



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 13-1009

Agenda Item Number: 11.

Agenda Date: 1/9/2014

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Department for Culture and Creative Development

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Felix Noel Padrón

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Council District 1

SUBJECT:

Designation of El Mercado Zona Cultural

SUMMARY:

An ordinance authorizing the approval and designation of a new San Antonio cultural and arts district called "El Mercado Zona Cultural," located in Council District 1.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The historic, cultural, and business heart of San Antonio reaches back over 300 years. The depth of the City's cultural arts and rich history is preserved in structures and public gathering places that include Main Plaza, San Fernando Cathedral, Spanish Governor's Palace, O. Henry House, Casa Navarro, Casa Mexico/Teatro Alameda and Market Square, to name just a few.

Plans and studies have been developed over the years, which have led to incremental investment in this area. Until now, there has not been an overarching vision to anchor this area in the heart of old San Antonio as a vibrant neighborhood and destination. To achieve this goal, the City Architect's office led a City of San Antonio task force with community members to begin developing a concept for a cultural district. The task force discussed many of the past, present and future efforts in this area to evaluate the positioning of this unique destination. Thirteen meetings were held from February to November of this year where consultants, business and community representatives began to define the extents of the district boundaries, naming the district and necessary future steps to be taken. The outcome led to the proposed name of "El Mercado Zona Cultural" and a unique mission, vision with guiding principles.

The proposed El Mercado Zona Cultural is bounded by Houston Street on the north, the San Antonio River on the east, Nueva Street on the south and North Pecos-La Trinidad Street on the west.

Once approved, the Department for Culture and Creative Development will coordinate the next phase of development with Center City Development, Planning and Community Development, Convention Visitors Bureau and the Transportation and Capital Improvement Departments. The team will also continue to partner with Centro San Antonio to help leverage resources and ensure that El Mercado Zona Cultural development reaches its full potential. That will require the development of design guidelines that reflect the esthetics of the destination, unique branding and marketing plan, a retail strategy, a sound management structure and submitting an application to the state for cultural district recognition. This state recognition can lead to other national and state funding opportunities not currently available in the city.

ISSUE:

An ordinance authorizing the approval and designation of new San Antonio cultural and arts district called “El Mercado Zona Cultural,” located in Council District 1.

Plans and studies have been developed over the years, which have led to incremental investment in this area. Until now, there has not been an overarching vision to reclaim the heart of old San Antonio and evolve it into both a world-class neighborhood and destination. In February 2013 a task force of City staff, consultants, business stakeholders and community representatives were assembled to define the extents of what currently is called El Mercado Zona Cultural and to establish the zone’s unique mission, vision, and guiding principles.

The proposed El Mercado Zona Cultural currently is bounded by the limits of Houston Street on the north, the San Antonio River on the east, Nueva Street on the south and North Pecos-La Trinidad Street on the west.

Approval of the new San Antonio cultural and arts district will allow for future local and federal funding opportunities.

ALTERNATIVES:

As an alternative, City Council could choose not to approve this designation of a new cultural and arts district and the numerous existing plans, studies and capital projects that are under development within this area will continue to evolve as discrete plans and projects, irrespective of any specific district designation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

At this time, there is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approve of this ordinance authorizing the approval and designation of a new San Antonio cultural and arts district called “El Mercado Zona Cultural.”