



Form-Based Code and Land Use Analysis

Town of Lansing

Design Connect: Cornell University
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Project Overview

Design Connect is a multi-disciplinary, student-run, community design organization based at Cornell University. Design Connect assisted the Town of Lansing in its comprehensive planning process throughout the Fall of 2015. The project team explored the applicability of Form-Based Code, as well as other policy options for achieving the objectives of town officials and residents. Through the semester we have worked with several clients at the Town of Lansing including Board Member Ruth Hopkins, Planning Committee members Deb Trumbull and Larry Sharpsteen and Planning Consultant Mike Long.

The Design Connect team has analyzed the use of Form-Based Code in comparable municipalities, the existing land use and zoning in the Town, and the local real estate market. This report summarizes the work and research the Design Connect team completed over the course of the semester.

Town of Lansing: Existing Land Use Analysis

The Town of Lansing currently uses a traditional, Euclidean Zoning system. Euclidean zoning is also commonly referred to as ‘single-use zoning’ because the primary motivation and focus of the regulations are use restrictions. In contrast, Form-Based Code prioritizes regulating the form of buildings over regulating use. In the Town of Lansing’s existing code regulations, the intent of districts is described as “the land use control districts in the Town of Lansing have been established in furtherance of the Town’s Comprehensive Plan and for the aspirational and non-regulatory purposes of the intents described” (p. 15). The zoning regulation details the intent of each of the 8 districts which have been simplified below. The full zoning regulations are found in the Town of Lansing’s zoning ordinance, available on the Town’s website.

Commercial Mixed Use (B1) - Areas where development will be encouraged to occur in ways that can lead to an identifiable focal point for the Town.

Commercial (B2) - Areas where a range of retail, service and repair business, commercial and storage activities, light industry and similar land use activities that may not be compatible with objectives of the B1 district.

Industrial Research (IR) - Areas where some form of light manufacturing is appropriate.

Lakeshore (L1) - Areas that are adjacent or have access to the shoreline of Cayuga Lake.

Residential - Low Density (R1) - Areas where agriculture has been an historic use of land, but which areas are now primarily residential.

Residential - Moderate Density (R2) - Areas where the expected and desired use of land is a mixture of varied types of residential development at a somewhat higher development density.

Residential - Mixed Use (R3) - Areas where the use of the land will change from the most traditional agricultural uses of the community to a denser residential development depending, in part, upon introduction of public water and sewage.

Rural Agriculture (RA) - Areas where farming and farm-related businesses are the predominant and desire land use activities.

The Town of Lansing zoning policy is fairly broad, with 8 different districts. The zoning map published by the town with different districts can be found below:

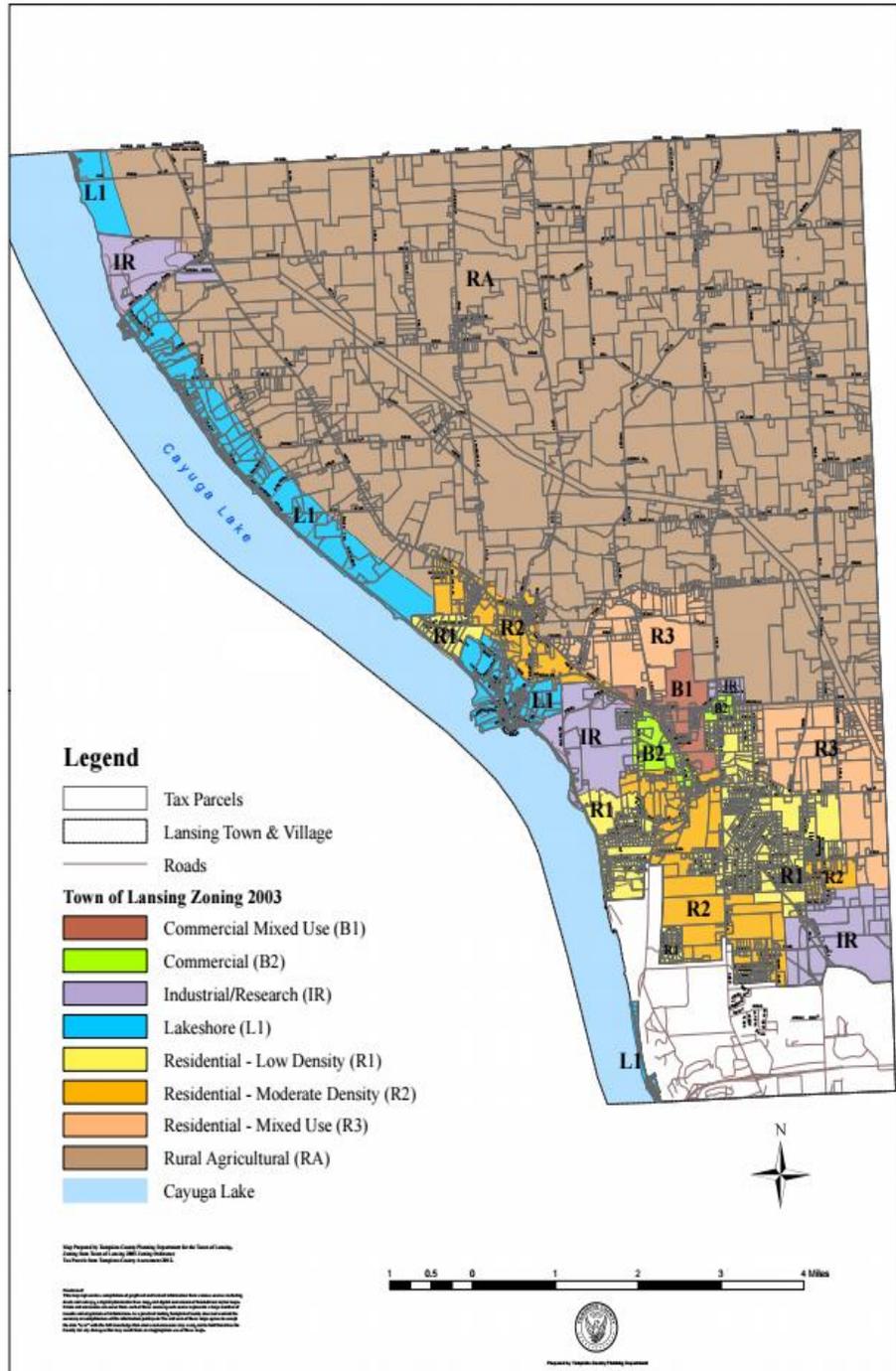


Figure 1: Town of Lansing Zoning Districts

Target Area

Design Connect specifically focused on one smaller region of the Town: the 34/34B intersection and surrounding areas. The Target Area Zoning map shows there are various zoning districts within our target area including RA, R1, R2, R3, IR, B1 and B2. The Town selected this area for study due to its mix of uses, its centrality to the road network, and the vacant land likely to be developed in the future.

Town of Lansing - Target Area Zoning

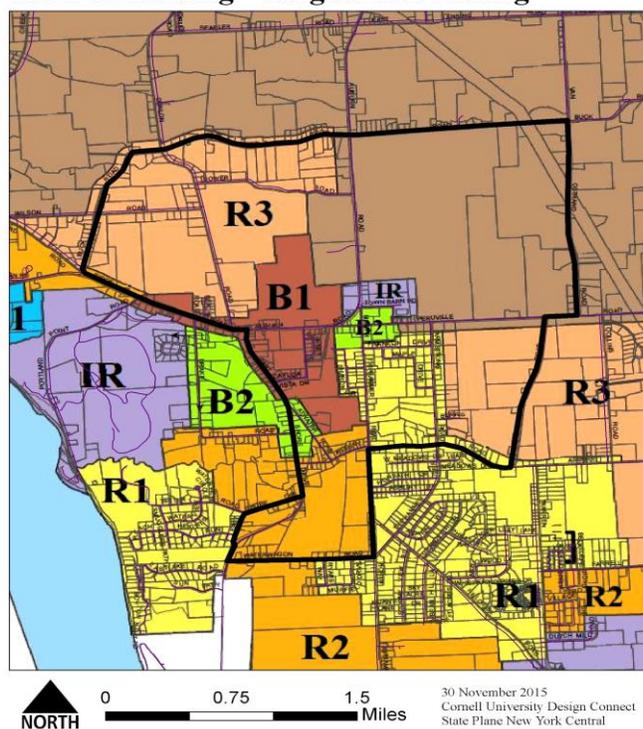


Figure 2: Target Area Zoning Districts

The variety of zoning matches the mix of development types within the Target Area, including commercial buildings, agricultural land, residential single family neighborhoods, industrial areas and more. Each zoning district comes with a series of regulations and standards that require enforcement and determine development form. The complete breakdown of requirements for each zoning district can be found on the Lansing website or by talking to any Town Official. To evaluate how well the existing zoning districts match the existing land use, we isolated 3 variables - or zoning requirements -

and compared them to the actual buildings in Lansing. The regulations we looked at were building height, developed area per parcel and building setbacks from the street centerline. The following are the restrictions by district:

Zoning Designation	Setback Requirement	Minimum Open Space <small>(maximum amount if variation within zone)</small>	Maximum Building Height
B1 - Commercial Mixed Use	60 ft	50%	35 ft
B2 - Commercial	60 ft	50%	35 ft
IR – Industrial Research	60 ft	75%	35 ft
R1 – Residential Low Density	60 ft	75%	35 ft
R2 – Residential Moderate Density	60 ft	75%	35 ft
R3 – Residential Mixed Use	60 ft	75%	35 ft
RA – Rural Agricultural	60 ft	75%	35 ft

Figure 3: Town of Lansing Zoning Bulk Requirements

Building Height

Beginning with the maximum building height, we found that the Target Area conforms relatively well to the zoning regulations. The maximum building height for all buildings in Lansing, regardless of the zoning district, is 35 feet unless a variance has been established. An obvious exception to conformity in maximum building height is Rogue’s Harbor on Shore Drive. Other obvious structures not in compliance with the height requirement are various barns scattered throughout the target area which are clearly over the 35-foot maximum. Overall, we did not find building height to be an issue in terms of zoning regulation enforcement. We do not think raising this height limit would greatly impact development in the Town.

Minimum Open Space

Minimum open space requirements vary from 50% to 75% of lot area depending on the zoning designation. In order to check compliance, we used Geographic Information Systems software. Parcel data was collected from Tompkins County (2012). In addition, building information was gathered from the county and clipped to the target area provided by the clients. The floor area of each building was calculated and joined to the related parcel. Finally, we found the ratio of the floor area to the total acreage per parcel.

The results of the minimum open space analysis showed that there is 99% compliance with the existing zoning code. Out of over 740 buildings in the target area, only 1 did not conform to code. The noncompliant building was a barn on a smaller lot adjacent to another parcel with the same owner. Given the additional information, it is clear that there is essentially 100% compliance with the open space requirement. The results can be seen below:

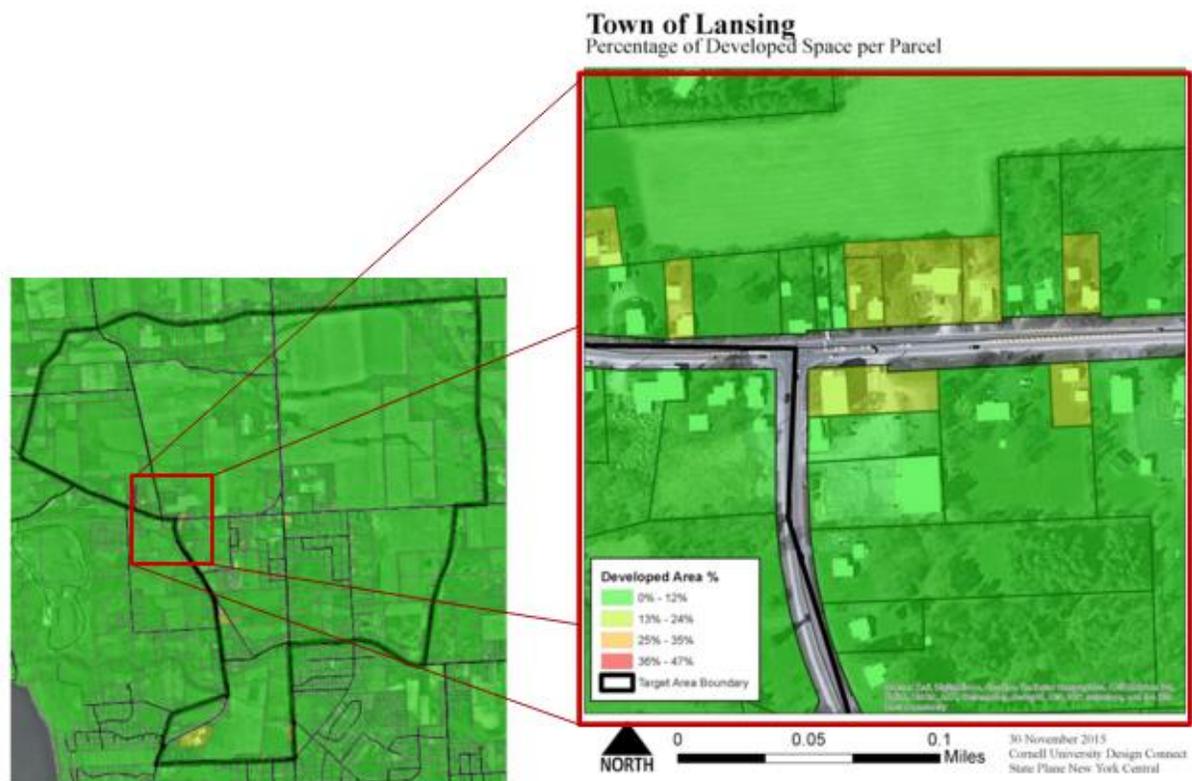


Figure 4: Target Area conformity with open space requirements.

Setback Requirements

The final zoning requirement that we examined were setback requirements. Regardless of the zoning designation, the setback requirement for all development in the target area is 60 feet. In order to compare the regulation against reality we used the same building footprint shapefile as in the open space analysis. In addition, we collected road centerline data from US Census Data provided online. With the two shapefiles, we calculated the distance from the building edge to the nearest road centerline. The map below shows the results. Any building with a red outline demarcates a building that is noncompliant: or a building with a setback less than the required 60 feet.

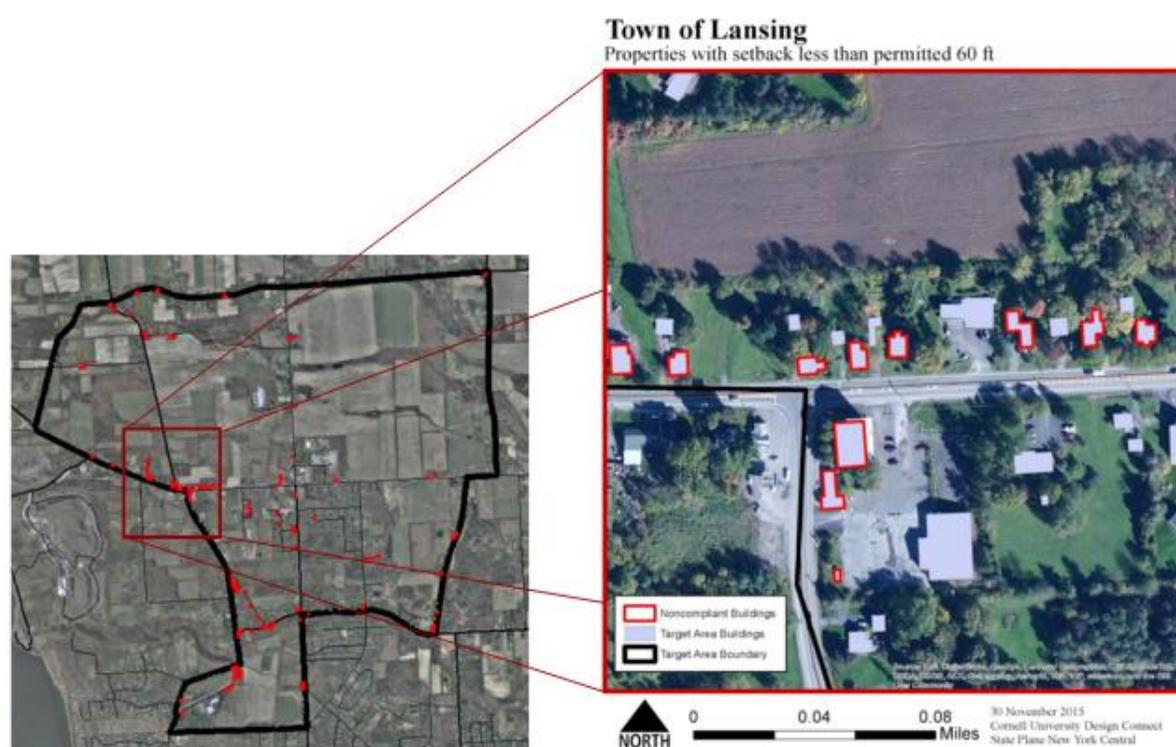


Figure 5: Target Area conformity with setback requirements.

The results for the setback analysis paint a much different picture of the building conformity in Lansing compared to the prior two analyses. 103 buildings, or 13.5% of the total buildings in the target area, did not meet the setback requirement. The majority of noncompliant buildings are found at road intersections. It is clear that there are also quite a few noncompliant buildings scattered throughout the more rural areas of the town.

Existing Zoning Conclusion

Based on the analysis conducted the zoning in Lansing fairly well matches the existing infrastructure. Minimum open space and building height are essentially non issues. However, setback requirements are not well aligned with existing buildings. In order to continue development consistent with the character of existing buildings in Lansing it is worth considering adjusting the setback requirements or switching to an alternative zoning system. Even if Lansing does not implement a Form-Based Code or another full revision of its zoning ordinance, it would be worth evaluating whether building setbacks should be reduced in certain zoning districts.

Form-Based Code: Background

Form-Based Code is a relatively new alternative form of zoning which regulates land use primarily through regulating form rather than regulating use. Form-Based Code first became common in the 1980s and 1990s; hundreds of municipalities have implemented Form-Based Code, and its popularity continues to grow. It has been used to regulate the form of areas as large as the Cities of Cincinnati and Miami and as small as individual street corridors.

“A form-based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than the separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A form-based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.” -Form-Based Code Institute

Many land-use regulations mix elements of Form-Based Code and traditional Euclidean zoning within a single ordinance. However, Form-Based Code can be considered distinct from traditional zoning in two ways: 1) there exist a number of template codes, the most popular of which is the SmartCode, which can be adapted for any municipality. The adoption of these codes keep the concept of Form-Based Code distinct; 2) there are certain elements which are strongly associated with Form-Based Code, including:

- Transects:** Form-Based Code explicitly considers the transition between high and low density development, mirroring the structure of pre-zoning development. Form-based code uses the concept of the “transect” to designate the intensity of permitted development in a particular area (shown in Figure 6 below). These transects transition from low-density Transect 1 (T1) to higher density (T6). Form-Based Codes for locations outside of major cities, such as Lansing, do not necessarily include the high-density T5 or T6 districts. The concept of transects allows for greater gradation and smoother transitions between low- and high-density areas than is typically possible with traditional Euclidean zoning.



Figure 6: Rural-to-Urban Transect. Source: bettercities.net

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- **Build-to lines:** Most traditional zoning often regulates the built form of buildings with minimum and maximum requirements on various measures. Common examples include: maximum building heights, maximum lot coverage ratios, maximum floor area-to-lot area ratios, and minimum parking spaces per residential unit. However, the property owner has a great amount of leeway within these minimums, and these maximums do not determine the specific form which development takes. Form-Based Code often includes build-to lines rather than building maximums. For example, rather than requiring a maximum front setback of 40 feet, Form-Based Code might require that any building be set back exactly 40 feet. This can give community members more certainty about what form development will take.
 - **Form over use:** Although Form-Based Code has some restrictions on what uses are permitted in a given area, it usually restrictive use less than traditional zoning. Traditional zoning, which was adopted by most US municipalities in the early 1900s, often banned commercial uses in residential neighborhoods. This made neighborhood-serving corner stores or restaurants illegal in many places. Form-Based Code relaxes this type of restriction, under the idea that neighbors are more concerned about the scale of development than about use, with the exception of true nuisances such as factories.
 - **Details of buildings:** Form-Based Code often is implemented so that new development will fit with the existing buildings. This can include requiring that new developments include features typical of the community's preferred buildings. This could include porches, types of siding or windows, or maximum percentage of opaque street-facing façade in key shopping streets. However, the regulation of this type of building detail is not a feature of all form-based codes.
 - **Clear regulation with images:** Zoning ordinances are often complex and difficult to understand, with long descriptions of each regulation. Form-Based Code often uses images to demonstrate the outcome of the regulation, which is typically more legible than text alone. Since Form-Based Code typically has more specific requirements, anyone can view these images and understand. An example from the Form-Based Code of Malta, NY is found in Figure 7 below.

2.11. RA-2: Downtown Residential Attached

The RA-2 District is intended to accommodate a mix of detached and attached residential building types in a pedestrian-friendly and walkable environment where buildings do not exceed 2 stories in height.



A. Permitted Building Types

- Mixed-Use Development
- Apartment
- Traditional Detached
- Townhouse
- Single-Family Detached
- Cottage Court
- General Building
- Detached House
- Civic Building

B. Maximum Building Heights

- 2 stories: Townhouse, Cottage Court, Detached House, Civic Building
- 1 story: —

Case Studies

To explore how Form-Based Code could be applied to the Town of Lansing, the Design Connect team reviewed examples from other municipalities which share some characteristics with Lansing. These examples are found in the following sections. Team members reviewed the code in each municipality, spoke with town officials or consultants involved in each zoning process, and reviewed news articles which recorded each process and the reception of each code.

Form-Based Code Case Study: Saratoga Springs



Figure 8: The Springs, Saratoga Springs, NY. Source: Photo taken by Sean McGee

1. Why did we select this municipality?

Saratoga Springs, New York, was selected as a case study primarily because of its geographical similarity to Lansing New York. As an upstate New York municipality that adopted a Form-Based Code in 2003, it was “one of the first communities to adopt a ‘SmartCode’ to implement comprehensive place principles.” (Rouse and Zobl, 5) Finally, Saratoga Springs was also selected as a case study because the decade during which the Form-Based Code (FBC) was adopted showed the measurable effects of the Code upon the area.

2. Why did this municipality seek to implement a Form-Based Code?

Since the 1980s, the City of Saratoga Springs had sought to “to preserve and add onto the historic fabric of its downtown” by enhancing many of its urban qualities, particularly, that of the city’s primary downtown thoroughfare, Broadway. (Langdon, 3) Despite some of its present buildings undergoing renovation and restoration in that area, new construction was sluggish. In 1994, a project called Congress Park Centre was started as the result of a planned unit development ordinance. (Langdon, 3) As construction began, the City of Saratoga Springs “realized that pedestrian-friendly fixed use development could be encouraged through a form-based code.” (Langdon, 3)

3. Who was involved in the implementation process?

The Form-Based Code was primarily created with the help of two consultants, Joel Russell of Northampton, Massachusetts, and Environmental Design & Research of Syracuse, New York. (Langdon, 3) Additionally, volunteer committee members and planning staff assisted with the process. (Langdon, 3)

4. How long did the implementation process take?

The implementation process took nine years. The discussion of a FBC first began in 1994 with the development of the Congress Park Centre and the Code was finally adopted in 2003. (Langdon, 3)

5. How was the Form-Based Code received by the public?

According to a presentation prepared by Joel Russell for the Massachusetts Municipal Association in January, 2011, the initial public response to a FBC was one of both confusion and skepticism. Quotes included in that presentation indicated that residents in Saratoga feared that too much power would be given to the Planning Board and that a FBC would encourage overgrowth. (Russell, 25)

6. Was the Form-Based Code viewed as successful?

In Saratoga's comprehensive plan the downtown district was identified as a special development area. The transect model was applied to the downtown district and, as a result, the area was divided into three urban transect categories that replaced the existing zoning districts: the Urban Neighborhood (T-4), Neighborhood Center (T-5), and Urban Core (T-6)." (Rouse and Zobl, 5) Design Standards were applied "for setbacks, height, parking location, street design, façade treatments, and creation of a public realm." (Rouse and Zobl, 5) All uses are permitted in the T-6 zone. Both the T-5 and T-4 zones require the issuance of a special use permit for any new proposed use through a "flexible review process." (Rouse and Zobl, 5) As of 2011, following the adoption of a FBC, the city of Saratoga Springs approved fifteen major projects that reflect over \$200 million and over one million new square feet. (Russell, 28)

Form-Based Code Case Study: Malta, NY

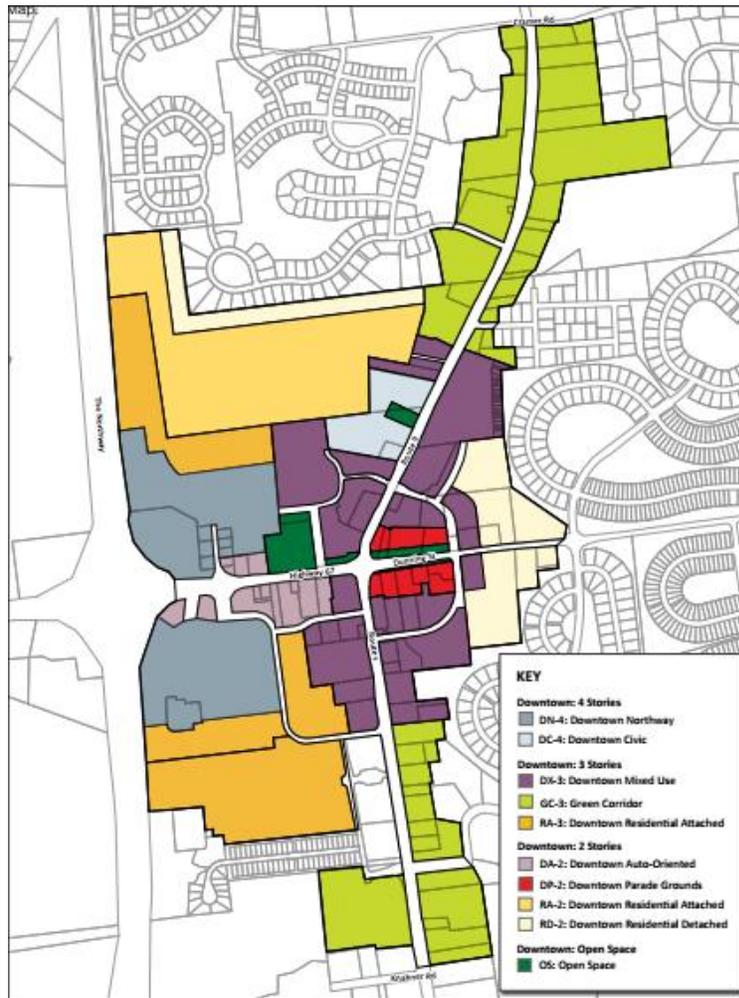


Figure 9: Downtown Malta Zoning Map

1. Why did we select this municipality?

Malta, New York, was selected as a case study for our project primarily because its geographic context is similar to that of Lansing in upstate New York. Additionally, we selected Malta because a Form-Based Code (FBC) was recently adopted by the municipality earlier this year. Malta was also recommended to us by Shannon Bush, a current Project Planner at the Chazen Companies and a former resident of Lansing. She is a graduate the Master in City and Regional Planning degree program at Cornell University.

2. Why did this municipality seek to implement Form-Based Code?

The Town of Malta sought to implement a Form-Based Code as a way of taking a “proactive approach towards preserving its community character while simultaneously capitalizing on new community investments” that had emerged from the development of the Luther Forest Technology Campus and the Global Foundries computer chip manufacturing facility. (Code Studio, 2) Malta desired “to create an attractive mixed use Downtown centered on an integrated multi-modal transportation network, with an improved and inviting pedestrian and bicycling environment.” (Code Studio, 2)

3. Who was involved in the implementation process?

In addition to the Town Board and planning staff, several consultants were hired to assist with the implementation of a FBC in Malta. Code Studio based in Austin, Texas was hired to serve as lead consultants on the project. Code Studio “in turn enlisted a team of specialists” consisting of Third Coast Design Studio based in Nashville, Tennessee, Howard Stein Hudson Associates in Boston, Massachusetts, and Fuss & O’Neill in Hartford, Connecticut. (Code Studio, 2)

4. How long did the implementation process take?

In 2011, the town of Malta’s Downtown Plan “recommended that the Town develop a form-based (zoning) code and complete streets plan for downtown.” (Code Studio, 2) Following the hiring of the consultants listed above, a consultant held a walking tour of downtown Malta in March, 2012. The tour led into a Charrette Week, held from March 24-28, 2012. A draft FBC was published in July, 2012. The FBC was subsequently adopted by the Town Board in February, 2014. (Town of Malta) The FBC was then revised by the Town Board in March, 2014, and finally adopted for a second time in May, 2015. (Town of Malta)

5. How was the Form-Based Code received by the public?

The initial public reaction to a FBC in Malta appears quite mixed. As reported in the Ballston Journal on February 5, 2013, while several officials praised the adoption of a FBC, one resident expressed the following: “I’m really concerned about the honesty of this board... The people have spoken: we do not want this.” (Erchak) It is important to note that the initial adoption of a Form-Based Code in Malta required revision in order to refine

architectural standards. During the revision process, other residents expressed their concern that this new form of zoning was “very restrictive.” (Connor)

6. Was the Form-Based Code viewed as successful?

The revised FBC was adopted by Malta in May, 2015. As such, it is too early in the process to determine the success of the FBC at this point in time. Subsequent research at a later date would aid the assessment of the success of a FBC in Malta, NY, as presently, a prediction would be premature.

Form-Based Code Case Study: St. Lucie County, FL

1. Why did we select this municipality?

St. Lucie County is unique for its successful implementation of the first regional FBC called Town Village County Code (TVC). It is a transect-based SmartCode and includes a regional street network that aims at creating a sustainable growth pattern for the St. Lucie County. Like Lansing, St. Lucie County includes adjacent agricultural and residential areas.

2. Why did the municipality seek to implement FBC?

It was created as a result of growth pressure on a 28-square mile agricultural area near Fort Pierce. The plan wants to focus development in new villages surrounding the concentrated farmland to keep the balance of rural vs. urban development throughout the county and protect 60- 70% of rural citrus farmland. The TVC is an amendment in the Comprehensive Plan that ensures sustainable development characterized by a mix of uses, building types, income levels and pedestrian- friendly blocks and street network. It also gives emphasis to public open space, future agricultural practices and how to mitigate the environmental impact of new development in the area.

3. Who was involved in the process?

Apart from the Planning Department of St. Lucie and the State Board of County Commissioners of Florida, who take a prominent role in urban planning decisions throughout the state, Dover Kohl and Partners is private firm that was hired for consultation and design. Residents of the county also actively participated, providing input during town meetings.

4. How long did the process take?

The plan was completed in 2006 and was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in 2007. The approval for the first village however, Village of Sunset Lakes, was approved and implemented only in 2010.

5. What was the public reception?

There was a lot of anticipation and collaboration among the Planning Board, residents and Dover Kohl and Partners during the planning process. Many farmer owners however were

skeptical of diminished development rights.

6. Were the FBCs successful?

Although approved in 2007, implementation was delayed as a result of financial crisis in 2008. The first successful implementation in Village of Sunset Lakes in 2010 and received support from majority despite obstacles as a result of public participation.

Form-Based Code Case Study: Beacon, NY

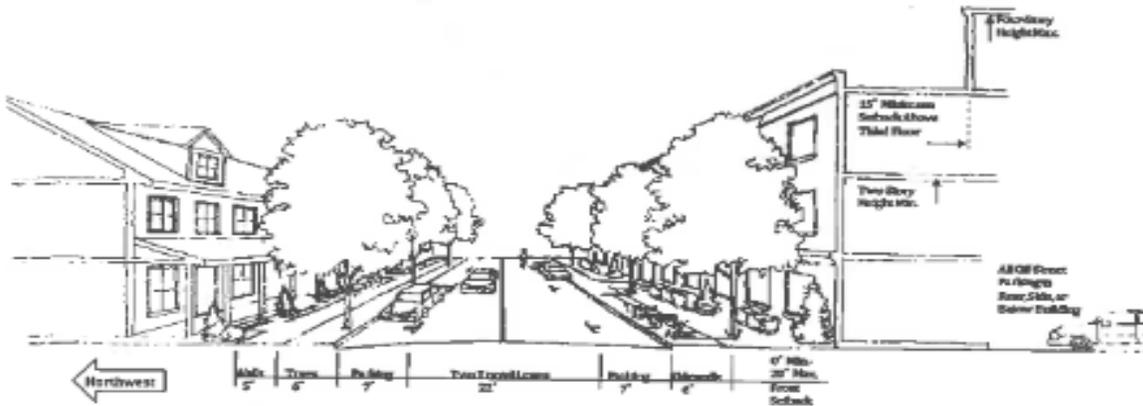


Figure 10: Beacon Zoning Code. Linkage District. Figure 21-0: Illustrative View of Proposed Linkage Zoning Requirements



Figure 11: Main Street, Beacon. © 2015 Houlihan Lawrence.

1. Why did we select this municipality?

The City of Beacon, New York was selected as a case study for this report because it is an Upstate New York municipality of comparable size to Lansing, with a similar attachment to its beautiful natural environs. The code eventually adopted by Beacon makes use of a type of Form-Based Code that is often called Transect-Based code or SmartCode; the town's predominating transect being similar to what is found in Lansing.

2. Why did this municipality seek to implement a Form-Based Code?

The City of Beacon sought to use Form-Based Code as a way to spur new development in the corridor along Main Street between the East End and West End Districts and the Linkage district that runs from West End to the train station. The new zoning was meant to encourage appropriate infill development in these prime locations that fits with existing historic buildings and reflects the artistic, design-oriented community (Russell, Beacon Comprehensive Plan).

3. Who was involved in the implementation process?

The Form-based code was developed and written by consultant Joel Russell of Northampton, Massachusetts with the overall concept, graphics and community outreach plans by John Clarke, Dutchess County Department of Planning. Community meetings were held in the town to facilitate explanation of FBCs and elicit public input.

4. How long did the implementation process take?

The directive to write the Form-Based Code for the Main Street and Linkage districts in was adopted in the Comprehensive Plan that was developed between 2004 and 2007. The Form-Based Code itself was adopted in 2013 (Stowe, Russell).

5. How was the Form-Based Code received by the public?

In the public meetings, Form-Based Code was received as generally positive by the town of Beacon. Residents did have two primary concerns with respect to encouraging more development. First, residents cherish the view from downtown of Mt. Beacon and did not want buildings blocking that vista (Stowe). Second, people were concerned about gentrification, especially given the proximity to New York City. As a result, provisions for affordable housing were written into code (Joel Russell).

6. Was the Form-Based Code viewed as successful?

It is still too early to make an assessment on the success of Beacon's Form-Based Code. As of this writing, plans for new development have been submitted indicating interest by developers. There have been a few hitches in the approval process for a few buildings that take advantage of the height exceptions allowed in code (Joel Russell).

Form-Based Code Case Study: Port Royal, SC



Figure 12: Proposed Mixed Use infill in Traditional Neighborhood Plan, 1995 for Port Royal

1. Why did we select this municipality?

Port Royal, South Carolina was selected as a case study for this report because it is a municipality of comparable population density to Lansing. Port Royal and Lansing are both historic towns, with a similar attachment to their beautiful natural environs. The code adopted by Port Royal makes use of a type of Form-Based Code that is often called Transect-Based code or SmartCode, with the town's predominating transect being similar to what is found in Lansing.

2. Why did this municipality seek to implement a Form-Based Code?

Despite the economic boom of Beaufort County (where Port Royal is located) in 1960s, 1970s and 80s, Port Royal received a small share of growth. The town's location at the bottom of the peninsula contributed to Port Royal being overlooked by the real estate and excluded from development. Port Royal also had a large number of historic properties dispersed and spread out across the town. Form-Based Code was thus seen as a measure to manage and preserve a variety of historic buildings using Traditional Neighborhood Development as an alternative to a preservation ordinance, and as a means to attract real estate and foster development in the town.

3. Who was involved in the implementation process?

The Form-Based Code called Traditional Neighborhood Development was developed and written by consultant Dover- Kohl and Partners. Also involved in organizing community

and public meetings was the Town of Port Royal and the Town Supervising Planning Committee especially set up for the formulation of the TND plan for Port Royal.

4. How long did the implementation process take?

Dover- Kohl and Partners began working on TND for Port Royal in the initial months of 1995 and the code was adopted on 7th Dec 1995. The town further contracted Kohler and Dove for 5 years to review the plan twice a year. In 1997, an Overlay district code was adopted for the town that focused on existing development and built upon the existing TND plan for Port Royal.

5. How was the Form-Based Code received by the public?

TND was sought as a means of promoting community and economic development. It focused on promoting traditional houses, increasing home ownership, and increasing public participation. Dover and Kohl spent six months in residency in the town of Port Royal to get a better understanding of the town and the needs of the people. “Hands-on Saturday” were organized every Saturday which included focused group discussions, community mapping for both existing and required aspects. Because of intensive public participation, the plan was very well received by the public once adopted.

6. Was the Form-Based Code viewed as successful?

Traditional Neighborhood Plan for Port Royal was one of the first Form-Based Codes to be adopted across the United States. The TND plan for Port Royal (1995) was a thirty-page document with only thirteen pages of text; the rest were drawings. It focused on the principles of neighborhood, street, open space, parks, and lucratively attracting the "right kind of developers". In 1996, the Congress for New Urbanism ranked Port Royal's TND plan in top 10 TNDs in the United states. The plan has been very successful and Port Royal has been able to witness a boom in construction and redevelopment ever since the adoption of the Form-Based Code. A new Form-Based Code was adopted in 2014, built upon the TND adopted about 20 years ago.

Public Meeting Overview and Feedback Summary

On November 12th, the Design Connect team held a public meeting for residents of the Town of Lansing. The Town advertised the meeting to residents by sending out postcard notifications through the mail. We structured the meeting by introducing the definition of Form-Based Code, providing examples of places Form-Based Code has been implemented using our case studies, and eliciting feedback from community members on their initial impressions of form based code and their ideas for how it may or may not be implemented in Lansing. There were twenty-five residents in attendance. We started the public meeting with an informal meet and greet. We set up six flipcharts around the room and encouraged people to write their answers to questions such as “What do you like about Lansing?”, “When I think of new development in Lansing, I think of...”, “What would you improve in your area?”. The goal of the public meeting was to introduce the concept of Form-Based Code and get the public’s initial impressions.

“Terrible idea... I cannot build a house where I want, and it has to look a certain way? ...I don't want any part of form based code.”

“I think we should improve on what we have, and preserve agriculture and the small town.”

“I believe FBC is exactly what is needed. It would take what works and incorporate it throughout main areas of town and provide consistency.”

Public feedback was mixed. Some people automatically associated Form Based Code with regulation and made it clear that they were not accepting of anything that could potentially damage agricultural land or change the bucolic feel of the town. The residents made it clear that they like the relaxing, family-oriented, agricultural nature of the town. Even

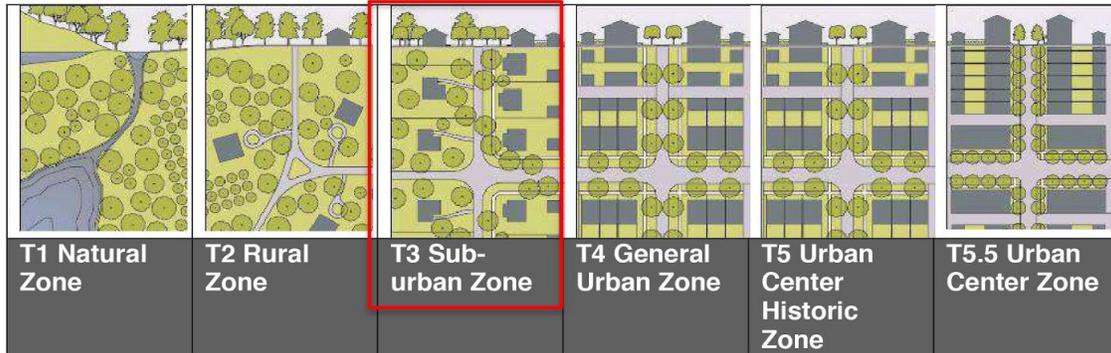
after the presentation, there was still some confusion about the definition of Form-Based Code and how it differs from traditional Euclidean zoning. Team leaders facilitated a group discussion to provide clarification allow people to express their views. There were some residents who were more optimistic and saw Form-Based Code as an opportunity to incorporate their town’s values into the built environment. People identified the intersection of 34 and 34B as a potential target area for form based code. This public contribution was important as that intersection is part of the target area initially identified by our client. Please see Appendix for a full summary of public feedback collected at the town meeting.

“I think it would help to preserve the rural sections of the town by restricting growth to the area where 34 and 34B intersect.”

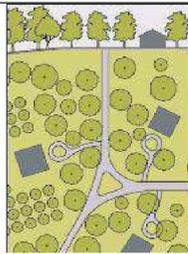
Form Based Code: Town of Lansing Example

We have come up with an example of what Form-Based Code near the intersection of 34 and 34B could look like, based on characteristics of Rogues' Harbor. The community identified this historic inn and restaurant as one of the most-liked buildings in the Target Area. Form-Based Code functions on a rural to urban transect, with each zone varying by level of intensity of natural, built, and social components. Our first step was to identify which transect category the intersection of 34 and 34B would be categorized as; we identified the intersection as a T3 sub-urban zone. Using Rogues' Harbor as an example, characteristics of the primary walls, roof shape, openings and windows, attached elements and massing have been identified. Additional images of these characteristics are provided as reference. In addition to building characteristics, a diagram of potential setbacks and building heights design guidelines based on Rogues' Harbor, as well as standard T3 setbacks and building heights, has been created. The following pages show how the SmartCode can be adapted to serve this goal.

TRANSECT CHARACTERISTICS



Transect Description (T2 – T4)



T-2 RURAL

T-2 Rural Zone consists of sparsely settled lands in open or cultivated states. These include woodland, agricultural land, and grassland. Typical buildings are farmhouses and agricultural buildings. T-2 occurs on the north side of the Town of Lansing

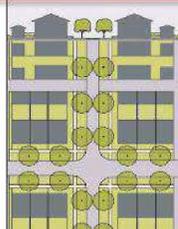
General Character: Primary agricultural with woodland, wetland, and scattered buildings
Building Placement: Variable setbacks
Frontage Type: Not Applicable
Typical Building Height: 1-to-2 story for houses
Type of Civic Space: Parks, Greenways



T-3 SUB-URBAN

T-3 Sub-Urban Zone consists of low-density residential areas, adjacent to higher zones that have some mixed use. Home occupations and outbuildings are allowed. Planting is naturalistic and setbacks are relatively deep. Blocks may be large and the roads irregular to accommodate natural conditions

General character: Lawns and landscaped yards surrounding detached single-family houses, pedestrians occasionally
Building Placement: Large and variable front and side yard setbacks
Frontage Type: Common lawn, porch & fence, naturalistic tree planting
Typical Building Height: 1-to 2-story with some 3-5 story
Type of Civic Space: Parks, Greenways

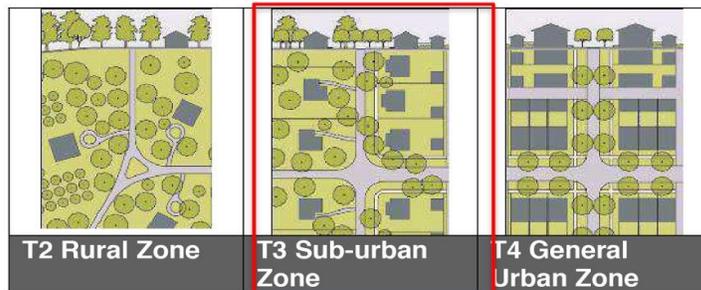


T-4 GENERAL URBAN ZONE

T-4 General Urban Zone consists of a mixed use but primarily residential urban fabric. It may have a wide range of building types: single, Side yard, and Row houses. Setbacks and landscaping are variable. Streets with curbs and sidewalks defining medium-sized blocks.

General character: Mix of houses, row houses, and small multi-family buildings with scattered commercial activity. Balance between landscape and buildings, presence of pedestrians
Building Placement: Shallow to medium front and side yard setbacks
Frontage Type: Porches, fences, dooryards and storefronts
Typical Building Height: 1-to 3 story with a few mixed use buildings
Type of Civic Space: Squares, greens

Transect Regulation Summary (T2 – T4)



BLOCK SIZE			
Block Perimeter	Not applicable	2,000 ft max	1,800 ft max
LOT OCCUPATION			
Lot width	Not applicable	40ft – 70 ft	18 ft – 60 ft
Lot coverage	Not applicable	60% max	70% max
SETBACKS-PRINCIPAL BUILDING			
Front setback principal	Not applicable	12 ft - 30 ft	0 ft – 12 ft
Front setback secondary	Not applicable	16 ft min	0 ft – 12 ft
Side setback	Not applicable	5 ft min	0 ft or 6 ft total
Rear setback	Not applicable	20 ft min	3 ft min
Frontage buildout	Not applicable	50% min	70% min
SETBACKS-OUTBUILDING			
Front setback	Not applicable	20ft min + bldg setback	20 ft min + bldg setback
Side setback	Not applicable	3 ft or 6 ft total	0 ft min. or 3 ft
Rear setback	Not applicable	3ft min / 15 ft from centerline of rear alley	3 ft min / 15 ft from centerline of rear alley
PRIVATE FRONTAGES			
Common yard	Not applicable	Permitted	Permitted
Porch & fence	Not applicable	Permitted	Permitted
Terrace / Lightwell	Not applicable	Not permitted	Permitted
Forecourt	Not applicable	Not permitted	Permitted
Stoop	Not applicable	Not permitted	Permitted
Shopfront	Not applicable	Not permitted	Permitted
Parking lot	Not applicable	Not permitted	Not permitted
BUILDING CONFIGURATION			
Principal Building	Not applicable	3 stories max	3 stories max
Outbuilding	Not applicable	2 stories max	2 stories max
BUILDING FUNCTION			
Residential	Not applicable	Restricted use	Limited use
Lodging	Not applicable	Restricted use	Limited use
Office	Not applicable	Restricted use	Limited use
Retail	Not applicable	Restricted use	Limited use
Industrial	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Description of T3 FBC

A. Description

The majority of building uses in the T3 zone shall be residential use. Other functions such as lodging, office, and retail, or a mix of these functions may be allowed, with these other functions located on the ground floor, and dwellings on its upper floors.

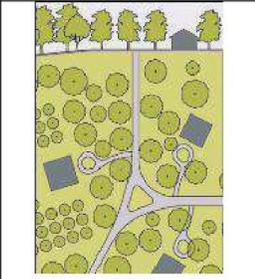
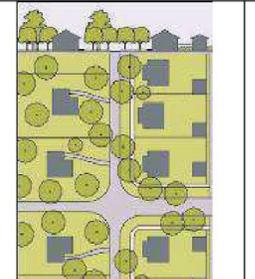
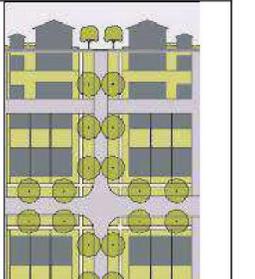
B. Access

1. The main entrance to each ground floor area shall be directly and face the street
2. Entrance to residential and/or non residential portions of the building above the ground floor shall be through a street level lobby or through a podium lobby accessible from the street
3. Interior circulation to each dwelling shall be through a corridor which may be single or double-loaded
4. Where an alley is present, parking shall be accessed through the alley
5. Where an alley is not present, parking shall be accessed by a driveway of 14' min width
6. On a corner lot without access to an alley, parking shall be accessed by a driveway of 14' min width

C. Parking & Services

1. Required parking must be provided at grade. Garage, carport, or uncovered parking allowed
2. Dwellings may have indirect access to their parking stalls
3. Where an alley is present, services above ground equipment and trash container areas shall be located on the alley

Transect Development Examples (T2 – T4)

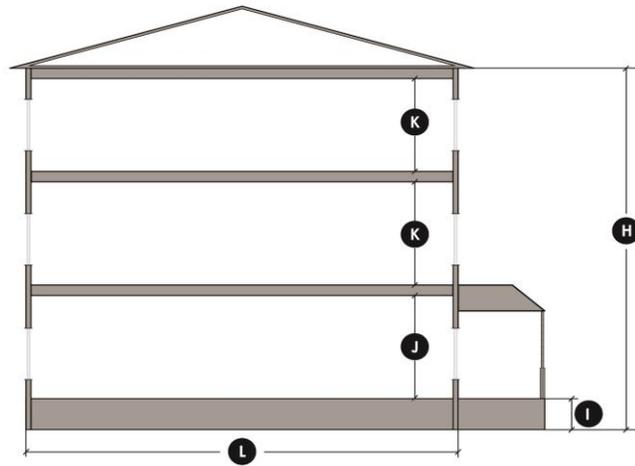
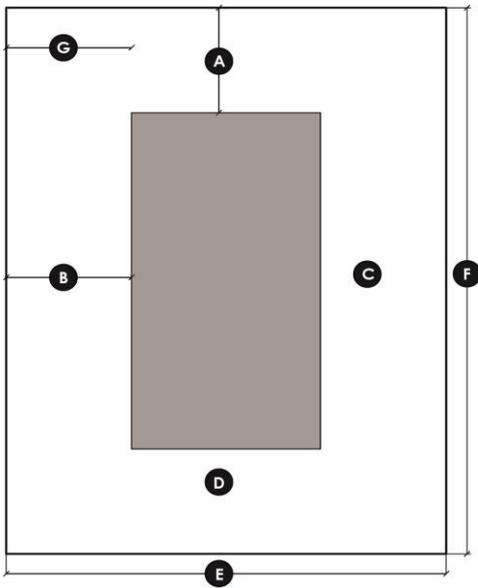
	 T2 Rural Zone	 T3 Sub-urban Zone	 T4 General Urban Zone
RESIDENTIAL			
OTHER FUNCTIONS			

Sample Building Elements to be regulated (T3)

<p>Primary Walls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Walls shall show no more than two materials/color along any building section. Single family detached housing are exempt ☒ Piers are a minimum of 6x6" if wood posts, and 18x18" if stone or stucco 			
<p>Roof Shape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Roof geometry must be pitched ☒ Overhang shall be kept at a maximum of 10" 			
<p>Openings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Window openings should be oriented vertically, although windows may abut to form horizontal opening 			
<p>Attached Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ Porches, chimneys, and trellises can enroach beyond primary exterior surface of buildings into their setback ☒ Tapered, square columns 			
<p>Massing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ 3 or 2 storey with 1 story components such as porches or veranda ☒ 1 story simple house forms with 1 story components such as porches or veranda 			

Based on Bellevue's Form Based Codes Article XXI -FBC

Source: <http://formbasedcodes.org/content/uploads/2014/08/Bellevue-Form-Based-Code-Article-XXI-FBC.pdf>



Building Placement		
Build-to-Line (Distance from Property Line)		
Front	25'	A
Side Street	30'	B
Building Façade at BTL		
Front	80% min	
Side-Street	30% min	
Setback (Minimum distance from Property Line)		
Side	0'	C
Rear		
Adjacent to other zone	5'	D
Lot Size		
Width	123' max	E
Depth	100' max	F
Miscellaneous		
Only one main building and one Ancillary Building may be built on each lot.		
Street facades must be built to BTL within 30' of street corners.		G
Entire BTL must be defined by a building or a 2'-6" to 4'-6" high fence stucco or masonry wall.		

Building Form		
Height		
Main Building	22' min.*	H
	3 Stories max.	H
Ancillary Building	2 Stories max.	
Ground Floor Finish Level	6" max. above sidewalk	I
Ground Floor Ceiling	12' min. clear	J
Upper Floor(s) Ceiling	8' min. clear	K
*Measured from grade to eave or parapet base		
Footprint		
Depth Ground Floor	40' min.	L
Miscellaneous		
All floors must have primary entrance along the front façade.		
Loading docks, overhead doors, and other service entries may not be located on street-facing facades.		
Any buildings wider than 50' must be designed to read as a series of buildings no wider than 50' each.		

Process Conclusions

If the Town of Lansing determines that it is in the best interest of the community to move forward with the implementation process of Form-Based Code, based upon the analysis conducted for this report and observations made at public meetings with residents of Lansing as well as community representatives, the following steps should be considered.

1. Identify a target area for implementation

At the outset of this study, we were given a particular Target Area of focus within Lansing in which we to focus our inquiries. As such our report primarily addresses that particular area of Lansing. However, as a result of our study and findings, we believe that the selection of a target area for the implementation of Form-Based Code should be considered with increased public participation and input. Clear observations were made throughout the study that indicate residents of Lansing may have differing opinions as to which area in Lansing would benefit most from Form-Based Code. The implementation of Form-Based Code in one particular of the municipality location appeared from our study to be the most effective, as well as efficient, limiting factor of the implementation process.

2. Involve Public

Public participation should be a key priority of the entire implementation process. Public involvement was a component of the municipalities identified as comparable case studies for Lansing and a notion mentioned at the public meetings held during this study. Based upon the understanding of Form-Based Code developed over the course of the project, it can be seen that the strength of the Form-Based Code adopted by a municipality greatly depends upon the extent to which the public of that municipality participates in the implementation process.

3. Identify Goals and Consider Alternatives

Form-Based Code has proven useful in many contexts, but is not applicable or necessary in every context. Any preliminary public outreach should focus on identifying the Town's goals, and Town residents should consider whether Form-Based Code could achieve those goals. These goals may become more clear during the ongoing Comprehensive Plan process. The Town should then consider: whether the existing zoning code supports those goals; whether the existing code could be revised to support those goals; or whether a new zoning ordinance is needed to support those goals.

4. Consider hiring a professional consultant or private firm

Each of the relevant comparable municipalities that have adopted Form-Based Code, as identified in this report, has used professional consultants to assist the appropriate town officials and planning staff with the implementation process. There is no indication that Lansing would not benefit from contacting a professional consultant or private firm. Ideally, the prospective consultant will have experience with the implementation process of Form-Based Code and be familiar with Lansing's context in upstate New York.

Appendix

The Design Connect team posed the following questions posed to community members at the public meeting held November 12th, 2015. Community members answered questions in Section A on public posters; community members answered questions in Section B on individual handouts.

Section A:

1. *What do you like about Lansing?*
 - People and rural quality
 - Open spaces
 - Family farms
 - Small
 - No large, public capital projects
 - Views
 - Houses that have lawns
2. *What are your favorite places in Lansing?*
 - Myers Park
 - My home
 - The library
 - Agricultural areas
 - Lake
 - Salt Pt., Myers, Belle Station
3. *Which places are in need of work?*
 - Rogue's Harbor Intersection
 - Flooded ditches on Ridge Rd
 - Any big areas of paving
 - Roads leading into 34/34B
 - Triphammer/Asbury Rd intersection
 - Asbury Rd/E Shore Drive
4. *What would you improve in your area?*
 - Broadband access
 - Speed limit lowering
 - True openness to governance that listens to all
 - Traffic patterns
 - Nothing...
 - Drainage

-
- Deaden the road noise from the salt trucks and traffic (noise walls?)
5. *When I think of new development in Lansing, I think of...*
 - Urban sprawl
 - Ways to get between neighborhoods
 - Unplanned development could hurt town's character
 - Groan
 - McMansions- not a good thing
 - A real need for collaboration across segments
 - Unmanageable traffic & increased taxes
 - Lansing median income = \$25,600
 - Only 4400 households and 11000 people
 - Traffic noise, light pollution
 6. *When I think of open spaces and scenic views in Lansing, I think...*
 - Great Lansing feature, don't want to lose.
 - Views from main roads - sunset, lake
 - Places to get away
 - Ludlowville
 - Lake
 - Private farms
 - Salt point
 - "Secret" waterfalls

Section B:

1. *General Comments*
 - Don't want to lose ability to have home on large lot without a lot of close neighbors
 - Location of new town center (there is none now). Highway traffic is a problem here. Town center could be moved a little, or traffic could be diverted
2. *How might FBC work in Lansing?*
 - New development areas, South Lansing, Lansingville area around fire station and N. Lansing
 - Not practically suitable for Lansing unless it could be used to preserve open space
 - I think it would help to preserve the rural sections of the town by restricting growth to the area where 34 and 34B intersect
 - I believe FBC is exactly what is needed. It would take what works and incorporate it throughout main areas of town and provide consistency

-
- Terrible idea... I cannot build a house where I want, and it has to look a certain way!? Who are you to tell me how my home/dwelling has to look? Being 20 years old, it is hard enough for my generation to get on its own (grow up), don't want ANY part of form based code. Plus, taxes will raise through the roof, not that they are high enough already
 - Mixed feelings - Not sure if it will work given scope of community
 - Yes, must explain to people that it is not encouraging in the agriculture areas of the town
 - The town center area would be a perfect place to apply FBC
 - FBC will be very hard to use in much detail, though it could be helpful to delineate new development and direct in-fill development
3. *If you had \$5 million to do build anything you'd like in the Town of Lansing, what would you build?*
- South Lansing- sidewalks, bike lanes, trees all the way to Myers and school zone; mixed use- inland amass from town fields
 - Something for indoor arrangement in winter, museum/theater combination. Need Town Hall.
 - Sewer system that wouldn't burden the property owners too much starting in the area circles and expanding as funds become available. Funds from a small increase in property tax.
 - Town Center and sewer system to support larger businesses
 - Improve what we have. Make the old new and not just keep building and developing. 5 million can buy quite a lot of asphalt for our current roads.
 - Something to Increase Tax Base
 - A conference center or hotel on old cement plant
 - I wouldn't build anything since the huge unknown factor of the power plant. Possibly closing and the unaffordable tax rate that will turn this place into a ghost town. With close to 20% increase in taxes, I will sell my business and home and leave.
 - Town center area with mixed use similar to figure #5

4. Please look at the pictures of various development types below, and consider how suitable each type is for the Town of Lansing.

 Lansing – Design Connect

REFERENCE DEVELOPMENT

Please look at the pictures of various development types below, and consider how suitable each type is for the Town of Lansing. Larger copies of these images are available on the main table.





Figure 1 Pre-Emption Rd, Geneva Figure 2 Whitetail Dr. Ithaca Figure 3 Ballston Spa, Downtown Area





Figure 4 Sinclair Street, Skaneateles Figure 5 Saratoga Mixed Use Housing 01 Figure 6 Beacon Main Street





Figure 7 Saratoga Housing Figure 8 Grand Avenue Auburn Figure 9 Malta Housing Development





Figure 10 Poets Landing, Dryden Figure 11 Saratoga Housing 01 Figure 12 Saratoga Mixed Use Housing 02

Average Suitability Scores according to residents (1-least suitable; 5-most suitable)	
Figure 1	2.428
Figure 2	3.25
Figure 3	2.428
Figure 4	3.375
Figure 5	2.375
Figure 6	2
Figure 7	2.875
Figure 8	1.875
Figure 9	2.375
Figure 10	2.571
Figure 11	2.571
Figure 12	2.125

5. Additional comments from #4 above:

- All except 3, 6 and 12 are striking for the absence of trees or other natural vegetation. They are uninspiring. Lansing in contrast has pieces that offer vistas, with hedge pieces. Triphammer Mall north of the mall. If these fields are to be developed, then aesthetic consider [illegible] in form based code become irrelevant. If a town center is to be created, it is a good model.
- 3/6: Area where East Shore Drive/34B intersect, 7/9: Triphammer Rd, 11/1: Along 34B North of Salmon Creek but South of Lansingville Rd; 4/2: Keep this where it is, east of the schools and Triphammer Road
- 2-Cayuga Vista Drive, 10-Triphammer Road north of [Michauleous]
- I think we should improve on what we have, and preserve agriculture and the small

town.

- None are really appropriate. Lansing generally has broad setbacks of cul-de-sac type neighborhoods
- Can't really match

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