Marin County Form-Based Code (FBC)
Agenda

• **What** are Objective Design Standards?
• **Why** should Communities Have Them?
• **Where** should Objective Design Standards Apply?
• **How** will Marin County Create a Form-Based Code?
Overview of Objective Design + Development Standards
What are Objective Design standards?

“Standards that involve no personal or subjective judgment by a public official”

Source: California Govt Code 65658.5(a)(1)(8)
Examples

• **Building Height:** “Any building with commercial uses on the ground floor shall have a ground-floor height of least 14 feet, measured from floor to ceiling”

• **Parking:** “Curb cuts and driveways providing access to parking facilities shall be from an alley or secondary street”

• **Building Mass:** “Buildings shall not exceed a length of 100’ on any side”
What are Design Guidelines?

Examples:
In most cases, design guidelines are **not** objective:

- “Enhance the appearance and livability of the community”
- “Shall not require excessive grading”
- “Shall not substantially harm major views”
Why should Marin County have Objective Design Standards?

• Ensure that Marin County is **positioned as strongly as possible** to achieve **high quality design** for new multi-family and mixed-use buildings.
Where would Objective Design + Development Standards apply?

- Ultimately, this is **decided by each jurisdiction**.

They may apply to:

- Sites where state streamlining requirements might apply
- Other multi-family or commercial areas
- Long-term resource for facilitating future land use decisions
Where would Objective Design + Development Standards not be used?

- Single-family zoned sites
- A project that requires an amendment to the general plan, a community plan, or zoning
- A project that would result in one or more significant public health and safety impacts (e.g., flood zone)
How do Objective Design Standards relate to new state law?

Trends and requirements in state law include:

• More ministerial approvals
• Limited subjective review of projects
• More CEQA Exemptions

In many cases, Objective Design Standards may be one of the most important ways for local jurisdictions to influence and direct design of multi-family and mixed-use buildings.
Approach to Marin County’s Form-Based Code (FBC)
Marin ODDS Approach: Shared Toolkit

Prepare Objective Standards through a Toolkit for the range of physical character in 10 towns and the County.

Each jurisdiction to further customize the content before adoption.

We have worked with your staff to customize the County’s FBC.
Key Elements of the Marin Approach

Existing Conditions Analysis
Countywide Survey
Place Types and Building Types Atlas
Micro-scale Analysis
Site Testing Analysis
Development Pro-Forma
Place Types and Building Types Atlas
Site Testing

- Yield analyses to help understand what types of standards might be needed.
- And to help customize the zones to your needs.
Palette of 8 Zones and Standards

T3 Zones

T4 Zones

T5 Zones

Palette of 8 Zones and Standards

Palette of 8 Zones and Standards

Palette of 8 Zones and Standards
Key Components of Marin County’s FBC
Marin County’s FBC

Title X: Objective Design and Development Standards

- Preamble
- Ch 1 Introduction and Applicability
- Ch 2 Palette of Zones
- Ch 3 Zone Standards
- Ch 4 Specific to Uses
- Ch 5 General Standards
- Ch 6 Specific to Buildings
- Ch 7 Specific to Frontages
- Ch 8 Specific to Architecture
- Ch 9 Specific to Signage
- Ch 10 Specific to Large Sites
- Ch 11 Administration
- Ch 12 Definitions
Building Type Standards
6 Architectural Styles to choose from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Architectural Styles</th>
<th>Contemporary</th>
<th>Craftsman</th>
<th>Main Street Classical</th>
<th>Mediterranean</th>
<th>Tudor</th>
<th>Victorian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Typical Characteristics</strong></td>
<td>Long, low-sloped roofs with simple awnings and exposed rafter tails</td>
<td>Horizontally proportioned openings</td>
<td>Symmetrical facade composition with proportions that imply load-bearing masonry structure</td>
<td>Horizontally proportioned openings with vertically proportioned windows</td>
<td>Horizontally proportioned openings with vertically proportioned openings</td>
<td>Horizontally proportioned openings with vertically proportioned openings with cornice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table a-DL-A: Architectural Styles Overview

Table a-DL-A: Architectural Styles Overview (Continued)
Architectural Style Standards
Public Realm Standards

Table 04.060.A: Required Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Improvements</th>
<th>Development Scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infill Design Site on Existing Block</td>
<td>Development consists of one design site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or More Design Sites on Existing Block</td>
<td>Development consists of two or more design sites that are less than half of the block face. New Block(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than Half of Existing Block</td>
<td>Development consists of two or more design sites that are more than half of the block face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Block(s)</td>
<td>Development creates one or more new blocks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Sidewalk. Add missing segment(s) along abutting front and/or side street.

b. Sidewalk. Repair uneven segments along abutting front and/or side street.

c. Street Trees. Add street trees along abutting front and/or side street where there is adequate room to also maintain sufficient width for traffic lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, and bicycle facilities. See Subsection 04.030.A.4.(2).

d. Crosswalk Improvements. Add crosswalk.

e. Bicycle Facilities. Add bicycle facilities required in Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

Table 04.060.B: Public Frontage Types Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Frontage Types</th>
<th>Specific Standards</th>
<th>E1</th>
<th>E2</th>
<th>E3</th>
<th>E4</th>
<th>E5</th>
<th>E6</th>
<th>E7</th>
<th>E8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Street</td>
<td>04.060.C.1</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avenue/Boulevard</td>
<td>04.060.C.2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>04.060.C.3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 04.060.C: Public Frontage Assemblies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assembly. The type and dimension of curbs, medians, and planters.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Width</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.060.C.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.060.C.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.060.C.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See below for required elements of each assembly.

a. Curb. The detailing of the edge of the roadway pavement, incorporating drainage.

   i. Type. Raised Curb. Raised Curb. Raised Curb.
   
   ii. Height. 8” min. 8” min. 12” min.

   Note: Placement of curb ramps shall match the desired path of pedestrian travel. See Marin County Standard Plan for curb ramp design.

c. Planter. The area that accommodates street trees and other landscaping.

   
   ii. Types. Planting Strips along curbs. Tree Wells (must be located between walkway and curb).
   
   iii. Width. 5’ min. 6’ min. 4’ min.
Applying the FBC to large sites

- For lots exceed a length that may allow for a new street in response to existing context
- When lots are larger than few acres and may allow for new streets and blocks
Why? To fit new buildings to the context

Existing Super-Block = large buildings

Outcome of FBC

Key:  
- New Buildings’ footprints do not fit existing context
- New Buildings’ footprints fit existing context
Apply maximum block-size standards

- Break up super blocks and promote a transit-friendly street & block network
Apply maximum lot size standards

- Reinforce the existing lot size pattern through lot standards coordinated to building size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Super-Block</th>
<th>Outcome of FBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Key: ➔ New Lots considering existing context (width and depth)
Apply building type and frontage standards

Existing Super-Block = large buildings

Outcome of FBC

Key: New Buildings’ footprints do not fit existing context

Key: New Buildings’ footprints fit existing context
### Relief from the Standards

#### Table x.11.030.A: Adjustments to Standards (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Relief Type for Design Sites Over 6% Slope</th>
<th>Required Findings</th>
<th>Allowed Administrative Relief</th>
<th>Reference to Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Design Site Dimensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Depth</td>
<td>i. Existing slope exceeds 15% grade for over 50% of design site depth.</td>
<td>20% max. of the standard</td>
<td>Subsection 3 of the zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. An existing or new design site can be developed consistent with the intent of the zone as described in Subsection 1 of the zone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Width</td>
<td>i. Existing slope exceeds 15% grade for over 25% of design site width.</td>
<td>10% max. of the standard</td>
<td>Subsection 3 of the zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. An existing or new design site can be developed consistent with the intent of the zone as described in Subsection 1 of the zone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Building Setbacks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Front, Side Street, Side or Rear</td>
<td>i. Existing slope exceeds 15% grade.</td>
<td>Reduction in the minimum setback up to within 5' of the zone line. Where side street setback is 5' minimum, reduction in the minimum setback up to within 3' of the design site line.</td>
<td>Subsection 5 of the zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. An existing tree, rock outcrop, and/or utility infrastructure prevents compliance with the standard.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. An existing or new design site can be developed consistent with the intent of the zone as described in Subsection 1 of the zone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress

- Toolkit delivered February 2021 (1 year from start)
- 2 towns have adopted a further customized version (Corte Madera, Belvedere)
- 4 towns are in progress with customization (County, Sausalito, San Anselmo, Fairfax)
- 3 towns intend to use the Toolkit (Novato, Ross, Larkspur)
- 2 others are not using the Toolkit (Tiburon, Mill Valley)