



San Antonio River Oversight Committee

421 Sixth Street, #1
San Antonio, Texas 78215

210/354-2925 Office

210/354-2964 Fax

DECEMBER 18, 2006

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY BOARD ROOM

100 E. GUENTHER STREET

5:00 P.M.

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDING: MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES- Joe Alderete, Roberto Anguiano, Dermot Brosnan, Bob Buchanan, Nathan Campbell, Tony Cantu, Susan Chandoha, Lila Cockrell, Ed Day, Tom DeBrooke, Joan Gaither, Irby Hightower, Glenn Huddleston, Mike Lance, Marise McDermott, Jeff Neathery **STAFF AND CONSULTANTS-** Beth Wells, Joseph Cruz, Richard Grochowski, Claude Harding, Kerim Jacaman, Susan Snow, Gayle Brennan Spencer, Arturo Villarreal, Deya Villarreal, Kyle Gass, Linda Ximenes and three **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lila Cockrell called the meeting to order and welcomed all the members.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2006

The minutes were corrected to show that Albert Valle attended. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW DOWNTOWN DEPARTMENT AND INTRODUCTION OF DIRECTOR

The following was discussed under this agenda item:

- The City has created a new department that will encompass all downtown activities in one department, so now the downtown sections of the San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP) will be included under that department.
- Paula Stallcup is the director of the new department, which includes all of the maintenance on the River Walk at the river level as well as street level. It also includes downtown parking facilities, La Villita, Hemisfair, Market Square and other downtown cultural facilities, and contract services for all the leases for the downtown area.
- The department will continue to rely on the Parks Department and Public Works for some of the downtown activities.
- The boundaries for downtown are basically the highways—IH 35, IH 37, IH 10 and Durango Street. There is not sufficient funding to be able to support maintaining all the downtown area except for the core, but Ms. Stallcup will be looking for ways to cover all of downtown.

UPDATE ON MUSEUM REACH ACTIVITIES

Schedule Update

Mr. Boenig reported on the following items:

- The pumps are now in operation that take the base flow from the river into the tunnel and force it into main pipes that exit at Lexington Street. They will continue to pump for the next two years to keep the base flow out of the river during construction. The quality of the water should remain the same, or may improve since drawing it through the tunnel shaft may get out more sediment.
- A remote monitoring and control system is being considered for the lock and dam structure. The current design automatically senses the upstream water surface to adjust the level of the lock and dam independent of other river operations. The City has requested this remote (SCADA) system be considered and SARA is waiting on cost estimates to decide. The remote system would be an allowance to the contractor or contracted separately. The monitoring data would go directly to the City through a radio system or a direct connection so they can monitor it.
- SARA had a pre-proposal meeting with contractors last week. January 17th is scheduled for opening the bids. The bid award date was postponed for 60 days at the request of contractors who were seeking to bid. Four primes attended the meeting and eleven have the bid documents. The size of the bond limits the number of contractors who can bid.
- The real estate work is going well. Sixteen of the 27 parcels needed are in hand.
- The 404 permit has been secured.
- There is a second permit from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the impoundment of the waters in front of the dam. It is in the permit writing stage, which means it will come in the near future.

UPDATE ON MISSION REACH ACTIVITIES

Jeff Neathery reported that the 60 percent plans will be ready tomorrow. He stated that the subcommittee has been grappling with the concept of the riffle structures and suggested asking the Corps to do a pilot to see what they will really look like and how they will perform. He asked Mr. Boenig to report on the activities to date.

Architectural/Engineering Update

Mr. Boenig reported the following activities:

- The consultants will turn in their plans for the section from Lone Star Blvd. to the confluence of San Pedro Creek tomorrow and he is hoping for a thirty-day turnaround from the agencies reviewing the plan.
- The Corps and SARA looked at an alternative disposal site, but decided on the primary site on Southton Road at least for the first phase. They have completed the second tier of the environmental study and everything seems to be in line for its use. The appraisal is due in mid-January and use of the site will be pursued if it is okay environmentally.
- The proposed site for the riffle structure “pilot” is south of the San Juan Diversion structure south of Mission County Park. The Corps will contract it out and SARA is coordinating it with Public Works. A long weir wall representing the final product would be created and boulders would be stacked upstream and downstream of the

weir. The challenge is for the water to be visible on either side of the weir and not just disappear into the ground.

- At the utility coordination meeting with the Corps and SAWS, they agreed to a joint bid for the construction that will start in June 2007. There is a slightly different design from the 30 percent plans to the 60 percent plans, so the relocation costs may be higher. SARA is reviewing the costs to be sure. The only location where there are conflicts in Phase I is at the confluence of San Pedro Cree with some sewer lines.
- Property acquisition will commence once the appraisals are completed and reviewed.

EAGLELAND PROJECTS

Mr. Neathery stated that there was an Eagleland Subcommittee meeting last week. At the meeting, they were looking at potential sources of funding for the amenities, which include the modifications to the Alamo Street Bridge. They discussed the possibility of getting the improvements included within the City bond program for next year, but did not specify an amount. It would be included in the Streets and Sidewalks category.

Other aspects discussed were:

- The Alamo Street Bridge improvements would provide access to the area where the bald cypress is and make the bridge crossing safer. The cost estimate is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$789,000.
- **There were no concerns expressed, and the Committee agreed by consensus that the Co-chairs should write a letter to the appropriate bond committee that would include an estimate of the costs and propose the Alamo Street Bridge improvements for the committee's consideration for inclusion in the bond.**
- County funds could not be used for this project since they are exclusively for flood control.

Consideration of Eagleland Bridge design

Richard Grochowski reported the following:

- The City met with TCEQ recently and TCEQ, despite efforts by the City, stipulated that the City had to stop the hike and bike project since they decided that it is linked to the Big-Tex development. The assessment was moved to mid-January. At that time, once the site assessment is complete, then the City believes it can demonstrate that the hike and bike project should not be stopped because of the clean-up activities on the development.
- The contractor has been working on the redesign of the Eagleland bridge under the guidance of a subgroup of the Eagleland Design Subcommittee. The bridge will be a clear span bridge with a much higher bowstring arch and 4 x 4 mesh grid safety railings for the bikes. It will be twelve feet from the bottom of the bridge to the top of the rail.

Update on Pedestrian Phase

Mr. Grochowski reported that the Corps permit is still being considered and is waiting for four other entities to complete their review before they can give the permit. The City will be stepping up the pressure to get the review done as quickly as possible. The Corps does not have any issues.

Kyle Gass of Civil Engineering Consultants (CEC), the design consultant for the pedestrian phase, reviewed the design and made the following points:

- The plans are to construct retaining walls at the southern end of the walkway. As you move closer to Alamo Street there will be a retaining wall and water on one side that will be filled in and planted.
- At Alamo Street, there are three flood control gates. One will be removed to accommodate the walkway. Immediately north of Alamo Street, you enter the cascades area where there will be a waterfall over a new wall in the channel east of the walkway. As you move out of the cascades area, you get onto the pier-supported walkway and continue all the way past Guenther Street. At the SARA offices, there will be another overlook with plantings within proposed retaining walls. The existing maintenance ramp will be re-graded and reconstructed to accommodate the walkway.
- This section of walkway is known as the “Missing Link” and connects the Mission Trails Project’s path to the existing River Walk. It will create a continuous trail from downtown to Mission Espada.

Alamo Street Amenities

Jim Boenig reported the following:

- For the Corps project, he met with the contractor for the re-vegetation on costs for rubble removal and re-vegetation. The Corps has funding to address the concerns for the project. It is hoped that the different issues will get resolved by the spring planting.
- SARA will need to work with the County to determine how to appropriate the 25 percent local matching funds for the Corps’ \$400,000. Work-in-kind efforts are also eligible for match.
- SARA hopes to have the submittal to the City right after the first of the year for completion of the Gate 6 operation modifications to slow down the flow and reduce the erosion just below the gate.
- The proposal for the Crofton Street pocket park was received from Bender Wells Clark. Funding for the park is from the King William Association and the City of San Antonio. Authorization of funds should be in place in January and construction of the park should start in July 2007.
- The City did a nice job of removing the graffiti from the wall across from Constance.

STATUS OF FEDERAL FUNDING

Suzanne Scott reported the following:

- For the 2007 appropriations, the House and Senate needed to get together and reconcile the different amounts they have suggested for this project, but it did not happen. They passed a Continuing Resolution until July 2007 instead. This limits the SARIP to the amount spent last year or the lower of the two bills approved. This should complete the design process through the 95 percent plans, but will not cover the construction documents.
- She is hearing that the new Chair of the Appropriations Committee said they would likely continue things as they are and move toward 2008 appropriations. He has said they would not fund any earmarks, which would probably affect our project since we are not in the President’s budget. Senator Hutchison’s office said that since the

project has been funded for so many years it is likely that continuing funding will be approved.

- Congressman Ciro Rodriguez needs to be advised of the current situation. The Co-chairs agreed to send him a letter to that effect.
- The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) will need to begin all over again since the Congress did not pass it. It would have allowed for reimbursement of construction costs if construction had begun this summer. Efforts will be made to get some type of credit language included in the continuing resolution.
- Phase I cannot be separated out from the rest of the project because that would trigger a re-evaluation of the rest of the project, meaning more delays.
- It will be important to be able to move forward with local funding in the event the federal funding does not get approved.
- The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has sent a letter stating they do not want to recommend the project for funding in the President's 2008 budget because of the low habitat values, but it still has a good chance since it is a project that is already begun.
- Local elected officials and Senator Hutchison's office have all been very supportive and will continue to work for the project.
- All funding options need to be kept open and all sources considered.

Tentative groundbreaking for the Museum Reach construction is Tuesday, February 13th at 10:30 a.m. The location will be determined.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Susan Chadoha announced the Steve Whitesell is on temporary detail until March 2007. He was selected to work on the initial planning for the Centennial Challenge, a ten-year effort to culminate in 2016 with the hundredth anniversary of a celebration of the signing of the bill that created the national parks.

The Co-chairs will send him a letter of congratulations on behalf of the committee.

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE ROC WILL BE ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2007 AT 5:00 P.M. AT THE SARA OFFICE, 100 E. GUENTHER.