The planning of land uses affects realms of life from housing affordability to travel distances, water quality, and urban economic performance. Land-use regulation can serve as bulwark against encroachment of industrial hazards into neighborhoods, and a protector of lakes and rivers against non-point-source pollution. At the same time, it can be a gatekeeper excluding some children from high-quality public schools, a reinforcer of racial segregation, and an impediment to households’ commute-reducing residential choices. Land-use planning is ubiquitous; virtually all land use in U.S. metropolitan areas is regulated in some way, and the notion of a free market in land development is largely illusory. In this class, we learn about different land use and environmental planning tools and techniques, which involve regulations, incentives, taxation, and infrastructure provision. Examples include growth management techniques (urban growth boundaries, urban service boundaries, priority development areas, concurrency), zoning and related ordinances (subdivision regulation, site review), agricultural land preservation (transfer of development rights, conservation easements), and private-like alternatives to public regulation. The majority of this class will focus on planning in the United States, although a number of international examples will also feature.

Learning Goals:

By the end of the term, students will be able to:

- Explain the challenges posed at multiple scales by land in the planning and development process
- Critically discuss the merits and drawbacks of government interventions that regulate land use and development.
- Articulate the relevance of ever-present political debates over growth to the professional practice of urban and regional planning.
- Understand how and why comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances emerged in US planning.
- Explain why development patterns and land use regulations differ across geographical contexts and historical periods.
- Critique contemporary land use governance as it relates to issues of social justice and environmental sustainability.
- Compare potential directions for the reform of land-use planning
- Demonstrate effective public speaking and visual and written communications about land use issues.

Course Requirements:

Course assignments include a midterm and second-half exam, a presentation, and a final paper.