Form-Based Code A model for the Hamilton corridor



The City of Spokane is experimenting with a model form-based code (FBC). The FBC emphasizes the shape and type of development and streets, using new zoning techniques to create pleasant and active streets that are tailored more closely to community characteristics. This model is a first attempt, exploring how the concept can apply in Spokane.

what's the difference?

Conventional (Euclidean) zoning and form-based codes are similar in many ways, but they're different, too. Here's a quick guide, plus a bonus chart to see how FBC applies here:

Euclidean Zoning

Euclidean zoning is the most common form of zoning (named after a town in Ohio, not the Greek mathematician). The Spokane's zoning ordinance is a typical example of a Euclidean zoning system.

Also known as "traditional" zoning, Euclidean zoning is characterized by its emphasis on regulating dimensional standards and land use classifications. Typically, land uses are separated into geographic districts primarily defined by uses allowed in each district. Typical districts found in Euclidean zoning codes include single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial. Often, allowable and excluded uses are defined in a use table, or matrix.

Typical Euclidean dimensional standards include building height, lot size, building coverage and setback (building distance from property lines). Euclidean standards are often purely quantitative, enforcing floor area ratios, density limits and setbacks. As might be expected, Euclidean systems ensure little in terms of the more qualitative outcomes of development.



Form-Based Code

A form-based code regulates land use but provides greater consideration to the placement and form of buildings. This approach also promotes the establishment and conservation of interconnected street networks and pedestrian-scaled blocks.

Effective form based codes provide clear and meaningful **illustrations** showing what the community expects from development. Form-based codes generally include the following components:

- A regulating plan, showing where standards apply
- Public space standards, providing specifications for elements such as sidewalks, travel lanes, lighting and on-street parking
- Building form standards, identifying the configuration of building features such as building and parking placement, build-to-lines, building height - and in some cases more detailed building facade and material specifications
- A clearly-defined application and permit review process

Despite their focus on traditional urban patterns, Form-based codes are relatively new, and can be difficult to enact due to public and developer familiarity with Euclidean systems.



	Euclidean	Form-Based
Permitted land uses	Specific uses that are permitted, conditionally per- mitted and prohibited are listed in tables, usually in a multi-page table.	Uses are listed by general category, and the number of conditionally permitted uses is either reduced or eliminated, with more permitted by right.
Design guidelines	Design guidelines are advisory in nature and are contained in a separate document, applied citywide to specific zoning districts.	Design requirements - many of which are drawn from the existing guidelines - are built into the code, cus- tomized to fit this particular part of Spokane.
Discretionary review	Uses requiring conditional use permits must go through a hearing examiner, public hearing process.	There are no uses in Hamilton that require a CUP, so there is no need for a public hearing for any permittee use.
Street design	Street design is governed by the City's public works standards, interpreted by the City's public works staf.	Street design is dictated by the form-based code, with lane widths, landscaping and other items shaped to conform to the neighborhood's character.
Building height	Maximum building height is 70' in the CC2 zone, 50' in the CC1, and 35' in the RSF, but those hights in the commercial districts is unlikely to be reached be- cause of off-street parking requirements.	Heights in the character areas are the same as they would be in the Euclidean zoning, but parking require ments are different, permitting more intense site de- velopment.
Parking requirements	Parking requirements vary by use, and on-street	New street designs add to on-street parking inven-

Mixing uses Complexity

parking helps meet required levels. tory, reducing the number of spaces required to be provided on site. Mixed uses are permitted, both vertical and horizon-Mixed uses are permitted, both vertical and horizontal, but "shopfront" street requires retail or institutal. tional uses on ground floor. Form-based code provides all development standards Development applications require conformance to zoning standards and design guidelines, with some in one location, and there is no requirement for public hearing if the project complies with code. uses requiring public hearing.

Hamilton Corridor Model Form-Based Code