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Smart Urban Design Compiled Sub-Committee Recommendations

Chair: Patty Eaton

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The full workgroup met together on four occasions to discuss the various materials and concepts that had been submitted by individual members of the group. We also had presentations and discussions on street design and construction, the current update of the comprehensive plan and the ongoing INCOG transportation plan. Several members then worked to organize and edit the multitude of ideas that were under consideration. A final workgroup meeting reviewed the recommendations and approved the draft report with some minor reservations. The final recommendations fall into six general areas, as listed in no particular order:

- Develop a Transportation Plan of Action
- Improve Visual Aesthetics of the Transportation System
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Utilize Advanced Technology
- Incorporate “Walkable Community” and “Bike Friendly” Elements in all Plans and Projects
- Develop and Encourage Multiple Modes of Travel
- Initiate Public Education Outreach and Marketing

We are unanimous in the belief that these ideas should be adopted as an integral part of the committee recommendations. The City has a

rare opportunity to enhance our transportation system, not only with smooth pavement and wider streets, but with visually attractive streets that provide several travel choices, an enhanced environment and more compact and focused growth.

More and more often businesses and families choose to locate where there are walkable neighborhoods with sidewalks, trails, bike lanes and other amenities, as well as effective public transit. Complete Streets defines the streets as public spaces to be used by all users, moving by car, truck, transit, bicycle, wheelchair, or foot in a safe, functional and welcoming way. Complete Streets policies call for routinely providing for travel by all users when building and reconstructing streets and roads, and implemented on a case by case basis. The development of a Complete Streets policy should include a set-aside of a percentage of construction or reconstruction funds to be applied toward the implementation of bicycle, pedestrian and transit facilities.

Integrating transportation and land use is an economic development tool that cities such as Boulder, Austin, Charlotte and others are using to great advantage and one that Tulsa can not afford to ignore. The Comprehensive Plan update should incorporate Complete Streets concepts and develop new, typical cross sections that reflect the integration of land use in their design, using the Institute of Transportation Engineer's (ITE) Context Sensitive (CSS) design standards.

Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is a series of standards that, when applied, are designed to integrate projects into the context or setting in a sensitive manner through careful planning, consideration of different perspectives, and tailoring designs to particular project circumstances.

Context Sensitive Solutions promotes six key principles:

1. Balance safety, mobility, community, and environmental goals in all projects.
2. Involve the public and affected agencies early and continuously.
3. Use an interdisciplinary team tailored to project needs.
4. Address all modes of travel.
5. Apply flexibility inherent in design standards.
6. Incorporate aesthetics as an integral part of good design.

Develop a Transportation Plan of Action

- The plan should provide for funding for maintenance and improvements of the system based on equitable and objective needs. Funding decisions must be transparent and based on an approved priority list.

- Plan must be “visionary”, achievable in a timely fashion, and include established policy to construct Complete Streets designed to accommodate all users. In all new roadway projects or major reconstruction projects, travel by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users should be accommodated.

- The plan should utilize existing plans developed by Public Works and INCOG as the basis for directing the expenditure of funds.
 - Prioritized needs should be determined based on the Pavement Management System and the Transportation Improvement Projects Prioritization Plan used by the City of Tulsa Public Works Department, and INCOG’s Tulsa Transportation Management Area Long Range Transportation Plan.

- **Improve Visual Aesthetics of the Transportation System**
 - Commitment to treating our streets and sidewalks as quality outdoor public spaces in our community, through choice of materials, design and thoughtful placement of amenities can shape the urban fabric and beauty of our street transportation system and, in kind, our city. These choices can also influence patterns of activities by improving access to recreational opportunities, creating “social hubs” or spaces that encourage social activity and interaction, and, in general, creating better conditions for all transportation users.

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 - The following bullets provide *some* guidance for improving the current condition of our system.

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- Establish more neighborhood centers/corridors, e.g. Cherry Street and Brookside, as clearly defined "places" that the roadway and sidewalk system connects
 - Establish incentives for appropriate rebuilding and infill development, such as upgrading infrastructure and amenities, lowering of impact fees, increasing density allowances, reducing parking requirements, and zoning for mixed-use development
 - Encourage diversity in architectural elements, art and landscape design
 - Avoid the use of utility hardware such as meters and transformers on grade in the street right-of-way, utility poles next to the street curb, or in the sidewalk and similar unsightly objects
 - Recognize that removal of AEP power lines in right of way would vastly improve the visual appearance of the corridor

- **Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning**
 - Leaders should strengthen inter-agency coordination of transportation and land use planning to encourage pedestrian, bicycle, and transit oriented development, while responsibilities should be clearly designated
 - The update of the Tulsa Comprehensive Plan, and all other plans, should integrate transportation design elements defined by Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) criteria to incorporate appropriate street design such as building setbacks, streetscaping, pedestrian-friendly elements, reduced lane widths, accommodations for public transit and other modes.
 - The Comprehensive Plan should consider employing Mixed Use and/or Transit Oriented Development standards near significant transportation investments, e.g. roadway intersection improvements and/or expansions, targeted corridor rehabilitation areas, and future mass transit station area locations.

○ **Advanced Technology**

The City should develop a process to continually investigate, evaluate, and employ technologies and products which could enhance our transportation system/corridors, especially in regard to initial cost, life cycle maintenance cost and safety.

- Technology and best practices such as traffic signal visual detection devices, signal coordination, rapid incident response and clearing, and real time user notification for both roadway and transit users should be used to optimize existing transportation infrastructure.
- The City should draw on tested and proven solutions utilized by other municipalities and public agencies
- All plans should incorporate the benefits of green design technologies, especially increased permeability, more shading and reduced water reaching the storm system runoff (curbside bio-swales, etc.)
- Dynamic Message Signs already in place should be utilized for system management
- Provision of adequate staff and technical resources to plan, design, maintain and evaluate the system will be essential

○ **Incorporate “Walkable community” and “Bike friendly” Elements in all Plans and Projects**

Tulsa should seek to encourage use of non-automobile modes of transportation through the development of more effective bicycle and pedestrian systems along with public education of these improved systems.

- Take measures to increase walkability such as those put forward by Metro (Portland) and Charlotte guidelines.
- Utilize the Institute of Transportation Engineer’s (ITE) Context Sensitive Solution Guidelines in “Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities”.

- Develop in cooperation with the public school systems a “Safe Routes to School Travel Plan”
 - Provide sidewalk access to all schools, parks, community centers and libraries
 - Strengthen and consistently implement City policy requiring sidewalks
 - Avoid waivers of the sidewalk requirements for all development (public and private) unless there is a clear and present physical hardship
 - Establish a “Fee in Lieu Of” fund for sidewalks to be applied where developers cannot build sidewalks because of terrain or other circumstances.
 - Support INCOG in its development of a comprehensive Pedestrian Master Plan with the above objectives.
 - Meet requirements for a “Bike-Friendly Community”
 - Support INCOG in its development of a comprehensive bicycle transportation master plan, which identifies capital improvements as well as programs designed to increase cycling mode share and cycling safety.
 - Reduce automobile speed for increased volume including the incorporation of traffic calming design such as narrower lanes, fewer lanes, smaller radii and less signalization where appropriate.
 - Access management should be enhanced
- **Develop and Encourage Multiple Modes of Travel**
Plans should support multiple modes of travel to among other benefits, reduce wear on our roadways, to make the system more convenient and to enhance capacity
- Expand and improve transit service to provide safe, reliable, convenient, efficient and desirable public transportation
 - Establish a dedicated source of funds, e.g. sales tax, for public transportation purposes to include planning, operations and maintenance to improve the system as well as initiating the necessary analyses for passenger rail implementation

- Reduce travel demand by encouraging working at home, telecommuting and other options.
 - Encourage car sharing through policy and design (*eg. INCOG's Green Traveler rideshare program, use of Zip Cars etc.*)
- **Public Education, Participation, Promotion, Marketing**
- Actively engage the public regarding transportation needs and funding mechanisms:
- Increase the public understanding of the real personal and public costs of continuing the current system as well as the quality of life considerations, through demonstrated public participation techniques.
 - Using all media avenues available and involving local organizations, neighborhood associations, schools, teachers, and advisory groups; promote and advertise the above information to reach the broadest possible audience
 - Cultivate public support of the development of a sustainable, multimodal transportation system and to provide adequate funding for transportation programs including operations and maintenance.
 - Initiate an ongoing public outreach program in support of Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Solution concepts, neighborhood design and corridor enhancement
 - Utilize programs such as the Mayor's/Governor's fitness challenges and the City/County Health Department's "healthy walking" program.