Recommended Adjustments:

- Replace serpent-head street lights with single-head.
- Relocate power poles underground.
- Increase the sidewalk to 7', each side.
- Decrease the bike lane to 5', each side.

The proposed alterations are focused on maintaining the established streetscape along both sides of Main Street. This will contribute to the pedestrian experience and support businesses by enhancing the sidewalk and tree wells. The plan involves street trees in wells and pedestrian-scale lighting. Existing tree wells are recommended to be increased to 5'.

The pedestrian experience should be enhanced with sidewalks that strengthen a sense of enclosure for shoppers and strollers. The street's residential character and increasing the quality of the pedestrian environment are key goals. The bike lane and land use pattern will be adjusted to support these objectives.

Any building over 50' wide must be broken down to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each. The proposed alterations are focused on maintaining the existing street's residential character and increasing the quality of the pedestrian experience. Main Street is almost exclusively a commercial street with a few mixed-use buildings. Future development should maintain the established streetscape and pedestrian experience with Lisa Wise Consulting. Best Practices Report - City of Cincinnati, Ohio

Key:
- **M** Mural, Property Line
- **H** Mural, Street
- **T** Mural, Side Street
- **P** Mural, Ground Street
- **G** Mural, Ground Street
- **L** Mural, Ground Street
- **N** Mural, Ground Street
- **E** Mural, Ground Street
- **A** Mural, Ground Street
- **K** Mural, Ground Street
- **D** Mural, Ground Street
- **W** Mural, Ground Street
- **E** Mural, Ground Street
- **R** Mural, Ground Street
- **S** Mural, Ground Street
- **T** Mural, Ground Street
- **C** Mural, Ground Street
- **B** Mural, Ground Street
- **J** Mural, Ground Street
- **I** Mural, Ground Street
- **O** Mural, Ground Street
- **Y** Mural, Ground Street
- **U** Mural, Ground Street
- **V** Mural, Ground Street
- **F** Mural, Ground Street
Introduction

The primary objective of the following report is to give an overview of best practice standards for Form-Based Code writing and application.

There are three primary parts of this report:

1. What is a Form-Based Code;
2. A summary of how four different case studies from Form-Based Codes are applicable to Cincinnati; and
3. Two new Form-Based Code case studies from Livermore, California and Nashville, Tennessee and a clarification of how techniques used and lessons learned apply to Cincinnati.

This report is intended to be used alongside the report titled, “Existing Regulatory Obstacles for Form-Based Code Application” and the “Focus Neighborhood Mapping” document to inform the future application of Form-Based Coding in the City of Cincinnati.

The following three topics repeatedly came up while reviewing these case studies and thinking about how Cincinnati could learn from them:

1. How to use Form-Based Codes to reinforce neighborhood main streets;
2. How Form-Based Codes can be successfully integrated into an otherwise conventional zoning code;
3. How the Urban-to-rural transect can be modified in its application to relate to complex, existing, built conditions.

These ideas are further explained throughout this report.
1

Form-Based Code
Best Practice Standards
Why are Form-Based Codes Needed?

The current zoning system is broken: It has produced auto-dependent development patterns that have compromised community character, our nation’s health and the environment and have left communities searching for tools to address these issues.

Form-Based Codes are an alternative to Euclidian Zoning that focus on the creation, revitalization, and preservation of vibrant, walkable urban places. As Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk states in *Form-Based Codes*, “as Global Society swings into action to reduce carbon emissions, the data ever more clearly points to the need to reduce dependence on vehicular mobility and to remake the built environment as transit- and pedestrian-friendly places of dense economic and social interaction. Only the Form-Based Code can ensure such an urbanism.” Even developers are supporting this push for zoning reform: at the 2009 New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Albuquerque, developer Rob Dixon presented his “Top 20 Ways to Make a Green, Smart City,” and “replace your Euclidean zoning with Form-Based Codes” was number two on his list.

As the market demand for walkable urbanism grows and demographics shift, Form-Based Codes, when created according to these best-practice standards, have proven to be an effective tool for breaking down the barriers to developing and revitalizing urban places and ensuring high-quality predictable built results.

What is a Form-Based Code?

The Form-Based Code Institute defines Form-Based Codes (FBCs) as follows:

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.

The most important aspect of this definition in terms of differentiating FBCs from Euclidean zoning is that the intended physical form or desired place replaces use as the organizing principle, or framework, for the overall code. So instead of a zone being labeled “single-family residential,” it might be called “traditional neighborhood,” and instead of a zone being called “commercial”, it might be called “neighborhood main street.” The terms “neighborhood” and “main street” tie back into the intended physical form or place, both of which may include a mix of uses and different building types that create a vibrant walkable urbanism. The urban-to-rural Transect, which categorizes a spectrum of urban to rural contexts in six Transect zones (from the most urban T6 to the most rural T1—see image to right of an urban-to-rural Transect for Flagstaff, Arizona), is a prominent organizing principle within Form-Based Code practice. The second important aspect of this definition is that FBCs replace zoning and are not merely design guidelines.
Form-Based Code Components

There is a list of Form-Based Code components that have proven necessary to an effective FBC: the Regulating Plan (which replaces the zoning map), Building Form Standards, Public Space Standards (which consist of Thoroughfare Standards and Civic Space Standards), Frontage Type Standards, Subdivision Standards, and Administration.

There is also a list of supplementary components that are not mandatory for an effective code, but that can give further clarity to the intended type of place. The more of these components that you can include in your code, the more predictable the implementation will be. This list includes Building Type Standards, Architectural Standards, Landscape Standards, Sustainability Standards (such as stormwater, alternative energy, greywater, etc.), and Green Building Standards.

The Regulating Plan

The Regulating Plan takes the place of the zoning map in Form-Based Codes. This map looks a lot like a zoning map at first glance, but upon further review it is clear that this map regulates with intended physical form and type of place as the Organizing Principle, which should be reinforced by form-based zone names that are not use based.

Above: For a more detailed description of Form-Based Codes see “Form-Based Codes,” by Parolek or go to the Form-Based Code Institute’s web site at www.formbasedcodes.org. Below: Regulating Plan Example from the Hercules Bayfront FBC.
Building Form Standards

This is the component that most people visualize when they think about a Form-Based Code. This component has the primary role in defining and regulating the intended physical form. Typical elements within this component are building form, building placement, building height, general land use, parking location and requirements, encroachments, and allowed frontage types.

Civic Space Standards

This is an important element to ensure that a full menu of civic spaces is included in the Code and that the scale and design approach is calibrated according to where the space resides in the urban to rural continuum.

Thoroughfare Standards (See image below right)

In most cities streets comprise nearly 25% of all space and make up a large percentage of provided public space as well. Therefore in creating and reinforcing walkable urban environments it is important to consider thoroughfares as a critical element. Also, details matter tremendously when it comes to thoroughfare design, therefore the exact desired dimensional parameters for the retrofit of existing and creation of new thoroughfares should be included in a Form-Based Code.
Frontage Type Standards

Frontages create an appropriate transition from the private realm (inside of a building) to the public realm (sidewalk or yard), providing a clear threshold for this mental transition to occur. A typical starting point for a menu of frontage types includes porches, terraces, forecourts, stoops, shopfronts, galleries, and arcades. The final menu used within the Form-Based Code should be modified to include any unique frontage types that have occurred historically or that address climatic conditions, and remove any of these typical type that would not be appropriate for the context.

Table 7 from the SmartCode (DPZ) gives a good overview of potential frontage types.
The Transect

The Transect is an Organizing Principle often used in Form-Based Coding that focuses first on the intended character and type of place and second on the mix of uses within. This flips the framework used in conventional or Euclidean zoning, in which use is the primary focus and form comes second. Transect zones are used to reinforce existing or to create new walkable mixed-use urban environments.

“The rural-to-urban Transect is a means for considering and organizing the human habitat in a continuum of intensity that ranges from the most rural condition to the most urban. It provides a standardized method for differentiating between the intentions for urban form in various areas using gradual transitions rather than harsh distinctions. The zones are primarily classified by the physical intensity of the built form, the relationship between nature and the built environment, and the complexity of uses within the zone.”

~ Form-Based Codes

The model Transect for American towns is divided into six Transect zones or T-zones: Natural (T1), Rural (T2), Sub-urban (T3), General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), and Urban Core (T6), together with a Special District (SD) designation for areas with specialized purposes (e.g., heavy industrial, transportation, entertainment, or university districts, among other possibilities). Each T-zone is given a number: higher numbers designate progressively more urban zones, and lower numbers designate more rural zones.

SmartCode: DPZ
Above: Cincinnati Urban-to-Rural Transect by Glaserworks, a local architecture and urban design firm. Right: The SmartCode is a model, Transect-Based, Form-Based Code.
Case Studies
From Form-Based Codes & How They Are Relevant to Cincinnati
Benicia, California
Downtown Master Plan and Form-Based Code Application

The City of Benicia has a population of approximately 28,000 people and is located along the Carquinez Strait in the San Francisco Bay Area.

How is this relevant to Cincinnati?

The Evolution and Revitalization of a Small Town Neighborhood-Scale Main Street

The primary focus was on the revitalization and evolution of a small town main street, which is similar in scale to most of the neighborhood main streets in Cincinnati, and defining and regulating appropriate transitions from the main street into the residential areas. This code removed barriers that were in place and provided incentives for the right types of projects in the right locations.

Refining the Application of Mixed Use in Historic Neighborhoods

This code and plan refined the vaguely defined mixed-use classification that existed. This was done in both the physical form regulations and the land use tables within the Form-Based Code. This type of careful thought and refinement is necessary in Cincinnati’s Form-Based Code application in order to help refine the intent and function of the CN-P, CN-M, RMX, OL, and RM zones that are part of and adjacent to the neighborhood main streets in Cincinnati.

A Model Code for Simplicity and Clarity

The last reason this was chosen as a case study was to illustrate the simplicity and clarity that should be inherent in Form-Based Codes created for the Focus Neighborhoods in Cincinnati. The usability is not just inherent in the graphic integration, but also in the basic intent of each zone and the concise regulatory content.
**Chapter 4: Form-Based Code**

**Neighborhood General-Open (NG-O) Standards**

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**Table 4.3: Neighborhood General (NG-O) Zone Allowed Uses and Parking Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Type</th>
<th>Required Spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Space</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Notes**

- Minimum parking requirements not reflected.
- Minimum parking requirements are calculated in accordance with the applicable code.
- Minimum parking requirements are also calculated in accordance with the applicable code for on-street parking.
- Minimum parking requirements are also calculated in accordance with the applicable code for off-street parking.
- Minimum parking requirements are also calculated in accordance with the applicable code for shared parking.
- Minimum parking requirements are also calculated in accordance with the applicable code for on-street parking and off-street parking.
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- Minimum parking requirements are also calculated in accordance with the applica...
The City of Grass Valley is located in Northern California along the Highway 49 corridor in Nevada County with a current population of approximately 12,000.

How is this relevant to Cincinnati?

Integrating Form-Based Codes into a Conventional Development Code Framework

This case study is yet another good example of how the Form-Based Code was carefully integrated into an otherwise conventional zoning code. In this example, the form-based zones and all applicable regulations were included in a separate chapter titled Traditional Community Development Zones. In addition to form-based zone standards, the code also includes parking and frontages regulations specific to the form-based zones.

Reinforcing Neighborhood Main Streets as a Neighborhood Amenity

Many of the decisions made in the Grass Valley Form-Based Code process and content were about reinforcing a walkable neighborhood structure, which is similar to the Form-Based Code application goals in Cincinnati. In looking at the neighborhoods and their main streets during the visioning and coding process the primary elements that should be considered are:

1. How to regulate neighborhood main streets so that obstacles or additional hurdles are not put in place for the right kinds of projects or uses;
2. How to regulate the transition from the main streets to neighborhoods in a way that avoids incompatibilities in form and use; and,
3. How to provide flexible uses at edges of main street to allow retail and commercial to spread as market demands, but allow residential uses to fill the gaps if the market is not there.

In Grass Valley, the Neighborhood Center (NC) zone was intended to reinforce and revitalize existing neighborhood main streets. The Neighborhood Center-Flex zone was intended to work in combinations with the NC zone to promote the vitality of corridors and main streets within the neighborhoods. The Neighborhood General-3 zone was intended to promote evolution of existing neighborhoods with appropriately scaled medium density housing types near the neighborhood main streets.

Process Driven by a Steering Committee

Due to the scale of the application and its ultimate intent to simply implement the General Plan uses and intensities, the public process did not include public charrettes. The steering committee that has been created for Cincinnati could serve a similar role in expediting the FBC application process. In particular, in areas that want Form-Based Code application but the degree of change is primarily preservation or small levels of evolution, full charrettes may not be necessary. This will allow quicker application of Form-Based Codes to these areas, enabling them to meet their community goals. If transformation is likely in application areas, then charrettes will likely be necessary to gain community buy in for the future change that the FBC will implement.
**NC: Neighborhood Center Standards**

- **Front Elevation:**
  - **Rear Setback:** 0’ min.; 10’ max.
  - **Side Setback:** 0’ min.; 10’ max.
  - **Height:** 2 story max.
- **Street Facade:**
  - **Street Facade Built-to BTL:** 80% min.
  - **Lot Width:** 100’ max.

- **Building Form:**
  - Mansard roof forms are not allowed.
  - First Floor Ceiling Height: 12’ min. clear
  - Upper Floor(s) Ceiling Height: 8’ min. clear
  - Upper Floor(s) Residential or Service*
  - Public Assembly*

- **Building Maximum:** 3 stories
- **Building Minimum:** 16’

- **Secondary Street:**
  - 2’ max. clear distance between gallery columns and curb.
  - Upper story galleries facing the street must not be used to meet circulation requirements.

- **Foundation:**
  - Bay Windows: 4’ max.
  - Upper-Story Balconies: 8’ max.

- **Parking Drive:**
  - Width: 15’ max.
  - Parking Drive: 25’

- **Parking:**
  - Other uses: 1 space/300 sf
  - Uses > 3,000 sf: 1 space/500 sf
  - Uses < 3,000 sf: No off-street parking required
  - Required Spaces

**Notes:**
- Bicycle parking must be provided in a secure environment.
- Parking may be provided if not within 2,500’ or incurred on adjacent street.
- Parking may be provided if on a shared driveway.
- Off-street parking may be provided for noncommercial uses.

**Key:**
- Lot
- Property Line: Build-to Line (BTL)
- Encroachment Area: Build-to Line (BTL)
- Bay Windows: 4’ max.
- Upper-Story Balconies: 8’ max.
- Primary Street
- Secondary Street
- Street Side, Corner Lot
- Residence
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Education
- Public Assembly
- Parking
- Transportation
- Communication
- Infrastructure

**End Notes:**
- A list of small permitted uses and design uses is in Appendix A.
- Additional text regarding design uses is in draft.

**Table x.x: Neighborhood Center (NC) Zone Allowed Land Uses and Permit Requirements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Type</th>
<th>Required Floor Area</th>
<th>Required Height</th>
<th>Building Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References:**
- Grass Valley Development Code
- 2-5 Grass Valley Development Code
- 2-4 Grass Valley Development Code
- 36x35 Opticos Design, Inc.
- Cincinnati FBC Consultation
- Opticos Design, Inc.
Peoria is a town of approximately 113,000 people that is located along the Illinois River in Peoria County.

**How is this relevant to Cincinnati?**

**Integration of Form-Based Zones into a Conventional Code Update**

The Form-Based Zones (Form Districts) were integrated into a conventional development code update. The specific areas selected for the application of the Form-Based Zones were carefully considered. The Regulating Plans show the precision that is necessary to establish the boundaries for the Form-Based Zones within the framework of the entire code. As the plans evolved, the boundaries had to be very specifically considered for each of the individual planning areas. The Prospect Road Form District boundary focuses only on the lots facing the Prospect Road corridor; the Sheridan Triangle Form District boundary was extended along the various side-streets to ensure that the goals of the vision plan could be met; the West Main Form district boundary included a block into the side streets to enable an appropriate transition from Main Street into the neighborhoods; and the Warehouse District boundaries established an entire section of town that has the potential to evolve into a mixed-use neighborhood.

**Revitalizing Pedestrian-Oriented Neighborhood Main Streets and Corridors**

One of the primary reasons for selecting the Sheridan Triangle, Prospect Road, and West Main study areas was to reinvigorate the neighborhood commercial centers and main streets that once served as the focal points for the community. This is similar to the objectives of many of the Focus Neighborhoods in Cincinnati. The goal of the vision plan and FBC application were to remove regulatory obstacles that were in place that prohibited the revitalization of these areas. Thus allowing them to once again serve as vibrant social centers within the community.

**Utilizing a Unique Aspect of the Community**

The warehouse district was selected because it represents a unique group of historic structures that played a vital role in the history of Peoria. The intent in this area was to create a code that would encourage the adaptive reuse of these beautiful historic warehouse buildings and new buildings in character with them to create a mixed-use neighborhood that was unique to Peoria. In Cincinnati many of the Focus Neighborhoods have very unique character inherent in their architecture and urban pattern that should be reinforced by the FBC application.

**Potential Future Expansion of the Form-Based Code**

An option for expansion of Form-Based Code areas, called the Planned Form District, was included in the code. The concept was to allow future charrette work, or expansion of existing Form Code Areas through a defined formal process, similar to the one completed for these subareas. In Cincinnati, the FBC should be set up to allow future FBC application beyond the original Focus Neighborhoods.
Images from Sheridan Triangle FBC application: Reg Plan, Ill Plan (Ferrell Madden Lewis); Bottom: Before and after photo montage (Urban Advantage).
City of Ventura
California General Plan and Form-Based Code Application

Since its inclusion in Form-Based Codes, the City of Ventura has adopted 5 additional Form-Based Codes (bringing the total to 6) and have 3 more in process.

Approved FBCs:
1. Downtown Area (Downtown Specific Plan)
2. Midtown Corridors
3. Victoria Corridor
4. Wells Saticoy Community
5. Parklands Specific Plan
6. UC Hansen Specific Plan

FBCs in Progress:
1. Community Memorial Hospital District (ready for adoption in July)
2. Westview Neighborhood (just initiated)
3. West Side Community Plan (just initiated)

Contact: Kaizer Rangwala
Assistant Community Development Director
805-677-3918
krangwala@ci.ventura.ca.us

How is this relevant to Cincinnati?

A Non-Conventional Comprehensive Plan Framework that Reinforces the Intent of the Community: Since the City of Cincinnati is about to embark on a Comprehensive Plan Update there are a few important lessons learned from Ventura's Comprehensive Plan/General Plan. First of all, the City of Ventura thought "outside the box" in terms of the structure of the document in order to emphasize what was important to the community.

The ten organizing elements are:
1. Our Natural Community
2. Our Prosperous Community
3. Our Well-Planned and Designed Community
4. Our Accessible Community
5. Our Sustainable Community
6. Our Active Community
7. Our Healthy and Safe Community
8. Our Educated Community
9. Our Creative Community
10. Our Involved Community

The "Our Well Planned and Designed Community" chapter integrated the typical land use and housing elements and included other aspects that reinforced community form and character over land use and intensity. Secondly, they made the citywide application of Form-Based Coding a policy within this document to reinforce their commitment to using implementation tools that can get them to their goals. Thirdly, they integrated the Transect into the General Plan.

Building Internal Capabilities to Administer and Create Form-Based Codes: In terms of long-term application of Form-Based Coding Planning, the City built internal capabilities within their staff to work with consultants to create Form-Based Codes and to effectively administer Form-Based Codes. This process entailed sending staff to training, completing regular internal training efforts, and hiring staff that had the experience with or a strong desire to learn about Form-Based Codes.

Sample Corridor Applications: Two of the Form-Based Codes completed were corridor projects, thus applying to many of the main street corridor context of the Focus Neighborhoods in Cincinnati. The importance of the street design, the transitions into the neighborhoods, and the necessity to clearly designate nodes along the corridor were all elements within this code that would apply to Cincinnati.

Multiple Code Experience: As a leader in FBC application nationally, the City of Ventura has learned many lessons from the process of creating and administering multiple Form-Based Codes. One of these lessons is to be sure to establish a singular Organizing Principle and format that all the Form-Based Codes will share. After the first several Form-Based Codes were completed by different consultants it became clear that having disparate formats and Organizing Principles was going to cause the administration confusion and headaches over the longer term.
3

Additional Case Studies & How They Are Relevant to Cincinnati
The City of Livermore is located in Northern California in the eastern-most edge of the San Francisco Bay Area with a current population of approximately 73,345. This Form-Based Code project included the complete rewrite of the City of Livermore’s Development Code with Form-Based Code integration.

### Status:
Public Review Draft

### Scale:
City Wide

### Implementation Method:
Mandatory & Integrated

### Site Context:
- Greenfield
- Redevelopment/Infill
- Greyfield

### Site Size:
NA

### Administration:
City/County staff

### Organizing Principle:
Modified Transect

### Buildings Completed Under Code:
None Yet

### Code Consultants(s):
Opticos Design, Inc.
Lisa Wise Consulting
Jacobson & Wack

### Agency:
City of Livermore, California Community Development Department

### Contact:
Christine Rodriguez
(project manager)
Associate Planner
925-960-4471
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## Code Overview

The City of Livermore decided to completely rewrite their entire zoning code to reinforce their General Plan policies that promoted infill and redevelopment over new growth at the edge of the City. They realized that their antiquated zoning was promoting auto-dependent development in all parts of the City, not just at the edges. Therefore they wanted a zoning system that would remove barriers and provide incentives for appropriately scaled development in the historic neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.

This code is a perfect example of a hybrid code. It integrates conventional zoning components that regulate existing drivable suburban developments, so as not to render them non-conforming, with Form-Based Code elements that regulate the walkable urban areas. A hybrid code should not be confused with a hybrid-Form-Based Code, which cannot be effective.

The process started at the macro scale with the team documenting the existing neighborhoods, districts, and corridors. They then created representative diagrams and maps which helped determine the best areas for Form-Based Code application and gave the team a comprehensive understanding of the physical form of the community. Due to the extensive amount of GIS information available, the Opticos team was able to utilize this information for a robust macro-scale analysis. The end result of this analysis was an existing neighborhood and proposed neighborhood and public space framework that the Form-Based Code would reinforce.

The micro scale analysis (synoptic survey) was then completed, documenting the prototypical sampling area for each potential transect zone that existed in Livermore, as well as building types, frontage types, street types, and general architectural elements. All of this information would ultimately enable the team to establish a Livermore Transect and become the DNA for the Form-Based Code content. The City Staff was trained by Opticos on the micro scale documentation process and completed nearly 50% of the work with maps and templates provided by Opticos.

The organizing principle of the Form-Based Code is the Transect, but it was modified to meet the intent of application to the existing conditions. The Form-Based Zones integrated into the code were T3-Neighborhood, T4-Neighborhood, T4 Neighborhood-Open, T4 Main Street, and T4-Main Street-Open. The Neighborhood and Main Street categories relate to the intended physical form and the Open classification illustrates that the uses are flexible or “open” in these areas. Although they were not used in this code, placeholders were put in place for T1, T2, T5, and T6 allowing for future application to the natural edge of town as well as the potential BART transit station.
This structure is a good example of how to create a development code that can default to walkable urbanism in the future while effectively integrating conventional zoning elements that regulate existing and some new drivable suburban development. Instead of the Form-Based Code being the exception the conventional coding elements are.

**FBC Application:**

1. **Mandatory:** Historic neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. Transformation of first tier of strip centers into neighborhood main streets.

2. **Optional:** Larger commercial sites and the few larger residential sites at edge to allow for Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD).

**Public Process**

The public process focused on Form-Based Code application areas north and south of downtown and the transformation of strip commercial sites into neighborhood main streets.

**Steps:**

1. Stakeholder interviews
2. Workshop to determine strengths and weaknesses of each neighborhood
3. Pre-charrette presentation
4. 5-Day public charrette
5. Brief charrette summary report

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**Conventional vs. Form-Based**

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<tr>
<th>RLS-5 vs T3-N</th>
<th>RM vs T4-N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Existing conditions photograph" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Existing conditions photograph" /></td>
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<td><img src="image3" alt="Potential development under existing zoning code" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Potential development under existing zoning code" /></td>
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<td><img src="image5" alt="Potential development under proposed Form-Based code" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Potential development under proposed Form-Based code" /></td>
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**How will this be achieved:**

- No garages along main facade.
- 2-2.5 story maximum height.
- Encourage porches, stoops and other architectural elements.
- Define appropriate building types for medium density housing.

**Above:** Visual Assessment of allowed development under existing code and new Form-Based Code.
How is this relevant to Cincinnati?

Integrating Form-Based Codes Into an Otherwise Conventional Zoning Code: Since the Cincinnati development code will become a hybrid code when the Form-Based Code is integrated, it is important for the City to understand the complexities and benefits of integrating Form-Based Code regulations within their conventional zoning code.

Reinforcing a walkable neighborhood structure: This code addressed the following issues that Cincinnati will have to address to support the goal of reinforcing their existing neighborhood structure:

1. How to regulate neighborhood main streets;
2. How to regulate the transition from main streets into neighborhoods; and,
3. How to create flexibility of use at the edges of main streets.

Transformation of early strip malls into neighborhood centers:
Based on initial assessment of existing conditions within the Focus Neighborhoods there are potential opportunities to transform medium-sized lots along the corridor that used to be medium-sized box retail or small strip malls into projects that integrate neighborhood serving commercial and retail uses with a variety of housing types.

Range of Transect zones/Level of intensity: Similar to this code, the Focus Neighborhoods designated to date for Cincinnati have T4/T5 form and character (1-3 story main streets) at their centers transitioning quickly to T4/T3 (townhouses, small apartments, etc), transitioning to single family.

Modified transect application: Similar to this code, if the Transect is used in Cincinnati, it would likely have to be refined/modified in order to appropriately relate to the complex existing conditions at a fine-grain scale.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T4-Main Street-Open</th>
<th>T4-Main Street</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desired Form</td>
<td>Desired Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commercial/Shopfront</td>
<td>Commercial/Shopfront</td>
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**Intent**

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<td>The primary intent of this zone is to provide an appropriate transition from the neighborhood main street into residential areas, and to provide flexible ground-floor spaces in a commercial form that can allow the ground-floor “shopfront” environment to expand as the market desires.</td>
<td>The primary intent of this zone is to integrate vibrant main street commercial and retail environments into neighborhoods that will provide day-to-day commercial amenities within walking distance, reinforce an existing or potential transit stop, and serve as a focal point for the neighborhoods.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Modified transect used as the Organizing Principle for the Form-Based Code.*
Left (from top to bottom): Existing Shopping Center, Illustrative Plan and Regulating Plan for new neighborhood main street.
Nashville is the capital of Tennessee, which resides in the north-central part of the state. In 2008 the population of the Nashville-Davidson County region was 626,144. The 2008 population of the Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Columbia combined statistical area was estimated at 1,632,671.

**Overview**

The Community Character Manual (CCM) is not a Form-Based Code (FBC), but rather was a tool used by the City for citywide FBC application. The General Plan consists of many components, including functional plans and Community Plans (formerly known as Subarea Plans). The functional plans cover topics that are addressed briefly in the General Plan, such as housing, economic development, transportation, land use policies, and historic preservation. The Community Character Manual (CCM) is a functional plan component of the Nashville’s Concept 2010: A General Plan for Nashville and Davidson County (twenty-year planning horizon).

The CCM, which was created and adopted in 2008, has three main functions:

1. Explain and institute the Community Character Policies that will be applied in each Community Plan;
2. Provide direction for implementation tools such as zoning;
3. Help shape the form and character of neighborhoods, centers, corridors, open space, and districts within communities.

The adoption and use of the CCM represents the evolution in the community’s understanding of community planning from one based primarily on land use and density (as established by the Land Use Policy Application (LUPA) in 1992) to a greater emphasis on form and character of development including massing, orientation and scale of buildings, setbacks and spacing, location of access and parking, etc. The original LUPA process, like most citywide Comprehensive Plans/General Plans based on land use and intensity, did not give the Planning Department and communities the tools that they needed to reinforce their commitment to preserving the diversity of rural, urban, and suburban areas developed in the Nashville/Davidson County area. The result has been development that is homogeneous and does not preserve or create the sense of place that community members often call for during Community Planning.

The CCM’s Community Character Policies, which speak to form and character of development in addition to land use and intensity, replace the Land Use Policy Application (LUPA), which primarily focused on density and intensity. As Community Plans are updated, Detailed Design Plans are created, and plan amendments are undertaken, Land Use Policies will be replaced with Community Character Policies. Until the Community Plan or Detailed Design Plan is updated or amended, the existing Land Use Policies will remain in effect. All future land use decisions, including recommendations on zone changes and subdivision requests, are made based on the Community Character Policies in each Community Plan.

**The CCM Document**

Planning Department divided Davidson County into 14 communities for planning purposes. Each community has a Community Plan that is updated every 7 to 10 years through a process that engages community stakeholders – residents, property owners, business owners, institutional representatives, developers and elected officials – in planning for future growth, development and preservation in the community. In some areas, Detailed Design Plans may be developed to further refine the guidance provided by the Community Plan for a specific neighborhood, center or corridor. The Community Plans, including their accompanying Detailed Design Plans, are adopted by the Metropolitan Planning Commission following several community meetings and a public hearing. The plans may be amended in a process that includes a public hear-
Community Character Policies (CCP) are the primary product of each Community Plan. The CCP discuss the appropriate form and character of development – massing, orientation and scale of buildings, setbacks and spacing, location of access and parking, etc. The emphasis on form and character allows communities to preserve existing character and enhance or create areas with distinctive rural, suburban, urban or special use character. The CCP are applied to all the property in the community and have two main functions: to explain the vision of the community for its future growth, development and preservation and to provide direction for implementation tools such as zoning/Form-Based Coding.

The overarching concept behind each Community Character Policy is its location in the Transect – T1 Natural, T2 Rural, T3 Suburban, T4 Urban, T5 Center, T6 Downtown, and District. After its location on the Transect is determined, this is followed by considering the Community Element to be described – Open Space, Neighborhood, Center, Corridor, or District. Finally, the Community Character Policy provides the particular character and form guidance.

Within each Transect Category (T1-T6), the Community Character Policies provide guidance on how to plan, design, and create the appropriate rural, suburban, and urban form for each of four Community Elements – Open Space, Neighborhoods, Centers, and Corridors. The result is that the guidance provided in a Community Character Policy for a T2 Rural Neighborhood will be different than the guidance for a T3 Suburban Neighborhood and a T4 Urban Neighborhood. When a Community Plan is updated or amended, or a Detailed Design Plan is created, each property is assigned a Community Character Policy to guide future growth, development and preservation of the land.

Diagram giving a clear summary of how the CCM is applied.

How is this relevant to Cincinnati?

Providing an Example of a Form-Based Approach to a Comprehensive Plan: Since the City of Cincinnati is about to embark on a Comprehensive Plan Update that has a goal of reinforcing the character of urban, suburban, and rural areas it may want to consider an approach that replaces the typical land use and intensity based policy, which does not provide a tool for reinforcing the unique character of these places, with an approach similar to Nashville that focuses on form and character first.

Building Internal Staff Capabilities to Create and Administer the Form-Based Code(s): In terms of long-term application of Form-Based Coding and Community Planning, the City may also want to consider building internal capabilities into their staff to complete this work in house like is done in Nashville.

Providing a Foundation for Predictable Future Development Decisions: Having a Community Character Policy in place to reinforce the Form-Based Code application would provide a foundation for all future land use and development decisions and approvals, thus reassuring residents of the community that only projects that reinforce the policies and FBC would be approved.

Learning from a Regional Resource: Nashville already has been used as a good regional resource and should continue to be one. The CCM effort along with the Community Plans and Form-Based Codes put in place have created substantial, high-quality built results that can be used as examples until Cincinnati has its own built examples to point to.
The Community Character Manual

2008

T1 Natural

T2 Rural

T3 Suburban

T4 Urban

T5 Center

T6 Downtown

D District

Adopted August 14, 2008

Metropolitan Nashville / Davidson County Planning Department

Cincinnati FBC Consultation
Opticos Design, Inc.