

Many such ordinances are now being rewritten to encourage the integration of mutually supportive uses. Zoning is also used to establish the height and size of buildings, building uses and parking requirements, the setbacks (or not) required from the street and, often, building materials. It is, however, generally used for establishing land uses at a block-by-block level. Zoning categories generally apply to areas of cities bounded by streets creating what are called 'planners' blocks'. They are not the blocks of life. Urban designers should generally be concerned with what happens on both sides of a street. Streets are the seams of urban life.

The limitation of zoning as a design tool is that it does not deal effectively with the creation of behaviour settings and aesthetic displays. The courts generally frown on spot, site-by-site zoning. Yet the quality of the public realm depends on such details. The use of zoning in conjunction with special districts and incentives can, nevertheless, accomplish much.

Carrots and Sticks in Urban Design

Both incentives and disincentives have been widely used to shape cities and often form part of piece-by-piece urban design packages to structure city precincts in specific directions (see Chapter 9). The incentives involve financial subsidies in some form or other. The sticks involve measures that are financially punitive, directly or indirectly. Many urban design control packages have both punitive and incentive components operating simultaneously in order to get schemes built in accordance with a conceptual design's objectives. What is legal very much depends on the political system in which public actions take place. Control packages, however legal they may be, cannot operate against market forces; they have to operate with them.

Carrots

Many of the carrots encouraging developers to do what they would otherwise be disinclined to do involve the use of zoning codes. Land-use plans and zoning codes have traditionally been employed to avoid the negative impacts of development. The questions then asked in situations like that in New York already mentioned were: 'Can these tools be used to shape cities to achieve desired ends?' and 'Can incentives be developed to encourage development to take a particular direction and provide particular facilities that are desirable and in the public interest but not as profitable for developers as building for other uses?'

A number of possible incentives are available for shaping and supporting urban design objectives. Government subsidies have already been mentioned. There are other types of carrots. Floor space incentives usually allow a developer to make a greater profit by building a taller or bulkier building than a zoning ordinance allows in return for including some non-profit making or not-so-profitable amenity in a proposed development. Such a design incentive involves a trade-off