

Metropolitan Planning Council

Building Equity in the Built Environment



Untangling Zoning Impacts and Promoting Equity Through Reform



OUR SPONSORS



CROWN FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES



Paul and Rebecca Carlisle
Chaddick Institute at DePaul University
The Chicago Community Trust

The Cira and Chris Conley Family
Union Carpenters & Contractors
Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council

Today's event!

- Introduce MPC and event
- Zoning and land use basics
- Panel discussion with Q+A
- Closing remarks



Our Work

MPC addresses built environment issues through a racial and economic justice lens. MPC partners with communities, businesses, and government to advance policy that drives systemic change toward a more equitable and sustainable Chicago region.



Our Focus Areas



Transportation



**Housing + Community
Development**



Water Resources



Land Use + Planning

Event housekeeping

- Hour-long panel discussion
- Audience questions integrated throughout
- Provide index card with question to MPC staff

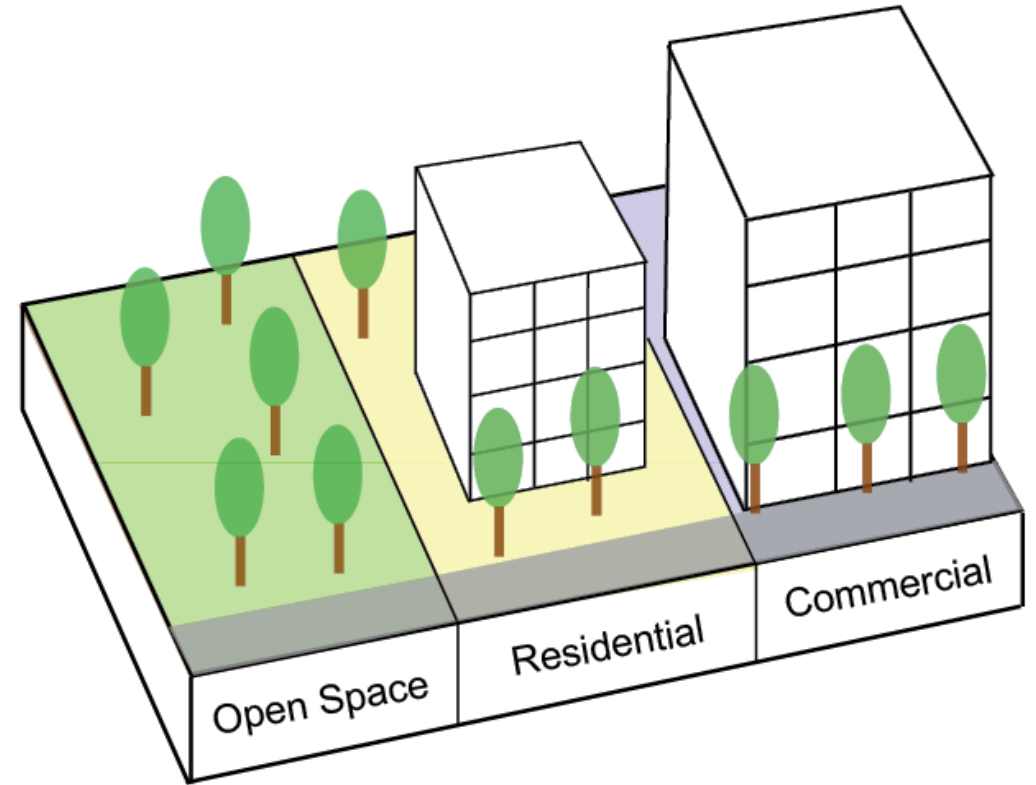


Zoning and Land use basics



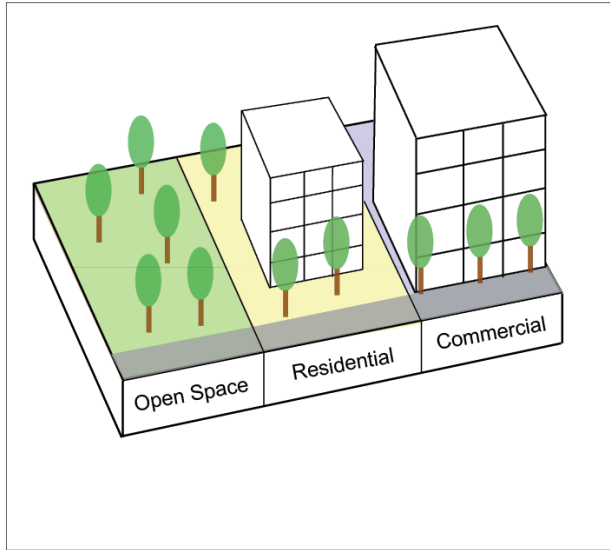
Land use is how we experience a place

- What you see when you walk outside your door or when you travel to other places
- Spatial relationship between the uses and activities in neighborhoods
- Determines adjacencies and broadly separated into categories like open space, residential, commercial, industrial, transportation, etc.

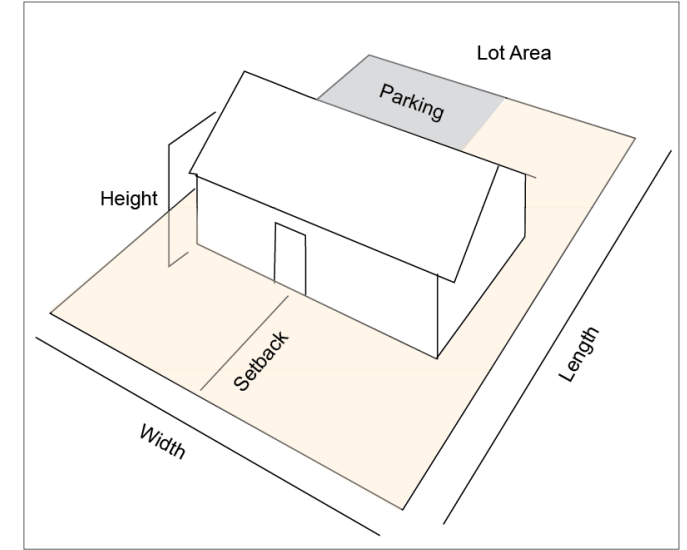


Zoning tells us what can be built, where

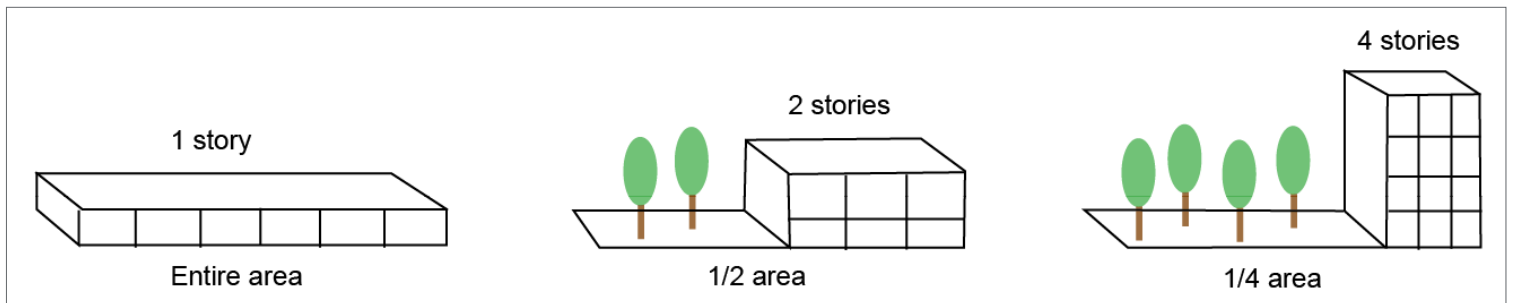
- Regulates the location of land uses allowed in different areas through zoning districts
- Controls characteristics and aspects of development in the different districts
- Determines the volume, height, shape, density of buildings, as well as parking requirements



Land use location

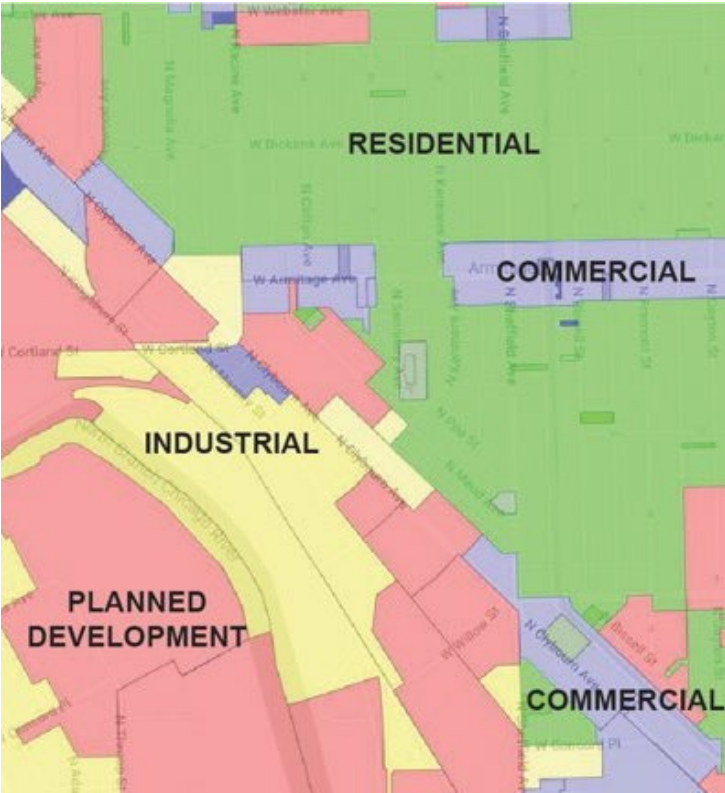


Development characteristics



Density

Zoning includes the code, map, and process

<p>Zoning ordinance (code) <i>Set of instructions with use and standards</i></p>	<p>Zoning map <i>Spatial location of allowed uses based on zoning district</i></p>	<p>Zoning process <i>People and requirements for input and decision-making</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CHAPTER 17-2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS</p> <hr/> <p>17-2-0100 District descriptions.</p> <p>17-2-0200 Allowed uses.</p> <p>17-2-0300 Bulk and density standards.</p> <p>17-2-0400 Character standards.</p> <p>17-2-0500 Townhouse developments.</p> <p>17-2-0100 District descriptions.</p> <p>17-2-0101 Generally. The “R”, residential districts are intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical character of the city’s existing neighborhoods. While the districts primarily accommodate residential use types, nonresidential uses that are compatible with residential neighborhoods are also allowed.</p> <p>17-2-0102 RS, Residential Single-Unit (Detached House) Districts. The primary purpose of the RS districts is to accommodate the development of detached houses on individual lots. It is intended that RS zoning be applied in areas where the land-use pattern is characterized predominantly by detached houses on individual lots or where such a land use pattern is desired in the future. The Zoning Ordinance includes three RS districts – RS1, RS2 and RS3 – which are differentiated primarily on the basis of minimum lot area requirements and floor area ratios.</p> <p>17-2-0103 RT, Residential Two-Flat, Townhouse and Multi-Unit Districts. The primary purpose of the RT districts is to accommodate detached houses, two-flats, townhouses and low-density, multi-unit residential buildings at a density and building scale that is compatible with RS districts. The districts are intended to be applied in areas characterized by a mix of housing types. The districts are also intended to provide a gradual transition between RS districts and higher density RM districts. The RT districts are differentiated primarily on the basis of allowed density (minimum lot area per unit) and floor area ratios.</p> <p>17-2-0104 RM, Residential Multi-Unit Districts.</p> <p>17-2-0104-A General. The primary purpose of the RM districts is to accommodate detached houses, two-flats, townhouses and multi-unit residential buildings. Although the districts accommodate a wide range of housing types, they are primarily intended to accommodate moderate- to high-density, multi-unit residential buildings in areas where such development already exists or where it is desired in the future. The Zoning Ordinance includes 5 RM districts – RM4.5, RM5, RM5.5, RM6 and RM6.5. These districts are differentiated primarily on the basis of allowed density (minimum lot area per unit), floor area ratio and allowed building heights.</p> <p>17-2-0104-B RM4.5. The RM4.5 district is intended to serve as a transition district between the RT4 and RM5 classifications. It is primarily intended to accommodate multi-unit buildings.</p> <p>17-2-0104-C RM5 and RM5.5. The RM5 and RM5.5 districts are intended to accommodate multi-unit residential buildings. The RM5 district differs from the RM5.5 district only in terms of the maximum building height allowed. Applicable height limits in RM5 generally limit buildings to a maximum of 3 1/2 to 4 stories, whereas larger lots in the RM5.5 district could contain 5-story structures. RM5.5 zoning is intended to be applied only in areas where the established neighborhood character is defined by buildings taller than 4 stories or in areas where there is no established neighborhood character, due to a lack of buildings.</p>		<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Zoning Amendments</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">How changes are made to by-right zoning</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin: 5px 0;"> ↑ ↓ </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #2e8b57; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Public Participation</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">How and when participation occurs</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin: 5px 0;"> ↑ ↓ </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #c85131; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Decision-Making</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Who has the authority to make decisions</div> </div>

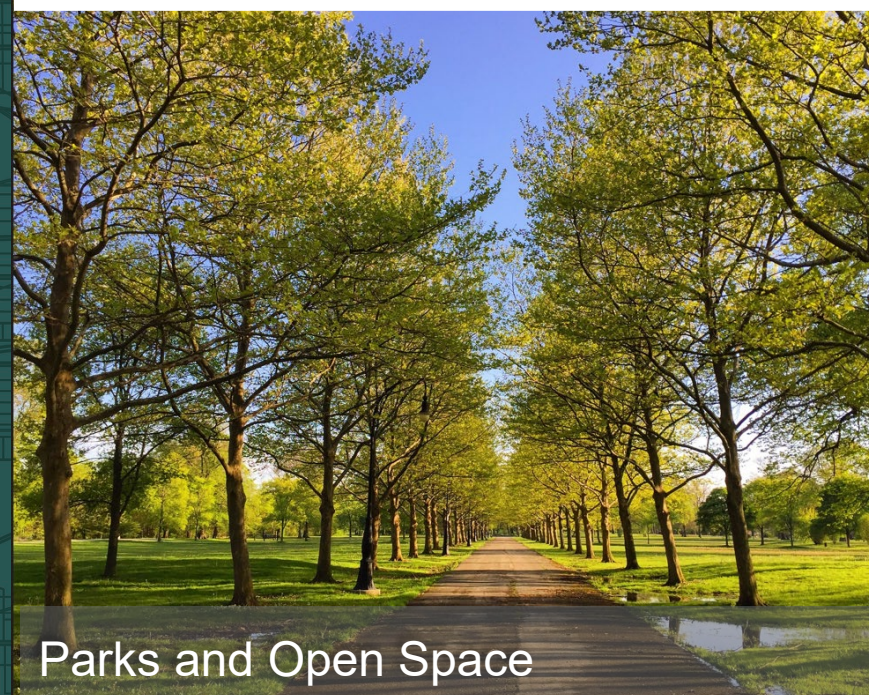
Land use and zoning shape the overall built environment—the type of home you live in, and what you live by



Single-family Housing



Industrial



Parks and Open Space



Commercial



Photo credits: Eric Allix Rogers

Initiative to assess impacts of zoning



Equity

Outcomes and processes that result in fair and just access to opportunities and resources by way of repairing past harms and transforming power dynamics so that everyone, but particularly oppressed groups, both historically and presently, have the power and resources needed to thrive.



Sustainability

An inclusive, systemic approach that improves and integrates environment, climate, health, social equity, and economic vitality to create thriving, healthy, diverse, and resilient communities and natural ecosystems for this generation and generations to come.



Public Health

The physical, mental, and social wellbeing of individuals and neighborhoods and populations. All of these are shaped by social and physical structures, conditions, and processes.

Early 'zoning': late 19th century to 1923 ordinance

- Zoning regulations emerged from a time period of racial discrimination
- Followed restrictive covenants and frontage consent ordinance, created to exclude
- Ordinance in Chicago located higher density and industrial uses in Black and immigrant neighborhoods, set precedents for ongoing discriminatory policy

Early 20th Century – Restrictive Covenants

Restrictive Covenants and Frontage Consent Ordinances were used to exclude African-Americans and other racial minorities from neighborhoods. Restrictive covenants were ruled unconstitutional, and limitations were set on frontage.

1923 – Chicago's First Zoning Ordinance

Creation of the Zoning Board of Appeals to provide relief and avoid litigation. Established four districts: residential, apartment, manufacturing, and commercial.

Late 19th Century – Nuisance Lawsuits

Allowed residents or local government to file lawsuits against incompatible land uses to protect health and safety.

1919 – Glackin Law

Passed by the Illinois General Assembly authorizing municipalities to develop piecemeal zoning ordinances for neighborhoods if 40% of that neighborhood's property owners endorsed the plan.

Why we are here to talk about zoning with the panelists



MORGAN MALONE
(MODERATOR)

Executive Director
City Bureau



SARA BRONIN

Founder/Director & Author
National Zoning Atlas



YONAH FREEMARK

Director
Urban Institute Land Use Lab



NOLAN GRAY

Professional Urban
Planner & Author

Panel discussion
with Q+A



Introductory questions

- **Tell us about yourself.**
- **How has zoning shaped the city you call home?**



Zoning outcomes: lightning round

**When you think about zoning,
what are the outcomes you believe
we should be trying to achieve?**



Zoning history

How was zoning created and what is the history that we need to understand?



Audience questions

What questions do you have for the panelists about zoning?



Zoning, equity, and housing affordability

What does the research suggest with how zoning presents challenges in moving us towards equity, particularly with housing affordability?



Zoning and community participation

- **What should zoning policymaking and process look like when involving the community?**
- **If community participants disagree with policy and planning that is equitable, then what?**



Audience questions

What questions do you have for the panelists about zoning?



Zoning and reform

- **Are there examples of how zoning reform has played out in other cities, states, countries, that we can learn from, including what has gone well and what has not?**
- **What are the most important types of reform strategies to pursue based on what we've learned?**



Zoning and other policies: lightning round

What strategies should government pursue in tandem with reform?



Audience questions

What questions do you have for the panelists about zoning?



Concluding question

What do you wish more people knew or understood about zoning?



Closing remarks



Reflections on today

- Zoning impacts the places we call home and where we visit
- Zoning should reflect our values about how we want to live together
- MPC's initiative looks at outcomes to determine impacts and recommendations



Instructions for work session participants

- **Work session participants have a dot on their name tag**
- **Proceed to the 11th floor via the elevators**
 - **MPC staff can help direct you to the elevators**
- **Follow signs on the 11th floor to room 1115**
- **Check-in with MPC staff to receive your work session materials and lunch instructions**





Thank you

Reach out to Debbie Liu
dliu@metroplanning.org
for project updates

