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News Release

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San Antonio River Authority Announces Findings of Mission Reach Recreational Concessions Study

SAN ANTONIO – After months of consulting with project stakeholders and neighborhood residents near the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project, The San Antonio River Authority (SARA) has released the final draft of the Mission Reach Recreational Concessions Study. The study was commissioned by SARA to evaluate which recreational concessions are most appropriate for the Mission Reach, as well as to determine which locations are best suited for concession facilities. Concessions offered on the Mission Reach are intended to maximize Bexar County's \$176.6 million investment in the \$245.7 million project.

"Bexar County has funded the addition of a variety of recreational amenities to enhance the enjoyment of the San Antonio River" said Suzanne Scott, General Manager of the San Antonio River Authority. "The Mission Reach will operate as a public park, free and open for use by everyone. Our goal with the study is to plan ahead that should concession opportunities be made available, they each compliment these recreational features and promote a family-friendly experience along the river."

The study recommends that stationary structures be built at several designated areas along the Mission Reach to house concessions. By designating locations, concession operations are located at higher traffic locations while preserving the character of the nature park along the river. Concession concepts that may be housed at these designated locations include prepackaged light snacks and beverages, as well as selected outdoor gear such as bicycles, fishing poles and paddling equipment. The study also recommends that use of kayaks and canoes on the Mission Reach be allowed and that SARA should pursue enabling changes to existing city ordinances to support these activities. Lastly, the study calls for incremental implementation of the concession plan as the Mission reach as the project is completed and new opportunities become apparent.

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The San Antonio River Authority is serving as project manager for the Mission Reach Project and will be responsible for operations and maintenance of the area when construction is complete. Although SARA would be responsible for overseeing the operation of concessions, the report recommends relying on the City of San Antonio's experience with vendor selection and permitting used in other local public parks.

"Throughout the process of implementing the Mission Reach project and the completion of this concession study citizens have made it clear that the use of the river must remain free and accessible to everyone while allowing tasteful opportunities for concessions to enhance the experience. This plan serves as the guide to achieving that vision." says Scott.

Scott added that the implementation of the concession plan including criteria for vendor selection, hours of operation, and preferred types of concession opportunities will be coordinated through the River South Subcommittee which is a subcommittee to the San Antonio River Oversight Committee (ROC). The ROC has served since 1998 as the citizen advisory committee for the implementation of the San Antonio River Improvements Project.

For more information on the study and to download a copy of the report, visit www.sanantonioriver.org.

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The Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project is transforming an eight mile stretch of the San Antonio River into a quality riparian woodland ecosystem. The Mission Reach project is being primarily funded by Bexar County, with additional funding from the City of San Antonio, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the San Antonio River Foundation. SARA is overseeing construction on the project and will oversee operations, maintenance and concessions when the project is complete. For more information about this project please visit www.sanantonioriver.org.