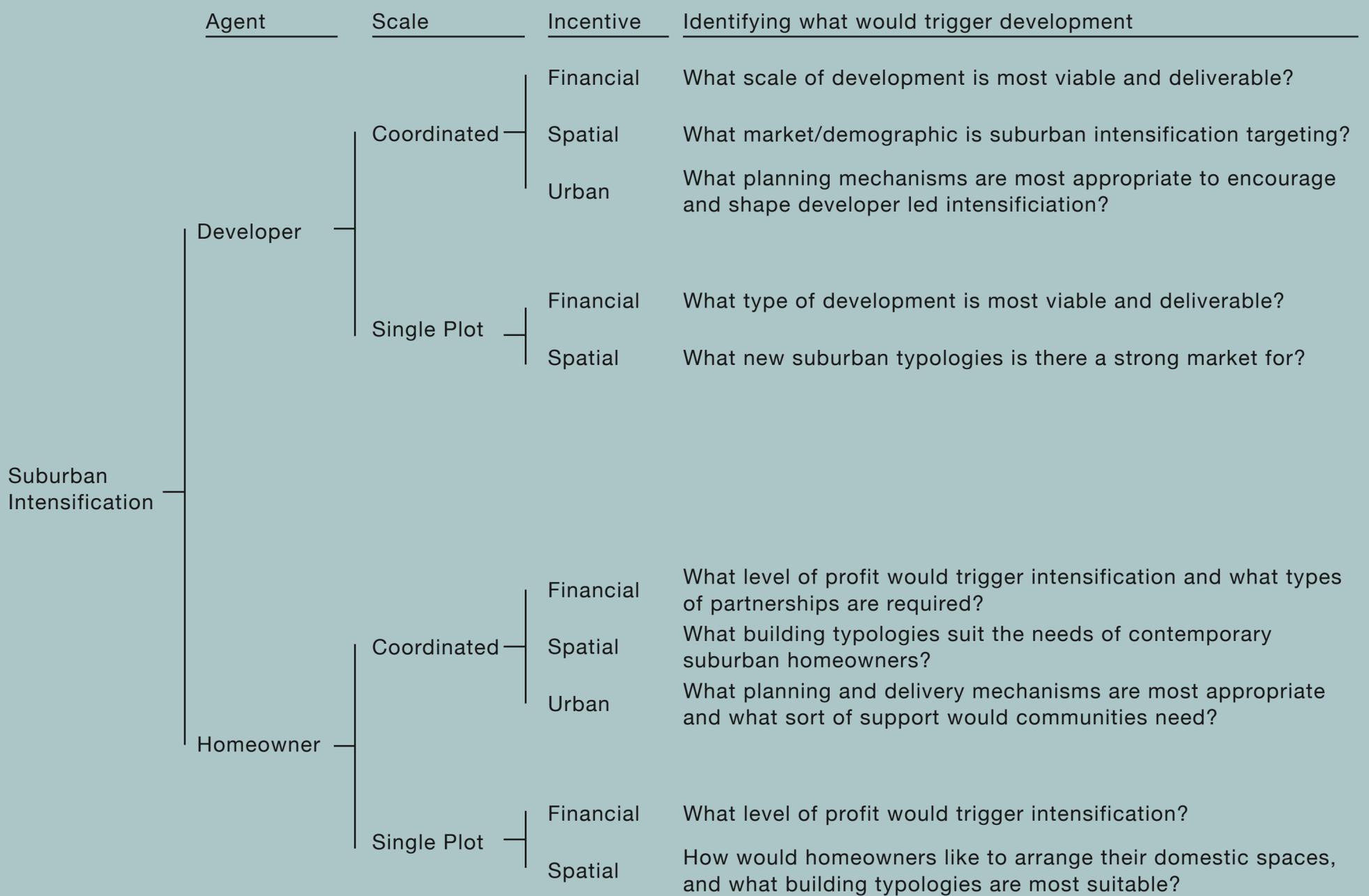




PUBLIC PRACTICE

How can suburban intensification be popular?



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If suburban intensification is to deliver significant numbers of new homes and the related benefits from increasing densities, it must tap into the interests of individual homeowners. Taking a user-centred approach through focus groups and surveys, the research is identifying these incentives and the thresholds that need to be met in order to trigger redevelopment. Such incentives have generally been narrowly framed as opportunities for economic gain, but a wider spectrum of interests may also unlock (or inhibit) redevelopment, and lead to a more intensive use of suburban land. The home as capital is fundamental to the attractiveness of suburban life, and intensification is a way in which value can be created or released by homeowners. Whilst small-scale alterations and extensions have long been a way homeowners have

increased the value of their assets, intensification presents new challenges given the logistics of redeveloping on a scale that would create additional new dwellings. Suburban homes have offered freedom and flexibility in adapting to suit the changing needs of residents, and this freedom continues to be part of the lure of the suburbs. The spatial quality of suburbs is defined by tree-lined streets, generous green spaces and consistent urban form, qualities that suburban residents value and which often create the inertia to change in the suburbs. However, the community is one aspect of the rural idyll that is central to suburban development, and the collective, co-ordinated improvement of an area through intensification can offer residents in low-density areas better services and infrastructure.