



Groundwork

Workforce Housing for Northwest Arkansas

#FutureIsNow

Building our ideal future: Leveraging zoning

Municipal zoning and code are tools municipalities use to regulate and shape the type of development within the municipality.













Municipalities in the Northwest Arkansas region have legacy zoning code that dates to the 1960s, known as Euclidean/Conventional zoning. Traditionally, Euclidean code focused on land use, setbacks, lot size, height, and primarily separates uses within a municipality. The result is an automobile-oriented society that separates homes from groceries, away from restaurants and schools and has minimal input as to the look and design of the buildings. This resulted in NWA becoming over zoned for commercial purposes and limited the types of homes that can be built across much of the region to single-family homes.

In recent years, alternative codes, such as form-based code, and pattern zoning were introduced to give municipalities the ability to control sprawl, manage the design of the buildings being built, and limit the administrative stop gaps that make development difficult.









NWA's local municipalities have done a lot of work to update their code, but a more comprehensive region-wide reform is needed.

What is the difference?

Conventional Zoning

-  Separates uses related to daily activity, such as home, school and work.
-  Promotes sprawl and limited housing choices.
-  Encourages excessive land consumption and automobile dependency.
-  Focuses on what uses are not allowed and doesn't take into account what fits the community.
-  "One-size-fits-all" standards and design requirements.
-  Regulations encourage developers to "max out" the massing of a building within allowed limits.
-  Automobile-oriented leading to more travel and traffic.
-  Regulates private development but does not take into account the design or character of the streets.
-  Large parking lots and garages fronting buildings.
-  Lacks sense of place.

Formed Based Code

-  Encourages a mix of land uses, often reducing the need to travel extensively as part of one's daily routine. Promotes a mix of housing types.
-  Is "proactive," focusing on what the community wants and not what it dislikes.
-  Results from a public design process, which creates consensus and a clear vision for a community, to be implemented by the form-based code.
-  Tells developers exactly how buildings should look and allows cities to establish a sense of place.
-  Addresses design of the public spaces and importance of street design.
-  Easier to understand than traditional zoning codes because of shorter, more concise and emphasis on illustrations over text.
-  Allows for faster approvals and less administrative paperwork and administrative cost savings that can be passed on to the buyer/renter.
-  Informs developers on desired development.

Changes needed in NWA to pave the way for housing attainability

Establish more centers of commerce and **walkable neighborhoods**.

Removal of all only single-family zoning in most of the areas and allow for more **diverse types of homes** including duplexes, triplexes and townhomes.

A more cohesive and **regional approach** to zoning that makes it easier for developers to navigate municipal codes and a more streamlined process for development.

Allow for development on land zoned strictly for commercial across the major thorough ways across the region.

Allow for parking requirements to be **determined by the market** instead of by the municipality – allowing for more units to be produced within each development.

Limit the minimum distance a building or structure must be set back from a property line or from other buildings where valuable and expensive land goes unused.

A regional vision that **connects communities**, developments, and charts growth in a thoughtful way.

To learn more visit groundworknwa.org