Clearzoning transforms zoning codes

- It reorganizes codes into 7 basic articles, adds graphics, hyperlinks sections, and more
- Clearzoning maintains the regulatory effect of your existing zoning code language
- The end result is a user-friendly document that is easy to navigate and easier to understand
- It improves customer service and can be part of an economic development strategy

It’s Your Code, Only Better™

The Clearzoning format, including use of the 7 key articles, side tabs, bottom buttons, unique graphics, color-coded use matrix, and two-page zoning district spread are protected and registered with the United States Copyright Office. Certain terms and graphics are also the subject of marks that are registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.
A New Way to Improve Service to the Public

*It’s Your Zoning Code, Only Better™*

Zoning codes are not known for being user-friendly; in fact, to many people, they are the exact opposite. Often disorganized, hard to understand, and simply overwhelming, the Zoning Code is often a barrier to a community’s ability to provide efficient customer service. After over eighty years of zoning, isn’t it time someone came up with a new approach that would make it easier to find and understand zoning regulations?

Clearzoning partners with municipalities to transform conventional zoning codes into easy-to-read, better organized, digital documents that revolutionize the way local codes function. Plain text and black and white graphics are reborn as colorful illustrations. Words and phrases become searchable, sections are hyper-linked, and regulations are easier to understand. It can also save staff time at the counter, and it will be easier for officials and citizens to use on a daily basis. Clearzoning will also guide the development community in a more effective way, making a zoning code available around the clock and around the world.

Clearzoning is clear and connected. Call us at 1-866-271-ZONE.
Zoning codes are detailed and complex documents that can often confuse even experienced planners. Imagine how confusing and intimidating they can be to the first-time applicant or the homeowners attempting to determine what is permitted on their property.

Many communities have strived over the years to update zoning language to reflect master plan goals, legislative updates, current local and national trends, innovative development techniques, and case law, but the structure and presentation of zoning codes has not fundamentally changed. Even some communities adopting form-based codes have maintained the historical structure of the old ordinance.

Advances in technology and widespread accessibility of the Internet call for a change in the traditional text-based zoning ordinance format of yesterday. Improvements to the organization and visual presentation of ordinances can make them more user-friendly as well as foster economic development. It’s time for planners to take a fresh look at zoning codes and employ techniques to improve their functionality and clarity.

**Organizational Structure.** Traditional zoning codes are often divided into twenty or more articles, with each article further divided into divisions and sections. Users often find themselves lost in the maze of sections and subsections. Simplifying the organizational structure by logically grouping sections into fewer articles can result in an ordinance that is more intuitive and easier to navigate. Establishing a clear hierarchy of headings and subheadings enables users to more quickly identify their location within the document.

**Visual Presentation.** High quality, color illustrations can visually portray ordinance standards and present regulations in a simple and straightforward manner. When adding color to graphics, it’s important to choose a palette that will make sense to the reader and improve legibility. It’s also important to choose colors that will maintain sufficient contrast when photocopied in black and white.

**User Tools.** Every community’s ordinance is different. By adding basic features, such as a user’s guide, use matrix, and flowcharts, a community can create an ordinance that is friendly to both the most experienced professional and the first-time applicant.
Save Paper

Creating a user-friendly digital product that can be accessed online and made available on CD can reduce the overall need and demand for hardcopies.

Changing the organizational structure of a zoning ordinance can reduce its bulk by 25 to 45 percent. This is a significant reduction in the number of pages printed per copy.

**Internet and Computer Interface.** Many communities have successfully increased public access to their codes by making them available on the Internet, however, most are nothing more than digital versions of ordinances that were originally designed to be printed documents. Technology and the Internet have drastically changed the way our society interacts, but the manner in which we present and communicate our zoning codes has not kept pace. Zoning ordinances of today can be designed to be primarily digital products rather than paper documents. Multiple navigation tools, such as links, bookmarks, and buttons, can be incorporated to allow users to quickly “click” through the ordinance. A well-designed digital ordinance may reduce the demand for hardcopies, however, it will not likely eliminate the need altogether. Don’t forget to consider how effective the ordinance will be in printed format.

**Relationship to Other Development Codes.** Zoning ordinances do not typically contain all of a community’s regulations that pertain to land use and development. Zoning codes should clearly cross-reference and link to other applicable codes, such as subdivision regulations, tree protection ordinances, private road standards, etc.

**User Tools**

Ordinances that are easy to use, easy to read, and easy to understand are friendly to both the most experienced professional and the first-time applicant.

A user’s guide can provide a quick overview of document layout and important features, as well as tips on how to effectively use the ordinance. Tools such as use matrices and flowcharts can help translate detailed ordinance language into a clear and easy to understand format.

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Clearzoning has been shown to be a health check-up for zoning codes. Our process seeks out and resolves inconsistent regulations and incorrect cross-references.