

GPAC MEMORANDUM

TO: San Marcos General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

FROM: De Novo Planning Group

SUBJECT: General Plan Advisory Committee Mobility Discussion

DATE: November 4, 2021

The November 18, 2021 GPAC meeting will focus on the topic of economic development. This meeting packet includes specific reading materials related to this topic. The Economic Development Element is an optional element to the City's General Plan; the City does not currently have a stand-alone Economic Development Element, however, this topic is generally addressed as part of the City's Land Use and Community Design Element.

REQUIRED READING

[Existing Conditions Report Market Conditions Section](#)

[Current General Plan Land Use and Community Design Element \(Addresses Economic Development\)](#)

[City of San Marcos Economic Development Website Featuring Videos and Materials](#)

[California Office of Planning and Research Comments on Economic Development](#)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

The City's new Economic Development Element is intended to guide the City's future policy decisions to **support growing and strengthening the local economy**. The Economic Development Element is not a required element for a General Plan, but the City has decided to include it in recognition that promoting economic vibrancy and resiliency is a central aspect of planning for San Marcos' future. While presented as a separate chapter, the policies contained within the Economic Development Element will be intertwined with those found in the other Elements of the General Plan. Decisions designed to advance other elements, such as land use, housing, mobility, open space, and health and wellness, necessarily impact economic development, and vice-versa.

Economic development means different things to different people. On a broad scale, anything a community does to foster and create a healthy economy can be considered "economic development". Economic development is a concerted effort on the part of the City to influence the direction of private sector investment toward opportunities that can lead to sustained economic growth. Sustained economic growth can provide sufficient incomes for the local labor force, profitable business opportunities for employers and tax revenues for maintaining an infrastructure to support this continued growth.

INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE

As part of the GPAC's meeting on November 18, members will participate in completing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis specific to future economic development goals and priorities in San Marcos. In other words, what should the City be thinking about as it develops goals, policies, and programs to help grow and strengthen the local economy?

Prior to the meeting, we encourage you to start thinking about the City's unique **internal strengths** that make it a desirable place to invest and do business. Conversely, what are some of the community's **internal challenges/weaknesses** that might limit the City's ability to strengthen its economic position? Are there specific **external opportunities** (things happening outside of the City) that the City could take advantage of to strengthen its local economic position, or what are some **external threats** (things outside of the City's control) facing the City as it addresses economic development priorities over the coming years? As part of this work, feel free to engage your friends, families, and neighbors in a discussion about these topics and record any ideas that you'd like to share with the group as part of the GPAC meeting.

Consider the following ideas and use the next page to record your thoughts. Please bring this sheet with you to the GPAC meeting to help facilitate our discussion.

STEP 1 – LIST STRENGTHS

Develop a list of internal strengths of San Marcos. Strengths are the internal qualities, activities, and assets of the City which help contribute to a strong local economy. What are we doing well? What are our strongest assets? What distinguishes San Marcos from neighbors in the Trade Area?

STEP 2 – IDENTIFY WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses are internal factors that may limit the City's potential to grow and strengthen the local economy. It is possible that a strength could also be a weakness. For example, for a business, long-time employees could be a strength because of their experience, but may be a weakness because it might indicate a workforce close to retirement.

STEP 3 – LIST OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities are external factors, as opposed to the internal factors of strengths and weaknesses. Opportunities could include new relevant training programs at educational institutions or an emerging diverse workforce. What trends are evident in the marketplace? What new types of business could we be targeting?

STEP 4 – IDENTIFY THREATS

Threats are also external factors. Threats could have a negative impact on the City's ability to grow and strengthen its local economy. How does San Marcos fit into the regional economic landscape? Are there new regulations that potentially could impact the City's economic success? Again it is possible that an opportunity may also be perceived as a threat.

Prompt: How to Grow and Strengthen the Local San Marcos Economy

Strengths (Internal)	Weaknesses (Internal)
Opportunities (External)	Threats (External)