

# ALAMO PLAZA ★ A STAR REBORN

*Completing the Alamo Experience.*

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*San Antonio and Texas 'Partner' with The Alamo Plaza Project to establish America's premier destination for tourism.*

*"CAPTURE THE SPIRIT OF SAN ANTONIO AND TEXAS"*

## **Objective:**

"The Alamo Plaza Project" will make San Antonio and Texas the premier destination for intrastate, national and international tourism by capitalizing on the unique qualities of this historic site.

## **Summary:**

The stories of Texas and the Alamo have excited and inspired people worldwide because of their enduring concepts of freedom, independence, sacrifice, and the can-do frontier spirit. Often, these unique qualities have been hard to explain, even for "insiders." For those outside Texas, they are often difficult to understand. But the enormous interest and fascination with Texas and the American West make San Antonio the logical location as the Capital of Texas History – where this vibrant legacy can best be presented and understood.

"The Alamo Plaza Project" is a world-class plan that will recreate much of the historic Alamo compound as it stood in 1836. Anchoring the north end of the new Alamo Plaza will be a state-of-the-art multi-media museum and historical/educational research center. For the first time, the dramatic stories of the Alamo and previously untold Texas history will be presented in ways that people will passionately embrace. The plan, entitled A Star Reborn, will reposition Alamo Plaza as a national treasure, and place it alongside Pearl Harbor, Jamestown, and Gettysburg, as a premier American destination with undeniable historic value.

## **Background:**

When one thinks of Texas and the Alamo, the mind visualizes legendary tales of history involving high adventure, cultural diversity, breathtaking romance, and life-and-death struggles of staggering dimension. Throughout the world, people readily identify Texas with Western mystique and lore. Renowned writer and humorist Will Rogers once proclaimed San Antonio as one of America's six most unique cities. San Antonio's vibrant, diverse history derives from its original southwestern style, a rich Spanish heritage, and the frontier and cowboy spirit. It should be – and could be – a city that is truly unique, international and world-class. This is what visitors have always wanted and expected of San Antonio. Many visitors come to San Antonio seeking to "capture that spirit" they have long imagined or heard of, but are ultimately disappointed by finding the Alamo in an underwhelming setting surrounded by a commercial district with an often tawdry atmosphere.

## **Concept:**

The plan to transform Alamo Plaza into a world-class historic site is as big and bold as Texas itself. Becoming THE centerpiece of pride of the entire city, state and nation, it will dramatically increase tourism attendance fourfold to 8-10 million visitors per year to see the newly redesigned plaza itself, the Alamo, and the spectacular new museum: The Texas History Center.

## THE TEXAS HISTORY CENTER AT ALAMO PLAZA

The Texas History Center at Alamo Plaza will include a world-class multimedia center with three theaters, a state-of-the-art historical/educational research center, five primary foundational museum presentations on Texas history that include: The History of Alamo Plaza, The History of the Texas Revolution, David Crockett and the Frontier Expansion, The Spanish Legacy & El Camino Real de los Tejas, and the Popular Culture of the Alamo. This winning combination of interactive technology and never-before-seen artifact collections will secure San Antonio and the Alamo as Texas' premier destination for tourists and locals alike. The museum will also feature a Visitors Center that will be the hub to other cultural venues and historic sites around the region, making for a more successful tourism industry in and around San Antonio.

In this day and age of international travelers, 'baby boomers' yearning to see it all, a thriving interest in heritage tourism, and cutting-edge technology, A Star Reborn is precisely the right plan at the right time in the right place. There is only one Alamo, one San Antonio, and one Texas...and this world-class project will finally bring together this entire larger-than-life history for all to experience, share, and enjoy.

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## THE TEXAS HISTORY CENTER AT ALAMO PLAZA

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### MISSION STATEMENT

*To enthrall, educate, and entertain our visitors with the balanced intermingling of scholarship, drama, and technology that, in turn, inspires our visitors towards the active preservation of our diverse heritage and the land that sustains us.*

## PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW:

### 1. Five Primary Foundational Themes:

- **The History of Alamo Plaza**

This theme covers the three dramatic centuries of evolution. From the early descriptions of the water sources that attracted the human element, to the iconic center it is today, the multi-faceted story of Alamo Plaza unfolds through a series of multi-media exhibits.

- **The History of the Texas Revolution**

This is an inclusive and multi-ethnic story about the clash of cultures and political ideologies. The typical visitor will be surprised and awed at the broader international perspective and realities that shaped the future of the American Southwest.



- **David Crockett & the Frontier Expansion**

This is a much larger and advanced presentation of the successful Davy Crockett Exhibit at the Bob Bullock Museum in 2002. David Crockett symbolizes the complex nature of a young and adventurous republic, expanding its frontier borders and culture into the precarious international arena of pre-Civil War America. We will present the tenacious spirit of the frontier culture whose origins came from Europe and continued their westward march to the Pacific Ocean.

- **The Spanish-Tejano Legacy/El Camino Real de los Tejas**

Colonial Spain's many contributions will surprise and fascinate. From architecture, engineering, travel and commerce, to the little known support that helped win the American Revolution, all will be dramatically presented. This will also become the official hub for the El Camino Real project.

- **Popular Culture of the Alamo**

The voluminous expression of the Alamo story through film, television, literature, music, and art requires a major international venue. Told in many languages, the Alamo experience is revealed as a universal expression, not just a Texas event.



### 2. A series of traveling/temporary exhibits that complement the focus of our primary foundational themes.

### 3. Center for Texas History Studies:

- **Educational Hub for Research and Teaching Refinement**

This is a state-of-the-art center for history education that combines the very best of scholarship, leadership, technology, and communication. The center is an ideal workshop for improving the methods and techniques of teaching history - or how to be an effective storyteller.

- **Interpretive Workshops**

An extension of the Educational Hub, this is a defining workshop for those who desire to be professional historical interpreters whether for media, theatre, museum education, or historic sites. A full curriculum of voice training, body language, theatre, hair/make-up, wardrobe, and one-act performance will be established to complete the skills of the performer.

- **Collective Thought Forums - Regional/National/International Presentations**

Held in one of the three theatres, the Forum series will provide a venue for discussing historical related issues that are timeless and engaging. The universal sharing of perceptions and ideas will broaden the scope of the THC as an international venue and will often be connected to network television productions.

- **Texas Republic Ballroom**

Proposed as a new entire top floor and creating a new roofline to the museum (not shown), this multi-functional room will become a major venue for formal gatherings, galas and many special events.

#### 4. Orientation Center:

- **Spirit of History Wall**

This is a surreal experience that is designed to help the visitor prepare for the journey through the complex, regardless of the length of stay. The multi-layered visual “trailer,” supported by a state-of-the-art audio “presence,” with a negative ionized air treatment for a full and refreshing introduction to heighten the experience.

- **Historical Journey Network Center/Visitor Information**

Adjacent to the “Spirit of History Wall” will be another technological wonder - a most advanced media center for visitor information. Highlighting local and regional cultural treasures (including museums, historic sites, Texas Heritage Trails, etc) a series of large monitors tastefully display the assets and information that visitors need for enriching and expanding their journey.

- **THC Museum Retail Shop**

This is a shopping experience that is a complete departure from the typical visit to a traditional museum gift shop. Designed with the visitor in mind, the entire environment is classy, uncluttered, and serene. Stocked with an abundance of quality educational items, many of the featured merchandise will be exclusive to the THC.

- **The North Wall**

An authentic and sensitive recreation of the North Wall of the Alamo as it would have stood in 1836 will be recreated as though the building was created around it. This innovative look at history will provide another interpretive venue for telling the rich story of the Alamo.

#### 5. Exterior Presentations:

- **Soldado Mexicano Tribute**

For the first time, an impressive and emotional sculpture of a knot of Mexican Soldados surging towards the North Wall will be erected where so many died. Supported with a large backdrop of the recreated Toluca Battalion Flag, the area honors soldiers just as we do at other battlefields.

- **Film/Video Public Art Presentations - Spirit of History**

After nightfall, a large screen will be illuminated with a series of epic trailers (visuals only) that promote the themes of the main venues of the museum, or of coming attractions and/or events. These will be designed as art, forms within their own right and be projected for several hours each night.

- **Promenade for Tour Activity**

The closure of Alamo Street to regular traffic allows for a new area to function as point of arrival/departure for tour vehicles and horse-drawn carriages.

- **Information Station**

Kiosk with information and personnel designed to keep the tourist flow at Plaza level moving.

- **Green Building Standards**

We will develop responsible design and execution for maximum sustainability that includes solar energy, water absorption, and installing an abundance of native plants.

- **Living History Presentations/Programs**

The development of a full array of quality living history programs must be part of the new energy for promoting “Authentic San Antonio.” A carefully planned series of daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual events representing several key periods of this site’s history are paramount to the city and state’s success in attracting tourists and students alike. As people come to expect these dramatic presentations, more visitors will infiltrate the area throughout the calendar year.

### **Benefits of the Primary Foundational Themes:**

The selected themes attract a broader and more affluent audience because of the importance of the presentation. A much greater perspective of the Hispanic contributions to Texas and the American Southwest is now available. The themes also fill major voids in the way the story of Texas is currently presented and are key to the successful experience of visitors, educators, and students. Completes the Alamo experience with presentations that cover a variety of primary disciplines including history, architecture, science, and the arts. Important themes like El Camino Real de los Tejas bring a comprehensive approach to Texas storytelling. The audience will sense a greater connection to other Texas and interstate locations through this famous trail system. It will also enhance the visitor's experience with the Alamo complex. A world-class venue that showcases the very best technology and methods for presenting major historical themes will dramatically increase the average visit to Alamo Plaza from 35 minutes to several hours. It is estimated that the real visit to Alamo Plaza/Texas History Center will increase from 2.5 million to at least 7 million visitors annually! The sensation of this major venue will be a major drawing card for immediate and long-range tourism. From the active employment perspective the economic impact of this venue is impressive. The immediate staff will vary from 200-300 employees while vendor support for different services will be in the thousands. The surrounding district will also be transformed because of the heightened exposure, stimulating a positive reaction for new and related businesses to heritage tourism.

### **Benefits of the Traveling Exhibits:**

- Keeps the entire venue fresh with new and related subjects that complement the presentation.
- Makes the THC consistently relevant for all audiences.
- Many Texan artifacts and primary source documents would be displayed for the first time from a variety of private source collections committed to telling the Texas story.

### **Benefits of the Texas History Center Education & Research Department:**

- THC becomes a state and national focal point for educational training and interpretive development.
- THC puts San Antonio and Texas in a world-class arena for presenting history at different levels. Attracts visitors beyond conventional schedules for evening and weekend events/classes/seminars.
- THC Education & Research Center becomes a central focus for bringing historical research into an efficient mode of operation. This model will attract key scholars/researchers/presenters from around the globe.
- The THC Repository makes it an international hub because of its ability to access important data to the world.

### **Benefits of the Orientation Center:**

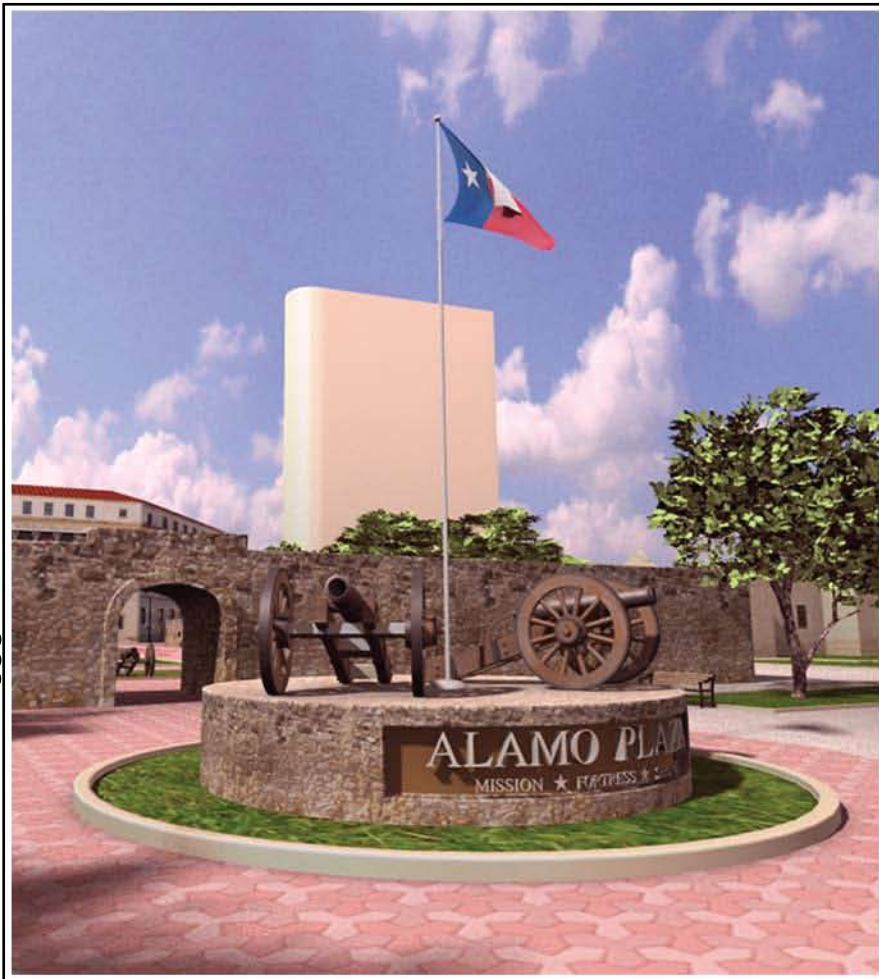
- The THC Orientation Center becomes the key stop for all visitors because it informs, inspires, and enthralls.
- The Orientation Center (OC) is designed to extend the visitor's stay in San Antonio and Texas via attractive presentations.
- The OC helps to complete the Alamo experience with the North Wall and Museum Gift Shop.
- The OC becomes San Antonio's real visitor center because of its innovative design and technology.

### **Benefits of the THC Exterior Presentations:**

- The exterior presentations attract audiences throughout the entire day and encourage pedestrian traffic flow towards the north of the THC and beyond Travis Street.
- The Toluca display helps to acknowledge the other side of the Alamo story. This act will attract many Hispanic visitors who otherwise have not felt invited into this area.
- The environmental treatments become a visual inspiration for other transformational projects. It also becomes a role model for dealing with environmental concerns including energy use.
- The entire THC presence will be a positive link to Houston St., River North projects, and will inspire positive growth and development around the immediate area.
- Any and all quality living history programs emanating from the THC will add greatly to the visitor experience in Alamo Plaza and San Antonio.



NOTE: A key element under consideration is the recreation of a twenty-four man company of Spanish Presidio Lancers (c. 1803) when the Alamo was protected by the Flying Company of El Alamo de Parras. This display of authentic cavalry would become the new symbol that represents San Antonio both at home and abroad for special events and presentations. Some of its potential functions may provide school visits/presentations that foster learning, leadership, and the willingness to reach for high personal goals.



◀ The reconstructed defensive lunette and main gate become the new gateway into Alamo Plaza .

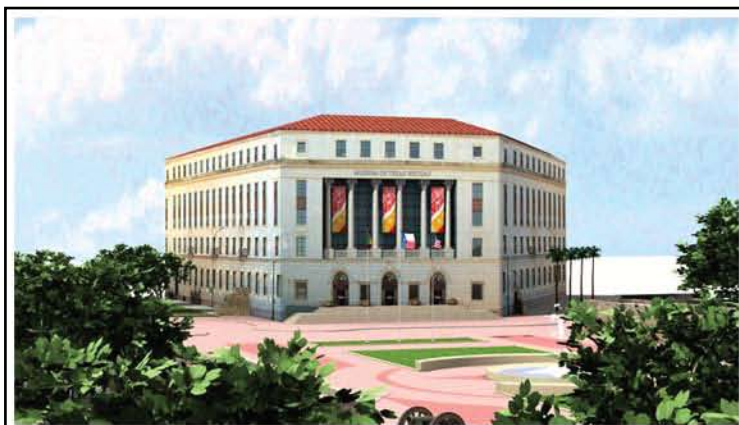
▼ A bird's eye view looking north.



*A New Era.*

*A New Opportunity.*

*A New Vision.*



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◀ The new Center for Texas History, A 300,000 sf world-class multimedia center and museum.

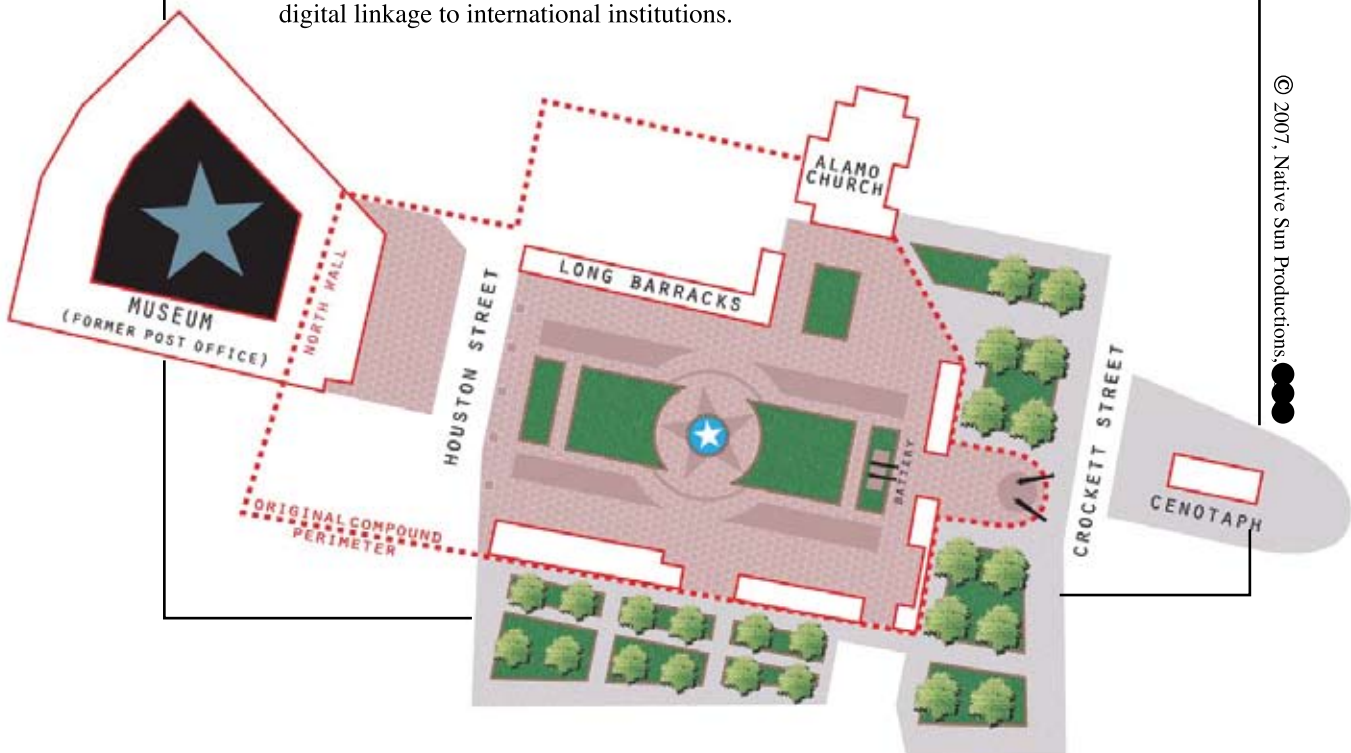
# ALAMO PLAZA ★ A STAR REBORN

## *Completing the Alamo Experience.*

The dramatic story of the Alamo is known throughout the world for its universal human appeal for courage and sacrifice. As San Antonio enters one of its brightest eras, a new vision for presenting our storied past is also on the rise. It is an effort that embraces all the elements that a world famous site must have - authenticity, reverence, and integrity - all interwoven into the fabric of a world-class presentation.

### **ALAMO PLAZA RENOVATION FEATURES:**

- ★ Closure of vehicle traffic on Alamo Street. Restore the integrity of the original mission compound and its historic boundaries, and establish a reverant setting with appropriate materials.
- ★ Recreate southern enclosure of the Alamo compound including the Low Barracks, defensive lunette, and main gate entrance.
- ★ Recreate the southwest corner of the Alamo and the entire length of the original west wall to Houston Street.
- ★ Relocate the Cenotaph to the southern end of the Plaza, outside the original mission boundary and directly in front of the Menger Hotel.
- ★ Transform the old Post Office/Federal Building at the north end of Alamo Plaza into a major world-class multi-media center and museum. It will also house the new Center for Texas History for educational and interpretive workshops, and digital linkage to international institutions.



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