



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority (RA)
In-Person & Virtual - GoToMeetings
November 16, 2021, 6 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Skye Curd, Co-Chair
Al Arreola, West SA Chamber of Commerce
Melinda Gonzalez, Prosper West SA
Alfredo Guillen, Los Bexareños
Genealogical Society
Hillary Lilly, SAISD
Norberto G. Landin, Prospect Hill NA

Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com
Rick Rodriguez, SA Alt. Housing Corp.
Brianna Salas, OLLU
Albert Salgado, UTSA
Patricia Seidenberger, SA Conservation
Society
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe
Assn.

Staff and Public Present

Lorraine Robles, SA Housing Authority
Beth Keel, SA Housing Authority
Reuben Bazan, River Authority
Derek Boese, River Authority
Carrie Brown, River Authority
Shaun Donovan, River Authority

Kendall Hayes, River Authority
Brian Mast, River Authority
Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.
Eiginio Rodriguez

I. Welcome

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the WCROC meeting to order. Mr. Ramirez said the WCROC is trying out a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting format to determine how future meetings will be held. Mr. Mast, River Authority, explained how online participants could comment during the meeting. Mr. Ramirez reminded the audience of the three-minute comment time limit. He turned the meeting over to Ms. Skye Curd, Co-Chair.

II. Roll Call

Mr. Mast called the WCROC roll. Committee members who were present are listed above. A quorum was reached during the meeting, after roll was called.

III. Citizens to be Heard

Ms. Curd called for Citizens to be Heard. Mr. Eiginio Rodriguez came forward to speak. He referenced the Zarzamora Creek map. He said despite the reference to "creek restoration" their creek is gone since being channeled.

Mr. Rodriguez said Woodlawn Lake's creek system near St. Cloud was v-shaped, but now there are vertical walls channeling the creek. He has seen water main breaks, shifting ground, slanting gas meters and frequent gas leaks. Mr. Rodriguez said he is concerned the area is shifting and asked who is responsible for creating better retaining walls. He also said streets in a new nearby subdivision are now buckling.

Mr. Ramirez clarified Mr. Rodriguez was referencing the section of Zarzamora Creek between 36th Street and Rosedale Park. Ms. Curd told Mr. Rodriguez that Reuben Bazan, RA staff, would be reviewing the Zarzamora Creek project and could address his concerns. Mr. Rodriguez agreed to hear from Mr. Bazan.

IV. Calendar Items

Mr. Mast reviewed the calendar and noted events were being held virtually and in-person. Calendar items included:

- Yoga on the Creek with Mobile Om: Mondays, 6 p.m., in-person at Legacy Park
- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting: Dec. 9, 2021, 9 a.m. - virtual
- Illume: Making Spirits Bright: Dec. 10-11, 2021, in-person and virtual
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting: Feb. 15, 2022, 6 p.m., venue to be determined.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 17, 2021

Mr. Ramírez commended Ximenes & Associates for their work in producing the WCROC meeting minutes. The meeting minutes for August 17, 2021 were unanimously approved as presented.

VI. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects – Reuben Bazan, River Authority

Mr. Mast introduced Reuben Bazan who gave updates on the Westside Creeks Linear Trails Project.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the status of the Apache Creek Trail project. The project is a joint-bid contract between the City of San Antonio (CoSA) and San Antonio Water System (SAWS). The RA will manage the trails and park amenities, which include a shade structure, tables, benches, trash receptacles, a drinking fountain, signage and ADA parking. The contractor completed the project during summer 2021 and the park is now fully operational.

Mr. Bazan presented the status of the Zarzamora Creek Trail project. He said this project is not part of the creek restoration projects. It includes only the hike and bike trails.

The hike and bike trails will be 10 feet wide and made of concrete. There are three trailheads and eight trail street connections. Park amenities will include shade structures, drinking fountains, benches, trash receptacles and solar lights. Upon completion, the public can walk or bike from Alderete Park to the Mission Reach.

Mr. Bazan said all concrete has been placed and there is a continuous trail throughout. The contractor is placing the vegetation, finalizing the grading, sodding trees, and installing the irrigation system. Completion is expected soon after Thanksgiving.

Mr. Ramirez raised Mr. Eigenio Rodriguez's concerns. Staff confirmed the Zarzamora Creek Trail project only includes the trail. Mr. Ramirez asked where the trail project ends and the restoration project begins. Mr. Mast said the restoration will not include Zarzamora Creek. The ecosystem restoration project will begin at Elmendorf Lake, continue south along Apache Creek, continue from Woodlawn Lake south along Alazan and Martinez creeks, then on from San Pedro Creek at the I-35 bridge to the confluence of the San Antonio River.

Mr. Ramirez said the public should know this is a "trail only" project, and does not include the creek, its shores, culverts, bridges over the creek or retaining walls. Mr. Bazan said there are

pedestrian bridges which are part of the creek, but they are designed to be flooded over, which is standard for all city trails. Mr. Ramirez confirmed with staff that street bridges were not removed.

Mr. Mast said he had spoken to CoSA and the issues concerning Mr. Rodriguez fall within CoSA's maintenance and operations program. The appropriate CoSA department for Mr. Rodriguez to address his concerns is the Public Works – Stormwater department.

Mr. Bazan provided an update on the Alazan Creek Trail project. The project begins at Lombrano Street and ends at the Apache Creek confluence. It is 2.9 miles long, 10 feet wide, and includes five street and two trail connections. Once complete in December 2021, it will connect Woodlawn Lake to the San Antonio River.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the ongoing construction activities, including the retaining walls, stone pavement and seating, and the installation of the railroad bridge canopy. Most of the concrete has been placed, and park amenities and vegetation will soon be installed. He said Farias Park will not be completed as part of this project. It is located at the confluence of Martinez Creek. When the Martinez project is built, it will connect to Alderete Park and the Alazan project.

Mr. Velasquez thanked the RA staff for their work on the Alazan project. He said the bridge is a bright symbol for the Avenida Guadalupe Association and the RA's long-term commitment to the project was courageous.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the Martinez Creek Trail project. The project is completely designed, but on hold for funding in 2023. When completed, the project will tie into existing trails at Cincinnati Ave. and Farias Park.

See the related presentation, Linear Creek Trailways, for additional details.

VII. General Ecosystem Restoration Update, Brian Mast

Mr. Mast said the Westside Creeks project was designed to restore 11 miles of creek, which includes Apache, Alazan, San Pedro, Martinez creeks. He presented key project milestones from 2011 to the present. Currently, a project request for \$2.34 million in federal funding is in the administration's FY 2022 budget. The RA anticipates the omnibus funding bill will be passed in December 2021 and the \$2.34 million would be received thereafter. The funding will allow the RA to begin pre-construction engineering and design in spring 2022. For FY 2023, the RA has requested \$16.5 million in federal funds for construction from the I-35 bridge to the confluence of the San Antonio River along the San Pedro Creek (SPC).

He added the Fort Worth division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) had submitted a \$115 million funding request to the USACE headquarters for creek restoration under the Infrastructure and Jobs Act. While the Westside Creeks are a third-tier project (projects ready for engineering and pre-design, but not yet started), he is hopeful because the project is an administration priority.

Mr. Mast clarified the USACE has 60 days to draft their work plan showing how they would allocate Infrastructure and Jobs Act funds for projects in their portfolio. Mr. Ramirez asked about a request for \$1.5 million, in addition to the \$2.34 million for the Apache Creek design. Mr. Mast said the request totals \$1.97 million and is part of the appropriations process in the Fort Worth USACE workplan, not the Infrastructure and Jobs Act.

Mr. Velasquez said over the years, the WCROC has asked for clarifications about funding requests, and typically funding has come through. As a result, he is optimistic about potential funding.

VIII. Restitution Update and WSC Fish and Habitat Survey, Shaun Donovan, River Authority

Mr. Donovan provided an update on the June 2021 Apache Creek fish kill. Currently, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPWD) is managing the restitution process. The RA is working with Vulcan Materials, which may donate materials for the ecological restoration. The TPWD is drafting a proposal to share with Kiolbassa, since the restitution agreement will be between Kiolbassa and the TWPD. The RA will assist with the process overall and expects the discussions to conclude by the end of this year. The RA will place habitat features up and downstream along the SPC confluence, so fish can easily move into the Westside Creeks system once restoration is complete.

He discussed the biological surveys which gauge whether habitat restoration has succeeded. The multi-year surveys, beginning at pre-construction through post-construction, will establish a baseline of the fish communities and habitat features for future comparison.

Mr. Ramirez asked if Kiolbassa was still providing an educational component as part of its restitution. Mr. Donovan said they will provide \$100,000 over the next five years to the RA's education department, beyond their liability responsibility. He complimented Kiolbassa's cooperation. Mr. Ramirez asked if SAISD was involved. Ms. Lilly said she could help coordinate the effort with SAISD. Mr. Mast said the RA's education team works with SAISD and they will further that relationship. Ms. Curd mentioned working with the area universities, as well. Ms. Brianna Salas said she could help involve OLLU.

IX. Status Report on the San Pedro Creek Culture Park and Communications, Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority

Ms. Ortega reviewed Phase 1.2, located at the corner of Camaron and Houston streets, and showed the site design. She said the SPC Citizens Advisory Sub-committee members, a focus group of stakeholders, St. James AME Church leadership, the San Antonio African-American Community Archives Museum, and the Bexar County Historical Commission came to a consensus on the Plaza design being shown.

For the archaeological site in Phase 1.2, Ms. Ortega said upcoming efforts include the installation of a storm sewer line, documentation and disassembly of the Church's west wall, and stabilization of the wall. The design team will continue designing the remaining elements for the interior of the church footprint with focus group members, as well as proceeding with the remaining construction.

Ms. Ortega said Phase 1.2 is slated for completion during fall 2022, although the channel may contain water by May 2022.

Ms. Ortega reviewed Phase 1.3. She showed images of the Nueva Bridge replacement where they will pour sidewalks in the next few weeks, the bio-retention pond near the federal courthouse, and construction on Graham Street. The expected completion date is fall 2022.

For Phase 2, Ms. Ortega reviewed project construction showing channel construction at Guadalupe and Alamo streets, and construction on Camp Street. Completion is expected in spring 2023.

The Phase 3 design is complete. Ms. Ortega said the RA will seek construction approval from Bexar County in late November. The construction start date is January 2022, and the anticipated end date is June 2023.

For Phase 4.1, from Cesar Chavez to Guadalupe streets, Ms. Ortega said the design concept for the section from El Paso to Guadalupe streets has been revised. The RA has been meeting with property owners, and is only moving forward with the portion between El Paso and Guadalupe. She said the RA would keep the committee informed as discussions proceed.

Mr. Velasquez asked about the design and its location. He noted the proposed design shown on the slide was a new urban design, not a reiteration of an old feature. He said it was going to help efforts to connect the cultural zone between Santa Rosa and Guadalupe streets and commended the RA for their work.

Mr. Ramirez asked for a Phase 4 presentation showing how the above-ground area will look with the creek flowing underneath. He said if there is a connection to the Zona Cultural, people walking toward the Zona and Guadalupe Street, should see signage and features explaining the SPC is beneath them. Ms. Ortega said they would present at the next meeting.

Mr. Velasquez said the project's impact is an opportunity to let everyone know about the positive changes happening on the westside.

X. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park (SPCCP) - Carrie Brown, River Authority

Ms. Brown provided an update on the Phase 1.1 public art project, *Creek Lines*, a county-funded tricentennial project in the Plaza de Fundación. There was a slight delay due to faulty concrete, but the installation is now on schedule with an estimated completion date in February 2022.

In Phase 1.2, a team of artists, led by Lionel and Kathy Sosa, was selected by Commissioner's Court for the Five-Panel Mural, *La Gloriosa Historia de San Pedro Creek*. Two open houses were held in November, which concluded the outreach process. Ms. Brown said their outreach process included meetings with stakeholders, such as 1718 San Antonio Founding Families, the Canary Islanders Descendants Association, Westside Preservation Alliance, Westside Historic Neighborhood Association, the San Antonio African-American Community Archives Museum staff, and others. The estimated completion date is May 2022.

Ms. Brown updated the committee on artist Michael Menchaca's tile benches located in Main Plaza, as part of Phase 1.1. Cement tiles on the benches were replaced with glazed ceramic tiles. Other benches were also included in the tile replacement process.

She also reviewed a temporary project to be installed in December 2021. She said whimsical vibrant sculptures will be installed along two blocks of the SPCCP and be lit from within at night.

Ms. Brown reviewed calendar items related to the SPCCP, shown under IV. Calendar Items.

Ms. Curd asked about the composition of the sculptures. Ms. Brown said they are acrylic and have programmable LED lighting within the sculpture.

Ms. Lorraine Robles asked about the location of the sculptures. Ms. Brown said they would be installed between Santa Rosa and Travis streets.

See the related presentation, San Pedro Creek Culture Park, for more details.

XI. Update on Recognition of Roberto Rodriguez, Robert Ramirez Committee, Co-Chair

Mr. Ramirez reported on the Roberto Rodriguez Committee meeting. Eight people attended to discuss honoring Mr. Rodriguez. They agreed the ecosystem restoration should be named after him, as the “Roberto Rodriguez Westside Creeks Ecosystem.” He said the word “ecosystem” recognizes the creeks are natural living parts of our existence, are being restored to life, and are more than drainage ditches.

He asked for a motion endorsing the adoption of the name. He said with the WCROC’s endorsement, the sub-committee could then pursue the next steps in the naming process.

On behalf of the Avenida Guadalupe Association, Mr. Velasquez moved to rename the Westside Creek Restoration Project to the “Roberto Rodriguez Westside Creeks Ecosystem.” Mr. Ramirez clarified that it is not the project itself, but the project’s ecosystem being named. He said the project will end, but the ecosystem will endure. The motion was seconded by Dr. Kamala Platt. Mr. Ramirez restated the motion as follows: The WCROC endorses the adoption of the name “Roberto Rodriguez Westside Creeks Ecosystem” with reference to the creek areas included in the Westside Creek Restoration Project.

Mr. Velasquez said he had distributed several articles about Mr. Rodriguez’s contributions and read from one of them. Mr. Ramirez reminded everyone that their votes represent organizations which lend credibility to the naming effort.

The motion passed unanimously with 12 votes in the affirmative. Mr. Ramirez said he would hold another sub-committee meeting soon and invite Board member Lourdes Galvan.

XII. Sunset Comment Period

Mr. Ramirez said the Sunset Advisory Commission, legislated under the Texas Sunset Act, is inviting public comments on ideas to improve the RA’s services and operations. He encouraged members to provide input.

XIII. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Velasquez asked members to pray for artist Jesse Trevino, who is battling cancer.

Mr. Ramirez wished everyone happy holidays. Mr. Mast said the RA wanted to celebrate the holidays and thank members for their commitment, so they are giving a copy of the book, *Westside Rising*, to all committee members.

Ms. Curd thanked everyone for participating and wished everyone happy holidays.

XIV. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.

VIRTUAL CHAT COMMENTS – NOVEMBER 16, 2021 WCROC MEETING

Al Salgado (to Everyone): 6:09 PM: Hi Robert. Are we on hold or is my audio off?

Briana Salas (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: I'd love to have my students involved!

Patricia Seidenberger (to Everyone): 6:55 PM: Patricia Seidenberger is present. Please excuse for being late as another meeting ran late.

SARA Meeting-5 (to Patricia Seidenberger): 6:56 PM: got you as being present. thank you!

Jeremy Landin (to Everyone): 7:13 PM: Excited to see this come to court!

SARA Meeting-5 (to Jeremy Landin): 7:23 PM: Jeremy, I apologize for mispronouncing your name during the roll call. There was a typo on our sheet.

Jeremy Landin (to Everyone): 7:24 PM: Not a problem

Jeremy Landin (Private): 7:24 PM: Not a problem

Westside Development Corporation (to Everyone): 7:29 PM: Happy holidays to all. Jesse will be in my prayers, let me know if there is anything I can do. - Melinda

Al Salgado (to Everyone): 7:29 PM: Happy Holiday to all Al Salgado UTSA

Patricia Seidenberger (to Everyone): 7:31 PM: Thank you for the lovely gift and wish everyone "Happy Holidays"