

# PUBLIC SPEAKER CARD

Date 16 / 23 / 19

Agenda item # 190506

NAME (Please print) Lauren Thompson

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KC

CITY

MO

STATE

64108

ZIP CODE

EMAIL ADDRESS

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self

ORGANIZATION REPRESENTED

I wish to address the Council:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ In favor

☒ Opposed

☐ Other

Comments:

Other cities have passed ordinances similar to this + are now passing new ordinances to control for the

negative consequences

Thank you for your interest and participation in city government.  
Please contact the City Clerk with any questions, **816-513-6401** or **clerk@kcmo.org**



# LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

## 2

## 3

### FIRST READING

Ordinance is introduced at Legislative Session and referred to a standing committee for public hearing

#### Airport Committee

Meets on Tuesday's (alternates w/ Housing) at noon in Committee Room, 10th floor; (No meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month)

#### Housing Committee

Meets on Tuesday's (alternates w/ Airport) at noon in Committee Room, 10th floor (No meeting the 3rd Tuesday of each month)

#### Finance and Governance

#### Committee

Meets on Wednesday's at 8:30 a.m. in Committee Room, 10th floor

### SECOND READING

Committee hears ordinance and takes public testimony then makes recommendation to the City Council

#### Neighborhoods and Public Safety Committee

Meets on Wednesday's at 10:00 a.m. in Committee Room, 10th floor

#### Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

Meets on Wednesday's at 1:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, 26th floor (public testimony taken)

#### Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Meets on Thursday's at 8:45 a.m. in the Council Chamber, 26th floor (public testimony taken)

### THIRD READING

City Council votes on the ordinance at Legislative Session, if approved it becomes law

#### City Council Business Session

City Council meets on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in Committee Room, 10th floor, to discuss issues of importance

#### City Council Legislative Session

Meets on Thursdays at 3 p.m. in Council Chamber, 26th floor

Visit the City Clerk's website, <http://www.kcmo.org/clerk> to obtain weekly agendas.

Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Jobs Committee, Legislative Committee, Ethics and Legal Review Committee, & Youth Development Committee will meet as needed.

10/23/2019

'I am basically a prisoner in my own home': Winnipeg woman says construction site next door dangerous - Winnipeg | Globalnews.ca

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# **'I am basically a prisoner in my own home': Winnipeg woman says construction site next door dangerous**

BY GLOBAL NEWS

Posted July 31, 2017 6:42 pm

Updated August 1, 2017 11:13 am



— In this photo shared on Facebook, Lauren Henderson shows the effect the construction site next door to her home has on her property. . **Lauren Henderson / Facebook**

-A A+

A new mom says she's living a nightmare as construction on an infill home next door makes it next to impossible for her to get out of her home safely.

Lauren Henderson said she just wants to get to her car safely with her one month old baby, but she can't.

**"I can't take my garbage out. I can't get to my vehicle to take him [the baby] to**

## **appointments,” Henderson said.**

For three months, Henderson has been running a dangerous obstacle course to get in and out of her home.

The infill house under construction next door has made it next to impossible for her to safely get to her car, take out the trash, and safely transport her baby around her property.

The construction in the lot next to hers has left her with a tight, less than one foot access, to her backyard and parking spot. If she were to slip or not make it around the obstacle course, it would be roughly a five foot drop on the other side.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

She's recovering from a c-section and said because of the barrier she has to walk a full block with her son in his car seat to be able to get to her backyard.

**“We don’t have legal access to our property. Not only do we not have access, there’s now a hole, a giant hole off the kitchen wall.”**



 TWEET THIS

Henderson first posted to Facebook about the problem on Thursday with a video showing how dangerous it is for her to reach her own backyard.



**Lauren Elizabeth**  
about 2 years ago

I do not have an issue with infill housing. I have an issue with it being supported at the expense of established existing adjoining properties. This DIRECTLY contravenes the City of Winnipeg Charter (section 247 [3]b) which states "a zoning variance application can be approved if the proposed development: b) does not create of substantial adverse effect on the amenities, use, safety and convenience of the adjoining property and adjacent area." As you can see from the video a... [See More](#)



11 12 53

She said she's reached out to the city officials and several councillors, asking for help since May. But the city said if property boundaries are not

being respected, it's a civil matter she'll need to resolve with the builder in court.

Until construction finishes next door, Lauren says she'll continue to have no choice but to walk the extra block or through the obstacle course to get around safely.

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JOURNALISTIC STANDARDS



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**Lauren Elizabeth**

July 27, 2017 ·

I do not have an issue with infill housing. I have an issue with it being supported at the expense of established existing adjoining properties. This DIRECTLY contravenes the City of Winnipeg Charter (section 247 [3]b) which states "a zoning variance application can be approved if the proposed development: b) does not create of substantial adverse effect on the amenities, use, safety and convenience of the adjoining property and adjacent area." As you can see from the video and pictures posted, there is indeed a substantial adverse effect. I do not have access to my back yard or parking area. I have to walk around the block to Brazier St with my month old baby, still healing c-section incision and bad back to get to my vehicle. I can't even take my garbage out. In 2009 at a Board of Adjustment hearing, a member of the board is ON PUBLIC RECORD stating "were the planners on holiday? I mean this is another nightmare." It is clear the city was aware of their mistake way back in 2009, however the variance was rubber stamped and the city planners have washed their hands of it. Not only that, but Property Planning and Development approved the hole being dug for 222 Talbot Ave to be 25 ft wide-the total width of the property which then by default causes the construction fencing and paraphernalia to be encroaching on the adjacent properties without any consultation or approval. I KNOW my situation is not unique as I have seen similar developments across the city. Property Planning and Development and the City of Winnipeg should be ashamed. [Brian Bowman](#) [Jason Schreyer](#) CTV News [Winnipeg](#) [CBC Manitoba](#) [Jillian Taylor](#) [Global Winnipeg](#)



41



18 Comments 53 Shares

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**Paul Colvin** Ya that's bs

Like · 2y

1



**Pamela Nicole Marie** OMG are you fr' kidding me. you should talk to my friend [Albert David Streit](#) he may have some tips for you.

Like · 2y · Edited

**Pamela Nicole Marie** replied · 2 Replies

## Friend Requests

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**Jason Schreyer** Hi Lauren Elizabeth. Did you say this initially passed through Board of adjustment in 2009?


Like · 2y
- 


Cheryl Froese replied · 3 Replies
- 

**Chelsea Allen** Wow..


Like · 2y
- 

**Wendy Janz-Marlon** This is ridiculous, how can they approve such a project.  
I am so sorry for you guys


Like · 2y
- 

Mary Anne Henderson replied · 1 Reply
- 


**Mary Anne Henderson** This post needs to be shared far and wide. The city needs to do something about this totally unsafe situation.

Like · 2y
- 


**Charlene Clasen** WTH? That's awful Lauren Elizabeth.

Like · 2y
- 


**Aynsley Nixon** Shocking

Like · 2y
- 

**Mary Anne Henderson** It's beyond shocking Aynsley Nixon.

Like · 2y
- 

**Global Winnipeg** Hey Lauren, tried to contact you from Global News - could you please give me a shout at zahra.premji@globalnews.ca or 204-227-2393 thanks!

Like · 2y
- 

**Veronique Vermette** Very sad.. also all about them reading guidelines in Manitoba but no requirement to follow any of them. Best of luck guys.

Like · 1y



## Manitoba

## Winnipeg vows no more 'skinny, tall & long houses' as part of new infill guidelines



City slated to require builders to cover less of a new lot when new housing rises in older neighbourhoods

[Bartley Kives](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 03, 2019 9:27 PM CT | Last Updated: January 3



These infill homes on Vivian Avenue in St. Vital are larger than neighbouring older homes. The city is considering new guidelines for infill housing. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

[comments](#)



Infill developers in Winnipeg are expected to face new restrictions on how much of a lot a new home can cover as part of proposed guidelines for housing in older neighbourhoods.

On Monday, city council's property committee will consider a plan to phase in new infill-housing guidelines over the next three years.

One of the first changes involves a plan to eliminate infill that city land-use officials describe as "skinny, tall and long houses" that some residents of older neighbourhoods cited as eyesores when the city held public consultations about infill housing.

"One of the most frequently expressed concerns was related to modest bungalows being replaced by two long, narrow bi-level houses that fill up the lot, leaving no rear yard, no greenspace, frequently with a large secondary suite," City of Winnipeg principal planner Kurtis Kowalke wrote in a report to council.

- **St. Boniface residents oppose riverfront condo complex**

As a result, his office has proposed changes to the city's land-use bylaws this fall.

City council's new property chair supports the move.

"People aren't even necessarily opposed to [several] houses going in where there was one. They just have concern largely about how big some of these are, the way in which they're being constructed, and we can deal with that," said St. Vital Coun. Brian Mayes, standing on a block of Vivian Avenue that sports a mix of infill and older housing.







Joanne Seiff, standing on an empty lot at the corner of McMillan Avenue and Stafford Street, said she's not against infill, as long as it's consonant with existing nearby homes. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Mayes said the No. 1 complaint in the northern portion of his ward involves the construction of infill housing after existing lots are split in two.

Fighting against lot splitting has become a mission for activists such as Gary Lenko, who has mounted successful appeals against subdivisions in Fort Garry's Maybank neighbourhood.

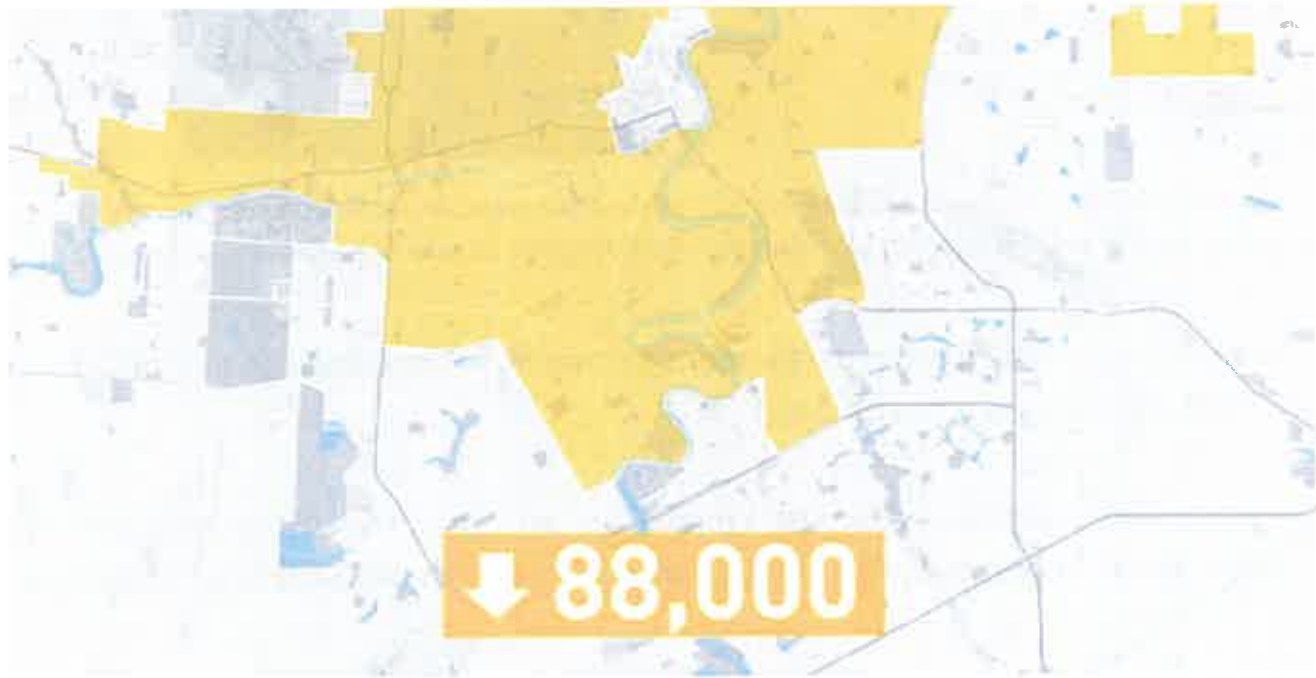
- **Edmonton city council denies request for lot-splitting infill moratorium**

"There's no backyards now for kids. So we're basically throwing kids out of the neighborhood. Yes, there are individual houses — they're fenced, but there's no yard. So what's the point? You might as well go live in an apartment block," said Lenko, who tried to unseat River Heights-Fort Garry Coun. John Orlikow in last fall's election.

The city has been trying to promote infill housing as a means to combat a population decline in older Winnipeg neighbourhoods, increase the population density in order to save money on infrastructure maintenance and collect more property-tax revenue on smaller lots.

## Population drop in mature Winnipeg neighbourhoods from 1971 to 2011





SOURCE: City of Winnipeg

Some residents of older neighbourhoods say the city must try harder to ensure infill developments resemble existing housing.

In Crescentwood, Joanne Seiff is concerned about modern structures rising next to character homes.

- **OPINION 'You get the city you deserve': Winnipeg can, and should, do better at infill housing**

"You can definitely build infill housing that's sensitive to the needs of the neighborhood, if you have a 100-year-old neighborhood. It's nice that the infill looks something like what the neighbours' houses look like," she said.

Some developers, however, chafe against the idea of requiring neighbourhoods to remain homogenous, in terms of architecture.







Ventura Developments vice president Tim Comack, seen here in front of his company's Crescentwood condo project, said Winnipeg can be too concerned with preserving neighbourhood homogeneity. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Tim Comack, vice-president of Ventura Developments, called the idea monotonous.

"I find that we spend a lot of time trying to protect and and maintain existing context and character and we don't focus enough on how we can actually transform a neighborhood to become more dense and more livable and become a better use of the actual infrastructure," Comack said.

- [Developer questions rejection of 'perfect' Crescentwood infill project](#)
- [4th time's a charm for Crescentwood infill project](#)

Comack expressed concern the city will take three years to phase in its infill-policy guidelines, adding developers are looking for the city to develop consistent rules for infill.

"You either want it or you don't," he said.

The city is considering new guidelines for infill housing in Winnipeg. 2:18

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10/23/2019

Frustrated neighbour says too-tall home highlights problems with Winnipeg's variance, infill rules | CBC News



Manitoba

## Frustrated neighbour says too-tall home highlights problems with Winnipeg's variance, infill rules



Property owners followed rules to build three-storey home, but neighbours say city's process needs changes

Sean Kavanagh · CBC News · Posted: Sep 23, 2019 5:00 AM CT | Last Updated: September 23



The owner of the Winnipeg property where this new three-storey infill home is being built followed city procedures. But neighbours say it's too tall for the area. (John Einarson/CBC)

comments



The sun sets earlier these days in Michelle Arnal's back yard.

2019

It is the height of a home going up on a recently subdivided lot next door to her house on Rosedale Avenue that makes shadows fall around 4 p.m., she says.

"I lose about four hours of sun every day," Arnal told CBC News. "I feel all the homes should be in line with each other. I feel like nobody's privacy should be taken away from them. I feel totally violated in my own backyard."

The three-storey building going up on the street in Winnipeg's Lord Roberts neighbourhood is noticeably taller than the houses nearby.

The property owners are building a 3,240-square-foot home and followed all the proper procedures, obtaining a variance in November 2016 to subdivide their property into two lots.

When they appeared at the City of Winnipeg's board of adjustment to get the variance, no one appeared in opposition.

After some delays getting plans and contractors on board, they applied for, and received, the appropriate building permits and started construction.





Michelle Arnal says she doesn't blame the owner of the property next to her home, where a new three-storey house is being built, but says she would have fought against it if she knew the size of building. (John Einarson/CBC)

One of the property owners building the new home told CBC News they love the area and don't want to make enemies with their neighbours, but said if there were objections to what they were building, the residents on the street could have raised them at the board of adjustment hearing.

The City of Winnipeg put up a sign on the property in advance, announcing the proposed lot split and advertising the date of the public hearing.

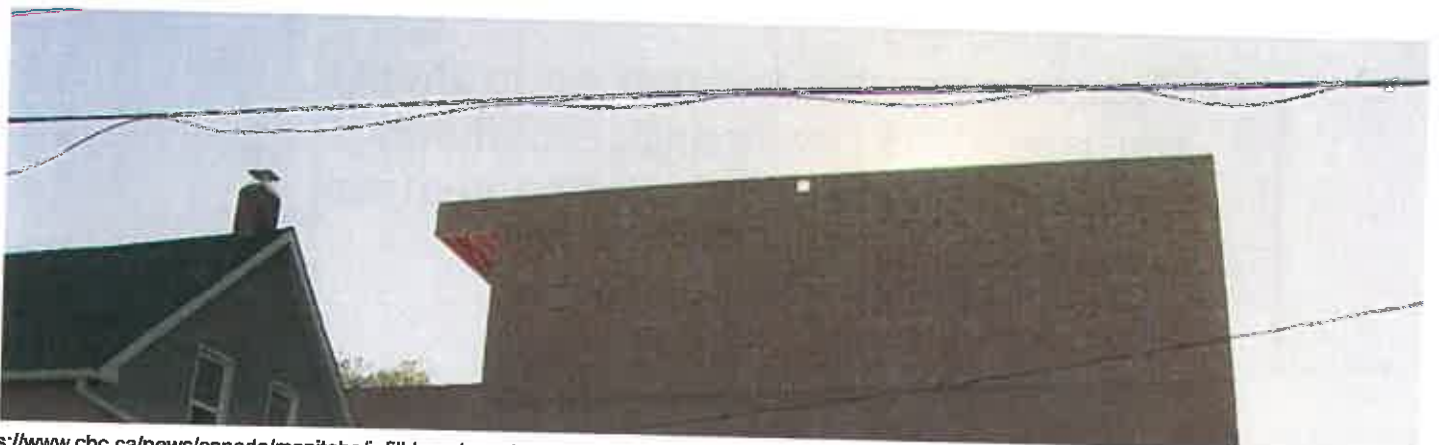
The city has promised to change its rules on infill housing, but the review of its policies has just begun.

- **Winnipeg vows no more 'skinny, tall & long houses' as part of new infill guidelines**
- **Developer questions rejection of 'perfect' Crescentwood infill project**

That sign wasn't enough, says Arnal, and she's started a petition among her neighbours to get the city to improve the way it communicates proposed plans for potential developments.

"We should have been alerted.... Anybody within a 200-foot radius of anything that is going up with any sort of variances should be notified. We all should have been notified with ample opportunity to protest this," Arnal says.

The 20-year Rosedale Avenue resident says neighbours should get details of applications for construction in the mail, and the city needs better signage announcing hearings.





The city of Winnipeg will hold its first public meeting on a new infill housing strategy on Sept. 24. (John Einarson/CBC)

She doesn't blame her neighbours for building the home — far from it, in fact.

"God no. If I had the money, I would have probably done something similar. But there are rules in place. There are bylaws in place. I didn't think something like this was possible."

In issuing the variance, she says, either the planner or the board of adjustment didn't follow the rules laid out by the city. She quotes a section of the City of Winnipeg Charter Act that says approval will be given when it "does not create a substantial adverse effect on the amenities, use, safety and convenience of the adjoining property and adjacent area."

## Infill teachable moment

Jino Distasio, the head of the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg, took one of his urban revitalization classes to view the property last week.

The lesson for his students, Distasio says, was about poor communication from the city to residents about what was proposed, and a missed opportunity for city planners to broker some understanding between neighbours.

“There is no way that ... a staked sign in a front yard is enough for every single community member — especially for those who aren't sure of what their rights are.”

- Jino Distasio, University of Winnipeg



He, much like the residents near the construction project, didn't blame the developer.

"I think if they all got around a table — maybe with the help of a community planner — they could have come up with a design that maximized the light in the back, that softened the sight and the height of the project," Distasio said.

The residents he spoke to in the neighbourhood said they didn't understand the variance system, or what was meant by the notice that was posted before the lot was split into two.

"There is no way that in each neighbourhood ... a staked sign in a front yard is enough for every single community member — especially for those who aren't sure of what their rights are," Distasio said.

## Size matters

As new homes pop up in older neighbourhoods, the concerns — and complaints — mount over infill housing.

The city councillor who chairs the city's property, planning and development committee acknowledges these kind of neighbourhood flash points are filling his inbox.

"We need some some guidelines. We need some standardization," said Coun. Brian Mayes (St. Vital).

"No one enjoys being up at midnight responding to people denouncing you ... saying that you're corruptly in favour of one side or the other. But we do need to get a better process."

- **Developers warn infill housing will dry up if Winnipeg pursues new restrictions**
- **ANALYSIS What do we want? Infill housing! How do we get it? We have no idea!**

The city has launched a review of infill housing policies and Mayes says everything, including how high is too high, will be on the table.

"We do need to have a talk about height, about what sort of light coverage we want, and how to preserve trees, and just how to deal with some of the problems that arise with infill," Mayes said.

The city will hold open houses on [changing its infill strategy](#) starting Sept. 24.

Arnal says she and some of her neighbours will be at that meeting.

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Manitoba • Opinion

## 'You get the city you deserve': Winnipeg can, and should, do better at infill housing



Winnipeg's long-term vision for city infill creates density without livability, says Joanne Seiff

Joanne Seiff · for CBC News · Posted: Aug 05, 2018 6:00 AM CT | Last Updated: August 5, 2018



With the right regulations in place, infill development can work well in cities — but Winnipeg's current approach doesn't properly factor in neighbourhood character, infrastructure needs and livability, says Joanne Seiff. (TBaker770/Shutterstock)

comments

Recently we walked past yet another century-old home being torn down for a brick-and-steel set of condos. I talked with the people with me. "You know," one said, "you get the city you

deserve."

We remembered visiting other cities with gorgeous intact neighbourhoods, filled with lovingly restored historic homes. It struck me that yes, Winnipeg's long-term vision for city infill legislates something entirely different — we're getting what we deserve.

Infill without long-term vision is poor urban planning. It results in too many people with too many traffic jams, in a poorly planned space.

• **Dense development: is building along busy corridors unhealthy?**

• **Is infill housing the answer for Alberta's biggest cities?**

• **ANALYSIS Now why would they go and build that there? How house design can drive neighbours nuts**

Winnipeg's recent public engagement on infill strategy recognizes that our city currently doesn't have a cohesive set of guidelines in place that would reduce controversy over this issue.

What does that mean? The city acknowledges that current neighbourhood plans in place don't preserve a neighbourhood's historic character.





A 2016 artist's rendering of a four-storey condo project now under construction at Harrow Street and McMillan Avenue in Winnipeg. While the city's stated planning strategy is to create infill in parts of the city with established infrastructure, the way this evolves doesn't serve residents well, says Joanne Seiff. (Ventura Developments)

It's cheaper overall to build a new set of condos than it is to carefully restore or maintain a historic structure. There are few publicized financial incentives in place to motivate someone to preserve instead of demolish a residential building.

While the stated outcome of Winnipeg's planning strategy is to create infill in parts of the city with established infrastructure, the way this evolves doesn't serve us well.

- **4th time's a charm for Crescentwood infill project**
- **OPINION It's like a stab in the eye: Why infill needs to be architecturally appropriate**

On the ground, it means that developers buy up older buildings, apply for variances and adjustments to put in their new condo development, and tear down history.

The effort to fill the lots entirely to make more money reduces green space that may be on private lots, but which affects the neighbourhood.

## Increased density, more conflict

What happens when the neighbourhood absorbs these new developments? It increases density and conflict. There's an increase in stressors: noise, light and air pollution are all bad for our health.

Further, we need green space — studies show that living near parks and trees can improve our health.

- **Living in a greener neighbourhood could lower risk of early death: study**



- **The happiest people live in rural areas, study finds**

- **OPINION Green spaces are important enough to be an election issue in Winnipeg**

What do we lose when we knock down parts of our neighbourhood? Well, in some cases, we get rid of local history.

A current project at 887 Grosvenor Ave. proposes to tear down a house that used to be called the "House of Rock" and was home to Roade Recording Studios.

Another part of an area's culture is architectural diversity. If each house was purpose-built originally, the area retains personalized quirks and interest. Renovations increase that diversity.

Yet developers seek to use similar building plans repeatedly to save money. This results in a whole lot of new modern buildings that look very similar but are out of place among their hundred-year-old streetmates.

## Impact on neighbourhood culture, infrastructure

Condo developments can also affect a neighbourhood's friendly culture.

Several neighbours have remarked that the people who move into the "maintenance-free" condos aren't looking to interact with others or contribute. They spend a lot of money so someone else can blow snow, mow or keep up their homes.

While this is their decision to make, you can bet that those people aren't picking up snow shovels to help a senior citizen down the block, or to clear a school bus stop.







A 2014 infill project on Carter Avenue, in Winnipeg's Grant Park area, drew objections from some area residents, who said the multi-family dwelling changed the character of their neighbourhood. (CBC)

In new subdivisions, developers fund certain amenities like new splash pads, pools and soccer fields. Infill projects rely on existing infrastructure with no obligation to improve deteriorating or aging facilities.

- **[Water to run at Waverley West splash pad after spat between province, city](#)**
- **[Staring into an unknown future: Winnipeg's aging recreation facilities face big challenges](#)**

Nearby roads, street lights, and a park or splash pad already exist, but the new owners' taxes don't go directly toward local maintenance or improvements to that infrastructure.

Critics argue that there is an effort toward historic preservation in the city and yes, that's true.

Recently, Winnipeg city council approved heritage status for a church that doesn't want it — but we have no shortage of old, poorly kept up public buildings.

- **[Pastor gets cold shoulder as city committee supports heritage status for North End church](#)**
- **[Osborne Village church added to heritage list despite congregation's concerns](#)**

It's family homes or older duplexes that are targeted through the infill process. Few of these are considered for historic heritage status for any reason.

## Winnipeg needs a better approach

Can infill and urban planning make for good city living? Absolutely. With regulations in place, cities can do this well.

Consistent efforts to boost livability through upgrading pollution legislation, maintaining infrastructure and developing green space, new schools and more can make this work.

- **Density fosters sustainability and efficiency, says Vancouver's former chief planner**
- **OPINION Vancouver needs more density, says urban theorist Richard Florida**
- **OPINION Building up, not out needs to be done right in Saskatoon**

However, when one knocks down a single-family dwelling or a duplex and puts up condos, right now, developers only have to worry over trees, variances and adjustments to code.

Does the developer put thought into increased traffic, street repair, schools or green spaces? No. Is the city system set up to consider this? No.

This is a cause-and-effect narrative. We need to build and maintain infrastructure based on the infill we expect to see and plan ahead to improve livability for everyone (considering transit, pollution and more.)

- **Residents say big multi-family buildings crowding older neighbourhoods**
- **St. Boniface residents oppose riverfront condo complex**

With my windows open this summer, I breathe in that "fresh" Winnipeg air — full of the smell of car exhaust, firepit smoke and cigarettes from the nearby bus stop.

We hear parties on patios across the street. We hear the trash picked up at 3:50 a.m., because those emptying dumpsters **aren't required to abide by the noise pollution bylaws**. We see the lights left on all night long. That can't be sustainable city living.

Could we start planning ahead with a more robust effort to plan our urban future? We need to think on it — because the current system offers infill without livability.

Increased density without accompanying protective legislation creates stress and health problems which tax our health care budget. The research shows density without green space

leads to increased mortality, less productivity — and overall, a population that's less happy.

We can do better.

There's a reason many people who can afford it choose to escape the city to their cottages. Perhaps if our city prioritized livability in its urban planning, more Winnipeggers would enjoy staying home.

*This column is part of CBC's [Opinion section](#). For more information about this section, please read this [editor's blog](#) and our [FAQ](#).*

- [Read more opinion pieces published by CBC Manitoba.](#)

## Corrections

- This column initially said developers pay for schools in new subdivisions. In fact, the provincial government pays for the construction of new schools, which are operated by publicly funded school divisions.

Aug 07, 2018 1:56 PM CT

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## City strategy to take aim at tall, narrow infill housing



**Jeff Keele**, Political Reporter  
@jeffkeelectv

Published Friday, January 4, 2019 6:16PM CST

Last Updated Friday, January 4, 2019 7:09PM CST

Tall, narrow and new.

Two years ago Glenwood homeowner Pam St. Godard noticed her neighbourhood was changing.

"What's going on, it just seemed to be out of control," said St. Godard.

### PHOTOS



The goal of the strategy is to place rules and guidelines around infill houses, including a size cap.

You don't have to drive far in the older neighbourhood to find new homes, known as infill housing. In some cases two homes are squeezed into a single lot.

St. Godard said some of them are too tall, take up the entire lot and don't fit the character of the mature community.

"Just this morning I got an email from a resident saying the sunlight that comes into my kitchen is gone now," said St. Godard.

In response to the concerns of her and others in Winnipeg, the city has developed an infill housing strategy. The goal is to place rules and guidelines around infill houses, including a size cap.

Winnipeg property and development chair Brian Mayes supports the move.

"We're trying to do more of what other cities do, have restriction," said Mayes.

The strategy outlines clear intentions:

- Prevent long narrow infill that extends into the traditional back yard.
- Improve compatibility of infill with older homes in the neighbourhood.
- Improve privacy for adjacent homes.
- Reduce the size of secondary suites.
- Increase green space.

"You go that's new, the next one isn't, and the heights are going up and down you start thinking, yeah, we should have some control," said Mayes.

Tim Comack from Ventura Developments worries certain restrictions could be a roadblock for infill.

"Infill has to be perceived as something that we want and that we're encouraging," said Comack.

He says this could lead to even more urban sprawl, as it's already easier to build in the suburbs.

"That's why you're seeing a large percentage of the development taking place in suburbia. And it will continue if we continue to discourage infill," said Comack.

If approved the plan would be phased in over three years.

Pam St. Godard says new rules are needed now and wants the city to put an immediate moratorium on infill in the meantime.

"Do we wait another three years until this is in place, then our neighbourhood would be changed completely," said St. Godard.

<https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/city-strategy-to-take-aim-at-tall-narrow-infill-housing-1.4241360>



## News:

# Guidelines for Residential Infill Development in Toronto Approved by Council

November 27, 2017

## SvN's Long Branch Character Guidelines was unanimously approved by Community Council last week.

### Neighbourhood Character Guidelines: Building a Template

Posted with permission of the publisher of NRU Publishing Inc. Original article first appeared in Novae Res Urbis – Toronto, Vol. 21, No. 46, Friday, November 24, 2017. Article written by Dominik Matusik.

In an effort to control residential infill development, Toronto planners are creating guidelines for neighbourhood character in two pilot communities, with the intention of developing a template that can be used in other parts of the city. Last week, Etobicoke York Community Council voted unanimously in favour of council approving the **Long Branch Character Guidelines** (<http://svn-ap.com/projects/neighbourhood-urban-design-guidelines/>). These are the culmination of a study examining the various natural and built-form elements that make up the character of Long Branch. **These guidelines are designed to give builders, staff, and the community clarity about the type of infill that is appropriate.**

Currently, staff is undertaking a similar study in part of the North York neighbourhood of Willowdale. Both Long Branch and Willowdale have long been the focus of development pressures that have resulted in lot-splitting and the construction of homes many residents considered to be out of character with their neighbourhoods. Ward 23 Willowdale councillor John Filion told NRU that in his ward the volume and negative impacts of infill housing has been overwhelming. "If you made a list of all the possible negative impacts [of infill housing], I could put a checkmark beside all of them," he says. "...The volume is astonishing. Last time I counted, I have more [infill housing developments] just in my ward than, say, all of Scarborough put together. Certainly more [committee of adjustment] applications than anywhere else in the city. Hardly anybody builds without going to the CofA. Part of the fundamental problem is that there aren't too many homebuilders anymore, there are people who buy land and build a house, and [they] aren't too concerned about city rules or regulations." **Part of the issue is that new infill houses often don't respect the neighbourhood's character.** However, determining what character a particular neighbourhood actually has can be tricky. Toronto urban design program manager James Parakh told NRU that similar concerns from different neighbourhoods prompted staff to explore the idea of creating a template for character studies that can be used across the city.

"Many years ago, we began to hear citywide—not just in the two pilot areas—that the character of neighbourhoods is eroding," he says. "So we embarked upon what we started as a city-wide template. And then that citywide template can actually be used by various community groups, or city staff, in different neighbourhood to embark on specific character guidelines for a neighbourhood." Parakh says that, **given the diversity of neighbourhoods in Toronto, the template cannot be specific to a particular area, but rather allow**

each neighbourhood that uses it to develop its set of unique guidelines. “The template is broad and has a number of categories: things like building height, scale, fenestration, materiality, roof pitch. But then it’s the role of the individual guidelines to actually do a deeper dive and a character analysis. So that’s looking at a broad study area and then understanding nuances. [Where] are the streets where [built form] is very eclectic? [The] Long Branch guidelines clearly say that streets like Lakefront Promenade, along the lakeshore, have a very eclectic character. So many homes are different and, therefore, that’s what that street is all about. Whereas other areas have a very in-tact character... We’re not saying mimic the house, but we’re saying to follow certain aspects that will make it part of the character.”

The city retained consultants SvN Architects + Planners to assist with the project. Council will consider Etobicoke York Community Council’s recommendations on the Long Branch guidelines at its meeting December 5. The Willowdale study is ongoing. Staff anticipate taking the refined city-wide template to Planning and Growth Management Committee in 2018.

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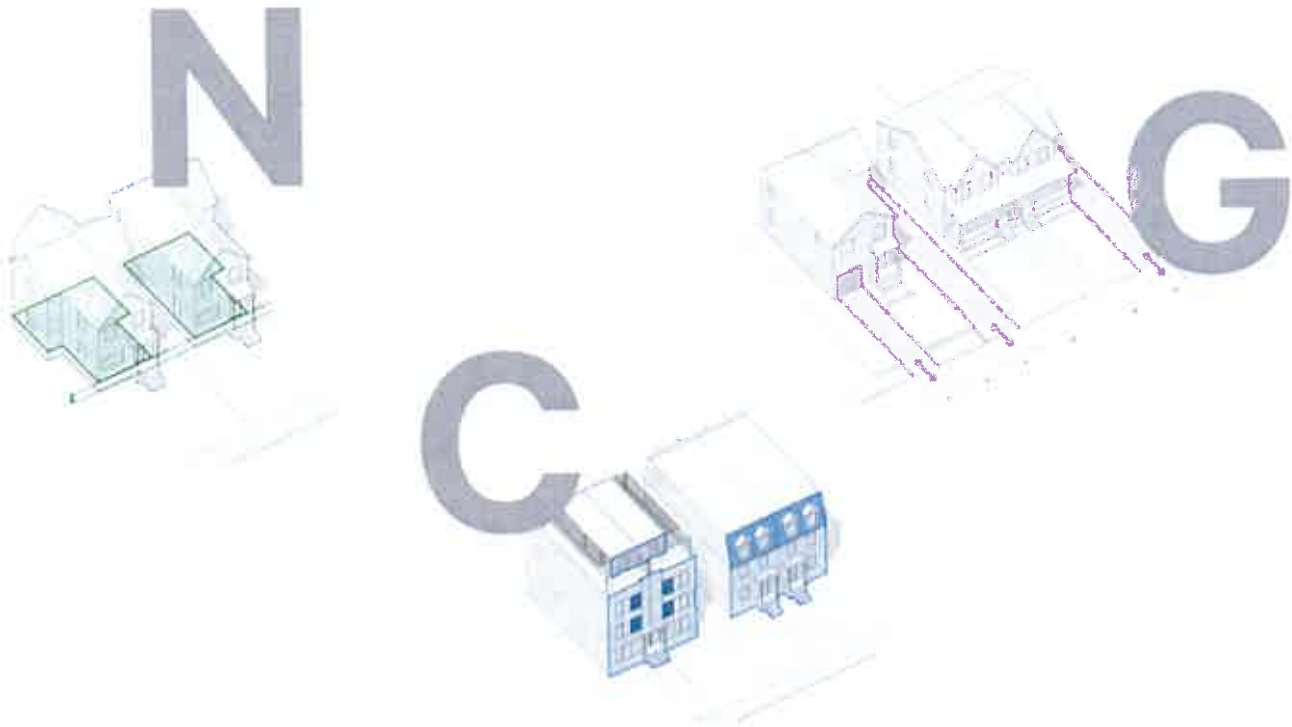
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OTTAWA - The City of Ottawa has some ideas to fix concerns about infill housing and is looking for residents to weigh in on some of those solutions.

"This has become an important issue in many neighbourhoods," said Richard Kilstrom, the city's manager of policy development and urban design said in an email. "We would like to work with the communities so that infill is seen as a positive contribution to the neighbourhood."

City planners hope a series of public consultations will help to resolve some of those issues.

The city encourages high-density development and it has guidelines for how infill homes should be designed. But many projects raise the ire of neighbours and city planners because they don't follow the guidelines, but that's because they don't have to.

In the hierarchy of planning law, design guidelines don't hold much weight. If a development meets the rules set out in the city's official plan and zoning bylaw, it can be built, even if it doesn't look like what the city had in mind when it made the decision to actively encouraged infill development.

Following a city study of infill development in five central wards (Capital, Kitchissippi, Rideau-Rockcliffe, Rideau-Vanier and Somerset), city planners have a better picture of the pressures and patterns shaping infill development.

The survey looked at all small-scale housing construction projects that could be classified as infill that were built between January of 2005 and June of 2010.

The study found that infill affects more than just the buildings. Green yards are quickly becoming a thing of the past as people turn their front yards into driveways. The city actually has a bylaw against that, but it's a frequently ignored law.

Homes that push the property limits also leave little room for trees, which stands in contrast on older, tree-lined streets.

Green streets aren't just pretty – they serve other purposes, including reducing the impact on storm water systems, easing the effects of urban "heat islands" where heat is trapped in built-up areas, providing habitat for animals and more.

Parking is also a big issue. Almost all infill homes devote their first floor to a garage, essentially making them a storey taller than surrounding houses. Adding driveways also reduces the amount of on-street parking available.

Garages are often being used instead of a front door, the study found. Some homes have doors on the side, or no door at all, which is a safety concern, according to a report on the study. Emergency services staff might not see how to get inside the house, and side doors can provide an easier opportunity for thieves looking for a way into the home.

City planners said possible outcomes could include changes to the zoning bylaw, changes to the infill design guidelines (officially called the Design Guidelines for Low/Medium Density Infill Housing) and changes to application requirements.

"We are hoping for quite a good turnout," Kilstrom said. "We've developed a menu of ideas that we would like feedback on. We would also like to hear any ideas that the communities might come up with."

## Meeting dates

Each of the meetings will have the same content, so those interested need only attend one session. After the presentation, people will have a chance to "vote" on the options by writing and placing dots on display boards. New ideas and solutions are also welcome, says Selma Hassan, a city planner who has been working on the project.

The meetings will take place:

Monday, Feb. 7, 7 to 9 p.m.

St. Bartholomew's Church: 125 MacKay St.

Thursday, Feb. 17, 7 to 9 p.m.

Connaught Public School (gym): 1149 Gladstone Ave.

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 7:15 to 9:15 p.m.

St. Matthew's Church: 217 First Ave.

Thursday, Feb. 24, 7 to 9 p.m.

Festival Control at city hall, 110 Laurier Ave. W.

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*A new home goes up on Hickory Street, near little Italy. While this one has front doors, city planners are concerned about a 'scourge' of infill houses that don't, and they will be going to bat to change the city's zoning bylaw to prevent infill development that changes the character of neighbourhoods. - Laura Mueller*

10/23/2019



Stricter infill rules coming to Edmonton, councillors say | CBC News

Edmonton

## Stricter infill rules coming to Edmonton, councillors say



Citizen complaints about infill went up 51 per cent in 2018

Natasha Riebe · CBC News · Posted: Apr 23, 2019 8:22 PM MT | Last Updated: April 23



Irren Bonik says an infill development next door has caused problems to his Parkallen home. (Scott  
ufeld/CBC)

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Stricter infill rules coming to Edmonton, councillors say | CBC News

infill projects in Edmonton may be subject to stricter rules in the coming years after councillors reviewed a recent report showing complaints jumped in 2018 from the previous

report in front of urban planning committee Tuesday shows citizen complaints about infill went up 51 per cent, from 820 cases to 1,240.

Councillors are frustrated that the complaints continue and the infill process doesn't seem to improve for residents.

Coun. Tim Cartmell said the majority of projects are sound but when they're not, "they are catastrophic," for homeowners.

"The biggest investment they'll ever make in their life is falling apart in front of their eyes — that is catastrophic," he said during the meeting.

He's calling on the city administration to find a way to intercept that before it happens.

"We really need to do that."

## Infill headaches

Darren Bonik lives next door to an infill property in Parkallen, where he said the builder started excavating in late March. Bonik believes the side of his house started caving in and the concrete cracked.

Bonik said the builder had the 'business is business' attitude.

"They just wanted to get the house built as fast as possible. They assured me no damage, nothing's going to happen."







Darren Bonik is waiting for an assessment of property damage. (Scott Neufeld/CBC)

He said he's waiting for an assessment of the damage and to hear from his lawyer on what to do next.

In the meantime, the builder has continued construction.

Bonik said the city needs tighter regulations and more supervision to make sure builders are doing responsible work.

“The builder in question today goes on the naughty list.”

- Coun. Michael Walters

Coun. Michael Walters wants better checks and balances and faster permits for a builder with a proven track record, "who goes through the necessary steps to engage your neighbour and make sure that everything is done to protect your neighbour."

Builders who don't prove themselves would have a slower permitting process to go through.





Michael Walters wants better checks and balances for builders. (Scott Neufeld/CBC)

"So the builder in question today goes on the naughty list," he said. "And in order to get another permit in another neighbourhood in another time, they have to do extra things to make sure that project is done to protect the neighbouring properties."

Dennis Peck, government relations manager for the Canadian Home Builders' Association Edmonton region, said reputation is important for builders, but noted that not all infill projects get complaints.

"As you heard many times here from councillors, most of the projects going through are not an issue," said Peck. "It's unfortunate that they [councillors] didn't have exact numbers in there but you can see it when you go through neighbourhoods.

"There's a lot of infill and you don't hear a lot about the vast majority of it."

The urban planning committee passed a motion Tuesday, asking city administration to propose a streamlined process that will reward the reputable and make problem builders more accountable.

It possibly includes permits specifically for excavation — the main culprit that damaged adjacent properties.

Cartmell hopes the new steps will ensure neighbouring property owners aren't stuck in the middle.

"Find a way to weed out the bad actors and we won't have to add process and cost — that you don't leave someone in a situation where they cannot recover in any easy way."

- **Infill roadmap a must to get Edmonton on right path, developer says**
- **Infill site inspections, complaints on the rise in Edmonton**

The city's infill compliance annual report also shows the team issued 110 per cent more written warnings to builders between 2017 and 2018, from 547 to 1,152.

In 2018, 442 tickets were issued for violations found on infill properties, up 25 per cent from the 354 tickets issued in 2017.

Infractions include the builder occupying the right of way on a road, obstructing a highway, nuisance on a property and operating a business without a licence.

Councillors also heard from several residents from the Parkallen community besides Bonik, claiming projects are tearing up properties.

Jan Hardstaff, civics director for the Parkallen community league, urged council to create firmer rules.

"We want infill that's respectful to the neighbour, responsible to the community and being done properly," she said Tuesday. "We need to raise the bar."

Coun. Mike Nickel recommends all homeowners near infill projects take photographs to document the state of their property before and during construction.

Administration is expected to report back with the details on improving infill to the urban planning committee in early 2020.

**@natashariebe**

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## Manitoba

## Developers warn infill housing will dry up if Winnipeg pursues new restrictions



City planners proposing guidelines that could restrict size of new house on older lot

**Bartley Kives** • CBC News • Posted: Feb 04, 2019 2:08 PM CT | Last Updated: February 4



These infill homes on Vivian Avenue in St. Vital are larger than neighbouring older homes. The city is considering new guidelines for infill housing. (Trevor Brine/CBC)

Infill housing development in Winnipeg will grind to a halt if the city follows through on a proposed restriction on how much of a lot a new home can cover, developers warned city council's property committee Monday.

City of Winnipeg planners are putting together new guidelines for infill housing that could restrict the size of an infill home — a new house on an older lot — to 45 per cent of the lot in question, including a garage or shed.

- **Winnipeg vows no more 'skinny, tall & long houses' as part of new infill guidelines**

The city plans to consult real-estate developers and builders before it comes forward with the new guidelines. Nonetheless, several builders and real estate agents appeared before the committee to warn what's being proposed would require infill homes to be too small and expensive to sell.

"Infill development is good for the city, and the rules and regulations that are being proposed would kill it," Jon Blumberg of Monopoly Realty told the committee, warning the change would require builders to create homes nobody could sell.

The city is considering smaller lot coverage based on a 45-per-cent standard in place in Vancouver and Calgary. Overall, lot sizes are larger in those cities, Janelle Brown and Nigel Furgus of Paragon Design Build told the committee.

They said the city's proposed rule would require any firm that builds on a 25-foot-wide by 100-foot-deep lot would be forced to build a home with a footprint no larger than 641 square feet.

## Hoping to cool the rhetoric

The development industry delegates addressed the committee even after chair Brian Mayes (St. Vital) warned the city is only considering the change at this point.

Mayes said he's hoping to cool the rhetoric after about 600 Winnipeggers signed a petition demanding a moratorium on infill development and developers warned of an end to infill.

As a general practice, city planners encourage infill development as a means of increasing population density and reducing the need for the city to spend more money extending roads, watermains and sewers into new neighbourhoods and maintaining this infrastructure.

Some residents, however, complain infill homes are out of scale with existing homes.

Coun. Kevin Klein (Charleswood-Tuxedo-Westwood) said it's clear the city needs to do better at listening to both sides and engaging ordinary Winnipeggers who are not opposed to infill development.

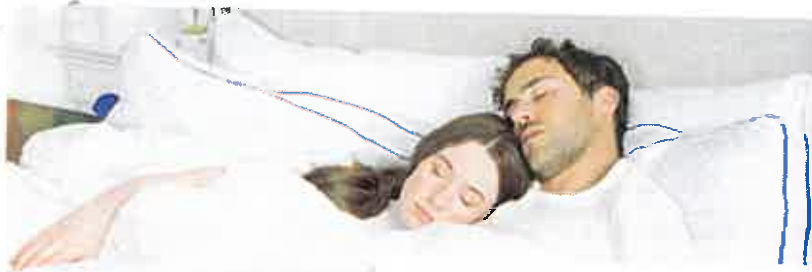
"I think we're doing a terrible job at communicating," Klein said.

City planners expect to come back with proposed new regulations later this year.

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## 'Tall skinny' takeover: Which Nashville neighborhoods are doubling up after demolition

**Mike Reicher**, USA TODAY NETWORK – Tennessee Published 6:00 a.m. CT Oct. 12, 2017 | Updated 2:07 p.m. CT Oct. 16, 2017



(Photo: Wade Payne / For The Tennessean)

From his office above a Whole Foods store in upscale Green Hills, John Brittle Jr. and his team of agents target the next affordable Nashville neighborhood for redevelopment.

Brittle, a broker with Parks Realty, is called the "Infill King (<http://www.tnledger.com/editorial/article.aspx?id=75052>). His developer clients rely on him to spot bargain older homes, which they tear down and replace with bigger, more expensive properties.

► **More:** [Growth picks up, but drivers slow down, chamber report says \(/story/news/2017/10/11/employment-income-rise-middle-tennessee-housing-education-problems-loom/740381001/\)](#)

"For 30 years, real estate agents have been talking about the TSU and Fisk areas," Brittle said, referring to the neighborhoods surrounding Tennessee State University and Fisk University, two of Nashville's historically black institutions. "We're going to see some beautiful stuff there."

Investors and builders have transformed entire neighborhoods in recent years as Nashville's appetite for homes soared. Countywide, nearly half of all properties with single structures demolished and new construction approved had two or more residential buildings planned for the lot, according to a Tennessean analysis of Metro Nashville permit data.



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day, Sept. 27, 2017 (Photo: Wade Payne / For The Tennessean)



Nashville neighborhoods are doubling up after demolition <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/10/12/nashville-hou...>  
The familiar scene replays throughout the urban core: Multiple modern, three-story homes replace one-story brick houses. Some derelict homes are demolished and property taxes flow into city coffers. Meanwhile, long-time neighbors live with construction dust, noise, blocked sunlight and changing faces — until they too move, often outside the city.

► More: [First look: New images of B. Edward Ewing's West Trinity vision \(/story/money/real-estate/2017/10/09/first-look-new-images-millionaire-ewings-planned-west-trinity-area-project/746845001/\)](#)

"Some people don't like what we do," said Brittle, who wishes city regulations would allow for denser, less expensive development. "But the fact of the matter is that the market demands this. People are wanting to move into these neighborhoods."

Metro Nashville issued 962 residential demolition permits in 2015 and 1,035 in 2016 — nearly three houses a day. That rate has cooled off by 10 percent in 2017, but the rapid redevelopment has left many residents wondering what is happening to their city.



Map created by  [tennessean](#)

## Nearly half of demolished properties have more than one building permit

The Tennessean analyzed [building \(http://data.nashville.gov/licenses-permits/building-permits-issued/3h5w-q8b7\)](http://data.nashville.gov/licenses-permits/building-permits-issued/3h5w-q8b7) permit data (<https://data.nashville.gov/licenses-permits/building-permits-issued/3h5w-q8b7>) from the past three years to see where most residential demolitions happened, and what was being built in their place.

The 37209 zip code that includes The Nations and Sylvan Park had the most residential demolitions, with 583 between September 2014 and September 2017. At those properties, 376 had approval for new housing. And on those lots, builders obtained 608 new home permits.

### Nashville ZIP codes with most residential demolition permits, Sept. 2014 - Sept. 2017

- 583 permits - **37209** (The Nations/Sylvan Park/Sylvan Heights)
- 383 - **37206** (East Nashville)
- 254 - **37208** (Germantown, North Nashville)
- 251 - **37215** (Green Hills)

Source: Metro Nashville Codes Department data; Tennessean analysis

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..., and raise the property values," said George Lauderback, owner of L & S

Which Nashville neighborhoods are doubling up after demolition

Construction Services, the company with the most permits to build on lots with recent demolitions.

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/10/12/nashville-h>

► **More:** [The Nations evolves into one of Nashville's hottest urban hubs \(/story/money/homes/2017/09/22/nations-evolves-into-one-nashvilles-hottest-urban-hubs/671954001/\)](https://www.tennessean.com/story/money/homes/2017/09/22/nations-evolves-into-one-nashvilles-hottest-urban-hubs/671954001/)

While some homes were clearly dilapidated, which homes are "eyesores" and which are "nice" depends on whom you ask. Sharon Jarrett, a retired state worker who lives on Ninth Avenue Circle, just south of downtown, watched her neighbors' homes fall one by one. In a two year span, three one-story 1970s-era homes on her cul-de-sac were demolished and replaced with six three-story residences.

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Most of the original homes were occupied by seniors, she said. "Some just got brand new roofs, others had a lot of work done," said Jarrett, 56, next to her freshly-mowed lawn. "These seniors took care of their properties."



Resident Sharon Jarrett talks about the development around her home of 16 years, south of Downtown Nashville. (Photo: Wade Payne / For The Tennessean)

Today, neighboring houses that have been finished either sit vacant or are rented on a short-term basis, Jarrett said, talking above the din of construction work.

"They work on weekends. They work on Sundays," she said as a tractor revved. "You can't get any rest here."

## "Tall skinny" homes add to the property tax base

Jarrett's zip code, 37203, had the fifth most demolitions in the three-year period, with 237. The leader was 37209, which includes The Nations, a post-industrial neighborhood northwest of Downtown, with 583. East Nashville, Germantown/North Nashville and Green Hills also ranked in the top five.

City planners, new residents and real estate professionals point to the benefits of infill development. "It pays the bills for the city," said Brittle, the real estate broker.

► **More:** [5 things to know about Nashville's 'tall skinny' homes \(/story/news/2017/09/21/nashvilles-tall-skinny-homes-5-things-to-know/679288001/\)](https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/09/21/nashvilles-tall-skinny-homes-5-things-to-know/679288001/)

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new tax revenue for city coffers because of higher property values and more homes per lot. For example, the Metro Nashville Police Department's Midtown Hills Precinct

10/23/2019, 8:58 AM

h Nashville neighborhoods are doubling up after demolition opened near Jarrett's neighborhood in 2014.

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/10/12/nashville-hou...>

"There are a lot of people out there who really like the tall and skinnies," said Metro Nashville Zoning Administrator Bill Herbert, referring to the nickname given to multiple big homes on a single lot. "It's revitalizing neighborhoods."



Some homeowners choose to holdout as the neighborhood is redeveloped. Pictured is Southside Place in Nashville. (Photo: Wade Payne / For The Tennessean)

But critics say the term "revitalization" masks a substantial side effect: displacement. Low-income residents can't afford to live in new homes built in their gentrifying communities. Instead, residents are moving in from wealthy suburbs like Franklin and from coastal cities, real estate agents say.

► **More:** [Homebuilder pays \\$10.58M for Davidson land zoned for 1,600 residences \(/story/money/real-estate/2017/10/03/homebuilder-pays-south-davidson-land-zoned-1-600-residences/725607001/\)](#)

The house next door to Jarrett's, slate grey with dark panels, is listed for \$689,000. Jarrett bought her house 16 years ago for \$45,000, she said. Her neighbors, she said, sold their homes for about \$170,000, and real estate agents were knocking on her door every week.

"I told them I wasn't ready to sell," she said. "I'm not ready to move at that point."

## Residents can't find replacement homes

A home fetching three or four times its original purchase price sounds great, but homeowners can struggle to find an affordable replacement nearby. Jarrett said one of her neighbors moved in with her sister in La Vergne, about 20 miles southeast.

That problem could be solved, in part, by changing land-use regulations and speeding up the approvals process to allow for smaller-lot development, said Brittle, the infill broker. His team proposed building up to eight homes on two lots in Barrett's neighborhood. Two or three of the houses could have been "workforce housing," he said — affordable to people like teachers or firefighters. But the plan wasn't in accord with the area's land use designation, Brittle said, and neighboring landowners who recently bought lots objected.

"We would love to be part of the solution," Brittle said.

Reach Mike Reicher at 615-259-8228, [mreicher@tennessean.com](mailto:mreicher@tennessean.com) (<mailto:mreicher@tennessean.com>) and on Twitter [@mreicher](http://twitter.com/mreicher) (<http://twitter.com/mreicher>).

## How much can be made with two "tall skinny" homes?

In 2017, most residential lots in Nashville's redeveloping neighborhoods cost builders about \$200,000, according to brokers. After building two homes and an it of about \$100,000, said John Brittle, broker at Parks Realty.

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\$100,000 and turn a substantial profit. Here's an example, based on public records, of

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Which Nashville neighborhoods are doubling up after demolition  
one property redeveloped in The Nations neighborhood:

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2017/10/12/nashville-hc>

**August 2013:** A 1935 1-story wood bungalow in The Nations neighborhood sold for \$59,000.

**July 2015:** Residential demolition permit issued for the home, for an estimated construction cost of \$2,500, Metro records show.

**August 2015:** Two new townhome building permits issued, for an estimated construction cost of \$185,000 each. The townhomes are two stories tall, with 1,700 square feet each.

**December 2015:** One townhome sold for \$330,000.

**March 2016:** The other townhome sold for \$333,000.

**Gross income:** \$663,000

**Land and construction costs:** \$431,500

**Other costs (commission, closing, loan interest payments, etc.):** \$100,000

**Total costs:** \$531,500

**Net profit (Gross income - Total costs):** \$131,500

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## The 'double-edged sword' of infill

Friday, April 26, 2013, Vol. 37, No. 17  
By Hollie Deese

There are certain things about Sylvan Park that lured resident Steve Swartz away from Belle Meade seven years ago, like the variety in architecture and diversity in character of the neighbors.

"One of the charming things about Sylvan Park I thought was that it had a very mixed neighborhood," says Swartz, president of the Sylvan Park Neighborhood Association. "But the neighborhood has changed."

The watershed moment came in 2006 when one group of neighbors, after a bitter battle, could not win support for historic zoning – specifically, a conservation zoning overlay – that would have required Metro Historic Zoning Commission approval of tear-downs, new construction and renovation plans.

In no time, empty or underserved lots quickly filled in with all manner of homes. It's what developers, planners and Realtors refer to as "infill."

At its foundation, infill is the redevelopment of lots that have been vacant or are underutilized, such as a small house on a lot that could support multiple houses. It is used as a way to provide affordable housing in desirable neighborhoods. Basically, infill is opposite of urban sprawl.

The "double-edged sword of infill," as Lynn Taylor of Taylor Made Plans explains, is that new construction can fit in with the neighborhood and give it new life and diversity of price point, or it can spoil the neighborhood's character and drive out anyone who can't afford \$300,000-plus for a place to live.

As infill houses have popped up all over Davidson County – East Nashville, Green Hills, The Nations, Salemtown, Germantown, 12South, Belmont, Vanderbilt, Brookside, Crieve Hall and Hillsboro Village – the debate moves along from neighborhood to neighborhood.

## Half-million dollar homes

Prices for infill houses vary. Some are designed for the first-time buyer, but in Sylvan Park, developers filled in with several homes that hardly fit in the affordable category.

"Some people felt if we didn't have a historic overlay that the nature of the whole community was going to change, and that was not a good thing," Swartz says. "And they had a point."

"These houses now, even the little teardowns, are \$225,000. You pay \$5,000 to have the old house torn down, build a 2,000-square-foot home at \$150 a square foot, and you are right at \$500,000."



Infill houses take shape along Glen Echo just steps away from the Lipscomb University campus . . .

-- Lyle Graves | Nashville Ledger

The average sale price for homes in Sylvan Park from January 2013-March 2013 was \$381,500, up nearly 30 percent from last year. Swartz is concerned about pricing creative and blue collar types out of the neighborhood. But, he doesn't dispute the positive impact of infill.

"Nearly every block has a new half-million-dollar home going up," he says. "They are lovely, very nicely designed, most of them, and architecturally they go along with the community and, in a certain sense, are very much an asset. Most of the people moving in are clearly affluent, young families with children, which has had a real impact on the community and our schools."

Before 1900, Sylvan Park was a working-class community. People of modest incomes and modest backgrounds filled the neighborhood, many of them in unpretentious homes that are, for the most part, going or gone.

"The teardown thing is accelerating rapidly because you do have homes that are quite small and not worth very much," Swartz says. "The land is worth more than the home by a long shot."

"It is too bad to have a lot of the more traditional nature of Sylvan Park slowly ebbing. I don't think this trend is going to go away. It is too good a place to live, it is too close to town (and) so many amenities that it has extremely strong appeal."

## 'Knitting together downtowns'

Some consider the development of Sylvan Park a resounding success. Others call it a cautionary tale. But for most, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

"This is a trend nationwide in that some really bad decisions were made in the mid 20th Century as a part of urban renewal as people migrated out of the city," says Phil Thomason of Thomason and Associates Preservation Planners.

"We had this problem in Memphis then they were going to extend I-40 straight through this thriving residential area. They tore down a bunch of buildings and then cancelled the project. So they have been knitting that area back together again."

Thomason's work takes him around the country writing and reviewing design guidelines for historic districts, and infill is a big part of that. He has seen a resurgence of baby boomers and young professionals wanting to ditch the suburbs and move back downtown, not just in Nashville but in every city.

"You can see this in the Gulch and development downtown, taking these vacant lots and doing infill," he says. "And within any historic district we work in, there is going to be at least a few – and sometimes a lot – of vacant lots."

"So the question then becomes, what would be the most compatible types of designs that should go back in on those lots? The approach in most communities is to fill them with some kind of compatible building. It is a way of knitting together downtowns and our historic inner city neighborhoods."

Taylor calls empty lots in a thriving neighborhood the "missing tooth syndrome" and says filling those spaces can revive a community.

"It is good for neighborhoods to have infill because it also brings in different people than you have there already," she says. "It is not a bad thing to have new or different types of people than you would normally have in a historic neighborhood."

## Infill's East Nashville roots

Thomason says East Nashville was a pioneering neighborhood of infill development back in the 1970s and 80s. An article published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation highlights Nashville's role in developing infill housing, including single- and multi-family homes in Edgefield.

"Russell [Street], in particular, had a lot of vacant lots that they infilled, so it is an interesting development with a lot of really good examples," Thomason explains. "We started kind of early in Nashville, approaching how we redevelop those lots that are going to have the most positive impact on the neighborhood."

"When I see what other cities are doing, I think the architects we have working here in Nashville in the last 20-30 years are pretty skilled compared to some. They might try to do it correctly, but miss it in the details, and as a result may not be what we have all hoped for."

Ron Gobbell of Gobbell Hays Partners actually did the first infill home in Nashville on Russell Street in the 70s, and while it was kind of a fluke that he found himself on the project, he thinks the concept of infill development is solid.

"Well-done infill is certainly worth the effort," he says. "Poorly-done infill can be a detractor. Getting these neighborhoods back to their glory, whatever that might be, is a challenge."

Taylor still has the drawings for the first infill home she designed in 1994, also on Russell Street. Before that she had only done renovations and additions, but now specializes in custom and infill home designs that preserve the integrity of East Nashville, her neighborhood of choice.

"The reason people didn't do it beforehand in certain neighborhoods was because you have to be able to build a house you can sell and make money based on price per square foot, and some neighborhoods just hadn't reached that level," Taylor says.

"But East Nashville started growing in popularity and people couldn't afford what was there."

## Infill for first-time buyers



... while across the street, small ranches that have been in place for years offer a snapshot of the neighborhood's roots.

A builder Taylor works with regularly is Bob Potter of Kudzu Homes, who renovated or built about 50 homes in the past six years. He buys vacant or teardown lots and then builds homes that fit into the neighborhood.

Potter says increasing density in already populated areas decreases the cost of services for all. He aims to keep his homes priced less than \$200,000 so first-time buyers actually have a shot at living in the neighborhood.

"A lot of my peer group teases me because they are building bigger things and making higher profits per house," Potter says. "But for me, and speaking specifically to the character of East Nashville, I think it is important that there still be houses available for people to buy that can be affordable to working class people."



-- Lyle Graves | Nashville Ledger

"If everything that is built is a \$400,000-\$500,000 [house], you are probably going to end up with all lawyers and doctors and executives. But where do the artists and teachers and police officers – people you want in the community who are going to be a positive influence – where do they live?"

Potter and Taylor teamed on a 910-square-foot infill home a few years ago with the goal to price it as close to \$100,000 as possible. People thought it would never sell because of the size, but in the last few years they have completed and sold five of similar size.

"There were a lot of naysayers, but turns out there are lots of people who will buy them because of the price point," he says. "It is really just creating opportunities for diversity in the community."

## Two houses, one lot

One aspect of infill is taking a lot that has one home, and if zoning allows, building two or more. Potter is working on such a project now in East Nashville, and likes them if they work with the neighborhood. He also says they are not right for every location.

"If I can put two houses on a lot and spread the cost of that lot over two houses instead of one, I can give the buyers a little better deal on the property so they can have the single-family feel but don't have to pay quite as much for it," he says.

"If I have to put just one house on the lot, that will limit the kinds of buyers I can sell to because I have to raise the price on it."

John Brittle Jr. of Infill Nashville has 25 years of real estate experience and subdivided his first lot on Westwood Avenue in 1997, building a replica bungalow to fit in the neighborhood.

He now works connecting buyers with builders mainly in the Green Hills, Vanderbilt, Belmont and the Nations neighborhoods, orchestrating the construction of more than 400 unattached homes in the last four years.

Brittle also doesn't limit himself to vacant lots, but will look for lots that are not right for the area and offer to buy.

"We are not out looking for people in trouble," he explains. "We are looking for opportunities where the land might not have been used to what we subscribe is the highest and best use principal."

"Basically, we look for oversized or underutilized land. I believe we need to build more stuff in close, so every day I am out knocking on doors and calling people and we are trying to find a place for you to live."

Brittle completed four 1,800- to 2,000-square-foot homes on Grandview in Green Hills last year and is completing another six on Glen Echo in the same neighborhood that are between 2,000 and 2,200 square feet. And while the size is small, the cost, around \$470,000, is still higher than what most first-time buyers can afford because of the lot prices.

Brittle says he continually pushes for multi-family developments in the areas he develops, but neighbors have balked.

"Neighborhoods change and cities grow and more people come and you have to put them somewhere," he adds.

Brittle says people should be able to afford to live near where they work.

"People are afraid of multi-family, too, and unnecessarily," Brittle says. "We don't have enough rental property in Nashville as it is. The rental market is out of control, and part of that is the little houses in neighborhoods where someone wants a bigger house are going away.

"In some neighborhoods in the next 10 years, all of the little homes will be gone."

## The downside of infill

Taylor says infill in East Nashville has succeeded in its goal of continuing to provide affordable housing to buyers where Sylvan Park has failed because of the conservation overlay. Without it, she isn't sure that the eclectic people who make up the fabric of East Nashville could afford to live there anymore.

"There is really a debate about whether you improve a community by tearing down houses and building all new," she says. "All you have to do is go over to Sylvan Park. They have some of the most butchered houses, and some houses that are just huge.

"In 12South, the same thing is happening. When all the little houses get torn down, and you no longer have a diversity of architecture and a diversity of people, and all the home price points get to be \$400,000-500,000."

Not that prices are rock bottom in East Nashville, either, which is why Taylor and Potter try hard to create spaces that will keep the community diverse.

"In East Nashville, if you buy a piece of property for \$125,000, then you have to build a house that is a certain size and has a certain price point to make any money. So that is why the prices get higher and higher and the houses get bigger and bigger."

Mary Jon Hicks with the Green Hills Action Partners is focused on smart growth and sees the benefit of infill as a way of improving life in her area.

"Green Hills was just sprawling, and nothing was connected," she says. "We really care about the way things are built and what is put here and how it works with everything else. And infill is very important for smart growth, and we hope to reduce some urban sprawl."

But as a resident, she also thinks it can be too much of a good thing.

"Land is so expensive in Green Hills. I can understand why developers are seeking property and then wanting to renovate and redevelop," Hicks explains.

"It makes economic sense. But we do have to keep in mind that one of the reasons people love Nashville is because of the beautiful, large lawns and the green spaces. We don't want to get it so far that we lose what people love. We have to have a balance."

Taylor agrees, but isn't exactly sure you can stop progress.

"It is a double-edge sword, but some of this stuff you are not going to be able to stop," she says. "And should we? I don't have answers for that.



“Some of us would say when we started seeing infill that we wanted it to be improved some. But what we really wanted was to grow to a certain point and stop and say ‘no more.’”

# Gentrification in North Nashville

*A 4-Part Series on redevelopment and affordable housing in Nashville, TN and the city's failure to protect single-family homes in African American neighborhoods.*

By **Peter White** - March 7, 2019



*A new row of condos on 27th Ave. N. and Clifton Ave. and there's more coming to the neighborhood.*

## Part 1: What's Killing Nashville's Black Neighborhoods?

*The house at 715 26th Ave. N. was demolished January 12, 2019. Four others are already gone to make way for new development that neighbors don't want.*

**NASHVILLE, TN** – Single-family homes used to line the 700 block of 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N. But several lots are now empty, the modest houses gone, and the families who lived in them have moved away.

Tonya Wade-Moody still lives in one of the remaining homes. And she is plenty angry.

"Where are the affordable homes? All of these people are being kicked out, put out of their homes. You're bringing in these high-priced condos/ apartments. The average person can't afford that," said Tonya Wade-Moody. She spoke to the City Council Dec 4, 2018.

She gave much the same speech to the Planning Commission Dec 13, 2018. She handed them a petition signed by 75 people in the neighborhood who didn't want the multi-story apartment complex on the end of their block and didn't want tall and skinnyies looming over them either.

"We don't want it in our area and I wish you would listen to us. We don't want that and we don't need it," she told the 10-member Planning Commission.

The commission approved the re-zoning plan. Dozens of projects like it are green-lit every month. The **Nashville Next** plan is supposed to regulate growth but unchecked development is eating up North Nashville like a cancer.

Not a single person on the 41-member City Council voted to preserve the old neighborhood so people could keep living where they raised their children, grow old, and leave their house to the next generation.

Aside from bad policy and the officials who implement it, there are economic pressures causing the black diaspora. Homeowners are being offered top dollar for their homes by speculators who tear them down and replace them with tall and skinnyies or change the zoning to build multi-family units on the same and adjoining lots.

"There's nothing strange about that," said Property Assessor Vivian Wilhoite. Home prices in Nashville have been steadily rising for a decade. According to Zillow, a real estate database company, the mean home price in Nashville is \$262,400; the mean rent is \$1,558. Zillow ranks Nashville the 8<sup>th</sup> hottest housing market in the U.S.

"People are willing to pay more so they don't have to drive into town. If a buyer is willing to pay a certain price and a seller is unwilling to sell for one penny less, that sets the value for the entire neighborhood," Wilhoite said.

But there is something strange going on. Banks used to routinely gouge or outright deny home loans to blacks in red-lined neighborhoods because it was considered a poor financial risk. The practice was widespread and blatantly discriminatory. Just the opposite is happening now. Banks are quite willing to make construction loans to people who want to build in older black neighborhoods and to make home loans to people who want to buy what they build.

Urban pioneers who are richer, whiter, and younger are settling into new homes in East and North Nashville that are no longer affordable to the people who once lived there.

Wilhoite is quite right to point out that home sales don't happen without a willing buyer and a willing seller. African Americans who own their homes in North Nashville may be cash poor but they are land rich. Single family homes on small lots in Moody's neighborhood are not worth as much as the land they sit on. And so many black seniors are cashing in.

For example, the lot at 705 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N. sold for \$30,000 in 2014. The same lot sold for \$80,000 in 2018. The lot at 716 27<sup>th</sup> Ave. N. sold for \$19,500 in 2010. In 2018 it sold for \$150,000. The developer, E3 Construction, bought both lots.

"Dirt is not cheap," said Michael Leidel of Metrostudy.com, a real estate data collection and research firm. And neither are the homes being built all over town.

Leidel is tracking new construction projects in Nashville with at least four units and a home-owners association. In North Nashville, there are 17 current projects. Without amenities the builders list prices range from \$250,000 to \$800,000.

*Along its major corridors North Nashville is being surrounded by hostile developments.*

Building higher density housing offers a better return on investment and the **Nashville Next** community plan allow for multi-family housing along major corridors. There's only one problem: working families can't afford them.

The mean household income in Nashville is \$43,847. You'd have to make about \$80,000 a year to buy any of those new market-rate homes. The residents of North Nashville are being surrounded by hostile construction projects. (see map). In the gussied-up jargon of **Nashville Next** that is called "best land use".

Affordable housing is not in Wilhoite's job description. "We don't have the concession on reducing the value of property just because you want to build affordable housing," she said.

"They didn't get organized in time," said Bob Butler, a longtime civil rights activist, who lives in a single residence occupancy (SRO) group home on Wade-Moody's block.

*Bob Butler, 76, lives on the 700 block of 26th Ave. N. His room is stuffed with books about criminal justice, gang culture, organized labor, and the civil rights movement. He gathered them during a lifetime organizing people to resist.*

"If you're talking about organizing, you're not talking to no rookie," said Butler. He said people don't always know how the system works and it's an organizer's job to find out.

"You can't be a leader if you don't know anything," he said.

People can protect their neighborhood from unwanted development by creating an historic or conservation overlay. There is an application process through the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission. But people have to agree they want one and then get together to make it happen.

"Sometimes it can be overnight," and Butler snaps his fingers. "Most of the time you have to build it for a long time."

Easy money is behind the gentrification that is displacing longtime residents in North Nashville. The city's failure to keep developers in check and insist they build more affordable homes is sabotaging equitable development in North Nashville. The area's Community Plan goes on and on for 85 pages about how great things could be. But wishing doesn't make it so.

On Wade-Moody's block, eight lots sit empty where families once lived. One of them found a place off Gallatin Rd. and another is renting in Bordeaux. If Wade-Moody and her neighbors get organized they might still stop a 20+ apartment complex right behind them on 27<sup>th</sup> Ave N.

John S. looks at a pile of rubble on his block that used to be someone's home. "It was here the day before yesterday. They just finished tearing it down and want to build that bullshit right here on 26<sup>th</sup>," he says, and points to the multi-story apartment complex at the end of the street.

Just a few blocks away, vacancy signs hang in the new apartment complexes along Charlotte Ave. "Nobody's living in them," he scoffs. "It makes no sense," he says, and heads home.



*This article was written with the support of a journalism fellowship from the Gerontological Society of America, Journalists Network on Generations and The Commonwealth Fund.*

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## Part 2: Elderly Homeowners Are the New Expendables As New Development Invades North Nashville

*At its February 5 meeting, the City Council deferred a bill that could put \$40 million into the Barnes Fund to build more affordable housing.*

NASHVILLE, TN – The Nashville building boom started with a big government construction project. The Music City Convention Center broke ground in March 2010 and opened in May 2013. Since then, development has transformed properties downtown, south of Broadway, and in the Gulch.

In East Nashville and on the west side in the Nations, gentrification has hit Nashville's working-class neighborhoods hard. Charlotte Avenue from the Capitol to Sylvan Park and now the area around Clifton Ave from Swetts restaurant to 25<sup>th</sup> Ave. N. is starting to look like West Los Angeles.

"We don't want that and we don't need it," said Tonya Wade-Moody. She has lived on the 700 block of 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. N. for 20 years. She raised her children there. She doesn't like what's happening to her neighborhood.

David Swetts thinks the re-making of the area will be a good thing. So does Reverend Enoch Fuzz of the Corinthian Baptist Church on 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave N. He told the City Council the projects on 26<sup>th</sup> Ave N and 27<sup>th</sup> Ave N. will reduce crime in the neighborhood.

*Single-family homes line one side of the 700 block of 26<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.*

Perhaps, but this transformation has a social price. Older black homeowners are expendable in the new wave of development that is hitting North Nashville like a tsunami. It is wiping out dozens of single-family homes in the black district around Fisk University,

Nashville General Hospital, Meharry Medical College, and Tennessee State University. They are all black institutions with storied histories that go back more than a century. The community that gave rise to them is being fractured and dispersed.

### How Zoning Gets Changed

If you want to build somewhere you have to get a permit from the Planning Department. The community plan designates zoning. If it calls for single family homes and the builder wants to build a single-family home, then getting a permit is easy.

If you want to build something else you must get a variance and make a good case to change the zoning to allow it. Developers work with planning staffers who review projects and then recommend approval to the Planning Commission. Sometimes they approve with conditions which the developer must live with. It may not be exactly what he wants.

*The other side of the block has been cleared for new development.*

If a builder wants to do something that the Community Plan does not allow, he can ask the commission to change the plan. And planning staffers often help builders do that. At the December 13 Planning Commission meeting, 8 of the 45 projects were proposals to change the plan to suit the builder.

*This is what it looks like when new construction replaces older single-family homes.*

When a developer wants a zoning change, the **Nashville Next** plan calls for community engagement and that usually means at least one meeting to sell the project to the neighbors. After Wade-Moody showed District 21 Councilman Ed Kendall her petition opposing the projects in her neighborhood, he organized a meeting at Mt. Zebo Baptist Church and told Wade-Moody to bring people who opposed the development.

"I will submit that several people who attended that meeting were in support of it, ones who spoke anyway," Kendall told the council.

But the meeting called at Mt. Zebo to get community input was a farce, according to Renee Dennis. She lives across the street from Wade-Moody and felt insulted when Kendall suggested that nobody should want to live in a poor neighborhood.

"That comment was insulting to people who own homes in this area," Dennis said. She has two elderly neighbors who also own their homes. "They may not make \$50,000 a year but their homes are now worth \$70-\$100,000 more because of the development that has already taken place," she said.

Dennis understands that rising land prices is a double-edged sword. Still, somehow, she wants to preserve the neighborhood's single-family homes. "The more development they want to add will basically displace them eventually," she said.

"I know people don't like change," Kendall said. He told the neighbors that the project's approval was a foregone conclusion. "So, when you get up to speak have something positive to say," he said.

That really got her back up. Dennis and her neighbors universally opposed the project and only had negative things to say about it so they didn't say much at all. "We weren't saying 'don't build here'. We're saying build the same kind of homes so the elderly people who already live here can afford it,"

she told the Tribune. Unless residents organize to stop City Hall from lying in bed with speculators, that isn't going to happen.

### **How City Council Approves Zoning Changes**

When council members bring a developer's proposal to the Planning Commission, they are essentially endorsing it and asking for its approval. If nobody is there to object, the commissioners approve it on their consent agenda. Then the project goes before the City Council for the first of three readings and a public hearing. But the hearing is pretty much all for show.

The first hour or two of a typical city council meeting is taken up with bills to change the zoning on various properties around town. There are always a lot of them and the process is a bit like George Orwell's *Animal Farm* because it's all about manufacturing consent.

*A new row of condos on 27th Ave. N and Clifton Ave and there's more coming to the neighborhood.*

The councilperson who is sponsoring a bill asks Vice-Mayor Jim Shulman to open a public hearing on their re-zoning bill. Shulman asks if anybody in the audience wants to speak in favor. Then he asks if anybody wants to speak against a particular proposal. "Seeing none, I declare the public hearing closed," says Shulman and slams his gavel down. As Shulman moves through dozens of bills on the agenda, members start to doze. If they are lucky and things go quickly, they will get home before 10 pm.

Council members support each other's re-zoning bills as a matter of "Councilmanic Courtesy". Members trust that their colleague has brought all the stakeholders into a conversation which resulted in some consensus. Thus, the outcome is pre-ordained although public hearings are held to give people three minutes at the microphone. That at least looks like democratic process even if it isn't.

Regarding Kendall's two bills for multi-family construction along Clifton Ave, he said the mixed development would bring 163 jobs, a grocery store, and that 20 percent, or about 12 units, would sell between \$100,000-\$250,000. "That's unusual," said Kendall and urged the bill's passage.

Tonya Wade-Moody took her allotted time and spoke from the heart. So did L.D. McLemore who told the council, "It's wrong, wrong, wrong." Their impassioned pleas didn't make the slightest difference to the outcome. The council voted unanimously to approve Kendall's two bills.

**Historical Sidebar: The Collapse of the Housing Market in 2008 and How Wall St. Keeps Stealing the American Dream of Owning your Own Home**

Nashville's unprecedented growth cannot be explained without understanding the crash of the housing market which preceded it. Lehman Brothers, the nation's fourth-largest investment bank, filed for bankruptcy Sept. 15, 2008. It was the largest business failure in U.S. history. Lehman's collapse in New York sent shock waves as far as Nashville and beyond. Eight trillion dollars of housing wealth disappeared overnight sending the country into a deep recession.

A 2010 *Center for Responsible Lending* study found minority communities had significantly higher foreclosure rates than their white neighbors. Research showed minority borrowers were more likely to receive subprime loans during the boom with higher monthly payments and quicker defaults once the housing bubble burst.

"Millions lost their homes and jobs. Even a decade later, by some measures, most notably prime-age employment rates, the labor market has still not recovered," wrote noted economist Dean Baker recently in a research paper for the *Center for Economic and Policy Research* in Washington.

In the run-up to the crash, investors bought entire blocks of new homes and then sold them to first-time homebuyers. Too many people were moving into those homes with so-called "NINJA" loans (no income, no job or assets). In 2005, the National Realtors Association released a report showing that almost half of first-time homebuyers in 2005 had down payments of zero or less.

Overbuilding inevitably led to falling home prices and that meant getting into a new house was like buying a new car that loses 10 percent of its value the minute you drive it off the lot. The value of a new home dropped as soon as a buyer signed a "liar loan".

"These price declines meant that millions of people were underwater in their mortgages even before Lehman Brothers collapsed," Baker wrote. Then in 2008, the housing bubble burst and the stock market crashed.

Vacancy rates peaked in 2010 and that same year foreclosures peaked at 2.9 million. According to the *Center on Budget and Policies Priorities*, 8.7 million people lost their jobs between 2008-2010 and many could no longer pay their mortgages. According to ATTOM, a real estate database, there were about 30,000 bankruptcy filings in Nashville between 2008-2010.

Housing experts say minority communities generally have higher unemployment rates and black and Latino borrowers have fewer financial resources to fall back on than whites. In short, when people of color lost their homes, they were essentially broke.

Thanks to a federal bailout banks weathered the financial crisis. When the housing bubble burst, they dumped or wrote off their toxic assets. At bank sales or auctions, speculators and big Wall St. investors scooped up foreclosed homes for pennies on the dollar. And then they waited for the housing market to rebound. What was a tragedy for many became an opportunity for some.

"Private equity firms bought foreclosed single-family homes in bulk after the crisis and formed real estate investment trusts like **Invitation Homes** and **American Homes 4 Rent** to rent them out," wrote Jeff Andrews recently for the real estate site *Curbed.com*. Michael Leidel, a real estate analyst with *Metrostudy.com*, says that happened and is still happening in Nashville.

According to TSU professor Dr. Ken Chilton, four Wall St. firms have bought 5500 single-family homes in Davidson and surrounding counties and turned entire neighborhoods into rental property. When that happens, people who own or are paying off a mortgage no longer live in a community of homeowners because too many have been sold to an investment firm that charges high rent but isn't around to fix the plumbing.



A first-time homebuyer who needs a mortgage can't compete with a Wall St. firm that pays cash. This trend started when the housing bubble burst in 2008. It accelerated in 2010 when banks started to lend out the cash they had been sitting on. They were restrained from their worst impulses by the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall St. Reform and Consumer Protection Act but that didn't stop speculators from buying up real estate in neighborhoods like North Nashville. That same year two events occurred in Nashville that triggered a massive building boom in Music City. One was the ground-breaking of the new convention center and the other was a massive flood.

*This article was written with the support of a journalism fellowship from the Gerontological Society of America, Journalists Network on Generations and The Commonwealth Fund.*

### Part 3: **Nashville Next: Where's the Beef?**

*Looking West across the Cumberland River from East Nashville. Land values have increased dramatically in neighborhoods close to downtown.*

**Nashville Next** is a 25-year master plan to turn Music City into the proverbial "city upon a hill", a shining example of tolerance and equal opportunity. Its major assumption is that Nashville's unprecedented growth will bring prosperity and progress to everyone.

The plan was three years in the making and cost \$268,310 not counting hundreds of hours of paid staff time. City planners got input from 18,500 residents, held 400 community meetings, and hired several experts to do research. The plan was released with much fanfare in 2015. It is divided into five parts and includes 14 community plans.

There was an inventory of roads and bridges, public art, housing, parks, streams, trees, jobs, business, public health, and schools—all things people expect when they live in a modern forward-looking metropolis. The plan described where things stood now and talked about how city programs, departments, and initiatives could make Nashville a friendly, safe, healthy, and very livable city in the future.

**Nashville Next** is an impressive document, 748 pages, and it won a National Planning Excellence Award in 2016 for "a general plan for Metro Nashville/Davidson County that is relevant to community needs and addresses future growth".

The success of the plan would be gauged with annual follow-up reports and there was one in 2016. Since then, nothing. Planning Spokesperson Sean Braisted said maybe they will release one in the Summer of 2019. Don't hold your breath.

Four years after it made headlines, the two most important parts of **Nashville Next** are kaput. The mayor who stood watch over its infancy left office in disgrace, the chief of the planning department that put it together retired, and things sort of just went back to normal.



Although city officials still give **Nashville Next** lip service, the Equitable Development part and its detailed strategy to create affordable housing has been largely ignored. Metro officials have instead handed speculators the keys to the city and the vision of a shining city on the hill is fading fast.

Former mayor Megan Barry promoted a \$9-billion Let's Move Nashville mass transit plan. It was the transportation piece of **Nashville Next**. Voters rejected it by a 2-to-1 margin in May, 2018.

After the city council passed an inclusionary zoning housing bill in September 2016, the Republican-majority state legislature killed it. Another affordable housing initiative, the Housing Incentives Pilot Program (HIPP) had its \$2 million budget cut to \$550,000.

Not a single unit of affordable housing got built in Nashville in a year and a half after those bills were passed, according to the Tennessean. Building market-rate and subsidized housing side by side was a good idea but it never really got started.

**MDHA is the Exception**

The Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency (MDHA) is the largest provider of affordable housing in Nashville. It started building low-income rentals in 1939.

Affordable multi-family apartments with several bedrooms are as rare as hens' teeth in Nashville now. In 2000 MDHA began replacing the old 1950s-era Historic Preston Taylor Homes with 2-5 bedroom townhouses in one North Nashville neighborhood.

*Historic Preston Taylor Homes, one of Nashville's oldest public housing projects, was built in 1951. It was torn down in 2000 and MDHA built 182 two-story duplexes on the same site.*

MDHA built 182 units next to Tennessee State University (TSU). Rents will not rise above 30% of residents' incomes for the next 40 years thanks to a new Housing and Urban Development program called Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD). MDHA Executive Director Jim Herbison told the Tribune last week that their entire portfolio has been converted to the RAD program with the exception of 184 duplexes in MDHA's Neighborhood Housing program. Those duplexes

are scattered throughout the city. MDHA has a total of 18,300 rent-controlled apartments and serves more than 13,500 families.

About two dozen townhouses in Historic Preston Taylor Homes are market-rate. The others are reserved for low-income families. None of the units are for sale and MDHA has no plans to sell any. In effect, Historic Preston Taylor Homes is a "No Speculators" zone, a sanctuary of affordable housing in North Nashville that is protected from gentrification.

Notwithstanding the safety net of affordable housing MDHA provides, homelessness and lack of affordable housing are still huge problems city officials are doing precious little to solve. The building boom continues apace but more than half of Nashville's 659,042 residents cannot afford to rent or buy any of the new market-rate housing being built.

*Historic Preston Taylor Homes II features these 2-5 bedroom duplexes built on the same site as the original project in the other photo from 1953.*

"The problem is that rents have increased way faster than incomes," said At-Large Councilman John Cooper. He said skyrocketing land prices have prevented affordable homes from being replaced. Like a force of nature, gentrification is rapidly reducing the supply of affordable homes in Nashville. But other cities are grappling with the same problem and finding solutions Music City can only dream about.

## ***The Grass Really is Greener On the Other Side of the Hill***

The City of Austin, Texas has a department of Neighborhood Housing and Community Development. It provides a range of services including renter assistance, homebuyer assistance, homeowner assistance, housing development assistance, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, small business assistance, and financial empowerment.

Nashville's Office of Economic & Community Development (OECD) has a completely different approach. It gives grants of \$500/job to companies and tax incentives for up to ten years. Between 1999-2017 the OECD gave large companies like Dell and Asurion \$76,189,500 to hire 11,197 employees. Metro's Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program saved companies \$223.7 million. That is ten times more than Metro has invested to end homelessness.

From 2014-2018, small businesses got \$526,854 to improve blighted commercial properties and nine small companies got \$124,750 to create 10 or more jobs. Those grants have leveraged \$25 million in investment—but not to build affordable housing.

A similar program of tax exemptions for multifamily affordable housing could have a big impact in Music City. Using that tool, Minneapolis produced 1181 affordable rental and homeownership units in 2013. Seattle produced 3134. Nashville produced 0.

Seattle is building more affordable units than it's losing—something that most cities, including Nashville, cannot say in today's market. It passed a seven-year \$145 million Affordable Housing property tax in 2009. It leveraged that money with other public and private funds at a ratio of 3:1. Seattle's Office of Housing used the money to build or retain 1,643 affordable rental units, 110 units of supportive housing, subsidized rent for 1,286 households at risk of homelessness, and helped 106 families buy their own homes.

The 2009 tax levy expired in 2016 and was renewed in 2017. The amount was doubled so Seattle will spend \$290 million on affordable housing in the next seven years.

In Dec 2017, Seattle announced a \$100 million investment in affordable housing projects and the Seattle City Council approved \$29 million in bonding to build 896 new homes and keep 550 homes affordable for the next 50 years.

Nashville doesn't have a Housing Department or an Office of Housing. The Mayor's office said that Briley is committed to creating and preserving affordable housing in Nashville through a number of different tools.

In October 2016 Metro launched a private-public housing partnership with the Elmington Capital Group to build 170 workforce units at 12<sup>th</sup> Ave S. and Wedgewood Ave. Rents range from \$750 to \$1500/mo. Metro offered the land and a tax break. The deal was a step in the right direction but a small one.

Metro is not really serious about finding housing solutions for most of its residents. Its scattershot and piecemeal approach to affordable housing pales in comparison with the juggernaut of gentrification and market-rate housing that is being built all over town. Nashville compares very unfavorably with other American cities of similar size that are not letting speculators run amuck in their towns.

"The Mayor cannot order a moratorium on private development in the city," said Mayor David Briley's spokesperson Thomas Mulgrew. Perhaps not, but Briley could be much more pro-active than he has been. A City Council resolution to provide the same amount of money for affordable housing that

Metro is planning to give Amazon has stalled in the City Council. Sources tell the Tribune that City Hall is not in favor of it.

In 2014, the Housing Bureau in Portland, Oregon launched the N/NE Neighborhood Housing Strategy, a \$20 million financing initiative focused in the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area in response to the community's well documented need for affordable housing and other investments. Since then, that fund has been increased to \$60 million. The Bureau has 1785 units in its Affordable Rental Housing Construction Pipeline to be built in the next two years.

In January 2019, Portland's Housing Bureau announced a \$12 million grant for new housing and mental health services in a targeted effort to combat chronic homelessness. The two projects were funded by a partnership between the city, county, and state—the first of its kind in Oregon.

According to Karl Dickelspiel, who manages Portland's Housing Investment and Portfolio Preservation, "We recognize that policies from the federal to local level point to a long history of institutional racism that constrained opportunities for black communities, and now we see people displaced, churches gone, neighborhoods significantly changed— and we need to make amends. We are starting with the principle of right of return, and hopefully coupling economic development with supporting neighborhood community development corporations (CDCs) and community groups and investing in capacity building of local black-owned businesses."

Regarding black businesses, the Metro City Council passed an Equal Business Opportunity Law last month. But it does not include an investment fund to grow businesses or bonding guarantees to help black entrepreneurs obtain city contracts.

Nashville's planning stands in stark contrast to Portland, Seattle, and a number of other cities. People are being displaced in Metro's black neighborhoods bigtime. And the actual number of Nashville's homeless population is much higher than the official number of 2300.

Portland, Chicago, and the state of Vermont have laws that ensure long-term affordability of housing built with tax dollars. Affordable housing stock does not disappear but grows over time.

In Nashville, just the opposite is happening. According to the *National Housing Preservation Database*, more than 150,000 units of affordable housing have left the assisted housing stock in Nashville since 1997. And there is no formal affordable housing preservation plan in place to reverse that trend.

### Too Little Too Late

In 2013, the *Barnes Housing Trust Fund* was created to increase affordable housing options for Nashvillians. In five years the fund has invested \$27 million and leveraged another \$127 million of federal and private funding to build 1300 units of affordable housing. Affordable housing advocates say we need 19,000 units now and an additional 12,000 by 2025.

On Feb 1, 2019 Mayor David Briley appointed Hannah Davis his new Affordable Housing. Program Manager. She will oversee the Barnes Fund.

Nonprofit builders have partnered with Metro to build some affordable housing projects with Barnes Fund money. However, housing advocates say the Fund does not have a designated funding source like other city departments, and it is not nearly large enough to make a big difference.

In December 2017 Metro gave a non-profit, The Housing Fund (THF), \$250,000 to start a Community Land Trust (CLT) to start building homes with a covenant that will keep them affordable permanently. THF owns the land and residents own the house. Fifteen properties are being transferred to THF this month. In Colorado, the City of Boulder's has a similar CLT program called *HomeWorks*. It has a portfolio of more than 500 permanently affordable homes.

The Athens (GA) Land Trust has created 164 affordable homes with a zero percent foreclosure rate. The Chapel Hill, NC Community Home Trust has 200 affordable homes.

Music City is woefully behind other cities that are increasing their stock of affordable housing. However, there are people who live and breathe affordable housing in this town. MDHA is the biggest agency and it works with Community Development Corporations and a handful of non-profits.

We will look at what they are doing in the fourth and final part of this series.

\*\*\*

*This article was written with the support of a journalism fellowship from the Gerontological Society of America, Journalists Network on Generations and The Commonwealth Fund.*

#### **Part 4: Building Safety Net Housing in Shark-Infested Waters**

*"This home was sold to a working family that was mortgage ready and that qualified for a special loan program for low to moderate income buyers," said*



*Kay Bowers, Executive Director of New Level, a non-profit developer.*

"I deal with probably 90% of the non-profits. They're all good to work for. I've never had problems with any of them," said Jeff Stromatt.

Stromatt and his crew are putting the finishing touches on a three bedroom two-bath house they started building around Christmas. It has already been sold and the first-time homeowner is anxious to move in. Stromatt has been building below-market-rate single-family homes for 20 years.

"I've probably done 300," he says. They raised the roof a bit and put all the HVAC in between the floors instead of the crawl space beneath the house on 11 Avenue N. They used a concrete siding called HardiePlank instead of vinyl. It won't warp because it's waterproof. Little touches make the build cost about \$110/sq. ft. but the home will get an energy star rating and have lower utility bills.

*New Level*, the developer, is a Community Development Corporation (CDC) created by the Mount Zion Baptist Church. Kay Bowers is the Executive Director. She says housing costs have two main factors: the price of land and the building costs. If *New Level* gets a lot from the city that helps keep the price down but they still have to pay to clear the title. Construction costs have steadily risen in Nashville and labor is sometimes scarce.

The house on 11<sup>th</sup> Ave N. is appraised for \$300,000. It will sell for \$150,000. Stromatt could be making a lot more. "I enjoy doing this the most to help people get their feet on the ground," he said.

Stromatt said the way *New Level* works is the same as the other half dozen non-profit builders in town. "Somebody with 80% of the medium area income will take out a mortgage for \$150,000 and there is a second mortgage with Metro for the other \$150,000 that is forgiven over 20 years.

"After that the owner can do whatever they want with it," Stromatt said.

"During the recession and shortly thereafter investors with deep pockets came in and bought up properties in vulnerable neighborhoods. They just bought them up because they had cash in hand. They are ahead in the game but we are non-profits and we have to raise it," said Bowers.

She said they save on costs with multi-family projects because there are economies of scale when you build 10 or more condos together. "We do that very very well and we would obviously sell it or rent it below market rate because that's our mission," said Bowers.

Market-rate builders have their costs and their investors' expectations for about an 10-20% return. Getting the best price they can for a property determines the selling price.

"You have to have public subsidy to bring down the sticker price to create a mortgage that's affordable," Bowers said. She said non-profits can't compete with for-profit builders because the playing field isn't level and she is always playing catch-up. Meanwhile, older neighborhoods are being shredded, families torn apart, and that has become the new normal in North Nashville.

"Nashville doesn't have basic best-practice tools in the toolbox to help preserve affordability where people want to live, where their roots are, and where they want to remain. Until the decision-makers feel that it's in their interest to get behind better efforts to do good planning with the proper resources we will continue to struggle and our communities will suffer," Bowers said.

### Habitat on the Edge of Town



Danny Herron knows how the real estate game is played. He says he never got hugs when he was a banker but now he gets plenty of them. Nashville's *Habitat for Humanity* is building an entire subdivision in the White's Creek area out by the UPS facility off Briley Parkway. It's called Park Preserve and it's for low to moderate income residents who work in Nashville.

"Every family here goes through an application process with a background check and credit check," Herron said. First-time home-buyers have to put in 80 hours of classroom time to learn about budgeting money.

Habitat has already built 225 houses in Park Preserve and will build 75 more. Herron said their mortgages are very different from a conventional mortgage because they are zero percent interest loans.

"Our families have to qualify to buy the house and afford it with no interest but spend 100 hours out here building a neighbor's house. So there's sweat equity involved and that's one of the reasons we have a very low foreclosure rate of less than 3%. That's good. We're proud of those good numbers," he said.

*"These homes won't be torn down. There's no place for working people to live in East Nashville anymore." said Danny Herron, CEO of Nashville Habitat for Humanity.*

Herron really likes the Habitat model that allows families to build equity for the first time in their lives. Payments are really low—about \$800 a month. That's an affordable home you are buying over 30 years and wind up owning.

"it's a very successful program but it's not a handout, it's a hand up," Herron said. Everybody gets involved on weekends to give their neighbor an opportunity to improve their life and own their own home.

Herron won't say this to just anybody but sometimes he thinks we need another big recession. When the housing bubble burst in 2006, Habitat was in a good position to snap up foreclosures for 20 cents on the dollar just like other investors did. Habitat bought an entire subdivision in Antioch. It was only half-built when the developer went bankrupt, so Habitat finished it and added 130 homes to their inventory of 800 houses.

### Affordable Rents in Town

Mark Wright runs *Be a Helping Hand Foundation*. He builds rental housing for seniors and disabled residents under a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program.

"We focus on large families with women-led households," Wright said. Wright's properties have 4-5 bedrooms that rent for about \$700 a month. "Our turnover is almost zero," Wright said. Their two newest of 36 properties were built in 2015 and the foundation is currently developing 6 new parcels.

*Mark Wright runs Be A Helping Hand Foundation. He's got long waiting list of large families who need affordable homes with 4-5 bedrooms. These houses were built in 2015 in North Nashville with a grant from the Barnes Fund.*

Wright gets land with help from the Barnes Fund and goes fishing for grants to build on the lots. "We could do more with more money," he said.

"We can't compete with the developers coming in. They are buying up property at market rates and closing within a couple of weeks. We can't do that. Our funds are tied to a grant. There's a process. If we

had an open fund that would give us access to funding to be able to close quicker, then we would be on a level playing field with the developers," he said.

Wright said Metro, MDHA, and the Barnes Fund are doing a good job and Helping Hand has done a lot with their help. "We just need a lot more of it. A lot of people are waiting for us to do more," he said.

What could he do with \$100 million? "I could build quite a lot if that type of money was available," he said.

Rusty Lawrence runs *Urban Housing Solutions*. He's got a finger in just about every available pie that funds affordable rental housing in Nashville. The property he is developing on Clarksville Highway is for low income renters. Twenty-three units are built, 63 more are being built, and there will be another 55 units for seniors. They will all have Section 8 vouchers which they will get from MDHA to subsidize the rent. Like MDHA rentals, none of Urban Housing Solutions' tenants are cost-burdened, meaning they don't pay more than 30% of their income for rent. The units cost about \$150,000 a piece to build and Lawrence says the total build cost will be between \$15-\$20 million.

*Rusty Lawrence, CEO of Urban Housing Solutions, is building 140 affordable apartments on Clarksville Highway and 26th Ave N.*

With a \$40 million housing fund, which the city council was considering last month but then tabled, Lawrence could double the number of units he's building now.

\*\*\*

*This article was written with the support of a journalism fellowship from the Gerontological Society of America, Journalists Network on Generations and The Commonwealth Fund.*

**Here is a list of Non-Profit Builders Interviewed for this article:**

**Be a Helping Hand Foundation** 827 W. McKennie Ave 615-227-6000

**Affordable Housing Resources** 50 Vantage Way 615-251-0025

**Woodbine Community Organization** 643 Spence Lane 615-833-9580

**15th Avenue Baptist Church** 1203 9th Avenue N, 615-256-4326

**New Level** 1112 Jefferson St. 615-627-0347

**Urban Housing Solutions** 822 Woodland St. 615-726-2696

**Habitat for Humanity** 414 Harding Place 615-942-1218

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**Peter White**

10/23/2019

Tall and skinny homes change how Nashville Firefighters battle house fires | WZTV

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GENERAL ALERT: MIDSTATE COAT DRIVE

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## Tall and skinny homes change how Nashville crews fight fires

by Harriet Wallace

Thursday, June 14th 2018

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(Fox 17 News)



## Fire Department has new train ing up all across Music City.

Clark Price and his wife Leah love their home in the Nations neighborhood in west Nashville. They've lived there for two years.

"We rented for a year, and then found this home and we fell in love with it," Price said. "Nice little quaint back yard. A manageable front yard."

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They bought a home that's convenient and cozy, but also a potential safety and fire hazard found in the new trendy homes known as "tall and skinnies".

"It's real scary when you know that time is ticking quickly," said Cpt. Alfred Baltz, an instructor with the Nashville Fire Department.

The narrow way the homes are built and their proximity to each other has firefighters worried and changing the way they battle blazes.

Not only can flames jump easily between homes, but the floors are more prone to collapse quicker and easier. That's a safety concern for the homeowner and the men and women who go in to protect them.

standpoint because I'm respon:  
n to that fire."

44°

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63°

Baltz has been with the fire department for 28 years. He said he started doing some research almost a year ago on the design of "tall and skinnies" and the potential fire hazards surrounding them.

He designed specialized fire training for "tall and skinnies." Firefighters are changing the way they move around the home with water hoses due to the smaller space between the homes.

They've also developed new ways to get in the trendy homes and pull residents to safety before the floor caves in.

"It's pretty scary," Price said. "I want my house and my wife and family to be as safe as possible."

So does the Nashville Fire Department. While those safety concerns are a lot to worry about, Price says he'll just focus on what he can control

"Yes, a fire could impact and burn down my house, but my life continues," Price said. "My investment isn't just this house. My investment is in my wife, my relationships and my faith."

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## 'I'm not selling' 94-year-old fights back against pushy developers in Nashville

by Erika Glover  
Tuesday, June 4th 2019

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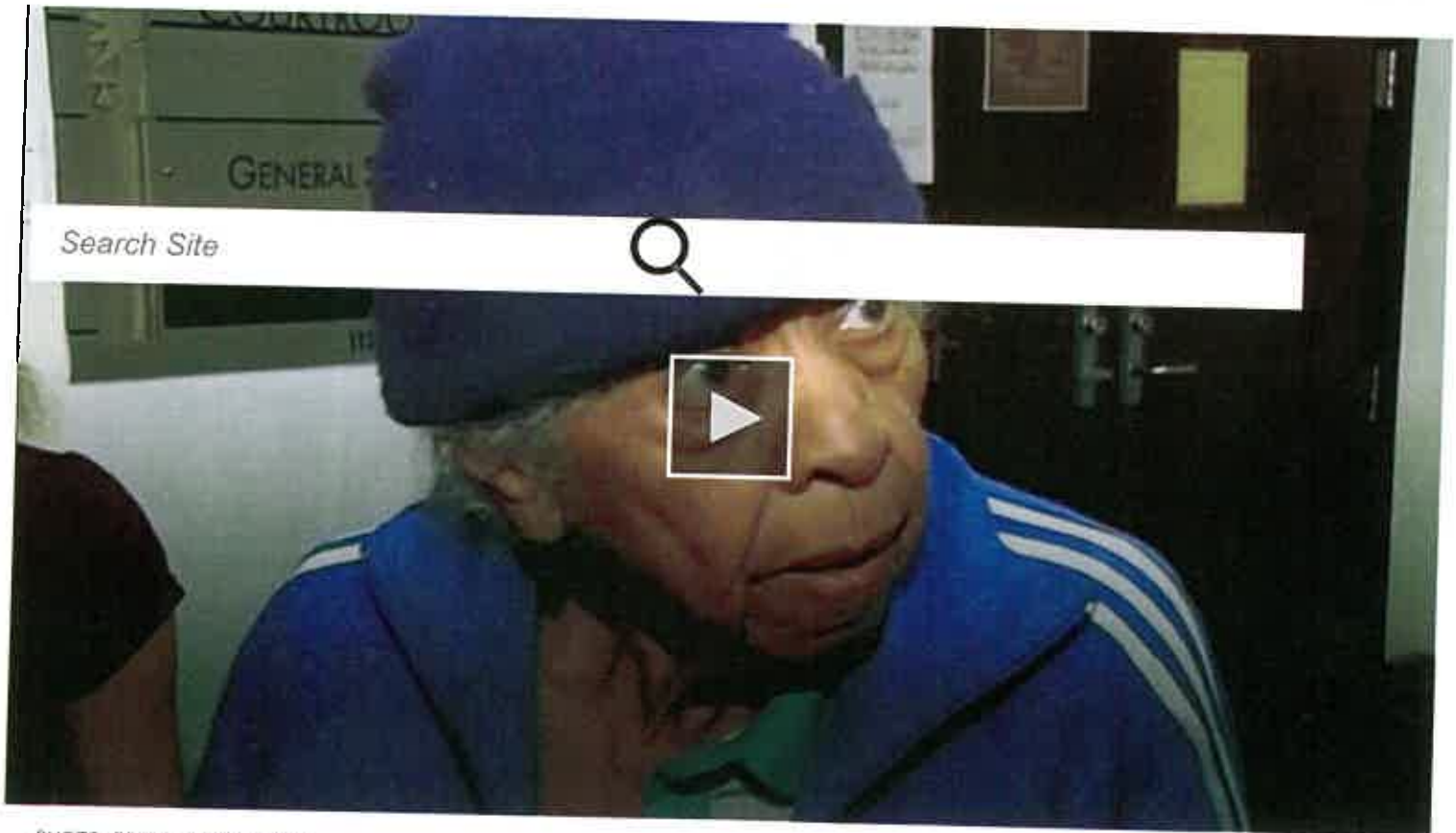


PHOTO: FOX 17 NEWS





94-year-old Evelyn Suggs is pushing back against aggressive developers who want to sell commercial properties she owns on Jefferson Street in south Nashville. Project Nashville first reported the sassy senior not backing down at the end of May.

"You know they want to buy, but I'm not selling," Suggs said.

Project Nashville caught up with Suggs as she was leaving court for code violations. She said the infractions are a result of her turning down multiple developers.

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"They wanted to buy the whole damn street, but they couldn't get it because I was there," Suggs said.

Longtime homebuilder and Metro Council at-large candidate Michael Craddock said property prying is reaching new lows.

"These developers just need to back off," said Michael Craddock. "As long as the real-estate market is the way it is and people are coming here daily, I don't think it's going to stop."

East Nashville homeowner Regina Gaines said Suggs is not the only homeowner feeling the real estate pressure. Gaines said for the past three years developers have not stopped pushing to purchase her property. It's led to consistent code violations.





give me a citation," said Gaines. "It's costing me a lot of



She's convinced that they are willing to do whatever it takes to break her spirit and turn her property into their next "tall and skinny" home remodeling project.

"I had to remove a car from my own driveway because it had a flat tire and the license plate wasn't up to date," Gaines said. "They also had me cut down trees."

Just like the assertive Evelyn Suggs, Gaines said she's not going down without a fight.

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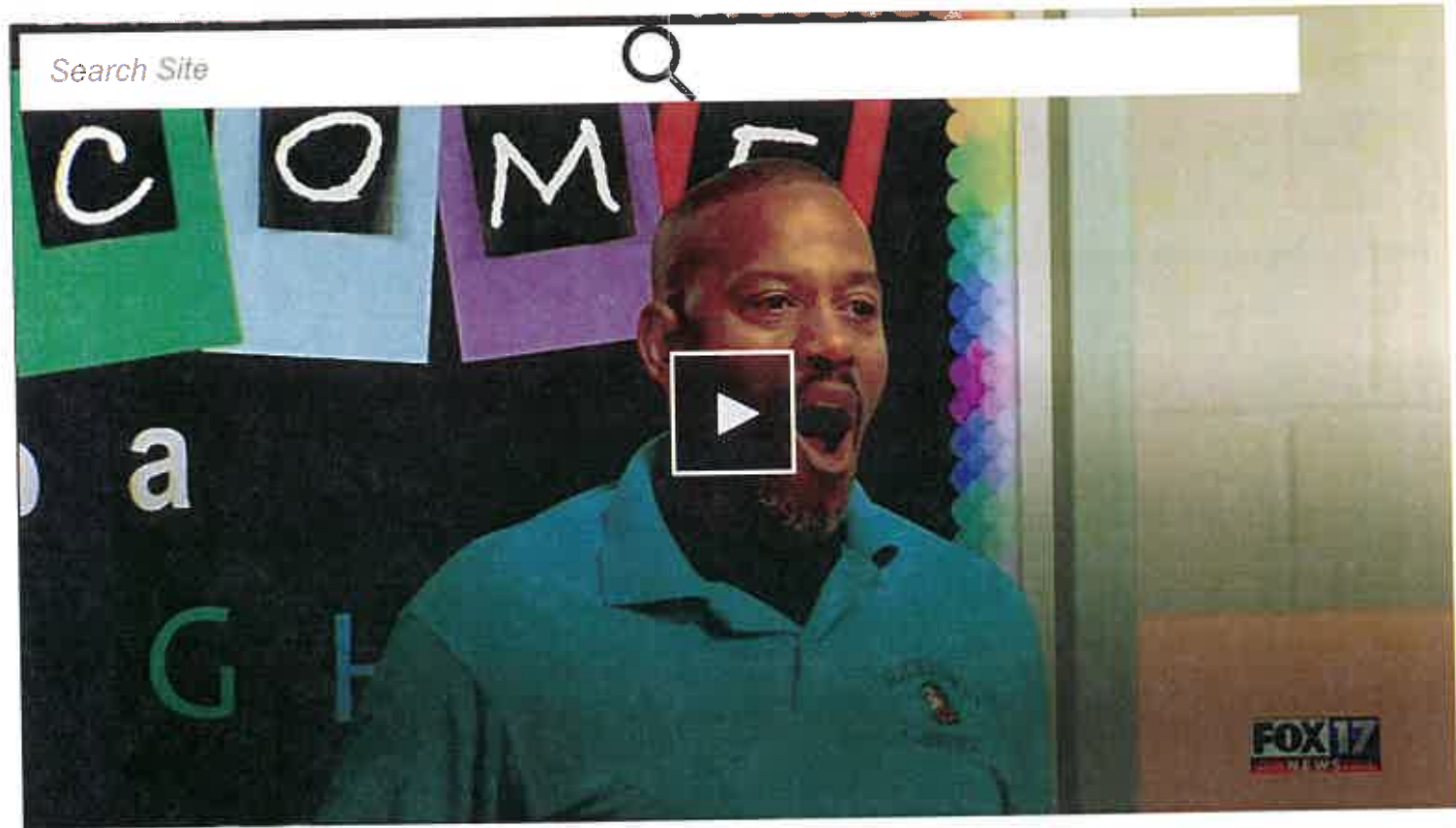
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VIDEO: Entire middle Tennessee school signs 'Happy Birthday' song for beloved custodian

by Kaylin Jorge  
Wednesday, October 23rd 2019

AA



VIDEO: Entire middle Tennessee school signs 'Happy Birthday' song for beloved custodian (FOX 17 News)



TULLAHOMA, Tenn. (WZTV) — \*First on FOX 17 News because original stories matter\*

Last year **the world was introduced to Mr. James**, a loved middle Tennessee custodian who is deaf and received a special surprise from some sweet kindergarten students.

Pure joy exuded from Mr. James' face as students at Hickerson Elementary signed the "Happy Birthday" song. The video went viral, gaining 10 million views on the FOX 17 News Facebook page alone.



Now, the school was set out to give Mr. James a new surprise of a lifetime that he so very-much deserves.

The entire school joined for an assembly Wednesday to sign Mr. James the "Happy Birthday" song and his reaction is better than ever. The NFL also gifted Mr. James with a signed football and a blanket.

Hickerson Principal Jimmy Anderson tells FOX 17 News that the kids love Mr. James.

"Mr. James teaches the kids sign language every now and then, teaches them good manners and how to treat other people," Anderson said.



James is a great role model for the students.



Mr. James has worked at Hickerson Elementary for 16 years, but has been with the school district for 31 years.

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# Jefferson Street gentrification exposes racial fault lines

Posted: 5:14 PM, May 30, 2019 Updated: 7:06 PM, May 30, 2019



By: Kyle Horan



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happens every week on Jefferson Street.

Developers looking to get in on Nashville's endless expansion approach longtime business owners looking to buy up property. But for residents, a city on the rise is following old, disturbing patterns.

Artist Omari Booker is a curator for Woodcuts, a custom framing and original artwork business on Jefferson Street. His artwork reflects his experience in the neighborhood he grew up in, and shows modern Nashville themes such as the new development and "tall and skinny" homes.

"In the 1930s they drew red lines around neighborhoods and said the black people could live in this area, white business people could live in these areas and the red line neighborhoods were built for African Americans or immigrants," said Booker.

Booker believes current development, though no longer driven by redlining, still follows in the spirit of segregation. Especially when the development involves brand new modern homes popping up in historically black neighborhoods.

"There is that level of tension when this huge place goes up next to these people

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come, but so far the owner of the business  
tions of the property.

id of have to have not only some foresight  
e driven by strict capitalism. It has to be

ected by developers as well.

THE OWNER OF Straighthead Barber Shop, Joe Trotter, said he was offered \$100,000 for his small lot about a year ago. He's been cutting hair there since the 1980s and didn't want to part with it.

Still, he believes the growth on Jefferson Street can't be stopped.

"It's too far gone. It's almost impossible to stop it. It sit still for years with nothing happening. I guess it's time to go," said Trotter.

For Booker, why some businesses have decided to sell is not easy to explain.

"It's hard to quantify with just numbers what some of those institutions mean to the culture in the neighborhood and the fabric of Nashville."

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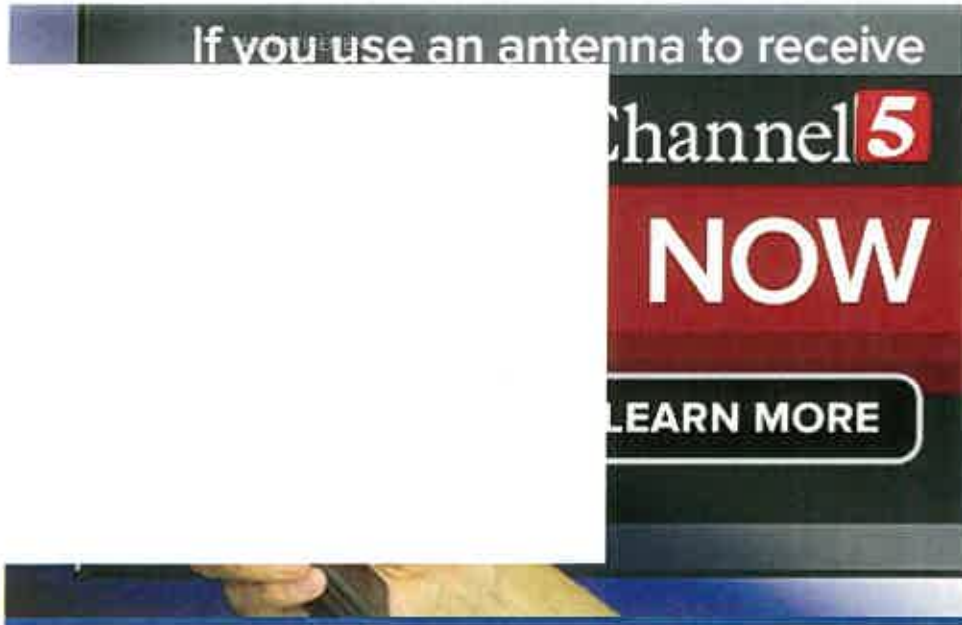
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# What's Killing Nashville's Black Neighborhoods?

By Peter White • January 31, 2019



*The house at 715 26th Ave. was demolished January 12, 2019. Four others are already gone to make way for new development that neighbors don't want.*

**By Peter White**

NASHVILLE, TN — Single-family homes used to line the 700 block of 26th Ave N.

But several lots are now empty, the modest houses gone, and the families who lived in them have moved away.

Tonya Wade-Moody still lives in one of the remaining homes. And she is plenty angry.

"Where are the affordable homes? All of these people are being kicked out, put out of their homes. You're bringing in these high-priced condos/ apartments. The average person can't afford that," said Tonya Wade-Moody. She spoke to the City Council Dec 4, 2018.

She gave much the same speech to the Planning Commission Dec 13, 2018. She handed them a petition signed by 75 people in the neighborhood who didn't want the multi-story apartment complex on the end of their block and didn't want tall and skinnies looming over them either.

"We don't want it in our area and I wish you would listen to us. We don't want that and we don't need it," she told the 10-member Planning Commission.

The commission approved the re-zoning plan. Dozens of projects like it are green-lit every month. The **Nashville Next** plan is supposed to regulate growth but unchecked development is eating up North Nashville like a cancer.

Not a single person on the 41-member City Council voted to preserve the old neighborhood so people could keep living where they raised their children, grow old, and leave their house to the next generation.

Aside from bad policy and the officials who implement it, there are economic pressures causing the black diaspora. Homeowners are being offered top dollar for their homes by speculators who tear them down and replace them with tall and skinnies or change the zoning to build multi-family units on the same and adjoining lots.

"There's nothing strange about that," said Property Assessor Vivian Wilhoite. Home prices in Nashville have been steadily rising for a decade. According to Zillow, a real estate database company, the mean home price in Nashville is \$262,400; the mean rent is \$1,558. Zillow ranks Nashville the 8th hottest housing market in the U.S.

"People are willing to pay more so they don't have to drive into town. If a buyer is willing to pay a certain price and a seller is unwilling to sell for one penny less, that sets the value for the entire neighborhood," Wilhoite said.

But there is something strange going on. Banks used to routinely gouge or outright deny home loans to blacks in red-lined neighborhoods because it was considered a poor financial risk. The practice was widespread and blatantly discriminatory. Just the opposite is happening now. Banks are quite willing to make construction loans to people who want to build in older black neighborhoods and to make home loans to people who want to buy what they build.

Urban pioneers who are richer, whiter, and younger are settling into new homes in East and North Nashville that are no longer affordable to the people who once lived there.

Wilhoite is quite right to point out that home sales don't happen without a willing buyer and a willing seller. African Americans who own their homes in North Nashville may be cash poor but they are land rich. Single family homes on small lots in Moody's neighborhood are not worth as much as the land they sit on. And so many black seniors are cashing in.

For example, the lot at 709 26th Ave N. sold for \$30,000 in 2014. The same lot sold for \$60,000 in 2018. The lot at 716 27th Ave. N. sold for \$19,500 in 2010. In 2018 it sold for \$150,000. The developer, E3 Construction, bought both lots.

"Dirt is not cheap," said Michael Leidel of Metrostudy.com, a real estate data collection and research firm. And neither are the homes being built all over town.

Leidel is tracking new construction projects in Nashville with at least four units and a home-owners association. In North Nashville, there are 17 current projects. Without amenities the builders list prices range from \$250,000 to \$200,000.

Building higher density housing offers a better return on investment and the **Nashville Next** community plan allows for multi-family housing along major corridors. There's only one problem: working families can't afford them.

The mean household income in Nashville is \$43,847. You'd have to make about \$80,000 a year to buy any of those new market-rate homes. The residents of North Nashville are being surrounded by hostile construction projects. (see map). In the gussied-up jargon of **Nashville Next** that is called "best land use".

Affordable housing is not in Wilhoite's job description. "We don't have the concession on reducing the value of property just because you want to build affordable housing," she said.

"They didn't get organized in time," said Bob Butler, a longtime civil rights activist, who lives in a single residence occupancy (SRO) group home on Wade-Moody's block.

"If you're talking about organizing, you're not talking to no rookie," said Butler. He said people don't always know how the system works and it's an organizer's job to find out.

*Bob Butler, 75, lives on the 700 block of 26th Ave. N. His room is stuffed with books about criminal justice, gang culture, organized labor, and the civil rights movement. He gathered them during a lifetime organizing people to resist.*

"You can't be a leader if you don't know anything," he said.

People can protect their neighborhood from unwanted development by creating an historic or conservation overlay. There is an application process through the Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission. But people have to agree they want one and then get together to make it happen.

"Sometimes it can be overnight," and Butler snaps his fingers. "Most of the time you have to build it for a long time."

Easy money is behind the gentrification that is displacing longtime residents in North Nashville. The city's failure to keep developers in check and insist they build more affordable homes is sabotaging equitable development in North Nashville. The area's Community Plan goes on and on for 85 pages about how great things could be. But wishing doesn't make it so.

On Wade-Moody's block, eight lots sit empty where families once lived. One of them found a place off Gallatin Rd. and another is renting in Bordeaux. If Wade-Moody and her neighbors get organized they might still stop a 30+ apartment complex right behind them on 27th Ave N.

John S. looks at a pile of rubble on his block that used to be someone's home. "It was here the day before yesterday. They just finished tearing it down and want to build that bullshit right here on 26th," he says, and points to the multi-story apartment complex at the end of the street.

Just a few blocks away, vacancy signs hang in the new apartment complexes along Charlotte Ave. "Nobody's living in them," he scoffs. "It makes no sense," he says, and heads home.

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\*\*\*\*\*

*This article was written with the support of a journalism fellowship from the Gerontological Society of America, Journalists Network on Generations and The Commonwealth Fund.*

## Facebook Comments

Peter White



10/23/2019

A lot of rain and nowhere for it to go, rapid raid and rapid growth don't mix in Nashville | WZTV

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## A lot of rain and nowhere for it to go, rapid raid and rapid growth don't mix in Nashville

by Nikki Junewicz

Monday, July 22nd 2019

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WZTV



When it rains, it pours, that's been the weather story in Nashville so far in 2019.

<https://fox17.com/news/local/a-lot-of-rain-and-nowhere-for-it-to-go-rapid-raid-and-rapid-growth-dont-mix-in-nashville>





months of 2019 is putting us on track to see the third wettest



Torrential downpours combined with rapid development have created major flooding for Nashville's new neighborhoods.

"There's just nowhere for the water to go, it's trying to keep it away from the house as best I can, but it can be difficult when it rains a lot," Conner Reed lives in The Nations where folks are feeling the impact.

The tall and skinny homes are so tightly packed, water that should be running off is pooling.

"It'll sit for a couple days before it starts to recede, especially in the winter when we had all that really bad rain it sat for weeks at a time," says Reed, who even dug out his backyard to help the stormwater flow.

Sonia Allman with Metro Water Services says her department has noticed it too.

"We're seeing increased flooding now in part due to development but more so because the amount and intensity of rains we're getting," says Allman

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She says our stormwater system is engineered for average years, not above average years like this.

Making matters worse, plots of land that used to have one home, now have as many as four.

"When you have a piece of land, grassy area will always be the best, farm land and grassy areas are always going to be the best for rain but we have less and less of that here in Nashville," says Allman.

Water that used to flow on either side of a home to a street, now goes in between or around a home, and not into the creeks and streams they are meant to go.

"Water is always going to find the path of least resistance, so at that point it tries to go another route which often goes to another property or into the neighboring home causing flooding."



s to February, the wettest on record with 12.5 inches of rain.



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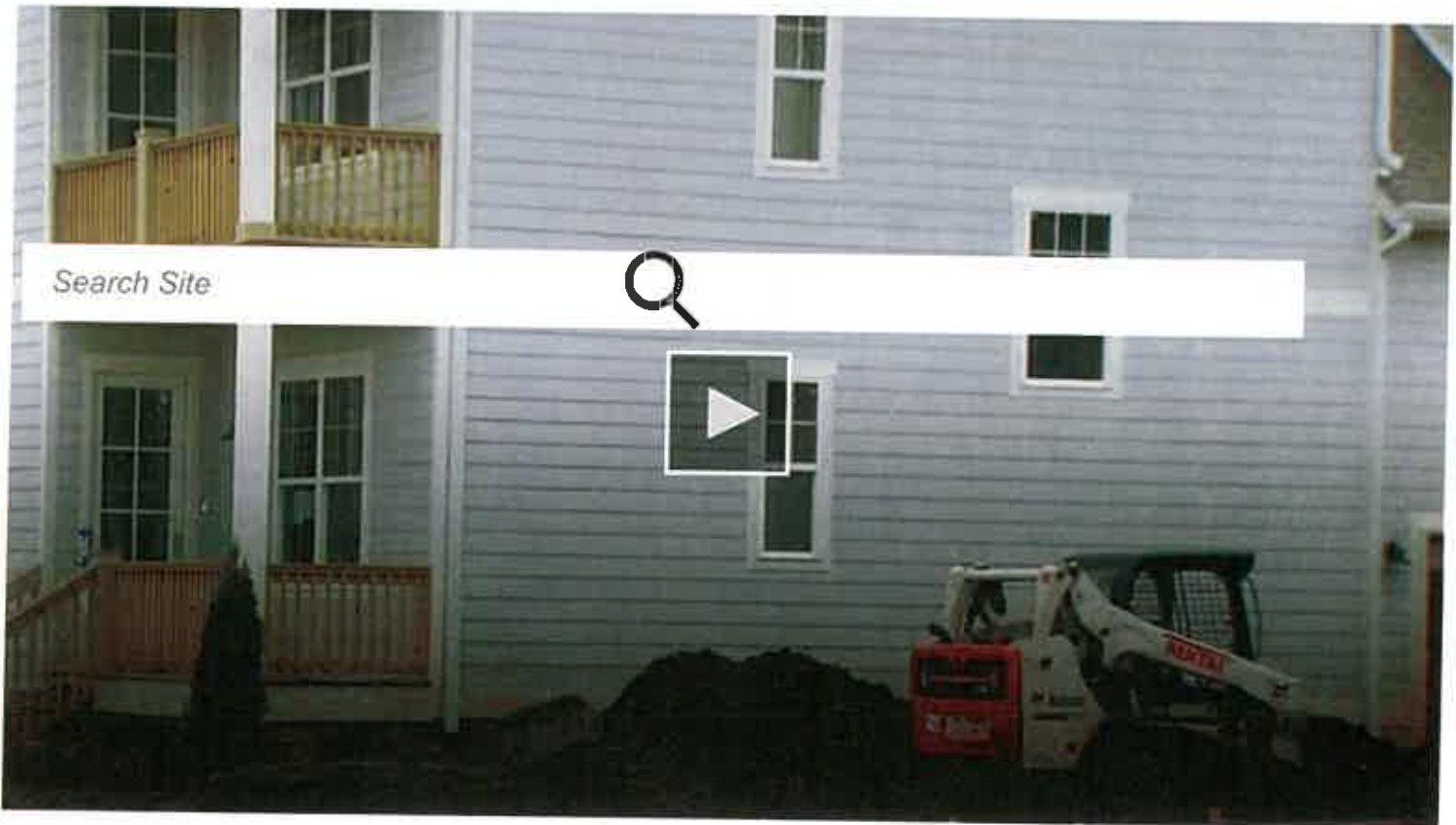
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## New development struggles to keep up with rain, homeowners report severe flooding

by Nikki Junewicz

Wednesday, February 20th 2019

AA



FOX 17 News Photo &lt;p&gt;{/p&gt;



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WZTV) — All this rain is amplifying a major problem with new developments.



ction, like the "tall and skinnies" in The Nations, report



They may be beautiful on the outside, but folks who live inside them say looks can be deceiving.

"You think you're going to get one thing and then you don't," says Diana D'Aoust.

D'Aoust says whenever it rains, water comes up out of the storm drains outside her home, and the space between her property and her neighbor's turns into a stream.

"It's frustrating, you spend a lot of money on the yard we've re-seeded and re-sodded and nothing works because of the flooding, and the water that just pools everywhere."

She says she's tried installing her own drains and laying gravel, but nothing is working.

Metro Councilwoman Mary Carolyn Roberts represents District 20 which includes The Nations, she says it's an infrastructure problem, nothing Diana can fix.

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here

for this water to go," says Roberts.

"My entire neighborhood was built on the premise that this wouldn't be developed, we don't have ditches we don't have drains, so with 6,000 houses being built in this one square mile we are at ground zero now."

Roberts is calling for a stop on development all together until the infrastructure can keep up.

You may recall a Fox 17 investigation from 2017 which revealed nearly 100 homes in The Nations neighborhood got built too close together.

This flooding issue, just another problem associated with that.

MORE TO EXPLORE



# The Debate Over Infill Developments

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By S and  
ra Fleishman  
February 5, 2000

Is "infill" the sensible answer to dreaded suburban sprawl? Or just one more way for builders to take advantage of suddenly cool close-in neighborhoods?

The term infill development hasn't made it into Webster's, but the definition often used is housing that fills gaps in neighborhoods. It can be houses, town houses or apartments tucked onto vacant lots or subdivided lots, usually in cities or close-in suburbs. It's a national phenomenon because of new interest from empty-nesters, young professionals, people weary of long commutes and buyers deterred by area slow-growth movements.

Reaction depends on whom you ask--neighbors or developers--and how compatible they believe infill is with what's there now.

Neighbors often say infill can destroy the character of the community. They claim builders sacrifice green space and compatibility to squeeze every inch--and penny--out of supersize houses or looming higher-density complexes.

Builders say they are responding to the need for more housing without sacrificing the countryside. They contend they are revitalizing long-derelict lots and trashy woods or turning once-unbuildable properties into buildable ones.

Recently, The Washington Post played host to a roundtable discussion on infill. This is an edited transcript of that discussion.

ide this section, we also look at four local infill projects. As builders and neighbors can attest, each instance its own complicated story. The participants in the roundtable were: Susan Ingraham Bell, director of the Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development; Phil Dearborn, president of Greater Washington Research Center; Gary Garczynski, president of National Capital Land and Development Co., an infill builder, and officer of the National Association of Home Builders; Phil Mendelson, a Democratic D.C. Council member; and Cathy Wiss, president of the Tenleytown Neighbors Association Inc., a group fighting proposed apartment buildings near their homes.

#### 'The Issue Is Compatibility'

GARCZYNSKI: Infill is important to the building industry because of the whole "smart-growth" process solving in this country. . . .

Infill is a major component of our smart-growth initiative; no matter where you go, they talk about the revitalization of America's cities and first-tier suburbs.

I think the paradox is that the American people are against two basic precepts--sprawl and density. If we can cure that one out, we'll go a long way to solving the problem.

In my experience, there are two types of infill: the "open-arms" infill that may rejuvenate or replace deteriorating housing stock; and the situation that's much more tenuous where you're going into a piece of land that has neighborhood opposition, like the situation in Tenleytown.

MENDELSON: Infill--to my view--is not necessarily bad. When you look at an area like the District, you really can't have any development without it being infill.

It gets to be very problematic when it's a house in an established single-family neighborhood. But infill is also what we saw on K Street in the 1960s and 1970s, and what we want to see on New York Avenue or Georgia Avenue.

The issue is compatibility. And compatibility can be defined in a number of different ways, whether it's trees, traffic, height, building design, or fitting within the historic district. And I don't want to make that sound too easy, because that's really where it's difficult.

I don't think infill is an antidote to sprawl. I think it's a quality-of-life issue. If we want an antidote to sprawl, we have to think of some big-picture things like what makes the District economically more attractive for people than moving to Manassas or Prince William County. . . .

I have a vision of seeing the District be what it was before in population--700,000 residents--or even larger. And if people feel safe, and if people feel they have good-quality services such as education, I think people are willing to live in a more dense environment--not everybody, but a lot of people--and that's what we're talking about, just attracting a lot of people, not everybody.

ELL: Infill takes more of our time than some larger projects because of three issues: the compatibility of new construction with existing neighborhoods--we have many houses 50 years old or older; the perception or reality of increased traffic; and then what I call "trees," the loss of what is perceived to be public open space, though it's privately owned. There are many folks who have looked at those heavily treed lots for years and see them as

of the fabric of their community, part of what makes it home. And while you might be able to mitigate it, it takes a really long time to bring the trees back.

My role as department head and previously zoning administrator, a lot of what I have done, and what staff and elected officials have done, is to try to find a course that allows for investment and new construction, but at the same time mitigates the negative impact. And we have developed some tools that we think help some.

ARBORN: My principal interest since 1974 with the advent of home rule has been how to make the District a successful city. . . . The city is at somewhat of a turning point, and to a great extent it will succeed or fail based on what happens in its residential areas. . . .

The problem that has plagued the District since home rule is an inability to think about where we want to be 30 years from now. The area, and especially the District, has a huge investment in Metro, and it's going to be very important that we maximize this investment.

ISS: Tenleytown in Upper Northwest has gone through a series of infills. It is the second oldest settlement in the District, after Georgetown. It's older than the city of Washington.

In the past 15 years or so, we've had subdivisions of large lots. In the last five years, we've had tear-downs where two houses [or more] can be built in the place of one without changing the zoning.

In the past six months a developer bought a half-acre piece of property that had two houses on it and now proposes to rezone it to build 26 condominium units.

We feel this is not compatible with the neighborhood. It's going to be 40 feet in height, and although 40 feet is allowed in our zoning, nobody's house is anywhere close to that. It's going to be a whole block of buildings, whereas we have lots of very small houses.

We think it will also complicate traffic on a very narrow street, because there are several very complex intersections. . . .

And, of course, we have worried about the trees: It just so happens that this land is next to a national park, as well as a high school property that has been undeveloped and has a stream.

**THE WASHINGTON POST:** How do you ensure compatibility?

**BELL:** Some people do it better than others. We have a tool that is relatively new, called Unified Residential Development. It allows people within existing zoning to do infill projects, but one of the key aspects is that the developer meets with the community and we ask them to take design cues from the community. . . .

That give-and-take can take longer, but I think you get a more satisfactory product at the end. Everybody gives a little bit.

**GARCZYNSKI:** We face an overall problem of housing 1.2 million more people in the Washington metro area by 2020, while the surrounding outer counties are attempting to put a green belt around the area. With more people being able to get on the homeownership ladder, it all points to the fact that we have to make density not be a dirty word.



NDELSON: I don't think density is the issue; it's compatibility. And oftentimes compatibility comes down to how the developer approaches the project.

A developer who is fairly sophisticated will figure out that he has to work with the community. I'm thinking, for example, of the Kennedy-Warren apartments, a historic building on Connecticut Avenue next to the National Mall where they wanted to build a new wing. The developer worked with the community. Objections came up, but those objections got worked out. But in the Tenleytown project, the developer began by tearing down the historic house and then clearing out ancient trees, so that right there, the neighborhood was in opposition.

Density is not the issue. The District had about 700,000 residents in the '50s. . . . We can house them. We've been having a fight for years about trying to get more housing downtown. . . .

LARBORN: But some [District] neighborhoods are going to shift from being single-family, low-density neighborhoods to high-density neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods have constantly undergone this transition. Wall Street was at one point single-family homes, and Pennsylvania Avenue and K Street was single-family homes. That's where I think the District has to plan for the future. I mean, for whatever reason, the District decided to build a Metro station at Tenleytown. It strikes me that if you come back 50 years from now, no matter how this 26-unit infill development comes out, Tenleytown will be very much changed from what it is today.

ISS: On the question of density, in fact, we are not opposed to having more apartments in Tenleytown. They have planned apartments for years in our commercial strip but it has simply never developed. We have one-story stores, parking lots, lots of vacant stores. We have apartment buildings that have lots of vacancies. So there is a great deal of space that could be higher density.

The difficulty for us is that this is development suddenly jumping into the neighborhood and saying, let's rezone the neighborhood. And that's scary.

DEARBORN: It seems to me that we need to be less concerned about small infill developments, because most of them get resolved one way or another. What concerns me much more are macro infill decisions, like . . . the St. Elizabeths Hospital site and the policy around Metro stations. The District has got to think about the big picture. The numbers are a little frightening: From 1990 to 1998, the District lost 24,000 housing units. In those eight years--actually nine years, because this number includes '99--it added 2,661 units.

MENDELSON: The trick for the District is to get the kind of development interest that's happening with Wisconsin and Connecticut avenues going on some of the other avenues. . . . I think we have to look at economic incentives. And we have to look at our public transit system, to make it easier for people to go up streets like Georgia Avenue.

BELL: I think what the District really has to do is be intentional about where they want the density, because that helps make your market. It helps people know where sites are going to be entertained for development and where developers will be welcomed. . . . And part of that is having the dialogue with the community in advance of the developer coming in and tearing down houses, and putting it in your comprehensive plan.

Once you've got it there, to the extent that council members may change, the developer still knows, generally, that if I go down this corridor, I'm likely to get a favorable response as long as I respond to the community. I think that's why Arlington has been successful at getting housing at Metro.

We have, in our land-use plan . . . what we call the "bull's-eye concept," where you have the highest heights and densities at Metro, and then as you move away from the Metro station, you taper heights and densities down. . . .

We have, over time, embarked on addenda to our plans, to address issues as they have arisen. We're about to embark, later this year, on another review.

THE WASHINGTON POST: Does the District do that?

MENDELSON: No. Our planning function completely fell apart. Mayor [Anthony A.] Williams has begun to restore it. We have a new planning director, and the council has approved funding for more positions. We actually now have some planners in the Office of Planning.

THE WASHINGTON POST: Phil Dearborn suggests small infill projects will resolve themselves. But there are so many of them and people get really, really angry about them.

WISS: This is the problem of infill. It is right next door. It is right across the street. It has a serious impact on your life. . . . It's your loss of privacy, loss of convenience. All of these things hit you very, very closely. One concern is having to raise money in order to fight. You just feel you're sitting there in your house, and all of a sudden, you have to put out a lot of money to try to keep your circumstances comfortable. It's as if it's the other guy's fault, but you have to pay for it.

RCZYNSKI: I never want to go into a public hearing, Cathy, having your homeowners stand up against me in front of Phil [Mendelson]. I want to avoid that, because I'm either going to get turned down, or I'm going to be delayed. That's not what I want.

SS: Basically what we're up against is a philosophy that's new--which is, let's develop in neighborhoods around Metro stops versus earlier philosophies to keep development along the commercial strip. . . .

RCZYNSKI: [the neighborhood], people are starting to move out, they're uncomfortable. People are saying, "I've had it, I'm going to move to Bethesda." And that is what we are afraid of.

RCZYNSKI: There is a change in philosophy. The American Planning Association, I think, next year will publish a treatise that advocates mixed use, the blending of different housing types. It's getting away from the single-use zonings pushed in the '60s. There was a time in Fairfax where if you didn't come in with a curvilinear street and a cul-de-sac, you were dead. Now, those cul-de-sacs are considered soul-less, and planners want a different section of pedestrian-friendly streets with neighborhood stores.

SS: But Tenleytown is different because you don't have large developments. . . . Tenleytown started out as a village, and it remains a village.

RCZYNSKI: It's hard to take a stance on any one particular project because it's so personal. I can't judge who's right or wrong. But you have to remember that these parcels [close to subway stops] are in demand. There is almost this frenzy to get property near the stations. If it's vacant right now, somebody is looking at it.

THE WASHINGTON POST: How does the "mansionization" of houses alter infill development?

RCZYNSKI: In a particular neighborhood, say McLean or Bethesda, there could be a property with a single-family home built 50 or 60 years ago, [but] the value of that ground today . . . is unbelievable. And if a buyer is willing to pay . . . 10 times what [the lot] was worth 50 years ago, he's not going to put that same type of home on that lot.

RCZYNSKI: That's where compatibility comes up, because there may be neighbors now who don't want to see a 4,000-square-foot, two-story Colonial next to a 1,500-square-foot Rambler. However, there will come a point in time when the person in that Rambler wants to sell his house, and you can bet he'll be looking at what happened next door and want that appreciation.

LL: Well, there's a land right [to build mansions on small lots], but there is a quality-of-life issue too.

RCZYNSKI: [in Arlington] have had so much tension [over houses that maximize height and square footage] that we've gone back to look at our base requirements. Our ordinance was adopted in 1930 and updated in '42, '50 and '62. What people want to live in today is entirely different.

RCZYNSKI: We're going to have a series of recommendations about how the zoning ordinance might be changed to address infill development, as well as how people manage and maintain additions.

DEARBORN: At this stage, I think it would be very hard for the District to enact a policy to discourage very wealthy people who would like to come here and build a monstrous house. If a Bill Gates--

GARCZYNSKI: Or a Michael Jordan?

DEARBORN: --Wants to build a big house, while it would be nice if they would build it as appropriate with a nice style, I would be reluctant for us to say, "Don't come, we don't want you."

GARCZYNSKI: I think the challenge for the District is not to worry about the Michael Jordans . . . but to develop what planners today call the 24-hour city--so you don't have a downtown that becomes a ghost town after 5.

To really revitalize cities, we have to bring in a good cross section of housing. It's not just the wealthy and the mansions; it's bringing the everyday working families back in with their children.

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# Residential Infill Strategy

Residential infill is new housing in established neighbourhoods. New housing can be single-family, two-family, townhouse, or multi-family. The goal for this project is to advance a shared vision for residential infill that helps address demand for new housing while preserving neighbourhood quality, character, and liveability.

## Updates

**October 11, 2019** - Thank you to over 2,000 residents who participated in round 1 of engagement on the residential infill design guidelines and intensification criteria. The feedback received will be analyzed and a public engagement summary of what we heard will be made publicly available and sent to all those who have subscribed for updates.

Stakeholders and members of the public provided feedback that will be used along with Winnipeg data, a cross-jurisdictional scan, and research to guide the location and design of residential infill development in established neighbourhoods. Preliminary design guidelines and intensification criteria are expected for public feedback in winter 2020.

## Engage

### UPDATE: October 2019

#### Round 1 - Design guidelines and Intensification criteria

Building on the priorities identified in the Residential Infill Strategy's [Implementation Action Plan](#), the City asked for public input on residential infill design guidelines and intensification criteria to help ensure that new development in Mature Communities is compatible in form, scale, and design, and to help determine when and where density changes should occur on residential streets.

Thank you to all who attended the public open houses from September 24 to October 3 and filled out our survey. Approximately 300 people attended the open houses, and over 1,988 surveys were submitted (126 in person). The feedback received will be analyzed and a public engagement summary of what we heard will be made publicly available and sent to all those who have [subscribed for updates](#).


#### Previous Engagement:


To begin defining the main challenges and opportunities presented by small scale residential infill housing, stakeholders were invited to five focus group meetings between June 14 and June 22, 2017. A stakeholder workshop was held on June 29, 2017 to determine key issues to focus on in developing the residential infill strategy. An online survey followed to collect further public feedback, from October 3 to December 1, 2017.

Information collected to this point was summarized in [Public Engagement Summary 1](#), and presented at public workshops on January 27 and 31, 2018. The input provided at the workshops held on January 27 and 31 refined the list of key issues, based on public priorities and the perceived complexity of implementing them. Feedback from the public priorities workshops is summarized in [Public Engagement Summary 2](#).

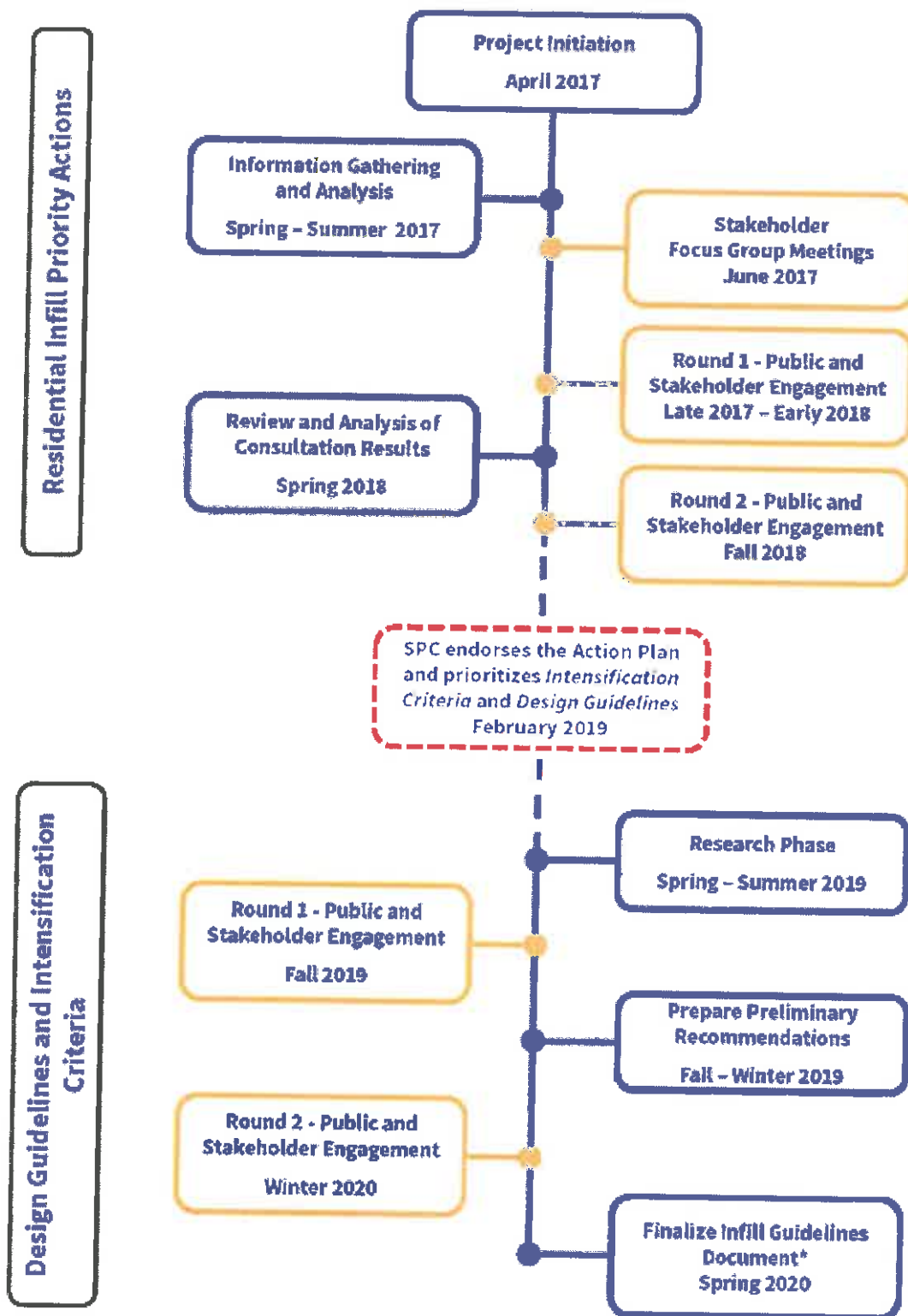
Building on what was learned through previous engagement activities, a public open house was held on September 19, 2018 at the Millennium Library. This open house focused on presenting the [Residential Infill Strategy Action Plan](#), and gathered feedback on each of the proposed actions. In addition to hosting the public event, the draft implementation action plan was also presented through an online survey, which was open from September 6 to 26, 2018. Feedback from the open house and online survey was used to refine and re-prioritize the draft implementation plan actions. A summary of this feedback is available in [Public Engagement Summary 3](#). The recommendations of the Implementation action plan were presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage, and Downtown

Development on Monday, January 7, 2019, which included the opportunity for members of the public to **appear as a delegation** before the committee.

If you have any comments or would like to get in touch with the Residential Infill project team, email us at **[infill@winnipeg.ca](mailto:infill@winnipeg.ca)**  .

To stay up to date on this project, please **sign up**  for email project updates.  
If you no longer wish to receive project updates, you may **unsubscribe**.

## Project Timeline



\*Subject to Council approval and funding

Timeline

## Background

On December 5, 2016, City Council directed the Public Service to prepare a residential infill strategy to include:


















1. A policy framework to encourage residential infill development;
2. Planning and design guidelines for residential infill; and,
3. A residential infill communications strategy to share information clearly and widely with builders and residents.



Based on the latest population forecasts prepared by the Conference Board of Canada, the City of Winnipeg is expected to grow by more than 200,000 people by 2040. While the greatest percentage of residential growth continues to occur in emerging neighbourhoods at the edge of the city, many new residential units built over the last five years have been located within established neighbourhoods. Market demand for new units in many existing neighbourhoods continues to remain high for the foreseeable future.

Infill housing is desirable because it makes efficient use of existing services. Established neighbourhoods already have infrastructure in place, are typically well-served by transit, and are conducive to cycling and walking, meaning less congestion and less wear and tear on our arterial roadways. This is why infill is an important tool in addressing our infrastructure deficit.

Despite its benefits, infill development can sometimes be a source of tension and conflict. A number of recent infill proposals in Winnipeg have demonstrated a lack of consensus on how and where different forms of infill should occur. Many cities have guidelines or policies around infill housing. Winnipeg currently does not have a comprehensive city-wide infill strategy to serve as a blueprint for development.

Documents

Document Name	Date	Type
<a href="#">Open House Boards (September 2019)</a> 	09/09/2019	Storyboards
Newspaper advertisements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <a href="#">The Metro</a> </li><li>▪ <a href="#">The Herald</a> </li><li>▪ <a href="#">The Times</a> </li><li>▪ <a href="#">The Lance</a> </li><li>▪ <a href="#">The Sou'wester</a> </li><li>▪ <a href="#">La Liberté</a> </li></ul>	09/09/2019	Advertisements
<a href="#">Open House News Release (September 2019)</a> 	09/09/2019	News Release
<a href="#">Implementation Action Plan summary</a> 	09/09/2019	Image
<a href="#">Public Engagement Summary 3</a> 	12/05/2018	Report
<a href="#">Fall Open House Boards</a> 	09/15/2018	Storyboards
<a href="#">Print Ad</a> 	09/05/2018	Promotion
<a href="#">Open House News Release</a> 	09/05/2018	News Release
<a href="#">Public Engagement Summary 2</a> 	06/28/2018	Report
<a href="#">Real Estate News Article</a> 	01/31/2018	News article
<a href="#">Public Engagement Summary 1</a> 	01/26/2018	Report
<a href="#">News Release</a> 	01/11/2018	News Release

Document Name	Date	Type
<a href="#">Survey Cards</a> 	01/11/2018	Promotion
Meeting Notes from engagement planning:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 14, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 15, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 21, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 21, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 22, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">June 29, 2017</a> </li> <li>▪ <a href="#">September 12, 2017</a> </li> </ul>	09/12/2017	Notes
<a href="#">Residential Infill Strategy Committee Approved Workplan</a> 	04/11/2017	Report

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are the biggest benefits of infill?

- it is financially sustainable by making efficient use of existing city services and infrastructure;
- it meets Winnipeggers' housing needs by providing for greater housing options;
- it builds more complete communities by increasing population within our mature neighbourhoods to better support existing businesses and schools;
- it is a critical source of neighbourhood reinvestment; and
- it helps to reduce our environmental foot print by reducing vehicle miles traveled and reducing the speed by which the city grows outwards;

*Date added: September 2019*

### 2. What are the biggest challenges of infill?

Infill poses challenges in trying to integrate a new building into an existing neighbourhood with an established character. Form and design details need to be responsive to the context and complementary to the neighbourhood. For builders, there is much greater risk involved, especially when a public hearing is required. Site acquisition and site constraints can also make infill costlier than a comparable project in a greenfield setting.

*Date added: September 2019*

### 3. How do Residential Infill Guidelines relate to the 2016 Residential Infill Strategy?

The Residential Infill Guidelines was a priority action that came out of the Residential Infill Strategy.

*Date added: September 2019*

### 4. What are design guidelines?

Infill guidelines are a tool that will be used to evaluate how the design and location of a building will look on a property, while also encouraging a better "fit" within the established character of the immediate surroundings.

- Ensure Winnipeg accommodates a wide variety of housing options to meet all needs;



- Encourage economically sustainable development that draws value from existing infrastructure and enhancements such as rapid transit and active transportation;
- Clarify and build on concepts such as 'context-sensitive development';
- Understand and mitigate the concerns most commonly associated with residential infill; and
- Provide greater clarity, consistency and predictability in the development application process.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **5. Do other cities across Canada have Residential Infill Guidelines?**

Many cities in Canada and elsewhere have guidelines or policies specifically around infill housing. Outside of a few neighbourhood plans, Winnipeg does not.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **6. What is intensification criteria?**

Intensification criteria is a means to evaluate where new development might occur.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **7. What type of development will it apply to?**

This project will apply to small scale infill development such as single family homes, duplexes/side-by-sides, triplexes, fourplexes, and small scale apartments.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **8. Is this project about downtown housing and transit-oriented development?**

No, higher density areas like downtown and transit station areas are not part of this project. Nor are mixed use corridors like Pembina Highway or Academy Road. Residential Infill Guidelines will focus on mature neighbourhoods and how to integrate new housing within neighbourhoods, at a scale and density compatible with lower density housing.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **9. Will the Residential Infill Guidelines focus on certain areas of the city?**

This project will establish guidelines for neighbourhoods identified as "mature communities" within the Complete Communities Direction Strategy.

*Date added: September 2019*

## **10. Where will the Residential Infill Guidelines not apply?**

This project will not apply to other policy areas within the Complete Communities Direction Strategy (e.g. New Communities, Recent Communities, Mixed Use Corridors and Centres, the Downtown) and within areas governed by a Secondary Plan By-law.

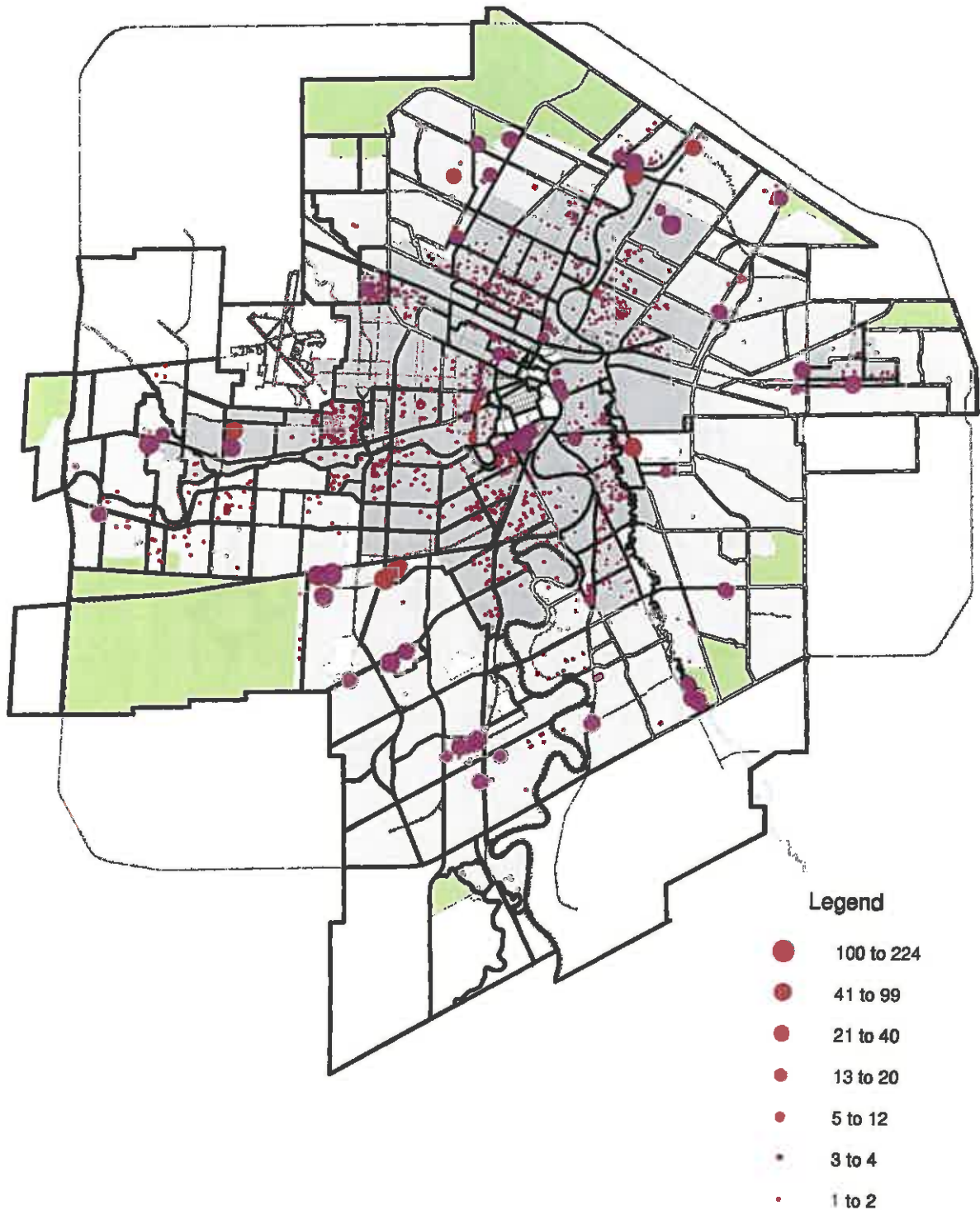
*Date added: September 2019*

## **11. What neighbourhoods will be consulted via the planned infill public engagement activities?**

The public engagement will endeavour to reach out broadly to all areas through both online and in-person engagement opportunities. This will include public consultation within each of the five Community Committees.

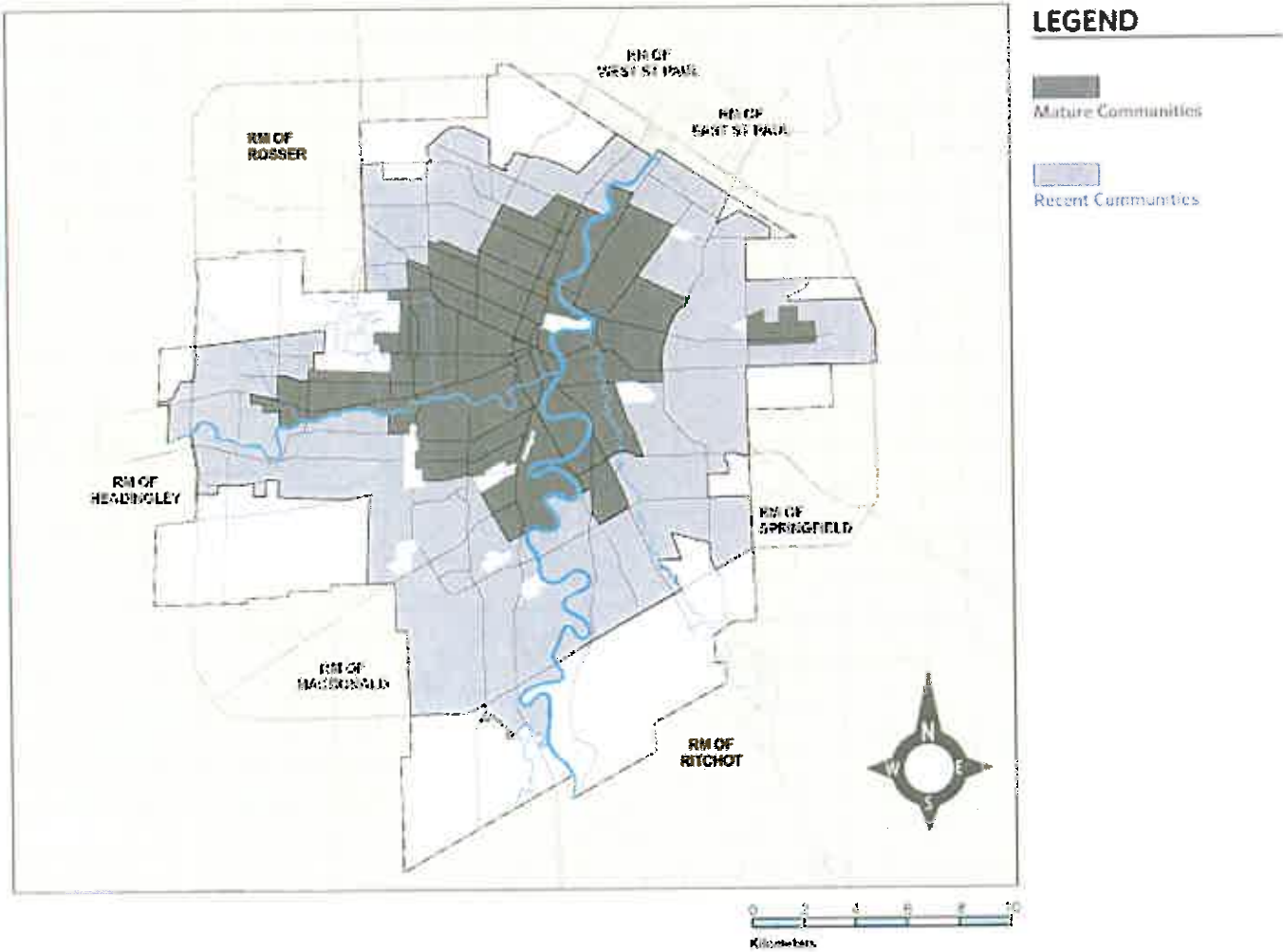
*Date added: September 2019*

## Maps



**Residential development in Areas of Stability  
2012-16, weighted by number of dwelling units**

AREAS OF STABILITY



Map

Last update: October 11, 2019

# FIRERESCUE.



Uncategorized

## Too Close for Comfort

Issue 9 and Volume 2.





By [Greg Jakubowski](#) | 3.20.09



An increasing number of single-family houses are being built in clusters in many areas of the country. Houses are placed close together in the development to promote interaction between the residents and provide common open spaces. Often two and three stories tall, these clustered houses present challenges to firefighting that require some adaptation from a traditional residential response. I was inspired to write on this topic after reading a conversation on the Web forum Prevention Advocacy Resources and Data Exchange (EPARADE) between two of my friends and respected colleagues, Ozzie Mirkhah, fire protection engineer for Las Vegas Fire and Rescue, and Michael Love, fire marshal for Montgomery County (Md.) Fire and Rescue.

Cluster houses built today employ modern construction techniques, including lightweight wood trusses, vinyl siding and other construction features that ensure a hot fire. In many cases, houses are situated no more than 10 feet apart with, at best, 35-40 feet of street frontage. Walls are generally not fire-rated. There will be gypsum board on the inside of the exterior wall, but combustible material on the outside of the wall will facilitate spread from the fire building. Windows are likely to be present on the facing walls, and, due to the commonality of designs, there's a very good chance the windows will face each other, which can further exacerbate the potential for fire spread from dwelling to dwelling. Further, narrow streets and limited off-street parking may create severe access challenges to firefighters, especially during holidays and weekends. Cluster developments often feature dead-end streets that limit



- apparatus access once a supply line is laid.

## Apparatus Placement

Since the street frontage for these houses is limited and there's clearly no access for apparatus on Sides B or D (and perhaps only limited access on Side C), placement of apparatus becomes critical. In order to minimize the collapse risk presented by lightweight construction, ensure firefighters have aerial ladder access on Side A (and perhaps Side C) to work the roof with the aerial stream.

*Tip:* Using the aerial to access third-story windows or the roof of a two- to three-story cluster house is much safer and more efficient than ground ladders. However, if two engines arrive simultaneously and take positions in the front of the building, it may become difficult for the aerial to get a usable position anywhere near the dwelling.

There are other apparatus placement challenges presented by cluster houses. Many feature rear-entry garages with limited access driveways/alleyways in the rear of the dwellings. There are a number of things that can block access through these driveways/alleyways, including parked vehicles, delivery vehicles, snow or ice.

Fire in a rear-entry garage may be best attacked with a line entering Side A. There may not even be obvious signs of fire from a rear-entry garage to apparatus arriving in the front of the home. On the other hand, apparatus arriving on Side C may be able to easily stretch a line, but firefighters must be careful not to push the fire into the dwelling or "cross streams" with a hoseline



crew that has entered from the front. Apparatus arriving first on Side C may experience great difficulty making the stretch should they decide it is more appropriate to take their handline around to the front to make their attack. It might not be easy to stretch a line between houses, and the crew must use a long enough line to make the stretch.

## Attacking the Fire

Gaining access to the building for rescue and ventilation will be a key objective. Firefighters may ladder the front and rear of the dwelling but might also need to ladder the side windows to perform rescues. There are a lot of challenges in raising ground ladders to the sides of these houses due to the proximity of neighboring structures, which have only a few feet to the property line. These challenges can slow rescue efforts and roof ventilation, allowing for greater fire spread and reducing the time that firefighters have in the building and on the roof.

Firefighters also face greater risk operating in and on the building. Many fire officers may be hesitant to send firefighters onto the roofs because of their lightweight construction. *Tip:* Some houses are constructed with an attic ventilation fan. If it's safe to access that area of the roof, removing the fan hood/shroud can quickly ventilate the attic. Removing gable vents is another ventilation technique crews may employ with limited manpower. Of course, ladder access will be necessary to make this happen.

There are many similarities between cluster houses and the infamous "three-deckers" found in New England. These three-story wood-frame houses with





- wooden porches on all three levels are often constructed close together and present rapid fire-spread challenges. Aggressive attack strategies are needed in three-deckers, including throwing numerous ground ladders, for which the Boston Fire Department is famous.

The major difference between three-deckers and cluster houses: their construction materials. The lightweight construction of cluster houses presents faster collapse potential than the balloon-frame construction of three-deckers, which firefighters must keep in mind.

It's also worth keeping in mind that gas and electric meters may be located on the sides of the dwellings between houses. If the gas meter on the adjoining dwelling becomes involved in fire, it might not be controllable until the utility company arrives and cuts the gas at the street. Until that happens, fire here will quickly spread fire to the exposure home.

## Laddering the Building

Laddering cluster houses presents challenges to firefighters. With 10 feet or less clearance between homes, the ability to raise a ladder with the proper climbing angle to a second-story windowsill for rescue/entry purposes can be quite difficult. A flat raise will be impossible—ladders in this space must be raised with a beam raise, a tactic that requires practice to complete. Two or three very capable firefighters will be necessary to place a ground ladder able to reach the second floor or roof—probably a 28- or 35-footer—and then perform a beam raise. Many departments simply lack the manpower to ladder these buildings



safely, and many may not carry ground ladders longer than 24 feet. Very few engine companies and, unfortunately, fewer ladder companies than ever carry ground ladders longer than 35 feet.

Raising a ground ladder at a cluster house becomes even more difficult if the lot slopes downward from the front to the back or if obstructions such as bushes or fences are present. Both of these are relatively common design features in cluster homes, as they facilitate a walkout basement in the rear of the home. If a walkout basement is present in a three-story home, firefighters in the rear will essentially be looking at four stories, making it very difficult to reach upper-floor windows for rescue with ground ladders. Even two-story houses with a walkout basement in the rear will require raising 35' ground ladders in Division C to make rescues. *Note:* Fortunately, model codes require “rescue windows,” larger-than-normal windows designed to give firefighters more space for ingress and rescue, in new residential construction.

## On the Inside

The open floor plans of many of these houses will allow for fire, heat and smoke to quickly spread throughout the building. It will also allow for hoselines to be more easily stretched to many various locations. The heat, smoke and water spread will also increase the need for salvage, and these factors are likely to require additional manpower to achieve fire/rescue objectives at these homes. Extra manpower may also be needed to check for fire spread into exposure





buildings. *Note:* Although the fire alarm may be active in the fire dwelling, it will not transmit to adjoining buildings until fire enters those dwellings. Consequently, there may be a delay in alerting neighbors of the need to evacuate.

## Further Considerations

Cluster developments are often built outside of downtown areas. Many larger departments may concentrate their ladder companies in downtown areas and only staff engine/ambulance units in the outlying areas, which can result in delayed response for aerial apparatus. When many of these outlying stations were constructed, multi-story houses may not have existed, and the stations may not be capable of housing aerial equipment without making structural modifications.

City planners must be aware of the amount of work necessary to fight fires in these developments and must consider a variety of tools to reduce fire risk. Above all, residential sprinklers should be a primary tool in their protection. Sprinkler systems make firefighters' jobs easier and safer in these densely built, lightweight structures.

City planners must also ensure all fire stations can accommodate ladder companies or quints, even if your department isn't planning to add one at the moment. *Note:* ISO? wants to see ladder company distribution within 2 « miles of each area of response. While this certainly isn't possible everywhere, departments must take this under consideration during their master planning efforts. Planners must also consider adequate apparatus turning radius in these



developments. The International Fire Code<sup>®</sup> has some specific turning radius requirements—but they're in the appendix and thus not a requirement unless your jurisdiction has specifically adopted that appendix.

## Conclusion

Although city planning and fire station design are beyond the control of the line firefighter, planning tactics for fires in cluster houses is not. One of the best training exercises departments can use to prepare for these fires is obtaining permission to work on one of the houses during construction, when it's framed out but finishes have not yet been applied. Practice stretching hoselines into the various rooms and raising ladders to various access points to ensure you're ready when you get the call.

# FIRERESCUE









