

# The Downtown Infill and Redevelopment Process

## Purpose.

One of the priorities of most small cities and towns is to find private developers interested in doing vision-consistent projects in and around downtown; and then to enable them to be successful. The purpose of this paper is to present a process for inciting private investors and developers to be successful downtown.

## Process.

### 1. Use the Vision-Strategy-Action Continuum.

- a. Create or affirm the consensus vision for the city and its downtown.
- b. Prepare a strategy to create the vision.
- c. Enact strategy-directed action plans.

### 2. The Vision

- a. Describe the consensus vision in words and pictures.
  - Words are the basis for standards.
  - Pictures engage the emotions.
- b. The existing condition is usually the foundation; preserving historic and natural resources is important.
- c. Consider a “build-out” scenario; when the town is complete, how will it look and feel?

### 3. The Strategy.

- a. To create an organization to incite vision-consistent downtown development.
- b. To enforce codes by examining all existing sub-standard and vacant buildings that need to be resurrected to meet code or demolished.
- c. To anticipate and support vision-consistent private infill and redevelopment projects with entitlements, infrastructure and the use of the city’s financial tools.
- d. To evaluate all public and private vacant lands and marginal buildings to create an inventory of potential infill and redevelopment sites and buildings.
- e. To consider the market; find investors and developers with strong experience.

### 4. The Action Plans

- a. Inventory vacant and under-utilized land, public and private:
    - Determine the suitability of public lands and buildings for private development.
    - Identify owners of private vacant lands and marginal buildings willing to pursue a partnership to find a private developer.
    - Identify “catalyst” projects from the public and private inventories.
  - b. Amend the city’s land development ordinances including the future land use designations, zoning, development standards and design guidelines in order to assist the private developers in achieving the city’s vision.
  - c. Provide the necessary infrastructure, or be prepared to provide it with developer support if necessary, including water and sewer, master stormwater systems, master parking systems, wayfinding systems and broadband internet.
  - d. Create funding mechanisms:
    - Provide selective access to the city’s financial tool, not its money. Community redevelopment agencies [CRA], neighborhood improvement districts [NID], local financial institution lending and other financing tools that can support private development.
    - Establish a NID as the first step with the approval of the property owners to tax themselves for a specific downtown infill or redevelopment purpose.
  - e. Issue *Requests for Proposals* to qualified developers for the most promising catalyst projects.
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