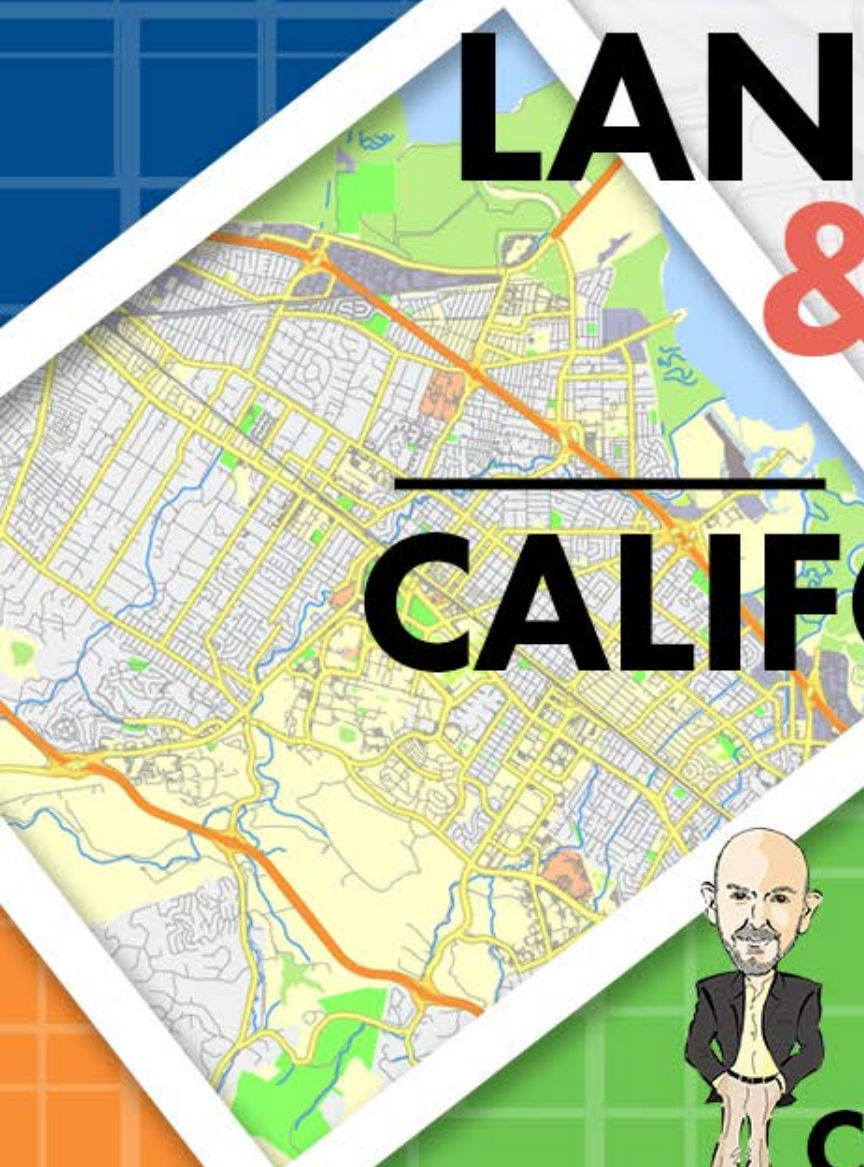


# LAND USE & ZONING IN CALIFORNIA



**ATTORNEY**  
**CHARLIE BRONITSKY**



# DISCLAIMER

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**ATTORNEY**

**CHARLIE  
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The background features a collage of urban planning elements. On the left, a colorful map shows a city grid with green parks and blue water bodies. On the right, a faded technical drawing of a building floor plan is visible, with labels like 'LIVING ROOM' and 'KITCHEN'. The overall design is modern and professional, with geometric shapes in blue, green, and orange framing the central text.

# **BASICS OF LAND USE & ZONING**

# ZONING BASICS

## WHAT IS ZONING

**ZONING IS THE INTIAL SET OF  
RESTICTIONS ON HOW LAND CAN BE  
USED**



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# ZONING BASICS

## WHAT IS ZONING

### PERMITTED USE

- Based on Anticipated USE of Property
- What is Allowed
- What is Not Allowed
- What is Allowed Under Certain Conditions



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# ZONING BASICS

## WHAT IS ZONING

### WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED

- Height Restrictions
- Setbacks (Close to Edge of Property Line)
- Floor-Area Ratio
- Size Restrictions

### Example: Spot-Zoning



# ZONING BASICS

## TERMS & DEFINITIONS

### ZONING CODE

- Municipal or county ordinances

### SETBACK

- Distance from structure to street

### FLOOR-TO-AREA RATIO

- Ratio between building's total floor area and total area of land





# ZONING BASICS

## TERMS & DEFINITIONS

### CONDITIONAL USE

- Specific use exception within a zoning ordinance

### VARIANCE

- Exception to zoning ordinance based on unique circumstances



# ZONING BASICS

## TYPES OF ZONES

### MANY TYPES OF ZONES

- **Varies by municipality**

### SUB-ZONE CATEGORIES

- **Example: high-density & low-density residential**



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# **ZONING BASICS**

## **GENERAL TYPES OF ZONES**

**COMMERCIAL**

**INDUSTRIAL**

**RESIDENTIAL**

**MIXED-USE**

**SPECIAL**



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# ZONING BASICS

## EXCEPTIONS

### HOW TO GET EXCEPTIONION

**Conditional Use**

**Rezoning**

**Variance**



**LAND USE & ZONING IN CALIFORNIA**

**THE  
PLANNING  
PROCESS**

**PROCESS**

# ZONING PROCESS

## FINDING THE LAND

### ADDRESS

- Zoning Maps Online or at City Hall

### ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER

- Find on Grant Deed
- Contact County Tax Assessor



# ZONING PROCESS

## DUE DILIGENCE

### PLANNING DEPARTMENTS

- Counter Hours – Advisory Info, No Decision

### COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- If Unincorporated Area



# ZONING PROCESS

## DUE DILIGENCE

### ARCHITECTS & ENGINEERS

- Often Conduct Zoning Due Diligence

### BUILDING VS. PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- Planning – General Layout & Look
- Building – Specifics of Building



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# PLANNING PROCESS

**GENERAL GUIDANCE  
FROM PLANNING  
DEPARTMENT**

**SUBMIT PLANS TO  
PLANNING STAFF**

**RECEIVE COMMENTS**

**CAN APPEAL TO  
CITY COUNCIL OR COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**IF APPROVED,  
RECEIVE PERMIT &  
MOVE TO BUILDING  
DEPARTMENT**

**PLANS SENT TO  
PLANNING  
COMMISSION**

**PLANNING  
COMMISSION STAFF  
MAKE RECOMMENDATION**

**PLANNING  
COMMISSION MAKES  
DECISION**



# ZONING PROCESS

## NAVIGATING CITY PLANNERS

### PLANNING COMMISSION

- Occasionally Requires Architectural Review Committee

### ORDINANCES

- General Look & Feel of Community



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# ZONING PROCESS

## OBTAINING PERMITS

**PERMITTED USE**

**CONDITIONAL USE**



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# ZONING PROCESS

## OBTAINING PERMITS

### VARIANCE

- Subjective Process – Based on Unique Circumstances

### UNIQUE ASPECT PARCEL



# ZONING PROCESS

## REZONING

### PROCESS

**Submission of Request in Various Forms**

**Staff Review – Staff Report**

**Planning Commission Recommendation**

**City Council Approval**



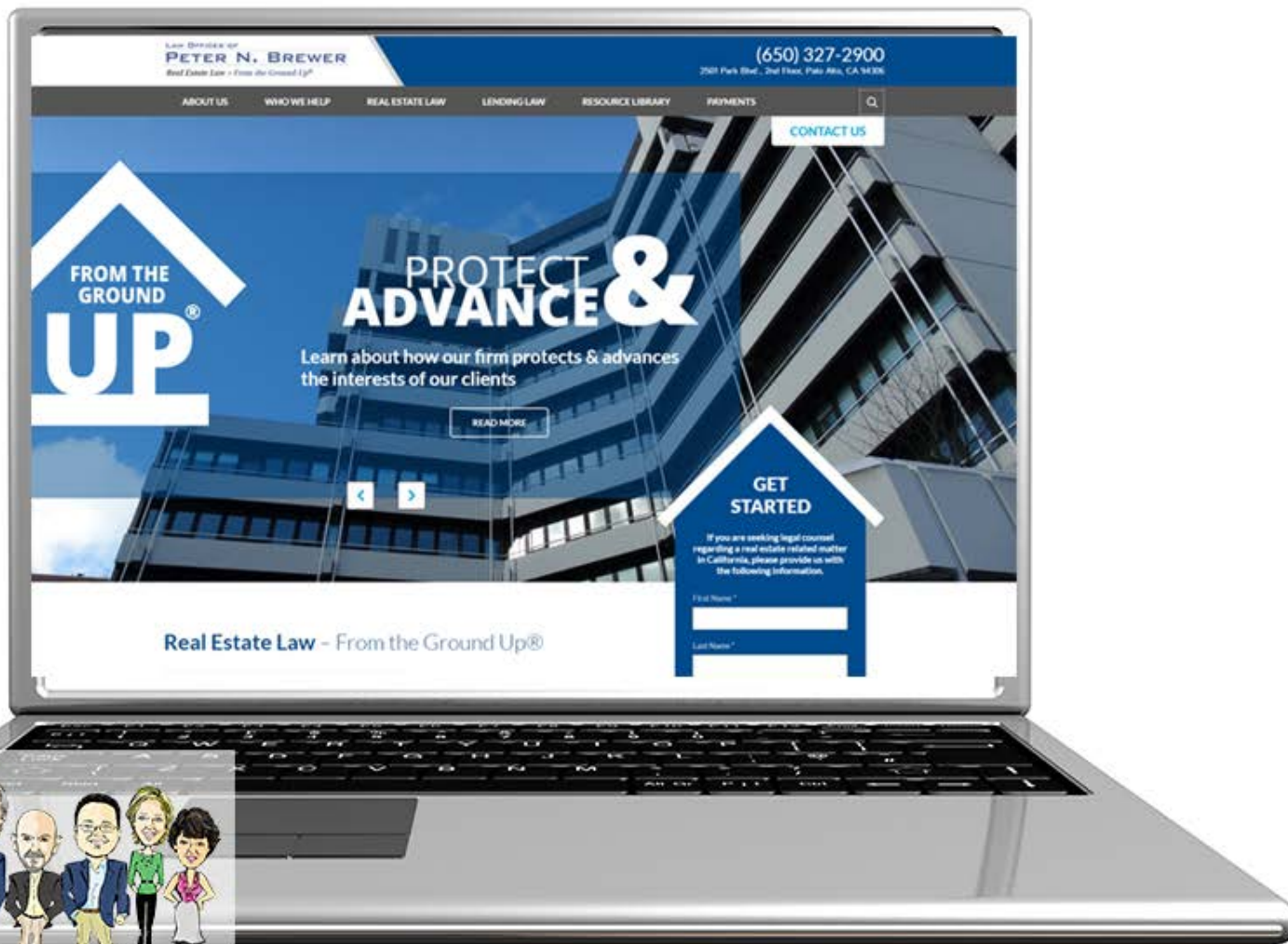
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# **LIVE EXAMPLE**

## **CITY OF PALO ALTO**



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**THURS, SEPT. 7<sup>TH</sup>**  
**9:30AM - 10:30AM**

**Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium**

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