# Table of Contents

**Toolkit Overview** .......................................................... 3

**Projects** ........................................................................... 5

  - Start a Business Association ........................................... 6
  - Placemaking ..................................................................... 7
  - Organize a District Cleanup and Graffiti Removal .............. 8
  - Report Code Violations .................................................. 10
  - Create a National Register District ................................. 12

**Programs** ........................................................................ 13

  - Right-of-Way Programs .................................................. 14
  - Parking Requirements ................................................... 15
  - Historic Preservation Overlay ....................................... 16
  - Neon Sign Grant Program ............................................. 17
  - Request Mixed Use Zoning Along BRT Route .................... 18
  - Development Fee Reimbursement Along BRT Routes .......... 19

**Funding** ......................................................................... 20
“Designing a dream city is easy; rebuilding a living one takes imagination.”

—Jane Jacobs, *Downtown is for People*
Toolkit Overview

Strong commercial districts support a more vibrant and connected city. The goal of the Commercial Toolkit is to connect business owners to programs, projects, or initiatives in Tulsa that support commercial revitalization.

The Toolkit offers information and resources on how to implement place-based projects, regulations, and programs that support active commercial districts, and fundraising ideas. Many of these programs have the capacity to be utilized broadly, and this Toolkit aims to help stakeholders take advantage of these opportunities.

Projects, programs, and initiatives fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Regulations
- Place-based
- Historic preservation
- Grants or funding opportunities
- Transit-oriented development
- Beautification

Some of the projects are designed to improve individual businesses, but most will work best when a variety of stakeholders in a commercial district come together to collaborate on a project.

Each topic includes a description of the program, project, or initiative and its importance, specific steps to implement, and a list of resources where you can find more information, more detailed steps, templates, etc.

Goals

We hope this Toolkit will become a valuable resource for all Tulsa commercial districts. This document will be updated periodically to include additional projects or resources.

Completed a Project? Want to Suggest a New Project? Let us know!

When you or your commercial district complete a project in this guide, or if you have ideas for new projects we should include, we want to hear about it. Send us stories, pictures, questions, and suggestions so we can celebrate your accomplishments. Send an email to the Destination Districts Program at destinationdistricts@incog.org, send us a message or tag us at facebook.com/tulsaplainning, or visit tulsaplinning.org.

Resources for Neighborhoods

The Tulsa Planning Office also has programs for neighborhoods, including the Vibrant Neighborhoods Partnership and a Neighborhood Toolkit similar to this guide. Visit tulsaplinning.org for more information.
“The trust of a city street is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts... Most of it is ostensibly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all.”

– Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
Start a Business Association

Description
Creating a Business Association can be a beneficial way to collaborate with other businesses in your commercial district to work toward a shared vision for the area. Business Associations generally have dues, so the group will be able to implement projects. Creating a Business Association is also a good way to show the City of Tulsa and Tulsa Planning Office that you are committed to your commercial district and you may be a good candidate for a Business Improvement District (BID), Destination District, or other programs in the future.

Steps
1. Organize a group of property owners and businesses with interest in working together on common issues and opportunities, such as making the area clean, safe, beautified and occupied. This group is generally called a Steering Committee.
2. Draft tentative district boundaries. These initial boundaries may shift a bit based on feedback from all of the district’s stakeholders.
3. Contact stakeholders to gather feedback on boundaries and issues through a combination of surveys, small group meetings, 1:1 meetings, and community meetings. Make sure all tenants and property owners are invited.
4. The Steering Committee and stakeholders will define immediate priorities and action items, create a meeting schedule, and identify dues and a budget.
5. Incorporate as a business association through the State of Oklahoma Secretary of State.
6. After incorporation with the State, the business association can form a board of directors, adopt bylaws and terms of membership. Once the bylaws are adopted, apply for tax-exempt status and a 501(c)6 or (c)4 designation with the IRS. This will likely take 6+ months based on IRS timelines. Contact Destination Districts staff for example bylaws and assistance with this step.
7. Create a strategic plan for the organization and the area. The plan should address issues and opportunities identified by stakeholders, such as branding, cleanup, parking, capital projects, and events. Destination Districts staff can provide resources and templates for this step.
8. Register your Business Association with the City of Tulsa Working in Neighborhoods Department.

Resources
Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Luisa Krug, Destination Districts Manager
lkrug@incog.org
918.579.9454

Oklahoma Secretary of State
sos.ok.gov/business/forms.aspx

Internal Revenue Service
irs.gov/charities-and-nonprofits

Business Association Registration
cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/working-in-neighborhoods/neighborhoods/registration
Placemaking

Description
Placemaking refers to the collaborative process of shaping the public realm to better support connections between people and places. The goal is to promote better urban design through a creative use of space, considering the physical, cultural, and social identities that define that place.

There are infinite different types of placemaking activities, so this Toolkit just focuses on the general process. Ideas include pop-up plazas or markets, amenities like seating or public art, and programming. Be creative when you think about how to more effectively use your space and identify projects! If you have ideas or questions, contact staff – we can share resources or connect you with other potential partners!

Steps

1. **Define place and identify stakeholders.** The process starts with a meeting to engage community representatives from public, private, and civic sectors in order to identify the main issues that different groups face, and to identify a particular place or places to focus efforts.

2. **Evaluate space and identify issues.** Stakeholders observe how a place is used and how it could be improved. Specific topics are identified for more investigation. The goal is to create a preliminary vision for the space and begin brainstorming about potential partners. It is important to identify multiple ways that stakeholders or other participants can provide feedback — some may respond best to a survey, while others may want to attend a guided discussion/observation of the space.

3. **Create a vision.** Stakeholders should use insights from Step 2 to create a vision for the place. The vision should include a mission or statement of goals, a definition of how the space will be used and by whom, a description of the intended character of the space, a concept plan, examples of similar spaces, and an action plan.

4. **Short-term experiments.** Once you have a vision, you can start to implement. One of the easiest ways to implement is to use “Lighter, Quicker, cheaper” (LQC) projects to test out different ideas. LQC projects are short-term projects that can be done quickly with a small budget, and can easily be undone. Keep in mind that implementation of these projects may require a Special Event Permit from the City of Tulsa.

5. **Ongoing reevaluation and long-term changes.** Creating a great public space takes time! Plan to evaluate projects so that you can see what’s working or what needs to change. You can use this data to advocate for permanent investments with the City, local businesses, or other funding opportunities. Evaluation can also help identify new LQC projects.

6. **Share your progress!** Create a press release before implementing a new project and share your progress on social media by using #placemaking and tagging us at facebook.com/tulsaplanning.

Resources

**Tulsa Planning Office Contact**
Luisa Krug, Destination Districts Manager
lkrug@incog.org
918.579.9454

**Downtown Coordinating Council**
Maggie Hoey, Assistant Director
mhoey@cityoftulsa.org

The Downtown Coordinating Council supports downtown businesses/property owners within the Inner Dispersal Loop and may be able to connect you with funding opportunities or assistance in the development and design of your project.

**City of Tulsa Special Events**
Skipper Bain
sbain@cityoftulsa.org

**Project for Public Spaces**
pps.org/category/placemaking
pps.org/category/lighter-quicker-cheaper

**AARP and Team Better Block Pop up Placemaking Toolkit**
aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2019/pop-up-tool-kit.html
Organize a District Cleanup and Graffiti Removal

Description
Organizing a district cleanup can facilitate collaboration while improving the commercial area. A district cleanup could involve clearing sidewalks, mowing, trimming and edging, pulling weeds, re-painting, removing litter or graffiti, or planting flowers or trees.

While public art can bring significant value to a neighborhood, graffiti often involves ethnic slurs, obscenities, and territorial tagging by gangs. Graffiti is costly and destructive, and sends a message that the community is not concerned about the appearance of its commercial district. You can take control of your commercial district by quickly removing graffiti. Prompt removal reduces the chance of graffiti reappearing and helps maintain a safe, secure, and attractive environment.

The City of Tulsa does not currently have a graffiti removal program, but you can report it to 311. If you see graffiti in progress, call 911.

Steps

1. Talk to nearby businesses or property owners to decide which projects need to be completed, and agree on three possible dates to host your projects. This is also a great opportunity to connect with nearby neighborhoods and/or neighborhood associations.

2. Recruit volunteers for specific projects. Try to find at least one expert you can pair inexperienced volunteers with. A spreadsheet may help keep everyone’s responsibilities in order, and if your group is large enough, you may need captains in charge of specific elements of your projects.

3. Gather supplies. Your project may require brooms, weed trimmers, lawn mowers, shovels, gloves, paint brushes, litter pickers, trash bags, or other items. If your group is spread over a large area, it would be wise to recruit someone with a large vehicle to haul filled trash bags or other items back to the dumpster (or to the Green Waste Facility) throughout the day. Free supplies may be available through Keep Oklahoma Beautiful’s programs (next page).

4. For graffiti removal, make sure you talk to the property owner(s) before starting, and gather supplies such as a power washer, paint, paint sprayer, or other graffiti removal tools.

5. Publicize the cleanup on your district Facebook page (if you have one), individual business pages, newsletter, and at meetings.

6. Get to Work! Make sure everyone stays hydrated, and that you have sunscreen, bug spray, and appropriate clothing (close-toed shoes, hats, etc.). If your work will take several hours, ask for volunteers to supply food or snacks to keep everyone fueled up.

7. Take photos of your projects and share them with us at facebook.com/tulsaplaning or email us at destinationdistricts@incog.org.

Resources

Working in Neighborhoods
Neighborhood Liaisons
Joel Hensley
jhensley@cityoftulsa.org
918.576.5634

Alisia Myers
amyers@cityoftulsa.org
918.596.9336

General Contact
918.596.1292
neighborhoods@cityoftulsa.org

Request a Dumpster Online
cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/working-in-neighborhoods/neighborhoods/dumpster-program

Reporting
• Online: visit tulsa311.com
• Download the Tulsa311 mobile app
• Dial 3-1-1
See page 10 for more information

Remove Graffiti
sfpublicworks.org/services/graffiti-abatement-tips
seattle.gov/utilities/protecting-our-environment/safe-and-clean-seattle/graffiti/remove-graffiti

Prevent Graffiti
seattle.gov/utilities/protecting-our-environment/safe-and-clean-seattle/graffiti/prevent-graffiti
City of Tulsa Waste Services

Dead Animal Removal
Dead animal collection from the street or curb can be arranged by calling 918.596.9777.

Green Waste Drop-Off
2100 N. 145th E. Ave.
7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, except City holidays.
The City of Tulsa offers free yard waste drop-off. Residents may dispose of grass, leaves, brush and tree limbs. A current drivers license with a Tulsa address or a City of Tulsa utility bill are required. Wood chips are available for free, as well. This cannot be used for general waste from commercial businesses.

Dumpster Program
The City’s Working in Neighborhoods department has Neighborhood Liaisons that can help registered Business Associations obtain a dumpster for cleanup efforts. This cannot be used for general waste from commercial businesses.

Recycling
The Metropolitan Environmental Trust (M.e.t.) has a list of commercial recycling options available on their website: metrecycle.com/commercial-recyclers.

Keep Oklahoma Beautiful Programs
keepoklahomabeautiful.com

Great American Cleanup — An annual, nationwide project. Keep Oklahoma Beautiful coordinates cleanup activities in Oklahoma. Registered participants receive free supplies for their event. Don’t miss this opportunity to spruce up your community next spring! Everything kicks off on March 1 and ends May 31.

Fresh Paint Days — A program designed to encourage volunteers to seek out unsightly community structures and renovate them with the creative use of resources. Willing volunteers make use of donated paint and a stipend for supplies to transform their building with the application of fresh paint, a little creativity, and a lot of elbow grease!

Lend-a-Bin — Keep Oklahoma Beautiful has recycling bins available for your use. District cleanups, conferences, and festivals are just a few ideas on how your organization can use these bins. Bins must be picked up at KOB’s offices in Oklahoma City.

Environmental Excellence Competition — Each year, Keep Oklahoma Beautiful calls for nominations for environmental awards in a number of categories. The prestigious awards are presented at an Awards Recognition Banquet each November.

Litter Education — Provides educational opportunities for students through creative projects. Each program is developed to teach students about the harmful effects of littering and the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

Workshops — KOB staff, community leaders, volunteers and experienced organizational directors provide useful knowledge and expertise at these workshops.

Disposing of Latex Paint
Once it’s fully dried, latex paint is non-hazardous and can be disposed of in your normal trash receptacle. Be sure to thoroughly read the paint label to understand if your paint is latex or oil-based. Oil-based paints must be disposed of at the Household Pollutant Collection Facility.

To dispose of latex paint at home, simply remove the lid in a well-ventilated area and let the paint solidify. Depending on the amount of paint, this may take several days to weeks. You can also add cat litter to help speed the drying process. Once the paint is solidified and there is no liquid left in the container, it can be disposed of in your normal trash.

If you have any questions about this process or the City of Tulsa’s Household Pollutant Collection Facility, call 918.591.4325.
Description

There are many types of code violations. Some common violations are described below. For a full list of categories, visit Tulsa311.com. Please bear in mind the differences between personal opinions and code violations. In order for a code violation to exist, it must be defined by a Tulsa City Ordinance.

It’s usually best to try to talk to nearby businesses or property owners about a potential code violation before reporting it to the City.

Common Code Violations

**Zoning Clearance Permit** (Chapter 70, Section 70.080) — A Zoning Clearance Permit is required before establishing any new Use on a vacant lot or before changing uses. Zoning Clearance Permits can be issued as a stand-alone permit, or as a part of the Building Permit, if applicable.

**Sign Permit** (Chapter 60, Section 60.020) — All signs in the City of Tulsa require a Sign Permit, except for those listed in Section 60.030 of the Tulsa Zoning Code (Sign Exceptions).

**Outdoor Lighting** (Chapter 67, Section 67.030) — The Tulsa Zoning Code requires all private outdoor commercial lighting to be arranged or shielded to direct light downward and away from abutting lots that are not under common ownership. Light-producing elements must not be visible from an abutting property, 5 feet above grade. Spillover light (light trespass) may not exceed 0.5 foot-candles when abutting a Residential or Agricultural Zoning District and may not exceed 3.0 foot-candles when abutting any other zoning district or public right-of-way.

**Screening Fence** (Chapter 65, Section 65.070-C) — Most Commercial and Multi-Family Residential Uses are required to maintain an F-1 screening fence or wall along any abutting Single-Family Residential Zoning District. An F-1 screening fence must be an opaque fence at least 6 feet in height, typically a wooden privacy fence, or a masonry wall with a minimum height of 6 feet. The finished sign of the fence or wall must face the adjacent property or street and must always be maintained. Chain link fencing cannot be used to satisfy the screening fence requirements.

**Landscaping Maintenance** (Chapter 65, Section 65.090-F) — Required landscaping must be continuously maintained by the property owner, including necessary watering, weeding, pruning, pest control, litter and debris clean-up, and replacement of dead, diseased or damaged plant material.

**Outdoor Storage in CS Zoning District** (Chapter 15, Section 15.040-A) — In the Commercial Shopping (CS) Zoning District, outdoor storage and display of items (including merchandise) is prohibited within 300 feet of a Residential Zoning District.

Resources

**Tulsa City Ordinances**
library.municode.com/ok/tulsa/

**Tulsa Zoning Code**
tulsaplanning.org/resources/plans

**Reporting**
- Online: visit tulsa311.com
- Download the Tulsa311 mobile app
- Dial 3-1-1

**Check Status**
- Tulsa311.com
  - After logging in, click ‘My Requests’
  - Click on a specific case to see details

**Mobile App**
- Tap on ‘My Reports’, then select a specific case to see details

**Online Self Service Portal**
- Click on “Search Inspections”
- Change the Search box to “Code Case”
- Enter the address you are searching and hit enter
- Results will show all cases on the property since 2018

**Contact Working in Neighborhoods**
- Call 918-596-1292 or send an email to neighborhoods@cityoftulsa.org

**Contact the Permit Center**
- Visit cityoftulsa.org/permitting or call 918.596.9456.

**Contact the Tulsa Planning Office**
- Visit tulsaplanning.org or call 918.584.7526.

Photo courtesy of Kendall Whittier Main Street
Common Code Violations, continued

Parking Design (Chapter 55, Section 55.090) — All parking areas must be designed and marked in accordance with the dimensional standards listed in section 55.090-D of the Tulsa Zoning Code. Parking spaces must be at least 8.5 feet in width and 18 feet in length, not including access drives and aisles. Unless the business abuts a minor street, all parking areas must be designed to allow vehicles to enter and exit a street in a forward motion. The parking surface must be dustless, all-weather material such as concrete or asphalt. Accessible parking facilities must be provided in accordance with the Building Code.

Promotional Signs, Flags & Banners (Chapter 60, Section 60.030-E-4) — Promotional signs, such as banners, flags, corrugated signs, and non-rigid displays require a Promotional Sign Permit from the City of Tulsa. No more than 4 promotional sign permits are allowed per business per year. The promotional sign permit is issued for a 14-day period, but the 4 allowed time periods may run consecutively. Promotional signs are not allowed within the public right-of-way and are subject to size and setback restrictions based on the Zoning District. More information about Promotional Sign Permits can be found at cityoftulsa.org/permitting or by calling (918) 596-9456.

Window Signs (Chapter 60, Section 60.030-D) — Window signs are allowed but must not cover more than 25% of the area of the window to which they are attached.

Dynamic Display (Digital) Signs (Chapter 60, Section 60.100) — Dynamic Display Signs are required to be equipped with a light detector/photocell that automatically adjusts the display's brightness according to natural ambient light conditions. Brightness must not exceed 500 nits at night and 6,500 nits during the day. All messages must be full and complete in and of themselves and must have a minimum dwell time of at least 8 seconds each. Transitions from one message to another must occur within 1 second or less. All movement, animation, audio, video, pyrotechnics, or other special effects are prohibited.

Vacant, Unsecured Structures (Title 55, Section 1003)— Property owners are responsible for securing all structures and components including windows, doors, or other openings. An owner may need to board up a vacant structure if a break-in or fire occurs. These structures are a very real problem for neighborhoods and commercial districts. They have become a target for vandals, criminal activities, and a general nuisance for adjacent properties.

How to Report a Violation

Dial 3-1-1
1. Call 3-1-1 to file your complaint. Be prepared to give a physical address, your name (will be kept confidential), and a description of the problem.

Visit Tulsa311.com
1. If this is your first visit, click ‘Register’ to create an account.
2. Once logged in, click ‘Services’ to file a new complaint.
3. Select the category that best fits the problem you’re reporting, and enter the requested information, including the address and a description of the problem. Be specific.
4. When you’re finished, click ‘Submit’.

Use the Mobile App
1. Download the Tulsa311 app from your mobile app store.
2. Log in or create an account if this is your first visit.
3. To submit a new complaint, click ‘File a Report’.
4. Select the category that best fits the problem you’re reporting.
   Note: the mobile app does not include all of the categories listed on Tulsa311.com. If your category is not included, select ‘Other’ and provide a detailed description.
5. Enter the requested information, including the address and a description of the problem. Be specific. The app also allows users to upload a photo of the problem.
6. When you’re finished, tap ‘Submit’.

What Happens Next
The case will be assigned to an investigator, who will visit the property. If a violation is found at the time of inspection, a written notice will be given to the property owner, who will have 10 days to correct the violation. Immediate interventions can be made if the violation poses a health and safety risk.

What do I do if I’ve received a Notice of Violation Letter?
The notice includes the name and phone number of the City of Tulsa Inspector assigned to your case. You may also call 3-1-1 to be directed to Working In Neighborhoods.
Create a National Register District

Description

The National Park Service (NPS)’s National Register of Historic Places is an official list of historic places worthy of preservation. The national program seeks to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archeological resources.

Contributing Resources in National Register Districts are eligible for Historic Preservation Tax Credits and may be eligible for other grant programs. Inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places is an honorary designation and does not provide protection as an HP Overlay would (page 16).

Steps

1. Contact the Historic Preservation (HP) Planner at the Tulsa Planning Office to start the process for your property or commercial district.

2. A survey of properties will be conducted to identify which properties meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, which includes evaluation of the property’s age, significance, and integrity. Usually, a property must be at least 50 years old to qualify. The evaluation/survey can be conducted for a single property or multiple properties. The survey is conducted by the owner(s) or a consultant hired by the owner(s).

3. After the survey is completed, the HP Planner will submit a draft nomination to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review.

4. After revisions from SHPO review, the HP Planner will present a recommendation to the Tulsa Preservation Commission to consider.

5. If recommended, HP Planner and Tulsa Preservation Commission will submit a nomination for the district to SHPO for review. SHPO will contact property owners and local governments for public comment. If a majority of property owners in the district object, the property cannot be listed, so it is important to coordinate with property owners before starting the process. Nominations will be reviewed quarterly by the HP Review Board of the State of Oklahoma.

6. Complete nominations and certifying recommendations are submitted by SHPO to the National Park Service for a decision.

7. Once a district (or property) has been listed on the National Register, contributing resources are eligible for federal preservation grants for planning and rehabilitation, state and federal investment tax credits, preservation easements to nonprofit organizations, and international building code fire and life safety code alternatives.

8. In order to take advantage of state and federal investment tax credits, you are required to follow the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for rehabilitation. These projects are reviewed and administered by SHPO, which includes a phased review process from both SHPO and NPS architects. Presently the Oklahoma Tax Commission matches the credit awarded by the Internal Revenue Service.

Resources

Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Jed Porter, Historic Preservation Planner
jporter@incog.org
918.579.9448

State Historic Preservation Office
Sara Werneke
swerneke@okhistory.org
405.522.4478
okhistory.org/shpo/shpom

National Park Service: How to List a Property
nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/how-to-list-a-property.htm

Criteria for Inclusion
nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/publications.htm

What a listing can and cannot do

• Under Federal Law, the listing of a property in the National Register places no restrictions on what a non-federal owner may do with their property up to and including destruction, unless the property is involved in a project that receives Federal assistance, usually funding or licensing/permitting.

• National Register listing does not lead to public acquisition or require public access

• A property will not be listed if, for individual properties, the owner objects, or for districts, a majority of property owners object

• National Register listing does not automatically invoke local historic district zoning or local landmark designation
“A good city is like a good party — people stay longer than they need to because they are enjoying themselves.”

– Jan Gehl, Danish architect
Right-of-Way Programs

Description
There are a variety of right-of-way permit programs offered by the City of Tulsa: Sidewalk Cafés, Tables and Chairs, and Parklets. The goal of these programs is to activate the public realm and create vibrant spaces. With proper design and management, sidewalk cafés, tables and chairs, and/or parklets add vitality to the street by encouraging walking, shopping, dining, and socializing, which in turn boost economic development efforts.

While the process of obtaining a right-of-way permit is fairly straightforward, not every business or location is right for these permits. Tulsa Planning Office staff is happy to talk you through this to make sure you choose the most appropriate permit program.

Steps
1. Review the chart at tulsaplanning.org/row to determine which program is best for you based on your existing conditions. Remember: a parklet permit uses the parking space(s) in front of your business, and a sidewalk café or tables and chairs permit uses the sidewalk in front of your business.

2. Talk to your neighbors and property owner. You may be required to show documentation of their support for your application. For example, some people may be concerned about removing parking near their business. While this may be a legitimate concern in some areas, research has shown that parklets increase economic benefits even for surrounding businesses by increasing the amount of time people spend in the area. It would be helpful to conduct research on how sidewalk cafés or parklets are benefits to the entire commercial district before talking to your neighbors.

3. Once you know what type of permit is right for you and have the support of your neighbors, start the permit application process. Visit our website to download the application forms. Be sure the read the entire manual before starting; otherwise, you may encounter costly delays.

4. Hire an engineer or designer as needed for each permit program. The Tulsa Planning Office cannot recommend any specific designers, but there are many local firms who can do the work. Ask them if they have experience with these types of designs, and look at examples to make sure they will fit your needs.

5. Be creative! There are requirements in each manual, but we also want to support creative ideas.

6. Implement your project. Get people excited about these creative projects by tagging us at facebook.com/tulsaplanning and using #parklet, #sidewalkcafe, or #outsideseating.

7. Evaluate your project! We want to know how our right-of-way programs are supporting businesses. Keep track of sales or foot traffic before implementation and compare after implementation. Email destinationdistricts@incog.org for a survey to use at your business.

Resources

Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Payton Wynes
Right-of-Way Programs Administrator
pwynes@incog.org
918.579.9449

Downtown Coordinating Council
Maggie Hoey, Assistant Director
mhoey@cityoftulsa.org
The Downtown Coordinating Council supports downtown businesses and property owners within the Inner Dispersal Loop and may be able to connect you with funding opportunities or assistance in the development and design of your project

Website
tulsaplanning.org/row

Other Resources
nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/interim-design-strategies/parklets

Evaluation and Other Research
groundplaysf.org/wp-content/parklet-impact-study
smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/parklet-policy-toolkit.pdf
Parking Requirements

Description
If you are building or renovating a building for a business outside of downtown, you will likely encounter minimum parking requirements. To prevent minimum parking requirements from becoming an economic burden to businesses, there is some flexibility built into the Tulsa Zoning Code, including: shared parking agreements, public parking, bicycle parking, car share parking, on-street parking, parking alternatives, and reductions or exemptions in certain zoning districts.

For more information on parking requirements and other options, contact Tulsa Planning Office staff.

Steps
1. Review the Zoning Map to identify what zoning district your selected parcel is in.
2. Review the Parking Chapter of the Zoning Code to identify how much parking you are required to have (Table 55-1). Are you in one of the exemption areas? Check to see if your parcel is in CBD Zoning (downtown), Historic Preservation overlay, or a building on the National Historic Register. You can check about historic preservation or the National Historic Register at tulsapreservationcommission.org
3. You may also be exempt from some parking requirements if you are zoned Commercial High (CH). The first 5,000 sqft of certain uses is exempt from parking.
4. If there is nearby public parking or on-street parking, use the calculations in the Zoning Code to determine how much of your parking this can replace (Section 55-050-H through I).
5. Are there nearby businesses that you could share parking with? Talk to your neighbors about a shared parking agreement and contact the Tulsa Planning Office for an example agreement. Use the calculation in the Tulsa Zoning Code to determine how much of your parking this can replace (Section 55-050-J).
6. Have you considered providing designated motorcycle, scooter, bike share, or car share parking? Each of these can lower the amount of parking you are required to provide (Section 55-050-E through G).
7. If none of these options work and you still feel like you need to reduce your parking requirement, there is an alternative compliance option with an approved parking study. Talk to Tulsa Planning Office staff before hiring someone to conduct the study to make sure all necessary information and data is gathered.
8. Does your proposed parcel have too much parking? Check out the Placemaking topic in this Toolkit for information about how to reuse that space in a more active way! Alternatively, you can implement one of the right-of-way programs in private space without going through the permit process. Contact City of Tulsa Development Services before initiating any construction because you will likely still need building permits.

Resources
Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Nathan Foster
nfoster@incog.org
918.579.9481
City of Tulsa Permit Center
Visit cityoftulsa.org/permitting or call 918.596.9456
Tulsa Zoning Code
tulsaplanning.org/resources/plans
Tulsa Zoning Map
tulsaplanning.org/resources/maps
Tulsa Preservation Commission
tulsapreservationcommission.org
Description
A Historic Preservation (HP) Overlay is used in multiple Tulsa neighborhoods. Existing zoning is supplemented by Historic Preservation Zoning to preserve their historic character. Not only does an HP Overlay protect the character of a neighborhood, but it also protects owners’ investments in their property by assuring that new construction and additions are compatible with the character of the district. Proposals for projects are reviewed by the Tulsa Preservation Commission, which relies on the Historic Preservation Design Guidelines.

Steps
1. If your commercial district is interested in adopting a historic preservation (HP) overlay, start by discussing the process with the Historic Preservation Planner to ensure that your district qualifies based on age, significance, and integrity. Check out the eligibility requirements in the Tulsa Zoning Code (Section 70.070-F).
2. Coordinate with district property owners and your City Councilor to gauge interest and support. It is important to have significant support from both the property owners and City Councilor before moving forward.
3. The Historic Preservation Planner will present a report to Tulsa Preservation Commission for a public hearing. Affected properties will receive a notice, and public comment will be reviewed at the Tulsa Preservation Commission meeting. There will also be neighborhood signs posted and notices in the newspaper.
4. The Tulsa Preservation Commission will forward the application with a recommendation to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (TMAPC), which will conduct a public review and afterwards forward its recommendation to City Council.
5. Tulsa City Council will make the final decision on the HP Overlay. If approved, the Zoning Map will be updated to reflect the HP Overlay.
6. Once approved, nearly all exterior projects within the HP Overlay will require the review and approval of the Tulsa Preservation Commission. For more information on this process, check out Section 70.070 of the Tulsa Zoning Code. Contact staff for assistance interpreting the HP Design Guidelines.
7. Once the overlay is approved, a Historic Preservation Permit will be required before you proceed with your project, unless your project has been determined to be exempt from the requirement. For more information on this process, contact the Historic Preservation Planner.

Resources
Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Jed Porter, Historic Preservation Planner
jporter@incog.org
918.579.9448
Tulsa Preservation Commission
tulsapreservationcommission.org
Design Guidelines: Non-Residential and Mixed Use Structures
tulsapreservationcommission.org/guidelines
Tulsa Zoning Code
tulsaplanning.org/resources/plans
Neon Sign Grant Program

Description
This grant program encourages installation of exterior signage containing at least 25 percent external neon or alternative LED lighting within the Route 66 Overlay District to stimulate the pedestrian realm and to enhance the tourist experience. The preference is for the business name to be included in the neon or LED. The repair or installation of historical or historically-inspired signage, specifically neon or LED, helps promote the redevelopment and revitalization of Route 66. Grants are available up to 50% of the cost of the installation, up to $10,000. Awards are based on available funds.

Steps
1. Check to see if you are eligible for the program based on the Route 66 Overlay boundaries and the grant program eligibility guidelines in the Grant Process document.
2. Work with a neon sign company to create a preliminary sketch. The City of Tulsa and Tulsa Planning Office cannot recommend a specific designer, but ask to see examples of their work and talk to them about the sign guidelines in the Route 66 Overlay. Be creative! Look for ideas online using hashtags like #neonsigns or #route66neon.
3. Once you have a concept illustration and quote for cost, complete the grant application and submit it to Tulsa Planning Office contact. If you have questions about the application, contact Tulsa Planning Office or Engineering Services contact.
4. Your application and preliminary design will be submitted to the Route 66 Commission Preservation and Design subcommittee for review at their monthly meeting.
5. If your project is recommended, you may continue with the sign permit process. Contact the City of Tulsa Permit Center if you have questions about the sign permit application.
6. After the sign permit has been approved and staff has received a copy, the Mayor will make the final approval, and a contract will be executed by you (the applicant) and the Mayor for the grant amount.
7. Once you receive a Notice to Proceed, you can commence work on the sign and will be reimbursed the contracted amount upon completion. Important: in order to receive your reimbursement, you must not begin work before final approval and contract execution.
8. Show off your sign! Host a “lighting ceremony” or share it on social media. Invite your city councilor, the media, and the Route 66 Commission to attend. Tag the Tulsa Planning Office and/or Route 66 Commission, or use #route66neon, #route66oklahoma, or #route66tulsa.

Resources
Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Dennis Whitaker, Planner
dwhitaker@incog.org
918.579.9457

City of Tulsa Engineering Services Contact
Glen Sams, Senior Engineer
gsams@cityoftulsa.org
918.596.9578

City of Tulsa Permit Center
Visit cityoftulsa.org/permitting or call 918.596.9456

Route 66 Commission
facebook.com/Tulsa66Commission

Neon Sign Grant Process Overview
cityoftulsa.org/neongrant

Tulsa Zoning Map
tulsaplanning.org/resources/maps

Route 66 Overlay
cityoftulsa.org/media/9829/zoningcodeoverlaydistrictsigns.pdf

Neon Sign Grant website
TulsaZoning.org/programs/supporting-programs/route-66-neon-grants/neon-sign-grants

Sign Permit Application
cityoftulsa.org/media/1358/sign_app_052214.pdf
Request Mixed Use Zoning Along BRT Route

Description
If you own property within a half-mile of an enhanced BRT station recommended for mixed-use zoning in the BRT Land Use Framework, you may be eligible for a free re-zoning to a Mixed Use Zoning District. Re-zoning applications typically cost around $2,000. The current program is set to expire December 31, 2021.

Mixed-use zoning (MX) allows a mixture of residential, office, and retail uses within the same building or property, which can help make it easier to walk, bike, or drive to things you need near your home, like grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and stores. This is the way cities were traditionally built for thousands of years.

Applying mixed-use zoning to your property can help protect the future of your district by ensuring predictable and accessible developments that can make the neighborhood more desirable.

Steps
1. View the map at tulsaplanning.org/forms/Mixed-Use-Incentive-Maps.pdf to see if your property is in a Mixed-Use zoning incentive location.
2. Reach out to Dwayne Wilkerson in the Tulsa Planning Office to discuss your proposal and if you are ready to move forward, complete the application.
3. Submit the application along with an accurate legal description to esubmit@incog.org.
4. Staff will contact you to continue the process and confirm the date for you to go before Tulsa Metropolitan Planning Commission (TMAPC). You may also submit your application in person at 2 W. 2nd St, 8th Floor.
5. As your case is being prepared, property owners within 300 feet of your property will be notified so they can attend the public meeting and have a voice. A sign will also be posted on your property so passersby will be notified of the meeting. Finally, staff will prepare a case report with a recommendation for approval or denial of your request.
6. On the day of the TMAPC meeting, staff will present the case to commissioners. The public will be allowed to give comments, and TMAPC may have questions for you about your property. Finally, commissioners will recommend approval or denial for the case to move on to City Council.
7. If it is recommended for approval and goes before the City Council, you will be contacted once a date will be set for your case to go before City Council.

Resources
Tulsa Planning Office Contact
Dwayne Wilkerson
dwilkerson@incog.org
918.579.9475

BRT Land Use Framework
tulsaplanning.org/plans-programs/completed-projects/peoria-brt-land-use-framework

Map of Eligible Properties
tulsaplanning.org/forms/Mixed-Use-Incentive-Maps.pdf

Mixed-Use Rezoning Incentive Program
tulsaplanning.org/news/mixed-use-program-extended

Submit Applications
Email completed application and legal description of the property to: esubmit@incog.org
Development Fee Reimbursement Along BRT Routes

Description
The Development Fee Reimbursement Program is intended to offset the costs of opening a brick and mortar business along the City of Tulsa’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes. The fees associated with opening a business are frequently overlooked when opening a business and can influence a business’ success. This program can reimburse up to $2,500 in eligible fees.

Steps
1. If you have started a business after January 1, 2019, view the map of Tulsa’s BRT network at tulsaplanning.org/docs/PeoriaBRTMap.pdf to determine if your business is eligible.
2. Determine if fees you paid are eligible for reimbursement by checking in Title 49 of the City of Tulsa Municipal Code. You are allowed reimbursement up to $2,500. If you are planning for your project, identify which fees will be eligible for reimbursement and make sure to keep documentation of payment.
3. Contact the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development to apply for the program.
4. After your application is received, it will be reviewed and, if approved, payment will be disbursed.

Resources
Mayor’s Office of Economic Development
Spencer Mitchell, Economic Incentives Manager
smitchell@cityoftulsa.org
918.576.5561

BRT Map
tulsaplanning.org/docs/PeoriaBRTMap.pdf

City of Tulsa Municipal Code, Title 49
library.municode.com/ok/tulsa/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TUCOOR_TIT49ADPELIFE
Funding

Description
Some of these projects may involve investments by business or property owners. While some may be personal investments, there may also be projects that will enhance the entire commercial district, and therefore require fundraising and donations from multiple sources such as funding commitments from business/property owners, grants, or fundraising activities.

Funding Commitments from Business or Property Owners
1. If you have a business association, you can use your dues to fund projects in the district. Be sure to create a budget and gain consensus on a vision of how to use the money.
2. For a larger project, or for districts without a business association, create a budget specifically for the proposed project. This will help other business/property owners see exactly how their donations will be used.
3. Show potential donors how this project will benefit them. Is it a one time event that will bring hundreds of people to the district? Is it a permanent installation that will increase foot traffic? Will it make the district more beautiful? Have clear goals and evaluation measures identified before you ask for money.
4. Identify other ways that business and property owners can be involved even if they can’t donate money (in-kind donations). Is there a business in your district that could do advertising for free? Could someone donate equipment? In-kind donations can make planning the event easier, because you already have the experts involved!
5. Recognize donors or other sponsors as part of your project. Share how they will be recognized based on differing levels of commitment.
6. After the project is implemented, ask how you did. Give people the opportunity to give honest feedback and have a plan for how to incorporate that feedback in the future.

Grants
1. Applying for grants is also a great way to raise money for your district. Many grants are for non-profit organizations, so if you do not have an official non-profit designation, you may need to find a local non-profit to work with as a partner. Although this may be challenging to find initially, having a non-profit partner can help you build relationships and capacity in your own community. For information about gaining non-profit status, refer to the topic Starting a Business Association in this toolkit.
2. Once you find a grant, make sure that your organization is eligible and that the funding announcement fits with the mission and vision of your project. Don’t apply for grants just to get more funding – make sure your project ideas fit into the scope of the grant application. It will be easier to identify the best grants for your district if you already have project ideas and/or a vision for the district.
3. Evaluate how much time it will take to complete the grant application.

Local Resources
Bank of Oklahoma
bankofoklahoma.com/about-us/about-us
Chapman Foundations
chapmantrusts.org
George Kaiser Family Foundation
gkff.org
Hille Foundation
hillefoundation.org
Lobeck-Taylor Family Foundation
lobecktaylor.com
ONEOK Foundation
oneok.com/sustainability/community-investments
Pathways to Health
pathwaystohealthtulsa.org/grant-opportunities
Shusterman Family Foundation
schusterman.org
Tulsa Area United Way
tauw.org
Tulsa Community Foundation
tulsacf.org
TYPROS Foundation
typros.org/foundation
Warren Foundation
williamkwarrenfoundation.org
Williams Companies Foundation
williams.com/community/community-giving
Zarrow Foundations
zarrow.org

Permits
cityoftulsa.org/developmentbusiness/special-events
You may need to apply for a special event permit for your fundraising event. Keep in mind, special event permit applications must be submitted at least 90 days in advance. Visit the above website for details, fees, and instructions.
Make a timeline and identify needs for the application, such as data about the identified need. If you have data needs, contact the Destination Districts Program – we may be able to help you.

4. Identify who will do what for the grant application. Some people might be great at gathering data, while others excel at writing the narrative. Depending on the size of the grant, it may be helpful to assign a Project Manager to make sure all of the different parts of the grant are completed.

5. Don’t forget to proofread! It is easy to make mistakes, but grant reviewers want to see that you have attention to detail. Ask someone who wasn’t involved to read your application to make sure it makes sense and there are no grammatical errors.

6. Submit the application on time (or early)!

**Organize a Fundraiser**

1. Once your district has selected a project, recruit volunteers for a fundraising team. Create a list of tasks, brainstorm different fundraising events/methods (see right for some examples), and have your team members sign up for specific roles, preferably ones that are related to their skills.

2. Establish goals and make a plan. When setting a fundraising goal, be sure to consider the kinds of expenses you will have to complete your ultimate project and to conduct the fundraising. It’s often helpful to set target dates as a motivator, and it’s a good idea to write down your goals. Make them specific, but be realistic about possible constraints. Also consider how many people in your neighborhood need to participate, and create a plan for how to get as many participants as you can.

3. Create a timeline. Start with the date of your event or end of your project in mind and work backwards. Come up with clear deadlines of when things will need to get done to stay on track.

4. Focus. Keep the focus of every meeting and conversation on why you are trying to raise money, and be open to different ideas on how to get there. By keeping the focus on what you want to achieve, you can avoid group disputes that detract from the mission.

5. Work together, celebrate together. Make sure everyone knows that their hard work is appreciated, and make sure you celebrate your successes together. If you have a celebration, grand reveal, or ribbon-cutting ceremony, make sure to invite everyone who has contributed time, money, services, or merchandise to make it happen. If it’s a formal event, recognize the more significant donors and offer them a chance to say a few words.

6. Say thanks. Remember to send thank-you notes to volunteers, donors, businesses, and anyone who helps your group achieve its goals. “Thank you” goes a long way, and gives you an opportunity to tell or show them what was accomplished with their contributions. This simple gesture also improves the chances they will donate toward future projects.

**Fundraising Ideas**

- **Eat out for a cause.** Ask a local restaurant to donate a small percentage of their sales for a certain day or week. It’s a fairly easy way to collect money for your cause while supporting a local business. Make sure to spread the word to your neighbors and friends.

- **If your group is very organized,** you can also arrange for a restaurant “crawl” wherein participants pay a flat fee to sample food and drinks from a variety of restaurants. This takes much more coordination between volunteers and multiple restaurants, but can create a fun environment and raise more money.

- **Organize a district concert, market, or movie night.** You can hold the event in a nearby park, or right in the district. This could be a great Lighter Quicker Cheaper placemaking project! Sell tickets to the event, or charge vendors to be there. Offer refreshments, food, or desserts for sale.

- **Organize a holiday tour or parade of businesses.** Recruit people who want to show off their holiday decorations, pick a date, and provide a map of participating businesses to attendees. This is a great way to increase foot traffic at businesses in the district. Solicit sponsors for the event to raise money, or charge food trucks to attend.

- **Organize a paint and sip night.** Recruit a local artist to lead the class. Sell tickets ahead of time and provide a cash bar with a portion of the proceeds going to your organization.

- **Sell t-shirts promoting your district.** Hire a local graphic designer to create a design that highlights your district, and take orders online or at local businesses.

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**National Grants**

**Home Depot Community Impact Grants**
corporate.homedepot.com/foundation/communityimpactgrants

**Bank of America Grants**
about.bankofamerica.com/en-us/what-guides-us/find-grants-sponsorships.html

**Target Grants & Donation Requests**
corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/philanthropy

**Walmart Grants**
walmart.org/how-we-give/local-community-grants

**Costco Warehouse Donations**
costco.com/charitable-giving.html