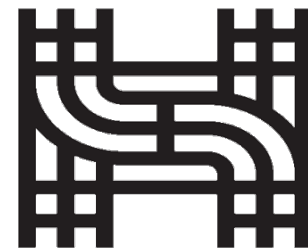


**ACTIVATE  
HOUSTON  
STREET**



**COMMUNITY CHARRETTE  
FEEDBACK SUMMARY**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**PREPARED FOR**

CENTRO San Antonio  
April 2018

**PREPARED BY**

AIA San Antonio  
Torrey Stanley Carleton, Hon. AIA  
Executive Director

**COMMUNITY CHARRETTE PRESENTERS**

Trish DeBerry, Board Chair, Centro San Antonio  
Don Frost, Board Chair, Centro San Antonio  
Roberto C. Treviño, AIA, City Councilman, District 1, City of San Antonio  
Juanita Hardy, ULI Senior Visiting Fellow  
Eric Gomez, Henry Ford Academy Alameda School for Art + Design  
Maria Nelson, Centro San Antonio  
Samantha Whitney Schwarze, AIA San Antonio

**PARTICIPANTS**

Anne Solsbery	Debra Vanskike	Juan Cano	Ron Clark
Aurora Perkins	Diane Lochner	Karla Campos	Samuel Pena
Austen Keithly	Donovan Linsey	Kay Harig	Sarah Esserlieu
Bernie Hernandez	Elaine Kearney	Ken Erfurth	Shanon Miller
Beverly Baldwin	Ellen Andrus	Lauren Sage	Sheryl Sculley
Bill Kanyusik	Emiliano Romero	Linda Deatricks	Steve Graham
Carrie Brown	Esla Fernandez	Lori Houston	Steve Lopez
Cathey Meyer	Felix Padrón	Luis Miguel Martinez	Steve Yndo
Charlotte Kahl	Francesca Rattray	Lynn Knapik	Suzanne Scott
Chris Lazaro	Freda Chapa	Madison Rogers	Torrey Carleton
Chris Moyles	Gabriel Deleon	Marc Toppel	Trish Deberry
Christine Viña	Janis Ploetz	Margaret Kanyusik	Veronica Garcia
Cody Shown	Javier Roman	Michelyn Smith	Veronica Gonzalez
Cristina Garza	Javier Vasquez	Nancy Russell	Veronica Rodriguez
Dale Dowlearn	John Jacks	Paul Kahl	Veronique LeMelle
David Adelman	John Troy	Ray Castilla	Wenxl Zhu
David Simon	Jorge Lucio	Rhea Roberts	Zenon Solis
Darryl Byrd	Jorge Varela	Roberto Treviño	Estefania Olvera

**FACILITATORS**

Adam Reed  
Ann McGlone  
Jason Puchot  
Jay Louden  
Mary Bartlett  
Michael Guarino  
Mike McGlone  
Nicki Marrone  
Sandra Montalbo  
Siboney Díaz-Sánchez

**SCRIBES**

Lori Martinez  
Rogelio Rodriguez  
Rebecca Flores  
Eddie Romero  
Scott Nelson  
Khi R.  
Garrett Burleson  
Zayed Shaikh  
Ilse Castro  
Estefania Olvera

**VOLUNTEERS**

Christina Diaz  
Danny Khalil  
Janie Garza  
Liz Burt  
Matthew Sirgo  
Michael Cirlos  
Noah Almanza  
Rachel Brehm  
Stacy Jones  
Tony Piazzi



ACTIVATE HOUSTON STREET  
COMMUNITY CHARRETTE  
JANUARY 20, 2018





## ABOUT CENTRO SAN ANTONIO

Centro San Antonio (Centro) is a 501(c)3 community development corporation whose mission is to mobilize people and resources to build a more prosperous downtown through strategic partnerships, convening and facilitating around important downtown issues, advocating for members and property owners, providing thought leadership on important community issues and delivering services that improve the downtown experience.

## THE ACTIVATE HOUSTON STREET INITIATIVE

Activate Houston Street is an initiative of Centro San Antonio tasked with the goal of creating a placemaking action plan for the Houston Street corridor. Centro’s place-based strategy was developed in 2011 as part of the Strategic Framework Plan for the Center City. The Strategic Framework Plan for the Center City is a guiding document focused on community goals established by the SA2020 process. The plan recommends a place-based strategy approach to growth for the center city. In the plan, Houston Street is identified as a key target corridor within the urban core. In 2016, the board of directors identified Houston Street and other placemaking as a key work plan pillar. Centro remains committed to strengthening the Houston Street corridor as it reclaims its status as “San Antonio’s main street.”

## INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

In October 2017, Centro convened a panel of subject matter experts organized by the International Downtown Association (IDA). These experts came from diverse backgrounds in urban space management, downtown development, and destination retail. Their objective was to develop a placemaking action plan for Houston Street that reflects the needs of properties and adjacent neighborhoods. Placemaking refers to the multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces.

The findings and recommendations outlined in the IDA Activate Houston Street Panel Recommendations report were informed through careful evaluation of the corridor, conversations with key stakeholders, and thoughtful research into the current and historical conditions along Houston Street. The panel determined that there were four main segments of Houston Street stretching from Alamo Plaza to San Saba. The panel then developed ideas for short-, medium-, and long-term activation strategies for each segment; suggesting pilot, seasonal, temporary, and permanent programming along the corridor inspired by feedback gathered from stakeholders.



## COMMUNITY CHARRETTE

In January 2018, Centro hosted a community charrette that took place on Saturday, January 20 from 8:00 AM to Noon at the Henry Ford Academy Alameda School for Art + Design that served as a follow-up to the IDA panel. The charrette, hosted in partnership with the San Antonio chapters of the American Institute for Architects and the Urban Land Institute, solicited feedback and guidance on the IDA report from the community-at-large.

Charrette participants were asked to craft the appropriate, contextual solution throughout the corridor focusing on the Zona, Innovation, Performing, and Alamo segments. The audience also discussed achievable activations within 0-12 months and activations within 12-24 months.

Centro will use these solutions to go back to the community and engage them once again in activating these in the coming months. Please visit <http://centrosanantonio.org/activatehoustonstreet/> to stay engaged in the process.



# COMMUNITY CHARRETTE



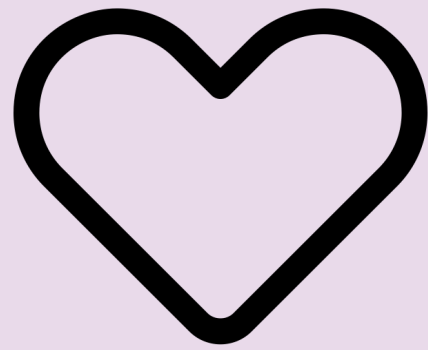


**ALA San Antonio visualized IDA's recommendations  
using a participatory decision-making process  
involving the community at large.**

**These ideas will be used to transform Houston Street  
into a more vibrant cultural corridor  
for the city of San Antonio.**

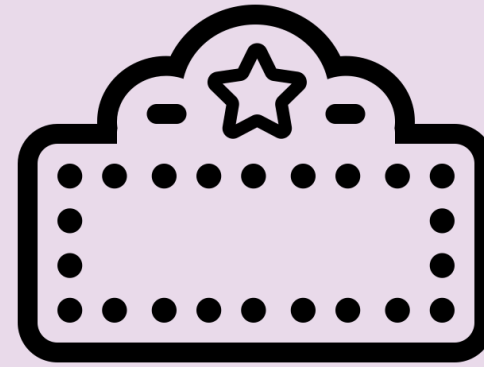


## VISION



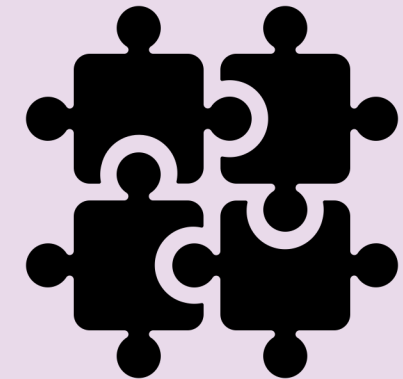
### HEART

Foster an animated vibe of year-round, day-to-evening, and seasonal activity that is authentic to San Antonio by leveraging Houston Street's central location at the heart of the city.



### HISTORY

Establish a clear and consistent identity for Houston Street that builds upon the past while celebrating San Antonio's capacity for future innovation.



### HARMONY

Encourage new uses and play that position Houston Street as a livable, walkable, and interesting place that appeals to locals and tourists alike.



## TOP 10 IDEAS





## ACTIVATE STOREFRONTS

Breathe new life into empty and underutilized storefronts.

Host seasonal pop-ups that may evolve into a permanent presence along Houston Street.

Encourage programming and new development that contributes to the creation a vibrant streetscape experience.



## ESTABLISH A PERFORMING ARTS "DISTRICT"

Establish Houston Street as a performing arts "district" by encouraging the production of various types of performing arts and exhibition of Their related crafts.

Close the street on special occasions and host year-round events that bring the city together.



## CONNECT HOUSTON STREET TO OTHER PARTS OF DOWNTOWN

Elevate Houston Street's role as "San Antonio's Main Street".

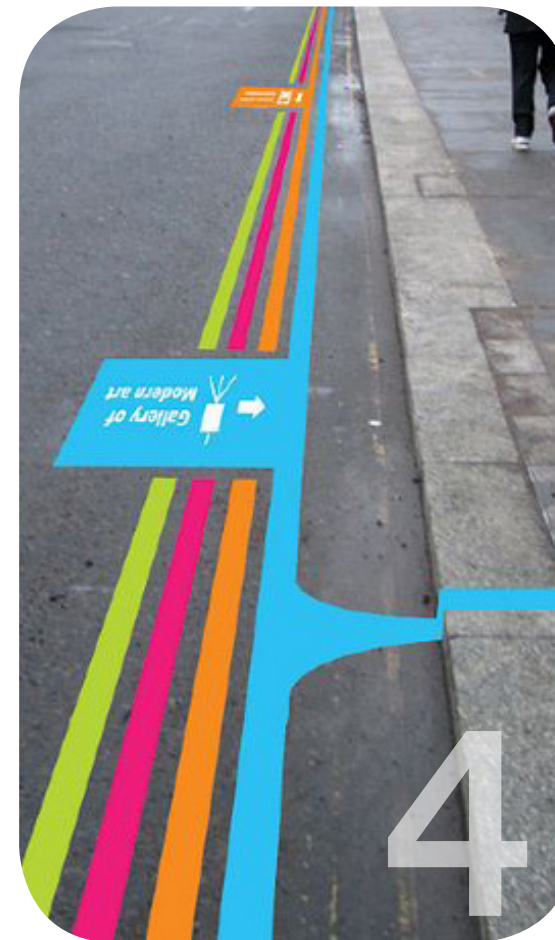
Consider the emerging energy from the rejuvenation of the Alameda, San Pedro Creek, Hemisfair, and Alamo Plaza by strategically relating Houston Street to these gathering places and others in the city such as the Riverwalk, Tobin Theater, Southtown, and Pearl.



## DEVELOP CLEAR + COMPELLING WAYFINDING

Use wayfinding to provide useful information that is meaningful to both locals and visitors alike by conveying an authentic expression of San Antonio.

Employ it as a framework to understand the many narratives of our city's past, allow it to be a fun map for discovering the present, and inspire people to participate in shaping its future.



## INTRODUCE LIGHTING, ART + SHADE INTO THE STREETSCAPE

Add components to complete the streetscape such as canopies and landscape elements to improve outdoor comfort and encourage people to linger along Houston Street.

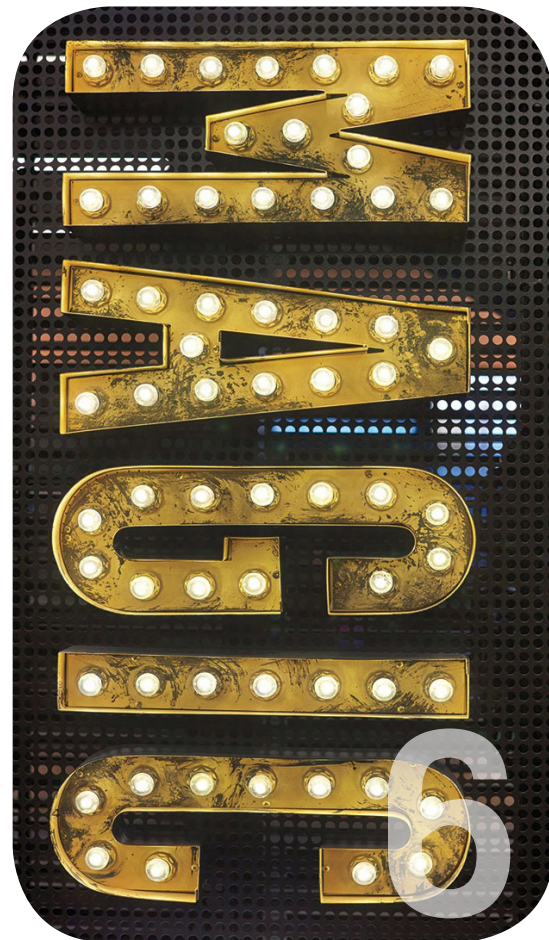
Incorporate lighting infrastructure that doubles as colorful, identity-strengthening public art unique to Houston Street.





## CELEBRATE BUILDING SIGNAGE

Encourage a design aesthetic for building signage that pays homage to the historic bright lights of Houston Street while including room for new solutions for commercial expression; adding up to a recognizable graphic identity unique to the district.



## ACTIVATE ALLEYS + CROSSWALKS

Create a new life for existing alleys. Transform Peacock Alley and spaces like it into a network of engaging experiences that inspire discovery; a new way to see our city by foot.

Clearly mark crosswalks and introduce new crossings to improve safety and prioritize pedestrians.



## RECLAIM SURFACE LOTS + ROOFTOPS

Make use of surface parking lots and empty garage rooftops during off-peak times to make way for a higher and better use by food trucks, weekend markets, and pop-ups.

Inject new life into Milam Park and Frost Park by creating a seasonal calendar of activities.



## PRIORITIZE DESIGN FOR RESIDENTS

Calibrate programming and ideas for new development offerings to reflect the needs and personalities of Houston Street's local residents; leading to authentic outcomes which appeal to locals and visitors.



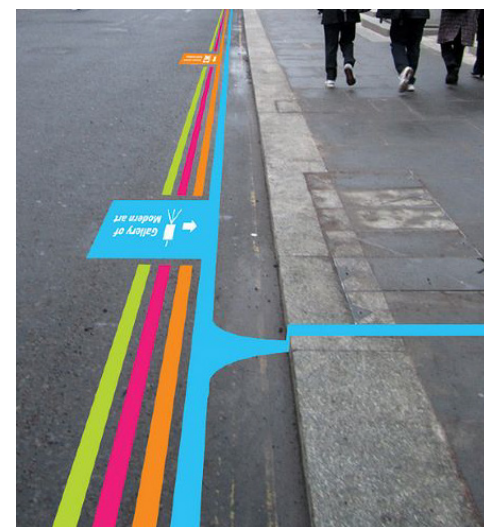
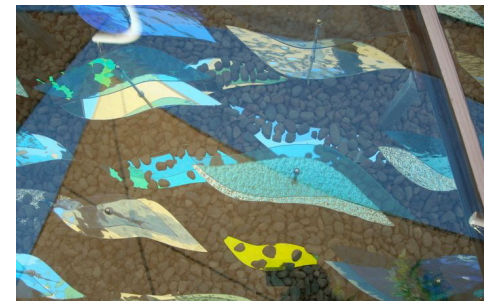
## IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO THE RIVERWALK + SAN PEDRO CREEK

Bring the energy of the Riverwalk and San Pedro Creek up to street level.

Improve physical connections and enhance the visibility of surrounding cultural assets from Houston Street.







TODAY (ABOVE), POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE (BELOW)



## ALAMO SEGMENT

The Alamo Segment of Houston Street serves as the eastern gateway to the heart of Houston Street. Activation of the area around Houston Street and Alamo Street is critical to directing people toward Houston Street. Installation of light features with signage to illuminate the gateway to Houston Street would allow the intersection to be more lively and inviting when visitors leave Alamo Plaza and look north. Another opportunity to enhance the activity of Houston Street is to provide an “Instagrammable” moment through temporary art installations or murals that could showcase Houston Street via social media. Ultimately, a more permanent art installation could be installed, creating a defining feature and gateway for Houston Street. A more inviting sidewalk experience where people could interact through temporary sidewalk games, art exhibits, or food trucks was also envisioned to enhance the activity of Houston Street.

Activation of storefronts along Houston Street would serve to stimulate Houston Street the segment. Including live window displays, visibility into storefronts, and even live performances outside these areas to attract people inwards, would all enhance activity. Providing local and easy access to everyday food through local vendors, open farmers markets, pop-up stands, and reasonably priced food would draw and serve locals who live in the area. It was noted that the buildings along this portion of Houston Street had many inactive spaces, such as rooftops and empty lots, which could be utilized and activated as food truck parks, rooftop event spaces, or new bars and restaurants geared to locals. A series of sidewalk cafes could also be an effective way of attracting people and enlivening large empty sidewalks.

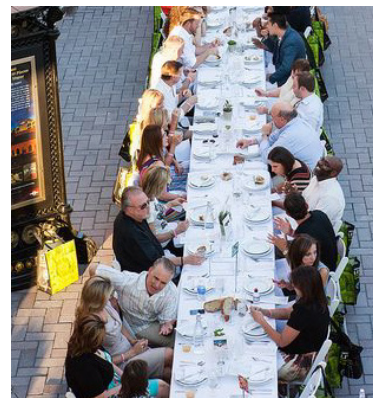
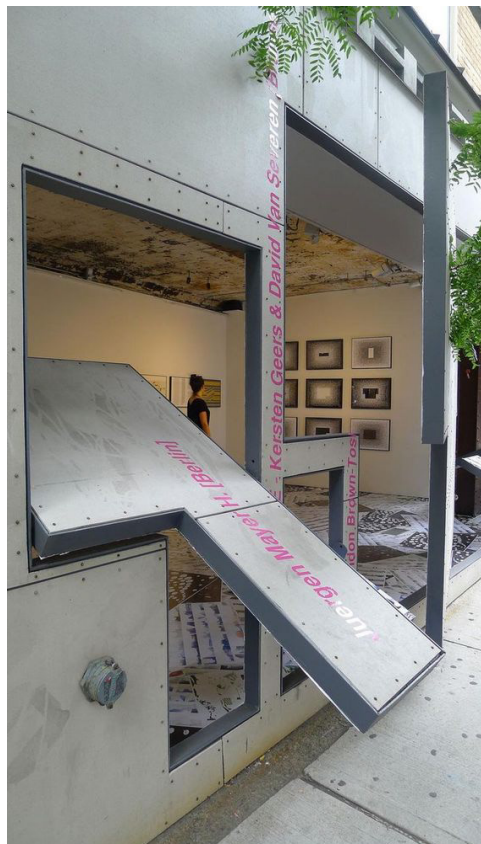
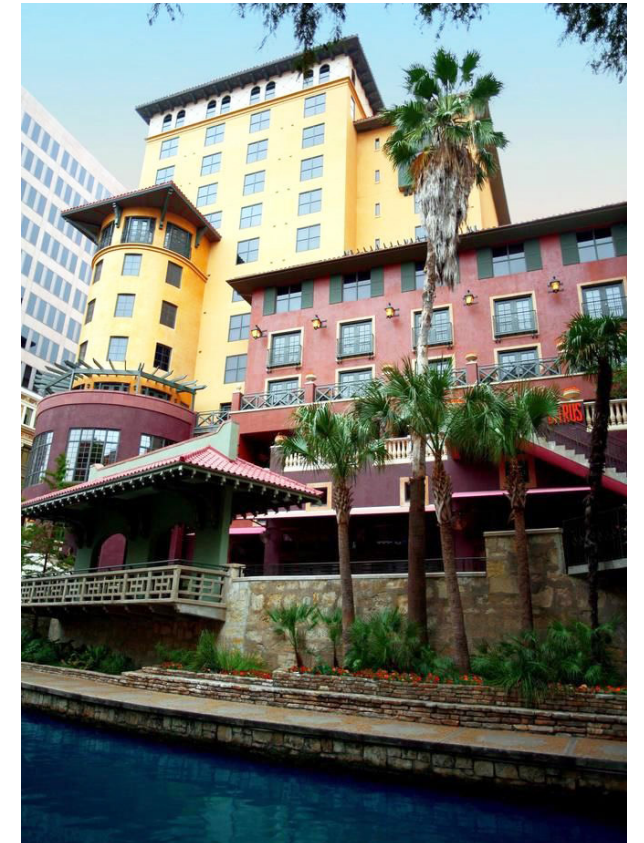
Focal points, such as lighting and art, are encouraged to make stronger connections between Houston Street and the Broadway corridor, as this is a local connection to Houston Street. The connection to the Riverwalk could be enhanced with better signage and lighting visible in both directions. There is the potential to use these important intersections to get more pedestrian traffic to Houston Street and make this segment feel livelier.

### Proposed Activations:

- Activate empty storefronts with information or art installations
- Paint graphic wayfinding maps on streets, alleys, sidewalks (pilot wayfinding)
- Provide themed walks: ghost tour, science, history, etc.
- Enable interactive, self-guided tours/apps/scavenger hunt
- Provide a “selfie” wall and other Instagram-friendly spots
- Encourage a “Small Business Saturday” with local discounts for shopping at small, local businesses
- Enable a Daily Market, or a Saturday/Sunday Market
- Provide incubator spaces, such as art studios or galleries, for artists
- Reenergize alleys for pedestrian movement
- Activate Peacock Alley; address landscape, wayfinding, shade, crossings
- Treat crosswalks as public art, marking key gateways to Alamo Plaza, Main Plaza, San Pedro Creek, the Riverwalk, the Tobin Center, etc.







TODAY (ABOVE), POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE (BELOW)



## Activation Strategies:

- Lights on theatre marquees should be turned on every night
- Show more movies at the theaters or in outdoor spaces
- Encourage live music and other performances at street level or in storefronts
- Open up the lobby of the Majestic Theater to Houston Street
- Host a “Taste of Houston Street” dining event
- Improve connections between Houston Street and the Riverwalk. A water theme could be referenced through pattern, color, and materials.
- Transform IBC Plaza into a lively civic space (market, visitor center, retail, public art)
- Activate parking garage rooftops for events, parties, etc.
- Activate surface parking lots for pop-ups (food trucks, seasonal events)
- Provide fitness opportunities such as a “bootcamp” in the streets (consider partnering with Gold’s Gym)
- Improve traffic and storm water management issues at Houston Street/St. Mary’s Street intersection

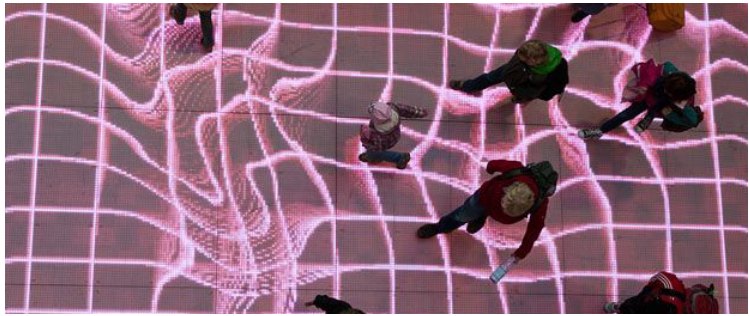
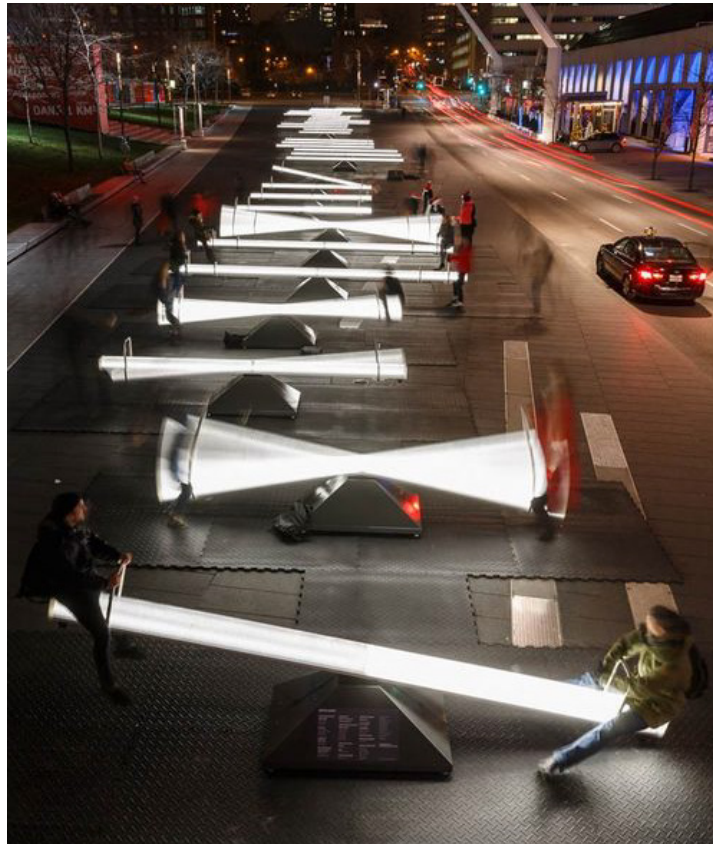


## PERFORMING ARTS SEGMENT

The Performing Arts Segment of Houston Street is the historic center of commerce and is the most active segment. The Majestic and Empire theaters, along with the numerous hotels, keep the area busy with activity during all hours of the day on most days. The Performing Arts Segment includes variety of restaurants and coffee shops that are frequented both day and night.

Installation of a lighting feature that is seen from both the River-walk and Houston Street would bring additional interest in the area, and potentially tie this segment to other Houston Street segments. The ability to temporarily close off the street to vehicular traffic for special activities through art installations, dining events, and festivals would draw more people to Houston Street. Restaurants and bars should be encouraged to include a more dynamic outdoor dining experience. It is also recommended that the theater marquees and streetlights be lit every evening to provide a more enticing urban environment. The office spaces located on street level should either be more transparent and open to Houston Street, or have an interesting window treatment and be encouraged to be well lit so that the street does not look closed past dusk. There is an opportunity to redevelop IBC Plaza to allow the plaza be more connected with the Riverwalk and serve as an engaging space. The current entrance to IBC Plaza from Houston Street is not inviting to visitors and locals. IBC Plaza has the potential to be a place for food trucks, a music venue or a pop up beer garden. In addition, collaborations are encouraged with other performing arts like Magik Theater (Children’s Theater) or the San Antonio Symphony to offer “Pop Up Performances” on the large sidewalks along Houston Street, or perhaps in IBC Plaza.





TODAY (ABOVE), POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE (BELOW)



## INNOVATION SEGMENT

The Innovation Segment of Houston Street offers many opportunities for new programming: Frost Park, the growing number of daytime inhabitants, and its location between San Pedro Creek and the River create unique experiences to be capitalized upon. Activation of Frost Park is critical to activation of the segment; ideas for fitness and food opportunities, lounging/rest areas that offer places to plug in with technology, and art installations would all serve to activate the park. Other tactics could include strengthening the East-West promenade by reallocating parking spaces into food and vendor areas and providing transportation within the area.

Additionally, the building facades along Houston Street need more transparency, pedestrian and public friendly zones, and visible activity. Improving the building facades within the City of San Antonio/Frost Bank building would all contribute to encourage public activity and social engagement.

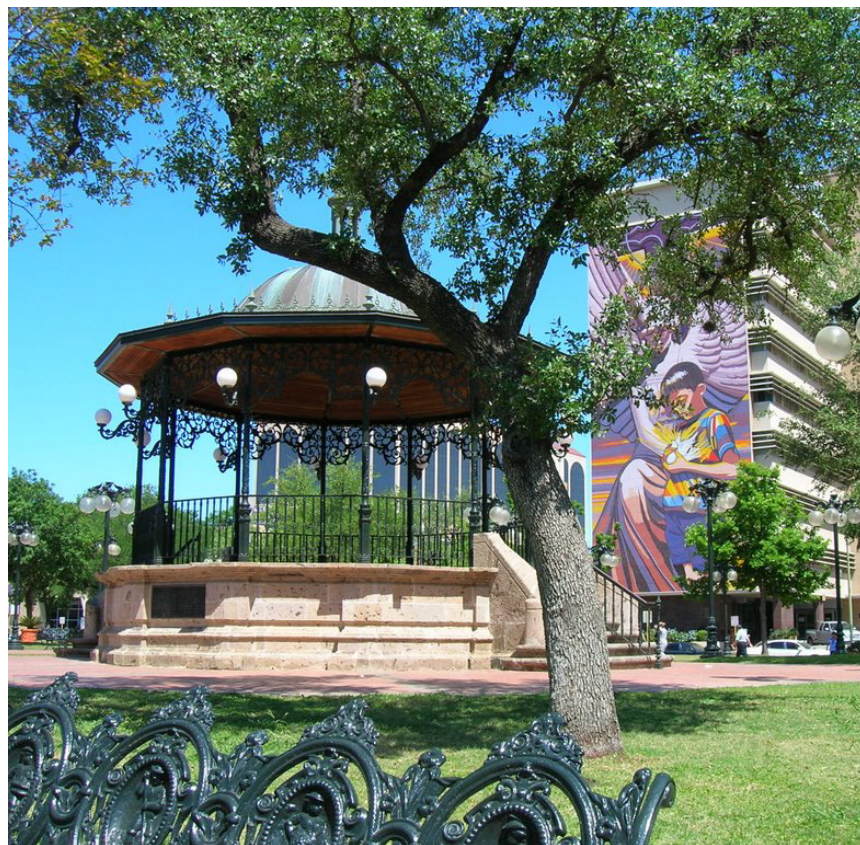
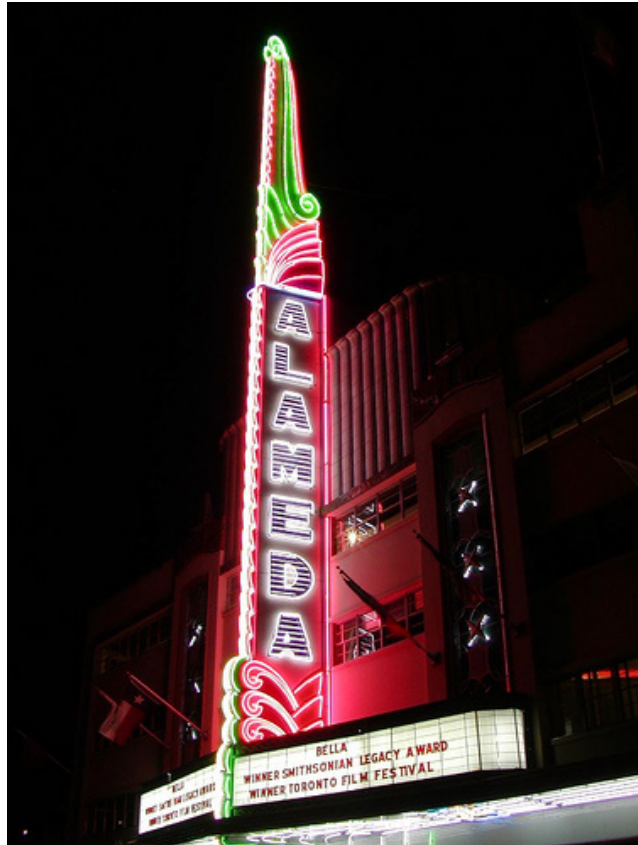
Finally, the Segment was noted to present opportunities to strengthen links from North to South due to the location of Frost Park and its potential to create pedestrian promenades along the edges of the park.

### Activation Strategies:

- Activate Frost Park as a place of exchange: (pet-friendly, kid-friendly, yoga, tai chi, concerts, pop-up events, food trucks, virtual library, croquet, beer garden, wifi hotspot)
- Add an iconic public art piece to Frost Park similar to “the Bean” at Millennium Park in Chicago
- Activate the City of San Antonio/Frost Tower as a place of public access and innovation: extrovert the facade by opening the ground level to Houston Street with a food court, introduce video public art/ sculpture, offer bike stop with showers, restrooms, amenities
- Provide increased casual, local, affordable food/restaurant options
- Increase ground level retail
- Add balconies and awnings to activate the street and increase sidewalk comfort
- Provide additional signage opportunities through decorative construction wraps
- Add a small Target/HEB Pantry Store







TODAY (ABOVE), POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FUTURE (BELOW)



## ZONA CULTURAL SEGMENT

The Zona Cultural Segment of Houston Street serves as the western gateway to Houston Street and provides opportunities for improved connectivity between Houston Street and nearby locations. Locations for which connectivity to Houston Street could be improved most prominently include Market Square, San Pedro Creek, the San Antonio River, and points further west along Houston Street.

Increasing and densifying residential developments along and around this segment could enhance activity within the corridor. An opportunity exists for a modernized Milam Park to support the needs of those residents by providing amenities such as a small market, salons, and other services. Healing the streetscape, which is currently broken up by parking lots and vacant spaces, would both increase the sense of connectivity along Houston and would make the street more whole. It is also encouraged that the hours of operation for existing retail and other business be extended.

Short term and/or temporary activation opportunities should be enhanced: food events (including bringing food trucks in and around Milam Park), music events (including using the Alameda Theater and public spaces along San Pedro Creek), and family-centric events in Milam Park (such as outdoor movies, open-air markets, and fairs). Lighting in Milam Park can also be enhanced to improve the perceived safety of the space at night. Programming can also be increased within Milam Park to draw people to the park. An additional opportunity for improving connectivity with Houston Street lies at the Centro de Artes, which could become more welcoming and accessible from Houston Street.

### Activation Strategies:

- Improve connection between Market Square and Houston Street
- Connect Milam Park, the Mercado, Centro de Artes, the Alameda Theater, and San Pedro Creek
- Activate Milam Park as a neighborhood park; concepts include concerts, services, lighting, fresh food/ community health + wellness awareness with Children's Hospital of San Antonio, homelessness resources, meditation spaces, benches, bike parking, family activities, movies in the park, and a splash pad
- Increase residential types, price points (including affordable units), and number of units
- Offer neighborhood-centric amenities such as laundry, daycare, market, salons, barbershops, dry cleaning, affordable food choices, small grocery (daily use offerings)
- Enhance ground level Retail at the Vistana
- Establish a Boys and Girls Club presence





## ACTIVATION MAP



## PILOT/ SEASONAL ACTIVATION

## SPECIAL CROSSING



## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY



## IMPROVE SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE



## ACTIVATE WINDOWS / STOREFRONTS



## LIGHTING



## SHADE DEVICE



## "PORCH" STREETSCAPE CONCEPT



## IMPROVE PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS



## PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITY

- 1 Sidewalk Activation
- 2 Film/ Theater Projection
- 3 "Pop-Up Central"
- 4 Food venue/ Restaurant
- 5 Denote Alamo Wall
- 6 Information/ Kiosk
- 7 Wrap Garage w/ Retail/ Art/ Pop-Ups
- 8 Public Art Opportunity
- 9 Seasonal Street Market Zone
- 10 Specialty Shops
- 11 "Dining in the Street" Zone
- 12 Pop-Up Opportunity
- 13 Tech-Themed Interactive Destination
- 14 Frost Tower as Public Resource
- 15 Food Truck Zone
- 16 Activate w/ Year-Round Programming













# COMMUNITY CHARRETTE TAKEAWAYS

## ALAMO SEGMENT

### Roundtable Discussion Takeaways:

- There is a loss of energy as you walk from Alamo Plaza on Houston Street towards Broadway.
- Hipolito F. Garcia Federal Building is a critical anchor for this segment.
- Wayfinding is important to draw you further east along the corridor.
- The first thing a pedestrian sees as they walk up from the River to street level is a parking lot.
- “Theatres pack the street.”
- Trash containers in the alley behind the Burns Building are impeding activations.
- Alley adjacent to Moses Roses is an activation and wayfinding opportunity.

### Proposed Activations:

(0-12 months)

- Activate parking lot at Jefferson and Houston street with Food Trucks
- Activate with performing arts groups Ex. Jump-Start
- Activate Peacock Alley Ex. Luminaria, Festoon lights
- Activate alley adjacent to Moses Roses.

(12-24 months)

- Engage with Alamo museum designers to explore “Moses Roses” Alley connection.

## PERFORMING ARTS SEGMENT

### Roundtable Discussion Takeaways:

- This segment has the best connection to the River Walk.
- The security guard at the IBC Center is a visual obstacle, and the plaza is rimmed with spaces that are empty.
- Pedestrians on the River level give up too easy on navigating the street level from the River at the IBC Center.
- Houston Street is the most walkable corridor because of the canopies.
- Do not show more vacant spaces.
- Theatres are the animators of the street. How do you accommodate live music, and other performing arts?

### Proposed Activations:

(0-12 months)

- Houston Street Fair, Second Sunday of the month, performing arts centric. Jefferson Street Stage and IBC Plaza Stage
- Activate IBC Plaza with musicians drawing pedestrians up from River.
- Ask Buckhorn Saloon to unstack patio chairs and utilize patio space creatively.
- Cooperative marketing plan so San Antonians know what is happening in the District. (cooperative and comprehensive)

(12-24 months)

- Remove IBC Center structure.
- Organize cross-marketing of performing arts and restaurants
- Hologram wayfinding
- Close Alamo to Broadway along Houston Street.

## INNOVATION SEGMENT

### Roundtable Discussion Takeaways:

- Parking in front of the Rand Building is an activation opportunity. Ex. Mini-golf, Weekend farmer’s market
- GGN working on landscaping plan for the park across the Frost tower.
- People of the Innovation Segment would benefit from a pet friendly environment.
- Discussion regarding signage for Rosella – what will the City of San Antonio approve?
- The Frost building outdoor entrance plaza would be ideal for the Plaza Club to activate, serve lunch or condensed menu.
- It is important for activations to take into consideration the benefits of residents from the Robert E. Lee.
- Take into consideration the connection to Main Plaza. Ex. Energy from the new Hotel in Solo Serve Building location.
- The Book Building is a “great opportunity.” The owners are committed to keeping it to scale.

### Proposed Activations:

(0-12 months)

- Explore opportunities for co-tenanting?
- Assist Pinch and surrounding businesses in promotions of a comparatively affordable, local restaurant option.
- Develop marketing effort targeting the options available for living downtown. Ex. Funneling information directly to UTSA College of Architecture, Construction and Planning students. Ex. Geekdom, Majestic Towers Renting at \$1.50 per square foot.

## ZONA CULTURAL SEGMENT

### Roundtable Discussion Takeaways:

- UTSA downtown campus connection must be a focus. Currently, the “safest” route from downtown to the campus is Houston Street, cut through Milam to Commerce Street to UTSA.
- UTSA is less than a half mile to downtown.
- It is important to consider arties to Houston Street when looking to activate. Consider parents/family of Children’s Hospital of San Antonio patients as well as the other hospitals within downtown.

### Proposed Activations:

(0-12 months)

- Temporary art installations across the street from Henry Ford Academy to visibly shield the parking lot and invite pedestrians, students, and parents to linger. Ex. “Mirror what’s happening inside the school.”
- Activate Rose Verde Tower parking lot.
- Light up Milam Park like Travis Park.
- Activate parking lot behind Continental Building/Goodwill with a farmers market.

(12-24 months)

- Connect the Governor’s Palace, San Pedro Creek, to Market Square along Commerce Street.
- Activate Market Square facing Commerce Street (coordinating deliveries needed).



**CENTRO**  
SAN ANTONIO  
WE MOVE DOWNTOWN



**AIA**  
San Antonio



Urban Land  
Institute  
**San Antonio**



**DOWNTOWN  
SAN ANTONIO**  
SINCE 1718



INSPIRED LEADERS  
SHAPING CITIES