

RESOLUTION NO. 11-19128

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF BILLINGS  
TO ADOPT AN INFILL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

WHEREAS, in enacting this resolution, it is the intent of the City Council to encourage efficient utilization of City infrastructure and services; support development and redevelopment of land within the City limits that can access existing City infrastructure and services, preserve established neighborhoods, set a high standard for the City's built environment, and improve the quality of life of Billings residents; and

WHEREAS, the *2010 Community Investment Plan: City of Billings City Council and Staff Strategic Priorities* identified one of its goals to make infill a priority; and

WHEREAS, infill development can benefit the City of Billings by reducing the cost of basic City services, providing housing choices, encouraging walkable communities and revitalizing existing neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the City of Billings has annexed more than nine square miles since 2000 (32.8 to 41.9 sq. mi.) and many of those annexations required a considerable outlay of City funds to ensure acceptable levels of service to the annexed properties and to maintain the levels of service within the existing City limits; and

WHEREAS, it has been shown by an analysis of Billings' property tax structure by Joseph Minicozzi of Public Interest Projects, Inc. that property tax values per acre in downtown Billings can be as much as seven or eight times that of commercial development in West Billings; and

WHEREAS, the Billings City Council encourages redevelopment of the City of Billings urban area through formation and implementation of Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Districts, Historic Districts, and Business Improvement Districts (BID); and

WHEREAS, the City of Billings City Council desires to establish clear policy, shared vision for the future, consistency in decision making, and public-private cooperation and partnerships to foster infill development within the city.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL that the City of Billings adopt the following Infill Development Policy.

## **INFILL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

Infill development has been proven to promote housing and retail choices, encourage economic development, and support the efficient use of existing municipal infrastructure and services.

This policy is intended to clarify community priorities and guide the development of future regulations. Provisions of this policy are not intended to have regulatory effect and should not be interpreted in themselves to authorize, require, prohibit, or influence any particular project, property, land use application, or proceeding. However, as a non-binding, statement of city goals and intentions, the policy may be cited by citizens, staff, and decision-makers as a basis for influencing decisions that are discretionary in nature and that otherwise permit consideration of such goals and intentions.

For the purposes of this policy, “infill development” means development of under-utilized or vacant parcels that are connected to or able to take advantage of existing infrastructure. Furthermore, it is development that is urban in nature, often multi-story, within the City limits, and designed and constructed to be compatible with existing neighborhoods while providing amenities that enhance the community’s quality of life.

### **2. GOALS OF INFILL POLICY**

- (a) Encourage and support efficient and strategic public and private investments, including the enhancement of existing public resources, such as schools, libraries, and parks, and to support targeted private investments
- (b) Capitalize on development opportunities by reforming regulations to create incentives and provide additional land use predictability through City-supported changes to subdivision, zoning, and site development regulations.
- (c) Ensure compatibility with and work to enhance existing neighborhood amenities by implementing neighborhood plans, involving residents early in planning processes, and striving for a shared vision of the future.
- (d) Find ways to include safety, health, environmental, and transportation benefits for the community when considering any infill development plan or project to always improve the overall sense of place.

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

(a) The City of Billings shall work in cooperation with developers, organizations, agencies, and community members to implement the goals of the policy using the following strategies as a guide:

i. **Provide Resources:**

- Provide maps identifying where tax parcels are in close proximity to public services including, but not limited to, water, sewer, schools, transit routes, Tax Increment Finance Districts, etc.
- Inventory and map parcels that are vacant and provide information on the eligibility of parcels for funding programs
- Establish a list of potentially underutilized parcels and invite landowners to include properties on a voluntary basis
- Target public investments by identifying areas of focus and enhance through the Capital Improvement Plan planning process
- Explore multi-use development opportunities through public partnerships (schools/community centers/parks/libraries)

ii. **Develop Incentives**

- Assess and catalog the condition of public infrastructure and make it easily accessible to the community
- Explore changes to streamline permit-review process and reduce development fees
- Provide training and/or education on building codes and working with and around electrical and natural gas utilities, particularly for the renovation of existing buildings, and including the use of non-traditional energy systems like solar, wind, or geothermal applications.
- Provide information and education to the public on how City assessments and fees are determined and applied across the City to enable better understanding of how assessments and fees affect infill development
- Establish annual award to recognize exceptional infill projects
- Research and prioritize potential regulatory changes, including but not limited to: density bonuses; infrastructure cost-sharing; two-way streets, right-of-way enhancements (trees); modifications to City assessments; parking standard adjustments ; changes to street widths
- Consider City-initiated rezoning of property

iii. **Ensure Compatibility**

- Implement form-based code in East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD) and explore similar code changes in other parts of the City based on EBURD code
- Support educational presentations about infill in general; facilitation by trained presenters; Neighborhood Task Force presentations/education

- Engage major employers to identify infill locations for workforce housing
- Develop criteria and identify preferred infill areas and areas of stability to provide a guide to developers on preferred infill development locations

iv. **Enhance Livability**

- Encourage energy efficiency and LEED construction incentives;
- Promote attractive streetscape construction and enhance public spaces through landscaping and other amenities
- Support transportation system connectivity improvements for all users and location efficient development
- Explore public transit route improvements, including downtown circulator and commuter routes
- Continue to assess the positive impact of bike police patrols in the Business Improvement District and downtown area on public safety and use of public spaces;
- Continue to identify ways to promote the Billings brand and sense of place to people within and outside the community

(b) The City Council recognizes that infill development practices evolve and the tools and strategies to fulfill this policy may change over time. It is expected that this policy will be reviewed periodically to reflect the best practices in infill development for the City of Billings. Therefore, the City Council supports the following strategies for policy review and monitoring policy implementation:

- i. The City will participate in periodic events to showcase infill projects, share information, and monitor policy implementation progress.
- ii. In conjunction with the infill events, City staff will provide an annual summary report to the City Council and public outlining the policy implementation achievements to date.
- iii. City staff in coordination with infill developers will review the financial benefits of infill projects through before and after tax comparisons and other means.
- iv. Existing advisory boards such as the Development Process Advisory Review Board, Aviation and Transit Board, Public Works Board, Parking Advisory Board, City Zoning Commission, Yellowstone County Board of Planning, Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board, and Neighborhood Task Forces are encouraged to provide ongoing feedback and act as a conduit for public participation on the implementation of the Infill Development Policy.

PASSED by the City Council and APPROVED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2011.

THE CITY OF BILLINGS:



BY: Thomas W. Hanel  
Thomas W. Hanel, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BY: Cari Martin  
Cari Martin, CITY CLERK