

FBCI Codes for Communities

The Form-Based Codes Institute is a program of Smart Growth America dedicated to promoting the use of form-based codes to create walkable, mixed-use, socially-integrated communities. The Institute accomplishes its mission through robust education and training, influential research and impactful technical assistance. [The FBCI Codes for Communities](#) program offers a wide range of assistance by drawing on the experience and talents of FBCI leaders and staff to provide localities with advice and guidance on form-based codes and zoning reform.

Code Reviews

FBCI will review and comment on an existing zoning code to assess whether it supports or impedes other development goals like mixed-use or walkability. Experts will review the code, identify where it impedes other policy goals and suggest changes to address those barriers. FBCI also conducts peer reviews on newly drafted form-based codes, before the code is adopted, to ensure the code is consistent with [FBCI Standards of Practice](#) and easy to understand and administer. The sponsoring locality receives a written report synthesizing the expert reviewers' comments and suggestions.

Recent Assignments:

- Fauquier County, VA – *New draft code for Town of Marshall*
- Omaha, NE – *Review for compatibility with TOD principles*
- Maui County, HI – *Review for consistency with complete streets policy*

Code Audits

FBCI conducts audits of a neighborhood, district, or corridor zoning code when the code is not producing the kind of development that the community wants. In these audits, FBCI staff interviews key stakeholders—city staff, elected officials, developers, property owners, and architects—to discover their concerns about the existing code and suggestions for improvements. Experts then analyze the code to identify barriers to good urban form and make suggestions for revising the code. FBCI prepares a final report with the results of the interviews and analysis and with suggestions for code revisions. At the request of city staff, FBCI will present a summary of the report to local leaders, staff, and/or stakeholders and/or assist the staff to develop an RFP or RFQ if more substantial code revisions are needed.

Recent Assignment:

- Town of Leesburg, VA – *Review exiting district code, engage stakeholders, recommend changes*

FBCI's experienced team listened to town staff and other stakeholders, conducted a thorough review of our current ordinance, and made thoughtful and practical recommendations. As a result of their work, our Town Council now recognizes the kinds of changes needed to create great, walkable development. At the conclusion of FBCI's final presentation, there was Council consensus to move forward with changes that will create the kind of urban placemaking they envision."

— Susan Berry Hill, Director, Department of Planning & Zoning, Town of Leesburg, VA

Code Adjustments

Often, existing zoning codes conflict with other policies adopted to encourage better land use practices like transit-oriented development or complete streets. In other cases, a zoning code may need to be updated to accommodate new infrastructure investments or development trends. In conducting a code adjustment, FBCI will: 1) review and analyze an existing ordinance and other relevant land use policies and practices to identify potential obstacles and inconsistencies; 2) interview stakeholders in the community—staff, developers, architects, decision makers; 3) propose adjustments to the ordinance, within the current structure of the code; and 4) prepare a final report and presentation for local stakeholders on the findings and recommended changes.

Recent Assignment:

- Honolulu, HI – *Assessment of parking demand/supply and implications for the State’s clean energy goals, community engagement, and proposed revisions to off-street parking and loading sections of the City’s Land Use Ordinance*

A New Form-Based Code/Citywide Strategy

FBCI partners with top-notch code writing firms to create a citywide strategy for form-based coding or a state-of-the-art form-based code for a corridor, neighborhood, or district. Each FBCI team includes:

- World-class practitioners and other experts, led by an experienced team leader;
- Close collaboration with local staff members, offering a unique opportunity to learn from the best; and
- A plan for community engagement, tailored to fit the goals, culture, resources, and needs of the community.

The outcome of each assignment is a new, cutting-edge form-based code—or coding strategy—that can serve as the regulatory framework for creating mixed-use, walkable places that are healthy, prosperous, and resilient. Each form-based code or strategy developed with FBCI will be widely publicized through FBCI and SGA’s websites and publications and used in FBCI classes as a teaching tool for local governments.

Recent Assignments:

- City of Charlottesville, VA – *Neighborhood code and support for an affordable housing strategy*
- City of Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – *A Roadmap for Modern Citywide Zoning*

FBCI principals and staff will also provide advice and expertise by phone, or during a one- to two-day site visit. Costs and fees vary by the assignment.

For more information on Codes for Communities or FBCI, contact Marta Goldsmith, FBCI Executive Director, at mgoldsmith@smartgrowthamerica.org