



City of San Marcos

630 East Hopkins
San Marcos, TX 78666

Meeting Minutes City Council

Thursday, September 16, 2021

11:30 AM

City Council Chambers/Virtual

This meeting was held using conferencing software due to COVID-19 rules.

I. Call To Order

With a quorum present, the special meeting of the San Marcos City Council was called to order by Mayor Hughson at 11:31 a.m. Thursday, September 16, 2021. This meeting was held in-person and online.

II. Roll Call

Present: 6 - Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Derrick, Mayor Jane Hughson, Council Member Maxfield Baker, Council Member Saul Gonzales, Council Member Alyssa Garza and Council Member Mark Gleason

1. Receive a presentation from Staff and project consultants, MIG, on the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan Rewrite, and receive direction.

Andrea Villalobos, Planning Manager, provided a brief introduction regarding the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan Re-write. Ms. Villalobos provided events and meetings that have occurred in the process. This includes, City Council Workshop, 4 Steering Committee Meetings, Events/Surveys, Virtual Community Workshop, Virtual Open House, Focus Group Meetings, and numerous Community Events/Organization Meetings.

Ms. Villalobos provided the key takeaways of the Visioning and Guiding Principles Development, which include the following elements:

- Equitable
- Inclusive Community
- Protect and Value Natural Resources
- Intentional & Responsible Growth
- Diversity & Affordability of Housing
- Preservation of Quality of Life

She also noted there have been over 2,000 comments to date in this process.

Ms. Villalobos introduced Jay Renkens, Principal in charge of MIG and Matt

Prosser, Vice President of EPS to provide the presentation.

Mr. Renkens and Mr. Prosser discussed the following:

- **Scenario Inputs and Methodology, including growth assumptions, preliminary scenarios and summary of feedback, and development types and overlays. Mr. Prosser noted the amount of past and potential future growth. San Marcos has grown from 34,998 in 2000 to 69,731 in 2019. The average household size in Hays County is 2.26 people per household. Given the predicted growth in Hays County and San Marcos for 2050, between 42,000 and 54, 000 new units will be needed in San Marcos by 2050.**

There were Preliminary Sketch Scenarios, including the Trends scenario which is Business as Usual, Scenario A with Growth Constrained to City Limits, and Scenario B which is Strategic Eastward Growth and a Second City Center, and a Corridor Focused Development. For each there is a the comparison of goals and allocation of housing and jobs, and comparison of evaluation metrics.

- **Summary of Steering Committee and community feedback to date**

There was no support to continue exploring scenario constrained to City Limits. There is interest in the Second City Center Scenario. There were questions about best location and relationship to downtown and other employment centers.

There was also interest and concern about the Corridor-Focused Scenario and how it focuses growth along existing and new transportation investments.

Members of the committee had lots of discussion about the type and quality of development.

There was a feeling that historic assets need to be a higher priority, but there is support for scenarios that put less pressure on downtown and historic areas.

In addition, there was general concern that the preliminary scenarios did not consider environmental assets and constraints enough.

There are also three Overlays to consider: Historic Resources, Cultural Resources and Environmental.

Historic Resources Utilized the My Historic SMTX Resources Survey from 2019 and designated Historic Districts. The Designated Historic Districts were included in their entirety. For other areas in the Historic Resources Survey, a contiguous area was created that included all properties ranked Medium and High priority. For the scenario mapping and modeling exercise, jobs and housing were only allocated to vacant parcels within the Historic Resources Overlay.

Cultural Resources used the Cultural Resource data layers originally included in the prior Land Use Suitability map (except for Historic Districts as those were included in the Historic Resource Overlay). These included City Parks, Fish Hatcheries, and Cemeteries. It was noted that no housing and no jobs were allocated to any area mapped within the Cultural Resource Overlay.

The Environmental Overlay uses updated portions of the City's Land Use Suitability Map (LUS). The Cultural and Historic Resource inputs were removed (now in their own overlays). Input layers in the draft updated LUS are related to Edwards Aquifer, Floodplains, etc. These inputs were used to recalculate environmentally constrained areas on a scale of 1 (Least Constrained) to 5 (Most Constrained). The Environmental Overlay includes all areas scoring a 5 within the City Limits and all areas scoring a 4 or 5 outside the City Limits, but within the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). A maximum of 50% of areas within the environmental overlay were "developed" with allocations of housing and jobs.

Development Types:

Lower Density Neighborhood

Primary Land Use/s: Detached Single Family Residential

Secondary Land Use/s: Attached Single Family; Public/Institutional; Parks

Housing Density: 3-6 DU/acre (4.5 DU /acre for modeling purposes)

Medium Density Neighborhood

Primary Land Use/s: Attached SF; Low to Medium-Scale Multifamily Residential

Secondary Land Use/s: Public/Institutional; Parks and Open Space; Mixed Use Commercial

Housing Density: 6-12 DU/acre (9 DU/acre for modeling purposes)

Higher Density Neighborhood

Primary Land Use/s: Medium to Higher-Scale Multi-Family; Attached Single Family

Secondary Land Use/s: Public/Institutional; Parks and Open Space; Mixed Use Commercial

Housing Density: 12+ DU/acre (15 DU/acre for modeling purposes)

Neighborhood Commercial/Center

Primary Land Use/s: Small to Medium-Scale General Commercial and Mixed Use

Secondary Land Use/s: Small Scale Office; Live-Work; Parks and Open Space;

Public/Institutional**Jobs Density: 10 jobs/acre****Mr. Prosser described the scenarios outlined below:****Trends Scenario - Characteristics**

- **Single historic downtown**
- **Auto-oriented commercial along corridors outside of downtown**
- **Traditional subdivisions and multifamily housing where opportunity exists or can be created**
- **Suburban style expansion east of IH-35**
- **Continued project by project debate over appropriateness of development**
- **Continued reliance on key corridors resulting in increased congestion**
- **Walkability will remain a desired condition only realized in downtown or in specific subdivisions/projects**
- **Housing demand outpacing employment growth resulting in more pronounced “bedroom community” position**
- **Continued pressure to develop in a piecemeal fashion impacting environmentally sensitive areas**

Mr. Renkens explained Scenario A – Second City Center – Select Goals**Land Use Goal 1: Conserve historic assets and reduce pressure on existing developed and undeveloped areas by establishing a second, higher density City Center east of existing city development. Community Design and Character .****Goal 2: Encourage distinct places and neighborhood character across San Marcos with a hierarchy of destinations with services and amenities.****Economic Development Goal 1 & 2: Support existing businesses and employment areas with improved access, services and amenities. Promote a new regional employment hub in and around the second City Center.****Housing Goal 1: Concentrate medium-to-high density housing in and adjacent to the second City Center to meet a large portion of projected housing needs.****Transportation Goal 2: Minimize the need for cross-city and cross-regional driving trips by locating goods, services and employment closer to where people live.****Environment and Resource Protection Goal 1: Limit planned development in environmentally sensitive areas by planning and developing higher intensity places in San Marcos.**

Mr. Renkens continued with Scenario B – Corridors & Nodes – Select Goals
Land Use Goal 1 & 2: Conserve historic assets and reduce pressure on existing neighborhoods by focusing medium intensity development along transportation corridors. Maintain Downtown as the primary mixed use center serving San Marcos and foster smaller commercial and mixed use nodes along arterials and at major intersections.

Community Design and Character Goal 1: Protect character of existing neighborhoods and districts by focusing majority of future growth and development to major corridors and undeveloped areas

Economic Development Goal 2: Strengthen and expand existing industries and areas already identified for employment in San Marcos and coordinate regionally for additional opportunities.

Housing Goal 1 & 2: Concentrate medium density housing along major corridors. Develop low density housing in new neighborhoods on the periphery of San Marcos to meet remaining housing need.

Transportation Goal 1: Provide multi-modal transportation options along corridors to leverage investments and connect people to the places they want to go.

Environment and Resource Protection Goal 2: Facilitate an overall land use strategy that clusters development in more places to reduce the burden on any single watershed.

The Committee Feedback on Scenario A included a need to right-size the second activity center, continue to evaluate the best location for a second activity center, the need for a grid to support level of density depicted, consider impacts on the high school, and noted the support for housing diversity. For Scenario B, the thoughts included that it seems to build on the Trend Scenario, they liked that it spread the amenities throughout community, but noted that the scenario is too sprawling with too much Lower Density Neighborhood development and there is a need to buffer neighborhoods from higher intensity uses on corridors

Overall, the Committee had a general preference to combine Scenarios A & B, explore increase density of Medium and Higher Density Commercial (at least in strategic locations), a desire to minimize acres developed and impervious cover, with a goal of making more places walkable – infrastructure and places to walk to, and noted a heavy emphasis on new growth east of I-35 will likely

require new infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities, treatment plant, etc.) They also noted that the overlays should continue to be a priority input and output. Mr. Renkens reviewed the input from the community meeting last night.

Ms. Villalobos provided the list of Next Steps which include the Preferred Growth Scenario, Plan Element Goals and Policies, Small Area Plans, Administration Draft Plan, Public Review Draft Plan, and the Final Plan. Input is still welcome at www.visionsmtx.com

Upon completion of their presentation, they opened the floor for discussion and questions by Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Derrick requested that staff and the project team compare the growth forecasts predicted with Vision SMTX with that of Hays County and Texas State University forecasts. Council Member Derrick also discussed wanting to better understand the impacts of Covid-19 on the proposed growth forecasts.

- Staff and the project consultants will coordinate with the state Demographer, Hays County and Texas State University to ensure that the forecasts are in alignment.
- The project consultants indicated that the Covid-19 pandemic further emphasizes the continued housing demand in San Marcos. They also stated that it has impacted shifts in the work schedule as well as impacts on the use of office as a gathering place with an increased focus on public health and outdoor space. There is also an increased demand for housing and for office space. Outdoor space is also more in demand that it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. Demands are still changing and they will keep up with the changes. She noted that her preference is a combination of Scenario A and B.

The Mayor asked if the projections will be updated with the 2020 census since they were just released. Mr. Prosser stated they will update the numbers. She also asked whether the growth projections include Texas State numbers. She noted that the previous direction to the state universities of “Closing the Gaps” and now it is “Sixty by thirty” and that must be considered.

- Project consultants will update the numbers accordingly.
- Project consultants stated that they would ensure Texas State numbers are reflected and will also ask Texas State what shifts they are seeing because of the pandemic.

Council Member Baker stated that he supports Scenario A and has some concerns about Highway Commercial being prevalent in Scenario B and how it

relates to Strong Towns discussions as well as the quality of jobs in terms of salaries. He also asked how we can push higher density residential to not have as many amenities which may lead to more expensive units.

Council Member Baker asked whether we had any surveys completed in Spanish and asked for a status update on the Steering Committee attendance. He also inquired about new multi-family developments and is concerned that all the amenities increase the cost of rent.

- Staff stated that they will continue to do Spanish outreach and will also provide a status update on Steering Committee attendance.

The Mayor asked what the cost implications of added amenities in a development are and their impact on residents. She asked what types of savings there would be if such amenities were not included, particularly with High Density Development.

- Staff and project consultants will do research to address the Mayor and Council Member Baker's question and discussed how community-wide amenities funded by the entire community can provide greater access to the community (ex: Mueller development in Austin, TX).

The Mayor requested that the Steering Committee's sentiments regarding shrinking the Second City Center from the area outside the loop of Old Bastrop is conveyed in the summary of the committee feedback upon completion.

- Staff and project consultants will ensure this feedback is included.

City Manager, Bert Lumbreras, noted the progress so far in the process. He stated that he hopes that the project finds ways to encourage development as it relates to families with children and how we can tie that in with other City initiatives. In addition, Mr. Lumbreras stated that the City is lacking in social events and gatherings for youth and that the City should be a leader in creating ways to have people gather in parks or other areas.

Mayor Hughson noted that the Parks staff does a good job with their Party in your Park and Movies in the Park programs.

Staff stated that they would provide information on the Virtual Survey which is open until October 4. The following language can be used by Council as outreach for the survey:

The San Marcos Planning and Development Services Department invites you

to participate in the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan Rewrite! Vision SMTX is an exciting and important project because it guides the long-term decision making for topics that affect the community and help plan for future generations. It includes the community's vision for topics such as housing, transportation, arts and culture, land use, environmental resources, economic development, parks, community character, and others.

We invite you to participate in the Vision SMTX Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Virtual Survey! The survey is interactive and includes project information, maps, and short survey questions. The survey is available through October 4 and is offered in English and Spanish.

- Take the Survey in English: <https://arcg.is/1Tzj8y>**
- Take the Survey in Spanish: <https://arcg.is/rCKba>**

Hard copies of the survey are available for pickup in the Planning and Development Services Department. Please contact planninginfo@sanmarcostx.gov or 512.393.8230 to request a copy. You can learn more about the project at www.visionsmtx.com.

III. Adjournment.

Mayor Hughson adjourned the special meeting of the City Council on Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 12:56 p.m.

Tammy K. Cook, Interim City Clerk

Jane Hughson, Mayor