



# Boise Downtown Housing Workshop

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## **Background**

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- **Housing initiative**
- **Strategic business plan**
- **Workshop process**
- **Participants**

# Introduction

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## Facilitating Downtown Boise Housing

Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC) is Boise's urban renewal and redevelopment agency. A primary objective of its business plan is to facilitate the development of quality urban housing in and around the downtown. The agency focus on urban housing as a tool for downtown revitalization grew from recommendations in the Smart City Initiative committee report completed in 2002, the result of a collaboration of civic leaders focused on technology and revitalization in downtown Boise.

Urban housing has been a successful revitalization tool for many of America's cities. Boise's large downtown employment base, a large number of one and two person households, and the rich urban environment provided in downtown Boise all speak to an opportunity for the immediate start of quality owner and renter housing.

In support of this objective, CCDC convened a intense, weeklong workshop focused on the subject of urban housing in downtown Boise. The workshop was composed of a team of architects, planners, landscape architects, economic development and finance specialists, several Boise-based housing developers, CCDC board members, and members of the CCDC professional staff. The strategy pursued by the members of the workshop team consisted of examining the opportunities for urban housing in downtown Boise through:

1. Evaluating and recommending clusters of future urban housing. The guiding principle was to find geographic locations in and around the downtown where "communities rather than projects" could be developed. Experience has demonstrated the need for groups, clusters of urban housing, or "pulse points of investment" in which the public realm (streets, streetscape, street furniture, landscaping, and so forth) is almost as important to the resident as the building and dwelling unit. This is place making and community building.
2. Specific examination of several areas considered "ready to go." The 8<sup>th</sup> Street corridor between Myrtle and Battery streets is close to the revitalizing BoDo project, an area of mixed uses, historic buildings, street character, and other attributes. Specific planning examined how to fit multiple projects into this environment, determining necessary parking, the quality of streetscape, and other features that will reinforce successful implementation of multiple projects at the same time.

Therefore, this team of national and local professionals simultaneously worked "top down" and "bottom up." The process was dynamic, exciting, encouraging, and fruitful through the exploration of opportunities for development, barriers to be removed, and the likely next steps in Boise's urban housing revolution.

The CCDC board and staff are greatly appreciative of the time given by local architects, developers, and community leaders.

# Strategic Business Plan

The Housing Workshop was convened in direct support of CCDC’s Strategic Business Plan. CCDC is developing a ten-year strategic business plan to guide public investment in downtown Boise. The business plan is focused on the principle of leverage:

In order to promote economic development in Boise, CCDC should use its public investment in ways that leverage as much private investment as possible. Nationally, redevelopment agencies typically realize a ratio of private to public investment of four or five to one – that is, for every public dollar spent on streetscape, acquisition, parking, or other amenities, the private sector should respond with four or five dollars of private development. CCDC should anticipate a similar ratio of investment in downtown Boise.

Further, the strategic business plan identifies the criteria by which CCDC can evaluate potential investment opportunities. With limited public funds and multiple investment requests, CCDC cannot participate in every project, but must make strategic decisions as to which projects offer the greatest leverage opportunities and will further the overall downtown development goals. Therefore, the development criteria are a way to gauge potential projects to determine whether they can provide adequate leverage and other public benefits.

In Boise, the total ten-year downtown private investment goal is tentatively set at \$300 million, of which CCDC and other public agencies would supply \$60 million (reflecting the 5:1 ratio). Recognizing that urban housing is a growing national trend, that downtown Boise has a heavy office concentration, and that residents can support retail much more effectively than office workers, up to 2/3 of the \$300 million (\$180 million) would be in the form of urban housing products.

## Ten-Year Investment Targets for Downtown Boise

<i>Project Type</i>	<i>Units</i>	<i>Square Feet</i>	<i>Price</i>	<i>Investment</i>
Housing				
Condominium	550		\$180,000/unit	\$100 million
Apartment	800		\$100,000/unit	\$ 80 million
Retail		175,000	\$120/sq.ft.	\$ 20 million
Office		500,000	\$135/sq.ft.	\$ 65 million
Hotel	250		\$150,000/unit	\$ 35 million
			<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>\$300 million</b>

# Workshop Process

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The Downtown Boise Housing Workshop is based on a Urban Land Institute advisory services panel workshop model. The ULI uses the workshop approach to quickly (one week or less) develop strategies and solutions for difficult real estate problems in communities throughout the world. The core elements of this approach include:

- **Speed** – Complete the workshop in less than one week.
- **Focus** – Focus the efforts on a very specific issue or geographical area.
- **Expertise** – Use the services of senior-level planners, architects, and other consultants to draw from their years of experience.
- **Breadth** – Represented disciplines include architecture, development, planning, transportation, economics, and public policy.
- **Partnership** – Involve both public and private stakeholders. Real estate solutions are inherently private sector endeavors, but require the cooperation and support of the public sector. Therefore, both sides should be involved at a high level in developing solutions.
- **Implementation** – The process is designed to lead to real development projects. Therefore, the focus of the workshop process is to identify barriers to implementation and create strategies to overcome them.



# Workshop Process

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The workshop was convened on Sunday evening in an opening reception for all participants to meet and get to know each other. Following the opening reception, the remainder of the week was spent hard at work identifying the key issues and developing strategies:

## Monday, September 8

Monday began with an opening presentation to outline the work tasks for the rest of the week and to summarize the findings from the Boise Downtown Housing Analysis, a report completed in August 2003 that quantifies the potential demand for new urban housing in downtown Boise. An extensive walking tour was conducted through the primary study areas to view and photograph existing conditions. Following the tour, property owners and developers in the target area were interviewed to determine current plans and current approaches to development in the area. The rest of the day was spent identifying the key barriers to development, the major opportunities, and a preliminary development strategy for downtown.

## Tuesday, September 9

Tuesday began with a review of the strategy reached at the end of Monday. The first part of the day was spent refining the strategy and clarifying the major elements. The remainder of the day was spent in a series of small group work sessions to address specific elements of the strategy, followed by full meetings of the large group to review, critique, and offer alternative solutions. At the end of Tuesday, the team reached agreement on the “big picture” and strategic approach to supporting new housing in downtown.

## Wednesday, September 10

Wednesday began with a review of the conclusions from Tuesday. The remainder of the day was spent refining those conclusions and preparing the final presentation and writing strategic conclusions and recommendations.

## Thursday, September 11

The final day of the workshop was spent making final refinements to the strategy and report prior to a presentation of the findings by the team to a group of stakeholders.



# Workshop Strategic Objectives

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Prior to beginning the workshop, a series of strategic objectives and outcomes was developed in order to guide the team's efforts and keep them focused throughout the week:

1. Develop a housing strategy for downtown Boise.
2. Establish a strategy that activates private sector housing development and leverages public investment.
3. Define the “pulse points” for housing concentrations and urban neighborhoods.
4. Identify livability assets that support the neighborhoods and housing projects.
5. Identify place-making tools to transform multiple projects into a cohesive community.
6. Define a process leading to public and private commitment to the housing initiative, assuring successful design, financing and marketing and development.
7. Identify barriers to development and suggest means of overcoming them.
8. Contribute to the urban housing implementation process for CCDC.



# Design and Development Team

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## David Leland, chair

*Leland Consulting Group*

David Leland, CRE, has 38 years of experience in the real estate industry as a consultant, advisor, developer and owner. Dave has personally conducted and managed more than 2,500 real estate assignments in North America and Asia and is a member of The Counselors of Real Estate (CRE). As former CEO of a multistate mixed-use real estate acquisitions and development company, and educated in architecture, city planning and urban economics, he offers a strong working knowledge of real estate acquisition, development and management. He understands the linkage and relationship between location, program, and design. Dave is leading the strategic business planning process for CCDC and has provided market strategies for the Westside Downtown Master Plan and the proposed Old Boise Master Plan.

## Donald J. Stastny, architect and urban designer

*StastnyBrun Architects*

Don Stastny, FAIA, FAICP, principal of StastnyBrun Architects, Inc., has been a practicing architect and urbanist in Portland since 1973. His practice has focused on three distinct professional arenas: architecture (mixed-use, urban complexes, housing, museums, libraries and learning centers), town planning and civic design (strategic plans and designs for new towns and cities), and design process management (design and design/build competitions, invitationals, and community workshops). He is recognized nationally as a leader in design competition management and was the author of "The Design Excellence Program Guide - Building a Legacy" published by the U.S. General Services Administration. Don recently designed and facilitated the Pioneer Corridor design competition in Boise.

## Paddy Tillett, architect and urban designer

*Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership*

Paddy Tillett, FAIA, FAICP, has thirty years of professional experience, working for consulting firms and public agencies in many parts of the world before settling in the Pacific Northwest. He was appointed ZGF's Director of Planning and Urban Design in 1984. Since that time he has been responsible for most of the firm's major planning and urban design projects, including downtown revitalization plans, college and university and state campus master plans, transit studies, light rail systems, multimodal centers and other transportation-related development for Portland, Boise, Seattle, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Anchorage, El Paso, Boulder and Coeur d'Alene. Paddy has extensive experience in Boise including preparation of the Cultural District, River Street/Myrtle Street District, and Westside Downtown District urban design plans.

## Sherry McKibben, architect and urban designer

*McKibben + Cooper Architects*

Sherry McKibben, AIA, a Boise native, is a founding partner with the Boise architectural and urban design firm, McKibben + Cooper Architects and is Director of the University of Idaho's Idaho Urban Research and Design Center, located in downtown Boise. Working for prominent architects in New York and San Francisco, she gained experience in high density, mixed-use planning and architectural projects as well as cultural and government work. Before returning to Boise, Sherry taught architecture at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and joined several firms there working on urban mixed-use residential projects, university buildings and master plans.

# Design and Development Team

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## **Brian McCarter, landscape architect and urban designer**

*Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership*

Brian McCarter has 26 years of experience focused on urban design, landscape architecture and planning for a variety of urban, mixed-use, waterfront, campus, public open space and transportation projects. He brings an extensive background in the design of campuses, neighborhoods, parks, plazas and streets, as well as major transit and pedestrian facilities in urban settings. With ZGF, he has extensive experience with planning and urban design for downtown Boise.

## **Chris Zahas, economist**

*Leland Consulting Group*

Chris has experience in both the public and private sectors where he has worked with public agencies, private developers, citizen organizations and neighborhoods to develop and revitalize main streets and downtowns. As a senior associate at Leland Consulting Group, he leads multidisciplinary teams on a wide variety of projects. Prior to Leland Consulting Group, he was a project coordinator at the Portland Development Commission where he worked with multiple public agencies, community groups, and consultants to implement urban renewal projects. Chris holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Portland State University and is a skilled writer and public speaker.

## **Erik Oaas, developer**

*Stewart Laney Oaas*

Erik Oaas is a partner with Stewart Laney Oaas, a local real estate development firm. He is a retired Vice President and chief financial officer of Micron Electronics, Inc. and is a retired member of the Board of Directors, Micron Electronics, Inc. He served on the State of Idaho Attorney General's Task Force and is the president of a family owned manufacturing business. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Montana.

## **Clay Carley, developer**

*Old Boise LLC*

Clay Carley is a native Boisean with BA in philosophy (minors in economics and psychology). He lived for 29 years outside of Boise – New York City; Hartford, Conn.; Santa Barbara, Calif.; San Diego, Calif. Clay developed a hydraulic lift company in 1984 and sold the company to Dover Corp. in 2000. He has since relocated to Boise to manage his family's real estate development company. Clay is active in many local organizations such as the Treasure Valley YMCA, Downtown Boise Association, New Heritage Theater, and the Idaho Lacrosse Association.

## **Gary Christensen, developer**

*Christensen Development*

Gary Christensen is a partner in Old Boise, LLC, a development partnership formed to initiate mixed-use and housing developments in downtown Boise. He is a developer and owner of several buildings in downtown Boise.

# Design and Development Team

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## **Tim Wilcomb, developer**

*Jordan-Wilcomb Construction*

Tim Wilcomb is a fourth generation builder and developer in the Boise area. He is a partner in Wilcomb LLC and is an owner of several properties in the downtown area of Boise. Wilcomb LLC owns properties on Grove Street, Broad Street and 8th Street. Tim is also a partner in Jordan-Wilcomb Construction, Inc., Idaho's oldest construction company (established in 1910).

## **Ed Miller, developer**

*Givens Pursley*

Ed Miller is an Idaho native and is a lawyer and partner in Clark Development. Ed's legal practice focuses on the areas of real estate, business, and health care. Ed has extensive experience in land use and real estate development matters. Ed lectures at various Idaho Law Foundation and CLE courses and other seminars. He is active in community and political activities and has served on various boards and commissions.

## **Jeff Shneider, architect and developer**

*CSHQA*

Jeff Shneider, AIA, is team facilitator at CSHQA's, Boise's largest and oldest architecture and engineering firm. Jeff stresses effective communication as much as the design itself. His influence is visible in numerous large-scale projects including aviation, education, corporate and government facilities. Jeff has been with CSHQA since 1974, and has been a stockholder since 1977. CSHQA has designed and developed housing, commercial, and mixed-use projects throughout downtown Boise and has an exclusive right to negotiate for a public parcel in the 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton study area.

## **Bill Clark, developer**

*Clark Development*

Bill Clark has been involved in real estate development projects throughout the Northwest for more than 20 years. His firm, Clark Development, is based in Boise. Bill's primary professional focus in development is the creation of projects that are financially strong while being responsive to community needs and environmental sensitivities. He is presently involved in residential, resort and commercial projects in the Northwest, in both consultant and principal roles. These include the 1,700 acre Hidden Springs planned community near Boise; Eagle River, a 90-acre mixed-use project adjacent downtown Eagle; a 500-acre recreational development in McCall; redevelopment of the Veltex site in downtown Boise; and several commercial developments in the downtown and the greater Boise area.

## **Andy Erstad, architect**

*Erstad/Thornton Architects*

Andy Erstad, AIA, graduated in 1988 with Honors and Distinction from the University of Arizona School of Architecture, and from the College of Idaho with a Bachelor of Art degree in 1982. He studied abroad at Gonzaga University in Firenze, and received the Alpha Rho Chi Medal in Architecture in 1988. A fifth-generation Boisean, Andy is LEED certified and is a member of the Boise City Design Review Committee and the Idaho State Capitol Commission, and is affiliated with numerous local business, civic, and art and cultural committees. He is a land owner in the district, is a member of the Fulton Street Ventures Development team, and is also part of the FSV design team.

# Design and Development Team

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## **Rob Thornton, architect**

*Erstad/Thornton Architects*

Rob Thornton, AIA, graduated in 1985 from the University of Idaho's School of Architecture. A native of the Pacific Northwest, Rob has worked with a variety of firms in Portland, Seattle, and Boise, on a vast array of projects, in the past twenty years. He is licensed in Washington and Idaho, and has NCARB and LEED certification. His professional experience and adherence to design integrity allow him to create beautiful, functional buildings regardless of the project's parameters. In 1998, he and Andy Erstad formed Erstad/Thornton Architects.

## **Dave Wali, broker**

*Colliers International*

Dave Wali is a broker with the Boise office of Colliers International, a commercial real estate services firm. He is the leasing agent for the BoDo retail/entertainment project.

## **Scott Stewart, developer**

*Stewart Laney Oaas*

Scott Stewart is a partner with Stewart Laney Oaas, a local real estate development firm. He has 10 years of real estate development experience and seven years of property management experience. Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in finance/economics, an MBA from San Diego State University in finance/marketing, and is a CCIM candidate.

## **Kevin McKee, CCDC board chair**

*Kevin McKee Associates*

Kevin McKee, president of Kevin McKee Architecture PA, is currently acting as the chairman of the board for CCDC. His firm, which was established in Boise in 1990, has gained a national reputation for outstanding rustic style design in both high-end residences and resort work. He has been involved in Boise's downtown urban renewal for almost 15 years serving on both the Planning and Zoning commission and for the last five years as the chairman of CCDC.



# Design and Development Team

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## **Phil Kushlan, executive director**

*Capital City Development Corporation*

Phil Kushlan became the executive director of the agency effective July 6, 1999. Phil was previously the executive director of the Washington State Public Stadium Authority, the public entity responsible for the construction of a \$430 million NFL franchise football and professional soccer facility in Seattle. Before serving as the Stadium Authority's executive director, Phil was the city manager of the City of Bellevue, Washington, for ten years. He is experienced in overseeing public-private development projects and has been involved in several projects using incremental tax revenue as a partial source of funding.

## **Dennis Clark, development director**

*Capital City Development Corporation*

Dennis Clark joined CCDC in 1987 and has been involved with every property transaction undertaken by the agency since then. He serves as chief negotiator for the agency on disposition and development agreements and has been involved in lease transactions related to the construction and development of the Ada County Courthouse Corridor project. He has also assisted in developing several of the agency's financing transactions used to construct agency parking garages and to acquire development sites.

## **Pam Sheldon, planning director**

*Capital City Development Corporation*

Pam Sheldon has close to 30 years of experience working for cities and counties in current and long-range planning and community development. Pam holds a masters in urban and regional planning from Cal-Poly Pomona and bachelor's degrees in history from UC Irvine and organizational management from Colorado Christian University. At CCDC, recent projects include Westside Downtown Urban Renewal Plan, Gateway East Master Plan, Boise Smart City Initiative and Downtown Boise Mobility Study. Prior to CCDC, she was the community development director for Summit County and Greenwood Village in Colorado; planning director for Mounds View, Minnesota; city planner for Lakewood, Colorado; and senior planner for Irvine, California.

## **Katina Dutton, special projects assistant**

*Capital City Development Corporation*

Katina Dutton led logistical planning for the housing workshop. She has four years of public/private design and development experience. She holds a professional degree in architecture from the University of Oregon with a minor in interior architecture, and an emphasis in urban design and environmental studies. At CCDC her primary focus is the implementation of the Urban Housing Initiative, a spin-off of the Smart City Initiative. Prior to CCDC, Katina worked in Albertson's design and construction department for the Southern California region.

## **Jan Schneider, office manager**

*Capital City Development Corporation*

# **Market Report Findings**

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# Market Findings

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CCDC commissioned a market study to quantify and give detail to the demand for urban housing in the Boise market. There has been considerable recent interest in building new housing projects, particularly condominiums, yet there is little successful market precedent to guide developers and investors. The report describes the quantitative potential for urban housing in Boise as well as the qualitative characteristics of potential buyers. The report reviews what is known about national downtown housing markets, provides case studies of downtowns that have seen increased housing development, evaluates the current and long term market for housing in downtown Boise, and offers recommendations to developers and public officials. The findings can be used to help developers identify housing opportunities and to support lending applications.

With little existing precedent in Boise, the market study takes a close look at successful downtowns in other cities in order to draw conclusions about the qualities that make downtowns successful places for residential development and to identify the demographics characteristics of the most likely customer base.

The following pages summarize the key findings from the market study.



# Market Findings

## Trends

Across the United States, many urban centers have seen significant housing growth in the past decade. Downtowns complete with new housing, shopping, employment, and active open spaces are attracting residents back to the inner cities. The most successful urban revitalization case studies, such as Portland, Seattle, and Denver, have built their revitalization on creating dense urban neighborhoods with a variety of services including retail, restaurants, galleries, entertainment, bars, and quality parks and plazas. Downtown Boise already has all of these amenities yet has not seen significant housing growth. However, based on the vibrancy of downtown and demographic trends, Boise is ready to support significant housing growth.

Among the trends that are driving the increase in urban housing are:

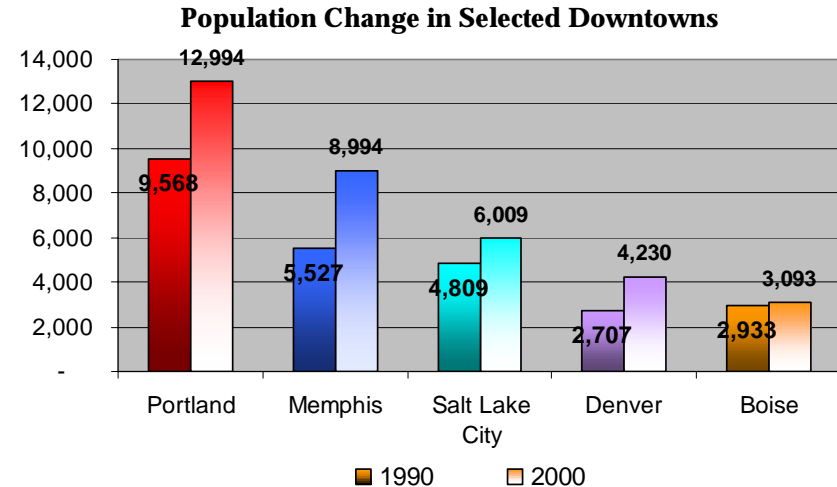
- Growing population of 1 and 2 person households;
- Empty nesters seeking scaled-down housing;
- Desire for maintenance-free homes;
- Desire for shorter commutes; and
- Desire for pedestrian neighborhoods and access to amenities.

## Share of 1 and 2 person households in various downtowns

Households	Boise	Portland	Seattle	Salt Lake City	Spokane
One-person	30.0%	34.6%	40.8%	33.2%	33.9%
Two-person	34.4%	33.3%	33.8%	31.3%	32.0%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>64.4%</b>	<b>67.9%</b>	<b>74.6%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>65.9%</b>
Three or more	35.6%	32.5%	25.4%	35.5%	34.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Population Growth

As shown below, downtown Boise (Census Tract 1) hardly grew at all compared to other downtowns. From 1990 to 2000, downtown Boise grew by only 160 people.



# Market Findings

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## Downtown Boise Housing Market

Studies from other cities have found that the majority of new downtown residents come from surrounding neighborhoods or elsewhere in the same city. Therefore, for the purposes of this market analysis, the primary market was defined as one- and two-person households within the City of Boise earning above \$25,000 per year for renters and above \$35,000 for homeowners. These incomes are approximately the minimum required to afford new market-rate housing.

An examination of survey data from other cities reveals that of the people in the pre-qualified market group, the following percentages would choose a downtown housing location if the right product were available:

- Renters – between 15% and 19%
- Owners – between 8% and 11%

Based on the primary market area assumptions, there are approximately 21,839 qualified ownership households and 9,851 renter households within the city of Boise. Of those, an estimated 9.2 percent of owners and 17.0 percent of renters would choose to live downtown as opposed to elsewhere in the city. Based on these potential capture rates, it is estimated that there is an immediate potential market for between 175 and 256 additional ownership housing units and between 263 and 390 rental units.

While there is already a large number of apartment units downtown, they are almost all income-limited to households earning less than \$25,000 per year. Therefore, they are not considered to be market-competitive and were not included in the analysis.

The demand discussed here only represents a *potential* demand for new housing. If quality housing is not built or does not meet the specific consumer preferences of residents, then the demand will simply go unmet and people will find somewhere else to live. That is, housing developers must carefully address consumer preferences in order to capture the market. Further, missed opportunities in one year do not necessarily translate into accumulated demand for subsequent years. More detailed market research for individual development opportunities will be needed to define product mixes, price points, amenities, and other development needs for specific sites.

Key factors for attracting new demand include:

- Quality projects
- Urban neighborhoods that are inviting
- Multiple projects simultaneously developed
- Detailed consumer preference information
- “If you build it, they will come” isn’t enough

# Housing Strategy

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# Strategic Overview

Creating a framework for an urban housing strategy for downtown Boise begins with an understanding of the evolution of urban housing in emerging downtowns. Rather than beginning with dense housing products at the geographical heart of the community (The Grove in Boise's case), most downtown housing begins at the edges of the downtown in small clusters of medium density housing. Over time, as these housing projects are occupied, a sense of community is established, and the demand for downtown housing is proven, development will begin to infill closer to the core. As it does so, projects will become larger and denser as they reflect the growing market and rising land prices.

Housing in downtown Boise is expected to follow the same principles. Early housing development is likely to occur not at the heart of the central business district, but in nearby places like Old Boise, 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton, and Central Westside.



Early phases of urban housing will occur at the fringes of the downtown core, as illustrated by the circles in red in the diagram at left. Later phases of housing in a more mature market will become denser and will begin to locate closer to the core as illustrated by the purple shaded areas.

# Pulse Points

Development of housing in downtown Boise will be centered at “pulse points.” These are physical locations where urban housing neighborhoods can be established and be both sustained and strengthened over time. The intent is to focus investment so that each housing location has a critical mass of activity where multiple projects combine to create a community. Isolated, stand-alone projects are prone to failure and do not support a long-term neighborhood. Pulse points are activity centers and each can have a different land use focus.

The figure below shows some natural pulse points throughout downtown Boise:

1. The Grove – The Grove represents the heart of downtown Boise.
2. 8<sup>th</sup> and Broad – The BoDo retail project, centered here, will create significant energy between Front and Myrtle.
3. 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton – This area has a strong potential for housing development.
4. Grove Street – This area of Old Boise is already seeing some small-scale housing development.
5. 5<sup>th</sup> and Broad – This area may be appropriate for future housing opportunities.



# Interconnected Pulse Points

Interconnection of pulse points defines a nexus of activity around the city center. By implication, what happens between the pulse points should be less intensive, but should still provide a sense of continuity to keep the sense of community in place and to keep the pedestrian interested. There is simply not enough pedestrian activity to support retail at all pulse points and along each connecting street, however. Since retail is already clustered along Idaho, Main, and 8<sup>th</sup> streets, it is important to concentrate and focus retail there so that it will perform the best. On interconnecting streets, buildings should maintain a “retail-like” presence with an active and interesting street-level frontage through live-work units, stoops, active offices, and very limited retail uses. Pulse points and their connections between points begin to define “districts” – places of unique character and quality.



# Reduce Traffic Barriers

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Visitors to downtown Boise know that Front, Myrtle, 9<sup>th</sup>, and Capitol are significant high-speed transportation arteries that divide downtown. These wide streets are barriers at multiple levels:

- They inhibit pedestrian flows: Their width and speed are hostile to pedestrians. People avoid these streets and seek out alternative locations to walk and cross.
- They act as edges instead of seams: Properly designed, a street can act as a seam that brings two adjoining districts together. The scale of these streets is so large that they act instead as barriers, dividing districts and keeping them from benefiting from each other's energy.
- They inhibit investment: These barriers combine to create a physical environment that deters investment. There is too much traffic for residential, and too much speed and no on-street parking to support retail. Thus, many of these have seen very little new investment.

Each of these streets currently acts as a way to travel *through* downtown rather than *to* downtown. Their character must be changed to reflect that downtown Boise has grown to envelop these streets and matured, so it is no longer appropriate to treat these streets as mini-freeways. Instead, they must act as surface streets and boulevards that integrate themselves into the downtown fabric.





# Project Selection Criteria

As part of the CCDC Strategic Business Plan, the agency has developed a set of project selection criteria. As the downtown market matures, especially for housing, there will be an increasing number of requests for funding yet CCDC funds will remain limited. Therefore, these criteria were developed to help “screen” potential projects to identify those that should be funded first.

The criteria at right should be used to identify which housing projects to support and to evaluate which ones are strongest.



## Project Selection Criteria:

### Capacity and Desire of CCDC to Promote Project

Mission	Does the project support CCDC's mission as well as the more specific goals of the urban renewal district in which it is located.
Leverage	Is the private investment large enough to justify the level of public investment required to make it happen? Target ratios across the downtown should average about 4 to 5 private dollars for every public dollar invested.
Public Financial Tools and Support	Are adequate financial resources available from CCDC or other public sources to support the project through implementation?
Project Program	Is the project of high quality, does it support mixed-use district objectives, and does it make use of existing infrastructure?

### Qualifications of Developer

Developer Qualifications	Does the developer have a history of successful projects with quality architecture, an ability to secure financing, supportive references, public-private partnership experience, and a long-term stake in Boise's downtown?
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### Specific Attributes of Site and Project

Ease of Assembly	Is site assembly achievable? Complicating factors: multiple property owners, parcelization, and high land costs
Potential for Synergy; Contribution to District; Probability of Success	Is the size and nature of the project such that it will succeed, lead to complementary development, add to product diversity and contribute to the district overall?
Market Support	Is the project supported by market research or professional opinion assuring that the project will attract tenants and buyers?
Community Support	Is the project likely to be supported by the neighborhood, Boise City, and the Ada County Highway District? Will the project enhance the surrounding community, encourage local entrepreneurial efforts, and help revitalize downtown?

# Strategies to Promote Urban Housing

To increase housing and housing investment opportunities throughout downtown Boise, the following general strategies were developed during the workshop:

- Projects must fully support public investment through tax increment financing or other means. Any tax increment public investment in a project or collection of projects must be able to be paid back through the increased value generated by those same projects. Given the limitations of tax increment sources, other sources of public financing should be combined to support projects.
- A target investment ratio of one public dollar to four to five private dollars (1:4 to 5) is the desired ratio for investing public capital into both an urban housing neighborhood and specific projects within that neighborhood. This is a ratio that is borne out in cities across the country. Boise has successfully achieved this ratio in the Central District and should continue to strive to meet the ratio elsewhere.
- Projects must pass stringent tests for design, financing, marketing and operation to qualify for public funding. The criteria mentioned earlier should assist in ensuring that public investment is spent only on those projects that further the vision of urban housing and will encourage additional high quality investment.
- Partnering between CCDC and other public agencies will be essential to secure a broad basis of public funding sources. CCDC cannot possibly pay for all the needed improvements themselves. Partnerships should be formed at the city, regional, state, and federal levels to supplement CCDC funding and leverage tax increment financing with other public tools.



- Capitalize on the synergy created by effective connection of pulse points. By linking pulse points, no one area needs to be entirely self-sufficient, but can build on the combined strength of nearby amenities.

# Strategies to Promote Urban Housing

- Focus on the creation of housing that will support other uses, not vice versa. Housing should be the focus of the effort, not retail or other commercial uses. They will follow in time as the neighborhoods mature and the market expands.
- Identify pulse points of housing investment opportunity throughout downtown. Some preliminary pulse points have been identified. There may be additional locations throughout downtown that can also be developed as pulse points.
- Encourage investor interest in suitable locations for urban housing neighborhoods. The CCDC initiative should be succeeded by investor analysis. One of the most important roles of the public sector is to market downtown housing and create a positive environment for private sector investment.
- Identify livability assets and barriers related to each potential site. No pulse point is perfect in every regard. Barriers should be identified early.
- Recommend for action changes necessary to overcome barriers to movement and deterrents to investment posed by major roads. Front, Myrtle, Capitol, and 9<sup>th</sup> are significant barriers to investment. Changes to the traffic patterns on these streets is a prerequisite to new investment on and near them.
- Identify any necessary interventions to enable development of urban neighborhoods to flourish. Possible areas for public intervention will likely go beyond the traffic issues mentioned above. Other areas for intervention may include parking, streetscape, open spaces, and plazas.

These strategies support an overall vision for downtown Boise as a collection of pulse points in support of the urban core.



## Case Study

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- **Applying the Strategies**

# Case Study – Fulton/Battery Quarter

In order to apply the principles developed in the workshop, a site-specific plan was developed for one of the likely housing pulse points. The intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton is in a quiet mixed-use area south of Myrtle Street and only one block from the new BoDo project. As a housing site, it has many positive attributes:

- Proximity to BoDo entertainment and retail;
- Proximity to the river;
- Quiet, low-traffic street (8<sup>th</sup>);
- Proximity to Julia Davis Park;
- Proximity to the library;
- Proximity to the downtown core;
- Proximity to Boise State University.

*Case study site – SW Corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton*



Further, the block on 8<sup>th</sup> between Fulton and Battery streets has many parcels that are owned by developers who have expressed an interest in pursuing housing development. With the support of CCDC, these developers could collaborate to create a collection of individual and joint housing projects that would combine to create a sense of place and community.

*8<sup>th</sup> Street near Fulton, looking south*



# Fulton/Battery Quarter Principles

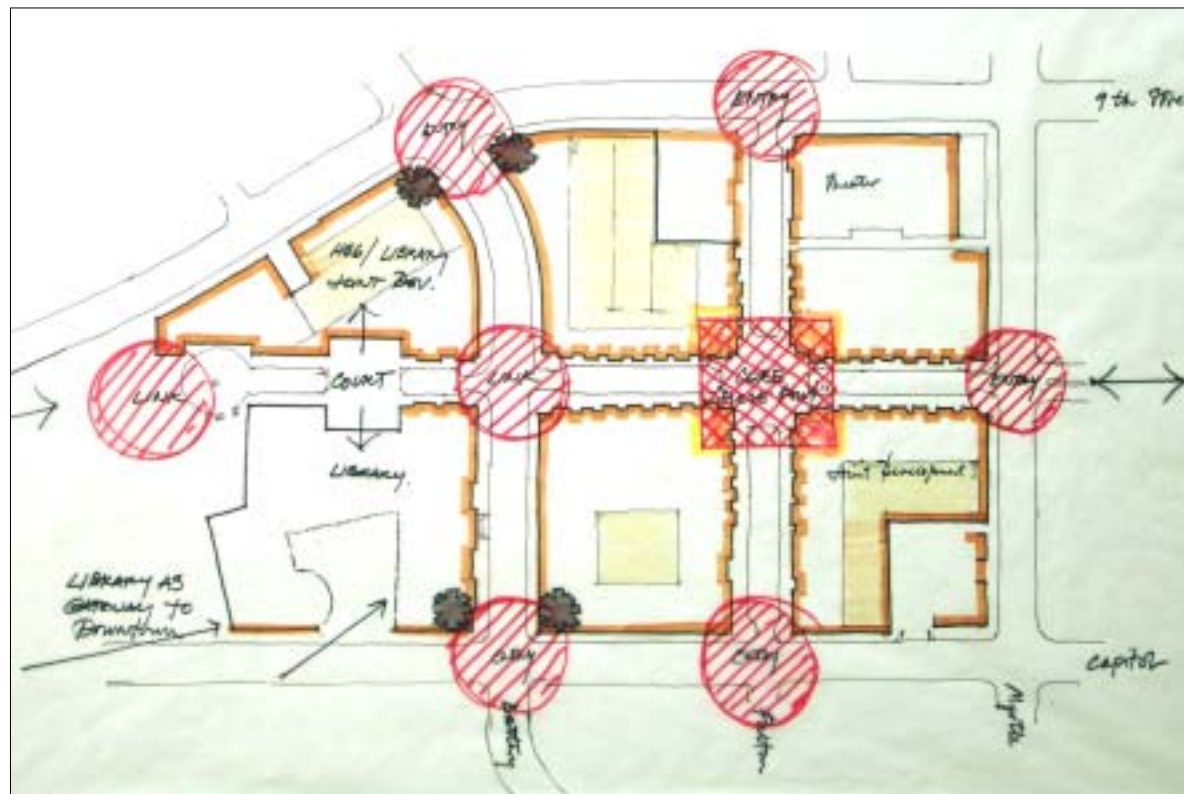
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Planning for the Fulton/Battery Quarter began with a set of development principles that were prepared by the team:

1. Create a neighborhood oriented around a “pulse point” – With the near-term potential for new housing on three corners, the intersection of 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton could become a new pulse point for downtown Boise.
2. The main focus of the district should be residential since it is somewhat cut off from the rest of downtown and has little visible traffic to support retail.
3. Quality streetscape and public realm would define the character of the neighborhood – A unified and quality street treatment will give the area character and a unique identity.
4. Treat entry points (in/out) of the neighborhood as “gateways.” Streetscape features should include a series of special gateway treatments at the entry points.
5. Build connections to neighborhood assets. Neighborhood assets such as the riverfront, Julia Davis Park, and BoDo should be emphasized through effective street and pedestrian connectivity.
6. Incorporate parking that serves multiple neighborhood uses and visually disappears into the urban fabric – Public investment in shared parking opportunities should be explored and may in fact be the best way for the public to support the neighborhood. Parking garages should be hidden behind buildings and should not take up street frontage other than for entrances.
7. Provide a diversity of uses, housing types, and designs – The neighborhood will be enhanced by having different housing products provided by different developers. This will add a variety of architectural style and will allow for affordability at a variety of levels, possibly both ownership and rental. Avoid “project” or “theme” appearance
8. Explore complementary development/project delivery partnerships: private/private, public/private, and public/public – With many parcels adjoining each other and some under public ownership, the opportunities for joint development and construction are many. Exploring these opportunities may reveal ways to enhance project efficiency and product design.

# Fulton/Battery Quarter Principles

The illustration below puts the development principles into action by identifying the key components of the pulse point concept plan. Key features identified include entry points, linkages to nearby amenities, an internal “texture” to the street frontage, and a focus on the pulse point at 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton.



# Fulton/Battery Quarter Tools

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In order to make the vision for the Fulton/Battery Quarter a reality, the development principles must be implemented. The following tools are a set of specific actions that will combine to change the character of the district in a positive way that supports housing and fosters linkages to surrounding districts.

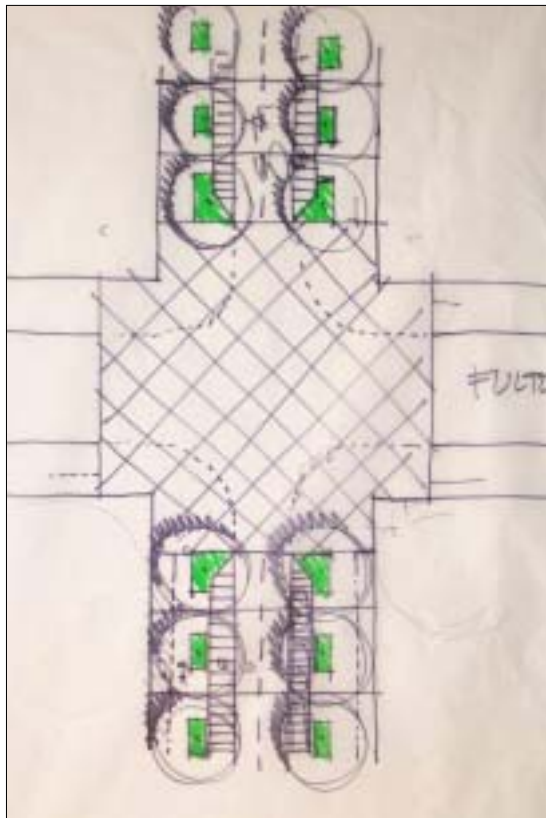
1. Reduce traffic lanes on Myrtle at 8<sup>th</sup> Street to four lanes and use gained space to extend sidewalks on the north and south sides of street. “Taming the traffic” on Myrtle is absolutely necessary to creating an effective connection between Fulton/Battery and BoDo and the rest of the downtown core.
2. Reconfigure Fulton and 8th streets to have one lane in each direction for vehicles, parallel parking on both sides, and expanded sidewalks.
3. Create a “flex” zone of 7.5 feet adjacent to properties on Fulton (between Capitol and 9<sup>th</sup>) and on 8<sup>th</sup> Street (between Myrtle and Battery). This flex zone results from a narrowing of the street width as part of the streetscape treatment. With room for wider sidewalks, a flex zone can be created where buildings can encroach the right of way for stoops, sidewalk dining areas, balconies, and other features. Doing so creates a façade that is articulated and visually interesting.
4. Install street trees, planters, curbs, and gutters on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Eighth Street should have a traditional neighborhood street look to it, but with a distinctive set of street treatments and street furniture.
5. Improve Fulton with a continuous paving pattern along (from building face to building face) including street trees and rolled curbs. In contrast to 8<sup>th</sup>, Fulton will have a continuous surface from building to building, creating a pedestrian plaza on which cars may drive.
6. Explore shared parking opportunities between uses and owners. With multiple housing projects and limited commercial and retail, opportunities for efficient joint parking use should be present.
7. Use tax increment financing to enhance and initiate development. CCDC’s funding tools can attract investors to the area. Once there, the tools can shape and enhance development opportunities.



# Fulton/Battery Street Elements

The conceptual drawings below show details of the streetscape treatments that are envisioned for the Fulton/Battery Quarter. In particular, they show the raised intersection at 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton, curb extensions, the narrowed right-of-way, and the flex zone along 8<sup>th</sup>.

*8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton Intersection Detail*



*Fulton/Battery Quarter Streetscape Plan*





# Fulton/Battery Quarter Initiatives

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In addition to the principles and tools that should guide housing development, other initiatives are recommended to achieve the vision portrayed in the concept plan:

1. Implement zoning modifications to allow alternative uses (in addition to retail) at street level. Current zoning puts a strong emphasis on retail uses on the ground floor of all buildings in C-5 zoning districts. This is an unrealistic expectation for all properties throughout the downtown. Instead, more flexible zoning should be in place that allows non-retail uses on the ground floor, but requires them to activate the street.
2. Investigate building code modifications to allow alternative construction techniques. The introduction of new housing may be assisted by new construction techniques such as four and five floors of wood-frame construction.

3. Continue the cooperative collaboration of South 8th Street property owners and developers. The workshop brought together many developers and property owners who have an interest in 8<sup>th</sup> Street. This partnership should be continued, understanding that development opportunities and the viability of the entire district will be enhanced by such collaboration.
4. Determine creative project delivery (construction and construction management) methodologies that provide value to individual owners and developers. Joint development may require creative ways of joining two independently built buildings to share common parking or open space facilities, and potentially sharing design and construction teams to allow for simultaneous construction.
5. Explore redevelopment partnerships for:
  - Idaho Linen/Table Rock parking lot – This property at the northeast corner of 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton would complete the four corners of the intersection if redeveloped.
  - Library/City properties – These properties at the south end of 8<sup>th</sup> Street present huge opportunities to create additional housing projects and other uses that will add to the viability of the district.

*Future redevelopment opportunity: Idaho Linen Supply*



# Fulton/Battery Quarter Concept Plan

In conclusion, the completed concept plan below for the Fulton/Battery Quarter shows all of the design concepts explored during the workshop. It captures all of the streetscape, pulse point, gateway, and housing elements called for by the principles.



# Other Pulse Points

While the Fulton/Battery Quarter was the primary study topic for the workshop, there are many other pulse points that could move forward with housing implementation if the right amount of developer interest were present. The diagram below shows some of the other existing and potential pulse points in the downtown: BoDo, The Grove, 8<sup>th</sup> and Idaho, Grove Street east of the downtown core, and Broad Street east of BoDo.

**The Grove** – The Grove should be the heart of downtown Boise. It serves as downtown Boise’s center for public events and outdoor gatherings and is adjacent to the retail core along Main and Idaho streets. By focusing activity around The Grove, Boise can reinforce retail and pedestrian activity while using it to tie to nearby housing and entertainment areas such as BoDo and Old Boise.

The diagram below shows the existing concentration of activity around The Grove.



# Other Pulse Points

**Broad Street East** – To the east of BoDo, Broad Street is a quiet haven between the high traffic arteries of Front and Myrtle. This makes it a natural focal point for properties that border Front and Myrtle. By focusing housing inward to Broad Street, residents can have a quiet, pedestrian-scale street as their front door and can have visual and physical linkages to BoDo to the east and the park to the south. The opportunity of creating mixed-use “loft” space between Broad and Front presents another “choice” for future downtown residents. Loft spaces could be either in additions over existing warehouse structures or in new construction that is built to allow for flexibility in space utilization.



**Grove Street East** – East of The Grove, Grove Street transitions into Old Boise and quieter residential areas. This pulse point is still very close to the downtown core and offers residents a wide array of amenities. By improving pedestrian safety and amenities on Front Street, better pedestrian connections could be made to tie the area to Julia Davis Park and the Boise River.

The diagram at left shows one concept for the redevelopment of properties along Grove Street and the “Triangle” property between Grove and Front between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Redevelopment here could include housing fronting Grove, adding to the pedestrian scale of that street, with more commercial uses along Front to make use of the high retail visibility there and to buffer the residential development from the traffic.

## **Conclusions and Next Steps**

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- **City and Interagency Level**
- **CCDC Level**
- **Neighborhood Level**
- **Implementation**

# Conclusions and Next Steps

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The downtown housing workshop has gone a long way to establishing a strategy for urban housing concentrations in downtown Boise will develop. The process, through the strategic overview and the specific case study on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and preliminary planning in several other pulse points, has shown the need and benefit of planning at the neighborhood level first, and the project level second.

For Boise's urban housing initiative to succeed, projects of every size must succeed. Hence, implementation is both a public-private and a private-private process as demonstrated in the 8<sup>th</sup> Street case study. Developer-to-developer cooperation is essential – for defining the neighborhood, for defining the streetscape and character, for assuring mutual success. Direct competition between contributing projects can be counter-productive.

Streetscape, neighborhood ambiance and character, sufficient parking, appropriate retail and services, and similar attributes contribute to the success of individual projects. Overwhelming traffic and overly large rights-of-way are a deterrent to urban housing development and for other kinds of urban investment as well. Front and Myrtle streets and 9<sup>th</sup> and Capitol are barriers to neighborhood development. Standalone projects can be, and frequently are, at risk.

This process and the focused energies of local developers, CCDC staff, CCDC consultants and city staff have produced meaningful inroads to:

- Setting the stage for an updated downtown plan;
- Acknowledging the need for updated code and policy changes; and
- Identifying the need to effectively address the negative impact on investment of Front, Myrtle, 9<sup>th</sup>, and Capitol.

Next steps are at three levels – the city and interagency, CCDC, and at the specific neighborhood and project level.

# Next Steps – City and Interagency Level

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At the city and interagency level, the next steps to further the housing initiative are as follows:

- Obtain Boise City Council support for the urban neighborhood housing initiative. The initiative and recommendations involve more than just CCDC. It will require the cooperation of many city agencies. It is important that the City Council make a public policy commitment to supporting the housing initiative and the implementation recommendations.
- Address changes to the building code – Building and fire codes often are barriers to innovative urban housing development. Code barriers should be identified and methodically removed to support safe new construction and design techniques.
- Initiate zoning ordinance changes – Unrealistic zoning requirements such as extensive ground-floor retail requirements are barriers to the success of individual projects and entire districts. Zoning should recognize that retail should be concentrated at pulse points and not spread throughout districts.
- Annex Old Boise into the River/Myrtle renewal district. Creation of market rate urban housing in Old Boise may require significant tax increment financing by CCDC. By merging it with the existing River/Myrtle district, Old Boise will have a large base from which to fund key projects.
- Update the 1993 Downtown Boise Plan to reflect the many changes and developments that have occurred since then.
- Integrate the findings of the mobility study into the downtown plan. The workshop team deliberately did not make detailed recommendation on transportation improvements, although they acknowledge that street design improvements are necessary to the future success of housing. Conclusions from the mobility study should be incorporated into the Downtown Plan update.
- Undertake a major initiative to deal with the transportation issue – While the mobility study may result in technical recommendations regarding the transportation infrastructure, many of the solutions will require significant community and political support in order to be carried out. Changes such as removing lanes or converting one-way streets back to two-way traffic cannot begin merely at the city staff level, but must be founded in a community-wide effort where support comes from residents, business owners, and property owners. In some cases, changes will be localized, while in others, streets might be affected over numerous blocks.



# Next Steps – CCDC Level

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At the CCDC level, the next steps to further the housing initiative are as follows:

- Create a comprehensive planning and investment strategy – CCDC is developing a Strategic Business Plan that details ten-year targets for private and public investment throughout the downtown. Those targets should be adopted in order to guide CCDC policy and investments over the near and long-terms. An overall urban design plan for downtown development is also needed to coordinate existing plans for the individual urban renewal districts. This plan should identify neighborhoods within the districts, pulse points and opportunity sites for development, land use mix, street character, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and improvements to the public realm that create distinctive places in downtown Boise.
- Adopt criteria for project selection and public-private partnering – There will always be more demands on public capital than there is ability to fund projects. Therefore, CCDC should adopt stringent criteria that will allow them to “screen” projects and ensure that money is spent only on the highest quality projects and those that will maximize leverage of private investment.
- Establish a thorough design, funding, marketing, and operational project review process prior to formalizing public investment partnerships – Mediocre projects not only lead to failed individual investments, but they set a bad market precedent that damages opportunities for additional housing growth for years to come. CCDC should take an active role to ensure that joint projects meet the highest goals of quality and design.
- Establish government partnerships (local, region, state and federal) for funding urban development – Long-term public investment goals do not necessarily mean that all funding must come from CCDC. CCDC should seek out and build partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels to bring in additional funding to support various components of downtown housing, transportation, and redevelopment projects.
- Establish an urban neighborhood partnership with CCDC, City of Boise, and ACHD for accelerated approvals and implementation – Due to the significance of the transportation barrier, a partnership with ACHD should be established early.
- Integrate the CCDC and developer-to-developer team process in future projects – This workshop involved a meaningful partnership between CCDC and multiple private development partners. Such partnerships should be encouraged and expanded where possible.
- Initiate a marketing strategy for Boise urban housing – Marketing urban housing in downtown Boise will benefit all developers and should be done at the downtown level in addition to the project-specific marketing of individual housing projects.
- Initiate a lender education and support process – When there is little existing market precedence for urban housing, as in Boise, the financial community may be reluctant to risk capital on projects. A lender education process can help assure financial partners that investing in downtown Boise housing is a good idea.

# Next Steps – Neighborhood and Project Level

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At the neighborhood and project level:

- Identify 8th and Fulton as a priority neighborhood project (as well as others that meet the selection criteria) - Given the expressed interest of multiple developers, this area should be an early priority.
- Simultaneously initiate streetscape design with project design – In urban housing districts, the street and public spaces become an extension of the “living room” of the housing. The streetscape and project designs should be integrated and closely coordinated.
- Conduct CCDC project criteria analysis – Individual projects should meet stringent CCDC criteria to qualify for funding. These criteria will ensure a high-quality project that adds, not detracts from, the urban housing experience.
- Determine required public parking – Structured parking is a huge project expense that can often mean the difference between financial viability and failure. Shared public (and private) parking opportunities should be explored to support housing projects.
- Conduct CCDC public investment analysis – Public investments should be carefully analyzed to determine whether they create the right kinds of incentives and maximize leverage of private investment.
- Determine overall private investment necessary to activate the neighborhood – Housing development is a public-private partnership. The level of investment needed from the private sector to balance the equation should be determined for each pulse point.
- Assist neighborhood developers with city approval process – Speeding development through the entitlement process can be one of the most valuable tools to facilitate development. “Time is money” is true for development more so than for other industries and an expedited approvals process can make or break a project.
- Simultaneously identify the next neighborhood for implementation – The viability of urban housing in Boise depends on multiple projects proceeding simultaneously at the same pulse point. As projects get underway, the next set of projects should already be in the planning stages.



# Implementation

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Rather than identify specific priority areas for early development in this strategy, the recommended approach suggests using project selection criteria to determine which projects should move forward first. This approach also recognizes that there are multiple parts of downtown that could be successful housing communities. While the 8<sup>th</sup> and Fulton area was studied in detail in this workshop, it is entirely appropriate that another unstudied pulse point should move forward first if certain criteria are met. Implementation steps include:

- **Other Criteria** – As part of the strategic business plan, a set of developer selection criteria has been developed to evaluate potential development proposals. The purpose of the criteria is to screen projects to determine whether they have sufficient talent and financial backing in order to be successful. Poorly conceived or inadequately financed projects should be postponed.
- **Controls** – As a partner in development through public-realm investments, CCDC should demand high-quality construction and design of its private sector partners. Indeed, weak projects will have a negative effect on the entire downtown housing market. Therefore, to maximize its leverage, CCDC should ensure that only the best-conceived projects get public funding and move forward.
- **Public-private partnering** – Neither CCDC nor private developers can implement a downtown housing initiative. Each party needs the other to implement various elements of the vision. Public-private partnering, already underway in this workshop, should be encouraged and expanded.
- **Critical mass of interest** – Last but not least is the level of developer interest. Areas where multiple developers have expressed interest in development may rise above other sites because private investment is already “lining up” to get housing underway. Since successful urban housing depends on creating “communities of housing” rather than “projects,” a stand-alone project will not meet the vision. Instead, areas where multiple projects can be underway simultaneously should be given priority since they have the ability to create the critical mass that gives a pulse point its identity and vitality.