

Alamo Plan

November 6, 2020

Background

The City owns the Alamo Plaza and surrounding streets. The General Land Office (GLO) owns the Church, Long Barrack, and Alamo grounds and in 2015 the GLO purchased the Crockett Building, Palace Building, and Woolworth Building. The bifurcated ownership of the site has been a barrier to the development of a comprehensive master plan because each party had a separate vision for the site. In 2014, the City established the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee to create a Vision and Guiding Principles for the Alamo Plaza and surrounding areas and to assist with the development of a master plan for the Alamo Plaza.

In 2015, Commissioner George P Bush approached the City about a partnership to jointly develop a master plan for the Alamo Plaza, Church and Long Barrack, and the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth buildings. The City agreed to a partnership with GLO provided that the GLO and the Alamo Trust, the organization established to operate and manage the Alamo, agreed to use the Vision and Guiding Principles created by the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee and adopted by City Council in 2014. In 2015, the parties executed a Cooperative Agreement to formalize the partnership.

The timeline provided in this document identifies the major milestones and events for the effort to redevelop the Alamo Plaza and surrounding area between 2014 and present day. In addition to the timeline, the document includes a summary of the project budget and public outreach and several exhibits integral to the project: Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee Roster, Vision and Guiding Principles, 2015 Cooperative Agreement and 2017 Amendment to the Cooperative Agreement, October 2018 City Council presentation on the Alamo Plan, and the Ground Lease and Management Agreement between the City and the General Land Office.

Timeline

- On March 6, 2014, City Council approved the process for the development of a comprehensive master plan for the Alamo Plaza and the surrounding area and established a 21 member Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee. The 21-member committee is comprised of one member appointed by each City Council District and eleven members appointed by the Mayor. The committee was charged with updating the 1994 Alamo Plaza Study, creating a vision and guiding principles for the redevelopment of Alamo Plaza and the surrounding area, assisting in the development of the scope of work for a request for qualifications for the development of a comprehensive master plan, and in providing general oversight of the development of the master plan. Three of the four tasks have been completed.
- On December 11, 2014, City Council approved the Vision and Guiding for the redevelopment of Alamo Plaza and the update to the 1994 Alamo Plaza Study Committee Report and scope of work to develop a comprehensive master plan for Alamo Plaza.
- On October 15, 2015, City Council executed a cooperative agreement among the GLO, Alamo Endowment Board, and the City of San Antonio regarding the Joint Master Plan

for the Alamo and surrounding area. The Agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party as well as the management and oversight structure for the master plan's development and adoption. The Agreement created a six-member Management Committee that includes two representatives from each entity. Councilmember Roberto Treviño and City Manager Erik Walsh represent the City of San Antonio. Other members include Hector Valle and Jeff Gordon with the General Land Office and Welcome Wilson and Congressman Will Hurd with the Alamo Trust. The Agreement also created a two-member Executive Committee and appoints the Mayor of San Antonio and the Commissioner for the General Land Office. The Cooperative Agreement identified the Vision and Guiding Principles developed by the Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee as the foundation for the master plan. The Cooperative Agreement also expanded the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee to include 5 additional members for a total of 26 members.

- On May 11, 2017, City Council unanimously approved the Alamo Master Plan, which consists of five key concepts:
 1. Restoration of the Church and Long Barrack.
 2. Delineation of the historic footprint.
 3. Recapture the Historic Mission Plaza and create a sense of reverence on the historic battlefield.
 4. Repurpose the Crockett Block, Woolworth, and Palace buildings into a world-class visitor center and museum that tells the story of the Battle of the Alamo and over 300 years of layered history.
 5. Create a sense of arrival to the site and enhance connectivity between the site and other public spaces.

City Council also provided conceptual approval for the restoration and relocation of the Cenotaph, closure of sections of Alamo and Crockett Streets, and the conveyance or lease of right of way necessary to reclaim the historic Plaza.

The approval of the Master Plan and conceptual approval of the specific site strategies was necessary to proceed with the next steps for the project, which included the development of an interpretive plan and more detailed site strategies necessary to implement the key elements.

- Between May 2017 and August 2018, the project partners developed the Alamo Plan that further defined the site strategies that were conceptually approved by City Council in May of 2017. On August 30, 2018, the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee approved seven resolutions in support of the Alamo Plan, including one recommending that the City enter into a long-term ground lease and management agreement with the GLO to manage the historic Alamo Plaza. The resolutions were submitted to the Alamo Management Committee on August 31, 2018. The Alamo Management Committee unanimously approved the Alamo Plan and sent it to the Alamo Executive Committee for their consideration. On October 2, the Alamo Executive Committee comprised of Mayor Ron Nirenberg and Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush approved the Alamo Plan.

- On October 10, 2018, the Planning Commission approved the recommendation to City Council to close sections of Alamo Street, Houston Street, and Crockett Street to vehicular access that are necessary to recapture the historic Plaza. They also approved a recommendation to City Council regarding the proposed lease between the City and GLO for the City owned property necessary to recapture the historic Alamo Plaza.
- On October 10, 2018, HDRC approved the proposed design changes to the Alamo Plaza. The proposed design changes included the relocation of the Cenotaph, the establishment of a formal point of entry to the Plaza during museum hours, and the rerouting of the two Fiesta parades in a manner that still accommodates important Fiesta traditions to include the floral tribute.
- On October 18, 2018, City Council endorsed the Alamo Plan and its site strategies necessary to achieve the five key concepts in the Master Plan. The more prominent site strategies include:
 1. Closing and restricting sections of Alamo Street, Houston Street, and Crockett Street to pedestrian and emergency vehicles only;
 2. Repairing and relocating the Cenotaph within Alamo Plaza;
 3. Developing a new parade route that honors the complete history of the Alamo;
 4. Assessing the adaptive reuse for the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth Buildings; establishing a formal point of entry to the Plaza during museum hours; and
 5. Leasing to the GLO portions of the Street and Plaza necessary to recapture the Plaza

City Council also approved a lease agreement between the City and GLO for the operation of the Plaza. The term of the lease is for 50 years with two 25-year extensions. The GLO is responsible for the day to day operations of the Alamo Plaza to include custodial, programming, and security and is also responsible for the project management and implementation of the Alamo Plan.

- Over the past 2 years, the City, GLO, and Alamo Trust have been working on various components to the Alamo Plan. The restoration of the Church and Long Barrack is the primary focus for the General Land Office and that work remains ongoing. The Alamo Trust is committed to the development of a museum and visitor center. However, key to both of these efforts is the repair and relocation of the Cenotaph as it allows the project to reclaim the Mission footprint and establish an outdoor museum that facilitates a comprehensive education curriculum that tells the history of the site from mission era to present day.
- The project partners selected Clark Guido for Phase 1 of Alamo Plaza improvements, which include the repair and relocation of the Cenotaph. Once the Cenotaph is relocated the project partners can proceed to the restoration of the historic mission plaza and the construction of the Museum and Visitor Center.
- The Alamo Management Committee briefed the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee on Phase 1 of the project in July 2019, provided an update on the project to the Planning and

Community Development Council Committee in October 2019, returned to the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee in November 2019 with an update on Phase 1 and next steps, and then to HDRC for approval of Phase 1 in December 2019.

- The next step for the project after HDRC approval was to proceed to the Texas Historic Commission. The project team met with THC staff and leadership on numerous occasions prior to the THC meeting on January 28, 2020. The Commission tabled the item at the January meeting and requested that the project team revisit the design and improve the site one between the church and the cenotaph and move the Cenotaph closer to the church. Staff listened to the THC and made the recommended changes and was prepared to present the revised design to the THC in March of 2020, but the meeting was cancelled due to the pandemic. The item was to be presented to the THC in June but was postponed to September by the Chairman because the meeting was to be virtual and he expressed concern about having public comment on the item virtually. The item was finally presented to THC on September 22nd and it was denied. The primary rationale for the denial was that the current site is significant and that the 1836 event should be the focal point. Without its relocation, the period neutral site envisioned by the Plan cannot be achieved and the Battle of 1836 will likely be the only story told. This potential new reality is inconsistent with the Vision and Guiding Principles that were created by the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee and adopted by City Council.
- While the project partners were working on Phase 1 of Alamo Plaza and preparing for the THC vote, they were simultaneously working on the Alamo Museum and Visitor Center. Specifically, three reports that will help inform its development. The reports include John G. Waite Associates, Architects' assessment on the Alamo Plaza Buildings, Dr. Carey Latimore's report on the history of desegregation in San Antonio from World War II to the mid-1960's, and the Alamo Research team's report on 1960 lunch counter integration in downtown San Antonio. These reports were released on October 22, 2020.
 1. John G. Waite Associates, Architects' report "Alamo Plaza Existing Buildings Historical Assessment" study, examines the significance and level of integrity of each of the three buildings on Alamo Plaza, where the planned museum and visitor center will be. This study was funded by the Alamo Trust. The study ultimately concluded that all of the buildings are in sound structural condition and have a strong potential for continued use for new museum spaces and functions.
 2. Dr. Carey Latimore's study, titled "Civil Rights in San Antonio: WWII to Mid-1960s," was made at the request of the Alamo Trust and funded by the City of San Antonio. The report goes into great detail about the African American Civil Rights Movement in San Antonio, and how the experiences of African Americans in San Antonio are connected to the national Civil Rights Movement.
 3. The Alamo Research team's Lunch Counter Photography report examines press coverage of cafeteria and lunch counter integration in downtown San Antonio on March 16, 1960 and the ongoing debate about how those events were documented.

- Since the denial by THC, the Alamo Management Committee has meet weekly to discuss options and potential path forward.
- A presentation on the project's timeline and key considerations in moving forward will be provided to City Council on November 12, 2020.

Budget

City Funding: The City adopted Fiscal Year 2016 capital budget included \$17 million for the redevelopment of the Alamo Plaza and surrounding area. Additionally, the 2017 bond program includes approximately \$21 million for construction of facilities in support of Alamo area improvements and street improvements.

State Funding: The Texas Legislature approved \$31.5 million in 2015 and \$75 million in 2017 for the restoration of the Alamo and redevelopment of the surrounding area.

Public Engagement

The public engagement on the Alamo Plan was extensive, transparent, and inclusive. There were over 200 stakeholder meetings to include local and state elected officials and executives. The project team took the project on the road to 13 different Texas cities. There were 19 Advisory Committee workshops, 12 public meetings, and numerous regulatory approvals that were open to the public. The partners tested the plan through polling and surveys before it was presented for approval to the City and the General Land Office.

Exhibits

- A. Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee Roster
- B. Vision and Guiding Principles
- C. 2015 Cooperative Agreement and 2017 Amendment to the Cooperative Agreement
- D. October 2018 City Council presentation on the Alamo Plan
- E. Ground Lease and Management Agreement between the City and the General Land Office.