



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
December 19, 2017
6:00 pm**

Committee Members Present

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair
Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair

Albert Salgado, UT at San Antonio
Karen Weehler, Woodlawn Lake NA
Skye Curd, West San Antonio Chamber
Dawn Hansen, Westside Development Corp.
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman
Kamala Platt, Texas Tejano.com
Sara Beesley, Bexar Audubon Society

Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace
Joanne Walsh, Downtown Residents
Kathy Krnavek, SA Conservation Society
Patti Radle, San Antonio ISD
Evelyn Mitchell, St. Mary's University

Staff and Public Present

Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority
Jaime Taylor, San Antonio River Authority
Carrie Brown, San Antonio River Authority
Nicole Koeninger, San Antonio River Authority
Eduardo Villalon, San Antonio River Authority
Brian Mast, San Antonio River Authority
Hillary Lilly, San Antonio River Authority
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates, Inc.
Manuel Lizcano

Lydia Garza, Soap Works Apartments
Charles Olsten, Woodlawn Lake Association
Ray Dawson, COSA Parks and Recreation
Steven Dean, Pape-Dawson
Grant Ellis, City of San Antonio
Amanda Kemmerer
Gloria Almaraz, Journalist
Daniel Carrillo, Central Church
Carolina Guzman, Central Church

I. Welcome

Ms. Lizcano convened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She reminded everyone this was the last meeting of 2017 and thanked everyone for their contributions and achievements. Mr. Ramirez also welcomed everyone and said the committee would be hearing updates on all five (5) creeks including the Zarzamora Creek Project.

II. Calendar Items

- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting –January 11, 2018,10:00 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom, San Antonio, Texas 78204
- Martinez Creek Trail 40% Design Public Meeting – January 18, 2018, 6:00 p.m. SA Central Church of the Nazarene 1418 W. Woodlawn Ave. San Antonio, TX 78201
- Zarzamora Creek Trail 40% Design Public Meeting – February 6, 2018, 6:00 p.m. Westside Family YMCA, 2900 Ruiz St. San Antonio, TX 78228
- Elmendorf Park Pool Design Public Meeting – January 30, 2018, 6:00 p.m. Our Lady of the Lake University Library Community Room 411 S.W. 24th Street, San Antonio, TX 78207
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Quarterly Meeting – February 20, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom, San Antonio, Texas 78204

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting notes from March, June, and September 2017 were considered for approval. Ms. Lizcano asked for approval and acceptance of the notes as presented. JoAnne Walsh made a motion to approve all three sets of notes and Kathy Krnavek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

IV. Alazan Trash Boom Re-installation

Nicole Koeninger, SARA Engineer briefly provided background on events that led to the disrepair of the trash boom on Alazan Creek and an update on the re-installation. Ms. Koeninger first presented on the original installation of the trash boom in May of 2016. The location is upstream of El Paso St. and downstream from S. Colorado St. The original boom design was one large aluminum basket supported by floatation booms on each side.

Ms. Koeninger said that one month after initial installation of the trash boom, a rain event occurred that resulted in five (5) inches of rainfall within 24 hours. This overwhelmed the basket and made clear that the original trash boom design was not sufficient. Another rain event occurred in December and caused the boom basket to submerge and break apart from the pressure. While crews tried to recover as much as possible, several pieces travelled about a mile and a half down to the San Pedro Creek. Ms. Koeninger said SARA worked with a contractor and manufacturer to redesign a boom system that can accommodate larger collection weights. The re-installation happened on December 4. The new design was soon tested by a rain event as well as snow and the trash boom stayed above water, as desired.

Karen Weehler asked about the trash boom portability and technology. Ms. Koeninger responded the system itself is not portable and clarified that only the baskets are removable. The trash boom stays on the water surface but the system itself cannot be moved because it is anchored.

Mr. Ramirez said the trash boom was designed as a pilot project to determine its feasibility and potential for installation in other areas of the city. Mr. Ramirez asked whether this was still a pilot project and also asked if the trash boom was still perceived as a negative eye sore/dump for the community. She said as long as the trash boom remains functional and beneficial, SARA would like to see additional installations in other areas. Furthermore, Ms. Koeninger said the trash boom is now seen as an asset that protects watersheds. Through educational outreach and a public meeting, SARA was able to demonstrate the benefits of not seeing trash downstream. This outreach was met with excitement among parents, teachers, and was also seen as an opportunity for students to see and correct behavioral patterns of littering.

Questions were raised regarding the cost of the project. Ms. Koeninger said the design and anchors were around \$500,000. Ms. Lizcano suggested to Ms. Weehler that perhaps the Woodlawn Lake boom could be funded with the next municipal bond.

V. Martinez Creek SAWS Collaboration

Eduardo Villalon, SARA Engineer, stated his presentation would cover the coordination of infrastructure plans with SAWS for the Martinez Creek area. He said SARA's goals for the project are to transform the creek to a more natural state while also maintaining drainage capacity and providing recreational opportunities for surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Villalon briefed the committee on background of the project that started with a feasibility study for Martinez Creek. A conceptual plan was developed in 2012 that represented the 'ultimate' restoration of the creek and included hydraulic profiles, and cross sections.

He went on to say, in 2014, the project was readdressed with the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) and a general reevaluation report (GRR) was issued in relation to feasibility and environmental restoration opportunities. Based on those studies, alternatives were presented stating this segment of Martinez Creek had a cost estimate of about \$11 million in utility relocations. The costs made the project more complex and therefore require more time.

Mr. Villalon provided background on the SAWS scope of work on Martinez Creek between Fredericksburg Road and Alazan Creek. He said SAWS is scheduled to replace sanitary sewer laterals, trunk and main lines, and other improvements to comply with an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandate. Mr. Villalon presented a rough alignment for the SAWS work to show SARA's proposal for collaboration to align with the Martinez Creek ecosystem restoration work. He said SARA reviewed the SAWS 90% plans and identified nine (9) conflicts between proposed SARA alignments and the SAWS sanitary line relocation. By coordinating up front with SAWS, the hope is to be able to reduce, or at least maintain, the estimated \$11 million utility costs. Mr. Villalon also provided examples of design adjustments made through coordination that minimize future costs being achieved through this coordination.

Question was asked if informal agreements would be formalized to ensure everyone is in sync with the plans. Mr. Villalon responded that SARA is still working with the COSA and SAWS to implement solutions before they reach final construction drawings and at that point there would be an agreement put in place. Mr. Villalon also talked about exposed pipes that in some instances would need to be abandoned. He said SARA was working with SAWS to determine the best way to flush these lines and then abandon them. He mentioned that one of the ways these are typically abandoned is to crush them but that any method selected would be done in an environmentally responsible way. Currently, there are no public meetings scheduled for this effort. The information will be available at the COSA Martinez Creek meeting on January 18, 2018.

VI. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project

Mr. Ramirez stated to meeting attendees that there are three parts to this presentation; design, art components, and Tricentennial events scheduled for May 5, 2018. Mr. Ramirez invited and urged attendees to attend the San Pedro Creek project subcommittee monthly meetings held every second Tuesday at 8:30am here at SARA.

Kerry Averyt, SARA Project Manager, stated he would update attendees on Phase 1.1 construction and enhancements, Phase 1.2 design, funding agreements with COSA, and the recently requested Bexar County Commissioners Court actions and approvals.

Phase 1.1 covers the tunnel inlet to Houston Street. Mr. Averyt said the Sundt/Davila team is on schedule to meet their May 5 deadline and is always looking for ways to construct the project more efficiently.

Mr. Averyt then shared drone video footage taken three weeks ago that demonstrated different aspects of the project including:

- The location of constructed wetlands
- A fountain with pilot channel
- Cascading falls, walkways, and a plaza for Tricentennial artwork. He said the video was taken about three weeks ago.
- Limestone on new and existing walls at Santa Rosa Street, including those being preserved that date back to 1780's.
- Crosswalks at Martin and Santa Rosa
- Six (6) bio-retention cells to capture and clean the stormwater before it hits the creek
- A potential paseo down the center of the channel at Martin Street
- Curb extensions on the far south lane of Martin to reduce the width of the street and make it safer for pedestrians
- Centrifugal Dynamic Separator (CDS) units, like the one used at the Tobin to help clean the water – these are typically used around small commercial sites but 40 will be installed along the San Pedro Creek project
- The Travis Street gatehouse and channel acequia which will cascade down
- The location of the Alex Rubio and Joe Lopez murals – Rubio's will be by the tunnel maintenance shaft, and Lopez's will be by the Alameda Theatre.
- The location of the Frost Building and the shared plaza.

Some of the comments made during this portion of the presentation included the following:

- Need to provide additional pedestrian safety infrastructure accessing the major public art piece (Plethora)
- Need to accommodate bicycles even if at street level with signage.

Mr. Averyt said the videos would be available on the website.

Mr. Averyt went on to say between August and October, several revisions were proposed to Phase 1.2 (Houston to Nueva). During this time, SARA went through value engineering and stakeholder involvement process and identified revisions that resulted in cost savings for Phase 1.2. The revisions to the scope include:

- Building a performance plaza instead of an amphitheater to allow for a more versatile use of the space and cut back on retention walls needed for seating (\$3 million savings);

- Accommodating the Texas Public Radio (TPR) Headquarters entrance from Commerce Street by creating more pedestrian access in this area and interaction with water features;
- Not building the footbridge at the Spanish Governor's Palace, which may come in later after the redevelopment is determined;
- Removing the MSE walls and replacing them with drill shaft or piles which results in a 25% savings and still looks good; and
- Deferring the construction of the gatehouse at Nueva Street, which is able to be done without having a negative impact on the flood control aspect of the project.

Mr. Averyt said these modifications resulted in approximately \$4.2 million in savings. A committee member asked if there is a potential for new development to increase stormwater runoff. Mr. Averyt said it could if there is a significant increase in impervious cover. He said they are currently covering the 100-year flood event so any new development that impacts that will need to mitigate for it. Another question was asked if SARA would look at a 250 or 500-year flood event. Mr. Averyt said it was unlikely that SARA would design for something higher than the 100-year flood event standard. Mr. Averyt said the worst part of flooding issues are found in Phase 2 at the tunnel outlet, from Guadalupe Street to the UPRR Bridge, where SARA will need to do the most expansion of the channel.

Mr. Averyt then showed the committee a series of renderings to show the committee what Phase 1.2 would look like at different points along the segment. The committee comments raised during this portion of the meeting included the following:

- The terrazzo tile at the performance plaza may get slick when wet. Need to be sure this does not become an issue.
- Be sure that if palms are used they are native to Texas.
- Use aquatic plantings as an educational opportunity in conjunction with local educators.
- What happens to the plantings and bioremediation if it all floods? Most of it will go under water and SARA crews will need to come in and clean and, if necessary, replant. SARA uses hardy plants to make this process easier and most of the floodwater will go in the tunnel under the creek.
- Ensure pedestrians receive enough notice when low bank paseo water rises during a 2-year rain event.
- Where does the water go? Mr. Averyt said ultimately it ends up in the San Antonio River after it travels through underground tunnel.
- Will you be planting native species so they do not need irrigation? Mr. Averyt said they are planting native species but they will still require some irrigation.

Mr. Averyt then presented the construction team's action plan to help avoid disruption to construction activities, get cost certainty, and avoid worker shortage. This allows the design team and construction companies to continue the construction process and move forward. He said the current work packages are focused on Phase 1.2 to include some of the new TPR headquarters, the Alameda, and some of the most complicated construction.

Mr. Averyt said Bexar County Commissioner's Court approved the recommended motions to separate Phase 1 into three segments and that SARA will be moving forward with 100% design of Phase 1.2 to be delivered in May of next year and will start construction late summer/fall next year. The total requested from Commissioner's Court was for \$19.8 million.

As far as the City of San Antonio's contribution, Mr. Averyt reminded the group that two propositions were passed in the City's May election. These propositions provide funding for San Pedro Creek with \$14.6 million for drainage improvements and \$4.9 million for parks and recreation. This funding was approved by City Council in December.

VII. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Improvements Project

Carrie Brown, San Pedro Creek Art Curator, provided a brief update on some of the Phase 1.1 art projects. She started her update by passing around tile samples, recently approved, for Adriana Garcia's mural. She stated the tiles being shown are currently in production and should be in place by the end of March.

Ms. Brown went on to state that Michael Menchaca was hired to produce three cement tiles for walls and benches all along San Pedro Creek. She also said John Philip Santos has curated original and historical text that is being sandblasted for the 300 Plaza. She said SARA is looking at ways to clean adjacent stones or patina the stones that are there to help them blend more. Ms. Brown said there would be plaques used on the actual installment to identify the artist and this information would also be available via a mobile app that is being developed.

Another tile work will include Diana Kersey. She was hired to create ceramic inserts that are placed into concrete walls at street level. The artist researched the historic name of the streets to draw inspiration for her pieces. Ms. Brown then provided a few updates moving forward from Phase 1.1. She said she is working on a calendar of events for May through December 2018 and working to incorporate the information into the website as they transition from a construction site to a park.

Ms. Brown and Mr. Ramirez then reviewed the events that are coming up:

- April 5, 2018 – countdown kick off news conference, new website, and interactive mobile app launched.
- May 5, 2018, 11 a.m. – ribbon cutting with a number of street closures to allow for people to walk freely, activities throughout the day, food trucks, entertainment – with the San Pedro Creek opening at 12 noon. The event will conclude with the free three-act opera at the Tobin Center.

VIII. Elmendorf Lake Park Pool

Jamie Taylor, SARA PM for Westside Creeks and Trails, showed the general location for the pool. He said the first public meeting would occur at the end of January. Further, Mr. Taylor said the new pool area would include lap lanes and wading pool with a zero-entry, as well as changing rooms and a mechanical pool house that also houses park police. He said the design team might skew the location of the maintenance pool house

to provide park police better access to the park. He said this project should have a schematic by March 2018 and hoping to have it constructed and finished by May 2019. The pool configuration is preliminary and public comment will influence the final design but restrooms will be accessible even if the pool is closed. Mr. Taylor will keep the committee apprised of meetings and the design.

IX. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Project

Jamie Taylor, SARA Project Manager, provided the update. The Alazan Creek trail is in the 60% design phase. It is approximately 2.9 miles long with a 10-foot-wide concrete trail and runs from Lombrano to Apache Creek. The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) selected this project for federal funding. He said this has been a challenge because SARA has had to reduce the schedule by about 6 months and work closely with Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) project managers.

The Alazan Creek 40% design public meeting was held in November and most attendees agreed with the design plans although a few people felt the plans were not easy to understand. Some of the comments received were about adding restrooms, water fountain for pets, shade, and that the maps were too detailed. Mr. Taylor further said restrooms cannot be included now due to constraints related to the federal funding. Mr. Taylor said some of the main comments involved the street connections. He said since the budget is tight, for some of the street connections SARA will provide a bump out (as a placeholder) to allow for street connections by the City of San Antonio at a later point. He said SARA will hold one more meeting at the 70% design to show how comments are addressed. Mr. Taylor then took questions from the committee.

- Will there be night lighting on the trails? Mr. Taylor said no and that is consistent with other trails.
- Will there be emergency phones? He said SARA is looking into it now but COSA can come back in and add them. He said they are not currently in the plans.
- Will the trails be locked at night? No. Mr. Taylor said there are bollards to allow for maintenance access but not for vehicular access. He said it is virtually impossible to gate the trails.
- Will you use pervious concrete? Mr. Taylor said pervious concrete is a cost prohibitive material because there is a lot more gravel base involved.
- Do you have to go through the National Environmental Policy Act, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality processes? Yes, we are doing a Phase 1 environmental site assessment that evaluates the project area and the area around it.
- Is there an opportunity to increase the budget? No, because we are using federal, city, and grant funding so we are locked into a \$6 million budget.
- When are we going to get to landscaping? We are not at that point in the design. That will come later this year and we are looking to do native, drought resistant plants.

He then said the Alazan Creek trail will have a typical trailhead with a water fountain, bench, pet water fountain, but it is generally a bare bones street connection. He said TxDOT only approves a certain amount of money to be spent on amenities. COSA

Parks & Recreation will be maintaining the trails and they are also funding the bike fix-it stations. Mr. Taylor said the alignment will run through the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) property along the creek and SARA is working on an easement with them. This easement will provide access to underserved communities, although SAHA wants fencing around their property. The general public will still be able to access the trail from outside the property. He concluded by quickly reviewing the slides and stating the remainder of the design has not changed since the last update. He reviewed the project schedule and said the next public meeting is scheduled for March 2018.

Mr. Taylor said the Martinez Creek Trail design, from Cincinnati to Alazan Creek confluence is being managed by Pape-Dawson. The elements have not changed since the last update but Mr. Taylor stated, the alignment may change after the public meeting. He said he expects 70% design by January 2018 and to go out to bid by June 2018 with the project construction completed by January 2020.

As for the Zarzamora Creek trail, also being led by Pape-Dawson, Mr. Taylor stated it starts at Alderete Park and connects to the existing trail at General McMullen/Apache Creek. He said there are several street connections including one at San Felipe to provide access to Gus Garcia Middle School. Mr. Taylor said at the existing Apache Creek trail there would be a bridge connection that would give pedestrians access to Rosedale Park. He said the Zarzamora Creek project is on the same schedule as the other creeks with construction occurring from August 2018 to January 2020.

A committee member asked if lighting would be available along the trails. A SARA representative said the USACE will not permit lighting along an ecosystem restoration project and all SARA trails are operating dawn to dusk. A committee member expressed concern about people being able to access the trail even if they are not lit. She did not want people to be subject to arrest if they are on the trail after dark.

X. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Ramirez encouraged people to attend subcommittee meetings to stay involved throughout the process.

XI. Citizens to be Heard

Gloria Almaraz introduced herself and said she writes for Street Talk. She said she became aware of Elmendorf Lake Park improvements three years ago when Lourdes Galvan gave her a tour. She said she was amazed by the tour and felt it was a beautiful park that no one knew anything about. She said she continues to be amazed by this beautiful park and wrote several articles that appeared in various newspapers. Ms. Almaraz was there to commend the committee for their hard work and dedication to bring to fruition the vision someone had over 10 years ago. She thanked the committee for creating a place where families can go and feel safe and participate in the same activities available at other parks in the city.

XII. Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:21 p.m.