

City of Hammond Planning and Zoning

Commercial Highway Build to Line



Introduction

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Background

The City of Hammond's Zoning Code was adopted from the Louisiana Land Use Toolkit, which was created to allow for communities to build a regulatory framework that is appropriate for needs of individual communities. The Code Requirements for build-to lines in the C-H Zoning Code for the City of Hammond was determined using this toolkit which varies from contextual areas ranging from urban, suburban, to rural. Build-to lines are used in many zoning districts around the country and were created for several reasons. The most crucial reason is for pedestrian accessibility. By ensuring the buildings are close to the street it helps with pedestrian accessibility and safety. However, it also helps the overall design of the city by ensuring buildings are placed on the site as to be in scale with the surrounding areas. By having large open areas in front of buildings, such as large parking lots, it creates scaling within the city that doesn't fit within the context of the Comprehensive Plan.

However, lots of issues come with regulating a building so close to the street in a suburban area along Commercial Highways. In these cases, a more flexible design is needed for the health, safety, and welfare of the City and its residents.

This report will look at our current code requirements and how it relates to the Comprehensive Plan. Recommendations will be given on how to improve the regulatory framework of the build-to line in the Hammond Unified Development Code. The main points being taken into consideration are sites within the Commercial Highway Corridor (C-H) Zoning Code along streets identified as Major Arterials in the Major Street Plan.

Commercial Highway Corridor Zoning

The American Planning Association (APA) has many resources on Best Practices for Planning and Zoning Codes.

Example 1 - Huntersville, North Carolina

General Requirements

1) Along existing streets, new buildings shall respect the general spacing of structures, building mass and scale, and street frontage relationships of existing buildings. New buildings which adhere to the scale, massing, volume, spacing, and setback of existing buildings along fronting streets exhibit demonstrable compatibility. New buildings which exceed the scale and volume of existing buildings may demonstrate compatibility by varying the massing of buildings to reduce perceived scale and volume. The definition of massing in Article 12 illustrates the application of design techniques to reduce the visual perception of size and integrate larger buildings with pre-existing smaller buildings. Nothing in this subsection shall be interpreted to conflict with the building design element provisions as found in N.C.G.S. 160D-702(b) for structures subject to the North Carolina Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings.

2) On new streets, allowable building and lot types will establish the development pattern.

3) In major subdivisions and planned developments, the aggregate number of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings shall not exceed 30% of the total number of dwelling units in a project.

4) Notwithstanding the limitations of 3), above,

(a) In any section of a major subdivision located within ¼ mile of a designated rail transit station, the percentage of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings is not limited. Higher overall density is encouraged within 1/4 mile of rail transit stations. Rail transit stations are those locations designated by resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Huntersville.

(b) In a pedestrian-oriented development organized around a system of streets and blocks, and anchored with retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses, 100% of the dwelling units which are located in the same block with commercial uses maybe contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings. To qualify under this paragraph, at least one parking space per dwelling unit must be replaced in a parking deck which is located on the interior of the block, and at least 20% of the habitable first-floor area in each block must be devoted to commercial uses. Habitable first-floor area includes all first-floor building area that is used for interior human activity (including storage areas of retail shops, kitchen areas and pantries for restaurants, and similar uses). Habitable first floor area does not include the first floor of a parking deck nor outdoor areas used for restaurant seating or retail display. Hotels, light manufacturing

and assembly facilities, and laboratories and associated research facilities are permitted within the development, but may not be used to meet the 20% minimum first-floor commercial requirement. The higher density residential environment permitted by this exception provides a full-time population which animates the streets, supports the businesses on a daily basis, and accesses goods and services without sole dependence on private vehicles.

(c) Within a Mixed-Use Node, the aggregate number of dwelling units contained in attached houses, apartment buildings, and mixed-use buildings shall not exceed 80% subject to the following requirements:

i. Housing density shall decrease in intensity on streets further away from the Commercial Use(s); apartment buildings and mixed-use buildings housing density shall not exceed 18 units per acre; attached housing density shall not exceed 8 units per acre; detached housing density shall not exceed 3 units per acre.

ii. A minimum of 50% of the node acreage must be for residential use.

iii. All mixed-use buildings shall count towards the residential acreage requirements.

iv. An approved Mixed Use Node that contains less than 100 acres may be expanded to include parcels that are adjacent to the approved Mixed-use Node and its major thoroughfare. The number and type of dwelling units permitted at an expanded Mixed Use Node shall not exceed the overall allowable density as prescribed herein.

5) Where screening is required by Article 9 for activities involving any sale, use, repair, storage, or cleaning operation, the specified standard of Section 7.5 shall apply.

6) Any Highway Commercial District shall be bordered on at least one side by a major or minor thoroughfare.

7) Abutting Interstate 77, the specified buffer requirement of Section 7.5 applies.

8) The arrangement of multiple buildings on a single lot shall establish building facades generally parallel to the frontage property lines along existing streets and proposed interior streets.

9) Every building lot shall have frontage upon a public street or urban open space except as follows: in specific locations where factors beyond developer control, such as a limited access highway, an existing development, or the location of an existing intersection, prohibit completing a street connection in the Highway Commercial District, a private drive may be substituted for the interior street which cannot be connected to the public network.

10) See Section 8.16, Standards for Residential Lot Widths, Alleys, Garages and Parking in Residential Districts

Example 2 - Billings, Montana

Arterial setbacks. Minimum arterial setbacks as follows apply to all commercial and mixed-use districts, except CBD and DX districts:

1. No building or structure shall be erected or maintained within fifty (50) feet of the centerline of an arterial street. In addition, no required parking area or portion thereof, including driving aisles, shall be constructed or located within forty (40) feet of the centerline of an arterial street. Any new construction that increases the number of required off-street parking spaces, must locate these additional required parking spaces in areas that comply with these locational standards.
2. Approved signs and public use controls and systems, trees trimmed up eight (8) feet and canopies with at least eight (8) feet clearance, shall be permitted in this setback area. For the purpose of this subsection, canopies shall be defined as covers that are solely attached to and supported by the structure on which it is attached to and which can be removed without destroying any part of that supporting structure. This shall only apply to canopies attached to the principal structure.

The designation of a street as an arterial shall be recommended by the city engineer, or in conformity with the most recent urban transportation plan.

City of Hammond Major Street Plan

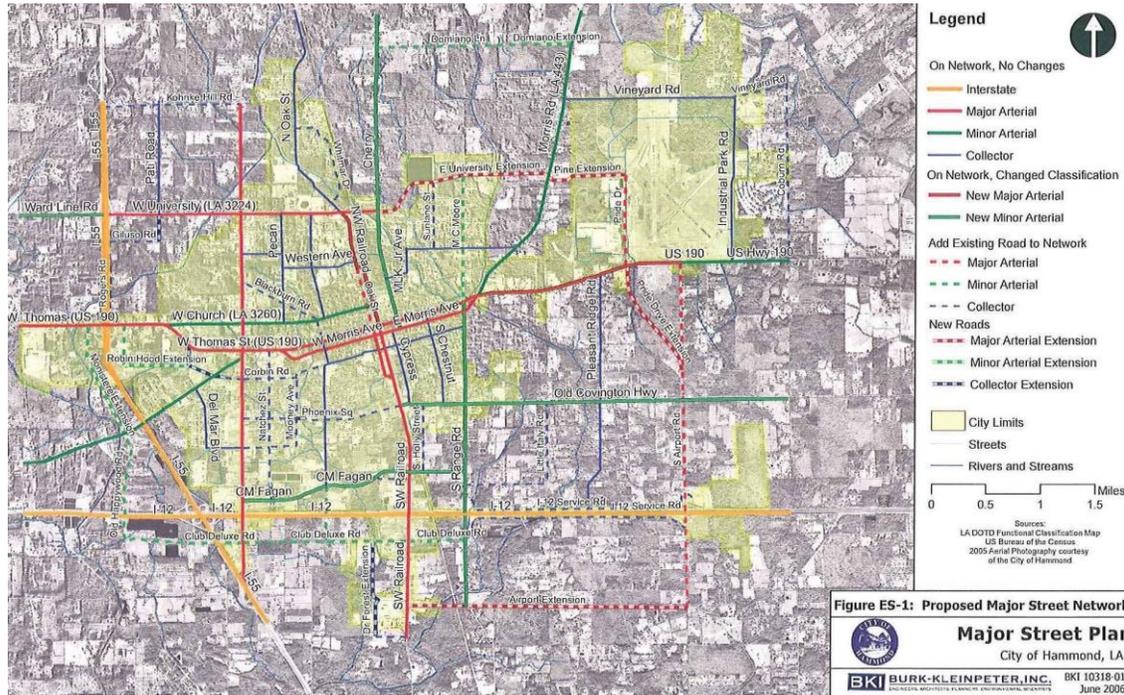


Figure ES-1: Proposed Major Street Network
Major Street Plan
 City of Hammond, LA
 BKI BURK-KLEINPETER, INC. BKI 10318-01
 ENGINEERS ARCHITECTS PLANNERS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS
 June 2006

Table ES-4
Proposed Major Street System - Major Arterials
 Existing Streets and New Construction

	Street Name	Limits	Location			Road Status		Existing Street Width (in feet)				Length (in miles)
			Urban	Sub-urban	Rural	In Network	On 2002 Functional Class Map?	Existing ROW	Design Standard	ROW Deficiency	Existing Pavement	
No Additional Right-of-Way Required	E/W Thomas St (US 190)	Carter Street to Morris Road	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Yes	Yes	- 60 ft each	120 ft	none apparent	24 ft each	7.4
	E/W Morris Ave		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Yes	Yes	- 60 ft each	120 ft	none apparent	20 ft	1.1
	N/S Oak Street	NW Railroad to SW Railroad	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			Yes	Yes	- 60 ft each	120 ft	none apparent	22 ft	
Corridors with Right-of-Way Need	NW/SW Railroad	N Oak to South Oak								none in urban area; 30 ft in suburban/rural areas	60 ft	4.4
	N/S Morrison Blvd (US 51)	I-55 to Northern Study Area Limits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	Yes	120 ft	120-150 ft	50-80 ft	24 ft	2.7
	SW Railroad Avenue	W Thomas to edge of project study area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes	Yes	40-70 ft	120-150 ft	50-80 ft	24 ft	1.9
Corridors to be Constructed	US Highway 190	Morris Rd to Airport Rd		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	No	80 ft	150 ft	70 ft	24 ft	2.5
	W University (LA 3224)	I-55 to N. Cherry Street Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Yes	Yes	70 ft	120 ft	50 ft	22 ft	2.5
	S. Airport Road	US Highway 190 to S. I-12 Service Road			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	No	70 ft	150 ft	80 ft	24 ft	1.6
Corridors to be Constructed	E. University Extension	N. Cherry St Ext to Morris Road		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	150 ft				1.1
	Pride Avenue Extension	US Highway 190 to S. Airport Road			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	No	150 ft				2.6
	New Major Arterial South of I-12	SW Railroad to S. Airport	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		No	No	150 ft				3.0
	New Major Arterial - east of W. University	W. University to Pride Drive	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			No	No	150 ft				0.5
	New Major Arterial, west of Pride Drive	Morris Rd to Pride Dr Extension	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			No	No	150 ft				

Notes:
 (1) Existing Major Street information from the 2002 Highway Functional Classification Map, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.
 (2) Average Right-of-Way (ROW) and paved section information from a map entitled "City of Hammond, Louisiana, City Streets, City Limits and Rights-of-Ways", prepared by the City of Hammond. It was noted on the map that the City only guarantees information on the State Highway Right-of-Ways.
 (3) Design standard corresponds to applicable Louisiana DOTD Design Standard, as contained in the Appendix.

Major Arterials

Major Arterials identified in the Major Street Plan are the corridors in the city that would more align with a larger setback or build-to line. These roads are designed “to move traffic from city to city... These corridors may be higher speed, provide access to the interstate highway network within cities and may run through downtown areas.” (Hammond Major Street Plan, Page ES-5).

However, a blanket change to the C-H Zoning Code would not create a consistent need across the City. Several things to consider when looking at this regulation is pedestrian activity currently in the area, density of existing development, and it’s location within the City (urban or suburban).

Hammond Comprehensive Plan

Community character is a major concern of the residents of the City and this applies to streets as much as to the development that lines streets. The Major Streets Plan delineates urban, suburban and rural areas and leaves open the possibility of reapplying these designations as areas intensify. Arterial roads should become urban main streets as they enter urban areas or new community centers. High-speed roads should transform to low-speed designs as they enter neighborhoods to slow traffic to pedestrian-friendly speeds of 20 miles per hour or less for the sake of safety. Widening roads to accommodate through-traffic decreases local livability and should be avoided. New road capacity created through widening is quickly absorbed by drivers who previously avoided the congested road. This is known as “induced traffic” and this explains the failure of newer, wider roads to reduce traffic congestion. Every increase in roadway capacity leads to increases in vehicle miles travelled. To reduce congestion, public transit, bikeways, sidewalks and mixed-use zoning and land use patterns that allow people to walk between destinations rather than drive should be explored. The proposed arterial loop to the Airport is intended to be used for unimpeded transportation. Where this road passes through rural areas west of the airport development should be discouraged because it undermines the movement of through-traffic. The construction of a new road should not necessarily result in an up-zoning of roadside properties to long linear strips of commercial uses. Hammond has many areas with this character already. Community centers may be desirable along the arterial road as identified in the Sector Plan and as part of a coordinated program for developing complete neighborhoods but changes to land use should be accompanied by planning for entire areas as coherent neighborhoods and centers.

Vision Statement and Goals

The City of Hammond's vision is to continue its role as an expanding regional hub of economic, transportation, higher education and cultural activity while growing in a sustainable manner that respects our history, enhances our quality of life and creates a stronger, more complete community for all residents while maintaining our City's character and appeal.

The City of Hammond will:

Ensure that future development preserves and enhances existing neighborhoods; encourages a high-quality mix of uses in a traditional neighborhood form; respects the natural environment and agricultural areas; and discourages sprawl development.

Encourage sustainable design that enhances and expands the existing community character and identifies Hammond as a special place.

Provide safe and convenient mobility and support a multi-modal transportation system that provides linkages to neighborhoods, schools and other community facilities and uses; at the same time the city will efficiently provide for and equitably fund quality infrastructure facilities.

Encourage a variety of good quality, affordable housing choices through preservation, rehabilitation, code enforcement and new development.

Improve the quality of Hammond's natural resources, by protecting wetlands, native habitat, water and air quality; recognizing that local efforts have local, regional and global effects.

Identify and foster opportunities for expanded cooperation with the Parish, including intergovernmental and annexation agreements, to manage growth, promote economic development, create gateways that impart a positive image of the city, and form a rational city pattern.

Provide community services and facilities that meet the physical, educational, economic, and recreational needs of all segments of Hammond's community.

Staff Recommendations



Recommendation 1

Identify Corridors

- University Avenue - City Limits to Cherry Street
- West Thomas Street - City Limits to one-way pair split (North Carter Street)
- East Thomas Street - One-way pair split (South Range Road) to City Limits
- North Morrison Boulevard
- Veterans Boulevard
- SW Railroad Avenue - One-way pair (First Avenue) to City Limits

Recommendation 2

Set Zoning Standards

- Create overlay districts for lots fronting the corridors identified above.
- Identify those areas as Suburban Commercial Highway's and include the following language for the Zoning Code site plans:

The current build-to line requirement may be waived if the following is implemented

- *Build to line of 60 feet (two lines of parking with a drive in the middle;*
- *Screening shall be provided on each side of such parking area which abuts upon or faces a Street, Alley or place. A parking area Screening shall be not less than four (4) and not more than six (6) feet in height above the grade of the parking lot surface, but in no case shall be permitted to within the Sight Distance Triangle (Appendix C).*

Recommendation 3

Recommend Infrastructure Improvements

- Sidewalk and Bike Improvements
- Louisiana DOTD Road Transfer Program Review



Recommendation 4

Update Existing Plans

- Ten year update to Hammond Comprehensive Plan;
- Create a Bike and Pedestrian Plan;
- Update and Review Major Street Plan

