

Arkansas River *Infrastructure* Task Force

Draft Findings

May 22, 2014

1. Last November, following the Tulsa Regional Chamber's 'What's Next' Intercity Visit to Pittsburgh, the Tulsa City Council and Mayor Bartlett established the Arkansas River Infrastructure Task Force, to consider the best course of action to build long-planned river corridor infrastructure, particularly the low-water dams contemplated in the 2004 Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan – Phase I Vision Plan.
2. At the first Task Force meeting, participation was broadened to include representatives from surrounding communities and other stakeholders. (*See attached list of Task Force participants.*)
3. The Task Force conducted eleven fact-finding meetings from December 2013 through May 2014, to learn more about different aspects of river infrastructure development opportunities, challenges, and costs. The Task Force:
 - Reviewed 2012 Mayor-Council River Development Task Force recommendations;
 - Reviewed the status of implementation of the Arkansas River Corridor Master Plan;
 - Reviewed potential hazards and impediments to river infrastructure development:
 - Stormwater Drainage & Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board recommendations,
 - Condition of the levee system,
 - Status of the Corps of Engineers' river corridor planning,
 - Potential impact of river corridor infrastructure on fish, wildlife, and habitat;
 - Reviewed river infrastructure development from the perspective of participating communities – the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Tulsa County, and the Cities of Jenks, Sand Springs, and Bixby, and Tulsa;
 - Reviewed current cost estimates for low-water dam construction and related infrastructure
 - Reviewed the Gathering Place project plans, timelines, and related infrastructure;
 - Reviewed the River Parks Authority's mission, property and facilities management, role in local government, and community partnerships;
 - Reviewed commercial and industrial facilities' resource needs and plans along the Arkansas River corridor, including:
 - AEP/PSO,
 - HollyFrontier, and
 - King's Landing;
 - Reviewed the potential establishment of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) and Business Improvement Districts and their possible uses along the Arkansas River corridor;
 - Reviewed potential stormwater impacts of low-water dam construction on the Arkansas River
 - Reviewed preliminary cost estimates for bank stabilization and stormwater outfalls associated with low-water dam construction;
 - Reviewed estimated final revenue from the Vision 2025 program;
 - Reviewed potential cross-jurisdictional public finance mechanisms for river infrastructure construction and long-term maintenance;
 - Reviewed riverfront development organizations in other cities and options available under Oklahoma state law; and
 - Reviewed the potential establishment of an Arkansas River Development Authority.

4. Construction of low-water dams at Sand Springs, Zink Lake, South Tulsa/Jenks, and Bixby would serve diverse needs, from attracting residential and retail development to supplying water to cooling towers for electricity generation.
5. The estimated costs of the low-water dams, including healthy contingencies, are as follows (in 2014 dollars):

Zink Dam	
Low-Water Dam Construction	\$44,700,000
Less City of Tulsa Infrastructure Relocation	(\$2,700,000)
Less Gathering Place East Bank Improvements	(\$6,500,000)
Zink Dam Subtotal	\$35,500,000
South Tulsa/Jenks Dam	
Low-Water Dam Construction	\$42,200,000
Pedestrian/Maintenance Bridge	\$11,000,000
South Tulsa/Jenks Dam Subtotal	\$53,200,000
Sand Springs Dam	
Low-Water Dam Construction	\$61,300,000
Pedestrian/Maintenance Bridge	\$11,700,000
Sand Springs Dam Subtotal	\$73,000,000

TOTAL	\$161,700,000
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6. A firm cost estimate has not yet been developed for a low-water dam in the Bixby area.
7. Low-water dam construction will necessitate ancillary infrastructure improvements, such as bank stabilization and stormwater outfalls. The current costs of these improvements are estimated to be between \$1.8 and \$2.8 million.
8. The River Parks Authority estimates that annual maintenance on a newly constructed Zink Dam (in 2014 dollars) would be \$165,000. Long-term maintenance cost estimates for other dams have not yet been developed.
9. Though not directly attributable to low-water dam construction, there is a broader need to address potential flooding in the Arkansas River corridor. Potential measures to address these concerns include floodplain management regulations and levee rehabilitation.
10. Low-water dam construction would necessitate mitigation of potential impacts on wildlife in the Arkansas River Corridor, for example, through the construction of more attractive alternative nesting sites for the Interior Least Tern.
11. Potential sources of river infrastructure *construction* funding include:
 - Vision 2025 surplus funding, if any, and if appropriate to purposes for which funding was approved
 - Sales tax renewal upon expiration of Vision 2025 (December 31, 2016)

- Sales tax associated with regional Economic Development District
- Appropriations from participating communities (e.g. general obligation bonds)
- Tax increment financing
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation and River Spirit/Margaritaville Casino-Hotel; other tribal nations
- State and federal grants, previously pledged or new
- Private grants (industrial and commercial interests along the river corridor, corporations, foundations)

12. Potential sources of long-term infrastructure *maintenance* funding include:

- An Arkansas River corridor improvement district (property assessment)
- Annual appropriations from participating communities
- A maintenance endowment from sales tax funds and/or corporate and foundation grants
- River organization(s) operating revenue (e.g. concessions, sponsorships, events)

13. There are several options available under state law, and many examples from other cities, for an organization, or organizations, to oversee river infrastructure development, long-term maintenance, and other river corridor objectives. Organizational options include:

- Cities, Tulsa County, and other public agencies, through inter-local agreements
- A non-profit river development corporation and/or other private organizations
- An existing public trust, such as River Parks Authority, or a new riverfront development authority
- A multi-jurisdictional economic development district

14. Consideration of an Arkansas River Development Authority, or similar entity, should begin with an assessment of goals in the river corridor, and should include consideration of which of these goals are being met, or which *can be* met by existing organizations, such as the River Parks Authority. Potential objectives include:

- River Corridor Planning, Zoning, Design Review, and Community Engagement
- Corridor/Area-Wide Infrastructure Construction
 - Revenue- and tax-backed bonds
 - Low-water dams
 - Bank stabilization
 - Stormwater
 - Levees
 - Transportation
 - Parks
 - Trails/boardwalks
- Corridor/Area-Wide Infrastructure Maintenance
 - Improvement district(s)
- Programming (e.g. festivals, sports leagues, farmers markets)
- Marketing and Promotion
- Economic Development Project Management
 - Land assembly
 - Environmental assessment and remediation assistance
 - Site-specific planning, design, and community engagement (e.g. charrettes)
 - Regulatory assistance (Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, zoning, building permits, etc.)
 - Site-specific Infrastructure development
 - Financing (revolving loan funds, TIF districts, EB5 Regional Centers, etc.)

Arkansas River Infrastructure Task Force Participants

Members:

Jack Henderson	Tulsa City Council District 1
Jeannie Cue	Tulsa City Council District 2
David Patrick	Tulsa City Council District 3
Blake Ewing	Tulsa City Council District 4
Karen Gilbert	Tulsa City Council District 5
Skip Steele	Tulsa City Council District 6
Arianna Moore	Tulsa City Council District 7
Phil Lakin	Tulsa City Council District 8
G.T. Bynum	Tulsa City Council District 9
Mayor Dewey Bartlett	City of Tulsa
Mayor John Easton	City of Bixby
Former Mayor Ray Bowen	City of Bixby
Mayor Lonnie Sims	City of Jenks
Mayor Mike Burdge	City of Sand Springs
Clay Bird	City of Tulsa, Director of Economic Development
Jarred Brejcha	City of Tulsa, Mayor's Chief of Staff
Herb Fritz	Fritz Baily P.C.
Vic Vreeland	Muscogee (Creek) Nation (designee of Chief Tiger)
Matt Meyer	River Parks Authority, Executive Director
Bob Sullivan	Sullivan & Company, L.L.C.
Karen Keith	Tulsa County Board of County Commissioners, District 2
Mike Neal	Tulsa Regional Chamber, President & CEO

Presenters and Other Participants:

Stuart Solomon	AEP/PSO, President & COO
Tom Hansen	AEP/PSO, Principal Engineer
Anna Childers	CH2M
Doug Enevoldsen	City of Bixby, City Manager
Jared Cottle	City of Bixby
Mike Tinker	City of Jenks, City Manager
Derek Campbell	City of Sand Springs, City Manager
Robert Gardner	City of Tulsa, Mayor's Director of River Development
Brian O'Hara	Congressman Jim Bridenstine, Constituent Services Representative
Todd Kilpatrick	Drainage District #12
Victoria Potratz	HollyFrontier
Andrew Haar	HollyFrontier
Rich Brierre	INCOG
Sharon King-Davis	King's Landing
Kirby Crowe	PMg
Gaylen Pinc	PMg
Ann Patton	Stormwater Drainage & Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board
Charles Hardt	Stormwater Drainage & Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board
Judith Finn	Stormwater Drainage & Hazard Mitigation Advisory Board
Jack Blair	Tulsa City Council Staff
Amy Brown	Tulsa City Council Staff
Jeff Stava	Tulsa Community Foundation/Gathering Place
Nick Doctor	Tulsa Regional Chamber, Vice President of Government Affairs
Mike Abate	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Cynthia Kitchens	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Commander David Burns	U.S. Coast Guard, Intelligence Operations
Kevin Stubbs	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service