



City of San Antonio

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 20-6590
Type: Staff Briefing - Without Ordinance
In control: City Council Special Meeting
On agenda: 11/12/2020
Title: A briefing on the Alamo Plan. [Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager]
Sponsors:
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments: 1. Updated Exhibit Packet, 2. Background and Timeline, 3. Staff Presentation

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Lori Houston, Assistant City Manager

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City-Wide

SUBJECT:

Alamo Plan Update

SUMMARY:

A briefing on the Alamo Plan

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

On October 15, 2015, City Council executed a cooperative agreement among the Texas General Land Office (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. City Manager Erik Walsh and Councilmember Roberto Treviño represent the City of San Antonio. The Agreement also created a two member Executive Committee and appoints the Mayor of San Antonio and the Commission 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 Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee includes 26 members appointed by the Mayor, City Council, or General Land Office and 4 technical advisory members representing industry organizations. The Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee was established in 2014 and is advisory to the Alamo Management Committee.

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 and respect 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 repair 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.

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 October 18, 2018 and after the approval of the Alamo Plan by the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee and Alamo Management Committee, 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:

- Closing and restricting sections of Alamo Street, Houston Street, and Crockett Street to pedestrian and emergency vehicles only;
- Repairing and relocating the Cenotaph within Alamo Plaza;
- Developing a new parade route that honors the complete history of the Alamo;
- Assessing the adaptive reuse for the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth Buildings; establishing a formal point of entry to the Plaza during museum hours; and
- 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.

ISSUE:

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 responsible for 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 historic Mission footprint and establish an outdoor museum that facilitates a comprehensive education curriculum that tells the history of the site from the Mission era to present day.

The project partners selected Clark Guido for Phase 1 of Alamo Plaza improvements, which includes the repair and relocation of the Cenotaph. 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 was to proceed to the Texas Historic Commission (THC). 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 improve the site line 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 plan 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 concerns about having public comment on the item virtually. The item was finally presented to THC on September 22nd and it was denied by the THC. The primary rationale for their denial was that the current location of the cenotaph 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.

Since the denial by THC, the Alamo Management Committee has meet weekly to discuss options and potential path forward. The purpose of the briefing is to provide City Council an update on the project to include an overview of the project timeline and key considerations for moving forward.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.