Proposed Walkable Places and Transit-Oriented Development Ordinances

Presented by Muxian Fang
Principal Planner, Planning & Development Department

Wednesday, June 24, 2020
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
Multi-modal Street Design

Auto-oriented vs 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>
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<th>WP Street</th>
<th>TOD Street</th>
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<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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| **Eligible Party**     | 1. City of Houston; or  
2. Property owners representing at least 50% of the total property frontage along each street segment | City of Houston                                                            |
| **Designation Requirement** | Min 1 street segment, no maximum requirements | Designated based on the TOD Street criteria |
| **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

- Ground Floor Building Line
- Property Line
- Pedestrian Access Easement
- Unobstructed Sidewalk
- 4’ Safety Buffer
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

**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.
Enhanced Pedestrian Realm Standards

Site Design

Parking Area on the Back

Parking Area on the back or side

Secondary Street

Parking Area wrapped by the proposed building

Primary Street

A One 30’ two-way driveway

B Two 15’ one-way driveways

A One 30’ two-way driveway on each secondary 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)
Walkable Places

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 Place Pilot Areas
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
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Current Transit corridor Streets</th>
<th>Proposed TOD Streets</th>
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<tr>
<td>Transit Corridor Street Type</td>
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Project Resources

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

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

- **Users’ Guide:**
Discussion