COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DEVELOPING A FORM-BASED CODES

ICMA Annual Meeting
October 20, 2019
Smart Growth America envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient.

We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.
The Form-Based Codes Institute is dedicated to advancing the understanding and use of form-based codes to create livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.

- Provides information, education and technical assistance to the planning and development community;
- Recognizes and publicizes exemplary form-based codes; and
- Serves as a forum for discussion and advancement of form-based codes.
WHAT IS A FORM-BASED CODE?

Emphasizes form and intensity of development over use and the permitting process.

Source: DPZ
WHAT IS A FORM-BASED CODE?

Conventional Zoning

Industrial
Commercial
Residential
Civic (School)
WHAT IS A FORM-BASED CODE?

Form-Based Code

Image: DPZ Partners LLC
Focused on what happens outside the building—streets, blocks, building form and scale, open space thoroughfares—as opposed to what happens on the inside (residential, commercial, etc.)
A regulatory framework and a set of standards for both public and private development to ensure that the approved vision or plan for the area is realized and the character of that vision is maintained over time.
Applied at different scales—city-wide, neighborhood, or corridor—and in different contexts—urban or suburban, greenfields, infill, or redevelopment areas—to create walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods.
BENEFITS OF A FORM-BASED CODE

• Realizes approved vision or plan
• Streamlined and predictable development process
• Diversified housing types, services, and mobility options
• High-quality walkable development that respects existing character and defines a unique sense of place
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS FOR DRAFTING A FORM-BASED CODE

- Visioning Sessions
- Charrettes
- Focus Groups
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Open Houses
- Workshops
- Public Hearings
Leesburg, VA Crescent Design District

- 2006 – Crescent District Master Plan
- steering committee + consultant
- 2008-2011 - development of CDD planning commission/town council process
- 2012 - adopted CDD and effective March, 2013
Leesburg, VA Crescent Design District

Historic Downtown Streetscape and Architecture
LEESBURG, VA CRESCE NT DESIGN DISTRICT

Existing Crescent District – Auto-Centric
CDD Goals

- Fully integrated, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented environment
- Synergy with in the CDD to support economic development and redevelopment
- Minimize traffic congestion, inefficient surface parking lots and environmental impacts by promoting compact, mixed-use pedestrian-friendly district.

- Regulate building height and placement to achieve appropriate scale.....and ensure proper transition to nearby residential neighborhoods
- Establish clear controls on building form and placement to frame a well-defined public realm...
Key Challenges of Current CDD

- Good placemaking requires both public and private compliance and coordination
- Regulating architecture vs regulating form
- No market study - difficult to know the mix right
- Scale – is the size right, does it call for too vertical integration
- Engineering requirements must be coordinated with form-based zoning objectives – e.g. site distance issues
- Low threshold for legislative review
Community Engagement Strategies

- Code review to develop questions
- Stakeholder group interviews
  - Planning staff
  - Developers
  - Property owners
  - Architects
  - Planning Commissioners
- Town Council Work Sessions
- Code audit and recommendations for changes and next steps
Next Steps

• Town Plan Update – 2019-2020
  • Confirm with the citizens whether the original goals of CDD are still valid
• Conduct market analysis
• Updated policy direction, according to market analysis and citizen feedback
• Beta test feedback from model project
• Amend/rewrite the CDD form-based code – 2020
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA
SPECIAL INVESTMENT AREA
Strategic Investment Area (SIA)

- Adjacent to historic downtown
- Predominantly public and assisted housing in need of renovation or replacement.
- Large parcel of under-developed land at the center
- Other challenges -- crime, disinvestment, health and educational disparities, lack of childcare, limited access to transit and job opportunities
- Vision plan adopted in 2013
Charlottesville, VA Special Investment Area

CRHA and Non-profit subsidized housing developments, built in the 1960’s and 70’s:

- Barracks-style, apartment buildings;
- Internally oriented and at times “gated” complexes;
- Isolated and disconnected parking lots and super-blocks;
- Single use, single type buildings of one income class;
- Few employment choices within walking distance.
- Poor natural surveillance
Proposed Community Engagement Strategy

- Follow the SIA Vision Plan
- Hold a Kick-Off Charrette – September 11 - 14, 2017
- Prepare First Draft of Form-Based Code
- Present to Community in Workshops
- Planning Commission Workshop
- Public Hearings
- Council Adoption
- Implementation
Community Concerns

• Will an FBC will accelerate gentrification *because* it promotes a livable environment?

• How Can we trust the City to provide affordable housing?

• Will there be community amenities in the neighborhood and available to us?

• Will we have a say on the design of our community?
Actual Community Engagement Strategy

- Follow the SIA Vision Plan
- Hold a Kick-Off Charrertte – September 11 - 14, 2017
- Planning Commission Workshop
- Housing Needs Assessment
- Financial Analysis of Affordable Housing Height Bonuses
- Prepare First Draft of Form-Based Code
- Facilitated Workshops for Public Housing Residents
- Stakeholder Open Houses
- Public Comment Period
- Planning Commission Workshop
- Public Hearing
- Council Adoption
- Implementation
Thank You!