



# DC Zoning Regulations Review Fact Sheet



## Why Update the Zoning Code?

The zoning code is being updated to reflect the needs of a 21st Century DC. The last major revision of the code was completed in 1958 and the Comprehensive Plan calls for “substantial revision and reorganization” of the zoning code. Revisions are also needed to implement the Comprehensive Plan and its policy objectives.



## What's New?

- ★ **Sustainability** - The new code will include sustainability measures like bike infrastructure improvements, a Green Area Ratio for commercial and multifamily development, and rules for tree planting and preservation that will enhance the city's tree canopy.
- ★ **Mixed Uses** - The Office of Planning is proposing to encourage corner stores in areas that lack access to neighborhood-serving retail, making it easier for residents to buy fresh produce or a gallon of milk near their homes.
- ★ **Parking** - The zoning review will update existing 1950s-era parking requirements that contribute to traffic congestion and housing affordability concerns. More than 35% of District households have no car, and the new requirements will make it easier to provide parking that is more consistent with our needs today.

## What's Going to Change?

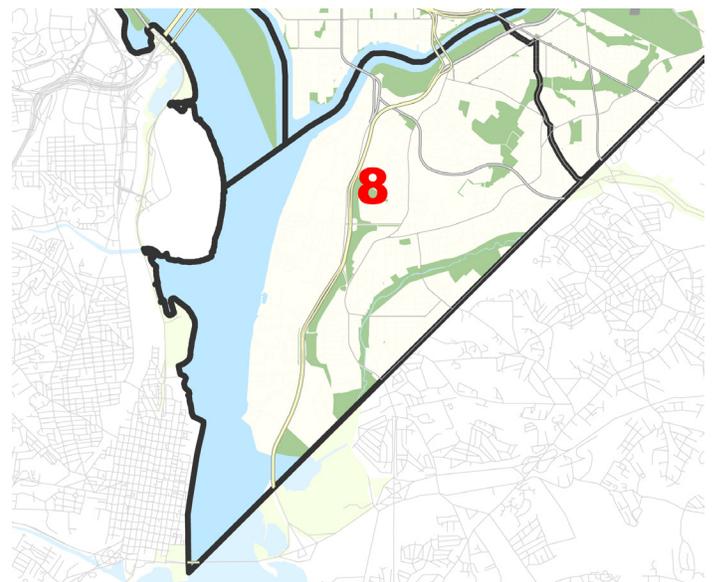
- ★ **Tables and Graphics** - The new code will use tables to make it easier to find information, instead of having to hunt through pages and pages of

Our goal is to create a code that is:

- Clearer
- Easier to use
- More effective for policy implementation

text. More graphics will be added to help illustrate and explain both existing and proposed rules and terms in the regulations.

- ★ **Use Categories** - The extensive lists of individual and often outdated uses (currently more than 600), are proposed to be consolidated into about 30 use categories. This will make the code more flexible and adaptive and allow for greater emphasis on regulating the impacts of uses such as size and noise.
- ★ **Overlay Zones** - Overlay requirements will not go away; they'll be incorporated into the new zone and easier to find. A number of overlays have been added to the existing code to achieve localized planning objectives. However, overlays can be confusing when paired with the existing zone requirements. To clarify the requirements, each overlay and its base zone is proposed to be translated into one focused zone.



## The Review Process to Date:

### ★ January 2008 to June 2011

An appointed Task Force was created with members from each ward, including citizen groups, business associations, and other organizations from across the city, to provide guidance on new zoning measures. Twenty Public Working Groups gave input on zoning topics through more than 100 public meetings. The Zoning Commission also held early hearings to provide conceptual feedback on the topics and discussions.

### ★ Summer 2010 to Summer 2012

A first draft of the potential new zoning code is being formulated by dedicated staff in the Office of Planning. As sections of the first draft are completed they are given to the Zoning Review Task Force for review and input.

## Next Steps

### July - September 2012

Office of Planning revises draft based on Task Force input.

### Fall 2012

Public outreach and neighborhood meetings on new draft zoning code. Feedback and comments will be used to revise the draft code.

### Winter 2013

Zoning Commission public hearings for review of the draft zoning code.



## Specific Text Changes:

### ★ Parking

Proposed changes include allowing shared parking between buildings, requiring spaces for car share services in large lots, removing parking minimums downtown, and increasing bicycle parking requirements.

### ★ Accessory Dwelling Units

The rules for accessory dwelling units are outdated and need revision. The proposed regulations clarify that only one ADU per property is allowed, allow greater flexibility for ADUs within the primary home, and provide greater control for ADUs within an accessory building. ADUs provide additional housing opportunities for small households and can make home ownership and aging in place more affordable for more District residents.

### ★ Building Height (Measurement)

For buildings in the lower-density residential zones, height would be measured to the midpoint of the roof pitch, rather than to the ceiling of the top story. This change will reduce the incentive for "pop-ups" and help ensure that new buildings are closer in character and scale to their neighbors.

### ★ Green Area Ratio

This proposed sustainability measure would require commercial, industrial, and multifamily residential developments to meet certain environmental standards to improve air quality and stormwater retention, and reduce the urban heat island effect.

### ★ Corner Stores

The new draft code would allow for limited commercial and arts activity in residential areas. The goal of this provision is to make it easier for people to buy a gallon of milk or a morning cup of coffee close to their homes and save time and car trips spent on small errands.

Public involvement is critical for the zoning review process. Get involved by visiting:

[www.dczoningupdate.org](http://www.dczoningupdate.org)

Or contact us at:  
[zoningupdate@dc.gov](mailto:zoningupdate@dc.gov)