

## A

**Affordable Requirements Ordinance:** Established in 2003 to increase the provision of affordable housing units in Chicago. Since first established, the ordinance has had 3 revisions, with changes to increase the percentage of affordable units provided, address patterns of segregation in the city, and decrease displacement of long-time residents in areas experiencing rapid development.

**Air Quality Zoning Ordinance:** Approved by City Council in March 2021, regulates the construction and expansion of certain facilities that create air pollution. The regulations require a formal City review process and expand public engagement opportunities for the zoning, public health and transportation implications of many types of intensive manufacturing and industrial operations.

## B

**By-right (Permitted Use):** Uses or developments permitted in a specific zoning district that comply with all applicable standards of the zoning code. The zoning code will mark these uses with a “P” that stands for “permitted by-right”. These developments are not subject to zoning procedures and do not require final approval by City Council.

**Bulk:** Bulk regulations are the combination of controls (lot size, floor area ratio, lot coverage, open space, yards, height and setback) that determine the maximum size and placement of a building on a zoning lot.

## C

**Cannabis Zoning Ordinance:** The Cannabis Zoning Ordinance, amended in September 2021, regulates where new adult use cannabis dispensaries may open in the City of Chicago. The ordinance permits new adult use cannabis dispensaries in certain Commercial (C), Downtown (D), Manufacturing (M) and Planned Manufacturing (PMD) zoning districts provided they obtain a special use permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). This ensures each new adult use cannabis dispensary receives a public hearing before the ZBA and provides an opportunity for public comment.

**Chicago Building Code or Chicago Construction Code:** Codes that establish minimum standards for the construction, alteration, repair, maintenance, and demolition of buildings and other structures in order to protect public health, safety and welfare. The Chicago Construction Codes include provisions of the Municipal Code of Chicago related to construction and rehabilitation, plumbing, heating, electrical, fire prevention, sanitation, zoning and other health and safety standards relating to buildings and structures, except provisions enforced exclusively by a city department other than the Department of Buildings.

**City Council, Chicago:** The legislative body of the city, the City Council usually meets once every month to exercise general and specific powers delegated by state statute. The City Council is the final decision-making body on zoning map amendments.

- **Committee on Zoning, Landmarks, and Building Standards:** Committee within Chicago City Council which holds jurisdiction over all zoning matters and the operation of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the office of the Zoning Administrator; land use policy generally and land use recommendations of the Chicago Plan Commission and the Department of Planning and Development; building code ordinances and matters generally affecting the Department of Buildings; and designation, maintenance and preservation of historical and architectural landmarks.

# GLOSSARY OF ZONING TERMS

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**Connected Communities Ordinance:** Passed by the City Council in July 2022, to promote development that will help residents live more conveniently, affordably, and sustainably while spurring economic development across the city. The Ordinance implemented many of the recommendations of the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy Plan (ETOD Policy Plan).

## D

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**Department of Planning and Development (DPD):** The principal planning agency for the City of Chicago, the department oversees Chicago's zoning and land use policies and employs a variety of resources to encourage business and real estate development, historic preservation, accessible waterfronts, walkable neighborhoods, and related community improvements. The commissioner of DPD is appointed by the Mayor with City Council consent.

## F

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**Floor Area Ratio (FAR):** A standard used to control the amount of floor area that can be built on a given lot. For example, a FAR of 3.0 on a 10,000 square foot lot would allow a building whose total floor area is 30,000 square feet. This permits a three-story building with 10,000 square feet on each floor or a six-story building with 5,000 square feet or any combination of stories and floor area that do not exceed 30,000 square feet.

## I

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**Inclusionary Zoning:** Regulations that increase housing choice by providing the opportunity to construct more affordable, diverse, and economical housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate income families

**Industrial Corridor:** Areas designated on the Zoning Map by the Chicago Plan Commission starting in 1992 where uses are primarily restricted to industrial or manufacturing activities, and any proposed land use changes require review by the Plan Commission and City Council. The city's 26 designated Industrial Corridors contain two thirds of all the land that's zoned for manufacturing in Chicago, including 15 Planned Manufacturing Districts that further refine the types and scale of allowed uses.

## L

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**Lakefront Protection Ordinance:** Adopted in 1973, Lake Michigan and Chicago Lakefront Protection Ordinance created an overlay district divided into three zones to preserve and protect Lake Michigan and the lakefront: the offshore zone, which includes all areas of Lake Michigan; the public zone, which includes all public open space and public paths adjacent to the shoreline of the Lake; and the private use zone, which includes all zoning lots in accordance with maps of the district.

**Landscape Ordinance:** Requires landscape features to be incorporated into all new or substantially renovated business, commercial buildings and large residential buildings. Planting standards are maintained by the Department of Streets and Sanitation's Bureau of Forestry. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) reviews survey plats, parking lot layouts and site plans to ensure that projects conform to the requirements of the ordinance.

# GLOSSARY OF ZONING TERMS

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## M

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**Map Amendment:** Revisions to the zoning map. Zoning Map Amendments may be proposed by the Mayor, City Council, Zoning Administrator, and the property owner of the subject property or the subject property owner's authorized agent.

**Mixed Use Development:** The development of a tract of land or building or structure with two or more different uses such as residential, office, manufacturing, retail, public, or entertainment.

## P

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**Plan Commission, Chicago:** Body responsible for the review of proposals that involve Planned Developments (PDs), the Lakefront Protection Ordinance, Planned Manufacturing Districts (PMDs), Industrial Corridors and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts. It also reviews proposed sales and acquisitions of public land as well as certain long-range community plans. Established in 1909, the commission has 23 members, including mayoral appointees made with City Council consent.

**Planned Development (PD):** Zoning designation required for certain projects to ensure adequate public review of major development proposals, encourage unified planning and development, promote economically beneficial development patterns that are compatible with the character of existing neighborhoods, ensure a level of amenities appropriate to the nature and scale of the project, allow flexibility in application of selected use, bulk, and development standards in order to promote excellence and creativity in building design and high-quality urban design. There are numerous mandatory thresholds for that trigger PD regulations and the review process requires public hearings before the Chicago Plan Commission and City Council Committee on Zoning prior to a vote by the full City Council.

- **Master Planned Development (Master PD):** "Megaprojects" that do not fall under the threshold for standard Planned Developments. Private projects that have or exceed 20 gross acres or 15 net acres, 4 million square feet or a 3 million incremental increase, or 4,000 dwelling units or a 3,000 incremental increase. Or, city owned land, waterfront sites, or industrial uses that have or exceed 15 gross acres or 10 net acres, 3 million square feet or a 2.5 million incremental increase, or 3,000 dwelling units or a 2,500 incremental increase.

**Planned Manufacturing District (PMD):** Area of land where the zoning laws prohibit residential development and other specific uses. The first PMD was created in 1988 and there are currently 15 total within larger areas designated as Industrial Corridors.

## R

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**River Design Guidelines, Chicago:** Adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission in January 2019, guidelines that outline how properties along the Chicago River should be developed and improved to create a more unified aesthetic, to enhance the natural environment, and to provide public access and recreational opportunities, while balancing the needs of active industrial uses critical to the City's economy.

## S

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**Special District:** Areas intended to enhance and preserve the unique physical character of properties within their boundaries, which are identified as overlays on the City's zoning map. Also called Neighborhood Conservation Districts, Special Districts often restrict height and bulk in order to protect historically significant communities and came to prominence in the 1990s.

# GLOSSARY OF ZONING TERMS

**Special Use:** Uses that, because of their widely varying land use and operational characteristics, require case-by-case review in order to determine whether they will be compatible with surrounding uses and development patterns. Case-by-case review is intended to ensure consideration of the special use's anticipated land use, site design and operational impacts.

**Spot Zoning:** Rezoning of a lot or parcel of land to benefit an owner for a use incompatible with surrounding uses and not for the purpose or effect of furthering the comprehensive zoning plan.

**Sustainable Development Policy, Chicago:** Chicago's Sustainable Development Policy requires that applicable development projects earn at least 100 points by implementing select sustainable strategies. Points can be earned in the following categories: health, energy, storm water, landscapes, green roofs, water, transportation solid waste, work force and wildlife

## T

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**Text Amendment:** Modifications to the text of the zoning ordinance (e.g., the adoption of new ordinances and the removal or changes of existing standards). Only the Mayor, City Council, or the Zoning Administrator may propose changes to the text of the zoning ordinance.

## Z

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**Zoning Administrator (ZA):** City staffer and head of the Zoning Bureau in the City of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development. The ZA's Responsibilities include review of all projects presented before the Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Council Committee on Zoning, Landmarks and Building Standards.

**Zoning District:** All properties in Chicago fall within a zoning district. These districts are grouped into broad categories like Residential and Manufacturing. Every zoning district has a designation, a name, and a description. Zoning Districts are described in the Zoning Ordinance and shown on the Zoning Map.

**Zoning Board of Appeals:** Body tasked with reviewing land use issues that pertain to the Chicago Zoning Ordinance, including proposed variations from the zoning code, special uses that require review to determine compatibility with adjacent properties, and appeals of decisions made by the Zoning Administrator. Established in 1923, the board has five members that are appointed by the Mayor with City Council consent.

**Zoning Ordinance, Chicago:** Chicago Municipal Code Title 17 (the "Zoning Ordinance"). The text of the Zoning Ordinance describes what types of constructions, buildings, and businesses can be undertaken on the land that has been zoned. The Zoning Ordinance categorizes a number of different types of zoning districts, such as residential, business, commercial, or manufacturing.

### Sources:

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