What is a Zoning Code?

A Zoning Code translates a community's vision and broad policies into rules and regulations that shape growth and development.

Zoning Codes serve three basic purposes:

- **Implement the City's Vision.** City of Columbus policy initiatives provide a vision for the future and how Columbus should grow and change over the next several decades. Regulations in the Zoning Code should ensure that as new development occurs it is consistent with and helps achieve that vision for the future.

- **Minimize Adverse Impacts.** Zoning regulations help limit potential adverse impacts that different uses and development may have on adjacent properties, allowing property owners to successfully utilize and develop property without negatively impacting the community.

- **Promote Health, Safety, and Welfare.** Effective land use allowances and development standards help to promote the community's health, safety, and welfare.
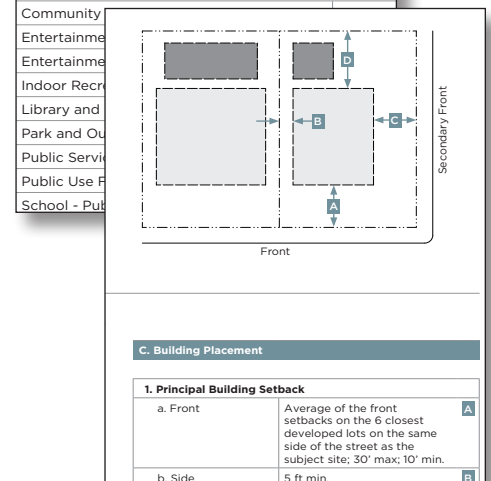
What Zoning Codes Typically Do

Zoning Codes establish development and form standards (building height, massing, scale, and placement), use regulations (specifications for what uses are allowed, subject to standards, or prohibited in certain areas of Columbus), and permit requirements and procedures (procedures for administering the Code).

Table 1111.030.A Business Zones Allowed Uses	
Land Use Type	**NC**
Agriculture and Animal Uses	
Community Garden	CUP
Kennel	-
Veterinary Clinics and Hospitals	CUP
Civic, Recreation, and Community Assembly Uses	
Adult Day-care Facility	CUP
Child Day-care Center	CUP
College or University	-
Community	
Entertainme	
Entertainme	
Indoor Recre	
Library and	
Park and Ou	
Public Servi	
Public Use F	
School - Pub	

C. Building Placement		
1. Principal Building Setback		
a. Front	Average of the front setbacks on the 6 closest developed lots on the same side of the street as the subject site; 30' max; 10' min.	A
b. Side	5 ft min.	B

Examples of building placement standards and use regulations

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Elements of a Typical Zoning Code

What goes into a Zoning Code?

The Zoning Code regulates land use and development, and is one part of the City's toolkit to implement the City's vision. The Zoning Code is made up of many different types of regulations and requirements, working together. Each is generally described below.

Zone Development Standards

Zone development standards control building height, bulk, placement, and density. These standards are different across zones to reflect the community character, context, and level of intensity in neighborhoods and non-residential areas.

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Use Regulations

Use regulations specify which land uses and activities are permitted, permitted with certain conditions and prohibited in every zone. They also define and categorize the land uses found in the City.

Varied Building Heights and Placement

Duplex

Multi-Family Residential Use

Open Space Use

Residential Neighborhood

Walkable Commercial Context

Big Box Commercial Use

Mixed Use

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Elements of a Typical Zoning Code

Citywide Development Standards

Citywide standards provide supplemental regulations for Citywide application that are not unique to a zone. This includes standards for parking, landscaping, signage, alternative energy, and other aspects of development.

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Administration and Procedures

Administrative procedures establish the process for land use permit and development application approval. The Code outlines submittal requirements, who approves each permit, and when public hearings and notices are required.
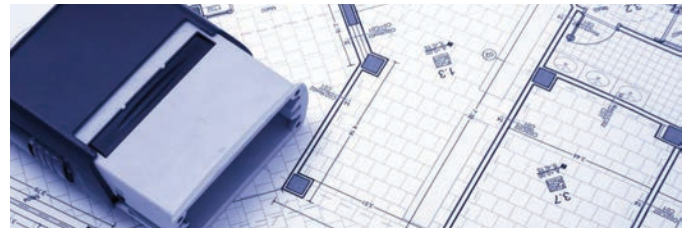

Parking

Signage

Permit Applications

Electric Parking

Landscaping

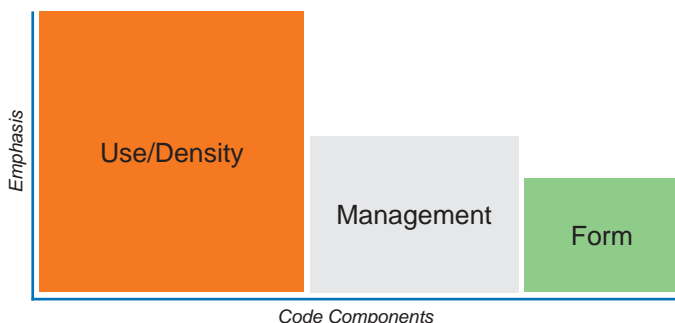*Public Meetings*

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Types of Zoning Codes

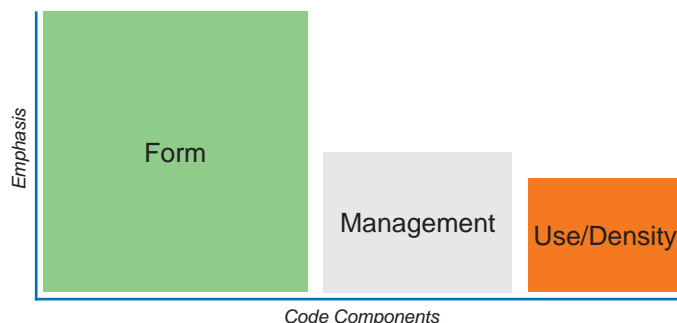## Did you know there are different types of zoning codes?

There are many different ways to approach zoning standards. A community's specific goals, needs, and priorities ultimately determine which is best. The table below summarizes common coding approaches and introduces basic concepts for each option.

Type	Goal	Features	Pros	Cons
Use–Based	• Separate incompatible uses • Set forth basic development standards	• Allowable land uses • Setback, height, density, and floor-area-ratio standards	• Clear use regulations • Easy/familiar • Simple regulations (may be appropriate in some areas)	• Limits mixing of uses • Lack of certainty in building form • Can be inflexible
Performance-Based	• Allow market to control development • Mitigate negative impacts	• Substitute quantitative for qualitative • Nuisance- or points-based standards	• Clear rationale for standards • Focus on compatibility	• Complex and formulaic • Difficult to administer and enforce
Form–Based	• Prioritize building form over use • Establish prescriptive, streamlined standards	• Building form requirements plus basic use and development standards • Promote mixed-use development • High use of graphics and tables	• Easier to mix uses • Encourage walkability • Provide certainty in development	• Very detailed/can be costly • Perception that they are complicated • May need education to transition to new approach
Hybrid	Achieves benefits from a mix of code types			

Use-Based Codes

Emphasis — Use/Density, Management, Form

Code Components

Form-Based Codes

Emphasis — Form, Management, Use/Density

Code Components

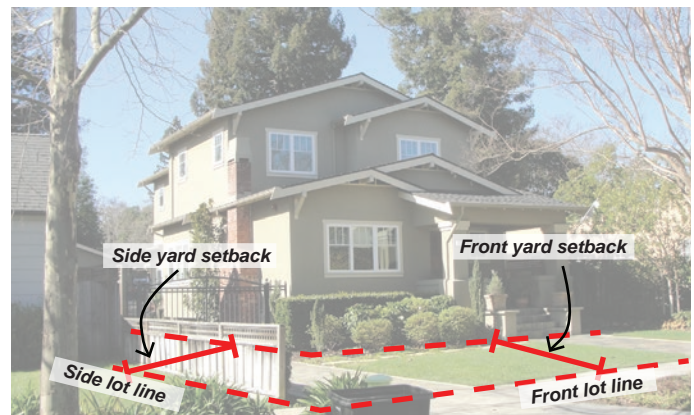THE CITY OF COLUMBUS   LWC

Code 101: Basic Concepts

New to zoning codes? Here are some important development standards you should know.

Development standards provide dimensional limitations and requirements for new buildings.

Building Height is the vertical distance between the base of the building and its highest point.

Residential Density is the number of residential units allowed on a lot (measured in dwelling units per acre). Zoning codes can regulate maximum and minimum density thresholds, or provide alternatives that focus on building form rather than specified density requirements.

3 dwelling units/acre (left) and 14 dwelling units/acre (right). "Visualizing Density" by J. Campoli and A.S. MacLean.

Building Setback is the distance between the lot line and any structures on the property. Setbacks can be regulated based on specified ranges or build-to lines that require structures to have a relationship to the street.

Projections are architectural features or structural elements that are allowed into required setback areas or beyond height limits. They help provide articulation and interest at the pedestrian scale, and are sometimes allowed to encroach into the public right-of-way.

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Code 101: Basic Concepts

New to zoning codes? Here are some important land use terms you should know.
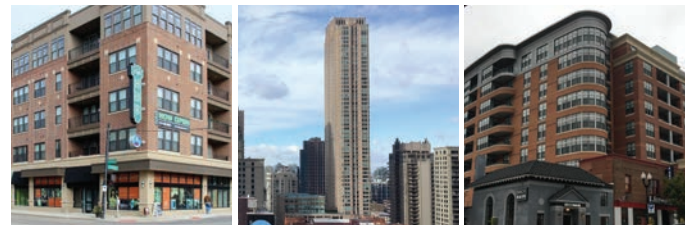
Use regulations define how a property can be used internally. Here are some general land use categories.

Residential Uses include a wide spectrum of building types and densities.

Single- and Two-Family Residential. Any property with only 1-2 residential units on the lot, most commonly a detached house or duplex. These uses are seen in a range of densities and building forms, including houses on small and large lots.

Multi-Family Residential. Any property with 3 or more units on a single lot, including apartments and condominiums, townhouses, and multiplexes.

Commercial Uses include uses such as retail, service, office, recreation, lodging, and entertainment.

Civic and Institutional Uses include uses such as hospitals, parks, schools, and libraries.

Industrial Uses include uses such as research and development, manufacturing, and storage and distribution.

Mixed Uses allow for diverse combinations of retail, office, and residential uses.

Vertical Mixed Use.
This type of development combines different uses within the same building. Typically with retail on the ground floor and office or residential on upper floors.

Horizontal Mixed Use.
This type of development combines different uses within the same lot, allowing for a range of complementary, integrated land uses.

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Code 101: Basic Concepts

New to zoning codes? Here are some important citywide standards you should know.

Citywide standards include requirements applicable to all projects within the City regardless of the zone.

Landscaping Standards establish required landscape buffers, planting materials, and public amenities based on land use and context.

Parking Standards establish vehicle parking requirements based on land use, as well as requirements for bicycle parking and alternative parking options to help promote walkability.

Sign Standards establish requirements for signage based on land use and context.

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