



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**16-6165

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**Agenda Item Number:** 21.

**Agenda Date:** 1/19/2017

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Office of Historic Preservation

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Shanon Shea Miller

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** Districts 1, 2, 3 and 5

### **SUBJECT:**

Resolution to initiate landmark designation for 29 historic gas stations and to provide a waiver of fees associated with the rezoning of the properties to include a historic zoning overlay.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) approved a Finding of Historic Significance for 29 historic gas stations on August 17, 2016. This resolution requests direction from City Council to move forward with the historic landmark designation process for 29 historic gas station properties and a waiver of fees associated with the rezoning of the properties to include a historic zoning overlay.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

These properties were identified through a survey initiative led by a volunteer committee of the San Antonio Conservation Society. This initiative, begun in 2012, updated a 1983 gas station survey by not only revisiting the previously identified sites but also adding new survey areas and expanding the age range of gas stations to include those built between 1940 and 1970. From this survey, approximately three dozen gas stations were identified as potentially eligible for local landmark designation based on the criteria established by the Unified Development Code (UDC). Historic gas stations in San Antonio represent a dominant industry in our regional economy, a nationwide shift in transportation patterns to reliance on a personal automobile, and the growing emphasis on corporate branding through design, with the buildings themselves serving as advertisements for their parent company. Their often unique designs and building placement contribute to the unique character and authenticity of our City.

On May 3, OHP and the Conservation Society co-hosted a Preservation Month event titled "San Antonio or Bust: Historic Landscapes of the American Road Trip" celebrating the rich collection of historic roadside

architecture, including these gas stations, and gathering feedback on the potentially eligible properties. Property owners were invited to this event and an informational meeting on July 13. Based on the research conducted, staff recommendations, and public comments received throughout the process, 29 properties are now recommended eligible for local landmark designation. Each of the 29 properties meets at least three of the Criteria for Evaluation, in accordance with the process for considering designation of a historic landmark, as outlined in the UDC Section 35-607. Nine of the gas stations are located in Council District 1, eight are located in Council District 2, seven are located in Council District 3, and five are located in Council District 5.

The HDRC reviewed and approved a Finding of Historic Significance for the gas stations on August 17, 2016. Property owners were notified by mail of the HDRC meeting and encouraged to attend. A second information meeting was held on November 15, 2016. Property owners were invited to this meeting via mailed letter which also solicited them to return comment cards indicating support or opposition to potential landmark designation. OHP received one response in favor of designation and one in opposition.

#### **ISSUE:**

The 29 historic gas station properties meet the criteria and are eligible for landmark designation. If Council approves a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, then OHP would apply for a change in zoning to include a historic landmark overlay for the properties. The change in zoning requires approval from both the Zoning Commission and City Council. If approved by Council, the properties would become local historic landmarks. Rehabilitation work would qualify for local tax incentives, and all future proposals for the properties would require HDRC review.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

Landmark designation would help protect and preserve these unique structures. If Council does not approve a resolution to proceed with landmark designation, the designation process would come to an end and the properties would not be protected against demolition. New construction or alterations on the properties would not require review by the HDRC.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

Costs associated with this designation include zoning application fees totaling \$5,946.60. With approval of a waiver of fees, there is no fiscal impact.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The properties are eligible for historic designation. The HDRC recommends that City Council initiate the historic designation process.