

CITYSCAPE

October 2015 | Issue 4 | An update on the progress moving OKC forward

TINKER AFB POSITIONED FOR GROWTH

See a timeline of Tinker's history on page 7

Oklahoma's largest employer in the heart of the Oklahoma City metro, Tinker Air Force Base, has been named the maintenance center for the Air Force's next generation of aerial refueling planes. The base's increased workload was made possible in part by its acquisition of 158 acres of land on the west side of the base to create a depot maintenance facility for the KC-46A Pegasus, a move that was announced earlier this year.

The land was purchased with funds from a joint effort between the U.S. Air Force (\$8 million), the City of Oklahoma City (\$23.5 million) and Oklahoma County (\$12.5 million). The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co. had owned the land and on it operated a rail yard that primarily served the former General Motors manufacturing facility.

Before selecting the 158-acre property as the location for its KC-46A depot operations, the Air Force evaluated a number of potential sites both on and near Tinker. After extensive review, the service determined this property would be the best value for the taxpayer and would also increase the base's security by incorporating land between disconnected portions of the base, connecting all of the base's property.

Tinker officials stressed the acquisition would not be possible without the continued support of the installation's community partners. The City of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County provided a combined \$36 million to enable the acquisition. The 1,321 new jobs created through this project will be enrolled in the Oklahoma Quality Jobs program. Legislation

passed last year will allow those incentive payments to go back to the City and County on a pro-rated basis to reimburse their investment in this job-producing infrastructure. Gov. Mary Fallin heralded the project as a prime example of how Oklahoma works together for economic development and for the support of our nation.



The acquisition of the BNSF railyard allows Tinker to create a depot maintenance facility for the KC-46A Pegasus aircraft, a move that will bring 1,321 new jobs to Oklahoma City.

"Tinker has such a critical role in supporting our military," said Gov. Fallin. "Oklahomans recognize the importance of the base and the workforce at Tinker to our economy. I applaud everyone involved for their perseverance in bringing this complicated project to fruition."

Construction on the property is under way, with the first KC-46A arriving at Tinker in 2018. An estimated workforce of 350 people will be employed for the construction of the maintenance facilities. In addition to the maintenance responsibilities, Tinker is also under consideration for the KC-46A Reserve mission.

In addition to the land acquisition, the County and Air Force also made a final transfer of ownership of the former General Motors facility, now known on base as Building 9001. The County leased the building to the Air Force after Oklahoma City residents approved a \$55 million bond issue in 2008. It allowed the county to purchase the former General Motors plant, which had closed in 2006. This public-private partnership allowed Tinker to increase its workload and efficiency while increasing the economic growth of the area.

Q&A WITH JIM CLARK ON DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT



Jim Clark, chairman of B.C. Clark Jewelers, has seen the transformation of downtown Oklahoma City in his

nearly 50 years of working for the 123-year-old company started by and named for his grandfather. He knew downtown as a thriving metro center to where he took his wife on their first date as teenagers to drag Main Street, and he watched it deteriorate as businesses fled to suburbs beginning in the 1960s and '70s. Now, thanks to a transformation that started when the first sales tax to fund Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) passed in 1993, Clark now is enjoying downtown Oklahoma City's renaissance as a destination area of the city.

He recently talked about downtown Oklahoma City's transition and B.C. Clark's history as the state's oldest locally owned and operated retailer. Here is an edited and condensed transcript:

Q: This is a broad question, but how have you seen downtown Oklahoma City improve in the past three decades?

A: I've worked in downtown Oklahoma City full time for almost 50 years now – 49 years – and I have never seen a period in 49 years that

is as exciting as what's going on right this minute, right now.

When I came and joined the family business in 1966, downtown had already peaked and it was starting on its downward spiral. Everything was going to the suburbs. We (B.C. Clark Jewelers) had a strong loyalty to downtown and we just never saw a reason to leave downtown like everybody else. We did add suburban stores.

Q: How did the renovation of the Skirvin Hilton Hotel impact the development downtown?

A: We have been in this same general location (across from the Skirvin) over 35 years. When we first moved over here things were great, the Skirvin was open and this was a good part of downtown to be.

Not too many years after we moved over here the Skirvin went into decline and they closed it. We didn't realize how much we were feeding off of the Skirvin until that happened. ... Having that albatross across the street shut down and boarded up was not good for us. It was a blight on the corner.

Once it was announced that they were going to get the Skirvin reopened, we started getting really excited about this corner again, and we realized there was an opportunity for us to take the space on the corner of this building.

That was probably the smartest thing we did because suddenly that corner had some vitality and identity. We discovered very quickly how important the Skirvin was to us in that we were the beneficiaries of a lot of traffic into our store from people that were either going to or staying at the Skirvin.

Q: Now that several other areas of downtown are experiencing revitalization, how do you think that will impact the growth of downtown?

A: I see it getting better. We have all of these little sub-districts now that are taking on their own life and personality. ... Young people have discovered downtown, but they have not only discovered downtown, they've also discovered Uptown, Midtown, Bricktown, Automobile Alley, Film Row, the Plaza District, the Paseo – all of these things as a group make downtown almost irresistible. Now Oklahoma City has a personality and a heartbeat and a character that can be defined.

This is a great time to be in Oklahoma City. A lot of the attention is focused on downtown but it's great for the whole city. Our city now has quite a reputation nationwide and people are beginning to discover that Oklahoma City is a neat place and a cool city. I just pinch myself every once in a while and can't believe that this is really Oklahoma City.

OKLAHOMA CITY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT BOND RATING AFFIRMED

Praising the strong financial management of the Oklahoma City Public School District (OKCPS), Moody's Investor Services Inc. affirmed the district's Aa2 bond rating for the \$37.5 million general obligation bonds expected to be issued in late April. The district shares the highest bond ratings of any school district in Oklahoma. By securing the Aa2 rating, the OKCPS administration is able to issue bonds at a lower interest rate which saves money for local property owners.

"The hard work and resilient fiscal management of the district's Financial Services Department is to be commended. With this rating we have the resources necessary to advance the academic performance of our students and support the structural improvements needed in our schools and administration building," said Robert Neu, Oklahoma City Public Schools superintendent.

In April, the District sold \$37.5 million in bonds from the "YES For KIDS" bond authorization supported overwhelmingly by district patrons in 2007. These bonds will fund the construction of health and safe spaces in elementary schools and other capital improvement needs in the district.

This year, the Oklahoma City Public School District also marked its 12th consecutive clean audit from Cole & Reed LLC. The annual audit was for the June 30, 2013, to July 1, 2014 fiscal year. The audit showed no deficiencies or weaknesses in how the district handles its financial statements.

To review the district's annual financial report, visit www.okcps.org, click the departments tab and select the financial services website.



This year, Moody's Investor Services Inc. affirmed the Oklahoma City Public School District's high bond rating, which will allow it to issue bonds at lower interest rates.

“ The hard work and resilient fiscal management of the district's Financial Services Department is to be commended. With this rating we have the resources necessary to advance the academic performance of our students and support the structural improvements needed in our schools and administration building. ”

Robert Neu, Oklahoma City Public Schools superintendent

PROGRESS SEEN ON MAPS 3 PROJECTS

MAPS 3, the third installment of the voter-approved quality of life program, is well on its way to transforming the landscape of Oklahoma City through its eight community projects. The program is projected to invest about \$777 million in Oklahoma City by the end of its sales tax collections in December 2017. Read on for the snapshot of progress being made.

Oklahoma River Improvements

The race course lighting project is complete, making Oklahoma City's flat rowing course on the Oklahoma River the only permanently lit facility in the world. The whitewater facility is under construction, with about 12,000 cubic yards of concrete being used for the buildings and the whitewater course. Utility work is under way, and construction has begun on the building and the pump elements for the whitewater course.



Sidewalks

The MAPS 3 sidewalks project will invest more than \$18 million in Oklahoma City's infrastructure. During design, consultants accounted for the density of surrounding neighborhoods, existing desire paths and proximity to schools and retail in order to determine sidewalk placement. Several sidewalk construction projects are complete, with many others under construction and more to start soon.



Downtown Public Park

The MAPS 3 Downtown Public Park, which will be located on either side of Interstate 40, will encompass 70 acres in the heart of Oklahoma City and offer residents a place to enjoy concerts, festivals and outdoor activities. The park project is in the design phase, and site acquisition and environmental assessments are under way. Once completed, it will be the largest park in Oklahoma City and will complement the existing park system by offering unique programming and space. It is expected to encourage new development in downtown Oklahoma City.

MAPS 3 Convention Center

The hospitality industry is a major contributor to Oklahoma City's economy, and the MAPS 3 Convention Center will be the catalyst to that sector's future growth and a driver of its success. The City of Oklahoma City recently reopened the site selection process for the Convention Center, which will allow the City to stay within the project's budget for land acquisition. The City Council recently voted to begin negotiations for property acquisition on more than one potential convention center site.



Modern Streetcar/Transit

The MAPS 3 Modern Streetcar/Transit project is at the center of Oklahoma City's future transit development plans. Recently, the Oklahoma City Council approved a consultant-recommended route framework which includes stops in Automobile Alley and Bricktown, and consultants recommended a site for the maintenance facility. Preliminary engineering design is under way. The City has received proposals to build the streetcars.

The Council voted in July to approve the preliminary report for the MAPS 3 Modern Streetcar Storage and Maintenance Facility, which paves the way for final plans and construction. Preparation for the streetcar has begun with improvements to the historic Santa Fe Depot. It will accommodate the Modern Streetcar, fixed route bus service, the Downtown Discovery shuttles and other current and future types of public transit. Federal funds have been secured for the renovation of the depot, with MAPS 3 money being used as part of the matching funds.

Trails

MAPS 3 funds will contribute to the City's trails system by connecting several existing trails throughout Oklahoma City. The West River Trail and, when finished, the Interstate 44 West Trail will allow residents to travel from Myriad Gardens all the way to Lake Overholser seamlessly.

The community celebrated the opening of the new 7.5-mile West River Trail with a bike ride and family festival June 27. Other recent developments with this MAPS 3 project include the design of the I-44 trail, which will be an urban trail along the I-44 corridor.



MAPS 3 PROJECTS CONTINUED

Senior Health & Wellness Centers

Oklahoma City Council recently broke ground on the first MAPS 3 senior health and wellness center, which is being built at Northwest 112th Street and North Rockwell Avenue. Healthy Living and Fitness LLC will operate the North Rockwell center. Variety Care will operate a second center near Capitol Hill High school in Southwest Oklahoma City. According to case studies on similar projects, specifically the senior health centers in Tucson, Ariz., private development in and around the senior wellness centers can lead to economic development and renewed vitality to the surrounding area.

The MAPS 3 Senior Wellness Centers will reflect the needs of each surrounding community while encouraging healthy and active lifestyles for Oklahoma City’s senior citizens. The centers will strive to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of members.



State Fairgrounds Improvements

State Fair Park annually generates more than \$300 million in direct spending to the Oklahoma City economy from events. MAPS 3 improvements will replace an aging public event building with a new Expo Center and improve parking at the fairgrounds.

The Expo Center, which is under construction, is located directly east of the Jim Norick Arena. Tim O’Toole, president and CEO of Oklahoma State Fair, Inc., said the new Expo Center will be a significant addition to the property and will add 279,000 square feet to the events space at State Fair Park. The exhibit floor is 200,000 square feet, and the building will offer a 10,000-square-foot kitchen that will handle all food service and catering operations for the entire property. MAPS 3 revenue also funded parking and site improvements, some of which are complete.

20 YEARS OF GROWTH AT TINKER AIR FORCE BASE

Tinker Air Force Base is an anchor of success for Oklahoma City, and has been since 1941 when the United States military located its civilian and military air center here. Today, Tinker AFB employs more than 26,000 people and has an annual statewide economic impact of \$3.6 billion, creating an estimated 33,000 secondary jobs. Here is a look back at the growth of Tinker AFB in the past 20 years.

1995 – Tinker Air Force Base is placed on the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list by the United States federal government. Oklahoma City leaders band together successfully to remove Tinker from that list.

1999 – The Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center joins in a partnership with Lockheed Martin to manage and repair all aircraft engines in the U.S. Air Force. It is the first of its kind for the Air Force and is successful in reducing costs while adapting modernized commercial repair techniques. The 15-year contract is valued at \$10.3 billion.

2002 – Oklahoma County passes a bond issue valued at up to \$50 million to clear houses from encroachment to the base and to provide increased security to Tinker AFB. All 108 houses are removed, along with a portion of an automobile dealership, to allow safe flight operations on Tinker's main operating runway.

2008 – Citizens of Oklahoma County pass a \$55 million bond issue to purchase the former General Motors Assembly Plant and lease it to the Air Force. The state of Oklahoma assists with \$10 million toward the project.

2011 – The Department of Defense announces a restructuring of the Air Force maintenance Command, and Tinker Air Force Base is named the Air Force Sustainment Center.

2012 – The Air Force Sustainment Center was officially activated at Tinker AFB, acting as the Air Force's focal point for all Air Force weapon systems and providing crucial



Above: Air Force officials and city leaders attend the BNSF railway acquisition announcement in February 2015.

support to the war fighter through depot maintenance, supply chain management and installation support.

2014 – Oklahoma lawmakers and Gov. Fallin rallied to support the state's military institutions by updating the state's Quality Jobs Act. The updated QJA allows reimbursements for new jobs to help pay for land acquisition costs.

2015 – Tinker is named the maintenance facility for the KC-46A, the Air Force's next-generation aerial refueling plane.

2015 – A partnership between the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Oklahoma City, the State of Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Industries Authority, Oklahoma's U.S. Congressional delegation, the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber and others allowed Tinker to purchase 158 acres of land adjacent to the base from BNSF Railway.

2015 – Oklahoma County made a final transfer of ownership of the former General Motors facility, now known as Building 9001.

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK
PERMIT NO. 109



123 Park Ave. | Oklahoma City, OK 73102
www.okcchamber.com

EDITORIAL STAFF
Cynthia Reid, Kaylee Terracina,
Lillie-Beth Brinkman

DESIGNER
Traci Hayes

CITYSCAPE



Q&A with
Jim Clark on
Downtown
Development
OKCPS Bond
Rating Affirmed
MAPS 3 Projects
in Progress