

Tulsa City Council
One Technology Center
175, East 2nd St.
Tulsa OK 74103

Councilors,

SALES TAX EXTENSION

We strongly support the fresh consideration you are giving to the structure and timing of the sales tax extension. Public investments are crucial to the city's livability and increasingly, to Tulsa's ability to compete effectively with other cities. We have to get them right. As you deliberate, we recommend the following course of actions for your consideration.

Timing: We've observed an increasingly well-informed public conversation in recent days and weeks. The price for cutting off that discourse could be high when voters go to the polls. We urge you to abandon any notion of an April vote on any of the issues before you. There will be numerous opportunities before the current tax expires to call a vote. There are statewide elections scheduled in June and August, and even if a special election was necessary it would be a good investment when considering a package of this size.

More time will allow for a more participatory voter engagement in developing priorities, including polls and surveys which will lead to a better-structured, and more compelling set of relevant projects.

Structure: We support asking voters to re-authorize the full penny originally approved for Vision 2025, allowing Tulsa County to capture .1% of that for their capital needs. The remaining .9% could then be split along these lines: Permanent dedicated funding for Public Safety in the amount of .25%, Transit in the amount of .15%, and Parks and Recreation in the amount of .1%. The remaining .4% would then be available for Vision projects.

Term: As for the "temporary" tax for Vision projects, we implore you to sharply reduce the currently proposed 15-year term that would not expire until the end of 2031. The City of Tulsa can ill afford to commit every discretionary capital dollar for such a term when the world around us is changing at such an accelerated pace. A term of 6 to 10-years would allow future elected officials to respond to new challenges and opportunities more quickly.

Plans and Priorities: At Smart Growth Tulsa we are convinced the community is best served when public spending supports adopted plans. Please review every potential Vision project under a lens that considers how well it supports and implements those plans.

Respectfully,
Smart Growth Tulsa