


**Livable Places Action Committee**  
Virtual Meeting

**Suvidha Bandi**  
Principal Planner  
Planning & Development Department  
City of Houston


April 20, 2021





PLANNING &  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT


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**SPEAKER RULES**

**Mute to Listen;  
Unmute to Speak**  
  
(For dialing in, \*6 to mute/unmute)


**Request to Speak**  
  
Teams Chat window  
Call POD 832-393-6600

**Wait to be  
Recognized by Chair**  



**State Full Name;  
Speak up Clearly**  


**Public comments in the end**

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**DIRECTOR  
MARGARET  
WALLACE BROWN**




**PROJECT MANAGER  
SUVIDHA BANDI**

3




**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
MICHAEL KRAMER**



**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
JENNIFER OSTLIND**

4



**Planning Commission  
CHAIR  
MARTY STEIN**

**Livable Places Action  
Committee CO-CHAIR  
SONNY GARZA**

**Livable Places Action  
Committee CO-CHAIR  
LISA CLARK**

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### Meeting Agenda

**Welcome by Chairs**

**Director's report**

Technical Advisory Group meeting outcome – Physical separation distance

Recap on proposed amendments

- Dumpster screening
- Garage screening
- Lighting fixtures

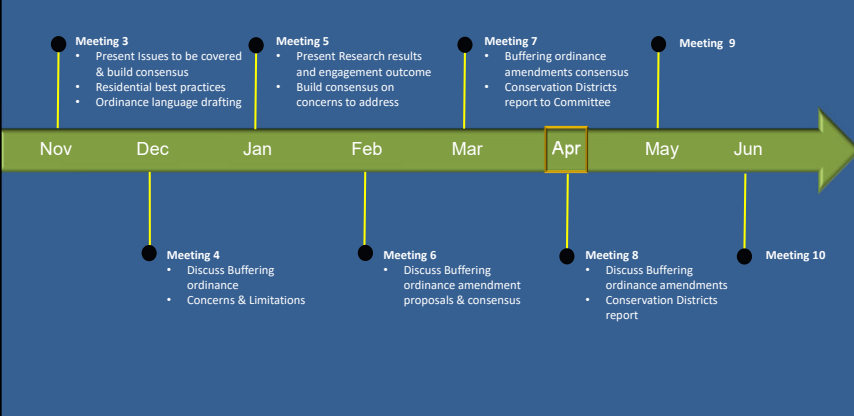
Conservation Districts Focus Group Report

Homework activity & next meeting

Public comments

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### Project schedule



**Meeting 3**

- Present Issues to be covered & build consensus
- Residential best practices
- Ordinance language drafting

**Meeting 4**

- Discuss Buffering ordinance
- Concerns & Limitations

**Meeting 5**

- Present Research results and engagement outcome
- Build consensus on concerns to address

**Meeting 6**

- Discuss Buffering ordinance amendment proposals & consensus

**Meeting 7**

- Buffering ordinance amendments consensus
- Conservation Districts report to Committee

**Meeting 8**

- Discuss Buffering ordinance amendments
- Conservation Districts report

**Meeting 9**

**Meeting 10**

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**MUXIAN FANG**



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**Distance Separation Standard Overarching Principles**

Establish distance separation standards to:

1. Encourage high-rise developments along major corridors and in Major Activity Centers
2. Discourage high-rise developments along local streets where most residence occurs
3. Guide compatible mid-rise developments abutting existing single-family residence along local streets

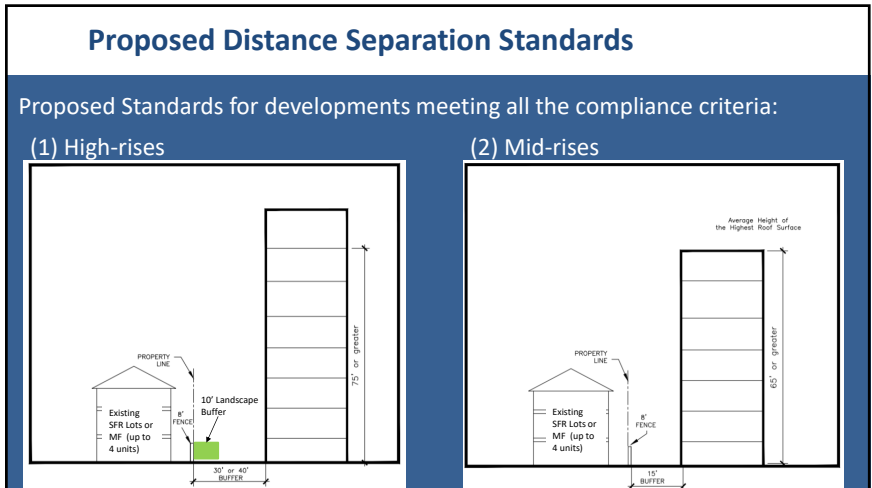
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**Proposed Distance Separation Standards**

Compliance criteria

Current Criteria	Proposed Amendments
1) Adjacent to or taking access from a public street other than a Major Thoroughfare or a Transit Corridor Street	1) Adjacent to or taking access from a public street other than a Major Thoroughfare or a Transit Corridor Street
2) Not located in a Major Activity Center	2) Not located in a Major Activity Center
3) Greater than 75 feet in height (high-rise building height)	3) Create two building height criteria, one for high-rises & one for mid-rises abutting or taking access from only a local street . Different distance separation standards are proposed for the two types of development respectively:  (a) High-rises: greater than 75 feet in height (high-rise building height) (b) Mid-rises: greater than 65 feet in height (actual building height)
4) Majority of the adjacent SFR lots greater than 3500 sqft	4) Majority of the abutting properties are either existing single-family residential development or small-scale multi-family residential (up to 4 units)
5) Min 60% of a property line adjacent to SFR lots greater than 3500 sqft	5) Min 60% of a property line abuts either existing single-family residential development or small-scale multi-family residential (up to 4 units)

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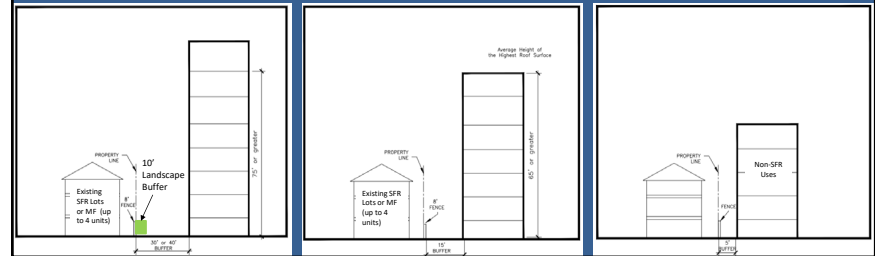
### Draft Distance Separation Standards – Summary

Current Requirements		Proposed Amendments	
Applicability Criteria	Buffer Area Standards	Applicability Criteria	Buffer Area Standards
1) Adjacent to or taking access from a public street other than a Major Thoroughfare or a Transit Corridor Street	1) Min 30 feet wide buffer area if adjacent to or taking access from a Collector Street	1) Adjacent to or taking access from a public street other than a Major Thoroughfare or a Transit Corridor Street	(a) High-rises greater than 75 feet in height (high-rise building height): 1) Min 30 feet wide buffer area if adjacent to or taking access from a Collector Street
2) Not located in a Major Activity Center	2) Min 40 feet wide buffer area if adjacent to or taking access from a local street	2) Not located in a Major Activity Center	2) Min 40 feet wide buffer area if adjacent to or taking access from a local street
3) Greater than 75 feet in height	3) Include a 10 feet landscape buffer & an 8' fence/wall	3) Create two building height criteria, one for high-rises & one for mid-rises abutting or taking access from only a local street . (a) High-rises: greater than 75 feet in height (high-rise building height) (b) Mid-rises: greater than 65 feet in height (actual building height)	3) Include a 10 feet landscape buffer & an 8' fence/wall 4) No structures or covered parking within the buffer area 5) Vehicular access and surface parking are allowed
4) Majority of the adjacent SFR lots greater than 3500 sqft	4) No structures or covered parking within the buffer area	4) Majority of the property line abutting existing SFR or small-scale multi-family residential (up to 4 units)	(b) Mid-rises greater than 65 feet in height (actual building height) and the development abuts or takes access from only a local street: 1) Min 15 feet wide buffer area 2) Provide an 8' fence/ wall 3) No structures or covered parking within the buffer area 4) Vehicular access and surface parking are allowed
5) Min 60% of a property line adjacent to SFR lots greater than 3500 sqft	5) Vehicular access and surface parking are allowed	5) Min 60% of a property line adjacent to SFR lots or small-scale multi-family residential (up to 4 units)	

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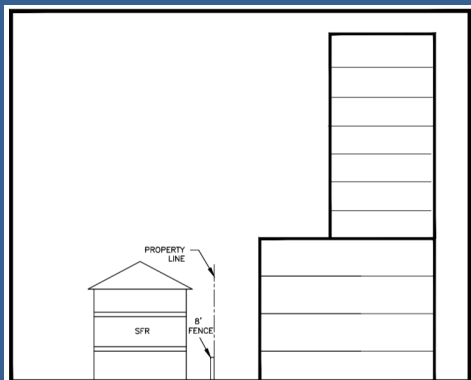
### Distance Separation Requirement Summary

- (1) High-rises abutting existing SFR lots or MF (up to 4 units)
- (2) Mid-rises solely along local streets & taller than 65' abutting existing SFR lots or MF (up to 4 units)
- (3) All other proposed new buildings



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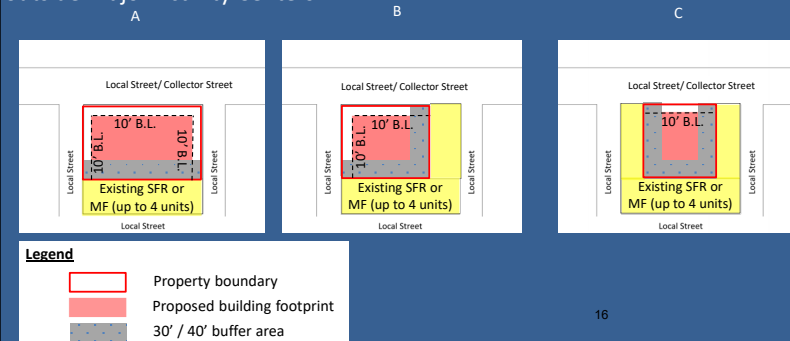
### Establish Different Buffer Standards for Staircase Buildings?



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### Proposed Distance Separation Standards – High-rises

Fronting a public street other than a Major Thoroughfare/ Transit Corridor Street outside Major Activity Centers



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### Proposed Distance Separation Standards – Mid-rises (>65' tall)

Fronting a public local street outside Major Activity Centers

**A**

**B**

**C**

**Legend**

- Property boundary
- Proposed building footprint
- 15' buffer area

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### Major Activity Centers - Criteria

- Two or more major thoroughfares or abuts a freeway or transit corridor street
- At least 400 acres of land
- At least 10,000,000 sf of gross floor area developed for other uses
- No more than 3% is single-family residential
- Properties used for two or more uses other than single-family residential
- Contiguous tracts

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### Map of Major Activity Centers

**City of Houston Major Activity Centers**

**MAC**

- MAC 1: Westchase
- MAC 2: The Energy Corridor
- MAC 3: The Medical Center
- MAC 4: Greenspoint
- MAC 5: Memorial City/Town & Country/City Centre
- MAC 6: Uptown
- MAC 7: Greenway
- MAC 8: Downtown
- Full Purpose City Limits

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## Meeting Agenda

Welcome by Chairs  
 Director's report  
 Technical Advisory Group meeting outcome - Physical separation distance  
**Recap on proposed amendments**

- Dumpster screening
- Garage screening
- Lighting fixtures

Conservation Districts Focus Group Report  
 Homework activity & next meeting  
 Public comments

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## Recap on proposed amendments

Dumpster screening standards  
 Garage screening standards  
 Lighting fixture standards

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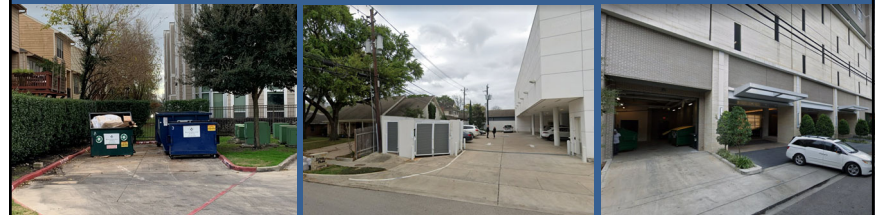
## Current Dumpster/Bulk Container Standards

City of Houston related regulations related to dumpsters:

1. No screening or location requirements for dumpsters adjacent to residential uses
2. Ch. 39 requires screenings to make dumpsters invisible from the street on the address side of the property
3. Ch. 39 allows a berm, building, fence, wall, gate, shrubbery as screening when visible
4. Ch. 20 requires that dumpsters have tight fitting lids and kept closed
5. Ch. 40 requires that dumpsters be not left on the roadway or sidewalks
6. Ch. 26 requires that existing or planned dumpsters be shown on the site plan
7. Ch. 42 site plans must illustrate screening for bulk containers required
8. Ch. 42 Any bulk container and related screening shall be located outside the pedestrian realm

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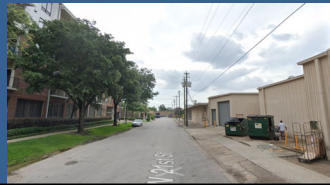
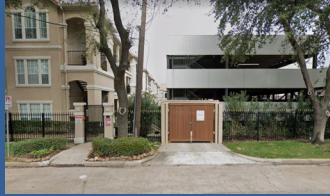
## Dumpster/Bulk Container Screening



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### Current Dumpster/Bulk Container Screening Standards

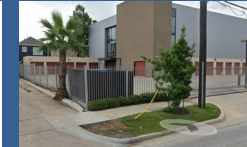
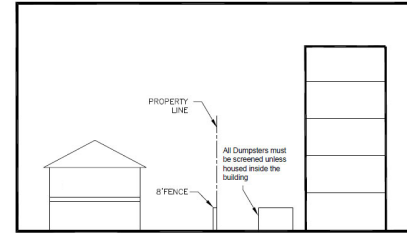
- Dumpster must not be visible from the street right-of-way on the address side of the property.
- A berm, building, fence, wall, gate, shrubbery, or a combination can be used for screening.
- A dumpster located on a service drive behind a building on said property shall not be deemed visible from the street right-of-way.



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### Proposed Dumpster/Bulk Container Screening Standards

Require screening of less than 8' high for all dumpsters on new developments unless housed inside the building



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### Current Garage Screening Standards (Section 406.2.11, Building Code)

Any part of an abutting development used as parking garage structure shall:

1. Provide an exterior cover for each floor directly facing SFR within 30'
2. The exterior cover shall be:
  - a) An **opaque surface or screen mesh** of sufficient rating to block headlights
  - b) At least **42 inches** in height from finished floor per tier
  - c) Positioned to block headlights shining into adjacent properties for ramps and other sloped surfaces
  - d) Not required for a finished floor over **50 feet** from grade

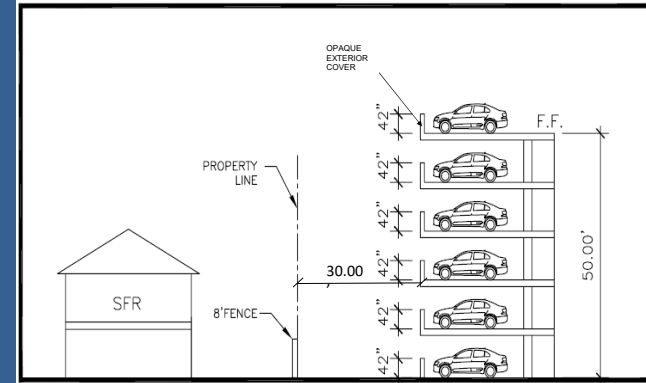
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### Garage Screening Standards



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### Current Garage Screening Standards

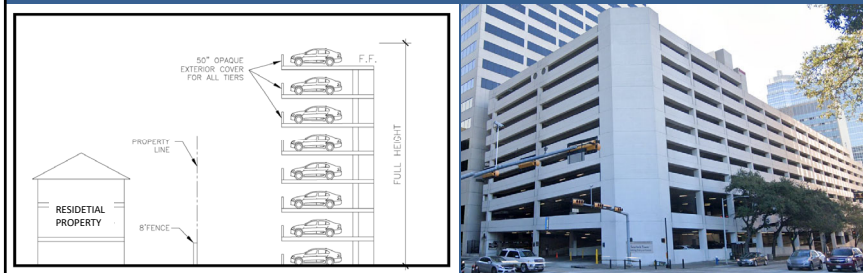


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### Proposed Garage Screening Standards

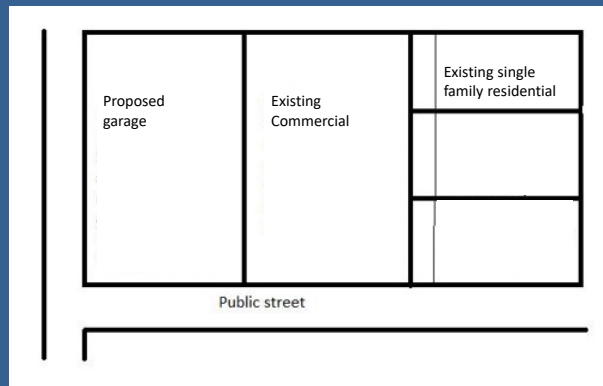
To address lighting from car headlights:

Provide 50" opaque exterior cover for all garage faces on all tiers abutting residential developments or streets



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### Garage Screening concern during TAG meeting



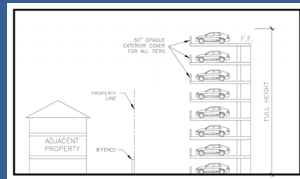
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### Modified Garage Screening Amendment Proposal

To address lighting from car headlights:

- Provide 50" opaque exterior cover for all garage faces on all tiers except for garage faces interior to the site on campus style developments
- For ramps and other sloped surfaces, the exterior cover shall be positioned to block headlights from emitting any light into adjacent properties.
- The exterior cover shall be made of an opaque surface or screen mesh material of sufficient rating to block headlights.
- Screening must meet the "openness" and ventilation requirements of the code.



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### Proposed Garage Screening Standards

To address lighting trespass from garage ceiling lights, select one of the following:

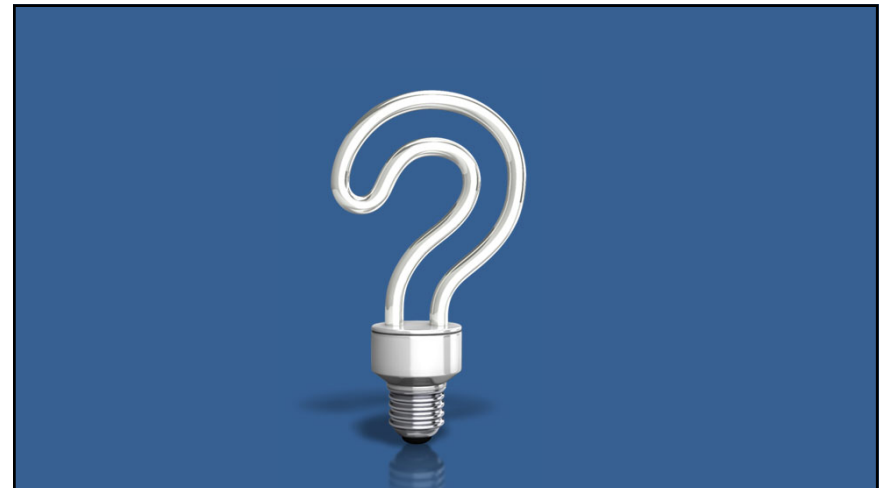
1. Full screening for entire height of the garage facing street or abutting residential development to prevent light trespass or;
2. All internal garage lights must meet appropriate national standards and must be shielded when located along the periphery or;
3. Provide a photometric plan to demonstrate that no light trespass occurs beyond the property line that exceeds 0.2 fc (foot candles) measured at grade



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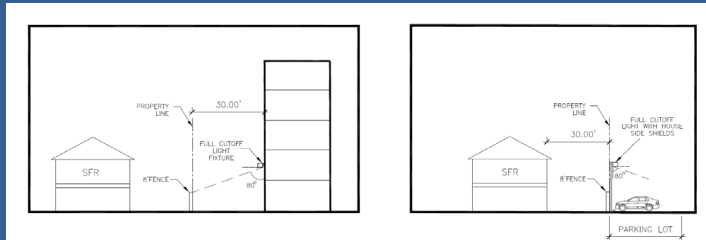


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### Current Lighting Fixture Standards (Section 513.1, Building Code)

All wall mounted outdoor fixtures installed on an abutting development within 30 feet of a SFR home shall be **full cutoff**

All pole mounted outdoor fixtures installed on an abutting development within 30 feet of a SFR home shall be **full cutoff with house side shields**.



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### Lighting Fixtures Standards



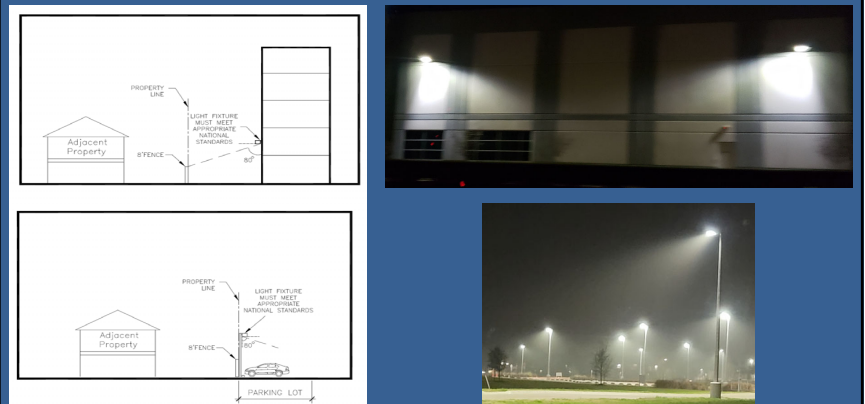
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### Proposed Lighting Fixtures Standards

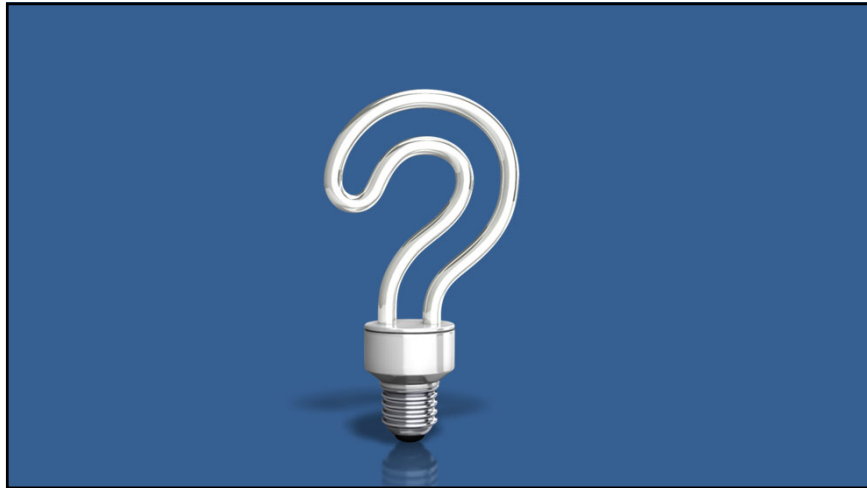
- Require all wall mounted and pole mounted outdoor fixtures installed on any development to meet appropriate national standards
- All pole mounted outdoor fixtures adjacent to other developments must provide house side shields to minimize light trespass
- Alternative for lights signifying a brand, architectural façade illumination, task lights, and display or ornamental lights will be considered
- All outdoor fixtures are recommended to have “correlated color temperature” CCT (Correlated Color Temperature) of no more than 3,000-3500 kelvins maximum and CRI (Color Rendering Index) OF 80+
- Lighting controls such as photocell, motion sensors, dimmers must be used.

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### Proposed Lighting Fixtures Standards



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Public comments

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**ROMAN MCALLEN**



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**Existing Character Protection Tools**

**Minimum Building Line**  
Preserves the building line character of a single-family residential neighborhood or block that does not have a minimum building line requirement established by deed restrictions.

**Minimum Lot Size**  
Preserves the lot size character of a single-family residential area or block that does not have a minimum lot size established by deed restrictions.

**Prohibited Yard Parking**  
Protects neighborhood property values, aesthetic appearance of the areas and prevents damage to the City of Houston’s underground infrastructure by prohibiting parking of vehicles on any unimproved surface (front or side yard) in single-family residential areas.

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## Existing Preservation Tools

**Historic Districts**  
Ordinance allowing them adopted in 1993

- Proposed work in a Historic District must meet the 11 criteria established by that ordinance and significant work must be reviewed by the Houston Archeological and Historic Commission
- Majority of existing buildings in a proposed district must be 50 years old or older unless deemed of "extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age."
- Requires affirmative response by a minimum of 67% of property owners

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## Conservation Districts

The Conservation District Task Force (CDTF) recommends to the Livable Places Action Committee that the City establish a framework for creating Conservation Districts in the City of Houston.

**Why:**

- There are neighborhoods that would benefit from certain aspects of historic preservation that will lack the ability to garner support for historic districts due to the restrictions that come with them
- Historic districts maintain status quo and there are areas that wish to change but need a more modest level of protection

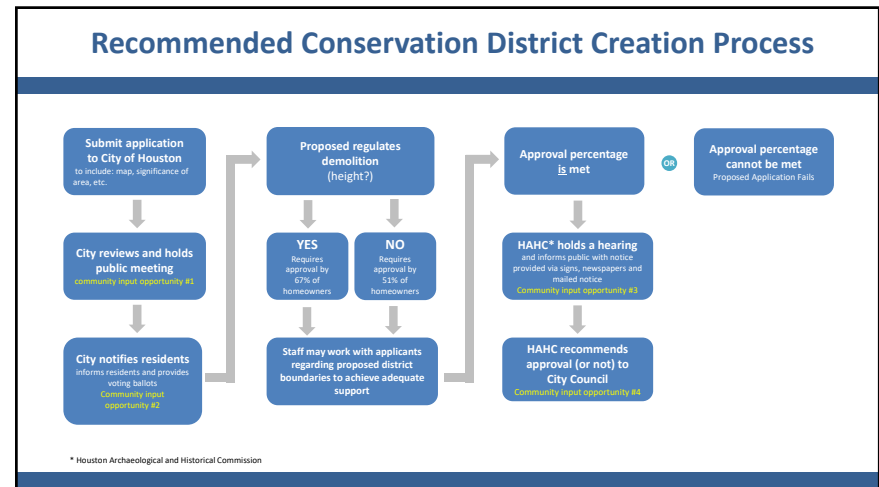
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## Purpose

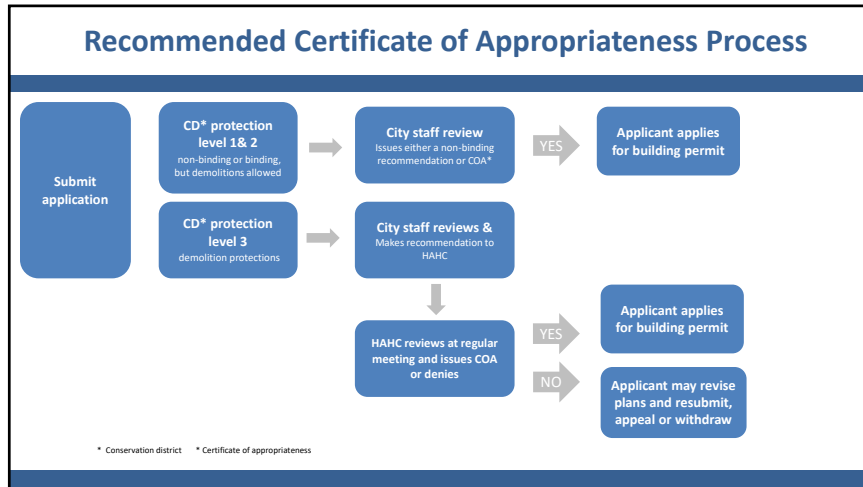
**Key Points:**

- Purpose: to provide a new tool for property owners and residents to protect their community's character
- The CDTF sees potential conservation districts being used as part of future policy tools in the implementation of strategies to address affordability and historic preservation which should rely on incentives more often than regulation
- Historic Districts may be included within the boundaries of a Conservation District
- Conservation Districts will be tailor made solutions to the preservation challenges as seen by the residents who seek to establish the districts

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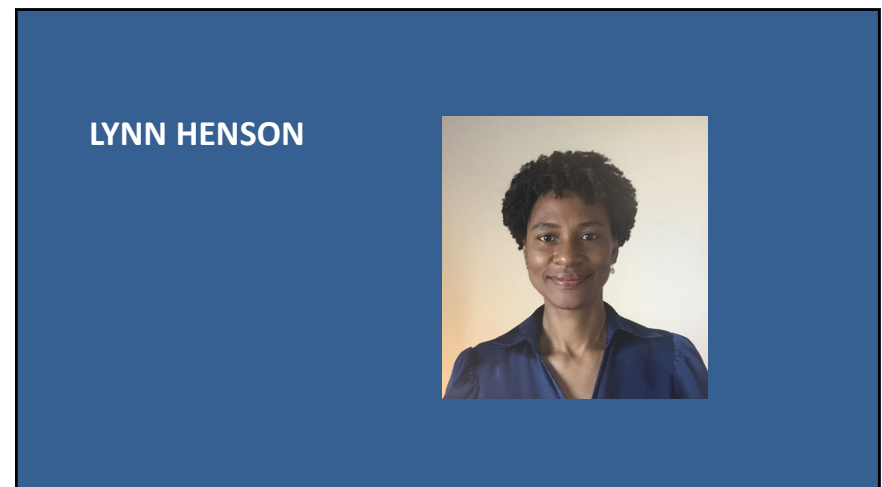
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## Homework Activities

[www.LetsTalkHouston.org/Livable-Places](http://www.LetsTalkHouston.org/Livable-Places)

- Residential Buffering Ordinance -Proposed amendments survey
- Read articles



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## Let's Talk Houston!

[www.LetsTalkHouston.org/Livable-Places](http://www.LetsTalkHouston.org/Livable-Places)

### Residential Buffering Ordinance Proposed Amendments

The [Livable Places Action Committee](#) is considering changes to the city's Code of Ordinances to address the effects of abutting high-density developments on existing single family residential homes. The committee provides the opportunity for you to review and comment on proposed changes.

This survey allows you to review the proposed standards and provide comments on each of the 5 items listed below. Each proposed item is presented on a separate page. To access the current ordinances related to each, click the adjacent link.

- Garage Screening ([existing ordinance](#))
- Lighting Fixtures ([existing ordinance](#))
- Dumpster/Bulk Container Screening ([existing ordinance](#))
- Proposed Distance Separation Standards - High-Rise ([existing ordinance](#))
- Proposed Distance Separation Standards - Mid-Rise Taller than 65' ([existing ordinance](#))

Please complete this survey by May 14th 2021.

### Residential Buffering Related Articles

News articles

The following articles are provided for discussion purposes relating to the residential buffering ordinance proposed amendments.

- [Developers already eyeing commercial-to-res conversions](#)  
April 16, 2021 09:30 AM  
<https://www.bizjournals.com/houston/news/2021/04/16/development-commercial-to-residential-conversions.html>
- [What Will Happen to All the Empty Office Buildings and Hotels?](#)  
by C. J. Hughes  
April 16, 2021  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/us/economy/empty-office-buildings-hotels.html>


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## Contacts and Resources

**Livable Places**  
[LivablePlaces@houstontx.gov](mailto:LivablePlaces@houstontx.gov)  
 832.393.6600

**Suvidha Bandi**  
 Jennifer Ostlind  
 Lynn Henson

[www.HoustonPlanning.com](http://www.HoustonPlanning.com)  
[www.LetsTalkHouston.org](http://www.LetsTalkHouston.org)



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**Next meeting**  
**May 18<sup>th</sup>**  
**3-5pm**

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**Public comments**

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## Instructions for Public Comments

2 minutes per speaker

Press \*6 if connected on phone

Click on the microphone button

State your full name & spell your last name



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