

Panther Island Form-Based Code Update

Public Link: [Section-by-Section Overview](#)



Content

- Project Team
- Project Background & Timeline
- Overview of Code Updates
- **Section by Section Review of Code Updates**
- Next Steps & Adoption Timeline



Project Team

- City of Fort Worth
- TRWD
- Consultants (Livable Plans & Codes, Kimley-Horn, Side Partners)
- Invited Stakeholders



Evolution of the Code

- Original code established framework
- Vision 2.0 refined priorities
- Updated code **implements and operationalizes vision**

KEY EFFORTS HAVE SHAPED PANTHER ISLAND'S URBAN DESIGN VISION TO WHAT IT IS TODAY

TRINITY UPTOWN PLAN (2004)

FORM-BASED CODE (2016, 2018)

CANAL DESIGN STANDARDS (2016)

INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING (ONGOING)

PANTHER ISLAND

Panther Island Form Based Zoning District
Zoning Handbook and Guidelines



Original uptown plan adopted in 2004.
 Last major update to existing code was in 2016.
 Minor updates in 2025

Purpose of the Code Update

- Align development with **Vision 2.0**
- Respond to **real-world development activity**
- Improve **connectivity, open space, and waterfront experience**
- Provide **clear, predictable development standards**



VISION 2.0



REVISED CODE



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Takeaway: This update provides operational framework to ensure Panther Island delivers on its intended vision.

Project Team

City of Fort Worth

TRWD

Consultants (Livable Plans & Codes, Kimley-Horn, Side Partners)

Invited Stakeholders

Project Schedule

Project kick-off: Fall 2024

Code Workshop – February 12-14, 2025

Stakeholder meetings and Code Framework: Spring 2025

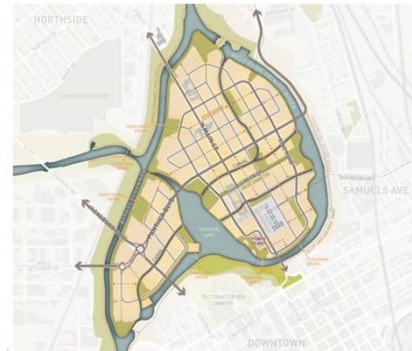
Revised Code Draft and Internal Workshops: Summer/Fall 2025

Finalize Code Draft and Stakeholder & Public Meetings on Revised Code: Spring 2026

Code Adoption: Summer 2026

Vision 2.0 Priorities Driving the Update

- Robust **open space** network
- Continuous **waterfront and canal access**
- **Smaller blocks + walkable streets**
- Preservation of **view corridors**
- Concentrated **development intensity in core**



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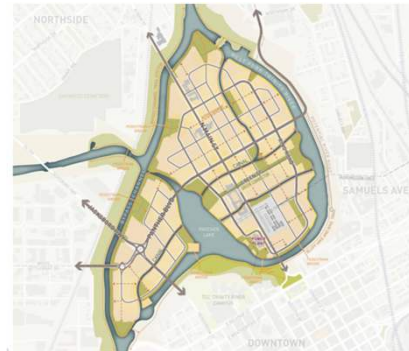


Takeaway: Design, connectivity, and experience are priorities --- not just density.

Northside: We heard the desire to ensure access for everyone which has been provided with requirement for continuous waterfront and canal access. This will also be enhanced with interim connections to the existing levee trail on both the east and west sides of the island. The east side will be constructed with the Phase I park and paseo construction this fall.

Vision 2.0 Priorities Driving the Update

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Table of Contents Update

Original

1. Understanding the District
2. Urban Design Plan
3. Sites and Buildings
4. Public Space Furnishings
5. Land Uses
6. Signs

Revised

1. Introduction
2. Principles
3. Governance and Administration
4. Regulating Plan
5. Permitted Land Uses
6. Waterfront Standards
7. Streets, Blocks, Streetscapes, and Sidewalks
8. Public Open Spaces
9. Urban Form
10. Building Design
11. Landscaping on Private Property
12. Parking
13. Screening and Fencing
14. Signage



Section 1: Introduction

Previously “Understanding the District”

- Updated background
- Added purpose and clear applicability
- Amended map

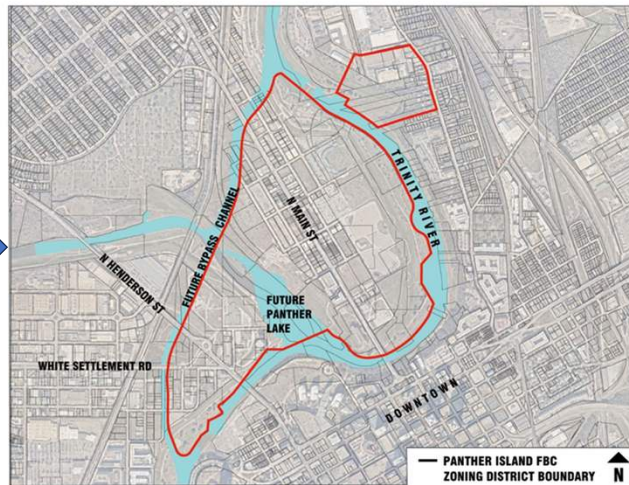


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- ✓ **BOUNDARY:** Amended map to remove TCC campus properties.
- ✓ **BOUNDARY:** Amended map to remove flea market in the peripheral zones since it is separated by railroad tracks and outside of the PID boundaries.

Updated Boundary



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Removed flea market and properties south of the river from the base zoning. Flea market is separated by grade change and railroad track --- also not conducive to the existing minimum building heights so working with property owner to adjust to appropriate mixed-use zoning. South of river more appropriate to incorporate into downtown and ensure it is included in peripheral zone that protects the waterfront attributes as an alternative.

Section 2: Principles (Refocused)

Previously “Intent and General Development”

- Prioritizes **waterfront + open space**
- De-emphasizes purely residential focus
- Strengthen **connections** to
 - Downtown
 - Cultural District
 - Northside
 - Stockyards
- Protects key **view corridors**



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Adds specific Vision 2.0 principles.

Takeaway: Panther Island is a regional destination, not just a neighborhood.

Section 3: Governance & Administration

New

- Clarifies **roles and authority**
- Aligns with **TRWD Canal System Manual**
- Strengthens coordination between:
 - Program Office
 - Design Review Committee
 - Urban Design Commission



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Takeaway: Stronger implementation and consistency.

Goals

- Align process with existing practices, processes in other districts, and the unique needs of this district due to the role of Tarrant Regional Water District.
- Provide more administrative authority than other districts and a shared Design Review Committee between TRWD and the City due to the significant complexity of developing on Panther Island. This includes approval of projects that meet standards and guidelines (whereas downtown requires all new construction to go to UDC) and limited adjustments to setbacks, transparency, block dimensions, landscaping and signs.

Section 4: Regulating Plan

Previously part of “Urban Design Plan”

- Establishes **development zones, street grid, frontage assignments, commercial intersections**
- Reflects **public open spaces** for 15% of land area (non-binding)



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Blocks on North Island are 210 – 230 feet in new vision while previously some had been as large as 500 feet. This was achieved with recommended pedestrian connectors.

Regulating Plan: Development Zones

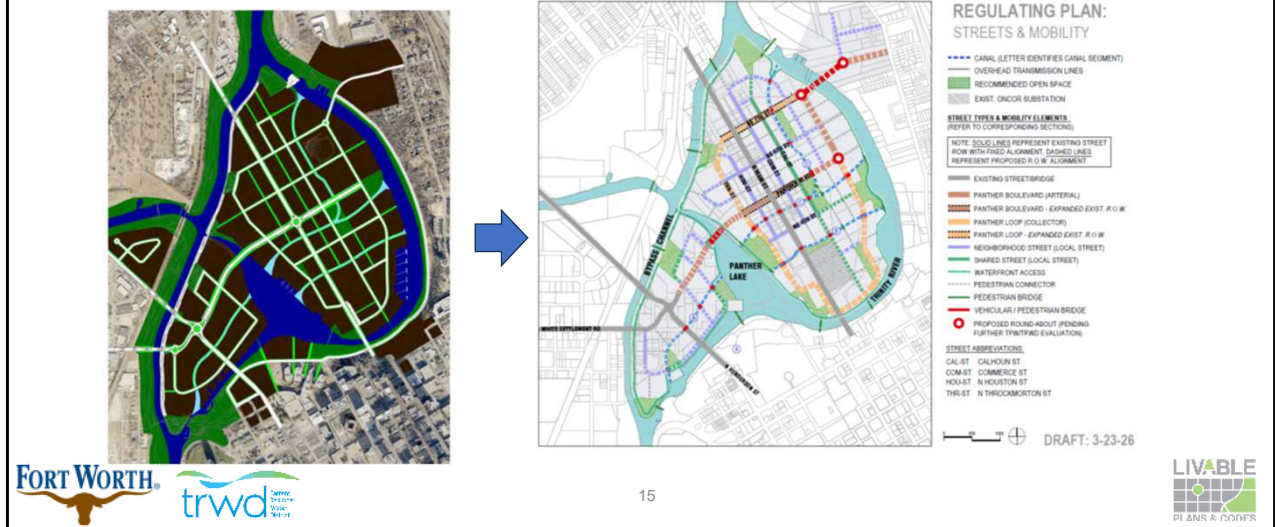


The Regulating Plan establishes **street grid, frontage assignments, and commercial** at key intersections.

An important change is the reduction from 9 to 2 zones (Core and Edge), simplifying building height and setback requirements.

- Clearer development zones
- Better alignment with market realities
- Reinforces vision for intensity and transitions

Regulating Plan: Streets and Mobility



Improved Connectivity

- Fine-grain street network
- Enhance pedestrian experience
- Integrated mobility framework

Takeaway: Walkability and access are foundational.

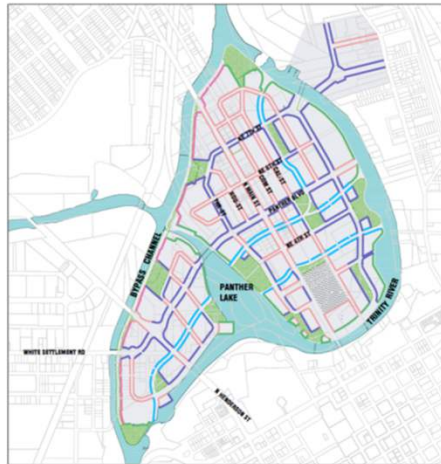
Key Attributes:

Added frontage designations to enhance development on A streets and waterfronts, meaning no garage access, etc.

Adjusted some Vision 2.0 recommendations due to constructability, available ROW and the ability to service buildings.

- **Panther Blvd alignment**
- Some **pedestrian bridges** expanded to vehicular bridges
- Modified **4th Street "Green Street"**
- Incorporates **Pedestrian Connectors** and potential local street sections to reduce block sizes

Regulating Plan: Frontage Designations - NEW



REGULATING PLAN:
FRONTAGE DESIGNATIONS

- FRONTAGE TYPE
- A FRONTAGE
 - B FRONTAGE
 - CANAL FRONTAGE
 - WATER FRONTAGE
 - BY-PASS CHANNEL FRONTAGE

- STREET ABBREVIATIONS
- CAL-ST CALHOUN ST
 - COM-ST COMMERCE ST
 - HOU-ST N HOUSTON ST
 - THR-ST N THROCKMORTON ST



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Section 5: Permitted Land Uses

Previously “Prohibited Land Uses”

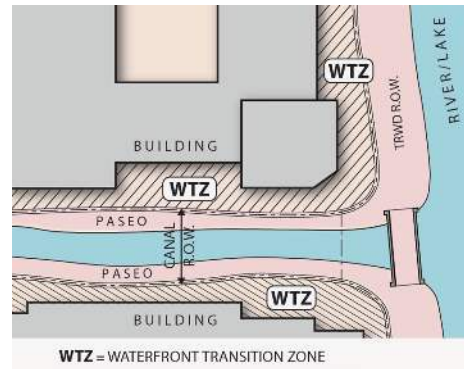
- ✓ Eliminates references to **North Main** as primary commercial corridor
- ✓ Excludes **townhouses**
- ✓ Requires **Conditional Use Permit for bars** greater than 2,000 square feet



Section 6: Waterfront Standards

Previously part of “Urban Design Plan”

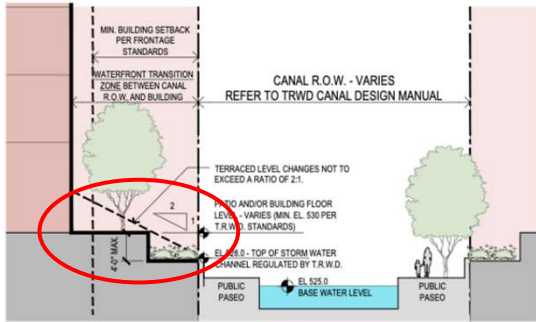
- Integrates **Canal System Manual**
- Establishes **waterfront transition zones** on private property
- Defers **Bypass Channel** to future regulations



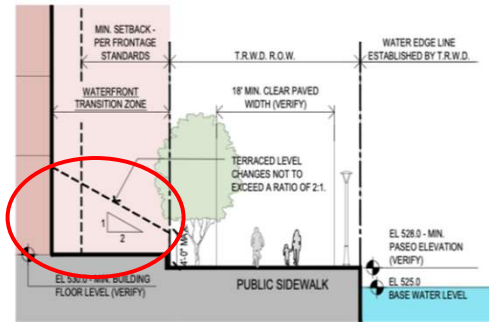
Establishes special area between the canal/river and the building, with landscaping and use standards

Canal Transitions

Requires a stepped or terraced transition from the canal channel level to the building level for more visibility and security



TYPICAL CANAL SECTION



TYPICAL RIVER/LAKE SECTION



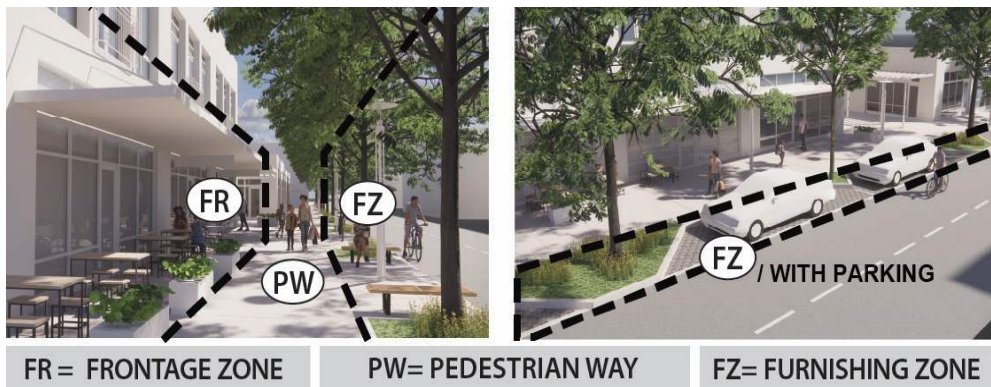
Section 7: Streets, Blocks, Streetscapes, and Sidewalks

(Previously part of Urban Design Plan and Public Space Furnishing)

- Adds **block standards** to specify maximum block perimeter and building façade length
- Updates **road sections** and adds **bridge sections**
- Modifies **Ring Road** to accommodate Panther Boulevard realignment
- References future “**Streetscape Specification Manual**” to specify streetscape furnishings, lighting and planting details
- Clarifies function of “**Pedestrian Connectors**”
- Adds “**Accessways**” to provide internal circulation within a project site



Sidewalks and Streetscape Standards



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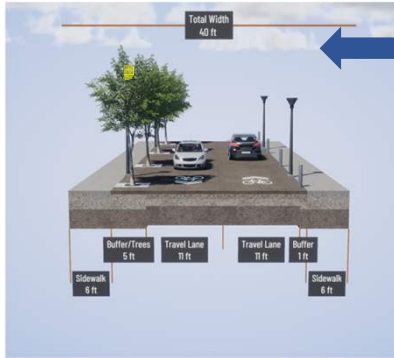
Streetscape components, such as lighting, street furniture, tree planting details, etc., will be identified in a separate **streetscape manual**.

Chapter on Streets, Blocks, Streetscapes and Sidewalks – Design Standards and Guidelines

- Updated street and bridge sections
- Adds **block standards** to specify maximum block perimeter and building façade length
- Updates **road sections** and adds **bridge sections**
- Modifies **Ring Road** to accommodate Panther Boulevard realignment
- References future “**Streetscape Specification Manual**” to specify streetscape furnishings, lighting and planting details
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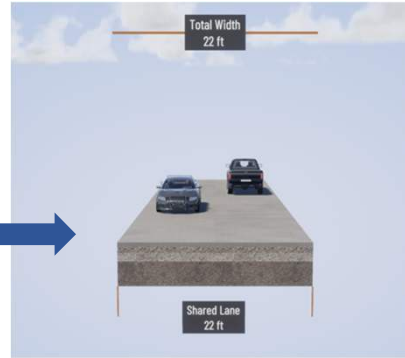
Accessways

For service, emergency vehicle access and access to parking garages.



Option 1 with Pedestrian Connector.

Option 2 without Pedestrian Connector.

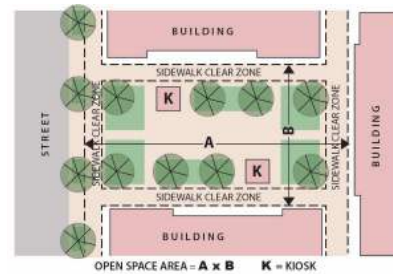


They are not mapped on the Regulating Plan but are to be determined as part of the development plan.

Section 8: Public Open Space

Previously "Parks, Schools and Open Space"

- Incorporates Vision 2.0 **15% open space goal**
- **Standards** for:
 - Tree canopy (50%)
 - Landscaping
 - Public amenities
- **Guidelines** for art, fountains and activation



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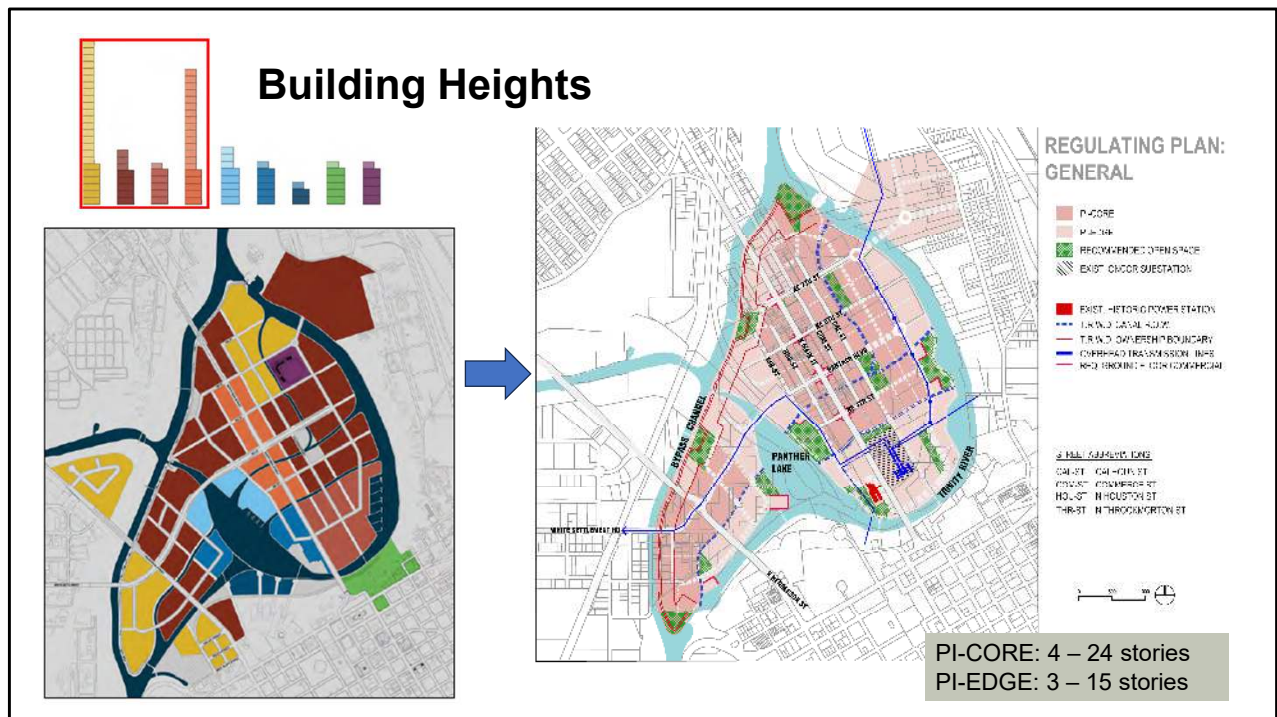
- Allows **kiosks** up to 250 square feet/up to 5% of open space area

Section 9: Urban Form Standards

(Previously "Sites and Buildings")

- Calibrates **Build-to-Zone and parking garage setbacks** to Frontage Type (A or B)
- **Building Heights:**
 - Increases building heights in most zones (core 24 stories; edge 15 stories)
 - Decreases minimum heights from mostly 5-6 to 3 and 4
- **Building Setbacks:**
 - Reduces from minimum from 5 to 3 feet from streets
 - Increases from 5 – 15 feet to 10 – 50 feet from canals and 15 feet or greater from river to reflect greater open space of Vision 2.0
- **Tower Setbacks:** Added side/rear setback of 30' above tower level when abutting another property





Reduced from 9 to 2 development zones with more focused and intentional density.

Building Heights:

- Increases building heights in most zones (core 24 stories; edge 15 stories)
- Decreases minimum heights from mostly 5-6 to 3 and 4

Building Setbacks:

- Reduces from minimum from 5 to 3 feet from streets
- Increases from 5 – 15 feet to 10 – 50 feet from canals and 15 feet or greater from river to reflect greater open space of Vision 2.0.

Previously the maximum height was predominantly 8 stories except for N. Main and far north. The goal now is to let the market drive but allow taller in the center and shorter on the edge to preserve water and downtown views.

Exceptions to Minimum Building Heights

Cafes, retail/food kiosks, bike hubs, and small rental or community spaces if:

- Part of a larger development
- In, and abutting open spaces and canals



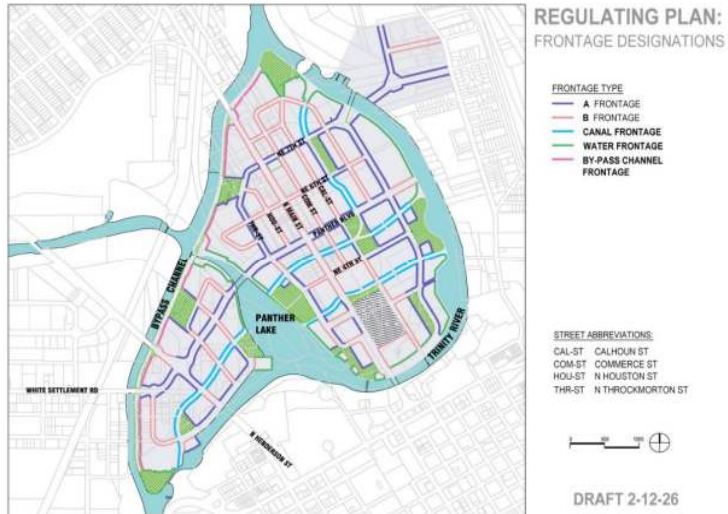
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Aligns with text amendment approved for Phase I.

Frontage Types

Govern setbacks, garage and drive locations, etc.



A frontage:

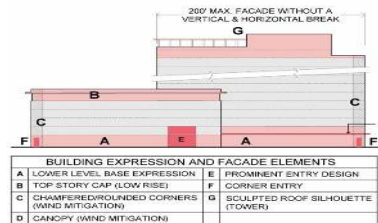
- Highest pedestrian-oriented design
- Active ground floor uses and fenestration

B frontage:

- Balances pedestrian comfort with vehicular access for garages and driveways

Section 10: Building Design

- Removed **exterior materials requirements** (State law)
- Improved:
 - Façade articulation
 - Glazing standards
 - Parking structure design



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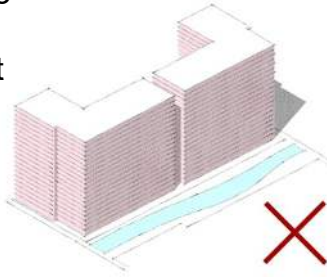


Takeaway: Higher-quality, more flexible design outcomes.

- Increases ground floor **commercial glazing** from 40% to 50% and limits **blank walls** to 20 feet
- Adds 25% ground floor **residential glazing**
- Adds **façade variation** standards
- Building base
 - Façade plane breaks
 - Emphasize entrance
 - Canopy for shade and wind mitigation
 - Roof silhouette
- Encourages **tower stepbacks**, massing variation and wind mitigation
- Expands **Parking Garage Standards** for screening, including full concealment of ground-level parking on Frontage Type A and Canals

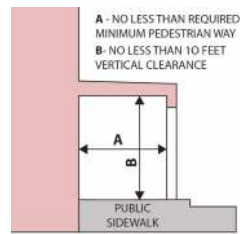
Tower Guidelines

- Massing and height related to shadow impact
- Orientation next to waterfront
- Top floor silhouette
- Wind mitigation

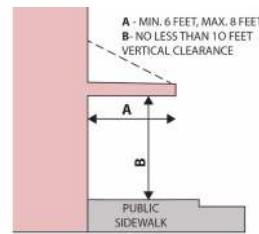


Galleries, Canopies and Arcades

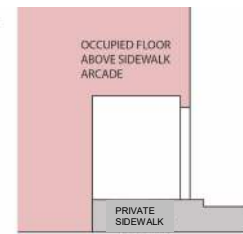
- **Galleries and canopies** are encouraged
- **Arcades** must occur behind the private property line



GALLERY



CANOPY



ARCADE



Balcony Guidelines

- Should be **integrated** with the façade
- **Encouraged** within the first five building levels and along canals and waterways



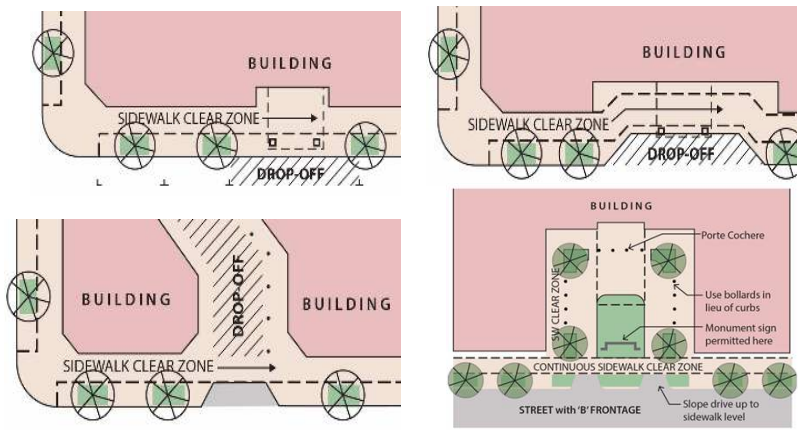
Section 11: Landscaping on Private Property

New

- **Consolidates and enhances** prior code
- Adds requirement for bushes, flowers and other plantings conforming to **American Standard for Nursery Stock**
- Requires minimum of **50% tree canopy** coverage in the **WTZ**
- Requires **40%** tree canopy coverage for surface **parking lots**
- Updates **tree list**

Section 12: Parking

- Adds requirements for **Vehicular Plazas and Drop-Offs**
- Creates **Transitional Parking Standards** (up to 5-years) to manage surface lots as island evolves



Section 13: Screening and Fencing

Previously part of "Sites and Buildings"

- Regulates location of **service areas**
- Regulates placement and screening of wall-, ground-, and roof-mounted **equipment**
- Perimeter **fencing materials** (chain link, barbed wire, etc. prohibited)

Section 14: Signage

Standards aligned with
Downtown



Next Steps

Adoption process: Summer 2026



Key Takeaways

- Implements Vision 2.0
- Strengthens waterfront + open space identity
- Improves walkability and connectivity
- Provides clearer development guidance
- Positions Panther Island for successful delivery



