

# TRN-1.28 – Curb Extensions for Buildings and Planning Actions

## CURB EXTENSIONS

*Administrative Rule Adopted by Bureau of Transportation Engineering & Development Pursuant to Rule-Making Authority*

ARB-TRN-1.28

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### I. Purpose

To clarify under what conditions curb extensions will be required in relation to corner reconstruction.

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### II. Administrative Rule

The City Traffic Engineer has determined that curb extensions are required under the conditions described below. However, consideration of curb extension feasibility and design will occur during the Public Works engineering and design process.

- Dual curb extensions are required at **unsignalized** intersections within the Northwest and the Central City Plan Districts when those sites are also located within a Pedestrian District<sup>1</sup> or along a City Walkway.
- Single curb extensions are required at any **unsignalized** intersection (outside the Northwest/Central City Plan Districts) when those sites are also located within Pedestrian District or along a City Walkway AND abut any street with a **traffic** classification greater than a Local Service Street.<sup>1</sup> The curb extension is required to extend into this street.

Curb extensions may not be required in designated Freight Districts, on streets without on-street parking, on streets with planned separated bike facilities, or where there are existing utility conflicts. However, final determination of feasibility will be made by PBOT during the Public Works process.

Obstructions such as utility vaults, catenary poles, building appurtenances, or building projections are not permitted to be placed in the curb extension on corridors with a bicycle or transit designation other than Local Service in the Transportation System Plan.

### III. Exemptions

PBOT will not require permittees to build concrete curb extensions on a subset of city streets identified in the [Curb Extension Policy Exemption Map](#). These streets are identified for near-term capital improvements intended to provide protected bicycle lanes (or any curb tight bicycle facility) or enhanced transit priority lanes. It includes planned bikeways on the TSP 1-10 year list, funded bikeways<sup>2</sup>, Enhanced Transit Corridors projects on the 1-10 year project list<sup>3</sup>, Central City in Motion projects (all are in a 1-10 year timeframe), and near-term projects included in the Quick Build Programs for Bike Network Completion and Transit Spot Improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> A Pedestrian District includes both sides of the streets along its boundaries - Portland Pedestrian Master Plan, June 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Some funded bikeways are not on the TSP 1-10 year list since a) projects in the TSP are generally \$1 million or more and b) new projects become funded over time.

<sup>3</sup> On some corridors, the exclusion is limited to segments within 500' of a signalized intersection.

For development projects for which public works permits are under review at the time of this filing, Permit Engineering Review will request applicants remove curb extensions prior to the first review of design development plans. For projects beyond this phase, PBOT will consider requests made in writing for a credit for design efforts to remove the curb extensions from the plans.

Additionally, PBOT will decline requests from a permittee for building concrete curb extensions along these identified corridors. The applicant may request a design exception, which will be reviewed by the City Traffic Engineer. On streets where there are adopted streetscape plans or special design standards, the curb extension exemption policy shall still apply.

#### **IV. Background**

Curb extensions decrease the overall width of the roadway and can serve as a visual cue to drivers that they are entering an area of increased pedestrian activity. Curb extensions also increase the overall visibility of pedestrians by aligning them with the edge of the parking lane and reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians, improving the safety of an intersection. Curb extensions are identified in the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP) as an effective safety and traffic calming measure and are recognized in the City's Pedestrian Design Guide as a preferred element when reconstructing a corner in a Pedestrian District.

While curb extensions are an important tool for enhancing pedestrian visibility and comfort at crossings, they can preclude or complicate future bike and transit improvements. With the adoption of the Climate Action Plan and 2035 Comprehensive Plan, the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) has increased its focus on implementing protected bicycle lanes and enhanced transit corridors, including bus queue jumps. Both these facility types often depend on using the curb zone. Implementation of these facilities can sometimes be made more difficult and/or more expensive by the presence of curb extensions in the curb zone, or altogether infeasible. In these cases, curb extensions may need to be removed to accommodate bicycle and/or transit uses adjacent to the curb.

Policy 9.6 of the City's Comprehensive Plan prioritizes walking, bicycling and transit—in that order--over other modes of transportation. That policy also states that "All users' needs are balanced with the intent of optimizing the right of way for multiple modes on the same street" and that a "Policy-based rationale is provided if modes lower in the ordered list are prioritized." The exemptions section of this rule takes both those actions and recognizes that pedestrian crossing improvements can be provided in a manner that also allows for needed bicycle and transit improvements. Floating curb extensions and interim curb extensions are two design variations that can help to address these concerns.

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#### **V. Reference**

Pursuant to Rule Making Authority of City Code Title & Chapter 3.12.

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#### **HISTORY**

Adopted by Director of Portland Bureau of Transportation June 11, 2019.

Filed for inclusion in PPD June 17, 2019.

Curb Extensions Exemption Map Added August 7, 2019.