

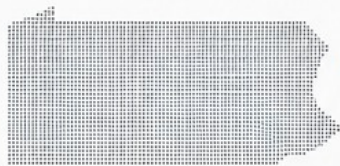
# ZONING & DEVELOPMENT IN PENNSYLVANIA

Understanding the "Single Source of Truth"

## 1 THE BIG IDEA

### THERE IS NO SINGLE STATEWIDE ZONING SYSTEM.

Pennsylvania land use is controlled primarily by local municipalities—boroughs, townships, and cities.



The legal framework comes from the **Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (MPC)**

But the actual authority comes from:

- ✓ Local zoning ordinances
- ✓ Local zoning maps
- ✓ Local subdivision & land development ordinances



Every municipality is different.

## 2 THE HIERARCHY OF AUTHORITY



### 1. MUNICIPAL ZONING ORDINANCE

*The Legal Rulebook*

- Permitted uses
- Building setbacks
- Density
- Height limits
- Overlay districts

PRIMARY SOURCE OF TRUTH



### 2. ZONING MAP

*The Geographic Authority*

Shows:

- Industrial districts
- Commercial districts
- Residential districts
- Agricultural areas

DEFINES WHAT CAN GO WHERE



### 3. SALDO

*Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance*

Controls:

- Land subdivision
- Site plan review
- Roads / utilities
- Stormwater standards

DEFINES HOW DEVELOPMENT OCCURS



### 4. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*The Long-Term Vision*

Guides:

- Growth priorities
- Redevelopment areas
- Infrastructure strategy

POLICY GUIDE—NOT LAW

## 3 WHO MAKES DECISIONS?



**Municipal Governing Body**  
Adopts ordinances.



**Planning Commission**  
Reviews development plans and makes recommendations.



**Zoning Officer**  
Administers and enforces zoning regulations.



**Zoning Hearing Board**  
Rules on variances, special exceptions and appeals.



**County Planning Agency**  
Provides advisory review and technical assistance.  
*Not regulatory.*

## 4 WHY IT MATTERS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SPEED + CERTAINTY = COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE



Clear zoning alignment



Infrastructure readiness



Predictable approvals



Coordinated local partners



Strong project outcomes



Organizations like **Focus Central PA** help investors navigate this decentralized process by creating a practical "single source of truth" for site selection and development coordination across Central Pennsylvania.

## 5 THE BOTTOM LINE

**IN PENNSYLVANIA:**  
STATE LAW ENABLES.  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTROLS.  
LOCAL ORDINANCES GOVERN DEVELOPMENT.



**MPC**  
= Framework



Zoning Ordinance + Map  
= Legal Authority



**SALDO**  
= Development Process



Local Coordination  
= Project Success