Proposed Walkable Places and Transit-Oriented Development Ordinances

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Project Background
Integrated Efforts of Plan Houston

- Walkable Places Ordinance
- Transit-oriented Development Ordinance
- Houston Complete Streets and Transportation Plan
- Houston Bike Plan
- Complete Communities
- Vision Zero
Ordinance Goals

To encourage pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development with an enhanced, walkable public realm.

- Benefits property owners by allowing more buildable area and adjusting parking requirements
- Benefits pedestrians and neighborhoods by creating safer and more walkable streetscapes and public spaces
- Benefits neighborhoods by creating a more lively and activated area with more eyes on the street
Integrated Pedestrian Realm

No connection to neighborhood

Connected to the neighborhood and surrounding development
Active Ground Floor

Little interaction with the building

Interactive
Mix of Land Uses

Single Use

Mixed-Use development
Multi-modal Street Design

Auto-oriented

Multi-modal
Walkable Places vs. TOD

Similarities:

1. **Objective:** to promote pedestrian friendly development tailored to the designated streets

2. **Approach:** to create mandatory and optional compliance tailored to the local context
   a) Primary Street(s) – mandatory compliance
   b) Secondary Street(s) – optional compliance

3. **Planning standards:** to establish 5 planning standards along each designated streets:
   a) Street width
   b) Pedestrian realm
   c) Building design
   d) Site design
   e) Off-street parking
## Walkable Places vs. TOD

### Differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WP Street</th>
<th>TOD Street</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Street Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>Any streets within the city limit</td>
<td>Streets within a ½ mile walking distance from the transit station platform</td>
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<td><strong>Eligible Party</strong></td>
<td>1. City of Houston; or 2. Property owners representing at least 50% of the total property frontage along each street segment</td>
<td>City of Houston</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Designation Requirement</strong></td>
<td>Min 1 street segment, no maximum requirements</td>
<td>Designated based on the TOD Street criteria</td>
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</table>
| **Planning Standards**  | 1. Some enhanced pedestrian realm standards are customizable  
                          2. Allow establishment of special parking requirements  
                          3. WP rules supersede TOD rules when both rules are applicable | 1. Enhanced pedestrian realm standards are established based on TOD Street classification  
                          2. Allow parking reduction/ exemption                                      |
Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards

Pedestrian Realm

No auto-related uses within the pedestrian realm, except driveway(s) perpendicular with the adjacent public streets. (35% softscape)
Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards

Building Design – Single Family Residential

Front Door facing the WP/ TOD Street with pedestrian access.

Non-opaque fence with a maximum height of 48 inches

If a tract is further subdivided, lot access must be from a shared driveway, Type 2PAE, alley or new public street created by the same subdivision plat.
**Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards**

**Building Design – Other Uses**

- **Min 10’ Clearance height for balconies and habitable structures**
- **Overhang is allowed to be constructed up to the property line.**

**Min 8’ Clearance height for canopies and other shade structures**

**Ground Floor Façade:** is the area of the building façade measured between the finished floor of the ground floor and a vertical height of 8 feet.

The total area of A (doors), B (windows) into occupiable space on the ground floor façade must be 50% along primary streets and 40% along secondary streets.

**Occupiable space** means an area inside the building intended for human activities (live, work, play, worship, shop, eat, or similar). It excludes areas such as storage or utility areas, parking garages, loading docks, etc.

One primary entrance facing the street.
Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards

Site Design

Parking Area on the Back

- Property line
- Building
- One 30’ two-way driveway (A)

Parking Area on the back or side

- Property line
- Building
- One 30’ two-way driveway on each secondary street (A)

Parking Area wrapped by the proposed building

- Property line
- Building
- Two 15’ one-way driveways (B)

Secondary Street

Primary Street
Ordinance Structure

Walkable Places Plan & TOD Plan
(Procedure to create the plans)
(Ch 33, Article IX Division 4 & 5)

Definitions
(Sec 1-2)

Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards
(Ch 10, Article I; Ch 42, Article IV)

Sidewalk Standards
(IDM; Ch 40, Article XXII)

Building Line Standards
(Ch 42, Article III Division 3)

Off-street Parking Standards
(Ch 26, Article VIII)

Right-of-way Width
(Sec 42-122)
Five guiding principles:

- Be sensitive to local context
- Ensure walkable urban form along proposed streets
- Promote safe multi-modal transportation
- Create a pleasant experience
- Obtain local support
Walkable Places Pilot Areas

- Near Northside
- Midtown
- Third Ward
Transit Corridor Ordinance

Challenges:

• The optional approach creates insufficient incentives
• Some standards limit development flexibility
• The transit street designation does not take adjacent land uses and local context into consideration
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Objective: to effectively promote transit-oriented development adjacent to METRO light rail & bus rapid transit (BRT) stations by:

- Establishing objective criteria to determine streets eligible for the TOD rules
- Designating eligible TOD Streets for each transit station
- Updating the planning standards to improve pedestrian friendly environment adjacent to the designated Streets
Transit Station Analysis Combined

METRO Rail Stations

TOD Street Type
- Primary
- Secondary
- HCAD Parcels

Source:
Date: 06.05.2020
Reference:

This map is made available for reference purposes only and should not be substituted for a survey product. The City of Houston will not accept liability of any kind in conjunction with its use.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Red Line North

Current Transit corridor Streets

Proposed TOD Streets
University Line/ Uptown BRT

Current Transit corridor Streets

Proposed TOD Streets
Project Timeline

Jan 2017 - May 2019
- Framework development
- Public outreach

Jun - Jul 2019
- Preliminary approval by WPC
- Preliminary approval by PC

Jan - May 2020
- Public Hearing
- PC recommendation

Aug - Dec 2019
- Ordinance language
- Users’ Guide
- Public engagement

Jun - Aug 2020
- City Council Consideration
Project Resources

• Project website:
  https://houstontx.gov/planning/wp-committee.html

• Ordinance related documents:
  https://houstontx.gov/planning/wp-tod-ordinance.html

• Users’ Guide: