

City of Laredo

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

Thursday, June 11, 2026

12:00 PM

**City of Laredo City Hall
City Council Chambers
1110 Houston Street
Laredo, Texas 78040**

Historic District / Landmark Board

This governmental body may allow participation in meetings by video conference in accordance with Texas Government Code § 551.127, provided a quorum is present at the posted location.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Texas Pledge

5. Approval of Minutes

5A. Regular Meeting of November 13, 2025 [26-1135](#)

5B. Regular Meeting of March 12, 2026 [26-1136](#)

5C. Regular Meeting of May 14, 2026 [26-1137](#)

6. Citizen Comments

Citizens are required to fill out a witness card and submit it to a City Planner, or designee, no later than 11:45 p.m. and identify themselves at the microphone. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes per speaker. No more than three (3) persons will be allowed to speak on any side of an issue. Should there be more than three (3) people who wish to speak on a particular issue, they need to select not more than three (3) representatives to speak for them and the presiding officer may limit the public comments further in the interest of an orderly meeting. Speakers may not pass their minutes to any other speaker. Comments should be relevant to City business and delivered in a professional manner. No derogatory remarks will be permitted.

7. Public Hearing and Consideration of the Following:

7A. Public Hearing and consideration of a motion to consider the exterior alterations of the façade by replacing the original storefront windows with a stucco wall on Lots 8 and 9, Block 42, Western Division, located at 901 Hidalgo Street. This property is within Old Mercado Historic District. [26-1138](#)

HD-006-2026
District VIII

8. Adjournment

This notice was posted at the Municipal Government Office, 1110 Houston Street, Laredo, Texas 78040, at a place of convenient and readily accessible to the public at all time. Said notice was posted on Friday, June 5, 2026 by 12:00 P.M.

City of Laredo

Historic District / Landmark Board

Meeting Date: 6/11/2026

Action Item 5A.

CITY OF LAREDO

HISTORIC DISTRICT/LANDMARK BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 13, 2025

The Historic District/Landmark Board of the City of Laredo convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at 12:00 noon, at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 1110 Houston St., in Laredo, Texas 78040, to consider the following:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Narvaez called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, called roll and verified **quorum** existed.

Members present: Chair Johnny Narvaez
Vice Chair Francisco Barrientos
Jorge Santana
Ana Villarreal (1st Meeting)
Wayne Nance
Priscilla Iglesias

Members absent: Sara V. Garza (Excused)
Teresa Barker (Excused)
Marc Gonzalez (Excused)

Staff present: Vanessa Guerra
Deidre Garcia
Vanessa Fresnillo

Others present: Rick Solis
Victor Montes
Teresa Fonseca
Joshua Black
Leonel Garza
Carmen P. de la Rosa
Sofia Santos

Chair Narvaez requested a motion to excuse Members not present.

Board Member (Bm.) Barrientos made a motion to **excuse** Members not present.

Second: Bm. Nance

Minutes of the HDLB meeting of November 13, 2025

For: 6
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

4. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF:

A. Regular Meeting of August 14, 2025.

Board Member (Bm.) Iglesias made a motion to **approve** the minutes of August 14, 2025.

Second: Bm. Barrientos
For: 6
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

Motion carried unanimously

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIERATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to consider façade improvements to the Plaza Theater, which includes exterior alterations, new construction, demolition, and restoration of Lots 2, 8, 9, and the west one third of Lot 3 (approximately 2,057.75 square feet), Block 46, Western Division, located at 1018 and 1012 ½ Hidalgo Street and 1013 and 1017 Farragut Street. This property is within the Old Mercado Historic District.**

HD-001-2026

District VIII

Deidre Garcia, Planning Staff, provided a brief overview on the item.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, clarified that Building A, the demolition is for all of the building, except the façade.

Staff Recommendation: Staff **supports** the proposed scope of work for the following reasons:

- 1). Alterations, Renovations, and Repairs that will Alter the Existing Exterior Façade:
 - a. The replacement of skeletonized lighting, chrome hardware, canopy reconstruction, and lighting fixtures will reflect the Art Moderne architectural style. As per the Secretary of the Interior, the historic character of the Plaza Theater will be retained and preserved. (Standard 2: Historic Character)
 - b. The proposed scope of work appropriately restores the historic building while incorporating new materials such as stucco, a flat TPO roof, and metal that complement the existing character, materials, and spatial relationships of the property, as per the Secretary of the Interior. (Standard 9: New Additions)
- 2). Repairs and Renovations that will not Alter the Exterior Façade:
 - a. The proposed repairs, such as cleaning, replacement of grout, wood sanding/refinishing, repairing metal panels, are consistent with historic preservation standards and maintain the architectural integrity of the Plaza Theater. (Standard 2: Historic Character)
 - b. The proposed scope of work includes repair of teal tile, terrazzo flooring, and wood doors in a manner that maintains integrity and preserves all character-defining features, as per the Historic Urban Design Guidelines. (Chapter 3: Treatment of Character-Defining Features)
- 3). Partial Demolition of Building A (1012 ½ Hidalgo Street - building adjacent to the Plaza Theater)
 - a. The proposed partial demolition of Building A does not destroy historic materials, as the Plaza Theater will remain intact, as per the Secretary of the Interior. (Standard 9: New Additions)
 - b. The proposed partial demolition of Building A will maintain the streetscape and will preserve the façade materials of Building A, as per the Historic Urban Design Guidelines. (Chapter 3: Preserve Façade Materials)
- 4). New Construction to the Rear of Building A (1012 ½ Hidalgo Street - building adjacent to the Plaza Theater):
 - a. The new construction is compatible in scale, materials, and massing without creating a false historical appearance, as similar materials such as stucco, metal, and a flat TPO roof are being used, as per the Secretary of Interior. (Standard 9: New Additions)
 - b. The addition for the Plaza Theater expansion recedes approximately 15 feet from the street, is distinguishable from the existing historical environment, and remains visually compatible to the Plaza Theater as per the Historic Urban Design Guidelines. (Chapter 3: Additions to Historic Buildings)

Staff General Comments:

1. Any improvements which are approved by the Historic District Landmark Board shall also comply with all Building Code requirements and other regulations as provided in the Laredo Land Development Code.
2. Approval by the Historic District Landmark Board does not guarantee approval of a building permit or any other permit which may be required.
3. It is recommended that all existed improvements utilize the following resources as a guide:

Minutes of the HDLB meeting of November 13, 2025

- The Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
 - City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines
 - City of Laredo Historic Preservation Plan
4. No other improvements, changes to the building, site or new construction on the property shall be permitted without prior review and approval by staff and/or Historic District Landmark Board, to meet compliance.
 5. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, all proposed scope of work should be physically and visually compatible to the original materials and features of the historical structure.

Chairman Narvaez opened the public hearing.

Rick Solis, Partner with Able City, and Victor Montes, Project Manager, addressed the Board and expressed their support for the proposed project. Mr. Solis stated that the goal is to modernize the building while preserving its historic integrity and respecting its original character. He explained that the proposed demolition work would allow for the installation of ADA-compliant restrooms, an elevator, and exit stairs, all without affecting the Plaza Theater itself.

Mr. Montes presented images of the proposed neon lighting to provide the Board with an example of the color and design, demonstrating that it would match the proposed aesthetic for the building.

Board Member Santana expressed his enthusiasm for the project and stated that he was pleased to see the work moving forward, noting that the building represents an important part of the community's history.

Mr. Montes explained that the proposed sign would utilize a skeletonized lighting system. Mr. Solis added that the design would transition from traditional neon to an LED skeletonized system due to the high cost and maintenance associated with neon lighting. He noted that the proposed system would use the same anchor points as the existing sign, making the differences between the two systems difficult to detect.

Board Member Santana commented that the systems appear nearly identical while also consuming less energy.

Mr. Montes further explained that the contractor would utilize the existing connection points where current neon lighting is damaged or disconnected in order to minimize the need to create additional holes in the structure. He also noted that other neon lights throughout the building are frequently vandalized and that neon tubing is costly to replace. For this reason, the proposal includes the use of Incision Prime Green skeletonized LED lighting, and he presented several examples for the Board's consideration.

Board Member Villarreal asked staff whether the proposed ordinance under Item 6C, which addresses the prohibition of illuminated signage within the Historic District, would affect the proposed project.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed the Board that the applicants should already have obtained the necessary permits; therefore, the project would be considered vested under the previous ordinance.

Board Member Santana asked whether another building with similar signage installed approximately eighty (80) years ago would be considered grandfathered.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, explained that if documentation exists demonstrating that the signage was installed prior to the adoption of the ordinance, it would be considered grandfathered.

Chairman Narvaez, requested a motion to close the public hearing and action for HD-001-2026.

Bm. Iglesias made a motion to close the public hearing and **approve** HD-001-2026. The motion includes to consider façade improvements to the Plaza Theater, which includes exterior alterations, new construction, demolition, and restoration.

Second:	Bm. Barrientos
For:	6
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

Motion carried unanimously

B. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to consider façade repair and restoration on Block 10, Western Division, located at 217 San Agustin Avenue. This property is within the San Agustin de Laredo Historic District.

HD-002-2026

District VIII

Vanessa Fresnillo, Planning Staff, provided a brief overview on the item.

Staff Recommendation: Staff **supports** the proposed scope of work, for the following reasons:

1. Sixty (60) windows are to be replaced with insulated windows.
 - a. The proposed installation of insulated windows will maintain the original window design and proportions, ensuring no visual change to the façade or historic character of the Santa Monica Parish Hall. Any window replacement shall not

- alter the exterior appearance or compromise the historic character of the building. (Historic Urban Design Guidelines)
- b. The replacement with insulated windows in the Santa Monica Parish Hall will help with the long-term sustainability of the building while retaining its character. Work undertaken to meet energy efficiency and sustainability goals should be compatible with the historic character of the building, replacing windows may be appropriate when thermal performance is necessary for long-term building function. (Secretary of Interior Standards)
2. Repair and restoration of fourteen (14) window frames using reclaimed Longleaf Pine or species to match existing per material testing.
 - a. Repairing the wood windows using reclaimed Longleaf Pine or a similar fine-grained species maintains this intent by retaining or reusing authentic materials. (Chapter 3: Design Guidelines for Historic Properties)
 - b. The proposed use of reclaimed Longleaf Pine aligns with this philosophy-it repairs the feature using materials that are either identical or as close as possible in species and grain to the original. (Standard 6)
 3. Salvage and replacement of forty-six (46) window frames using Clear Ponderosa Pine or suitable fine-grained lumber.
 - a. Clear Ponderosa Pine or a suitable-grained lumber is an appropriate replacement that will ensure visual continuity. Similar wood species-those with comparable grain, color, and finish-are appropriate substitutes when exact matching materials are unavailable.
 - b. Using a compatible fine-grained lumber such as Clear Ponderosa Pine fits this provision, provided that the finish, detailing, and joinery replicate the original appearance. When original materials are not available, the Standards allow “matching the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.” (Standard 6)

Staff Recommendation: Staff **does not support** the proposed scope of work for the following reasons:

4. Aluminum cladding of forty-six (46) window frames that will be painted to match historic color(s) of existing windows as per material testing
 - a. The Historic Urban Design Guidelines identifies aluminum-clad windows as inappropriate for historic buildings, therefore the proposed usage of aluminum-cladding on the windows introduces a non-historic material inconsistent with the original character and intent of the Historic Urban Design Guidelines.
 - b. Aluminum, being non-porous, reflective, and machine-finished, fails to replicate the tactile texture, warmth, and matte quality of wood, resulting in an incompatible appearance. (Secretary of Interior Standards)
 - c. The cladding is a permanent alteration that prevents inspection and maintenance of the underlying wood-contrary to preservation practice favoring reversible interventions. (Secretary of Interior Standards)

Staff General Comments:

1. Any improvements which are approved by the Historic District Landmark Board shall also comply with all Building Code requirements and other regulations as provided in the Laredo Land Development Code.
2. Approval by the Historic District Landmark Board does not guarantee approval of a building permit or any other permit which may be required.
3. It is recommended that all existed improvements utilize the following resources as a guide:
 - The Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
 - City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines
 - City of Laredo Historic Preservation Plan
4. No other improvements, changes to the building, site or new construction on the property shall be permitted without prior review and approval by staff and/or Historic District Landmark Board, to meet compliance.
5. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, all proposed scope of work should be physically and visually compatible to the original materials and features of the historical structure.

Chairman Narvaez opened the public hearing.

Teresa Fonseca, Project Architect, provided a brief presentation outlining the proposed project. She explained that the building contains approximately 300 windows, many of which are beyond repair. As a result, the proposal includes replacing the north-facing second and third floor windows with aluminum clad wood windows manufactured by Marvin. She noted that the proposed windows are designed to match the existing window profiles and that the aluminum cladding would serve to protect the wood. Ms. Fonseca also stated that any materials that can be salvaged from the north second and third floor windows would be reused to repair and restore windows on the south second and third floor elevations.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed the Commission that while health and safety considerations are important, staff must adhere to the adopted historic preservation guidelines. She noted that, according to the guidelines, the use of cladding on historic windows is generally not recommended.

Chairman Narvaez, requested a motion to close the public hearing and action for HD-002-2026.

Bm. Nance made a motion to close the public hearing, support Staff recommendation and **approve** Item No's 1 through 3, and go against Staff recommendation and **approve** Item No. 4 in HD-002-2026.

Second:	Bm. Santana
For:	6
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

Motion carried Unanimously

C. Amending Chapter 28 of the City of Laredo Code of Ordinances, Article II to prohibit illuminated signage for all properties located along all Right-of-Ways (ROW) abutting designated historic plaza; providing a severability; establishing an effective date; and providing for publication.

Vanessa Fresnillo, Planning Staff, provided a brief overview on the item.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed the Board an asterisk (*), has been added to the legend explaining “Illuminated signage shall be prohibited on all properties located along the right-of-way abutting the perimeter of designated plazas in accordance with Section 28-41 (c)”.

Staff Recommendation: Staff **supports** the proposed ordinance which will prevent illuminated signs on properties located along the Right-of-Ways abutting the perimeter of, in and adjacent to the following City of Laredo designated plazas – San Agustin Plaza, Jarvis Plaza, El Mercado Plaza, Bruni Plaza, and St. Peter’s Plaza.

Chairman Narvaez opened the public hearing.

Chairman Narvaez requested a motion to close the public hearing and action on the proposed ordinance.

Bm. Nance made a motion to close the public hearing and **supports** Staff’s recommendation.

Second:	Bm. Villarreal
For:	6
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

Motion carried Unanimously

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, introduced and welcomed Ana Villarreal to the Board. She also expressed her appreciation to Vanessa Fresnillo, Planner, for drafting her first ordinance and commended her for the work completed.

Board members discussed the importance of educating property owners on the rules and regulations that apply to properties located within the historic districts.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed the Board that staff remains available to meet with property owners to address any questions or concerns. She further noted the City has invested significantly in several incentive programs intended to assist property owners within historic districts, including the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ), the Façade Improvement

Program, and initiatives led by the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) Board to support continued improvements in the downtown area.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Narvaez requested the meeting be adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Bm. Villarreal made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting.

Second:	Bm. Nance
For:	6
Against:	0
Abstain:	0

Vanessa Guerra,
City Planning Director

Johnny Narvaez
HDLB Chair

City of Laredo

Historic District / Landmark Board

Meeting Date: 6/11/2026

Action Item 5B.

CITY OF LAREDO

HISTORIC DISTRICT/LANDMARK BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 12, 2026

The Historic District/Landmark Board of the City of Laredo convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 12:00 noon, at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 1110 Houston St., in Laredo, Texas 78040, to consider the following:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, called roll and verified **no quorum** existed, and informed the Commissioners present that Vice Chair Barrientos and Bm. Garza had confirmed their attendance.

Members present: Jorge Santana
Wayne Nance
Marc Gonzalez

Members absent: Chair Johnny Narvaez
Vice Chair Francisco Barrientos
Sara V. Garza
Teresa Barker
Council District IV (Vacant)
Priscilla Iglesias

Staff present: Vanessa Guerra
Deidre Garcia
Laura Garza
Vanessa Fresnillo

Others present: Mona Dadlani
Emily Bayless
Bernice Agruirre

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed everyone present that they would have to recite the Texas Flag as well.

Commissioner Nance stepped out of the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed those present that they would wait a few minutes while the other Board members arrive.

Bm. Santa, called for a 10-minute recess to see if more members arrive.

Commissioner Nance stepped back into the meeting at 12:07 p.m.

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed the Applicants present that due to lack of quorum, the items that were being presented will be going to the City Council meeting of April 7, 2026.

4. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF:

A. Regular Meeting of November 13, 2025.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIERATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

A. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to consider the new construction of a solar panel pergola and the addition solar panels on the existing residential structure on Lot 1, Block 201, Western Division, located at 1602 Washington Street. This property is with the Saint Peter's Historic District.

HD-004-2026

District VIII

B. Public hearing and consideration of a motion to consider the exterior alteration of the side façade along Lincoln Street by adding a terracotta clay mural on part of Lot 4 and all of Lot 5, Block 40, Western Division, located at 502 Convent Avenue. This property is with the Old Mercado Historic District.

HD-005-2026

District VIII

7. ADJOURNMENT

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Vanessa Guerra,
City Planning Director

Johnny Narvaez
HDLB Chair

NO QUORUM

City of Laredo

Historic District / Landmark Board

Meeting Date: 6/11/2026

Action Item 5C.

CITY OF LAREDO

HISTORIC DISTRICT/LANDMARK BOARD

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF MAY 14, 2026

The Historic District/Landmark Board of the City of Laredo convened in a regular meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 12:00 noon, at the City Council Chambers at City Hall at 1110 Houston St., in Laredo, Texas 78040, to consider the following:

1. CALL TO ORDER

Marc Gonzalez, called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, called roll and verified **no quorum** existed. She informed the Board Members present that Vice Chair Barrientos had confirmed his attendance. Ms. Guerra further explained the item scheduled for discussion was for informational purposes only and did not require Board action. Therefore, the meeting could proceed despite the lack of a quorum; however, no action could be taken on the approval of the meeting minutes.

Members present: Jorge Santana
Marc Gonzalez

Members absent: Chair Johnny Narvaez
Vice Chair Francisco Barrientos
Sara V. Garza
Teresa Barker
Wayne Nance
Council District IV (Vacant)
Priscilla Iglesias

Staff present: Charles Graves
Vanessa Guerra
Deidre Garcia
Vanessa Fresnillo
Alejandra Martinez

Others present:

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director, informed those in attendance that the recitation of the Texas Pledge is now required at all meetings.

4. TEXAS PLEDGE

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. Regular Meeting of March 12, 2026.

6. CITIZEN COMMENTS

None.

7. STAFF REPORT (NO ACTION REQUIRED)

A. Staff report on the issuance of a demolition permit for the property on the north ½ of Lot 1 and 2 and the south 4.3 varas of Lot 10, Block 26, Western Division, located at 305 San Bernardo Avenue. This property is within the San Agustin de Laredo Historic District.

Alejandra Martinez, Certified Building Official, informed the Board that the subject structure, an old brick building with no roof and in a severely deteriorated condition, had been determined to be an imminent danger to public safety. She explained that the City received a complaint through 311 regarding a substandard structure reportedly occupied by homeless individuals. Following an inspection, a Notice of Violation was issued to the property owner and the structure was subsequently tagged as unsafe.

Ms. Martinez stated that the property owner later informed City staff that the structure was considered historic and that a demolition permit had previously been denied. The owner was advised to coordinate with the Historic District/Landmark Board regarding the matter. After additional inspections were conducted, a demolition permit application was submitted and reviewed. Based on the condition of the structure and applicable codes and regulations, Ms. Martinez determined that immediate action was necessary and recommended demolition of the building.

Board Member Gonzalez requested clarification regarding the approval process for the demolition.

Planning Director Vanessa Guerra explained that permits for alterations, construction, renovation, or demolition within a historic district generally require Historic District/Landmark Board approval unless exempted under the code. However, due to the Building Official's determination that the structure posed an imminent danger to public safety, staff determined that the demolition permit could be issued without Board approval. No action by the Board was required.

Executive Planning Director Charles Graves stated that staff believed it was important to inform the Board of the situation, given the significance of the structure's condition and the need for immediate action.

Board Member Santana commented that while he understood the justification for demolition, he believed the structure may have had restoration potential. He expressed concern regarding similar deteriorated buildings throughout the historic districts and questioned what additional measures could be taken to encourage restoration and prevent demolition by neglect.

Vice Chair Barrientos arrived at 12:10 p.m.

Ms. Guerra acknowledged Mr. Santana's concerns and discussed the City's efforts to promote preservation and reinvestment within historic areas. She noted that City ordinances require property owners to maintain their structures and that staff actively identifies substandard buildings and works with property owners to bring them into compliance. She also highlighted various incentive programs available to property owners, including Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) tax abatements, permit fee waivers, façade improvement programs, grant opportunities, and infrastructure improvements through the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) program.

Mr. Graves added that fines and penalties may be imposed on neglected properties, although such measures are not always effective in achieving compliance.

Board Member Gonzalez requested information regarding how interested property owners could access the available incentive programs.

Ms. Guerra advised that members of the public may contact the Community Development Department's Economic Development Division for information regarding the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ) Program, Façade Improvement Program, and other available assistance programs.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Vanessa Guerra, Planning Director adjourned the meeting at 12:24 p.m.

Vanessa Guerra,
City Planning Director

Johnny Narvaez
HDLB Chair

City of Laredo

Historic District / Landmark Board

Meeting Date: 6/11/2026

Action Item 7A.

SUBJECT

Public Hearing and consideration of a motion to consider the exterior alterations of the façade by replacing the original storefront windows with a stucco wall on Lots 8 and 9, Block 42, Western Division, located at 901 Hidalgo Street. This property is within Old Mercado Historic District.

HD-006-2026
District VIII

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

On April 2, 2024, the City Council approved of the exterior alterations and addition of two new roofs, new construction, and attached signage on Lots 1, 8, 9, and 10, Block 42, Western Division, located at 901 Hidalgo Street.

BACKGROUND

Initiated by: Bethany House of Laredo, Inc. Owner; Monica Bautista, Representative

Proposed Scope of Work: The applicant is requesting approval from the Historic District Landmark Board for alterations that have already been constructed on the building's primary façade. The modifications consist of replacing the original historic storefront windows with a stucco wall, thereby enclosing the former display window openings. The applicant is seeking retroactive approval for the completed exterior alterations.

Building Type:

Bethany House Resource Center (corner of Hidalgo Street and San Bernardo Avenue) - As per the Historic Urban Design Assessment Report, states the following:

This is a single-story, brick building. The brick has been painted over. The openings on the facade are recessed and vary in size. The windows and door have a raised brick frame around them. The parapet wall is capped by a raised brick coping and has an embattlement profile.

Site: The property is an H-AE (Historic Arts and Entertainment) zoning district.

Letters sent to the surrounding property owners: 26

For: 0

Against: 0

Granting or Denying an Application:

- As per the Laredo Land Development Code, Section 24.1.2.2(2), the Historic District Landmark Board shall utilize the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings; and the City of Laredo, Texas, Historic Urban Design

Guidelines

Secretary of the Interior's Standards:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff does not support the replacement of the original storefront windows with a stucco wall, as the proposed work is not consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation or the City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines.

1. The storefront and window openings are character-defining features of the historic structure and contribute significantly to the architectural integrity and historic appearance of the building. Replacing the windows with a solid stucco wall alters the original façade composition and diminishes the transparency, rhythm, and visual continuity traditionally associated with historic commercial storefronts.
2. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, deteriorated historic features should be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible, and new work should be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion of the building. Restoring the storefront windows would better align with these standards and preserve the historic character of the property and surrounding district. (Standards 2, 5, 6, and 9)

Staff acknowledges the applicant's concerns regarding vandalism, public safety, and the financial burden associated with repeated window replacement. However, while these concerns are understandable, the proposed alteration permanently changes a significant architectural feature of the building and is not considered an appropriate treatment under the preservation standards and design guidelines.

Staff recommends that the original storefront window openings be restored to maintain the historic character of the building. To address the applicant's security concerns while minimizing impacts to the historic façade, the applicant may consider alternative security measures, including but not limited to:

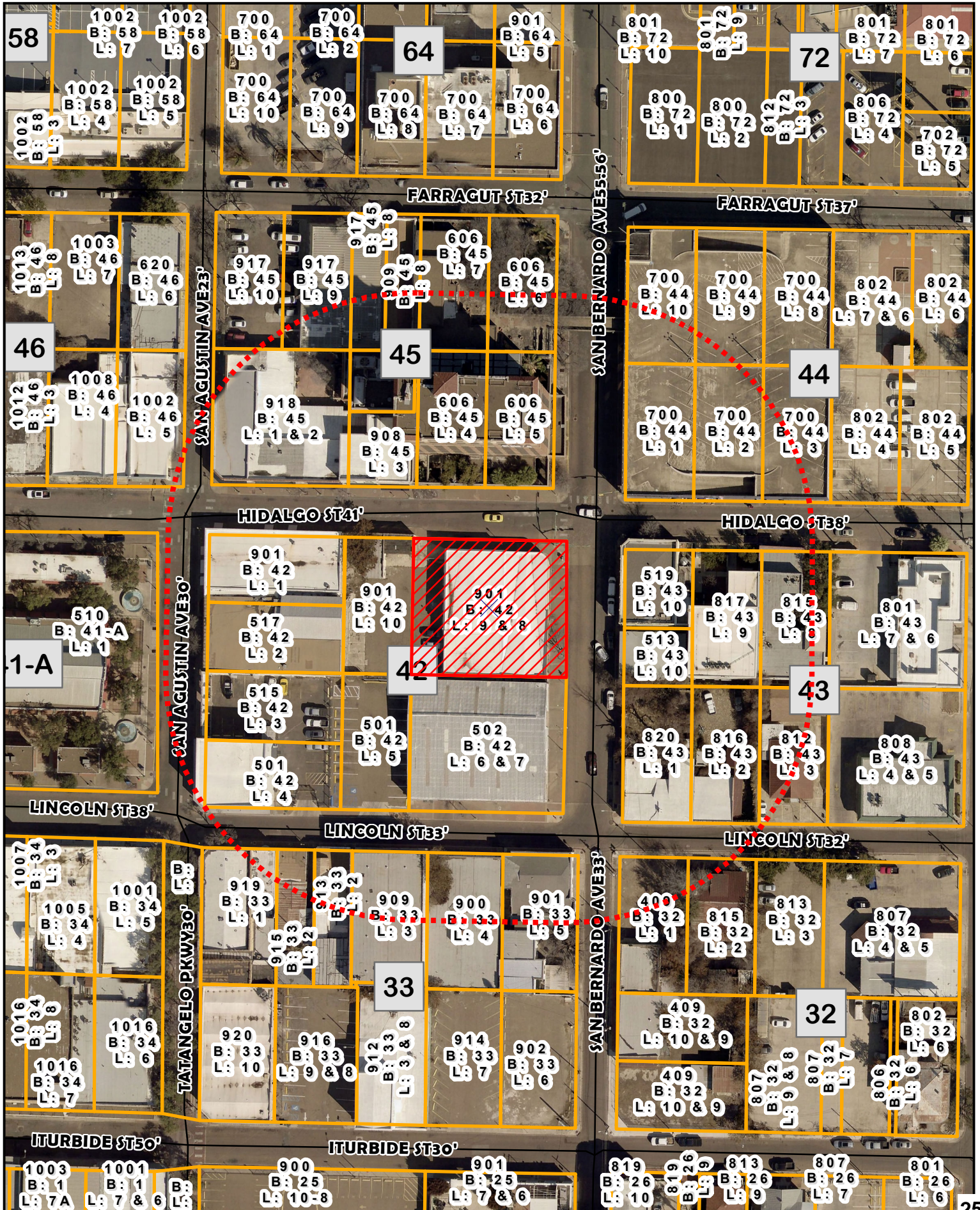
- Plexiglass (acrylic glazing), which is lightweight, shatter-resistant, and may serve as a more cost-effective alternative to traditional glass in certain applications.
- Tempered glass, which is stronger than standard glass and commonly used in commercial storefronts due to its enhanced durability and safety characteristics.
- Laminated or impact-resistant security glass, which provides increased protection against vandalism and forced entry while maintaining the appearance of a traditional storefront.
- Polycarbonate glazing systems, which offer superior impact resistance and are commonly used in high-security applications due to their durability and resistance to breakage.
- Interior security grilles or roll-down metal grille screens installed behind the storefront windows, as encouraged by the City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines, to provide security while preserving visibility and transparency along the street frontage.

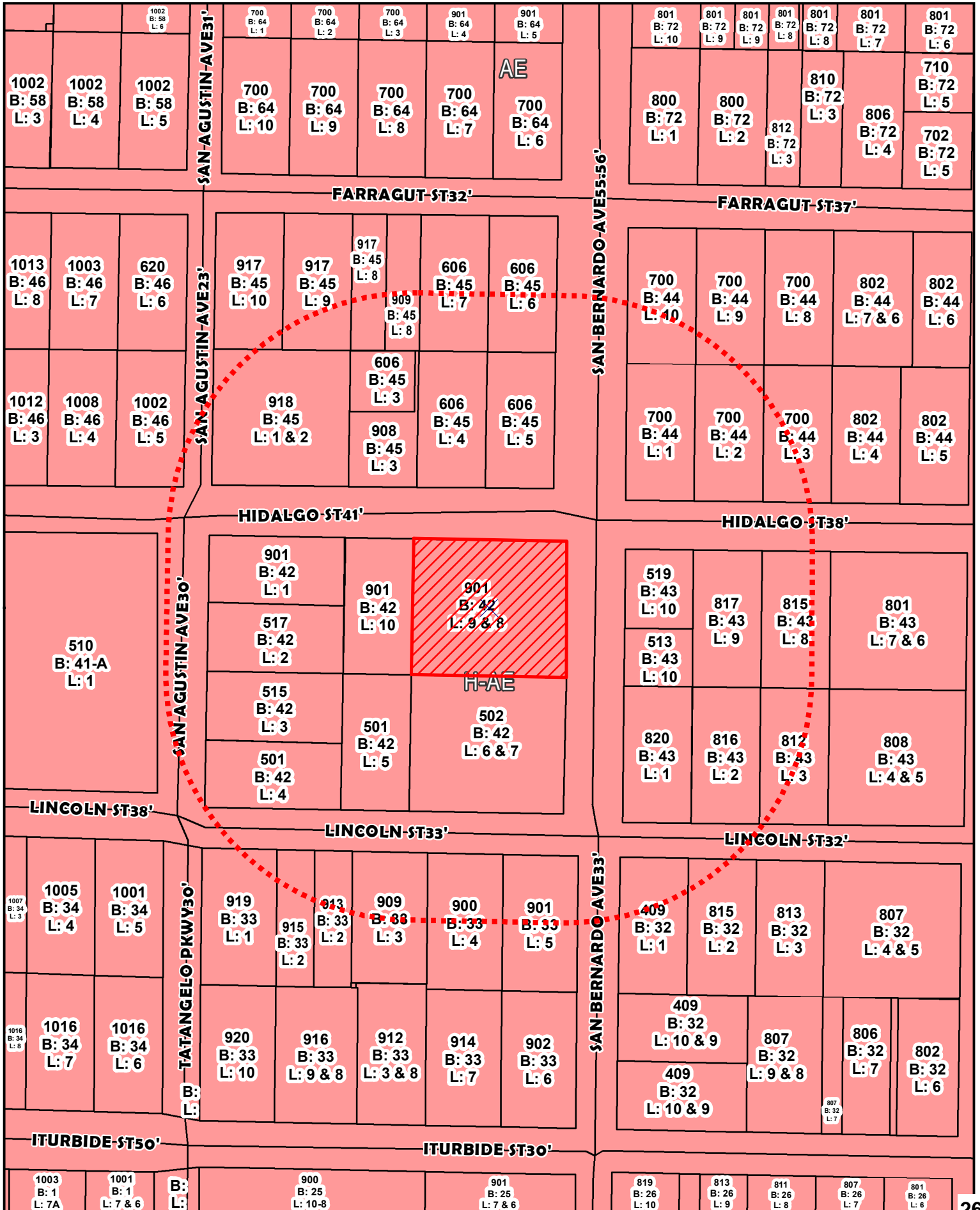
These alternatives would improve building security while allowing the historic storefront configuration and architectural integrity of the structure to remain visible and preserved.

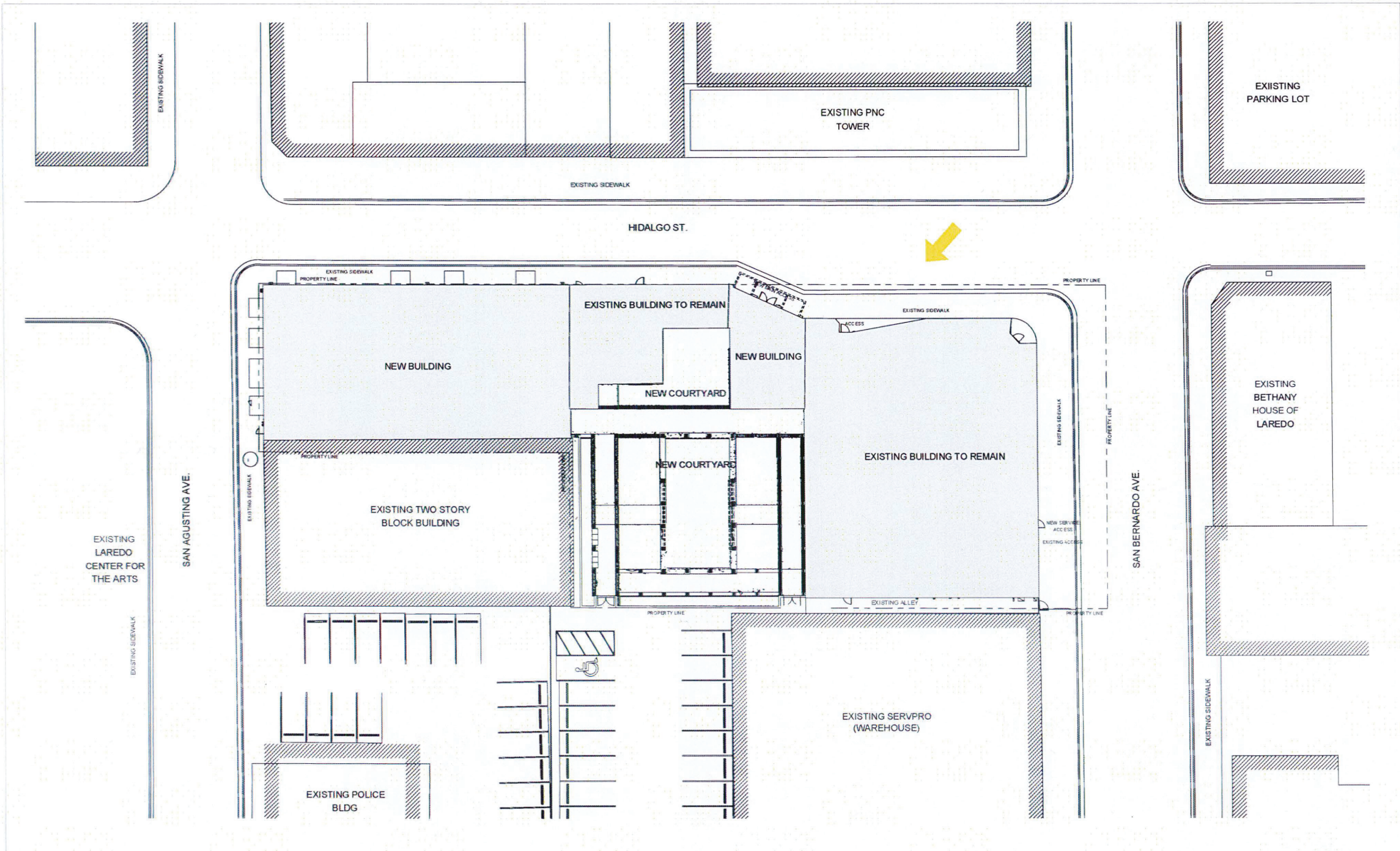
Staff General Comments:

1. Any improvements which are approved by the Historic District Landmark Board shall also comply with all Building Code requirements and other regulations as provided in the Laredo Land Development Code.
2. Approval by the Historic District Landmark Board does not guarantee approval of a building permit or any other permit which may be required.
3. It is recommended that all existed improvements utilize the following resources as a guide:
 - The Secretary of the Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings
 - City of Laredo Historic Urban Design Guidelines
 - City of Laredo Historic Preservation Plan
4. No other improvements, changes to the building, site or new construction on the property shall be permitted without prior review and approval by staff and/or Historic District Landmark Board, to meet compliance.

5. As per the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, all proposed scope of work should be physically and visually compatible to the original materials and features of the historical structure.







SITE PLAN
 SCALE: N/A
 BETHANY HOUSE OF LAREDO
 901 HIDALGO ST, LAREDO TX 78040

COURTYARD RESOURCE CENTER



BETHANY HOUSE

Founded in 1982 by Father Charles McNaboe
Our Mission: "To feed the hungry and shelter the homeless"



January 15, 2026

Ms. Tina Rodriguez
City of Laredo Community Development, Director
1301 Farragut- 3rd Floor East Wing
Laredo, TX 78040

Re: Modifications to Resource Center Façade

I am writing on behalf of Bethany House in response to your request for clarification regarding modifications made in August 2025 to the façade of the Bethany House Resource Center located in 901 Hidalgo Street, which include the replacement of three plate glass window panels with a stucco wall.

The modifications were implemented in response to an act of vandalism in which a person undergoing severe mental health distress threw pieces of brick through five of the large front plate glass windows, shattering them completely. A photo of the damage is attached.

The destruction of the windows left the entire building open to the street. It left the lobby area fully exposed and created an unsafe environment for staff and participants of our program.

Following this incident, our location was a target of several property damage threats from other individuals experiencing homelessness and severe mental health instability.

Given these conditions, immediate action was taken to mitigate risk and ensure the safety and continuity of the essential services our agency provides. The decision to go with a stucco wall to replace four of the windows was undertaken as a temporary response to urgent conditions.

Since the event, we have asked our contractor if using a stronger glass to replace the windows would guaranty that this damage would not happen again. We were informed that a stronger glass might make the windows a little more difficult to break, but in a next contest of brick meeting glass in all likelihood the brick would win out again. Estimates for the cost of replacing all five windows were approximately \$8,000.00 with regular grade glass. This is a cost we cannot afford to pay of a regular basis.

We acknowledge that the Resource Center is located within a recognized historic district. We deeply respect the importance of preserving the architectural and historical integrity of the area. We recognize that Bethany House should address the long-term disposition of these modifications through the appropriate review and approval processes and take the action required to resolve the matter on a permanent basis. We will begin this process.

Please be assured that Bethany House remains committed to working collaboratively with the City of Laredo. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require additional information or wish to discuss this matter further.

Sincerely,

Monica Bautista, Bethany House Executive Director

Laredo, Texas 78040
956-722-4152 phone
info@bethanyhouseoflaredo.org

Barbara A. Kazen
Center for Hope
(Main Offices)
817 Hidalgo St.

Dining Facility
819 Hidalgo St.

Shelter
815 Hidalgo St.

**Courtyard & Resource
Center**
901 Hidalgo St.

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Dr. Patrick Valls

EMERITUS
Linda Mann
Bavi Nixon
Fanny Stavorowski





Original Façade



Damages the date of the incident -
August 5, 2025



Existing façade after
modifications

ORIGINAL FAÇADE



DAMAGES TO FAÇADE



EXISTING FAÇADE



Possible Window Recommendations

Plexiglass (Acrylic) Description: Plexiglass is a lightweight, transparent acrylic material often used as a cost-effective substitute for traditional glass.

- Advantages:
 - More affordable than traditional glass.
 - Lightweight and easy to install.
 - Shatter-resistant, making it safer than standard glass in certain applications.
- Disadvantages:
 - Prone to yellowing over time when exposed to sunlight (UV degradation).
 - Scratches more easily than glass, which can affect long-term appearance.
 - More rigid and may crack or chip more readily than polycarbonate.
 - Not ideal for high-traffic areas where appearance and durability are essential.
- Common Uses: Commercial and residential window replacements, display cases, and protective barriers where budget is a primary concern.

Tempered Glass Description: Tempered glass is a type of safety glass that is heat-treated to increase its strength and improve its resistance to breakage.

- Advantages:
 - Up to four times stronger than regular glass.
 - Shatters into small, blunt pieces rather than sharp shards when broken, reducing injury risk.
 - Frequently used for its clean look and durability in commercial settings.
- Disadvantages:
 - Not designed to resist forced entry or provide advanced security.
 - Once broken, it cannot be repaired—must be fully replaced.
 - More expensive than standard glass or plexiglass.
- Common Uses: Storefronts, glass doors, commercial windows, and other areas requiring enhanced safety.

Laminated Glass Description: Laminated glass consists of two or more layers of glass bonded together with a plastic interlayer (usually PVB). When broken, the glass shards remain adhered to the interlayer.

- Advantages:
 - Provides excellent safety by preventing the glass from shattering completely.
 - Offers sound insulation and UV protection.
 - Ideal for high-security applications and storm resistance.
- Disadvantages:
 - More expensive than both tempered glass and plexiglass.
 - Heavier, which may affect structural support and installation requirements.
- Common Uses: Car windshields, hurricane-resistant windows, storefronts, and security glass installations.

Polycarbonate Description: Polycarbonate is a strong, transparent thermoplastic known for its impact resistance and flexibility.

- Advantages:
 - Significantly stronger than plexiglass and nearly unbreakable under normal conditions.
 - Extremely durable, offering superior protection against impact and vandalism.
 - Resistant to chips and cracks.
- Disadvantages:
 - Higher cost compared to other materials.
 - Susceptible to surface scratching (though coatings can mitigate this).
 - May discolor over time if not treated with UV-resistant coating.
- Common Uses: Security windows, riot shields, detention centers, protective barriers, and industrial enclosures.

Thick Glass (Increased Thickness for Strength) Description: Increasing the thickness of standard glass can provide added strength and durability, though it does not offer the safety features of tempered or laminated glass.

- Advantages:
 - More difficult to break than standard single-pane glass.
 - Can enhance insulation and soundproofing when used in multi-pane assemblies.
- Disadvantages:
 - Still prone to shattering upon impact unless tempered or laminated.
 - Heavier and costlier to install.
 - Not ideal for security unless combined with other treatments.
- Common Uses: Architectural features, high-end residential windows, and display applications where clarity and strength are prioritized.