

SCOTTSDALE REPUBLIC

VP/GENERAL MANAGER:
Michael Ryan, 602-444-5810
OPINIONS EDITOR:
Robert Leger, 602-444-6805

OPINIONS WRITER:
Cindy Hernandez, 602-444-7748
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2 OK'd projects a boon to downtown

Downtown Scottsdale has received another infusion of good news. The City Council approved two projects that will keep the area humming.

OUR VIEW

» The first, passed

unanimously with no debate, sets the outline for expansion of the Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn Medical Center for the next two to three decades. This will include a taller hospital with more than 240 new beds, bringing the total to more than 630. Surgical services, a neurosciences center and a conference center will be added.

This is all good for keeping Northeast Valley residents healthy, but it's just as important for keeping downtown healthy. The hospital is downtown's largest employer. Those doctors, nurses, technicians, support staff and volunteers eat and shop downtown. They're vital to its economic



CRYSTAL OCHOA/THE REPUBLIC

Scottsdale Healthcare is expanding its downtown center.

health.

Scottsdale Healthcare stayed put during downtown's darkest days, when the area most needed the anchor that the hospital provided. The unanimous vote on this proposal was a proper way to reward Scottsdale Healthcare's loyalty.

Most requests for additional height are met with protracted, passionate debate and a divided vote. It's noteworthy that Scottsdale Healthcare's project sailed through with none of that.

» The second project is equally noteworthy: Optima



MARK HENLE/THE REPUBLIC

Architect David Hovey Sr. on a terraced garden at Optima Camelview Village. Hovey says Optima Sonoran Village will be even better.

Sonoran Village, to be built on the site of the vacant and decaying Orchidtree apartment complex.

Orchidtree once offered moderately priced housing in downtown Scottsdale. At the height of the real-estate boom, a developer bought the property with plans to convert the apartments into condos. Tenants were evicted. And then the bust came, the plan col-

lapsed and the apartments became an eyesore.

We could bemoan the loss of affordable housing, but it wouldn't bring back what Orchidtree once was. That's gone. The goal should be to make the best of the situation as it exists.

That's what the project does. Developer David Hovey Sr. has already given the city one of its finest examples of archi-

itecture, Optima Camelview Village northeast of Fashion Square. He promises that Optima Sonoran Village will be better yet.

That didn't keep neighbors from objecting. Cathy Kent Croom, for instance, said the project would be too tall, too dense and produce too much traffic.

Fortunately, the council saw that the benefits of the 493-unit condo complex far outweighed any downsides. Hovey has been sensitive to the neighbors closest to the property, making changes in response to their comments. For instance, although the overall height will reach seven stories, the building closest to a residential neighborhood will be shorter.

Hovey has set a goal of surpassing the architectural excellence of Optima Camelview Village. That's a high bar, and one more piece of evidence that downtown will be well served by this project.