



JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ
STATE SENATOR
SENATE DISTRICT 29
EL PASO, CULBERSON, HUDSPETH, PRESIDIO & JEFF DAVIS COUNTIES

Jan. 11, 2020

Honorable THC State Board of Review Members
Texas Historical Commission
1511 Colorado Street
Austin, Texas 78701

RE: Downtown El Paso Historic District Nomination

Dear Members:

I write in support of the Downtown El Paso Historic District nomination that you will consider Saturday. This nomination is the result of years of effort by El Paso County, community advocates, and agencies such as yours, and represents critical recognition of Downtown El Paso as one of the most significant urban districts in the West.

My understanding is that the City of El Paso, in one of the outgoing administration's last acts, has lodged last-minute opposition to this nomination, raising technical questions regarding notification and structural integrity of certain buildings. Those questions have been answered with certitude. The City was timely notified of the nomination application, and the buildings can continue to contribute.

However, the real reason for the City opposition has nothing to do with these questions. Rather, the former City administration, acting on behalf of a small group of private developers, has sought to build a sports arena in the historic neighborhood of Duranguito. In the process, it has continually misrepresented the historic importance of this community; now, the City seeks to subvert this nomination process to forestall recognition of the facts.

I have long supported your mission as the state agency for historic preservation. As stated on your Website: "We save the real places that tell the real stories of Texas. Our staff consults with citizens and organizations to preserve Texas history through its architectural, archeological, and cultural landmarks. The agency is recognized nationally for its preservation programs."

The City seeks to create confusion sufficient to delay approval of this nomination, in hopes that this would eliminate ultimate approval of the Downtown El Paso Historic District and recognition of Duranguito. Allowing this to happen would contradict your purpose as an agency.

I urge you to approve this nomination with no delay. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the State of Texas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Rodríguez". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping underline.

José Rodríguez

CC:
Mark Wolfe, THC Executive Director
El Paso County Commissioners
El Paso City Council