

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Treece, Kansas Voluntary Relocation Project

Updated: 8/16/10

Eligibility Questions:

1. How long must you have lived in Treece in order to participate in the buyout? *Residents living in Treece on or before March 13, 2006, will have the highest priority. Residents moving to Treece after March 13, 2006, will be considered on a case by case basis in a later phase per a prioritization plan.*
2. What is the buyout boundary? *The TRA Trust identified the buyout boundaries as all property within the Treece city limits and residents outside the city limit who have potable water supplied by the City of Treece public water supply system. The Treece city limits is defined as Webber (Grove) Road to the north, Treece Road/State Line to the south, Prospect Road to the west, and Columbus Road to the east. The only known residents located outside the city limits and supplied by the Treece city water system are along Webber (Grove) Road, SW 10th Street, and Starr Road.*
3. What is the priority for purchasing properties? *Residents living in their homes continuously since March 13, 2006, will have first priority. Residents living in their homes after March 13, 2006, will be include in a second prioritization phase later in 2010 or possibly in 2011.*
4. If someone received a buyout in Picher and moved to Treece, are they eligible for another buyout? *Someone receiving a buyout from the Lead-Impacted Community Assistance Trust, Picher, Oklahoma buyout efforts will be eligible for relocation assistance, but they will be in the last prioritization group considered if they were not a Treece resident by March 13, 2006.*
5. If a home has not been occupied for several years, will that structure be considered? Do you have to be living in the structure to get a buyout? *Occupied residences will take first priority, but all homes will be considered. A home unoccupied for an extended period of time may essentially be considered a storage structure. **The TRA Trust anticipates allowing owners who move out of their home at any time after January 28, 2010, to still be eligible for relocation assistance as an occupied home assuming the home is still in livable condition.***
6. Will farms be a part of the relocation assistance efforts to receive buyout? *The TRA Trust has determined the typical maximum acreage eligible for purchase is 5 acres, but the actual acreage will be considered on a case by case basis. Any land to be purchased must be considered an integral part of the home (i.e. part of the farmstead of acreage).*
7. Will empty/vacant lots be purchased? *Vacant lots will be considered for purchase in the second phase. One exception is that vacant lots may be grouped together with properties that are eligible for purchase in phase I.*

Eligibility FAQs Continued:

8. Will religious organizations be able to participate? *Yes, religious organization will be handled in the same manner as a business or nonprofit organization.*
9. What if I run a business out of a house? *Property with home-based businesses can be appraised as a business, but will likely be appraised as a residence since that will present the best value for the property.*
10. Are renters included in the relocation program? *Renters who have resided in their homes since March 13, 2006, and can produce a valid rental contract or other proof of rental arrangement are eligible for relocation assistance. Assistance will be provided in an amount up to the average cost of 12 months rent for comparable housing elsewhere in Cherokee County. Renters may also receive up to \$1,000 for eligible moving expenses.*
11. Will a property owner receive assistance if they are renting their house to someone else? *Owners of rental property are eligible for relocation assistance.*
12. How do you handle the situation when I am in a “Rent to Own” or “Lease to Buy Option” on the house I am living in? *Documentation must be provided detailing proof a contract for a lease-to-own or a rent-to-own agreement. Only one owner will be eligible for the buyout. Rental assistance will still be available if the TRA Trust determines the current owner on record shall be paid for the property. The TRA Trust will evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis.*
13. What happens when one person owns the land and another person owns the house? *Separate appraisals will be considered for the house and the land; however the total value will not exceed an amount provided for similar property with only one owner. Both parties involved may receive assistance; however the prioritization for payment has not been finalized. The Trust will evaluate these scenarios on a case-by-case basis.*

Timeline/Trust Questions:

1. What is the timeline to begin and end the relocation? How long will it take before I am bought out? *The TRA Trust was finalized on June 8, 2010 and the Program Plan was finalized on July 19, 2010. Appraisers are expected to be selected in late August or early September. The deadline for phase I applications is August 31, 2010. The best case scenario is to possibly have the first offers out to some applicants in late 2010, early 2011.*
2. If I receive a buyout, how much time will I be given to move out of my home? *The TRA Trust estimates allowing owners up to 30 days to accept the buyout offer.*
3. How will the Relocation Trust Members be appointed? *The TRA Trust consists of five members appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the Kansas Senate.*
4. My child has asthma, will children go first? *The prioritization plan has not been finalized, but age and health of residents may be factors considered by the trustees. The primary prioritization will be based on meeting the minimum application criteria and when applications were received.*

Appraisal Questions:

1. Will we be able to use an arbitrator if we disagree with the appraisal we receive for our property? *The TRA Trust does not anticipate including provisions for using an arbitrator during relocation negotiations.*
2. Will the appraisers start at one end of town and work toward the other end all at once or work on individual properties scattered throughout town. *Appraisals will be conducted in groups of properties that have approved applications for relocation assistance.*
3. If property appraisals are based on property values in Columbus or another Cherokee County town do I have to move to that community? *Comparative property values used for the purposes of the relocation efforts will be based on an amount equal to the average cost of comparable housing elsewhere in Cherokee County, Kansas. The TRA Trust will solicit appraisals prepared based on comparisons from different comparable communities in Cherokee County. The availability of housing for rent or purchase will be among several factors considered when selecting the comparable communities.*
4. Will Small Business Administrative Loans be available for moving costs and acquiring new property? *KDHE does not anticipate coordinating any type of outside financial assistance beyond that of the property purchase. Any small business or other types of loans will be the responsibility of the property owner to acquire.*
5. If I own a mobile home will I have to move it or will I be paid for it? *Owners of mobile homes will have the option of moving their homes; however, the cost paid by the TRA Trust cannot exceed the value of the property.*
6. Can we take our fence with us if we accept relocation assistance? *The TRA Trust will evaluate requests to remove items, such as fences, pools, playground equipment; easily-movable small storage sheds, etc. A list of acceptable items that may be removed from the property will be developed prior to the application deadline. In addition, owners can request permission on a case-by-case basis to remove additional items. Removal of significant items may affect the appraisal value.*

City/Housing Questions:

1. Will utilities remain for those that choose not to relocate? *The availability of remaining utilities is unknown until the Trust identifies how many residents will remain. No changes are anticipated for telephone, natural gas, and electricity. Sanitary sewer and public water supply are more of a concern and the Trust recommends all residents assume those utilities will not be available under the current city-run system.*

Water: Cherokee County RWD #3 is anticipated to take over the remaining public water system, but remaining residents will need to comply with their normal hookup requirements, including but not limited to purchase of a new benefit unit (\$1,800 as on July 2010), easement at eh Cherokee County Courthouse (est. \$150), and any new waterline that need be installed (customer's cost). The RWD #3 recommends any people interested in requesting their service attend one of their meetings.

Sanitary Sewer: Availability will also be dependent upon the number of remaining residents and their desire to maintain the existing system. Too few remaining residents may not allow for adequate flow and use of the existing system without significant modifications or changes to the sewer system operations. Sewer requirements are available by contacting Carl Hayes, Cherokee County Health Department at (620) 429-3087.

2. Will people who decline the buyout be able to acquire neighboring "buyout property" in order to install a septic field? *The Trust does not anticipate remaining residents will be able to acquire neighboring property purchased by the Trust. The TRA Trust will have restrictions placed on the land to prevent future occupancy of the property.*
3. Will money be available to upgrade city infrastructure if people do not participate in the buyout? *The purpose of the TRA Trust is to facilitate relocation of affected occupants. The program is not set up to provide infrastructure upgrades for remaining residents.*
4. If you move my house, will you conduct an environmental assessment of the house before moving it? *If a resident chooses to relocate their home, the owner may have the home assessed as part of the relocation tasks. Keep in mind this will be considered as part of the relocation cost and may leave less for the move of the home. Any move of a home will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the associated costs must be reviewed and approved.*
5. Will residents be able to relocate to Baxter Springs? *Yes, the TRA Trust will offer owners and renters an amount based on the comparable values or rental amounts in other communities in Cherokee County. The actual comparable communities have not yet been determined. If an offer is accepted, the money will be provided to the appropriate party and they are free to move wherever they choose. If the TRA Trust determines the most cost effective alternative is to pay the cost of relocating a movable structure, the new location will be negotiated as part of the relocation offer. You will be free to move anywhere you decide, including out of state. The TRA Trust will include a requirement that any person receiving assistance pursuant to this section must agree to move to property on which there is no mining waste and which is not prone to subsidence.*

City/Housing FAQs Continued:

6. If we decide to move our mobile home, how far will you move it since some cities only allow mobile homes in a mobile home park? *Although the TRA Trust business rules have not been finalized, KDHE anticipates each owner will be offered a buyout amount for their property. That amount may be based on the cost to move your home to another location in Cherokee County, Kansas, including cost of the new lot, utility hookups, etc. Owners may then choose to use that money to move their home to any location.*
7. Will a property owner get more money for making new improvements to their house? *New improvements will not make a significant difference during the appraisal process because the appraisal will be based on the general condition and size of the structure in a comparable community. The TRA Trust will determine if property improvements made after the announcement of plans for relocation assistance in an attempt to raise the property value will be considered during the appraisal. The goal of this project to help relocate as many residents as possible.*
8. If an owner decides to move their mobile home and the TRA Trust purchases the remaining lot does the money go to the mortgage company or the land owner? *Applicants need to ensure that they are current on all overdue payments, including but not limited to: rent charges/fees, liens, mortgage payments, tax payments, etc. A real estate closing company will handle the final closing and ensure overdue payments are collected.*
9. Does an applicant need to have the deed in their name to show proof of ownership? Example: The deed was not changed after a parent passed away and their son or daughter inherited the property. *The Trust highly recommends that applicants make sure the deed is completed to show they own the property. Properties with proper deeds and definitive property ownership will be handled quicker than properties with ownership questions that require additional research by the Trust or clarification by the applicant.*

Long Term Property Management Questions:

1. What will happen to the property following the buyout? *Property purchased during the relocation project will be owned by the TRA Trust. Upon completion of all buyout efforts, the TRA Trust will likely negotiate with a governmental entity or organization for the long-term care of the property as a nature area or grassland. No decisions have been made concerning what organization can own the property for the long term. Environmental use controls will prevent the future occupancy of any of the property.*