



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**18-5700

---

**Agenda Item Number:** 1.

**Agenda Date:** 10/10/2018

**In Control:** Historic and Design Review Commission

---

### **HISTORIC AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMISSION (Joint Meeting of the Planning Commission and the HDRC)**

October 10, 2018

**HDRC CASE NO:** 2018-494  
**COMMON NAME:** Alamo Plaza  
**ZONING:** D, H, HE  
**CITY COUNCIL DIST.:** 1  
**DISTRICT:** Alamo Plaza Historic District  
**LANDMARK:** Alamo / Alamo Plaza, Paseo Del Alamo

**OWNER:** City of San Antonio

**REQUEST:**

Consideration of the following items related to implementation of the Alamo Master Plan project located in District 1 as requested by the City of San Antonio:

- A. An Ordinance closing, vacating and abandoning sections of right-of-way located on N Alamo Street, Alamo Plaza, and Houston Street.
- B. An Ordinance restricting sections of right-of-way located on Alamo Plaza, Alamo Street, Blum Street, E Crockett Street, and E Houston Street to pedestrian and emergency vehicle use only.
- C. An Ordinance approving a master lease agreement with the Texas General Land Office for property located in the historic Alamo mission footprint and property required for the development and management of the proposed Alamo museum.
- D. Conceptual approval of the treatment of the historic Mission San Antonio de Valero Plaza site and general design concepts.

- E. Conceptual approval of the treatment of public right-of-way including Houston Street to the east and west of the historic mission footprint and Crockett Street, Blum Street, and Alamo Street south of the historic mission footprint.
- F. Conceptual approval of alterations to the Paseo del Alamo and Maverick Walk areas to include a new, street-level connection to Losoya Street and alterations to the Torch of Friendship area to include a new connection to the River Walk.
- G. Final approval to dismantle, repair, and reassemble the Cenotaph (Spirit of Sacrifice) in Alamo Plaza at the approximate location of the existing bandstand. Exact positioning and final plaza design will be considered at a future date.

## **SUMMARY:**

The following are considerations of a right-of-way closure, vehicular restriction, real property lease, and design concepts in order to implement the Alamo Master Plan, a cooperative effort among the City of San Antonio, Texas General Land Office, and Alamo Endowment.

- A. Request by the City of San Antonio for approval to close, vacate and abandon the following right-of-way:
  - 1.41 acres along N. Alamo Street from Peacock Alley continuing south along Alamo Plaza to the intersection of the north property line of Lot 21, Block 24, N.C.B. 423 on the west and to the intersection of E. Crockett Street on the east; and along E. Houston Street from an approximate variable distance of 33 to 42 feet west of the intersection of Alamo Plaza to an approximate variable distance of 19 to 26 feet east of the intersection of Avenue E.
- B. Request by the City of San Antonio for approval to restrict the following right-of-way to pedestrian and emergency vehicle use only:
  - Alamo Plaza from the north property line of Lot 21, Block 24, N.C.B. 423 to the north boundary of the intersection with E. Commerce Street
  - A variable width portion, approximately 0 to 94 feet, of Alamo Street from the southern boundary of the intersection with Commerce Street to the northern boundary of the intersection with Market Street
  - Blum Street from Alamo Plaza to dead-end and intersecting 106 Alamo Plaza
  - E. Crockett from the intersection with Losoya to the intersection with Bonham
  - E. Houston Street from the intersection with Broadway to an approximate variable distance of 33 to 42 feet west of the intersection with Alamo Plaza; and an approximate variable distance of 19 to 26 feet east of the intersection with Alamo Plaza to the intersection with 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Bonham Street
- C. Request by the City of San Antonio for approval of a master lease agreement with the Texas General Land Office of property required for the development and management of the proposed Alamo museum and

Alamo site:

- Areas of Alamo Plaza that are within the historic mission footprint
- Paseo del Alamo located at 150 Losoya Street
- Maverick Walk located at 510 Houston Street
- 313 Alamo Plaza
- 315 Alamo Plaza
- Basement and first floor of 317 Alamo Plaza

- D. Request by the City of San Antonio for conceptual approval of the treatment of the historic Mission San Antonio de Valero Plaza site and general design concepts.
- E. Request by the City of San Antonio for conceptual approval of the treatment of public right-of-way including Houston Street to the east and west of the historic mission footprint and Crockett Street, Blum Street, and Alamo Street south of the historic mission footprint.
- F. Request by the City of San Antonio for conceptual approval of alterations to the Paseo del Alamo and Maverick Walk areas to include a new, street-level connection to Losoya Street and alterations to the Torch of Friendship area to include a new connection to the River Walk.
- G. Request by the City of San Antonio for final approval to dismantle, repair, and reassemble the Cenotaph (Spirit of Sacrifice) in Alamo Plaza at the approximate location of the existing bandstand. Exact positioning and final plaza design will be considered at a future date.

## **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 Historic District and the Alamo Complex. 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 Sheryl Sculley and Councilmember Roberto Treviño represent the City of San Antonio.

The Management Committee selected Preservation Design Partnership (PDP) to lead the Alamo master planning process. From March 2016 to May 2017, the Management Committee and PDP conducted extensive community outreach to ensure that the Alamo's many stakeholders had ample opportunity to share ideas.

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.

In December 2017, the Management Committee announced the selection of PGAV Destinations to lead development of the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan and design of Alamo Plaza that will build on the Master Plan's five key concepts. The team also includes Reed-Hilderbrand landscape architects and Cultural Innovations museum and cultural heritage consultants.

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 10 members appointed by the Mayor, 10 members appointed by the City Council members, and 6 members appointed by the State. The Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee will continue to provide feedback throughout development of the plan and museum.

On August 30, 2018, the Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee passed seven resolutions in support of strategies recommended in the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan:

1. Restricting vehicular traffic on Alamo Street from Peacock Alley to Market Street, Crockett Street from Bonham to Losoya, and Houston Street from Broadway to East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in an effort to recapture and delineate the historic mission plaza, respect the historic Mission footprint and battlefield, and create a sense of place and reverence. If vehicular traffic is restricted, a service and delivery plan will be done to accommodate the area businesses and service providers.
2. Continuing important Fiesta parade traditions through the development of a new parade route that respects known burial grounds and does not go through the historic mission footprint but honors the fallen of the Battle of the Alamo with a floral tribute in front of the Church and accommodates other ceremonial activity zone in partnership with the Battle of Flowers Parade Association, Fiesta Flambeau Parade Association, Fiesta Commission, and Texas Cavaliers.
3. Restoring the Spirit of Sacrifice (Alamo Cenotaph) and relocating it to an area within Alamo Plaza as long as the area will provide space for reverence and learning and is in a prominent location within Alamo Plaza. Before any work starting, a repair plan that includes laser scanning will be developed by a structural engineer and conservation expert. The repair plan must be reviewed and approved by the Office of Historic Preservation prior to the commencement of any work.
4. 24/7 access to the historic mission plaza that is free to the public and includes 6 entry points before and after museum hours and 1 primary entry point during museum hours with 2 auxiliary entry points that can be open during times of high pedestrian traffic volume or during times there is no programming going on in the historic mission plaza.
5. Commissioning a study that assesses the potential for the adaptive reuse of the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth Buildings as a Visitor Center and Museum provided the study adheres to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee will review the findings and provide input on the recommendations related to the buildings prior to review and consideration by the Texas Historical Commission.
6. Supporting the proposed site plan for the Alamo Plan as long as it follows the Antiquities Code, Texas health and Safety Code, and other codes as applicable by law and that the Plan goes through the required regulatory review process for specific elements to include HDRC, Planning Commission, and Texas Historical Commission.
7. Entering into a long term agreement between the City of San Antonio and the Texas GLO to manage Alamo Plaza that includes a commitment to honor the Vision and Guiding Principles; a commitment to incorporate the elements included in the above resolutions; the ability for the City to monitor compliance; and a dispute resolution process to identify and address issues early on.

On September 4, 2018, the Management Committee unanimously supported these recommendations.

The Alamo Plan proposes to reimagine the Alamo experience by recapturing the historic footprint of the mission, reclaiming the plaza to create a sense of reverence and respect, building a world-class visitor center and museum, creating a sense of arrival, and reinforcing connections to the rest of downtown San Antonio. 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. The City adopted Fiscal Year 2016 capital budget included \$17 million for the redevelopment of the Alamo Plaza and surrounding area. The 2017 bond program includes approximately \$21 million for construction of facilities in support of Alamo area improvements and street improvements identified in the Joint Master Plan. The Alamo Endowment is committed to raising private funds for implementation.

## **ISSUE:**

### Required Actions

The City of San Antonio has requested to close, vacate, and abandon the right-of-way of sections of N Alamo, Alamo Plaza and Houston Street located in the historic Alamo Mission footprint, restrict vehicular access on streets surrounding Alamo Plaza, and lease real property to the GLO. These actions are necessary for implementation of the Alamo Master Plan.

Planning Commission recommendation to City Council is required to restrict sections of Alamo Plaza, Alamo Street, Blum Street, E Crockett and E. Houston Street to pedestrian and emergency vehicle use only and to close, vacate, and abandon right-of-way sections along N. Alamo Street, Alamo Plaza, and E. Houston Street necessary to recapture the historic Mission footprint. Additionally, the Planning Commission must make a recommendation to City Council regarding the proposed lease between the City and GLO for the City-owned property necessary to recapture the historic Mission footprint and develop and manage the proposed museum.

Chapter 37 of the City Code mandates that signs be posted at or near the public rights-of-way to be closed and that notification letters are sent to area property owners within a 500 foot radius of the proposed closures at least 30 days prior to City Council action. These requirements under the City Code ensure property owners in the area are properly notified and have an opportunity to express their opinions on the proposed actions. On September 17, 2018, signs were posted at the public rights-of-ways to be closed and, to ensure staff sufficiently notified the property owners in the immediate area, staff extended the radius and sent notification letters to area property owners within a 600 feet radius of the proposed closures.

The Historic and Design Review Commission must make a recommendation regarding the design and physical alterations to properties designated as historic and to public property including the public right-of-way, parks, plazas, and City-owned facilities. Design considerations by the HDRC are guided by UDC section 35-640 through 35-646. The project area that is considered under the Alamo Plan also falls within the Alamo Plaza local historic district. As such, the HDRC considers impacts to historic resources in its decision as guided by UDC section 35-610. The UDC also mandates that signs be posted on the property subject to the application in advance of an HDRC hearing.

### Findings Related to HDRC Action Items

a. DESIGNATIONS - The Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) is a National Historic Landmark and is also listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places as a site. The Alamo Chapel and Long Barracks are a Registered Texas Historic Landmark and the Mission site is a designated State Antiquities Landmark. The larger Alamo Plaza area is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a district and includes the 19th and 20th Century buildings that surround the plaza. In 2014, the site was included in the World Heritage inscription for San Antonio's Missions. The state-level designations may require notification and review by the Texas Historical Commission for certain components of the

Alamo Plan. At this time, there is no federal review component associated with the Alamo Plan. All requirements for archaeology associated with individual components of the Plan will be met.

b. **STATE-OWNED PROPERTIES** - Generally, property that is owned by a state or federal agency is not subject to HDRC review and approval. This includes plan components such as the work to the Alamo Chapel and Long Barracks, Centennial Garden area, and potential alterations to or demolition of buildings owned by the General Land Office. A study is underway that will assess the potential for the adaptive reuse of the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth Buildings as a Visitor Center and Museum in accordance with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee voted in September 2018 to support the assessment of the three buildings provided they can review the results of the study and provide comment prior to any recommendation to the THC. OHP prepared a report documenting the historic significance of the Crockett, Palace, and Woolworth buildings which is included in the exhibits. Any alterations or demolition of historic buildings that are not owned by the State will be subject to future review.

c. **MISSION SAN ANTONIO DE VALERO SITE TREATMENT** - The proposed Alamo Plan calls for delineation of the historic Mission San Antonio de Valero footprint. This includes interventions such as lowering the grade at the footprint, constructing interpretations, and creating viewing areas for extant archaeological features. The current site elements in the plaza, including low walls, tree wells, and bandstand were constructed in 1976. The Plan is consistent with UDC Section 35-642(a) which states that historically significant aspects of the site shall be identified and if possible incorporated into the site design. The proposal broadens opportunities for historical interpretation of the site and restores spatial relationships that have been determined to contribute to the period of significance for the Mission footprint.

d. **RIGHT-OF-WAY TREATMENT** - The proposed Alamo Plan calls for incorporating vacated portions of Houston Street into the historic Mission footprint as well as creating new, pedestrian spaces east and west of the plaza on Houston Street, south of the plaza toward the Torch of Friendship, and west of the plaza toward Losoya Street. The conceptual designs indicate the placement of street trees and special paving treatments which are generally consistent with the provisions of UDC Section 35-646 for construction in the public right-of-way.

e. **STREET AND RIVER LEVEL CONNECTIONS** - The existing Paseo del Alamo was constructed in 1983 and was designed by Ford, Powell, and Carson architects. It features a winding path with stairs, planters, and water features and is considered part of the San Antonio River Walk area. The Plan calls for maintaining a River-level connection at this location. The proposed creation of an additional River-level connection near the Torch of Friendship will improve pedestrian access and wayfinding consistent with Article VI of the UDC.

f. **CENOTAPH** - The Cenotaph to the Alamo Defenders (also known as the Spirit of Sacrifice) was commissioned in 1936 by the Texas Centennial Commission. It was designed by architect Carleton Adams with sculptural elements by Pompeo Coppini. The Cenotaph was completed in 1939 and dedicated in 1940.

Due to materiality and water infiltration issues, the Cenotaph and its significant sculptural elements have experienced deterioration and are in need of extensive conservation efforts. In the Plan, the Cenotaph is proposed to be relocated and restored within Alamo Plaza at the approximate location of the existing 1976 bandstand. Exact positioning and final plaza design will be considered at a future date.

The term Cenotaph refers an empty tomb or a monument erected in honor of a person or group of people whose remains are elsewhere. Following the siege and battle in 1836, the defenders' bodies were burned on three funeral pyres to the south. Exact locations remain unknown, but are believed to be in the vicinity of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, the Samuel Gompers Statue, and the convention center, and perhaps east of the Alamo grounds. While the design of the Cenotaph reflects a funeral pyre for the Alamo defenders, it was known at the time of design and construction that the Cenotaph location did not represent the location of one of the pyres.

It is well-documented through 1936 that the bandstand location to the south of the historic Mission site was the originally-selected site for the Alamo Defenders memorial. The announcement of a new location for the memorial in north Alamo Plaza came in July 1937. There is little documentation of why the change in location had occurred.

The Cenotaph inscriptions list 182 men who died at the battle of the Alamo, compiled by Dr. Amelia W. Williams. Today, there are 189 known Defenders and some errors have been identified in the names listed. With the restoration, the inscriptions will be updated to reflect the most accurate information available.

In the Plan, the distinctive materials, features, finishes, and craftsmanship that characterize the Cenotaph will be preserved in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The Cenotaph's spatial relationship to the Mission site, including site lines to the chapel, will also be preserved while creating a new focal point within a public plaza.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the Commissions' actions. This is a City-initiated request in support for the implementation of the Alamo Master Plan.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends approval of the following items related to implementation of the Alamo Master Plan:

- A. Close, vacate and abandon the following right-of-way:
  - 1.41 acres along N. Alamo Street from Peacock Alley continuing south along Alamo Plaza to the intersection of the north property line of Lot 21, Block 24, N.C.B. 423 on the west and to the intersection of E. Crockett Street on the east; and along E. Houston Street from an approximate variable distance of 33 to 42 feet west of the intersection of Alamo Plaza to an approximate variable distance of 19 to 26 feet east of the intersection of Avenue E.
- B. Restrict the following right-of-way to pedestrian and emergency vehicle use only:
  - Alamo Plaza from the north property line of Lot 21, Block 24, N.C.B. 423 to the north boundary of the intersection with E. Commerce Street
  - A variable width portion, approximately 0 to 94 feet, of Alamo Street from the southern boundary of the intersection with Commerce Street to the northern boundary of the intersection with Market Street
  - Blum Street from Alamo Plaza to dead-end and intersecting 106 Alamo Plaza
  - E. Crockett from the intersection with Losoya to the intersection with Bonham
  - E. Houston Street from the intersection with Broadway to an approximate variable distance of 33 to 42 feet west of the intersection with Alamo Plaza; and an approximate variable distance of 19 to 26 feet east of the intersection with Alamo Plaza to the intersection with 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Bonham Street
- C. A master lease agreement with the Texas General Land Office of property required for the development and management of the proposed Alamo museum and Alamo site:
  - Areas of Alamo Plaza that are within the historic mission footprint
  - Paseo del Alamo located at 150 Losoya Street
  - Maverick Walk located at 510 Houston Street

- 313 Alamo Plaza
- 315 Alamo Plaza
- Basement and first floor of 317 Alamo Plaza

- D. Conceptual approval of the treatment of the historic Mission San Antonio de Valero Plaza site and general design concepts based on finding c
- E. Conceptual approval of the treatment of public right-of-way including Houston Street to the east and west of the historic mission footprint and Crockett Street, Blum Street, and Alamo Street south of the historic mission footprint based on findings c and d.
- F. Conceptual approval of alterations to the Paseo del Alamo and Maverick Walk areas to include a new, street-level connection to Losoya Street and alterations to the Torch of Friendship area to include a new connection to the River Walk based on finding d and e.
- G. Final approval to dismantle, repair, and reassemble the Cenotaph (Spirit of Sacrifice) in Alamo Plaza at the approximate location of the existing bandstand based on finding f. Exact positioning and final plaza design will be considered at a future date.