



San Antonio River Improvements Project



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SAN ANTONIO RIVER IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT FLOWS INTO PRELIMINARY DESIGN PHASE WITH BUS TOUR WORK SESSION

River Improvement Consultants Begin Project's Design Phase

(December 7, 2001) SAN ANTONIO — San Antonio River Improvements Project leadership kicked off the project's preliminary design phase today with a work session and bus tour of the 13 miles of river to be restored and preserved during the 10-year, \$140 million project.

The tour stopped at various points along the river, where consultants and project leaders discussed issues relating to improving flood control and making environmental and recreational improvements to the river. River enhancements will extend beyond the downtown River Walk and are expected to increase development and recreational activities along the San Antonio River.

More than 50 people took the tour, including representatives from the City of San Antonio, Bexar County, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) and the San Antonio River Oversight Committee (SAROC). Also participating were design team members working on the project's Museum Reach (four miles from Lexington Street to Hildebrand Avenue at Brackenridge Park) and Historic Mission Reach (nine miles from South Alamo Street to Mission Espada just below Interstate Loop 410) and consultants who will coordinate the public input process. SARA Technical and Projects Manager Steve Graham led today's tour to better acquaint the project's consultants with the issues and goals of the project.

"The design teams will be working to achieve a balance between flood control, restoring the natural state of the river, and adding recreational and environmental amenities," Graham said. "Our goal is to create design solutions that allow everyone to enjoy the benefits of the river from the headwaters all the way down to the historic Missions."

In 1998, Bexar County, the City of San Antonio and SARA formed SAROC to oversee the preservation and restoration of the San Antonio River. These entities oversaw development of the recently completed Concept Design Guidelines for the San Antonio River Improvements Project, which gained national recognition for creating a community-supported vision for the river. Today's bus tour is the initial step toward creating design solutions to implement that vision.

"It is very rewarding for us to see this project progressing and the preliminary design phase beginning," said SAROC Co-Chair Lila Cockrell. "The San Antonio River is the lifeblood of our community, and the

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River Improvements Project will have a positive impact on our entire city.”

The Museum Reach design team is led by Ford, Powell & Carson Architects & Planners, Inc. The San Antonio based company was founded in 1967 and has a history of working on landmark Texas projects, including the restoration of the Texas State Capitol and the construction of the Tower of the Americas. The firm also designed the turning basin at Rivercenter Mall, water features and walkways at the Paseo del Alamo, and site-specific design at Sea World of Texas.

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. Boone Powell of Ford, Powell, & Carson will work closely with Mike Johnson of HDR Engineering, Inc. who will serve as the Museum Reach design team project manager.

“The success of the River Improvements Project is very important to all of us, not only in our capacity as design team members but as residents of a city that will benefit greatly from the expanded development and recreational opportunities on the river,” Powell said. “The vision for our work on the Museum Reach is to set the framework for urban development with a continuous pedestrian link that will tie in well to the adjacent urban fabric.”

Carter & Burgess, Inc. leads the Historic Mission Reach design team, including Kevin Conner as the Historic Mission Reach design team project manager. Carter & Burgess, Inc. is a national architectural and engineering consulting firm with more than 2700 employees nationwide. While Carter & Burgess has overseen projects in multiple disciplines across the country, the firm has also left its stamp on environmental development in San Antonio and throughout the region.

“Our past experience includes habitat and water quality plans at Mitchell Lake, an environmental assessment for the Westbrook tract on South Padre Island, and topographic and boundary studies for the Texas Department of Transportation in San Antonio and the Hill Country,” Conner said. “What stands out for us on this project is the use of fluvial geomorphology on the Historic Mission Reach to restore the natural condition of the river and create a more stable river while maintaining floodwater capacity.”

The River Improvements Project preliminary design phase will include a significant amount of public input. KGBTexas has been selected to lead the public information and input process, and Mary Meek and Angela Herrera lead their team. Linda Ximenes of Ximenes & Associates, Inc. will also contribute to the public participation team. A number of meetings will be held in 2002 both in areas along the river reaches as well as in other parts of the city.

About the San Antonio River Improvements Project

The San Antonio River Improvements Project represents a 10-year, \$140 million local, federal, and private sector 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 COE. Project leadership will be seeking \$15 million in private donations for recreational and aesthetic upgrades to the amenities outlined for the project. SARA provides project and technical management and overall project coordination.

The project's Museum Reach extends approximately four miles from Lexington Street to Hildebrand Avenue at Brackenridge Park, and the Historic Mission Reach extends nine miles from S. Alamo Street to Mission Espada just below Interstate Loop 410.

The design phase of the project consists of two steps - 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 late 2002. Funding for the preliminary design phase is derived from the Bexar County Flood Tax and the City of San Antonio Capital Improvements Fund.

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