


HOUSING DENSITY CITY POLICIES, PLANNING

City Council Work Session
September 18, 2017


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Director, Planning &
Community Services



BACKGROUND

- **May 2017 – Council considered updates to the Annexation Policy and Map**
 - **Updates included increase to minimum residential density from 4/units per acre to 6/units per acre based on Billings' 2016 Growth Policy**
 - **Council amended Annexation Policy to a range of 4-7 units/acre**
 - **At the same time, Council asked for future work session discussion on residential density**
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DENSITY – A PRIMER

- Density is the number of living units per area of land – net or gross
 - Density and Design should go hand in hand, but often do not:
 - Higher density does not mean bad design and lower density does not mean good design
 - A high-density multi-family development may be designed well and a large-lot SFD development may be designed poorly
 - Density is often tied to zoning, but also is critical to efficient delivery of other city services such as water, sewer, public safety services, street cleaning, snow removal etc.
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The Elms Townhomes at 632 St Johns Avenue 16 dwelling units/acre

Google



The "Tree Streets" – 7 dwelling units/acre

Google



Josephine Crossing – 12 dwelling units/acre

Google



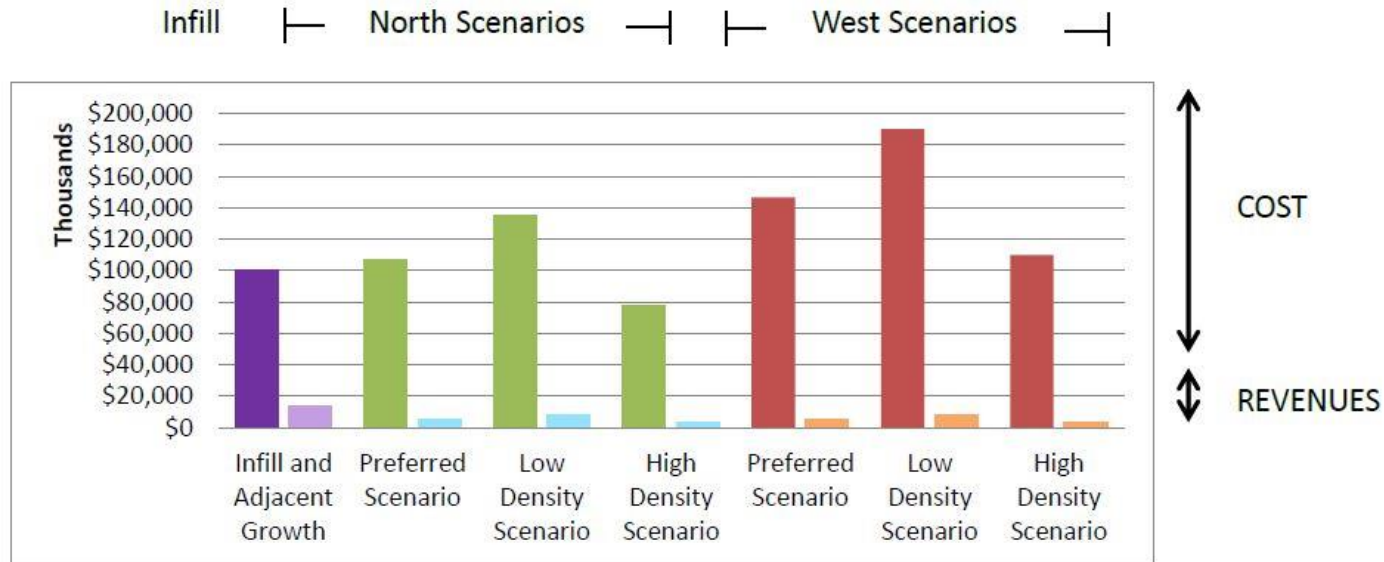
East of Main Billings Heights – 6.8 dwelling units/acre




Google

Image capture: Sep 2015 © 2017 Google United States

DENSITY AND BILLINGS' 2016 GROWTH POLICY

CHART 1.1. SCENARIO COSTS AND ANNUAL REVENUES



Low Density Scenarios Costs 
 \$135M - \$190M
 High Density Scenarios Costs 
 \$78M-\$109M
 Community Preferred Scenarios Costs 
 \$107M - \$146M

Residential high & mixed use density = 16 d.u./acre


Residential medium density = 9 d.u./acre

Residential low density = 5 d.u./acre

WHAT CAN INCREASES IN HOUSING DENSITY DO?

- Increase housing choices and options
 - Reduce service delivery costs
 - Increases viability of local bus service
 - Reduces road miles/infrastructure needed to serve citizens
 - Serve as a fiscally conservative tool for operating the City
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- A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against the blue background.

COUNCIL CHOICES THAT IMPACT HOUSING DENSITY

- 2017 Annexation Policy (4-7 Units/Acre)
 - 2016 Growth Policy (6+ Units/Acre)
 - Zoning Code Update (Underway)
 - Cost of Service Study (Future Work Session Discussion)
 - Further implementation of City Infill Policy (+Density)
 - Future Coordinated Infrastructure Planning
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Visualizing Density
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy
2007

<http://datatoolkits.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/visualizing-density/tour/t1.aspx>