Form Based Code

Form-based codes restore time-tested development forms. They provide organization for historic preservation, social spaces, walkability, and development for our towns and neighborhoods. While traditional zoning has been more interested in controlling land uses, form-based codes focus on shaping the physical form of our public spaces. Most importantly, a form based code asks the community to participate in creating the vision that shapes the future of the places where they live, work, and play.

Form-based codes start with a vision

Form based codes are informed by community needs and goals. The community is asked for their vision and aspirations for the built environment. For example, what the community would like to preserve or achieve in terms of building sizes, how buildings relate to one another, what public spaces provide, and what other development is allowed.

The form-based codes then provide the design guidelines for the built environment to achieve those community aspirations in the built environment.

Components of form-based code

The regulating plan is the central component of a form-based code. The regulating plan provides maps with different zones with building requirements to achieve the vision. The plan also provides tables that regulate the types of uses allowed in each zone. Together, these components regulate the form of buildings, streets, parking, and public spaces. Diagrams and illustrations are also used to provide guidance on the overall vision.

In Cumberland Gap

Steps:
- Public process to develop vision and aspirations
- Create the regulating plan
- Overlay replace existing zoning map - all other regulations can remain
- Menu of architectural elements for private developers
- Guidelines for public spaces, streets, and parking
- Project review and development procedures

Major Benefits of Form Based Code:
- Community participation in vision for future
- One coherent set of rules for private and public realms
- Provide consistency and predictability in plan review and development
- Encourage mixed use development
- Expand preservation of Town
- Adapt to the market

Streetscapes in Cumberland Gap

Streetscape Design Considerations:

- Consistent sidewalks along and between blocks
- Narrower parking spaces allow for other development
- Consistent street trees provide shade and environment
- Periodic lighting lends to historical feel

- Sidewalks with minimum 6’ width pedestrian walkway
- Buried utilities provide more pleasing environment
- More room for sidewalk furniture
- ADA accessible design makes the space available to all

Colwyn Street (Existing)

Colwyn Street (Updated)

Pics Courtesy of the Form Based Code Institute