

# UPPER TOWNSHIP

## *Form-Based Code*

### What is a Form-Based Code?

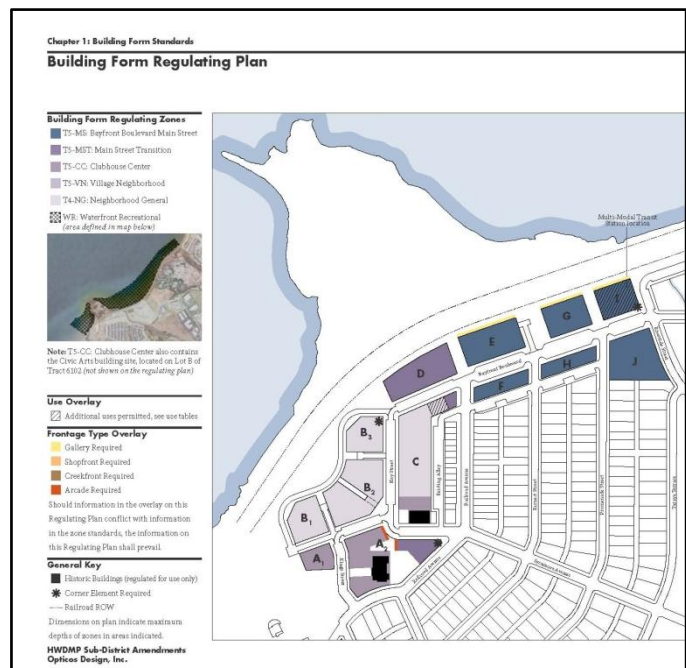
“A method of regulating development to achieve a specific urban form. Form-based codes create a predictable public realm primarily by controlling physical form, with a lesser focus on land use, through city or county regulations” (Form-Based Codes Institute).

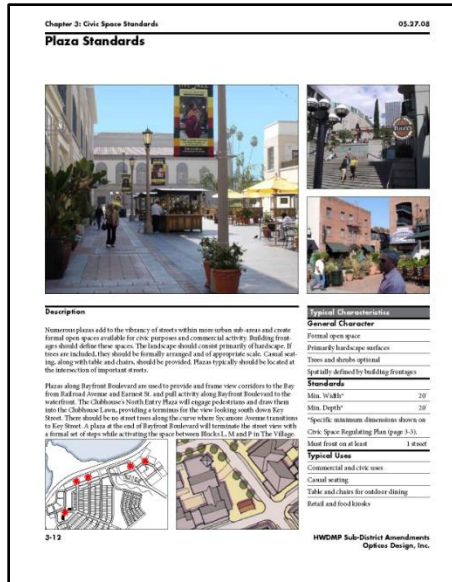
Form-based codes (FBC) look at the relationship between buildings and the street – the public realm and community form. FBCs look at the mass of buildings in relation to each other and the scale of the streets and blocks. Regulations are presented with both text and graphics, which is linked to a regulating plan that indicates the form and scale of permitted development as opposed to only delineating permitted land use types. Whereas, typical zoning focuses solely on segregating uses and controlling intensity through floor to area ratios, dwellings per acre, setbacks and parking ratios. Note that FBCs are regulatory, not advisory like design guidelines.

FBCs are prepared to achieve a community’s vision; they are a tool that can implement quality development and create a sense of place.

Form-based codes typically include the following elements:

- Regulating Plan – map of the study area designating where different building form standards apply, based on the community’s input regarding physical character
- Building Form Standards – policies for controlling the arrangement, characteristics and functions of buildings, which define and shape the public realm





- Public Space Standards – provisions for the elements (sidewalks, on-street parking, street trees, street furniture, etc.) within the public realm

- Administration – defines the application and project review process

- Definitions – ensures technical terms are understood

Form-based codes sometimes include:

- Architectural Standards – controls the exterior materials and quality

- Landscaping Standards – controls landscape design and plant materials on private parcels as they impact public spaces (parking lot screening regulations, etc.)
- Signage Standards – controls permitted signage sizes, materials, illuminations, placement

### Why should Upper Township consider FBC?

There are a number of advantages to FBCs, which are as follows:

- They are prescriptive, telling you what they want, rather than what they don't want. Therefore, the results are more predictable.
- They encourage public participation by gathering public input on design, density, height and scale, which then aid in formulating the code
- They often yield a diversity of architecture, materials and uses
- They work well in established communities because they can define and codify a community's existing "DNA"
- They are easier to use than conventional zoning codes because they are more concise and typically include illustrations for clarification, making it easier for residents and builders to determine whether their project is compliant or not
- They require less oversight by planning and zoning boards, which could yield savings in time and money
- They are enforceable because the purpose is to provide the community with a high-quality public realm – a recognized public good