

## CHARRETTES AND FORM BASED CODE

A charrette is a type of participatory planning process that assembles citizens and specific stakeholder groups with an interdisciplinary design team to create a design and implementation plan for a specific project. It differs from a traditional community consultation process in that it is design based. In addition, as opposed to traditional planning exercises that can take months or longer to be finalized, charrettes are compressed into a short period of time. Charrettes can be used to create a wide range of plans including town center plans, transit-oriented development plans, and wide-scale redevelopment projects.

A key component of a charrette is time compression. For four to seven days, participants work together in brainstorming sessions, sketching workshops, and other exercises through a series of feedback loops. Meetings take place with participants coming together as a group at set times or breaking off into smaller working groups. Behind the scenes, the design team works constantly.

The entire community, however, does not need to take several days off to participate. Planners involve as many stakeholders as early as possible in a set of short, intensive design meetings. In these collaborative, hands-on sessions, participants help planners root out potential problems, identify and debate solutions, and create a buildable, realistic design plan that goes beyond a simple vision statement or wish list.

In order to implement the final master design plan, form based code is used to make the vision into a reality. Form based code is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than traditional separation of uses zoning regulations) as the organizing principle for the code. A form based code is a regulation, not a mere guideline, and offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulations.

Form based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form, scale and character of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types

This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters, often to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general policy statements, form based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. It allows a community to be proactive by dictating to potential developers the type of development a municipality wants from a big picture perspective as opposed to a reactive approach that encourages a series of zoning

decisions that are often unrelated decisions on a case by case or lot by lot basis. Furthermore, the implementation of form based code streamlines the zoning application process. If a developer adheres to the code, approval can be done in one or two months (thus saving money and time) instead of the protracted twelve to eighteen month process that confronts many applicants.

LINKS:

**Charrettes:**

National charrette institute: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/nci/>

Simsbury charrette results: [https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1216/f/file/file/simsbury\\_charrette\\_report\\_final\\_june5.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1216/f/file/file/simsbury_charrette_report_final_june5.pdf)

**Form based code:**

Form based code institute: <https://formbasedcodes.org/>

Canton, CT form based code document:

[https://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/19342/19345/19617/45153/45254/45236/47133/TOC\\_Form-Based\\_Code\\_-\\_Effective\\_04-10-18.pdf](https://www.townofcantonct.org/filestorage/19342/19345/19617/45153/45254/45236/47133/TOC_Form-Based_Code_-_Effective_04-10-18.pdf)

Simsbury form based code document:

<http://www.growsmartri.org/training/Municipal%20Examples%20for%20Form-Based%20Zoning/Simsbury%20CT%20Center%20FBC%20and%20Regulating%20Plan%2001.21.11.pdf>