

EDITORIAL

REACHING BEYOND THE MISSIONS

January 28, 2010

Bexar County has many hidden gems within its streets and neighborhoods. One of those treasures is the San Antonio River. The 13 mile stretch of our famous *Paseo del Rio* receives more than one million visitors annually. Tourism generates wonders for our economy so as an elected official, projects geared specifically to generate positive development and increase to our economy is one of the many priorities I face. As the representative of Precinct 1, I always strive to bring the development to the South side.

More than ten years ago, Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, and the San Antonio River Authority began measures to truly revitalize this community. Now, many years later, I have proudly been afforded the wonderful opportunity to play an instrumental role in the planning and development of a huge mission; the San Antonio River Improvements Project.

More than a combined \$384 million dollars has been invested into the River Improvements Projects from many partners including Bexar County, the City of San Antonio, the San Antonio River Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Parks Service, the San Antonio River Foundation, and other organizations and private donors. The River Improvements Projects serves as a flood control measure, eco-system restoration and preservation, improvements for recreation and amenities, and is also an opportunity to truly revive the South side.









As you see the River Project progress to the South, you will also experience the economic and developmental impacts to the four historic Missions. The ideas for the Missions, that are part of the projects funded by the visitor tax, are to build segways from the newly enhanced San Antonio River straight to each of the historic Missions where visitors and residents can receive peace, enjoyment of the improved area, and education on the history and culture of the Missions. The idea is to create as much recreational usage for people in the area so having spaces for picnics, walking, biking, and playing sports was the inspiration of our planning efforts.

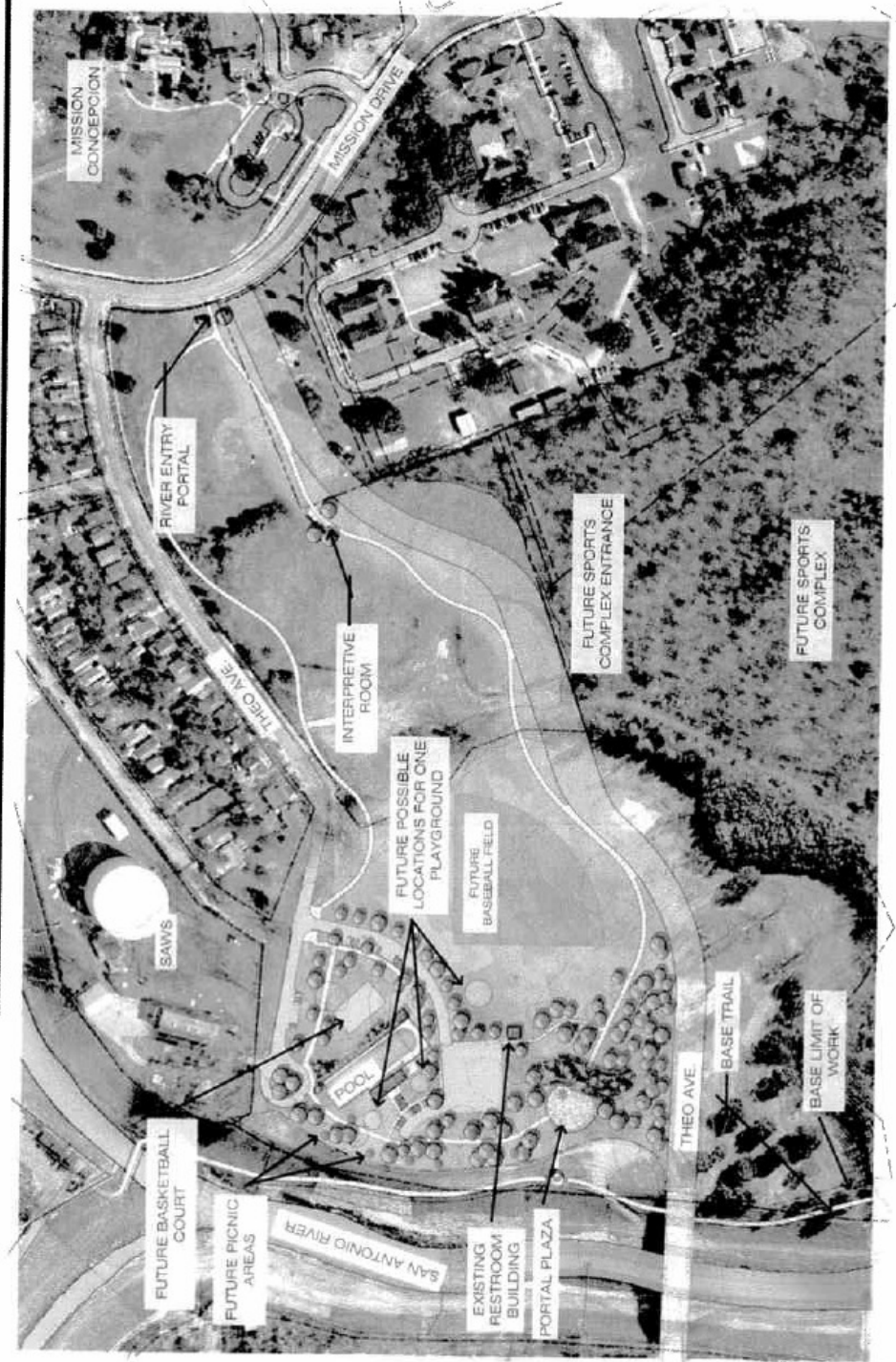
Each of the four Missions will have their own Portal directly linking it to the River and within each portal, there will be unique design that will highlight the original mission of that Mission. During the planning process for the Portal for Mission Concepcion, the stakeholders involved in the development process ran into an issue with the placement of the Portal but quickly thought up an innovative way to solve the issue and also to further improve the area and neighborhood. The concept was to redevelop Theo Avenue. When the Bexar County Community Venue Program Director, Mike Sculley came to me to inform me of the issue and the possible solution, he also informed me there was no funding. After discussion with the other Commissioners Court members, I felt confident I would have their support to find a funding mechanism.

In working with the City of San Antonio, the County found the funding to realign Theo Avenue. The step of the process we are currently in is to ask the community for thoughts and comments. Last week, my office hosted the first of a series of public meetings to inform the public of our plans to realign Theo Avenue and I was amazed at the amount of support we received.

As the River Projects and the Venue Tax projects continue to develop, so many other opportunities for development continue to evolve. I don't like to pass up on an opportunity to improve the South side and have been persistent in talking about redevelopment. The squeaky wheel got the oil. I am excited to report that this week during our Commissioner Court meeting, the County finalized a consulting contract with Becky Cedillo who will lead a collaborative planning effort to brainstorm ways to improve the areas surrounding the Missions and the River. The idea is to develop an overall vision and revitalization plan that reaches around and beyond the Missions out into the surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Wonderful ideas from the community were received last week and I hope to continue to receive suggestions and comments. In order for success on the County's planning efforts to reach beyond the Missions, we need additional input from the community, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, organizations, and governmental entities. The next nine months for this development study will be exciting and with each new plan and vision, there will be more public meetings so my eyes and ears are open to your suggestions. All these enhancements are to improve your neighborhoods and enhance your quality of life. The South side is something to be extremely proud of and I want to show it off in all its history, culture, and beauty!

								
MISSION CONCEPCION	LA PURISIMA CONCEPCION DE ACUNA	SAN JOSE Y SAN MIGUEL DE AGUAYO	PHASE TWO	SCHEMATIC DESIGN	ISSUE DATE: JAN. 15, 2010	SHEET	2.4	11



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THEO AVE. REALIGNMENT  MISSION REACH: ENHANCEMENTS 

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