


Livable Places Action Committee

Virtual Meeting

Suvidha Bandi
Principal Planner
Planning & Development Department
City of Houston

January 12, 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**

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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

Recap

Public engagement outcome

Site visit summary

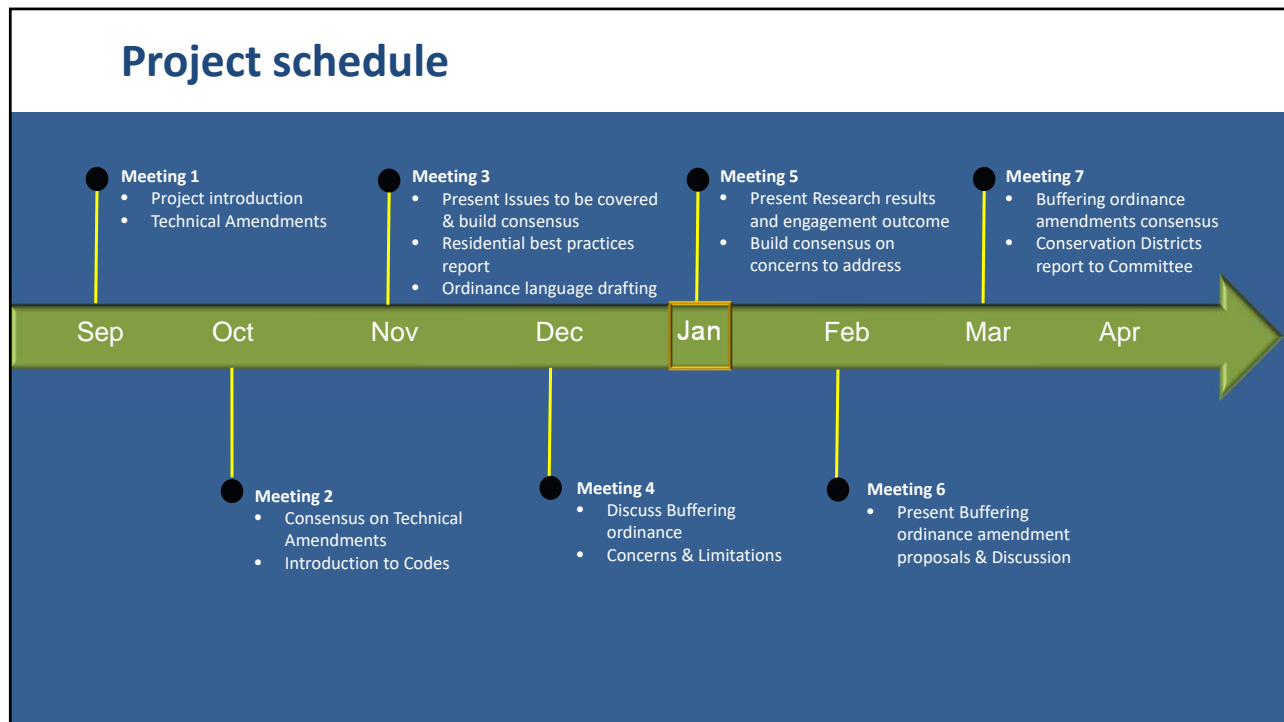
Research from other cities

Residential buffering concerns & consensus

Homework activity & next meeting

Public comments

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Recap

Residential buffering

The mitigating measures provided while developing high density structures adjacent to single family residential developments

Why was it introduced

To address the effects of abutting high density developments on existing single family residential homes

What are the existing ordinance regulations

We will go through them in the next few slides

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Abutting development

Abutting development is:

- Located on property not used or restricted to single-family residential use (SFR); and
- Directly abutting or within 30 feet of a SFR property

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Residential buffering regulations

Garage screening standards (Section 406.2.11, Building Code)

Apply to all Abutting Developments in the city

Lighting fixture standards (Section 513.1, Building Code)

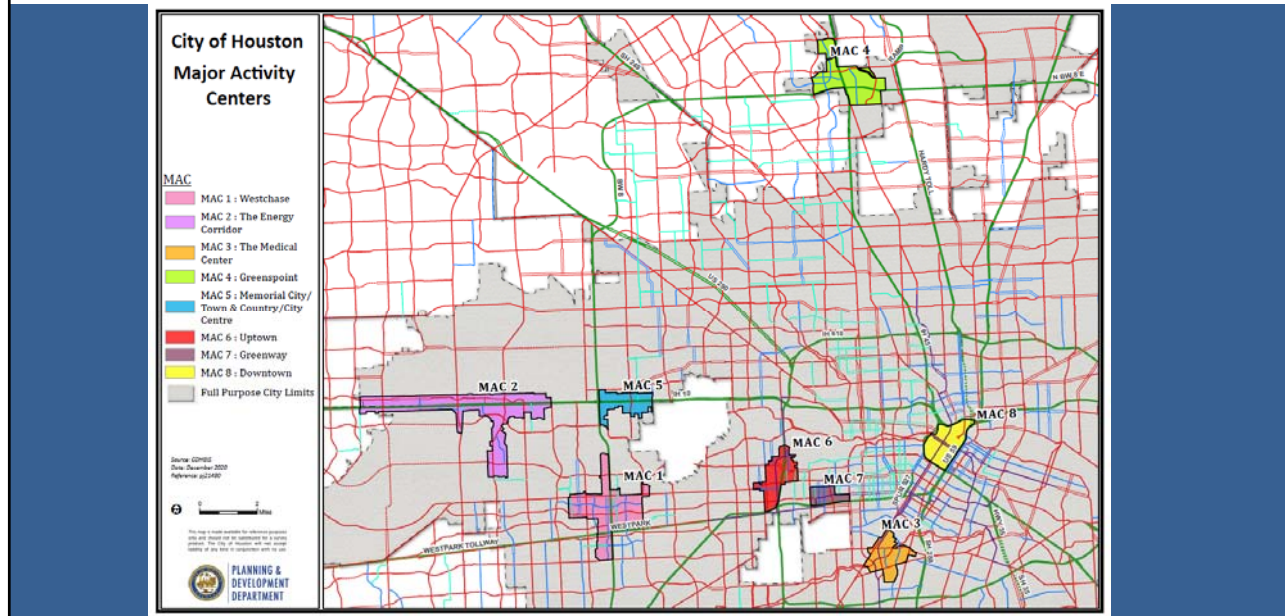
Apply to all Abutting Developments in the city

Residential buffer area standards (Sec 42.271 & 272, Code of Ordinances)

Only apply to Abutting Developments meeting certain requirements

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Map of MAC's



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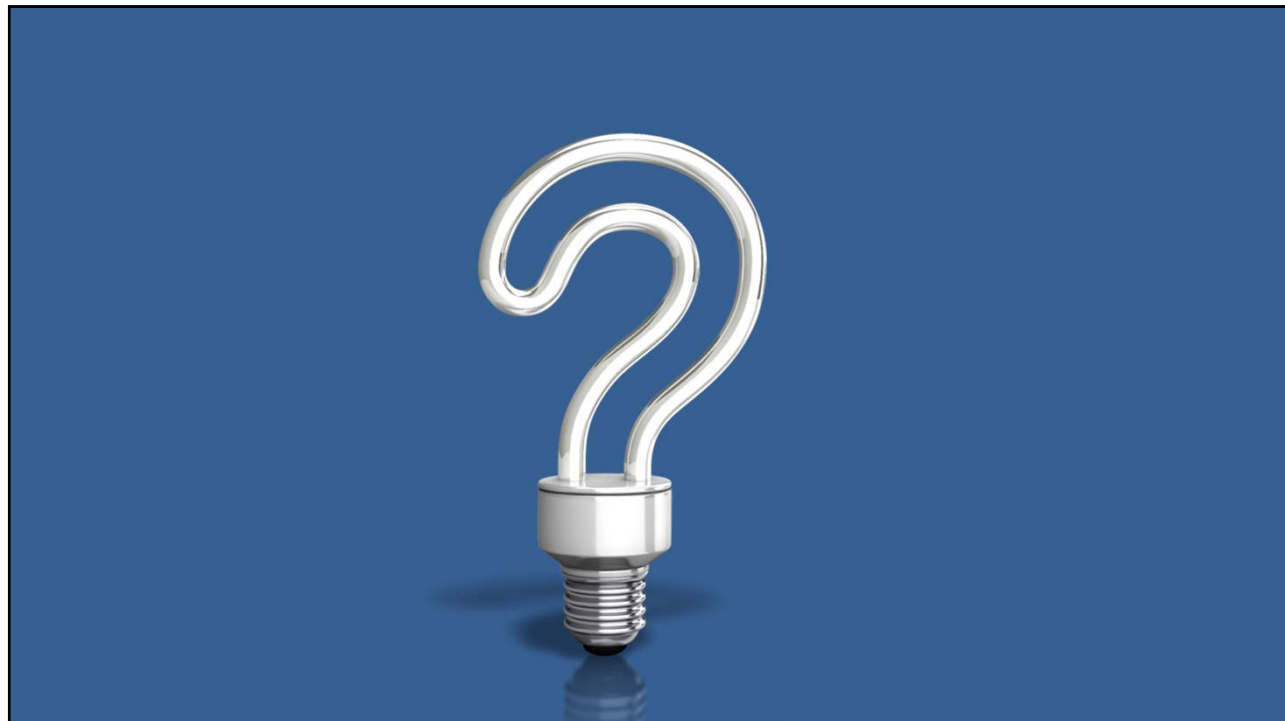
Matrix

Applicability	Abutting Development		
	Residential Buffering Applies?	Garage Screening Required?	Cut-off Lighting Required?
Lots used or restricted to SFR immediately abutting the property	Yes, if additional criteria are met	Yes	Yes
SFR lots are across public street or alley less than 30 feet	Yes, if additional criteria are met	Yes	Yes
Height of the structure less than 50 feet	No	Yes	Yes
Height more than 50' but less than 75 feet	No	No, not beyond 50 feet	Yes
Height more than 75 feet	Yes	No, not beyond 50 feet	Yes
Along Transit corridor streets, major thoroughfares or within MAC	No	Yes	Yes
Majority of SFR lots abutting are less than 3500 sf.	No	Yes	Yes
60% of the length of the property line has abutting lots smaller than 3500 sf.	No	Yes	Yes

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Residential Buffering Ordinance: Summary*		
*Note: Document for discussion purposes only. Refer to the ordinances for detailed requirements.		
Abutting Development		
Structure on property not in use for or restricted to single-family residential (SFR) Directly abutting property used for or restricted to SFR Within 30 feet of property used for or restricted to SFR		
<p>Residential Buffering Standards</p> <p>Shall apply to abutting developments within the City that are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75'gh as measured from grade to top habitable finished floor or top garage floor abutting local or collector streets only majority of lots abutting the property line are greater than 3500 sf. 60% of the length of the property line has abutting lots greater than 3500 sf. outside a major activity center (MAC) <p>Shall not apply to abutting developments within the City that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> abut or take access from major thoroughfare (MT) or transit corridor street (TCS) abut or take access from both local or collector street and major thoroughfare or transit corridor street located within a MAC <p>Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30' buffer area from single-family residential (SFR) development when abutting collector street 40' buffer area from SFR development when abutting local street 10' landscape buffer within the buffer area next to abutting development 8' Solid masonry wall or an 8' wooden fence grass, shrubs other vegetation or non-vegetative permeable cover with no paving No mechanical equipment in the 10' landscape buffer Min one tree planted or preserved for every 20' along the abutting development <p>Ordinance Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 42-1 Chapter 42-271 through 273 	<p>Garage Screening</p> <p>Shall apply to any part of an abutting development used as parking garage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> where parking directly faces SFR development or ramps and other sloped surfaces facing SFR development <p>Shall not apply to any floor of the parking garage structure which has a finished floor over 50 feet in height from grade.</p> <p>Requirements</p> <p>Exterior cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is made of an opaque surface or screen mesh material of sufficient rating to block headlights must be provided for each floor where parking faces SFR development shall be at least 42 inches in height measured from the finished floor where parking occurs for ramps and sloped surfaces, it must block headlights from emitting any light on SFR development <p>Ordinance Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42-1 406.2.11 	<p>Full Cutoff Lighting fixtures</p> <p>Shall apply to any lighting fixtures installed (outdoor wall mounted, or pole mounted) on an abutting development within 30 feet of an abutting SFR development.</p> <p>Full cutoff fixture shall mean a light fixture that prevents the light from spillover in all directions.</p> <p>Shall not apply to lighting fixtures installed that are not within 30' of SFR development</p> <p>Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full cutoff fixtures for any wall mounted outdoor fixtures Full cutoff fixtures with house side shields on all pole mounted fixtures <p>Ordinance Reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42-1 Building code 513.1

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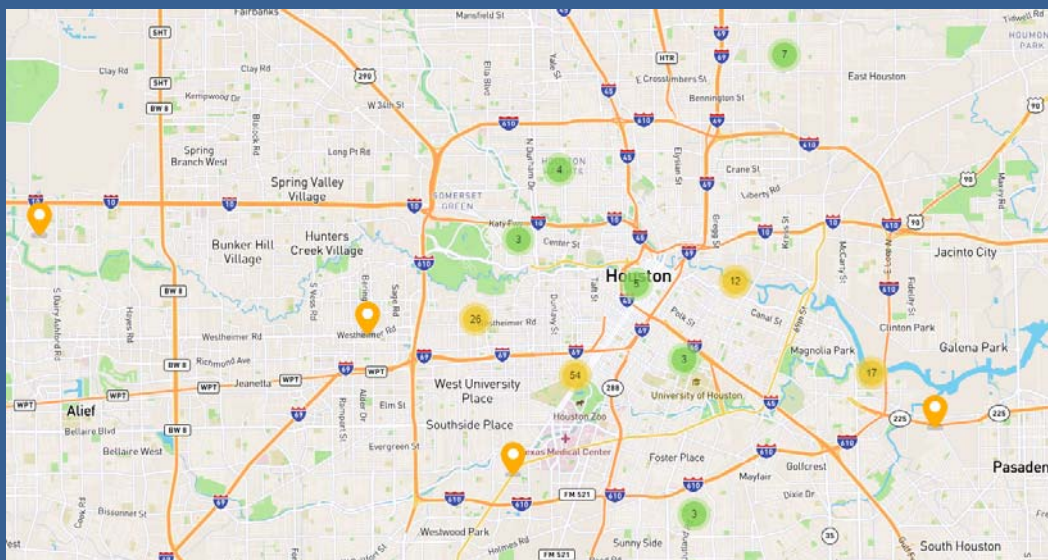
Residential buffering concerns & consensus

Homework activity & next meeting

Public comments

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Public engagement outcome



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Public engagement outcome

Received 131 pins in the map tool activity

- 45 pins represent high rises (26 are proposed)
- 26 represent mid rises (2 are proposed)
- 30 represent 2-4 stories
- 30 represent open land, truck yard sites, industrial development next to homes

Received 10 feedback/suggestions

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Map tool summary					
Pins	Stories	Development	Concerns/Comments	Good aspects	Staff Findings
24	5-11	Apartment or condos next to single family homes.	Building too close, access to narrow streets, excessive noise, light shining from the building, too tall, blocks signal from adjacent cell tower, did not assess parking needs correctly as they take up all on street parking, more distance must be kept from homes, construction noise through the night, construction vehicles blocked the road, increased traffic, block sunlight, noise from ground floor retail, affects value of homes, removal of trees, flooding, lost sense of privacy, trash thrown into home yards, no proper provision for dumpsters leading them to block the traffic lanes, visitor parking not planned, streets are dangerous to walk, lack of green space	Good distance from adjacent residential development, provided garage screening, walled dumpster, tall trees that block light and ground floor retail.	Apartment complex or condos next to single family. Garage screening and cut off lighting requirements apply.
10	13	Boone Manor - under construction	Construction noise, no silica dust mitigation, height of the structure compared to other buildings, street closures, parking lot and construction equipment shines light, parking occupied by construction vehicles, enforcement is not adequate, wrong way drivers, illegal parking, no dust mitigation, property damage from construction vehicles, noise and parking ordinance violations, too much traffic, creates shadows, trash, no ground floor retail, violation of noise and parking ordinance		Concerns forward to the relevant department, not within the scope, ground floor retail is not a requirement currently. Garage screening requirements apply.
2	16	Full Block condo development on Hermann		Garage screening and walled dumpster, amenities within the development	Full block development fronting on major thoroughfare. Not adjacent to SFR development.
1	20	High rise office building on Westheimer	No ground floor retail		Garage backing to residential townhomes, Garage screening and lighting applies.
3	24	The Southmore - Luxury apartments	Height, lights are blinding, lack of scale, dumpsters left on street, flooding, traffic, adjacent to nationally registered historic structures, creates shadows, garage screening not adequate, noise from exhaust fans and HVAC, wind tunnel effect, side yard along fence not maintained and causes flooding		Southmore development fronts on major thoroughfare with one single family lot adjacent to it. Garage screening and cut off lighting regulations apply. Light shines onto the adjacent property, noise is heard.
1	30	Warwick Towers - High rise condos	Noise from the heating/cooling unit on the ground floor, very tall and does not fit the neighborhood, no landscaping along the sides and homeless people sleep in the alcoves.	Garage screening	Development fronting on transit corridor streets and major thoroughfare. Not adjacent to SFR development.
1	30	2929 Wesleyan	Height of the structure		Apartment high rise fronting on major thoroughfare and abutting single family residential lots smaller than 3500 sf. Garage screening and cut off lighting regulations apply.
1	46	Luxury high rise condo on Preston	Height of the structure, blocking sunlight, disruption to bus stop services, destroyed the surrounding streets, and blocked access to the neighboring garage		Located in downtown MAC, no residential surrounding the property.

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Map tool summary					
Pins	Stories	Development	Concerns/Comments	Good aspects	Staff Findings
30	2-4	Single family residential developments	2, 3 or 4 story residential developments next to 1 or 2 story traditional single family homes. Construction debris, dust, sidewalks in passable, flooding, roads blocked, lead contamination, constant trash, noise and parking violations		Townhomes are also single family residential developments and can be located next to traditional single family homes.
2	7-10	Apartment complex next to single family homes on Alameda and another on 11th street	Light shines from the building, storage struture next to homes		Proposed developments next to single fmaily homes. Garage screening and cut off lighting regulations apply.
2	12-16	Proposed structure on Portsmouth	Proposed apartment building very tall towering adjacent single family homes, not conforming to the buffer ordinance due to technicality.		Proposed apartment buildings abutting single family lots less than 3500sf
9	35	XHouston - Proposed development and the development on San Felipe	Height, light will shine from 10 story garage, intrusive, block sunlight, noise from equipment, wind tunnel effect, removal of trees, construction impacts, noise from public event space, site too small, wind tunnel effect.		Proposed structure, not immediately abutting SFR properties. Garage screening regulations apply.
8	23	Ashby high rise - Proposed development	Light, traffic, sky view, invades privacy, noise, does not fit in with the neighborhood, parking issues in the neighborhood, disturbances from proposed retail /restaurant bars, blocks sunlight creating shadows, narrow side streets, lower property values, commercial vehicles accessing residential streets, will affect health of trees, limit on how long a building permit can be active, room on their property for deliveries, moving trucks, trash collection, etc. to avoid the continual blockage of traffic on surrounding streets, designated dog area must be provided within development, difficult for fire access. Large buildings need more setback requirements		Proposed development. Has single family residential abutting the site.
7	25	The Paramount - Proposed development	Too close to residential property, limited access and egress, turn around for fire and emergency vehicles too narrow, too tall and large for lot size, will negatively affect residential property, decrease property values, lack of privacy, narrow side streets, dangerous to walk, lack of attention to improving medians and adding turn lanes or lights directing traffic, increased traffic, curbside parking unavailable, lack of green space to socialize or walk dogs, no sidewalks, parking for visitors, no designated parking for construction workers, traffic through the neighborhood is of major concern and additional residents in the neighborhood that will require additional city resources, eg. water, power, sewage, parking, etc		Proposed development fronting on major thoroughfare and adjacent to single family homes. Garage screening and cut off lighting regulations apply
30		Industrial development and truck yards	Industrial development next to single family homes. Truck yards, metal recyclers, dust, odor, oil tanks next to homes, flooding, lead contamination, increased paved areas, equipment left on roads, potholes, increased sediments in air, construction noise too early in the morning, soil contamination, sidewalks blocked, increased risk of accidents, improper fencing, metal fencing adjacent to residential homes, no trees, illegal dumping and clogged drainage. Roads not equipped to handle commercial vehicles, environmental violations, no permits, drainage or detention ponds for the development.		Industrial developments adjacent to residential homes and truck yards are outside the scope.

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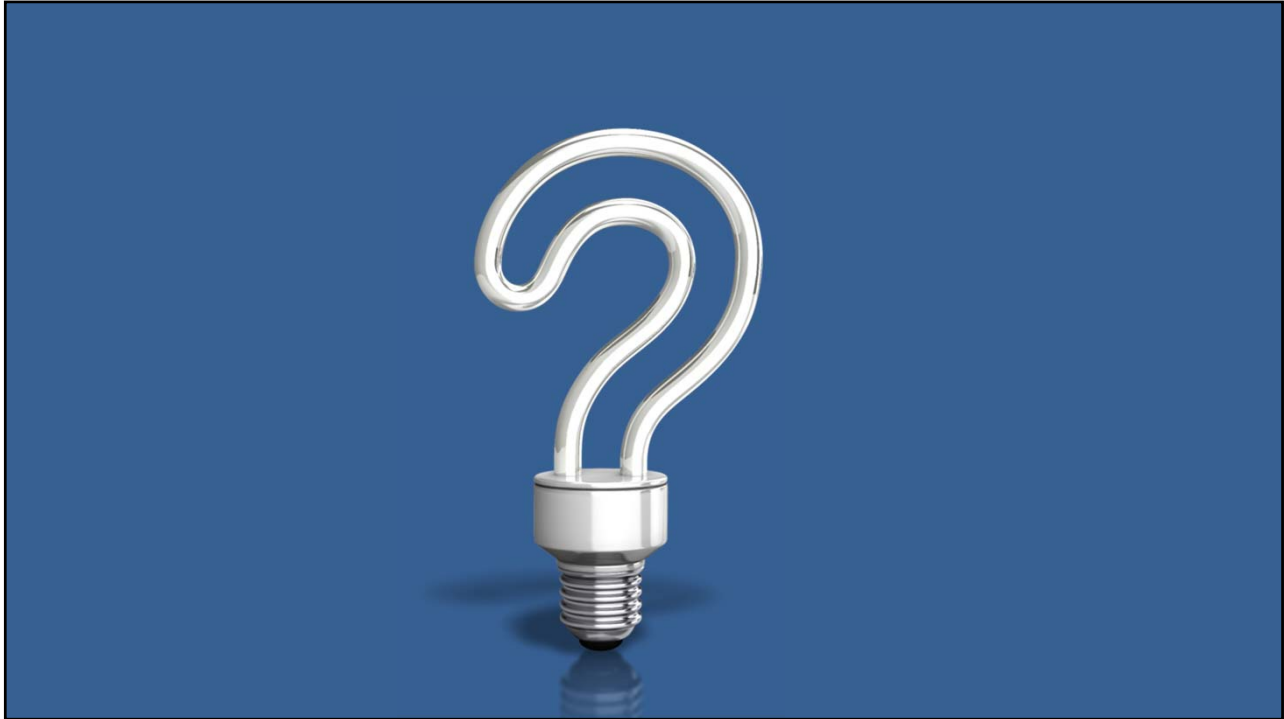
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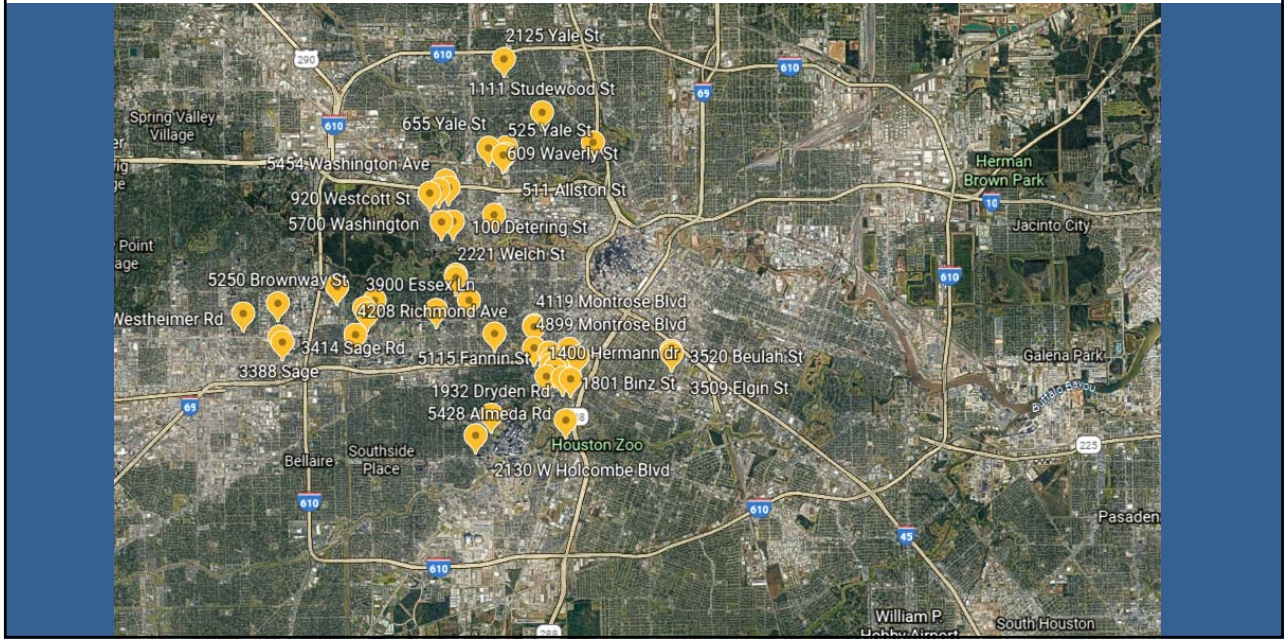
Site visits summary

Conducted 40 site visits to study all aspects of buffering

- High- and mid-rise structures adjacent to single family High- and mid-rise structures adjacent to condos
- High- and mid-rise structures adjacent to apartments
- Townhomes next to apartments and condos
- Garage structures with residential across the street
- Commercial (storage, hotel) structures next to residential

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Site visits summary



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Site visits summary



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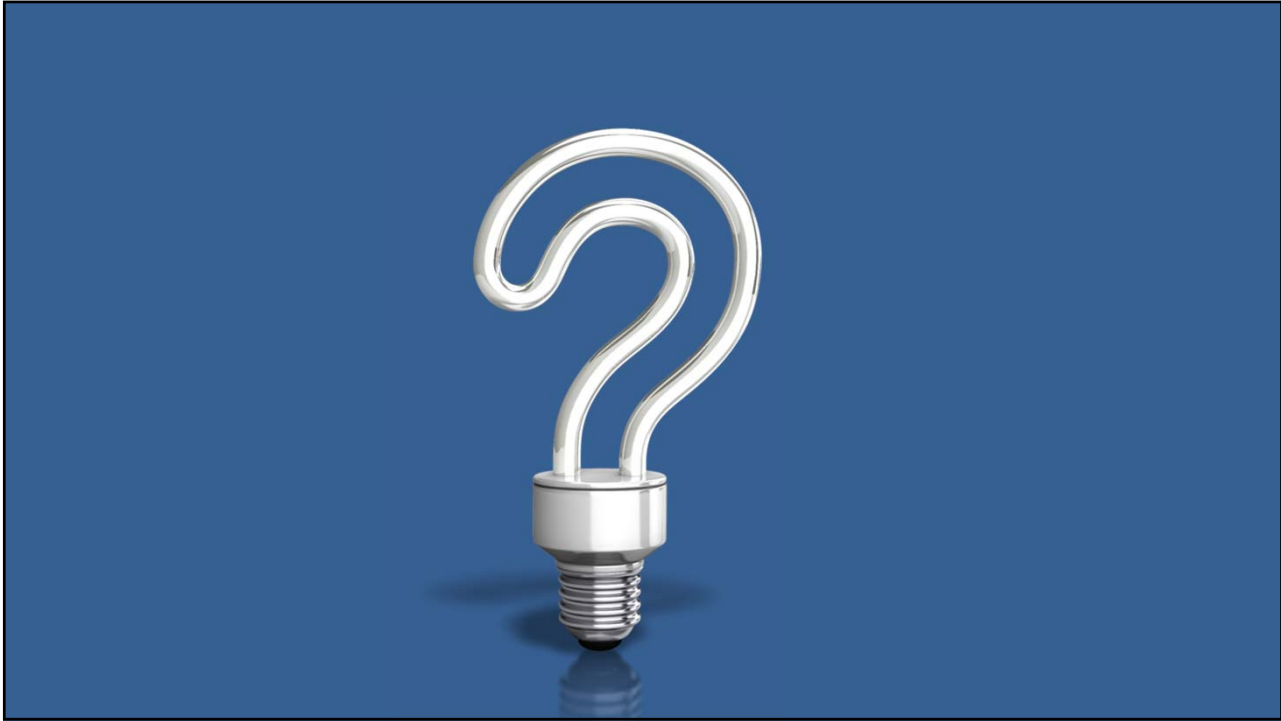
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Research from other cities

Buffering requirements in other cities

- Austin
- Dallas
- Los Angeles
- Charlotte
- Chicago
- Denver

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MUXIAN FANG

A portrait of a woman with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a patterned jacket. The portrait is set against a dark blue background and is positioned to the right of the name 'MUXIAN FANG'. The name is written in white, bold, uppercase letters on a solid blue background.

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What Do We Try to Accomplish?

To promote compatible developments and help the city grow sustainably by improving:

1. Physical separation standards?
2. Garage screening standards?
3. Lighting fixture standards?
4. Noise control standards?

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What Type of Developments Do We Try to Protect?

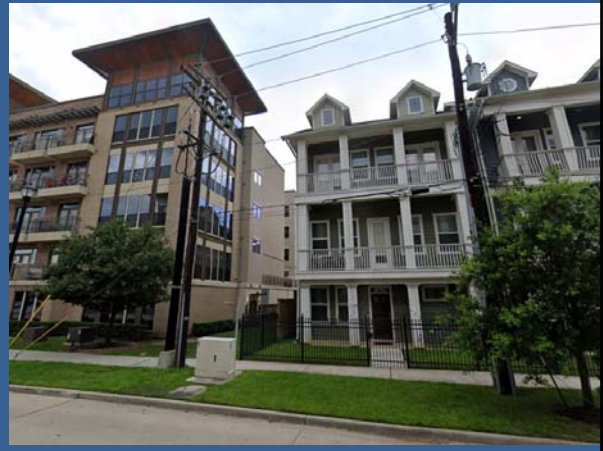
Traditional single family residential houses



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What Type of Developments Do We Try to Protect?

Townhouses?



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What Type of Developments Do We Try to Protect?

Triplex/ Quadplex?



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What Type of Developments Do We Try to Protect?

Condos?



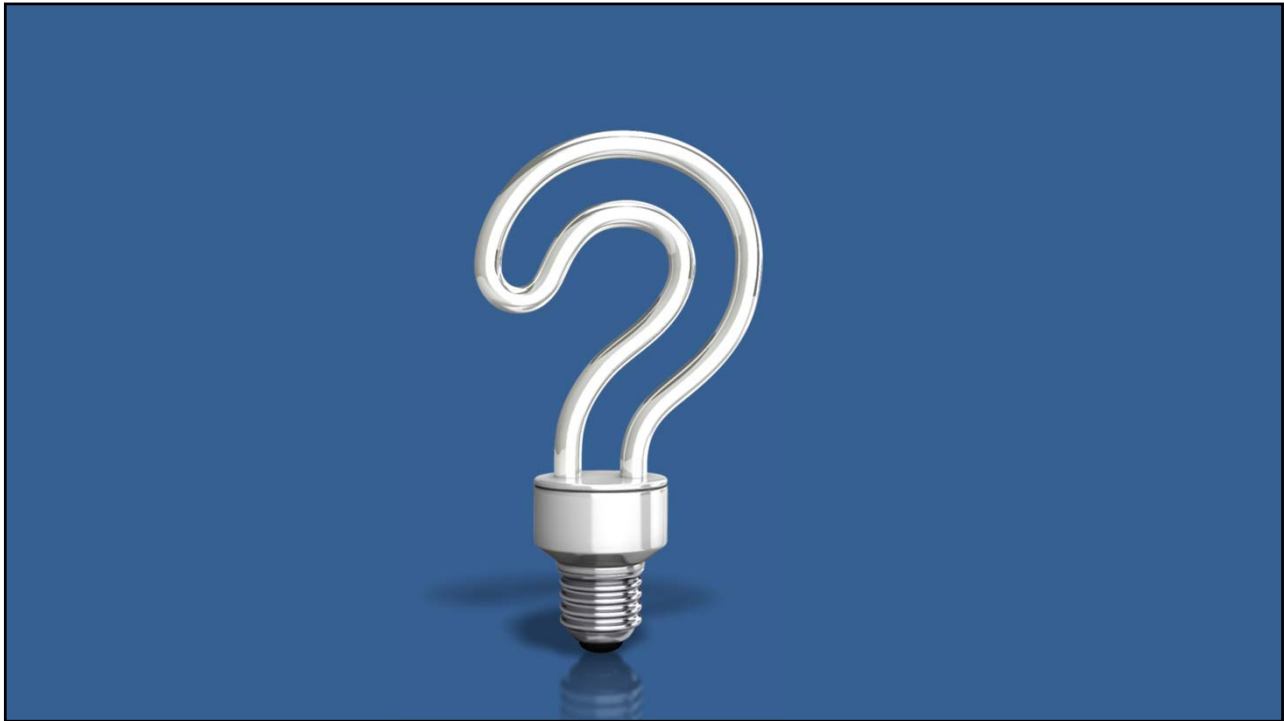
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What Type of Developments Do We Try to Protect?

Apartments?



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Standards to Be Revisited

Physical separation standards

Garage screening standards

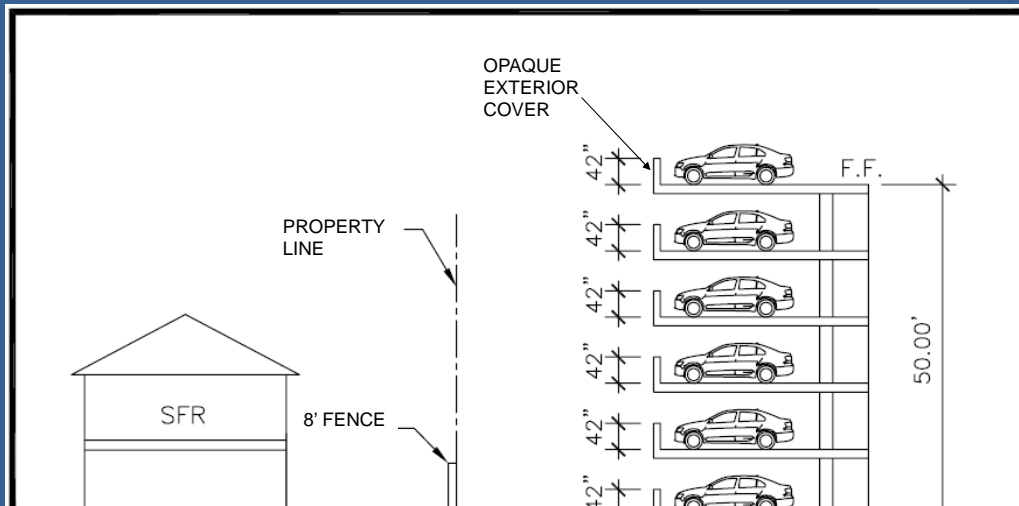
Lighting fixture standards

Noise control standards (Equipment/ Dumpster Noise)

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Garage Screening Standards

Current standards



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Garage Screening Standards

Garages without any screenings



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Garage Screening Standards

Garages with opaque cover blocking headlights



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Garage Screening Standards

Garages with full screenings



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Garage Screening Standards

Garages with full screenings



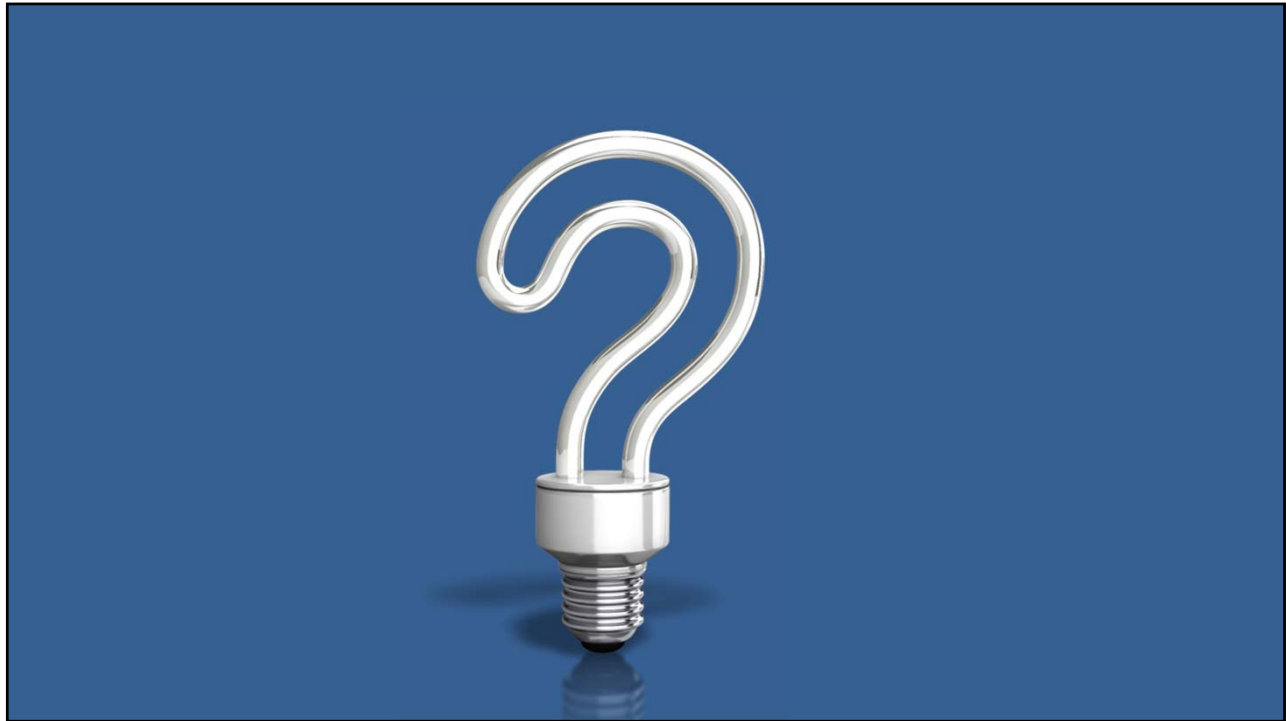
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Garage Screening Standards

Potential option:

1. Require 42" tall opaque exterior cover for every floor of garage structures regardless of the height & adjacent development; and
2. Require full screening for the first three above grade levels of ALL garage structures

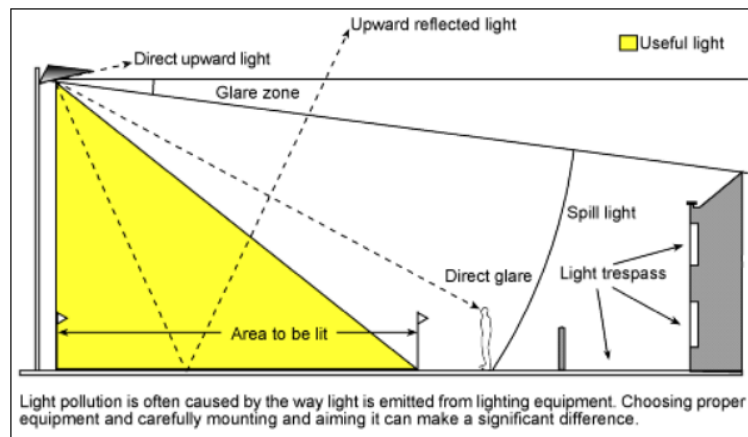
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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Figure 2. Example of useful light and light pollution from a typical pole-mounted outdoor luminaire



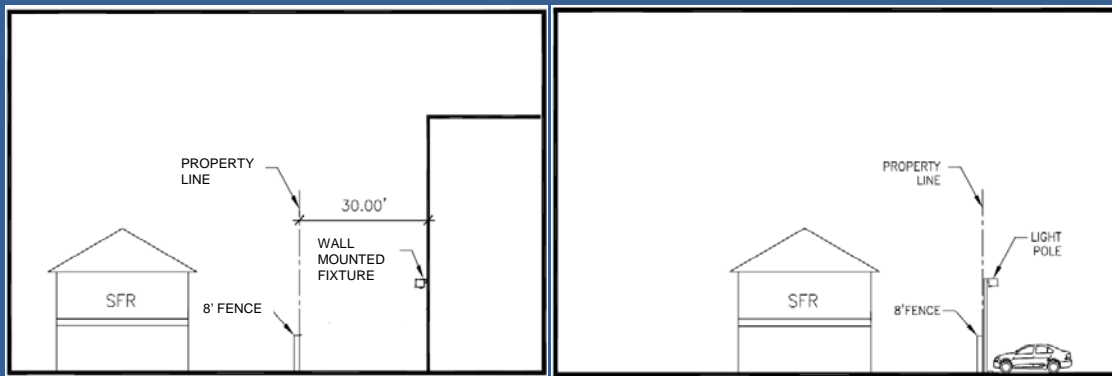
Source: Adapted from Institution of Lighting Engineers

Source: <https://www.lrc.rpi.edu/programs/nlpip/lightinganswers/lightpollution/lightPollution.asp>

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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Current standards



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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

a. Full Cutoff - With full cutoff, no light is emitted at or above an angle of 90 degrees from the nadir (horizontal plane). The intensity does not exceed 100 Candela per 1000 lamp Lumens (10 percent) at a vertical angle of 80 degrees from the nadir.

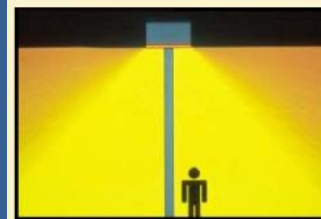
b. Cutoff - A small amount of uplighting is permitted with cutoff light fixtures. The intensity does not exceed 25 Candela per 1000 lamp Lumens (2.5 percent) at a vertical angle of 90 degrees from the nadir. The intensity does not exceed 100 Candela per 1000 lamp Lumens (10 percent) at an angle of 80 degrees from the nadir.

c. Semi-Cutoff - Semi-cutoff light fixtures emit more light directly into the sky and provide little control at the property line. The intensity does not exceed 50 Candela per 1000 lamp Lumens (5 percent) at an angle of 90 degrees from the nadir. The intensity does not exceed 200 Candela per 1000 lamp Lumens (20 percent) at an angle of 80 degrees above nadir.

d. Non-Cutoff - Non-cutoff light fixtures distribute light without Candela limitation in the zone above the max Candela.



Unshielded Fixture



Shielded Fixture

Source: <https://www.blancocountynightsky.org/guidelines.php>

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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Full cut-off lighting fixtures



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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Non-cut-off lighting fixtures



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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Other U.S. cities' outdoor lighting fixture standards:

1. Require fully-shielded or full cut-off lighting fixtures along all street types to reduce glare for the public and the adjacent development (Austin, Dallas)
2. Require all outdoor lighting be screened, or shielded from the adjacent residential uses and in a manner as not to cause glare or impair the vision of motorists (Charlotte)
3. Set maximum height requirements for outdoor lighting fixture adjacent to residential uses (Charlotte, Denver, Dallas)

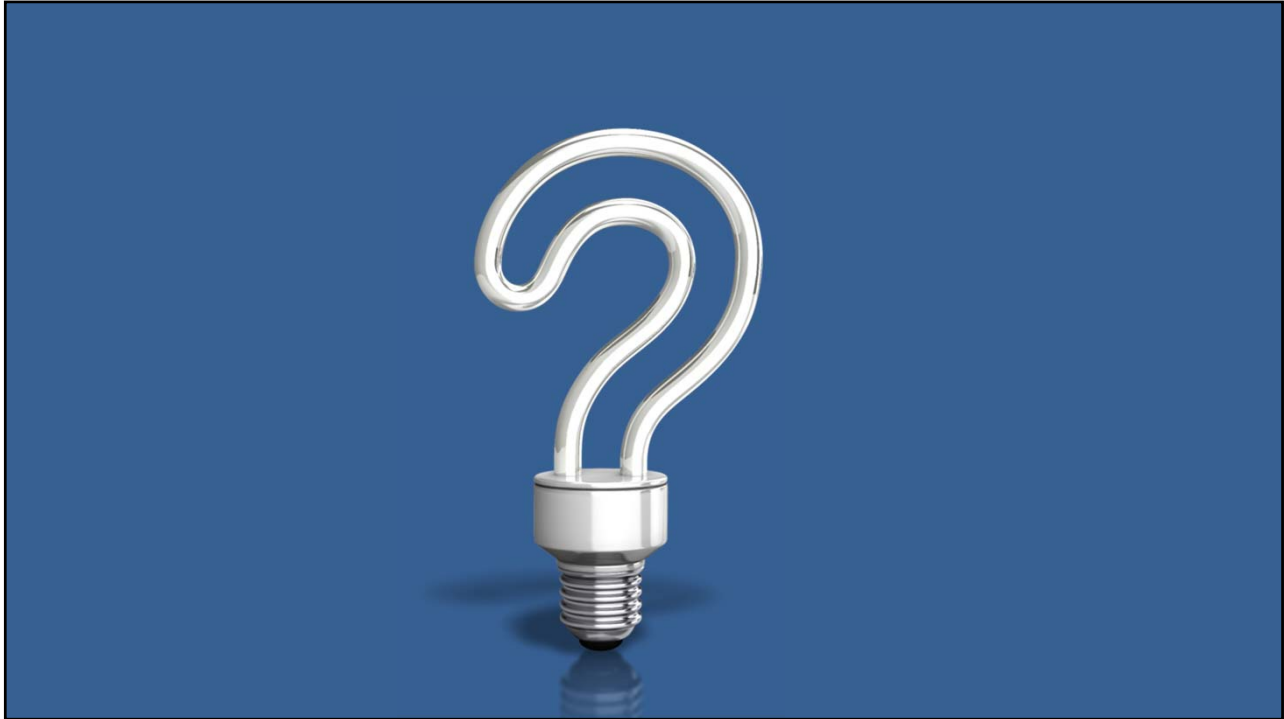
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Outdoor Lighting Fixture Standards

Potential option:

Require outdoor full cut-off lighting fixtures for all development regardless of the adjacent development.

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Noise Control Standards

The Residential Buffer Ordinance does not include noise control standards

Chapter 30 Noise and Sound Level Regulation provides general guidance

Noise related concerns:

1. Noise from the adjacent commercial uses (bars, restaurants)
2. Equipment noise
3. Dumpster noise

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Noise Control Standards

Outdoor dumpsters without screening



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Noise Control Standards

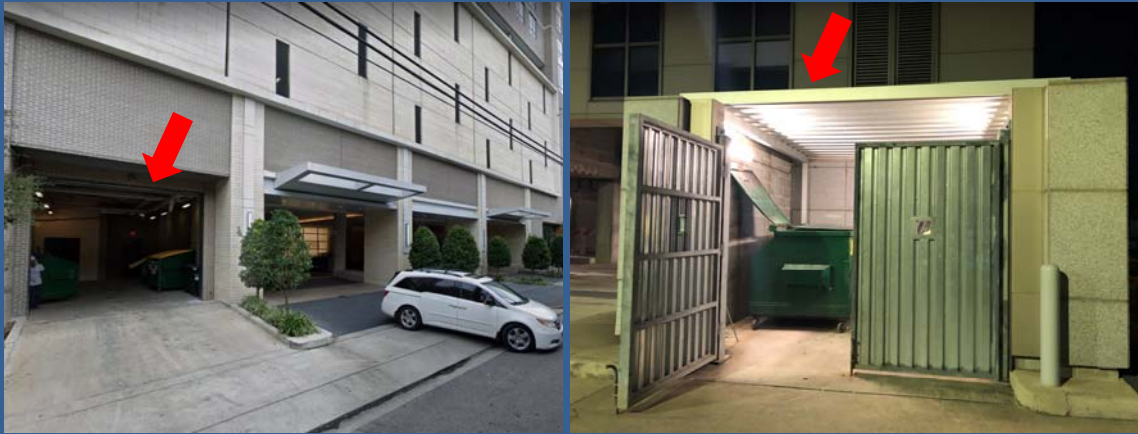
Outdoor dumpsters with screening



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Noise Control Standards

Enclosed dumpsters



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Noise Control Standards

Outdoor equipments



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Noise Control Standards

Enclosed equipments



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Noise Control Standards

City of Houston related regulations:

1. No screening or location requirements for bulk containers adjacent to residential uses
2. No screening requirements for building equipments
3. Equipment is not allowed to be placed below or above grade on any easement
4. Sec 39-101(a) requires screenings to make bulk containers invisible from the street on the address side of the property
5. Sec 39-101(c) allows a berm, building, fence, wall, gate, shrubbery, or a combination thereof, as screening

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Noise Control Standards

Other U.S. cities' practices:

1. Require screening for surface parking lots, dumpsters, recycle containers, utility structures, equipments adjacent to residential uses and public streets (Austin, Charlotte, Dallas, Denver)
2. Require enclosure and screening for dumpsters/ recycle containers adjacent to residential uses and public streets (Chicago)

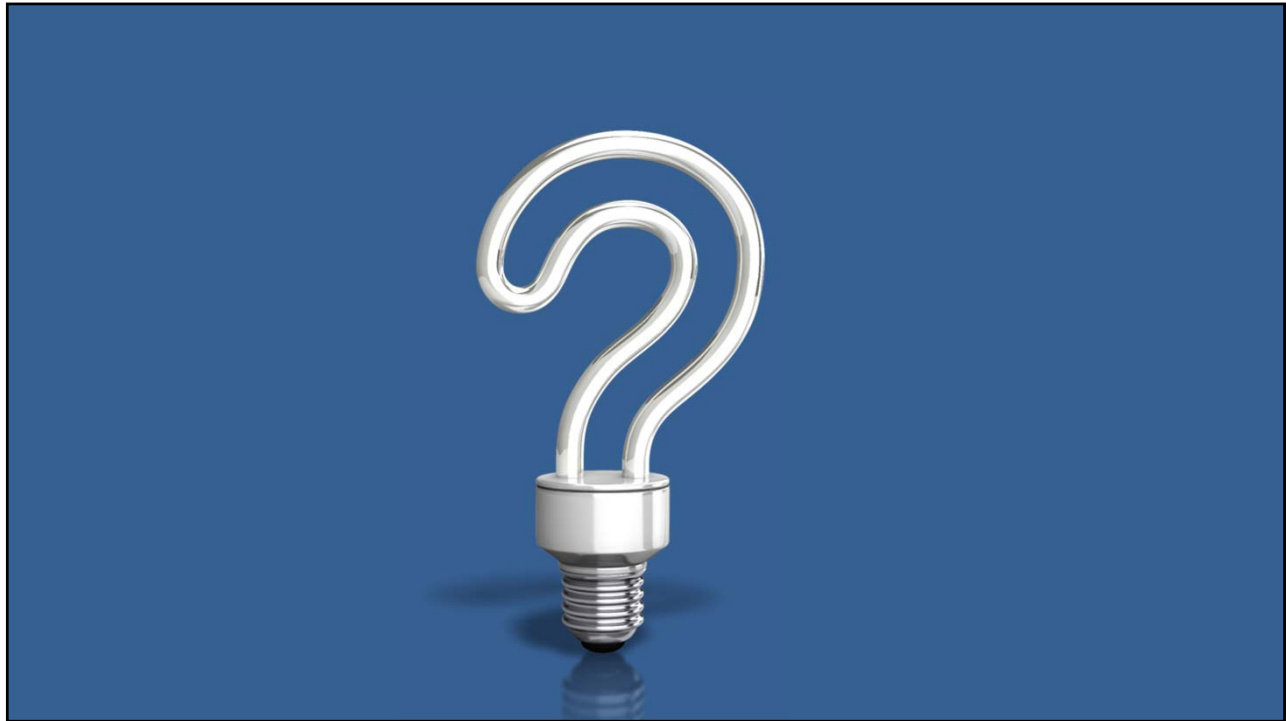
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Noise Control Standards

Potential options:

1. Require screening for bulk containers, utility structures, equipments adjacent to residential uses and public streets; or
2. Require enclosure and screening for bulk containers, utility structures, equipments adjacent to residential uses and public streets

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LYNN HENSON

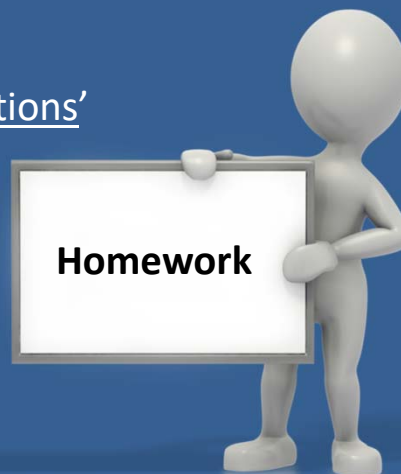


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Homework Activities

www.LetsTalkHouston.org

- Attend the AARP webinar on 'Creating Flexible Housing Options'
- Read articles



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Let's Talk Houston!

www.LetsTalkHouston.org/Livable-Places



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Home

LIVABLE PLACES HOUSTON

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Creating Flexible Housing Options

Backyard cottages, basement or garage apartments, and other small residences are housing solutions that homeowners can create for themselves or a loved one, or for renting to a tenant. Register (and share the link) for this free webinar, based in part on AARP's publications about accessory dwelling units.

SIGN UP FOR THIS JANUARY 14 EVENT

TEXT @ 833-408-2362

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**Next meeting
February 9th
3-5pm**

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Contacts and Resources

Livable Places

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Lynn Henson

www.HoustonPlanning.com

www.LetsTalkHouston.org



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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

