



County of San Diego, Planning & Development Services
FORM BASED CODE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ZONING DIVISION

Background:

On July 30, 2014 the County Board of Supervisors approved Form Based Codes (FBC) for the Ramona Town Center and a 40 acre portion of the Alpine Village Core. Establishing FBCs that promote compact and viable County village areas is a key component of the County General Plan and is called out as an implementation measure in the General Plan Implementation Plan. FBCs have been utilized in many communities throughout the state and nation. FBCs have been shown to be successful tools to help improve aesthetics and walkability, and increase the economic value of developments by diversifying development with mixed uses.

What is a Form Based Code (FBC) and how is it different from the zoning that existed on my property prior to the FBC's adoption?

Unlike traditional zoning, FBCs primarily control physical form (building types, intensity and character) and encourage wider, more appropriate mixed uses. Traditional zoning does not regulate the built environment beyond basic regulations such as height, lot coverage and setbacks. FBCs focus on what is desired, unlike traditional zoning which focuses on what is prohibited. Additionally, FBCs address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, the scale and pattern, and types of streets and blocks.

Why were FBCs created for Alpine and Ramona?

Alpine and Ramona community members recognized that the full economic and social potential of their town centers is not being utilized by both residents and visitors. For instance...people drive through Ramona on their way to some other destination but don't stop to shop. Additionally, many residents need to travel to other communities in order purchase certain products or obtain services not available in the community. These village areas lack a diversity of quality land uses and inviting social spaces that make the town centers attractive places to visit and for residents to use. Community members sought to establish an appropriate mix and intensity of uses to support commercial areas and to create a sense of "place" within their communities.

How does applying a FBC affect my property?

Prior to adoption of the FBC, properties located within the Alpine and Ramona Town Center areas were already subject to community design requirements. These requirements have been replaced with new design standards that better achieve the goals set forth by community members to revitalize their downtown areas. The new design standards contained in the FBC stress the importance of a building's location and its relation to the street. By doing this, the FBC allows for greater use of the property by allowing for more lot coverage, reduced parking requirements, and greater flexibility for mixed uses. It's important to note that these new standards only apply to new development or properties which are being significantly redeveloped; existing uses and buildings are not subject to the requirements of the FBC until substantial changes to existing uses and structures are proposed.



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Will the uses allowed on my property change?

The FBC created six new zoning designations in Ramona and three new zoning designations in Alpine. Use allowance tables are located within the FBC documents. The table, located within each zoning district section of the FBC, specifies uses that are allowed “by-right” and uses that require various levels of discretionary permits in each zone. Staff conducted an analysis and worked with the community to assure that appropriate uses were retained or removed depending on the new zoning district. The intent of developing the use table was also to consolidate and streamline the range of allowable uses. The FBC should be referenced to determine allowable uses on your property based on its zoning designation.

Does the FBC change the way I would process a development permit on my property?

Development projects will continue to be processed in the same manner as they are currently processed. Applicants are required to obtain a Site Plan Review Permit pursuant to Section 5750 of the County Zoning Ordinance for new or redeveloped properties located within the FBC area. Projects will also be eligible to apply for an expedited Site Plan Design Review Exemption if they qualify. The Site Plan Review Permit will be forwarded to the applicable Community Planning Group (CPG) and Design Review Board (DRB) for review and recommendation to the County. It is highly recommended that you contact the CPG and DRB to discuss the “ins and outs” of your project and receive general information on the feasibility of the project up front before you make any major investment in time and money, and prior to formally submitting your project to the County. Also, it is recommended that you set-up an Initial Consultation meeting with County staff to discuss the proposed project.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alpine CPG ▪ Alpine DRB ▪ Ramona CPG ▪ Ramona DRB 	<p>Visit the CPG and DRB webpage below for contact information for each CPG and DRB listed: http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/pds/CommunityGroups/</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initial Consultation Meeting 	<p>PDS Zoning Counter - (858) 565-5981</p>

Where can I get a copy of the FBC?

A copy of the FBCs for can be downloaded for free at the following web addresses:

Alpine: <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/dplu/advance/village/alpineformbasedcode.pdf>
 Ramona: <http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/dplu/advance/village/ramonaformbasedcode.pdf>

Hardcopies of the Ramona FBC can be purchased for \$14.50 and the Alpine FBC can be purchased for \$7.25 at Planning & Development Services, 5510 Overland Avenue, San Diego, 1st Floor.

Does the County plan to develop FBC for other communities?

Yes - the General Plan Implementation Plan proposes that FBCs be developed for other town center areas in the County to assure that these areas are revitalized to become vital and sustainable communities. Additional FBC work is in the Advance Planning Division Work Program and will be prioritized for implementation as resources allow.