

Let's Talk About Trenton's New Land Development Ordinance



The City of Trenton has drafted a new Land Development Ordinance (LDO) that will be a key tool for implementing many of the policies contained in the Trenton250 Comprehensive Master Plan.

It's Kind of a Big Deal.

What is a Land Development Ordinance (LDO)?

At its most basic level, the LDO regulates what structures and land can be used for, where a structure can be located, and how big it can be. The LDO also includes some basic design standards for new buildings, and regulates things like parking, signs, accessory structures, and landscaping.

...and Why are we Updating It?

In short, the current LDO is obsolete. It contains obsolete content, inconsistent standards, and insufficient guidance for decision-making. Many regulations don't relate to the way Trenton is built, and unintentionally serve as barriers to development that the community desires. Modernizing the LDO is a big step in helping Trenton achieve the long-term vision articulated in Trenton250.

What are Some of the Biggest Proposed Changes in the New LDO?

A Responsive Zoning District Structure

Districts that reflect, protect, and enhance the places of Trenton.

The LDO's updated district structure better fits the character of the City, and works to implement the community vision adopted in Trenton250. The new zoning districts coordinate with the future land use categories established in the plan, and encourage the types of development the City wants to see in the future. An Updated Zoning Map has been created, applying the new districts to land within the City based upon careful consideration of future development, as well as on-the-ground conditions.

A Modern Use Approach

Simplified, streamlined, state-of-the-art. The way that uses are handled has been completely modernized.

- The rules for what can be done in each district are now organized within a single matrix, making it easier to see what is allowed on a piece of property or to see where certain uses can locate within the City.
- Uses match the purpose of the districts, new and emerging uses have been added, and use standards have been included for certain uses to control potential impacts.

Updated Site Element Standards

Trenton, dressed to impress.

Landscaping and signs are important visual and aesthetic elements of the City, and they play a big role in how a city is perceived. Enhanced landscaping requirements and new sign permissions have been comprehensively addressed within the new LDO.

A Realistic Approach to Parking

Parking shouldn't "drive" development patterns in Trenton.

A big change in the new LDO is the elimination of minimum parking requirements in most instances. In addition, the LDO contains parking maximum regulations that limit how much parking may be provided on-site. For certain types of projects, a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan is required, which may require off-street parking to be provided, determined during site plan review.

Required Bicycle Parking

Mode-share, everywhere.

The new LDO requires bicycle parking for certain uses and developments, and addresses required amounts and design of bicycle parking areas.

Prioritizing Sustainability

Working to build a healthy, resilient City.

- The regulations encourage true mixed-use neighborhoods, reducing the need for vehicular trips to fulfill the daily needs of residents.
- Impervious surface (i.e., paved surface) coverage limits are included in the residential districts, helping to mitigate stormwater and heat island impacts.
- Electric vehicle parking spaces are required (if parking is provided)
- Permissions for sustainable accessory structures, such as solar panels and private wind turbines have been included.
- The LDO contains exterior lighting controls (on private property), helping to minimize light pollution in the City.
- New comprehensive landscape and tree preservation requirements help to beautify the City and create valuable green infrastructure