Form-Based Codes: The Basics

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Form-Based Codes: The Basics

Purpose of today's presentation

1. What is a Form-Based Code (FBC)?
2. Foundation on a strong Vision
3. What does a FBC address?
4. What are the key concepts and components of a FBC?
5. What does a FBC look like?
6. How do we implement FBCs?
7. What are some local examples of FBCs?
8. FBC Resources

What is a Form-Based Code?

Form-Based Codes: based on the idea of *New Urbanism*, a.k.a., old urbanism

The way we've been designing cities for centuries…

Form-Based Codes: A new method but an old idea

Austin's Waller Plan - 1839

His vision on how properties would be laid out; how buildings sit on lots; relationship to the street and each other.

19th St. (Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.)
West Ave.
Congress Ave.
IH-35 (East Ave.)
6th Street
Cesar Chavez St.

PLAN OF AUSTIN.

What is a Form-Based Code?

A Form-Based Code is a zoning implementation tool based on a collective community **vision**. It is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of land uses) as the organizing principle for the code.
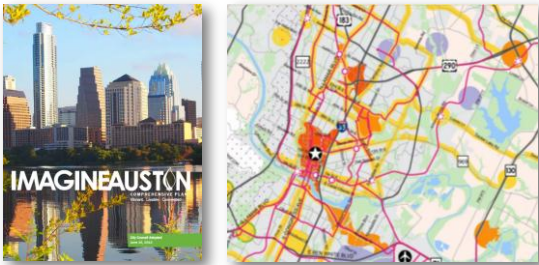
A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into municipal law. These codes offer a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.
Source: formbasedcodes.org/definition

Foundation on a strong Vision

Based on a unifying Vision: Imagine Austin

VISION: Neighborhood Plan Recommendations

"Townhouses can provide an effective transition between commercial or higher density multifamily residential and single- family residential areas." [Emphasis added]
North Loop Neighborhood Plan, Page 12. Adopted by the City Council on May 23, 2002 under Ordinance No. 020523-30

North Loop Neighborhood Plan, Page 12

"Encourage a mixture of compatible and appropriately scaled business and residential land uses in the neighborhood and mixed-use development on major corridors to enhance this diversity." [Emphasis added]
Brentwood/Highland Combined Neighborhood Plan, Page 6. Adopted by the City Council on May 13, 2004 under Ordinance No. 040513-30

Brentwood/Highland Combined Neighborhood Plan, page 48

Formulation and Ownership of the Vision

Substantial community input into formulating the Vision to imagine the kinds of places they want to see realized.

Airport Blvd. FBC Vision Workshop – September 2011:
- Over 115 community stakeholders attended
- Crafted Vision foundation
- Articulated community character

Illustrative Vision: A compass, not a site plan

Potential redevelopment: 2042

Illustrative Vision - North of Koenig Lane

Illustrative Vision: A compass, not a site plan

Potential redevelopment: 2042

Illustrative Vision - South of Koenig Lane

Code Framework: A path to implementation

Draft Code Framework: 8 unique character districts

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Form-Based Codes: Rules to help realize a Vision

- Place-specific
- Context sensitive
- **The Vision informs the Code**

Draft Airport Blvd. FBC – Local Mixed-Use

Draft Airport Blvd. FBC – Neighborhood Transition

Draft Airport Blvd. FBC – Commercial Transition

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Vision ≠ FBC

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FBC =

...to implement the Vision

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What can a Form-Based Code Address?

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What does a Form-Based Code address?

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.

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What does a Form-Based Code address?

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.

Regulating Plan   FBC Regulations

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Emphasis on Urban Form

Conventional Zoning (buffers)   **Form-Based (transitions)**

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Emphasis on Urban Form - not Architecture

Form-Based Code   **FBC Architectural Styles**

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Conventional Zoning vs. Form-Based Code

Existing Zoning

Design Guidelines

Form-Based Code

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Layers of Complexity

Austin's Land Development Code has been amended hundreds of times over the years. It is complex, difficult to understand, and to administer.

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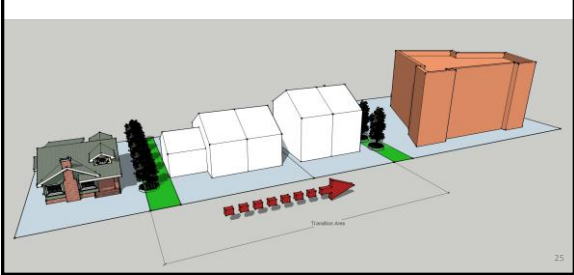
Context-specific standards

Calibration by building type

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Context-specific standards

Calibration by building type

Context-specific standards

Calibration by building type

Emerging Airport Blvd. FBC

Context-specific Standards

What are the key concepts and components of a FBC?

Key Form-Based Code Elements

1. **Regulating Plan**
   - Denotes character districts
2. **Development Standards**
   - Public Space standards (open space)
   - Building form standards
     - Tailored to each character zone
   - Administration (includes non-conforming uses, non-compliant structures, amendments, etc.)
3. **Other standards**
   - Architectural design and materials
   - Landscaping and streetscaping
   - Building design/urban design
   - Signage
   - Transitions

What does a Form-Based Code look like?

Sample FBCs: Camp Bowie, Ft. Worth TX

Sample FBCs: Benicia, CA

Downtown Mixed Use Plan

Sample FBCs: Bridge Street District Dublin, OH

How do we implement Form-Based Codes?

FBC Implementation Steps

1 Council directive to commence FBC

2 Study Area Assessment — Project kickoff and initial assessment

FBC Implementation Steps

3 Community Vision Workshop — Community Vision crafted

4 Design Workshop — Community Vision realized
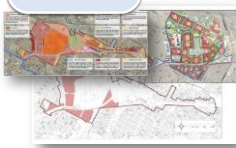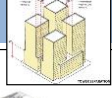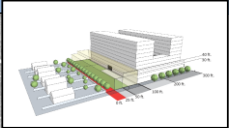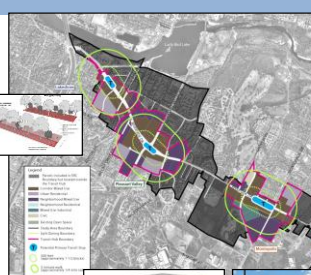
FBC Implementation Steps

What are some <u>local</u> examples of Form-Based Code use?

Downtown Austin Plan

East Riverside Corridor

East Riverside Corridor

North Burnet/Gateway Master Plan

North Burnet/Gateway Regulating Plan & TODs

Airport Boulevard Form-Based Code

Form-Based Code Resources

Form-Based Code Resources

Form-Based Code Institute: http://www.formbasedcodes.org/
A link to the FBCI website with a treasure trove of information regarding FBCs and their use and impact throughout the county. This institute coordinates and showcases best practices around the country and is the steward of the most up to date information regarding FBCs.

Form-Based Code Articles:
http://www.formbasedcodes.org/articles
Excellent source of articles related to FBCs discussing multiple topics of interest specifically related to the use and successes of FBCs.

Form-Based Code News: http://www.formbasedcodes.org/news
An extensive list of past and recent news articles addressing FBCs.

Form-Based Code Books: http://www.formbasedcodes.org/books
An extensive list of publications emphasizing FBCs.

Form-Based Codes:
The Basics

Questions?

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