

The ABCs of the Smoky Hill River Renewal Project

Restoring our community's identity -- creating a special place!

EYESORE



ASSET



OR

On November 2, Salina voters will decide on a ¼ cent sales tax for a term of 10 years that would be used to restore the Smoky Hill River through the heart of town. This tax would generate up to \$28 million over 10 years – enough to complete the “primary phase” of the seven-mile restoration. The choice to move forward is truly up to you!

around the entire seven-mile river channel. The downtown area would feature nearly one-half mile of urban river walk similar to San Antonio, TX, Oklahoma City, OK, and Pueblo, CO. This will include a concrete channel, wide sidewalks, boating, water taxi rides, entertainment and much more. Replacement of the Iron Street drainage pipes with a quality bridge will also occur.

Why a river project in Salina?

In the early 1960s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed a flood control levee around Salina. The levee eliminated serious community flooding that occurred in prior years. However, it also cut off the central channel of the Smoky Hill River. Most Salinans know that our town actually grew up along the Smoky Hill. The unintended consequence of flood protection was the elimination of our community's river identity for the last 50 years. Taking away the river also created significant harm to Salina's premier nature and wildlife area.

Who does the project benefit?

The short answer is EVERYONE -- whether you are young or old, education-minded, recreation-oriented, a plant or animal person, a walker or jogger, or someone who just likes to relax and hang out. The project offers nature and habitat restoration, a bustling downtown river walk, miles of access to the river and nature, community connectivity, unlimited educational and cultural opportunities, and an economic boost for both downtown and the entire community. We also recognize the river is a

Most of us have a special place we like to visit because of features like mountains, trees, streams, lakes, shopping or for other reasons. Unfortunately, most Salinans routinely drive away from our community to find such a place. This project will create that special place in Salina just for us – the people that live and work here!

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sensitive drainage area. As a result, the project is guaranteed not to increase drainage problems and will possibly relieve them in certain areas. Unlike many other activities or visitor destinations, access

to the entire river will be FREE TO EVERYONE, so personal income will never be a factor.

What does the “primary phase” of this project offer?

The features of this project were designed by Salinans, through numerous public forums and discussions. The primary phase entails a majority of the core river project. It includes removal of sediment, channel cleaning and restoration of stream flow for the entire seven miles of river. An extra-wide, multi-use trail for hiking and biking is planned from Bill Burke Park all the way to downtown. Depending on final costs, this trail could be looped

Can the river project be ready for use in just four years?

Many people hear of the project requiring over 50 years to complete. Sure, it could take up to 50 years for every public and private aspect of the master plan to be



completed. However, if the November sales tax is approved, the “primary phase” of the project could be ready in just four years. Project design is expected to take a year. The leveraging of federal/state grants, environmental permitting and other project logistics will likely take another year. Final costs will be reviewed and we will be ready to bid. Construction is estimated to take two years, for a total estimated completion time of only four years.

Why a sales tax?

First, any sales tax in Kansas must be approved by voters. Voters control the amount, the use and the term (i.e., 10, 15 or 20 years). Sales taxes do not get created or renewed without voter approval.

We all recognize this is still a tough economic time. Any tax increase is a difficult choice. Property taxes are not a reasonable option. The sales tax has been very good for Salina. It has brought us the K-State at Salina campus, numerous roadway improvements, recreation fields, job incentives, a county jail and the finest water park in Kansas. In addition, it has helped keep the city’s property tax among the lowest in the state. Nearly one-third of the sales tax is generated by those living



outside of Saline County. A ¼ cent sales tax is an increase of only ¼ penny for every dollar spent, or 25 cents for every \$100 spent. This is much less than the cost of a cup of coffee. Even with this small sales tax increase, Salina’s total sales tax is still equal to or lower than that for most of its regional competitors.

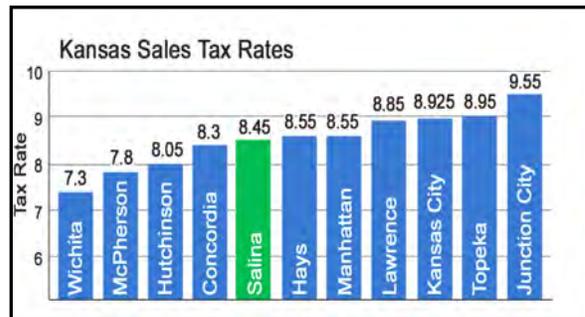
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Why hasn’t this been done already?

Renewal of the Smoky Hill River has been a community priority for decades. In the *1987 GOALS FOR SALINA* report it was a “top” community priority. It is also a Comprehensive Plan goal and Strategic Plan goal of the community. While certain aspects of the river have been studied in past years, the project was considered “too hard” due to various challenges. The physical and legal challenges have now been overcome and the project is no longer considered out of reach. We can now ensure both the physical water flow and legal ability to restore our river!

Why today?

This river renewal project has already created excitement because it has the realistic potential to create a game changing impact for Salina. It builds on Newsweek’s claim that Salina is “Kansas’ Best Place to Raise Kids” and compliments other big impact projects including: the Salina Regional Medical Center tower, North Ohio Bridge, South Ninth Street and South Ohio roadways, Salina Community Theatre expansion, Kansas Wesleyan’s and K-State at Salina’s student life centers, the Magnolia Soccer Complex and CityGo transit. Even during the recession, Salina has been “a community on the move” and ready to be one of Kansas’ premier places.



*Salina rate shown as proposed.

We think that approved sales tax dollars for the first phase can leverage significant federal/state grants and private investment. Other projects nationwide have needed public dollars to kick-start the momentum. Once momentum is built, the private sector typically responds.

Today, interest rates for borrowing money are at record lows and the bidding climate for construction is extremely competitive. For large projects, these factors can result in much lower costs over the 10-year payback period. The restoration of the Smoky Hill River is long overdue. Today the river channel is nothing more than an eyesore, while it could be a major asset! This project can forever change our community in a very positive way. When all factors are considered, this may be Salina’s best opportunity in 50 years to actually see restoration of the river become a reality!

For More Information

For more information, please visit the City’s webpage at www.salina-ks.gov or call Martha Tasker at (785) 309-5725.

Western Star Mill Dam Modification

• Behind Salina Community Theatre



Iron Street Culvert Replacement

• Replace existing culvert with bridge



Riverwalk and Hard-Scaped Channel

• Founders Park to Existing Walnut Street Bridge (0.44 Miles)
• 60 feet wide x 3.5 feet deep



Multi-Use Trail Lighting

• Oakdale Park to Walnut Street Bridge

Multi-Use Trail

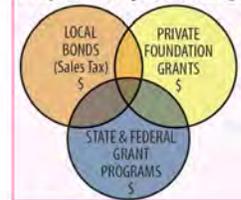
• Bill Burke Park to Walnut Street Bridge and connect to hard-scaped channel (3.38 Miles)
• 10 foot wide concrete trail
• Accommodates both walkers and bikers
• Includes nature trail in some areas



Smoky Hill River Renewal

Primary Phase—\$27.7M

Proposed Project Funding



Estimated Project Schedule

Following a public vote of support:
• Begin Design—Spring 2011
• Begin Construction—Spring 2013
• Complete Construction—Fall 2015

Optional Multi-Use Trail Loop

• Option to extend multi-use trail from hard-scaped channel at Western Star Mill Dam to the levy east of Lakewood, and then along the bypass channel (3.13 Miles)
• Forms a complete trail loop between the original and bypass channels

Clearing/Trimming of Trees & Brush and Flow Restoration

• Inlet to Outlet of Original Channel (6.8 Miles)



Sediment Control Basin

• Located on river side of levee
• Structure to be 500 feet long x 6 feet deep x 40 feet wide
• Multi-gate inlet structure to skim cleaner topwater
• Settles out nearly all sand, 50% of silt
• Results in a decreased sediment load

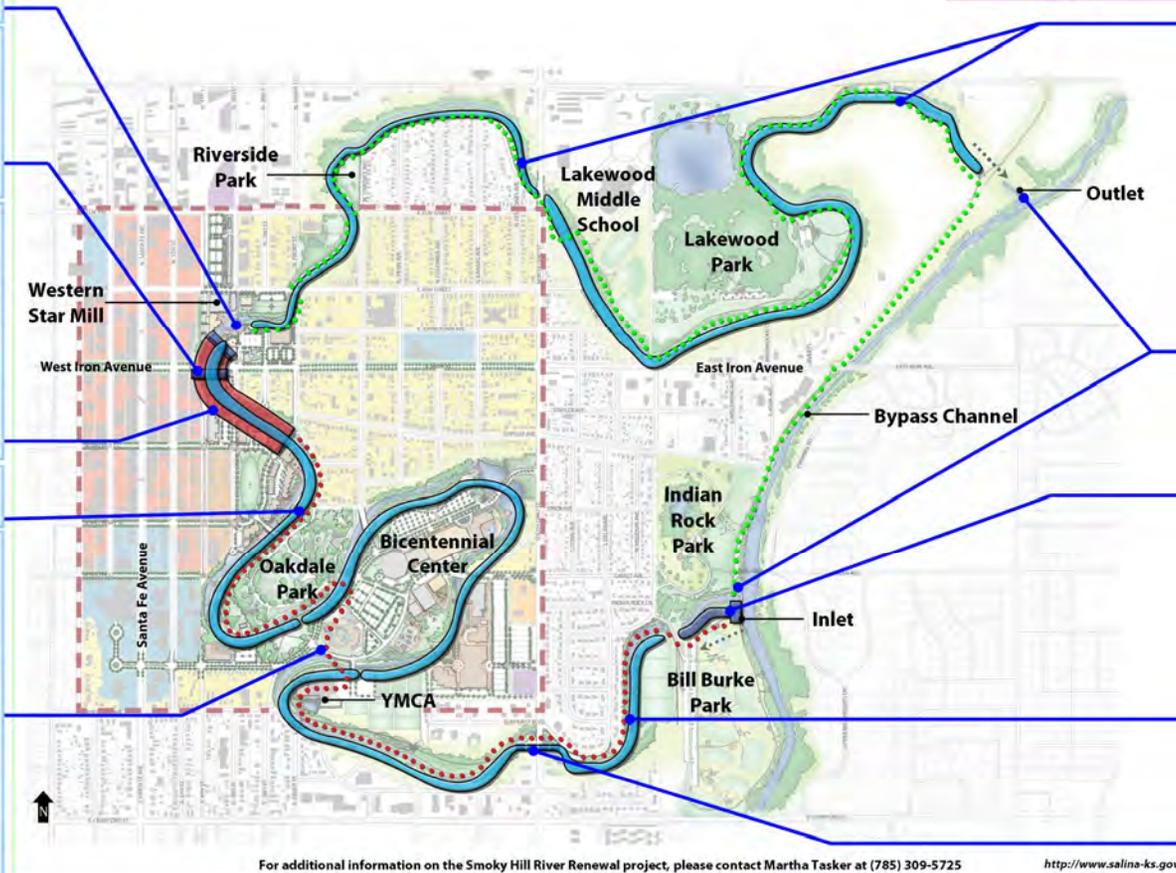
Sediment Removal

• Bill Burke Park to Founders Park



Temporary Piping under Ohio Street

• Pipe to be installed to convey flow across Ohio Street
• To later be replaced by a new bridge, allowing natural flow and trail access below



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