

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR EACH CITY

SAN MARCOS

"Bed and banks"

The "bed-and-banks" bill would transfer the ownership of the land in the riverbed and along the banks of the San Marcos River located within city limits from the state to the city. San Marcos officials say this would allow for the city to better protect the river and its wildlife.

BUDA

Hotel occupancy tax revenue use

Buda Mayor Todd Ruge said he has discussed working with San Marcos to receive state approval to use hotel occupancy tax to fund city parks.

KYLE

Railroad siding relocation

The city of Kyle is hoping for legislation that will allow the relocation of a switching station—a line of railroad track that allows one train to pull off the main track while another train passes—from Center Street. The current location of the station causes major congestion downtown, officials have said.

Hays County-area legislators prep bills for next session

Lawmakers to propose changes to annexation, marijuana possession and property tax laws

BY **CARLIE PORTERFIELD**

The 85th Texas Legislature will convene Jan. 10, and Hays County legislators are supporting bills that include decriminalizing marijuana, transferring ownership of the bed and banks of the San Marcos River, and reforming the annexation process for cities.

'BED AND BANKS'

State Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, prefiled Senate Bill 71, a bill that deals with San Marcos specifically but could have statewide implications.

If passed, SB 71, or the "bed-and-banks" bill, would transfer the ownership of the land in the riverbed and along the banks of the San Marcos River located within city limits from the state to the city.

Kristi Wyatt, city of San Marcos spokesperson, said this would allow for the city to better protect the river and the wildlife that calls it home.

CONTINUED ON 20



The Gas Lamp District, off Centerpoint Road in San Marcos, is one of several mixed-use developments planned on the city's east side.

San Marcos' east side primed for single-family housing boom

BY **BRETT THORNE**

San Marcos' most recent comprehensive plan, a city document that guides city growth, calls for increased development on the city's east side.

During the plan's formation, "the public indicated a preference for some redevelopment in the urban core and for new development along east-side corridors and I-35," the

plan states.

Four projects on the city's eastside could bring as many as 4,000 new single-family homes as well as multifamily housing and retail properties.

"That's the direction we want to grow," San Marcos Permit Manager Abby Gillfillan said. "It's not over the [Edwards Aquifer] recharge zone. It's not environmentally sensitive land."

THE TRACE COMMUNITY

In January, California-based real estate development firm HighPointe Communities will break ground on Trace, a community that, when fully built out, will include 1,000 single-family homes, parks and a site for a new San Marcos CISD elementary school as well as commercial, office and retail space.

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John and Jennifer Garrett began *Community Impact Newspaper* in 2005 in Pflugerville, Texas. The company's mission is to build communities of informed citizens and thriving businesses through the collaboration of a passionate team.

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I'm dreaming of a white Christmas

Snow is what many children and some adults will be wishing for as Christmas approaches, and although that likely isn't going to happen in our area—again, that is—there are plenty of wonderful opportunities to volunteer your time this holiday season helping others, as you'll see in our Volunteer Guide this month (see page 17).

As we ring in 2017 in less than a month, members of the Texas Legislature will be heading to Austin for the upcoming session. In her cover story this month,

reporter Carlie Porterfield takes a look at what legislation the cities of San Marcos, Kyle and Buda will be following.

In San Marcos, Amazon.com isn't the only growth taking place on the east side. In his front-page story this month, editor Brett Thorne examines a potential residential boom east of I-35 in the city.

Christmas is a wonderful time of year. A time of sharing with family, friends and neighbors. Spread the happiness with a smile and greeting to all those you encounter now and throughout 2017.



David Short

David Short
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ASK THE EDITOR



Brett Thorne

Brett Thorne
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Do you have a question about how local government works or something going on in town? Send it to sbk@communityimpact.com.

How can I keep up with the upcoming Texas legislative session?

Marijuana, annexation reform, property tax relief and the San Marcos River. What do each of these subjects have in common? Each is the focus of legislation that has been proposed by or received support from Hays County-area legislators.

The 85th Texas Legislature convenes Jan. 10, and representatives from the Hays County area will head to the Capitol to represent your interests.

Community Impact Newspaper will be covering issues of interest to residents in San Marcos, Buda and Kyle throughout the session. In addition to following our coverage in the newspaper and online at communityimpact.com, you can keep up with bill you're interested in through the Texas Legislature Online at www.legis.state.tx.us. The site allows users to look up the status of bills and follow them through the legislative process.

If you see legislation you like or don't like, let your representative know. Contact information for Isaac, Campbell and Zaffirini is listed on Page 21.

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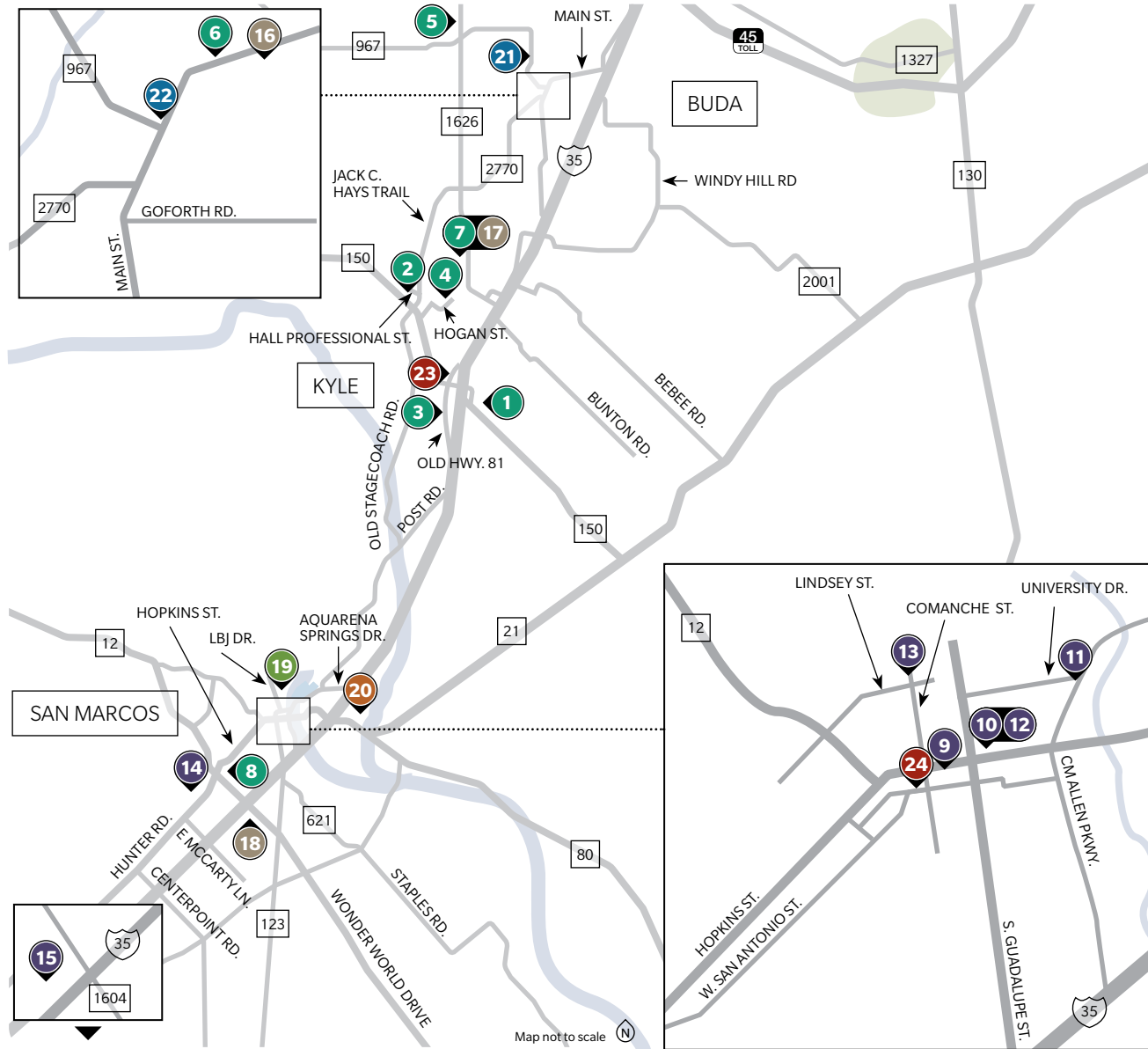
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NOW OPEN

1 Kyle Care Pharmacy, 575 E. FM 150, Kyle, opened in early December, owner Sri Vatti said. The pharmacy fills prescriptions and offers over-the-counter medications. The business also provides free medication delivery and will matches competing pharmacies' prices. 512-256-0129. www.kylecarepharmacy.com

2 Faces in the Dark Tattoo, 121 Hall Professional Center, Ste. E, Kyle, is a tattoo shop that specializes in color and black-and-white realism pieces. The studio opened in early October. 512-504-9988.

3 Rising Phoenix Martial Arts, 402 S. Old Hwy. 81, Kyle, opened in early October and offers martial arts classes for all ages, from 3-year-olds to adults in their 70s. 512-975-9520.

www.risingphoenixtkd.com

4 Cuda Sports Rentals, 220 Hogan, Kyle, opened in November and is a family-owned party rental company offering full-service setup and teardown of equipment. Right now Cuda Sports rents out Knockerballs, single-chamber inflatable spheres with inner handles and adjustable shoulder straps. In the future, Cuda will expand its inventory to include inflatable

sumo suits and boxing gloves. 512-686-6795. www.cudasportsrentals.com

5 Cornerstone Storage, 281 N. FM 1626, Buda, opened in September. The business offers climate-controlled storage, outside drive-up storage, and both covered and uncovered RV parking. 512-523-8086. www.storage1626.com

6 Beauty Studio opened at 668-B Main St., Buda, in early November. The business provides eyelash extensions, haircuts, hair color, highlights, Brazilian blowouts, waxing and other beauty services. 512-312-4126. www.beautystudiotx.com

7 Which Wich, at 4640 S. FM 1626, Kyle, opened Oct. 24 and serves a variety of cold and hot sandwiches as well as wraps, salads and milkshakes. 512-268-9281. www.whichwich.com

8 MedPost Urgent Care, 155 Wonder World Drive, San Marcos, opened Dec. 12. The urgent care facility can provide physical examinations; travel medication; occupational health services; prescriptions; and lab testing for streptococcus mononucleosis and other afflictions. The facility can also treat colds, influenza and allergies. MedPost Urgent Care will also host a grand opening event in mid-January. 512-738-8334. www.medpost.com

COMING SOON

9 Schlotzsky's Bakery & Cafe, 205 W. Hopkins St., San Marcos, is expected to open Dec. 22. The restaurant will serve sandwiches, soups and pizzas, among other dishes. www.schlotzskys.com. Twitter: @schlotzskys

10 Blue Dahlia Bistro, 107 Hopkins St., San Marcos, will open in January, co-owner Amy Ramirez said in a news release. The restaurant will serve a variety of salads and tartines—open-faced sandwiches—as well as breakfast dishes such as frittatas, croissants, soft-boiled eggs and crepes. Blue Dahlia Bistro will be open Mon.-Thu. 8 a.m.-10 p.m., Fri. 8 a.m.-11 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-11 p.m. and Sun. 9 a.m.-10 p.m. www.bluedahliaastro.com



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11 Dylan Neiman plans to open **Urban Bricks Pizza**, 420 University Drive, San Marcos, by mid-December. The restaurant/bar concept will also host a grand opening celebration in mid-January, he said. The restaurant allows customers to build their own Neapolitan-style pizza, and it features a full bar and patio. Neiman, an alumnus of Texas State University, said Urban Bricks Pizza also has locations in New Braunfels and San Antonio. www.urbanbrickspizza.com

12 **Insomnia Cookies** will open at 111 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos, by early 2017. Offering a variety of flavors, as well as vegan and gluten-free options, most Insomnia Cookies locations deliver fresh-baked cookies from 10 a.m.-3 a.m. 877-632-6654. www.insomniacookies.com

13 **The Pointe**, near the intersection of Comanche and Lindsey streets in San Marcos, will open in August. The multifamily housing community will feature a mix of 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, 5- and 6-bedroom floor-plans. Amenities at The Pointe include a resort-style pool, resident lounge, coffee bars and tanning booths. More information is available at the community's leasing office, 316 N. Edward Gary St., San Marcos. 512-766-5876. www.pointesanmarcos.com

14 **The Candy Wraptor**, 2626 Hunter Road, San Marcos, will open in mid-January. The "old-fashioned soda fountain" will sell a variety of sodas and candies as well as milk shakes, ice cream floats and other sweets. 512-787-1044. www.thecandywraptor.com Twitter: @thecandywraptor

15 **IKEA** will open a 289,000-square-foot store at the southwestern corner of I-35 and Loop 1604 in Live Oak, about 30 miles south of San Marcos, in 2019, the company announced Nov. 29. The company sells furniture and home goods, and the new location will also feature a food court. The store will be the company's fifth in Texas. www.ikea.com. Twitter: @ikeausa

RELOCATIONS

16 **Zoi Acupuncture** moved from 320 N. Main St., Buda, to 825 N. Main St., Ste. 130, Buda, on Nov. 1. Owner Noa Lynne Davis

provides acupuncture, herbal prescriptions and functional medicine consultations as well as integrated massage at the business. Zoi Acupuncture is equipped to draw blood, perform hormone tests and take urine samples, Lynne said. Patients are provided with a preventive medicine plan tailored to their individual needs. 512-648-0610. www.zoiacupuncture.com

17 **Speedy Cash** leased a 1,200-square-foot space at the Dorman Center, 4640 S. FM 1626, Kyle, in November. It aims to relocate its Buda location to the space by January. Speedy Cash offers a variety of loans, including title, payday and installment loans. 512-295-2200. www.speedycash.com

18 **WellMed at Springtown Way**, 200 Springtown Way, Ste. 1100, San Marcos, will, relocate to a new office at 1290 Wonder World Drive, San Marcos, in the spring. WellMed spokesperson Daniel Calderon said the new location will have room for three health care providers. The current location has space for two providers. 512-393-3325. www.wellmedhealthcare.com

NEW OWNERSHIP

19 Shannon Baxley assumed ownership of **Bobcat Nation Sports Bar & Grill**, 700 N. LBJ Drive, Ste. 109, San Marcos, in mid-September. New General Manager Bobby "Bo" Freeman said the bar and restaurant features happy hours "all day, every day," which include \$2 frozen margaritas, \$2.50 well drinks and \$1 pints of Pabst Blue Ribbon. Bobcat Nation also serves a variety of food dishes, including burgers, nachos and quesadillas. The business also hosts events throughout the week, including karaoke nights and live music. 512-216-6716. www.bobcatnationsmtx.com. Twitter: @bobcatnationbar

ANNIVERSARIES

20 **Jason's Deli** celebrated its 40th anniversary Nov. 30. The restaurant, located at 901 Hwy. 80, San Marcos, offers an expansive salad bar as well as soups and sandwiches. The first Jason's Deli opened Nov. 30, 1976, in Beaumont, Texas. 512-393-3354. www.jasonsdeli.com

Owner Jamie Chaidez celebrated the first anniversary of **Ma's Mini Pigs' Farm & Rescue**, located in east Kyle off FM 150, in November. Ma's Mini Pigs' Farm & Rescue is a nonprofit that aims to provide temporary housing and feeding for small- to medium-sized livestock. Ma's Mini Pigs' Farm & Rescue specializes in mini pigs, however, they are not accepting new animals at this time and plan to pursue more rescue efforts once they find the right donors or supporters. 408-824-4514. www.masminipigs.com

EXPANSIONS

21 **Sodalis Senior Living**, 645 FM 967, Buda, broke ground on 48 new assisted-living apartments Nov. 29. The community will include a movie theater, a prayer room, a spa-like salon, a wine bar and other amenities. The new facility will be located across the street from Sodalis' existing senior living community in Buda. The new apartments are expected to open in November 2017. 512-295-5600. www.sodalissenior.com

22 In October, **Old Town Buda Antique Mall**, 212 N Main St., Buda, expanded and added 1,190 square feet, increasing the store's size by about a third. Old Town Buda Antique Mall sells vintage, collectible and antique items. Several vendor spaces are available. 512-423-8713

CLOSINGS

23 **South Austin BBQ** at 905, N. Old Highway 81, Kyle, closed in September. The restaurant served brisket, sausage and ribs.

24 **Studio D Barber & Beauty**, 317 W. San Antonio St., San Marcos, closed in November. The salon offered haircuts and styling services for men and women.

SCHOOL NOTES

In November, **the San Marcos High School golf team** donated 140 pounds of nonperishable food items to the Hays County Food Bank as part of the Rattlers Giving Back campaign. The team also toured the food bank, at 220 Herndon St., San Marcos, and learned about food insecurity in Hays County.

COMPILED BY **CARLIE PORTERFIELD AND BRETT THORNE**
News or questions about San Marcos, Buda or Kyle?
Email us at sbknews@communityimpact.com.



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WHAT'S NEXT FOR NEW LOCAL BUSINESSES & RESTAURANTS



PHOTOS BY CARLIE PORTERFIELD/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

BUSINESS FEATURE

Gray Gardens

Farmers' market takes root in downtown Buda

BY CARLIE PORTERFIELD

Gray Gardens is a sustainable urban vegetable farm located on Main Street in Buda. Owned by the Gray family for about 20 years, the farm began selling produce six years ago at the Buda Farmers' Market, which Gray Gardens also curates, Farm Manager Jonas Jones said.

At the Buda Farmers' Market, Gray Gardens sells the vegetables it grows, such as okra, peppers, eggplant, kale, onions and broccoli. Its most popular vegetables are tomatoes, Jones said.

"[At the market] we can tell people directly what everything is and where their food comes from," he said. "I think it's an awesome, empowering thing."

The Buda Farmers' Market operates on Tuesdays and Saturdays, Jones said. The Saturday markets often have more vendors, he said, but the Tuesday market prices are sometimes cheaper. Saturday markets also have live music performances.

"The people here want to provide

good food," Jones said. "They're not out here to rob you. They're growing great food, and they do it because they love it."

Besides farmers markets, Gray Gardens also supports itself through a community-supported agriculture, or CSA, program.

CSA's were started in Japan during the 1970s by mothers who wanted more direct access to naturally grown food and to pay farmers directly, Jones said. The concept has only recently taken off in Texas.

Through the CSA, members buy a share into the farm and pick up a weekly portion of vegetables. It helps the farmer with upfront capital to prepare for the upcoming season, he said. Last season, Gray Gardens provided food to 40 families through its CSA program.

"It helps relieve stress for the farmer, because there's no security in farming, whether it's the market, or it's nature," Jones said. "At the end of the day, even

if everything works out 100 percent, you're still working with Mother Nature."

The farmers at Gray Gardens will often work 14-hour days, he said.

"We're all a little quirky, I guess, to do that," Jones said. "I wouldn't trade it for anything else."

Jones said Gray Gardens has considered relocating to another part of Buda in the future, one surrounded by more "trendy" businesses.

"Buda's growing, and we want to grow with it," he said. "We're fortunate to have a community and be here and do this. Where's the farm on Main Street in San Marcos [or] Kyle?"

Every farm is fighting to "stay above the red," Jones said.

"No matter who you vote for, whether you do or you don't, the most important thing you can do, especially in your local economy, is voting every time you spend your dollar," he said. "If you don't support these systems, then you're going to lose them."

OTHER VENDORS

Susana Rueda at **Frolla Patisserie** sells artisanal, gluten-free pastries at the market nearly every weekend. Her most popular treats are her homemade gluten-free Twinkie-like treats, which cost \$5 for a package of two.

Darn Good Goods sells restorative ointment made from locally sourced beeswax. A variety of formulas, such as lavender and citrus are available. A 6-ounce jar costs \$10.

Ron Gross sells a variety of flavored olive oils made in Dripping Springs. Flavors include chili, garlic and Meyer lemon. A 250 ml bottle of traditional olive oil costs \$15.

Gray Gardens

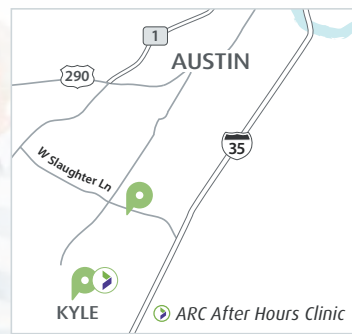
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DINING FEATURE

The Restaurant at Sage Hill

Kyle inn expands food service to accommodate nonguests

BY BRETT THORNE

On 90 acres west of Kyle, Sage Hill Inn Above Onion Creek has been a relaxing getaway for guests from across the nation for more than 20 years. It has only been since last year that the inn's popular dining room has opened to nonguests.

The Restaurant at Sage Hill offers a three-course prix fixe menu featuring dishes such as Shiner Bock Rosemary Dumpplings, Cobb Creek Chicken Pot Pie and Sweet Potato Bundt Cake.

Autumn Wallace, executive chef and dining room manager, said the restaurant takes pride in its fresh vegetables, which are picked from a garden a few steps from the restaurant's entrance.

"The dishes that really highlight things coming out of the garden, people get really excited about that," Wallace said. "And they taste great because they're really fresh, and we pick it right before dinner service.



Autumn Wallace

Those are the prime picks."

The garden features a variety of vegetables, including lettuce, carrots and radishes, as well as fresh flowers, which are placed in guests' rooms daily.

"We are pretty spoiled," Wallace said. "We have a really big garden."

In addition to vegetables from the nearby garden, the restaurant sources its meat and other ingredients from a variety of local and regional producers. The beef from the restaurant's pot roast, which is on the winter menu, is sourced from 44 Farms in Cameron, Texas. The restaurant's coffee, served alongside desserts, comes from Independence Roasters in Brenham.

The restaurant is open to nonguests Monday-Wednesday, and dinner seatings take place from 6-7 p.m. The three-course prix fixe meal costs \$75 per person. Beer and wine are available for an additional cost.

Wallace said she would like to host more weddings at the inn. The Hill Country setting makes an ideal

1: The Restaurant at Sage Hill's winter menu includes pot roast, which is served on white cheddar mashed potatoes with baby carrots. **2:** The garden salad is served with a variety of fresh vegetables picked from the restaurant's garden.



PHOTOS BY BRETT THORNE/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

The Restaurant at Sage Hill

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backdrop, she said. In addition to hosting the wedding, the restaurant can provide catering.

"I definitely think this is a bride and groom's dream spot to have a wedding, so I would like to do more of those," she said.

The restaurant has capacity for about 45 guests, Wallace said. On "nice nights," the outdoor patio, which faces the sunset, is also open to guests, providing additional seating.

"It's a bit of a drive out here, but it's worth it," she said. "That's for sure."

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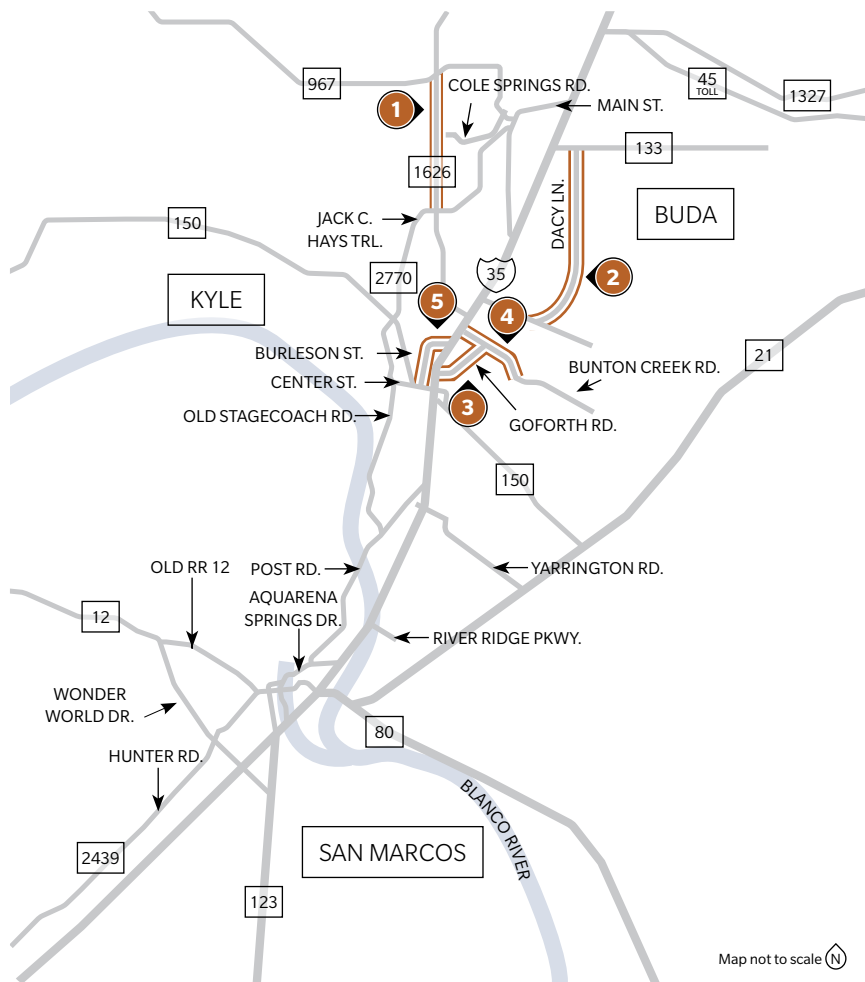
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1 FM 1626 South improvements

The span of FM 1626 from FM 967 to FM 2770 in Kyle and Buda will be improved to include five lanes with a continuous center-turn lane and shoulders. Hays County and the Texas Department of Transportation hosted a groundbreaking for the project Nov. 16.

Timeline: November 2016-late 2018

Cost: \$20.56 million

Funding sources: TxDOT, Hays County

2 Dacy Lane improvements

The portion of Dacy Lane from Beebe Road to Hillside Terrace in Kyle and Buda will be improved to include two travel lanes in each direction as well as a center turn lane and sidewalks. The project will be built using \$20 million of Proposition 2 bond funds approved by voters in the Nov. 8 election. The county is currently working to determine how the bond projects will be managed. County Transportation Director Jerry Borchering said the Dacy Lane project will likely be one of the highest-priority projects.

Timeline: TBD

Cost: \$20 million

Funding sources: Hays County

3 Goforth Road expansion

Goforth Road will be expanded to include two to three lanes in areas between I-35 and Bunton Creek Road. The city aims to

have the bridge on Goforth over Plum Creek completed by January.

Timeline: April 2016-March 2017

Cost: \$6.6 million

Funding sources: city of Kyle

4 Bunton Creek Road reconstruction

Construction on Bunton Creek Road began Sept. 23. The city of Kyle plans to reconstruct the 1-mile portion of Bunton Creek from I-35 to Lehman Road. Road reconstruction began in late November.

Timeline: Sept. 23-September 2017

Cost: \$5 million

Funding sources: city of Kyle

5 Burleson Street reconstruction

The city of Kyle is planning to reconstruct Burleson Street to include two lanes from Miller Street to Lockhart Street and three lanes from Lockhart to the I-35 frontage road. Due to delays in right-of-way acquisition, the construction start date for the project has been pushed to August 2017.

Timeline: August 2017

Cost: \$8.5 million

Funding sources: city of Kyle

All information on this page was updated as of 12/2/16. News or questions about these or other local transportation projects? Email us at sbknews@communityimpact.com.

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County begins work on bond projects

BY BRETT THORNE

Hays County voters approved the two bond propositions on the Nov. 8 ballot, and work on designing and planning for Proposition 1 projects is underway.

Of the 63,034 voters who cast ballots for or against Proposition 1, 51.15 percent of voters supported the measure, which will fund improvements and an expansion at the county jail on Uhland Road in San Marcos as well as a new law-enforcement center and co-located communications center near the Hays County Government Center on Stagecoach Trail in San Marcos.

Hays county Commissioner Will Conley, who is part of a public safety facilities committee, said the committee will soon begin looking at details of the projects and begin working on timelines and construction phasing.

Initial construction plans presented to the court this summer call for \$106.4 million of construction projects. Construction at the site of the current jail—which will include renovating and expanding the jail as well as building

a new vehicle maintenance facility—is expected to cost \$62.4 million. Construction near the government center—including the new law-enforcement center and co-located communication center—is expected to cost \$44 million.

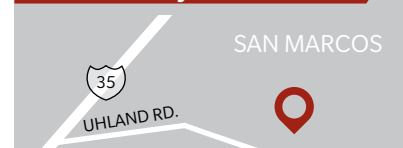
Conley said the sequence of construction will be especially important because the law enforcement center and county communications center are currently located on the site of the jail. Those facilities will need to be moved before jail expansion can begin.

As of Nov. 21, the county was holding 140 inmates in jails outside of the county. Hays County has contracts with seven counties to hold prisoners, but those counties' jails are cutting back the number of inmates they are receiving, Conley said.

"That market is starting to shrink and become more competitive as we have anticipated for some time, so we're also going to be putting together what we do in the interim to make sure we maintain a high level of public safety but in a fiscally responsible

LAND LOCKED DOWN: LOCATIONS SET FOR LAW-ENFORCEMENT PROJECTS

HAYS COUNTY JAIL EXPANSION



COMMUNICATIONS AND LAW-ENFORCEMENT FACILITIES



way," Conley said.

The county spends about \$50 per day to hold inmates in jails outside the county. That number does not factor in the cost of transporting inmates or other related expenses.

On Nov. 22 commissioners approved initiating the process of seeking requests for qualifications from firms to perform environmental and traffic impact analyses related to the public safety projects in Proposition 1.

County Development Services Director Clint Garza said the court could select firms to handle the work by Dec. 20. Then contract negotiations would begin with the selected firms, and

PROPOSITION 2



Voters also approved Proposition 2, which will fund transportation projects throughout the county. Hays County Transportation Director Jerry Borchering said the Commissioners Court may decide to appoint a subcommittee to manage the transportation bond program and determine the sequencing of projects, or commissioners may handle management themselves. That decision will likely be made by mid-December, he said.

Although the sequence of projects has not been determined, Borchering said a \$20 million project to widen Dacy Lane will likely be one of the highest-priority bond projects because of the recent opening of McCormick Middle School on Dacy.

"We've been working on that for some time now, and we want to go on and finish up Dacy Lane."

SOURCE: HAYS COUNTY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

design of the facilities will be presented to court by February, Garza said.

"I'm still of the opinion that the most pressing issue we have in this county is our circumstance at the jail and law enforcement center," Commissioner Ray Whisenant said. "We need to get things moving because it's costing our taxpayers dollars every day."

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County prepares disaster recovery grant allocations

HAYS COUNTY The county has been allocated \$74 million of a \$50.97 million disaster-recovery grant awarded to the state of Texas from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant is aimed at helping the county recover from the Memorial Day weekend and All Saint's Day floods in 2015.

Members of the Hays County Commissioners Court discussed the grant at a meeting Nov. 15.

Projects located in the city of San Marcos would not be eligible to be funded through the grant because the city received a \$25.08 million disaster-recovery grant from HUD in February.

The General Land Office, a state agency that oversees state land and will oversee the grant administration, determined that 68 percent of funds—about \$5.03 million for Hays County—should go to nonhousing and infrastructure-related projects, and 32 percent of the county's funds—about \$2.37 million—should go to housing.

Commissioner Will Conley, who represents a portion of western Hays County that includes Wimberley, said the county may have a hard time finding housing projects to spend the money on because projects cannot be located in San Marcos.

"If we cannot find good, quality housing projects and needs, then I think, stating the obvious, we'd like that to be able to go toward more of the infrastructure needs and demands in the county that our staffs and public and ourselves have identified and our other local municipalities have identified as important in their communities and different geographic areas of the county," Conley said.

Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe, who represents a portion of the county including San Marcos, echoed Conley's sentiment, saying that although many homes in the county were affected by the flooding, they may not qualify for the county's disaster-recovery grant.

INITIAL ALLOCATIONS

Cities throughout Hays County are eligible to receive funding through the county's disaster recovery grant related to the two destructive floods in 2015. Funding can go toward housing and nonhousing, or infrastructure, projects.

Hays County	Dripping Springs	Umland
Nonhousing: \$2,912,334	Nonhousing: \$288,898	Nonhousing: \$177,490
Housing: \$1,503,514	Housing: \$0	Housing: \$0
Buda	Kyle	Wimberley
Nonhousing: \$275,382	Nonhousing: \$1,182,376	Nonhousing: \$199,136
Housing: \$0	Housing: \$0	Housing: \$866,188

Buda appoints seven to sustainability commission

BUDA City Council appointed seven residents to serve on the city's newly created sustainability commission at a meeting Nov. 15.

According to city documents, the commission will serve as a City Council advisory board on matters related to sustainability, such as environmental stewardship and social awareness.

"The commission will take a holistic look [at] sustainability and make recommendations that best suit the residents of Buda," City Planner Meredith Johnson said in an email. "[Their] goal is to address issues that are not only related to the environment but also to livability as a whole."

City Secretary Alicia Ramirez said the city began advertising for positions after council approved the creation

of the commission at its Sept. 20 meeting. Since then, the city received 16 applications. Each council member made one nomination.

Appointees include Carly Montez, Brooke Prendergast, Vincent Lecca, Rex Drake, Amy Chung, Eric Martinez and Marni Martinez.

Johnson said citizens serving on the commission will make policy recommendations to the council related to air quality, water conservation and green space preservation. The commission will examine best practices for development and how to promote a sustainably built environment. According to the city, the commission will also pursue grant opportunities and develop educational opportunities for Buda residents.

Four City Council races head to runoff Dec. 13

Candidates in four races in San Marcos and Buda failed to receive more than 50 percent of the vote, meaning those races will go to a runoff election Dec. 13. On election day voters must cast ballots at their precinct's designated polling place. Polling places will be open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. in San Marcos and Buda.

SAN MARCOS In San Marcos, Ruben Becerra and John Thomaides, the candidates who received the most votes in the Nov. 8 mayoral election, are facing off to determine who will be the city's next mayor. Shane Scott and Saul Gonzales are in a runoff to determine the winner of the Place 2 seat on City Council, and Jason Dalton Montgomery and Ed Mihalkanin are facing off in the Place 3 race.

Precincts 110 and 113
Hays County Health Department, 401-A Broadway St., San Marcos

Precincts 111 and 112
Dunbar Center, 801 Martin Luther King Drive, San Marcos

Precinct 120
San Marcos Housing, CM Allen Homes, 820 Sturgeon, San Marcos

Precincts 315, 316 and 317
Hernandez Intermediate School, 333 Stagecoach Trail, San Marcos

Precincts 318, 330 and 334
Crockett Elementary School, 1300 Girard St., San Marcos

Precincts 332, 415 and 447
Travis Elementary School, 1437 Post Road, San Marcos

Precinct 336
Brookdale (formally Horizon Bay at San Marcos), 1720 Old RR 12, San Marcos

Precincts 413, 414, 416 and 417
Allenwood Homes, 1201 Thorpe Lane, San Marcos

BUDA Lee Urbanovsky and John Hatch are facing off for the Place 1 seat on Buda City Council.

Precinct 224
Buda City Hall, Council Chambers, 121 S. Main St., Buda

Precinct 228
Tom Green Elementary School, 1301 Old Goforth Road, Buda

NUMBER TO KNOW

150 On Nov. 28, a wildfire burned about 150 acres of land near Kyle. Officials determined the fire was caused by a resident burning brush in high winds. The county enacted a burn ban Nov. 29.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"I HAVE A LOT OF DEMOCRAT FRIENDS WHO SWEAR TO ME JOYCE IS A REPUBLICAN. I HAVE A LOT OF REPUBLICAN FRIENDS WHO SWEAR TO ME THAT SHE'S A DEMOCRAT. WHAT THAT SAYS TO ME IS THAT JOYCE IS ABSOLUTELY FAIR."

— JON LEONARD, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE HAYS COUNTY DEMOCRATS, ON HAYS COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR JOYCE COWAN, WHO WILL OVERSEE HER LAST ELECTION DEC. 13 BEFORE RETIRING AT THE END OF THE YEAR

CITY HIGHLIGHTS

SAN MARCOS City Council unanimously voted Nov. 15 to extend the city's contract with the Greater San Marcos Partnership for economic development services through Sept. 30, 2018. Under the agreement the city will pay the GSMP \$31,250 per month.

KYLE On Nov. 15, Kyle City Council adopted a storm drainage fee aimed at addressing flood issues. The first fee will appear on January utility bills. A \$5 fee will be applied to Kyle homeowners' monthly utility bills. The commercial fee will be determined by the amount of impervious cover—surfaces such as concrete that do not allow moisture to seep into the soil—on the commercial property.

MEETINGS

San Marcos City Council, Meets the first and third Tuesday of each month, at 5 p.m. • 630 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos • 512-393-8000
www.sanmarcostx.gov

Kyle City Council, Meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., • 100 W. Center St., Kyle • 512-262-1010,
www.cityofkyle.com

Buda City Council, Meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. 121 Main St., Buda • 512-312-0084
www.ci.buda.tx.us

Hays County Commissioners Court, Meets every Tuesday at 9 a.m. • 111 E. San Antonio St., San Marcos • 512-393-220
www.co.hays.tx.us

For instant coverage of these meetings, follow us on Twitter:
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STUDIO ESTATES

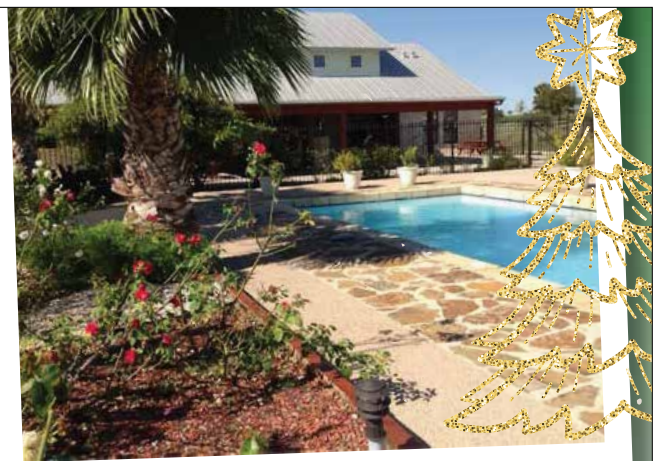
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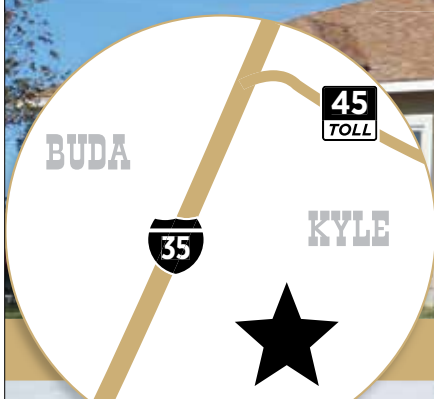
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DECEMBER

WORTH THE TRIP



COURTESY DEAR WESLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

10-23 Trail of Lights

The grand opening of the Trail of Lights is free and open to the public. Title sponsor H-E-B leads the countdown to turn on the lights. What began as a small gathering in 1965 known as the Yule Fest, a gift to the city of Austin from Austin Parks and Recreation Department, has now grown to be a communitywide celebration of the unique spirit and people that comprise Austin. In the 51 years since the first Yule Log was lit, the Trail of Lights has expanded to include more than 40 displays, 2 million lights and a variety of holiday activities. Tickets are also available for a preview party Dec. 9. 7-10 p.m. (nightly). Free entry (Dec. 10-16), \$3 entry (Dec. 17-23). Zilker Metropolitan Park, 2100 Barton Springs Road, Austin. www.austrinailoflights.org. info@austrinailoflights.org

15 Cookies and Cocoa at the Courthouse

"The Polar Express" is shown on a large screen at the event at 6 p.m. Santa Claus is also available beforehand for pictures. Attendees are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chairs. Attendees are also encouraged to bring a camera for pictures with Santa. Cookies and cocoa are free. The event is hosted by the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department and the San Marcos Main Street Program. 5:30-8 p.m. Free. Hays County Courthouse, 111 E. San Antonio St., San

Marcos. 512-393-8400. www.sanmarcostx.gov/communityservices. jramos@sanmarcostx.gov



COURTESY SWING TIME DANCE COMPANY

16 Holiday West Coast Swing Dance

Hosted by Swing Time Dance Company, the event includes beginner lessons and a dance. 7 p.m. (beginner lesson), 8 p.m.-midnight (West Coast Swing Dance). \$5 (per person for lesson or dance), \$10 (per person for both lesson and dance). Swing Time Dance Company, 101 Uhland Road, Ste. 206, San Marcos. 512-210-7460. www.swingtimedancecompany.com. swingtimedancecompany@gmail.com

JANUARY

10 Navigate Your Future: college admission info

All Hays CISD middle school and high school students and parents are invited to the event to learn more about dual-credit opportunities, financial aid and graduation planning. Middle and high school counselors are in attendance to answer questions. Interpreters for Spanish speakers and the hearing-impaired are available. 6-8:30 p.m. Free. Hays CISD Performing Arts Center, 979 Kohlers Crossing, Kyle. 512-268-2141. www.hayscis.net. charlotte.winkelmenn@hayscis.net

12-15 11th annual Clay Continuum

Four instructors take participants through an intensive exploration of clay

FEATURED EVENT



COURTESY KYLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

DEC 31 Kyle-O-Meter Resolution Run

Hosted by the Kyle Area Chamber of Commerce, the 5K run surrounds participants with local businesses that focus on healthy activities and tips, all while raising funds to support the local economy, community and businesses. Strollers and dogs on leashes are welcome. Online registration ends Dec. 15. 8-8:40 a.m. (on-site registration), 8:45 a.m. (warm-up), 9-11:30 a.m. (race). \$15 (students age 18 and younger), \$25 (age 19 and older). Wallace Middle School, 1500 W. Center St., Kyle. 512-268-4220. www.kylechamber.org/kyle-o-meter-5k. info@kylechamber.org

wheel, clay sculpture and hand-building and firing clay. The workshop is limited to 40 participants. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (each day). \$500 (4-day tuition). Eye of the Dog Art Center, 405 Valley View West Road, San Marcos. 512-558-1723. <http://eyeofthedog.com>

15 Fifth annual Purgatory Trail Run

The annual event is open to walkers, hikers and runners and includes a 10-mile and 5K course. More experienced trail runners will experience some difficult technical sections of trail during the race. The 5K course is rigorous with a medium technical rating and is an introduction into trail running. Runners and walkers receive a T-shirt. No dogs are allowed, and there are no refunds. 8 a.m. (packet pickup), 9 a.m.-noon (run). \$25 (5K before Jan. 15), \$30 (5K race day), \$35 (10-mile before Jan. 15), \$40 (10-mile race day). San Marcos Greenbelt, Wonder World

Drive and Hunter Road, San Marcos. 512-353-2673. www.athleteguild.com/running/san-marcos-tx/2017-5th-annual-purgatory-trail-run. david@corerunningcompany.com

19-22 'Into the Woods'

Presented by Hays High School, the musical intertwines the plots of several Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault fairy tales, exploring the consequences of the characters' wishes and quests, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. 7 p.m. (Thu.-Sat.), 2 p.m. (Sun.). \$5 (students), \$10 (adults). Burdine Johnson Theater at Hays High School, 4800 Jack C. Hays Trail, Buda. 512-633-6824. catherine.crafton@hayscis.net

ONLINE CALENDAR

Find more or submit San Marcos, Kyle or Buda events at communityimpact.com/sbk-calendar.



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COMPILED BY CARLIE PORTERFIELD AND BRETT THORNE
V KRISTIN BRUNO

GUIDE

Volunteer opportunities abound throughout the year in Hays County. From job and life-skills training in Buda, to fostering children in Kyle, to mentoring children in San Marcos, there are no shortage of opportunities to give back to your community. This guide aims to spotlight just a few of the organizations making a difference throughout the San Marcos, Kyle and Buda communities.

*This list is not comprehensive.

Austin Angels, which expanded to Buda in 2010, supports foster children and families through its Love Box program, in which groups of friends or neighbors or church groups are matched with a foster family whom they sponsor for a year. Each month, the group delivers a box to the family filled with household necessities and activities to do together. 512-577-0465
www.austinangels.com



AWARE (Always Wanted A Riding)

Experience) Inc. provides therapeutic horseback riding for children and adults with special needs. Therapeutic riding benefits the body, mind and spirit. Volunteers are needed to help groom and care for horses. Volunteers are also sought to lead horses during sessions. 1708 Centerpoint Road, San Marcos 512-754-6773
www.awaresmtx.org

Bobcat Build is a student-led service event intended to build relationships between Texas State University and its surrounding communities through volunteerism and service. Over 4,500 students volunteer and over 275 job sites participate every spring. This year's event takes place April 1. The organization will begin accepting job site requests from residents and donations from local businesses in January. 512-245-4245
601 University Drive, LBJ Student Center 4-7.1, San Marcos
www.bobcatbuild.txstate.edu
Twitter: @bobcatbuild

CASA of Central Texas advocates for abused and neglected children in the court system by recruiting, training and

supporting community volunteers. A CASA volunteer is appointed by a judge to be an independent voice for a child in and out of the courtroom. Historic Hays County Courthouse, second floor, 111 E. San Antonio St., San Marcos 830-626-2272
www.casacentex.org
Twitter: @casacentex



Volunteer opportunities abound for individuals of all ages and walks of life at **Central Texas Medical Center**. From the auxiliary to hospice to junior volunteers, internships and residencies, volunteerism extends CTMC's healing ministry throughout the city of San Marcos and Hays County. 1301 Wonder World Drive, San Marcos

512-753-3685 (general),
512-754-6159 (hospice)
www.ctmc.org
Twitter: @CTMC_SanMarcos

The Central Texas Wing of the Commemorative Air Force is dedicated to educating the public about World War II through the display of restored aircraft and vehicles from the era. The Central Texas Wing houses nine vintage aircraft, a WWII museum and library with historic artifacts. Volunteers receive training in restoration and maintenance and have the opportunity to fly in historic aircraft. 512-396-1943
www.commemorativeairforce.org

Circle of Living Hope is a child placing agency that is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The organization recruits, trains and verifies foster families to provide family-based therapeutic care to abused and neglected children from birth to age 21. The organization has expanded to five branch locations in Austin, San Antonio, Brownsville, Red Oak and Houston. 1216 Estival Drive, Kyle 512-216-9615
www.colh.org
Twitter: @colh_inc



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Daughters of the Republic of Texas is a statewide nonprofit organization whose members descend from those living in Texas from 1820 to February 1846. The local Moon-McGehee Chapter promotes the education and preservation of Texas history. The organization is looking for volunteers who can research and find particular graves for marking with memorial DRT medallions and also help research a person's ancestry.
512-667-7778
www.sanmarcosdrt.org

Dick's Classic Garage is dedicated to the preservation and display of classic cars. Volunteers are needed to dust cars on the showroom floor and to walk the floor answering guests' questions.
120 Stagecoach Trail, San Marcos
512-878-2406
www.dicksclassicgarage.com

Dream of Hopes Ranch provides job and life skills training and respite care for children and adults with special needs. Program Manager Laura Stock said the organization is seeking volunteers to help organize and staff camps and fundraisers, maintain landscaping at the nonprofit's facility, care for animals and assist with adult care during the day.
16250 Oak Grove Road, Buda
512-791-0160
www.dreamofhopesranch.org



COURTESY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY SAN MARCOS

Habitat for Humanity San Marcos is an all-volunteer affiliate of Habitat International. All donations go to construct new homes for low- to moderate-income people in San Marcos. The organization is looking for those with experience in construction to help at worksites. Volunteers who live in or near San Marcos are also needed to serve on the board of directors.
P.O. Box 1594, San Marcos
512-754-8142
www.habitatforhumanitysanmarcos.org

Hands of Hope provides education in subjects including math, English and Bible study, as well as career-readiness training for women of all ages in Hays County. Volunteers can help teach classes, provide child care and serve meals.
325 W. McCarty Lane, San Marcos
512-618-0723
www.handsofhopesanmarcos.org

Hays County 4-H focuses on the development of head, heart, hands and health to help youth to reach their fullest potential. Hays County 4-H includes nine 4-H clubs and a variety of school and community programs. Volunteers serve as project leaders, activity coordinators and judges.
Hays County, 1253 Civic Center Loop, San Marcos

512-393-2120
http://hays4-h.blogspot.com

Established in 1984, the **Hays County Food Bank** is passionately committed to improving lives through food-assistance programs, nutrition education and advocacy. Volunteer opportunities include driving food to delivery sites, weighing, sorting and packing food at the food bank warehouse as well as working with distribution, front office and client services, special projects and events. Volunteers are also needed to work at a local farm to help plant, weed, harvest and wash fresh produce for the food bank.
220 Herndon St., San Marcos
512-392-8300, ext. 222
www.haysfoodbank.org
jkamimoto@haysfoodbank.org
Twitter: @HaysFoodBank



COURTESY HAYS-CALDWELL WOMEN'S CENTER

The purpose of the **Hays-Caldwell Women's Center** is to create an environment where violence and abuse are not tolerated in the communities it serves. The center will provide emergency shelter, education, violence-prevention services and crisis intervention to victims of family violence, dating violence, sexual assault and child abuse.
P.O. Box 234, San Marcos
512-396-3404
www.hcwc.org
info@hcwc.org

Keep San Marcos Beautiful strives to educate and engage San Marcos residents and visitors to take responsibility for improving the community environment. The organization focuses on litter prevention, waste reduction, and beautification. KSMB hosts Hot Spot Clean Ups on the first Saturday of every month as well as planting and weeding days throughout the year. The first Saturday in March the organization co-sponsors the Great Texas River Clean Up, a litter-collecting event along the San Marcos River.
630 E. Hopkins St., San Marcos
512-393-8407
www.sanmarcostx.gov



COURTESY PREVENT A LITTER

PALS (Prevent a Litter) has been helping people and their pets for more than 20 years in Hays County. Volunteer opportunities include fostering kittens and nursing mother cats for four- to

eight-week assignments, feeding feral colonies, grant writing, bookkeeping and information technology assistance.
P.O. Box 401, San Marcos, TX 78667
www.preventalitter.com
www.facebook.com/preventalitter
volunteerpals@gmail.com

PAWS Shelter of Central Texas is a nonprofit, no-kill animal shelter that has been saving homeless pets since 1986. The organization is dependent on donations, fostering and volunteerism from the community to give pets the chance to live a great life. Volunteer work can include working and play with cats and dogs data entry, event assistance or cleaning.
500 E. FM 150, Kyle
volunteer@pawsshelter.org
www.pawsshelter.org
Twitter: @pawsshelter



COURTESY SALVATION ARMY

Salvation Army of San Marcos serves Hays County in a variety of ways, including providing clothing, housewares, school supplies and emergency response. Volunteer opportunities include ringing the red kettle bell during the holidays and handling clothing at the San Marcos service center.
300 CM Allen Parkway, Ste. 100, San Marcos
www.salvationarmytexas.org
www.facebook.com/salvationarmytexas
Twitter: @salarmytexas

San Marcos Greenbelt Alliance is creating an interconnected system of parks and natural areas in and around San Marcos. Volunteers can help with trail work; restoration and natural area monitoring; outreach efforts including social media support and hikes; working with community leaders and landowners; and administrative activities.
107 E. Hopkins St., Ste. 123 A, San Marcos
512-392-7457
www.smgreenbelt.org



COURTESY SAN MARCOS RIVER FOUNDATION

The San Marcos River Foundation protects public access to and preserves the flow, purity, and natural beauty of the San Marcos River, its watershed and estuaries with the help of volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include helping care for and plant cypress trees on the riverbanks and maintaining a ring of fencing around them to protect the trees

from beavers and vandalism. Volunteers can also plant native flora on riverbanks to hold the soil in place and provide food for wildlife. Cleanups of litter in the parks and along tributaries are regularly scheduled and need many volunteers.
222 W. San Antonio St., San Marcos
512-787-6392
www.sanmarcosriver.org

San Marcos Youth Service Bureau is an after-school and summer program for at-risk youth ages 11-17. YSB focuses on service projects, life skills and educational workshops inside the program's facility and in the community. Volunteers are needed to work alongside youth in activities, demonstrate good citizenship and model positive behaviors as youth are engaged in all aspects of learning and in volunteer work.
518 S. Guadalupe St. San Marcos
512-396-5437
www.ysb.org
julie@ysb.org
staff@ysb.org

Southside Community Center has been helping those in poverty in Hays County since 1927. The organization provides a family homeless shelter and after-school programs for youth and assists those living in poverty with rent and utility bill payments, housing rehabilitation and senior housing. The community center is accepting volunteers for the thrift store and for administrative work at the organization's office. Volunteers can also serve dinner to those in need. Dinner preparation typically begins at 3 p.m., and dinner is served from 5-7 p.m. daily.
518 S. Guadalupe St., San Marcos
512-392-6694
www.southsidecommunitycenter.org

Sozo Mentoring, a faith-based program of San Marcos-based church Sozo, aims to create relationships with children who need positive influences in their lives, create a safe place for children who do not have a safe place at home and be a friend to a child who has never had a friend. Volunteers for this program will meet with the same child once a week for about 45 minutes of encouragement and mentorship.
kejones5@gmail.com



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By the Numbers: The Salvation Army in Central Texas

BY **CARLIE PORTERFIELD**

The Salvation Army is a Christian ministry that provides services to anyone, regardless of religion or beliefs. Founded in London in 1865, it is now present in 127 countries worldwide, running charity shops, homeless shelters and offering disaster relief and humanitarian aid. The Salvation Army is also known for collecting spare change in their red kettles, which goes to raise funds to support local services, as well as local Angel Trees, to provide new clothing and toys for children of families in need during the holidays.



Community Impact Newspaper launched a new philanthropic mission in 2016: **CI Cares** seeks to aid citizens in our communities affected by hunger and poverty in order to give them a chance to thrive. The organizations featured in this section reflect that mission.



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BED NIGHTS OF SHELTER WERE PROVIDED TO THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS LAST YEAR.

6,016 CHILDREN

WERE PROVIDED GIFTS AND CLOTHING THROUGH THE ANGEL TREE PROGRAM.



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130 YEARS.

SOURCE: SALVATION ARMY/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

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Austin-based organization expands foster family support program into Hays County

BY **CARLIE PORTERFIELD**

In the Buda area, an Austin-based charity supports 22 foster children and their families.

Austin Angels recruits, engages and trains groups of volunteers, such as friends, neighbors, church groups and businesses, to form a team for what the charity calls its Love Box program.

The teams are matched by Austin Angels with a foster family whom they sponsor for a year, Director of Programs Rebecca Rice said. Each month, the group delivers a box to the family filled with things the family needs on a daily basis, such as laundry detergent or toilet paper. The group also packs movie tickets and other gifts.

"We really encourage the volunteer groups to make it their own and tailor what they're delivering every month to the needs of the family," Rice said. "[We prioritize] building relationships with kids, telling them they're important,

cared for and thought about."

There is a lack of stability for many children in the foster care system, she said. It is not unheard of for a child in the foster system for eight years to be moved to a new family 20 times.

"More often than not, kids live in unstable environments, and they don't get the message that they're important and that they're loved and cared for," she said. "Statistically, the outcomes for foster youth are unspeakable and unacceptable."

According to Austin Angels, 80 percent of the prison system is made up of former foster youth. Additionally, 30 percent of the homeless population went through the foster care system. Only 3 percent of foster children who age out of the system at age 18 go on to earn college degrees, despite grants and funding that could provide free higher education.

"The biggest challenge is knowing how many obstacles these kids face,"



Buda City Council proclaimed November as Adoption Awareness Month at its Nov. 7 meeting. The proclamation was accepted by Austin Angels representatives.

Rice said. "Without caring adults intervening and stepping in to help, their outcome and their future is bleak. It's a sad future. Statistically, we know that."

In September, there were 66 children in foster care in Hays County, according to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

"Our culture and our community is largely blind to the crisis that's happening in the foster care system," Rice said. "I feel like a lot of times when people hear what's actually going on, they feel compelled [to

help]. How can you not get involved?"

Rice said Buda-area residents can form a Love Box group to sponsor a family or pledge to make a monthly donation to Austin Angels.

"We know every one of the kids we serve has the potential to be great," she said. "They just need the chance. They need someone to believe in them and guide them [to] live to their fullest potential."

Austin Angels

512-577-0465

www.austinangels.com

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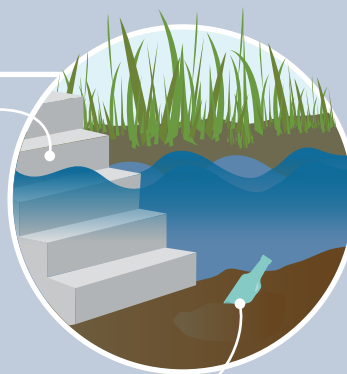
SCOTT ELDER

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE LEGISLATION



'BED AND BANKS'

Current law dictates that the city of San Marcos must obtain state and federal permits before beginning work on any projects below the river's average water line. Even for small repairs to existing infrastructure in the river, state agencies must grant approval prior to the city starting work. If the city were to take ownership of the river, the process would be more efficient and allow for easier day-to-day maintenance, city staff say.



The city is not required to obtain state or federal permits to remove litter in and along the river, manage flora or keep up with other maintenance issues.

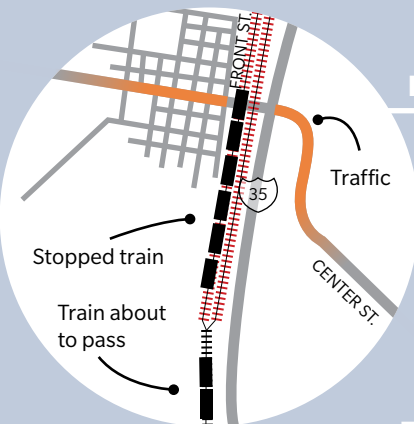


MARIJUANA DECRIMINALIZATION

HB 81 aims at decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana. Marijuana possession and consumption would still be illegal, but the bill would lower the offense to a Class C misdemeanor, similar to a parking ticket. The offense would not show up on criminal background checks.

ANNEXATION REFORM

State Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels, plans to propose annexation reform by filing legislation that would protect private property owners from forced annexation by cities. Details on the proposed legislation have not been released as of *Community Impact Newspaper's* press time.



KYLE CENTER STREET SIDING

When trains pull into the switching station on Center Street and have to wait for other trains to pass, they can block the crossing for nearly an hour, Kyle Communications Specialist Kim Hilsenbeck said. Trains blocking major arterials in the city can create issues for police and emergency services and can be dangerous when pedestrians try to walk between train cars, Hilsenbeck said. City staff say they are not sure where the switching station would be relocated.

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX

According to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, from September 2015-September 2016, the city of Buda collected more than \$600,000 in hotel occupancy tax revenue from six local hotels. With approval from the state, the city could use that money to promote ecotourism and develop Garison Park on a 40-acre piece of land located at the end of Garison Road. Proposed ideas for the park include trails, a kayak and canoe launching site, a zip-line, climbing boulders, a ropes course, and a nature center.



SOURCES: CITIES OF SAN MARCOS, KYLE AND BUDA; TEXAS LEGISLATURE ONLINE; TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS/COMMUNITY IMPACT NEWSPAPER

CONTINUED FROM 1

"[The bill would] help us to make everything run smoother and allow us to do the things we do on a day-to-day basis more efficiently," Wyatt said.

The city is responsible for removing litter in and along the river, discouraging invasive wildlife and non-native plants, and installing native plants, among other maintenance, city staff said.

The Edwards Aquifer is home to seven endangered species, such as the fountain darter, Texas wild rice and the Texas blind salamander. Because the bed and banks of the river belong to the state, the city cannot enforce laws that would protect the river and wildlife.

"Everybody that lives here knows that we have a lot of endangered species we work really hard to protect. Sometimes it's hard to protect them because we don't have jurisdiction," Wyatt said. "If people are going in and pulling [Texas wild rice] up, it's not within our jurisdiction to ticket them or stop them."

Owning the land would also simplify the process for making repairs in and along the river, such as at access points, Wyatt said.

Currently, state and federal permits must be obtained prior to work on any projects below the average water line, city staff said. Even for small repairs to existing infrastructure in the river, state agencies must grant approval before the city can start work.

According to the bill, ownership of the property automatically reverts to the state if the city fails to provide for the protection of health and general welfare, recreation, beautification and civic improvement, or if the city sells any or all of the property. The state would also retain oil, gas and other mineral rights.

"We have no intention of selling the land. That's not something we would want to do," Wyatt said. "We want to protect the river and everything in it."

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BUDA 448.5 ACRES

SAN MARCOS 0 ACRES



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MARIJUANA DECRIMINALIZATION

State Rep. Jason Isaac, R-Dripping Springs, said he's invested in an issue that he admits is still unpopular with many Republicans who elected him: decriminalizing the possession of small amounts of marijuana.

"When I explain it to people, the feedback is overwhelmingly in support of the idea," Isaac said at a Nov. 16 Dripping Springs town hall meeting.

He supports HB 81, filed by state Rep. Joe Moody, D-El Paso, that would impose a fine rather than the arrest and jailing of those found to be in possession of up to an ounce of marijuana.

He used an example of Texas State University students who "make a mistake" and are found in possession of small amounts of marijuana.

"When they go to get a job when they graduate college, guess what comes up on their criminal background check, and guess who doesn't get hired?" Isaac said. "People that you and I have invested in, [in] their educations, so that they can meet our workforce needs."

Marijuana possession and consumption would still be against the law, but if passed, HB 81 would lower the offense to a Class C misdemeanor, "like a parking ticket," Isaac said.

"It's an economic development issue to me," he said. "We want them to be able to get jobs. We want them to be economic contributors to the state of Texas. This would help do that."

CENTER STREET CONGESTION IN KYLE

Kyle Mayor Todd Webster said although the city will not hire a lobbyist or have a formal legislative agenda, the city is interested in one issue.

"We've had quite a bit of engagement with [state Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels,] and Isaac about the rail siding relocation issue," Webster said. "It's a long shot, but we're hoping to try to get some financial support so we can work in partnership to try to

move the Center Street main siding."

Webster said the siding's current location near Center Street can cause trains to come to a complete stop, which happens four or five times per day at a minimum, he said. When this happens, traffic can be blocked on Center Street and nearby streets for nearly an hour,

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Rep. Jason Isaac

Capitol Office: P.O. Box 2910, Room E1.410, Austin | 512-463-0647
District: 100 Commons Road, Box 7-125, Dripping Springs | 512-850-5524
Jason.Isaac@house.state.tx.us

Sen. Donna Campbell

Capitol Office: 512-463-0125 | P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin
District Office: 1902 E. Common St., Ste. 500, New Braunfels | 830-626-0065
donna.campbell@senate.state.tx.us

Sen. Judith Zaffirini

Capitol Office: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station, Austin | 512-463-0121
District Office: 1407 Washington St., Laredo | 956-722-2293
Judith.zaffirini@senate.state.tx.us

and it creates major problems, he said.

"It's definitely a quality-of-life issue and mobility issue for us," he said.

Kyle's location on the I-35 corridor means traffic in the city can affect commuters in other towns.

"I think it's a regional mobility issue," he said. "Kyle residents aren't the only ones moving through there."

ANNEXATION REFORM

Campbell said she plans to file legislation to bring about annexation reform that would protect private property owners from forced annexation by cities. Annexation should not be a one-sided revenue grab, she said.

"[Annexation] simply is something

that big cities use to add to their tax base and to continue with their unsustainable spending and their borrowing," Campbell said at the Nov. 16 Dripping Springs town hall meeting. "I believe annexation should be a collaborative process where all the stakeholders are brought together, and every citizen has a voice in that. The way it is right now, in the big city, if the city wants to annex, they do. It's very difficult for people to have a voice in that."

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX REFORM

Buda Mayor Todd Ruge said he is working to receive state approval to use hotel occupancy tax revenue to fund city parks. He said he has talked with San Marcos officials about working together.

"We have a lot of hotels in Buda," he said. "By state law, we can only spend [HOT tax revenue] on certain things."

From September 2015 to September 2016, the city collected about \$609,912 in HOT tax revenue, records from the Texas Comptroller show.

The HOT tax fund is "very healthy," Ruge said, and he would like to see the funds go toward other city priorities.

"If we can get some localized legislation, we [could] tap into that extra money we have sitting there and divert it into our park system and promote ecotourism," Ruge said.

The city budgeted funds for legislative activity, he said, and City Council will meet to discuss issues related to the upcoming legislative session so members "can all be on board."

"If we propose anything, they'll be local bills," Ruge said. "[It] isn't anything very radical."

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

State Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, filed a bill Nov. 29 that aims to reduce the tax burden on property owners, but San Marcos and other Central Texas cities along I-35 say the legislation

would do more harm than good.

Dubbed the Texas Property Tax Reform and Relief Act of 2017, Senate Bill 2 would lower the rollback tax rate and require voter approval for a rate in excess of the rollback rate.

The rollback tax rate is the rate that would raise the same amount of tax revenue as the previous year plus 8 percent. SB 2 would reduce the rollback rate from 8 percent to 4 percent and trigger an automatic tax ratification election when a city, county or special district exceeds the rollback rate, among other measures.

"Texas taxpayers have been facing property tax bills that are increasing 2.5 to 3 times faster than the median household income," Bettencourt said in a statement. "Throughout Texas, in hearing after hearing, the Select Committee heard the same message loud and clear: Texans are asking for and deserve property tax relief."

But the cities of Austin, San Marcos, New Braunfels and San Antonio would have lost at least \$770 million over the past decade under this law, according to a news release, while saving the average homeowner just a few dollars a month. Without this revenue, cities in the I-35 corridor will struggle to accommodate the rapid growth in the area, officials said.

"The state's proposal would negatively impact every resident who wants a street repaired, every neighborhood that seeks better police protection and every business that needs improved infrastructure to better serve their customers," San Marcos Mayor Daniel Guerrero said in a statement. "Texas cities are thriving, and this proposed legislation would stunt the progress we have made."



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City officials have said they are hopeful the development will spur more homeownership in San Marcos.

Council Member John Thomaides said he was concerned about the potential for investors to buy up a large number of houses and rent them out, thus threatening the owner-occupied character of the development.

Steve Metcalfe, an attorney for the developer, said it would be very difficult to enforce a restriction on investors buying properties in the neighborhood. An investor could come into the neighborhood and buy 10 different properties using 10 different names, he said.

Instead the development will rely on the single-family occupancy limits within the city's zoning ordinance to help ensure the single-family residences are truly single-family. The multifamily portion of the development will have the same restrictions. The ordinance limits the number of unrelated people who can share a residence within certain zoning districts in the city.

HighPointe also plans to provide \$2.5 million in cash and in-kind assistance to the city to build a fire station within the development. City Manager Jared Miller said the station's proximity to homes within the neighborhood should lower some residents' home insurance rates.

Steve Vliss, president and CEO of HighPointe Communities, said the developer is aiming to attract first-time homebuyers. The Austin-area real estate market has grown at a fast pace, Vliss said, but some potential buyers have been left behind in that growth.

"We felt that was an underserved need, and it was only going to get more so over the next several years," Vliss said.

Home prices in Trace will likely start below \$200,000, Vliss said.

OTHER EAST SIDE DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to Trace, developments have been planned on more than 3,000 acres east of I-35 in the city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction—an area just outside the city limits where the city has limited control.

Cotton Center, a 2,358-acre development planned to be built east of the San Marcos Regional Airport, is planned to include single-family homes as well as parks and commercial space.

The project is being developed by Walton TX LP, a Canada-based real estate firm that is also planning the mixed-use Gas Lamp District in south-east San Marcos near the outlet malls.

Room to grow IN EAST SAN MARCOS

WHISPER

STATUS: BREAKING GROUND IN EARLY 2017

Developer Robert McDonald is working with the city on the Whisper development, which dates back to 2013. According to development documents submitted to the city, the project will be worth about \$748.46 million when it is fully built out.

600 single-family homes in phase 1



706 acres



241 acres of commercial and retail space

TRACE

STATUS: BREAKING GROUND IN JANUARY

HighPointe Communities, the developer behind the project, plans to break ground on the neighborhood in January. When completed, Trace will include a mix of single-family, multifamily, commercial and retail space.



12-acre site for a San Marcos CISD school.



850 multi-family units



420 acres



1,000 single-family home sites

COTTON CENTER

STATUS: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Walton TX, LP, the same firm planning the Gas Lamp District, is planning a mixed-use, primarily residential development east of the San Marcos Regional Airport. City Council discussed the project at a Dec. 6 meeting. As of *Community Impact Newspaper's* press time, there was no timeline for when construction on the development may begin.



2,358 acres

Planned areas within Cotton Center include:



residential



parks



commercial

GAS LAMP DISTRICT

STATUS: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

This mixed-use development is planned to include single-family, multifamily and senior housing as well as office sites, research and light industrial facilities, hike and bike trails, and parks. There is currently no timeline for when construction may begin.

Phase 1 will include 226 single-family units



98 acres in phase 1



1,197 single-family home lots

Gillfillan said Walton is working with the city on the Gas Lamp District project, although there are currently no plans for construction to begin in the near future.

Whisper, a development located just south of Yarrington Road off the I-35 access road, is planned to include 600 single-family homes in its first phase. The development will also include 241 acres of commercial and retail space.

Assistant Planning Director Kristy Stark said the city is working with Robert McDonald, the project developer, on plans for the 706-acre property.

"Hopefully within the next couple of months you'll see that moving forward through [the planning and zoning commission] and through City Council," Stark said.

McDonald estimated work on the development's infrastructure would begin in early 2017.

Once roads are built within the development construction will begin on a 50,000-square-foot commercial building.

In early December, The LaSalle

Municipal Utility District, another community planned to be built northeast of San Marcos, requested an extension of its development timeline. Under the extension request, work on the community would likely not begin for a few years.

HOUSING AVAILABILITY

The city of San Marcos has historically issued fewer single-family home construction permits per year than neighboring communities.

In 2014 and 2015 the city issued 278 and 238 single-family home permits, respectively. From Jan. 1-Nov. 30, the city issued 330 single-family home permits.

The city of Kyle issued 507 single-family home permits from Jan. 1-Nov. 30. The city of Buda issued 291 during the same period. Buda's total

does not include homes built in the Sunfield or Meadows of Shadow Creek neighborhoods, which are outside the city limits.

San Marcos officials said they are hopeful the new developments will help the city's housing inventory keep pace with the explosive growth the region is experiencing.

"It's going to hopefully change the balance of single-family and multifamily in San Marcos to owner-occupied versus rental and provide more opportunities for people to own a home," Miller said. "That's a difficult thing right now because the market is so sparse; there is a lot of competition out there."



Find updates from City Council's Dec. 6 discussion about Cotton Center at communityimpact.com.

MEADOWS AT BUDA

Meadows at Buda is located west of I-35 in Buda. This neighborhood is served by Hays CISD and is 16 miles south of Austin and about 50 miles north of San Antonio.

Build-out year: not built out

Builders include: Gehan Homes

Square footage: 1,780-4,030

Home values: \$194,500-\$391,188

HOA dues (estimated): \$408 annually

Amenities: jogging and hiking paths, playground and community pool

Schools: Buda Elementary School, Dahlstrom Middle School, Hays High School

Property taxes (in dollars):

Northeast Hays Co. ESD No. 2	0.0500
Hays Co. ESD No. 8	0.1000
Hays County	0.4232
Special Road District	0.0438
Hays CISD	1.5377
South Buda WCID No. 1	0.9000
Austin Community College District:	0.1005
Total (per \$100 valuation)	3.1552

Median home value

\$244,995

Homes on the market*

10

Homes under contract*

2

Median annual property taxes

\$4,883

Median price per square foot

\$118.13

Average days on the market*

98

*As of 12/5/16

Neighborhood data provided by Sarai Mata, Realtor
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MARKET DATA

ON THE MARKET (NOVEMBER 2016)

	Number of homes for sale/average days on the market		
Price range	78610	78640	78666
\$149,999 or less	-	5/13	3/18
\$150,000-\$199,999	5/8	18/50	3/17
\$200,000-\$299,999	20/43	28/63	3/203
\$300,000-\$399,999	8/44	2/16	2/213
\$400,000-\$499,999	1/70	1/74	1/123
\$500,000-\$599,999	1/14	-	-
\$600,000-\$799,999	-	-	1/70
\$800,000-\$999,999	-	-	-
\$1 million +	-	-	1/234

MEDIAN PRICE OF HOMES SOLD IN NOVEMBER 2015 VS. 2016

Price	78610	78640	78666
\$325,000			
\$300,000			
\$275,000			
\$250,000			
\$225,000			
\$200,000			
\$175,000			
\$150,000			
\$125,000			
\$100,000			
\$75,000			
\$50,000			
\$25,000			
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