



Chicano Park, "Parque Chicano," J. S. Talamantez, photographer, 2012

Name of Property: Chicano Park
City, State: San Diego, California
Period of Significance: 1970-1989
NHL Criteria: 1 and 5
NHL Exception: 8
NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
 2. Visual and performing arts
 5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design
 IV. Shaping the Political Landscape
 1. Parties, protests, and movements
 4. Political ideas, cultures, and theories

Previous Recognition: 2013 National Register of Historic Places
National Historic Context: *American Latinos & the Making of the United States Theme Study*
 XXIV. Painting and Sculpture
 Chicano Muralism
 XXXI. Social and Humanitarian Movements
 M. Civil Rights Movements
 Chicano Civil Rights Movement

NHL Significance:

- Chicano Park is an outstanding representation of the cultural and political legacies of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and the social history of American Latino/as in their struggle for political and social inclusion.
- On April 20, 1970, community residents occupied this property in a demonstration to



Chicano Park, “Cauhtémoc,” photograph by Todd Stands, 2012 (left); “Virgen de Guadalupe,” photograph by J. S. Talamantez, March 2013 (middle); “Mujer Cosmica,” photograph by Todd Stands, January 27, 2012 (right).

prevent the construction of a California Highway Patrol substation on land where the City of San Diego had promised the neighborhood a community park.

- Successful in creating the park, Chicano Park has become a cultural and recreational gathering place for the Chicano community.
- The park is also the location of the Chicano Park Monumental Murals, an exceptional assemblage of master mural artwork painted on the freeway bridge supports. Created by a large group of Chicano artist’s collectives, the murals commemorate the struggle to reclaim the property as an urban park for a marginalized neighborhood.

Integrity:

- The life cycle of a mural is approximately ten years, therefore maintenance is important.
- In 1991, the California Department of Transportation (Cal Trans) trained numerous artists in repair techniques.
- In 2002, Cal Trans sought and obtained Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 funding (\$1,613,000) to restore the identified historic murals in Chicano Park. The eighteen selected murals were painted during phases one (1973-74), two (1974-1975), and three (1977-1980). These restored murals are expected to maintain their appearance for more than eighty years.
- During this project, Chicano Park mural artists and Cal Trans engineers collaborated to develop advanced technological approaches for mural restoration which resulted in the creation of the “Chicano Park Mural Restoration Technical Manual.”

Owner of Property: City of San Diego and California Department of Transportation

Acreage of Property: 7.4 acres

Origins of Nomination: In 1996, the California State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the California Department of Transportation's assessment that Chicano Park and its murals, although not yet fifty years old, met the exceptional importance criterion for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources. The actual National Register (NR) listing did not occur until 2013. Shortly after it was determined that Chicano Park may be eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) under a recently begun theme study entitled *American Latinos and the Making of the United States*. In the summer of 2015, an intern with the Latino Heritage Internship Program (LHIP) detailed to the NHL Program in Washington, DC developed an NHL nomination based on the National Register documentation.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Recognition of Chicano Park will bring national recognition to a property that can tell multiple stories about Latino heritage in the United States. It will also reinforce that the history of the United States includes many diverse cultures.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None is known.

Landmarks Committee Comments: Dr. Allan liked the nomination but recommends that additional maps be added. Committee asked whether Criteria Exception 8 could apply to this property. Stephanie Toothman, Associate Director for Cultural Resources, recommended that a paragraph be added to the nomination noting that the documentation would be updated in the future to extend the period of significance.

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Chen moved, Dr. Allan seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 5/6/16):

The Honorable Scott Peters, California 52nd District, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

The Honorable Jared Huffman, California 2nd District, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC

The Honorable Linda T. Sánchez, California 38th District, U.S. House of Representatives, Chairwoman, Congressional Hispanic Caucus

The Honorable Juan Vargas, California 51st District, U.S. House of Representatives, Member, Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Laura Dominguez, Co-Chair, Latinos in Heritage Conservation

Desiree M. Smith, Co-Chair, Latinos in Heritage Conservation

The Honorable Luis A. Alejo, Assembly Member, 30th District; Chair, California Latino Legislative Caucus, Sacramento, California

The Honorable Ben Hueso, State Senator, 40th District; Vice Chair, California Latino Legislative Caucus, Sacramento, California

David Alvarez, Councilmember, Eighth District, City of San Diego, California

Craig Watson, Director, California Arts Council, Sacramento, California



Sehila Mota Casper, Field Officer, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Houston, Texas
Raymond W. Rast, Ph.D., Department of History, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington
Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer, Office of Historic Preservation,
Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento, California
The Honorable Kevin L. Faulconer, Mayor of the City of San Diego, California
The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Assemblywoman, 80th District, California Legislature,
Sacramento, California
Amy Kitchener, Executive Director, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, Fresno, California

Advisory Board Recommendation: