

LA VILLITA
MASTER PLAN

FOR
THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

LA VILLITA ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS
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San Antonio Conservation Society

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INTRODUCTION

The La Villita Restoration Project was organized by the City of San Antonio through Centro 21 and the Department of Economic and Employment Development. Application for this project was made in March of 1980 and funding was approved in October of 1980. The City's commitment to the La Villita project led them to commission Architects in the Summer of 1980 to begin this Master Plan before final funding was acquired. Recently, the Department of Parks and Recreation has assumed the responsibility for management and ongoing maintenance.

The project area is within the City's La Villita Historic District and is defined by S. Alamo, Nueva, S. Presa and Villita Streets. In addition, the Cos house and the Arneson River Theatre, which connects the area to the Paseo del Rio along the San Antonio River, are also included in the study area.

CURRENT SITUATIONS

In terms of the usage of the area, La Villita presents itself in conflicting periods of either intensive use or vacancy. On the one hand La Villita has the day-to-day image of a sparsely used cluster of charming old houses with scarcely enough business and activity to provide an income for its shopkeepers and artists. On the other hand La Villita is sometimes packed with thousands of persons straining to see an arts and crafts show or revelling in the celebration of a fiesta.

Presently, the very small scale streets and buildings are hidden by trucks and automobiles which can be found continually parking within La Villita. Delivery and catering trucks often block the view and pedestrian way to sections of La Villita, damaging the business of the tenants.

The plazas and patios rented for private parties often interfere with the ongoing La Villita operations. The present location of fences and walls to enclose the areas block pedestrian and vehicular passage which should remain open at all times. Lack of storage space for tables, chairs and concessionaire supplies causes the plazas to be cluttered with unsightly objects before and after events are staged.

The ever present deterioration of building materials has caused damage to the structures which in some cases requires major restoration. Deterioration of paving materials can cause liability problems for the city, while patching and replacing materials has created a patchwork quilt of paving patterns. A number of significant site drainage problems exist throughout the area, and basic utility systems have been handled in ways which are often unsightly and inadequate.

Public restrooms have been put into historic structures taking up valuable lease space. The restrooms, however, are often times used only during major events and serve no purpose for anyone on a day-to-day basis.

Artists presently in La Villita are making do with facilities not conducive to the production of their work. Often times, they use the space only for displaying their art, while their studio space is elsewhere.

Some of the La Villita shops have quality merchandise, but there are too many shops which have only curios and what-nots. The overall quality of goods does not appear to be geared to the types of visitors the La Villita area is and should be attracting. Also, many of the shopkeepers have failed to recognize the historic character of the interior of their shops and instead have concealed the original materials with such materials as shag carpeting and peg board.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

All of these conditions can be improved through a combination of management decisions and physical changes which are addressed in this Master Plan. The task is to make La Villita function for the shopkeepers and the participants in special events; for the tourist as well as the local visitor; for the artists and for their patrons.

The EDA application and the La Villita Associated Architects have defined the following goals for the restoration project. These goals have been concurred in by the City staff.

1. Revitalize La Villita as a thriving center for the arts and crafts.
2. Establish La Villita as a major tourist attraction and specialty retail center in Downtown San Antonio.
3. Reinforce the cultural character and potential for cultural activities of the area.
4. Reinforce the historical integrity of La Villita.

In order to achieve these goals, the following specific objectives have been identified.

1. Restore deteriorated structures in La Villita.
2. Improve circulation and access to the area.
3. Interpret the historical significance of the project, allowing the historic nature of the area to be apparent to the visitors.

4. Improve the economic viability of the area by physical improvements which will attract users to patronize more of the area, more often.
5. Develop a theme and a tenant mix that will attract a greater number of visitors to patronize the area.
6. Increase the volume of retail sales.
7. Increase employment in the area through increased demand for services.
8. Increase frequency of use of the public plazas for special events and with increased attendance at those events.

It is intended that this planning study be used in several important ways. First, this document is intended to serve as the basic guide identifying the most beneficial improvement to be made with present funding. Secondly, it will set the design concepts for accomplishing these improvements. Thirdly, the Master Plan should provide the standards used by the City appointed boards and commissions to review redevelopment projects. Fourthly, it will serve as a guide for present and future tenants who will be expected to make certain improvements to their rental property as conditions of future leases. Fifth, the Master Plan will suggest future improvements that the La Villita staff would accomplish either on a normal maintenance basis or through future funding from the City.

The magnitude of the various improvements needed in La Villita is such that implementation will, of necessity, take place over a considerable period of time. For this reason, it is most important that the framework established by this study be formally adopted by the City as the official longterm redevelopment policy for the area. This can be accomplished through a number of approaches. Formal adoption of the restoration plan by the City Council, or incorporating the recommendations within the existing La Villita, Paseo del Rio, or Historic Review Board ordinances are possibilities which should be investigated. By whatever means, formally establishing this plan as the overall Master Plan of improvements will insure continuity between present work and later projects. A procedure should also be established to review the plan periodically in the future to insure that present goals are consistent with major needs in the years to come.

It is imperative that the operational staff of La Villita fully understand the redevelopment plan and that they make sure that all tenants, both the present occupants and future parties, read and understand the accepted document. It should also be emphasized that operational staff can be invaluable in overseeing the successful implementation of the plan, particularly by giving tenants specific guidance and assistance with such things as marketing, architectural design, and signage. This will greatly reduce the problems experienced by tenants and staff alike. It is likewise

important that reviewing bodies and the supporting staff of the City understand this document so that they may identify problems at the time of review.

HISTORY

La Villita, called in earlier years Villa Nueva, developed on the east bank of the San Antonio River in the mid to late 18th Century as a settlement adjacent to Mission San Antonio de Valero (The Alamo) founded in 1718. On the west side of the River, a separate "village" developed comprised of the Presidio de Bejar established in 1718, the Canary Islanders settlement of 1731, and the parish church of San Fernando. A ford in the San Antonio River connected these two settlements, crossing near today's Navarro Street bridge between Market and Villita Streets. These settlements, together with four outlying missions to the south, served as a northern outpost for Spain's far-flung empire.

Eighteenth Century life in this isolated location was a succession of challenges for native as well as European settlers. Frequent cholera epidemics and threats from hostile Indians continually threatened the security of the settlement. Severely depopulated, the missions and town struggled to survive.

Visitors to San Antonio in the mid to late Eighteenth Century found an unimpressive sight. A Frenchman, Monsieur Pages, visited in 1768, and spoke of the Presidio as "much encumbered from without by several miserable villages." We can speculate that among those villages was La Villita.

Fray Juan Augustin Morfi, who accompanied Theodore de Croix, inspector general for the Province of Texas, wrote in 1778:

"The entire European population of so vast and fertile a province is reduced to the Villa of San Fernando, which, together with the Presidio San Antonio de Bexar, constitutes a town so miserable that it resembles a most wretched village...the total number of souls is 2060...the town consists of fifty-nine houses of stone and mud, and seventy-nine of wood, all poorly built...so that the whole resembles more a poor village than a villa..."

Carlos E. Castaneda, noted Texas historian, interpreted the remarks of the Conde de Sierra Gorda in 1792, as describing La Villita. The Count, in his communiques, noted that "adjacent to Mission Valero and just outside the Villa de San Fernando, there had grown up a fairly large settlement of families generally called agregados (squatters). It was with these that many of the mission Indians had intermarried."

In 1793, the lands of Mission San Antonio de Valero were distributed among Indians and other settlers, following secularization of the mission. Squatters continued to inhabit the lands of La Villita. In 1801, the Compania Volante de San Carlos de Parras from San Jose y Santiago del Alamo in Mexico, occupied the abandoned mission, staying there for twelve years. These troops provided more residents for La Villita.

Mexico's struggle for independence from Spain, beginning in 1810, created great turbulence in San Antonio, a center of revolutionary activity. The Casas Rebellion of 1811, led by Juan Bautista de las Casas, commander of the Presidio of Bejar, and aided by the presidial troops, failed, resulting in Casas' execution. The subsequent Gutierrez-Magee Expedition of 1812-13, another episode in the fight for independence, drew much support from San Antonians. Soldiers and civilian residents who had lived on the La Villita lands without title, had their property and homes confiscated as punishment for revolutionary activities. In 1817, Antonio Martinez, representing the Spanish Government in San Antonio, petitioned to allow these homes to be sold or rented in order to prevent their further deterioration. This permission was given, and a few land grants in the La Villita Area date to 1818. Archival records show other houses were occupied by soldiers rent free.

The flood of July 5, 1819, had the most profound effect on La Villita's development. Antonio Martinez wrote:

"On the morning of the fifth of the present month as the result of a cloudburst on the north side of this city, the River became so swollen with water that its banks overflowed the city and caused the most disastrous flood that had ever occurred in this province. It left the city in such a condition that one might say the city did not exist. Its inhabitants, those who did not perish in the flood, were reduced to the most lamentable poverty."

The disastrous flood was felt most in the area of the Plaza de Armas and Plaza de las Islas, where many buildings and homes were destroyed. It was only one week before citizens began their petitions for land on the high side of the River in La Villita. They rapidly saw the wisdom of re-locating in this heretofore un-stylish neighborhood.

These families, among them Manuel Chavez, Leandro Sosa, Maria Anna de Luna, and Dionicio Martinez, were those responsible for the permanent and continued settlement of La Villita. The Mexican Government, following independence from Spain in 1821, also made grants in La Villita. These included land to Jose Gomez in 1826, Dolores O'Conn in 1830, and Eduardo Hernandez in 1831. The population of La Villita continued to increase with the approach of the Texas Revolution.

La Villita was at the center of events in revolutionary activities in 1835 and 1836. On November 2, 1835, Samuel A. Maverick wrote:

"Austin and his chief division are 1½ miles above town at the upper mill place, the rest below town on both sides of the River...Nothing done today, but a little firing at long distances and without effect, at the picket guards of the Mexicans in the edge of La Vietta (sic)."

The surrender of Mexican troops following defeat at the Storming of Bexar is known through tradition to have been signed by General Perfecto Martin de Cos in the "Cos House" in La Villita.

Captain Jose Enrique de la Pena, serving under General Santa Anna, wrote on February 25, 1836, shortly before the fall of the Alamo:

"During the night, some construction was undertaken to protect the line that had been established at La Villita under orders of Colonel Morales."

These battles surely must have damaged the fragile adobe and palisado houses of the area, but the days of the Republic of Texas from 1836 to 1846, provided little opportunity to rebuild and stabilize. The population remained low, with many residents moving in and out of town as the threats of Mexican invasion came and went. It was only after statehood in 1846, that a certain security returned. La Villita, as all of San Antonio, began to change in character under the influence of the Anglo and European immigrant.

The children or grandchildren of original grantees, or those who had purchased land from original grantees, gradually sold their lots and modest homes to residents with names like Downs (1846), Ingle (1850), Beck (1852), Leffering (1856), Fest (1857), and McAllister (1866). This trend continued until, by 1890, La Villita was owned almost entirely by non-Hispanics.

The new architecture of this period reflected this trend, though a few simple remnants of the early and mid Nineteenth Century remained. Jacales of mesquite sticks and posts, chinked with clay and roofed in tiles, disappeared. One La Villita resident, interviewed in 1939, recalled that the last such house had burned down a few years earlier. In place of these palisado houses, and in addition to the few remaining adobe structures, dwellings of cut limestone were constructed, adding a Victorian element to the neighborhood.

The residential nature of La Villita prevailed through the turn of the century. The McAllister store, and several other commercial

enterprises operated on the edges of the area. The German Methodist Episcopal, built in 1878, lent an institutional influence, and Mrs. Womble's boarding house was a stopping point for travelers, but generally, the neighborhood was one of homes.

La Villita combined not only architectural styles, but diverse ethnic groups. Though few Hispanic names appear in the 1877 City Directory as living in La Villita, a number of blacks were listed. A strong German influence was also apparent. In 1877, many homes appear to have been owner occupied, but by the turn of the century, most were renter occupied.

By 1900, the neighborhood tone began to change dramatically. The school of Miss Artemesia Bowden, the forerunner of St. Philip's College, purchased a site on Villita Street, and from 1898 to 1917, built an impressive educational facility. The 1904 Sanborn's map indicated primarily homes, but a coffee warehouse and miscellaneous repair shops had appeared.

The next thirty years accelerated the trend of commercial, industrial, and rooming house development in La Villita. Though the structures preserved today withstood this period, nine other adobe or stone houses were destroyed for construction of brick or tile commercial buildings. From 1904 to 1934, a bakery, multiple auto repair and engine shops, a large laundry, and various miscellaneous shops were introduced. Small adobe houses disappeared in a maze of sheetmetal sheds. Other homes became rooming houses.

Louis Lipscomb, Police and Fire Commissioner under Maury Maverick, the mayor who resurrected La Villita, recalled:

"The area around La Villita was one of the worst slum districts in San Antonio...it was a hangout for winos, all sorts of vice, and a terrible looking, dirty neighborhood. This land, of course, belonged to the Public Service Company..."

Maury Maverick himself wrote:

"...one moonlight night in June, 1939, soon after becoming Mayor, I visited it. I found it was owned by the local public service company. I talked to my colleagues on the City Commission; and they were willing to buy. We did by trading City land."

Maverick also contacted his old friend, Aubrey Williams, the National Administrator of the National Youth Administration (N.Y.A.). N.Y.A. agreed to provide \$100,000, if the City would give some money, equipment and materials for the restoration of the area. For two months, preliminary clearance, grading and selective demolition work were undertaken. Additions to buildings were removed, two commercial brick buildings circa 1900 on Villita Street were demolished, trash, and 1800 cubic yards of dirt were

were removed. On October 9, 1939, restoration work was actually begun on seven houses to be restored by N.Y.A.

The Villita Ordinance, an appeal for Inter-American harmony, equality and peace, was adopted on October 12, 1939. The streets, houses, and plazas of La Villita were all named to commemorate the Pan American spirit. In December, 1939, the Carnegie Corporation granted the City \$15,000 for a library, museum and community center building. The City provided additional funding, and Bolivar Hall was built, dedicated to the South American patriot who first envisioned Pan American friendship and unity.

O'Neil Ford, then working in Dallas, was selected by N.Y.A. to be the consulting architect. Working with Blanding Sloan, another architect, Evan Todd, the project superintendent, and artists such as Hardin Black and Mary Green, under the close supervision of Maury Maverick, six houses (the seventh had to be demolished), Bolivar Hall, and new structures including a kitchen and weaving building, were all completed and officially dedicated in May, 1941.

La Villita became a center for community events, and continued to grow in the next forty years under the supervision of Hamilton MaGruder until 1964. The Combs property, 502-508 Villita Street, was acquired in 1947, and the McAllister property at the corner of Villita and South Alamo Streets was bought by the City in 1949. Plaza Nueva at the corner of Nueva and South Alamo Streets, was developed in 1968, including the reconstruction of a palisado house moved from the Hemisfair Grounds. In 1974, La Villita increased in size by 25% with the addition of the Joykist Candy Company complex containing five structures.

On October 2, 1969, the La Villita Historic District of the City of San Antonio was created, and the district was extended to the south on February 27, 1975. La Villita is also a National Register Historic District.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing specific planning recommendations for a historic area is often secondary to resolving a number of legitimate - and usually complex - questions. Is the area really historic? Is its preservation meaningful to the City generally, and to its citizens individually? Can the area really be put to a valid use? Who will oversee the project? How can it be funded?

Fortunately for La Villita, the efforts of many individuals, groups and administrations have already provided most of these answers. The importance of La Villita as a preservation area and as a distinctive place, is long established and accepted. The commitments, public and private, have been made, and the history of La Villita remains part and parcel of what San Antonio is today. Given these facts, the study is able to address the specifics of how the area can best be used and how it should be cared for. All of the long-range problems in La Villita's future can not be indentified; but an appropriate framework for policies and improvements can be established and must be followed. In this way, solutions to immediate problems can begin, and those of the future can be handled more effectively.

The following considerations are essential to the continued welfare of La Villita.

PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

The significance of La Villita as a historic resource - particularly its architecture - is the primary reason that the area has endured as an important element of San Antonio. In this regard, all improvements and redevelopment activities must place the continued preservation of the district in the highest possible priority.

The exteriors of all buildings must be carefully and authentically restored. Interior improvements should also be thoughtfully designed to accommodate reuse without undermining the original fabric of the structures. Additions to original structures must be carefully evaluated. In some cases, additions have added to the historic quality of the original construction and should be preserved; others are inappropriate and should be removed.

All existing public open spaces, plazas and patios should be preserved and enhanced in ways which are in keeping with La Villita's unique flavor. This is especially true of the streetscape in general. All architectural and site improvements should be specifically designed to clarify and reinforce the residential character and scale of the area as a historic residential compound. Throughout the area, contemporary amenities such as adequate utilites, lighting and paving should be provided as necessary to support reuse, but kept subordinant in all instances to historic features.

It is also recommended that all improvements reinforce the identity of La Villita as a specific and defined historic precinct within the downtown area. In particular, the boundaries or "edges" of the district should be made more distinct to make the location of the area more easily perceived and its entrances more readily apparent.

In conjunction with actual physical restoration and improvements, efforts should also focus on appropriately interpreting the history of La Villita and its architecture. A comprehensive interpretive program, beyond the usual historical markers and plaques, will be a step toward making the district a truly significant experience in preservation education. This will also make La Villita a more popular tourist destination as well.

USE

In terms of appropriate use, the already established pattern of mixed public and private activities centering around the arts and the spirit of Fiesta should be continued and intensified. The theme of La Villita should be a congenial mixture of uses which support one another and co-exist with the fiestas, fairs and festivals that are regularly scheduled.

ARTS & CRAFTS

The 1939 ordinance recreating La Villita outlined the production of arts and crafts as a basic purpose of La Villita. Since that time, many artists and craftsmen have produced or shown their work in La Villita. This tradition should be continued and vigorously encouraged.

The original ordinance intended that the use of La Villita for arts and crafts production "help in establishing a standard of fine design and workmanship for both the worker and the buyer." If La Villita is to become recognized as a quality arts and crafts place, the management and the individual artisans must maintain a high standard for the items produced and sold there.

Presently, La Villita has several fine artists and craftsmen who should be encouraged to stay and help build the new La Villita. Special coordination will be required between the tenant and management in order to satisfy the programmatic requirements of each artisan.

A concerted effort should also be made to attract new users which support both the production and sale of quality art and crafts. Appropriate studio space should be provided for accomplished artists and craftsmen, and instruction in these areas should be encouraged. Shops specializing in the sale of quality art and craft items - those produced in La Villita as well as elsewhere - should remain the primary thrust of retail activity in the area.

COMPATIBLE BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

In addition to those activities directly related to the arts, more varied and higher quality retailing should also be encouraged, and various compatible business activities, such as restaurants and cantinas should be selectively recruited. This will add an extra dimension to the visitor experience for both tourists and residents and will help sustain activity throughout the area into the evening hours. A continuous program of cultural events and activities will also help support these endeavors and should be viewed as a high priority in "marketing" the area.

RENTAL OF PUBLIC FACILITIES

As a compliment to these uses, the rental of the various plazas, patios, and suitable interior spaces for private parties and other special events should also be continued and improved. This adds yet another dimension to the life of La Villita, and in addition to providing a useful public service, affords visitors a truly unique opportunity to see the different cultures of San Antonio at their best.

In support of all these uses, the physical facilities of the area must be appropriately upgraded and the necessary basic services provided. This is mandatory if La Villita is to continue to attract quality tenants and customers. This approach offers the extra advantage of increased economic return to the City through more reasonable rental income which can be used to defray the expense of properly maintaining and perserving the district.

It should also be noted that all uses and activities in La Villita must be accommodated within the existing historic architecture or appropriate infill. In general, there is very limited opportunity for expanding existing buildings, introducing additional historic structures or adding new construction. This situation dictates that the selection of tenants be limited to those whose immediate and long term needs can be satisfied by available space. It is also extremely important that a specific use be located in a building which can be successfully adapted to meet the needs of the specific activity. Studio spaces for artists are a particular case in point.

It is important to emphasize that care and respect for the buildings must be exercised. The production of arts and crafts within these old buildings can be harmful to them. An artist's studio or craft shop is in many ways like a laboratory or factory. The use of water, paints, dyes, acids or other chemicals are necessary to produce many items. Heavy equipment for printing, weaving, potting and firing are also necessary. Flexibility to change the size of the space is desirable. The interior materials of an artisan's space should be durable and virtually maitenance free. These criteria are seldom easily accommodated within historic buildings.

Therefore, an artist or craftsman who wishes to work in La Villita must commit himself to do all that is necessary to protect the basic integrity and details of the structures they occupy, even if this means concealing from view features which should otherwise be seen.

The location of studio space within will be based on many determinates, the foremost being the needs and tastes of the interested artists and craftsmen. The browsing tourist and local shopper who will be expected to patronize the Villita shops is much more apt to enter a ground level shop than go upstairs. Therefore, the upper level spaces with less commercial appeal could be utilized as studio spaces for artists and craftsmen and rented at moderate rates. If the artists, or a group of craftsmen, were to rent an entire building, the ground floor space could serve as additional studio space or as a shared gallery space. Single tenancy would eliminate the present problem of stairways shared by two or more tenants.

This approach would allow for 4,000 square feet of upper level studio space in four buildings. Considering the present amount of space devoted to arts and crafts production (approximately 1,800 square feet) this amount of space should allow for ample increase in the number of artists and craftsmen.

Other spaces at ground level may also be used by artists and craftsmen, but the rental rate, if not subsidized by special "artists' rates", will probably have to be more expensive.

Locations for the various appropriate uses in La Villita are illustrated by the accompanying use maps.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The pedestrian circulation within La Villita must be understandable for every visitor - even on the first visit. This, of course, is not presently the case.

The two main circulation paths which have the potential for providing orientation are Villita Street and, perpendicular to it, King Phillip Street. Villita Street runs east to west through the area, creating major points at its intersection with South Alamo Street on the east and Presa Street on the west. The intersection of King Phillip and Nueva Street on the south also establishes a third entrance.

The intersection of Villita and King Phillip marks the center of La Villita. This location should be used as the primary orientation point for the entire project. All of the minor streets, Guadalupe Walk, Hidalgo Walk, Nacional Street and the plazas and patios can be clearly located for visitors in relation to Villita or King Phillip Streets.

It is therefore important that the master plan improvements include improvements which will reinforce the clarity of Villita and King Phillip Streets as the major pedestrian ways of the area. In addition to the major entrance points established by Villita and King Phillip Streets, a number of secondary connections from the surrounding areas into the district presently exist. However, none of these paths provide direct circulation which can be easily understood by visitors. Although these minor connections draw pedestrians into La Villita, major orientation efforts should focus on the Villita-King Phillip system.

A CONNECTION TO THE RIVER

The Paseo del Rio and La Villita have been associated for a long time as compatible and complementary San Antonio areas. Few persons would disagree that the two spaces should work together.

A connection between the river and La Villita must include the following to be workable for all concerned:

- 1) Signage, well designed and carefully placed, to identify the walkway as a path to La Villita, must be installed.
- 2) The pathway should be as direct as possible so that the pedestrian does not lose his orientation.
- 3) It should be well-lighted, but spill light must not bother the neighbors.
- 4) Security and privacy for its neighbors must be provided.

PRESA STREET

Pedestrian circulation along Presa Street should be encouraged. Various improvements will reinforce the special character of La Villita and the pedestrian connections to the surrounding areas on the south and west.

Street trees should be planted along the west side of Presa Street between the Gresser House and the Villita Parking Garage. A low plastered wall approximately 4'0" in height will help shield the view of the cars in the parking lot at the corner of Villita and Presa Streets.

This property to the west of Presa Street holds important redevelopment potential which will affect the success of La Villita. The property will someday be built on and a future building would most positively affect La Villita if the following criteria are met:

- 1) The use of the building should support the activities of La Villita.
- 2) The structure should take advantage of the views across La Villita and the Presa Street connection to the Paseo del Rio.
- 3) The overall visual scale of the building should not overpower the La Villita side of Presa Street.
- 4) The building should form a handsom visual terminus for the westward view down Villita Street.
- 5) Pedestrian paths from the building should relate to Villita Street and Presa Street.

Presa Street also serves to connect La Villita with the two major parking structures in the area, the Villita Parking Garage and the new River Bend Parking Garage on Presa between Commerce and Market Streets. The walk from the garages to La Villita should be pleasant and enjoyable, so that the garages are as convenient as possible to visitors. Some sidewalk realignment may be desirable. One place where the sidewalk area should be increased is between Market Street and the northeast corner of the Presa Street bridge. The sidewalk should follow a straight line from the corner to the Bridge, allowing for a curb cut at the Hertzburg Collection service drive and an enlarged sidewalk area at the stairway to the Paseo del Rio.

ALAMO STREET

The area along Alamo Street to the east of the Villita structures is presently developed in two very different ways. North of Villita Street and in front of the Little Rhein Steakhouse, the sidewalk is located as it was before Alamo Street was relocated to the east. Metered parking for several cars is available. South of Villita Street, the original location of Alamo Street is not apparent and the space is wide and unused.

It is recommended that the area south of Villita Street be developed in a similar way to the area north of Villita, but allowing the live oak trees to remain. The continuation of the drive would exit onto Alamo Street just north of the entrance to Nueva Plaza, leaving this narrower area exclusively for pedestrians. Metered parking for ten to fifteen cars would be added.

Pedestrian circulation to and from Hemisfair Plaza could be enhanced if a specially paved walk across South Alamo Street at Nueva Street were constructed. This would entail removing a strip of asphalt approximately 8'0" wide and repaving this patch with the brick paver chosen for La Villita paving.

KING PHILLIP V STREET

King Phillip Street should be utilized as an important pedestrian path connecting the Villita Street activities to the Plaza Nueva and Plaza Nacional activities.

A consistent paving material, such as brick, should be used to define a narrow street through the center of the right of way. The sides should then be developed with a sidewalk scaled element (which is flush with brick paving). Off of this sidewalk should run concrete, brick, or stone walks up to the porches or doors of each building. To reinforce this sense of street, a low (3'0") Victorian metal or wood fence could be built. This should take the place of the tall existing walls which hide the spaces beyond, discouraging visitors to explore these areas.

A considerable amount of utility relocation must be done to put existing telephone and electrical lines and meters underground. At the same time, the R.O.W. of King Phillip Street should be used to extend or replace water, sewer, drainage, and gas lines. If a chilled water system is installed to air condition the Villita structures, the location of the meter vault and the main lines should be in King Phillip Street.

All of the utility work should be coordinated so that it is installed before the new paving is done.

STREET & SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS:

The various streets and public ways of La Villita are in differing states of disrepair. Some are paved with materials which have deteriorated; some are paved with inappropriate materials such as asphalt; some do not drain properly; others are in much better condition, but need a street light or a bench.

In general, existing paving materials should be sensitively repaired where possible, or replaced entirely with appropriate materials if deteriorated beyond repair. Pedestrian and street lighting should also be evaluated and upgraded appropriately to complement the context of the historic district. Street furniture should generally be kept to a minimum and placed only in areas which will enhance the overall pedestrian circulation. Outdoor seating for restaurants and cantinas should be encouraged wherever adequate space is available.

All improvements to the streetscape must be designed to reinforce the residential character of the district. Small yards, low open fences, and other typical residential design elements such as those along Villita Street near the Little Church of La Villita should be encouraged throughout the area when compatible with the existing architecture.

All buildings, especially those located along Villita and King Phillip Streets, should be opened onto the streets as much as possible within the context of the architecture of the structure. The following changes should help draw more customers into these structures and give a sense of street vitality to these areas:

- 1) Restore the original porch to 420 Villita Street and replace missing doors. Doors with glass panels will allow visibility to the interior. Restore appropriate window type to window on the east facade.
- 2) The small house at 416 Villita Street would function better commercially if a door opened off of Villita Street. From photographs and Sanborn Maps, it can be established that the house once had a porch which was removed when a brick addition brought the front of the house out to the property line. It should be established in the schematic design phase with the aid of the Texas Historical Commission whether or not the porch should be replaced or if a door with glass panels can replace one of the two existing windows.
- 3) La Villita Cantina, the structure at 106 Hidalgo Walk, originally built as a kitchen building for the first La Villita Restoration and which backs onto King Phillip Street, should be modified so that it opens onto King Phillip Street. The facade of the building along King Phillip should be as important as the facade facing west.
- 4) All other structures along the streets and walks should present an inviting and open appearance in order to attract customers inside while creating a lively commercial street activity. Future tenants along Villita and King Phillip Streets should be chosen while considering the amount of activity they will generate and the number of persons they will attract to La Villita.

RENTAL FACILITIES

Substantial physical changes and policy revisions are required to significantly improve the rental operation in La Villita. The variety of facilities which the City makes available for private rental, ranging from the small Cos House and patio to the Arneson River Theater, fulfill an important need in San Antonio and add to the special charm of the district and to its unique marketing potential as well. Although each of the facilities have specific problems which must be addressed individually, a number of desirable improvements common to all rental spaces can be sited.

The following general recommendations apply to all rentable areas:

- 1) Increase electrical distribution to support activities.
- 2) Provide storage space for trash receptacles, tables, and chairs, out of view and out of the weather. The use of the Bolivar Hall Basement will satisfy this need.
- 3) Provide catering/concession areas which are permanent facilities which eliminate the need for unsightly temporary booths. Require all caterers and concessionaires to keep their equipment within these facilities or remove the equipment from the areas immediately after use.
- 4) Lighting should be improved according to the design and use of each space.
- 5) Paving should be repaired and replaced with appropriate materials as necessary.
- 6) Rental fees for the facilities and for the tables and chairs should be adjusted to compensate the city for the services provided.
- 7) The several plaza areas which are available for public rental should be continued within appropriately fenced and/or walled areas insuring that Villita and King Phillip Streets remain open at all times. The only exception to this policy should be for events which rent the entire La Villita area. The relocation of a few walls and fences along King Phillip Street will allow for events to take place in all of the rentable plazas and spaces simultaneously and for all but four structures to remain open during plaza events.
- 8) Provide a public address system to service the streets and plazas which may be used separately or all together.

Specific improvements recommended for individual facilities are outlined below.

PLAZA NUEVA

Plaza Nueva, the largest plaza in La Villita, requires the most work. The following list enumerates improvements which need to be done:

- 1) The western leg of the L-shaped arbor is in poor structural condition and should be removed. If rebuilt, it should be located to the east of its present position behind the porches of the adjacent houses and should not span across

King Phillip Street. If not rebuilt, this location would be appropriate for several small buildings which would be moved into La Villita. Structures placed in this area would reinforce King Phillip Street as an important pedestrian way, helping to draw visitors into this part of La Villita. Generous space between the structures would allow for access to Plaza Nueva.

- 2) An open air pavillion along the south wall of Plaza Nueva could be very helpful in solving some of the problems of the space. It would provide a covered area to shelter users from the summer sun and protect them in case of rain. Men's and women's restrooms would be conveniently located for plaza users and allow for the removal of antiquated restrooms from a historic structure, freeing it to be used for other purposes. The concession/catering facility could be built into the pavillion, supplying the plaza with additional electrical and gas connections. A small kitchen area might also be included.
- 3) Remove the section of wall adjacent to the Florian House giving the plaza access to this structure and making it visually part of the plaza.
- 4) Provide a new service gate in the south wall along Nueva Street to allow access to the proposed loading lane from the plaza.

JUAREZ PLAZA

Juarez Plaza, the original plaza, requires the following improvements:

- 1) Recently added paving around the perimeter of the space is incompatible with the original materials and should be removed. Ground covers and other appropriate plant material should be introduced.
- 2) The paving materials adjacent to the plaza itself along Hidalgo Walk are dangerously worn and unsafe. They should be replaced with an appropriate paving material and area drains should be installed as necessary to correct drainage problems.
- 3) The condition of the large shade trees in the plaza should be carefully evaluated, and whatever steps necessary to insure their continued good health should be taken immediately.

PLAZA NACIONAL

Plaza Nacional, the newest plaza, is in a good state of repair, except for minor elements which will require staff maintenance.

COS HOUSE

The Cos House and patio is in need of much restoration work:

- 1) The exterior plaster is in poor condition, as is much of the exterior millwork. New wiring throughout is required and the plumbing is poor. It is not air conditioned or heated.
- 2) This house is of great historical importance to Texas and the United States. Special funding should be sought to restore and furnish this structure appropriately.
- 3) In the patio, electrical equipment must be screened from view.

ARNESON RIVER THEATER

The Arneson River Theater is used at least five nights of every week during the summer months and frequently at other times.

- 1) A considerable amount of plumbing and rewiring should be done to both the stage building (which houses dressing rooms) and to the entrance building (which serves as a concession booth), lighting loft and restrooms.)
- 2) Presently, extremely glaring and offensive lighting confronts Riverwalk strollers. Indirect step lights should be installed which would invite pedestrians into La Villita.
- 3) The boxes for special seating at the left and right of the lower seating area should be removed and the typical seating terraces continued to the side walls. This would increase seating by about 30 persons.
- 4) The bleachers at the river end of Womble Alley (King Phillip Street) should be repaired or the bleachers should be converted to permanent seating.
- 5) A new theatrical lighting system is needed.

BOLIVAR HALL

Better utilization of all three levels of this building (including

a full basement) has the potential to solve a number of significant problems common to the entire La Villita area. It is particularly well suited to accommodate adequate storage facilities for tables, chairs and other necessary equipment. An elevator should be installed in the existing elevator shaft to provide easy, direct access to the basement area. The two upper floors could easily accommodate a variety of badly needed facilities including large public restrooms and a permanent office for the Villita management. These possibilities, as well as its potential for quality lease space (art gallery, restaurant, cantina, party room or retail shop), should be carefully studied as a priority item in the initial phase of restoration work.

SERVICE AND UTILITIES

Adequate service facilities and access are essential for the successful operation of the Villita area. All of the various permanent uses, as well as special events, rely on the basic services for delivery, emergency protection, and utilities. These must be provided satisfactorily if the area is to attract quality operations, but this must be done in ways which are appropriate to the historic setting.

DELIVERY AND SERVICE

All vehicular traffic through Villita Street should be discontinued with the exception of delivery service at specific hours and emergency access.

King Phillip Street should be changed from a service alley into a major pedestrian walkway, and all vehicular traffic, except emergency vehicles, should be prohibited at all times. One lane of traffic on the northern half of Nueva Street should be dedicated as a commercial loading zone. The facility can accommodate a significant number of vehicles at one time and will serve La Villita on a daily basis as well as during large special events.

Garbage pickup for the entire La Villita area should remain at its present location off Presa Street; however, the existing unsightly service yard should be allocated for at least three dumpsters and two service truck spaces, all appropriately screened. All tenants will be expected to transport their garbage to this location on a daily basis, and no exterior holding areas for garbage should be allowed at individual locations. Garbage pickup should continue to take place between the hours of 5:00 to 6:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. As becomes necessary, this schedule should be revised to meet the needs of the area for more frequent service. Garbage pickup schedules should be coordinated with general service hours so that this space can also be used as a commercial loading zone for delivery service. Design of this

space should allow for pedestrian circulation between the courtyard east of the Guadalupe House and Nacional Street.

The La Villita Management and the City Police Department should combine efforts to strictly enforce regulations constantly. In addition, long-term parking of automobiles or service vehicles should not be allowed anywhere within the area, and this policy should also be strictly enforced.

CONCESSIONS

The concessions operation in La Villita is an important part of the overall management policy and should be carefully evaluated. Whether the area is served by a single concessionaire or through some other arrangement, it is imperative that visual impact of the concessions' operative be kept to a minimum at all times.

At least seven (7) permanent locations for concessions should be provided in the following areas:

- Plaza Nueva - 3 stands
- Plaza Juarez - 1 stand
- Plaza Nacional - 1 stand
- Arneson Theater - 1 stand
- Cos House - 1 stand

These stands should be adequate in size to accommodate at least five ice boxes, be weather protected and provided with electricity for ice boxes. Electric ice boxes would eliminate the need of bringing ice to the stands continuously during an event and would eliminate parking needs for ice trucks, as well as the need for concessionaires to deliver beer and soft drinks cold.

These concession stands should be provided, maintained and its ice boxes owned by the City and leased to concessionaires to eliminate the need to "drag out" all ice boxes belonging to a particular concessionaire to "make room" for another concessionaire's ice boxes.

Approximately one-third of the lower floor of Bolivar Hall should be used for storage of beer and other goods supplied by concessionaires and this will substantially improve the current situation for storing goods, tables, chairs and other equipment.

UTILITIES

Utility service and related equipment must be upgraded throughout the area to meet current and future needs. Great care must be taken so that the architecture and the visual quality of La Villita is respected.

Whenever possible, utility services should be provided by underground sources. All necessary above-ground equipment should be located as inconspicuously as possible and appropriately painted and screened to blend with the surroundings. Utility meters and switch boxes should not be prominently visible and never allowed on primary facades of buildings.

The feasibility of obtaining chilled water service for the area from the City Water Board should be fully investigated. If this is not practical, individual units should be installed for the various structures. In any event, all individual equipment, such as air handling units, should be located out of view. Window air conditioning units should not be allowed.

GRAPHICS AND SIGNAGE

Signage is an important part of any public or commercial area and can add visual delight, orientation, individuality and even humor to the district. However, poorly handled signage can be ugly, confusing and worthless.

La Villita is a special place. It is unique. The signs for the area should be very special too, compatible with 19th century Texas from which La Villita grew. Three categories of signage are needed throughout the district: Orientation Graphics, Interpretive Graphics, and Business Signage.

All signage must be carefully designed and compatible with the character of the area, and it is imperative that all graphics be reviewed and approved by the established reviewing entities of the City. It is also recommended that a specific sign ordinance for La Villita be established. Specific design criteria for all types of signage are presented in the Design Guidelines prepared as part of this study.

ORIENTATION GRAPHICS

Every visitor to La Villita needs to understand where the different activities take place and how to get to them. A system of orientation graphics should be developed with the aid of a graphics consultant which would provide this service for visitors.

The basic orientation system should make apparent the following:

- 1) What La Villita is.
- 2) The location of plazas and patios.
- 3) The location of shops and restaurants.

- 4) The location of artists and craftsmen.
- 5) Directions to adjacent facilities such as the Convention Center and Hertzberg Circus Collection.
- 6) The hours of operation.

Primary orientation graphics should be placed at the four major entrances: the east and west ends of Villita Street, the intersection of King Phillip and Nueva and the river entrance.

At the minor entrances (Plaza Nueva, Plaza Nacional and Plaza Juarez) secondary orientation graphics identifying the plazas should be developed. Gates to these plazas should remain closed when events are not being staged, requiring people to enter at one of the major entrance points where the orientation graphic can be found.

The intersection of King Phillip and Villita Streets offer the best location within the district for a major orientation point. The orientation graphics here should also include a map of the area, a directory of all shops, restaurants, artists and craftsmen within the area. The map should also point the direction to adjacent facilities such as the convention center and the Hertzberg Circus Collection.

Other types of necessary informational signage such as street signs, traffic and parking signs, and signs identifying restrooms, the Villita Office, service areas, and other major facilities should compliment the historic setting and should be coordinated with the basic orientation graphics system.

INTERPRETIVE GRAPHICS

The interpretation of the history of La Villita, its houses and its former inhabitants can be dramatically improved. There are many ways that the La Villita visitor can be made aware of the history of the compound and a vigorous effort by the City should be undertaken to relay this information to the visitor.

The interpretation of the history of the village will reinforce La Villita as a desirable place to schedule a party, to shop or to visit. The results of a program to convey this history will reinforce the commercial aspects as well as the cultural ones.

Historical interpretation is a specialized field of expertise. If done correctly, the interpretation can be exciting and give the visitor a sense of La Villita's role in the history of San Antonio. If done poorly, the interpretative history will be ignored. It is imperative if La Villita is to be a major tourist attraction that the history of La Villita be told, and be told interestingly.

It is therefore recommended that a graphic and display consultant with experience in historic area interpretation be employed by the City to develop the overall program of historic interpretation. In addition to written text describing various historical occurrences, other interpretative techniques such as audio devices programmed to speak to the visitor, should also be considered to help create a comprehensive interpretative program.

In addition to the permanent interpretive fixtures, the La Villita staff must help with daily interpretation. Tours guided by La Villita staff or volunteers would add greatly to the visitor's enjoyment of the district. Also an accurate, colorful and informative guidebook would be very helpful in portraying the story of La Villita. The La Villita staff should work with the San Antonio Museum Association, Trinity Press or a publisher to see that a scholarly, informative and well-designed guidebook or history is published. It would surely become a very popular and easily sold item.

BUSINESS SIGNAGE

All businesses in La Villita must have quality signage in order to produce a quality commercial image. In general, business signage should be restricted primarily to identification rather than advertising. Although creativity and individuality should be encouraged, all business signage must be in keeping with the character of the La Villita Historic District and the architectural styles of specific buildings.

MANAGEMENT POLICIES

The physical improvements to La Villita recommended by this Master Plan can only have a limited effect on the revitalization of La Villita. Far more important than the architectural modifications will be a series of aggressive management decisions which will be needed to improve and coordinate the successful operation of the area.

The following management policy recommendations are only the first steps in creating a successful project as outlined by this Master Plan. They should serve to suggest a direction for further policy revisions which may be needed in the future. In addition, they are also intended to suggest the degree of organization and management expertise necessary to accomplish the initial and later phases of this project.

LEASE AGREEMENT REVISIONS

The present lease agreement for the area should be revised. The new lease agreement should address the following concerns:

1. Rental rates.
2. Expanded hours of operation (mandatory).
3. Prohibition of Sub-leasing.
4. Signage Requirements and Restrictions.
5. Interior and Exterior Architectural Requirements and Restrictions.
6. Use of the building.
7. Quality of Services or Goods provided.
8. Requirements for Lease Proposal - Architectural Plan and use program.
9. Length of Lease.
10. Improvements to the building that will be required by the City.

TYPE OF MANAGEMENT

Before any major architectural or long term policy decisions are made, a system of management for the entire area must be developed. It is recommended that a consultant in the management of retail specialty centers and arts related developments be hired by the City to review or help develop the management system to be used. This could be done in conjunction with the hiring of a marketing consultant who would (1) help with the selection of new tenants, and (2) help formulate a specific marketing program and management strategy.

TENANT SELECTION

One of the most difficult tasks that must be accomplished during the La Villita revitalization process will be the selection of new tenants. As buildings and spaces become available it is imperative that each new tenant compliment the overall La Villita ambiance and add to the commercial and artistic appeal of the area.

The final decision of tenant acceptability will be based on many factors, but some basic criteria can be enumerated. The La Villita staff must determine the selection criteria and the process of selection before any new tenants are selected. A Centro 21 committee has been established to determine appropriate building uses.

The San Antonio Development Agency has utilized a process by which it has selected bidders for property in St. Paul Square area. Discussions with their planners would be helpful in arriving at selection criteria.

Consultation with a shopping center marketing professional would also be very well-founded. The marketing consultant should be asked to evaluate tenants who are to remain and suggest the types of uses best suited to complement and enhance the commercial value of La Villita. The consultant might also be asked to help develop selection criteria and evaluate tenant proposals.

It is important that extra effort and money be spent to select the correct tenant mix. An improper selection will handicap La Villita for the length of the lease agreement.

A specific management staff member should be chosen whose only responsibilities are to coordinate the selection of new tenants, and to help the tenants coordinate their interior and exterior renovation plans with the requirements of this Master Plan.

The following criteria for selection of tenants should be included in the final criteria:

1. Does the proposed use compliment and enhance the other La Villita tenants?
2. Does the tenant enhance the historic quality of the building and of La Villita?
3. Does the tenant's plans harm or distract from the historic features of the structure?
4. Does the tenant's use generate activity for the whole of La Villita?
5. Is this the prime location of business for the tenant?
6. Does the tenant make use of the entire structure?
7. Does the tenant's financial record show that he will be able to meet his tenant obligations?
8. Does the tenant's personality reflect a cooperative spirit?
9. Does the tenant understand the constraints of the building and accept the limits of growth imposed by the structure?

REVISION OF CONCESSIONAIRE POLICY

The present food and drink concessions policy is presently being studied by the City. The specifics of the concession contract will affect both the amount of service and storage space required at La Villita, and therefore this issue should be resolved as quickly as possible so that this issue can be effectively addressed by the Master Plan.

LA VILLITA ACTIVITIES

Daily activities of many kinds will be necessary to insure the success of La Villita. The Management should employ a Director of Activities whose job would be to direct all La Villita events. Activities will fall into two categories:

1. Special Events such as parties in the plazas and patios, Art Fairs and Fiestas, which have been handled by La Villita staff since its beginnings.
2. Villita Events which will be new activities organized by staff itself to bring both tourists and local San Antonians to La Villita. Such events should be scheduled not to compete with events presently scheduled for La Villita but should fill the schedule especially during off-season times. Such events might include Brown Bag days in Nueva Plaza, Octoberfest, a special Christmas shopping festival, musical concerts, a La Villita art and craft exposition, or many other events that would attract visitors to La Villita. One such annual function could be organized to raise money for additional La Villita Restoration.

In addition to entertainment activities, the Villita staff should consider allowing special concessions for vendors. Street vendors could add another level of commercial activity and increase street activity. Such vendors would be required to follow regulations developed by the Villita staff concerning such things as their merchandise, their locations for selling, and their hours.

It has also been suggested that cart vendors be allowed to sell in Nueva Plaza when it is not in use. The cart vendors would be required to remove their cart and all merchandise from the area each evening allowing for evening events.

The following list of vendors suggests the types of activities to be allowed:

- cold and hot drinks
- fresh flowers
- newspapers and books
- taco de harina o maiz
- german sausage on a stick

Vendors can only be successful where large numbers of persons are continually coming and going. It is also advantageous to have as many different kinds of vendors as possible selling in close proximity to one another.

A weekly outdoor flea market on Saturdays or Sundays would generate, on a regular basis, large numbers of visitors. These visitors would not only support the flea market vendors but would also increase sales in other shops and eateries in the immediate area. The basic flea market area could be set up under the proposed Nueva Plaza pavillion but during good weather it could be enlarged to utilize even more of the plaza. Arts and crafts days sponsored by the local universities are also a possibility. The location for concession vendors should be chosen to compliment such activities.

This type of daily activity in La Villita will have to be built over time. The potential for the success of such a program should be evaluated by a marketing consultant and proper facilities for the vendors provided.

PUBLICITY

More effort and money must be spent advertising and promoting La Villita. These efforts should begin simultaneously with the revitalization and continue after the physical improvements have been made.

Magazines such as Texas Homes, Texas Monthly, and Southern Living should be contacted to take a look at the "new" old place. Local promotion by the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Paseo del Rio Association should also focus on the specific shops, artists, and restaurants, as well as the historic charm of the area to encourage San Antonians who know Villita, to take advantage of changes and improvements.

The use of public service time on radio and television stations should be used to interest persons in the restoration of La Villita and to advertise special events. Press releases should regularly advise the media of ongoing events and special functions.

CONTROL OF PARKING AND DELIVERY

New policies on parking must be made and followed strictly by La Villita staff, City personnel and visitors alike, in order to correct the present parking situation.

1. No automobile parking should be allowed within the La Villita area. This policy should leave Villita Street and King Phillip Street open at all times for pedestrians and emergency vehicles.
2. Delivery vehicles service should be allowed on Villita Street only between the hours of 7am and 10am, and between the hours of 3pm and 5pm. At other times, Delivery vehicles must use areas designated as commercial loading zones at the perimeter of the area. No other area within La Villita should be used for parking or loading by Delivery vehicles.

MAINTENANCE POLICY

Maintenance of a historic area containing as many structures and resources as are found in La Villita is an enormous task. It is the day-to-day and year-to-year maintenance which will create a favorable impression on every visitor.

The daily maintenance of La Villita is very labor consuming and keeps the existing staff busy, especially during the summer months. The creation of storage facilities for chairs, tables, and equipment should help the maintenance crew to keep the facility looking neater.

The continual maintenance of the buildings and of the paving materials, walls, fences, and other structural items are more difficult and quite expensive.

The guidelines in this report can only serve as a basis for the maintenance program. Other repairs not outlined herein will be required and the maintenance staff should always consult with experienced craftsmen and repairmen for all special items.

Because of the historic requirements of the area and the number of groups and individuals who will be interested in the maintenance of La Villita, all repair work should be cleared through the City Historic Preservation Officer. If a standard process is regularly followed it should, in the long run, facilitate repairs and decrease complaints. It will also allow for appropriate corrections to existing inappropriate construction.

The historic structures of La Villita are but a part of the numerous historic structures and Landmarks owned and maintained by the City, many under the Department of Parks and Recreation. The City should consider the hiring of a preservation architect who would coordinate the maintenance program and prepare documents for review for all of the City's historic structures, including La Villita.

HOURS FOR COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Shops, bars and restaurants should be encouraged to stay open during early evening hours. It is at this time of day that many tourists and visitors are walking through this area on their way to La Villita and to Convention Center events. The Villita area could provide an ideal place for impulse shopping. It is also a convenient place for spectators, going to the Arena and Theatre for the Performing Arts events, to stop for supper and a drink.

Shops, bars, and eateries that remain open in the evenings during plaza events would generate additional commercial activity and add needed street life, which would give the area a real urban presence.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Exterior restoration of all Villita Structures.
- B. Renovation of Bolivar Hall as a focus for the entire Villita area to contain a major restroom facility (removing minor restrooms from historic structures), storage, maintenance and office facilities for La Villita personnel, an orientation and information area, a food and drink area, and an interior space for use by Plazas Nacional and Juarez users in case of rain. The redesign of Bolivar Hall should include a passageway connecting Plaza Nacional to Paseo de Guadalupe.
- C. Development of a Pedestrian connection to the Paseo del Rio.
- D. Removal of all automobile parking from the interior of the Villita area.
- E. Removal of all truck delivery from the interior of the Villita area except at designated delivery areas and at designated times.
- F. Development of King Phillip's Street as an inviting pedestrian street open at all times.
- G. Re-definition of rentable plaza areas through relocation of fences and walls.
- H. Improvement of lighting, plant materials, and paving to unify the streetscape and reinforce the pedestrian environment.
- I. Development of Presa Street with an improved sidewalk connection to the River Bend Garage and the Hertzberg Circus Collection.
- J. Development of orientation and interpretation graphics.
- K. Development of new signage by tenants.
- L. Redesign of the east and west ends of Villita street to make both ends more inviting and attractive.
- M. Construction of a covered pavillion in Plaza Nueva which contains restrooms and concessions while providing shelter in the event of rain.
- N. Improve Arneson River Theatre facilities by upgrading dressing rooms and the concession/restroom facilities. Remove inappropriate lighting and install louvered step lighting.
- O. Provide appropriate rental spaces for artists and craftsmen in order to re-establish La Villita as arts community.

- P. Improve the quality of retail merchandise offered to the public.
- Q. Improve food and drink service within the area by revision of the present concessionaire contract, and the development of additional permanent food service facilities.
- R. Renovation of the Cós House including new electrical wiring and architectural repairs to increase its use as a rental facility.