

Infill and Redevelopment Steering Committee 2012 Annual Report

History

After the 2000 Residential Infill Study, a small group of elected and appointed officials, development and neighborhood interests, and staff starting meeting as an ad hoc Infill and Redevelopment Steering Committee. The Committee was reorganized and expanded in 2007 as part of the decision not to enlarge the Urban Service Boundary. Three (3) task forces were created to study and review infill and redevelopment efforts and prepare a comprehensive report. The entire process, which lasted approximately two years, identified, evaluated, and drew consensus on the major issues and opportunities related to infill and redevelopment. The report was issued in 2008 and detailed 104 recommendations to improve the quality of life, quality of place, and quality of process of the Infill & Redevelopment Area.

The report was updated in 2010 to highlight the objectives accomplished regarding zoning ordinance text amendments, the development of small area plans, the development of the Complete Streets recommendations, legislation for the Land Bank and Abandoned Urban Property Tax, operation of the Community Land Trust, review and streamlining of the development review process, and the completion of the Housing Market Study and Non-Residential infill and Redevelopment Study. The report also recommended returning to a large focus group instead of 3 work groups.

Current Status and Focus

The Steering Committee has now been officially appointed as a Council committee by the Vice Mayor and its current members are:

Tony Barrett, Barrett Partners, Citizen representative, co-chair

Steve Kay, Councilmember at Large, co-chair

Tom Blues, Council member, 2nd District

Chris Ford, Council member, 1st District

Derek Paulsen, Commissioner of Planning, Preservation, and Development

Chris King, Director, Division of Planning

Jimmy Emmons, Infill/Redev Planner Senior

Barbara Rackers, Admin. Officer, Planning Services

Kevin Wentz, Admin. Officer, Environmental Quality and Public Works

Dr. David Stevens, Citizen representative

Joan Whitman, Whitman Realty, Citizen representative

Jeff Fugate, Downtown Development Authority
 Knox Van Nagell, Fayette Alliance, Citizen representative
 Mike Owens, Planning Commission member
 Renee Jackson, Downtown Lexington Corporation
 Stan Harvey, Urban Collage, Citizen representative
 Bill Johnston, Citizen representative
 David O'Neill, Property Valuation Administrator
 Dennis Anderson, Anderson communities, Citizen representative

Its initial task was to review the recommendations to determine what had been completed, what was in progress, what the priorities were, what the barriers were, and what the next steps were. It officially added thirteen (13) recommendations and removed items that had been completed. A copy of the Master List is attached as Appendix A. This process left 42 recommendations that needed attention or were in progress. A copy of the Current Focus list is attached as Appendix B.

The Committee recognized that the “low hanging fruit” of the recommendations had been picked leaving the more difficult recommendations remaining. Barriers to implementation include funding, ownership, or staffing capacity. The Committee separated the remaining issues into categories of housing, development process, environment, public space/art, or design with most of the recommendations falling into housing, design, or development process.

Since the last report, the Design Excellence Committee is working to implement design standards; and Planning is working on “Complete Street” standards, Corridor studies, and updating the Comprehensive Plan including small area plans. The Downtown Streetscape Master Plan has been completed.

The Committee is working to invigorate the Land Bank and the Vacant Property Review Commission, and combine the Public Art and Culture Master Plan Committee, and the Urban County Arts Review Board. One of the biggest achievements is the cooperation between Planning and the Property Valuation Administrator regarding vacant and underutilized property.

GIS Development Tracking

A primary focus of the Steering Committee has been to make data available to the public on-line and in real-time, if possible. Most of the discussion has centered on a GIS Development Tracking system for real time development tracking which would allow property to be followed from start to finish. It would integrate the permitting function into the GIS system and include Planning, Engineering, Building Inspections, Code Enforcement and Geo reference. It is an important economic development tool allowing us to find available land for development, pre-certify that land in some capacity, and then solicit investors. It will, however, need technical and integrated software that functions across the government. At the request of the Committee, money was placed in the 2013 budget for a pilot program which is currently being evaluated by Planning.

Code Enforcement

Believing that effective and efficient Code Enforcement plays a pivotal role in the appearance, safety, economic development, and redevelopment of property in the infill area, the Steering Committee initially focused on recommendation #96, “[p]rovide coordinated assistance to property owners with Code Enforcement violations.” It prepared and reviewed a white paper regarding Code Enforcement and made the following recommendations. These recommendations have been referred to the Administration and Council.

I. Code Enforcement

1. Analyze current fine structure to determine if changes should be made regarding increased fines for subsequent offenses on the same property.
2. Review Code to determine if certain provisions are too restrictive.
3. Update the standard operating procedures and have them approved by Council.
4. Post a link to the International Property Maintenance Code on the website.
5. Post a copy of the Standard Operating Procedures on the website.
6. Post a copy of the field inspection form on the website.
7. Make the appropriate portions of the Code Enforcement database available to the public.
8. Redraft the notice and letters sent to violators to make them more informative and user friendly while including all legal requirements.

9. Request funds in the next budget cycle to hire an administrative position to file the Code Enforcement liens, draft and monitor abatement plans, and staff the Vacant Property Review Board.
10. Monitor the officers' files to determine if time frame and paperwork standards are being met and are consistent.
11. Follow the procedure outlined in the standard operating procedures for Comprehensive Inspections.

Legal Department

1. Rewrite Sec. 12-1(b) to make it easier to read.
2. Change "reasonable time" to "30 days or in compliance with approved plan," require that reasons be listed for any plan that is extended past 90 days, require officers to list reasons for deviation from plan and reasons for extensions in report, require civil penalties to be imposed after 6 months, and provide that transfer of property does not automatically restart time frame.
3. Request funds in the next budget cycle to hire a paralegal devoted solely to filing and managing foreclosure actions.
4. Request funds in the next budget cycle to contract with a hearing officer to handle Code Enforcement cases.

Council

1. Request a report to the Public Safety Committee in six (6) months from Code Enforcement and the Legal Department regarding the implementation of these recommendations.
2. Adopt recommended changes to the ordinance when they are developed by the Law Department.
3. Adopt recommended changes to the Standard Operating Procedures when they are developed by Code Enforcement.
4. Recommend to the Administration to increase the budget for the Legal Department during the next budget cycle by \$80,000 including:
 - a. \$10,000 in filing fees;
 - b. \$55,000 for a paralegal; and
 - c. \$15,000 for a hearing officer.
5. Recommend to the Administration to increase the budget of Code Enforcement by \$46,000 during the next budget cycle to hire an administrative position to file the Code Enforcement liens and staff the Vacant Property Review Commission.

Total Budgetary Impact: \$126,000

Next Steps

The Steering Committee is now focusing on the University of Kentucky and the issues with its near neighborhoods including density, noise, trash, crime, parking, transportation, planning, development, neighborhood connectivity, neighborhood stability and demographic balance, transiency, and green space and how best to solve those problems. It supports Planning in its work with the University of Kentucky in monitoring the development of UK Master Plan.

It anticipates that it will next focus on the overall housing needs of the community including how the Vacant Property Review Commission, Land Bank, Community Land Trust, a Community Development Corporation, and an Affordable Housing Trust Fund would work together.