

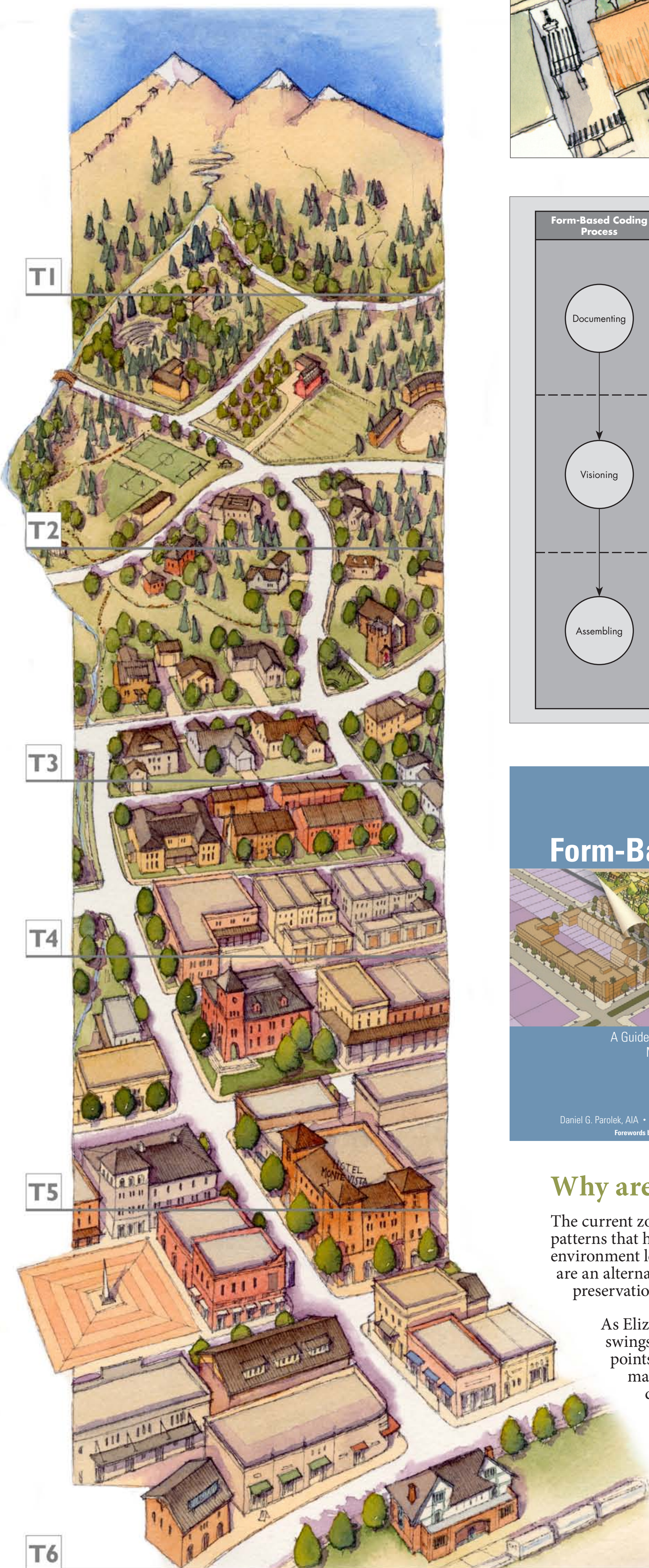
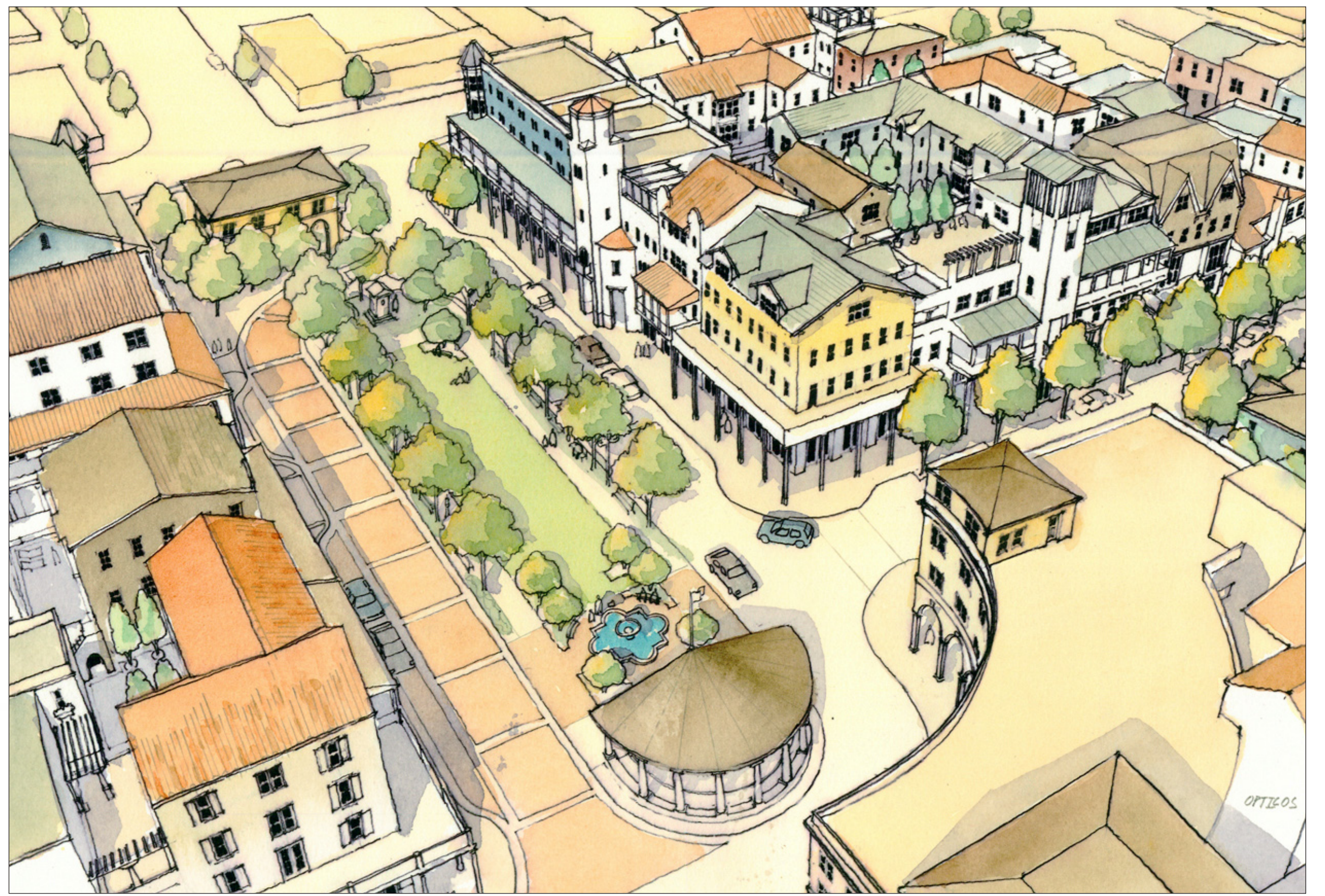
# What is a Form-Based Code?

Placemaking with a New Approach to Zoning  
Opticos Design, Inc.

## The Form-Based Codes Institute defines Form-Based Codes 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.

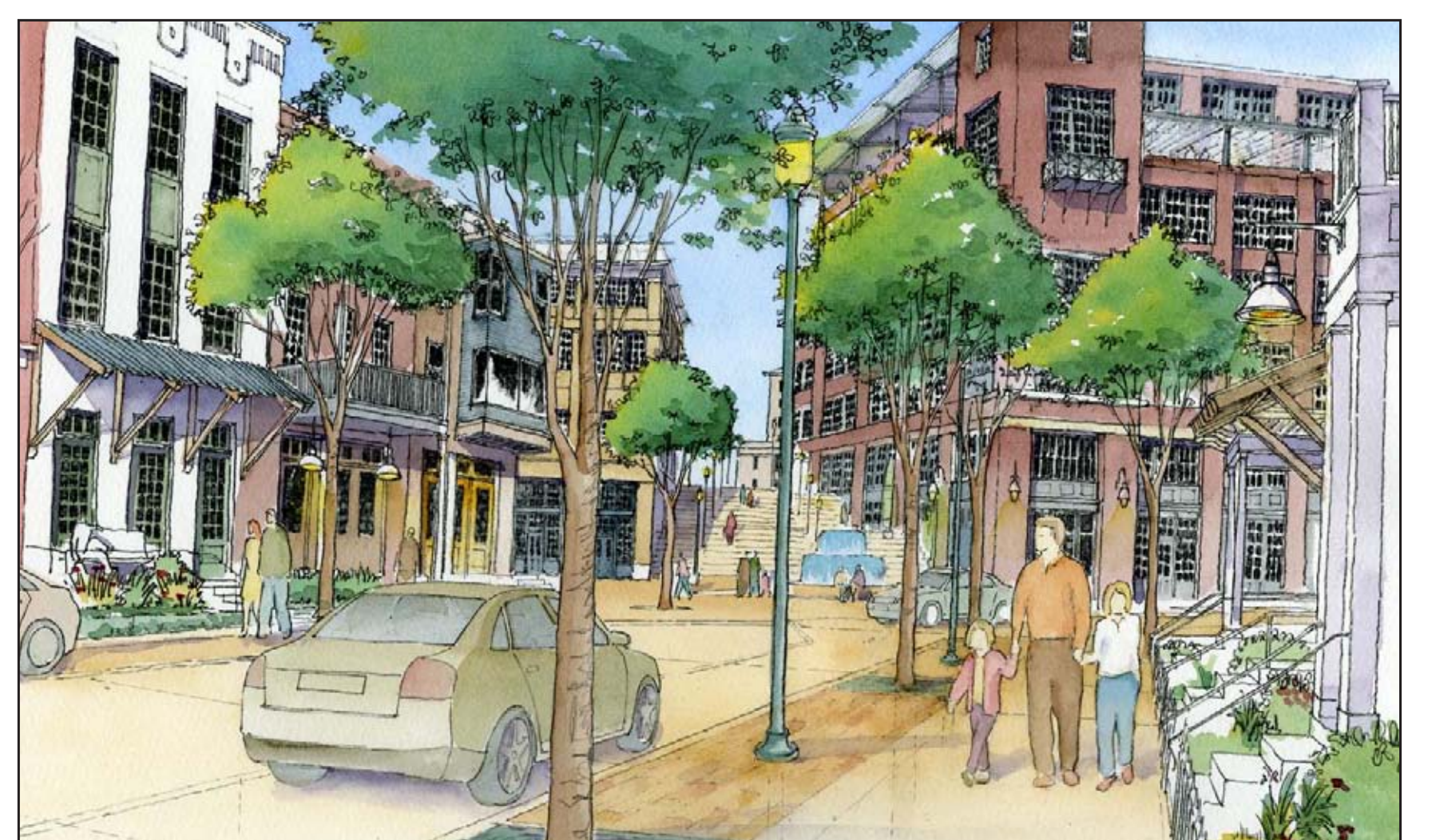
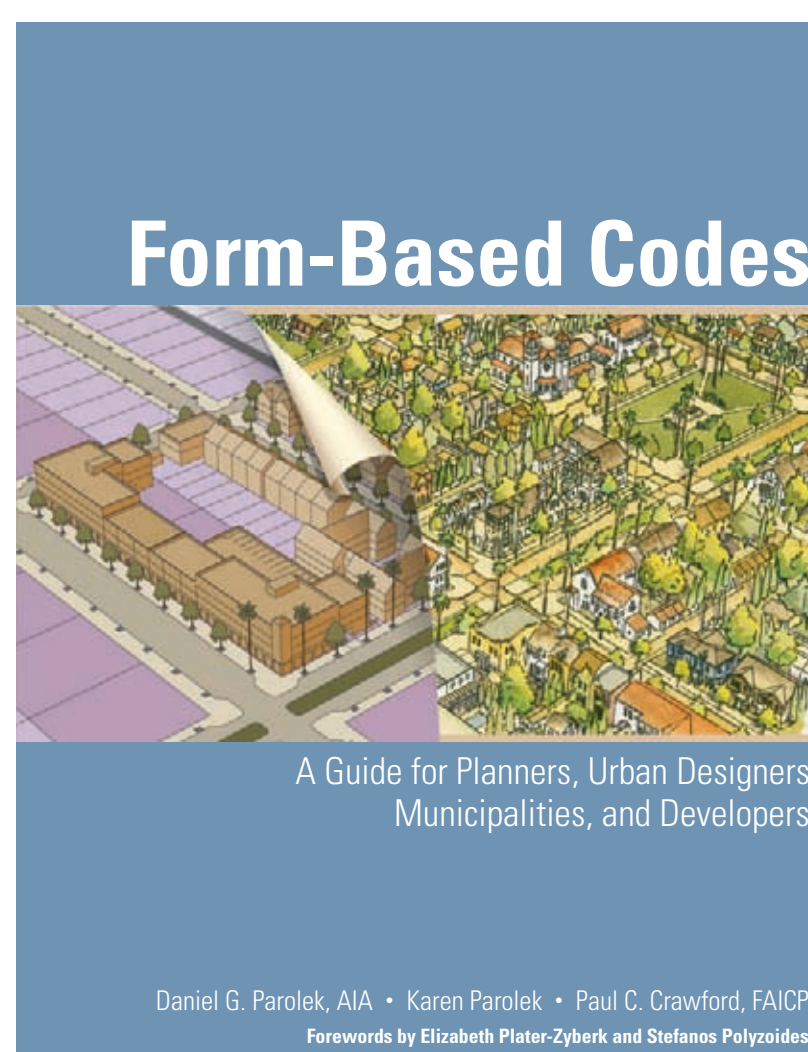
The most important aspect of this definition in terms of differentiating FBCs from Euclidean zoning is that the intended physical form or desired place replaces use as the organizing principle, or framework, for the overall code. So instead of a zone being labeled "single-family residential," it might 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), 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 Coding Process	Plan	Regulations	Administration
Documenting	<b>Macro Scale</b> 1.1 Existing Framework Plan (N/D/C)	<b>Micro Scale</b> 1.2 Existing Transect Matrix and Micro Element Documentation Sheets	
	<b>Illustrative Plan and Imagery</b>		
Visioning	2.1 Illustrative Plan	Transect Zone Vision Sheets and Micro Element Type Vision Sheets	
	<b>Regulating Plan and Regulations</b>		
Assembling	2.2 Regulating Plan	Transect Regulation Matrix and Micro Element Regulation Matrices	
			3.1 <b>Splicing</b> Additional Code Text
	3.2 <b>Formatting</b> Form-Based Code		

## 3-Step Process for Creating a Form-Based Code:

There are three important steps in the process of creating a Form-Based Code: Documentation, Visioning, and Assembling. The two scales of Documentation are the macro-scale, which establishes a framework of existing neighborhoods, districts, and corridors, and the micro-scale, which documents building blocks, lots, building placement, frontage types and other small scale elements that add to the character and quality of the built environment. The Visioning phase engages the community and allows them to participate in the creation of a detailed design vision that the Form-Based Code will implement. The Assembling phase is the process of compiling the code content into a usable format and structure and plugging it into the existing zoning code if it is not going to completely replace it.

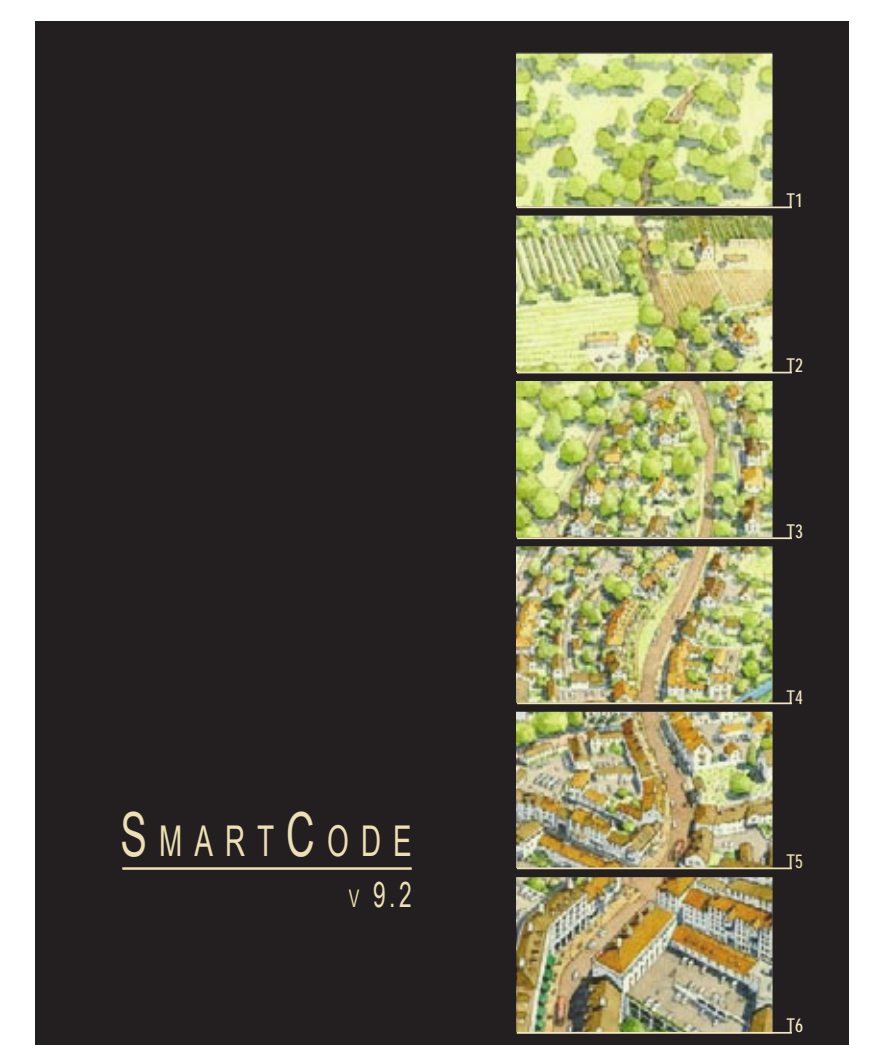


## Why are Form-Based Codes Needed?

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 leaving communities searching for tools to address these issues. FBCs 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 re-make 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.

For a more detailed description of FBCs see "Form-Based Codes," by Parolek or go to the Form-Based Code Institutes's web site at [www.formbasedcodes.org](http://www.formbasedcodes.org). The SmartCode is a model, Transect-Based, Form-Based Code.



## Organizing Principle: The Rural-to-Urban Transect

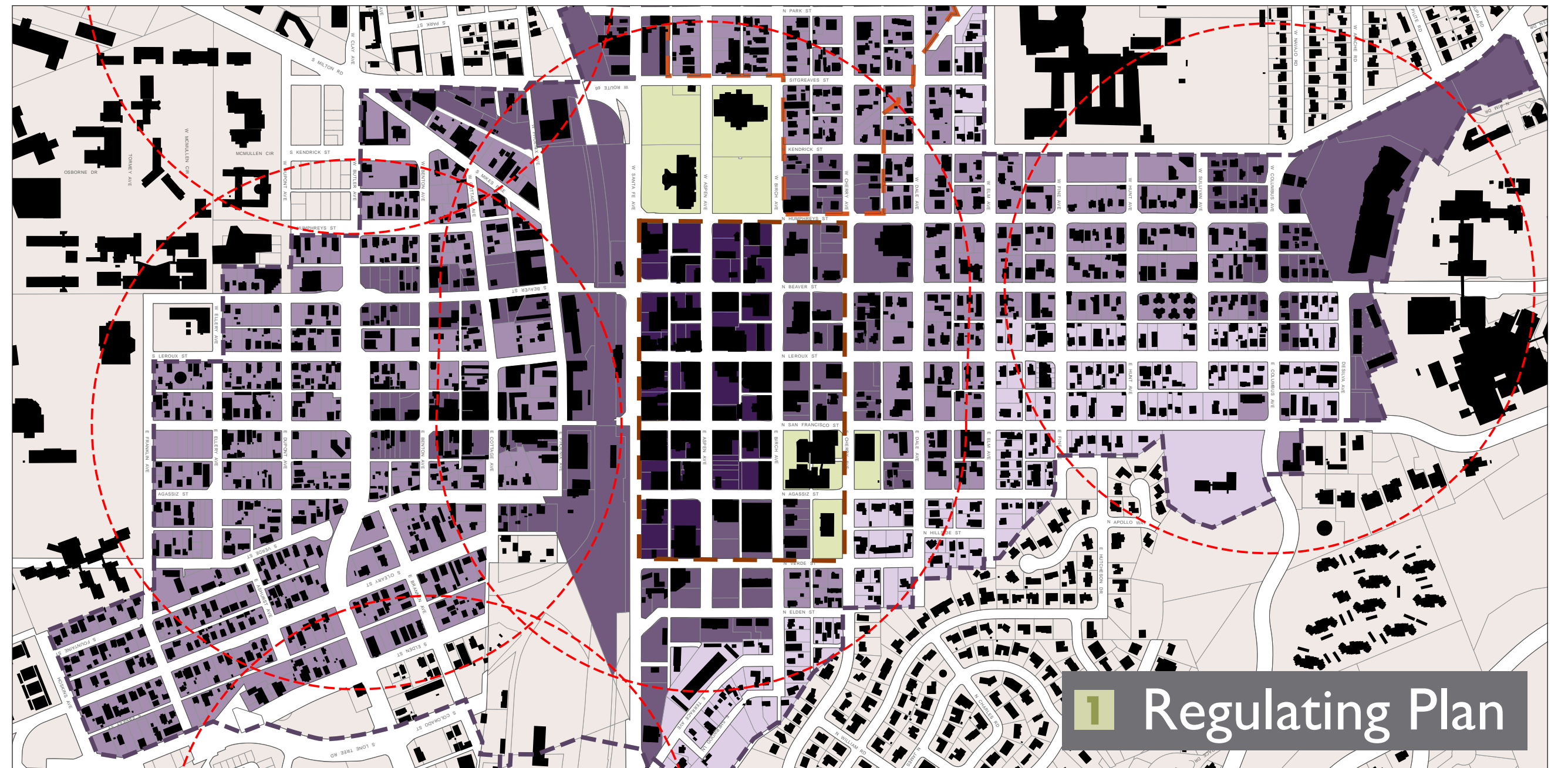
# Components of the Form-Based Code

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## Essential Components

Form-Based Code Components that have proven necessary to an effective FBC:

- 1 **Regulating Plan** (which replaces the zoning map)
- 2 **Building Form Standards**
- 3 **Thoroughfare Standards**
- 4 **Civic Space Standards**
- 5 **Frontage Type Standards**
- 6 **Subdivision Standards**
- 7 **Administration**



1 **Regulating Plan**

**Article 15.04.XXX.020 Building Form Standards** Draft: August 31, 2009

### T4 Main Street (T4MS) Standards

**Key:** --- ROW / Property Line --- Setback Line --- Build-to Line (RTL) --- Building Area

Building Placement	Building Form
<b>Build-to Line (Distance from Right of Way)</b>	<b>Height</b>
Front: 0'	Building: 20' min. - 20' max.
Side Street: 0'	General Floor Finish Level: 2 Stories max.
RTI: Defined by a building	General Floor Ceiling Height: 14' min. clear
Front, lots < 50' wide: 100% min.	Upper Floor(s) Ceiling: 9' min. clear
Front, lots < 75' wide: 75% min.	Within 20' of the rear property line, buildings may not be more than 2' taller than the allowed height of adjacent buildings.
Front, lots < 125' wide: 80% min.	4 stories permitted for LEED certified buildings or on lots that provide a public open space.
On lots < 150' wide, RTIs may be located up to 20' from the ROW in order to provide a public plaza.	
<b>Setback (Distance from Property Line or ROW)</b>	<b>Frontage Type</b>
Side: 0'	Depth, Ground-floor: 100' max.
Rear: 0'	Depth, Upper Floor(s): 30' min.
Adjacent to Residential: 5'	Commercial, Side Street: 30' min.
Adjacent to any other use: 0'	Commercial, Side Street: 30' min.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
Street facade must be built to RTI within 30' of a street corner.	Distance between features: To Ground Floor: 30' max.
Front RTI must be defined by a building or an 11' x 14' high fence or screen or masonry wall.	To Upper Floor(s): 100' max.
	All upper floors must have a primary entrance along the front facade. Loading docks, overhead doors and other service entrances may not be located on front or street-facing facades.

**Article 15.04.XXX.020 Building Form Standards** Draft: August 31, 2009

### T4 Main Street (T4MS) Standards

**Key:** --- ROW / Property Line --- Setback Line --- Build-to Line (RTL) --- Encroachment Area

Building Form (Continued)	Parking
<b>Building Form (Continued)</b>	<b>Required Spaces</b>
Buildings wider than 75' must be designed to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.	Residential Uses: 1 space/1,000sf min.
Privacy windows are required for residential units on all side and rear elevations within 5' of a property line.	New Residential Uses: 0' spaces min.
<b>Encroachments</b>	General Floor < 1,000sf: 2 space/1,000sf min.
Front: 14' min.	Upper Floors: 2 space/1,000sf min.
Side Street: 14' min.	No parking spaces are required for affordable or senior housing units.
Rear, Setback: 0'	2' buffer of residential use is permitted without parking.
Encroachments are not allowed within an Alley Right of Way or across a Property Line.	No parking is required for lots that provide a Plaza within the Block.
<b>Allowed Frontage Types</b>	<b>Location (Distance from RTI or Setback)</b>
Galley: Forecourt	Front: 30' min.
Arcade: Shopfront	Side Street: 0' min.
Commercial Terrace*	Side: 0' min.
*See Frontage Type Standards for descriptions and regulations.	Rear: 0' min.
*Permitted along a cross-street frontage only.	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
	Adjacent to Residential: 5'
	Commercial and other use: 0'
	<b>Miscellaneous</b>
	Parking Drive Width: Front: 12' max.
	Side Street: 20' max.
	All garages must be screened from the front street by a suitable screen. See additional general parking requirements for all Tract Zones on page 2.47.

**7.01.050 Thoroughfare Types**

### Neighborhood Street Planter Strip

Application	Edges
Movement Type: Slow	Drainage Collection Type: Curb and gutter
Anticipated Design Speed: 20 mph	Planter Type: 5' continuous, min.
Pedestrian Crossing: Bulb-outs encouraged to decrease pedestrian crossing time.	Lighting Type: Low pedestrian oriented lighting
Tract Zones: T4N-D, T4N, T2N	Walkway Type: 5' sidewalk, min.
Overall Widths: Right-of-Way (ROW): 56-62'	<b>Intersection</b>
Face-of-Curb to Face-of-Curb: 36'	Curb Radius: 15' max. (bulb-outs recommended)
Lanes: Traffic Lanes: 2 @ 10' (2-way travel)	<b>Miscellaneous Requirements</b>
Bicycle Lanes: None	Transformations to existing streets shall match the designations set forth in the General Plan.
Parking Lanes: 2 @ 8' parallel	
Medians: None	

**7.01.060 Thoroughfare Types**

### Neighborhood Main Street

Application	Edges
Movement Type: Slow	Drainage Collection Type: Curb and gutter
Anticipated Design Speed: 20 mph	Planter Type: 4' x 4' tree grate, min.
Pedestrian Crossing: Bulb-outs encouraged to decrease pedestrian crossing time.	Lighting Type: Low pedestrian oriented lighting
Tract Zones: T4MS, T4MS-D	Walkway Type: 12' sidewalk
Overall Widths: Right-of-Way (ROW): 60'	<b>Intersection</b>
Face-of-Curb to Face-of-Curb: 36'	Intersection: Curb Radius: 15' max. (bulb-outs recommended)
Lanes: Traffic Lanes: 2 @ 10' (2-way travel)	<b>Miscellaneous Requirements</b>
Bicycle Lanes: None	Transformations to existing streets shall match the designations set forth in the General Plan.
Parking Lanes: 2 @ 8' parallel	
Medians: None	

2 The Building Form component defines and regulates the intended physical form including building form, building height, general land use, parking, encroachments, allowed frontages.

3 Streets comprise a large percentage of public space within most cities, therefore the details and dimensional parameters of the Thoroughfare component is a critical element of a FBC.

**Chapter 3: Civic Space Standards** Final Draft: 05.17.10

### Plaza Standards

**Description:** Plazas add to the vibrancy of streets within urban areas and create open spaces available for civic purposes and commercial activity. Building frontages and tree-lined street edges shall define these spaces. Plazas shall have a hard-edge and have a primarily hard-surfaced surface. Large, hard-surfaced areas shall include elements such as period planters, trees, tables and chairs, benches, or fountains to provide pedestrian scale. If trees are included, they shall be formally arranged and of appropriate scale. Casual seating shall be provided.

**Plaza layout within block (C):** shall be more intimate to both character and scale. This plaza will help drive activity from Summer Avenue and transition between commercial and residential uses. This space shall be more heavily landscaped.

**Plaza adjacent to San Pablo:** shall express a more urban character that supports the surrounding retail. This space shall be a larger scale and primarily hard-surfaced. A fountain may be included.

**Chapter 3: Civic Space Standards** Final Draft: 05.17.10

### Plaza Standards

Size & Location	Typical Uses
Min. Width: 20'	Commercial and civic uses
Min. Front (On At Least 1 side) or another civic space:	Casual seating
<b>General Character</b>	Chairs, tables, and umbrellas for outdoor dining
Commercial, hard-surfaced	Stormwater Management Techniques
Formal open space	Dry Wells & French Drains
Hard-surfaced	Trees and period planters
Tree and period planters	Urban to intimate character
Urban to intimate character	For additional stormwater quality standards, see Appendix B: Stormwater Quality Standards (p. 6-9).
Spatially defined by building frontages or tree-lined streets	
Typical to frontages	

4 The Civic Space component ensures that a full menu of public spaces are included in the Code and that the scale and design approach is calibrated for the location of these spaces.

**10-50.30.020 Frontages**

### Private Frontages General

The Private Frontage is the area between the building facade and the lot line.

PLAN	PLAN
T1: T2: T3: T4: T5: T6:	LOT FRONTAGE LOT FRONTAGE

**Common Yard:** a planned frontage where the facade is set back substantially from the frontage line, providing a buffer from the higher-speed thoroughfares. The front yard created remains unfenced and is visually continuous with adjacent yards, supporting a common landscape and working in conjunction with the other private frontages.

**Porch:** a planned frontage wherein the facade is set back from the frontage line with an elevated terrace or a sunken Lightwell. This type buffers residential use from urban sidewalks and removes the private yard from public encroachment. Terraces are suitable for conversion to outdoor cafes. **See: Overlays.**

**Terrace or Lightwell:** a frontage where the facade is set back from the frontage line by an elevated terrace or a sunken Lightwell. This type buffers residential use from urban sidewalks and removes the private yard from public encroachment. Terraces are suitable for conversion to outdoor cafes. **See: Overlays.**

**Forecourt:** a frontage where a portion of the facade is close to the frontage line and the overall portion is set back. The forecourt created is suitable for vehicular drop-offs. A fence at the frontage line maintains screen spatial definition. There are three types of Forecourt: Projecting (10-50.30.040), Engaged (10-50.30.050) and Integral (10-50.30.060).

**Stoop:** a frontage where the facade is aligned close to the frontage line with the first story entrance from the sidewalk sufficiently to secure privacy for the windows. The entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing.

**10-50.30.090 Frontages**

### Stoop

**Description:** The main facade of the building is near the frontage line and the elevated stoop engages the sidewalk. The Stoop should be elevated above the sidewalk to ensure privacy within the building. Stairs from the stoop may lead directly to the sidewalk or may be side-loaded.

Stoop
Width, clear: 5' min., 8' max.
Depth, clear: 5' min., 8' min.
Height, clear: 8' min.
Height: 1 Story max.
Finish level above sidewalk: 18" min.

**Miscellaneous:** Stairs may be perpendicular or parallel to the building facade. Ramps shall be parallel to facade. The entry door shall be recessed or recessed to provide shelter from the elements. Depth of recessed entries: 4' max. Gates are not permitted. All doors must face the street.

5 Frontages create an appropriate transition from the private to the public realm. This component typically includes porches, terraces, forecourts, stoops, shopfronts, galleries and arcades.

**5.01.090 Building Types**

### 5.01.090 Townhouse

General Note: the drawings and photos below are illustrative.

**Description:** The Townhouse building type consists of structures that contain three or more dwelling units placed side by side. A small side or rear yard is provided for each unit as private open space. This building type provides a high-density, fee-simple unit in a more urban form.

**Four attached townhouses designed with a simple missing individual porch and gate ends on the end units provide the secondary rhythm.**

**Chapter 3: Architectural Styles** Administrative Draft: 10.23.09

### Spanish Revival Style

Typical Characteristics
<b>Masonry</b>
Patterns of compositions of simple rectangular forms of varying heights, with low-pitched roof forms
Larger buildings often use these forms to form enclosed or semi-enclosed courtyards
<b>Facade Composition</b>
Balanced, asymmetrical facade composition with decorative railings or brackets
The proportion of openings to wall is small in keeping with the appearance of masonry construction
<b>Roof Form</b>
Multi-level, low-pitched, gabled or hipped roof forms clad with red clay barrel tiles
Shallow eaves with a stone profile or open eaves with decorative rafters or brackets
<b>Windows</b>
Variety of proportioned casements, french casements, or fixed
Punctuated, recessed openings for doors and windows with stone or cast stone sill
Elaborated with window grilles, small metal balconies and awnings
<b>Doors</b>
Arched openings typical for principle doors or beneath porch roof
Elevated stoop, cast stone, or stone detailing at primary entrances
<b>Elements</b>
Chimneys, often with elaborate tops and small, tiled roofs
Upper floor cantilevered balconies
Ground floor loggias and arcades
Well-articulated porches and patios
Tiled fountains in courtyards or patios

**Chapter 3: Civic Space Standards** 05.27.08

### Stormwater Quality Standards

**Description:** Stormwater management will be regulated to meet high standards for water quality and improve the overall environmental sustainability of the Florida Bayshore. Stormwater quality treatment systems will be provided through urban approaches and best management practices (BMP) such as filter strips, vegetated swales, vegetated swales, water-quality basins, and filters and vegetative units to the extent possible. A wide variety of vegetation can be utilized to achieve a range of visual effects. Typically stormwater will be treated at the edges of the project area and located in landscaped, smaller areas that allow for more efficient maintenance and monitoring.

To the extent possible, water-quality treatment will follow all guidelines and standards as required by Central Florida County, described in the Stormwater C.G. Guidbook. Reference to urban standards for other communities should also be consulted including, The Stormwater Guidelines for Green, Dense Redevelopment, produced by the City of Greenville (Adopted 12/06/2005).

## Optional Components

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:

- A **Building Type Standards**
- B **Architectural Standards**
- C **Sustainability Standards (such as stormwater, alternative energy, greywater, etc.)**
- D **Landscape Standards**
- E **Green Building Standards**
- F **Signage Standards**