Steering Committee

Director Andrew Dash, Corey Layman, Derek Dauphin
September 29, 2021
Overview

• Q&A with Director of City Planning Andrew Dash
• Zoning Presentation and Q&A with Zoning Administrator Corey Layman
• Neighborhood Plan Format and Implementation
• Preview of Upcoming Meetings
Planning Process

September 2021
In-person events, online engagement

We are here
Zoning
What is Zoning?

• “Zoning is the regulation of land use with the goal of allowing property owners reasonable use of their property to the extent that it is not detrimental to neighboring properties or the broader community.”

• Ultimately, zoning is a tool to achieve land use policy goals.

• Zoning can be viewed as a tool to harness private development investments to implement community goals. However, there are limitations and constraints based on State and Federal property rights laws. Zoning laws need to balance private property rights and public/community goals.

• Zoning can allow something to happen or prohibit it, but it can’t make something happen.
How City Planning Creates Zoning

• The Department of City Planning often initiates rezonings as part of planning processes or to implement existing plans and policies.

• The first step is to identify the desired outcomes. What kinds of things do people want to see happen in their neighborhood? What are the issues they’re facing under the current conditions.

• This could be urban design focused (e.g., create more enjoyable and comfortable pedestrian-oriented streets) or not (e.g., create more affordable housing, more jobs, more open space).

• Then staff identify what changes are needed and how best to implement them. This is often through changing requirements or creating incentives.
Changes in Zoning and Non-Conformance

• Pittsburgh has been built out and redeveloped throughout its long history and the Zoning Code only applied during the 20th century. This means many buildings predate the Zoning Code’s existence. Further, the Zoning Code has been modified multiple times.

• The result is that what is allowed by the Zoning Code today may be different from what was built there in the past. This is call “non-conformance.”

• This occurs in Oakland where single-family residential zoning has been applied to areas where there are historic multi-unit buildings.

• It is considered best practice not to increase non-conformance issues as part of rezoning projects, and ideally, to reduce them where possible.
Recent Zoning Code Efforts

- Accessory Dwelling Unit Overlay (pilot, has since expired)
- Uptown Public Realm District (implements the EcoInnovation District Plan)
- Performance Points System
- Riverfront Zoning
- Inclusionary Zoning Overlay (currently undergoing expansion)
- Stormwater Code and Ordinance Review and Update (at Council now)
How Zoning is Implemented

• Staff review applications for all types of development for compliance with the Zoning Code, ranging from decks to office towers.

• Simple reviews happen quickly – over 100 applications per week.

• Complex reviews / larger projects require more review process, including community input and collaboration.

• Some reviews involve public commissions or boards including: Design Review & Contextual Design Advisory Panel (CDAP), Planning Commission, Historic Review Commission (HRC), and the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).
Types of Zoning Districts

• **Base zoning districts**: these apply at different locations throughout the city. Consider them a common kit of parts. Examples include Single-Family Residential Attached (R1A), Local Neighborhood Commercial (LNC), Residential Multifamily (RM). Many zones have density set through a modifier such as High, Very High (e.g., RM-H, R1A-VH).

• **Public realm districts**: these are created by the City to apply to an area with unique needs. They often have subdistricts where some of the provisions are different (e.g., Oakland Public Realm District, Subdistrict D).

• **Specially Planned Districts (SP)**: are created by the property owner as a means to negotiate with the community and City about a collective desired outcomes for large sites (e.g., Pittsburgh Technology Center is SP-1 on the former J&L Coke Works site).

• **Overlay districts**: typically modify a specific aspect of an existing underlying district (e.g., allowing Accessory Dwelling Units in residential zones in Garfield).
Elements of Non-Base Zoning Districts

- **Boundaries**: defines the area for which the regulations apply. Could be between X and Y streets, but often uses a map.

- **Objective/purpose/intent statements**: often used for public realm districts and subdistricts to describe the desired outcome.

- **Uses**: identifies the set of uses from categories already in the Zoning Code that are allowed in the area. They can be allowed outright or if certain conditions are met.

- **Development standards**: set parameters for the size, shape, and placement of the building on the parcel.

- **Exception criteria**: sets conditions that need to be met for an exception in this district/area (e.g., Infrastructure Hub in Uptown).
More About Uses

• The Zoning Code has use tables (Article V) that generally define all land uses that are possible within a building in Pittsburgh. There is also a process for handling new uses as they arise.

• It’s easy to confuse uses with base zones, but they are different. For example, the Local Neighborhood Commercial (LNC) district allows residential and commercial uses.

• Uses can be permitted in call cases (Permitted By-Right), or can be permitted based meeting conditions as determined by the Zoning Administrator (Administrator Exception), Zoning Board of Adjustments (Special Exception), or City Council (Conditional Use).
More About Development Standards

• These standards focus on the building itself. They are often where basic urban design expectations are embedded in the code. More detailed design direction should be put into design guidelines.

• Site Development Standards establish the height/volume limits of a building and where it’s located on the parcel and relative to adjacent buildings and streets. Increasingly, height is being mapped to improve clarity and allow finer scale controls (e.g., Riverfront Zoning Districts). There has also been a shift to regulating building height in feet instead of volume (floor-area-ratio, FAR).

• Specific Project Development Standards set requirements for other aspects of a building such as where its entrances are located, how parking is managed, environmental performance, etc.
Development Standards

- Floor-to-floor height
- Tower
- Podium
- Exterior side yard setback
- Front yard setback
- Upper floor stepback
- Interior side yard setback
Development Standards Example
Educational Medical Institution (EMI)

• These districts require a 10-year Institutional Master Plan (IMP) to set the parameters for development. The IMP is reviewed by Planning Commission and approved by City Council.

• Their intent was to create a process for institutions to outline 10 years worth of projects with the community and City at one time.

• The IMP Best Practices Guide (2018) provides updated expectations for IMPs to meet more recent goals around neighborhood enhancement, energy, environment, urban design, historic preservation, and mobility.

• More on how neighborhood plans and IMPs relate coming up!
Performance Points System

• This system allows developers to earn something they want (e.g., 15 ft of additional building height, proximity to the river) in return for contributing something the City/Community wants (e.g., affordable housing, riverfront trails).

• There are currently 11 options in this system. An area must opt into specific points in the system (e.g., Uptown projects can access only 5 of the options).

• Examples of points in the system: energy efficiency, energy generation on-site, green infrastructure, building reuse, affordable housing, transit-oriented development, riverfront trails and access.

• More points are awarded for providing more of something (e.g., more affordable housing units). Projects can mix and match between available points.
Neighborhood Plan
Format and Implementation
Scales of Planning  Types of Plans

**Citywide Topic Plans**
Focus on a single topic, but across the entire city.
*Examples*: transportation system plans, land use plans

**Comprehensive Plan**
Cover all topics citywide at a high level. More detailed planning occurs at smaller scales.

**Master Plans**
Cover a narrow number of topics necessary to achieve a specific end for a discrete location.
*Examples*: park plans, transit station plans

**Neighborhood Plans**
Cover a large number of topics at a high level of detail for a specific district or area.

**Number of Topics**
- One (Large)
- Many (Small)
VISION STATEMENTS
What are we going to be in 10 years?

- **Vision statements** provide a shared description of what the neighborhood will be in 10 years if the plan is successful.
- **Goals** are long-term outcomes the plan will achieve by implementing programs, policies, and projects.
- **Policies** set a preferred direction and describe what must be done to achieve the goals.
- **Programs** are a set of activities that seek to realize a particular long-term aim.
- **Projects** are discrete actions for a list of implementation partners to take on and complete.
- **Partnerships** are commitments by organizations to work together to advance an outcome.

Public comment started March 2021

Public comment in September 2021
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>PPP</th>
<th>Detail</th>
<th>Timeline (Years)</th>
<th>Funding Source(s)</th>
<th>Implementers (bold = lead)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.3.a</td>
<td>Zone Change</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Rezone Elm Street from Urban Industrial to Local Neighborhood Commercial to provide a mixed-use corridor within the neighborhood.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>None needed</td>
<td>Department of City Planning, Community-Based Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.a</td>
<td>Mentorship Program for District Youth</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Establish afterschool program within District Elementary School that allows seniors from the community to voluntarily mentor students in grades 6-12.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>School District, Children’s Foundation</td>
<td>District Afterschool Program, District Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.a</td>
<td>Park Exercise Equipment</td>
<td>Project</td>
<td>Release Request for Solutions for vendors to provide exercise equipment for all ages and abilities. Select most popular options and install in the community park.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>City Budget</td>
<td>City Dept. of Public Works, CommunityBased Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.2.b</td>
<td>Neighborhood Walks for a Purpose</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Create program with residents, businesses and the university that organizes weekly walking tours of the neighborhood with each week focusing on a different issue to address, activity, or topic of interest of faculty.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>CommunityBased Organization Operating Funds</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization, Business Association, University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.1.b</td>
<td>Accessibility Partnerships</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Create partnerships to ensure that the public right of way is designed and maintained for all users.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>None needed</td>
<td>District Accessibility Task Force, Transportation Department, and Community-Based Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example from Uptown

Tustin Smart Block

A public-private partnership to improve Uptown’s only park, surround it with healthy and affordable housing, and connect it to jobs via Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

Consistent with the ECONOMIZATION DISTRICT PLAN vision, the Tustin Smart Block concept proposes public and private investment in one of Uptown’s few intact residential blocks. Infrastructure and homes in need of upgrades present a unique opportunity to lock in affordability at the same time that improvements to the park and surrounding streets make this area healthier, more enjoyable, and better connected to jobs. A community-led program of block-level planning could follow to help transform Uptown while maintaining affordability.

Strategy Details Example

- Title
- Publication date (to allow updates)
- What we heard (bullets)
- Ideal start (range of years from the matrix)
- Expected duration (months or years)
- Estimated costs (in dollar signs)
- Relevant illustrations
- Project goals and components
- Potential lead and partner organizations
Plan Contents and Adoption

- Vision statement
- Goals and policies by chapter
- Implementation matrices by chapter: Projects, Programs, Partnerships
- Strategy details where needed (~1-3 page summaries)
- Supporting documents (e.g., Existing Conditions, studies, etc.)

**Adopted content:** any future changes to this content would need to be reviewed and adopted by the Planning Commission.

**Elements not formally adopted:** still reviewed by Planning Commission as they adopt the plan. Not adopted to allow for flexibility as conditions change while the plan is implemented.
Adopted Plans and Development Review

• **Design and Development:** City departments and community organizations direct developers to the neighborhood plan and typically highlight location- or topic-based items that are relevant to the proposal. The development team can then address these as they craft their proposal.

• **Development review:** When the Planning Commission reviews development projects (e.g., new buildings), they receive a letter from the neighborhood planner showing how that project is or is not generally consistent with the vision, goals, and policies of the plan.

• This is separate from testimony at public hearings that may be submitted by organizations or residents.

• This is also separate from the Development Activities Meetings required by the Registered Community Organization legislation.
Adopted Plans and IMPs

• Institutions are required to have adopted master plans that regulate building projects for the next 10 years (i.e., the 10-Year Building Envelope).

• DCP’s 2018 IMP Best Practices Guide includes instruction for addressing adopted neighborhood plans. All IMPs are expected to address the neighborhood plan’s vision, goals, and specific project or programmatic strategies that are relevant due to the location or topic.

• As the IMPs are developed, a multi-departmental staff panel meets with the IMP team and advises them on how to achieve excellence in a variety of topics including elements of neighborhood plans. While this process is voluntary, it has been highly utilized.

• As with development projects, IMPs are submitted to Planning Commission with an accompanying neighborhood plan conformance letter.
Adopted Plans and Public Projects

• Proposed projects, programs, and partnerships represent a shared “to do” list for organizations in the community and public agencies.

• Public agencies look to neighborhood plans to identify what projects they should pursue in that community, how the project should be scoped, who they should work with, and how much funding they will need to complete it.

• When external funding opportunities arise, neighborhood plans are often the first place departments look for potential projects to submit.
Range of Strategies

- **High Difficulty / Low Importance:**
  These projects are tough to achieve and while they may be very important to some, they are not important to everyone. Make sure they are important enough to some stakeholders to include them.

- **Low Difficulty / Low Importance:**
  These projects are easy to achieve but not important to everyone. These could be low hanging fruit for specific partners to take on and implement.

- **High Difficulty / High Importance:**
  These projects are often the “big ideas” of a plan. Think about breaking them up into smaller steps to achieve the final outcome and creating a larger group of implementation partners.

- **Low Difficulty / High Importance:**
  These projects should be prioritized first for implementation. They help to build momentum and grow capacity coming out of the planning process. Make sure you identify projects that fit into this category.
Preview of Upcoming Meetings

- **October**: City Council Representatives have asked to lead a discussion with the Steering Committee. Details to be determined.

- **November and December**: Review draft strategies in detail. This will likely take additional work sessions that we will start to schedule in the next few weeks.

- **January and February**: Review updated vision statement and goal language as part of a first draft of the plan. Also return to Zoning Code elements. Again, we may need to add some additional work sessions.

- **Spring 2022**: Release the draft plan and Zoning Code amendments for public comment, hold public meetings, adoption process.
Where can you find us?

Pittsburgh City Planning

@PLANPGH
@resilientPGH

@planpgh

Online at pittsburghpa.gov/dcp/oakland and engage.pittsburghpa.gov/oakland