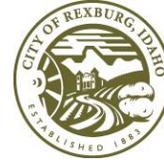


# Planning & Zoning Minutes

August 16, 2012



CITY OF  
**REXBURG**  
America's Family Community

35 North 1<sup>st</sup> East  
Rexburg, ID 83440

[www.rexburg.org](http://www.rexburg.org)

Phone: 208.359.3020  
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## Commissioners Attending:

Winston Dyer – Chairman  
Thaine Robinson  
Scott Ferguson  
Mark Rudd  
Cory Sorensen

## City Council:

Christopher Mann    Jordan Busby  
Donna Benfield      Jerry Merrill  
Bruce Sutherland    Sally Smith

## City Staff and Others:

Craig Rindlisbacher – GIS Director  
Val Christensen- Community Development Director  
Natalie Powell – Code Enforcement Officer  
Scott Johnson – Economic Development Director  
Blair D. Kay – City Clerk  
Kelvin Giles – Technology Coordination Services Director  
Darrik Farmer – Community Development Intern

**Chairman Dyer** opened the meeting at 7:05 pm.

He welcomed the public to the meeting. The City Council has asked to have a work session on infill and policy making. We appreciate the public's interest in this topic. It is not a public hearing meeting; however, the public is welcome to listen to the proceedings.

## **Roll Call of Planning and Zoning Commissioners:**

Mark Rudd, Scott Ferguson, Winston Dyer, Thaine Robinson, Cory Sorensen

Gil Shirley, Mary Ann Mounts, Marilyn Rasmussen, Richie Webb, Dan Hanna, and Jedd Walker were excused.

**City Council Members attending:** Christopher Mann, Bruce Sutherland, Donna Benfield, Sally Smith, Jerry Merrill, and Jordan Busby.

## **Minutes: Deferred for approval.**

## **New Business:**

1. Infill Zoning – Discussion with the City Council

**Winston Dyer** opened the discussion on infill and areas better to be left alone.

He referenced the infill map to be reviewed by staff.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** presented an overhead presentation on change. Change is difficult; however, it is important to recognize that to deal with change effectively, we need to view it as an opportunity. Their challenge as a city is to promote the public interest. We cannot let the interest of 1 individual, neighborhood, developer, employer, business or interest groups overrule the common long-term interest of our community. This needs to be the community's vision, not just a small segment of the community. **Craig's** presentation:

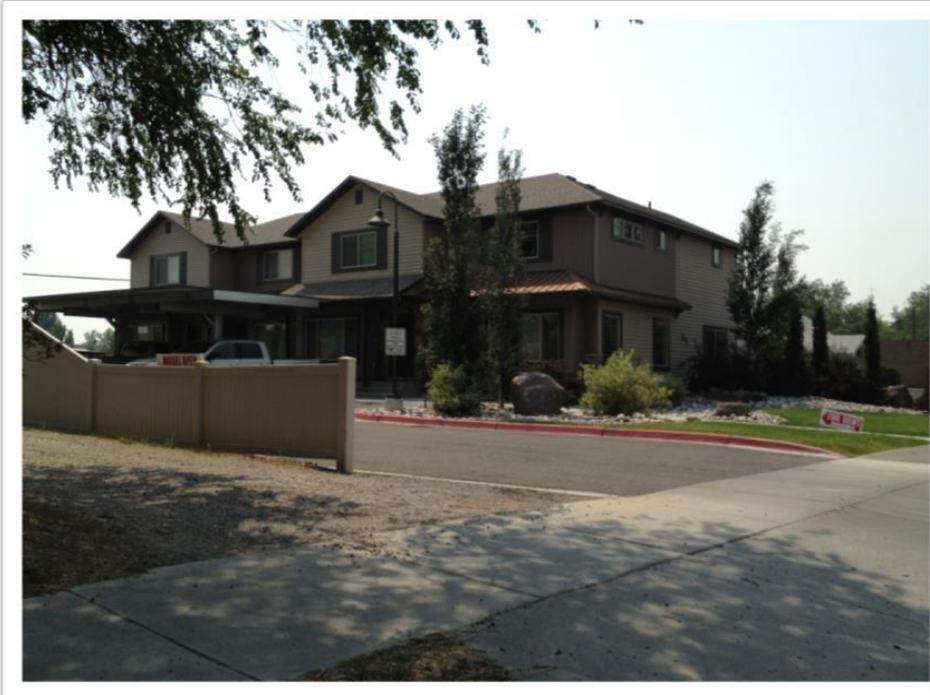
## **“Preparing for 2030 and Beyond”**

## “Rexburg Infill/redevelopment policy”

1. How have we grown since the BYU-I 4-year announcement?
2. Complaints about the traffic thru adjoining neighborhoods and the Highway 20 view corridor; also costly for new infrastructure.
  - a. The army barracks look.



- b. 4<sup>th</sup> South, 5<sup>th</sup> West and Main – Married student and Community housing projects.



c. 2<sup>nd</sup> West, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> South – Single student dormitories



3. Good use of “Vacant Ground” inside the core of the city.
4. Finding cheap land outside the community core is only cheap for the developer!
5. Limited supply of vacant ground.
  - Higher road costs and maintenance
  - Greater infrastructure costs and maintenance
  - Higher fuel cost for commuter
  - Increased cost for Police and Emergency Services
6. SPRAWL = HIGHER TAXES

### **“INFILL/REDEVELOPMENT”**

At the last Rexburg Joint Council/Planning and Zoning meeting, Council instructed Staff to have the P&Z Commission take a survey on Priorities of Infill/Redevelopment.

#### INFILL/ REDEVELOPMENT STUDY

At the last Joint Meeting, City Council instructed Staff to take the list of Infill/Redevelopment qualifiers and rank them. On a scale of one being the least important and ten being the most important, the following is the result:

1. Protect Stable Non-Fragmented Single Family Neighborhoods - (9 out of 10 Importance)
2. Identify Vacant Lots and Underutilized Properties - (8.3 out of 10 Importance)
3. Location of Existing Utility Infrastructure - (7 out of 10 Importance)
4. Distance From Significant Locations and Amenities - (6.9 out of 10 Importance)
5. Street Access - (6.9 out of 10 Importance)
6. Identify Existing Investment - (5.3 out of 10 Importance)
7. Historic Preservation - (5.3 out of 10 Importance)

### **Rexburg infill/redevelopment Planning policy**

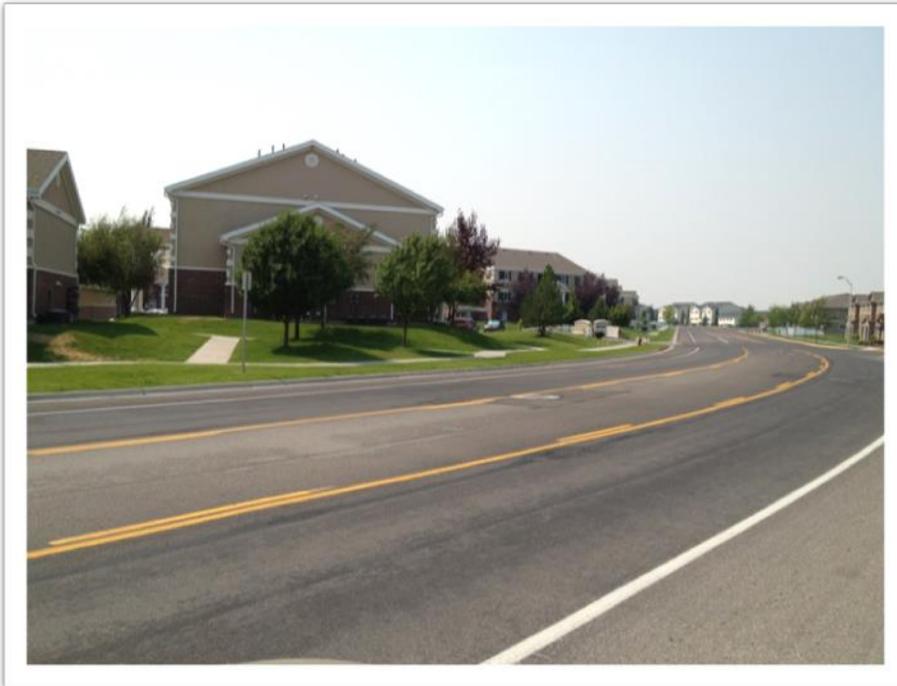
The population of Rexburg is growing at a robust rate. BYU-I is adding around 1000 students per year. In order to direct the growth in a manner that will be the best for the entire community, the City of Rexburg City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission and Staff promote Infill and Redevelopment. Utilizing the Survey Results, the following is a suggested **starting point** for a new Infill/Redevelopment Policy:

### **Protect Stable Non-Fragmented Single Family Neighborhoods (9 out of 10 Importance)**

Methods –

1. Street Buffering:

A city street built to current Development Code Standards can create a significant buffer between single family homes, higher density residential or commercial development.



2. Landscape Buffering:

The use of berms, bushes, trees and other landscape features can be used to buffer different land uses.



3. Building Setback:

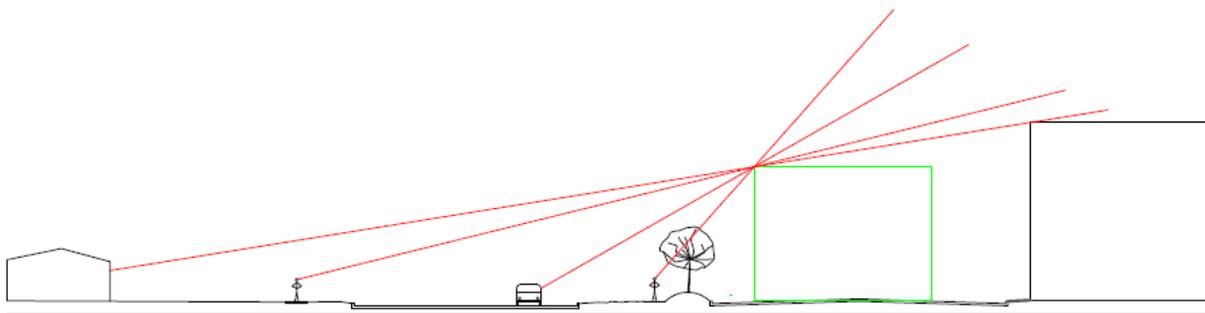
Rear yard, side yard and even front yard setbacks can be increased from those found in the current Development Code by conditions set at time of zone changes.

4. Building Height:

Building height can be reduced (or increased) in reference to the proximity to property lines.

5. Limited Vehicular Access:

Sight angles of a three story building setback at current City standards versus a four story building setback with a landscape berm and a parking lot.



Limit vehicular and pedestrian traffic in certain locations by building orientation, landscape buffers and fences.

**2. Identify Vacant Lots and Underutilized Properties - (8.3 out of 10 Importance):**

Methods –

- a. Proximity of different zones
- b. Proximity to Highway Corridors
- c. Proximity to Railroad Corridor
- d. Size

**3. Location of Existing Utility Infrastructure (7 out of 10 Importance):**

Sanitary Sewer  
Water Distribution  
Electrical Distribution  
Gas Lines  
Storm Sewer  
Fiber Optics

**4. Distance From Significant Locations and Amenities (6.9 out of 10 Importance):**

BYU-I  
Downtown Rexburg  
Employment Centers  
Parks  
Retail  
Restaurants

**5. Street Access (6.9 out of 10 Importance):**

Existing Streets In Place  
New Streets Proposed In Close Proximity  
New Streets Proposed Not In Close Proximity  
Inadequate Service Routes

**6. Identify Existing Investment (5.3 out of 10 Importance):**

Recent  
Established

**7. Historic Preservation (4.7 out of 10 Importance):**

Structures  
Neighborhoods

**“Why infill, redevelopment and mixed use?”**

# Invigorate Downtown

Higher density in the City core is better for business



Why infill, redevelopment and mixed use?



Whenever possible, build new projects in  
WEED FIELDS AND BROWN  
FIELDS not in GREEN FIELDS!

Why infill, redevelopment and mixed use?



Put investment into the core of the City.

Why infill, redevelopment and mixed use?



Take advantage of our existing amenities

**Incentives:** "...incentives may be necessary for some infill projects..."  
(from the Infill and Redevelopment Code Handbook) Many communities across the USA are looking for ways to incentivize infill and redevelopment.

**John Taylor (on early settlements):** The quality of human settlement was important to LDS founders. In 1892, LDS Church President John Taylor wrote,

*"In all cases in making new settlements, the Saints should be advised to gather together in villages... The advantages of this plan, instead of carelessly scattering out over a wide extent of country, are many and obvious...By this means the people can retain their ecclesiastical organizations...Cooperate for the good of all in financial and secular matters... Further than this they are a mutual protection and a source of strength... their compact organization gives them many advantages of a social and civic character which might be lost, misapplied or frittered away by spreading out so thinly that inter-communication is difficult, dangerous, inconvenient, and expensive."*

- Quoted in "Mormon Country" by Wallace Stegner

"We express our values by what we build"

– James Moeser, Chancellor, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



**Craig Rindlisbacher** asked the question: What do you value in Rexburg? What qualities do we have that we want to maintain?

**Sally Smith** said it is the quality of the people who live here.

**Donna Benfield** said the safety of the community.

**Jerry Merrill** said we still have a small town feel.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** said there is economic opportunity and small town atmosphere....

**Christopher Mann** said people move here to raise families.

**Cory Sorensen** said there are untapped resources in Rexburg as far as growth - economic potential, water, and natural resources.

**Bruce Sutherland** said the community has very nice amenities including the new hospital, library, high school, and an aquatic center park, all in addition to the University, which adds a whole different level of opportunities.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** said costs are lower here than in many urban areas. We have recreation opportunities that the world dreams of. There is a mix of people of all ages and income levels, of professionals and students. There is a strong sense of community.

The challenge is how do we accommodate growth and at the same time maintain these qualities? He reviewed developments on the overhead screen.

There is the need to keep costs low but to create environments where people want to be.

There is a need for integrative land uses. We are building a community.

We have to build at higher densities, but these developments are not inferior if they are built in the context of the community and have strong community amenities.

**Scott Ferguson** said the Kensington Apartments development at East 3<sup>rd</sup> North and South 2<sup>nd</sup> East is an improvement to the neighborhood.

**Winston Dyer** said the development gives the look and feel of a single family home. The end result represents the planning process at its best.

**Donna Benfield** asked about the parking for this development. Craig Rindlisbacher said the development was in the PEZ Zone, and they have reduced parking. There has not been a parking problem.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** continued to review more developments. How well does the four-plex development on 5<sup>th</sup> West integrate into the community.

**Jordan Busby** asked where the development of apartments ends.

**Cory Sorensen** said infill is a moving target that changes over time. Maybe these four-plexes on 5<sup>th</sup> West will be a target for infill in the future.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** reviewed the concept of a walkable community. One of the strengths of the traditional Rexburg community was that it was walkable. Over time, they have watched this strength erode with the development on the fringe of the community, but much of Rexburg is still very walkable.

**Jerry Merrill** said his neighbors walk to the University from five and six blocks away.

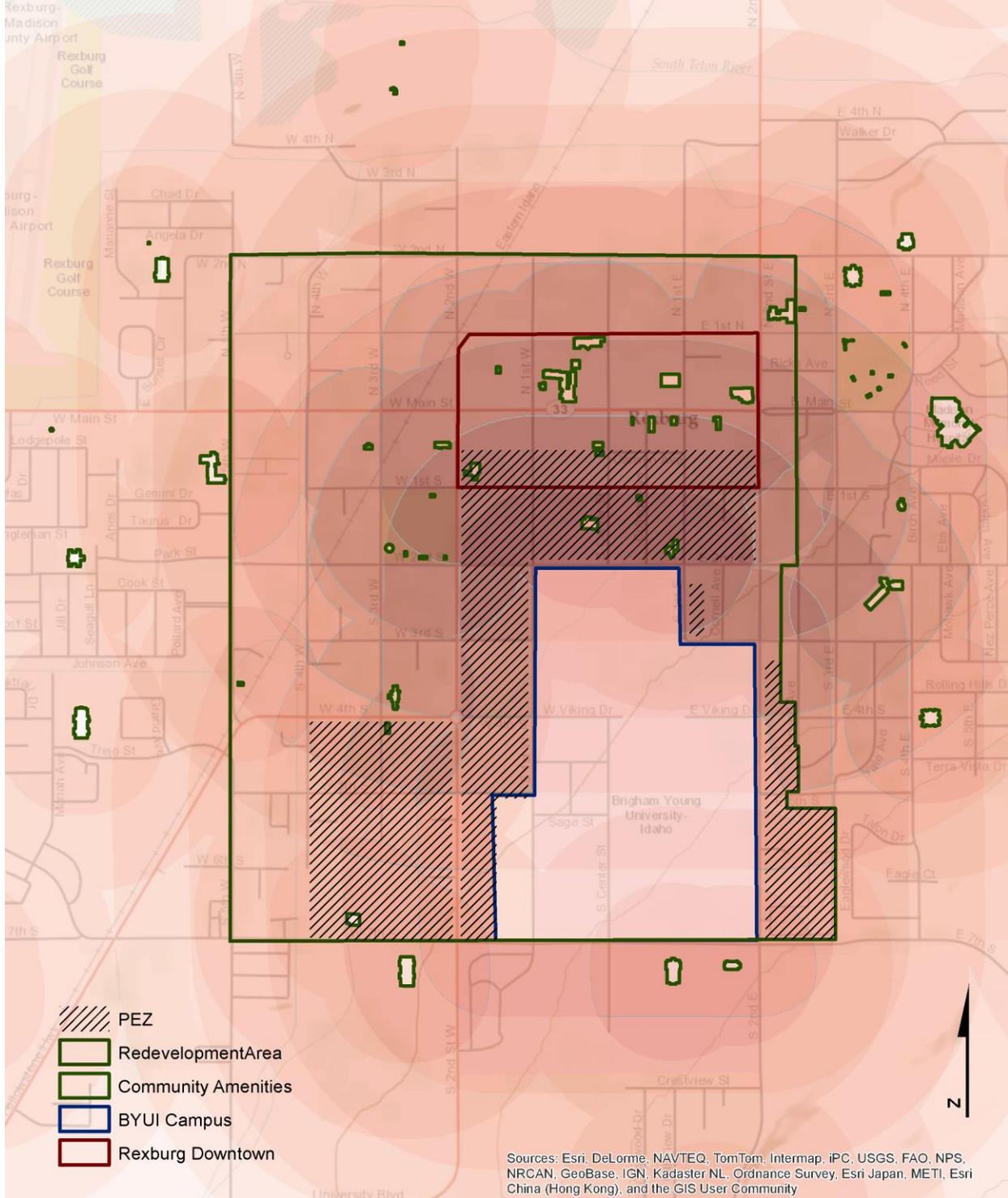
**Craig Rindlisbacher** reviewed Daybreak, Utah and the walkability of this community. You can get a walking score on the internet for your community to see if it is a walkable community.

He said that there is not bad weather; there are just bad clothes. Isn't it a quality issue to be able to walk to a destination?

**Bruce Sutherland** said that is what infill is all about; he lives in a wonderful place with the hospital, library, and apartments close by.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** did a GIS exercise. The question is "How can we protect and strengthen our compact community core?" He defined the core of the campus. The core of the campus was banded by a blue line on the map shown. He said five blocks is about the maximum walking distance you will want to walk. He overlapped the five block areas for the campus and the downtown area to see on the map where demand for growth would be proposed. The outline of the input redevelopment focus area was put on this map.

# High Demand Areas for Walkable Housing



**Scott Ferguson** said the Planning and Zoning Commission was appreciative of the mapping overlapping to show how close the planning has come to develop within five blocks of the University and the Downtown area.

There was discussion of the planning in the lighter shaded areas on the map. Development is not always apartments for the University. Pockets of development need to be developed within a two block area of amenities. Housing creates demand for commercial development within a pocket.

**Winston Dyer** thanked Craig Rindlisbacher for the presentation. He turned to the next presentation from Val Christensen – preliminary elements of a policy regarding infill.

**Val Christensen** reviewed overhead pictures of recent developments. He referred to the problem when cheap land is developed. It is only cheap for the developer. Sprawl is problematic and costs more to develop for the community due to more roads, water, sewer, power, snow removal, medical, etc. These costs will add up over time to a lot of money. At the last City Council meeting, some information was given to the City Council for review. The information on rankings for an infill/redevelopment survey was reviewed.

The number one issue of importance in this study: Protect Stable Non-fragmented Single Family Neighborhoods.

Val's presentation:

## Change:

Change is difficult, risky, and problematic. It can create conflict.

“Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.” (Edward T. McMahon)

## Our Challenge:

To promote the public interest, the interest of the community at large, rather than the interest of individuals or special groups within the community (City of Rexburg 2020 Comprehensive Plan)

## Our Community:

Residents of Rexburg have chosen to live here because they enjoy the current **quality** of life .... The primary vision of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that this quality is maintained, preserved, and enhanced.

What do you value about living in Rexburg? Changing attitudes toward effective Community Development.

Envision Utah and the Cache Valley Scenario planning examples demonstrate the need for **frugal** approaches to growth. **Economic development** now requires community market strategies to be successful. (This isn't an all or nothing situation. The goal for Cache Valley is for 25 % of the growth to be infill and redevelopment.)

## The need for Integrated Land-uses:

We must not build housing, we must build communities. – Mike Burton

Higher density housing offers an inferior lifestyle only when it is without a community as its setting. – Andres Duany

We can't afford to separate like we once thought desirable to preserve our community; we need to seek a pattern of Integrated Development.

Let's review where we have both succeeded or fallen short in meeting this need to integrate development into the community. This is the development that was...





What is working and what isn't in this area of town?



In my opinion, this area hasn't worked out so well. Why?



How has this development positively or negatively affected the neighborhood? How does this complex better integrate into the community? This was a tough one for the community. How well does it integrate?



Is this area of town working?



What about here?

## The Walkable Community:

“Americans are broad-minded people. They’ll accept the fact that a person can be an alcoholic, a dope fiend, a wife beater, and even a newspaperman, but if a man doesn’t drive there’s something wrong with him.” – Art Buchwald

One of the strengths of the traditional Rexburg community was its walkability. Over time we have watched this strength erode with the fringe development, but much of Rexburg is still very walkable.

## Walkability – attitudes are changing:

“God made us walking animals—pedestrians. As a fish needs to swim, a bird to fly, a deer to run, we need to walk, not in order to survive, but to be happy.” – Enrique Penalosa

If you look outside Rexburg, you realize the whole cities a being designed with walkability built into the fabric of the community. Websites are now devoted to accessing the walkability of an area  
If I’m a young married student with 2 kids ....

<http://www.daybreakutah.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Fall-2010-newsletter.pdf>  
<http://www.walkscore.com/ID/Rexburg>

## How can we protect and strengthen our compact community core?

Proximity to community assets affects more than walkability. **Val Christensen** reviewed the colored map to show the development of the community by the type of property use- including single family, duplex, apartments, etc.

How non-fragmented established neighborhoods are to be protected and buffered from development projects needs to be a focus.

Landscaping buffers could include berms, etc. – there are tools available to soften how a project looks.

Building Setbacks: could be larger. A building could be set further back by using the right landscaping and berm. During the zoning process, it is possible to condition the rezone to address such concerns. A number of tools can be used to address these concerns – on a case by case basis.

Building Heights: the building heights can be increased or reduced. Larger setbacks can be employed if needed to buffer. That can affect the height of the building.

Sight Angles: Berms, trees, and a parking lot can make an acceptable buffer to a single family home across the street.

Vehicular access: Limited vehicular access and pedestrian traffic in certain locations by building orientation, landscape buffers and fences – no access on to a, fencing of parking lots, landscape buffering, etc.

Identify Vacant Lots and Underutilized Properties: how it would work with the proximity of different zones and how they may have a proximity to the highway corridor.  
Consider the look of the remaining highway corridor.  
Consider the size of the property.

Location of Existing Utility Infrastructure – how does it fit?

Distance from Significant Locations and Amenities - addressed in Craig Rindlisbacher's presentation.

Street Access: Existing streets that are in place are more valuable than having to build new streets or infrastructure.

Identifying Existing Investment: is it recent or established?

Historic Preservation: Structures and neighborhoods need to be looked at.

Why infill redevelopment through Mixed Use? Invigorate downtown; higher density in the City core is better for business.

Whenever possible build new projects in wheat fields and brown fields, not in green fields. Put investment into the City core. Take advantage of our existing amenities.

Incentives may be necessary for some infill projects. Many communities in the United States are looking for ways to incentivize infill and redevelopment.

**John Taylor quotation** on early settlement - "In all cases in making new settlements, the same should be advised to gather together in villages. The advantages of this plan instead of perilously scattering out over a wide extent of country are many and obvious. By this means the people can retain their ecclesiastic organizations, cooperate for the good of all in financial and secular matters; further than this they are a mutual protection and a source of strength. Their compact organization gives them many advantages of a social and specific character which might be lost, misapplied or

frittered away by spreading out so thinly that intercommunications are difficult, dangerous, inconvenient, and expensive.”

**Val Christensen** ended his presentation by quoting James Mosier, Chancellor of the University of North Carolina – “We express our values by what we build.”

**Val Christensen** asked for any direction and input on tonight’s presentations, so further information toward an infill policy can be addressed at the next work meeting of the City Council and the P&Z Commission.

The goal would be to have policy in place to meet the City Council September 19<sup>th</sup> schedule.

**Winston Dyer** asked for questions for clarification.

**Cory Sorensen** asked when creating this map if they had gone door to door for information in addition to tax record and database information.

There has been some door to door information gathered – the windshield approach.

**Scott Ferguson** asked for the size of a parcel for infill to be addressed.

**Val Christensen** said combining lots does drive re-development verses one lot at a time. Density verses setback was discussed. Line of sight makes sense when taller buildings are set back over 100 feet.

**Winston Dyer** said infill does make sense; he referred to the PEZ overlay where attractive buildings are being built with incentives including less parking and more pedestrian amenities. He referred to incentivized development on 7<sup>th</sup> South to get lava rock land developed. He stated Hwy 20 buffering is in place on newer developments. There is a plan in place for trying to keep that corridor visual and beautiful.

**Cory Sorensen** said he observed Cambridge Court, a 66-unit complex, as having very little traffic. What is a fragmented neighborhood versus a non-fragmented neighborhood? He lives behind Porter Park where he is one of two owner-occupied homes in that neighborhood.

**Val Christensen** said it is a case by case issue. The subject planning map is just a focus point to do planning. His own neighborhood changed the zoning to single family to prevent more duplexes in his neighborhood. Only a few homes were without apartments in his neighborhood at that time. There was a struggle as homes were becoming dormitories.

**Sally Smith** said there is not much land in the defined infill area to develop. She referred to a hypothetical possibility of Wal-Mart doing a new distribution development and needing to hire 400 people, or any other change that may happen to change the face of the community. What would happen? We are talking about keeping the infrastructure close, but that may not be possible. We need to concentrate on the designated area, but we need to keep our eyes open. The infill discussion is a moving target.

**Christopher Mann** said the presentation has been great; however, each development proposal needs to be looked at individually.

**Winston Dyer** said any planning is done on a case by case basis- including incentives, setbacks, etc.

**Scott Johnson** said the discussion on infill has been going on for a year with staff. It has been an ongoing conversation for a long time. There are some great examples that impact economic development. The first step is to identify infill areas; they are not saying that everything is coming to the identified square on the map – that is not the intent. He is raising a family in Rexburg. His biggest desire is to keep this community a viable community to live in. Cost is a huge factor - additional infrastructure, roads, etc. How can we continue to grow and develop and maintain a lot of the things that we want?

**Sally Smith** thanked staff for all they are doing and being in the daily trenches. She appreciates all their hard work.

**Donna Benfield** agreed. She thanked Craig Rindlisbacher for his presentation; it helped to demonstrate for her that 5th West may eventually not be too far out. She wondered about the feasibility of a future buyer or renter living near the railroad.

Buffering could make a big difference.

**Cory Sorensen** stated he has lived next to the railroad tracks for over 8 years.

**Bruce Sutherland** said it is nice to have larger buildings 120 feet away instead of a smaller building 20 feet away from the street. It is a good tool to use to show how development will affect an existing neighborhood.

**Jerry Merrill** said sometimes there is a feeling the developer wants bigger complexes to make more money. He wants the developments to make money to keep the property nice which helps improve the neighborhood. He likes the conditioning tools for new developments. Keep in mind that we want the developments to be successful to keep the property maintained.

**Scott Johnson** said staff is trying to facilitate the discussions to come to a consensus for long-term growth of the community.

**Cory Sorensen** reiterated the need to be successful with a development to pay taxes to help with the upkeep of streets and city infrastructure. It would improve the economy as a whole.

**Donna Benfield** was interested in the inventory numbers. How many beds are in the works right now?

**Val Christensen** said the map is necessary before they can address the actual numbers. He said there is a need for 200 community housing units per year. A block zoned Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) would allow 200 units. High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) would allow 30 units per acre or 300 units.

**Cory Sorensen** said non-student housing is also needed for stable growth.

**Val Christensen** said he has owned apartments in the past, which averaged 33% non-student renters.

**Phil Packer** of BYU-Idaho said the University plans on about 25% married students.

**Scott Johnson** said the hiring for 50 new jobs is happening currently.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** said the whole picture includes planning, investors, etc. Along with the infill. It is not just the City doing development.

**Bruce Sutherland** said growth develops through the free market process. The City is just trying to manage growth; we do not want to do away with it – we want to do the best we can for the future.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** said we need to do a better job of educating the citizens and the community. Government is also here to protect people's private property rights.

**Winston Dyer** asked for questions from the public on the discussion they have heard tonight.

How can the public give input on process of city policy in general?

It was discussed that citizens could come in and speak with City staff about their concerns.

**Chris Mann** said the community is brought in at the very beginning of the process.

**Scott Johnson** said many of the staff members are part of the community and live in the community. They are here to have those discussions.

**Donna Benfield** said staff has been working on this issue for more than a year. Some of the emphasis on this infill information is new to the City Council. This is just the beginning of the process.

**Craig Rindlisbacher** asked for clarification on the policy discussion. **Winston Dyer** said policy starts at the staff level; then it goes to Planning and Zoning before a recommendation is made to City Council. Further input can follow.

How often is the Comprehensive Plan evaluated?

**Winston Dyer** said state law used to require a six month window before Comprehensive Plan changes could be proposed. The law was recently changed to allow requests for change at any time. The Comprehensive Plan has been edited routinely; however, the state code requires a complete review every 10 years. The map was created to show how mapping can be used to show current development; the map is a tool to show how development is occurring.

Underutilized property may be a home with a large lot with sagebrush in the back yard. The home is proper; however, the back yard is not developed.

**Val Christensen** said the presented map is an example of what the City is trying to achieve. The map is not yet complete.

An audience member said she appreciates the fact she was allowed to be present at this meeting to hear this discussion.

**Johnny Watson** of JRW & Associates said from a designer's point of view – he goes into a new community and checks for a current zoning ordinance, a comprehensive plan or a community vision, and design standards etc. These documents guide a developer or designer as to where potential projects can go. He is so grateful to live in a community that has these steps in place. Communities without these tools allow for more uncontrolled growth. What kind of goals does Rexburg have for development? He said the discussion can become very personal; so, as a

community person and business person, he feels it is very nice to have the planning documents to shape the community.

An audience member said she liked the quote stated earlier: “We express our values by what we build.” It was stated earlier that infill does not have to be a huge apartment complex. She hopes that is the case. She is not saying that apartments are not valuable. Please make sure the development is done in a way that is livable for the people who are already living there and livable for the people who will be part of the new development.

The next work meeting on Infill will be on September 06, 2012 at 6:00 P.M. before the regular Planning and Zoning meeting.

**Winston Dyer** thanked everyone for their input.

Break at 9:20 P.M.

**Compliance:** None

**Non controversial Items Added to the Agenda:**

1. Adams Elementary CUP update

**Val Christensen** reviewed the issue of the portable building being moved two feet to achieve the required setback. Also, the rental business use of the building was allowed by the City Council to continue to the end of the school year in the spring of 2013. The preschool contracts were already signed for the upcoming school year; therefore the City Council allowed the continuation of the preschool for one more year.

The joint meeting with the school district will be set up for this coming November.

**Val Christensen** will use tonight’s input and will continue to work on the infill policy statement to be addressed further at the September 6<sup>th</sup> work meeting of the P&Z Commission and the City Council.

**Report on Projects:** None

**Tabled Requests:** None

**Building Permit Application Report:** None

**Heads Up:**

August 30 - Joint P&Z Commission meeting (Rexburg, Madison County, Sugar City, Teton, Newdale) – Madison County is hosting  
September 6 – Work meeting of P&Z and City Council at 6:00 pm before the regular P&Z meeting.  
September 6 – CUP for Duplex – 237 Marianne Drive  
September 6 – The Lofts Apartments – South 3<sup>rd</sup> West - Site plan change

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 pm.