# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tab</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tab 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab 2</td>
<td>Project Overview</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Background</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Project Description</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab 3</td>
<td>Programming Documents</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Site Description and Analysis</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Functional Relationships</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab 4</td>
<td>Conceptual Cost Estimate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab 5</td>
<td>Project Schedule</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tab 6</td>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In 1993, Oklahoma City voters decided to turn around their struggling city by doing something about it: approving a new tax on themselves. The $350 million sales tax-funded initiative was created to revitalize Downtown, improve Oklahoma City’s image and provide new and upgraded cultural, sports, recreation, entertainment and convention facilities. Due to the overwhelming success of MAPS and recognizing the needs of the city’s struggling public schools, Oklahoma City proposed a second MAPS initiative. MAPS for Kids went before voters in 2001 and passed with a 61 percent majority. The new sales tax generated $514 million along with a $180 million Oklahoma City Public Schools bond issue, which was used for school facility improvements, technology and transportation projects.

City leaders began discussing the possibility of a third MAPS in January 2007 after a survey found that the majority of Oklahoma City residents had no intention of slowing the City’s progress after MAPS for Kids was completed. The City announced the eight projects to be included in MAPS 3 on September 17, 2009, and a special election was called, in which the public would decide whether to fund the program by extending the one-cent sales tax. On December 8, 2009, voters passed the MAPS 3 initiative, approving a one-cent sales tax for seven years and nine months, April 2010 through December 2017. The eight projects span the entire city at an estimated cost of $777 million. These projects include: a new Downtown Convention Center, a new Downtown Public Park, Modern Streetcar/Transit, Oklahoma River Improvements, Oklahoma State Fairgrounds Improvements, Senior Health and Wellness Centers, Trails and Sidewalks.
PROJECT REQUIREMENTS – DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARK

PROJECT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the City of Oklahoma City developed the Core to Shore Plan with a vision to connect the Oklahoma River to the downtown core. Prior to the MAPS 3 vote, the City of Oklahoma City engaged Hargreaves and Associates to develop a design concept for the Central Park which was an element of the City’s Core to Shore Master Plan. That conceptual design may be considered in the development of the final design of the Downtown Public Park, recognizing that this concept design was not developed with consultation of users and other stakeholders.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Downtown Public Park consists of a 40-acre upper section and a 30-acre lower section connected by the SkyDance Bridge that spans the relocated Interstate 40 Highway. The upper park is generally within the boundaries of Hudson Avenue on the west, Robinson Avenue on the east, the future Boulevard on the north (SW 3rd St.) and the new I-40 on the south. The lower park is generally within the boundaries of Walker Avenue on the West, Robinson Avenue on the east, the new I-40 on the north and SW 10th Street on the south, with an additional section bounded by Harvey Avenue on the west, Robinson Avenue on the east, SW 10th street on the north and SW 15th Street on the south.

The Downtown Public Park extends across the relocated I-40 corridor. This will establish park activity south of I-40 (reaching toward the Oklahoma River), and an active southern landing area for the Skydance Bridge, thereby helping to mitigate the barrier effect of the new I-40.

The project will be completed in three phases to include:

- The development of an overall Master Plan and design and construction of the first phase of the upper section which may include basic amenities such as developing an edge with the new Boulevard and the access to the SkyDance bridge.
- The second phase will include amenities related to the planned programming for the upper section of the park.
- The lower section will be completed in the final phase and may be less programmed than the upper section.

Amenities included in each phase will be determined by the available budget and will be addressed during the Master Plan for the Downtown Public Park.
The Downtown Public Park will become the signature open space of the City’s Core to Shore plan - a 750 acre redevelopment plan which was envisioned to build and connect a series of neighborhoods, parks, and economic opportunities that will reinvent downtown Oklahoma City, leading to new jobs and a higher quality of life for residents. The park will also form an integral connection component of a larger downtown open space system that includes the river edges, the Myriad Botanical Gardens, Bicentennial Park and other public and private open spaces.
SITE DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The 40 acres of the park north of the new I-40 will be acquired and cleared, preserving as many trees and historic structures as possible. A former U.S. Federal Post Office facility on the site has been demolished along with other residential and commercial properties.

Acquisition of the 30 acres for the lower section of park south of the new I-40 is scheduled to begin in 2014.

The new Downtown Convention Center is currently planned to be located directly north of the Downtown Public Park on the other side of the proposed Boulevard. The Convention Center design is scheduled to begin in 2014 with construction to begin in 2016.

An electrical substation is located across the street from the northeast corner of the Downtown Public Park. There has been discussion about possible means of mitigating the impact of the substation on the Downtown Public Park, including various methods of screening it from view. Options for such mitigation, if deemed necessary, should be included in the Master Plan.
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

BACKGROUND
The Downtown Public Park will serve as Oklahoma City’s great public common and the City’s main space for civic events and celebrations. The use and programming of the park will be determined through the public participation and market analysis process. The Downtown Public Park must be designed and constructed to the highest standards to ensure long-term quality and flexibility of use, and to improve land values of adjacent parcels.

The Core to Shore Plan defined key objectives for the Downtown Public Park including the following:

- Design spaces that appeal to a wide variety of users during different times of the day and year
- Maximize park interest with varied attractions and the ability to adapt and evolve over time
- Act as a development tool that encourages high-quality adjacent development
- Ensure that neighboring development provides active frontages along the Oklahoma River and the park
- Increase use and activity along the riverfront by making the shore more accessible
- Take advantage of the opportunities for world-class sports venues and individual recreation offered by the Oklahoma River
- Capitalize on the views of the Oklahoma River, the park, and the downtown from within the park and adjacent development

In January 2012, MAPS 3 Program Consultant ADG conducted a limited study considering the Core to Shore plan in context with the MAPS 3 projects and other developments in light of the recent evolution of specific components such as the proposed site for the Convention Center, the construction of the Devon Tower, improvements to the Myriad Gardens and the initiation of ODOT’s design for the new Boulevard. This study should be considered in the planning and design of the Downtown Public Park.

MASTER PLAN
The first step in creating the Downtown Public Park will be the development of a Master Plan. The master planning process shall include extensive community input and public participation.
Input should be gathered from a broad range of professionals and stakeholders including the MAPS 3 subcommittee, parks department, planning department, park users, children, city council members, arts and cultural organizations and leaders, civic associations, sporting clubs, landscape architects, engineers, historians and others as appropriate.
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

The elements of the Downtown Public Park will ultimately be determined in the Downtown Public Park Master Plan after public participation, but may include such elements as were mentioned in the original Core to Shore plan, including the following:

- Structures and spaces for major community events such as the Oklahoma City Festival of the Arts
- One or more distinctive children’s play areas
- Water features
- Shaded open areas with attractive landscape for casual activity
- A “Great Lawn” for large events, concerts, and unstructured use
- Public art
- An events center
- A formal garden
- Dining and rental opportunities to encourage continual park utilization
- Active Use options unique to the region

Public participation shall guide the process of designing and programming the park, but the consultant shall be expected to draw on their experience and knowledge of best practices in completing the Downtown Public Park Master Plan.

PROGRAMMING
The programming of the Downtown Public Park will be ultimately be determined in the Downtown Public Park Master Plan after public participation, but may include such programming suggestions as were included in the 2009 Oklahoma City Central Park Concept Plan outlined below.

**Core Baseline Activities**
The Downtown Public Park will provide varied opportunities for non-sponsored, daily park use. Core baseline activities act as a continuous attraction. These activities should account for the majority of baseline visitation and require minimal support. Examples of these activities are:

- Walking / strolling / jogging/ biking
- Walking tours / biking tours / history tours
- Picnics
- Sunbathing
- Café / restaurant usage
- People watching
- Pick-up sports
- Dog exercise
- Active recreation and explorational play

**Frequent Programs and Events**
There will be both public and private sponsored events for adults, seniors, and children, which occur on a regular basis. These events and activities are intended to encourage multiple visits to the park with new and exciting events. Examples of these events and activities are:
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

- Workshops
- Guided tour of sustainable features
- Outdoor exercise
- Educational classes

Seasonal Activities and Events
These activities will primarily be large-scale events sponsored by outside producers. There will be a special event permit process for the permitting of all outside events. Examples of these events and activities are:
  - Flower market
  - Farmers/Craft markets
  - Ice skating
  - Holiday tree lighting
  - Arts festivals
  - Cultural events and celebrations

Special Events
The primary purpose of special events is to draw visitors to entertain them and potentially generate revenue for the park. Special events are generally organized by outside producers who may rent the venues and event spaces in the park. There will be a special event permit process for permitting of all outside events. These events will have the biggest impact on the park landscape and features. Examples of these special events are:
  - Major art exhibits
  - Fall plant sale
  - Outdoor theatres
  - Performance
  - Festivals
  - Marathons or runs

Private Functions
Certain areas of the park will be available for rental for private functions that will be closed to the public. Examples of these events include:
  - Private parties, weddings and other events
  - Corporate receptions
  - Graduations

Members of the MAPS 3 Downtown Public Park subcommittee have provided additional input in regard to elements and amenities they desire to be considered for the Downtown Public Park. These include but are not necessarily limited to:
  - Grand entrances
  - Outer boardwalks
  - Mature trees / shade / wind breaks
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

- Preserve as many of the current mature trees as possible
- Native plants
- Iconic item as focal point
- Several water features
- Paddleboats
- Large open lawn
- Several concert areas
- Numerous bicycle racks, bike rentals, bike paths
- Athletic fields (softball, soccer, field hockey, etc.)
- Dog release area
- Marketplace
- Festival areas
- Par 3 golf course
- Equestrian center / stables
- Tennis courts
- Restaurants
- Boardwalk beer garden
- Public art, large scale sculpture
- Historical elements
- A large ride such as a ferris wheel, roller coaster or carousel
- Smaller, more intimate areas within the park
- Ample parking
- Connections to surrounding area and the river
- Transit access

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS
Regardless of the physical elements ultimately included in the design, considerations for the design might include:

- A combination of physical amenities and activities. A range of things to do, which are easily accessed and connected to the surrounding community; safe, clean and attractive; a place to meet other people; numerous things to do, attracting many different kinds of people.
- The park should be easy to see and accessible. Activities are visible from the street, and the streets surrounding the park are pedestrian friendly.
- Buildings in the park are linked to the park around it, with details such as roll-up garage doors, sliding windows for concessions to outdoor patios where people can sit, eat and people watch and circulation paths connecting all areas of the park.
- Flexible spaces allowing for uses during various seasons and inclement weather.
- Food concessions at park edge to serve both street and park.
- Programming and physical design of the park to encourage use during daytime and evening hours.
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

- Comfortable places to sit and socialize in all areas of the park, including near the park’s perimeter. Areas of shade and shelter throughout the park.
- Spaces should promote a sense of openness and should not be isolated to be perceived as unsafe.
- Design should be based on Community Policing Through Environmental Design (CETED) principles to maximize safety and security.
- Design should be based on established best industry practices and should accomplish the City’s goals for multi-use while considering maintenance and management costs.
- Opportunities for present and future placement of public art shall be considered.
- Union Station shall be integrated into the park programming with consideration for the operations of the tenant (the Central Oklahoma Transit and Parking Authority) and related federal obligations.

COORDINATION OF EFFORTS
The Master Plan and park design should be created in partnership with the efforts of several other organizations and entities in addition to the MAPS office, to include but not necessarily limited to:

- The Arts Council of Oklahoma City and other arts and cultural entities to develop a Master Plan for public art and cultural programming in the park.
- The Oklahoma Department of Transportation to finalize the details of the design of the new Boulevard
- The Alliance for Economic Development to create development guidelines for private projects adjacent to the park to ensure mutual success
- The Myriad Gardens Foundation
- The Oklahoma City Riverfront Redevelopment Authority
- The City of Oklahoma City Planning Department
- The City of OKC Public Works Department
- The City of OKC Parks and Recreation Department
- The Oklahoma City Park Commission

Park operations, management and maintenance must be considered in concert with funding strategies, including philanthropic support. The park must be as financially self-supporting as possible.

SUSTAINABILITY
The original concept plan for the Core to Shore park outlined important goals and strategies for sustainability including such things as renewable energy production and carbon neutrality; maximum materials re-use and recycling; rainwater re-use to meet 100% of irrigation demands and; aquifer recharge and restoration of natural habitat. Sustainability should be considered as part of the Master Plan. Examples from the Oklahoma City Central Park Concept Plan are outlined below.
DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (continued)

Water Goals and Strategies
- Rainwater collection, storage and reuse for irrigation means that the park landscape will reduce water demand on the aquifer.
- Water features are often designed to release discharged water into the sanitary sewer system where it will be pumped, often for several miles, before it is released to a municipal sewage treatment plant. Fountain discharge does not require this energy intensive high level of treatment. The parks design team would work with the appropriate regulatory agencies to gain approval to collect, disinfect and reuse the water within the fountains.

Energy Goals and Strategies
- Carbon sequestration will occur on site by natural vegetative uptake of CO2 in the acres of new landscape.
- The café and other minor structures should include high efficiency mechanical systems to significantly reduce their energy demand.
- Photovoltaic panels installed on the rooftops of new buildings, the existing Union Station and integrated into shade structures throughout the park will generate power for park operations and maintenance.

Community Goals and Strategies
- Park based education through design, programming, pathways, interactive features and signage to provide opportunities for learning about the natural environment in an urban landscape.
- Economic opportunity by providing spaces for local manufacturers and designers to show and sell their goods.
- Community health through the installation of recreational facilities and programs.
- Community gardens that allow the public the opportunity to landscape and grow produce in an otherwise preclusive environment.
- Reinvestment in the surrounding area by developers and businesses that take ongoing interest in the park and its community initiatives.
- Institutional partnerships to allow regional and state universities and non-profit groups the opportunity to perform research and the community to participate and learn.
- Public/private partnerships that encourage diverse community and stakeholder groups to become invested in the park’s future.

Materials Goals and Strategies
- The replacement of roadways, parking lots and buildings with gardens, grasslands and trees will act as a natural filter to improve air quality for the community.
- Using recycled demolition materials in the park construction such as parking lots and buildings will reduce the volume of new materials mined, processed and transported to the site.
- Demolition materials may be used as a resource for earthwork fill, new buildings, new pavement and aggregate.
- High albedo or light colored materials will reflect solar radiation and keep the ground and atmosphere cool. Shade structures and trees to protect the landscape and visitors from intense
summer heat. Heat island reduction helps lower urban temperatures minimizing energy intensive building cooling.

- The existing concrete and asphalt landscape will be replaced by a richly-planted landscape which will filter particles and smog from the air; absorb CO2 and release oxygen and; cause evaporative cooling from rainfall deposition on leaves.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
As previously outlined, a sizeable electrical substation is located across the street from the northeast corner of the Downtown Public Park. There has been discussion about possible means of mitigating the impact of the substation on the Downtown Public Park, including various methods of screening it from view. Additionally, the Robinson Street traffic ramp creates connection issues to the east. Options for such mitigation, if deemed necessary, should be included in the creation of the Master Plan.

A Comprehensive Maintenance Plan should be developed during the master planning phase, including funding, roles, responsibilities, etc.

Prior to demolition of any structures in the MAPS 3 Upper and Lower Downtown Public Park, a historic age survey must be conducted to determine if any property is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. As of this writing, the City is contracting for this survey, which should considered at all stages of demolition and design. The findings of this survey shall be considered before the recommendation of demolition of any structures.
## PROJECT REQUIREMENTS – DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARK

## CONCEPTUAL COST ESTIMATE

### BUDGET

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The Program Consultant will be responsible for creating a schedule for this project. Included in this document is a milestone schedule with estimated target dates for certain activities to aid in creating the schedule.

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**PROJECT REQUIREMENTS – DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARK**

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

**SCHEDULE**

The Program Consultant will be responsible for creating a schedule for this project. Included in this document is a milestone schedule with estimated target dates for certain activities to aid in creating the schedule.
PROJECT REQUIREMENTS – DOWNTOWN PUBLIC PARK

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Core to Shore Study -

Oklahoma Central Park Concept Plan -

Map of Downtown Public Park area