

## EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

603 W. Yandell  
El Paso, Texas 79902  
(915) 533-3603

[epchs@elpasohistory.com](mailto:epchs@elpasohistory.com)



June 25, 2020

Dear County of El Paso, Texas Commissioners Court:

The El Paso County Historical Society (EPCHS) submits this letter in opposition to the boundaries for the Segundo Barrio National Historic District approved by the Court on June 15, 2020.

Founded in 1954, EPCHS is one of the oldest historical societies in Texas. Our leadership consists of academically trained historians, members of the business community, and active participants in the civic culture of El Paso.

We believe that the boundaries of the proposed national historic district, as approved on June 15, 2020, are inadequate and fail to completely represent Segundo Barrio. This neighborhood, dating back to at least 1885, is one of El Paso's oldest communities. It has served as a bedrock for Mexican American residents for generations. To walk along its streets today is to step into an area distinct from any other neighborhood or business district in El Paso. Placing the neighborhood in two separate national historical districts is not only historically inaccurate but raises concerns as to the reasons behind such a move.

As the City of El Paso wrote in 2012, "Segundo Barrio is not Downtown... the strategies for addressing this historic community should be different from strategies for the Downtown. As investment and revitalization of the Downtown occurs, the large-scale development of the Downtown need not bleed over into Segundo Barrio. Preservation and infill should be the focus of strategies for the neighborhood in order to enhance the community, without pricing the present inhabitants out of the market" (City of El Paso, Texas, Comprehensive Plan 2012, Vol. 1, pg. 2.18).

We believe that Option 3, dated June 15, 2020, or the compromise plan presented by Commissioner David Stout on June 22, 2020, best reflect the historical boundaries of Segundo Barrio. The southern boundary of the proposed Downtown National Historic District should be Paisano Street. We also believe that the Court should value the expertise of local experts and, most importantly, the residents of the neighborhood, many who do not agree with the boundary voted upon on June 15, 2020. Residents of the neighborhood are in a position to understand its unique character more than anyone. As such, we respectfully ask that Commissioners Court reconsider its position.

Please contact us at 915-329-3702 or at [epchs@elpasohistory.com](mailto:epchs@elpasohistory.com) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Hutson, President  
El Paso County Historical Society