

### **Context Zone t1: Natural**

The Natural Zone includes all lands that have been permanently protected from development. This includes national parks, state parks and most land trust lands. Here, in the wilderness, nature trumps mankind every time. The only buildings you're likely to find here are forest rangers' cottages or campground structures. This is the quietest place you can find, and it's the place where the stars shine the brightest.

### **Context Zone t2: Rural**

The Rural Zone includes lands that are not currently slated for development, but that have not been permanently protected from development. Most of the Rural Zone in central Texas is ranchland and hill country. Man begins to shape this zone, but he uses natural or rustic materials to do it, like the rows upon rows of corn in the field converging on the horizon, the columns of fruit trees marching like soldiers over the hills of the orchard, or the lonely lines of barbed wire strung along cedar posts at the edge of a field. You may hear a distant tractor plowing the fields by day, or the cows mooing as they come home in the evening. The blips of the fireflies over the fresh-mown fields are still the most numerous lights, but you may occasionally see a light in the window of a farmhouse as you go by, at least until bedtime.

### **Context Zone t3: Suburban Neighborhood**

The Sub-urban Neighborhood Zone isn't exactly the suburban environment you typically see. It's close, to be sure, but it doesn't include some things like the big box retail that you might instead find in a highway business district. The Suburban Zone in San Marcos is beautifully executed in the historic neighborhoods. Here, lots are larger, streets begin to curve with the contour of the land. Streetlights and sidewalks occur in this Zone, but are less regular than closer to the square. Natural features such as streams still trump things built by humans.

### **Context Zone t4: General Urban**

The General Urban Zone is the place that settlements start coalescing into strongly identifiable neighborhoods, each with their own center that you can walk to in five minutes or less. These areas usually surround the most urban portions of the city. This is the place where the houses pull up close enough to the street so you can sit on your porch and talk to your neighbor who has stopped to lean over your fence with the latest news. Here, the neighborhood is compact enough that children can safely walk or ride their bikes down tree-lined sidewalks to the ice cream store down on the corner, and return home before they finish the cone.

### **Context Zone t5: Urban Center**

The Urban Center Zone is Main Street America. Main Street was never far from the life of every American town. There were sometimes townhouses at the edge of Main Street and there was always a good selection of apartments over the street itself, and over the square. Young couples just getting started would often live in an apartment over Main Street, but they weren't alone. The Main Street neighborhood was as diverse as any, including merchants living over their shops and old folks who didn't want to have to saddle up to get to all the necessities. You could see lights on in the windows over the square every evening, and could hear mothers calling their kids to come in and do their homework long after the old men out in front of the general store had folded up their checkerboard and gone home for the day.