

Daniel Bursuck - Optional Grant Road Urban Overlay District (Oracle to 1st) Preliminary Draft

From: John Anderson <JAnderson@westlandresources.com>
To: Daniel Bursuck <Daniel.Bursuck@tucsonaz.gov>
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Subject: Optional Grant Road Urban Overlay District (Oracle to 1st) Preliminary Draft

Dan-

A few comments on your draft:

I'm not familiar with the City's Design Professional. The review process leans heavily on his/her judgement. Hope that person has the expertise and the political support to promote imaginative urban development.

The review process seems to give a lot of weight to a review by historic preservation folks. I have a colleague who volunteered with the City's historic review committee (or whatever the formal name of the committee is) and he described his fellow committee members as well-intentioned but unimaginative folks who wanted to preserve everything. I'd hate to see a good development plan held hostage by a group that wants to preserve a historic but unusable structure.

Comment DB10: Option 3 seems to my non-planner eye to be the most practical solution, one that a NA would understand.

I would caution against relying on "landscape" to provide shade or buffer adjacent properties. Unlike constructed elements, plants require greater ongoing maintenance, typically provided by a maintenance service that is underpaid and undertrained. Urban environments are often the most challenging for plant health. Dead plants are typically not replaced. The City doesn't have the resources to monitor plant health and enforce replacement. Nor does the City currently have the resources to maintain landscapes in the right of way. If possible, I would recommend the formation of a HOA-type of organization, similar to the Downtown Merchants, to create a funding source for ongoing landscape maintenance if "landscapes" serve a central role in the development of these properties.

Plants do not reduce noise travel.

I would allow balconies. They break up the vertical mass of a multi-story building. They are attractive to owners, thereby increasing appeal. Obnoxious behavior can be aggressively policed.

Could parking requirements be reduced by more than 25% if provisions are made to restrict access into adjoining residential neighborhoods?

I haven't explored the use of "pervious" pavement, but I hear that it requires greater than average maintenance. Same concerns as I voiced above regarding landscape.

I'm not a planner, but the intent of this draft seems progressive. I'm excited—I hope the money is too.

Hope this helps.

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