



City of San Marcos

630 East Hopkins
San Marcos, TX 78666

Workshop Agenda - Final City Council

Wednesday, September 30, 2015

5:30 PM

Activity Center Room 1

501 E. Hopkins (Activity Center, Room 1) - Joint City Council/P&Z Meeting

I. Call To Order

II. Roll Call

1. Receive Staff presentations and hold discussion regarding updates to the Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan, CodeSMTX, and the Transportation Master Plan and provide direction to staff.

VI. Question and Answer Session with Press and Public.

VII. Adjournment.

POSTED ON FRIDAY, September 25, 2015 at 12:00PM

TAMMY COOK, TRMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

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Legislation Text

File #: ID#15-587, **Version:** 1

AGENDA CAPTION:

Receive Staff presentations and hold discussion regarding updates to the Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan, CodeSMTX, and the Transportation Master Plan and provide direction to staff.

Meeting date: September 30, 2015

Department: Planning and Development Services

Funds Required: N/A

Account Number: N/A

Funds Available: N/A

Account Name: N/A

CITY COUNCIL GOAL: Community Wellness/ Strengthen the Middle Class

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENT(s):

BACKGROUND:

The Joint Workshop contains a presentation and information on the progress and implementation strategies incorporated as part of three important projects in San Marcos.

- Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan Update
- CodeSMTX
- Transportation Master Plan

9.30.15 JOINT WORKSHOP

The Joint Workshop contains a presentation and information on the progress and implementation strategies incorporated as part of two important projects in San Marcos.

- Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan Update
- CodeSMTX

Below is a brief summary of the purpose and key implementation strategies of each project

VISION SAN MARCOS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Purpose: The purpose of the proposed Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan update is to maintain a current tool for guiding growth and development in San Marcos. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in April of 2013. Three goals of the plan were to 1) rewrite the Land Development Code, 2) Conduct Neighborhood Character Studies, and 3) Update the Transportation Master Plan. These three projects have provided new information related to guiding growth and development in San Marcos. In addition there have been environmental and infrastructure changes over the last few years in San Marcos that need to be incorporated in the Plan.

Key Implementation Strategies: The key implementation strategies identified for the update to the Comprehensive Plan include updates to the document and preferred scenario map for three plan elements including:

- **Neighborhoods and Housing** – Identify and differentiate each Neighborhood Study Area on the Preferred Scenario Map and within the document. Include a discussion about implementation of Neighborhood Character Plans.
- **Land Use** – Refinement of the future vision and implementation strategies for each Vision San Marcos Intensity Zone. Update the boundaries of Vision San Marcos Intensity Zones to reflect new environmental and transportation information.
- **Transportation** – Inclusion of Corridors and Corridor Classifications within the document including: Highway Corridors, Conservation Corridors, Commercial Corridors, Neighborhood Corridors, and Greenway Corridors. Update to the Preferred Scenario Map to include Land Use classifications around proposed corridors.

CODESMTX

Purpose: The purpose of the CodeSMTX project is to implement the Comprehensive Plan by directing growth compatible with the intent of each of the different Comprehensive Plan Areas including: Intensity Zones, Existing Neighborhoods, Areas of Stability, and Corridors.

Key Implementation Strategies: The key implementation strategy in each of the four comprehensive plan areas includes:

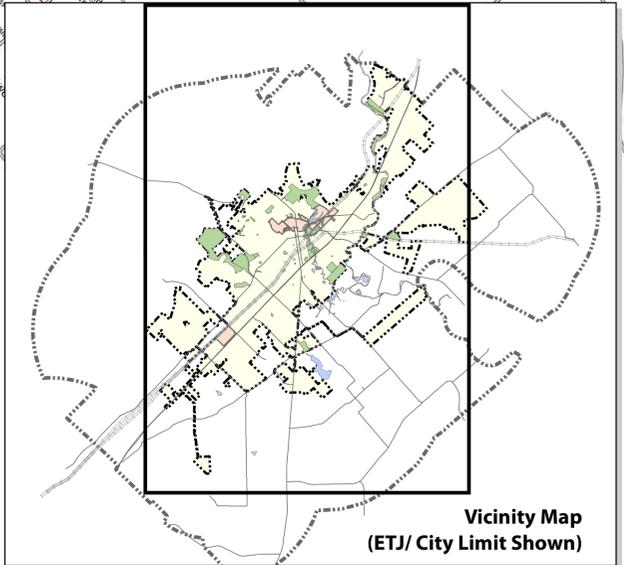
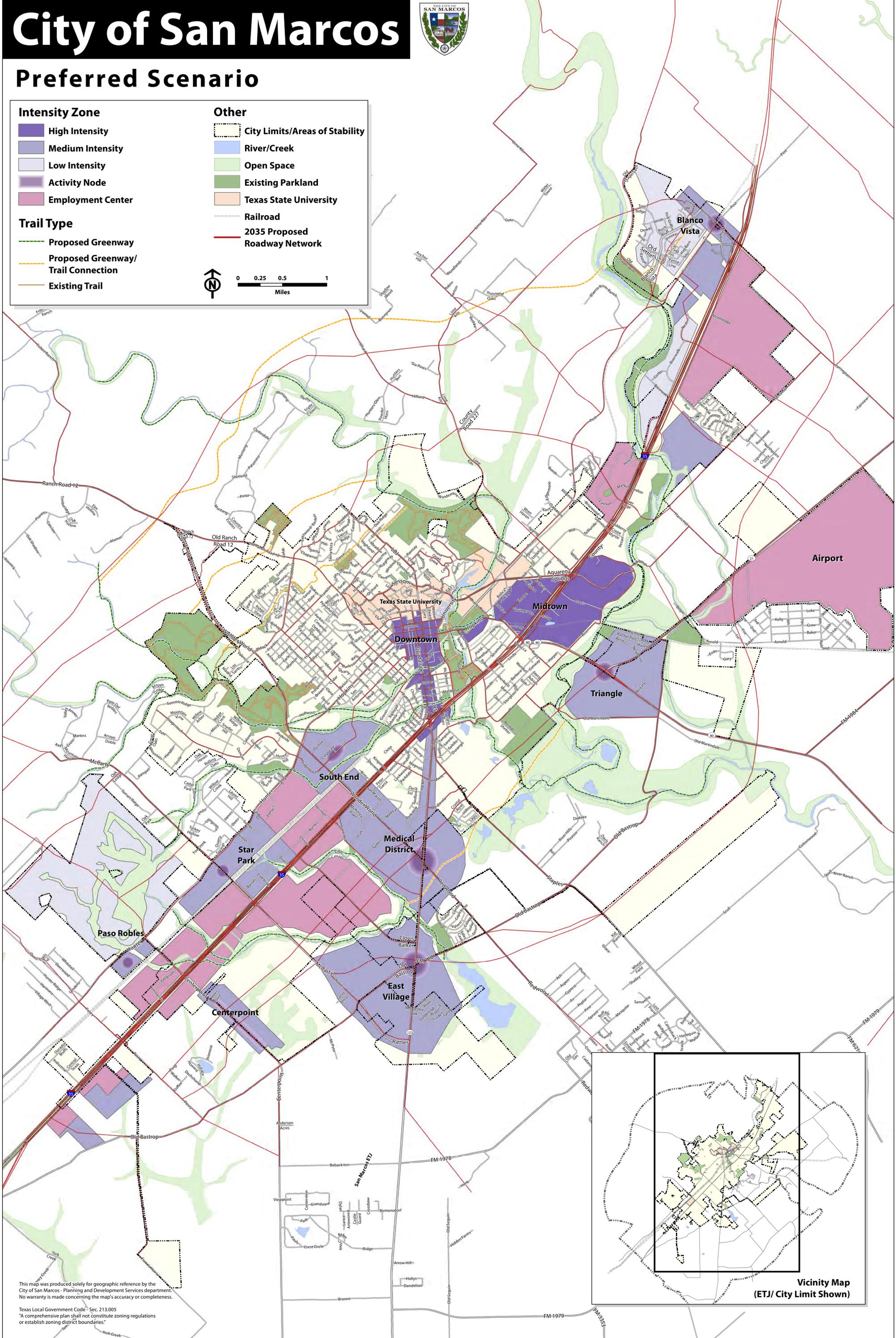
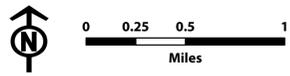
- **Intensity Zones** – Places to accommodate the City's future growth and expansion in well-planned areas where people can meet their daily needs within a short walk, bike, transit trip or drive.
 - City Initiated rezoning is proposed for these areas
- **Existing Neighborhoods** – Places that maintain their existing character and follow development and redevelopment patterns desired by the residents.
 - No City Initiated rezoning is proposed in these areas
- **Corridors** – A system of corridors to compliment the character and connect various Comp Plan areas across the city.
 - No City Initiated rezoning is proposed in these areas
- **Areas of Stability** – Places that maintain their existing character and are not encouraged for intense development.
 - No City Initiated rezoning is proposed in these areas

City of San Marcos



Preferred Scenario

Intensity Zone		Other	
	High Intensity		City Limits/Areas of Stability
	Medium Intensity		River/Creek
	Low Intensity		Open Space
	Activity Node		Existing Parkland
	Employment Center		Texas State University
Trail Type			Railroad
	Proposed Greenway		2035 Proposed Roadway Network
	Proposed Greenway/ Trail Connection		
	Existing Trail		



This map was produced solely for geographic reference by the City of San Marcos - Planning and Development Services department. No warranty is made concerning the map's accuracy or completeness.

Texas Local Government Code - Sec. 213.005
 "A comprehensive plan shall not constitute zoning regulations or establish zoning district boundaries."

Preferred Scenario—DRAFT 2015



Comprehensive Plan Elements

Growth Areas

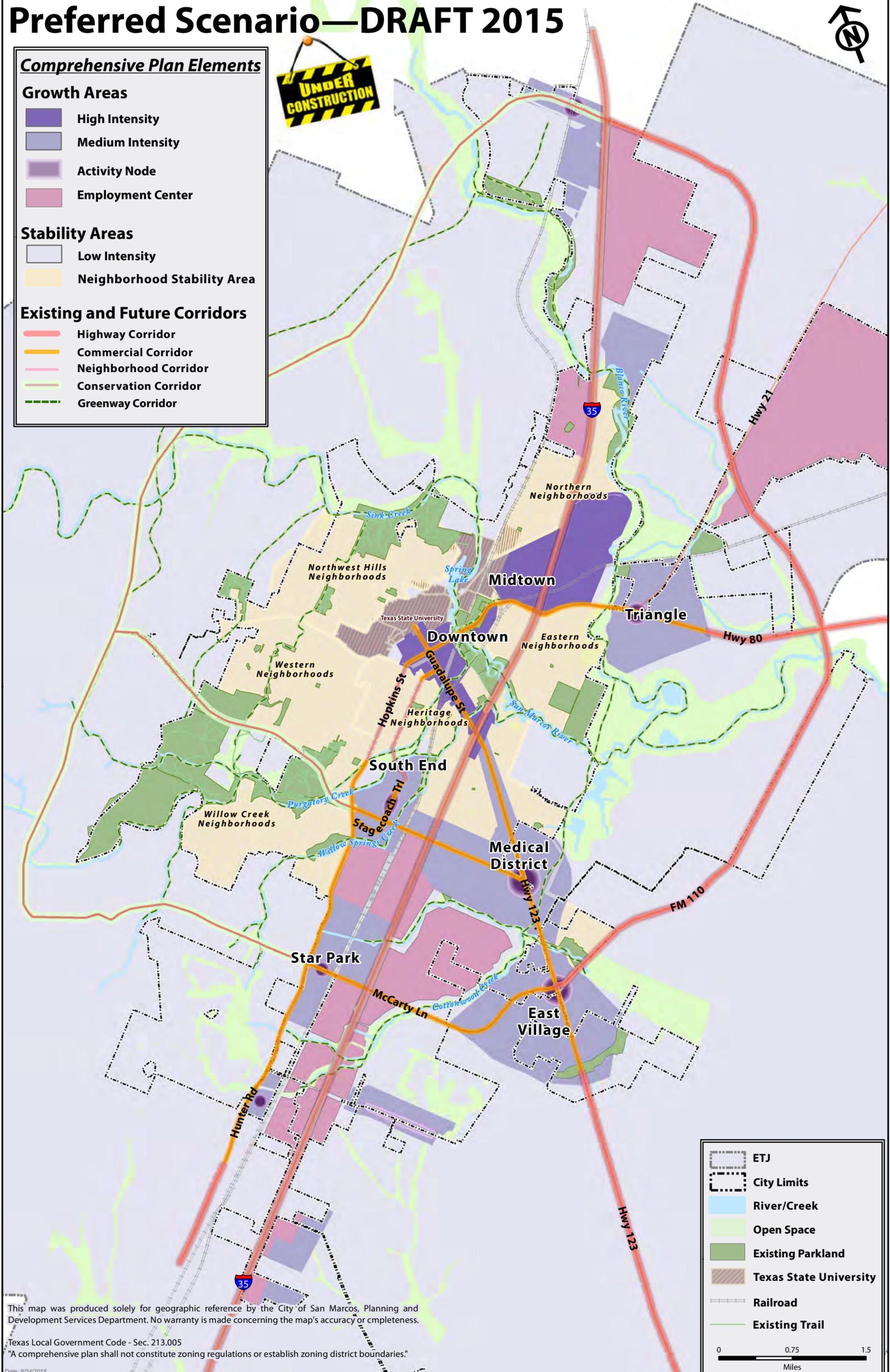
- High Intensity
- Medium Intensity
- Activity Node
- Employment Center

Stability Areas

- Low Intensity
- Neighborhood Stability Area

Existing and Future Corridors

- Highway Corridor
- Commercial Corridor
- Neighborhood Corridor
- Conservation Corridor
- Greenway Corridor



	ETJ
	City Limits
	River/Creek
	Open Space
	Existing Parkland
	Texas State University
	Railroad
	Existing Trail

0 0.75 1.5
Miles

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MIDTOWN

CURRENT

Midtown is generally bounded by Aquarena Springs Drive, River Road, Hopkins, and the railroad tracks to the west. This area consists of Thorpe Lane and Springtown Mall. Private development includes retail and multi-family residential along Thorpe Lane and several large apartment complexes east of IH-35. Springtown Mall is primarily unoccupied, providing an ideal opportunity for redevelopment.

FUTURE VISION

Because of its central location and accessibility, Midtown will be a high-density mixed use area, possibly the densest area in San Marcos, with housing for many household types. Midtown residents will have easy access to services, city facilities, the university, and the San Marcos River. They will have the most diverse options for transportation, including transit connections to the university and the rest of the city. A variety of services will be within walking distance, along the multiple bicycle routes, and through vehicular access to major roads including IH-35. The area will complement, not compete with, Downtown. Due to the lack of historically significant structures, more contemporary architecture will be appropriate. This architecture will differentiate Midtown from Downtown.





MIDTOWN



CURRENT

Midtown is generally bounded by Aquarena Springs Drive, River Road, Hopkins, and the railroad tracks to the west. Midtown has 5 distinct areas, all with limited roadway networks, making it difficult to implement walkable solutions as the area densifies.

1. West of I-35 contains Thorpe Lane and Springtown Mall.
2. Multifamily area on both sides of Aquarena Springs east of I-35 has large complexes, each cut off from its neighbor.
3. Area on both sides of Davis Lane south to the railroad; has the best opportunity for new development.
4. Area west of I-35, between the railroad and Hwy 80 that includes the Walmart and Sanmar Shopping Plaza.
5. The houses facing River Road along the Blanco River have their own rural character.

FUTURE VISION

Midtown will be a high-density mixed use area with a network of interconnected streets that are pedestrian and bike friendly. Midtown residents will have easy access to services, city facilities, the university, the San Marcos River, and future trails along the Blanco River. Residents will have the most diverse options for transportation, including transit connections to the university and the rest of the city. A variety of services will be within walking distance, along the multiple bicycle routes, and through vehicular access to major roads including I-35. The area will complement San Marcos' Historic Downtown with more contemporary new architecture. To improve pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation, property owners/ developers may need to provide new streets as properties redevelop over time. The plan shows in the western portion of Midtown a greenway that can be used to handle storm water but looks like a park and provides a walking/ biking trail through the neighborhood.



IMPLEMENTATION & PHASING

Midtown is a re-development planning area with build-out goal of 15-20 years for the area west of IH-35 and 20-30 years east of IH-35. It will also be one of the more challenging of the Intensity Zones to implement. As opposed to new development, or "greenfield development," Midtown is constrained by less than ideal existing land development patterns, fragmented land ownership, and market constraints common to vertical mixed-use development. Additionally, Midtown has significant pedestrian and bicycle connectivity issues despite being in close proximity to downtown and the university. Key implementation components for the Midtown vision should include:

- Near -Term prioritization of Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) within the Midtown Area.
- Implement an infill and economic development strategy.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a special finance district.
- Develop and implement a Regional Storm-water plan for the Midtown Area.
- Develop strategies for mitigating the divide that IH-35 creates within Midtown.

HERITAGE



CURRENT

The Heritage Neighborhood Area is generally located west of IH 35 between Wonderworld Drive and the San Marcos River. It borders the Willow Creek Neighborhood Area and is intersected by downtown. The Heritage Neighborhood Area contains all of the City's Historic Districts. Most of the streets in this neighborhood area are lined with large trees, adding to the character of the built environment.

A mix of land uses defines the Heritage Neighborhood Area. Commercial uses line the major thoroughfares and multifamily uses are integrated into the predominately single-family neighborhoods.

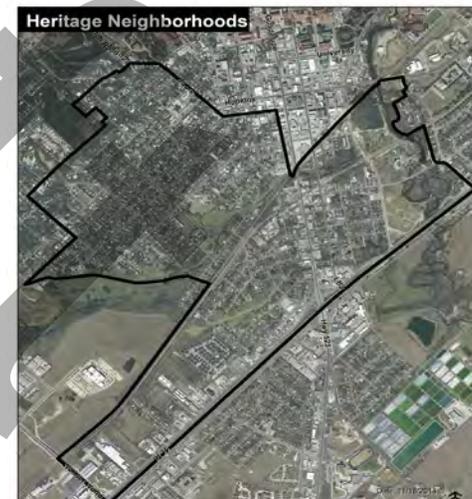
FUTURE VISION

The Heritage Neighborhood Area will maintain its historic character. New developments should follow development and redevelopment patterns which enhance the look of the existing built environment. Currently vacant lots should be targeted for infill development of single family homes in predominately single family areas or mixed use developments in other areas.

All residents should have access to parks. Pocket parks, neighborhood scale parks and community gardens should be developed with amenities which make them attractive and enhance the historic character. Bicycle and pedestrian access must be provided for parks and other destinations. To further promote cycling and walking as modes of transportation, vehicular traffic should be controlled through reduced speeds and other traffic calming measures.

IMPLEMENTATION & PHASING

- Include standards in CodeSMTX which encourage development in line with the character of the area
- Update the Preferred Scenario map by identifying transition areas which are better suited for non-single family developments
- Identify parcels within neighborhoods which may be developed as parks or community gardens
- Construct Complete Streets to provide a comprehensive network for cyclists and pedestrians and study travel patterns within the neighborhood to create a plan for managing high-speed and cut-through vehicular traffic





CORRIDORS

A system of Corridors are established on the preferred scenario map to accommodate and connect existing land uses across the City and to give direction for future land uses. Corridors classifications also guide the future design or re-design of roadways. The Transportation Master Plan specifies various roadway designs including Boulevards, Avenues, and standard Streets. Corridors classifications will indicate which of these roadway types are appropriate. CodeSMTX is also developing appropriate zoning districts as options along corridors to complement the roadway types. CodeSMTX is not proposing any City initiated rezoning along corridors.

HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

A highway corridor is a high intensity thoroughfare that typically gives greatest priority to moving vehicular traffic. Appropriate uses along Highway Corridors include regional commercial and employment center uses, as well as open space. Highway Corridors should accommodate transit as needed and provide amenities for pedestrians and bicycles when necessary to provide connectivity to and within Intensity Zones. Appropriate roadway types include Boulevards and Avenues.

CONSERVATION CORRIDOR

A Conservation corridor is a mixed intensity thoroughfare depending on its locations, but has limited adjacent development and access. Conservation Corridors are typically located within environmentally sensitive areas and within the City's ETJ. Conservation Corridors should provide amenities for pedestrians and bicycles when necessary to provide connectivity to and within Intensity Zones and/or City Parks. Appropriate roadway types include Boulevards and Avenues.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

A Commercial corridor is a high intensity thoroughfare that accommodates multiple modes of transportation. Appropriate uses include a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Commercial Corridors are typically located within Intensity Zones. They should give high priority to amenities for pedestrians, transit, and bicycles and vehicular. On-street parking and street trees should be standard and access to adjacent properties should be limited. Buildings located along Commercial corridors are typically two to five stories and close to the street. Appropriate roadway types include Boulevards and Avenues.

NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR

A Neighborhood corridor is a low intensity thoroughfare with predominantly residential uses and neighborhood oriented retail and commercial uses. Neighborhood corridors place the greatest priority on pedestrian and bicycle amenities. On-street parking and street trees should also be standards and transit should be accommodated as necessary. Buildings are typically one to three stories tall and moderately setback from the street. Appropriate roadway types include standard streets.

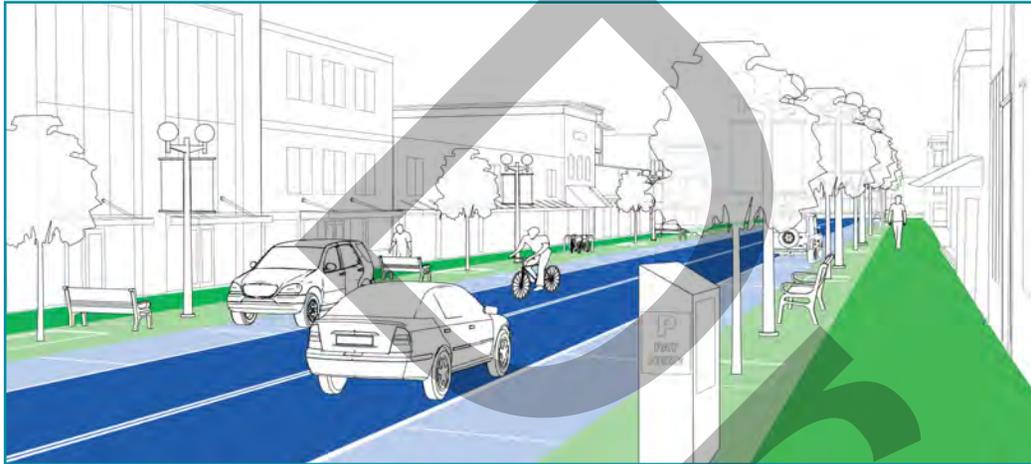
GREENWAY CORRIDOR

A linear corridor of protected open space following natural features and supporting bicycle and pedestrian connections between various intensity zones and neighborhood areas across the City. Adjacent development should relate to the corridor.



Greenway Corridor Example

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS



Commercial Corridor Elements



Hopkins Street - Existing

CHARACTERISTICS:

DESIGN ELEMENTS: 2-4 Travel Lanes, On-Street Parking, Bicycle Lane/Path, Landscape/Amenity Zone, Street Trees, Expanded Sidewalk for Cafe Seating,

ROADWAY TYPES: Boulevards, Avenues, Streets

LAND USES: Walkable Mixed Use Development.

EXISTING EXAMPLES: Hopkins Street Downtown



Hopkins Street - Potential

TT COMMENT REVIEW PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF THE THINK TANK REVIEW PROCESS FOR CODESMTX

Think Tank consideration of CodeSMTX consists of review of the document on two levels.

Level One – Think Tank as a Committee

The framework and process for the Think Tank consideration and review of CodeSMTX as a committee will 1) reflect an equal level of participation and input from all members of the committee, 2) provide feedback on the codes ability to implement community values and interests, and 3) be reflected as part of the consensus report from the Think Tank to City Council.

Level Two – Think Tank Members as Technical Experts

The framework and process for the Think Tank consideration and review of CodeSMTX as individual technical experts will 1) provide input to staff on shared themes and concerns to be brought for group consideration, 2) be considered for inclusion in the final draft 3) be responded to by the code team and 4) be summarized and reflected in an addendum to the final report as Individual TT member comments.

LEVEL ONE CONSIDERATION BREAKDOWN

The following framework and process have been identified to facilitate a productive and high level discussion of the proposed CodeSMTX strategy.

- Five Issue Exploration Meetings** have been scheduled to address the major components of CodeSMTX
 - September 2: Conventional Districts
 - September 16: Character Based Districts
 - October 7: Environmental Chapter
 - October 21: Supplemental Standards
 - November 4: Transportation
- One Week** prior to the Issue Exploration Meeting Staff will:
 - 1) Provide a response to all related comments in the TT comment spreadsheet
 - 2) Provide a memo with an overview of the topic to be discussed
- Two Days** before the Meeting TT Members will submit one key question or Concern for staff response. Questions/ Concerns and responses will be provided to the entire group before the meeting
- At the Meeting** TT will Review and discuss the current code approach, proposed code approach and related Comprehensive Plan Goals and provide feedback on two main questions
 - 1) Does the proposed CodeSMTX strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?
 - 2) If not, what are those interests that have not been met?
- After the Meeting** Staff will record the TT feedback received from the discussion and respond

LEVEL TWO CONSIDERATION BREAKDOWN

Think Tank members have been appointed due to their technical expertise, unique perspective and knowledge of San Marcos. Comments and recommendations from TT members as technical experts will be considered and utilized during the drafting of CodeSMTX document. Following is a framework for Staffs consideration of Individual TT comments.

- Comments that are recommended by the code team and integrated into the document
- Comments that need further discussion as a group
- Comments that need further clarification or explanation
- Comments that are not recommended by staff

It is important to note that the documents and comments received will be changing throughout the review as new information is received and code strategies are amended. Staff will analyze all comments received as new drafts of the code are produced. This is an iterative process.

ZONING IN AREAS OF STABILITY AND EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

SEPTEMBER 2, 2015; ISSUE EXPLORATION

ZONING TRANSLATION TABLE

The Zoning Translation Table is a key implementation tool for Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Table is to translate the guiding principles for growth and development established through the Preferred Scenario Map into Zoning.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

“The preferred scenario map does not explicitly address zoning. Land in the preferred scenario is divided into two broad categories. The first category includes intensity zones where change is anticipated by the plan. The second category includes areas of relative stability where changes in use are not recommended by the plan.” ... “Zoning is conservative in nature and has a bias towards maintaining the status quo. Growing cities, though, are not static; new residents move in, new businesses are established and new technologies change the way people live. The purpose of planning is to anticipate and shape this change in a way that provides opportunities for new development and redevelopment while preserving the community’s cultural and environmental heritage.”

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See LDC Section 4.1.5.2

The existing zoning translation table was implemented after the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation tool. The table provides a direct translation from the preferred scenario to allowable zoning districts.

Initial Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Create a zoning tool that implements the guiding principles of the Comprehensive Plan and provides opportunities for positive growth and change

See CodeSMTX Section 5.1.1.5

Zoning Translation Table Amendments include:

- An Intensity Classification System that allows for more flexibility in zoning requests
- The addition of Corridors and their allowable zoning districts
- A general policy statement that “Zoning requests may be made in the same or lower Intensity Classification”
- The addition of Character Based Districts that enable change in Intensity Areas
- The addition of more zoning options for Employment Centers

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?

If Not, what are those interests that have not been met?

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

New Zoning Options

Two different options for Character Based Zoning Districts have been provided in CodeSMTX and tailored for incorporation into Existing Neighborhood Areas and Areas of Stability.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

“Being located in an area of stability does not mean that these areas should not or will not change. It means that any changes, whether new developments, zoning requests, or public improvements, should be carefully planned and implemented so that the character of the area remains.”

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 3

- Revise zoning code to allow for more diverse housing types and mixed-use development
- Update infill housing program
- Develop an affordable housing program

Current Land Development Code Provisions

Existing Neighborhood Areas (Infill):

The Existing Land Development Code does not currently have a zoning tool that provides for diversified housing types within Existing Neighborhood Areas. The mechanism that is used for this type of a development is a Planned Development District (PDD)

See Smartcode Section 3.3.1

Areas of Stability (New Development):

Smartcode zoning is available in areas of stability as an option for providing diverse and complete neighborhoods for properties greater than 40 acres.

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Existing Neighborhood Areas (Infill):

Development or redevelopment on parcels that are greater than either ½ of a block or 5 acres within existing neighborhood have the option of requesting a re-zoning to Character District 4 (CD-4). Character District 4 provides the flexibility needed for a larger development parcel while retaining compatibility with existing neighborhood scale. CD-4 includes:

- Primarily residential incorporating single family, duplex, rowhouses, small multifamily, live/work, and small commercial. Buildings are 2 to 3 stories

Areas of Stability (New Development):

Development on parcels greater than 20 acres has the option to request a Character Based Planning Area (CBPA) Zoning District in order to ensure that development

- The CBPA zoning consists of a complete community with a range of development types and streets. CBPA zoning allows the owner to submit a Regulating Plan to assign certain percentages of CD-3, CD-4, and CD-5.

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?

If Not, what are those interests that have not been met?

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Planned Development Districts

Planned Development Districts are an overlay district with the purpose of providing an option for larger properties to develop as an integral unit for single or mixed uses that may include uses and standards that vary from the provision of other zoning districts.

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Goal1: Direct growth, compatible with surrounding uses

Other CodeSMTX Re-write Goals:

Streamlining Development Process: PDD's frequently consist of drafting and negotiating an entirely new document that can take between 9 months and 2 years for approval.

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See Section 4.2.6.1 LDC

The current Land Development Code utilizes PDDs as a tool to achieve mixed use or larger scale development that doesn't fit within the existing San Marcos zoning categories. Currently PDD's

- Have the following minimum district size
 - Single Family/ Duplex/ Mixed Uses: 2 acres
 - Multi-family and Non-Residential: 1 acre
- Are required to achieve diversified housing and mixed use developments
- Are required to achieve a dense Multi-Family development
- May vary from any use or development standard within the LDC

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CodeSMTX is replacing PDD's as an overlay district with the allowance for a CD-4 in Existing Neighborhood Areas.

CodeSMTX endeavors to draft zoning districts and standards that provide a balanced degree of flexibility and predictability so that long negotiated entitlement processes can be minimized. Character Based Planning provides the flexibility to accommodate a changing market and larger tracts of land while preserving development standards. The establishment of CD-4 within Existing Neighborhood Areas is proposed to :

- Have the following minimum district size:
 - Greater than 5 acres
 - Greater than 1/2 block
- Require a regulating plan to be included with the zoning change request.
- Follow all standards for a CD-4 district

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?

If Not, what are those interests that have not been met?

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Accessory Dwelling Units

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 3

- Revise zoning code to allow for more diverse housing types and mixed-use development
- Update infill housing program
- Develop an affordable housing program

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 2: Housing opportunities for students of Texas State University in Appropriate Areas

- Revise development codes in Intensity Zones to allow and streamline the process for appropriate uses and densities
- Develop a plan to reduce congestion and parking issues caused near campus and in dense housing areas including options that integrate with existing university systems

Current Land Development Code Provisions

See Section 4.3.2.1 and 4.3.1.2

The Existing Land Development Code permits Accessory Dwelling Units under the following conditions:

- Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted in FD, AR, SF-R and Conditional in SF-11 and SF 6
- Accessory Dwelling Units are limited to 50% of the total floor area of the primary structure
- No additional parking space is required
- Accessory Dwelling Units must be located behind the Primary Structure

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

The Proposed Code Strategy permits Accessory Dwelling Units under the following conditions:

- Accessory Dwelling Units are permitted in FD, AR, SF-R, SF-6 and Conditional in SF 4.5, DR, and TH.
- Accessory Dwelling Units are limited to 625 Square Feet
- Require one additional parking space in the 3rd lot layer
- Accessory Dwelling Units must be located in the 3rd lot layer

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?

If Not, what are those interests that have not been met?

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

Conventional District Changes

Vision San Marcos Comprehensive Plan:

Land Use Goal 2: High-Density Mixed-Use development and infrastructure in the Activity Nodes and Intensity Zones, including the downtown area supporting walkability and integrated transit corridors

Neighborhoods and Housing Goal 4: Well maintained, stable neighborhoods protected from blight or the encroachment on incompatible land uses

Transportation Goal 1

- Determine appropriate modes of transportation in and around new developments, subdivisions, site plans, the University and high density residential areas

Current Land Development Code Provisions

Currently all conventional zoning districts are primarily use based and suburban auto-oriented including Medium and High Density residential districts

Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy

CodeSMTX is proposing to modify those zoning districts that require more parking, are higher density, and are typically located in transitional areas. Changes to Conventional districts include

- Updated standards in DR, TH, and NC districts that include the following:
 - Parking in the 2nd layer for NC and 3rd layer for DR, and TH districts
 - Limitation of Driveway size and location
 - Frontage Type specifications
 - Modifications to setbacks and landscaping standards to accommodate parking location
- The retirement of the MF-12, MF-18, and MF-24 districts. New High Density Multi-Family development is required to locate in Character District-5 within Intensity Zones.

TT Discussion/ Response

Does the Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy meet the Comprehensive Plan goals, the interests of the stakeholder groups and our overall community vision?

If Not, what are those interests that have not been met?

Final Proposed CodeSMTX Strategy