



This new billboard at City Hall in Kansas City, MO is a good example of the visual eye-sore billboards can become.



These 2 photos are before and after images after this Florida city adopted a sign ordinance.

Design and Zoning Guidelines

GOAL: TO ENSURE DEVELOPMENT ADHERES TO THE GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY EXPRESSED THROUGH THE MASTER PLAN.

ZONING

Zoning regulations should be reworked to comply with the goals for Riverside identified in this Master Plan. Regulations regarding setbacks, streetscapes, parking, pedestrian amenities, site plan review, land use, and design character should be updated to reflect the desire to create an attractive Riverside that is pedestrian friendly and proactive about directing development.

Develop and Update

When used effectively, zoning can shape growth in a City to adhere to the long-term goals for the site. However, traditional zoning does have drawbacks. Traditional code is complex and illegible for much of the general public, it regulates based on use, artificially separating users that may be better off in proximity, and it disconnects land use from urban form. It is the recommendation of the Master Planning Team that a form-based zoning code be developed in concert with the update of the traditional code. This form based code concentrates on regulating the urban form of a development rather than the use.

Typical zoning codes include physical requirements for each zone, usually dictating a minimum lot size, desired setbacks from streets and adjacent lots,

and maximum building heights. Typically, the zoning code does not help to create a streetscape.

Street Character

In Riverside buildings should be placed to define stronger street edges, thus creating more lively sidewalks and zones where activity can take place. Areas for cars should be located behind or at the sides of buildings where possible. The relationship of buildings to the streets and the physical character of the street should be defined. Public uses should occur at the street level, setting more eyes on the street, attracting people, and generating social intercourse.

The Form-Based Zoning Alternative

The arguments against traditional zoning do not mandate that the current system must be abandoned. It is an efficient, simple, defensible, and economic approach to planning, and it can be modified to encourage a different growth pattern than is currently supported. Other municipalities and entire states have successfully instituted "Smart Growth" policies that utilize various tools in conjunction with more conventional zoning strategies in an effort to create more vital, pedestrian friendly, higher density communities. It is tools like these that the City of Riverside must explore to generate more positive growth.

Transect Zoning Recommendation

This plan recommends the Transect Zoning approach, developed by Duany Plater Zyberk & Company. Their research of walkable, mixed-use commu-

nities led to the development of a code based on the characteristics of six zones, which form a Transect. Typically, the Transect is divided into zones, ranging from an undisturbed natural environment through an urban core. Within each zone, the characteristics of density, scale, open space and mix of uses can be described in a consistent manner and across the range of context zones one finds distinct choices for people with different preferences. One additional zone is reserved for special uses and industry.

Under the transect code, criteria are assigned for density, block sizes, public frontage, civic spaces, lot occupancy, setback, private frontage, building height, and basic guidelines for use; these criteria are detailed in each transect differently, to define the desired character. The zones are sometimes arranged in order of intensity, but it is entirely possible that an urban center or core could be juxtaposed to a rural or natural zone. Zones may even overlap. The code is a template, and is more graphic in content than verbal. This type of picture-book zoning forces a community to make decisions about the broad character they desire. The real advantage to Transect based zoning is its simplicity and ability to shape urban form. Both of those characteristics make it ideal for use in Riverside.

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

A design review board is a group charged with maintaining the design standards of a community. The board would evaluate the architectural quality of incoming development proposals

and ensure that they adhere to the guidelines established for the particular type of structure. Riverside should consider assigning design review board duties to the Planning Board. This body could also represent redevelopment initiatives and potentially identify and go after development opportunities in cooperation with the appropriate developer.

BILLBOARDS

Because of the persistent concern with the overall appearance and image of Riverside, the Master Plan recommends a ban on billboards inside Riverside city limits. Because of the zero real estate tax in Riverside there is no real incentive for allowing the construction of billboards. These signs clutter roadways and the most visible parts of communities across Missouri. A properly drafted sign ordinance will protect the City from billboards and the visual clutter that they create. It is recommended that such an ordinance be drafted and adopted.

PERMITTING

One item that the team heard in many of the interviews was the desire to have City staff handle routine permitting issues. It is the recommendation of the team that day-to-day routine permitting issues be delegated to City staff for approval. This will free up the Planning Board to concentrate on larger and more pressing issues.