



San Antonio River Improvements Project



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MULTI-FACETED DESIGN TEAMS LAUNCH EFFORT TO REINVIGORATE SAN ANTONIO RIVER

SAN ANTONIO – The challenge of transforming under-utilized portions of the San Antonio River into viable areas for public recreation, wildlife habitat and commercial development is in the hands of two architectural firms with long histories of high-profile projects in San Antonio. Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, Inc. and Carter & Burgess, Inc. were selected in October of 2001 to oversee the preliminary design phase of the San Antonio River Improvements Project. The 10-year, \$140 million project concentrates on 13 miles of the San Antonio River, including the four-mile Museum Reach, which is north of the downtown area, and the nine-mile Historic Mission Reach, which is south of downtown.

Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, Inc., which is based in San Antonio, was founded in 1967, approximately 40 years into O' Neil Ford's architectural career. Since Ford's death in 1982, partners Boone Powell, FAIA; Chris Carson, FAIA; and Carolyn Peterson, FAIA have led the firm in completing hundreds of projects of varying sizes across the state and the nation.

Some of the firm's more notable achievements include the restoration of the Texas State Capitol in 1995, the construction of the Cowboy Artists of America Museum in Kerrville, Texas, in 1983, the development of the main campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio from 1970 to 1976 and the construction of the Tower of the Americas as part of the 1968 HemisFair. The firm's work has been recognized with more than 125 state, local and regional awards, including the 1999 Architecture Firm of the Year Award from the Texas Society of Architects and the 25 Year Award from the Dallas chapter of the American Institute of Architects. "We are anticipating the outcome of this project as much as any other citizen of San Antonio who will be able to enjoy the river with their family," said Powell. "Given our history of developing landmark projects in San Antonio, we feel a sense of obligation to help bring San Antonio's crown jewel, the San Antonio River, to its fullest potential."

Ford, Powell & Carson will oversee the re-development of the Museum Reach, which extends approximately four miles north from Lexington Street to East Hildebrand Avenue at Brackenridge Park. The proposed improvements for the Museum Reach include pedestrian access from the street level, a continuation of the River Walk's pathways, plant and fish habitats, the capacity for river barge usage, and commercial and residential development.

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Other members of the Museum Reach design team include HDR Engineering, Inc.; Inter-Fluve, Inc.; Arias & Kezar, Inc.; UTSA Center for Archaeological Research; Project Cost Resources; Edwards Aquifer Research Center; NY*LA/Marek-Hill; Garza Consulting; Buck Group; Kaplan Partners Architectural Lighting; and Rodriguez Engineering. Mike Johnson of HDR Engineering, Inc. serves as Museum Reach design team project manager.

Established in 1917, HDR is one of the oldest national engineering firms and is ranked in the top 50 design firms by Engineering News-Record. HDR is an employee-owned company with a staff of 3,000 in more than 60 offices nationwide. The firm's Texas offices include San Antonio, Austin, Houston, Dallas, Fort Worth and Corpus Christi. The San Antonio office has a staff of 65 employees. By discipline, the San Antonio team has five registered structural engineers; three registered and two graduate forensic engineers; nine registered and seven graduate civil engineers; one surveyor; three architects and one intern architect; two certified industrial hygienists; four additional industrial hygienists and one environmental scientist.

Carter & Burgess, Inc. will guide the improvements to the nine-mile Historic Mission Reach from South Alamo Street south to Mission Espada just below Interstate Loop 410. Improvement objectives for the Historic Mission Reach include the construction of hike and bike paths; re-introduction of trees and other vegetation; creation of wildlife habitat areas; establishment of recreational activities such as canoeing; the development of more natural-looking, asymmetrical riverbanks; and links to historically significant sites along the Mission Trails.

Carter & Burgess is a national full service architectural, engineering and construction management firm with offices in 29 cities, including San Antonio. It has grown from a two-man partnership in 1939 into a multi-discipline consulting firm with more than 2,700 employees, more than doubling in size over the last four years. While Carter & Burgess has overseen numerous projects across the country, it has left its stamp on environmental development in San Antonio and the region.

The firm developed a plan for San Antonio's Mitchell Lake to improve habitat water quality and community usage; provided a baseline environmental assessment for the 730-acre Westbrook tract on South Padre Island; and performed surveying work for the Texas Department of Transportation in San Antonio and the Hill Country, which included topographic and boundary surveys for upcoming expansion projects, as well as tree, creek and drainage surveys.

The magnitude and diversity of the company's projects have led to consistent awards and recognition. In 2001, Carter & Burgess was ranked among the top ten firms in the nation by industry publications including Engineering News-Record, Building Design and Construction, Display and Design Ideas, Visual Merchandising and Store Design and the Zweig Letter.

"What stands out for us on this project is the use of fluvial geomorphology to restore the natural condition of the river and create a more stable river while maintaining floodwater capacity," said Kevin Conner of the Carter & Burgess team. "This project is important to all of us, because of the significance of the river to our city and the positive impact the planned improvements will have on our community."

The Historic Mission Reach design team, led by Kevin Conner of Carter & Burgess, includes Sprinkle Robey Architects; Inter-Fluve, Inc.; Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center; Raba-Kistner, Inc.; UTSA Center for Archaeological Research; Overby Descamps Engineering, Inc.; Arias & Kezar, Inc.; Garza Consulting; Accutech Consultants, L.L.C. and HDR Engineering, Inc.

The multidisciplinary, total solution focus of Carter & Burgess allows the assembly of project-relevant teams of specialists such as this one. Landscape architects, hydrologists, civil engineers, structural engineers, biologists and cost management professionals have been brought together for the efforts on the Historic Mission Reach.

Sprinkle Robey Architects is led by Davis Sprinkle and Thom Robey, both leaders in the field of architectural design. The firm maintains a diverse architectural practice including municipal structures, mixed-use commercial projects, restaurants, health care facilities, industrial projects, religious facilities, adaptive reuse historic structures and urban design. Inter-Fluve, Inc., led by Dale Miller, is a leader in river restoration focusing on watershed projects across the country. The firm is staffed by a team of hydrologists, geomorphologists, engineers and biologists.

The San Antonio River Improvements Project represents a 10-year, \$140 million city, county, and federal investment in flood control, amenities, environmental restoration and recreational improvements to the river. Bexar County and the City of San Antonio are providing local funding with the federal project components funded through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE). The San Antonio River Authority provides project and technical management and overall project coordination. Steve Graham of the San Antonio River Authority serves as the overall Project Manager.

The design phase of the River Improvements Project consists of preliminary design and detailed design. Preliminary design services, including a public input phase, are estimated to cost \$3.3 million and will be completed in early 2003. The public information and input process is being facilitated by KGBTexas Public Relations with assistance from Ximenes & Associates. Funding for the preliminary design phase is derived from the Bexar County Flood Tax and the City of San Antonio Capital Improvements Fund. Final design and construction will be initiated in phases during the ten years of the project, occurring on both the Museum Reach and the Historic Mission Reach simultaneously.

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