EXPLORATION OF FORM-BASED CODES

GREAT STREETS AND GATEWAYS
MADISON-MLK CORRIDOR

Matthew Zyzewski
December 12, 2008
Final Report
PROBLEM STATEMENT
The problem with typical zoning codes is that they regulate where development cannot occur and often lack a vision of what neighborhoods should look like. Commonly, typical zone designations have different requirements such as height, setback, density, and parking. Form-based codes, on the other hand, show where development can occur and offer cohesive development. Form-based codes allow a vision of an area to be translated into a code. The selected site for form-based code intervention is Madison Road between Oakley and Madisonville.

EXISTING ZONING
**Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan**

**Existing Conditions:**
- Madisonville lacking new development
- Lack of maintenance in Madisonville
- Development pressures near I-71 threatening Oakley
- Numerous infill opportunities in Oakley

**Recommendations:**
- Create streetscape enhancements
- Preserve greenspace near Red Bank Expressway
- Make Madisonville pedestrian friendly
- Condense Madisonville NBD
- Introduce higher residential density in Madisonville

**GoCincinnati Recommendations**
- Need job growth
- Promote walkable urban spaces
- Need to preserve industrial base
- Historic character of Madisonville needs to be preserved
- Millworks site should feature office and residential
- Madisonville should have higher density residential uses
Development regulations as listed in the City of Cincinnati Zoning Ordinance were translated into transect zones as prescribed in the SmartCode 9.0. CN-M and CN-P zones were commonly T5. RMX, and high density residential zones were similar to the T4 designation. Additionally, less dense residential zones were translated into T3 zones.

Eastwood Circle in Madisonville is characteristic of a T3 sub-urban zone. Homes on this street feature long front yard setbacks.

Taylor Avenue in Oakley fits in the T4 general urban category. Buildings in this zone typically feature short front yard setbacks and remain close to each other.

The Center of Cincinnati would most likely be classified as a special district. Large parking lots and expansive lot coverage are not common characteristics of a T1-T6 categories.

Madison Road in Oakley NBD is characteristic of a T5 general urban zone. Oftentimes, buildings have zero setbacks and are densely packed together.
As indicated, transect zones were approximated by an examination of current urban forms in the study area. Although certain zones have certain restrictions, it was discovered that existing urban forms did not always conform to the underlying zoning. Most noticeably, areas to the south of the Madisonville NBD are better characterized as suburban zones (T3) than T4 zones.
Given existing studies and a thorough examination of the study area, step three is a recommendation of what the transect should be. In Madisonville, it is recommended that the NBC be condensed. Additionally, a higher dense zone (T4) is recommended for areas surrounding the Madisonville NBD.
T5 INTERVENTION IN MADISONVILLE

Through an examination of which sites might best benefit from form-based codes, two specific sites in Madisonville were identified. The first site is near the intersection of Madison Road and Whetsel Avenue. The second site is on the southern side of Madisonville near Whetsel Avenue and Bramble Avenue. The application of a T5 designation might enhance these areas which contain disinvestment, abandonment, and opportunities for infill development.
Welcome to Madisonville...

- infill opportunities
- junk storage
- parking predominance
- lack of greenery
- infill opportunities
- lack of street activity
- abandonment
- disinvestment
- suburban strip
- ready for change
Southeast Corner of Madison Road and Whetsel Avenue

The major node of entry to Madisonville is the intersection at Madison Road and Whetsel Avenue. Currently, a commercial strip is on the northwest corner which is anchored by a front parking lot. The northeast corner features a few businesses which directly abut the sidewalk. The southwest and southeast corners currently remain vacant.

The figure on the top right highlights potential buildings in a T5 zone. These buildings are placed with existing buildings to show what the how dense the area could be.
Another node in Madisonville is the intersection of Whetsel Avenue and Bramble Avenue. Although smaller in scale, this area could benefit from the implementation of a T5 zone. Currently, this area is plagued by abandonment and disinvestment. A form-based code for this area might help entice future development.

The figure on the top right demonstrates buildings which may be allowed in a T5 zone. These potential buildings are placed with existing buildings to illustrate what the urban fabric could be in this area.
CONCLUSION

Form-based codes are by no means the panacea to urban problems in Madisonville and the general study area. However, a form-based code might be an effective tool to enhance the street character and introduce green infrastructure. Furthermore, the implementation of a form-based code might entice developers to create infill projects. A form-based code does not have to take the form of a transect as identified in this project. Some municipalities may prefer to utilize a form-based code for specific sites in an overlay zone format. In summary, a form-based code is a good starting point for residents and community actors to determine a vision for a particular area through the implementation of a code that looks at where development should occur.