



# Infill Development

Infill development refers to any new development occurring on vacant or under-used parcels in already built-up areas. It can also include the redevelopment of existing properties to make more efficient use of the land. Generally, infill increases neighborhood density and the ratio of improvement-to-land value of the property.

## BACKGROUND

Infill development adds residential capacity to cities without annexation or infringing on open space or other sensitive areas. Instead, it directs development to areas where public services and infrastructure already exist. This can be a cost-effective strategy for cities and developers. Directing growth to already-served neighborhoods avoids the cost of extending sewer, road and other infrastructure. Infill development can help achieve goals like creating transit-oriented development, expanding housing options, increasing neighborhood density and diversity, and revitalizing older communities.

Infill development generally occurs on individual properties or a collection of neighboring properties. Cities can encourage infill development by supporting the aggregation of neighboring properties into larger parcels for (re)development. Properties that make good candidates for infill development are those served by transit and other amenities. They are located in densely zoned neighborhoods or neighborhoods built below their zoned density, are vacant or economically underutilized, or are large enough to be subdivided. As jurisdictions analyze existing land uses for planning purposes, compiling data on vacant or underutilized parcels can be a valuable resource for policy makers or developers interested in infill projects.



## TOOL PROFILE

### Objectives

[Housing in Centers and Near Transit](#)

[Housing Options in Expensive Markets](#)

[Missing Middle Density](#)

### Type of Tool

**Development types**

### Project Type

**Single Family**

**Multifamily**

**Ownership**

**Rental**

### Affordability Level

**Market-rate incentives and tools**





Despite the numerous benefits of infill development, barriers to its widespread application exist. Infill construction can be inhibited by neighbors' concerns about increased density or different housing types, by infrastructure in need of modernization, and by development regulations that only allow detached single-family housing types.

Coupling infill development strategies with other tools may help overcome these problems. Creating [overlay zones](#) and [flexible development regulations](#) can help remove regulatory barriers for smaller or oddly sized lots. A [lot size averaging](#) ordinance could be implemented in neighborhoods where vacant lots are smaller than the minimum requirements. Single-family residential zones could be amended to allow more diverse middle-density housing types, like [accessory dwelling units](#), duplexes, triplexes, or [townhomes](#). [Density bonuses](#) or using [incentive zoning](#), especially for development incorporating affordable housing, can also encourage infill. Applying design guidelines to infill projects and conducting [community outreach](#) can help ease concerns about density and character of development.

## RESOURCES

MRSC: [Infill Development](#) (2020)

City of Everett: [Potential Residential Infill Measures](#) (2013)

City of Portland: [Infill Design Toolkit](#) (2020)

