Discussion Paper regarding City Mobility Oriented Development (MOD)

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*Note most of this material was taken from common sources, and based on commonly understood planning definitions. The *Complete Communities Toolbox* from the state of Delaware was referred to extensively.

This discussion paper is prepared by the City of St. Augustine Planning and Building Department. The paper is an effort to communicate with interested individuals and the citizens of St. Augustine regarding the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment that creates a land use category in the City's Comprehensive Plan related to a concept of Mobility Oriented Development, MOD for short.

The city is also proposing to create a compatible zoning district that will be inserted into the city Zoning Code that is a companion to the MOD land use category and outlines the uses and parameters for any proposed development.

Status of the Rail Station

The first issue related to the city's interest in creating an MOD land use category in the Comprehensive Plan and a zoning district is the fact that there is a State and regional agency proposal to locate a commuter rail station within the city of St. Augustine. Initially there were two (2) locations being considered: one (1) near the intersection of Highway US 1 and King Street, and the second on North US 1 at the FEC Maintenance Building location. During early considerations the location analysis focused on the intersection of Highway US 1 and King Street/West King.

The project is in the Planning stages. Currently, there is a 1 million dollar grant for community outreach and discussion. The agencies are trying to garner as much input as possible over the next year. Additionally, the agencies are working on funding for a PD&E study (Planning, Development and Engineering study) to do a corridor analysis.

The corridor analysis would look at four (4) stops, St. Augustine, Racetrack Road, The Avenues Mall area and downtown Jacksonville. These stops were prioritized out of 16 original locations under consideration. Other considerations include a certain "critical mass" of density to justify the stop and a 1,300-foot distance of straight track to facilitate the train stop and required station location.

The I-95 corridor through the region is reaching its limit of capacity and expansion within right-of-way limits. There is a need for alternative forms of transportation. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) is actively working on transit options. South and Central Florida are already moving forward with options that include rail. The rail right-of-way is sufficient to accommodate passenger rail along with freight requirements. The reality is that the region can not be reliant on automobiles into the future. It is not sustainable for the long term.

Basics of Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) or TOD (Transit Oriented Development) types of development

TOD types of development have been utilized for many years in larger communities that typically have rail and bus or mass transit options for transportation. St. Augustine has chosen to refer to this general type of development related to potential transit as Mobility Oriented Development (MOD) because of the city's recent Comprehensive Plan update, discussion and implementation of mobility improvements and choices within the city. For example, the complete street transformation of Hypolita Street, Treasury and Spanish Streets downtown, as well as, the availability of ebikes, dynamic parking pricing, and shuttle services.

In general MOD developments are defined as walkable, compact, mixed-use projects including a mix of residential and commercial uses, higher density, preferably within walking distance to a transit facility. This should include enhanced convenience and safety for walking and bicycling to provide a vibrant livable community.

Key Principles

There are five (5) key principles or characteristics for MOD types of development. They are:

1) walkable, high quality pedestrian environments that integrate streetscaping;
2) higher density closest to transit centers that decrease sprawl and promotes compactness;
3) transit centers are the center of a destination that is a diverse mixed-use development;
4) parking located in proximity to the development and well designed and managed; and
5) the community has public transit facilities and services.

Pros/Cons

Typical fears related to MOD developments are that a transit/mobility development will take away neighborhood character, cause traffic congestion and lead to gentrification.

Typical benefits demonstrate encouragement of a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment, support of local businesses, increased property values and combating urban sprawl, and facilitating multimodal needs and creative patterns of land use.

Why is the City of St. Augustine interested in MOD land use?

A primary focus of the city's updated Comprehensive Plan that is a Plan out to 2040 is the recognition and promotion of compact development within the city including trying to promote a mix of uses to encourage a diverse economy.

Infill development and redevelopment is discussed throughout the plan to encourage compact reuse of properties within the city. Infill development, redevelopment, and revitalization in areas targets growth and reinvestment. The definitions are also included below.

Infill development encourages strategies, tools and programs in areas to optimize infrastructure investments and consume less land, promote an efficient compact pattern of land use and development. This encourages reinvestment in areas and use of existing infrastructure including efficient delivery of quality public services, as well as mobility options.

Redevelopment is the conversion of an existing built property into another use which is ideally a better use of property.

Revitalization means instilling new life and vitality into a community which may include reusing, renovating, improving building facades, streetscaping and using planning tools to leverage local assets. This also includes possibly filling in "gaps" in the streetscape, efficient land use, economic development and utilizing existing infrastructure. Reinvestment in existing areas will hopefully increase the potential to create jobs, and encourage adaptive reuse of underutilized buildings.

Mixed use infill is discussed to specifically encourage efficient live and work opportunities, conduct business, shop dine and socialize, create walkable, and bikable areas, encourage transit, to reduce driving, create greater housing variety and density that can be affordable by lowering transportation costs, and at the same time provide a consistent customer base in an area or neighborhood. The goal is compact, innovative land use management and efficient multimodal transportation systems.

The intent is to encourage transit within a 10-minute walk, which is approximately a quarter mile to a one-third mile radius. The city's Walkability score is 73 out of 100 for walking and 74 out of 100 for biking. A goal through increased mobility options and efforts would be to promote an improving Walkability score.

Fitting into the Big Picture

As we look at changing demographics and associated real estate desires increasing demand for high quality, compact and walkable communities, promoting planning to sustain a diverse economy, fostering community design we are promoting, development that serves the economy, community, public health, and the environment. This can include vertical and horizontal project designs.

The city is trying to encourage economic development to build on existing assets to leverage local assets to improve quality of life, and a high quality of life providing opportunities to attract and retain talented employees.

A balance of complimentary land uses can attract investment in areas intended for growth, infill development, or redevelopment, including coordinated provision of infrastructure and services that support business investment and market-ready (re)investment.

The concept of "Complete communities" is a new term that the city is uniquely set to recognize and plan ahead in these aspects to promote a healthy and active, sustainable, and inclusive community.

There are five (5) key principles or characteristics of "complete communities". They are:

1) Complete streets
2) Efficient land use
3) Healthy and livable
4) Inclusive and active, and
5) Sustainable and resilient

These design principles for communities include, building livable communities, preserving historic resources, respecting local character in new construction, and reducing the impact of vehicles. All principles that are attainable for St. Augustine.

General Benefits of Community Identity

Livable communities are a balance of jobs, homes, services, and amenities. Traditional neighborhoods are compact, pedestrian and bicycle friendly, have quality public space and a variety of uses and building types.

Neighborhoods should create a sense of place, and community identity that encourages social interaction, walking and connectivity, preserve historic resources, reduce impact of cars, and balance the auto with other transportation options.

These are all goals of the city's Mobility Plan. Including peripheral parking facilities and offering alternative forms of transportation to relieve the stress of vehicles in the downtown.

Specific Language in the Proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment

FLUE Objective 6.9

Multimodal Categories: The Mobility Oriented Development category is established to recognize the city's mobility planning efforts and establish a land use category that promotes multimodal transportation options.

FLUE Policy 6.9.1

Mobility Oriented Development

This district is intended to facilitate and encourage development and redevelopment of areas containing or directly contiguous to a Mobility Station.

A Mobility Station means either (i) a transit station, (ii) a commuter rail station, or (iii) a publicly owned parking garage, publicly leased parking garage, or publicly available parking garage containing a minimum of 200 parking spaces available for daily public parking at rates no greater than charged by the City of St. Augustine at the Historic Downtown Parking Facility located at 1 Cordova Street.

The City's goal in allowing Mobility-Oriented Development ("MOD") in conjunction with a Mobility Station is to reduce automobile use through the utilization of transit services, alternative mobility solutions and infrastructure for active modes, such as walking and biking.

Mobility Stations must be located both (i) at one of the two Future Rail Stations identified on the City's 2040 Mobility Plan contained in the Mobility Plan & Mobility Fee Technical Report Executive Summary dated June 2021; and (ii) along U.S. Highway 1. A MOD must include a Mobility Station.

MODs shall promote a complimentary, concentrated mixture of transit-supportive uses at higher densities and intensities in conjunction with a Mobility Station. Such districts shall provide internal pedestrian linkage improvements with accommodations for park-and-ride and bikeshare/carshare programs for access into the downtown area. Allowable uses within MODs may include, but are not limited to, Mobility Stations, retail services, grocery stores, restaurants, other commercial and service uses, offices, hotels, multi-family residential units, public buildings and public uses, parks/plazas and similar uses and supporting facilities.

Residential Uses:

Multi-family residential: Maximum of 50 units per acre.

Other Uses:

Maximum lot coverage of 80 percent; maximum building height 75 feet; must include a multi-family residential component and at least one non-residential use, in addition to the Mobility Station.

The Planning and Zoning Board will make a recommendation to the City Commission on the public benefit gained by the Mobility Station component, as well as the compatibility of the mixed-use components of the MOD.

The Future Land Use Map ("FLUM") designation of MOD requires that an active Mobility Station and all other required transit-oriented components of the project be constructed and remain active for use. Should a project fail to build and/or maintain the MOD associated with the project, the FLUM for the property will revert back to the pre-MOD FLUM designation, or may be the subject of a FLUM amendment to any other appropriate and compatible designation. Structures existing at the time of the reverter may be deemed non-conforming, consistent with the City of St. Augustine's municipal code, but may not be allowed to be rebuilt if destroyed, or expanded. Any new construction, reconstruction or unbuilt development will have to conform to the new FLUM designation and associated zoning after the reversion to a non-MOD FLUM category. All applicants for MOD, and their heirs, successors and assigns, understand and agree to be bound by this condition to the MOD FLUM designation.

Supported in the Comprehensive Plan

Included below are specific Objectives and Policies from the City of St. Augustine's Comprehensive Plan that demonstrate that this proposed Future Land Use Category carries forward these concepts.

Existing 2040 Comprehensive Plan Promoting Mobility Options

Future Land Use Element

FLUE Goal 5 Urban Sprawl

Discourage urban sprawl by encouraging innovative strategies to promote infill and compact development or redevelopment and establishing energy efficient land use patterns.

FLU Objective 5.1

The City shall discourage and/or reduce urban sprawl through a future land use pattern that promotes orderly, compact development and the provision of public facilities and services that minimize costs and environmental impacts and maximizes efficiency.

FLUE Policy 5.1.2

The City shall encourage infill and redevelopment through the use of higher density and intensity land use designations and mixed-use designations in appropriate locations.

FLUE Objective 5.2

New development in the City shall encourage principles that minimize the emission of greenhouse gases and reduce vehicle miles of travel as opposed to conventional development standards that encourage urban sprawl.

FLUE Policy 5.2.3

New Development in commercial and mixed-use areas is encouraged to provide a mix of pedestrian scale commercial activities, shops, offices, apartments, multi-family units and homes on site and provide mixed-uses within neighborhoods, within blocks and within buildings.

FLUE Policy 5.2.4

Developments in areas with design guidelines or standards shall be evaluated on-site and building design that emphasizes qualifying benchmarks of character and authenticity,

aesthetics, human comfort, creating a sense of place, special placement of civic uses and sites and human-scale architecture and amenities, especially at street level.

FLUE Objective 5.5

The City has established three (3) forms of energy conservation/greenhouse gas reduction strategies: carbon sequestration, preserving the environment, and alternative transportation and mobility improvements.

FLUE Policy 5.5.2

The City's mobility plan encourages alternative forms of transportation including public, and other lower emissions forms of mobility by encouraging the development of bicycle and pedestrian ways.

FLUE Policy 5.5.3

The City's infill, mixed-use and redevelopment policies will increase densities, proximity and diversity of land uses in an effort to encourage efficient land use patterns and reduce greenhouse gases.

Transportation and Mobility Element

Overall Goal

The City will encourage accessible, energy efficient, sustainable and economically viable transportation options that meet the needs of residents, employers, employees and visitors through a variety of innovative methods that are sensitive to the environmental, historical, and cultural resources of the City of St. Augustine.

Transportation

TME Goal 1 Transportation

To maintain a coordinated multimodal transportation system which provides for the safe, efficient, and economical movement of people, goods, and services, which is consistent with the Future Land Use Plan, recognizes the impact resulting from sea level rise and higher, more intense rainfall, conserves energy, and protects the City's natural, cultural, and historical resources.

TME Policy 1.3.3

The City shall continue to discourage urban sprawl and encourage efficient, compact, infill and redevelopment within the existing "urban" area of the city including existing commercial corridors.

TME Policy 1.3.4

The City recognizes that certain roadway corridors will be congested, and that congestion will be addressed by means other than solely considering adding capacity for single occupant automobiles.

TME Policy 1.3.5

The City shall coordinate transportation planning with the Future Land Use Element to provide multi-modal transportation facilities which are adequate to accommodate the uses shown on the Future Land Use Map (FLUM). The City shall determine, on a case-by-case basis, if a proposed development is consistent with the Transportation and Mobility Element and the FLUM through the site plan review process.

TME Policy 1.3.6

The City may require new development and redevelopment to support alternative modes of transportation through such measures including, but not limited to, the provision of sidewalks, bikeways, transit stops or other facilities that support alternative modes of transportation, such as parking management systems and park-and-ride facilities.

TME Policy 1.3.7

The City may require developers of commercial property to provide for convenient and safe access to bicyclists and pedestrians and may provide a secure location for the storage of bicycles on-site.

TME Policy 1.3.8

The City shall revise its Land Development Code to ensure consistency with the policies contained in this Plan. Development review will ensure predictable evaluation criteria for assessing site plan design.

TME Policy 1.3.9

The City shall ensure that all new development and redevelopment is designed and required to: safely promote increased walking, bicycling, low speed alternative vehicles and a circulator or community transit use while reducing vehicle trip lengths and vehicle miles of travel, as outlined

in the Future Land Use and Transportation and Mobility Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. This will also be implemented in the Land Development Code, and potentially funded through either collection of fees or improvements to the multi-modal transportation system that further the achievement of multi-modal performance measures established by the City's Mobility Plan.

TME Policy 1.3.10

The city shall further support pedestrian, bicycle, and a community circulator or transit use by:

- Considering an increase in residential density and non-residential intensity in locations that serve to help meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan;
- Planning for an appropriate mix of residential, commercial, educational, recreational, institutional and other complimentary uses allowing residents and visitors to meet their daily needs more efficiently while minimizing travel distances;
- Requiring that sites be designed in a manner that provide safe, and convenient access for pedestrians, cyclists and circulator or transit users;
- Increasing sidewalk connectivity to reduce trip lengths and create a more walkable system of short blocks; and
- Providing complete streets that foster neighborhood connectivity to nearby commercial retail areas.

TME Objective 1.6

The City recognizes that the use of gasoline creates a large portion of the greenhouse gas emissions and shall incorporate transportation strategies to address the reduction of these greenhouse gas emissions. The City shall identify and pursue strategies to reduce the vehicle miles traveled.
A) Establish locations for compact mixed-use development.
B) Increase opportunities for job creation proximate to higher density residential.
C) Facilitate future opportunities for transit-oriented developments.
D) The City shall encourage existing and new developments to be connected by roadways, bikeways, and pedestrian systems that encourage travel between neighborhoods and access to transit without requiring use of the major thoroughfare system. (Adopted June 2011 Ord. #2011-02)

TME Policy 1.6.1

The City shall employ Transportation System Management Strategies to protect the right-of-way, improve efficiency and enhance safety. The City will continue efforts to coordinate and participate in, when feasible, regional transportation studies which encourage and promote transit initiatives. The City will continue to work with St. Johns County, Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), North Florida TPO, Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) and FDOT and other transportation agencies to educate and encourage transit in the region including rail and a possible commuter stop within the city limits.

Mobility

TME Goal 2 Mobility

Establish a coordinated multimodal transportation system that provides mobility for pedestrians, bicyclists, circulator and transit users, motorized vehicle users, rail and trail users, and is sensitive to the City of St. Augustine's natural, cultural, and historical resources.

TME Goal 3 Mobility Planning

To enhance the quality of life for City residents and reduce congestion by (1) making it safer and more convenient for people to walk and bicycle, (2) creating a park once environment within the multimodal district for longer duration visits, and (3) developing innovative parking management strategies that improve access to local businesses and reduce the impact of non-city resident traffic on residential streets.

TME Objective 3.1

To develop and implement a 2040 Mobility Plan focused on the movement of people, the provision of multiple multimodal transportation options to move about the community, the pursuit of a park once environment for travel within the City's multimodal district for longer duration visits, and the development of a Mobility Fee, based upon the projects identified in the Mobility Plan, that allows for new development and redevelopment to equitably mitigate its impact to the multimodal transportation system.

TME Policy 3.1.1

The City will promote an interconnected, multimodal transportation system that transitions from a system focused on quickly moving motor vehicles toward a system that emphasizes the movement of people of all ages and abilities, whether those people choose to walk, bicycle, ride transit, drive a motor vehicle or use a new transportation mobility technology.

TME Policy 3.1.2

The Mobility Plan shall identify multimodal projects that include improvements, services, and programs for people walking, bicycling, riding transit, driving motor vehicles and utilizing new mobility technologies. The projects identified in the Mobility Plan shall be based upon existing demand and projected increases in personal travel demand by 2040, the mobility plan horizon year, from new development, redevelopment, tourism and the growing population in northeast Florida.

TME Policy 3.1.4

The Mobility Plan shall promote a park once environment with parking garages located outside of the multimodal district for longer duration visits generally exceeding three or more hours. Surface parking lots maybe initially provided with the intent of constructing parking garages. The Mobility Plan shall include transit circulator routes and identify water taxi docks, for public and/or private water taxi service, that connect the parking garages to destinations within the multimodal district. As more parking spaces are located in parking garages along the periphery of the multimodal district and frequent multimodal transportation options are provided, longer duration visits may include visits of two or more hours in length.

TME Policy 3.1.8

The Mobility Plan projects may include, but are not limited to, sidewalks, paths, trails, bike lanes, protected bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, bicycle boulevards, bicycle racks, shared streets, speed reduction programs, shared-use multimodal lanes, flexible lanes, dedicated transit lanes, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, mobility hubs, pavement markings, traffic control devices, enhanced crosswalks, advanced warning systems, streetscape, hardscape, landscape, turn lanes, intersection improvements, safety improvements, roundabouts, bridges, transit stops, shelters, stations and pull-out bays, transit vehicles, and new motor vehicle travel lanes.

TME Policy 3.1.17

The City shall require all comprehensive plan amendments, rezonings, final development engineering plans and changes of land uses evaluate the impacts to and opportunities to coordinate with the Mobility Plan, Complete Street, safety, and parking management multimodal projects.

Housing Element

H Policy 1.1.4

The city shall promote mixed-use developments that include provisions for a wide variety of housing types and prices in close proximity to support facilities.