

City of San Antonio

Monuments, Memorials, Markers and Plaques Policy

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to provide the City Council, City Staff, the Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC), and the general public with guidelines for the acceptance, placement, and appropriateness of monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques. From time to time requests are received from individuals and organizations for permission to place monuments, memorials, markers or plaques to an individual, organization or event on City property. When properly designed, planned, and displayed, memorials may provide for simplified interpretation and furnish the general public with essential knowledge in capsule form.

The City of San Antonio, as the steward of public land, is committed to protecting the parks, open spaces, public buildings, and other public areas of the city while providing opportunities for appropriately designed monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques that honor an individual, organization or event beneficial to the greater good of the community.

This policy is not intended to address street naming requests.

CRITERIA FOR INITIAL PROJECT REVIEW: Before proceeding with the subsequent steps of this process, applicants desiring to place a monument, memorial, marker or plaque should submit a letter to the Historic Preservation Officer that outlines in sufficient detail the main purpose and concept of their proposal. Staff will then schedule a feasibility consultation with the applicant and advise him or her of the content of this policy, the appropriateness of the proposed memorial or monument in light of this policy, and the necessary courses of action required to complete the application. In the case of proposals for significant memorials or monuments, the staff reserves the right to submit the applicant's preliminary proposal to the Architectural Committee of the HDRC for their review of the concept before embarking on further costly planning and study. In the case of proposals for commemorative public artworks, the staff shall advise the applicant to complete artwork review policies as set forth in Unified Development Code, Article VI, Division V. The proposed project must meet the following criteria in order to be considered by the HDRC.

1. **Use of Public Space:** Donors of monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques shall consider the primary uses of public open space in their request for a location or suitable site. While appropriate memorials may enrich an area, public open space is also a precious commodity. Therefore, monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques should be carefully reviewed to balance these two public benefits to protect the greater good.
2. **Timelessness:** The quality of timelessness shall be considered in the significance of the individual, community or event being memorialized. Memorial proposals should

represent the values and principles of the community that will be relevant to future generations.

3. **Community Significance:** Proposed projects must serve to commemorate or to identify a particularly significant historic event or person. Projects that seek to honor particular individuals or events by placing them into the public realm should appeal to the broader interests of the community. To assure that the significance of an event or person has withstood the test of time, a project may only commemorate an event 1 year or older and a person 1 year or more posthumously. City Council may waive this requirement for those individuals with exceptional community significance in cases of unusual and compelling circumstances.
4. **Past Honors:** The City inventories all publicly owned fine artworks, public art, and design enhancements, in addition to all commemorative monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques in order to enable the City to effectively evaluate proposed memorials. It is recognized that specific individuals, organizations or events may have been sufficiently honored in the past.
5. **Maintenance Planning:** Maintenance concerns should be a primary consideration, with adequate financial provision made for continued future maintenance. In all cases, permanent memorials should be made from durable materials that will stand up over time. Memorials that include moveable parts or technological elements will require additional consideration and review.
6. **Financial Responsibility:** The donors of the proposed memorial are required to pay for the complete design, manufacturing, installation, and maintenance endowment to ensure adequate quality of care for the memorial. To allow for the installation of new public art projects, as well as maintenance of existing art inventory and commemorative artworks, donations shall be made to the City in a fund for public art maintenance. Contributions toward this fund may be combined towards larger scale projects, which will recognize both individual and group donations.
7. **Ownership:** Improvements made on City lands become the property of the City of San Antonio.
8. **Structures Over Six Feet in Height:** The International Building Code, the current building code adopted by the city, requires that any structure over six feet in height should be designed according to professional engineering practices and will require an engineer's letter.
9. **Riverwalk:** The Riverwalk is a unique and precious natural, cultural, and historic resource that provides a physical connection through San Antonio by linking a variety of neighborhoods, cultural sites, public parks, and destinations. This valuable resource deserves special protection. The following standards shall apply to the riverside of properties abutting the San Antonio River (River Improvement Overlay Ordinance (35-679, d)).

- a. Texas Historical Commission (THC) markers are permitted, if mounted to walls or structures. Pole mounted THC markers are not permitted in River Improvement Overlay District 3 (RIO-3).
- b. Monuments and memorial plaques must commemorate an event or person significant to the Riverwalk or the history of the Riverwalk. To assure that the significance of an event or a person has withstood the test of time, memorial plaques may only commemorate an event 10 years or older and a person 10 years or more posthumously.
- c. The City may, from time to time, accept memorial gifts, such as benches, fountain or public art, etc. as gifts. Plaques acknowledging the gift shall be bronze and no larger than ten inches by four inches (10"x4"). Memorial plaques for a tree or other plantings are not permitted.
- d. Placement of monuments, memorials, markers and plaques will be under the jurisdiction of the City Manager or designee, after consultation with the HDRC and coordination with applicable City Departments.
- e. Plaques recognizing donors for significant improvements or plaques acknowledging the naming of significant improvement such as, but not limited to, pocket parks, footbridges, fountains, grottos, gardens, gazebos, boat landings, overlooks and other significant features may be placed along the San Antonio River. The plaques may be no larger than four (4) square feet and must be made of either cast bronze, cast aluminum (or other suitable metal), carved stone, or tile. An individual, corporation or foundation must be acknowledged with wording similar to "sponsored by, underwritten by, a gift from.." and shall not contain corporate logos.

For projects associated with the Museum Reach and Mission Reach applicants shall refer to the Policy Guidelines developed by City Council. Those guidelines shall supercede this policy until such time as those guidelines expire.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGN/PLACEMENT REVIEW:

The basic types of memorials vary greatly in the impact they have upon the city and open spaces; the review process for allowing them to occur on City owned land should reflect those differences. A public art review process is required for any proposals for public artwork memorials, which is outlined under Unified Development Code, Article VI, Division V. All memorials, however, will be judged for appropriateness according to the following criteria.

Design Criteria:

1. The quality, scale, and character of the memorial should be at a level commensurate with the particular location or setting.
2. The memorial contributes to the location from a functional or design standpoint.
3. The memorial should be designed by a qualified professional in the field appropriate to the size, scale, and complexity of the proposal.

4. Logos (symbols or trademarks designed for easy and definite recognition) may not be used in the overall design concept of the memorial. Logos may not appear on a plaque acknowledging the memorial's donors. The acknowledgment plaque should be incidental to the memorial and not the main focus of the memorial.

Placement Criteria:

1. The location under consideration shall be an appropriate setting for the memorial; in general, there should be some specific geographic justification for the memorial being located in the proposed location.
2. It should be considered that a particular location may reach a saturation point and it would be appropriate to limit future memorial installations at a particular location or area.
3. The location of the memorial should complement and enhance existing and proposed circulation and use patterns.
4. The location of the memorial should be supported by any public art master plan, neighborhood and community plans, area design guidelines, and the City's Master Plan Policies.

BASIC CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL: The following items must be provided in order to file an application for review by the HDRC.

1. **All Inclusive Costs:** The cost of design, fabrication, plaques, transportation, installation, site preparation work, foundation, lighting, electrical, permits etc. must be financed by the requesting party. The memorial proposal shall include all-inclusive costs and any exclusion shall be stated clearly in the proposal. Additionally, any party hired or employed by the requesting party must provide proof of insurance approved by the City that may include and not limited to: general liability, automobile insurance, professional liability insurance, performance insurance bonds, workman's compensation coverage, and others as required by the City.
2. **Site:** All proposed monuments or memorials must relate to and support their proposed site and/or community. Any party proposing to install a monument, plaque or memorial must propose three feasible sites, public or private, for their project along with an explanation of the significance and relationship to each site.
3. **Maintenance:** All monuments, memorials, markers, and plaques require insurance, bond and endowment fund (as appropriate), and a maintenance schedule by the memorial donor adequate to ensure its care conditions satisfactory to the donor and the City. The posted insurance or bond should also cover costs of installation and/or removal. If an adequate level of maintenance is not continued, the City reserves the right to remove or modify the memorial or any portion of the memorial.
4. **Wording on memorial plaques:** Individuals and groups may be recognized for their contributions towards a memorial project. All text and design must be approved by the HDRC prior to the fabrication of the plaque.
5. **Artwork:** All proposed public art memorials shall complete the public art review procedures as set forth in UDC Article VI, Division V.

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR SIMPLE PLAQUES, ADORNED PLAQUES, AND SITE ACCESSORIES AND AMENITIES:

1. **Written Proposal:** Once the initial feasibility of the applicant's proposed memorial has been established, the applicant will be requested to submit a written proposal with as much information as possible as to the design, size, materials, appropriateness of preferred site, map identifying the proposed site, plaque wording, sketches, renderings, a rendering of the plaque or site accessory at the proposed site, and estimated costs. A maintenance plan must also be submitted prior to final approval.
2. **Proposal Review:** The requesting party is required to complete the following steps before presentation to the HDRC for recommendation:
 - a. Prepare any additional submission requests as required by staff.
 - b. Provide evidence of financing or fund raising activities.
 - c. Submit proof of insurance requirements.
 - d. Notify the appropriate neighboring community or business associations that may be affected by the location of the plaque or site accessory. Provide the comments and feedback from these organizations.
 - e. Provide site plans, detailed designs, and schematic drawings.
 - f. Any engineering, structural, or site impact questions must be addressed before the proposal can be placed on the HDRC's agenda for recommendation.
 - g. Submit information concerning the type of materials to be used, the type of coatings and patinas.

Once all of the requirements listed above have been completed, the proposal will be placed on the next available HDRC agenda. The HDRC will consider all information, including the staff recommendation, the written proposal and concepts, and public testimony in its decision making process. The HDRC may recommend approval of the placement of the proposed plaque or site accessory; it may request additional information on the proposal; or it may recommend denial of the placement of the plaque or site accessory.

After a recommendation is received from the HDRC, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Director for a final decision. The requesting party will be required to enter into a contractual agreement with the City of San Antonio prior to the commencement of any work. No work may begin unless the applicant can provide evidence of funding sufficient to cover 100% of all costs associated with the design, construction, and placement of the memorial. The applicant must also provide evidence of funding of a maintenance endowment equal to 10% of the total cost of the memorial. All construction documents must be reviewed by the appropriate City departments before the commencement of construction.

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR OTHER MEMORIALS:

1. **Written Proposal:** Once the initial feasibility of the applicant's proposed memorial has been established, the applicant will be requested to submit a written proposal with as much information as possible as to the design, size, materials, appropriateness of preferred site, map identifying the proposed site, plaque wording, sketches, artists renderings and/or models, a rendering of the memorial at the proposed site, and estimated

costs. A maintenance plan developed and approved by a qualified professional or art conservator must also be submitted prior to final approval.

2. **Proposal Review:** All written proposals shall be reviewed by staff and a recommendation shall be made.
3. **Artwork Review:** As applicable, all proposed public art memorials shall complete the public art review procedures as set forth in Unified Development Code, Article VI, Division V.
4. **Conceptual Approval, Modification, or Disapproval:** Upon completion of the artwork proposal review, a recommendation will be forwarded in writing to HDRC accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposal. The requesting party is required to complete the following steps before presentation to the HDRC for approval:
 - A. Prepare any additional submission requests as required during proposal review.
 - B. Provide evidence of financing or fund raising activities.
 - C. Submit proof of insurance requirements.
 - D. Notify the appropriate neighboring community or business associations that may be affected by the location of the memorial. Provide the comments and feedback from these organizations.
 - E. Provide site plans, detailed designs, and schematic drawings.
 - F. Any engineering, structural, or site impact questions must be addressed before the proposal can be placed on the HDRC's agenda for action.
 - G. Submit information concerning the type of materials to be used, the type of coatings and patinas, and the involved artists or design professionals.

Once all of the requirements listed above have been completed, the proposal will be placed on the regularly scheduled meeting agenda of the HDRC at least 30 days after PAC approval. The HDRC will consider all information, including the PAC recommendation, staff recommendation, the written proposal and concepts, and public testimony in its decision making process. The HDRC may recommend approval of the placement of the proposed memorial; it may request additional information on the proposal; or it may recommend denial of the placement of the memorial.

After a recommendation of approval is received from the HDRC, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Director for a final decision. The requesting party will be required to enter into a contractual agreement with the City of San Antonio prior to the commencement of any work. No work may begin unless the applicant can provide evidence of funding sufficient to cover 100% of all costs associated with the design, construction, and placement of the memorial. The applicant must also provide evidence of funding of a maintenance endowment equal to 10% of the total cost of the memorial. All construction documents must be reviewed by the appropriate City departments before the commencement of construction.

DEFINITIONS:

A distinction is made between simple plaques and more elaborate memorials. The seven types of memorials will be categorized as follows:

1. Monuments are large scale and venerated for their enduring historic significance or association with a notable past person or event.
2. Memorials are medium scale and serve as a remembrance of a person or an event.
3. Markers are small scale, conspicuous objects used to distinguish or mark something.
4. Adorned plaques are those installed as part of a larger, more intrusive setting. These plaques include installations such as those that are pedestal mounted or affixed to a boulder, wall or vertical element.
5. Simple plaques are those that are mounted flush with the ground. The size should be appropriately designed per the limitations and consideration of the setting.
6. Artwork Memorials include, but are not limited to, representational, non-objective, contemporary, and abstract pieces in a wide variety of artistic mediums such as metal, glass, bronze ceramic, wood etc. that meet the criteria and procedures set forth in Unified Development Code, Article VI, Division V. Artworks that are integrated into a placement or setting will be strongly encouraged.
7. Fountains may be fairly simple or large and complex. These will require additional consideration and review because of the infrastructure required (plumbing and electrical), additional maintenance implied and environmental issues.
8. Memorial gardens and plazas may include some of the object listed above but include a spatial experience.
9. Basic Site Accessories and Amenities such as landscaping, site furnishings, benches, seating, picnic tables, drinking fountains, sun dials, shade structures, mosaics, unique pathways, etc.
10. Other Memorials is a category to cover proposals that may not fit into any of the categories previously described.