

DOWNTOWN TASK FORCE



MEETING DATE: MAY 17, 2010

ITEM NO. _____

TOPIC

Infill Incentive Districts [A.R.S. 9-499.10.]

BACKGROUND

General Plan

The City Council approved, voter ratified, 2001 Scottsdale General Plan Neighborhoods Element contains community value statements, goals, and approaches supporting revitalization, infill development, and redevelopment within the City of Scottsdale including:

- A commitment to community revitalization;
- The preservation, enhancement and revitalization of Scottsdale's residential and commercial neighborhoods;
- Redevelopment and reinvestment in the community's mature areas;
- Incentive programs that encourage context-appropriate infill development and redevelopment efforts; and
- Sustaining the long-term economic well being of the city through redevelopment and revitalization efforts.

Therefore, continued exploration of implementation tools to help achieve the community's goals regarding infill, revitalization and redevelopment within Scottsdale are important work program items for the city's General Plan, Character and Neighborhood Planning processes.

Character Area Plan

Character Area Plans are components of the General Plan that are used to guide future development and revitalization within specific areas of the city. Character Area Plans focus on area-related goals and policies whereas the General Plan provides goals and policies applicable to the city as a whole. To avoid repetition, the Character Area Plans supplement the city-wide goals provided by the General Plan.

In addition to the General Plan, the adopted Downtown Character Area Plan (Downtown Plan) establishes public policy that assists the citizens, business community, development community, staff, boards and commissions, and City Council in the decision making processes related to Downtown Scottsdale.

One primary principle in the Downtown Plan is that close coordination between the public and private sectors, coupled with development flexibility, will be necessary in order to carefully manage Downtown land use considerations in the future. The involvement of the private sector is pivotal to the successful implementation of the Downtown Plan, and flexible development standards may encourage the private sector to attain a high level of quality development while at the same time assisting in the provision of public amenities and benefits. Thus, encouraging new development, redevelopment and infill development that strengthens Downtown's mix of land uses is strongly encouraged.

As part of the extensive community involvement process conducted for the Downtown Plan update project, some themes related to height and development intensity allowances in the Downtown area have been brought up by the community on a repeated basis including:

- Community support for greater height and intensity north of the Arizona Canal in the Downtown Regional neighborhood, as well as in the Downtown Medical Campus areas of the downtown;
- Recognition that height allowances in downtown will need to be able to accommodate current/updated building standards and practices; and
- A desire to encourage continued high quality revitalization, redevelopment, revitalization and infill projects through development flexibility on a case by case basis and that takes into account the surrounding context.

Allowing for development flexibility on a case by case basis was first suggested by the Downtown Scottsdale Town Hall members in their final consensus report to the Scottsdale City Council in 2007 – “the city should be flexible and encourage high quality revitalization and innovative quality developments while respecting existing height limits in the Old Town and traditional shopping districts. Outside of those districts, projects should be decided on a case by case basis”.

Following the Downtown Town Hall efforts, allowing for development flexibility continued to be a main theme in the Downtown Plan public outreach sessions. Most recently, at the May 3, 2010 Downtown Task Force meeting regarding height and development intensity in Downtown Scottsdale, the expressed desire for wanting a “mechanism” that would allow for development flexibility on a case by case basis that also considers the surrounding context /character was once again expressed.

Consequently, based on the common community repetition of a case by case development flexibility theme, city staff is proposing an Infill Incentive District designation in Downtown Scottsdale.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATIONS

Arizona Revised Statutes [A.R.S. 9-499.10.] allows for the governing body of a city or town to designate an Infill Incentive District in an area of the city or town that meets at least three out of six state statute identified criteria.

If the governing body establishes an Infill Incentive District, it is required to adopt an Infill Incentive Plan to encourage redevelopment in the district. Such a plan may include:

1. Expedited zoning or rezoning procedures.
2. Expedited processing of plans and proposals.
3. Waivers of municipal fees for development activities as long as the waivers are not funded by other development fees.
4. Relief from development standards.

The City of Scottsdale currently has one Infill Incentive District which was designated in 2003. Located in Downtown Scottsdale, this particular Infill Incentive District is specifically limited to the Scottsdale Waterfront site/property and therefore cannot be utilized by any other properties within the Downtown area.

Staff is proposing the designation of a second Infill Incentive District located within the Downtown Scottsdale boundary that can be utilized by both small and large properties as a tool to further downtown investment and revitalization. Such a district designation and plan would allow the private sector to propose, on a case by case basis, projects with amended development standards (including height and density amendments which cannot be amended under the current Zoning Ordinance at this time). Each project proposal would need to be reviewed through a public hearing process culminating in City Council review and possible approval.

Such case by case project decision making would allow for context and character specific discussion regarding each proposed project, which have been an important points stressed in the Downtown Task Force discussions to date.

Consequently, discussion and possible action of a recommendation to the City Council has been placed on the Downtown Task Force meeting agenda for May 17, 2010. Further discussion with the community will also occur during the months of May and June 2010, concluding with a City Council discussion and possible action on a Downtown Infill Incentive District scheduled prior to the City Council summer break.

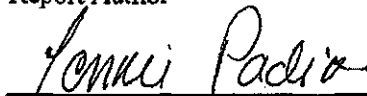
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