

# Block and Blockface

**City Plan Commission  
February 15, 2018**

**Pam Thompson  
Senior Planner  
Sustainable Development  
and Construction**



**City of Dallas**

# Request

DCA178-005

- An application for an amendment to the Dallas Development Code, Chapters 51 and 51A, amending regulations regarding block and blockface.



# Summary

- The requested amendment proposes to amend Chapter 51A of the Dallas Development Code
  - 1) to amend the definition of **block**,
  - 2) to create a definition for **blockface**, and
  - 3) to clarify the methodology for determining continuity of setback related to certain uses and certain geometries,
- Additionally, staff recommends
  - 1) amendments to clarify additional references to *block* and *blockface* in Chapter 51A and
  - 2) parallel amendments to Chapter 51 of the Dallas Development Code.



# Background (Summary)

- Current code defines *block* as both
  - An area bounded by streets on all sides; *and*
  - ...the distance along one side of a street...
- Two issues relate to this definition:
  - The definition conflates *block* meaning a two-dimensional area and *blockface*, meaning the linear side of a block.
  - The section of code that determines continuity of setback uses the term *block* and applies to all properties, regardless of whether the property is likely to have a structure and regardless of whether the road has a significant curve.
- The requested amendment addresses both issues.



# Section 51A-2.201

## General Definitions

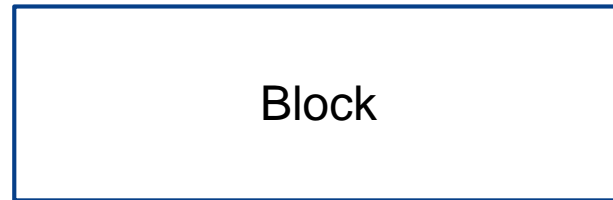


# Definition - Current

- Dallas Development Code Section 51A-2.102 defines *block* like this:

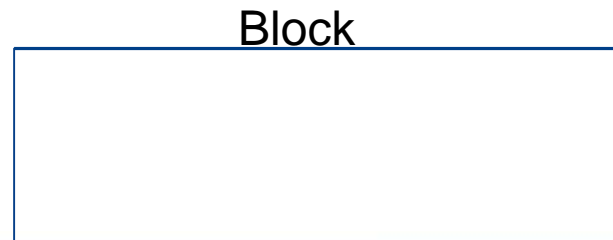
(10) BLOCK means:

(A) an area bounded by streets on all sides;



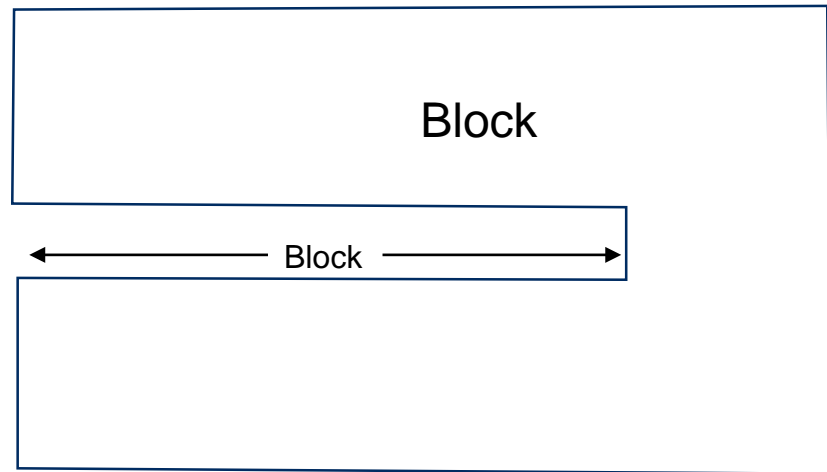
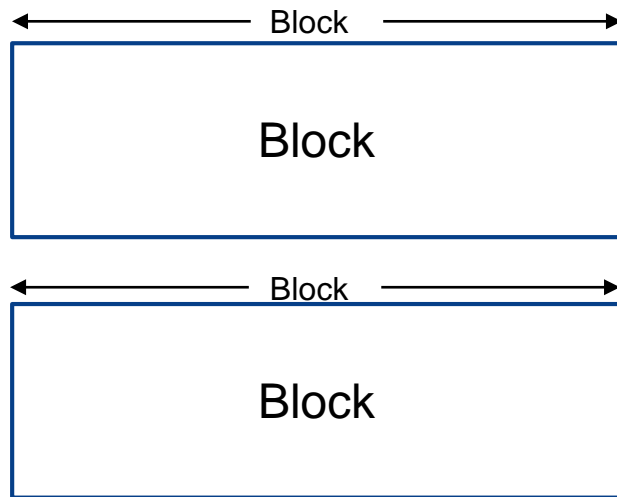
*and*

(B) as a measurement term, the distance along one side of a street....

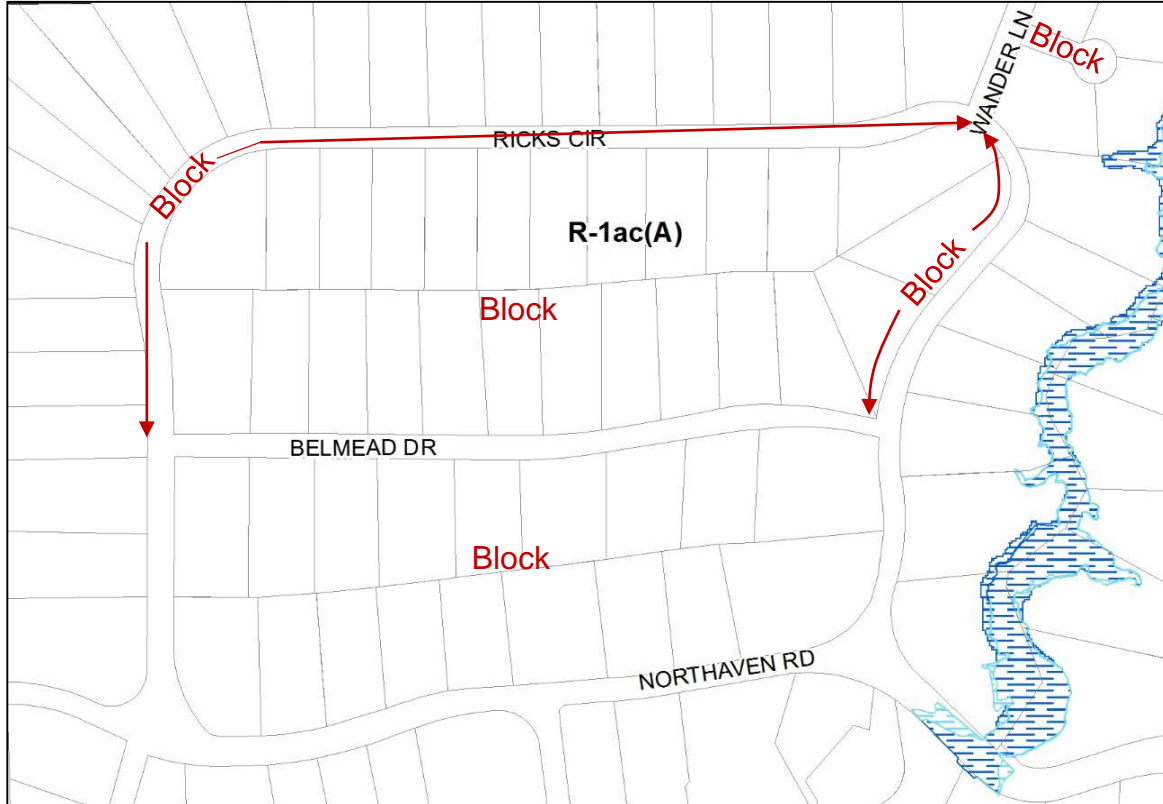


# Definition - Current

- ...between the two nearest intersecting streets, or
- where a street deadends, the distance along one side of a street between the nearest intersecting street and the end of the deadend street.



# Definition - Current





# Definition – Proposal Part 1

- Proposed definition of *block* leaves *block* as an area bounded by streets,
  - But it moves the second half of the definition to *blockface*:

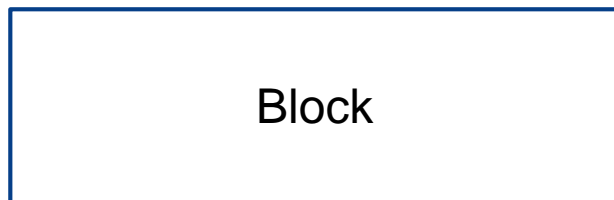
## **SEC. 51A-2.102. Definitions.**

(10) BLOCK means an area bounded by streets on all sides.

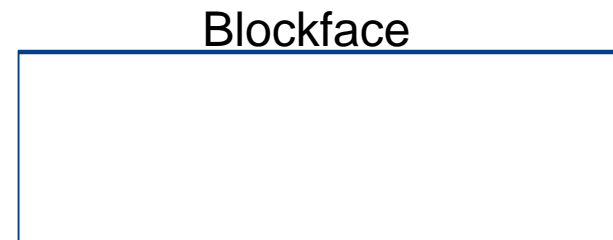
(10.1) BLOCKFACE means:

(A) the distance along one side of a street between the two nearest intersecting streets; or

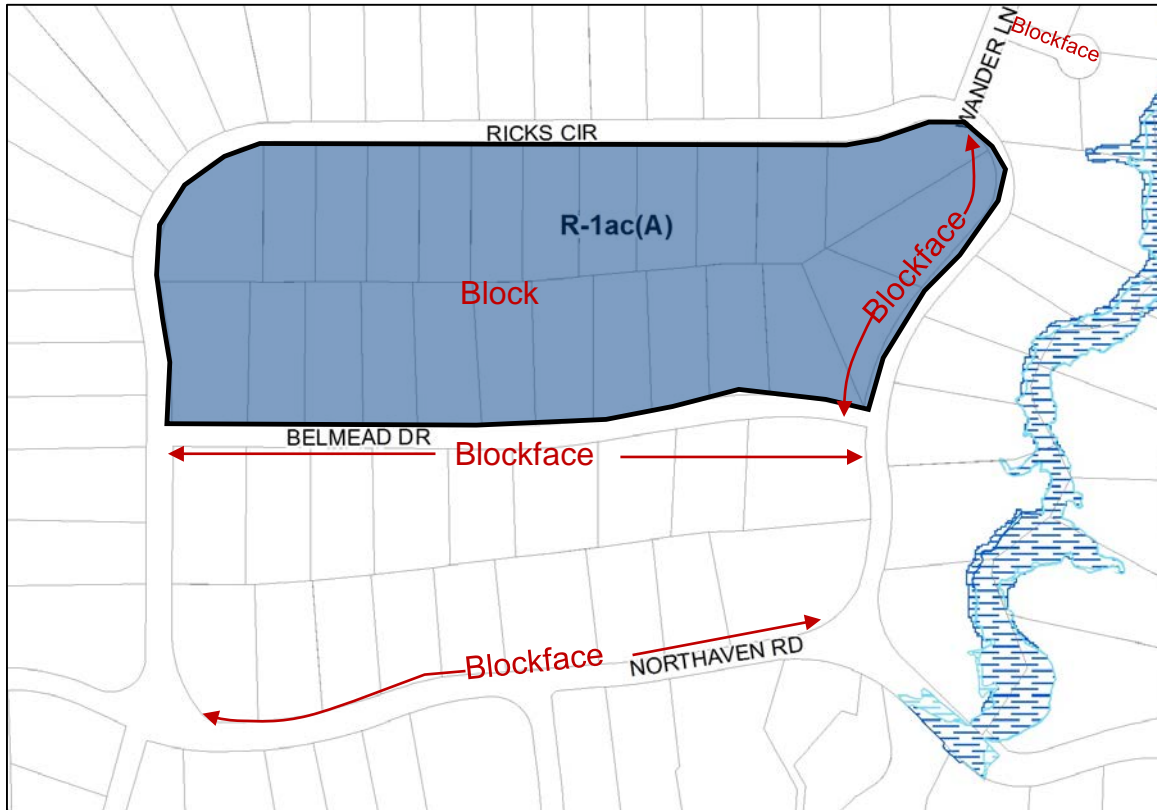
(B) where a street deadends, the distance along one side of a street between the nearest intersecting street and the end of the deadend street;



and



# Definition – Proposal Part 1



# Definition – Proposal Part 2

## SEC. 51A-2.102. Definitions.

(10) BLOCK means an area bounded by streets.

(10.1) BLOCKFACE means:

(A) the distance along one side of a street between the two nearest intersecting streets; or

(B) where a street deadends, the distance along one side of a street between the nearest intersecting street and the end of the deadend street; or

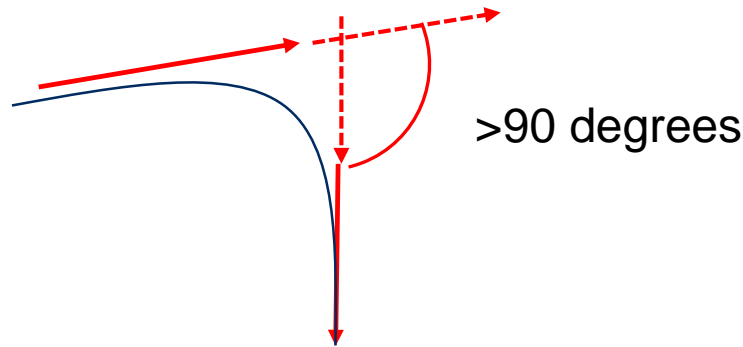
(C) where a street centerline contains a change of direction 90 degrees or more, the distance along one side of a street between either the nearest intersecting street or the deadend and the point determining the angle of the change of direction.

11

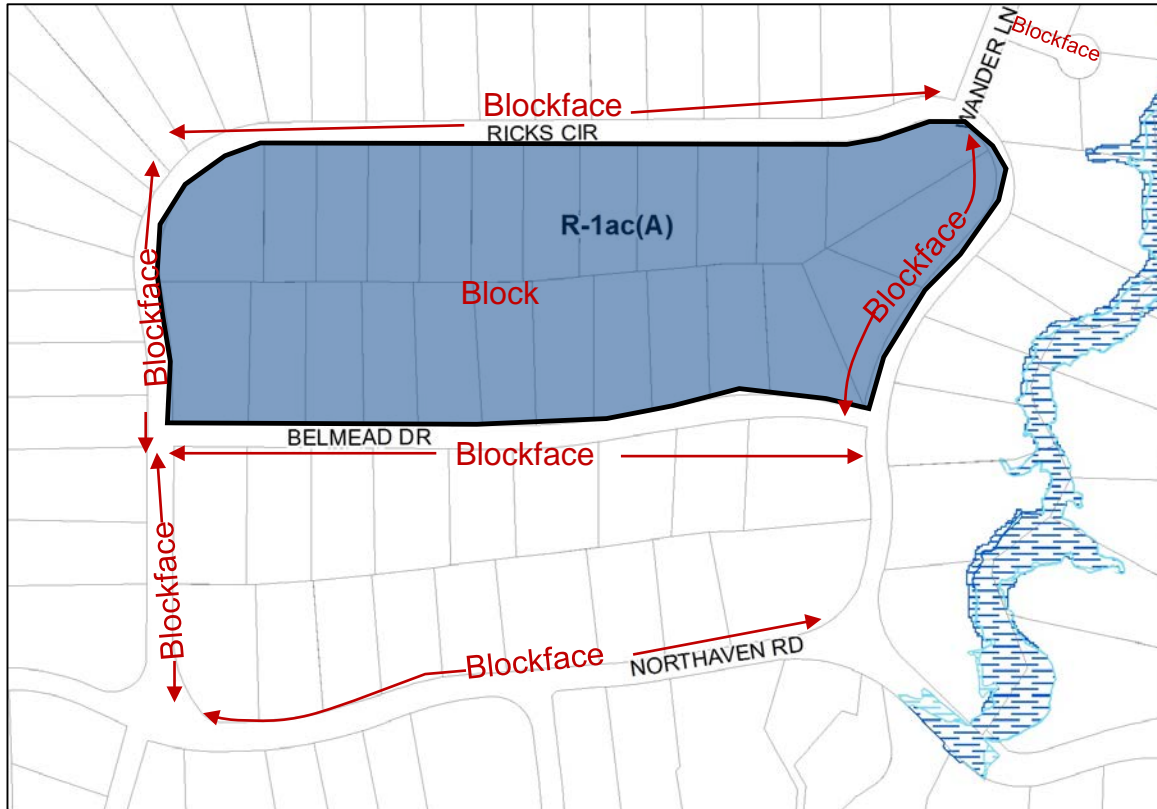
# Definition – Proposal Part 2

or

(C) where a street centerline contains a change of direction 90 degrees or more,



# Definition – Proposal Part 2



- (10.1) **BLOCKFACE** means:
- (A) the distance along one side of a street between the two nearest intersecting streets; or
  - (B) where a street deadends, the distance along one side of a street between the nearest intersecting street and the end of the deadend street; or
  - (C) where a street centerline contains a change of direction 90 degrees or more, the distance along one side of a street between either the nearest intersecting street or the deadend and the point determining the angle of the change of direction.

# Section 51A-4.401

Continuity of Blockface, also known as  
Continuity of Front Yard Setback



# Continuity of Front Yard Setback

- Designed to provide a uniform street wall, such as in a residential district or in a downtown area.



Northaven at St Michael, facing west (Google Streetview)



Michigan Ave. (APA)

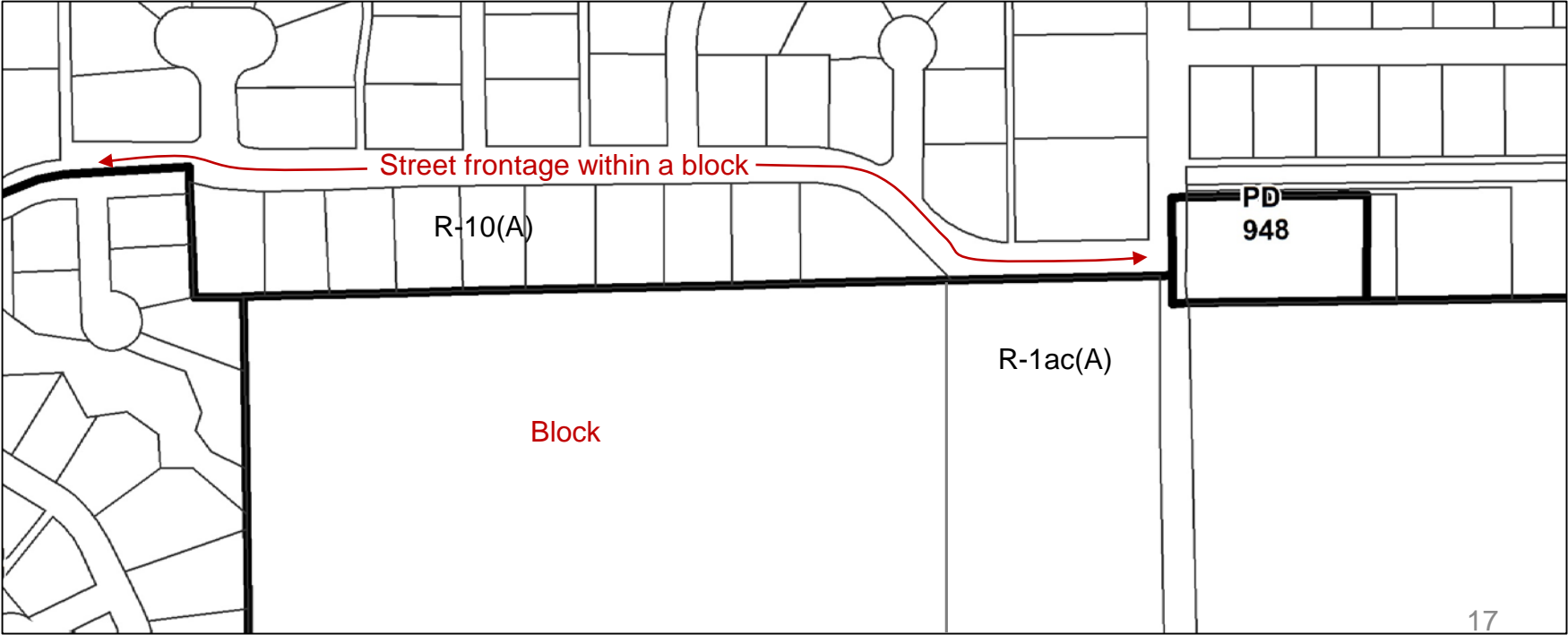
# Continuity of Front Yard Setback

- Sec 51A-4.401(a)(6) uses *block* for continuity of front yard setbacks:
  - “If **street frontage within a block** is divided by two or more zoning districts, the front yard for the entire **block** must comply with the requirements of the district with the greatest front yard requirement.”
- Same definitional issue as with 2.201. This use of *street frontage within a block* is more accurately stated as *blockface*, and the second reference to *block* means *blockface*.





# Current Continuity of Setback - Block



# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Block

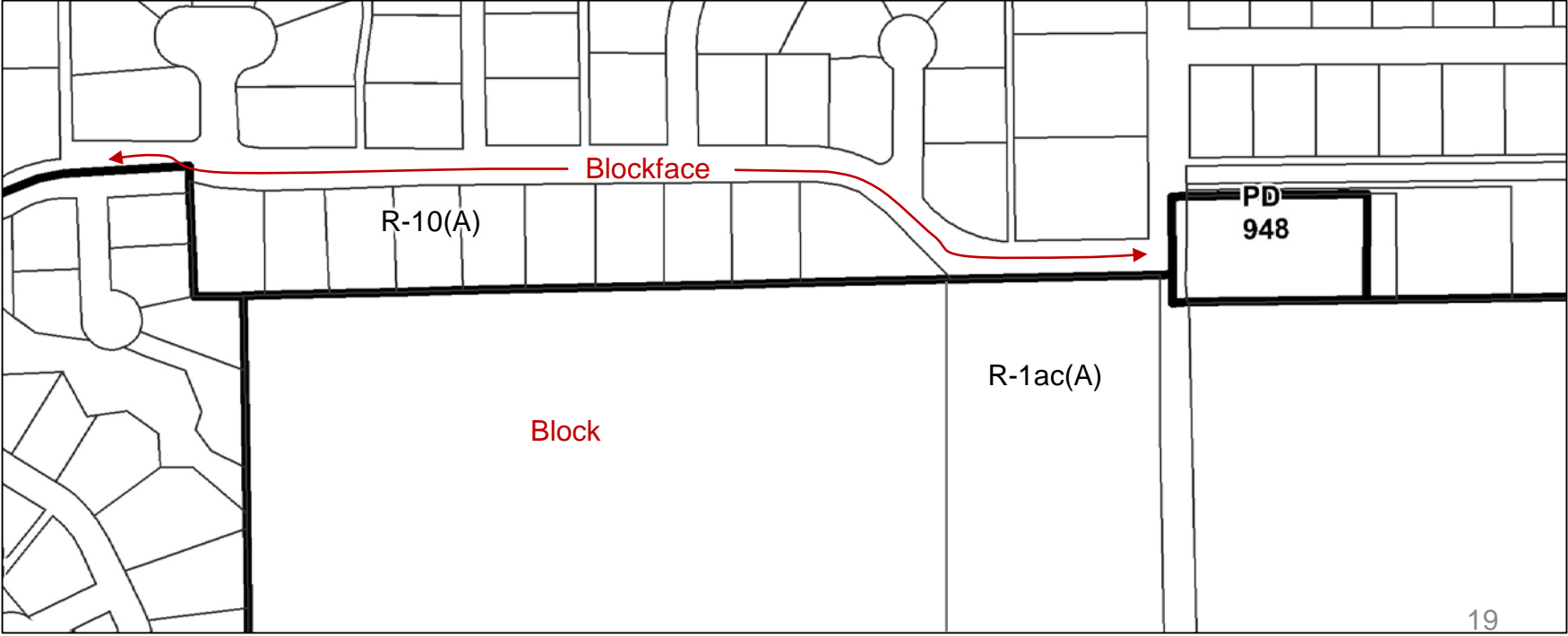
## SEC. 51A-4.401 Minimum Front Yard

(a) General provisions.

(6) Continuity of setback.

(A) If ~~street frontage within a block~~ a blockface is divided by two or more zoning districts, the front yard for the entire blockface must comply with the requirements of the district with the greatest front yard requirement...

# Proposed Continuity of Setback - Block



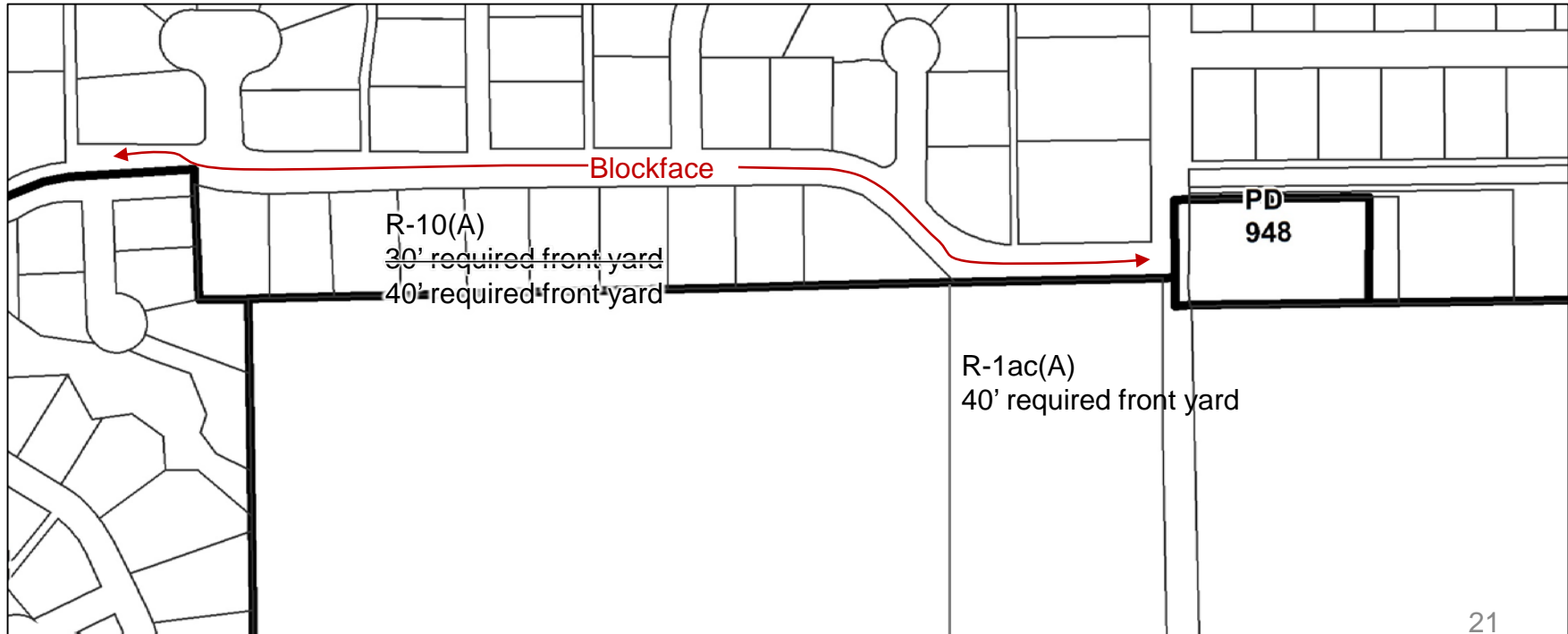
# Current Continuity of Setback

- This continuity currently applies to all properties, regardless of
  - whether the properties are likely to have structures
  - curvature (and associated sight lines) of the blockface



# Current Continuity of Setback

If a blockface is divided by two or more zoning districts, the front yard for the entire blockface must comply with the requirements of the district with the greatest front yard requirement...

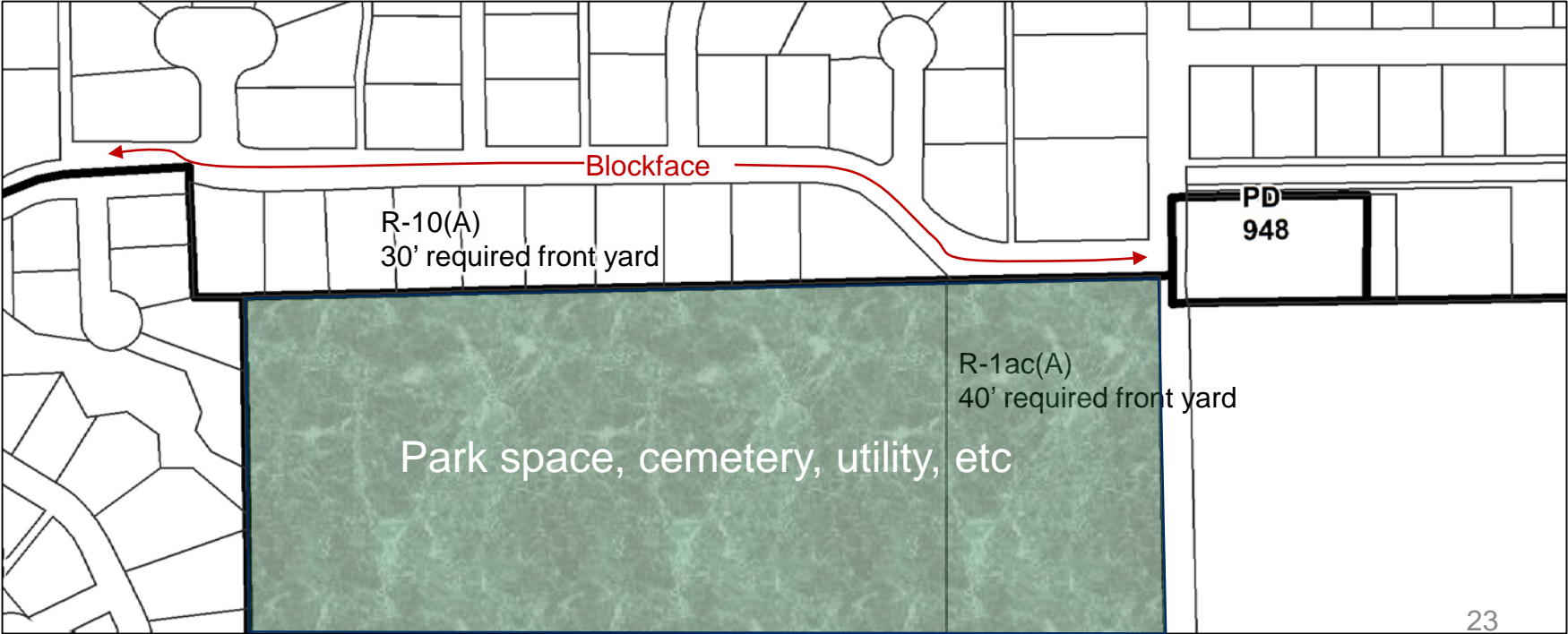


# Section 51A-4.401

## Continuity of Setback - Uses



# Continuity of Setback - Uses



# Continuity of Setback - Uses

← CR and MF-2(A)



Webb Chapel at Lombardy Lane (Google Streetview)

R-7.5(A)

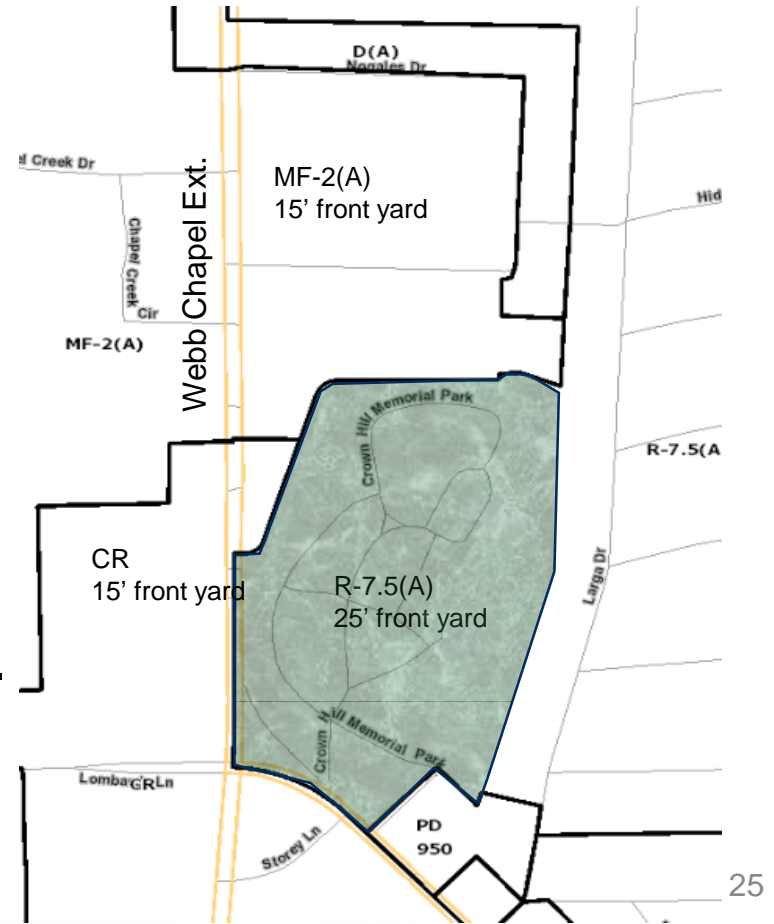


Webb Chapel at Lombardy Lane (Google Streetview)



# Continuity of Setback - Uses

- Under current regulations, the MF-2(A) and the CR districts in the image would need to follow the R-7.5(A) setback.
- Cemeteries, parks, and utilities, for example, rarely have large structures.
  - Blockface already disrupted.
  - Permitted in most zoning districts either by right or by specific use permit.



# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Uses

- Section 51A-4.401(a)(6) addresses continuity of front yard setbacks.
- Staff recommends disregarding the setbacks of districts with...
  - utility
  - railroad
  - cemetery/ mausoleum, and
  - recreation uses
- ...when the setback of that district would otherwise have controlled the setback of other districts in the blockface.



# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Uses

## SEC. 51A-4.401 Minimum Front Yard

(a) General provisions.

(6)

(A) Except as provided in this paragraph, if [street frontage within] a blockface is divided by two or more zoning districts, the front yard for the entire blockface must comply with the requirements of the district with the greatest front yard requirement.

(B) If the greatest front yard is in a district with one or more of the following uses being conducted as a main use, the greatest front yard without one of these uses shall control:

(i) Utility and public service uses listed in Section 51A-4.212.

(ii) A railroad right-of-way.

(iii) A cemetery or mausoleum.

(iv) Recreation uses listed in Section 51A-4.208.”

27

Chapter 51 changes are similar, with slight adjustments for uses.



City of Dallas

# Section 51A-4.401

Continuity of Setback -  
Curvature of the Road



# Continuity of Setback - Curvature

- Once a street curves more than 45 degrees, the view is of the front of a building rather than the front yard setback.



Valley View Lane, facing east (Google Streetview)



# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Curvature

## SEC. 51A-4.401 Minimum Front Yard

(a) General provisions.

(6) In this paragraph: BLOCKFACE means:

(i) the distance along one side of a street between the two nearest intersecting streets; or

(ii) where a street deadends, the distance along one side of a street between the nearest intersecting street and the end of the deadend street; or

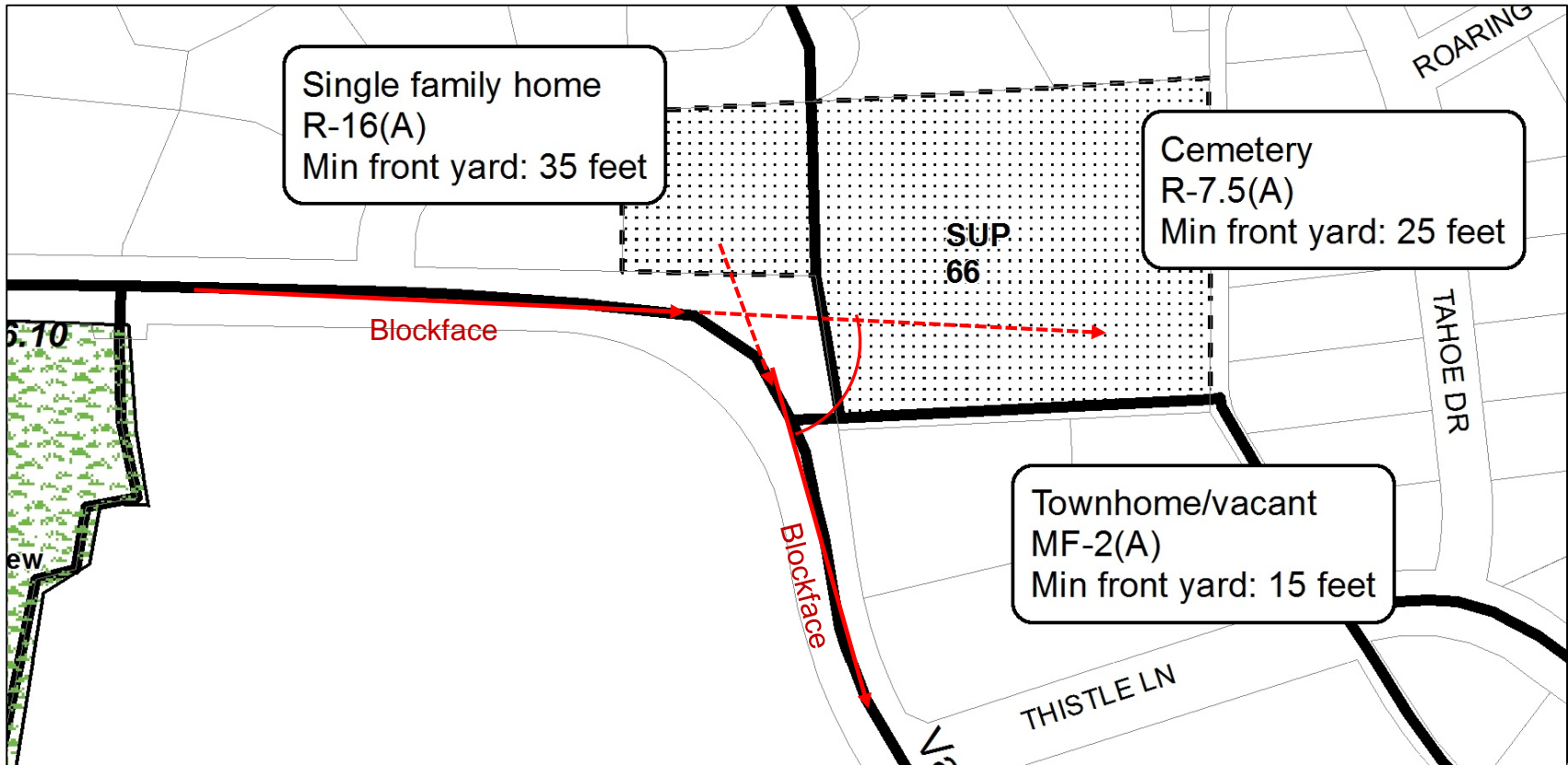
(iii) where a street centerline contains a change of direction greater than 45 degrees, the distance along one side of a street between either the nearest intersecting street or the deadend and the point determining the angle of the change of direction.



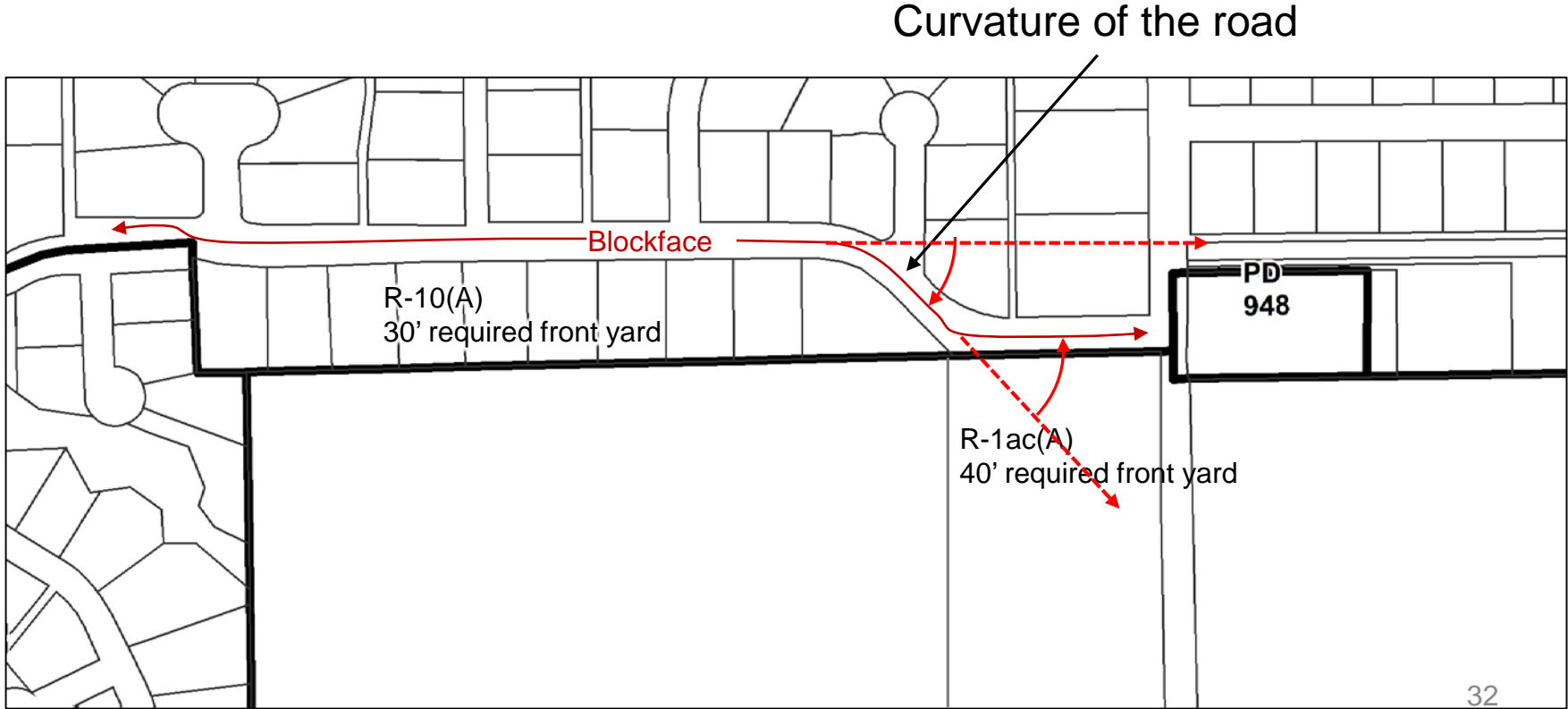
30

Chapter 51 changes are similar.

# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Curvature



# Proposal – Continuity of Setback - Curvature





# Additional changes

- CA-1(A) districts
- Transit passenger station parking
- TH setbacks when abutting residential
- Sign regulations



# Additional Amendments

- In the **CA-1(A) - Central Area District**, the additional provisions specify **sidewalk** widths for frontages along blocks and fencing requirements for surface parking lots. Staff recommends the following changes:

Section 51A-4.124(a)(8)(C) - Sidewalk regulations in CA-1(A) districts – “(i) Average sidewalk width equals the total sidewalk surface area divided by the lineal feet of frontage. (aa) Each frontage on each ~~block~~ blockface must contain the required average sidewalk width.”

Section 51A-4.124(a)(9)(J) – “Fencing for commercial parking garages and surface parking lots: (ii) Surface parking lots in the middle of a blockface with buildings on both adjoining lots and less than 100 feet of frontage and all commercial parking garages must have wrought iron fencing.”

34

Chapter 51 changes are similar for CA-1 districts.



City of Dallas

# Additional Amendments

- Section 51A-4.211(10) regulates **transit passenger station or transfer center uses**. The paragraph for minimum setbacks for parking uses *blockface* as staff proposes it to be defined. Staff recommends clarifying the intended definition.

Section 51A-4.211(10)(E)(v) – “Minimum setbacks for parking and maneuvering. In residential districts, all off-street parking spaces and bus bays, including maneuvering areas, must be located behind the required setback lines established in this chapter, or behind the established setbacks for the blockface as defined in Section 51A-4.401, whichever results in the greater setback. A minimum setback of ten feet must be provided for a side or rear yard adjacent to a residential use.”



# Additional Amendments

- Section 51A-4.401(b) regulates minimum front yard requirements for **townhomes** adjacent to other residential districts.

4.401(b)(3) “If a TH or TH(A) district abuts another residential district in the same blockface ~~and fronts on the same side of the street~~, the residential district with the greater front yard requirement determines the minimum front yard. The minimum front yard for the residential district with the greater front yard requirement must extend at least 150 feet into the TH or TH(A) district.”



# Additional Amendments

- Within Article VII – **Sign Regulations**, Section 51A-7.500 regulates special provision sign districts. Section 51A-7.502 uses the lineal (rather than areal) definition of block and must therefore be updated to replace *block* with *blockface*:

Section 51A-7.502. “Creation of a special provision sign district. By amendment to this article, the city council may designate an area as a special provision sign district subject to the following conditions:  
(1) The district must include frontage on a street, either for an entire blockface or for not less than 500 feet measured along the way or continuous set of intersecting ways.”



# CPC Direction

- Make recommendation on proposed amendments



# Block and Blockface

**City Plan Commission  
February 15, 2018**

**Pam Thompson  
Senior Planner  
Sustainable Development  
and Construction**



**City of Dallas**