



DOWNTOWN WACO MASTER REDEVELOPMENT **DOWNTOWN FORM-BASED CODE**

Assessment Report
January 2025



AGENDA

- **Introductions**
- **Reminder: Project workplan and schedule**
- **Overview of the Assessment Report**
- **Questions and discussion**
- **Next steps**



PROJECT LEADERSHIP

City of Waco

Tom Balk, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Clint Peters, Development Services Director

Hunt Companies

Rodney Moss, Sr. Vice President, Public-Private Partnerships

Clarion Associates

Matt Goebel, Director

An aerial photograph of a cityscape. In the foreground, a large, vibrant green park with many trees and walking paths is visible. To the right of the park, there's a paved area with several orange umbrellas and people, possibly a cafe or outdoor seating area. In the background, a dense urban area with various buildings is visible. A prominent white building with a tall spire is on the left. A yellow building with the word 'ALICE' in red letters is on the right. The sky is blue with some clouds.

WHY A NEW DOWNTOWN FORM-BASED CODE?

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN



DOWNTOWN WACO MASTER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC ROADMAP

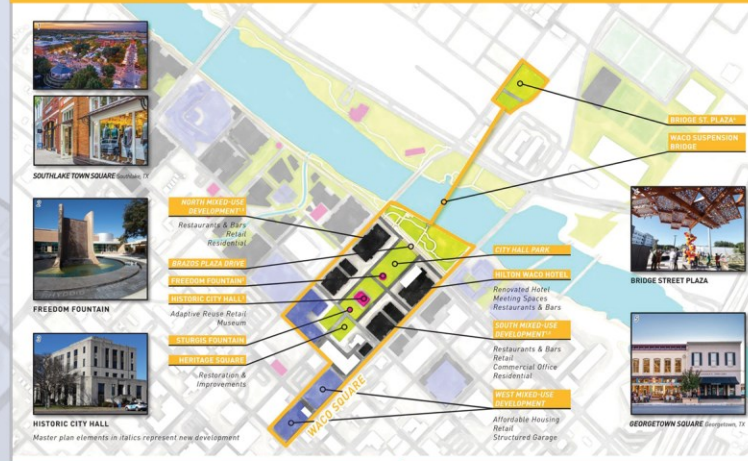
JUNE 18, 2024 • CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION

5 DEFINING DISTRICTS

Barron's Branch



Waco Square



Ballpark



Riverfront



Mary Ave



BARRON'S BRANCH DISTRICT

ST. FRANCIS ON THE BRAZOS

La Pila Fountain⁴
St. Francis Plaza⁴
St. Francis Church⁵

CALLE DOS PLAZA

Public Plaza¹
Shade Pavilion²

BARRON'S BRANCH CREEK

Creek restoration³
Creekside trails³

WEST MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Restaurants & Bars
Retail
Commercial Office
Structured Garage

CENTRAL MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Restaurants & Bars
Retail
Commercial Office

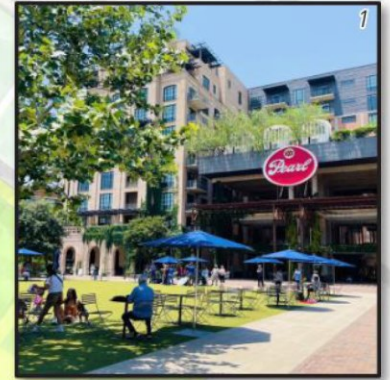
MUTUALISTA HALL & DANCE PLATFORM

SOUTH MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

Restaurants & Bars
Retail
Residential
Structured Garage

CALLE DOS

BARRON'S BRANCH



PEARL PARK San Antonio, TX



KYLDE WARREN PAVILION Dallas, TX



WATERLOO GREENWAY Austin, TX



LA PILA FOUNTAIN



ST. FRANCIS ON THE BRAZOS

Master plan elements in italics represent new development

An aerial photograph of a park featuring a prominent stone staircase with two large arches. The park is lush with green trees and grass, with many people walking and sitting on the grounds. A body of water is visible at the bottom of the frame, with a few people on a small boat. The text "HOW WILL THE NEW DOWNTOWN CODE BE DRAFTED?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

**HOW WILL THE NEW DOWNTOWN CODE
BE DRAFTED?**

PROJECT SCOPE & TIMELINE





ROLE OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE

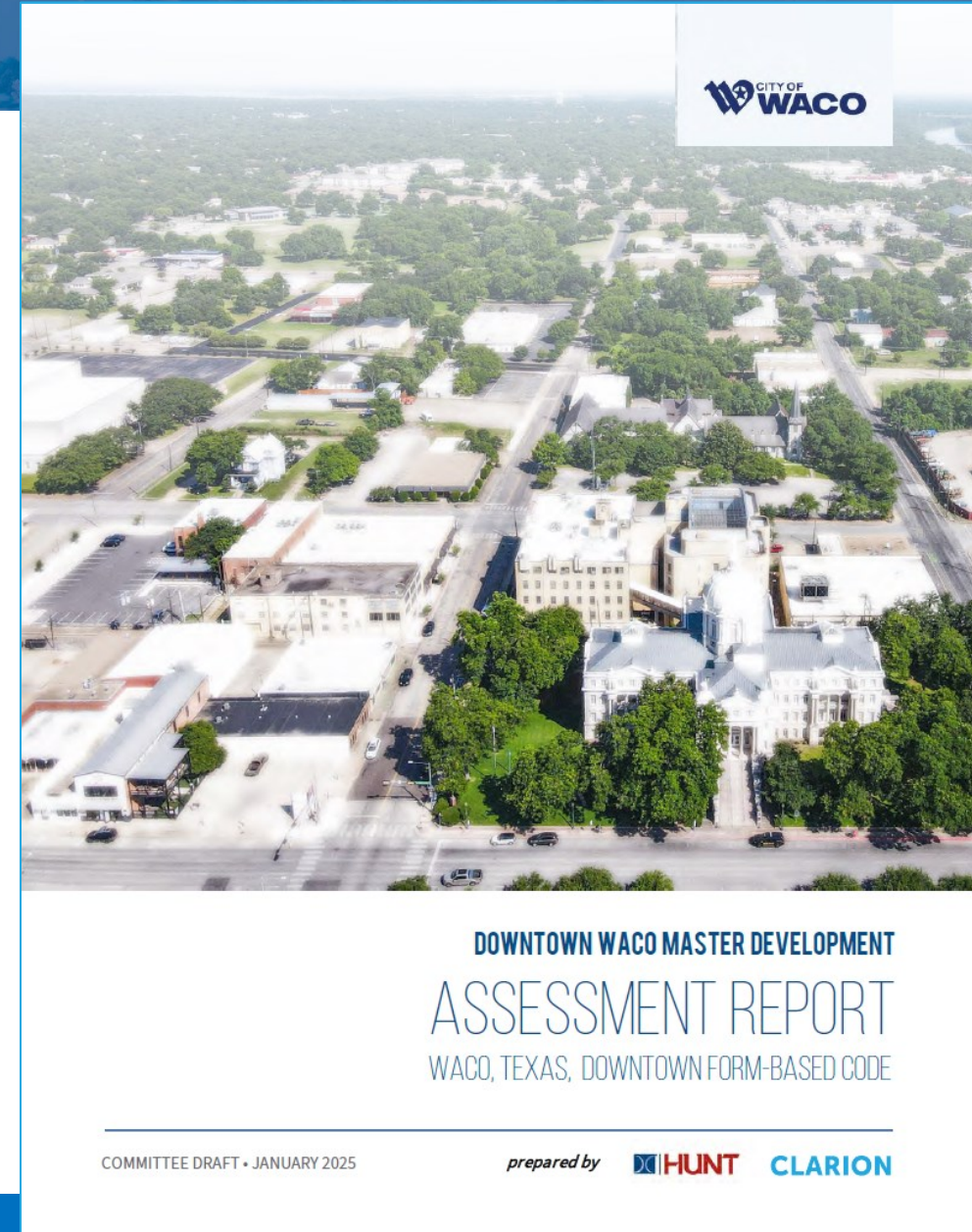
- **Assist in analysis of existing code—especially successes and challenges**
- **Attend meetings to provide recommendations and feedback**
- **Review and comment on incremental drafts of new regulations**
- **Attend and participate in public meetings**
- **Provide continual outreach to and feedback from colleagues and respective industries**



ASSESSMENT REPORT

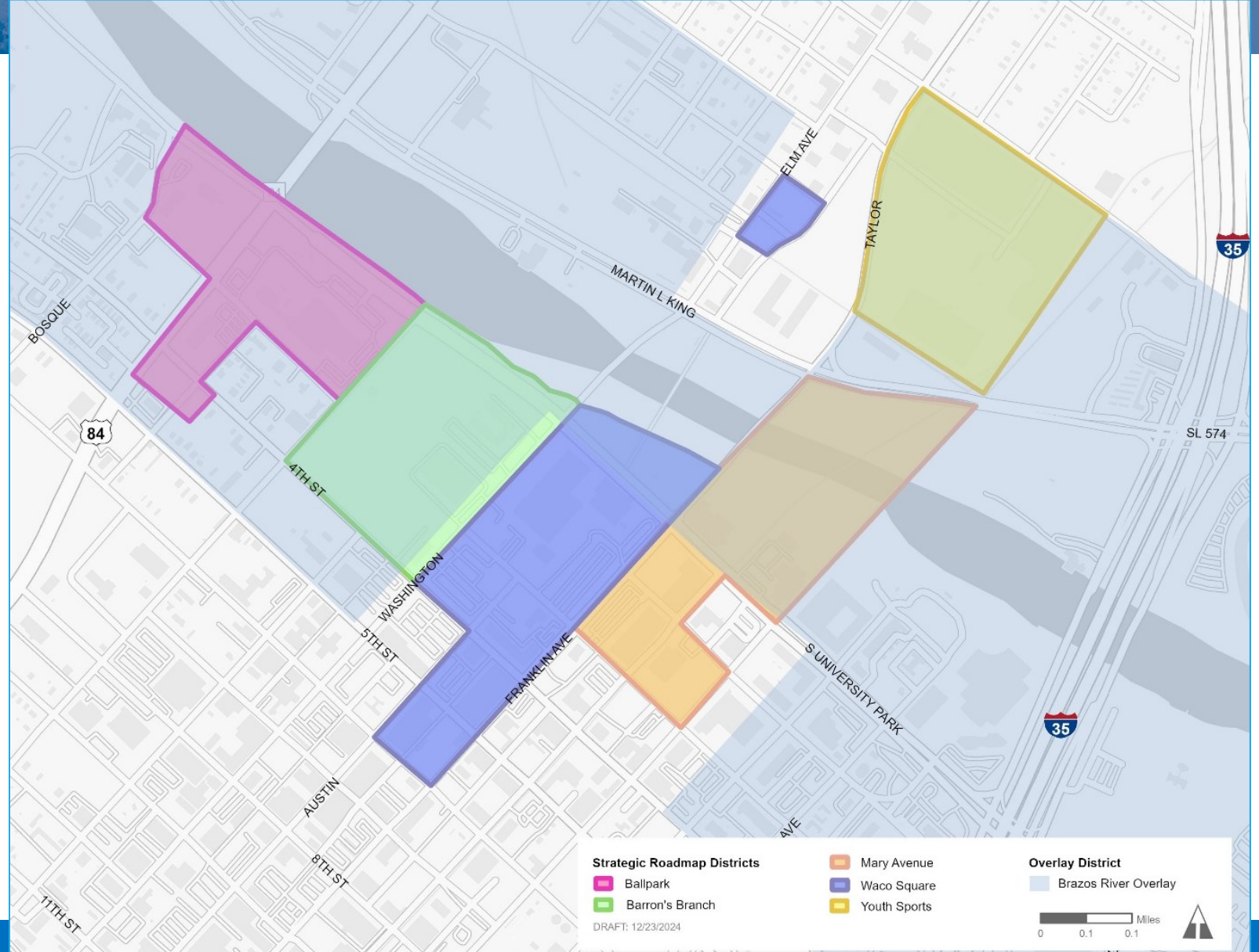
CONTENTS

- **Executive Summary**
- **Introduction: About the Project**
- **Project Area Description**
- **Recommendations**
 - Core Focus Area
 - Study Area
- **Appendices**
 - Reviews of Existing Plans and Code
 - Character Area Analysis



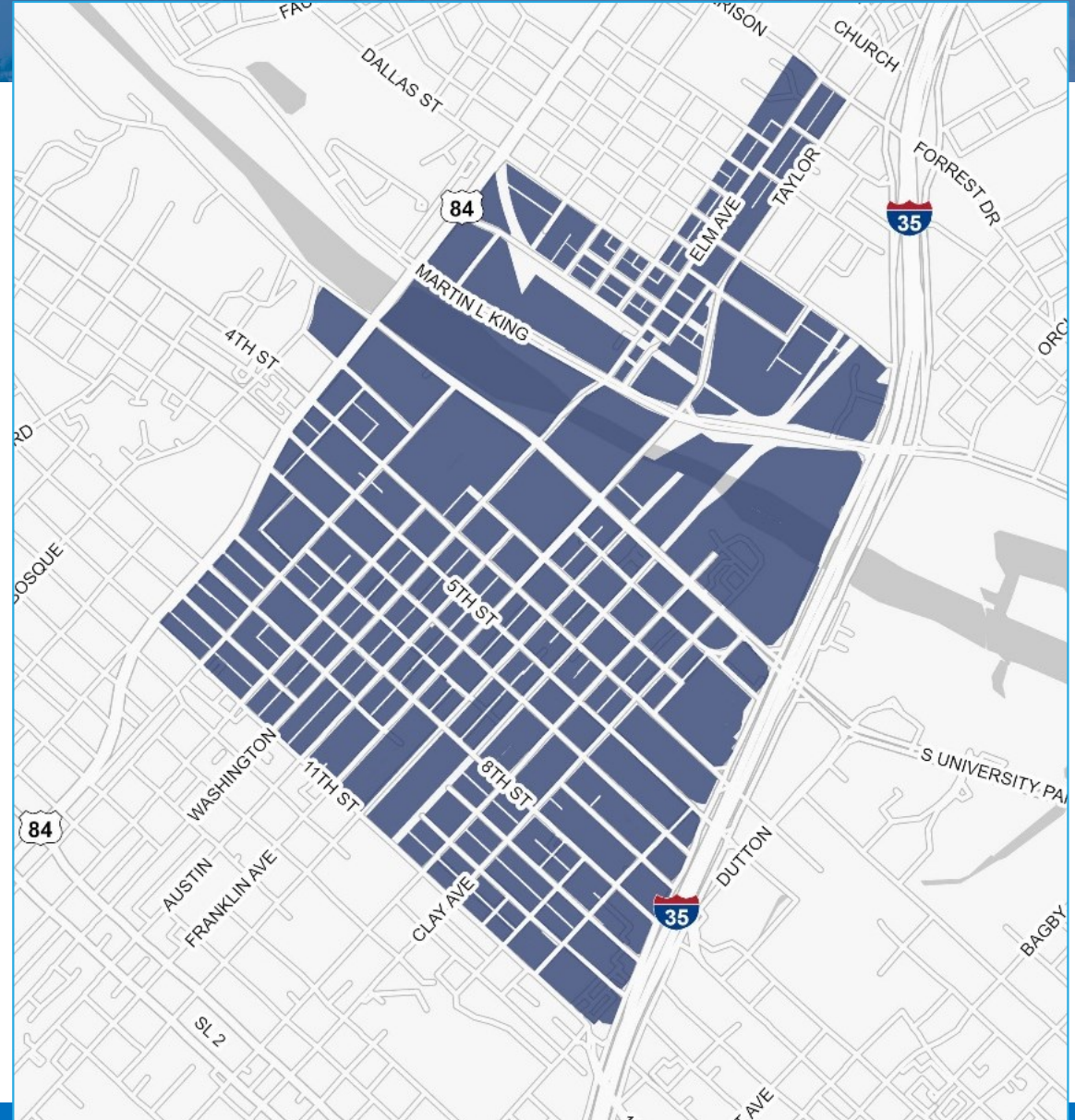
FOCUS AREA

- Ballpark
- Barron's Branch
- Mary Avenue
- Waco Square
- Youth Sports



STUDY AREA

- A larger that provides context and ensure compatibility between the Focus Area and the surrounding downtown neighborhoods.



SUBDISTRICT REVIEWS

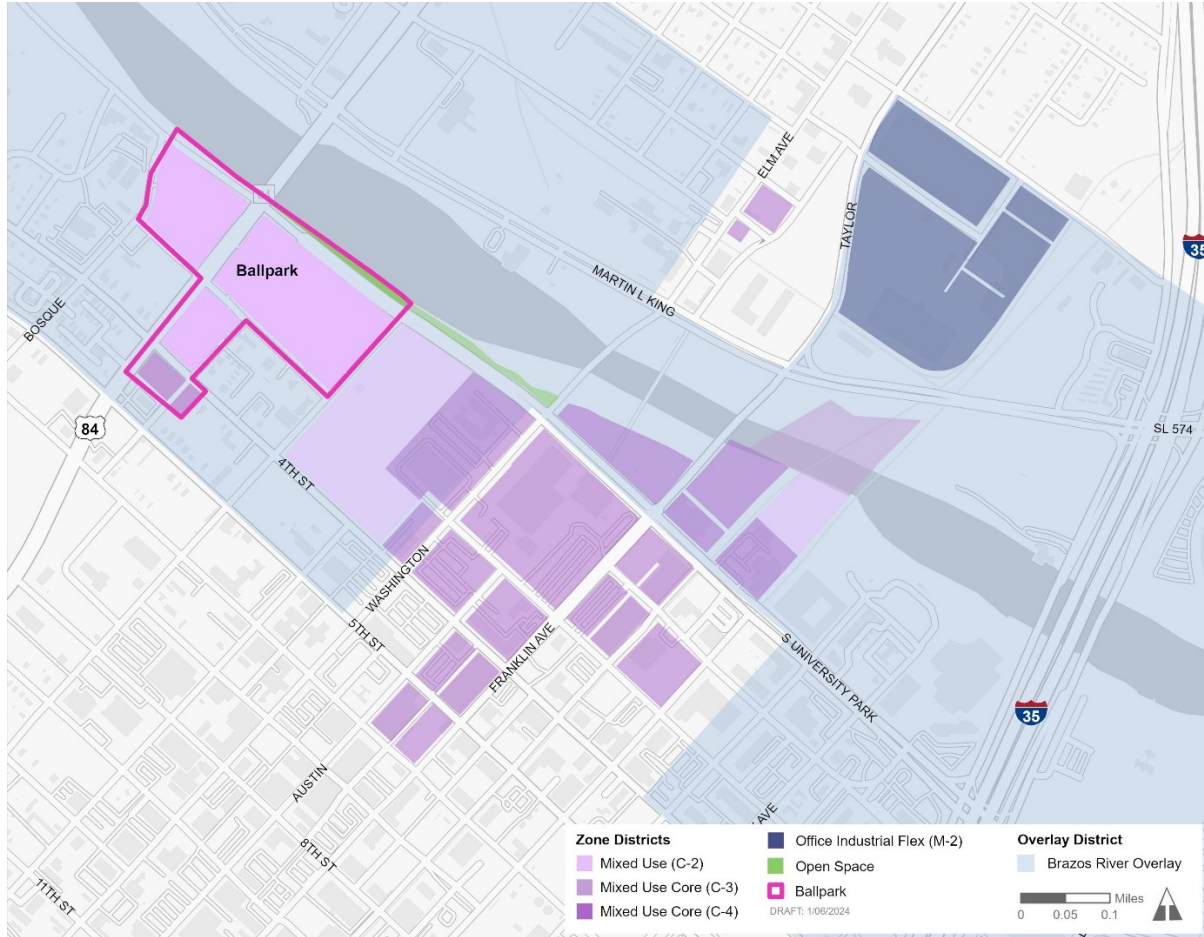
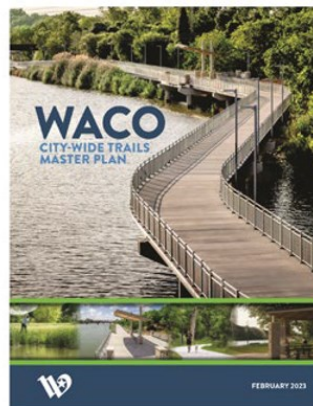
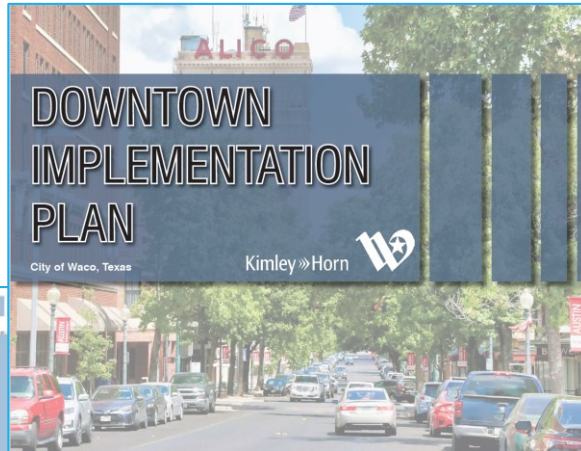
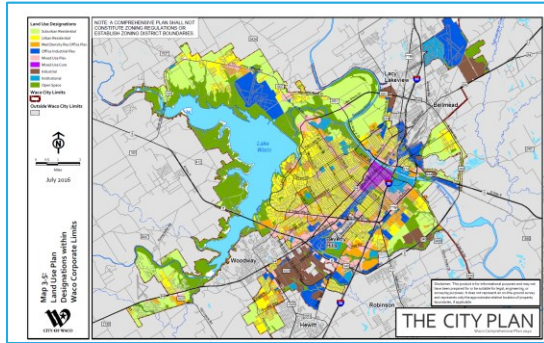


Table 1. Recommendations Compared to Current Zoning - Ballpark

	Proposed	R-1B	C-2	C-3
Context and Scale	Primarily Mid-Rise, multi-modal arrival, internally walkable	Single-family development at moderate density	Variety of mutually supporting compatible business and multifamily residential	Wide variety of business uses in locations with a high degree of accessibility to major transportation corridors
Street and Block Pattern	Perimeter streets with limit through-streets to preserve pedestrian paths			
Dimension Standards				
Minimum Lot Size (Acres)	0.25	0.07 - 1	0.23, varies for multifamily	0.46
Maximum Lot Size (Acres)	6	None	None	None
Minimum Front Setback (Ft.)	5	25 or 50	20	10
Maximum Setback (Other yards, Ft.)	10	5 or 25 (side), 25 or 50 (rear)	None	None
Minimum Building Height (Ft.)	18	None	None	None
Maximum Building Height (Ft.)	100	35	35	60
Parking Strategy				
Shared	Yes	No	No	No
Off-Site Structured Parking	Yes	No	No	No
Uses				
Multifamily	Yes	No	Yes	No
Hotel	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Office	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Retail	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Event/Civic	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Civic and Open Space Types	Plazas, pocket parks, & pedestrian streetscapes			

WACO'S PRECEDENT PLANS



Downtown Façade Design Standards (2007)

The *Downtown Façade Design Standards* were adopted in 2007 and pertain to development within the Downtown Overlay district. In general, the standards are dated and no longer represent best practices or desired outcomes for the Downtown area.

The document outlines general design principles but also provides guidance related to storefronts, building materials, articulation, and fenestration. Because the design standards focus solely on the facade, the document does not address site design or urban design principles. As a result, there is no guidance on form or massing to help inform appropriate development for downtown or elsewhere in the city. However, because they are codified and referenced the Downtown Overlay, the *Downtown Façade Design Standards* must be addressed as part of this project.

It is recommended that through the proposed amendments, new design standards addressing both the building façade, the overall form of the development, and the development's relationship to the street be developed to replace the existing *Downtown Façade Design Standards*.

The Brazos River Corridor Guidelines

The *Brazos River Corridor Guidelines* (2003) focuses on establishing specific regulations and design standards for development within the Brazos River Corridor in Waco, Texas. These guidelines are meant to inform the standards and intent for the establishment of the Brazos River Corridor Overlay district. The document emphasizes the need for design standards to protect the inherent beauty and ecological integrity of the river, recognizing the Brazos and its tributaries as a valuable community asset. Recognizing that the river influences the quality of life in Waco, the document stresses the significance of responsible development practices. The guidelines explicitly prohibit certain land uses within the corridor that are deemed incompatible with the goals of preserving the river's environmental quality and aesthetic character. Pedestrian access is highly encouraged, with provisions for riverfront developments to provide access to adjacent developments, promoting connectivity and a pedestrian-oriented environment.

ANNOTATED CODE REVIEW

- **Review of applicable zoning districts, overlays and development standards**
- **Recommendations focus on**
 - **Alignment with *Strategic Roadmap***
 - **Best practices to encourage and streamline development**

Multiple-Family (R-3C and R-3E)

The R-3C and R-3E zoning districts are intended to be primarily for multiple-family dwellings. Like single-family districts, properties with these designations allow other complementary land uses by right and by special permit. Other residential land uses permitted in the districts include single-family dwellings, duplexes, and townhomes.

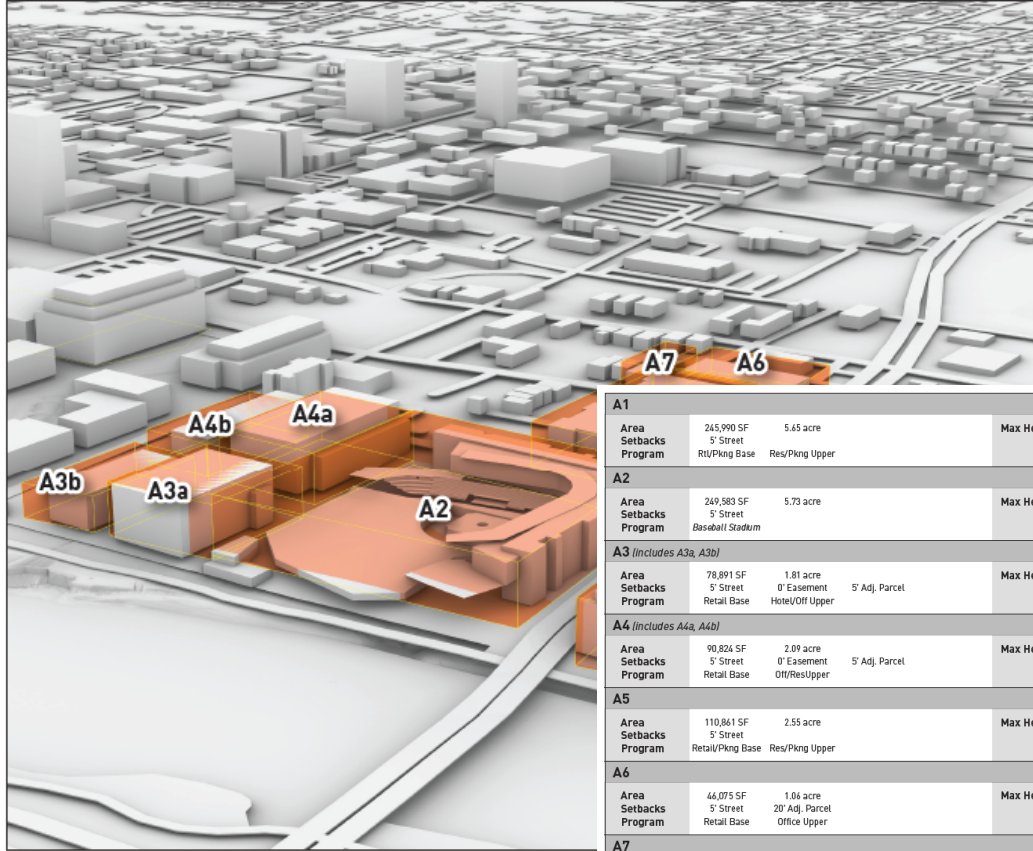
Property zoned R-3C and R-3E require front and rear yard setbacks of twenty-five feet and cap the maximum building height at 2.5 stories, or 35 feet. However, minimum lot sizes are significantly less in these districts compared to the requirements in single-family districts. The maximum residential density permitted in the R-3C and R-3E districts are 25 and 40 units per acre, respectively.

Like the recommendations of the residential zoning district, the density and dimensional standards require a housing product that is suburban in nature, which does not reflect the conditions of the urban environment in which they are located. Recommendations for multiple-family districts include:

- Create design standards for the desired development in lieu of site plan review;
- Utilize FAR as a metric for massing instead of units per acre;
- Reducing front setback and lot width requirements;
- Eliminate or reduce off-street parking requirements for multiple family dwellings;
- Allow multiple-family structures to be three stories, particularly along major corridors;
- Consider permitting neighborhood-serving commercial, office, and/or live-work units;
- Replace minimum lot width requirements with maximum building widths to ensure compatible development.

CHARACTER ANALYSES

Developable Envelopes



A1					
Area Setbacks Program	245,990 SF 5' Street Rtl/Pking Base	5.65 acre Res/Pking Upper	Max Height	100'	
A2					
Area Setbacks Program	249,583 SF 5' Street Baseball Stadium	5.73 acre	Max Height	100'	
A3 (includes A3a, A3b)					
Area Setbacks Program	78,891 SF 5' Street Retail Base	1.81 acre 0' Easement Hotel/Off Upper	5' Adj. Parcel	Max Height	A3a: 90' A3b: 60'
A4 (includes A4a, A4b)					
Area Setbacks Program	90,824 SF 5' Street Retail Base	2.09 acre 0' Easement Off/Res Upper	5' Adj. Parcel	Max Height	A4a: 90' A4b: 60'
A5					
Area Setbacks Program	110,861 SF 5' Street Retail/Pking Base	2.55 acre Res/Pking Upper	Max Height	80'	
A6					
Area Setbacks Program	46,075 SF 5' Street Retail Base	1.04 acre 20' Adj. Parcel Office Upper	Max Height	50'	
A7					
Area Setbacks Program	11,955 SF 5' Street Retail Base	0.27 acre 20' Adj. Parcel Residential Upper	Max Height	50'	

District Site Plan



Context and Scale	Primarily Mid-Rise, multi-modal arrival, internally walkable
Street & Block Pattern	Perimeter streets with limit through-streets to preserve pedestrian paths, especially along extension of Calle Dos to the Baseball Stadium and along creek front.
Lots Configuration & Size	Lots range in size from 0.27 Acre to 5.73 Acres
Building Form	
Building Placement	5' at ROW, 0' at Creek, 10' at Adjoining Parcels, 0' at Easements
Building Frontage	Shopfronts, restaurants, multi-family, entertainment
Building Height	1-5 Stories
Building Types	Multi-family Residential, Hotel, Office, Retail, Restaurant, Event
Parking	Structured, district garages. Shared and co-generative parking arrangements to maximize developable efficiency.
Civic/ Open Space Types	Plazas, pocket parks, & pedestrian streetscapes

Historic Context



Architectural Precedents

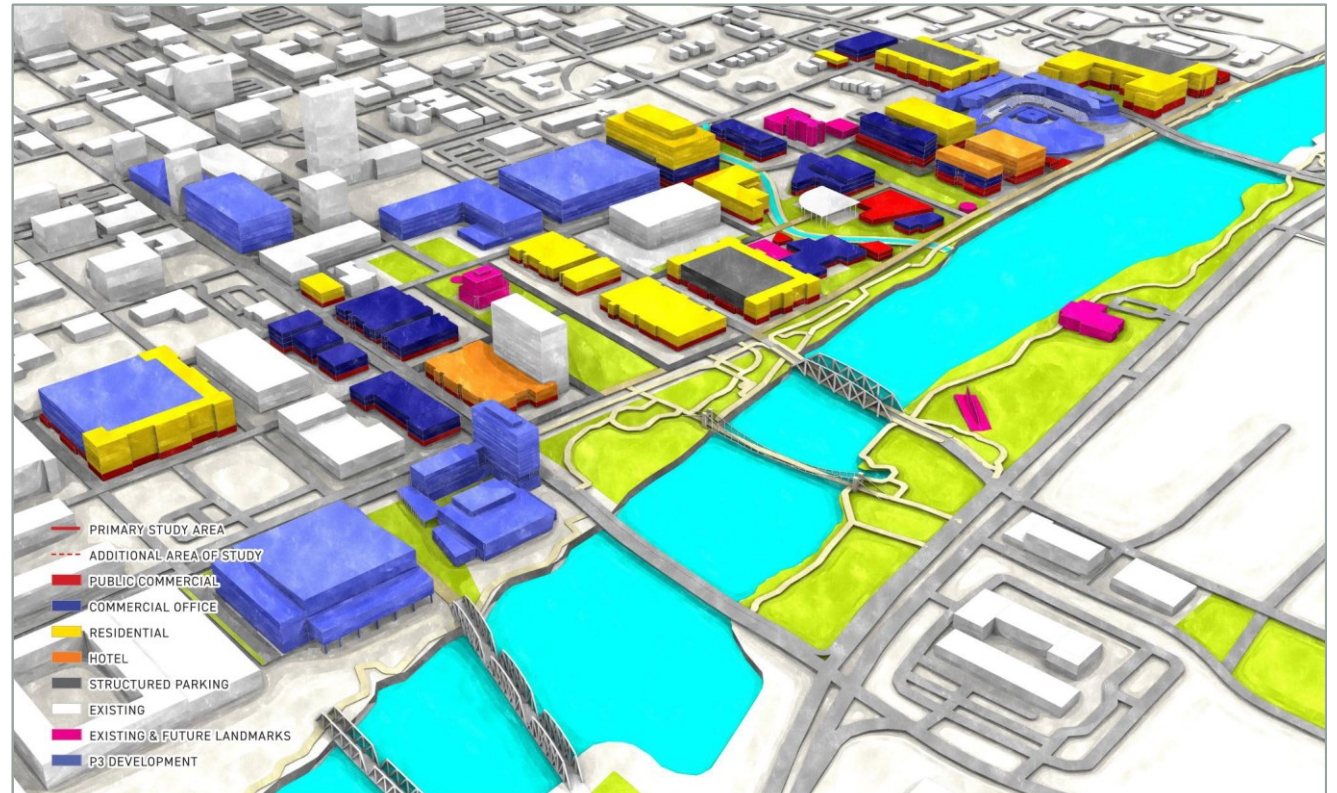


RECOMMENDATIONS




DRAFT NEW FORM-BASED ZONING DISTRICTS

- **Replace existing zoning with new form-based districts based on the *Strategic Roadmap***
- **“Form-based”**
 - **Focus on physical form of buildings and relationship of public and private realms**
 - **Deemphasize allowed land uses**

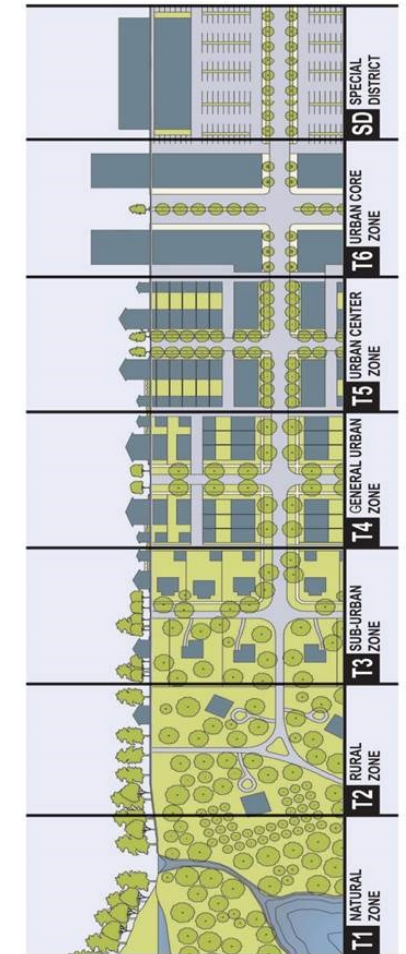


WHAT IS FORM-BASED ZONING?

- **Standards that emphasize pedestrian-scaled, walkable urbanism:**
 - Building form (height, massing, etc.)
 - Ground-floor activation and frontage (arcade, porch, gallery, shopfront, etc.)
 - Public spaces (sidewalks, plazas, medians, ec.)
 - Block length
 - Density



GROUND-FLOOR USE	CAFÉ ZONE	PEDESTRIAN ZONE	LANDSCAPE + FURNITURE ZONE	PARKING + PLANTER ZONE	SHARED TRAVEL ZONE
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	Not Applicable See Appendix A.5 Private Frontage Guidelines.	6' - 8'	6' - 8' Tree wells; Street furniture to be provided per Section 6;	8' parallel	See Section 3.3 for Street Type Standards.
COMMERCIAL	Where Applicable; 6' - 12' Additionally, See Appendix A.5 Private Frontage Guidelines.	7' - 10'	See Section 3.5 for Street Landscape Standards.	16' - 18' head-in diagonal OR 8' parallel Parking Lane Planters (optional)	



BUILDING FORMS & TYPES

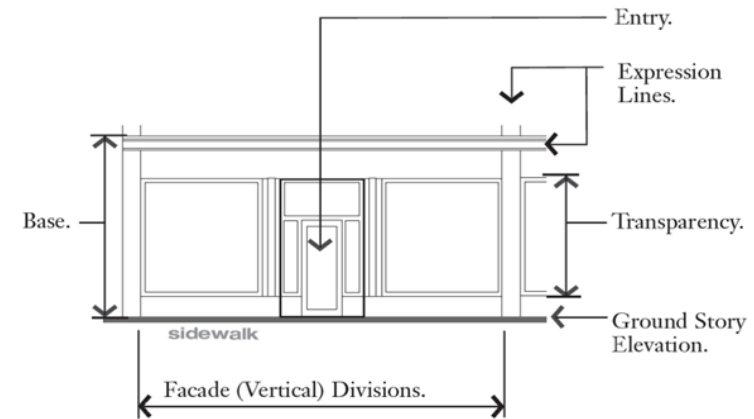
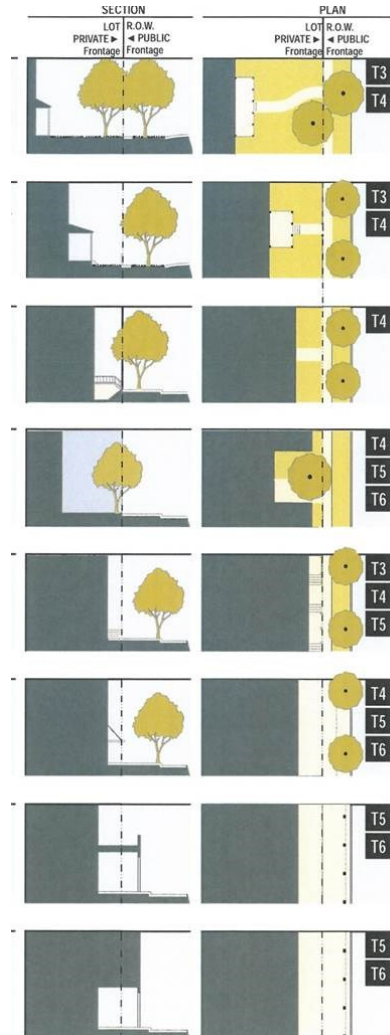
Building Types by Districts		Districts					
Building Types		MS-1 (Main Street)	MS-2 (B Street)	MS-3 (Transitions)	DT-1 (High Street)	DT-2 (Support)	DT-3 (East High)
	Storefront Building	●		●	●	●	●
	General Stoop Building		●	●		●	●
	Cottage Commercial	●	○	●			●
	Civic Building		●	●	●	●	●
	Row Building		●			●	
	Parking Structure					◐	

● = Permitted within district
 ○ = Permitted only on corner parcels
 ◐ = Permitted on secondary street only

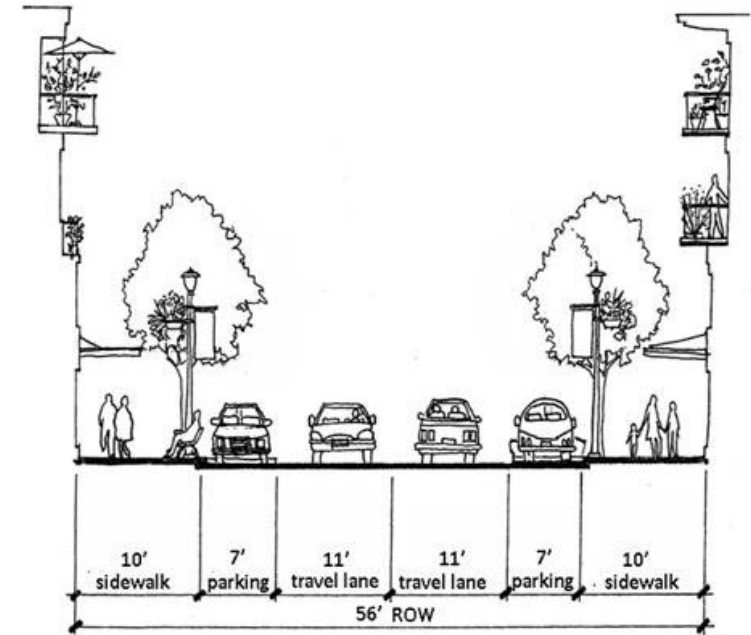
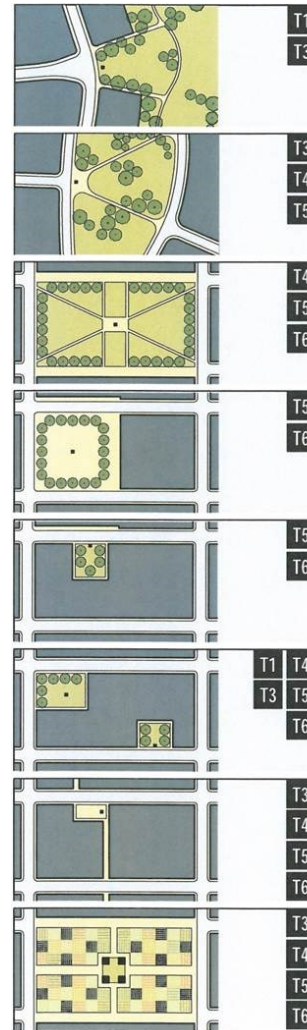
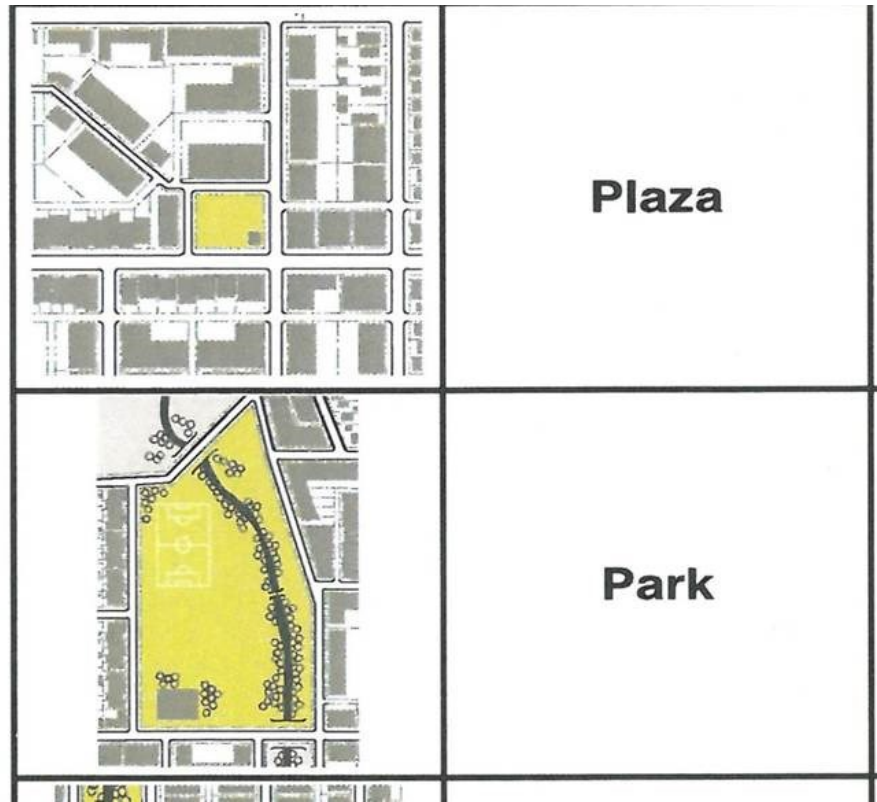
Table 1129.40 (1). Permitted Building Types by District.



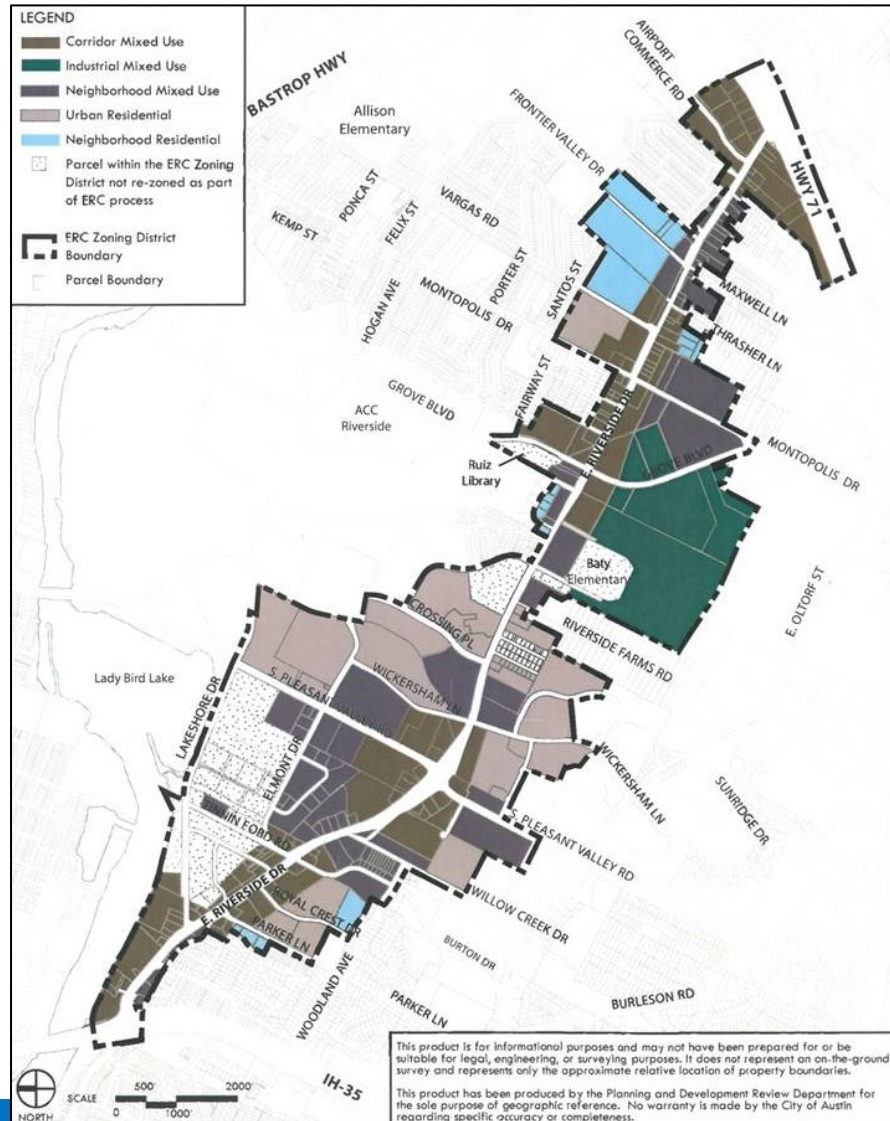
FRONTAGE TYPES



PUBLIC SPACES

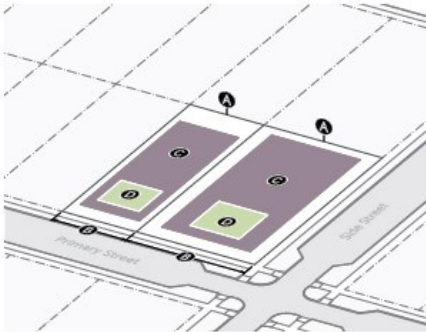


REGULATING PLAN



19-2.3.3. RN-B NEIGHBORHOOD B

A. SITE



1. LOT SIZE	Sec. 2.11.2.
Ⓐ Area (min)	None
Ⓑ Width (min)	
Front access	40'
Side/rear access	25'
2. DENSITY	Sec. 2.11.3.
Dwellings per lot (max)	
Base	8
Bonus	10
3. COVERAGE ²	Sec. 2.11.4.
Ⓒ Building coverage (max)	
0 to 8 units and Nonresidential	65%
9 to 10 units	75%
Ⓓ Outdoor amenity space (min)	10%

4. BUILDING SETBACKS ²	Sec. 2.11.5.
Ⓔ Primary street lot line (min/max)	10' / 20' or Setback Range
Ⓕ Side street lot line (min/max)	5' / 20'
Ⓖ Side lot line (min)	4'
Ⓗ Rear/alley lot line (min)	4'
5. TRANSITION ²	Sec. 2.11.6.
Transition type	Type A
6. BUILD-TO	Sec. 2.11.7.
Build-to width (min)	
⓫ Primary street	65%
⓬ Side street	40%
7. PARKING SETBACKS	Sec. 2.11.8.
Primary street (min)	30'
Side street (min)	10'
8. FENCES AND WALLS	Sec. 2.11.9.
Front yard height (max)	Type B 3'
Side street yard height (max)	Type C 6'
Side/rear yard height (max)	Type E 6'

RN-B

B. BUILDING



1. HEIGHT	Sec. 2.11.10.
Ⓐ Overall height (max stories/feet) ¹	2.5 / 32'
Ⓑ Side wall (max)	25'
2. MASSING	Sec. 2.11.11.
Ⓒ Building width (max)	40'
Ⓓ Building depth (max)	90'
Ⓔ Active depth (min)	9'
3. GROUND STORY	Sec. 2.11.12.
Ⓕ Story height (min)	9'
Ⓖ Finish floor elevation (min/max)	0' / 5'

4. TRANSPARENCY	Sec. 2.11.13.	
Ⓕ Ground story (min)	25%	20%
⓫ Upper story (min)	15%	15%
⓬ Blank wall width (max)	10'	20'
5. ENTRANCES	Sec. 2.11.14.	
Ⓗ Street-facing entry spacing (max)	30'	50'
Entry feature	Yes	Yes

(g) Parking & Access

(1) Vehicle Parking Space Requirements:

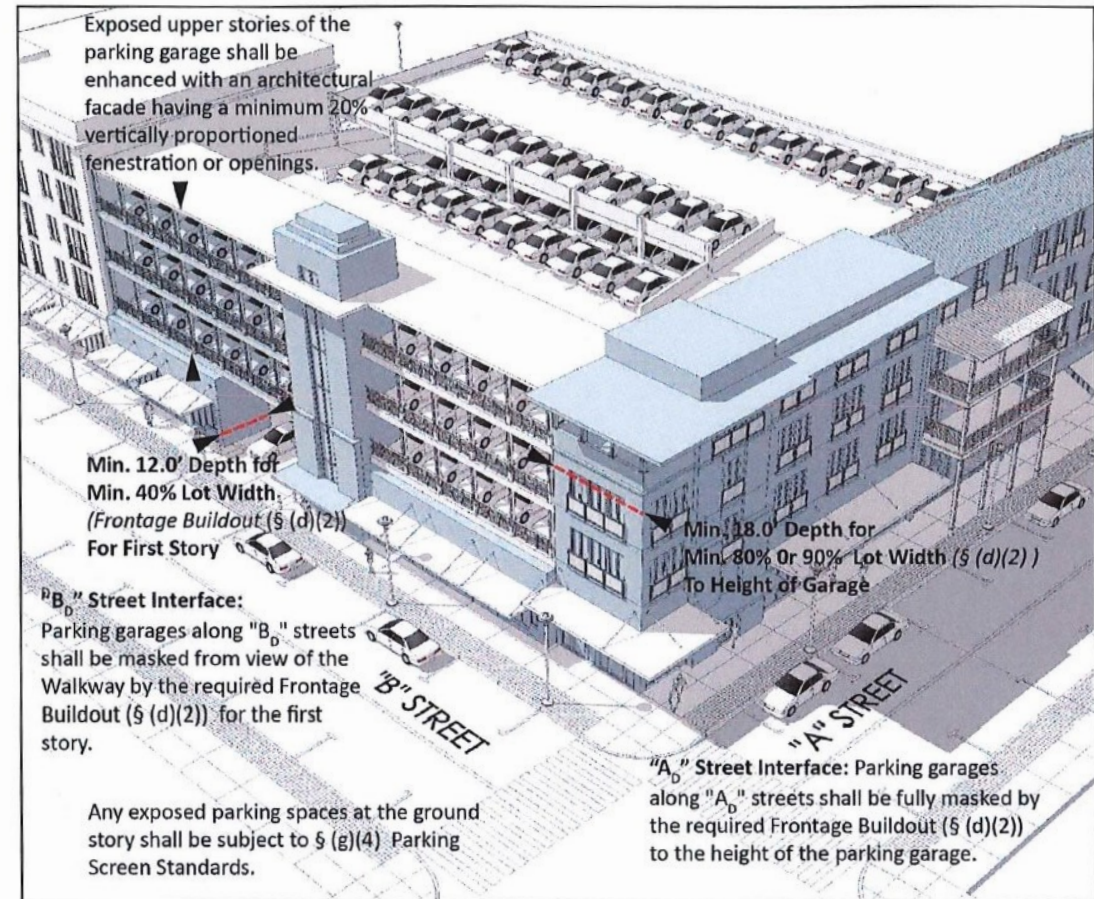
- a. There shall be no minimum parking space requirements for all buildings of five (5) stories or less.
- b. For buildings over five (5) stories, parking shall be provided on the lot, screened from the Walkway as per the provisions of this code, and the minimum number of required parking spaces for the entire building shall be as follows:
 1. Retail: 3 Spaces / 1000 sf
 2. Office: 2 Spaces / 1000 sf
 3. Residential: 1 Space / Unit
 4. Accommodations: 1 Space / Room

(2) Location of Off-Street Parking: Off-Street Parking shall not be viewable from the Walkway unless the following conditions are met:

- a. Parking Garage Standards § (g)(3), or
- b. Parking Screen Standard § (g)(4).

(3) Parking Garage Standards: The following applies to parking garages:

- a. Parking garages along "B_D" streets shall be masked from view of the Walkway by the required Frontage Buildout § (d)(2) for the first story. The remainder of the garage may be unmasked provided the following standards are met:
 1. Upper stories of the parking garage shall have a facade where all openings are vertically proportioned.
 2. Any exposed parking spaces at the ground story shall be subject to § (g)(4) Parking Screen Standards.
- b. Parking garages along "A" streets shall be fully masked by the required Frontage Buildout § (d)(2) to the height of the parking garage.





Host a class on form-based codes in your community

FBCI invites state and municipal government agencies, regional councils, and other land use and development organizations to host a class this summer or

[READ MORE »](#)

Courses & Webinars

[FBC101: ABCs of Form-Based Codes](#)

Learn how form-based codes are essentially different from conventional land use regulation and how they have evolved to solve many of the problems created by conventional zoning.

[» FBC101 Virtual Edition](#)[» FBC101 Pre-Recorded](#)

FORM-BASED ZONING: LESSONS LEARNED

- Focus on areas where “walkable urbanism” is the goal
 - Not city-wide
 - Pedestrian-oriented street activity is key
 - Be clear upfront if you’re aiming to be prescriptive and/or contextual
- Be careful of locking in too much detail
 - Life never turns out like the picture on the box
 - Lots of unanticipated events will take place before buildout
 - How much detail do you need to make the place a success?
- Focus on integration with other City plans/regulations
 - Recognize staff capacity
 - Don’t set up a parallel code



An aerial photograph of a city area with various urban planning overlays. A river flows diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. Along the left bank of the river, there is a green baseball field, a blue winding path, and several grey rectangular building footprints. To the right of the river, there are more grey building footprints and green spaces. In the top right corner, there is a cluster of green rectangular fields, possibly for soccer or sports, surrounded by grey building footprints. The entire map is overlaid with a grid of grey lines representing streets.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

DEVELOP A NEW PARKING STRATEGY

With the anticipated increase in density, Waco must develop a new parking strategy to ensure adequate parking for new developments.

Key elements:

- **Updated minimum off-street parking requirements**
- **Alternatives to providing on-site parking**
 - **Fee in-lieu**
 - **Alternative tools (shared, etc.)**
- **Well-designed and well-located parking structures to accommodate increased parking demand**



PARKING: EXAMPLES

- **Dripping Springs, TX**

- Establishes a single fee.
- Allows for the developer to reduce fees by building some parking
- Allows for the funds to be used for any parking improvement (not just garages)

- **Georgetown, TX**

- No set fee in ordinance
- Includes maintenance in its fee calculation for a period of 10-years
- Viewed as a last resort if shared parking is not possible
- Positioned as a historic preservation tool
- Fees can be reduced by entering into shared parking agreements

- **Jackson, WY**

- Has an established fee via an adopted ordinance.
- Charges differential fees based on the number of spaces required (less than 5 pay one price, while more than that is charged a higher fee)

- **Magnolia, TX**

- Fee based on 100% construction cost, as prepared by the City Engineer
- Money goes to a special fund, for parking improvements only
- Has a refund process in the instance the funds aren't used in seven years

- **McAllen, TX**

- Charges a single, low-dollar value fee (\$1,000)

PARKING: RECOMMENDED POLICY FOR WACO

- **Reestablish **parking minimums** in the Downtown**
 - Consider limiting this area at first to areas where demand will be highest
 - Important to demonstrate success here before expanding to rest of downtown
- **Authorize **alternative** parking strategies**
 - Allow alternatives like shared parking, off-street parking valet parking, etc., to satisfy requirements
 - Authorize **fee in-lieu** of providing on-site parking
 - Ensure fee reflects the **actual costs** to provide parking (construction, land acquisition, maintenance)
- **Managing the parking strategy**
 - Establish a **parking benefit district** (All money collected from parking is spent within district)
 - Adjust **on-street parking rates** (garage parking should be the less-expensive long-term parking)
 - Leverage funds for **bonding** capacity (Use funds from the benefit district, TIRZ, or PID as seed money to issue debt to pay for initial construction as the fund balance gradually increases)

ADOPTING THE NEW PARKING POLICY

- **Reestablish parking minimums *early* in the FBC adoption process**
 - *Strategic Roadmap* implementation success hinges on this approach being approved
- **Present the overall parking strategy *holistically***
 - Ensure that it's clear that all the moving parts (e.g., parking minimums, fee in-lieu, parking district) are all part of a comprehensive strategy
- **Expand the applicable area for the fee in-lieu *gradually***
 - Areas where parking demand is expected to be most significant should be prioritized
 - As Downtown is built out, other areas should be included when there is adequate demand

DISCUSSION: PARKING

- **What type of parking facilities should be built?**
 - Some cities pay for surface, while others pay for structured only.
- **Flexibility: what types of exceptions or relief procedures should allow reductions in required parking?**
- **Other questions?**
- **Fee management (internal City issue). Sample questions:**
 - When should fee be required (zoning approval or building permit?) and in what form (single vs installments)?
 - How should the fee be structured (i.e., what are the considerations in developing the cost?). Some cities do not include the cost of land acquisition and maintenance while others do.
 - Different fees based on the number of spaces required? (benefit to smaller development)

UPDATE THE DOWNTOWN SIGN REGULATIONS

- **Expand allowed sign types to include those that are typically found in downtowns, including roof signs, office directories, and multi-tenant signs**
- **Increase the maximum allowable square footage**
- **Better address the unique signage needs of large entertainment venues**





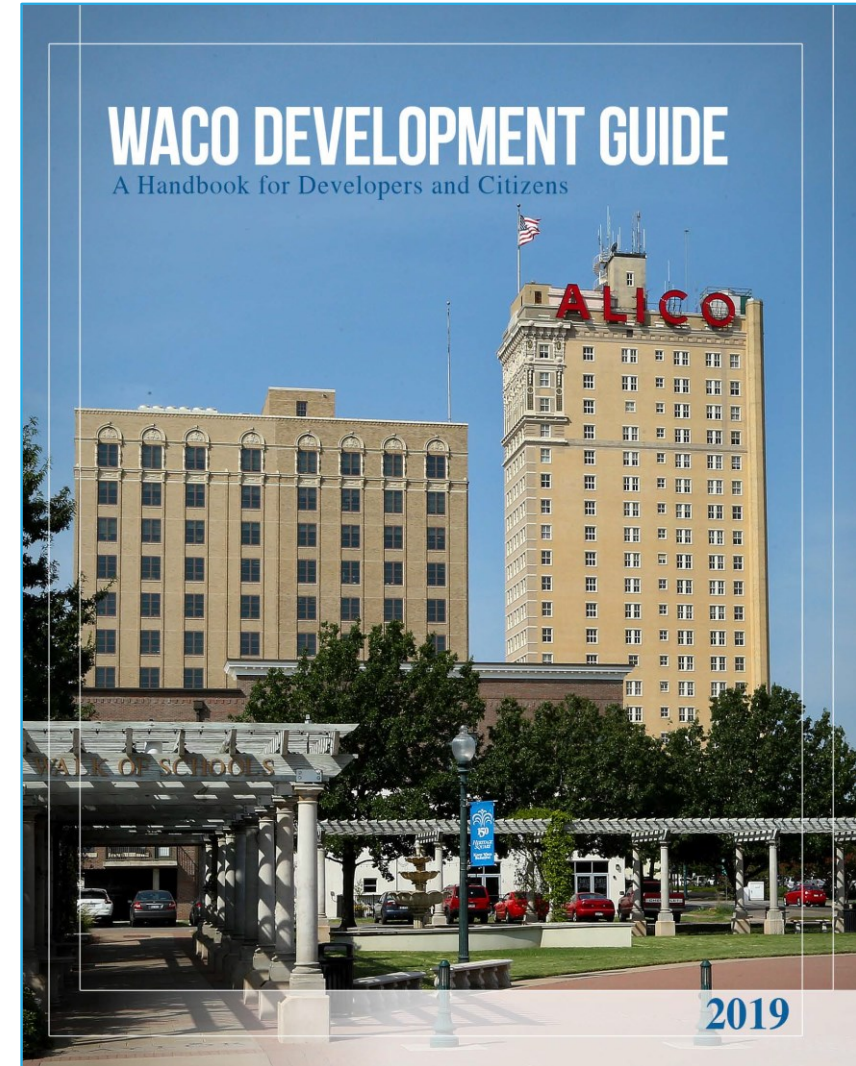
STRENGTHEN THE HISTORIC REGULATIONS

Align the FBC with current City initiatives to improve the historic regulations

- **Consider participating in the Main Street Program**
- **Strengthen building design standards in the Historic District Overlay to ensure new development complements historic resources**

PROCEDURAL AND OTHER UPDATES

- **Strengthen Planned Unit Development (PUD) requirements**
- **Rework the Site Development Plan process**
- **Define key terms from the *Strategic Roadmap***
- **Outsource permitting to third-party reviewers**
- **Improve overall code user-friendliness**



An aerial photograph of a city grid with a river flowing through it. Overlaid on the map are various colored shapes representing proposed development: light blue rectangles for buildings, green areas for parks and sports fields (including a baseball field and several soccer fields), and yellow/orange lines for paths or roads. The text 'QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION' is centered in the lower half of the image.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Waco Downtown Redevelopment Project

**Creating a vibrant hub
of culture, commerce,
and community along
the Brazos River.**



Waco Downtown Redevelopment Informational Session

Please join us for a Waco Downtown Redevelopment Informational Session on **August 27, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.** The event will be held in the **Texas North 115 at the Waco Convention Center.**

Register Now →

WWW.WACODOWNTOWNREDEVELOPMENT.COM
SIGN-UP TO RECEIVE PROJECT UPDATES.



NEXT STEPS

**Please send any comments on the Assessment to
CC Clarion at: ccicci@clarionassociates.com**

Next committee meeting: late spring

Focus on draft form-based zoning districts





DOWNTOWN WACO MASTER REDEVELOPMENT **DOWNTOWN FORM-BASED CODE**

Assessment Report
January 2025