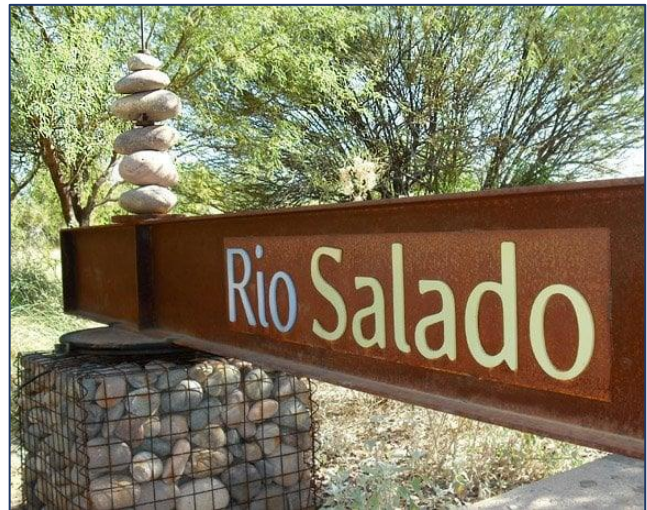


Rio Reimagined Brownfields Assessment Coalition Grant

On August 14, 2020, Tempe, Phoenix, Avondale, and Arizona State University received a \$600,000 *Rio Reimagined Brownfields Assessment Coalition* (RR Coalition) grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) identifies the Parties' roles and responsibilities to facilitate the reuse and/or redevelopment of contaminated sites by identifying, inventorying, assessing, and conducting cleanup and reuse planning for eligible public or privately-held properties in accordance with the *Rio Reimagined Work Plan* as approved by EPA and the RR Coalition. This three-year Agreement becomes effective October 1, 2020. Council action on the MOA is scheduled for the September 24, 2020, Regular Council Meeting.

Background

The *Rio Reimagined Project* is a vision to revitalize the Rio Salado (Salt River), Aqua Fria and Gila Rivers, and the region by transforming over 45 miles of the river stretching from the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community at the eastern-most boundary to the City of Buckeye to the west and encompassing more than 78,000 acres. **The project aspires to reconnect the community with the river, to establish a unified vision, to be a catalyst for economic growth and inclusion, and to build a unique regional destination.** Leaders of eight river communities demonstrated their commitment to moving *Rio Reimagined* forward by signing a Statement of Intent in 2018. With Arizona State University (ASU) as community convener contributing financial, intellectual, and organizational resources, and the eight communities directing the vision, the journey has begun.



On September 1, 2020, The Rio Reimagined Project was formally dedicated as the 20th Urban Waters Federal Partnership Project.

Target Area

The target area for this grant is within 1.0 mile of the Rio Salado (Salt River), Aqua Fria and Gila Rivers within the cities of Tempe, Phoenix, and Avondale. Two brownfields inventories will be developed (Tempe and Avondale) and the coalition cities will target one or more priority projects in the target area. Tempe identified the 24.5-acre West

Hardy site on Rio Salado Parkway, between the Priest Yard and the IDEA campus, and the linear recreational areas identified in the Rio Salado Park and Beach Park Master Plan.

Outcomes

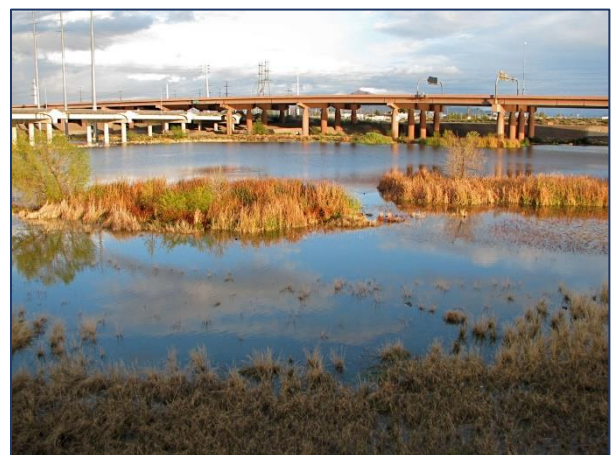
The primary benefits of property redevelopment to be performed with grant funding are economic development, workforce development, job creation, increased tax revenue, creation of new recreational opportunities, and a unified vision for the entire *Rio Reimagined Project*. In addition, most of the *Rio Reimagined Project* area is within designated Opportunity Zones (OZs) and the identified priority brownfields sites are in OZs, which will result in added investment incentives to spur economic growth. Additional funding that may be leveraged by the coalition members includes:



- Up to \$6.8 million for transit-oriented development planning, preliminary design for light rail construction, and Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) funds allocated for the Tres Rios Project in Phoenix.
- \$10.7 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Housing and Urban Development, and ACOE funds obtained by Tempe.
- Over \$340,000 in HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) funds obtained from the Maricopa County Consortium as a consortium member in Tempe.
- \$1.1 million in CDBG and HOME funds in Avondale.

Community Outreach

The RR Coalition understands the importance of tailoring outreach methods to each community/target area and ensuring equal access to project information for sensitive and underserved populations. Anticipated engagement includes hosting three community outreach events during the first year and two events per year thereafter, in addition to sharing project information at other ongoing outreach events. A Brownfields Advisory Committee (BAC) will be established in the 3rd quarter, April-June 2021, comprised of stakeholders as agreed upon by the RR Coalition members. The BAC will be an ad hoc, voluntary committee and will meet on a quarterly basis for the life of the grant. The purpose of the BAC will be to assist the Coalition with community engagement, site selection and prioritization, cleanup planning, and redevelopment planning.



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