



Walkable Places

Presented by
Planning & Development Department
City of Houston

Walkable Places Subcommittee
Wednesday, June 14, 2017



Project Schedule

PHASE I	PHASE II	PHASE III	PHASE IV
Background Information & Best Practices	Framework/ Decision Making	Ordinance Amendment	Public Outreach & City Council Adoptions

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Aug Sep Oct Nov Jan Jun

2017 2018

Meeting Agenda



- I. Design Charrette Recap
- II. Guiding Principles for Encouraging Walkable Places
- III. Project Schedule
- IV. Potential Location Criteria
- V. Potential Application Process
- VI. Public Comments

I. Design Charrette Recap



- Building Setback
- Parking
- Pedestrian Realm
- Urban Form Considerations
- Potential Approaches



I. Design Charrette Recap



Building Setback

1. Require reduced building line to bring development closer to the street
2. Allow "build-to-lines" in certain areas (btwn back of curb & building façade)
3. Building line should be sensitive to the context, not one size fits all



I. Design Charrette Recap



Parking

1. Reduce minimum parking requirements where appropriate
2. Expand parking exempt area boundary
3. No off-street parking allowed within building line or in front of buildings



I. Design Charrette Recap



Pedestrian Realm

1. Minimum 15' wide pedestrian realm
2. Minimum 6' wide unobstructed sidewalk
3. Require wider sidewalk where appropriate
4. Consider removing above ground utility obstruction if reconstructing the streets
5. Appropriate urban landscaping design:
 - (1) No landscaping btwn the building & the sidewalk
 - (2) Allow street trees as pedestrian buffer



I. Design Charrette Recap



Urban Form Considerations

1. Awnings/canopies to provide shade
2. Minimum façade transparency or façade with screening /art works
3. Minimum ground floor height & façade transparency to create flexibility for future uses
4. Front entrance along the street with canopy
5. Limit driveway access along major corridors



I. Design Charrette Recap



Potential Approaches

1. Required with variance request option
2. Incentivized through expediting permitting process

Discussion



- Do you have any additional thoughts or clarification on the charrette discussion?

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II. Guiding Principles for Encouraging Walkable Places



Identify Appropriate Locations

- Establish criteria

Application-Based Process

- External Applicants or City- Initiated

Context Sensitive Approach

- Appropriate for local urban context

Public Engagement

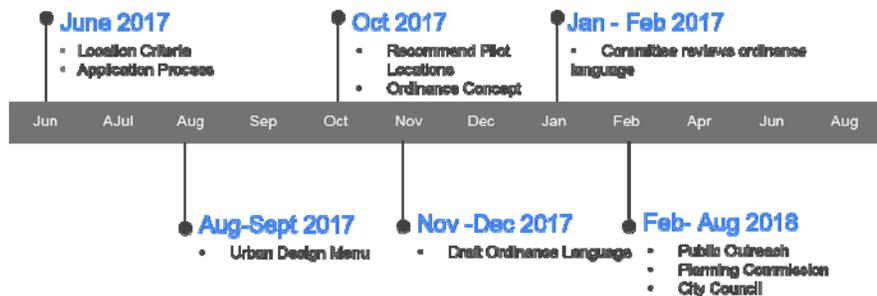
- Allow local areas to provide input for rulemaking

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III. Project Schedule



IV. Identifying Locations



Walkable Place

Walkable,
but not a Walkable Place

Identifying Locations



- Urban Houston Framework:
Major characteristics of walkable places
 - Essential Population Density
 - Diverse Land Use
 - High Street Connectivity & Density
 - High Transit Quality
 - High Bicycle and Pedestrian Accessibility

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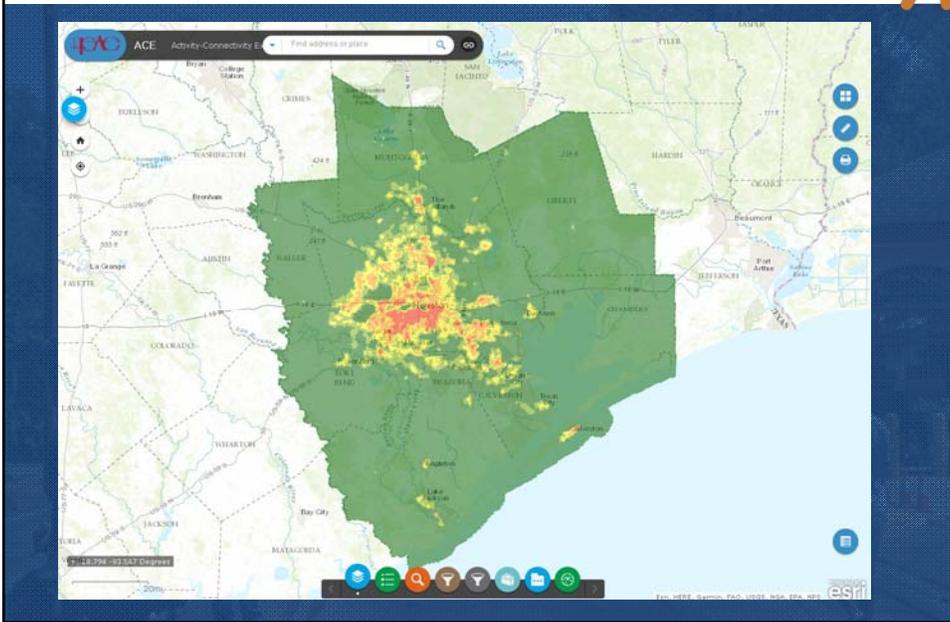
Potential Location Criteria



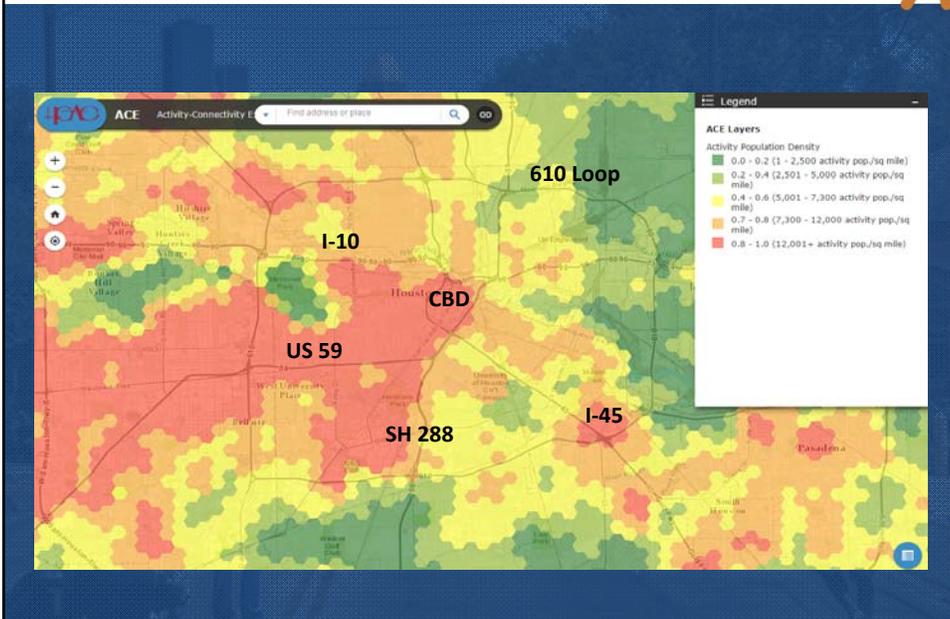
- Some Existing Urban Forms
- Some Existing Pedestrian Activity
- Activity Population Density (Household/Employment)
- Area Connectivity (Intersection Density)
- Mix of Land Uses (within walking distance)
- Accessibility to Transit (walking distance to transit services/bikeways)



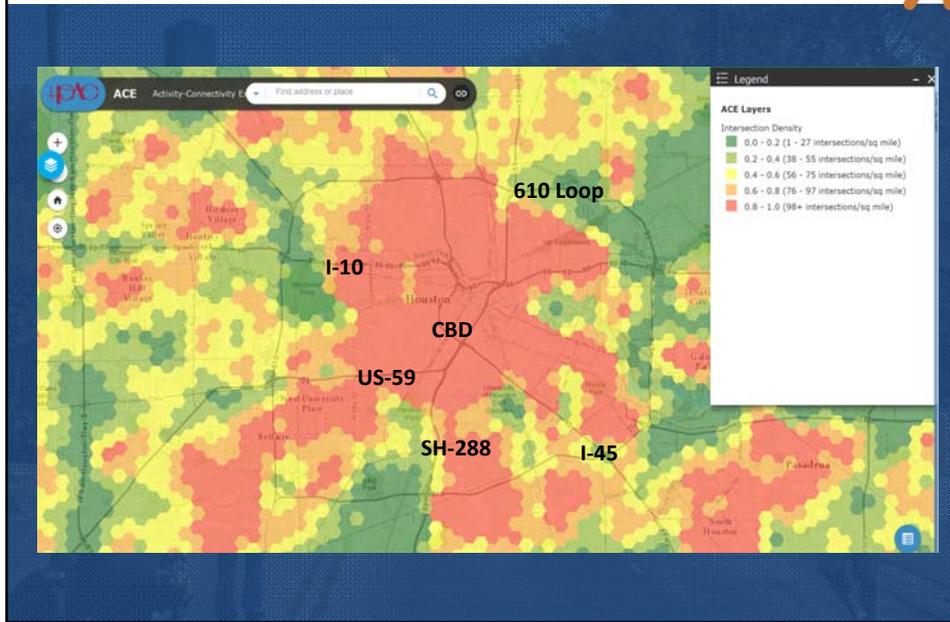
Location Criteria Evaluation Tool – ACE



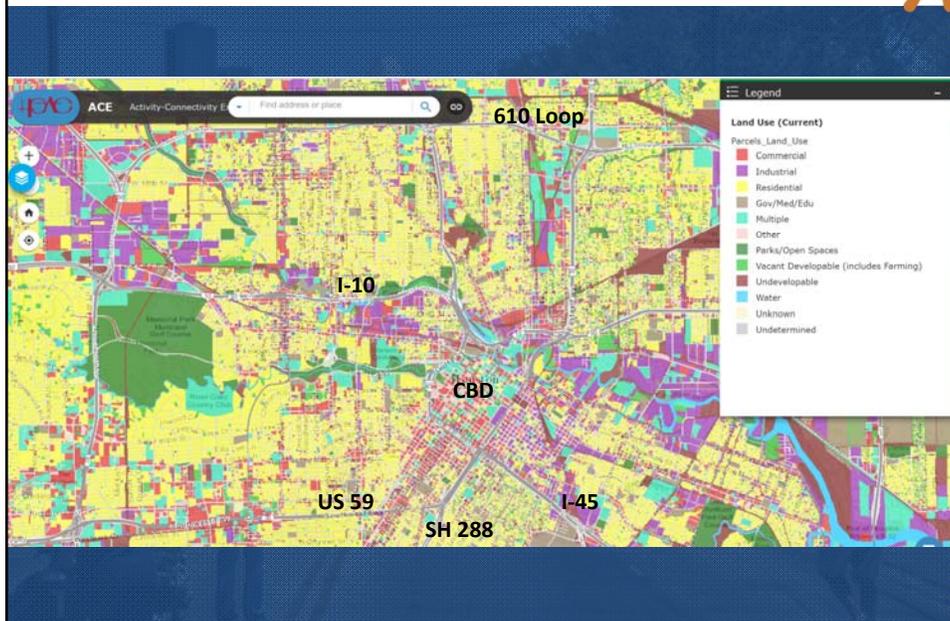
High Activity Population Density



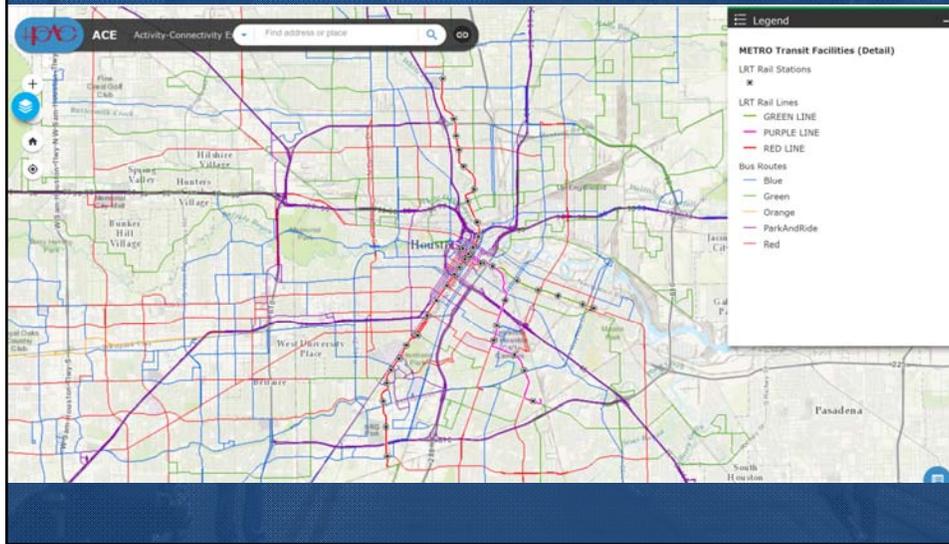
High Connectivity



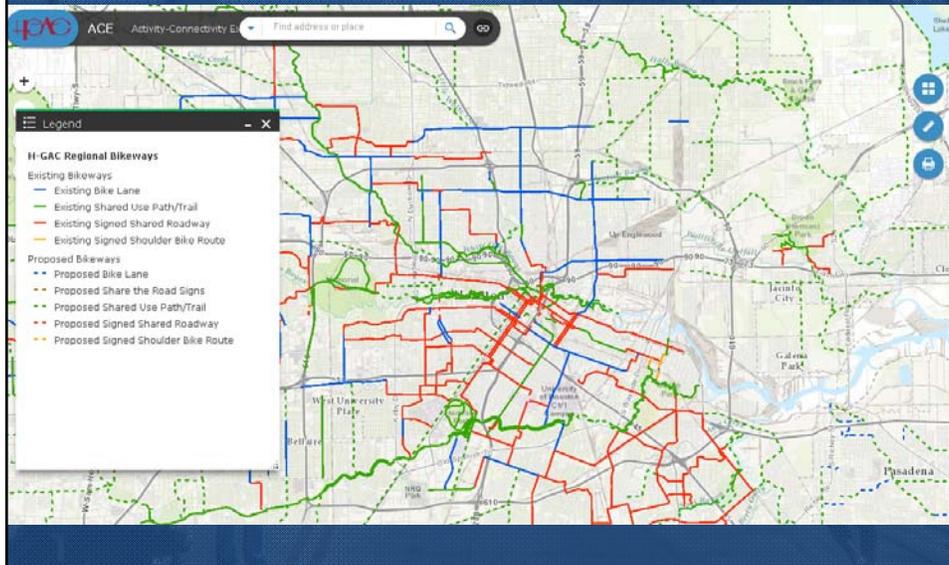
Mix of Land Uses within Walking Distance



Accessibility to Transit



Accessibility to Bikeways



Do these criteria work?



- Areas meeting all the criteria:
 - Midtown
 - Montrose
 - Museum District
 - EADO
 - Washington Avenue Area
 - Rice Village Area
- Areas meeting most of the criteria:
 - Palm Center Area
 - Navigation Blvd
 - Harrisburg Blvd
 - Lyons Ave
 - Airline Blvd
 - North Main St

Discussion



- Are these the right criteria to determine locations for walkable places?
- Should all the criteria be met? Should some flexibility be allowed?

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V. Potential Application Process



Application

- Submittal

Review

- Verify location qualifications

Public Notification & Engagement

- Establish public hearing date
- Notification & Survey
- At least one community meeting

Planning Commission Approval

- Staff's Recommendation
- Planning Commission Action

City Council Approval

- City Council Action

Discussion



- Is this the appropriate processes to establish rules to designate locations for walkable places?

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