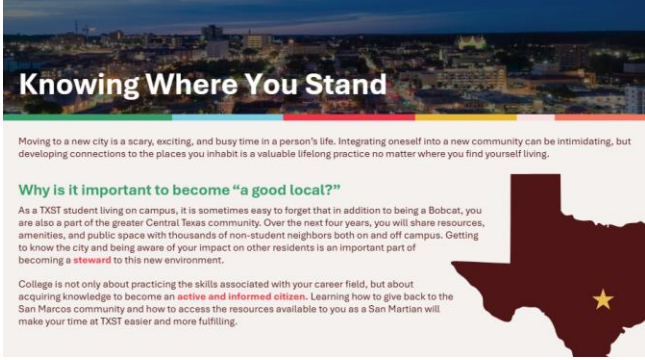


Go Local, Go San Marcos: Growing Community Roots as a First-Year Bobcat

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to describe the benefits and steps of becoming “a good local” in San Marcos, including how to find places outside of their residence halls and classes to encounter community, and how to choose local businesses, volunteer opportunities, and city resources during their time at Texas State University.

Delivery (Presentation Notes):

 Knowing Where You Stand Moving to a new city is a scary, exciting, and busy time in a person's life. Integrating oneself into a new community can be intimidating, but developing connections to the places you inhabit is a valuable lifelong practice no matter where you find yourself living. Why is it important to become “a good local?” As a TXST student living on campus, it is sometimes easy to forget that in addition to being a Bobcat, you are also a part of the greater Central Texas community. Over the next four years, you will share resources, amenities, and public space with thousands of non-student neighbors both on and off campus. Getting to know the city and being aware of your impact on other residents is an important part of becoming a steward to this new environment. College is not only about practicing the skills associated with your career field, but about acquiring knowledge to become an active and informed citizen. Learning how to give back to the San Marcos community and how to access the resources available to you as a San Martian will make your time at TXST easier and more fulfilling.	<u>Knowing Where You Stand</u> This introduction establishes the reason why students should care about becoming a “local” in San Marcos- namely, that students are not only parts of the TXST campus community but also residents of the city and county, connected to other residents through resource and space sharing. Introduce stewardship- the act of caring for the wellbeing of an area- goes hand in hand with first getting to know an area. Emphasize that even though it is easy to feel isolated or disconnected from the world, especially in the age of social media, it is important for students both socially and emotionally to become grounded in the material surroundings of where they live.
 Stepping Outside The first step to familiarizing yourself with a new location is often the one you take out your own front door! Getting to know San Marcos begins by exploring its streets, businesses, parks, and outdoor areas. Finding and frequenting these locations where you can have fun and interact with neighbors will help to both orient yourself geographically in your new home and discover new ways to spend time outside of school. Finding a Third Place A third place is a setting outside of the home (the first place) and work or school (the second place) where people can go to relax and socialize. Cafes, bookstores, music venues, and restaurants are all popular kinds of third places, but they can also be free locations like libraries and parks. Third places are important because they help us form identities and interests outside of our professional lives, and provide a space to connect with friends and strangers. Think, Pair, Share: What is your favorite place to spend free time? Is it a first, second, or third place?	<u>Stepping Outside</u> This slide kicks off the process of integration by encouraging students to make the first leap and exploring their new environment. It introduces to students the concept of the third place, an idea found often in sociology and urban studies, to define and illustrate the value of public gathering spaces outside students’ residence halls and classes. The idea of first, second, and third places is helpful for students to reflect about what

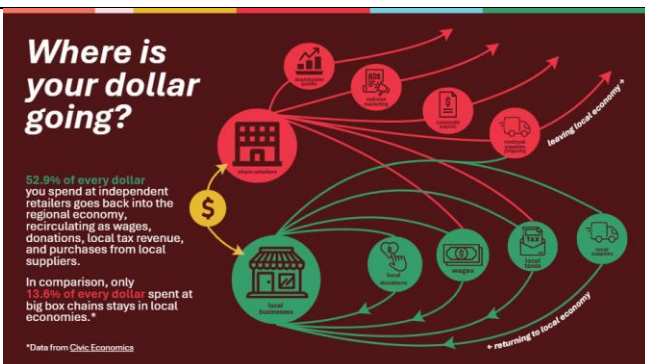
	kinds of spaces they frequent and whether/how they find fulfillment in them. Included at the bottom of this slide is an opportunity to engage students in a paired or classroom discussion about what third places they can think of already.
	<u>Exploring San Marcos</u> As a continuation of the previous slide, this slide offers an easy entry point for discovering third places and other recreational opportunities in San Marcos. The slide features a screenshot from the Visit San Marcos blog, which is also provided as an embedded link in the text. Feel free to navigate to the website, and encourage students to scan the QR code to explore the site on their own time. Though the official city blog is geared formally towards tourists, it is also an extremely useful place for newcomers to learn about San Marcos attractions, food scene, and seasonal event schedule.
	<u>Shopping Local- for the Earth</u> This slide is the first of two illustrating the benefits of shopping local, beginning with the environmental advantages associated with independent retailers over big box chains. Emphasize that the difference between independent versus chain retailers primarily comes down to an issue of transportation. When shopping, ask students to think about how the product in the store arrived in front of them- where did the raw materials come from? Where was it assembled? How far did it have to travel to get to the store? The more the product had to be transported in order to be assembled and sold, the more emissions are produced as a byproduct. Because the inverse is also true, shopping local

(whether at locally owned stores or buying local products at stores like HEB) cuts pollution and has a smaller carbon footprint for producers and consumers. It is important to explain the connection between pollution/emissions generation and the production process, as many people are aware of the benefits of shopping local but often cannot explain the specific environmental harm of buying from chains.



Shopping Local- for the Economy

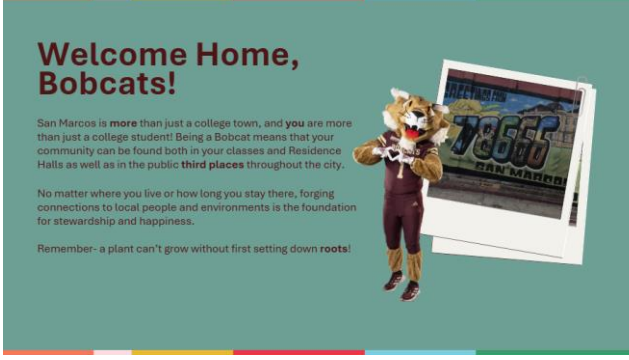
This slide expands the benefits of shopping local in the economic context, explaining the effect by which money spent at local businesses remains in regional economies at a higher rate than that spent in bog box chains. An important note to make to students is that it is **not necessary** to purchase every item from local businesses to produce benefits like the Local Multiplier Effect. Especially because students have limited income sources, buying everything local is not feasible or realistic, but making the switch to local products for even a few items is better than buying everything at a chain store, and still sustainable!



Where is Your Dollar Going?

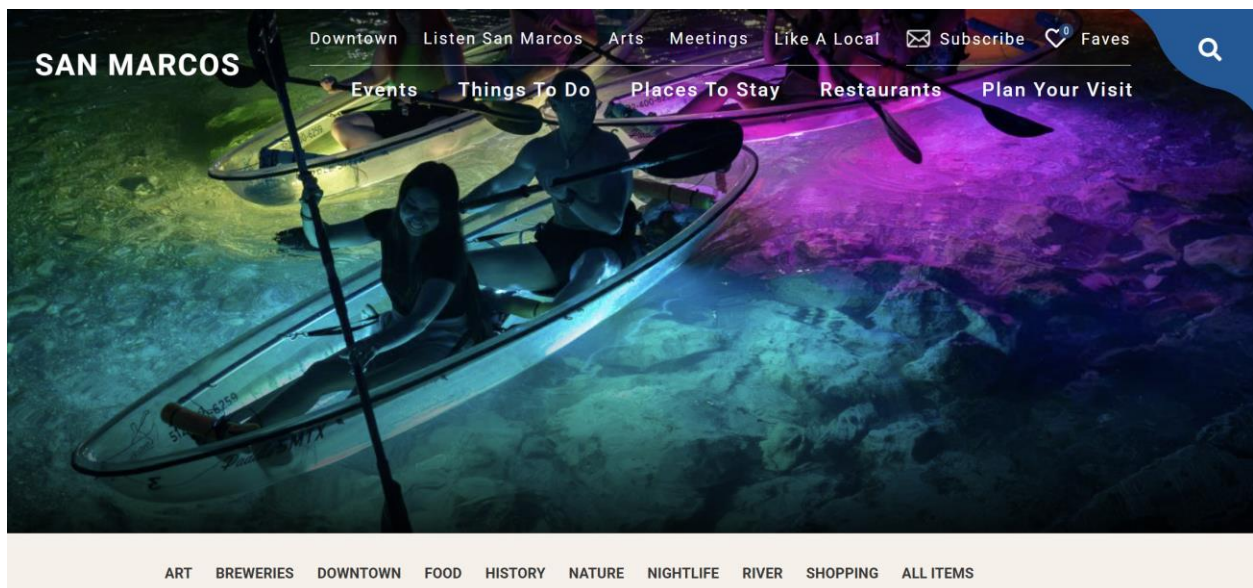
To further illustrate the difference between shopping at chains and shopping local, this conceptual diagram helps to visualize the path of a dollar in the two different scenarios. Point out to students how even though some revenue from chains does go to local tax revenue and employee wages, most of it will leave the local economy on its way to national corporate payroll, marketing, and shareholder dividends. Meanwhile, more than half of every dollar spent at an

	independent retailer recirculates back into the local economy.
Building the Village When you're not perusing a local shop or eating at a family-owned restaurant, volunteering is another great way to give back and get involved in the San Marcos community. Each year, Bobcats have the opportunity to participate in a variety of different volunteer events where they can make a positive impact on people and the environment.  Fall River Clean Up Keep San Marcos Beautiful Both Texas State University and the City of San Marcos host regular and seasonal river clean up days that any member of the public can participate in. In October and March, San Martians come together to pick up litter around the San Marcos River and its watershed during the Fall River Clean Up and Great Texas River Clean Up. To participate in these important local traditions, learn more from the City of San Marcos' River Clean Ups webpage, or follow the Keep San Marcos Beautiful campaign on Facebook or Instagram. 	<u>Building the Village</u> Switching topics into the second main theme of the presentation, the following two slides discuss volunteering opportunities in San Marcos. Though there are many more volunteer opportunities in the city, the ones highlighted in these slides are some of the most culturally significant and widely participated in San Marcos. Each caption features an embedded link to take students to the webpage with more information about each opportunity and organization.
 Volunteers are always needed at Southside Community Center, which serves as a shelter and resource distribution site for San Martians experiencing homelessness. Bobcats can volunteer to serve meals, clean, and organize donations.  Every Spring, TXST hosts Bobcat Build's Big Event, a day of service where students can donate their time to various community projects across the city. Bobcats have an opportunity to join as individuals or as a member of a participating student organization.  The Hays County Food Bank feeds hundreds of Hays County families and individuals experiencing food insecurity, operating with help from volunteers who cook meals, transport food items, and organize items for distribution. These events and organizations are just some of the volunteer opportunities that Bobcats can participate in as new residents of San Marcos!	<u>Building the Village cont.</u>
Local Services and Resources In addition to the resources available on campus to TXST students, Bobcats also have access to a variety of services and amenities provided by Hays County and the City of San Marcos. As you settle into your home, be sure to learn not just what you can do for your city, but what your city can do for you! PARKS  Whether you like riverside picnics or hikes through hill country, San Marcos parks and natural areas have something for every Bobcat to enjoy. Plan your next outdoor outing using this map that displays all San Marcos parks and nature trails. LIBRARY  In addition to Alek Library, Bobcats also have access to books and services offered at the San Marcos Public Library on Emil Hopkins St. Students can get a library card for free using their Residence Hall address. ACTIVITY CENTER  Looking to go for a swim, host an event, or join an exercise class? The San Marcos Activity Center has a variety of amenities and resources available for members. Located close to campus, the SHAC is the "Center of it All!" VOTING  If traveling home to vote is inconvenient or impossible, Bobcats can register to vote in San Marcos using their Residence Hall address at the Hays County Elections Office, located in the Hays County Government Center on Stagecoach Trail. BUS ROUTES  Along with the Bobcat Shuttle, students can ride the San Marcos bus for free, which runs on 8 routes that service all parts of the city. The Capitol Area Rural Transportation System (CARTS) bus also offers routes to out-of-town destinations for a small fee.	<u>Local Services and Resources</u> While the last slides placed an emphasis on new Bobcats giving either time or money into the San Marcos community, this slide highlights ways in which the city and county offer support services to <i>them</i>. Each yellow subtitle is a navigable link that can be clicked on for either a map or informational website that can be shown to students. Encourage students to explore not just the numerous institutional resources from Texas State, but also those available to them through their local government.

 Welcome Home, Bobcats! San Marcos is more than just a college town, and you are more than just a college student! Being a Bobcat means that your community can be found both in your classes and Residence Halls as well as in the public third places throughout the city. No matter where you live or how long you stay there, forging connections to local people and environments is the foundation for stewardship and happiness. Remember- a plant can't grow without first setting down roots!	<u>Welcome Home, Bobcats!</u> The lesson concludes by reasserting the significance of San Marcos as a town in its own right rather than simply the setting for a university. Ensure that students are left with a final message of understanding that they both have the privilege and responsibility of partaking as a responsible member of the San Marcos community for as long as they are attending TXST.
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Activity: Plan a San Marcos Day

This activity revolves around the use of the [Visit San Marcos](#) blog, which was linked at the very beginning of the slide deck. Students will need a device such as a laptop, smart phone, or tablet to complete the activity. A sheet of paper is recommended, but they may also use a blank Word document if the instructor chooses to keep the entire activity digital.



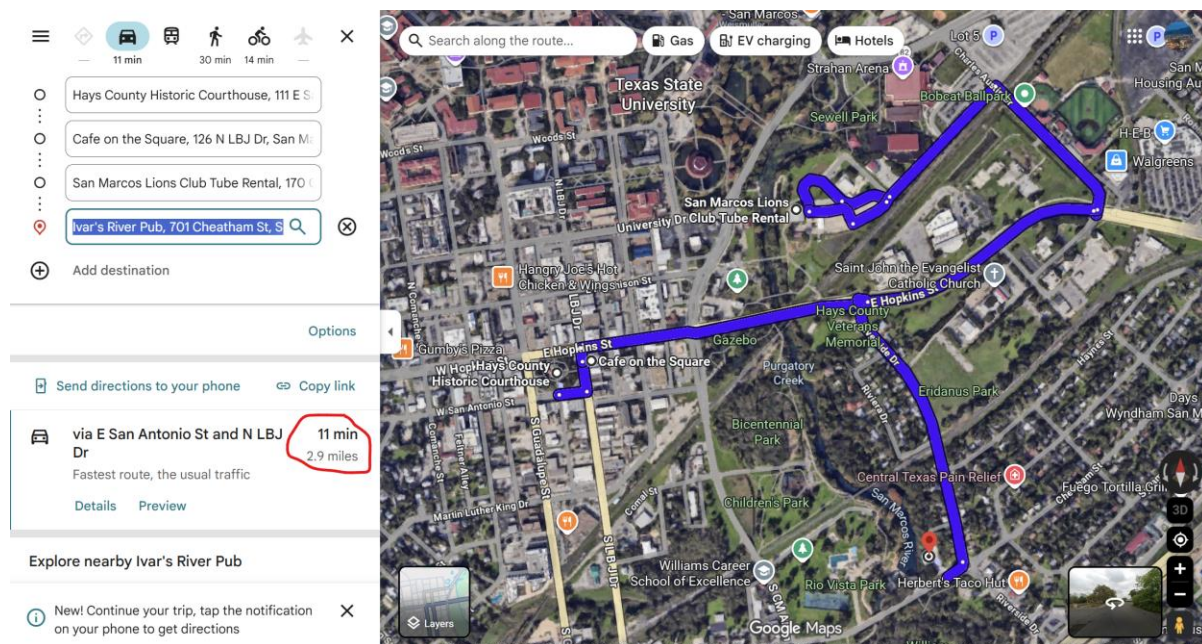
Organize the class into groups of 2-3 students each. Utilizing information from the Visit San Marcos site (Figure 1), challenge each group to plan a day-long itinerary of activities in San Marcos based around the following criteria:

1. Activities must take place **at a locally owned business or location unique to San Marcos**, i.e., their chosen activities cannot include going to chain restaurants, national stores, or other non-independent businesses. If students are unsure about whether their

chosen locations meet this requirement, ask them to consider whether they can find their location in other American cities. If they can, it is likely not a local business. (Note: a small exception to this can be made to local chain businesses with a few locations in San Marcos, New Braunfels, and/or Austin, but this is not ideal and should not apply to all locations).

2. Students must choose **one activity for the morning, afternoon, and evening** in order to be considered a full day itinerary. The activities can be recreational, outdoor-based, restaurant or food-based, or event-based.

As a bonus component to the activity, challenge students to try and limit the travel associated with their itinerary to as few driving miles as possible, given a starting point of the Hays County historic courthouse (the Square/downtown San Marcos). Students can measure driving miles by using the “get directions” function on Google Maps and adding all their stops to a route (Figure 2).



The goal with this requirement is not necessarily to reduce driving time to 0 miles, as this may be inconvenient or even impossible depending on what locations the students may have selected for their itinerary. Rather, it is simply an added component to show how planning a day around local activities produces less driving-related emissions and is also more convenient because of the smaller radius. After all students have found their itinerary driving distances, rank each group's itinerary based on driving miles. Instructors can award the top three groups with the fewest driving miles extra credit (or some other sort of small incentive like candy).

As another optional component of this activity, instructors can also offer extra credit to students who actually go out and test the itinerary they developed in class, extending the activity to a homework assignment or something that can be done at a later point in the semester. To secure the extra credit, have students turn in a photo (or photos) of themselves at the locations they chose in their itinerary, and ask that they write a short reflection on their day in San Marcos. Some suggested prompts for this reflection include:

- What was your favorite location? Least favorite location?
- What did you observe at each location? Did you experience something new, or perhaps talk to anyone interesting while you were there?
- If you could have another day of San Marcos activities, what would you change about your itinerary? What would you keep the same?
- How would your experience have been different if you had chosen to instead plan your day around going to chain retailers/restaurants compared to the local ones?