



## WHAT IS ZONING AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?

If you don't know much about zoning, that's ok! We hope that through this process, we'll help you understand why it's important and why we are recommending the changes proposed.

**OVERVIEW:** Zoning regulations provide rules regarding how every parcel of land can be used and developed within the City. Zoning laws exist so that permitted uses occurring on one property do not negatively impact anyone else's property, while also ensuring property values are maintained. Zoning can also ensure that there is orderly development within a City and should provide certainty to property owners on what they can expect to occur around them and certainty to developers on what the community expects and desires when development occurs.

### **EUCLIDIAN ZONING MODEL VERSUS FORM-BASED CODE**

Norwalk has traditionally followed a Euclidian zoning model (the name stems from the 1926 Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty court case about zoning, not Euclidean geometry), which separates land use by different types. For example, not allowing industrial uses, such as a distribution facility, in a residential area. This model is what most communities continue to employ, and, in many cases, it makes sense to separate certain uses from one another. However, this form of zoning is not appropriate for mixed use environments or in all parts of our urban environment. The [2019 Citywide Plan](#) recommends incorporating "form-based" zoning techniques into the updated regulations where appropriate.

Form-based code seeks to provide predictable regulations that result in desirous developments where the physical form and built environment are the prime factors and Use is not the paramount driver of decisions. That is not to say that Uses aren't regulated. We are very cognizant of the impacts of certain uses such as contractor yards and heavier industrial users and have set up the regulations to ensure the impacts of more intense uses do not negatively impact residential areas and uses that are proposed in proximity to residential areas are compatible.

### **FORM-BASED CODE?**

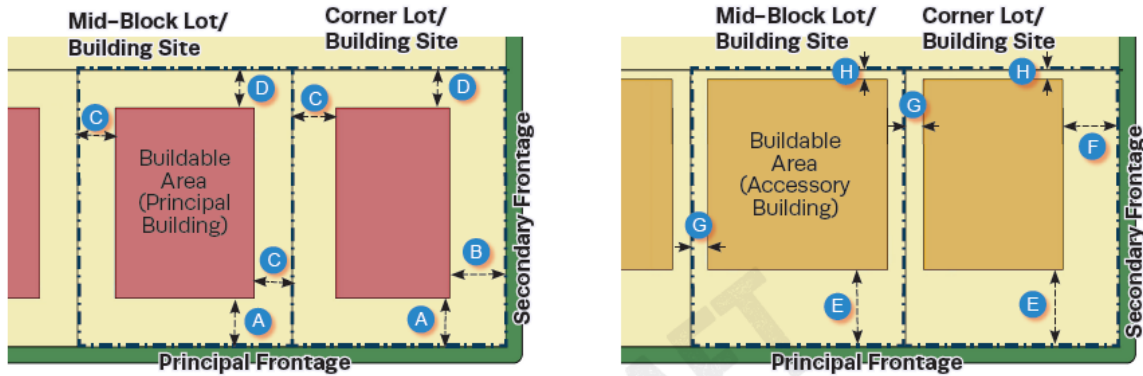
*"Form-based codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals."*

excerpt from

[Form-Based Code Institute](#)

# HYBRID DRAFT ZONING REGULATIONS

Our draft code is a true hybrid code, blending both Euclidean zoning and form-based code. Standard (Euclidian) zoning is employed in our traditional single-family areas and a form-based



approach to our multi-family and commercial areas. Regardless of the zone, the draft regulations rely on graphics, diagrams and clear visuals to illustrate what is allowed and desired within each zoning district. In addition, certain areas of the City are designated as Village Districts, as allowed in [§8-2j of the CT General Statutes](#), which adds an additional layer of protection regarding building and site design.

We feel this model provides both certainty for all property owners and enough flexibility and safeguards to allow the appropriate development, while protecting the cherished parts of the City.

We recognize that this is a big change and hope that through our outreach process that by the time the new regulations are adopted, everyone understands what is being considered and what the implications are.

