San Pedro Creek
Public Art
Assessment and Strategy
# Table of Contents

## Introduction

### Part 1: Assessment
- Creating the Assessment and Public Art Strategy
- Assessment Key Findings
- Benchmarks

### Part 2: Direction
- How Can Public Art Define San Pedro Creek?
- Recommendations
- Organizational Structure / Staff / Partners / Steering Committee / San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance / Program Budget
- Funding Strategies
- Community Engagement Strategies
- Evaluation

### Part 3: Artwork Opportunities
- Artwork Locations and Project Types
- Curatorial Frameworks
- Opportunities for Collaborators and Partners

### Part 5: Acknowledgements

## Appendix:
- San Pedro Creek Interpretive Plan
San Pedro Creek Phasing Map

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Phase 4
Introduction

San Pedro Creek Culture Park will invite San Antonio residents to reconnect with a place of great historical and cultural significance. While visitors will be welcome to this site and will certainly be attracted to its beauty, intimacy, design features, and art, San Antonians are the focal audience.

When the original funding stream for public art was removed from the park due to budget cuts, the San Antonio River Authority and the City of San Antonio embarked on a planning process to reexamine new approaches to connect the community to the park through the arts. The San Pedro Creek Advisory Committee was formed to guide the planning process. Our team was charged with assessing San Antonio’s capacity for different administrative frameworks, benchmarking successful public art programs, making a recommendation for an administrative infrastructure to support art in the park, and developing strategies for presenting art in the park. This document is the culmination of this work.

Public art and cultural programs on the creek will be managed by San Pedro Creek Arts, a new pilot program of the San Antonio River Authority (SARA). The program builds on existing resources and structures. Projects along the creek warrant expertise required for understanding its special flood-zone conditions. A full-time San Pedro Creek curator position will be created with responsibilities to direct the program, guide the implementation of this strategy, manage projects, and serve as a resource in the community. Placing the curator at SARA will enable artists and art locations to be planned with these conditions in mind. The program will launch as a three-to-five-year pilot contingent on the construction schedule of the park. San Pedro Creek Arts will be evaluated and adjusted as the park is completed.

San Pedro Creek Arts will have a steering committee to guide its work plan and budget, and the San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance to foster collaborations and partnerships with local and regional artists and arts and culture entities invested in the park. SARA will fund the first three to five years of the pilot program contingent upon the project construction schedule, including staff, marketing, and overhead. The San Antonio River Foundation (SARF) will serve as a fiscal sponsor to identify funds for future public art commissions and cultural programs.
Public art projects in San Pedro Creek Culture Park will express what is authentic about San Antonio today or to explore the history and meaning of the creek through a contemporary art lens. There is a singular opportunity to distinguish the revitalized creek through public art approaches and project types that are rare in the rest of the city. San Antonio already has many places where permanent, freestanding sculpture can be appreciated. The park is a place to provide new cultural experiences and different project types while remaining relevant to this place.

Many artists will be able to participate in creating projects for the site over time. Temporary artwork, and locations that feature changing artwork, will allow a range of local, regional, national, and international artists and arts organizations to participate in the program. The art program will be complemented by performances in the amphitheater, the permanent 300th anniversary commission at the tunnel inlet, and places to integrate art into the design at a few key locations. Property owners adjacent to the creek will be encouraged to consider creating projects inspired by this strategy and by collaborating with San Pedro Creek Arts.

The first projects to launch in the park are funded by Bexar County, which allocated $900,000 in 2016 for artworks in the park to celebrate San Antonio’s tricentennial. Following this initial investment, SARA and Bexar County will identify future funds and opportunities for public art. The interpretive plan created for the creek can be offered as a resource to artists developing permanent and temporary commissions for the creek. The plan appears as an exhibit (see p. 63) in this document. A mix of project types will allow the artwork along the creek to be both memorable and relevant over time.
Part 1: Assessment

CREATING THE ASSESSMENT AND PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

The public art assessment and strategy were created through listening, learning, and understanding the past and present physical and cultural roles that San Pedro Creek plays in San Antonio. This document details a direction for its future that is grounded in this experience and meets the aspirations that were articulated to us through this process.

Background and Document Review

SARA provided us with documents and studies that provided in-depth background on the development of San Pedro Creek Culture Park, as well as documents that helped us understand the physical and cultural context for the project. These documents included histories of the site, draft design documents, results of community engagement and outreach meetings used to design the park, plans for other sites including Hemisfair, and a comprehensive listing of public art projects in San Antonio. In addition to reading these documents, we researched arts organizations, events, historic sites, and San Antonio demographics.

Benchmarking

How should public art along San Pedro Creek be administered? What is the right model for staff, artist selection, project types, and community engagement? To answer these questions, we researched a number of public art programs and presented our findings to stakeholders at public meetings during our May 2016 visit. Feedback on this research was a springboard for a discussion that led to the administrative recommendations in this plan. Our research is summarized below.
Site Visits

Our June 2016 trip to San Antonio started with a three-hour site visit where we walked along every accessible part of the creek with members of the design team, San Pedro Creek Art Advisory Committee members, and SARA staff. This visit was important for us to understand the scale of the creek and the enhancements, as well as the differences in how San Pedro Creek will be experienced downtown compared to the San Antonio River. During the rest of our trip, we took advantage of opportunities to experience the site lines of the creek and to visit the creek headwaters, San Pedro Springs. We also had a separate tour on Mission Reach and Museum Reach of the San Antonio River, which was focused on the permanent public art created for these locations. On our following visits, we made time to revisit sections of the creek, Museum Reach, Mission Reach, and River Walk in order to consider how the creek would develop its own identity in the context of these other linear parks.
Stakeholder Meetings

During our June visit, we met with over fifty people to talk about the future potential of public art along San Pedro Creek, their vision for the park, the connectivity of the site to other neighborhoods, and how the park can distinguish itself from other places in San Antonio. We met with elected officials including Judge Wolff and Commissioner Elizondo as well as County Manager David Smith, the design team, historians, SARA and Bexar County staff, San Pedro Creek Stakeholder Committee, San Pedro Creek Art Advisory Committee, Westside Creeks Oversight Committee, community advisors, San Antonio River Foundation staff, local artists, arts leaders, and property owners along the creek.

During our July visit, we continued to meet with stakeholders to present examples of types of public art project strategies and to discuss the organizational structure. In addition to the officials and groups of stakeholders listed above, we met with a new group of arts leaders to discuss how to best represent the community in the process of bringing the arts along San Pedro Creek.

During our October visit, we presented the draft administrative structure to stakeholders and Bexar County, City of San Antonio (CoSA), SARA, and SARF staff and participated in a daylong charrette with the design team to identify key locations for art along the creek.

The consultant team meeting the design team and members of the San Pedro Creek Advisory Committee. Betty Bueche, Bexar County, County Manager David Smith, and SARA General Manager Suzanne B. Scott, October 2016.
ASSESSMENT KEY FINDINGS

1 Establishing a new 501(c)(3) would cause unneeded competition for limited private funds in San Antonio. A public-private partnership that builds on existing structures for funding, review, and implementation would be most efficient. This administrative framework, led by a public art curator with project planning and implementation expertise, would focus limited funds on artworks rather than administration. This strategy can be reevaluated after a three-to-five-year pilot phase.

2 Every single stakeholder expressed the desire for the public art in the San Pedro Creek Culture Park to be excellent and focused on providing a beautiful and thoughtful experience for San Antonio’s diverse residents. They want the park to connect to what this place was, is, and could be. Visitors are welcome, but are not the reason or target audience for this place.

3 Funding for the Tricentennial will launch the public art projects for San Pedro Creek Culture Park, but resources for future programming will need to be identified. Long-term support and resources will follow programmatic, artistic, and collaborative excellence.

4 The creek has the great benefit of being anchored by key cultural entities including ArtPace, Alameda Theater, Zona Cultural, City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture, Public Art San Antonio, and the Pace Foundation / Ruby City. Public art in the park should expand on the experiences these entities will provide, as well as work in partnership with them.

5 Artists, art leaders, and other stakeholders expressed a need for public art on San Pedro Creek to be different from the projects along the San Antonio River. They expressed a desire to see more temporary commissions, performances, and opportunities for local and regional artists to create art in the public realm.

6 Many arts organizations and artists are interested in this being a site that offers them opportunities to experience and produce art in the public realm. Local, regional, national, and international artists and collaborations are welcome as long as there are substantive opportunities for local artists to gain footing and experience in the public realm.

7 Authenticity is key. The origin stories associated with the creek are the foundation for its essence as a place of history, divide, and aspiration. It is important to present authentic San Antonio experiences in this cultural park that include history, but
also articulate the vitality of contemporary San Antonio and positions the city as a public art leader. An interpretive program plan for the San Pedro Creek Culture Park identifies key historical themes and stories. Artists, partners, and collaborators should review the interpretive plan as one reference and resource for inspiration. See Appendix (p. 63).

8 To maintain focus and excellence, a clear process for reviewing and accepting long- and short-term artworks in the cultural park is needed. Since this park is new and opening during the Tricentennial, it will be the place where entities want to produce and present their ideas.

9 Instead of only presenting permanent commissions of sculpture, temporary works, new media works, and changing works are desired. The San Pedro Creek curator should identify opportunities to balance these projects with places where artists can impact the design through integrated elements.

10 Appropriately sized artwork for the park. San Pedro Creek is narrow, especially in Phases 1, 2, and 4. Consider artworks that take advantage of this intimate scale and promote a sense of discovery. Focus on quality, not quantity.

11 The character of the park will be amplified by adjacent properties. Property owners adjacent to the creek will be invited to consider creating projects inspired by this strategy and by collaborating with the San Pedro Creek curator.

**ASSESSMENT**

San Pedro Creek Culture Park will invite San Antonio residents to reconnect with a place of great historical and cultural significance. While visitors will be welcome to this site and will certainly be attracted to its beauty, intimacy, design features, and art, San Antonians are the focal audience.

Rather than create a new nonprofit organization to compete for a small pool of resources, the integration of public art and implementation of visual art and performing art experiences should be managed by San Pedro Creek Arts, a pilot program housed at SARA. It should be staffed by a full-time San Pedro Creek curator who will direct the program, guide the implementation of this strategy, provide project development, and serve as a
resource in the community. The program is governed by a Steering Committee and guided by the San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance, to ensure stakeholder participation and community collaboration.

There is an exciting opportunity to distinguish the site through public art approaches and project types that are rare in the rest of the city, and give local and regional artists new opportunities to work in the public realm. San Antonio has many places where permanent, freestanding sculpture can be experienced. The park is a place to provide new experiences of different project types that many artists can participate in creating, while remaining relevant to this specific place.

When the original funding stream for integrated public art was removed from the project, it resulted in an opportunity to reexamine new approaches for public art. A mix of project types will allow the artworks along the creek to be both memorable and relevant over time. Temporary artworks and permanent locations that feature changing artworks will allow a range of local, regional, national, and international artists and arts organizations to participate in the program. These in turn balance the permanent 300th anniversary commission at the tunnel inlet and integrated art into the design of a few key locations.
BENCHMARKS

Initial research identified six initiatives in other cities to serve as benchmarks with relevance to San Antonio and the mission of the San Pedro Creek Culture Park. The projects were selected because of their artistic excellence, variety of administrative structures, and relevance locally, nationally, and internationally. The study, presented to a number of groups during the team’s first visit to San Antonio from June 5 to 9, 2016, included a summary of each project’s goals, history and background, community and outreach strategies, administrative structure, public art process, project support mechanisms, financial structure, and evaluation strategies.

Benchmark Lessons:

- Temporary art and performances draw the local community to return.
- Relevancy to local history, culture, and storytelling is paramount.
- Curatorial focus is important. The staff must have the network to draw national talent, the ability to inspire donors, and a passion for local artists and arts organizations.
- Public-private partnerships can successfully house an art program.
- Art should engage the community in decision-making.
- Partner with local art organizations to provide varied and unique programming.

Benchmark Summary:

Following is a list of the six projects with summary information on structure and background, budget, the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, and applications for San Pedro Creek.

1 5x5, Washington, DC

Program Structure: This public program is administered by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, an entity of the City of Washington. Funding comes from public monies allocated by the commission to provide grants and educational activities for diverse artistic expression for residents and visitors. The program’s reach is supplemented by collaborations with other cultural organizations in Washington such as the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the Arc, Washington Project for the Arts, and the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop.
**Summary:** A series of rotating curators select groups of artists for temporary public art installations throughout the DC area. The project’s title is derived from the selection of five curators who in turn select five artists to work over the course of sixteen weeks to produce a total of twenty-five art projects. The organization completed commissions in 2012 and 2014.

**Budget:** Each of the five curators is given a budget of $100,000 to commission five works of art. The artist, production, and curator fees all come from that budget.

**Program’s Pros and Cons:** Pros include the centralized management of the project through the City’s Commission for the Arts and Humanities and its experienced staff. This also means the administrative cost to run the program is absorbed by the commission and becomes part of the regular activities of the department. Also in its favor is direct funding, using funds from the organization’s budget, mitigating the need for independent fundraising. On the other hand, this very fact places the program at risk as public budgets are subject to yearly approval by city government, making the ongoing viability of the program not as secure as it might be. Another pro is the ability of the organization to build relationships with cross-sector partners across the city in the production and siting of the artworks.

**Applicability for San Pedro Creek:** 5x5 provides an interesting model based on curatorial selection for temporary works of public art. It provides a structure for constantly varied art experiences, which in the case of San Pedro Creek addresses the mandate to enliven the park in ways that attract the local residents by continuously refreshing the experience of the park. This is also a model for varied community partners and collaborators.

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**2 Prospect New Orleans, LA**

**Program Structure:** Held once every three years, Prospect New Orleans was conceived in the tradition of the great international exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale and the Bienal de São Paulo, to showcase new artistic practices from around the world in settings that are both historic and culturally exceptional. The program contributes to the cultural economy of New Orleans and the Louisiana Gulf region. It is open to the public free of charge, with demonstrable economic benefits for the city. Prospect New Orleans is an independent 501(c)(3).
Program Summary: The project is noteworthy for inviting a highly respected curator once every three years to consider the dynamics of a specific place and invite artists from near and far to participate in a dialogue focused on New Orleans. The project links with and promotes the activities of a wide range of local organizations, thus expanding the scope and reach of the project. The project is held in a number of cultural, educational, and community venues. At the same time, dozens of other organizations in the city are able to coordinate and link their independent arts activities to the project through an institutionalized satellite program overseen by Prospect New Orleans. This leverages the cumulative effect of the experience for the international, national, and regional attendees.

Budget: Seed money for the first round of the project in 2007 was provided by philanthropist Toby Devan Lewis. Nearly ten years later, the project is governed by a sixteen-member board of directors and a staff of ten employees including a deputy director for curatorial affairs, project manager, grant writer, and bookkeeper. Funding continues to derive primarily from contributions, the staff’s fundraising efforts, and revenue from special events and sales. The 2014 1099 recorded income of $2,145,111.

Program’s Pros and Cons: Key to the program’s success is its ability to attract top curatorial and administrative professionals. As the project is funded primarily through private contributions, there is also a level of administrative and curatorial independence to support the adventuresome nature of the projects and affiliated programs. Both an advantage and a liability, the program’s administration was based in New York City. This facilitated links to the international art world, although its distance from New Orleans also caused a sense of disconnect and remoteness from the project site itself. This is a festival format that takes place only once every three years for a comparatively short period of time.

Applicability for San Pedro Creek: This program demonstrates the importance of the strong curatorial management San Pedro Creek will need to bring the new park to life. It is also a very good example of the coordination of arts and cultural events through an established system of partnerships and collaborations. This will be very important for San Pedro Creek as it will augment the impact of a limited budget, especially during the program’s initial years of operation. If funding was available, a commissioning program of this magnitude may be considered every five to ten years to focus national and international attention on the creek.
3 Market Square Public Art, Pittsburgh, PA

A Program Structure: Market Square Public Art commissions temporary public art in Pittsburgh’s main downtown plaza during the winter months. The program is initiated by the City of Pittsburgh, but is managed and implemented by two private nonprofit partners: The Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership (PDP) and the Office of Public Art (OPA). It is the only temporary art program initiated by the City of Pittsburgh. The program started in 2013, with the first commission presented in the winter of 2014.

B Program Summary: The project is noteworthy as an example of a public-private partnership between a government agency, a community development organization, and a nonprofit public art program funded primarily through private sources. The program commissions temporary public art in Pittsburgh’s main downtown plaza during winter months from January 31 to May 1. Its primary audience is the citizens of Pittsburgh, with a mission to bring life to a public space normally dormant at that time of year. Artists are identified through an international request-for-qualifications process. Artists are selected in groups of three, alleviating the need to administer an annual artist selection process.

C Budget: The program is funded by local foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts, with a contribution from the City of Pittsburgh. The artist commissions are $75,000. The full cost of each project, including marketing and administration, is $100,000–$120,000.

D Program’s Pros and Cons: This is a very good example of a successful temporary public art program tied to a specific site and time of year. Its seasonal requirements are important to the goal of activating a public space during a time of year—the winter months—that would otherwise be barren. The main issue with this example is the challenge of establishing the diverse funding base for the project. This is an unusual, yet effective, model that reflects the particular characteristics present in Pittsburgh.

E Applicability for San Pedro Creek: This project is structured to address a local audience, also a stated goal of the San Pedro Creek Project. Further, it may be a good model for the activation of specific parcels along the length of the park. The method of selecting a roster of approved artists only once every three years described above is also something easily applied to San Pedro Creek. The funding of the project through local foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts, with only a
small contribution from the city provides great flexibility. If this can be replicated in San Antonio, it would provide opportunities to expand programming along the creek beyond the basic funding base suggested in this report.

4 High Line, New York, NY

Program Structure: This is a public park owned by the City of New York and operated by the Friends of the High Line, a private nonprofit working in collaboration with the city. The Friends of the High Line was first formed in 1999; ownership of the park by New York City was accepted in 2005/06.

Program Summary: This project is noteworthy as an important linear park with physical characteristics similar to the San Pedro Creek project area. It has been especially successful developing a number of platforms for presenting art and by engaging the public, as well as extending its reach to adjacent buildings and streets along its narrow length. A staff comprised of close to eighty people is dedicated to a number of program areas including production of a calendar of events and programs, administration of numerous cultural events each year, family, teen, and school programs, and a daylong art camp. When considering the large staff, it is important to remember they also provide overall management of the park as well as general operations.

Budget: Most of the High Line’s funding is from private sources, i.e. the Friends of the High Line, which raises 98% of the annual operating budget, and the Altman Foundation, with more limited public funding coming from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York City Council. Specific programs are supported by various commercial companies.

Program’s Pros and Cons: The High Line park demonstrates what is possible when an initiative of this type is well funded, in this case primarily from private sources. It is also notable for the positive collaborative arrangement between the City of New York and the Department of Parks and Recreation, both public entities. Through high-level curation, the park presents an engaging program of cultural activities and temporary public art on a par with the offerings of some of New York City’s most prestigious cultural institutions have proven a tremendous draw to the public. The new Whitney
Museum of American Art—now directly adjacent to the High Line—is a very good example. It should also be noted that tourists are the main target audience in addition to members of the local community, a fact that deviates from the goals of San Pedro Creek with its emphasis on serving local residents. Finally, this is a significant enterprise, with a large board, staff, and structure, more akin to a commercial venture than a nonprofit cultural institution.

**Applicability for San Pedro Creek:** This is a long and narrow urban linear park that shares many characteristics with San Pedro Creek and the plans San Antonio developed to enliven its 2.2-mile length. Further, the long narrow character of both parks makes the High Line’s sensitive approach to scale highly relevant to San Pedro Creek. Also significant is its success in working with adjacent landholders—largely a consequence of its narrow nature—to expand the canvas on which public art projects can take place. San Antonio has the added benefit of a number of important cultural organizations in close proximity to the creek, most notably ArtPace, the Pace Foundation, the San Antonio Office of Culture & Creative Development, and the Alameda Theater.

5 **Buffalo Bayou Park, Houston, TX**

**Program Structure:** Buffalo Bayou Park is a public-private partnership led by the non-profit organization Buffalo Bayou Partnership (founded in 1986), the City of Houston through the Houston Parks and Recreation Department, the Harris County Flood Control District, the Kinder Foundation, the Wortham Foundation, the Downtown Tax Incentive Reinvestment Zone, other nonprofits. This is a successful reclamation and rehabilitation project in Texas with thirty years of planning behind it.

**Program Summary:** This program is noteworthy as a long-standing, highly successful reclamation and rehabilitation project tied to water management issues with goals similar to those established for the redevelopment of the San Pedro Creek. Its operation focuses on ten square miles of the Buffalo Bayou. Particularly interesting is the twenty-year master plan, issued in 2002, that balances conservation and development along with the creation of projects that address recreation, flood management, and ecosystem restoration, as well as public art and lighting. There are a number of recurring social and fundraising events each year including the BBP regatta, annual gala, Kids Day, etc., in addition to a roster of tours of the park. A major recent project was the restoration of the cistern, an old drinking water facility
that will now be used for temporary art installations and other events. Permanent artwork is the focus of the program, though adjacent property owners sometimes embark on temporary commissions.

**Budget:** All public art is permanent and mostly commissioned through the City of Houston’s Percent for Art ordinance with some private donors. Some artworks have been gifts to the park.

**Program’s Pros and Cons:** The program provides a sophisticated model for the integration of a range of activities, including cultural and public art events, into a water-based park. With the majority of the projects freestanding or permanent sculptures, the park lacks a variety of public art project types.

**Applicability for San Pedro Creek:** Buffalo Bayou Park is relevant as a nearby Texas organization focused on water management issues that incorporates sophisticated cultural and public art programming to bring life and awareness to an important foundation feature central to Houston’s urban fabric. The public-private basis for its operation is worth considering for San Pedro Creek. It is worth noting the role of Buffalo Bayou Park parallels that of SARA.

### 6 The Greenway, Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, Boston, MA

**Program Structure:** This public-private partnership consists of stewardship from the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, a nonprofit parks organization, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The structure is similar to what is suggested for San Pedro Creek, with SARA serving as the administrative umbrella for the art program. The program seeks a diversity of artists, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography to produce temporary public art projects in a wide variety of forms, approaches, and intents throughout the length of the Greenway. Completed in 2012, the conservancy’s public art strategy outlines an ambitious program to position the Greenway,—and the City of Boston—as an internationally known showcase for temporary, contemporary public art. The Greenway recognizes that because the art is temporary, artists can take greater risks, creating a powerful draw for this vital public space. Following the recommendation of the public art strategy, a public art curator and part-time curatorial assistant were hired as part of the conservancy’s permanent staff to manage the program.
**Program Summary:** This program is noteworthy because of the successful integration of a public art curator and a curatorial assistant following a master planning process for the integration of public art into the conservancy’s administrative structure. Boston was famously the site of the Big Dig, which resulted in the creation of the 1.5-mile Rose Kennedy Greenway. The curatorial staff’s primary responsibility is the ongoing activation of the Greenway for the benefit of both local residents and large numbers of visitors to the city.

**Budget:** The Conservancy funds its operations through private donations, endowment income, and earned revenue, which provides nearly 60% of the funds for the park. State support accounts for approximately 40%. The budget for public art depends on the projects taking place during the year and thus can vary dramatically. In fiscal year 2014, the budget was unusually high at $1,998,448 due to the installation of artist Janet Echelman’s large and technically challenging piece. A more realistic public art budget is $500,000 per year.

**Program’s Pros and Cons:** This is a good example of a public art program with a focus on temporary projects. It is also an example of a successful program where a platform for rotating programming has been established. In this case, it is the facade of a building ideal for large-scale murals by internationally renowned artists, each on view for 12–18 months.

**Applicability for San Pedro Creek:** This again is an example of a linear park with applicability to San Pedro Creek. Two important ideas serve as a model for San Antonio. The first is the addition of a full-time curatorial position; the second is the concept of a permanent platform—in the case of the Greenway a vast blank wall—that can serve as the recipient of rotating works of public art. In Boston, this program leverages the presence of major artists with shows in the city’s major cultural venues including the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art to coordinate a mural as part of their presence in Boston. The plan for San Pedro Creek incorporates both of these ideas as key recommendations.
Part 2: Direction

HOW CAN PUBLIC ART DEFINE SAN PEDRO CREEK?

1. Authenticity is key

The origin stories associated with the creek are the foundation for its essence as a place of history, divide, and aspiration. It is important to present authentic San Antonio experiences in this cultural park that include history, but also articulate the vitality of contemporary San Antonio to position the city as a public art leader. An interpretive plan has been developed to identify key historical themes and stories.

2. Right-size artwork for this place

San Pedro Creek is narrow, especially in Phases 1, 2, and 4. Consider artworks that take advantage of this intimate scale and promote a sense of discovery. Focus on quality not quantity.

3. Engage the community

The park offers arts, history, and cultural organizations an opportunity to collaborate and serve as a network for producing projects and programs.

4. The properties that line San Pedro Creek will dramatically change over the next five to ten years as the park evolves

San Pedro Creek Arts should remain flexible to respond thoughtfully to the changing landscape. This strategy calls for multiple temporary art forms, places for performance, and key sites for permanent or integrated works of art.
RECOMMENDATIONS

An art program for San Pedro Creek must be authentic and original. Like the successful benchmarks, San Pedro Creek Arts must develop projects that are an appropriate scale to the creek and expand the public art bandwidth of San Antonio. Our research through benchmarking, meetings, and feedback from presentations helped to form the framework for this new endeavor. The context of the framework:

- While history is a crucial underpinning for this cultural park, art can articulate the vitality of contemporary San Antonio. The origin stories associated with the creek are its essence as a place of history, divide, and aspiration and offer an excellent springboard for this new program.

- A program dedicated to temporary art in a variety of forms should develop over the next ten years as the site evolves.

- To maintain focus and excellence, a clear process for reviewing and accepting long- and short-term artwork in the cultural park is outlined here.

- Since this park is new and opening during the Tricentennial, it will be the place where entities want to produce and present their idea, so this strategy outlines ways to engage in productive partnership.

- A thoughtful, well-managed program will position the city as a public leader in the next decade.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

At this point in time, housing the program in an existing organization, rather than creating a new nonprofit organization is the most viable option. This arrangement should be evaluated as the program develops. We recommend that SARA launch San Pedro Creek Arts, a program fostered as a three-to-five-year pilot while the park is under design and construction.

The public art strategy for San Pedro Creek Culture Park must encourage authentic, varied, and excellent projects by national, local, and regional artists and arts organizations. Hiring a curator to launch the program and engaging a steering and advisory committee are crucial to getting the program off the ground and successful.
This framework supports the production of a variety of temporary and permanent public art projects, performances, and cultural events. San Pedro Creek Arts will commission its own projects and events, partner with local and regional artists and arts organizations, collaborate with community entities, and engage adjacent property owners.

The funding for the pilot phase of San Pedro Creek Arts will be identified by SARA, with the possibility of support from other sources. SARF agreed to serve as a fiscal sponsor to receive funds for art commissions and programs. Initial funds of $900,000 for a limited number of projects to launch in 2018 were contributed by Bexar County in 2016. The curator will work with SARA and SARF staff to fundraise for future art funds.

A steering committee will guide the work plan and budget for the program. The San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance will engage many arts, culture, and history entities in developing projects and programs for the park.

**STAFF**

San Pedro Creek Arts will be a program at SARA through the pilot period. It will be staffed by a full-time curator, who focuses 100% on the production and integration of arts and culture projects in San Pedro Creek Culture Park. The curator will collaborate with other SARA staff, building on the relationships created through the park project.

The curator’s responsibilities include:

**Program Management**

- Create a work plan that outlines projects, programs, and partnerships
- Develop, foster, and manage partnerships and collaborations with local, regional, and national entities to produce projects and programs along San Pedro Creek Culture Park
- Develop the policy used to review applications for temporary works of art in the park
- Develop and implement community engagement strategies
- Develop a three-year budget for the program
- Develop a fundraising strategy for the program
• Facilitate the San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance meetings
• Provide content for calendars, social media postings, marketing, and public relations material to promote San Pedro Creek Culture Park
• Work with SARA staff to develop artwork implementation timelines

Curatorial Direction
• Develop the curatorial direction and framework for permanent and temporary public art projects, performances, and programs in the park. This may include curating specific projects or programs.
• Manage contracts for artwork, performances, and programs
• Provide artists guidance, information, and connections to resources to assist them in making successful projects
• Employ the temporary art policy to review applications for projects and programs in the park proposed by outside entities

Project Management
• Decide on the artist selection process to be used for permanent and temporary projects
• Appoint artist selection committee members
• Manage permanent and temporary public art commissions from selection through implementation
• Manage performances and programs

PARTNERS
San Antonio River Authority, Managing Partner
• Identify funding and in-kind resources for staff salary, overhead, and marketing
• Hire staff to fulfill the needs of the program
• Lead the performance review of the curator and art program staff
• Collaborate with program staff to implement projects and programs in the work plan
• Contract with artists and entities producing projects and programs
• Authorize notice to proceed with permanent and temporary works of art
• Commit to public art and community engagement best practices in producing projects and programs
• Convene Steering Committee meetings and participate as a member
• Identify funding and in-kind resources to contribute to the program
• Commit to establishing and maintaining an identity, social media presence, and plans for marketing and funding the program through the pilot phase
• Dovetail the design and construction of the park, the interpretive plan, and the public art assessment and strategy
• Provide assistance with branding, marketing, governmental relations, and public relations

**San Antonio River Foundation**

• Serve as the fiscal agent for contributions to San Pedro Creek Arts
• Review work plan
• Identify funding and in-kind resources to contribute to the program
• Commit to public art and community engagement best practices in producing project and programs
• Participate on the Steering Committee
• Review potential public art projects as required
**Bexar County**
- Participate on the Steering Committee
- Commit to public art and community engagement best practices in producing projects and programs
- Review potential public art projects as required
- Review work plan
- Identify funding and in-kind resources to contribute to the program

**City of San Antonio**
- Participate on the Steering Committee
- Commit to public art and community engagement best practices in producing projects and programs
- Review potential public art projects as required
- Review work plan

**STEERING COMMITTEE**
Membership: This committee consists of representatives of the government entities connected to the creek and community representatives. The chairs of the committee rotate between SARA and Bexar County. The Steering Committee will meet monthly during the first two years, and may ultimately meet quarterly.

- Bexar County Manager
- Director, Bexar County Heritage
- General Manager, SARA
- Executive Director, SARF
- Director, City of San Antonio Arts & Culture Department
- San Antonio Arts Commission Chair
- At least three members of the San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance
Responsibilities:

- Review and approve work plan
- Review and approve budget
- Approve Steering Committee members to serve on artist selection committees
- Provide input on the performance of the curator
- Identify potential partners, collaborators, and funding sources

SAN PEDRO CREEK ARTS AND CULTURE ALLIANCE

Membership: This all-volunteer community cohort is open to any San Antonio arts, culture, or history organization interested in the development of arts and culture opportunities along San Pedro Creek Culture Park. Participating organizations may be located anywhere in the city, but should have an interest in engaging in conversations about cultural activities in this area. Diversity and expertise are keys to the success of this committee. The Alliance meets quarterly, but the frequency of meetings may change over time.

Subcommittees may be formed to engage in specific tasks or programs.

Responsibilities:

- Collaborate with the curator on the conceptualization and implementation of educational programs, arts programming, and special events
- Review the work plan
- Distribute information about San Pedro Creek Arts events and opportunities to their networks and constituents to encourage broad participation in art projects and performances
- Participate on artist selection committees
- Identify potential partners, collaborators, and funding sources
- Appoint three members to the Steering Committee
PROGRAM BUDGET

The budget is divided into two sections: Operating Expenses and Program- and Project-Related Expenses. It covers the program’s first five years of operations.

San Pedro Creek Project–Budget Projection for Years 1 - 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Expenses</th>
<th>Year One 2017</th>
<th>Year Two 2018</th>
<th>Year Three 2019</th>
<th>Year Four 2020</th>
<th>Year Five 2021</th>
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<td>SPC Curator Salary</td>
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<td>Benefit Package (10%)</td>
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Program- and Project-Related Expenses

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<th>Selection Panel Cost</th>
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<td>Artist Travel</td>
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FUNDING STRATEGIES

When the first segment of San Pedro Creek Culture Park opens to the public in 2018, it will feature temporary and permanent artworks funded through an allocation from Bexar County in honor of San Antonio’s Tricentennial. The administrative structure outlined in this document takes into account the fact that there is no ongoing source of funds dedicated for public art. The strategies outlined below should be explored to pay for future public art projects, public programs, and events, as well as general operating support and unrestricted funds.

We recommend that the curator develop a three-year funding plan to be presented to the San Pedro Creek Arts Steering Committee.

Grants, Sponsorships, and Donations

The partnership between SARA and SARF has many benefits, including the ability to raise funds through an existing, arts-related 501(c)(3). Many of the individuals that we met through our stakeholder interviews and community meetings felt it was important not to set up a new nonprofit that would be competing with other organizations in the community for scarce foundation support. Having the existing 501(c)(3) also allows the partnership to apply for grants from the National Endowment for the Arts now, instead of waiting for three years of programming to be complete in order to be eligible.

Foundation Support: In addition to foundations that are interested in supporting the arts and quality of life projects in San Antonio, build relationships and apply to grant opportunities by local, regional, and national foundations that are interested in presenting contemporary art, performing arts, and literary arts; providing access to the arts; offering community opportunities for outdoor and fitness activities; community development and revitalization; and developing cross-sector programs such as art-, environmental-, and science-related projects and programs. Examples of national foundations include the Kresge Foundation, ArtPlace America, and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Corporate Support and Sponsorship: Similar to foundation support, seek opportunities from local, regional, and national corporations that are aligned with the activities in San Pedro Creek Culture Park. In addition, seek support and sponsorship from San Antonio corporations for specific projects or sites. For example, approach Frost Bank to support a long-term program to commission temporary, rotating exhibitions on the plaza in front of
their tower. Alternatively, seek donations or sponsorship from a tech company or hotels to donate equipment or funds to support a one-time video installation or family-friendly weekend programs.

**Federal, State, and Local Grants:** Seek grant opportunities from government sources that offer funding for presenting art, culture, and humanities in the public realm. San Pedro Creek’s history and its park setting will also offer the ability to seek grant support for history, recreation, and ecology related projects. Federal agencies include the National Endowment for the Arts, Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, National Endowment for the Humanities, Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institute of Health among others.

**Individual Donations:** The authenticity of San Pedro Creek will result in community appreciation and the desire for more high-quality experiences and programs. Individual donations can be sought through an annual campaign for programs or operating support or through crowdsourcing for specific projects. Individual support can be garnered in other ways as well. For example, collectors of artists who are selected to be presented on San Pedro Creek can be approached to contribute to specific installations that feature that artist’s work. If temporary artworks are sold as a result of their installation in the park, a donation can be requested from the buyer. Fundraisers every few years are also a possibility worth exploring if there is a powerful host committee and significant volunteer labor to support a successful event.

### Allocations

**Allocations for Operating Support:** SARA has already committed to identifying operating support for San Pedro Creek Arts through the pilot phase. Steering committee members should also consider establishing funds for operating support. Ideally, their level of support can be decreased once the program is more established and able to raise and earn funds.

**Construction Dollars for Commissions:** When capital projects occur on the creek in phases 3 and 4, an allocation from the construction costs should be set aside for commissioning permanent works of art that are integrated into those projects. In the future, when parts of the park are renovated, funding should be allocated for new artworks or to maintain or conserve works of art that are already permanently placed on the site.
**Development Projects:** A policy to contribute to the arts based on the development of private property along the creek should be established. The contribution could be used to create public art at the development site or contribute to a fund to support arts and culture activities on other sites along the creek.

**Collaborations**

**Collaborating and partnering:** A project may require the participation of multiple entities to be implemented successfully. Funding and other project assets may come from a variety of sources. When there is no or very limited funding available for the curator to generate or initiate projects, it can also be a way to ensure that art maintains a presence in the public realm on the creek.

**Venue for Temporary Art and Programs:** A plan for temporary art provides a system for the curator to accept applications for temporary works of art and arts programs that are generated, funded, and produced by outside entities and individual artists. These can add variety to projects being presented on the creek by the curator, or, at times when there is limited or no funding, they can be the only programs presented on the creek.

Festivals and events such as Luminaria and San Antonio Contemporary should be encouraged to consider the creek as a venue for some of their projects. The curator can also seek regional, national, and international projects through this application process.

**Earned Income**

Unrestricted funds and general operating support can be difficult to raise, even though they are very crucial to the success of a program. Earned income can be a way to develop this budget line.

**Technical Assistance Fees:** As an arts leader in the community, the curator will be asked to provide a lot of services and advice. While it is natural for some of these to be in-kind, a menu of fee-for-service technical assistance can be developed. For example, the curator can be hired to manage artist selection, design development, and project management for private developers who want to include art in their park-adjacent projects but don’t have the staff or skills to commission their own artwork.

If the program is successful in the long term, entities across Texas and the country will be seeking advice on how to implement public art along creeks or linear parks. The curator could be empowered to provide consulting services and advice for a fee, bringing the fees back to the program.
**Event Tickets:** If there is a desire and system in place to charge for events, it’s not realistic to expect tickets to walking tours or workshops to pay for the entire event. Revenue could help to offset some costs such as an on-site translator or a speaker fee for an artist.

**Membership Fees:** In the future, explore the possibility of establishing a way to have a “Friends of San Pedro Creek” or an improvement district for businesses and residencies along the creek. The membership fees could be used to support programs or maintenance of the park.

**Merchandise:** Collateral merchandise that is related to art on the creek is not a viable way to raise significant funds, especially since the park is a cultural amenity and not a tourist attraction or a retail venue. Decisions to make things like mugs, shirts, fine art prints, and calendars need to be carefully explored so the authenticity of the creek’s programs is preserved. If images of or reference to artist’s work will be used on retail products, they need to be consulted first and if in agreement, they need to receive a contract.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

For thousands of years, San Pedro Creek has been the meeting place for a great diversity of cultures and peoples. Accessing the creek was a part of daily life for generations. The current physical conditions are recent constructs, and the redevelopment is returning the site back to a welcoming place for the people of San Antonio to be together.

San Pedro Creek Culture Park has flood control as its core, but it is not filled with barriers. It is designed to be enjoyed by people who live and work in San Antonio. The Park is an amenity, a place to reflect on history, contemporary culture, and ecology that are authentic to San Antonio.

Now that the community will be welcomed to return to the waters, how can they be engaged with the park? This section offers a framework to involve community members in providing direction for artworks and programs, as well as a list of ways to promote use and repeat visitation to the park through ongoing programming.

**Inviting Community Members to Provide Direction**

San Antonio is characterized by its diversity. To ensure that multiple voices are included in the development of arts and culture programs on the park, the curator and Steering Committee can invite community members to participate in planning and review in the following ways.
San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance: The alliance is described in detail above. This all-volunteer community cohort is open to any San Antonio arts, culture, or history organization that is interested in the development of arts and culture opportunities along San Pedro Creek Culture Park. Participating organizations may be located anywhere in the city, but should have an interest in engaging in conversations about cultural activities in this area.

Artist Selection Panels: Community members can be invited to participate on selection panels to identify artists for commissions or programs.

Artist and Community Meet Ups: When artists are developing concepts for the park, meeting community members to learn about the creek’s history, culture, and context may be an important part of their research. The curator can help connect artists with people who can inform their work. Alternatively, artists can be invited to give presentations about their approach to art and their past work as a way to build knowledge and excitement about the artists who are developing projects for San Pedro Creek.

Planned Project Information Opportunities: While CoSA, County, SARA, and SARF may have formal review processes for proposed projects on their property, these meetings are not always widely attended by the public. The curator can develop opportunities for community members to learn about planned artworks for the creek and give their feedback. These can range from formal project presentations to informal events where information about projects is available. In person meetings can be followed with announcements by e-newsletters, social media announcements, or other methods.
Temporary Arts Policy: Community members are also able to initiate temporary artworks or programs on the creek by following the temporary arts policy that will be developed by the curator.

Engaging the Community with Programming

Since San Pedro Creek Culture Park is designed for locals, programming needs to inspire repeat visitation. Since the park is new, experimentation and pilots should be the focus of the first three years to determine how programs will meet the unique features and needs of the park and the people who visit.

Interactive Artworks: Some projects commissioned for San Pedro Creek Culture Park should focus on artists who make work that includes community engagement to develop its content or form. For example, projects like Pedestrian Drama by Janet Zweig and Congregation by KMA rely on members of the community to submit content or to interact.

Plug In and Perform Space: This strategy recommends opportunities for performing and literary art in addition to visual art. The amphitheater and other locations can be identified as a “Plug in and Play” performance space along the creek for performing artists or literary artists. The space can be curated, programmed through a prequalified list, or be open on a first-come-first-serve basis. Access to electricity, a place to store their belongings, nearby parking, and moveable seating would make the space more welcoming to artists.

Complementary Programs: The possibilities are endless for developing public programs that complement the installations and history of San Pedro Creek. The curator should work with the San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance to develop a menu each year. Many programs should be offered in English and Spanish, or other languages spoken in San Antonio.

Educational programs such as artist talks, walking or bike tours, and studio visits could focus on permanent and temporary commissions in the park. They can be offered during the planning phases of the artwork or once the artworks have been installed to promote appreciation and understanding of the projects. Eventually, a volunteer art docent program could be developed in collaboration with a local art history program or museum. Examples include the Art Ambassadors program of the Association for Public Art in Philadelphia, PA.

Fitness activities such as yoga, lunchtime walks, or dance classes can occur in proximity to artwork installations. While the focus will be the activity, information about the artworks can be made available to participants.
Ecology and Engineering: The ecology and engineering of San Pedro Creek should be the focus of public programs. There is an opportunity to raise awareness about nature along the creek and how water and floods are managed. Teaching artists can be invited to participate in these programs to develop hands-on activities that highlight the understanding of the science in these programs.

History and Heritage: Using the interpretive plan as one source of inspiration, the curator can develop programs that focus on the history and heritage relevant to this site. This is an opportunity for the curator to collaborate with members of the San Pedro Creek Cultural Alliance, as well as others with expertise in this area to develop engaging and innovative programing.

Printed Materials: Brochures, walking tour guides, and posters that feature the temporary and permanent artworks, as well as public programs in the park, should be available along the creek and in key community spots across San Antonio. The materials should have a common visual identity to build awareness of the program. Materials should be offered in English and Spanish, and possibly other languages to support international visitors.

Programs in Proximity: Through the San Pedro Creek Culture Arts Alliance, in addition to programs generated in the park, information about programs near the creek can be shared with park users and members of this group. The creek is a spine that connects many communities and neighborhoods. Promoting the events of others and their proximity to the creek will promote usage of the creek as a cultural hub.

Website: San Pedro Creek Arts’ section of the SARA website can be a source of information and resources to help visitors deepen their experience and knowledge of the park. Over time, the curator can use the site to present an archive of all the projects presented in the park, as well as interactive modules, videos, educational curriculum, and links to relevant research and printed materials. Members of the San Pedro Creek Arts Alliance could be a helpful resource for content development.
EVALUATION

An evaluation system to assess progress and determine the success of the San Pedro Creek Arts as it develops is important. As a new initiative in San Antonio, performance benchmarks tied to project goals should be established and reviewed on a yearly basis.

Yearly or biannual assessments should cover the following areas:

- Placement of San Pedro Creek Arts at SARA
- Performance of the Steering Committee
- Connectivity and performance of San Pedro Creek Arts
- Public art program staff
- Public art projects’ artistic quality and public appreciation
- Processes for artist selection and project management
- Attendance and appreciation of events and programs
- Relationships with local and regional artists and arts organizations
- Relationships with adjacent property owners
- Success in community outreach and engagement, media coverage, etc.

At the five-year mark, a comprehensive evaluation will have data to assess the success of San Pedro Creek Arts at SARA to determine its ongoing viability. The review will either ratify its success, provide an opportunity to make adjustments, or find structures more advantageous for the future of the program.
Part 3: 
Artwork Opportunities

ARTWORK GOALS

• Activate, celebrate, and sustain arts and culture experiences.

• Commission temporary and permanent projects and events, partner artists and arts organizations, collaborate with community entities, and engage adjacent property owners.

• Encourage authentic and varied projects by local, national, and international artists and arts organizations.

• Align with the park development and management until completion of the park.

• Create opportunities for scheduled performances.

• Integrate artwork into the design of the park.

ARTWORK LOCATIONS AND PROJECT TYPES

The “new” San Pedro Creek will be dramatically more vital and connected to the urban fabric. Our findings indicate that it will be the place where people want to go and where artists and organizations want to produce and present their ideas. To maintain focus and excellence, a clear process for initiating, reviewing, and accepting long- and short-term artworks in the cultural park is essential. San Pedro Creek Arts will be able to initiate some projects during the first couple of years using the initial funds from Bexar County. We encourage partnerships to host temporary artworks and programs produced by others. The creek has the great benefit of being anchored by key cultural entities, including Alameda Theater, Zona Cultural, City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture, San Antonio Public Art, ArtPace, and Pace Foundation / Ruby City.

The following project types and curatorial frameworks are catalysts for creating an authentic, meaningful, and innovative place for San Antonians to enjoy on repeat visits. Multiple approaches to creating opportunities for temporary, long-term art, and permanent public art are recommended. These suggestions are derived from our conversations with
stakeholders, including artists and arts leaders, members of the San Pedro Creek Public Art Committee, community members, owners of property adjacent to the creek, and historians. They are also informed by meetings with the design team, including Mario Schjetnan, tours of the site, our own observations of the site and other public art in San Antonio.

Since the site is unfolding and evolving, temporary public art ensures residents who visit the park frequently will enjoy new experiences. This strategy offers many international, national, regional, and local artists opportunities to develop artworks along the creek over a long period of time. It also encourages experimentation in new media, forms, and content, and the opportunity for multiple perspectives and interpretations of San Pedro Creek’s history and context. Another benefit of temporary art is that there is minimal costs for ongoing maintenance and conservation of artwork.

San Pedro Creek Arts can lead the direction of new public art forms in San Antonio, as no programs currently commission temporary public art on a regular basis. Since an ongoing, reliable funding stream for temporary public art is crucial, the project types and locations are intended to attract a range of local, regional, and national funders.

This document outlines opportunities for the first two phases of San Pedro Creek Culture Park. The opportunities are sites for:

- temporary and changing works of art
- performance, music, dance, and poetry
- and permanent or integrated works of art

Sites for future phases of the creek and sites for projects on adjacent properties will be the focus of the San Pedro Creek Arts curator.

**Duration**

It is important to consider the duration of art installations in San Pedro Creek’s riparian environment. In the temporary category, there are temporal installations that may last from a day to over a year, only exist while they are *in situ*. A sound installation under the bridge will be audible for a set time, or a floating project may last for a day. There are also Ongoing Sites for Temporary Art. For example a mural on the Alameda Theater might be painted over after a few years to allow for a new commission.
Permanent and integrated artwork is intended to last in perpetuity. The tricentennial project or railing that is integrated into the design are examples of art that is expected to be permanent. Long-term projects are another option to consider for artworks that might not have a “permanent” lifespan because of the materials used or the location of the work. This is something to consider for certain types of artwork that are located along the creek.

**PROJECT TYPE: TEMPORARY ART**

For a site that is unfolding and evolving, temporary public art is a way to ensure that a range of artists can develop public art projects in the park and that residents who will visit the park frequently can enjoy new experiences. For these projects, we consider temporary to be up to two years unless noted below. Encourage experimentation in new media, forms, and content that may not be appropriate for permanent installations. Offer the opportunity for multiple perspectives and interpretations of San Pedro Creek’s history and context. Commission art to connect to the neighborhoods along the creek. Furthermore, ongoing conservation is not required.

Currently, there are no government programs to regularly commission temporary art on an ongoing basis in San Antonio, so this is an area where San Pedro Creek Arts can lead. Since an ongoing reliable funding stream for temporary public art is crucial, it is essential to develop a process and projects that are attractive to a range of funders including, local, regional, and national funders, as well as public and private. The San Pedro Creek curator will take the lead in identifying the focus for these projects and the ways to select artists

**Initiate Sites for Ongoing Experimentation:** These are locations to host rotating installations on an ongoing basis. We also recommend ways that the initial Bexar County funds can be spent to make these sites viable for rotating artwork. It will be important to determine the duration as part of the overall work plan so that the openings are staggered.
Market Square Public Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, commissions temporary artwork during the winter. Recent projects include *Congregation* by KMA (top) and *Mix-N-Match* by Allard Van Horn (bottom).
Locations for Temporary Sculpture

These are places for local and regional artists to work on a large, public scale. They are also places to invite prominent national or international artists and organizations to present work. Solo exhibitions or small groups of sculpture are possible. Installations can change as frequently as is feasible.

**Salinas Boardwalk:** pedestrian platform crosses the creek  
**Sculpture Lawn at Dolorosa:** open space on east side of creek

*Circle of Animals/Zodiac Heads* by Ai Wei Wei has traveled across the world. This photo is from the 2015 installation along the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway.
Locations for Temporary Murals

The underpasses of select bridges are excellent sites for temporary murals, potentially lasting up to two years. The photo on page 43 depicts a similar site near tunnel inlet.

Bridges at Travis, Dolorosa, and Graham

Street painting at Martin

Amphitheater restroom screen wall
The underpass near Tunnel Inlet replicates the conditions along the creek where temporary murals could be presented.
Underpass was a project by the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh on Federal Street. They commissioned several temporary murals to enliven the experience for pedestrians and cars. Participating artists included Kim Beck (top) and Dick Esterle (bottom).

**PROJECT TYPE: “MOBILE” ARTWORKS**

The linear park along the creek is a spine that connects many neighborhoods and communities. Artwork that is mobile, traveling through the communities and the park, could be a fun, joyful way to build awareness of the park and signal it as a place for innovative art to engage residents. The artworks should be made to last through the opening of all of the phases and beyond.

We suggest commissioning an artist or team of artists and designers to develop projects to foster collaborations for content and programming.
PROJECT TYPE: SAN PEDRO CREEK CULTURE PARK AS VENUE

Our research indicates that there are organizations that are interested in presenting performing and visual art and events along San Pedro Creek Culture Park. Local, regional, national, and international artists and collaborations are welcome as long as there are substantive opportunities for local artists to gain footing and experience in the public realm. Once the park is open there will likely be other organizations or individual artists who will have ideas for the park. The goals for San Pedro Creek Culture Park as a venue are:

- Increase access to and appreciation for a range of public art projects, performances, and events
- Create opportunities for local and regional artists to develop their public art skills
- Provide venues for local, regional, and national artists and organizations to collaborate with the curator on public realm installations

Attack Theatre creates performances inspired by specific places, such as George Sugarman’s sculpture, *Pittsburgh Variations*, along the Allegheny River.
PROJECT TYPE: ONGOING SITES FOR TEMPORARY ART

Locations:

Light and Sound Experience at Commerce Street

The eastern side of the creek, north of Commerce Street, has an underpass that is a major opportunity to transform a difficult location into a community asset. We recommend permanent modifications to the site to present changing sound, video, and light installations.

The architectural drawings below show the design of the “parking pinch,” a space on San Pedro Creek where this installation can occur. The photo depicts a similar physical condition along the San Antonio River to demonstrate the site conditions for the Light and Sound Experience on Commerce Street.
**Alameda Amphitheater and Mural**

The amphitheater, located south of the Houston Street bridge, provides a key venue for cultural programming. Auditioning guidelines for the program need to be integrated into the process to encourage individual performers. The San Pedro Creek Arts and Culture Alliance and other stakeholders along the creek can be approached to activate the space for larger festivals. Guidelines can also be developed to encourage performances at other locations along the creek. The Alameda Theater can be the site of a dramatic mural that wraps around three sides of the building, helping to identify the creek from many downtown locations. This mural can be changed every ten years.

**Salinas Boardwalk**

The Salinas boardwalk will open during the first phase of the project. It is an ideal location to site temporary sculpture by local and regional artists. The curator can develop exhibitions for this site, collaborate with other arts organizations, or host traveling exhibitions of sculpture.

**PROJECT TYPE: PERMANENT AND INTEGRATED ARTWORKS**

Because of the changing nature of San Pedro Creek, we recommend that beyond the tricentennial project and art integrated into design there be no permanent, freestanding works considered until the entire park is complete. Opportunities for integrated artwork should be the focus of permanent works of art.

The future sections of the park offer a number of possibilities for integrated art along the creek. It is possible that CoSA’s public art program will be a strong partner to envision how the city’s public art funds will be spent. We recommend that artist(s) be selected to participate in the design of key places in phases 3 and 4 of the park. Benefits include:

- Modest artist design budgets can have big impacts
- Maintenance costs can be reduced
- Aesthetic upgrades to everyday places are desirable and amplify character
- Increased ability for a range of artists to participate in public art
Locations for Permanent or Integrated Art

Tunnel Inlet Tricentennial Sculpture

Extensive community conversations during the design of the park identified the tunnel inlet, where the park begins, as an ideal place for a permanent artwork.

An international request for qualifications was organized for this commission. This permanent sculpture has a generous budget of $735,000. It will be a dynamic addition to San Pedro Creek and in San Antonio.

Rendering of Plethora by Jorge Rodriguez-Gerada, the proposed sculpture to be located near the tunnel inlet.
**Railing for the High Paseo Bridge at Nueva Street**

This pedestrian crossing of the creek is an opportunity to include an artist on the design team with the architect to integrate artistic railings, tile design, or other elements into the bridge.

Examples of artist-designed bridge railings include *Desert Passage/Canopy Dreams*, 2009 by Barbara Grygutis (middle), Caroline Law’s *Rippling Waters Bridge*, 2009 (bottom left), and *Shimmer*, 2014, by Claudia Ravaschiere and Mike Ross (bottom right).
Mosaic Inserts on Bridge “Wing Walls” and Cast Concrete Inserts

On many of the new bridges, concrete abutments can include spaces for mosaics on the “wing walls.” The architect can design subtle and attractive spaces where these mosaic enhancements can be inserted in the future. There may be locations along the creek where artist-designed cast-concrete can be integrated into the design.

*Trinity Water Fowls*, 2016, by Norie Sato in Fort Worth, TX. These mosaics are based on images of birds by North Texas photographers.
Future Opportunities

The curator, SARA staff, Bexar County, and the design team will identify future opportunities for integrated art as the design of the park evolves. Bridges and long expanses of concrete walls should be a main focus area for integrated art opportunities.

Examples of integrated artworks include *Ridge and Valley*, 2012, by Stacy Levy (top) and *Untitled*, a series of 17 patterns created by Carolyn Braaksma for concrete form liners to enhances miles of walls along the Blue Line of the Charlotte Area Rapid Transit System (bottom).
CURATORIAL FRAMEWORKS

While the section above focuses on project types and locations, curatorial frameworks are intended to ensure that the “cultural” aspect of the San Pedro Creek Culture Park is addressed through the content, topics and/or strategies used to create these exciting projects. These are intended as a menu that the curator and the San Pedro Creek Arts Steering Committee can apply to the projects as initiated.

History and cultural heritage through a contemporary lens: Given the historical significance of the site, there is an opportunity to develop projects that use this history and cultural heritage as a springboard. It is clear that there are many voices and ideas about history that can be tapped. There is a significant amount of historical research completed for this project, and it is likely that more information will surface with the Tricentennial. Since a historical narrative is being planned to weave through the park, temporary projects can amplify a more specific history for contemporary audiences. These could be projects that invite collaboration with different groups and are ripe for collaboration with students or others. The interpretive plan for the creek is an appendix to this document.
**Performance Projects:** While the amphitheater offers a specific performance space, opportunities to explore forms of performance at other areas, or that utilize the linear aspect of the creek should be encouraged. These event-based activities will likely occur in collaboration with other organizations, be initiated by artists, or be a component of a commission.

**Community Engagement:** As indicated in the community engagement section, community engagement is an important part of all projects. The extent to which it is a focal point should be decided at the project’s outset so that the mechanism, support, and collaborative entities are in place to make it happen successfully.

**San Pedro Creek’s Ecology:** The purpose of the creek’s overall redevelopment has a strong environmental underpinning. The creek itself is an important part of the San Antonio River watershed. Illuminating the ecology of the creek offers a rich subject for projects and programs. This will be particularly important as the creek nears completion and becomes a linear experience as it weaves through different types of built environments.

*Behind Every Wall, 2015, by Laurie Lundquist in Pittsburgh, PA. The artist used photographs of buildings no longer present to create sandblasted images and a sense of history along Route 28.*
OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS

San Pedro Creek intersects a variety of neighborhoods with a rich array of public and private institutions, many of which offer collaborative opportunities for the development of public art and cultural programming. The possibilities range from sustained, ongoing partnerships to sporadic collaborations for specific initiatives. Building effective relationships with these institutions will be a major challenge for the new San Pedro Creek Arts curator, but one that will magnify the impact of arts and cultural programming positively if managed deftly.

**Partnerships** are formal alliances with institutions with ongoing, mission-driven cultural programming of their own or that have the capacity to develop sustained programming for San Pedro Creek with the help of the new curator. These organizations form two groups, a) those adjacent to the creek with a clear vested interest in promoting the success of a redeveloped promenade; and b) those in broader San Antonio with cultural mandates in a position to support arts programming along the creek.

**Collaborations** are more informal and sporadic alliances with organizations that will see the benefit of participation from time to time when programming is jointly relevant. It is important to note maintenance of these relationships must be ongoing for them to bear fruit at the appropriate moment.

A group of artists from San Antonio met with the consultant team to discuss their vision for public art opportunities along San Pedro Creek, June 2016.
Foster partnerships and collaborations with nonprofit organizations or private-enterprise stakeholders who want to develop a vibrant environment attractive to their clients and interests.

**Resources found along San Pedro Creek**

1. Nonprofit cultural resources include:
   - ArtPace
   - Alameda Theater
   - Casa Navarro House State Historic Site
   - Linda Pace Foundation / Ruby City (scheduled to open in 2018)
   - City of San Antonio Arts & Culture Offices and Gallery
   - Public Art San Antonio
   - Texas Public Radio
   - Zona Cultural

2. Private business resources include:
   - Frost Bank
   - Courtyard Marriott Hotel and other adjacent hotels
   - Market Square businesses, Market Square Association, Zona Cultural
   - Weston Urban
   - Other local business associations

**Resources in greater San Antonio:** There is a diverse array of cultural, arts, and educational institutions in the city. Cultivating collaborative relationships with the major cultural and arts organizations should be a focus to garner the resources for sustained programming along the creek. These institutions may have programming to dovetail with the creek’s art programming initiatives. They are also potential partners with the ability to support original programming. But there are other institutions important to the cultural and social fabric of the city that could be important allies. These institutions include colleges and universities, the public school system, specialized chambers of commerce, etc. These also have the potential to provide important support occasionally to San Pedro Creek Arts activities.
1 Major cultural and arts organizations
   • Blue Star Contemporary Art Museum
   • Guadalupe Cultural Center
   • Luminaria Festival
   • McNay Art Museum
   • Mexican Cultural Institute
   • San Antonio Art Museum
   • San Antonio Children’s Museum
   • Avenida Guadalupe
   • Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center
   • San Anto Cultural Arts

2 Other citywide institutions
   • American Indians of Texas
   • Colleges and universities
   • Hispanic Heritage Society
   • National Association for Latino Arts and Culture
   • San Antonio public schools
Acknowledgements

Elected Officials

Bexar County Commissioners Court
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Tommy Calvert, Jr., Commissioner, Precinct 4
Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez, Commissioner, Precinct 1
Kevin Wolff, Commissioner, Precinct 3
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1 INLET STRUCTURE TO SANTA ROSA

THEME: San Pedro Creek has been a place of natural beauty and human occupation for millennia; the origins of Bexar/San Antonio began in this vicinity with the founding of Mission San Antonio de Valero.

Birth of a City

San Pedro Creek gave birth to San Antonio. The creek is formed by artesian springs that flow from rocky outcroppings a short distance north of here in today’s San Pedro Springs Park. The creek’s waters nourished plants, animals, and fish that sustained Native Americans for thousands of years before it was discovered and named by Spanish explorers.

In 1718 Spanish missionaries selected a site near the creek as the initial location for their first mission–San Antonio de Valero. Historians have long believed that the first mission was at or near this site—a belief strengthened by recent archaeological investigations. Though the mission moved from this location in 1719, it is considered to be the founding site for the settlement that grew to be the City of San Antonio.

The Diverse Cultures of Upper San Pedro Creek

This site was first inhabited at least 10,000 years ago by diverse indigenous peoples who were drawn to the creek’s abundant water and the rich array of plant and animal life found along its banks. Spanish soldiers and civilians who arrived in the early 1700s intermingled with indigenous residents, and the population grew more diverse as immigrants from the eastern United States, England, and Europe settled in the community. This confluence of cultures was displayed in the neighborhood along San Pedro Creek where, by the late 1800s, Mexican, French, Italian, German, and Lebanese residents built houses, farmed garden plots irrigated with the creek's water, and operated small stores and other businesses.
Celebrating the Tri-centennial of San Antonio de Bexar

The re-birth of San Pedro Creek commemorates the 300th anniversary of the founding of the mission and presidio that gave rise to the City of San Antonio. Long-neglected and unknown to many, the creek, together with the San Antonio River to the east and tributary streams, provided water that nourished diverse peoples who have lived and worked along its banks for thousands of years. Once a dividing line between cultural groups, San Pedro Creek is being revisioned as the symbol of a community that has survived adversity to prosper and become a major American city. The Plethora sculpture symbolizes the tri-centennial’s celebration of the city’s rich confluence of cultures and the optimism of its sustainability for future generations.

Protecting the City

Flooding along the San Pedro Creek was managed by changes to the channel until 1991 when construction of an underground flood bypass tunnel was completed. In times of flooding, water flows here to the inlet, drops 150 feet through a shaft into a tunnel under the city, and travels about one mile south to the outlet at Guadalupe Street. Together, the San Pedro Creek tunnel and the larger San Antonio River tunnel protect downtown during times of heavy flooding. These structures have made it possible to reshape and beautify the creek channel as well as develop property that is no longer in the flood plain.

2 SANTA ROSA TO MARTIN

THEME: RESTORING HARMONY—PEOPLE AND NATURE

The natural quality and beauty of San Pedro Creek was nearly destroyed when it was made into a drainage ditch, but is brought back to natural vitality and harmonious balance with the urban landscape.

The Channelization of San Pedro Creek
Though the landscape along and near San Pedro Creek changed dramatically in the 1700s and 1800s, the natural creek channel remained largely unaltered until the early 1900s. Always subject to flooding and runoff from surrounding land, the creek’s condition worsened as urbanization increased. Homes and businesses were built in the floodplain and the creek became polluted and overgrown. Beginning in 1919 the San Pedro Creek channel was realigned at various points to speed the flow of flood water. To prevent erosion, the banks were stabilized with wood, stone, and concrete retaining walls. This work continued in the early 1930s through relief programs funded by the city, county, and state. Some of the early stone retaining walls remain in 2016 and will be preserved as part of the effort to return San Pedro Creek to a more natural condition.

Reclaiming Nature

The natural habitat of San Pedro Creek and the adjoining land has been largely destroyed by urban development and alterations to the creek channel. The San Pedro Creek Improvements Project will incorporate low impact development (LID) practices to improve water quality by managing and filtering runoff from the surrounding urban landscape. The natural creek habitat will be restored, and the riparian environment will once again support a variety of plants that depend on moisture and provide food, water, and protection for mammals, birds, and reptiles.

3 MARTIN TO HOUSTON

THEME: CROSSROADS OF FAMILY

San Pedro Creek has been a crossroads between people and families since the earliest periods of San Antonio’s history. The population and businesses along the creek since the earliest periods of San Antonio’s history have been mixed and interconnected
**Industry on San Pedro Creek**

San Pedro Creek provided water for small manufacturing facilities that were scattered along its banks between the springs and the confluence with the San Antonio River to the south. Enterprising German immigrant, Frederick Klemcke, began making soap in a small building here on the creek in 1849. Klemcke later sold his business to Simon Menger, who expanded the facility and operated the San Antonio Soap Works there until his death in 1892. The soap works closed in 1917 and the building fell into disrepair until it was restored as part of the Soap Works Apartments. Today it stands as the city’s oldest intact industrial building.

**The Legacy of Early Settlers**

The founders of San Antonio and their descendants are commemorated in various ways throughout the community including street names. Here, Salinas Street recalls Francisco Salinas, an early city official and owner of many area ranches, and his sons, José and Pablo. José served four terms as alcalde (mayor) of San Antonio between 1822 and 1836, and the brothers supported the Texas revolutionary cause. By the middle 1800s the small thoroughfare known as the Callejón de los Nogales (Pecan Alley) was renamed in the family’s honor.

**The Barrio del Norte**

After the founding of Mission San Antonio de Valero and its protective presidio near San Pedro Springs in 1718, settlers dug a shallow ditch to irrigate farm lands between the creek and the San Antonio River. By 1722 the presidio moved south to a new site on today’s Plaza de Armas, and soldiers and a few civilian settlers built houses and farmed in the surrounding area. The fifteen families who arrived from the Canary Islands in 1731 were settled east of the presidio in a community that included a central plaza (Plaza de las Islas), the ejido (town common), and land for grazing and farming (the labores). To irrigate farmlands in the Barrio del Norte and Barrio del Sur to the south, a new acequia (irrigation ditch) was dug from San Pedro Springs south to near the creek’s confluence with the San Antonio River. The San Pedro Acequia continued to water small garden plots throughout the 1800s and was not officially closed until 1912.
Health Care West of the Creek

In 1869, at the invitation of Bishop Claude Marie Dubuis, three members of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word arrived to establish a small infirmary in downtown San Antonio on Military Plaza. The sisters assisted physicians in providing skilled care to paying and charity patients of all faiths and races. When the plaza became congested and noisy, the sisters moved their infirmary west of the creek to a site on Houston Street where they had operated a small orphanage. There the sisters greatly expanded the hospital’s mission, keeping pace with rapid changes in health care. Today known as the Children’s Hospital of San Antonio, the facility continues to provide quality health care to the growing community.

A Financial Legacy

Many entrepreneurs arrived in San Antonio in the days following the Civil War. Among them was Colonel Thomas Clayborne Frost who began a business to haul freight from Indianola on the Gulf coast to central Texas. In 1866 he became a partner in an auction house a short distance from here on Main Plaza. Frost expanded into a mercantile and commission business and began lending money to customers. By 1899 Frost’s financial business was federally chartered as Frost National Bank. In over 100 years, the bank, known today simply as Frost, has built and occupied three structures at sites on Houston Street and Main Plaza. The bank’s future home, slated for completion in 2019, will overlook San Pedro Creek.

4 HOUSTON TO NUEVA

THEME: CENTRO DE BEXAR

San Pedro Creek is central to much of San Antonio’s formative but overlooked history.

The revitalization of San Pedro Creek includes a renaissance narrative of San Antonio’s neglected history from 1718 through 1968.
Houston and Nueva Streets formed the north and south boundaries of the original Villa de San Fernando town site, with San Pedro Creek forming the west boundary and the San Antonio River the east.

HOUSTON TO COMMERCE

SUBTHEME: There was a concentration of entertainment and social venues for San Antonio’s Hispanic/Mexican-American community in this vicinity.

Along the Creek on Camaron Street

As San Antonio was transformed from a modest colonial town to a thriving city, its narrow streets were lined with a disparate array of residential, religious, municipal, and industrial buildings. Typical of this complex pattern was Camaron Street, the small thoroughfare that extended north from Military Plaza along the east bank of San Pedro Creek. Once the site of stone houses, in the late 1800s the county jail, a livery stable, the city’s gas plant, a soap factory, and St. James African American Episcopal Church, the second AME church in Texas, had occupied the short block just north of Military Plaza.

A Rich Cultural Experience

The Hispanic population of San Antonio grew rapidly in the early 1900s as refugees fled political unrest in Mexico. The business district along and west of San Pedro Creek was transformed into a center of commerce, entertainment, and businesses that served the new arrivals’ everyday needs. Newsstands and bookstores provided the latest political news and literary publications, and medical practitioners and botanicas served the sick. Entertainment venues including vaudeville houses and movie theaters, most notably the Alameda, featured popular performers, movies, and newsreels that served as important cultural touchstones for new residents.
Camino Real al Presidio de Rio Grande

As the Spanish expanded their territory in Mexico after the conquest in 1521, they followed trails and roads used for thousands of years by the indigenous population, who themselves probably followed ancient game trails. When these roads connected major settlements, they were designated Caminos Reales (King’s Highways). In 1690 the Spanish authorities in Mexico, feeling threatened by French colonization activity, directed Alonso de León to establish a mission in what is now East Texas. De León’s party crossed the Rio Grande near present Guerrero, Coahuila, and traveled along ancient Indian trails through what would become San Antonio and continued into East Texas. Over the next two decades other expeditions extended the road into what is now Louisiana. The “camino” was not a single road but a series of mostly parallel trails. Travelers picked the best route based on weather and indigenous activity. The Camino Real al Presidio del Rio Grande came into San Antonio from the southwest, where it merged with the Camino Real de Laredo, and crossed San Pedro Creek near the two plazas. East of the plazas, the road crossed the river south of Mission Valero, then turned northeast along current Bonham Street and, after leaving town, crossed Texas to Nacogdoches, then continued to its final destination, Los Adaes, near present-day Robeline, Louisiana.

COMMERCE TO DOLOROSA

SUBTHEME: The civil history of San Antonio began with the Presidio de Bexar and Villa de San Fernando, both sustained by the waters of San Pedro Creek. Interweaving of peoples and destinies that formed the foundation of Bexar/San Antonio diversity and common interests.

The Presidio de Bejar

Though Mission San Antonio de Valero and its protective presidio were established near San Pedro Springs in May 1718, both were soon relocated to sites east of the creek. The presidio was moved south to a new site between the creek and the San Antonio River and rebuilt in a fortress-like manner on today’s Plaza de Armas. Soldiers and other settlers
built houses and farmed the surrounding lands that belonged to the presidio. Another community developed east of the river where Mission San Antonio de Valero was re-established, and residents farmed adjacent land.

The Villa de San Fernando

The arrival of fifteen families from the Canary Islands in 1731 introduced a new community dynamic. Because land west of San Pedro Creek was at risk from ongoing Indian attacks and lacked irrigation, the colonists were settled immediately east of the presidio. The settlement, named the Villa de San Fernando de Béxar honoring the patron of the Isleños journey, Don Fernando, the son of King Philip V, was the first organized civil government in Texas. The town site, surveyed in 1732 from a point that would become the front door of the parish church, comprised eight leagues and included a central plaza, *ejido* (town common), and land for grazing and farming (the *labores*) that was subdivided and granted to the Isleños. To provide water to the presidio and new villa, as well as lands north and south of the presidio and villa (known at the Barrio del Norte and Barrio del Sur), a four-mile long acequia was completed in 1734 running from San Pedro Springs south through the villa to a point near the creek’s confluence with the San Antonio River. Many of the Isleños prospered, and they and their descendants became community leaders and later helped win independence for Texas. As residents of San Antonio in the 21st century, Canary Island descendants continue to celebrate the cultural and historical legacy inherited from their pioneering forebearers.

The People of Bexar

In the 1700s and 1800s the population of the city we know today as San Antonio was composed of soldiers, civilian settlers, missionaries, and indigenous peoples, creating a complex mix of cultures and competing interests. Soldiers and missionaries were the first to arrive beginning in 1718, founding a settlement near the headwaters of San Pedro Creek. Attempts to recruit families to establish a permanent civilian community did not succeed until 1731 when fifteen families arrived from the Canary Islands located off the Atlantic coast of Africa. The new arrivals were settled between the presidio on the west and Mission San Antonio de Valero on the east. Four other missions lay to the south–Mission San José established in 1720 and missions Concepción, San Juan, and Espada. The diverse residents of the villa, presidio, and missions all needed land and water to grow
crops and graze livestock. The population grew in the mid-to-late 1700s as more soldiers were assigned to the presidio, families grew, and new residents from Los Adaes in East Texas were relocated to Béxar. By 1779 there were over 1,200 civilians and 270 soldiers and their family members in addition to the mission residents. Competition for scarce resources was finally eased when the missions were secularized beginning in the 1790s, resulting in increased availability of land for distribution and settlement by both indigenous and non-indigenous townspeople. The descendants of these early Hispanic settlers came to be known as Tejanos or Bexareños. They were joined in the early 1800s by Texians—Anglo Americans who settled in the Mexican State of Coahuila y Tejas and, later, the Republic of Texas. These groups of disparate lineage fought alongside to win Texas independence in 1836 and together established the governmental, commercial, and cultural foundations of the city and state.

The Bexar Territory

In 1731, with the establishment of the first civil settlement in Spanish Texas, San Fernando de Bexar was designated a municipality and could exercise jurisdiction over all civilians in the undefined, but huge, area between French Louisiana to the east and north and the Nueces River to the south and west. Under Mexican rule the area that Bexar (now San Antonio) administrated was reduced to the unorganized country basically between the Guadalupe and Nueces rivers from the Gulf to the Red River. When the Republic of Texas was realized after the Battle of San Jacinto in 1836 the new government maintained the political structure it inherited from Mexico, but it claimed the Rio Grande as its western boundary instead of the Nueces and further claimed all the land east of the river to its source, which included the parts of current Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma that were not part of the Louisiana Purchase. As a result the newly designated Bexar County contained basically all the land in Texas west of a north-south line through San Antonio and a significant portion of five other states. Under the republic Bexar County lost authority over its far northeast territory (the Fannin District, about 22 current counties on the Red River) and a large part of South Texas (Nueces County, about 15 current counties bordered by the Gulf of Mexico and the Rio Grande). Several important counties (Comal, Gillespie, Guadalupe, Medina, and Webb) were created out of Bexar County from statehood in 1845 until the end of the Mexican War in 1848. That same year Bexar County lost about half of its area when Santa Fe County was created. It included all the land west of the Pecos River, about the top half of the Panhandle, and the land Texas claimed above its current boundary. In 1850 Texas sold her claim to the latter; and Bexar County lost the
area east of the Pecos River in current New Mexico. At the end of the year Bexar County was basically its current boundaries, about five counties south and west, and most of the land between the Pecos River and the east line of the Panhandle south to the current US 90. In the next few years Bexar County was reduced almost to its current boundaries by the creation of Karnes (1854), Atascosa, Bandera, and Kerr (1856), and Wilson (1860) counties. The final boundary change was a small adjustment with Medina County in 1874. In the meantime, however, the unorganized land to the west and north that Bexar County was administratively responsible for had become physically separated from the county with the creation of Bandera and Kerr counties in 1856. It was also split into two entities. The Bexar District was the unorganized land east of the Pecos River south from the bottom of the Panhandle. The Bexar Territory was the top two tiers of counties in the Panhandle. The two areas were separated by the Young Territory. After their creation in 1856, these two units administrated by Bexar County were reduced in size as new counties were created until 1874 when all the land had been organized.

DOLOROSA TO NUEVA

SUBTHEME: San Antonio’s motto is libertatis cunabula, the “Cradle of Liberty” and the only native-born Texans who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence once lived next to San Pedro Creek. The story of struggle to gain independence is told through resistance, revolt and revolution from 1810 – 1836.

Gaining Mexico’s Independence from Spain

Mexico’s struggle for independence from Spain spanned over a decade in the early 1800s. In Europe wars and political problems between Spain and France led to economic measures that had an impact on residents of New Spain. Disruptions in trade with Spain as well as poor agricultural yields strained the economy and exacerbated class and political differences. On September 16, 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called for rebellion against Spanish rule, setting in motion a complicated series of military encounters that did
not end until 1821. San Antonio de Béxar and its residents played prominent roles in the long struggle. Captain Juan Bautista de las Casas, commanding troops in San Antonio, was a supporter of the revolutionary cause, leading insurgents against royalist supporters in early 1811. Though successful in advancing Hidalgo’s revolutionary cause, some of Casas’s supporters turned against him, resulting in his arrest and execution in 1811. In the aftermath of the Casas Revolt, as it was known, rebel envoy José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara sought United States support of the revolutionary cause. Believing there was American backing for the cause, de Lara’s supporter Lt. Augustus Magee led an invasion into Texas that gained momentum, winning battles as it advanced toward San Antonio. Among these encounters was the Battle of Rosillo near San Antonio, which resulted in the surrender and execution of Governor Manuel Salcedo and his officers. Rebels adopted a declaration of independence at San Antonio on April 6, 1813, naming Gutiérrez de Lara as president of a new republic of Texas under the Republic of Mexico. Both sides continued to fight on, meeting just west of San Antonio de Béxar in June 1813 at the Battle of Alazan. Once again, Spanish royalists were defeated by Republican forces led by Gutiérrez de Lara, resulting in the capture of a large cache of food supplies, guns and munitions, saddles, and horses and mules. Spanish royalist forces regrouped and two months later, in August 1813, avenged their defeats at the bloody Battle of Medina south of San Antonio de Béxar. Republic troops were ambushed and massacred by royalist soldiers. In the aftermath of battle, martial law was declared in San Antonio by royalist commander General Joaquin de Arredondo. Hundreds of rebels and their family members were imprisoned in crowded jails where many died. Men and women alike were beaten and tortured, and the heads of executed rebels were placed on display in Military Plaza. The population was decimated, and those who survived had their property confiscated as General Arredondo re-established Royalist control. In the aftermath of these events, the struggle for independence was in disarray. It was not until 1820 that military rebellion and political upheaval in Spain led to tensions between colonial authorities and reformists in Mexico. These opposing sides met and developed the Plan de Iguala, which laid the groundwork for Mexican independence that was ratified in a treaty signed on August 24, 1821.

**Winning Texas Independence**

The arrival of increasing numbers of Anglo Americans in Texas during the 1820s and early 1830s resulted in political disagreements between governing authorities and their colonists. Calls for independence did not take hold until 1835 when issues of taxation; restricted settlement; and centralized, dictatorial rule sparked the Texas Revolution. When citizens
of Gonzales refused to surrender a cannon given to them for defense against Indian attacks, Mexican forces marched on the town in October 1835. Outnumbered in their brief skirmish with Texan troops, Mexican soldiers withdrew to San Antonio. The Texans also advanced to San Antonio and camped on the outskirts of town. On the morning of October 28, the Mexican Army engaged the Texans near Mission Concepción east of the confluence of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek. The river’s wooded banks and foggy conditions provided cover for the Texans who inflicted over fifty casualties on the Mexican Army during the thirty-minute battle. The Battle of Concepción, as it became known, was the first encounter of the Siege of Bexar, a six-week long event that saw fighting between opposing troops in the streets and buildings of the town on both sides of San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River. In November Mexican soldiers withdrew to the town after encounters with Texans near Alazan Creek, an event that became known as the Grass Fight. Fighting continued in the town into December, resulting in casualties on both sides, notably Ben Milam who was shot and killed. After ongoing fighting and with the arrival of Texan reinforcements, Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cos surrendered on December 9. In the aftermath of this hard-fought victory, General Antonio López de Santa Anna marched troops to San Antonio to avenge the defeat of his son-in-law, General Cos. Santa Anna’s defeat of Texan defenders holding the old mission buildings known as the Alamo became the rallying cry for the revolution as fighting moved east. Mexican forces defeated James Fannin’s troops at Presidio La Bahia and subsequently executed Texan prisoners at the Goliad Massacre. East Texas residents fled in advance of the Mexican Army—the evacuation called the Runaway Scrape. During the encounters Texans had convened at Washington-on-the Brazos, where on March 2 they adopted a formal declaration of independence. With his troops demoralized by defeats and facing bad weather and being pursued by Santa Anna, Houston moved his Texan forces further east where they converged with Santa Anna’s army on the San Jacinto River. In a surprise attack on April 21, the Texan army decisively defeated Santa Anna’s troops. Sparing Santa Anna’s life, Houston ordered the surviving opponents to return to Mexico, and the victory at San Jacinto resulted in Texas winning its independence from Mexico.

The Texas Declaration of Independence

During the 1820s and early 1830s residents of Texas, a subdivision of the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas, became increasingly displeased with the centralized government and its leader Antonio López de Santa Anna who they considered hostile and unresponsive to their needs. Following months of unrest and political infighting
within the Mexican government, a group of Texans convened and resolved to establish a provisional government and adopt a declaration of independence. The Texas Declaration of Independence was adopted on March 2, 1836, by delegates meeting at Washington-on-the Brazos. The document protested centralized rather than republican rule by a corrupt and tyrannical government. Fifty-nine delegates signed the document, including only two native-born Texans, José Francisco Ruiz and his nephew José Antonio Navarro, both representatives of the district of Bexar.

**Libertatis Cunabula- “Cradle of Liberty”**

The coat of arms of the City of San Antonio, adopted in 1972, celebrates the city’s rich history and acknowledges its important role in winning Texas independence with the inscription Libertatis Cunabula (Cradle of Liberty). The crest’s shield features a castle representing the municipality and the family coat of arms of Portuguese-born Saint Anthony of Padua on whose feast day the city was founded and therefore named. The Republic and State of Texas are represented by a star, and the fight for independence is depicted by the Alamo, known as “the cradle of Texas liberty,” which was the site of the battle preceding the Texian victory at the Battle of San Jacinto.

**José Francisco Ruiz**

José Francisco Ruiz was a school teacher, member of San Antonio’s *cabildo* (city council), and long-time military officer. Exiled because of his support of the actions against the Spanish government in 1812-1813, Ruiz did not return to Texas until 1822. He continued his Mexican military service until 1832 when he retired in poor health. Ruiz joined the Texas revolutionary cause in 1835 and attended the 1836 convention where he signed the Declaration of Independence. After Texas won its independence, Ruiz served as Bexar’s senator in the Republic of Texas’s first congress. He owned extensive land, and his house was located on Dolorosa Street near this site just east of San Pedro Creek facing the Plaza de Armas. This was just a short distance from the home of his nephew, José Antonio Navarro, which still stands on the west bank of San Pedro Creek. José Francisco Ruiz died in 1840. Threatened with demolition, Ruiz’s house was relocated to the grounds of the Witte Museum in 1943.
José Antonio Navarro and Casa de Navarro

Born in San Antonio in 1795, José Antonio Navarro became an influential figure in the struggle for Texas independence and an advocate for Tejano rights. He studied first in San Antonio with his uncle José Francisco Ruiz and then in Mexico, returning to work in his father’s mercantile store and to study law with his uncle. Navarro prospered as a merchant, land investor, and rancher. Like his uncle, Navarro supported actions to overthrow Spanish Governor Manuel Salcedo in 1812-1813, forcing him and Ruiz to seek exile in Louisiana. Navarro was pardoned in 1815 and returned to San Antonio. He was elected to offices in the Mexican government but went on to become a supporter of the Texas revolutionary cause. He and Ruiz were elected delegated to the constitutional convention in February 1836, and they subsequently became the only Tejano signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. Navarro was elected to represent Bexar in the Republic of Texas legislature. In 1841 he participated in the Santa Fe expedition that sought (and failed) to secure Texas control of Santa Fe, resulting in his imprisonment in Mexico for over a year. Back in San Antonio, he supported statehood, helped write the first state constitution, was elected to two terms in the state senate, and supported secession in 1861. Navarro had purchased land on the west side of San Pedro Creek in 1837 (or 1832?) in the Barrio de Laredo, later referred to as Laredito, and built his home there in about 1840, adding a two-story store and office by 1856. Until his death in 1871, Navarro lived and worked here, writing essays and historical accounts that provided the Tejano narrative of the defining events that shaped state and city, establishing Navarro as the first Tejano historian. Today, the Navarro house, kitchen, and office, saved from demolition by the San Antonio Conservation Society in the 1960s and managed for many years by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, is operated as a historical site by the Texas Historical Commission. The complex includes the only standing structures associated with the life and work of José Antonio Navarro.
5 NUEVA STREET TO CESAR CHAVEZ BOULEVARD

THEME: PLACE OF ACCORD

The progress of respect for human rights and the rule of law are highlighted by the past social and economic struggles of the Mexican-American community in the 20th century.

The history of San Pedro Creek as a cultural and social divide was most pronounced in this area where gracious houses lined the east bank and “mexican tenements” lined the west bank.

Barrio del Sur

As the Villa de San Fernando grew during the period of Spanish rule, Governor Manuel Salcedo divided the community into four barrios for better administration and governance. The Barrio del Norte and Barrio del Sur lay between San Pedro Creek and the river north and south of the plazas. West of the creek was the Barrio de Laredo and east of the river, the Barrio de Valero was associated with Mission San Antonio de Valero. Land in the Barrio del Sur was granted to early settlers who built their houses here along San Pedro Creek. By the mid-to-late 1800s, homes were replaced by businesses including blacksmith shops, stores, stables, and wagon yards. As the city continued to develop, these structures were replaced in the 1900s and 2000s with modern office and apartment structures, leaving no traces of the once vibrant colonial neighborhood.

Barrio de Laredo

The Barrio de Laredo, commonly referred to as Laredito, was one of four political subdivisions that formed the Villa de San Fernando in the early 1800s. Located west of San Pedro Creek and stretching lineally along the Camino de Laredo (today’s Laredo Street), Laredito was home to thirty-six households by 1809. After a catastrophic flood damaged the town in 1819, some residents applied for and received land to build new homes in Laredito. The road to Laredo became the defining feature of the neighborhood and main transportation route west of the creek. Though somewhat isolated from the rest of the town during the early 1800s, the neighborhood prospered as land was subdivided, streets...
and bridges built, and prominent families constructed homes and businesses there. With the influx of refugees from Mexico in the early 1900s, Laredito, known at the time by many as “the other side of the creek,” evolved into a dense residential and commercial area filled with substandard structures, many occupied by local prostitutes. In the late 1900s Laredito was cleared and the area redeveloped under the Urban Renewal program.

**A Neighborhood in Transition**

The neighborhoods along San Pedro Creek that were once home to the city’s pioneer residents changed rapidly in the 1900s. Substantial stone houses with gardens watered from the creek deteriorated, and old residents died or moved to newer neighborhoods. Buildings were sold or rented to the less fortunate or demolished to make way for *corrals*—flimsy multi-family houses without indoor plumbing. These were interspersed with larger commercial structures. Notably, a thriving red light district came to define the area west of the creek. Along the creek’s west bank, the Richter family, who had operated a small bakery, built a modern new brick bakery. On the east side of the creek, Graham Paper Company leased a new brick building in 1927, just one of several commercial structures that came to characterize the landscape along the creek in the early-to-mid 1900s. Urban renewal projects initiated in the 1960s dramatically changed the landscape, displacing long-time residences and businesses to revitalize the community. Buildings that were preserved were repurposed in later years for offices or replaced by new buildings to support the expanding needs of the county government. Today, new housing, technology businesses, and the downtown campus of the University of Texas at San Antonio are revitalizing the inner city, uniting communities living and working on the east and west sides of San Pedro Creek.
6 CESAR CHAVEZ TO CAMP

THEME: PASSAGES OF ENTERPRISE

San Pedro Creek was dramatically altered from its natural course to a concrete channel by the MKT Railroad and the agricultural landscape by the industries served along the rail line.

The industrial urban land patterns are directly derived from the antecedent agricultural landscape.

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CESAR CHAVEZ TO GUADALUPE STREET

SUBTHEME: RAILROAD

San Pedro Creek was buried in a culvert in order to build the Missouri Kansas Texas Station and Rail Yard.

**Tunnel Outlet Structure**

Flooding had historically been a problem along San Pedro Creek, but conditions worsened with increased urbanization and enclosure of the creek just north of this site in an underground tunnel to accommodate construction of the Missouri-Kansas-Texas rail yard in 1917. Until 1991 flooding was managed by widening and deepening the creek channel and building protective walls. This changed with completion that year of an underground flood bypass tunnel. In times of heavy rainfall, water flows to the inlet about one mile north of this site, drops 150 feet through a shaft into the tunnel that runs under the city, and travels to the outlet here at Guadalupe Street. Together, the San Pedro Creek tunnel and the larger San Antonio River tunnel protect downtown during times of heavy flooding.

**Wagon Trains and Camp Yards**

San Antonio had been an important crossroads for military expeditions, travelers, and the shipment of supplies since its founding and continued to fulfill this role during and
after the Civil War. Confederate troops camped near the springs that formed the creek in today’s San Pedro Springs Park. Further to the south near downtown and along Laredo Street, teamsters congregated in camp yards along both sides of the creek and loaded their wagons with cotton and other goods destined for Mexico. Leonardo Garza, a descendant of the town’s early settlers, reminisced about the area along and west of the creek. “The people of pure Spanish descent who lived here in the early days had very few but commercial pursuits . . . The greatest commerce seemed to have been the traffic from Port Lavaca, bringing all the goods for the stores and also the trains that went overland to Chihuahua, to Santa Fe, and El Paso. The people employed in that traffic camped along the San Pedro Creek and formed the little village that became known as Chihuahua.”

**Missouri Kansas Texas Railroad and Station**

San Antonio was not connected by rail to the rest of the country until 1877 when the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio line was completed. The International and Great Northern and San Antonio and Aransas Pass lines followed in the 1880s. These companies energized the local economy, carrying passengers, cattle, produce, and manufactured goods to distant destinations in the United States and Mexico. The last company to lay tracks into San Antonio was the Missouri, Kansas and Texas—known as the M-K-T or the Katy. Construction of the railyard necessitated covering the creek which was encased in an underground concrete culvert. The first M-K-T train arrived on September 1, 1917, at an imposing Spanish Colonial Revival depot on this site. Arrival of the M-K-T line transformed properties along the creek, delivering raw materials to newly built manufacturing companies and shipping finished products. During World War II soldiers left from the Katy station, and in the post-war years the line continued to carry passengers throughout Texas and to the north. Rail passenger service to San Antonio ended in 1964, and the depot was demolished in 1969. Competition from other railroads increased and business declined, and in 1988 the Katy was purchased by Union Pacific. The depot site on the east bank of San Pedro Creek remained vacant until a hotel was built on the site.

**US Arsenal/Devine/HEB**

San Antonio had been a military center since the Spanish presidio was established here in 1718. After Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836 and became a state in 1845, the city became the main supply depot for the forts that protected travelers and settlers on
the West Texas frontier in the mid-1800s. The United States Army purchased land between
the east bank of the creek and San Antonio River in 1859 from former Texas governor P.H.
Bell and two brothers, Gregory and Dr. James Devine. Another Devine brother, Thomas, a
prominent lawyer, judge, and landowner, lived and farmed immediately to the south on
land that ran to the creek. The army built a permanent facility on its property to store and
ship arms, ammunition, and other military items to the forts. Unfinished when the Civil
War began in 1861, the site was reoccupied by the army after the war, and buildings were
added as San Antonio’s importance as a military center increased. By the time the arsenal
was deactivated in 1947, it had supplied troops on the Texas frontier and along the Rio
Grande and supported soldiers fighting the Spanish American War and World Wars I and
II. The site was used for federal offices and reserve military training until 1986 when it was
declared surplus. H-E-B Grocery Company purchased the arsenal property and additional
land along the creek and renovated the site as its corporate headquarters. Thomas Devine’s
house was demolished in 1949 and the property is now the site of offices of the San
Antonio Housing Authority and Alamo Community College District.

GUADALUPE TO CAMP STREET

SUBTHEME: Industrial Age

The industrial development of South San Antonio began along the
MKT Rail/San Pedro Creek corridor.

Confection Manufacturing

Completion of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas rail line running between the creek and
Flores Street to a terminal just north of this site transformed adjoining properties into prime
commercial sites. Structures that had been built years earlier on what had been the town’s
Labores de Abajo (lower fields) were demolished and replaced by warehouses and light
manufacturing facilities connected to the main rail line by sidings. Among the businesses
were candy manufacturers who shipped sugar and other raw materials to their plants. Both
Jenner Manufacturing Company, later operated as Judson Candy Company, and Duerler
Manufacturing Company, just below this site on Camp Street (today’s Camp Street Lofts),
produced pecan candies using the abundant native nuts that grew along and near the
creek, shipping the popular treats throughout the state and nation.
From Agriculture to Industry along the Creek

As San Antonio’s population grew, families who had owned land adjoining San Pedro Creek began to subdivide and sell their properties. Among those were Ignacio Perez and his family who began to sell their holdings in the Labor de Abajo south of the plazas and east of the creek in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Their agricultural lands, which were entitled to water from the creek, acequia, and river, extended south along the “New County Road” as Flores Street was known in 1860. The Perez family and their successors sold land below the United States Arsenal to newly arrived immigrants including Frenchman George Lachapelle who built his home and adjoining soap factory on the creek in 1860. By 1886 when Augustus Koch drew his bird’s eye view map of San Antonio, much of the land between Flores Street and the creek below the arsenal remained open, though small houses lined the west side of the street. Both east and west of Flores Street, larger houses were surrounded by agricultural fields. It was not until the early 1900s that the character of the area changed significantly. As families fled unrest in Mexico in 1910 and settled in San Antonio, tenement housing was built along the creek adjoining the rail tracks and new commercial and industrial structures. A rail line leading from the main Missouri, Kansas, and Texas tracks to the depot near downtown was constructed between the creek and Flores Street. Among the companies doing business along the creek’s east bank in the early to mid 1900s were the Aluminum Honeycomb Company, Bird-Thomas Company, wholesale grocers, and the Southwest Electrical Institute. Just after World War II Albert Dean acquired a small sheet metal shop on Flores Street begun by his great uncle. The company continued to grow at this site throughout the 20th century and still operates there in 2016 as Deansteel Manufacturing Company.

Trevanion T. Teel Homestead

Substantial houses set in large agricultural fields stood on both sides of San Pedro Creek from the mid 1800s until the early 1900s. Among these was the Trevanion T. Teel house on the west side of the creek near the intersection of today’s Laredo and Camp streets. Trevanion T. Teel served in the war between the United States and Mexico and following the war moved to San Antonio. Teel became a prominent criminal attorney and married in 1856. He joined the Confederate Army, was wounded in the Battle of Valverde, and participated in various encounters during the New Mexican campaign. Before retreating, he and his troops buried their cannon in Albuquerque’s plaza, returning in later years to
recover them. Teel recalled his New Mexico experiences in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. Teel and his wife Emily made their home in San Antonio where he had a prominent legal practice. Among Teel’s notable cases was the prosecution of Ben Thompson for killing local political leader and saloon owner Jack Harris. Trevanion and Emily Teel purchased land along San Pedro Creek and built a two-story house in about 1871. Their property fronted 300 feet on Laredo Street and extended back 500 feet to San Pedro Creek. Neighbors and friends remembered that the property was cultivated with sugar cane, corn, and oats. There was also an orchard of fruit trees and rosebushes. Trevanion Teel moved to El Paso when he and his wife divorced in 1892. Emily Teel and her family continued to live in the old home until the property was sold in 1912. The land was subdivided and by 1926 was the site of a warehouse for Builders Supply Company and a trunk factory.

7 CAMP STREET TO IH35 OVERPASS

THEME: VIDA DE ARROYO

San Pedro Creek was essential to the 18th century Labores de Abajo, which was the breadbasket San Antonio, and featured pecan groves that shaped the lives of those who produced, harvested and processed the nuts. Within the cultural landscape, the culture of food influences how people modify and activate the land.

**Labores de Abajo**

In the 1700s and 1800s, the land south of San Antonio de Béxar between San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River was prime farmland. Known as the Labores de Abajo (lower farm), the land was subdivided into long, narrow tracts that ran east/west between the creek and river. (Labores were lands owned either by the Villa de Béxar or the missions. Lands owned by the villa were sold to raise funds to run the government.) Lots in the labores were granted to townspeople beginning in 1734, the same year the four-mile-long San Pedro acequia was completed. Water from both the acequia and nearby river was used to irrigate adjoining farm plots. In later years these tracts were further divided or resold as original owners died and heirs inherited the property. With the influx of Anglo settlers
in the years following Texas independence in 1836 and throughout the 1800s, land was purchased and further divided, gradually transitioning from farming to residential and industrial uses.

**Pecan Tree**

Native to an area from about San Antonio east to the Mississippi River and north up to southern Iowa, the pecan (*Carya illinoinensis*, a member of the hickory family) was a major source of nutrition and trade for pre-agricultural Native Americans. European settlers quickly planted stands of the trees east of the Mississippi and, ultimately, the trees were planted in other parts of the world that enjoy a temperate climate. In the early decades of the 20th Century, pecan shelling became an important economic activity in San Antonio for Mexican American women, but low compensation and dismal working conditions led to a major strike. Today the United States accounts for about 80% of world pecan production, and Texas is usually the second largest producer behind Georgia. In 1906 Texas former governor James Stephen Hogg asked that a pecan tree be planted at his grave instead of a traditional headstone and requested that the nuts be distributed throughout the state to make Texas a land of trees. His wish was carried out and this brought more attention to pecan trees. In 1919 the 36th Texas Legislature made the pecan tree the state tree of Texas.

**Pecan Shellers Strike**

For many years before World War II, San Antonio had been the center of the nation’s pecan processing business. Even though cracking and shelling equipment had been available since the mid-1920s, San Antonio operators in the 1930s used hand labor for these operations. The major processor contracted with individuals to provide the facilities and people to crack and shell the nuts and then bought the finished meats. This set-up isolated the company from labor problems, and by the late 1930s there were some 400 locations on the West Side that employed about 12,000 workers, who were paid a few cents for each pound processed. The work was hard and seasonal, the typical building was ill lit and poorly ventilated, and most of the workers were Mexican-origin women. In late January 1938 the independent contractors lowered the prices they paid their shellers by about 15%, and most of the workers went out on strike. The CIO supported the strikers, who made the local Communist activist Emma Tenayuca the honorary strike leader. The local police reacted with such violence against the strikers, from simple harassment and
frivolous arrests to tear gas, that Texas governor James Allred ordered a state commission to investigate civil liberties abuses. Meanwhile city and church leaders denounced the strike because it was being led by a Communist. When other union locals took the same stance, the CIO replaced Tenayuca as strike leader. After about three months the strike was settled in the workers’ favor, but it was a short lived victory. The new federal minimum wage made it more economical for the companies to mechanize, and within a couple of years most of the workers lost their jobs. Even so, Tenayuca felt that the strike was not a failure because it proved that Mexican-origin workers could make a difference if they acted together.

8 IH 35 OVERPASS

THEME: PATHS OF CONVERGENCE

IH35 is the successor to the Pan American Highway, the Laredo Road, and the Camino Real de Laredo; a path of transportation and communication that predates European settlement. The movement of people along convergent paths over time and space

Nogalitos Street/Paso de Nogales

Land along San Pedro Creek south of the town was used primarily for farming and grazing in the 1700s and 1800s. The property was highly desirable for its abundance of water drawn from the creek, the San Pedro Acequia, and the San Antonio River just to the east. Though land west of the creek was more isolated from the community and did not have access to the acequia and river, it nonetheless developed along the road leading to communities and ranches to the south. Travel and commerce between those on the east and west sides of the creek was possible because of low water crossings. One crossing, the Paso de Nogalitos, was located at a place known as Rincón de Nogalitos. Another, the Paso de las Animas, was located further to the south at Rincón de las Animas, where Flores Street crosses San Pedro Creek today.
Pan American Highway

The concept of a road from one tip of the Americas to the other, a pan-American highway, was proposed in 1923. Each country was given jurisdiction to designate the section of the highway within its borders. Mexico was the first country to complete its portion of the highway, in 1950. No road in the United States or Canada has ever been officially designated as the Pan-American Highway, so the road officially starts at the U.S.-Mexico border. In 1932 Congress proposed designating a route from Duluth, Minnesota, to Laredo to connect with the Pan-American Highway in Mexico. The route more or less followed today’s Interstate 35. When the section of I-35 in southwest San Antonio was built, it was named the Pan Am Expressway, as it lies along this route. The first section to be built, from South Alamo to Nogalitos, was completed by 1951, and the segment north of that to present-day I-10 West was completed by 1957. The southern section, from Nogalitos to Loop 410, was open to traffic by 1964.

San Antonio Stockyards

The land along San Pedro, Alazan, and Apache creeks south of today’s downtown remained sparsely populated as late as the mid-1800s. In the 1700s the mesquite-filled fields were isolated from the town center and difficult to protect from Indian attacks. It was not until after 1745 when peace made with the Apaches that the Spanish government began to make land grants west of San Pedro Creek. Among the landmarks cited in these early grants was “a road called by many names”–later known as Laredo Street. The road was an important thoroughfare for trade with the rest of Coahuila y Tejas. Townspeople penned their cattle in fields adjoining the road and nearby creek and used the creek to water their herds. By the mid-1800s Mexican and Anglo teamsters gathered in camp yards where they loaded wagons with cotton and other goods destined for markets to the south. When cattle drives from Texas to Midwestern markets began in the 1870s, herds were assembled in holding pens west of the creek, and the area became a bustling center of trading and shipment. Within several years construction of rail lines revolutionized the transport of cattle. Three major rail lines reached the city between 1877 and 1886, and the tracks crossed San Pedro Creek south of the downtown area. The availability of rail transport and increasing residential development closer to downtown led area ranchers to establish the San Antonio Stock Yards Company, later named the Union Stock Yards of San Antonio. They chose a site here adjacent to rail lines near the confluences of
Apache, Alazan, and San Pedro creeks. The stockyards became the main receiving point for shipment of cattle to San Antonio from South Texas, and rail remained the primary means of cattle transport until the 1930s when new highways were constructed and trucks became the preferred mode of shipping. In 1950 the stockyard was still the state’s largest cattle market, but by the end of the 1900s increased operating costs, a decline in livestock auction numbers, and market changes led to the closing of Union Stock Yards in 2001. Today the Union Stock Yards site is operated by the Stock Yards Commercial Properties Company. The company offers commercial lease space for offices and warehouses.
STREET BRIDGES

The bridges are special places of crossing and seen as bridges of understanding. Theme and topic are explored as transcendental in nature rather than factual. As such, the experience of walking under the otherwise culvert-type bridges is envisioned as entering a chapel or shrine, embracing the phenomena that lies beyond the reality. Each of the street names of the bridges have a factual provenance that may be linked with a deeper meaning. At this time most of the bridges have not yet been assigned a theme or topic.

SANTA ROSA STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** Not Determined

*Named after the Santa Rosa Infirmary, founded in 1869 by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word. The area of Santa Rosa Avenue defined the western edge of San Antonio and was a route along the Chisholm Trail that bypassed the town and led to watering places along San Pedro Creek. Santa Rosa is Saint Rose of Lima (1586-1617) canonized 1668, the first from the New World. Baptized Isabel Flores de Olivia her mother called her Rose at three months when a rose suddenly appeared over her and the vanished. Special calling to help the Indians and devoted to active duty while living a life of extreme austerity. She took into her house and cared for homeless children, the elderly, and the sick.*

MARTIN STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** Not Determined

*The street now known as Martin Street was originally named North Third. In 1881, when the east/west streets west of Santa Rosa Avenue and north of Commerce Street were named for old families, it became known as Hidalgo Street. (Other names were Zavala, Chavez, Perez, Lopez, Ruiz and Delgado.) It was later named Lakeview after the subdivision of the same name near Elmendorf Lake. At the request of residents, the street between the river and 24th Street was named Martin Street on September 9, 1929. The origin of the name Martin has not yet been clarified.*

**Topic:** Salinas Family (Former Salinas Street Bridge)
Salinas was formerly known as **Calle de los Nogales** for the many pecan trees that once bordered on it. When the streets were named for old families, **Salinas** probably referred to either Francisco Manuel Salinas or his son, Jose Maria de Jesus Salinas (1797-1851). Francisco was a local government official until 1818. Jose served as an alcalde after **Mexican independence** and was “the last San Antonio alcalde before Texas independence.” Jose and his brother Pablo fought for Texas independence under Juan Sequin. Jose helped finance the revolutionary cause.

**TRAVIS STREET BRIDGE**

**Topic:** Not Determined

Travis was named Obraje Street until it was changed on November 11, 1912. Obraje referred to the manufacturers who produced brick and adobe in the area. **Travis was named for William Barret Travis, commander of the Texas army at the Alamo.** Streets east of the river were named for Texas heroes including Travis, Bonham, Bowie and Fannin. As the city grew and new streets were created, Travis Street was extended west across the river and connected to Obraje. The name was then changed to Travis for consistency.

**HOUSTON STREET BRIDGE**

**Topic:** Not Determined

Houston was originally **Rivas** Street from Soledad to the Campo Santo (where Santa Rosa Hospital now stands). This referenced the Rivas family whose early 19th century home stood at the corner of Laredo Street. In 1851, Rivas was extended to the river and connected by bridge to the street east of the river that was named “**Paso**” (or Paseo). This referred to the pass or ford of the river. At that time the entire street was named **Houston Street** in honor of Sam Houston.
COMMERCES STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** Camino Real al Presidio de Rio Grande

Commerce near the creek was previously named **Presidio.** This referred to the Presidio de Bejar but also was the route of the Camino Real as it entered Plaza de Armás or Military Plaza. It was renamed as **Commerce** Street after the Civil War.

DOLOROSA STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** the violation of women during the 1813 occupation

The name of **Dolorosa** Street is thought to refer to the suffering of the women who fed prisoners taken by General Arredondo during the Spanish army’s 1813 invasion of the town and their mistreatment by the occupation soldiers.

NUEVA STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** Not Determined

The exact date of the establishment of Nueva Street has not been established but it is thought to date to the 1840s. As early as 1848, it was referred to as the “Calle Nueva” when Jose Antonio Navarro petitioned city council to build a bridge across the creek.

GRAHAM STREET BRIDGE

**Topic:** Undetermined

In the 1920’s the Graham Paper Company occupied present site of Bill Millers. Graham Street is not a dedicated city street, and the bridge may have been constructed for the business as were other service bridges along the creek.
**CESAR CHAVEZ BLVD BRIDGE**

**Topic:** Cesar Chavez, farmworkers

West of the creek, the thoroughfare originally known as **South Fifth** Street was established when the land was subdivided in 1849. When the streets were renamed for Mexican towns in 1881, it became known as **Durango**. East of the creek, and in alignment with Durango, **Martinez** Street extended between St. Mary’s (formerly Garden) and S. Alamo Streets. When the city built a bridge across the river after the 1921 flood, Martinez Street was extended to the west. The two streets were joined and at the time of HemisFair, widened and reconfigured as a thoroughfare known as **Durango**. The name was changed to **Cesar Chavez** in 2011.

**ARSENAEL/EL PASO STREET BRIDGE**

**Topic:** Not Determined

The name Arsenal refers to the United States Arsenal that was constructed on the west bank of the San Antonio River beginning in 1859. West of the creek it is named **El Paso** (formerly **South Eighth** Street).

**GUADALUPE STREET BRIDGE**

**Topic:** Not Determined

The street was originally named **South Ninth**. When the land west of Santa Rosa Street (originally **East Street**) was subdivided in 1849, streets were named numerically. Later the north/south streets were named for rivers (i.e. San Saba, Nueces, Medina, San Marcos) while the east/west streets were named for places (i.e. Buena Vista, Monterey, San Fernando, San Luis, Tampico). This system would mean that **Guadalupe** refers to a **place** rather than a river but this has not been firmly established. (South Eighth became El Paso and South Tenth became Colima.)
CAMP STREET BRIDGE

Topic: Ruby City/Red

After land was donated by Dr. Amos Graves in 1890, the street was named Camp Street on March 3, 1890.

ALAMO STREET BRIDGE

Topic: Not Determined

The street southwest of the King William area where it crosses San Pedro Creek is a continuation of Alamo Street, the name given to street that ran south from Alamo Plaza. At Garden Street (now St. Mary’s), Alamo became known as Mill Street because it led to the river near Guenther’s mill. After the river crossing was built, the street continued to the west and was named Aransas for the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad that had its depot at the corner of S. Flores Street. The name was changed by 1921 to Alamo.

CAVALLOS STREET BRIDGE

Topic: Not Yet Determined

This street was reportedly named for Pedro Cevallo who was a local Bexar County Constable.