



Legislation Text

File #: ID#21-072, **Version:** 1

AGENDA CAPTION:

Downtown Design Standards. Hold a public hearing and consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding text amendments to Chapters 3 and 4 of the San Marcos Development Code and to Appendix A, Article 1 of the Design Manual, that, among other things, would update provisions concerning nonconforming streetscapes, the Character District 5 Downtown description, the minimum two story building height in downtown, and the downtown architectural design standards and guidelines related to varied massing, transparency, blank wall area, expression elements, building elements, and contextual height stepdown. (A.Villalobos)

Meeting date: February 9, 2021

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:

Project Background

In 2012, the City contracted with Winter & Company to develop and adopt Downtown Design Guidelines and Architectural Standards to regulate the look and feel of new buildings in the downtown area. The standards and guidelines adopted in 2012 were carried over into the new San Marcos Development Code and into Appendix A of the San Marcos Design Manual in 2018. Both standards and guidelines are utilized when reviewing new development in the downtown area.

In January, 2020, the San Marcos City Council provided direction to update the design standards and guidelines using the guidance of the previous consultants, Winter & Company. The update to the design standards and guidelines is intended to include new standards to address design issues, new graphics to clearly illustrate the standards and guidelines, and be tailored to various contexts within downtown. Key topics to be addressed included:

- 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.

Past Events

City staff and Winter and Company have hosted several events in order to better understand community feedback on downtown design. These events were broken up into two phases of the project: the initial project development and the public draft review. Events included three focus group meetings and a joint focus group meeting, a Community Kickoff survey, two Virtual Community Workshops, two Joint Planning and Zoning Commission/City Council Workshops, and a final follow-up survey.

Final Draft Formulation

Following the public review period of the Public Draft, all City Council, Planning Commission, Focus Group, and community input has been compiled and reviewed for additional potential changes to the proposed standards and guidelines. A Final Draft incorporating this input is included in this packet.

Section 2.4.1.3 of the San Marcos Development Code requires the Planning & Zoning Commission make a recommendation regarding the text amendment(s) to the City Council.

Below is a summary of the process and key dates:

- Joint Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council Workshop #1 (**June 25, 2020**)
- Joint Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council Workshop #2 (**December 10, 2020**)
- Planning & Zoning Commission consideration and recommendation (**February 9, 2021**)
- City Council discusses amendments during a Work Session (**February 16, 2021**)
- City Council holds a public hearing and first reading of ordinance (**March 2, 2021**)
- City Council holds second reading of ordinance (**March 16, 2021**)

Council Committee, Board/Commission Action:

n/a

Alternatives:

Section 2.4.1.3(C) The Planning and Zoning Commission shall hold a public hearing on the text amendment in accordance with Section 2.3.3.1. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall make a recommendation regarding the text amendment(s) to the City Council. The Planning and Zoning Commission may recommend approval, approval with conditions, or denial of the text amendment to this development Code.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends **approval** of the proposed Development Code and Design Manual text amendments as presented.