

## ***News from the Helotes Heritage Association***

Dear Readers,

There was a press conference called today by the Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas (AGUA), Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (GEAA), Hausman United Communities (Kyle Seale area), Helotes Heritage Association, and the Hill Country Planning Association asking the City of San Antonio to not rezone land at the Rim and at the intersection of 1604 and Hausman to allow for high density commercial.

Following is the statement that was presented by the HHA at the press conference. As expressed in the statement, HHA strongly opposes the proposed rezoning. HHA intends to present the statement at the San Antonio City Council meeting this Thursday when the rezoning request is to be voted on.

Sincerely,  
Ron Green  
HHA, President

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The San Antonio City Council is to vote Thursday June 21 whether to rezone property near the intersection of Hausman and 1604 from residential to commercial. This rezoning would also allow for higher density development over the recharge zone. The Helotes Heritage Association can understand why some private interests want to see land located in the 1604 corridor zoned to allow for this heavy commercial development. The problem with this is that the land in question is located squarely in the middle of the Edwards Aquifer recharge area.

The proposed C-2 commercial zoning would allow for big box stores such as a Lowes or a WalMart. These enterprises sell pesticides, herbicides, solvents, and similar products and store large amounts of these toxins on their premises. Under ideal conditions, these products are handled responsibly and pose no threat to the environment. However, ideal conditions are not always achieved. From time to time, poor practices result in these toxins washed off site where they can get into streambeds and then into the groundwater.

The greatest threat from these types of commercial enterprises, however, is not from day-to-day practices; it comes from catastrophic events such as fires. Too sadly, we learned what threats we face when we have a serious fire over the recharge zone. Fortunately we only got some soot in the Edwards Aquifer from the Helotes mulch fire and it cleared out in a few days.

What would happen if a large box store built over the recharge zone were to catch fire? The amount of water required to battle a fire in at 200,000 sq ft big box store would fill on-site detention ponds in less than 30 minutes. That means you better snuff out the fire in a half hour or let it burn and in either case hope no toxins are washed off site. Because if the fire is over the recharge zone, those toxins would be washed directly into the Edwards Aquifer.

And these toxins are serious business. They would not simply degrade the smell and taste of groundwater like soot. These toxins are carcinogens and when they enter the Edwards Aquifer, they will be there for a long, long time.

Because of this, HHA strongly opposes rezoning the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone to allow for businesses that handle pesticides, herbicides, solvents, and other toxins. The City of San Antonio has recently shown great leadership as a steward of the Edwards Aquifer. We ask that San Antonio continue to show such leadership and continue to protect the recharge zone to our very valuable, yet vulnerable resource, the Edwards Aquifer.