

You may have recently received a flyer with some inaccurate information about local historic districts in San Antonio. Let's set the record straight.

Property Rights

The flyer says:

- If you vote "yes" for the historic district, you give up your property rights.
- By voting "yes," you give away your property rights to do whatever you want with your home.

The TRUTH is:

Historic designation does not give the City any right to your property. "Historic" is a zoning overlay that tells city staff that the homes and buildings in the district are subject to the Historic Design Guidelines. If you decide to do work on the exterior of your home, you would start by requesting approval from the Office of Historic Preservation. The application is always free for homeowners, and 97% of requests are approved.

Design Review

The flyer says:

- If you vote "yes" for the historic district, you will first need permission and approval to paint your house. You will need permission and approval for the color you choose.
- If you vote "yes" for the historic district, you will first need permission and approval before you start any exterior work on your home.

The TRUTH is:

The City does not regulate paint colors. Minor repairs and maintenance, including painting, require review and approval that is often issued the same day. The City's review process helps protect the historic character of your neighborhood by preventing inappropriate changes. Everyone in the historic district would be required to follow the same process, which gives you the chance to speak up about changes in your neighborhood, including proposed new developments.

Health & Safety

The flyer says:

- The City requires that all homes and structures meet health and safety requirements per the Unified Development Code.
- If you vote "yes" and your home does not meet the Unified Development Code, you will be issued a citation/ticket or works, the City can demolish your home or structure.
- If you vote "yes" the City of San Antonio can make removal of rear additions and more! Any action the City takes against the homeowner, you will be charged \$\$\$ for that action.
- You will not get extra police protection!
- You will not get extra fire department protection!

The TRUTH is:

The safety of standing structures in the City of San Antonio is required by City Codes that apply to every structure in the City. **Designation does not change this requirement and definitely does not increase the threat of demolition. In fact, it is an important tool used to protect against demolition.** Designation does not come with increased City services. It does tell the City that this neighborhood wants to preserve its historic character and have a role in managing change.

Tax Incentives

The flyer says:

- The Bexar County Appraisal District is responsible for property tax appraisal of your home. Not the historic district. Your taxes will not be lowered.
- The historic district tax incentives are only for a homeowner. If you first put up “substantial rehabilitation” (money) of your home.
- Do not believe the City lies! There is no automatic 20% Tax Cuts!
- To qualify for any tax cut, a homeowner must first make substantial (\$\$\$) money repairs/rehabilitation to your home. To receive any tax cut or freeze your property taxes you must first make repair of 30% valuation of your home.

The TRUTH is:

Designation does not affect your appraisal, and property values are rising now regardless of historic designation. There are two local tax incentives for historic properties: the owner-occupied exemption, and the substantial rehabilitation exemption. These exemptions apply to your city taxes – they do not change your appraisal.

Owner-occupied: **If you own your home when a new district is designated, you will automatically see a 20% reduction in your City property taxes for up to 15 years.** This incentive supports all homeowners living in the district at the time of designation. **No work is required to qualify for this credit.**

Substantial Rehabilitation: The second tax incentive is available to both residential and commercial properties. Property owners who want to participate in this tax incentive must show they invested 30% of the pre-rehabilitation improvement value into their home or property. Residential property owners can then choose to either freeze City taxes for 10 years, or pay no City taxes for five years followed by five years paying City taxes at half the assessed value. Commercial property owners would pay no City taxes for five years followed by five years paying City taxes at half the assessed value. This is a separate program with an application and review process. It is not related to the automatic tax incentive that comes with new district designation.

Demolition

The flyer says:

- By voting “yes,” if the city wants to demolish your home, they can! Because you gave away your rights by voting “yes.”
- Historic district designation does not protect your home from demolition. It only protects buildings and landmarks not your home!

The TRUTH is:

Historic designation protects all structures – homes, buildings, landmarks – from hasty demolition. When it comes to demolition requests, all designated properties, including landmarks and districts, are treated exactly the same by the City. In fact, **historic designation changes the requirements for City-ordered demolitions and make it *HARDER* to demolish any structure designated – including your home.**

Property owners can request demolition for a designated property, but they have to provide documentation that there is an unreasonable economic hardship or that the home or building has lost its significance. On top of that, the owner must provide replacement plans for the neighborhood to review and discuss at a public hearing. You and your neighbors would be able to tell the Historic and Design Review Commission what you think about the demolition request and any proposed new construction in the district.