

Quick reference

ZONING ADVISORY COUNCILS

WHAT ARE ZONING ADVISORY COUNCILS?

Zoning Advisory Councils (ZACs) are led by community members and prominent organizations in the neighborhood. ZACs help inform the alderman of the community's perspective on any given rezoning application. There are many ZACs set up in wards across Chicago, and they typically use the following process:

Proposal and referral

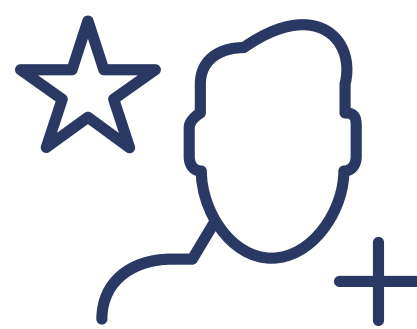
Developer sends proposal to alderman's office and the Department of Planning and Development for a zoning change



Alderman refers developer to ZAC

Developer meeting

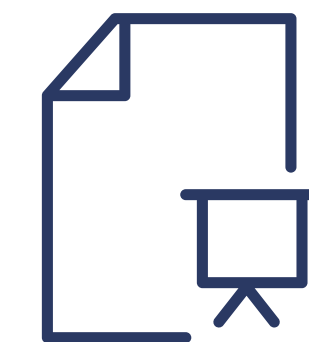
Developer meets with ZAC



ZAC asks relevant questions

Public meeting

ZAC hosts public meeting with developer



Developer presents the development plan to the public

Alderman's decision

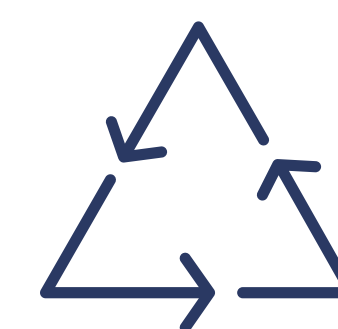
Alderman makes a decision to grant or deny the requested zoning change

Alderman may request certain changes to the design before it is accepted

Feedback

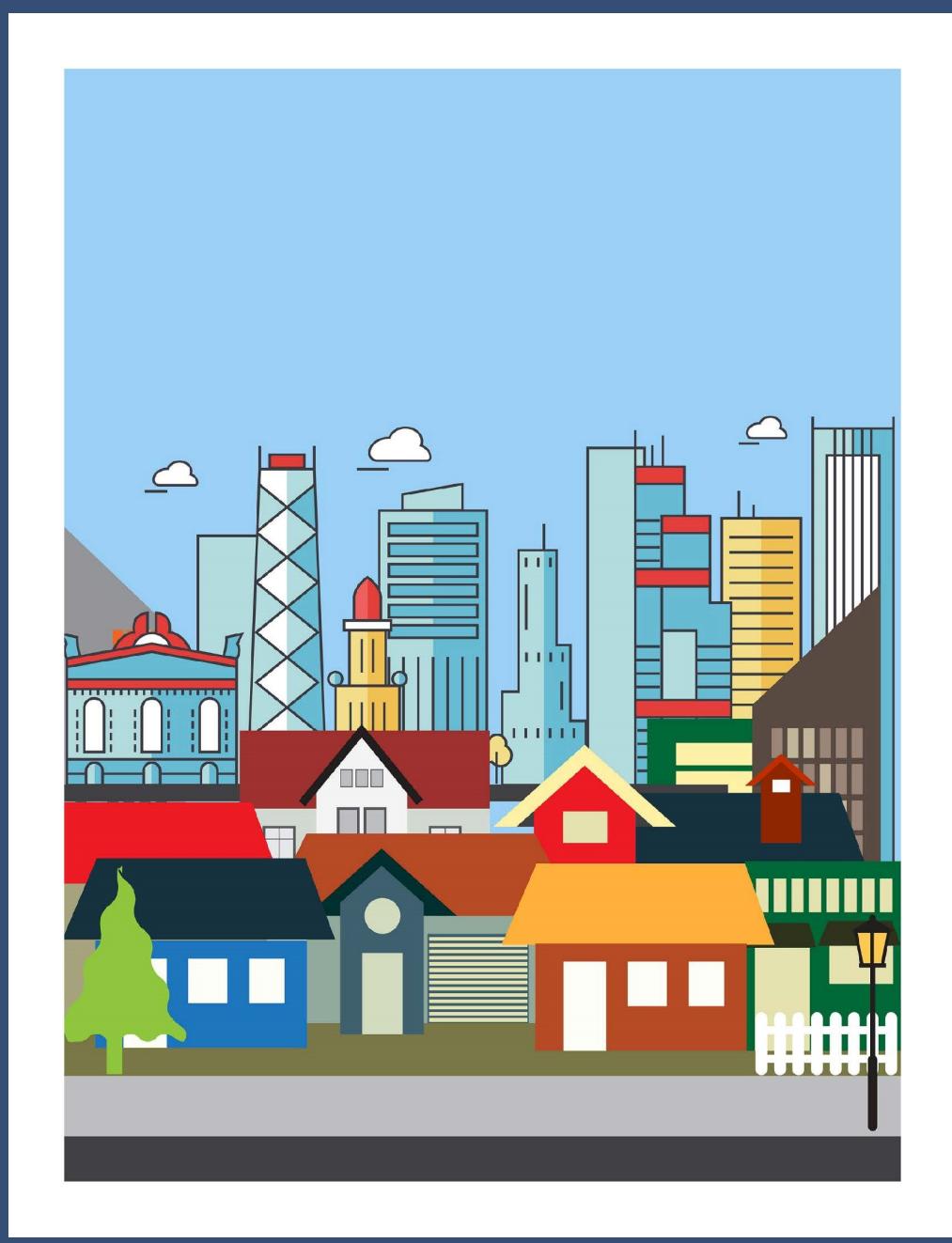
ZAC gathers written and verbal feedback from public

ZAC reviews all feedback



All feedback is sent to alderman, who continues to gather public feedback

If accepted, the proposal will move to the Department of Planning and Development, the Zoning Committee, and City Council for final approval.



Quick reference

CHANGING ZONING RULES

Zoning determines the rules and restrictions for how a building or land can be used. The city creates a “Zoning Map” which draws outlines for specific uses of buildings, separating residential, commercial, and industrial.

Zoning can be changed through:

(1) Rezoning (2) adjustments, or (3) allowable special uses and variances.

REZONING

Rezoning is an amendment that changes the zoning map and zoning classification for a particular building. This can include “down-zoning” to make future projects require another zoning change.

Requires an [amendment passed by City Council](#).

Requires:

1. application to Department of Planning and Development
2. review by the Committee on Zoning, Landmarks, and Building Standards
3. approval by City Council

Rezoning is heavily dependent on the local alderman's approval, because the Committee and City Council defer to them. The public can attend all committee and City Council meetings, but the most effective public input occurs through a relationship with the alderman.

ADJUSTMENT

Adjustments are small changes to buildings, usually relating to size, bulk, and density. The [Zoning Administrator](#) approves an adjustment if the change doesn't go against the intention of the zoning restriction.

Requires [approval by the Zoning Administrator](#).

Adjustments require an application to the Zoning Administrator.

The Administrator will approve the adjustment if it eliminates an inconvenience and so long as any negative consequences will be very small or will be addressed by the building owner.

SPECIAL USES & VARIATIONS

Special Uses are applications for particular types of use which require a more robust review process – such as a school. Each type of use requiring a Special Use application is specifically identified in the Zoning Ordinance.

Variations are applications for changes related to size, bulk, and density which have more impact on a building than those considered as an “Adjustment.”

Requires [approval by the Zoning Board of Appeals](#)

Special Uses and Variations both require an application to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Board reviews the impact of the requested change and the public's viewpoint. Generally, the Board considers the Alderman's opinion to be the same as the public's. The Board's monthly meetings are open to the public.

The most effective public input occurs through a relationship with the alderman – before the Board reviews the matter.