

ZONING FROM A TO Z

Manufacturing Districts (Chapter 17-5) – Part I

As with residential, business, and commercial districts, generally designated “R,” “B,” and “C,” respectively, the new zoning code adopted in late 2004 continues the use of “M” for its manufacturing districts. M districts are intended to accommodate manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale and industrial use. Further, the districts are intended to promote the economic viability of these uses, encourage employment growth, and limit the encroachment of other types of development – including residential -- in industrial corridors.

The new code establishes three M districts: M1 (Limited Manufacturing/Business Park District, M2 (Light Industry District), and M3 (Heavy Industry District).

The M1 Limited Manufacturing/Business Park District accommodates low-impact activities that occur within enclosed buildings. An additional purpose of the district is to promote high quality new development and reuse of older industrial buildings.

The M2 Light Industry District accommodates activities with moderate impact, including storage and work-related activities that occur outside of enclosed buildings. These activities typically also are more land-intensive than those accommodated in M1 districts.

Finally, as one might expect, the M3 Heavy Industry District accommodates high-impact manufacturing and industrial uses.

Few M districts fall within the Sheffield neighborhood except on its western boundary, between the Clybourn corridor and the Chicago River. Most of these M districts are part of Planned Manufacturing Districts or Planned Developments, both of which will be covered in future articles. However, there are M districts along the railroad tracks south of Belden between Lakewood and Wayne; on Fullerton at Lakewood; on Fullerton and Racine (site of the former Rubens Baby Factory that currently serves as a DePaul University surface parking lot); and in the triangle formed by Ashland, Fullerton, and Clybourn. All of these districts are zoned M1 except for the triangle at Ashland, Fullerton, and Clybourn, which is zoned M2.

Much like residential, business, and commercial districts, M districts are further differentiated based upon “bulk and density” standards. Unlike R, B, and C districts, however, M districts are differentiated only by floor area ratio limits. There are no minimum lot area requirements, which apply to dwelling units.

Floor area ratio (FAR) is the maximum square footage that can be built on a lot. Consistent with other types of districts, the FAR standard in M districts is designated by a numeral following the dash after the district name, e.g., M1-2.

Most of the M districts in Sheffield carry the bulk and density designation of “-2.” In a “-2” district, the maximum floor area ratio is 2.2. The maximum square footage allowed on a property designated “-2” therefore is determined by multiplying the square footage of the property by 2.2. Recall that the maximum FAR in the “-2” business or commercial district

common in Sheffield also is 2.2, while the FAR that applies to RT4, the predominant residential designation in Sheffield, is 1.2.

This is the tenth in a series of articles designed to educate the community about the basics of the new zoning code adopted in late 2004. The first five installments focused on residential districts, and the next four focused on business and commercial districts. If you would like to learn about a particular topic, contact the Association; please be as specific as possible when describing your topic or question. Electronic copies of previous installments are available on the SNA website, www.sheffieldneighborhood.org; select the "Newsletter" tab on the left, then click for archived news articles.