

ZONING AND URBAN DESIGN DISCUSSION SYNOPSIS

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About

Zoning was historically designed to deal with incompatible or unwanted land use. Main types are:

- **Conventional, Functional or Use-based:** Emphasis on use of land (residential, industrial, etc.), often ignoring form or congruity in appearance. Can produce disparate looks...e.g. projects with the same density can be completely different in appearance.
- **Performance or Impact:** Based on anticipated outputs, performance criteria and the characteristics of a particular site to support development. Provides additional control over the effects of the land use. Can be very costly in both time and money to implement. Unpredictable. Need to monitor each project.
- **Transactional or Incentive:** Includes the ability to negotiate standards in exchange.
- **Form Based:** Considers what kind of physical environment is desired, then develop them into standards. Regulations may govern the density, size, scale and shape of allowed buildings whatever their use. This reverse engineer process is becoming more acceptable as a tool especially in downtown main-street areas.
 - Ventura has an old version that should be updated. Is overly prescriptive so every project ultimately needs to go through the exception process.
 - Oxnard's new FBC for downtown is working well, and encouraging the kind of development desired. Allows for Director discretion and interpretation. Oxnard has 10-12 new infill projects as a result of new FBC.
 - Get more community buy in with FBC
 - FBC might have more codes but they are usually more flexible and less rigid.
 - FBC makes it easier for the developer to come in with projects and architects to be creative.
 - Potential problem when dealing with other agencies that *DO* care about use: Coastal zone, etc.

Current

- People associate density with big apartment complexes, and how it is used, often limits infill.
- Ask: Does the zoning serve the community or is the community serving the zoning.
- Currently a developer can follow all rules, codes, guidelines and still get project denied when current policy makers or vocal residents just don't like it. Hard to sustain long-term because staff and policy makers change.
- New state laws will impact our existing and any new codes/zoning regs. Works for some cities and doesn't for others.
- Public transit ridership dropped in VC. LA County Metro is supporting housing development on their property; VC not there yet.

Future

- Increase density using missing middle residential types (e.g. fourplex, courtyard complex, live/work, duplex).

- Issue: density vs overcrowding – 2 different things.
- Recommend more cities adopt FBC.
 - Adopt Hybrid Zoning: leave traditional in places where no change is expected; implement FBC in those areas that will or you want to change.
 - Need to have FBC *and* performance or conventional either stand alone or part of the FBC. How many are you going to regulate and at what strength.
 - Apply FBC to existing centers by contrasting what is actually allowable per traditional zoning vs what can achieve the same goals but with better fit to the surrounding area.
 - County-sponsored FBC with roll-out and flexibility for each city to adopt some or all (see Marin County example).
 - Consider CEQA, parking, transportation, etc. in the code to streamline the process.
- Need to expend the same amount of effort, community-based discussion, etc. in zoning as you do in General Plan. Get input from architects, staff, community leaders, etc.
 - Understand the “intent” in order to provide focus.
 - Build flexibility in anticipating varying city environments, staff, delegation authority, etc.
 - What are the metrics that we need to consider? Density, parking, height, setback, walkability ...
 - What does the future work environment look like?
 - What is the community benefit for the project or design standards?
- Let’s use this as an opportunity to ...
 - Do more “small town urbanism” – how transit, housing, jobs all come together. E.g. Moorpark’s High St. project
 - Coordinate the many different public transportations in the county.
 - Plan for generational shifts in transport; young people will Uber, bikeways, easy communal transportation. Getting rid of parking spots will force shift.
 - Plan for flexible building use so that unused office space can be easily converted to residential.