

Welcome

Kenosha Zoning Rewrite Open House

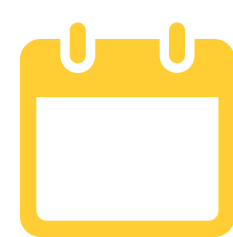
**Learn about the project and
review and comment on
zoning code issues and opportunities!**

Stay Involved!



Scan the QR Code

[graef-usa.mysocialpinpoint.com/
kenoshazoning](https://graef-usa.mysocialpinpoint.com/kenoshazoning)



August 5, 2026



5 - 7:00 p.m.



**Kenosha Innovation Center
5522 26th Avenue
Kenosha, WI 53140**

Project Overview

The City of Kenosha has embarked on a comprehensive rewrite of its Zoning Code. Your participation will help to ensure the new Zoning Code best serves the community's needs.

Purpose

The purpose of this open house is to gain **YOUR INPUT** on the City of Kenosha Zoning Code Rewrite. What you tell us today will help shape future zoning regulations and guide new development in the City.

Why Rewrite the Zoning Code?

The City of Kenosha's current zoning code was created in 1978 and has been updated, corrected, and added to in small ways since then. In that time, it has become inconsistent, redundant, and inflexible. The code is now going through an update to meet modern zoning practices that will make a more flexible and simplified code. This will make it easier to continue to build high-quality development and help Kenosha guide sustainable investments.



Look for this icon!

This meeting includes project background, educational materials, and opportunities for public input. Wherever you see the feedback icon, that's where we want to hear your opinion!

Project Timeline

- Spring - Summer 2026**
 - Initiation and Research
- Summer - Fall 2026**
 - Public Engagement
- Fall - Winter 2026/2027**
 - Preliminary Recommendations
 - Code Framework
- Spring 2027**
 - Formalization and Adoption

Visit the Project Website:

graeef-usa.mysocialpinpoint.com/kenoshazoning



Desired Outcomes

The City has identified several goals for this project:

- A major goal of the zoning rewrite project is to seek reforms and innovations that produce superior design and development outcomes while still protecting the general public.
- The code needs to be more user-friendly to implementers, the general public, and the development community, which could be accomplished by consolidating and simplifying standards and/or reducing the number of zoning categories.
- Improve zoning consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and any updates thereto, and better align with its vision of compact and sustainable development.
- Improve development process outcomes for City officials, staff, the development community, businesses, residents, neighborhood associations, and general public. This may include moving towards a more form-based code or updating site and design standards.
- Undertake a public process that fairly addresses the issues and solutions and includes as many voices as possible.
- Allow for a more proactive role in planning such as form-based strategies/street-to building relationships, mixed-use activity centers, and newly master planned areas.
- Produce more housing supply, diversity of choices, and affordability.
- Reduce sprawl and environmental and habitat degradation.
- Correct dual-zoned properties in the city.
- Produce more complete streets and neighborhoods with housing choices, retail/commercial amenities, and jobs within walkable distance.
- Align related development standards found in the Code of Ordinances to be updated and cross-referenced.
- Create new use tables that are user-friendly.
- Improve and modernize definitions reducing interpretation issues.
- Add illustrations or images to visually define expectations.
- A geographic information systems map reflecting the updated zoning code.

How Zoning Works

Zoning Basics

Zoning is the framework that guides how land is used and developed. It includes zoning maps, zoning districts, land uses, and approval processes that work together to shape neighborhoods, businesses, and public spaces while supporting the community's vision for the future.

What is Zoning?

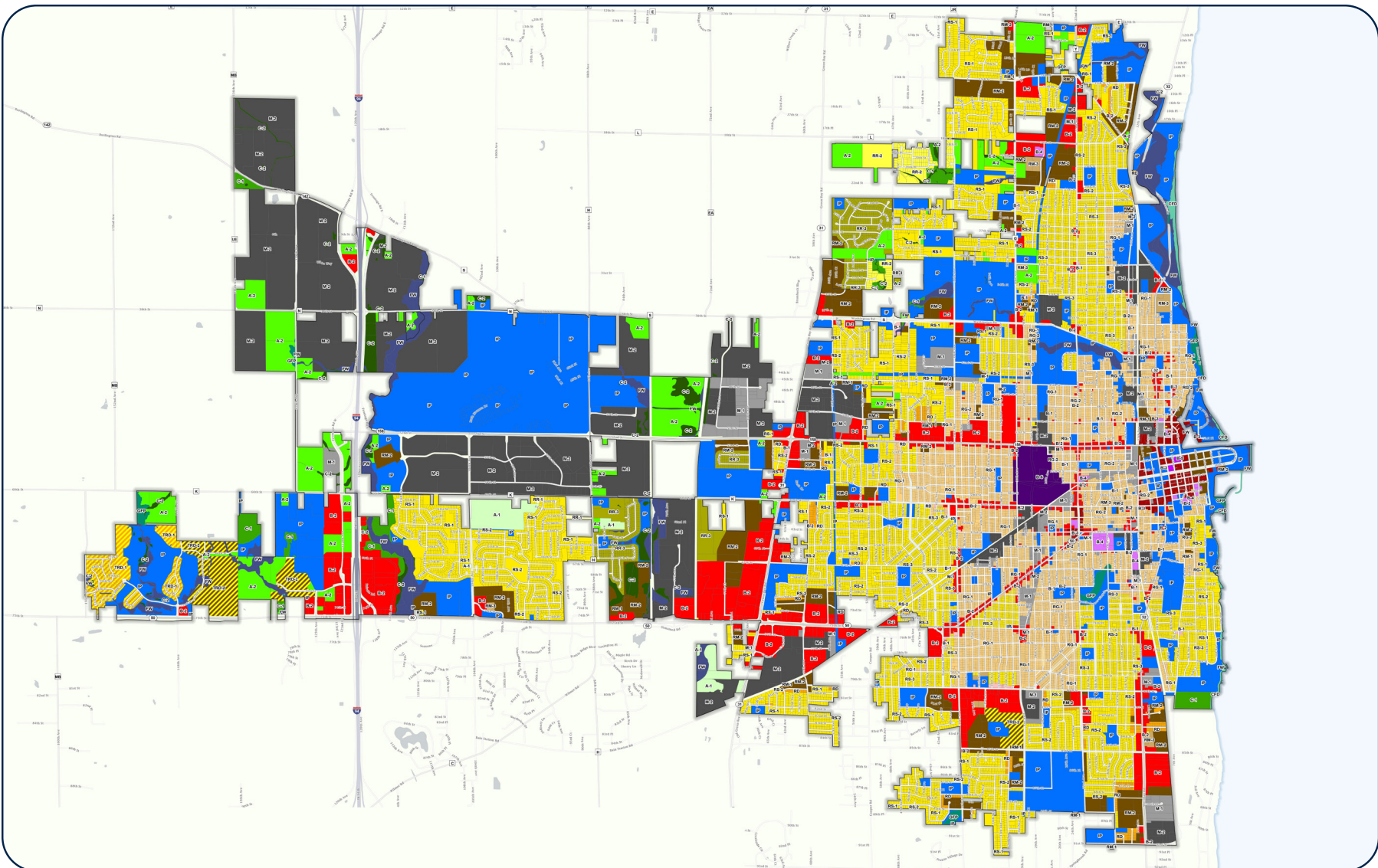
Zoning is a set of rules that guides how land is used and developed throughout the city. It determines what types of activities can occur on a property and establishes standards for buildings and sites. Zoning helps create compatible neighborhoods, supports economic development and housing, protects public health and safety, and implements the community's vision for future growth.

Zoning Map

The Zoning Map shows where different zoning districts are located throughout the City. It divides the community into areas that have different rules for development and land use. Every property in Kenosha is assigned a zoning district on the map.

Zoning Districts

Zoning Districts are areas with a common set of development standards and allowed uses. Each district is designed to support a particular type of place, such as residential neighborhoods, shopping areas, employment centers, or mixed-use districts.



Land Uses

Land Uses describe how property and buildings are used. Examples include homes, apartments, stores, offices, restaurants, schools, and industrial facilities. Zoning determines which land uses are allowed in each zoning district.

Permitted Uses

Permitted Uses are allowed by right within a zoning district. If a proposal meets all zoning requirements and other applicable regulations, it can typically be approved administratively.

Conditional Uses

Conditional Uses may be appropriate in a zoning district but require additional review. These uses undergo a public review process to ensure they are compatible with surrounding properties and meet specific approval criteria.

Prohibited Uses

Prohibited Uses are not allowed within a zoning district. These uses are either permitted in other districts or are not allowed under the zoning ordinance. Any use not listed is prohibited in that zoning district.

Special Approvals

Special Approvals provide flexibility for unique situations that are not otherwise allowed by the zoning ordinance. These requests require additional review, public hearings, and City approval to determine whether they are appropriate for a particular site and beneficial to the community.

Zoning Districts

Changes to the City's Zoning Districts may be proposed to align with the City's policies, plans, and community feedback. These are the current districts:

- RR-1 Rural Single Family Residential District
- RR-2 Suburban Single Family Residential District
- RR-3 Urban Single Family Residential District
- Rs-1 Single Family Residential District
- Rs-2 Single Family Residential District
- Rs-3 Single Family Residential District
- Rd Two Family Residential District
- Rg-1 General Residential District
- Rg-2 General Residential District
- Rm-1 Multiple Family Residential District
- Rm-2 Multiple Family Residential District
- Rm-3 Elderly and Handicapped Housing District
- B-1 Neighborhood Business District
- B-2 Community Business District
- B-3 Central Business District
- B-4 Mixed-Use District
- B-5 Downtown Mixed Use District
- M-1 Light Manufacturing District
- M-2 Heavy Manufacturing District
- IP Institutional Park District
- FW Floodway District
- FFO Floodplain Fringe Overlay District
- GFP General Floodplain District
- PDO Planned Development Overlay District
- SWO Shoreland Wetland Overlay District
- A-1 General Agricultural District
- A-2 Agricultural Land Holding District
- C-1 Upland Resource Conservancy District
- C-2 Lowland Resource Conservancy District
- HPO Historic Preservation Overlay District
- HRPO Harborpark Overlay District
- PCNO Pike Creek Neighborhood Overlay District
- TRD-1 Traditional Single and Two Family Residential District
- TRD-2 Traditional Multiple Family Residential District
- AIR Airport Overlay District

How Zoning Works

Design Standards

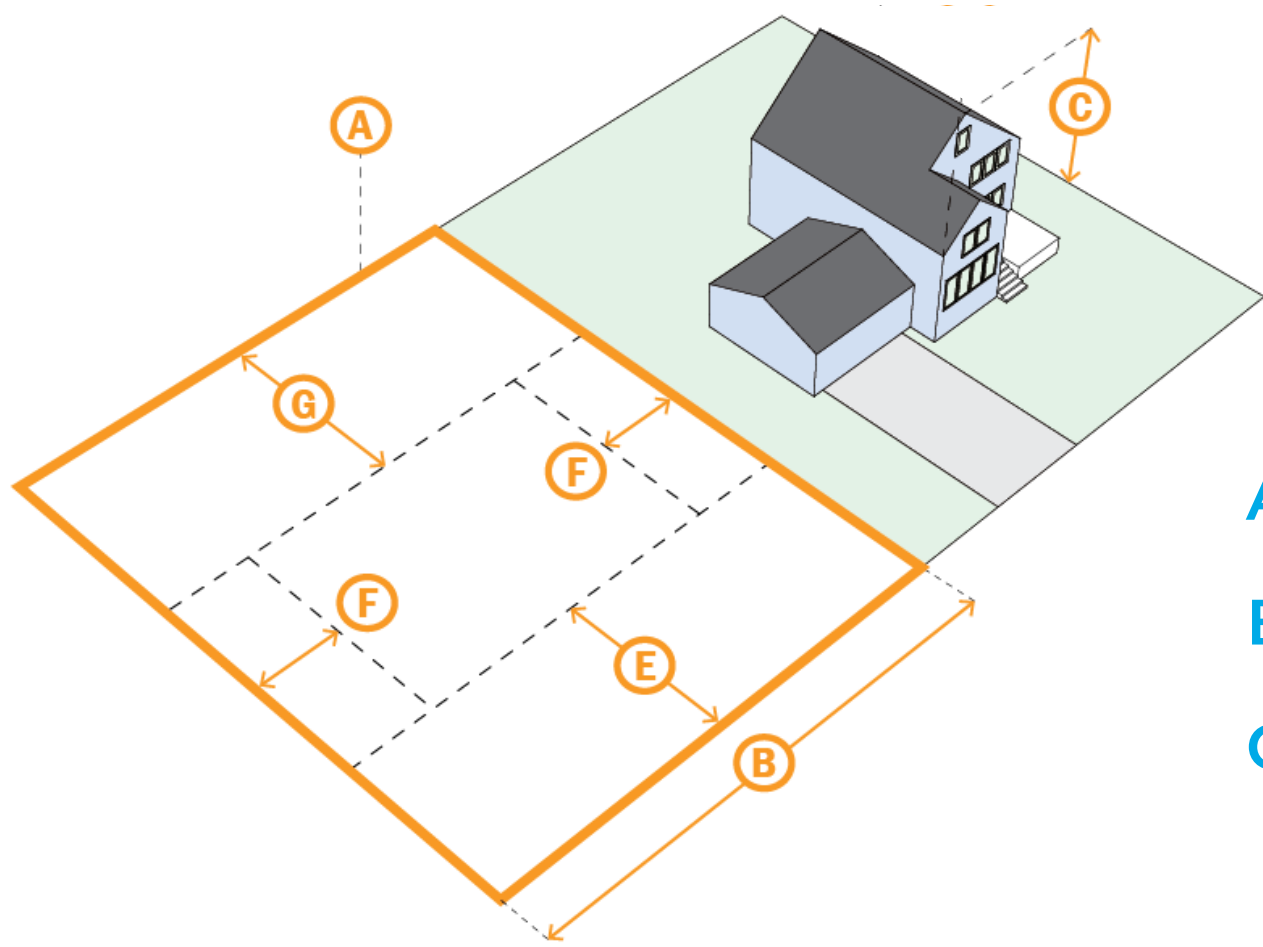
Development and design standards shape how buildings and sites are arranged and designed. These standards help create safe, attractive, and functional development while ensuring compatibility with surrounding properties and public spaces.

What are Design Standards?

Design and development standards are regulations that establish a baseline for the physical form and appearance of development across the city. They provide clear expectations for property owners, developers, and residents by addressing building placement, site design, landscaping, lighting, and signage. During the development review process, these standards help guide decisions and ensure that new development contributes positively to the community while maintaining a predictable and consistent built environment.

Dimensional Requirements

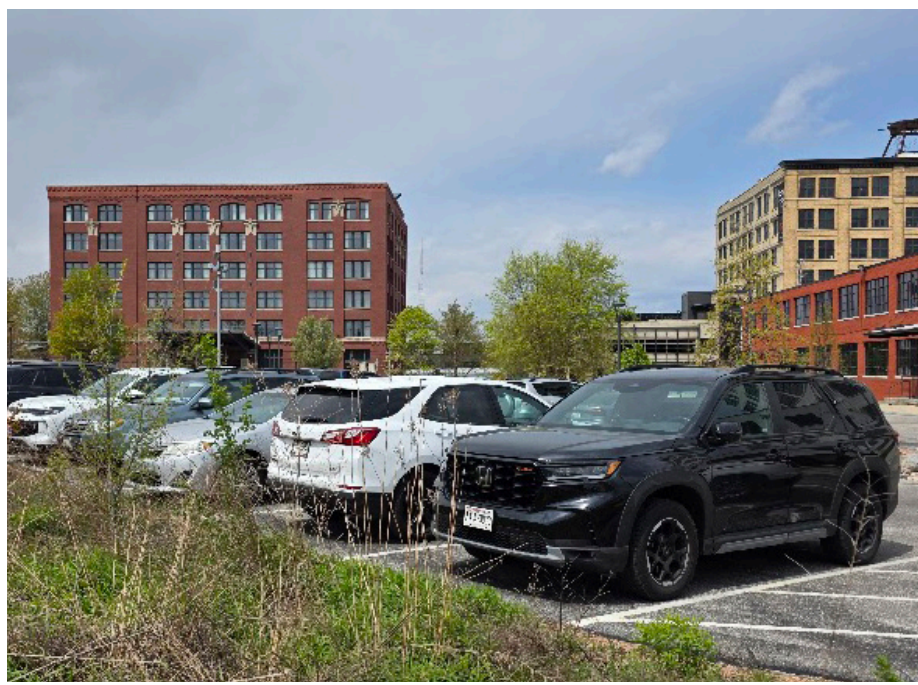
Dimensional requirements establish the size and placement of buildings and structures on a property. These standards regulate features such as building height, setbacks, lot coverage, and lot size to help create orderly development and compatibility between neighboring properties.



- A. Lot area
- B. Lot width
- C. Building height
- E. Street yard setback
- F. Side yard setback
- G. Rear yard setback

Parking & Access

Parking and access standards help ensure that people can safely and conveniently travel to and through a site. These standards regulate the number and design of parking spaces, the location of driveways and loading areas, and connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles. Together, they support safe circulation, accessibility, and efficient site design.



Landscaping

Landscaping standards help enhance the appearance and function of development. Requirements for trees, plantings, buffers, and open spaces can improve streetscapes, soften transitions between different land uses, and contribute to a more attractive community.



Lighting

Lighting standards promote safety and visibility while minimizing impacts on surrounding properties. These standards regulate the placement, height, and intensity of outdoor lighting to reduce glare, light spillover, and other nuisance effects.

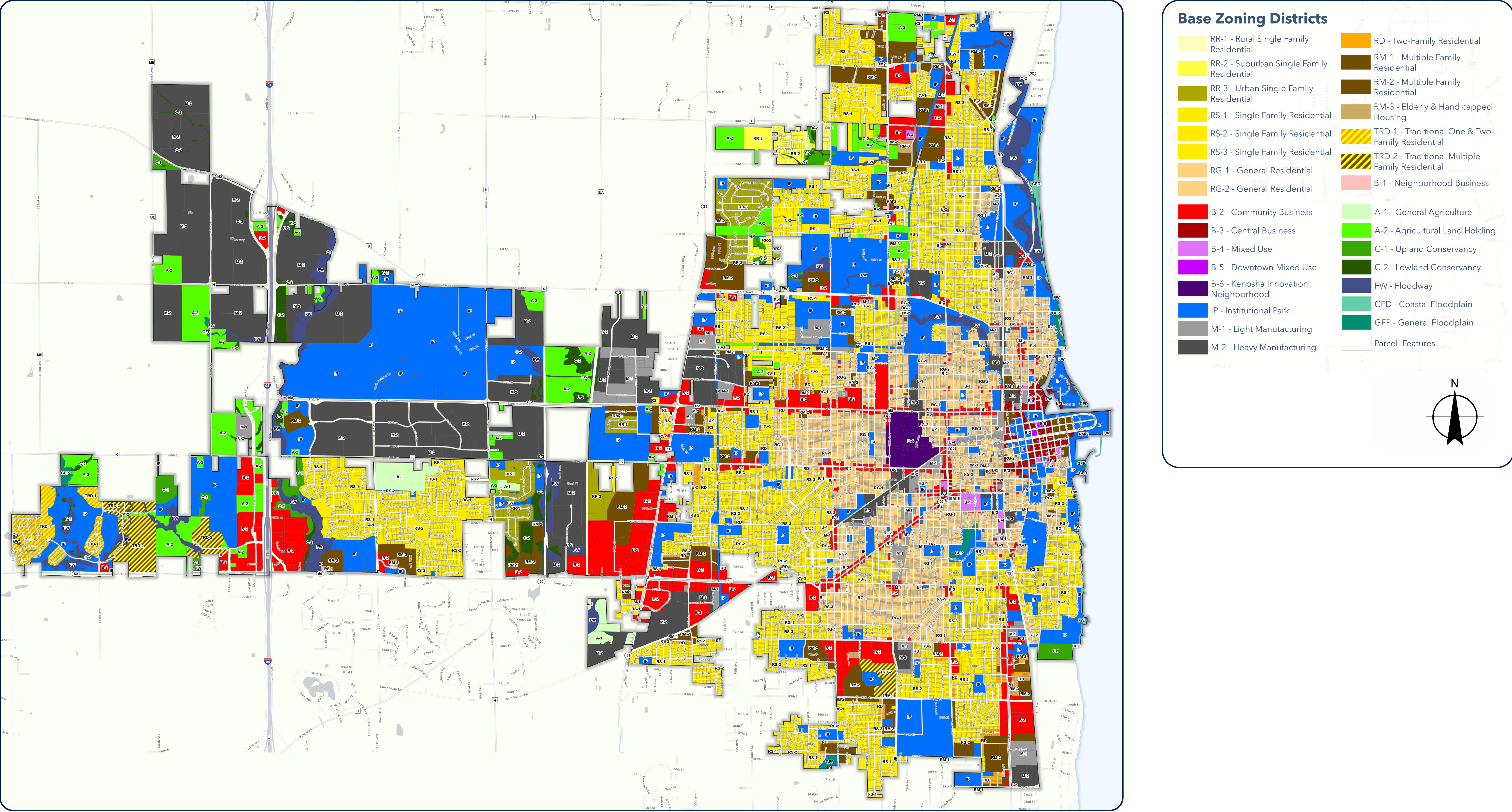


Signage

Sign regulations establish standards for the size, location, design, and illumination of signs. These standards help businesses and organizations communicate effectively while supporting public safety and preserving community character.



Existing Zoning Map



How Zoning Works

Administration & Procedures

Administration and procedures represent the process for reviewing development proposals and enforcing zoning regulations. These processes help ensure that applications are reviewed fairly, transparently, and in accordance with adopted plans and standards.

How Are Decisions Made?

Administration and procedures establish the processes used to review development proposals and implement the zoning ordinance. The level of review varies depending on the type of request, with more complex proposals typically requiring additional analysis, public input, and decision-making.

Approval Processes

Process Components



Big Idea #1

Sustainable Strategies

Zoning Code rewrites often incorporate measures that promote sustainability and natural resources. Place a sticker on which sustainable strategies or natural resource provisions Kenosha should require, encourage, or not include in this Zoning Rewrite Project.



Place a Sticker on Your Choice:

Sustainable Strategy Type	Require	Encourage	Do Not Include
Rain Gardens/Bioswales			
Native Plant Species			
Tree Planting & Preservation			
Permeable Surfaces			
Reduce Off-Street Parking			
Limits on Impervious Surfaces			
Green Roofs			
Renewable Energy Options			
Bird Friendly Design			
Dark Skies Friendly Lighting			
Bicycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure			
Electric Vehicle Charging Stations			
Restrict impacts/ regulate replacement of natural features			
Strict preservation of wetlands or mature trees			

Big Idea #2

Streamlined Approvals

Approval procedures are the steps required for a development to be constructed. More complex developments involve lengthier approval procedures. Each public meeting can add months to a construction timeline.

What’s the idea?

Public meetings and hearings can create significant barriers to development by adding time, uncertainty, and costs to the approval process, which may discourage or prevent otherwise viable projects from moving forward.

Redundancy

A development project that meets all of its zoning requirements cannot be denied in a public meeting. This makes the public meeting redundant and frustrating to people attending the meeting when nothing can be done.

Financial Risk

Public meetings significantly increase the time it takes a development to be approved. Problems can’t be fixed right away, because meetings are held every time the design changes, stopping work for public input.

Complex requirements

The number, complexity, and poor communication of requirements for new development slows down approvals by requiring several rounds of revisions to projects when standards are unclear.

What might Kenosha want to do?

- **Staff approvals:** Allow development to be approved by City staff if it cannot be denied in a public meeting.
- **Reduce public hearings:** Speed up development timelines for projects that are not controversial, saving hearings for projects that need greater transparency.
- **Objective standards:** Simplify and clean up standards so that developments have reduced risk with a clearer understanding of what is required.

What do you think?

Should City Staff be given the authority to approve developments that meet all requirements? What types of projects should involve additional public meetings, public comment periods, and evidence gathering?



Place a Sticker on Your Choice:

Application Type:	Staff Review (faster approval and no public meeting if all standards are met)	Standard Plan Commission Review (public meeting without public hearing)	Plan Commission Public Hearing (additional notice, time, and formal public comments)
Sign Permits			
Commercial Building Design Review			
Industrial Building Design Review			
Commercial Site Plan Review			
Industrial Site Plan Review			

Big Idea #3

Reduced Parking

For the last several decades, the need for parking has been the primary shaper of American communities. Communities require developments to provide “adequate” parking often to an excess or where it is even unnecessary. Many of these parking requirements are based arbitrarily on obscure metrics.

What’s the idea?

Minimum parking standards require large amounts of area to be dedicated to parking, which significantly raises the cost of development, and makes cities less walkable and inviting.

Reducing, or even eliminating these requirements would allow developers to build the number of parking stalls they believe they truly need for a site, rather than legally requiring them to create more than they need. As commercial development evolves, communities need the tools to right-size their parking to local market conditions.

Why might Kenosha want to do this?

- Development-friendly; Reduces the cost of new development by reducing parking costs.
- Results in efficient land use and reduced sprawl.
- Prevents large, empty seas of pavement.
- Reduces stormwater and flooding impacts.
- Encourages walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation.
- More visually appealing construction.
- Reduced environmental impacts

Things to consider:

- Should parking minimums be reduced everywhere, or only in certain areas where parking demand is lower?
- Would it make sense to place a maximum on parking spaces in certain places?
- Are there any uses that currently have too high or too low parking requirements?
- Should Kenosha completely eliminate parking minimums?

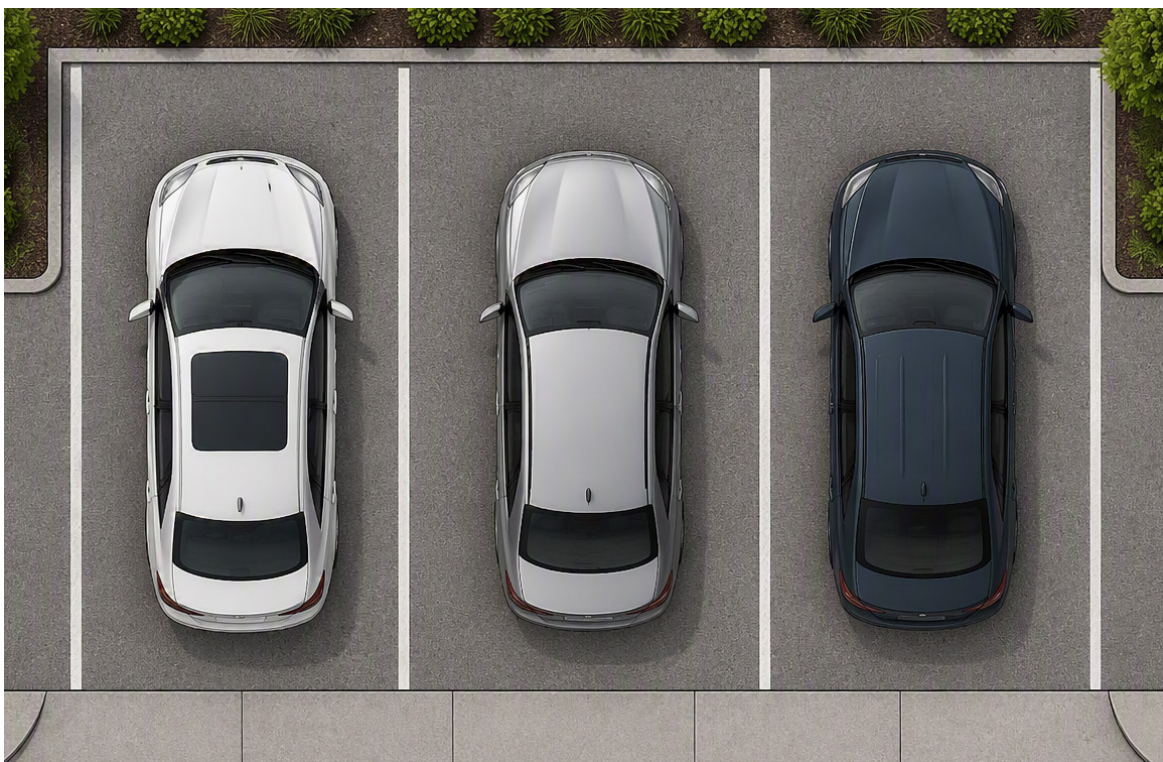


Precedents:

- **West Allis:** No minimums citywide
- **South Milwaukee:** No minimums downtown
- **Sheboygan:** No minimums downtown
- **Superior:** No minimums citywide
- **Manitowoc:** No minimums downtown for non-residential

Size / Sq. Ft. Comparison

3 Parking Spaces



=

Studio Apartment



=

Cafe Seating



Accessory Dwelling Units

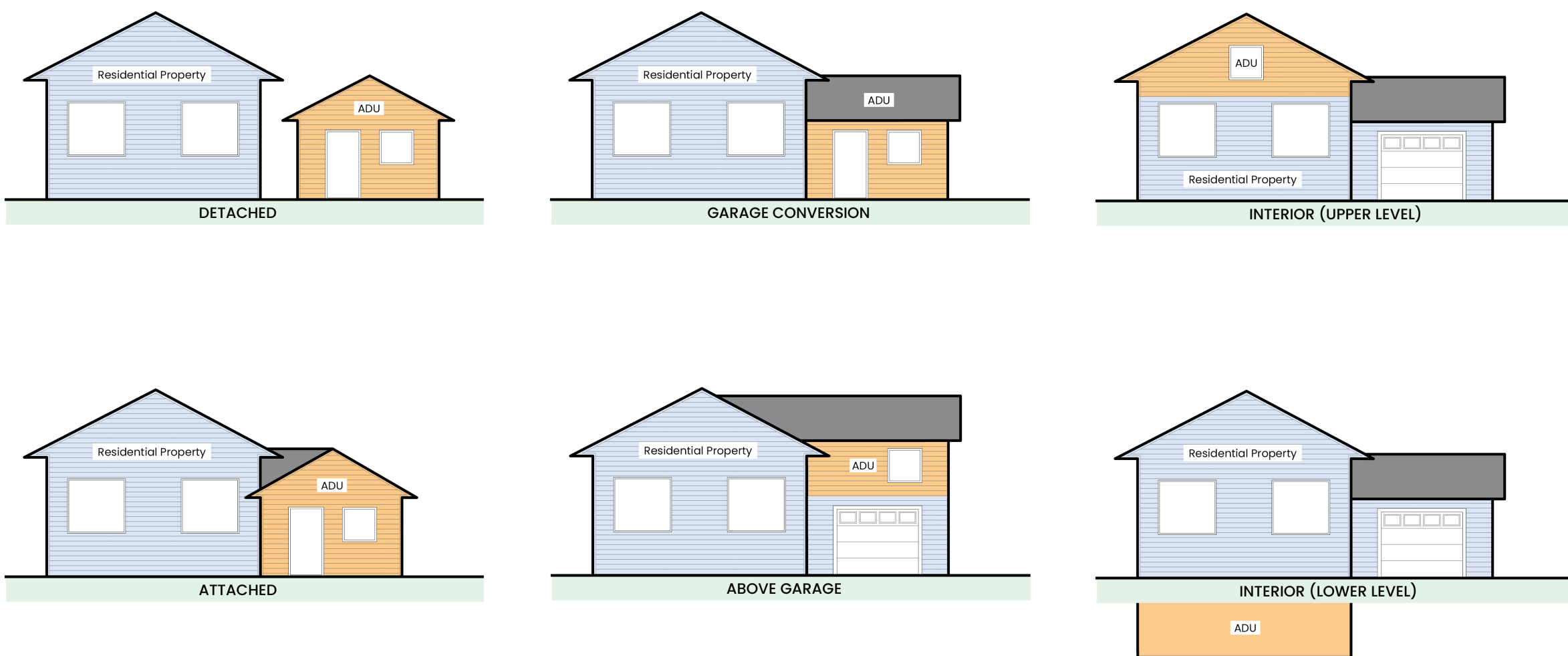
A photograph of a two-story house with green and blue siding, a large tree in the foreground, and a person standing on the porch.

Many communities are missing smaller-scale housing options, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) provide an opportunity to offer this option in existing neighborhoods. They are perfect for fresh-out-of-college individuals, or older couples looking to downsize.

ADUs are a separate home from the primary residence, and is typically smaller in size. They are often; but not always, detached. ADUs can increase the number of homes in a neighborhood without massive investments in infrastructure.

- **More choices:** increases housing options in existing neighborhoods with limited variety.
- **Missing need:** perfect for families trying to downsize and stay in the same neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood character:** fits into existing neighborhood without needing new construction.
- **Affordable:** provides a much needed affordable housing option.

- Where on a property should ADUs be allowed? (See options to the left)
- Should ADUs be allowed on all single-family properties, or only in specific areas?
- Should rentals be allowed in ADUs?
- Should the owners of the property be required to live there, or can they rent the whole property out to multiple tenants?
- Should the addition of a new ADU require additional parking?
- What should the minimum size of an ADU be?
- What other requirements should be applied to ADUs?



Share your feedback!

Big Idea #5

Economic Development

Economic development involves a broad range of activities to increase investment, build wealth, and provide employment across the community. Zoning has a significant influence on economic development by determining what can be built and factors that influence the cost of development. The Zoning Rewrite should balance quality of life with staying competitive as a place to do business.

What's the idea?

As the economy evolves, new businesses are emerging and posing challenging zoning regulations. Different reforms can help improve economic development, support community wealth building, and improve quality of life. Several types of business activities may be considered.



Home Occupations

Home occupations are businesses operated from a residence, such as remote professional services, tutoring, personal services, or creative work.

Reducing barriers to home-based businesses can support entrepreneurship, lower startup costs, create opportunities for small business owners, and allow neighborhood-serving businesses to grow within the community.



Data Centers, Large Industrial Campuses and Business Parks

Data centers, industrial campuses, and business parks support manufacturing, logistics, technology, research, and digital infrastructure while creating jobs and driving economic growth. As demand for these uses increases in southeastern Wisconsin, they are becoming a more prominent part of the region's development pattern.

The zoning rewrite will explore how these facilities should be located and designed, including considerations related to size, appearance, noise, transportation access, environmental impacts, and compatibility with nearby neighborhoods. Community input will help shape future regulations.



Neighborhood Commercial / Retail

Neighborhood commercial and retail uses, such as restaurants, cafés, shops, personal services, and small offices, provide convenient access to everyday goods and services close to where people live.

These businesses support local entrepreneurship, contribute to vibrant neighborhoods, and can create more walkable communities. The zoning rewrite will explore how to encourage neighborhood-serving businesses while maintaining compatibility with nearby homes.



Artisan Manufacturing in Commercial Districts

Artisan manufacturing businesses, such as craft food and beverage makers, woodworkers, artists, and maker spaces, often combine production, retail sales, and customer experiences in one location.

These businesses can support entrepreneurship, create jobs, and add unique character to commercial areas. The zoning rewrite will explore where artisan manufacturing is appropriate and how it can be integrated into commercial districts while remaining compatible with surrounding businesses and neighborhoods.

Things to consider:

- Should home occupations be allowed to receive clients? Or should they be limited to no-impact work?
- How many employees should be allowed for a home occupation?
- Should a special permit be required for a home occupation?
- Should shared parking lots between compatible uses be allowed?
- Should a greater range of commercial uses be allowed?
- Streamline the approval process for new businesses.
- Should ground-level residential uses be allowed in vacant commercial spaces?
- Should smaller retail spaces for businesses be allowed?
- Should light manufacturing be allowed in commercial areas (i.e. candle making, woodworking, printing, etc.)



Share your ideas!

Big Idea #6

Inclusionary Zoning

Some community districts permit only a single or limited number of uses or require buildings to be constructed in a specific way. This “excludes” individuals who cannot afford it, resulting in a lack of housing diversity and often adverse affects on home and rent prices. Residential districts permitting only large single-family homes is a common example.

What’s the idea?

Traditional zoning creates uniform, single-use neighborhoods which have very little diversity in housing or demographic makeup. This can reduce housing choice, make homes more expensive, and concentrates families that live in duplexes, condos, or apartments into smaller, limited areas.

When neighborhoods have more housing variety, residents can age in place and build stronger neighborhoods for every stage of life, from starter homes for young families, to larger homes for growing households, to smaller homes and senior housing for older adults who wish to remain in their community.

Things to consider:

- Should a greater mix of housing types be allowed?
- Should reduced parking requirements be considered?
- Consider allowing reduced side yard setbacks.
- Should increased building heights be allowed?
- Should the review process be simplified for new housing?
- What should the minimum size of an ADU be?
- What other requirements should be applied to ADUs?

Why might Kenosha want to do this?

- **More choices:** more options for housing.
- **More affordable:** makes housing cheaper to obtain.
- **Stronger neighborhoods:** promotes intergenerational neighborhoods, socio-economic integration, and economic resilience.
- **Aging in place:** Allows people to stay in their neighborhood as their family situation changes.
- **Walkability:** Providing greater variety of land uses in the



Think about your neighborhood



Where should these housing types be located?

Housing Type:	Existing Single Family Neighborhoods	Existing Mixed Density Residential Neighborhoods	Existing Multifamily Areas	Along Arterial or Collector Streets	In Proximity to Downtown
Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)					
Tiny homes (<900 sq-ft)					
Small-Medium Single Family Homes (900-3000 sq-ft)					
Very Large Single Family Homes (3,000+ sq-ft)					
Duplex or Triplex Homes					
Cottage Courts					
Townhomes					
Small-Medium Senior Housing (1-4 stories)					
Large Senior housing (5+ stories)					
Small-Medium Condos or Apartments (3-15 units)					
Large Condos or Apartments (16+ units)					

Big Idea #7

Redevelopment & Infill

Redevelopment and infill focus on reinvesting in existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and underutilized properties. By encouraging thoughtful growth in already-developed parts of the city, Kenosha can strengthen neighborhoods, support economic development, expand housing choices, and make better use of existing infrastructure.



What’s the idea?

Kenosha continues to evolve from its exclusively industrial past. As it changes, areas that were once industrial may be candidates for redevelopment. Examples of this redevelopment are both the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood and HarborPark. Updates to current zoning can help support walkable, resilient, complete neighborhoods.

Why might Kenosha want to do this?

- Revitalize underutilized properties
- Support investment in existing areas
- Make efficient use of existing infrastructure.
- Transform vacant or underused land into community assets
- Create walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods

What do you think?

What uses would you like to see in redevelopment or infill areas?



Place a Sticker on Your Choice:

Business/Use Type	Support
Condos or apartments above retail (Mixed-Use)	
Office Space	
Parks, Recreation or Open Space	
Urban Agriculture, Greenhouses, Community Gardens	
Small-scale Neighborhood Retail	
Large-scale retail (Big Box Stores)	
Medical Services	
Auto-oriented uses	
Senior Housing or Affordable Housing	
Single Family Homes	
Duplex/Triplex/Townhomes	
Multi-family Apartments	