



Downtown Auburn and New Auburn Form Based Code

**AVCOG Planning Day
November 16, 2017**

Introduction:

The City of Auburn decided in 2014 to embark on an effort to enact a Form Based Code for Downtown Auburn and New Auburn. This commitment would implement a recommendation from the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and implement the goal of stimulating new investment in Downtown, New Auburn and the connecting Main Street corridor.

Today, over 387 American municipalities have adopted Form Based Code. As an alternative to traditional zoning, Form Based Code is used to regulate development and bring back traditional development patterns.



WHY FORM-BASED CODE IN AUBURN?



Our current traditional zoning laws tend to separate where we live from where we work, learn, and shop, forcing us to rely on a high speed, over-designed, road system to connect them all. These “modern roads” are dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists. As a result, Americans spend more time in their cars than anyone on earth, and a growing number of communities are working to do something about it.

How to Create a Form Based Code:

Auburn's Case Study



STEP 1- Ask the Questions

1. Is there support?
2. What does the community want?
3. Where should the focus be? (create a map)
4. What is our capacity to create and administrate a Form Based Code?
 - ✓ In-house staff or consultant?
 - ✓ Community Involvement-
Planning Board/Steering Committee?

STEP 1- Ask the Questions

1. Is there support?

Who is asking for the FBC?

Are your elected officials supportive?

Does the business and development community support a Form Based Code?

Do people understand what Form Based Code is?

STEP 1- Ask the Questions

2. What does our community want?

Historic Preservation?

Walkable Community?

Better Design?

Infill and Redevelopment?

New Development?

STEP 1- Ask the Questions

3. What should the boundaries be?

It's very important to discuss and determine the scope, scale and location of your FBC.

Begin to look at areas or blocks that have similar characteristics.

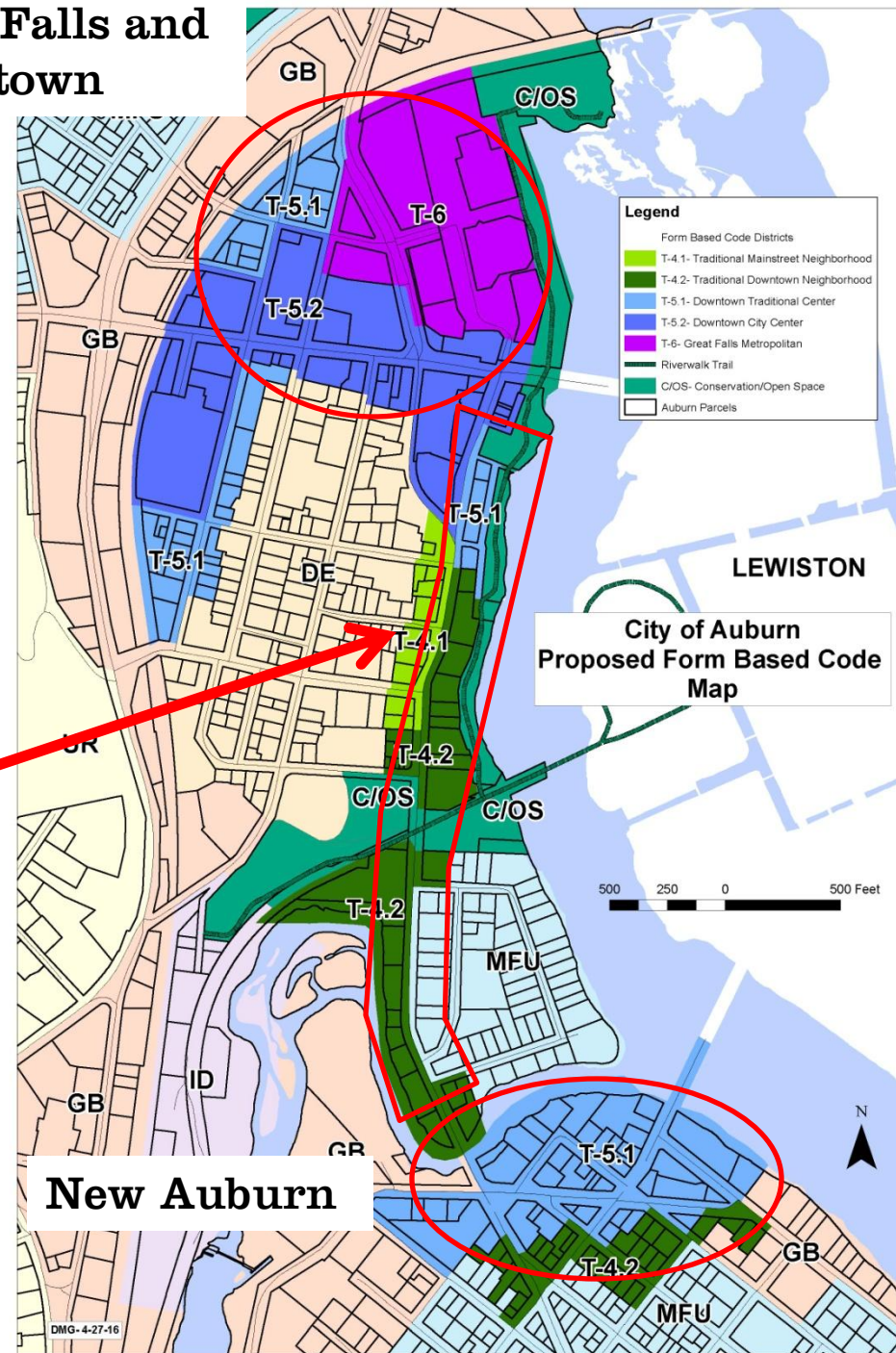
Are there areas of existing zoning that are causing problems?

Create Your Map

In addition to focusing on the Auburn's Downtown, Great Falls and New Auburn areas, Main Street was added to the Form Based Code "Regulating Plan" as a connecting piece to unify the initial areas.

**Main Street
Corridor**

**Great Falls and
Downtown**



STEP 1- Ask the Questions

4. What is the local capacity of the municipality to create and administrate a FBC?

This was a driving force in the end product for Auburn. **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

- **Good Staff support and knowledge**
- **Excellent Planning Board participation**
- **Support of Elected Officials**
- **Good public support**

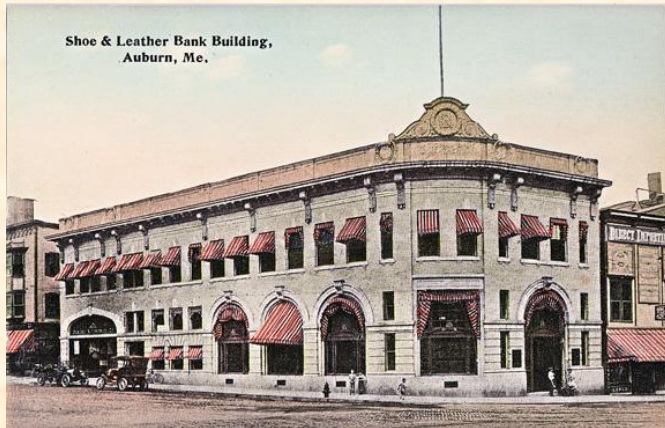
Step 2- Develop Your Plan

- 1. Calibrate the proposed area**
- 2. Determine your transects**
- 3. Create the Regulating Plan**
- 4. Create an Administrative Procedure**
- 5. Develop a Parking and Use Chart**

Step 2- Develop Your Plan

1. Calibrate the proposed area-

- Inventory of all structures- photos, spreadsheet, architectural styles, set backs
- Create draft map that organizes and categorizes the potential transects

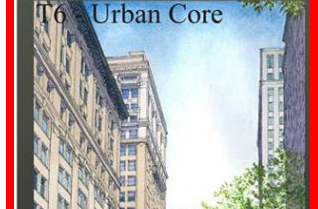
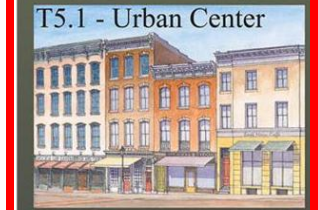
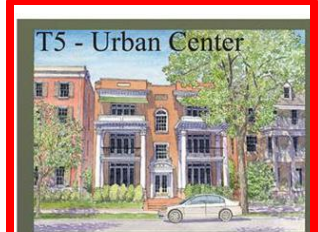
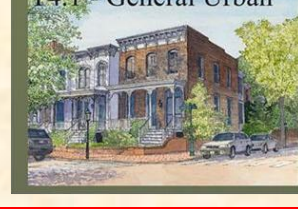
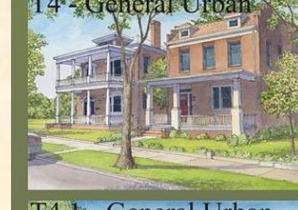
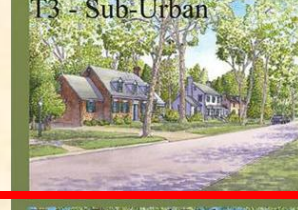


Step 2- Develop Your Plan

2. Determine your transects-



Auburn's Choices



Step 2- Develop Your Plan

3. Create the FBC Regulating Plan

The Form Based Code regulates the built environment through the following requirements, features and options:

- **Building Set-backs** minimum and maximum
- **Building Heights** minimum and maximum by stories
- **Frontage Types for** buildings
- **Building Entrance locations**
- **Window and door coverage** on fronts of buildings
- **First floor** elevations for Residential and Commercial Uses
- **Parking** locations
- **Driveway** locations
- **Street walls** for commercial parking along streets
- **Lower parking requirements** than current zoning dictates
- **Optional front yard fences**
- **Optional landscaping**

Step 2- Develop Your Plan –

4. Create an Administrative Procedure

Auburn's Form Based Code will allow projects to move to the building permit stage if it meets all the requirements of the Form Based Code. The following exceptions must go before the Planning Board as a Special Exception and Site Plan Review:

- 1. The proposed use is listed as a “S” on the Parking and Use Matrix.**
- 2. The project contains more than 12,000 s.f. in total (all floors) size. Under current zoning that threshold is 5,000 s.f.**

Other Administrative Rules:

- 1. All new construction must follow the Form Based Code regulations.**
- 2. Reconstruction or and addition of over 25% of a structure must follow the Form Based Code.**
- 3. Applicants can apply for waivers to the Form Based Code rules but must get approval from the Planning Board.**

Step 2- Develop Your Plan

5. Create Use and Parking Chart

Uses and parking requirements are listed in a color coded matrix chart. The Planning Board streamlined and reduced number of use categories and reduced the required parking rates.

Sec. 60-554 FORM BASED CODE USE and PARKING MATRIX

* * * (2)

USE (1)	T-4.1	T-4.2	T-5.1	T-5.2	T-6	PARKING REQUIREMENTS (2)
Residential Type Use						
Single Family	P	P	P			1 sp/DU
Duplex	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU
Townhouse	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU
Multi-Family	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/DU plus 1 guest space/4 DU
Bed & Breakfast < 4 Rooms	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/guest
Bed & Breakfast > 4 Rooms	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/guest
Hotel	X	X	S	S	P	1/2 sp /employee plus 1 sp /room
Elderly/Child Care Facility	S	S	S	S	P	1/2 sp /employee plus 1 sp/ 8 users
Home Occupation	P	P	P	P	P	Based on Use Type (Sec. 60-673-10)
Community Based Residential Facilities	P	P	P	P	P	1 sp/employee plus 1 sp/client
Boarding House/Lodginghouse	P	P	P	S	X	1 sp/guestroom plus 1 sp/employee
Office/Service Type Use						
Professional Offices	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Medical and Dental Clinics	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp./400 sf
Personal Services	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp./400 sf
Retail Type Use						
General Retail	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Age Restricted Retail (3)	S	S	S	S	S	1 sp/400 sf
Specialty Shops	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Restaurant up to 30 seats w/16 outdoor	X	S	P	P	P	1 sp/4 seats
Restaurant over 30 seats w/16 outdoor	X	S	S	P	P	1 sp/4 seats
Halls, Private Clubs, Indoor Amusement	S	S	S	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Artist Studios, Performing Art Center	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Civic						
Church or Places of Worship	S	S	P	P	P	1 sp/5 seats
Government Offices	X	X	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Art Galleries	S	P	P	P	P	1 sp/400 sf
Transportation Facilities	X	X	S	S	S	1 sp/400 sf

Notes:

- (1) Uses not listed are considered prohibited unless deemed similar by the Director of Planning or by the Planning Board through a special exception approval.
- (2) Parking requirements in T-5.1, T- 5.2 and T-6 may be provided by the municipality or private parking resources within 1,000 feet of the principal building, subject to Planning Board approval.
- (3) Where more than 50% of floor space is devoted to Age Restricted Goods

S = Special Exception
sp = parking space

P = Permitted
sf = square foot of gross floor space

X-Prohibited
DU = Dwelling Unit

Step 3 Draft the Plan- Auburn's Plan includes:

Sec. 60-550 DOWNTOWN TRADITIONAL CENTER T-5.1

Color Coded Title and Location in the Zoning Ordinance



Graphic depiction of Transect

Illustrative View of T- 5.1 (Future Great Falls Plaza)

Intent and Purpose:

Downtown Traditional Center (T- 5.1)

The Downtown Traditional Center zone is characterized by medium to larger sized buildings in a compact urban environment that generates an active street life. There is interplay between the Public Realm of the busy street and sidewalk, and the Private Realm of the residential stoops, commercial storefronts and gallery building fronts. The increased building widths form a more solid and compact street wall pattern, generating an energized traditional downtown feel.

Intent and purpose Statement

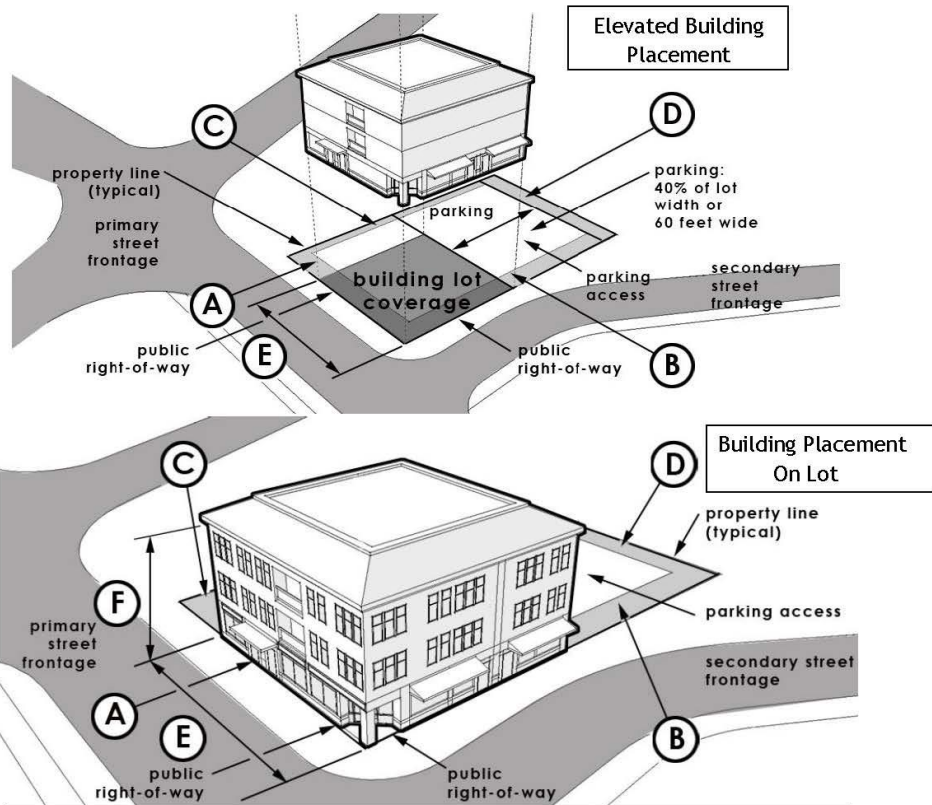


- Key Features**
- Vibrant and active interaction between public and private realms
 - Larger buildings
 - Front facade detailing
 - Bay windows
 - Balconies
 - Street trees
 - More urban density



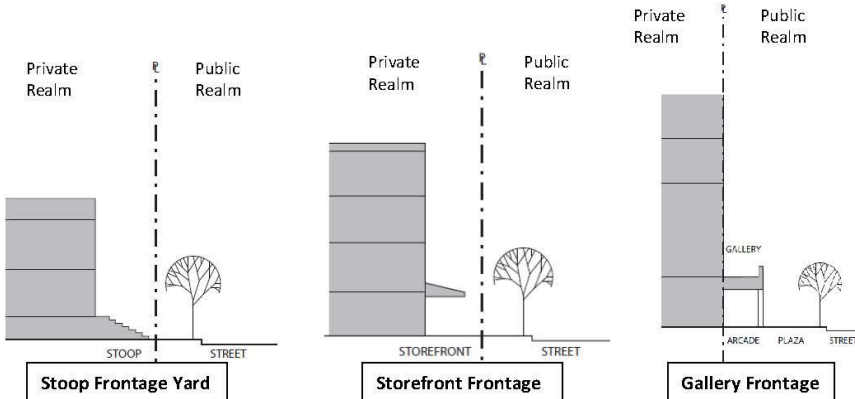
Examples of Downtown Traditional Center – T- 5.1

←
Graphic examples and descriptions



PRINCIPAL BUILDING PLACEMENT:		
Front Setback, Principal:	0 ft Min, 10 ft Max	(A)
(Corner Lot) Front Setback, Secondary:	0 ft Min, 10 ft Max	(B)
Side Setback:	0*-5 ft Min	(C)
	*Subject to Building Permit Approval	
Rear Setback:	10 ft Min	(D)
Building Lot Coverage:	75% Max	
Useable Open Space:	5% Min	
Frontage Build-Out:	75% Min (along Front Setback, Primary)	
Lot Width:	24 ft Min, 160 ft Max	
PRINCIPAL BUILDING CONFIGURATION:		
Building Width:	14 ft Min, 150 ft Max	(E)
Building Height Minimum:	2 Story Min	(F)
Building Height Maximum:	4 Story Max	(F)
	(excluding attic story)	

← Graphics and chart of building placement and configuration




BUILDING FRONTAGE TYPES:	Stoop, Storefront and Gallery
BUILDING ENTRIES:	Primary entry door is encouraged along ground story facade facing a primary street.
BUILDING ENVELOPE ARTICULATION:	
Ground Story Building Frontage Facade:	Windows and doors shall comprise a minimum of 25% and maximum 60% coverage of the total ground story facade frontage.
Upper Story Building Frontage Facade:	Windows and doors shall comprise a minimum of 20% and maximum 40% coverage of the total upper story facade frontage.
Ground Story Finished Floor Elevation:	<u>Residential</u> - The ground story elevation must be a minimum of 2 feet minimum to 6 feet maximum above the front yard elevation (average grade). <u>Commercial</u> - The ground story elevation must be at a minimum of sidewalk grade to maximum of 2 feet.
Front Facade Wall:	Blank lengths of wall exceeding 10 linear feet are prohibited.



Graphics and chart of Building Frontages and Envelope Requirements

Front Yard Fence: (Residential)	<u>Residential</u> - A front yard fence a minimum of 2 feet and a maximum of 4 feet in height is encouraged to maintain spatial edge of street. No chain link, vinyl, split rail, or barbed wire is allowed.
Street Wall/Wall Opening:	A vehicle entry way, as part of a street wall, shall be a maximum width of 20 feet (residential) and 24 feet (commercial); a pedestrian entry way shall be a maximum width of 6 feet.
Building Projections:	No part of any building, except overhanging eaves, awnings, balconies, bay windows, stoops and other architectural features shall encroach beyond the minimum front setback line.
Stoop Encroachments:	Stoops may encroach upon the front setback line by the following distances but not encroach in the street right of way.
Garages:	Detached garages shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from any street right of way.
Driveways:	Driveways are encouraged to be on the secondary street frontage. Driveways shall be paved and a minimum of 8 feet wide and a maximum of 20 feet wide.
Parking:	<u>Residential</u> -Vehicle parking areas shall be located only on driveways or designated parking areas and shall not extend into the street right of way or sidewalk. <u>Commercial</u> - Parking shall be located to rear of the property to the greatest extent possible. Parking on a side yard is limited to no more than 60 feet wide or 40% of the lot width. Screening and/or street wall is required for parking areas along a street.
Accessory Structures:	Accessory structures shall be located a minimum of 20 feet from any street right of way and 5 feet from either side or rear property line.
Landscaping:	Landscaping is encouraged but shall not extend into any street sidewalk or travel way. Street trees are encouraged.
Foundation Planting:	Foundation plantings are encouraged but should be pruned and maintained with enough clearance from the building facade to encourage air circulation.

Description of External Elements



Step 4-

Public Process, Adoption and Implementation

- Consider creating a **Steering Committee** at the start (include business community, neighborhoods, important stakeholders)
- Make sure to clearly **establish the community vision!**
- **Use your Planning Board-** Hold regular workshops
- Keep your elected officials informed
- Take your time, consider the details and have your Form Based Code implement your community vision!
- Don't lose sight of what your staff can handle
- Promote what you've accomplished

In Summary:

Form Base Code can provide many benefits, attract new development and create a place that promotes a socially, economically healthy community. It's worth the work!



**Doug Greene, AICP RLA
Urban Development Coordinator
dgreene@auburnmaine.gov
2017-333-6601 ext. 1156**