

INFILL ROUNDTABLE

REMOVAL OF BARRIERS

Barriers & Recommendations

November 29, 2017

"We've done infill work before, but we likely won't again. It's simply much easier to work on greenfield."

Why do something that is ten times harder to make the same profit? You pick the path of least resistance."

Comment received in Summer 2017 from a local builder.

"This is the last time my company will work on an infill project needing rezoning. It's just not worth the hassle. Actually, we would love to do nothing but infill, but it's severely limiting at the moment, so we will be forced to do more greenfield."

Comment received in Fall 2017 from an experienced local developer/builder.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the results of the first phase of the Infill Roundtable discussions designed to address challenges to infill development in Saskatoon and level the playing field between greenfield and infill development. While there are many challenges to infill development that may take some time to address, the development community is well-positioned to provide feedback on a multitude of barriers and ideas which can be addressed relatively quickly as an important first step to increase opportunities for infill development in Saskatoon.

Process

Phase one focused on identifying barriers to growth and recommending solutions to these issues, making an effort to move forward on items which can have a quick turnaround so as not to delay improvements any longer than necessary. The main organizational team represented a balanced core, including Director of Planning and Development Lesley Anderson (representing City of Saskatoon staff), Chief of Staff Michelle Beveridge (representing the Mayor's Office), and Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association CEO Chris Guérette (representing the residential construction and development industry). The remaining 24 participants were a mix of stakeholders who were carefully chosen to represent a wide range of builders and developers (small and large, infill and greenfield, single and multi-family), consultants, City staff, and elected officials.

Barriers & Recommendations

At the initial meeting, the group worked together to identify barriers and ideas for solutions, which were organized into subcategories (Planning, Transportation & Utilities, Water & Sewer, and Communications). Each barrier and its corresponding ideas for solutions were then further organized by priority level and degree of complexity. A detailed description of these discussions can be found in the tables on pages 5-11 of this report. From these discussions, a list of 21 recommendations were drafted and reviewed at a second meeting on August 3, including:

1. Access to Information

- Make info within the City's control readily available
- Identify which data can be readily shared
- Determine a process to house information and make it easily accessible
- Clearly and quickly disclose process and project status

2. Communications

- Develop a consistent message which is made available to all players (e.g., developers)
- Facilitate Internal communications between departments
- Recognize and manage NIMBYism
- Make the Mayor's Infill Roundtable a long-term commitment
- Create infill sub-committee of Developers' Liaison Committee

3. Organizational Change & Coordination

- Neighbourhood by neighbourhood study on infrastructure
- Conduct organizational review of the rezoning process
- Prioritize infrastructure requirements
- Re-evaluate the zoning process
- Develop tree policy or bylaw to better support infill development
- Allow for innovation and flexibility where possible

4. Financial

- Reduce weigh of deposits
- Remove offsite levies and/or infrastructure upgrades
- Use levies in the neighbourhood for which they were collected
- Review parking requirements
- Give tax incentive to developer instead of future homeowner
- Seize opportunities with other policies to remove costs to infill development

Next Steps

The current timeline for phase one proposes to finish with a presentation to City Council on December 18th, 2017. Overall, there is optimism about the impacts that the Infill Roundtable can have in addressing barriers to infill development in Saskatoon, and the participants look forward to continuing to work with the City toward our common goal of healthy, balanced growth in Saskatoon.



CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Following the delivery of the City of Saskatoon's recent Growth Plan, there have been many discussions surrounding the goals and objectives focused on increasing infill development in our city. In fact, one of the great debates in today's Canadian cities has been in regards to infill vs. greenfield development, where picking sides on the debate has been more important than finding a solution tailored for one's city. In fact, infill and greenfield developments are not mutually exclusive silos that operate independently from one another where if you have one, you can't have the other. Rather, cities should have a solid, balanced plan as to not hinder development and erode affordability, while still offering homeowners a choice in price and style. With the right plan, both infill and greenfield development can co-exist in a way that's much more beneficial than choosing one or the other.

There are debates within the development community surrounding the goals of infill development for the City of Saskatoon, about whether they are reasonable or attainable; and although there are a variety of opinions on this, many can agree that more needs to be done to ensure a level playing field exists between infill and greenfield development.

It is well known within the development community that there are far more challenges and barriers in developing infills compared to greenfield developments. Although difficult to measure the degree of missed opportunities due to these challenges, one can still argue that infill development has had a slow growth in Saskatoon. This is not for lack of opportunity, but because of high resistance to bring projects to market.

Before incentivising infill development and conducting more studies, the City may want to analyse what "quick wins" it can provide as a first step so as to make faster progress on the issue. The development community is well positioned to provide feedback and ideas to identify barriers within the City's control that can be removed relatively quickly and would increase opportunities for the development community to work on infill projects.

Although a boxed-in or limited approach to such a large issue, this analysis is a small and important piece of the conversation on improving our city's delivery of infill development and an excellent starting point. A roundtable discussion was led in partnership by both the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association and the City of Saskatoon, to bring the expertise from both groups to the table to identify and move forward on quick improvements, an objective all stakeholders have in common.

ROUNDTABLE PROCESS

The Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association in partnership with the Mayor's office of the City of Saskatoon, will coordinate the following process in order to bring the Infill Roundtable Discussion to fruition and kick-start the discussion on infill development in our city.

Barriers to infill growth

Phase 1: Identifying barriers and make recommendations.

Phase 2: Attach timeline and resources required for each recommendation.

Phase 3: Following implementation, record comments and track permits to determine degree of progress.

Phase 4: Evaluate, report. Continue with additional or ongoing removal of barriers and/or start similar process with topic of incentivising infill growth.

Phase 1

The first few steps of phase 1 moved very quickly, after which the SRHBA took a pause in order to properly consult and provide the highest credibility to the report. The original deadline to complete the project was in September but we are hopeful that with this new timeline, 2018 will be off to a good start on this file. It is important to note that all businesses involved in the process were very keen in finishing Phase 1 and presenting this report.

Initial meeting - **July 18 2017 (2-6PM)**

SRHBA drafts recommendations and submits to group - **July 31 2017**

Second meeting to review draft recommendations - **August 3 2017**

Provided verbal update to City Council - **September 25 2017**

Present to Planning & Development Committee - **December 4 2017 (external presentation)**

Third meeting to discuss next steps - **December 15 2017**

Potentially present to City Council - **December 18 2017 (potentially)**



Objectives of the process

The objectives of the day were purposefully limited. Challenges in infill development are not unique to Saskatoon and are very complex. In order to start the discussion, we argued that we have to take smaller bites and build on small successes regularly. We will not be able to fix everything overnight, but we have to start the discussion. It was thus important to only identify barriers and ideas that were within the City's direct control, and nothing else. This is not to say that other points are not a priority or important, but they are to be considered in a different process. The day's objectives were to:

- Identify barriers
- Think of ideas for solutions
- Determine order of priority (quick wins)
- Gauge level of difficulty or complexity
- Discuss next steps in the process

Values of the process

The participants of the Infill Roundtable decided amongst themselves of the values that would guide their discussions and work together. All participants were committed to working for common objectives and although many of them do not regularly work with one another, they wanted to start an ongoing relationship of having an openness as a group to work together, putting the elephants on the table and continuing the dialogue. The values agreed upon were:

- Focus on barriers
- Forward looking, not dwell on the past and challenging experiences
- Focus on process & potential to improve, not people

Stakeholders involved

Stakeholders were carefully chosen to have a mix of small to large builders and developers, infill and greenfield, single to multi family, consultants, City staff and elected officials. The main organizational team was comprised of a balanced core: Lesley Anderson (City of Saskatoon staff), Michelle Beveridge (for the elected side from the Mayor's office) and Chris Guérette (industry lead). The stakeholders selected are:

Jim Siemens	Oxbow Architecture	Charlie Clark	Mayor, City of Saskatoon
Karl Miller	Meridian Development	Kara Fagnou	Building Standards, City of Saskatoon
Mark Bobyn	Design Build	Darryl Dawson	Planning and Development, City of Saskatoon
Andrew Williams	North Prairie Development	Darren Crilly	Parks, City of Saskatoon
Curtis Olson	CEO, Shift Development	Jeff Jorgenson	City of Saskatoon
Lee Torvik Smith	Development Manager, Shift Development	Murray Totland	General Manager, City of Saskatoon
Ron Olson	GM, Boychuk Construction	Daryl Schmidt	Land Development, City of Saskatoon
Cam Skoropat	CEO, Lexis Homes	Jay Magus	Transportation, City of Saskatoon
Alan Wallace	V3 Group of Companies of Canada	Galen Heinrichs	Saskatoon Water, City of Saskatoon
Brent Penner	Executive Director, Downtown YXE BID	Rob Dudiak	Construction and Design, City of Saskatoon
Darla Lindbjerg	President & CEO, Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce	Lesley Anderson	Director of Planning, City of Saskatoon
Alex Miller	CEO, Innovative Residential	Michelle Beveridge	Chief of Staff, City of Saskatoon
Mark Kelleher	BlackRock Developments	Chris Guérette	CEO, Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association
Cynthia Block	Councillor for Ward 6, City of Saskatoon		



SUB CATEGORIES ANALYSED

The following box details the group's discussion in categories by first identifying the barriers, then matching it with potential ideas for solutions. A level of priority was also given to each barrier identified (1 through 3, with 1 being of highest importance) and matched where possible with a degree of complexity (easy, medium or hard). The feedback provided were categorized in four categories reflective of the development process:

1. Planning

2. Transportation & Utilities

3. Water & Sewer

4. Communications

1. Planning

Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
<p>1.1 Timelines. Not knowing timelines and their impacts adds to much risk to projects. Must have a more predictable zoning process that takes risk out of it.</p> <p>One determinant impacting the speed of a timeline is the rezoning process, which is too slow due to resistance in up-zoning. Many have experienced a timeline of 1 year, which is too long.</p> <p>Business does not stop because of an election, summer or vacation. How to keep the process going 12 months of the year, every year?</p> <p>Local area plan process could benefit from an adjustment. Can the developer community be engaged here with residents as well? It's a matter of getting input early. The City needs to articulate public direction better. Is public consultation also always necessary?</p>	<p>Some say more human resources will help to shorten the whole process but until you look at the whole problem as a whole, it is hard to determine if lack of staff is the issue. This is also about understanding the process and where the sticking points are.</p> <p>Conducting a process review with the developer community and city staff could determine pain points and how to power through improvements to timelines. If an operational review is already under way or planned, how can we ensure developers can contribute or take part where opportune?</p> <p>Internal champion within City of Saskatoon staff could help.</p> <p>Overlay districts could also be a solution so residents and developers already know what an area can potentially be up-zoned to, accelerating the process of public consultations or even avoiding the possibly of going to council in some cases. If the requirements of the overlay district are met with the proposal, the land could then re-zoned immediately. This could cut timelines down as quickly as the process for a building permit. The public would already be aware of the public consultation that would have taken place when the overlay districts were originally put in place.</p> <p>All building permits go through same three individuals but the City has grown beyond that model. New process required.</p> <p>City could help with the communication piece of rezoning. This is an investment in time but could assist in lowering the temperature with community. Relying on the developer to send the message and lead the process is not the best route. Some cities have best practices on this and their processes could be evaluated to see what would work for Saskatoon.</p>	<p>1 > easy but process evaluation is medium</p>



Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
1.2 Lack of conversation between departments. Consultation between departments at the beginning would identify surprises and variables.	Designated infill coordination to decrease the culture of silos, increase communications and increase efficiency.	1 > medium
1.3 Inefficiencies. The work has to be repeated if going through rezoning, subdivision or condo applications, even without changes.	<p>Evaluate the administrative process to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency.</p> <p>Developers with a proven track record are fast-tracked through certain steps and processes when there would be changes. Although this could be seen as providing preferential treatment, a clear process could be put into place to determine how to get such status.</p> <p>Not piecemeal zoning, a clear direction, vision and strategy for corridors and communities. With a clear laid out plan(s), this would provide certainty to not only developers but for community members as well. It is important to not get too much into the details however as to hinder the process; Broader scoped visions and values can also provide the guidance required.</p> <p>Clarity of vision is required for a comprehensive zoning strategy in the City. Mesh layers of City with developers.</p> <p>Education session with development community when new or improved processes in place.</p>	<p>2 > easy because in process already</p> <p>1 > medium</p>
1.4 Inflexibility. Models are applied to infill and greenfield as though they would be the same (eg.,: parking). Lack of flexibility in applying regulations to infill, existing conditions not considered.	<p>If infill is truly to be reflected in growth plan, we need to have more transparency to bylaws and policies as to bring focus to this objective in a way that will not hinder growth.</p> <p>The Planning Officer should have more flexibility to make trades on items, not everything has to go through council. For example, a density bonus could be given should more parking be provided or a parking relaxation should a public amenity or green spaces be provided.</p> <p>Review of bylaws impacting infill with new lens. Nothing was written for purpose of infill development, only greenfield, we need to tailor bylaws to infill development.</p>	1 > medium to hard
1.5 Green infrastructure. Value and requirement of tree protection not communicated early enough in the process and sometimes challenging with infill realities.	<p>Communication & consideration during design phase so identification of conflict between development and trees can be identified and resolved early in the process.</p> <p>Develop tree policy or bylaw to better support infill. Council policy currently mandates the protection of</p>	<p>3 > easy</p> <p>3 > medium</p>



Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
1.5 Green infrastructure (Cont'd)	all healthy city trees but this policy was not developed with infill in mind and does not consider the business case of infill vs. environmental (mature tree canopy) vs. citizens' quality of life. These aspects should be considered in a new tree policy or bylaw to ensure that the rules that govern tree protection around infill development sites are balanced and applied consistently at early stages of development. Trees need to be protected but removal should not be so punitive (barrier) that it affects a project.	
1.6 Parking requirements. Parking policy requirements creates a significant reoccurring barrier in infill. A lot of infill developments do not require the amount of parking required by the bylaw. Inefficient use of space and dollars.	Increase flexibility in negotiating zoning restrictions. Parking requirement needs to be re-written from top to bottom. A trade-off option might be the walkability ratio and off-street parking where appropriate.	3 > hard

2. Transportation & Utilities

Barriers Identified	Ideas for solutions	Priority & Complexity
2.1 Deposits. Currently deposits are perceived as a penalty. They are also not clear and consistent in their process, timing and application.	Establish clear, consistent application and communication of process.	2 > easy
	Look at other mechanisms (bonds and other guarantees) or if available, communicate options clearly as a service to provide.	
	Ask for realistic amounts of deposits and release deposits in a timely matter. Developers increasingly require deeper pockets to operate.	3 > medium to hard
	Recognition or rating system for good developers who have proven themselves over time. There might be an opportunity of a good pilot project with multi-unit sidewalk deposits which could be replicated elsewhere.	3 > medium
	Global management for all deposits, as opposed to a continual and uncoordinated accumulation of several deposits that impacts cash flow. It was noted that that the sewer and water connection deposits work well.	



Barriers Identified	Ideas for solutions	Priority & Complexity
2.2 Cost of lane paving. The reasoning for this requirement is not always clear and understood, appears arbitrary in some cases. This is a large barrier that is also difficult to anticipate and the innovation and capital can be spent more effectively elsewhere.	Create a city-wide program to pave or address all lanes, not picking here and there depending on development. Maybe include in the community strategy mentioned in category 1. Would also be more cost effective to aggregate a number of small projects. Developers willing to work together if they know of each other's works and common city requirements. Analyse if gravel lanes are acceptable. Decide and research (storm water liability?). The practice should be discontinued until proven necessary.	1 > medium
2.3 Cost of Traffic Impact Assessments. Inconsistent when it is required and overlapping between nearby properties and other servicing reports.	City shares TIAs and other reports with developers through a portal and vice versa. The City however, does not own all/most TIAs and reports so they cannot release them. There may be an opportunity in creating a system between participating developers and the SRHBA and City to share such reports and information in a single-point portal.	3 > hard
2.4 Administration of land development accounting. Access to key staff challenging, hard to get information and creates delays.	Single point of contact at the City. Could there be a champion internally for infill? Unsure if this is viable but worth looking at.	2 > medium
2.5 Fees and levies. They are discovered too late in the process, creating more unpredictability.	Give some control to the developer to figure out levies and calculations on their own so they can determine the level of opportunity for a project. Better communications by creating an infill single-point of access online with calculators and all data. The data is available now, just make it easily accessible.	1 > medium
2.6 No right to appeal conditions of rezoning. Lack of servicing agreement.	Put standards online, not applied consistently.	2 > medium
2.7 List of smaller items but they add up: Access for staging, closing right of ways, meter hooding.	No charge for meters, right of ways etc. if projects are labelled for infill growth. The history of hooding fees was punitive in nature to recover damages. As an incentive, the City could initiate a change here.	2 > easy

3. Water & Sewer

Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
3.1 New storm capacity requirements. These requirements are now impacting infill as well; Developers are blind on the infrastructure needs and unable to anticipate cost in advance. What triggers an infrastructure upgrade? Subdivision, design, rezoning, service agreement etc. It's the element of surprise because of the lack of communication. The intent is appropriate but the implementation is problematic.	Look closely at limitations, come up with a city-wide solution and fund it properly. Neighborhood by neighborhood. There will not be a "one solution fits all" across the city but downtown might be a relatively easy one to start with as well as corridors highlighted on the growth plan.	1 > hard



Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
3.3 Inconsistencies in overlapping policies. From planning to water & sewer, policies between departments overlap and created inconsistencies that often only the developer will see and have to work around.	Review administrative policies to align departments. Maybe an infill champion internally could assist with this? Find best practices in other cities.	2 > easy in pinpoint, medium to modify.
3.4 Investment in existing infrastructure. Currently, the onus is on the future home owner, via the developer, to make up for the short fall yet charging offsite levies on infill creates a double hit: paying the tax and paying for the upgrades.	Track offsite levies for infills and where they go. Who gets them? How are they tracked? How do we understand this infrastructure accounting better? Infill might be more popular with the public if they knew levy dollars were to be used to improve their community.	1 > consultation required with City staff.
3.5 Lack of openness to creative solutions. Some examples around this relate to potential solutions to address challenges in storm/sewer capacity.	City to take a broader approach to addressing infrastructure impacts for a particular area.	3 >
3.7 Acquiring data. Getting data on what capacity is available at a given location is challenging and time consuming.	Find a model to share information and models of storm, water etc. The City of Kelowna is one of those good examples.	3 > easy

4. Communications

Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
<p>4.1 Lack of access to basic information. Information required is within the City's hands, but very difficult if not impossible sometime, to access. They are:</p> <p>Are offsite levies owing or not? If owing, information about those levies is very difficult to find and impacts success of a project.</p> <p>Servicing agreements can't be found.</p> <p>How are the rates calculated? Why can't one calculate themselves online?</p> <p>Not all land development constraints are known at time of land purchase, but can be.</p>	<p>Create info hub for developers (or anyone), a one-stop-shop, an app maybe? Keep it high level (processes & costs) with status for each application/development. Service agreements can be make available, online calculator, map, guide. Let the user calculate and search on their own without having to depend on a response from a staff person. Access to basic development information, made easy.</p> <p>Let developers know implication of future actions e.g.,if you subdivide, you will have off-site levies).</p> <p>Levies and how they are calculated are a bit of a mystery. Clarify and be transparent.</p> <p>Look at the City of Kelowna's website as a best practice.</p>	1 > City staff consultation required.
<p>4.2 NIMBYism: Not In My Back Yard. We all want to talk growth and infill until it is in our own back yard. How can we get to a less polarizing language and process? NIMBYism can make or break a project.</p>	<p>Manage the issue: Publicise strategic plans broadly. City promotion could help change residents' attitudes.</p> <p>Develop communication strategy. Communicate plainly.</p> <p>Articulate the cost of not having infill. Signage for example, could be installed in a neighborhood around upgrades to infrastructure to identify how projects were funded. If infill had a part in paying for such things, support for infill might not be as challenging, decreasing NYMBIs.</p>	1 > hard



Barriers Identified	Ideas for Solutions	Priority & Complexity
4.2 NIMBYism: Not In My Back Yard (Cont'd)	Change city's narrative from unlimited expansion to vibrant density. Density and suburbs can co-exist. All players need to be involved but in coordination.	
4.3 Information is scattered. Different departments and individuals do not talk to each other and collecting required information is time consuming and navigating the City staff structure is challenging.	Communication between departments. Sometimes there is conflicting information. City staff as a unit could benefit from understanding the benefits of infill. Engagement from within. Can the SRHBA lead some part of this? Willing to sit down with the City and determine what role we could play without stepping on toes.	1 >
4.4 Timeframe for review. Trying to find out a project's status at any given time creates delays. Some things can get addressed faster while other aspects are still being evaluated. Making the entire process transparent also makes it more efficient in terms of using time wisely meaning items can be prepared while others are being processed.	Provide real-time information via online system or portal.	1 > hard in terms of getting set up and operational through IT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the details of the discussion above, the following 21 recommendations are being made to the City of Saskatoon, grouped into the following themes:

- 1. Access to information**
- 2. Communications**

- 3. Organizational changes & coordination**
- 4. Financial**

1. Access to information

1.1 Identify what data and information can readily be shared without access to City staff. The SRHBA can assist with some options should some information not be within the City's scope to share, such as with general industry and developer reports.

1.2 Make information within the City of Saskatoon's control readily available. All the information required to determine a business case and develop infill already exists, it's a matter of making it either easy to find for the development community or publicly available. If the development community has access to the information it requires, it can mean less staff required for the City. The development community will do the work and prepare ahead of time, before issues or questions arise at the City's level. This might also help allay residents' concerns as they can find information or do the research themselves.

1.3 Determine infrastructure or process to house information and make it easily accessible. The City could have this available online such as a website, an application or an internal portal, a sort of one-stop-shop. Additional tools could eventually be integrated such as a calculator and search function.

1.4 Clearly & quickly disclose processes and status of projects. The City can also disclose information such as policies, requirements, expected timelines, status of applications, status of approvals or requested changes in real time or with minimal delays. This could also eventually be included in an internal portal mentioned above, or at the very least, continual electronic communication throughout the process.



2. Communications

2.1 Create overlay districts on neighborhoods targeted for infill growth. The intent would be a public consultation with a larger scope, but that only needs to be done once for a neighborhood instead of for one lot. Then residents and developers already know what an area can potentially be up-zoned to once approved, and if the requirements of the overlay district are met with the proposal, the land could then re-zoned immediately, cutting timelines significantly.

2.2 Make one consistent message available for all players. One consistent message (a strategy) from the City would be better than developers going around the area they wish to develop. Residents can be educated on the benefits of infill and that it is something that the City is promoting and will be doing now and in the future. Each developer does this differently with different messages and it's not always well received by the community. Again, the City is better placed to take the lead on this, and the development community can utilize it consistently. Language and process must be changed as to be less polarizing.

2.3 Facilitate internal communications between departments. Current communication between departments is very compartmentalized. Information and policies can be conflicting and very rigid in nature. An internal infill champion might be the solution.

2.4 Make the Mayor's Infill Roundtable a long-term commitment. An important and successful partnership was created where dialogue was productive and efficient. The SRHBA is willing to play a supportive role in continuing the dialogue with this Roundtable until we can get it right for Saskatoon.

2.5 Create an infill sub-committee of the Developers' Liaison Committee. City staff have already moved ahead with this recommendation.

3. Organizational change & coordination

3.1 Neighborhood by neighborhood study on infrastructure. Select a few core neighborhoods to conduct engineering studies and then release the information. The development community can then know what service & utility capacities exist prior to development. This will help make investment decisions but could also allow the project costs to be lowered, making entire projects more viable.

3.2 Prioritize infrastructure requirements. The City requires a way to communicate its priorities clearly so developers can assist and plan.

3.3 Conduct an organizational review of the rezoning process in order to make it more efficient and foster opportunities.

3.4 Re-evaluate the zoning process. Once a plan for a community is in place, does every situation have to go back to council? Some cities have mastered this and best practices should be evaluated.

3.5 Develop a tree policy or bylaw to better support infill development considering the business case vs. environmental case vs. quality of life for citizens. Current policy was not developed with infill in mind.

3.6 Allow for innovation and flexibility where possible, such as offering the ability to trade-in certain options or gaining credits for others. Certain members of the development community have been pioneers in infill development, how can we create pioneers within the City of Saskatoon, allowing policies and ideas to breathe their intent?

4. Financial

4.1 Reduce the weight of deposits, both in terms of process and monetary value. The process, in its current format, is far too heavy and creates constraints on business that far outweigh its intent. The deposit is too large, and when several departments collect individual deposits, the sum is unreasonable. The timeline for their return is too long and some processes are not transparent and well understood.



4.2 Remove offsite levies and/or infrastructure upgrades (paving of alleys, storm or sewer storage, etc). Tax incremental financing should be the principal mechanism for the City to finance Infrastructure upgrades in infill neighborhoods, not offsite levies. Also, having both these being charged at the same time creates a double tax but also puts an unfair weight on the future homeowner of that project. It also provides a lack of transparency and understanding as to what offsite levies are being used for.

4.3 Use levies for the neighborhood they were collected for. By being able to track offsite levies to see where they go, this could also assist a neighborhood in understand why infill is viable and desired.

4.4 Review parking requirement to make it more flexible and allow for innovation.

4.5 Give the tax incentive to the developer instead of the future homeowner. Many anecdotes provided confirmation that the tax incentive as it is designed is not providing an incentive for homeowners to buy, it is simply a nice add-on at the end. The true benefit would be to give this to the developer to conduct the work.

4.6 Seize the opportunities with other policies, to remove costs to infill development. Many small items add up to a lot. From right of ways to meter hooding, if these expenses were removed for infill development, the cost of projects would go down.

PARKING LOT

The following items were identified as either challenges that were not necessarily barriers that could be removed by the City, or challenges that require more attention and analysis than what was within the scope of the Roundtable discussions. These points could certainly be included into a future phase of work on infill development, but are purposefully not included in this report due to the scope being smaller than what these points required:

1. Cost of surface servicing
2. Timing of servicing (re: gas, winter increases in fees based on date)
3. Land Bank priorities meshing with the Growth Plan

CONCLUSION

The results produced by the Infill Roundtable are an important first step in attaining a balance between infill and greenfield in Saskatoon. This process was such an instrumental initiative to start the conversation on infill development that many want it to continue.

We look forward to the discussions surrounding the delivery of the recommendations and continuing this collaborative work for the benefit of our city.

