



2021 IDM Webinar Questions & Responses

The 2021 Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) webinar was held on August 19, 2021. It presented a high level view of Houston Public Works's (HPW) updates to the design and construction standards made during the 2020 - 2021 Standards Review Cycle. All questions asked during the presentation have been organized according to IDM chapter or standards category. Responses have been provided from HPW's service line experts. Helpful links to the webinar information can be found below.

Contact: HPWStandards@houstontx.gov

Webinar Video Part 1: [here](#)

Webinar Video Part 2: [here](#)

2020-2021 Webinar Presentation: [here](#)

Design and Construction Standards Webpage: [here](#)

Date: September 28, 2021

Revision 0



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: General

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
G-1	General	Are all of today's presenters from the same service line?	We have presenters and representatives from multiple service lines of Houston Public Works (HPW).
G-2	General	When will the other chapters get table of contents and chapter placeholders?	Table of contents and Chapter Placeholders in the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) have been added to the open chapters of the current review cycle. Once all IDM chapters have been reviewed in the 5-year review cycle period, all chapters will have those items by October 2023.
G-3	General	Is this meeting being recorded?	Yes, we will post a copy of the presentation on our website.
G-4	General	Can we request changes at any time or do they need to be requested at a specific time duration?	<p>HPW's review of the City's infrastructure requirements are conducted on a 5-year cycle. Each year specific IDM chapters and associated standards are selected for open comment and review. A public notice of the selected documents is posted on the Houston Permitting Center's website along with a request form to change standards. The open comment period for the 2021-2022 Review Cycle is from August 05, 2021 to September 30, 2021.</p> <p>Requests can be proposed outside of the selected documents and time frame of each review cycle year however, they will be considered on a case by case basis. Proposed changes to address a grave safety concerns will take priority.</p> <p>For more information on the review cycle and revision procedures, please select the "Standards Review Committee" sidebar on the Design and Construction Standards webpage⁽¹⁾.</p>



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: General

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
G-5	General	Could you please repeat what qualifies to be grandfathered from this year's IDM updates?	For projects in the public or private sector, plans submitted for initial review after October 1, 2021, must comply with all standards in the 2021 IDM. The City must receive substantially complete plans and complete initial review before October 1, 2021, to be grandfathered under the 2020 standards. It is encouraged to submit your projects well in advance of the deadline.
G-6	General	What does substantially complete mean?	For public or private sector projects, the term substantially complete means the Engineer has determined that the plans are complete to an extent that they will be approved by the City and also meets the list of submittal requirements of the OCE discipline groups. For example, Storm Detention Requirement FAQ, which has some storm submittal requirements, can be found here .
G-7	General	What is meant by service line?	HPW is split into 5 service lines Capital Projects, Customer Account Services, Houston Permitting Center, Houston Water and Transportation and Drainage Operations. Each service line manages or maintains a portion of the City's infrastructure. For information on the function of each service line, refer to HPW's website and select the service line links located under the "Public Works Service Lines" heading ⁽²⁾ .
G-8	General	The Design submittals are the 60/90/bid ready. Substantial complete is 90% for Design?	For Houston Public Works capital improvement projects managed by the Capital Projects service line, Phase II final designs that have not been submitted for a required review prior to October 1, 2021, must comply with all standards in the 2021 IDM. Typically, phase II final design submittal at 60% completion is considered the first required Phase II final design submittal. For more information, coordinate with your HPW project manager to answer your project specific questions.
G-9	General	Is this substantial completion checklist published and available to the public?	Please refer to response to comment G-6.
G-10	General	Can we get some sort of certificate of attendance?	Attendance certificates and PDHs are not offered by HPW for this webinar.

Notes: (1) <https://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/office-city-engineer/design-and-construction-standards>
 (2) <https://www.publicworks.houstontx.gov/>



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 3

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
3-1	Chapter 3	It is easier and user friendly to combine the borehole layout and boring profiles. Has that been considered?	That was considered, however the city does not want to portray the information as a soil profile. The city wants to ensure the contractor is fully aware of the geotechnical conditions on certain project types prior to bid and has access to this information while on the construction site.
3-2	Chapter 3	Do we need to show the smaller diameter of CenterPoint energy like 2" conduit in the profile view? It is for SUE.	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.
3-3	Chapter 3	Why was 400 dpi chosen as the minimum .pdf drawing resolution?	A minimum of 400 dpi resolution for .pdf drawings was chosen because it reduces pixelization and increases the clarity of the image without increasing the file size substantially.
3-4	Chapter 3	Is the intent to provide the same information from the Geotechnical Report on the plans?	Yes. The city wants to ensure the contractor is fully aware of the geotechnical conditions on certain project types prior to bid and has access to this information while on the construction site.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 6

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
6-1	Chapter 6	Can SUE bore hole information be provided as a supplement to project manuals, instead of Drawings?	Borehole information regarding soil stratigraphy and water level conditions are to follow the Ch. 11 and Ch. 3 requirements. Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) information shall be shown on the Drawings according to Ch. 6 requirements. Refer to comment 6-2 for more info.
6-2	Chapter 6	Did the SUE requirements trigger graphic requirement updates? Are the SUE requirements intended to document field verified information on plans?	The Subsurface Utility Engineering (SUE) requirements did not drive the graphic requirement updates in the IDM Ch. 3. The updates to Ch. 11 drove the updates to Ch. 3. SUE requirements were added to give guidance on SUE. IDM 6.2.01.E states the following regarding information to be placed on plans; 'Located utilities shall be shown on plans as "location verified."



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 7

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7-1	Chapter 7	Regarding Table 7.2, was the depth of cover report done by the University of Houston?	Yes.
7-2	Chapter 7	How do I know if a waterline on my project is to be looped?	Since dead-ends are not allowed; any water line will have to be looped or connected to another water line.
7-3	Chapter 7	Are the new dead end line rules also applicable to facilities that City of Houston does not maintain, i.e. lines being maintained by utility districts?	Yes, anywhere the city engineer needs to sign off on plans it will be applicable. OCE uses the IDM for all projects that come through, we treat everyone exactly the same.
7-4	Chapter 7	Is the dead end water line looping requirement applicable to ETJ projects?	Yes, anywhere the city engineer needs to sign off on plans it will be applicable.
7-5	Chapter 7	Is there a minimum size of the tracer wire?	See the tracer wire specification for tracer wire details. All non-metallic water lines (6" and larger) will require tracer wires.
7-6	Chapter 7	In looping the line, what if the pipe sizes are not same?	Pipe sizes will often not be the same. The City is working on guidance related to this.
7-7	Chapter 7	Multi-phase developments almost always require temporary dead end lines that will be extended in subsequent projects. Is there any consideration for this in the new requirements? This requirement may have the unintended consequence of requiring a lot of extra water line that would not normally be installed if the development were constructed all at once.	The few instances where this has been brought to the City the City was able to offer a resolution and avoid the dead ends. The City cannot know how long the dead end will remain until the next phase(s) are constructed. Therefore, the rule applies.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 7

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7-8	Chapter 7	Will the water meter report include fire line services that don't have a meter?	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.
7-9	Chapter 7	How are as-builts submitted to OCE?	The project contractor will submit as-built drawings to the project engineer who will take this information and use it to create record drawings that will be submitted to OCE upon project completion.
7-10	Chapter 7	Who decides what constitutes a "reasonable" distance to an existing water line? How will the city determine when a developer is going to be required to build a water line though an existing development to eliminate an existing dead end?	No particular distance was decided upon to constitute reasonable distance, the goal is to re-establish engineering judgment. All projects are different and some small LF may be very difficult relative to other longer LFs. The appropriate time to discuss with your City PM to work out this type of detail is at the beginning of the project when you are scoping and going through negotiations.
7-11	Chapter 7	What type of restraint gland will be used with the Tyton Connections for Hydrants/Valves?	Please clarify. Fire hydrant branches are required to be restrained joint.
7-12	Chapter 7	Are the As-Builts requirements the same/different than in the Contract?	The language on as-builts in chapter 7 of the IDM is meant to provide further detail and expand upon what is already written in the contract. If there is a conflict and this needs to be revisited or the language maybe moved then please reach out and offer comments.
7-13	Chapter 7	Will this effect the specifications for the Connection Type which is currently Tyton(Push-On)?	Please clarify. Restrained joint is required in lieu of thrust blocks and at other locations where change in alignment creates thrust.
7-14	Chapter 7	Will the as-built submission to OCE apply to all project or is it more so specific to Public Utility Extensions/Improvements?	If your project requires engineering plans to be created and approved by the City, then this rule applies.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 7

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7-15	Chapter 7	Can temporary easements be quickly provided for construction, before the easement is officially recorded?	Any public asset must to be within the City ROW or a permanent easement. For project specific inquiry, coordinate with your City project manager.
7-16	Chapter 7	Has the conflicts in clearance requirements been resolved between the sections (water and storm sewer)?	We believe so.
7-17	Chapter 7	Is the required cover now 5 foot regardless of whether the street gutter is there?	No, the 5-ft is from top of curb.
7-18	Chapter 7	What is the min vertical distance between the storm sewer (RCP) and water line ?	This answer is dependent on size of the utility line. For large diameter water line, please refer to table A.4 in Appendix A of Chapter 7. For small diameter water line, water only requires 12-inch, however, if there is a large sewer involved, refer to Chapter 9.
7-19	Chapter 7	Can we loop to an existing 6 inch water line?	There are some circumstances when that may be allowed and some that it may not. Refer to the IDM for fire hydrant and total linear footage requirements for 6-inch water lines.
7-20	Chapter 7	What is the minimum clearances between water lines?	This answer is dependent on size and material of existing and proposed utilities. Please look at Chapter 7, including Appendix A, and let us know if it is unclear.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 7

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7-21	Chapter 7	There are many MUD's / Subdivisions in the ETJ built in the 1970's and 1980's where the AC waterline is at the end of its useful life and needs replacing. Those subdivisions won't have easements/ROW available to loop the waterline. What is the grandfathering / variance procedures going to be so the MUD's are able to replace their water lines?	We have seen many developments that can have their dead-ends eliminated by obtaining 10-foot easements to connect dead end water lines to each other, thereby allowing compliance with the new requirements. If, after careful consideration and investigation, all feasible paths are exhausted, the path forward is the variance process. The variance process will include confirmation of the lack of feasible paths.
7-22	Chapter 7	From Sec. 7.2.01.c.2.: <i>Locations within an easement: Refer to : Chapter 5, Easement Requirements for minimum easements widths. Do not locate lines 16-inch diameter and larger inside lot easements. For location within side lot easements, see Chapter 5.</i> Is inside meant to be in side?	Yes. Thank you.
7-23	Chapter 7	What is clearance for abandoned lines?	Abandoned lines can be removed if in conflict. Lines that are to be abandoned, but must stay in service until after acceptable, must maintain one-foot vertical and 4 foot horizontal clearance from adjacent utilities.
7-24	Chapter 7	Why are Notes for Construction near LDWL not available in the Construction Notes available on the HPW Website?	Large Diameter Water Lines are highly specialized. The Construction Notes for these projects are contained inside the appropriate specifications.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 7

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
7-25	Chapter 7	What are the requirements or restrictions for communication equipment in water easements?	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 8

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
8-1	Chapter 8	References - Where can I find the COH Uniform Plumbing Code amendments?	Found online at https://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/help/codes
8-2	Chapter 8	Manhole covers shall not be placed in driveways, does requirement apply to existing infrastructure? Are these new requirements only for new projects?	Applies to only new infrastructure.
8-3	Chapter 8	Can we place a private manhole inside the property on the driveway?	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.
8-4	Chapter 8	Are covers in the flood plain required to be completely solid (i.e. no vent holes)?	Yes, the city requires solid covers (i.e. no pick holes) that are sealed, bolted down, and system vented.
8-5	Chapter 8	Are we use UFC - Federal codes as reference or just ICC?	Neither is listed in section 8.1.02 (References).
8-6	Chapter 8	Do water line clearance requirements apply to sanitary sewer service leads?	Yes, water line clearance requirements apply to all sanitary sewer leads.
8-7	Chapter 8	What if the private manhole is making connection to a public manhole, can we still propose that on driveway?	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.
8-8	Chapter 8	What are the requirements or restrictions for communication equipment in sanitary easements?	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 8

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
8-9	Chapter 8	What is the minimum clearance between proposed 6-inch sanitary service leads and proposed water line, is it 6-inches still?	There was never 6-inches allowed between water and sanitary. the 6-inch was min water and anything besides sanitary, and yes that's gone now.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 9

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
9-1	Chapter 9	Were the detention supplements added to the IDM already effective in April 2021?	Yes.
9-2	Chapter 9	I noticed the detention rate curve was moved in Ch. 9. Did the curve or data change from the IDM supplements/FAQ posted on the HPC website in March 2021?	No.
9-3	Chapter 9	Are master plans submitted and approved prior to April 1, 2021 grandfathered?	If you are based on atlas 14 rainfall after 2019 then the city will allow the development to proceed for up to five years, but project development must be continuous. However, if you are not based on the atlas 14 rainfall data then you must provide the delta rainfall as detention in the new project.
9-4	Chapter 9	When is the new large storm manhole detail being released? I know the City of Houston is moving away from brick manholes, but hadn't released the new detail to my knowledge.	The new drawings will be effective October 1, 2021 and the brick manhole drawings will be removed from the City's standard storm sewer details. See "Details" Questions and Response for more info.
9-5	Chapter 9	When were the starting water surface and hydraulic gradient requirements changed in 9.2.01.C.5?	That change has been with us since 2019.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 9

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
9-6	Chapter 9	SFR: single 4" pipe through curb even if the 2 year storm runoff is greater than the capacity of a 4" pipe? Is this reasoning for aesthetic purposes or is it to serve as a restrictor?	The typical curb is 6". If we allow a 6" pipe through the curb, there will not be any curb concrete cover, and everything would break away. The pipe is used to control discharge. If runoff is greater, then the water will back up into the property.
9-7	Chapter 9	SFR: Sheet flow across ROW allowed or do we still need to capture runoff then pipe out to curb with single 4" Sch 40?	If there is a curb, then it should be through the curb with a 4" Sch 40 pipe. It is not allowed to sheet flow across any properties. The exception to this is SFR sheet flow from driveway.
9-8	Chapter 9	What is the maximum inlet depth Top of Curb to Flow Line for the B-B and C inlets details sheet ?	I don't believe the Max inlet depth is defined, but we want to make sure that the 2 year event will be within the pipe.
9-9	Chapter 9	What is the status of "Fee in lieu of detention"	The Fee in lieu of detention is still not available because of coordination and negotiations between Harris county is still ongoing.
9-10	Chapter 9	If you are over 20 acres, do you have to use detention rate curve?	No, you can use hydraulic analysis, but the minimum rate is still 0.75 acre-ft/acre.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 9

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
9-11	Chapter 9	The detention picture shown has a pond fountain feature...I assume it's to prevent stagnant water and improve water quality. Will there be a water fountain feature requirement for detention ponds considered?	Ponds with water fountain features have a constant volume of water to run the water fountain feature. That constant volume of water cannot be considered as part of the required detention volume. Water fountain features are not required for detention ponds.
9-12	Chapter 9	Can you explain more about 9.2.01.H.3.c? For example, If we are doing 6 SFR units with shared driveway but the total size of the tract is less than 15k SF, how the detention formula will apply?	If the total size is less than 15k, the building footing will get 65% exemption. However, the entire shared driveway will have to be calculated as 100% required for detention without 65% exemption.
9-13	Chapter 9	Harris County allows for 0.65 acre-ft/acre if the site drains into a HCFCD channel. Can we make the city and county standards the same?	No, the min for inside city project detention is 0.75 acre-ft/acre.
9-14	Chapter 9	Is there a map available showing the limits of the CBD and TMC3 areas?	Yes. If your project is within the limits, the map can be provided to you by the Office of the City Engineer plan reviewer upon request.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 9

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
9-15	Chapter 9	Can you clarify that the proposed percent impervious is based on total site acreage or limits of disturbed area?	The total tract size is to be used to decide which categories; such as 0.75 acre-ft/acre, or use the curves, or do a hydraulic analysis. % of impervious, which is based on the disturbed area, is normally used to find the point at the Detention curves when the total tract size is between 1 - 20 acres.
9-16	Chapter 9	For small additions to larger developments, do we calculate the detention rate based on the impervious cover of just the disturbed area or is it based on the impervious cover of the entire existing development?	For small additions to larger developments, use the detention rate curves.
9-17	Chapter 9	Does City regulate batch detention requirement per TECQ	HPW coordination pending; please check back for update.
9-18	Chapter 9	How does the City of Houston define the "disturbed area" for the 0.75 acre-ft/acre rate application? Is this just the total impervious cover of the site, or is any area disturbed regardless of impervious/pervious cover?	Disturbed area - any area disturbed resulting in impervious cover. Disturbed areas as defined require detention.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 9

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
9-19	Chapter 9	<p>Chapter 9: Thanks for the efforts on Chapter 9 – it seems we are getting closer to a regional reconciliation within the local governments. We all want a more resilient City. This question is for street CIP projects, sidewalk projects, and redevelopment that cannot provide surface detention (traditional detention basins). These are usually a gray area in CIPs. Will dynamic modeling be allowed to utilize in-line detention (pipes)? What is the expectation for CIP linear projects in this category?</p>	<p>Some CIP projects I have seen actually provide detention where city purchased properties. Big projects normally go for Regional detentions.</p>
9-20	Chapter 9	<p>If we have approved plans for the section, but have not began construction, do the large storm manholes need to be bid with the new details or are we grandfathered in?</p>	<p>It is recommended that all designers make an effort to incorporate the new changes into their current design to the extent that it does not increase cost or delay a project.</p> <p>For CIP projects managed by the Capital Projects service line, coordinate with the City project manager to answer your project specific questions.</p> <p>For public/private projects, work with OCE to answer you project specific questions.</p>



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 11

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
11-1	Chapter 11	11.2.17.C - Shafts in PPCA, where should the engineer's recommendations for methods other than dewatering be made? On the drawings, a geotechnical report, or with the City Project Manager?	The recommendation will be made by the geotechnical engineer in the geotechnical report. This recommendation will be used by Engineer of Record (EOR) and contractor.
11-2	Chapter 11	11.3.06.C.4.d - When the environmental professional informs the Engineer of Record more borings need to be made due to unclear determination of PPCA station limits, who will the EOR notify for the additional locations to be sampled?	The EOR will contact the City project manager, mostly for budgeting purposes.
11-3	Chapter 11	Are borehole layouts and logs required in ETJ projects?	Yes.
11-4	Chapter 11	Do you still update soil boring log sheet in GIMs map?	Yes.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 13

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
13-1	Chapter 13	Are all GIS requirements for all types of City infrastructure currently in the IDM Ch. 13 or are there some additional requirements outside of Ch. 13?	Chapter 13 focuses primarily on water, wastewater, and storm water system. As other chapters are revised we will be looking to update deliverable information in chapter 13 accordingly.
13-2	Chapter 13	On the GIS Definitions slide. How will the format be defined? Will the City Project Manager help with the type of format that will be accepted?	Chapter 13 section 5 has a variety of accepted formats to provide flexibility. The city project manager will work with the consultant to identify the proper format to be submitted.
13-3	Chapter 13	Do you see chapter 13 as a tool the city is using to bridge the gap between the different service lines and reduce data silos internally at the city?	Yes, the goal is to build up enterprise datasets to ensure these datasets are widely available.
13-4	Chapter 13	When will GIMS move to something other than Internet Explorer, which isn't supported by Microsoft anymore?	GIMS will be replaced with the GeoLINK GIS system later this fiscal year. Contact the Houston Public Works IT GIS manager (832) 395 - 2028 or the Standards and Specifications group for more detail on the release.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 13

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
13-5	Chapter 13	How often do you update data in GIMs? or how do we know these data are update?	Depending on what information you are looking for will determine the frequency at which it updates. The metadata is the best indicator of when the data was last updated. Feel free to reach out to the Houston Public Works Houston Water GIS Manager at: (832) 395 - 2878 with any questions on the water and wastewater system datasets or the Transportation and Drainage Operations GIS Manager at: (832) 395 - 2954 with any questions on the stormwater system dataset.
13-6	Chapter 13	Are you going to provide digital datasheets for consultants to use?	Yes, the city is working on developing standard templates for the geodatabase and excel formats that will be made available.
13-7	Chapter 13	Does the Geotechnical Consultant need any additional software's as part of the additional GIS requirements in addition to excel?	Chapter 13, Section 5 affords the option to deliver in either a GIS file geodatabase or text data format. Given these options, GIS software is needed to deliver a file geodatabase, however, this software is not required to deliver the text version of the data.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 14

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
14-1	Chapter 14	There were comments submitted for the submersible lift station guidelines, although the guidelines will have future updates, were those considered this review cycle?	Yes, they were reviewed and the outcome will be captured in the updated documents wastewater operations is working on. If the changes were accepted they will be included in these documents.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 17

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
17-1	Chapter 17	Safety and Visibility buffers: please clarify. If my building will have a security gate, will HPW have accept the location and design if it is near or within the safety buffer before its built?	The Safety and Visibility Buffer requirement is established in both the IDM and the Code of Ordinances, and would apply to any construction activity within defined area, whether it is on public property or private property. A security gate would have to comply with the requirements for allowable installations in the buffer and would be subject to review.
17-2	Chapter 17	If I can't fit the required sidewalk width, do I need a variance? And where does that variance come from – Public Works or the Planning Department?	A modification to a sidewalk design will require approval from the Sidewalk Modification Committee, as defined in Ch. 40 of the Code of Ordinances. The request for a modification can start as early as platting. To legally vary from the sidewalk design standards, approval must be obtained from the Committee. A formal IDM variance is not required to initiate this process.
17-3	Chapter 17	CenterPoint Energy was left out of the discussion and decisions regarding sidewalk placements given their power poles (both existing and needed in the future) do conflict and will conflict with sidewalk locations within major thoroughfare and collector/local street rights-of-way back-of-curb distances to the property lines.	Modifications to accommodate existing and/or proposed utilities and other fixed obstructions may be obtained through the Sidewalk Modification Committee. Generally, the new standards should provide more space for the installation of CenterPoint and other utility features.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 17

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
17-4	Chapter 17	If the proposed development can meet the 4' minimum safety buffer but what if there is an existing sidewalk next to the proposed development and which has safety buffer less than 4'? How to tie the proposed sidewalk to the existing sidewalk? At the tie in point we will not be able to meet the minimum buffer requirement.	Reasonable transitions and unavoidable pinch points are acceptable reasons to modify the sidewalk design. This type of modification requires approval from the Sidewalk Modification Committee; however, the \$1144 application fee is exempted. The fee is required only if the applications request to not provide the sidewalk/ safety buffer at all.
17-5	Chapter 17	Does the clearance buffer apply to fire hydrants and traffic signal boxes?	The frontage buffer and safety buffer are acceptable locations for fire hydrants and traffic signal boxes. These features shall not reduce the usable amount of clear sidewalk below the minimum.
17-6	Chapter 17	Do sidewalk requirements apply within City ETJ?	The IDM design standards only apply within the City of Houston city limits.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 17

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
17-7	Chapter 17	If you only have 9.5' from back of curb to property line along a major throughfare. Which would need 10' for the sidewalk (6') and safety buffer (4'). Will you have to submit to the sidewalk review? If so will the client have to pay the 1100\$ for the variance for a issue not caused by them? To clarify sidewalk requirement is 6' and safety buffer 4'. So it would not meet the criteria	For full site redevelopment or roadway construction purposes, the required dimensions can be satisfied with either additional right-of-way dedication or acquisition provision of a sidewalk easement on private property. The Sidewalk Modifications Committee can approve smaller dimensions than are required. The \$1144 application fee is exempted for this type of request. The fee is required only if the application requests to not provide the sidewalk/ safety buffer at all.
17-8	Chapter 17	If the initial variance is rejected, will there be an appeal process? If so, in what form?	The Sidewalk Modification Committee is tasked with finding a reasonable compromise and is the ultimate deciding body for modifications to sidewalk design. There is not a specific appeals process.
17-9	Chapter 17	Are the new off-street parking details added to the updated amendments included on the OCE website?	The Houston Construction Code is adopted and amended by City Council. The 2015 building code amendments, which will include the new off-street parking details, are currently under review internally by the City. Once they are approved by City Council, the amendments will go into effect and the details will be added to the HPC website.
17-10	Chapter 17	Is the updated off-street parking details that were added to the 2015 Building Code available on the OCE website?	See answer to question 17-9.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Chapter 17

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
17-11	Chapter 17	Where safety buffer is used for equipment but what is minimum distance for vertical features from face of curb?	Chapter 17 does not specify the minimum distance for vertical features from the face of curb.
17-12	Chapter 17	For sidewalks/side paths, does the 1' minimum frontage buffer have to be grass or can it be concrete like the safety buffer?	The frontage and safety buffers can be grass or concrete and be indistinguishable from the sidewalk.
17-13	Chapter 17	If we want to convert an existing sub-standard sidewalk into a shared use path, does the "pedestrian realm" width apply? Specifically, is that grounds for a variance or does the Code of Ordinances mean that we would then have to go acquire ROW or an easement?	A shared-use path will typically be wider than the required sidewalk; the additional width of the share-use path can be used as "credit" for either the frontage buffer or safety buffer.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Specifications

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
S-1	Specifications	Were there brand new specifications created this review cycle?	Yes, three new specifications were created this review cycle. All related to waterlines: Large Diameter Line Stops, Insertion valves & Line stops, Trace Wire for Non-Metallic Water Lines. Refer to the IDM executive summary and specification revision sheet at the front of the 2021 Standard Specifications for more information.
S-2	Specifications	Can I reuse city specs I have used on a project I worked and completed last year?	The City makes updates to the standard documents annually, so it is not recommended to re-use old projects specifications. The latest documents are available on the Houston Permitting Center's website and the documents that are effective during your submittal must be used. For more information, refer to the 2021 IDM announcement, Cover letter and Executive Summary.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Details

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
D-1	Standard Details	When will the manhole drawing be published.	The new drawings will be effective October 1, 2021 and the brick manhole drawings will be removed from the City's standard storm sewer details.
D-2	Standard Details	Will I need to add storm water precast manhole details for my storm project?	<p>It is recommended that all designers make an effort to incorporate the new changes into their current design to the extent that it does not increase cost or delay a project.</p> <p>Capital improvement projects managed by the Capital Projects service line, Phase II final designs that have not been submitted for a required review prior to October 1, 2021, must comply with all standards in the 2021 IDM and construction standards.</p> <p>For projects in the public or private sector, plans submitted for initial review after October 1, 2021, must comply with all standards in the 2021 IDM. The City must receive substantially complete plans before October 1, 2021, to be grandfathered under the 2020 standards.</p>
D-3	Standard Details	Can we use the new drawings now?	The IDM executive summary provides information regarding this. The summary states that for phase II final designs that have already been submitted for a required review prior to October 1, 2021, it's recommended that designers make an effort to incorporate the new changes into there final design as long as it does not increase cost or delay a project.
D-4	Standard Details	Is the City allowing cast in place manhole for storm sewers?	The City did not retire or modify the cast-in-place standard specification. That being said, please contact your City Project Manager to verify the City's preference for precast concrete manholes on your project.
D-5	Standard Details	When will you update all inlet details? Do you have any a timeline ?	The Standards and Specifications Group and Storm Water Operations are working on setting a timeline for this work.



2021 IDM Webinar Questions/Responses

Section: Closing

COMMENT #	SECTION	QUESTION	RESPONSE
C-1	Closing	Where can I find the 2021 IDM announcement webpage?	The direct page weblink is provided here . Also for a limited time, go to the Houston Permitting Center website and click the banner on the main page. Either will take you to the announcement.