



CITY PLANNING

Calley Mersmann
Director

Authorization

for Professional Services Contract to Enhance Form-Based Code

Ord. 1398-2025

Summary

This legislation authorizes the engagement of a qualified consultant team for planning services to refine and recommend expansions of the Form-Based Code (FBC). The contract will augment the Planning Department's staff capacity to refine the code based on results from FBC pilot areas; create new district types, such as industrial, autocentric, waterfront, and transit-oriented development; and recommend expansions of the FBC framework to additional geographies across the city.

Background

In 2014, Cleveland began its effort to modernize its zoning code through the creation and adoption of FBC. After years of planning and technical drafting, in 2024 City Council passed pilot FBC districts in three neighborhoods: Detroit Shoreway/Cudell, Hough, and the Opportunity Corridor. The next phase of the initiative will refine the existing FBC text based on lessons learned from the pilot, create new districts to support additional development patterns, and recommend expansion of the FBC to additional neighborhoods.

Details

The project will secure a consultant team to support the City Planning Commission. The work focuses on significant progress in priority areas, including refining existing FBC standards (e.g., ADUs, ground-floor residential restrictions, streetscape), clarifying administrative processes, and creating new district types for uses like automotive, industrial, waterfront, and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). A key task is developing strategies to incorporate Fire Code requirements with urban infill and adaptive reuse goals. The resulting code will be predictable, user-friendly, and graphic-rich.

Alignment

This legislation advances the city's work toward land use policies that support equitable, predictable development, neighborhood revitalization, and multimodal transportation access. Expanding and refining the FBC is a critical next step in zoning policy to deliver these regulatory priorities.





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Financial

Impact

The initial contract amount will not exceed \$125,184. The contract term is for one (1) year from the effective date, with three (3) one-year options exercisable by the Planning Director with additional legislative authority.

Geographic Impact

This is a citywide initiative.

