The Consequences of Residential Infill on Existing Neighborhoods in the Treasure Valley
Criteria for Infill Case Studies

Projects Studied:

1. Were both controversial and non-controversial when proposed - compare/contrast
2. Have densities ranging from 5 units per acre to 50 units per acre
3. Had to be completed to allow a full assessment
4. Met the definition of infill adopted by the study team
5. Represented both good and bad examples of:
   - Design,
   - Included Amenities,
   - Open space,
   - Neighborhood impacts,
   - Compatibility,
   - Traffic impacts,
   - Affect on property values
6. Were vacant sites prior to the case study project being constructed or were redeveloped with the case study project.
7. Represented all types of residential [single family detached, townhouse, condominiums and apartments] *Note: studied only the housing portion of Oak Park/Brampton Square that does have an adjacent mixed use portion.
What We Studied

- Examined hearing records and testimony.
- Collected sales price and price per square foot data trends by neighborhood area compared to MLS region.
- Conducted door to door survey of neighbors in area surrounding chosen projects.
- Completed phone surveys with developers and individuals who testified at hearings.
- Mailed survey to residents of chosen projects.
Findings of Records Examined

Hearing records showed testimony, written comments, or petition signatures from 158 people:

- 20% concerned about traffic congestion
- 19% opposed higher density
- 13% thought project was incompatible
- 10% predicted feared parking issues
- 9% feared school overcrowding
- 8% worried about safety issues
General Property Value Trends

Compared sales price and price per sq. ft. of sales in neighborhood areas near project to sales in MLS area.

- Neighborhood areas generally have smaller homes than the MLS area and thus lower sales price but generally in synch with the MLS area sales price trend.

- Most neighborhood areas show a higher price per square foot than their MLS area, often due to smaller homes but in a favorable location.
Completed 184 surveys

80% were homeowners,
53% had lived in home 10+ yrs

- Lowest score 2.45; includes public amenities such as traffic calming, pathways and public open space that enhance the neighborhood.

- 2nd lowest score 2.71; the project preserved desirable elements for the neighborhood such as historic structures or mature trees.

- Highest score 3.60; did not negatively affect air quality.

- 2nd highest score 3.48; existing residents can find the same quality and quantity of on-street parking.
"the neighborhood had no plan, but this development was incongruous."

"I testified [against] on setbacks and landscaping, in truth I wasn’t fully informed...the houses are nice and they kept a lot of trees."

"the skinny house developers really don’t care and the rules let them not care."

"the people are nice but not the density."
## Summary of Survey Data

|                  | Years | % Rent/ | % Own | Trips/day | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | Average |
|------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------|
| Central Rim      | 6.1   | 22/78   | 2.53  | 2.2       | 2 | 2.15 | 2 | 2.33 | 2.61 | 2.9 | 2.95 | 2.2 | 2.37 | 2.61 | 2.86 | 2.73 | 2.44 | 3.22 | 2.42 |
| Ferndale         | 11.69 | 23/77   | 2.96  | 2.46      | 2 | 2.92 | 2 | 2.75 | 2.36 | 2.44 | 3.42 | 2.62 | 2.55 | 2.82 | 2.17 | 3.38 | 3.08 | 3.33 | 3.08 |
| Garden Green     | 8.22  | 44/56   | 4.33  | 2.83      | 3 | 2.67 | 3.17 | 2.71 | 3 | 2.57 | 2.43 | 3 | 2.57 | 2 | 2.67 | 3 | 2.86 | 3.29 |
| Gatewood         | 20.29 | 14/86   | 3.52  | 2.89      | 2.75 | 2.56 | 3.4 | 2.85 | 3.32 | 3 | 2.89 | 3.15 | 3.26 | 3.07 | 3.25 | 3 | 3.62 | 3.36 |
| Hyde Park Place  | 11.59 | 27/73   | 2.32  | 3.55      | 3.18 | 2.55 | 3.91 | 2.13 | 3.4 | 4 | 3.7 | 3.27 | 3 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| Oak Park/Brampton| 19.58 | 29/71   | 2.13  | 2.56      | 2.6 | 2.39 | 2.92 | 2.36 | 3.2 | 3.65 | 2.52 | 3.04 | 2.35 | 2.26 | 2.57 | 2.84 | 2.7 | 2.48 |
| Phillipi Park    | 15.59 | 12/88   | 2.41  | 4.35      | 4.47 | 4 | 4.71 | 4.53 | 4.35 | 4.75 | 4.35 | 4.06 | 4.12 | 4.06 | 4.76 | 4.41 | 4.47 |
| South Boise Village| 9.04  | 37/63   | 2.5   | 2.25      | 2.13 | 1.63 | 2.75 | 1.75 | 2.44 | 2.8 | 2.75 | 2.67 | 2.8 | 3.13 | 3.13 | 3.13 | 3.13 | 3.13 |
| Urban Renaissance| 11.57 | 07/93   | 3.33  | 2.67      | 2.6 | 2.07 | 3 | 2.08 | 3.53 | 3.71 | 2.79 | 2.73 | 2.86 | 3.15 | 3.29 | 3.29 | 3.62 | 3.31 |
| Washington Square| 15.56 | 12/88   | 2.79  | 3.47      | 3 | 2.5 | 3.65 | 3.08 | 3.59 | 3.96 | 3.5 | 3.88 | 3.71 | 3.81 | 3.94 | 3.94 | 4.01 |
| Wesley           | 14.91 | 0/100   | 4.59  | 3.09      | 3.55 | 2.67 | 3.56 | 3.38 | 3.82 | 3.88 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.56 | 4.8 | 3.64 | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| Totals           | 13.1  | 20/80   | 3.04  | 2.94      | 2.94 | 2.46 | 3.29 | 2.71 | 3.38 | 3.44 | 3.07 | 3.12 | 3.05 | 3.07 | 3.48 | 3.04 | 3.08 |

* 8 of 11 projects surveyed gave the lowest score to question 3 - "includes amenities."
* 3 questions had multiple instances receiving the highest score: 7) Increased surrounding values; 12) same quality of parking; 15) safe from crime. Parking, negative impact on property values or crime, are common complaints in the public hearing process.
Findings on Concerned Neighbors and Developers

Phone Interviews

- Still a lot of passion, even about older projects.
- Two developers who have stopped doing infill because of negative experience, others who will never do anything else.
- Generally gave good marks to city staff, but also generally gave poor marks to the process, much distrust of fairness.
- Still convinced they were right even when evidence doesn’t back them up.
Highlights of Infill Resident Survey

Mailed 447 - 49 returned complete
12% returned overall - 17% returned minus apartments at Oak Park.
80% were owners
92% felt welcome in the neighborhood
100% felt that their home was a positive addition

“What is your favorite thing about n’hood” -
- 57%, unprompted in an open ended question, responded proximity or short walking distances to jobs services and every day needs
- 18% cited friendly neighbors or neighborhood
- 11% named nearby parks and other amenities

“What is least favorite thing about n’hood” -
- 29% identified surrounding property that was not well cared for
- 8% mentioned rowdy neighbors
- 8% said noise
# Infill Resident Survey Summary

447 surveys mailed out, 49 filled out and returned by resident. 43 returned as vacant property - 26 of those in Oak Park or Brampton Square and 6 more in skinny houses - all most likely rental properties.

## Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Brampton Square</th>
<th>Oak Park Village</th>
<th>Ferndale Sub</th>
<th>Ga</th>
<th>Green Central</th>
<th>Gatewood</th>
<th>Hyde Park Place</th>
<th>Park</th>
<th>Phillip Park</th>
<th>South Boise Village</th>
<th>Urban Renaissance</th>
<th>Washington Square</th>
<th>Wesley Sub.</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood? (some w/1+ issues)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Proximity/Walking Distance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>3. Nearby park/other amenities</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4. Safe</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>5. Less maintenance</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<td>6. Quality building, clean</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<td>7. Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the least favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood? (some w/1+ issues)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Surrounding property not cared for</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Traffic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. New proximate infill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>4. Rowdy neighbors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. No sidewalks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Parking issues</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Close by sex offenders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<td>8. Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. High taxes/market value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Noisy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Not enough greenspace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Do you feel welcome in your neighborhood?**

| Yes | 1 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 45 | 92% |
| No | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 8% |

## My home is a positive addition to the neighborhood

| Yes | 3 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 49 | 100% |
| No | 3 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 49 | 100% |

## Do you own or rent your home?**

| Own | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 39 | 80% |
| Rent | 1 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 20% |

## How many roundtrip cars trips does your household make by car per day? (total /respondents) | 2.67 | 2.00 | 2.67 | 2.25 | 1.75 | 0.75 | 1.25 | 1.33 | 4.28 | 2.50 | 1.20 | 1.90 |

*One respondent in Oak Park Village failed to answer the question on roundtrip cartrips per day - data based on 48 responses.*
“I am glad that this affordable, low environmental impact housing exists in inner Boise.”

“I love my house, its small enough for me to manage the home maintenance & new enough I don’t have to fix it up.”

“I like having a new home near downtown.”

“I love my house! It’s the cutest on the block.”
Travel Habits Differed

Infill residents self-report 1.9 trips per day, a third less than what surrounding neighbors self-reported at 3 trips per day. Residents of one infill project estimated taking only 0.75 trips per day on average. Three of twelve projects residents’ estimated taking more than 2.5 trips per day; 2.5 trips per day was the lowest estimate by surrounding neighbors.
Types of Infill Projects Studied

12 Projects

Smallest 9 - unit, 3 single family and 6 townhomes

Largest - 243 Unit, 200 Apartment and 43 condominiums

Most Dense – 43 d./u. per acre

Least dense 5 d./u. per acre
### Ferndale Subdivision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year built</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Type</td>
<td>Patio Homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Units</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size in Acres</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units per Acre</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior use</td>
<td>1 SF Res.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent Uses</td>
<td>Large lot/Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lowest/ Highest survey answer**

- **Good natural amenities**: 2.0
- **N’hood still affordable**: 3.46

**Conclusions**

- Lower than average scores
- Different housing type for neighborhood
- Density not supported
- Minimal traffic impacts
- Real estate trends inconclusive
- Lack of agreement on comp plan goals
- Process didn’t help meet concerns
Garden Green

Year built 1998
Dwelling Type 4-Plex
# of Units 32
Size in Acres 1.899
Units per Acre 16.85
Prior use Vacant
Adjacent Uses SF Residential

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

Didn’t create more traffic 2.0
As safe from crime 3.29

Conclusions
- Lower than average scores
- Frustrating process for all involved
- Unmitigated traffic impacts
- Limiting density affected project quality
- Real estate values affected by location
- No one is happy with outcome
# Gatewood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year built</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Type</td>
<td>SF/Townhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Units</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size in Acres</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units per Acre</td>
<td>8.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior use</td>
<td>Large lot Res.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjacent Uses</td>
<td>SF Residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lowest/ Highest survey answer**

- Good natural amenities: **2.56**
- Compatible design: **3.46**

## Conclusions

- Moderate scores
- Loss of open space still felt today
- No traffic impacts
- Density concerns not evident
- Real estate rising faster than MLS
- Concerns about other infill
Hyde Park Place

Year built: 2004  
Dwelling Type: Condominium  
# of Units: 39  
Size in Acres: 0.841  
Units per Acre: 46.37  
Prior use: School Admin/MF  
Adjacent Uses: School/Res/LO  

Lowest/Highest survey answer:

- Preserved historic bldgs: 2.13
- Same quality parking: 4.45

Conclusions:

- Higher than average scores
- Concerns raised during process have not been demonstrated by data
- Traffic is down and parking more available
- New concern that values are rising too fast
- Continued concern about loss of historic structures
## Oak Park Vil./ Brampton Sq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Condos Year built</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Type</td>
<td>Condominiums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Units</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size in Acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Units per Acre</td>
<td>10.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior use</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjacent Uses</td>
<td>SF Residential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lowest/ Highest survey answer**

- Protected views/ light: 2.04
- N’hood still affordable: 3.2

### Process
- Flyers to larger neighborhood
- Developer agreed to add commercial
- Pathway and crosswalk improved
- School access
# Oak Park Vill./ Brampton Sq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year built</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Type</td>
<td>Apartments</td>
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<td># of Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>Size in Acres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Units per Acre</td>
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<td>Prior use</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjacent Uses</td>
<td>SF/Commercial</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Conclusions
- Lower than average scores
- Concerns about neighborhood in general
- Fear traffic impacts not realized
- Addition of amenities helped gain support for project
- Real estate values mixed
Phillipi Park Condos

- Year built: 2001
- Dwelling Type: Condominium
- # of Units: 13
- Size in Acres: 1.347
- Units per Acre: 9.65
- Prior use: Vacant
- Adjacent Uses: SF Residential

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

- Good natural amenities: 4.0
- Protected views/light: 4.76

Conclusions
- Highest scores by full point
- Quality of life in neighborhood rated high
- No traffic impacts
- Concerns about different housing type unfounded
- Real estate values rising
Urban Renaissance

Year built: 1999
Dwelling Type: SF Residential
# of Units: 19
Size in Acres: 1.455
Units per Acre: 13.06
Prior use: 1 SF/Pasture
Adjacent Uses: SF Residential

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

Good natural amenities: 2.07
Project increased values: 3.71

Conclusions

- Low to moderate scores
- Lack of public amenities still felt
- Traffic impacted by nearby commercial
- Density concerns mitigated with design
- Real estate values mixed
- Set example with stub street
Washington Square

Year built: 1981
Dwelling Type: Townhouse
# of Units: 20
Size in Acres: 1.757
Units per Acre: 11.38
Prior use: Vacant
Adjacent Uses: SF Residential

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

- Good natural amenities: 2.5
- As safe from crime: 4.06

Conclusions

- Higher than average scores
- Some still feel loss of “park”
- Density still perceived negatively
- No traffic impacts found
- Compatibility still an issue to some
- Real estate values affected by down market
Wesley Subdivision

Year built: 2004  
Dwelling Type: Townhouse  
# of Units: 30  
Size in Acres: 5.03  
Units per Acre: 5.96  
Prior use: Vacant  
Adjacent Uses: Large lot SF/Com  

Lowest/ Highest survey answer  
- Preserved historic bldgs: 2.13  
- Same quality parking: 4.45  

Conclusions  
- Higher than average scores  
- Still tagged as incompatible  
- Traffic affected by connectivity and nearby commercial  
- Loss of open space, feelings mixed  
- Real estate trends mixed
‘Skinny Houses’

Issue cited in neighborhood plans:

- Accommodating change is a challenge
- Regulations [are needed] to make new homes blend with existing homes - support quality products with compatible design
- Challenges with setbacks, landscaping, privacy, garage placement
- Improving pedestrian safety - completing curbs gutters and sidewalks
- Introducing new public open space - playgrounds, neighborhood plaza
Substandard Lots of Record

New ‘Skinny House’ Regulations

- Regulates mass & bulk for compatibility;
- Limits maximum building FAR in ratio to lot size;
- Reduced side-yard setbacks allow 19-ft homes;
- Requires landscaping enhancements;
- Requires right-of-way improvements;
- Regulates garage placement;
- Includes off-street parking requirements;
- Increased private open space requirements;
- Requires neighborhood notification;
- Requires design review;
- Waiver process formalized where comp plan or other goals may conflict w/ requirements
Original South Boise N’hood

Year built 19??-20??
Dwelling Type Single Family
# of Units 52
Size in Acres 3.64
Units per Acre 14.28
Prior use SF/Vacant
Adjacent Uses SF/Duplex

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

Good natural amenities 1.63
As safe from crime 3.25

Conclusions
➢ Lower than average scores
➢ Much neighborhood change due to ‘skinny houses’
➢ Helped spur city action
➢ Amenities and parking still issues
➢ No traffic impacts found
➢ Real estate trends mixed
Central Rim Neighborhood

Year built: 19??-20??
Dwelling Type: Single Family
# of Units: 32
Size in Acres: 2.24
Units per Acre: 14.29
Prior use: SF/Vacant
Adjacent Uses: SF

Lowest/ Highest survey answer

Good natural amenities: 2.0
Didn’t affect Air Quality: 3.22

Conclusions

- Lowest scores of any neighborhood
- Concerns in neighborhood plan raised in ordinance change
- Neighborhood amenities still lacking
- Real estate values rising faster than MLS
Factors that create apprehension about infill projects, such as density, neighborhood incompatibility, design, and lack of public amenities, are difficult to measure or their effects are difficult to assess.

The sample of case studies is relatively small, but the quantifiable data was remarkably consistent between the projects.

For the factors that can be quantified, including traffic, parking and property values the community fears are generally unfounded for the cases studied.

Due to the small sample size conclusions should not be assumed for infill in general. We would welcome additional case studies and a comparison of findings.
Conclusions - Traffic

1. There is no evidence of harmful effects of traffic from infill on existing neighborhoods.
   - **75% of cases** traffic was flat or down.
   - **Where traffic was up** lack of roadway connectivity increased the traffic impact.

“When people say density its just another way of saying they are concerned about traffic.”

*Project developer*
Conclusions - Property Value

2. There is no clear evidence that infill development harms property values.

- Location is an important factor in property value trends.
- Neighborhoods around infill projects are generally filled with smaller homes that have a lower sales price but higher price/square foot.
Conclusions - Amenities

3. Infill developments are perceived by the neighbors to provide few public amenities.

- Amenities required are usually to serve residents of infill projects and not the broader neighborhood.
- Where public amenities are provided they can garner neighbors’ support.
Conclusions - Open Space

4. The loss of both public and private open space is deeply felt

- Open Space in neighborhoods evokes a deep (almost emotional) attachment.
- Public policy could address open space in infill neighborhoods.
Conclusions - Design

5. Design quality can positively affect acceptance of infill developments.

- Projects that were vigorously opposed gained acceptance after being built when well designed.
Conclusions - Regulations

6. There is a lack of understanding by the public of goals and regulations

- Planning goals to encourage infill are often not understood or well accepted by neighbors.
- Regulations can often be used to oppose projects even when they meet goals.
Conclusions - Density

7. Density did not correlate to the perceived acceptance of case study projects.

- Of higher density projects three were scored above average and three below.
Thank You

We hope this study spurs a community conversation about infill policy.

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