

CITY OF COUNCIL BLUFFS

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RIVER'S EDGE PHASE FOUR

Council Bluffs, IA – Future plans for the Council Bluffs riverfront include a treetop walk, an observation tower, an adventure course, and a pier.

"Residents can expect to see changes happening this spring at River's Edge as we begin Phase Four of our riverfront revitalization," said Council Bluffs Mayor Matt Walsh. "Ten years ago the riverfront was a wooded and underutilized area. Today we have award-winning public spaces, trail connections, commercial development, and the progress will continue."

Improvements to the Council Bluffs riverfront began in 2007, and Tom Hanafan River's Edge Park opened in 2013. Since then, River's Edge has welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors to enjoy access to the water's edge, open landscapes, natural habitat, and dramatic views of the Omaha skyline and Missouri River.

Phase Four begins this spring with 90 acres of woodland restoration north of Tom Hanafan Park. Cleanup starts with removing flood and woodland debris from the area. Then, hiking trails will be established through the forest floor providing an intimate experience with nature.

The treetop walk brings an elevated experience to River's Edge that is structurally beautiful from above and below. Conceptual renderings illustrate 2,480 linear feet of treetop walk through the woodland area and a connection to the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge. The project team will begin designing the treetop walk this spring, and construction is slated for November 2021 – September 2022.

"The most recent phase of River's Edge will attract local residents and community visitors to the area while supporting the potential for additional economic development," said Pete Tulipana, President of SINC. "This reimagining of our riverfront is truly transforming our region."

A 130' observation tower and a climbing adventure course are planned for 2022-2023. The observation tower takes visitors above the trees and provides unique river, woodland, and city views. The climbing adventure course provides challenging outdoor experiences with a 50' climbing wall, ropes course, zip line, caving, and roll gliding. A pier that offers an above-water experience taking visitors beyond the

water's edge is intended for 2024. Conceptual renderings can be found at www.councilbluffs-ia.gov/riversedge.

Phase Four is funded entirely by private donations. The estimated budget is \$50 million, and the Iowa West Foundation has provided the lead gift of \$15 million disbursed over five years. SINC is securing additional donors through specific fundraising efforts. Tax increases are not part of the funding plan.

"The joint effort to revitalize the Council Bluffs riverfront is nothing short of amazing," said Mayor Matt Walsh. "River's Edge continues to be a prime example of a successful public/ private partnership. We are grateful to our partners in the private sector for their commitment to improving Council Bluffs."

The design team has mitigated the potential for flooding within their recommended concepts. All of the proposed structures will be designed to withstand the force of floodwaters and the structures will be built above the flood zone, at the levee system's elevation.

River's Edge Phase Four intends to remold the "wet" (west) side of the levee into a beautiful and natural place for residents and visitors to enjoy. "The lookout pier, treetop walk, and first level of the observation tower will be located above the top of the levee. As such, all of the improvements will remain open during high river events," said Chris Koenig, Senior Project Manager for HDR. "All of the improvements will be supported by piles driven to bedrock and designed for flood conditions including the potential impacts from ice."

Invasive trees and plant material detrimental to shoreline stability and ecology will be removed from River's Edge. The design team works closely with specialists to ensure the plant material is compatible with flooding conditions and will thrive with the river fluctuations. All proposed trees and vegetation shall consist of native species that intend to restore the riverfront's ecosystem.

"River's Edge is unique to Council Bluffs and its strong identity increases local pride in our community," said Mayor Matt Walsh. "It's a prime example of how Council Bluffs is unlike anywhere else. On Purpose."

Conceptual renderings and additional information can be found on the City of Council Bluffs website at www.councilbluffs-ia.gov/riversedge.