Seminar Overview: The Urban Infill “W’s”

- **Trends** influencing urban infill in each geographic region: East, Mountain West, and West – why are people opting for urban infill?
- **Demographics** – who are the end-users for each region?
- **Motivations** – what is influencing these buyers to opt for urban infill development?
- **Form of Development** – how to satisfy these buyers?
- **Challenges and Opportunities** – what to look for (or look out for) when developing urban infill

Defining Urban Infill

- **Adjective**
  1. of, pertaining to, or designating a city or town.
  2. living in a city.
  3. characteristic of or accustomed to cities; citified

  “characteristic of city life,” 1619 (but rare before 1830s), from L. urbana “of or pertaining to a city or city life,”

- **Verb (used with object)**
  1. to fill in: The old stream beds have been infilled with sediment.

- **Noun**
  2. the planned conversion of empty lots, underused or rundown buildings, and other available space in densely built-up urban and suburban areas for use as sites for commercial buildings and housing, frequently as an alternative to overdevelopment of rural areas.

- **Adjective**
  3. of, pertaining to, or involving the use of fill in urban planning: infill condominium projects; infill office buildings and retail space.
Reasons for Urban Infill Development

**Urban development limits auto dependence**

Higher density urban infill development, especially at walkable nodes along a transit system, enable alternative modes to the automobile; they don’t result in more congestion on local streets, roads and highways.

**Urban development reflects diversity**

The US population is becoming increasingly diverse; demand for a single family house for a nuclear family is no longer paramount. With this changing demand comes a desire for new kinds of places.

**Urban development utilizes existing infrastructure**

- In-place utility infrastructure can be utilized rather than having to construct anew.
- Existing street network can be used and reinvigorated.
- Can take advantage of existing surrounding businesses and social amenities.

**Urban infill development = good land use practice**

- Revitalization of inner cities, urban fringe areas and suburban hubs signals responsible, smart and sustainable land use practices.

**WHY:**

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development
Trends Across the Country

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - The Coasts
- Sprawl, sprawl and more sprawl...
- Lack of affordable real estate
- Increasing distances to employment, shopping, entertainment, etc.
- Increasing automotive congestion despite recent decrease in vehicle miles traveled
- Energy and fuel cost uncertainties
- Renewed interest in mass transportation

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - The Coasts
- Affordable housing demand
- Singles
- Families
- Seniors
- Work force housing needs
- Luxury/Move-up buyers still are still out there, albeit in fewer numbers

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - Rocky Mountain West
Delayed Marriage

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - Rocky Mountain West
High “Boomer” Divorce Rate
New Light Rail System

Major Redevelopment: Stapleton Airport

Major Redevelopment: Gates Rubber Company

New Sports and Cultural Facilities
Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - General
- Generational demographics
- Decreasing household sizes
- Non-traditional households
- Lifestyle choices

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - General
- Cultural demographics
- Increasing diversity
  - Immigrants, Multi-Generational, Ethnicity

Trends Influencing Urban Infill Development - Overall
- Smart growth, sustainable design and green building initiatives
- Increased public and private investment in inner cities, urban fringe areas and older suburban hubs.
- Increased municipal efforts to redevelop and revitalize underutilized urban areas

Demographics: WHO are the Buyers?
- Market Segments
  - Generation X & Y
  - Singles (+25%)
  - Boomers/ 55+ market (+30%)
  - Non-traditional families (+4%)
  - Immigrants/ Ethnic
  - Traditional families (-16%)

Who are the Consumers?
- ...just about every demographic, EXCEPT “families w/ school aged children”
Demographics Influencing Urban Migration

- Aging population
  - % of Population over 65 increasing
- Family sizes decreasing
  - 1950: 3.54 persons per household
  - Today: 2.6 persons per household
  - Greater than 50% of all households are childless
  - Single parents constitute 10% of households

Demographics Influencing Urban Migration

- By 2010 up to 75 percent of U.S. households will have no children living at home.
- Typical resident profiles are couples with no children, young singles, and empty nesters in search of smaller, more convenient housing in cities

Demographic Segments Desiring Urban Living

- Gen-X/ Gen-Y/ Singles
  - Want their own identity, not their parents
  - Desire to do better than their parents
  - High levels of debt
  - More interested in multi-family
  - Smaller units that offer higher design (not just square footage and room count)
  - Amenities, amenities, amenities…
  - Proximity to social opportunities
  - Transportation choices
  - Emphasis on the environment and sustainability

Demographic Segments Desiring Urban Living

- Boomers/ Empty-Nesters
  - Highest disposable income of any demographic group
  - Still active and working
  - Independent
  - Life-long learning
  - Embrace technology
  - Environmentally aware
  - Enjoying life and having fun!

Demographic Segments Desiring Urban Living

- Immigrants/ Ethnic
  - Growth in many markets almost entirely due to immigration
  - Diverse needs and expectations
  - Multi-generational
  - Attainability
  - Adjacent to their social and civic institutions
  - Tend to be more urban oriented

Demographic Segments Desiring Urban Living

- Non-Traditional Families and Households
  - Single parent
  - Smaller households
  - Alternative lifestyle
  - Value added amenities very important
  - Design takes on increased significance
  - Flexibility
Motivations:

**WHAT**
Influences Buyers to Opt for Urban Infill?

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?
- Congestion due to sprawl = loss of quality time

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?
- Cost of energy now and in the future

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?
- The long commute

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?
- Volatility in suburban real estate markets

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?
- Access to public transit
What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?

- Rocky Mountain West
  ...here it's a little bit different! It's not... lack of land, or... increased distance to employment, or... lack of affordable housing.

  It's about a recreation oriented “lifestyle”

  and convenience... ...and, attitude!

What Motivates Urban Infill Buyers?

- West Coast
  • Strong and growing dedication to the environment and sustainability
  • Mandated sustainability legislation in several states including California, Oregon and Washington
  • Mandated growth control legislation in both Oregon and Washington
  • Strong market of “cultural creatives” who want sustainability living environments

What Urban Areas Have to Offer

• Lifestyle choices
• Seeking a sense of community and togetherness
• “Hiving”
  - Home is considered “command central” for work, social and entertainment activities
  - Quest for more ‘connectedness’ with friends, family and neighbors

What Urban Areas Have to Offer

• Importance of “experience”
  - Within walking distance of, or connected by transit to recreation, culture and entertainment
  - Surrounded by features and amenities
  - Pride of where they live

What Urban Areas Have to Offer

• Proximity to shopping, dining and culture
• Proximity to civic institutions, hospitals and higher education

Range of housing choices
Forms of Development: **HOW to Satisfy Urban Infill Buyers**

Elements of Urban Infill Development

- Residential
- Transit Oriented
- Mixed Use
- Urban Infill Development
- Office
- Parking
- Retail

Forms of Development - East Coast

Liberty Court
Philadelphia, PA

Phase I

Phase II
Forms of Development
-Rocky Mountain West

Housing Smorgasbord: 3 lots become 14 homes
Housing Smorgasbord: 5 lots become 17 homes

Housing Smorgasbord: mid-density

Housing Smorgasbord: mixed-use

Housing Smorgasbord: planned community
Domaine Intracorp  |  80 DUA
Seattle, Washington

High Point Seattle Housing Authority  |  20 DUA
Seattle, Washington

Rolling and steep hillside

Longfellow Creek Watershed
Seattle, Washington
Reduce Hardscape Area
- Reduce road width
- Maximize transit opportunities
- Use streets for parking rather than parking lots
- Use pervious pavement
- Use alternative pervious driving surfaces
- Use curbed, curbless and interrupted curbs
- Maintain classic neighborhood streetscape

Create Natural Drainage System
- Improve water quality treatment
- Miles of grass and vegetated swales
- Shallow swales promote play, TND look
- Protects salmon habitat
- Mimics natural drainage quality
- Maintain classic neighborhood streetscape

Resident Type Distribution

High Point - Storm Water/Streets
56’ ROW, 25’ Street, Parking Both Sides
High Point – “Rain Garden” Storm Water Treatment
Seattle, Washington

High Point – Parks and Open Space
Seattle, Washington

High Point – Storm Water Flow/Treatment
Seattle, Washington

What to Consider **WHEN** Developing Urban Infill Properties: Challenges & Opportunities

- Land acquisition costs
- Land use regulations
- Site contamination (brownfields)
- Neighborhood opposition

Challenges to Urban Infill Development

Collects and cleans surface storm water runoff & directs flow into Longfellow Creek

A football field in size
Challenges to Urban Infill Development

- Public policies
- Site constraints
- Reuse of existing elements/infrastructure
- Parking, parking, parking!

Challenges to Urban Infill Development

- Availability of jobs
- Quality of education
- Proximity to mass transit
- Perception of daily living
- Crime

Identifying Urban Infill Opportunities

- Master planning
- Block redevelopment
- Scattered sites
- Adaptive reuse
- Brownfields
- Greyfields

Planning and Programming Considerations

- Design
  - Scale and proportion
  - Relationship to surrounding context
- Mixed use considerations
  - Retail visibility
  - Office/commercial access
  - Range of housing choices
  - Density of housing
  - 24/7 vitality

Planning and Programming Considerations

- Parking
  - Discrete but convenient
  - Shared parking: night/day and transit/non-transit
  - Reduced parking ratios
- Transit oriented
  - Accommodating pedestrians and bicyclists & ride sharing
  - Facilitating quick and easy access to transit
- Walkable neighborhoods

Planning and Programming Considerations

- Partnerships
  - Local government/municipality
  - Transit agency
  - Developer
  - Residents and transit users
  - Community development groups

• Sustainable/Green Design Considerations
Conclusion

- Greatly reduced dependence on oil and other energy resources
- Less automotive congestion and strain of road infrastructure
- Greatly reduced pollution and environmental compromise
- Increased Use of Mass Transportation

Questions?

DROP US A LINE!

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