

Your Money at Work: The Role of General Obligation Bonds in Major Road Construction

A Message from City Manager Michael Spurgeon

Maintaining our City's transportation system so that drivers can get around safely and efficiently is a top priority for the City Council and Administration. Please allow me to expand on this topic by talking about road expansion and the City's plan of action.

Population Growth

It's no secret that the growth in Broken Arrow has exploded over the last 25 years. Statistically speaking, in 1992 our population was 61,073. Today it's estimated at just under 112,000, an increase of more than 80%, which very few communities can tout. Consider, too, that Broken Arrow is recognized as one of the safest cities in the Midwest; so when you couple this fact with a high quality of life, it's easy to understand why so many people want to live in our great community.

Consequences of Growth

A consequence associated with this population explosion is increased traffic congestion in certain parts of our city. Without question, streets and roads are the "bread and butter" of moving traffic and ensuring a community continues to develop. Broken Arrow's street system currently consists of more than 600 lane miles of road surface, well over 5,000 acres of right-of-way property and the operation of 84 traffic signals. Based on my observations, we have about a dozen miles within our major arterial roads (e.g. Aspen, Olive, Houston, 23rd Street, etc.) that I consider "under capacity" and unable to effectively handle the traffic volume of cars that travel on them. As a result (and on a regular basis), I get asked the question, "When is this road or that road going to be expanded?"

First, let me start by saying that the City recognizes the importance of preserving our street system and believes that our streets and roads are arguably our most important and expensive public asset. Local streets and roads hold the City's entire transportation network together. From the moment we open our front door to drive to work, bike to school, or walk to the bus stop, we depend on safe, reliable local streets and roads. In the case of police, fire, and emergency medical services, safe and reliable roads allow us to respond quickly to emergencies. A few minutes' delay can be a matter of life and death. Likewise, our roads make a crucial contribution to economic development and growth and bring important social benefits to all of us.

What Does It Cost?

The previous paragraph highlights some of the economic and social importance of a sound transportation system. The challenge is how to pay for the expansions, when there are scarce public resources. Our Engineering and Construction Department estimates that the cost to widen a two-lane road to five-lane for one mile is approximately \$5 million. If widening a bridge or including major stormwater improvements are necessary, the total cost can skyrocket to nearly \$6 million! Yes, that's right...between \$5 and \$6 million! A very expensive proposition for sure.

How Will We Pay For Road Expansion?

Because of the high cost, the only sustainable means to fund these much-needed expansions are through voter-approved General Obligation (GO) Bonds. GO Bonds are a common financing tool used by Oklahoma cities

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Police Chief Retires

After serving over 26 years in law enforcement, Police Chief David Boggs will retire from the Broken Arrow Police Department (BAPD) at the end of August 2017. Boggs is looking forward to pursuing other opportunities that will take him into the teaching and consulting fields. The hiring process, which will include a nationwide search for his replacement, is now underway.

Chief Boggs began working in Broken Arrow in August 2011. He was recruited from Lexington, Kentucky, where he had served as Deputy Chief. He leaves behind a force of 146 sworn officers. Through his leadership, BAPD has gained a reputation as one of the most professional police agencies in the United States. BAPD is also nationally recognized for its community policing programs, which other departments around the country use as a model for their programs. With over 250 citizens serving as

volunteers for the police department, public support and respect for the City's officers is exceptionally high. That support is credited for successful renewal of the Vision 2025 sales tax to hire new police officers, firefighters and fund street maintenance. BAPD will grow to 161 sworn officers when the Vision renewal campaign promise is fully implemented.

"The Broken Arrow City Council and I couldn't be more pleased with the job the Broken Arrow Police Department and Chief Boggs have done in keeping our community safe," said Mayor Craig Thurmond. "We are consistently recognized as one of the safest places to live in the U.S., and I credit Chief Boggs' leadership for making that designation possible. We wish him all the best in his next endeavors."

Apply Today for BA Youth City Council

Applications for the 2017-2018 Broken Arrow Youth City Council program are now being accepted. The program runs from September until early May. The deadline to apply is September 1, 2017.

Youth City Council provides an opportunity for high school students to learn how municipal government works, obtain an understanding of local policymaking, and help serve their community. Participants will meet with City Councilors and other City officials, tour public facilities, attend public meetings and demonstrate knowledge gained by presenting their ideas to City Council.

To view requirements and download an application, visit www.BrokenArrowOK.gov/youthcitycouncil. For more information, call 918-259-8419.



Pictured: The 2016-2017 Youth City Council members receiving their certificates on May 2.

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to pay for major capital projects, like the building of roads, public buildings and parks facilities. The last time the City asked voters to approve GO Bonds for road projects was back in 2014. All projects submitted were approved by voters and are in various stages of the project lifecycle. This includes the widening of 9th Street from Houston to Kenosha, widening Washington Street from Garnett to Olive, widening Florence Street from Olive to Aspen, constructing 37th Street from Albany to Omaha and more. Thank you for supporting these public projects!

Opportunity in 2018

Presently, the City Council and Administration are in the initial stages of preparing a new package of projects for voter approval in the summer of 2018. Later this fall, we will be taking a citizen's survey to get your input on road improvements and other important quality of life projects. We will make the survey easily accessible, so that everyone in the community can participate. We value your input and want to hear your feedback. It's clear from the feedback we've already received, many residents want to expand our roads to relieve the traffic congestion they face on their way to work and back home. Before the City can move forward with any major road projects, voters will have to approve the bond funding that will pay for the improvements. Additional public education on needs and costs is forthcoming.

I am available to answer your questions and can be reached at 918-259-8419 or mspurgeon@brokenarrowok.gov. I also encourage you to watch a video that explains more about GO Bonds, available at www.BrokenArrowOK.gov/BOND.

Annual Water Quality Report Now Available

The City of Broken Arrow 2016 Annual Water Quality Report (Consumer Confidence Report) is now available online at www.BrokenArrowOK.gov/2016waterreport. Those who prefer a paper copy may pick up the report at City Hall, 220 S. First Street.

Police Department to Hold Annual Events

National Night Out is set for Tuesday, August 1. The Broken Arrow Police Department encourages you and your neighborhood to join other communities across the nation to celebrate America's Night Out Against Crime. National Night Out is a cohesive effort to promote involvement in crime prevention activities, police-community partnerships, neighborhood camaraderie and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

The 9th annual Back to School Bash will be held on Saturday, August 5 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at Tulsa Technology, 4000 W. Florence Street, in Broken Arrow. There will be free school supplies, haircuts, immunizations, vision screening and more! Other organizations in attendance will include: Camp Bandage, Family and Children's Services, Tulsa City-County Library, Vince and Larry the Crash Test Dummies and McGruff the Crime Dog.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Ongoing through October - Rose District Farmers Market 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. on Tuesdays and 7:00 a.m. - noon on Saturdays, 418 S. Main Street.

Ongoing through July 22 - BA Soccer Club Registration. Boys and girls ages 3-18. For details, visit www.bascok.com.

August 1 — Broken Arrow City Council 6:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.

August 1 — National Night Out (see related story)

August 5 — Back to School Bash See related story

August 10 — Planning Commission 5 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.

August 12 — Sand Dazzle Sand Sculpture Contest 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Nienhuis Aquatic Facility, 3201 N. 9th Street. Free to the public! For details, call

918-259-7000.

August 15 — Broken Arrow City Council 6:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.

August 19 — Pooch Plunge 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Family Aquatic Center, 1400 S. Main Street. \$5 per dog; free for humans! For details, call 918-259-7000.

August 24 — Planning Commission 5 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.

September 4 — Labor Day Holiday City offices closed. Monday and Tuesday trash service will be one day later.

September 5 — Broken Arrow City Council 6:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.

September 14 — Planning Commission 5 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 220 S. First St.