



“Only in Chicago can zoning be epic. From the nuisance laws of the 19th century targeting Chicago’s notorious filth to its cutting-edge new code, this meticulously researched book chronicles the use of zoning as both handmaiden for the just and tool for the self-serving. City planners and urban historians will delight in the colorful tale of how a city’s backbone—and zoning is indeed Chicago’s backbone—supports its broad shoulders.”

—Michael Davidson, Editor, *Zoning Practice*, American Planning Association

The Politics of Place

A History of Zoning in Chicago

By Joseph Schwieterman, Ph.D., and Dana Caspall

Intrigue. Strategy. A political environment that’s not for sissies—but demands dreamers. Optimism tempered by gritty reality. Stalemates. Shots to the foot. Pioneering concepts.

Show me the zoning ordinance.

You don’t have to be a tourist to marvel at Chicago’s breathtaking sights. The modern buildings beside vintage structures; revitalized business districts and the ever-morphing character of the neighborhoods remind visitors and residents alike that Chicago knows how to broaden its scope as a great place to live, work, and play.

But even natives might not realize that zoning—the regulatory muscle behind development—is a fierce game of vision, trends, tactics, and power, with a history of turning taxpayers into activists, and a duty to renew and preserve a city’s finest resources. Who said it was all just about maps and mundane technical stuff?

The Politics of Place: A History of Zoning in Chicago by Joseph P. Schwieterman and Dana M. Caspall explores the landmark events, technology, and social contexts that have changed how Chicago makes use of its space. Along the way, the legacy of some of the city’s best known citizen advocates, business leaders, and government officials add spark and color to an ongoing epic of civic transformation.

Growing pains, fits and starts, and bursts of initiative include:

- The 1909 Plan of Chicago that enshrined the lakefront as a civic resource to be protected as public open space
- The legendary power of aldermen to set agendas for their wards
- Incentives to developers to tear down the old in favor of the new vs. policies geared to the opposite effect
- Planned Developments like Marina City, Illinois Center, Dearborn Park, and the Trump Tower and Hotel that have earned accolades—and controversy

Follow the rush of new ideas and shifting tensions as no small plans are made for the City that Works.