



Legislation Text

File #: ID#20-642, **Version:** 1

AGENDA CAPTION:

Discuss and take action on the creation, appointment, and implementation of a Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Steering Committee charged with assisting in the City's Comprehensive Plan rewrite; and provide direction to Staff.

Meeting date: October 7, 2020

Department: Planning and Development Services

Amount & Source of Funding

Funds Required: n/a

Account Number: n/a

Funds Available: n/a

Account Name: n/a

Fiscal Note:

Prior Council Action: n/a

City Council Strategic Initiative:

N/A

Comprehensive Plan Element (s):

- ☒ Economic Development - Choose an item.
- ☒ Environment & Resource Protection - Choose an item.
- ☒ Land Use - Choose an item.
- ☒ Neighborhoods & Housing - Choose an item.
- ☒ Parks, Public Spaces & Facilities - Choose an item.
- ☒ Transportation - Choose an item.
- ☒ Core Services
- ☐ Not Applicable

Master Plan:

Vision San Marcos - A River Runs Through Us

Background Information:

The City is moving forward with the rewrite of its Comprehensive Plan. City Council recently approved the contract with the selected consultant, Moore, Iacofano, and Goltsman (MIG), and City staff just held its internal kickoff meeting with them on August 27, 2020.

One of the next steps in the process is to appoint a steering committee that will oversee the project and the creation of the plan. This committee will be a working group that aids City staff and the consultant team with both the public process and the plan's substance. The committee will meet about eight times during the project, and include approximately +/- 20 people who, together, represent the broad interests that exist within the community.

The role of the members of the Steering Committee will be as follows:

- The members of this committee will be asked to serve as a representative to various constituents and individuals in their respective networks, encouraging participation in the public process, while also sharing some of the more technical insights developed by the committee, as appropriate.
- The members of this committee will be asked to provide input throughout the process, as well as to share constructive feedback, both in the form of their individual expertise, as well as representative of those they are representing.
- Finally, as the plan moves toward adoption, members will be asked to champion the plan through the adoption process, sharing their unique perspective of having served on the committee and playing a key role in building consensus around the plan's vision, goals, and recommendations.

Please note, the Steering Committee is a separate committee than the current Comprehensive Plan Oversight Committee, which is a seven member committee that was established after the completion of the 2013 plan to: review the progress of implementation of the plan; determine completeness of the plan objectives; recommend prioritization of plan objectives; and provide an annual status report. The main difference between these two committees is that the Steering Committee will be the committee that assists in the creation of the plan, and ensuring the plan represents the interests of the community, whereas, the Oversight Committee is the group that ensures the implementation of the plan after it is adopted. While the names of these committees are similar, their charges currently are different, thus the reason for the creation of a separate committee.

Since the Comprehensive Plan covers a wide range of topics/elements and should be representative of the residents of San Marcos, the committee should have a great deal of diversity within its membership. Not only should the members on the committee have an interest in the future of San Marcos, but the committee should have a membership that includes individuals with background and/or expertise in the following areas:

- Land use
- Urban design / architecture
- Historic preservation
- Environmental and resource protection
- Economic development / business
- Housing
- Neighborhoods
- Parks and recreations

- Transportation and mobility
- Health, safety, and wellness
- Arts and culture
- Downtown / Main Street
- Outreach and communications

Applications are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 28, 2020. Following that, Staff will assemble the applications and provide them to the City Council for their consideration. In addition to this, Staff will provide an analysis of the applicants and their related interest, background, and areas of expertise. The City Council can then use this as they look to appoint the members of the committee.

Council Committee, Board/Commission Action:

n/a

Alternatives:

n/a

Recommendation:

It will be important to select members who are in tune with the wants and desires of the citizens within the community. In addition, it will also be important to select members who have an interest, background, or expertise in one or more of the above defined areas will be important, as these areas correspond to the identified planning elements within the Comprehensive Plan. In one of its most basic, yet important roles, the Steering Committee will be used as a sounding board to the initial recommendations made. For example, as we go through the process of developing goals, objectives, and policies, the members of the Steering Committee will help ensure that the ideas presented make sense, are feasible, or create any red flags, both from a technical and community support standpoint. This is identified because even if an idea is doable from a technical standpoint, it does not mean it will have the support of the citizens of the community. Therefore, having members who represent both areas will be important.

Also, to be effective, the Steering Committee should consist of about 20-25 members. If the committee has significantly more members, it can be difficult to gain consensus, and any less it can present challenges of being governed by a few, especially if not all members attend every meeting. Again, the intent of this group is to be a resource to the consultant and staff in the development of the plan, and to address concerns prior to the drafts/ideas being presented. While not every member of the Steering Committee will need expertise in every area, it will be helpful that they have some degree of background in the area for which they were identified.

The application process was done to provide the City Council with the greatest degree of flexibility in the process in appointing the committee's members. Knowing who is interested in serving on the committee and their interest/background/expertise, will allow the City Council the ability to analyze any areas of need for the committee that may not be able to be addressed by only the individuals who have specifically applied. Depending on number of people who apply and their interest/background/expertise, it may change the approach the City Council wishes to take regarding appointing individuals, including possibly appointing

members from other boards, commissions, committees, organizations, etc. Also, organizations like the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District, Texas State University, Hays County, etc. will have an impact on numerous elements within the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, it may be beneficial to have members on the Steering Committee who represent those organizations. Again, the intent is to provide the City Council with options in appointing the members to make sure we have the needed representation.

One option that has been done in the past with selecting members for committees is to have each City Council member select a certain number of individuals. For example, since there are seven members of the City Council, each member could pick three applicants. This would then equate to 21 members, and if a member was added from the San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District, Texas State University, Hays County, Planning and Zoning Commission, and the City Council, it would get us to 26 members, assuming each City Council member selects different members, or the member that they select is not part of one of the other organizations. Please note this is only an option, and the City Council may choose to structure and appoint this committee as they feel is appropriate.

Finally, recognizing that there is a priority to get the project completed in a reasonable amount of time, especially the area plans, the application process should provide the City Council with as much information and interest from potential members upfront as they make their decision. If members are appointed at the October 7, 2020 meeting, or shortly thereafter, it should allow the project to stay on schedule, with an anticipated completion date by the end of 2021 (18 months from consultant contract approval).