



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities



National Complete Streets Coalition



State Smart Transportation Initiative



Transportation for America

FBCs Can Fix What Zoning Broke

April, 11, 2024

Tocarra Nicole Thomas, AICP

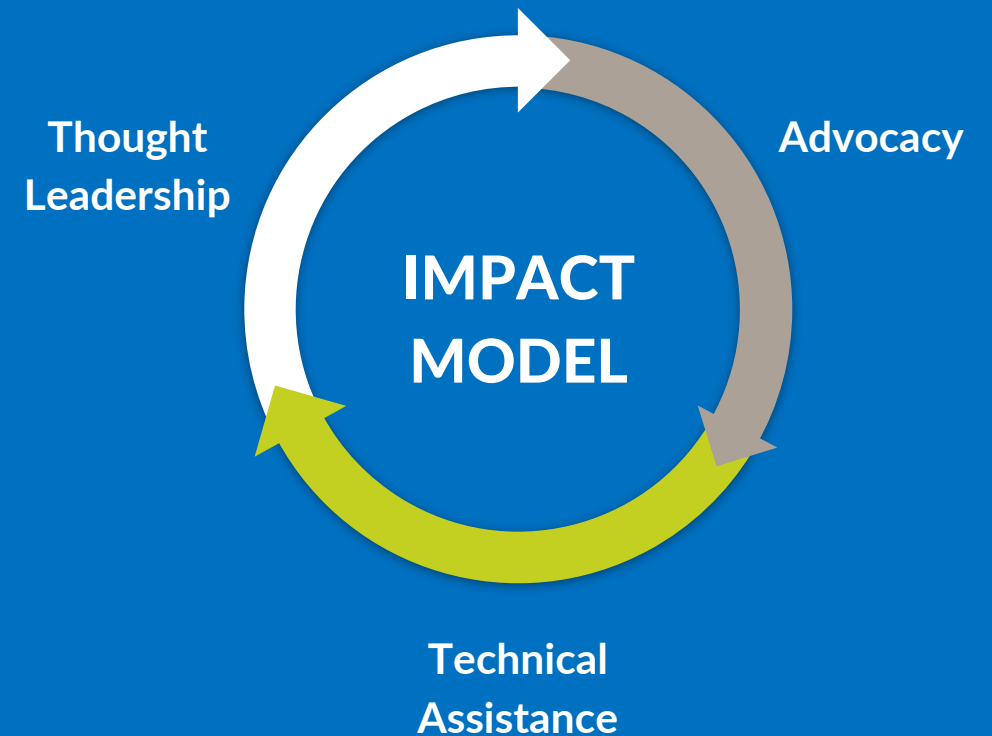
Director, Land Use and Development | Executive Director Form-Based Codes Institute

Smart Growth America a National Nonprofit

OUR NORTH STAR

We envision a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient.

We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.





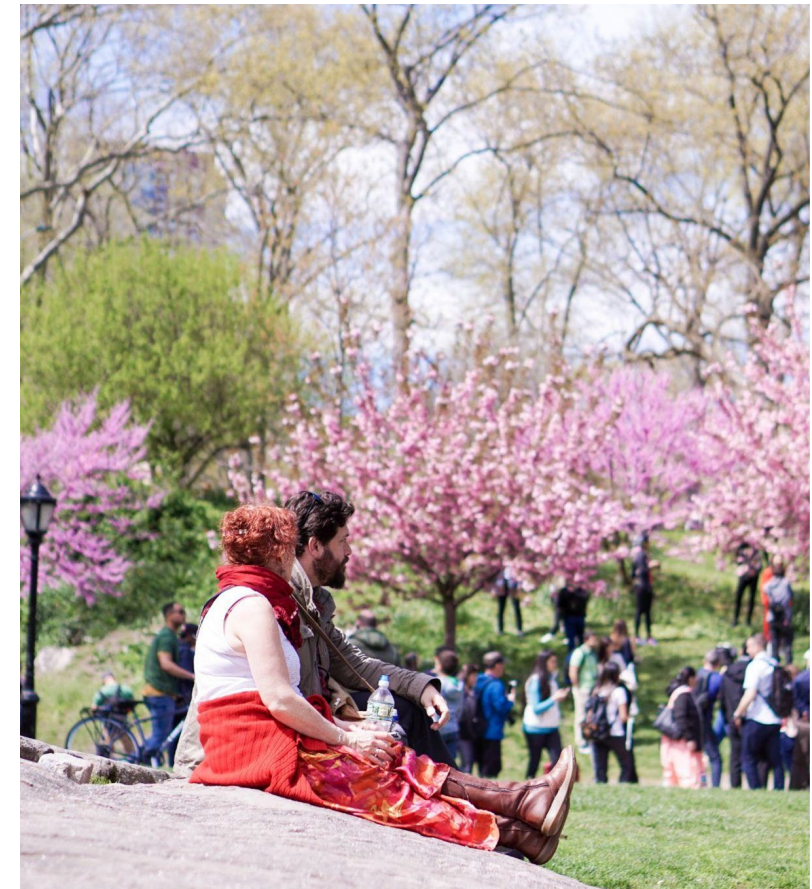
PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES



**CLIMATE CHANGE
AND RESILIENCE**



**ADVANCING RACIAL
EQUITY**



**HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**



Form-Based Codes Institute an SGA Program

FBC Classes

Codes for
Communities



FBC Award

More than 400 Form-Based Codes have been adopted into law in the United States and Canada, and many more are currently being developed.





Toccarra Nicole Thomas, *AICP*
**Director Land Use and
Development |
Executive Director FBCI**

Spheres of Influences at SGA:
Zoning Innovation, and Housing
Attainability

Practical Planning Experience:
Municipal Leadership,
Comprehensive Planning, Zoning
Administration, Community
Development, Redevelopment

Before We Get Started Houston, TX

“The Department of Planning and Development regulates land development in Houston and within its extraterritorial jurisdiction, ETJ. The City of Houston does not have zoning, but development is governed by ordinance codes that address how property can be subdivided. The City codes do not address land use.”

<https://www.houstontx.gov/planning/DevelopRegs/#~:text=The%20Department%20of%20Planning%20and,do%20not%20address%20land%20use.>



Incremental Approaches are great (especially for communities not ready for Comprehensive Reform) but have to get going... remember the cautionary tale of Hydra...incremental approaches can cause unintended consequences



These are big accusations...

Illegal to Build Any
Housing Type Besides SF

Discretionary Review
Process: used to delay
and deny approvals

Separation of Uses
Leading to Car
Dependent Sprawl

NIMBYs Coopt the
Discretionary Review
Process to Protect the
Status Quo

Federal Polices Historic
and Current Using
Traditional Zoning to
Promote Segregation
and Inequality

Minimum Lot Sizes And
Prohibition On ADUs

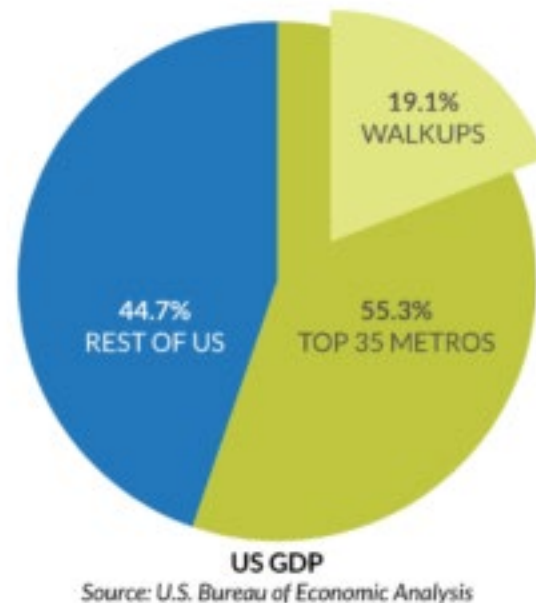
Expensive Submittal
Requirements

Density Controls
Arbitrarily Kept
Communities Low
Density Preventing
Effective Transit

Zoning essentially makes the development of desirable places illegal...From a pragmatic standpoint, zoning stole integrated, people oriented vibrant communities from us nationally, exposed us to health risks, and is bad fiscal policy/costs us money.



Zoning is Bad Fiscal Policy, exposes pedestrians to unnecessary health exposures by forcing competition for the limited public space between humans and cars, and leaves money on the table! People are willing to pay more for walkable, smart growth communities...



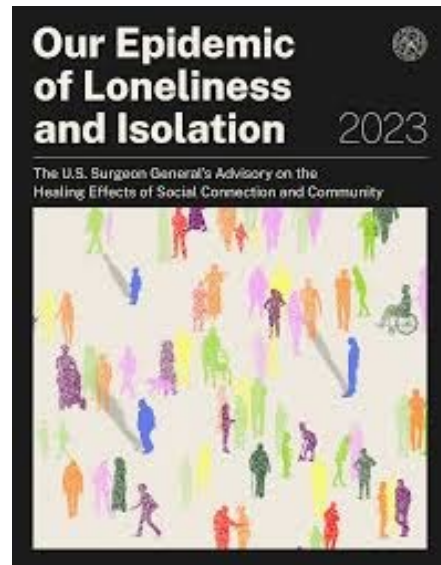
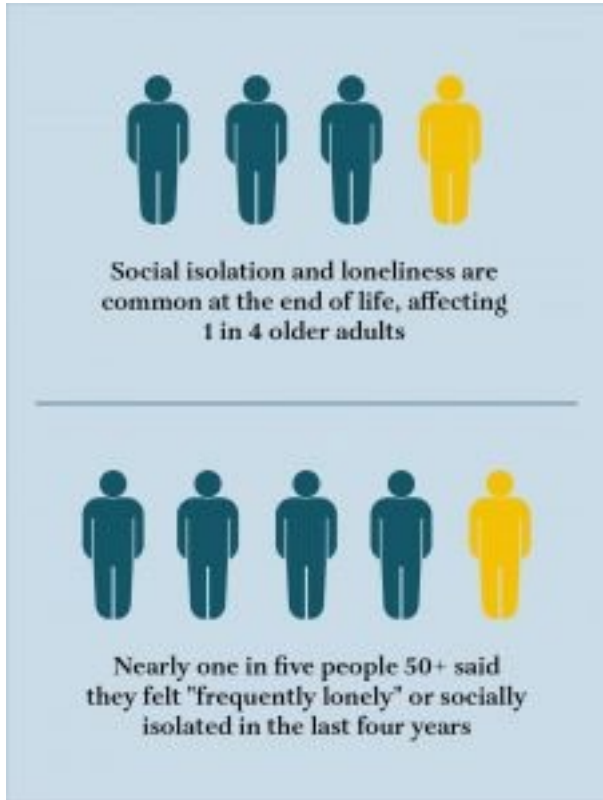
The report found that 19.1% of the total U.S. real GDP and 6.8% of the U.S. population are located in walkable urban places that represent just 1.2% of total landmass of the top 35 U.S. metros.

Sprawl Costs America \$1Trillion Annually in infrastructure installation and maintenance, and service delivery

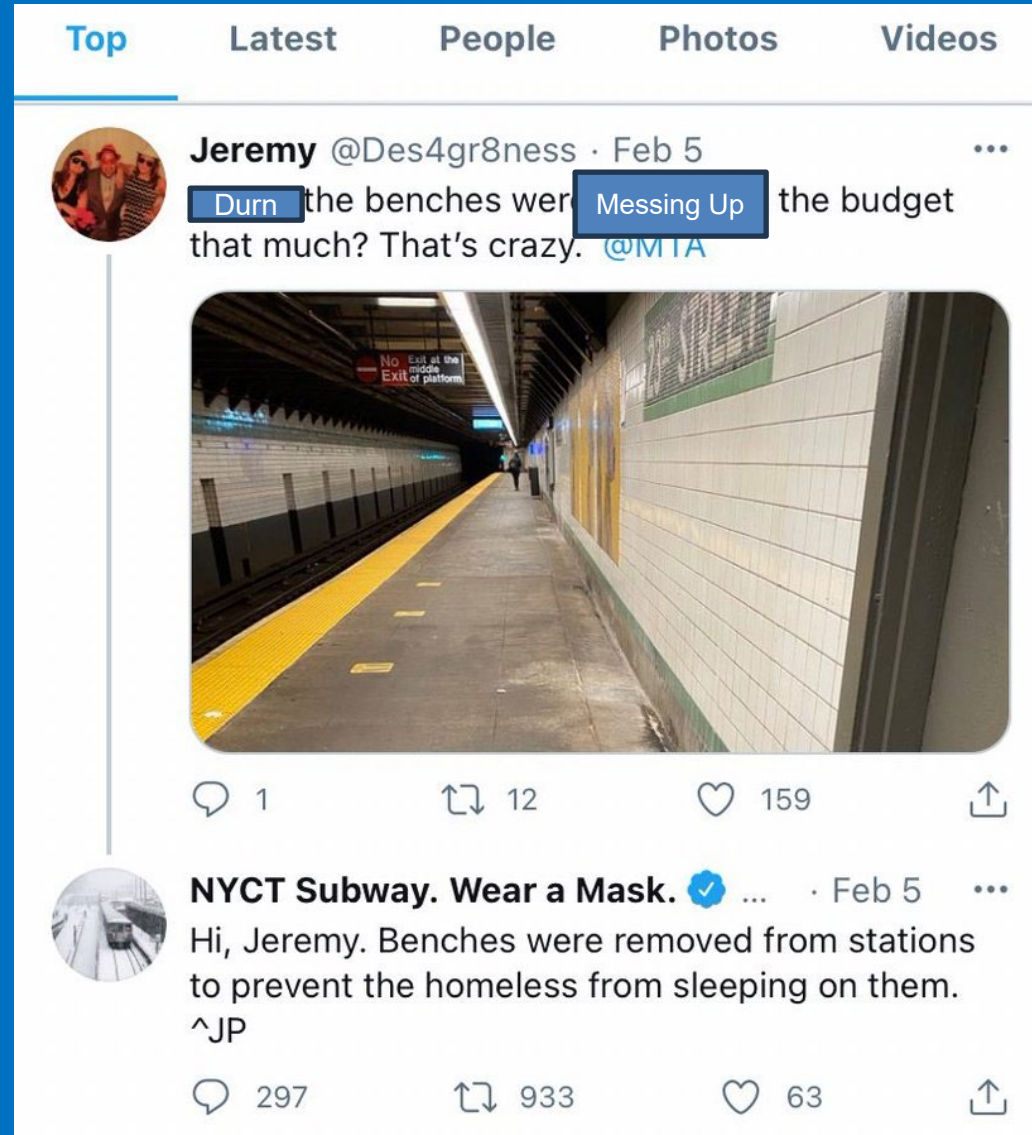
Communities with FBC experience generate more tax revenue for local governments (\$65 million)

Foot Traffic Ahead
2023

Social Isolation is now an Official Epidemic....symptom of zoning



Hostile Architecture, Inhospitable Biking/Walking Routes, elimination of third spaces, and car infrastructure is killing us in an attempt to punish the poor, homeless, and other undesirables we all lose

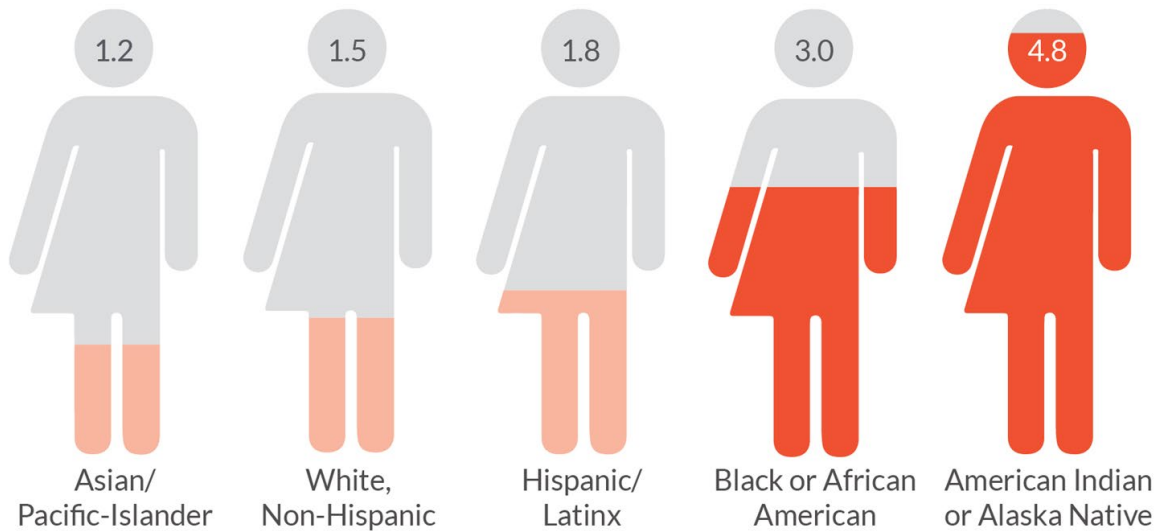


Car infrastructure is literally killing us but minorities feel it the worst...this is by design

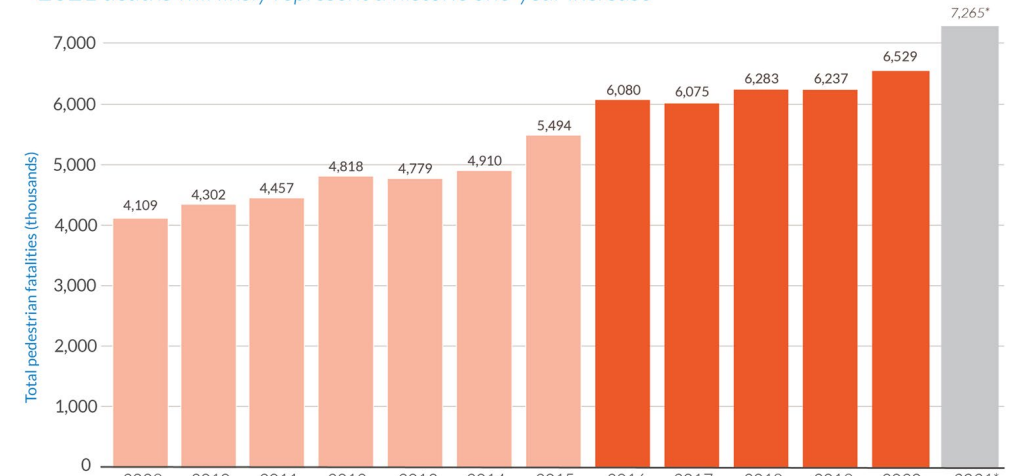


People of color, particularly Native and Black Americans, are more likely to die while walking than any other race or ethnic group

Pedestrian deaths per 100,000 by race & ethnicity (2016-2020)



Driving went down in 2020, but deaths of people walking increased 4.7%
2021 deaths will likely represent a historic one-year increase



*This estimate for 2021 is produced by applying the 11.5 percent increase for 2021 projected by the Governors Highway Safety Administration (GHSA) to the federal FARS data for 2020 used in this report.

**Form-Based Codes
is the Land Use
Version of Heracles**



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People of all ages want to live in vibrant, walkable, mixed use communities where jobs, shops, and homes are all accessible in a variety of mobility options



The number of residents in the form-based code areas grew faster than in the comparison areas and Stakeholders across jurisdictions emphasized the improved quality of life, walkability, and access to services and amenities for local business owners and residents in the areas with form-based codes

“Zoned In: The Economic Benefits & Shared Prosperity with Form-Based Codes”



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Zoned In: Economic Benefits of FBCs

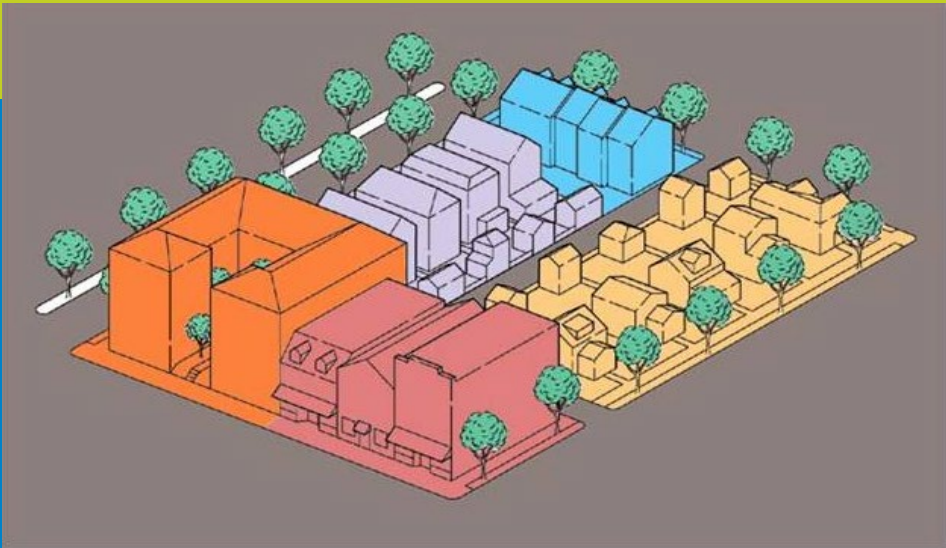
Places with FBCs generally performed as well or better than comparable areas with conventional zoning

Places with FBCs Generate more tax revenue for local governments (\$65 million)

Real estate developers touted the increased flexibility and predictability of the approval process in places where form-based codes were in effect.

Places with FBCs did not experience displacement of existing residents
Average rent in multi-family developments grew at a slower pace in places with form-based codes than in the comparison areas

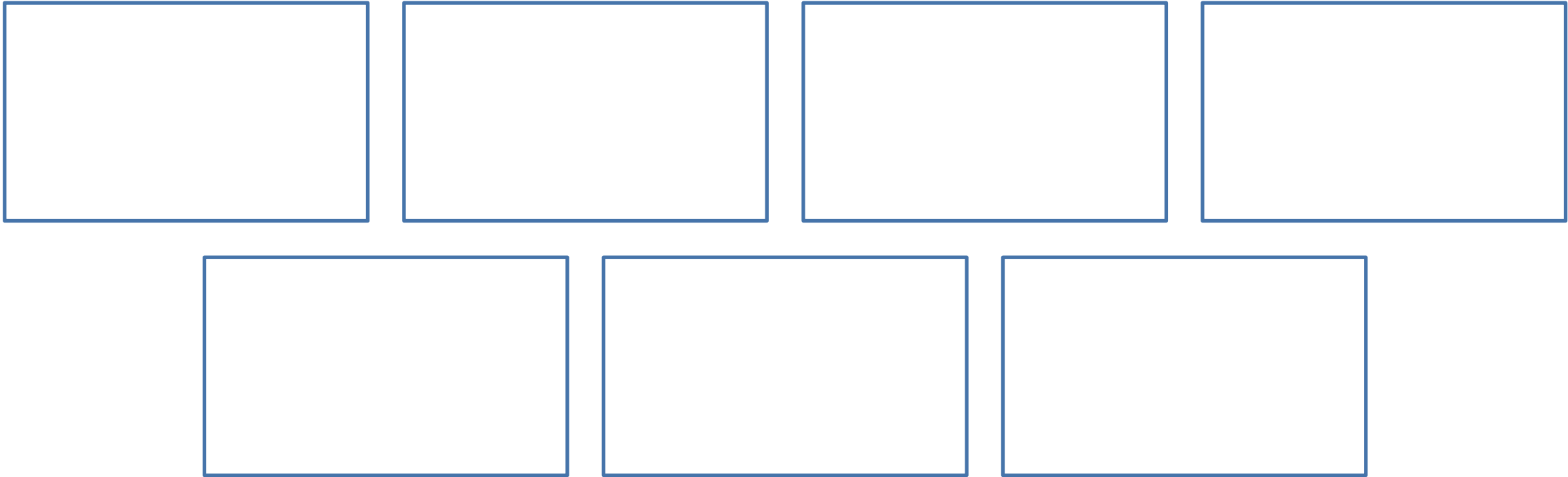
What is a Form-Based Code?



- A set of land development regulation that produce predictable built results, a high-quality **walkable** public realm, and uses physical form—rather than separation of uses—as the organizing principle
- Legally binding regulations not option guides
- Focuses on what happens outside the buildings—form
- Includes standards for both public and private development
- Ensures that the approved vision or plan for the area is realized
- Ensures that the **physical character** of that vision is maintained over time.



Form Based Codes Standards of Practice: Standards for building form and mass consciously based on **existing** context and/or desired changes





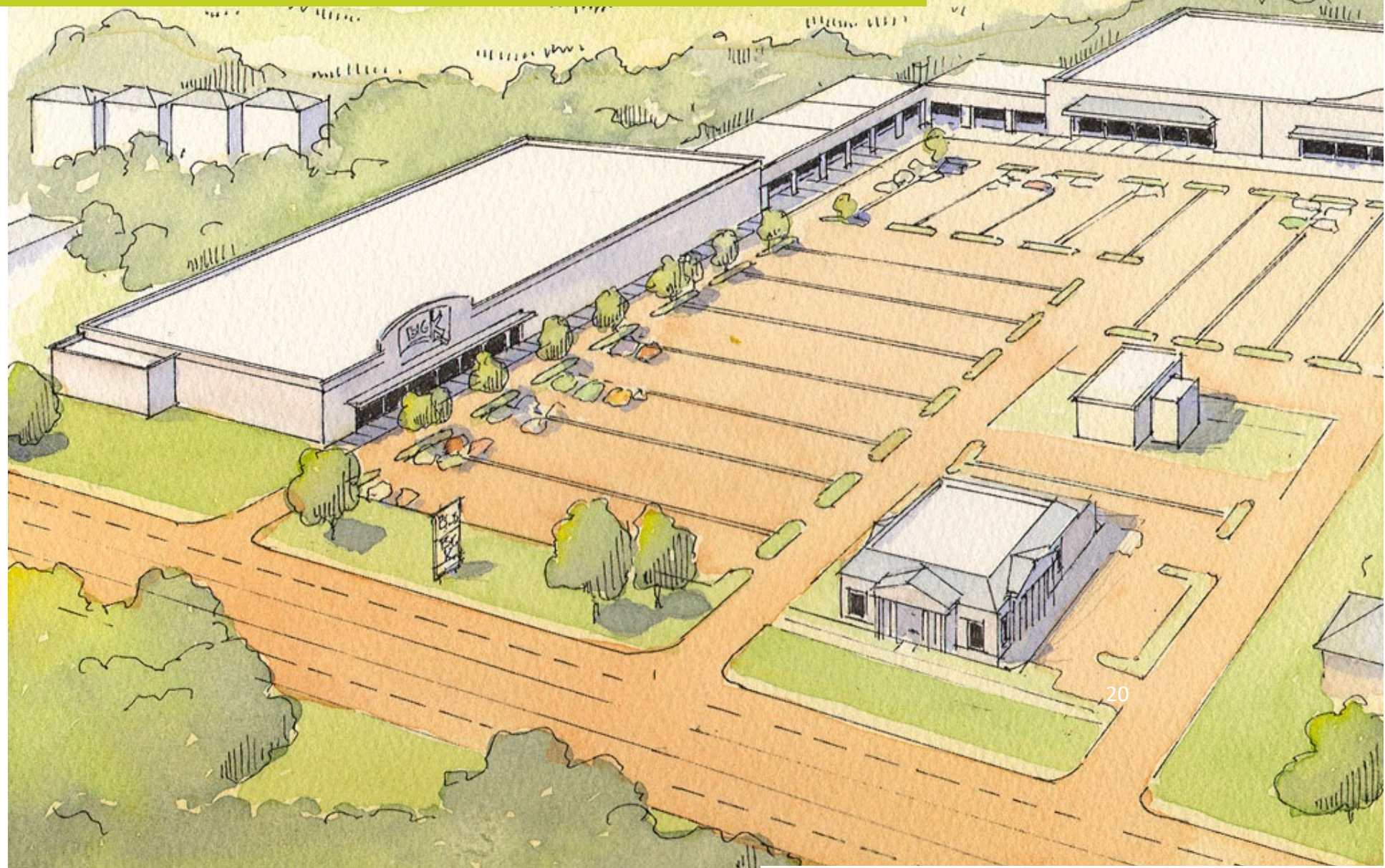
Hartford, CT Form-Based Code



2020 FBC Award Recipient

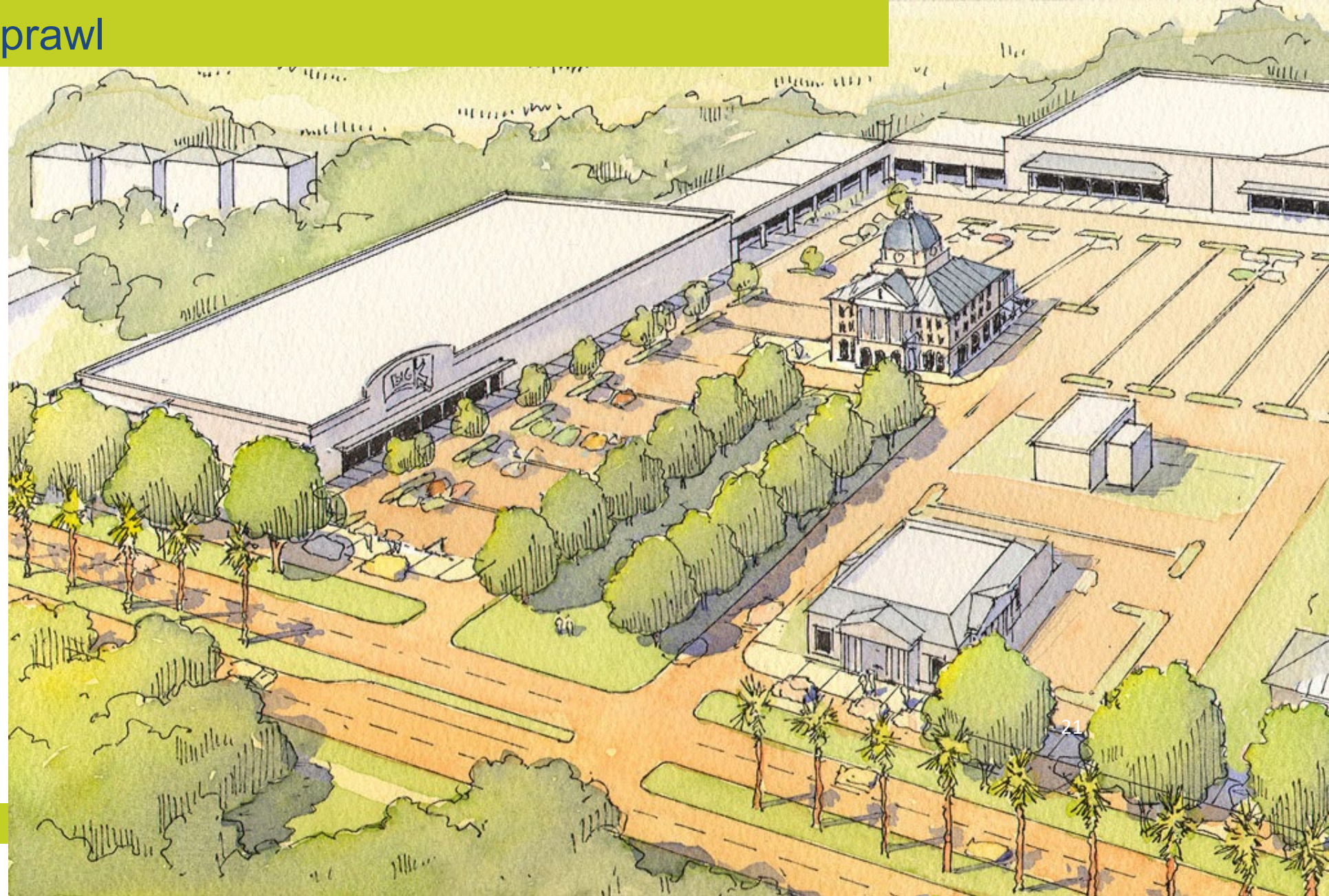
City of Hartford received a grant from the State Department of Transportation to write the Award Winning Code

To retrofit suburban sprawl



Dover, Kohl & Partners

To retrofit suburban sprawl



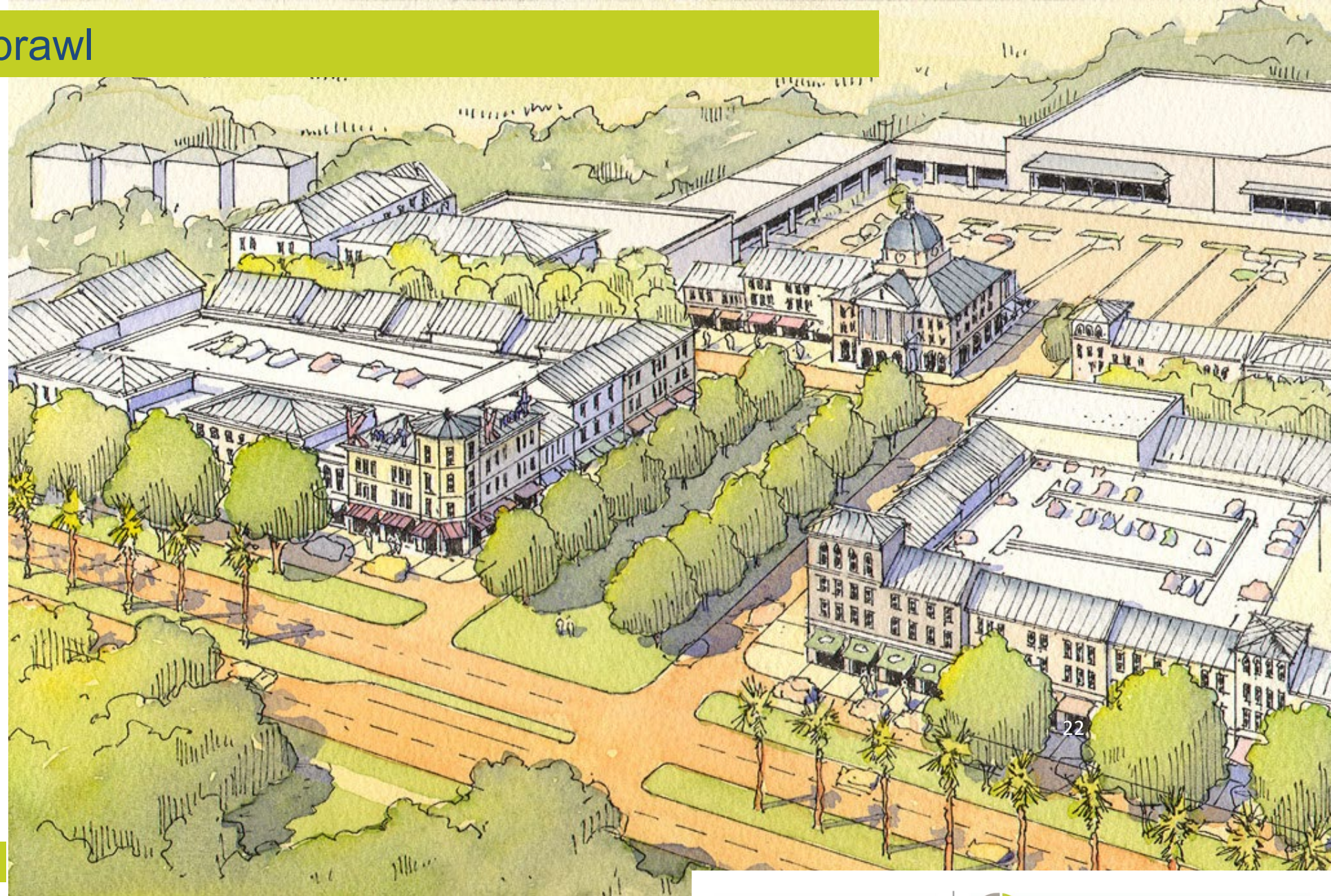
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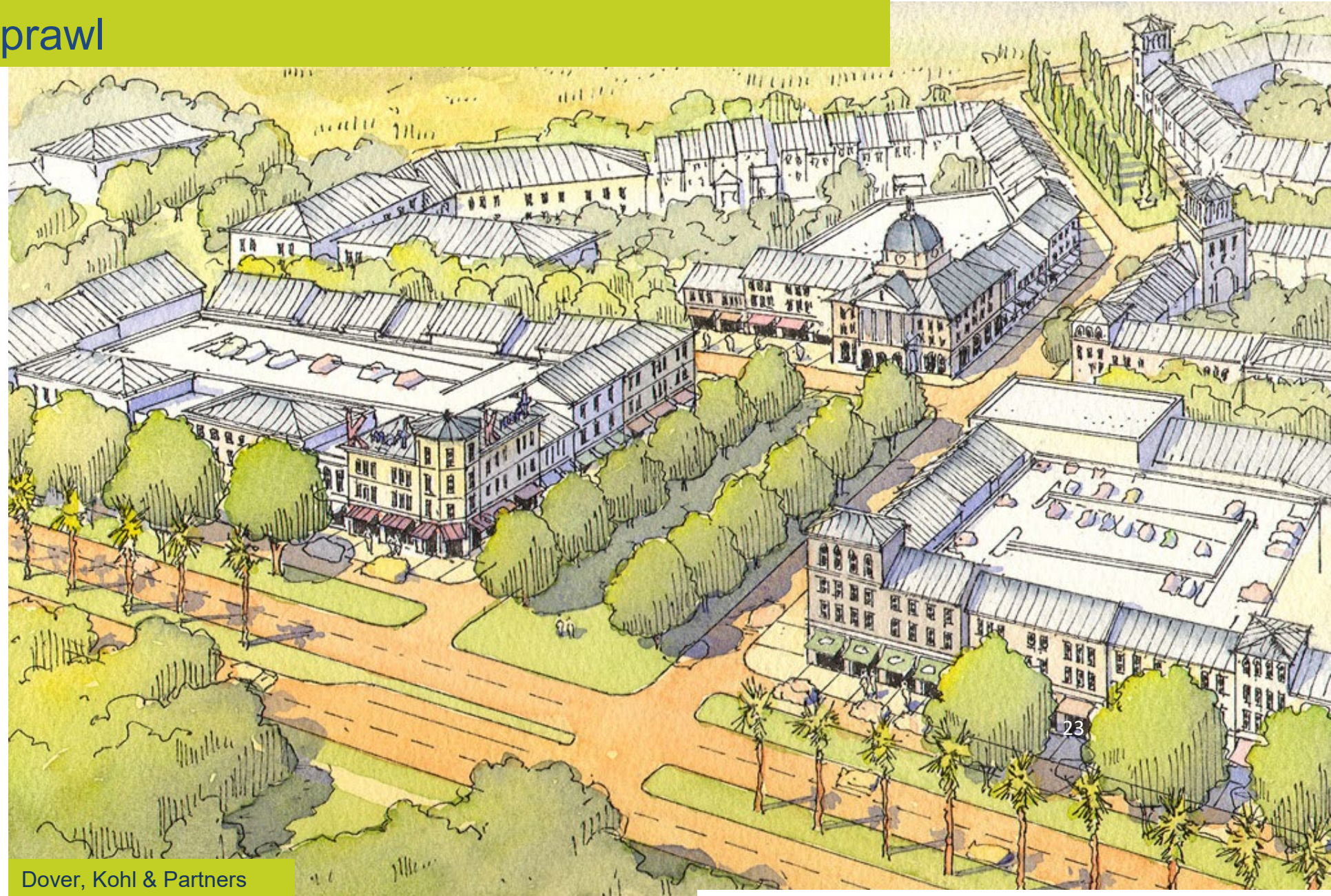
To retrofit suburban sprawl



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Dover, Kohl & Partners

To retrofit suburban sprawl



Dover, Kohl & Partners



Generations of land use decisions that advance car Infrastructure and an intense and perverse desire to harm the poor, the disenfranchised, and the homeless has stolen mobility options, physical health, mental health, and community health from us, FBC can restore people oriented, fiscally responsible communities.

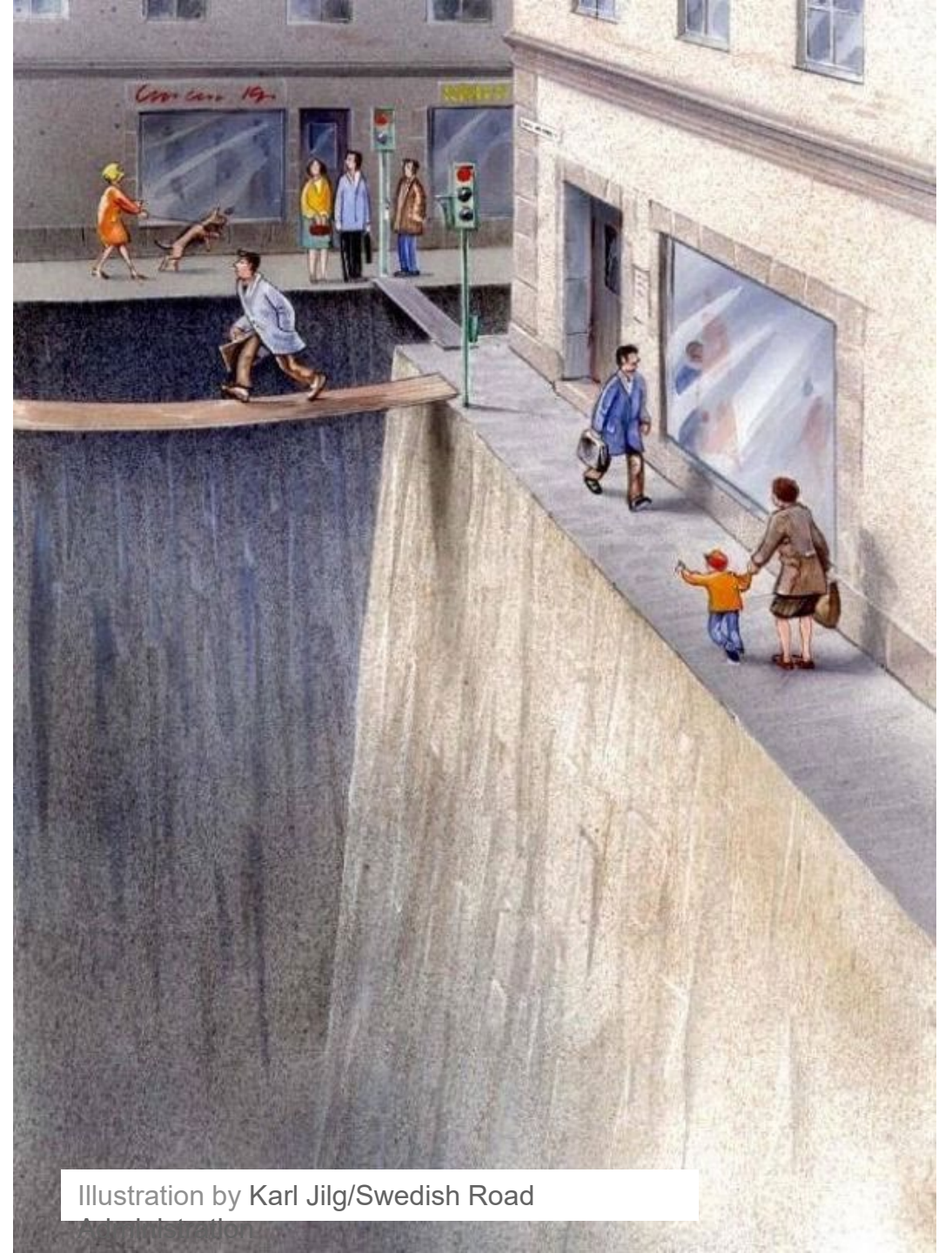


Illustration by Karl Jilg/Swedish Road

Resources



ZONED IN

Economic Benefits & Shared Prosperity
with Form-Based Codes





STAY IN CONTACT



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[@FORMBASEDCODES](https://www.twitter.com/FORMBASEDCODES)

FBCI Form-Based
Codes Institute

WWW.FORMBASEDCODES.ORG



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