



“Unzoning”: Zoning Minimalism and Simplification

City Planning Commission
Ordinance Revision Committee

11-28-2023



Discussion Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Purpose + Definitions
3. Concept: Simplified Planning Zones
4. Concept: Pink Zoning
5. Concept: Mix Tape Zoning
6. Discussion Questions



1. Introduction

- City of Ann Arbor Planning and Development Services staff will discuss with ORC members an item from the Commission work program involving what has been referred to as “unzoning” or sometimes “zoning minimalism” as it relates to the simplification of the Unified Development Code (UDC).
- Potentially instructive concepts for this discussion include Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs), Pink Zones, and Mix Tape Zoning.



2. Purpose + Definitions

- Define what commissioners envisioned in adding “unzoning” to the work program
- Set context around a shared definition
- Determine concrete directions for ORC members to contribute to zoning simplification



2. Purpose + Definitions

- What did you envision the definition was when “unzoning” was added to the work program?
 - In *Zoning Minimalism* (2021) Norman Wright, AICP describes it as "a response to clear, ambitious goals for the urban environment."
 - Zoning Minimalism seeks to:
 - Develop quality zoning rules with clear goals
 - Speed up approval process
 - Lessen administrative burden
 - Set equitable and expose inequitable rules



3. Concept: Simplified Planning Zones

A Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) is an area where specific planning permissions have already been granted to remove the need for individual planning permission, encourage development and investment, and increase compliance.

- SPZs have been ongoing in Ireland and UK since late 1970s



3. Concept: Simplified Planning Zones

Example Definitions from City Websites:

Rochdale, United Kingdom

- "SPZs are areas where planning permission has already been granted for certain developments. This means you do not need to apply for planning permission yourself."

Scotland

- "SPZs grant planning permission for the types of development specified within the scheme, without the need for any individual planning permission."

Toronto, Canada

- "Simplification: Proposed changes to reduce confusion, remove redundant provisions, and simplify wording where appropriate. Potential changes include: Updating and clarifying zoning regulations to eliminate confusion and duplication regarding secondary suites and multiplexes."



4. Concept: Pink Zoning

Pink Zones are "areas where the red tape is lightened — is the locus for implementation of Lean strategies and improvements, and it identifies an area where new protocols are pre-negotiated and experiments are conducted, all with the goal of removing impediments to economic development and community-building."
(Project for Lean Urbanism)

- Typically small, carefully defined locations that contain viable mixes of homes and businesses
- Small size makes it possible to concentrate resources, focus public and private initiatives, and energize existing businesses and residents



5. Concept: Mix Tape Zoning

In Detroit, “Mix Tape Zoning” refers to a better mixing of the land uses along commercial corridors deviating from traditional segregation by use.

- When implementing, the existing Traditional Main Street Overlay Area (TMSO) regulations were used to require basic design standards
- Changes to the TMSO regulations reduced parking requirements and allowed outdoor dining in front of a restaurant without a hearing, among other changes



6. Discussion Questions

- The UDC provides both review and approval procedures (Article V) and use and development standards (Articles III and IV).
 - It's also over 300 pages long. What does simplification mean to the UDC?
- **What specific article or section could benefit from minimalism?**
 - ...meaning eliminating a requirement or lowering a standard?
- **Would it be enough to do one or all the following?:**
 - Do a thorough copy-edit for brevity
 - Reduce the number of sentences and increase lists, tables, and graphics
 - Cut content without changing the requirements or standards



6. Discussion Questions

How could Pink Zoning be used in Ann Arbor?

- What specific problem could be solved or specific goal could be achieved with Pink Zoning?

How could Mix Tape Zoning be used in Ann Arbor?

- What specific problem could be solved or goal could be achieved with Mix Tape Zoning?