

Residential Infill Strategy: Workshop Notes



Date: Thursday June 29, 2017

Time: 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Location: 4th Floor Auditorium, Millennium Library, Winnipeg, MB

Attendees:

15 people in attendance

Organizations*:

- City of Winnipeg Urban Planning and Office of Public Engagement
- Paragon Design
- Winnipeg Realtors
- Osborne Village West Residents
- JSU Properties
- UWCRC
- Corydon Osborne Community Voice

*Please note: not all attendees provided their organization or affiliation when signing in

Overview

- The goal of this meeting was to bring residents and those associated with resident associations together with people from the development community to engage in discussion about infill development.
- The meeting began with a 5 minute presentation by the Urban Planning Division. The presentation concluded with two prompt questions:
 - With regard to infill - What factors are most important to consider?
 - What is 'good' infill?
- Participants were asked to gather at two separate tables and begin the 'card storming' exercise, using the prompt questions as a starting point.

- Members of the Urban Planning Division sat in on the conversation and were available to help facilitate discussion if needed. Two members of the Urban Planning Division captured notes from discussions that were taking place. After about a half hour of discussions and writing ideas on post-it notes, groups were asked to organize the comments into categories that held a common theme. These cards were posted up on the wall for others to see. Once organized, each group assigned a representative to speak to the discussions that took place and encourage further discussion about the themes or specific points that were identified. After about another half hour of discussions, the session wrapped up, participants were thanked for coming and told that follow up consultation would likely resume in the fall.

Notes from card storming exercise

Participants were asked to answer the prompting questions:

- With regard to infill - What factors are most important to consider?
- What is 'good' infill?

As participants answered the questions, they wrote their ideas on sticky notes. The sticky note answers were then arranged into themes or categories by participants. Each of the cells in the tables below represents one sticky note. The first table shows sticky notes and theme categories generated by Group 1 and the second table shows sticky notes and theme categories generated by Group 2. Group 2 chose to label the themes they had generated.

Group 1

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6
Rules Clear Projects move forward automatically	Derelict buildings vs. good buildings	What - How Show design in greater transparency Early – online maybe	Affordability	Corridor densification not happening	Lessons learned – OV and Corydon
No political influence	Liveable, walkable (not destroyed)	Collaborative practice Engaging community	Sustainable	Proper densification	
Defined criteria to consider (from planning)	Bring value to neighbourhood	Collaboration before signs go up	Character of neighbourhood Consistent		
Rule consistency Neighbourhood development	Value to community	Involvement, Collaboration Consultation and participation with neighbourhood in advance	Scale (max area, max height)		
Rules need to be clear and consistent for all involved			What is “good” development. Should be “sustainable” Not automatic demolition of good homes		

Group 2

Density	Design	Infrastructure	Affordability	Engagement
Hidden density	Design within the characteristics of the neighbourhood	Infill, good infill needs proper transportation modes	Min % low income/RGI	Face to face
Invisible density – secondary suite	No cookie cutter 1 offs	Proper transportation to live where you live	Min % affordable	Holding developers liable
Gentle density – midrise	Landscaping projects properly		Affordable	Neighbourhood engagement with developer
Infill to be absorbable in timely period	Infill: Fit in the area Don't stand out.		Build to where infrastructure allows	Infill that adds back
Maximize land/density but not intrusive	Specific infill strategy for each area		Encourage engagement with Community	
Laneway housing	Consider disaster management		Where should density go?	
Multi-unit to increase density in neighbourhoods that need it	Proper buffers to support infill		Public awareness	
Opportunity to create multi-family rental	Good infill = good building materials		What is a stakeholder? Who?	
Create co-housing options			Opportunity to introduce Culturally appropriate housing	
Opportunity to increase number of accessible units in a community			Smaller sites	
Process to distinguish infill from new “large development” in mature areas			Opportunity to create more non-market options. Non-profit, co-op, social	

Notes from card storming exercise and general discussions

- Good infill should be sustainable infill. Sending lots of building materials to landfills for a new building.
- Reuse of buildings retains character of buildings.
- Refurbishing can be very difficult and costly. It is easier to demo than to refurbish.
- NIMBY (“not in my backyard”) is a negative term that residents take exception to.
- Replacing 100 year old buildings with modern design that is out of context and over built.
- Overpriced vacant buildings (in Corydon area) e.g. \$600,000 condo not selling.
- Information not available for developments on variance signs. Need information further in advance of public hearing.
- Good infill is consistent with the character of the neighbourhood.
- More emphasis on process.
- Can development be assessed by the values of the neighbourhood? Used in density bonusing. (Density bonusing is a tool that creates incentive for developers to provide public amenities in exchange for greater density levels than allowed under existing zoning.)
- Death of the corner store. Community-oriented commercial stores are less viable today and that with the decline of these stores, the sense of a tightly knit community has also declined.
- Upgrades to older homes need to meet current building code requirements.
- Density is not happening where it should. Low density areas rather than corridors.
- Some housing stock is run down and should be replaced.
- Scale is important: “losing right to light.”
- What if there was a community level urban design approval by residents?
- Rules on development need to be clear for all parties and need to be consistent.
- What grants are available? What incentives?
- Themes: Density, design, infrastructure, affordability, engagement.
- Can infill policy include affordable housing policy?

- Demolition by neglect.
- Costs for variances should be higher.
- Density bonusing.
- Natural features – how do they get protected? Trees, riverbanks, etc.
- What does consultation look like?
- Need a residential review committee.
- Either you're in support or opposition at a public hearing.
- How do we get a broad representation of what the neighbourhood wants?
- What role can the Office of Public Engagement play, if any, in individual infill projects?
- *Value of old housing stock vs. value of new housing:*
 - *Should viable old houses be demolished for new development?*
 - *Residents less concerned about demolition of old dangerous or dilapidated houses, but don't want to see good character houses lost.*
 - *Developers talked about how code and accessibility can be issues even in 'good' character houses.*