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Westside :: Southside :: Downtown



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City Council approves Infill Incentive District to advance neighborhood protections and promote infill development and economic development!

I recently voted with the majority of my colleagues to approve a new Infill Incentive District for the city of Tucson. This incentive district will incentivize infill development in our downtown while protecting neighborhood cohesion and historic properties. For many years Tucson has created a number of zoning overlays that work to incentivize development in our downtown core. Two years ago, Mayor and Council directed City staff to replace the sometimes baffling collection of overlays with one larger incentive district that will simplify the development process and promote quality development while offering more input from neighbors.

City staff, in conjunction with neighborhood leaders, historic preservationists and developers, held dozens of meetings and spent countless hours talking through difficult issues to find balance between the revitalization of downtown and the protection of historic neighborhoods. The result is “opening up” 140 acres of industrial zones to mixed use, commercial or residential development in the downtown area. This will mean a more vibrant downtown with more residents living close to the streetcar, downtown restaurants and nightlife and ultimately a more prosperous and interesting downtown.

For most of the last year, my staff and I worked closely with the El Presidio Neighborhood Association to resolve some especially tricky issues in their neighborhood. El Presidio is Tucson’s first neighborhood and those nineteenth century adobe homes adjacent to our modern downtown present unique challenges for a 21st Century Tucson. I had to ask my colleagues on the Council to give the neighborhood and City staff 30 extra days to craft an even more nuanced approach to development in El Presidio. No document is perfect, and I am sure we will discover small problems with the document that can be solved with minor tweaks, but I am proud of what was approved on Wednesday and I am proud of the City staff that guided the process (Thank you Carolyn Laurie, Jim Mazzocco and Ernie Duarte!).