

City of San Marcos Strategic Initiatives 2022-2026



Workforce Housing

- Eliminate barriers to housing.
- Elevate housing rehabilitation program as a specific strategy.
- Update, consolidate and communicate housing policies and action plans.
- Develop dedicated housing and revenue sources that meet goals.
- Implement land use and zoning regulations that support diverse, mixed income communities in all areas of the City.



Community Safety

- Increase safety across the City, especially Downtown
- Emergency preparedness.
- Address the factors that cause individuals to become homeless and assist those experiencing homelessness.



Economic Development

- Ensure that our City looks top notch.
- Leverage and continue partnerships with Texas State University, Austin Community College, Community Action, Chamber of Commerce and Greater San Marcos Partnership to provide additional resources in the community.
- Facilitate opportunities for training and programming for residents.
- Support diversified business activity, including local and emerging small businesses.
- Downtown is accessible and has a quality of place.



Sustainability

- Develop a baseline of sustainability performance measures.
- Promote sustainability practices throughout the community.
- Sustainability incorporated into City construction and operations.
- Develop economic development and procurement policies to encourage sustainability for businesses that work with the City.



Covid Response

- Accurate, up-to-date information is disseminated throughout the community.
- More frequent communication with the County, School District, Texas State, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).
- Continue search for resources and collaboration with local partners to address community needs.



Assessment of Community Assistance (Area of Focus)

- Establish initial assessment and documentation process.
- Effective case management.
- Optimize social service agency application process.



Develop Equity Policy (Area of Focus)

- Develop a shared understanding of equity.
- Work towards an equity-based budget.



Workforce Housing

- Includes housing affordability.
- Eliminate barriers to housing.
- Elevate housing rehabilitation program as a specific strategy.
- Update, consolidate and communicate housing policies and action plans.
- Develop dedicated housing and revenue sources that meet goals.
- Implement land use and zoning regulations that support diverse, mixed income communities in all areas of the City.

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

1. **Encourage mixed income communities within new development.**
2. **Focus on improving sub-standard housing and research additional funding sources.*****
3. **Build additional permanently affordable homes targeted to flood victims on city-owned lots with CDBG-DR funds.**
4. **Utilize CDBG funds to preserve and maintain for households earning less than 80% AMI through the Housing Rehabilitation Program.**
5. Work with the Neighborhood Commission to address multifamily substandard conditions, outreach to apartments, and add an apartment complex representative.
6. 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/implement housing solutions and overcome systemic barriers regarding renting and homeownership.***
7. Monitor the bonus density program for effectiveness and re-assess during the annual Code update.
8. Monitor the number of new missing middle housing types built under Code SMTX and re-assess during the annual Code update.

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

9. **Enter into cooperative agreements with the County and School District to identify tax-forfeiture properties and make them available for construction of permanently affordable workforce housing.**
10. **Establish an Emergency Housing Rehabilitation Program.**
11. **Determine if the City can provide an incentive or assistance, i.e. financing, to get vacant lots utilized.*****
12. Identify housing barriers and how they may be overcome.***

Bold = core service

*** = additional resources needed

13. Investigate creating a CUP to go above occupancy restrictions in defined cases.***
14. Research if there are ways to require LIHTC/Housing Authority properties to accept housing vouchers.***
15. Determine if there are barriers to remove or if incentives needed to help developers build condos.***
16. Research and implement intentional community outreach engagement related to housing.
17. Explore home-sharing and provide a report.***

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

18. Commit General Funds to land banking, investigate other revenue streams such as density bonuses.
19. Explore the feasibility of the City backing loans related to development of workforce housing.
20. Draft an ordinance targeting geographic locations and non-profit home builders for appropriate zoning when permanently affordable for sale housing is constructed.



Sustainability

- Develop a baseline of sustainability performance measures.
- Promote sustainability practices throughout the community.
- Sustainability incorporated into City construction and operations.
- Develop economic development and procurement policies to encourage sustainability for businesses that work with the City.

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

- 1. Better sidewalk mapping and ADA accessibility.**
- 2. Determine needs of River clean-up advocates and assist in search for resources; assess funding sources, e.g HCP, HOT.*****
- 3. Develop and implement programs for elimination of bottled water usage and other single use plastic products (SUPs).*****
- 4. Consider policies incorporating sustainability in the procurement process.**
5. Installation of renewable energy facilities where applicable to provide resilient, reliable energy.***
6. Investigate wind power at utility- and individual-house scale.
7. Determine feasibility of renewable energy opportunities for City facilities to provide reliable power in times of disaster.***
8. Work with Texas State to stay abreast of renewable power innovation.
9. Work with Texas State University and other Texas communities to assess their sustainability programs.
10. Consider if a consultant is necessary in order to determine the baseline of sustainability measures.***
11. Increase public education and outreach of City's conservation and sustainability efforts, including available rebates.
12. Continue evaluation of alternate energy technologies and opportunities.
13. Research and adopt policies encouraging sustainability in economic development.

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

- 14. Require developers to include sustainable practices if they pursue public improvement districts.**
15. Promote farming, community gardens, and local production of goods through incentives, education.***
16. Investigate potential options for landscaping and green space.
17. Promote the installation and use of rainwater capture systems.***

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

- 18. Increase education of River litter in order to reduce/eliminate the litter.*****

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19. **Research cost/benefit of renewable power from existing infrastructure, e.g. Spring Lake and wastewater discharge.*****
20. **Consider tenets of Slow Streets.*****
21. **Include historic preservation as a component.*****
22. **Develop a formal Building Design Standard for municipal buildings or design elements that reduce resource consumption.*****
23. Research potential funding sources and revenues for sustainability initiative implementation.***



Covid Response

- Accurate, up-to-date information is disseminated throughout the community.
- More frequent communication with the County, School District, Texas State, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD).
- Continue search for resources and collaboration with local partners to address community needs.

In Process

- 1. Monitor COVID-mitigation supply availability and consider funding sources for COVID response supplies after current funding is expended.**

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

- 2. Focus on education dissemination by assessing needs and distributing up-to-date, accurate information to the public.**
- 3. Consider offering Zoom access for Council meetings, boards and commissions, Council committees, and events that involve the public, as applicable to the event.*****
- 4. Monitor ongoing needs related to COVID response and recovery, including distribution of personal protective equipment.**
- 5. Continue promoting resources available to residents in the community.**
6. Identify possible barriers to assistance and remove them if possible, by City Council decision.
7. More frequent coordination with the Hays County to see what we can do to assist in promoting rental assistance and determine barriers to successful applications.
8. Prepare for and facilitate vaccination rollout.
9. Determine use of potential freed up General Fund dollars.

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

- 10. Pursue grants and other funding opportunities.**
11. Continue partnerships with local entities, including assistance in acquiring and maintaining grants.



Community Safety

- Includes criminal justice reform and homelessness.
- Increase safety across the city, especially Downtown.
- Emergency preparedness.
- Address the factors that cause individuals to become homeless and assist those experiencing homelessness.

In Process

1. Work on how we gather information/implement a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

- 2. Consider increase in personnel as needed in regard to Community Safety.*****
- 3. Work with community stakeholders to reduce violent crime by 5%.*****
- 4. Providing robust Mental Health services - need increased resources and collaborative strategies.*****
- 5. Address all stakeholder concerns - victims, families, those who perpetrate the crime.*****
- 6. Implementing Fire Department Community Risk Assessment Standards of Cover, including additional fire stations/equipment.*****
- 7. Support adding telephonic crisis consultations dispatch option when calling 911.*****
- 8. Evaluate resources provided by the Tenant's Council to tenants, considering additional services and outreach.**
9. Support the Police Department's goal to earn accreditation from the Texas Police Chief's Association.***
10. Support the Fire Department's goal to earn accreditation from the Texas Fire Chief's Association.***
11. Signage in restaurants and bars – alcohol-related (overconsumption, drinking and driving, drinking while pregnant), trafficking of minors, sex trafficking to provide information to help those affected, fentanyl.***
12. Seek University involvement in community safety programs.***
13. Review Campaign Zero Policies and consider implementation of those that apply to San Marcos to help enhance trust in our local police.***
14. Review decriminalization of marijuana to determine if there are benefits to the City.***
15. Clarity of Chapter 143 to enhance trust in Police.***
16. Promote Veteran housing vouchers.***
17. Assess food handling requirements and consider amendments to increase food access.

Bold = core service

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18. Consider staffing needs (possibly short-term) to determine baseline needs to assist those experiencing homelessness – possibly through grant funds, ARP funds.***

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

19. **Support actions to achieve ISO (Insurance Services Office) Public Protection Class of 1.*****
20. Identify sources or methods to establish mailing addresses for homeless residents.***
21. Improve/expand capacity to house those experiencing homelessness, e.g. shelters, single room occupancies.***
22. Determine if and how we are enforcing the conditions in a Student Housing CUP to ensure students have a place to live.***

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

23. **Implement process for after action report and improvement plans for major disasters.**
24. Determine actions needed to prevent homelessness.***
25. Study redlining behaviors that keep people homeless.***
26. Review comprehensive needs assessment for those experiencing homelessness. Implement actions recommended and accepted.***



Economic Development

- Includes workforce development and Downtown vitality.
- Ensure that our City looks top notch.
- Leverage and continue partnerships with Texas State University, Austin Community College, Community Action, Chamber of Commerce and Greater San Marcos Partnership to provide additional resources in the community.
- Facilitate opportunities for training and programming for residents.
- Support diversified business activity, including local and emerging small businesses.
- Downtown is accessible and has a quality of place.

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

- 1. Increase exposure of local businesses, including search engine optimization.**
- 2. Monitor businesses' COVID-19 needs and consider assistance.**
- 3. Identify challenges and unmet needs in the business community that are impacted by workforce development.**
- 4. Identify advertising opportunities with area stakeholders to highlight City attractions.*****
- 5. Determine impediments to local vendors and assess requirements to awarding them municipal contracts.*****
6. Implement Legacy Business Program, incentives for small businesses, and Economic Development Policy.***
7. Review fees for new businesses and determine if they can be waived.***
8. Require businesses with Chapter 380 agreements to have internship opportunities for SMCISD and TX State students.
9. Review and address underground electric ordinances.
10. Work with community partners on outreach for job fairs and other employment opportunities. Ask job fair organizers to work with TX State Career Services to see who posts on their job board, invite them to job fairs.

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

- 11. Consider using Community Enhancement Fee funds to fix street signage, downtown storefront covers for vacant buildings, removal of grass in curbs, downtown cleanliness, etc.*****
- 12. Investigate if City's contracted services can be brought in-house and/or review if contractors provide basic benefits and comparable pay.*****
- 13. Investigate ways to provide more services on the east side - possibly take resources provided by the workforce development staff of the Library to the neighborhood periodically, also look at school facilities and churches.*****

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- 14. Identify current assets including partners, existing services, possible locations, and organizational purpose. Include mapping of assets and services within the City.**
- 15. 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.*****
- 16. Review and assess possible sites and facilities which could promote San Marcos as a destination.**
- 17. Identify strategic locations for streetscape and infrastructure improvements and identify funding options.**
18. Investigate possible Office of Innovation, Geekdom model from San Antonio.
19. Look at possible code changes regarding enforcement of construction practices, e.g. fencing, security, cleanliness.***
20. Analyze permit process for commercial development to determine if there are obstacles that can be mitigated or removed.***
21. Research working with Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM) to provide health insurance and benefits to local artists and musicians.
22. Investigate ways to publicize and incentivize residents to take workforce development classes, including but not limited to providing childcare and transportation to training classes.***
23. Analyze office space needs post-COVID.
24. Investigate additional opportunities to enhance/promote childcare/eldercare services.***
25. Identify community partner to anchor a cradle to career initiative.

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

- 26. Support emerging small businesses, including non-traditional – includes grant assistance, workspace, equipment, resource recovery for excess materials.*****
- 27. Approve and implement the Parking Management Plan.*****
28. Explore fiber expansion as a possible way to provide additional jobs and open employment opportunities to residents who need high speed, reliable internet to work.***
29. Determine needs for a community college district.***
30. Assess need for an additional regional airport.***
31. Determine community need and investigate ways to get Austin Community College courses offered to residents at reduced costs.***
32. Explore possibility of a day labor program implemented through social service agencies.***

Downtown Vitality

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

- 33. Encourage murals, banners, walkways, painted transformer boxes reflecting the downtown San Marcos art community - Downtown Association concern*****
- 34. Promote Downtown Mobility HUB and Parklet Program.*****
- 35. Continue working with Texas State University Police regarding Downtown patrols.*****
- 36. Include trees, shrubs, and flowers in Downtown's streetscape ensuring ongoing maintenance and cleaning - Downtown Association concern*****
- 37. Tie Downtown to the River so that River visitors want to come Downtown.
- 38. Designate employee parking lots for those who work downtown, freeing up spaces for customers - Downtown Association concern***
- 39. Consider additional signs, walkways and art leading visitors to visit both the river and downtown - Downtown Association concern***
- 40. Begin a revised Downtown Master Plan including, the innovation, cultural and arts districts.

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

- 41. Consider incentives to attract new businesses, especially for vacant buildings, and a more streamlined permitting process - Downtown Association concern***
- 42. Investigate why Downtown spaces are not filling up like other places in town and determine solutions to get them filled.***
- 43. Review and assess strategies for vacant and neglected buildings including graphics, murals, or "Shop Downtown" promotion.***
- 44. Determine if we can leverage resources with the Texas State to actively monitor Downtown cameras in real time.***

Long Term (completed in over 36 months)

- 45. Consider adding lamp posts for ambiance and more lighting in alleyways for safety - Downtown Association concern*****
- 46. Encourage Greenspace in Downtown alleys/park.*****
- 47. Assess the amount of co-working space needed and determine appropriate level of financial assistance - Downtown Association concern***
- 48. Complete an infrastructure audit related to broadband to plan/schedule updates downtown - Downtown Association concern***

Included in Economic Development Policy

- 49. Identify potential items to include when incentivizing economic development agreements.
- 50. Review possible programs for legacy businesses.

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Assessment of Community Assistance

- Additional area of focus.
- Establish initial assessment and documentation process.
- Effective case management.
- Optimize social service agency application process.

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

1. **Establish a method by which those who need help can start with one office to obtain information about the services they need – address, phone number, website, etc. (Benefit Navigator)**
2. Set priorities each year before applications are accepted for Human Services Advisory Board funding (similar to CDBG process).



Develop Equity Policy

- Additional area of focus.
- Includes diversity and inclusion.
- Develop a shared definition and understanding of equity.
- Work towards an equity-based budget (San Antonio model).

Short Term (completed in 12-18 months)

1. Research methods to mitigate the negative impacts of poverty.
2. Invest in training to build our knowledge to remove disparities.***
3. Complete an equity survey.***

Intermediate (completed in 18-36 months)

4. Consider a Commission for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.