



TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: CITY OF SAN ANTONIO PROPOSITION 2

STATUS: ADOPTED

DATE: 09/23/2010

RECOMMENDATION: That the Board of Directors of The Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce adopt the following statement as policy:

STATEMENT: The Chamber supports the City of San Antonio's Proposition 2 Sales Tax for the Creekways Parks Development and Expansion Venue Project. The Chamber believes the extension of Proposition 2 enhances the overall quality of life in San Antonio by preserving our unique ecosystem, enhancing our storm water management and will further develop the interconnecting hike and bike trails throughout the City.

BACKGROUND:

The City's linear parkway program is designed to establish a continuous linkage along Leon Creek and Salado Creek and their tributaries. The purpose of the program is to create a linear park system within city limits that incorporates passive flood control components with appropriate park amenities. Leon Creek and Salado Creek are two of San Antonio's primary watersheds and significant rainfall can cause these two creeks to swell beyond their banks and threaten life and property nearby. However, during dry periods, these creeks offer miles of rugged, natural terrain for hiking and mountain biking.

Proposition 2 authorizes the City to impose and use a 1/8-of-a-cent sales tax to collect \$45 million for the acquisition of open space and linear parks along Leon Creek, Salado Creek, the Medina River and the San Antonio River. These areas will become part of the municipal park system and include park improvements supported by sales tax funds.

2000 Proposition 3

In May 2000, voters approved the Proposition 3 Sales Tax for Park Land Acquisition Program to provide funds to support aquifer protection and parks expansion through the development of linear creekways. The tax provided for an investment of \$65 million for the purchase and development of property over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone in the Salado Creek and Leon Creek watersheds (\$45 million was for the Edward's program and \$20 million for the creekways program).

The sales tax was collected from October 2000 until the required funds for each project was collected in July 2004. The Proposition 3 funds allowed the creekways program to purchase properties in selected contiguous areas of Salado Creek and Leon Creek through 2006. By February 2005, over 200 acres had been purchased and another 2,000 acres were proposed for acquisition to complete the program.

2005 Proposition 2

In May 2005, voters approved Proposition 1 Sales Tax for Edward's Aquifer Protection and Proposition 2 Sales Tax for Creekways Parks Development and Expansion. These two propositions provide for a sales tax increase (1/8 of a cent) up to \$135 million (\$90 million for Proposition 1 and \$45 million for Proposition 2). Proposition 2 provided continued funds to acquire and develop linear parks along the Leon and Salado Creeks as well as to make improvements to projects on the Medina River and the San Antonio River.

The tax collection started in October 2005 with the first funds available in December 2005. The program completed the work started with the 2000 Proposition 3 acquisition and development of properties into useable recreational space and to protect life and property near flood-prone areas. As of August 2010, the Linear Creek Greenways had acquired over 1100 acres of creekways property (not including existing parks connected by the greenways)

Linear Creek Greenways Current Project Status as of 8/10/10

22 miles of trail construction completed (7 trail segments)

- Leon Creek Greenway (Babcock to Bandera) – 4 miles
- Salado Creek Greenway (Heubner to Blanco) – 1.7 miles
- Salado Creek Greenway (McAllister to loop 410) – 4 miles
- Salado Creek Greenway (410 to Rittiman) – 3 miles
- Salado Creek Greenway (Rigsby to SS Lions Park) – 2.3 miles
- Medina River Greenway (Medina River Natural Area to Old Applewhite Rd.) – 3 miles
- Medina River Greenway (Old Applewhite Rd. to Medina River Crossing) – 4 miles

4 Trail Segments Currently under Construction (approximately 14.5 miles)

- Leon Creek Greenway North (1604 to Babcock) – 3.8 miles
- Leon Creek Greenway Central (Bandera to Ingram) – 5.7 miles
- Salado Creek Hike & Bike Phase 2 – 2.5 miles
- Salado Creek Hike & Bike Phase 1 – 2.5 miles

4 Trail Segments Currently under Design

- Leon Creek Greenway South (Loop Trail at Levi Strauss Park) – 2 miles
- Leon Creek Greenway South (Pearsall Park to near Quintana Road) – 1.5 miles
- Medina River Greenway Phase 3 (Medina River Crossing to Pleasanton Rd.) – 3 miles
- Medina River Greenway Phase 4 (Pleasanton Rd. to Mitchell Lake) – 3 miles

2010 Proposition 2

On June 10, 2010 the San Antonio City Council called a special election for November 2, 2010, to allow voters the option of extending the 1/8-cent sales tax up to \$135 million for the Proposition 1 Edwards Aquifer Protection Initiative and the Proposition 2 Parks Development and Expansion Venue Project (\$90 million for Proposition 1 and \$45 million for Proposition 2).

Proposition 2 includes the acquisition of open space and linear parks along San Antonio's creekways, specifically including Leon Creek, Salado Creek, Apache Creek, Alazan Creek, Martinez Creek, San Pedro Creek, the Medina River and the San Antonio River and for improvements and additions to the Municipal Parks and Recreation System.

Reasons for supporting this statement:

1. The people of San Antonio will benefit by the continuation of this sales tax, through preservation of the creekways' unique ecosystems, enhanced storm water management, greater recreation opportunities and enhancement of alternative transit opportunities through an interconnected system of pedestrian and bicycle routes throughout San Antonio.
2. Proposition 2 is a continuation of creekway acquisition measures which have successfully acquired more than 1,100 acres of creekway property and at least 22 miles of hike and bike trails throughout the City.

Reasons for opposing this statement:

1. In light of a recovering economy, perhaps the sales tax dollars should support other community priorities such as infrastructure or transit initiatives.
2. The Linear Park Development Program does not have an end goal for the Creekways Parks Development and Expansion Venue Project. It is not clear to the community how many extensions will be requested and how long it may be before these tax funds could be dedicated toward other community resources.

IMPLEMENTATION: The Chamber will communicate this position to the Mayor and members of the City Council, the media and The Chamber membership through public testimony, letters, media releases and publication in *The Chamber Today*.