



# INTRODUCTION

## Columbus Citywide Planning Policies

**FIRST EDITION**

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# Introduction

Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2) will help guide the next generation of development in the city of Columbus. As Central Ohio is projected to grow by up to 1 million people by 2050 (source: insight2050), Columbus Citywide Planning Policies are designed to guide and focus our share of this growth in a manner that supports the city's economic competitiveness, benefits the environment, and improves resident's quality of life. The C2P2 Guiding Principles (Healthy and Complete Communities, Guided Growth and Sustainable Development, and Design and Character) serve as a basis for key development strategies implemented through the use of C2P2 Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines.

**Healthy cities anticipate and prepare for change. They are connected, inclusive, and diverse. For Columbus this will mean embracing and guiding growth, encouraging reinvestment, and enhancing established neighborhoods. These goals speak to the way land is used, the form development takes, and how we get around.**

**What is Connectivity?**

Connectivity is a term used to describe sidewalk and street networks that are continuous between developments (new and old). Urban areas typically have a high level of connectivity due to the grid street pattern. In Suburban areas, connectivity can be lost when areas have issues such as dead-end streets or incomplete sidewalks. Connectivity is a benefit to the community as it supports walking and biking and improves access to transportation.

**What is a Recommended Land Use (RLU) Map?**

The RLU map provides a land use recommendation for each piece of property within a plan area boundary. The recommendations correspond with C2P2 Land Use Policies and Area Specific Policies in the Land Use Plan. The map is a primary element of the Land Use Plan.

# About C2P2

Columbus Citywide Planning Policies serve as the basis for land use planning within the city of Columbus and specifically address land use and design in development review. The goal is to adopt C2P2 in every area of the city in order to establish consistent, predictable policies citywide that are updated regularly. C2P2 includes four primary elements: Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and Land Use Plans. Together, the four elements are used to guide community and city review of rezoning and variance applications. Table 1.1 (below) provides a description of each element.

Table 1.1: Four primary elements of Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2)

C2P2 Element	Description	Application
Guiding Principles	“Big picture” ideas that express how the city should develop and serve as the foundation for the Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines.	Citywide
Design Guidelines	Recommendations for the placement and design of development (what development should “look” like), including topics such as <b>connectivity</b> , setbacks, parking, open space, and natural resources.	Citywide
Land Use Policies	Detailed policies (text) designed to be used with the <b>Recommended Land Use Map</b> in an area’s Land Use Plan. These policies provide flexible guidance on key land use issues and scenarios.	Citywide
Land Use Plan(s)	Developed for each area individually. It includes a Recommended Land Use Map and Area Specific Policies, and provides recommendations to address special circumstances in each area.	Area Specific



**insight2050**

insight2050 is a collaborative project led by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and its partners at the Columbus District of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Columbus) and Columbus 2020. The project was designed to help communities in Central Ohio plan for development and population growth over the next 30+ years.

insight2050 also modeled four growth scenarios to illustrate how Central Ohio might choose to accommodate the projected population growth. The comparison of the four scenarios shows that focusing growth in infill and redevelopment locations in and around cities provides a significant fiscal savings, reduces the amount of miles driven in vehicles, reduces public health costs, and conserves both energy and water consumption. (Source: MORPC, [www.getinsight2050.org](http://www.getinsight2050.org))

**COLUMBUS CITYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES ARE:**

- **Adopted city policy.**
- **Used to guide community and city review of future rezoning and variance requests.**
- **NOT...**City code or law, and do not change existing zoning or zoning overlays already in place.
- **NOT...**used to address operational issues or issues unrelated to the built and natural environment, such as healthcare, code enforcement, and public safety. These items are outside the scope of the planning process.
- **NOT...**used to directly plan for traffic, congestion, or stormwater issues. (Instead, these matters are addressed as part of the development review process managed by the Department of Building and Zoning Services.)

**BENEFITS OF C2P2**

C2P2 will:

- Provide consistent, predictable, and up-to-date citywide policies.
- Institute best practices developed by the City of Columbus over 20+ years.
- Provide a clear response to **insight2050** and projected growth patterns for Central Ohio.
- Offer a consistent neighborhood planning process.
- Result in clear, predictable, and consistent responses to development proposals.
- Support housing and job options for a growing and diverse population.
- Encourage development patterns that support transportation options.
- Serve as a basis to consider code updates to facilitate community development.
- Provide for regular updates to ensure planning policies are current citywide.

**C2P2 AND THE COMMUNITY**

Adoption of C2P2 in each area of Columbus provides communities with the most up-to-date, best practices for land use and design. Unlike a static plan, updates to the Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines and Land Use Policies (when adopted by City Council) will apply automatically to every area where C2P2 has been previously adopted.

Community engagement is a key component of C2P2 and input will be sought at both a citywide and neighborhood level based on the type of update proposed. Updates to the Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines and Land Use Policies will include engagement at a

**What are Area Specific Policies?**

Each community has distinct land use situations in which more unique, specific land use guidance may be appropriate. In these cases, Area Specific Policies (ASP) are developed to respond to the unique attributes of individual areas. Area Specific Policies are included in area Land Use Plans.

**What is a Recommended Land Use (RLU) Map?**

The RLU map provides a land use recommendation for each piece of property within a plan area boundary. The recommendations correspond with C2P2 Land Use Policies and Area Specific Policies in the Land Use Plan. The map is a primary element of the Land Use Plan.

citywide level, while Land Use Plans will be developed by city staff in partnership with area leadership and the community. Land Use Plans are area specific and include a Recommended Land Use Map and Area Specific Policies (See Table 1.2).

**GOING FORWARD: C2P2 TIMELINE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

C2P2 may be adopted in areas through a two-step process. Step 1, early adoption, provides neighborhoods the opportunity to benefit from C2P2 Design Guidelines earlier than their scheduled Land Use Plan update. Step 2 is complete adoption of C2P2, including updated Land Use Plans, by area. In Step 2, the City will work directly with each area to develop Land Use Plans, including a Recommended Land Use Map and Area Specific Policies (see Table 1.2).

Implementation of C2P2 as citywide policy will occur over several years, and three phases of public engagement are currently planned (see Table 1.3). Phase I (2018) includes educating the community on C2P2 and providing areas the opportunity for early adoption of C2P2 Design Guidelines. Phase II (2019) includes citywide public engagement on C2P2 Land Use Policies and Design Guidelines and will result in the first citywide update to C2P2. Phase III (2020) includes area focused public engagement and complete adoption of C2P2, including Land Use Plans, by area.

Table 1.2: Adoption steps and public engagement type for each element of C2P2

Adoption Stage	C2P2 Element	Engagement/ Application	Description
Step 1: Early Adoption	Guiding Principles	Citywide	The foundation for the guidelines, policies and plans.
	Early Adoption	Citywide	Design recommendations for proposed development.
Step 2: Complete Adoption	Land Use Policies	Citywide	Policy text used with Land Use Plans to provide guidance on land use.
	Land Use Plan	Area Specific	Recommended Land Use Map and Area Specific Policies.

Table 1.3: Phases of public engagement for C2P2

Phase	Year	Engagement	Goals
Phase I	2018	Educate community on C2P2 policies and timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 1: Early Adoption by area</li> <li>Establish C2P2 as a citywide basis for land use planning</li> </ul>
Phase II	2019	Engage stakeholders citywide on land use policies and design guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First update to C2P2 Design Guidelines and Land Use Policies</li> </ul>
Phase III	2020 (ongoing)	Engage stakeholders by area to develop Land Use Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Step 2: Complete adoption of C2P2 by area, including Land Use Plans</li> </ul>



## USING COLUMBUS CITYWIDE PLANNING POLICIES: BASIC STEPS

Follow five basic steps to review development proposals using the Columbus Citywide Planning Policies:

### Begin with an area's C2P2 Land Use Plan (Step 1-3)\*:

*\*When C2P2 Design Guidelines have been adopted for an area (early adoption), but a C2P2 Land Use Plan is not in place, proceed to Step 5. In this case, development proposals will be reviewed for consistency with C2P2 Design Guidelines and an area's previously adopted Area or Neighborhood Plan. If there is a conflict between an existing plan's recommendation and C2P2 Design Guidelines, the more current policies will be used.*

**Step 1:** Identify the location of the development on the Recommended Land Use Map located within the C2P2 Land Use Plan. Refer to the map legend to determine the recommended land use for the site location. Online mapping applications are also available at: [www.columbus.gov/planning](http://www.columbus.gov/planning)

**Step 2:** Refer to the Land Use Classification Table for a general description of the land use recommendation for the site.

**Step 3:** Review the Area Specific Policies located within the C2P2 Land Use Plan to determine if any apply to the site.

### Then proceed to C2P2 Land Use Policies (Step 4):

**Step 4:** Review the C2P2 Land Use Policies (pages 36-49) that corresponds with the land use recommendation for more specific policy information.

### Then proceed to C2P2 Design Guidelines (Step 5):

**Step 5:** Refer to any relevant C2P2 Design Guidelines (pages 20-35) for the proposed development.



## Background

### 1993 COLUMBUS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In 1993, Columbus City Council adopted the City's first Comprehensive Plan in over 80 years. The effort was, in part, a response to development pressures and service challenges that had emerged during the prior decade. The plan established a framework for addressing planning and development, capital improvements, and community facility issues on a citywide basis.

Implementation of the plan led to a number of key initiatives that remain in place today, including:

- Requirements for sidewalks, street trees, and street lights
- Parkland Dedication Ordinance
- Traffic Standards Code
- Traditional Neighborhood Development Code
- Increased emphasis on riparian corridors
- Environmental Conservation District - 1st City policy to protect the Darby

### AREA PLANNING PRIOR TO C2P2

After the 1993 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the city focused on smaller scale neighborhood and area plans to address land use, urban design, and related issues. Over the past 25 years, area planning has evolved to be better suited to supporting development review, which is the primary use of the plans. Area plans no longer address operational issues such as refuse collection, safety services, and code enforcement. While important to the community, these issues are difficult to implement through an area plan and are better addressed through specific initiatives. Area plan recommendations instead focus on land use and urban design as a way to directly impact development review in the city. Parcel level land use recommendations were also introduced through the use of geographic information systems (GIS).



Columbus currently has over 40 neighborhood and area plans, covering over 90% of the city's corporate boundary. The update schedule for area plans is influenced by a number of factors, including development activity, broader city priorities, and the age or relevance of the current document. However, due to the amount of time required to update each area plan, the City has been unable to keep all plans updated within the preferred 10-year timeframe. Outdated plans have resulted in a number of challenges for the city and community, including: significant differences between current and older plan policies, inconsistent policies for property owners and developers working on projects in multiple areas, planning area boundaries that are inconsistent with newly formed area commission boundaries, and an absence of a broader policy framework for citywide development issues.

## **C2P2: A RESPONSE TO AREA PLAN CHALLENGES**

The Columbus Citywide Planning Policies (C2P2) were created as a response to the challenges encountered through the past area planning process. C2P2 will provide communities with the most up-to-date, best practices for land use and design and will be updated regularly. As adopted citywide policy, updates to the C2P2 Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines and Land Use Policies will apply automatically to every area where C2P2 has been previously adopted. This method creates a consistent neighborhood planning process that allows all areas within the city to benefit from the most up-to-date policies for land use and design review.

C2P2 is based on best practices developed with community stakeholders over the past 20+ years of area planning. The document is a reflection of the city's most current area plan best practices, land use polices, and design guidelines. Implementing citywide policies allows for clear, predictable, and consistent responses to development proposals throughout the city and also directly responds to findings in insight2050, a public/private initiative in Central Ohio to plan for growth over the next 30+ years ([www.getinsight2050.org](http://www.getinsight2050.org)).

C2P2 includes Land Use Plans developed specifically for each area in Columbus. Land Use Plans (previously titled Neighborhood or Area Plans) are developed by city staff in partnership with community members to provide specific land use recommendations for an area. Land Use Plans focus on Area Specific Policies and a Recommended Land Use Map. Rezoning or variance applications are reviewed by city staff and the community for consistency with Columbus Citywide Planning Policies, including the Design Guidelines, Land Use Policies, and Land Use Plan. For more information, see *Using Columbus Citywide Planning Policies: Basic Steps* on page 11.



## **Additional Planning in Central Ohio**

Columbus Citywide Planning Policies address land use and design for development proposals within the city of Columbus. C2P2 is specific in subject matter in order to provide focused guidance for development review, and it is designed to complement other planning efforts related to city infrastructure, recreation and parks, transportation and more. Examples of additional planning efforts in the City of Columbus and Central Ohio include insight2050 (Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission), Connect Columbus (City of Columbus), NextGen (Central Ohio Transit Authority), and AgeFriendly Columbus (The Ohio State University College of Social Work).