



## Infill - It's Importance to Cities and Regions

### FACT SHEET

As urban areas grow outward travel times for commuters become longer, infrastructure costs including long-term operation and maintenance increases, impacts to open space and other natural resources occur, and available vacant land that may include under-built or under-utilized facilities and infrastructure within the urban core lies unused.

#### HOW HAS INFILL BEEN DEFINED?

In the Truckee Meadows Regional Plan; infill is defined as development or redevelopment of land that has been bypassed, remained vacant, and/or is under-used as a result of the continuing urban development process. These areas and/or sites are usually served by nearby infrastructure.

Infill can provide opportunities for growth without consuming additional agricultural, environmentally sensitive lands and natural area. Compact development can contribute to non-renewable energy savings, and can promote alternative modes of travel including bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. Infill can help enhance the vitality, diversity, and economic health of towns and cities. Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, British Columbia are prime examples with high density development areas serviced by very successful pedestrian, bicycle, and transit systems.

Infill projects build homes, businesses, and public facilities on unused or under-utilized lands within existing urban areas. Infill keeps resources where people already live. Infill development is one of the keys to accommodating growth and revitalizing our towns or cities to be environmentally and socially sustainable. (Center for Livable Communities-2001, page 48).

Infill as a development strategy supports the regional form and land-use pattern found in the *2007 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan*.

Priority is given to infill development within city centers and along transit oriented development corridors. The idea of infill development was carefully considered for inclusion in the Regional Plan as one of the ways to provide support for the future prosperity of our region, to minimize sprawl, and to optimize infrastructure efficiency.

#### HOW CAN WE BETTER USE INFILL PROPERTIES?

Infill development can be used to provide high density housing, mixed uses (such as commercial, housing, industrial, and recreation facilities) in one compact development. Infill can also be used to protect our historical neighborhoods and districts by providing an incentive to the community and developers to construct secondary buildings on sites designed to conform with and compliment the surrounding historic structures and neighborhood.



*Infill Project from Kitsilano Historic District, Vancouver BC*

Vancouver, B.C. developed specific standards for infill development in historic districts as an incentive to retain existing buildings by allowing secondary residential buildings on appropriate sites. ([www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org))

## WHAT OTHER BENEFITS ARE THERE TO INFILL?

Infill development can help cities to provide affordable and workforce housing to its community. From *Strategies for Successful Infill Development*, “communities with vision are planning neighborhoods that mix apartments and town homes with single-family homes.” These neighborhoods house a diverse population, including all kinds of families, single people, retirees, and people of different incomes. Market studies show growing demand and strong sales for in-town housing, live-work units and other alternatives to the single-family house.

At the local level, using the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act and the City of Henderson as an example; when the City requested that the Bureau of Land Management delay the auction of several thousand acres of developable land within their boundary, a significant increase in infill development occurred between 2002 and 2005 (*Infill Development: Barriers and Incentives* by TMRPA, September 2005)



*Eight on Center - one mile from downtown Reno*

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO INFILL DEVELOPMENT?

The Truckee Meadows Regional Planning Agency contracted with Clarion & Associates to provide a regionally-focused view of infill development barriers and to provide input into the 2007 Truckee Meadows Regional Plan update. A copy of the resulting paper is available on the TMRPA website ([www.tmrpa.org](http://www.tmrpa.org)).

Three components were included in this study: 1) an analysis of existing regulatory documents, plans, fee structures, and processes was conducted; 2) a series of stakeholder interviews was held to identify infill barriers, recent accomplishments, and current best practices within the region; 3) a review of other infill programs, incentives, and activities within Nevada. Two national case studies were also included to supplement the key findings uncovered at the state level.

Barriers identified and best practices to address them were focused in the following categories:

- Policy Barriers - growth and infill/redevelopment;
- Zoning or Substantive Regulatory Barriers - regulations establishing permitted uses, intensity/density, parking, districts, building/site design standards;
- Process Barriers - development review; internal coordination within a city/county; inter-governmental coordination;
- Costs of Development - development fees, special assessments; and
- Infrastructure - condition and capacity of existing infrastructure, cost of infrastructure improvements.

Despite identified barriers to infill development, the Truckee Meadows has an excellent track record in providing urban area infill and redevelopment projects.

## HOW ABOUT INFILL IN THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS?

There are a wide range of exciting and successful infill projects in the Truckee Meadows. Mostly built by private developers or public/private partnerships, the list is long, garnering many accolades. These projects have and will continue to provide a variety of housing, commercial, retail, and industrial opportunities well into the future. A few examples include:

- Smaller-scale housing projects include: 8 on Center, SODO 4, 2 on Watt, 11 on 4th, 3 on Wonder, 4 on Wonder, and Modern on Cheney, all designed by award-winning architect Jack Hawkins. These projects are compact affordable green-built housing projects that are developed within established neighborhoods with incorporated plants and gardens providing an urban outdoor experience.
- Larger-scale housing and mixed-use projects include: Boulevard South at Double Diamond, Lakeridge Place, Grants Landing, Virginia Lake Townhouses, the Village at Idlewild.
- Large-scale commercial, retail, and surrounding mixed-use housing includes: Legends at the Sparks Marina including a 77-acre park, retail, surrounding mixed-use housing options; and the Reno Downtown Freight House District home to the Reno Aces Baseball Team. Development will include the baseball park as the centerpiece of the exciting Freight House District. ([www.downtownmake-over.com](http://www.downtownmake-over.com))

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