

DESIGN INTENT:

Main Plaza is the historic heart of San Antonio, a gathering place since its founding by Canary Island settlers in 1731. The redesign honors this legacy by preserving the plaza's cultural story while creating a durable, flexible, and inviting public space that can adapt to contemporary community needs. The layout is fitting for an urban plaza with many varying programming needs throughout the year. The plaza will be predominantly paved, increasing accessibility, and will be organized around a central gathering area, shaped with a mix of new plantings and preserved existing trees. Historical interpretation is woven into the design through material choices, including an Interpretative timeline and a historic acequia marker.

Key Landscape Components:

- **Central Plaza:**
 - Removal of outdated structures and utilities
 - Improved site grading, fully ADA compliant surface
 - Preservation of all heritage trees in raised and irrigated planters
 - Combination of stone, precast pavers, and integral color concrete
 - Dedicated food-truck power, hinged bollards, site furnishings, movable café seating
 - Integrated lighting and electrical connections
 - Shade pavilion/stage structure for gatherings, performances, and activities
- **Hardscape + Paving:**
 - Historic acequia marker: natural stone paving over a sub-slab engraved with historic acequia mapping
 - Central paving: earth-tone precast pavers with an interpretative timeline incorporated into the layout
 - Perimeter paving: integral color concrete reflecting early Plaza conditions
 - Retaining walls: Lueders limestone walls providing character, keeping grades at existing trees, and additional places to rest
- **Furnishings:**
 - Movable benches, tables, chairs, and umbrellas, featuring colors inspired by the Canary Islands
 - Distributed trash/recycling bins
 - Perimeter bike racks
 - Hinged bollards for cathedral access
- **Planting:**
 - Preserve all heritage trees; relocate select younger trees to open view corridors
 - Add new shade and ornamental trees for seasonal interest
 - Drought-tolerant native understory plantings, including blue and yellow flowering species echoing the Canary Islands' flag

FOOD & BEVERAGE PAVILION DESIGN INTENT:

Adjacent to the historic San Fernando Cathedral, the proposed Shade Pavilion / Food & Beverage Pavilion is conceived as a light, transparent structure that supports daily plaza activity while remaining visually deferential to its historic surroundings. The pavilion is designed to complement—rather than compete with—the architectural prominence of the cathedral and the historic Main Plaza. Its low, open profile and extensive floor-to-ceiling glazing create a permeable structure that allows views, activity, and light to pass through it. The design emphasizes natural materials, warmth, and transparency, reinforcing the plaza's role as a civic gathering space while maintaining clear visual connections to the surrounding historic fabric.

An expressed wood structural system forms the primary architectural character of the pavilion. Solid wood columns and beams provide warmth and texture that echo the plaza's tree canopy, establishing a dialogue between architecture and landscape. The natural wood structure contrasts subtly with the surrounding stone and masonry while maintaining a restrained architectural presence.

A broad, gently sloping roof extends outward to create generous shaded areas that support informal gathering, dining, performances, and community events. The open and flexible structure functions as both a daily amenity and a civic stage for plaza programming. The pavilion strengthens the social life of Main Plaza while remaining intentionally subordinate to the historic character of the site, ensuring that San Fernando Cathedral and the plaza remain the primary visual and cultural focal points.

Key Pavilion Components**Pavilion Structure**

- Expressed heavy-timber structural frame with solid wood columns and beams
- Simple detailing that maintains a light architectural expression
- Concrete piers anchoring the structure while minimizing visual bulk
- Broad roof overhangs defining shaded gathering space

Transparency + Architectural Character

- Floor-to-ceiling glazing enclosing café and food service areas
- Highly transparent façades maintaining visual continuity across the plaza
- Minimal framing reinforcing the pavilion's open character
- Textured concrete walls hide service areas and incorporate interpretive mosaics telling the history of the plaza

Food & Beverage Area

- Café integrated within the pavilion
- Interior seating oriented toward the plaza
- Outdoor seating extending into the shaded terrace
- Flexible layout supporting daily use and larger plaza events

Shade + Comfort

- Cantilevered roof providing substantial shade coverage



TBG



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Project Description

Main Plaza
San Antonio, Texas

- Covered seating areas for dining and gathering
- Open sides allowing natural airflow and passive cooling
- Integration with existing trees to create layered shade

Relationship to the Historic Plaza

- Low-profile architecture preserving views to San Fernando Cathedral
- Natural materials complementing the surrounding landscape
- Transparent edges allowing the plaza to remain visually dominant
- Pavilion scale and placement calibrated to remain secondary to the cathedral

Plaza Activation

- Informal seating steps and gathering areas adjacent to the pavilion
- Flexible performance space for music and cultural programming
- Movable tables and chairs supporting daily plaza use
- Integrated lighting and power for evening events and festivals

Overall Vision

The Shade Pavilion / Food & Beverage Pavilion is envisioned as a transparent civic structure that supports the daily life of Main Plaza. Through the use of natural wood, extensive glazing, and an open architectural form, the pavilion integrates with the surrounding tree canopy and historic setting while providing shade, gathering space, and food service amenities. The design reinforces the plaza's role as a vibrant cultural center while ensuring that the historic San Fernando Cathedral and the legacy of Main Plaza remain the defining elements of the space.