



LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION




Implemented on Cape Cod

OVERVIEW

A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and high-quality public spaces by using physical form (rather than segregation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. It is a type of zoning that regulates building form more than uses. A form-based code uses pictures, diagrams, and simple language to describe the type and style of growth and development that are desirable to a community. Form-based codes can be a useful tool for increasing housing opportunities because the code may allow residential uses in forms that the community desires, leading to more predictable outcomes for both the community and developer. As with other zoning amendments, it would need to be adopted by Town Meeting or Town Council. Robust community input and engagement during development of the zoning can increase likelihood of adoption.

CHALLENGES ADDRESSED

-  Not Allowed to Build Multi-family Housing
-  Too Expensive to Build New Housing
-  Too Expensive to Secure or Maintain Housing
-  Hard to Find Year-round Housing

POTENTIAL BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Creates a stronger connection between community vision, regulations, and development plans
- Establishes a supportive relationship between private development and the public realm
- Generates more predictable development outcomes
- Reinforces historic patterns at the building scale
- Makes zoning regulations more accessible to the community through the code's use of photos, diagrams, and drawings
- Zoning reform can be time-consuming and potentially costly
- Local developers and municipal staff may be unfamiliar with form-based codes and may need time to become comfortable with it

RESOURCES & EXAMPLES

Form-based Codes Institute (FBCI) - The Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI), a program of Smart Growth America, is a professional organization dedicated to advancing the understanding and use of form-based codes.

A Framework for Form-based Codes on Cape Cod - This form-based code framework was developed as part of a larger effort known as Community Resiliency by Design, carried out by Union Studio, the Cape Cod Commission, and several towns on the Cape.

A Design-Driven Housing Model Bylaw for Cape Cod Towns - This model form-based code bylaw provides a starting point for towns looking to implement form-based code to allow for more housing varieties in their community.

CASE STUDY: DOWNTOWN HYANNIS REZONING (2023)

The Town of Barnstable revised the zoning for downtown Hyannis with a particular focus on residential and mixed-use development that responds to local context through size, form, placement, and design considerations. The prior zoning allowed for multi-family residential development; however, very few residential units were permitted by-right. The new zoning

strives to allow for efficient models of compact housing by-right through a code crafted to correspond with the historic development patterns of downtown Hyannis. The rezoning also sought to create a predictable regulatory framework that would encourage desirable forms of development while also meeting a range of housing needs.

