



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 4, 2008

TO: Town of Truckee Planning Commission

FROM: Jaime LaChance, Assistant Planner

RE: 2008 Development Code Update – Infill Development

Approved by: _____
John McLaughlin, Community Development Director

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission provide comments to staff on possible amendments to the Development Code regarding infill development.

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS:

Background:

Although the Town's General Plan and Development Code do not specifically define "infill development," for the purpose of this discussion, it can be described as the development of vacant lots or the redevelopment of underused lots or dilapidated buildings within well-established areas of a community where the project can maximize use of existing infrastructure to minimize urban sprawl, loss of open space, and natural resource impacts. Generally, infill development is constructed with higher intensities to increase activity areas, stimulate the economy, stabilize and enhance existing developed areas, encourage alternative modes of transportation, and achieve the desired community character.

Various Elements of the updated 2025 General Plan make reference to infill development through guiding principles, discussion, goals, policies, and action items (*Attachment #1*). Some of the references are direct, while others are more loosely related to infill. Also, some policies are general references to infill, and others refer to specific areas, such as Downtown or the Gateway Area.

The Town Council and Planning Commission identified infill development as a major topic for early discussion as part of the Development Code Update process. It was suggested to review the standards, guidelines, and incentives for development in infill areas to determine if such standards, guidelines, and incentives encourage development in a manner consistent with General Plan policies.

This report is designed to facilitate discussion between the public, the Planning Commission and staff regarding infill development, with the Commission to provide formal direction to staff. Depending on the outcome of the discussion, staff may need to draft Development Code language for further review by the Commission.

Existing Standards:

Currently the only reference to “infill development” in the Town of Truckee Development Code is found in Section 18.12.050, “Floor Area Ratio Criteria” (*Attachment #2*). This section allows the review authority to approve an increase to the 0.20 maximum floor area ratio within Commercial and Manufacturing zoning districts if the review authority finds that the FAR increase is proportional to the public benefit provided by the project, including exemplary design and environmental sensitivity, and if the Town Engineer finds that increased project intensity will not create unmitigatable traffic circulation impacts in the site vicinity or elsewhere in the Town. There are six project features that would each allow a 0.05 FAR increase, up to a maximum FAR of 0.35, for each of the following:

1. The primary use of the site is for lodging;
2. Lands are dedicated for public open space, public access, and/or public recreation beyond that necessary for the project;
3. The site is within the preferred infill area shown on Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map (*Attachment #4*);
4. The project will provide enhanced public facilities which are needed by the Town beyond those required for the project as mitigation measures (for example, transit facilities);
5. The project is a mixed commercial/industrial development that contain one or more businesses that support other businesses within the development and reduce traffic and parking demand for the development to an extent greater than that generated by the increased floor space; and/or
6. The project incorporates transportation control measures that reduce traffic and parking demand for the development to an extent greater than that generated by the increased floor space.

Issues for the Planning Commission to Consider:

- 1. Does Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map adequately depict the desired infill areas? If not, should the area be expanded or reduced?**

Explanation/Background: As stated above in the “Existing Standards” section, the “FAR Incentive Infill Area” identified on Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map (*Attachment #4*) depicts the properties that are eligible for a 0.05 FAR increase at the discretion of the review authority. The existing area identified for this incentive encompasses the commercial properties in the Gateway Corridor along Donner Pass Road. Along this corridor, there are few vacant lots and a number of the properties are candidates for redevelopment to achieve a more desirable pedestrian-oriented streetscape.

Options for Consideration: Other areas of town that could be added to the Infill Incentive Area could be Downtown, the Brockway Road Corridor, and potentially the West River Street Corridor west of the McIver undercrossing. Staff does not believe it is necessary to further incentivize development downtown since the Downtown Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Manufacturing zoning districts do not have setback requirements or maximum FARs. In addition, Section 18.12.070, “Downtown Commercial District Development Standards” allows for payment of in-lieu fees for vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and frontage improvements which provide development flexibility and incentives that are not available in other areas of town. If the Commission believes that infill in downtown should be further incentivized, other incentives will need to be considered beyond the 0.05 FAR increase. The Community Character Element identifies the Brockway Road Corridor as having the potential for a significant amount of development along a key arterial; however, the Land Use Policy BR-P1 emphasizes the preservation of the corridor’s open qualities which provide an important transition from the developed areas of the Town to the open space of

the Martis Valley to the south. Therefore, while staff believes this corridor is appropriate for development, it may not be appropriate for such high-intensity uses, although FAR increases are still be allowed on a case-by-case basis through the Mixed Use Development incentives in Section 18.58.140. Regarding the West River Street Corridor, there is direction in the *Downtown Specific Plan* and *Downtown River Revitalization Strategy* to revitalize and redevelop the area, including the relocation of existing industrial uses. Since most of the West River Street Corridor is in the Downtown Mixed-Use, Commercial, and Manufacturing zoning districts there are not setback requirements or maximum FARs which will allow for maximized infill development. To assist the Commission in determining which areas of Town, if any, should be added to the Infill Incentive Area, a map of the Redevelopment Project Area is attached for your review (*Attachment #5*).

Staff Recommendation: Staff believes that the area on Sheet 28 accurately represents the areas which may be appropriate for incentives to encourage higher intensity infill development.

2. Does the discretionary 0.05 FAR increase provide sufficient incentives to encourage infill development in the Gateway Corridor?

Explanation/Background: Again, the “FAR Incentive Infill Area” identified on Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map (*Attachment #4*) depicts the properties within the Gateway Corridor that are eligible for a 0.05 FAR increase at the discretion of the review authority. The General Plan policies related to infill development in the Gateway Corridor (*Attachment #1*) use action words/phrases such as “encourage,” “strongly encourage,” “enhance,” “improve,” “promote,” etc. This language is generally used as a way to recognize the importance of achieving such goals in the General Plan.

Options for Consideration: The Commission may consider incorporating additional incentives to further encourage infill development in the Gateway Corridor. These incentives could include the following:

- Reduction of development impact fees
- Reduction of land use application processing fees
- Priority permit processing
- Modifications to development standards, including:
 - Increased FAR beyond the 0.05 potential increase
 - Decreased number of required parking spaces
 - Increased site coverage (reduced open space)
 - Reduced setbacks
 - Flexibility to standards for slope disturbance areas
 - Flexibility to guidelines for preservation of existing trees

If the Commission believes that additional incentives should be incorporated, staff would appreciate the Commission’s feedback on the appropriateness of the above incentives.

Staff Recommendation: Staff believes that the existing 0.05 FAR is sufficient to incentivize infill development in the Gateway Corridor, with the awareness that the Mixed Use Development contains incentives in Section 18.58.140 and understanding that staff may be more supportive of a Planned Development application (projects requesting minor deviations from development standards) for a project in this area if it is believed that the project is achieving the General Plan goals set forth for Gateway development.

3. Should the Development Code include a separate section to emphasize infill development for projects within the “FAR Incentive Infill Area”?

Explanation/Background: The Development Code does not define or provide standards for infill development since the only reference is in relation to the FAR incentive for projects located within the “FAR Incentive Infill Area.” The intention, level of discretion, or minimum standards are not described for this incentive, other than stating that the review authority shall find that the 0.05 FAR increase is proportional to the public benefit provided by the project, including exemplary design and environmental sensitivity.

Options for Consideration: The Commission could consider leaving the infill development reference in the Development Code section as-is, expanding the existing “FAR Criteria” section to describe the goals and minimum standards for infill development, or creating a new section of the Development Code to emphasize infill development standards and potential incentives. Staff believes it could be beneficial to add an “Infill Development” section that would define the objectives for infill development, define the applicable infill development area (referencing Sheet 28 of the zoning map), describe incentives offered for infill development, include findings that would be required in order for the review authority to allow minor deviations to development standards with guidelines for how much of a deviation may be appropriate, etc. Staff envisions that, if added, this section may be similar to the Mixed-Use Development Section 18.58.140 (*Attachment #3*). This could provide a method to ensure projects in the “FAR Incentive Infill Area” are required to meet defined objections in order to receive discretionary approval of the 0.05 FAR increase, or any other incentives determined to be appropriate by the Planning Commission. If this is the desire of the Planning Commission, staff will draft language for future review by the public and Commission that could be inserted into the Development Code.

Staff Recommendation: Staff believes that an “Infill Development” should be added to the Development Code to set standards for projects that are eligible for the 0.05 FAR increase incentive to ensure that Town goals for new construction and redevelopment are achieved in infill areas.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: Notice of this Planning Commission agenda item was sent to all persons included in the Development Code Update e-mail notification list.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. General Plan Language Related to Infill Development
2. Development Code Section 18.12.050, “Floor Area Ratio Criteria”
3. Development Code Section 18.58.140, “Mixed-Use Development”
4. Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map, “FAR Incentive Infill Area”
5. Truckee Redevelopment Project Area Map

General Plan Language Related to Infill Development

General	Downtown	Gateway	General Plan Language
X			<p>Land Use Guiding Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate significant new development around existing developed areas. • Locate the highest density and intensity of development on infill sites within existing developed areas. • In order to provide opportunities for infill development and help fund the need for a secondary access road out of Tahoe Donner, maintain allowed residential densities on 700 acres southeast of Tahoe Donner. • Prevent "commercial sprawl" in Truckee.
		X	<p>Land Use Gateway Neighborhood Area: (Policies intended to recognize and build upon the centrality and community importance of the Gateway area):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GW-P2: Encourage retrofitting of existing commercial development...
X			<p>Land Use Goal LU-3: Create efficient land use patterns which reduce environmental impacts and minimize the potential for residential and commercial sprawl.</p>
X			<p>Land Use Policy P3.3: To provide for projected population growth in an efficient manner, accommodate development at the highest densities in infill areas, consistent with goals for environmental protection and land use compatibility.</p>
X			<p>Land Use Goal LU-5: Encourage a mix of land uses in the Town to promote a vibrant community and to reduce traffic, while addressing the need to minimize land use conflicts.</p>
X	X	X	<p>Land Use Policy P5.1: Strongly encourage mixed use development in appropriate locations, including the Downtown, Gateway area and Donner Lake.</p>
	X		<p>Land Use Policy P6.2: Maintain and enhance Downtown as the heart of Truckee and as the Town's premier tourist destination...</p>
X	X	X	<p>Community Character Guiding Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Truckee's town centers as vibrant, mixed use hubs of community life. • Enhance Truckee's important corridors and community gateways.
	X		<p>Community Character Goal CC-6: Maintain Downtown as the pre-eminent Town center in Truckee, with a vibrant Main Street, mixture of uses, and rich diversity of historic resources.</p>
	X		<p>Community Character Policy P6.1: Focus community investment and resources in the redevelopment of the Downtown as Truckee's primary town center.</p>
	X		<p>Community Character Policy P6.5: Promote new mixed use and infill development in the Downtown, including at the Railyard and Hilltop sites.</p>
		X	<p>Community Character Goal CC-8: Improve the character and urban design quality of the Gateway Area so that it becomes a true Town Center for Truckee.</p>
		X	<p>Community Character Policy P8.1: Encourage the redevelopment of the Gateway Area from an auto-oriented, strip-commercial dominated corridor, to a place that invites pedestrian activity and provides gathering places and opportunities for interaction.</p>

General	Downtown	Gateway	General Plan Language
		X	Community Character Policy P8.2: Reinforce the commercial and mixed use qualities that contribute to the “town” orientation of the Gateway corridor.
		X	Community Character Policy P8.8: Encourage new mixed use development in the Gateway Area, particularly projects that incorporate both a residential and commercial component.
			Community Character Goal CC-9: Create mixed use centers that can provide local shopping, services and employment in proximity to housing.
X			Community Character Policy P9.1: Promote redevelopment and infill of existing auto-oriented commercial centers and corridors with pedestrian-friendly mixed use development.
X			Community Character Goal CC-13: Ensure that Truckee’s commercial and industrial districts are safe, well-designed and accessible areas that are positively integrated with other parts of the town.
X			Circulation Guiding Principle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that new development minimizes impacts on the roadway network, is integrated into the existing transportation system and provides opportunities for use of alternate modes. • Reduce automobile travel demand to reduce impacts on the Town's roadway system, lessen the need for new or expanded road facilities to accommodate increased demand, and decrease pollutants emissions from automobiles.
X			Circulation Goal CIR-4: Create new developments that are integrated into the circulation network and promote connectivity within and between community areas.
X			Circulation Policy P9.2: Promote land use and transportation strategies that will reduce automobile trips, particularly implementation of compact, pedestrian-oriented development, mixed uses, live-work projects, neighborhood-serving commercial and mixed use centers, and clustered and infill development.
X			Housing Program H-3.1.7: Allow shared parking in commercial and residential mixed-use projects, where it can be demonstrated that the uses do not have competing peak parking demands.
X			Housing Policy H-4.2: Encourage clustered residential development that reduces infrastructure and other development costs, preserves and enhance important environmental resources, and maintains important areas as open space.
	X		Economic Development Policy P8.2: Continue redevelopment and improvement efforts in Downtown Truckee, including programs to preserve the unique historic character of the Downtown, to expand upon the downtown’s vibrant mixed-use character, and to develop projects that differentiate Downtown Truckee from other commercial areas within the Town and the surrounding trade area.

18.12.050 - Floor Area Ratio Criteria

The floor area ratio (FAR) requirements established by Table 2-8 for the CN, CG, CH, CS, and M zoning districts may be increased by the review authority to a maximum of 0.35, subject to the following standards.

A. The review authority shall find that the FAR increase is proportional to the public benefit provided by the project, including exemplary design and environmental sensitivity, and compliance with the other provisions of this Section.

B. FAR may be increased by 0.05, or 2,200 square feet per acre, up to a maximum of 0.35, based on each/any of the following project features:

1. The primary use of the site is for lodging;
2. Lands are dedicated for public open space, public access, and/or public recreation beyond that necessary for the project;
3. The site is within the preferred infill area shown on Sheet 28 of the Town Zoning Map;
4. The project will provide enhanced public facilities which are needed by the Town beyond those required for the project as mitigation measures (for example, transit facilities);
5. The project is a mixed commercial/industrial development that contain one or more businesses that support other businesses within the development and reduce traffic and parking demand for the development to an extent greater than that generated by the increased floor space; and/or
6. The project incorporates transportation control measures that reduce traffic and parking demand for the development to an extent greater than that generated by the increased floor space.

C. Residential floor space within mixed use projects and live/work spaces shall not be counted toward the maximum allowed FAR.

D. No increase in the FAR shall be granted unless the Town Engineer first determines that the increased project intensity will not create unmitigable traffic circulation impacts in the site vicinity or elsewhere in the Town.

18.58.140 - Mixed-Use Development

A. Purpose. This Section provides significant incentives to encourage the development of mixed-use projects in the CN, CG, CS, DMU, DC, M, and DM zoning districts. The intent is to provide a mixture of commercial and residential uses within the commercial zoning districts to increase the area's population and pedestrian activity, and to reduce air pollution, energy consumption, and transportation costs. The provisions of this Section allow greater flexibility in design and encourage innovative and creative site planning by providing incentives to combine commercial and residential land uses in either or both multi-use or single-purpose structures.

B. Applicability. Incentives to encourage mixed-use development shall be available within the CN, CG, CS, DMU, DC, M, and DM zoning districts only and at the discretion of the Commission. Incentives may be in the form of development bonuses (e.g., relaxed development standards), and/or decreased processing and/or development impact fees.

C. Permit requirement. Whenever a mixed-use project requests incentives or proposes uses not specifically permitted in the applicable zoning district, the development of a mixed-use project shall require Commission approval of a Use Permit, in compliance with Chapter 18.76 (Use Permits and Minor Use Permits). In this case, the Director shall provide the Commission with a recommendation, which would include the appropriateness of the mixed-use development on the subject site and the incentives the Town should offer in order to encourage the development of the mixed-use project.

D. Preliminary Commission review.

1. A prospective applicant for a mixed-use project may exercise the option of requesting a preliminary Commission review of the mixed-use proposal.
2. Upon the filing of an application and payment of the required processing fee, the Commission will review the proposal in a public meeting, advise the applicant of any concerns about the project that may be apparent to the Commission at that time, and indicate whether the Commission believes that the project may qualify for incentives and what type of incentives the Commission would consider granting.
3. This determination shall be provided by the Commission in good faith, but shall not be binding upon Commission before a decision being made on an actual Use Permit application after a public hearing.

E. Eligibility for mixed-use development incentives. To qualify for a mixed-use development incentive, a project shall meet the following minimum requirements.

1. Allowable uses.
 - a. The project shall include residential uses. A minimum of two residential units shall be provided. The Commission shall increase the minimum number of residential units required based on its determination of the reasonable number of units in relation to the size/floor area of the non-residential use.

b. Office uses may also be allowed when located above the ground floor or in areas where levels of pedestrian activity are relatively low, subject to the discretion of the Commission.

2. The project may be developed as one or more multi-use or single purpose structures. If the project is developed in phases, residential units shall be provided in the first phase.

F. Allowed land uses. The uses which may be approved in a mixed-use project shall be those allowed in the applicable zoning districts in compliance with the provisions of Section 18.12.030 (Commercial and Manufacturing District Land Uses and Permit Requirements). Uses not specifically permitted in the applicable zoning district may be approved in a mixed-use project. The floor area for uses not specifically permitted in the applicable zoning district shall not exceed 25 percent of the total floor area of the non-residential uses of the mixed-use project.

G. Design and development standards. The following standards shall apply to mixed-use projects:

1. Density. Residential density shall be determined through the Use Permit process, but shall not exceed four units per acre;

2. Floor area. Commercial and/or industrial uses shall be the primary components of a mixed-use project. Residential floor area shall not exceed 50 percent of the total floor area of the mixed-use project. Residential floor space shall not be counted towards the allowed floor area as determined by the floor area criteria development standard; and

3. Site development standards. The development standards of the applicable zoning district shall apply to mixed-use projects unless they are specifically modified through the bonus provisions specified in Subsection H., below.

4. Residential parking. One parking space shall be provided for each residential unit.

H. Mixed-use bonuses. The Commission shall grant one or more of the following incentives to an eligible mixed-use project:

1. Increase in the maximum allowable:

a. Floor area ratio; or

b. Lot coverage.

2. Decrease in the number of required parking spaces.

3. Reduction of processing and/or development impact fees.