

Oklahoma City MAPS Background

What is MAPS?

Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) is an initiative in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma that began in December 1993 when voters in the city approved a dedicated one per cent municipal sales tax for nine major civic project.

MAPS is limited (or sunset) tax that has twice been renewed. The MAPS 1 tax expired on July 1, 1999 (following a six-month extension); during the 66 months it was in effect, more than \$309 million was collected and another \$54 million was earned in interest. Voters in OKC later supported MAPS 2 and MAPS 3, which saw the one-cent tax used for additional civic and educational projects.

MAPS is administered by a citizen advisory council (with one appointed city council member), which consults with the public on projects. Approved projects only proceed when funds are “in the bank.”

Why was MAPS implemented?

In a September 2012 interview with Transformation Calgary, Ron Norick, the former mayor of Oklahoma City said that when he became mayor, the city’s prospect were dismal.

"We were dying," Norick said.

OKC was facing an oil bust, a banking bust and a daunting recession. Civic leaders were trying to win economic opportunities and attract jobs, but realized the city wasn’t competitive. Norick reluctantly concluded the reason no one wanted to come to OKC was because the city had no quality of life. He then headed a study group that put together a plan, which identified nine projects that could help transform the city.

Council at first didn't fully support Norick. He worked behind the scenes and with the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce to convince members of council to vote yes. Nine council votes eventually came forward with regards to MAPS and they all passed with 100 per cent support.

How is MAPS revenue used?

MAPS 1 funds were used for:

- The Ford Center, now the Chesapeake Energy Arena
- The AT&T Bricktown Ballpark
- The Bricktown Canal
- State Fairgrounds Improvements
- The Oklahoma River
- The Oklahoma Spirit Trolleys
- Cox Business Services Convention Center
- Renovation of the Civic Center Music Hall
- The Norick Downtown Library

OCMAPS, the second phase of MAPS also known as MAPS for Kids, was a \$700-million school program that included hundreds of construction, transportation and technology projects for public schools students in OKC. The program also included \$470 million of school construction and

renovations and funding to 23 other public school districts attended by OKC students. It ran from 2001 to 2008 and generated about \$500 million.

MAPS 3 is a 10-year construction program designed to further improve the quality of life in OKC. It will provide funding for some eight projects estimated to be worth \$777 million:

- New Downtown Convention Center
- New Downtown Public Park
- Modern Streetcar/Transit
- Oklahoma River Improvements
- Oklahoma State Fairgrounds
- Senior Health & Wellness Centers
- Trails
- Sidewalks

The MAPS 3 sales tax began in April 2010 and ends in December 2017.

MAPS funding credited with giving the city the ability to attract an NBA team in 2009

How did the sales tax work?

One per cent is added to every retail purchase in Oklahoma City. The city had an existing sales tax. Residents who live in the city and in Oklahoma County or Cleveland County pay an additional 8.375 cents in sales tax for every dollar spent. Of the 8.375 cents per dollar that citizens of Oklahoma City spend, 4.5 cents goes to the State of Oklahoma general fund. The other 3.875 cents goes to the City of Oklahoma City.

Who votes to approve this initiative?

The citizens who live within the city limits of Oklahoma City.

What percentage of the voters is required for approval of new sales taxes in Oklahoma City?

Fifty percent of the voters, plus one.

How is OKC Council involved in the process?

City Council decides whether to schedule a vote of the people on a sales tax.

How does the advisory council work?

The Mayor appoints a mandated citizen oversight board (varying size from 15 to 21 members) shortly after voters approve the projects. The board reviews project components including financing and site location and then makes recommendations to the City Council. The MAPS board led the public review process for the MAPS Master Plan which the Council approved on February 14, 1995. The board was dissolved on June 22, 2004.

Day-to-day operations are handled by the MAPS office, whose staff members are all City employees.

Praise

From the MAPS 3 Implementation Plan:

“The MAPS programs have been touted as some of the most successful public/private partnerships in the country. In perhaps the best salute to the MAPS efforts, *Southern Business & Development* named the citizens of Oklahoma City its ‘2011 Person of the Year.’ The magazine notes that, ‘In an age of marked scepticism of government in general, OKC stands out like no place in the country. It is a city that has continued to invest in itself over and over again and the results are nothing less than extraordinary.’ ”

- *Urban Land Magazine* “Top 10 Areas of New Jobs:” OKC #7 in Raw Gains (November 11, 2010)
- *Newsweek’s* “Top Ten Places Poised for Recovery” (November 8, 2010)
- Milken Institute: OKC Among “Top 25 Best Performing Cities” (October 19, 2010)
- *Forbes*: OKC a “Top 5 Fastest-Growing City” (October 11, 2010)
- Brookings Institute/The Atlantic: OKC Among “20 Strongest Performers Once Again” (September 15, 2010)
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: OKC in “Top 20 Private Sector Job Growth Over the Past Decade” (June 30, 2010)
- *Huffington Post*: “11 Cities Beating the Recession” (June 15, 2010)
- *Business Insider*: OKC #4 on “Cities That Are Having an Awesome Recovery” List (March 18, 2010)

Sources: *Transformation Calgary* interview with Ron Norick, former mayor of Oklahoma City; *Oklahoma City* website; and the *MAPS 3 Implementation Plan*