

CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

LINEAR CREEKWAY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD (LCPAB)

MINUTES
July 28, 2020

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Elaine Kearny, Mayoral Appointee
Ms. Cosima Colvin, District One
Mr. Forrest Cobb, District Three
Dr. Randall Preissig, District Four
Ms. Faith Radle, District Five

Mr. Myrl Britten, District Six
Mr. Greg Hammer, District Seven, Chair
Mr. John Kent, District Nine, Vice-Chair
Ms. Sherri Dugas, District Ten

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Nikki Ramos, Parks and Recreation
Mr. Brandon Ross, Parks and Recreation
Mr. Agdel Rivera, Parks and Recreation

Mr. Steve Whitworth, Office of the City Attorney
Mr. Sam Sanchez, Parks and Recreation
Mr. Daniel Leal, Parks and Recreation

REGULAR BUSINESS

- Meeting called to order at 6:01 PM.
- Motion and approval of the minutes from February 25, 2020 meeting; with the addition of a note regarding the UTSA study of fishing on local creeks, once it's completed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Ross said that in the new online meeting format, the deadline for submittal of Public Comments is at 1:00pm the Monday before each meeting.

Public Comments read by Mr. Greg Hammer:

- Public Comment by Ms. Terry Castillo - Ms. Castillo welcomes Faith Radle to the LCPAB as the District Five board member after years of vacancy. The Creekway System is part of a safe and healthy transportation system that will propel San Antonio as a city of sustainability and connectivity.
- Public Comment by Ms. Bonnie Connor - Ms. Conner expressed her appreciation of the LCPAB members for their service. She expressed that during this pandemic it has become evident that the trails have become essential for physical, mental and emotional health. She has been involved in the planning of the aquifer protection and creekway initiatives since the early stages to help build support. Ms. Conner emphasized that the plan to expand trails needs to be completed and is calling the board to make everyone aware so that the greenways can be funded.

DISCUSSION ON LINEAR CREEKWAY PARK PROGRAM

Update on the Linear Creekway Development Program Funding Source:

- Ms. Ramos began the discussion saying that prior to COVID-19 in March, there had been discussion with the Bexar County to fund \$83 million toward the Greenway Trail Program. However, after the pandemic hit Judge Wolf said that the County's priority would be in COVID-19 recovery. In addition, no formal discussions had been undertaken by City Council.
- The sales tax collection was originally anticipated to be completed by early 2021, but now with the pandemic, it will take slightly longer due to decreased sales tax revenue. In turn, the trail program expenditures will likely also be rolled out more slowly, potentially into 2023. There are multiple possible ways to fund the continuation of the

trails program, but no decisions have been made. Since collection will take longer there is more time for discussion. There is a certainly a public desire to continue this program. Staff will bring any news forward as things develop.

- Mr. Hammer commented that initially the Mayor put the brakes on the sales tax discussion and then recently shifted gears to use the sales tax for workforce development. He also mentioned that people are using the trails and bike shops are seeing the increase in demand. Leadership needs to identify a viable funding source because maintenance needs to be funded in perpetuity.
- Ms. Colvin commented that the sustainable funding source is the continued portion of the 1/8-cent Sales Tax. She asked Ms. Ramos about when the other agencies would be able to begin revenue collections if the funding is switched over.
- Ms. Ramos responded that the program is expecting to finish collecting sales tax in mid to late 2021 and the other entities cannot begin collection until the maximum capacity from the last election (\$80 million for the greenways and \$100 million for the Edwards Program) is reached. There is no time limit on spending these funds once they are received.
- Ms. Colvin mentioned that late last year the LCPAB made a resolution to state the LCPAB's position on the sales tax shift and she motioned to update the resolution. While Mr. Hammer said he agreed with Ms. Colvin, he suggested potentially tabling the item for future discussion.
 - Mr. Whitworth advised that the item to consider passing a resolution to Council be added as an agenda item for a future meeting.
 - In response to a question posed by Mr. Myrl Britten, Mr. Whitworth replied that the deadline for Council to approve items to be included on the November ballot is August 17th. Mr. Britten observed that due to the timing, the LCPAB would not have another meeting before the deadline unless a special meeting were called.
- Ms. Ramos suggested that a special meeting is possible. Mr. Whitworth also suggested that the board draft a cover letter to add to the existing resolution since it essentially communicated the LCPAB's past and current wishes that the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails continue to be funded by the Sales Tax.
- Mr. Hammer agreed this was a good method to communicate the LCPAB's wishes to Council. Ms. Kearny suggested that language be included in the cover letter that points out the increased use of the trails in recent months.
- Dr. Preissig pointed out that once VIA begins receiving the tax through the current plan, it would be receiving it in perpetuity. He asked Mr. Whitworth if the board members had a fiduciary responsibility in the implementation of the trail projects.
 - Mr. Whitworth replied that there are no legal fiduciary liabilities or duties that board members will be held to, but there may be ethics considerations for conflicts of interest. He added that the proposed shift of sales tax funds for workforce development has not yet gone through council. He said that his understanding was that there would be two B-Session presentations to City Council to review the proposal. The Workforce development and Via proposals will be two separate propositions. Council action would be on August 13th.
- Ms. Sherri Dugas asked what the best way would be for the members to communicate their wishes on the Sales Tax.
 - Mr. Hammer said that as Chair of the board, he would communicate to the District 7 Councilwoman and the Mayor. He also encouraged the members to reach out to their Council representative and include the existing resolution in their communications.

Presentation of Design Plan for a Huebner Creek Greenway Trailhead Connection at Crystal Hill Drive

- Mr. Brandon Ross shared the design plans for the Huebner Creek Trail connection at Crystal Hill and Crystal Bow. The trailhead will have trees, a shade structure, lighting, and a crosswalk to the site to provide direct, ADA trail access from the adjacent neighborhood, the Retreat at Ingram Hills. The trailhead items will include Trail Design Strategy recommendations and the site will include a Low-Impact Development (LID) feature that will filter and clean water from the adjacent streets. The trailhead will compliment work recently completed by the Public Works

Department to reconfigure the adjacent intersection of Crystal Hill and Crystal Bow streets. The project design will be completed by fall and construction will by spring 2021.

- Mr. Hammer noted that this project is an example of how the greenways are connecting neighborhoods and amenities. He also acknowledged that staff does a good job of coordinating with other agencies to provide safety solutions like the crosswalk.
- Ms. Elaine Kearney asked if this project has used or is using the LID rebate from the San Antonio River Authority.
 - Mr. Ross responded that the rebate has been used in previous projects, but he will look into whether the rebate program is still active and could be applied to this project.
 - Ms. Nikki Ramos added that there is a portion of the 2015 sales tax funding that is specifically set aside for the implementation of LID features.

Board Member Reports

- Ms. Cosima Colvin, District One
 - Ms. Colvin recently received a comment from a resident that there is a lack of amenities on the Westside Creek trails. She asked that as future funding becomes available, additional amenities for the Westside Creeks be considered in the plan.
 - Ms. Colvin has recently enjoyed the new Espada connection south of the Mission Reach trails on the San Antonio River. She said that there is work being done by TxDOT on the 281 and South Flores intersection, which divides the new trail from the rest of the Medina River Greenway system.
 - Mr. Ross has been in communication with TXDOT about the crossing and they have recently installed trail closure signage to increase awareness for people entering the trail from the Mission Reach.
- Mr. Forrest Cobb, District Three
 - Mr. Cobb has noticed a lot of people on the trails in his area and has also seen a lot of people fishing. He has received questions about whether people should be fishing on the Medina River. He wants to know more about fishing and water quality along the greenways, specifically Medina River.
 - Mr. Ross said he would follow up on both the UTSA fishing study and the water quality question.
 - *(Mr. Ross subsequently contacted UTSA, who said the fishing study was delayed but would be completed in approximately September to October. He also spoke with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA), who said that the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for fish advisory signage and that the City's Department of Metro Health has installed them in the past).*
- Dr. Randy Preissig, District Four
 - Dr. Preissig emphasized that it would be a shame to not finish the “Emerald Necklace” of greenway trails around San Antonio. He encouraged the board members to contact their Council person to discuss future trail funding.
- Ms. Faith Radle, District Five
 - Ms. Radle said that she visits the Apache Creek on a daily basis and is excited to see new segments opening to the public. She said has observed that the development of the Westside Creeks is a process and a lot has been done, but that there is also a lot of concrete that lines the Westside Creeks. She asked about the role of the board and who the board and staff coordinate with on related improvements (such as drainage design).
 - Mr. Hammer said that the purview of the board is centered around the development of the greenway trails, but that the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has worked on a longer-term plan to restore the Westside Creeks to a more natural condition. He said that the Greenways staff do a good job in coordinating with other departments and agencies to maximize impacts and beautifications to the creeks.

- Ms. Ramos added that the program takes these types of situations into account and that Parks and Recreation staff began considering enhancements in the 2015 Sales Tax Program to improve things like accessibility, aesthetics, shade, and similar enhancements wherever possible. Planning for these types of enhancements will continue in future buildout plans.
 - Mr. Daniel Leal said that while the Westside Creeks were designed by the USACE for drainage capacity in the 50's, there are some strategies that are being put into place to partially mitigate some of that reality, such as a tree plan to put in approximately 1,400 trees on the Westside Creeks, as well as implementing the Trail Design Strategy (TDS).
- Mr. Myrl Britten, District Six
 - Mr. Britten recently visited several trailheads. He observed that the parking lot at West Military Dr. was full of cars and that there was no parking available when he went. He also stated that bicycle usage is up nationwide.
- Mr. Greg Hammer, District Seven, Chair
 - Mr. Hammer discussed how the trails are leveraging other recreation opportunities, such as the Medicine Wall rock climbing area, now accessible through the Salado Creek Greenway.
- Mr. John Kent, District Nine, Vice-Chair
 - Mr. Kent asked if the program had the capability to do a statistical survey to provide to Council on trail use and trends.
 - Mr. Ross responded that reports are available for bike and pedestrian count usage and that staff could make them available to the LCPAB on a regular basis (probably quarterly). There is also a trail user survey that has been drafted, but it has not been released yet. The survey will be used to get a sense of peoples' use of the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trail System and their interests in potential future trail development projects.
 - Ms. Colvin mentioned the Strava heat maps and said they might be a good resource to see the trail usage around the City.
- Ms. Sherri Dugas, District Ten
 - Ms. Dugas complimented staff on a sign at the Salado Loop 1604 Trailhead that provides great information to trail users.
 - Ms. Dugas also said that she is no longer riding her bike on the trails over the weekends due to the growing number of trail users.
- Ms. Elaine Kearny, Mayoral Appointee
 - Ms. Kearny said she has been spreading the word about the trails to those that are not as familiar with them.

Staff Report on Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails Program (Brandon Ross, Parks and Recreation)

Salado Creek Greenway (Projects listed North to South)

- Salado (Loop 1604 to Eisenhower Park) – 3 miles north of Loop 1604 Trailhead adjacent to Salado Creek completed and opened to the public in June. Eisenhower Trailhead and portion between quarry and Camp Bullis to be opened December 2020.
- John James Park to Jack White Park (Ft. Sam Houston Connection – 3.9 miles) – Working with Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) to demolish old horse barn and paddocks. JBSA work toward arranging for contract to build new barn and paddocks and relocate horses is currently on hold due to Covid-19.
- Salado E. Commerce Trailhead – Construction has begun.
- Southside Lions to SE Military – Construction Documents complete. Hope to begin construction soon.
- SE Military to Monte Viejo neighborhood – Currently in early design phase.

Leon Creek Greenway (Projects listed North to South)

- Leon (Levi Strauss to Lackland Monument site) – Currently out for bids. Anticipate construction by early 2021.
- Leon (Pearsall to I-35) – Under-railroad bridge canopy design being done to submit to UPRR for approval before starting remainder of design.

Medina River Greenway

- Medina River Phase 3 (3.1 miles from Medina River Crossing to Pleasanton Road) – Completed and opened to the public.
- Espada Connection from Medina River to Mission Espada – Completed and opened to the public. Trail is currently closed at TxDOT intersection (281/Roosevelt and Flores Street), but is planned for completion by TxDOT in late summer to fall 2020.

Westside Creeks

- Alazan – Under Construction.
- Zarzamora Creek – Under Construction
- Tree Planting Projects ongoing, including Martinez Creek (Cincinnati to Fredericksburg Rd) which includes 350 trees to be completed September 2020.

Tributary Trails, Connections, and Enhancements

- French Creek (Leon Greenway to Nani Falcone Park) – Anticipate construction start by late-2020 to early 2021.
- Maverick Creek (Huesta Creek Greenway to UTSA Blvd.) and Markson Park – Trail portion is currently under construction. Park design being modified to incorporate additional special needs equipment and facilities.
- Culebra Tributary (Tezel connection) – In design and land acquisitions. Anticipating construction by late-2020.

ADJOURNMENT - Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:46 pm