

Key Priorities:

The Strategic Initiatives identified by the Council during the Visioning Meeting in January ~~2020~~ 2021 focus around the following key priorities:

- Workforce Housing
- ~~Multi-Modal Transportation~~
- Workforce Development
- Downtown Vitality
- Sustainability
- COVID Recovery

Strategic Initiatives

Key Priority: Workforce Housing

A. Update, consolidate and communicate housing policies and action plans.

Strategies:

- ~~I. Research intentional community outreach engagement related to housing. Update the Affordable Housing Policy and adopt a housing framework / blueprint based on the work of the San Marcos Workforce housing Task Force.~~
- ~~I.~~
 - a. ~~Maintain a robust~~ Improve the website as a resource to low- and moderate-income residents seeking housing. and participate as a community partner in advancing the City's housing goals.
- II. Develop internal city capacity and support capacity building efforts in community partners to advance the City's housing goals. Work with local employers such as Texas State University, San Marcos CISD, Hays County, Central Texas Medical Center, the banking community, the Greater San Marcos Partnership and area non-profits to identify ~~and~~ implement housing solutions and overcome

systemic barriers regarding renting and homeownership.

- III. Focus on improving sub-standard housing and research additional funding sources.
 - a. Determine appropriate role for code enforcement.
 - b. ~~Research budgetary impact of increased role for~~ Assess the need for a local resource to interact with the Austin Tenants Council.
 - c. Evaluate requirements for owners to make repairs to rental properties.
 - ~~e.d.~~ Set up a more accessible resource for housing discrimination complaints and provide additional outreach

B. Develop dedicated housing and revenue sources that meet goals.

Strategies:

- I. Build additional permanently affordable homes targeted to flood victims on city-owned lots with CDBG-DR funds.
- II. ~~Apply for HOME funds.~~ Utilize CDBG funds to preserve and maintain for households earning less than 80% AMI through the Housing Rehabilitation Program.
- II. Enter into cooperative agreements with ~~other the County and School District~~ taxing entities to identify tax-forfeiture properties and make them available for construction of permanently affordable workforce housing.
- III. ~~Establish a~~ Commit General Funds to land banking, investigate other revenue streams such as density bonuses and community land trust with the purpose of supporting permanently affordable workforce housing.
- IV. ~~Determine if the City can provide an incentive or assistance, i.e. financing, to get vacant lots utilized.~~
- ~~III.V.~~ Explore the feasibility of the City backing loans related to development of workforce housing.
- ~~IV.VI.~~ Establish an Emergency Housing

Rehabilitation Program.

C. Implement land use and zoning regulations that support diverse, mixed income communities in all areas of the City.

Strategies:

- I. Encourage mixed income communities within new development.
- II. Monitor the bonus density program for effectiveness and re-assess during the annual code update.
- III. Monitor the number of new missing middle housing types built under Code SMTX and re-assess during the annual Code update.
- ~~IV. Draft an ordinance targeting geographic locations and non-profit home builders for appropriate zoning when permanently affordable for sale housing is constructed.~~
- ~~IV. Explore home-sharing and provide a report. Research what is necessary in order to utilize data, such as average median income, specific to San Marcos instead of the data for the Austin metropolitan statistical area in regards to low income housing tax credit and other housing projects.~~

Key Priority: Multi Modal Transportation

~~A. City reviews the benefits and challenges of creating an integrated, seamless transit partnership between the City and Texas State University.~~

Strategies:

- ~~I. Assess the operating and financial alternatives for coordinated transit services.

 - a. Continue Five Year Strategic Plan for Transit Service~~
- ~~II. Evaluate the benefits and constraints of a transit partnership with Texas State, to~~

include:

- ~~a. Seamless transit services for all customers.~~
- ~~b. Expand community access to transit options~~
- ~~c. Share capital budget resources.~~
- ~~d. Coordinate transit routes to maximize efficiency.~~
- ~~e. Leverage state and federal funding opportunities.~~
- ~~f. Contribute to regional goals to reduce traffic and protect air quality.~~
- ~~III. Evaluate the challenges of a transit partnership with Texas State, to include:

 - a. Create a shared governance structure.
 - b. Compliance with federal and state regulations, to include paratransit services.
 - c. Coordinate transit routes to maximize efficiency.
 - d. Establish a financial plan to include operating funds, initial investment of capital for vehicles, maintenance facility, and passenger amenities.~~
- ~~IV. Consider the potential impacts of the 2020 US Census upon transit services in the San Marcos urbanized area.~~

~~B. City continues other multi-modal initiatives.~~

Strategies:

- ~~I. Transportation Demand Management/ including downtown parking management:

 - a. Adopt and implement parking management plan.
 - b. Prioritize Transportation Master Plan projects to improve multi-modal alternatives.
 - c. Evaluate and prioritize other transportation demand management tactics.
 - d. Work with Texas State on park and ride locations
 - e. Market businesses that promote multimodal transportation~~
- ~~II. Improve Bicycle Friendly Community rating:

 - a. Improve and expand dockless bike share program and explore other shared mobility~~

- opportunities.
- ~~b. Revisit Complete Streets policy and propose changes for Council consideration.~~
- ~~c. Consider creation of a Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee.~~
- ~~d. Adopt and implement bicycle master plan.~~
- ~~e. Engage community at events for bicycles~~
- ~~III. Improve pedestrian connectivity and accessibility:~~
 - ~~a. Conduct updated assessment of existing sidewalk infrastructure.~~
 - ~~b. Develop and adopt Sidewalk Master Plan.~~
 - ~~c. Identify and program long term pedestrian improvements.~~
 - ~~d. Conduct site survey sampling for ADA compliance.~~
- ~~IV. Other regional transit partnerships:~~
 - ~~a. Evaluate the benefits of regional transit partnerships with interurban providers including multimodal transit facility options.~~
 - ~~b. Investigate light rail, AMTRAK, and other future transit opportunities.~~
 - ~~c. Explore options for a downtown circulator, including all alternative fuel/vehicle options.~~
- ~~V. Pursue multi-modal funding opportunities.~~

Key Priority: Workforce Development

A. Leverage and Partner with the Community.

Strategies:

- I. Identify current assets including partners, existing services, possible locations, and organizational purpose. Include mapping of assets and services within the City.
 - a) Include Community Action as a resource, promote their certification programs
- II. Identify community partner to anchor a cradle to career initiative.
- ~~III. Identify and develop outreach opportunities.~~
- ~~IV. Identify challenges and unmet needs in the business community that are impacted by workforce development.~~
- III. Explore possibility of a day labor program implemented through social service

agencies.

- IV. Assist local businesses with their search engine optimization, focusing on historically under-utilized businesses.
- V. Research the use of opportunity zones.
- ~~V.~~ VI. Research daycare needs for children and the elderly, available resources, outreach opportunities, and potential funding – focus on preparing children for Kindergarten.

B. Facilitate opportunities for Training and Programming.

Strategies:

- ~~I. Identify and communicate existing training available, including through technology such as a mobile phone application.~~
- ~~II. Explore opportunities to promote Career and Technical Education (CTE), General Education Diploma (GED), financial literacy, and life skills.~~
- ~~III. Identify potential gaps and barriers for San Marcos residents and consider alternate delivery methods when possible.~~
- ~~IV.~~ I. Identify potential items to include when incentivizing economic development agreements.
- ~~V.~~ II. Evaluate Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP) contract to include deliverables that require training and programming opportunities.
- ~~VI.~~ III. Determine where to invest city funding to mitigate gaps and barriers that have been identified including a possible training location and regular access to workforce development resources on the east side.

Key Priority: Downtown Vitality

A. Support diversified business activity.

Strategies:

- I. Begin a revised Downtown Master Plan including, the innovation, cultural and arts districts.
 - a) Scope and Visioning Exercise with district Stakeholders and City Council.
 - ~~b) Request for Proposal (RFP) and Contract for consultant.~~
 - ~~e)b)~~ Public outreach with key stakeholders including the Downtown Association, Main Street, the University, as well as other key stakeholders.
 - ~~e)c)~~ Work with Arts Commission to identify projects linking Downtown and the river
 - ~~e)d)~~ Drafting and adopting the Downtown Master Plan.
 - II. Define goals and objectives for the Main Street program.
 - a) Review current goals and objectives within the Four Point approach of (1-Economic Vitality, 2-Design, 3-Organization, and 4-Promotion).
 - b) Develop a strategy for transformation of Downtown along the Four Points.
 - c) Define quantifiable outcomes for the transformation strategies identified.
 - d) Align organizational resources to achieve desired outcomes through the budget process.
 - III. Review possible programs for legacy businesses.
 - a) Promoting City grant programs.
 - b) Buying down interest rates for small businesses.
 - ~~IV.~~ Evaluate funding for co-working sites.
 - ~~IV-V.~~ Analyze office space needs post-COVID
- B. Take measures to improve downtown quality of place.**

Strategies:

- I. Review and assess possible sites and facilities which could promote San Marcos as a destination.
- II. Review and address underground electric ordinances.
 - a) Identify code amendments during the annual code update process.

- III. Review and assess strategies for vacant and neglected buildings.
 - a) Review model programs, including incentives, and identify resources needed for implementation.
 - b) Propose code amendments during the annual code update process.
 - ~~c)~~ Identify possible options to maintain health and safety, including inspections.
 - ~~e)d)~~ Investigate mixed-use development for Downtown properties acquired through TIRZ funding.
- IV. Identify strategic locations for streetscape and infrastructure improvements and identify funding options.
 - a) Develop an interim maintenance and beautification plan and coordinate efforts amongst stakeholders.
 - b) Explore the long-term solutions for beautification and maintenance including a downtown management district with downtown stakeholders.
 - c) Align organizational resources to achieve desired outcomes through the budget process.
- V. Identify advertising opportunities with area stakeholders to highlight city attractions.
- VI. Continue working with Texas State University Police regarding Downtown patrols.
- ~~VII. Review and amend the Downtown Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) #5.~~
 - ~~a) Prepare a revised Project & Finance Plan for Board consideration and approval.~~
 - ~~b) Present revised Project & Finance Plan for Council and Commissioner's Court consideration.~~
 - ~~c) Work with the County and TIRZ Board on Downtown vision.~~

C. Accessibility to and within the downtown.

Strategies:

- I. Approve and implement the Parking Management Plan.
 - a) Hire Parking & Mobility Manager.
 - b) Procure parking management technology (meters & mobile app).

- c) Create program branding and marketing campaign.
- d) Initiate phased rollout of on-street paid parking.
- e) Negotiate off-street parking agreements with private property owners and facilitate options.

- Plan roll out of reduction programs
- Public out reach
- Potentially identify need for full time position after observing roll out success metrics

Key Priority: Sustainability

A. Develop a baseline of sustainability performance measures.

Strategies:

- I. Work with Texas State University and other Texas communities to assess their sustainability programs.
 - a) Current organizations available
(Cost - initial staff time to analyze and hold meeting 2x per year)
 - b) Identify City and local stakeholder groups
 - c) Conduct networking opportunities
- II. Consider if a consultant is necessary in order to determine the baseline of sustainability measures.
 - a) Data collection for usage
(Cost - initial staff time to analyze and public outreach components)
 - Water, Electric, Fossil Fuels, Renewables (high view snapshot guesstimates)
 - City Facilities
 - Residential (public outreach)
 - Commercial (public outreach)
 - b) Possible Cost-Benefit analysis
 - Consider a means to evaluate upfront expenses compared to overall savings
 - Include quality of life in financial calculations
 - c) Consultant
(Cost - probably between 50k - 100k)
 - Coordinate data collection (or by staff)

B. Promote sustainability practices throughout the community.

Strategies:

- I. Increase public education and outreach of City's conservation and sustainability efforts, including available rebates.
 - ~~a) Add Sustainability page to website to centralize City environmental programs (water/energy conservation, recycling, air quality, etc). Example City of Austin Office of Sustainability page www.austintexas.gov/department/sustainability.~~
 - ~~b)a) Increase use of social media such as Facebook to promote environmental programs; add environmental programs to FB schedule.~~
 - ~~e)b) Evaluate optional or mandatory training on sustainability (anti-idling, recycling, etc) for City staff.~~
 - ~~c) Discuss with school district increased use of environmental curriculum (such as Learning to be WaterWise Outdoors program which is currently offered to teachers and funded by the City).~~
 - ~~d) Assess funding levels for green space, trails and provide additional education.~~
- II. ~~Develop and adopt incentive programs for water conservation to include incentivizing builders to reduce or eliminate turf irrigation systems.~~
 - ~~a) Consider building codes that limit the amount of turf in new development.~~
 - ~~b) Evaluate financial incentives to builders for using alternative landscaping (ie xeriscape and pervious hardscape)~~

- ~~instead of turfgrass in new development.~~
- ~~c) Evaluate financial incentives to builders to not install irrigation systems in new development.~~
- ~~d) Research requirement for separate meters for all new irrigation systems (currently single family is exempted).~~

~~III. Develop and adopt incentive programs for comprehensive weatherization or energy efficiency retrofits.~~

- ~~a) Investigate volunteer program, similar to Habitat for Humanity, to provide weatherization for low-income homes.~~
- ~~b) Discuss partnership with Combined Community Action on their existing weatherization program.~~
- ~~c) Consider additional staff or contractor to evaluate and weatherize low income homes.~~

~~II. Consider tenets of Slow Streets.~~

- ~~a) Monitor potential State legislation.~~
- ~~b) Work with the Texas Department of Transportation to include aspects in projects within the City.~~

~~III. Include historic preservation as a component.~~

~~IV. Investigate potential options for landscaping and green space.~~

- ~~a) Promote local farming, including education and allowing urban farming in front yards.~~
- ~~b) Explore a xeriscaping program for existing development.~~

C. Determine strategies to incorporate sustainability into City construction and operations.

Strategies:

- I. Implement sustainable infrastructure solutions in the City's capital improvement program projects.
- II. Develop a formal Building Design Standard for municipal buildings or design elements that reduce resource consumption.

- III. Continue evaluation of alternate energy technologies and opportunities.
 - a) Research feasibility of community solar project.
 - b) Research feasibility of Time of Use (TOU) strategies (e.g. education, billing)
 - c) Evaluate offering customer's purchase of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)
- IV. Develop and implement programs for elimination of bottled water usage and other single use plastic products (SUPs).
 - a) Research purchasing and/or personnel policies that discourage or prohibit using City funds to purchase SUPs.
 - b) Consider installing bottle fill/fountains in all City facilities.
- V. Research potential funding sources and revenues for sustainability initiative implementation

D. Develop economic development and procurement policies to encourage sustainability for businesses that work with the City.

Strategies:

- I. Research and adopt policies encouraging sustainability in economic development.
 - a) Create a standard set of sustainable preferences for developments and economic development projects.
 - a)b) Resource Grants for sustainability (30k - 50K)
 1. Focus on helping small businesses transition to sustainable practices
 - Work with Economic Development staff (*City Staff time needed*)
 - Installing solar, HVAC upgrades, windows, single use plastic/to-go containers, etc.
 2. Potential home/business conservation rebates
 - Farmland, wildscape, urban farms, water collection, grey water reclamation, etc.
 - Possible awards and marketing for businesses and maybe

- neighborhoods
- 3. Organizational partnerships and resources
 - Matching grants
 - Opportunities to use our marketing force to help (City Staff time needed)
 - Education, Outreach, Diversion bins
- II. Consider policies incorporating sustainability in the procurement process.
 - a) Reduction projections
(Cost - initial staff time to analyze)
 - Cut back on obvious waste
 - Paper purchasing, water bottles, color printing, single use plastic, etc.
 - Survey each office and ask where they think waste can be reduced.

Strategies:

- I. Investigate model that works best for San Marcos and identify community partners
- II. Comprehensive needs assessment is needed – should analyze need for a larger shelter facility, transitional housing, continuum of care, mental health services, plan for when evictions are permitted again
- III. Work on how we gather information/implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- IV. Invite non-profits to present the services their organizations provide, initially focusing on services provided to those experiencing homelessness; use City channel to enhance education/promotion

Key Priority: COVID Recovery**A. Assess needs and distribute up-to-date, accurate information to the public****Strategies:**

- I. Monitor ongoing related to COVID response and recovery, including distribution of personal protective equipment
- II. Continue promoting resources available to residents in the community.
- III. Prepare for and facilitate vaccination rollout.

B. Continue search for resources and collaboration with local partners to address community needs.**Strategies:**

- I. Pursue grants and other funding opportunities.
- II. Determine use of potential freed up General Fund dollars.
- III. Continue partnerships with local entities, including assistance in acquiring and maintaining grants.

- ❖ *Staff will continue to implement work on City Facilities through completion of the bond projects, Public Service Center, and determining next steps on City Hall.*
- ❖ *Staff will work towards “Year of the City”-continue to implement Multi Modal Transportation initiatives already underway and implement ways to assist people of all abilities in planning their routes.*
- ❖ *Staff will continue to assist on homelessness initiatives.*

Area of Focus: Homelessness