

HEALTHY, SLOW STREETS SAN MARCOS

May 19, 2020

Mayor and Council,

Thank you for your leadership during this challenging time. MoveSM submits this public comment as a moment of reflection on the state of the largest portion of public space in our cities -- our streets -- and the attached [petition](#)¹ as a call to action to create more safe human spaces on them, especially during this time of required physical distancing.

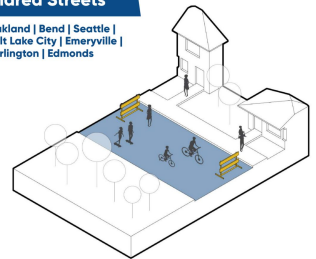
One of the “silver linings” of this awful pandemic is that fewer cars have been on the road. You’ve likely seen the remarkable photos from around the world depicting air quality improvement so dramatic you can actually [see it](#)². Unfortunately, you may have also noticed that motorists are driving faster than ever. While the number of car crashes is plummeting due to lower traffic volumes, the rate of car crashes per mile driven is actually up in many cities as drivers are getting more reckless on [wide open lanes](#)³.

During this crisis, more people than ever are turning to active transportation as they seek relief from enclosed spaces; but cyclists and pedestrians have been allowed such a limited allocation of street space, they often struggle to give physical distance. The acres of impervious surfaces given over to cars have been brought into stark relief.

Nationally, [cities small and large](#)⁴ are responding by creating “slow streets,” “open streets,” or “healthy streets” programs where humans are getting back some of the space giving over to cars through the closing of just a few streets to thru-traffic and limiting non-resident access to only emergency and delivery vehicles traveling at slow speeds. A movement for this type of program is growing in Central Texas as well and Austin City Council passed a resolution to create their own “healthy streets” program earlier this month. These programs utilize basic signage and a number of guides for [implementation are available](#)⁵, similar to the graphic at right by Street Plans.

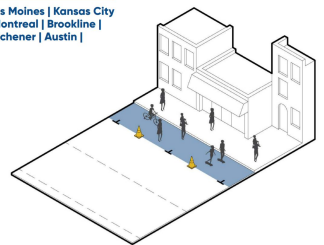
Shared Streets

Oakland | Bend | Seattle |
Salt Lake City | Emeryville |
Burlington | Edmonds



Open Curbs

Des Moines | Kansas City
| Montreal | Brookline |
Kitchener | Austin |



Inspired by these national movements and resources, MoveSM worked in collaboration with SimpleCity Design to create the attached document and map which offers some streets distributed across a variety of neighborhoods for your consideration of a Phase 1 roll-out of San Marcos’ own Slow Streets Program.

It is encouraging to see portions of Belvin St have recently been made limited access (image at right), which demonstrates the ease of implementing a slow street. Nearby San Antonio St. is also proposed as a Slow Street in the attached document and the Open Curb style shown above would be an excellent option given the large width of that street that would maintain full vehicle access. Regardless of the streets selected, it’s important that slow streets be equitably provided throughout the community as all residents deserve the opportunity to safely use public space.



Thank you again for your service to the City during this challenging time in our history. And, thank you in advance for creating Slow Streets in San Marcos for the health and safety of your citizens.

Sincerely,

The Members of MoveSM

movesm@googlegroups.com

¹<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/healthy-slow-streets-san-marcos>

²<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-photos-decline-air-pollution-lockdown/>

³<https://usa.streetsblog.org/2020/04/09/covid-19-cuts-car-crashes-but-what-about-crash-rates/>

⁴A non-exhaustive list of cities taking action may be found at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tjam1v0NLUWkYedla4dVOL49pyWIPlyGwRB0DOnm3Ls/edit#gid=0>

⁵<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/webinar-recap-complete-streets-responses-to-covid-19/>

Dear San Marcos Mayor and City Council,

64 people have signed a petition on Action Network asking for the implementation of a Healthy, Slow Streets Program in San Marcos as our community navigates the pandemic.

Below is the petition they signed:

Mayor Hughson and Council members,

During this pandemic, more people than ever are turning to active transportation as they seek relief from enclosed spaces; but cyclists and pedestrians have been allowed such a limited allocation our streets, they often struggle to give physical distance. Parks have been closed, but people want to get outside! The acres and acres of oil-based impervious surfaces given over to single occupant vehicles has been brought into stark relief.

Across the County, cities small and large are responding by creating "slow streets," "healthy streets," or "open streets" programs that give back some of the public space given to cars back to people by closing vehicular lanes to thru-traffic and limiting non-resident access to only emergency, service, and delivery vehicles traveling at very slow speeds (e.g. 10mph). San Marcos should join them!

We are asking the San Marcos City Council to immediately create a limited number of Slow Streets in neighborhoods across San Marcos through at least August 1, 2020 to allow residents to more safely physically distance._

Thank you for your service to the City during this challenging time in our history. And, thank you in advance for creating Slow Streets in San Marcos for the health and safety of your citizens.

You can view each petition signer and the comments they left you below.

Thank you,

MoveSM & the following collective Healthy, Slow Streets petition signees

1. Laura Leigh Wilde (ZIP code: 78666)
Great idea!

2. Adam Zavala (ZIP code: 78666)

3. Anahi Villarruel (ZIP code: 78666)

4. Annie Simpson (*ZIP code: 78666*)

5. Anthony Cross (*ZIP code: 78666*)

6. L. Tim Bauerkemper (*ZIP code: 78666*)

I would propose the middle section of Franklin Dr as well, the part with no sidewalk and far too wide for a residential street. That runs from Girard to Perkins. The sidewalk addition from Bishop up the hill has slowed traffic since the lane is now the size of a freeway lane rather than something you would see on a test track for nascar...

The Girard to Perkins section could be narrowed with cones like this and still have two directions of travel. I worry what will happen now that the Hopkins detour is supposedly Craddock... once people realize cutting up Franklin saves about a mile we will be the unofficial detour.

The stretch from perkins to Old 12 where it gets skinnier but the housing dynamics has street parking that other stretch doesnt, well thats a problem slow streets wont solve. Perhaps if there were some runaway bulldozers get loose but that's not gonna fly. Terrible design....

7. Kathleen Seal (*ZIP code: 78666*)

8. Raquel Damico (*ZIP code: 77803*)

9. Natalie Bones (*ZIP code: 78666*)

10. Brian Smith (*ZIP code: 78666*)

11. Brenda McGahagin (*ZIP code: 78666*)

12. Carina Boston Pinales (*ZIP code: 78666*)

If we were to phase in and integrate these concepts in planning we would be able to adapt what we have and plan for what we want.

13. Cassandra Garza (*ZIP code: 78640*)

14. Matt Chambers (*ZIP code: 78666*)

15. Christine Terrell (*ZIP code: 78666*)

16. Celeste Monforton (*ZIP code: 78666*)

17. Cory Glisson-Munier (*ZIP code: 78666*)

18. Daniel Currey (*ZIP code: 78666*)

19. Diann McCabe (ZIP code: 78666)

I ask the San Marcos City Council to immediately create a limited number of Slow Streets in neighborhoods across San Marcos through at least August 1, 2020 to allow residents to more safely physically distance. I live at the corner of Alamo and Holland St. Holland St has heavy and fast traffic. Many many pedestrians including children and pets walk along Alamo St which should be a slow street. Holland St traffic turning on to Alamo is often too fast. A slow street designation would help improve the quality of life for families and individuals who walk there. Thank you

20. Emily Herring (ZIP code: 78666)

We are not at all through the woods... We need to keep up with as many precautions as possible here in San Marcos.

21. Elizabeth Mjos (ZIP code: 78666)

22. Emily McCuistion (ZIP code: 78666)

I support the idea of slow streets in San Marcos, for the short term. I live on one of the streets proposed as a slow street and think it would benefit from the reduced speed limit, given the high pedestrian traffic. However, I do not think San Antonio Street should be designated as a slow street, especially since it is the main alternative to Hopkins during construction. I also think there should be exceptions to the 10mph rule for cyclists on these streets.

23. Eric Shaw (ZIP code: 78666)

Love this initiative; precisely what's needed in San Marcos right now!

24. Erin Leavitt (ZIP code: 78666)

Thanks for helping us stay healthy and safe.

25. Gabrielle Moore (ZIP code: 78666)

I love this plan and believe most San Marcos residents will adapt to it readily. Please make it happen!

26. Gloria Salazar (ZIP code: 78666)

27. Heather Demere (ZIP code: 78666)

28. Isabelle Ganz (ZIP code: 77030)

29. Kathlene Ingham (ZIP code: 78666)

30. Ivan Friedman (ZIP code: 78666)

31. Antonio Castillo (ZIP code: 78666)

32. Jennifer Katz (ZIP code: 78666)

33. Amy Kirwin (ZIP code: 78666)

34. Juan Arredondo (ZIP code: 78666)

35. John David Carson (ZIP code: 78666)

36. Jordan Feldman (ZIP code: 78666)

37. James Steenhagen (ZIP code: 78666)

Great idea!

38. July Moreno (ZIP code: 78666)

I appreciate this proposal.

39. Karla Lewis (ZIP code: 77087)

I am retiring to my property in Country Estates, but at this time live in Houston

40. Kate Shaw (ZIP code: 78666)

I can see just how important it is for children and adults to be outside for exercise and recreation to support physical health, emotional wellness and foster strong community. Slow streets would allow for healthy social distancing and improve quality of life for local residents.

41. Kim Clogston (ZIP code: 78667)

42. Lauren Holloway (ZIP code: 77904)

43. Lene Richards (ZIP code: 78666)

44. Logan Maxwell (ZIP code: 78666)

45. Lauren Patterson (ZIP code: 78666)

46. Lynny Davis Moore (ZIP code: 78666)

Allow bikes everywhere

47. Matt Lewis (ZIP code: 78666)

City Council,

Your leadership is needed now more than ever to demonstrate to the community a healthy, safe city is priority. Cars have dominated the landscape for far too long. Please support the movement of people through active transportation and provide them the ability to use the public realm confidently as they adapt.

48. Melissa Nicewarner Daly (ZIP code: 78666)

49. Morgan Passino (ZIP code: 78666)

50. Patricia Simpson (ZIP code: 78666)

Thank you! So enlightening and informative.

Hopefully, with your hard work and our responses, we can get this started and implemented in San Marcos!!

51. Alex Vogt (ZIP code: 78666)

Slow streets for the win!

52. Peter Tschirhart (ZIP code: 78666)

Healthy environments and active living have never been more important. Please make it EASY for people to choose wellness. Open our streets to people!

53. Thomas Simpson (ZIP code: 78666)

54. Brenda Mcgahagin (ZIP code: 78666)

10 MPH should not apply to bicycles. The street parallel to Hopkins is only thru street alternative to Hopkins (now under construction)

55. Stephen Hurdle (ZIP code: 78666)

Please keep our city small and safe!

56. Eli Zablosky (ZIP code: 78666)

57. Betsy Robertson (ZIP code: 78666)

As a long time bicycle rider I support this initiative. I think it will increase the health and cohesiveness of our community.

58. Sherwood Bishop (ZIP code: 78666)

This looks like a good idea!

59. Stephanie Symmes (ZIP code: 78666)

We need streets that are convenient and safe for all users! Please support sustainable transportation options for the City of San Marcos.

60. Sarah Simpson (ZIP code: 78666)

One per neighborhood, please!

61. Stevie Vitola (ZIP code: 78201)

62. Sydney Huddleston (ZIP code: 78666)

63. Jamey Strauss (ZIP code: 78620)

64. Zachary Crissman (ZIP code: 78666)



"Eyes on the Street: A Quick Look at Oakland's 'Slow Streets.'" News Break. Oakland, CA. April 15, 2020.

SLOW STREETS **SAN MARCOS**

MOVE»SM
simple**city**design

May 1, 2020

ABOUT "SLOW STREETS" SAN MARCOS

The "Slow Streets San Marcos" Program is proposed for immediate implementation under the Covid-19 Disaster Declaration. The program supports safe physical activity by creating more space for physical distancing for all San Martians on streets shown in [Phase One: Limited-Access Streets Map](#) (see page 3). Temporary residential street closures to through traffic enable people to more comfortably use these low-traffic streets for physically distant walking, wheelchair rolling, jogging, and biking all across the City.

Slow Streets receive "soft closures" with traffic cones, barricades and signage. Additional signage for residents to place in their yard can be made available through the City website to be printed and displayed as additional safety measures, and to promote community inclusion.

The City should determine a managing department. Consider recommending the Planning Department be empowered to manage the program with the support of the Engineering and Public Works Department.



WHO HAS IMPLEMENTED SLOW STREETS?

Cities across the country are using local Covid-19 Disaster Declarations to temporarily close streets to allow for people to walk, bike, play, and exercise outside safely. Cities with Slow Streets:

- Bend, OR
- Brookline, MA
- Boston, MA
- Burlington, VT
- Denver, CO
- Des Moines, IA
- Duluth, MN
- Madison, WI
- Minneapolis, MN
- New York City, NY
- Oakland, CA
- Palo Alto, CA
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA
- Vancouver, Canada

Barricade blocking closed roads in Swope and Blue Valley parks.
Kansas City, MO. KSHB. 2020

WHY?

- **COVID-19 Has Us Locked In.** The Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) is changing lifestyles around the globe. As Hays County Shelter-in-Place orders extend, the City of San Marcos can consider ways to increase San Martians access to open space and provide increased social distancing. Streets and sidewalks can be a resource to make sure we stay healthy during this prolonged period of sheltering in place.
- **People are Using Streets as Shared Public Spaces.** With COVID-19, people are taking to the streets more than ever. In order to maintain at least 6 feet of space from a neighbor, people are walking from the sidewalk into the street or crossing to the other side, or putting their families on bikes and strolling around the neighborhood to get exercise when vehicle traffic is low.
- **Physical Activity Needs to Occur in Your Neighborhood on Our Streets.** Acknowledging that all San Martians have access to public streets, and that our streets and sidewalks have become places where people get their daily activity is proposing to encourage community members to use readily available materials to keep their physical activity local.



"Cities Close Streets to Cars, Opening Space for Social Distancing." The New York Times. Oakland, CA. April 11, 2020.

WHERE IN SAN MARCOS?

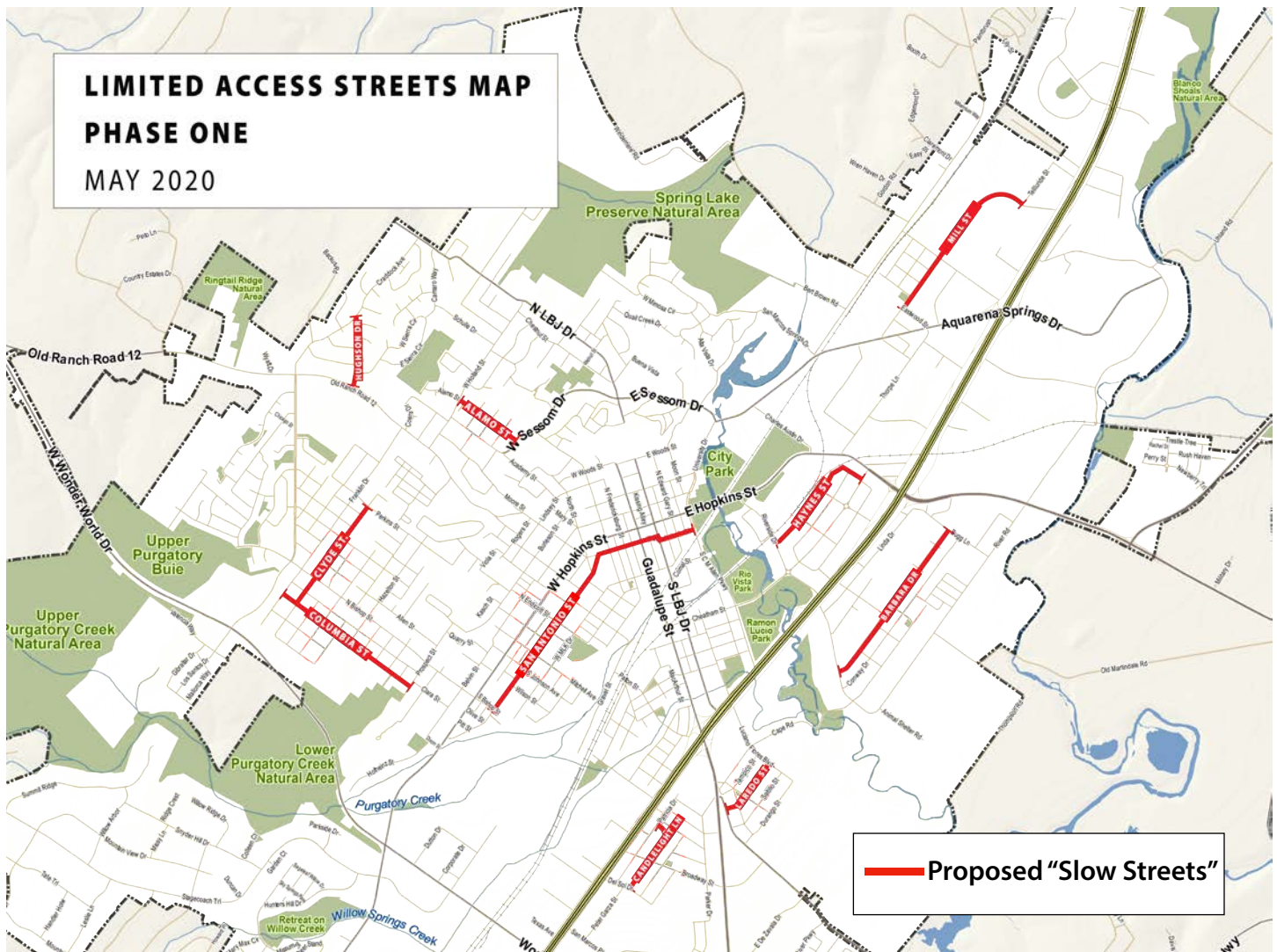
The City should use the [Phase One: Limited-Access Streets Map](#) proposed the following “Slow Streets”.

See the map for graphic representation of street segments proposed for closure.

- ▶ Laredo St.
- ▶ Mill St.
- ▶ Clyde St.
- ▶ Columbia St.

- ▶ Barbara St.
- ▶ Candlelight Ln.
- ▶ San Antonio St.
- ▶ Haynes St.
- ▶ Hughson Dr.
- ▶ Alamo St.

Community feedback should be collected to evaluate phase two of closures. Feedback should be collected through online facilitation.



WHAT?

"San Marcos Slow Streets" **DOES** the following:

- ✓ **Declare "Road Closed to Through Traffic"** on all "Slow Streets" for the Duration of the Emergency or until otherwise indicated by the City of San Marcos.
- ✓ **Provide Signage/Barricades at Key Locations**, at selected locations, such as intersections with arterial streets, post closure signage.
- ✓ **Promote Physically Distant Physical Activity** with City streets identified as closed to through traffic, residents can safely distance themselves from neighbors when walking, jogging, and biking along these streets. Always maintain at least 6 feet of space from others.
- ✓ **Build City Partnerships** by working with community organizations and civic leaders to complement City-led interventions – communications and outreach, additional signage, evaluation, and potential community-designed traffic calming ("tactical urbanism").
- ✓ **Measure Impact and Modify Overtime.** Our cities are adapting faster than ever before due to COVID-19. The program plans to evaluate the efficacy of our efforts overtime and make any relevant adjustments, perhaps making some changes permanent with installation of traffic calming infrastructure.

"Slow Streets San Marcos" **DOESN'T** do the following:

- ✗ Limit access for emergency vehicles or close streets to people that must use them to access a final destination.
- ✗ Encourage social gathering or events on any of these streets. Always maintain at least 6 feet of physical space from others.
- ✗ Seek to ticket or financially penalize those who use the corridors as through streets.
- ✗ Affect CARTS bus routes or service, trash/recycling collection, or deliveries.

HOW?

- **City of San Marcos** declares emergency Road Closed to through traffic and install signs/ barricades at key intersections. These "soft closures" should start with the following streets:
 - ▶ Laredo St.
 - ▶ Mill St.
 - ▶ Clyde St.
 - ▶ Columbia St.
 - ▶ Barbara St.
 - ▶ Candlelight Ln.
 - ▶ San Antonio St.
 - ▶ Haynes St.
 - ▶ Hughson Dr.
 - ▶ Alamo St

The City then seeks input on additional streets for safe streets closures.

- **Drivers should avoid these streets** unless it's necessary to access their home, or in emergency situations.
- **Drivers should drive slowly on ALL streets and expect to encounter people walking and biking.** Although there are fewer other cars on the road, there are more people getting fresh air and physical activity on our streets all across the City than ever before. **Hospitals don't need additional patients!**
- **San Martians must obey physical distancing at ALL times.** Reminder: these streets are for jogging, walking, family and individual biking, not for playing outside of individual households. Maintain at least 6' distance from others outside your immediate household.