

***Guest Opinion:***

***“Empathy for A Building”***

***Broadway’s “Sunshine Mile”: A “Panda” Design Discussion***

As an architect, it’s not unusual to have respect, adoration and even empathy for inanimate objects such as an excellently designed & important building.

For the Panda building, it’s better that we create “lemonade” from this lemon.

***The facts are:***

The building is not historic nor important ‘rchitectural design.

Restaurants are the most difficult to remodel for many design reasons including costs beyond the vandalism. In several locations, existing restaurants were demoed, replaced with new restaurants.

This building is too near the street right of way (ROW), which in this area is only eighty-feet (80) in width. Most boulevards contain a 100 foot or more ROW.

This building will probably be demolished for minimal improvements: a wider bike lane & sidewalk and street landscaping—all of these are missing and desperately needed to beautify the *Sunshine Mile* streetscape and historic buildings.

Apparently, City funds will be saved by the demolition, with the hope these are utilized more constructively at this site.

***So how do we mix the “lemonade”?***

In a brief meeting last week headed by Jennifer Burdick, Project Manager for the Broadway Corridor Committee and several interested individuals, many excellent, positive ideas were discussed on how to utilize resources saved to enhance the site temporarily or preferably permanently as part of the *Sunshine Mile*.

I look forward to final suggestions from Jennifer and this group.

However, *my design vision* is to place these enhancements at the west portion and/or southwest corner of the site, positioned to avoid a future ROW widening—preferably permanent—but retain the majority of the site for future improvements, which hopefully respect *Sunshine Mile’s ‘Rchitectural Design Integrity*.

***Some of my favorite design ideas:***

Install an historic signage on the site, similar to the famous El Con Mall sign.

Install a kiosk to display future events, activities and other *Sunshine Mile* information.

Provide bicycle parking for possible Neighborhood or Community events held on site or elsewhere.

Install large shade trees at the south edge which can be relocated if needed.

Create a plaza for seating and gathering.

Probably the most difficult is to relocate the bus stop & shelter to this site; these must be located a required distance from a street corner.

***“How do we respect Sunshine Mile’s ‘Rchitectural Design Integrity?’***

***These aspects would assist in a design vision, add to the Design Integrity:***

The sign code limits installations of historic signs, and needs to be revised.

The *Sunshine Mile* nor the *Broadway Corridor Project* provides any “*Rchitectural Design Guidelines*” to enhance the streetscape & building facades with cohesive, pleasing designs applicable to the *Sunshine Mile* and future construction.

Cash investments, donations or sponsorships by the Community and the *Sunshine Mile* businesses may be needed to supplement the city monies provided.

The existing zoning is inconsistent related to the existing buildings desired for retention.

Hence, the creation of a “district overlay” is critical to provide a path for building retention, shared parking, building & site architectural design guidelines, and incentives for design excellence.

The most enduring asset of the *Sunshine Mile* is the new respect for “*rchitectural Design*” missing or misunderstood in our beloved Tucson.

Enduring design elements would increase protection for the adjacent Neighborhoods but also benefiting our entire Community in a vastly improved

“*Boulevard of Dreams & Destinations*” in a future multi-modal corridor known as the *Sunshine Mile*.

Fin

Please Note: This is my personal opinion.



**Joseph Maher, Jr. AIA  
Architect**

***“Great Design and Planning can solve any ‘Rchitectural situation.’”***

***A local architect, UA Grad, AZ native, self proclaimed ‘Richitectural Criti’, active in several City of Tucson Citizen Committees; Liaison to the Broadway Corridor project from the City of Tucson Planning Commission; Executive Board Member, the Southern Arizona Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (SAC/AIA)***

***“Support for Reading, Riting, Rithmatic and Rchitecture can provide a path for Community Design success.”***

**Address/contact:**

**4949 East Scarlett Street, Tucson, AZ 85711**

**Ward 6**

**Cell 520-2489569**

**Email: [jmaherjraia@aol.com](mailto:jmaherjraia@aol.com)**

