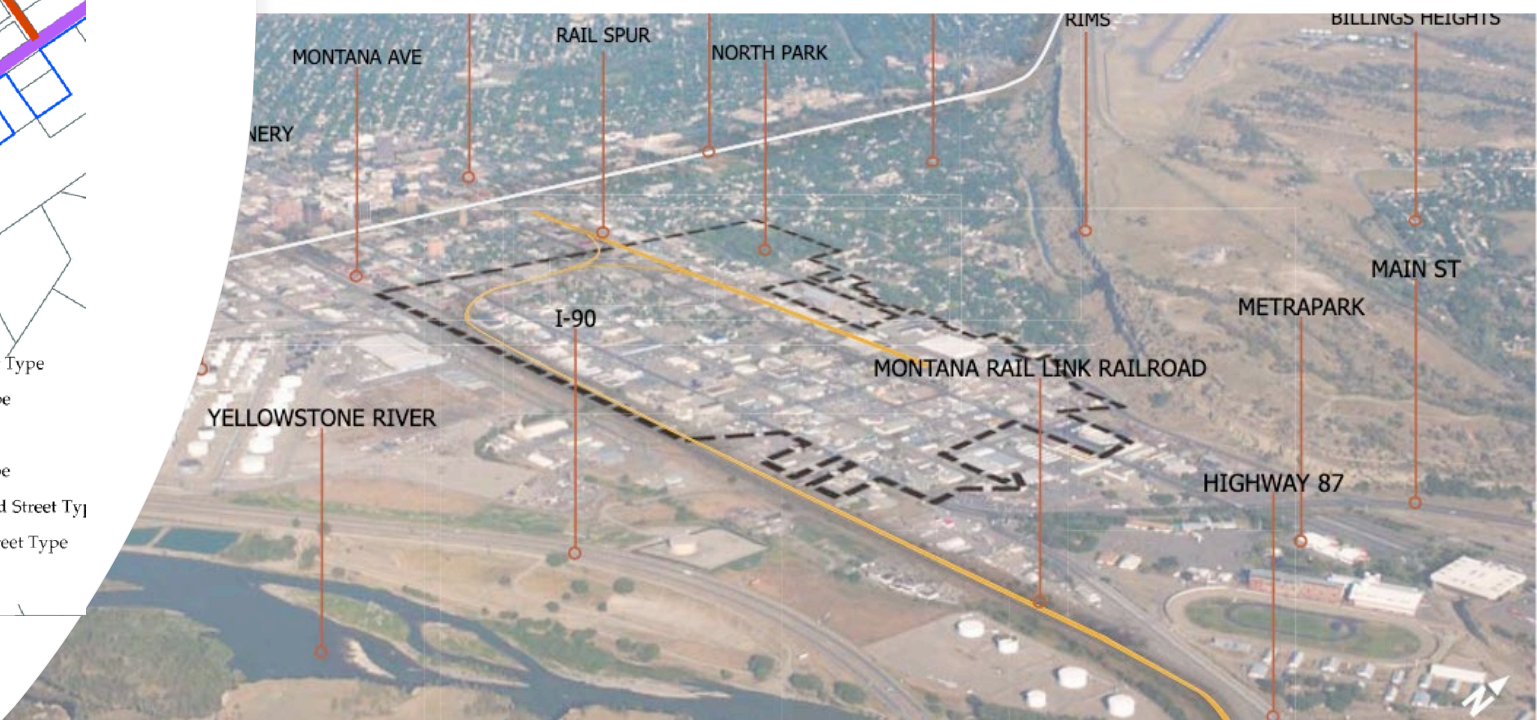


FORM-BASED CODE

a planner's perspective

Olympia Planning Commission

December 4, 2023



What is Form-Based Code?

Definition

A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters 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. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.

– FBC Institute

Conventional Zoning

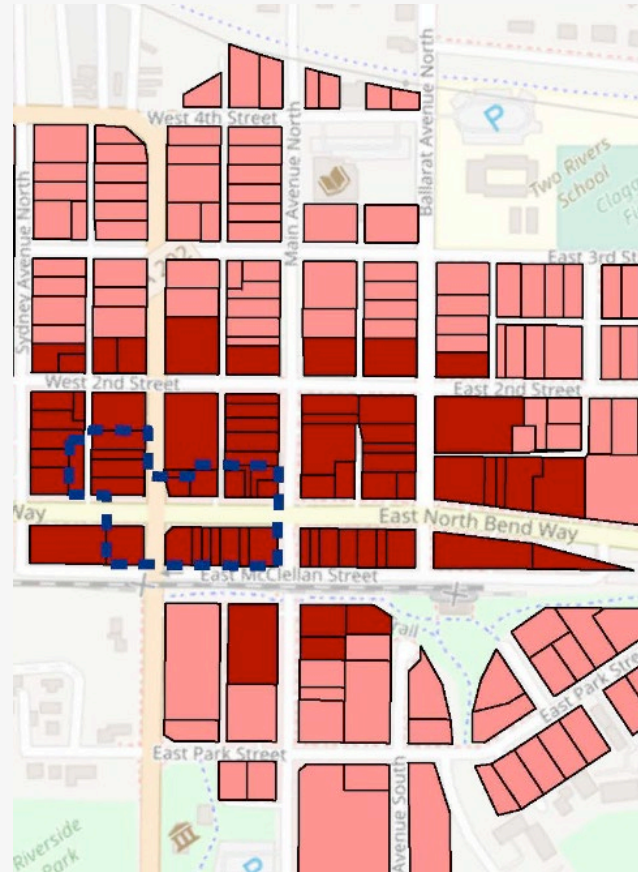
Prioritizes USE over form:



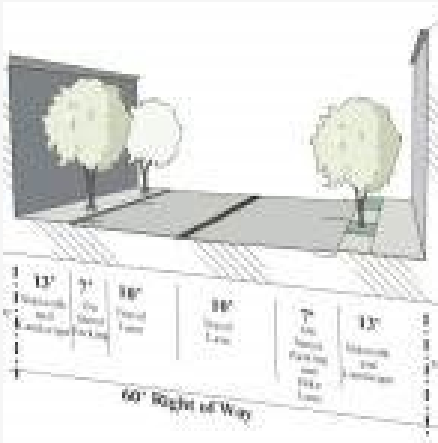
Form-Based Coding

Prioritizes FORM over use:





Building Elements	
Encroachments	
Front, Areas II, III, IV	To ROW
Front, Areas V, VI	10' beyond
Front, recessed	3'
Side	3'
Notes	
Bay windows, balconies, stoops and the encroachment areas.	



Elements of Form-Based Code

Five Main Elements of Form-Based Codes

1. Regulating Plan

A plan or map of the regulated area designating the locations where different building form standards apply.

2. Public Standards

Specifies elements in the public realm: sidewalk, travel lanes, on-street parking, street trees and furniture, etc.

3. Building Standards

Regulations controlling the features, configurations, and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm.

4. Administration

A clearly defined and streamlined application and project review process.

5. Definitions

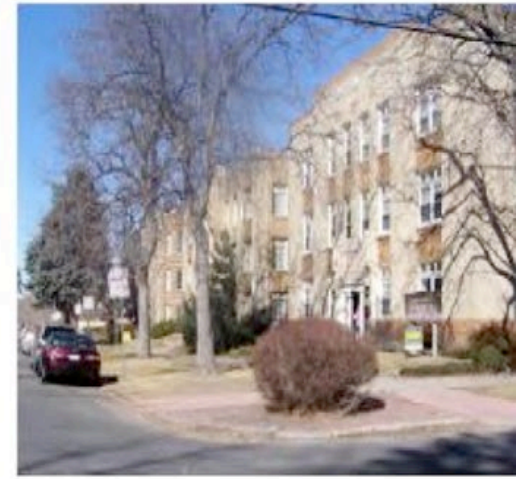
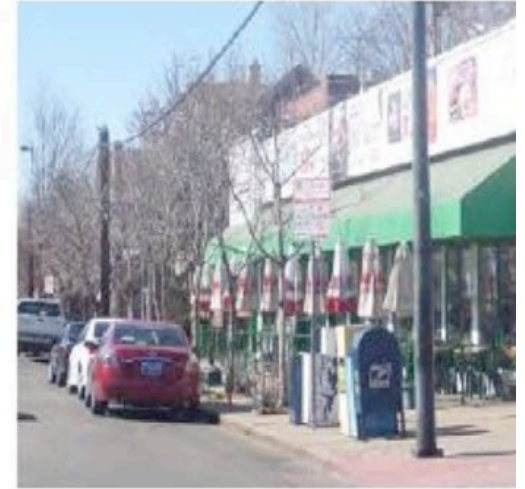
A glossary to ensure the precise use of technical terms.

Adopted Form-Based Code – Denver, CO 2010

Journal of Urban Design,
2017

Vol. 22, no. 6, 845–865

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2017.1337495>



Adopted FBC in Washington

Lakewood – District standards: building, land use, streetscape

North Bend – Downtown district standards, historic preservation, building type and streetscape standards

Bothell – District standards: building design, parking, architectural, signage

Chelan – Land use district standards and street type designations

Freeland – Land use district standards: building design, parking

Mountlake Terrace – Village standards: land uses, design standards, parking, streetscape

Sammamish – Zoning district design standards: landscaping, parking, signage, streetscape

Snoqualmie – Block frontage type standards: site and building design

Lakewood, WA Hybrid FBC - Regulating Plan

- Overlay superimposes the FBC over zoning
- Densities already in place
- Street typologies drive standards
- Transit and commercial corridors identified for mixed use
- Supportive of missing middle in residential area



North Bend, WA FBC – Building Adornments Encouraged

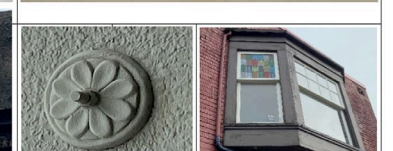
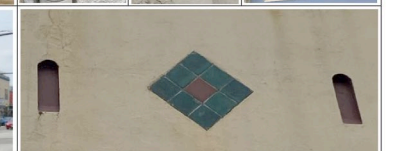
Sunset Garage (201 W North Bend Wy): Built in the 1920s, portions of the Sunset Garage were restored in 2019, resulting in a 2019 Spellman Award for Historic Preservation.



McGrath Building (101 W North Bend Wy): Built in 1922, The McGrath building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.



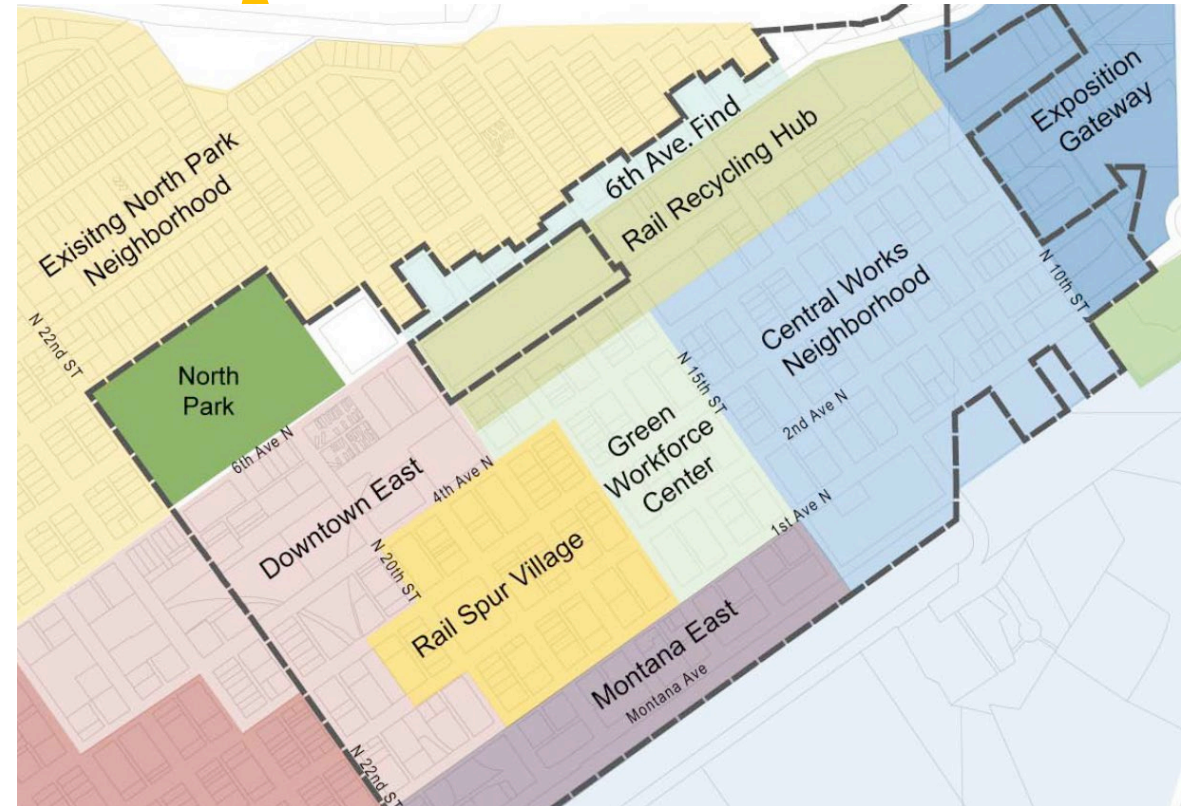
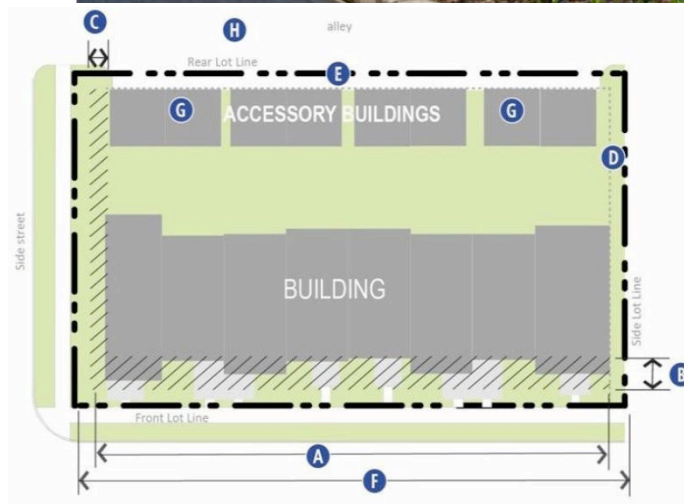
Other Architectural Features Found in the Downtown Core of North Bend

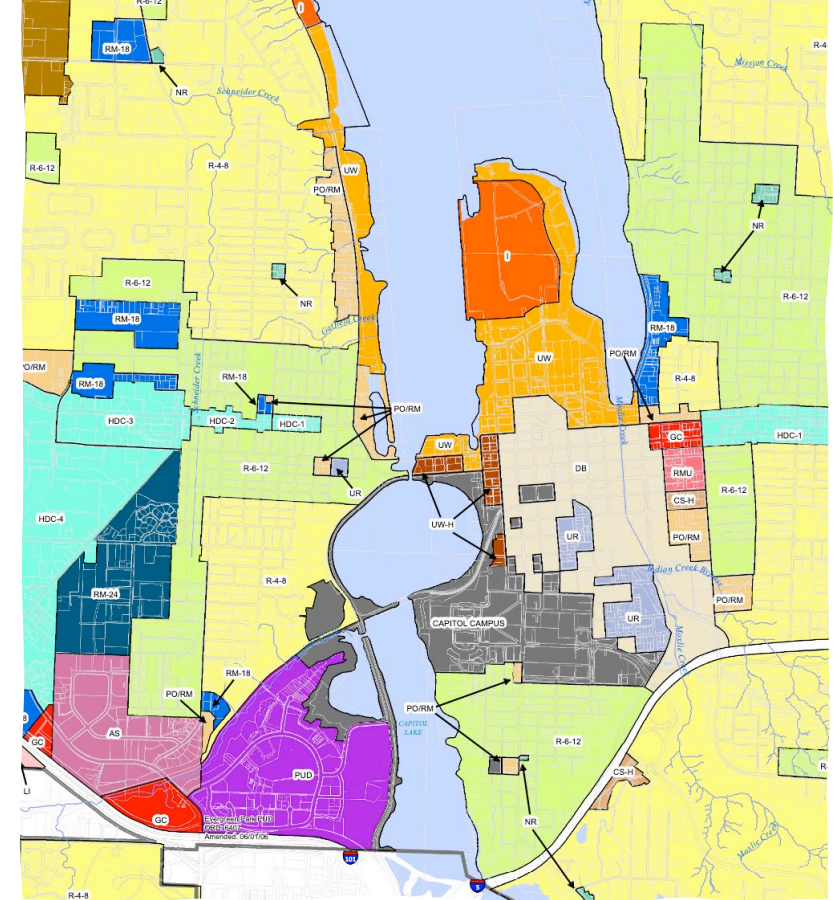
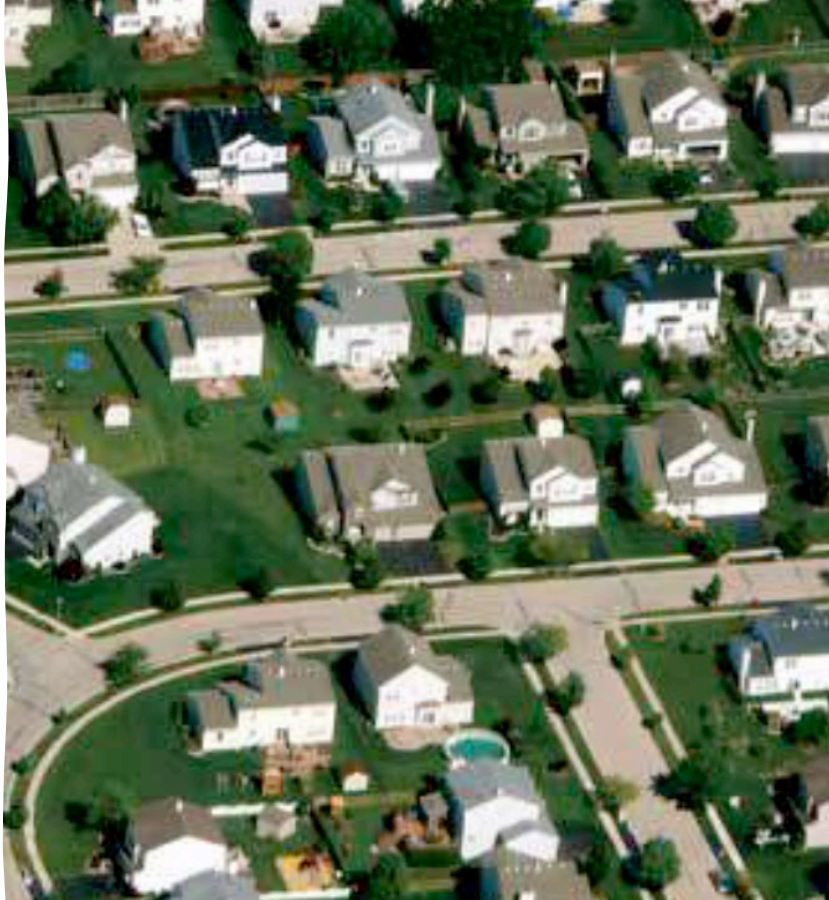


East Billings Urban Renewal District - FBC



Figure 27-906(8a): Typical Sample Connector.





What Form-
Based Code is
not

- Planned Unit Development
- Master Planned Community
- Conventional Euclidean Zoning

Pedestrian Entries from Frontage Line:

Beaufort S.C.

EXAMPLE: BUILDING ENTRANCES FACING PRIMARY FRONTAGE



Advantages of Form-Based Code

- Instill and preserve a sense of place by:
 - Creating healthy and walkable neighborhoods
 - Supporting aesthetically pleasing architecture
 - Preserving historic features



Historic row houses.



Bungalow Court development where several small homes surround a central garden.

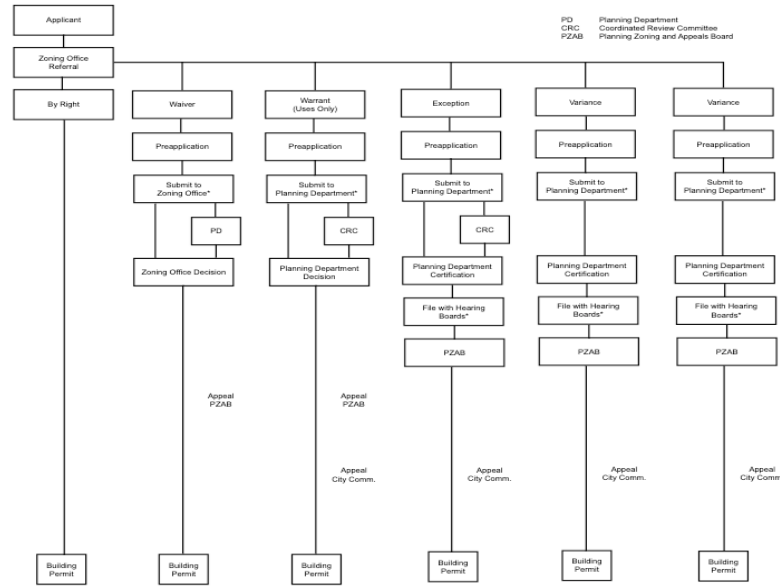


Commercial and residential mixed use.

Advantages of Form-Based Code

- Create attainable housing and advance racial equity by:
 - Integrating middle housing and non-conventional ownership models
 - Permitting diverse land uses

PERMITTING PROCESS DIAGRAM



2.0 Administration

2.1 REVIEW BODIES

2.1.1 Summary of Review Authority

The following table summarizes the required review and approval authority provided under this development code.

	2.1.2	2.1.3	2.1.4	2.1.5	2.1.6	2.1.7	
Procedure	Zoning Administrator	Site Plan Review Board	Planning Commission	Zoning Commission	Zoning Board of Appeals	City Council	Reference
Zoning Compliance Certificates	D	R					2.2
Certificate of Occupancy	D						2.3
Administrative Deviation	D						2.4
Uses Permitted with Administrative Approval	D						2.5
Minor Variations without Site Plan Review	D						2.6
Minor Variations with Site Plan Review	D	R					2.6
Major Variations without							



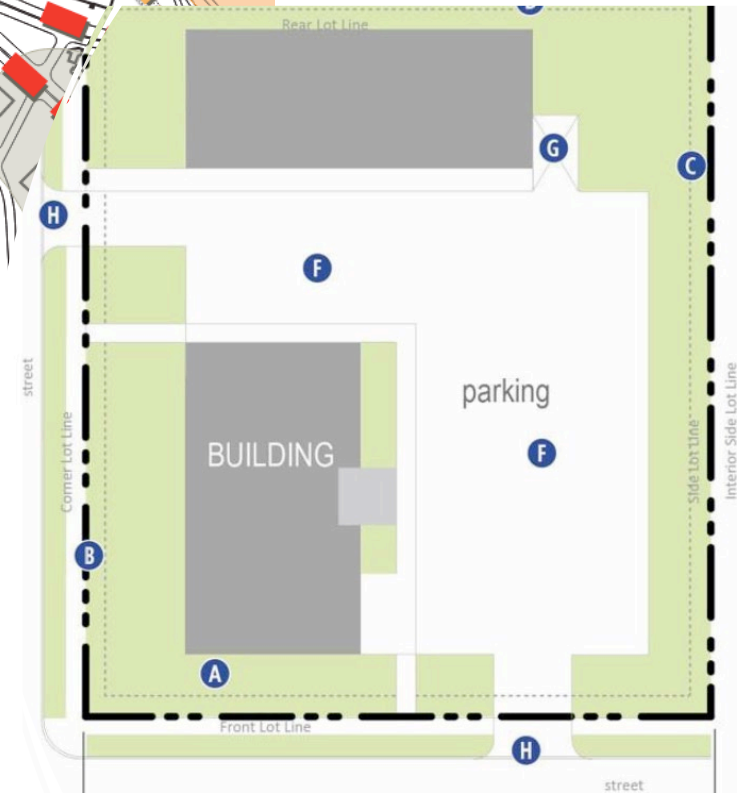
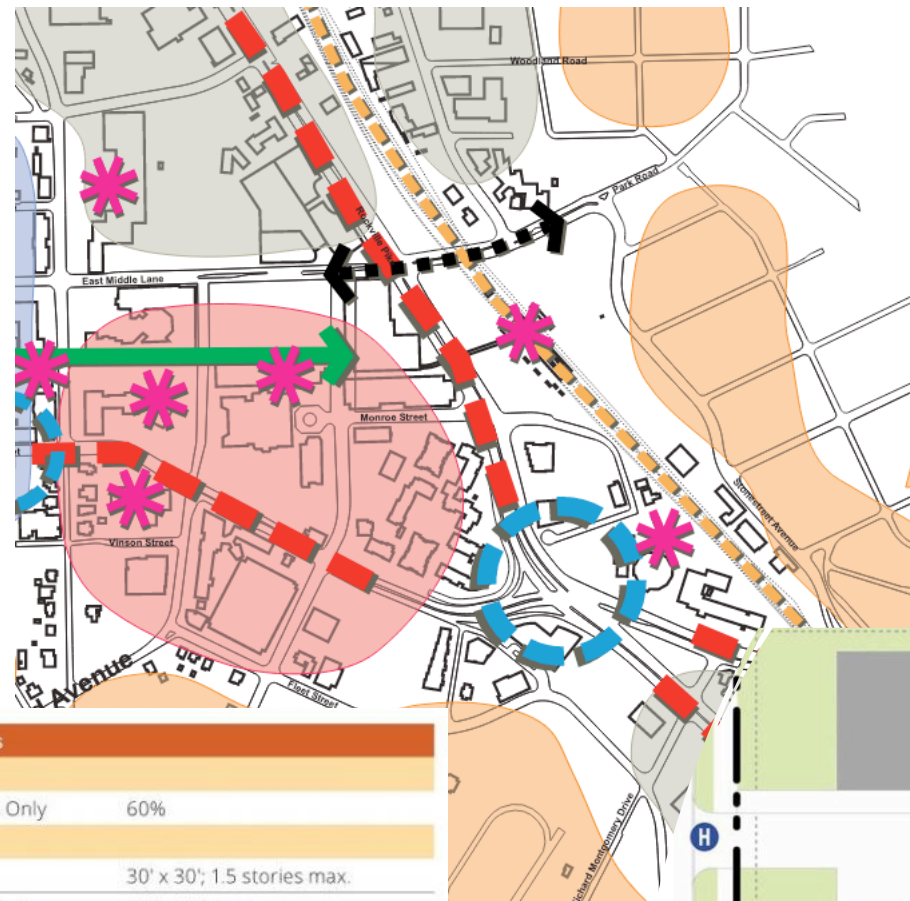
Advantages of Form-Based Code

- Predictable regulatory requirements and permitting process
- Legalize existing non-conforming land uses
- Support small business

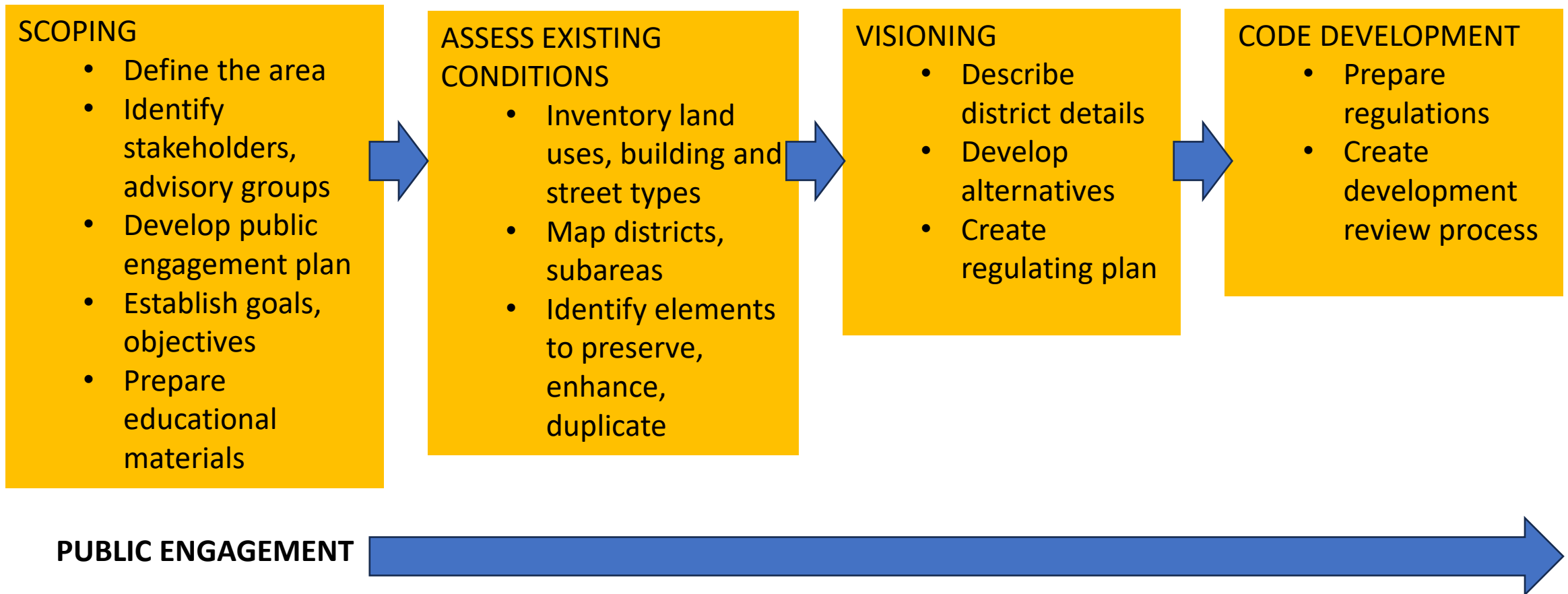
Disadvantages of Form-Based Code

- Expensive and time-consuming to develop
- Overly prescriptive
- Increases cost of development
- Takes too long to achieve the vision

Multiple Buildings		
Lot Coverage		
Building Footprints Only	60%	
Building Size ¹		
Detached House	30' x 30'; 1.5 stories max.	
Buildings with > 1 Unit	48' x 48' max.	
Building Separation		
Clear Space Between Buildings	10' min. (clear)	A
Shared Yard for Lot		
Area (up to 5 Buildings)	20' x 30' min. clear	B
Area (6 or more Buildings)	20% of the lot min.; no dim. <20'	
Opening to Front or Side Street	12'	C
Shared yard shall not be combined with or encroached with vehicular access or parking areas.		
4. Pedestrian Access		
Passage Setbacks		
From Building Entrance	10' min.	D
From Side of Building	8' min.	E



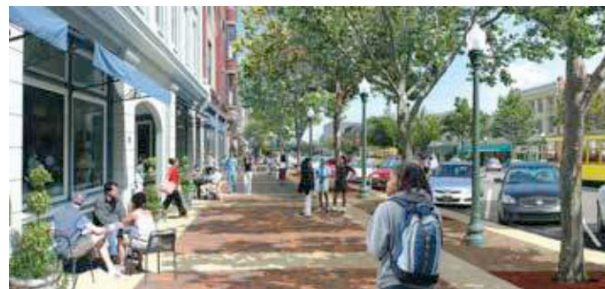
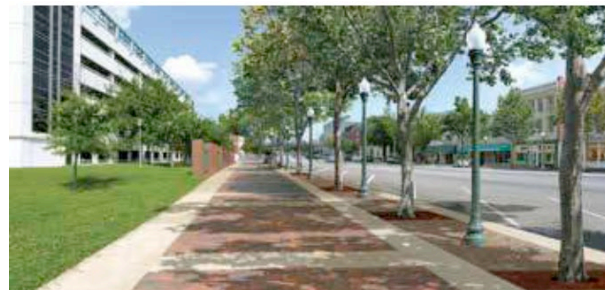
Pathway to Creating a Form-Based Code



Renderings of Form-Based Code



Peoria, IL



Montgomery, AL



Hercules, CA



Where Would Form-Based Code Work in Olympia?

- Subareas
- Neighborhood Centers
- Corridors

Resources

Form-Based Code Institute

American Planning Association

Washington Department of Commerce

Planetizen

- National Charrette Institute
- Congress for the New Urbanism
- Urban Land Institute
- Strong Towns
- Smart Growth America

Photo credits

- Form-Based Code Institute
- City of Olympia, WA
- City of Billings, MT
- City of North Bend, WA
- Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
- Flickr user Shawndra and Simon
- Urban Advantage
- Development Concepts, Inc./HNTB