

CITYSCAPE

NOVEMBER 2016 | ISSUE 6 | AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS MOVING OKC FORWARD

GE opens new oil and gas research center in Oklahoma City

GE Global Research's first industry-specific research center exploring new technologies in oil and gas celebrated its grand opening in Oklahoma City on Oct. 5. The center, which is located at 10th and Walnut Avenue near downtown Oklahoma City, employs about 120 people in high-tech positions and is expected to have a direct and indirect economic impact of \$13 million on the state and local economies.

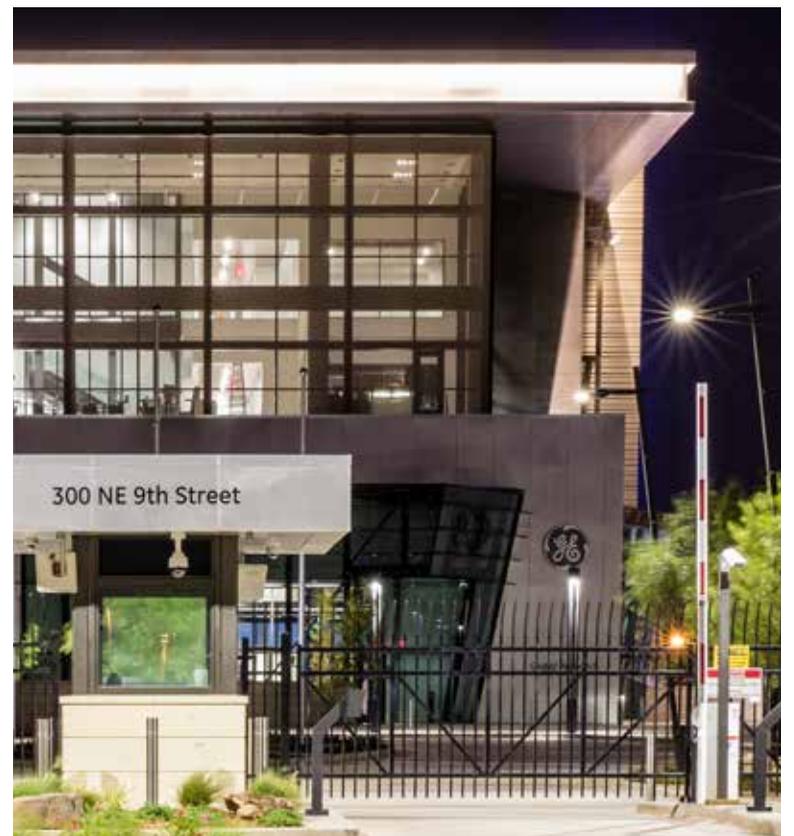
"To the greatest extent possible, we are bringing the oilfield and our customers directly into our lab space," Michael Ming, General Manager of GE's Global Research Oil and Gas Technology Center, said. "When you couple that with the world-leading scientists and engineers based here in Oklahoma City and at GE's other global research centers around the world, you have a winning formula for driving transformational technologies the industry will need."

Ming noted the research focus at the new Center will span across all areas of oil & gas from production solutions and well construction systems to oilfield facilities and systems and reservoir performance.

Although the new Center just recently opened, temporary offices were established more than two years ago in the City Place Tower in downtown Oklahoma City. With 120 employees today, the Center can accommodate as many as 230 people.

GE Global Research announced its intent to open its 125,000-square-foot center in Oklahoma City in December 2013 and broke ground on the facility in May 2015. The facility is part of GE's overall increased investment in the oil and gas industry.

The campus is located in the heart of Oklahoma City's innovation district and its construction was an important first step in encouraging a partnership with the Brookings Institution and the Project for Public Spaces for the ongoing study of the district. GE's new Oil & Gas Technology Center has established several programs and partnerships with industry and academia, including Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma, and has R&D agreements in place with many of the leading operators in North America.



Oklahoma City is home to GE Research's first industry-specific research center. Focusing on the oil and gas industry, the center is expected to have a direct and indirect economic impact of \$13 million on the state and local economies.

Q&A with Superintendent Lora

Superintendent Aurora Lora joined the Oklahoma City Public School District team in 2014 and was responsible for developing, implementing and supervising districtwide curriculum. Lora also worked with human resources to train and evaluate staff while monitoring student achievement and school effectiveness. Lora was named superintendent of OKCPS in July 2016 and is now responsible for leading and overseeing the district's 46,000 students and 5,000 staff members.

Recently, Superintendent Lora sat down with the CityScope staff to answer a few questions about OKCPS's future.

CityScope: When you think of the future of the district, what is the most encouraging thing to you?

We've got a great team that is in place now. We've got a vision with goals and strategies that we are going to implement, and especially because we are in tight budget times, there has been a huge outpouring of support from the community. People want to step up and help us fill our needs. Right now it feels like the stars are starting to align over Oklahoma City in terms of the right people, the right leaders and the right support for us to make huge changes for the kids of this city.

How are you being innovative with your resources in tight budget times?

Part of what the budget crisis has allowed us to do is to evaluate every penny we were spending and make sure that we are using our dollars for the most impactful programs and strategies and that we are being creative to get resources for our schools. We've learned how to use crowdfunding to get the needs of our teachers met during tight budget times. I think we have been really thoughtful lately about how we can maintain our services for our kids but stretch our dollar further.

What are your primary goals for your first year?

We have seven goal areas that are my priorities for the next four years: early literacy and numeracy, mastery of core subjects, increasing attendance, decreasing discipline rates and improving

graduation rates are a few of those. We are focused on improving educational outcomes for kids, and we have set specific targets for the next four years. Our staff is working tirelessly to meet those benchmarks.

How can the community get involved?

We have been partnering with The Foundation for Oklahoma City Public Schools to make sure people have multiple ways they can

help their neighborhood schools. People can get involved by going to www.donorschoose.org to find out what the teachers in your neighborhood schools might need for their classrooms that their schools currently can't afford. School principals have something called Partners in Action where they list needs that the entire school has—from tutoring needs to school supply donations. The Foundation is also helping us raise funds for the Coat a Kid Campaign to make sure that every student has a coat before the weather gets cold.

What do you see in the future for the district?

At the end of the day, I want this to be one of the happiest school districts in America—where kids are learning, where people love coming to work, and where kids are excited to learn. I want our outcomes for our students to increase significantly in all seven of our goal areas. I want our district to be on the rise in terms of morale, funding and student achievement. We want to move out of the bottom numbers in terms of education in this nation and move up into the top. I think within five years it is possible.



After being named superintendent of OKCPS in July 2016, Aurora Lora became responsible for leading and overseeing the district's 46,000 students and 5,000 staff members.

City to negotiate convention center hotel agreement with Omni



The Oklahoma City Council voted to begin negotiations with Omni Hotels and Resorts on a potential agreement for a hotel to serve the MAPS 3 Downtown Convention Center, which is represented in a rendering above left. Omni would operate the city's "headquarters hotel," or a hotel that is adjacent to or connected to a convention center. The hotel rendering, above right, is subject to change as the project develops.

The Oklahoma City Council voted to begin negotiations with Omni Hotels and Resorts on a potential agreement for a hotel to serve the MAPS 3 Downtown Convention Center. Oklahoma City's future "headquarters hotel," or a hotel that is adjacent to or connected to a convention center, will be an important part of growing Oklahoma City's appeal as a convention destination.

"Having a headquarters hotel alongside the new convention center is essential in our ability to attract conventions and events to Oklahoma City," said Michael J. Carrier, president of the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Headquarter hotels make the difference between hosting a convention and losing it to another city."

The presence of a headquarters hotel combined with the new MAPS 3 Convention Center is expected to multiply the impact of Oklahoma City's growing tourism market, which already has an annual economic impact of \$2 billion.

Oklahoma City's current convention center, the Cox Convention Center, is only able to compete for less than 50 percent of meetings due to the lack of a larger headquarters hotel. The new convention center and Omni hotel will allow OKC to compete for 80 percent or more of those meetings, Carrier estimates. The hotel project itself is estimated to create more than 3,000 jobs and more than \$370 million in economic activity.

Omni's proposal met the requirements for the concept design, which included 600 rooms, 50,000 square feet of ballroom or meeting space, an upper upscale brand and potential connectivity to the Downtown Convention Center. Omni Hotel proposed a 19-floor hotel and several food and beverage outlets including two restaurants. According to Omni's estimates, the proposed headquarters hotel would average a daily room rate of \$193 and would generate \$51 million in nightly stays and food and beverage revenues each year.

Omni's proposal was chosen because of the greater developer contribution and lower public participation costs. Omni also owns and manages their hotels rather than selling the hotel to a group of investors, which allows a more long-term commitment and a stable ownership structure.

Omni is also a recognized hotel brand with experience as a headquarters hotel operator in numerous markets, including Dallas, Nashville and Fort Worth, and is building a new hotel in Louisville set to open in 2018.

The total development cost of Omni's proposal is \$235.5 million, with up to \$85.4 million in public investment. Potential funding options include taxes generated by the hotel, TIF district funds or increases in hotel occupancy taxes or rental car taxes.

Yes the Yellow ballot to maintain local schools without raising taxes



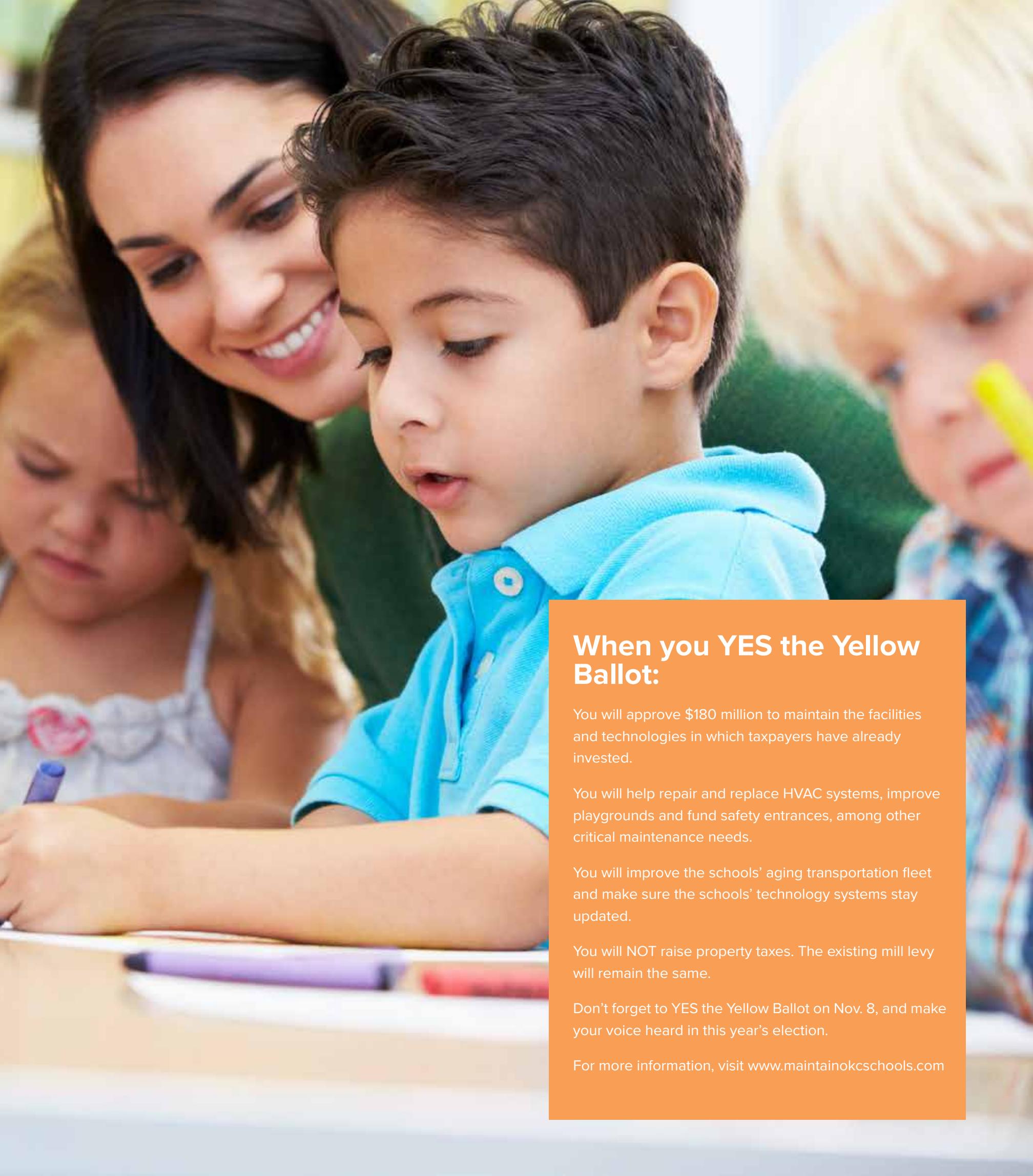
On Election Day, don't forget to "yes the yellow ballot" to support Oklahoma City's students and protect our capital investments in public education. The Chamber supports passage of the three OKC Public Schools bond propositions that will appear on voters' ballots on Nov. 8, and is running a campaign to help ensure their approval.

These bond issues will provide the district with needed funds to better maintain existing buildings, make important repairs on roofs and aging heating/air conditioning systems, electrical and plumbing systems, and provide funds for fine arts/athletics and playgrounds; allow the district to make proper updates to its technological and communications infrastructure; and to purchase necessary transportation-related equipment, including 100 new buses, all for the benefit of Oklahoma City's students.

The bond package, referred to as a "maintenance bond" by district leaders, consists of no new construction projects, but seeks to provide the district with the ability to better address maintenance and operational issues that affect learning, such as repairing faulty air-conditioning and plumbing systems, in addition to providing transportation (the average district bus is now 10.5 years old and has almost 200,000 miles) and technology upgrades important to student success, like computer labs and testing computers. The last set of bond proposals to be approved by voters in the district was in 2007.

If the proposals pass, existing tax rates for property owners in the district will not change, as the existing mill levy for voters would simply remain the same. The district's current rate for bond repayment, at 18.61 mills, is the fourth-lowest in Oklahoma County and well behind districts such as Edmond, Choctaw, Bethany, Piedmont, Mustang, Moore, Jones and Mid-Del, which all currently levy more than 24 mills for bond issues.

The proposed bond package of \$180 million will appear on a yellow-colored ballot for voters in the OKCPS district, and is comprised of three separate bond proposals: \$106.3 million for school building maintenance for 78 school district sites as well as district-owned buildings home to charter schools; \$54.5 for technology and network infrastructure updates; and \$19.2 million for transportation expenditures. Rather than a simple majority, each proposal must gain at least 60 percent approval at the polls in order to pass. Don't forget to "yes the yellow" to support our local students and help maintain OKC's investments in public education on Election Day.



When you YES the Yellow Ballot:

You will approve \$180 million to maintain the facilities and technologies in which taxpayers have already invested.

You will help repair and replace HVAC systems, improve playgrounds and fund safety entrances, among other critical maintenance needs.

You will improve the schools' aging transportation fleet and make sure the schools' technology systems stay updated.

You will NOT raise property taxes. The existing mill levy will remain the same.

Don't forget to YES the Yellow Ballot on Nov. 8, and make your voice heard in this year's election.

For more information, visit www.maintainokcschools.com

City makes progress on MAPS 3 projects

Oklahoma City continues to make significant progress on its eight MAPS 3 projects that were approved by voters in December 2009. Read on for how these projects are actively transforming the landscape of the Oklahoma City community.

Downtown Convention Center

As Oklahoma City's appeal as a convention destination continues to grow, work is underway to replace its current aging convention center facility. On Sept. 21, city staff and consultants revealed updated preliminary renderings of the convention center, which show plans for a modern design featuring views of downtown.

The plans focus on energy efficiency and resilience against weather conditions. The convention center will be built along the eastern edge of the future MAPS 3 Park.

Oklahoma City Streetcar

The MAPS 3 Modern Streetcar project, now branded the Oklahoma City Streetcar, is well on its way to becoming a reality. In July, EMBARK unveiled its brand using Bermuda Green, Clear Sky Blue and Redbud as the color palettes for each of the six streetcars currently being built by Brookville Equipment Corp. In September, the first delivery of streetcar rails arrived in Oklahoma City. Construction is scheduled to begin on the rail in early 2017.



The MAPS 3 Downtown Convention Center, which is pictured above in a conceptual rendering, will connect with the MAPS 3 Park and will be built along the route of the Oklahoma City Streetcar. This synergy with other MAPS 3 projects will have a positive impact on the way residents and visitors interact with downtown Oklahoma City amenities.



The eight MAPS 3 projects approved by voters in December 2009 are actively transforming the landscape of Oklahoma City. In May, the RIVERSPORT Rapids whitewater center opened and hosted the 2016 Olympic trials for canoe/kayak slalom. In July, EMBARK unveiled the brand of the Oklahoma City Streetcar, pictured above right. Land acquisition for the Downtown Park is nearly complete for the upper section and is ongoing for the lower section.

Oklahoma River Improvements

The eyes of America were on the Oklahoma River in May when the completed MAPS 3-funded whitewater rafting and kayaking center, RIVERSPORT Rapids, hosted the 2016 Olympic team trials for canoe/kayak slalom. In addition to Olympic athletes, RIVERSPORT Rapids offers recreation for people of all skill levels. The racecourse lighting along the Oklahoma River is also complete and is used for races throughout the year.

Senior Health and Wellness Centers

The MAPS 3 Senior Health and Wellness Centers will improve the health of the community by connecting seniors with important services and with social and recreational activities. Operators have been chosen for the first two centers, which are located at 11501 N Rockwell Ave. and at 4021 S Walker Ave. near Capitol Hill High School. Both facilities are under construction and will open next year. The City is seeking an operating partner for the third center.

Downtown Park

By providing a space where the community can play and enjoy outdoor activities such as sports and concerts, the MAPS 3 Park will encourage people to spend time outdoors and improve the quality of life in our community. The City Council approved a master plan and the project and preliminary construction plans are in design. Land acquisition on the upper section is nearly complete and is ongoing for the lower section.

Sidewalks

Phases 1 and 2 of the sidewalk construction are complete and are improving the accessibility, safety and quality of life in Oklahoma City's neighborhoods. Phase 3 is under construction, and Phase 4 is in design.

Oklahoma State Fairgrounds Improvements

In June, the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma State Fair revealed the official name of the MAPS 3 Expo Center: the Bennett Event Center. When completed, the 279,000-square-foot Bennett Event Center will feature an exhibit hall with 201,000 square feet of contiguous floor space. The building will be the largest event space in Oklahoma City and is scheduled to open later this year.

Trails

With the guidance of the Oklahoma City Trails Master Plan, the MAPS 3 Trails include connections between Lake Hefner and the Oklahoma River (The Will Rogers Trail), Lake Overholser and the Oklahoma River (The West River Trail) and a loop trail around Lake Stanley Draper. The West River Trail is complete. Design is underway on the Lake Draper Trail, and construction has begun on the Will Rogers Trail.



The first two Senior Health and Wellness Centers, which are located at 11501 N Rockwell Ave. and 4021 S Walker Ave., are under construction and will open next year. The MAPS 3-funded West River trail is complete, while the Lake Draper Trail is under design and the Will Rogers Trail is under construction.

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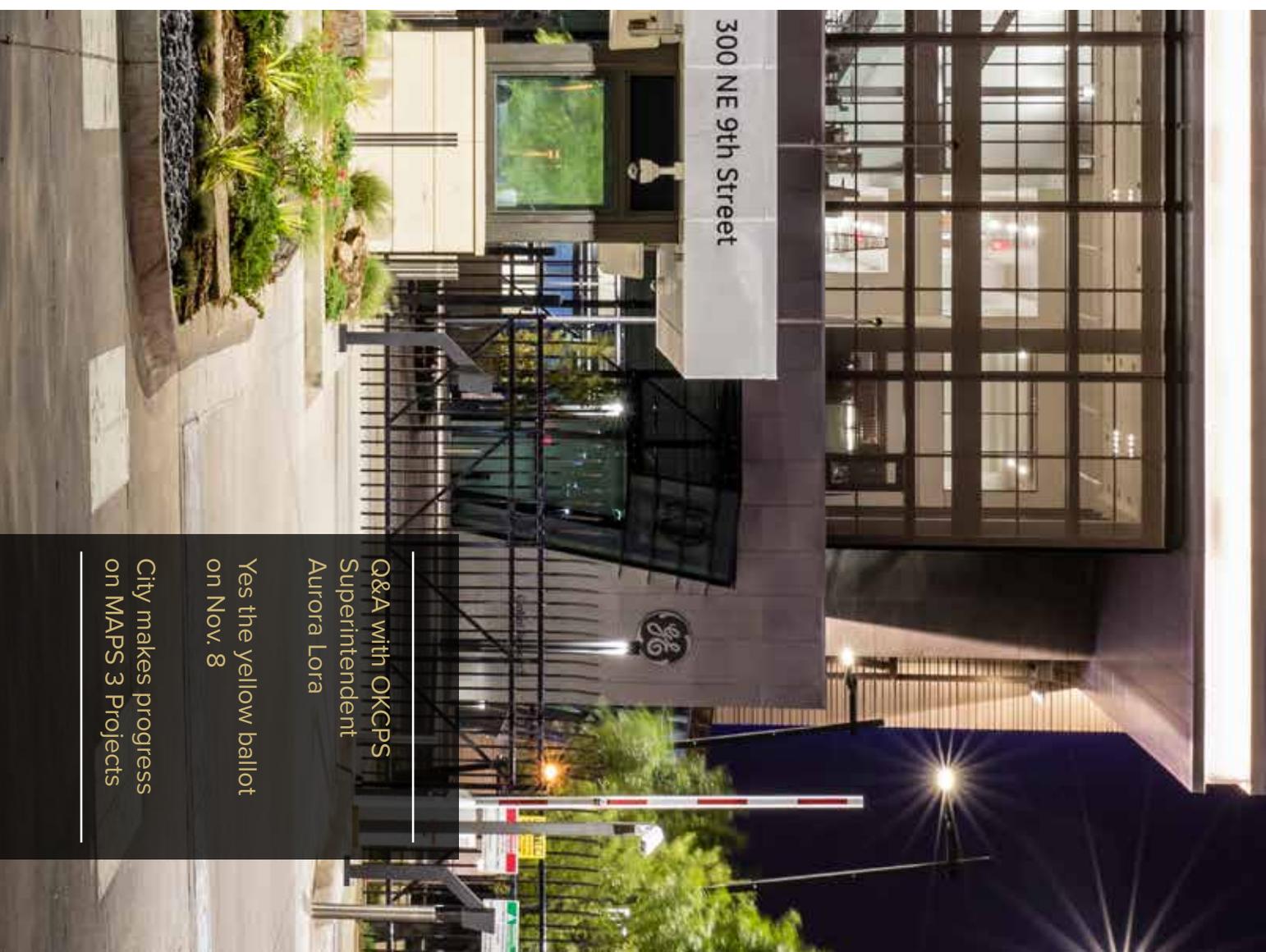


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Q&A with OKCPS
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on Nov. 8

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