

Preamble

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FORM-BASED CODES AND THE TRANSECT: PRINCIPLES

Form-Based Codes

The Form-Based Code is an alternative approach to zoning that reinforces walkable, sustainable mixed-use environments and development and builds upon community character. The Livermore Development Code uses a Form-Based Coding approach in order to achieve the General Plan's goals of sustainability and sensitive high-quality infill. Form-Based Coding also meets the objectives of the Caltrans Community-Based Transportation Planning Grant, with which this project was partially funded, by creating a code that focuses on the creation of compact, high-quality projects, which will lay a solid foundation for smart growth policies and practices in the City.

Form-based codes foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. These codes are adopted into city or county law as regulations, not mere guidelines. Form-based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning.

Form-Based Codes Institute

The first step in this approach was the application of Form-Based Coding to the designated Focus Areas – primarily older neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. The code framework thus established will encourage further Form-Based Code application throughout the City in the future, including the possibilities of optional Form-Based Coding overlays for large greyfield sites, the creation and use of Transect zones for future projects such as a BART Station Specific Plan, and the creation of subdivision standards and Transect zone regulations for the limited number of new neighborhoods that may be built. The ultimate goal is to contain growth in Livermore, preserve the existing historic character of neighborhoods surrounding the downtown, regulate for high-quality infill, and create a predictable process for developers and the community to help meet these goals.

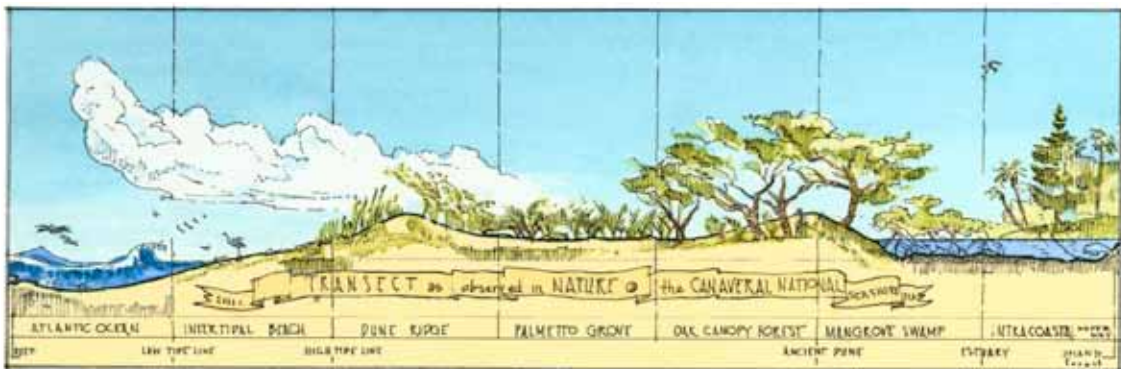
The Transect

The Transect is an organizing principle often used in Form-Based Coding that focuses first on the intended character and type of place and second on the uses within. This flips the framework used in conventional or Euclidean zoning, in which use is the primary focus and form comes second. Transect zones are used to reinforce existing or to create new walkable mixed-use urban environments.

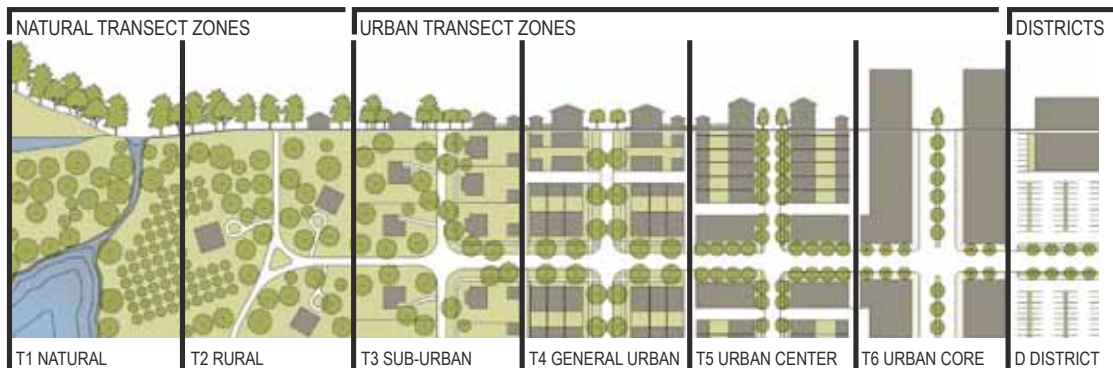
“The rural-to-urban Transect is a means for considering and organizing the human habitat in a continuum of intensity that ranges from the most rural condition to the most urban. It provides a standardized method for differentiating between the intentions for urban form in various areas using gradual transitions rather than harsh distinctions. The zones are primarily classified by the physical intensity of the built form, the relationship between nature and the built environment, and the complexity of uses within the zone.”

Form-Based Code Institute

The model Transect for American towns is divided into six Transect zones or T-zones: Natural (T1), Rural (T2), Sub-urban (T3), General Urban (T4), Urban Center (T5), and Urban Core (T6), together with a Special District (SD) designation for areas with specialized purposes (e.g., heavy industrial, transportation, entertainment, or university districts, among other possibilities). Each T-zone is given a number: higher numbers designate progressively more urban zones, and lower numbers designate more rural zones.



RURAL ||||| TRANSECT ||||| URBAN



The Livermore Transect

The Livermore-specific Transect was created through thorough documentation of existing conditions and uses, both old and new classifications. For instance, the Natural and Rural zones from the previously established zoning code, including the zones currently called Open Space, Planned Development/Agriculture, South Livermore Valley/Agriculture and Residential Rural, will keep their current names due to the familiarity of the existing terminology and system. Meanwhile, the Form-Based Code (FBC) Focus Areas north and south of downtown will be reclassified into the T3 and T4 Transect zones. Placeholders have been left in this document to allow for the future creation and application of T5 and T6 zones, which were not used in the FBC Focus Areas, but which could be applicable to future BART station area planning and the downtown area. In the Livermore application of the rural-to-urban Transect, the T4 Transect zone is further broken down into sub-zones. The first level of specialization introduces a T4 Neighborhood and a T4 Main Street, which are compatible in scale but require different types of buildings and physical forms – residential in the Neighborhood zones and commercial in the Main Street zones. These classifications can be further specialized with an “Open” designation, which allows for more variety in intended uses. For example, a T4 Main Street – Open still requires commercial buildings, but the allowed uses for the ground and upper floors of these buildings are more flexible.

In this code, the Special Districts are categorized as Non-Transect zones. These zones are typically more reliant on automobile and other vehicle use and must be regulated with consideration for this context. With these requirements in mind, the updated Development Code has retained the naming conventions of the past code for these zones, and only minor changes have been made to their regulations, such as the reformatting of the text into easy-to-read tables. Some zones with similar intents have been combined to make the code easier to understand and administer.

All of the development regulations within this code document have been carefully considered in relation to their context or setting along the Transect, including parking and building form. Future regulations, including Specific Plans and any additional sustainability standards, should consider using the Transect as a framework in order to further reinforce this common vocabulary.

The Livermore Transect Zones and Intent

T3N	T4N	T4N-O
		
T3-Neighborhood	T4-Neighborhood	T4-Neighborhood-Open
Desired Form	Desired Form	Desired Form
Residential	Residential	Residential
Intent	Intent	Intent
<p>This zone's primary intent is to allow additions and new development that respect and protect the integrity and quality of the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown.</p> <p>This zone allows for new additions and single-family houses to be built in the scale and character of the existing neighborhood. Carriage house units provide additional housing opportunities within these walkable neighborhoods.</p>	<p>This zone's primary intent is to build upon the unique characteristics of Livermore's walkable downtown neighborhoods while allowing them to evolve. A mixture of different small-footprint, medium-density building types such as bungalow courts, duplexes, and courtyard apartments help reinforce the walkable nature of the neighborhood and support neighborhood-serving commercial uses adjacent to this zone.</p>	<p>The primary intent of this zone is to provide an appropriate transition from a neighborhood main street or downtown environment into residential areas, and to provide flexible buildings in a residential form that allows neighborhood-serving commercial and service uses to expand as the market desires.</p>

T4MS-O	T4MS
	
T4-Main Street-Open	T4-Main Street
Desired Form	Desired Form
Commercial/Shopfront	Commercial/Shopfront
Intent	Intent
<p>The primary intent of this zone is to provide an appropriate transition from the neighborhood main street into residential areas, and to provide flexible ground-floor spaces in a commercial form that can allow the ground-floor “shopfront” environment to expand as the market desires.</p>	<p>The primary intent of this zone is to integrate vibrant main street commercial and retail environments into neighborhoods that will provide day-to-day commercial amenities within walking distance, reinforce an existing or potential transit stop, and serve as a focal point for the neighborhoods.</p>

Using the Transect to Meet Principles

The Transect can be applied at various scales across the City to meet the following principles:

A. The City-Guiding Principles

1. Preserve and enhance community character;
2. Growth: encourage appropriately scaled infill and development;
3. Alternatives to cars: reinforce through the protection and expansion of extensive trails and bicycle routes and patterns that support more frequent transit service;
4. Preserve agriculture and open space at edges - clear boundary;
5. Reinforce a pattern of walkable neighborhoods: support existing walkable neighborhoods and retrofit those that are not walkable; and
6. Support a range of vibrant human habitats along the Transect.

B. The Neighborhood-Guiding Principles

1. Support a diversity of housing choices appropriate to location along the Transect;
2. Encourage and incubate small local businesses;
3. Place services within a safe, comfortable walking distance of homes; and
4. Create a framework of well-designed streets that are safe and secure for pedestrians and bicycles.

C. The Block and Building-Guiding Principles

1. Build upon and reinforce the unique characteristics of Livermore;
2. Ensure that each building plays a role in creating a better whole, not just a good building;
3. Meet the changing needs of residents;
4. Ensure that architecture and landscape grow from local climate, history, and building practice; and
5. Put civic buildings in important locations and make sure their form is appropriate to their civic stature.

HOW TO USE THE CODE

Organization

The following text is advisory only and is intended to give a brief overview of the overall Development Code.

Preamble:

This Part introduces the rural-to-urban Transect system and the Livermore-specific Transect calibration that forms the framework of the Code. It also gives an overview of the various parts of the Code and illustrates how to use it.

Part 1: Intent and Applicability

This Part establishes the legal foundation for the Code document and includes the purpose, authority, responsibility for administration, applicability, and rules of interpretation.

Part 2: General to All

This Part provides the design standards for the subdivision of property in the City of Livermore.

Part 3: Specific to Zones

This Part contains regulations for two types of zones: Transect zones and non-Transect zones. The Transect zones are intended to reinforce a walkable, transit-supportive urban environment, and the non-Transect zones are more drivable, suburban environments.

Part 4: General to Zones

This Part establishes development standards for topics such as parking, landscape and signage. These standards supplement the regulations in Part 3.

Part 5: Building Types

This Part establishes development standards for building types such as carriage house, single-family, bungalow court, duplex, townhouse, fourplex and sixplex, courtyard apartment, live/work, and commercial block that form the foundation for Form-Based Code application within the Transect zones. These standards are only applicable to the Transect zones.

Part 6: Specific to Uses

This Part contains regulations that apply to specific uses in addition to regulations set forth in previous Parts. These uses include Home Occupation, Child Day Care, and Bed and Breakfast Inns. This Part is divided into regulations that apply to all zones and those that only apply to non-Transect Zones.

Part 7: Thoroughfare Types

This Part establishes a collection of pre-approved street designs intended to be used in the creation of new streets and the transformation of existing streets to reinforce a pedestrian-oriented environment. These thoroughfare standards supplement other City approved street standards.

Part 8: Civic Space Types

This Part establishes a collection of pre-approved civic space types intended to be integrated into medium and large projects such as those in the Neighborhood Mixed-Use Zone. These civic space standards supplement other City civic space or park standards that are only applicable to the Transect zones.

Part 9: Permits and Procedures

This Part provides the detailed process by which development will be permitted by the City and the requirements related to specific types of submittals.

Part 10: Subdivision

This Part provides the detailed process by which land shall be subdivided.

Part 11: Definitions

This Part provides the definitions used throughout the Code.

Part 12: Zoning Map

This Part provides the Zoning Map.

Steps for Using the Code

Simple Process Diagram

Step	Instructions	Code Article
1	Find zone for your parcel	12 Zoning Map
2	Comply with all <i>applicable</i> standards in General to All	2 General to All
3	Comply with standards specific to your zone	3 Specific to Zones
4	Comply with standards general to all zones	4 General to Zones
5	Follow the procedures and comply with requirements for permit application	9 Permit Procedures and Nonconforming Provisions

Expanded Process Diagram

