



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
In-person: 100 E. Guenther St.
Virtual: Gotomeetings
June 20, 2023 - 6 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Skye Curd, Co-Chair
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe
Jerry Lockey, Beacon Hill NA
Rita María Avery, Bexar Audubon
Mary Ann Valdez-Hernandez,
Historic Westside Residents Assoc.
Michael Lopez, Opportunity Home SA
Brianna Salas, OLLU

Charles Blank, River Aid San Antonio
Kate Ruckman, SA Conservation Society
William Buhrman, St. Mary's Univ.
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com
Albert Salgado, UTSA
Erwin Deluna, United San Antonio Pow
Wow Inc.
Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Staff and Public Present

Lourdes Galvan, RA Board Member
Derek Boese, RA General Manager
Meera Nguyen, RA
Rebecca Krug, RA
Brian Mast, RA
Steve Graham, RA
Aarin Teague, RA
Christina M. Castaño, Ximenes & Assoc.
Margarita Saldana, RA
Jeff Tyler, T-Core Engineers
John Hooker
Zach Rosen, Resource Environmental

Frates Seeligson, SA River Foundation
Adam Shedlosky, Expedition School
Bill Pennell, CoSA Parks
Ana Ramirez
Barbara Witte-Howell
Natalie Guerrero
Belinda Gavallos
Ashley Mireles
Monica Trevino-Ortega, Bexar County
Robert Reyna, CoSA Public Works

I. Welcome

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez, called the WCROC meeting to order.

II. Roll Call – Meera Nguyen, RA

Ms. Nguyen called the WCROC roll. A quorum was not present at the outset of the meeting but was achieved later in the meeting. Committee members who were present are listed above.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2023

Once a quorum was achieved, the Committee approved the April 18, 2023, minutes as presented.

IV. Calendar Items – Meera Nguyen, RA

Ms. Nguyen reviewed the Calendar Items listed on the respective PowerPoint slide, highlighting the July 22nd WSC Community Involvement Session at Tafolla Middle School.

V. General Manager Update – Derek Boese, RA

Mr. Boese covered updates by reviewing the respective PowerPoint slides #7-11: San Pedro Creek Improvements Project Phase 2, 3, and Phase 4.1; Zarzamora Creek Trail Project, and WSC Design Review Community Meetings.

San Pedro Creek Improvements Project Phase 2, Guadalupe Street to South Alamo: Mr. Boese anticipates substantial completion by the end of June 2023. The actual date to open the facility to the public is being coordinated with the contractor and Bexar County. The gatehouse and restrooms on Alamo Street are nearly complete, and the shade structure and artificial turf have been installed at the park north of Camp Street. Some of the plants are being installed but may be challenged due to the current weather conditions.

Phase 3 Alamo Street to Confluence within Apache Creek: Mr. Boese anticipates completion in November 2023. The paseos and walls are nearing completion; riffle pools and stones are completed and functioning.

Phase 4.1 Guadalupe Street to El Paso Street: Mr. Boese anticipates completion in August 2023. Construction is well underway and most of the paseo has been poured. Electrical conduits and water lines are being installed. The team is working closely with the hotels to get the path through the hotel complex at Cesar Chavez Blvd.; and the team is working with the City of San Antonio to create a pedestrian path with appropriate signage due to the construction.

Mr. Boese reviewed the overall project map on Slide 9, emphasizing Phase 1 is complete while all other phases are under construction; and noted that Phase 2 will be substantially complete by the end of June 2023.

The Zarzamora Creek Trail project was funded by the City bond together with Bexar County. SARA is doing project management and anticipating the first design phase in early fall 2023.

WSC Design Review Community Meetings: the first milestone will be in early fall, and staff will hold community meetings for public input, one for each of the four creeks. Planning for the community meetings will begin soon.

Mr. Boese proceeded to inquire if the WCROC had any questions.

Robert Ramirez: asked for clarification on the Union Pacific railroad bridge. Mr. Boese stated that progress is being made, and still in progress.

Lourdes Galvan: suggests that the slides on the handouts be printed slightly larger. Ms. Nguyen confirmed that she will work on Ms. Galvan's suggestion for the next meeting.

Gabriel Velasquez: Thanked the staff and committee for the consistent and diligent work on the westside creeks; noting that there have been multiple staff changes at the City, but the project is on track for the community.

Citizen: asked about the new apartments "Tampico Lofts" at Laredo and I-35, inquired if the nearby empty lot is going to be improved. Mr. Boese replied that staff will research

the item and communicate back with the citizen. He encouraged her to attend the public input session on July 22. Co-chair Robert Ramirez also invited the citizen to attend the public meeting.

VI. Project Status Update, Rebecca Krug, RA

Ms. Krug provided the update of the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project Manager (WSC ER), on slides 13-16.

Slide 13: For design activities, surveys have been in progress. Completed surveys on Apache and San Pedro Creek and the results have been delivered to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and are under review now. The Martinez Creek survey as well as Alazán creek survey, are still in progress and should be completed by the end of June 2023. Alazán is the longest creek and will be the last to be completed, in July, with the topographic and boundary surveys. Subsurface utility engineering is where the design team will discover and record any underground wastewater, sewer, utilities, or communication lines or other, that may need to be excavated or modified further down the project timeline.

Slide 14 – The architectural and engineering firm, Michael Baker, is working on adding the design elements which were included in the initial project scope to the meteorology and hydrologic models. The inputs will show how new features of ecosystem restoration are going to be impacted in the area whenever a rainstorm event occurs, how the features affect the flows and how the creeks will be altered to accommodate those flows. The firm is also looking to past ecosystem restoration projects, such as Mission Reach, for lessons learned.

Slide 15 – We are on target for the design team to reach the first design milestone of 35% in early fall. The RA will host individual creek public meetings for the community to see the design progress made so far and provide an opportunity to gain public input.

Ms. Krug proceeded to inquire if the WCROC had any questions.

Questions:

Mr. Velasquez: During the design of the creek near the Lincoln Courts (Alazán Creek), were the concerns of the area residents and Opportunity Home regarding the pedestrian bridges being considered? Is this type of element being considered for the study? The Lincoln Courts public housing project is currently under master plan development. Ms. Krug replied that as part of the list of betterments, the pedestrian bridges included, although it should be noted that the pedestrian bridges are identified as locally funded and would not be part of the federally funded project. Community input identifying the locations where the bridges are desired is an important item for the July public meeting.

Mr. Ramirez: In an effort to manage expectations of the public for “recreational activities”, will the presentation identify a list of types of recreational ideas for the plan or will the public be encouraged to identify anything they desire? Mr. Ramirez stated he is concerned that the public may possibly identify items that are not feasible; and noted that the team should recall the lessons learned in previous planning processes. Mr. Boese replied that the team will ensure the information is inclusive and cautions that he does not want to be overly prescriptive or influencing

the input. Often, there are times the public has ideas staff that had not yet thought of; furthermore, he said the team will certainly review the lessons learned in previous planning processes.

Mr. Lopez: Following up on Mr. Velasquez's question regarding pedestrian walkways, he asked for clarification on the pedestrian walkways and bridges. Ms. Krug replied that locations for the pedestrian facilities are the types of ideas the RA would like to receive at the July public meeting.

Ms. Galvan: Appreciated the thorough PowerPoint presentation and looks forward to the July public meeting.

Mr. Velasquez: Requested that in response to the citizen's questions as to the timing of the project, the RA should continue to re-iterate that the federal government is funding this project, and that the funds are specifically earmarked for this project.

Ms. Galvan: Expressed that she agreed with Mr. Velasquez, and commended the board members, staff, community, and elected officials for the continued work on funding for this project.

Mr. Buhrman: Requested clarification on the 35% milestone and how it relates to the project. Ms. Krug replied that due to the four creeks being designed simultaneously, the 35% design milestone is reflective of the full plan. Future milestones will be 65%, 95% and 100% just for the design phase. Mr. Ramirez asked staff to update the previously used timeline which clarifies that it reflects the whole project: design, construction, and operations/maintenance phases. Mr. Boese agreed with Mr. Ramirez and will follow through on this item for better understanding of the public.

VII. Review of Community Involvement Session, Brian Mast, RA

Mr. Mast provided information on the forthcoming July 22nd community meeting that identified the planning and outreach. The work being conducted includes the on-line platform with information about the meeting materials and opportunities to provide input on-line; the public meeting agenda, engagement activities, and data collection tools, noting all information is available in English and Spanish. He further explained that accommodations are being made to have Spanish translators, refreshments, wayfinding, and parking for the public meeting at Tafolla Middle School. Mr. Mast expects a large attendance at the public meeting.

Mr. Mast also provided information about the WCROC "Committee Windshield Tour" to take place on Saturday, June 24th at 9:00 am. Members of the WCROC planning to attend should contact Ms. Nguyen.

Mr. Mast proceeded to inquire if the WCROC had any questions.

Mr. Buhrman: Asked for clarification on how the public input will be collected, and how the data will be utilized by the design team after the public meeting. Mr. Mast did confirm the techniques for collecting the data, and assured the committee all data collected will be presented to the design team; and the results will be brought back to the WCROC and the public. Mr. Boese further explained that expectations are that the data will reflect more "wants" from the community than can be funded through the current budget. He further stated that the data is valuable, as it can help shape future plans and funding opportunities for both the RA and other sister agencies. And finally, he stated that the RA staff will share data with sister agencies for their use.

Ms. Galvan: Inquired regarding parking opportunities in and around Tafolla Middle School for the public meeting. Mr. Mast explained he has ensured there will be ample parking available and has coordinated with the neighboring parking lots, such as the Natatorium.

Dr. Platt: Inquired whether the Army Corps of Engineers will be present at the meeting. Mr. Mast stated that they have been invited along with several other stakeholders. They have not yet replied to the invitation.

Mr. Ramirez: Inquired as to who will be responsible for “maintenance” of the creek once the restoration project is complete. Mr. Mast stated that communications and negotiations are being carried out with the City and County on this issue, and a decision has not yet been made. Mr. Ramirez suggested the community get involved with the maintenance, as “neighborhood ambassadors” for stewardship, so care for the creeks would be engrained in the community.

Dr. Platt: Stated her disagreement with the current timing of the mowing along the creeks as currently maintained by the City of San Antonio. She explained that the timing is detrimental to the native plants and shrubs, and generally the community. She also stated the WCROC and the community should have input as to who maintains the creeks moving forward. Mr. Boese stated that the RA agrees with her regarding the timing of the mowing, however, he understands the complexity of mowing because they have limited resources and a massive responsibility across the city. He also stated that the maintenance is currently in negotiations with the City and County, as it comes with great responsibility and funding requirements.

VII. Citizens to be heard

None.

VIII. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Velasquez: Regarding the naming issue of the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration to Roberto Rodriguez Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration, requested RA staff provide an update on this at a future meeting. Mr. Boese replied that although staff does not have an update this month, they will consider it for update at a future meeting.

Mr. Velasquez: At a future meeting, is there a presentation that can be made to the WCROC on how projects get funded? Ms. Kurd stated that Mr. Mast is making a note of it for consideration.

Mr. Buhman: Asked what the WCROC members could do for the upcoming public meeting. Ms. Nguyen replied that committee members can help spread the word about the session, attend and provide comments at the session. She also suggested that any WCROC member could volunteer for the event, as volunteers are needed.

IX. Adjourn

Ms. Curd thanked everyone for their attendance and input. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee – June 2023

June 20, 2023 · 6:05 PM

SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone): 6:05 PM: Online participants: Please sign in here <https://forms.office.com/r/dwQ6WQ8ivN>

SARA Meeting-1 (to Westside Creeks): 6:10 PM: Hello is this Rita Maria Contreras Avery?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Westside Creeks): 6:12 PM: If so, I have been trying to contact you via email. I do not have a phone number for you. Can you please give me a call at your convenience? Meera Nguyen 210-302-3228

Briana Salas - OLLU (to Everyone): 6:12 PM: 🙋

Frates Seeligson (to Everyone): 6:13 PM: Would it be possible to display the boardroom?

Westside Creeks (to Everyone): 6:13 PM: Yes, I am Rita María

SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone): 6:14 PM: Hi Frates, we're having some technical issues with gotomeetings it is not allowing cameras this evening. We are working with our IT to see if it can be fixed

Frates Seeligson (to Everyone): 6:14 PM: Ok, no worries. Appreciate you all trying

Westside Creeks (Private): 6:15 PM: There is not much volume—not sure if that is my iPhone or ?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Westside Creeks): 6:19 PM: Ms. Rita Maria can you please email me your phone number or call me later this week. Yes, I thin it might be your phone. Do you have your volume on full? If so, try the settings in go to meetings

SARA Meeting-1 (to Albert Salgado): 6:20 PM: Hi Mr. Salgado, glad you could attend this evening. I recieved a error message when trying to reach you by phone last week. Have you changed your phone number?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Everyone): 6:21 PM: Participants: If you haven't had a chance, please sign in using our online form here: Online participants: Please sign in here <https://forms.office.com/r/dwQ6WQ8ivN>

Westside Creeks (Private): 6:24 PM: Can hard copies images be emailed to me, please?

Charles Blank (to Organizer(s) Only): 6:24 PM: Would it be possible to get a full resolution copy of the H&H Model from slide 15?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Charles Blank): 6:26 PM: I will check with Rebecca and see if we can get this to you.

Charles Blank (Private): 6:27 PM: Thanks, I appreciate it.

Westside Creeks (Private): 6:34 PM: Are we able to see the designs completed thus far?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Westside Creeks): 6:39 PM: Not yet. We have not seen them ourselves. They are currently being worked on by the consultant. The first milestone that the consultant will have share their design will be 35%. At this stage, we will have community meetings to share the design

Westside Creeks (Private): 6:51 PM: Meera, I'd like to attend on Saturday, please. Rita María

Steve Graham (to Everyone): 6:52 PM: I'm going on the tour if there is room available?

SARA Meeting-1 (to Steve Graham): 6:52 PM: Yes, I have you down. Right now, it looks like we will defintly have the space for you to participate.

Steve Graham (to Everyone): 6:53 PM: People need to use their mics

SARA Meeting-1 (to Steve Graham): 6:54 PM: I will make sure to follow up with you by Thursday

SARA Meeting-1 (to Ashley Mireles): 7:00 PM: Hi Ms. Mireles, thank you for joining us this evening. Can you sign in using this form please? <https://forms.office.com/r/dwQ6WQ8ivN>