

WHAT ARE FORM-BASED CODES ?

The Form-Based Codes Institute defines form-based codes as “[a] method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, and land uses secondarily.”

Form-based codes:

- go beyond conventional zoning by addressing the relationship of the building to the streetscape and the proper relationship between buildings in order to define a desired urban form
- are prescriptive, not reactive. (Conventional zoning tells you what you cannot do, Form-based codes, prescribe building form requirements to achieve the desired community vision.)
- integrate the built environment and land use by permitting only specific building types that are suited for the appropriate land use.
- compatibility of uses is achieved through design and orientation of buildings, instead of strict land use separation.
- provide for development that is compact, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly and transit supportive to create healthy vibrant communities.
- are graphic and designed to be easy to use and understand.

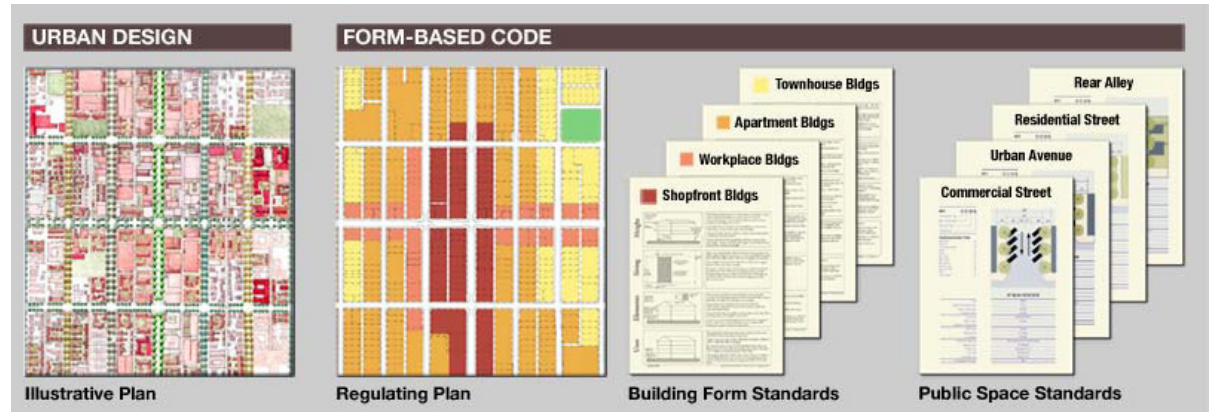


Diagram created by Steve Price

Conventional vs. Form-based Zoning

Conventional	Form based
Land Use-based, dividing a land area into zoning districts with segregated land uses.	Allows a mixture of compatible land uses, establishes complete neighborhoods or street corridors, that have consistent character.
Uses parameters such as setback, height, density, and floor area ratios to create uniformity throughout a district.	Promotes development diversity by tying Land use and building form together. Standards ensure that the building form relates to the streetscape.
Focuses on land use and dimensional requirements.	Focuses on the building form and how it relates to the streetscape. Form-based codes often prescribe build-to-lines where buildings are required to be set a specific distance from the front lot line in order to define the streetscape.
Focuses on the lot and with limited attention to the streetscape. Uses minimum setbacks to create building envelopes; the ultimate location and form of the building within the envelope is unpredictable.	Considers the building form as it relates to the streetscape.
Has limited ability to effect change, as it focuses on what type of development is not desired.	Effects change by describing the desired urban form.