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**Westside Creeks Restoration Project
Alazán Creek Subcommittee Meeting
Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center – 1300 Guadalupe St.
September 01, 2009 – 8:00 AM**

Meeting Notes

Attendees: Jerold Suarez; Patricia Ramirez-Long; Jesse H. Valdez; Andrea Gilles, San Antonio City Planning; Jessica O. Guerrero; Esperanza Peace & Justice Center; Jaime P. Martinez, Cesar E. Chavez/LULAC; Lourdes Galvan, Westside Chamber of Commerce; Adrian Flores, LULAC; Názarite Pérez, SARA Board Member, Roberto G. Rodriguez, SARA Board Member; Thomas C. Lopez, SAISD; Melissa Sherburn, AECOM; Emmanuel Didier, AECOM; Brad Smith, AECOM; Ed Garza, AECOM; Andy Rooke, AECOM; Rudy Farias, SARA; William Long, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.; Linda Vela, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.; and Rudy Rivera, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.

1.0 Welcome & Introductions

Tom Lopez, with SAISD, called the meeting to order. He stated that he appreciated everyone taking the time out of their day to help the Westside Creeks. Roberto Rodriguez, a SARA Board Member, added that he was excited that everyone came to participate.

2.0 Approval of the Meeting Minutes (July 2009)

Minutes were reviewed and approved.

3.0 Draft Framework Plan Catalyst Sites

Brad Smith, with AECOM, started his presentation by showing a PowerPoint slide of the project purpose. He explained that the Westside Creek Restoration Project is a community-based planning effort initiated in 2008 by the San Antonio River Authority (SARA). He added that its mission is to develop concepts for restoring the environmental condition of the Alazán, Apache, Martinez, and San Pedro Creeks, maintain the current flood control components of these creeks, and provide increased opportunities for people to enjoy the urban creeks.

Mr. Smith then discussed the project schedule. He showed a graph that depicted the project vision development and feasibility analysis phase. Mr. Smith explained that studying the existing conditions helped the project team understand the key issues and constraints. He said the goal was to take the information provided at the first workshop and apply it to the project design. Mr. Smith said that the work sessions were about refining those ideas into opportunities, especially at catalyst sites.

Mr. Smith then discussed the April 19th Workshop and said that there were 160 attendees. He explained that the “Imagination Station” Workshop was across the lake from the Earth Day celebration at Woodlawn Lake. He said that strong support emerged for restoration. He added that other ideas for all the creeks included public art, gathering

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spaces, urban parks, trail connections, and safety. Mr. Smith then used a series of slides to explain the diverse comments received at the workshop. He pointed out how each creek would be able to have its own character, design, and identity.

Mr. Smith then asked Emmanuel Didier, with AECOM, to discuss the specific catalyst sites for Alazán Creek. He started by defining a catalyst site as areas that the community indicated are the best opportunities for change. He added that the catalyst sites are prototypes for various land-use scenarios. He said other factors included land within the floodplain, available public land, meaningful locations, access, and adjacent uses. Mr. Didier said that he wants to hear from the subcommittee as to what could be created in the catalyst sites. He said that the group was small enough to discuss each of the catalyst sites together.

5.0 Catalyst Site Break-Out Sessions

The subcommittee then moved to where the maps were setup for Catalyst Site #1, 2 and 3. The comments collected during these break-out sessions included:

Catalyst Site #1:

- If we are going to move all the people out, why are we going to build the park?
- As far as neighborhoods, you cannot run people out.
- You are talking about 100 year flood plain and if you fix flood issues the houses will not be in flood plain.
- Woodlawn is your anchor if you can get them to walk thru from Woodlawn to here that would be great.
- Catalyst site at Ruiz is not located on streets that could support commercial development.
- Maybe it should be more natural.
- Perhaps focus on Zarzamora/Ruiz corner.
- Definitely need to create some revitalization, provide some apartments.
- Small lots, small houses need to be revitalized.
- Are there any Neighborhood Associations that have plans?
- COSA not in this area.
- Prospect Hill does not have a Neighborhood Plan.
- City is working on a Westside revitalization plan for this area.
- Need to integrate with school plans and neighborhood plans.
- Crockett Elementary has 960 kids – this is in a dense student population.
- Put in a regional park in their backyard.
- How much of a decline is there?
- Need to provide a soft trail for people to run on.
- Need to connect all creeks to each other and to river.
- Want trail on the same side as Crockett and Irving.
- Need to consider some kind of Water Park along creeks so people go there instead of in creek.
- Also consider skate parks because they currently use schools.

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Catalyst Site #2:

- Provide a lot of naturally shady places to sit.
- Add restrooms.
- Do not knock down houses.
- Look for options for infill development.
- The flooding is caused by poor drainage, not creeks.
- Need to provide connection to Westside Multimodal center.
- What will happen to homeless population? – Hopefully they will go to the Haven for Hope.
- This area calls for a larger commercial footprint.
- Vista Verde is an active neighborhood – and there is some concern about jail expansion and Westside MM.
- Need to preserve that neighborhood.
- Smaller scale mixed use (2-3) story.
- If this is close to downtown perhaps have motel.
- Right here is where Battle of Alazán was fought – There should be a park/historical marker.
- In 2003/04 – when SARA brought students, they did some nice drawings.
- As we talk, patios and outdoor cafes sound good. Then we talk about hotels and that is not necessarily what we want. Concrete is not natural and we want to keep it natural near our creeks. Need to honor “gente” that live near arroyos.
- How do you use streets that dead end?

Catalyst Site #3:

- As a parking area for access to creeks.
- Need to make sure this is integrated into transit and bike plans so that we do not rely on parking.
- We can look at reconnecting streets for pedestrians.
- Look at old Sanborn maps to see where historical connection could be.
- For years and years people have told their kids to stay away from creeks.
- Throughout streets and creeks, historically we have had vendors. Perhaps there is an option for this.
- Perhaps install park ranger station.
- Ideally they are self policing.
- This will take awhile.
- Need to connect plan with others and the reason there are not more vendors are permitting restrictions and costs.
- How to get people there?
- Add playgrounds.
- Not too active in terms of commercial.
- What about a lighted area.
- If we can, shift over to include look out point.

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- At upcoming meetings, present more information and talk more about ecosystem and how we can improve air quality.
- OUTREACH.
- Need to do more outreach.

6.0 Items to Report to Oversight Committee

There were no items to report to the Oversight Committee other than to report on the comments received during the catalyst site break-out sessions.

7.0 Adjourn

Mr. Lopez adjourned the meeting.

Action Items

- At upcoming meetings, present more information and talk more about ecosystem and how we can improve air quality.
- There was a request that we do more outreach.

Distribution

- WCROC
- Alazán Subcommittee Members
- SARA Staff
- Consultant Team