

ZONING 101

What is Zoning?

Think of zoning as the city's "rulebook" for development. It helps ensure that homes, businesses, schools, parks, and other uses are located in appropriate areas.

Why it matters

Zoning helps protect neighborhood character, public safety, manage growth and reduce conflicts between different land uses.



Common Zoning Terms

Zoning District

A zoning district is a designated area with specific development rules: RS – Residential Single-Family; CG – Commercial General; IH – Industrial Heavy.

Setback (yard)

The minimum distance a building must be from a property line. Setbacks provide space between buildings, streets, and neighboring properties.

Principal Structure

The main building on a property, such as a house or business.

Accessory Structure

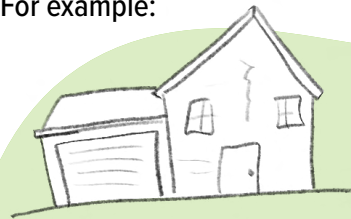
A secondary structure on a property, such as a garage, shed or accessory dwelling unit.

What can the property be used for?

Each zoning district identifies:

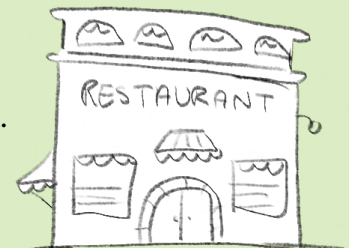
- **Permitted Uses** – Uses allowed by right
- **Special Uses** – Uses that require additional review

For example:



A single-family home is allowed in a residential district.

A restaurant is allowed in a commercial district.



What is a Planned Development (PD)?

Planned Development is a customized zoning approval for a specific property. An applicant creates a site plan that is reviewed by staff and approved by City Council through a public hearing process. The PD results in a site plan which controls future development on the site.

What Are Overlays and Special Districts?

Some areas of Tampa have additional zoning rules to preserve their unique character.

Examples include: Ybor City, Seminole Heights, Westshore and West Tampa.

These districts may have design requirements that go beyond standard zoning regulations.

What If a Property Owner Wants an Exception?

Variance

A variance is a request for relief from a zoning requirement, such as: building setbacks.

Design Exception

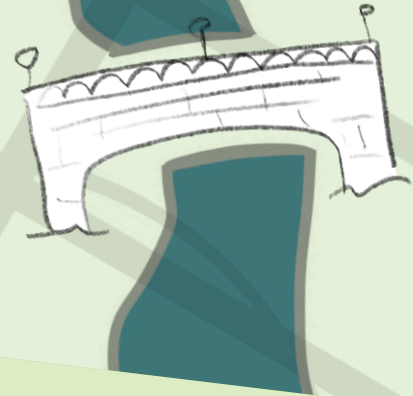
A design exception allows flexibility for certain site design standards while maintaining compatibility with surrounding properties.

What is a Special Use?

Some uses require additional review because they may have a greater impact on surrounding properties, such as accessory dwelling units, places of religious assembly or alcoholic beverage sales.

Depending on the use, approval may be granted by City staff or City Council.

To view Tampa's municipal codes, scan here:



How Development Rules Build on One Another

Because land use regulations are layered, a cake is an often-used metaphor to explain zoning, as each layer adds another set of rules. Though not every property has five layers, each one does depend on the one below it.

So before you “bake” a development project, you have to account for every layer of regulation!

