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San Xavier District dedicates new pedestrian plaza, sidewalks at Mission

The San Xavier District dedicated a \$545,000 Mission Plaza project today built with funds from the Regional Transportation Authority.

The project includes 2,500 feet of new sidewalk, six new crosswalks, traffic barriers to better direct traffic flow, additional handicapped parking spaces, signs and a plaza area with seating.

"The location needed these improvements to address the safety and well-being of pedestrians visiting the Mission site," said Nathan Barrett, a planner for the San Xavier District. "We are seeing an increased number of vehicular, pedestrian, tourist, bus rider and bicycle traffic at the site."

The plaza site is approximately 7.5 acres. The project helps visitors to better access the San Xavier Mission from the parking area, and future phases will help visitors access the IHS Clinic and the education and recreation centers, as well as neighborhood areas throughout the district.

The \$2.1 billion RTA plan was approved by Pima County voters in May 2006 and included funding of \$180 million for safety improvements, one of the main concerns of the public that were addressed in the 20-year plan.

Since the RTA began project implementation, several million dollars worth of sidewalks have been installed throughout the region.

In 2009, the San Xavier District received a \$500,000 transportation enhancement grant for construction of a safe pathway connecting the Mission Plaza to the Recreation and Education Centers a half mile to the south. The RTA will contribute an additional \$400,000 for this project. Construction is likely to begin on this project in 2012. The pathway will allow students at the San Xavier Mission School to safely walk to after-school activities hosted at the nearby community facilities. The San Xavier District also is working on designs for a pedestrian bridge over the nearby Santa Cruz River, a project funded through Pima Association of Governments, the Arizona Department of Transportation and transportation enhancement grants. This project, too, will likely begin construction in 2012.

Other RTA projects that are enhancing regional mobility include expanded and enhanced transit

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services, such as the Sun Shuttle neighborhood transit service to the San Xavier District. The RTA and its member jurisdictions have six roadway improvement projects under way.

Projects under construction are La Canada, the Twin Peaks interchange in Marana, the I-19 frontage road in Green Valley, the first intersection on the Houghton Road corridor project at Houghton and Old Vail, Sahuarita Road improvements, between Interstate 19 and La Villita Road, and the Camino de Manana roadway widening in Marana.

To date, the RTA Board has approved 317 projects with 130 currently in development and with 140 completed, including the Sun Tran Bus Storage and Maintenance Facility. Forty-three are under construction and 13 transit projects are completed.

The Regional Transportation Authority is the fiscal manager of the \$2.1 billion plan approved by Pima County voters on May 16, 2006. The RTA Board is comprised of representatives from the local jurisdictions in Pima County, including the cities of Tucson and South Tucson, Pima County, the towns of Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe and the Tohono O'odham Nation. A representative of the Arizona State Transportation Board also serves on the board. For more information about the RTA plan, visit www.RTAmobility.com or call (520) 770-9410.