

FBCI

Introducing Form-Based Codes

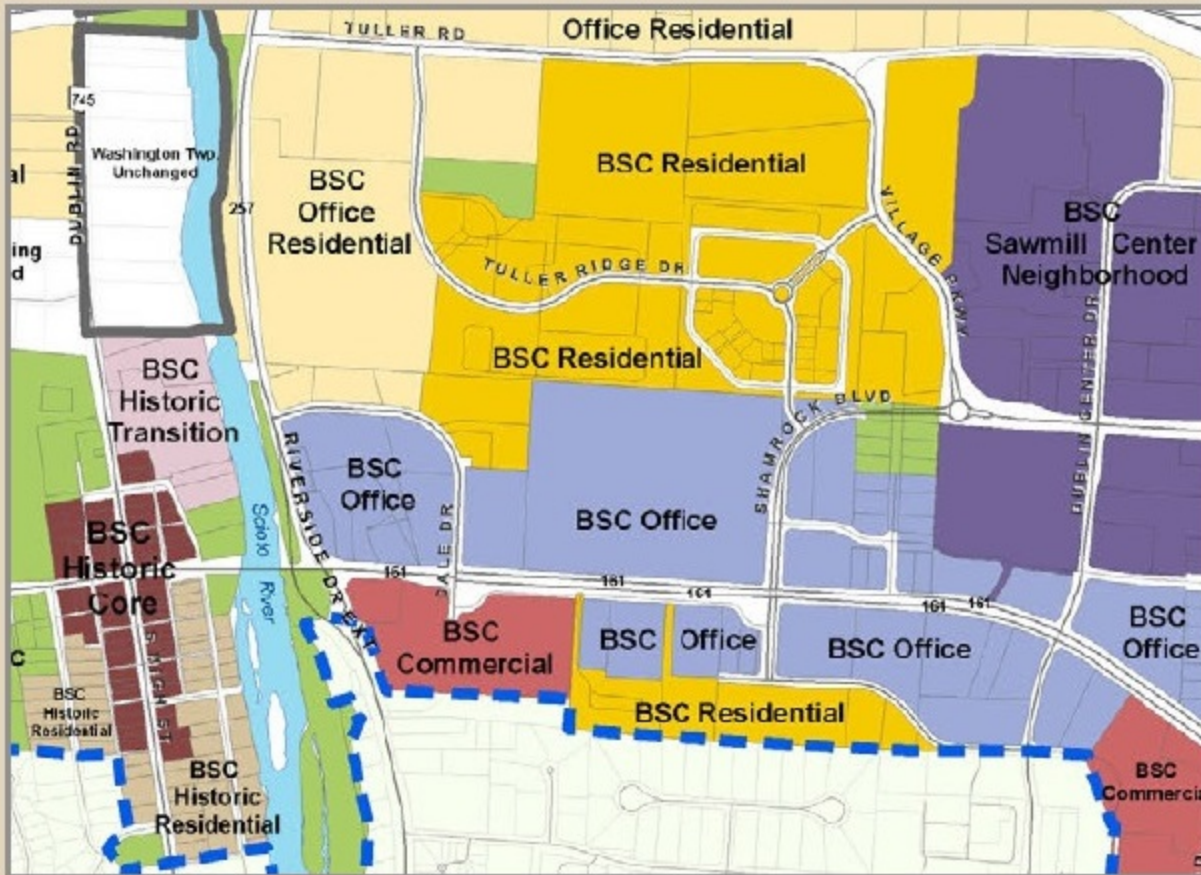
Form-based codes (FBCs) seek to restore time-tested forms of urbanism. They give unity, efficient organization, social vitality, and walkability to our cities, towns, and neighborhoods.



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FBCs are a response to the past half-century of urban development, when regulations have been more concerned with controlling land uses rather than shaping the physical form of our communities.



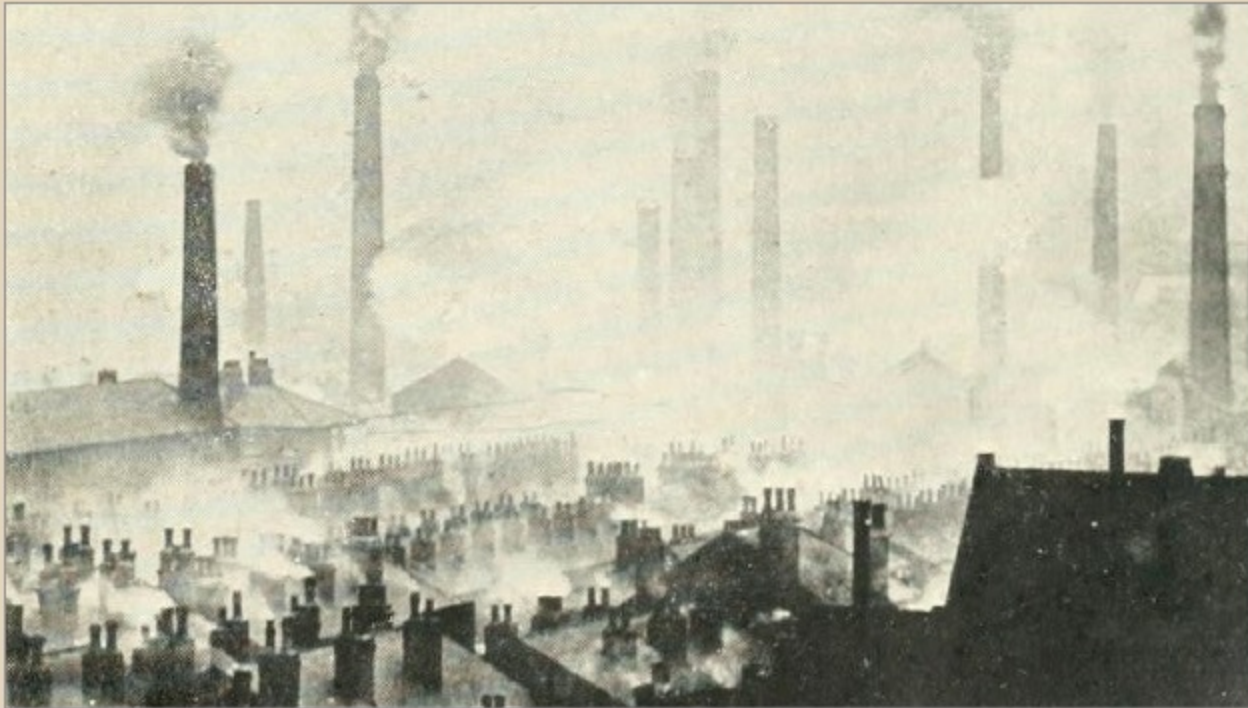
Maintenance and Repair Shops	2			
Paint and Body Repair Shops	2			
Parts and Accessories (tires, batteries, etc.)	2			
Towing Services				
Wrecking and Dismantling Yard (*) and Hulk Haulers (*)				
Bail Bonds				
Beauty and Barber Shops		2	1	2
Bed and Breakfast Inn (*)	2	2	2	2
Boats and Marine Accessories				1
Butcher Shop			2	1
Commercial Services (*)				
Communication Towers (*)				1
Convenience Store—Closed 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.				
Convenience Store—Open 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.				
Pet Daycare/Animal Training (*)	2			
Farm and Implements, Tools and Heavy Construction Equipment				
Farm Supplies				
Financial Institutions				
Fuel Oil and Coal Distributors				
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Appliances				
General Hardware, Garden Equipment, and Supplies				
General Retail Sales 12,000 sq. ft. or less (not otherwise regulated) (*)				
General Retail Sales greater than 12,000 sq. ft. (not otherwise regulated) (*)				



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The current system of zoning was devised to prevent undesirable juxtapositions, like factories next to homes, and incompatible scales of development.

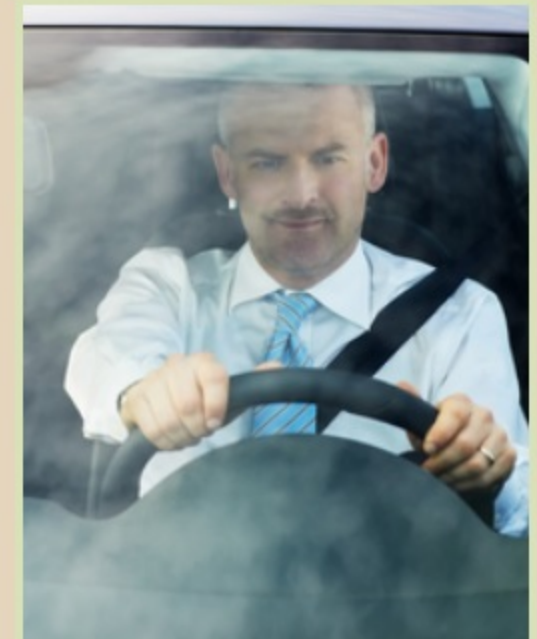


Separating incompatible land uses is sensible. But many diverse land uses are compatible and their unnatural separation can be harmful to communities. However, the rationale of separation became an unquestioned planning convention, one that needs closer examination.

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Standard zoning has led to communities being divided and separated into sectors, with zones for apartments, large houses, small houses, shopping, offices and industry. To move among these everyone has to drive (or be driven).



The unintended consequences have been sprawl . . .



Bing Maps, 2013 Microsoft Corporation

. . . the disassembling of our cities . . .

. . . populations divided by income . . .



... and the disappearance of
social gathering places.



Transportation planning with a single-minded concern with vehicular movement has further eroded community life.



Google, Digital Globe

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Post-war transportation theory conceives of three types of streets: collector streets (red) which feed vehicles from slow local streets (yellow) to high-speed arterials (purple) for distance travel. For new streets, this has become the norm across the United States.

Arterial street



Collector street



But this results in fragmented street systems. Little Mary might see her playmate's house a short distance away, but if she wishes to bicycle there, she may have to go surprising distances, including on fast collectors and arterials. For pedestrians, distances are tiring and streets don't connect as you expect.

Arterial street



Collector street



Communities often don't like the results of modern zoning and transportation planning. They want a better future, one where different planning professionals are not working at cross purposes, where planning integrates all the concerns of a community into a workable whole. Yet communities struggle to find a better way.

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Form-based codes offer a new way of thinking about development regulation and helping communities holistically shape their futures. They help to achieve desired urban forms, such as . . .



... vital centers supportive of businesses both big and small ...



... neighborhoods and streets that are safe and attractive for walking and bicycling ...

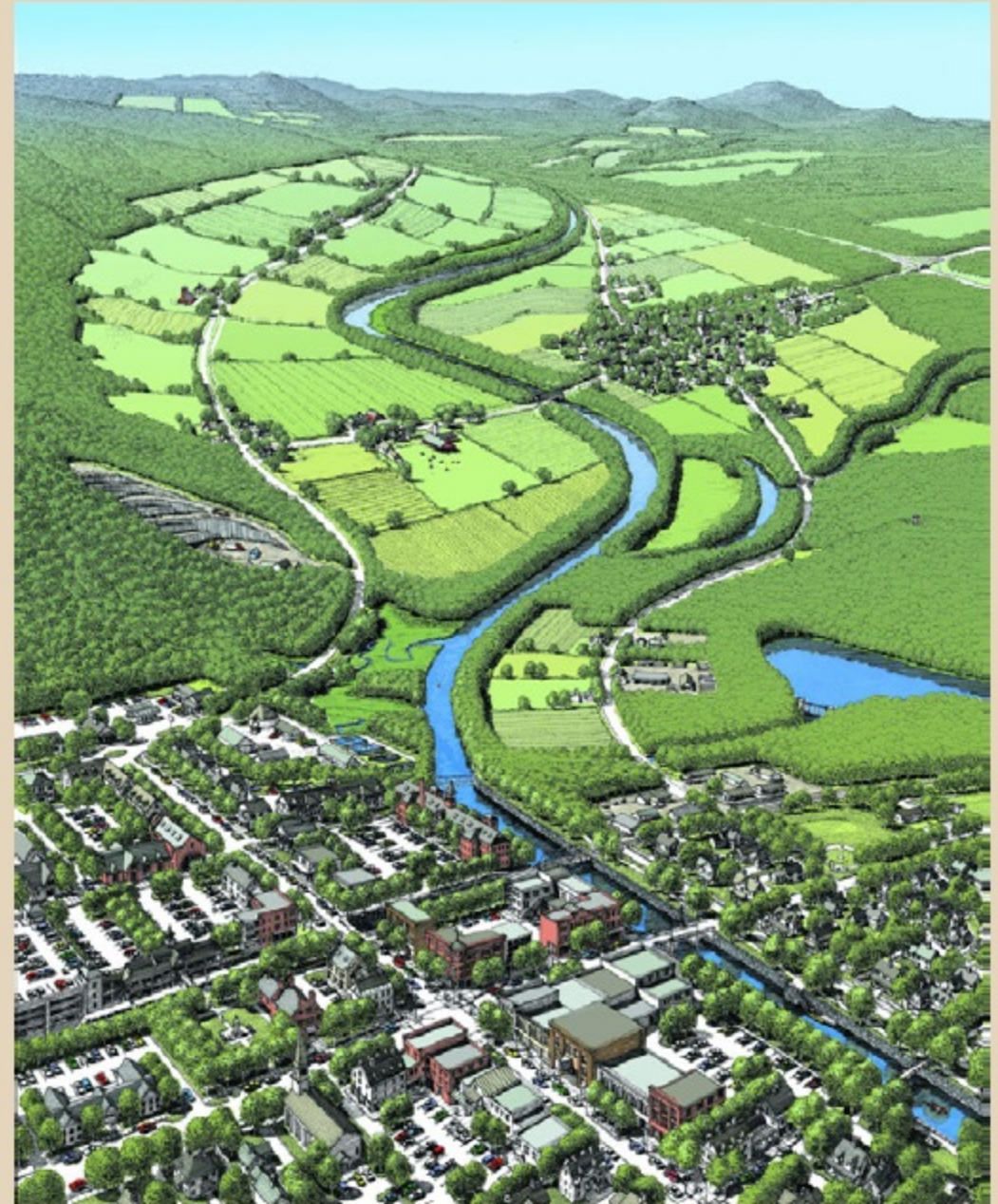
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... preservation of community history ...



... and protection of the environment.



Dodson & Flinker Associates

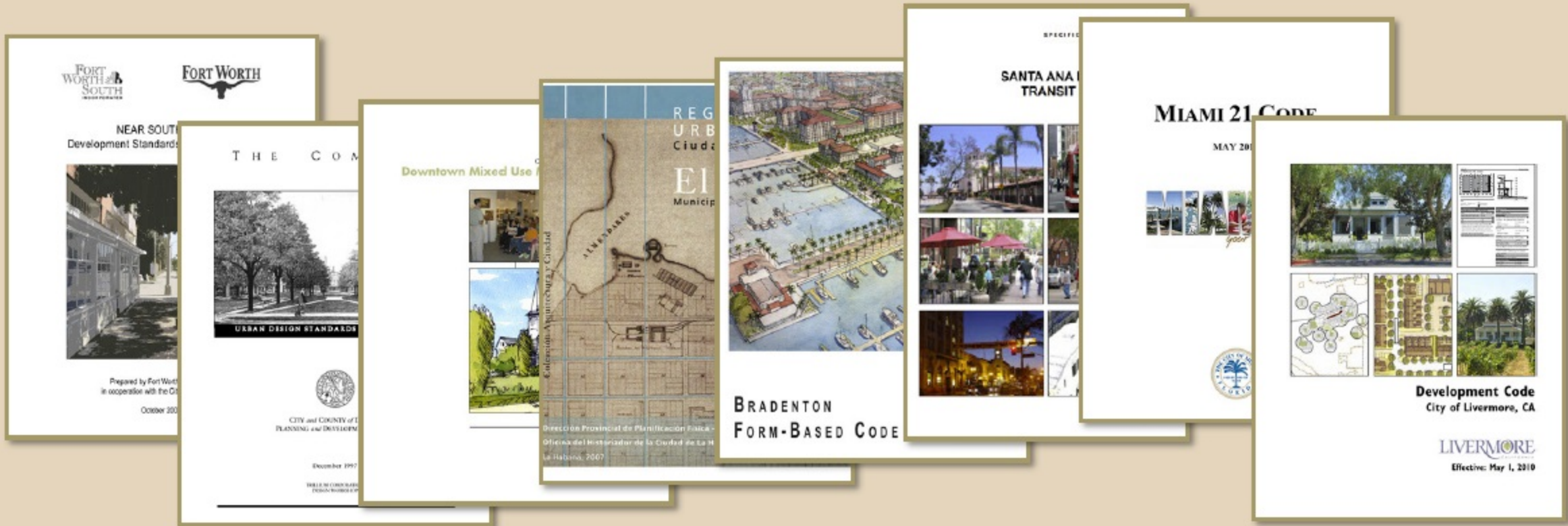


How do Form-Based Codes do this?

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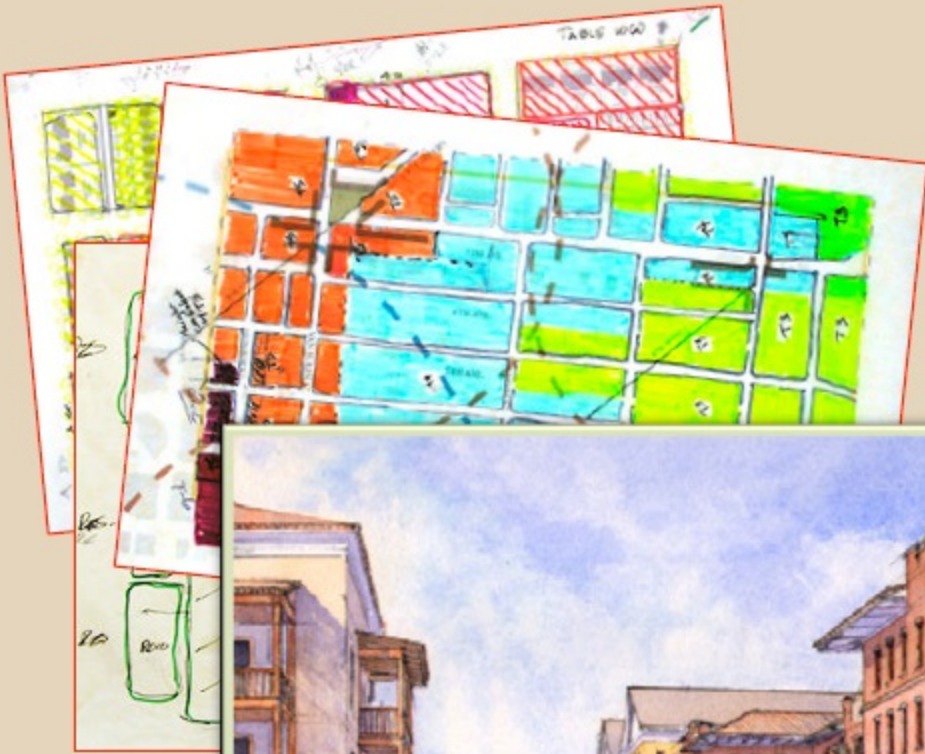
Informed by community needs and goals, FBCs are a set of design regulations that give form to the built landscape to achieve those aspirations.



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Creating a form-based code begins with asking a community to envision its future.



Concepts are not enough. A vision needs to show building types, the relationship of buildings to public spaces, types of streets and where they go, placement of parking, the size of blocks, and so forth.

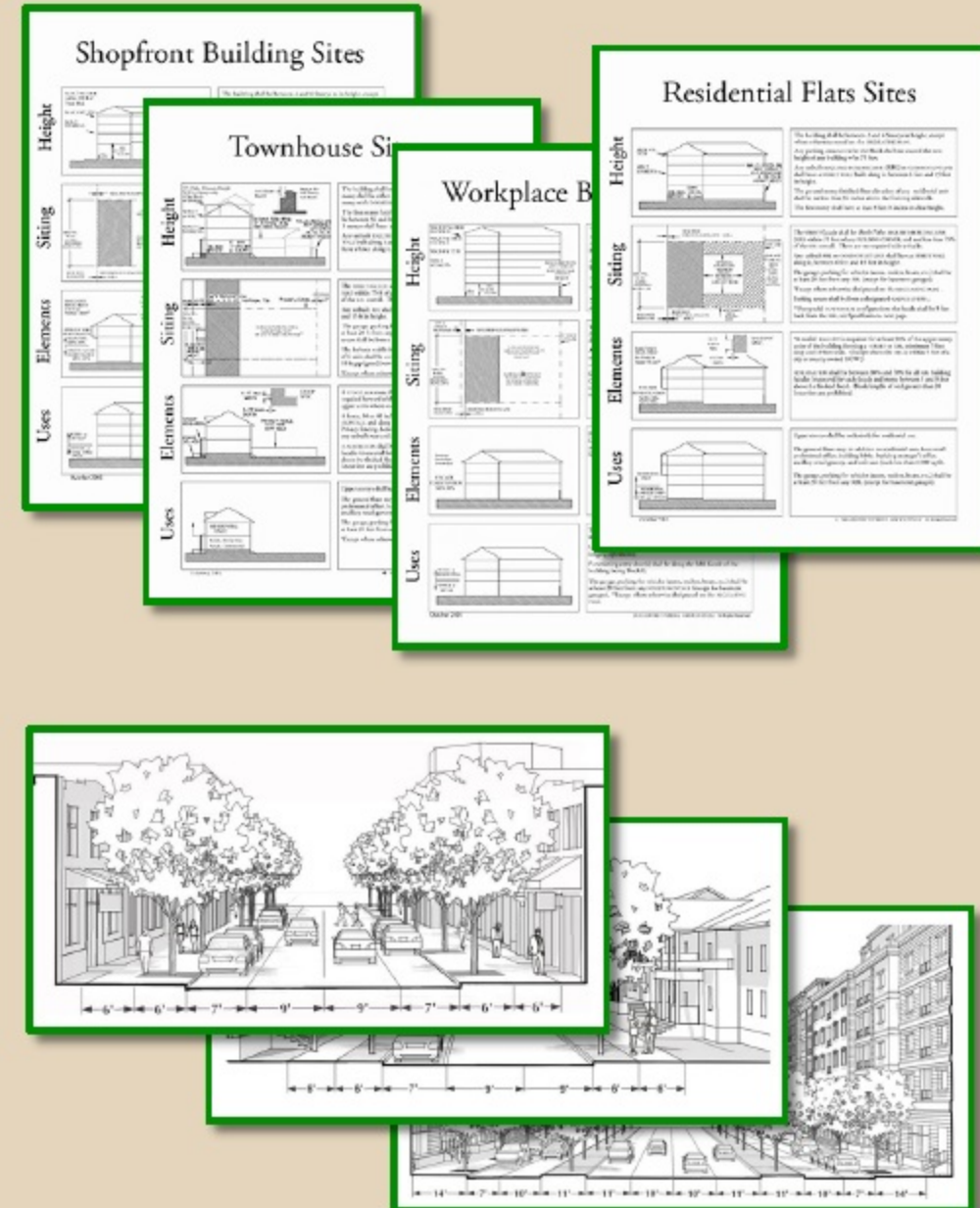
After this vision is drawn . . .



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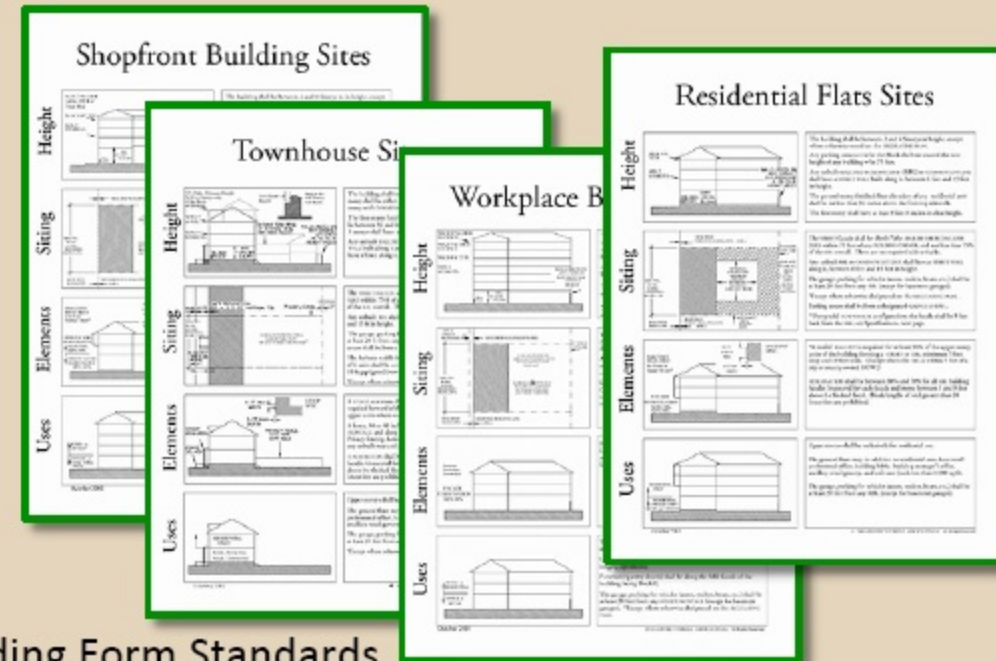
... a form-based code is drafted to implement it. The code contains standards that are regulatory not advisory. They are not mere design guidelines. They don't just propose, they require.



Form-Based Codes are composed of *Building Form Standards* and *Public Space Standards* mapped to a *Regulating Plan*.



Regulating plan



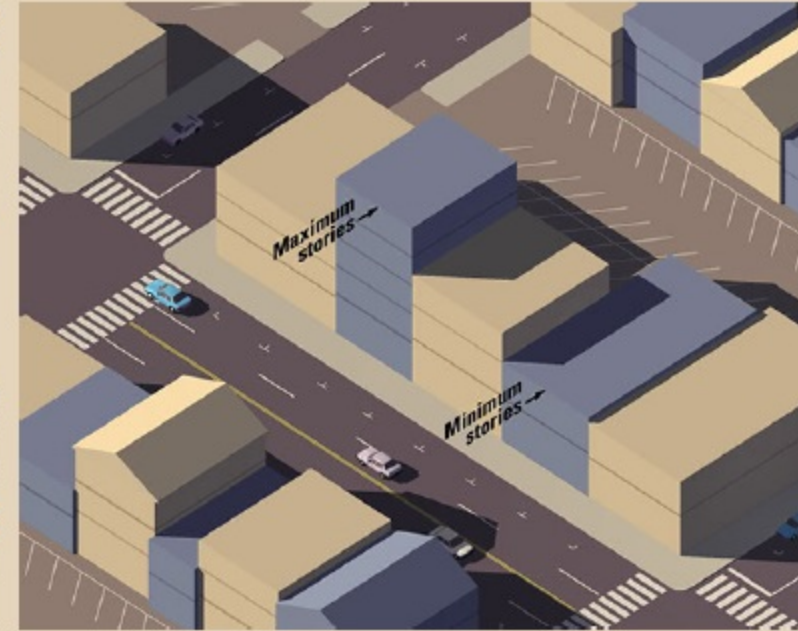
Building Form Standards



Public Space Standards



Building Form Standards regulate simple things like: how far buildings are from sidewalks, how much window area at minimum a building must have, how tall it is in relation to the width of the street, how accessible and welcoming front entrances are, and where a building's parking goes.



Building Form Standards can profoundly affect how public spaces like streets, squares, and parks are experienced and used. Building orientation is key.



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Building Form Standards can require buildings to have windows and welcoming entries. They should contribute to life on the sidewalk.



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Building Form Standards designate where parking should go. For example, the standards can require the placement of parking to the rear of buildings to ensure that it doesn't get between buildings and pedestrians.



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In the absence of such standards, building designs tend to become idiosyncratic, even eccentric. They cannot be assembled to create streets that are unified and pleasing public spaces.



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Some architects fear that *Building Form Standards* will restrict their creativity. In reality, the standards that require walkable urbanism do not limit architectural creativity and invention. They simply require that buildings support and shape the public spaces of a town or city.



Building Form Standards control the use of land in a more indirect way than standard zoning. They don't give the long and ever expanding lists of acceptable uses that zoning codes typically contain. Rather, they describe general uses. And they try to guide land use through building type. For example, if a community wants a pedestrian-friendly main street, its standards would prescribe shopfront or mixed-use buildings.



Require this building type . . .



. . . to avoid this

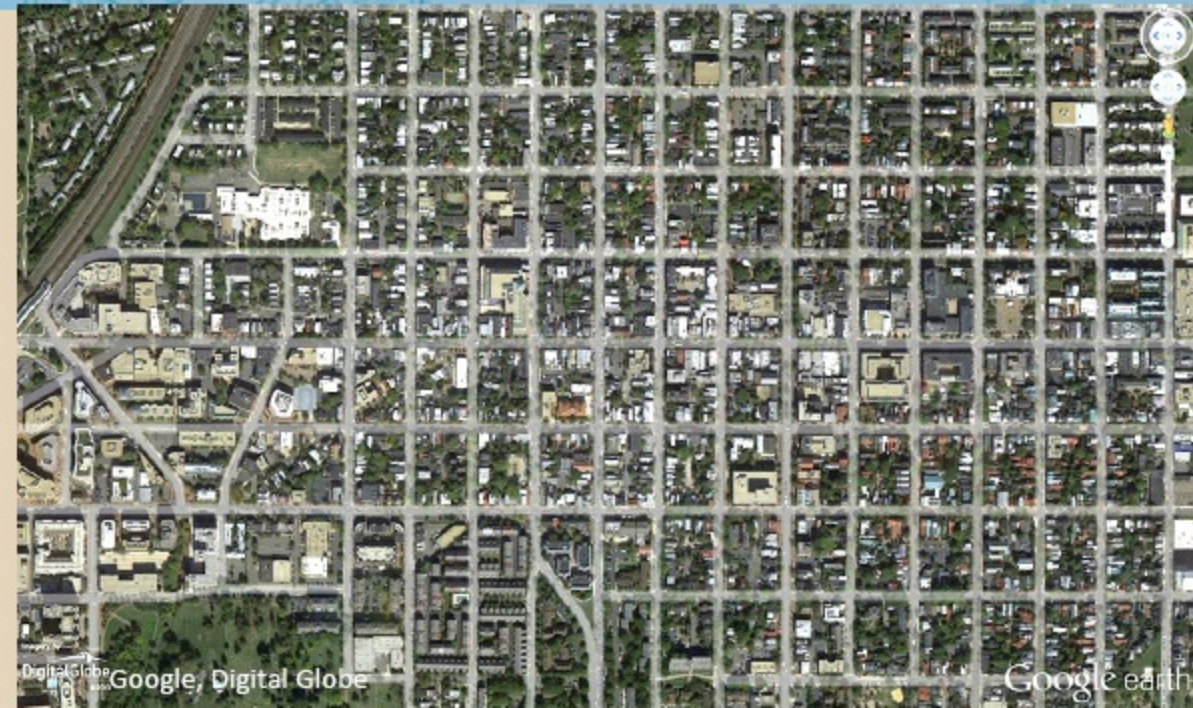
Public Space Standards regulate the form of streets and squares. Effective standards create comfortable and useful spaces for many activities, including walking, bicycling, driving, public transit, and a community's social life. They ensure that public space works for *everyone*, not just for the movement and storage of cars.



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Public Space Standards regulate not just individual streets, but also how streets interconnect and function as systems.



Google, Digital Globe

Google earth

Contemporary auto-oriented street system

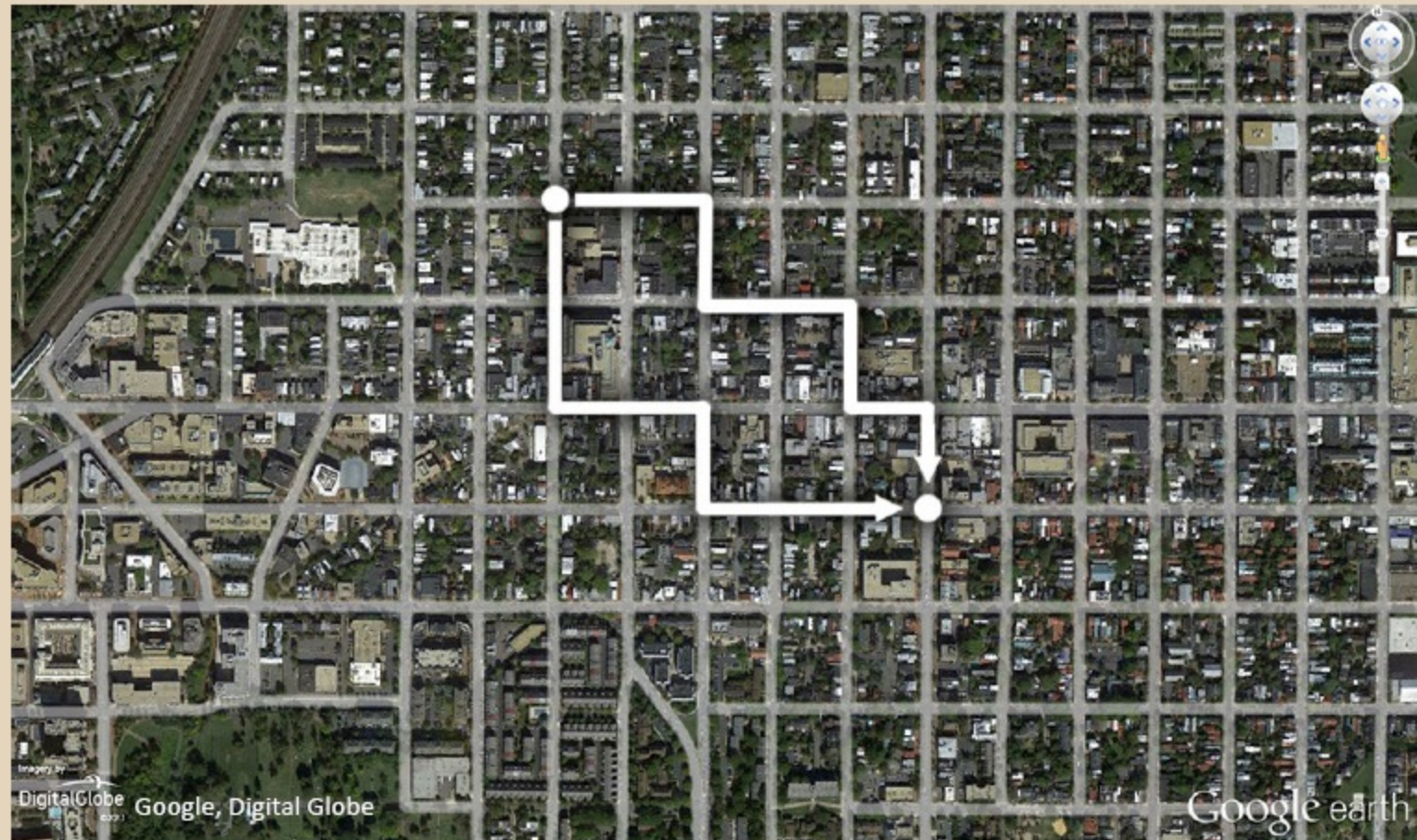
Walkable interconnected street system



Google, Digital Globe



Many FBCs regulate block dimensions to keep blocks small and streets interconnected. An interconnected street system allows more routes between locations. This encourages walking and exploration. Automobile traffic also gets lightly distributed over many streets rather than funneled onto a small number of super-sized streets.



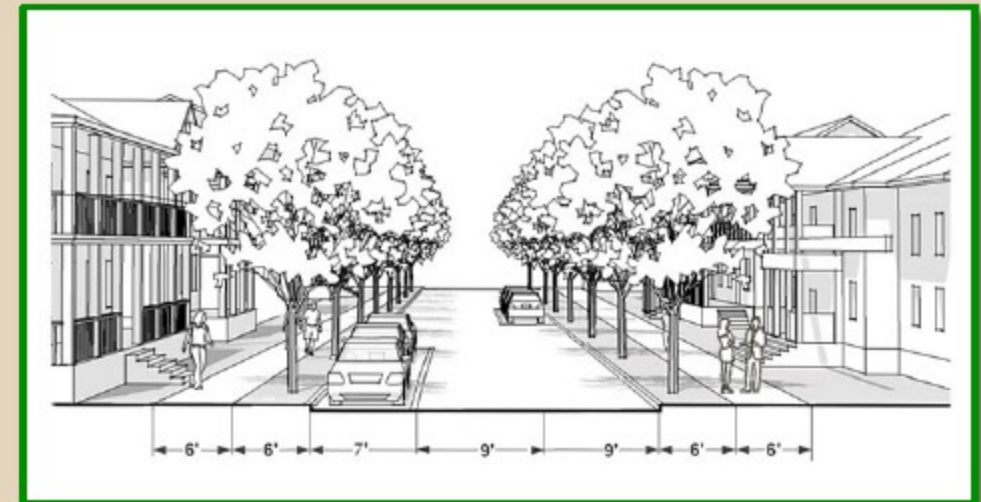
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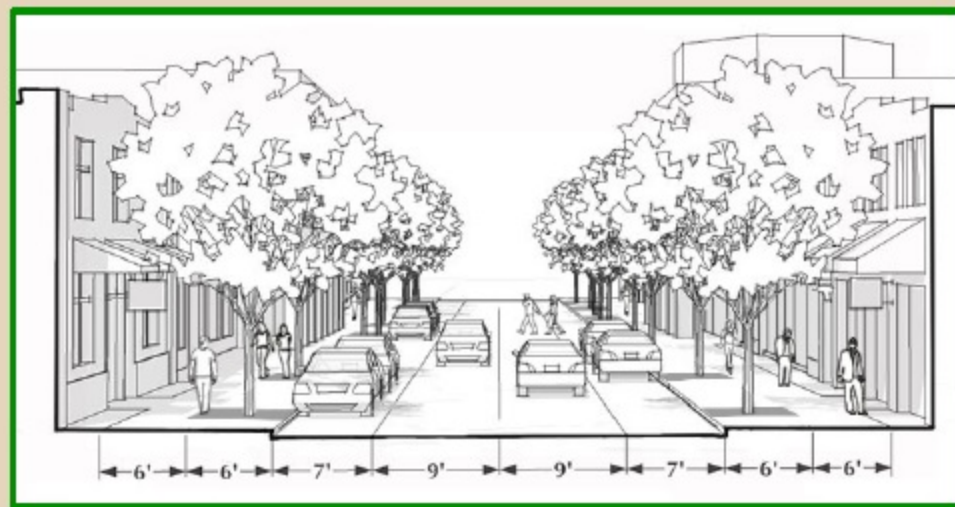
Urban designers can design streets to intersect at right angles or have interesting deflections and curves. FBCs make sure the block dimensions stay walkable. Street types are formulated not just as conduits for cars, but also as public spaces that invite walking, with a rich mix of buildings and uses.



A shopping street is a different kind of street than a boulevard, which is different from a residential street, which is different from a rear alley. There are several different types of streets. For this presentation we're only showing three.



Residential street



Shopping street

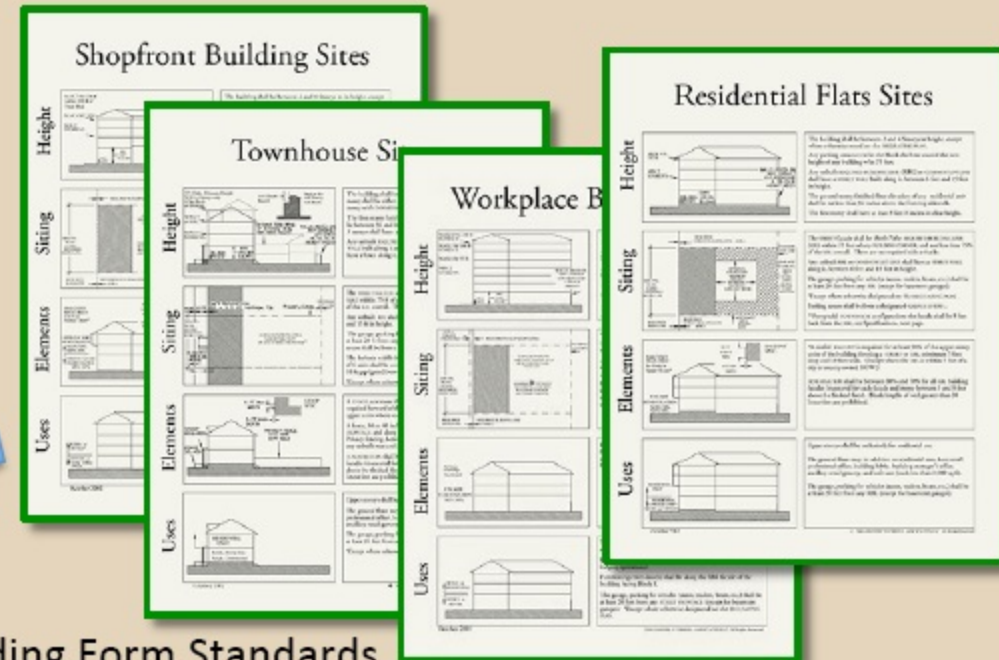


Multi-way boulevard

The different *Building Form Standards* and *Public Space Standards* are assigned to streets and blocks in a *Regulating Plan*. A *Regulating Plan* plays a key role in a form-based code.



Regulating plan



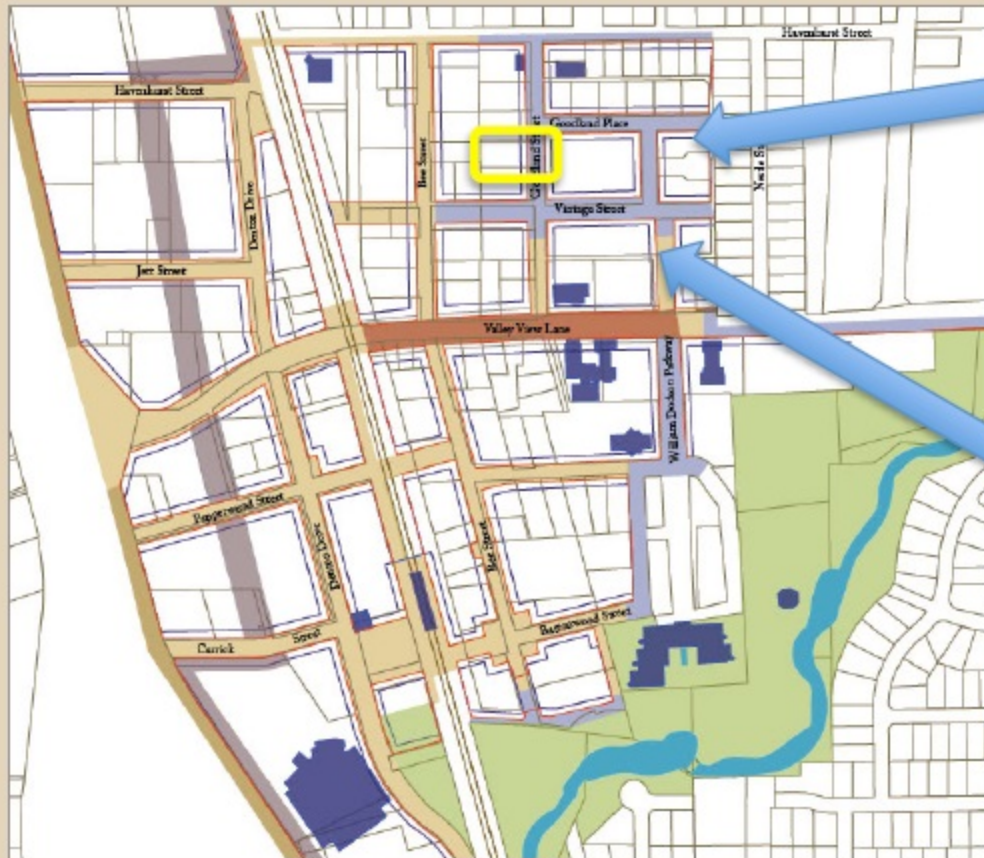
Building Form Standards



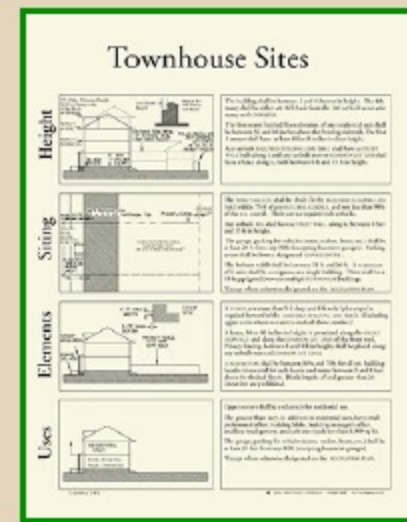
Public Space Standards



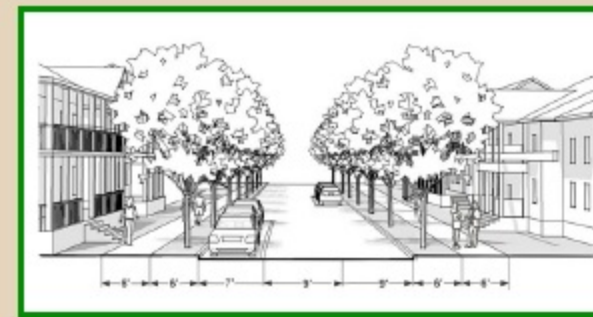
By looking at the *Regulating Plan*, a property owner can quickly see the design regulations governing his or her property. She knows what can be done on the site without having to study the entire code.



Regulating plan



Building Form Standard



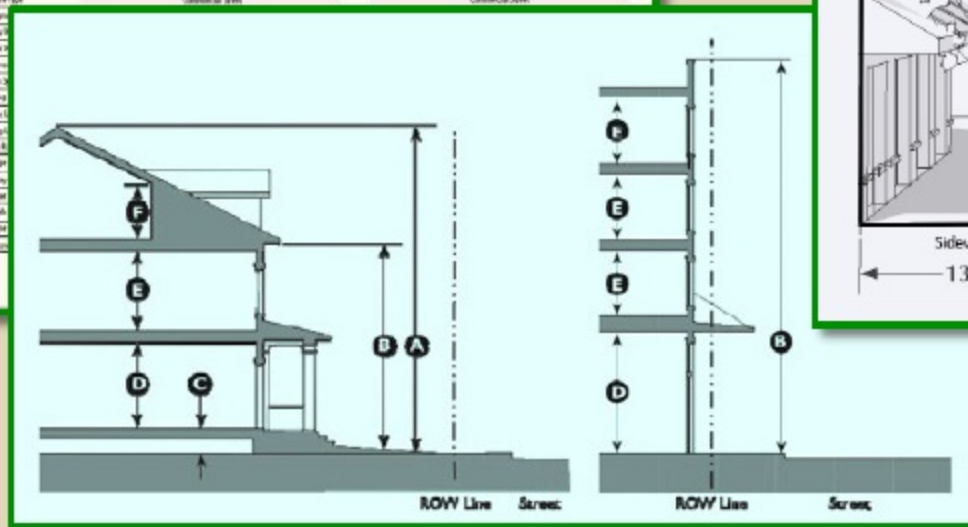
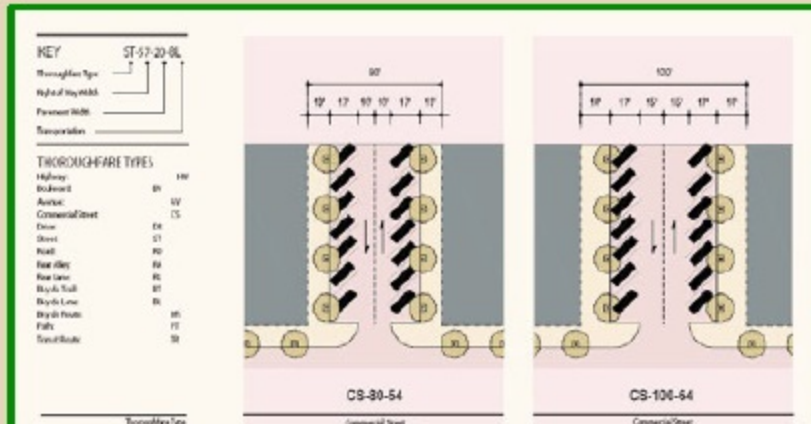
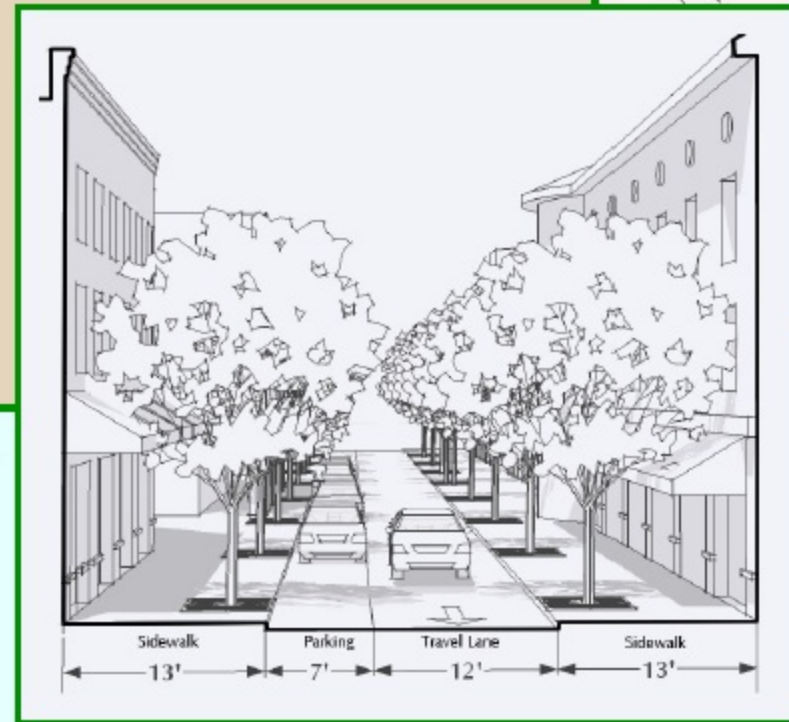
Public Space Standard



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Form-based codes, with their generous illustrations and simple diagrams, clearly convey a community's intentions for an area. FBCs are designed for quick and convenient understanding.



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By putting all the important decisions about urban form in simple regulations, FBCs cut through red tape and protracted review processes.



FBCs provide greater certainty of outcome. Their form-based regulations ensure that a community's vision will be more than wishful thinking. It will be enforced.

THE COLUMBIA PIKE SPECIAL REVITALIZATION DISTRICT FORM-BASED CODE

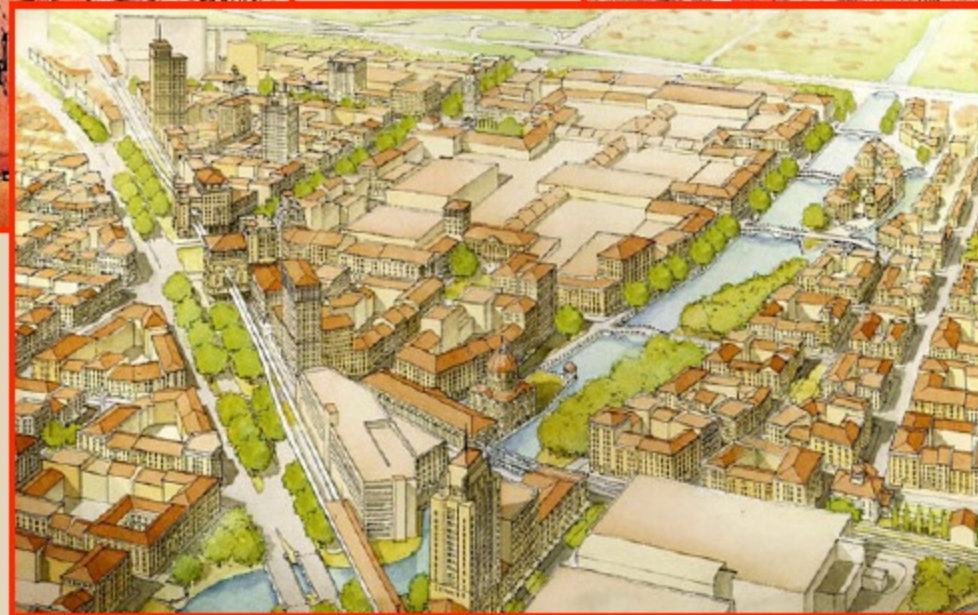
SECTION 20 (APPENDIX A) OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE
"CP-FBC" COLUMBIA PIKE—FORM BASED CODE DISTRICTS



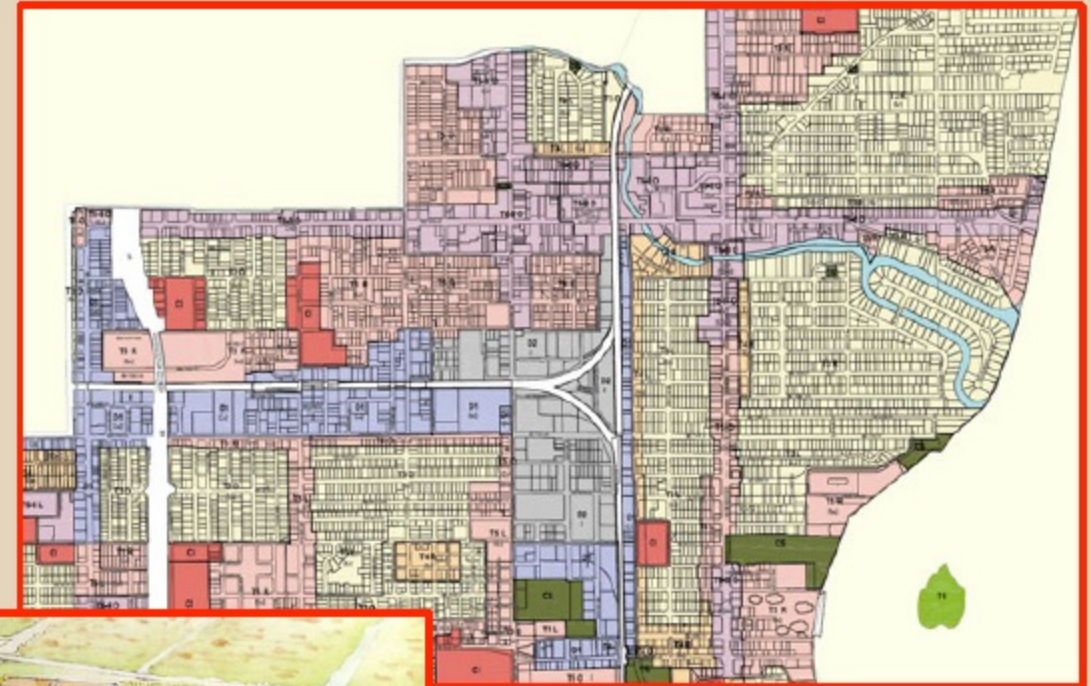
Communities have adopted form-based codes to guide development at many scales, from streets to neighborhoods to entire cities.



Street



Neighborhood

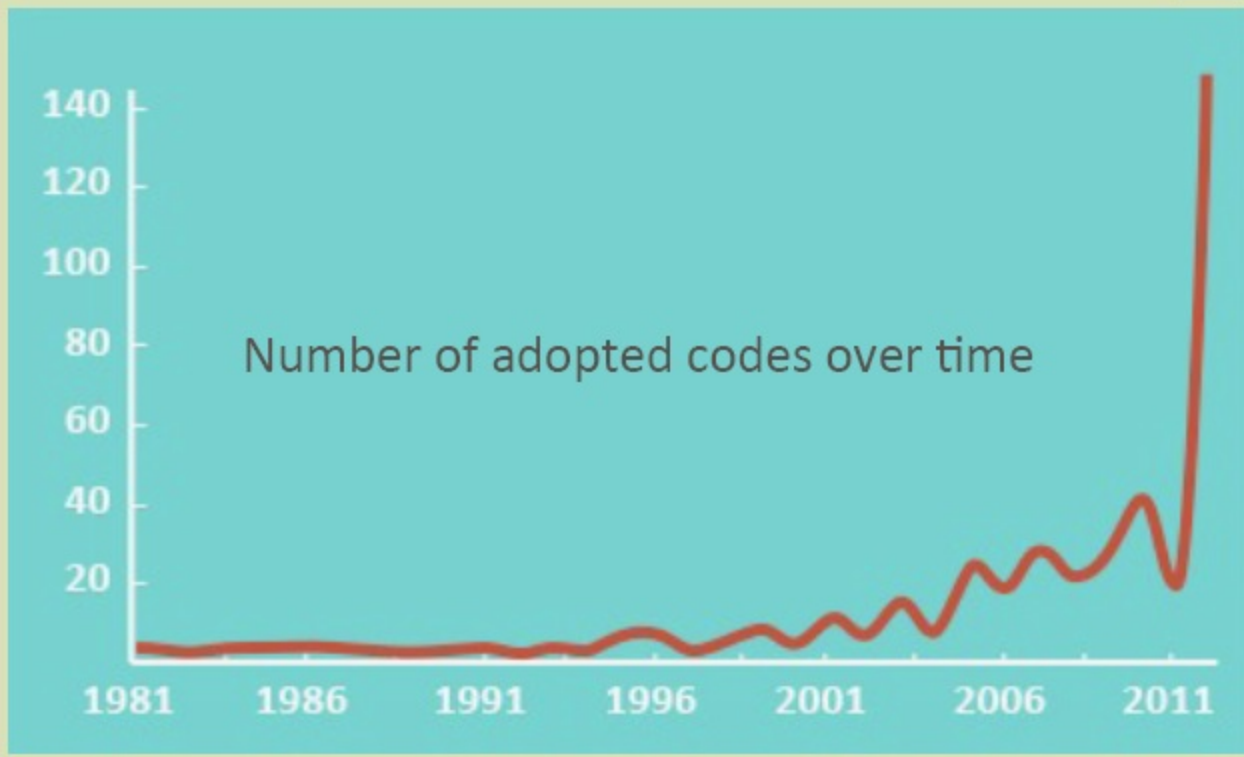


City

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The number of communities adopting form-based codes in North America is rapidly accelerating . . .



... including major cities like Miami, El Paso, and Cincinnati.

Cincinnati Form-Based Code



Adopted form-based codes are transforming communities across the United States.



Form-based codes have been described as the DNA of livable communities. Since 2008, I've been working with neighborhoods around the city, to make this powerful alternative to conventional zoning available to our Cincinnati neighborhoods.

Roxanne Qualls, Vice-Mayor, City of Cincinnati, Ohio



For our Columbia Pike corridor, creating the Form-based Code was a powerful vehicle to coalesce the aspirations of the community into an effective plan – one which both citizens and prospective developers can understand. . . Residents wanted to convert an auto-oriented strip into a walkable Main Street. Ten years later, we can see the transformation well underway.

Chris Zimmerman, County Board Member, Arlington County, Virginia



Nashville has adopted form-based codes for over 30 districts, corridors, and neighborhoods. The direct result has been an increase in property values and a much greater desire to develop in areas with FBC's due to the certainty that the code provides the developer and the community.

Rick Bernhardt, Planning Director, Nashville, Tennessee

Explore www.Form-BasedCodes.org to read articles, get answers to Frequently Asked Questions, see sample codes, and learn about instruction opportunities.



The screenshot shows the FBCI website's 'Courses & Webinars' page. At the top is the FBCI logo and a navigation menu with links for HOME, CODE RESOURCES, COURSES & WEBINARS, SAMPLE CODES, DRIEHAUS AWARD, RPPS, and ABOUT FBCI. Below the menu is a search bar. The main heading is 'FBCI Courses & Webinars'. Under 'Courses:', there is a list of three items: 'The ABC's of Form-Based Codes', 'FBC 201: Design Considerations', and 'FBC 301: Completing, Adopting'. Under 'Webinars:', there is a list of three items: 'LIVE Sept 14 SMALL TOWNS #2', 'FBCI Recorded Webinar Series', and 'Intro How FBCs Transform Cities & Towns'. A 'Pricing' link is also visible. The 'Introductory Course' section features 'FBC 101e: ABCs of FBCs On-Line' with a 'REGISTER' link and a description of the 8-hour web-based course. The 'Advanced Courses' section lists 'FBC 201: Preparing a Form-Based Code: Design Considerations' with three dates and locations, each with a 'REGISTER' link. A photograph of a group of people in a meeting is shown at the bottom left of the screenshot.

FBCI Form-Based Codes Institute

HOME CODE RESOURCES COURSES & WEBINARS SAMPLE CODES DRIEHAUS AWARD RPPS ABOUT FBCI Search

FBCI Courses & Webinars

Courses:

- [The ABC's of Form-Based Codes](#)
- [FBC 201: Design Considerations](#)
- [FBC 301: Completing, Adopting](#)

Webinars:

- [LIVE Sept 14 SMALL TOWNS #2](#)
- [FBCI Recorded Webinar Series](#)
- [Intro How FBCs Transform Cities & Towns](#)

[Pricing](#)

Introductory Course

FBC 101e: ABCs of FBCs On-Line
New web-based course now available! REGISTER

This 8-hour web-based course replicates FBCI's popular one-day ABCs of Form-Based Codes. It is a comprehensive introduction in which participants learn the principles and components of FBCs, as powerful regulatory tools to shape community form and character. The course gives a complete overview and solid grounding in the practice of creating and implementing form-based codes. The e-learning format allows you to take it conveniently from your home or office, in a single day or during a period of up to six weeks. The course is composed of eight segments arranged in sequential order, with recorded presentations, reading assignments and a virtual field exercise. Each of the eight segments builds upon the preceding one to create a comprehensive body of knowledge.

Note - FBC101e substitutes for The ABCs of Form-Based Codes. It fulfills the prerequisite for Advanced Courses.

Advanced Courses

FBC 201: Preparing a Form-Based Code: Design Considerations

December 4-5, 2013 in Pasadena, CA [REGISTER](#)
January 31 - February 1, 2013 in Cincinnati, OH [REGISTER](#)
March 25-26, 2013 in Tampa, FL [REGISTER](#)

Image Credits

(All images were provided by Steve Price unless noted below)

Slides:

- 01 *Regulating map, street cross section, building diagram*, Spikowski Planning Associates, Dover, Kohl and Partners *Townhouse Sites standards*, Ferrell Madden *Bird's eye 3d model*, Dover, Kohl and Partners
- 04 *Historic photograph*, public domain
- 06 *Children and driver photographs*, Veer.com
Traffic photograph, iStockphoto.com
- 07 *Aerial photograph*, Bing Maps, Microsoft Corporation
- 08 *Aerial photographs*, Bing Maps, Microsoft Corporation
- 10 *Satellite view*, Google/Digital Globe
- 11 *Satellite view*, Google/Digital Globe, *overlay* by Steve Price
- 12 *Satellite view*, Google/Digital Globe, *overlay* by Steve Price
- 16 *Bird's-eye drawing*, Dodson & Flinker Associates
- 19 *Perspective watercolor*, Dover, Kohl and Partners

- 20 *Illustrative plan*, Dover, Kohl and Partners
- 21 *Regulating map, street cross sections*, Spikowski Planning Associates, Dover, Kohl and Partners
Building form standards, Ferrell Madden
- 22 *Regulating map, street cross sections*, Spikowski Planning Associates, Dover, Kohl and Partners
Building form standards, Ferrell Madden
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- 32 *Satellite photograph*, Google/Digital Globe, *overlay* by Steve Price
- 33 *Satellite photographs*, Google/Digital Globe, *overlays* by Steve Price
- 34 *Street cross sections*, Spikowski Planning Associates, Dover, Kohl and Partners
- 35 *Regulating map, street cross sections*, Spikowski Planning Associates, Dover, Kohl and Partners

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