Item

TMAPC consideration of adoption of Resolution No. 2858:1035 finding the Route 66 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Land Use Framework in conformance with the Tulsa Comprehensive Plan

Background

The Tulsa Planning Office completed a land use study for land surrounding future transit station areas located along the Route 66 BRT corridor. The study evaluated the properties along the length of 11th Street between S. Peoria Ave. and S. Garnett Rd., along S. Garnett Rd. between 11th Street and 21st Street, and 21st Street between S. Garnett Rd. and 145th E. Ave., and recommends land use and zoning changes that can maximize economic development activity. The study addresses which land uses provide the most successful outcomes for private properties that border the BRT alignment.

Tulsa Planning Office staff presented an update on the land use study at an August 18, 2021 work session of the Planning Commission. The Route 66 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Land Use Framework (see attached) is considered a functional plan and falls under the category of "other types of plans, studies and initiatives" in the TMAPC Policies and Procedures, which requires that the plan be reviewed for conformance with the Tulsa Comprehensive Plan. Following this action, the City Council will be asked to concur with the finding of conformance.

Comprehensive Plan Conformance

The Tulsa Comprehensive Plan (PlanITulsa) contains priorities, goals and policies supporting a variety of transportation options (including bus rapid transit) and the need to create walkable, higher density development within walking distance of transit (see attached for Comprehensive Plan references). The Route 66 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Land Use Framework contains specific land use and zoning recommendations designed to achieve these concepts outlined in the Comprehensive Plan. The land use framework will provide guidance as public improvements are made and private properties develop along the Route 66 BRT corridor. The land use recommendations for mixed use development, specifically through utilization of the mixed-use zoning tool in the City of Tulsa Zoning Code, will implement the Comprehensive Plan's direction on transit-oriented development. Staff finds that based on the above, the Route 66 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Land Use Framework is in conformance with the Tulsa Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Recommendation

Adopt a resolution finding the Route 66 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Land Use Framework in conformance with the Tulsa Comprehensive Plan.
Mixed-Use Development

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 people need near their home, like grocery stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and stores. Most mixed-use developments include commercial spaces on the ground floor, and other uses, like apartments, offices, or hotels, on floors above. This is the way cities were traditionally built for thousands of years, with residents able to meet all their needs within a short walking distance.

Components of Mixed-Use Zoning Districts

Each MX district consists of a use designation, a character designation, and a height designation. This approach allows the creation of finely-tuned, context-sensitive zoning districts. For example, MX1-P-35 denotes a neighborhood-oriented mixed-use district (MX1) that requires a very pedestrian-oriented (–P) character, and that allows buildings up to 35 feet in height (–35).

Use Designations

- **MX1: Neighborhood Mixed-Use** allows small-scale retail, service, and dining uses that serve nearby residential neighborhoods. The district also allows a variety of residential uses and building types.

- **MX2: Community Mixed-Use** is intended to accommodate retail, service, entertainment, and employment that serve surrounding neighborhoods. MX2 also allows a variety of residential uses and building types.

- **MX3: Regional Mixed-Use** allows large-scale employment, retail, civic, institutional, and entertainment uses that draw visitors and workers around the region.

- **MX: Institutional Mixed-Use** is intended to accommodate one or more hospitals, colleges, or universities, and should provide an environment conducive to the development and conservation of these medical and educational institutions.

Character Designations

Mixed-Use zoning includes four character designations which regulate allowed building types and required building and development patterns (setbacks, transparency, etc.).

- **P: Pedestrian** is intended to be applied in locations where a high level of pedestrian orientation is present or desired, such as areas designated by the comprehensive plan as “Main Street” areas.
  
  Types of buildings allowed include vertical mixed-use buildings, commercial buildings, civic/institutional buildings, and open space sites.

- **U: Urban** is intended to be applied in areas with high levels of walkability, but where a greater variety of building types are present or desired, such as in areas designated by the comprehensive plan as Neighborhood, Town Center, and Regional Center and along some plan-designated Mixed-Use Corridors.
  
  Building types allowed include vertical and horizontal mixed-use buildings, commercial buildings, apartment/condo, townhouses, civic/institutional buildings, and open space sites.

- **V: Variable** is intended to be applied in auto-oriented areas where a transition to greater levels of walkability are underway or desired. The regulations allow greater flexibility in the siting of buildings and parking areas by, for example, allowing more generous maximum building setbacks, which can be used for landscape and streetscape elements or limited amounts of parking.

  Building types allowed include vertical and horizontal mixed-use buildings, commercial buildings, apartment/condo, townhouses, civic/institutional buildings, and open space sites.

- **F: Flexible** is intended to allow the highest levels of flexibility in terms of allowed building types and development patterns. Types of buildings allowed include vertical and horizontal mixed-use buildings, commercial buildings, apartment/condo, townhouses, duplexes, detached houses, civic/institutional buildings, and open space sites.
Mixed-Use Rezoning Incentive

To spur development activity along the future Peoria BRT route, in 2018 the City Council initiated an incentive program to encourage development along the corridor.

The program waives rezoning application fees for properties identified in the Peoria BRT Land Use Framework to rezone Mixed-Use (MX). This saves each participating property owner around $2,000, and has encouraged transit-oriented development.

Since the program began, at least 24 properties have gone through the rezoning initiative, leading to new and interesting development projects along the route, increasing the number of businesses and residents served by the BRT.

Properties along the proposed Route 66 BRT route have been analyzed, resulting in recommendations for MX zoning and character designations. Should the City Council extend the Mixed-Use Incentive Program to properties along the Route 66 corridor, property owners would work with Tulsa Planning Office staff to begin the rezoning application process.

| Allowed Building Types in Mixed-Use Character Designations |
|-----------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Building Types              | Pedestrian | Urban | Variable | Flexible |
| Vertical Mixed-Use          | X       | X      | X       | X       |
| Mixed-Use                  | X       | X      | X       | X       |
| Commercial                  | X       | X      | X       | X       |
| Apartment/Condo             | X       | X      | X       |         |
| Civic/Institutional         | X       | X      | X       |         |
| Townhouses                  | X       | X      | X       |         |
| Duplexes                    |         |        |         | X       |
| Detached Houses             |         |        |         | X       |

Other Incentives

Incentives managed by TAO or the Route 66 Commission and potentially applicable to the rezoning program include:

- Partnership with TAO to make Commercial Revitalization Revolving Loan funding available and more favorable loan terms for those along BRT routes.
- The Brownfield Assessment and Remediation Initiative program focuses on the Route 66 corridor to conduct Phase I and Phase II assessments and develop cleanup planning. A Revolving Loan Fund can then be used to clean up affected sites.
- The Façade Grant Program envisions supporting the preservation and adaptive reuse of buildings constructed and utilized during the early era of Route 66. The program would offer zero-interest loans and matching grants for the rehabilitation of facades facing the arterial route alignment. This program could work in tandem with other incentives such as Historic Tax Credits.
- The Neon Sign Grant Program enhances the Route 66 tourist experience by promoting the installation of exterior signage containing no less than 25% neon or neon-style LED lighting within the Route 66 Overlay District. The program offers matching grants of 50% up to $10,000.

Analysis

Staff analyzed properties within a quarter mile of the route, plus a half mile in each direction along abutting arterial cross-streets, including an evaluation of existing land use conditions and recommendations from the other sections of the BRT project.

Rezoning recommendations were vetted through various meetings with the staff teams, steering committee, and business and property owners along the BRT corridor. Staff also presented concepts to the Route 66 Commission, Tulsa Global District, and Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (TMAPC).

Key Considerations

Use and Character recommendations are a gradient based on the level of urban intensity. These recommendations are stepped down in intensity moving away from downtown.

MX1 was used strategically to promote changes in use to reduce the prevalence of auto sales and maintenance uses, and to promote more commercial/retail uses to attract more riders, tourists, etc.

MX2 was used in areas east of Highway 169 where auto-centric uses are more acceptable.

MX3 is recommended for industrial sites with industrial and employment uses.

IMX is applied to institutional uses along the alignments (hospitals, schools, etc.)

There are two Character Designation options per property, stepping down in urban intensity as the alignment moves east of downtown.
PLANiTULSA

References for Peoria Bus Rapid Transit Land Use Study

The Vision of Tulsa’s Future P. 10 Provide Effective Transportation

“Tulsans recognize that great cities also need great transportation systems that provide a range of travel choices and make the most of their investments. Tulsa’s strategy in the past has been to build primarily for cars. The legacy of this approach is significant capacity for automobile travel, but at the expense of those who are unable to drive, or who would like better options for transit, biking, and walking. Tulsans are ready to make a change, and use some of that capacity to expand options. We are also ready to use modes like frequent bus service, rail transit and streetcars. We also want to expand and make better use of our bike facilities and pedestrian networks to connect our city.”

LU 42 (TR 19) Expanded Transit System

“The elements of the expanded transit system include rail (both light rail and commuter rail), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and a variation on BRT called High Frequency Bus.”

LU 43 (TR 43) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

“BRT is a relatively new technology that combines some aspects of rail transit with the flexibility of buses. It can operate on exclusive transit ways, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, expressways, or ordinary streets. Compared to typical diesel bus transit systems, a BRT system offers potential advantages by combining priority transit lanes, alternative fuel technology, cleaner and quieter operation, rapid and convenient fare collection, and integration with land-use policy.”

LU 79 Priority 1, Goal 3, Policy 3.2 - Encourage a balance of land uses within walking distance of each other.

- “Support the creation of higher density mixed-use areas at major centers served by transit.”
- “Transform commercial strips along Multi-modal Corridors into mixed-use boulevards.”

LU 84 Priority 4, Goal 12 - Residents in established neighborhoods have access to multiple modes of transportation.

TR 29 Transit – Oriented Development

“In response to future rail, BRT and streetcar service growth should be encouraged around transit facilities by supporting Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). TOD is a way for Tulsa to make long-range coordinated transportation and land use decisions that will provide a variety of housing and mobility options and create active places where people can live, work, shop, interact and recreate. The program will address: transportation access for pedestrians, bicycles, transit and automobiles; the type and density of land use; urban design; and parking. The program also works with private property owners and potential developers to help implement and develop incentives
for TODs. Potential TOD incentives include reductions in parking requirements for mixed-use zone districts and tax increment financing to assist with operating and maintaining the transit facility."

**TR 30 Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

**Transit Oriented Development (TOD):** TOD creates a higher density residential development within walking distance of transit, in particular light rail and bus rapid transit. Costs of these developments can be taken on by developers, but cities can introduce incentives to promote TOD development. In time, tax revenues from these developments can contribute back to local infrastructure, making them value-added projects.

**TR 36 Priority 1 - Provide a Wide Range of Reliable Transportation Options So Every Tulsan Can Efficiently Get Where They Want To Go.**

**TR 36 Priority 1, Goal 1 - All Tulsans have a variety of transportation options for getting around the city.**

**TR 36 Priority 1, Goal 1, Policy 1.1 -**

Coordinate closely with MTTA to provide for transit-supportive enhancements in the high frequency bus, bus rapid transit, streetcar, light rail and commuter rail corridors.

**TR 36 Priority 1, Goal 2 - Tulsa has a sustainable network of roadways, trails and transit infrastructure that is well maintained and not a burden on future generations to operate.**

**TR 38 Priority 3 – Ensure that transportation investments enhance the land uses they serve.**

**TR 38 Priority 3, Goal 7, Policy 7.1**

Enhance transportation Tulsa’s right-of-ways so they both serve as great public places and promote multi-modal travel.

- Correlate a mixed use land use development strategy to minimize auto trips and roadway congestion through internal capture of vehicular trips.

**TR 40 Priority 4 – Provide multiple transportation choices to all Tulsans.**

**TR 40 Transportation Priority 4, Goal 12, Policy 12.2**

Enhance bus transit services with higher frequency bus service, improved stations/stops and priorities for intelligent transportation systems (ITS) investments (including bus priority signalization) on the Big T route, which includes Peoria Avenue and 21st Street as portrayed in the Vision Map.

**TR 40 Transportation Priority 4, Goal 12, Policy 12.5**

Develop a transit-oriented development program incentives, including: promotion of shared parking; creation of new zone districts and/or overlays that allow for reduced parking
requirements and support a mix of transit supportive land uses; and development of dedicated funding to “land bank” key land parcels near stations to preserve future development opportunities.

H 13 Priority 2, Goal 8 - The combined cost of housing and transportation to Tulsa’s residents is reduced.