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Development of Criteria for Evaluating Urban River Settings for Tourism-Rereation Use

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An earlier study, Cultural Benefits from Metropolitan River Recreation--San Antonio Prototype, (Gunn, et al., 1972), revealed that urban water resources can be successfully developed for tourism and recreation. The San Antonio River Walk is a unique demonstration of a new amalgam different from either parks or tourist business clusters. It draws upon both for success. It shows the synergistic effect of a park/ business mix.

Because few other cities have created a park/ business complex from their downtown water resources, the purpose of this study is the development of criteria through which cities may evaluate their potential for this use. The general guidelines offered here will require special adaptation to local conditions.

The basis for the recommended guidelines in this report came from three primary sources. First, the River Walk Study provided insight into one very successful park/business development. Second, research studies by Hanna (1974) and Parenzin (1973) described urban park/business development in other cities, developed physical factor criteria and identified influential action agents. Third, the researchers examined recreation, tourism, land design and planning literature for information of value to this development problem.

The authors recommend three phases of investigation based upon this research: preliminary investigation; study of motivating forces, site factors and other influential factors; and planning and implementation.

