

SAN MARCOS, TEXAS

VISION 2020

"The Greater San Marcos Partnership's road map to success is founded on the excellent work provided by Market Street Services.

Their team worked in collaboration with us and our community stakeholders to develop an economic development strategic plan

that was aspirational, attainable, and really brought our diverse communities together. I appreciate the hard work and support Market Street Services has provided our region over the past 10 years through the development of both the 'Partners for Progress' plan and Vision 2020. We're looking forward to working with them again on our next five year plan!"



Adriana Cruz, President, Greater San Marcos Partnership

Background

In recent decades, Greater San Marcos, Texas has emerged as an increasingly prominent area home to new businesses and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, Texas State. Nearly equidistant from the thriving cities of Austin and San Antonio, the area sits in a "garden spot," allowing it to take advantage of economic opportunities generated by both metros while maintaining its own unique character.

In 2009, Market Street Services partnered with the City of San Marcos and its economic development team, Economic Development San Marcos, to coordinate a plan aimed at elevating economic prosperity for the residents, businesses and elected/appointed leadership of the Greater San Marcos area known as "Partners for Progress." One of the first strategic initiatives successfully implemented was the creation of the Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP), which is funded by a strong collaboration of originating investors.

Since 2009, GSMP has made important headway on several fronts and began establishing its credibility and value position within the region. Market Street again partnered with GSMP in 2014 to facilitate a strategic planning process that culminated in the creation of Vision 2020, a comprehensive five-year strategy for the two-county region comprised of Hays and Caldwell counties. The strategic planning process was led by a steering committee made up of a diverse group of community leaders from the public and private sectors. During the eight-month process, over 700 stakeholders from across Greater San Marcos contributed to the development of the Vision 2020 Strategy through their participation in public input.

Vision 2020 was developed and approved in 2015 and was organized around five key Strategic Catalysts:

- Define and Promote the Greater San Marcos Value Proposition
- Support Quality Growth in Export-Oriented Target Sectors
- Optimize the Local Talent Base
- Accommodate and Manage Quality Growth
- Create Destination Appeal



Implementation Highlights

Through hundreds of hours spent by staff and volunteers to implement Vision 2020, Greater San Marcos has made real, measurable, and impactful progress. Some of these successes are listed below.

- As a direct outcome of Vision 2020 and the identified need to define a regional narrative and develop brand and messaging platform for Greater San Marcos, GSMP developed and launched a new website in 2017 to help communicate the region's story. In addition to a revamped website, GSMP rebranded under a new logo and has increased its social media and online engagement significantly. The Partnership now has a marketing strategy it uses to develop its program of work each year.
- GSMP contracted with a national PR firm, DCI, to help foster national media contacts while maintaining local relationships. Additionally, they launched a national public relations campaign that has garnered more than \$1.2 million in advertising equivalency. Greater San Marcos has been featured by CNBC, Bloomberg Technology, *The Economist*, and Thrillist, to name a few. There has been a total of 83 media results with more than 227 million impressions since 2017.
- Since the launch of Vision 2020, GSMP has facilitated a number of corporate relocations that have brought new jobs and investment to the community. Key projects have spanned multiple target sectors, including Amazon's San Marcos Fulfillment Center which has created over 3,000 local jobs, Best Buy's first and only Texas e-commerce sales operation center, Epic Piping, Urban Mining Company, Fashion Glass & Mirror, and VFT Technologies.
- Accomplishing one of Vision 2020's key initiatives, Texas State successfully secured funding for Bruce and Gloria Ingram Hall (the Engineering and Science Building). The 167,000 square foot, \$120 million building began construction in August 2016 and opened in 2018. The facility includes a customized space for Engineering Senior Design activities; a Collaborative Learning Center and STEM scholarship facilities; an extension of the SMART Lab where students are directly involved in research pertaining to renewable energy; and a student-accessible makerspace with 3D printers, laser cutters and engravers, metal and plastic mills and a large water jet table.
- In order to improve community perceptions of public school districts and build connections between businesses and education and workforce entities, Vision 2020 volunteers worked with GSMP staff to program and host an Education Summit in April 2018. Programming included a panel discussion with superintendents and materials promoting K-12 assets were provided. The Summit was spoken highly of by participant. The second annual summit will be hosted in November 2019.
- An early "win" for Vision 2020 was the creation of a Greater San Marcos Young Professionals network. San Marcos Young Professionals, an organization for up and coming professionals between the ages of 21 and 40 in the San Marcos region, launched in 2015 by the San Marcos Chamber. The organization provides opportunities to develop professionally through networking, education, community involvement, and economic development.
- The region has invested significantly in its transportation system. More than \$500 million in roadway improvements has been invested in Hays County since 2007. In 2016, voters in Hays County passed Proposition 2, a \$131.4 million bond to fund long-term transportation work, and in 2018, the City of San Marcos updated its Transportation Master Plan.
- GSMP worked together with regional partners in Hays County to pass the freeport inventory exemption from the county and school districts, giving the majority of the county "triple freeport" status. The passage of this exemption led to the development of nearly 1 million square feet of speculative industrial space in the city of Kyle.

