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## MAPS 3 foes focused on leverage, not merits

OUR VIEWS POLICE, FIRE UNIONS ANNOUNCE OPPOSITION

The Oklahoman Editorial [Comments](#)  6

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SO, we now have organized opposition to the MAPS 3 proposal that will go before Oklahoma City voters early next month. The police and firefighters unions are against MAPS 3 because, well, because they're not happy with the way contract negotiations are going.

Make no mistake: The "Not This MAPS" campaign that police and fire started last week has nothing to do with the merits of MAPS 3 and everything to do with trying to gain leverage in contract talks. The unions want more money and more staffing; disappointed in how the city has reacted to those requests, the unions have decided to do what they can to sink a project that's vitally important to the city.

Just a few months ago, the police union boss described MAPS 3 as "good projects" that were flawed because they didn't include money for public safety. Now he says it's just a bad plan overall.

This change is nothing new — the unions feint and jab at every turn. "As soon as you address one issue, all of a sudden they throw out other issues," said Roy Williams, president of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber. "You can't ever get anywhere because that's their strategy, is to never come to an agreement."

The original MAPS proposal, approved by city voters in 1993, was for \$350 million worth of projects that have since generated more than \$2 billion in private investment. City voters later approved MAPS for Kids, which has resulted in new and improved school buildings throughout the city. MAPS 3 has a \$777 million price tag, to be paid for with the extension of a 1-cent city sales tax, and would fund construction of a convention center, a huge downtown park, upgrades to the Oklahoma River and State Fair Park, and other projects not just downtown but throughout the city.

The previous MAPS plans didn't have specific public safety components, and yet they weren't opposed by the police or fire unions. But the relationship between the city and its public safety unions has deteriorated through the years and now is strained, at best. The result is "Not This MAPS."

Public safety did benefit from MAPS for Kids, by the way, in the form of tens of millions of dollars in revenue from use taxes, which are charged to businesses that buy items outside Oklahoma City for use within the city. Use taxes typically are part of a voter-approved sales tax, and would be with MAPS 3. The city recently agreed to provide use tax revenue to public safety if the proposal passes.

The union leaders — surprise — said the offer was too little too late. And so the unions will work to waylay a plan that would benefit the whole city. We believe voters who care about Oklahoma City's future will see through this ploy when they go to the polls on Dec. 8.

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**Cancer Cosmetics: Friday, Nov. 13, 2009**  
Cancer patients learned make-up and cosmetic tips from Johnson during a session at Integris Baptist

9 photos




**Oklahoma City Fatal Fire: Friday, Nov. 13,**  
Authorities say five people, including an unborn child, died in a fire at an Oklahoma City home

5 photos



**Not This Maps Coalition: Friday, Nov.**  
Oklahoma City Fire Union and Police Union leaders held a news conference to announce their opposition

10 photos



**Oklahoma City Zoo Princes & Pirates**  
View photos from the event.

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