnings, storefronts, review process, and conducting surveys. Winter & Company assisted the city in hosting a number of public engagement workshops. They then tailored the Design Standards to fit the unique design qualities of Downtown Plano.

The Downtown Heritage Resource District Design Standards promote rehabilitation and redevelopment that is sensitive to the surrounding historic context and helps maintain downtown as the center of the community. By preserving existing buildings and guiding compatible redevelopment, the standards also help promote cultural, environmental and economic sustainability. A key goal is to support a downtown that meets the needs of residents, business owners and visitors.



Diagrams and models throughout the document identify key-character defining features of historic buildings in the district. These are important to preserve whenever feasible to keep the charm of Downtown Plano intact.

Proposed Timeline

January 2020	Negotiate contract
February 2020	Gather information, finalize schedules
April 2020	Hold first public meetings, develop models (Trip 1)
May 2020	Refine vision and develop outlines for new design standards & guidelines
June-July 2020	Develop draft #1 of design standards & guidelines
August-Sept 2020	Develop draft #2 of design standards & guidelines
September 2020	Hold second public workshop and meetings (Trip 2)
October 2020	Develop final draft of design standards & guidelines
November 2020	Prepare Powerpoint presentation for adoption hearings
TBD	Present final design standards and guidelines to Planning Commission (Trip 3)
TBD	Present final design standards and guidelines to City Council for adoption (Trip 4)