

Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee

Vision, Guiding Principles and Alamo Plaza Plan Update

Vision

- Engage local residents and visitors in ways to personally connect to the Alamo area experience.
- Tell the story of the Battle of the Alamo and its impact on the Republic of Texas, City of San Antonio, State of Texas, the United States and the international community.
- Include and interpret the diverse cultures that contributed to the story of the Alamo area through meaningful and memorable experiences for visitors.
- Tell the in-depth history of the Alamo area to the present day as a tribute to all who lived, fought, and died there.

Guiding Principles

- The 1836 Battle of the Alamo, the most widely recognized event, provides an opportunity to tell the entire history of the Alamo area
- Unified leadership under the management of a single steward (public and private) with a sustainable business model
- Preservation and interpretation based on historical and archaeological evidence
- Embrace intellectual, experiential and physical accessibility
- Balance scholarship, historical context, folklore and myth to provide an engaging visitor experience
- Create a premier Visitor Experience through physical space and interpretation
- Embrace the continuum of history to foster understanding and healing
- Enhance connectivity and wayfinding to the river, neighborhoods, La Villita, the cathedral, and the other Plazas

Primary (Impact)

1. Include a document that gives the background information on the more than 300 years of history of the Alamo Plaza site.
2. Create a glossary of terms for common reference.
3. Create a unified foundation or organization for the management of the public (city, state, federal) and private interests of the Alamo area experience.
4. Develop a Master Plan and an Interpretive Plan.
5. Develop Physical, Interpretive, Implementation, and Management and Investment Plans as part of the Alamo area experience Master Plan. Update scholarship and technology regularly through the Interpretive Plan every 5 years.
6. Develop and implement an integrated and coordinated way finding, interpretive, and directional signage plan for the Alamo area experience and the Alamo Plaza Historic District. Interpret the Alamo so visitors understand its location on the battlefield.

7. Include strict guidelines in the Interpretive Plan for appropriate experiences as part of the overall Alamo area experience; address street preachers, food and other vendors, street performers, living history interpreters and special events to ensure high quality visitor experiences.
8. Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation, circulation, and parking plan to accommodate accessibility while exerting minimal negative impact on the visitor experience in the Alamo area.
9. Provide an exceptional visitor experience while considering all points of view and a comprehensive interpretation of the Alamo area.
10. Consider the World Heritage Site nomination and designation. Be sure the Alamo area experience Master Plan recommendations do not jeopardize the process and potential designation.

Secondary (Long-Term Strategy)

1. Make sure infrastructure and way finding plans are inclusive of all types of visitors, and are broadly accessible and flexible.
2. Develop a strategy to orient visitors to the stories and context before they experience the Alamo compound. Provide information and services to facilitate the visitor experience.
3. Creatively separate commercial areas from battleground areas through visual cues and interpretation.

Themes and Goals

Theme A: The evolution of settlements and cultures around the Alamo area

Goal 1. Tell the story of the environment and the Native Americans

- a) San Antonio is located just below an escarpment that cuts across the state and joins a semi-arid region to the southwest and a fertile plain to the east. The area was a meeting and gathering place as well as home to different groups of Native Americans.
- b) Native American groups of the area:
 - remains have been found that date Native Americans in this area to 8,000-10,000 years ago
 - nomadic and followed seasonal food sources, were hunters and gatherers of food, not farmers
 - subsisted on wild game, nuts, berries and other fruits as food sources
 - traveled in small bands or groups
 - built jacales as dwellings
 - made basketry
 - had the San Antonio River, creeks and springs as abundant water sources
 - met with other Native Americans at San Pedro Springs to trade and for Mitotes/gathering/ceremonies
 - the region was called the sacred word Yanaguana
 - area Native American groups were attacked often by the Apache

- were known to seek protection within the mission from outside attacks-as did other people in the area
- became part of the expanding Spanish Empire when the Indian missions and later towns/pueblos were established
- the towns/pueblos had an appointed Native American government that included Governor, Mayor, Constable, etc., as conferred by the *Auto de Posesión*
- were mission-dwellers who farmed and ranched on the frontier to survive and thereby expand the Spanish Empire,
- were converted to Christianity---the primary goal of the Spanish missionaries
- were willing to live in the mission, be Christianized and take Spanish names while still maintaining a connection to Native culture
- mastered the skills and trades that the missionaries introduced while incorporating native symbols and colors in the designs

Goal 2. Tell the story of the Spanish influence and settlement, including the three types of towns:

Missionary and Indian Towns/Pueblos, the Soldier/Settler Town, and the Civilian Town

a) The introduction of the horse by the Spanish led to the culture of the vaquero and the cowboy. The area of San Antonio was settled to protect New Spain against French encroachment from Louisiana. Spanish Texas would always serve as a defensive frontier on the edge of the Empire. Once the Crown sponsored-establishments were founded, settlers began to pursue their own goals and objectives rather than those of the Empire.

Spain established Indian missions that became **Missionary and Indian Towns/Pueblos** as a means of expanding the Empire. These towns/pueblos had an appointed Native American government that included Governor, Mayor, Constable etc. This was conferred by the *Auto de Posesión*. The primary goal of the Spanish missionaries was the conversion of the Native Americans. To survive and expand, mission dwellers developed farms and ranches on the frontier.

Residents of the **Soldier-Settler Towns** (called presidios or military garrisons) often relied more on the local economic base, farming and grazing, rather than on their military pay.

The settlers in the **Civilian Town** of San Fernando de Béjar immigrated to Texas under the sponsorship of Spain. They originally relied heavily on the rights conferred to them by the Spanish Crown, but in time they too searched for security and economic improvements over imperial Spain's objectives.

b) Define and provide context for:

- Definition of the Military Plan
- define the terms Spanish, Mexican, Tejano, Bexareño, Texian
- who is identified as Mexican
- secularization fostered Mestizos/ Mestizaje
- the first families of the area
- Spanish colonization that brought converging goals of church and crown – building missions, churches and schools
- establishment of civil governments
- the role of slavery
- establishment of Spanish archives to file their deed records and wills
- protection for the missions with the establishment of the Presidios, establishment of law and order in the region

- Porciones (define land measurements by today's standards)
- new techniques of farming, raising cattle and horses, the impact of clearing large areas of brush and trees to establish farming land
- introduction of domesticated animals (cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, chickens, oxen)
- the Spanish way to trade, traded with Spanish money
- introduction of a new language
- changes and influences regarding architectural styles
- built roads
- made carts and wagons to haul products
- established new businesses and stores
- the San Antonio River for drinking water, washing clothes, acequias to channel water for animals and farm land
- impact of new diseases, small pox and other diseases
- hospitals and new medicine

Goal 3. Tell the story of all the cultural groups involved in the coming Texas Revolution (including, but not limited to Mexicans, Mulattos, slaves and freedmen, Tejanos, Americans, Texians and other immigrants)

a) From Spanish to Mexican and American Texas

- recognize the founder of San Antonio—Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares
- Spanish Mission secularization
- San Antonio society in transformation-mission to presidio to town to now a city
- Mexico's immigration policy
- Tejano, Italian, Irish, German -united by the common Catholic religion
- include the influence of slavery on the coming revolution

b) San Antonio and the Mexican War of Independence

- the De las Casas Revolt

c) San Antonio and the Texas Revolution

- the Westward Movement (economic links to the US)
- confidence in US support-money, arms and volunteers
- the rise of Centralist power (cutting ties with US)
- civil war becomes revolution (from autonomy and self-determination to independence)

d) United States policy

- Manifest Destiny
- Monroe Doctrine
- Andrew Jackson and the west
- Southern designs for Texas, the expansion of slavery
- problems with Annexation in 1836
- President James A. Polk designs for California

e) Westward movement of the diverse immigrants to America

- population growth
- immigration—include the range of diverse groups
- German, Italian and Mexican settlers came together as Catholics
- farmers growing crops
- links to active national and international market
- governmental support
- Louisiana Purchase

- Northwest Ordinance
 - US policy of removal of Native Americans
- f) The diversity the Texians and the American settlers brought:
- new languages
 - new ideas on how to farm
 - new religions
 - banking industry
 - new politics
 - new money
 - new English laws
 - new streets
 - new ways of transportation
 - new businesses
 - better water systems inside the home
 - new record keeping, court records
 - established factories, industry
 - new food items
 - city parks and recreation
 - new schools
 - better protection from pollution for the river
 - new voting system
 - demolished old buildings and built new ones
 - installed paved sidewalks

Theme B: Tell the story of the 1836 Battle of the Alamo

Goal 1. Present the politics of the Texas Revolution

The visiting public of all ages will gain an understanding of the political forces at work leading up to and during the Texas Revolution from September 1835 to June 1836. The known six political factions will be stressed and their leading spokesman identified (through primary source materials) to give visitors a sense of the political and emotional turmoil which split families and friendships during the Texas Revolution. Include politics and policies surrounding the Native American population-Native Revolution/Slavery/Manifest Destiny/Politics. Include the Mexican perspective of what the Battle of the Alamo was about--Mexicans believed Texas and other territories were stolen.

a) The political factions to explore are:

Federalist: supported the Mexican Constitution of 1824, desired Mexican Statehood for Texas separate from its union with Coahuila, sought to overthrow the centralist dictatorship of President Antonio Lopez Santa Anna and opposed annexation to the United States

Centralist: supported the dictatorship of President Antonio Lopez Santa Anna and opposed further immigration from the United States

Republican/Independence: sought an independent Republic of Texas separate and apart from both Mexico and the United States

Annexationist: sought an immediate annexation of Texas to the United States through purchase or war as part and parcel of the US Manifest Destiny and the extension of slavery as an economic base

Lone Star Conspiracy: composed primarily of former followers of US Vice President Aaron Burr (Burr Conspiracy), US General James Wilkinson (Spanish Conspiracy), or the All Mexico Club. This group was composed primarily of US, Texas and Northeastern Mexico frontiersmen who favored the creation of a third North American Republic between Mexico and the United States.

Neutralist: lost in the political turmoil of the Revolution, a great number of American colonists and Tejanos quit the Federalist Volunteer Army of Texas after the removal of Stephen F. Austin, or remained neutral throughout the ordeal.

- Goal 2. Provide background to set the stage for the Battle: September 1835 to February 22, 1836
- a. the fight for self-determination, self preservation and self-rule
 - b. Pueblo San Antonio de Valero is transformed from an agrarian community to a military garrison as the area residents are literally pushed out from around the Alamo Compound and surrounding area
 - c. communities of Villa de Béjar and Pueblo de Valero at the outbreak of the Texas Revolution
 - d. early battles in and around Bexar County at Mission Concepción, the Grass Fight and the Siege of Béjar from October to December of 1835
 - e. Alamo Compound transformed from an abandoned mission, community plaza, and cemetery to a fortified military site
 - f. Mexican Army fortification of the Alamo compound and immediate area before and during Siege of Béjar
 - g. Continuation of military improvements under Col. James Neill (December 1835 through February 1836)
 - h. The 1836 Alamo Battlefield
 - i. defenders' artillery emplacements within the Alamo Compound
 - j. defenders' primary and secondary defensive positions
 - k. Mexican Artillery emplacements around the Alamo Compound
 - l. Mexican Infantry staging area
 - m. Mexican Cavalry positions
 - n. Mexican Reserves
 - o. Mexican battle logistics and order of the day
 - p. Mexican assault routes by commands
 - q. known sites where individuals died (primary source materials or evidence-based)
 - r. surviving Alamo Garrison combatants
 - s. surviving Alamo Garrison non-combatants
 - t. Mexican impressions of the assault by participants
 - u. recollections of local eyewitnesses (from primary source materials)
 - v. The Battle in Retrospect
 - w. casualties: inside and outside the Alamo walls
 - x. Mexican Army of Operations in Texas: tactics and objectives after the fall of the Alamo
 - y. memorializing the Battle: the Fall of the Alamo becomes a battle cry
 - z. evidence-based interpretation, incorporating ongoing research and scholarship

- aa. interpreting the Battle of the Alamo in the context of demographics and with cultural sensitivity
- bb. background on the political implications of the struggle and the sacrifice by Alamo defenders, Mexican soldiers, Tejanos, Bexareños, the enslaved and freedmen and others affected by the battle

Goal 3. Provide ways to understand the geography of the battlefield site

- a) Visitors of all ages will gain an understanding of the physical space, geography and context of the Alamo compound, Villa de Béjar, Camino Real and Texas in 1836 through a planned interpretive strategy and visitor experience program that provides visual and intellectual context for the site, including the interpretation of important geography and locations:
 - Native American and mission cemeteries and burial grounds
 - the topography and geography of the Alamo Compound in relation to the Villa de Béjar, acequias, wells, cemetery, field, housing etc.
 - the physical structures and layout of the Alamo compound
 - Béjar in 1836 Texas

Goal 4. Be inclusive in telling all sides of the military story

- a) Tell the story of the Battle of 1813 and how it set the stage for the 1835/36 revolution and the Alamo story. Include the story of the people living in the area who did not participate in the 1836 battle and why. Include the background story of the Companias Volantes, expand story of Tejanos supporting revolution, the Volunteer Army of Texas and the Mexican Army of Operations in Texas.
 - provide context for visitors to understand the daily lives of volunteers, soldiers and camp followers, including uniforms, equipment, food, music and medicine
 - interpret the Mexican pioneer story, present the point of view of Mexico and what the revolution and battles meant from the Mexican perspective
 - provide evidence-based content and context for role of the women and children as eyewitnesses
 - provide evidence-based content and context for the role of the African Texans as eyewitnesses, combatants and non-combatants
 - include Alamo survivors and their roles as combatants and/or couriers
 - include the Texian Army in February and March of 1836 as it relates to possible reinforcements, supplies and communications

Goal 5. Tell the story of the local population's participation and reaction to the battle

- a) visitors of all ages will understand the impact of participation and the reaction of the local population of Béjar and the surrounding area to the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo
- b) provide context and interpretation for the following:
What did Tejanos/Native Americans stand to lose ecologically, socially, and culturally? What was the impact on the enslaved and freedmen population?
- c) the emotional impact of the fall of the Alamo as reflected through correspondence, journalistic accounts, military and government reports on both sides
- d) the impact of the fall of the Alamo as it motivated many volunteers to enlist

- e) the political impact in the 19th and 20th century of the fall of the Alamo as it set the stage for the US-Mexico War and acquisition of the Southwest US
- f) the Alamo Compound as an early tourist attraction
- g) the creation of the Alamo myths

Goal 6. Examine the role and influence of slavery

Theme C: The Alamo area is a place of remembrance, honor and respect

Goal 1. Recognize all cultures and events in the Alamo area that have contributed to the history of the Alamo area experience

- a) Include in the interpretation of the history of the Alamo area the perspectives of :
 - Native Americans
 - Spaniards
 - Mexicans
 - Canary Islanders
 - Presidio Soldiers
 - African Americans
 - Mexican Americans
 - Americans

Goal 2. Regard the Alamo area with reverence, honor and respect as a tribute to all who lived, fought and died there

- a) Native Americans who lived in the area
 - b) the Missionary and Indian led Settlement
 - c) Pueblo San Antonio de Valero
 - d) Tejanos, Bexareños, Texians
 - e) Spanish Military
 - f) Mexican Military
 - g) American Military
 - h) the enslaved and freedmen
- a) Along with information on those that died at the Battle of the Alamo, interpretive information will include:
- the traditional location for cemeteries was in front of the church, the Campo Santo was in front of the existing Alamo church and was originally used by the Coahuiltecan Bands, Coco, Karankawa, Apache, Comanche and other Native Americans subsequently buried at Mission San Antonio de Valero
 - the identification, protection, preservation and the story behind the Campo Santo—include death rites, location and time of the burials and identity of those buried there
 - the significance and importance to the story of the Canon law-- that non-Catholics could not be buried in a Campo Santo

Theme D: The Alamo area experience has evolved over more than 300 years and continues to be a community gathering place

Goal 1. Present what the Alamo area looked like over the different periods of its more than 300 years of history.

Include:

- a) the Yanaguana/pre-mission period
- b) Mission Period (1718 -1794)
- c) secularization of the mission, shops opened in the structures of the west and south sides of the Plaza
- d) evolution and expansion of the civil settlement
- e) related sites and features such as: the Campo Santos, La Villita, the Camino Real, ranching, farming, acequias, the barrios to the north and south, the Barrio de Valero and Laredito
- f) Tejanos: 1813 -- first Independent Texas, discuss Tejanos self-determination need for freedom and independence
- g) Spanish Military Period (1801-1821)
- h) Mexican Military Period (1821-1836)
- i) Republic of Texas Period (1836-1845) Include Tejano families living outside the walls in the story of the Alamo
- j) American Military Period (1845-1880)
- k) the Civil War Period (1861 -1865)
- l) the beginning of urbanization (1880-1900)
- m) involvement of governmental, historical and preservation organizations: Texas State Historical Association, General Land Office, Texas Historical Commission, Camino Real de las Tejas Association and the Daughters of the Republic of Texas
- n) a respectful gateway to the Alamo site

Goal 2. Present the Alamo's relationship to other sites, missions and historically related locations.

- a) Include Native American history, pre-mission and mission periods, secularization, the communities, entertainment and retail surrounding the Plaza and the beginnings and continuation of urbanization.

Goal 3. Review historic and current commercial ventures in the Alamo Plaza area and ensure future commerce and programming honors, respects and complements the area

Conclusion

The work of the Alamo Plaza Advisory Committee was thorough, respectful and inclusive of the more than 300 years of Alamo Plaza's ongoing history. The Alamo Plaza Committee composition was diverse and inclusive of professions, business interests and cultural heritage. The result of the Committee's work is a set of fundamental guideposts that serve as the foundation for the 2015 master planning effort.