



San Antonio River Improvements Project



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**LOCAL RESIDENTS GATHER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER**

River Improvements Project to enhance 13 miles of the river beyond downtown

(March 16, 2002) SAN ANTONIO – Mayor Ed Garza and Judge Nelson Wolff joined River Improvements Project leaders and local residents at a public information fair today at the Piper-Bass Student Center of the Blossom Athletic Complex. The event provided local residents with an opportunity to learn about planned improvements to 13 miles of the San Antonio River both north and south of downtown. The project aims to provide stable, maintainable flood control while also focusing on environmental restoration and the addition of recreational opportunities for local residents.

“This is the first of many opportunities in the preliminary design phase for the community to learn about this project and to provide their input on what the river should become for our city,” said Lila Cockrell, co-chair of the San Antonio River Oversight Committee. “This project will expand the river’s natural charm beyond downtown for our citizens to enjoy for years to come.”

The River Improvements Project is a 10-year, \$140 million city, county, and federal investment in flood control, amenities, environmental restoration and recreational improvements to the river. The project’s Museum Reach extends approximately four miles from Hildebrand to Lexington Street, and the project’s Historic Mission Reach extends approximately nine miles from S. Alamo Street to Mission Espada. Throughout the ten-year project, the San Antonio River Authority will provide project and technical management as well as overall project coordination between the partners.

Steve Graham, project manager for the San Antonio River Authority, provided citizens at the information fair with an overview of the master plan for the river. The River Improvements Project is now in the preliminary design phase, which is estimated to cost \$3.3 million and will be completed in early 2003. The project will then move in phases into final design and construction, with work progressing both north and south of downtown simultaneously.

Improvements to the river are expected to have far-reaching benefits for San Antonio – from increased economic development to cultural resources and recreational opportunities connecting neighborhoods. Specific objectives for the Museum Reach include extending the amenities of the River Walk into areas that are currently inaccessible because of sheer banks, vegetative growth and lack of pathways. The Historic Mission Reach, however, has little vegetation and few original topographical features remaining.

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The project in this area aims to restore native habitat and the natural meander of the river, along with developing new recreational opportunities.

Visitors at today's information fair were given the opportunity to browse the project's concept drawings and maps, and to ask questions of project staff. Public input gathered during the event will be compiled and reviewed for incorporation into preliminary design development. Consultant teams led by Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, Inc. and Carter & Burgess, Inc. will develop the preliminary designs.

Today's event was the first of two citywide information fairs to be held during the preliminary design phase of the project. Six public input meetings will also be held in upcoming months at locations along the river reaches. At these meetings, consultants will present design options and solicit input from the community. The first public input meeting on the Historic Mission Reach is scheduled for 6 p.m. on May 15, 2002 at the Blessed Sacrament Academy Gymnasium. The first public input meeting on the Museum Reach is scheduled for 6 p.m. on June 17, 2002 at the Witte Museum. Additional information on these meetings and on the project can be found at www.sanantonioriver.org.

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