

QUALITY OF LIFE ZONING CODE

Atlanta, Georgia



While with the City of Atlanta, TSW's Caleb Racicot prepared the City of Atlanta **Quality of Life Zoning Code**. This parallel code is a comprehensive update of the City's zoning ordinance which provides an alternative to conventional, outdated zoning districts. The code is the product of hundreds of meeting with neighborhoods, business, and those unsatisfied the conventional zoning code.

Under the conventional code many of the city's cherished neighborhoods could not be built today. The new code responds to a desire to provide zoning districts which allow developers to build pedestrian oriented, traditional buildings without being forced to go through a costly and time-consuming variance process. The **Quality of Life Zoning Code** includes several new zoning districts: **Neighborhood Commercial, Residential-Commercial Mix, Live-Work, Multifamily-Residential**, and several transit-oriented and mixed-use Special **Public Interest Districts**.

Regardless of the district, all **Quality of Life Zoning Code** districts share basic urban design principles. These include requirements for wide sidewalks with street trees, sidewalk-oriented buildings, unobtrusive parking, and a respect for the street, among other things. All districts require parking to be behind or beside buildings, articulation of ground floor facades, entrances directly accessible from the sidewalk, and a limited number of permitted driveways.

Mixed-use districts are an integral part of the code. The **Neighborhood Commercial** district provides neighborhoods with close-at-hand goods and services, including neighborhood-scale retail, offices, and multifamily housing options. These districts generally serve no more than one or two neighborhoods. Similarly, the **Residential-Commercial Mix** districts provides commercial and multifamily uses that serve several neighborhoods. This district includes three different density levels which correspond to varying needs across the City. **Special Public Interest (SPI) Districts** provide the highest density mixed-use areas, and are generally located around MARTA Rail Stations and in traditional business centers. These include the **Midtown** and **Lindbergh** SPI districts.

Primarily residential districts provide opportunities for higher-density residential, while allowing limited commercial uses. The **Live-Work** district provides residents with opportunities to operate small shops and galleries out of townhomes, lofts and apartments buildings, while still maintaining a residential character. Location controls and size limits ensure this.

The **Multifamily-Residential** allows for several density levels of multifamily housing, ranging from single-family townhouses to high-rise apartment towers. Small commercial uses are permitted on the ground floor of these buildings, as appropriate for the scale and character of nearby neighborhoods.

