

CITYSCAPE

February 2014 | Issue 2 | A quarterly update on the progress moving OKC forward

OKC AMONG FEW CITIES WITH GROWING MIDDLE CLASS

National media have long been reporting the decline of mid-paying jobs and the middle class across the nation. However, Oklahoma City's economy tells a different story.

An article from *Forbes* ("The Cities Creating The Most Middle Class Jobs"; Oct. 24, 2013) states: "Perhaps nothing is as critical to America's future as the trajectory of the middle class and improving the prospects of upward mobility." According to the article, along with many other national reports,

middle-class incomes are either stagnant or declining, going from 25 percent of the workforce to just above 15 percent today.

While the picture for middle class jobs looks grim across much of the nation, there are a few metropolitan areas, including Oklahoma City, that are bucking the trend and increasing middle class opportunities.

Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City echoes that report. Through August 2013, Oklahoma City

had 4 percent more jobs than before the recession, while the U.S. continued to lag, not having yet achieved the same number of pre-recession jobs.

The region continues to show strength in attracting jobs and investment. During 2013, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber assisted with more than 6,500 new jobs for both existing and new-to-market companies. Both high-paying technical and low-paying service jobs have seen an increase in the regional economy.

"Twenty-thirteen was one of the most successful years we have had in terms of companies looking at and choosing Greater Oklahoma City," said Kurt Foreman, executive vice president of economic development, Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. "We are seeing numbers that we have not seen since before the recession and we expect to continue to see companies announce their relocation to or expansion in this region."

Oklahoma City ranks No. 5 in middle-class job growth among cities of more than 1 million people.

-Forbes, Oct. 2013

CITY WORKING TO INCREASE PARKING DOWNTOWN

The Central Business District currently has approximately 26,100 parking spaces, including off- and on-street parking. With recent growth in the area, the City is working to increase the number of spaces available to meet current and future demand.



The Arts District Garage, currently under construction, will add approximately 830 new parking spaces to downtown.



Project 180 is adding 600 on-street metered spaces to downtown, bringing the total number of on-street metered spaces to 2,100.



The addition of angled parking along Broadway Avenue in Automobile Alley spaces is expected to increase parking in the area by 24 spots.

Q&A WITH MAYOR MICK CORNETT

How is Oklahoma City different today than when you started your civic service as a member of the City Council?

I started serving on the Council in 2001. At that point Oklahoma City was inching its way up. We had passed MAPS but were still in the process of completing a few remaining projects. It was four years before we brought the then-New Orleans Hornets here in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Really, at that point, having a permanent NBA team to call our own was mostly wishful thinking.

Even still, you could feel this energy in the city. The people of Oklahoma City are amazing. We will not let anything or anyone keep us down. That energy was alive in 2001, and my desire to help the citizens capitalize on that energy and determination is the main reason I took the leap into public service.

Outside of the new facilities, what are some of the other positive effects the city is seeing from MAPS?

It's not an exaggeration to say MAPS changed everything. It made Oklahoma City more desirable, both for our own citizens and those looking in from the outside. It has



Mayor Cornett with Oklahoma City Police Officers at a groundbreaking for one of the MAPS 3 Sidewalks.

opened the door for major investment from companies like Devon and GE.

A growing economy allows us to invest in the needs of our city. We're addressing that today thanks to the increased revenue allowing us to better serve the citizens. We are spending more on street resurfacing than ever before. We have added police officer positions to our force in

each of the last two years and I anticipate that trend will continue. We are building new fire stations, repairing bridges, improving parks, fixing drainage systems, replacing buses. The list goes on and on. Without MAPS and the way it has revitalized Oklahoma City, it would not be possible to do this responsibly. Thanks to MAPS, we can enjoy an improved quality of life. Yes that means enjoying a day on the Oklahoma River and taking

in a Thunder game at the Chesapeake Energy Arena. But it also means safer neighborhoods, better streets and all around better services for our citizens.

Last year was a significant year for severe weather. What has the city done to increase safety and response in emergencies?

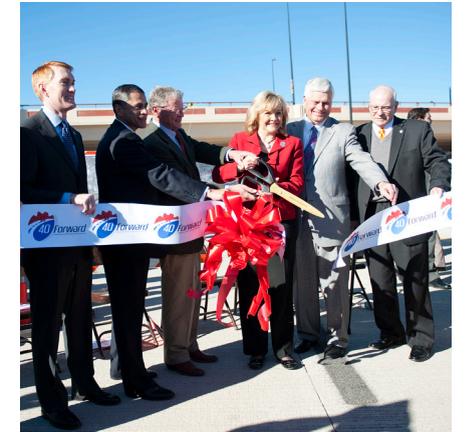
Last year's extreme weather certainly made us stop and think "are we doing everything we can to keep our



Mick Cornett became the 35th mayor of Oklahoma City in 2004.



Mayor Cornett led the vision for MAPS 3 which will shape the city's future with new quality of life projects.



Mayor Cornett, alongside state leaders, celebrated the relocation of the I-40 Crosstown.

citizens, and especially our children, safe?" Just a week after the May 20 tornado I put together a task force to help us review public and school safety procedures. The nine members of the task force and myself have spent time looking at the issues and are working in appropriate safeguards for the community.

I recently called for a new city ordinance to require that all newly built schools be equipped with storm shelters. With 24 districts having schools inside our city limits, we saw an opportunity to increase the safety of our school children without putting an unreasonable financial burden on the districts.

What are you most looking forward to for Oklahoma City in 2014?

I'm hoping for a world championship for the Thunder. But I think equally as exciting will be

the prospect of even more new jobs coming to the city, bringing new talent and helping to continue our momentum. We saw a big announcement in 2013 with the GE Global Research Facility. I think 2014 will hold similar big things for Oklahoma City.

We are also going to see pretty significant progress on several MAPS 3 projects. Sidewalks are popping up all around the city. We have started work on the trails. We will break ground on the whitewater facility. Now that we've been collecting pennies for nearly four years, we can really start to see things move forward.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS A HIGH PRIORITY IN OKC



The FY 2013-2014 budget includes an increase of nearly 7 percent in public safety funding.

Citizen Surveys from recent years showed that citizens have a positive perception of the city and are happy with the majority of city services. However, citizens reported that public safety, specifically the quality of police service, should receive increased emphasis.

Satisfaction with the quality of police and fire service from the 2013 Citizen Survey ranked at 70 percent and 92 percent, respectively.

“Reducing crime, preventing and responding to fire and medical emergencies quickly are the expectations we have for our public safety departments,” said Jim Couch, City Manager, City of Oklahoma City, in a letter to the Mayor and City Council as part of the FY 2014 budget. “The FY 2014 budget continues that emphasis with several significant additions.”

Public Safety spending in FY 2014 accounts for nearly two-thirds of the city’s General Fund at more than 64 percent. That is an increase of nearly 7 percent more than the FY 2013 budget. Police and fire receive additional revenue through the dedicated three-quarter cent Public Safety Sales Tax.

The addition of 40 uniform police positions increases the number of police officer positions in Oklahoma City by 3.7 percent. Those

positions, coupled with the 33 positions added since FY 2012, result in a 7 percent increase in uniform positions.

“It’s probably not a coincidence that we have reduced crime this past year by eight to 10 percent. The number of drive-by shootings is half of what it used to be,” said Mayor Mick Cornett during his annual State of the City address. “And through our truancy program and our Police Athletic League, our police officers are interacting with kids earlier rather than later.”

Both police and fire will benefit from the 2007 General Obligation Bond. The bond contained funding for a new police headquarters and courts complex. The groundbreaking for the police headquarters was held in January. The bond also includes funding for the construction of five new fire stations. Once those stations are completed, the city expects to add additional firefighters.

“The economic strain of the ‘80s and ‘90s, combined with the incredible investment and population growth of the past 20 years left our city playing catch-up in terms of some crucial city services, including public safety,” said Mayor Cornett. “It is up to us to provide a safe and secure community for our citizens. Budgets for the past few years reflect the city’s dedication to raising our expectations and ensuring that our citizens live in a safe city with safe neighborhoods.”



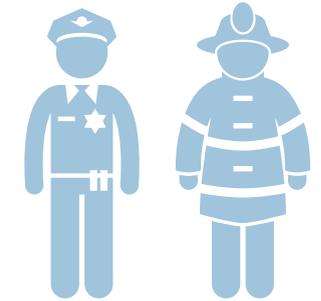
The new police headquarters is being built as part of the 2007 G.O. Bond.

PUBLIC SAFETY IN OKC



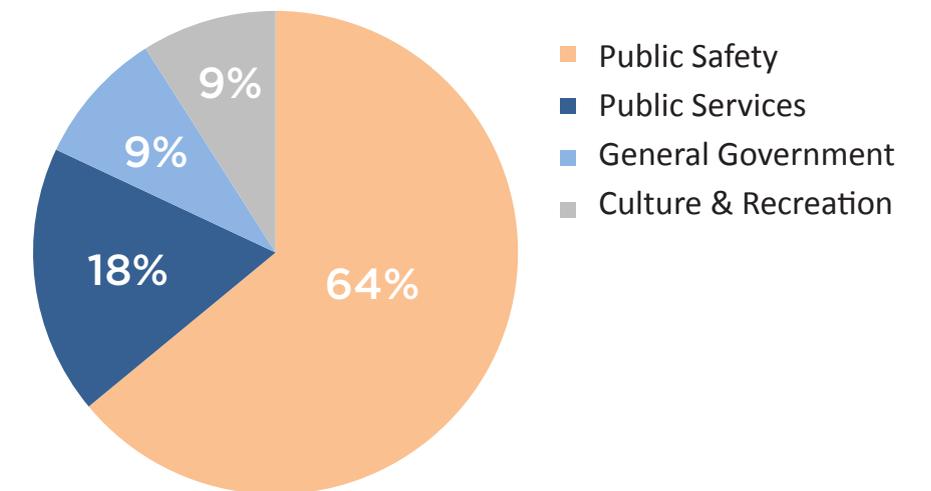
64% of annual budget

funding for **76** additional police officers and firefighters



7% increase in uniformed police officers since FY2012

GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION



For more information on the FY 2014 budget, visit www.okc.gov.

MAPS 3 CREATES QUALITY OF LIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZENS

On Dec. 8, 2009, the Oklahoma City citizens voted to invest in eight quality of life projects known as MAPS 3. The collection of the one-cent sales tax, which began in April 2010, is nearly four years underway and results are starting to show. The following is an update on the progress regarding each project and what can be expected to happen in 2014.

SIDEWALKS

The sidewalk projects promote a healthier lifestyle and a more walkable community. They are being built and planned in high-traffic areas to create additional safety for pedestrians, as well as in strategic locations to enhance accessibility, safety and quality of life.



Completed:

- Sidewalks Master Plan
- Approval of an additional \$9 million in funding by the City Council

What to expect in 2014:

- Completion of Phase 1, Projects 1 and 2
- Start of construction of Phase 1, Project 3
- Start of construction of Phase 2
- Completion of design of Phase 2

DOWNTOWN CONVENTION CENTER

Tourism is an important sector of Oklahoma City's economy, employing more than 32,000 people and acting as its third largest industry. The new convention center is expected to nearly triple the economic impact the city receives from visitors, and will allow Oklahoma City to replace an inadequate facility.

Completed:

- Site location study
- Site recommendation

What to expect in 2014:

- Completion of site appraisals
- Start of land acquisition
- Completion of conceptual design

OKLAHOMA STATE FAIRGROUNDS IMPROVEMENTS

State Fair Park is perhaps the most widely-used public facility in Oklahoma City, as well as an economic engine. MAPS 3 will replace aging, dilapidated public event buildings used by citizens

year-round. The projects are guided by the State Fair Park Master Plan and include parking and site improvements, as well as a new expo building.

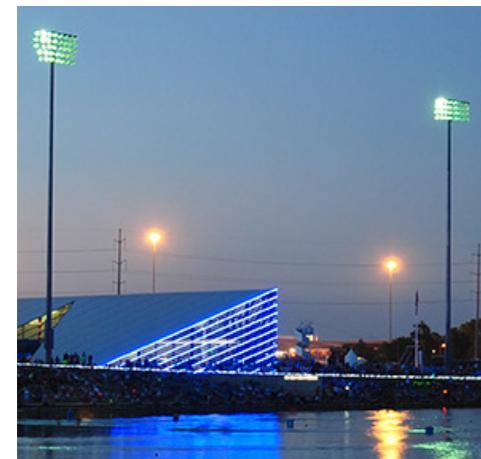
Completed:

- Preliminary design on the expo building

What to expect in 2014:

- Completion of final design/construction documents on expo building
- Start of construction of expo building
- Completion of Phase 1 of parking and site improvements

OKLAHOMA RIVER IMPROVEMENTS



The Oklahoma River redevelopment that began with the first MAPS is an unquestioned success story. MAPS 3 will create a world-class whitewater

rafting and kayaking facility that will provide a myriad of recreation possibilities for athletes and the public. Other improvements along the river include lighting, grandstands, windscreens, race course improvements and stage.

Completed:

- Race course starting systems installed
- Race course lighting

What to expect in 2014:

- Completion of windscreen design
- Begin construction of whitewater facility
- Completion of Phase 2 race course improvements

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARK

This world-class, 70-acre community gathering place will provide citizens with a variety of recreation activities, including concerts, trails, picnic sites, youth sports fields, play areas, public art, interactive water features and more.



Completed:

- Approval of Master Plan by City Council
- Utility investigations
- Partial site acquisition

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON MAPS 3

Don't miss any of the exciting developments of the MAPS 3 projects. Subscribe to the MAPS 3 e-newsletter today.

Updates in the most recent edition include:

- Downtown Park Master Plan approved
- A note from the MAPS 3 Program Manager



Visit www.okc.gov/maps3 to sign up to receive the e-newsletter and stay informed.



What to expect in 2014:

- Additional progress on site acquisition
- Completion of environmental assessment
- Design of utility relocations
- Design of Phase 1 improvements

TRAILS

The trails component of MAPS 3 will complete a series of trail loops throughout Oklahoma City. The proposed expansion includes trails connecting Lake Hefner to the North Canadian River, connections from Lake Overholser to the North Canadian Central Greenway, a loop trail around Lake Stanley Draper and connection from the Grand Boulevard Trail to the Earlywine Trail.

Completed:

- Groundbreaking on the West River Trail
- Public open house on the I-44 West Trail

What to expect in 2014:

- Completion on the first project of the West River Trail
- Groundbreaking on Project 2 of the West River Trail
- Final design on the I-44 West Trail

SENIOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTERS

The Senior Health and Wellness Centers will reflect the needs of the surrounding communities in which they are located. These centers, distributed geographically throughout the city, will serve as community gathering places and will likely include amenities such as a gym, indoor walking track, classrooms, lap and therapy pools, lounge space, library, computer access and more.

Completed:

- Selection of design architect

What to expect in 2014:

- Contract negotiations with two potential operating partners
- Architect/engineer search for the second center
- Completed design of first center

MODERN STREETCAR/TRANSIT

Serving the downtown vicinity, the rail-based streetcar system will help to connect workers to their jobs, residents to events/recreation, and visitors to our attractions. In addition, the streetcars will give Oklahoma City the first element of a future, more extensive public transit system and establishes a hub to support multiple types of transportation.



Completed:

- City Council approval of consultant-recommended route framework
- Acquisition of the Santa Fe station for use as a hub
- Announcement of federal funding for renovation of Santa Fe station
- Recommendation of a site for the streetcar maintenance facility

What to expect in 2014:

- Selection of architecture/engineering consultant for hub renovation
- Preliminary design of the route
- And more

FIXING OUR ROADS: BOND ISSUES HELP CITY TACKLE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

The City of Oklahoma City's Public Works Department works to maintain the vast amounts of infrastructure, streets, bridges, drainage and traffic control facilities located throughout Oklahoma City's 621-square mile borders.

The city's expansive size makes for enough challenges when maintaining necessary infrastructure. Add to that the fact that the city passed zero General Obligation (G.O.) Bonds from 1976 until 1995. The result? Long-deferred maintenance and a backlog of needed improvements and updates.

Since the 1995 G.O. Bond, the citizens have passed two additional G.O. Bonds, totaling more than \$1 billion spent or planned on streets, bridges,



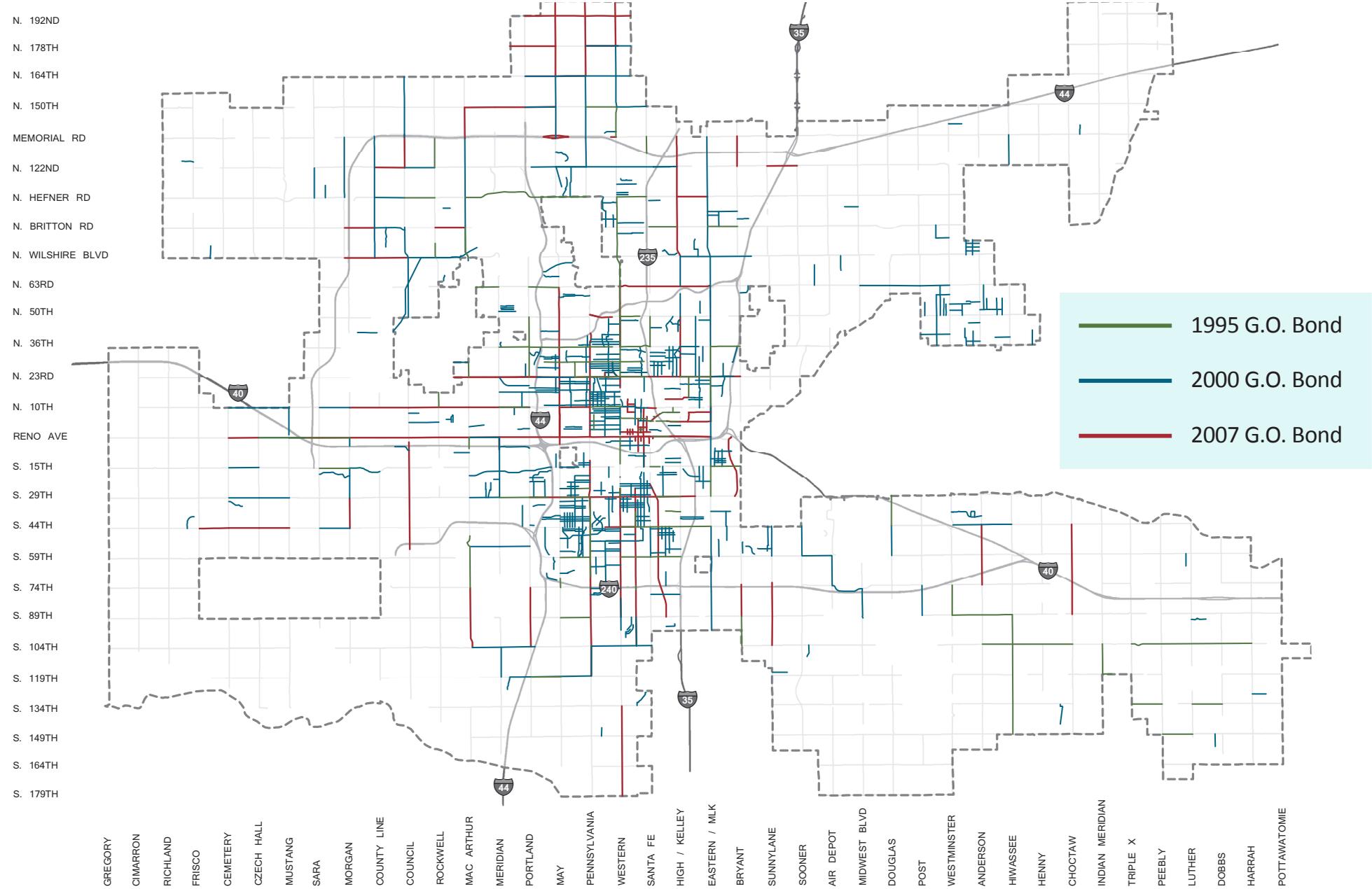
Recent G.O. Bond issues have added more than \$1 billion in funding to maintenance and repair of City infrastructure.

traffic systems and drainage control in Oklahoma City.

The city's focus on improving street conditions extends beyond Bond projects. The Public Works budget for FY 2014 includes increased funding to allow for the addition of two construction project managers and other staff to support a higher work effort.

The following map represents improvements made to streets and other infrastructure as a result

of the 1995, 2000 and 2007 G.O. Bonds. If you have specific questions regarding the Bond Issues, contact the City of Oklahoma City's Public Works Department at 297-2581.



A LIFE LIVED IN OKC: LONG-TIME RESIDENT TELLS HER STORY



Dannie Bea Hightower, 89, is a life-long Oklahoma City resident who is passionate about the role downtown plays in a vibrant and growing city.

Dannie Bea Hightower's life is intertwined with that of Oklahoma City's. Her father owned the Black Hotel downtown when she was young and at one point owned the Skirvin Hotel and its towers. Her husband's grandfather, and later her husband, the late Frank Hightower, owned the Hightower Building, built in the 1920s at Main and Hudson.

Here, Hightower, shares some of her impressions of Oklahoma City's changes through the years and of its most recent renaissance.

In what area of town did you grow up?

I lived in Heritage Hills when I was young. My father had a hotel downtown and when we were quite young we had the penthouse on the top. When I was a child, I grew up looking out over the city.

What changes have you seen downtown?

My husband, Frank Hightower, was a person who believed passionately that if the city didn't have a vibrant and a strong downtown, it would never really grow. By having a central strong downtown that brings people from all directions, pulls them together, ... then you have a heart of a city.

What is your impression of the one-cent sales tax known as MAPS that launched the renaissance downtown?

I think that MAPS was the starting point that put everything in motion.

What do you see downtown now?

Now it's above people's wildest dreams to see how the downtown area has exploded. The energy is all right there. I drive down there all the time. I love to see everything that's going on. Of course the river has been such an exciting development. As I say, a good strong downtown makes people feel like it's the heart of the city, and the heart feeds all the outlying areas. It's drawn everyone together, north and south and east, west.

What do you think of some of the current development happening downtown including increased housing, the new Arts District parking garage and so many more projects that are planned or under development in downtown Oklahoma City?

We're seeing the downtown growing off in all directions. Now it's beginning to head to the west. We're kind of coming full circle is the way I see it. Things that moved away are now coming back to the center.

To what do you attribute some of Oklahoma City's renaissance?

I cannot express enough how important I think our last three mayors have been to the wonderful development in Oklahoma

City. First of all, Ron Norick's big vision of MAPS, which created these wonderful buildings downtown. MAPS is what got the ball rolling and that was the leadership of Ron Norick. Kirk Humphreys kept the vision alive, and, going even further, we are so fortunate to have the leadership of Mick Cornett who had the knowledge and the background to bring the Hornets to Oklahoma City. Then he was instrumental in bringing the Thunder here. It's so important to recognize how the three mayors saw the importance of a really strong city and community.



Dannie Bea Hightower's husband's grandfather, and later her husband, Frank, owned the Hightower Building at Main and Hudson. The Hightower family still owns the building today.