

Custom Zoning in Denver

It is Denver Community Planning and Development's policy to attempt to identify a standard zone district for all proposed map amendments. However, the Denver Zoning Code acknowledges that customized zoning is appropriate in some situations. The three main customized zoning tools are:

Planned Unit Development (PUD) (see Division 9.6 of the Denver Zoning Code)

Definition and Intent:

- Stand-alone zone district that provides an alternative to standard zone districts. PUD districts are based on a standard zone district, but tailor standards – such as building form, parking, or site design – to a particular site.
- Intended to respond to unique and extraordinary circumstances and to be used where more flexible zoning than what is achievable through a standard zone district is desirable.
- Created through official map amendment process.

When to use: Generally used for specific sites with unique or extraordinary circumstances, rather than large geographic areas with more than one owner.

Overlays - Design and Conservation (see Division 9.4 of the Denver Zoning Code)

Definition and Intent:

- Provide supplementary regulations that modify a standard underlying zone district(s). The overlay district is not a stand-alone district – it “overlays” the underlying zoning of a property.
- Intended for special and unique cases to supplement a standard zone district with additional use or design limits, allowances and/or prohibitions.
 - Design overlays are intended to create uniform design standards for corridors, neighborhoods, or newly developing areas.
 - Conservation overlays are intended to revitalize and conserve areas that have distinctive features, identity, or character worthy of retention or enhancement.
- Created through a text amendment to establish the standards, as well as an official map amendment.

When to use: Generally used for larger geographic areas with multiple owners, such as a river corridor or neighborhood, or for newly developing areas. Conservation overlays are specifically for geographic areas where there are distinctive features, identity, or character worthy of retention and enhancement.

Waivers and Conditions (see Section 12.4.10.6 of the Denver Zoning Code)

Definition and Intent:

- **Waivers:** As part of an official map amendment, an applicant may waive certain rights or obligations under the proposed zone. Waivers are for waiving of any right or obligation that is directly part of the zoning code.
- **Conditions:** The Denver Zoning Code also allows for the attachment of reasonable conditions to an official map amendment. Conditions are for items that are not standards in the zoning code.

When to use: It is CPD policy to use waivers in situations where the waiver(s) helps to solve an issue that CPD is committed to resolve through a future text amendment. It is CPD policy to avoid the use of conditions.