

PLAN SLATE BELT



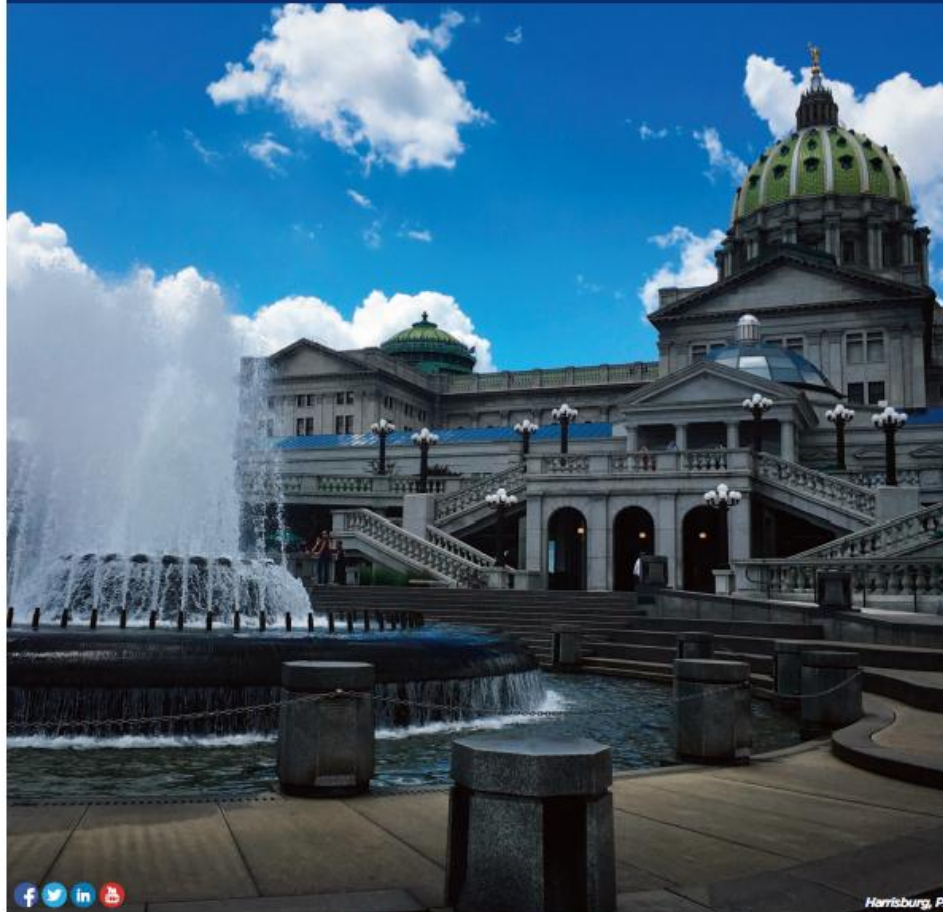
Zoning Basics
Emerging Uses
April/May Work Sessions

February 5, 2026



PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPALITIES PLANNING CODE

Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247 as reenacted and amended.
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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
PA Department of Community & Economic Development | dced.pa.gov



ZONING PURPOSE

Section 604. Zoning Purposes. The provisions of zoning ordinances shall be designed:

- (1) To promote, protect and facilitate any or all of the following: the public health, safety, morals, and the general welfare; coordinated and practical community development and proper density of population; emergency management preparedness and operations, airports, and national defense facilities, the provisions of adequate light and air, access to incident solar energy, police protection, vehicle parking and loading space, transportation, water, sewerage, schools, recreational facilities, public grounds, the provision of a safe, reliable and adequate water supply for domestic, commercial, agricultural or industrial use, and other public requirements; as well as preservation of the natural, scenic and historic values in the environment and preservation of forests, wetlands, aquifers and floodplains.
- (2) To prevent one or more of the following: overcrowding of land, blight, danger and congestion in travel and transportation, loss of health, life or property from fire, flood, panic or other dangers.
- (3) To preserve prime agriculture and farmland considering topography, soil type and classification, and present use.

ZONING PURPOSE

Section 604. Zoning Purposes. The provisions of zoning ordinances shall be designed:

(4) To provide for the use of land within the municipality for residential housing of various dwelling types encompassing all basic forms of housing, including single-family and two-family dwellings, and a reasonable range of multifamily dwellings in various arrangements, mobile homes and mobile home parks, provided, however, that no zoning ordinance shall be deemed invalid for the failure to provide for any other specific dwelling type.

(5) To accommodate reasonable overall community growth, including population and employment growth, and opportunities for development of a variety of residential dwelling types and nonresidential uses.

ZONING OFFICER

Section 614. Appointment and Powers of Zoning Officer.

For the administration of a zoning ordinance, a zoning officer, who shall not hold any elective office in the municipality, shall be appointed. The zoning officer shall meet qualifications established by the municipality and shall be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the municipality a working knowledge of municipal zoning. The zoning officer shall administer the zoning ordinance in accordance with its literal terms and shall not have the power to permit any construction or any use or change of use which does not conform to the zoning ordinance. Zoning officers may be authorized to institute civil enforcement proceedings as a means of enforcement when acting within the scope of their employment.

PERMITTED USES

ZONING OFFICER APPROVES

E. Lot Area, Building Coverage, and Height Regulations

Each of the following dimensional requirements shall apply to each use in the Density Residential District, except as specifically provide for in this Ordinance

Principal Use	Minimum Lot Area* (sq. ft.)	Minimum Lot Width** (feet)	Maximum Land Coverage (%)		Maximum Structure Height (feet)
			5	10	
Agriculture	217,800	400	5	10	70
Single Family Detached Dwelling with On-Lot Sewer & On-Lot Water	43,560	130	20	30	35
with On-Lot Sewer & Centralized Water	35,000	120	25	35	35
with Centralized Sewer & Centralized Water	22,000	100	30	40	35
Two Family Dwelling with On-Lot Sewer & On-Lot Water	39,204	120	25	35	35
with On-Lot Sewer & Centralized Water	31,500	100	25	35	35
with Centralized Sewer & Centralized Water	19,800	90	30	40	35
Any Other Use	43,560	130	20	30	35

* Per dwelling unit for single family detached and two family dwellings or average area per each low-rise multiple family unit.

**Measured at the building setback line or in accordance with Section 4.4 B.

3.7 LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R-1)

A. Purpose

The purposes of the Low Density Residential District are to provide areas to meet the needs of the present and expected future residents in a variety of housing types, to protect residential neighborhoods from negative impacts of incompatible land uses, and to protect residents' privacy, access to air and solar energy, and investments of money, time and pride in their community.

B. Uses Permitted by Right

Each of the following principal uses and their accessory uses are permitted by right in the Low Density Residential District by the Zoning Officer, provided that the use type, dimensional, and all other applicable requirements of this Ordinance are satisfied:

1. Agriculture
2. Mobile Home on Permanent Foundation**
3. Park
4. Single Family Detached Dwelling

F. Minimum Yard Requirements

Principal Use	Front Yard (feet)	Side Yard		Rear Yard (feet)
		One (feet)	Both (feet)	
Any Use with On-Lot Sewer & On-Lot Water	40	20*	50	60
with On-Lot Sewer & Centralized Water	40	15*	40	60
with Centralized Sewer & Centralized Water	30	10*	30	30

SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS VARIANCES CONDITIONAL USES

Section 603. Ordinance Provisions.

(c) Zoning ordinances may contain:

(1) provisions for special exceptions and variances administered by the **zoning hearing board**.

(2) provisions for conditional uses to be allowed or denied by the **governing body after recommendations by the planning agency** and hearing, pursuant to express standards and criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance. In allowing a conditional use, the governing body may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance

Example

3.8 MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (R-2)

Ordinance 284 As Amended July 2014

A. Purpose

The purposes of the Medium Density Residential District are the location of convenience commercial and service uses and farming areas.

B. Uses Permitted by Right

Each of the following principal uses and their accessory use in the Medium Density Residential District by the Zoning Ordinance, dimensional, and all other applicable requirements are satisfied:

1. Agriculture
2. Mobile Home on Permanent Foundation**
3. Park
4. Single Family Detached Dwelling
5. Swimming Club*,**
6. Townhouse
7. Two Family Dwelling

* See Section 3.12 for additional requirements.

** Site Plan Review required (see Section 4.8).

C. Special Exception Uses

Each of the following principal uses and their accessory uses in the Medium Density Residential District by the Zoning Ordinance are subject to the standards contained in Section 3.13 of this Ordinance:

1. Cemetery
2. Church
3. Fire Station
4. Garden Apartment
5. Hospital
6. Library
7. Low Rise Apartment
8. Membership Club
9. Mobile Home Park
10. Public Utility Building, Substation
11. School
12. Tennis Club

D. Accessory Uses

1. Each accessory use in the Medium Density Residential District shall meet the minimum yard requirements of Section 3.8 F., except as provided in this Ordinance.

SPECIAL EXCEPTION

ZONING HEARING BOARD APPROVES

This is an optional use type

Section 912.1. Zoning Hearing Board's Functions; Special Exception.

Where the governing body, in the zoning ordinance, has stated special exceptions to be granted or denied by the board pursuant to express standards and criteria, the board shall hear and decide requests for such special exceptions in accordance with such standards and criteria. In granting a special exception, the board may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act and the zoning ordinance.



SPECIAL EXCEPTION STANDARDS

Example

§ 800.10. Standards for reviews.

In any instance where the Zoning Hearing Board is required to consider an exception or variance in this Ordinance or the Zoning Map in accordance with the provisions of this Ordinance, the Board shall, among other things:

Determine that the proposed change will not substantially injure or detract from the use of neighboring property or from the general character of the neighborhood and that the use of the property adjacent to the area included in the proposed change or plan is adequately safeguarded.

Consider the effect of the proposed changes upon the logical, efficient and economical extension of public services and facilities, such as public water, sewers, police and fire protection and public...

Safeguard the development of street frontage insofar as possible to limit the total number of access points with respect to its probable effects upon street traffic to avoid traffic congestion and danger to pedestrian traffic, including children going to and from the schools.

Impose such conditions, in addition to those required, as are necessary to assure that the general purpose and intent of this Ordinance are complied with...



CONDITIONAL USE

GOVERNING BODY APPROVES

This is an optional use type

Section 913.2. Governing Body's Functions; Conditional Uses.

(a) Where the governing body, in the zoning ordinances, has stated conditional uses to be granted or denied by the governing body pursuant to express standards and criteria, the governing body shall hold hearings on and decide requests for such conditional uses in accordance with such standards and criteria. In granting a conditional use, the governing body may attach such reasonable conditions and safeguards, in addition to those expressed in the ordinance, as it may deem necessary to implement the purposes of this act in the zoning ordinance.



VARIANCES

ZONING HEARING BOARD APPROVES

Section 910.2. Zoning Hearing Board's Functions; Variances.

(a) The board shall hear requests for variances where it is alleged that the provisions of the zoning ordinance inflict unnecessary hardship upon the applicant. The board may grant a variance, provided that **all of the following findings are made** where relevant in a given case:

(1) That there are unique physical circumstances or conditions, including irregularity, narrowness, or shallowness of lot size or shape, or exceptional topographical or other physical conditions peculiar to the particular property and that the unnecessary hardship is due to such conditions...

(2) That because of such physical circumstances or conditions, there is no possibility that the property can be developed in strict conformity with the provisions of the zoning ordinance and that the authorization of a variance is therefore necessary to enable the reasonable use of the property.

(3) That such unnecessary hardship has not been created by the appellant.

(4) That the variance, if authorized, will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood or district in which the property is located, nor substantially or permanently impair the appropriate use or development of adjacent property, nor be detrimental to the public welfare.

(5) That the variance, if authorized, will represent the minimum variance that will afford relief and will represent the least modification possible of the regulation in issue.



PA MPC MANDATES

(f) **Forestry activities** shall be a permitted use by right in all zoning districts in every municipality.

“Forestry,” the management of forests and timberlands when practiced in accordance with accepted silvicultural principles, through developing, cultivating, harvesting, transporting and selling trees for commercial purposes, which does not involve any land development.

(l) Zoning ordinances shall permit no-impact home-based businesses in all residential zones of the municipality as a use permitted by right.

“No-impact home-based business,” a business or commercial activity administered or conducted as an accessory use which is clearly secondary to the use as a residential dwelling and which involves no customer, client or patient traffic, whether vehicular or pedestrian, pickup, delivery or removal functions to or from the premises, in excess of those normally associated with residential use. The business or commercial activity must satisfy the following requirements:

- (1) The business activity shall be compatible with the residential use of the property and surrounding residential uses.
- (2) The business shall employ no employees other than family members residing in the dwelling.....



STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC USES

SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS

Example

507.8 Bed and Breakfast Establishments

Bed and breakfast establishments shall comply with the following standards in addition to all other applicable standards in this Zoning Ordinance.

- A. Parking - Adequate off-street parking is provided in accord with this Ordinance with the minimum number of parking spaces provided as follows: one (1) space for each rentable room; one (1) space for each non-resident employee, and two (2) spaces for the dwelling unit.
- B. Number of Rooms - Not more than five (5) rentable rooms are provided in the establishment.
- C. Owner/Manager - The owner or manager of the bed and breakfast must reside on the premises.
- D. Lot Size - Bed and breakfast establishments shall not be permitted on lots which are nonconforming in minimum area.



STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC USES

SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS

Example

6. Bed and Breakfast, Country Inn, Rooming and Boarding Houses

Ord 199 June 1998

- a. Except for a sign, there shall be no external evidence of any commercial activity.
- b. Any such use shall have sufficient parking as set forth in Article 7 to serve the anticipated number of users and employees and shall have suitable street access.
- c. All newly constructed bed and breakfast buildings shall have minimum front, side and rear yards of fifty (50') feet, a maximum building height of thirty-five (35') feet, and a maximum lot coverage of thirty (30%) percent. A minimum lot area per rooming or boarding (R&B) or Bed and Breakfast (B&B) rooms of 1500 square feet with centralized sewer and water service, 2500 square feet per R&B or B&B units with only centralized sewer service, and 3600 square feet per R&B or B&B units with on-lot sewer and on-lot water facilities is required.
- d. All new and existing buildings proposed for B&B or R&B uses shall have a minimum total lot area for these accessory uses shall be contingent on the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer's findings that the sewage disposal system can handle the expected flows and that the minimum spacing, isolation distance setbacks and other requirements can be met.
- e. All Bed and Breakfast rooms available for rent to the public shall be provided with a minimum of one full bathroom for at least every two B&B rooms.
- f. Property containing a Country Inn shall be a minimum of ten (10) acres in area.
- g. All such buildings shall have an interconnected fire and smoke alarm system and they shall be approved by the appropriate State and or Federal agency and they shall have sewer and water systems approved by the appropriate Sewage Enforcement Officer. Copies of all required structural and or operating permits or licenses shall be provided to the Township.



ALL LAND USES / SHARED USES

Municipalities must provide for all land uses; however, municipalities with a multimunicipal comprehensive plan can share land uses.

Section 1103. Finances, Staff and Program. County or Multimunicipal Comprehensive Plans.

(a) The comprehensive plan that is the subject of an agreement may be developed by the municipalities or at the request of the municipalities, by the county planning agency, or agencies in the case of a plan covering municipalities in more than one county, in cooperation with municipalities within the area and shall include all the elements required or authorized in section 301 for the region of the plan, including a plan to meet the housing needs of present residents and those individuals and families anticipated to reside in the area of the plan, which may include conservation of presently sound housing, rehabilitation of housing in declining neighborhoods and the accommodations of expected new housing in different dwelling types and of appropriate densities for households of all income levels. The plan may:

(4) Plan for the accommodation of all categories of uses within the area of the plan, provided, however, that **all uses need not be provided in every municipality**, but shall be planned and provided for within a reasonable geographic area of the plan.



ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)

Detached	Attached	Interior	Garage Apartment	Above Garage
				
free-standing structure	shares at least one wall with the primary home	built from existing or converted space (i.e. attic or basement)	converted former garage space	unit built above garage

Courtesy of El Dorado County, CA



SHORT-TERM RENTALS



RESTAURANT / CORNER STORE / BARBERSHOP IN NEIGHBORHOODS



LIVE / WORK UNITS



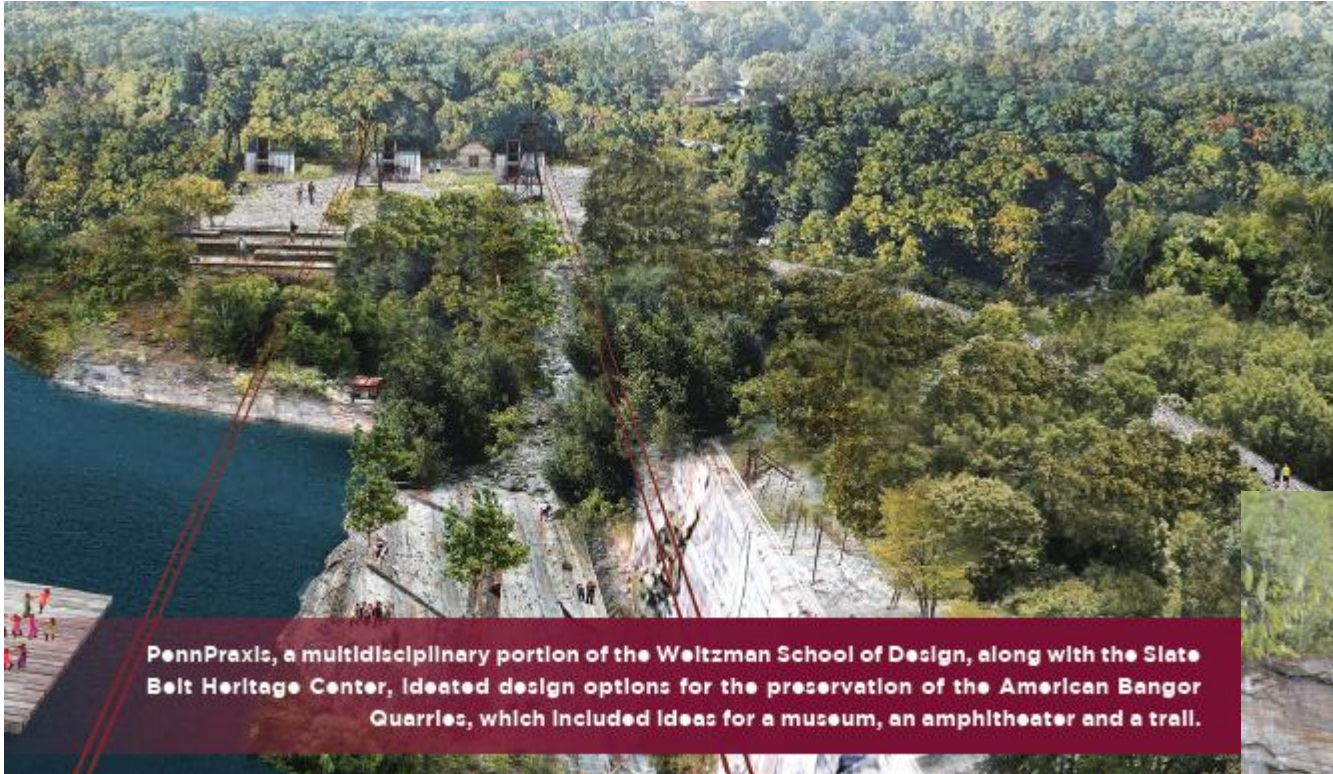
ADAPTIVE REUSE

SMALL-SCALE MANUFACTURING / ARTISAN SPACE

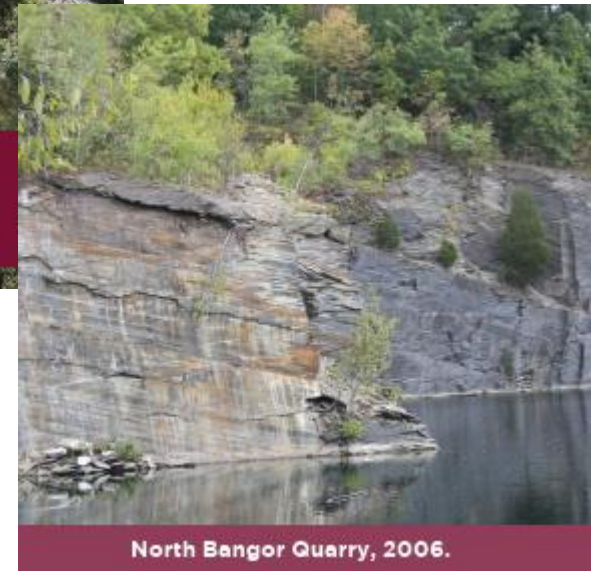
CO-WORKING SPACE



RECLAIMED SITES



PennPraxis, a multidisciplinary portion of the Weitzman School of Design, along with the Slate Belt Heritage Center, ideated design options for the preservation of the American Bangor Quarries, which included ideas for a museum, an amphitheater and a trail.



North Bangor Quarry, 2006.



DATA CENTERS POWER GENERATION ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE



EV CHARGING STATIONS



PLAN SLATE BELT



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