



# DENSITY BY DESIGN

Livability and Sustainability  
in Urban Redevelopment

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# TRENDS



# Population Growth

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- US population is expected to increase 33% by 2030
- 94 Million more people than in 2000 (376 million total)
- Approximately half of the homes, offices, buildings, stores, and industrial facilities needed do not exist today

# Demographic Shift

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- US will need almost 60M new housing units by 2030
- Since the 1950's families with children fueled America's housing market
- Today these households make up less than 25% of American households, by 2020 it will be less than 20%
- Shift in population segments and household demography have created a new paradigm:
  1. Young Professionals
  2. Couples without children
  3. Empty Nesters
  4. Single Parents

# Problems in the Public Realm

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- Dwindling Natural areas
- Public Health Concerns
  - Smog, air pollution and resulting respiratory problems
  - Obesity increases attributed to more sedentary lifestyles
- Fragile and uncertain national energy policy
- Shrinking municipal budgets
- Increasing regional traffic congestion

# New Urban Dwellers (Market Demands)

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- 6 of 10 surveyed prefer smaller lot / higher density neighborhoods than large lot / cul-de-sac communities  
*....some Americans seem ready to give up their bedroom communities*
- Demand for higher density homes will increase as a result of:
  - 78 Million downsizing baby boomers
  - 78 million children of the baby boomers graduating college
  - 9 million new immigrants
- Generation “D” Matures: The highly networked digital generation begins to purchase and rent homes
- Growth of the “Creative Class” outpaces the “Service Class”
- Young Knowledge Workers Looking for more Urban Lifestyle



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# DESIGN DENSITY

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# Urban Re-Development Challenges

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- Costs: Land, Construction, Process...
- Accommodating the Auto: Traffic and Parking
- NIMBYism & Community Investment
- Zoning/Code Constraints
- Maintaining public space/place sensibilities
- “Green” Development Costs vs. Value



# Urban Re-Development Benefits

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- Infrastructure already in place
- Shorter travel distances (Live / Work / Play lifestyle)
- Mass transit options
- Diversity of housing options and other uses

# Designing Density: Adaptive Reuse

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- True Recycling: Giving older / obsolete buildings new life
- Old/New: Balancing the character of the past and the needs of the future
- Integration Into The Urban Fabric
- Projects
  1. Muses Block (office / retail buildings)
  2. Bass High School Lofts / Roosevelt Gym Apartments (schools)
  3. Mattress Factory Lofts (factory)
  4. City Hall East (distribution facility)

# Adaptive Reuse: Muses Block

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- Historic office / retail buildings (rough shape)
- No parking! (off-site)
- Utilized Historic Tax credits
- Tied all buildings together with common circulation
- New life for Downtown Atlanta

# Adaptive Reuse: Bass High School Lofts / Roosevelt Gym Apartments

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- Obsolete APS historic school buildings
- Wonderful shells / Great neighborhood locations
- Adapted use to apartments
- Utilized historic tax credits on both projects
- Worked hard to maintain original character while bringing up to modern standards

# Adaptive Reuse: Mattress Factory Lofts

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- Abandoned factory / warehouse complex
- Bad shape / environmental issues
- New uses include residential units, office, and retail
- Utilized historic tax credits
- Had to be very creative in fitting functional living spaces into large / awkward shapes of existing shells

# Adaptive Reuse: City Hall East

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- Former Sears warehouse / distribution center
- Included adjacent land, newer parking decks & service bays
- True mixed use community to be created in and around the historic shell
- Plan to utilize historic tax credits
- Most important transformation will be to reconnect neighborhoods

# Designing Density: Infill

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- Infill / Reuse of underutilized sites (replacing the missing teeth)
- Designing The Right Density
- Architectural Scale and Fit
- Infusing an appropriate mix : Retail, residential, office,etc
- Projects
  - Alta West (Westside Industrial district)
  - Inman Park Village (historic intown neighborhood)
  - The Reynolds (Peachtree Street / SONO district)
  - Tribute Lofts (Fourth Ward neighborhood / Freedom Parkway)
  - Oakland Park (Memorial Drive Corridor at edge of Grant Park)

# Infill: Alta West

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- Former underutilized industrial site
- Existing grid of urban blocks / “Hip” area
- Required re-zoning / density discussions with neighborhood
- Main goals were to create new urban housing for the area and activate the street with retail



# Infill: Inman Park Village

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- Former industrial site (Mead paper plant)
- On edge of historic neighborhood / along “Beltline”
- Great cooperative effort between sellers, community and developer team
- Created a wide diversity of uses and scales to respond to specific contexts

# Infill: The Reynolds

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- Former one story commercial building on Peachtree St.
- Part of emerging “SONO” district, connecting downtown and midtown
- Mixed use, mixed income building with street-front retail
- Near transit (Buses and MARTA)
- In-town option for empty-nesters

# Infill: Tribute Lofts

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- Former liquor store, abandoned sites
- On Freedom Parkway / Great views
- Collaborative rezoning process
- Mixed use / Mixed income building with street front retail and live-work units
- New housing option for Fourth Ward neighborhood

# Infill: Oakland Park & Memorial Drive Corridor

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- Former underutilized site on major arterial street
- NIMBYism addressed through pro-active community participation, education, and agreement
- Parking – Re-established internal alley for access to buried parking
- Mixed Use – Street front retail & residential
- LEED Certification applied for
  - Urban site reuse
  - Natural Daylighting
  - Special Bicycle and Carpool Vehicle Accommodations
  - Integration of recycled and sustainable products: Lighting, flooring, etc.
  - Low water use / higher efficiency systems



# SUMMARY



# Lessons Learned

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- Intown urban infill is more complicated
- Prices and market demand call for denser mixed use solutions
- No one answer for all sites, customize design in response to conditions
- Often meet resistance but with a good process and a good design, this can be overcome
- Growing support from City of Atlanta is extremely important
- Pride and rewards for successful projects are priceless!



Thank you.

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