

Roth: A gathering green trend for Oklahoma

By [Jim Roth](#), Director and Chair of the Firm's Clean Energy Practice Group. This column was [originally published in The Journal Record](#) on July 3, 2017.



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For decades Oklahoma's largest cities have focused more on infrastructure issues like roads, bridges and jails, at the expense of parks, sidewalks and trails. Nevertheless, the latter investments are becoming new again and Oklahoma's urban dwellers and visitors will soon see and feel the effects of quality-of-life improvements for healthier outdoor living.

In Tulsa, the generous George Kaiser Family Foundation is

leading the effort to revitalize and reshape the River Parks areas along the Arkansas River by connecting three adjacent parcels into the existing park system for a world-class experience. A Gathering Place for Tulsa will transform nearly 100 acres of Tulsa's waterfront into a blend of activities, nature, gathering and community in the great outdoors and within several anchor destinations like a lodge, a museum, an adventure playground, a mist mountain, gardens, sport courts and a large lawn for concerts and relaxation. Truly something for everyone to enjoy, thanks to the generosity of corporate and philanthropic Tulsans.

Phase one's 66 acres is expected to open in late 2017 and with an estimated 1 million visitors a year will prove the importance of these types of investments to the social, cultural, economic and environmental vibrancy of a community.

On Thursday, Mayor Mick Cornett and Oklahoma City leaders broke ground on Scissortail Park, the newly named 68-acre park expected to revitalize a once-blighted residential and commercial area south of the downtown's business core. The 37-acre upper park is underway to be opened in early 2019, including a lake, boathouse, great lawn, stage, gardens and playgrounds. The lower park, just south of Skydance Bridge and sculpture along Interstate 40, will come later and includes some environmental improvements and a transformation inviting outdoor activity and healthy, daily living for citizens and visitors. This MAPS 3-funded park will be joined by a new convention center, high-rise hotel and a mix of retail, residential and commercial uses, and will remake the feel and function of downtown Oklahoma City for generations to come.

Roadways will always be important investments and so too is the health and happiness of those citizens who would commute upon them. Soon these green living investments will pivot Oklahoma's two largest cities toward a tomorrow where more people can actually get out of their cars near the urban core, walk from their offices, relax a little and breathe some clean

outdoor air on a daily basis. This is a trend I hope continues for all Oklahomans.

Jim Roth, a former Oklahoma corporation commissioner, is an attorney with [Phillips Murrah P.C.](#) in Oklahoma City, where his practice focuses on clean, green energy for Oklahoma.