

## HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION

May 17, 2023

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2023-166  
**ADDRESS:** 601 NOLAN ST  
**LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** NCB 547 BLK 19 LOT 11  
**ZONING:** R-6, H  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 2  
**DISTRICT:** Dignowity Hill  
**APPLICANT:** Marc Jacobson | Public Works  
**OWNER:** COSA – Public Property  
**TYPE OF WORK:** Hardscaping and landscaping (right-of-way)  
**APPLICATION RECEIVED:** April 26, 2023  
**60-DAY REVIEW:** Not applicable due to City Council Emergency Orders  
**CASE MANAGER:** Bryan Morales

### REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for approval to perform sidewalk, ADA improvements, landscaping, and hardscaping work at the intersection of Nolan Street and N Mesquite Street.

### APPLICABLE CITATIONS:

*Historic Design Guidelines, Chapter 5, Guidelines for Site Elements*

#### 1. Topography

##### A. TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

- i. *Historic topography*—Avoid significantly altering the topography of a property (i.e., extensive grading). Do not alter character-defining features such as berms or sloped front lawns that help define the character of the public right-of-way. Maintain the established lawn to help prevent erosion. If turf is replaced over time, new plant materials in these areas should be low-growing and suitable for the prevention of erosion.
- ii. *New construction*—Match the historic topography of adjacent lots prevalent along the block face for new construction. Do not excavate raised lots to accommodate additional building height or an additional story for new construction.
- iii. *New elements*—Minimize changes in topography resulting from new elements, like driveways and walkways, through appropriate siting and design. New site elements should work with, rather than change, character-defining topography when possible.

#### 3. Landscape Design

##### A. PLANTINGS

- i. *Historic Gardens*—Maintain front yard gardens when appropriate within a specific historic district.
- ii. *Historic Lawns*—Do not fully remove and replace traditional lawn areas with impervious hardscape. Limit the removal of lawn areas to mulched planting beds or pervious hardscapes in locations where they would historically be found, such as along fences, walkways, or drives. Low-growing plantings should be used in historic lawn areas; invasive or large-scale species should be avoided. Historic lawn areas should never be reduced by more than 50%.
- iii. *Native xeric plant materials*—Select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. See UDC Appendix E: San Antonio Recommended Plant List—All Suited to Xeriscape Planting Methods, for a list of appropriate materials and planting methods. Select plant materials with a similar character, growth habit, and light requirements as those being replaced.
- iv. *Plant palettes*—If a varied plant palette is used, incorporate species of taller heights, such informal elements should be restrained to small areas of the front yard or to the rear or side yard so as not to obstruct views of or otherwise distract from the historic structure.
- v. *Maintenance*—Maintain existing landscape features. Do not introduce landscape elements that will obscure the historic structure or are located as to retain moisture on walls or foundations (e.g., dense foundation plantings or vines) or as to cause damage.

##### B. ROCKS OR HARDSCAPE

- i. *Impervious surfaces*—Do not introduce large pavers, asphalt, or other impervious surfaces where they were not historically located.

ii. *Pervious and semi-pervious surfaces*—New pervious hardscapes should be limited to areas that are not highly visible, and should not be used as wholesale replacement for plantings. If used, small plantings should be incorporated into the design.

iii. *Rock mulch and gravel* - Do not use rock mulch or gravel as a wholesale replacement for lawn area. If used, plantings should be incorporated into the design.

#### C. MULCH

*Organic mulch* – Organic mulch should not be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Organic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as beneath a tree canopy.

i. *Inorganic mulch* – Inorganic mulch should not be used in highly-visible areas and should never be used as a wholesale replacement for plant material. Inorganic mulch with appropriate plantings should be incorporated in areas where appropriate such as along a foundation wall where moisture retention is discouraged.

#### D. TREES

i. *Preservation*—Preserve and protect from damage existing mature trees and heritage trees. See UDC Section 35-523 (Tree Preservation) for specific requirements.

ii. *New Trees* – Select new trees based on site conditions. Avoid planting new trees in locations that could potentially cause damage to a historic structure or other historic elements. Species selection and planting procedure should be done in accordance with guidance from the City Arborist.

iii. *Maintenance* – Proper pruning encourages healthy growth and can extend the lifespan of trees. Avoid unnecessary or harmful pruning. A certified, licensed arborist is recommended for the pruning of mature trees and heritage trees.

### 4. Residential Streetscapes

#### A. PLANTING STRIPS

i. *Street trees*—Protect and encourage healthy street trees in planting strips. Replace damaged or dead trees with trees of a similar species, size, and growth habit as recommended by the City Arborist.

ii. *Lawns*— Maintain the use of traditional lawn in planting strips or low plantings where a consistent pattern has been retained along the block frontage. If mulch or gravel beds are used, low-growing plantings should be incorporated into the design.

iii. *Alternative materials*—Do not introduce impervious hardscape, raised planting beds, or other materials into planting strips where they were not historically found.

#### B. PARKWAYS AND PLANTED MEDIANS

i. *Historic plantings*—Maintain the park-like character of historic parkways and planted medians by preserving mature vegetation and retaining historic design elements. Replace damaged or dead plant materials with species of a like size, growth habit, and ornamental characteristics.

ii. *Hardscape*—Do not introduce new pavers, concrete, or other hardscape materials into parkways and planted medians where they were not historically found.

#### C. STREET ELEMENTS

i. *Site elements*—Preserve historic street lights, street markers, roundabouts, and other unique site elements found within the public right-of-way as street improvements and other public works projects are completed over time.

ii. *Historic paving materials*—Retain historic paving materials, such as brick pavers or colored paving, within the public right-of-way and repair in place with like materials.

### 5. Sidewalks, Walkways, Driveways, and Curbing

#### A. SIDEWALKS AND WALKWAYS

i. *Maintenance*—Repair minor cracking, settling, or jamming along sidewalks to prevent uneven surfaces. Retain and repair historic sidewalk and walkway paving materials—often brick or concrete—in place.

ii. *Replacement materials*—Replace those portions of sidewalks or walkways that are deteriorated beyond repair. Every effort should be made to match existing sidewalk color and material.

iii. *Width and alignment*— Follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Alter the historic width or alignment only where absolutely necessary to accommodate the preservation of a significant tree.

iv. *Stamped concrete*—Preserve stamped street names, business insignias, or other historic elements of sidewalks and walkways when replacement is necessary.

v. *ADA compliance*—Limit removal of historic sidewalk materials to the immediate intersection when ramps are added to address ADA requirements.

#### B. DRIVEWAYS

i. *Driveway configuration*—Retain and repair in place historic driveway configurations, such as ribbon drives. Incorporate a similar driveway configuration—materials, width, and design—to that historically found on the site. Historic driveways

are typically no wider than 10 feet. Pervious paving surfaces may be considered where replacement is necessary to increase stormwater infiltration.

ii. *Curb cuts and ramps*—Maintain the width and configuration of original curb cuts when replacing historic driveways. Avoid introducing new curb cuts where not historically found.

### C. CURBING

i. *Historic curbing*—Retain historic curbing wherever possible. Historic curbing in San Antonio is typically constructed of concrete with a curved or angular profile.

ii. *Replacement curbing*—Replace curbing in-kind when deteriorated beyond repair. Where in-kind replacement is not be feasible, use a comparable substitute that duplicates the color, texture, durability, and profile of the original. Retaining walls and curbing should not be added to the sidewalk design unless absolutely necessary.

## 8. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

### A. HISTORIC FEATURES

i. *Avoid damage*—Minimize the damage to the historic character and materials of the building and sidewalk while complying with all aspects of accessibility requirements.

ii. *Doors and door openings*—Avoid modifying historic doors or door openings that do not conform to the building and/or accessibility codes, particularly on the front façade. Consider using a discretely located addition as a means of providing accessibility.

### B. ENTRANCES

i. *Grade changes*—Incorporate minor changes in grade to modify sidewalk or walkway elevation to provide an accessible entry when possible.

ii. *Residential entrances*—The preferred location of new ramps is at the side or rear of the building when convenient for the user.

iii. *Non-residential and mixed use entrances*—Provide an accessible entrance located as close to the primary entrance as possible when access to the front door is not feasible.

### C. DESIGN

i. *Materials*—Design ramps and lifts to compliment the historic character of the building and be visually unobtrusive as to minimize the visual impact, especially when visible from the public right-of-way.

ii. *Screening*—Screen ramps, lifts, or other elements related to ADA compliance using appropriate landscape materials. Refer to Guidelines for Site Elements for additional guidance.

iii. *Curb cuts*—Install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk.

## *Xeriscaping & Responsible Landscaping: City of San Antonio Historic Design Guidelines Landscaping Policy Document*

### THE DO NOT'S

- Do not develop proposals that remove over 50% of the total green space in the front yard.
- Do not fully remove plants from the planting strip (the space between the sidewalk and street). Retaining at least 50% plantings in this area is highly encouraged to reduce the heat island, aid in rainwater absorption on streets, and create a lively pedestrian experience.
- Do not utilize gravel, decomposed granite, or other small rock ground cover as the primary element of your landscaping plan.
- Do not incorporate black, non-native, or artificially colored rocks.
- Do not incorporate rock ground cover with an overall diameter of greater than 2 inches.
- Do not incorporate large boulders or flagstone as accent pieces. Consider integrating drought-tolerant trees or low shrubbery instead to add visual diversity and interest.
- Do not incorporate excessive use of concrete or impervious (non-permeable) hardscaping. Hardscaping is best for functional purposes only: driveways, walkways, steps, and patios.

### FINDINGS:

- a. The properties at 602, 601, 533, and 528 Nolan Street is located on the west side of the Dignowity Hill Historic District and the project is bound by these four addresses. The streetscape features historic retaining walls and sidewalks.
- b. **SIDEWALK INSTALLATION** – The applicant is requesting to modify the existing sidewalk footprint as shown in the landscape site plan. The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 5.A.iii. stipulates that sidewalks must

follow the historic alignment, configuration, and width of sidewalks and walkways. Staff finds the modification of the sidewalk generally conform to Guidelines.

- c. ADA RAMP INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting to install ADA curb cuts at the intersection of Nolan and N Mesquite Streets. Guidelines for Site Elements 8.A.iii. stipulates to install new ADA curb cuts on historic sidewalks to be consistent with the existing sidewalk color and texture while minimizing damage to the historical sidewalk. The applicant has not submitted a color selection for the ADA ramp. Staff finds the installation of the ADA sidewalk ramps generally conforms to Guidelines.
- d. LANDSCAPING INSTALLATION – The applicant is proposing to install:
  - 1. Palo Verde and crape myrtle trees.
  - 2. Compact Texas sage, Adams color guard, red yucca, soft leaf yucca, and agave shrubs and grasses.
  - 3. 2”-4” Colorado River rock and natural limestone boulders.

The Historic Design Guidelines for Site Elements 3.A.iii. states to select native and/or xeric plants that thrive in local conditions and reduce watering usage. The Xeriscaping and Responsible Landscaping policy document states to not incorporate rock ground cover with an overall diameter of greater than two inches, non-native rocks, and large boulders. Staff finds the inclusion of non-native plantings and rocks and the inclusion of boulders generally does not conform to Guidelines.

- e. HANDSCAPING INSTALLATION – The applicant is requesting to install curbing and planting beds on the existing street. Guidelines for Site Elements 5.C.i. states to retain historic curbing whenever possible. Guidelines for Site Elements 4.A.iii. states to not introduce impervious hardscape, raised planting beds, or other materials into planting strips where they were not historically found. Staff finds the installation of the curbing and planting beds generally conforms to Guidelines.
- f. ARCHAEOLOGY - The project shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations regarding archaeology, as applicable.

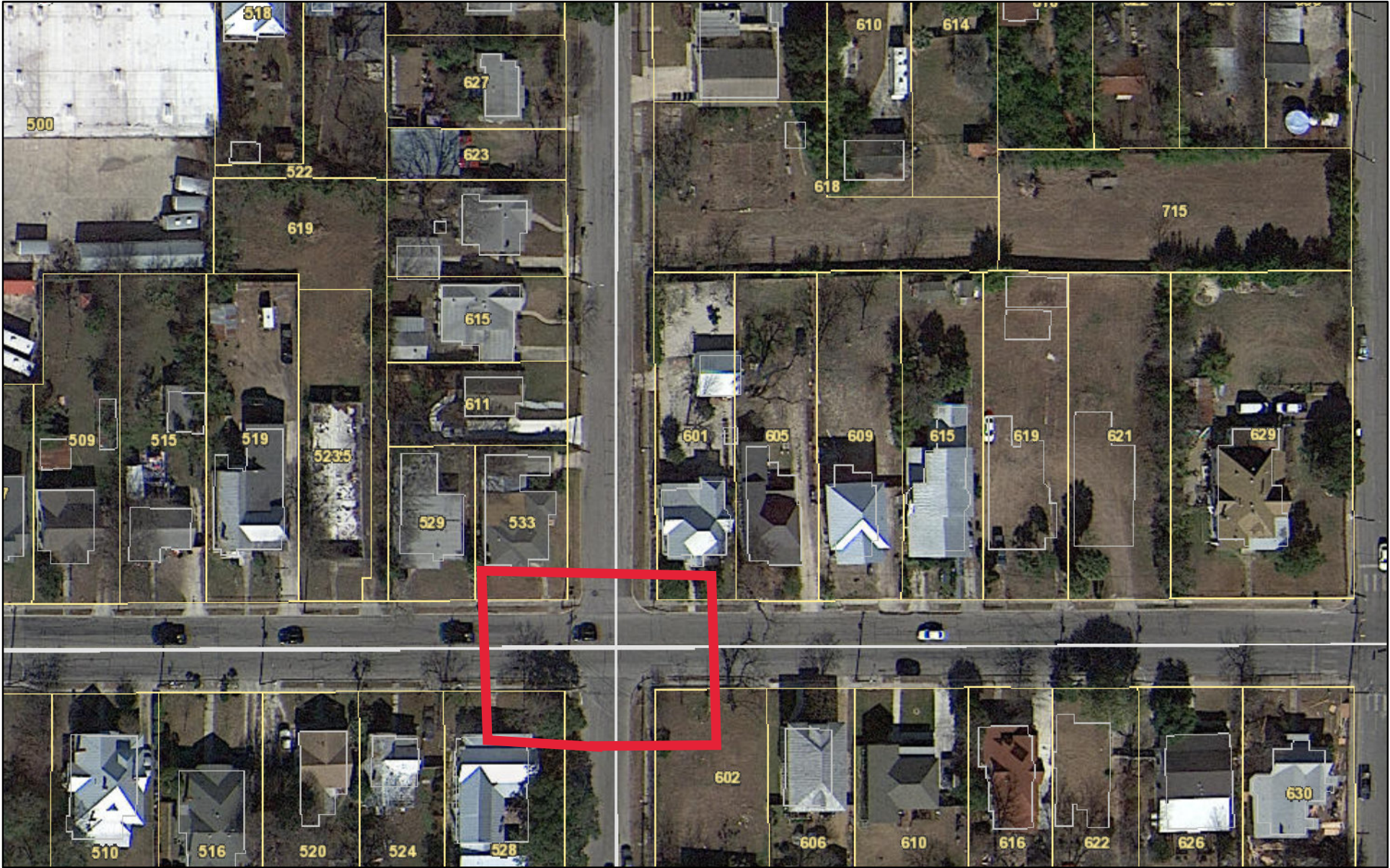
#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the request, based on findings a through f, with the following stipulations:

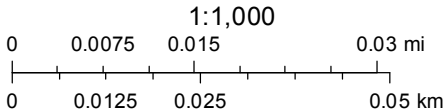
- i. That the applicant submit final construction documents that show the retention of the historic retaining walls at the intersection.
- ii. That the applicant specify gray truncated domes on the ADA ramps.
- iii. That the applicant install rocks that do not exceed two inches in size.
- iv. That the applicant save and reuse any concrete stamps found within the area.



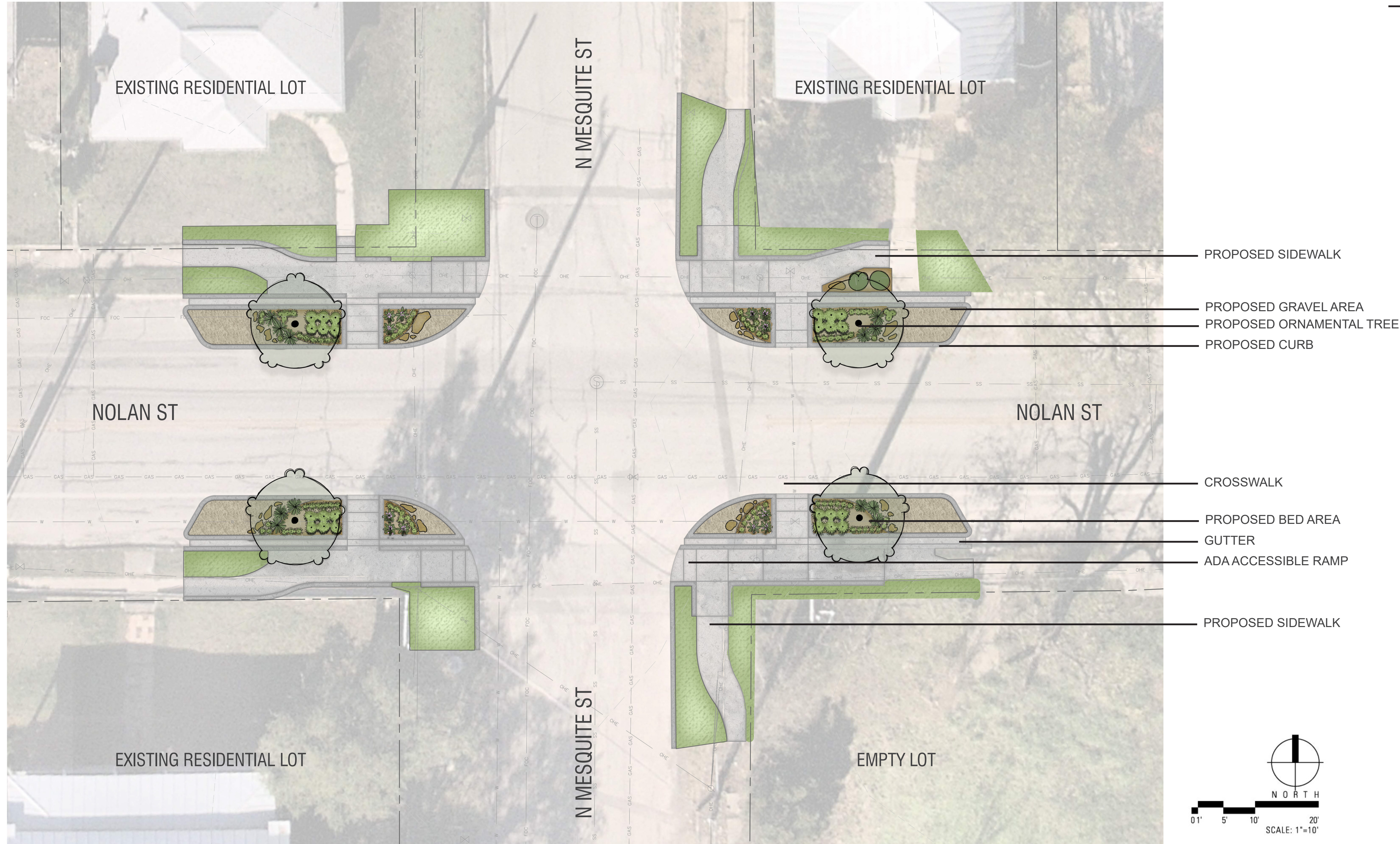
City of San Antonio One Stop



May 2, 2023







- MATERIALS:**
- TREES:**  
PALO VERDE, SINGLE TRUNK  
CRAPE MYRTLE, SINGLE TRUNK
- SHRUBS/GRASSES:**  
COMPACT TEXAS SAGE  
ADAMS COLOR GUARD  
RED YUCCA  
SOFT LEAF YUCCA  
AGAVE
- AGGREGATE:**  
2" - 4" COLORADO RIVER ROCK  
NATURAL LIMESTONE BOULDERS

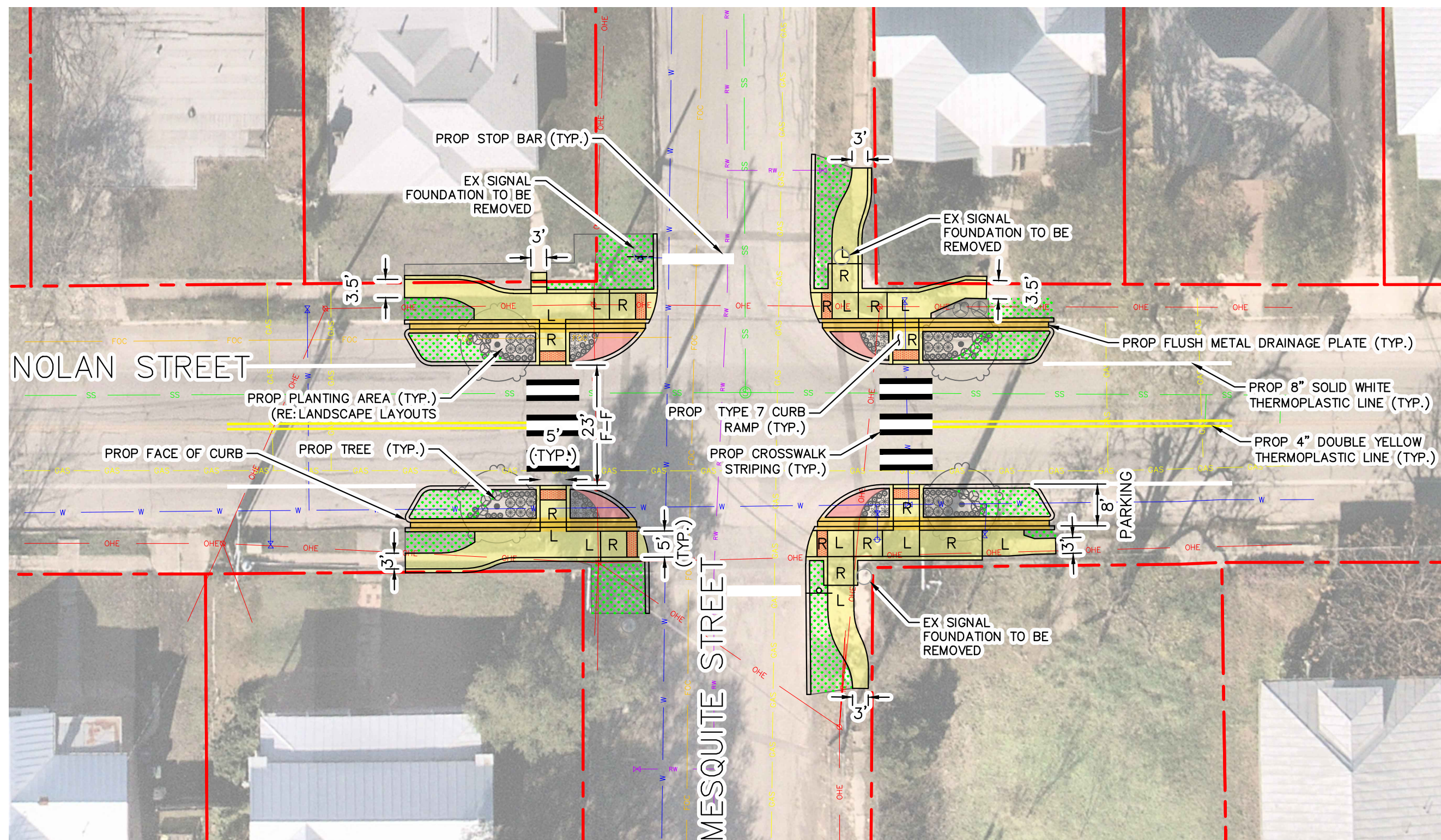
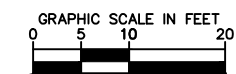


# NOLAN ST. AT MESQUITE ST. - INTERSECTION ENHANCEMENTS

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN CONCEPT





NOLAN STREET & MESQUITE STREET CONCEPTUAL LAYOUT



## Bryan Morales (OHP)

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**From:** Marc Jacobson (PWD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 6:38 AM  
**To:** Bryan Morales (OHP)  
**Subject:** RE: 601 Nolan (ROW) - HDRC Greeting

Bryan,

The plan submitted isn't construction drawings just a schematic showing the general location of the sidewalk. At all of the locations you highlighted, that is where we plan to tie back into the original sidewalk. However, there is no work planned from the wall back toward the homes so there is no reason the walls would be touched. However, some of the existing sidewalk on the street side of the wall would be removed and replaced with grass with the wall to remain.

I will verify this with the consultant and see if maybe we can just add a note on the plans in each area that calls out that the existing retaining wall to remain. We should be able to do that by the 17<sup>th</sup>. Would that work?

**Marc Jacobson, P.E., PTOE**

**Transportation Systems Management & Operations (TSMO) Program Manager**

Public Works Department

City of San Antonio

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**PUBLIC WORKS**



[sanantonio.gov/PublicWorks](https://sanantonio.gov/PublicWorks)

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**From:** Bryan Morales (OHP) <Bryan.Morales@sanantonio.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 9, 2023 4:04 PM  
**To:** Marc Jacobson (PWD) <Marc.Jacobson@sanantonio.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: 601 Nolan (ROW) - HDRC Greeting

Hello Marc,

I know when we spoke on the phone, you had mentioned that the historic retaining walls would not be touched; however, the site plan shows that there would have to be modifications to them.

I have attached a portion of the sight plan and have highlighted the areas of concern within it. If you would like, we can still take this to HDRC as submitted on the 17<sup>th</sup> or we can postpone to June 7<sup>th</sup> to allow the consultant enough time to modify the site plan to reflect that the retaining walls would not be modified.

For clarity, OHP would not recommend approval of the plan as submitted and HDRC would be unlikely to approve this scope of work as well. We would recommend postponing to the 7<sup>th</sup> and having the consultant modify the plan to retain the retaining walls as they currently stand.

Thank you,

