



Responses to questions from the December 13, 2006 Public Meeting

The Core to Shore planning team received several great questions at the December Public Meeting. This document contains responses to those questions.

Please also check our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) for more general information on the project's intent and scope.

How will development in the planning area be controlled?

The Core to Shore planning process will produce a general framework to guide redevelopment in the Study Area. This framework, though flexible, will be structured enough to ensure that it facilitates optimal development patterns, supports synergy between new developments, and does not compromise the downtown core. The plan will be guided by:

- 1) Research and analysis performed by the consultant team,
- 2) Evaluation and recommendations from the Steering Committee, and
- 3) Community input gained from public meetings and interaction with staff and Steering Committee members

The plan will include recommendations for preferred private development and new civic projects. The plan will also include recommendations on financing options to support new development, timing, infrastructure improvements, zoning and design codes.

The process for final adoption by City leaders includes consideration by the Oklahoma City Planning Commission and City Council. If approved by the Planning Commission and adopted by City Council, the City's Comprehensive Plan will be amended to reflect those changes. This multi-step approach assures that all new development in the planning area is controlled from permitting through final completion in accordance with the adopted plan.

What will be the future role of Union Station?

Nothing has yet been determined. Union Station is an important historic building, and because it is owned by the City, will likely be utilized for some higher civic use at some point in the future. The Core To Shore planning process will probably not determine that use. A study of commuter rail service options, that follows up on the recently completed Fixed Guideway Study, will determine if the Station will play a role in any future east-west commuter rail service. The Central Oklahoma Transportation and Parking Authority (COTPA) is managing this Study.

Will the Core to Shore study address light-rail and other forms of public transit?

The Fixed Guideway Study explores future light-rail and public transit alternatives. The Core to Shore planning process will utilize COTPA'S findings to accommodate other non-vehicular modes of transportation in the design of new infrastructure improvements. The final format of these will be determined by COTPA's present study. To find out more about the Fixed Guideway go to: <http://www.okfgs.org/>.

Will Core to Shore provide the opportunity to readdress the planned location and construction of the new I-40?

No. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHA) 2002 decision about the location and construction of the I-40 realignment will not be revisited in the Core to Shore planning process. The Core to Shore plan is focused on the real estate changes that result from that decision, and ensuring that new development is undertaken in a way that supports the City's downtown development goals. We will address local traffic movements as these are impacted by the new alignment and the boulevard.

Are there any studies that have been performed that indicate the type of development the planning area might be able to support in the future?

The most recent market studies have been focused on fiscal impacts resulting from downtown development and the feasibility of individual development types like hotels, housing and grocery stores. These can be accessed on the City's website. One of Core to Shore's main objectives is to evaluate the study area's development potential.

How will the City handle possible needs for increased security following the closure of the Post Office Building?

The Core to Shore plan intends to identify an appropriate use for this site prior to closure of the building. Once that use is determined, City leaders can take action to mitigate any potential risks. We realize that this general area has elevated security concerns, which is one of the reasons for this study. The current blighted conditions cannot continue. In the meantime, citizens are encouraged to contact the police concerning any illegal activity in the area.

Is the City considering placing restrictions on fringe development to curb urban sprawl and encourage development in the planning area?

City leaders have historically preferred incentives over restrictions. The City recently commissioned a Fiscal Impact Study to fully understand the cost of fringe development and its impact on the overall annual budget. The study is in its final review stages and will be used by City policy makers to assess what adjustments, if any, should be made to current development policies.

To find out more about plans for future growth and development check out the: [OKC Plan](#)

How do we address the homeless population?

Mayor Mick Cornett has recently assembled a task force to address homeless issues. The Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force will begin work in January 2007. Rand Baker, Interim Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, and Brett Hamm, President of Downtown OKC, Inc, chair the Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from social service providers, business and government agencies. The Task Force plans to report their findings to the Mayor and City Council by April 2007. We anticipate that the Task Force will explore long-term solutions for a range of homelessness-related issues.

Will there be an urban design district for the Core to Shore area?

Most of the Core to Shore area in which we anticipate new development to occur lies within proposed urban design districts. The new Downtown Zoning and the Riverfront Development districts are currently being reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council. Final approval should occur in early 2007.

Will eminent domain be used?

The City anticipates that private developers - in response to market forces - will undertake most of the new development. However, it is likely that some land will need to be acquired for public purposes (a park for example). If this occurs, it is the City's policy to acquire private property by negotiated sale. If for some reason property cannot be acquired voluntarily, the City may use eminent domain to complete its acquisition. It needs to be stressed that eminent domain, if used at all, would only be a last resort and only in support of a public purpose. Eminent domain would not be used to acquire property for subsequent sale to private developers.

Will there be a TIF district established or TIF money available to the area?

A significant portion of the Study Area already lies within TIF District #2 (everything east of Western). However, most of this area (south of the proposed boulevard) is in a "receiving area" only, meaning that TIF funds can be used in the area, but additional increment created is not collected. With the amount of development anticipated, it makes sense that this area will be able to generate funds. We have not yet discussed how this might be accomplished, or to what extent funds from the existing TIF #2 will be used in the area. In any regard, available funds will not be sufficient to support the likely extent of new development, which means that additional financing mechanisms will need to be identified.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool for funding projects that benefit the public. As new development occurs, property taxes increase. The additional property tax generated (above the rate set at the time the TIF District is established) is collected to fund new public projects and public infrastructure improvements required to enable private development.

Are there any plans to encourage environmental sustainability in the planning area?

This will be strongly encouraged in all new private sector development. There is an opportunity to employ any new public sector projects generated by this study as models for the applications of sustainability principles.

Will the plan dictate what happens along the shoreline of the Oklahoma River?

The Core to Shore Planning team is working closely with the Riverfront Development Authority to identify development and open space opportunities along the shoreline in the project area. The Riverfront Authority already has an excellent master plan that illustrates the kinds of development that could occur along the shoreline. We anticipate that any shoreline development will be very sympathetic to the river, will accommodate public access, and improve the existing riverbank environment.

Where will on ramps and exit ramps connect to the new I-40?

The list below is complete for all on and off movements from the Interstate to local streets.

If you are traveling **EAST** on I-40, the driver will encounter the following:

- an exit ramp to the Boulevard
- an exit ramp to Agnew Ave.
- exit and entrance ramps at Pennsylvania Ave.
- exit and entrance ramps at Western Ave.
- exit and entrance ramps at Shields Blvd.

For the traffic headed **WEST** on I-40, the following movements will be encountered:

- an exit ramp to the Boulevard
- an entrance ramp from Shields Blvd.
- an exit ramp to Robinson Ave.
- exit and entrance ramps at Western Ave.
- an exit ramp to Pennsylvania Ave.
- exit and entrance ramps at Agnew Ave.
- an entrance ramp from the Boulevard

A diagram showing the location of each interchange can be found on the Core to Shore [website](#).

Will the Core to Shore plan incorporate new or existing public art?

The Core to Shore Plan will identify general opportunity sites in the project area. Public art will eventually be incorporated within public gathering areas, gateways, the Boulevard, adjacent to the river, and in any new public parks. The details of public art placement will not be determined until projects are approved. The Core to Shore planning process is not structured to that level of detail.

Will there be any incentives available to help existing business owners make changes necessary to meet new design requirements?

Existing property owners will not be forced to comply with newly established design requirements. Any new design requirements, such as those proposed in the Downtown Design District and the Scenic River Design Districts, will only affect new construction, expansions to existing structures or changes in the use of the property. If a property owner is willing to construct, expand or change the use of a property, the City has several low-interest loan programs to assist them.

What is the definition of “affordable housing” and will it be incorporated into plans for the area?

There is a federal definition of affordable housing that may not be relevant here. A goal of the Core to Shore plan is to have a variety of housing types to fit a variety of income levels. The planning process includes a local market evaluation to support demand for certain types of housing and once those needs have been identified, recommendations on the best way to include different types of housing in the development mix will be incorporated.

How might my property taxes increase as a result of the future improvements to the area?

State Question 676 passed by voters in 1996, caps increases to taxable property value at 5%. This law protects the current property owners from rapid rises in property value. We do anticipate that property values will increase in the area as significant improvements and investment occurs. For more information on State Question 676 and the 5% cap go to the county assessor’s [website](#).

What’s the timeline on development of the Study Area?

The Study Area is not likely to fully develop for several decades, simply because of its scale. Exact timing will depend on the confidence of the private sector and the aggressiveness of the City in providing public improvements, which in turn is dependent on funding availability. There are a number of things that need to fall into place to implement the plan, but the City and its partners are fully committed to ensuring that this happens. The first wave of development is likely to be centered around the new boulevard, which will be completed in approximately 5 years. We anticipate that this initial development phase will establish the momentum required to keep the development process moving. Experience from MAPS 1 indicates that public sector improvements (new infrastructure, parks, etc.) will have to happen to ensure that private development proceeds at pace.