

Proposed Mexican American and Indigenous Heritage and Cultural District
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are heritage and cultural districts?

Heritage and cultural districts are areas that are culturally and historically significant but do not qualify for official historic designations from agencies such as the Texas Historical Commission or San Marcos Historical Preservation Commission due to loss or modification of homes and other structures.

2. Why does San Marcos need a Heritage and Cultural District for Mexican American and indigenous communities?

Most indigenous communities were driven out or displaced from their homelands, and few Mexican Americans had the power and resources to preserve their homes and other buildings in their communities. A heritage and cultural district would highlight the significance of these marginalized communities, encourage residents and property owners to maintain the character of the neighborhoods, encourage historians to research the area, discourage gentrification, and allow the city to focus on neighborhood enhancement.

3. Will homes and other buildings located within a heritage district be subject to fees or other types of regulations?

No. Cities and other government agencies may not impose fees or otherwise restrict the use, modification or renovation of homes and buildings in a heritage and cultural district. However, cities may encourage homeowners and property owners to renovate and preserve significant structures to maintain the district's historic and cultural integrity and enhance the neighborhood.

4. How much money is needed to establish a heritage and cultural district, and who will bear the cost?

No funds are required to establish a heritage and cultural district, but the city could direct staff resources and other funds for signage and publicity, home and building repair and preservation, or programming and other related activities.

5. What types of programs or activities might be encouraged in a heritage and cultural district, and who would sponsor them?

Programs and activities might include the following, among others:

- collect photographs and oral histories related to the area,
- develop indoor and outdoor exhibits to document the people and history of the area, including the places that have been demolished,
- develop festivals or other events related to indigenous and Mexican American heritage,
- hold dances and musical or theatrical performances related to the community, especially at Cuauhtemoc Hall, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, and the proposed Indigenous Culture Center.
- provide informational and educational programs to help maintain and enhance the district's character.

6. Why is it important to establish a heritage and cultural district in these four neighborhoods?

The Guadalupe Neighborhood, Victory Gardens Neighborhood/Barrio de la Victoria, and the Barrio del Pescado/Wallace Addition Neighborhood were the first four neighborhoods established by the first Mexican American and Indigenous families of San Marcos. The first barrio held special significance as it had established a special space for community festivals and cultural events. The first Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebrations were held in this space. The neighborhood was eradicated by Urban Renewal to make way for the Rio Vista Park, and the pioneer Mexican American families were displaced. There is an opportunity to elevate the history of these Mexican American first families by establishing a heritage and cultural district.