El Mercado Zona Cultural | San Antonio
Today’s Conversation

- Context
- Vision for Zona Cultural
- Revitalization Plan
- Opportunities
- Organization
- Next Steps
Context
“San Antonio is the capitol of what America is becoming.”

- San Antonio Express-News
Why Zona Cultural… and WHY NOW?

• A family and its vision…generations in the making…

• A helping hand from the City to build momentum
  - City Council designates Zona as a cultural district (Spring 2014)

• Centro San Antonio and neighborhood stakeholders chip in to lead the effort

• Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) lends its support
  - TCA designates Zona as a cultural district (Fall 2015)

• Building a road to success – The Zona Cultural Revitalization Plan
Despite a rich history and a location in the heart of the City, Zona Cultural has struggled to find its voice and capitalize on its unique position.

Why?
- Lacks a clear identity and focus
- Physical connections both into and within Zona are difficult to navigate and lack aesthetic appeal.
- The offer is focused on the anchors of Market Square and Main Plaza – what lies between and beyond is lacking

So what is the answer?
- A clear and well-proclaimed storyline... and an actionable strategy to:
  • Address the district’s challenges
  • Leverage its tremendous potential
Zona Cultural is a crossroads of culture, commerce and community; a destination celebrating the story of San Antonio through music, food, culture and the arts.
Goals of the El Mercado Zona Cultural Revitalization Plan

Establishing a Foundation to Understand Zona

Building a Plan to Revitalize Zona

A Long-Term Sustainable Strategy to Deliver the Plan
What do we gain by investing in Zona Cultural?

• **A refreshed, strengthened offer** – for the local community and visitors

• **Economic growth** – increased incomes, sales taxes, property values, visitor stays and spending

• **Leveraged City investments** – City, San Pedro Creek, Children’s Hospital of San Antonio, Weston Urban, VIA, the Alameda, etc.)
Revitalization Plan Opportunities
## Initial Recommendations

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Branding, Identity and Activation

Left and Below:
Mexico City

Right:
Pasadena, CA

Far Right:
Denver, CO
Economic Development – Vacant Storefront Interventions

From This:

To This:
Economic Development – Affordable Housing for Creatives

From This:

To This:

Artspace Project – Loveland, CO
Connectivity and Public Realm – Public Art and Mural Program

From This:

To This:
Pop-Up Parks

Wayfinding & Gateways

ADDITIVE WAYFINDING

ADAPTIVE RE-USE

GROUND WAYFINDING

PAINTED SIGNS ON BUILDINGS
Planning and Policy – Design Guidelines

Western Architecture
- Commercial development: shaded walkways, brick facades with timber framing.

Agrarian/Railroad Architecture
- Residential development: territorial, ranch and bungalow styles.

Design Themes
- High Percentage of Ground Floor Selling (Store & Windows)
- Sidewalks, Pedestrian Street Trees
- Auto Street-Level Access
- Streetwall Intersect
- On Street Parking
- Mid Streetwalk

Heritage District Design Guidelines June 2011 / Deutsch Architecture Group

Central City Fundamental Design Guidelines

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Market Square – Reintroduce Fresh Food/Artisan Market
Market Square – Expand Programming to Surrounding Areas
Physical Improvements to Market Square
Successful districts become that way when local stakeholders are empowered and engaged, and have the appropriate resources to plan multi-year programs.

• Role:
  - To oversee Zona Cultural and facilitate implementation of the Zona Cultural Revitalization Plan
  - Bring together civic, cultural and private sector partners to improve Zona Cultural as a whole.
  - Access tax-deductible contributions and leverages those funds through grants, foundations
  - Employ full-time Zona Cultural staff
Who IS this new Zona Cultural Management Entity

• The Organization would be managed by an independent board of directors made up of a diverse mix of stakeholders and partners from within Zona Cultural, including:
  - Private property representatives
  - Small business representatives
  - Artists and creatives
  - Residential representatives
  - Institutional organization representatives (e.g. Children’s Hospital, UTSA)
  - Cultural institutions representatives
  - Public sector representatives
  - Partner representatives

• 12-15 representatives comprising a diverse cross-section of the community

• Role would be to set yearly work plans and budgets and establish overarching policy direction for Zona Cultural.
• Centro SA will commit to doing the following:
  - Collaborate with public entities on future steps
  - Funding commitments
  - Endorsement + support for the plan
  - Establish Zona organization and governance
  - Move forward with Artspace, Branding, Website, Social Media

• Quick win projects prioritized
“History doesn’t stop, but changes…”

- Daniel Arreola, Author
Thank you.

Pat DiGiovanni
President & CEO

With help from Jamie Licko, Centro, Inc.