

Sustainable tourism issues in the San Antonio Mission Historic District, students' work



A summary of ideas generated by Master of Architecture students during the spring semesters of 2012 and 2013. Excerpted from a 2015 article in *Tourism and Hospitality Research*. Original article written by UTSA's Dr. Sedef Doganer.

Students' idea No. 1: "Big Tex"

Type: Culinary Tourism

Location: Southtown—between the Blue Star Arts Complex and Lone Star Brewery, and across from the historic King William neighborhood.

Description: The plan proposes a new *land bridge* over the existing railway tracks. About half of the land bridge's space would be used to grow the food needed to support the community's restaurants and market. The project would include *hike and bike trails* connecting the river to the land bridge, plazas and courtyards. Space would be included for food trucks. "Big Tex" could be host to local cultural events, such as the city's annual Fiesta celebration. Also included in "Big Tex":

La Galeria—a boutique hotel (pictured next page) featuring an artist/cyclist motif. The project would include an art gallery. A restaurant would be accessible from the street level, would use *crops grown on site*, and would open to the public. The hotel



itself would comprise a tower of suites and a standard room wing—the parts would be connected by a pedestrian bridge and would both face north to provide *views of King William and Downtown*. Office space and parking would both be under the land bridge. Also included would be a pool and bar at the land bridge level, and a rooftop terrace with a garden/café.

San Antonio Food Museum—would be located under the land bridge and near the river, on the east side of the project. Visitors would learn about the history of food and its preparation, taste different foods from different cultures, learn how to make what they’ve just tasted, and buy ingredients to prepare the food at home.

Students' idea No 2: "Mitchell Quarter"

Type: Cultural Heritage Tourism

Location: Mission Concepcion—The site is defined by U.S. Highway 90, Probandt Street, Mitchell Street and Mission Road. It is located at the northwest corner of Mission Concepcion.

Description: The main purpose of this design project is to connect both sides of the San Antonio River and the mission effectively for pedestrians and vehicles. The project would address pedestrian access from public transportation by creating an entirely new *pedestrian linear park* that spans from Probandt Street all the way to Mission Concepcion, including a new pedestrian bridge over the San Antonio River. On the west side of the river, the project would include a





farmer’s market, restaurant and cafes, retail shops, a small grocery store, a health and wellness facility, mixed-use buildings with *new residential housing*, and parking garages.

Existing older homes would be renovated and reused as bed & breakfasts. The east side of the river would be geared toward cultural activities and service areas. In addition to a new hotel, Mitchell Quarter also would feature:

Quarter Pavilion—an open air pavilion (pictured above) to serve various purposes including the weekly farmer’s market, community gatherings, festivals, etc.

Mission Heritage Museum—an education center that would centralize efforts currently spread across the five missions, bringing together stories, artifacts and documents to present a complete interpretation. Plans also call for a *children’s wing* that would include interactive exhibits.

Students' idea No 3: "River South"

Type: Rural Tourism

Location: southern part of Missions Historic District. The site is situated between Mission Espada and Mission San Juan, just south of the Spanish Colonial Demonstration Farm and accessible via hiking/biking trails.

Description: The project would include a *lawn area for community gatherings* and rural festivals, educational farmlands and a farmer's market, a *beach and deck for fishing* and a boutique hotel. Also included:

Equestrian center—would offer 1ha riding arena, stables for 14 horses, a clubhouse, restrooms and a restaurant.



Rural museum—would take advantage of the existing *acequia* system by integrating this irrigation system into the museum design.