



# SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

October 10, 2018

Planning Commission Joint Meeting with the Historic and Design Review Commission

Re: Alamo Plaza

Over the summer, the San Antonio Conservation Society collected some 7,500 signatures to maintain Alamo Plaza as a public place and preserve its historic structures. We are concerned that the terms of the lease agreement will severely curtail public access to the plaza. In addition to our concern for the landmark Crockett, Palace and Woolworth Buildings, we feel that the lease will severely limit the City of San Antonio's ability to direct the future of one of its most important public spaces.

Since 2015, the Conservation Society has urged the incorporation of three historic buildings into the new Alamo museum. The 2017 Alamo Master Plan called for the same and our organization largely supported that plan. The current plan is less clear about the historic buildings' future, despite the support for preservation voiced by Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Councilman Roberto Treviño and City Manager Sheryl Sculley.

Equally concerning are the lease terms which will require all Alamo visitors to pass through a single entrance during business hours. The area will cease to function as a plaza and become a themed cul-de-sac. Special events will further limit public access, even though the 1871 conveyance of the plaza included a condition that "the property hereby conveyed is conveyed on condition that it shall be dedicated to the public use as an open space, and be made a part of and one with the public plaza above and below it, now known as the Alamo Plaza and Plaza de Valero."

The current interpretive plan has focused almost exclusively on the first half of the Alamo's 300-year history, with extensive discussion and design regarding the mission period, the 1836 battle and the decades following that battle. There has been little discussion of its important late -19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century history as a public plaza, including the notable voluntary and peaceful desegregation of lunch counters, exemplified at Woolworth's, on March 16, 1960.

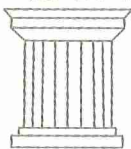
This lease agreement negates almost every aspect of local authority the City has historically exercised over this vital area of downtown. The lease needs to be amended to give the City more control over the results of the plan.

Respectfully submitted,

SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Susan Beavin, President

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The Purpose of this Society is to preserve and to encourage the preservation of historic buildings, objects, places and customs, relating to the history of Texas, its natural beauty, and all that is admirably distinctive to our State; and by such physical and cultural preservation to keep the history of Texas legible and intact to educate the public, especially the youth of today and tomorrow, with knowledge of our inherited regional values.

