City Zoning

Give students a chance to experiment with zoning by having them create their own city layouts. Place students into groups and give them four sheets of 8” x 12” colored paper (color and sizes may vary depending on your resources), and one piece of 11” x 17” sheet of white paper. Tell students that each color represents a different zone. (For example, green could be commercial, red residential, or yellow industrial.)

Explain that they need to create a city layout that includes four different types of zones. Students must use each color, but they can cut them into as many or as few pieces as they want depending on how they want to layout their city. After they have created a layout on the 11” x 17” piece of paper, have groups explain the rationale behind their layout.

After students have shared their zoning layout, have students think more deeply about zoning issues.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What are some of the benefits of having distinct zones? What are the drawbacks?
- What types of buildings would characterize each space?
- How can one zone affect another?
- What social and cultural issues can be related to zoning?
- What types of land use conflicts could affect a city’s developmental plan (e.g., agriculture vs. housing, single family vs. multifamily)?
- How can overly restrictive zoning controls affect a city’s residents?