



# SAN ANTONIO RIVER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE FACT SHEET

In the 1990s, Bexar County, the City of San Antonio and the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) was working with citizens and community groups to identify concepts for the enhancement of flood control, maintenance and amenity features along the San Antonio River from Josephine Street south to Espada Dam. The County, City and SARA understood the importance and value of continued public participation in the development of San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP). In 1998, Bexar County, the City of San Antonio and SARA officially formed the San Antonio River Oversight Committee (SAROC) to ensure public participation in the SARIP.

SAROC was modeled after the Mission Trails Oversight Committee, which was seen as a proven model of a representative and productive citizen participation process which yielded quality results and community consensus. Former San Antonio Mayor, Lila Cockrell and Irby Hightower, a local architect, were appointed as SAROC co-chairs. The SAROC was created to advise Bexar County, the City of San Antonio and SARA on the planning, design, project management, construction, construction phasing and funding for the development of flood control and amenity improvements on the San Antonio River from Josephine Street south to Espada Dam (this was later extended to south of Loop 410).

Additionally, the SAROC was to provide an open and representative public forum which encouraged citizen input into all stages of the planning, development and implementation of the projects, and encouraged and promoted community involvement and consensus in the projects. The community volunteers who sit on the SAROC have always remained mindful that the San Antonio River is a treasured resource which is enjoyed by city and county residents as well as many visiting tourists.

The SAROC was instrumental in the development of the July 2001 SARIP Concept Design Guidelines, which served as the blueprint for the design and construction of the project. As proposed in the Concept Design Guidelines, SAROC had a continuing voice in each phase of the development of the SARIP design and construction of the project. This process ensured the continuing support of the community over

- the many years it took the project to progress
- from concept to final design through actual construction. This citizen support for SARIP, created in large part by SAROC, helped pass a local tax proposition in 2008 that provided funds to complete the project. SAROC continues today even as construction on the SARIP is nearing completion. The committee is presently overseeing the development of a Management Plan intended to maximize the project's long-term effectiveness and value to the community.
- With the SARIP nearing completion, the success of the project is clear. The entire River Walk is now over 15 miles of linear length, containing nearly 30 miles of trail system. There is nearly 2,020 acres of public land associated with the River Walk. As a comparison, Central Park in New York City totals 843 acres. In the five years since the opening of the Museum Reach Urban Segment, over \$250 million of private investment brought new economic development along the river. Locals and visitors alike are enjoying the expanded River Walk as evidenced by a 2014 River Walk impact study that indicated 11.5 million people visit the River Walk annually, which stimulates an overall economic impact of \$3.1 billion and support 31,000 jobs. Study area included the new Museum and Mission Reaches.
- The project experienced many hurdles over its 16 years of implementation from federal authorization to funding and from changes in elected leadership to disagreements on design priorities. The project survived these hurdles because of the dogged determination and tenacity the members of the SAROC had to see the project through to completion.

**The Guiding Principle of the San Antonio River Oversight Committee is: "As representatives of the community of San Antonio and advocates for the San Antonio River, we will strive to reach consensus among ourselves and within the community in support of a program of improvements to the San Antonio River that are consistent with the highest standards of technical and design criteria, respect and address the needs of all segments of the river, and improve the quality of life for all its citizens."**

***What follows is a list of SARIP and SAROC milestones and accomplishments.***

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| <b>Fall 1998</b>      | Bexar County, City of San Antonio and SARA Committee of Six forms the SAROC with each governmental entity passing similar resolutions appointing Lila Cockrell and Irby Hightower as co-chairs  |
| <b>September 1999</b> | Preliminary Design of SARIP Downtown Reach completed  |
| <b>February 2000</b>  | SAROC completes Planning Document for the SARIP detailing the community vision for the river  |
| <b>December 2000</b>  | Final Design on SARIP Downtown Reach completed  |
| <b>January 2001</b>   | Construction on SARIP Downtown Reach initiated  |
| <b>March 2001</b>     | Draft of the SWA Concept Design completed   |
| <b>July 2001</b>      | Final SWA Concept Design Document completed   |
| <b>January 2002</b>   | Preliminary Design on Museum and Mission Reaches initiated  |
| <b>October 2002</b>   | Construction of SARIP Downtown Reach completed  |
| <b>May 2003</b>       | General Reevaluation Study (GRR) initiated  |
| <b>October 2003</b>   | Preliminary Design of Museum Reach completed  |
| <b>December 2003</b>  | Local Preliminary Design on Mission Reach completed and forwarded to the USACE for consideration as the locally preferred option in the GRR   |
| <b>August 2004</b>    | Final Design of the Museum Reach: Urban Segment completed   |
| <b>September 2004</b> | GRR completed   |
| <b>February 2006</b>  | 30% Final Design Documents on Museum Reach completed  |
| <b>March 2006</b>     | 30% Cost Estimate on Museum Reach completed   |
| <b>May 2006</b>       | SAROC approves Public Arts Master Plan for SARIP  |
| <b>June 2006</b>      | 50% Final Design documents on Museum Reach completed  |
| <b>June 2006</b>      | 30% Final Design documents and revised Cost Estimate on Mission Reach completed   |
| <b>June 2006</b>      | Assistant Secretary of the Army approves GRR  |
| <b>August 2006</b>    | 50% Cost Estimate for Museum Reach is completed   |
| <b>August 2006</b>    | Project Cooperation Agreement for Mission Reach is executed   |
| <b>August 2006</b>    | Design for 60% of Phase I of Mission Reach authorized   |
| <b>September 2006</b> | 90% Cost Estimate on Museum Reach Urban Segment and 30% Final Design on Mission Reach completed   |
| <b>October 2006</b>   | Bexar County, City of San Antonio and SARA approve SARIP Interlocal Agreement   |
| <b>October 2006</b>   | 404 Permit for Museum Reach Urban Segment secured   |
| <b>December 2006</b>  | 100% Cost Estimate on Museum Reach Urban Segment completed  |
| <b>January 2007</b>   | TCEQ permit for Lock and Dam secured  |
| <b>January 2007</b>   | Workshop to review 60% Final Design of Phase I of Mission Reach completed   |
| <b>May 2007</b>       | Construction of the Museum Reach Urban Segment initiated  |
| <b>May 2008</b>       | Bexar County voters approve \$125 million for SARIP as part of the Visitor Tax Election   |
| <b>June 2008</b>      | Construction of Mission Reach Phase I initiated   |
| <b>May 2009</b>       | Construction of Museum Reach Urban Segment completed  |
| <b>February 2010</b>  | Construction of Mission Reach Phase II initiated  |
| <b>September 2010</b> | River South Area Management Plan initiated  |
| <b>October 2010</b>   | Construction of Mission Reach Phase III initiated   |
| <b>June 2011</b>      | Construction of Mission Reach Phases I and II completed   |
| <b>October 2013</b>   | Construction of Mission Reach Phase III completed   |
| <b>April 2014</b>     | Impact of the San Antonio River Walk Study released conservative conclusions that 11.5 million people visit the River Walk annually which stimulates an overall economic impact of \$3.1 billion and support 31,000 jobs. Study area included the new Museum and Mission Reaches. |
| <b>2015</b>           | River South Area Management Plan completed (anticipated)  |
| <b>2015</b>           | Construction of Museum Reach Park Segment initiated (anticipated)   |
| <b>2015</b>           | Construction of Museum Reach Park Segment completed (anticipated)   |