

THE SOAP FACTORY APARTMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The piece below was adapted from public comment on Monday, September 16th at the SAISD School Board meeting. Despite protests from Soap Factory residents, The San Antonio City Council approved a framework deal for a new downtown minor league San Antonio Missions baseball stadium. Thus the Apartments are due for demolition at this time displacing hundreds of tenants.*

I arrived in San Antonio with scarce resources and no connections, yet I encountered a remarkable opportunity to establish a productive life living and working Downtown. Housing at the Soap Factory Apartments and an appealing job opportunity nearby captivated me, and I thought I had a promising path forward. However, it emerged just a few weeks ago that secretive deliberations for a downtown baseball stadium, spanning years, had focused on dismantling these essential apartments without residents' knowledge or input. Large corporations like Weston Urban, and other well connected investors have been driving this plan forward, using the threat of a looming deadline to catch our elected officials off guard, pressuring them into rapid approval of a project that leaves individuals like me and my neighbors as collateral damage due to their poor planning.

Now we have a situation where the wealthy business owners backing the baseball stadium are

taking our public institutions like the San Antonio Independent School District for granted, and they're taking residents like me and my neighbors for granted, too. They feel like they already have everything they need to move forward with their plans. We're here to say: Not So Fast!

Our education and our organizing has empowered us to become active contributors to society and ensured our voices are heard. Had we not advocated for ourselves, we would have been overlooked by the powerful entities seeking to profit at our expense.

We request a seat at the table regarding our homes. We acknowledge the significant pressure the School District and the County are under to yield to these influential forces, which we've also experienced first hand.

Many have purported to represent us without our input. We appreciate the School District's leadership for allowing us the time to speak up and be actively heard, and for calling a public input session, something the San Antonio City Council should have done a long time ago.

We deserve the opportunity to fully articulate our aspirations for a safe, secure, and successful future for us as Soap Factory residents, and for all San Antonians.

—PA, resident at the Soap Factory Apartments

