On April 4, 2005, Governor Kathleen Sebelius signed Senate Bill 58, the Sedgwick County Arena tax bill. This bill authorizes Sedgwick County to collect a sales tax beginning July 1, 2005 for 30 months. Sedgwick County citizens voted to approve the one percent sales tax on November 2, 2004, which was subject to Legislature approval in 2005.

Sedgwick County leaders conducted a community engagement process in the late summer of 2004. This process enabled leaders to share information about other community Arenas, parking and traffic concerns, costs and financing options, economic impact, Kansas Coliseum renovations and future and the overall project timeline.

The Sedgwick County Arena will be a multi-purpose center, with 15,000 seats for basketball and up to 24 box suites. The facility will be owned and operated by the Board of Sedgwick Commissioners and will be located in downtown Wichita. The Sedgwick County Arena in downtown Wichita will make a large and long-term impact on the downtown area of the City of Wichita. Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita are working together to create a neighborhood redevelopment plan that will make downtown a vibrant community and destination point for years to come. The Arena will be part of an atmosphere that provides future economic development and enhances the quality of life with other projects such as the Old Town entertainment district, Eaton Place, the Transit Center and the proposed Art District, Water Walk and Century II expansion.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD), which is jointly funded by Sedgwick County and the City of Wichita, will be tasked with producing the redevelopment plan for the area surrounding the Sedgwick County Arena. The MAPD will utilize
consultants and seek community input to build consensus on the development of the plan for the area. Potential boundaries of the Arena Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan are identified in the highlighted area of the map down below between Old Town and Water Walk:

On July 27, 2005, the BoCC approved the Request for Proposal submitted by Arena Design Consortium (ADC). ADC met the standard requirements for architecture and engineering services for the Sedgwick County Arena, plus the additional specification for the experience in large arenas in an urban setting. ADC has previous experience operating facilities with similar scope and size, which will help control long-term operational costs for the facility.

Local and national firms comprising ADC include: Wilson Darnell Mann P.A.; Gossen Livingston & Associates, Inc.; McCluggage Vansickle Perry, Architects; HOK Sport+Venue+Event; M-E Engineering; Professional Engineering Consultants P.A.; Walter P. Moore; Poole Consultants; HNTB; Wrightson, Johnson, Hadden & Williams, Inc.; The Bigelow Companies; Turner Construction; Walker Parking Consultants; Historic Preservation Services. Preliminary design costs at the existing Kansas Coliseum and the construction improvements for the Pavilions at the Coliseum are part of the Arena project costs. The improvements will allow the Pavilions to continue its mission as a much needed venue for horse and livestock events and tradeshows that would not take place inside Sedgwick County Arena in downtown Wichita.

Sedgwick County has used citizen engagement throughout this process to provide information about the Sedgwick County Arena and assure perspectives, views, concerns and ideas from citizens are heard. There are two citizen committees related to the Sedgwick County Arena: the Citizen Arena Sales Tax Oversight Committee and the Citizen Design Review Committee. Additionally, Sedgwick County utilizes the County’s website and streaming video in an effort to have a transparent and open Arena planning process. This model of community engagement will continue throughout the planning and construction process of the Sedgwick County Arena.