



SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Becky Waldman, Director
Asset Management
City of San Antonio
P O Box 839966
San Antonio, TX 78283-3966

February 17, 2004

Dear Becky:

The Board of Directors of the San Antonio Conservation Society appreciated your concise and comprehensive presentation of the HemisFair Park Master Plan at our January meeting. As you know, we followed up with an onsite tour for the board on February 2, 2004. We appreciate the assistance you provided and thank Colleen Swain for her help in setting up the tour and accompanying our group.

At the special called board meeting following the tour, there was considerable discussion regarding the opportunities provided by the master planning process now underway. Without doubt, the Conservation Society advocates that the historic buildings be set aside for preservation as a part of the fair. The Conservation Society played a prominent role in 1968 in the preservation of these structures and the buildings must be retained, reused and preserved. These buildings have value for their importance to the fabric of the neighborhood destroyed by HemisFair, but also have value as a part of the collection selected to be preserved and presented at the fair as part of the showcase of historic San Antonio. In addition to the historic structures preserved in 1968, the historic ruins of the Dugosh and Tynan dependencies provide opportunities for preservation in a manner which will display their historic value.

The permanent structures erected for HemisFair offer special opportunities. The Cyrus Wagner designed Woman's Pavilion is very suitable for adaptive use as part of the HemisFair redevelopment plan. In addition to its significance to exonerating the role of women in 20th century advancement, it is a well-designed, exemplary product of its period of construction. The doors designed by well-known craftsman Lynn Ford should be subject to immediate preservation. Another underutilized HemisFair structure, the Gulf Life Insurance Pavilion should also be studied for adaptation for another use as part of the rehabilitation of the park in the immediate vicinity of the Tower and the Convention Center.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the master plan at this time. We anticipate making further comments as the master plan continues to evolve.

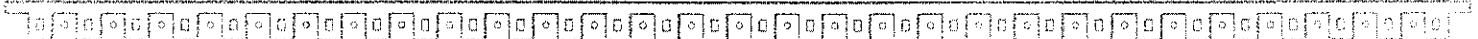
Sincerely,

Loretta Huddleston
President

C: Malcolm Matthews, Director, Department of Parks & Recreation, COSA

Emil Moncivais, Director, Department of Planning, COSA

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The Purpose of this Society is to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs, relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty, and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values.





SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

February 18, 2004

STATEMENT

To: Charles Schubert, Chairman, and Members,
Historic and Design Review Commission

Re: Agenda Item No. 18 - Case No. 2004-045
HemisFair Master Plan

The San Antonio Conservation Society has had the opportunity to be a part of stake holder meetings and public hearings. At all of these meetings support was given to retention and preservation of the historic buildings preserved in 1968 as part of HemisFair. The Society agrees with the concept of seeking productive uses for these buildings which will provide revenue for their continued maintenance. We also recommend interpretation of the Dugosh and Tynan dependencies.

The Society also supports the continued use and presentation of the remaining buildings from HemisFair, many of which are recognized as historic.

Loretta Huddleston
President

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SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

January 7, 2004

STATEMENT

Re: HemisFair Park Area Master Plan Public Hearing

The City of San Antonio is to be commended for moving forward with a master plan for HemisFair Park. The attendance, the active participation and the amazing group consensus on a variety of key objectives at the December 2, 2003 meeting is a clear indication that the time is ripe for developing a plan for the future of the park.

The San Antonio Conservation Society's major concern is for the future of the historic buildings, which are the proud remnants of the vibrant neighborhood that once existed there. Not only were the existing 22 buildings selected to be saved as a reminder of historic San Antonio, they received added significance as an integral part of San Antonio's premier event of the second half of the twentieth century. The fair is widely recognized as a major turning point in San Antonio's history.

It is our hope that the planning process for the master plan will result in selection of uses for the historic structures which will produce sufficient revenue to restore and maintain the buildings. In the 36 years since the fair the majority of the historic structures have been chronically in a state of disrepair and decay. Unless the plan addresses the potential for compatible income producing uses, particularly for the smaller buildings, the area will not be successfully revitalized.

It is important to note that the 22 buildings retained for the fair were all preserved in their original locations. Only three were moved recently by the City because of the latest Convention Center eastward expansion. Let us not talk about wasting any more money by coming up with plans, which will require relocation of any more historic structures.

Another concern is for the remaining permanent buildings erected for the fair. Each was built with the idea of being converted to future permanent use. These buildings are also historic for their association with the fair and should be preserved as well.

Loretta Huddleston
President

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TO: THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HEMISFAIR PARK AREA MASTER PLAN

STATUS: APPROVED

DATE: 02/26/04

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of Directors of The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce adopt the following statement as policy.

STATEMENT: The Board of Directors of The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce realizes the need for adequate planning to ensure public assets, such as Hemisfair Park, are utilized to the fullest extent possible, and supports the City of San Antonio's efforts to create a Master Plan for the Hemisfair Park area. As the master plan is developed The Board of Directors urges the City of San Antonio to incorporate the following considerations into the final master plan:

- The creation of a viable transportation plan, with the possible addition of a point of entry visitor center, with adequate linkages to other downtown attractions;
- The resolution of parking issues without detracting from the intended uses of the park, while also aiding traffic flow in and around the park;
- The increasing of open green space for recreational use by residents and visitors;
- The communication and coordination of assigned city staff with other city departments and organizations currently using space within or adjacent to the Hemisfair Park area;
- Ensuring that all new revenue generating projects affiliated with Hemisfair Park are privatized and assigned through a fair and open proposal process;
- Additional public hearings and stakeholder meetings should be held when critical steps of the plan are being considered for implementation.

BACKGROUND: Hemisfair Park has been maintained by The City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department since the end of Hemisfair '68 and has numerous tenants and buildings in use, including: The Tower of Americas, The Institute of Texan Cultures, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX), Magik Children's Theatre, and a Federal Courthouse. A large capital project was undertaken in 1985 that constructed dozens of permanent water features, and was followed by the destruction of the Hemisfair Arena and extension of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in the mid 1990's. Throughout all this activity there has not been a master plan City staff can refer to when processing requests from tenants for expansion or new construction requests.

Therefore on December 2, 2003, city staff held the first of two public stakeholder meetings and worked with a consultant to determine what the local citizens' input was regarding a master plan. Staff continued to hold private meetings with downtown organizations and neighborhood groups and finished the public input process after 38 meetings, with a final public hearing on Jan. 7, 2004.

Staff presented the findings of the public input process with City Council on January 26, 2004, and hopes the Master Plan will be approved by Council in March. The current plan calls for an increase in utilization by city departments, improvement of the connections between the park and the Convention Center, increased public use of the historic buildings located on the Park, an increase in children and family focused activities, adequate parking on the outer borders of the park, an improvement of the physical connection between The Institute of Texan Cultures and the park, the extension of the Riverwalk into the park, a jogging/biking trail, and an examination of the creation of a visitor center and "people mover" located near the bus terminal in front of The Alamodome.

- Pro -
1. Continued support of a master plan will help solidify The Central Area Business Council and The Greater Chamber's position as a stakeholder in downtown development issues.
 2. A coordinated effort to improve Hemisfair Park will add to the attractiveness of downtown to visitors and locals, therefore increasing consumer traffic in the downtown area.
 3. Showing support for City of San Antonio staff will improve the lines of communication between The City and The Chamber.
 4. A large centrally located public park is a unique feature of numerous large metropolitan centers, and will be an integral part the high quality of life benefits San Antonio offers its citizens.
- Cons -
1. Members of the business community may not see the rationale behind a business organization such as The Chamber getting involved in a park planning issue.
 2. Time spent by city staff to resolve this problem, takes away from other targeted projects.
 3. Territorial disputes may arise between the various organizations and agencies that are housed in Hemisfair Park and The Chamber may be asked to choose sides on particular issues in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Chamber will continue its efforts to serve as a liaison between the business community and the City of San Antonio, and will convey this policy statement to City Council and the appropriate city departments. Chamber members will be notified of this position through The Chamber Today and at various Chamber committee meetings.