



CENTRAL TEXAS AREA GUIDE • NO. 01 • CENTRAL TEXAS

The Southern Corridor

Buda, Kyle & San Marcos, honestly – what each town feels like, what the money really looks like, and how to buy well where most of the homes are brand new.

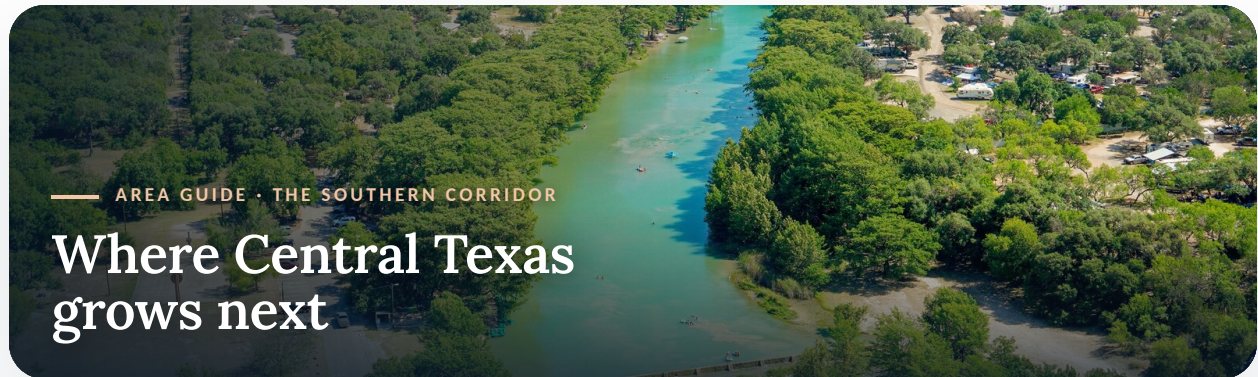
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The corridor most relocating families end up touring

Drive twenty minutes south of downtown Austin on I-35 and the metro changes character: the price-per-square-foot drops, the neighborhoods get newer, and three distinct small cities — **Buda, Kyle, and San Marcos** — each make their own case. This guide is the honest, on-the-ground version of what living down here is actually like: what each town feels like, what the money really looks like, and how to buy well in a corridor where most of the inventory is new construction. No pitch — just the stuff we'd tell a good friend.

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The corridor at a glance

The southern corridor is the stretch of I-35 between South Austin and San Marcos. It's one of the fastest-growing parts of Texas — and for relocating buyers it's often the sweet spot: **newer homes, more space per dollar, real small-town centers, and a straight shot up the interstate** to everything Austin.



One road, three personalities

Buda (closest in, roughly 15 miles from downtown Austin), Kyle (the corridor's growth engine, roughly 20), and San Marcos (the college town on the river, roughly 30). Distances are approximate, via I-35 — your real commute is the peak-hour version, not the map version.



New construction country

A large share of homes for sale down here are new builds in master-planned communities. That means incentives, design centers, builder contracts — and a real advantage for buyers who bring someone who knows how builders work.



Your dollar stretches

Same budget, different outcome: closer-in Austin buys you proximity; the corridor buys you square footage, a yard, and often a brand-new home with a warranty. Neither is wrong — it's a life choice, and we'll help you weigh it honestly.



This is Pete's home turf

Pete and Eugenia live and work this corridor — including years spent selling new homes for builders in South Austin. This is the part of the metro where their knowledge is street-by-street, not just data-deep.

Town by town, honestly

These three cities get lumped together on maps, but they don't feel the same. Here's the plain-English version — what each one is, and who tends to love it. (Fit, not rankings: the right one depends on your life.)

Buda — the small town at Austin's doorstep

- ☐ **The feel:** a genuinely historic little main street (antique shops, coffee, patio restaurants) wrapped in newer neighborhoods. “Buda” rhymes with “judah” — you'll be corrected once, kindly.
- ☐ **The housing picture:** established neighborhoods from the 2000s–2010s plus active new-home communities; generally the closest-in (and often the priciest) of the three.
- ☐ **Who tends to love it:** people who want the shortest corridor commute and a town that already feels settled — with a real main street for Saturday mornings.

Kyle — the corridor's growth engine

- ☐ **The feel:** one of the fastest-growing cities in Texas — new communities, new schools, new retail arriving in waves. Also, delightfully, the self-proclaimed “Pie Capital of Texas.”
- ☐ **The housing picture:** the deepest new-construction inventory in the corridor, across a wide band of prices — from first-home communities to larger master-planned neighborhoods with resort pools and trails.
- ☐ **Who tends to love it:** buyers who want the most home for the money in a brand-new community and are comfortable with a town that's still being built around them — energy now, amenities arriving.

San Marcos — the river city

- ☐ **The feel:** a real college town (Texas State) with a crystal-clear spring-fed river running through the middle of it, a courthouse square with live music, and outlet malls people drive hours to reach.
- ☐ **The housing picture:** the most affordable of the three overall — historic pockets near the square, newer communities on the edges, and steady investor interest thanks to the university.
- ☐ **Who tends to love it:** value-focused buyers, remote workers who want river-town life, Texas State families, and anyone splitting life between Austin and San Antonio — you're roughly halfway.

What about the South Austin edge?

Just north of Buda, inside Austin's city limits, communities along the Menchaca and Goodnight Ranch corridors give you an in-between option: city address, newer construction, and quick access to both downtown and the corridor. If your budget can reach it and your life points north, it belongs on your tour.

Ask us to build you a corridor tour — we'll sequence all of it in one focused day.

About schools

School fit matters and it's yours to decide. We don't rank areas by schools — that's steering, and it's also just not our call. Verify current boundaries, ratings, and campuses yourself with the districts and the Texas Education Agency, per address; we'll happily point you to the official sources for any home you're weighing.



Living here: the good stuff

The corridor's secret is that the fun isn't up in Austin — a lot of it is right here:

- ☐ **Float the San Marcos River** — spring-fed, clear, and roughly 72°F year-round — tube it, paddle it, or just swim at Rio Vista Park
- ☐ **Buda's main street** — antiques, coffee, breakfast tacos, and one of the best small-town farmers-market vibes near Austin
- ☐ **Pie in Kyle** — the Texas Pie Company earned Kyle its “Pie Capital of Texas” title — go early on weekends
- ☐ **The square in San Marcos** — courthouse lawn, live music, student energy, and proper Texas dance halls within a short drive
- ☐ **Outlet runs** — the San Marcos outlets are a legitimate destination — plan a half day, go on a weekday
- ☐ **Wimberley & the Hill Country** — Jacob's Well, Blue Hole, and wine country start twenty minutes west of the corridor
- ☐ **Everything Austin, on your schedule** — SoCo dinners, Zilker weekends, ACL in the fall — 20 to 40 minutes north when you want it, peace when you don't

Want the local shortlist?

Tell us which town you're leaning toward and we'll send the real list — where locals actually eat, swim, and spend Saturdays. **Just ask.**

— BUYING NEW DOWN HERE

Most of the corridor is brand new — buy it well

New construction: the corridor's main event

More than almost anywhere in the metro, buying in the southern corridor usually means buying from a builder. That's a genuine opportunity — **if you understand how the builder side works**. Pete spent years on that side of the table, selling new homes for builders in this very part of the metro. Here's what that experience buys you:



Incentives decoded

Rate buy-downs, closing-cost credits, design-center dollars — builders rarely lead with their best offer, and the structure matters as much as the size. We track what's really on the table across the corridor.

[Ask for this week's tracker.](#)



MUD & PID reality check

Many corridor communities sit in special districts that add to the tax bill. They're not bad — they built the pool you'll love — but the *settled, all-in monthly* is the number to budget, not year-one taxes on bare dirt. We run it for any address.



Upgrades that hold value

Some design-center choices you'll see again at resale; others you never will. Before you spend a dollar past the base price, we'll tell you which is which — bluntly.



Representation costs you nothing

The friendly on-site agent works for the builder. Registration policies vary, and in many communities your agent must be with you from the *first* visit. Loop us in before you tour — it protects you, at no cost to you.

The model home is the builder's best salesperson.
Bring your own.

The money, without the fog

No invented numbers here — prices move, and anyone quoting you a "corridor average" is selling something. What holds true:



The gradient is real: broadly, the further south you go, the more home you get per dollar — Buda closest-in at a premium, San Marcos the value end, Kyle the wide middle. Where *your* budget lands is a one-conversation answer.

- ☐ **Taxes need the district math:** Hays County, city, school district, and any MUD/PID stack into your real rate — it varies street by street, not just town by town. Always price a *specific address*, never the town.
- ☐ **Homestead exemption:** once you own and occupy, file it — it lowers the taxable value of your primary residence. Verify current rules with the Hays County appraisal district.
- ☐ **New-build taxes step up:** year-one bills on new construction are often assessed on partial value. Budget the settled number so year two never surprises you.
- ☐ **Insurance quotes early:** newer roofs help, but get a real quote on the real address before you fall in love with the payment.

General information, not tax, legal, or lending advice — verify specifics for any property with the county, a licensed lender, and a licensed insurance agent. We're glad to run real numbers on any address.

The commute, honestly

The corridor lives and dies by I-35, and I-35 has opinions. The honest picture:

- ☐ **Peak hours are real.** The same drive that takes 25 minutes on Sunday can take an hour on a weekday morning. Drive your actual commute at the actual time before you commit — no exceptions.
- ☐ **You have relief valves:** SH-130 (toll) parallels I-35 to the east and moves when the interstate doesn't; SH-45 connects the corridor west toward MoPac. Toll costs add up — put them in the monthly budget if you'll use them daily.
- ☐ **Remote and hybrid change everything.** If you're in the office twice a week, the corridor math gets dramatically better. Be honest about your real schedule, not your worst-case one.
- ☐ **The airport run is easy:** ABIA sits on the southeast side, so corridor living often beats north-metro living for frequent flyers.

Worksheet — your must-reach places

List the two or three places you actually have to reach often. Where you land along I-35, MoPac, 183, and the tollways shapes your daily life more than almost anything else.

PLACE YOU MUST REACH	HOW OFTEN	MAX DRIVE YOU'LL ACCEPT	PEAK-TIME REALITY



Send me your top three and I'll show you homes that fit the commute — not the other way around.

Which town leans your way?

? A quick gut-check

Buda → shortest corridor commute, settled small-town center, willing to pay a bit more for both.

Kyle → maximum new home for the money, growing community energy, patience for construction around you.

San Marcos → best value, river-and-square lifestyle, college-town energy, or a foot in both Austin and San Antonio.

Still torn → good — that's what a one-day, three-town tour is for. We'll sequence it so you feel the difference back-to-back.

Scorecard — take this to every showing

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU	1	2	3	4	5
Commute to your must-reach places	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All-in monthly cost fits comfortably	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Home age / condition / warranty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Space & layout for your life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
What's within 15 minutes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Taxes & district fees (MUD/PID/HOA)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resale outlook you're comfortable with	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall gut feel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



Comparing two or three homes? Score each one and the right answer usually gets a lot clearer.

The official links, bookmarked

- ☐ **City of Buda** — city services, permits, events
- ☐ **City of Kyle** — city services and the growth pipeline
- ☐ **City of San Marcos** — city services, river rules, parks
- ☐ **Hays County Appraisal District** — the actual tax picture for any corridor address
- ☐ **Texas Comptroller** — **property tax** — homestead-exemption basics and current rules
- ☐ **Texas Education Agency** — verify school districts and campuses yourself, per address
- ☐ **TxDOT / Mobility35** — what's actually happening with I-35 construction

 **CapMetro** — park-and-rides and transit reaching the south metro

*This guide is educational and general — not tax, legal, or financial advice; figures and characterizations are qualitative and change. Verify specifics for any property before relying on them. Equal Housing Opportunity. **TREC** Information About Brokerage Services · **TREC** Consumer Protection Notice.*



Made for you by Pete & Eugenia

We're a husband-and-wife team who help families move to Central Texas with a lot less stress and a lot more confidence. This guide is our way of helping before you ever pick up the phone. Whenever you want a real person to think it through with you — areas, timing, a specific home — we're one call or text away. No pressure, ever.

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Going deeper on new construction? **New Home Dispatch** is our independent, no-pitch guide to buying new in Central Texas — newhomedispatch.com.

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