



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority  
100 E. Guenther  
Tuesday, October 18, 2016  
Notes**

**Committee Members Present:**

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair  
Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA  
Joanne Walsh, Downtown Residents Assoc.  
Dave Stafford, Downtown Residents Assoc. (alt)  
Cary Guffey, Our Lady of the Lake University

Kathy Krnavek, SA Conservation Society  
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman  
Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.Com  
Belinda Saldaña Harmon, UTSA  
Skye Curd, West SA Chamber of Commerce  
Karen Weehler, Woodlawn Lake NA

**Staff and Public Present:**

Suzanne Scott, SARA  
Kerry Averyt, SARA  
Jeff Tyler, SARA

Therese Kenner, SARA  
Brian Mast, SARA  
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Assoc.

**I. Welcome**

Olga Lizcano, co-chair opened the meeting. Robert Ramirez introduced Kathy Krnavek, the new representative with the San Antonio Conversation Society. Mr. Ramirez also recognized Belinda Saldana Harmon, UTSA Downtown Campus, as attending in place of Dr. Jude Valdez.

**II. Calendar Items**

- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting – November 10, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom.
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting – December 20, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom.

**III. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting notes will be considered at the next meeting. There was not a quorum present. However, Ms. Krnavek noted she was not at the meeting and her name is listed as being present.

**IV. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project**

Mr. Ramirez reminded the committee that the San Pedro Subcommittee meetings are held every second Thursday of the month. The Conservation Society is represented on both committees and Jerry Geyer is the co-chair and de facto member of the WCROC. Mr. Ramirez then turned the status report over to Kerry Averyt, SARA Project Manager.

Mr. Averyt noted the presentation is the same one presented to the subcommittee. The full presentation can be found at <http://spcproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Powerpoint-20161013-Subcommittee.pdf>

Bexar County Commissioner's Court took action on September 27 and authorized the initial \$30 million for construction. They also authorized use of Advanced Transportation District (ATD) and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) reimbursement funds for the improvements effort. On October 18, the River Authority recommended approval of the construction phases and an amendment of the construction Interlocal Agreement (ILA).

Mr. Averyt went on to state that the construction manager at risk (CMAR) contract has yet to be executed. Dates and contract language have been agreed upon and the team has discussed extending the project duration to 2019. The contract stipulates if deliverables are not met, then all parties will be involved in a comprehensive review to come up with a recovery plan. It is anticipated the contract will be executed by the end of the week.

In terms of construction phasing, Mr. Averyt stated the CMAR will have \$500,000 at risk for substantial completion of Phase 1 by April 5, 2018 and final completion by the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary one month later in May 2018. The Phase 1 segment – the tunnel inlet near Fox Tech to Dolorosa Street – is the goal for May 2018. If this is not possible, the goal will be Houston Street. The first work package is out and construction will start in December. There are ten work packages for this phase.

With regard to USACE permits and necessary federal review, the River Authority and design team have intensified the effort. River Authority officials are taking weekly trips to Fort Worth and the design team is having daily (or more) communications. The 404 permit application was submitted on October 13, 2016 and the permit is anticipated to be granted in December. The 408 permit, for the tunnel inlet structure, the tunnel outlet, and the maintenance shaft, is also anticipated to be granted in a timely manner to proceed with construction as planned. The Section 106 cultural and historical review and permit need to be acquired by December 23, 2016. The schedule shows January 5, 2017 but the sooner the better to keep the construction moving forward. The review duration is currently being evaluated by the USACE. In terms of the environmental assessment (EA), the submittal was scheduled for October 17, 2016 and the team has identified some areas where the Section 106 (as part of the EA) can be condensed. The team is confident the federal review and USACE permits will be secured and complete as scheduled.

Mr. Averyt then went on to update the committee on the utility relocation effort. The relocation will involve SAWS, CPS, Time Warner, and others. The effort is being managed as a joint bore cost sharing between the various entities. The utilities currently hand under the bridges and with this effort, they will be tunneled

under the creek. The costs will be initially covered by the project with reimbursements from each entity. There will be weekly meetings to ensure adequate coordination and timely completion prior to construction.

The first work package is horizontal direction drilling. This work does not interfere with the federal review since it does not touch any of the banks or walls.

The second work package is the tunnel inlet to Houston Street includes heavy civil engineering components and does not include the landscaping or wayfinding elements. These elements will be part of the final phases of development for this initial Phase 1 effort. Work package 3, Houston Street to Commerce Street, involves the underpinning design and was submitted on September 28. This effort will involve constructing piers under the existing structures including the Continental Building and 601 Dolorosa. Work Package 5, Houston Street to Commerce Street, includes bridge demolition and utility relocations. The package is due on October 31, 2016 with construction slated for early next year.

Questions (answered by Kerry Averyt, unless noted)

- Any interest penalty for late reimbursement from utilities? *Language in agreement but not interest penalty. Veronica Robinson with the River Authority is leading the utility coordination effort. Ms. Robinson stated that a 30-day review is built into the agreement to ensure timely reimbursement.*
- All these action plans/deliverables/work plans – utility will coincide? *Yes. It will take intense coordination and more in the field when we get started but committed and all parties understand the importance.*
- Is the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary goal realistic? *Not unrealistic but lofty. Everyone involved is on board.*
- Is Google fiber part of this effort? *No.*
- Is the utility passage way [conduit] big enough to add more later without having to do another project? *No – they will not be oversized and the conduits will be bundled. There will not be an opportunity to add more later and this is the reason for heavy coordination now.*

Returning back to the update, Mr. Averyt presented information related to the right of way (ROW) deliverables. One private property parcel still needs to be acquired. Temporary construction easements have been initially approved and they will be vacated upon construction completion. On November 3, 2016, City Council will formally approve the public easements and coordination will continue with private property owners. The River Authority is also coordinating efforts with other planned construction projects in the area. The construction staging area will be parking area behind the Continental Hotel at S Laredo Street and Calder Alley.

Questions (answered by Kerry Averyt, unless noted)

- What kind of outreach is planned for community to inform the public of street closures? *Implementation of the communication plan has already begun.*

*Information can be found on the project website, smart phone apps, and the city's 311 information system.*

- The deadline [for construction completion] is May 2018? Is there coordination with the Fiesta Commission and VIA transit? *Yes. The team met last week to begin coordination.*
- Has the potential for earthquakes and flooding been considered? *Constant vibration monitoring and contractor is coming up with plan to relocate efforts if work has to stop in one area in order to continue in another. The plan is to mitigate for rain events. However, if it's a 100 year event, it would have significant impact.*
- Are you including the new advancements for fiber optics in the utility or will there have to be retrofits? *It is up to the individual companies. We are only providing the conduit.*
- In terms of the existing manholes downtown – with growth of city, they are pretty filled up – is the team adding to the existing manholes or creating new ones? *New manholes are being created. The existing ones will be demolished and removed.*

Suzanne Scott, River Authority General Manager, explained that the construction will be a complex effort with a lot of moving parts. The goal is to get to Dolorosa by May 2018. There will be a lot of street closures and communication will be key. The team is working hard to minimize detours but it will be inconvenient. She also stated that Pape-Dawson has been hired to coordinate the communication effort.

What is your sense of the center of business now that it is not downtown – would you say the center of the city will be residential and business? *Ms. Scott replied the center city will be more a 24-hour live work environment with the new Frost Tower and more capacity for business.*

Are the GPS people informed of the lane closures? *Ms. Scott indicated the team is exploring ways to connect to GPS providers with notifications.*

## **V. Status report on Westside Creeks Improvement Project**

### **a. Westside Creeks Linear Trails**

Jeff Tyler with the River Authority provided the update. Mr. Tyler began by stating all of the Phase 1 trail improvements are complete. These are the trails funded with 2010 Prop 1 money. The remainder of the San Pedro Creek trail will be Phase 3 and is funded with 2015 sales tax prop money.

Mr. Tyler went on to state the SAWS project, that will connect General McMullen to the San Antonio River is being joint bid with the River Authority. The utility work and the new trail will be built together and it is slated as an 18-month effort. Currently, there is a four-foot trail in this area.

The initial San Pedro Creek trail improvements were officially opened on August 20, 2016. The trails being built in the next phase, funded by the 2015

sales tax initiative, are currently out to bid and will be awarded at the end of the year. Construction is anticipated to start in early 2017.

In response to the question about the timeline for design and construction of the new trails recently approved by City Council, including the Zarzamora Creek connection to St. Mary's University, Mr. Tyler informed the committee that August 2018 is the goal for design and August 2020 is the construction completion goal. He continued by stating the public outreach for the design will include one initial public meeting to show the project location, followed by a second public meeting when the design is near completion. Each creek trail improvement will have its own public meeting. They will not be coupled together this time around. The trail design services are currently being advertised for solicitation on the River Authority website as well as in the SA Express-News.

Finally, Mr. Tyler informed the group that the letter from St. Mary's President Thomas Mengler has been communicated. There is a commitment from the university to study the potential connection between Our Lady of the Lake and St. Mary's University along Zarzamora Creek. Ms. Scott added that the River Authority has met with St. Mary's and they want to use their engineering and economic analysis students to present a concept to the City by May 2017. The River Authority will continue to work with them to hopefully make this connection a reality. Mr. Tyler concluded this portion of the update by saying the Zarzamora connection is not clear since the area is fully developed. There will be more information at the next meeting.

**b. Elmendorf Lake Park**

Mr. Tyler provided the update. He started by saying the project is approximately 95 percent complete. The bridges and the southern segment are complete. The north segment is anticipated for completion in December. The areas already open to the public have lots of activity. He reminded the committee that the progress on the website is updated regularly.

Mr. Tyler showed the progress photos and offered the committee a tour in November in anticipation of a December grand opening. There were several complimentary comments from the committee.

In terms of other amenities, Mr. Tyler stated the ground surface has been completed for the new playground and the equipment is getting ready to be installed. The wetland areas are being supplied recirculated water and to ensure the wetland density, there is specific count of plants to be installed. Mr. Tyler added there are two bus stops, both on Commerce, that are part of the project. It was suggested that air stations for bikes would be a good amenity. Mr. Tyler replied that the Howard Peak Trail system is currently being retrofitted to include air stations and counters to track trail usage. Elmendorf would be a good candidate for these amenities.

Questions (answered by Jeff Tyler, unless noted)

- The Lake Plaza sign cannot be read when the sun hits it; it's just an arch – can we fix it? *We will look to add something to contrast it but it is galvanized metal and may be hard to do.*
- Any plans to have solar chargers for cars and outlets for phones and computers? *These amenities have not been part of the discussion. However, once the construction is complete, the park will be turned over to City Parks. So, electrical outlets may come later. Ms. Scott added the City has budget for “smart city” with some benches programmed with these types of amenities. She will mention to Parks about possibility of adding these to Elmendorf.*
- Will there be lighting under the Zarzamora bridge at Cassiano Park? *Yes. The under bridge lighting came straight from this committee and it is being added under several bridges. Additional lighting includes the shared light fixtures with Our Lady of the Lake University that lights up the trail and the campus.*
- Did the contractor end up putting wi-fi in the park? *No and it is not currently contracted.*
- The comment was made that when coming down Commerce, the sidewalk on north side of Commerce is not continuous so when it rains, it gets muddy and puddles up at the bus stop at 21<sup>st</sup> Street. Additionally, there is no wheelchair access from the bus stop to the park. , if from bus stop to get to park, it is impossible. *There is funding to put in the hawk crossing at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Commerce. The bus stop is on the south side and the median is built out at the Commerce/Buena Vista split.*

Finally, the committee tour was scheduled for Tuesday, November 15 at 5:30 p.m.

**VI. Update on Trash and Floatables Collection System Along Alazan Creek**

Mr. Tyler provided the update. He began by showing the overall map and stated the trap and boom were installed in October 2016. The install location is just upstream of El Paso Street and downstream of S. Colorado Street on the Alazan Creek. He went on to say, installation was simple and showed the committee the before and after photos. The photos showed the basket in the creek channel and the boom on the banks. The area has access for maintenance vehicles and the basket will be emptied after each flood event. The River Authority will maintain the area from the pier to the basket with the remaining area maintained by the City.

In response to who is responsible if something happens, Mr. Tyler replied it will be same as with any incident at a public facility. He mentioned there is no access from the school as the area around the school is fenced.

A meeting has been scheduled this month to determine educational programming. The River Authority is developing the curriculum and working with the school district and council office.

**VII. WCROC Calendar Change**

Mr. Ramirez announced committee meetings for 2017, will be held on a quarterly basis. The change comes with the current trail and park work coming to an end. He reminded and encouraged the group to attend the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meetings every second Thursday of the month at the River Authority. He went on to say there will be more newsletters and emails and he and Mrs. Lizcano will actively be keeping up with progress. The December meeting will be a celebration of sorts. It has been seven years since the effort began, the concept book was created, the trails are complete and now Elmendorf is close to completion. Following the December meeting, the next meeting will be held in March.

**VIII. Miscellaneous Items**

Sonia Jimenez, Planning Chair for the Annual Basura Bash River and Waterway Clean Up, announced the date for the 2017 event will be February 18<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to noon. There are 20 clean up areas that include the westside creeks of Alazan Creek near Christ the King, Alazan Creek near Irving Middle School being led by District 1 City Council, Alazan Creek at the Guadalupe Street Bridge being led by District 5 City Council, and the new Martinez Creek Trail. She encouraged volunteering for the clean up as well as making a sponsorship contribution.

A committee member inquired about the motion passed at the June meeting to send a letter to the River Authority requesting the public art framework include all the westside creeks and have at least one art installation on each of the four creeks. Mr. Ramirez replied that he and Mrs. Lizcano will follow-up and get the letter to the River Authority.

**IX. Citizens to be heard**

A local journalist, Gloria Almaraz, stated she visited Elmendorf and was very pleased to see how beautiful it is now. She asked about the swimming pool and Mr. Ramirez informed her a new \$2 million pool is part of the 2017 bond. Mr. Ramirez will be testifying at the bond committee meetings to advocate for inclusion of it in the bond package. He urged anyone else interested in showing support to attend the meetings.

Dave Stafford, Downtown Residents Association and District 1 resident expressed his satisfaction with the changes that happening in the downtown area. He is very excited about keeping the San Antonio River for the tourist focused while focusing the creeks on the natives. He thanked the committee and the River Authority for their efforts.

**X. Adjourn**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:14 p.m.