

Zoning Activities Related to Freight Facilities and Corridors

There are many zoning tools that cities are already utilizing that can aid in creating a *sensible* development environment for residential and other developments that are noise, vibration or safety sensitive land uses, or development that abuts or is adjacent to freight facilities and corridors.

Across the U.S., cities and counties (if they are authorized) enact zoning rules to regulate how development activities will be carried out within the territorial jurisdictions.

The purposes of zoning are to protect and promote the public health, safety and general welfare of a jurisdiction. Zoning is also utilized to implement the policies of the general plan, comprehensive plan, and other long range plans by classifying and regulating land use and structures in specific areas. The City of Pasadena notes that for the purpose of implementing its comprehensive plan, it is the intent of the city's zoning code to:

*According to New York City:
"Zoning shapes the city. Zoning determines the size and use of buildings, where they are located and, densities of the city's diverse neighborhoods. Along with the city's power to budget, tax, and condemn property, zoning is a key tool for carrying out planning policy."*

- Provide standards for the orderly development of the city and continue a stable land use pattern
- Conserve and protect the historical integrity of neighborhoods
- Maintain and protect the value of property
- Ensure the provision of adequate open space for light, air and fire safety
- Provide for the economic stability of existing land uses that conform to the general plan, and protect them from intrusions of harmful or inharmonious land uses
- Ensure compatibility between land uses
- Encourage a pedestrian friendly community by promoting mixes of land uses and pedestrian-oriented development in commercial areas.

Under zoning, most jurisdictions are divided into basic zoning districts. These are usually residential (R), Commercial (C), Manufacturing (M), Industrial (I), Public and Semi Public Use (PS), Agricultural (A) and Temporary Uses (T). These districts are usually then divided into a variety of differing density districts. The zoning districts usually regulate:

- Permitted uses listed in one or more of use groups;
- The size of the building in relation to the size of the zoning lot which is commonly called the floor area ration (FAR);
- For residential uses the number of dwelling units that will be permitted, open space requirements for the lot, and the maximum amount of the lot that can be covered by a building (called lot coverage);
- The distance between the building on the lot and its front, side and rear lot lines;

- Any parking requirements; and
- Other features that may be specifically applicable to the different types of districts.

Some cities also utilize specific design and construction design guidelines to promote 'aesthetics' and 'design styles' within communities. These will be found in manuals often entitled "design guidelines manuals." They are designed to serve as a guide for developers, engineers, contractors and the general public. As an example the City of Jacksonville, FL has a Design Guidelines Manual that provides detailed instructions for treatments for lighting, parking, pedestrian environment, vegetation, signage, and commercial site design.

Many cities also utilize special purpose zoning "overlay" districts that are placed over certain neighborhoods to create specific unique characteristics, or to retain these characteristics. The overlay districts modify the controls of the underlying districts. For example, overlay districts have been used for airport areas of influence and for Transit Oriented Development. Overlays will usually be seen on a zoning map as a hatched or other pattern that is superimposed over a specific use.

The use of overlay districts is now metamorphosing, with cities using them to achieve desired development outcomes. Baltimore Maryland, for example, created a Maritime Industrial Overlay District to reduce residential development around the Port of Baltimore, which was being encroached upon by multiple residential and commercial uses impairing its ability to function as a freight node.

Riverside California, in its [airport land use compatibility plan policy document](#) in 2004 recommended creating areas of Special Compatibility Concern. This was because of the drawback that a standard (comprehensive) plan or zoning ordinance could be changed and uses that are currently compatible may not be assured for the future. This type of designation, they noted would serve as a reminder that airport impacts should be carefully considered in any decision to change existing land use designations. Areas of special compatibility concern could easily be utilized for all the freight mode high use facilities.

Sources:

City of Jacksonville Planning and Development Design Guidelines

<http://www.coj.net/Departments/Planning+and+Development/Current+Planning/Design+Guidelines.htm>

New York City Zoning Guidelines

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/zone/zonehis.shtml>).

Baltimore Industrial Overlay District

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/CityCharterCodes.aspx>

City of Pasadena Zoning Guidelines

<http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/zoning/P-8.html> and <http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/zoning/P-2.html>