# 26-1 Introduction & Definitions

### How to Use the Taft Corners FBC

Look at the REGULATING PLAN to determine if property is located within the Taft Corners FBC.

**If no:**

These standards are not applicable.

**If yes:**

*I want to know what I can do with my property:*

1. Find the specific property in question on the REGULATING PLAN. Identify the REQUIRED BUILDING LINE and the PARKING SETBACK LINE. The color of the fronting STREET-SPACE determines the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD (you will find these in the key located on the REGULATING PLAN).
2. Find the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD in *Section 3. Building Form Standards*. The standards in *Section 3.1 General Provisions* that apply to all properties in the Taft Corners FBC. The BUILDING FORM STANDARD describes the parameters for development on the site in terms of placement, height, elements, and use.
3. Additional regulations regarding architecture, streets and other public spaces, parking requirements, and permitted building functions are found in *Sections 4 to 7.*
4. See *Section 8* for information on the development review process.

*I want to modify an existing building:*

Determine whether your intended changes would trigger a level of code compliance by looking at *Section 3 Building Form Standards* and in *Section 8, Non-Conformities.*

If yes, follow the process delineated therein (and the indicated portions of steps 2-4, above).

*I want to establish a new use in an existing building:*

Find the property on the REGULATING PLAN and determine the applicable BUILDING FORM STANDARD. Determine whether the use is allowed by looking at the Permitted Use Table in *Section 7.* If the use is listed with a cross-reference in the right-hand column, refer to those specific performance standards.

I want to subdivide my property:

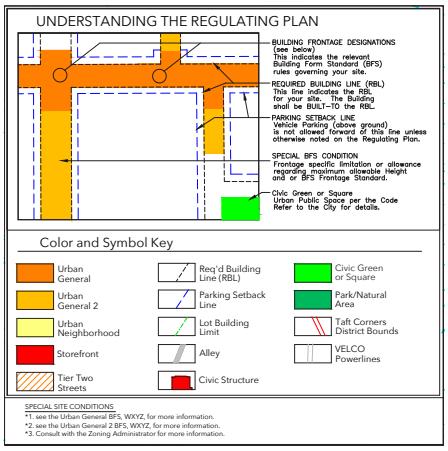
Property may be subdivided in accordance with the procedures of the Williston Unified Development Bylaw Chapter 12 Subdivisions. Any subdivision of a property within Taft Corners shall meet the applicable standards of *Sections 2 to 7.*

Note that:

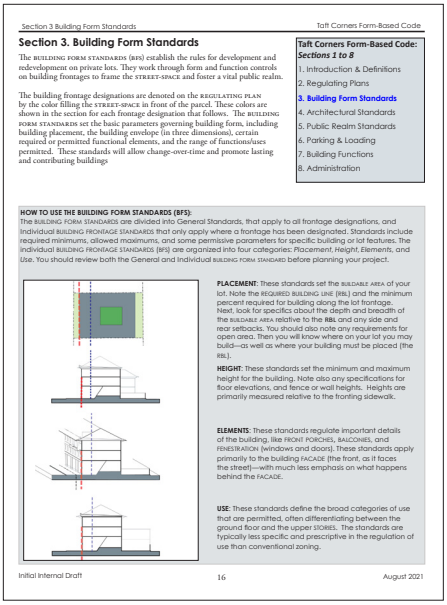
Certain terms in this Code are used in specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Wherever a word is in SMALL CAPITALS format, consult Section G. Key Concepts (below) or this Section G and H for its specific and limited meaning within Taft Corners.

**Taft Corners Form-Based Code:**
***Sections 1 to 8***

**1. Introduction & Definitions**
2. Regulating Plans
3. Building Form Standards
4. Architectural Standards
5. Public Realm Standards
6. Parking & Loading
7. Building Functions
8. Administration
9. Reserved




*REGULATING PLAN Key*

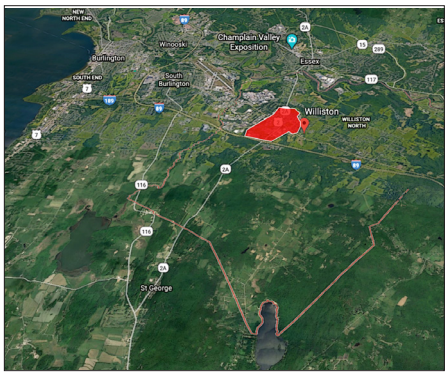



*BUILDING FORM STANDARDS, page 1*

## A. Purpose & Intent

This section establishes the Taft Corners Form-Based Code (Taft Corners FBC). *Sections 2* through *7* provide the rules for development in these districts.

This code is established to implement the community vision plan. It focuses on community character, through an emphasis on development character, intensity, and physical form and patterns, rather than solely on land uses. This code emphasizes the relationship between private development and the public realm to promote an overall sense of place within Taft Corners while allowing a wide variety of land uses.




*Birds-Eye 2021: Taft Corners in Williston*

Taft Corners is a defined geographic area in a specific location that accommodates a mix of uses—either within the same building, on the same parcel, or within close proximity—in a pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive, compact, walkable form. The Taft Corners FBC is intended to create traditional urban design.

The Taft Corners FBC regulations establish requirements related to form, character and design that will promote compatible redevelopment and create an environment where people can live, work, learn, worship, and relax within a compact walkable setting. The standards foster a system in which buildings are oriented toward the street or public realm, and organized around perimeter BLOCKS, ideally with rear lot service access via ALLEYS or shared drives.

*Aerial photo Taft Corners*

## B. Organization

Taft Corners is mapped by a REGULATING PLAN and divided into building frontages. Each building frontage is defined primarily by a common scale, character, and intensity, rather than land use category (although uses are broadly regulated).

The Taft Corners FBC regulations include a set of BUILDING FORM STANDARDS that establish a hierarchy of building forms, with a scale and intensity tailored for their location. The goal of the BUILDING FORM STANDARDS is to create a vital and coherent public realm through the definition and shape of the STREET-SPACE.

The regulations on building forms are applied at the parcel level and put primary emphasis on the building frontage—the relationship between the building and the STREET-SPACE. The regulations work together to frame the PUBLIC REALM.

The BUILDING FORM STANDARDS are tailored to the desired physical and functional context of each location, using a range of scales and intensities, as identified by the Taft Corners REGULATING PLAN.

*Illustrative Plan, mixed-use core area.*

*Illustrative Plan, Taft Corners.*

*Vision, Bird's Eye View over 2A/Merchants Row (extended).*

## C. Applicability and Intent

1. The REGULATING PLAN is the official zoning map for Taft Corners.
2. The Code is in effect for that part of the Town of Williston, Vermont, designated on the Official Zoning Map as the Taft Corners Form District (TCFD)
3. Where the REGULATING PLAN is shown on the zoning map, these standards immediately apply.
4. The process for developing or redeveloping within Taft Corners is explained in *Section 8*.
5. The REGULATING PLAN establishes and gaurantees the interconnected network of small blocks and walkable/pedestrian oriented streets in accordance with ther Town Plan.

## D. Other Applicable Regulations

Where apparent conflicts exist between the provisions of the Taft Corners FBC and the other sections of the Williston Unified Development Bylaw or other existing ordinances or approvals, these standards shall take preference unless in conflict with State or Federal law.

## E. Minimum Requirements

In interpreting and applying the provisions of the Taft Corners FBC, these are the minimum requirements for development under this Code.

## F. Components

The Taft Corners standards are included in the following sections:

1. *Section 1 Introduction & Definitions* instructs on the use and organization of the Taft Corners Code. The *Definitions* subsection includes those terms that are used in the Taft Corners regulations in specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Wherever a word is in SMALL CAPITALS format, consult *G. Key Concepts*, or *H. Definitions* for its specific and limited meaning. Words used but not defined in Taft Corners, but that are defined elsewhere in the Williston Unified Development Bylaw, shall have the meanings set forth therein.
2. *Section 2 Regulating Plans:* The REGULATING PLAN is the zoning map for Taft Corners. The REGULATING PLAN provides specific information on the rules for development within each parcel. The REGULATING PLAN makes the development standards place-specific by designating the BUILDING FORM STANDARD frontages and delineating the public spaces.

   The REGULATING PLAN identifies: the boundaries for Taft Corners; existing and new streets; the REQUIRED BUILDING LINE; and the PARKING SETBACK LINE throughout Taft Corners; and may identify additional regulations and/or special circumstances for specific locations.
3. *Section 3 Building Form Standards* sets out the rules for building siting, scale, and massing that control how buildings frame and relate to the

STREET-SPACE or public realm. The BUILDING FORM STANDARDS establish the parameters for development on each site in terms of building placement, height, elements, and uses.

4. *Section 4 Architectural Standards* provide parameters for a building's exterior elements, with an emphasis on FACADES. These standards govern materials, configurations, and techniques for development under all BUILDING FORM STANDARDS. They are established in order to ensure a coherent and high-quality building character that is complementary to the best traditions of Williston and the region.
5. *Section 5 Public Realm Standards* include standards for the public realm: streets and sidewalks, and SQUARES, CIVIC GREENS, and other public open spaces. They are established in order to ensure a vital and complete public realm/ STREET-SPACE with a high level of walkability.
6. *Section 6 Parking and Loading Standards* provide goals and requirements to promote a "park once" environment through shared parking and encourage a pedestrian-friendly, walkable Taft Corners.
7. *Section 7 Building Function Standards* define the uses allowed and/or required on ground floors and in upper floors, correlated with each BUILDING FORM STANDARD. Because Taft Corners emphasizes form more than use, these standards include fewer, broader categories than those provided elsewhere in the Williston Unified Development Bylaw.
8. *Section 8 Administration* covers the application and approval process for developing in Taft Corners. It also sets out the standards and procedures for amendments to the REGULATING PLAN and how development proposals will be reviewed.

*Illustrative view of future Trader Lane at the Village Green.*

## G. Taft Corners Intent and Key Concepts

The following list of concepts are important components of the Taft Corners regulations and are provided here for quick reference. These and other terms in the Taft Corners sections are used in specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Wherever a word is in SMALL CAPITAL format, consult *H. Definitions* for its complete specific and limited meeting

**ALLEY:**
ALLEYS provide efficient and coordinated rear access for service and parking to all users of a BLOCK. They are critical to the functioning of the interconnected network of streets.

**BLOCK:**
BLOCKS are the foundation of a walkable, efficient, and vital Town Center/Urban Place. WIth their public frontages, private lots and interior service and parking areas, BLOCKS provide an efficent and workable system for private interests, large and small, to interact in a synergistic and democratic way. They are the building block of all the great American towns and cities.

**BUILDABLE AREA:**
This area, described/set out in the Building Form Standards, is simply the area of the lot where buildings may be constructed.

**CLEAR SIDEWALK:**
This is the continuous clear area of sidewalk for pedestrians. While the area that is available to pedestrians will often be wider, the CLEAR SIDEWALK area will never be encroached into or compromised.

**CLEARLY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET-SPACE:**
The Taft Corners Form-Based Code most regulates things that directly shape the form and functioning of the STREET-SPACE - things that are CLEARLY VISIBLE FROM THE STREET-SPACE. Private actions and building forms beyond that, generally within or behind the buildings, are less regulated.

**DOORYARD:**
The area between the building FACADE and the SIDEWALK. DOORYARDS vary with their context, some being paved areas in front of shops and others small front gardens or lawns.

**FAÇADE:**
The building elevation facing and on the street is its public face - or FACADE. Because the building FACADE is the primary component of the STREET-SPACE, the form based code places careful parameters on it, with much less control on the rest of the building.

**FENESTRATION:**
The doors, windows, and other openings in a building that provide views and communication between the private space within the building and the public realm of the STREET-SPACE. The FBC regulates FENESTRATION to support vital walkable streets and to maintain 'eyes on the street' for safety.

**PARKING SETBACK LINE:**
The arrangement of parked cars in Taft Corners is very llightly regulated. There is a simple setback line, generally 30' from the STREET-SPACE, that ensures that no pedestrian will have to walk alongside a parking lot.

**PRIVATE OPEN AREA:**
PRIVATE OPEN SPACE is for residents. This is not public space, as in a GREEN or a park, but open area for individual families, and/ or residents of individual buildings, out of the public hustle and bustle of living in a compact, walkable, downtown. The 19th Century city failed in this regard and the resulting inhumane conditions contributed to the 20th Century flight to the suburbans that so consumed our rural lands.

**REGULATING PLAN:**
You might think of the REGULATING PLAN as a 21st Century Zoning Map. It lays out the Form and Function regulations for development and the interconnected network of streets, BLOCKS, ALLEYS, and public open spaces that are necessary for the pedestrian oriented, walkable downtown/town center called for in the Town Plan.

**REQUIRED BUILDING LINE (RBL):**
The required building line is the line, or narrow strip, that aligns buildings consistently along the street and sidewalk. The Taft Corners Form-Based Code requires a minimum percentage of all lot frontages to have a building FACADE built along it,

**STREET-SPACE:**
The complete space between the building FACADES. The STREET-SPACE is a community's first and foremost public space. It includes the automobile travel and parking lanes, the TREE LAWNS, sidewalks, DOORYARDS, and any GREENS or SQUARES.

**STREET TREES:**
"A street with canopy shade trees is like a room without a ceiling" Henry Arnold.

STREET TREES and plants contribute to privacy, the reduction of noise and air pollution, shade, maintenance of the natural habitat, conservation of water, and storm-water management. Good STREET-SPACES promote sustainable transportation options such as walking and bicycling.

## H. Definitions

The following terms are defined for the purpose of the Taft Corners Form-Based Code (FBC). Terms not defined here may be defined elsewhere in the Williston Unified Development Bylaw. In such case, the definition contained in the Williston Unified Development Bylaw shall be used. Certain terms in these districts are used in very specific ways, often excluding some of the meanings of common usage. Where there is an apparent conflict or contradiction, the definition herein shall take precedence.

Alley. The public right-of-way or public access easement for vehicles and pedestrians within a block that provides service access to the rear or side of properties, vehicle parking (e.g., garages), loading docks, utility meters, recycling containers, and garbage bins.

Attic Story. Habitable space situated within the structure of a pitched roof and above the uppermost story that does not count against the ultimate building or story height if constructed within the prescribed standards.

Awning. A fabric-on-frame roof-like element attached to the façade or required building line side of a building to provide shelter or shade.

Balcony. An exterior platform attached to the upper stories of the building façade (generally forward of the required building line).

Bay Window. Generally, a U-shaped enclosure extending the interior space of the building forward of the facade/ required building line (along its street-space side).

Block. An increment of land comprised of lots, alleys, and parcels circumscribed and not traversed by streets (pedestrian pathways excepted). Blocks are measured at the required building line (rbl).

Block Corner. The outside corner of a block at the intersection of any two required building lines. Inside corners, where the resulting angle formed by the block face is less than 180 degrees (concave) are not considered block corners for the purposes of the Taft Corners. (see *Section 3 General Standards, Diagram 8*)

Block Face. The required building line frontage between block corners.

Building Corner. The outside corner of a building where the primary building mass is within an angle less than 180 degrees. Inside corners, where the exterior space of the building mass forms an angle of more than 180 degrees are not considered building corners for the purposes of Taft Corners. (see *Section 3 General Standards, Diagram 8*)

Buildable Area. The area of the lot that structure(s) may occupy, which generally includes the area of the lot behind the required building line excluding any required setbacks, as designated in the individual building form standard. Any building additions shall be within the specified buildable area.

Building Form Standards (bfs). The part of the Taft Corners standards that establish basic parameters regulating building form, including: the envelope (in three dimensions); placement on the lot; certain permitted and required building elements, such as shopfronts, balconies, and fenestration; and the allowed functions.

Canopy. The solid-on-frame roof-like element, covering an entry door(s), attached to the façade or required building line side of the building to provide shade or shelter.

Civic Buildings. Those buildings designated on the regulating plan that are or were designed to house strictly civic or cultural assembly uses or are historically and urbanistically significant structures. These may include meeting halls; libraries; schools; police and fire stations; post offices (retail operations only, no primary distribution facilities); places of worship; museums; cultural, visual and performing art centers; transit centers; courthouses; and other similar community uses. Public ownership alone does not constitute a civic building. Civic buildings and publicly-owned public art are not subject to the building form standard prescriptions of the Taft Corners FBC unless specifically noted otherwise.

Clear Height. The habitable distance between the floor and ceiling. For entrances and other external building features, the unobstructed distance from the ground/sidewalk to the lowest element above. Clear height is not applicable to parking structures.

Clear Sidewalk. The portion of a sidewalk that must remain clear of obstructions (furniture, signage, trees, lighting, etc.) to allow for unimpeded public passage

Clearly visible from the Street-Space. Some requirements of the Taft Corners FBC apply only where the subject is "clearly visible from the street-space." (Note the definition of street-space below.) A building element more than 30 feet from a required building line or street-space is by definition not clearly visible from the street-space. Common or party walls are by definition not clearly visible from the street-space.

Common Lot Lines. Lot lines shared by adjacent private lots.

Corner Lot**.** A lot that has frontages on two intersecting street-spaces. Special building placement, fencing and landscape requirements may apply.

Dooryard. The area within the street-space, extending across the entire frontage of the lot, between the building façade (the required building line) and the clear sidewalk/ROW. This area may be hard-surfaced or planted according to Section 5.2.A Public Realm Standards, General, Dooryards

Dormer. Roofed ancillary structures with windows providing light and air to habitable space within a pitched roof.

Equivalent or Better. A building material or construction technique that has been determined, by the Zoning Administrator in consultation with the Project Review Committee (PRC), to be at least equal to, in appearance, durability, etc., or surpassing those expressly permitted herein.

English Basement. A habitable floor level in a rowhouse that is below the first floor that is partially above and below grade. The ceiling of an english basement is between 3 and 6 feet above the average fronting sidewalk grade with windows and an entry with direct street-space access. English basement units do not count against the story height limit but do count against the maximum height measurement. An english basement unit is considered an accessory dwelling unit.

Facade. (the building face): The building elevation facing the street-space or required building line. Building walls facing private interior courts, common lot lines, and alleys are not façades, and are considered elevations..

Facade Composition. The arrangement and proportion of materials and building elements (windows, doors, columns, pilasters, bays) on a given façade.

Fenestration. Openings in a wall, including windows and doors, allowing light and views between the building and/or lot interior (private realm) and exterior (public realm)

Forecourt. A building facade configuration where a central portion of the facade is set back from the required building lines to form a space that is enclosed on 3 sides by building elevations, with the entry door on one of the three elevations. Forecourts are limited in size and must satisfy all their frontage standards.

First Floor. See Ground Story.

Front Porch. An entry platform attached to the ground story facade or required building line side of the building.

Green or Square. A public open space designated on the regulating plan. The term green is used to describe a small public lawn, playground, or other public open area that is primarily pervious-surfaced . The term square is generally used to describe spaces that have more impervious area. See *Section 5. Public Realm Standards* for the specific parameters for greens and squares.

Ground Story. The first habitable level of a building at or above grade, not including english basements. The next story above the ground story is the second story or floor.

Mansard Roof. A roof with two angles of slope, the lower portion of which is steeper and is architecturally comparable to a building wall. Also a nearly vertical facade which imitates a roof. Mansard roofs are permitted within the parameters in *Section 4.X*

Mezzanine. An internal intermediate level between the ground story and the second story that may be in the form of a platform, podium, or wide balcony.

Muntin. A strip of wood or metal separating and holding panes of glass in a window, less than 1" in thickness. Muntins divide a single window sash or casement into a smaller grid system of panes of glass.

Parking Setback Line. A line or plane, generally parallel to the required building line, that extends vertically up from the ground story floor level (unless otherwise noted on the regulating plan), behind which parking may be located.

Pedestrian Pathway. A publicly accessible interconnecting hard-surfaced way, open to the sky, providing pedestrian and bicycle passage through blocks running from a street-space to another street-space, alley, or an interior block parking area.

Privacy Fence. An opaque fence generally along alleys, pedestrian pathways, and common lot lines. See the *Section 3 Building Form Standards* for height and placement specifications and *Section 4 Architecture* for material and configuration standards.

Private Open Area. An occupiable area within the buildable area, generally only accessible to occupants of the particular building or site, and (primarily) open to the sky. The permitted location(s) for private open area is designated in the individual building form standard.

Project Review Committee (PRC). An internal staff committee established to review development proposals for compliance with applicable Taft Corners FBC regulations and to interpret the ordinance in such a way as to carry out its purpose and intent. The committee shall consist of the Zoning Administrator, the Department of Public Works, and a Planner designated by the Zoning Administrator.

Regulating Plan. The implementing plan for development within Taft Corners. The regulating plan designates the building form standards for private development and may provide additional specific information for the disposition of each building site. The regulating plan shows how each site relates to adjacent street-spaces, and the overall district.

Required Building Line (rbl). A line or plane indicated on the regulating plan, defining the street frontage, that extends vertically and is generally parallel to the street, at which the building façade shall be placed. This is a requirement, not a permissive minimum such as a setback. (The minimum length and height of facade that is required to be at the rbl is shown on the applicable building form standard.)

Rowhouse. A single-unit multi-story attached building, sharing one or more common walls with at least one other unit, and with a direct street-space facade entry and no principal dwelling unit above another principal dwelling unit. Rowhouses are only permitted in Urban Neighborhood frontages.

Shared Parking. Automobile parking that is visible (this may be via signage) and accessible to the public for a minimum portion of each day.

Shopfront. The area of the frontage running, vertically from the sidewalk up to the bottom of the second story floor structure and horizontally, the full width of the interior shop or store space. This is typically comprised of the various architectural elements including kneewalls, transoms, window panes, mullions, muntins, posts, pilasters, columns, and any roofs, cornices or eaves—all of which shall comply with the standards of *Section 3.3 Building Form Standards, Storefront Frontages,* and *Section 4.4.F. Architectural Standards, Shopfronts.*

Sidewing. The portion of a building attached to and behind the primary structure extending along a common lot line toward the alley or rear of the lot.

Square. See green.

Stoop. An entry platform on the façade of a building. (See the individual building form standards for specifications.)

Story. That space within a building and above grade that is situated between one floor level and the floor level next above, or if there is no floor above, the ceiling or roof above.

Street-Space. The space between fronting façades or required building lines, including streets, squares, greens, sidewalks, dooryards, and parks—but not within alleys.

Street-Space Frontage. That portion of the lot or building that is coincident with the required building line as required by Taft Corners.

Street Tree. A tree required in the Taft Corners FBC that is used to define the street-space or public realm and listed in the Street Tree List in *Section 5 Public Realm Standards.* Street trees are large canopy shade trees that will form a shade canopy with sufficient clear trunk to allow traffic to pass under unimpeded.

Street Wall. A primarily masonry wall which assists in defining the street-space, filling in the gaps between adjacent building facades.

Tree Lawn. (tree trench/planting strip): A continuous strip of soil area—typically covered with bridging pavement, tree grates, porous pavers, or grass and other vegetation—located between the back of curb and the clear sidewalk, and used for planting street trees and configured to foster healthy street tree root systems. Tree lawn configurations are specified in the *Public Realm Standards, Section 5.5*.

Uses. See *Section 7 Functions* for categories and definitions.