



What is a Form-Based Code?

A Form Based Code is a land development regulatory tool (Zoning) that places primary emphasis on the urban form, the relationship of buildings to each other, to the street, and to open spaces - rather than a code that is based primarily on land use. The Form Based Code:

- ∞ De-emphasizes use and density.
- ∞ Recognizes uses may change but the building remains.
- ∞ Encourages mixed use and a mix of housing types.
- ∞ Relies on design concepts and patterns intended to preserve the best of the community, creating more livable environments and spaces.
- ∞ Achieves compatibility of uses through design and orientation, instead of strict land use separation.
- ∞ Gives more attention to the streetscape and the design of the public realm.
- ∞ Is based on a design focused public participation process.

The basic principle is that design is more important than use. It includes simple and clear graphic prescriptions for building height, how a building is placed on site, and how building elements are used to control development. Form-based codes are proving to be particularly adept as regulating new infill development in existing residential areas to respect existing character/context and prevent new out-of-scale development. Form-based codes support mixed use neighborhoods with a range of housing types by focusing more on form, size, and placement of buildings and parking, and less on land use and density.