



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

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**TEXAS DISTRICT COURT RULING REINFORCES EFFORT TO  
SAVE EL PASO'S OLDEST NEIGHBORHOOD FROM DEMOLITION**

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 5, 2017)**—Yesterday, the 250th Judicial District Court of Travis County, Texas, issued its [findings and conclusions](#) on the City of El Paso's plan to construct a downtown arena, which threatens current residents and historic buildings in Duranguito, the city's oldest neighborhood. The Court reaffirmed its prior ruling prohibiting the City from using bond money to build an arena that accommodates sporting events. The following is a statement by the National Trust for Historic Preservation:

"We applaud the Court for concluding that the proposed arena is not in keeping with the quality-of-life purpose the voters of El Paso approved," said Barbara Pahl, senior vice president of field services for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "As El Paso's first neighborhood, we believe that Duranguito defines the city's character and identity, contributes to sustainability and walkability, spurs creativity, and gives residents the sense of stability they need in an ever-expanding city. Duranguito is home to working-class families, seniors and irreplaceable historic structures, including the only surviving landmark of the city's early Chinese community—the 117-year-old Chinese laundry building.

"Despite the neighborhood's cultural significance and widespread local opposition to demolition, confirmed by the thousands of residents who signed a petition to preserve Duranguito, the City of El Paso continues to pursue a misplaced sports arena that would destroy the heart of an area many Mexican Americans consider the "Ellis Island of the border." Since naming [El Paso's historic neighborhoods](#) to America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in 2016 and [highlighting Duranguito](#) in our magazine earlier this year, the National Trust has observed how lack of transparency on this issue has led to questionable and unfortunate actions. Most notably, last month, the City failed to stop bulldozers from damaging several buildings in Duranguito, rendering them dangerously unstable.

"The National Trust strongly opposes any steps that threaten Duranguito's older buildings, which—as demonstrated by historic neighborhoods across America's most resilient cities—contain enormous potential to improve affordability, prosperity and well-being for the community and future generations. We look forward to working with local partners and city and state leaders in Texas towards an outcome that works for everyone and gives Duranguito the protection it deserves—one that takes full advantage of its Mexican American heritage and one-of-a-kind piece of Chinese American history, and keeps the buildings alive, in active use and relevant to the actual needs of the people who surround them.

"Move the arena, not the people."

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**About the National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded nonprofit organization, works to save America's historic places. [www.savingplaces.org](http://www.savingplaces.org)