Form-Based Codes

Presented by the Institute for Public Administration
University of Delaware
What is a Form-Based Code (FBC)?

- A regulatory zoning structure that can help implement a community’s vision in a manner that is more predictable, transparent and user friendly.
- Standards are presented using a combination of written regulations, diagrams and graphic renderings.
What is a Form-Based Code (FBC)?

- Stronger focus is placed upon building form and placement, the scale of buildings, and the relationship of the building to the street and open spaces so as to create a more holistic regulatory framework.
- While land use is still regulated, it is superseded by those design elements mentioned above.
How are FBCs different?

While a standard zoning ordinance regulates use and setbacks, a FBC also stipulates what building types can be constructed, how and where they are placed, along with the form and scale of both open spaces, streets and other public places.
Why adopt a FBC?

Standard zoning has led to:
• Separation of uses
• Segregation of neighborhoods by income
• Automobile dependency

A FBC allows for:
• The greater integration of uses
• Multi-modal forms of transportation
The Development of a FBC - Visioning & Public Participation

• The first step towards developing a FBC is to identify what type and density of development the community would like to achieve.

• It is important to gain “buy-in” from community stakeholders, local elected officials and state regulatory agencies.

• A FBC should be developed as part of a Master Planning or Comprehensive Plan Update.
The Development of a FBC

Transect Approach – dividing the community into zones

Rural → Urban

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## Transect Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Small Town</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Urban Residential" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Small Town Residential" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Rural Residential" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Commercial Residential" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Commercial Small Town" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Commercial Rural" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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[UD Logo]

[DelDOT Logo]

[OSPC Logo]
## Transect Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Streets</th>
<th>Urban</th>
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<th>Rural</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">Urban Streets</a></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Urban Streets" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Small Town Streets" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Rural Streets" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Small Town</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="#">Urban Open Space</a></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Urban Open Space" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Small Town Open Space" /></td>
<td><img src="#" alt="Rural Open Space" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Street-Based Approach

This option regulates building placement, scale, and public-space standards by various types of streets (i.e. boulevard, main street, side street etc.)
Elements of a Form-Based Code

1. Regulatory Plan
   - Building-Form Standards
   - Public-Space Standards
   - Architectural Standards (Optional)
   - Landscaping Standards (Optional)

2. Code administration & approval processes

3. Glossary
Building-Form Standards

Designates detailed information about buildings such as:

- Frontage standards
- Setback
- Parking requirements
- Building height
Public-Space Standards

These standards specify such elements as:

• Design, widths and scale of streets
• Block layout and size
• Parking requirements & design
• Open space requirements & design
Advantages of the FBC Approach

1. Greater opportunities for community participation
2. A more “holistic” approach to community design
3. FBCs outline “what is expected” instead of “what is allowed”
4. More transparent and predictable development review process
5. Opportunities for economic development or infill redevelopment
Potential Barriers to FBC Implementation

• The rigorous visioning process to gain public and private support from within the community
• Lack of in-house planning staff
• Significant costs associated with drafting a FBC
Mid-Atlantic Form-Based Codes

• Columbia Pike Corridor FBC – Arlington, VA
Resources

For more information on the FBC approach, please visit the Form-Based Codes Institute.

Resources for this presentation may be found at:

- Better! Cities and Towns Online
- http://formbasedcodes.org/what-are-form-based-codes-0
- http://www.albionparkproject.org/Albionpark/Survey_files/010409-ALBION-A_1.jpg
- http://www.lslplanning.com/services/images/FBCExampleSmall_000.gif
- http://propimages.apartments.com/226251/001/BL010132.JPG
Sources (Images)

• Image #1 - http://www.flickr.com/photos/smart_growth/7852063132/in/photolist-cXRSWS-cXRT1m-cXRT5m-cXRTn9-cXRSNQ/lightbox/

• Image #2 - http://www.flickr.com/photos/smart_growth/7852064032/in/photolist-cXRSWS-cXRT1m-cXRT5m-cXRTn9-cXRSNQ/lightbox/


• Image #4 – http://www.newurbanism.org/Frame-416433-sprawlcosts-page416433.html?refresh=1219375854535
Sources (Images)

• Image #5 –

• Image #6 –
  http://www.haddonfieldnj.org/pdf/Chapter-135-FirstReading.pdf

• Image #7 –
Credits

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With support from:
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