

**A MAP FOR THE FUTURE:
OKLAHOMA CITY'S METROPOLITAN AREA PROJECTS
AS A CASE STUDY FOR SUCCESSFUL URBAN PLANNING**

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ABSTRACT

In 1993, Oklahoma City (OKC) introduced the Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS), a successful sales-tax funded program to revitalize the city. MAPS 3 is the third wave of this program, funding several infrastructure projects including the OKC Convention Center and the Riversport Rapids whitewater rafting and kayaking center. MAPS 3 serves as a case study for a successful government revitalization project with effective community collaboration, bringing together citizens through community meetings and a citizen advisory board, businesses through robust support by the OKC Chamber of Commerce, and over two decades of city leadership. MAPS 3 was successful because of four key elements: 1) A one-percent sales tax that ensures efficiency and transparency; 2) Community engagement that generates support for the project initiatives; 3) A citizen advisory board that maximizes efficient flow and encourages representativeness and; 4) Public-private partnerships that allocate resources efficiently and involve the private sector in city development.

INTRODUCTION

Following an oil market crash in the 1980s, Oklahoma City (OKC) was unable to secure any major business investments and its downtown area was left downtrodden and dilapidated (“Chamber History,” 2013). After a failed bid for a United Airlines maintenance facility, then-mayor Ron Norick proposed that OKC invest in itself through the first MAPS project in 1993, beginning the city’s effort to transform the economically depressed city into a thriving hub of economic growth (Bassett, 2017). MAPS introduced a one-percent sales tax for five years to fund nine separate projects within the city, including the Bricktown Canal, the Indoor Sports Arena, and the trolley system. Through the five-year tax, OKC raised \$363 million, allowing for the debt-free construction of the proposed MAPS project (Beyer, 2016).

MAPS was so successful that the public voted to fund MAPS for Kids in 2001, a second iteration of the original program aimed at improving 70 public schools in and around OKC (MAPS For Kids, n.d.). In 2009, seeking to build on the momentum of the first two programs, Mayor Mick Cornett proposed—and the public approved—MAPS 3. MAPS 3 has raised \$777 million, almost double the amount the original MAPS raised in 1993, to fund eight public initiatives. These initiatives include a world-class whitewater rafting facility, a convention center, walking trails, and neighborhood senior centers (Beyer, 2016). One of the more unique MAPS 3 projects is OKC’s Riversport Rapids, a whitewater

rafting and kayaking center. The center was completed in 2016 and is run by The Oklahoma City Boathouse Foundation, a group dedicated to improving the waterfront and increasing tourism in OKC. OKC is the country’s only urban venue for whitewater and competition rowing, bringing a unique crowd to OKC (“Riversport Rapids,” n.d.). MAPS 3 also paved the way for OKC’s Downtown Convention Center, a project jointly funded by the government and Omni Hotels and projected to finish by 2018. Through this public-private relationship, the city administration wants to draw businesses and large-scale events to OKC, and develop a hospitality industry within the city’s downtown district (“About MAPS 3,” n.d.). Not driven solely by improving tourism and business, MAPS 3 also includes plans to support the city’s aging senior population through the creation of four different centers maintained by experienced senior wellness operating partners (“Senior Health,” n.d.).

This paper begins with a diagnosis of MAPS 3, describing its economic and political success in OKC. It then identifies four key best practices based on OKC’s methods and an in-depth discussion of OKC’s methods in these four areas. It then shows that the MAPS tax model is an efficient method of raising funds for community projects and infrastructure. This paper concludes with recommendations and implications for other cities that want to match its success.

DIAGNOSIS

MAPS 3, like MAPS and MAPS for Kids before it, is an economic and political success. Mayor Norick envisioned the first MAPS as “something to hold onto and rally around” (Chamber History, 2013), and the prosperity that the program brought to Oklahoma City has incentivized efforts to replicate and continue that success. MAPS 3 is a key part of a revitalization effort that has grown the population and landed OKC on numerous “best” lists. It has been named a “top city to launch a small business” by Inc. (Kaitlyn, 2017), one of the “top metros for wage growth” by Forbes (Strauss, 2016), and one of the “top cities rebounding from the Great Recession” by CNBC (Guzman, 2016). Further, between 2010 and 2015, OKC saw a 9.1 percent increase in its millennial population (Johnson, 2017). While these accolades and the statistics are an important barometer of MAPS’ success, the OKC citizens’ continued support is perhaps more important. A 2009 poll of community support for MAPS projects showed an 80 percent voter approval rating (Bassett, 2017). The city administration listened. In September 2017, OKC passed a 27-month sales tax extension to ensure the continuation and completion of MAPS 3, which included street resurfacing and other improvements (Crum & Felder, 2016). When MAPS 3 is debated, OKC citizens discuss which programs should be enacted, not whether the revenue should be raised to enact them (Bassett, 2017).

The city’s support for MAPS 3 parallels the robust political support for one of the project’s primary architects, Mayor Mick Cornett, who became mayor in 2004 (“Mayor,” n.d.). His incremental approach to the project, discussed more in the section “Community Engagement,” contributed to Cornett’s 2014 election to an unprecedented fourth term as mayor with nearly 66 percent of the vote (Thomas, 2014). Cornett has been showered with various honors, including being named by Governing Magazine as Public Official of the Year in 2010 (Governing Magazine, 2010) and highlighted by Politico Magazine as an innovative public official tackling obesity in a former top junk food city (Allen, 2015).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The creation of MAPS 3 in 2009, and its continuation in 2017, constitute a public administration success. OKC's holistic approach to this initiative incorporated not only the managerial-driven, customer-focused ideas of New Public Management (NPM); the city also expertly applied a transparency-fueled political lens while ensuring the legality of the project (Rosenbloom, Kravchuck, & Clerkin, 2015). OKC's complete 360-degree understanding of effective administration brought OKC success in a space where other communities have failed. Whereas other cities had failed when funding large scale projects, such as improving public infrastructure, OKC proposed generating a steady stream of tax revenue before building. Without this cash flow already planned and coming in, revitalization projects can create decades-long debt, like Kansas City's, construction of an arena and entertainment district that cost it which cost the city roughly \$300 million (DeMause, 2015).

OKC spent over twenty years refining the MAPS model through the development of the original MAPS program and MAPS for Kids. This created an effective strategy for MAPS 3 comprised of four key elements:

1. Enact a one-percent sales tax to ensure efficiency and transparency;
2. Engage the community to generate support for the project initiatives;
3. Create a citizen advisory board to maximize efficient flow and encourage representativeness; and
4. Develop public-private partnerships to allocate resources efficiently and involve the private sector in city development.

One-Percent Sales Tax:

MAPS 3's successful one-percent sales tax was first conceived in the early 1990s. Mayor Norick, who served as mayor from 1988 to 1998, and a team of public administrators recognized that such a tax would allow them to raise several millions of dollars to fund a variety of projects without incurring debt or burdening OKC's population ("Chamber History," 2013). For every dollar spent in the city, there would be an additional penny charged, ensuring that project funds would slowly, but steadily, be generated (Rosenbloom et al., 2015). This slow generation allowed the city to stay below their "tax tolerance" (p. 271). When governments create or increase taxes, public administrators must be wary of too high a tax as "citizens are concerned that their taxes be used in the wisest, most effective ways" (p. 265). Beyond being an unobtrusive way to gain funds, the tax also benefited from its simplicity, making it easy to comprehend and re-implement.

Because the one-percent sales tax was easy to understand and there was rapid, debt-free development, the OKC administration ensured that its citizens drew the connection between the extra penny and the city's improvements. In other words, the tax system's simplicity meant that it could be easily understood by the public and efficiently implemented, a deft combination of the managerial and political approaches ("Metropolitan Area Projects," 2013). The one-percent sales tax, which found initial success with MAPS under Norick, continued to be an important revenue stream for MAPS for Kids and MAPS 3. While the simplicity and transparency of the one-percent sales tax were crucial to its overall recognition and appeal for MAPS 3, its initial passage for MAPS was in fact seen as a lifeline for the community. During the 1980s, OKC experienced a minor depression and, in an effort to jumpstart the economy, city leadership suggested the tax to a willing population. As one public administrator described it, "MAPS ... [was] like a rope – we thought this could be our way out."

The one-percent sales tax was challenged once. While MAPS and MAPS for Kids taxes listed all the proposed projects on the ballot as a single item, OKC changed the way the projects were presented on the 2009 ballot for MAPS 3. Concerns were raised that naming various projects in one proposed tax item violated the "single-subject rule" outlined in the Oklahoma Constitution which requires that legislation depict its focus and scope (Etus, 2009; Rosenbloom et al., 2015, p. 11). For MAPS 3, OKC's city council outlined the MAPS 3 project as capital improvements, rather than detailing each proposal (Etus, 2009). Despite this change, in August 2013 a team of attorneys wrote a letter to Mayor Cornett, insisting that MAPS 3 was unconstitutional based on the "single-subject" rule (Wells, 2013). The city reviewed the letter within the context of other cases and defended the 2009 ballot as constitutional based on the legal research the city had done in 2009, ensuring that the project continued and setting a standard for future taxes (Van Timmeren, 2013). There have been no challenges since.

Community Engagement

Community engagement and involvement was key to the successful passage and implementation of MAPS 3 in Oklahoma City. The MAPS programs have received a tremendous amount of public acclaim due to the OKC government's work to frame the project as a both an open discussion and collaboration between the public and the city administration. When Mayor Norick devised the first MAPS with a small team of advisors from the OKC Chamber of Commerce, the public had little involvement in the development and goals of the project. Through the use of press releases and civic engagement, Norick's team informed the public about the potentially controversial sales tax, what it was supposed to do, and how long it would last. This transparency helped Norick to gain the public's trust, which led to the vote and passage of the sales tax (Knapp, 2017).

Mayor Cornett took this transparency and approach a step further by allowing and encouraging direct civilian participation in the project's inception, development, and design. Cornett began the design for MAPS 3 by reaching out to the citizens of OKC and asking for their project development suggestions via social media and public meetings. After the tax was passed on the 2009 ballot, Cornett continued the involvement of citizens via an advisory board and subcommittees, discussed in more detail in the following section, "Citizen Advisory Board" ("Mayor," n.d.). In doing this, Cornett exercised an incremental model approach, wherein public administrators use the needs of their community or stakeholders to inform their decision making. This is done to make a project such as MAPS 3 as representative of the desires of the OKC populace as possible. By adopting this approach, Cornett facilitated greater public participation to develop and guide the project's development (Rosenbloom et al., 2015, p. 335).

The recent vote in September 2017 to continue MAPS 3's sales tax for another 27 months speaks volumes about the trust that has developed between public and administration through their collaboration on each iteration of MAPS (Crum & Felder, 2016). Beyond furthering the city's interests, components of MAPS 3, such as Cornett's formation of advisory boards and subcommittees, seem especially engineered towards developing a collaborative effort between the public and the city's administration. These strategies created a rock-solid foundation for the long-term success of a major public administration project like MAPS 3, and should be similarly utilized in future projects that Oklahoma City might pursue.

Citizen Advisory Board

MAPS 3 blends the political approach of inclusiveness and transparency with a collaborative NPM style best represented by the citizen advisory board. The advisory board speaks to the ideals of citizen empowerment, customer-driven missions, and the government “steering, not rowing” (Rosenbloom et al., 2015, p. 20). The subcommittees and advisory board have the ability to make their own decisions about project direction, such as selecting which construction contractors to utilize for the various projects, and offer community-driven ideas from public meetings that flow through the chain of command. This bottom-up approach, which empowers the public to act with government guidance, begins with the eight subcommittees made up of over 60 citizens, elaborated on in the next paragraph. (Kettl, 2009; “The City,” 2011). The subcommittees evaluate the finer details of the MAPS 3 projects and provide recommendations to the citizen advisory board. The citizen advisory board receives the recommendations and decides what projects to prioritize. After the citizen advisory finalizes a project plan, they share it with the city council for final approval (“The City,” 2011). The subcommittees, for example, are responsible for reviewing solicitations from contractors and making a final decision on who to refer up. The referral then moves up the chain and eventually makes its way to the city council for final approval. This clear chain of command allows for an efficient and transparent flow of information.

While the managerial approach is often depicted as a bureaucratic hierarchy used to coordinate project efforts, the representativeness of each city ward within the citizen advisory board adds a political angle to OKC NPM approach (Rosenbloom et al., 2015, p. 16). This can be seen through the 11-member citizen advisory board which is comprised of one representative from each of the eight city wards, two at-large members appointed by the mayor, and one member who serves on city council. Each of the eight members who represent their ward have an interest that is particular to their community area, which helps the board identify what areas of the city are to be the focus for the MAPS 3 project. The two members appointed by the mayor as well as the one city council member provide political influence to ensure that the city government has some clout within the decision making process. With each ward and political influence represented, the citizen advisory board illustrates a clear division of labor that accounts for the specialization of its members.

Public-Private Partnerships

MAPS 3 represents a bond of trust between the citizens of OKC and their government, cemented by the many public-private partnerships required for the success of the project. Public-private partnerships are contracted between public and private sector organizations to provide public services (“7 Keys to Success,” n.d.). OKC’s citizens and businesses are intimately involved in the decision-making process as well as the implementation of the work of MAPS 3. Citizen and business involvement is not limited to the Citizen Advisory Board discussed above but also occurs through the government’s ties with the OKC Chamber of Commerce. The transparency and vision this partnership offers to the citizens of OKC has led to the transformation of the city through government and private funds.

Because OKC never created a government office of economic development, the OKC government works more collaboratively with its Chamber of Commerce, a network of thousands of private businesses, than other cities (Beyer, 2016; “What We Do,” 2017). The Chamber lists economic development first on its “What We Do” website page,

touting their work to “attract new business and high-quality jobs to Oklahoma City” and to “promote retail development” within the city (“What We Do,” 2017). Their work has brought companies like Boeing and Paycom to the region, and through the Government Relations team, the Chamber has led reform in education and worker’s compensation. Among other responsibilities, the Chamber creates a preliminary list of potential MAPS projects and working with the Citizens Advisory Board to review and expand upon proposed ideas before they are approved by city council and put to a citizen vote (Beyer, 2016). The mayor and the Chamber work together frequently, even traveling to national retailer conventions together. Cornett has said that the business community “want[s] to create jobs, they want this community to grow. . . . and we work with them as well as any city in the country” (Fultonberg, 2017). This “tight relationship” is one that Mayor Mick Cornett says is “taken for granted by [Cornett and his] predecessors” (Beyer, 2016), but the public-private partnerships it inspires are critical to the success of the MAPS 3 program.

The OKC Boathouse Foundation, a nonprofit which funds and manages riverside attractions that include the new whitewater rafting facility, Riversport Rapids, is one MAPS 3 public-private partnership (Knopp, 2017). In an interview with Mike Knopp, executive director of the OKC Boathouse Foundation, he described how the original MAPS program invested government money in the revitalization and development of the Oklahoma River. This investment prompted the formation of the OKC Boathouse Foundation, which raised funds to build and manage the Chesapeake Boathouse as well as other boathouses and river attractions that Knopp and his fellow visionaries proposed should be built upon the river. The partnership between OKC and the OKC Boathouse Foundation is one of mutual investment in the city: The city provides the capital infusion through improvements to the riverfront and for the construction of the whitewater center and the OKC Boathouse Foundation uses private funds to build boat houses as well as develop and maintain the facilities while providing well-received programming. As OKC invests in infrastructure and public goods, the private sector steps up to invest in the facilities that bring people to the river. This shared sense of responsibility for the success of the river fosters the bond between the public and private sectors in OKC.

Knopp’s original vision to “activate” the renewed river through watersports continued to grow with the 2016 grand opening of Riversport Rapids, a state-of-the-art kayak center that provides an authentic whitewater experience to paddlers of all ages. Riversport Rapids is also a training site for the US Rowing and USA Kayak/Canoe Olympic and Paralympic teams and has put OKC on the map for these sports. In 2018, OKC will host the paddler industry’s official trade show, Paddlesport Retailer, a move the show made based on OKC’s new reputation and facilities (Lackmeyer, 2017; USOC Training Site”, 2018). Knopp foresees an earned revenue stream from the whitewater center developing in time which will subsidize operations and community outreach (Knopp, 2017). Knopp hopes that the OKC Boathouse Foundation’s work and accessible programming will continue to bring an intergenerational population to the river, bolstering the outdoor culture that has developed as corporations field rowing teams and senior centers bring seniors to paddle in the dragon boats. Knopp and the OKC Boathouse Foundation’s passion for rowing and vision for OKC, combined with the support of the MAPS 3 project, has brought a world-class facility to the Oklahoma River.

CONCLUSION

The success of MAPS 3 rests on the legacy of the previous MAPS projects and the integrated political-NPM approach Oklahoma City has developed over time. With citizens deeply involved in the work of MAPS 3, engaged even before the passage of the tax and throughout the process via the advisory board and public-private partnerships, the success of this simple, efficient tax was assured. As OKC looks to the future and ponders the possibility of a MAPS 4 (Crum & Felder, 2016), these tenets of the NPM, political, and legal approaches to manage projects effectively and legally, enable public participation, and ensure employee empowerment will guarantee future success. The MAPS programs have excited a growth in community pride that creates the momentum to keep OKC moving forward. Oklahoma City has spent the last two decades refining MAPS, creating a template for administrative success. This comprehensive strategy outlines compelling ideals of transparency, efficiency, representativeness, and community development which can inspire impactful project initiatives in other cities.

DISCUSSION

This discussion compares important city characteristics, demographics, and layout to other metropolitan cities to show how other cities can learn from OKC's success. It begins by discussing how parts of MAPS can be implemented in other cities before examining the limitations of the program. It concludes with broader implications for cities wishing to emulate its success.

The one-percent sales tax implemented by OKC was certainly not a unique concept and could easily be applied elsewhere. According to the U.S Census Bureau, in 2016, OKC's population was around 640,000 with a density of 930 per square mile ("Quick Facts," 2016). The city, reaching 620.34 square miles, means more room to develop infrastructure, but also more infrastructure necessary to reach and connect to their population. Furthermore, each MAPS program has focused on a different area of the city, such as Bricktown, certain public schools, or the riverfront, resulting in drastic but segmented city improvements. In addition, each MAPS program requires around a decade to raise the necessary funds to begin building, a downside to a smaller population. The one-percent sales tax plan would thrive in high-density cities, such as Chicago.

As of 2016, Chicago had an estimated population of 2.7 million and a density of 12,000 people per square mile ("Population and Housing Unit Estimates," 2016). Roughly 234 square miles, a similar number of city revitalization projects would reach a larger portion of Chicago's population than OKC's. Additionally, Chicago's larger population would raise necessary funding far quicker than in OKC. Unfortunately, with a larger city comes significantly more roadblocks. Chicago's density also means a greater diversity of infrastructure needs and interests as well as an already high 10.25 percent tax burden on the population ("Chicago, Illinois Sales Tax Rate," 2018). Increasing tax may put pressure on members of a struggling population, however, the long term benefits of development may outweigh the short-term costs.

Other limitations to programs similar to MAPS 3 within other cities may include factors such as city layout. City layout, such as the direction in which the buildings are constructed, could create a limitation with consideration to a 180-degree growth pattern versus a 360-degree growth pattern. If OKC had not grown around the Oklahoma River in a 360-degree growth pattern, the Riversport Rapids whitewater rafting and kayaking center

may not have been prosperous. Had Oklahoma City grown in a linear pattern down the length of the Oklahoma River, the geographical layout of the city would have been different and potentially affected the MAPS 3 project. Other cities, depending on their growth pattern, natural resources, and geography may be constrained.

As far as defining the limitations in implementing a program such as MAPS, the particular economy of the region may not be an obstacle. On the contrary, projects such as this can be extremely beneficial for even the most limited local economy. A 2014 report found that "nearly \$5 billion in economic impact can be attributed to the original MAPS program" (Evans, Long, & Agee, 2014). Originally, OKC's economy was limited, based largely in oil market exports. Today, it is rich in numerous industry markets such as mining, construction, manufacturing, and trade sectors. The building of various attractions created tremendous benefits for the construction industry, which subsequently facilitated growth in other businesses. OKC currently sees an impact of approximately \$2.1 billion in direct spending from more than 7.5 million tourists who visit each year.

If there is one limitation posed by the economic impact of MAPS, it would be that the OKC economy has become heavily dependent on the benefits that it brought about,; such as tourism and new industries. OKC's Chamber of Commerce is designed to sustain the numerous interests that the city has accumulated resulting from the first MAPS. For example, an Economic Development team is used to continue attracting outside business interests, a Community Redevelopment division is used to keep the real-estate market profitable, and the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors' Bureau is utilized to keep the tourism industry alive by finding new ways to promote the city as an ideal vacation spot ("Chamber History," 2013). MAPS brought about several new components that enabled OKC's economy to flourish, but it necessitated the maintenance of such developments which all cities that consider a similar project would need to consider.

As other cities look to OKC's model, leaders must engage the community, leveraging existing relationships and building new ones to foster the kinds of public-private partnerships upon which the MAPS 3 program relies. OKC leaders knew that business owners would engage with MAPS projects because of the OKC Chamber of Commerce's longstanding involvement in economic development. Other communities where there is more tension and less collaboration between local government and local business owners might need to expand on OKC's already robust plans for community engagement and transparent communication through the citizen advisory board model and effective leadership. MAPS 3 had the advantage of following the footsteps of previous successful programs, and was led by a popular and charismatic mayor. Communities embarking on innovative ventures will require similarly well-connected and trusted leaders to unite varied stakeholders to invest in new programming.

The simple structure and its success in OKC would doubtless help sell the one-percent sales tax to other communities hoping to replicate the success of MAPS 3, but if another city tried to implement a similar program, the tax's simplicity and transparency alone might not be enough to carry it through a voting process. As other cities contemplate revitalization and infrastructure projects in the vein of MAPS 3, visionaries must keep in mind not only the recommendations presented in this paper but also the context in which city leadership would employ them. Leaders must instill and engage with the guiding values of transparency, efficiency, representativeness, and community engagement through the bureaucracies and relationships that already exist in each city.

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TUNISIAN DEMOCRACY AND EGYPTIAN AUTHORITARIANISM: WHAT EXPLAINS THE DIFFERENCE?

Adam Goldstein

ABSTRACT

This article discusses two divergent cases within the Arab Spring: Tunisia and Egypt. In doing so, there is analysis of both states' paths toward democratization, where they faltered or succeeded, and why. Specifically, this paper synthesizes two ostensibly competing theories to strengthen an understanding of Tunisian and Egyptian politics. Tunisia and Egypt are similar cases. Their central difference revolves around the role and capabilities of security services. In Tunisia, where democracy was more successful, security services were less robust. In Egypt, conversely, security services were powerful enough to reverse democratic outcomes. This article concludes that security institutions interact with anti-state organizations, ultimately inhibiting or enabling democratic outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

While many initially viewed the Arab Spring as a hopeful and inevitable transition toward democracy, the realities of the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria dampen this optimism. Whereas Tunisia successfully democratized, Egypt and Syria did not. While Syria devolved into a violent civil war that still threatens Syria's status as a consolidated state, Egypt's de-evolution away from democracy was political (albeit violent). Focusing on Egypt and Tunisia, as they have similar demographics and grievances unlike Syria, this essay attempts to synthesize two explanations as to why Tunisia democratized and Egypt did not. Two possible explanations for the differences between Tunisia and Egypt concern the military and security apparati and the manifestation of social cleavages. The first theory states that the security services played a larger role in Egyptian politics than in Tunisia's. Because Tunisian politics were less securitized, the government lacked the will and means to maintain hegemony, whereas in Egypt, the security services could reverse democratic outcomes. The other main explanation is that the political and social cleavages in Egypt were not reflected in political outcomes, compared to Tunisia. As a result, Tunisians felt more comfortable with democratic outcomes than Egyptians because democratic outcomes better approximated the average voter.

Ultimately, this paper takes the position that while the role of the security services in Egypt and Tunisia influenced the progression of both revolutions, democracy failed in Egypt because Egyptian politics did not reflect the average voter enough for them to accept democracy as the legitimate and sole governing system. Alternatively, Tunisia better reflects