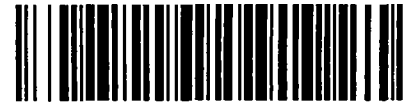




City of Chicago



O2022-1791

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	6/22/2022
Sponsor(s):	Misc. Transmittal
Type:	Ordinance
Title:	Historical landmark designation for Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags at W Division St and N Artesian Ave (2400W), and N Mozart St (2800W)
Committee(s) Assignment:	Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards



JUN14 '22 1:22PM

CHGO CITY CLERK1

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF CHICAGO

COUNCIL DIVISION

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Anna M. Valencia
City Clerk
City of Chicago
Room 107, City Hall
121 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Ordinance designating the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags (W. Division Street at N. Artesian Avenue and N. Mozart Street) as a Chicago Landmark

Dear Clerk Valencia:

We are filing with your office for introduction at the June 22, 2022, City Council meeting as a transmittal to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago the recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

The material being submitted to you for this proposal includes the:

1. Recommendation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks; and
2. Proposed Ordinance.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Dickhut
Deputy Commissioner
Bureau of Citywide Systems and Historic Preservation

encls.

cc: The Honorable Roberto Maldonado, Alderman 26th Ward (*w/o enclosures*)

ORDINANCE

Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags

W. Division Street at N. Artesian Avenue [2400-West] and N. Mozart Street [2800-West]

WHEREAS, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Municipal Code of Chicago (the "Municipal Code"), Sections 2-120-620 through -690, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the "Commission") has determined that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags spanning W. Division Street at N. Artesian Avenue [2400-West] and at N. Mozart Street [2800-West], Chicago, Illinois, as depicted in **Exhibit A**, attached hereto and incorporated herein, satisfies three (3) criteria for landmark designation as set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4), and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags represent the Puerto Rican presence and persistence in the City of Chicago, the state of Illinois and the United States—given that the Puerto Rican flag is the most significant representation of the Puerto Rican identity and given that the original Puerto Rican flag was adopted by Puerto Ricans living in the United States in 1895; and

WHEREAS, the steel structure of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags symbolizes three major aspects of Chicago's industrial heritage which Puerto Ricans participated in including steel, steel pipelines and welding; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags were dedicated on January 6, 1995, marking the centennial of the Puerto Rican flag and celebrating the most important day of the Puerto Rican ritual calendar, Three Kings Day; and

WHEREAS, the flags of Paseo Boricua make the area the only officially recognized Puerto Rican community in the United States and the welded-steel sculptures in the form of Puerto Rican flags serve as a community icon and a point of pride for the Puerto Rican community; and

WHEREAS, community-based placemaking infrastructure projects like the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are significant in Chicago history because they reflect community history and civic pride; and

WHEREAS, the design of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags successfully transforms rigid steel tubing and plate into a dynamic visual representation of flowing cloth; indeed, the Paseo Boricua Flags are the largest flags in the world that are not made of cloth; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags exhibit exceptional craftsmanship in structural steel, including design, installation and fabrication with a high-level of execution in welding technique; and

WHEREAS, as towering symbols of the flag of Puerto Rico, long a symbol of Puerto Rican consciousness and self-determination, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are a distinctive visual feature of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and a unique sculpture in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags have significant historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest

or value, the integrity of which is preserved in light of their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2022, the Commission adopted a resolution recommending to the City Council of the City of Chicago (the "City Council") that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags be designated a Chicago Landmark; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. The above recitals are hereby adopted as the findings of the City Council.

SECTION 2. The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are hereby designated a Chicago Landmark in accordance with Section 2-120-700 of the Municipal Code.

SECTION 3. For purposes of Sections 2-120-740 and 2-120-770 of the Municipal Code governing permit review, the significant historical and architectural features of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are identified as:

- All elevations of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags.

SECTION 4. The Commission is hereby directed to create a suitable plaque appropriately identifying the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags as a Chicago Landmark.

SECTION 5. If any provision of this ordinance shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any reason, the invalidity or unenforceability of such provision shall not affect any of the other provisions of this ordinance.

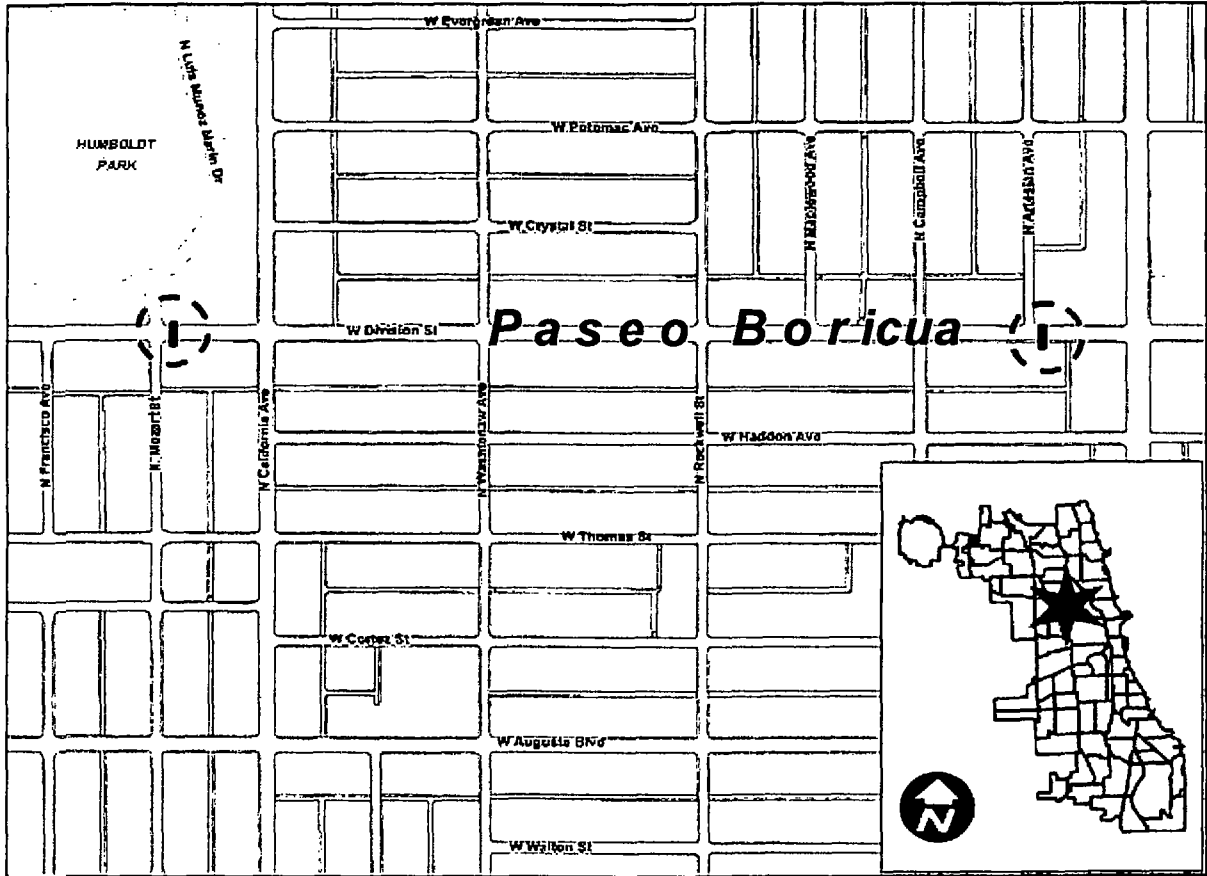
SECTION 6. All ordinances, resolutions, motions or orders in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 7. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and approval.

EXHIBIT A

Location

The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags span W. Division Street at N. Artesian Avenue [2400-West] and at N. Mozart Street [2800-West], Chicago, Illinois



**CITY OF CHICAGO
COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS**

May 5, 2022

**RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF CHICAGO THAT
CHICAGO LANDMARK DESIGNATION BE ADOPTED FOR THE**

PASEO BORICUA GATEWAY FLAGS

W. Division Street at N. Artesian Avenue [2400-West] and N. Mozart Street [2800-West]

Docket No. 2022-03

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago:

Pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code of the City of Chicago (the “Municipal Code”), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (the “Commission”) has determined that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are worthy of designation as a Chicago Landmark. On the basis of careful consideration of the history and architecture of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags, the Commission has found that they satisfy the following three (3) criteria set forth in Section 2-120-620 of the Municipal Code:

1. *Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*
4. *Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.*
7. *Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.*

I. BACKGROUND

The formal landmark designation process for the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags began on April 7, 2022, when the Commission approved a preliminary landmark recommendation (the “Preliminary Recommendation”) for the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags as a Chicago Landmark. The Commission found that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags meet three (3) of the seven (7) criteria for designation, as well as the integrity criterion, identified in the Chicago Landmarks Ordinance (Municipal Code, Section 2-120-580 *et seq.*). As part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission preliminarily identified the “significant historical and architectural features” of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags as:

- All elevations of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags.

Also, as part of the Preliminary Recommendation, the Commission adopted a Designation Report, dated April 7, 2022, the most current iteration of which is dated May 5, 2022, incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit A** (the “Designation Report”).

At its regular meeting of May 5, 2022, the Commission received a report incorporated herein and attached hereto as **Exhibit B** (the “Department of Planning and Development Report”) from Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development, stating that the proposed landmark designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags supports the City’s overall planning goals and is consistent with the City’s governing policies and plans.

On April 7, 2022, the Commission received written consent to landmark designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags in a form dated April 7, 2022, and signed by Commissioner Gia Biagi, City of Chicago Department of Transportation, representing the owner of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags (the City of Chicago).

II. FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 2-120-690 of the Municipal Code, the Commission has reviewed the entire record of proceedings on the proposed Chicago Landmark designation, including the Designation Report and all of the information on the proposed landmark designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags represent the Puerto Rican presence and persistence in the City of Chicago, the state of Illinois and the United States—given that the Puerto Rican flag is the most significant representation of the Puerto Rican identity and given that the original Puerto Rican flag was adopted by Puerto Ricans living in the United States in 1895; and

WHEREAS, the steel structure of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags symbolizes three major aspects of Chicago’s industrial heritage which Puerto Ricans participated in including steel, steel pipelines and welding; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags were dedicated on January 6, 1995, marking the centennial of the Puerto Rican flag and celebrating the most important day of the Puerto Rican ritual calendar, Three Kings Day; and

WHEREAS, the flags of Paseo Boricua make the area the only officially recognized Puerto Rican community in the United States and the welded-steel sculptures in the form of Puerto Rican flags serve as a community icon and a point of pride for the Puerto Rican community; and

WHEREAS, community-based placemaking infrastructure projects like the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are significant in Chicago history because they reflect community history and civic pride; and

WHEREAS, the design of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags successfully transforms rigid steel tubing and plate into a dynamic visual representation of flowing cloth; indeed, the Paseo Boricua Flags are the largest flags in the world that are not made of cloth; and

WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags exhibit exceptional craftsmanship in structural steel, including design, installation and fabrication with a high-level of execution in welding technique; and

WHEREAS, as towering symbols of the flag of Puerto Rico, long a symbol of Puerto Rican consciousness and self-determination, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are a distinctive visual feature of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and a unique sculpture in Chicago; and

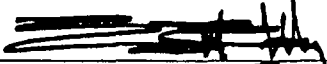
WHEREAS, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags meet three (3) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags have significant historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value, the integrity of which is preserved in light of their location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and ability to express such historic, community, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value; now, therefore,

THE COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS HEREBY:

1. Adopts the recitals, findings and statements of fact set forth in the preamble and Sections I and II hereof as the findings of the Commission; and
2. Adopts the Designation Report, as revised, and dated this May 5, 2022; and
3. Finds, based on the Designation Report and the entire record before the Commission, that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags meet the three (3) criteria for landmark designation set forth in Section 2-120-620 (1), (4) and (7) of the Municipal Code; and
4. Finds that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags satisfy the "integrity" requirement set forth in Section 2-120-630 of the Municipal Code; and
5. Finds that the significant historical and architectural features of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are identified as follows:
 - All elevations of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags.
6. Recommends the designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags a Chicago Landmark.

This recommendation was adopted unanimously (7-0).


Ernest C. Wong, Chair
Commission on Chicago Landmarks

Dated: May 5, 2022

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



PASEO BORICUA GATEWAY FLAGS **WEST DIVISION STREET AT ARTESIAN AVENUE [2400-WEST]** **AND MOZART STREET [2800-WEST]**

Final Landmark Recommendation Adopted by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks,
on May 5, 2022



CITY OF CHICAGO
Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Maurice Cox, Commissioner

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PASEO BORICUA GATEWAY FLAGS

WEST DIVISION STREET AT ARTESIAN AVENUE [2400-WEST] AND MOZART STREET [2800-WEST]

BUILT: 1995

ARCHITECTS: JAMES R. DEStEFANO, FAIA, RIBA, PRINCIPAL IN CHARGE;

JOHN ADAMS DIX, AIA, MANAGEMENT PRINCIPAL;

JOHN EDWARD WINDHORST, PROJECT ARCHITECT

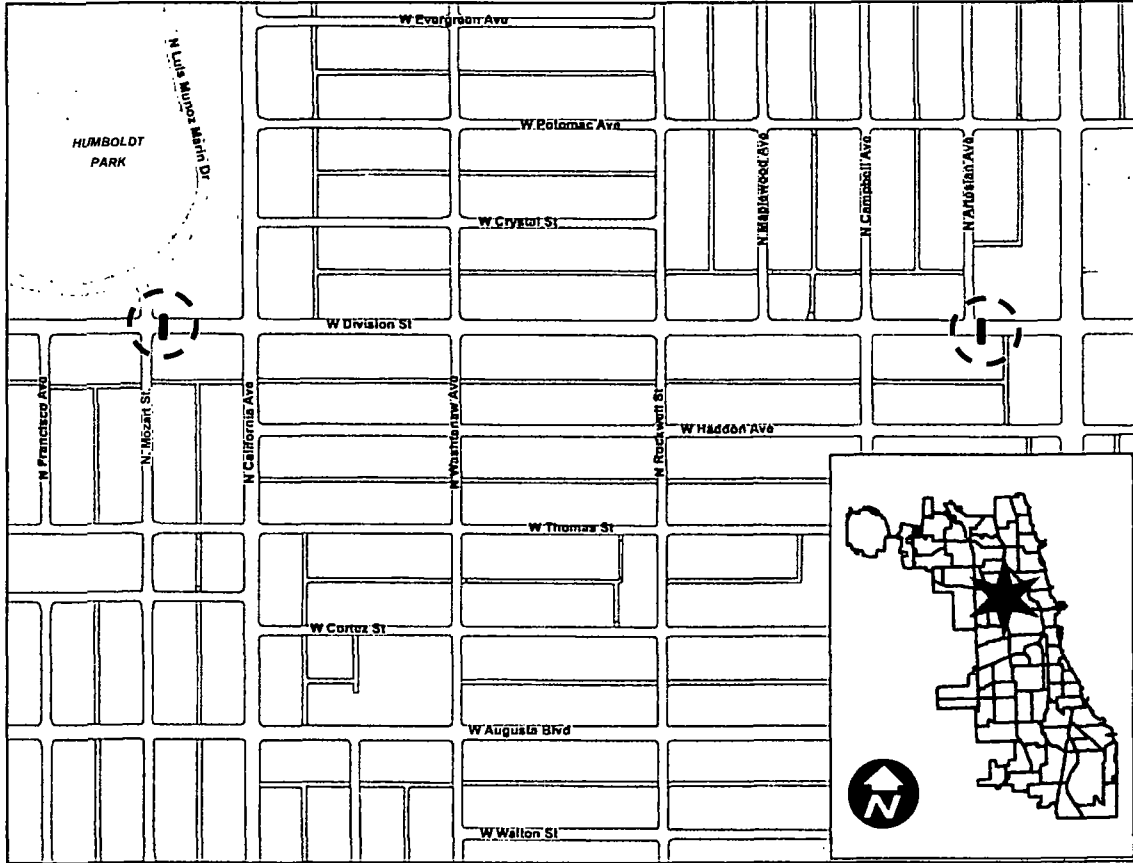
RODRIGUEZ ASSOCIATES: OSVALDO “OZZIE” RODRIGUEZ

McCLIER COMPANY

The Paseo Boricua is a section of Division Street in the Humboldt Park neighborhood that was formally recognized in 1995 as the economic, political, and cultural center of Chicago’s Puerto Rican community. At either end of the paseo stand twin steel gateway sculptures designed in the shape of fluttering Puerto Rican flags. Each gateway is a sinuous network of red and blue steel tube and plate that stand 55 feet tall and 56 feet wide. The innovative design transforms rigid structural steel into forms that appear to billow and ripple in the wind.

For over a century, the flag of Puerto Rico has been a symbol of identity and consciousness within the Puerto Rican community. The steel sculptures in the form of this symbol serve as a community icon and a point of pride for the Puerto Rican community in Chicago and the community’s decades-long ties to Division Street and the larger Humboldt Park neighborhood. The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags grew out of a community-based process and were completed in 1995.

In 2019, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks identified the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags as part of the *Community Streetscape Markers: Context Statement*. The Context Statement recognized the cultural significance of this type of public improvement and laid out the criteria necessary for these community resources to be designated Chicago landmarks.



The two gateway flags mark a 1/2 mile stretch of Division Street in the Humboldt Park neighborhood. This stretch of Division Street is known as Paseo Boricua and forms the economic, social and cultural heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community.



Over 50 murals adorn the six blocks between the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags, many were painted since the flags were dedicated, and several include images of the flag sculpture itself, including 79th at left by John Vergara, from 2010.

THE HUMBOLDT PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags mark the entrances to a section of West Division Street known as Paseo Boricua, which is the heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community. The Paseo Boricua runs east-to-west through the Humboldt Park neighborhood within the larger West Town Community Area.

The land that is now Humboldt Park is near historic Native American trails now traced by Milwaukee and Grand Avenues. Originally these thoroughfares were important trade routes in the Great Lakes region for indigenous peoples like the Council of the Three Fires (Ojibwa, Odawa, Potawatomi), among others who inhabited the area before European colonization.

The Humboldt Park neighborhood, as well as the 206-acre pastoral landscaped park in it, both take their name from the Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. Like many Chicago neighborhoods, Humboldt Park has been home to a number of different ethnic communities over time. Germans and Scandinavian began to move in and develop the area in the late 1850s and 1860s. They were followed after the turn of the 20th century by Polish, Italians, Russians, and Eastern European Jews who built much of the housing stock as well as churches and synagogues that surround the area. These groups left landmarks in Humboldt Park accenting their cultural roots with statues of Alexander Von Humboldt, the German novelist and poet Fritz Reuter, as well as, Norse explorer Leif Erikson, which still stand in the park.

In 1904, the Polish community in Humboldt Park raised money to erect and dedicate a statue to Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko, which attracted an estimated 50,000 people to the ceremony. The statue stood in Humboldt Park until 1978, when it was relocated near Northerly Island. European groups also left important institutions like the Norwegian American Hospital, which was founded in 1894 and continues to independently operate today as a community hospital (renamed Humboldt Park Health in 2021). As a result, the area of Division Street from Oakley to Francisco Street, has seen a concentration of health services including St. Mary's and St. Elizabeth hospitals on the east, and health clinics, private practice offices, small pharmacies, nonprofit healthcare providers like Vida SIDA/Puerto Rican Cultural Center, dentists, physical therapists and non-traditional health & healing providers are found along Division Street.

Humboldt Park was also home to Saul Bellow, one of Chicago's greatest literary figures and Nobel Laureate (1976). Two of his most-respected works were written in the neighborhood, including *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), which received the National Book Award for Fiction and *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), which won the Pulitzer Prize in Literature in 1976. Another significant person associated with Humboldt Park is Jens Jensen, the prominent landscape architect who developed the Prairie Style of Landscape architecture in Chicago. He made the Humboldt Park neighborhood his home when he was appointed superintendent of its namesake park. His offices were in the Humboldt Park Receptory Building and Stable, which today serves as the home of the National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts & Culture (the building is also a designated Chicago Landmark).



The Humboldt Park neighborhood takes its name from the large park in its midst. This park, was designed by William LeBaron Jenney's as part of the park and boulevard system that connected the South and West Sides. Shown here is the lagoon with its 1907 Prairie-style Boathouse/ Refectory designed by Schmidt, Garden & Martin.



Humboldt Park's named for Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt, represented by a portrait sculpture in Humboldt Park cast in 1892 by sculptor Felix Gorling. It is shown here in a stereoscope. Credit: Library of Congress, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>.

PASEO BORICUA, THE PUERTO RICAN CULTURAL DISTRICT IN CHICAGO

The Puerto Rican community began arriving in Chicago in significant numbers during the early 1950s when Puerto Rico became a commonwealth of the United States. Historians cite a push-pull dynamic in the movement of Puerto Ricans from the island to the mainland: a lack of economic opportunity on the island provided a push, while the hope of better jobs on the mainland served as the pull. In Chicago, many Puerto Ricans found employment in the area's steel industry, a legacy honored by the steel material used to construct the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags. Initially, the newcomers settled throughout the city, but especially on the Near West Side along Harrison Street and on the North Side in Lincoln Park and Lake View. Most Puerto Ricans left these areas during the 1960s in the face of the construction of the University of Illinois at Chicago campus on the Near West Side and gentrification in both Lincoln Park and Lake View. After this displacement, the Puerto Rican community in Chicago coalesced around the West Town and Humboldt Park neighborhoods with Division Street serving as the economic and cultural spine of the community.

The Puerto Rican corridor of Division Street was originally known to the community as *La Division*. In 1966, the first Puerto Rican parade was held on Division Street, a cultural tradition that continues today. More recently, the combined Spanish-English name of the street, *La Division*, has been replaced with the appellation *Paseo Boricua*. *Boricua* is derived from *Borikén*, the name used by the indigenous *Taíno* population of the island prior to Spanish colonization.

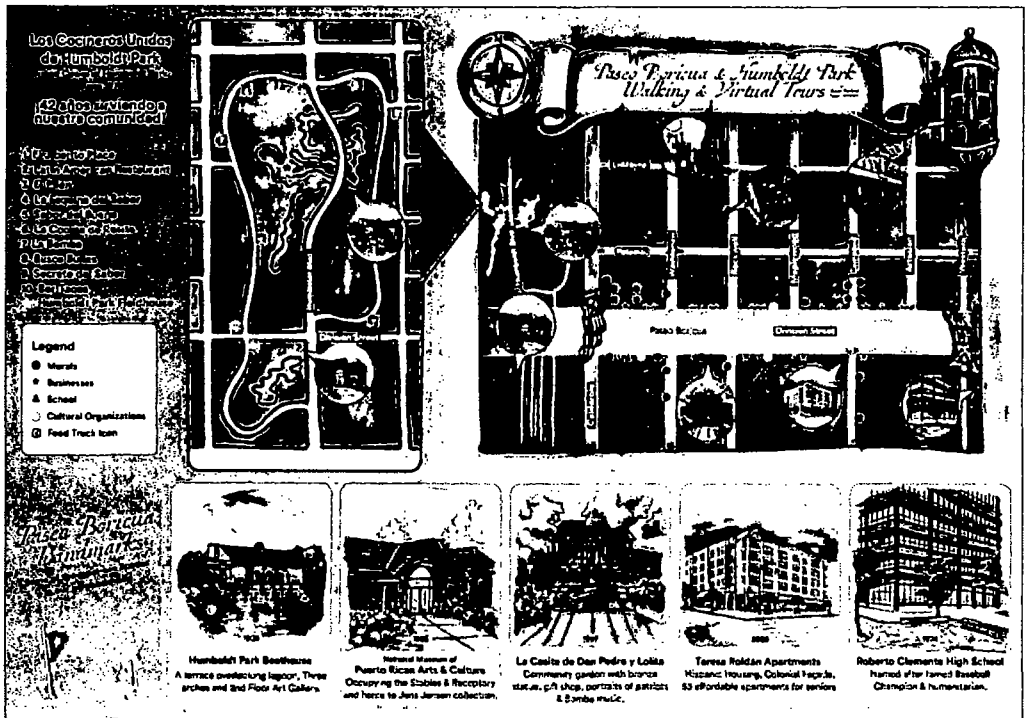
Paseo Boricua is now the most-densely commercialized Puerto Rican business district in the United States. This space serves as the epicenter of Puerto Rican Chicago and is often described as the Puerto Rican's "*pedacito de patria*" (a small piece of the homeland). The Paseo Boricua Flags mark the gateway for either side of the six-block corridor of Puerto Rican businesses, restaurants, affordable housing developments, non-profit organizations, and cultural institutions like the Urban Theater Company, Africaribe and La Casita de Don Pedro. The strip that composes Paseo Boricua is considered by those living inside and outside of the area, both Puerto Ricans and non-Puerto Ricans alike, to be the "heart" of Chicago's Puerto Rican community.

PLANNING, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE PASEO BORICUA GATEWAY FLAGS

During the 1970s and 1980s, Division Street suffered from disinvestment, high retail vacancies, crime, and deteriorated infrastructure. In the 1990s, continued gentrification at the community's eastern edges pushed the Puerto Rican population west past Western Avenue. Community leaders concerned by both the high levels of vacancy and perceived threat posed by gentrification began plans in the early 1990s for the revitalization of Division Street. Devised by community members as well as then-alderman Billy Ocasio, the idea for Paseo Boricua – the



Numerous annual festivals have longstanding traditions celebrating the Puerto Rican culture and pride on Division St. / Paseo Boricua since 1966. These include the Puerto Rican day Parade (established 1966), The Puerto Rican Festival in the Park (established 1977), The Puerto Rican Peoples Parade (established 1978), Fiesta Boricua (established 1994), Three Kings Day Parade (established 1995) and Haunted Paseo Boricua (established 2001). Credit: José E. López and Eduardo Arocho, M.S.



A current visitor's map of Paseo Boricua highlights the steel flags as well as the culture of the city's Puerto Rican corridor, including cuisine, murals, businesses, schools and cultural organizations. Credit: Paseo Boricua Tour Company.



The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags transform steel plate and tube into a towering representation of the flag of Puerto Rico, long a symbol of Puerto Rican consciousness and self determination. Credit: Paseo Boricua Tour Company.

Puerto Rican community's street – was inspired by other ethno-cultural districts in the city. Alderman Ocasio presented the district concept to mayor Richard M. Daley, who supported the project and approved its funding. The City hired the firm of DeStefano+Partners to design gateways that delineate the district and serve as entrances to the community. The firm's 1994 proposal featured the twin flag gateways in addition to a comprehensive streetscaping plan that included small plazas bordered in Spanish tiles with central shade trees. The plazas were designed to create inviting outdoor spaces for local interaction that had the atmosphere of an avenue in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In addition, a series of laser-cut metal lamp post banners featuring traditional *Taino* symbols and 78 painted planters representing towns of Puerto Rico were installed.

Planning for the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags began in 1994 and took nine months. Ocasio, with the support of Congressman Luis Gutierrez, then-Cook County Commissioner Roberto Maldonado, the Division Street Business Development Association and community leader José López responded to a call articulated in a 1993 community summit held at Roberto Clemente High school convened by the Puerto Rican Agenda of Chicago, a non-profit community organization. The summit started to formalize the idea of having some kind of marker in the community. Ocasio explained “I personally wanted some type of gateway. That was the task given to the architectural firm. We need something that's going to anchor all of that and let people know. That's when I said I wanted gateways.”

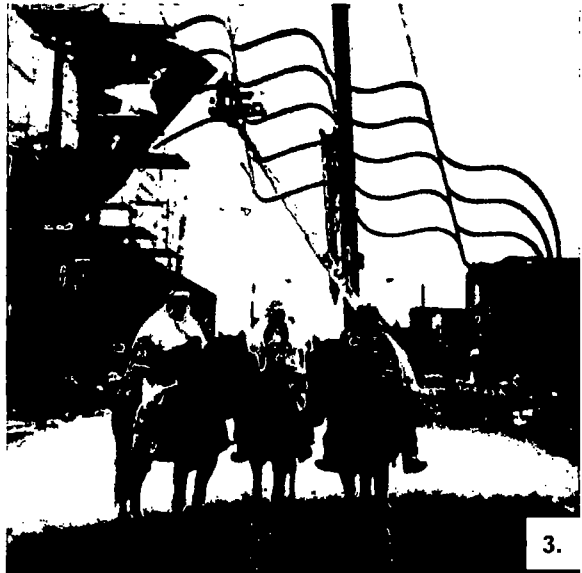
Ocasio goes on to discuss how the architects came back with ten different gateway designs. But he and José López knew the moment they saw the winning flag design: “At the meeting, José López and I just looked at each other and we said, ‘That one!’” The architects asked if they wanted to go through the other proposals, but Ocasio and José declined, expressing, “No, no, no, no, we just want this.”

Architects Edward Windhorst and James DeStefano came up with the design by walking in the community, observing, and talking to residents. The architects explained to Ocasio how they came up with the flag design, “everywhere you took us, people or somewhere, every store, every restaurant, everybody had the (Puerto Rican) flag somehow. So, we thought that it's not like any other flag because, people take pride in a lot of things, but in the Puerto Rican community, the flag, has always been the symbol.” The architects said, “Look, why don't we do this?” By observing and interacting with the community they concluded that the flag really captured the pride and sense of community among Puerto Rican people.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico adopted its flag in 1952, however the concept of a distinct flag for the Puerto Rican island and its people traces its origins to 1868 when the first Puerto Rican flag was designed by Dr. Ramón Emeterio Betances and embroidered by Mariana Bracetti during *El Grito de Lares*, a revolt against Spanish colonial rule of the island that was itself an early manifestation of Puerto Rican national identity. The design of the current Puerto Rican flag originated in New York in 1895 from a group of Puerto Rican exiles who had led the *Grito de Lares*. When Puerto Rico was annexed by the United States six year later, the Puerto Rican flag was prohibited from being flown on the island until 1952 when the Commonwealth



1. The flags are a double-lattice structure built up from steel tubes.
2. Flowing "pipe waves" were welded end-to-end with a high level of technical expertise. . (Credit: Chicago Tribune)
3. The Paseo Boricua Flags were dedicated on January 6, 1995, the occasion of *Día de Los Reyes Magos*, or the Feast of Three Kings when Christmas is traditionally celebrated in Puerto Rico with the exchange of gifts. . (Credit: Chicago Tribune)



was declared. The design of the flag consists of horizontal stripes, with red symbolizing blood and white peace. A blue triangle at the left side symbolizes water and the island's three branches of government. The white star represents the island itself.

The two flags span Division Street at Artesian Avenue to the east and Mozart Street to the west. The easternmost is near Roberto Clemente High School, an important educational institution in the community; the westernmost flag stands at edge of Humboldt Park, the historic landscaped park where Puerto Rican festivals are held. The distance from flag-to-flag is the ½ mile section of Division Street known as Paseo Boricua.

The design and construction of the flags successfully transforms tons of welded steel plate and tubing into a visually dynamic and flowing form much like a cloth flag, indeed the Paseo Boricua Flags are the largest flags in the world that are not made of cloth. Architect John Edward Windhorst of DeStefano+Partners as well as architects McClier Company and Ozzie Rodriguez of Rodriguez Associates designed the gateways, which were installed in 1996 under the auspices of the Chicago Department of Transportation. The flags have been recognized with numerous awards, most notably the “Building of the Year Award” presented by the American Institute of Architects in 1995. They have been highly acknowledged for their streetscape projects in the City of Chicago. In addition to the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags, DeStefano+Partners also designed the Rainbow Pylons and Legacy Walk on North Halsted Street, a designated Chicago Landmark which commemorate the LGBTQ community in Chicago. They also designed the Madison St Bridge over the Kennedy Expressway (1996). This bridge was a prototype for the other bridges over the Kennedy—the red handrail sports motifs drawn from the Chicago Flag

Each gateway flag weighs about 45 tons and rises up 56 feet into the air, while spanning the 59 feet across the width of Division Street. Foundations of 70 tons of concrete carry each flag with a gravity load to hold much more weight than the above structure. The flags are constructed of structural steel joined with welds, respectively honoring an industry and skilled trade that hard-working Puerto Ricans found employment in when they arrived in Chicago.

The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags were fabricated by one of Chicago area's oldest ironworks, the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company. Installation began in December 1994 and lasted six weeks. The fabrication and installation of the flags were an engineering challenge. Each flag is a double-lattice structure to resist wind loading up to 77 miles per hour. Then-new digital technologies, including computer-aided design and manufacturing were used to make the sculptural elements as thin and light as possible. Each flag is built up with hundreds of steel tubes joined with full-penetration welds ground smooth, several of which had to be completed *in situ*. The steel surfaces were shot peened and finished with bright blue and red epoxy coatings.

According to Horst Peppia of the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company, construction and installation took five months. The structure was transported from the shop to the site in four pieces: the vertical “mast” or flagpole, the “wave” of steel pipes representing the horizontal-

banded portion of the flag, the triangular “pendant” portion of the flag, and the “tangle” representing the twisting fabric.

Along with the giant flags, other renovations were added to Division Street as part of the recognition of the Puerto Rican community. According to August Chidichimo, Project Manager of the Chicago Department of Transportation, the entire cost of the project was \$1,250,000 which also included: the fabrication and installation of the black metal banners on the lampposts, acorn lights on the lampposts; 16 cement *placitas* (table and seats); provision for diagonal parking on two side streets, Campbell Ave. and Washtenaw Ave.; some concrete work on the pavement and the refurbishing of trees.

The Paseo Boricua Flags were dedicated on January 6, 1995, the occasion of *Día de Los Reyes Magos*, or the Feast of Three Kings when Christmas is traditionally celebrated in Puerto Rico with the exchange of gifts. The installation represented a new chapter for the community—a “marker” that slowed down gentrification, brought hope and much needed economic and community development into these inner-city blocks. The choice of the Puerto Rican flag as the symbol design grew from listening to community leaders and residents, reflecting the importance of community-driven design.

Within a year of the completion flag gateways, the stretch of Division Street locally known as Paseo Boricua had quickly transformed. Sixteen new businesses opened in the first year, with a total of more than 90 businesses and organizations by the year 2000. The long history of Puerto Ricans in the Humboldt Park area was solidified and stabilized through several efforts but benefited especially from the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Section 2-120-690), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of Landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines that it meets two or more of the stated “Criteria for Designation,” as well as possesses a significant degree of historic design integrity. The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Value as an Example of City, State or National Heritage

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.

- The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags represent the Puerto Rican presence and persistence in the City of Chicago, the state of Illinois and the United States—given that the Puerto Rican

flag is the most significant representation of the Puerto Rican identity and given that the original Puerto Rican flag was adopted by Puerto Ricans living in the United States in 1895.

- The steel structure of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags represents three major aspects of Chicago's industrial production which Puerto Ricans participated in including steel, steel pipelines and welding.
- The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags were dedicated on January 6, 1995, marking the centennial of the Puerto Rican flag and celebrating the most important day of the Puerto Rican ritual calendar, Three Kings Day.
- The flags of Paseo Boricua make the area the only officially recognized Puerto Rican community in the United States and the welded-steel sculptures in the form of Puerto Rican flags serve as a community icon and a point of pride for the Puerto Rican community.
- Community-based placemaking infrastructure projects like the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are significant in Chicago history because they reflect community history and civic pride.

Criterion 4: Exemplary Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The design of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags successfully transforms rigid steel tubing and plate into a dynamic visual representation of flowing cloth; indeed, the Paseo Boricua Flags are the largest flags in the world that are not made of cloth.
- The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags exhibit exceptional craftsmanship in structural steel, including design, installation and fabrication with a high-level of execution in welding technique.

Criterion 7: Unique or Distinctive Visual Feature

Its unique location or distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Chicago.

- As towering symbols of the flag of Puerto Rico, long a symbol of Puerto Rican consciousness and self determination, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags are a distinctive visual feature of the Humboldt Park neighborhood and a unique sculpture in Chicago.

The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags also meet the additional requirements for designation outlined in the *Community Streetscape Markers Context Statement* adopted by the Commission on March 7, 2019, which states the following:

- The design of the marker(s) must employ the use of symbolism or imagery that is significant and/or reflects a certain social, ethnic, or cultural group. The work does not only recognize a geographic place within the city (street, neighborhood, or community area).
- The community marker(s) must be visible from the public-right-of-way.

- The marker(s) is a work of original art and/or architectural designed by an artist or architect. It is not a stock piece, or an element comprised of prefabricated components.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic value.

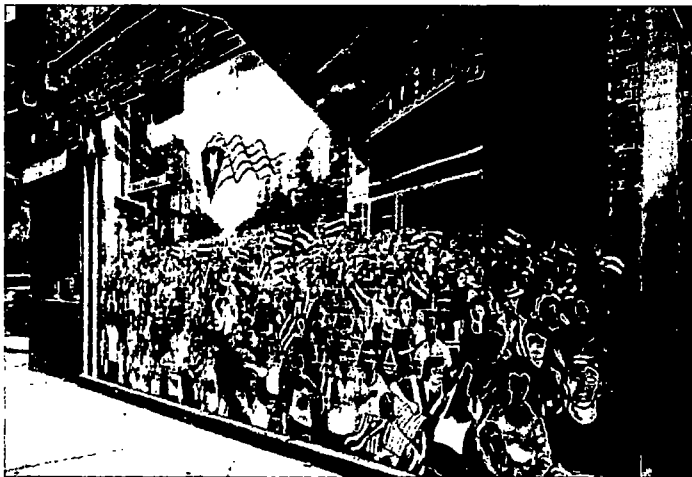
The Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags possess a high degree of integrity. They remain in their original location and the setting of commercial buildings on Division Street which remains the heart of Chicago’s Puerto Rican community as it was when the flags were dedicated. The exceptional design which renders steel into flowing cloth remains unchanged with the passage of time. Although nearly three decades have passed since their dedication, the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags remain an important symbol and point of pride for the Puerto Rican community and the City of Chicago as a whole.

SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the “significant historical and architectural features” of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered the most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its evaluation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All elevations of the two Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags.



The "Sea of Flags" mural is by Gamaliel Ramirez with help from Star Padilla, Luis Ortiz, Moncho, Melissa Cintron in Paseo Boricua shows the important symbolism of the Puerto Rican flag and its sculptural representation on Division Street. Credit: Chicago Tribune.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF CHICAGO

Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner

Kathleen Dickhut, Deputy Commissioner, Bureau of Citywide Systems and Historic Preservation

Authors

José E. López

Eduardo Arocho, M.S.

Staff

Matt Crawford, Project Manager

DPD would like to thank Patrick Pyszka, Principal Photographer, City of Chicago Department of Assets, Information and Services for the professional photography featured in this report.



The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor and City Council, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual building, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, City Hall, 121 North LaSalle Street, Room 905, Chicago, IL 60602; (312-744-3200) phone; web site: www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the final landmark designation ordinance as approved by City Council should be regarded as final.

COMMISSION ON CHICAGO LANDMARKS

Ernest C. Wong, Chair

Gabriel Ignacio Dziekiewicz, Vice-Chair

Maurice D. Cox, Secretary

Suellen Burns

Tiara Hughes

Alicia Ponce

Richard Tolliver

The Commission is staffed by the:



Department of Planning and Development
Bureau of Citywide Systems and Historic Preservation
City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St., Room 905
Chicago, Illinois 60602
312.744.3200 (TEL)
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>

May 2022



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
CITY OF CHICAGO

May 5, 2022

Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags

West Division Street at Artesian Avenue [2400-West] and Mozart Street [2800-West]

The Department of Planning and Development finds that the proposed landmark designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags supports the City's overall planning goals and is consistent with the City's governing policies and plans.

The two gateway flags mark a one-half mile section of Division Street in the Humboldt Park neighborhood. This stretch of Division Street is known as Paseo Boricua and forms the economic, social and cultural heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community.

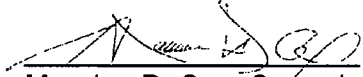
The Department of Planning and the Department of Housing have pursued several affordable housing, culture and public health development projects within a short distance of the Flags.

One of these is the **Humboldt Park Health (HPH) Wellness Center**. In March, the Plan Commission approved a proposal by Humboldt Park Health, formerly Norwegian Hospital, to build a three-story, 45,500-square-foot wellness center on a vacant lot it owns at 2933 W. Division Street. The community-centric design by JGMA architects will offer healthcare to area residents who disproportionately suffer from diabetes and congestive heart failure, as well as services such as rehab for stroke victims. The center will also include a wonderful natatorium with a formidable pool, a track, several fitness areas and a sports medicine clinic.

Three blocks to the east, construction is underway of the **Nancy Franco-Maldonado Paseo Boricua Arts Building** at 2715 W. Division. The development is being implemented via municipal bonds and will include the construction of a new five-story mixed-use building with 24 affordable residences targeting artists and their families. There will also be two commercial/retail spaces including a black box performance theater that will be leased by a local theater company.

The Department of Housing in partnership with the Hispanic Housing Development Corporation is also working on two new affordable housing developments a very short distance from the Flags. Forty affordable units are planned for a site at **1237 N. California Avenue**. Most of the apartments will be two- and three-bedroom units, all are geared toward working families. A few doors down at **1201-1209 N. California Avenue** the Hispanic Housing Development Corporation is planning a 64-unit affordable housing complex with 2,500 square feet of commercial space, 19 parking spaces.

In conclusion, the Department supports landmark designation of the Paseo Boricua Gateway Flags to recognize the cultural contributions of the Puerto Rican community to Chicago. The flags promote community pride, enhance the sense of place in the neighborhood and demonstrate that the space is cared for. These are goals that the Department encourages.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurice D. Cox", written over a horizontal line.

Maurice D. Cox, Commissioner
Department of Planning and Development