

Team—Zoning and Regulations

Zoning defines how a given area will be used by establishing a range of acceptable development options for a piece of property according to a classification of land uses. There are both single- and mixed-use zones. Land use generally includes office, commercial, industrial, residential, agricultural, recreational, conservation, and scenic categories, but the exact names and classifications can vary by community. Once established by officials in the local government, the land uses are identified on a zoning map and are further defined in a zoning ordinance (the set of laws that manages zoning). Zoning maps are available from a town or city's planning department.

Your team is responsible for mapping civic buildings such as libraries, schools, museums, courthouses, post offices, recreation centers, and other government buildings.

Objectives

1. Describe the plans and regulations that guided the development of your community over time. Study zoning regulations in your area. When were zoning regulations first introduced? Why were zoning codes developed?
2. Map the municipal structures and public facilities (excluding mass transit and roads) that define your town or city, as well as the different zoning designations for the following time periods:
 - Early 1900s
 - 1950s
 - 1990s
 - Today

Resources

To learn more about zoning in your community, contact the zoning and planning department for your town or city (or county). Other helpful sources for your team are the town hall, local library, historical societies, board of education, phone books, tourist and welcome centers, personal observations, and the Internet.



Team—Housing

A housing unit is a structure designated as living quarters. It can be a house, apartment, mobile home, condominium complex, nursing home, or retirement community. Zoning regulations often determine minimum and maximum lot and home sizes.

Objective

Describe and map the spread of housing through your community over the following time periods:

- Early 1900s
- 1950s
- 1990s
- Today

Resources

Good starter resources for your topic are the U.S. Census Bureau's website (www.census.gov), your town or city planning offices, the community housing department, the Internet, and the tax office. Walk around your community to see what you discover. What other resources can you find?



Team—Transportation

Transportation is how we move people and goods from one place to another. Modes of transportation can vary from automobiles to airplanes, bicycles to boats, and trains to trucks. Any mode of transportation requires a system of infrastructure to function (e.g., local roads, highways, ports, paths, airports, parking lots).

Objective

Research and map the use of transportation (e.g., roadways, train tracks, bus routes, airports, parking lots) in your community over the following time periods:

- Early 1900s
- 1950s
- 1990s
- Today

Resources

Your team might contact your local government's street, highway, and transit departments; government planning offices; bicycle, pedestrian, and transit advocacy groups; transportation companies; and transportation hubs for information. See what other resources you can find. Can you locate old schedules and route maps? Also think about libraries, historical resources, and the Internet. Does your community have master street plans and bikeway plans? Walk around your community and make observations. Where did abandoned railways once go, and who used them? What preceded today's high-speed rails—a wagon track? Has the availability of transit changed?



Team—Water and Wastewater

When you turn on the faucet, where does the water come from? Some people draw their water from individual wells, deep holes dug into the ground to obtain water. Others rely on water piped in from reservoirs or aquifers that are miles away. What water systems are in place to provide water for the residents in your community? How have the systems changed over time?

In most urban and suburban communities, where people live close together, a sewage system directs, collects, and treats the wastewater that is created when we flush the toilet, take a shower, and pour things down the drain. A typical sewage system is made up of pipes that connect individual houses and buildings to larger pipes that lead to a wastewater treatment plant. In many rural communities where people live farther apart, individuals have their own sewage treatment plants, called septic tanks. Other areas now use holding tanks, which require periodic pumping.

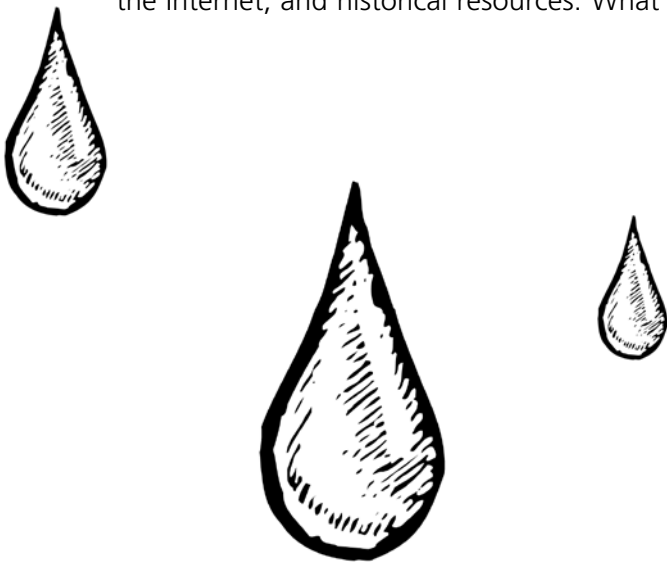
Objective

Describe the methods of distributing clean water and controlling the flow of wastewater in your community over the following time periods:

- Early 1900s
- 1950s
- 1990s
- Today

Resources

Your team might want to contact your town or city government's planning offices, water department, or sewage treatment plants for more information. Sewer and water maps may be available from the engineer's office or public utilities departments in your town or city. If you are investigating septic systems, contact your local government offices. Also think about using libraries, the Internet, and historical resources. What other sources can you find?



Team—Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the planet's natural life support system—a strategically planned and managed network of wilderness, parks, greenways, conservation easements, and working lands with conservation value. This land supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources, and contributes to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people. When we think of infrastructure, we usually think of built infrastructure such as roads, electric power lines, and water systems, as well as social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and libraries. Visit <http://greeninfrastructure.net> for more information.

Objective

Research the geographic distribution of your community's green infrastructure over the following time periods:

- Early 1900s
- 1950s
- 1990s
- Today

Resources

Your team might want to contact the town or city planning offices, Bureau of Land Management district offices, park and forestry departments, historical societies, environmental groups, soil and water conservation departments, and community conservation organizations. See what kinds of maps, books, and recreation tips you can find in libraries or online. Aerial photos can help give a sense of your community's green infrastructure. Explore your community and see what you discover. Think about how changes in your community's green infrastructure affect its visual character. Look at newly developed areas. What was there before the development? What other resources can you find?



Team—Business and Industry

The economic viability of a community is closely tied to the businesses and industries in the area. Sometimes, it is the industry that brings viability to the community, and sometimes, it is the other way around. The location of commercial and industrial development is related to zoning regulations.

Objective

Research, map, and report on the businesses and industries that exist or once existed in your community over the following time periods:

- Early 1900s
- 1950s
- 1990s
- Today

Resources

To learn more about business and industry in your community, explore historical resources, libraries, small business associations, chambers of commerce, phone books, town planning departments, and tax offices. Other helpful sources of information are the town hall and the Internet.

