

PREFACE AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK

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Tulsa has reached its one hundredth birthday and, with respect to American urban places, Tulsa is a young child. Yet even in this youth, we are encountering what older urban centers have experienced for sometime. Tulsa has already reached in many places the physical limits to where our community can grow. Land for development has been greatly consumed and outward growth is blocked by surrounding suburban communities. As our community looks for new development opportunities, it must look inward at the older existing urban form. Tulsa leaders responded to this and other related urban issues by stating:

“As Tulsa continues to mature as a city, infill development will become more important as land on the perimeter is no longer available for development. Infill will no longer be the exception; it will be the rule in terms of predominant types of development. Support and encouragement of infill development are strongly recommended and should be implemented through City regulations, policies and philosophies in order to ensure quality and consistency in future development.”¹

This is the opening statement of the Tulsa report on infill development, “Report of the Infill Development Task Force,” prepared by the Tulsa Infill Development Task Force for Mayor M. Susan Savage and the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission. The Tulsa Infill Development Task Force recommendations are serving as the foundation for infill planning initiatives in the City of Tulsa.

This Task Force identified several major infill-development-related issues which needed to be addressed and suggested that a pilot study be conducted of a designated planning area which would result in the preparation of a detailed neighborhood plan for optimum development. Given the diversity of character and issues within Tulsa neighborhoods, the Mayor’s Office determined that three pilot studies would be undertaken by the City of Tulsa Urban Development Department to address infill issues. The Brookside neighborhood area is one of those pilot study areas.

¹ “Report of the Infill Development Task Force”, May 11, 1999, Page 5.

The planning process for Brookside began with the establishment of a Brookside Infill Neighborhood Task Force (Brookside Task Force). The Brookside Task Force consisted initially of two subcommittees - the Brookside Neighborhood Subcommittee and the Brookside Business Subcommittee. Members included representatives from the Brookside Neighborhood Association, Brookside Business Association, area schools, churches, and home, business and property owners.

Many months were spent in determining community defined issues and concerns, formulating design considerations and opportunities, and determining community preferred solutions. Brookside needs were defined and an extensive survey was conducted to determine planning priorities. Study efforts led the Brookside task force to identify specific infill issues which related directly or indirectly to the major points included in the citywide task force report. Those major points revolved around:

- (1) Determining recommendations for urban design solutions to help resolve land use and development conflicts;
- (2) Reaffirming existing and recommending new policies and standards related to infrastructure;
- (3) Determining new and upgraded public improvement needs and establishing priorities;
- (4) Seeking funding of new and upgraded public improvements;
- (5) Suggest revisions to planning, zoning and building codes;
- (6) Address parking problems;
- (7) Improve traffic safety and circulation;
- (8) Improve the application and enforcement of zoning and building regulations;
- (9) Streamline the development permitting process;
- (10) Help resolve specific traffic and circulation problems of neighborhood public schools; and
- (11) Support crime prevention and security activities.

The Brookside Task Force concluded that not any one strategy would solve an issue. Rather multiple strategies were determined necessary and appropriate. It was also determined that solutions and proposals had differing time-frames in which they could and needed to be addressed. Some issues could be dealt within a rather short time-frame. These solutions involved strategies or actions that could begin almost immediately - near-term planning efforts. Other issues require more time to improve or solve, generally three to five years - midrange plan proposals. Still other recommendations were long-term in nature and would take longer to accomplish - long-range plan proposals. The Brookside Task Force proceeded with a near-term planning effort targeting immediate needs.

Simultaneously, the Task Force began the development of the Brookside Infill Neighborhood Detailed Implementation Plan for midrange and long-range proposals.

It is noted that infill planning efforts and activities by the City extend beyond the Urban Development Department and include significant efforts of the Department of Public Works and its several divisions. Additionally, infill planning coordination continues between the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission, its staff and the Urban Development Department. Examples of infill planning efforts which have occurred and/or are ongoing in Brookside or which directly relate to the Brookside community and other pilot study areas are described below.

- (1) Determining recommendations for urban design solutions to help resolve land use and development conflicts and enhance development. The Task Force considered existing requirements for screening, buffering and landscaping for Tulsa and reviewed examples of their application in Tulsa and Brookside. Additional design elements which have been used in Tulsa and other communities were also considered and reviewed. Examples of their application in Tulsa were presented to the Task Force. Substantial discussion focused on these urban design features and the recommendations of the Brookside Task Force are contained in this report document. This document serves as one component of the “Brookside Infill Neighborhood Detailed Implementation Plan for S. Peoria Avenue from Crow Creek to Skelly Drive.”
- (2) Reaffirming existing and recommending new policies and standards related to infrastructure. The District 6 Plan was reviewed by the Task Force. Design standards are recommended for certain area public improvements. Design standards were recommended for street paving, street furniture, tree planting and other streetscape features especially important to enhancing the image and beauty of the area. These standards are included within this Plan report and are intended to be reaffirmed.
- (3) Determining new and upgraded public improvement needs and establishing priorities. The Brookside Task Force identified capital improvement needs for the Brookside area. The Task Force reviewed the projects, considered conceptual designs and determined a priority list of capital improvements. The “Recommended List of Physical/Capital Improvement Projects of the Brookside Neighborhood Task Force” was submitted to the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and confirmed as conforming with the District 6 Plan by the Tulsa Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and their staff. That project list is contained in Appendix A of this Plan report.

- (4) Seeking funding of new and upgraded public improvements. Budgetary cost estimates were prepared for the priority projects and reviewed by the Task Force. The design standards were recommended for street paving, street furniture, tree planting and other streetscape features especially important to enhancing the image and beauty of the area. These standards are included within this Plan report for inclusion in the City of Tulsa’s list of eligible Capital Improvements. It was the expressed desire of the Brookside Task Force that these projects are included in the Tulsa “Third Penny Sales Tax Extension” program of the City, as well as other possible funding programs of the City, state and federal government as appropriate. Several of the projects were approved for funding by the 2001 Third Penny Sales Tax Extension and are included in a list of Brookside area projects listed in Appendix B.

- (5) Suggesting revisions to planning, zoning and building codes. The problem of redeveloping and reusing the older existing building stock in Tulsa is common to the three pilot study areas, including Brookside, and for all of the older urbanized portions of Tulsa. The City initiated a planning effort to review problems associated with application of the Tulsa (B.O.C.A.) Building Codes to infill projects in older buildings. This planning effort included lead staff from all City departments which deal with development and construction plans. The effort, led by the Tulsa City Fire Marshall, studied the existing building code, reviewed an “Existing Buildings Code” which had been adopted in New Jersey to facilitate infill development, and prepared a recommended “Existing Building Code” chapter for the City of Tulsa. Since this effort, the City of Tulsa has adopted the B.O.C.A. version of an existing buildings code. This code has the approval of the State of Oklahoma. This existing buildings code provides a Tulsa Building Code chapter which can be used for older existing buildings. Application of this Code should remove many barriers to the economic, practical reuse of these buildings, while assisting in preservation of their architectural character and flavor. The use of these codes should facilitate the reuse and mixed use of existing buildings in Brookside and elsewhere within the older portions of Tulsa.

- (6) Addressing parking issues. This problem has been previously identified in Brookside. Task Force efforts reaffirmed this as a major issue in the high pedestrian area along S. Peoria Avenue. Budgetary cost estimates were prepared for conceptual parking projects and reviewed by the Task Force. On-street and off-street public improvements were included in the “Recommended List of Physical/Capital Improvement Projects of the Brookside Neighborhood Task Force” submitted to the City of Tulsa. Additionally, conceptual design standards and parking facility concepts are included the Plan report. The Plan proposes ongoing programming

efforts necessary to develop the required consensus of area property owners, choose optimum locations for off-street facilities, prepare funding strategies and mechanisms, and select potential management and operational techniques for any future parking facilities.

- (7) Improving traffic safety and circulation. Brookside Task Force members contacted the Tulsa Police Department regarding speeding in the high pedestrian traffic areas along S. Peoria Avenue. Additional enforcement was provided at specific locations during high traffic periods on selected days. Also, the Brookside Task Force recommended traffic calming techniques for specific locations along S. Peoria Avenue. These concepts are included in this Plan report and were included in the “Recommended List of Physical/Capital Improvement Projects of the Brookside Neighborhood Task Force” submitted to the City. The City of Tulsa Traffic Engineering Division conducted preliminary analysis of intersections which might be appropriate for new traffic signals. In addition, Traffic Engineering investigated possible techniques for slowing traffic in residential neighborhoods and reported their findings in “Residential Neighborhood Traffic Calming” report, and additional review of these techniques continues.
- (8) Improving the application and enforcement of regulations. Actions were taken by the City of Tulsa Protective Inspections Department to insure compliance with City nuisance and zoning laws regarding operations of businesses in the northern portions of the planning area along S. Peoria Avenue. Issues regarding noise were addressed in recent court cases relating to these matters. At the time of this report, noise from Brookside entertainment businesses is not a problem.
- (9) Streamlining the development permitting process. In 2000, the City of Tulsa established a one-stop review and permitting center at 111 S. Greenwood Avenue. This has reduced the time needed and improved efficiency in review of construction and development plans, including those for infill projects.
- (10) Helping resolve particular problems of neighborhood schools. Peak-school-traffic problems were identified around Eliot School. Representatives of the Tulsa Police Department met with the Brookside Task Force and suggested “system solutions” for traffic problems. Concept on-site traffic circulation solutions were also discussed with the Task Force. Planning staff met with the Eliot School Planning Committee to discuss possible solutions. Eliot School representatives presented these ideas to the Eliot School Parent-Teacher Association and the Tulsa Public Schools. Additionally, traffic-calming and intersection improvement

concepts were included in the “Recommended List of Physical/Capital Improvement Projects of the Brookside Neighborhood Task Force” submitted to the City of Tulsa for this portion of the neighborhood.

- (11) Supporting crime prevention and security activities. Issues related to specific problem areas were discussed by the Brookside Task Force. In addition, Tulsa Police Department continues to provide additional presence during festival events and evening high-activity periods. Improved pedestrian lighting standards have been included in this Plan report for high pedestrian areas along S. Peoria Avenue. In addition, an Illustrative Development Concept was prepared for the vacant, under-utilized northwest corner of S. Peoria Avenue and I-44 which includes the “Camelot Hotel” site. Inappropriate activity has been observed on multiple occasions by area residents. The concept illustration is intended to generate ideas for redevelopment and reuse of this portion of Brookside. Infill development of this site would remove blighting influences, infuse substantial economic vitality at this end of Brookside and improve the image for this regional landmark.

The Plan report that follows contains the vision for Brookside. It presents the optimum physical improvement envisioned by Brookside residents, merchants and property owners and prescribes guidelines for enhancing Brookside’s distinctive urban form. It provides a practical, realistic plan of the Brookside built environment and practical strategies and actions to achieve Brookside’s goals.

In summary, the vision is to keep and improve the Brookside area as a great place to live, work, worship, shop, learn and play, to assist and assure that development in Brookside is of optimum quality, and to represent all Brookside interests equitably and fairly.