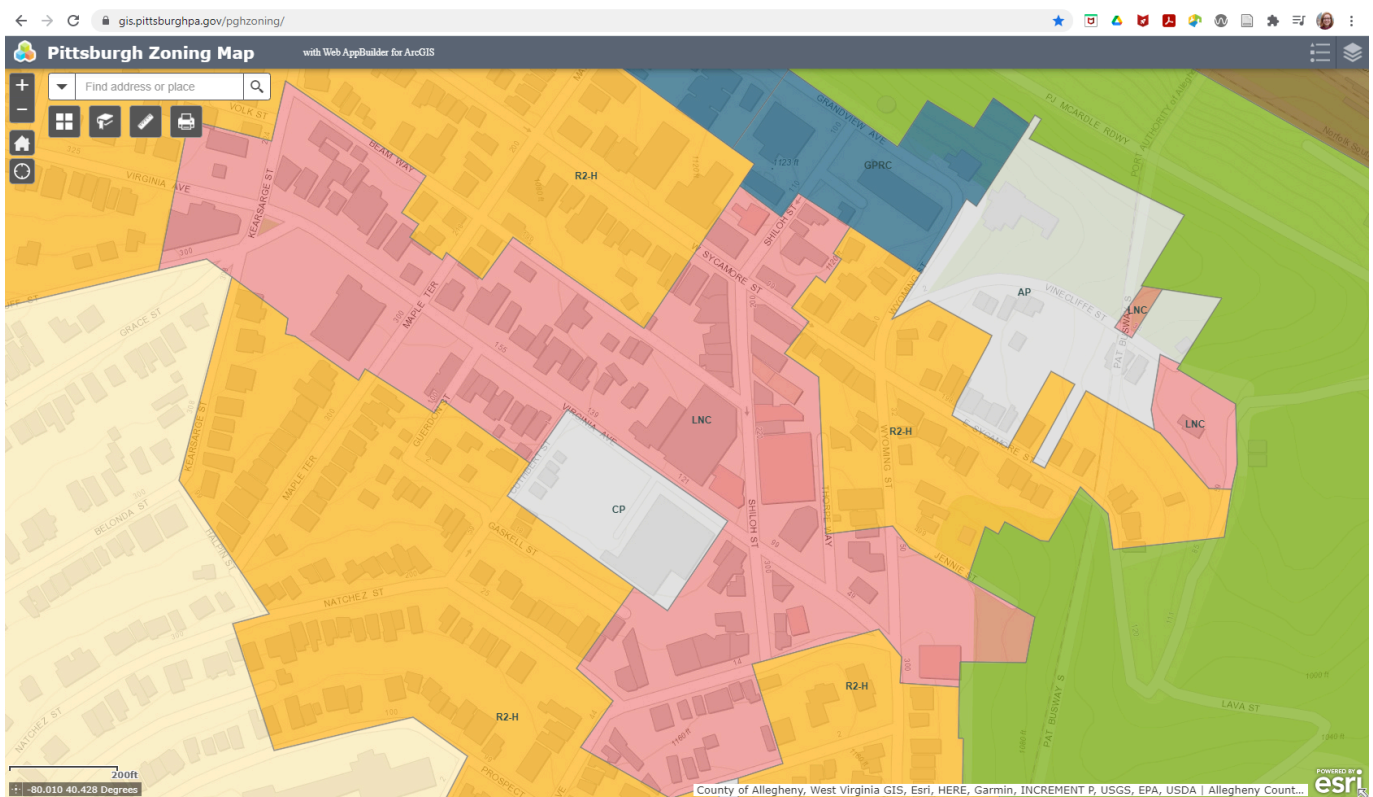




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Pittsburgh Zoning Districts - LNC Overview

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Introduction

Zoning districts are a fundamental building block of zoning regulations and set the base use, height, and density standards. In some cases, the district also sets the required level of zoning review. Just over 1.5 square miles (3%) of Pittsburgh falls into an LNC (Local Neighborhood Commercial) zoning district. In this post, we provide an overview of the challenges when

working on a site in the LNC zone. Additional posts will dive into the [uses](#) and [density](#) regulations for the LNC.

Refer to our [Introduction to Pittsburgh's Zoning Districts](#) for the complete list of base zoning districts in the city. Pittsburgh's [interactive zoning map](#) can be used to verify the project site's zoning district.

Challenges

Projects in mixed-use zoning districts tend to have more standards to follow and are often required to go through Site Plan Review. Site Plan Review is a longer, more thorough review than Basic Zoning Review (formerly known as over-the-counter), and often requires additional documentation. Due to the staff time involved, there is an additional cost for the review. In the LNC, Site Plan Review is required for:

- any new construction, addition, or exterior renovation on a property with a lot size of at least 2,400 sq ft (a common size)
- any parking lot with more than 10 spaces or over 2,500 sq ft
- any scope of work on most parcels adjacent to or within 100 feet of an R1D/A, R2, R3, RM, or H zoning district

One of the additional standards checked during Site Plan Review is Residential Compatibility. Residential Compatibility applies when a parcel is adjacent to or within 100 feet of an R1D/A, R2, R3, RM, or H zoning district. Due to the size and location of the LNC district (it often covers half a block on either side of a neighborhood main street), most property in the district falls into this range. The Residential Compatibility Standards ([Chapter 916](#)) may add setbacks, height limits, and screening requirements above and beyond the base requirements. They may also impose limits on operating hours, lighting, noise, and odor. The zoning code acknowledges that this often creates a hardship. As a result, the code has standards to waive some or all of the Residential Compatibility Standards through a Special Exception at the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

The 2:1 floor area ratio maximum in the LNC limits the permissible density to the point that either the 90% lot coverage or the 3-story height limit can be maxed, but not both. At the

same time, density is encouraged through prohibiting two of the three urban agriculture uses defined in the zoning code.

Some sites experience a parking challenge when changing use. The first parking space provided for a commercial use must be a van accessible space with an 8 ft wide access aisle. While some sites may have a small yard behind the existing building, it is often not large enough to accommodate this requirement. Waiving the accessible parking standard requires State approval before the Zoning Board can review the variance request, which adds time to the project review.

Conclusion

The zoning district sets the base use, height, and density standards for any project and may also designate the level of review required. The LNC seems to seek a compromise to create a dense, but not too dense, built environment. Projects needing zoning review in the Local Neighborhood Commercial zoning district will likely require the longer and more expensive Site Plan Review process and be subject to Residential Compatibility Standards.

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< **Pittsburgh Zoning Districts - LNC Uses**

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