

Key Priorities:

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

- Workforce Housing
- Workforce Development
- Downtown Vitality
- Sustainability
- COVID Response

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.
 - a. Improve the website as a resource to low- and moderate-income residents seeking housing.
- 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/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. 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.
- 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. 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 the County and School District to identify tax- forfeiture properties and make them available for construction of permanently affordable workforce housing.
- III. Commit General Funds to land banking, investigate other revenue streams such as density bonuses.
- IV. Determine if the City can provide an incentive or assistance, i.e. financing, to get vacant lots utilized.
- V. Explore the feasibility of the City backing loans related to development of workforce housing.
- 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.
- V. Explore home-sharing and provide a report.

- I. Identify potential items to include when incentivizing economic development agreements.
- II. Evaluate Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP) contract to include deliverables that require training and programming opportunities.
- 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: 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.
- V. Explore possibility of a day labor program implemented through social service agencies.
- VI. Assist local businesses with their search engine optimization, focusing on historically under-utilized businesses.
- VII. Research the use of opportunity zones.
- VIII. 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:

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) Public outreach with key stakeholders including the Downtown Association, Main Street, the University, as well as other key stakeholders.
 - c) Work with Arts Commission to identify projects linking Downtown and the river
 - 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.
- 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.
 - 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.

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.

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

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) Increase use of social media such as Facebook to promote environmental programs; add environmental programs to FB schedule.
 - 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. 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.

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.

Key Priority: COVID Response

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.

Area of Focus: Homelessness

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

- ❖ *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 continue to implement Multi Modal Transportation initiatives already underway and implement ways to assist people of all abilities in planning their routes.*