



# ACCELERATING INFILL IN HAYWARD



OPTIONS  
TO BOOST  
HOUSING

DECEMBER 2019





## INTRODUCTION

Hayward has approximately 160,000 residents, strategically located in the heart of the eastern San Francisco Bay Area. The city has convenient transportation access, with two BART stations providing easy access to job centers to the north in Oakland and San Francisco and to the south in Silicon Valley, the Amtrak Capitol Corridor train with access to San Jose and Sacramento, numerous local transit lines, three major freeways, and the Hayward Executive Airport. The city is the second-most diverse in California and home to three separate institutions of higher learning that educate more than 30,000 students.

At the same time, the city features many underused parcels, particularly in its downtown district near BART, around the South Hayward BART station, and along commercial corridors such as Mission Boulevard. The result is unmet demand for new housing and missed opportunities for investment and resulting tax revenue for the city. In addition, the lack of development – particularly housing – means many downtown and commercial districts will fail to meet their promise for exciting, walkable, and activated gathering places that can provide amenities for existing residents and new housing for a growing community.

City officials and business leaders are now seeking to identify promising solutions to boost infill development in Hayward (“infill” refers to building on unused and underutilized lands within existing development patterns, which is critical to accommodating growth and redesigning cities for environmental and social sustainability). In response, the Council of Infill Builders convened builders, public officials, financial leaders, and architects in Hayward in November 2019. The group identified key barriers and recommended solutions to encourage and expedite infill in Hayward. This policy brief summarizes these priority solutions, challenges, and next steps.



# VISION FOR HAYWARD 2030 INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Participants at the November convening described a vision for the ideal infill scenario in Hayward by 2030, featuring:

- **An “18-hour” downtown and commercial corridors** with a strong local brand, based on Hayward’s unique history, culture and character, with bustling infill neighborhoods filled with residents and amenities that create activity beyond standard business hours
- **A walkable, urban city** that leverages and preserves its unique character, history and architecture
- **Sufficient housing** for a stable community of residents from “eight- to eighty-years old”
- **Housing density and diversity** to support an equitable, diverse community of residents and families in apartments, co-living homes, and other housing types with strong schools and day care options
- **Ground-floor and public space amenities** such as retail, food and services, including flexible spaces, with street festivals, plazas and parks to draw residents to infill neighborhoods
- **A stable, locally based business community** with job centers for residents
- **Increased personal mobility** through convenient multi-modal options and safe, two-way streets that prioritize BART riders, pedestrians and bikers
- **Optimized parking provision** that efficiently distributes parked vehicles among infill projects to promote BART, pedestrian, bicycle and scooter access

Achieving this vision requires identifying and overcoming the obstacles that make it unlikely to be realized on its own. The following section describes those obstacles and offers solutions for local and industry leaders.



## BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT IN HAYWARD

Common barriers often prevent developers from building infill projects in key locations, such as downtowns and near major transit. For the November 21, 2019 convening, the Council of Infill Builders surveyed participants in advance and discussed the most common barriers to infill in Hayward. Participants identified the following four priority barriers to infill and offered solutions to overcome each of them, discussed below.

1. **Pilot projects with public partnership** with possible con
1. **High costs and fees** to build infill
2. **Market uncertainty** due to unknown or weak demand for infill
3. **Lack of supporting uses** for infill in public spaces, such as the streets and streetscape
4. **Unusual parcels and challenging land assembly** to support infill

While additional barriers exist, participants agreed that these four represent the most common barriers that render infill difficult to accomplish in Hayward.

To help overcome these barriers, the group recommended **10 near-term, priority solutions**, in no particular order:

1. **Hire a mobility consultant to reconfigure the streets and identify strategic interventions** to boost walkability and transit, bike, and scooter access.
2. Task city economic development staff and outside downtown development experts to **identify priority amenities, including “magic mix” locations for feasible retail**, façade, and other downtown improvements, as well as educate the public on practical options.
3. Enable a **downtown and commercial district “art” fee** to pay for murals and façade improvements.
4. Improve **high-speed wireless internet** access across downtown and commercial corridors.
5. **Educate property owners and developers on parcel size and land assembly options** and facilitate relocation of existing businesses on unusual parcels through data sharing and inventories of downtown and commercial corridor businesses and parcels.
6. **Update and highlight city design guidelines that allow retail flexibility for infill projects**, such as through a retail in-lieu fee, comprehensive plan for amenities in areas without retail, and flexibility across multiple parcels to meet target retail goals.
7. **Highlight and encourage tiered and deferred fees for downtown projects**, including through a city website that maps and highlights fee structures.
8. **Fast-track approvals for infill projects**, including through pre-zoning, planning, and development permit reforms, as well as the option for “blended” density across parcels to meet plan goals.
9. Facilitate a dialogue with labor leaders to **boost construction labor supply and local job training programs and reduce project construction costs**.
10. Focus on **“catalyst projects” on public land** that can further infill goals.

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These and other solutions are discussed in more detail in this report.

“It’s important to focus on how to keep costs down so these infill projects can work.”

- Felix AuYeung, MidPen Housing Corporation

## **Barrier # 1: High costs and fees to build infill in Hayward**

Infill development is by its nature more expensive to build than low-rise, wood-frame construction. Multi-story infill construction in existing urbanized areas like Hayward faces a complicated regulatory process, expensive construction materials, and high-wage labor, as well as the challenge of building in developed neighborhoods and the attendant cost of upgrading older infrastructure. Permitting for infill projects can also be complicated, time consuming, and expensive. Other factors such as parking requirements and land use restrictions can contribute to high costs.

### **Solutions for High Construction Costs: *Provide Regulatory Flexibility and Dialogue with Labor Leaders and Property Owners***

To reduce the high cost of building sustainable infill development, Hayward city leaders could reform local permitting and regulatory requirements to allow more flexibility, while facilitating dialogue with labor leaders and local property owners to reduce costs.

#### **SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS:**

##### **City leaders could:**

**Implement tiered and deferred fees for downtown projects in order to reduce costs.** The city leaders could ensure lower fees for projects near the downtown and South Hayward BART stations and other commercial corridors. The city could also promote deferred fees for some infill projects, such as waiting until occupancy occurs to collect certain fees for those new projects. As some participants noted, this flexibility to defer fees until occupancy can greatly improve a project’s internal rate of return, which is in part dependent part on the time value of money. As a result, the city could potentially transform marginal infill projects into viable

deals for developers through deferred fees. City leaders could also relax the thresholds for projects to qualify for these incentives, to enable small businesses and smaller projects to benefit.

**Promote and map existing fee incentives for infill projects.** The city has already taken steps to defer some fees, but participants at the convening were unaware of some of these actions. As a result, the city may benefit by promoting these incentives prominently on its permitting website. In addition, developers would benefit from having all relevant fees for infill projects mapped and posted in one convenient website, to highlight beneficial fee structures and reduce the time for developers to ascertain these applicable fees.

**Fast-track approvals through ministerial permitting for some infill projects.** Participants noted that reduced permitting time and fewer opportunities for unexpected local agency vetoes would greatly reduce costs. City leaders could take steps like pre-zoning certain priority parcels for more compact infill development, advance planning of priority parcels, and developing more objective review standards. For example, city staff could update exterior design standards to make permitting ministerial for exterior features like balconies and recessed windows.

**Develop an option for “blended” density across multiple parcels, instead of uniform requirements on each downtown parcel.** Participants noted that stringent requirements for density on a specific parcel may make a project on that site infeasible, whereas a similar or more stringent density requirement on a nearby parcel may be more practical. As a result, flexibility to allow an “average” density across these multiple parcels could help make a lower-density project economically viable on one site while getting “credit” for increased density on another site. The averages would have to meet the city’s overall density goals, while allowing cross-subsidies through transferable density.

**Promote existing regulatory flexibility on housing affordability requirements.** Most new residential projects must include subsidized affordable units at below-market rates. The city has taken steps to provide developers with the option of instead subsidizing these affordable housing units off-site, with possible deferral on off-site affordable housing construction until a certain number of on-site market-rate homes come to market. Otherwise, requiring these units on each parcel could be economically challenging for some developers. An area-wide in-lieu affordable housing fee could therefore be a helpful option to

lower building costs for on-site market-rate housing. The city could promote these options via its website, such as the flexibility to build 100% affordable standalone developments, with contributions from nearby developments. The city would need to develop mechanisms to ensure that the affordable units actually get built if they are not included on-site with market rate-projects.

**Update city design guidelines to allow retail flexibility for infill projects.** Developers and city staff noted that ground-floor retail on some projects may not make economic sense, while nearby parcels may present better options for such uses. As a result, the city could help provide flexibility to meet these requirements. One solution participants discussed is a retail in-lieu fee, in which developers pay a fee not to provide on-site retail, which then generates revenue that the city can spend to boost retail in other locations, such as through streetscape improvements or subsidies for some retail uses. The city could also provide flexibility across multiple parcels to meet a target retail goal, with some parcels absorbing most of the retail and other parcels minimizing or not offering retail, in areas where retail would not be economically practical. Finally, the city could develop a plan for street-level activation and amenities in areas without retail, in order to boost walkability and street life without rigid retail requirements.

“Hayward should be incentivizing existing businesses to stay and expand.”

- Emily Boyd, TRI Pointe Homes

**Facilitate a dialogue with labor leaders to boost construction labor supply and training programs and reduce project costs.** High labor costs, in part due to an ongoing, state-wide construction labor shortage, is a major contributor to the overall increase in infill project costs. City leaders could facilitate a dialogue between developers and labor leaders to boost local college partnerships and vocational training programs in high school, in order to boost the supply of new workers. In exchange, construction trade groups might be willing to entertain reduced costs for labor on new projects.

“Off-site construction methods usually follow a pretty strict system. A lot of cities have zoning codes and other policies that will not accommodate houses built off-site.”

- Josh Roden, Brookfield Residential

**Develop optimal parking policies to encourage market-driven supply that boosts walkability, biking and transit usage.** Participants noted that excess parking supply and requirements adds to project costs and can reduce the walkability and transit-friendly nature of downtowns and commercial corridors. For example, the average cost of a parking space in a parking structure ranges from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Costs per unit in San Francisco for podium parking can range from \$17,500 to \$35,000 per unit, depending on the ratio of spaces per unit, and up to \$38,000 for underground parking. Ongoing operation and maintenance of parking structures can also be costly for rental properties. At the same time, some participants noted that lenders are reluctant to finance new projects in Hayward without sufficient on-site parking.

As a result, city leaders can develop parking policies that allow the market to determine supply while providing options to reduce the demand for on-site, decentralized parking that can increase project costs. For example, the city could explore the potential for centralized parking that can convert to other uses in the future if less parking is needed. In general, city leaders could reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements, unbundle parking from housing (charging the cost of a parking space separately from the cost of renting or purchasing a home), and allow developers to use more shared parking.

**Promote density bonus potential with access to data and greater transparency.** State density bonus law allows developers to increase the density of their project in exchange for adding more affordable housing units. Participants noted that city leaders could improve the use of this program by making data related to density limits and affordable housing units more accessible and transparent.

## **Barrier # 2: Market uncertainty due to unknown or weak demand for infill**

Given the high construction costs of multi-story infill projects, these projects must be able to attract buyers or renters from specific market segments that can pay higher rents per square foot, including young professionals, seniors, and singles who are willing to live in smaller spaces, as well as higher-income individuals, couples and families. Participants noted that Hayward's downtown, BART districts, and commercial corridors will need strong branding and local amenities, as well as buy-in from city officials, industry leaders, and the public for a long-term plan to boost demand for infill living and related activities.

### **Solutions for Market Uncertainty for Infill: *Improve Hayward's Branding and Amenities & Undertake Comprehensive Outreach Campaign***

To address the market uncertainty, Hayward leaders could seek to brand downtown and its commercial corridors based on its history, culture and geography as a place where people want to live and work. City and business leaders could also launch an outreach campaign to educate the public and receive input on the opportunities and economic realities of a vibrant infill area.

#### **SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS:**

##### **City and business leaders could:**

**Leverage marketing expertise to create an alluring brand for Hayward, based on local history, culture, and geography.** Participants noted that Hayward will need to have a 'there there' to attract residents and investment, potentially based on proximity to job centers in Oakland and Silicon Valley but also drawing on the cultural history and diversity of the community and/or local food traditions. The brand should be linked to clear policy to develop downtown and commercial corridors as infill communities and to target marketing to key demographics. City leaders could involve business associations in this process and improve lighting and other visible security measures to address any concerns about personal security in these areas.

“Hayward has a downtown that feels like a downtown. Like Napa, the city could take a few key steps to just tweak it and get a lot of benefit.”

- Aaron Roden, Landsea Homes

“You have to have a “there there.” Napa has a ‘there.’ They have benefitted from their commitment to food and wine. Housing is necessary, but you have to have a reason to come there.”

- Curt Johansen, TerraVerde Ventures

**Improve high-speed wireless internet access across downtown and key commercial corridors.** Participants noted that wi-fi internet access was unreliable in infill areas, leading to lost investment and commercial activity in these areas. They suggested working with private sector entities to provide low-cost or free internet access, by leveraging existing network providers.

**Educate property owners, wealth managers, and the school district on Hayward’s infill potential.** Redevelopment and investment in infill will require the cooperation of current property owners, as well as wealth managers who could facilitate investment in these properties. School district officials could also assist by engaging students in outreach and research projects for infill planning (see below), as well providing training for a labor workforce, as discussed above. City and business leaders could launch this outreach work through working lunches, roundtables, and briefings.

“Local businesses have an important impact. They make downtown more viable as a place to want to be.”

- James Edison, Willdan Financial Services

**Educate city officials and stakeholders and involve local students on market realities for investing in infill.** Participants suggested engaging high school students through stakeholder and student engagement programs like “UrbanPlan.” City and business leaders could also offer public trainings, including for city officials, on developer pro formas (a set of calculations that projects the financial return on a proposed real estate development) so that city leaders and residents can better understand economic realities for desired infill projects.

**Task city economic development staff and outside downtown development experts to identify priority street-level amenities.** City priorities include making downtown and commercial corridors more of a destination with attractive amenities, including street-level, ground-floor retail. A downtown development expert could assist the city to determine the “magic mix” of ideal locations for feasible retail, façade, and other infill improvements. Such an expert, in partnership with city economic development staff, could help educate city officials and the public on practical options. The end result could be a menu of options for amenities that would be attractive to residents in infill public spaces and that would reduce pressure on individual projects to provide less optimal amenities.

**Educate city officials and the public on best practices and market realities for retail and other streetscape amenities.** While many residents and local leaders may want abundant retail options for ground-level infill development, market realities may conflict. An outreach campaign, through working lunches, presentations, and roundtables, could help explore and educate options to activate the streetscape in Hayward beyond retail, such as through events, public spaces, and other uses like flexible work spaces and services.

“Neighborhoods in San Francisco are losing character. And with new construction, the street-level retail tends to be chains because they are the only ones that can afford the high rents.”

- Bob McLaughlin, New Albion Group

“What will retail be in 30 years? Today it is dining, food, and personal services. But which way is retail going? It is a collection of services. You want the right mix of amenities at the right time.”

- Steve Lawton, Main Street Property Services



### **Barrier # 3: Lack of supporting uses for infill in public spaces, such as the streets and public parcels**

Hayward's public realm – such as the city streets, parks and publicly owned parcels – could be leveraged to attract more investment in infill. Current one-way streets and street designs are not conducive to pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, while downtown and commercial corridor beautification, such as through murals and façade improvements, need a dedicated revenue stream. Such improvements in the public realm will encourage private sector investment in projects that meet the vision of infill in Hayward.

“Like downtown Walnut Creek, Hayward could choke some streets and add parklets. The city has a cool eclectic feeling and should keep it. It already has personality and character.”

- Brian Steele, Trumark

“You want a city to have a family feel. You have to focus on leveraging what you already have in Hayward.”

- Meea Kang, Related Development

### **Solutions for a Lack of Supportive Public Realm for Infill: *Redesign City Streets and Streetscapes and Beautify Infill Areas***

City and business leaders will need to reconfigure Hayward's street design and accompanying uses, as well as boost beautification efforts throughout downtown, the BART districts, and the commercial corridors. Pilot projects and more outreach to key stakeholders and local leaders can also help implement these solutions.

## SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS:

### City leaders could:

**Hire a mobility consultant to reconfigure the streets and identify strategic interventions to boost walkability and bike, scooter and transit access.** Hayward's proximity to BART and other transit lines is a critical asset, but the city still needs to facilitate "first/last mile" connections to these transit nodes. Participants recommended hiring an expert consultant to explore initial strategic interventions, at least as a start of a long-term plan. The focus should be on redesigning select streets for two-way and slower automobile traffic in order to boost walkability and related development. Participants thought it would be helpful to identify small steps that the city can take in the near term while it undertakes plans for longer-term improvements.

**Apply for funding to state and county transportation agencies for strategic interventions in street design that can lead to a longer-term change.** Participants noted that funding may be available from the Alameda County Transportation Commission and California Strategic Growth Council to reconfigure streets for reduced vehicle miles traveled and more pedestrian and transit access. These improvements could also lead to enhanced lighting, increased public safety, and stormwater controls, among other environmental benefits that may help attract grant funding.

"The proximity of the BART stations is one of Hayward's biggest attributes. A lot of millennials never want to own a car. The city should use the BART stations as a reason for why people would want to live here. They can go to San Francisco during the week and then hang out in Hayward on the weekends."

- Galen Wilson, Goldman Sachs

**Conduct outreach to the public on proposed changes for the public realm, including street design.** Such decisions on traffic and walkability can be controversial. City staff and business leaders will need to build support for such interventions, possibly by starting with initial pilot interventions that require less review and affect a smaller area. They could also begin with more popular tasks that have broad public support, such

as street cleaning and public safety improvements through better and more creative lighting.

**Enable a downtown and commercial corridor district “art” fee to pay for murals and façade improvements.** Participants noted that developers would be willing to pay such a fee if it paid for improvements in the public realm that would boost the profitability of their projects. The business improvement district could take the lead to implement this fee.

### **Barrier # 4: Unusual parcels and challenging land assembly inhibit infill development**

Participants observed that Hayward has unusually shaped parcels that may pose a challenge to building larger infill projects that the community may want. In addition, existing property owners and businesses located in the middle of parcels that could otherwise be assembled for a larger project may hinder development opportunities in strategic areas.

“If you combine and redevelop too many unusual parcels, you may destroy the character of the downtown.”

- William Duncanson, BAR Architects

### **Solutions for Land Assembly and Unusual Parcels: *Facilitate Land Assembly and New Projects through Outreach and “Catalyst” Projects***

City leaders can address these parcel-size and land-assembly barriers through outreach and data sharing, as well as facilitating relationships among property owners and developers. In addition, the city staff can focus on “catalyst” projects on publicly owned parcels as a way to jumpstart activity in priority areas.

## SPECIFIC SOLUTIONS:

### City leaders could:

**Educate property owners and developers on parcel size and land assembly options.** City staff could help property owners assess opportunities for redevelopment. Staff could also facilitate re-use of certain land by helping current owners and businesses to relocate in order to redevelop a larger site with an unusual parcel configuration. City staff could accomplish this outreach and match-making through data-sharing and inventories of infill business and parcels.

“Alleys present often overlooked opportunities as places to activate with restaurants and other amenities.”

- Keith McCoy, Urban Mix Development

**Facilitate dialogue among developers to partner on priority infill sites.** Hayward’s goals for mixed-use infill projects may clash with the existing economics and business siloes of real estate development. For example, some developers only focus on housing, while others focus only on mixed-use or commercial projects at large scales. As a result, city leaders could help play “match-maker” among developers to facilitate partnerships on single or multiple parcels, in order to meet multiple goals of boosting housing, retail, and office projects.

**Focus on “catalyst projects” on public land that can further infill goals for the city.** City leaders could launch and support pilot infill projects on publicly owned parcels that meet certain criteria with expedited processing and other incentives. City leaders could also apply for state grants to jump-start the development of these catalyst projects. The goal would be to demonstrate the viability of infill projects in Hayward and stimulate revitalization of its priority, transit-rich neighborhoods.



## CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS: THE FUTURE OF INFILL IN HAYWARD

Hayward retains significant opportunity to create thriving, walkable, transit-friendly neighborhoods in its downtown district, South Hayward BART area, and commercial corridors. Its city staff has made progress to cultivate the potential, with over 3,700 units currently in the development pipeline. The city also recently approved a specific plan around its BART station. In addition, the city has approximately 200 acres of public land, for which it will soon seek proposals. To make the most of these opportunities and address the need for more infill housing and amenities, city and other local leaders could act together to implement some of the solutions identified in this policy brief. The result will be a more convenient, thriving, and environmentally and economically sustainable Hayward for existing and future residents.

“The City has adopted a culture of being innovative and creative. We want to promote housing.”

- Jennifer Ott, City of Hayward

## CONVENING ATTENDEES

### Participants:

Felix AuYeung, MidPen Housing Corporation  
 Emily Boyd, TRI Pointe Homes  
 William Duncanson, BAR Architects  
 James Edison, Willdan Financial Services  
 Curt Johansen, Terra Verde  
 Meea Kang, Related Group  
 Steve Lawton, Main Street Property Services  
 Keith McCoy, Urban Mix Development  
 Bob McLaughlin, New Albion Group  
 Aaron Roden, Landsea Homes  
 Josh Roden, Brookfield Residential  
 Brian Steele, Trumark  
 Scott Ward, Urban Mix Development  
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## ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF INFILL BUILDERS

The of Infill Builders is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation of real estate Council professionals committed to improving California through infill development. Infill development revitalizes neighborhoods and communities, provides transportation choices, creates viable close-knit mixed-use areas, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and improves the overall economy. The Builders seek to educate the public about these benefits through research and outreach.

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*This report and its recommendations are solely a product of the Council of Infill Builders and do not necessarily reflect the views of all individual convening participants, reviewers, or observers.*

## ENDNOTES

- 1 “Development Pipeline,” City of Hayward, Fall 2019, p. 1. Available at: <https://www.hayward-ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/development-pipeline-fall-2019.pdf> (accessed November 24, 2019).
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- 3 Greenbelt Alliance, *Fixing the Foundation: Local Solutions for Infill Housing*, November 2013, p. 24. Available at: [http://www.greenbelt.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Greenbelt\\_Alliance\\_Fixing\\_the\\_Foundation.pdf](http://www.greenbelt.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Greenbelt_Alliance_Fixing_the_Foundation.pdf) (accessed November 26, 2019).
- 4 San Francisco Planning and Urban Redevelopment (SPUR), *San Francisco: Why does housing cost so much* presentation at SPUR, slide 10. Available at: [https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/events\\_pdfs/2017.05.30%20Why%20Does%20Housing%20Cost%20So%20Much%20-%20Hogan.pdf](https://www.spur.org/sites/default/files/events_pdfs/2017.05.30%20Why%20Does%20Housing%20Cost%20So%20Much%20-%20Hogan.pdf) (accessed November 26, 2019).
- 5 Donald Shoup, “Cutting the Cost of Parking Requirements,” *ACCESS Magazine*, Issue 48, Spring 2016. Available at: <http://www.accessmagazine.org/spring-2016/cutting-the-cost-of-parking-requirements/> (accessed November 26, 2019).
- 6 Greenbelt Alliance, *supra*, at 24.
- 7 Council of Infill Builders, *supra*, at 8.
- 8 For more information on UrbanPlan, please visit: <https://americas.uli.org/programs/urbanplan/> (accessed November 25, 2019).





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