



## OVERVIEW

Following is a description of the program for the Play Escape at Hemisfair. The program was the result of an analysis of the site conditions, the previous Plaza de Artes Program and discussions with various focus groups representing the surrounding neighborhoods, the current tenants on the site, the design and development community, the different departments of the City of San Antonio, Civic organizations, the HPARC staff, the HPARC Board, artists invited by the Public Arts Commission and teenagers from the local high school.



Play Escape at Hemisfair will be designed as a welcoming space where people of all ages and abilities will find a play and recreation outdoor experience in a shady, natural setting. Visitors will have a rich and diverse experience, informed by the lively, layered and constantly evolving arts and culture of San Antonio, the context of Hemisfair, the city's famous river, the historic springs, and the *acequia* from early settlement times. The design will embrace San Antonio's past while embracing the future as Hemisfair evolves into a vibrant community and neighborhood. Play Escape will be the catalyst for the redevelopment of this downtown place where people live, work and play. Learning and play opportunities will be provided for adults and teens, as well as children.



### **GATEWAY ENTRANCES**

There are five entry points into the Play Escape. Each entry point connects to the Promenade, the main circulation spine through the site. Each entry also has its own distinct character.

### **CESAR CHAVEZ**

Located on the south side of the park along Cesar Chavez Street, this gateway is the most prominent entry to Play Escape. Thousands of people will see this entry as they drive by on the busy street. The entry will serve the South Town neighborhood. The look of this entry will be playful, shaded and inviting, presenting a glimpse into the park activities.



## **COMPONENTS**

### **Learning Activities**

- History/ Cultural tiles on ground
- Climbing on the “PLAY” sign and play seating steps
- Spatial Relationships

### **ALAMO PLAY GATEWAY**

Once Alamo Street has been redeveloped, a new mid-block crosswalk from the parking area at the Marriot to the right side of the Eagar House is the reason for this Gateway. It probably will be the lesser used entry point, since it serves mostly hotels and some minor parking. This gateway also has the potential to introduce the Play Escape to many people driving by on Alamo Street. The gateway here is a play experience in and of itself. The “Walholla” play wall will become the gateway. Here children can climb through and over this enclosed mesh wall. People driving by will see active play in this gateway structure with green open space behind. This will be another playful way to announce the Play Escape and lure passers-by into the experience. At night this gateway will become a light show or a place to show outdoor movies from the lawn areas behind it.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Climbing
- Perspective
- Sliding
- Overview
- Pattern Differentiation

### **MAGIK THEATER/ALAMO ENTRY**

Hundreds of school children arrive at the Magik Theater every morning to attend a performance. They arrive and are divided into two groups—one group goes into the theater and the other stays in the park to play until the second performance. Then the first group comes out to play and the second group goes into the theater. This entry must accommodate both cueing and waiting. At this gateway there will be a gathering courtyard. Children will be able to wait there in the shade or eat their lunch before or after their theater experience.

### **WATER STREET**

With the future housing development that is planned for Hemisfair and the redevelopment of Water Street, a gateway entry to Play Escape from Water Street is essential. This entry may prove a very busy one in the future, serving both Hemisfair and all the neighborhoods to the east.



## **GOLIAD PLAZA**

This gateway will be the crossroads of the Civic Park, the River Garden and the Play Escape. It will be plaza-like so people can gather or wait and relax or continue on to the rest of Hemisfair or to the Convention Center.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Music Making
- Math
- History
- Spatial Relationships

## **PROMENADE/RIVERWALK STROLL**

The Promenade connects the entire Play Escape from East Cesar Chavez to Goliad Street. It is the organizing element and spine for the site design. It is also the place to provide shade and comfort throughout the site. The pathway is a metaphor for the river, as well as the entry experience to each of the main activity settings—the Active Play Area, the Flexible Open Space, the Water Play and River Sand Bar. Each section of the Promenade will have a different character that relates to the adjacent functions. It will be designed with a simple structure that will support the roof and provide a design rhythm throughout the promenade. The structure will also provide an armature on which parts can be added to expand program opportunities at different times for different purposes. The promenade can be used as a shaded sitting area, a place where small vendors can sell simple items, a place to display art, or a changing venue for a nighttime light show. It should be a multi-purpose place that is wide enough (+ /- 20') to accommodate activities while simultaneously used for circulation. The height and density of the roof structure should also vary so that it relates to both the surrounding activities and the tree cover. The materials need to be durable, authentic, flexible and simple. The entire feel should be comfortable, welcoming, and crafted, and it should have a playful spirit. The Promenade will define the Play Escape experience.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Gathering
- Waiting/ meeting
- Orientation and information
- Sitting
- Exploring
- Buying/selling
- Displaying
- Figure Ground
- Seasonal Diversity
- Reflection and Patterning



- Geometry and Volume

### **Physical Elements**

- Benches/ trash/ bike parking
- Directional signs
- Information signs
- Native planting
- Climbing vines
- PA System
- Detachable display structures
- Overhead structure with columns
- Shade
- Drinking water
- Hose bibs
- Light fixtures
- Planting baskets

### **Art Element(s)**

- Fascia on the column structure
- Paving

### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum 15'- 20' wide
- Minimum 12' height
- Length of each section varies depending on surrounding character

### **Accessibility**

- Accessible communication systems and easy-to-understand graphics
- Companion seating

### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Changing program information
- Cleaning and trash pickup
- Garden / trellis care + plant training

### **Health and Safety**

- Stroller parking
- No smoking
- Visual observation
- Ability for a police car or ambulance to drive through
- Non-climbable

### **Infrastructure**

- Sound system/ PA
- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage



- Solar cells
- Hose bibs

### **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Art shows,
- Exhibits of all kinds

### **FLEXIBLE OPEN SPACE**

The flexible open space area is designed for a variety of activities that can be either programmed or spontaneous. A large storage unit located in the Eggar House Courtyard supports the programs and games for this area. The storage unit houses a variety of loose parts for both individual and group play. The area also contains a shaded trellis with seating and game tables (see the Game Porch)

### **COMPONENTS**

#### **Activities**

- Gathering
- Lounging
- Playing games
- Climbing
- Running
- Sitting
- Eating
- Loose parts play
- People-watching
- Lawn picnicking
- Group gathering
- Storytelling
- Movie watching
- Special events

#### **Physical Elements**

- Shade
- Benches
- Imagination Playground Blocks
- Portable lawn bowling and other lawn games
- Wallholla
- Pathways
- Trash Receptacles
- Storage for games and loose parts
- Directional signs
- Information signs
- PA System



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### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of an acre

### **Accessibility**

- Accessible communication systems and easy-to-understand graphics
- Accessible pathways

### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Events management
- Changing program information
- Cleaning and trash pickup
- Play Equipment inspection and maintenance

### **Health and Safety**

- No smoking
- Access for fire, police and emergency vehicles
- Fall attenuating surfaces around the Wallholla

### **Utilities**

- Sound system/ PA
- Irrigation
- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage

### **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Program driven

## **COMMUNITY PORCH**

The community porch is a shaded trellis around the Eagar House Area. It provides shade and an activity area for playing board and card games. It also provides shaded seating for both the Flexible Open Space area and the Active Play Area. The space is also used as a part of the circulation system for the Play Escape.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Gathering
- Waiting/meeting
- Orientation and information
- Sitting
- Exploring
- Playing games
- Circulating

### **Physical Elements**

- Benches
- Tables



- Game tables
- Directional signs
- Information signs
- PA System

#### **Art Element(s)**

- Game Tables

#### **Space Requirements**

- 15' wide by a minimum of 12' high

#### **Accessibility**

- Accessible communication systems and easy-to-understand graphics
- Wheelchair accessible game tables

#### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Cleaning and trash pickup
- System for checking out and returning borrowed games and loose parts

#### **Health and Safety**

- Provide designated stroller parking
- No smoking

#### **Utilities**

- Sound system/ PA
- Fans
- Solar cells
- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage

#### **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Programmed Activities

### **ACTIVE PLAY AREA**

The active play area will be created around a custom designed net play experience. Children, teens and adults can use the play equipment. The multilayered equipment will incorporate all the traditional experiences—such as climbing, swinging and sliding—but in a non-traditional way. It will have a range of graduated challenges woven through it so it is appropriate for all ages and abilities.

### **COMPONENTS**

#### **Activities**

- Swinging
- Sliding
- Climbing
- Rolling, crawling, spinning



- Hanging out
- Resting
- Talking
- Role-playing
- Waiting/meeting
- Sitting
- Exploring
- Vestibular Motion to help the inner ear to keep balance
- Gross Motor and Fine Movement Development
- Socialization

### **Physical Elements**

- Net climber
- Swing ropes
- Hammocks
- Shaded seating
- Net bridges and tunnels

### **Art Element(s)**

- Play Equipment

### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum 1/3 of an acre

### **Accessibility**

- Access to the play experience at different locations
- Access to climbing structures

### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Equipment inspection and maintenance
- Cleaning and trash pickup

### **Health and Safety**

- No Smoking
- Access for emergency Vehicles
- Fall attenuating safety surfacing

### **Utilities**

- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage



## **WATER PLAY AREA**

Using the *acequia* as the inspiration and the various ways the water was taken from the river, the water play area will create a series of outlets coming off of an aqueduct-like structure to drip down limestone steps. Designed for everyone to be able to get wet, the steps will provide places for adults and teens to get their feet wet, children to interact with water and sprays for everyone. The area will be structured so when the water is turned off, the space can be use for gathering or holding a small performance. The water play area will be adjacent to the sand area and provide a stream like element to wet the sand.

This area is modeled after the water systems of the old acequias. It provides the water play on the limestone seats with the water building up in the crevices of the limestone cracking and then recharging the water system. It will consist of 5 gushing springs that come out through the rocks/boulders. The water surges into the blue hole and drains out into the sand area.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Observing
- Splashing
- Sitting
- Performing
- Relaxing
- Soaking

### **Physical Elements**

- Play *acequia*
- Terraced stone amphitheater/water feature
- Sprays
- Recirculating system
- Pump room
- Portable changing rooms

### **Art Element(s)**

- Paving
- Stone work

### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre

### **Accessibility**

- Access to the water

### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Periodic maintenance of water system elements
- Gardening/landscape maintenance
- Cleaning and trash pick-up



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### **Health and Safety**

- No smoking
- Water testing

### **Utilities**

- Sound system/ PA
- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage

### **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Working of the *acequia*

## **RIVER SANDBAR PLAY**

The sand area will be designed as a free-form sandbar that occurs along the San Antonio River.

### **Activities**

- Observing
- Exploring
- Digging
- Building
- Role-playing
- Damming

### **Physical Elements**

- *Acequia*
- Terraced stone amphitheater/water feature
- Shade trees
- Native plantings
- Benches
- PA System
- Rocks and boulders
- Shade

### **Art Element(s)**

- Buried “treasures”

### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an acre

### **Accessibility**

- Transfer elements as needed to provide access to play features

### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Cleaning and trash pickup
- Sand raking
- Replacement sand



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### **Health and Safety**

- Check sand for foreign objects that can hurt someone
- Provide designated stroller parking
- No smoking

### **Utilities**

- Sound system/ PA
- Electricity
- Potable water
- Drainage
- Sanitary sewer

### **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Archeological programs

### **TEEN CHILL ZONE**

Teens would like to feel welcome in all the areas of the park, but they would also like a small part of it to be for their special use.

### **COMPONENTS**

#### **Activities**

- Gathering/Hanging out
- Waiting/meeting
- Eating
- Sitting
- Exploring
- Game playing

#### **Physical Elements**

- Benches and tables
- PA system
- Art wall and or digital wall
- Deck
- Shade

#### **Art Element(s)**

- Skateboard sculpture

#### **Space Requirements**

- Minimum 1/8 of an acre

#### **Accessibility**

- Accessible communication systems and easy-to-understand graphics

#### **Operations and Maintenance**

- Cleaning and trash pickup



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## **Health and Safety**

- Provide designated bike parking
- No smoking

## **Utilities**

- Sound system/ PA
- Electricity
- WiFi
- Potable water
- Drainage

## **Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Programmed Activities

## **COURTYARDS**

There are four major courtyards adjacent to buildings in Play Escape. Each one has a different character. Each looks out on an active play experience and provides places to get something to eat and observe the adjacent activities. The courtyards are intended to be open during the day and through the evening, becoming a place where people of all ages come to play and gather. Each courtyard supports a revenue-generating concession.

## **COMPONENTS**

### **Activities**

- Gathering
- Waiting/meeting
- Sitting
- Eating
- Music-making
- Socializing

### **Physical Elements**

- Tables and chairs
- Seat walls
- Paving or decking
- Shade
- Information signs
- PA system
- Lighting

### **Art Element(s)**

- By Vendors (to express their shop)

### **Space Requirements**

- Each has a different size based on the location and type of concession



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**Accessibility**

- Accessible communication systems and easy-to-understand graphics

**Operations and Maintenance**

- Cleaning and trash pickup

**Health and Safety**

- Provide designated stroller parking
- No smoking

**Utilities**

- Sound system/PA
- Electricity
- Potable water
- WiFi
- Drainage

**Education and Interpretation Opportunities**

- Depends on the concession