

16.5.10.030

16.5.10.030.M.14. Window Sign

Form-Based Zones: LDR.N, T3N, T4N.S, T4N.M, T4MS, T5U, T5MS

Conventional Zones: RC, PQ, LDR, MDR, HDR, IU, C-G, C-N, C-IP, C-F, C-LI

a. Description
A sign consisting of individual letters and designs applied directly on the inside of a window. Window signs offer a high level of craftsmanship and visibility.

b. Sign Size
Signable Area (Permanent 40% max. of the ground and Temporary Signs floor window area in all zones and 50% max. of second floor window area in Conventional Zones)

c. Location
No applicable standards

d. Miscellaneous
Applied plastic or vinyl cut letters are subject to Director review and approval. Window Signs must have a clear background. Permanent window sign area not included in the total allowable wall sign area for building mounted signs. Note: Image not intended to limit sign message copy.

Width: 75% max. of Shopfront Width

Height: 36" max.

Key: Allowed By Review Not Allowed

T4 Neighborhood Small (T4N.S) | 16.3.20.060

E. Building Placement
Setback (Distance from ROW / Lot Line)
Front (Facade Zone)¹
Interior Lot: 10' min.; 20' max.
Corner Lot: 15' min.; 20' max.

F. Parking
Minimum Required Spaces
Residential Uses
Studio or 1 Bedroom: 1 per 600 sf
Business/Professional: 1.5 per 1,000 sf

B. Number of Units
Units per Building: 24 max.
Buildings per Lot: 1 max.

D. Allowed Frontage Types
Porch: Projecting: 16.5.20.050.D
Porch: Engaged: 16.5.20.050.E

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Best Practices Memo

August 23, 2017



Prepared for the City of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma by:
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Introduction

Oklahoma City uses six key sets of content or 'Development Codes' to regulate, guide, and process development and land use activity:

- Chapter 59 Zoning and Planning
- Chapter 3 Advertising and Signs
- Subdivision Regulations
- Chapter 35 Nuisances
- Design Guidelines
- Chapter 16 Drainage and Flood Control

The content that has the most extensive role in development is in Chapter 59 Zoning and Planning: the 'zoning code'. Of the four types of zoning that exist (performance-based, negotiated, conventional, and Form-based), Chapter 59 is mostly conventional with some performance-based and some limited attempts at Form-based. However, as noted in the June 2017 Development Codes Diagnosis ('Code Diagnosis'), the negotiated type of zoning is on the increase in Oklahoma City with 2,599 individual negotiations as of May 2017 (an average of 7 PUDs or SPUDs per month). This significant increase in negotiated zoning is not unique to Oklahoma City. It is happening in numerous communities in response to outdated zoning standards which presents a choice: negotiate specific standards for each site or, take the time to fix the existing zoning for many more parcels at once? Most communities or applicants choose to negotiate their specific standards rather than take on issues beyond their site. While this resolves the immediate needs of an individual project, it results in more time for applicants to prepare their application, more staff time to process each project, reduces predictability for staff, neighbors, and future investors, while making administration more complex.

The other zoning trend we see over the past 10 to 15 years is that increasingly, communities are finding the need to go back and spend the time to repair or replace the existing base zoning. In addition, communities are spending the time and money to apply Form-based zoning to their urban areas and pre-1940s neighborhoods because they find this type of zoning to serve those development patterns better than the other three options mentioned above.

The Code Diagnosis revealed a list of issues and concerns with the organization, effectiveness, and usability of standards, design guidelines and procedures in some or all of the Development Codes. This memo addresses the findings and recommendations in the Codes Diagnosis through a series of best practices in code organization, code writing, zoning,

design guidelines, and, administration / procedures for possible inclusion in Oklahoma City's code update.

This memo is organized into one chapter for each of the five key sets of content in Oklahoma City's development codes and a sixth chapter focused on administration and procedures for all content. Chapter 16, Drainage and Flood Control, will be evaluated in detail during phase 2 of the code update process.

Key Terms

LUTA. One of seven Land Use Typology Areas in **planokc** providing policy direction for physical form and land use.

Performance-based Zoning. Standards focused on the effects of uses and less on the categories of uses.

Negotiated Zoning. Standards created and applied through a PUD or SPUD specifically for the parcel(s) in the project.

Conventional Zoning. Standards focused on land use with some or few standards on physical form, character.

Form-Based Zoning. Standards focused on physical form, character with less standards on land use.

Urban (syn 'walkable urban'). Development pattern primarily before 1940 where uses are intentionally mixed as practical and where walking and bicycling to services retail, and jobs is more common than driving.

Suburban. Development primarily after 1940 where uses are intentionally separated as much as possible and where driving to services, retail, and jobs is more common than walking and bicycling.

Rural. Areas of agriculture with associated housing.

Natural. Areas of nature, wilderness.

Identified Issues and Concerns

The Code Diagnosis identified the following primary issues and concerns:

- 1 Weak Document Structure/Organization and Format.** Poor usability and clarity, few graphics/illustrations, repetition and conflicting standards, poor integration of similar information, non-user friendly page format.
- 2 Ineffective Base Zoning Districts.** Regulating different contexts with same zone(s), emphasis on use instead of physical form, weak standards require more discretionary review, low predictability about what the standards will generate from one parcel to the next.
- 3 Overuse of PUDs and Site-Specific Plan Approvals.** Unpredictable results, makes more administrative work, impractical regulatory approach.
- 4 Too Many Layers of Regulations.** Confusing, requires more work by reader/investor than necessary to identify relevant standards.
- 5 Outdated and Overly Restrictive Parking Regulations.** Encourages / requires auto-oriented environments regardless of context or desired type of place.
- 6 Narrowly Defined Land Uses and Outdated Regulations.** Cumbersome and outdated standards, uses defined with specificity that invites the need for interpretations.
- 7 Out of Date Subdivision Standards.** Disconnect between the standards and the variety of expected places, standards see every project as a version of a suburban housing tract.
- 8 Ineffective Regulations for Rural Environments.** Standards do not contain the information to generate/protect rural places.
- 9 Complex Procedures.** Difficult to navigate the process, too much discretionary review, unclear requirements and inconsistent permit cycles, few opportunities for administrative approval of minor deviations from standards.
- 10 Complex Administration.** Multiple City departments in charge of different sections of the standards not consistently coordinating their review of projects with other departments.

(See pages 12-15 of Code Diagnosis for more information on the above issues)

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Best Practice: Unified Hybrid Development Code

Hybrid Code

The Code Diagnosis revealed that the Development Codes have a weak document structure, too many layers of regulations, and out of date standards. Further, the content is unnecessarily complicated and difficult to use. In response to this type of problem, over the past 30 years, many communities have reorganized their standards into a Unified Development Code (UDC). This approach consolidates all development-related regulations, zoning, subdivision/platting regulations and design standards into one document, making the document easier to understand and use. But that doesn't necessarily mean that the standards are better coordinated to the range of development needs like those in Oklahoma City. So, increasingly, over the past 10 years, communities have transitioned to a Unified Hybrid Development Code. This approach reorganizes all standards just like the UDC. But the hybrid aspect organizes the standards into distinct sets: one for natural, rural, and suburban types of development and another for urban types of development.

We recommend that Oklahoma City reorganize Chapter 59, Chapter 3, and the site planning and thoroughfare standards from the Subdivision Regulations, and the non-police-related content from Chapter 35 into a Unified Hybrid Development Code. In this way, the relevant standards are all coordinated within one document in a logical organization that is user-friendly. Further, we recommend coordinating the standards with the types of expectations in each of the four contexts: natural, rural, suburban, and urban.

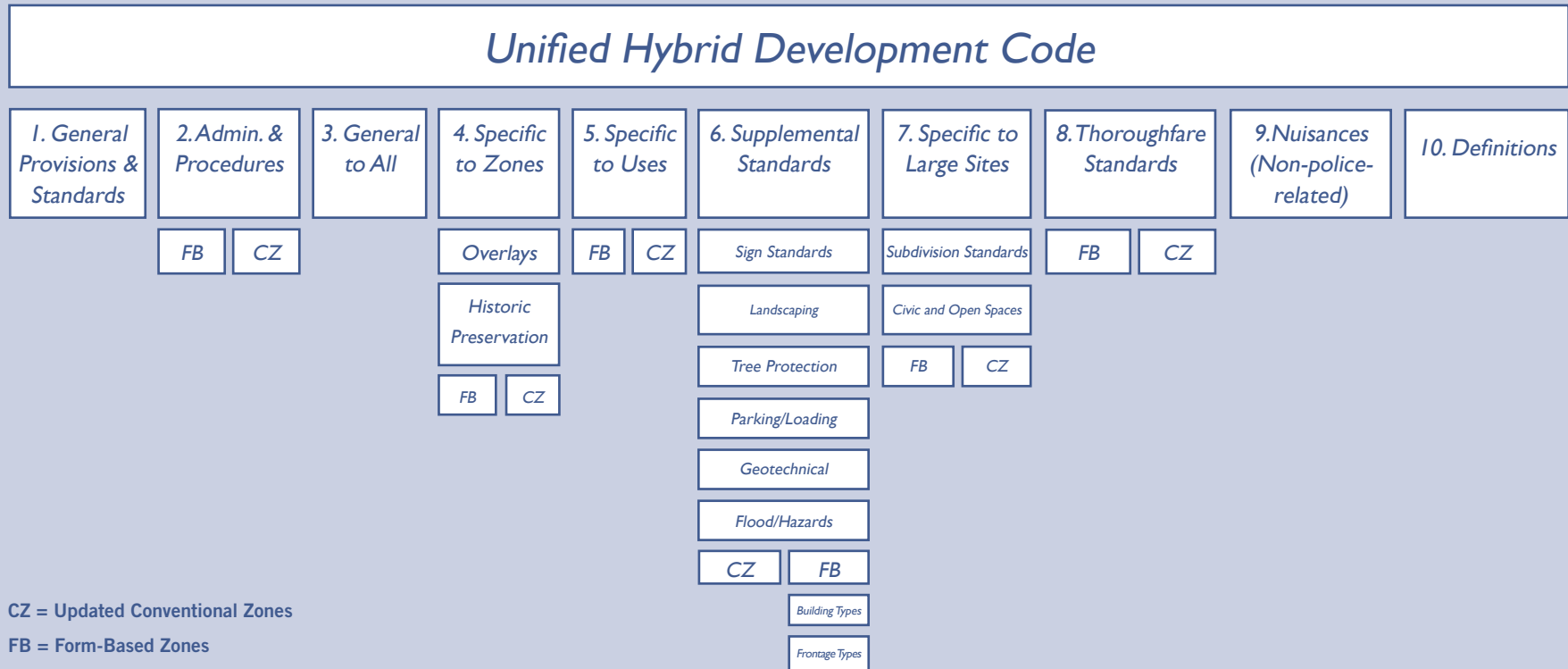
Advantages

- Integrates all standards to directly support the intent of base zoning districts and allowed uses
- Removes speculation about what the standards intend
- Saves time in applicant's preparation of development applications, and in staff's review of those applications and writing staff reports

Disadvantages

- Requires moderate to high level of involvement from other City Departments to guide the repackaging of the content and/or generation of new content.

Example: Unified Hybrid Development Code Organization



Best Practice: Different Zoning for Different Places

Physical Form as the Organizing Principle

Concerns raised in the Code Diagnosis include the overuse of PUDs/SPUDs and site-specific plan approvals, ineffective base zoning districts, outdated parking standards, and ineffective standards for rural areas. These issues stem from the fact that the base zoning districts are not fully coordinated with the physical realities and expectations of the places being regulated. The first thing to do is to verify the needs and realities of the different places in Oklahoma City. This is most effectively done by grouping areas into four general contexts: natural, rural, suburban, and urban. Each supports distinct development and uses.

After making the above distinctions, it is key to introduce physical form and character as the organizing principle for updating the zoning. This results in easier implementation by acknowledging the degree that physical form and character plays in each context. For example, we have found updated conventional zoning best serves natural and suburban contexts because physical form plays a lesser role in these areas. Rural contexts can be served by updated conventional zoning or Form-based zoning, and urban contexts are best served by Form-based zoning.

While it might seem attractive to apply Form-based zoning to many parts of the City, it is not practical or effective to do so. At over 620 square miles, it would be very costly to apply it citywide. It's important to keep in mind that areas where use will play a larger role than form shouldn't receive Form-based zoning. In addition, the information needed for Form-based zones and standards requires more detailed analysis and community process than does updated conventional

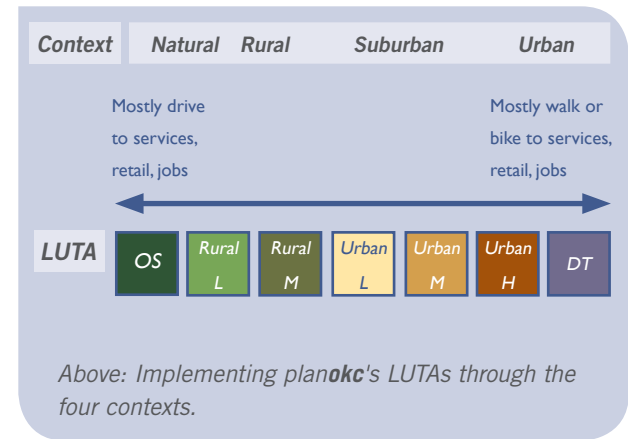
zoning. Instead, we recommend taking the time to implement *planokc*'s intent in each of the seven LUTAs for natural, rural, suburban, or urban contexts. Then, apply Form-based zoning to the areas for rural and urban development and apply updated conventional zoning to the natural areas and areas for suburban development. For the suburban areas that desire some change toward mixing of uses and/or Missing Middle Housing, we recommend Form-based zoning with certain standards that are "dialed down" to guidelines status.

Advantages

- Directly implements the direction in each LUTA from *planokc*
- Recognizes Oklahoma City's wide variety of existing physical environments
- Coordinates with Hybrid Unified Development Code

Disadvantages

- None identified



Below: Examples of non-residential or 'commercial' development types and residential development types that are very different and need different zoning to function properly. Understanding their context is key to fitting with the best zoning.

Different 'commercial' development types



Different 'residential' development types



Context Types: The physical framework for reorganizing the Development Codes

Above: Achieving the community's expectations is effective when zoning is matched with the type of context and expected development. In our experience, Urban contexts are most effectively regulated with Form-based zones, which apply primarily to mixed-use, urban environments and neighborhoods. Suburban and Natural contexts are most effectively regulated in a more conventional way, through updated conventional, use-based zones. Rural contexts can be regulated through updated conventional or Form-based zones. Taking the time to map these four types of areas is key to effectively serving the expected development types and uses. Oklahoma City's LUTAs in *planokc* provide a big head start in this direction.

Using the LUTA map in *planokc*, we recommend identifying which of the four contexts applies to each LUTA. This provides clarity on where each type of zoning is anticipated so focused discussion can take place to confirm or change that direction.



Example of mapping and describing the four contexts.

Figure P.030.B: Context Type Descriptions

Natural Context

Natural context types consist of undeveloped land interspersed throughout the City and along its periphery. In these areas, nature dominates a person's experience, but may include an occasional building or other man-made feature. The use of cars is integrated, but does not dominate the character of natural areas. The proximity of natural areas to the developed portions of Vallejo, especially those created by topography, such as Sulphur Springs Mountain, and the marshes at White Slough and San Pablo Bay are important components in defining the City's unique character.

These areas are implemented through the Resource Conservation Conventional zone.



Rural Context

Rural context types consist of a large proportion of open space and agriculture with a small proportion of developed land along the community's periphery. In these areas, nature and/or agriculture dominates a person's experience, but also includes an occasional house and associated agricultural buildings. In some areas, a small concentration of very low intensity urban buildings and a small adjacent grouping of houses occurs in the form of a crossroads. The use of cars is integrated, but does not dominate the character of natural areas. Thoroughfares have natural edges and natural arrangements of trees and landscaping not to be confused with suburban, informal planting arrangements.

These areas are implemented through the T3 and T4 Form-Based zones.



Auto-Oriented Suburban Context

Auto-Oriented Suburban context types developed mainly after the 1950's east of central Vallejo and on Vallejo's periphery. This type of development is driven by the need to accommodate the automobile. Characteristic of this context type, land uses are segregated and often buffered, leaving large distances between them requiring the automobile for day-to-day functions. Walking and cycling occur in these areas, but generally for recreational rather than destination purposes due to lack of connectivity and amenities within short walking distance.

Examples of these areas are commercial big box retail and strip mall centers, single-family residential subdivisions on the periphery of the City, and industrial areas. These areas typically have a higher environmental impact per capita than Walkable areas because of the high degree of land consumption and separation of uses.

These areas are implemented through Conventional, use-based zones (e.g., Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Professional Offices District, Freeway Shopping and Service District).



Walkable Context

Walkable context types are those in which a person can walk, bike or ride transit to work to fulfill most shopping and recreation needs. These environments allow for the use of automobiles but do not require the use of a vehicle to accommodate most daily needs.

These areas primarily developed prior to the 1940's, were developed in a pattern where a person could live with limited reliance on the automobile and were conducive to destination walking and cycling - characteristics still prevalent today. These areas are largely supported through a network of interconnected, tree-lined streets, a diversity of housing choices and a mix of appropriate commercial and residential uses in a compact form. These areas also support public transit due to their compact nature. This context type includes downtown, downtown neighborhoods such as St. Vincent's, Federal Terrace neighborhoods and neighborhood main streets such as Marin between Kentucky and Carolina, and Tennessee between Lincoln and Tuolumne.

These areas are implemented through the T3-T5 Form-Based zones.



Best Practice: Zoning for Four Context Types

Coordinate Zoning to Four Key Context Types

As mentioned earlier, there are four general types of contexts: natural, rural, suburban, and urban. In order to understand what zoning to apply where, we find it effective to organize development types by their context. This is necessary to keep the connection between the place (e.g., rural) and the intended physical form and character. Otherwise, key information that needs to find its way into the zoning standards can easily be dropped.

We recommend coordinating all changes to existing zoning districts and any new zoning districts to fully reflect planokc's existing and intended physical environments. This is effectively done by grouping them as follows:

Natural. Areas characterized by nature, wilderness.

Rural. Areas characterized by farms and occasional development in support of agriculture.

Suburban. Areas characterized by development patterns primarily after 1940 where uses are intentionally separated as much as possible and driving is more common than walking and bicycling.

Urban. Areas characterized by development patterns primarily before 1940 where uses are intentionally mixed as practical and walking and bicycling are more common than driving.

It's important to note that except for the Natural context, within each of the above contexts, there is a range of development and land use activity ('low to high').

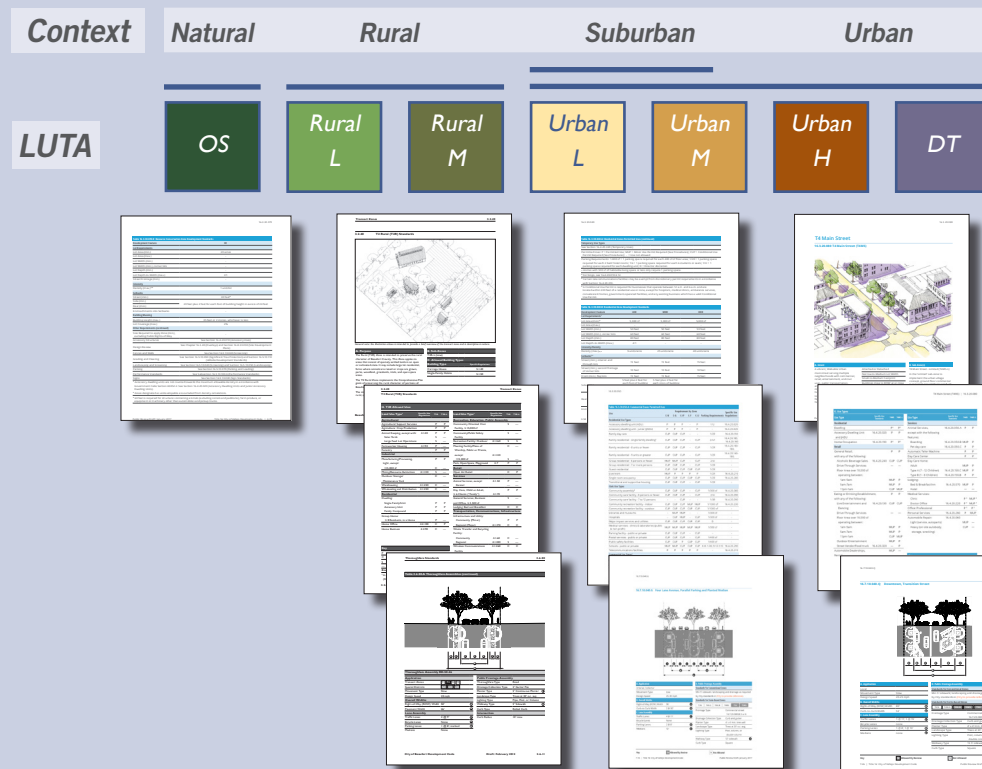
Advantages

- Zoning created or updated to serve the specific development and land use needs of the four distinct context types
- Standards reflect degree of mixed use expected in each type of place

Disadvantages

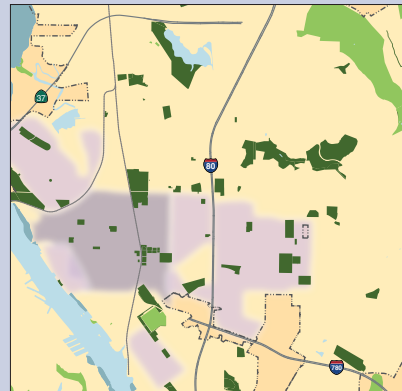
- None identified

Example: Zoning for Natural, Rural, Suburban, and Urban Contexts



Each context is implemented by the number of zoning districts that it takes to implement planokc.

Example: Align zoning districts with intended contexts



The four different contexts are mapped to identify which type of zoning best implements the comprehensive plan's intent

Figure P430.B: Context Type Descriptions

- Natural Context:** Natural context types consist of undeveloped land interspersed throughout the City and along its periphery. In these areas, nature dominates a person's experience, but may include an occasional building or other man-made feature. The use of land is irregular, but does not detract from the character of natural areas. The proximity of natural areas to the developed portions of Valley, especially those created by topography, such as Sulphur Springs Mountain, and the meadows at White Sulphur and San Pedro Bay are important components in defining the City's unique character. These areas are implemented through the Resource Conservation Conventional zones.
- Rural Context:** Rural context types consist of a large proportion of open space and agriculture with a small proportion of developed land along the community periphery. In these areas, nature and/or agriculture dominates a person's experience, but also includes an occasional house and associated agricultural buildings. In some areas, a small concentration of very low intensity open buildings and a small adjacent grouping of houses occur in the form of a crossroads. The use of cars is irregular, but does not detract from the character of natural areas. These areas have natural edges and natural arrangements of trees and landscaping not to be confused with suburban, formal planting arrangements. These areas are implemented through the T3 and T4 Farm-Based zones.
- Auto-Oriented Suburban Context:** Auto-Oriented Suburban context types developed mainly after the 1950's east of central Valley and on Valley's periphery. This type of development is driven by the need to accommodate the automobile. Characteristics of this context type, land use are segregated and often buffered, leaving large distances between them requiring the automobile for day-to-day functions. Walking and cycling occur in these areas, but generally for recreational rather than destination purposes due to lack of connecting and amenities within short walking distances. Examples of these areas are commercial big box retail and strip mall centers, single-family residential subdivisions on the periphery of the City, and industrial areas. These areas typically have a higher environmental impact per capita than Walkable areas because of the high degree of land consumption and separation of uses. These areas are implemented through Conventional, use-based zones (e.g., Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Professional Office District, Freeway Shopping and Service District).
- Walkable Context:** Walkable context types are those in which a person can walk, bike or ride transit to work to fulfill some shopping and recreation needs. These environments allow for the use of automobiles but do not require the use of a vehicle to accommodate most daily needs. These areas were primarily developed prior to the 1940's, were developed in a pattern where a person could live with limited reliance on the automobile and were conducive to destination walking and cycling - characteristics still prevalent today. These areas are largely irregular through a network of interconnected, tree-lined streets, a diversity of housing choices and a mix of appropriate commercial and residential uses in compact form. These areas also support public transit due to their compact nature. This context type includes downtown, downtown neighborhoods such as St. Vincent's, Federal Terrace neighborhoods and neighborhood main streets such as Main between Berkeley and Carolina, and Tennessee between Lincoln and Tualuma. These areas are implemented through the T3-T5 Form-Based zones.

Table P430.A: Correlation between General Plan and Development Context Type and Implementing Zones

General Plan Land Use Designation	Context Type and Implementing Zones			
	Natural Context	Rural Context	Auto-Oriented Suburban Context	Walkable Context
Community				
Parks and Recreation	Resource Conservation			
Open Space	Resource Conservation			
Public Facilities and Institutions			Public and Quasi-Public	
Residential				
Primarily Single Family		T3 Neighborhood	Low Density Residential	Low Density Residential - Neighborhood
Mix of Housing Types		T4 Neighborhood Small	Medium Density Residential High Density Residential	T3 Neighborhood T4 Neighborhood Small T4 Neighborhood Medium
Primarily Multifamily			High Density Residential	T5 Urban
Mixed Use				
District - Downtown				T4 Main Street
Waterfront				T5 Urban T5 Main Street
District - Mare Island			See Specific Plan	
District - Solano 360			See Specific Plan	
District - North Gateway			Commercial-Freeway Commercial-General	
Central Corridor		T4 Main Street		T4 Neighborhood Medium T4 Main Street T5 Urban T5 Main Street
Neighborhood Corridor			Commercial-Neighborhood Commercial-General	T4 Main Street
Business and Industry				
Retail/Entertainment			Commercial-Freeway Commercial-Neighborhood Commercial-General Commercial-Institutional Professional	T4 Main Street T5 Main Street

By aligning each base zoning district with one of four contexts, the resulting development and use standards can better implement the range of intended outcomes.

Best Practice: Updated Conventional Zoning

Zoning for areas where physical form is not the priority

After identifying the areas where the regulation of land use will play a larger role (Natural and Suburban areas) than regulation of physical form (Rural and Urban areas), the relevant conventional zoning districts will be evaluated for possible updates. At the very least, each conventional zoning district is reviewed for whether it effectively allows the uses and generates the type of development expected.

For example, the updates to industrial zoning districts will be typically less and more focused in comparison to improvements to commercial and residential zoning districts. The updates may range from adding sub-zones that expand or restrict the list of allowed uses in the zoning district to adding limited guidelines about physical form. The degree of updating depends on the degree of change desired by the community.

Advantages

- Conventional zoning districts are updated to implement planokc
- Each conventional zoning district receives only the upgrades needed to deliver the expected results (some will receive more upgrades than others)

Disadvantages

- None identified

Best Practice: Form-Based Zoning

Applying the transect where physical form is the priority

After identifying the areas where updated conventional zoning will be applied, and where Form-based zoning will be applied, we recommend applying the transect to the Form-based areas.

The principle used in organizing most Form-based zoning is the Natural-to-Urban Transect. The 'transect' establishes a hierarchy of physical environments or 'zones' from the most natural to the most urban. Between these two ends of the spectrum are the rural zones and suburban zones. The designation of each zone along this hierarchy is determined first by the character and form, intensity of development, and type of place and secondly by the mix of uses within the area. This hierarchy of physical environments becomes the framework/organizing principle for the Form-based zones, replacing use as the organizing principle as in conventional, use-based zoning.

We also recommend taking the time to map the community's priorities and expectations regarding regulation. Planokc's 'Retail Nodes and Corridors' diagram provides base information about the policy direction for these areas. For example some corridors might have very high expectations while other corridors might have moderate expectations. The number of topics and degree of regulation need to reflect this intent. In our experience, the transect system makes it easier to integrate this direction than other approaches because of its physical basis. In our experience, Form-based zones that aren't organized by the transect can be effective but are not as easy to understand and adjust over time.

Advantages

- Logical, easy to expand system to changes over time
- Easy translation of LUTAs intent from planokc
- Directly recognizes Oklahoma City's wide variety of existing and intended physical environments

Disadvantages

- Can be expensive and time-consuming to create

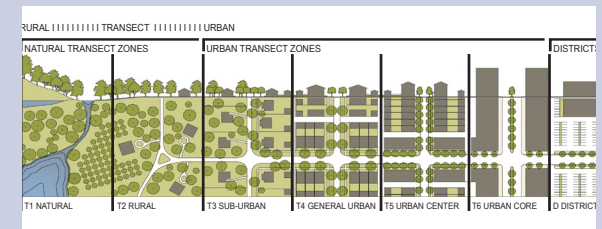
Applying Form-Based Zoning

Other cities that faced similar issues applied Form-based zoning to portions of their community: Nashville, Cincinnati, Fort Worth, Iowa City, Flagstaff and Mesa, AZ, Beaufort County, SC, El Paso, TX, the island of Kauai, Peoria, IL, Birmingham, AL, and Gulfport, MS to name a few. Denver applied it to much of the community and Miami has applied it to the entire city. Austin is in the process of applying it to approximately 20 percent of their 350-square mile community.

Nashville–Davidson County, TN replaced their conventional zoning with a “Community Character”, Form-based approach to policy and zoning for their neighborhoods, centers, corridors and open spaces. They then documented the economic effect of parcels zoned with and without Form-based zoning. Their documentation shows a 75 percent increase in taxable value in the districts where the approach is used, compared to a 28 percent increase in the county over the same time period. Source: AARP fact sheet.

Below: The Natural-to-Urban Transect. This diagram illustrates a continuum of context types from the most natural to the most urban from left to right. Image courtesy of DPZ.

The Natural-to-Urban Transect: The Framework for the Form-Based Code



Natural Areas: best regulated through updated conventional zoning.

Rural Areas: can be regulated through updated conventional zoning or Form-based zoning.

Suburban Areas: best regulated through updated conventional zoning. The transect is not applied to these areas.

Urban Areas: best regulated through Form-based zoning.

Best Practice: Effective Base Zoning Districts

Effective Base Zoning

Effective base zoning districts are predictable about what they allow and the types of development they generate. Another way to say this is that effective base zoning serves the needs of the type of development and uses expected in an area without the need for variances, exceptions or other administrative remedies. The standards are coordinated with a particular intended physical character and range of uses for an area to generate specific types and intensities of development. This seems like a basic expectation to have of base zoning but it's not the case in most cities. Typically, the issues created by ineffective base zoning are addressed by adding more process or relief from the standards or by patching the base zoning with a new layer of standards or exemptions. But this doesn't increase predictability for anyone: investor and neighbor alike.

The Code Diagnosis revealed major concerns about ineffective base zoning districts in Chapter 59 Zoning and Planning. For example, Oklahoma City has 26 base zoning districts and the majority are not coordinated with their existing or intended context. This means that the same standards for the C-3 General Commercial District, including setbacks, height, uses and parking requirements apply anywhere in the city that the C-3 zoning district is located. Additionally, there are 144 individual use unit classifications, making it difficult for the public to assess which use unit applies to a particular project, and requiring interpretation by staff according to narrow and specific descriptions.

Many cities have improved their conventional zoning over the past few decades to better acknowledge the existing or intended physical character. As helpful as that has been, it's our experience that these improvements are

effective primarily in suburban types of development. We find that rural and urban types of development need other standards that even updated conventional zoning doesn't include. Understanding the degree to which physical form and character play a role is key to making effective base zoning districts.

The other key to effective base zoning is to seriously simplify land use categories and the number of uses within each category, relying on common sense and detailed definitions to support interpretations.

We recommend that planokc's policy direction for places and physical character be included in effective base zoning districts and standards to reflect planokc's intended wide range of natural, rural, suburban, and urban physical environments, activities, and parking needs. Apply an approach to zoning, parking and thoroughfare design that is based first on intended physical character with a lower priority on land use. Or, at least apply this thinking in the urban and rural contexts while allowing the suburban context to prioritize uses and vehicle needs. Combine the above with the approach identified on pages 10-12, matching each LUTA in planokc with updated conventional zoning or Form-based zoning to deliver the intended types of development.

Advantages

- Updated conventional zoning districts and new Form-based zoning districts offer a viable alternative to the PUD and other site-specific plan approvals, making long-term administration of the code easier and more consistent
- Clear expectations and administration enables more to approved 'by right'
- Improved use tables

Disadvantages

- Dealing with existing use-unit structure and its role in building permits

Example: Simple use tables, sub-zones

A sub-zone is an expanded or limited list of the uses allowed in the base zone while not changing the intended physical form and character. For example, at certain intersections, the list could be focused on food uses, certain types of retail, and no ground floor medical uses. Away from key intersections, along a corridor, the list might expand to allow uses that aren't best for a key intersection but help to regenerate other parts of the corridor. We recommend creating sub-zones to avoid new overlays or zoning districts that are essentially focused on adjustments to uses.

Use Type	Specific Use Standards	T5MS	T5MS-0
Residential			
Dwelling		P ¹	P
Home Occupation	16.4.20.190	P ¹	P
Retail			
General Retail,		P	P
with any of the following:			
Alcoholic Beverage Sales	16.4.20.240	CUP	CUP
Drive-Through Services		—	—
Floor Area over 10,000 sf operating between:			
1am-5am		MUP	P
5am-7am		MUP	P
11pm-1am		CUP	MUP
Eating or Drinking Establishment,		P	P
with any of the following:			
Live Entertainment and Dancing	16.4.20.130	CUP	CUP
Drive-Through Services	16.4.20.120	—	—
Street Vendor/Food truck	16.4.20.320	—	MUP
Floor Area over 10,000 sf operating between:			
1am-5am		MUP	P
5am-7am		MUP	P
11pm-1am		CUP	MUP

Base Zone

Open sub-zone.

Uses allowed in base zone are in left column and uses allowed in the Open sub-zone are in the right column.

T4 Village Neighborhood: Small Footprint (T4N.SF) | 9.81.040

K. Use Types			Use Type		
Use Type	Specific Use Standards	T4N.SF	Use Type	Specific Use Standards	T4N.SF
Residential			Recreation, Education, Public Assembly		
Dwelling ¹		P	Cultural <5,000 sf		MUP ³
Accessory Building ¹		P	Meeting Facilities		X
Home Occupation	9.07.030	P	Green	9.83.100.H	P
Home Office		P	Pocket Park	9.83.100.C	P
Retail			Playground	9.83.100.D	P
General Retail ≤ 1,000 sf		P ³	Public Safety Facility		X
General Retail ≤ 1,000 sf with the following:			Community Assembly		P
Alcoholic Beverage Sales	9.07.040	MUP ³	School: Private		CUP ³
Drive Through Service		X	Studio: Art, Music, Dance		P ²
Eating or Drinking Establishment ≤ 1,000 sf		MUP ³	Agriculture		
with the following:			Urban Agriculture/Crop Production		X
Alcoholic Beverage Sales	9.07.040	MUP ³	Community Garden	9.83.100.F	P
Drive Through Service		X	Transportation, Communications, Infrastructure		
Operating between 11pm-5am		X	Infrastructure and Utility		X
Services			Public Parking	9.82.060	P
Animal Services ≤ 1,000 sf		MUP ³	Wireless Telecommunications:		
Animal Services ≤ 1,000 sf with the following:			Antenna ≤ 20' tall	9.07.020	AUP
Boarding		X	Antenna > 20' tall	9.07.020	X
Pet day care		X	Facility		X
Automotive Repair		X	Accessory		
Automotive Sales/Rental		X	Accessory Building/Structure ¹		P
Car Wash		X	Key		
Care Facility for the Elderly <7		P	P	Permitted Use ⁴	
Care Facility for the Elderly >7		P	MUP	Minor Conditional Use Permit Required	
Day Care:			CUP	Conditional Use Permit Required	
Adult		CUP	AUP	Antenna Use Permit Required	
Large House (7 to 12)		CUP	X	Use Not Allowed	
Small (1 to 6)		P	End Notes		
Lodging: Bed & Breakfast Inn		P ³	¹ See allowed Building Types in Subsection C.		
Medical Services:			² Max. 600 sf when in accessory structure.		
Clinic		MUP ³	³ Allowed only within 75' of street corner.		
Doctor Office		MUP ³	⁴ Director may require a MUP per 9.65.040(a)(6).		
Office: Professional		P ³	For further information on uses listed and for uses not listed in table, refer to Definitions.		
Personal Services		MUP ³			
Personal Services, Restricted		X			

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Uses are categorized and defined in a Definitions section to allow the use-tables to be simplified and easy to use. Improvements include regulating by size of use for certain uses instead of simply by use.

Best Practice: Highly Graphic and User-Friendly Page Layout

Simplify and Reformat for the User

The Code Diagnosis revealed that Oklahoma City's development codes have a weak document structure/organization and format. Often, the reader gets the sense that maybe there is more information that they might need but are not sure about that: 'am I done looking?' The most effective way to convey complicated zoning information is through simple graphics and clear language.

We recommend reformatting existing and updated content to use a graphic approach to page layout that improves clarity, and reduces the amount of text needed to convey the information.

Advantages

- Easier to navigate and find information.
- Improved clarity through reduced text and simple diagrams
- Easier to understand and explain instead of only text and multiple references to other parts of code.

Disadvantages

- Clear and highly graphic standards and simplified approach may be perceived as more difficult and/or inflexible by applicants who like to negotiate most or all aspects of a project

Example: Simple graphics, Clear language, and User-friendly page layout

9.82.080.G

9.82.080.G Dooryard

Key
 --- ROW / Design Site Line --- Building Setback Line

A. Description
 The main facade of the building is set back from the front design site line, which is defined by a low wall, hedge, or other allowed screening creating a small dooryard. Each dooryard is separated from the adjacent dooryards. The dooryard may be raised, sunken, or at grade and may be used for ground-floor residential or non-residential.

B. Site

Depth, Clear	8' min.	(A)
Length	50' max.	(B)
Distance between Glazing	4' max.	(C)
Depth of Recessed Entries	5' max.	(D)
Pedestrian access	3' wide min.	(E)
Finish Level above Sidewalk	3' 6" max.	(F)
Height of Dooryard Fence/Wall above Finish Level	36" max.	(G)

C. Miscellaneous
 For live/work, retail, service, and restaurant uses, the Shopfront Frontage Type is to be applied.
 Each Dooryard shall provide access to only one ground floor entry.

Small dooryards include low fences to provide a visual transition from the public sidewalk.

A series of small dooryards give small outdoor gardens along the front of each ground floor unit.

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Standards and text are regulatory. Photos are labeled as illustrative.

9.82.040

9.82.040 Fencing or Allowed Screening

A. Purpose. This Section prescribes standards for screening, fences, and walls for the conservation and protection of property; the assurance of safety and security; the enhancement of privacy; the attenuation of noise; and the improvement of the visual environment of the neighborhood.

B. Applicability. The provisions of this Section apply to all new development and to improvements to existing development in transect zones.

C. Design Standards for Fencing or Allowed Screening. Fencing or allowed screening shall comply with the following:

- 1. Zone Height Maximums.** Fencing or allowed screening shall not exceed the maximums identified in Subsection G (Encroachments) of the zone.
- 2. Fencing or Allowed Screening Height Measurement.** All fencing or allowed screening height shall be measured as the vertical distance between the finished grade at the base of the fence or allowed screen and the top edge of the fence or allowed screen material. Where there is a difference in elevation on opposite sides of such fence, wall or other fencing or allowed screening, the height shall be measured from the highest elevation. Notwithstanding these requirements, where the finished elevation of the property is lower at the boundary line, or within five feet inside the boundary line, than an abutting property elevation, such change in elevation may be used in lieu of, or in combination with, additional fencing or allowed screening to satisfy a fencing or allowed screening requirement. Where fencing or allowed screening is required along a public or private street and the roadway elevation is higher than the property in question, the Director may require fences or allowed screens to be higher than permitted by the applicable height limit.

D. Reduction of Required Fencing or Allowed Screening or Fencing or Allowed Screening Design Standards. The Director may completely or partially waive required fencing or allowed screening and associated standards in cases where the Director deems the relief necessary to maintain or enhance the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.

E. Additional Fencing or Allowed Screening Requiring Administrative Permit. The following fencing or allowed screening types shall comply with the specified requirements and shall require approval of a Minor Site Development permit prior to issuance of a building or landscape permit, as applicable.

- 1. Courtyard.** Fences, walls and other allowed screening installed to create a courtyard without a roof shall be a maximum of five feet in height and be set back a minimum of ten feet from the front property line or back of sidewalk, whichever is the least. In reviewing the plan for the proposed courtyard, the Director shall consider, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Building characteristics including the dimensions, color and architectural design;
 - b. Compatibility of the architectural and design features of the proposed courtyard with the features of the adjoining, as well as neighboring buildings; and
 - c. Landscaping, including the effort to minimize removal of existing vegetation and to match replacements with vegetation of the site.
- 2. Fencing or allowed screening on retaining walls.** The total height of fences or allowed screens and the retaining walls that they are mounted on or attached to shall

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Even though the page is all text, visual hierarchy makes each page easy to navigate.

Best Practice: Highly Graphic and User-Friendly Page Layout

Example: Simple graphics, Clear language, and User-friendly page layout

16.3.20.060 | T4 Neighborhood Small (T4N.S)

Alley as Occurs

Street (Front: Narrowest Side)

Street (Side)

Key

--- ROW / Lot Line

C. Building Types

Primary Building Type	Lot Width A	Depth B	Standards
Detached House: Compact	40' min.	75' min.	16.5.20.030.C
Detached House: Medium	40' min.	75' max.	16.5.20.030.D
Duplex	40' min.	100' min.	16.5.20.030.E
Cottage Court	75' min.	150' max.	16.5.20.030.F
Multiplex: Small	50' min.	100' max.	16.5.20.030.G
Rowhouse: House Scale	45' min.	110' max.	16.5.20.030.I
Courtyard	50' min.	150' max.	16.5.20.030.J

Accessory Building Type

Carriage House	n/a	n/a	16.5.20.030.B
----------------	-----	-----	---------------

D. Building Form

Height

Main Building

Stories

To Eave/Pa

Overall

Accessory St

Accessory

Other

Ground Floor

above Sidew

Ground Floor

Upper Floor

Ground floor

unit building

ground floor

Footprint

Lot Coverage

Depth, Grou

Accessory St

Width

Depth

Clear diagrams and labels supported by minimal text

T4 Neighborhood Small (T4N.S) | 16.3.20.060

Alley as Occurs

Street (Front: Narrowest Side)

Street (Side)

Key

--- ROW / Lot Line

--- Building Setback Line

█ Buildable Area

▨ Acc. Structures Only

▩ Facade Zone

E. Building Placement

Setback (Distance from ROW / Lot Line)

Front (Facade Zone)¹

Interior Lot	10' min.; 20' max.
Corner Lot	0' min.; 15' max.
Side Street (Facade Zone) ¹	10' min.; 15' max.

Side

Main Building	5' min.; 10' min.
Accessory Structure(s)	combined 3' min.

Rear²

Main Building, Lot Depth ≤ 125'	25' min.
Main Building, Lot Depth > 125'	Lot depth less 100'
Accessory Structure(s)	5' min.

Facade within Facade Zone

Front	65% min.
Side Street	50% min.

¹For Steep Front Yard Frontage Types, measured from top of slope.

²Min. 10' for existing lots fronting on side street. Buildings may be set in front of the minimum front setback to align with the facade of the front most immediately adjacent property.

F. Parking

Minimum Required Spaces

Residential Uses	Minimum Required Spaces
Studio or 1 Bedroom	1 per 600 sf
2 or more Bedrooms	1.5 per 1,000 sf

Non-Residential Uses

≤ 1,500 sf	None
>1,500 sf	2/1,000 sf above first 1,500 sf

Parking areas shall comply with Section 16.5.10.070. Required parking may be reduced as set forth in Section 16.5.10.070 (Parking and Loading).

No off-street parking required for uses in accessory structure(s).

Location (Distance from ROW / Lot Line)

Front Setback	75' min. ¹
Side Street Setback	10' min.
Side Setback	5' min.
Rear Setback	5' min.
¹ 15' min. for existing lots fronting on side street	

Miscellaneous

Curb Cut or Parking Driveway Width	
< 40 spaces	14' max.
> 40 spaces	18' max.

Driveway width along alley may exceed 10'. Driveways may be shared between adjacent parcels.

Chapter 16.5.10: Supplemental to All Zones

Sections:

- 16.5.10.010 Purpose
- 16.5.10.020 Applicability
- 16.5.10.030 Sign Standards
- 16.5.10.040 Screening
- 16.5.10.050 Landscaping
- 16.5.10.060 Water Efficient Landscape Requirements
- 16.5.10.070 Parking and Loading
- 16.5.10.080 Energy Conservation
- 16.5.10.090 Significant Tree Protection
- 16.5.10.100 Site and Structural Standards
- 16.5.10.110 Hillside Development Standards
- 16.5.10.120 Geotechnical Hazards Requirements
- 16.5.10.130 Flood Hazards Requirements
- 16.5.10.140 Fire Hazards Requirements

16.5.10.010 Purpose

This Chapter sets forth standards that are supplemental to the regulations of each zone, and are specific to particular aspects of development, such as parking and signage among others. These standards are intended to promote development that complements and helps reinforce the intended physical character of the zone and compatibility of uses.

16.5.10.020 Applicability

This Chapter applies to all development. Each section within this Chapter further refines the applicability of the standards.

16.5.10.030 Sign Standards

A. Purpose.

1. The Council finds that the natural surroundings, climate, history, and people of the City provide the community with its unique character. This Section has been adopted to ensure that all signs installed in the City are compatible with the unique character and environment of the community, and in compliance with the Propel Vallejo 2040 General Plan.
2. The purpose of this Section is to promote public health, safety, and welfare through a comprehensive system of reasonable, effective, consistent, content-neutral, and nondiscriminatory sign standards and requirements to:
 - a. Promote and accomplish the goals, policies, and actions of the Propel Vallejo 2040 General Plan;

Clear, logical page layout with Table of Contents at the Chapter and Section levels to make the content user-friendly.

Best Practice: Community Outreach

Ongoing Communication is Key

This is a critical component to a successful code update. Too often, the community is only engaged at the beginning or end of a code update. This is not effective and leads to uninformed people and an uninformed code update.

In our experience, communication needs to begin early in the process and continue to the adoption of the updated code. To do this we recommend a variety of ways to engage and communicate with the various stakeholder groups and the general public:

Hands-on Working Sessions: We have found it most effective to start with these sessions before anything new is proposed. People have to first understand the issues with the existing standards and what that means to them. Then, they can be shown how and why the recommended approach to zoning and updated development standards is different than the existing standards. This is effective in a few 2-3 hour working sessions where people split into smaller groups that work on specific questions or issues.

Focus Groups: These groups are key to ongoing communication between the community at large and the team working on the code update. There's no way that the team can stay in contact with as many people as can a set of groups that represents a wide variety of stakeholder groups. We recommend focus groups from the Planning Commission, Design Review Commissions (Downtown, Urban Design), bike groups, transit providers/advocates, local architects, historic preservation commission, developers, sign industry, civil engineers, contractors, and other groups routinely involved in preparing or reviewing development applications. These groups can

provide much needed insight into the details of the standards.

Virtual Community Workshops: This tool is effective by offering the community at large an opportunity to comment from their own computer or smart phone. We recommend carefully designing a survey that uses diagrams, maps and illustrations to get at bigger picture questions as well as more detailed questions. We have found this tool to be very helpful in preparation for major public events in the code update process or at least right before starting each draft of the code update.

Implementation of planokc: This document provides lots of helpful information about the community's vision and expectations. But there are more questions to be asked and discussions that need to occur to properly inform the code update. This presents a great opportunity to methodically work with the community and focus groups to get their input on these questions and clarifications that need to be made. We recommend workshops that generate two primary results: a) mapping of the natural, rural, suburban, and urban contexts for each LUTA and b) identifying the community's expected outcomes for each area in enough detail to know how to begin responding with the most effective zoning. What type of change, if any, is desired? Minimal (preservation), incremental, or transformative?

A successful tool we developed is "Community Character in a Box". This series of interactive workshops uses the local community's photos and notes about the unique characteristics of their neighborhood. Over the course of a few weeks, much information is collected that gives the code writing team important details while involving the community in a meaningful way.

Identifying the Desired Level of Regulation: planokc starts to address this through its information on 'Retail Nodes and Corridors' about the intent: revision, revitalize, or reaffirm. This is very helpful, but to generate responsive zoning standards, a key question to answer is "what's needed to achieve the expected results across the various sites and areas of the community?" This takes time and is most effective when the community and the focus groups are engaged.

Testing: This is another key component that is often missing from the code update process. In our experience, a code update is most effective when the standards are tested in public to answer at least three key questions: a) do the standards easily generate the expected results? b) are there issues or glitches with using the standards? and c) do the standards prevent results that should be allowed? We recommend doing this testing in a 3-4 day public workshop that addresses all of the community where the team responds to input each day to arrive at a resolved set of issues by the end of the workshop.

Advantages

- Informed community understands the reasons for and benefits of the updated standards
- Code Update reflects the community's input and typically means broad support

Disadvantages

- Requires more funding and time

Example: Community Character in a Box

Step 1: Community Mapping

Your community's input is essential in the development of CodeNEXT because the Code aims to capture and build upon what makes your part of Austin distinct. Help the team understand what is important to you in your community - you are the local experts!

COMMUNITY MAPPING IN A NUTSHELL

Mapping your community can be quick, easy, and fun. On the community map provided, mark those locations that you feel are strengths, or assets, to your community with a green dot, those that are negatives, or constraints, with a red dot, and those locations that are opportunities in the community - places to improve or grow - with a blue dot. Make sure to include brief notes to explain why you've marked these areas.



A group discusses their community's assets, constraints, and opportunity sites; the community places sticky-dots on a base map.

MATERIALS PROVIDED IN YOUR BOX

- Pens/Markers
- Three colors of sticky-dots: green for assets, red for constraints, and blue for opportunity sites.
- Base map(s) of your community

HOW TO MAP YOUR COMMUNITY

1. As a group, discuss what you feel are assets, constraints and opportunity sites; mark the map accordingly. Write additional notes directly on the map to explain your choices.
2. After about 30 minutes, ask if there is anything missing from what you have indicated with sticky-dots? Should anything more be brought to the attention of the Project Team?
3. Remember to take photos of your community members hard at work. Submit these photos along with your basemap and notes.

EXAMPLES OF PLACES TO LOCATE ON YOUR MAP:

Locate the following items on the maps provided:

Assets

- Places where everyone in the community goes, such as favorite restaurants, bars, stores, and public spaces
- Amenities (services or places) that you like in your community
- Civic institutions (schools, libraries, churches, museums, etc.)
- Parks or natural beauty you wish to preserve

Constraints

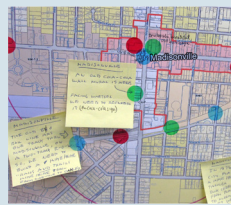
- Abandoned building(s)
- Empty lot(s)
- Dangerous routes
- Eye-sore(s)
- Environmental hazards
- Land uses or activities you wish would relocate

Opportunities for Improvement

- Empty lot(s)
- Public space that needs improving
- An amenity (service, business, or improvement) that your community needs (food market, coffeehouse, etc.)
- A good spot for public art or a community garden
- You tell us!

Areas to Photograph

- Mark on the maps where you might want to go take pictures. This is good planning for Step 2 Photographic Documentation.



Community members write notes on community maps.

HOW TO SUBMIT MAPS

- Return your Community Map to the City in your Box; make sure that all notes are submitted with the maps.
- Be sure to document your community name, the person responsible for the Box, and the number of people who participated.
- Collect all of the supplies provided in the Box, and return the Community Character in a Box to:

City of Austin Planning Department
500 Barton Springs Road
Austin, Texas 78704

Step 2: Photo Documentation

Photo documentation is a key tool in capturing the character of a community. Be sure to take photos of typical types of buildings and streets, as well as what makes your area unique. These photos will inform the CodeNEXT team what should be maintained in the community, and what could be improved.

WHAT TO PHOTOGRAPH IN A NUTSHELL

Walk around your community, and photograph what you feel are both good and bad examples of the buildings in your area, the sidewalk conditions, any public spaces, and pictures of different street widths.

MATERIALS TO BRING WITH YOU:

- Camera or phone with a camera
- Pens/Markers
- Map of the area you will cover (one per group)



A group meets to photo document their community, later splitting up to cover different areas.

HOW TO DOCUMENT WITH PHOTOGRAPHY?

1. Split the group into pairs of 2-4 people; decide who will cover different parts of the community to not overlap.
2. Make sure you have maps and cameras for each team. Plan to spend 1-2 hours taking lots of photos; refer to the blue box for examples of what kinds of photos to take.
3. As you cover parts of your neighborhood, mark on a map your route to document where your photographs were taken.

WHAT TO AVOID:

- Try to avoid taking pictures with:
 - Trash cans
 - Light poles and utility/power lines overhead
 - Traffic interrupting what you are trying to photograph

This is a great exercise to do on foot, try not to take photos from a moving vehicle. And remember to be careful to respect private property.

Prepared by Opticos Design, Inc.



These are examples of photo boards that describe the character of residential and commercial buildings in one community.

EXAMPLES OF PHOTOGRAPHS TO TAKE

The light orange highlight on the photos below shows what to look for in each type of picture.



Take front, or elevation, photos to show how tall and wide a building is.

- Look for unique details in the architecture
- Capture shots of important landmarks or historic structures.

Take 45-degree angle photographs to show how deep a building is.

Take photographs of buildings together, to show how far apart buildings are, and to show how tall a building is compared to a nearby building.

Take photographs looking down the sidewalk to show how a building relates to the public street (front yard, porch, stoop, outdoor seating, etc.).

- How far back from the street is the building?
- Take photos of parks and civic spaces too.

Take photographs of streets to show what kind of streets are in your area.

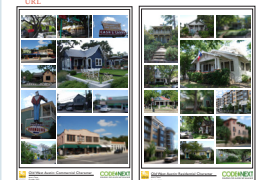
- Look for street trees and landscaping
- Take photos of the street furnishings (like lamp posts or trash bins).
- Notice how the street follows the hills, creeks, or other features in your area.

TIPS ON TAKING PHOTOS

- Try to take pictures from different angles of buildings, including straight on, and at a 45-degree angle.
- When possible, use a good quality camera, like a digital SLR camera to capture crisper images, at a wider angle.
- If your camera has a GPS string, turn it on to automatically record the location of the image.

HOW TO SUBMIT PHOTOS:

- If you used the camera provided in the Box:
 - Simply return the camera to City Staff in the Box.
- If you used your personal camera:
 - Place your photos into a folder on your computer with your community name.
 - Organize your photos into good examples and bad examples.
 - Submit your photographic documentation by uploading them here: url



These are examples of photo boards that describe the character of residential and commercial buildings in one community.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH YOUR PHOTOS?

- Wondering what we are going to do with your Community Character photo documentation? The Project Team will:
 - Refer to them to help understand the unique qualities of your community.
 - Sort through the photos, and place the best examples onto photo boards. This will quickly and visually tell a story of your community.
 - Show the photo boards at community meetings to ask residents if the team captured what makes your place unique.
 - Compare similar types of buildings and spaces from different communities across the City to understand similarities and differences.

Draft: December 19, 2013 | 4

Best Practice: Training

Spend time understanding the new tools and how to use them

In our experience, planning and development services staff aren't typically given the time they need to learn about new tools or code standards. The result is often resistance and frustration. When new software is purchased, it's typical to receive some training on how to use it. It's the same with an updated development code. It's likely to include new tools or new development standards that staff isn't accustomed to using. It's also likely that the updated code is reorganized in a way that is completely different than what staff has been using. For these simple reasons, we recommend including training for staff from the beginning of the process to adoption of the code update:

Hands-on Working Sessions: As described in the community outreach discussion, we find it most effective to start with these sessions before anything new is proposed. What is context-sensitive design? how do Form-based zones work? what's in an improved conventional zoning district? We organize these topics into a series of 2-3 hour working sessions where the staff works with example standards until their first draft is generated.

Advantages

- Staff becomes fluent in the new tools before they have to actually use them
- Staff informs the code update process and content

Disadvantages

- Requires scheduling of limited staff time

Example: Training throughout the Code Update process helps staff and the code content

Working sessions with staff use real development applications as well as projects designed during the sessions to test/troubleshoot the standards and help staff learn how to use the new standards.



We recommend involving developers and architects that work in the community to be part of the sessions. Here, in a large group session, a local architect explains what his group found in applying the draft standards and in using the new code.

Subdivision Regulations **2** chapter



Identified Issues and Concerns

- 1 Outdated Regulations**
- 2 Disconnect between the variety and types of physical environments, open spaces, thoroughfares and the standards that drive site planning**
- 3 Standards accommodate vehicular movement over other important factors**
- 4 Incomplete non-rural and rural road standards**
- 5 Lack of standards for unified planning of adjacent sites**

(See pages 46-47 of Code Diagnosis for more information on the above issues)

Best Practice: Standards for Large Sites

Standards for Unified Planning of Adjacent Sites

A key issue identified in the Code Diagnosis is the lack of standards for unified planning of adjacent sites. This means that important aspects such as access, parking, building placement, and setbacks are not coordinated or possibly even considered, resulting primarily in a disjointed community, lack of place, and access management issues. Instead of only addressing these issues when a subdivision is proposed, we recommend requiring that sites of a certain size generate new blocks. In our experience, these standards make sense for sites over 4 acres in size. This threshold needs to be determined for Oklahoma City.

We recommend that unified planning be required based on project size and that standards are provided for the variety of developments from the most rural to the most urban.

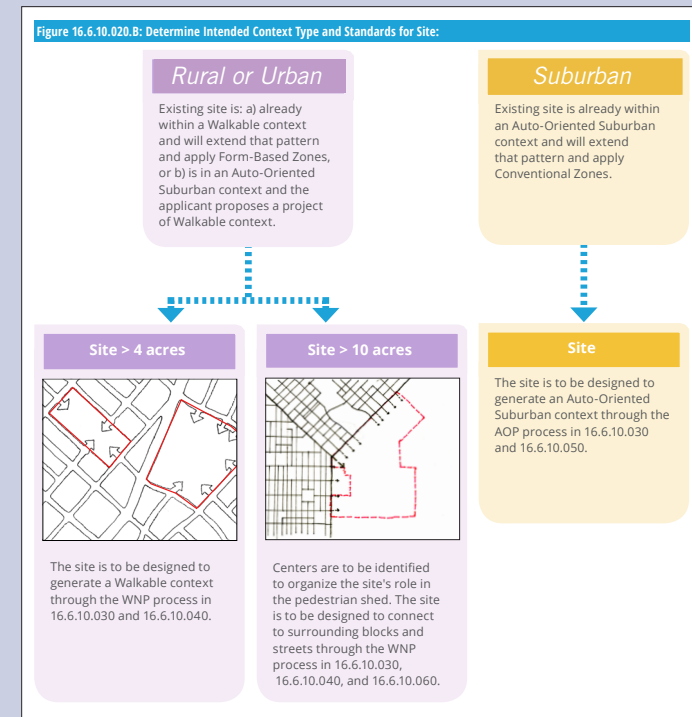
Advantages

- Streets can be public or private, as approved
- Integrated open/civic space
- Improved network of thoroughfares for all modes
- Easier preparation and review of development applications

Disadvantages

- Shared access may not be desired by all applicants/owners

Example: Standards for 'Large Sites'



We recommend identifying the process and requirements for Rural, Suburban, and Urban sites and then aligning each with the palette of available zoning districts to implement planOKC. These standards do not apply to Natural sites.

Best Practice: Integrated Subdivision Regulations

Integrate Subdivision Regulations in Unified Development Code

The Code Diagnosis identified that the existing subdivision standards don't contain the type of information needed to effectively address urban and rural environments. Like most subdivision standards, the current standards are aimed at generating suburban development. But that is only one of three types of development needed in Oklahoma City.

As mentioned, a Unified Hybrid Development Code first consolidates all development regulations into a coordinated, user-friendly document. But it goes further by coordinating the standards with the needs of natural, rural, suburban, and urban development. A major need is the issue of designing large sites to complement the adjacent and surrounding pattern of blocks and streets in any of these three contexts. Typical subdivision standards don't effectively deal with this primary issue.

We recommend aligning the existing subdivision standards with planoc's intended physical contexts within each LUTA. Then, coordinate with the relevant thoroughfare, civic, and open space standards. In addition, integrate standards for generating interconnected networks of blocks and complete streets for rural, suburban, and urban types of development.

Advantages

- Standards are coordinated with the three general types of development: rural, suburban, and urban
- Better coordination between adjacent sites
- Depending on the specific development, the amount of required open space is clearly identified with options for how to deliver it as civic and/or open space

- Easier processing and preparation of applications

Disadvantages

- None identified

Example: Robust standards, including standards for civic/open spaces, thoroughfares

Figure 9.83.030.A: Walkable Urban Site Transformation Process

1 Blocks

Step 1: Subdivide project area (See Table 9.83.030.B) to create smaller blocks and a network of interconnected streets (See Table 9.83.050.B).

2 Streets/Civic Space

from the allowable thoroughfare types listed in Section 9.83.050. Identify at least 10% of the project area as new civic space (See Table 9.83.100.A). 10% is calculated after subtracting thoroughfare R.O.W.s.

3 Alleys

Step 3: Introduce alleys to provide access to design sites and maintain a continuous streetscape without the interruption of driveways (See 9.83.050.J).

4 Transect Zones

Step 4: Apply transect zones to implement the intended physical character, in compliance with Section 9.83.030.E (Project Regulating Plan).

5 Design-Site Lines

Step 5: Select at least two to three building types' from the allowable building types in Subsection C of each transect zone and introduce design sites within each block based on the required design site width and depth. Design site lines may be permanently recorded by the applicant.*

6 Buildings

Step 6: Show the different building types in each block, and identify the selected frontage types for each design site. (See Subsection D of each Building Type in 9.82.070).

Legend:

- 74 Village Neighborhood SF
- 74 Village Neighborhood LF
- 74 Village Main Street

*TAN, LF: min. 3 different types
TAMS and TAN, LF: min. 2 different types

- Detached House
- Duplex
- Multiplex: Small
- Multiplex: Large
- Rowhouse Building
- Main Street Building

In our experience, codifying the process of making new streets, blocks and lots does more to generate development that fits its neighbors than design guidelines or other processes.

9.83.100.C Pocket Park

9.83.050.F Victoria Boulevard: Sepulveda Ave. to Alley (Facing West)

9.82.070 Building Type

Building Type	Min. Lot Area	Min. Frontage	Min. Depth	Min. Setback	Min. Height	Min. Floor Area	Min. Parking	Min. Green Space	Min. Open Space	Min. Tree Canopy	Min. Tree Diameter	Min. Tree Spacing	Min. Tree Species
Detached House	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10
Duplex	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10
Multiplex: Small	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10
Multiplex: Large	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10
Rowhouse Building	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10
Main Street Building	3,000	30	30	10	10	1,000	1	10	10	10	4	10	10

*The sequence of designing a site into new blocks, civic and open space, and lots for buildings is codified and illustrated for clarity. Each step identifies the requirements and shows the reader where to find the standards. *Lot lines are only required for the design process and may be recorded as legal lots at the choice of the applicant.*

Best Practice: Context-Sensitive Civic Space

Provide Standards for Integral Civic Space

The Code Diagnosis identified a disconnect between the variety of intended development types, open spaces, and the standards that drive site planning. This situation tends to result in open space that is not well-integrated into new development. In our experience, it is often simply seen as land that can't be developed. Instead, we recommend a context-sensitive approach that integrates open space as an amenity for new development.

We recommend standard options ranging from the most natural to rural to suburban to the most urban. In addition, allow for flexibility in size for the different types of development and physical contexts. This results in greater predictability by having a set of choices to apply to any development and easier to comply with the required amount of area.

Planokc provides preliminary information about the intended development in each LUTA. Planokc also calls for providing new open space in urban areas, protecting the character of rural areas, and preserving existing environmentally sensitive areas to the extent possible. The approach we recommend achieves these goals while offering flexibility in design.

Advantages

- Allows flexibility in design of open space
- Ensures appropriate, usable, beneficial open space for the different physical contexts
- Coordinates with the range of zoning districts

Disadvantages

- None identified

Example: Choices for different contexts

16.6.10.060.E Neighborhood Park
A. Description
 Open space available for unstructured and limited amounts of structured recreation. Appropriate site elements, community facility + 5,000 G.S.F., fountains, benches, service area. Neighborhood.
B. General Character
 Informal or formal
 Primarily planted areas with paths to and between recreation areas and civic buildings.
C. Size and Location
 Spatially defined by tree-lined streets and adjacent buildings
D. Typical Uses
 Unstructured passive and active recreation
 Civic uses
 Temporary commercial uses

16.100.C Pocket Park
A. Description
 Small scale open space, serving the immediate neighborhood, available for informal activities in close proximity to neighborhood residences. Service area. Neighborhood.
B. General Character
 Formal or informal, urban
 Accessory Structures <200 sq. ft. per § 8.3.100.A.5
 Combination of planted areas and hardscape
 Spatially defined by building frontages and adjacent street trees
 Walkways along edges or across space
 Civic element provided
C. Size and Location
 Area: 1,600 sf min.
 Depth: 40 ft. min. Width: 40 ft. min.
D. Typical Uses
 Civic activity
 Passive recreation, casual seating and/or outdoor seating
 Commercial uses in support of civic activity

16.3.100.G Plaza
A. Description
 Community-wide focal point primarily for civic purposes and commercial activities. Plaza are typically landscaped with planting as accents. Commercial activities are subordinate to Civic activity. Service area Multiple Neighborhoods.
B. General Character
 Formal, urban
 Accessory Structures (e.g. = 5,000 G.S.F., fountains, benches per § 8.3.100.A.5)
 Combination of hardscaped and planted areas in formal patterns
 Spatially defined by buildings and tree-lined streets
 Civic element provided
C. Size and Location
 Area: 1/2 acre min.
 Depth: 80 ft. min. Width: 150 ft. min.
 Streets required on three quarters of the plaza perimeter
 Facilities on design site attached to or across a thoroughfare at all "four" corners of the Plaza
D. Typical Uses
 Civic uses
 Passive recreation
 Commercial uses in support of civic uses

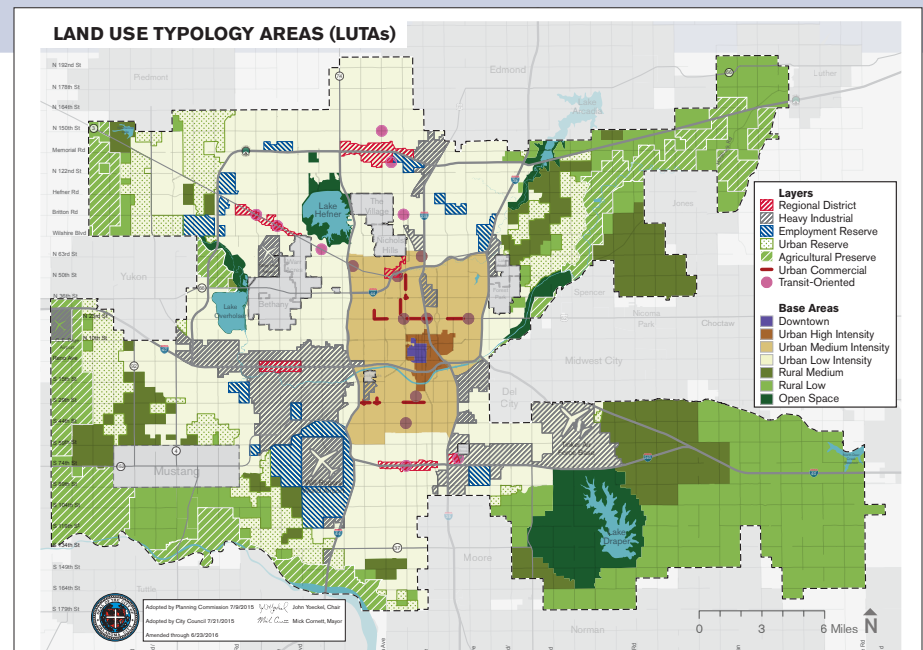
Examples of three options responding to three very different physical conditions

Table 16.6.10.060.A Civic Park and Open Space Type Overview																					
Form-Based Zone	T3	T4	T5	T3	T4	T5	T3	T4	T5	T3	T4	T5									
Conventional Zone	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R									
Civic Space Type	Community Park			Greenway			Neighborhood Park			Square		Plaza		Pocket Plaza		Pocket Park		Playground		Community Garden	
Illustration																					

We recommend identifying the range of civic space types for each of planokc's LUTAs and the intended physical contexts. Then, align each with the corresponding zoning district(s).

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Administration & Procedures 3 chapter



Identified Issues and Concerns

- 1 Need for a predictable and streamlined entitlement process
- 2 Difficulty of navigating through administrative procedures
- 3 Unclear application requirements and inconsistent permit cycle times
- 4 Unclear description of Review Authorities and Responsibilities
- 5 Hard to find and inconsistent permitting procedures

(See pages 22-23 of Code Diagnosis for more information on the above issues)

Best Practice: Clear, Logical Organization

Establish Predictable Permitting Processes and Requirements

Permitting processes and requirements should be predictable and streamlined so that they are clear and easy to follow. A lengthy and unpredictable review process is not only the result of complicated procedures, but often also the outcome of complex development standards themselves. A predictable entitlement process with clearly stated application requirements and permit cycle times gives applicants piece of mind when applying for permits, whereas a complicated Code that is disorganized and includes hard to understand regulations reduces its usability. Also, the complexity of the regulations adds time and cost to construction projects which can affect affordability. In addition to streamlined permit approval processes, consideration should be given, consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, to the inclusion of as many uses by right with staff level approval, rather than through a public hearing process.

Ensure the Code is Easily Navigable

A well-designed Code ensures that users can navigate it easily to find the administrative procedures and information they are seeking. A common complaint about the current Code is that it is hard to use and information is not easy to find because of the lack of a coherent and organized structure. The Table of Contents should be designed so that there is logic and order to the way the chapters are organized. A short section within the Introduction/Preamble should, for example, include an overview of “How to Use the Code” with a supporting graphic. The Permits and Approval section should include a description of the roles and responsibilities of all review authorities as well as flow charts that visually

describe the process for obtaining approvals and permits in addition to the text.

Advantages

- Greater predictability in decision making allowing for ease of use by residents and therefore fewer questions for staff
- Greater satisfaction with the level of service provided by City staff
- Less conflict between departmental requirements
- Fewer public hearings with resultant savings in administration costs and time in public meetings

Disadvantages

- Training for staff, applicants, and developers will be needed on the new Code and may be perceived as not needed
- May be perceived as reducing citizen input in key decisions on new development projects
- May be perceived as being overly friendly towards developers rather than residents

Example: Clear, Logical Organization

Chapter 10-20: Administration, Procedures, and Enforcement

Content:	
Division 10-20.10: Purpose	20.10-1
10-20.10.010 Purpose	20.10-1
Division 10-20.20: Administration	20.20-1
10-20.20.010 Purpose	20.20-1
10-20.20.020 Administrative Hearing Officer	20.20-1
10-20.20.030 Board of Adjustment	20.20-1
10-20.20.040 Council	20.20-1
10-20.20.050 Heritage Preservation Commission	20.20-2
10-20.20.060 Historic Preservation Officer	20.20-2
10-20.20.070 Planning Commission	20.20-3
10-20.20.080 Planning Director	20.20-3
10-20.20.090 Zoning Code Administrator	20.20-3
Division 10-20.30: Common Procedures	20.30-1
10-20.30.010 Purpose	20.30-1
10-20.30.020 Application Process	20.30-1
10-20.30.030 Fees	20.30-3
10-20.30.040 Pre-Application Review by Director	20.30-3
10-20.30.050 Concept Plan Review	20.30-4
10-20.30.060 Neighborhood Meeting	20.30-5
10-20.30.070 Additional Requirements for Citizen Outreach	20.30-8
10-20.30.080 Notice of Public Hearings	20.30-9
10-20.30.090 Findings Required	20.30-12
10-20.30.100 Final Decisions	20.30-13
10-20.30.110 Effect of Denials	20.30-13
10-20.30.120 Administrative Procedures	20.30-13

Page from the Table of Contents, Flagstaff, AZ Zoning Code, showing good organization to allow ease of use.

Best Practice: Simple Approval Process Charts

Clearly Graphically Describe Approval Processes

Permitting procedures and regulations should be easily identified in the Code, and procedures that are common to many different permits or approvals (e.g. submittal procedures and requirements or public noticing requirements) should be grouped into one section to avoid duplication. Also, it is a good practice to arrange permits and approvals in alphabetical order so that they are easily identified.

Advantages

- Greater predictability in decision making allowing for ease of use by residents and therefore fewer questions for City staff
- Greater satisfaction with the level of service provided by City staff

Disadvantages

- Training for staff, applicants, and developers will be needed on the new Code and may be perceived as not needed

Example: Easy-to-use Process Guides for Conventional Zones and Form-Based Zones

The image displays four process flowcharts from the Vallejo, CA Draft Zoning Code, illustrating easy-to-use guides for various approval processes:

- Quick Code Guide: New or Expanded Use in Conventional Zones:** This chart is divided into two main paths: 'Expanded Use' and 'New Use'. Both paths start with 'Application Submittal Process' and 'Review Process' steps, involving staff, director, and city staff reviews. It includes a table of zoning codes and their corresponding review processes.
- Quick Code Guide: New or Modified Building:** A vertical flowchart starting with 'Find the transect zone for your parcel' and 'Select the building type from the types allowed in the transect zone'. It continues through steps like 'Apply building setbacks to design site', 'Apply parking and access standards and setbacks to lot', 'Apply building height allowance', and 'Apply maximum building use to design site'. It concludes with selecting frontage types and applying standards to the building.
- Quick Code Guide: New or Modified Signage:** This chart is split into 'Permanent Signs' and 'Temporary Signs'. The permanent path involves identifying the transect zone, reviewing standards, and submitting applications for review by the Commission, Director, and City Staff. The temporary path involves determining the proposed sign, reviewing and applying standards, and submitting applications to the City Planning Commission.
- Quick Code Guide: Large Sites in Form-Based Zones:** A vertical flowchart starting with 'Confirm that your parcel exceeds 4 acres' and 'Identify the context type for your parcel'. It continues through steps like 'Identify applicable process for your parcel', 'Apply the standards for creating walkable neighborhood site', 'Design the site', and 'Follow the procedures for applying Form-Based Zones and for required permits and approvals'.

Examples of easy-to-use guides in the Vallejo, CA Draft Zoning Code.

Best Practice: Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities

Establish Predictability through Clarity of Processes

The roles and responsibilities of all review authorities should be clearly defined, and ideally located near the beginning of the Code. This can be achieved through clearly written text as well as a table or graphic that describes the principal responsibilities of the review authority.

Advantages

- Greater predictability in decision making allowing for ease of use by residents and therefore fewer questions for City staff
- Greater satisfaction with the level of service provided by City staff

Disadvantages

- None identified

Example: Table of Responsible Authorities

Table 23-2A-1030.A Overview of Legislative, Quasi-Judicial and Administrative Approvals				
Approval Type	Section, Article or Division	Recommended ¹	Decision	Appeal
Legislative Decision Establishing Citywide Policies & Requirements for Land Use and Development				
Original Zoning	Section 23-4B-1010	Land Use Commission	City Council	—
Map Amendments (Rezoning)	Division 23-4B-3	Land Use Commission	City Council	—
Text Amendments	Division 23-2E-1	Planning Commission	City Council	—
Comprehensive Plan Amendments	Section 23-2E-2020	Planning Commission	City Council	—
Neighborhood Plan Amendments	Section 23-2E-2030	Planning Commission	City Council	—
Original Zoning	Section 23-4B-1010	Land Use Commission	City Council	—
Quasi-Judicial Decisions Determining Rights or Entitlements Based on Evidentiary Hearing and Discretionary Application or Interpretation of Code Requirements				
Zoning Variance	Section 23-4B-4010	—	Board of Adjustment	District Court
Environmental Variance	Division 23-2F-1	Environmental Commission	Land Use Commission	—
Subdivision Variance	Section 23-5B-1050	Development Services Director	Land Use Commission	—
Special Exception	Section 23-4B-4020	Planning Director	Board of Adjustment	District Court
Administrative Appeals:				
Zoning Regulations	Article 23-21	Planning Director	Board of Adjustment	District Court
Technical Codes	Article 23-21	Building Official	Building & Fire Code Board of Appeals	—
Conditional Use Permit	Section 23-4B-1020	Planning Director	Land Use Commission	City Council
Limited Adjustment	Division 23-2F-3	Development Services Director	City Council	—
Project Consent Agreement	Section 23-2K-2040	Development Services Director	City Council	—
Original Zoning	Section 23-4B-1010	Land Use Commission	City Council	—

Table clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities of City departments, Austin, TX Draft Zoning Code.

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Design Guidelines **4** chapter



Identified Issues and Concerns

- 1** Existing design guidelines apply to defined select areas of the City, while much of the City where design guidelines could be effective, are not subject to them
- 2** Many of the existing guidelines are overly vague, subjective, and imprecise leaving room for interpretation and possibly conflict
- 3** The existing guidelines rely almost exclusively on text and they lack illustrations and photographs

Best Practice: Context-Appropriate Design

Establish Tangible Design Guidelines

It is appropriate to establish design guidelines that apply to a particular area or context (e.g. the design guidelines that apply to the Bricktown Core District compared to the Downtown Business District) to support the unique characteristics of that district. However, there are many areas of the City that could also be subject to enhanced design standards or guidelines. There are several ways of expanding the application of design guidelines in the City, including the preferred approach of applying them to corridors and districts or neighborhoods identified by unique contextual characteristics, or they could be written to apply to, for example, commercial or multi-family residential uses.

Advantages

- Design guidelines that are customized to particular neighborhoods or districts ensure that new development is appropriately scaled and designed to address the unique characteristics of one place compared to another

Disadvantages

- A commitment of staff time and other resources will be needed to expand the application of design standards or guidelines to other areas of the City

Example: Well-illustrated and Clear Content

CHAPTER 2 DESIGNING YOUR HOUSE & LOT

A. CORNER LOTS AND INTERSECTION GREEN FRONTAGES

Intent & Applicability: The Guidelines in this section are specific to Reverse-Corner Lots, including those fronting Intersection Greens (See Section 1.2.2). The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that all future projects on these prominent, character-defining lots contribute to and preserve the unique historic patterns of Mission Hills.

The MHZO defines a Building Line along the "sides" of reverse corner lots that may be notably less than the Front Building Line of adjacent properties, potentially allowing a building, fence or retaining wall to intrude into the Streetside Greenspace, disrupting what is otherwise a legacy Greenspace of Mission Hills.

The Guidelines in this section strongly discourage such intrusions, and provide special site organization instructions to ensure that the Streetside Greenspace patterns are preserved. Because Reverse Corner lots – especially those fronting an Intersection Green – contribute such a large percentage of their lot to the Streetside Greenspace, it is in turn, generally acceptable, that they contribute less to the Gardenside Greenspace.

As such, the Primary Building Area may generally encroach more closely to the side property lines of adjacent interior lots, than otherwise recommended for typical lots. That site organization is described in this section, and Section 2.6.4 describes the balance of adjustments for Intersection Green Frontages.

TABLE 2.6.3A - SITE ORGANIZATION

a Front Yard (Common Greenspace)	Lot Area in front of b & c . If Pavement Artifact is present at intersection, also includes i
b Extension of Building Line ("Front" St)	Extension of Front Building Line from adjacent interior lot on "Front" street
c Extension of Building Line ("Side" St)	Extension of Front Building Line from adjacent interior lot on "Side" street
d Lot Depth 1	To be measured at Side Property Line
e Lot Depth 2	To be Measured at Side Property Line
FRONT BOUNDARIES	
f Primary Building Area	b and c Set back 20% of d and e respectively
g Conditional Building Area	b and c Set back 15% of d and e respectively
h Primary Landscape Area	Front Lot Line(s) Side/Rear Lot Line(s)
i Streetside Conditional Building Area	b and c See Guidelines on following page
REAR YARD BOUNDARIES	

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Example of a well-illustrated page from the Mission Hills, KS Design Guidelines.

Best Practice: Determine Intention for Design Guidelines

How are the Guidelines to be Applied?

It is important to determine whether the community desires the application of design standards (i.e. these are mandatory design requirements) or design guidelines (i.e. optional design elements that may be utilized and that are not specifically required). Once this determination has been made within an area (note, some districts or corridors may apply standards while others may apply guidelines), the Code must be written to ensure that clear guidance to property owners and their architects is provided. Design guidelines or standards should allow for a wide range of architectural solutions to achieve the same level of character and expression in the context area. Clear, precise, concise, and objective guidelines or standards are essential as design guidelines that are vague can lead to disagreement, feelings of ill-will in the community, and even legal challenges.

Advantages

- Ease of use and application of design guidelines and standards resulting in fewer questions to City staff
- Greater predictability and certainty in decision making because standards are clear, well-illustrated and objective
- Greater satisfaction with the level of service provided by City staff

Disadvantages

- Training for staff, applicants, and developers will be needed on how to apply new guidelines or standards and may be perceived as not needed

Best Practice: Clear Graphics and Illustrations

Take the Time to be Clear

Design guidelines and standards should include illustrations and photographs supported by narratives to illustrate, for example, appropriate styles, elements, materials, massing, detailing, and relationships to street frontages, that a community finds both acceptable and unacceptable.

Advantages

- Ease of use and application of design guidelines and standards resulting in fewer questions to City staff
- Greater satisfaction with the level of service provided by City staff
- Fewer conflicts and disagreements

Disadvantages

- Producing well-crafted design guidelines or standards requires a commitment to public/stakeholder involvement in the process and the allocation of financial and staff resources


Example: Illustrate Non-regulatory aspects of Sites and Buildings

Chapter 4: Jordan Road Character District

4.3.5 Architectural Details

Architectural details and features are important to create visual interest and break up the mass of structures in the district.

- Architectural details indicative of locally traditional residential architecture are encouraged, such as:
 - Red rock fireplaces
 - Front porches
 - Overhanging eaves and exposed rafter ends
 - Pitched roofs
- Other details that create architectural interest and break up building mass are also encouraged, such as:
 - Red rock pillars and red rock wainscots or bulkheads
 - Ironwork details
 - Front or side arcades of small-scale and simple posts
 - Hanging or mounted light fixtures with decorative metal brackets
 - Decorative scuppers, catches and downspouts consistent with the predominant architecture style of the building
- Exterior lighting should be designed as part of the overall architectural style of the building. The lighting of full façades or roofs is prohibited.
- Awnings are discouraged in this district.




Sedona Main Street and Character Districts Design Manual

Chapter 4: Jordan Road Character District

4.4.2 Public Spaces and Amenities

- The provision of intimate pedestrian-oriented spaces is strongly encouraged. The following types should be considered:
 - Small plazas and courtyards
 - Outdoor dining patios
 - Pathways and paseos between buildings and/or to parking areas
- Trees and landscaping should be incorporated into the plaza design, providing shade if possible.
- The addition of pedestrian amenities in plazas, courtyards, and paseos is strongly encouraged:
 - Benches and seating
 - Trash and recycling receptacles
 - Cigarette receptacles
 - Umbrellas or simple shade structures
 - Bicycle racks
 - Drinking fountains
- The size and design of private site amenities should be compatible with the architectural style of the building to which it relates. Red rock and wood are preferred materials for site furniture.
- Public art, kiosks, and interpretive signs may also be incorporated as an integral part of courtyard, plaza, and paseo designs. Murals are not allowed.
- The use of decorative paving in plazas, courtyards, and paseos is strongly encouraged.



Sedona Main Street and Character Districts Design Manual

Page 4-10

Example of a well-illustrated page from the Jordan Road Character District in Sedona, AZ.

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Sign Standards **5** chapter



Identified Issues and Concerns

- 1** The current sign regulations include some sign types that are defined based on the content or message on the sign, and as such, they are not content neutral
- 2** Chapter 3 (Advertising and Signs) is poorly organized which makes it hard to find applicable standards
- 3** Many sign standards are imprecise and incomplete, lack clarity and consistency, and are ineffective
- 4** The current sign regulations lack flexibility and do not incentivize good sign design
- 5** The Code lacks clear standards for sign maintenance, enforcement, or the removal/replacement of existing billboards

(See pages 48-49 of Code Diagnosis for more information on the above issues)

Best Practice: Content-Neutral Sign Standards

Categorize Sign Types by Their Location

Under the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*, the City can no longer distinguish between signs based on a sign category determined by the message it conveys and its content (i.e. real estate signs, subdivision signs, or political signs) without a compelling governmental reason (i.e. strict scrutiny). Categorizing them based on their location (i.e. wall sign) or type (i.e. billboard or window signs) is acceptable.

Advantages

- A content-neutral sign Code will comply with applicable federal and case law



Disadvantages

- The new approach to regulating signs such as political signs or real estate signs will be substantially different than what residents are used to; as a result, education and training of citizens, sign professionals, and City code enforcement staff will be required

Example: Distinction between Content-based and Content-neutral Sign Types

Content

Content-Based	Content-Neutral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What does sign say? ■ Message determines if it stays up or down, or applicable regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Time ■ Place ■ Manner

 <p>Fred's Gas Station Unleaded: \$3.50 Regular \$4.00</p>	 <p>BLAH BLAH BLAH blah blah blah blah blah</p>
"Gas Station Sign"	"Pole Sign"

PowerPoint slide differentiating between content-based and content-neutral sign types (Used with permission, Mark White, Esq. White and Smith, LLC).

Best Practice: Ensure a Logical Structure & Organization to Sign Chapter

Rename and Reorganize Signage Standards

Rename Chapter 3 (Advertising and Signs) to “Sign Standards” and reorganize its content. Sign standards are easier to understand and more user friendly when they have a logical flow and organization. For example, it is best to first introduce the sign regulations that are applicable to all signs (e.g. sign area and height determination, illumination and material standards, etc.) and then establish detailed standards for each sign type. The sections on nonconforming signs and enforcement are typically placed at the end of the sign chapter.

Advantages

- Logical flow and organization of the chapter
- Ease of use for staff and all other users of the Code
- Fewer questions to staff on sign standards which allows for greater staff efficiency and reduced costs

Disadvantages

- Training for staff, applicants, and sign professionals will be needed on the on the content of the new chapter and may be perceived as not needed

Example: Table of Contents for Chapter on Sign Standards

Table of Contents
X.010 Purpose
X.020 Applicability
X.030 Sign Permit Requirements
X.040 General Restrictions for All Signs
X.050 General Requirements for All Signs
X.060 Permanent Signs
X.070 Comprehensive Sign Programs <i>(May be called Master Sign Plans)</i>
X.080 Sign Design Performance Standards
X.090 Temporary Signs
X.100 Sign Districts of Special Designation <i>(If applicable)</i>
X.110 Nonconforming Signs
X.120 Enforcement
X.130 Appeals
X.140 Severability

A well-organized Table of Contents for a sign code.

Best Practice: Establish Clear Procedures for Sign Review

Illustrate a Clear Process for Permits

Clearly define the procedures for sign review by all review authorities, their responsibilities, and the process for enforcement should signs be installed out of compliance with applicable standards. A flow diagram that describes the procedures for issuance of a sign permit (and indeed all other permits) should be included in the Code. It is also important to include clear standards and procedures that describes the City's approach to the nonconforming signs including, for example, the removal or replacement of existing billboards.

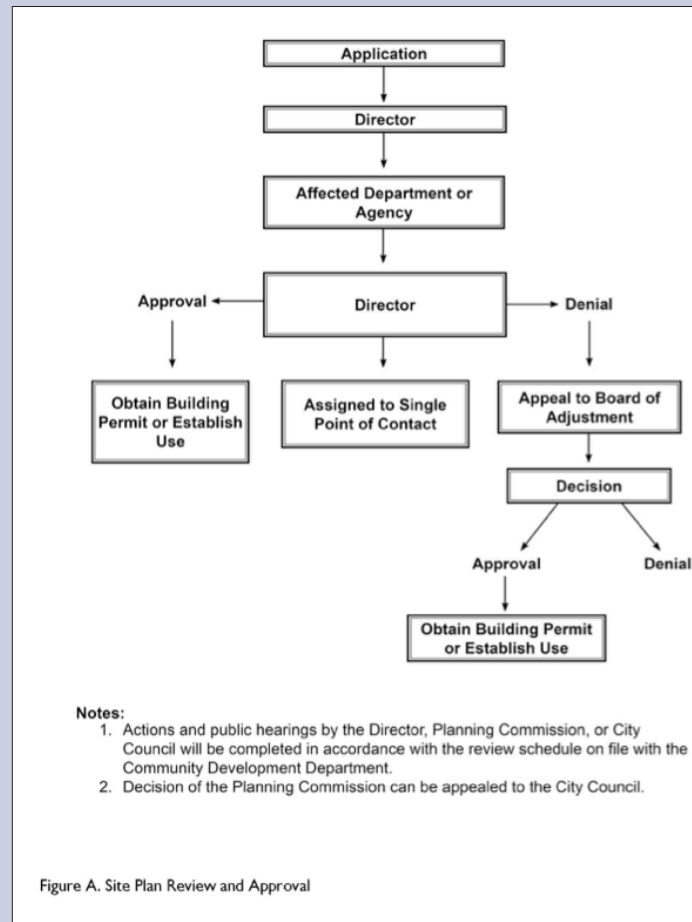
Advantages

- All review authority's roles are precisely defined and transparent which minimizes confusion
- Increased predictability
- More effective code enforcement
- More attractive community with fewer out-of-compliance signs

Disadvantages

- May result in the need for additional staff resources, especially with regard to sign enforcement
- Additional staff training will be needed and may be perceived as not needed

Example: Flow Chart from Development Code



Example of an easy-to-use permit flow chart from the Flagstaff, AZ Code.

— Best Practice: Establish Clearly Defined yet Flexible Sign Standards —

Clarify Dimensional Standards for Signs

Clearly define and clarify the maximum area and height standards for building mounted and freestanding signs based on zoning districts or land use types as well as for specific sign types. In this way, it's possible to provide more flexibility for property/business owners to install various building mounted or freestanding sign types subject to specified rules (e.g. no signs facing a residential zone), provided they comply with the overall maximum area and height standards for the zoning district or use type. This approach provides a proven mechanism to help the City manage sign clutter.

Add a New Master Sign Program Section

Include new standards and procedures for a Master Sign Program to allow for greater flexibility and design control of sign standards for large projects. A Master Sign Program can incentivize better sign design and consistency within large projects, and decrease sign clutter.

Advantages

- Clear and precise regulations are easy to understand and apply
- The property/business owner has flexibility in the placement of signs, provided area limitations are satisfied, as well as other applicable standards
- Greater flexibility with the design and placement of signs on large projects
- Unified and consistent sign design standards within the project

Disadvantages

- A perception that the sign standards are less restrictive and that too much flexibility has been given to property/business owners
- Training for staff, applicants, and sign professionals will be needed on the new sign standards and may be perceived as not needed

Example: Sign Standards by Type

16.5.10.030

16.5.10.030.M.5. Awning/Canopy Sign

Form-Based Zones: LDR.N, T3N, T4N.S, T4N.M, T4MS, T5U, T5MS

Conventional Zones: RC, PQ, LDR, MDR, HDR, IU, C-G, C-N, C-IP, C-F, C-LI

a. Description
A sign on an awning or the canopy of a shopfront, pedestrian-scaled, that is read along the sidewalk or from the other side of the street.

2. Sign Size

Canopy Sign

Signable Area ¹	1 sf per linear foot of awning width, max.	A
Lettering Height	16" max.	B
Lettering Thickness	6" max.	C

Sloping Plane on an Awning

Signable Area ¹	Max. 45% of sloping plane ²	A
Awning Width	Max. 25% coverage of sloping plane	D
Lettering Height	18" max.	E

Valance Sign

Signable Area ¹	75% coverage max. of	G , H , F
Width	60% valance width, max.	G
Height	8" min.; 16" max.	H
Lettering Height	8" max.	I

b. Sign Size (continued)

¹ Included in the total allowable sign area for building mounted signs.
² If an awning covers multiple store fronts, each store is allowed a signable area of 75% of store width.

3. Location

Clear Height	8" min.; 14" min. over driveways and alleys	J
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4. Miscellaneous

Sign area included in the total allowable wall sign area for building mounted signs.
Open-ended awnings are allowed in all zones.
Closed-end awnings and internally illuminated awnings are not allowed in Form-Based Zones.
Vinyl or plastic awnings are not allowed.
Note: Image not intended to limit sign message copy.

Key: **TR** Allowed By Review **TR** Not Allowed

5-26 | Title 16: City of Vallejo Development Code
Public Review Draft: January 2017

16.5.10.030

16.5.10.030.M.14. Window Sign

Form-Based Zones: LDR.N, T3N, T4N.S, T4N.M, T4MS, T5U, T5MS

Conventional Zones: RC, PQ, LDR, MDR, HDR, IU, C-G, C-N, C-IP, C-F, C-LI

a. Description
A sign consisting of individual letters and designs applied directly on the inside of a window. Window signs offer a high level of craftsmanship and visibility.

b. Sign Size

Signable Area (Permanent 40% max. of the ground and Temporary Signs floor window area in all zones)	50% max. of second floor window area in Conventional Zones	A
Width	75% max. of Shopfront Width	B
Height	36" max.	C

c. Location

No applicable standards

d. Miscellaneous

Applied plastic or vinyl cut letters are subject to Director review and approval.
Window Signs must have a clear background.
Permanent window sign area not included in the total allowable wall sign area for building mounted signs.
Note: Image not intended to limit sign message copy.

Key: **TR** Allowed By Review **TR** Not Allowed

Public Review Draft: January 2017
Title 16: City of Vallejo Development Code | 5-35

Examples of clear, flexible standards for different sign types from the draft Vallejo, CA Zoning Code. In addition to realistic standards, the Sign Chapter includes provisions for administrative adjustments to the standards.

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Nuisance Standards **6** chapter



Identified Issues and Concerns

- 1** The standards for nuisances are located in nine separate chapters of the existing Code. This fragmented organization of the nuisance provisions results in an overlap of standards in some cases, and makes them hard to find and apply
- 2** The fragmented organization of the City's nuisance provisions means there is a frequent lack of clarity and internal consistency; some standards and procedures are imprecise and incomplete

(See pages 50-51 of Code Diagnosis for more information on the above issues)

Best Practice: Consolidate the Standards

Condense Nuisance Standards In One Place

Consolidate all non-law enforcement related nuisance provisions and standards into a Nuisance Chapter within the Code. Further, related nuisance provisions such as, Article IV (Trash) and Chapter 27 (Litter) should be combined into one Article within the Chapter.

Separate Provisions Regulated by Law Enforcement

Within this reorganization, consolidate those nuisance provisions that are enforced directly by the City’s Police Department to simplify administration of the Code.

Reorganize Nuisance Definitions Into One Section

Reorganize and update the nuisance regulations to consolidate all definitions into one section to ensure consistency, all common procedures related to enforcement actions are in one place with appropriate cross-references, and that the Code is updated and simplified as much as possible.

Advantages

- Simplified organization of the nuisance regulations will make them easier to find, understand, and apply and eliminate duplication and redundancy
- Increased clarity and consistency of nuisance regulations
- Internal consistency and transparency of standards

Disadvantages

- Staff training will be needed on the new organization of the Code and the new standards

Example: Table Summarizing how Nuisance Provisions could be Reorganized for Ease of Use

Policy/nuisance elements	Provisions of Chapter 35 - Nuisances	Other OKC Chapters related to Nuisances	Recommended Action
SU-10: Mitigate negative impacts of compactness by updating the nuisance code to better address noise, smell, vibration, properly maintenance, panhandling, animal control, delivery hours limits, and other possible negative effects. (2018).			
	Article I -- In General		Update as needed.
Abandoned and wrecked vehicles	II Abandoned and wrecked vehicles	--	Keep in Chapter 35, updated and improved
Weeds and noxious plants	III Weeds and noxious plants	--	Keep in Chapter 35, updated and improved
Trash	IV Trash	Chapter 27 - Litter	Consider combining w/ Chapter 27 Litter. Update as needed.
Graffiti	V Graffiti	--	Keep in Chapter 35, updated and improved
Criminal activities	VI Criminal activities as a public nuisance	Chapter 43, Police Department	Consider combining with Chapter 43, Police Department. Update as needed.
Aerosol spray/graffiti	VII Prohibition aerosol spray to minors	--	Consider combining w/ Article V, Graffiti, update.
Animal control	VIII Exotic wildlife	Chapter 8, Animals	Consider combining with Chapter 8, Animals. Update as needed.
Property maintenance	IX Abandoned buildings	Chapter 24, Housing and Abandoned Buildings	Consider combining with Chapter 24, Housing and Abandoned Buildings. Update as needed.
Noise (sound)	--	Chapter 34, Noise	Update Chapter 34, Noise, as needed
		§ 59-12400 (Environmental performance stds.) of Zoning & Planning Code	Cross-reference to updated Chapter 34, Noise
Smell (odors)	--	§ 59-12400 (Environmental Performance Stds.) of Zoning & Planning Code	To remain in § 59-12400, updated as needed
Vibration	--	§ 59-12400 (Environmental Performance Stds.) of Zoning & Planning Code	To remain in § 59-12400, updated as needed
Panhandling	--	--	Consider including as part of Chapter 43, Police Department.
Glare and heat	--	§ 59-12400 (Environmental performance stds.) of Zoning & Planning Code	To remain in Environmental performance stds., updated as needed
Air pollution	--	§ 59-12400 (Environmental performance stds.) of Zoning & Planning Code	Cross-reference to updated Chapter 4, Air Pollution
Delivery hours	--	--	Consider including in Chapter 34, Noise w/ new standards
Exterior lighting	--	§ 59-12350 (Site lighting requirements) of Zoning & Planning Code	To remain in Site lighting requirements, updated as needed
Rat control	--	Chapter 46, Rat Control	Update Chapter 46, Rat Control, as needed
Trees and shrubs	--	Chapter 53, Trees and Shrubs	Update Chapter 53, Trees and Shrubs, as needed

Table summarizing ideas for how nuisance provisions in the Oklahoma City Code could be reorganized for ease of use.