# Consequences of Residential Infill Development on Existing Neighborhoods in the Treasure Valley

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## Executive Summary

In 2004, the Urban Land Institute awarded a community action grant to the newly formed Idaho District Council. In partnership with Idaho Smart Growth, the purpose of the grant was to examine if in-fill projects resulted in the negative consequences that neighborhood feared at the time the project was approved.

The study was conducted over a three year period with assistance from, Boise State University, the Ada County Assessor's Office, the Ada County Highway District, the Cities of Meridian and Boise, builders and developers, and neighborhood association leaders. After considering eighteen projects for possible inclusion in the study twelve completed infill projects were analyzed.

A review of the hearing and public comments for each project was documented. In the case of the substandard lot developments no hearing records exist so comments about that type of infill was documented from neighborhood plans. Changes in property valuation based on actual sales prices were evaluated for the neighborhoods surrounding the projects in comparison to the Multiple Listings valuations for that area. Traffic conditions before and after the project were assessed based on before and after traffic counts and current parking conditions were compared to the conditions testified to. An on-site survey was conducted of neighborhood opinions and assessments stated by the neighbors who were found at home and were willing to take the time to answer researchers questions. A mail survey was sent to residents of the chosen projects. Finally neighbors who had testified at the hearings and the developers of the projects were interviewed by the team.

The general findings of the study are that many of the factors that create apprehension about in-fill projects are difficult to assess. These factors include density, neighborhood incompatibility, design, and lack of public amenities. The sample of case studies is relatively small, but the quantifiable data was remarkably consistent between the projects. For the factors that can be quantified, including traffic, parking and property values the community fears are generally unfounded.

Based on the analysis, the working group who prepared the study makes the following recommendations and findings:

(to be completed by the group)

## Brampton Square/Oak Park Village

### Background

Oak Park Village and Brampton Square are part of a mixed use development completed in 1996. Oak Park Village consists of 200 subsidized apartment units on 9.89 acres (20.23 units/acre). To transition the project into the pre-existing single family neighborhood, there are 43 three and four-plex townhomes on 11 acres (3.82 units/acre) on the south and west sides of the apartments. Many of the condominiums are owner occupied and face onto single family homes across the streets. The covered parking for the condominiums is behind them and accessed through the apartment entrance.

The project includes a neighborhood serving retail and office component on a busy arterial, Vista Ave., to the east. There is a church to the west and the rest of the immediate neighborhood is single family residential. This is one of two neighborhoods in Boise that met the criteria to be classified as low income in the 1990 census. Some in the neighborhood who opposed this project felt like building housing specifically for low income residents invited a further concentration of low income households in the neighborhood.

Developer Jim Tomlinson acquired the vacant parcel slated for a grocery store. Tomlinson worked hard to communicate with neighbors, holding several neighborhood meetings. Recognizing the potential controversy surrounding the subsidized housing proposed he expanded notification beyond the 300 foot requirement and maximized the participation of area residents by arranging for a local Boy Scout troop to deliver flyers announcing the neighborhood meeting to area residents.

According to the developer, existing residents chiefly expressed concern about the density and the potential for traffic congestion. On a positive note, the neighbors suggested and the developer agreed to add the commercial/retail portion abutting Vista a move that also buffered the apartments and condos from the busy traffic on Vista. The developer responded to concerns about school access by installing a stop light with a crosswalk on Vista leading to a school across the street and providing a walking path through the project that allows all neighborhood children to easily access the signaled crossing to the school. He also supports a head start center in this portion of the project which appealed to neighbors whose own children might use it.

The public meetings appeared to allay at least some of the concerns over what increased density meant for the neighborhood, in the end the Vista Neighborhood Association supported the project. Of the 19 people who testified about the project at the public hearings, 4 expressed concern over traffic congestion, 4 on school overcrowding, and 3 on potential parking problems. It is interesting to note that residents feared school overcrowding. How were they to know that the Boise Schools, especially in the Bench area would face the opposite problem just a few years later? With the rapid growth in surrounding suburban communities – at the expense of Boise's first tier neighborhoods – the Boise School district now faces declining enrollments.

### Evaluation

Neighbors complained of increased traffic at the inception of the project, and today rate the increased traffic as their chief complaint. The developer, on the other hand, contends that through traffic should decrease with infill development. After hearing of concerns at the neighborhood meeting the developer worked to alleviate them by directing traffic from the project onto the nearby arterial through traffic calming measures. That effort appears to have been successful with traffic levels on Cherry Ave. holding steady from 1995 to 2003. However, traffic data for Shoshone Street near the project is not available so researchers were unable to determine if Shoshone has been impacted. We do know that traffic counts on Vista Ave. have declined substantially both north and south of the project since the project was built – from a high of over 23,000 ADT to a current level around 20,000 ADT. This may be explained by a shift of the center of the Boise metro region to the west, leaving this eastern portion of the region with fewer regional trips.

Though residents feared initially that parking in the area would suffer, a full 40% of residents surveyed, reported they "agreed" that the project did not reduce the quality and quantity of on-street parking. On that parking question, "4" on the scale of 1 to 5 was the most common answer, so it appears that the theoretical concern over parking was not borne out in practice. In our survey of 25 neighborhood residents, those residents gave the lowest score to the question "the development protects views and natural light". As the property was a vacant lot prior to building, this loss is quite real. The developer was careful to step back the height of the project, the condominiums fronting the existing single story single family residences are designed with single story facades that step back to two-stories with the three story apartments behind that. However the foothills are still obscured from view for adjacent residences to the south and west.

Half of all residents thought their neighborhood was less safe since the project's construction, and another 20% were neutral on the question. The fear of crime predates the project and is confirmed by concerns about crime stated in a neighborhood plan that predates the project. The Vista Neighborhood Association pitched a proposal that the City of Boise construct a Police substation on the property where the development now stands. These fears are not supported by evidence as crime within the police reporting sub district that covers this neighborhood decreased on a per capita basis since this project was built, however it does remain above the crime rate in other Boise sub districts. Ironically, the residents of the apartment complex are mostly pleased with their homes, but many expressed concern with the number of sex offenders housed in the rest of the neighborhood.

What remains a conundrum on this project is discerning its impact on surrounding property values. At the project's inception, at least one resident complained that he did not want low income housing in the neighborhood because it would hurt property values. The real estate data studied includes only the condominium portion of the project, Brampton Square. The apartment complex, Oak Park Village, has remained under ownership of the developer and housing authority, no sales data exists on it.

As with the rest of the Treasure Valley, this area has seen strong growth. Noting the difference in house size of the two areas, researchers divided the surrounding neighborhood into two pieces and aggregated the data for each sub neighborhood separately. Before the project was completed both parts of the neighborhood were nearly on pace with or outpacing the MLS in property value increase. Sales prices in the neighborhood were lower than the MLS because of the smaller size homes. However, their price per square foot (/sf) remained even with or above the MLS price. This seems consistent with the rule that smaller sized homes in good locations bring a higher price/sf due to economies of scale.

After the project was completed the Lemhi/Dill portion of the neighborhood began to lose ground on its advantage in price/sf over both the MLS and the Nez Perce/Canal portion of the neighborhood. It also lost ground in the rate of increase in sales price. Some of the small homes in the Lemhi/Dill sub neighborhood visibly need renovation, while a few are well kept, and, as noted by the apartment residents, this sub neighborhood also has a higher proportion of registered resident sex offenders than the surrounding neighborhood. It would require more study to determine the cause of this relative decline. Meanwhile, the Nez Perce/Canal portion of the neighborhood seems unaffected in price/sf and is rising in sales price at a slightly higher pace than the MLS region.

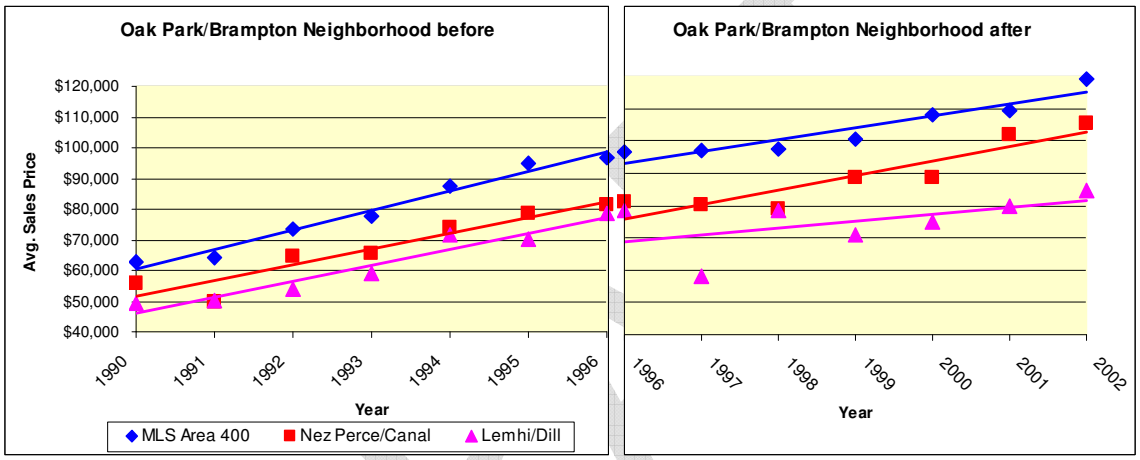
Researchers also observed that the value of Brampton Square condominiums were initially above the MLS in sales price, but remained flat for the study period – quite an anomaly in the Boise market during this period – only rising with the market in the last year studied. The question we were unable to answer is whether the subsidized housing in the Oak Park Village complex is affecting the value of the homes in the Lemhi/Dill neighborhood (and coincidentally the value of the Brampton Square condominiums themselves) or whether the lack of a concerted renovation effort, the crime rate and a concentration of offenders in this sub neighborhood or a combination of those factors is affecting the value. Despite the mixed conclusions of researchers the surveyed residents gave their highest marks to the statements, "the neighborhood is a place that I want to and can afford to live in" and "the project did not negatively impact

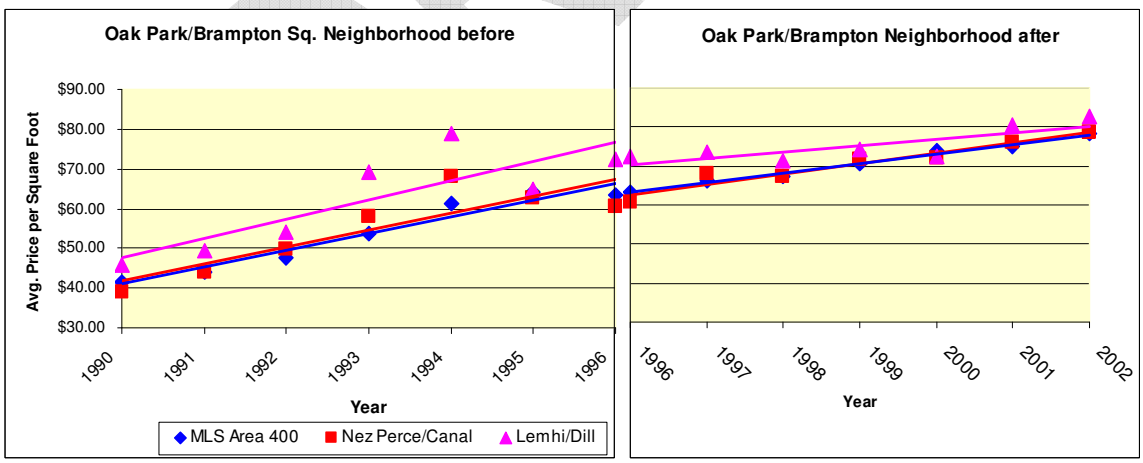
my property values." The factors potentially affecting property values in this neighborhood are too varied to assign cause to any of them without further study.

**Conclusions**

Of the intial concerns from the neighbors; the traffic on the collector streets has not gotten worse and traffic has actually decreased on the arterial, parking seems unaffected, conversely views have been obscured. The project has not dampened property values for the Nez Perce/Canal sub neighborhood and the affects on the Lemhi/Dill property values are uncertain. The project has one of the lower mean scores when surveying surrounding neighbors. What is unclear is whether the scores were lower because of the neighborhood in general, or if the Oak Park project was the primary contributing factor.

All in all, the residents surveyed were upbeat about the project as it stands today. Certainly the fact that the developer listened to residents' concerns and implemented traffic calming, added walkable retail, put in a pathway and stoplight and included a Headstart classroom, helped this project succeed. In a difficult location a project including a subsidized housing component gained neighborhood association support initially and is seen by half our respondents as a positive addition to the neighborhood today.



## Ferndale Subdivision

### Background

The Ferndale Subdivision consists of 13 dwelling units on 2.55 acres for a density of 5.09 d.u./acre. It was completed in 2004 in the Pierce Park area of northwest Boise with 8 duplex units and 5 single family detached homes. The approval process required a conditional use permit and subdivision plat. The developer asked for waivers on lot size minimums and zero lot line setbacks on the duplex lots. Surrounding uses include single family detached residential to the east, large lot residential (2 to 5 acres lots) to the south, small lot single family to the west and a church to the north. The land was previously vacant.

The developer held a neighborhood meeting that was attended by four people. The attendees of the meeting were concerned about a street connection providing a cut through route on their street. That street was not extended and none of them subsequently testified at the hearings on the project. Another street within the project was stubbed for a future street connection. Four people did testify or write letters, three in opposition. The opposition was centered mainly on density, traffic and incompatibility with the existing large lot estates in the immediate area. One letter declared that the nearby neighborhood school was over capacity, yet the Boise School District proposed to close that school because of declining enrollments in 2004. A petition requesting a moratorium on further development in the neighborhood until the zoning could be examined relative to the neighborhoods' integrity was signed by 45 neighbors and submitted.

This is an area of transition within the Boise City limits. It developed at the edge of the city and on the edge of the historic streetcar line as small farms and large lot housing. Pockets of rural development remain and some residents still keep large animals. Newer developments are mostly medium sized single family detached housing and are interspersed randomly. The small house product and duplexes in this project are different from the other housing types in the area. Finally the city comprehensive plan calls for new urbanism and an urban village in the area – however the land use map indicates low density residential.

The existing R1-C zoning on the land under this project allowed for up to twenty dwelling units, yet testimony centered on the thirteen units proposed as "excessive" density. Confusion may have arisen over waivers requested in the conditional use process. The average lot size in the project is larger than the minimum required in the Boise code, but the project was granted a waiver allowing smaller than minimum lots with zero lot line (no setback required between units) to create separate lots for each of the duplex units. This provision allowed for separate homeownership for these products.

A waiver was also requested on the size of the corner common lot that acts as a buffer from the collector. Corner lots are required to be bigger so that buffer space from the roadways can be incorporated into them. A separate common lot buffer provides a bigger buffer than a buildable corner lot would. Those opposing the development did not seem to understand the reason for the waiver requests, but did understand that the houses proposed would be different from their own.

### Evaluation

Surrounding residents scored this development moderately. The second lowest overall score for any development studied was recorded on whether the project includes amenities. Researchers note that the project was required to add sidewalks, curb and gutter on both the collector and local streets. These features are missing in much of the neighborhood; clearly surrounding residents don't consider these to be amenities. The developer was also required to build a fence surrounding the project at neighbors request, but neighbors asked for a pole fence and the fence that was constructed is solid wood.

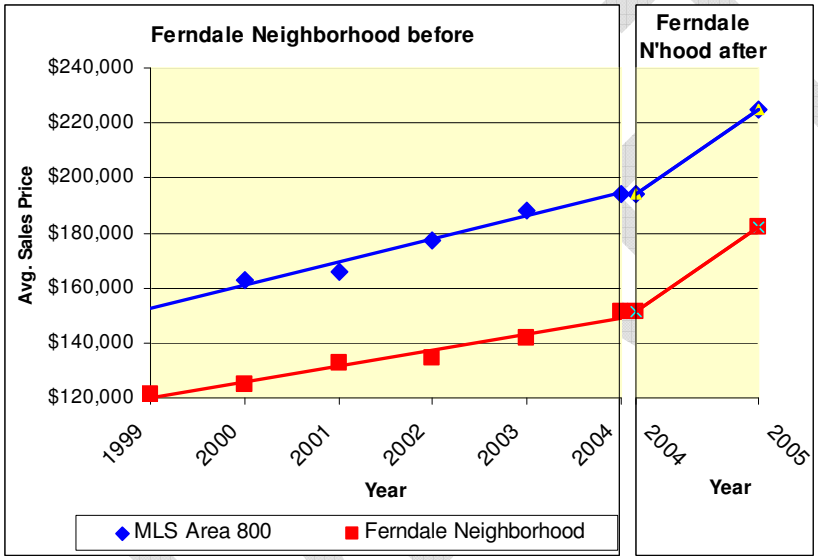
Respondents were also concerned about traffic and the compatibility of the project layout with existing neighborhood and scored both of these questions quite low. Recorded traffic counts show that traffic has decreased on the adjacent collector since 2001 by as much as 300 trips per day. Traffic counts did

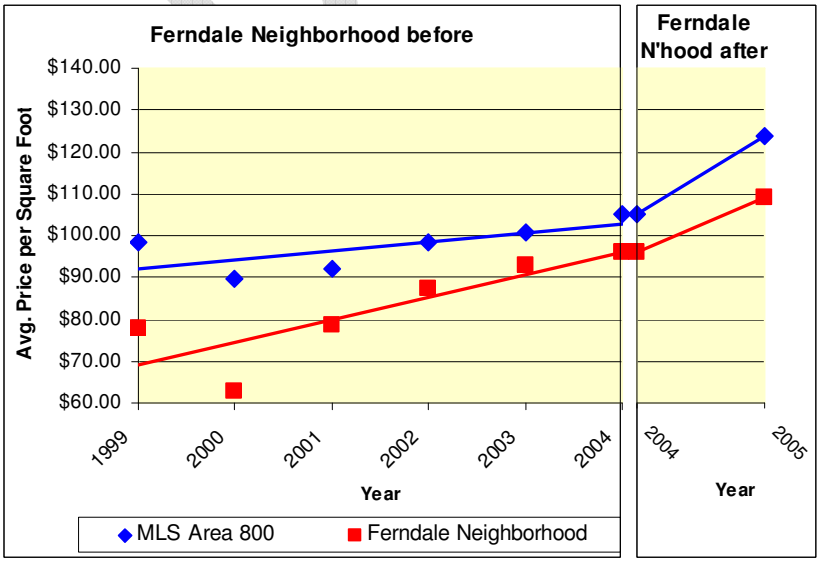
increase by 50 trips per day after the project was completed. A count of traffic exiting the development shows 102 cars per day.

Survey respondents believe that the project maintained affordability in the neighborhood at the same time that it increased property values in the area. The real estate data is inconclusive. The Sales price of the existing neighborhood was increasing at a slower rate than the larger MLS region before the project was complete. Those sales prices rose at the same rate in the year after the project was built. The price per square foot was the reverse, rising in relationship to the MLS before the project and declining in the year after.

**Conclusion**

The Ferndale Subdivision introduced a different housing product into this traditionally rural neighborhood. The surrounding neighbors were uncertain of the impact of that housing type and generally unsupportive of both the density and the difference. They are concerned about the overall integrity of the neighborhood. Researchers note that the future vision for this area reflected in the city comprehensive plan goals and land use map doesn't seem to be understood or accepted by the neighborhood residents. The fear of increased traffic has not come about and the scores given the project are generally moderate.



## Garden Green Narrative

### Background

Garden Green is a 32 unit development in eight four-plex buildings on 16.851 acres (1.899 units/acre) in a single family residential neighborhood on the Central Bench Rim in Boise. The site was the last vestige of a farm and was largely vacant until Garden Green was built in 1998. Immediately to the North below the grade of the rim is the I84 connector, to the east and south are single family residences and to the west and disconnected from the neighborhood are commercial uses lining an arterial, Orchard Street.

The site is constrained by the interstate and the commercial uses, leaving only one main route in and out, with a secondary route on a substandard width road fronted by single family houses. Both routes traverse through the existing neighborhood for access. The neighborhood does not have sidewalks in most places.

There were a number of proposals for the property prior to the one that was eventually built; all of them were for multi-family projects at much higher density, up to 60 units. The approval process included a conditional use permit and a rezone and a reapplication of a modified conditional use permit after negotiation with the neighborhood. There were numerous public hearings, appeals, a denial and reapplication. Thirty-two people testified, all in opposition to the project. The issues that were cited most often in opposition to the project included traffic congestion, high density, school overcrowding, hazards to children from traffic, incompatibility with surrounding neighborhood, parking issues, and architectural design issues.

### Evaluation

The approval process for Garden Green was acrimonious. In fact, years after the development was completed, both neighbors and the developer marvel at the hostility that characterized the process. During this period, residents formed a neighborhood association. Modifications to the developers' plan came about through the course of gaining approval, reducing density (from 40 units to 33 units) and making small architectural and aesthetic changes in the buildings. Neither side was satisfied by the compromises, and both agree that the changes in design made the apartments more suited for multi-person rentals, rather than family occupancy.

All parties remain dissatisfied with the development of Garden Green today. Neighborhood activists continue to be displeased with the project and the developer has abandoned working on infill in Boise because of his frustration with the process. He felt that the project he wanted to build would have served the interests of the City in increasing density close to the core, providing connectivity to the Greenbelt, and providing new investment in a struggling neighborhood. However, the compromises led to the development of a very different project, without enough units to support high quality construction.

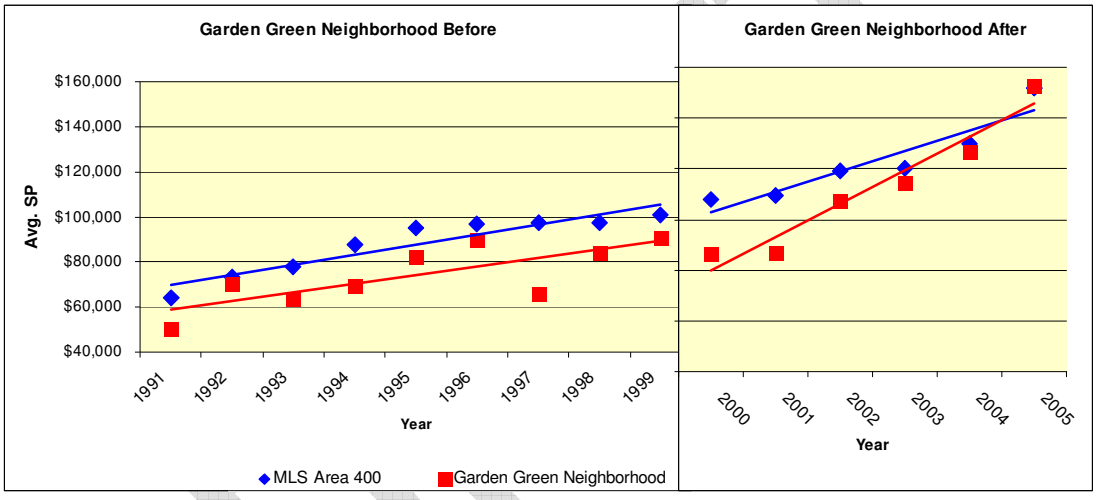
Today residents express many concerns about both Garden Green and other changes in the immediate neighborhood. Surveyed residents found the project to not be a positive addition to the neighborhood. Neighbor perception is that Garden Green continues to attract short-term tenants, and that high occupancy units increase traffic and parking problems. With the lowest mean score [of 2] in any of our neighborhood surveys, residents believe Garden Green has increased traffic in the neighborhood. Finally, there is some concern that the acceptance of the higher density Garden Green project which is unlike other neighborhood dwellings in appearance opened the door for the emergence of skinny houses in the area.

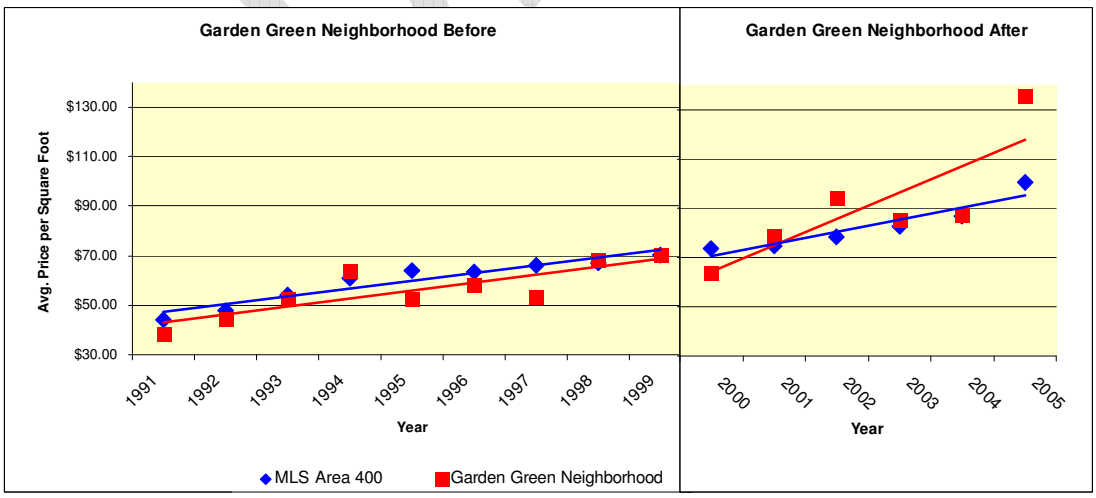
Although residents suggest that Garden Green has negatively impacted property values, MLS data shows that both sales price and price/sf has increased at a higher rate after the project was completed than before it was built with both actually surpassing the MLS region by 2005. Researchers cannot conclude how the Garden Green development affected real estate prices, instead noting that this neighborhood is one of the bench neighborhoods nearest downtown with historic character and good access to nearly all parts of town. All of these factors have played a role in driving prices up. Another factor, as observed by neighbors during the survey, this neighborhood has a high number of infill skinny houses built within the last 5 years, this newer housing stock is generally higher priced than the existing small older homes.

Data on traffic indicates an increase of nearly 200 cars a day on Garden Street north of Emerald at the time the project was completed. This is no surprise given that lack of options for access to the project. In addition, a counter on Bluff at the entrance of the project indicates that it is producing 349 trips daily. Without mitigation for the narrow roads and lack of sidewalks researchers understand the concern this has caused existing neighborhood residents. Readers should be aware that Garden Street was connected down the hill into downtown before the I84 connector was complete and traffic counts on Garden were reduced by nearly 1000 cars per day when this occurred. There was recognition at the time that Garden Street would have required improvements if this disconnection was not made.

**Conclusion**

The development of Garden Green illustrates a wide array of the frustrations that arise during infill development, and some of the negative consequences that infill projects can have on communities. This development has been accompanied by an increase in traffic on substandard streets. Although density was limited because of the opposition both the neighbors and developer remain unhappy with the result. The units as built are already showing signs of wear and tear and have continued to attract relatively transient residents. Residents and the developer are both convinced, however, that a *different* infill project might have produced better outcomes for all involved.



## Gatewood

### Background

Gatewood is a nine unit single family residential subdivision on 1.11 acres (8.108 units/acre) in South East Boise. The site was formerly one single family home with a pasture. The original home was saved and renovated as one of the units in the development. Two other units are street facing on the corner and the remaining six units are in a courtyard pattern with a shared driveway. The approval process included a conditional use permit and subdivision and an appeal.

Surrounding use is mostly single family residential, with a 10-acre city park, Manitou Park, less than one block away. Seventeen people testified at the public hearings. The biggest concern by far was the density of the project with fifteen people opposing the density as too high. The surrounding neighborhood averages 4.656 units/acres. The lot that was redeveloped had traditionally been pastureland and was perceived by the neighborhood as open space.

There were other issues of concern as well. Three people were afraid of traffic congestion and two believed that the development was incompatible with the neighborhood. Also mentioned were; lack of parking, hazards to kids, negative impacts on quality of life, increased crime, landscaping issues, and loss of wildlife.

### Evaluation

Although the approval process was fairly contentious, many neighbors and community activists are more ambivalent now about the impact of the project on the neighborhood. Several residents agree that the project as built is nice, and is a positive addition to the neighborhood; while others emphasize the loss of neighborhood continuity and increased traffic. This ambivalence is reflected in survey results. Responses to questions about the compatibility of Gatewood with the neighborhood, the impact of the development on traffic and parking in the neighborhood, and overall project impact produce lukewarm responses, with means between 2.9 and 3.3.

The central concern now in the neighborhood is the sense that this infill project opened the door for other, less desirable, types of infill and neighbors of Gatewood suggest that the proliferation of skinny infill houses is in some way related to this project.

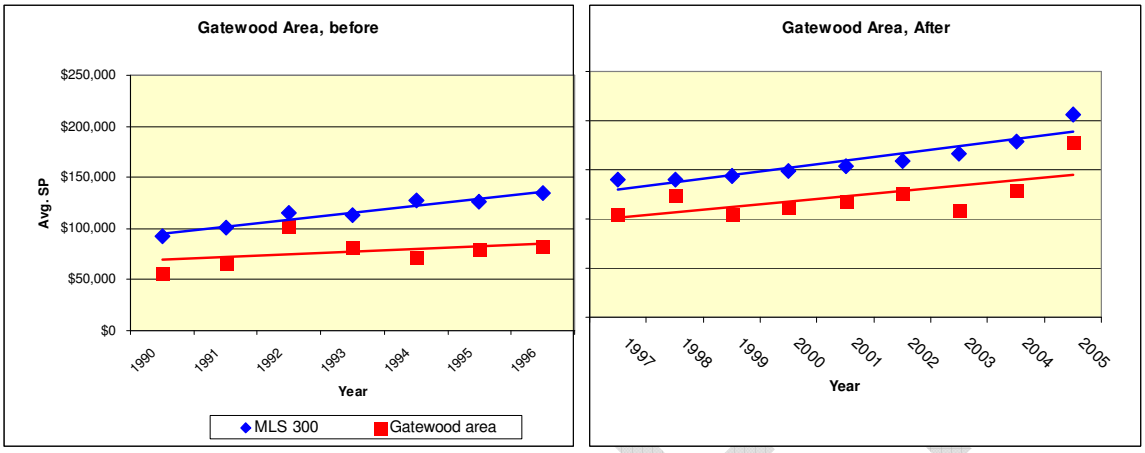
Neither Gatewood (or for that matter the skinny houses) appear to have had any negative impacts on property values in the neighborhood. The sales prices, though lower than the MLS region due to smaller home size, have increased at a higher rate since the project was completed than before it was built, nearly keeping up with the MLS afterward. Price/sf took a jump and nearly caught the MLS region shortly after the project was built. The factors affecting these prices are more likely the desirable location and relative health of this older neighborhood than any effects from such a small infill development.

Another major concern was traffic and that continues to be perceived by some as a problem. The data does not bear out this concern with traffic counts on Manitou falling by nearly 300 trips a day since the project was built. In addition, the highway district had concerns about drainage from the development and included a requirement to detain all drainage on site. This was eventually implemented using some roadway right-of-way (opposed by some in the neighborhood on the grounds that allowing the use of the right-of-way was favoring the developer). By chance this drainage swale created a traffic calming bulb out that has likely discouraged traffic on Martin and slowed it as well.

Despite the small size of the project and the proximity of public park open space the development of Gatewood was problematic for neighbors who didn't want to lose this open space in their neighborhood. Testimony at the time the project was built and anecdotes recited to surveyors show that the loss of this pasture and its habitat as open space and continues to be felt as a negative impact today.

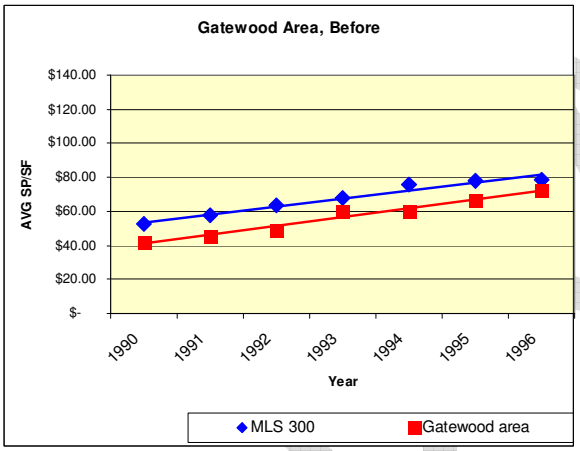
## Conclusions

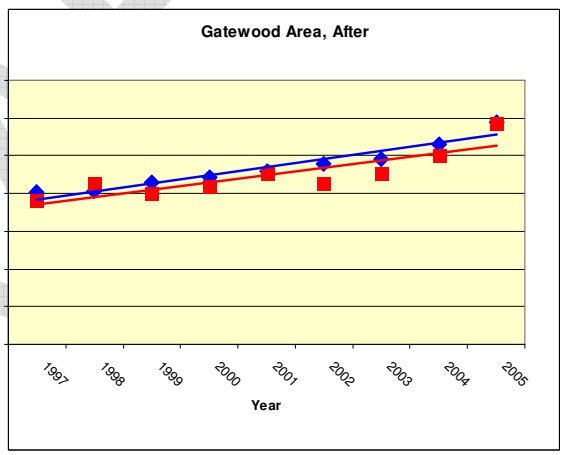
Gatewood was opposed by many neighbors and even today some of those continue to feel the loss of open space despite a nearby public park. The concerns about negative affects from density and the traffic it might produce have not proven true. Property values in this neighborhood are increasing at rates faster than the MLS averages and the feelings about the project itself today are ambivalent with many people in the neighborhood finding it to be a pleasant addition to the community. The key infill concern of neighbors surveyed today is the proliferation of skinny houses in the neighborhood.









## Hyde Park Place

### Background

Hyde Park Place, completed in 2003, is a 39 unit townhouse development on .84 acres (46.37 units/acre) in Boise's Near North End. It occupies one half block and replaced an historic school building and an 8-unit brick apartment. There were two public hearings and an appeal on the application. Surrounding uses include a mix of single family and multi-family residences, and limited office spaces. The approval process included a conditional use application and a height variance. Testimony was received from eight people at the public hearings. Hyde Park Place generated controversy primarily because of the loss of an historic building, the potential for increased traffic, and the higher density of this development than the immediate surrounding area. The North End Neighborhood Association did not oppose the project, although other neighbors testified in opposition to the project at Planning and Zoning hearings and in an appeal of P & Z approval to the City Council.

Five people testified about a fear of increased traffic congestion. Two people in each instance expressed concern about loss of on-street parking for existing neighbors, high density, and incompatibility of the building with the surrounding neighborhood as potential impacts. Others objected to the name, fear of increased crime, and possible air and noise pollution. Opposition to the demolition of the historic school structure was expressed by three people and was fervent. The school building had originally been an elementary school, Whittier, and had later been extensively remodeled to serve as the district's administrative offices. Those opposed on this issue felt the removal of the historic school structure was a significant loss to the community and took the issue to district court to stop demolition. The developer countered that the extensive changes to the building had significantly diminished its historic value. The developer prevailed and proceeded.

Although the developer describes the process of gaining approval for Hyde Park Place as "smooth," the residents who opposed the project still feel quite passionate that the project was inappropriate for the area, and sets a dangerous precedent for development in the neighborhood. News reports, activists' accounts of their involvement, and surveys of Hyde Park Place residents and neighbors all support a continued concern about the loss of historic buildings. The developer and involved neighbors feel compelled to also discuss the failed development of the adjacent Cathedral Place proposal that has resulted in moving or demolishing an entire block of historic residences. Some use the comparison to paint Hyde Park Place positively (HPP is lower density, attractive design); others use it as evidence of a precedence enabling the demolition of further historic buildings and the potential development of other high density projects. It should be noted that the City of Boise has subsequently expanded the boundaries of its historic districts to include this neighborhood and provide further protection from demolition.

### Evaluation

A majority of the neighbors surveyed agreed that the project did not increase traffic in the neighborhood despite the fear of traffic increases raised at the Planning and Zoning hearing. The developer suggests that when activists express concern about "density," they are talking about traffic. If this is the case, then residents' concerns about density (or traffic) appear not to have been realized. Current data, though limited, shows a decrease of approximately 1000 trips per day on Fort Street immediately east and west of the project.* Furthermore the connected grid system disperses traffic. Of note, residents of Hyde Park Place self-reported .75 average car trips per day, compared with the 2.32 average car trips per day per household self-reported by neighbors of Hyde Park Place during our survey.

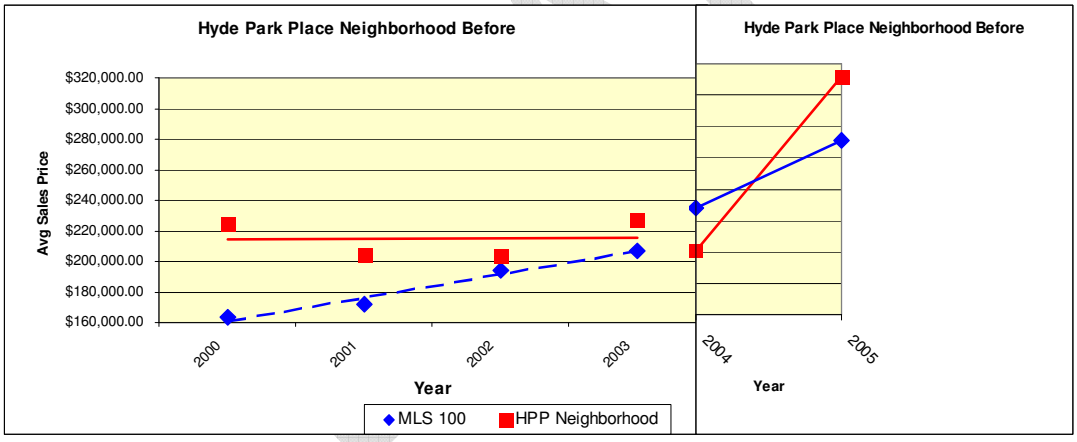
Property value effects of the project are uncertain. The surrounding neighborhood was lagging the increases in both sales price and price per square foot prior to 2004 for the MLS area. Increases in both outpaced the MLS for 2004-2005 by a considerable margin. Researchers note 2005 was a high water year for property sales values in the Boise region and further study over time would be needed to draw a firm correlation. However, in the case of Hyde Park Place, there is now fear that the project may contribute to driving property values (and thus property taxes) too high.

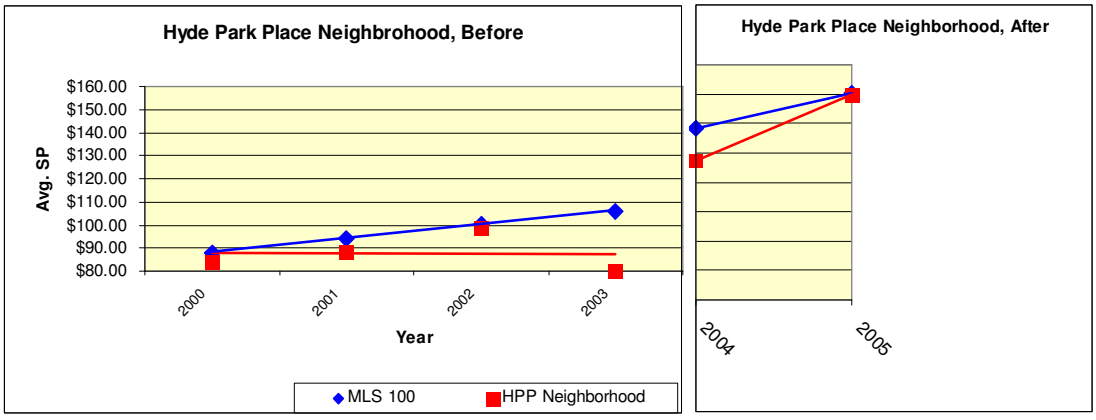
Concerns about parking and air quality have not been borne out. Surveyed residents rated the current quality and quantity of parking with the highest mean score of 4.45. No noticeable impacts on air quality rated the next highest mean score at 4.36. Neighbors also rated natural amenities high, anecdotally related to the preservation of some of the historic trees by the developer. In fact, neighbors and residents of Hyde Park Place generally suggest that the project has been a positive addition to the neighborhood, some suggesting that it has turned out better than expected and other suggesting that the larger neighborhood problem now is residents of nearby housing not maintaining their properties.

Project design is worthy of mention as well. Resident concerns did not center principally on the design of Hyde Park Place, but the developer is confident that the quality of design is why neighbors were not more upset by the project, and why the project went through the City process rather efficiently. The perceived quality of the design is also supported by the survey results, in which residents generally found the project to be compatible with the overall neighborhood, in design, mass, height and layout with ratings above average on all counts, this despite the height exception and stated concerns about compatibility.

**Conclusions**

Concerns raised during the public hearings about increased traffic and density, declining air quality, reduced parking and incompatibility with the neighborhood have not been demonstrated by the data and anecdotal remarks that researchers collected. New concerns have arisen concerning increasing property values and the potential negative affect on property taxes that this poses, further study over time will be needed to determine if these are related to the study project. The neighborhood continues to show apprehension about the loss of historic structures and the affect that may have on neighborhood character. This concern seems supported by the loss of so many adjacent structures but may have been mitigated by the city's action to expand the boundaries of historic districts in this area.



## Phillippi Park

### Background

Phillippi Park Condominiums is a 13 unit condominium project on 1.35 acres at a density of 9.65 d.u. per acre. The site was formerly occupied by two large lot single family homes. It is located on Phillippi south of Targee in a region that developed as rural residential outside the city. It was annexed into the city beginning in the 1960's and has been redeveloping into a more urban residential area since. The surrounding neighborhood is characterized by a mix of single family homes, single family manufactured homes, a townhouse development, a smattering of duplexes, one four-plex and one grandfathered small business. The development is directly adjacent to a neighborhood park.

The developer held a neighborhood meeting and six residents attended. The approval process included a rezone from single family residential to multi-family with a design review overlay. It also included a condominium plat. Four residents testified in opposition to the project at the public hearing at the Planning & Zoning Commission. Though the developer was unable to participate in the study a planning and Zoning Commissioner at the time remembers fervent objections which records show included traffic congestion, density, lower property values, noise pollution, hazards to kids, safety hazards and degrading the quality of life. The project site is near the interstate limiting connectivity and destinations to the south, three of the residents who testified with concerns about increased traffic live on Phillippi to the south of the project.

Phillippi Park is different than other housing types in the neighborhood in lay out and construction, but similar in density to other nearby development. It is nearly twice as dense as the adjacent single family detached lot housing to the south which is 4.78 d.u./acre and it is an attached housing courtyard design. However, the project is similar in density to the manufactured homes adjacent to the east which are 8.76 d/u/acre and is less dense than nearby townhouses which are 11.25/d.u./acre. The lay out is a less familiar driveway courtyard arrangement rather than a cul-de-sac design such as the townhouses and the manufactured homes. Construction type is reflected in the average sales values of the project of $157,500 when built, compared to $143,500 for the nearby townhouses that are approximately the same size.

### Evaluation

Given the eclectic mix of housing types and densities in the surrounding neighborhood the passionate opposition to this project based on quality of life, density and property values was somewhat surprising. Anecdotes to researchers indicate it may have been attributed to the need for a rezone request for higher density, the fact that the development proposed was quite different than anything existing in the neighborhood, and to the fact that this neighborhood originally developed as a rural residential area and that expectations based on that lifestyle still remain.

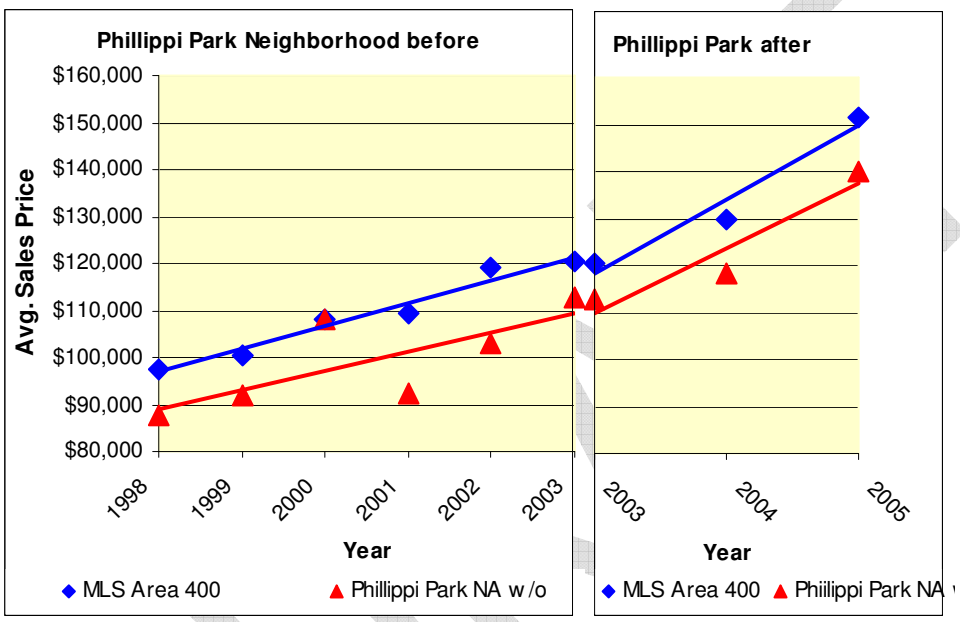
Survey respondents today rate this project far higher than any other project reviewed with a mean score of 4.39. Quality of life issues of protecting views/light access, being a positive addition to the neighborhood and including natural amenities scored the highest at 4.76, 4.75 and 4.71 respectively. No other project scored higher than 3.65 on any of those questions. Traffic and safety for bikes, among the lowest mean scores at 4.12 and 4.06, are still well above average. Data from the highway district shows that traffic on Targee Street has decreased by about 250 trips per day since the project was completed, and that the project is only producing 30-32 trips per day, about half the number projected by the trip generation manual.

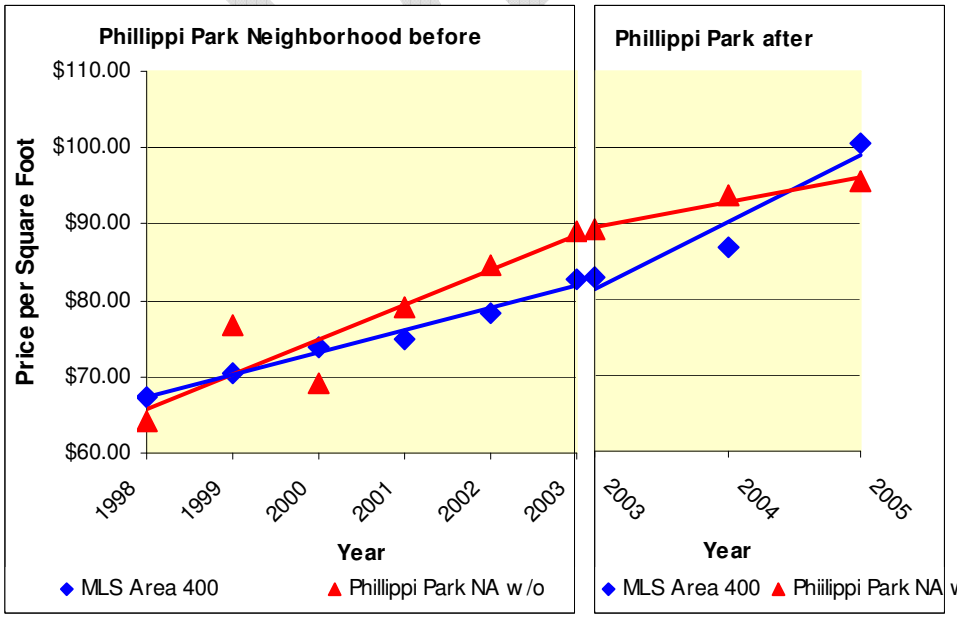
Fear of lower property values was voiced at the public hearing. There is no evidence that this project has had a negative affect on values. The neighborhood trend in sales price* was losing ground very slightly to the MLS region before the project was built and continued to do so at nearly the same rate afterward, though both the neighborhood and the MLS region saw dramatic increases in sales price from 2003 to 2005. However price per square foot went from losing ground to the MLS region to gaining ground and surpassing the average price per square foot of the region from 2003 to 2005. This appears to be another

area of the city where the location proximate to the interstate and services is driving up the value of real estate. **Researchers examined property sales in the neighborhood including the townhouses but excluding the manufactured homes which are considered a different sales market.*

**Conclusion**

The Phillippi Park project is well received today despite vigorous opposition during the approval process. Predictions about increased traffic and a loss of quality of life have not proven to be accurate. Traffic has decreased on the nearby collector and the number of trips per day generated by the development is lower than projected. Quality of life issues received the highest scores of any project surveyed by a full point on a five point scale. Real estate values have increased and price per square foot has surpassed the MLS region since the project was completed. The location adjacent to a neighborhood park and the attention to construction quality has been a positive addition to the neighborhood. Despite initial opposition and being quite different from the rest of its neighbors in lay-out and design this project is extremely well accepted by its neighbors today.



## Urban Renaissance

### Background

The Urban Renaissance project consists of 19 homes built on 1.455 acres at a density of 13.06 d.u./acre, completed in 1999. It abuts a subsequent development, Cobblestone, that copies its style and layout for a total of 28 single family dwelling units. The approval process included a rezone, a conditional use permit and a subdivision. The site was formerly a pasture with one single family house. The surrounding neighborhood is largely suburban single family residential, however the larger neighborhood has a balanced mix of uses including multi-family housing, schools and community sized commercial development.

The developer held a neighborhood meeting that was attended by four neighbors. Issues raised at the meeting centered on density and traffic. At the meeting the developer presented a vision of more dense housing, but with very few details and asked neighbors what they would like to see. He incorporated their ideas particularly regarding village style design. The homes as built face the street with front porches, have on street parking and sidewalks, feature alley loaded garages, and are set on a public transportation route. The development was one of the first in the area to include a street stub to accommodate a future street connection. The City of Boise features this development on its examples of outstanding compact infill development, and an earlier study by a Boise State researcher found this development scored well on both environmental standards, and "smart growth" standards.

The neighborhood association representative testified in opposition to the proposal citing density and traffic as the objection. There was a request that the developer build a bus stop for the development and the neighborhood. The developer did attempt to provide a covered bus shelter, but the required negotiation with multiple public agencies, and a lack of ability to reach agreement on use of the right-of-way prevented its completion. The developer feels that the process was not as contentious as in other projects he has worked on and would build this project again. In fact not long after this project was completed the developer started another similar development just a few miles away.

### Evaluation

The research team interviewed 15 residents of the surrounding neighborhood regarding this development. The residents surveyed gave low marks to the question asking if the developer preserved historic structures – this development replaced a barn and other out buildings, though it did preserve the single family home on the site. The lowest overall score went to the question, "did the project provide public amenities?" – although the bus stop was not completed researchers do not know if respondents knew of this condition when they answered our question. Residents also rated the project relatively low for both bicycle and pedestrian safety despite the attention to streetscape and sidewalks.

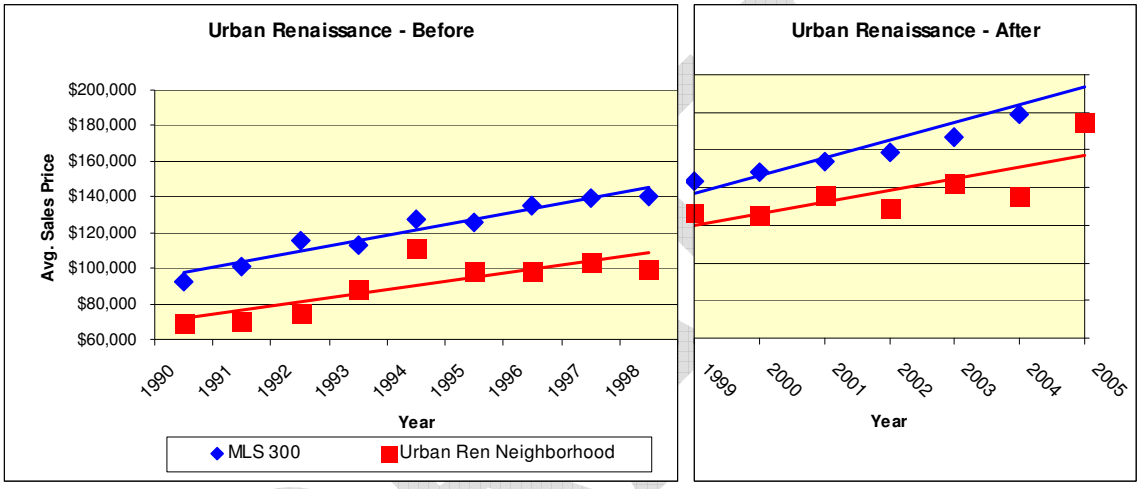
On the positive side existing residents find the neighborhood a place they want to and can afford to live in, and that this development preserved the on-street parking for the current residents. They gave fairly high scores to the question about traffic indicating that it has not become a problem. Traffic data collected confirms this. Traffic counts on all surrounding streets went down immediately after completion of the development. Traffic has since increased but researchers note this happened after the completion of a large commercial development in the area and may be attributed to that. Surveyors noted ambivalence among the 15 residents surveyed, saying many appeared "bored" and struggled to complete the questions. They also noted many residents were either unaware of, or did not have strong opinions on the project either way. This reported apathy is puzzling as 11 of the 15 residents surveyed lived in the neighborhood when the project was constructed and 93% were home owners who lived in the area a mean 11.57 years.

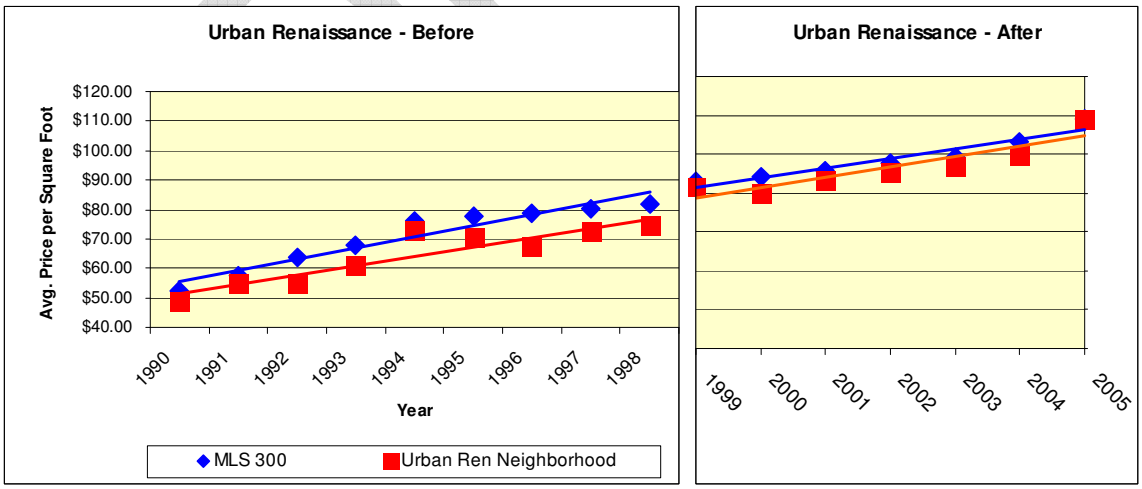
Survey respondents indicated that they believe the project had a positive impact on real estate values giving the highest rating to the question asking if the project had increased surrounding values. The data on real estate values is mixed. The existing neighborhood sales values increased at nearly the same rate before the project was built as after it was completed. However, the MLS area as a whole increased at a

slightly higher rate after the project was built, likely as result of larger and thus higher priced houses being built in the MLS area during this period. The existing neighborhood lost ground in sales price in relation to the MLS as a result. On the other hand the price per square foot of existing residences increased at a slightly higher rate after the project was complete than their recorded rate before the project was built. This rate was higher than the MLS region as whole. The smaller size and the advantageous location of the existing homes in relation to neighborhood services such as retail and schools is the likely explanation for this difference.

## Conclusions

The Urban Renaissance project has the elements that many studies cite in pointing to good infill. It is high quality in look and finish, includes on site amenities such as sidewalks, connected streets, transit access and alley loaded garages. It created a stub street for future connectivity and data shows that it did not negatively impact traffic in the region. The real estate data is mixed and likely indicates that despite larger higher priced housing in the MLS region the area surrounding the project is gaining in price per square foot because of its superior location and access to community services.



## Washington Square

### Background

In 1981, Evans Brothers Development built 20 Victorian style townhomes on a vacant block in Boise's East End. Neighbors had frequently used the site for recreation and some hoped the City would purchase and develop it as a park. Boise City Council members heard testimony from 43 neighbors who variously testified that the project was incompatible with the rest of the neighborhood; that schools would face overcrowding; that traffic congestion would increase; and that the development would be hazardous to kids.

The developer held neighborhood meetings and listened to input from residents; residents seemed to place the blame on the City zoning that allowed for this type of "higher density" project. This project generated support for the growth of the East End Neighborhood Association, just as foothill development did for the North End Neighborhood Association in the late 1970s.

Though several area residents recall the primary issue was the loss of open space, the public hearing record only shows 2 complaints on that issue, and only 1 on the loss of view and sunlight. Our survey confirmed the sentiment that the loss of open space still weighs heavy on the minds of area residents, with Question #5 (Preserved natural amenities, historic structures) receiving the second lowest score for this project – a mean of 3.08, of any question on the survey. As with the other developments surveyed, this development earned its lowest score on including public amenities, achieving a score of only 2.50. Anecdotes from those surveyed reveal that the lack of a park is an absence still affecting the neighborhood.

### Evaluation

Consistent with original testimony, neighbors continue to have no concern about the projects impact their property values. Regional (MLS) real estate data is not available for the time period surrounding the completion of this project. The Assessors office did have access to data for the whole East End Neighborhood and so researchers compared the smaller Washington Square Area with the larger East End Neighborhood as a whole instead of comparing to the MLS region. The project was built in the mid 1980's, a period of relative stagnation in real estate prices for the Boise Metro region.

In comparing the Washington Square area to the whole East End two points stand out. The sales prices in the Washington Square Area were losing ground slightly to the East End before the project was built and gained ground relatively afterward (both showed real declines in sales price during this period). This would seem to indicate a positive impact on property values as a result of the project. On the other hand the price/sf in the Washington Square Area declined at a slightly higher rate after the project was built than the East End as a whole. This is likely due to the smaller size of houses in the Washington Square area coupled with declining sales prices.

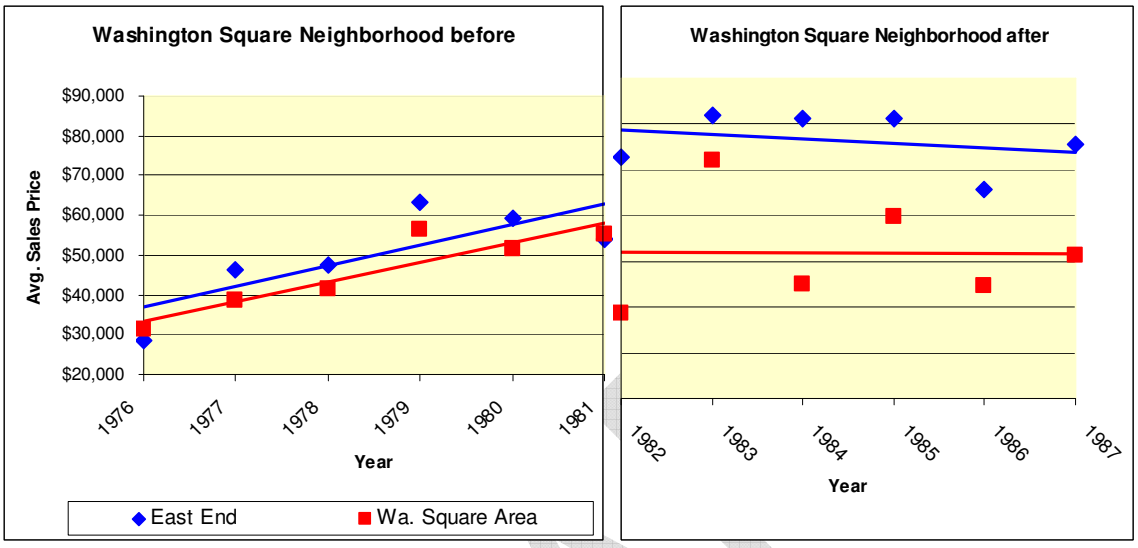
Our surveys indicate that the neighborhood still harbors concerns related to compatibility of the project with the neighborhood. Among the issues Washington Square area residents cited were: building height and mass; paint colors – some characterize them as garish; density; "too different from rest of neighborhood; and a preference for single family homes. The prevalence of "skinny homes" (which these are not) was mentioned and others feel the neighborhood is being inundated by rentals (only 11% of those we surveyed were renters).

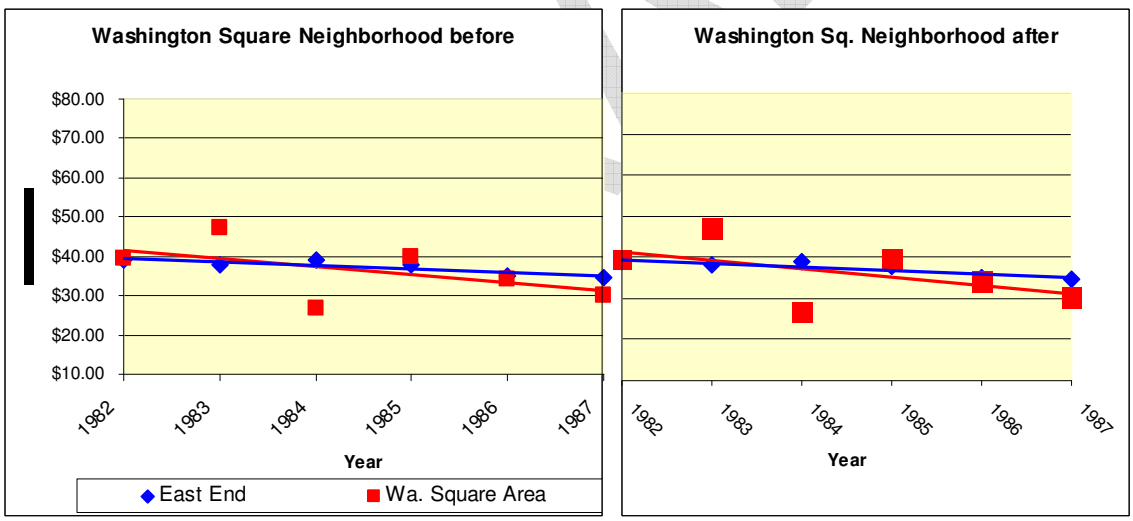
Traffic counts were not available immediately adjacent to Washington Square and the project received a relatively high mean score (3.81) on the question indicating that neighbors feel it did not create traffic. The development as built should generate about the same number of trips per day as other blocks in the neighborhood and the connected grid system allows for a wide dispersal of trips. Additionally, nearly the entire neighborhood has detached tree lined sidewalks. Traffic has become an issue with the neighborhood and they are working proactively to implement a neighborhood wide traffic calming plan,

however much of the 'excess' traffic in the neighborhood is attributed to cut through trips from nearby foothills development.

**Conclusions**

On the whole researchers found no negative affect on property values or traffic from this project, though the "density" is still perceived negatively. It invites other concerns about compatibility – it is different than it neighbors, especially the attached design and "painted lady" character. The biggest continuing concern however is the lost opportunity for a neighborhood park.



## Wesley Subdivision

### Background

The Wesley subdivision completed in 2002 consists of 30 townhouses on 5.03 acres at a density of 5.96 dwelling units per acre. The development process included public hearings at Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council on annexation and rezone, a public hearing at P&Z on a Conditional Use Permit/Planned Unit Development and a Subdivision Plat. The site is surrounded by an eclectic mix of big box retail, single-family detached-lot subdivisions, and one-acre ranchettes. This odd mix of uses provides some land use balance and opportunities for trip capture but may be less deliberate than as a result of fast paced growth. Meridian is one of the nation's fastest growing cities over the last decade, population that doubled over 30 years from 1940 and 1970, quadrupled in ten years from 1990 and 2000.

Wesley is the only case study in the city of Meridian but faced hurdles similar to those experienced in Boise during the approval process. The developer asked for six variances as part of the PUD on lot size and frontage, setbacks, and culdesac length. Existing development surrounding the parcel had not been required to stub street connections. Wesley subdivision was built with a culdesac that is longer than standard and back to back with another cul-de-sac to the west – a real missed opportunity for street connectivity and a fire safety hazard.

### Evaluation

In testimony before the Meridian Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council neighbors supported adding connectivity and expressed concern over the project's density and its affect on traffic and parking. There was also concern about shallow backyard setbacks that were part of the variance requests. The approval process included conditions requiring pedestrian access through the cul-de-sac and a common lot open area to provide relief from shallow setbacks to the properties immediately adjacent. A pedestrian pathway was proposed to the south to provide a shorter walking route to school and was supported by nearly everyone including the landowner whose property it would have passed through. The landowner and developer could not reach agreement on the conditions governing the easement and the pathway was not built. Researchers discovered that one of the school students residing to the south uses a wheelchair and cannot safely get to school by herself without this connection. Project researchers also found that the pedestrian access at the end of the cul-de-sac is restricted by a gate that is fixed half closed.

Surrounding residents today rate the quality and quantity of on-street parking very high, giving a mean score of 4.8 to that question, no surprise since this development is not connected to the adjacent residential streets. Residents surveyed report that they did not know any of the Wesley residents yet believed that their neighborhood is as safe or safer from crime. Researchers also found that many of those surveyed did not consider the Wesley project part of their neighborhood – likely a function of the disconnected site design which isolates the Wesley residents. Some residents reported that they were not sad to see the unkempt, mosquito-filled horse pasture go away, others liked looking at the pasture better than the townhouses. There remains concern about shallow backyard setbacks, researchers recounted residents to the north, whose homes are quite similar to the town homes in Wesley Sub in both size and design, reported more negativity than did the residents living in the acre ranchettes to the south, especially noting the proximity of the buildings to neighbors on the north. Additionally, residents in the area all around Wesley Subdivision reported feeling the pinch of a lack of amenities, particularly open space and unsatisfied with the compatibility of the layout of the project.

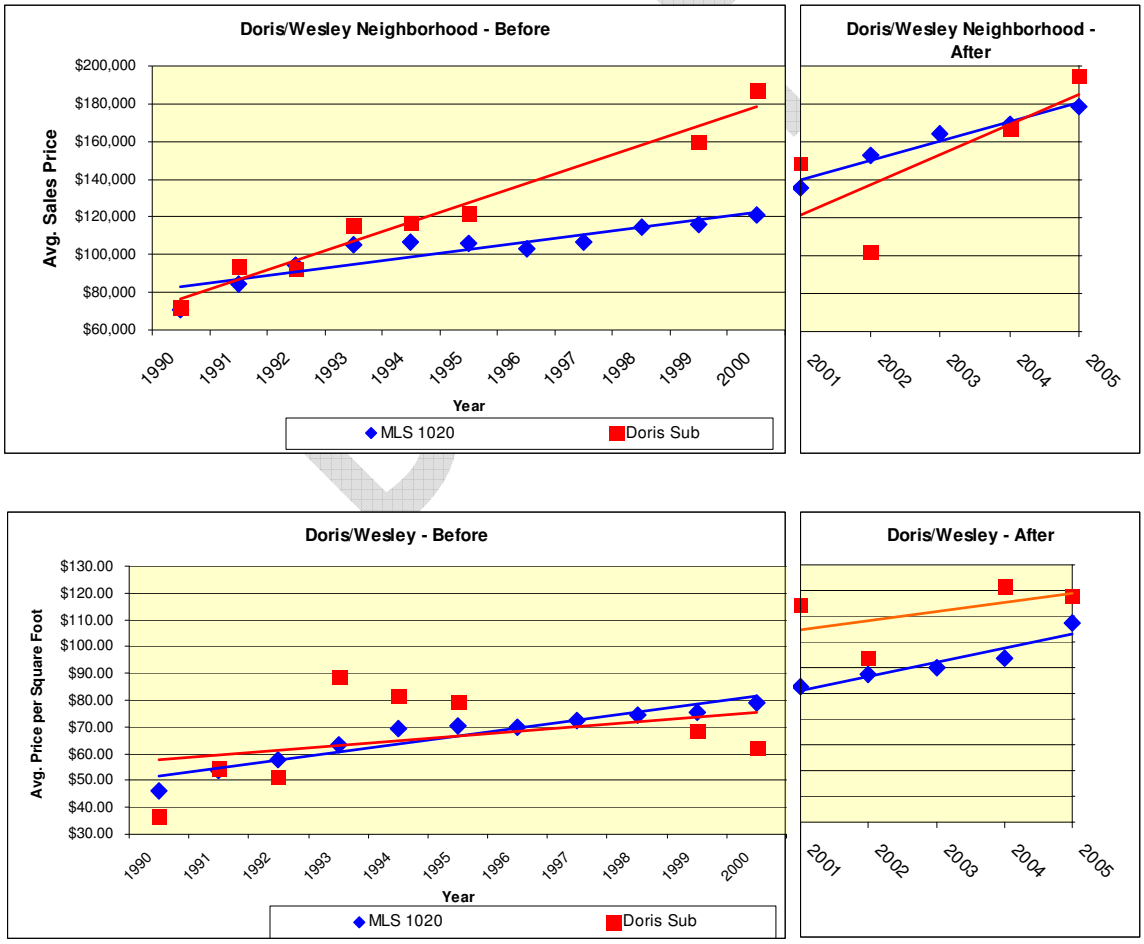
Traffic on the adjacent arterial, Locust Grove, has increased dramatically, going from 12,000 ADT to over 18,000 ADT from 2000 to 2006 reflecting the new community size retail in the immediate area. A one-time traffic count done on Willowbrook after the project was completed shows that 396 trips were generated on that day. As the development exists now, the 30 homes and 396 trips in Wesley can only exit the development onto Locust Grove. A connection through current cul-de-sac would allow those trips to disperse both directions but the potential for cut through traffic would increase, especially given the proximity of a light at Fairview which often backs up during peak hour. The lack of street connectivity in

the surrounding area complicates this discussion, as does the growth in traffic. As the area is currently designed, with low levels of connectivity, the traffic on Locust Grove will continue to grow. Connectivity at a few points would disperse traffic, but would negatively impact residents on the connecting streets.

Surrounding residents surveyed scored the affordability of the neighborhood and the housing values in the neighborhood relatively high. The real estate data shows that the subdivision to the north increased in value dramatically compared to the larger MLS region before the project was built. The comparative increase continued after the project was complete at a somewhat lower rate. Conversely price per square foot in the Doris Subdivision was increasing at a slower rate than the surrounding MLS region, that trend continued after the project was completed. Given the big changes in the area including the completion of a community sized shopping service center an athletic club and road improvements on Locust Grove any changes in real estate values in the immediate area cannot be attributed to any one cause.

**Conclusions**

Wesley subdivision is still tagged as incompatible and is not viewed as a part of the neighborhood, which tends to view itself by subdivision plat and not as a larger regional neighborhood. The project has cleaned up a mosquito breeding ground and has provided 30 affordable well kept homes. Crime has not increased perceptively in the region and on-street parking is still available in adjacent subdivisions. Data was not conclusive on the affects on property values that were feared. The research shows continued concerns about backyard setback standards and neighborhood amenities. Wesley residents have contributed to traffic on the adjacent arterial and that arterial traffic has impacted existing resident's mobility. The most vexing issue still facing this area is transportation and with the lost opportunities for connectivity on this and other projects nearby projects, that will be a difficult issue to solve in the future.



## Substandard Lots of Record

### Background

The City of Boise clarified a policy decision in 1997 to allow redevelopment of single family homes on "substandard lots of record" with the passage of amendments to the zoning code to regulate such redevelopment. These lots are considered substandard because they are less than 5000 square feet, the adopted minimum lot size in the Boise City code. The lots were platted prior to the adoption of any city zoning code.

The lots are considered an existing property right and the city was interested in encouraging infill development in an effort to minimize sprawl. Many believed the ordinance amendment would allow for new affordable housing stock within the city that might be owner occupied.

Most of the original substandard lots are twenty five feet wide (they are always less than fifty feet wide) and are often about one hundred and twenty five feet deep. The lots were typically developed in combination with the adjoining lot(s) to create building parcels forty to seventy five feet wide. The single family houses built on the parcels were often small by today's standards.

For the first few years after the ordinance amendment was adopted the redevelopment of these lots was occasional. As developable land within the City of Boise became scarce and more valuable this type of redevelopment became much more common. In neighborhoods where substandard original lots are predominant and particularly in parts of those neighborhoods where the existing housing stock was small and less valuable this type of redevelopment became widespread.

Redevelopment began on lots that served an existing house as a side yard. As the practice intensified existing houses were demolished, the parcel split into its originally recorded lots and new and more numerous houses were constructed. The 1997 zoning amendment did little to regulate design or require amenities to accompany the redevelopment. It also regulated the activity as an administrative act with no public notice or input.

### Issues

The houses most often built on the substandard lots were fifteen feet wide, two stories tall and fifty or more feet deep and become known euphemistically as "skinny houses". The design was generally quite plain and there was no requirement for landscaping or retrofitting sidewalks where none existed. In fact because of a quirk in how right of way is regulated in the city there was no requirement for adding a curb and gutter if they were missing. Without curb, gutter or sidewalk the right of way outside the paved street was allowed to be graveled and used as front in parking in the front yard.

Where alleys existed the garage was required to be off the alley, but in areas where there were no alleys front loaded garages were allowed. The front load garage made placement of a front door difficult and 'front' doors were sometimes found on the sides of these houses. Also the front garages often meant a front yard of asphalt or concrete to accommodate the driveway. Mature landscaping was usually removed and the loss of mature trees was especially troubling to existing neighbors.

A cottage industry grew up around the construction of skinny houses and many of the developers involved are quite passionate about their role in minimizing sprawl and providing affordable housing. Many of the houses were sold to individuals who planned to live in them, others became rental properties, especially after 2002 when real estate became more of an investment vehicle in the financial markets. Some developers spent considerable effort notifying neighbors and working out privacy issues and construction staging, others simply got their permits and began demolition and construction.

The neighbors and neighborhood associations in the areas where skinny houses were being developed became alarmed at a type of development they believed was detrimental to the overall health of their neighborhoods. An infill task force was formed by a neighborhood association president and attracted many interested citizens.

**Action**
In 2005 the City Council responded to the issues by enacting an emergency ordinance that further controlled development on original substandard lots by regulating design (including placement of front doors), quality of materials, front garages, landscaping, building size and mass, open space, sidewalks off-street parking and neighborhood notification. By Idaho law an emergency ordinance must be replaced by an interim (or permanent) ordinance within six months and an interim ordinance must be made permanent within one year.

After working with members of the infill task force, including skinny house developers, the city has recently adopted a permanent ordinance that regulates; building mass and bulk for compatibility with existing neighbors, overall lot coverage and maximum building FAR, landscaping requirements, right-of-way improvements, garage placement, off-street parking requirements, private open space requirements, neighborhood notification, and a formalized waiver process for circumstances where comprehensive plan or other goals may conflict with the requirements.

**Report**
This research project has collected data from two neighborhoods where skinny houses have become common. Descriptions of what researchers found in the Original South Boise Village and the Central Rim neighborhoods follow. Researchers believe these findings will inform discussion in other neighborhoods, in Boise and beyond, where skinny house development is prevalent.

## Central Rim

### Background

The Central Rim neighborhood is bounded by the I-84 Connector on the north, Orchard Street on the west, Emerald to the South, and Americana Boulevard on its eastern edge. The "Rim" overlooking the Boise River valley runs northwest from Americana to I-84 along the edge of Kathryn Albertson Park. The area is separated from the original Boise City by the Boise River and the hill rising from the river to form the "bench". By 1917, the Interurban Transportation system provided transit to the neighborhood, and American Boulevard crossed the river and wound up the hill.

The area developed mostly as farmland and later subdivided in response to streetcar access. Boise City annexed the neighborhood in four stages between the years of 1947 and 1963. many of the lots in the original subdivisions were 25' wide and developed with one home on two to four lots. These later became "substandard original lots of record" when the city introduced zoning in the 1960's. the city's regulation of the lots, the Central Rim area's proximity to downtown and the rising land values offered incentives for property owners to split the fifty to one hundred foot parcels back into twenty five foot lots and "skinny houses" began appearing where one-story bungalows and cottages once stood.

By 2004, the Central Rim neighborhood counted 1,800 residents in 560 dwelling units. In the portion of the neighborhood with substandard lots fully 16% of the housing now stood on those lots. That year the Central Rim Neighborhood Plan submitted to the Boise City Council citing "new residential infill development… (as) issues of immediate concern." In addition, the plan notes that "there are no public playgrounds, parks, or neighborhood meeting locations within the neighborhood" and urges the city to consider a site for a future neighborhood plaza or space. It states a further goal of "complete[ing] curbs, gutters, and sidewalks as necessary for school children and the safety of all pedestrians, with a policy of "complete[ing] sidewalks along West Irving and North Garden Streets."

There are no hearing records to examine but the neighborhood plan documents many concerns regarding the redevelopment on substandard lots in the neighborhood. The plan noted a "lack of garages, lack of landscaping, inappropriate side setbacks, inappropriate window locations on the new homes" as concerns. It states a goal of "support(ing) quality neighborhood projects that provide compatible residential design with the existing neighborhood homes." and pledged to "Work with the city to develop new zoning standards to increase the compatibility of substandard lot(s) development with the existing neighborhood by developing new zoning standards to increase the compatibility of substandard lots that may include increased landscaping requirements, window orientation, restrictions on the amount of paving per lot, and architectural enhancements that break up the scale and mass of the structure. Leaders from this neighborhood subsequently served on the committee that helped write the new permanent substandard lot ordinance. As stated above, that ordinance addresses the concerns cited in the Central Rim Plan.

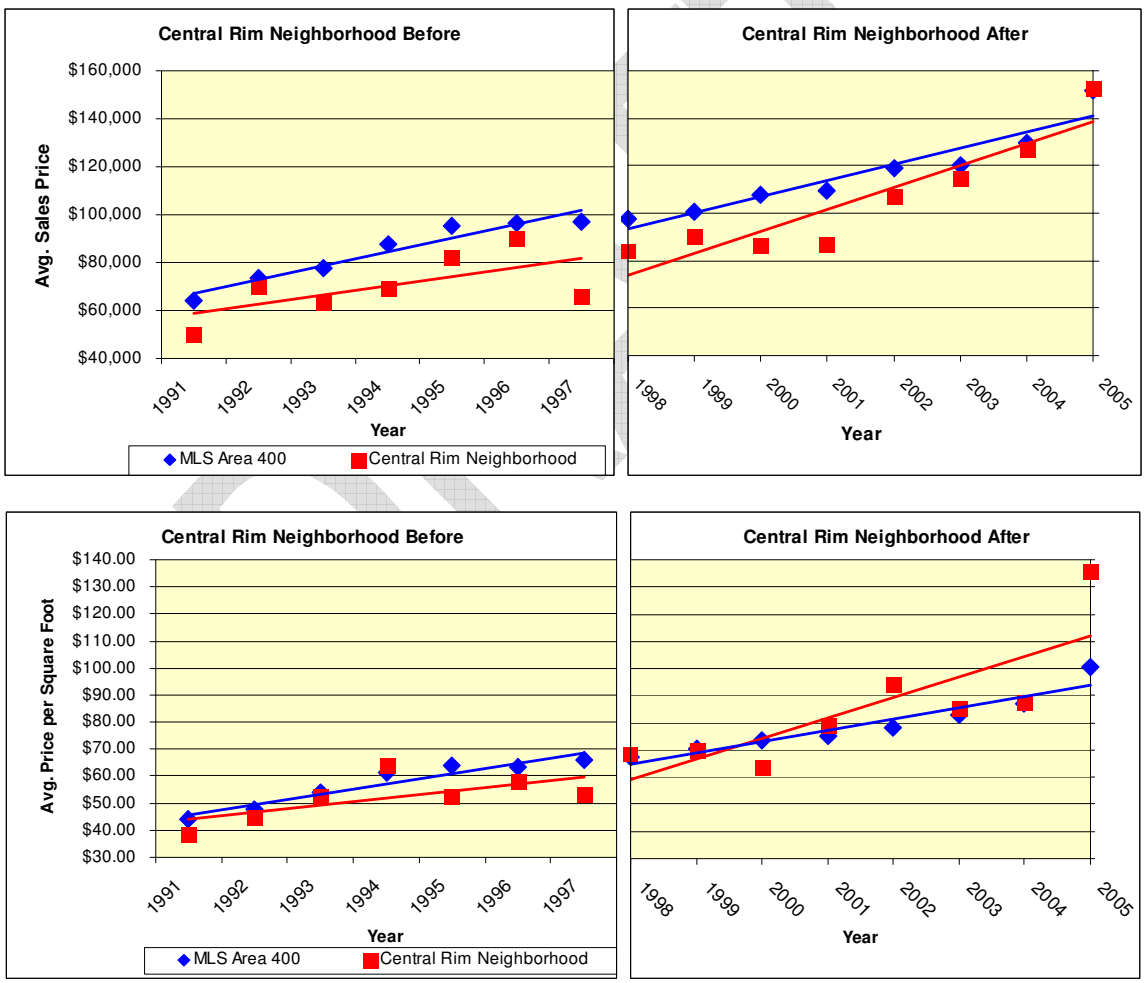
### Evaluation

Still, it is no surprise then that the 23 neighbors in the Central Rim neighborhood gave the lowest scores to public amenities, a mean score of 2.0, and to compatibility of design, height and mass – a mean score of 2.15. Anecdotally researchers note that the response citing a lack of public amenities is related to the lack of curb, gutter, and sidewalk and particularly the ubiquitous use of the right-of-way for front in graveled parking for the new homes that were built under the old ordinance. Respondents did not feel that these skinny houses were a positive addition to the neighborhood or compatible in layout scoring both questions below average at 2.2. Indeed, this neighborhoods response to our survey garnered the lowest scores of any neighborhood we studied with a mean score of 2.53. One of the higher scores (2.86) indicated that neighbors believe relatively that the new development has not caused an increase in traffic. Data from the highway district confirms that traffic has remained stable from 200 to 2005 on streets studied. Garden and Roosevelt, that are internal to the neighborhood.

Researchers also asked the neighbors if they believed these new "skinny homes" impacted their property values. Though from an aesthetic standpoint, neighbors overwhelmingly disliked these new homes, the statement that garnered the largest amount of agreement (2.95) was that these new homes did not negatively impact the value of the existing homes. Further, neighbors agreed that the neighborhood was still a place they wanted to live in and could afford to live in. Indeed, as the real estate data for the neighborhood shows, the MLS 400 area of the Boise Bench shows strong growth trend in both the average sale price and the price per square foot, with each outpacing the MLS region as a whole in the period during which the bulk of the skinny houses were completed.

## Conclusion

Redevelopment on substandard lots of record has raised many concerns with residents of the Central rim neighborhood. These concerns were well documented in the neighborhood plan of 2004. Apprehension about design standards, privacy, garage placement, and landscaping were addressed wit the new permanent substandard lot ordinance with the help of leaders from this neighborhood. The skinny houses have not dampened real estate values; in fact affordability is beginning to become an issue of concern. Retrofitting sidewalks, particularly on the collectors within the neighborhood, and introducing new public open space have not been addressed.



## Original South Boise Village

### Background

Original South Boise Village consists of 33 blocks that are nearly all platted in 25-by 125-foot lots. The area was laid out in rectangular grid fashion, with avenues running north-south and streets east-west, in South Boise First and Dundee First Subdivisions early in the century. The area has developed continuously in the decades since it was platted, with architecture reflecting building styles from many periods and many older historic homes remaining. The neighborhood is located just south of Boise State University's expanded southern border, Beacon Street.

The years 2000 to 2005 saw the development of 24 new single-family homes and 8 duplexes, a real building boom for this small neighborhood filling in nearly all vacant property in addition to prompting the demolition of some small older homes and redevelopment of those lots. A full 19% of the neighborhood is now comprised of structures on substandard lots of record which triggered a reaction by existing neighbors and the city.

The new homes researchers studied were completed under the substandard lot ordinance that did not require public input, so researchers have no project hearing records to refer to. However, the neighborhood took the initiative during this time to write a neighborhood plan and get it adopted by reference into the city's comprehensive plan. That documentation notes that "Accommodating change in older neighborhoods such as Original South Boise has been a challenge" and the first objective of the plan is to "Encourage regulations and land uses that allow for development that blends with existing homes."

Researchers find that this plan also calls to "work toward establishing neighborhood park…" by "investigate[ing] developing a micro-park on the northeast corner of Euclid and Highland Street…" The plan goes on to identify gaps in the neighborhood sidewalk network and calls for "Improve[ing] pedestrian safety via neighborhood sidewalks" by applying annually for grants from the city and the highway district to complete sidewalks within the neighborhood as prioritized by the plan. And finally the plan shows concern about loss of historic values with the objective "Preserve historic landmarks and identity of Original South Boise"

In addition residents, through the South East Neighborhood Association, pressed the City to amend the zoning ordinance to deal with 'ninety feet deep and 15 or 20 feet wide the units that loomed over neighboring homes and had virtually no private open space' in response to five especially large narrow two-story duplexes were constructed 2001 and 2002. The city responded by adding a design review requirement to all duplexes. Later, three of the same type of long tall duplex buildings that had caused the original alarm were moved into the neighborhood and set on three adjacent substandard lots with plans to convert them into single family houses. These came from north of Beacon Street to make way for the BSU expansion literally in the middle of the night with no warning and no permits. In response to the city called a special meeting and initiated the emergency ordinance on substandard lots.

### Evaluation

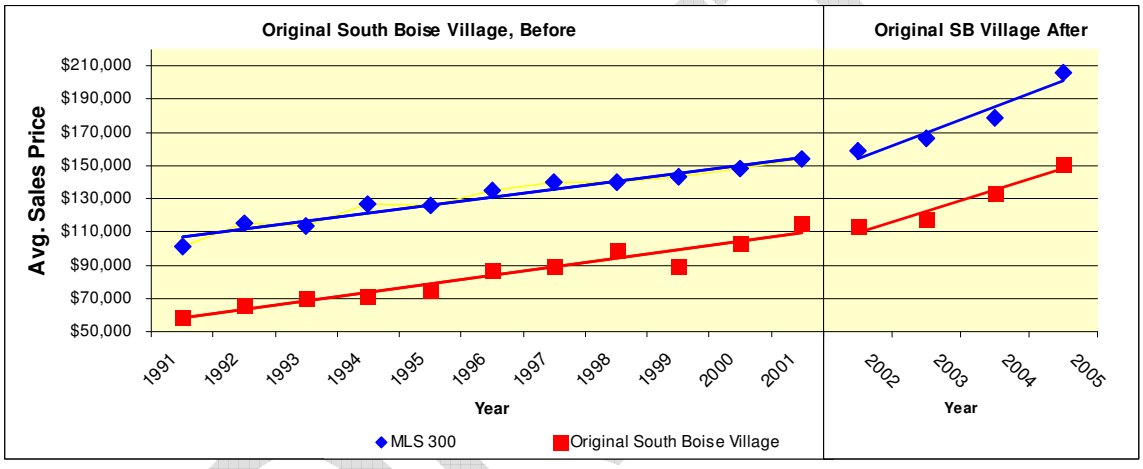
The issues addressed by the neighborhood plan are consistent with concerns raised by respondents to our survey who gave the lowest score recorded in any neighborhood on any question (1.63) when asked whether the infill properties "include amenities" and the second lowest score (1.75) to "preserves historic structures." In addition, this neighborhood's mean score for the whole survey at 2.61 was second lowest, only to Central Rim, as the lowest overall scores of neighborhoods surveyed. Despite the mini building boom survey respondents agreed that the skinny houses "did not create traffic" with a rating of 3.13. Highway district data shows this to be true with traffic on Beacon street remaining relatively stable from 1995 to 2005.

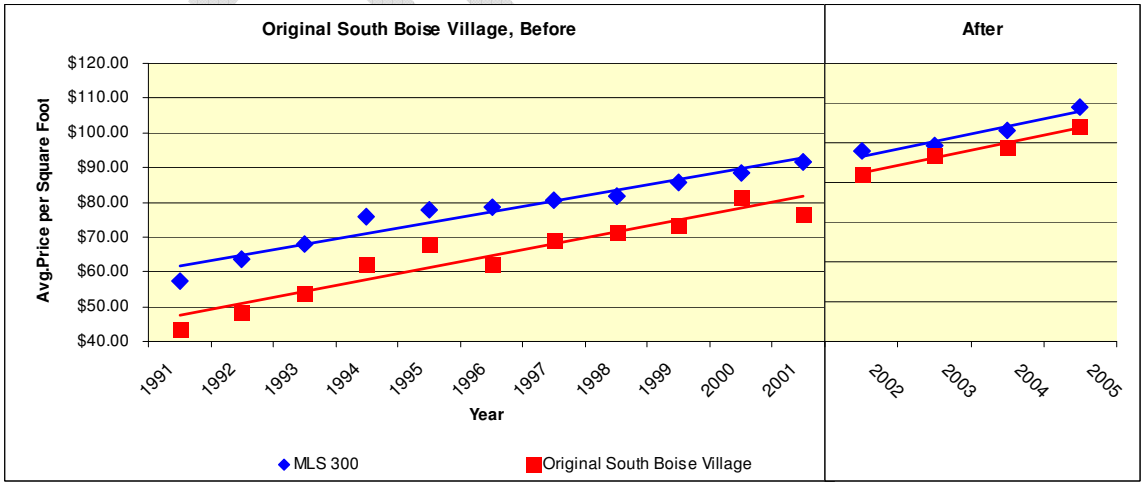
Survey respondents rated questions on maintaining housing affordability and increased property values just below average. Researchers looked at real estate trends before and after 2002 when construction of these infill houses had begun in earnest. Data indicates that the neighborhood lost ground relatively in

sales price to MLS 300 from 2002 to 2005 and continued to gain ground slightly toward the MLS average in sales price per square foot in the same period. This is consistent with other neighborhoods that have lower average sales prices due to smaller homes, and smaller skinny houses may have contributed to this trend. Conversely the convenient location is likely driving the price per square foot at a higher rate than the region.

**Conclusion**

South Boise Village has experienced a high rate of sub standard lot redevelopment in the last decade creating considerable change for such a small neighborhood. These changes have not negatively affected traffic volumes, and affects on real estate value is mixed. Residents did recognize other threats to their quality of life and responded with a neighborhood plan and request for design review of duplexes. The threat was magnified in 2005 with the move of three duplexes into the neighborhood. The city and neighborhood responded with ordinance changes further regulating skinny houses and duplexes and these changes addressed immediate threats. Issues that remain include retrofitting a complete pedestrian network, protecting mature landscaping, protecting historic assets and introducing new public open space to replace the lost private open space as the neighborhood fills in.



## Infill Residents Mail Survey Analysis

### Background

The Study team made a decision to complete a mail survey of the residents of the chosen case study projects. Although this was not part of the original scope of the study the team felt that the results would be informative in humanizing those residents by asking demographic questions that would allow a comparison with neighborhood residents and to discern their own perceptions of their homes and the neighborhoods they had chosen to live in.

The survey was mailed to 447 residents of the twelve case study projects chosen. 206 of the surveys were mailed to residents of the Oak Park Village Apartments, a project that is 100% rentals. Nine surveys were returned from Oak Park for a return rate of 4%. Of the remaining 241 surveys 40 were returned at a rate of 17%. Researchers recognize that this is not a scientifically random sample of residents and the data is more qualitative than quantitative. However the perceptions and estimates self reported by this group are no different than the qualitative self reported perceptions and estimates made by the neighbors of these projects in our door to door survey.

Residents were asked whether they owned or rented and to estimate the number of cars trips they took per day. They were asked if they felt welcome in their neighborhood and whether they believed that their home was a positive addition to the neighborhood. Finally they were allowed to comment on their favorite and least favorite thing about their new home and also to make a general comment. Some of the residents surveyed named more than one issue in their comments so some of the categories have more than 49 total comments.

### Results

Perhaps the most revealing comments received from these surveys were the overwhelming response to our question “What is the favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood?” A full 57% of the residents, unprompted in an open ended question, responded that the proximity or short walking distances to jobs services and every day needs was their favorite thing, 18% cited friendly neighbors or neighborhood and 11% named nearby parks and other amenities. No other issue was mentioned by more than two respondents.

Although not as overwhelming but nearly as revealing, in response to the inverse question “What is the least favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood?” 29% of residents identified the issue that surrounding property was not well cared for as their least favorite thing. Another 8% of our respondents mentioned rowdy neighbors, a different 8% thought noise was an issue, and a variety of other issues were rated about equally.

Every one of the infill residents who responded (100%) felt that their home was a positive addition to the neighborhood. The comments on this issue were heartfelt and confirm anecdotally the hopes for infill that policy makers have stated. One resident wrote “I am glad that this is affordable, low environmental impact housing exists in inner Boise.” Another said [as a] “single woman working for a non-profit that does good for community – but doesn't pay well, owning a "tall skinny house" has made it possible for me to live well. I love my house, its small enough for me to manage the home maintenance & new enough I don't have to fix it up.” A third reported “I like having a new home near downtown.” And finally one residents states “I love my house! It's the cutest on the block.”

The study team asked two questioned that allow comparison of the residents of infill projects to the neighbors who answered questioned posed by our on-the street surveyors. To the questions “How many roundtrip car trips does your household make per day infill residents self-report 1.9 trips per day, a third less than what neighbors self-reported at 3 trips per day. In each group 80% were homeowners and 20% were renters.

## Infill Residents Mail Survey Summary

| 447 surveys mailed out, 49 filled out and returned by resident, 43 returned as vacant property - 26 of those in Oak Park or Brampton Square and 6 more in skinny houses - all most likely rental properties<br>*Question* | Hyde Park Place | Gatewood | Wesley Sub. | Ferndale Sub | Washington Square | Urban Renaissance | Phillipi Park | Bramptone Sqaure | Oak Park Village | South Boise Village | Central Rim Garden Green | All | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **What is the favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood?** (some w/1+ issues) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Proximity/Walking Distance - | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 32 | 57% |
| Friendly neighbors/neighborhood | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 10 | 18% |
| Nearby park/other amenities | | | | | | | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | 6 | 11% |
| Little traffic | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4% |
| Safe | | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | | 2 | 4% |
| Less maintenance | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 2% |
| Quality building, clean | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 2% |
| Other | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 2 | 4% |
| **What is the least favorite thing you have discovered about your neighborhood?** (some w/1+ issues) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sourrounding property not cared for | 5 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 14 | 29% |
| Traffic | 1 | | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | 4 | 8% |
| New proximate infill | | 2 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 3 | 6% |
| Rowdy neighbors | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 8% |
| No sidewalks | | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | | 3 | 6% |
| Parking issues | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 3 | 6% |
| Close by sex offenders | | | | | | | | | 3 | | | 3 | 6% |
| None | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | 2 | 4% |
| High taxes/market value | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4% |
| Noisy | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 4 | 8% |
| Not enough greenspace | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2% |
| Other | 1 | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 5 | 10% |
| **How many roundtrip cars trips does your household make by car per day?** (total /respondents) | 0.75 | 1.75 | 1.20 | 2.67 | 2.50 | 4.25 | 1.25 | 2.67 | 2.00* | 1.33 | 2.25 | 1.90* | |
| **Do you feel welcome in your neighborhood?** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 45 | 92% |
| No | | | | | | | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 8% |
| **My home is a positive addition to the neighborhood** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Yes | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 49 | 100% |
| No | | | | | | | | | | | | 0 | 0% |
| **Do you own or rent your home?** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Own | 8 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | | 3 | 4 | 39 | 80% |
| Rent | | | | | | | | 1 | 9 | | | 10 | 20% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Note some comments addressed more than one issue resulting in more total comments than replies.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *** One respondent in Oak Park Village failed to answer the question on roundtrip cartrips per day - data based on 48 responses.** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## On-the-Street Survey Summary

| | Years | %Rent/Own | CarTrips | 1 Compatible layout | 2 Compatible design | 3 Includes amenities | 4 Includes natural amenities | 5 Perserves historic structures | 6 Maintained affordability | 7 Increased surrounding values | 8 Positive addition | 9 Pedestrian friendly | 10 Safe for bikes | 11 Did not create traffic | 12 Same quality of parking | 13 Protect views/light | 14 Air quality | 15 Safe from crime |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Central Rim | 6.1 | 22/78 | 2.53 | 2.2 | 2.15 | 2 | 2.33 | 2.61 | 2.9 | 2.95 | 2.2 | 2.37 | 2.61 | 2.86 | 2.73 | 2.44 | 3.22 | 2.42 |
| Ferndale | 11.69 | 23/77 | 2.96 | 2.46 | 2.92 | 2 | 2.75 | 2.36 | 3.46 | 3.42 | 2.62 | 2.55 | 2.82 | 2.17 | 3.38 | 3.08 | 3.33 | 3.08 |
| Garden Green | 8.22 | 44/56 | 4.33 | 2.83 | 3 | 2.67 | 3.17 | 2.71 | 3 | 2.57 | 2.43 | 3 | 2.57 | 2 | 2.67 | 3 | 2.86 | 3.29 |
| Gatewood | 20.29 | 14/86 | 3.52 | 2.89 | 2.75 | 2.56 | 3.46 | 2.85 | 3.32 | 3 | 2.89 | 3.15 | 3.26 | 3.07 | 3.25 | 3 | 3.62 | 3.36 |
| Hyde Park Place | 11.59 | 27/73 | 2.32 | 3.55 | 3.18 | 2.55 | 3.91 | 2.13 | 3.4 | 4.1 | 3.7 | 3.27 | 3 | 3.6 | 4.45 | 3.4 | 4.36 | 3.8 |
| Oak Park/Brampton | 19.58 | 29/71 | 2.13 | 2.56 | 2.6 | 2.39 | 2.92 | 2.36 | 3.2 | 3.09 | 2.52 | 3.04 | 2.35 | 2.26 | 2.57 | 2.04 | 2.7 | 2.48 |
| Phillipi Park | 15.59 | 12/88 | 2.41 | 4.35 | 4.47 | 4 | 4.71 | 4.53 | 4.53 | 4.35 | 4.75 | 4.35 | 4.06 | 4.12 | 4.06 | 4.76 | 4.41 | 4.47 |
| South Boise Village | 9.04 | 37/63 | 2.5 | 2.25 | 2.13 | 1.63 | 2.75 | 1.75 | 2.44 | 2.8 | 2.75 | 2.67 | 2.8 | 3.13 | 3.13 | 2.13 | 3.5 | 3.25 |
| Urban Renaissance | 11.57 | 07/93 | 3.33 | 2.67 | 2.6 | 2.07 | 3 | 2.08 | 3.53 | 3.71 | 2.79 | 2.73 | 2.86 | 3.15 | 3.29 | 2.62 | 3.31 | 3.15 |
| Washington Square | 15.56 | 12/88 | 2.79 | 3.47 | 3 | 2.5 | 3.65 | 3.08 | 3.59 | 3.96 | 3.5 | 3.88 | 3.71 | 3.81 | 3.94 | 3.35 | 3.94 | 4.06 |
| Wesley | 14.91 | 0/100 | 4.59 | 3.09 | 3.55 | 2.67 | 3.56 | 3.38 | 3.82 | 3.88 | 3.6 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.56 | 4.8 | 3.64 | 4.4 | 4.2 |
| Totals | 13.1 | 20/80 | 3.04 | 2.94 | 2.94 | 2.46 | 3.29 | 2.71 | 3.38 | 3.44 | 3.07 | 3.12 | 3.05 | 3.07 | 3.48 | 3.04 | 3.60 | 3.41 |

* 8 of 11 projects surveyed gave the lowest score to question 3 - "includes amenities."
* 3 questions had multiple instances receiving the highest score: 7) Increased surrounding values; 12) same qualityof parking; 15) safe from crime. Parking, negative imapct on property values or crime, are common complaints in the public hearing process.

## Traffic Count Summary

**Traffic Counts**

| Oak Park/Brampton Square | | | | Built:1996 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vista North of Targee | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 4/10/1997 | 23491 | 706 | 735 | 1055 | 1020 |
| 10/30/2002 | 22107 | 734 | 750 | 1018 | 893 |
| 11/19/2002 | 21540 | 705 | 745 | 952 | 855 |
| 11/18/2003 | 20235 | 605 | 657 | 873 | 903 |
| Vista South of Targee | | | | | |
| 4/10/1997 | 23172 | 738 | 787 | 1028 | 1015 |
| 11/19/2002 | 20501 | 654 | 722 | 908 | 802 |
| 11/18/2003 | 19487 | 607 | 665 | 863 | 867 |
| 2/7/2006 | 19822 | 655 | 619 | 848 | 841 |
| Cherry Lane West of Vista | | | | | |
| 3/21/1995 | 2060 | 96 | 45 | 79 | 111 |
| 1/7/1997 | 2314 | 114 | 30 | 73 | 123 |
| 3/19/1997 | 2212 | 109 | 33 | 73 | 119 |
| 12/10/2003 | 2038 | 67 | 23 | 68 | 130 |
| 3/2/2006 | 2822 | 99 | 37 | 126 | 130 |
| Shoshone north of Cherry lane | | | | | |
| 12/27/1995 | 843 | 20 | 20 | 42 | 38 |

| Garden Green | | | | Built:1998 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garden Street north of Emerald | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 8/19/1994 | 2159 | | | | |
| 10/13/1994 | 2327 | | | | |
| 10/6/1999 | 1388 | 21 | 48 | 52 | 73 |
| 11/8/2000 | 1569 | 34 | 42 | 54 | 72 |
| 2/4/2004 | 1523 | 32 | 53 | 65 | 62 |
| 3/3/2005 | 1567 | 24 | 58 | 68 | 64 |
| Bluff daily trip counter | | | | | |
| 5/16/2005 | ADT 349 | 13 | 13 | 21 | 11 |

| Hyde Park Place | | | | Built:2004 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Fort St east of 13th | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 3/31/1998 | 7533 | | | | |
| Fort St west of 13th | | | | | |
| 11/16/1994 | 6661 | | | | |
| 11/17/2004 | 5653 | 385 | 188 | 222 | 399 |
| Fort St west of 9th | | | | | |
| 3/31/1998 | 9280 | | | | |
| 1/9/2001 | 7967 | 528 | 182 | 219 | 516 |
| 9/29/2004 | 7945 | 436 | 183 | 265 | 534 |

| Phillipi Park | | | | Built:2003 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Targee west of Orchard | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 10/24/1995 | 2993 | | | | |
| 10/1/1996 | 2615 | 124 | 79 | 102 | 153 |
| 11/19/1996 | 2216 | 126 | 54 | 79 | 123 |
| 4/15/1997 | 2719 | | | | |
| 3/9/1999 | 2649 | 165 | 62 | 93 | 135 |
| 11/2/1999 | 2728 | | | | |
| 5/15/2003 | 2722 | 138 | 41 | 90 | 171 |
| 6/22/2005 | 2481 | 108 | 23 | 90 | 121 |
| Phillipi daily trip counter at project | | | | | |
| 5/16/2005 | ADT 32 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 5/23/2005 | ADT 30 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 |

| Wesley Subdivison | | | | Built:2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Locust Grove north of Fairview | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 4/5/2000 | 12007 | 174 | 536 | 714 | 430 |
| 2/14/2002 | 10890 | 132 | 566 | 656 | 398 |
| 3/2/2004 | 13283 | 201 | 742 | 733 | 491 |
| 4/20/2006 | 18710 | 344 | 922 | 752 | 806 |
| Willowbrook daily trip counter | | | | | |
| 5/23/2006 | ADT 396 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 21 |

| Gatewood Subdivison | | | | Built:1997 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Manitou south of Boise Avenue | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 9/4/1997 | 1183 | 59 | 11 | 48 | 90 |
| 10/18/2000 | 1156 | 60 | 17 | 46 | 77 |
| 9/28/2005 | 897 | 37 | 9 | 39 | 30 |

| Ferndale Subdivison | | | | Built:2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pierce Park south of Hill Road | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 8/7/1995 | 1005 | | | | |
| 12/10/1996 | 1161 | 20 | 58 | 49 | 55 |
| 8/26/1998 | 1561 | | | | |
| 1/25/2000 | 1243 | 40 | 61 | 71 | 53 |
| 1/24/2001 | 1141 | 25 | 59 | 60 | 53 |
| 6/26/2001 | 1510 | | | | |
| 7/15/2003 | 1769 | 35 | 45 | 74 | 64 |
| 12/2/2004 | 1305 | 35 | 60 | 60 | 48 |
| 1/5/2005 | 1355 | 34 | 54 | 83 | 71 |
| Battlement daily trip counter east of Pierce Park | | | | | |
| 1/5/2006 | ADT 102 | | | | |

| Urban Renaissance | | | | Built:1999 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Apple Street north of Bergeson | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 9/22/1994 | 6872 | | | | |
| 2/28/1995 | 6568 | | | | |
| 2/24/1998 | 7508 | 258 | 279 | 386 | 331 |
| 3/18/1998 | 8378 | 382 | 318 | 435 | 375 |
| 11/30/1999 | 8085 | | | | |
| 10/26/2000 | 7674 | | | | |
| 12/15/2005 | 9191 | 402 | 320 | 437 | 428 |
| Apple Street south of Boise Avenue | | | | | |
| 12/21/1995 | 12380 | 601 | 289 | 523 | 677 |
| 5/29/1996 | 11774 | 171 | 90 | 398 | 443 |
| 2/3/1999 | 10887 | 462 | 300 | 489 | 619 |
| 11/28/2000 | 10020 | | | | |
| 11/4/2003 | 11200 | 522 | 347 | 462 | 618 |
| Wright Street east of Apple Street | | | | | |
| 7/5/1995 | 1471 | 20 | 75 | 107 | 52 |
| 1/3/2001 | 1408 | 21 | 60 | 122 | 60 |
| 6/3/2004 | 1587 | 32 | 69 | 87 | 67 |

| Central Rim Neighborhood | | | | Built:2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garden Street north of Emerald | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 8/19/1994 | 2159 | | | | |
| 10/13/1994 | 2327 | | | | |
| 10/6/1999 | 1388 | 21 | 48 | 52 | 73 |
| 11/8/2000 | 1569 | 34 | 42 | 54 | 72 |
| 2/4/2004 | 1523 | 32 | 53 | 65 | 62 |
| 3/3/2005 | 1567 | 24 | 58 | 68 | 64 |
| Roosevelt north of Emerald | | | | | |
| 7/12/1993 | 1303 | | | | |
| 9/15/1993 | 1377 | | | | |
| 8/19/1994 | 1672 | | | | |
| 10/13/1994 | 1254 | | | | |
| 3/2/1995 | 518 | | | | |
| 10/6/1999 | 818 | 10 | 36 | 40 | 37 |
| 4/27/2004 | 815 | | | | |
| 3/3/2005 | 901 | 13 | 26 | 48 | 33 |

| Original South Boise Village | | | | Built:2002 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beacon Street west of Broadway | | | | | |
| Date | Count | am Nb | am Sb | pm Nb | pm Sb |
| 10/26/1995 | 10764 | 483 | 238 | 651 | 615 |
| 5/1/1996 | 13683 | | | | |
| 10/19/1999 | 11095 | 492 | 177 | 469 | 556 |
| 11/5/2002 | 10652 | 326 | 203 | 419 | 604 |
| 1/12/2005 | 10011 | 315 | 231 | 369 | 494 |