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ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION

MONDAY, JANUARY, 14, 2013

4:00PM

ALTA COMMUNITY CENTER/LIBRARY

(across from the Rustler Lodge)

10361 East Highway 210

801.363.5105

- 1) Introduction and welcome from the Chair
- 2) Approval of minutes from the October 10, 2012, November 5, 2012 and December 10, 2012 Planning Commission meetings.
- 3) Further discussion of height, coverage, density and appearance in the base facilities zone. The discussion will include further review of form based codes and which "tool", form based, traditional zoning or a hybrid might be the best way to accomplish identified goals for the base facilities zone
- 4) Introduction of discussion on amending the interconnect statement in the General Plan.
- 5) Date of next meeting.

Alta Town Council members are invited to the meeting; as such there may be a quorum of the Town Council.

Alta Planning Commission Minutes
January 14, 2013, 4pm
Community Center, 10361 E. Hwy 210, Alta, Utah

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Jon Nepstad, Joan Degiorgio, Rob Voye, Roger Bourke, and Skip Branch.

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner (staff), Claire Woodman (staff), Katie Lewis (counsel), Lauren Reber (counsel), Mayor Tom Pollard.

Members of the public: Onno Wieringa, Marcus Dippo, Linda Johnson, Merebea Danforth, Jeff Kramer, and Chad Potts (videographer).

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR.

Joan Degiorgio: Opened the meeting and asked for introductions around the room.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 10, 2012, NOVEMBER 5, 2012, AND DECEMBER 10, 2012 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS.

October 10, 2012 Planning Commission Minutes

Motion: Mr. Branch made a motion to adopt the October 10, 2012 Planning Commission minutes.

Second: Mr. Voye

All members voted in a verbal affirmation.

November 5, 2012 Planning Commission Minutes

Motion: Mr. Bourke made a motion to adopt the November 5, 2012 Planning Commission minutes.

Second: Mr. Nepstad

All members voted in a verbal affirmation.

December 10, 2012 Planning Commission Minutes

Roger Bourke: Would like to have the map that Mr. Wieringa showed at this meeting with Master Development Plan project locations made available to the Town.

Motion: Mr. Voye made a motion to adopt the December 10, 2012 Planning Commission minutes.

Second: Mr. Bourke

All members voted in a verbal affirmation.

FURTHER DISCUSSION OF HEIGHT, COVERAGE, DENSITY, AND APPEARANCE IN THE BASE FACILITIES ZONE. THE DISCUSSION WILL INCLUDE FURTHER REVIEW OF FORM BASED CODES AND WHICH "TOOL", FORM BASED, TRADITIONAL ZONING OR A HYBRID MIGHT BE THE BEST WAY TO ACCOMPLISH IDENTIFIED GOALS FOR THE BASE FACILITIES ZONE.

Joan Degiorgio: Since January 2012 this item was identified as a top priority. The Planning Commission has concerns with both coverage and height. Could Form Based Code (FBC) be a tool to help us implement our ideas? Asked Mr. Guldner to go over the bullet points he provided in his memo (see attached).

John Guldner: We are looking at the five areas in the Base Facilities Zone (BFZ) with regards to height and coverage, specifically less height and more coverage. We are getting distracted with FBC, because we still have to decide what we want. We are already doing FBC; we already have mixed use and have defined areas with a general idea of what the form would look like. We also do not allow residential development but could allow residential units for sale on the top floor.

- Came up with seven bullet points to look at and amend for the BFZ. Mr. Guldner started reading through the bullet points in his memo.

Roger Bourke: There was a 17 foot tower approved for the Snowpine Lodge, why is there a 25 foot height limitation above the road suggested? Mr. Bourke is worried about a one size fits all solution and that this does not address future expansion.

Joan Degiorgio: The Snowpine Lodge, Rustler Lodge, Alta Lodge are all in a category, the Alta Peruvian Lodge, Goldminer's Daughter are in another category, and then everything else is in yet another category.

- Instead of worrying about what goes on inside the building, we are worrying about what the building looks like.

Skip Branch. Intrigued about the conversation about residential housing.

- Feels that we are closer to language which enhances the dignity of responsible future growth.
- Likes the phrases "specific urban form," "building facade and public realm," and "character of development."

Joan Degiorgio: FBC gives direction about what the outside looks like. Want to specify some direction about these elements and keep it simple, straightforward, and understandable.

Jon Nepstad: We have got the principle, the spirit, and intent. It is good to explore FBC but now we can do what we need to do. How would we identify specify individual parcels for codification?

Katie Lewis: Amend zoning map and not call out the parcels by name.

John Guldner: Recommends keeping a definitive setback that way we always know we can get Snowcats through.

There was discussion on "stepback."

Rob Voye: The current height of GMD feels right to me.

Joan Degiorgio: Break it down based on zones. Start with "Zone A:" Snowpine Lodge, Rustler Lodge, and Alta Lodge. Should height above road be 17 feet or 25 feet?

- John Guldner: 25 feet is the magic number according to the design the Snowpine is interested in pursuing.
- Joan Degiorgio: There is concern with blocking views
- John Guldner: Do not want to see mechanical things on rooftops, but those elements can be hidden.
- Roger Bourke: Could set height at 17 feet and if the developer wants to exceed they could ask for variance.
- Katie Lewis: Variances are granted because of hardship; that is not the right concept for this. Could specify 17 feet for height, but if the developer wants 25 feet of height they would have to go through a review process. The Planning Commission could do that with any of these steps; have a baseline and if the developer wants to increase it, they need to prove their case.
- Jon Nepstad: Doesn't this introduce a lot of subjectivity?
- Katie Lewis: Could put standards in there, limit subjectivity by having a final maximum. The degree of subjectivity has to be something that the Town feels comfortable with.
- John Guldner: The more definitive it is, the nicer it is for us and the developer to work with.
- Joan Degiorgio: We're looking at a range of 17-25 feet. Let's solicit input from existing lodge owners from "Zone A".

Joan Degiorgio: Let's discuss coverage and setbacks.

- John Guldner: If we have no coverage and a 15' setback that could be 90% coverage for the Alta Peruvian Lodge. Less coverage for lodges with less acreage.
- Joan Degiorgio: At a minimum we need a 15' setback.
- Roger Bourke: Good rationale for having setbacks on sides, but not for front and back.
- John Guldner: Assume that UDOT will help determine setback on front.
- Joan Degiorgio: There is agreement on front of the property setbacks, 15 foot setbacks on the sides, however there is a question about the 15 foot setback on the back, and question about coverage. Put that on the agenda and have conversation with lodge owners about this issue.

Skip Branch: There is so much information we do not have. We should investigate what others have done.

Linda Johnson: Would be willing to put the Planning Commission in touch with ex-Town Manager of Vail. Ms. Johnson is working with the FCOZ process and snow removal is a problem and also the consideration of every application with a special application process is very burdensome. It is worthwhile to have rules so you know what you can do to get approved.

Katie Lewis: What comparisons are we trying to make? Once we have that idea then we can compare.

Jon Nepstad: These other places are always revisiting these issues constantly and always evolving.

Joan Degiorgio: At the next meeting we will discuss "Zone A" as it relates to the following:

- Discussing a height restriction between 17-25 feet
- How do we figure out coverage? We know that snow removal is important, but what other criteria should we establish for why it makes a difference?
- How do we have a south-side view that is not overwhelming?

Roger Bourke: Looking at coverage, are the hotels out of balance? 75% coverage for the Alta Peruvian Lodge is different than 75% coverage for Snowpine. Would like to see consistency in development. Percentage meets the fairness test but does that result in the community we want?

Tom Pollard: In reality, with the economy of the ski industry it does not seem likely that anyone would come in and build, for example, a 3,000 room hotel at the Peruvian.

- Onno Wieringa: Considering capacity and getting choked off by Snowbird, maybe a 3,000 room hotel full of destination skiers that support the local economy is not a bad thing.

Marcus Dippe: Brought up slope issues in "Zone A."

- Tom Pollard: Slope over 30% counts against net developable acreage
- John Guldner: Slope over 30% does not count against coverage though. Slope requirements are different in the BFZ than in a FR zone. We will look into how it factors into net developable acreage and density.

INTRODUCTION OF DISCUSSION ON AMENDING THE INTERCONNECT STATEMENT IN THE GENERAL PLAN.

Roger Bourke: Frustrated we have not discussed this item yet.

Joan Degiorgio: Discuss this next meeting before the BFZ discussion. Staff can resend out the statements on interconnect.

Jon Nepstad: What is the desired outcome of this discussion?

Roger Bourke: Need a common definition of interconnect.

Jon Nepstad: Might need to differentiate between "interconnect" and "interconnecting."

Linda Johnson: Should look at article in Outside Magazine that shows potential interconnecting lifts.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

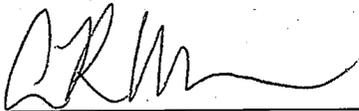
The next meeting date was tentatively set for February 11th, 3pm, at the Alta Community Center.

Roger Bourke: Concerned about rate of progress, should either meet more or longer.

Mr. Branch moved to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Voye seconded the motion with all Planning Commission members that were present voting in the affirmative. The motion was carried.

The content of the minutes is not intended, nor are they submitted, as a verbatim transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

These minutes were passed and approved on the eleventh day of February, 2013.



Claire R. Woodman
Assistant Town Administrator

January 8, 2013

Memo to the Alta Planning Commission

Re: Base Facilities Zoning and Form Based Code

Hi All,

I have been concerned that we have been sidetracked discussing changing to a Form Based Code (FBC) instead of focusing more specifically on desired amendments for the Base Facilities (base) properties. In our last meeting we agreed to discuss the FBC further at this upcoming meeting. I just re-read a lot of information about FBC's from different sources and I was elated to see that we can do both. We are already utilizing FBC principles in the base area.

Proponents of the FBC like to totally separate that plan from traditional Euclidean Zoning. It doesn't really work like that in the real world. Many codes use both zones simultaneously or mix them in a hybrid.

There are a million web sites discussing and describing FBC's. There is no way to go beyond scratching the surface right now. Key concepts and words related to FBC's are urban, concentrated, walk able, transit oriented, attractive, welcoming...

I like the Wikipedia description of FBC, because it's pretty neutral. It is attached.

Also attached is a one page description of FBC's from Flagstaff, AZ.

My favorite sentence from Wiki, and directly transferrable to us is a quote from a husband wife team, Duany and Plater-Zyberk, credited as creating one of the first successful FBC communities, Seaside Florida.

Re: their development they realized *"that designing an entire town would be an overwhelming task and would in the end lack the visual serendipity that only comes from myriad creative minds at work, they created a design code that established physical standards mapped to parcels, and then invited developers and architects to put their own distinctive stamp on their projects-but operating within those standards"*.

Again, that is what we have been doing and exactly what we need to refine for the base area by adding more specific language for the desired changes and diagrams, as used in FBC's. I especially like the reference to visual serendipity, which is us in a nutshell. Now we just need to refine that visual serendipity among the other changes desired for the base area.

The five properties in the base area, our "mapped parcels", start out defined by "form", e.g., height, coverage and location on the lot as determined by setbacks. They already enjoy mixed uses; hotel rooms, restaurants, lounges, ski shops, general stores, employee housing, etc.

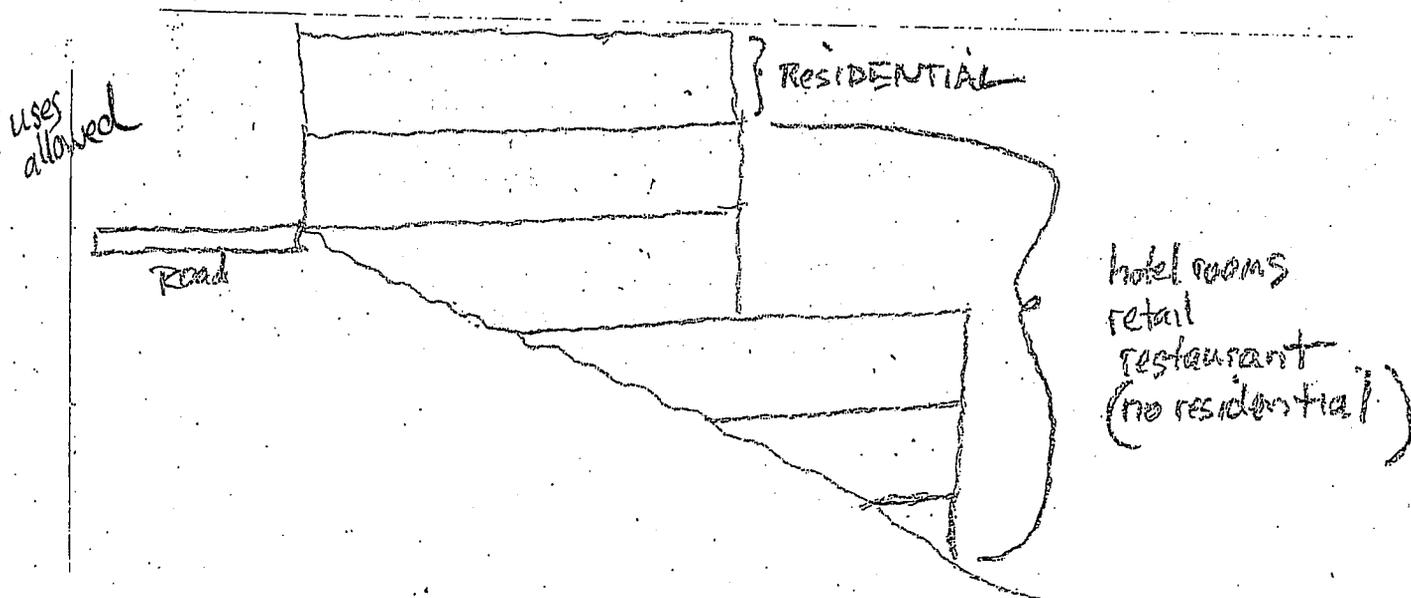
A couple of years ago the Town prohibited residential uses in the base area. There is now support for allowing residential uses, at least for a portion of hotel buildings, back in the base area.

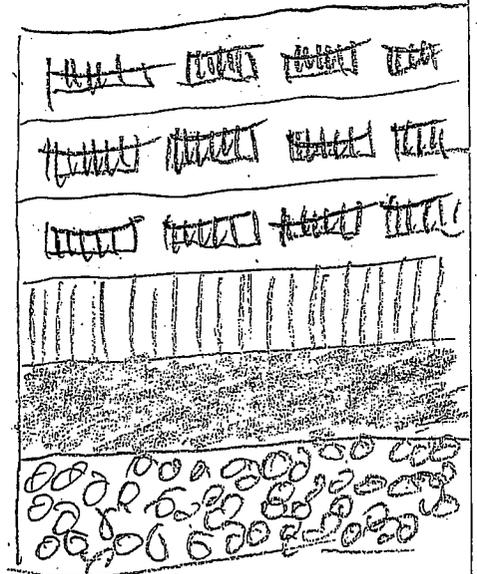
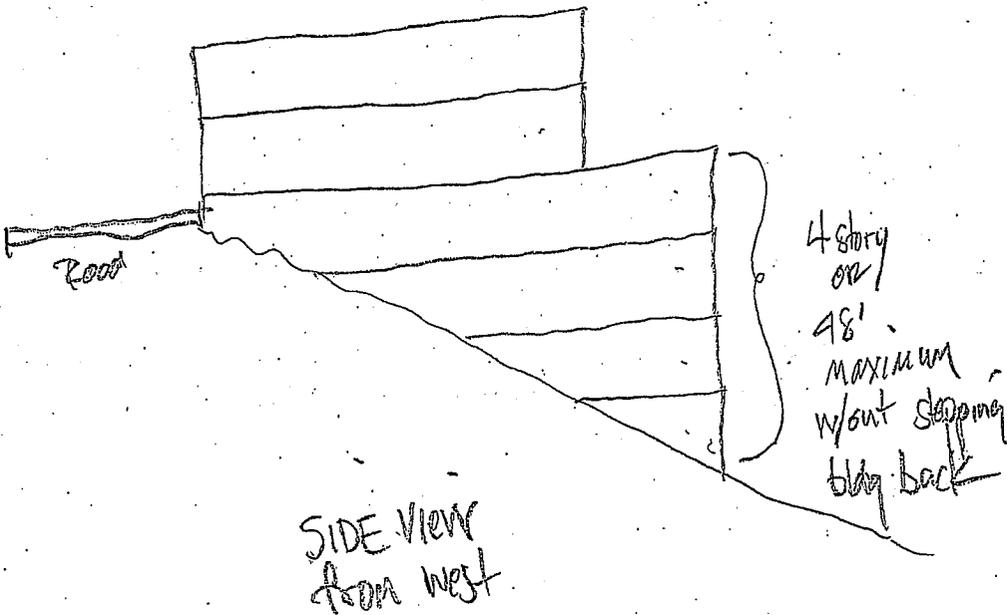
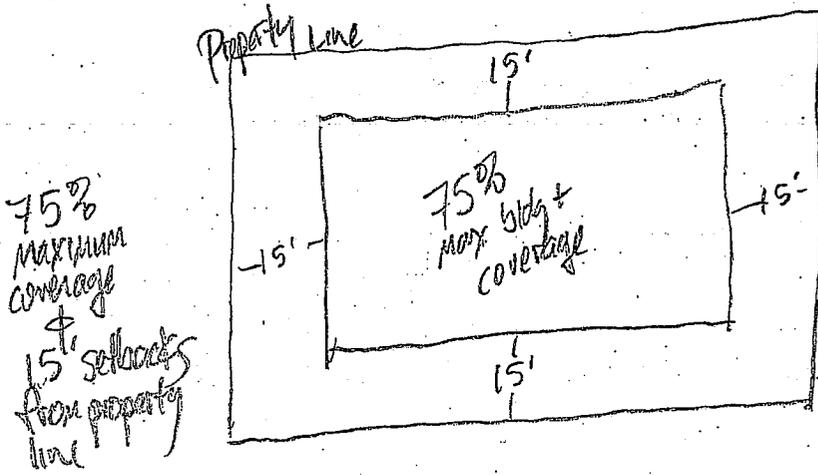
In sum, our base area amendments might look like the following if we incorporate FBC principles for our desired amendments:

- 25' height limitation above the road, for the Snowpine, Rustler and Alta Lodges, with diagram, attached
- 60' height limitation for Goldminer's Daughter and Peruvian Lodges, with diagram, attached
- Need to discuss and define height limit to Shallow Shaft and Photohaus on the north side of the road.
- 75% coverage, with specific minimum setbacks (15'?), for snow removal/cat access, with diagram, attached
- No more than 4 levels or 48' height without a step back in building design to alleviate the appearance of a solid high wall when viewed from the south...with diagram, attached
- Applicant may provide architectural alternatives such as color/material variations, facades, decking to physical step backs in building design to avoid the solid high wall affect. Such alternatives must be individually approved by the commission...diagram/drawing, attached
- The top floor of any 4 plus story building may include self contained residential units that may or may not be included in the hotel rental pool, with diagram, attached

Attached please find the Wiki article on Form Based Codes and the development standards for building in the Pleasant Hills, Ca, BART Station area.

I've also attached the one page description of form based codes from the Flagstaff, AZ zoning ordinance.





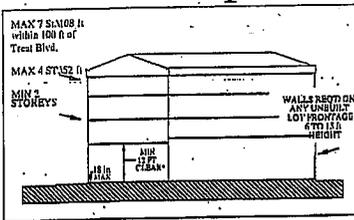
VIEW FROM SOUTH
Architectural Alternatives to Physical Step Back

Pleasant Hill BART Station

Building Envelope Standards

Shopfront Building Sites

Height



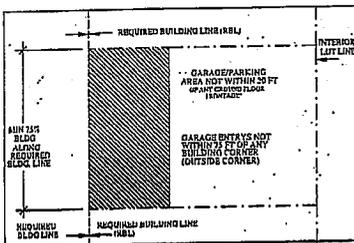
The building shall be between 2 and 4 storeys in height, except where otherwise noted here or on the REGULATING PLAN. Any parking structure w/in the block shall not exceed the eave height of any building w/in 75 feet.

Any unbuilt RBL or COMMON LOT LINE shall have a STREET WALL built along it, between 6 feet and 15 feet in height.

The ground floor elevation shall be no more than 18 inches above the fronting sidewalk elevation.

No less than 80% of the ground floor shall have at least 12 feet clear height. No less than 80% of the upper storeys shall each have at least 8 feet 8 inches clear height.

Siting

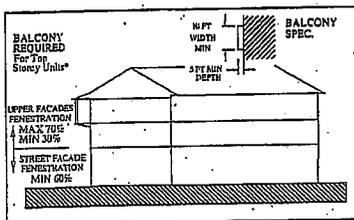


The STRAIGHT facade shall be Built-To the REQUIRED BUILDING LINE (RBL) within 75 feet of any BUILDING CORNER, and Built-To not less than 75% of the RBL overall. There are no required side setbacks.

Any unbuilt STREET FRONTAGE shall have a STREET WALL along it, between 6 feet and 15 feet in height.

Parking for vehicles (autos, trailers, boats, etc.) shall be at least 20 feet from any STREET FRONTAGE (excepting basement garages). Garage/parking entrances shall be no closer than 75 feet from any BUILDING CORNER (except where otherwise designated on the REGULATING PLAN).

Elements



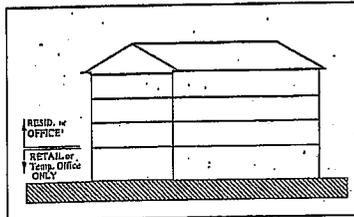
The primary ground floor facade shall have no less than 60% FENESTRATION (measured between 2 and 10 feet above the fronting sidewalk). Awnings and overhangs are encouraged.

Upper storey facades shall have between 30% and 70% FENESTRATION (measured for each storey between 3 and 9 feet above the finished floor).

*Except facades along Treat Blvd. and Jones Rd., no less than 50% of the top storey units shall have BALCONIES.

ARCADES are permitted if designed and constructed in contiguous STREET FRONTAGES of at least 200 feet (or any complete RBL fronting the square). Consult the Masterplan.

Uses



The ground floor shall house only retail or temporary office uses (also lobby and access for upper storey uses).

*Upper storey uses may be either: (Block B) residential, or (Block A and C), residential, office or lodging.

Fronting the square and the North/South Retail Street (between Blocks A and B) there shall be functioning entry door(s) along the STREET facade at intervals not greater than 75 feet.

The garage (parking for vehicles autos, trailers, boats, etc.) shall be at least 20 feet from any STREET FRONTAGE (except for basement garages). Except where otherwise designated on the REGULATING PLAN.

October 2001

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Form-based code

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
(Redirected from Form-based codes)

(See also the Form-based section of the Zoning in the United States article.)

A **form-based code** (FBC) is a means of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm by controlling physical form primarily, with a lesser focus on land use, through municipal regulations.

Form-based codes are a new response to the modern challenges of urban sprawl, deterioration of historic neighborhoods, and neglect of pedestrian safety in new development. Tradition has declined as a guide to development patterns, and the widespread adoption by cities of single-use zoning regulations has discouraged compact, walkable urbanism. Form-based codes are a tool to address these deficiencies, and to provide local governments the regulatory means to achieve development objectives with greater certainty.

Scope

Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes, presented in both diagrams and words, are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development rather than only distinctions in land-use types. This is in contrast to conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., floor area ratios, dwelling units per acre, setbacks, parking ratios) to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory.

Form-based codes are drafted to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism. Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes is dependent on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements.

History

Form-based codes are part of a long history of shaping the built landscape for public benefit. Such efforts go back to the urban designs of Hippodamus of Miletus, the planning of cities in ancient China, and Roman town planning. The Laws of the Indies, promulgated by the Spanish Crown starting in the 16th century, established some basic urban form requirements for colonial towns in the Americas. William Penn when planning Philadelphia in the 17th century did not shy from precise urban form requirements when he said, "Let every house be in a line, or upon a line, as much as may be."

During the 18th century, Baroque urban design commonly brought buildings to the fronts of their lots with common facade treatments. Baron Haussmann, appointed by Napoleon III to oversee the redevelopment of Paris in the 19th century, stipulated precise ratios of building heights to street widths; disposition and sizes of windows and doors on building facades; consistent planting of street trees; and standardization of material colors to bring unity and harmony to the public environment.

Emergence

Regulating urban form is a challenge in modern democracies; Design guidelines adopted by municipalities, without legal enforceability, often invite capricious observance, thus failing to produce the comprehensive changes required to produce satisfying public places. When public planning exercises fail to produce predictable results, citizens often rebel against any development. In addition, from early in the twentieth century to the present, attempts at regulating the built landscape have usually been done for reasons that neglect community form, that are more concerned with the uses of property and impacts of scale than the form that development takes. And a planning profession that in recent decades has focused on policy, neglecting design, encouraged an abstract intellectual response to problems that are largely physical in nature.

The development of modern form-based codes was started by architects, urban designers, and physical planners frustrated by the ineffectiveness of past criticisms of sprawl development and the failure of critics to propose realistic alternatives. These professionals, used to thinking physically about community problems, began the search for systematic physical solutions in the 1970s. Architect Christopher Alexander published *A Pattern Language* in 1977, a compendium of physical rules for designing humane buildings and places. Ian McHarg developed systematic mapping tools to encourage deliberate development patterns sensitive to local environmental conditions. Traditional Neighborhood Development ordinances were drafted beginning in the early 1990s as sets of development

regulations to promote traditional neighborhood forms in new development projects. TND ordinances were typically adopted as an optional regulatory procedure that developers could request in place of conventional zoning. But their design regulations were not mapped to parcels or streets in advance, so lacked predictability of outcomes; TND ordinances proved to be an instructive effort, but showed few results.

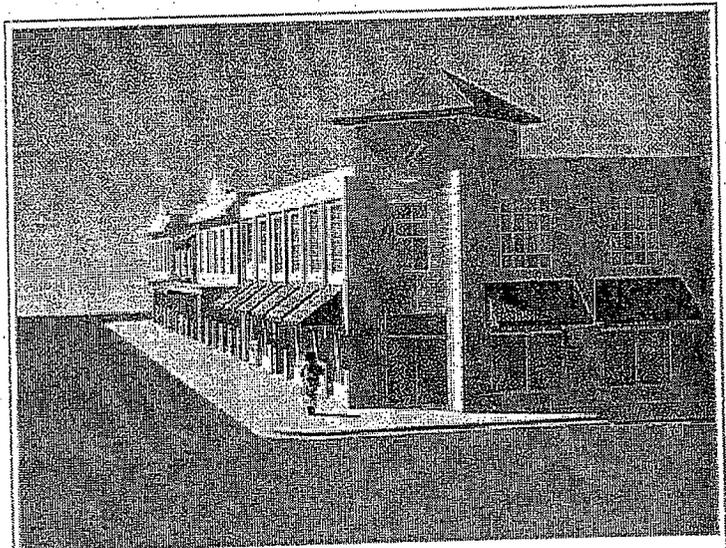
Meanwhile, the accelerating scale of worldwide urban growth and the rapid expansion of the extent of cities heightened the need for regulatory tools better equipped to deal with such growth. The first serious attempt at creating a modern form-based code was done in 1982 to guide the development of the Florida resort town of Seaside by the husband and wife design team of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. Realizing that designing an entire town would be an overwhelming task and would in the end lack the visual serendipity that only comes from myriad creative minds at work, they created a design code that established basic physical standards mapped to parcels, and then invited developers and architects to put their own distinctive stamp on their projects—but operating within those standards. The Seaside Code proved very successful; the resulting development of the town of Seaside is widely recognized as one of the most important and appealing planning efforts of the post-World War II era.

Duany/Plater-Zyberk's codes and the work of subsequent form-based code practitioners are not top-down mandates from imperial designers as in the baroque era or the wishful thinking of design guidelines that lack enforceability, but are instead legal regulations adopted by units of local government. As regulations they possess police power; violators of the regulations can be cited, and their invocation or retraction must go through a legislative process. As such, the community plays a more forceful role in shaping its physical future.

Recent developments

Although the Seaside code was commissioned by a private developer, most current codes are commissioned by counties and municipalities. Since Seaside, the scale of form-based coding projects has grown. Form-based coding can be applied at many scales, from a two-block main street to a county-wide region.

An early form-based code was adopted for downtown West Palm Beach in 1995. A significant code for a major urban arterial, the Columbia Pike in Arlington County, Virginia, was adopted in 2003 (Ferrell Madden Associates). A regional FBC was adopted in 2006 by St. Lucie County, Florida (Spikowski Associates, Dover-Kohl Partners). Duany/Plater-Zyberk has drafted a model FBC that is also a transect-based code that can be calibrated for local needs—the SMARTCODE. Its first attempted customization was done for Vicksburg, Mississippi in 2001 (Mouzon & Greene). The lessons learned there led to the first California adoption of a citywide form-based code for the City of Sonoma in March 2003 (Crawford Multari & Clark Associates, Moule & Polyzoides), followed on June 16, 2003, by the first SmartCode adopted in the U.S., for central Petaluma, California (Fisher and Hall Urban Design, Crawford Multari & Clark Associates). SmartCodes are now being calibrated for Miami, Florida and Hurricane Katrina ravaged communities in Mississippi and Louisiana, along with cities as diverse as Taos, NM, Michigan City, IN, Jamestown, RI, Lawrence, KS, New Castle, DE, and Bran, Romania. Planetary climate change that must be mitigated by changes in the human environment will no doubt be an inducement to form-based and transect-based coding in the future.



Form-based codes produce more consistent and predictable patterns of development in relationship to the public realm than typically achieved through conventional zoning regulations.

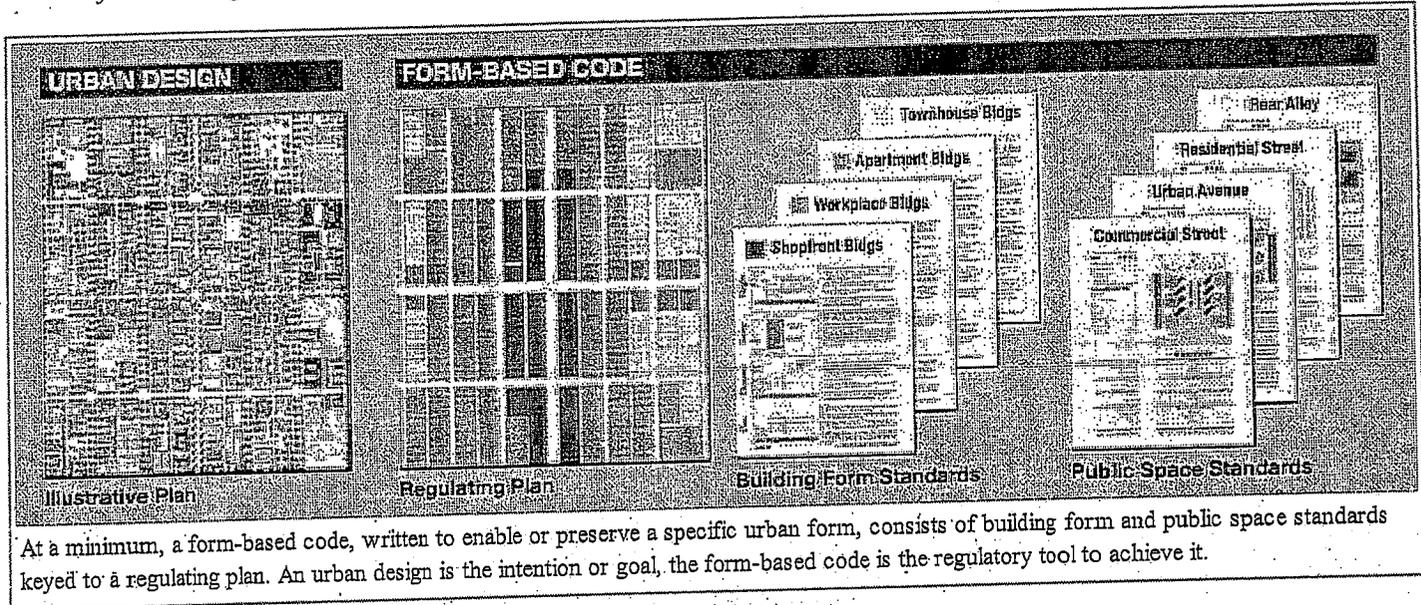
Because of the growing number of consultants advertising themselves as capable of writing FBCs but with little or no training, in 2004 the non-profit Form-Based Codes Institute was organized to establish standards and teach best practices. In addition, SmartCode workshops are regularly scheduled by PlaceMakers.com, SmartCodePro.com, and SmartCodeLocal.com.

Components

Form-based codes commonly include the following elements:

- *Regulating Plan.* A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply, based on clear community intentions regarding the physical character of the area being coded.
- *Public Space Standards.* Specifications for the elements within the public realm (e.g., sidewalks, travel lanes, on-street parking,

- street trees, street furniture, etc.).
- *Building Form Standards.* Regulations controlling the configuration, features, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.
- *Administration.* A clearly defined application and project review process.
- *Definitions.* A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.



Form-based codes also sometimes include:

- *Architectural Standards.* Regulations controlling external architectural materials and quality.
- *Landscaping Standards.* Regulations controlling landscape design and plant materials on private property as they impact public spaces (e.g. regulations about parking lot screening and shading, maintaining sight lines, insuring unobstructed pedestrian movements, etc.).
- *Signage Standards.* Regulations controlling allowable signage sizes, materials, illumination, and placement.
- *Environmental Resource Standards.* Regulations controlling issues such as storm water drainage and infiltration, development on slopes, tree protection, solar access, etc.
- *Annotation.* Text and illustrations explaining the intentions of specific code provisions.

Building Form Standards

The types of buildings that make for a lively main street are different from the types of buildings that make for a quiet residential street. Building Form Standards are sets of enforceable design regulations for controlling building types and how they impact the public realm. These Standards are mapped to streets on a Regulating Plan. Building Form Standards can control such things as: the alignment of buildings to the street; how close buildings are to sidewalks; the visibility and accessibility of building entrances; minimum and maximum buildings heights; minimum or maximum lot frontage coverage; minimum and maximum amounts of window coverage on facades; physical elements required on buildings (e.g. stoops, porches, types of permitted balconies); and the general usage of floors (e.g. office, residential, or retail). These regulations are less concerned with architectural styles and designs than in how buildings shape public spaces. If a local government also wishes to regulate the quality of architecture--for example to preserve the historic appearance of a neighborhood--then Architectural Standards should be drafted in addition to Building Form Standards.

Public Space Standards

Public Space Standards control the physical form of squares, parks, the public right-of-way of streets, and other public spaces. Public spaces are typically under the control of public works, parks, and highway departments. Streets, being the most common public spaces in a community, are the most frequently regulated. Public Space Standards for streets are typically described with dimensioned cross-sections and/or plan views showing travel lane widths, sidewalk widths, street tree and street lamp placement, locations of transit lanes, and the placement of architecture. Plan view diagrams may also be included showing spacing of street trees and lamps, and the radii of

the curves of street corners.

Identification

How does one determine if a development regulation is a form-based code and a well-crafted one? Form-based codes generally receive affirmative answers to all of the following questions:

- Is the code's focus primarily on regulating urban form and less on land use?
- Is the code regulatory rather than advisory?
- Does the code emphasize standards and parameters for form with predictable physical outcomes (build-to lines, frontage type requirements, etc.) rather than relying on numerical parameters (floor-area ratios, density, etc.) whose outcomes are impossible to predict?
- Does the code require private buildings to shape public space through the use of building form standards with specific requirements for building placement?
- Does the code promote and/or conserve an interconnected street network and pedestrian-scaled blocks?
- Are regulations and standards keyed to specific locations on a regulating plan?
- Are the diagrams in the code unambiguous, clearly labeled, and accurate in their presentation of spatial configurations? [1]

Implementation

How are form-based codes incorporated into a local government's development regulations? There are three basic ways:

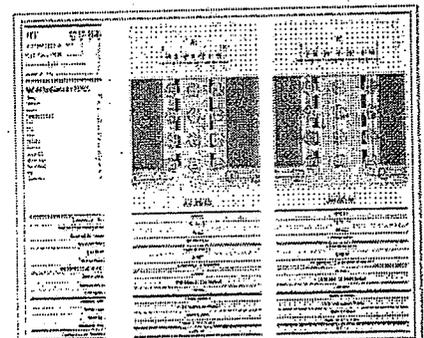
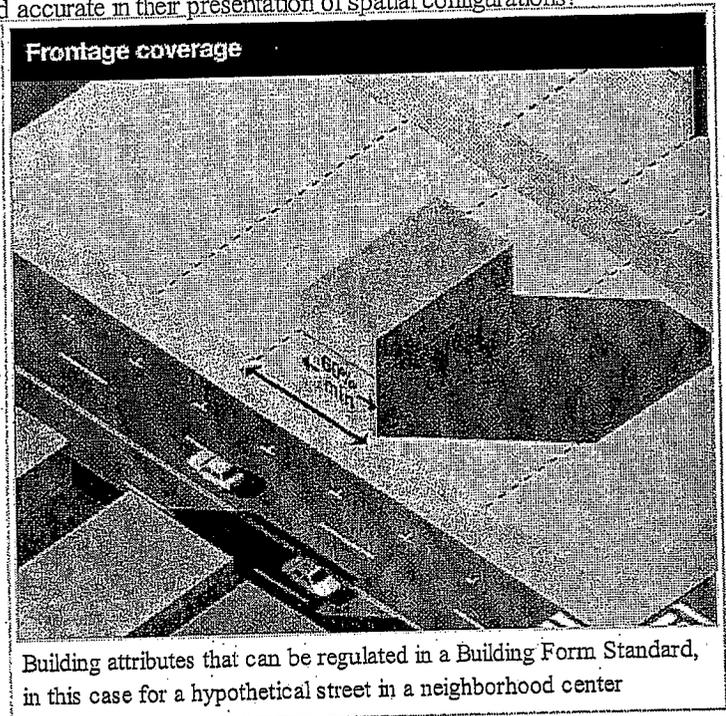
Mandatory codes. This is the most common adoption approach. It has the most regulatory "teeth"—compliance is required. But it is the most ambitious of the approaches, making the new code a seamless part of, or a complete replacement for, the existing zoning ordinance. The form-based code can be adopted as a new zoning district or as an overlay district.

Unique to California and a few other states with appropriate enabling legislation, form-based codes can be contained within a planning document called a "specific plan," which can completely override the zoning ordinance for a given geographic area. Since it stands apart from the zoning ordinance, it can be more creative in its format, giving the coder greater freedom in designing for user-friendliness through page layout, diagrams, and illustrations. Also, the urban design plan and the implementing regulations are bundled together, greatly improving user comprehension. But since the specific plan is not securely integrated within the existing zoning ordinance, it may be more politically vulnerable to retraction.

Example adopted codes:

- *Winter Springs Town Center District Code*, Winter Springs, Florida
- *Farmers Branch Station Area Form-Based Code*, Farmers Branch, Texas
- *Central Petaluma Specific Plan and SmartCode*, Petaluma, California

Optional (parallel) codes. An optional or parallel form-based code serves as an alternative to, but doesn't replace, a present zoning ordinance. Compliance is voluntary. The developer has the choice of complying with the form-based code or the zoning ordinance, but it must be one or the other. This approach makes sense when compliance with the zoning ordinance is so difficult and time consuming that most development is stymied. Thus a developer has the option of following a form-based code that will streamline and simplify his development process. But, for a local government to maintain two different sets of development regulations for one area is added work which can be significant if the area is extensive. Also depending on



An example of a Public Space Standard for public streets from the SmartCode 9.0

Form-Based Codes

A. What is a Form-Based Code (FBC)?

Form-Based Codes (FBC) are an alternative approach to zoning that reinforce walkable, sustainable mixed-use environments and development and build upon community character. The City of Flagstaff Zoning Code uses a portion of the City's Form-Based Coding approach in order to achieve the community's goals of sustainability and sensitive high-quality infill.

"Form-Based Codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. These codes are adopted into city or county law as regulations, not mere guidelines. Form-Based Codes are an alternative to conventional zoning."

~ Form-Based Codes Institute

An important aspect of this definition in terms of differentiating FBCs from conventional or Euclidean zoning is "by using physical form." This does not mean that use is not important, and instead of land use always being the organizing principle for the overall code, within the FBC elements of this Zoning Code the intended physical form or characteristics of desired place becomes the primary organizing principle. The naming conventions in FBCs reflect the intended physical form of different zones, so instead of a zone being labeled "single-family residential," it might be called "traditional neighborhood," and instead of a zone being called "commercial" or "mixed use," it might be called "neighborhood main street." The terms "neighborhood" and "main street" tie back to the intended physical form or place, both of which may include a mix of uses and different building types that create vibrant walkable urbanism.

or base facilities zone...

Another important aspect of Form-Based Codes is that where FBCs are implemented they are not just design guidelines. Instead they replace the existing zoning and are standards to be followed.

It is also important to note that while FBCs are allow an intended physical form, they also regulate use. FBCs often allow a range of uses that are carefully chosen to maximize compatibility between uses and the intended physical form of the zone.