



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UPDATED BUSINESS ZONING GUIDE TO PROVIDE CLARITY AND EASE OF USE FOR BUSINESS OWNERS**

*The zoning guide updates will clarify zoning requirements for business uses*

**CHICAGO** – Today, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP), released the updated Chicago Business Zoning Guide to serve as a reference for business owners and entrepreneurs. The Zoning Guide will provide property owners and businesses with clear, reliable, and consistent information on zoning usage. Zoning requirements are designed to maintain the unique character of Chicago's many neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and industrial areas, as well as provide a basis for economic growth. Ensuring proper zoning is a critical first step for any business looking to get their start or expand operations in Chicago.

"The City is committed to supporting our business community while fostering economic growth in our neighborhoods," said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "This updated zoning guide ensures that businesses can thrive and grow with ease and complement their unique communities."

"The updated Zoning Guide clarifies this important step in the licensing process," said BACP Commissioner Kenneth J. Meyer. "I am pleased with this comprehensive update that will serve as an everyday reference for business and property owners to make obtaining a business license all the easier."

Every business license, location expansion, and change of location application needs to be reviewed and approved by City of Chicago licensing and zoning staff before a business license application can be processed. The City of Chicago is divided into distinct zoning districts that reflect the diversity of business and neighborhood uses. Each zoning district has different regulations regarding the types of business activities that are permitted. Checking the zoning requirements of a proposed business use and the proposed business location is imperative. The Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD) was engaged in the Zoning Guide review to provide key insights as the City's zoning regulator.

The new Zoning Guide contains significant updates, including:

- Easy-to-follow charts to increase readability and save time
- Additional introductory zoning information to acquaint users with how zoning works and the specifications of each zoning district
- Updated, consistent, and reliable information regarding business uses

- Helpful resources and tools for further business support

BACP diligently worked with the Small Business Advocacy Council (SBAC) to understand the zoning needs of businesses and to produce this new guide with clarity and accuracy in mind. The SBAC is focused on improving the small business environment and revitalizing neighborhood business districts through nonpartisan advocacy and grassroots engagement.

“We have worked with chambers of commerce across Chicago, and other groups focused on economic development, to understand the challenges property owners and small business face with respect to understanding the zoning process, said Elliot Richardson, President & Co-Founder, Small Business Advocacy Council. “This accomplishment will help revitalize neighborhood business districts, foster a healthier small business environment and make it easier for businesses to thrive in Chicago.”

BACP will be hosting information webinars providing an overview of the updated Zoning Guide and zoning requirements. The first webinar, “Zoning Guide Overview” will take place on Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. To register, visit [Chicago.gov/BusinessEducation](https://www.chicago.gov/BusinessEducation).

The BACP Small Business Center (SBC), located at City Hall, Room 800, is the business licensing division for the City of Chicago. SBC Business Consultants can assist with business license applications and renewals, public way use permit applications, and connect entrepreneurs to business resources. Additionally, SBC Business Consultants provide guidance and assistance to all City business processes, including zoning information.

During a zoning review, SBC Business Consultants review the following:

- Proper classification of business activity
- If the business activity(s) is allowed in a specific district
- Compliance with parking, landscape, and building requirements
- Verification of valid driveway permits

BACP reminds Chicagoans to not enter any financial commitments (i.e., sign a lease) unless there is certainty the proposed business activity is allowed in the zoning district. Also, do not assume the previous owner’s zoning designation applies. Prospective business owners can utilize the [Interactive Zoning Map](#) to research zoning guidelines, designed to summarize zoning classifications and primary business licensing requirements for common business types.

To confirm the zoning status of a specific location, call the Business Call Center at 312-74-GOBIZ (744.6249). The Chicago Small Business Center also offers walk-in consultations from Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at 121 N. LaSalle Street, Room 800. To learn more, visit [Chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing](https://www.chicago.gov/BusinessLicensing).

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