



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:** 19-7637

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**Agenda Item Number:** 8.

**Agenda Date:** 10/14/2019

**In Control:** Planning and Community Development Committee

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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. Councilmember Roberto Treviño and City Manager Erik Walsh represent the City of San Antonio. The Agreement also created a two member Executive Committee of 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 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 to create a framework for the Alamo Master Plan and provide feedback to the Management Committee on its implementation.

The Management Committee selected Preservation Design Partnership (PDP) in association with San Antonio-based Fisher Heck Architects and Grupo De Diseño Urbano (GDU) of Mexico to lead the Alamo master planning process. 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 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. 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. The team also includes Reed-Hilderbrand landscape architects and Cultural Innovations museum and cultural heritage consultants. The team first unveiled the Plan to the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee and the public in May 2018.

The Plan proposed by the consultant team further developed the proposed 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.

These strategies are referred to collectively as the Alamo Plan and some of them required approval from specific regulatory agencies such as the Planning Commission and Historic and Design Review Commission (HDRC) for the City of San Antonio, Texas Historical Commission (THC), and the City of San Antonio City Council.

On August 30, 2018, the Alamo Citizen Advisory Committee approved seven resolutions in support of the 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 and the Historic and Design Review Commission held a joint meeting to review the plan. The Planning Commission recommended that City Council close sections of Alamo Street, Houston Street, and Crockett Street to vehicular access and create a pedestrian only right of way and to close, vacate, and abandon right of way on Alamo and Houston Street necessary to recapture the historic Plaza. Additionally, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed lease between the City and GLO for the City owned property necessary to recapture the historic Alamo Plaza. The HDRC conceptually approved design changes to Alamo Plaza, including 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. The Office of Historic Preservation must also review and approve the relocation and repair plan for the Cenotaph prior to any work beginning. The HDRC must review and approve the final design of Alamo Plaza.

On October 18, 2018, City Council approved the site strategies necessary to implement the Alamo Plan and 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. The lease also defines the roles and responsibilities of each party as it relates to site strategies in the Plan.

## ISSUE:

The purpose of this briefing is to provide an overview of the Alamo Plan and the process for its implementation; specifically, the design, archaeology, and construction management. Since 2014, the process has included over 50 public meetings and over 200 stakeholder meetings. Community input will continue through the design and implementation phase for the project.

**Design:** In June 2019, the Management Committee selected architecture firm Machado Silvetti as the Alamo Museum designer and HKS as the architect of record from over 35 firms who submitted qualifications. The museum design is underway. PGAV Destinations, Reed Hilderbrand, and Cultural Innovations continue to work on the Alamo Plaza design and interpretation of the site. The design team will present to the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee, the Texas Historical Commission, and HDRC in late 2019 and early 2020. HDRC must review and approve final design of Alamo Plaza and surrounding improvements.

**Archaeology:** The Alamo began archaeological investigations related to two projects over the summer: installation of fixed and removal bollards around Alamo Plaza to protect pedestrian activity, and investigations of below grade conditions in the Alamo Church and Long Barrack to guide conservation efforts. Prior to beginning archaeology work, the Alamo established the Alamo Mission Archaeology Advisory Committee, which consists of representatives of federally recognized tribes. The Committee developed a human remains treatment plan that was submitted to the Texas Historical Commission and is providing tribal monitors during the investigations.

The Alamo met with area stakeholders to discuss the activity in Alamo Plaza and sends weekly update emails with information about what to expect and what has been discovered. Installation of the bollards is expected to be complete in late 2019 or early 2020.

Archaeological investigations will continue throughout implementation of the plan. They will be based on final design, THC requirements, and discoveries made during investigations.

**Program and Construction Management:** The Management Committee recently selected Broaddus & Associates to manage the construction projects associated with the Alamo Plan. They are in the process of developing a project schedule that coordinates the various strategies and establishes construction milestones.

## ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only. However, 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. 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 Alamo Endowment is committed to raising private funds for implementation of the Alamo Plan. The public and private funding commitments will allow for the implementation of the Alamo Plan.

## RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

