



# CONCEPT





The creation of The San Antonio River Basin Plan for Nature-Based Park Resources for local populations (single-day user) is the first step in achieving a regional system of nature-based park resources, which should be linked to create a network of natural, recreational, and cultural points of interest. It is this regional network which may, in turn, bring economic development to local communities by attracting multi-day users (tourists) to the region. The flow of tourist dollars relies heavily on the creation of a multi-day experience, or an overnight stay, in which the user may spend money on accommodations/lodging, food, and entertainment / recreation.

The plan encourages a regional approach to creating a system wide collection of resources, unifying existing and future natural, cultural, and recreational opportunities located within the river basin. Together, the San Antonio River Basin and its population can create a unique system that blends recreation, history, culture, nature, and education while keeping its focus on the San Antonio River and its tributaries. The plan aims to celebrate the individual people, places, and ideas, but ultimately unite them as a singular entity.

The communities within the study area are stronger as a collection of destinations rather than individual competitors; pooling their economic, natural, and recreational resources to create a larger impact. The following elements each play an important role in creating this regional system, which will primarily benefit the residents of the region while potentially attracting tourist dollars as a result.

1. Cultural Centers
2. Culture-based Opportunities
3. Nature-based Opportunities
4. Resource Opportunities (by other governmental

- agencies)
5. Gateway/Water Trail Access
6. Activity Nodes
7. Identified Interest in Water Trails
8. Traveled Water Trails
9. Abandoned Rail Lines
10. On-Road Bicycle Trails

As these elements work together, the region must work together to create a cohesive, exciting plan that continually evolves and improves. The following pages describe each of the elements in more detail and how they function in the larger context.

## CULTURAL CENTERS

Cultural Centers are the incorporated cities within the study area that provide services for both single day and multi-day users. Along with being an incorporated city, these centers contain natural and historical resources of significance. Cultural Centers serve the role of providing users overnight accommodations, restaurants, retail, and emergency services to name a few. They should also provide simple comfort (*water, restrooms, trash receptacles, seating, shade, etc.*), trailheads, trail access points, and river access points.

The cities and towns identified as Cultural Centers include Somerset, China Grove, St. Hedwig, Elmendorf, La Vernia, Floresville, Stockdale, Poth, Falls City, Karnes City, Kenedy, Runge, and Goliad. Within a number of these communities there exist recreational (Karnes City Park) and educational (Jackson Nature Park) projects that are either being planned or constructed. These local projects not only serve the community they reside in, but will act as the catalyst for future development that will ultimately connect the study area on a larger, more regional level.

The City of Floresville is a good example of a community that is providing that spark for their citizens with the Floresville River Park and a separate venture with a hike and bike trail. While the River Park provides the many traditional recreational park opportunities (sports fields, swimming, playgrounds), the hike and bike trail takes advantage of the abandoned rail line that crosses the town. After years of negotiation and planning, the City was finally able to acquire the necessary right-of-way to construct a rail trail. Currently, an extension to this trail is being discussed.

In Goliad, citizens are taking advantage of the San Antonio River as a recreational resource and have created the Goliad Canoe Trail. This water trail could be the beginnings of a trend to ultimately navigate the entire length of river.

The Cultural Centers identified on the concept map are extremely important to the vitality of the nature-based park resource plan. Without the effort currently being undertaken by these centers, the vision for this plan could be even farther in the future. The Cultural Centers are critical hubs that not only address their existing population, but also provide a link to the rest of the region.

### **CULTURE-BASED OPPORTUNITIES**

Culture-based Opportunities include unincorporated communities or settlements in the river basin that provide historic or cultural opportunities. These communities do not currently serve the role of providing user services, but may be developed to support such services as future market conditions allow. Culture-based Opportunities may provide stopping points along on-road bike routes and water trails, but do not necessarily have the ability to currently support long-term, heavy use. These

communities also offer a wide variety of historical and natural amenities.

Culture-based Opportunities through the study area include Sutherland Springs, Kosciuszko, Cestohowa, Panna Maria, Helena, Charco, Weesatche, Berclair, Fannin, and Schroeder.

### **NATURE-BASED OPPORTUNITIES**

Nature-based Opportunities are those natural areas within the study area that are either established or being developed for public use. These locations are generally public domain and may offer recreation, interpretive, or educational opportunities. They do not have to be associated with a town or community, but are within adequate distance of these population centers. Like Cultural Centers and Culture-based Opportunities, Nature-based Opportunities become a component in the regional fabric of the four-county plan. These areas can become destinations themselves or simply links to other places. The Nature-based Opportunities identified in the study area are Braunig Lake, Calaveras Lake, Jackson Nature Park, Falls and Crossing Area (Falls City), and Natural Springs (Kenedy).

By 1970, SARA entered into agreements with the City of San Antonio's City Public Service allowing SARA to operate and manage Braunig and Calaveras Lake Parks. The parks located at these two locations offer a variety of activities for users, including boating, fishing, canoeing, picnicking, primitive camping, and hiking. These two facilities offer an incredible opportunity to tie into a regional system. By connecting to a bicycle trail system, for example, or acting as their own destinations, the unique activities present at Braunig and Calaveras Lakes are a good draw for users in southern Bexar County, Wilson County, and parts of Karnes County.



Jackson Nature Park is a 50-acre park on land donated to Wilson County by Mrs. Cloma Jackson. The park was deeded as a natural preserve and is being developed and operated through an interlocal agreement between Wilson County and the San Antonio River Authority. The immediate park development includes a primary and secondary pedestrian trail loop, picnic tables, drinking fountain, parking area, signage, and a fee collection box. Future phases are dependent upon further planning and funding, and may include development of an amphitheatre, Cibolo Creek water trail access station, pavilion, pedestrian trail expansion, signage and interpretative improvements, grape arbor gathering place, visitor center, park restrooms, and park host facilities. Jackson Nature Park lies in close proximity to potential bicycle trails, Cibolo Creek, and a Cultural Center (Stockdale) which makes it an attractive amenity for tourism, education, and regional activities.

The Falls and Crossing area is located on the San Antonio River upstream from Falls City. The area is actually a series of two falls (Skiles Falls and Falls City Falls) that are interspersed with historic crossings, or natural rock shelves, like Mays Crossing or Conquista Crossing. The falls are minor (anywhere between 2-and 4-feet) drops in the river, but help to create interesting dynamics in the normal flow of the river. The crossings located in this stretch of the river were historically some of the few ways early inhabitants of the area crossed the San Antonio River in route to their final destination (the crossings are discussed in more detail in pg. 31). Access to the falls and crossings may be limited to established water trails, but with their close proximity to the Falls City Cultural Center, the falls and historic crossings provide recreational, scenic, and cultural opportunities.

Hot mineral water was discovered in Kenedy in the early 1900's, and the Hot Wells Hotel and Bath House became a thriving business for almost twenty-five years. Today, the hot mineral water still runs in Kenedy, but is not currently used as a resource for economic development or tourism. These natural springs could potentially become the nature-based opportunity needed to complement the ongoing efforts to plan and implement a local city park and trail.

## **RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES**

Within the San Antonio River Basin there are a number of existing or planned resources that have been established by other governmental agencies independently of this study. These resources have been identified based on their proximity to cultural, natural, or historical amenities within the study area and can range from local city parks to nationally listed sites. Within the study area, Resource Opportunities again provide users with amenities that can help link a regional system. Resources are found within each county, and include Medina River Park, the Land Heritage Institute, Mitchell Lake and Wetlands, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Rancho de las Cabras, the New Karnes City Park, and Coletto Creek.

## **GATEWAY/WATER TRAIL ACCESS**

The purpose of Gateway/Water Trail Access areas is to provide users with a physical or visual connection to the San Antonio River, its tributaries, or area creeks and streams. These locations are spread throughout the study area, with the purpose of providing a wide range of opportunities for the user to engage the water. For mapping purposes, only major examples are shown. Through the general guidelines established below, other opportunities

should be identified and explored. The concept plan is simply setting a framework and highlighting the major crossings as researched in the planning process.

Gateways are identified as areas where the San Antonio River, or tributaries, is physically crossed by a State or U.S. Highway, abandoned rail line, or trail. The idea of a Gateway is to celebrate and embrace the river, rather than cross it without mention. Gateways can be a simple marker denoting the body of water crossed, or monumental architecture highlighting a culturally or historically significant crossing. As another option for gateway features, when a river crossing is within close proximity to a town or community, a great opportunity exists to create a “front door” by developing a city marker.

The San Antonio River is a constant element through the study area, and Water Trail Access is the key to the success of its utilization. Water Trail Access is vital to the user for canoeing, kayaking, fishing – activities identified through the public input process in which the public would like to engage. Generally, those citizens surveyed indicated that they would appreciate a form of free or low-cost public access to the river rather than crossing private land. It is intended that these locations occur in areas that provide the greatest amount of public access; such as, highway bridges or county road crossings, for example. The nature of the San Antonio River is such that its banks are generally steep and inaccessible. Therefore, part of the challenge in creating public access to the water is finding adequate areas that are clear, more gradual slopes that would require less site grading. At bridge crossings, the user can generally find these more gradual slopes within an established public right-of-way. Possible access points as identified on the plan include State Highway 16, Loop 1604,

US 87, State Highway 97, State Highway 123, State Highway 80, State Highway 72, State Highway 239, Riverdale County Road, US 59, US 183 and Duke Bridge County Road. In conjunction with the Texas Department of Transportation, opportunities might also exist where access points can be developed along with the reconstruction of a river crossing, rather than manipulating an existing condition.

Other entry points might be associated with existing parks, such as in Floresville’s River Park or Goliad State Park, or in close proximity to Cultural Centers or cultural/historical features, such as in Falls City and Panna Maria. The wide range of access possibilities is tremendous within the four-county region. Neither the locations listed, nor those yet to be identified, have been studied in great detail. Therefore, as specific projects are prioritized and funded, feasibility will need to be assessed for each location.

## ACTIVITY NODES

Through the development of the four-county plan for nature-based park resources, areas began to be identified as having several levels of user amenities with the convergence of multiple resources in one location. These areas have been labeled as Activity Nodes and might include water trail access, natural resources, and trails. The Activity Nodes identified are evenly distributed throughout the study area to ensure the greatest number of users possible. Criteria developed by the project team and approved by RPPAC were used in evaluating the nodes, and potential locations meeting the following criteria were then identified:

1. Presence of a Natural/Cultural/Historic Resource



2. Proximity to the San Antonio River or its tributaries
3. Proximity of Cultural Areas (Cities/Towns)
4. Location within a Natural Subregion
5. Proximity to Connection Opportunities (transportation network, etc)

In looking at the study area, the following Activity Nodes surfaced. These areas identify general locations of the convergence of multiple amenities and are not necessarily bounded by a specific perimeter. By consolidating multiple activities, we also address, to varying degrees, the established set of goals. These goals are evident in the opportunities created by the nodes.

## MEDINA RIVER ACTIVITY NODE

The Medina River Activity Node is located at the confluence of the Medina and San Antonio Rivers in southern Bexar County. The focus within this zone is the opportunity that is presented by both rivers. This Activity Node takes advantage of existing resources such as Medina River Park, the Land Heritage Institute, Mitchell Lake and Wetlands, and Braunig Lake. The rivers, the Nature-based Resources, and those resources already offered here by other agencies, create a base for activity in this area. In addition to water trail access resources, this area offers proximity to a system of potential multi-use hike and bike trails together with bicycle trails, bringing together several layers of activity and a variety of users.

Within the Medina River Activity Node, the opportunities exist for regional recreation by drawing users from southern Bexar County and Wilson County. Nature-based tourism and private economic development potential can be drawn

from the system of parks and the use of rivers and lakes. Access to water trails (in rivers or lakes) provides opportunity for connection to river-related recreation.

## NATURE PARK ACTIVITY NODE

The Nature Park Activity Node is generally located west/southwest of Stockdale along the Cibolo Creek in Wilson County. The existing resources that this activity node draws from include the Jackson Nature Park, the proximity to the Cibolo Creek, and the proximity to Stockdale. As previously discussed, the Jackson Nature Park offers various interpretive, educational, and recreational opportunities. The inclusion of Cibolo Creek within this node opens avenues to explore potential water trails, with water trail access occurring at State Highway 97 or County Road 537. In addition, with the introduction of an on-road bicycle trail system, the proximity to Stockdale is convenient to open the community as a cultural resource.

The development the Nature Park Activity node provides opportunities for nature-based education, regional recreational activity, and river-related access and recreation. As a destination for more natural amenities, and with its proximity to a Cultural Center, this node may also benefit from nature-based tourism and associated private economic development.

## RIVER, RAIL, AND ROADS ACTIVITY NODE

The River, Rail, and Roads Activity Node (RRR Activity Node) is generally located near Floresville along the San Antonio River in Wilson County. Within this zone, there is a fairly balanced mix of natural, cultural, and recreational resources to draw from. The existing resources include the San

Antonio River, Floresville River Park, Floresville Hike and Bike Trail, Rancho de las Cabras, and the proximity to the Cultural Center of Floresville.

The abandoned rail line in Floresville (discussed in the Abandoned Rail Line section) is potentially a multi-use rail trail amenity providing hiking, biking, and equestrian opportunities. The Floresville River Park also adds traditional recreation features as a balance to nature-based parks, such as the potential to develop an interpretive/educational zone utilizing the brush/crop resource of the area. With the inclusion of the San Antonio River, the RRR Activity Node provides opportunity for water trails, with access potential at State Highway 97. Rancho de las Cabras and the City of Floresville provide the historic and cultural resources, which give an anchor and destination to the RRR Activity Node; from which all other resources may be explored.

In relation to the set of project goals, opportunities available at the RRR Activity Node include water trail access and recreation, recreational activity (hike, bike, equestrian, sports fields, etc.), and nature-based tourism.

#### FALLS AND CROSSINGS ACTIVITY NODE

The Falls and Crossings Activity Node is generally located along the San Antonio River, upstream from Falls City, on the border between Wilson and Karnes Counties. Located within this node are the Skiles and Falls City Falls, as well as the Mays and Conquista Crossings. In addition, this area is in close proximity to Falls City, and also contains recreational potential with an abandoned rail line. The San Antonio River and its accessibility is the primary amenity of this node. As discussed earlier, not only do the two falls and natural rock crossings provide recreational opportunities, they also

appeal to an historic niche within the community. To utilize the river, a water trail from upstream of the first set of falls to the river crossing at US 181 would provide the local and regional user a unique environment from which to experience the natural surroundings.

The abandoned rail line in Floresville continues southward through Falls City. The rail line could potentially provide local and regional users with a multi-use trail for hiking, biking, and equestrian use. The nearby Cultural Center (Falls City) provides the anchor, or base, from which the other features are experienced. Besides water recreation and water trail access, the Falls and Crossings Activity Node presents opportunities for regional recreation, nature-based tourism, and private economic development.

#### CIBOLO CREEK ACTIVITY NODE

The Cibolo Creek Activity Node is located in the area of the confluence of the San Antonio River and Cibolo Creek in Karnes County. As with the confluence of two rivers in the Medina River Activity Node, this activity node highlights and celebrates the water as a resource. Other existing resources associated with this node include the nearby community of Panna Maria, the historic location of the Fuerte del Santa Cruz del Cibolo (both discussed in more detail in the Cultural Resources Analysis), and the close proximity of potential connections to a regional bicycle trail system. Water trail access points at State Highway 123 and further downstream in the town of Helena create water recreation opportunities, while the historic fort, the Polish settlement at Panna Maria, and the outlying communities all provide cultural insight. Opportunities for the Cibolo Creek Activity Node include regional recreation and water trail access



and recreation, along with nature-based tourism and education through the historic fort site. With the proximity to Panna Maria, Helena, and Cestohowa, and the connection between those communities through water trails or on-road bicycle trails, this zone creates a base for heritage tourism as historic resources in some of the oldest settlements in Texas. Private economic development can support the functions of this activity node.

## RIVER CORRIDOR ACTIVITY NODE

The River Corridor Activity Node is generally located around the town of Goliad in Goliad County. Existing resources found within this activity node include the Angel of Goliad Hike and Bike Trail, Goliad Canoe Trail, the proximity of historic downtown Goliad to the San Antonio River, Goliad State Park and Presidio La Bahia, and Mission Rosario. This activity node provides numerous culture-based resources and links to early settlements in south Texas. The cultural resources are the base upon which recreational opportunities (such as the multi-use trail and canoe trail) can be built. Also within this zone exists an abandoned rail line and tremendous potential for on-road bicycle trails.

The Goliad Canoe Trail is currently being developed and will utilize the portion of the San Antonio River in close proximity to downtown. This synergy created by cultural and recreational amenities promotes the River Corridor Activity Node hub as a spring board to the rest of the region, as well as the critical “southern hub” to the river corridor. Within the hub are opportunities for river-oriented economic development (private and public), nature-based and heritage tourism, and regional recreation. Moving outside of the activity node, users begin to take advantage of connections to other communities through regional bicycle routes (modeled after the

Mission Tour de Goliad annual bike routes) and the abandoned rail line from Berclair to Coletto Creek.

The potential for a kayak run in conjunction with the proposed Goliad Canoe Trail also exists. The kayak run ultimately becomes a regional attraction (from central Texas to the Coast) for those users in search of more adventurous and physical recreation. With the run comes the potential for private economic development ranging from kayak supply shops to restaurants.

## IDENTIFIED INTEREST IN WATER TRAILS VS. TRAVELED WATER TRAILS

Through the development of the nature-based park plan, the project team received input from citizens throughout the study area related to the accessibility and navigability of the San Antonio River, the Medina River, and Cibolo Creek. Between stories from local residence and written accounts by water trail enthusiasts (ex. Alamo City Rivermen), the project team was able to establish the river and its tributaries as a viable resource. The plan separates the water resources into two categories: Identified Interest in Water Trails and Traveled Water Trails.

Identified Interest in Water Trails has been recorded based mainly on public input of users who have accessed one or more of the water ways and participated in some form of water recreation. There is no indication from SARA or the public that the entire length of these water courses is entirely usable, but rather, while they’ve been used in the past, more detailed investigation would be required to determine feasibility. The interest to access existing rivers and creeks from Bexar County to Goliad County was very high. The San Antonio River, Medina River, and Cibolo Creek from Southern Bexar County to Karnes County remain

the most unpredictable at this time.

Traveled Water Trails have been identified through obtaining user group documentation, and researching existing and planned projects in the study area. For instance, the San Antonio River from the State Highway 72 crossing through Goliad to the Duke Bridge County Road has been navigated. Portions of that water trail encompass the efforts currently planned for the Goliad Canoe Trail. Falls City to Helena in Karnes County is also documented by user groups as being fairly navigable. Further feasibility studies need to be completed before any of the traveled water trails can be given approval for use, but indications to the project team are that these water ways are well ahead of many portions of the river. As with most sections of the rivers and creeks, the steep banks will be the first obstacle to clear in providing access and usage.

### **ABANDONED RAIL LINES**

Two separate abandoned rail lines are present within the study area. The first rail line runs from the northern edge of the study area in Bexar County to the southern edge of Karnes County, and the second rail line is identified as crossing Goliad County from near Berclair to south of Coletto Creek. Both of these lines converge in Beeville, south of the study area.

The main abandoned rail line through the study area begins approximately where Loop 410 and the San Antonio River intersect in southern Bexar County. From that point, the line proceeds through Elmendorf southward to Floresville, Poth, Falls City, Karnes City, Kenedy, and then turns south towards Beeville (located outside the project limits). The historical documentation of this rail line can be

found in the Cultural Resources Analysis. This link that parallels the San Antonio River for most of its journey, is an outstanding example of an amenity that can not only serve local users on a community level, but can also have regional implications. As previously mentioned, the City of Floresville has turned the rail corridor into a multi-use trail for its citizens. At the present time, the trail is not fully developed, nor is it of tremendous length, but it serves its local users well and is surely the catalyst from which further expansion and connection can occur. Karnes City and Kenedy are also exploring the idea of converting the rail lines in their communities to multi-use trails. Opportunities exist where railroad trusses and bridges cross rivers and creeks to provide an aesthetic appeal. Once the rail right-of-way is obtained, various trail types can be explored for use. Generally, there is adequate room for different uses (hike, bike, equestrian), but each will need to be researched in greater detail for specific locations. Also, negotiations with rail companies can be a lengthy process, so implementation may not be immediate.

The second line that presents a multi-use trail opportunity is located in Goliad County. The City of Goliad is the logical trail head and destination from which day trips can occur. The abandoned rail can be tied to the existing Angel of Goliad Trail to serve local users and regional users (or tourists) at the same time. The rail trail, combined with the bicycle loop system, gives users various options of length, difficulty, and interest.

### **ON-ROAD BICYCLE TRAILS**

On-road bikeways can provide connectors to destinations, especially where off-road trail corridors are not available, such that when considered together the on- and off- road segments form an



integrated system for bicycle travel, which can serve both recreational and transportation purposes.

The San Antonio River Basin Plan for Nature-Based Park Resources study area provides numerous possibilities for these tourism trails. While they could be referred to as loop trails, especially when considered together with the potential rail trails, they are much more than recreational loops. These on-road bicycle facilities can be utilized by local residents within communities for destination-oriented routes for both local residents and tourists into the rural areas where they may explore both the natural and cultural resource destinations along the way during single or multi-day trips.

The potential loops shown on the Regional Concept map are intended to link cultural, historical, and recreational resources. For instance, Goliad holds an annual bike ride, the Mission Tour de Goliad, which is comprised of different routes, consisting of a series of stacked loops for bicyclists with different skill levels. These loops also provide access to culture based resources in Goliad, Weesatche, and Charco; as well as multiple San Antonio River access points. This system can be expanded, as funds allow, to ultimately form a regional bicycle tourism trail system.

The suitability of specific segments of roadways has not been studied in detail, and the routes shown on the Regional Concept map are examples of potential on-road bicycle trails. Further analysis of roadway conditions will be needed prior to determining the suitability of specific routes and the need for specific treatments for such roadways to be signed as Bicycle Tourism Trails or local bike routes. Roadways with low traffic volumes and speeds, together with adequate space for bicyclists to operate (wide outside lanes, bike lanes, or suitable

shoulders) and good sight lines are all important factors in considering the suitability of specific roadway segments for encouraging bicycling.

## TRAILS

The San Antonio River corridor in southern Bexar County, southward through Wilson, Karnes and Goliad Counties is rich in cultural resources, dating back to the Spanish missions and later the battles for Texas independence and the historic cattle drives.

In reviewing the inventory data for the four-county area related to trails, there are already some multi-use and nature trails in existence. Most are site based trails suitable for exercise, recreation, and nature interpretation; however, the abandoned Union Pacific rail corridor within Floresville is linear and also serves a destination-oriented or transportation function.

Within the four-county area, there is an opportunity to craft a network of trails, which can potentially provide recreation and access to the abundant natural and cultural resources utilizing a combination of greenway, abandoned rail and the future water transmission line, together with on-road bicycle connections where needed. Key constraints include right-of-way availability, landowner attitudes, funding for construction and maintenance.

Another potential approach to trail development is to concentrate interconnected trail development within incorporated areas along publicly owned corridors such as riverfront stretches, city, state and national park properties, and roadway rights-of-way.

*Different types of pathways that may be appropriate include:*

HARD SURFACE TRAILS: MULTI-USE HIKE/BIKE/SKATE TRAILS

Natural Conditions

Appropriate in areas where construction, maintenance, and trail erosion may be a concern

Appropriate where preservation of sensitive environments is not a concern

Cultural Conditions

Appropriate for heavily-used activity areas (walking trails in parks, connectors in urban areas, sidewalks, etc.)

Community access to destinations along the trail (historic sites, scenic views, parks, schools, shopping, services)

Tourism and economic development (20+mile trails)

Recreation/ fitness/exercise

Considerations

Right-of way availability

Funding

Landowner support

SOFT SURFACE TRAILS

*Nature/Interpretive/hiking/walking/jogging trails*

Natural Conditions

Appropriate through ecologically-sensitive sites

(less construction impact); can be routed through heavily-treed environments with little disturbance

Does not contribute to increased runoff (pervious surfaces)

Soft-surface trails constructed of loose surface materials may need to be routed along flatter alignments to avoid erosion and wash-away

Increased maintenance requirements as compared to hard-surface trails

Cultural Conditions

Appropriate for low-impact uses such as

Education

Recreation/fitness/exercise

Tourism

Volunteer development support (trail building, trail maintenance days)

Considerations

Right-of-way availability

Landowner support

*Equestrian trails*

Natural Conditions

Appropriate along longer corridors (opportunity for private trails and facilities)

Inappropriate through fragile environments due to potential for user impacts

Minimal construction requirements/impacts

Cultural Conditions

Appropriate for uses such as:



Recreation/exercise  
Tourism

Economic development (horse or pack animal rentals, boarding, camping)

Volunteer development support

### Considerations

Right-of-way availability

Maintenance

Landowner support

Fragile environments

*Mountain bike trails (off-road bike trails)*

### Natural Conditions

Appropriate in areas with varied topography

Appropriate in areas with rocky terrain

Stacked-loop trails with varying degrees of challenge on confined parcels

Linear trails (such as rail-trail in rural areas)

Low-impact construction requirements

Routing must be carefully considered to prevent environmental degradation through erosion and the development of “renegade” trails along steep slopes

Inappropriate in fragile environments, due to potential for user impacts

### Cultural Conditions

Appropriate for uses such as:

Recreation/fitness/exercise

Tourism

Volunteer development, patrolling and maintenance support

### Considerations

Right-of-way availability

Landowner support

Fragile environments

Note: Soft surface trails may be shared-use or single user type trails. If shared-use trails are desirable, trail etiquette is that bicyclists yield to hikers, and hikers yield to equestrians.

## ON-ROAD BIKEWAYS

### Natural Conditions

Appropriate along roadways; cultural considerations apply

### Cultural Conditions

Streets within communities that have low traffic volume and speed are suitable for cyclists to share with motorized traffic. These may be signed with nothing more than way finding and/or a bike route sign.

Streets within communities with higher traffic volumes and speeds may be suitable given wide outside (14') shared-use lanes, bike lanes or shoulders.

Roadways in unincorporated areas can be suitable for touring cyclists given light traffic and good sight

lines. These may serve as connectors between trails or destinations in incorporated areas, and also lead visitors to natural and cultural resources in the area.

Roadways in unincorporated areas, especially those with smooth, paved shoulders can generally provide safe space for cyclists on more heavily traveled roads.

#### Considerations

City streets with heavy traffic, high speeds, and narrow lanes are not appropriate for signing as bikeways.

Any roadway with shoulders wide enough for motorized traffic, where slower traffic travels along the shoulder or moves to the shoulder to pass on the right, should not be signed as a bikeway. (This can be highly dangerous when sightlines due to hills or curves, are poor or drivers are inattentive.)

Roadways with rough, slurry seal shoulders are less desirable for distance cycling.

### WATER TRAILS FOR CANOES, KAYAKS, TUBING AND RAFTING

#### Natural Conditions

Appropriate along navigable rivers and creeks

Gentle slopes for canoe launch and take out points are necessary

Suitable water quality is necessary

Inadequate water flow or obstructions are undesirable

#### Cultural Conditions

Access to historic sites along banks or public areas is desirable

#### Tourism

Economic development (canoe rentals, guided trips, camping facilities along river)

#### Considerations

Funding for launch and take out facilities

Landowner attitudes

# SAN ANTONIO RIVER BASIN PLAN FOR NATURE BASED PARK RESOURCES

## REGIONAL CONCEPT

### LEGEND

- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Highway
- Road
- River and Major Creeks

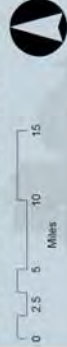
### REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (BASED ON PUBLIC INPUT)

- Identified Interest in Water Trails
- Traveled Water Trails
- On Road Bicycle Loop Trail (Example)
- Abandoned Rail Line  
(Potential for Multi-Use Rail Trail)
- Cultural Center (Incorporated)
- Gateway/Water Trail Access (Example)
- Nature-Based Opportunity
- Culture-Based Opportunity
- Resource Opportunity  
(by Other Governmental Agencies)
- Activity Node

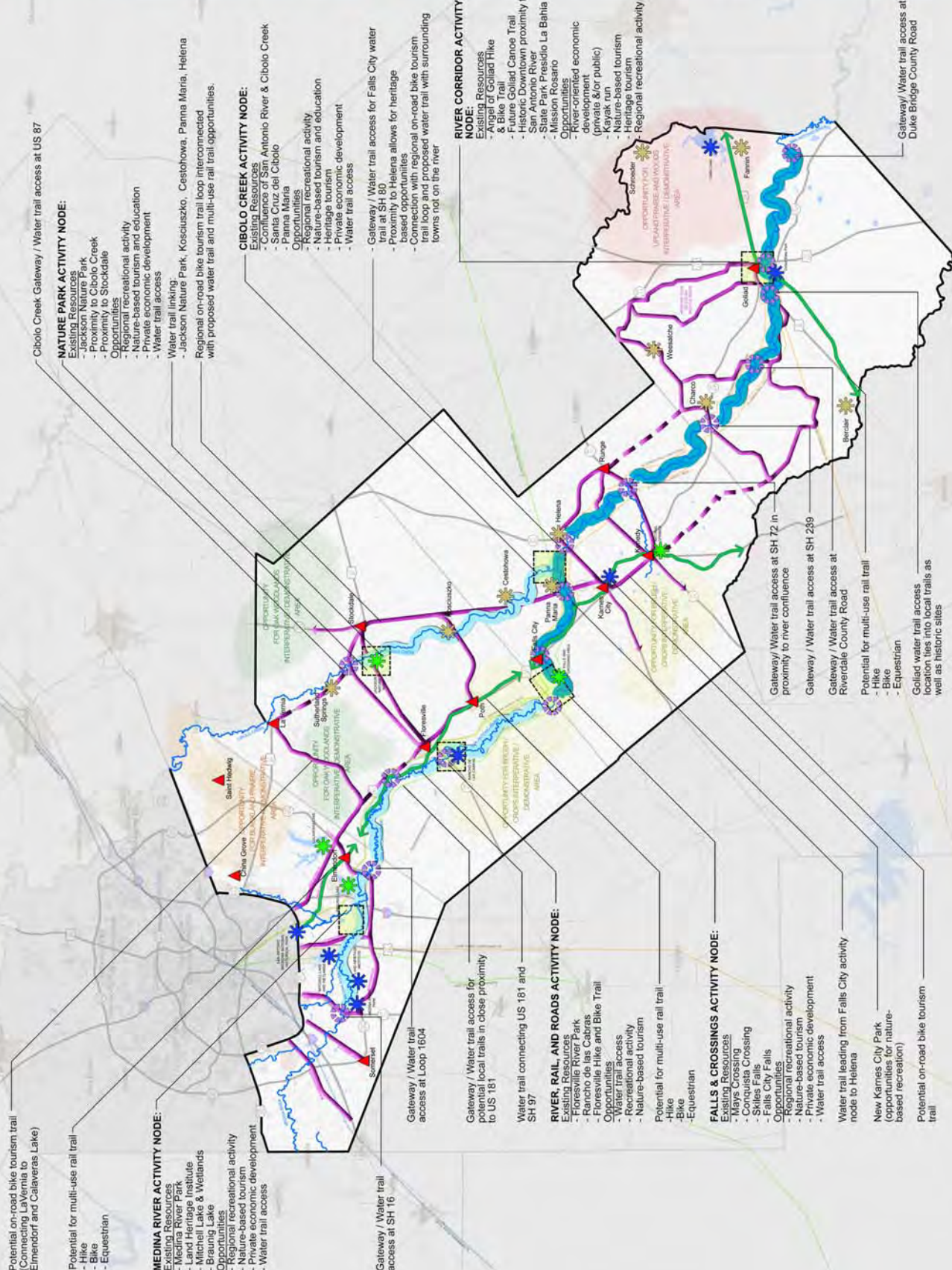
- Proximity to River or its Tributaries
- Proximity to Cultural Assets (Castles/Towers)
- Locations within a National Subregion
- Proximity to Corridor Opportunities (Roads, etc.)



In association with  
**Bowman-Melton Associates**  
Marketing Support  
**Roberts & Williams Associates**  
**UTSA Center for Archaeological Research**



**REGIONAL PARK PLANNING  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



Potential on-road bike tourism trail  
(Connecting Lavaca to Elmendorf and Calaveras Lake)

Potential for multi-use rail trail  
- Hike  
- Bike  
- Equestrian

**MEDINA RIVER ACTIVITY NODE:**  
- China Grove  
- Medina River Park  
- Land Heritage Institute  
- Mitchell Lake & Wetlands  
- Braung Lake  
- Opportunities  
- Regional recreational activity  
- Nature-based tourism  
- Private economic development  
- Water trail access

Gateway / Water trail access at SH 16

Gateway / Water trail access for potential local trails in close proximity to US 181

Water trail connecting US 181 and SH 97

**RIVER, RAIL, AND ROADS ACTIVITY NODE:**  
- Floresville River Park  
- Rancho de las Cabras  
- Floresville Hike and Bike Trail  
- Water trail access  
- Recreational activity  
- Nature-based tourism

Potential for multi-use rail trail  
- Hike  
- Bike  
- Equestrian

**FALLS & CROSSINGS ACTIVITY NODE:**  
- Mays Crossing  
- Conquistia Crossing  
- Skiles Falls  
- Falls City Falls  
- Opportunities  
- Regional recreational activity  
- Nature-based tourism  
- Private economic development  
- Water trail access

Water trail leading from Falls City activity node to Helena

New Karnes City Park (opportunities for nature-based recreation)

Potential on-road bike tourism trail

Cibolo Creek Gateway / Water trail access at US 87

**NATURE PARK ACTIVITY NODE:**  
- Existing Resources  
- Jackson Nature Park  
- Proximity to Cibolo Creek  
- Proximity to Stockdale  
- Opportunities  
- Regional recreational activity  
- Nature-based tourism and education  
- Private economic development  
- Water trail access

Water trail linking:  
- Jackson Nature Park, Kosciusko, Cestohowa, Panna Maria, Helena  
Regional on-road bike tourism trail loop interconnected with proposed water trail and multi-use rail trail opportunities.

**CIBOLO CREEK ACTIVITY NODE:**

- Confluence of San Antonio River & Cibolo Creek
- Panna Maria
- Opportunities
- Regional recreational activity
- Nature-based tourism and education
- Heritage tourism
- Private economic development
- Water trail access

- Gateway / Water trail access for Falls City water trail at SH 16 to Helena allows for heritage based opportunities
- Connection with regional on-road bike tourism trail loop and proposed water trail with surrounding towns not on the river

**RIVER CORRIDOR ACTIVITY NODE:**

- Existing Resources
- Angle of Goliad Hike
- Future Goliad Canoe Trail
- Historic Downtown proximity to San Antonio River
- State Park Presidio La Bahia
- Mission Rosario
- Opportunities
- River-oriented economic development (open for public)
- Kayak run
- Nature-based tourism
- Heritage tourism
- Regional recreational activity

Gateway / Water trail access at SH 72 in proximity to river confluence

Gateway / Water trail access at SH 239

Gateway / Water trail access at Riverdale County Road

Potential for multi-use rail trail  
- Hike  
- Bike  
- Equestrian

Goliad water trail access location ties into local trails as well as historic sites

Gateway Water trail access at Duke Bridge County Road