The El Paso Mission Trail A Review of Recommendations for Improving the Trail

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The El Paso Mission Trail

A Review of Recommendations for Improving the Trail

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Executive Summary

The Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) was commissioned by the City of El Paso to consolidate ideas from various plans developed over the last 35 years aimed at improving the El Paso Mission Trail Historic Corridor. This corridor is a 9-mile stretch of Socorro Road that encompasses the Ysleta and Socorro Missions (including the early Socorro Mission archeological site), San Elizario Chapel, and the Mission Trail Historic District. The image below (Figure 1 of the report) shows the Mission Trail, much of which coincides with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. The national historic trail was designated by Congress under the National Trails System Act as a part of the National Trails System.
The results presented in this document are extensive, based on recommendations from the various plans and two key individuals who provided feedback, Gary Williams of the El Paso Community Foundation and Steve Burns of the National Park Service. The following is a brief summary of several recommendations that stakeholders could address to enhance the long term preservation, awareness, and visitor experience of the Mission Trail. (See Table 2 of the report).

**Management and Leadership**
- Establish an independent authority to lead, manage, coordinate, and provide technical support for Mission Trail projects.
- Provide a dedicated source of funding for this authority/entity.

**Economic Development**
- Develop comprehensive economic development, preservation, and visitor use development plans for the Mission Valley, Mission Trail, and/or national historic trail.
- Increase investment in landscaping, screening, and façade improvements that incorporate appropriate design, visitor use development, and historic preservation guidelines consistent with the best historic preservation practices and understanding of the area’s history.

**Tourism**
- Diversify tourism efforts (heritage, ecotourism, celebration, etc.).
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that emphasizes events, community celebrations, dances, bazaars, fiestas, etc.
- Pursue extensive promotion and marketing of the Mission Trail as a destination experience similar to other destination trails across the country that provide significant tourism and economic development benefits.
- Improve/develop appropriate tourist friendly facilities for visiting the trail sites and retracing the historic Camino Real such as signing and interpretive exhibits at historic sites, parking, and trailheads.
- Working with NPS and others, pursue development of a non motorized national historic trail retracing the historic route of El Camino Real.
- Recognize El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and its preservation and development as a potential major tourism draw to the region and look for ways to extend the trail North and South into Mexico to attract international tourism.
Urban Design

- Identify blighted areas and improve them through landscaping, screening, and façade improvements that incorporate appropriate design and historic preservation guidelines consistent with the best historic preservation practices and understanding of the area’s history.
- Improve/develop gateways and pedestrian oriented areas at historic trail sites.
- Repurpose/redesign parking lots that currently have a negative impact on the character and integrity of historic sites. Incorporate historic preservation practices that restore the historic integrity and character of the Mission Trail.
- Develop more parks and visitor areas throughout the Mission Trail.
- Develop historic preservation strategies and mechanisms to prevent destruction of extant historic sites, resources, and character.
- Encourage appropriate and compatible land use through existing and enhanced mechanisms (such as zoning and historic overlay ordinances).

Should stakeholders organize under a common governance and management framework, the governance should consider operating under following criteria (See Table 4 of the report):

- Identify, support, plan and fund high impact projects and ensure projects and initiatives align with historic preservation goals, prevent destruction of historic sites and character, and protect the integrity or authentic sense of place that may remain or be restored on the trail.
- Manage the Mission Trail under a single authority. A potential structure would be formation of a board of directors to govern and an executive director to manage the trail.
- Include (on the board or in management of the trail) membership from each jurisdiction (identified in Table 3 of the report), stakeholders, community leaders, business leaders, and citizens.
- Identify and secure a dedicated funding stream with authority to seek additional funding.
- Provide leadership, planning, and coordination in local decision making, economic development, and historic preservation.
- Operates in a transparent fashion and is accountable to citizens and stakeholders.
- Form partnerships with the National Park Service, the Texas Historical Commission, TxDOT, local government, private landowners, citizens, and other local or nonlocal entities.
• Develop short term and long range plans with input from stakeholders and citizens for historic preservation, economic development, tourism, marketing, visitor use, etc.
• Seek participation from citizens, community groups, public and private organizations, and private enterprise.

As it relates to tourism, stakeholders could work to develop not only heritage tourism but other tourism options as well. Several recommendations stand out both in developing tourism and improving the visual character of the Mission Trail through urban design these include the following (See Table 11 and Table 15 of the report):

**Public Infrastructure**
• Road improvements and enhancements
• Traffic control and congestion planning
• Transportation planning
  ▪ Public transportation (bus service)
  ▪ Trolley service

**Tourism Infrastructure**
• Park improvements, planning, and development
  ▪ Rio Vista Farm Park
  ▪ Rio Bosque Wetlands
• Designation, planning, development of dining, entertainment, and shopping clusters
• Development of non motorized pedestrian/bike trail retracing the historic route of El Camino Real
• Planning and development of tourist friendly facilities (for instance, a Visitor Center at Socorro Mission)
• Scheduling and availability of the Missions and Mission Trail docents (trained and paid tour guides)
• Mission Trail Marketing and Promotion
  ▪ Highway advertising (billboards)
  ▪ Internet related advertising (websites, social media, smart phone apps, etc.)
  ▪ Improve visibility of interpretive signage
  ▪ Improve marketing/visibility of the Mission Trail at the Airport
Inventory, prioritize, plan, fund, and implement

- Modern building façade improvements
- Screening with trees, shrubs, and authentic adobe walls
  - Heavy commercial (junk yards, ...)
  - Industrial areas
  - Parking lots, car lots, blighted areas
  - Utility facilities and easements
  - El Paso Electric Company Substation
- Landscaping projects
  - Historic buildings, structures, sites
  - The entire Socorro Road right of way
  - Pedestrian oriented areas or clusters

Inventory, prioritize, plan, fund and implement reuse and repurposing of

- Parking lots, vacant lots
  - Socorro Mission parking lot landscape planning
- Historic canals

Pedestrian oriented design

- Gateways
- Plazas

Preservation

- Open space
- Agricultural fields
- Scenic areas
- Historic buildings
- Character of rural and pre-automobile era roads
  - Nevarez
  - Buford, etc.

Historic site interpretation and enhancements

- San Elizario Presidio Walls
- Original Socorro Mission Walls
- The Socorro Mission Rectory, Cemetery, and Cemetery Descansos
- Other high priority historic sites and structures
Historic preservation projects

- Socorro Mission Rectory preservation plans
- Socorro Mission Cemetery and Descansos preservation plans
- Other high priority sites identified by stakeholders

Steps for quickly improving visitor experience of the Mission Trail include (see Section 5 of the report):

- Conduct a full inventory of potential projects.
- Develop a process to prioritize and select high impact projects.
- Develop plans including
  - A plan to prioritize significant historic properties to be listed in the National Register and also be designated Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks.
  - A comprehensive preservation and visitor facilities development plan to guide future preservation and development projects.
  - Plans for individual projects.
  - Comprehensive economic development.
  - Tourism development.
  - Cultural landscape reports.
  - Historic structures reports.
  - Design guidelines.
- Identify and secure funding to implement “shovel ready” projects.

A review of information contained in the Mission Trail Plans shows that there are many projects that can be implemented that will improve the visual character, ensure historic preservation, and increase the number of visitors to the Mission Trail/El Camino Real area. This report indentified a few of the many that can be implemented in the near term (between one and five years). Projects selected by stakeholders for implementation should focus on “low hanging fruit” and areas that are within walking distance of the Missions. Projects should also target appropriate modern building façade improvements, historic character improvements, screening, and landscaping. Any project selected for implementation should also be based on sound historic research and documentation that might be found in reports such as cultural landscape reports, historic structures reports, design guidelines, and that are coordinated with the NPS and purposes of the national historic trail. Increasing the number of open space, agricultural land use, parks, and trails (especially the construction of the national historic trail in the area) will also attract more visitors with the added benefit of increasing the quality of life of the area. Organizing formal governance that provides leadership, management, and facilitates collaboration and coordination of initiatives may be the most effective option for tourism and economic development of the area.
1 – Introduction

The Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) was commissioned by the City of El Paso to consolidate ideas from various plans developed over the last 35 years aimed at improving the El Paso Mission Trail Historic Corridor. This corridor is a 9-mile stretch of Socorro Road that encompasses the Ysleta and Socorro Missions (including the early Socorro Mission archeological site), San Elizario Chapel, and the Mission Trail Historic District. **Figure 1** shows the Mission Trail, much of which coincides with El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. The national historic trail was designated by Congress under the National Trails System Act as a part of the National Trails System.

![Figure 1 – El Paso Mission Trail](image)

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1 Note that Rio Vista Farm is not part of the Mission Trail, but is included in the map because it is on the National Register of Historic Places. Source data for ArcGIS maps generated by IPED come from PDNMapa (GIS shapefiles), The Texas Natural Resources Information System of the Texas Water Development Board.
The documents reviewed by IPED, collectively referred to as the *Mission Trail Plans*, are summarized in Table 1. Not all of these plans are specifically focused on the Mission Trail but each provides recommendations for improving some aspect of the trail.

Table 1 – *Mission Trail Plans* reviewed by IPED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Missions Seminar</td>
<td>Texas Historical Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>The Mission Trail</td>
<td>West Texas Council of Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Design Criteria – Ysleta Historic District</td>
<td>The City of El Paso Department of Planning, Research, and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>A Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail Historical Area</td>
<td>The City of El Paso Department of Planning, Research, and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>El Paso Missions, Texas – Special Resource Study</td>
<td>United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Mission Valley of El Paso</td>
<td>Mission Valley Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mission Valley Tourism Assessment</td>
<td>Texas Department of Economic Development Tourism Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Mission Valley Summit</td>
<td>Mission Valley Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Heritage Tourism Plan</td>
<td>The City of El Paso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>City of El Paso, Texas Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>The City of El Paso and Plan El Paso</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IPED also reviewed various other reports, listed in the *References* section, and obtained feedback from two key individuals in an effort to identify the highest impact recommendations for improving the historic corridor. These individuals are Gary Williams of the El Paso Community Foundation and Steve Burns of the National Park Service.2 The

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2 The timeline for completing this project precluded contacting additional stakeholders.
results presented in this document are based on recommendations from the sources mentioned in this paragraph.

There are many stakeholders interested in improving the Mission Trail whose efforts may also influence the preservation and development of the national historic trail. The primary stakeholders include:

- The Catholic Diocese of El Paso
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo
- San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society
- El Paso Mission Trail Association
- The City and County of El Paso and the City of Socorro
- The Community of San Elizario

Other key regional partners include the El Paso Community Foundation, El Paso County Historical Commission, the El Paso Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization. State and federal stakeholders include the Texas Historical Commission (THC), the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), the National Park Service National Trails Office (NPS), and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM).³

Table 2 shows several recommendations that these and other stakeholders could address to enhance the long term preservation, awareness, and visitor experience of the Mission Trail.

Table 2 – Recommendations for improving preservation and visitor use experience of the Mission Trail/El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Management and Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Establish an independent authority to lead, manage, coordinate, and provide technical support for Mission Trail projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a dedicated source of funding for this authority/entity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³ In accordance with the National Trails System Act legislation which governs El Camino Real National Historic Trail, The National Park Service National Trails Office, along with the Bureau of Land Management, jointly administer El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. These federal agencies work in partnership with others who may influence the preservation and development of the national historic trail towards those ends. The act provides broad authorities for these agencies to work with public and private entities to the purposes of preservation and development of the national historic trail. They provide technical and some limited financial assistance to preserve and develop the trail for public use. In the case of the BLM, they also manage some segments of the national historic trail that are within BLM public lands.
Table 2 – Recommendations for improving preservation and visitor use experience of the Mission Trail/El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail

II. Economic Development
- Develop comprehensive economic development, preservation, and visitor use development plans for the Mission Valley, Mission Trail, and/or national historic trail.
- Increase investment in landscaping, screening, and façade improvements that incorporate appropriate design, visitor use development, and historic preservation guidelines consistent with the best historic preservation practices and understanding of the area’s history.

III. Tourism
- Diversify tourism efforts (heritage, ecotourism, celebration, etc.).
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan that emphasizes events, community celebrations, dances, bazaars, fiestas, etc.
- Pursue extensive promotion and marketing of the Mission Trail as a destination experience similar to other destination trails across the country that provide significant tourism and economic development benefits.
- Improve/develop appropriate tourist friendly facilities for visiting the trail sites and retracing the historic Camino Real such as signing and interpretive exhibits at historic sites, parking, and trailheads.
- Working with NPS and others, pursue development of a non motorized national historic trail retracing the historic route of El Camino Real.
- Recognize El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and its preservation and development as a potential major tourism draw to the region and look for ways to extend the trail North and South into Mexico to attract international tourism.

IV. Urban Design
- Identify blighted areas and improve them through landscaping, screening, and façade improvements that incorporate appropriate design and historic preservation guidelines consistent with the best historic preservation practices and understanding of the area’s history.
- Improve/develop gateways and pedestrian oriented areas at historic trail sites.
- Repurpose/redesign parking lots that currently have a negative impact on the character and integrity of historic sites. Incorporate historic preservation practices that restore the historic integrity and character of the Mission Trail.
- Develop more parks and visitor areas throughout the Mission Trail.
- Develop historic preservation strategies and mechanisms to prevent destruction of extant historic sites, resources, and character.
- Encourage appropriate and compatible land use through existing and enhanced mechanisms (such as zoning and historic overlay ordinances).

The remainder of this report provides additional details in the four areas shown in Table 2 as it relates to preserving the historical integrity and use experience of the Mission Trail and El Camino Real National Historic Trail.
2 – Unified Management and Leadership

Overview

Over the last 35 years, various plans and projects have been implemented with the goal of improving the Mission Trail. One of the primary challenges faced in garnering support for initiatives is the multijurisdictional nature of the trail. Table 3 lists the various entities that have some form of jurisdiction over the 9-mile trail. While these entities have succeeded in achieving several outcomes in collaboration with other parties, feedback from key stakeholders and other El Paso area officials indicates that the multijurisdictional makeup of the trail can make building consensus for programs and projects difficult if not impossible. Currently, no single entity has been placed in charge of overall coordination and management of the trail and the Mission Trail has no dedicated staff to provide leadership, management or other services for improving the trail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Catholic Diocese of El Paso</td>
<td>Private ownership of the Ysleta and Socorro Missions and San Elizario Chapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ysleta del Sur Pueblo</td>
<td>Private ownership of Speaking Rock and various properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of El Paso</td>
<td>Ysleta Historic District and land use planning, zoning, permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Socorro</td>
<td>Socorro Historic District and land use planning, zoning, permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso County</td>
<td>San Elizario Historic District and land use planning, zoning, permitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Department of Transportation</td>
<td>Transportation planning and programming of Socorro Road (FM 258)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private land owners</td>
<td>Private ownership of the early Socorro Mission and other historic sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS/BLM</td>
<td>Federal agencies with limited jurisdiction over “administration,” coordination and support for preservation and development of the national historic trail and compliance involvement on federal undertakings that may affect the trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas State Historical Commission</td>
<td>Oversight of state and federal actions that may affect national register eligible or listed properties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The challenge of this study is to identify projects that will produce maximum positive cultural heritage preservation and economic impact on the trail by increasing compatible
and appropriate use, community value, and tourism. Based on review of *Mission Trail Plans* and feedback from key individuals, the highest priority stakeholders should address is establishment of independent formal governance over the trail. The governance should operate under criteria given in Table 4.4

Table 4 – Criteria for an Independent Formal Governance of the Mission Trail

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Identify, support, plan and fund high impact projects and ensure projects and initiatives align with historic preservation goals, prevent destruction of historic sites and character, and protect the integrity or authentic sense of place that may remain or be restored on the trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Manage the Mission Trail under a single authority. A potential structure would be formation of a board of directors to govern and an executive director to manage the trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Include (on the board or in management of the trail) membership from each jurisdiction (identified in Table 3), stakeholders, community leaders, business leaders, and citizens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Identify and secure a dedicated funding stream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Provide leadership, planning, and coordination in local decision making, economic development, and historic preservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Operate in a transparent fashion with accountability to citizens and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Form partnerships with the National Park Service, the Texas Historical Commission, TxDOT, local government, private landowners, citizens, and other local or nonlocal entities.5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Develop short term and long range plans with input from stakeholders and citizens for historic preservation, economic development, tourism, marketing, visitor use, etc.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Seek participation from citizens, community groups, public and private organizations, and private enterprise.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 These criteria are adapted from (Morrow, 1981), (NPS, 1996), (MVTA, 2000), and (Laycock, 2012).
5 The Socorro Mission Preservation Project (SMPP, 2004), (Unk, 2005), (Fulton, ca. 2005) and (NTHP, 2006) is currently the primary example of the importance of establishing partnerships with nonlocal entities whose expertise adds value to local initiatives.
6 In 1981, Morrow stated, “Managing historic and economic resources is a partnership between private landowners and nearly all levels of government.”
7 The MTC would decide whether to develop the plan in-house or through an external third party.
In managing the trail, it is important to emphasize the first criterion in **Table 4**. Any formal governance should have a strong understanding of historic preservation. Miguel Celorio (THC, 1978, p. 15) identifies three categories of historic preservation: “strict preservation, which means to keep a structure in its present state and appearance; restoration, which means to return it to an earlier appearance; reconstruction, which is to construct a replica of all or part of a structure.” It is important to point out that reconstruction, in general, is not considered good historic preservation practice.\(^9\)\(^{,10}\) Reconstruction would usually not be supported by the NPS or State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) unless carefully planned based on sound historic documentation. This viewpoint on historic preservation should be kept in mind for any type of development or improvement implemented along the Mission Trail.

### Management of the Mission Trail under Existing Framework

The existing local management framework of the Mission Trail is multijurisdictional and bound together typically through inter-local agreements and informal local partnerships.\(^11\)\(^{,12}\) The primary local entities that make up this framework include the Catholic Diocese, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, El Paso Mission Trail Association, San Elizario Genealogy & Historical Society, the City of El Paso, the City of Socorro, and El Paso County.\(^12\) Other key regional partners include (among others) the El Paso Community Foundation, the El Paso County Historical Commission, and the El Paso Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.

The NPS proposed six conceptual strategies for management of the missions under this framework (NPS, 1996, pp. 54-65). The strategies and management structures are summarized in **Table 5** below. Note that NPS would play a role in all cases with the exception of **Conceptual Strategy #6**. Also note that **Conceptual Strategy #2** is now a reality.

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8 William Brown’s suggestion on participation involves getting “**to know the communities** and bring them into the family-getting their opinions and input as soon as possible” (THC, 1978, p. 24).
9 David Battle (THC, 1978, p. 26) states, a restoration process “would destroy the significant and sometimes outstanding existing fabric for a secondhand copy of an earlier appearance.”
10 The NPS (1996, p. 40) states, “Historical integrity is lost or diminished when properties are moved, extensively modified, reconstructed, or destroyed ... modern development, particularly at Ysleta, poses an increasing threat to the historical integrity of the communities.”
11 Personal Communication with Rosemary Neill, Director of Family and Community Services, El Paso County, 12/12/2012.
12 Personal Communication with Gary Williams, Senior Program Officer, El Paso Community Foundation, 12/11/2012.
**Table 5 – NPS Conceptual Strategies for management of the Mission Trail**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Organizational Management</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1) Community Celebration</strong></td>
<td><strong>Community Councils</strong></td>
<td>Community council representatives would direct planning efforts toward reviving traditional community activities and events such as feast day celebrations and music/dance performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Form <strong>Community Councils</strong> for each area made up of parishioners, local residents, local businesses and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.</td>
<td>The NPS would provide technical assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish permanent <strong>common forum</strong> to meet, coordinate joint events and develop solutions for common problems and goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2) El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro</strong></td>
<td><strong>Existing Local Management Framework/NPS</strong></td>
<td>The NPS is working towards:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: This is now a reality with The National Historic Trail designated in 2000.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Developing standards for individual site owners, managers, or authorized organizations to maintain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing research, resources, assistance, and partnering with others towards preservation of resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Providing technical, financial, and partner support in developing visitor information programs, trail preservation, trail development and facilities along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and the missions and other historic trail sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The NPS has in place a certification program for sites.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3) El Paso Missions Heritage Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Local Public/Private Formal Partnership and NPS</strong></td>
<td>The partnership, relying on local community leadership, would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish <strong>formal partnership</strong> to promote heritage</td>
<td>• Provide technical and financial assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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13 Note that all NPS participation would be contingent on availability of funds and resources.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Organizational Management</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4) Comprehensive Educational Facilities and Programs</td>
<td>Local Public/Private Coordination and NPS</td>
<td>Local governmental agencies in coordination with school district administration, universities, private groups and enterprises such as the diocese, Mission Trail Association, and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. The NPS would provide technical assistance and grant funding. Private entities would provide additional financial and organizational support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Preservation of Mission Structures and Rural Setting</td>
<td>Local Public/Private Collaboration and NPS</td>
<td>Local governmental agencies, the Diocese, private groups, the Water Company, and ditch companies. The Diocese of El Paso would continue to seek private and public support for the preservation of the missions. Volunteers from private groups and parishes would coordinate to provide visitor support services. Local government agencies would explore a variety of protective measures to preserve the rural setting of the missions. Ditch companies and the Water Company would participate in developing and implementing a trail system and open space plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 – NPS Conceptual Strategies for management of the Mission Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Organizational Management</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>businesses, chambers of commerce, and other private groups.</td>
<td>Local government agencies would provide a one-stop-shop that identifies and publicizes various local, state, and governmental incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preservation of the missions and other community resources would be linked to overall efforts to market and promote new and existing business opportunities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: (NPS, 1996, pp. iii-iv, pp. 50-65)

Improving Local Management of the Mission Trail

While the existing framework has been successful in achieving many outcomes, building consensus among multijurisdictional elements appears to be a primary drawback to getting things done. The National Park Service (1996, p. 43) commented that the existing framework created gaps in initiatives conducted by different uncoordinated organizations or groups working to improve the Mission Trail Historic District. Many of the projects and organizations frequently lacked coordination and “perhaps inadvertently work(ed) at cross purposes”. The NPS suggested “improved project coordination among agencies, groups, and individuals could assist in better achieving common goals and project objectives. The current difficulties faced by planners and preservationists are at least partly the consequence of the limitations placed by jurisdictional boundaries, restricting input into broader district wide decision making.”

Various recommendations have been made for management of the Mission Trail. Of the documents reviewed by IPED, those identified in Table 6 provide specific recommendations. The following is a summary:

- Morrow (1981) recommended formation of a Mission Trail Commission to administer the district. He recommended that the commission appoint an executive director or chief consultant tasked with administering the district.
- Palmore (1981, s. E, p. 31) stated, “Future conflict in overlapping jurisdictions that address an historic district under the auspices of two jurisdictions could and should

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13 At the time of the study, the NPS identified 24 organizations and groups working to improve the Mission Trail.
14 Full recommendations are reprinted in Table 16 in the Appendix for convenient reference.
be addressed in State enabling legislation ... it appears the only viable alternative may be State enabling legislation for a special district of the Mission Trail Area. It has been suggested that the district be designated an historic preservation district only as a means to guide growth.”

- The City of El Paso (CiEP, 1994) recommended formation of three commissions that contribute to the concept of a Mission Trail Historic District Commission. In this recommendation, the City of El Paso, The City of Socorro, and the County would each set up their own Mission Trail Commission and participate in an “umbrella commission” by formalized contract.16
- Community feedback in (NPS, 1996, p. 49) stated, “establish local leadership: a regional entity would coordinate efforts with regular meetings to share ideas.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Document</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mission Trail</td>
<td>(Morrow, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail Historical Corridor, Comprehensive Plan, Section One</td>
<td>(CiEP, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso Missions, Texas - Special Resource Study</td>
<td>(NPS, 1996) 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Establishing Independent Authority for the Mission Trail**

The existing framework operates much like a city commission, a combination of executive and administrative entities. However the existing framework has no single person in charge. A consensus is forming among key stakeholders that what is needed is a single formal organizational structure that facilitates coordination and participation among multijurisdictional agencies, groups and individuals.18 A review of successful parks and trails in Kent County Michigan by Laycock (2012) suggests that the most effective strategy for multijurisdictional management is the establishment of an independent authority that has a source of dedicated funding. Laycock states:

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16 Full recommendations are reprinted in Table 17 in the Appendix for convenient reference.
17 These reports identify many economic development issues faced by the Mission Valley.
18 Greg Hudson points out a few difficulties with inter-local agreements: loss of governmental control over the provision of services, conflicts when unforeseen problems arise that are not addressed in the agreement, and provisions that may be in conflict with authorized statutory powers of local governments. Document available at: [http://www.holaw.net/Documents/Interlocal contracts paper.pdf](http://www.holaw.net/Documents/Interlocal contracts paper.pdf).
What we found across the State (of Michigan), is that the strongest agencies had the strongest independent governance, and in most cases, dedicated funding. Parks and recreation as a general fund department tends to not fare well in difficult economic times. While dedicated funding (particularly a millage) goes hand-in-hand with an independent governance structure, we do not see this as a “chicken and egg” problem. Creating an independent governance structure as a platform for collaboration is the first step. This creates the opportunity for communities to come together to establish a more broadly held shared vision for parks and recreation and to begin advocating for additional resources. (Laycock, 2012)

An independent authority can potentially improve management of the three Mission Trail Historic Districts by serving as an overlay authority which allows multiple jurisdictions and communities to pursue individual priorities while at the same time receiving the benefit of additional support for regional assets (Laycock, 2012). In Texas, this independent authority or governance could take the form of a special district (specifically a development, improvement, and management district) or similar local level governmental unit. Special districts are units of local government exclusive of county and incorporated municipalities. These districts are typically governed by a county commissioner’s court or by a board of directors and can be given power by the State to raise revenue by taxation and charges for services. Establishing a special district to manage the Mission Trail “to promote, develop, encourage, and maintain employment, commerce, transportation, housing, tourism, recreation, the arts, entertainment, economic development, safety, and the public welfare” could provide an effective means to address cross-jurisdictional problems. In Texas there many (among hundreds) of examples of such districts including:

1. **Harris County Improvement District No. 3**, created for comprehensive planning, implementation, and operations for the public improvement of the Upper Kirby District in Houston, Texas.  
2. **Houston Downtown Management District**, established in 1995 and the district has since experienced a renaissance and economic rebound.

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19 Laycock further states that in difficult economic times, partnerships may not fare well due to increased competition for a shared tax base. Thus, multijurisdictional commissions such as those proposed by (Morrow, 1981) and (CiEP, 1994) may face limited funding when other priorities.
20 Texas Special District Local Laws Code, Title 4, Subtitle C, Chapters 3801 through 3911.
21 Article III, sections 52 and 52.a and Article XVI, section 59 are the constitutional basis for most special districts in Texas. See also [http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mwt01](http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mwt01).
24 [http://www.downtowndistrict.org/Home/AboutUs/Overview/default.asp](http://www.downtowndistrict.org/Home/AboutUs/Overview/default.asp)
3. **Buffalo Bayou Management District** comprises a total of 36 members whose mission is to promote tourism and economic development in the Buffalo Bayou area of Houston, Texas.\(^{25}\)

4. **International Management District**, in the Greater Houston Area, is currently implementing improvement projects to enhance mobility, attractiveness and quality of life of the community. The district is undergoing a transformation from Asiatown into a broader American and international community.\(^{26}\)

While all the examples above are located in Houston, special districts are spread throughout across the State and are not new to El Paso. In June 2009, the Tornillo Management District was created by the Texas Legislature based on a bill submitted by State Rep. Chente Quintanilla.\(^{27}\) A similar authority, the Camino Real Regional Mobile Authority or CRRMA, was created in 2007 by the El Paso City Council. Note that the CRRMA can complete and operate projects that cross jurisdictions.\(^{28}\)

It is important to note, that if a Mission Trail, Camino Real or Camino Real Missions Special District is created by the Texas legislature, catalyzed through local efforts of Mission Trail stakeholders, raising revenue by taxation would not necessarily be imposed on the residents of the district. As Laycock states, “the millage would be placed before the voters by a general legislative body.” Further, the Special District would have the authority to pursue other means of funding in order to fund projects related to preserving and improving visitor experience of the Mission Trail and El Camino Real NHT.

In conclusion, it is well known that over the years different plans have been proposed. A growing consensus supports the need to establish a formal administrative authority. As mentioned previously, the multijurisdictional nature of the Mission Trail has complicated this process. Formation of a special district operating under the criteria mentioned above could help resolve this issue and should be given full and careful consideration by all individuals who want to help to preserve and improve the Mission Trail and national historic trail.

This section closes with potential roles each entity involved with improving the Mission Trail could take on in the formation of a Mission Trail Special District. These are shown in Table 7.

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\(^{26}\) [http://www.imdhouston.org/IMD/about-the-district](http://www.imdhouston.org/IMD/about-the-district)  
\(^{28}\) [http://www.crrma.org/history.asp](http://www.crrma.org/history.asp)
Table 7 – Roles in Establishing Unified Management of the Mission Trail via Special District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Form Special District Committee</th>
<th>Nominate/Elect Board Members</th>
<th>Special District Legislation</th>
<th>Develop Comprehensive Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of El Paso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Socorro</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of El Paso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso County Texas State Representative(s)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The El Paso MPO</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Catholic Diocese of El Paso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TxDOT</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organizations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens, land owners, and businesses impacted by Mission Trail leadership</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park Service (^{30})</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining sections of this report summarize detailed recommendations made by various *Mission Trail Plans* that stakeholders should consider regardless of the type of governing structure chosen for uniting management of the Mission Trail.

### 3 – Economic Development

#### Overview

Ultimately, improvement of the Mission Trail is about crafting an economic development strategy. This section focuses briefly on economic development recommendations. While most *Mission Trail Plans* make some type of recommendation to improve economic conditions, the four shown in Table 8 are specifically geared toward economic development.

Table 8 – *Mission Trail Plans* that address economic development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Document</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Trail Economic Analysis And Plan</td>
<td>(Palmore, 1981)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{29}\) The Mission Trail is represented by two Texas State Representatives, Districts 75 and 76.

\(^{30}\) Here the NPS role would be in the form of technical assistance, contingent on the availability of resources.
### Table 8 – *Mission Trail Plans* that address economic development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Document</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mission Valley of El Paso, A Plan of Action</td>
<td>(MVSC, 1999)³¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Valley Summit, A Plan for the Future</td>
<td>(MVSC, 2004)³¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following is a brief summary of these plans.

**Mission Valley Economic Analysis and Plan.** This comprehensive plan was part of the Camino de las Misiones Program³² sponsored by the West Texas Council of Governments in 1981. The objectives of the plan were to:

- Identify potential for private investment and employment opportunities.
- Identify public actions for job creation enterprises.
- Evaluate the capacity for governmental entities for undertaking and supporting projects and programs.
- Project future levels of economic activity.
- Measure potential economic impact of recommended projects and programs.
- Analyze the impact of recommendations on 1) neighborhood stabilization and revitalization, 2) expansion of low to mid income housing, 3) expansion of economic activities of low to mid income families, and 4) enhancement of the area for future economic development.

**Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail, Economic Development Strategy.** This plan was part three of the comprehensive plan developed by the City of El Paso in cooperation with the City of Socorro, and El Paso County in the early 1990s. This plan focused on development of a viable tourism district and proposed an economic development strategy that is perhaps still viable today. Details of this plan are discussed in the next sub-section.

**Mission Valley of El Paso, A Plan of Action.** This plan, initiated by the Mission Valley Steering Committee, is a template of a comprehensive vision for development of the Mission Valley. The plan was to serve as a guide for community initiatives. The plan states:

> One hundred tactical plans and a thousand activities can be derived from the information contained in these pages. It is expected that neighborhoods, clubs, churches, and community organizations develop their own plans to improve areas. (MVSC, 1999, p. 5)

³¹ These reports identify many economic development issues faced by the Mission Valley.
³² Palmore referenced this project as the Mission Trail Comprehensive Planning Program.
The plan identified five priorities and corresponding implementation strategies. The priorities include 1) public transportation; 2) primary health/border health institute; 3) education and job training; 4) economic development; and 5) affordable housing. The relevance of this report is that it provides a community based comprehensive list of issues that need to be addressed in the Mission Valley including issues related to the Mission Trail. It can also serve as a starting point for development of a comprehensive economic development strategy for the area.

**Mission Valley Summit, A Plan for the Future.** This report was a follow-up to Mission Valley of El Paso, A Plan of Action (MVSC, 1999). The purpose was to identify “community-based priorities and strategies to address challenges common to the Mission Valley or unique to their own communities” (MVSC, 2004, p. iii). The overall goal of the summit was to provide a vehicle for Mission Valley leaders to carry forward their vision for the future and growth of the Mission Valley. Much like the previous plan, this report can serve as a starting point for development of a comprehensive economic development strategy for the area.

**Tourism District Economic Development Strategy**

The economic development strategy proposed by the City of El Paso (CiEP, 1994, s. 3) and summarized in Table 9 is worth noting because the general framework remains viable today and it is specifically focused on developing a tourism district. Given the designation of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro as a national historic trail since this study was completed, these recommendations can be updated, expanded, and enhanced to provide an upgraded strategy for developing the tourism industry along the Mission Trail/Camino Real National Historic Trail. (Potential updates to the plan are shown in parenthesis).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9 – Tourism District Economic Development Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Enterprise and reinvestment zone designation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each jurisdiction has applied for and established ERZ’s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ERZ’s provide incentives for business growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Target tourism related businesses including restaurants, motels/hotels, bed and breakfasts, galleries, etc. (This strategy could be expanded and reevaluated to consider businesses and services to target national historic trail interests and users especially if a non motorized pedestrian/bicycle retracement trail is developed following the historic Camino Real.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33 The program was amended to current format in 2003.
2. Business incentives
   • Provide low interest loans.
   • Provide regulatory relief to promote business.
   • Provide business and industrial services such as customized job training, reduced utility rates, one stop permitting, promotion and marketing services, fee waivers on building permits, etc.
   • (Provide incentives that promote preservation and restoration of historic properties including structures, historic landscapes, and agricultural use.)

3. Financial lending cooperative
   • Establish a micro loan program through ERZ/Community Development Corporation financial lending cooperative. (These loans could include incentives for historic preservation, continued historic agricultural land use, as well as trail user visitor services and incentives for construction of the national historic trail across private land.)

4. Mission trail marketing
   • Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that addresses:
     ▪ Area beautification, historic preservation, Mission Trail/national historic trail amenities, and physical reinvestment.
     ▪ Local business community involvement.
     ▪ Seasonal Mission Trail Corridor Events.
     ▪ Upgraded Mission Trail tourist information on site and at the airport. (This could include highlighting of the national historic trail and both national and international significance of El Camino Real.)
     ▪ Incorporated media exposure.
   • Note: Mission Trail marketing is addressed in greater detail in the Section 4 of this report.

5. Enhanced community services
   • Develop a public/private partnership to offer 1) improved fire and police protection; 2) Day-care provisions; 3) Community crime prevention programs; and 4) special public transit routes, reduced fairs and worker shuttles.

Source: (CiEP, 1994, s. 3, pp. 7-11)

There are two important notes to consider as it relates to the strategy outlined in Table 9. First, most Mission Trail Plans emphasize developing the tourism industry, in particular heritage tourism. It is for this reason that the next section focuses primarily on tourism related recommendations. Second, a comprehensive economic development strategy is needed for the Mission Valley that addresses other economic development concerns of the region. William Brown (THC, 1978, p. 24) stated, “If these communities are to continue ... giving the churches meaning, they must continue to function economically ... tourism
will not provide the income for this, though it might produce a critical increment on the top of a solid economic base.” The plans identified in Table 8 and the strategies summarized in Table 9 can be used as a starting point for development of a comprehensive economic development plan for the Mission Valley as well as an economic development to develop tourism within Mission Trail Historic District.

4 – Tourism Development

Overview

Historic preservation and culture are primary drivers of tourism. Image and aesthetics also play an important role in that the visual character of the Mission Trail reflects historic resources and agricultural landscape that attracts visitors. Tourism related research suggests that infrastructure is also a determinant in the attractiveness of a destination (Seetanah et al, 2011). Thus, not only is it important to improve and preserve the authentic historic character and image of the Mission Trail and El Camino Real, it is also important to address the infrastructure that tourists perceive when visiting the area such as availability of potable water, accessible roads, and visitor use facilities. This section addresses these tourism drivers covering the following topics: 1) Heritage Tourism; 2) Other Tourism Options; 3) Promoting Tourism; 4) Public Infrastructure and Tourism Infrastructure; and 5) Tourism Management. Section 5 addresses aesthetics in greater detail.

Heritage Tourism

Developing heritage tourism is at the top of the list of most Mission Trail tourism recommendations because of its many benefits (THC, 1978, p.24), (Morrow, 1981), (CiEP, 1994, s.3, p. 7), (NPS, 1996, p. 46), and (CiEP, 2008, pp. 8-10). According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP-1, 2012) and the Texas Department of Economic Development (MVTA, 2000), cultural heritage travelers tend to stay longer and subsequently spend more money than other kinds of travelers. Cultural heritage tourism improves the quality of life for residents as well as serving visitors. Further, heritage tourism projects balance economic development that comes through increased tourism and the need for preservation. The foundation for heritage tourism of the Mission Trail and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro must be based on preservation and/or restoration of the authentic historic resources, properties, structures, and cultural landscapes that provide the image, visual character, and interest of visitors to the area. A well developed
framework for historic preservation should therefore be seen as a prerequisite for any heritage tourism effort.

The following is a brief list of heritage tourism initiatives related to the Mission Trail:

- **The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo.** The website The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tigua Trails promote heritage tourism. 35

- **The City of El Paso Museums and Cultural Affairs Department.** The department develops initiatives that are targeted to authentically represent the stories and people of El Paso. 36 The department was involved with the creation of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Heritage Tourism Plan (CiEP, 2008).

- **The El Paso Community Foundation.** The EPCF established the Pass of the North Heritage Corridor project in 1998 designed to preserve and showcase the historical, cultural, and natural inheritance of the region and to pursue partnerships in heritage tourism that include the Mission Trail. 37

- **The National Park Service.** The NPS proposed establishment of an El Paso Missions Heritage Area (NPS Conceptual Strategy #3, Table 5) for managing the Mission Trail. The concept is rooted in promoting the region’s heritage “with a regional (perhaps bi-national) public-private partnership ... established that promotes the missions as part of coordinated efforts linking heritage conservation, education, tourism and heritage-based economic development (NPS, 1996, p. iv and p. 46).” 38 More information on heritage areas is given in the Tourism Management subsection and Table 12.

### Other Tourism Options

Besides the various efforts in developing heritage tourism along the Mission Trail Corridor, other tourism options have been proposed. These include:

35 [http://www.ysletadelsurpueblo.org/tigua_trails.sstg?id=znbfazhw&sub1=16](http://www.ysletadelsurpueblo.org/tigua_trails.sstg?id=znbfazhw&sub1=16)
37 Personal communication with Gary Williams, 12/04/2012.
38 Also reference [http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ/](http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ/).

• **Heritage/Eco-tourism.** A heritage oriented eco-tourism approach was discussed in “A Biological Management Plan for the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park” (Watts et al, 2002). In the plan, the following two recommendations were made:
  - In conjunction with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and other Native American groups, develop cultural demonstrations of Native American utilization of native vegetation and animals (Watts et al, 2002, p. 51). Agricultural tourism associated with the historic agricultural land use and character of the valley could be a part of this kind of heritage tourism.
  - Foster a relationship between the park, the Mission Trail Heritage project, and the City Socorro (Watts et al, 2002, p. 51).

• **Recreation Trails.** 39 Several plans recommend establishment of walking, running, hiking, and/or biking trails. 40 Selected recommendations from the various plans include:
  - “Canal banks can be developed as walkways for tourism, jogging paths, and bikeways ... the Southside Canal (in Ysleta) can be developed with canal side restaurants, outdoor restaurants, and small specialty shops. Guided tours can be established along landscaped walkways...” (Morrow, 1981, p. 125-126). 41
  - “Use acequias for trail corridors and develop an overall trail plan to link cultural resources within the area ... visitors would benefit from rural land protection measures and the development of trails along the acequias ...”

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39 Recreation trails contribute to both health and conservation and provide outdoor recreation activities. For more information, visit [http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/about.htm](http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/about.htm).

40 A recreation trails project is planned for San Antonio called the San Antonio B-Cycle Mission Reach Expansion Project. The plan is to link the missions within San Antonio Missions National Historic Park (Concepcion, San Jose, San Juan, Espada) to each other and to the larger Mission Reach section of the San Antonio River Improvement Project. The expansion project will incorporate eight miles of non-motorized recreation trails with educational signage and “portal” parks along the route. A similar trail could be developed to link the Missions with the Rio Bosque and Rio Grande River Park. For more information about the recreational trails of San Antonio visit [http://www.nps.gov/applications/digest/headline.cfm?type=Announcements&id=12460](http://www.nps.gov/applications/digest/headline.cfm?type=Announcements&id=12460).

41 Efforts at natural conservation and recreation using the river or irrigation canals will need to include the IBWC, Homeland Security, the water districts, etc. Personal Communication with Gary Williams, 02/21/2013.
developing trails ... would add recreational opportunities.” (NPS, 1996, pp. 62-63)  

- Repurposing of the Playa Drain would restore a more rural character ... showcasing the “valley” in the Mission Valley (PEP, 2012, s. 5, p. 24).
- The tourism industry could be developed in the context of Missions, historical district, neighborhood shops, bike routes, etc. (MVSC, 1999, p. 28).
- Look at grant possibilities for building a visitor center (at Socorro Mission) with hike and bike trails connected to the Rio Bosque (MVTA, 2000, p. 17).
- “The biological management plan (of the Rio Bosque) must be closely integrated with the educational and recreational functions of the park through placement of trails, research areas, bird-watching areas, visitor education center, and necessary facilities such as public restrooms.” (Watts et al., 2002, p. 27)

**Note:** With the establishment by Congress of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, the NPS envisions development of a non motorized retracement trail for visitors to follow and experience the historic route of El Camino Real. This route is a central component to the preservation and development of the national historic trail.

- **Community Celebration.** 43 The following is a summary of various recommendations aimed at promoting Mission Trail heritage events:
  - The NPS envisioned planning efforts “directed toward reviving traditional community activities and events such as feast day celebrations, music/dance performances, fiestas, farmers markets, craft fairs, concerts, and dance performances (NPS, 1996, pp. iii, 54).” As part of the now designated national historic trail, the NPS supports and advocates local development and promotion of annual or regular public retracement of El Camino Real which could include re-enactors and correspond with festivals, holidays, community and religious pilgrimages etc.
  - Morrow (p. 128) recommended an annual Mission Trail Pageant.
  - The Mission Valley Steering Committee (MVSC, 1996) recommended promotion of missions and festivities such as mariachi, matachines, and farmers’ market with chile roasting (p. 30).

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42 NPS Conceptual Strategy #5, Preservation of Mission Structures and Rural Setting (See Table 5).
43 NPS Conceptual Strategy #1, (See Table 5).
The Mission Valley Tourism Assessment (MVTA, 2000) recommended promotion of various events including traditional Tigua Indian Pueblo Dance (p. 4), Ysleta Wine Festival (p. 9), and Exhibition Charreada (p. 18). At the time of this writing, notable community celebration events linked with the Mission Trail include (among many others).

- The First Thanksgiving Celebration and Conference
- Mission Trail “Billy the Kid Festival”
- Native American Festival
- Lumnaria Festival and Posadas
- Socorro Procession
- Socorro Mission Bazaar
- Ysleta Mission Festival

The Mission Valley Tourism Assessment (2000) emphasized that stakeholders should make significant efforts to promote these events to attract visitors. The plan recommended promoting one particular event “in a 250-mile radius ... (sending) ... press releases 30-60 days prior.” Major events should probably be promoted in this or similar fashion.

**El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.** With the establishment of the National Trail in 2000, this is currently the preferred strategy of the NPS. Under this tourism option, the communities of Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario would contribute to the understanding of the Camino Real’s significance (from the Mexican Republic to the U.S. Civil War period) with the three churches and surrounding communities significant resources preserved and interpreted as components of the Camino Real. “The theme of transfer of people from one

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44 At the time of this writing, an Internet search yielded no information on the Ysleta Wine Festival. Only one website provided information about charreada events in El Paso County (See [http://visitelpaso.com/blog/45-to-be-a-charro](http://visitelpaso.com/blog/45-to-be-a-charro)). Still many other events are difficult to locate conducting a basic Internet search, indicating that visitors may also have difficulty in finding out about events.


48 [http://ysletamission.org/2008/10/festival-committee/](http://ysletamission.org/2008/10/festival-committee/)

49 NPS Conceptual Strategy #2 (See Table 5).

50 El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro was added to the National Trails System in October 2000. It is one of only 19 National Historic Trails authorized by Congress ([http://www.americantrails.org/resources/info/National-Historic-Trails.html](http://www.americantrails.org/resources/info/National-Historic-Trails.html)).

51 Personal communication with Steve Burns, Landscape Architect, NPS, 12/18/2012.
nation to another … may provide another avenue for historical research and interpretation (NPS, 1996, p. 42)”.

- **El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro and the Railroad Era.** This tourism concept recommends integration of the Mission Trail with El Camino Real and the railroad era of the City of El Paso (CIEP, 2008). For the most part, there is a direct historical relationship between the railroad and El Camino Real. The railroad mostly followed the route of the Camino Real and historically was the instrument that brought an end to use of El Camino Real as the major transportation route of its day. The plan states, “while the El Camino Real laid the groundwork for the historical development of the area, it needs to be integrated with the other key historical event that shaped El Paso's development: the coming of the railroad in the 1880's.”

- **Rio Vista Farm Historic District.** The Rio Vista Farm Historic District is a complex of 17 historic buildings (many with distinctive Mission Revival features) listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1996 (Wright & Dalbin, 1995) (NRHP-1, 2012). The farm was operated from 1915 to 1964 and then remained under the ownership of El Paso County until it was transferred to the City of Socorro. The area has potential as a heritage tourism site and the 200 acres surrounding it were at a time discussed as a potential regional park. The farm was also mentioned as a fit for UTEP’s prior initiative to develop the Paso al Norte Immigration History Museum.  

- **Promotion of the City of El Paso.** The Plan for El Paso (PEP, 2012, Vol. II, p. 8.16) states: “there are few tourism programs or initiatives that highlight the City’s history and attract visitors interested in learning more about the City itself. Despite the vast historic resources available, the historic border areas, links to the Mexican Revolution, and the Mission Trail, and the historic railroad infrastructure, most are inaccessible or unknown.” One effort addressing this associated with El Camino Real National Historic Trail is the ongoing NPS effort working with the El Paso Community Foundation and El Paso County Heritage Commission towards documentation, preservation, and visitor use development of the Oñate Crossing/Old Fort Bliss/Harts Mill site in El Paso. This site is the origin point of all that is El Paso, Texas and Cd. Juarez, Mexico

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52 Feedback provided by Gary Williams (2/21/2013). Information received from the UTEP Centennial Museum indicates that initiatives to establish the Immigration Museum are currently not active (2/27/2013).
and is an extremely significant historic site on El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail. A scope of work has been completed by the NPS to produce a combined historic structures report, cultural landscape report, and archeological investigation which would document this sites historic significance, integrity, and make recommendations for its preservation and visitor use development and interpretation. This site could be considered the starting point, as it is historically, for efforts to promote the history of El Paso.

The diversity of recommendations listed above suggests that in addition to heritage and culture tourism, other opportunities should be marketed and developed that attract tourists. As stated by the Texas Department of Economic Development, Tourism Division (MVTA, 2000, p. 21), “While historic and cultural travelers are often interested in a particular culture, they also engage in general tourism activities while visiting a community. In fact, these travelers engage in a greater number of activities while traveling than travelers in general.” Expanding the tourism reach of the Mission Trail Corridor and El Camino Real National Historic Trail to include other resources that have had a historic impact on the region such as the Rio Grande Trail Park, the Rio Bosque Wetlands, and Hueco Tanks, makes sense. Not only are these sites located within the vicinity of the Mission Trail Corridor (with the exception of Hueco Tanks and the northern sections of El Camino Real and the Rio Grande Trail Park), they provide the opportunity to diversify tourism by incorporating other types of tourism into a more comprehensive tourism “package”. Agricultural tourism which also promotes the preservation of agricultural land use and the historic character important to the Mission Valley and Camino Real could also be considered a part of this varied tourism package. Broadening the scope of tourism development of the Mission Trail also brings the opportunity to recognize not only impacts of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, Rio Grande floods, and the impacts of the railroad on the region, but also pre-Mission history.

Finally, it is important to note that the national historic trail can be a competitive advantage for obtaining funds and a catalyst for increasing tourism and heritage tourism. The NPS and BLM are now actively administering the national historic trial to support, partner, and advocate for the preservation of the historic sites and segments of the trail, of which the Mission Trail is part of, and to see its physical development on the ground as a non motorized trail for the public to follow and retrace the historic route of the Camino to the extent practicable.

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53 Feedback provided by Steve Burns (02/21/2013).
Promoting Tourism

Over the years many tangible tourism promotion “products” have been developed ranging from educational brochures and walking tours to websites. While most Mission Trail Plans address marketing to some degree, many recommendations are general comments indicating the need to initiate a marketing campaign that promotes the trail, events, historic sites, education initiatives, preservation efforts, business incentives and services, etc. This section reviews recommendations from the plans that provided greater detail in terms of marketing strategy for increasing tourism activity. These are listed in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10 – Mission Trail Plans that address marketing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Valley Tourism Assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail (CIEP, 1994, s. 3, p. 9) made the following recommendations for developing a complete marketing strategy:

- Area beautification and physical reinvestment.
- Local business community involvement.
- Seasonal Mission Trail corridor events (including free concerts, mariachi masses, First Thanksgiving recreations, Adobe Horseshoe Theatre productions, fiestas, bazaars, art fairs, etc.).
- Upgraded Mission Trail tourist information (at visitor sites and the Airport).
- Media Exposure (local, national, and international; submission of ads and stories to regional and national airline magazines; television advertisements; and an El Paso Passport).

The plan also suggested utilizing the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau (CVB) and the Heritage Tourism project for marketing.

The Texas Department of Economic Development Tourism Division also emphasized the importance of marketing (MVTA, 2000). Their recommendations are summarized below.

- The region has “three major, heavily traveled, highway arteries (IH 10, US 62/180 and US 54) that provide a stream of potential visitors to the county ...

---

54 The full details of these recommendations are given in the Appendix for convenient reference.
the challenge will be enticing these highway travelers ... into the Mission Valley area. Signage, advertising, billboards, and publicity along these highways will be essential in making the tourist want to leave the highway and visit the Mission Valley Area.” (p. 3)

- Mission Valley’s proximity to El Paso, New Mexico and Mexico provide good potential markets to which promote the area’s attractions and ultimately draw visitors. El Paso County was host to an estimated 1.3 million domestic leisure travelers in 1999, staying an average of 4.1 days. These visitors are looking for things to see and do in the El Paso area. (p. 3)

- Another opportunity for billboard advertising is to co-op a billboard with Speaking Rock Casino. Many travelers are already traveling to the casino; try to capitalize on this traffic. (p. 3)

- Continue efforts to partner with the El Paso CVB in tourism related endeavors. Make sure the Mission Valley area is being promoted in their marketing efforts. Also, look for ways to tie some of the tours El Paso gets into the Mission Trail area. (p. 8)

- Texas was ranked ... as one of the best places in the United States for bird watching activities. The Mission Valley Area should capitalize on this niche market. Once (Rio Bosque) is completed, work with the other nature tourism parks in the El Paso County area and the New Mexico border regions to offer the bird traveler even more product when they come to the region. This can be done through co-op advertising with brochures, web sites, and any other means of advertising and marketing of this niche market. (p. 18)

- Try to explore ways to make this (Exhibition Charreada) a Saturday and Sunday event. The Mission Valley Chamber of Commerce could take an active role in helping ... to promote the rodeo. This can be accomplished on web sites, brochures, and flyers ... This event cannot be marketed to a larger audience if it is only going to be a Sunday event. (p. 19)

- Historic and cultural travelers represent a niche market, and as such, they tend to differ from the overall population of travelers. They are more likely to be older and to be retired than travelers as a whole ... they are more likely to have a postgraduate degree. They also spend more time traveling, visit more destinations, spend more money, and stay more frequently in hotels, motels, and B&Bs (bed and breakfasts) ... Keep these traits in mind as you target this audience. Match your literature to their needs. (p.21)
• Use all of the media resources that the area has to offer to get the word out to the larger papers and publications in the state. This is an exceptional way to save money on advertising costs. Also, provide story ideas to specific travel publications such as The Group Travel Leader, the official monthly publication for group tour leaders and planners. (p. 23)

• Approach Speaking Rock about a partnership offering a trolley or two that runs every hour along the Mission Trail (i.e. a tour of the missions). This will help get visitors from one end of the Mission Trail to the other. (p.3).

**Note:** Other **Mission Trail Plans** also recommended bus and trolley service. These include:
- El Paso Transit Trolley: Mission Route part of the NPS Conceptual Strategy #4 (NPS, 1996, p. 60)
- Tourist Trolley for the Mission District (MVSC, 2004, p. 26)

• In addition to the plans related to the Mission Trail, the NPS recommends establishing El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail for the title and branding of the El Paso segment of El Camino Real replacing the Mission Trail for public branding, marketing and development efforts. This would eliminate potentially confusing overlap to the public and highlight the national and international significance of the area and El Paso’s place on the Camino Real.

**Note:** Stakeholders should carefully consider whether or not to pursue this branding recommendation or to continue with current initiatives (i.e. the current promotion initiative “Be a part of it”).

As stated earlier, one of the primary tasks for stakeholders of the Mission Trail to address is development of a comprehensive marketing strategy, and, as indicated in **Table 9**, such a strategy has a direct impact on economic development of the tourism industry. Stakeholders can refer to the recommendations listed above in developing a comprehensive marketing plan.

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55 In addition, the MVTA recommended utilizing programs from The Texas Department of Economic Development Tourism Division and the Texas Department of Transportation’s Travel Division.

56 [http://www.visitelpasomissiontrail.com/index.html](http://www.visitelpasomissiontrail.com/index.html). See also (Flores, 04/20/2011), (Flores, 01/03/2012), (Flores, 04/21/2012).
Infrastructure

Infrastructure is a primary driver of tourism. Seetahnah et al (2011) state, “infrastructure forms an integral part of the tourism package ... the level, use, or lack of infrastructure and technology in a destination (for example transportation, water and power supply, use of computer technology and communications among others) are also visible and determining features that can enhance the visitors' trip experience”.57 This sub-section discusses both public and tourism infrastructure recommendations made by various Mission Trail Plans. Public infrastructure consists of highways, roads, utilities, safety services (such as fire and police services), communication, and public transportation (Gearing et al, 1974, p. 3). Tourism infrastructure is defined as all tourism related infrastructure that is not public infrastructure, e.g. interpretive signage, historical markers, landscaping, building rehabilitation, hospitality, shopping facilities, etc.

The first Mission Trail Plans to highlight the need for infrastructure improvements were Parts I and II of the West Texas Council of Government’s Camino de las Misiones Program (Morrow, 1981) and (Palmore, 1981) respectively. Morrow stated that that Ysleta, Socorro, and San Elizario were, at the time, “not ready for tourism” (1981, p. 141) and “rehabilitation of building facades, yard and property cleanup, road repair, landscaping and historic resource marking will be needed before tourism can be developed”. Palmore identified lack of potable water and sewage as the most pressing problems (1981, s.V, p. 3).58

Since the completion of the Camino de las Misiones Program in 1981, the Mission Trail area has seen improvements. Yet, much work remains both in developing missing elements and in enhancing established infrastructure. Steps should be taken to inventory infrastructure projects and to prioritize, plan, fund, and implement those with the greatest impact to a visitor’s experience and quality of life of area residents.

A starting point in developing an inventory is provided in Tables 18 through 21 in the Appendix. These tables summarize infrastructure recommendations made by various Mission Trail Plans. Specifically, Table 18 lists public infrastructure recommendations, Tables 19 and 20 list primary and secondary tourism infrastructure recommendations respectively. Table 21 summarizes various urban design recommendations related to enhancing tourism infrastructure of the Mission Trail area (discussed in more detail in Section 5). Of the projects listed in these tables, those that can be implemented in the

57 See also (Gearing et al, 1974), (Smith, 1994), and (Crouch and Richie, 2000).
58 Palmore (1981, s. VII) provides a more in-depth discussion on the infrastructure of the Mission Trail Area.
near term with high potential impact on the visitor experience for the Mission Trail are summarized in Table 11 below.

Table 11 – Near Term Infrastructure Projects for Improving the Mission Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Road improvements and enhancements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic control and congestion planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public transportation (bus service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trolley service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism Infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park improvements, planning, and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rio Vista Farm Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rio Bosque Wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation, planning, development of dining, entertainment, and shopping clusters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of non motorized pedestrian/bike trail retracing the historic route of El Camino Real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and development of tourist friendly facilities (for instance, a Visitor Center at Socorro Mission)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling and availability of the Missions and Mission Trail docents (trained and paid tour guides)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Trail Marketing and Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Highway advertising (billboards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Internet related advertising (websites, social media, smart phone apps, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve visibility of interpretive signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve marketing/visibility of the Mission Trail at the Airport</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that any road improvement project should recognize the historic nature and character of The Mission Trail/El Camino Real and its surrounding cultural landscape. Often times within an historic context, road “improvement” may result in historic road or character destruction. Any road improvement plans should follow best

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59 Preliminary work by TxDOT is underway to plan for the Border Highway Extension (Gary Williams, 02/21/2013). This Border Highway Extension was recommended by (CIEP, 1994, pp. 27-28) and also mentioned in (MVSC, 1999, p. 14, 31-33). Establishment of this highway would help preserve historic structures along Socorro Road (CIEP, 1994, p. 13).

60 Gary Williams indicated previous plans for the Rio Vista area that included a 200 Acre park.

61 This trail is explicitly envisioned in the legislation establishing the national historic trail.

62 The completed El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Sign Plan developed with NPS, TxDOT, city, and county involvement should be implemented to quickly and for relatively little cost, create public visibility and understanding of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and the Mission Trail.
preservation practices for historic roads and should be based on good historic documentation and design guidelines that ensure preservation of the roads historic character and setting.  

Tourism Management

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, “developing a strong cultural heritage program will require an investment and a commitment—an investment of financial resources and a commitment of human resources including strong leadership”. NPS (1996) indicated that the many entities involved with heritage tourism could potentially benefit from a common leadership:

> The cooperative participation of ... heritage partners in a single organization should more effectively blend government technical expertise with private sector resourcefulness and understanding of local issues and values, providing essential coordination and leadership.” (NPS, 1996, p. 59)

As stated in Section 2 of this document, a well organized independent Mission Trail authority can potentially provide strong leadership and better coordination in advancing tourism efforts.

The NPS offered a tourism management strategy for heritage areas (See Conceptual Strategy #3, Table 5). Under this approach, “federal agencies share responsibilities for the ownership and management of cultural resources by supporting local and state programs and activities for heritage conservation” (NPS, 1996, p. 46). Key elements of the management strategy are given in Table 12. Note that since this study, national heritage area legislation has been implemented and a number of national heritage areas have been established across the country. With the establishment of the national historic trail, many of the authorities and objectives that would be realized in establishment of a national heritage area are already available. If establishment of a national heritage area is pursued it would be important that coordination and recognition of the designated national historic trail be made part of that effort to avoid overlapping cross purposes. The benefits of establishing a national heritage area if coordinated with the existing national historic trail designation might be the availability of additional funding and resources.

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63 Feedback provided by Steve Burns (02/21/2013).
64 [http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/howToGetStarted.htm](http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/howToGetStarted.htm)
65 Also see Conceptual Strategy #3, El Paso Missions Heritage Area (See Table 5).
Table 12 – Heritage Area Model Outlined by the National Park Service in 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership Management:</strong></td>
<td>Heritage areas would be managed by partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies, as well as private nonprofit organizations with a locally determined entity coordinating the partners' actions. Heritage partnerships would help local communities manage development to be compatible with the conservation of local heritage. A primary objective is to conserve heritage resources without federal ownership, regulations, or management of private land. In pursuing a partnership arrangement with the federal government, it is important to recognize the desirability of establishing a group of principal players willing to work in a partnership. Consent of local residents, governments, and organizations would be critical for achieving success in this environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Matching Grants and Technical Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Aimed at development of strategic plans, programs, interpretation and education for visitors, and preservation of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self sustaining heritage areas</strong></td>
<td>Heritage areas would receive initial assistance to develop momentum necessary to continue independently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (NPS, 1996, pp. 46-47)

In summary, tourism development is a viable economic development option for the Mission Trail/Camino Real. A coordinated effort can be undertaken to establish heritage, eco, agricultural, and adventure tourism plans (or a single unifying plan) for the Mission Trail that will lay the groundwork for future projects and initiatives. A central authority could provide a one-stop-shop for projects, technical support, and potential funding opportunities.

**Tourism Drawbacks**

It is important that tourism development proceed with an understanding of potential drawbacks. One such drawback was identified by the NPS as it relates to Mesilla, New Mexico:

Mesilla has successfully preserved its resources while also promoting tourism; the results have proven economically beneficial. However, most of the commercial properties are owned by those living outside the community, and it appears that in
some instances original residents of the town have been displaced. Therefore, while private development can provide positive benefits, it should be recognized that tradeoffs can occur in terms of the loss of traditional community values and lifestyles if these are not adequately considered in community development planning. (NPS, 1996, p. 48)

Other adverse impacts include (more likely to occur if not guided by good planning and design guidelines):

- Gentrification (Morrow, 1981, p. 111)
- Adverse impacts on historic buildings and archaeological sites. (NPS, 1996, p. 54)
- Rise in air and water pollution from vehicular traffic, surface runoff ... (NPS, 1996, p. 54)
- Traffic congestion, parking problems and noise. (NPS, 1996, p. 55)
- New facilities could adversely affect views of historic buildings and landscapes (NPS, 1996, p. 55)

This section concludes with potential roles that entities could play in developing tourism. These are presented in Table 13. Note that the NPS and BLM are now actively engaged in administration of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail and working with and forming partnerships to preserve and develop the trail on the ground for public use. All efforts to preserve and develop the national historic trail on the ground for visitor use are supported by these federal administering agencies of the trail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13 – Potential Roles in Developing a Holistic Tourism Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of El Paso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Socorro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The County of El Paso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Catholic Diocese of El Paso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The El Paso MPO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TxDOT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32
Table 13 – Potential Roles in Developing a Holistic Tourism Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Planning, Development, and Funding</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Events and Festivities</th>
<th>Heritage Tourism</th>
<th>Other Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UTEP/CERM 66</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Organizations 67</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Park Service 69</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 – Urban Design

Various *Mission Trail Plans* have addressed the importance of urban design in improving the aesthetic quality and historic/visual character of the Mission Trail as well as the need for preserving culture, heritage, and both historic sites and buildings. Plans that have extensive urban design guidelines are listed in Table 14. It should be noted that preservation and rehabilitation of the historic landscape and its character is also a critical component to the preservation objectives and visual character and qualities of the Mission Trail and El Camino Real.

Table 14 – *Mission Trail Plans* that address urban design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Document</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Mission Trail</td>
<td>(Morrow, 1981)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Comprehensive Plan for the Mission Trail Historical Corridor, Design Guidelines, Section Two</td>
<td>(CIEP, 1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of El Paso Texas Comprehensive Plan</td>
<td>(PEP, 2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Near term (between one and five years) urban design recommendations derived from these and other *Mission Trail Plans* are summarized in Table 15. (Also reference Table 21 in the Appendix).

66 With perhaps new initiatives to establish the Immigration Museum and continued eco/heritage tourism interpretation at Rio Bosque.

67 Such as the El Paso Community Foundation, The El Paso Mission Trail Association, The San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society, etc.

68 Private Organizations like the El Paso Mission Trail Association and the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society sponsor events such as the First Thanksgiving Celebration and Historic Conference

69 See (NPS, 1996, p. 59) for more information on NPS’ role.
Table 15 – Near Term Urban Design Projects for Improving the Mission Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory, prioritize, plan, fund, and implement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Modern building façade improvements</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Screening with trees, shrubs, and authentic adobe walls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Heavy commercial (junk yards, ...)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Industrial areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Parking lots, car lots, blighted areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Utility facilities and easements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ El Paso Electric Company Substation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Landscaping projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Historic buildings, structures, sites</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ The entire Socorro Road right of way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Pedestrian oriented areas or clusters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory, prioritize, plan, fund and implement reuse and repurposing of</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Parking lots, vacant lots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Socorro Mission parking lot landscape planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Historic canals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedestrian oriented design</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gateways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plazas</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preservation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Open space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agricultural fields</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scenic areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Historic buildings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Character of rural and pre-automobile era roads</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Nevarez</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Buford</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic site interpretation and enhancements</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• San Elizario Presidio Walls</td>
<td>71,72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Original Socorro Mission Walls</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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70 Façade improvement should proceed with caution because if done wrong, these types of improvements can result in destruction of historic structures and would be in direct conflict with goals of historic preservation. This may also lead to construction of “synthetic” history.

71 Palmore, (1981, s. VII, p. 6) indicated that citizens of San Elizaro suggested reconstructing portions of the original fort with an adobe wall.

72 As stated in Section 2, Management Priority # 1, reconstruction is generally not a good preservation strategy. However, if carefully done, based on sound historic documentation, some kind of interpretive wall construction to help visitors understand the scale and nature of the historic wall or mission would likely be supported.
Table 15 – Near Term Urban Design Projects for Improving the Mission Trail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The Socorro Mission Rectory, Cemetery, and Cemetery Descansos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other high priority historic sites and structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Historic preservation projects**

- Socorro Mission Rectory preservation plans
- Socorro Mission Cemetery and Descansos preservation plans
- Other high priority sites identified by stakeholders

It is important to reemphasize in moving forward that any form of development, landscaping, screening, façade improvement, redesign/repurposing, or historic preservation plans should focus on increasing awareness, visibility, understanding, interpretation, and the experience of the public. Simply improving the look could lead to destruction of historic integrity which should be the foundation for any effort to promote increased visitor awareness, understanding, and experience of the trail and tourism based on this. Design guidelines and appropriate preservation and visitor use development projects consistent with best historic preservation practices and increased visitor use, interpretation, and understanding of the area’s history should be carefully considered.  

Planning and funding projects in these areas benefits the public, visitors, and private enterprise for the following reasons:

- The projects improve the historic character, authenticity, and visitor experience of El Camino Real National Historic Trail and the Mission Trail.
- Quality of life of the region is improved.
- Many of these projects result in new direct and indirect employment opportunities (Palmore, 1981, s. XI, p. 3).  

For instance, appropriate modern building façade improvements, screening projects, historic structure preservation, landscaping projects, building rehabilitation and reuse, and historic site rehabilitation create jobs in both the construction and landscaping industries.

- Improving the historic character, authenticity, and visitor experience of the region utilizing locally available products such as native vegetation or

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73 One possibility for rehabilitating the site of the Socorro Mission is to first acquire the property from the owner who expressed willingness to sell the property (Flores, 09/27/2011) then design a suitable monument at the site via contest submissions as was done for the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC.

74 Feedback provided by Steve Burns (02/21/2013).

75 Palmore identified façade improvements as providing the highest employment multiplier among economic development options.
construction materials (e.g. adobe, brick, clay, and ceramic tile) helps to maximize the benefits for the area (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 2).

Funding for these types of projects can come from citizen donations, private enterprise, and/or from local, state and government programs.

Based on Table 15 the next steps for quickly improving visitor experience of the Mission Trail include:

1) Conduct a full inventory of road segments, potential walking trail retracements, parking lots, blighted areas, etc. in the Mission Trail Historic District. Historic property inventories have already been well documented, see for instance (Morrow, 1981) and (Myers et al., 1995). This inventory should be centrally maintained and made readily available to stakeholders.

2) Develop a process to prioritize high impact projects based on input from citizens and stakeholders. For near term implementation, selection of projects should include “low hanging fruit” or projects that can be made ready to implement in the near term. Projects should also emphasize the primary Mission Trail attractions (the Missions and San Elizario) and historic structures within walking distance of these sites.

3) Develop project implementation plans. If a project is correctly targeted, there is a potential to obtain economic development funds, HUD funds, block grant funds, etc. using the national historic trail to access those funds.76 Implementation plans should include:
   - Development of a plan to prioritize significant historic properties to be listed in the National Register and also be designated Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks.
   - Development of a comprehensive preservation and visitor facilities development plan to guide future preservation and development projects.
   - Development of specific plans for individual projects.

4) Identify and secure funding to implement “shovel ready” projects.

While much work remains in conducting a full inventory of properties (from empty lots to utility easements to heavy commercial properties) along Socorro Road, previous Mission Trail plans have already done much work. In particular:

76 Personal Communication with Steve Burns, 12/18/12.
Segments that best represent the character of the original Camino Real were identified in (CiEP, 1994, p. 13). These trail segments are illustrated in Figure 2 and descriptions include:

- The section of Socorro Road between Zaragoza and Carl Longuemere in Ysleta.
- The section of Socorro Road between Isaiah Drive and the Franklin Drain in Socorro.
- Glorieta Road in San Elizario.

Note that the NPS keeps an active database of the historic route of the national historic trail and associated historic properties. This is an on-going database that does not yet include all associated historic properties for this area.

- The City of El Paso (CiEP, 1994, p. 13) also recommended areas that could be improved without affecting the historic value of the Mission Trail. Road improvements include:
  - Improvements at Socorro Road and Americas Avenue (Loop 375).
  - Intersection improvements between Isaiah Drive and Franklin Drain with emphasis on the Winn Road intersection.
  - Improvements to the section of Socorro Road between Glorieta and San Elizario which does not follow the original Camino Real (Glorietta road follows the original trail as mentioned above). Note that this section may be ideal for development into a tourist centered business cluster with perhaps a transit terminal and gateway into historic San Elizario.
  - Border Highway Extension (CIEP, 1994, p. 27).

- An historic building inventory (HBI) was conducted by Morrow (1981, p. 187) and Myers et al (1995). Work conducted by Myers included a list of approximately 90 high priority sites determined eligible for listing in the National Register. Historic buildings, places of interest, landmarks, and primary sites are plotted in Figure 3. To give a sense of their proximity to primary visitor attractions, the figure also shows pedestrian walk times from the primary sites.

- An inventory of historic acequias or canals was conducted by Morrow (1981, p. 87). Among the canals identified for preservation and reuse were the Southside Feeder Lateral in Ysleta, the Socorro Lateral in Socorro, both the

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The figure includes a segment of Buford Road that leads to the archeological site of the Socorro Mission established in the late 1600s. This segment was not identified as an original Camino Real segment but is included here to emphasize the importance of the original site to the Mission Trail.
Barrial Lateral and San Elizario Lateral \(^{78}\) in San Elizario, and the Riverside Canal. These canals are shown in Figure 4. \(^{79}\) Note that walking and biking trails can be developed along the canals (which will require involvement and dialog with the IBWC, the water districts, etc). Figure 5 illustrates the accessibility of these canals should biking trails be developed (assuming 15 mph biking speeds throughout Mission Valley).

Also note, based on the figure, an end to end non motorized bike route from San Elizario to Ysleta would take approximately 45 minutes traveling at 15 miles per hour.

- Finally, Palmore (1981, s. X, pp. 24-26) identified various economic development projects for the Mission Trail area and recommended façade improvements for most of Socorro Road.

Based on recommendations made by various Mission Trail Plans and considering results of the images presented in Figure 2 through Figure 5, a process for prioritizing initial near term projects for implementation from Table 15 should concentrate on areas within walking distance of the primary Mission Trail sites (Refer to Figure 3 and Figure 4). Focusing on areas within walking distance of the Missions will give visitors more things to do, encourage exercise and exploration, and perhaps entice visitors to extend their visits.

This section concludes by highlighting three high priority projects that can be implemented in the near term:

1. Increase the number of parks along the Mission Trail.
2. Preserve rural character.
3. Repurpose or screen parking lots and blighted areas.

Analysis of Figure 6, imagery of the Mission Valley, illustrates two things. First, there is a need for more parks along the Mission Trail (and Mission Valley in general). \(^{80}\) Second, development in Socorro and San Elizario is eroding the agricultural landscape. Future plans for the area should consider increasing the number of parks and ways to preserve agricultural character.

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\(^{78}\) Identifed as Acequia Madre by Myers (1995, p. 241)
\(^{79}\) Historic acequias were among the properties recommended for future investigation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by Myers (1995, p. 250).
\(^{80}\) According to the County Public Works Website [http://www.epcounty.com/publicworks/countyparks.htm](http://www.epcounty.com/publicworks/countyparks.htm), there are only six parks in the Lower/Mission Valley, with three in San Elizario and three in Fabens.
As it relates to parking, on one hand it is a necessity. For instance, without sufficient parking Speaking Rock Entertainment Center, Mission Festivals, Art fairs, events and celebrations would not be able to accommodate large numbers of visitors whose preferred means of travel is by vehicle. On the other hand, parking lots are dead architecture and take away from the visitor experience.

The next series of figures illustrate the impact parking lots have had on the primary sites of the Mission Trail. Google Earth imagery of the San Antonio Missions National Historic Park is illustrated in Figure 7 through Figure 10. In comparison, Figure 11 through Figure 13 show imagery for the El Paso Mission Trail. These images illustrate in a graphic way the importance of the historic landscape and how a cultural landscape report would be critical to providing guidance to the preservation and long term treatment of the important historic mission landscapes in El Paso that have lost much historic integrity. From Figure 11 it is clear that parking has had the greatest impact near the Ysleta Mission. The Socorro Mission has also been impacted by parking, but to a lesser extent, as shown in Figure 12.  

Future urban design plans should be based on sound historic research, archeological investigations and cultural landscape reports to explore creative urban design projects that will improve the visual character of the immediate grounds of the primary sites and perhaps reconstruct/restore the historical features and character of the areas. Figure 14 shows how repurposing of a parking lot at the Ysleta Mission improved its visual appeal. A similar approach could be considered at the Socorro Mission and San Elizario. In general, the best solutions to parking lot repurposing (and urban design) will be guided by adequate research and documentation such as a cultural landscape report for historic landscapes or historic structures reports for historic buildings.

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81 An alternative to designing more parking lots could be development of parking garages, particularly in Ysleta. Potential benefits include 1) increased number of parking spaces within a reasonable walking distance of the Mission and Ysleta Entertainment Complex and 2) potential to replace existing parking lots with plazas and open space where and if appropriate within historic landscapes.
Figure 2 – El Paso Mission Trail Segments that represent character of the original Camino Real
Figure 3 – El Paso Mission HBI, Places of Interest, and Pedestrian Walk Times
Figure 4 – El Paso Mission Trail Historic Canals
Figure 5 – El Paso Mission Trail Travel Times Biking at 15 mph
Figure 6 – El Paso Mission Trail lack of parks and loss of agriculture
Figure 7 – Mission Espada Google earth view (1/14/2013)

Figure 8 – Mission San Juan Google earth view (1/14/2013)
Source: Mission San Jose. 29°21'43.64"N and 98°28'46.39"W. Google Earth. 04/21/12. 01/14/12.

**Figure 9 – Mission San Jose Google earth view (1/14/2013)**

Source: Mission Concepcion. 29°23'25.14"N and 98°29'30.48"W. Google Earth. 04/21/12. 01/14/12.

**Figure 10 – Mission Concepcion Google earth view (1/14/2013)**
Source: Ysleta Mission. 31°41’26.65”N and 106°19’40.16”. Google Earth. 06/12/10. 01/14/12.

Figure 11 – Ysleta Mission Google Earth View (1/14/2012)

Source: Socorro Mission. 31°39’30.49”N and 106°18’11.22”. Google Earth. 11/09/11. 01/14/12.

Figure 12 – Socorro Mission Google Earth View (1/14/2012)
Source: San Elizario Chapel. 31°35’06.29”N and 106°16’22.30”. Google Earth. 06/12/10. 01/14/12.

Figure 13 – San Elizarío Chapel Google Earth View (1/14/2012)

Source: (MVTA, 2000, p. 5)

Figure 14 – Ysleta Mission Parking Lot Repurposing
6 – Conclusion

A review of information contained in the Mission Trail Plans shows that there are many projects that can be implemented that will improve the visual character, ensure historic preservation, and increase the number of visitors to the Mission Trail/El Camino Real area. This report identified a few of the many that can be implemented in the near term (between one and five years). Projects selected by stakeholders for implementation should focus on “low hanging fruit” and areas that are within walking distance of the Missions. Projects should also target appropriate modern building façade improvements, historic character improvements, screening, and landscaping. Any project selected for implementation should also be based on sound historic research and documentation that might be found in reports such as cultural landscape reports, historic structures reports, design guidelines, and that are coordinated with the NPS and purposes of the national historic trail. Increasing the number of open space, agricultural land use, parks, and trails (especially the construction of the national historic trail in the area) will also attract more visitors with the added benefit of increasing the quality of life of the area. Organizing formal governance that provides leadership, management, and facilitates collaboration and coordination of initiatives may be the most effective option for tourism and economic development of the area.
Appendix

Table 16 – Mission Trail Commission. Source: (Morrow, 1981, pp. 175-177)

II. In order to be of optimum effectiveness to the citizens of Ysleta, Socorro, San Elizario, and Clint, the Mission Trail Commission should pursue the following:

1. Appoint a Professional Consultant or Executive Director.
2. Establish close liaison between the Mission Trail Commission and the Texas Historical Commission.
3. Maintain a Register of Cultural and Historic Properties. Properties can be added or removed by action of the Commission.
4. Develop a panel of experts in archaeology, history, geography, historic preservation, anthropology, and folklore to determine a management strategy for the area. The purpose of the panel is to establish the following:
   - What is known about the area.
   - What is the cultural, historical, and social potential for research?
   - What needs to be done.
   - What makes an historic site or information about it worth keeping?
   - How can we distinguish between significant sites and those not so significant or useless?
   - Can a community preserve them all?
   - How much of each can we preserve?
   - What will it cost?
5. Make public announcements of all meetings in the newspapers. Publish a monthly newsletter or have a newspaper column devoted to the Mission Trail area.
6. Conduct a survey of cultural and historic properties to document significant building interiors.
7. Begin publication of informative, bilingual pamphlets or news releases on the Commission's activities, guidelines, and policies.
   - For the general public in the Lower El Paso Valley giving background on the district, enabling legislation, and functions of the Commission.
   - For owners of historic properties giving descriptions of architectural elements, historic items, as well as repair and maintenance guidelines. Information on when and how to contact the Commission, explanation of the regulations, and philosophy and goals should be part of this.
   - For architects, realtors, builders, designers, and investors a description of the district, the architecture, the review philosophy, and when the Commission should be contacted.
   - A description of the Commission's policies on the following landscape and building features:
     - Sign criteria with samples and type of styles to be used.
     - Tree planting and landscaping.
     - Street lighting, location, and types recommended.
     - Roofing guidelines on historic buildings.
1. Porch and exterior trim details showing historic elements, periods, and materials, for rehabilitation assistance.
2. Regulations with guidelines for use, maintenance and repair of adobe, lime plaster, brick, wood, etc., as well as painting, and repair of materials.
3. Work with the people in each community to develop their economic and historic resources. Provide technical assistance and grant acquisition assistance for home and business rehabilitation, landscaping, design, and beautification of neighborhoods.
5. Develop tourism in the Lower El Paso Valley through interpretation of the historic and cultural resources, marking of roadways, historic sites, and buildings. Publish tourism brochures.
6. Develop facade improvement activities in the Lower El Paso Valley communities through private investment programs and local government financing.
7. Develop the mission, churches, and the presidio through building rehabilitation, reconstruction, and landscaping. This will dramatically increase tourism. Cooperate with the Bishop's Historical Commission to develop these programs.
8. Develop plans for reconstruction of the Spanish Colonial Presidio in San Elizario and rehabilitate existing buildings.
9. Develop plans for reconstruction of the historic Socorro Mission complex to portray a Spanish Colonial mission with associated buildings, gardens, fields, walls, etc. The purpose is to establish historic identity for the area, increase tourism, and increase private investment.
10. Develop private, investment and commercial aspects of Socorro, Ysleta, San Elizario, and Clint with specialty shops, restaurants, and services for tourists and valley residents.
11. Develop plans for the Ysleta Mission complex by strengthening the association between the Tigua Indian community and the Mission. Rehabilitate existing buildings, reconstruct walls, buildings, and mark the historic cemetery. Landscaping should be done with appropriate plants and placement.
12. Rehabilitate the "downtown block" of Ysleta as part of this joint economic development and historic rehabilitation program. Shops for services, tourism, recreation, and outdoor restaurants should be considered.
13. Develop Tigua Indian participation in:
   - Management of tourism in Ysleta.
   - Running specialty shops and outdoor restaurants.
   - Re-creation of living history exhibits on the Mission grounds and in the Tigua complex.
   - Street and plaza vendors of food and crafts.
   - Oral history recording and interpretation, marking of Tigua historic sites, and guided and self guided tours.
14. The juxtaposition of the Tigua Indian Pueblo Center, the Ysleta Mission, and the historic and cultural resources have high tourism potential in the Lower El Paso Valley. The Chamber of Commerce, the Arts and Humanities groups, and the historic associations should meet to plan joint programs.
15. Develop plans for survival of the Mexican-American heritage in the central neighborhoods in Ysleta, Socorro, San Elizario, and Clint.
The Mission Trail Historical Area was conceived as a single unit, consisting of the three churches and the road which links them together. In order to maintain a uniform historic ambience throughout the entire length of the Trail, each of the three governmental units must create a commission to oversee and administer the policies specifically designated to protect the historical integrity of the Mission Trail. Each Commission, operating within its respective jurisdiction, should contribute to the concept of a Mission Trail Historic District Commission.

### Policies

1. To retain the integrity of the entire Mission Trail Historical Area, there should be three Commissions, one for each governmental jurisdiction, responsible for the administration and preservation of its respective portion of the Mission Trail.
2. To be an effective agency, each Commission should maintain close contact with the other two Commissions. This will help to assure compatible decisions for all portions of the Mission Trail.
3. Cooperation among the three Commissions should be formalized by contract to ensure regular contact (perhaps monthly or quarterly) to discuss the activities, problems, and solutions occurring in each section of the Mission Trail.
4. Each Commission should be created by the governing body of the appropriate governmental unit as authorized by State Enabling Legislation.
5. Each governmental agency should develop bylaws for its respective Commission clearly stating the function of the Commission and the manner or method by which that function will be carried out.

### Create a feeling of security and available aid for tourists by providing regular patrols along the Mission Trail to offer assistance to any tourist requiring help. (As an alternative to the establishment of special patrols for this specific purpose, perhaps an agreement with the Sheriff’s Department to provide a regular patrol along the Trail might be negotiated for this purpose.)
Utilities
- Water supply (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 3), (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 20), (NPS, 1996), (MVSC, 1999)
- Potable water at a reasonable cost (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 3), (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 20), (MVSC, 1999, p. 8)
- Water drainage (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 3), (MVSC, 1999, p. 18)

Transportation
- Roads
  - Constrain the Ysleta area to small vehicle traffic (Morrow, 1981)
  - Close Old Pueblo Road to traffic (Morrow, 1981, p. 126)
  - Control traffic flow in Ysleta and Socorro (Morrow, 1981, pp. 137, 141)
  - Ongoing maintenance and repairs (Morrow, 1981, p. 141)
  - Improve north/south circulation between I-10 and Border Highway (Palmore, s. VII, p. 7)
  - The road system needs immediate planning attention if the Mission Trail Area is to be successful in attracting more industry and tourists (Palmore, s. VII, p. 8)
  - Downgrade entire Socorro Road to minor arterial (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 13)
  - Reroute heavy traffic, through traffic, and hazardous material with bypass routes to ease Socorro Road and preserve most important sections of the Camino Real and historic structures (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, pp. 13, 27, 36)
- Systems
  - El Paso International Airport (for targeting tourism) (CiEP, 1994, s. 3, p. 9)
  - Public transportation (Palmore, 1981, s. V, p. 3), (CiEP, 1994, p. 11), (MVSC, 1999, p. 7) \(^{84}\)
  - Rail service (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 8)
  - Establish bike lanes/routes (MVSC, 1999, p. 28)

Safety Services
- Police and Sherriff patrols
- Emergency call boxes
- Firefighters
- Uniform and period lighting for nighttime activity (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 34)

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\(^{82}\) Adapted from *Criteria for Judging Touristic Attractiveness* (Gearing et al, 1974, p. 3).

\(^{83}\) This includes accessibility considerations for disabled individuals.

\(^{84}\) This was identified by the MVSC as the most pressing need of the Mission Valley. The report states: “Low income and high unemployment levels make a public transportation system the most viable resource to provide access to jobs, education, health care, and services.”
### Table 19 – Primary Tourism Infrastructure and Services Recommendations

**Primary Sites (Socorro Road, The Missions and Chapel, Historic Buildings, etc.)**
- Ongoing historic preservation
- Archeological investigation of San Elizario Presidio Walls (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 39)
- Continuous improvement of visual appeal/image (See Table 21)
- Continuous improvement of urban design (See Table 21)
- National level historic district overlay
- National heritage area designation

**Signage, markers, and interpretation**
- El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Road Sign Plan (NPS, 2011)
- Interpretive markers (Morrow, 1981, p. 130, 141)
- Interpretive history displays (Campbell, 2005, p. 22) (SMPP, 2005)

**Tours**
- Manage and operate guided tours (Morrow, 1981, p. 128)
- Self guided walking tours (Morrow, 1981)
- Self guided driving tours
- Bus tours (NPS, 1996, p. 60)
- Mission Trail trolley with tours (NPS, 1996, p. 60)

**Marketing Services**
- Brand (Campbell, 2005, p. 13), (MVSC, 2005, p. 13)
- Utilize website advertising (MVTA, 2000, p. 11)
- Develop a website for the Mission Valley (MVTA, 2000, p. 21)
- Use billboards for advertising along El Paso’s highways (MVTA, 2000, p. 3)
- Develop brochures, pictorial publication (THC, 1978, p. 24)
- If a tour guide is unavailable, make sure the literature tells the story. (MVTA, 2000, p. 21)

**Facilities**
- Visitor/Information Centers
  - Ysleta (Mission Valley Visitor Center)
  - Socorro (could “also house the Mission Valley Chamber of Commerce (MVTA, 2000, p. 17))
  - San Elizario (Los Portales Museum and Visitor Center)
- Tourist friendly facilities (NPS, 1996, p. 72)

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85 Personal communication with Steve Burns, Landscape Architect, NPS, 12/18/2012.
86 Personal communication with Gary Williams, El Paso Community Foundation.
8787 There are currently many websites that promote the Mission Trail. The primary sites are listed in Table 22.
Table 19 – Primary Tourism Infrastructure and Services Recommendations

- Public Restrooms

**Parking**
- Provide parking for cars, buses, vans, RV’s (CiEP, s. 1, 1994) 88
- Eliminate curbside parking in Ysleta’s Alameda Commercial District (Morrow, 1981)
- Prohibit on-street parking from Zaragoza Road to Carl Longuemere (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 13)
- Encourage paved parking lots to reduce dust pollution (CiEP, s. 1, 1994, p. 28)
- Parking for the (Socorro) rectory should be reduced ... and the ingress and egress relocated (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 37)
- Parking should be convenient, but it should be developed on the fringe areas to the greatest extent possible (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 40)

Table 20 – Secondary Tourism Infrastructure and Services Recommendations

**Restaurants and food services** 89
- Outdoor Patio Café’s (Morrow, 1981, p. 126)
- Strolling vendors (Morrow, 1981, p. 128)
- Mobile Vendors

**Accommodation**
- Hotels/motels
- Bed and Breakfasts (CiEP, 1994) (MVTA, 2000, p. )
- Camping Sites and RV parks 90

**Recreation**
- Parks/Open Space
- Nighttime entertainment (Speaking Rock Entertainment, Free Concerts, etc.)
- Educational facilities
  - Tigua Indian and Cultural Center
  - Los Portales Museum
  - Licon Dairy and Petting Zoo

88 As stated in (CiEP, 1994, p. 41, “Parking should be convenient, but it should be developed on the fringe areas to the greatest extent possible ... new thoroughfares and parking lots should be built in the outlying areas”. Aerial views of San Antonio Missions reveal that parking is typically not directly in front of or next to the Mission structures. Efforts should be made to (further) relocate parking areas away from Mission sites. **Figures 7 through 14** in this Appendix contrast San Antonio Mission parking with El Paso Mission Trail parking and highlight that in El Paso, parking has not integrated well with the historic character of the Missions.

89 With a focus on specialized ethnic or regional restaurants.

90 [http://www.olicognography.org/social%20infrastructures/tourisminfrastructures.html](http://www.olicognography.org/social%20infrastructures/tourisminfrastructures.html)
### Table 20 – Secondary Tourism Infrastructure and Services Recommendations

- Commonly occurring events, festivals, etc.
- Sensitive commercial and cultural activities could be developed near the Missions to attract not only tourists but also Area residents (Palmore, 1981, s. VII, p. 12)

#### Tourism related business (excluding hospitality, food, and entertainment)
- Specialty shops such as art galleries, antiques, pottery, ceramics, etc. (CiEP, 1994, s. 3, pp. 7)
- Retail establishments/gift shops/outlet malls (CiEP, 1994, s. 3, pp. 7)
- Gas Stations (Seetahnah et al, 2011)
- Convenience stores
- Develop micro-enterprises with tourism as a base (MVSC, 1999, p. 28)
- Tax incentives and credits, published tourist guides, and promotional events. (NPS, 1996, p. 64)
- Implementation of the Enterprize/Reinvestment Zone strategy (CiEP, 1994, s. 3), (NPS, 1996, p. 64)

#### Personal and Financial Services
- Health services and care (MVSC, 1999)
- Availability of ATMs
- Access to banking

### Table 21 – Infrastructure that can be Improved through Urban Design Concepts

#### Sites/Urban Design
- Reuse/repurpose
  - Reuse of abandoned or underused buildings (Morrow, 1981, p. 126)
  - Parking lots
- Improve Image/Visual Character
  - Building façade rehabilitation (Morrow, 1981)
    - Portales
    - San Elizario Handball Court
  - Cleanup and maintenance of properties, vacant lots, fields, and roads (Morrow, 1981)
  - Use landscape architecture to create amenity surroundings (THC, 1978, p. 23),

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91 While not mentioned by Mission Trail Plans, those visitors who travel by car will be interested in availability of Gas Stations.
92 The Handball Court is among 11 properties recommended for future investigation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by Myers (1995, p. 250).
### Table 21 – Infrastructure that can be Improved through Urban Design Concepts

(Morrow, 1981, p. 126)

- Discourage heavy commercial uses along Socorro Road (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 12)
- Paint murals on the four structures at the corners of the cemetery (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 37)
- Screening
  - Utility Easements, junk yards, used car sales lots, open storage, warehouses
  - Traffic and parking lots (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 29), (NPS, 1996, p. 19)
- Screening alternatives
  - Adobe-type (stucco) walls (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, pp. 33, 40), (NPS, 1996, p. 19)
  - Shrub and tree planting (SMPP, 2005) and tree preservation (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 40)
  - Add brick paving to (gravel) and dirt streets in San Elizario (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 40)
- Murals

#### Destination Development/Preservation

- Plazas
- Rest Areas
  - Socorro Mission Portales, Descansos, Capilla Poza (SMPP, 2005)
  - Socorro Mission rectory, cemetery, and grotto
  - Benches near landscaped areas (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 34)
  - Nichos or altars
- Parks (Morrow, 1981), (MVSC, 1999??)
- Develop trails

#### Clustering/Nodes

- Design areas around primary sites into “people use areas” (Morrow, 1981, p. 126)
- Redesign commercial areas into “people use areas” (Morrow, 1981, p. 130)
- All new developments should incorporate and link pedestrian areas (CiEP, 1994, s.1, p. 40)
- Pedestrian areas could be enlarged and enhanced by rerouting vehicular traffic away from Main Street and converting that street entirely to pedestrian use (CiEP, 1994, s.1, p. 40)
- Apply the village concept based on "commercial and residential nodes" as alternatives to highway "strip" development (CiEP, 1994, s. 1, p. 29)

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93 The Socorro Cemetery descansos were among 11 properties recommended for future investigation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by Myers (1995, p. 250).
94 Nichos were among 11 properties recommended for future investigation and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by Myers (1995, p. 250).
95 Redesign of open space, plaza areas, and business clusters allows visitors to stop and stroll versus simply stopping and standing around with seemingly nothing to do (See also Morrow, 1981, p. 152).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Vision/Mission Statement</th>
<th>Content Related to the Mission Trail</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit El Paso Mission Trail&lt;sup&gt;96&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mission Adapted from articles and other sources</em> including: (Flores, 04/20/2011), (Flores, 01/03/2012), and (Flores, 04/21/2012) Promote the Mission Trail under a unifying logo and slogan: “Be A Part of It” Aim promotion of the Mission Trail to target tourists</td>
<td>Unified Branding of the Missions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso Mission Trail Association&lt;sup&gt;97&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Promote, Educate and Preserve tourism efforts along the Mission Trail and other historical areas, buildings, sites and associated historic routes in El Paso County.</td>
<td>History of the Missions, Visitor Information on Mission Trail Tours (Guided, Self-Guided) and Events, Map of the Mission Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Travel Down the Mission Trail&lt;sup&gt;98&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Website created to introduce the viewer to the history and culture of the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, and to promote heritage tourism and historic preservation of the El Paso area, particularly Ysleta and the Mission Valley.</td>
<td>Provides helpful information for the Heritage Traveler including web links, museums, historic sites, parks, libraries/archives, and activities calendars. Identifies scholarly resources and incorporates information such as bibliographies, chronologies and archival.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>96</sup> http://visitelpasomissiontrail.com/
<sup>97</sup> http://elpasomissiontrail.com/
<sup>98</sup> http://www.ysletadelsurpueblo.org/tigua_trails.sstg?id=16&sub1=23
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<th>Table 21 – Infrastructure that can be Improved through Urban Design Concepts</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>El Paso Convention &amp; Visitor’s Bureau, Visit El Paso Website, El Paso’s Mission Trail</strong>&lt;sup&gt;99&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>Ysleta Mission Website</strong>&lt;sup&gt;100&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>San Elizario Historic Art District</strong>&lt;sup&gt;101&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td><strong>San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society</strong>&lt;sup&gt;102&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<sup>100</sup> [http://ysletamission.org/](http://ysletamission.org/)
<sup>101</sup> [http://www.sanelizariohistoricartdistrict.com/](http://www.sanelizariohistoricartdistrict.com/)
<sup>102</sup> [http://www.epcounty.com/sanelizariomuseum/](http://www.epcounty.com/sanelizariomuseum/)
References

Mission Trail Plans


103 This report is Part II of the Mission Trail (Morrow, 1981).
105 (CIEP, 1993) Section 2 – Design Guidelines is essentially the same as (CIEP, 1994) Section 2 – Design Guidelines.
106 This plan is not specific to the Mission Trail. However the area does fit into holistic tourism development for Mission Valley.


Projects


Historic Building Inventory

(See also Morrow, 1981, p. 187)


National Park Service/Bureau of Land Management


Tourism


Data Sources


Miscellaneous


