

3 December 2009 (via email)

-----

Email from Council Member Karin Uhlich regarding the Feldman Design Manual

Thank you for your email concerning the recently passed Feldman Design Manual. I share your concern for the protection of historic central Tucson homes and neighborhoods and I appreciate how valuable these homes are to the Tucson Community.

As you know, in June of 2008 the Mayor and Council adopted the Neighborhood Preservation Zone. The purpose of the NPZ is to "preserve, protect, and enhance the unique character and historical resources of established City neighborhoods" and to provide for the creation and establishment of neighborhood-specific design manuals.

The Mayor and Council initiated the Feldman's and Jefferson Park neighborhoods as the first two to follow the NPZ process. The design manual for Feldman was completed and adopted by the Mayor and Council on November 24th, 2009 and work began on the Jefferson Park design manual process in November also.

The Neighborhood Preservation Zone is the companion legislation to the Downtown Area Infill Incentive District which was adopted by the Mayor and Council this year in August. The goal of this ordinance is to encourage and incentivize "sustainable infill development that supports the creation of urban neighborhoods that are pedestrian and transit-oriented" in the downtown area.

There is a need for a variety of housing close to the University of Arizona. We need it for single family home owners and renters such as faculty, staff and graduate students as well as undergraduates who behave in a neighborly way. There is also a need for denser infill on main arterials.

The intention of these two companion ordinances is to protect neighborhoods while we provide areas for appropriate infill redevelopment. The concept of exchanging development rights that was added to the Feldman Design Manual will allow for more ways to create this balance.

These are ideas to help neighborhoods deal with the tension between preservation and the need for University housing but we realize the need for other regulations to protect neighborhoods not covered by this pilot NPZ concept. We also know that there is a need to continue to address the student behavior issues.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts with my office.

Sincerely,

Karin Uhlich, Council Member