Downtown Auburn and New Auburn Form Based Code

Presented to the Auburn Planning Board
Public Hearing on April 12, 2016

Introduction:

Over the last 2 years, City Staff has been developing a draft Form Based Code for Downtown Auburn and New Auburn.   Auburn made the commitment to implement this new direction with the goal of stimulating new investment in Downtown, New Auburn and the connecting Main Street corridor.

By January 2015, over 382 American municipalities have adopted Form Based Code as an alternative to Traditional Zoning as a way 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, and force us to rely on an over-designed road system to connect them all. These "modern roads" are unfriendly and dangerous to pedestrians, 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.

Traditional Zoning vs. Form Based Code

Traditional Zoning

- Traditional Zoning is based on regulating uses
- Traditional Zoning primarily regulates the individual lot
- Traditional Zoning favors vehicular movement and speed
- Traditional Zoning normally doesn't regulate building appearance
- Traditional Zoning typically allows parking in the front yard

Form Based Code

- Form Based Code are based on regulating building form
- Form Based Code promotes a mixture of uses
- Form Based Code regulates buildings and lots by blocks
- Form Based Code promotes a well designed public street realm.
- Form Based Code requires parking to the rear or side

Benefits of Form Based Code

- **An Adaptable Approach-**
    Form-based codes are not "one-size-fits-all," but are tailored to the local context, objectives and means of each community.

- **Increased Predictability and Lowered Risk for Developers-**
    An application for development that meets the Form Based Code requirements can move to the building permit stage more quickly. Developers will know how neighbors will redevelop.

- **Will Create a More Desirable Community-**
    A form-based code focuses on how development relates to other buildings, the street, pedestrians, vehicles, along with public and private spaces. The code addresses these concerns by regulating site design, circulation, and overall building form.

- **Flexibility-** Auburn's Form Based Code lowers parking requirements, allows greater building coverage, and provides more diversity of uses.

Focus Areas for the Form Based Code

The initial focus for Auburn's Form Based Code is on the Downtown and New Auburn area. More specifically, both the Great Falls Plaza and New Auburn hold the most potential for new development.
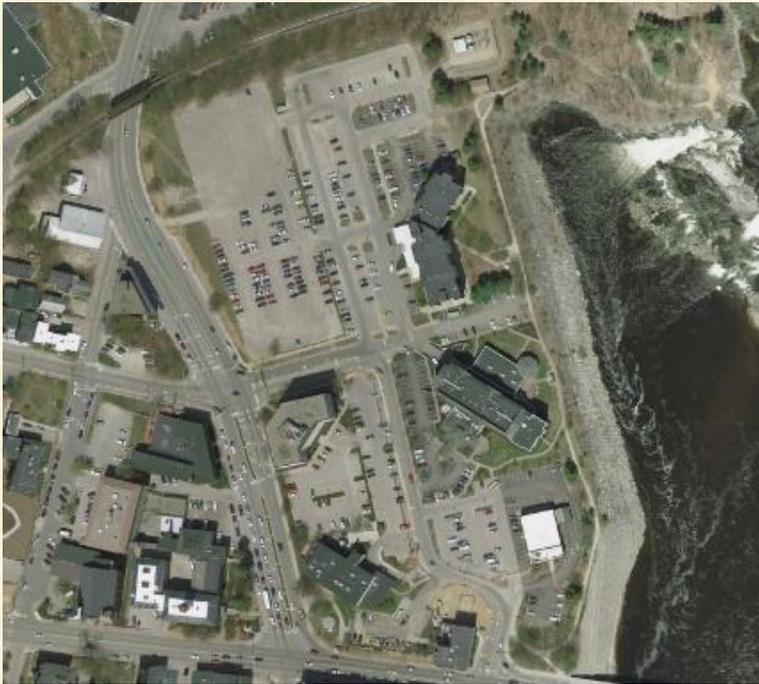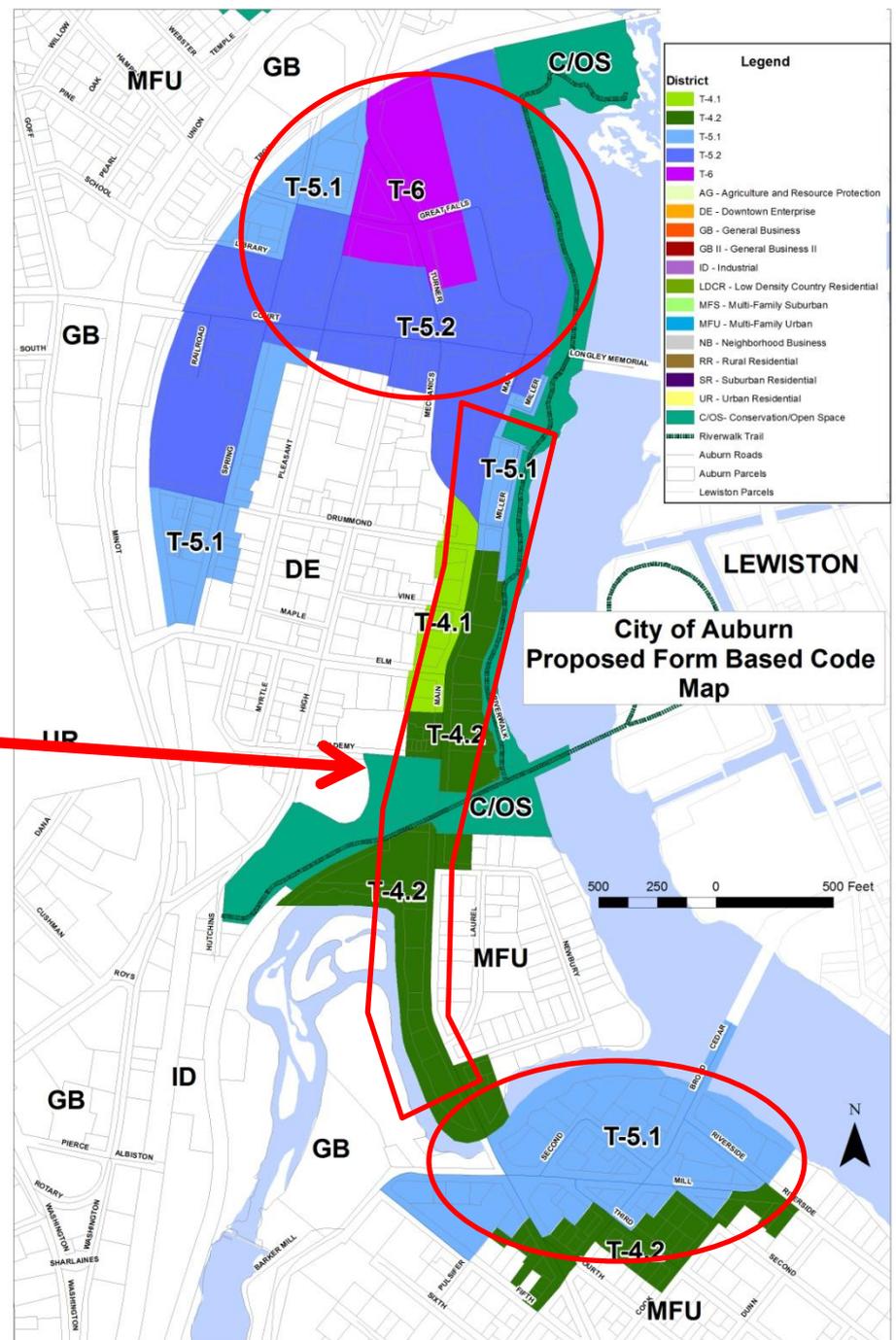

Great Falls Plaza

New Auburn

In addition to focusing on the 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

City of Auburn
Proposed Form Based Code
Map

How is the Form Based Code Organized?

The Form Based Code proposes **5 Form Base Code Districts**

T- 4.1   Traditional Main Street Neighborhood

T- 4.2   Traditional Downtown Neighborhood

T- 5.1   Downtown Traditional Center

T- 5.2   Downtown City Center


T- 6   Great Falls Metropolitan

T- 4.1 Traditional Main Street Neighborhood


The Main Street Neighborhood district is designed to continue the existing pattern of large houses set along Main Street. This area is characterized by front porches, residential front yards and front doors facing the street. T- 4.1 promotes a lower-density and less concentrated pattern of buildings along the street, while maintaining a pleasing, connective and compact multi-modal environment.

T- 4.2   Traditional Downtown Neighborhood

Spring Street
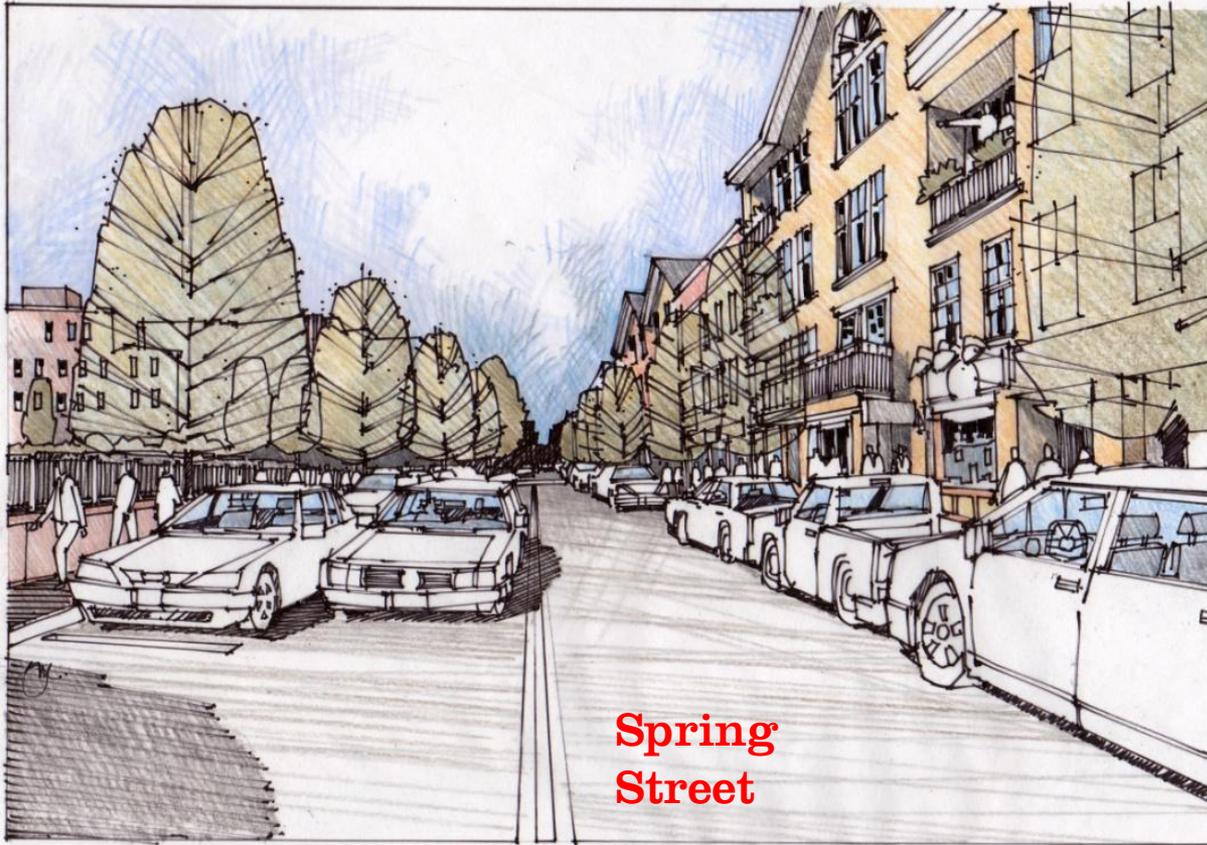
The Traditional Downtown Neighborhood district is characterized by a small to medium sized buildings with smaller front yards and stoops in a more compact urban environment, and includes and traditional neighborhood sized storefronts. The smaller minimum and maximum building set-backs form a moderately dense street-wall pattern, diverse architectural styles and pedestrian friendly streets and sidewalks.

T- 5.1 Downtown Traditional Center

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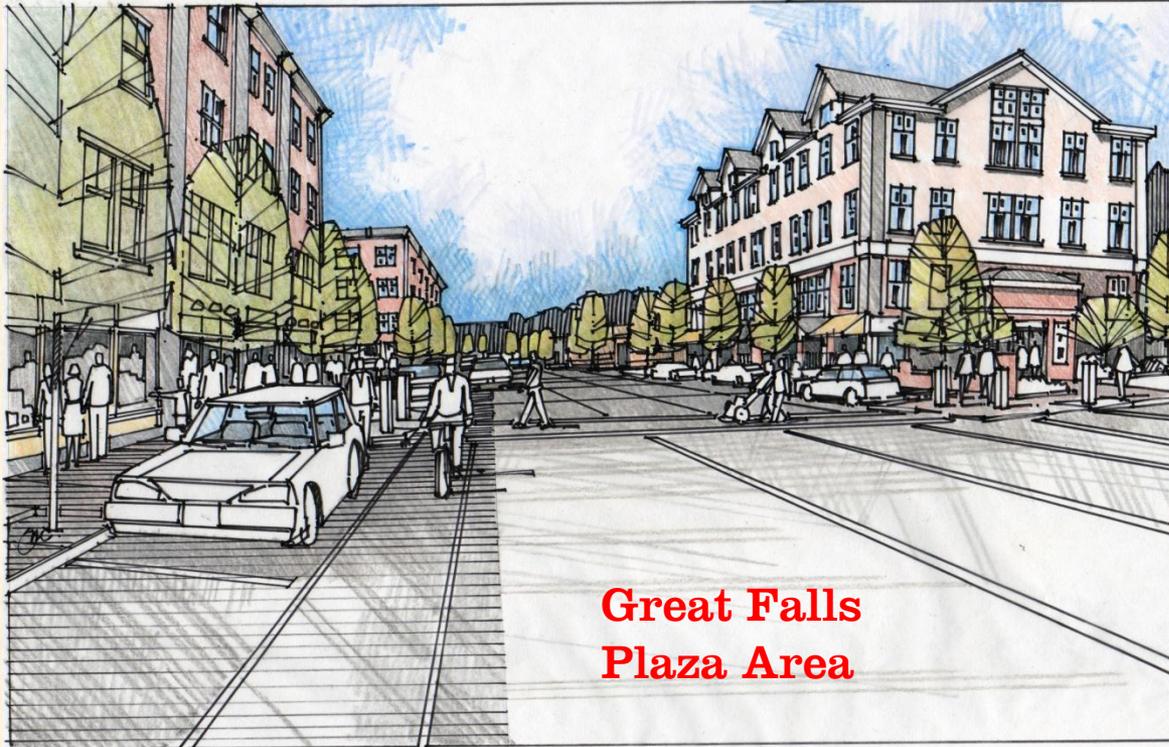
The Downtown Traditional Center district is characterized by medium to larger sized buildings in a compact urban environment that generates an active street life. There is an interplay between the Public Realm of the busy street, and the Private Realm of the residential stoops, commercial storefronts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

T- 5.2 Downtown City Center

Court Street

The Downtown City Center district is characterized by medium to large sized buildings in a compact urban environment. This setting will generate social and cultural activity and events, economic stimulation and human interaction. The streets will be important transportation corridors with large sidewalks. The residential and commercial building widths, frontages and building heights form a solid, street wall pattern. The Downtown City Center will generate regional economic development activity along with energized social and lifestyle activity.

T-6   Great Falls Metropolitan

Turner Street

The Great Falls Metropolitan district is characterized by large buildings up to 8 stories tall that will define the City of Auburn's emerging downtown. A new central city square, "Great Falls Square" will provide a downtown focal point and center for professional enterprise and commerce. The Great Falls Metropolitan urban form will generate strong regional socio-economic gravitational pull, attract corporate investment and become a regional destination for visitors, events, entertainment, shopping, and social gatherings.
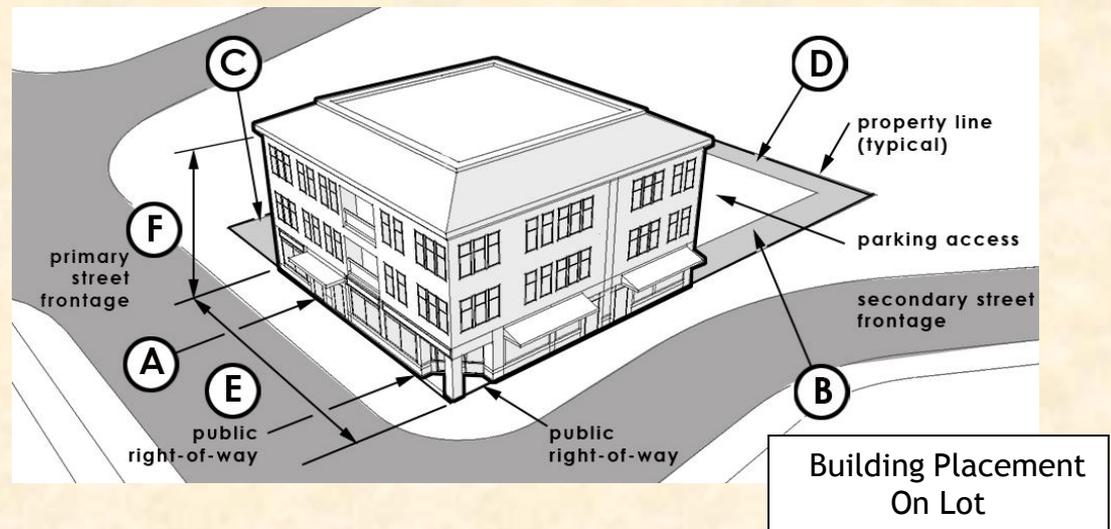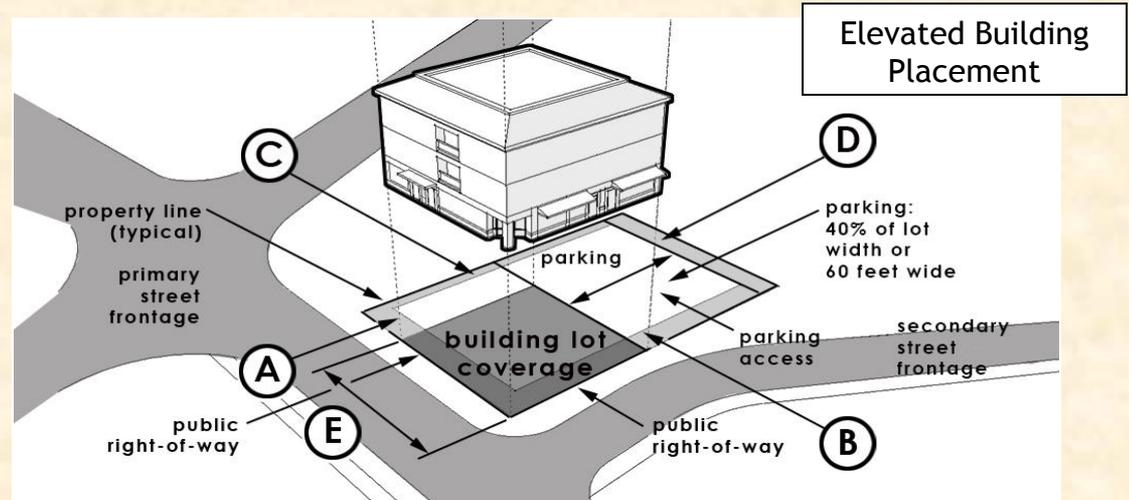
The Regulating Plan

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

- Minimum **and** maximum building set-backs
- Minimum and maximum building heights by stories not feet
- Building frontage types
- Building entrance locations
- Window and door coverage on fronts of buildings
- First floor elevations
- Parking area locations
- Driveway locations
- Street walls for commercial parking along streets
- Optional front yard fences
- Lower parking requirements than current zoning dictates.

Regulations Explained by Graphics

The graphic examples describe:
- **Front yard setbacks**
- **Side and rear setbacks**
- **Building coverage**
- **Useable open space**
- **Frontage build-out**
- **Lot width**
- **Building width**
- **Building height maximum and minimum**

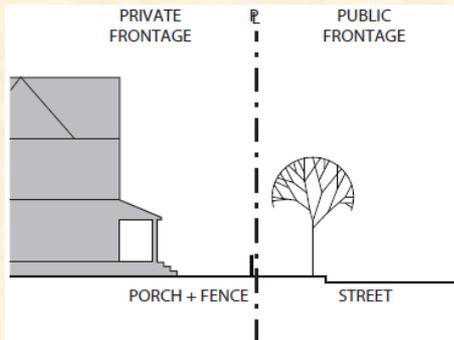Elevated Building Placement

Building Placement On Lot

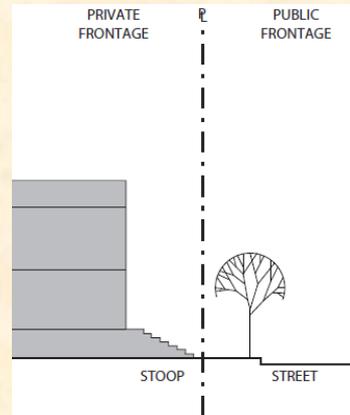**The graphics to make the Regulating Plan easier to understand.**

Other Features of the Form Based Code:

BUILDING FRONTAGE TYPES:

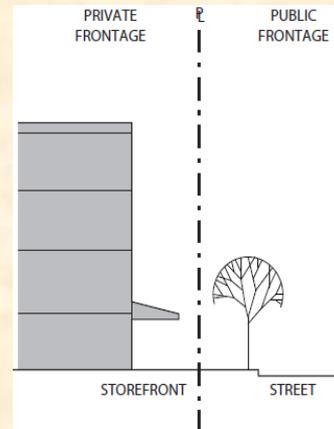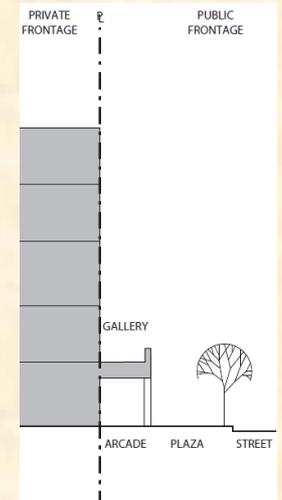**Each transect has choices for Frontage Types**

Porch

Stoop

Storefront

Gallery

EXTERNAL ELEMENTS are addressed such as:
- Street walls
- Building projections
- Garages and parking
- Accessory structures
- Landscaping (encouraged)

Uses and parking requirements are listed in a color coded matrix chart. The Board made use categories more inclusive and tried to reduce the number of individual use listings.

	T-4.1	T-4.2	T 5.1	T-5.2	T-6	
USE (1)			*	*	*	**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						
~~Financial/~~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	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		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   **P** = Permitted   **X**-Prohibited

sp = parking space   **sf** = square foot of gross floor space   **DU** = Dwelling Unit

Administration

The 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.
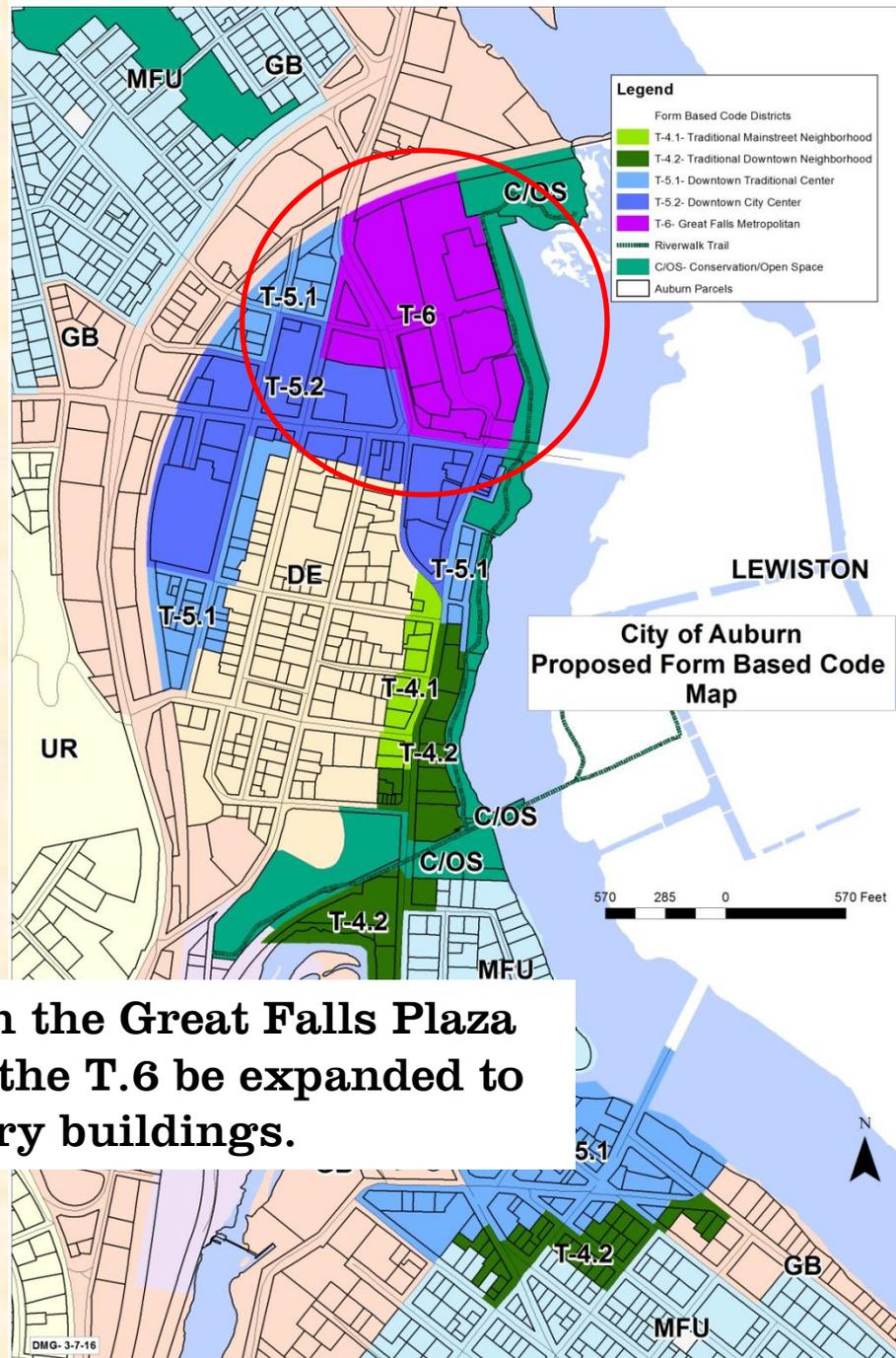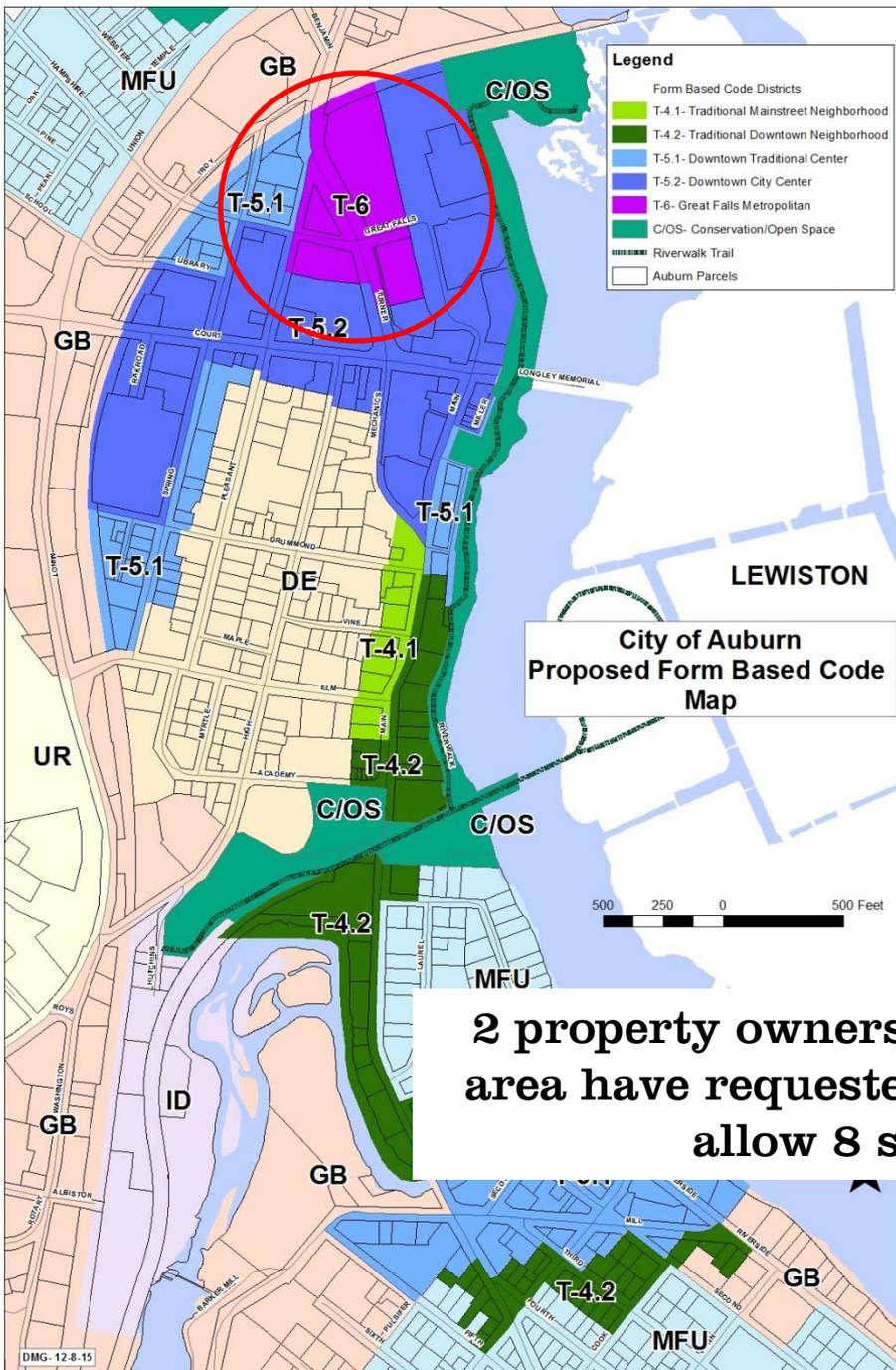
2 property owners in the Great Falls Plaza area have requested the T.6 be expanded to allow 8 story buildings.

Questions?