

# SWAMPLOT

## Uptown's Not Waiting for Light Rail, Planning Bus System Along Post Oak Instead

January 17, 2013

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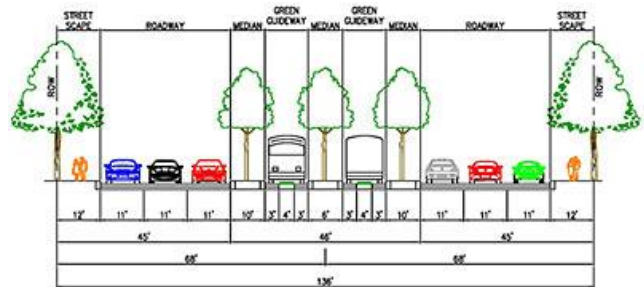


The driving force of a project that Uptown Houston District has proposed to the city to **transform** Post Oak Blvd.? **Big beautiful buses.** With both residential and commercial developments like [Skanska's 20-story office building](#) popping up along the major transit corridor and METRO's Uptown/Gold Line nowhere in sight, the District has developed a \$177-million project featuring **light rail-like BRT** to update Post Oak — a street “that has long **outlived** its original use,” says John Breeding, the District's president.

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The map above shows **densely packed** Uptown. The district includes 23 million sq. ft. of commercial office space, 5 million sq. ft. of retail, and more than 7,000 hotel rooms. In the next 2 years, almost 3,000 residential units will be added, says Breeding. **Congestion** can be so bad that even **off-duty traffic cops** can't ease it. Though METRO has plans for the **Uptown/Gold Line**, Breeding says that that could take up to 20 years. Instead, the District sees BRT as a solution. A cross section of the **new** Post Oak, with bus lanes in the center of the road, might look like this:



If that reminds you of drawings METRO has done for **light rail**, it's not an accident. This BRT service would work similarly, ferrying people up and down Post Oak while **protected** by **candlestick** barriers. (And, Breeding says, the street could later be **adapted for rail**, should that become necessary.)

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The BRT system, though, is just one part of the proposed project; the District's also working with **TxDOT** to build **HOV access lanes** to Loop 610 and U.S. 59., which the buses would take to get to and from two proposed **transit centers**. Breeding says Uptown is **underserved** by current METRO routes, as this map suggests:



A close-up of the proposed Post Oak BRT and new transit centers:



Breeding says the the Uptown District will hear back from the city about this proposal in the next month or two.