

# City of Fitchburg Zoning Code Rewrite

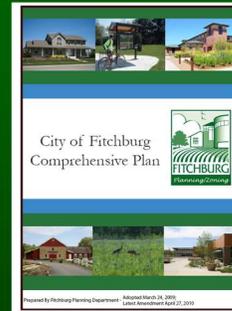
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Commercial Real Estate Brokers Breakfast  
October 13, 2010  
Planning / Zoning Department



# Fitchburg Comprehensive Plan

- Adopted by the Council on March 24, 2009
- Vision, Goals, Objectives, Policies
- Zoning decisions to be consistent with Comp Plan
- Calls for promotion of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND)



-The Comprehensive Plan establishes goals, objectives and policies for development within the City of Fitchburg.

-State Statute requires that all zoning decisions must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

-The Comprehensive Plan directs the City to consider a rewrite or revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to promote concepts from the Comprehensive Plan, such as Transit Oriented Development, mixed-use development, increased density and higher architectural standards.

-The Plan also calls for the promotion of Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND).

## Ch. 22 Zoning Code Updates

- Address issues raised by development community
- Allow more flexibility for standards zoning
- Address areas that have created problems for City

### -B-G (General Business District):

-Permitted use: Light manufacturing, assembly and warehousing accessory to a permitted or conditional use which shall not exceed more than 30% of the total uses by floor space (i.e. True Coffee retail coffee shop with coffee roasting operation at same site)

-Conditional use: Light manufacturing, assembly and warehousing, accessory and incidental to a permitted or conditional use, which may exceed 30% but no more than 45% of the total use by floor space.

### -I-G (General Industrial District) & I-S (Specialized Industrial District):

-Conditional use: Retail sales or services that exclusively or predominantly serve businesses and employees of the industrial area and are a minor part (less than 25%) of the total parcel usage by area, volume or similar measures. (i.e. – Industrial business with day care to serve the employees of the immediate industrial area)

### -R-H (Residential High Density District):

-Conditional use: Residential occupancy of greater than 8 dwelling units per building.

-PDD will remain an option – intended to produce a higher level of design than would be possible under other zoning districts.

# Traditional Neighborhood Design

- TND Principles (UW Ext.)
  - Designed for human scale
  - Mix of uses
  - Placement of parking lots & garages away from street
  - Mix of housing styles, types and sizes
  - Incorporates significant environmental features
  - Focus on walkability & connectivity



Source: Spring Creek  
Colorado Springs, CO



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Colorado Springs, CO

- What is TND? TND is the focus on the creation of compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. It is a planning concept based on traditional small towns and city neighborhoods.

-TND Principles (UW Extension):

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- Wisconsin's Smart Growth law required that by not later than Jan. 1, 2002, every city and village with a population of at least 12,500 shall enact an ordinance similar to the model traditional neighborhood development ordinance.

-Recently the State updated this requirement that by no later than Jan 1, 2011, the City must report to the State Dept. of Admin. Whether the City has enacted a TND Ordinance (WI ACT 351)

- The creation of a TND ordinance was also part of the Comprehensive Zoning Code Rewrite project. A form-based code is a type of zoning code that works to create TND.

## Fitchburg's TND - SmartCode

- SmartCode creates TND's
- Comprehensive Plan as driving force
- Predictable & easy to comply with Comp Plan
- Zoning for mixed-use
- Fulfills state's requirements for a TND Ordinance

-SmartCode is one type of Form-Based Code. The focus of Form-based Codes is on the creation of places, and it works to promote individual buildings to work and form a connected, walkable area. It's about shaping the form and public realm – Form based codes place primary emphasis on the form of the building and street with secondary emphasis on the use of a building.

-Model Code drafted by Andres Duany and others.

-The model code is customized or “calibrated” to a community based on its vision.

-The SmartCode is a zoning district primarily for new large greenfield mixed-use developments or smaller infill/redevelopments.

-The SmartCode is not designed for single uses such as industrial zones.

-SmartCode is generally not designed for small developments. Those developments should utilize one of the other standard zoning districts available (i.e. R-L, R-M, B-G, B-H, I-G, etc.)

-The SmartCode district would fulfill the State's requirement for a TND Ordinance.

# SmartCode

## Transect Zones

- T1: Natural
- T2: Rural
- T3: Sub-Urban



• T4: General Neighborhood

• T5: Urban Center



-SmartCode is based around transect zones.

-By ordering aspects of the built environment according to intensity of human use, the Transect helps to achieve the appropriate range and application of elements from natural through urban.

-For example, a street is more urban than a road, a curb more urban than a swale, a brick wall more urban than a wood wall, etc.

-Rules are created for each Transect Zone. There are appropriate levels of walkability, diversity, and density. In rural areas, natural preservation, low density, and vehicular accessibility are dominant. In more urban areas, mixed-uses, higher-density, and pedestrian (and possibly transit) accessibility are dominant.

Transect zones represent the various intensities of urbanity.

T1: Natural: Encompasses areas permanently protected from development. (wetlands, floodplains)

T2: Rural: more rural lifestyle, open space or natural space, woodland, agricultural lands – few homes other than those related to farming or conservation

T3: Sub-Urban: predominantly single-family residential with homes on moderate sized lots.

T4: General Urban: Bridge between T3 sub-urban character and T5's more urbanized character. Primarily residential with some limited mixed-use.

T5: Urban Center: Characterized by more mixed-use, intense higher density development

SmartCode works to intersperse the transect zones into a ¼ mile radius area, what is termed the “pedestrian shed”.

# SmartCode Elements

- Grid pattern
- Block perimeter limits
- Transect zone %
- Location of buildings
- Frontage buildout
- Prescribed open space



-SmartCode has a fixed set of rules, just like the other standard zoning districts within the City, and unlike Planned Development District.  
-Because SmartCode has fixed rules, it requires much less oversight by the various entities such as Plan Commission & Common Council. Given its lack of rules, PDD requires much oversight by the City entities.

Fixed set of rules = greater predictability

Range of choices = greater flexibility

-The SmartCode is calibrated to local conditions. However, it is very important that the impact of the changes made to the SmartCode do not unintentionally weaken its ability to produce more walkable, growth-controlled communities. When “calibrating” the Code, how changes will affect the basic principles or a TND Ordinance, including walkability, density, street network development, etc. must be carefully considered. Changing certain elements, such as the block perimeter, frontage buildout, etc. can affect the outcome and may work against achieving the desired development.

-SmartCode Elements:

- Grid Pattern – SmartCode and TND work off of a grid-type pattern, as shown on the top right diagram.
- Block perimeter: Each transect zone has a maximum block perimeter. Limiting the block perimeter helps keep the neighborhood walkable.
- Transect zone %: SmartCode works to create a diverse, mixed-use community with different uses as well as building types and densities.
- Location of buildings: As stated before, one of the principles of TND is placing garages and parking towards the backs while bringing the primary buildings, i.e. house, closer towards the street.
- Frontage buildout: This provision works to create spatial containment or a type of street wall, giving pedestrians the sense of enclosure. The requirements prescribes that a certain percent of the lot width be built at the primary setback, which is the setback closest to the frontage street.
- Prescribed open space: The SmartCode prescribes open space to be distributed throughout the neighborhood. It requires that a playground be placed within 1,000 feet of every residential unit and a main civic space be located within 800 feet of the geographic center of the pedestrian shed.
- As part of the zoning code rewrite process we have also updated some of the Ch. 15 Land Division standards, including adjusting the parkland dedication requirements for SmartCode developments. SmartCode parkland dedication based on sliding scale per transect zone as it is a more urban form of development.

# Neighborhood Design

- Key elements:
  - Neighborhood Structure
  - Housing Diversity
  - Connectivity
  - Block Structure
  - Transportation Choices
  - Civic Space
  - Mixed-Uses



The SmartCode is based on the premise of creating complete neighborhoods by incorporating ratios of T-zones into each community unit (1/4 mile radius pedestrian-shed). It contains the building blocks for creating complete neighborhoods.

The SmartCode, through its prescriptive, yet flexible standards, can help achieve this vision and form of mixed-use development. It encourages mixed-use, walkable, interconnected development that encourages a diversity of uses, forms, and intensities all within the 1/4 mile pedestrian shed.

# Fitchburg's SmartCode

- PlaceMakers LLC
- Calibration process
  - Issue Identification
  - 5 day Charrette
  - ZCR Steering Committee



- The model SmartCode was “calibrated” to Fitchburg with the assistance of PlaceMakers LLC consulting firm. The calibration process involved several stakeholder meetings including an issue identification process and a 5-day zoning charrette. During the charrette stakeholder meetings were held with various parties such as the Fire Department, Public Works, Ag Community, Business Community, and several others. The development community was well represented throughout the charrette and were closely involved in the calibration process.

-PlaceMakers worked with various development teams to draft illustrative examples of how property could be developed under the SmartCode for both greenfield and infill developments.

## Fitchburg SmartCode – T3

- 5-30% (likely to see 30%)
- Predominantly single-family residential
- Large to moderate sized lots: ~10,000 - 12,000 sf
- Garage access typically on the side of the house accessed by 10 ft. wide driveway



- As mentioned above, a TND is comprised of the T3, T4 and T5 transects.
- The T3 zone is predominantly single-family residential with homes on moderate sized lots.
- Garage access is typically on the side of the house and is accessed by a 10 ft. wide driveway

-The placement of the garage is a critical element of TND and the SmartCode. One of the key desired outcomes of the SmartCode is to create communities that are walkable and attractive to pedestrian activity. A garage located in front of a home places emphasis on the automobile, while a garage in the back of the home, tucked back from the street, creates a more pedestrian friendly street environment.

## T3 Cont.



Photo Source: Steve Mouzon  
Illustrative Drawing: PlaceMakers LLC

Example images of T3 streets and buildings.

## Fitchburg SmartCode – T4

- 30-65%
- Primarily single-family residential with 5% “other uses” (tavern, coffee shop, corner market, civic spaces, etc.)
- Smaller sized single-family lots: ~7,200 sf
- Similar to Seminole Glen Townhomes & smaller single family lots in Swan Creek
- Alleys/Lanes for access to garage



-T4 is the primary transect within the district, meaning the majority of a development would likely be T4.

-Lot sizes are similar to those in Middleton Hills or similar to the Seminole Glen Townhomes

-Residences on smaller lots with more shallow setbacks.

-In the T4 zone, garages are typically accessed by rear alleys or lanes rather than the standards front yard driveway.

-T4 has a smaller block size than the T3 as it is more urban in nature. Streets are smaller in this transect than in the T3, are organized in a grid pattern and there is more on street parking.

## T4 Cont.

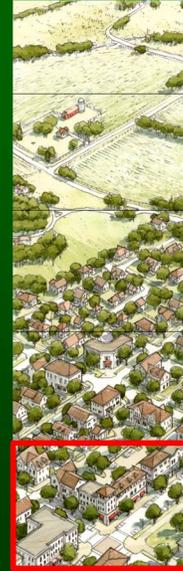


Photo Source: Steve Mouzon  
Illustrative Drawing: PlaceMakers LLC

Example images of T4 buildings and streets.

## Fitchburg SmartCode – T5

- Mix of high-density residential with commercial
- Located along primary thoroughfare
- Urban lifestyle with higher level of activity



-The T5 transect is characterized by more mixed use development, including shops, offices, live-work units, townhouses and apartments with a few single family at the edge.

-T5 is a more urban lifestyle with a higher level of activity. A bustling place with services and amenities within walking distance of other Transect zones.

-Urban development - may find parking structure.

-Heart of the development

## T5 Cont.



Photo Source: Steve Mouzon



Illustrative Drawing: PlaceMakers LLC

Example images of T5 buildings and streets.

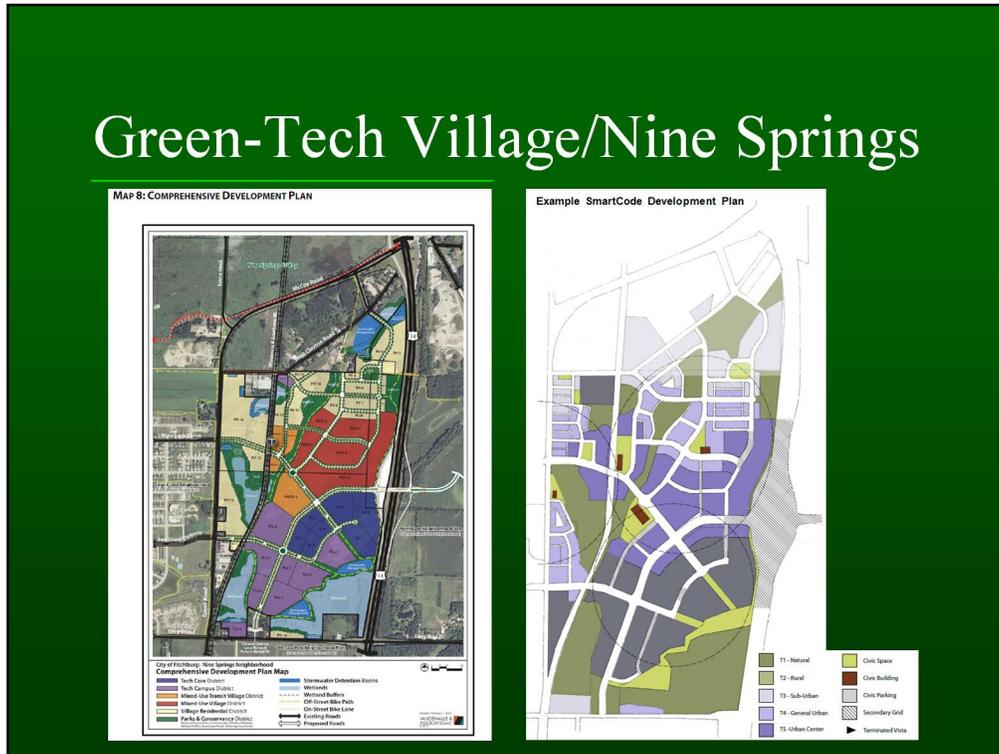
## SmartCode Implementation

- SmartCode is a new zoning district
- SmartCode is another option for development
- Additional option for developers to meet the Comprehensive Plan

-SmartCode is a new zoning district added to our updated Euclidean and PDD zoning districts.

- It is another option for development and an additional option to meet the Comprehensive Plan

# Green-Tech Village/Nine Springs



Throughout the Zoning Code Rewrite process the City has had an opportunity to undertake a public/private planning effort for SmartCode planning in the Green-Tech Village / Nine Springs Neighborhood. The City hired PlaceMakers LLC to work with the GTV/Nine Springs development team on drafting a SmartCode plan for the neighborhood.

Chris Armstrong of Avante properties is here to share with you the details of this SmartCode planning effort.

# Implementation Workshop

- October 13, 2010 – PlaceMakers, LLC  
City Hall Council Chambers

4:00 – 4:30 p.m.: Designing Under the SmartCode

4:30 – 4:45 p.m.: Break

4:45 – 5:15 p.m.: Developing a SmartCode Application

5:15 – 6:00 p.m.: Q & A / Discussion



Questions?

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Thank You!

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Respecting the Past, Safeguarding the Present, and Assuring a Vital Future –  
*with better zoning.*