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Boise City Council

Idaho Smart Growth, *Special Projects*

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Quality Infill - Lessons and Opportunities

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What is Infill?

Development of **vacant, abandoned, passed over or underutilized** land in built-up areas of existing communities, infrastructure is already in place.

- Provides an **economic use** or reuse
- Fills an **unmet need** in neighborhood
- **Fits in well** with the overall character of the surrounding area
- Served by **adequate public facilities**
- Accessible, has adequate **transportation for all modes.**
- Adds or is near **supporting land uses** (retail, service, jobs, and residential).



What Infill isn't

- **Overly dense, oversized, incompatible development.**
- **Any one particular use (it might be housing it might be retail or office)**
- **The sole solution to combat other issues (i.e. sprawl, disinvestment)**
- **The sole means to promote revitalization.**



Highlights of Infill Case Study Project



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/sq. ft. of sales in infill neighborhoods near project to sales in MLS area.

- Infill neighborhood have smaller homes than the MLS area and thus lower sales price but generally **in synch with the MLS area sales price trend.**
- Infill neighborhood areas had **higher price per square foot than their MLS area,** smaller homes but in favorable locations.



Highlights of Data from Survey

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.



Findings on Interviews with Concerned Neighbors and Developers

- 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

80% were owners

92% felt welcome in the neighborhood

100% felt that their home was a positive addition

unprompted in an open ended questions

“What is your favorite thing about n’hood” –

- **57%**, 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%** surrounding property that was not well cared for
- **8%** mentioned rowdy neighbors
- **8%** said noise



Comments by Infill Residents



“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.”



Comments from Neighbors



“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.”



General Findings

- 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 welcome additional case studies and a comparison of findings.



Conclusions - Traffic

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*



Travel Habits Differ

Infill residents self-report 1.9 trips per day, **one 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.



Conclusions – Property Value

There is no clear evidence that infill development affects 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 – Public Amenities

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

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 – Density and Design

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

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

Design can positively (or negatively) affect acceptance

- **Projects that were vigorously opposed gained acceptance after being built when well designed, still opposed when not.**





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Density – Design



Conclusions – Regulations

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.



Manage Neighborhood expectations and culture



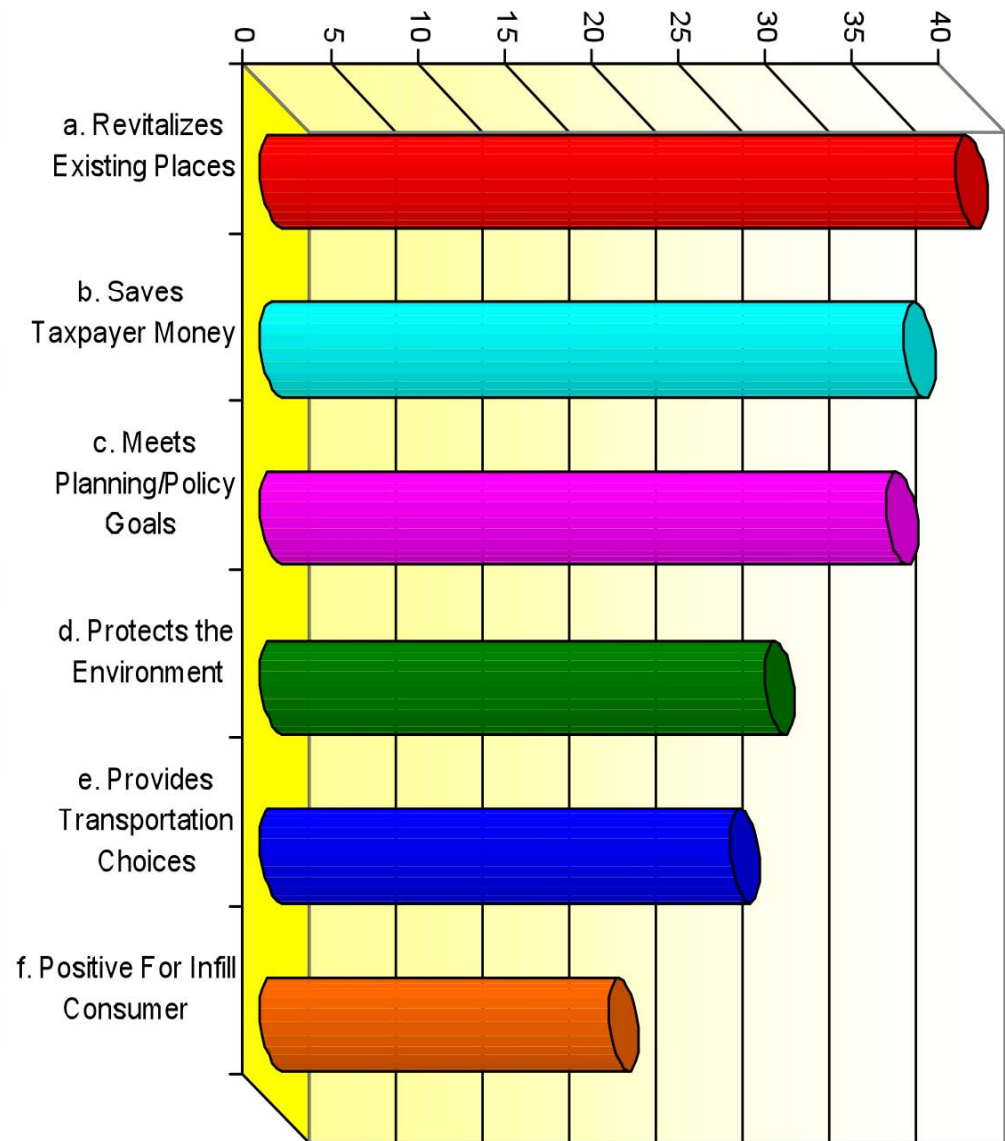
**Highlights
Infill Literature Review/
Policy
Recommendations
Project**



Why Infill

- Revitalization
- Planning Goals
- Protects the Environment
- Saves Money
- Transportation Choices
- Infill Consumer

Instances Found in Literature



Households are Changing

Household Type	1960	2000	2040
HH with Children	48%	33%	26%
HH without Children	52%	67%	74%
<i>Single/Other HH</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>34%</i>

Share of Growth 2000-2040

HH Type	Share
With children	14%
Without children	86%
<i>Single/Other</i>	<i>30%</i>

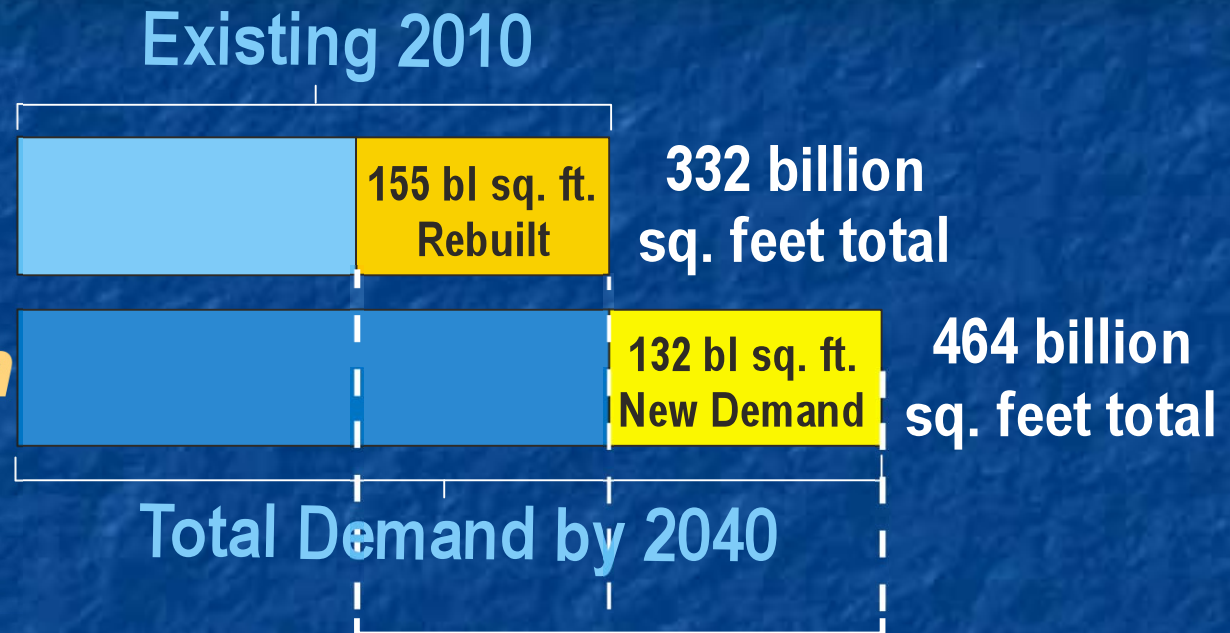


Source: Arthur C. Nelson, Presidential Professor & Director,
Metropolitan Research Center, University of Utah.



Future Building Boom?

**US
Building
Construction
Demand
2010 - 2040**



**Total Construction Demand
by 2040 = 287 billion sq. ft.**



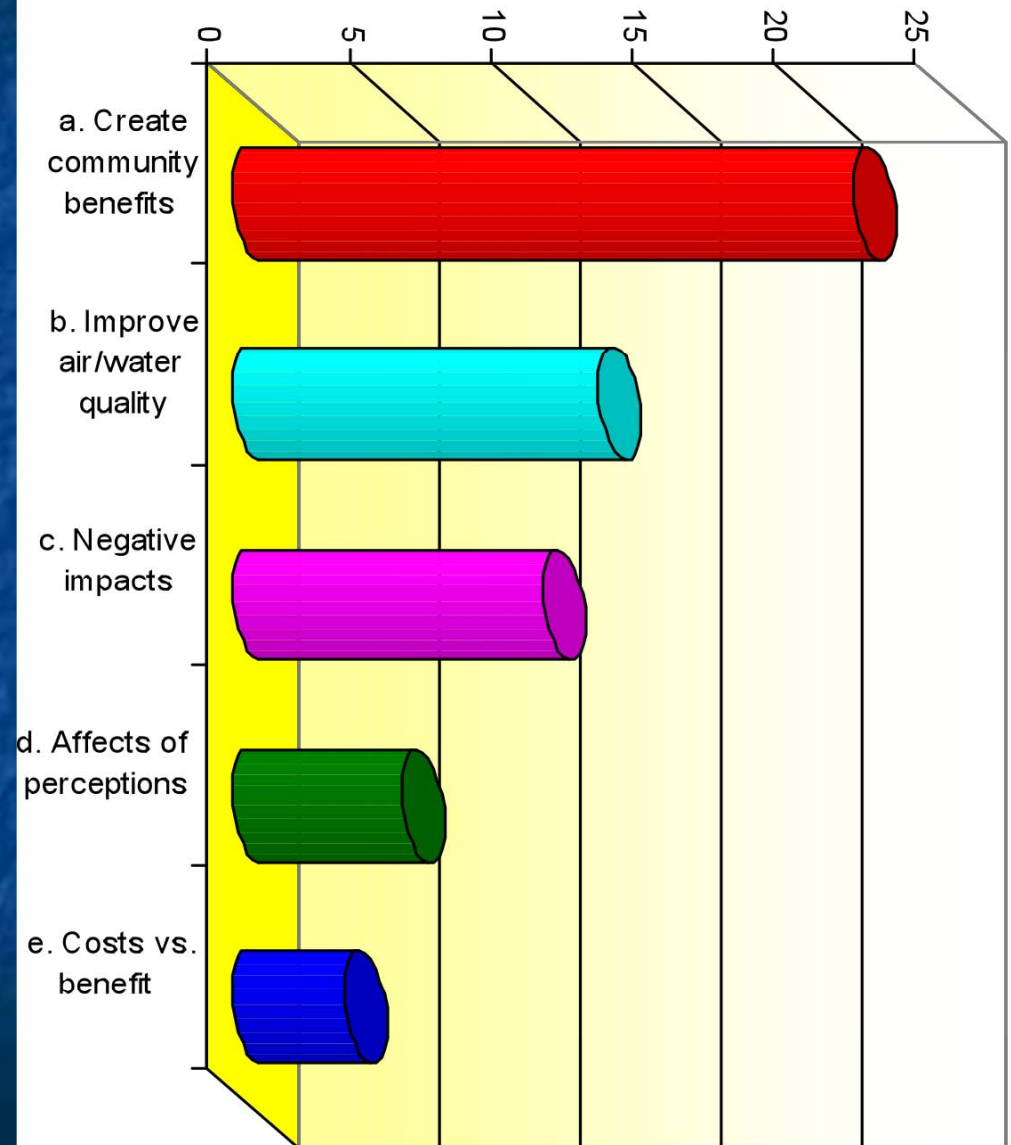
Source: Arthur C. Nelson, Presidential Professor & Director,
Metropolitan Research Center, University of Utah.



Consequences

- Community benefits
- Improves Environment
- Impacts Existing Neighbors
- Affect of Perceptions
- Cost/benefit

Instances Found in Literature

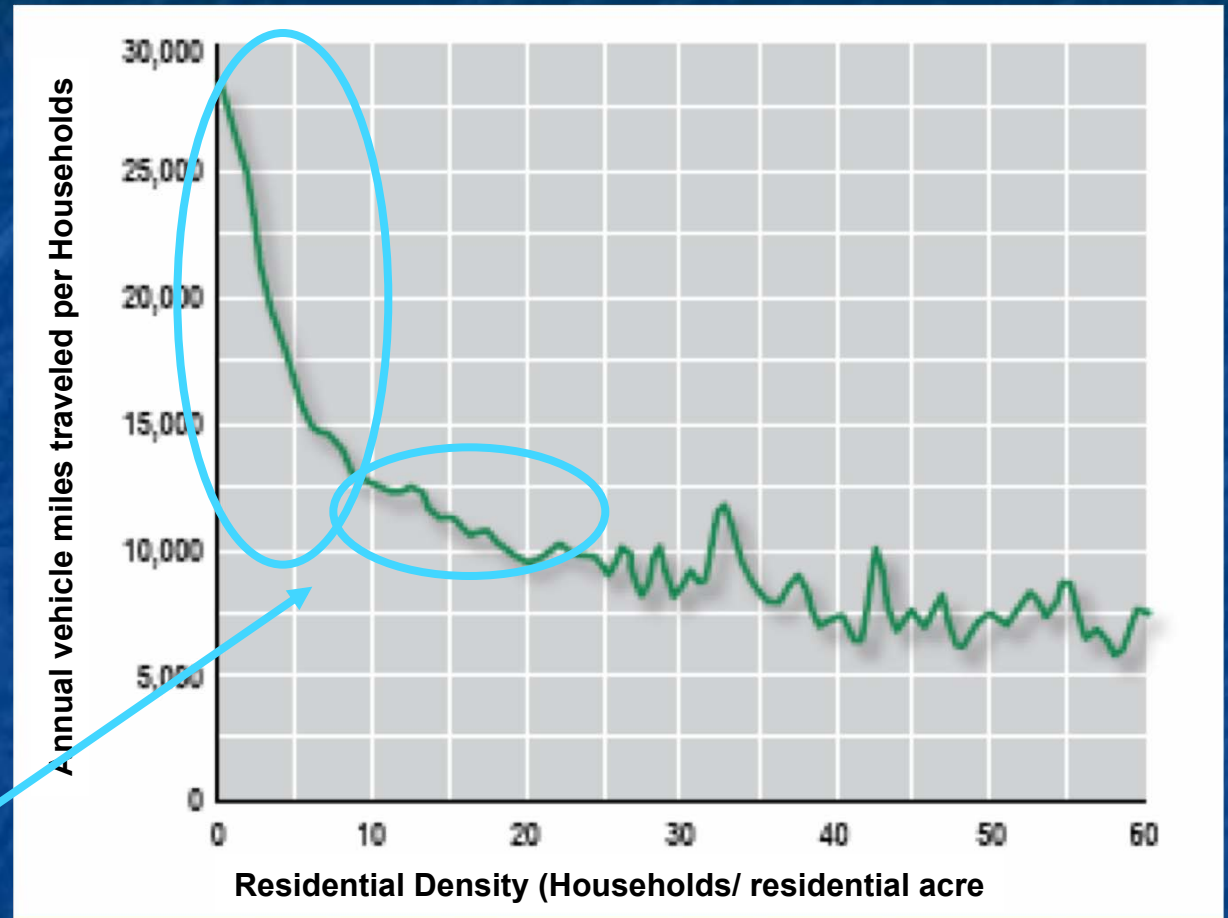


Does it Work?

Density

- Changes at lower end make a big difference in the # of miles traveled per year

Biggest gains at lowest levels



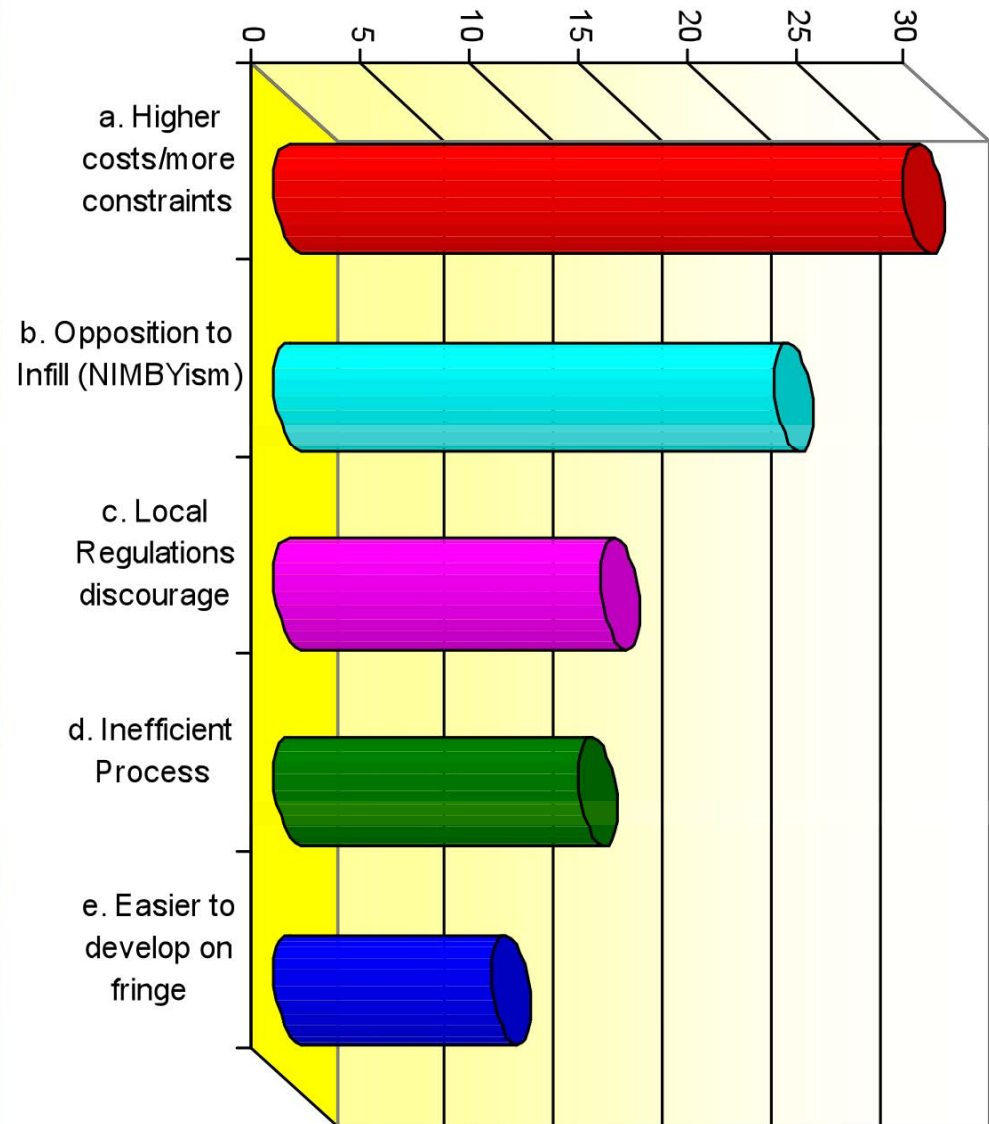
Source: Massachusetts data registry of motor vehicles 2005-2007



Barriers

- High Costs
- NIMBY Opposition
- Local Regulations
- Approval Process
- Easier to develop on Fringe

Instances Found in Literature



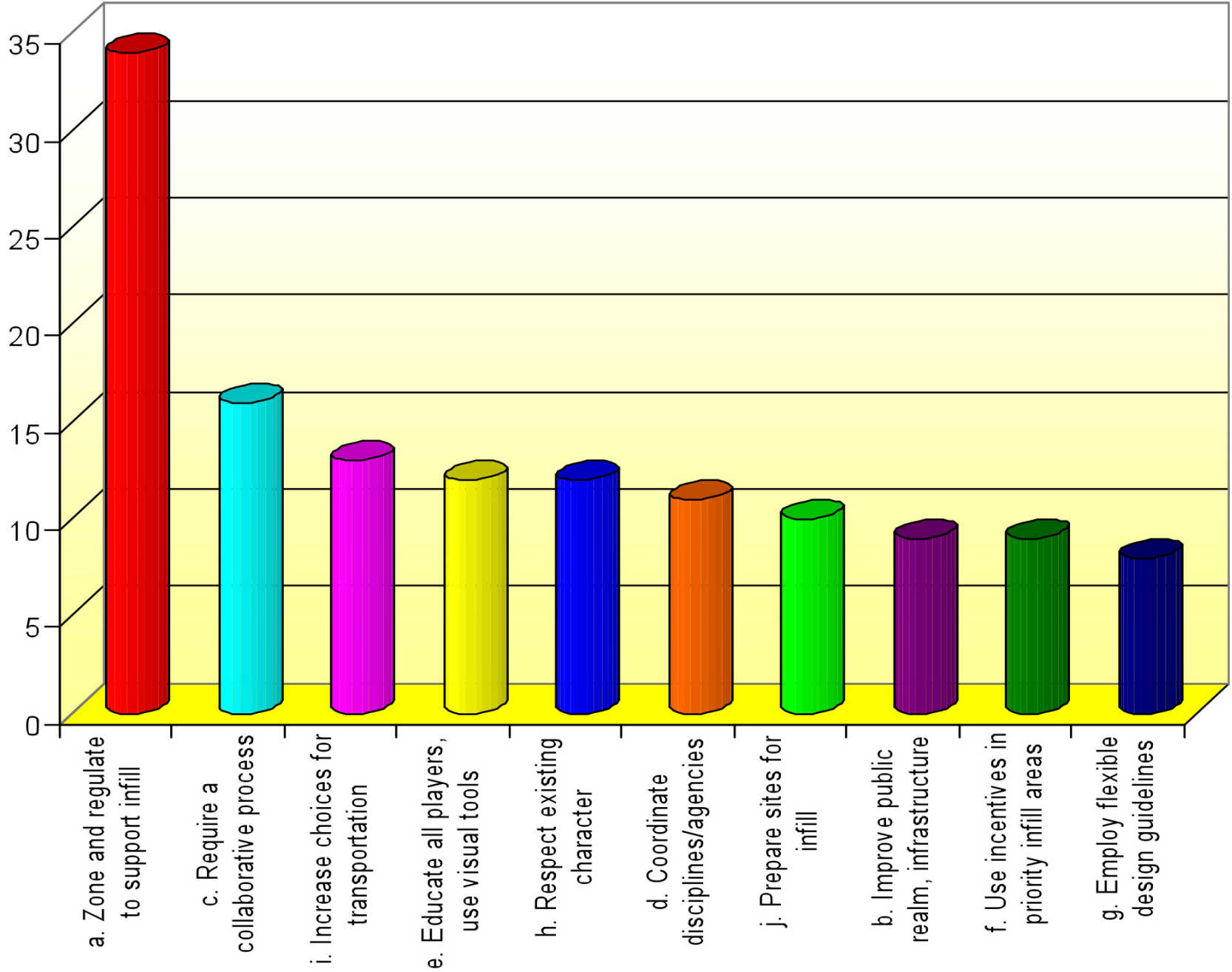
Recommendations to Encourage Quality Infill

Develop Guiding Principles in
support of Infill to provide policy
basis for infill strategies



Recommendations to Support Quality Infill

Instances Found in Literature



Develop specific appropriate zoning and dimensional standards that support infill

- Small lot zones
- Reduced parking
- Form based
- Mix of uses
- Specific Area planning

New Mixed Use Buildings

- Mixed Uses on Main Street
- Residential "Liner" Buildings on Idaho

Transit-Oriented Development

- Mixed Use Buildings
- Hotels
- Streetcar & BRT Stops
- Mid-Block Structured Parking

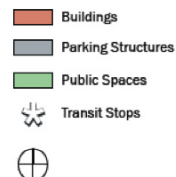
Residential Overlooking the River

- Retail & Cafes on Main Street
- Connections to the Trail

Main & Fairview Improvements

- 3 Lanes with Bike Lanes
- On-Street Parking
- Improved Streetscapes

Proposed Uses



**Require a
participator
y, inclusive
(of all
interests)
and
collaborativ
e process**



**Create priority Infill Areas,
concentrate incentives and
remove barriers in these**

areas



**Make infill compatible and respect
neighborhood character**

**Improve and public realm, and
infrastructure**



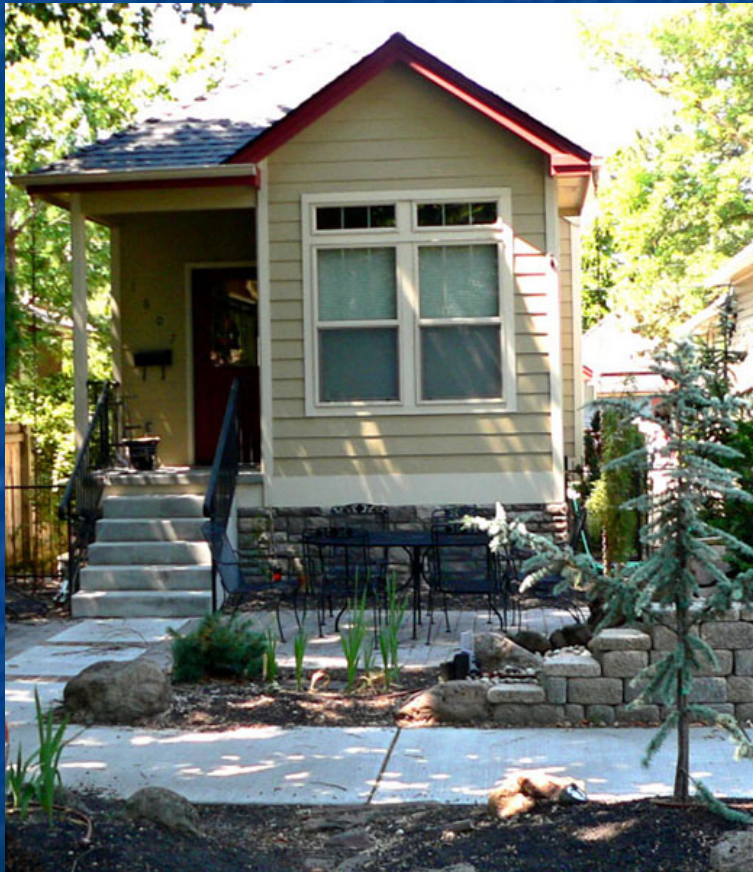
Make infill compatible and respect neighborhood character



Poor design
less
compatible



Make infill compatible and respect neighborhood character



**Better design
more compatible**



Improve and public realm, and infrastructure

Invest to support walking/biking with Perceptual qualities of the street:

- Make them interesting, maintain visual & sensory stimulus



Street design investments to support walking/biking

Invest to support walking/biking with Perceptual qualities of the street:

- Narrow streets, calm them make them complex



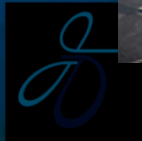
Street design investments to support walking/biking

Invest to support walking/biking with Perceptual qualities of the street:

- include trees, crosswalks, sidewalks, bikeways



Successful Infill



What leads to success for Infill as New Placemaking?

Bown Crossing

- New Road Connection
- Mixed Use Infill
- Regulatory Hurdles



What leads to success for Infill as New Placemaking?

Placemaking Activities

Bown
Crossing





Land Use Map

Legend

Wired Use Activity Centers

- Regional Activity Center
- Community Activity Center
- Neighborhood Activity Center

Future Land Use Categories

Neighborhoods

- High Density
- Medium Density
- Medium Density
- Single-Family
- Single-Family

Commercial Employment

- Commercial
- Office
- Professional

Wired Use

- Limited Wired Use
- Intensive Wired Use

Special Districts and Water Plans

- All-Citywide Special District
- City Water Plan

Parks and Open Space

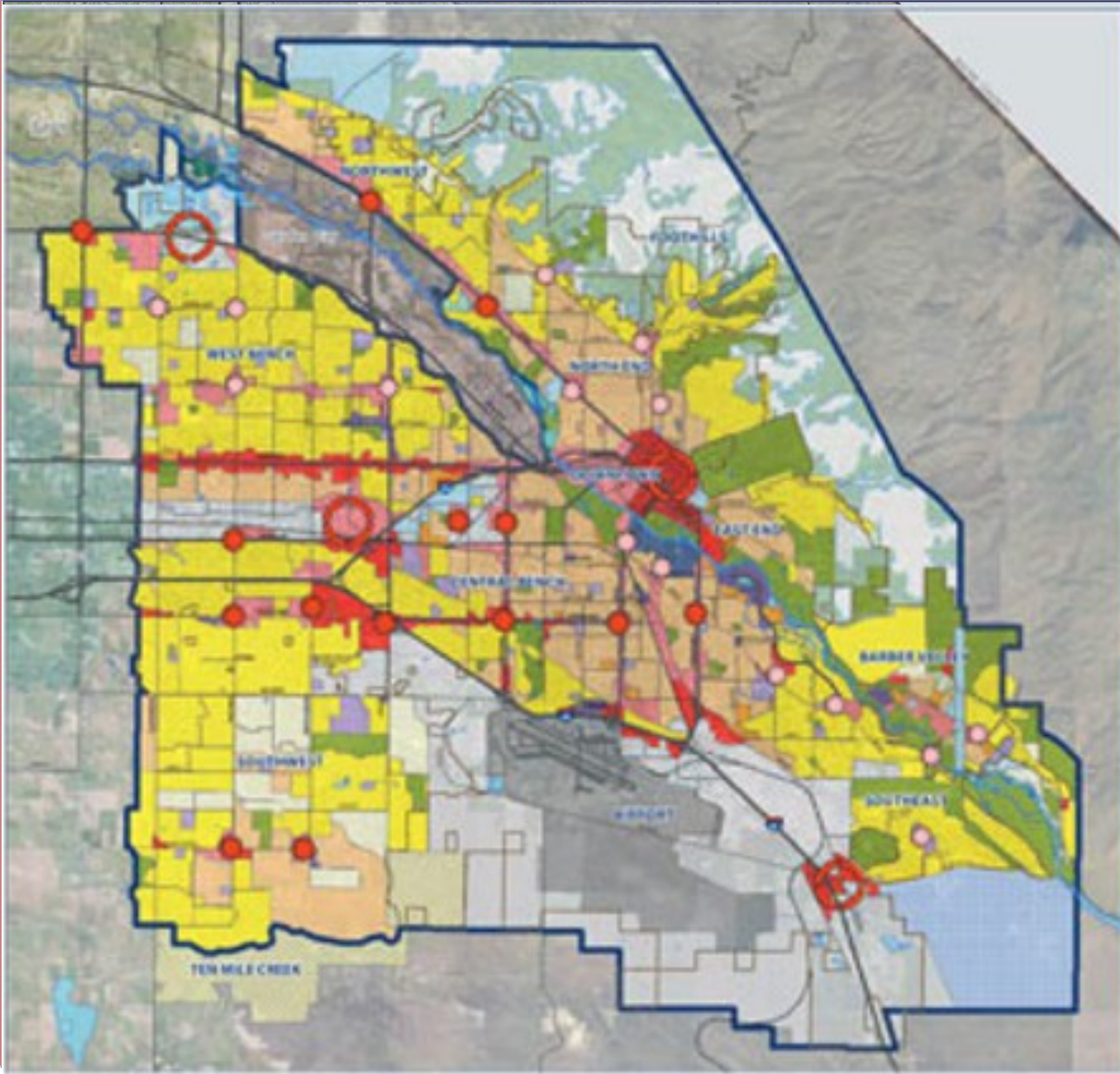
- Open Space

Public/Institutional

- Airport
- Public Open Space
- Recreation

Other

- Area of Interest
- Regional Greenway
- State Protection
- Submittal



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SCALE: 1:100,000

Successful Infill



What leads to success for Infill as New Placemaking?

36th St Plaza

- New retail and housing
 - Mixed Use Infill
 - At identified Activity Center
- ### Center



What leads to success for Infill as New Placemaking?

Placemaking Activities

36th St
Garden
Plaza



Public Investments can spur Infill and revitalize first ring disinvestment



Branch Libraries in Boise

- The branches have expanded the use of the library service, met other city goals (i.e. LEED cert.) locations have created neighborhoods access and palcemaking oppoortuniuties and have lead to private reinvestment.



Libraries spin-off effects

Evergreen Library Plaza Center

- Renamed Center to take advantage of library brand
- Completely rebuilt one building, rehabbed all others



Libraries spin-off effects

Hillcrest Shopping Center

- Library next to a community theater which has begun a children's program.
- Corner of mall empty when library moved in (except for theater, now over 50% rented)
- Empty big box space now being rebuilt as mixed use
- New roadway connection established



Libraries spin-off effects

Collister Shopping Center

- Library traffic has helped traffic at ice cream store, hair salon, and bowling alley.
- Library spurred facelift of 50 year old center.
- Attracted new pad tenant





Thank you!

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