

**Neighborhood Congress Series**  
**“Growing Up, Not Out: A Dialogue on Infill Development”**  
**10/27/2009**

**Discussion Draft**

**I. Introduction:**

**a. Timothy Teddy, AICP, Director of Planning & Development**

Mr. Teddy began the program by thanking the audience for attending and briefly introduced the topic: “Growing Up, Not Out: A Dialogue on Infill Development.” Mr. Teddy then passed note cards and asked attendees to write down at least one question they had about infill development.

**b. Leigh Britt, Neighborhood Services Manager**

Ms. Britt showed a PowerPoint presentation and described the mission, function and day-to-day operations of the newly formed Neighborhood Services Department. Ms. Britt explained the staff’s work would build upon neighborhood leadership and capacity, promote inspection and code enforcement, and provide volunteer opportunities. Many programs, such as the Neighborhood Leadership Program, Ms. Britt noted, would be continued on, and additional programs and opportunities would be explored. Attendees were advised the next Neighborhood Leadership Program would begin January 19, 2010, and that applications were available on the City of Columbia website until December 1, 2009:

<http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Volunteer/NeighborhoodLeadershipProgram.php>

Ms. Britt asked neighborhoods to contact the department with both issues and opportunities, and to let them know what additional services the department could provide. Ms. Britt ended the presentation by answering questions from attendees, including questions about the department’s website (contact and other information is being updated currently), which areas of the City would be geographically targeted for code enforcement and abatement (GIS data will be utilized with other data), if there would be a coordinated sidewalk assessment by volunteers (a volunteer study may be used in the future), and issues of open space and safety in the City (the department and neighborhoods can look to coordinating police, volunteers and neighborhood watches in sensitive areas).

**c. James Downey, Country Club Estates Neighborhood Association**

As a graduate of the Neighborhood Leadership Program, Mr. Downey explained the program and its benefits. He also discussed the newly formed neighborhood forum set up online to unite neighborhoods, city departments, volunteers and other groups. Mr. Downey mentioned that the site was being currently being developed but that the basic “infrastructure” was available at

[www.columbianeighborhoodalliance.com](http://www.columbianeighborhoodalliance.com)

## II. Discussion Items:

### a. What is Infill Development?

Following the introduction, Mr. Teddy asked participants to share their definition or perception of infill development. The group discussed negative and positive aspects of infill development:

- Filling in and adding density is good if the neighborhood's character is maintained
- Infill can make use of (existing) city infrastructure, which can be more efficient
- Infill is a good concept with ugly issue to watch out for, such as overstretching infrastructure
- Infill brings up redevelopment in addition to vacant land

### b. Vanishing Ink:

Mr. Teddy then summarized the role of "vanishing ink" on infill development, such as zoning entitlements and unfulfilled plans affecting underutilized property. Participants discussed several properties with "vanishing ink" and redevelopment concerns and issues:

- The intersection of Broadway and Providence was suggested as a good site for redevelopment
- Ameren UE was discussed as poorly sited within the central city
- Juxtaposed was the potential for mixed use to be very positive, but that without a lack of homogeneity, form-based code, or human scale it has been disparate, especially in central city neighborhoods
- Rental issues versus the value of homeownership, with regards to community ownership was explored

Following a question about land zoning and how neighborhoods can address zoning issues, Mr. Teddy described the fit between development patterns and tools. Additional issues were discussed:

- Tension in the north central neighborhoods was described, most notably instances of higher zoning, non-conforming uses, code enforcement and demolition issues in predominately single family areas
- Large-scale absentee landlords, crime, tax disincentives to property improvement and speculation were also described as multi-pronged issues
- Demolition by neglect and vacant lot issues were also mentioned

### c. Density: "Growing In" and "Underused" Property:

Referencing the Vacant Property Map, Mr. Teddy summarized vacancy in the City and described ways of assessing "underused" property by size, scale, classification, and other criteria to develop strategies for infill. Issues and solutions to vacant property were then discussed:

- It was noted that the repair and maintenance of inner-city infrastructure was a type of growth not often mentioned
- Taxes are higher on vacant properties, so split-rate taxation may be a solution
- It was proposed that you could target the population density of an area, then figure out the vacancies, then focus on how to get to the targeted density; i.e. look at growth projections and when zoning look at what the infrastructure can handle
- The Natural Resources Inventory was brought up as an important tool in preserving valuable green space when defining infill sites
- East Campus was mentioned as a case study on both good and bad infill

Mr. Teddy then described the LEED for Neighborhood Development program as a rating system that valued infill sites and he circulated a copy. Other infill tools were discussed:

- Community land banks and affordable housing/price barriers were described
- How “underused” should be defined was then discussed by several members of the audience
  - The use of property “value” was discredited because it was thought neighborhoods/areas should have a mix of values
  - The heart of the City is downtown so that is where to start, develop criteria, work with the neighborhood, and use form-based zoning
  - It was asked how Columbia’s density compared to other cities as a basis for comparison; cohort information collection was suggested
- Another proposed infill tool was looking at social institutions and infill/growth patterns to discern gaps and coverage; social services based on Geographic Information Systems Community Issues Management (outcome and performance measurement) was described as a way to address this
  - Appropriate density was described as places that are interesting to walk around, i.e. boring places are underutilized
  - NIMBYism and fights among neighbors are challenges to density, and less dense land may have other value, such as natural resources (e.g. mature tree coverage)

**d. Density: “Growing In” and “Underused” Property:**

The conversation shifted to a discussion of good and bad density, ways to build to an appropriate density, and how to compromise and reach consensus. Mr. Teddy discussed infill and density types and circulated a copy of a creative infill approach from Austin, Texas on infill types including “small-lot amnesty” allowing construction to occur on under-sized lots. Additional discussion brought up many points:

- The importance of advising third party service providers, such as internet services, of increased density was thought to be an appropriate way to adjust/increase non-civic infrastructure

- It was also noted that the vacant property inventory should not include areas undesirable because of a stream buffer, natural resources, slope, etc.
- The planning department was recognized for organizing the neighborhood dialogue and planning information meetings (prior to cases being heard by the Planning & Zoning Commission) so that neighborhoods could be involved and engaged earlier in the development process
  - Mr. Teddy described how that procedure was an outcome of Mr. Wade's stakeholder group's work on process improvement.

### III. Comment Cards:

Several of the comment cards regarding infill questions turned in by the audience were read by Mr. Teddy and considered by the group:\*

- i. **What kinds of incentives have been used in other cities to encourage in-fill and/or higher density development?** *Graduated density, and incentives for qualified infill projects (LEED for neighborhood development was cited as an example) were discussed as options.*
- ii. **Does the City own in-fill properties in the community? If so, how many? How did the city acquire these properties?** *The City's lack of a land bank and desire to have modest land banking for community development was discussed; some considered surface parking lots to be potential infill areas.*
- iii. **How can we protect residents and homeowners as more dense infill development occurs in the central city? Design guidelines? Form-based zoning?** *The audience discussed development local examples such as the Village at Cherry Hill, the public approval process, form-based codes, and other examples of design-oriented development.*
- iv. **How are "in-fill development" areas determined?** *Potential criteria were discussed by the group, with reference to environmental and neighborhood concerns.*
- v. **Will form-based zoning be applied?** *Mr. Teddy said form-based zoning was considered strongly in the visioning process and the City's visioning was a guide for future planning standards.*
- vi. **Is the City of Columbia looking at other programs besides TIF's for developing high density mixed-use?** *The Downtown Leadership Council was described as considering a variety of downtown development incentives.*
- vii. **How high?** *The height of existing buildings, such as the Tiger Hotel as a the tallest building downtown, was suggested by members of the audience as a*

*potential cap, and other issues such as fire codes, were mentioned as factors affecting the maximum height of buildings.*

\* The above list references the cards read and discussed by Neighborhood Congress participants. A complete list of all of the comment cards turned in by attendees follows:

- “We want to see a city recycling program that works- and is ENFORCED- for multi-unit housing (low and high rises) and businesses, not just single family homes.”
- “We need to consider the best ways to go about adding density, and incorporating mixed zoning, in order to keep the streets in use throughout the day, in our neighborhoods.”
- “Is Columbia going to pro-actively anticipate being connected to KC and St. Louis via high speed rail?”
- “Mixed use development; form based zoning & smart zoning; transects; growth management planning.”
- “The state of Oregon requires cities over certain population levels to establish “urban growth boundaries.” I can’t image that MO would ever adopt such legislation but could Columbia do its own?”
- “Will the city provide incentives for I/D?”
- “Is Modesa TIF on a CID TIF, other incentives available?”
- “How can the city make owners participate?”
- “The major thoroughfare throughout the city (I-70) reflects what our city looks like. I would like for our city to address this during the process.”
- “How will infill affect city traffic patterns & potential congested areas?”
- “How will this impact internet access and availability?”

#### **IV. Conclusion:**

Mr. Teddy ended the presentation by asking the group what they would like to happen next.

Mayor Hindman suggested that based upon the comments of the group, citizens should have access to education about form-based codes. He said he thought that

people feel better about infill and density in their own neighborhood if there is control over appearance. Mayor Hindman mentioned form-based codes were a good tool but more education was needed.

Former Councilman Kruse commented that the infill discussion was long overdue and he appreciated the opportunity.

Mr. Downey asked that the Planning Department distill the information discussed and the meeting, and provide the resources Mr. Teddy shared with the audience.

Mr. Teddy said the Planning Department would compile sources on best practices and provide additional and diverse resources for the public. He said they would publicize the information in conjunction to the records from the Neighborhood Congress forums.

Councilman Skala suggested that they start with the basics, with definitions and acronyms, and go from there.

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