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**Westside Creeks Restoration Project  
San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting  
Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center – 1300 Guadalupe St.  
September 02, 2009 – 6:00 PM**

## **Meeting Notes**

**Attendees:** Jerold Suarez; Jose Gonzalez; Narcisso Cano; Patricia Ramirez-Long; Jesse H. Valdez; Albert Esquivel; Rosemary Geyer, with Casa Navarro; Jerry Geyer, with Casa Navarro; Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelmen; Adrian Flores, LULAC; Rick Lewis, UTSA College of Architecture; Mitch Meyer, Loopy LTD.; Mardi Baron, San Antonio Conservation Society; Genie Cooper, Preservation Matters; Roberto G. Rodriguez, SARA Board Member; Melissa Sherburn, AECOM; Emmanuel Didier, AECOM; Brad Smith, AECOM; Ed Garza, AECOM; Andy Rooke, AECOM; Rudy Farias, SARA; William Long, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.; and Rudy Rivera, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.

### **1.0 Welcome & Introductions**

In the absence of the subcommittee co-chair, Narcisso Cano welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

### **2.0 Approval of the Meeting Minutes (July 2009)**

Minutes were reviewed and approved.

### **3.0 Draft Framework Plan Catalyst Sites**

Mr. Cano then introduced Brad Smith, with AECOM. Adrian Flores, with LULAC, asked Mr. Smith to identify where on the map the San Pedro Creek went underground. Mr. Smith said he would identify that on a map after a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Smith 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, Martínez, 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 with a graph that depicted that the project is in the vision development and feasibility analysis phase. Mr. Smith explained the process summary by saying 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

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restoration. He added that other ideas for all the creeks included public art, gathering 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 Apache 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 wanted to hear from the subcommittee as to which areas 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 discussed each catalyst site individually. Originally there were only two catalyst sites, but Jerry Geyer, with Casa Navarro, wanted to add the future federal courthouse as a catalyst site. The project team brought up a map of the area on the overhead projector and with the help of Mr. Geyer, they discussed the new catalyst site. The comments collected during these break-out sessions included:

### **San Pedro Catalyst Site #1**

- Cultural heart.
- Green connections.
- Buffer area between creek and interstate.
- Creek is the center between 2 major corridors.
- Higher density housing.
- Art promenade –“artwalk”.
- Balconies, multi-story facing west to the creek.

### **San Pedro Catalyst Site #2**

- There is an acequia that ran through this area.
- Softback turtles live at creek beside art museum site.
- Expand restored area there.
- Work with post office to work to restore both sides of creek.
- Sunken gardens, ledged terrace.
- Stairs are limiting though.
- Pieces of sculpture ok, but leave natural.
- Mural wall.
- On other side of creek mixed use.
- Candy factory great example.
- Already well-connected by the trolley.
- Canoe marina/restaurant.
- Connect Guenther.
- Culturally-themed, i.e. Chinatown for tourist attraction.

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- Architecture, style very important.
- By introducing canal water throughout it will increase appeal to live there.
- Put art and lighting like on the San Antonio River.
- Make the shallow part of the lake the focus of the park.
- Expand the lake.
- Infill the area with new housing.
- On Cevallos St. there are 4-story lofts available for redevelopment into retail.
- Create active trails bordering the proposed park area.
- Need to have outreach to St. Henry's.
- There is potential for active recreation.
- Divert the railroad away from the creeks and out of downtown.

## **Subcommittee Proposed San Pedro Catalyst Site #3**

- Creek is open near future federal courthouse.
- Recommend historic civic center catalyst site.
- City annex building was taken down.
- 7.7 acres where old police station – that is where federal courthouse is going.
- What are they putting in old annex? We do not know.
- San Pedro Creek has a storm tunnel underneath it just like San Antonio River.
- Is the pipe underneath it?
  - I believe so
  - 100 ft down
- Water you see in San Pedro Creek is just run-off.
- What happens to water from San Pedro Springs?
- Goes into tunnel.
- Federal courthouse is biggest catalyst in historic center called “Laredito”.
- Should be a catalyst because it is very large, very expensive.
- Police, fire, and emergency response center will be built at old KMART.
- No public parking
  - For security it will be underground
- Casa Navarro working with them to provide green space and widen banks of San Pedro Creek.
- Perhaps probation building could be re-used.
- Return 200 block of Laredo from government land to State of Texas who owns and operates Casa Navarro and turn it into green space.
- Will you have any parking at all?
- On site or across the street.
- Is there any interest in commercializing that property?
- There is a new historic Civic Center Master Plan almost released.
- There is an old plan that calls for East/West and North/South green space connectors.

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- SARA sent a coordination letter to federal courthouse folks.
- Problem will be difficulty of getting decision-makers into one room.
- This should be the #1 catalyst site.
- It is ok to transition from urban to natural and back.
- Did you say county jail would be torn down? It is not planned but will happen eventually – past usefulness.
- Old county building needs to come down – it is in very bad shape.
- There is a plan for green space to tie old Plaza de Armas.
- How many feet away will courthouse be from creek? Do not know but this study has potential to influence that.
- What is Casa Navarro? It is the estate of José Antonio Navarro.
- Need to lobby federal courthouse project because they will set the stage for what happens there.
- Do we have support from the Green Space Alliance?
- Possible Stakeholder Meetings.
  - Ford, Powell, Carson.
  - Federal Courthouse PM.
  - City of San Antonio Annex.
  - Green Space Alliance.

Mr. Cano said that right now there are only two catalyst sites. He asked if there was a motion to suggest the project team add the future federal courthouse as a site. Mardi Barron motioned that it be included. Adrian Flores seconded the motion. Then Mr. Cano said that he was told that some water could be put back into San Pedro Creek from the underground tunnel. Rick Lewis, with the UTSA College of Architecture, motioned that it be investigated. Rosemary Geyer, with Casa Navarro, seconded the motion. Jerry Geyer, with Casa Navarro, motioned that the name of San Pedro Creek be changed to Arroyo de San Pedro. Roberto Rodriguez, SARA Board Member, seconded the motion.

## **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**

The meeting was adjourned.

## **Action Items**

- Find out if water can be put back into San Pedro Creek from the underground tunnel.
- Recommend additional catalyst site to the Oversight Committee.

## **Distribution**

- WCROC
- San Pedro Subcommittee Members
- SARA Staff
- Consultant Team