

From NewsChannel 8:

## TIF Plan In Broken Arrow Off The Table

Location: Broken Arrow

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Broken Arrow - A 25-million dollar economic development plan is being put on the shelf in Broken Arrow. It's not going to be used because it does not have the support of the school system. The plan would have expanded business growth in a three and a half mile area surrounding the new Bass Pro Shop. NewsChannel 8's Burt Mummolo reports on what went wrong.

It's the dirty word of economic development -- TIF, or Tax Increment Financing. City leaders say the community simply didn't understand the plan. But, the opposition says there is no misunderstanding. They say they don't want to pay for business growth at the expense of the school system.

It's the latest thing on the menu -- the unbelievably. It also describes the mood of John Lare.

"Very happy," he says.

The Taco Mayo owner posted a petition, got 14-hundred signatures and helped stop a TIF for fear it would hurt the schools.

"The quality of life here, because of the school district, is the goose that lays the golden egg," Lare says. "And you're trying to propose something to turn it into bronze."

"Well, this TIF was good for schools," says City Manager Jim Twombly, who is not so happy. It was his 25-million dollar TIF that bit the dust.

"It's a complex, or it was, a complex strategic plan for economic development," he says.

Without the TIF, city leaders projected \$50-million dollars of growth around Bass Pro Shop. With it, they were projecting three times that amount. Now that its dead, its taken with it 100-million dollars in estimated development.

"Because the plan was more complex, I think it was harder for people to grasp," Twombly says.

"There's no misunderstanding," Lare says. "It's somebody saying well we want to give money to a developer. There's no misunderstanding in that."

Had the TIF passed, Broken Arrow schools would have gotten up to five million dollars. But, they'd have to wait up to 25-years to get any more money. Are they glad its dead?

"I guess the short answer would be yes," says BAPS Spokesman Keith Isbell. "because we thought it had a negative impact on our school district."

Downtown at Murry's, they've got everything from teapots to peppermint patties -- a huge selection of items, but only one feeling about the TIF.

"It wouldn't have helped the schools."

"It wasn't going to help the schools, so I just didn't think that was right."

"We'd love economic development down here, we would love it. But the schools are more important than that."

The Broken Arrow school system grew by three hundred students last year. They say they are not anti-TIF. It's just that the length of this plan -- 25 years -- was too long.

Lare says he plans to continue his petition drive. He wants a new ordinance in Broken Arrow that would require a public vote on any future proposals.

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