

Residential Infill Strategy: Focus Group Meeting Notes



Date: Wednesday June 21, 2017

Time: 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Location: 4th floor, 65 Garry St., Winnipeg, MB

Attendees: 4 people in attendance

Organizations:

- City of Winnipeg Urban Planning and Office of Public Engagement
- Character Homes Ltd.
- University of Winnipeg Community Renewal Corporation (UWCRC)
- Habitat for Humanity

Overview

The goal of this meeting was to connect with people in the development industry to discuss how we should conduct engagement for the infill strategy project.

The focus group discussions were based on the following questions:

- Who should we be talking to?
- What information should we be providing?
- What formats for engagement should we be using?
- This event was meant to inform the Urban Planning Division about consultation that is to begin in the fall of 2017.
- The meeting began with introductions, followed by a 5-10 minute powerpoint presentation by the Urban Planning Division. Once the presentation was complete the floor was opened up for discussions focused around the 3 questions. One member of the Urban Planning Division captured notes on a flip chart throughout the discussions. At the end of the meeting it was communicated to the group that the notes would be typed up and sent out to participants for their record and to ensure that points were captured accurately.

Further, the participants were encouraged to provide feedback, either to elaborate, provide clarity, or further explore ideas related to the conversation. No further comments were provided by participants.

Who Should be Engaged in this Process?

- 'Legitimate' stakeholders, and/or silent majority
- Capital Region
- Young people staying? Reach university students
- Speak to appraisers as part of zoning change recommendations; otherwise development goes to greenfield – fewer restrictions
- Baby boomers – needs/wants?
- Trade and industry associations
- Materiality – more up-front clarity – consult architects and developers on this
- Invite media? Allow them to hear story
- All city dwellers have a stake in key neighbourhoods

What information should we be providing?

- Bring/show precedents from other cities - successes, challenges
- Simple communication tools – regular language
- Look to other cities – density in Zoning districts – update with view to greater allowances
- PR strategy with key messaging
- Data – market analysis for owners, renters – guide allowable densities and other factors

What formats for engagement should we be using?

- Mix of engagement techniques – on-line, target stakeholders who know the building and financing business
- Continue the collaboration with these groups throughout, bounce off ideas

Other Points Raised in Meeting

- Reduce height caps in strategic areas to promote density and walkability.
- Parking reductions and density increases will stimulate appetite for infill.
- Fees: keep going up - cost charges - one building pays, next door doesn't
- Building and fire code changes
- Planning fees

- Appraised values – properties/streets with high values may need higher density to see change
- Ensure the strategy is tied to guiding framework.
 - City wide policy
 - OurWinnipeg
 - Complete Communities
- How will incentives play into the strategy?
- Current lack of clarity on incentives
- Less focus on greenfield
- Plug-in infrastructure may assist with complete neighbourhoods
- Density bonusing and incentives – tied to indicators – sustainable, affordable development
- Manitoba Hydro – incentives?