

ANNOUNCER: You've tuned in to another  
edition of The Break Room, a

weekly conversation about how  
the City of St Augustine

works from those who do the  
work everyday. Hosted by the

City of St Augustine's  
Communications Director Melissa

Wissel. The Break Room offers a  
closer look at the different

city departments and provides  
updates on current and upcoming

projects and events. And now  
your host, Melissa Wissel.

MELISSA: Welcome to The Breakroom.  
Thanks for tuning in. I'm

Melissa Wissel, Communications  
Director for the City of St

Augustine. This week, we are  
back in studio with Amy

Skinner. She is the City's  
Planning and Building Director.

We were talking last time about  
mobility-oriented development.

Why this is a good option for  
the city, a land category use,

a compatible zoning district.

We ran out of time. So, Amy, I

want to just jump right back  
in. Welcome back. AMY: Thank you.

Excellent. Let's. Let's do it. MELISSA:

Yeah. Let's do it. So, if you

missed it last time, we were  
talking about mobility-oriented

development. Specifically, we  
were talking about a piece of

property that we have at the  
corner of US -1 and King

Street, but it's not just about

that property in and of itself.

It's about a planning tool, a  
mobility-oriented development

land use category. Take it  
away. AMY: You know, that's correct.

We're trying to kind of  
look at the big picture and

when we updated the  
comprehensive plan, we talked

about compact development.  
We've talked about kind of

recognizing that the city has  
maybe areas that aren't

functioning to their their  
highest ability that we needed

to encourage a diverse economy,  
that we're talking about

infield development, compact  
development, you know,

redevelopment of certain areas.

So, the intent is to, you know,

really kind of overall, I

guess, encourage the reuse of

property, kind of. It's more

sustainable to redevelop

existing properties that are

within the city that, you know,

help us with our

infrastructure, help us in

mobility as part of that

infrastructure, to kind of

concentrate development, so that

we're more efficient, more

sustainable, and things like

that. So, we're trying to

promote walkable, compact,

mixed-use projects. Projects

that have residential and

commercial components that give

people an option to live close  
to where they work or close to

transit where they can get to,  
easily to places that offer, you

know, jobs and economic  
opportunity. If people live

close in or if they don't have  
to use a vehicle and that does

reduce their cost of living,  
because they're not having to,

you know, commute. And it  
adds value to your time. If

you're commuting, it adds a  
whole day to your week.

And stress and all that. So the  
exciting part about St

Augustine is it's so unique and  
that we have opportunities for really

kind of creating a compact

urban development. MELISSA: And we want

this, in case people missed our  
last one, I want to just make

sure that we're clear. The  
reason why this particular

parcel is being discussed for  
this mobility-oriented

development is this transit  
line using the rail system.

With JTA. AMY: Yes. So that the  
region has to look at

alternative forms of  
transportation. I -95

cannot be the only option to  
get through this area. US -1

can't be the only option. They  
have right of way that is a, you

know, for the railroad tracks.  
It's a logical thing to promote

commuter rail. The commuter  
rail is, they know they, as I

understand, it they need like  
1300 feet. So basically we're

looking at the turn where the  
rail turns west by US - 1 all

the way to Palmer Street. So the  
potential of having a transit

station there or a rail  
commuter rail station there

could benefit all the  
properties that are between, you

know, West King Street, Palmer  
Street, and US - 1 because

they'll have potentially access  
to rail on the backside. Also,

you know, there's talk about  
that the trail, the bicycle

trail. Coming in.

From the county, behind that

area. So, it kind of creates an  
an opportunity for those

properties to have front and  
backside options. MELISSA: And when you

talk about the development of  
the property, and this could be

this location, it could be some  
other parcel of property around,

even if there wasn't a rail,  
when you're talking a transit

center. You're also  
talking a parking garage,

possibly retail, restaurants, housing. AMY: Once we once we

create this land use category,  
really we when the cities

talked about the peripheral  
parking garages, maybe one, you

know, out on Anastasia Boulevard,  
north of town. There's potential



that we can tailor other zoning districts for other areas that

talk about, as you said, other mobility options. You have

potential for circulators, peripheral parking garages, we

want, we want walkability and bike-ability and bike safety

and pedestrian safe throughout the entire city. And when you

can reduce traffic or keep it to local traffic on the roads,

then then it's safer for everyone, including pedestrians

and bikes. MELISSA: And this MOD, again, this mobility-oriented

development, we don't have this in our code now. I think that's

the other thing that people

need to understand is... if I

want to build a house, I go  
find a place where I'm allowed

to build a house. It's zoned  
residential. I want to

build an office building, I go  
find a place that's zoned to

build an office building and I  
it. If I wanted to bring in a

bike, excuse me, a bus stop or  
a bus station or a rail center

or a transportation type. AMY: Hub.

MELISSA: Hub. Yeah. I can't do

that right now. Cuz that  
there is no land use category.

So, that's really the other  
thing that is important for

folks to understand why we're  
having this conversation. AMY: And

the updated comprehensive plan  
is supposed to plan out to 2040.

And so at the time, we were  
focused on getting our mobility

plan adopted. So, we have a  
mobility plan that sets the

groundwork for this. And so the,  
these this amendment to the comp

plan is kind of a follow up to  
that. It's another tool that

the city can use as an option  
to encourage alternative forms

of mobility. And there are lots  
of fears, you know, I guess

associated with it, you know. I  
think people are worried about

neighborhood character, you know,  
whether it's going to cause

more traffic congestion, whether  
it leads to gentrification, and

you know, people getting priced  
out of areas, you know. The

hope is that we don't have  
unintended consequences, but

that we promote the development  
of all the areas in the city

kind of equally and that people  
have access to transportation

and community in a sense of  
place in all areas of the

city, where they can kind of  
live well, and it's more

livable, and we maintain  
the character. You know,

typically, the benefits are, you  
know, where we're trying to

promote pedestrian and bicycle  
friendly environments. We're

trying to support local

businesses, increase property

values, and, you know, kind of  
combat urban sprawls. Just more

sustainable if we develop sort  
of from the inside out.

And when we don't... MELISSA: We we  
control it. AMY: We control it. MELISSA: If

you're just now tuning in,  
you're listening to The Break

Room. I'm speaking with Amy  
Skinner this week. We're

talking about mobility-oriented  
development. It's a good

planning tool for the city. And  
we're talking about how we put

that to good use and why it's  
important to the city. Amy,

you were just talking about, you  
know, livability, and I just

want to point out to folks.

Part of this need or desire to

create this category of land

use is because we really try to

follow those principles that

are in our vision plan and

one of those is livability,

maintaining that certain

quality of life. I think we

feel overrun by

overdevelopment. You were

mentioning on our last

conversation about, you know,

the county is infilling as

opposed to us. We're not urban

sprawl. We're we're urban in-sprawl, if that's such a word.

And like said, it's that sense

of place, we want people to be

able to afford to live here. And

part of the development of that

or any other type of of hub,

like you were talking about, is

we don't want, we also are

afraid of this idea of these

big buildings. We don't want to

be Daytona Beach, we don't

want to be Disney, we don't

want to be Miami. So part of

that is, keeping in mind that

when these projects come come

to us. AMY: Right and you know there

is a matter of scale, excuse me.

There, the reality is for these

developments to work, you need

a certain amount of density,

which requires a certain amount

of height, because we have

smaller pieces of property. But

if you concentrate development

where it's more efficient, it's  
better for our infrastructure.

It, there's a certain amount  
of density that is needed to

justify other forms of  
transportation. You can't have

a circulator if it's basically  
running empty all the time.

You know, it's just it's  
not sustainable. But, you

know, we want to try to  
encourage a balance of jobs,

housing options, amenities, and  
again, that comes with a

certain amount of density. And  
if we all use it and if there's

more people to use it, then  
it's safer, it's, it's more

accessible, it's, you know. MELISSA: And  
it's better. And it's resident



centric. I think that's the  
other thing is I think, the

other that I hope we're  
conveying to our listeners is

these are planning tools  
solutions to help us. AMY: Yes. MELISSA: To

help make it so that, let's say  
you do live in the Shores or

you live out somewhere outside  
of downtown. What do we hear

all the time? I don't ever go  
downtown. It's too busy. I

can't find a place to park.  
If we can create these

transportation hubs. It's not  
just about, that's not about

tourism. That's about making  
our quality of life better. You

mentioned the circulator, the downtown

circulator, where that's

going to be in place. And I know

X has talked about the

potential of that expanding to

the island, expanding to this

particular location we're

talking about. AMY: Some things are

kind of a leap of faith. I

mean, we try our best.

We're, I I you know, idealistic

maybe. Maybe there

are unintended consequences, but

if we don't take the

opportunity and take and try to

take advantage of the

opportunity and as I've said,

control our own destiny. And

where as locals, as people,

residents that live here, then,

if we can get those people that  
come in from the beach or come

in from the south or the  
northwest part of the county,

get them off the roads. Let  
them, you know, take a shuttle,

take a... MELISSA: Enjoy downtown. AMY: Enjoy  
downtown, then that frees up

some of the space, shall we  
say, space downtown for locals

that know where to park, know  
where to go, what know what

they're doing, they're having  
routines, where they like to

get ice cream or whatever. You  
know, so that helps us, you

know, with our public spaces  
and with our preserving our

neighborhoods, and you know,  
just encouraging social

interactions where we can  
take advantage of that. MELISSA: Have a

better quality of life. Right.

Yeah. Well, we we are out of

time again. I will say one  
thing real quick. Think of this

as renovating your kitchen. You  
and I talked about this. You

can only change the color of  
your cabinets and resurface

your countertops so many times.

And eventually someday comes

this, the day comes where you  
say I really just need to blow

out that back wall and put a  
patio back there and really

embrace this space. And that  
renovation takes a long time.

You're not really sure what

it's going to look like and

then all of a sudden a year  
after the fact you look back

and you go, wow I'm really glad  
I did that. So let's let's hope

that this is one of those where  
it's a great leap of faith.

There's going to be a lot of  
change. And hopefully when all

is said and done we look at it  
and we go, oh that wasn't so bad

and that really looks nice and  
it makes a positive change. AMY: And

that's the truth. I mean, cities  
evolve over time. You know,

we're seeing an opportunity  
with this commuter rail. We're

hoping that it, you know,  
encourages our economy and the

public health and saves our  
environment and we can work

within our own community and  
and make it work. MELISSA: Great. Well

thank you for coming again to  
talk about mobility oriented

development. Check it out on  
our website. We've got a web

page dedicated to it. [CityStAug.com/MOD](http://CityStAug.com/MOD).

We have information there.  
We're putting together a white

sheet flyer for that. We're  
going to try to get together a

public service announcement,  
little little information video

so all kinds of information on  
MOD, what it is, why it's

important to the City of St  
Augustine. If you missed part

of this broadcast and want to  
go back and listen from the

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Thanks for tuning in. Until

next time. ANNOUNCER: You've been  
listening to The Break Room, a

weekly program addressing  
projects and programs offered

by the City of St Augustine.

Join us each week as the City's

Communications Director,  
Melissa Wissel, has in-depth

conversations with the people  
who make our town work to meet

the needs of our community. The  
Break Room is produced by

Communication Specialist for  
the of St Augustine, Cindy

Walker. See you at this time  
next week for another edition

of The Break Room.