

## Benefits of Form-Based Code

Milton adopted a form-based code (FBC) in June 2021.

Form-Based Code differs from traditional zoning regulations. Euclidean zoning is based on the idea that each “zone”, or designated area of land, should be reserved for a specific use. However, form-based code zoning is based on context. Instead of focusing on use, form-based code focuses on building form.

(Example: There is an empty lot between two buildings that sit in a downtown area full of shops. Form-based regulations would preserve that block’s “form” and would include regulations that could include height – meaning a developer would not be able to build a skyscraper here between these two buildings- and with regulations (so the building doesn’t extend out onto the sidewalk). In the same situation, Euclidean zoning might restrict the development to commercial use only.

### **Traditional Zoning: Focuses on uses. Form-based code focuses on building form.**

Form-Based Code: Focuses on building form. Preserves community character through design requirements. Form-based codes emphasize the physical character of development (site design) and de-emphasize the regulation of land use. These codes are the result of a public design process, which creates a clear vision for a district or neighborhood. Form-based codes also encourage mixed uses to reduce the need to travel.

When comparing Euclidean zoning to form-based code, you might assume form-based code is more restrictive and complex for developers than traditional zoning. However, there are many benefits to form-based code. These benefits also eliminate some of the drawbacks of Euclidean zoning.

### **Five reasons why form-based code is more favorable for land development regulation in Milton include:**

1. Eliminates the drawbacks of Euclidean Zoning (where rules and regulations often do not consider the context).

Considering the context helps to eliminate the consequences that may include economic segregation when development is simply regulated on the intended use of an entire zone.

2. Provide developers with flexibility.

A lack of unique, new construction hurts the aesthetic of a city. But this is what happens when zones are drawn up with heavy restrictions on use and the development in a zone.

With a form-based code, developers have more flexibility as to where they can build, what they can renovate, and more, resulting in more aesthetically diverse buildings that gives the community a more unique appeal.

### 3. Revitalize urban neighborhoods.

When entire zones limit development, potential developers may have concerns regarding constraints.

Urban neighborhoods that could benefit from restoration won't attract new developers if the zoning regulations are too strict.

Form-based code zoning is much more friendly to developers in areas like this. The developer may have more leeway to build a unique, residential project in a desirable location- based on number of units, height, and design- rather than be limited to only a commercial or high-rise development.

### 4. Help local businesses to thrive.

Form-based code does not limit commercial businesses to specific zones, allowing local business owners to set up shop throughout the city.

This is beneficial to smaller business owners who cannot afford rent in more commercial areas of town.

Because Euclidean zoning can restrict businesses to commercial use zones only, they can easily be priced out of the city.

Additionally, form-based code might allow a building form that permits a business owner to live in an apartment located above their business. It allows business owners to find areas of the city in need of their service, instead of being forced to set up shop on the same block as their direct competition.

This, in turn, creates a more hospitable environment in which to do business.

### 5. Help Create More Walkable Neighborhoods.

A city becomes more walkable when form-based code is introduced.

Euclidean zoning tends to restrict neighborhoods to a specific use (so a neighborhood could be strictly residential, meaning it would take much longer to get to the nearest grocery store or park). The more walkable the neighborhood, the higher the quality of life.

This also helps reduce carbon emissions and makes for a healthier environment.