

Residential Infill Strategy: Workshop Notes



Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2017

Time: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Location: 1240 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB

Attendees:

25 people in attendance from the Winnipeg Realtors Association

Overview

- The City of Winnipeg Infill Project Team was invited to the Winnipeg Realtors Association to help lead an infill workshop. The goal of this workshop was to provide some background on the Residential Infill Strategy project and to hear the views and experiences of those in the real estate industry.
- 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 separate into three groups and begin the 'card storming' exercise, using the prompt questions as a starting point.
- Members of the City staff sat in on the conversation and were available to help facilitate discussion if needed. 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 reminded to sign up on the project website for email updates.

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.

Group 1

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Ensure single family infill is NOT subject to growth fees	Case manager assigned to take the entire process from start to end	Consistency – always follow Plan Winnipeg	Level the playing field during the application process for multi-unit developments	Developer frustration when projects are quashed after much time and money has been spent
	Inter-departmental communication (City)	Consistency (architectural) to “fit” within existing neighbourhood	Emphasis or preference to infill with secondary suites	Don’t allow affected ward councillor to vote on the project – consult only
	Improve communication between CoW departments i.e. Zoning, Water & Waste	Clear guidelines (preliminary standards)	Consider “aging in place” when approving infill projects	
	Same home inspector for each infill housing project			
	Public notification EARLY in the process – avoids issues later on			

Group 2

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Secondary suites	-uncertainty in process -unknowns when buyer purchases lot on what they can build -public meetings have ability to decline project even after "preliminary" planner approval from City of Winnipeg -we need a expedited approval process to eliminate uncertainty	Costs. Split vs. subdivide	CofW task force for infill approvals	Trust of residents
Good infill -maximize lot -variety -take existing street...consider it	Re-zoning pre-app ideas	Lot split maps Grants for infill		Get area residents on board -communicate -gain trust -overcome resistance to change
CofW aesthetic guidelines doc to support approval	CofW community outreach to establish development guidelines			Trusted & known builders
Blends in with community	Simplify infill process for investors			Variety & some uniqueness in each build
Good infill: -complete landscaping -maximize lot	Simplified variance process			Requirements of builders
Create construction site that is neighbour friendly	Planning – 90% Councillors – 5% Public – 5%			
Public engagement – residents to be able to make suggestions about aesthetics	Process of subdividing lots in mature areas very risky for investors- not knowing whether a lot could be subdivided before they decide to purchase it			
Consider affordability of residents (lower income in older neighbourhoods)	City to give a timeline for builders to start & finish the project			

Offer a complete product (i.e. complete landscaping)	City to develop a communication strat on all media platforms for neighbourhood consult for infill development educate, discuss process, purpose & expectation building/developer input
Quality of build	
Streamline variance process. Clear process for lot split vs. short form subdivision one standard fee scale, e.g.: 50 ft into two 25 ft lots	

Group 3

Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5
Tiny home concept – where can we put them? (600 or 700 sq.ft.)	Better planning for infrastructure capacity for infill development 6 inch to 10 inch line	Intergenerational infill development – mixed income	Large scale infill development e.g. East Village Calgary	Step-up zoning and step-up dwellings
Show appraisals of infill to prove they do not devalue property	Detailed infrastructure plan for all mature neighbourhoods	Be sensitive to age demographic e.g. millennials	Make intensive infill on transit corridors e.g. seniors	Allow or encourage more mixed use infill buildings
Be sensitive to preserving privacy of existing residents		Encourage mixed use zoning in more neighbourhoods	Educate owners on repurpose opportunities	Cost effective
Traffic engineering is important		Secondary suites	Staging of intensity of infill development	Incentives (selective)
		Multi-family	Repurposing mature neighbourhoods e.g. subdividing larger lots	
			Scale up on major restaurant corridor streets e.g. Corydon, Provencher	

Notes from card storming exercise and general discussions

After the idea cards were posted on the wall, groups shared some highlights of their discussions.

Group 1

- Concern about impact fees being applied to infill
- Opportunities to improve application process and inspection process
- Need to do consultation early
- Need for clear guidelines/standards (but not too technical)
- Opportunities for aging in place
- Challenges with political interference leading to a lack of predictability

Group 2

- Discussed factors that constitute good infill
- Politics often complicates development approvals
- Variances are expensive – why should all infill require variances?
- Create an infill task force
- Address trust and quality

Group 3

- Need for small lot / small home options
- Desire for more factual evidence
- Opportunity for transitional infill: corridors→multi-family→duplex→single-family; building heights should also be transitional in the same way
- Opportunity to focus infill around centres, hubs and nodes
- Challenges with not having infrastructure capacity in place
- Major redevelopment sites could be a focus for infill
- Consider orientation of balconies with multi-family infill near single-family