



Modernize Your Zoning Code

15 TOOLS TO EXPAND
HOUSING CHOICE



American Planning Association
Michigan Chapter
Creating Great Communities for All

Table of Contents



- 00 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
- 00 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
- 00 PREAMBLE**
- 00 PROJECT SCOPE**
- 00 FRAMING THE PROBLEM**
 - Why Local Government*
 - Economics of Housing*
 - Changing Demographics and Values*
 - Policy Contexts: National, State, Regional*
 - Communicating*
 - Other Factors*
- 00 MARKET CONTEXTS**
- 00 TOOLS**
 - Zone Districts*
 - *Collapse zone districts*
 - *Rezone for mixed-use / multi-family in commercial districts*
 - *Expand allowable uses*
 - *Performance zoning*
 - Form and Context*
 - *Reduce minimum lot width and area requirements*
 - *Reduce or eliminate minimum dwelling unit size*
 - *Reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements*
 - *Missing middle housing typologies*
 - *Density / height bonuses*
 - *Form and site standards*
 - Processes*
 - *Eliminate or reduce elected body approvals*
 - *Expand administrative review*
 - *Pre-approved plans*
 - *More flexible approach to nonconformities*
 - *Police Power ordinances to regulate nuisance*
- 00 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS**
 - Collaboration*
 - First Steps - Local Action*
 - Future Work - MAP / State Agencies / Partners*
- 00 APPENDIX**
 - Additional Tools and Resources*
 - Recommended Reading*

Acknowledgments

Copy goes here. Copy goes here. Copy goes here. Copy goes here. Copy goes here. Copy goes here.
Copy goes here. Copy goes here. Copy goes here.

Executive Summary

Includes a matrix of the 15 tools with the outcomes they achieve (increased housing supply, increased housing affordability, increase local unit tax revenue, decreased cost to developer, decreased carbon impact, etc.)

Preamble

What if you were told that there was a seemingly benign document in your local government office that affects your health, wealth, schools, infrastructure, taxes, traffic, access to opportunity, and even your personal choices about where to live, how to move, and who you interact with?

That document is called a zoning ordinance.

Zoning is the mechanism that guides development decisions and, ultimately, dictates community development patterns. These patterns affect whether a family can afford to live in a certain neighborhood, if a person walks or drives to work, and where businesses can grow. At a more personal level, it controls if aging parents can live in a “granny” suite adjoined to your home, if your children can afford to live in the same community they grew up in, and if you can find housing that meets the needs of your changing life circumstances.

Nearly a century ago, local zoning regulations were introduced to improve living conditions for the working poor. Today, zoning is a complex bundle of rules that attempt to promise residents that their neighborhood will remain unchanged and certain behaviors will be prevented before they even had a chance to start. How will we adapt to a rapidly changing world if zoning only promises the keep the status quo? Does the current approach truly prepare Michigan communities for the future?

Critics of zoning will say it creates exclusionary practices that deprive people of choice, increases costs and artificially controls the market (which in turn affects affordability and availability), exacerbates economic and social segregation, and creates unnecessary bureaucratic processes that do not really make a difference at the end of the day. This Guidebook suggests that those who manage the development process can rethink the purpose of zoning and craft a newer, nimbler, and more pragmatic approach that is more sustainable and fiscally responsible.

Modernizing local zoning to be outcomes-focused can provide better place-based solutions that increase opportunities to thrive and prosper. The zoning ordinances of most Michigan communities are like the homes one might see on HGTV. There are instances of failed upkeep and others where the structure simply does not meet today’s needs. Some communities have not maintained their zoning ordinance for decades. Others may have a recently adopted or amended code, but it is outdated in its approach...the same linoleum flooring has been reinstalled instead of a serious makeover that tears down the ordinance to its framing. We can keep the shell and transform the contents to make our communities more livable.

The 15 Tools provided in this Guidebook seek to challenge local zoning conventions for several reasons. First, Michigan communities cannot maintain a business-as-usual approach. There is a housing crisis nationwide because of shortages of labor (wages and skills), lumber (cost of materials and supply chain), and land (market constraints and zoning). Zoning is one of the easiest fixes in the list. Second, where local communities have failed to act, state legislatures from coast to coast have begun to pre-empt local control or dictate zoning requirements to local governments. Finally, through zoning reform we can build better, more inclusive places that are more economically successful and which improve the quality of life for all Michiganders.

Community master plans describe the outcomes your community is trying to produce. Is your zoning ordinance creating places where people can thrive, vibrant business districts, a strong economy, and safe streets? Or are there people struggling, vacant storefronts, flat tax base,

and a general feeling of falling behind? If your community is growing, is that growth living up to your expectations? Zoning is a component of the development process which strongly influences a community’s ability to achieve its vision. Let’s learn how it has affected housing and what you can do about it.

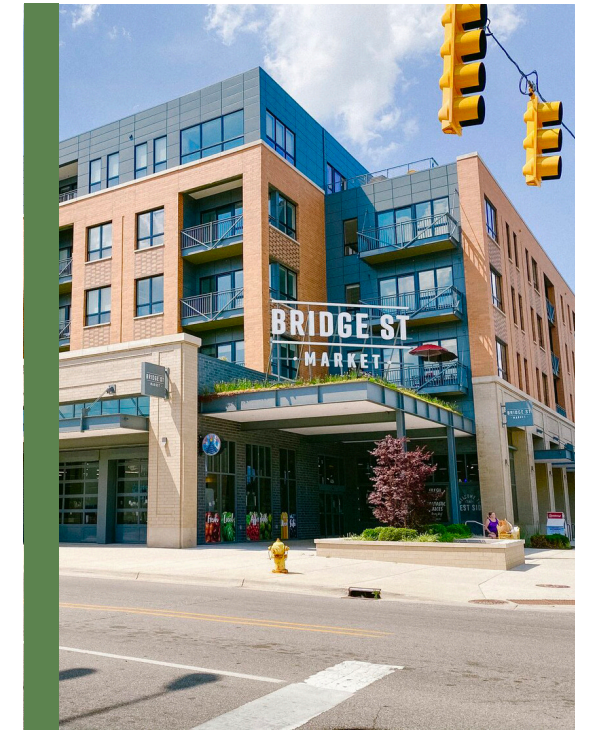


Image description copy goes here

Image description copy goes here



Project Scope

A serious housing shortage has emerged in Michigan, and nationally, in part due to overly restrictive zoning codes that constrain housing choice by prioritizing detached single-family development rather than a range of housing options.

These zoning ordinances were often established decades ago and have not fundamentally changed since their adoption, meaning that they are out of sync with the reality of the current built environment and market conditions. Coupled with lengthy and unpredictable development review processes, vociferous residents who oppose new development that isn't single family, and elected officials who are reluctant to stand up to a density-resistant constituency, it is difficult to bring new housing to many markets.

But local government leaders increasingly recognize that restrictive zoning codes and outdated land use regulations suppress housing supply, drive up housing costs, and widen racial and economic disparities. Implementing zoning reforms and easing restrictions can play a major role to increase housing supply that meets the needs of current and future residents. These are local government issues, and there is much that municipalities can do to mitigate the dampening effect on homebuilding by adjusting local zoning codes and other regulations, engaging and educating residents, and removing barriers to creating new local housing units.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide both local regulatory remedies and communications strategies to overcome resistance to new development regulations. We will share 15 tools to encourage the design and construction of a variety of housing types and densities to meet changing demographic needs and address the housing shortage in Michigan.

The objectives of the project include:

- To equip municipal leaders with the tools they need to update and contemporize local zoning and development review regulations to develop more housing.
- To highlight successful programs and

outcomes in Michigan and other states that have integrated innovative approaches to removing or mitigating regulatory barriers, and to customize them to meet Michigan's unique needs.

- To share inspiring case studies in Michigan and other states that demonstrate successful application of the recommended strategies in the Guidebook.
- To provide local government leaders with a comprehensive toolkit of options that can be customized for local conditions and needs.
- To craft master plan language to implement each tool and demonstrate how to translate that vision into measurable community goals and regulatory changes that advance housing development.
- To create communications and messaging best practices to help everyone – elected leaders, municipal professional staff, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders – to broaden the understanding of housing needs and relevant zoning solutions within Michigan.
- To build the foundation for future work, focused on housing strategies with a broader coalition of champions.

Framing the Problem

WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government has far more flexibility to adapt to housing supply issues than state or federal units. A lack of housing supply affects community livability, economic prosperity, quality of life, and fairness. Local regulations can directly or indirectly affect the cost of developing housing, making it harder or easier to accommodate affordable – or even market rate - housing. Zoning is local. Zoning determines where housing can be built, the type of housing that is allowed, and the form it takes.

- Responsibility of government to govern (stewardship)
- History of zoning and other public policy that has affected housing (Rothstein, MAP equitable economic development)
- Master Plans
- Nexus between community goals and zoning
- Need for tailored approaches
- Opportunities (U3 value creation, vitality, redevelopment potential)
- Examples of Michigan communities struggling with housing/quotes as sidebars (associated with planning and zoning)

ECONOMICS OF HOUSING

- Supply and demand – housing shortage
- Zoning regulations already a market intervention - allowing more density may actually be a lessening of intervention
- Expanding housing options about expanding choice
- Tax base, business attraction and retention, per pupil funding, optimize infrastructure (Strong Towns)

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND VALUES

- Demographics and demand for a variety of different housing types
- Housing preferences
- Ownership vs. rental
- Support by ESRI Tapestry data, etc. Census (SF homes v others)

America has come a long way since the nuclear family living in a detached single family home with the white picket fence was cemented as the normative ideal. The American household today looks a lot different than it did in the past. Single-person households are now the most common type in America – 28 percent of households are people living alone. The next biggest demographic is couples living together with no children at 25 percent. Nuclear families, two adults living with children under 21, now represent just 20 percent of all households.¹ Census data from 2021 found that 28 percent of all U.S. households are comprised of one person – compared to only 13 percent in 1960.²

POLICY CONTEXTS: NATIONAL, STATE, REGIONAL

The housing supply and affordability crisis is not occurring in a vacuum. While zoning is a local issue, it is impacted and has implications at multiple policy levels. Regulatory barriers to the creation of more housing units or units at lower price points are erected at the national, state, and regional level. Zoning policy may have impacts that have implications beyond the local level. This section will briefly explore these policy contexts.

Action at the federal level can have a major effect on housing, as detailed earlier in our discussion of the Federal Housing Administration's lending policies in the post-WWII era. Today, we are grappling with the legacy of those policies and the types of built environments that they created. While we have a commitment for housing to be free from unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability per the Fair Housing Act of 1968, in practice certain zoning policies can have a discriminatory effect.³ A zoning policy such as the prohibition of multi-family housing in the vast majority of a jurisdiction can have a discriminatory effect on a protected minority group or perpetuate segregation.⁴

Tools available at the federal level may also present challenges to expanding housing supply

or choice. The majority of federal programs are focused on households earning 60% area median income (AMI) and below. However, most market rate housing is priced for individuals earning 100% AMI and above. There is very little federal support for households earning 60-100% percent AMI.⁵ Additionally, there is a preponderance of federal measures targeted at homeowners, but fewer programs available for renters. The largest economic housing subsidy provided by the federal government comes in the form of the mortgage interest deduction. Total federal spending to support the mortgage interest deduction is around \$400 billion.⁶ The next largest housing program is the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, which costs about \$72 billion.⁷

State policy also impacts housing supply and affordability. Under Michigan law, local units of government do not have the authority to regulate the cost to purchase or rent property.⁸ In other states, rent control and inclusionary zoning are tools available to local units to mitigate housing costs. In Michigan, these tools are not available. It should be noted, however, that focusing on the affordability of housing when supply is not increased at the same time can have the opposite intended effect on the market. Research by the Brookings Institute shows that rent control can decrease affordability in the long-term despite helping current tenants in the short run.⁹ In recent years states such as California and Massachusetts have banned or restrained the rent control.¹⁰

Michigan does provide several tools to local units that can have a positive impact on housing supply and cost. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MHSDA) offers a variety of tools targeted at homeowners, renters, developers, and lenders. The Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) program of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) offers XXXX to local units.

Additionally, though challenging for the pocketbook of local units, Headlee can be a mechanism for housing affordability for homeowners. Headlee is an amendment to the Michigan Constitution passed in 1978 that caps property tax increases. Per Headlee, taxes cannot exceed the rate of inflation. Thus, even if the value of the home rises 15-20% per year (as it has done over the last several years), property tax increases are capped. Proposition A, passed

in 1994, further limits the increased in taxable value of a property to 5% or the rate of inflation, whichever is the lesser.

Housing supply is also a regional issue. Unfortunately, zoning is a local mechanism with no obligation to think of the regional picture. Michigan lacks strong regional entities in most cases to address the housing issue. While some county governments administer zoning or have planning programs, there is no statewide mandate for regional planning. However, housing is a regional issue in the same way that economic centers are regional. Metropolitan areas extend beyond one city's boundaries. RESEARCH ON REGIONAL APPROACHES TO HOUSING / LACK THEREOF.

Additionally, while metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) might have some programmatic work on land use, their mandate is to do long-term regional transportation planning. The link between transportation, land use, and housing is clear, but we lack mandates and incentives to address housing regionally in most areas in the state. DATA.

COMMUNICATING

- Various audiences
- Identification of useful community data to help build the case for change
- Finding common interests
- Value of story telling

OTHER FACTORS

Acknowledgement of other systems-level factors we will not be addressing, including:

- Transportation
- Wage growth (or lack thereof)
- Cost of construction rising
- Financing
- Lack of skilled trades to build housing
- Other Federal and State policies (MSHDA and HUD policies)
- Schools (siting, funding, and privatization)
- Invest (LIHTC, Leveraging public infrastructure)
- Abate (Fee waivers (infrastructure, permitting, etc.), tax incentives)

Tools

Zone Districts

To assist in “setting the table” for community discussions and poise local leaders for success, a section will be provided at the beginning of each major topic category to help frame common issues, provide talking points, and develop a cohesive and comprehensive response. Data will be recommended that can provide support. Talking points will be organized by audience:

- Elected and appointed officials / local unit staff (Commissions, boards, etc.);
- Business owners and major employers; and
- Residents

Collapse Zone Districts

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
	Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—	
	Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.	
	Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116	
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Rezone for Mixed-Use/ Multi-Family in Commercial Districts

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Expand Allowable Uses

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
	Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—	
	Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.	
	Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116	
	Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.	
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Performance Zoning

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
	Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—	
	Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.	
	Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116	
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Form and Context

To assist in “setting the table” for community discussions and poise local leaders for success, a section will be provided at the beginning of each major topic category to help frame common issues, provide talking points, and develop a cohesive and comprehensive response. Data will be recommended that can provide support. Talking points will be organized by audience:

- Elected and appointed officials / local unit staff (Commissions, boards, etc.);
- Business owners and major employers; and
- Residents

Reduce Minimum Lot Width and Area Requirements

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Reduce or Eliminate Minimum Dwelling Unit Size

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Reduce or Eliminate Minimum Parking Requirements

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.



Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

Missing Middle Housing Typologies

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

Density / Height Bonuses

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Form and Site Standards

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Processes

To assist in “setting the table” for community discussions and poise local leaders for success, a section will be provided at the beginning of each major topic category to help frame common issues, provide talking points, and develop a cohesive and comprehensive response. Data will be recommended that can provide support. Talking points will be organized by audience:

- Elected and appointed officials / local unit staff (Commissions, boards, etc.);
- Business owners and major employers; and
- Residents

Eliminate or Reduce Elected Body Approvals

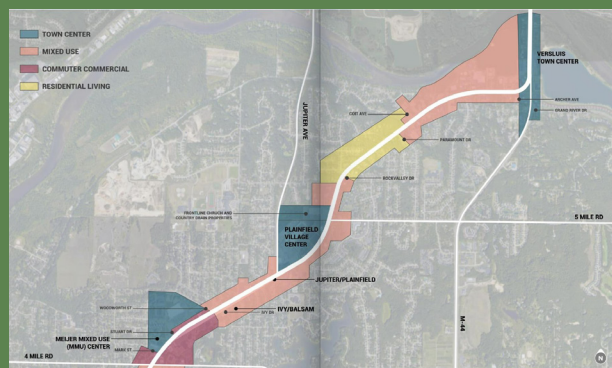
WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Expand Administrative Review

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Pre-approved Plans

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language:

"There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).

needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad



Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language:

"The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.

The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
	Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—	
	Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.	
	Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116	
	Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.	
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

More Flexible Approach to Nonconformities

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
	Assisted living center	S	S	—	
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Police Power Ordinances to Regulate Nuisance

WHAT IT IS

Traditional ordinances have zone districts that oftentimes build on one another and have small nuances in uses. For example, a community might have an R-1 zone district for single-family dwelling units, an R-2 zone district that allows single-family and two-family units, an R-3 zone district that allows single-family, two-family and up to 4-family units. Combining like districts can reduce the overall number of districts, begin to eliminate exclusionary practices, and increase opportunities for new investment. Instead of embedding dimensional context into the zone district, you can achieve appropriate siting of uses through use and form-based standards (described in the Performance Zoning and Descriptors for Form/Massing tools).

Case Study: Plainfield Township, MI

In 2020, Plainfield Township adopted a corridor master plan update, Reimagine Plainfield, a comprehensive redevelopment strategy to transform the Township's key commercial corridor, Plainfield Avenue. The goal was to transform Plainfield Avenue's current low-density, auto-dependent, single-use, single-format development patterns into a dynamic environment that is more vibrant and dense, with more varied uses.

Master Plan Language: "There are currently six zone districts that regulate development in the Plainfield Corridor...Several of the commercial designations are similar in nature, with distinctions made based on the intensity and impact of the uses. Zoning and development regulations are among the most effective regulatory tools that can be used by the Township to help implement the vision, goals, and design concepts in this Plan. Staff suggestions to support corridor redevelopment include simplifying the number of zone districts and creating more flexibility in design standards and the approval process." (p. 109).



PARADIGM SHIFT

A "one size fits all" approach in narrowly defined zone districts does not meet the needs and preferences of today's households. For example, aging baby boomers may wish to remain in their neighborhood but a single-family home is too much to maintain, or the young professional would rather travel than mow the lawn. Overly prescriptive use-based zone districts adversely affect household budgets, family choices, and wealth building opportunities. Approval processes that follow well-defined standards can be used to determine the appropriateness of a use in a particular neighborhood location.

WHY IT IMPACTS HOUSING

Limiting housing types through narrowly defined zone districts limits personal choice and the ability to build housing that serves the broad needs of a community's households - seniors, single people living alone, couples, single-parent families, two-parent families, and adults sharing with other adults. Regulating through a tiered-use approach is an unfair practice that treats residential areas in the same community differently, often times based on household type and economic position. Streamlining use categories provides a greater number of options in the housing market and increase housing supply.

Reducing the number of zone districts can make ordinance administration easier and more user friendly for the public. Similar to Rezoning for Mixed-Use / Multifamily in commercial zones, by simplifying the number of zone districts and expanding allowable uses based upon site-specific criteria, permissible locations for density can be accomplished sensitively.

Additionally, by allowing a different housing type in the same zone district in appropriate circumstances a dimensional variance could be sought rather than a use variance. This removes another potential barrier to housing supply as a) the burden of proof is less; b) many communities do not allow use variance requests; and c) application fees for dimensional variances are commonly less costly than use variances.

HOW IT IS USED

Start by cataloging the key differences in your residential zone districts. Identify opportunities to combine districts. It is important to note that approval processes can vary between housing types. For example, in a former single-family zone district perhaps new multi-family uses must seek Special Land Use approval with the Planning Commission. In areas that are currently zoned multiple family perhaps more housing types are allowed by-right. Engage in a pattern book exercise to catalog development patterns in your community. This will help to identify appropriate site- and form-based standards to accompany the collapsed zone districts to ensure new housing types "fit in" to the existing neighborhood context.

POSSIBLE OBSTACLES TO DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT

- This could constitute a major overhaul of the Zoning Ordinance. Will require public engagement and Planning Commission and elected body approval.
- Determining the appropriate site or use based criteria to regulate the intensity of uses requires thoughtful consideration.

Case Study: Grand Rapids, MI

In 2007, after several years of study and engagement, the City of Grand Rapids adopted a reformulated zoning ordinance. Central to the reconfiguration was a collapsing of zone districts, from multiple residential and commercial zone districts to a combination of three 'Neighborhood Classifications' and a simplified list of 'Zone Districts.' Residential zone districts, for example, shrank from seven to two.

Zoning Ordinance Language: "The Low-Density Residential District is intended to create, maintain and promote a variety of housing opportunities for individual households and to maintain the desired physical characteristics of the city's existing neighborhoods. The density ranges for each Low-Density Residential Zone District varies based upon the Neighborhood Classification in which it is located. Site and building placement regulations, as well as requirements for building elements, take the built environment into consideration as many of the areas that include this Zone District are in existing developed areas." (Sec. 5.5.01.)

ARTICLE 3. MAPPED DISTRICTS

Sec. 5.11. Zone Districts.
The City of Grand Rapids is hereby divided into the following zone districts:

- (1) R-1 One-Family Zone
- (2) R-1A One-Family Auxiliary Zone
- (3) R-2 One- and Two-family Zone
- (4) R-3 Low-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (5) R-4 Medium-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (6) R-5 High-Density Multiple-Family Zone
- (7) SR Special Residential Zone
- (8) F Flood Plain Zone
- (9) C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone
- (10) C-2 Community Commercial Zone
- (11) C-3 City Center District Zone
 - a. C-3a City Center Mixed Use District
 - b. C-3b City Center Service District
- (12) C-4 Heavy Commercial Zone
- (13) FSC Planned Shopping Center Zone
- (14) I-1 Light Industrial Zone
- (15) PID Planned Industrial District Zone
- (16) I-2 Heavy Industrial Zone
- (17) PUD Planned Unit Development Zone (Ord. No. 88-22, § 2, 4-12-88; Ord. No. 88-74, § 1, 12-13-88; Ord. No. 98-51, § 2, 11-10-98)

Table 5.5.05.B. Uses: Residential Zone Districts

Use Category	Specific Use	TN, MCN, MON		Use or Other Regulations	
		LDR	MDR		
RESIDENTIAL					
Household Living	Single-family dwelling, detached	P	P	5.2.07.	
	Single-family dwelling, attached	S/P	P	5.5.05.C, 5.9.06.	
	Two-family dwelling - existing	E	P	5.3.05.F.	
	Two-family dwelling - new construction	P/S	P	5.5.05.D., 5.5.06.	
	Multiple family dwelling	S/X	P	5.5.05.C., 5.9.20.	
	Manufactured housing community	X	P	5.9.17.	
	Adult foster care	Family home (1-6 residents)	P	P	5.9.04.
		Small group home (7-12 residents)	S	S	
		Large group home (13-20 residents)	S	S	
		Assisted living center	S	S	—
Nursing/convalescent home	S	S	—		
Residential rehabilitation facility	S	S	5.9.29.		
Rooming or boarding house	S	S	5.9.30., Chapter 116		
Single room occupancy (SRO)	X	S	5.9.32.		
Transitional or emergency shelter	X	S	5.9.36.		

TECHNICAL RESOURCES

- City of Grand Rapids – Neighborhood Pattern Work Book (2004)
- Redevelopment Ready Communities - Enabling Better Places: Users' Guide to Zoning Reform (2018)

Important Considerations

COLLABORATION

- Regional
- Coalition building
- Champions (creating, equipping)
- Leveraging the work of others (MML Pattern Book, Housing Michigan Coalition, AARP, etc.)

FIRST STEPS – LOCAL ACTION

- Steps to start the conversation
- Right sizing your regulations to your market
- Finding low-hanging fruit
- Community engagement

FUTURE WORK – MAP/STATE AGENCIES/PARTNERS

- Acknowledge systems change needed
- Additional Tools to examine
- Potential future policy: impact fees, CBAs, growth boundaries

Appendix

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Aligned with “important considerations”

RECOMMENDED READING

- The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America – Richard Rothstein
- Evicted: Poverty and Profit in an American City – Matthew Desmond
- How to Kill a City: Gentrification, Inequality, and the Fight for the Neighborhood – Peter Moskowitz



Michigan Association of Planning

1919 West Stadium Boulevard, Suite 4
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

info@planningmi.org

734.913.2000 (Office)
734.913.2061 (Fax)