



San Felipe Creek Coalition
Strategic Foundations
July 2022

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Process and Methodology](#)

[Checklist of Critical Tasks](#)

[Recommended Actions](#)

[Summary of Strategic Direction](#)

[Focus Area Action Tables](#)

[Roles](#)

[Appendix A: Activities & Tasks](#)

[Developing Goal Statements](#)

[Action Plan & Tracker](#)

[Advocacy Scenario Chart](#)

[Skills Table](#)

[Appendix B: Resources](#)

[Advocacy & Partnership Building](#)

[Fundraising](#)

[Technical Assistance Grants](#)

[Decision Making](#)

[Appendix C: Reference](#)

Introduction

The Strategic Foundations for the San Felipe Creek Coalition (SFCC) is a culmination of their members' contributions to a virtual multi-workshop strategic planning process. While SFCC partners originally wished to be a loose and informal group, they have since evolved, reformed, and rebranded. Their primary objective in pursuing strategic planning and collaboration workshops was to build an established organizational structure to support long-term resource protection efforts for San Felipe Creek. This report includes the story and findings of the workshop process and compiles resources for finalizing the SFCC strategic plan.

SFCC was awarded technical assistance by the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (NPS RTCA) Program in 2019. Their assistance request included issues identification, action planning, stakeholder engagement, and conceptual planning for San Felipe Creek in Del Rio, Texas. After experiencing several challenges both within the team and in the Del Rio community, SFCC made key changes in team membership and leadership and committed to building a new organizational framework. NPS RTCA partnered with Connected Realities, a collaboration firm based in Denver, Colorado, to facilitate the strategic planning process for SFCC.

Process and Methodology

San Felipe Creek Coalition embarked on an analysis and discovery process over the course of six virtual workshops, with some individual and team work in between. All existing SFCC members were invited to participate. Early on in the workshop series the group agreed on a quorum of 5 people

(or 50% attendance) for decision making. The quorum was met and sustained at all but one workshop; between 5 - 8 coalition members, as well as NPS RTCA staff, were present for at least a portion of each meeting.

The facilitation approach was rooted in deep listening, curiosity, understanding, and agreement. To aid learning and track progress throughout the process, a virtual whiteboard (Miro) was used to generate ideas, capture opinions, and visualize concepts. Notes and pictures of the Miro board were sent to the entire coalition after each meeting to keep everyone, including those who could not attend, informed and up to date.

Before the first workshop, participants were asked to complete a Collaboration Assessment (see [Appendix C](#)). This survey showed perceived strengths in group decision-making, participation, and collaboration, with room for growth in areas of effective coordination, roles and responsibilities, goals and strategies, mission, and vision, a welcoming culture, and broader buy-in. While it was later learned that the survey was answered based on the previous rather than the current group membership and their recent experiences, these topics would ultimately become the focus for the workshops.

- **Workshops 1 & 2:** The workshop series began with a situation analysis (see [Appendix C](#)) to help the group identify opportunities and challenges of the coalition, and decide how to prioritize and focus their workshop time together. These first two meetings also yielded group agreements – foundations for how the

coalition worked together in this space and beyond.

- **Workshop 3:** The focus of workshop 3 was to refine SFCC's existing mission statement, and begin to write a vision statement. A visual of a boat sailing along a waterway into the sunset (a strategic planning metaphor) was shared to explain how the concepts inform one another. (See [Appendix C](#)) To develop a draft vision statement, teams completed a creative exercise that asked them to imagine what article headlines would be written about San Felipe Creek 20 years into the future.
- **Workshop 4:** After some editing and finessing of the vision and mission statements, the group brainstormed goals that would take them towards that vision. These goals preliminarily fell under the categories of: education and outreach; a healthy, thriving ecosystem; and vibrant local community/community gathering space. The coalition met on their own time to continue to generate goals and goal categories, and filled out a form to help sign up for and clarify roles and responsibilities.
- **Workshop 5:** The bulk of workshop 5 was spent understanding the challenges of working

with the City of Del Rio, and exploring approaches and opportunities to foster a better relationship with them. Two case studies (Monarch Waystation and the Unfinished Bird-City Outdoor Classroom) were explored to imagine what an ideal relationship with the city could look like, and the steps or strategies SFCC could take to get there.

- **Workshop 6:** In the final workshop participants returned to goals and strategies and integrated new goals that stemmed directly from Del Rio's Master Plan. Coalition members made an update to the mission statement, narrowed down the number of goal categories, practiced making goal actions more specific, measurable and time-bound, added a few new roles to the roles chart, and wrapped up by expressing gratitude for their time together.

By the end of the workshop series, the San Felipe Creek Coalition finalized [vision and mission statements](#), and generated the beginnings of a [roles chart](#) and categorized [focus areas](#). This section summarizes and builds on that work. More details have been added to the roles chart, and suggestions for finalizing both that chart and putting goals on a timeline have been included.

Checklist of Critical Tasks

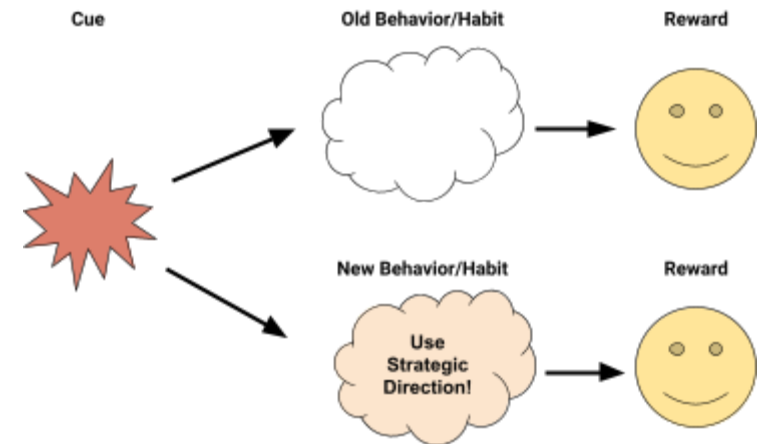
The list below captures the next steps SFCC must take together to finalize the strategic foundations into a strategic plan.

1. [Develop goal statements](#) for each Focus Area
2. Complete the [Action Plan & Tracker](#)
3. Use [Role chart](#) to assign critical organizational roles, or make a plan for how and when to assign them when they become relevant; Update and edit role responsibilities and skills as needed.

Recommended Actions

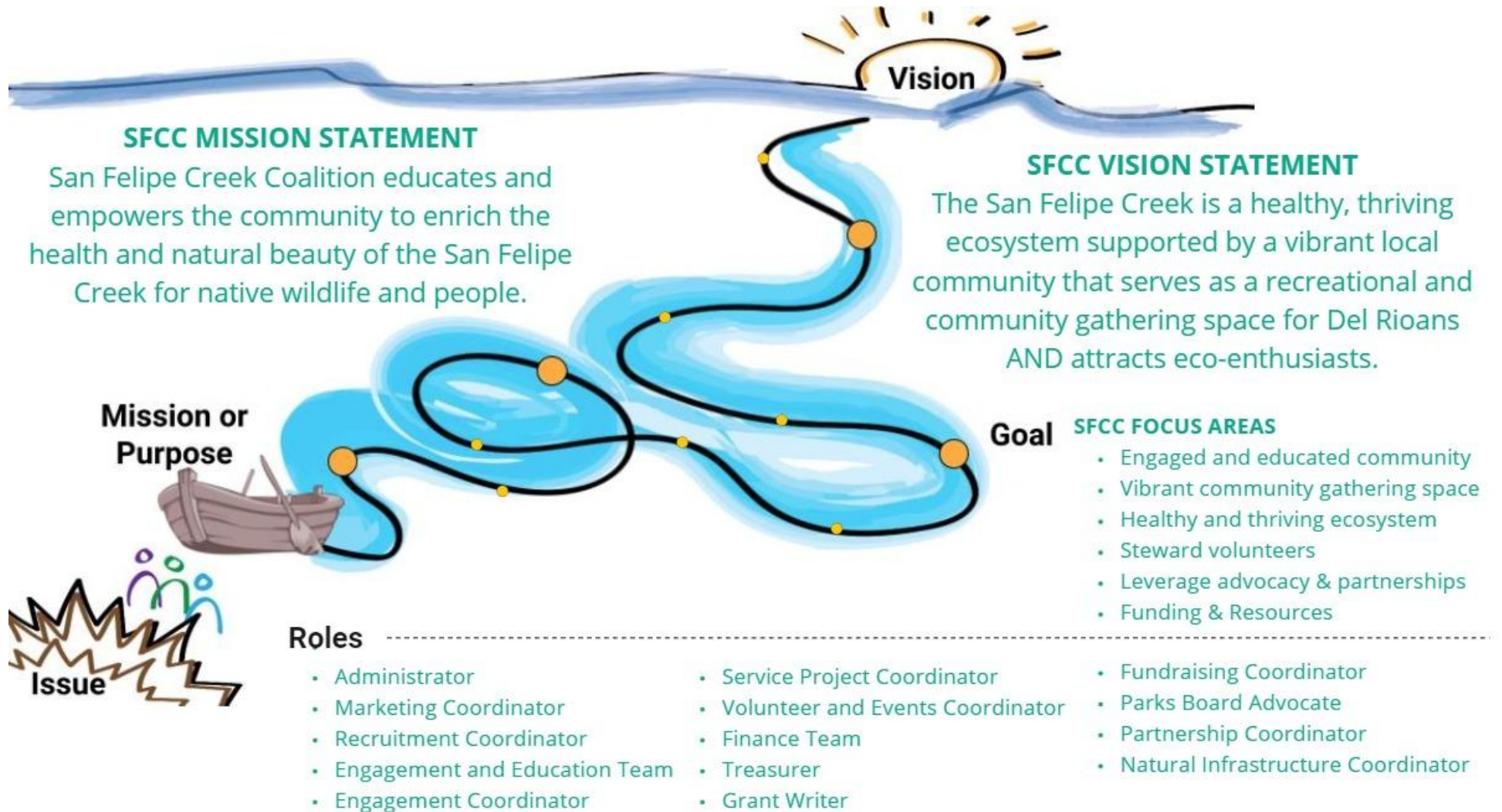
Beyond the actions that SFCC identified in order to fulfill their vision, NPS RTCA and Connected Realities have listed additional recommended actions for SFCC to consider for their organizational development:

- Take the time to apply the new learning you've developed during these workshops. Reflect on how you previously respond to various situations while doing SFC work and think through how you might respond now that you have [Strategic Direction](#). Think of ways to reward yourselves for developing new habits, whether it be using a new task management tool or how you communicate with the community. The key to developing new habits that stick is to reward yourself with something small but meaningful every time you perform the habit.



- Decide on a decision-making protocol for various levels of decisions. SFCC has decided not to have a president or officers and instead for everyone to have a voice in decisions. SFCC's group agreements indicate that "We will have a vote (maybe not on everything, but important tasks)" and "Majority vote and check-in with folks who disagree". To ensure an engaged and resilient team, we encourage you to develop a more detailed decision-making protocol that indicates when you will use majority vote (what qualifies as an "important task"?) and how you'll make decisions when you don't have a quorum. See Decision-Making in [Appendix B](#) for more information.
- Continue to monitor interest and boundaries of each member to ensure a resilient team.
- Decide on what systems to implement and enforce going forward: ie. regular meeting time, process for taking notes and following up on tasks.

Summary of Strategic Direction



Focus Area Action Tables

The Action Tables below are a collective starting point for an SFCC [action plan](#). Each table is dedicated to a Focus Area and lists relevant Actions according to their timeline - Now, Later, or Needs a Timeline. See [Checklist of Critical Tasks](#) for next steps.

Engaged and educated community (programming)		
Now	Later	Needs a Timeline
1. Engage the youth of the community. 2. Mini workshop on Texas Water Curriculum. 3. Educate private landowners about what a healthy ecosystem is. 4. City workshops about native landscaping. 5. Signage on invasive species. 6. Create a community events calendar on Google Docs. 7. Make Randi admin of Facebook Group.	1. Engage the public, adults, and people who aren't already "bought in". 2. Provide Texas Water Curriculum to elementary schools.	• <i>Thoughtful language practices that respectfully engage all community</i> • <i>Increase engagement on Facebook page</i> • <i>Education around environmental justice and human health issues</i> • <i>Back to Nature programming in the summer</i> • <i>Booth at Earth Day</i> • <i>Bags at Easter</i> • <i>Education for plastic bag reduction - reusable bags</i> • <i>Update point of contact list for invasives</i> • <i>Education on No Mow Zones</i> • <i>Education opportunity for SFCRCISD Summer Program</i> • <i>Outreach materials with logo</i> • <i>City Park staff workshop Fig 16 in Master Plan (Sarah Howard)</i>

Vibrant community gathering space (physical improvement)		
Now	Later	Needs a Timeline
1. Community planting days in the park! 2. Birding recreation events. 3. Heart of San Felipe Creek Mapping Projects.	1. Community and citizen science programming (I Naturalist, Texas Master Naturalist curriculum, Texas Natural Waters curriculum) 2. Water-based outdoor rec events (like kayaking) 3. Exercise equipment along the SFC 4. Develop FEMA Properties like sensory garden, etc. (with education)	• <i>Data collection all along the creek, like sampling water quality</i> • <i>Hold presentations at the amphitheater</i> • <i>Outdoor recreation events (birding, walking/hiking tours)</i> • <i>Monarch butterfly viewing, documentation (videos, etc.)</i> • <i>Community and citizen science</i> • <i>Armored Catfish Tournament</i>

Healthy and thriving ecosystem	
Now	Later
1. Workshop on the importance of a natural, non-manicured Creek 2. Tree planting projects 3. Invasive species removal. 4. River clean-ups -- removing old trash from the flood of '98 5. Bird City certification	1. Work with Parks Staff to achieve a healthy riparian area. 2. Agreement with city to water all plantings of trees 3. Removal of invasive species. 4. Buy La Loma de la Cruz 5. River cane removal 6. Catfish removal 7. Complete all requirements of the Bird City certification.

Steward Volunteers		
Now	Later	Needs a Timeline
1. Recruit volunteers 2. Stream team inventory - coordinate with Lake about restocking	1. Citizen Science program for the community	• <i>Naming and committing to DEI norms and values</i> • <i>Clarity on meeting schedules and agendas</i> • <i>Clear and accessible place of where to find all documents and resources</i> • <i>Outreach materials with logo (ie. table clothes, vinyl stickers, pencils, keychains lanyards, bumper stickers, plastic cups with logo)</i> • <i>T-shirt design and group pictures</i> • <i>Casa Naturalist - track volunteer hours</i>

Funding & Resources		
Now	Later	Needs a Timeline
1. Find funding 2. Review technical assistance grants shared by Connected Realities	1. Find a grant writer to assist the coalition for development of trails and purchase of access to La Loma de La Cruz.	• <i>RTP grant with TPWD - trail building up to \$300k</i> • <i>Border Resource Protection grant through Amistad</i> • <i>Urban Park Design (Grants for park designing) page 76 of Master Plan focused access feature</i>

Leverage Advocacy & Partnerships		
Now	Later	Needs a Timeline
1. Advocate with City for these projects	2. Develop partnership with city parks	• Establish a review process that evaluates sites and projects ahead of time/checklist to ensure a location is ideal • Training and workshops with maintenance folks? • SFCC can learn about the structure of the city and better understand how things get done • Introduction to new leadership - City mayor, city council, city manager • Share our mission statement/strategic plan at mini workshops. • Ask the City to designate parks staff to work with SFCC and have floaters do other jobs. • Add a City representative role to SFCC • Remove tire padding from playgrounds at Skate Park & Lions Park to prevent it from getting into creek - info about microplastics and alternatives. • Decrease chlorine from the community pool. • Remove islands in the creek • Cheat Sheet: which City Goals connect to SFCC's goals. Use to have

Roles

The situation analysis indicated that clarity around roles and responsibilities would help give SFCC the structure it needs to continue to grow and thrive. A list of roles – some for the short term, others for the long term – were brainstormed during the workshop process. This table outlines these roles, and the associated responsibilities and skill sets needed. SFCC can continue to shape and prioritize these roles based on capacity and need.

Role Title	Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
Administrator	1. Make sure information and resources are readily available to coalition members – through google classroom management. 2. Send out meeting invites. 3. Take and share meeting notes, including capturing action items.	• Organized, communicative, inclusive, transparent. • Knowledge of google docs, google classroom, other tech related to SFCC.	Rene
Marketing Coordinator	1. Utilize communication platforms (Facebook, instagram, radio, newspaper, etc.) to educate the community about SFCC and promote events and programming, including river clean posts. 2. Administrator and sign-in keeper of all social media accounts. 3. Get approval from the coalition about social media posts.	• Graphics and writing skills. • Knowledge of how to use and best utilize social media and other media platforms. • Good at preparing and posting materials in advance. • Collaborative – incorporate feedback from coalition members.	Randi

Role Title	Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
Recruitment Coordinator	1. Support coalition members in recruiting new members and volunteers. 2. Design and keep track of inquiry forms. 3. Contact references of new volunteers, or delegate. 4. Work with Marketing Coordinator to publicize recruitment opportunities.	• Relationships in the community. • Open and outgoing, curious about what people have to offer. • Ability to follow up with volunteers and maintain consistent/transparent communication.	_____
Parks Board Advocate	1. Present requests and proposals to the Parks Board. 2. Work with coordinators (listed in this table) to understand the priority requests and proposals of SFCC. 3. Build and maintain positive relationships with Parks Board members. 4. Report back to SFCC on meeting outcomes.	• Confident public speaker. • Relationship building skills. • Availability to attend Park Boards meetings, and knowledge of how they work	Amanda, Rene, Randi

Role Title		Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
Engage- ment and Education Team	Engagement and Education Coordinator	1. Work to design and implement educational events, materials, and collaborations in partnership with other coordinators on Engagement and Education Team. 2. Work with coalition members on co-designing programs that uplifting their specific area of knowledge about creek conservation.	• Management skills. • Event-planning experience.	_____
	Service Projects Coordinator	1. Plan and implement service projects (like creek clean-ups and tree plantings). 2. Casa Naturalist service projects. 3. Track volunteer hours.	• Planning and scheduling. • Knowledge of tools and materials needed for service projects. • Relationship with community.	Nora
	Volunteer and Events Coordinator	1. Create and maintain a database of volunteer information, interest and involvement. 2. Match volunteer interest with volunteer opportunities. 3. Work with Marketing Coordinator to publicize volunteer opportunities and events. 4. Support and celebrate volunteers. 5. Design and implement an event calendar.	• Strong written and verbal communication skills. • Spreadsheet management. • Knack for scheduling, coordinating logistics, and delegating.	_____ _____

Role Title		Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
Finance	Grant writer	1. Find and apply for grants; conduct necessary reporting. 2. Request updates and reports from other coalition members.	• Strong writing and storytelling skills. • An understanding of the coalition's long term goals, vision, and strategy. • Good at meeting deadlines and asking people for help where needed. • Basic accounting skills.	Belinda Hernandez
	Treasurer	1. Monitors and tracks coalition funds. 2. Shares and explains regular spending reports. 3. Has access to spending funds (check-signing authority), and a process for when others need to spend them. 4. Develops systems for ensuring SFCC's solvency. 5. Helps SFCC form financial policies. 6. Chairs finance committee, if applicable.	• Accounting and spreadsheet skills. • Finance communication skills. • Systems development skills.	Lupita

Role Title		Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
	Fundraising Coordinator	1. Sets fundraising goals in accordance with coalition needs. 2. Builds and maintains positive relationships with grantors and donors. 3. Identifies fundraising opportunities. 4. Builds partnerships with organizations for collaborative fundraising. 5. Implements fundraising tactics and events. 6. Reports.	• Relationship and partnership building. • Event planning.	Everyone participates - who leads?
Partnership Coordinator		1. Builds and maintains positive relationships with organizations, government agencies, and businesses. 2. Builds partnerships with organizations, government agencies, and businesses to accomplish mutual goals.	• Relationship and partnership building – along different scales, identities and interests.	Everyone participates - who leads?

Role Title	Responsibilities	Helpful skills and strengths	Member
Natural Infrastructure Coordinator	1. Helps SFCC to set natural infrastructure goals, including sites for acquisition (La Loma de la Cruz), and where to focus restoration efforts. 2. Develop and maintain a conceptual map and plan of the natural infrastructure SFCC aspires to have (where will SFCC achieve completely natural sections of the creek? Where will trees be planted?). 3. Builds and maintains positive partnerships with landowners, land trusts, and land stakeholders. 4. Develops strategy for land acquisition.	• Geography and conceptual mapping skills. GIS skills a plus. • Relationship and partnership building. • Land acquisition experience.	_____

Appendix A: Activities & Tasks

Developing Goal Statements

SFCC currently has 6 focus areas that all of the organization's actions will fall under. Some of those focus areas need to become Goal Statements in order for SFCC to have a clear sense of the milestones they need to reach in order to realize their Vision. See the table below for tips and suggestions.

Tip: Write goal statements as though the goal has already been fulfilled and is true: "SFC has a healthy and thriving ecosystem", "SFCC members are skilled, representative, and well-connected", "SFCC has a reliable network of volunteers"

Focus Area	What it needs to be a Goal Statement	Goal Statement
Engaged and educated community	Add other words like "Our community is...engaged and educated...about ____"	<i>Fill in...</i>
Vibrant community gathering space	Add other words like "San Felipe Creek is a...vibrant community gathering space"	
Healthy and thriving ecosystem	Add other words like "San Felipe Creek is a...healthy and thriving ecosystem..."	
Steward volunteers	Describe the result you are aiming for. Does SFCC steward the volunteers toward something? Do volunteers become stewards of SFCC?	
Leverage advocacy and partnerships	Describe the result you are aiming for when you leverage advocacy and partnerships - more advocacy & partnerships skills & experience among SFCC members? A robust network of supporters for the creek? Community support for key SFC projects?	
Funding and resources	Describe the result you are aiming for. Perhaps add other words like "SFCC has the funding and resources it needs..."	

*Credit: NPS RTCA Collaboration Services Toolkit Module 3: Clarify Shared Purpose and Goals
Adapted by Connected Realities, LLC*

Action Plan & Tracker

[Link to Action Plan & Tracker.](#)

Purpose: The SFCC Action Plan & Tracker is an online Google spreadsheet that can be used to track the progress of actions identified by SFCC to accomplish their vision, through six focus areas.

Description of Fields:

- Action - a task.
- Subtasks - a smaller task that helps to complete a larger Action
- Associated Focus Area - the category of focus that the action falls under. Includes drop-down menu with all focus areas.
- Lead - person responsible for completing the action. Includes drop-down menu with all team members.
- Timeline - the schedule or deadline of when the action must be completed.
- Status - the state the action is in. Includes a drop-down menu with various types of status.
- % Complete - how far along the action is toward completion, on a percent scale. Includes drop-down menu with varying percentages.
- Notes - Any pertinent information that helps those who are tracking the action to understand what it is and its status. This section is particularly helpful when the action is transferred to another lead.
- Quarterly Reports - report on the action every quarter of the calendar. This establishes a timeline of activity that may be more informative than the Notes section.

Instructions:

1. Complete the base information of the tracker:
 - a. Copy and paste the rest of the actions identified in the strategic plan, along with their [associated focus areas](#)
2. Nest Subtasks under Actions. You may notice that some actions fall under others - if so, nest the smaller ones under the larger ones using the Subtask column.
3. Make each action as specific and measurable as you can. This includes indicating your timeline.
 - a. Example: Instead of "Engage youth" try something like: Host a field trip during Fall Semester 2022 in collaboration with at least 2 classes at Magic Schoolbus Elementary School that includes Texas science curriculum.
 - i. This action is specific because it explains what type of activity (a field trip), with whom (Magic Schoolbus Elementary School), doing what (including science curriculum).
 - ii. This action is measurable because it says to host a field trip with "at least 2 classes".
4. Identify a lead for each action. Refer to the [Roles chart](#) and the [Skills chart](#).
5. Decide how often the tracker needs to be updated. Whenever there is an update for an action? Every week? Every time SFCC meets as a team?
6. Decide who accesses and updates the document. Does every action lead have editing privileges so they can easily provide updates? Or is allowing that many people to edit a key tracker too risky? If access is

limited to a few people, then how do the action leads give them the info they need to update the tracker? Consider access, efficiency, and information security as you make this decision.

7. Regularly update these fields in the tracker based on what you decide in #3:
 - a. Timeline (Only if needed. Try to stick to your deadlines unless they are unrealistic.)
 - b. Status
 - c. % Complete
 - d. Notes
 - e. Quarterly reports (e.g. 2022 Q2)
8. Use the [filter function](#) to alter the data that you see. Having a meeting about community education & programming? Filter the Associated Focus Area so you only see actions with that focus area.
9. Modify the fields and structure of the tracker so it best fits your needs

Advocacy Scenario Chart

The purpose of this chart is to distinguish between scenarios when certain coalition members can or cannot advocate – either on behalf of the coalition, or as themselves – as well as determining how certain team members show up in different scenarios.

Scenarios	Community member (as self)	Government Employee	Non-profit Employee	Notes
Speak at a city council meeting	x	x <i>Example: Sarah - only speaking about community efforts (not representing NPS)</i>	x	
Sign a petition				
Make written comments on a government plan (ie. Master Plan, USFS Review)				
Run for an elected office				
Represent SFCC at a political event				
Add more scenarios....	Fill in ...			

Skills Table

This skills table was shared as part of homework in between workshops 4 and 5. While not everyone in the coalition was able to fill it out, it is a useful start for aligning interests and skill sets with coalition needs.

	When it comes to the work of the San Felipe Creek Coalition...			
Name	I am most interested in...	My strengths include...	I have capacity for...	My boundaries include...
Amanda	All of the areas	Education, Marketing	I'm not sure right now. With me leaving the NPS at the end of May I should have more time to participate. I think for the next few months I will be more able to support a project than leading one.	I'm not sure right now. I think just conflicts with my new schedule would be the only thing.
Austin				
Jessica				
Lupita				
Nora	Partnership with the City	Stubborn, persistent		Work limitations
Randi				
Rene	Messing with the computer Interested in everything	Mixed media, IT Provide contacts for STEM club, and bylaws format Know the newly elected city council member for his district	Pretty much anything	None noted. Encouraged to think about.
Ryan				
Sarah	Restoration Making people care about ecosystem functions Education	Analytical (scientist by profession) Writing Details and timelines	Kid-friendly - my kids can be there with me	Limited hours, especially during school year Kid-friendly - preferred activities Summer - all bets are off Open-ended. Keeping things on a schedule and organized.

Appendix B: Resources

Advocacy & Partnership Building

Le'alani spent 4 years in New York City helping volunteer and nonprofit park groups to advocate for capital improvements (e.g. new playgrounds, basketball courts, and baseball fields) to their neighborhood parks. This advocacy was *collaborative* and required substantial partnership building with the City of New York, City Council, their local Community Board, and other community partners, including community members and park users. Resources from her time there are listed below. While the setting is quite different from Del Rio, the practices and techniques may still serve SFCC well in their advocacy and community engagement efforts for San Felipe Creek.

- [Advocating for your Community's Vision](#)
- If SFCC ever decides to engage the Del Rio community in helping them advocate for funding, policy, etc., these will be helpful resources:
 - [Survey Questions to Ask Your Community](#).
 - [Mosholu Parkway Community Visioning Banner](#). This was hung (along with the same banner en Espanol) by the [Friends of Mosholu Parkland](#) in the Bronx at every community event and meeting they hosted. It attracted people walking by to come to the event and provide their input, which eventually was compiled, analyzed, and synthesized into a [Visioning Report](#). Upon seeing the report, their City Councilman allocated \$2 million toward a new playground.

- [Sample Partnership Worksheet with City Agency](#). This is a document that Le'alani used as an employee of City Parks Foundation in her effort to partner with the NYC Parks Department Capital Projects Division so they would support these community advocacy efforts. There was never a formal MOU between the Le'alani's program and the Capital Projects Division, however they used this worksheet every time they met and communicated in order to stay clear with one another.

Fundraising

- [Park and Recreation Professional's Guide to Fundraising](#)

Technical Assistance Grants

- City of Austin - neighborhood empowerment & stewardship - Gibran
- [Recreation Economy for Rural Communities](#)
- [Partnerships Lab - Institute for Urban Parks, Central Park Conservancy](#)

Decision Making

Decision Rule	Use for these Levels of Stakes	Time Consumption	Team Participation & Buy-in	Notes and Things to Keep in Mind
Unanimous Agreement (Consensus Process)	High Low (see Notes)	High	High	Most likely to produce sustainable agreements Doesn't necessarily have to be unanimity Use Gradients of Agreement technique Inclusion technique - Unanimous Agreement can prevent low-stakes decisions that are abhorrent to a small minority
Majority Vote	Low-Moderate Low	Low- Moderate	Moderate	Once a majority is established, the opinions of the minority can be disregarded
Flip a Coin	Low	Low	None-Low	Use when there is low interest/ participation from the group If used too often, the group can lower their decision- making capacity. Don't forget to work this muscle!
Person-in-Charge Decides After Discussion	High Low	Moderate	Moderate	Strikes a balance between the compelling reasons for a person-in-charge to make certain decisions (access, resources, authority, credibility) and the benefits gained from seeking the group's counsel.
Person-in-Charge Decides Without Discussion	High (only in crisis moments) Low	None for the group	None	Gets group members in the habit of "doing what they are told"

*Credit: Common Decision Rules by Sam Kaner, Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making
Adapted by Connected Realities, LLC*

Appendix C: Reference

5-9-22 GROUP AGREEMENTS OF THE SAN FELIPE CREEK COALITION

What do we need from one another in order to have...

Productive Meetings

Systems & Protocol

- Routine schedule for meetings
- Quorum (5 members or 50%) for attendance at meetings

Culture & Communication

- Having everyone participate; equal participation; everyone has a voice
- Understand that not everyone works like you - be open to working differently/re-learning a method so everyone can participate (maybe you're in a different role)
- Work as a WE, not an I
- Move forward with resilience
- Every idea and feedback is welcome
- Be honest
- Be curious
- Push and challenge each other

Productive Team

- Time management and balancing; honoring boundaries and capacity

Effective Community Engagement

- Be courteous and thoughtful in our language
- Quorum (3 members) agrees on content before we post (draft is shared to the group)

Productive Decision-Making

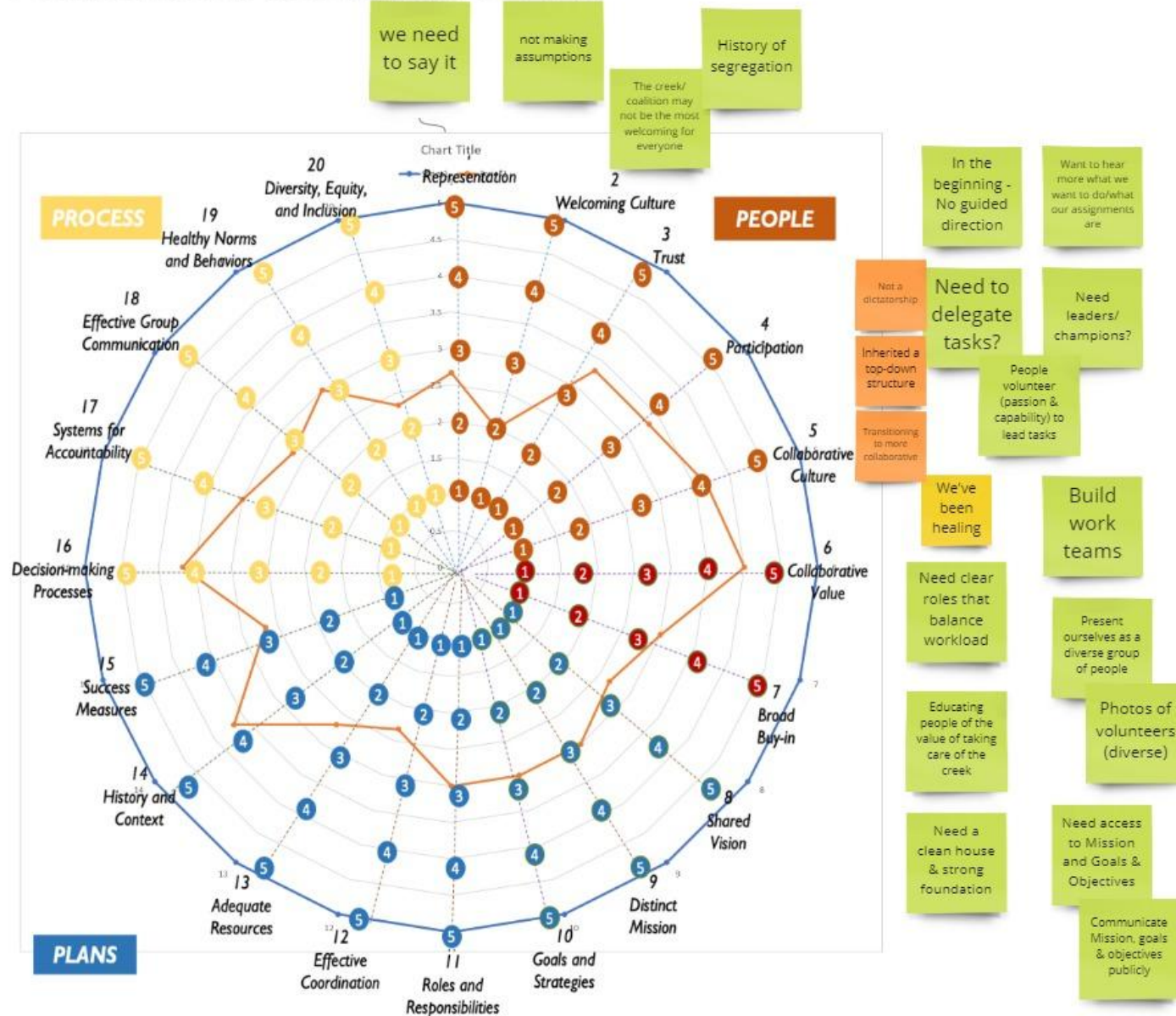
- We will have a vote (maybe not on everything, but important tasks)
- Majority vote and check-in with folks who disagree

Participation

- Volunteerism; no personal monetary gain; participating for coalition and community benefit
- Ethical participation (no conflict of interest)
- Cannot be both a volunteer and someone providing a service for a fee

COLLABORATION ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Pushing ourselves to make sure we're being welcoming to everyone
check ourselves



SITUATION ANALYSIS

1) What are the ISSUES that the San Felipe Creek Coalition works to address?
Why does SFCC exist? What problem(s) are you trying to solve?



2) What informs the work of the San Felipe Creek Coalition?
What do you take direction from? What do you respond to?



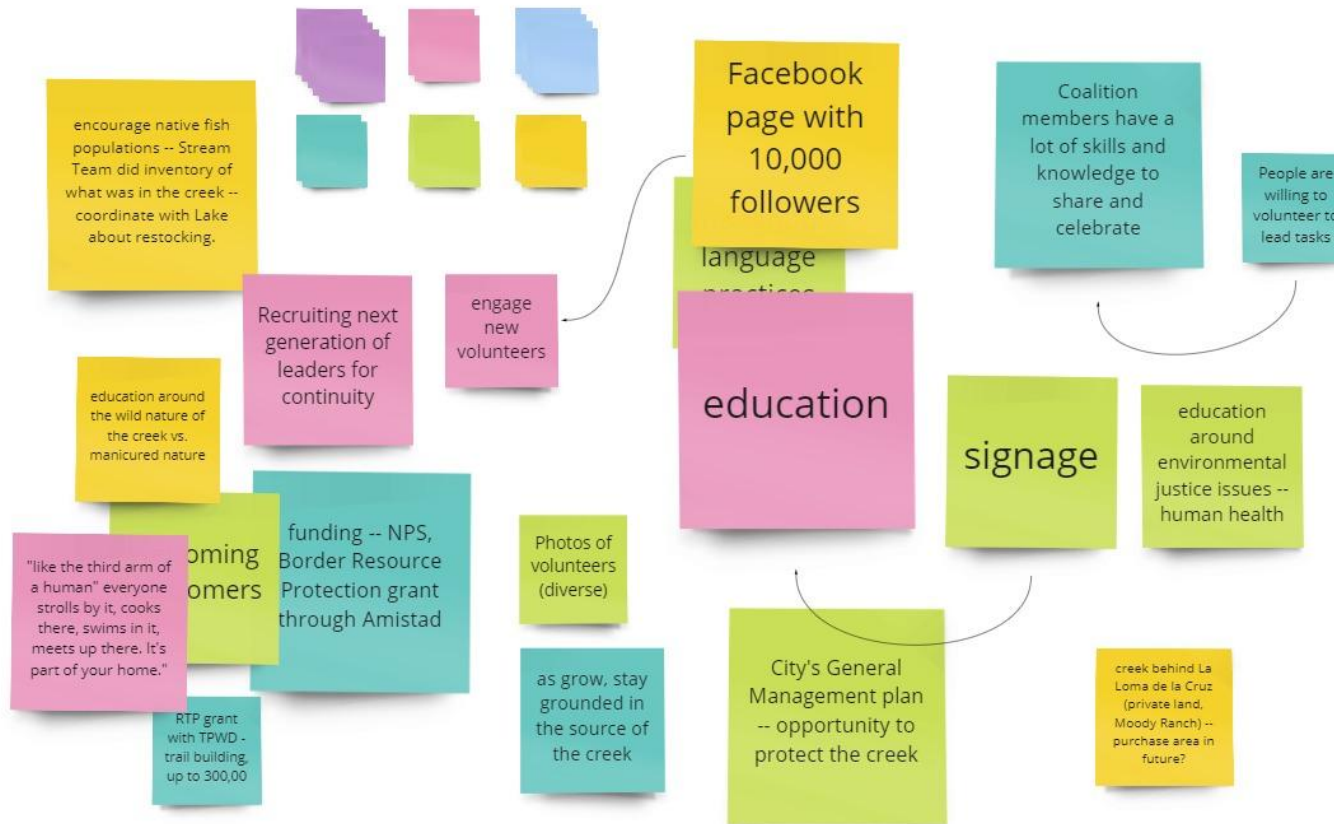
3) What does the San Felipe Creek Coalition do best?



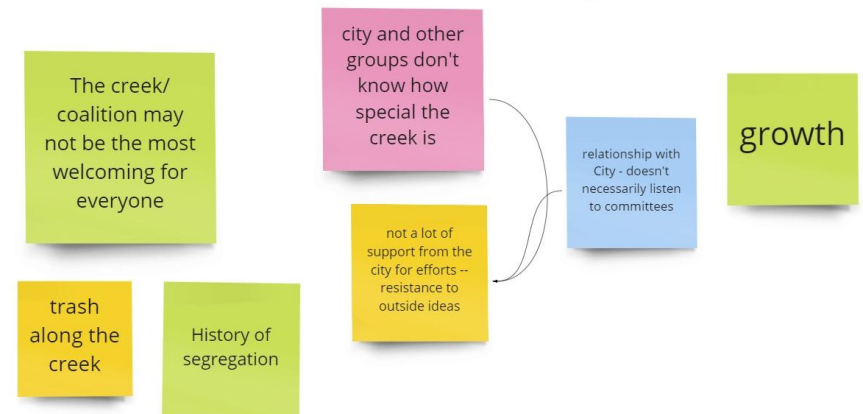
4) What are San Felipe Creek Coalition's weaknesses?



5) What are the opportunities that the San Felipe Creek Coalition has or could have?



6) What threatens or limits the San Felipe Creek Coalition?



What annual events and activities do you lead or participate in as a coalition? What events are coming up?



VISION STATEMENT



Vision: the change in the world your organization is working towards.

Write the headline and first 3-4 sentences from a news article describing the success of the San Felipe Creek Coalition, from the vantage point of 20 years in the future. Tell the story of the project and its impact for the people involved and the larger community.

GROUP 1

SAVED
by the
people!

Headline:

First 3-4 sentences:

community
cared enough
to take care
of the creek

the trees helped
hold the
area
together

next flood
???
community
involvement

community has
knowledge of
what to plant and
what wildlife is
supposed to be
there

community has
evolved from
relying on other
people to do
their part

protected
plants, and
reptarian
areas

After the next flood big flood that happen at 5 am on Tuesday 20 years in the future, the Del Rio community banded together to address the problems facing San Felipe Creek. Our trees held the creek together, volunteers removed the trash that was delivered during the flood to the beloved creek. Previous years of floodplain restoration and planting good plants ensured protection for the community -- and will continue to do so.

Article photo:

GROUP 2

Headline: Celebrating 20 years of San Felipe Coalition accomplishments

First 3-4 sentences of the article:

In place of cane leaves we have trees to help out with drought prevention.

We no longer have armored catfish, and now have a variety of species of fish.

We are also now a certified Bird city, an eco-tourist town with bird and butterfly stations throughout the city.

Partnered with scientific agencies to protect health of human recreation.

Have encouraged community recreation and family time around the river.

Article photo: of all the volunteers and what they've completed

no more armored
catfish, more
variety
restored cane
with more native
butterflies

the result has
drawn crowds of
tourists for
butterfly and
bird festivals -
eco-tourism

a beautiful
ecosystem

restoration of both
land and water - and
space to complete
and expand to be
better able to live

continued partnering
with other agencies
to improve water
quality and water
quality through
scientific monitoring
and water conservation

Themes:

harmony,
accountability,
pride ... passed on
to generations to
continue

planting
trees

education

community
benefits

community
action

community
cares

restored
ecosystem

resilient
ecosystem

ecotourism

economic
development

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

The San Felipe Creek is a healthy, thriving ecosystem supported by a vibrant local community that serves as a recreational and community gathering space for Del Rioans AND attracts eco-enthusiasts.

The San Felipe Creek is a healthy, thriving ecosystem supported by a vibrant local community that attracts eco-enthusiasts and visitors year after year.

...that cares and takes action

where trees, butterflies, plants, and birds flourish
river cane and armored catfish are no more.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING WITH CITY OF DEL RIO

Real-Life Experiences to workshop and work through:

Monarch Waystation

The City has failed to protect a Monarch Butterfly waystation that it supported.

City approved of monarch butterfly waystation on unfenced Brown Plaza, across from the Casa. San Felipe Creek Coalition prepared everything - tilled, planted milkweed. But the City failed to install a "no parking" sign so visitors parked on top of the waystation, destroying it. The City also takes short-cuts through the waystation to park.



What would have been your ideal experience with the City?

- Secure the site with a boundary (fencing or signage) first, especially if we don't trust them
- How much can we count on a "No Parking" sign? Paths of least resistance will still be traveled on.
- The city could have provided back and forth, to help troubleshoot some of these things ahead of time
- Better communication
- Planned with the city in advance, understand the City's needs/issues

Why do you the City isn't living up to that ideal experience?

- Project friends/champions at the city hit snags or something internally
- Way of thinking about how to manage parks -- make them pretty and clean
- the way they work and communicate administratively
- Turnover

What is within SFCC's control to improve the relationship with the City? What's one concrete next step SFCC can take or goal you can set to mend the situation?

- **Review process that evaluates the site and project ahead of time:** gets a commitment from the folks who are actually doing the work on the ground to build and care for the infrastructure to make sure it's possible.
 - Make sure infrastructure is in place first.
 - Checklist to make sure a location is ideal. - Another FEMA location ie. dead fish compost pile, could be (more) ideal
- Training and workshops with maintenance folks?
- SFCC can learn about the structure of the city and better understand how things get done

Unfinished Bird-City Outdoor Classroom

The City has failed to follow-through with a task they committed to.

Previously unpleasant place (people drinking, smoking, peeing in public) along the creek that City agreed to turn into a bird-friendly area. 20 trees were donated and the City paid a vendor to install a sprinkler system. But the sprinklers are still exposed and not protected underground or even functioning. The City refuses to hold their vendor accountable or finish the job. SFCC has alerted City Council and they've come out for visits but nothing has been done. Trees are doing well because volunteers and staff from the Casa are hauling water from the creek.



What would have been your ideal experience with the City?

- For them to have developed an agreement with us for planting, hole digging, working with the community, asking us what we would need to make this successful, making it an addition to the park system, asking us what is the goal and why we wanted it.
- agreement - enhance the space by planting more native seeds, grasses, flowers, etc.
- City would help us maintain it. NOT remove the berm that SFCC created to reduce erosion and stormwater contamination.
- NOT remove native flowers
- Communicated with their staff and remembered the agreement that was made with SFCC.
- Having staff meetings that alert staff about the work of SFCC and how City is supporting them.
- Having a set schedule to work on these areas with us
- Providing extra hands alongside us
- Having City designate employees to work in that area to develop that area with us.
- In the past they had park crews designated for certain areas until they retired - healthy competition!
- Mutual learning between City and SFCC
- Austin model - neighborhoods that adopted sections

Why do you think the City isn't living up to this ideal experience?

- People (from the community) don't see the need
- They're very business-as-usual. Don't seem open to other management strategies. Leadership and mentality - just here to collect a paycheck. Maybe stagnant and has no growth.
- Not having correct job descriptions? People are being pulled from their duties to go elsewhere.

What is within SFCC's control to improve the relationship with the City? What's one concrete next step SFCC can take or goal you can set to mend the situation?

- Introduction to new leadership - City mayor, city council, city manager - share our mission statement/strategic plan, mini workshops. Asking them to designate parks staff to work with SFCC and have floaters do other jobs.
- Adding a City representative to SFCC
- Long-term goal: MOU with City to water trees planted

City's Goals

- Ecotourism
- Bird City (people come from all over Texas and US)
- Main Street revitalization - chamber of commerce supports SFCC

Opportunity:

- Park Committee (Lupita on board til September)

Lessons learned/ tips for next time:

- Written docs aren't necessarily working

Next Steps you want to take:

- Updates at Park Committee monthly meetings.
- Line someone up to replace Lupita on Parks committee?
- Some informal convos about goals? Present selves as resources for meeting their goals.
- Janice has requested SFCC help with a number of goals
- Have some learning sessions to better understand the structure of the city: <https://www.cityofdelrio.com/i-want-to/advanced-components/boards-commissions>

SR question: what "pressures" the city? Do they care about press? could you do some positive (or negative) accountability in media?