

2 major downtown projects get go-ahead from council

Plans for Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn, Optima condos OK'd

By Edward Gately

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Future expansion and improvement at Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center and a multilevel luxury-condominium project on the southeastern corner of Camelback Road and 68th Street were given the green light by the Scottsdale City Council.

Both requests originally were among items on the council's Tuesday consent agenda, which required a single vote for approval. The Scottsdale Healthcare request remained on the consent agenda, and the council unanimously supported it.

The condominium request, however, was moved to the regular agenda, and Councilwoman Marg Nelssen cast the only vote against it. She questioned the effect of the project on the adjacent residential area.

Scottsdale Healthcare's long-term plans include the construction of two patient towers. The expansion could add more than 240 beds to the Osborn Medical Center, bringing the total to more than 630.

The medical campus, on the northwestern corner of Osborn Road and Drinkwater Boulevard, was established in the mid-1960s.

The council's approval allows Scottsdale Healthcare to move forward with development plans over the next 20 to 25 years. Plans call for expanded inpatient and outpatient surgical services, more private patient rooms and additional intensive-care beds.

Plans also include developing a new main entry, more parking, a neurosciences center and a conference center.

"Scottsdale Healthcare can now move forward planning for the future ... with a campus that is well planned, well thought out and will hopefully serve the future needs of the community for decades to come," said John Berry, a zoning attorney for Scottsdale Healthcare.

It also operates two other hospital campuses and is the city's largest employer.

The council also approved zoning changes to allow the high-end condomini-

um complex on the site of the abandoned Orchidtree apartment complex.

Optima, which is developing the Optima Camelview Village condominium complex at Scottsdale Road and Rancho Vista Drive, purchased the property last year and requested the zoning changes.

Optima Sonoran Village will include 493 residential units and 40,000 square feet of commercial, retail and amenity space, for a total of about 726,700 square feet of floor space. Five buildings will be arranged around two courtyards.

Four of the buildings will be seven stories in height, while the fifth building will have five floors on its north side and fewer floors on its south side.

Rick Robertson, a nearby homeowner, spoke in support of the project and asked Optima to maintain a wall to keep people from walking from the complex into the adjacent neighborhood.

Cathy Kent Croom, another nearby homeowner, spoke in opposition to the project, saying its height and density are inappropriate for the area.

"It's going to have more than double the number of units than were previously there and two levels of parking underneath the unit that are going to bring twice as much traffic to the area," she said. "The main entrance for the residents is about a half a block from my street."

She said area residents weren't properly notified of the plans.

"It's a massive thing ... there's going to be more vibration with more cars, these people who live up high are going to have lights on, they're going to have balconies and they're going to look over (into the neighborhoods)," she said.

David Hovey Sr., Optima president and owner, said Optima Sonoran Village is an "exceptional design specifically for this neighborhood and responds positively to all of the neighbors we met with, especially the neighbors that are closest to the development."

"We can't think of a better design or architectural solution to this particular site," he said. "This will be the highest-quality development anywhere in Arizona or the United States for that matter."