



November 2, 2021

Statement from The Conservation Society of San Antonio regarding the need for a long range plan for downtown murals.

TO: Mayor Ron Nirenberg and Members, San Antonio City Council

RE: Nov.4, 2021 City Council Item No. 16. Ordinance approving a Funding Agreement with Centro San Antonio in an amount up to \$100,000 for additional Travis Park programming and the Art Everywhere Initiative from the Houston Street TIRZ #9 Tax Increment Fund.

Recently the Texas Historical Commission rejected a proposal to paint ten large murals on the Astrodome in Houston, citing the building's State Antiquities Landmark status. The THC also expressed concern that some murals painted on buildings could be considered advertising more than artworks.

The concerns expressed by the Texas Historical Commission are relevant to San Antonio as well. The Conservation Society of San Antonio applauds many of the murals that celebrate our cultural heritage, such as the pieces undertaken as part of the San Pedro Creek Cultural Park. The Society will continue to review future mural installations in case they should more appropriately be permitted and approved under the terms of the sign ordinance.

We trust that the City of San Antonio and Centro will ensure that murals in our city follow an installation plan that protects historic building fabric, conforms to city plans and avoids crossing the line into commercialism. The City should commit to long-range planning on the size and impact of public art, especially in relation to important historic sites, including our World Heritage Missions and Alamo Plaza. Like New Orleans, Charleston and Savannah, the image of San Antonio is defined by its architectural inheritance, not contemporary art.

Respectfully,

Kathy Rhoads, President

c: Centro San Antonio, COSA Historic & Design Review Commission, VISIT SA, San Antonio Express-New, San Antonio Report, The Heron