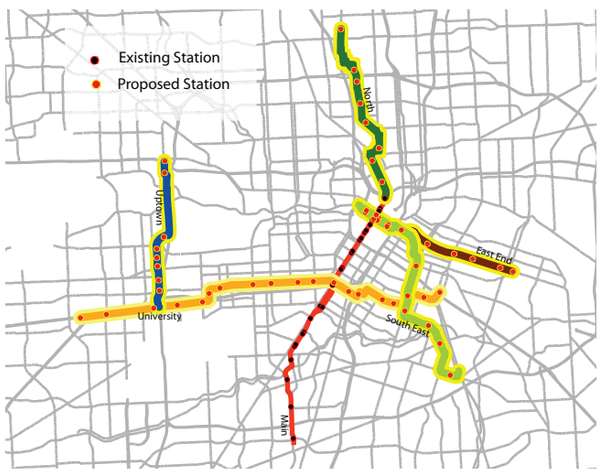
URBAN CORRIDOR PLANNING HOUSTON

Introduction

The purpose of the Urban Corridor Planning Initiative is to encourage an urban environment that improves pedestrian mobility, supports METRO's light rail investment, and helps accommodate the City's anticipated growth.

History

- The process began in spring 2006 with Phase 1. A Stakeholder Group was formed and a citywide workshop was held to identify top public concerns in the light rail corridors.
- In Phases 2 and 3 throughout 2007 and 2008, a consultant team was hired, analysis and public workshops conducted for each corridor, community representatives and development industry groups were consulted and the consultants reports were produced for each corridor.
- From 2008 to the present, the Phase 3 Implementation recommendations from the consultants and Urban Land Institute were received and the Mixed-Use / TOD Committee of the Houston Planning Commission was convened to shape proposed rules and prepare a draft ordinance.
- Throughout Phases 1 and 2, approximately 800 people participated and provided input.
- Approved by Houston Planning Commission on June 11, 2009. Adopted by Houston City Council on August 19, 2009. Ord. no. 2009-0762. Chapter 42 Article IV.



Metro Light Rail

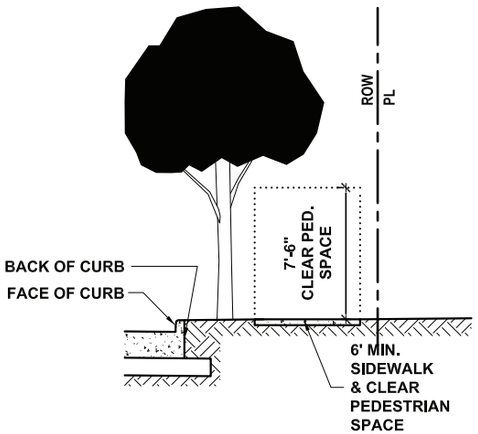
Transit Corridor Ordinance

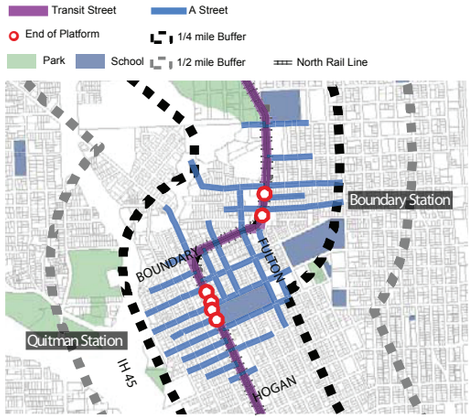
Mandatory Rules

New Development along transit corridor streets (TCS) and intersecting streets (Type "A" street) must comply with the following:

- Require sidewalks with a clear pedestrian space minimum 6 feet wide and 7-½ feet high along all transit corridor streets and Type A streets
- The city engineer has the authority to modify when it is technically or otherwise infeasible to comply

The changes will be handled by amendment to the building codes. The requirements can be fully accommodated in the public right of way.





Boundary & Quitman Station Area (North Corridor)

Opt-In Requirements

The incentive allows development within the building set back line

- New development of property abutting a transit corridor street or Type A street may use the performance standards. They must comply with all the requirements
- The applicant must submit a pedestrian access plan with the application for a building permit, development or other city permit
- The Director is authorized to prepare a map showing Type A streets

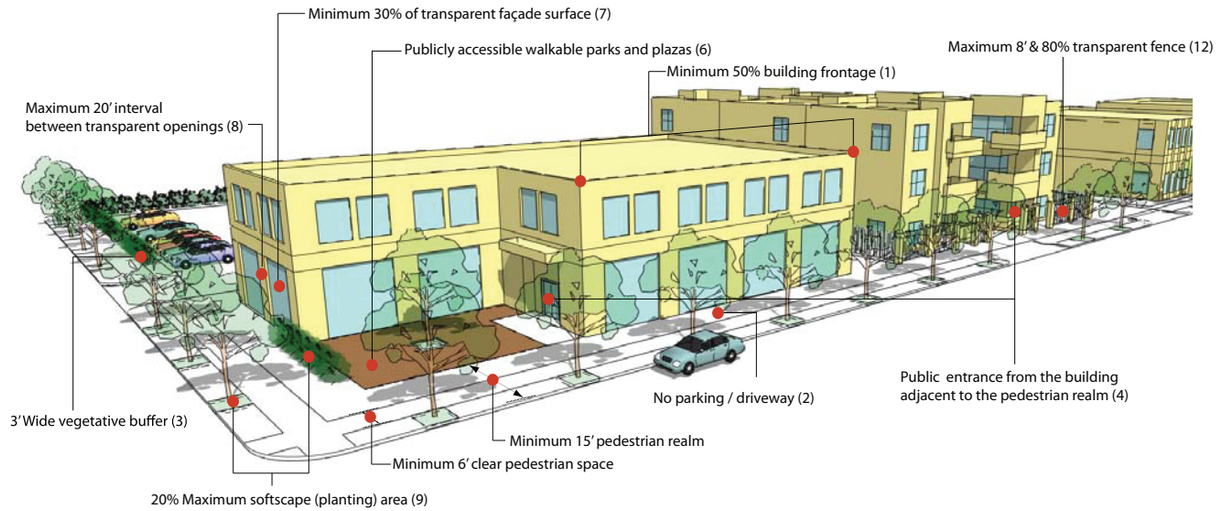
URBAN CORRIDOR PLANNING INITIATIVE

Transit corridor street and Type A street Pedestrian access standards

- The owner may build up to the property line but no closer than 15 feet from the back of curb, if the owner provides a pedestrian realm
- The pedestrian realm is at least 15 feet wide between the back of curb and the property line including a 6 feet wide sidewalk with a minimum 6 feet wide and 7 1/2 feet height clear pedestrian space within a street right-of-way or other public pedestrian access easement

Performance Standards

1. The facade of the building built within 10 feet of the pedestrian realm must be 50% of the lot width
2. No parking or driveways between the facade of the building and the pedestrian realm unless the facade is 25 feet back of the property line
3. A 3 feet wide vegetative buffer between the pedestrian realm and any surface parking
4. A public entrance from the building adjacent to the pedestrian realm
5. No building's doors may swing into the pedestrian realm
6. Publicly accessible walkable parks and plazas adjacent and connected to the pedestrian realm may be considered as part of the pedestrian realm
7. 30% of the surface of the facade between the ground and 8 feet high of buildings within 10 feet of the pedestrian realm must be transparent
8. The facade of the building within 10 feet of the pedestrian realm must have doors, windows or other openings every 20 feet
9. A maximum softscape (planting) area of 20% in the pedestrian realm
10. The softscape must be 2 feet back of curb of the street area used for parking
11. Property at the corner of a transit corridor street and a Type A street must have a pedestrian realm on the transit corridor street to have a pedestrian realm on the Type A street
12. Fences built on the front property line over 4 feet in height must be non-opaque and decorative for the portion exceeding 4 feet in height



New Single Family residential development on transit corridor streets and Type A streets

- May build up to the front property line but no closer than 15 feet from back of curb if they provide a pedestrian realm
- Any person using the performance standards must provide a driveway which allows for vehicle turnaround for all vehicles using the property

Dedication

- The pedestrian realm is a minimum 15 feet wide. If a property owner opts-in and there is less than 15 feet from the back of curb to the property line, the owner must provide the additional public right-of-way or easement to provide the 15 foot pedestrian realm.

Construction and Maintenance standards

- The property owner shall construct, install and maintain the sidewalks, clear pedestrian spaces and other improvements in the pedestrian realm.

http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/Urban/urban_cor.html
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