



Section 17.5: Public Benefit FAR Bonus Provisions

This section authorizes the Executive Director of the City Planning Commission to award floor area ratio bonuses at an administrative level. The FAR bonus may be considered if the building commits to pursuing a LEED Gold or Platinum sustainability rating, for financial contributions to acquire or improve public parks and open spaces or to restore landmark structures, or for creating a public plaza.

Ride recommends that streetscape and roadway improvements that accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders – either through a financial contribution or through direct improvements – should also be offered in exchange for the FAR bonus. These types of improvements can provide public benefits much in the same way parks, open space, and plazas do. Wide sidewalks and streetscape improvements that calm traffic, such as bump-outs, should be highlighted – they provide a pleasant public space and add value to the new development. For streetscape improvements and the other amenities described in this section, providing facilities for users of alternative transportation should be included and encouraged. Adding bike racks, bike rooms, transit shelters, trash cans, water fountains, wayfinding, information displays, greenery, and seating, for example.

Section 17.6: Multi-Modal/Pedestrian Street Design Standards

This section designates certain streets as multi-modal/pedestrian streets which are intended to preserve and enhance streets for alternative transportation users.

The streets that are designated as multi-modal pedestrian streets in the draft CZO (Figure 17-7) are shown in red to the right:



The CZO requires development along pedestrian streets to comply with the following six standards:

1. The first floor should have a minimum ceiling height of 14 feet (17.6.D.1)
2. All facades should have architectural features to avoid the appearance of blank walls facing the street (17.6.D.2)
3. Ventilation grates, emergency exits, etc. shall be designed as decorative elements and integrated into the overall building design (17.6.D.3)
4. Structures should have primary entrance on pedestrian street (17.6.D.4)
5. The site shall be designed to ensure safe pedestrian access to the building from the street and parking areas (17.6.D.5)
6. Mid-building pedestrian passages are encouraged (17.6.D.6)
7. Parking structures should have ground floor habitable space for 70% of ground floor façade (17.6.D.7)
- 8. Garage entrances, driveways, and loading bays are prohibited (17.7.D.8)**
9. Bicycle parking is required (17.7.D.9)
10. If site is in a historic district, it shall comply with and be approved by the Historic District Landmarks Commission (17.7.D.10)

Ride recommends that the two standards that were removed from the last draft of the CZO be added back in – these are:

1. The façade facing the pedestrian street should be a minimum of 60% transparent with windows having clear or lightly tinted glass and starting no more than 4.5 feet above sidewalk
2. The building façade should be within five feet of the sidewalk

Ride believes that all of these standards – with the exception of the prohibition on garage entrances, driveways and loading bays – are appropriate to apply throughout the CBD as general design standards. These standards are not cumbersome and will result in pedestrian-oriented design throughout the CBD. The standard pertaining to garage entrances, driveways and loading bays should be the only standard that is applied to streets designated as pedestrian-streets.

Additionally, Ride believes that the streets designated as pedestrian streets – and more importantly, those that are not – warrants a closer review. Within the CBD, the highly connective street grid is used for pedestrian travel between numerous destinations, not just along the streets featured in Figure 17-7. Some of the streets that are most unwelcoming to pedestrians are the ones that would benefit the most from pedestrian-oriented design standards.

A few examples of omissions include:

- Tchoupitoulas Street, S. Peters Street, Fulton Street, and Convention Center Boulevard: These corridors parallel to the river are the main thoroughfares for pedestrians in the Warehouse District, featuring many hotels, bars, and restaurants. Many already feature wide sidewalks, patio seating, and street furniture. In fact, Convention Center Boulevard was already highlighted as a pedestrian street in Section 17.6.F but then excluded in Section 17.7.C.

- Carondelet Street: This street features a streetcar line, which is specifically mentioned in 17.7.A.1 as a characteristic of a pedestrian street.
- Loyola Avenue, S. Rampart Street, and O'Keefe Street: These streets are rapidly developing in conjunction with the new transit investment along Loyola Avenue. The new, mixed-use development has been described as being pedestrian-oriented.
- Lafayette Street: This street is heavily trafficked by office workers in the CBD, and features unique pedestrian design, plazas, and brickwork. It serves as a connection to Lafayette Square.
- Common Street, Gravier Street, and Union Street: These narrow streets are heavily trafficked by CBD office workers, but often feature poor sidewalk conditions. They already feature bike facilities. Street level buildings are mostly pedestrian-oriented.
- Tulane Avenue, Lasalle Street, Perdido Street, and Julia Street: These streets lake-side from Loyola Avenue are used by pedestrians to access significant medical centers, government buildings, and sports arenas.

Ride agrees that garage entrances, driveways and loading docks should be prohibited on pedestrian streets, but only after a careful reexamination of those streets given the pedestrian streets designation is conducted. Ride recommends that developments in the CBD that will change the location of or introduce new garage entrances, driveways and loading docks should be subject to the conditional review process, be guided by limitations in number and width, and abide by all other CZO regulations, such as 22.6.D.