



Zoning Tip Sheet # 4: Determining the Zone Lot

The concept of a “zone lot” was established in 1956 with the city’s adoption of a new comprehensive zoning code now known as Former Chapter 59 (“FC59”). Most land in Denver was already subdivided into blocks and lots and Denver leaders wanted to save landowners the expense and process of having to “re-subdivide” tracts of land to meet the new zoning rules. A “zone lot” is the city-approved piece of land that meets zoning code requirements for minimum lot size, minimum lot width, required frontage on a public street, and in some cases limits on the number of structures and land uses. A “zone lot” may have the same boundaries as a single assessor tax parcel, or it may contain multiple tax parcels, or only portions of a tax parcel. Accordingly, if you want to build on your newly reconfigured tax parcel(s), or if you have reduced the size of the parcel containing an existing building, you must confirm whether the parcel complies with Denver’s minimum zoning standards. Any reconfiguration of the “zone lot” requires a Zone Lot Amendment and participation of all land owners per Denver zoning codes.

Intent of the Zone Lot

The purpose of a zone lot is to provide a boundary for a defined area of land consistent with zoning’s regulations for both land uses and structures. The Denver Zoning Code (“DZC”) formally defines a zone lot as: “The land designated as the building site for a structure; also, the land area occupied by a use or a structure. Such land area may be designated as a zone lot only by the owner or owners thereof.”

General Standards for all new Zone Lots

- All zone lots must have frontage abutting a named or numbered public street. DZC Section 1.2.3
- All zone lots must be composed of contiguous land area and its boundaries may not cross a public right-of-way (including streets and alleys) unless otherwise allowed by the zoning code.
- “Flag” zone lots are allowed only to accommodate an existing single-family development pattern consistent with the SU zone district and compatible with the existing neighborhood context. DZC Section 1.2.3.3; FC59 Section 59-120.C
- All zone lots must comply with minimum standards set forth by the zoning code for maximum number of uses and allowed structures. DZC Section 1.2.3.5; FC59 Section 59-120 (and similar)
- Zone Lots containing existing structures that are amended must comply with all zoning standards such as setbacks, building coverage, and height.

Zone Lot Exceptions

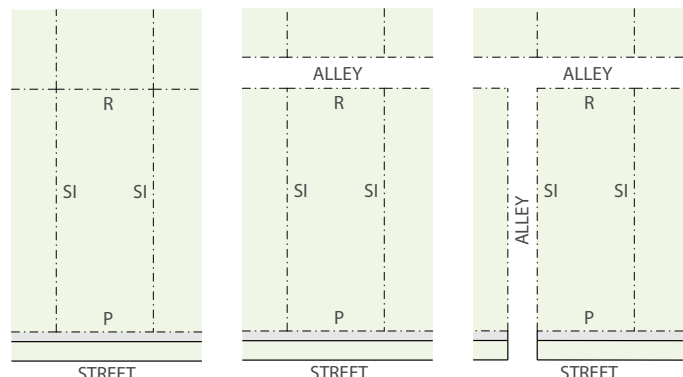
- Land area occupied by a use and/or structure, legally established prior to June 25th, 2010, may be deemed the zone lot(s) for all zoning review purposes. The use and/or structure must have been continuously maintained in accordance with the applicable zoning rules. The boundaries of such zone lots may be amended per DZC Section 12.4.4.
- Legally established zone lots that do not comply with the minimum zoning standards may still be developed as “nonconforming zone lots,” with limitations. DZC Section 1.2.3.4.D and Division 12.10.

Determining Zone Lot Lines under the DZC (Primary Street, Side Street, Side Interior, and Rear)

- Determining zone lot lines begins by determining whether the abutting public street(s) is a Primary or Side street per DZC rules in Article 13. See DZC Section 13.1.5
- CC, MX, MS and C-CCN zones have different rules for determining zone lot lines, and different criteria for the Zoning Administrator to make determinations. Rules for Zoning Administrator determinations can be found in DZC Section 13.1.5.2.C.
- See figures below for general Zone Lot line scenarios. See DZC Section 13.1.5.2 for more detailed information.

Interior Zone Lots (§ 13.1.5.2.D)

- Primary Street ZLL abutting Public Street = P
- Rear ZLL = R
- Side Interior ZLL = SI
- Side Street ZLL abutting Public Street = SS
- If zone lot has unique conditions, Zoning Administrator(ZA)/staff will determine

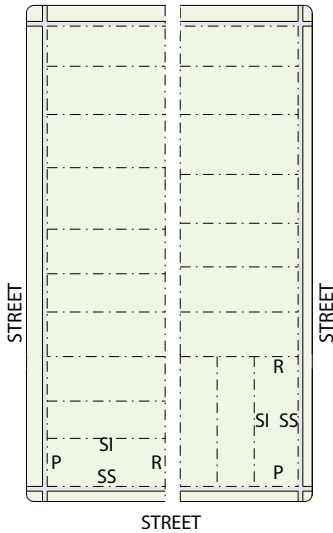


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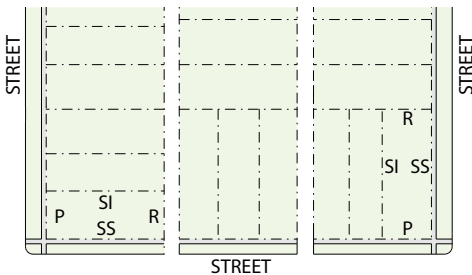
Corner Zone Lots - Oblong Blocks (§ 13.1.5.2.E.1)

- Primary Street ZLL abutting Public Street = P
- Rear ZLL = R
- Side Interior ZLL = SI
- Side Street ZLL abutting Public Street = SS
- If zone lot has unique conditions, ZA will determine per § 13.1.5.2.C



Corner Zone Lots - Square Blocks (§ 13.1.5.2.E.2)

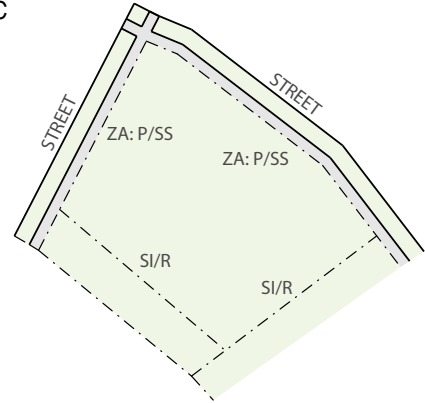
- Primary Street ZLL abutting Public Street = P
- Rear ZLL = R
- Side Interior ZLL = SI
- Side Street ZLL abutting Public Street = SS
- If zone lot has unique conditions, ZA will determine per § 13.1.5.2.C



Corner

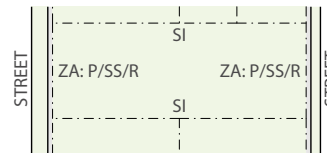
Zone Lots - Curvilinear Blocks (§ 13.1.5.2.E.3)

- Primary Street(s) ZLL abutting Public Street = P
- Rear ZLL = R
- Side Interior ZLL = SI
- Side Street ZLL abutting Public Street = SS
- These corner lots may have 2 Primary street ZLLs
- If zone lot has unique conditions, ZA will determine per § 13.1.5.2.C

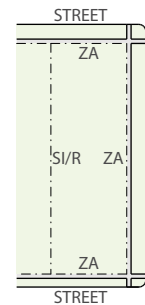


Zone Lots with Double Frontage & Frontage on 3 or More Streets (§ 13.1.5.2.F & G)

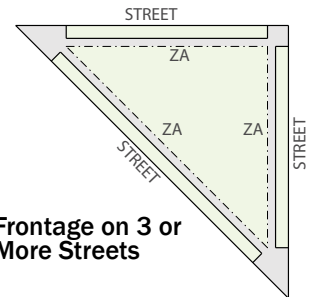
- Zoning Administrator/Staff will make zone lot line street determinations per § 13.1.5.2.F&G



Double Frontage



Frontage on 3 or More Streets



New Zone Lots and Zone Lot Amendments

The creation or designation of new Zone Lots (whether through subdivision, designation of a new Zone Lot, or amendment of an existing Zone Lot) shall comply with the minimum Zone Lot size and minimum Zone Lot width for at least one primary building form allowed in the subject Zone District. Different minimum Zone Lot sizes may apply to different primary building forms allowed in the same Zone District. The boundaries and area of a designated Zone Lot may be amended according to Section 12.4.4, Zone Lot Amendments. Amendment of an existing zone lot containing structures is only allowed if the resulting zone lot and structure fully comply with the all applicable standards in the zoning code.

Code reference sections:

- DZC - Zone Lots Division 1.2 / DZC - Siting Form Standards Section 13.1.5 / DZC - Zone Lot Amendments Section 12.4.4
- FC59 - Sec. 59-25 Zone lot for existing structures and uses. / FC59 - Sec. 59-120 Permitted structures. (and similar) /
- FC59 - Sec. 59-2 Definitions (322)

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