Planning for a healthy, vibrant neighborhood community

JWN PlanJam Workshop #1

Presented by the Jefferson Westside Neighbors
jwneugene.org

More information on the Web at: jwneugene.org/infillstds
Welcome!

- Your workshop coordinators are:
  - Rene Kane, JWN Chair  
    [renekane@comcast.net](mailto:renekane@comcast.net)
  - Paul Conte, former JWN Co-chair  
    [pconte@picante-soft-com](mailto:pconte@picante-soft-com)
- Please complete registration card
- Facilities
- Cell phones on “stun”, please.
- This workshop is for JWN members.
  - Residents, property owners, business principals
  - Guests are welcome as observers
- Before you leave, please complete evaluation form
Agenda

8:30 a.m. – Registration
8:45 a.m. – Welcome; introduction to the workshop
9:00 a.m. – Background of infill compatibility standards issues and process
9:15 a.m. – Description of the JWN “heritage” area that is the focus of the first set of standards
9:30 a.m. – Assessment of “neighborhood character”
10:00 a.m. – BREAK
10:15 a.m. – Assessment of negative impacts from incompatible infill
11:00 a.m. – Identifying critical areas for infill compatibility standards
11:40 a.m. – Charting what comes next
11:50 a.m. – Workshop evaluation
12:00 Noon – End of workshop
Why Infill Compatibility Standards?

We have a serious problem with incompatible infill that is degrading and destabilizing areas of the Jefferson and Westside neighborhoods.
What is the solution?

- Infill Compatibility Standards (ICS) in a nutshell
  - Land use code amendments that “prevent negative impacts, and promote positive impacts, of residential infill development on neighborhoods.”
    - From ICS Task Team Charter
  - The ICS Task Team’s Project Goals Statement

  Create and adopt land use code standards and processes that
  (a) Prevent residential infill that would significantly threaten or diminish the stability, quality, positive character, livability or natural resources of residential neighborhoods; and
  (b) Encourage residential infill that would enhance the stability, quality, positive character, livability or natural resources of residential neighborhoods; and
  (c) So long as the goal stated in (a) is met, allow for increased density, a variety of housing types, affordable housing, and mixed-use development; and
  (d) Improve the appearance of buildings and landscapes.
What is being done?

- City Council initiated two major projects and established two “task teams”
  - **Infill Compatibility Standards (ICS) Task Team**
    - Recommend standards to protect neighborhoods against negative impacts of incompatible infill
  - **Opportunity Siting (OS) Task Team**
    - Recommend process and incentives to promote well-designed, higher-density development on suitable sites that will enhance surrounding residential neighborhoods.

- JWN membership has endorsed both projects and JWN members have been actively participating
  - JWN representatives on ICS Task Team and its committees
  - JWN worked with OS Task Team to conduct two OS workshops in summer 2008
How ICS and OS relate

Protect Neighborhoods

Infill Compatibility Standards

Opportunity Siting

Create Properly-Sited, Well-Designed Higher Density Housing

Residential neighborhoods that are:
- Attractive
- Vibrant
- Sustainable
- Diverse
- Compact
Prior work & resources

- Westside Neighborhood Plan (1987)
- Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan (1983)
- Chambers Reconsidered project (2005)
  - City Web site & documents
  - Chambers Families for Healthy Neighborhoods (CAFHN) Web site
  - “Neighbors’ Report”
- “Promoting Compatible Development in a Mature Neighborhood”
- “Downtown Area Housing Policy Analysis”
Eugene’s first “infill”
Recent infill on same block
Planned schedule

Summer ‘08 – ICS supports JWN concept of “overlay zone” to implement infill standards applicable to “heritage” area zone R-2

Oct. ‘08 – JWN board directs Chair to implement JWN process
– JWN newsletter provides info on infill and PlanJam

Nov. 22 ‘08 – PlanJam Workshop #1

Nov.-Dec. ‘08 – Survey #1 on neighborhood character, negative impacts, stds. areas

Dec. ‘08 – JWN board approves preliminary proposal for standards

Jan. ‘09 – JWN newsletter provides recap of Workshop #1 and preliminary proposal

Jan. 13 ’09 – JWN general meeting, recap WS #1 and prelim. proposal

Jan. 14-20 ‘09 – Survey #2 on preliminary proposal

Jan. 24 ‘09 – PlanJam Workshop #2 on proposed standards

Jan. 27 ‘09 – JWN board approves recommendation for standards

Feb. 10 ’09 – JWN general meeting vote on recommendation

Feb. ‘09 – ICS “Multi-Dwelling Infill” committee recommends approval

Mar. ‘09 – ICS Task Team recommends approval

May. ‘09 – Planning Commission recommends approval

July ‘09 – City Council adopts recommended code amendments
The “R-2 Heritage” area

- Two large sections of Westside and Jefferson
- Pre- and post-war development
  - Predominantly single-family, small duplexes and secondary dwellings
- R-2 zone originally meant “two dwellings”
  - Most lots had one or two dwellings
  - By early 1980’s, R-2 allowed apartments, but maximum density meant most lots still allowed only 1 or 2 dwellings
  - R-2 now allows two or three times as many dwellings
    - Common 60’x160’ lot allows up to 9 dwellings
    - Buildings can be 40’ high (and higher) and only 5’ from adjacent property line
Tentative R-2 Heritage area
Why this area?

- Highly threatened section of Westside and Jefferson
  - Similar areas west of Polk (in Westside) and east of fairgrounds (in Jefferson) have protective zoning (SC and R-1)
- Effectively, this area was “stealth” re-zoned from single-family/duplex to high-density redevelopment
- Large body of relevant work already done during “Chambers Revisited” project.
- Volunteers who live in this area have been active
- After this area is protected, will look at other areas if there’s resident support
Steps to create standards

Modest, semi-private backyards

Neighborhood Character
Steps to create standards

Modest, semi-private backyards

Neighborhood Character

Use to understand impacts

Negative Impacts

- Loss of privacy
- Crowding
Steps to create standards

**Neighborhood Character**
- Use to determine what is “compatible” & should be promoted
- Use to understand impacts

**Negative Impacts**
- Loss of privacy
- Crowding

**Areas for infill standards**
- For structures in rear of lot: Maximum height, Minimum setbacks

**Modest, semi-private backyards**
Steps to create standards

**Neighborhood Character**
- Use to determine what is “compatible” & should be promoted
- Use to understand impacts

**Negative Impacts**
- Loss of privacy
- Crowding

**Areas for infill standards**
- Use to determine what to prevent

**For structures in rear of lot:**
- Maximum height
- Minimum setbacks

**Development standards in code**
- Use to scope and prioritize work

**Modest, semi-private backyards**
- Use to determine what is “compatible” & should be promoted

**For structures further than 60’ from front lot line:**
- Max height = 18 feet
- Min setback = 5’ up to 8’, then 1’ more for each 1’ in additional height
Now for the fun! ...

- Establishing effective infill compatibility standards requires a shared, objective understanding of:
  - Essential **positive elements** of the neighborhood character (standards should promote these characteristics)
  - Significant **negative impacts** of incompatible development (standards should prevent these impacts)

This understanding provides a foundation for community support.

- Objective for next two segments of the workshop:
  - Engage participants in understanding and further work on these two assessments
... and work!

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Assessing neighborhood character and infill impacts

- **Goal**
  - Develop a shared understanding of neighborhood character and potential negative impacts from incompatible infill.
    - List of key elements of neighborhood character
    - List with descriptions of potential negative impacts
    - Record opinions on importance, prevalence, local examples, and other observations

- **How used**
  - To help create infill standards that promote positive neighborhood characteristics and prevent significant negative impacts.
Introduction to neighborhood character

- Looking to identify the essential, positive, characteristics that make define and distinguish this area of the JWN.
- Both qualitative and quantitative.
- Includes both natural and built environment.
- As a starting point, the most fundamental characteristic of a neighborhood is usually its geography and pattern of streets, alleys, and lots.
  - Both Westside and Jefferson are flat, grid-patterned neighborhoods.
Neighborhood character

- A dynamic, living environment that includes:
  - Residents and visitors
  - Houses and other structures
  - Streets, alleys and sidewalks
  - Cars and bicycles
  - Trees, gardens, lawns, and other plants
  - Domestic and wild animals
  - And more ...

-- Neighbors’ Report
Neighborhood character

- “Predominantly single-family nature, older homes, tree-lined streets, and mature vegetation …”
  -- Westside Neighborhood Plan
- “Primarily single-family residential structures built between 1920 and 1950… the average parcel size is 8,276 square feet …”
  -- Jefferson/Far West Refinement Plan

- Long-term residents committed to neighborhood
- Grid-pattern streets, alleys, and lots
- Ample & varied vegetation, tree canopy, wildlife
- Semi-private backyards, gardens
- Oriented to pedestrians, not cars
- Many more elements to consider ... (See handout)
What are “infill impacts”?

- Examples of negative impacts from incompatible infill
  - Views into adjacent backyard intrude on privacy
  - Parking or excessive driveway surface in front of structure (i.e., between structure and street)
Introduction to infill impacts

- Impacts may be:
  - Functional (e.g., noise, reduced rear-yard privacy)
  - Aesthetic (e.g., roof shape)
  - Combination (e.g., garage location, front porches)

- Impacts should be as concrete as possible

- Impacts can affect different scopes
  - Immediately adjacent properties and residents
  - Residents on the same block or across the street
  - Residents who use nearby street(s), alley(s), and sidewalks
  - Residents in a larger section of the neighborhood

- Impacts can be dependent on the scale of development
  - E.g., Number of dwellings, number of bedrooms, parking spaces.
Introduction to infill impacts

- Impacts can be dependent on the **cumulative** effects of similar developments
  - E.g., Traffic load, permeable surfaces, greenscape, etc.
  - E.g., A few “alley-access” dwellings on a single block may be OK, but too many can create significant negative traffic impacts.
  - Built-out neighborhood’s have a limited “carrying capacity.” Exceeding the “carrying capacity” can destabilize an area.

- Location and context is important:
  - “Interior” to the residential neighborhood; i.e., development within built-out area of existing residences
  - Outside the “edges” of the established residential area and “transition zones” may provide different opportunities than interior areas
  - Type of streets (alleys, low-volume interior, busy residential, non-residential thoroughfares, etc.) can change nature of impacts
  - Existing adjacent and nearby development creates comparative context and/or cumulative effects
  - Different areas of lots (front and rear) may be impacted

- Many more elements to consider ... *(See handout and examples)*
Introduction to areas of infill compatibility standards

- Provides a way to organize and prioritize work on standards.

- Typically important areas
  - Lot configuration
  - Dwellings per lot
  - Mass and scale
  - Placement of structures (and lot coverage)
  - Form of structures (e.g., attached/detached, roof shape)
  - Specific conditions (alley development, small lots)

- This step identifies the areas to address and objectives for standards within each area.

- More areas to consider ... (See handout)
Next steps

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TODAY  – PlanJam Workshop #1
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Workshop evaluation

- Did you get enough information to participate effectively?
  - What information was useful?
  - What information was missing?

- Were the group discussions an effective way to accomplish the goals?
  - Did you have enough time?
  - How well did the discussions address the goals?
  - Complaints or suggestions?

- Do you feel you have an adequate foundation for the next workshop on a recommendation for infill standards?
  - What more do you need to be able to help define site selection and project approval criteria?
A parting thought ...

“All neighborhoods change over time. Older houses will be updated and new ones constructed. The new is never exactly the same as the old; nevertheless, the patterns that make these older neighborhoods unique can be sustained.

As a matter of civic responsibility, the city and its citizens should recognize the most coherent of these neighborhoods as cultural and physical artifacts and promote the understanding and preservation of them.”

– Chambers Reconsidered project team
Thank you & stay tuned!

JWN Web site: jwneugene.org