



CHICAGO LARGE LOTS ACTIVATION GUIDE

LATENT DESIGN + LISC CHICAGO

Congratulations on acquiring a vacant lot in your neighborhood through the City of Chicago's Large Lots Program! What's next? This resource for new lot-owners can help jumpstart your design process today.

WELCOME!

LISC Chicago connects neighborhoods to the resources they need to become stronger and healthier. Part of the national nonprofit Local Initiatives Support Corporation, LISC Chicago works citywide and neighborhood deep.
www.lisc-chicago.org

Latent Design is a progressive architecture firm and strategic design consultancy with a commitment to community development in Chicago. Our collaborations range from small-scale tactical interventions, new construction community buildings, adaptive reuse commercial and residential spaces, to neighborhood master plans and design speculations.
www.latentdesign.net

Together, we create vibrant spaces to live, work, and play.

In an effort to support the City of Chicago's Large Lots Program & to make the process of purchasing city owned land easier, LISC Chicago partnered with Teamwork Englewood & DataMade to create www.LargeLots.org with support from the Boeing Corporation & the Knight Foundation.

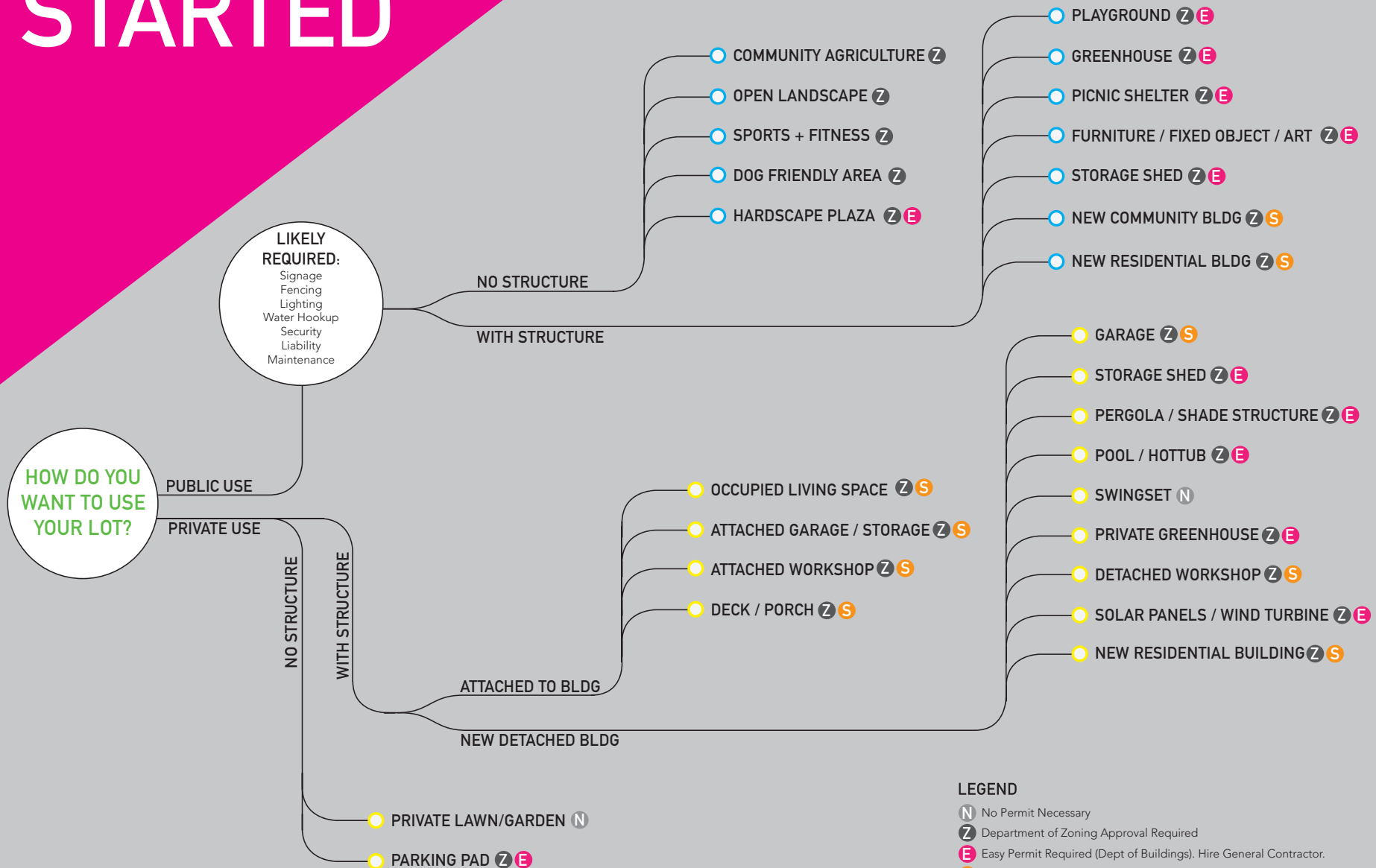
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GETTING STARTED

Note disclaimer: Municipal code changes regularly. Any information regarding permits or code in this publication is not guaranteed to be accurate. All resources and decision questions posed in this publication are non-exhaustive. Consult with a licensed design professional, construction professional, or legal professional to confirm the needs of your particular project before proceeding with any changes your lot.



KEY RESOURCES

How to Find a Qualified Professional

ARCHITECT: AIA Chicago Architect Finder
aiachicago.org/find-an-architect

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Associated Builders and Contractors Illinois Chapter Membership Directory (www.abcil.org); Building Performance Institute Certified Professionals (www.bpi.org); Angie's List for Contractors (www.angieslist.com/contractor/). Make sure any contractor you are considering is licensed by checking the City of Chicago's List of Registered Contractors: webapps1.cityofchicago.org/activegcWeb

SURVEYOR: Major local surveyors include, but are not limited to, Chicagoland Survey (www.chicagolandsurvey.com); Central Survey (www.centuralsurvey.com); Sekerez Land Surveying (www.sekerez.com)

GRANT WRITER: Search for experienced freelance writing professionals on www.grantwriters.org, www.elance.com, and www.odesk.com

What opportunities and steps can help you with your lot, no matter what you're planning to do next?

GATHER YOUR DESIGN IDEAS: One way to prepare for a meeting with your design professional is to gather images of spaces you like from popular sites like: Houzz.com, dwell.com, Pinterest.com, ApartmentTherapy.com, DesignSponge.com, design-milk.com, and witanddelight.com

LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A LANDLORD: See the City of Chicago's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiLandlords>

KNOW YOUR FUNDING & LOAN OPTIONS: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago: nhschicago.org.

APPEAL YOUR PROPERTY TAXES: See the Cook County Board of Review - www.cookcountyboardofreview.com

APPLY FOR NON-PROFIT STATUS: If you want to make your lot publicly accessible or seek tax-deductible donations, learn more through the Law Project (thelawproject.org) and the City of Chicago Small Business Center (cityofchicago.org/sbc)

SAVE MONEY THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY: Contact Elevate Energy, a local non-profit of experts extremely dedicated to helping Chicago property owners save money by saving energy. elevateenergy.org, 855.372.8377, buildings@elevateenergy.org.

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Walking
distance

My name is Lashawna and I am ROSELAND!

THE BEST THING ABOUT THE
NEIGHBORHOOD IS...

People
to

PUBLIC PROJECTS

Want to turn your lot into a new public amenity for your neighborhood?



1

Background
Community engagement tactic to brainstorm new uses for a vacant lot by tracking local points of pride as well as challenges

2

Above
Fresh Moves Mobile Produce Market was retrofitted into a former CTA bus, using previously underused assets

Ranging from flexible seating to book and game kiosks to community gardens, public amenities provide a low-cost means to quickly inject new layers of comfort and activity in your neighborhood. Similarly, rotating public art, particularly if it is interactive, can quickly transform a

space and provide a unique means for encouraging return visitation. Even a simple clean-up of a lot can generate a new space to host a neighborhood event. Temporary events can provide a creative platform to build momentum, showcase local talent and build future partnerships. Ongoing interventions can provide experimental means of testing the community vision and adapting designs and programs based upon user observation and feedback.

My name is Andrea and I am



Community Agriculture



Provides space for community members to grow plants for beautification, education, community distribution, or personal use

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Have a committed volunteer community?
- Horticultural knowledge?
- Will you have a storage shed?
- Will you have a hoop house/ greenhouse?
- Compost?
- Fencing?
- Planning to sell produce?
- Raised beds?
- Rainwater collection?
- On-site parking lot?

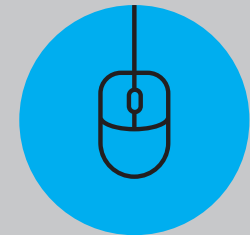
What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

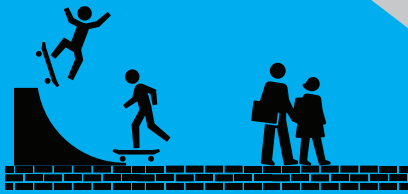
- Get professional advice and see the City of Chicago's Urban Agriculture FAQ to determine how to get zoning approval for community agriculture.
- The City of Chicago defines Community Gardens differently from how it defines Urban Farms. Community Gardens are typically operated non-profit by volunteers, and cannot exceed 25,000 SF in area. Urban Farms are commercial operations with a business license.
- Certain "accessory buildings," such as sheds, hoop houses, and greenhouses, require approval from Zoning, and possibly a permit. The size and materials used will determine what approval process you'll need. You may need to hire an architect and/or general contractor for a permit. Get professional advice.
- Research and connect with nearby community gardens in your area through the Chicago Community Gardener Association (CCGA) to foster a strong volunteer team.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- City of Chicago Urban Agriculture Zoning contact: See the City's Urban Agriculture FAQ: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiUrbanAgriculture>
- City contact person for community agriculture zoning inquiries: Jeanne Chandler, 312.744.0605
- CCGA: www.chicagocommunitygardens.org



Public Plazas + Hardscaping



Concrete, asphalt, or other activated
hardscape surfaces for public use

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Private parking pad?
- Asphalt?
- Concrete?
- Publicly accessible?
- Any existing/remnant paving?
- Considered drainage issues?
- Considered benefits of permeable paving?
- Ramp elements?

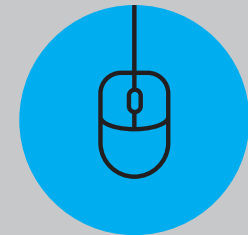
What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Get professional advice to determine the Chicago Municipal Code's requirements on size and property line setbacks. You may qualify for an Easy Permit with a contractor.
- Permeable paving refers to a range of sustainable materials (including pervious concrete, porous asphalt, or brick-like paving stones) which have the advantage of allowing stormwater to pass through the paving and return to the soil below, rather than becoming runoff for the city's sewers. It can look indistinguishable from non-porous paving but helps filter pollutants and improves water quality.
- If you are an owner-occupant able to design and/or build it yourself to be fully code-compliant, you may be eligible to move forward without a registered contractor via the Homeowner Assistance Permit process. Otherwise, you will at least require a general contractor.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To learn more about a Homeowner Permit: See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit
- To learn more about permeable paving benefits: See options, facts, + products: tinyurl.com/ChiPermeable
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.



Landscapes + Athletics



Provides publicly accessible, community-managed open space for recreation, beautification, and sustainability

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Have a committed volunteer community?
- Horticultural knowledge?
- Will you have a storage shed?
- Will you personally maintain the lot?
- Sports organizations? Fencing?
- Planning to sell produce?
- Raised beds?
- Rainwater collection?
- On-site parking lot?

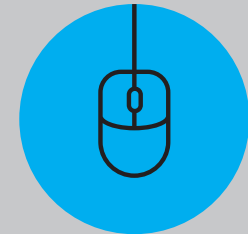
What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Reach out to your homeowner's insurance to determine how your privately owned lot can become a community-managed open space for use by the general public. You may need to make changes to your policy to protect yourself from liability.
- Certain "accessory buildings," such as storage sheds, gazebos, and pergolas, require approval from Zoning, and possibly a permit from the Department of Buildings. The size and materials used to construct the structure will determine what approval process you'll need. Get professional advice to find out. You may need to hire an architect and/or general contractor for a permit.
- Consider utility needs for light posts and waste receptacles. Make a plan to ensure a safe level of security 24/7 in the space. Renewable energy sources may help with providing site lighting and other amenities.

Where can I learn more about it?

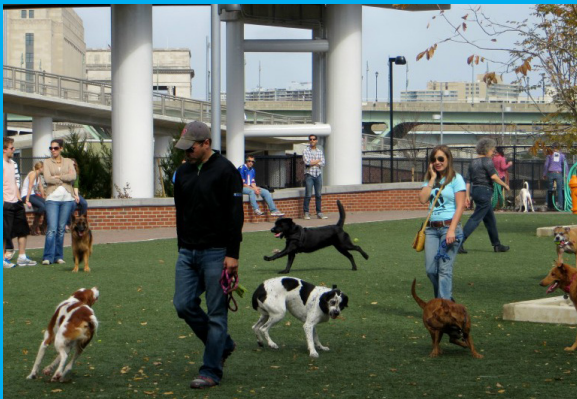


RESOURCES

- To learn more about a Homeowner Permit: See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit
- To learn more about permeable paving benefits: See options, facts, + products: tinyurl.com/ChiPermeable
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.
- Elevate Energy: These local experts are dedicated to providing all the resources Chicagoans need to install energy-saving technologies and offer a full-service approach for building owners, from start to finish. Browse resources at www.elevateenergy.org, call 855.372.8377, or email buildings@elevateenergy.org.



Dog Friendly Areas



Designated sections of public land where dogs are allowed to run, socialize, and play off-leash legally and securely

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Got a dog owner's community organization?
- Budget includes animal-related insurance?
- Water hookups for cleaning?
- Will you personally maintain the space?
- Relationships with local pet-related shops?
- Security plan?
- Planning to host large events?
- Fixed furniture like benches or tables?
- Need help designing or building it?

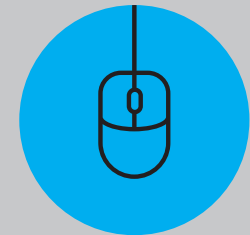
What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Review the Chicago Park District's "Dog Friendly Areas Manual for Development." Although you will not need to go through the same formal process that applies to Park District owned land, many general considerations and proposed rules for dog areas are pertinent.
- You will need to negotiate additional insurance for your dog friendly area, both as it pertains to inviting the public on private land as well as relating to potential animal attacks. By establishing a community organization for dog owners, you may be able to reduce your liability if members of the organization sign a waiver and/or contribute a membership fee to offset higher insurance costs. Talk to your insurer.
- Talk to your design professional about whether you will need a landscape architect as well as a general contractor for hardscape areas and foundations for fixed furniture.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To learn more about permeable paving benefits: See options, facts, + products: tinyurl.com/ChiPermeable
- City of Chicago Open Space Zoning contact: See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>
- Chicago Park District dog park information: Search "Dog Friendly Area" on www.chicagoparkdistrict.com. For info: Claudine Malik, claudine.malik@chicagoparkdistrict.com
- Elevate Energy: These local experts are dedicated to providing all the resources Chicagoans need to install energy-saving technologies and offer a full-service approach for building owners, from start to finish. Browse resources at www.elevateenergy.org, call 855.372.8377, or email buildings@elevateenergy.org.



Public Playgrounds



Provides publicly accessible, community-managed playground for youth of all ages in your neighborhood

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Have a committed volunteer community?
- Understand liability considerations?
- Will you have a storage shed?
- Will you personally maintain the lot?
- Security?
- Fencing?
- Planning to host large events?
- Fixed furniture like benches or tables?
- Shade structures like gazebos?
- On-site parking lot?

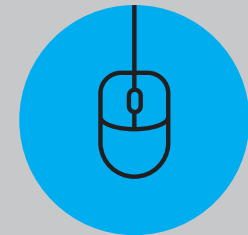
What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- You will need to negotiate additional insurance for the public playground you wish to create, both as it pertains to inviting the public on private land as well as relating to injuries on the equipment. By establishing a community organization for playground users, you may be able to reduce your liability if members of the organization sign a waiver and/or contribute a membership fee to offset higher insurance costs. Talk to your insurer. Homeowners Associations have accomplished this in the past.
- Talk to your design professional about whether you will need an architect as well as a general contractor for the playground, hardscape areas and foundations.
- Playground grants are sometimes available via Kaboom, a non-profit that partners with organizations and businesses serving charitable purposes to bring play to urban neighborhoods.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- City of Chicago Open Space Zoning contact: See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>
- Recommended Playground Manufacturers: The playground companies typically used by the Chicago Park District include: Landscape Structures (www.playlsi.com); GameTime (www.gametime.com); Kompan (www.kompan.us); and Dynamo (www.dynamoplaygrounds.com). Be advised that all playgrounds must adhere to ASTM & CPSC rules. Soft surfacing is required by law. Commonly, this is similar to woodchips. Rubberized surfaces, while popular, may add hundreds of thousands to your budget and requires restoration in 3 years.
- Kaboom: Look for playground grant info as well as general advice on kaboom.org/grants.



PUBLIC OR PRIVATE

Certain projects can be created for either community use or private residential purposes.



1

Background

Greenhouses are examples of structures that are moderated differently if they are used publicly vs. privately

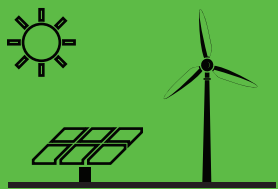
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Above

Renewable energy sources can directly benefit private owners, but there are also ways to harness energy for community use

Two lot owners may want to create the same type of amenity on their land, but their plans for who will ultimately use that amenity may require different paths to implementation. However, they can still connect and share knowledge with one another. For instance, someone looking to build

a pergola for their private backyard and someone interested in creating a pergola within a community garden can share tools and design inspiration as they relate to construction, but they will not necessarily work with the same permit process. Understanding the final audience and user group of what you plan to create on your lot can significantly shape your next steps.



Sustainable Strategies



Green roofs, solar panels, wind turbines, rainwater harvesting & other green technology for private or public use

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Green roof?
- Eligible for geothermal?
- Photovoltaic solar? (Electricity)
- Solar thermal panels? (Heat)
- Wind turbines or small wind capturing coils?
- Want to lower your energy bills?
- Interested in subsidies for energy efficiency?
- Researched passive strategies?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Get a free energy assessment from your current energy utility (such as ComEd) or a non-profit to find out where green upgrades would make the biggest impact.
- Get professional advice about your options, pricing, and subsidies by getting in touch with Elevate Energy, an affiliate of the Center for Neighborhood Technology. Elevate Energy is a non-profit dedicated to providing guidance, financing, and for Chicagoland energy projects.
- Pursuing green strategies can expedite your permit process through the Green Permit program.
- See if you're eligible for rebates or installations through the city's Retrofit Chicago program. Free efficiency items can include smart water meters, and rain barrels.
- Owners of buildings with 1-4 residential units may be eligible for Energy Efficiency Loan Options offered by the Chicago Community Loan Fund.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- Elevate Energy: www.elevateenergy.org, call 855.372.8377, or email buildings@elevateenergy.org.
- Green Permits Info: tinyurl.com/ChiGreenPermits Contact: sophie.martinez@cityofchicago.org, 312.744.7862
- Free Energy Assessment: ComEd and Elevate Energy both offer free home energy assessment to help identify how to partner for savings. ComEd: 845-433-2700.
- For energy loan info: Contact the Chicago Community Loan Fund: cclfchicago.org, info@cclfchicago.org
- For info on the City of Chicago's "Retrofit Chicago": tinyurl.com/retrofitchicago



Furniture, Objects + Art



Provides fixed items like benches, sculptures, and basketball hoops with secure foundations or surface bolts to prevent simple removal

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Public or private?
- Understand liability considerations?
- Will you have a storage shed?
- Will you personally maintain the lot?
- Security?
- Fencing?
- Planning to host large events?
- Understand foundation needs?
- Inhabitable structures like gazebos?
- On-site parking lot?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- If you are considering these fixed objects for private use only, consult a design professional, as you may simply need an Easy Permit to proceed (or even no permit at all).
- You may need to hire a licensed general contractor, typically if your object (such as a post for a basketball hoop) requires some kind of foundation.
- If you plan to have the public onto your privately-owned land, talk to your homeowner's insurance company about changes you will want to make in your policy to protect yourself from this change in liability.
- By establishing a community association for users, you may be able to reduce your liability if members of the association sign a waiver and/or contribute a membership fee to offset higher insurance costs. Talk to your insurer. Homeowners Associations have accomplished this in the past.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To find a local artist: Public Art in Chicago blog (publicartinchicago.com); Chicago Public Art Group Core Artist Portfolios: www.cpag.net/home/portfolios.html
- City of Chicago Zoning for Public Open Space: See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>
- Durable Fixed Outdoor Furniture: The Chicago Park District commonly installs durable benches and other outdoor furniture from: Landscape Structures (www.playlsi.com); GameTime (www.gametime.com); Dumor (dumor.com).



Shelters + Sheds



An accessory building or structure that contributes to the comfort, convenience, or necessity of a principal building or use served

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Private or public?
- Is this for a community garden? (Special zoning applies.)
- Single story?
- Will you personally maintain the structure?
- Related to commercial activity at all?
- Security plan?
- Planning to host large events?
- Fixed furniture like benches or tables?
- Electricity?
- Need help designing or building it?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Get professional advice to determine the Chicago Municipal Code's requirements on height, size, and property line setbacks.
- If you plan to have the public onto your privately-owned land, talk to your homeowner's insurance company about changes to policy to protect yourself from liability.
- If you are an owner-occupant able to design and/or build it yourself to be code-compliant, you may be eligible to move forward without a registered architect/contractor through the Homeowner Assistance Permit.
- Talk to your design professional about whether your structure qualifies for the Easy Permit program, which requires a general contractor. You may need a Standard Plan Review Permit from the Department of Buildings, which requires both an architect and a general contractor.
- Structures within community gardens have special rules. Refer to the City's Urban Agriculture FAQ's.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- City of Chicago Zoning for Public Open Space: See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>
- City of Chicago Urban Agriculture Zoning contact: See the City's Urban Agriculture FAQ on garden sheds: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiUrbanAgriculture>
- To learn more about a Homeowner Permit: See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit



Greenhouse



An accessory building or structure for the growing of plants in a wider growing season

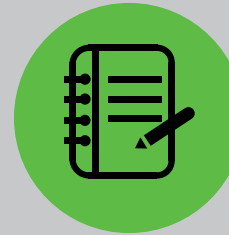
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Private or public?
- Is this for a community garden? Special zoning!
- Under 15' tall?
- Will you personally maintain the structure?
- Related to commercial activity at all?
- Security plan?
- Water utilities?
- Fixed furniture like benches or tables?
- Electricity?
- Need help designing or building it?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Talk to your design professional about whether your structure qualifies for the Easy Permit program, which requires a general contractor. You may need a Standard Plan Review Permit from the Department of Buildings, which requires both an architect and a general contractor. If you are an owner-occupant able to design and/or build it yourself to be fully code-compliant, you may be eligible to move forward without a registered architect with a Homeowner Assistance Permit.
- For a public greenhouse, be aware that a privately-owned, publicly accessible space may mean you need to change your lot's zoning. NeighborSpace is a key resource for navigating this process. Structures within community gardens have special rules, and most have a maximum area of 575 SF. Construction methods will define the permits needed for the structure.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- City of Chicago Zoning for Public Open Space: See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>.
- City of Chicago Urban Agriculture Zoning contact: See the City's Urban Agriculture FAQ on garden sheds: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiUrbanAgriculture>
- To learn more about a Homeowner Assistance Permit, see the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit



PRIVATE PROJECTS

Enhance the value of your home, generate rental opportunities, + expand your property's amenities



1

Background

Adding square footage to your home with an addition, like a guest room, may provide new rental income options

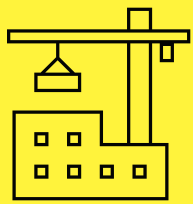
2

Above

Private outdoor spaces, like decks, and patios, can improve quality of life as well as the value of your property

You can use your new lot for many private, residential purposes. Enhancing your existing home with new features, including unique outdoor spaces, can increase the value of your property as well as improve quality of life for your family members living at home. You can

also create living space to lease out for new rental income, either through an addition to an existing building or by starting from scratch with a new multi-unit building. While some of these kinds of projects require larger initial investments, they have the potential to generate income in the future. Though you may be using your lot privately, you can contribute broadly to the overall value of your neighborhood by maintaining and beautifying local assets.



New Construction Building



A new detached building for single or multi-family residential or future mixed use programming, including community uses

What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Residential use?
- Planning on renting out the new space?
- Have the survey of your existing site?
- Planning to refinance or seek loans?
- Rooftop solar panels?
- Rooftop wind turbines?
- Have a homeowners association?
- Consulted your insurance company?
- Considered pre-fabricated buildings?
- Compliant with Large Lots usage constraints?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- You will need to hire a licensed architect and licensed general contractor to obtain the permits. Work with your architect to determine the Chicago Municipal Code's requirements on height, size, materials and property line setbacks.
- You will need approval from the Department of Zoning as well as a Standard Review Building Permit from the Department of Buildings. If the building will have a use other than residential, you may need to apply for a change in zoning.
- If you're interested in sustainable tech, you may need a Green Permit. This can expedite permitting.
- If you will be renting out the new space, comply with the City of Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance.
- Depending on the scope of construction and the quality of the finishes, anticipate construction costs starting at \$200 per square foot of the building.

Where can I learn more about it?

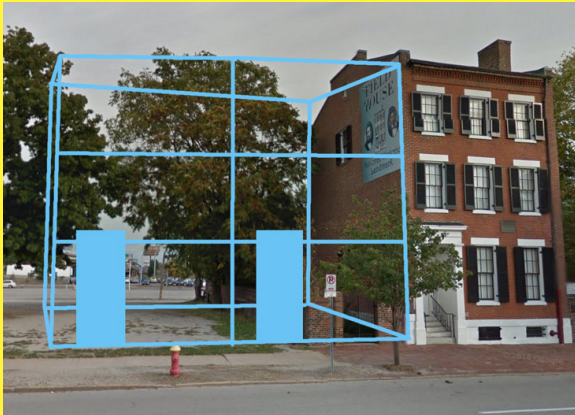


RESOURCES

- To learn more about becoming a Landlord: See the City of Chicago's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiLandlords>
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.



Building Addition



Building an addition indicates you will be adding enclosed, connected indoor square footage to an existing building.

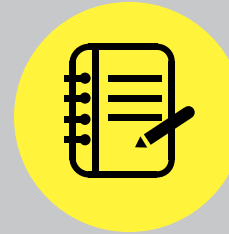
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Residential use only?
- Planning on renting out the new space?
- Have the plans of your existing building?
- Planning to refinance your home?
- Rooftop solar or wind turbines?
- Have a homeowners association?
- Consulted your home insurance company?
- Considered pre-fabricated additions?
- Can you live on site during construction?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- You will need to hire a licensed architect and licensed general contractor to obtain the permits. Work with your architect to determine the Chicago Municipal Code's requirements on height, size, construction materials, and property line setbacks.
- You will need approval from the Department of Zoning as well as a Standard Review Building Permit from the Department of Buildings.
- If you're interested in using sustainable technologies, you will also need a Green Permit. This can expedite your other permit processes.
- If you will be renting out the new space to tenants, ensure your units are in accordance with the City of Chicago Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To learn more about becoming a Landlord: See the City of Chicago's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiLandlords>
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.
- To get some design ideas: One way to prepare for a meeting with your architect is to gather images of interiors you like from sites such as: Houzz.com, Pinterest.com, ApartmentTherapy.com, DesignSponge.com, design-milk.com, witanddelight.com, and dwell.com



Garage



A garage is a building or part of a building designed for the display, shelter, storage, or servicing of all types of motor vehicles containing flammable fuel.

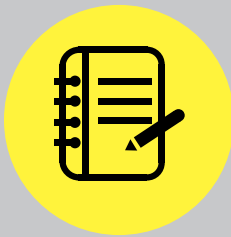
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Frame construction?
- Masonry construction?
- Will it be insulated?
- Existing building or foundation?
- Roof deck?
- Pergola/trellis on roof deck?
- Rooftop solar panels?
- Rooftop wind turbines?
- Enclosed stairs?
- Exterior stairs?
- Building it all yourself?
- Need help building it?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Get professional advice to determine the Chicago Municipal Code's requirements on height, size, and setbacks. Consult an architect to design and draft the permit plan. Hire a licensed general contractor for the project. Get approval from the Department of Zoning. If you are an owner-occupant able to design and/or build it yourself to be fully code-compliant, you may be eligible to move forward without a registered architect/contractor through the Homeowner Assistance Permit process.
- You will most likely need a Standard Plan Review Permit from the Department of Buildings. Talk to your design professional about whether your garage qualifies for the Easy Permit program.
- Depending on the scope of construction and the finishes and cladding you require, anticipate construction costs between \$80-\$120 per square foot of the garage.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.
- To learn more about a Homeowner Permit: See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit



Pools, Ponds, + Hot Tubs



Permanent private water features

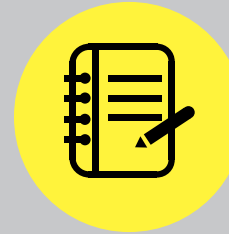
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Pool or pond with in-ground excavation?
- Depth of over 42"?
- Have a plan of the utility lines below your lot?
- Aware of increased energy demands?
- Pre-packaged unit?
- Aware of fencing & safety requirements?
- Discussed safety with neighboring families?
- Maintenance plan?
- Seasonal transition plan?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Many pools and water features need approval from the Department of Zoning, the Department of Buildings, and the Department of Water Management. Consult a design professional regarding permits.
- The City of Chicago defines "private residential swimming pools" as pools deeper than 42 inches. Pools require more extensive permit process for safety reasons. In Chicago, pools must be drained of water from Sept 15 to May 30. Permanent pools require an architect.
- Hot tubs, defined as hydromassage pools under 42" with filters, heaters, and blowers, may be either above or in-ground, pre-packaged or custom. Hot tubs are not required to be drained like pools.
- Ornamental pools or ponds are typically 2 to 3 feet in depth, not exceeding 42". The City of Chicago code typically refers to such ponds as "fountains." A Certified Aquascape Contractor is recommended.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- Custom pool builders: Request a free consultation with experienced Chicagoland companies like Barrington Pools (barrington-pools.com), Downes Pool (downespool.com), or All Seasons Pools (aspoools.com). There are many others.
- Consider pre-packaged options: Retailers like The Great Escape (shopthegreatescape.com) and large home improvement oriented department stores can give you a sense of price for pre-packaged pool & hot tub units.
- For ornamental ponds + fountains: Find a Certified Aquascape Contractor serving Chicagoland like: Gem Ponds (gemponds.com), Artistic Design Garden Ponds (adgponds.com), or Aqua Landscapes (aqualandscapesinc.com). There are many others.



Porches + Decks



An unheated portion of a building generally containing a stair, separated from the building by a fire-rated wall

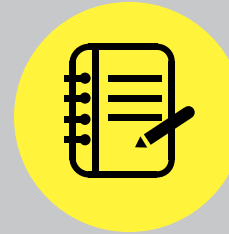
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Combustible materials like wood?
- Three stories or less?
- Projecting 10' or less from dwelling?
- Objects on sills or railings like flower boxes or decorative mouldings?
- Structurally designed for 100 lbs/SF capacity?
- Aware of fire code for your building type?
- Enclosed stairwell?
- Full replacement/new construction porch?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Note that per Chicago Code, “decks” are defined as being unroofed. “Porches” are defined as having roofs.
- There are stringent permitting requirements for porches and decks in Chicago. Ensure that the architect and general contractor you select are licensed and have experience specifically building Chicago porches and decks. You may also need to hire a structural engineer to satisfy the load requirements.
- If you have an existing porch in any condition that you wish to have assessed for potential rehabilitation, you can arrange for a free “owner-requested porch inspection” simply by dialing 3-1-1 and requesting it.
- Refer to the City of Chicago’s Porch Design & Construction Guidelines as you are planning your project. Many details are included for the benefit of homeowners to clarify the complete list of requirements.

Where can I learn more about it?

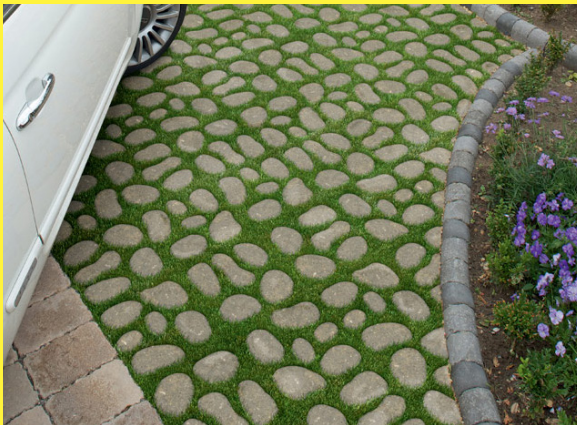


RESOURCES

- To find a structural engineer: Structural Engineers Association of Illinois: www.seaoi.org, office@seaoi.org
- To get a free inspection by a Building Inspector: Call 3-1-1 and ask for an “owner-requested porch inspection.”
- To get a free estimate: Request a quote from Chicago Porch Builders: www.porch-builders.com, 773.251.9879
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.



Driveways + Patios



A concrete, asphalt, or other hardscape surface for parking or outdoor landscape use

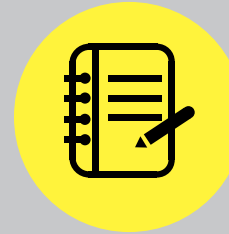
What do I need to ask myself and decide?



DECISION QUESTIONS

- Private parking pad?
- Asphalt?
- Concrete?
- Publicly accessible?
- Any existing/remnant paving?
- Considered drainage issues?
- Considered benefits of permeable paving?
- Ramp elements?
- Do you have a survey of utility lines that may be beneath grade?

What steps is it going to involve?



STEPS

- Permeable paving refers to a range of sustainable materials (including pervious concrete, porous asphalt, or brick-like paving stones) which have the advantage of allowing stormwater to pass through the paving and return to the soil below, rather than becoming runoff for the city's sewers. It can look indistinguishable from non-porous paving but helps filter pollutants and improves our water quality.
- If you are an owner-occupant able to design and/or build it yourself to be fully code-compliant, you may be eligible to move forward without a registered contractor via the Homeowner Assistance Permit process. Otherwise, you will at least require a general contractor.
- Talk to your design professional about whether your paving qualifies for the Easy Permit program, which requires a licensed general contractor.

Where can I learn more about it?



RESOURCES

- To learn more about a Homeowner Permit: See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit
- To learn more about permeable paving benefits: See options, facts, + products: tinyurl.com/ChiPermeable
- To learn more about funding & loan options: See the Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago website at nhschicago.org.

INDEX

Please note: The resources listed in this index and throughout this publication are non-exhaustive. Their inclusion does not reflect any official endorsements on behalf of any municipality or organization whatsoever.

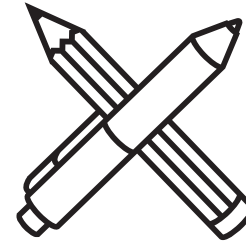
- **Agriculture:** See the City's Urban Agriculture FAQ: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiUrbanAgriculture>
- **Architect:** AIA Chicago Architect Finder, aiachicago.org/find-an-architect
- **Artists:** Public Art in Chicago blog (publicartinchicago.com); Chicago Public Art Group Core Artist Portfolios: www.cpag.net/home/portfolios.html
- **Center for Neighborhood Technology:** Resources for sustainable communities (www.cnt.org)
- **Cook County Board of Review:** Appeal your property taxes www.cookcountyboardofreview.com
- **Design ideas:** Houzz.com, Pinterest.com, ApartmentTherapy.com, www.DesignSponge.com, design-milk.com, witanddelight.com, and dwell.com
- **Dog friendly areas:** Search "Dog Friendly Area" on www.chicagoparkdistrict.com. For info: Claudine Malik, claudine.malik@chicagoparkdistrict.com
- **Energy assessment:** ComEd and Elevate Energy both offer free home energy assessment to help identify how to partner for savings. ComEd: 845-433-2700.
- **Energy loans:** Contact the Chicago Community Loan Fund: www.cclfcchicago.org, info@cclfcchicago.org
- **Gardening information and network:** Chicago Community Gardens (CCGA) www.chicagocommunitygardens.org
- **General Contractor:** Associated Builders and Contractors Illinois Chapter Membership Directory (www.abcil.org); Building Performance Institute Certified Professionals (bpi.org); Angie's List for Contractors (www.angieslist.com/contractor/). Make sure any contractor you are considering is licensed by checking the City of Chicago's List of Registered Contractors: webapps1.cityofchicago.org/activegcWeb
- **Grant Listings & Advice:** www.npguides.org; www.chicagocommunitytrust.org; www.cclfcchicago.org
- **Grant Writers:** Search for experienced freelance writing professionals on www.grantwriters.org, www.elance.com, and www.odesk.com
- **Green Permits Info:** <http://tinyurl.com/ChiGreenPermits> Contact: sophie.martinez@cityofchicago.org, 312.744.7862
- **Homeowner Permit:** See the Homeowner Assistance Plan Review submittal process: <http://tinyurl.com/homeownerpermit>
- **Hot tubs:** Retailers like The Great Escape (www.shopthegreatescape.com) and large home improvement oriented department stores for pre-packaged units.
- **Landlords:** See the City of Chicago's Residential Landlord and Tenant Ordinance: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiLandlords>

- **Latent Design:** www.latentdesign.net, 312.344.1498, hello@latentdesign.net.
- **LISC Chicago:** www.lisc-chicago.org; 312.422.9550
- **Loans:** Neighborhood Housing Services Chicago, www.nhschicago.org.
- **Non-Profit Status:** If you want to make your lot publicly accessible or seek tax-deductible donations, learn more through the Law Project (www.thelawproject.org) and the City of Chicago Small Business Center (www.cityofchicago.org/sbc)
- **Outdoor Furniture:** The Chicago Park District commonly installs durable benches and other outdoor furniture from: Landscape Structures (www.playlsi.com); GameTime (www.gametime.com); Dumor (www.dumor.com).
- **Paving:** See permeable options- <http://tinyurl.com/ChiPermeable>
- **Playground grants:** Kaboom, www.kaboom.org/grants.
- **Playground Manufacturers:** The playground companies typically used by the Chicago Park District include: Landscape Structures (www.playlsi.com); GameTime (www.gametime.com); Kompan (www.kompan.us); and Dynamo (www.dynamoplaygrounds.com). Be advised that all playgrounds must adhere to ASTM & CPSC rules. Soft surfacing, like woodchips, is required by law.
- **Ponds & fountains:** Find a Certified Aquascape Contractor serving Chicagoland like: Gem Ponds (www.gemponds.com), Artistic Design Garden Ponds (www.adgponds.com), or Aqua Landscapes (www.aqualandscapesinc.com).
- **Pools:** Barrington Pools (www.barrington-pools.com), Downes Pool (www.downespool.com), or All Seasons Pools (www.aspools.com).
- **Porches:** Request a quote from Chicago Porch Builders: www.porch-builders.com, 773.251.9879
- **Porch inspection:** Free inspection by a Building Inspector: Call 3-1-1 and ask for an "owner-requested porch inspection."
- **Public open space:** See the City's Open Space resources and read CitySpace Chicago: <http://tinyurl.com/ChiOpenSpace>
- **RainReady:** Water-related resources for land & buildings: www.rainready.org
- **Retrofitting:** City of Chicago's "Retrofit Chicago": <http://tinyurl.com/retrofitchicago>
- **Structural engineer:** Structural Engineers Association of Illinois: www.seaoi.org, office@seaoi.org
- **Surveyors:** Major local surveyors include, but are not limited to, Chicagoland Survey (www.chicagolandsurvey.com); Central Survey (www.centuralsurvey.com); Sekerez Land Surveying (www.sekerez.com)
- **Zoning Department:** Regarding Large Lots usage and zoning options, contact Jeanne Chandler, 312.744.0605

IMAGE CREDITS

Icons & Symbols: The Noun Project, thenounproject.com
Photos: Latent Design (p. 1-7, 13, 16 fig. 1, 24); Roosevelt Island Youth Program (p. 8); Pet Parent (p. 9); Kompan (p.10); UC San Diego (p. 11 fig. 1); Jugend Solar Project (p. 11 fig. 2); Huffington Post (p. 12); Linda Bergroth (p. 14); University of D.C. Center for Urban Agriculture (p. 15); Chicago Roofdeck & Garden (p. 16 fig. 2); Qb Design (p. 17); Eugene Field House Foundation (p. 18); Kazutoshi Imanaga (p. 19); Chicago Curbed (p.20); Reveal Design LLC (p. 21); Bioverse Permeable Pavers (p. 22)

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU



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