

## *News from the Helotes Heritage Association*

Dear Readers,

On November 5, 2008, the Helotes Planning and Zoning Committee unanimously voted to deny the motion to rezone the land on the northeast corner of Scenic Loop and Bandera from low and moderate intensity commercial zoning (B-1 and B-2) to high intensity commercial (B-3). Without this rezoning, a bigbox store, such as a Super WalMart or HEB Plus, cannot be built on this property. A bigbox store can only be built on land zoned B-3. The P&Z Committee is to be commended for voting to maintain this sensible level of zoning.

On December 11, 2008, the Helotes City Council will consider whether to rezone this parcel to B-3 to allow construction of a bigbox store at the corner of Scenic Loop and Bandera. This would be a poorly advised decision for a number of reasons. Foremost of these reasons are the excessive traffic, increased crime, and general degradation that would come to Helotes as a direct result of the bigbox store, no matter which company built it.

Of great concern, however, is the effect that a bigbox store would have on the environment of Helotes. The most environmentally sensitive area in Helotes is at the intersection of Scenic Loop and Bandera roads due to the confluence of the Helotes and Los Reyes Creeks, the large amount of floodwaters that currently are absorbed by exposed bedrock in that area, and that these waters provide rapid and significant recharge to the Edwards Aquifer.

Construction of a bigbox store at the intersection of Scenic Loop and Bandera would have a grave impact on each of these aspects of the environment. Construction of a bigbox store with its large parking lot would lead to significant flooding of Helotes Creek and Old Town Helotes, even during modest rainfall. Even the construction of runoff settling ponds cannot retain enough to runoff from the building and parking lot to avoid downstream flooding. These excessive runoff waters will rapidly infiltrate as recharge to the Edwards Aquifer. Any contaminant that runs off of the parking lot will also rapidly recharge the Edwards Aquifer.

Construction of a bigbox store and large parking lots at the intersection of Scenic Loop and Bandera would not be an advisable decision by a responsible City Council and would clearly not be in the best long-term interest of Helotes. The City Council of Helotes should vote to maintain the current zoning of B-1 and B-2 at the intersection of Scenic Loop and Bandera.

Please attend the Public Hearing at 7:00 pm on Thursday December 11, 2008 to voice your concern regarding this potential rezoning. Now is the time to positively affect the future of our community.

Sincerely,  
Ron Green, President  
Helotes Heritage Association