

MPNA Comments regarding TOD Ordinance:

Museum Park, both a destination district, home to 16 museums/cultural institutions, and a heavily residential neighborhood, has few protections to maintain the park-like setting that provides the backdrop for 12 million visitors each year. While other neighborhoods including those west of Main and some in the Third Ward east of 288, have deed restrictions, minimum lot size restrictions, Home Owners Associations, etc. to provide protections from inappropriate development, Museum Park has only set-backs under current code, a restriction that would no longer exist on the proposed TOD streets.

Museum Park, however, does have a model for this neighborhood outlined in the 2016 Museum Park Livable Center Study. This study, completed through a matching grant provided by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, is the blueprint for the neighborhood's future development using form-based code.

Museum Park has experienced negative impact from the 2009 TOD ordinance and is thus cautious about embracing the expanded TOD area that may well bring more of such impact.

Specific concerns include:

- Lack of residential buffering: High-rise, high-density development along current TOD corridors, and expanded in the proposed ordinance, are exempted from buffering standards including building lighting, garage sheathing, fencing, and other buffering techniques designed to mitigate impact on adjacent single family residences.
- Noise Issues: High-rise, high-density development in residential neighborhoods requires noise mitigation for oversized chillers and other exterior mechanical installations, not included in the proposed ordinance. Further, outdoor noise from mixed-use development must be addressed. Current ordinances allow businesses to purchase extended-day permits or annual permits to increase noise levels from 68 to 75 decibels, resulting in a significantly negative impact on residents' quality of life. Revising ordinances to preclude use of permits within XX distance of residential properties is critical.
- Preservation of existing trees. With the proposed TOD requirements of 20'/15' setbacks and sidewalk width requirements of 6'-8,' beautiful years-old trees, many of which are located in current easements, will be destroyed, forever impacting not just the immediate area but the environment of Houston and beyond.
- Parking issues: Museum Park residents support greater use of mass transit, however, millions currently visit the museums/cultural institutions annually using private vehicles. As a destination district, Museum Park is overwhelmed at times with visitor parking. And as MP enters a new phase of on-street parking codes, recently approved by City Council and effective February 11, questions abound for those living/working here. To multiply the impact by granting market-based parking and/or 50% reduced parking for high-rise structures almost simultaneously does not allow considered evaluation of the first set of ordinances before the second becomes effective.

Questions:

- Why are condos (owner occupied) treated as commercial properties when figuring 75% residential for exclusion from TOD?

- Can Planning provide outcomes for ½ block (currently parking lot) of property bounded by La Branch (west), Calumet (north), and Crawford (east) under current TOD rules vs. proposed TOD rules? And recently abandoned hospital bounded by La Branch (west), Calumet (south), Crawford (east), and Prospect (north)? Also outcomes for the parking lot at 5400 block of Crawford, bounded by Calumet (south), Crawford (west), and Prospect (north)?
- How will TOD ordinance treat setbacks/design on different TOD street types and non-TOD streets bounding a development that fronts at least one TOD street? If a development is bounded by a primary, secondary, and non-TOD street, will each street have a different setback and look based on requirement for each type of street? Or will existing setbacks/design of street itself be the requirement?

Museum Park Livable Center:

- Museum Park Livable Center Study continues to be the blueprint for this neighborhood. With support from District D and Southeast Management District plans for the Caroline Promenade are in the pre-design phase. Once complete the Super Neighborhood (with support from MPNA) will continue to work toward the realization of the Caroline Promenade.
- Our goal is to establish a working relationship with Planning Department built on the tenets of the Museum Park Livable Center Study.