



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

December 12, 2014

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF ZONING, MISSION PROTECTION OVERLAY DISTRICTS

Summary:

The Office of Historic Preservation is requesting a change in zoning for properties within four (4) Mission Protection Overlay zoning districts. The overlays were created by ordinance on October 2, 2014 (ordinance attached).

Background Information:

The San Antonio Missions have been nominated as a World Heritage site. Protecting the scenic quality of these sites is imperative to the success of the nomination which will yield valuable social and economic benefits for the City. In order to protect these important community treasures, the Office of Historic Preservation is proposing the creation of four (4), Mission Protection Overlay zoning districts (MPODs). Currently, there are no set height restrictions that consider the impact of new construction in close proximity to the historic mission sites, and the appropriateness of new construction is often subjective to individual interpretation versus adopted standards.

The Strategic Historic Preservation Plan, adopted by Council in 2009, has provided a number of recommendations for improving the City's historic preservation program, including a recommendation to expand the City's current viewshed ordinance for incorporation into the design review process. The implementation of planning tools, such as viewsheds, to protect important views and regulate developments adjacent to and near significant historic sites is commonly practiced worldwide. As World Heritage efforts in San Antonio have moved forward, the development of a viewsheds program or zoning buffer for the missions has been identified as a crucial component to the nomination. Since 2012, OHP staff has explored different options for implementing new viewsheds for the four southern missions.

The Office of Historic Preservation has developed the proposed overlays through consultation with stakeholders, including the National Parks Service and World Heritage Advisory Committee, and has hosted two preliminary public meetings on the topic. The proposed overlays expand upon the current viewshed provisions in the Unified Development Code, which stakeholders have long considered to have limited controls. Instead, the proposed overlays establish a formula for the height of new construction within a 1,500-foot radius of markers located at Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Mission San Juan and Mission Espada, providing a buffer zone around the missions which protects views in all directions.

The proposed overlays will allow for a new layer of design control in addition to existing regulations for affected properties which include both the Historic Design Guidelines and the River Improvement Overlay requirements. Only a small portion of properties affected by the proposed ordinance are not currently regulated by one of these existing overlays. While most projects would continue to be reviewed by the Historic and Design Review Commission, a small number of projects on properties with no other overlay would continue to be reviewed at the administrative level. The overlays will not alter the authorized use of any property nor will they necessitate changes to any existing improvements on a property.

Office of Historic Preservation staff has held three public meetings and has notified all affected property owners and owners within the 200 foot buffer.

The proposed overlays encompass an area with a totaling approximately 649 acres. Using information provided by GIS, a total of 753 affected properties representing 538 unique owners have been identified.

A total of 211 properties lie within the 200-foot buffer.

ATTACHMENTS

Owner list with property descriptions for affected properties

Owner list with property descriptions for properties within 200-foot buffer zone

Neighborhood Association list

Ordinance (10/2/2014)

Notification Maps

Survey information / Maps