



MEMO

TO: City Council
FROM: Andrea Villalobos, AICP, Senior Planner
THROUGH: Shannon Mattingly, AICP, Director of Planning and Development Services
DATE: January 2, 2020
RE: Update to Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines

PURPOSE

The purpose of this item is to consider awarding a contract for professional services to Winter and Company to update downtown architectural design standards. The focus of the project will be on design variables that were addressed by Winter and Company in a previous project for the city in 2012. Full details regarding the scope of services, timeline, cost of services, and Winter and Company qualifications and project descriptions are included in the packet.

BACKGROUND

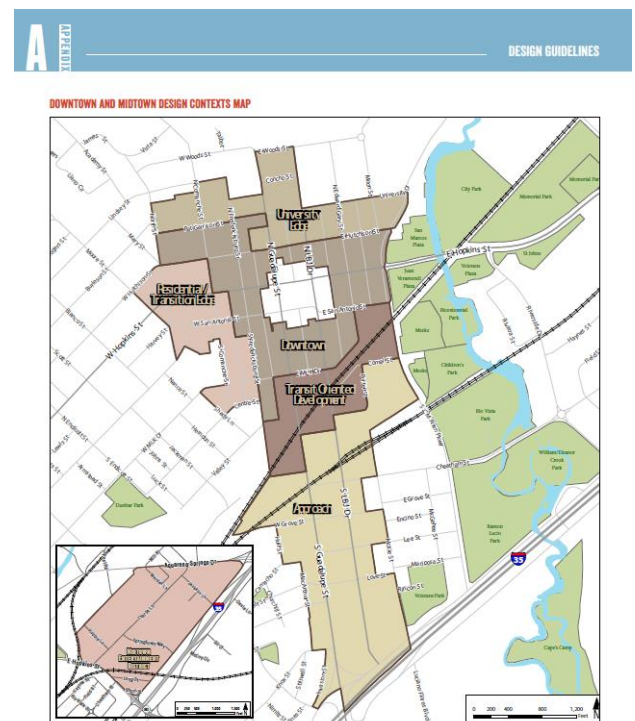
In 2012, the City contracted with Nore Winters to develop architectural standards. As presented in 2012, the purpose of the design standards was “to enhance the effectiveness of the SmartCode in downtown by adding context-sensitive design standards, supplementing with design guidelines for special cases, and revising the signage standards for the downtown area.” The following standards were approved in 2012:

- Expression tools
- Upper-floor window design
- Varied upper-floor massing
- Step-downs in height

In addition to these standards which are code requirements, a set of downtown design guidelines were adopted to be used in special cases as identified below:

- As advisory information for those who wish to better understand the intent of the design standards.
- As part of design review when an administrative approval process is specifically allowed by the code.
- As part of design review for the alternative compliance process approved by the Planning Commission.

The standards and guidelines adopted in 2012 with the design assistance of Nore Winters were carried over into the new San Marcos Development Code in 2018. In many cases, the 2012 standards were expanded upon and made applicable to other zoning districts where larger buildings may also be built. In addition to the 2012 standards being carried over, Code SMTX introduced new architectural standards to specifically address the massing of buildings adjacent to residential areas and sensitive sites. The current Downtown Design Guidelines can be found in Appendix A of the San Marcos Design Manual: <https://user-3vpeqil.cld.bz/Design-Manual/4/>



WINTER AND COMPANY SCOPE OF SERVICES

The update to the design standards and guidelines for downtown San Marcos is intended to include new standards to address design issues, new graphics to clearly illustrate the standards and guidelines, and shall be tailored to the various contexts within downtown.

Key Topics Include:

- Massing of larger buildings to promote compatibility with traditional scale of downtown;
- Variety in articulation of facades to be more in scale with design traditions;
- Treatment of building materials;
- Street level design to provide sense of place and activate the public realm; and
- Transitions from higher density zones to abutting sensitive edges.

Outreach Levels:

- **Community Workshops / Open House** – designed to engage the greatest numbers of people and to highlight a diversity of ideas through interactive settings to help build consensus.
- **Focus / Stakeholder Groups** – include specific discussions about matters of interest to stakeholders such as the Historic Preservation Commission, Heritage Association, downtown property owners, Downtown Association, and Main Street through community workshops and exercises to engage participants in the update.

Scope of Services:

- **Step 1: Set the Stage** – build an understanding of existing conditions in downtown San Marcos, evaluate the existing code for downtown, and generate alternative computer models.
- **Step 2: Develop the Strategy** – work with downtown to refine a vision for the area and its sub-areas with respect to design.
- **Step 3: Develop the Design Standards and Guidelines**
- **Step 4: Adoption**

Proposed Timeline:

