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Replating Breathes New Life Into Projects

Pressure is mounting to deliver residential and commercial real estate to end users at reduced market prices. With shrinking land values, many developers are strapped with infrastructure that is already installed and ready for sale. Adding lots or changing project layout can help salvage the value and profitability of a project. Replating an approved project is a successful strategy if the physical and jurisdictional obstacles are overcome.



Many projects in the market are good candidates for replating, though their existing infrastructure may impose physical constraints that need to be addressed. When an approved project gets redesigned, some of the existing improvements – such as street lights, hydrants, water services, and utility pedestals – will be in the wrong location. Often the streets are complete, including the final lift of pavement. Adding lots will require additional sewer, water, and private utility services. Incorporating infrastructure changes into existing projects can be tricky, but redesigns can be done while preserving the project's bottom line. The key steps are surveying the locations of all installed infrastructure and doing careful planning of potential relocations.

Working through jurisdictional approvals can be daunting as well. Adding lots or changing the design of a project will probably require new approvals by the city or other authorities. Changes in density, lot widths, impervious coverage, and setbacks are all likely to be scrutinized. Working with city staff and discussing proposed changes with decision makers is important for gauging how the revised project will be received. Potential success strategies include offsetting changes with amenity enhancements, architectural improvements, or design improvements. Additionally, understanding the perspective of neighbors – both inside and adjacent to the development – will indicate whether there is opposition to change. Neighbors who are willing to support the new project vision can help alleviate city concerns.

By analyzing the physical and jurisdictional constraints, the success rate for replating projects can be improved dramatically. Looking ahead and anticipating all obstacles in the process is essential for keeping costs down and achieving profit goals. A well developed plan for working through the many details of a project revision can revitalize an otherwise troubled project.

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