

Burleson West Transit Oriented Development District Amendment to the Comprehensive Plan

Background

In November 2005, the City of Burleson annexed 653 acres of land in the vicinity of the proposed rail station that will serve Burleson. The primary purpose of the annexation was to establish land use control in the vicinity of the proposed rail station in order to encourage mixed-use development that would be compatible with a rail station. The rail station will be located on the W-4 line (as designated by the North Central Texas Council of Governments), which will serve south Fort Worth, Crowley, Burleson, Joshua, and Cleburne.

After a regional transit summit held in March 2002, the Regional Transportation Committee of the North Central Texas Council of Governments has been studying options for regional rail transit in the Fort Worth-Dallas metro area. One of the rail lines that has been studied is the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line, identified as the W-4 corridor in the Regional Rail Corridor Study, which coincides with the western city limit line of Burleson. The W-4 corridor runs from downtown Fort Worth, through Burleson, and terminates in Cleburne.

The Regional Rail Corridor Study identifies a general location for a transit stop in the Burleson area. The opportunity for a transit stop on the west side of the railroad is advantageous, especially when combined with associated development adjacent to the transit site. Nationwide studies demonstrate that land values near a rail station are generally 20-25% higher than similar properties located farther away from the station. In Dallas, a 2003 study indicated residential property values increased 39% when located near a rail station.

Land Use Plan Summary

In order to take advantage of the growing desire for and ultimate development of commuter rail along the Fort Worth-Burleson-Cleburne line, the City and its consultant, Gateway Planning Group, have prepared a land use plan for a transit-oriented development (TOD) in the area. The plans for the TOD envision a 580-acre mixed-use development centered around the confluence of two major roadways in Burleson and the proposed rail station site. This site is unique in Burleson as it provides opportunities for multi-modal transportation. The mixed-use component of the TOD would provide for employment centers, integrated buildings with residential and retail/office components, potential governmental and other public buildings, and parks and open space. Surrounding the mixed-use component is a wide range of residential development, including higher-density condominiums and apartments in the range of 20 dwelling units per acre, and townhome/brownstone and other single family development in the 7-15 dwelling units per acre range. The layout of the overall acreage focuses on neighborhood centers, connected by sidewalks, paths and public trails in the parks, open spaces, and creek areas. The type of development encourages walking, and the compact nature of the development provides for short walking distances from the future rail station site to areas devoted to live, work and play.

Alsby Boulevard and Shaffstall Road are critical elements of the success of the TOD. These roadways comprise the only major thoroughfares within the TOD. Currently, Alsby Boulevard is not constructed in this area. Alsby Boulevard will be the primary access point for the developed areas to the north (Burleson proper). Shaffstall Road is a two-lane county-type roadway and will be

the primary access for those travelers coming from points east and south along SH 174. Through the TOD, these roadways will be designed with a unique cross-section. A “European boulevard” is envisioned so that pedestrian friendly areas and high volume, low speed travel lanes travel lanes can be created and complement each other in the overall design. Within the TOD, the goal is to construct these arterials as a feature of and integrated with the development, rather than a barrier between two different mixed-use developments. Outside the limits of the TOD, these roadways will be typical boulevards or undivided roadways with a center turn lane. Road “A” will provide direct access from both Alsbury Boulevard and Shaffstall Road to the rail station.

Goals of the Transit Oriented Development Plan

The proposed land use plan is designed to achieve the goals listed in the following areas.

Land Use

1. Provide a compatible mix of land uses which support and complement transit oriented development and ancillary development.
2. Provide uses of a density and configuration that will capitalize on the presence of commuter rail service.
3. Encourage a mix of commercial development that will create new jobs, generate direct and indirect tax revenue, attract new residents, and provide new amenities.
4. Encourage the development of higher-density housing options including townhouses, brownstones, condominiums and multi-family dwellings.

Open Space

1. Create a pedestrian network, linking the transit oriented development with adjacent neighborhoods and other existing and planned trail systems.
2. Integrate public open spaces with private development
3. Encourage access to public and commercial facilities by those who live or work in adjacent areas, without the use of automobiles.

Transportation

1. Design the transit oriented development as a multi-modal access community, capitalizing on the presence of commuter rail in the development.
2. Locate and configure parking in ways that will not interrupt street frontages or public open spaces.
3. Provide a hierarchy of local streets that will provide flexibility in circulation options and will be effective in serving a changing range of land uses over time.
4. Dimension streets for their local access functions, using no more land than is necessary.
5. Encourage walking and use of bicycles and transit.

Implementation

1. Provide a legal basis for the adoption of zoning and land use controls in the area to protect the future transit area and associated development.

2. Support applications for transportation funding participation by the North Central Texas Council of Governments for the construction of arterial streets and sustainable development.
3. Provide a legal basis for the adoption of zoning and land use controls as a means to protect the integrity of development along Alsbury Boulevard and Hulen Street.

