

May 30, 2023

Sedona Planning and Zoning
% Cari Meyer
109 Roadrunner Road
Sedona, AZ 86336

Subject: Oak Creek Heritage Lodge March 2023 Development Proposal

Dear Madam:

This letter is to provide comments on the latest submittal from the Oak Creek Heritage Lodge (as it is now being called) developer. I have noticed that since the developer's last presentation to Planning and Zoning they have made a few modifications to the configuration and submitted this to Sedona Community Development in March of 2023.

It appears that the developer did this with the hope that some additional detail and small modifications would allow Planning and Zoning to better understand the plan concept and would allow a more complete evaluation of the proposed development.

2022 Public Hearing

At the last Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, members of the Commission and the Public noted the following concerns with the plans previously submitted:

- The proposed development is not a rural concept and is a traditional resort facility that is not in keeping with the Oak Creek CFA. This is a contemporary hotel not a rural cabin or cottage development as called for in the CFA.
- The plans did not show a boutique hotel setting and did not present access to Oak Creek.
- The proposed development includes higher density meeting space, event, weddings and the associated traffic in an area that is in the center of the high traffic zone in Sedona.
- The prior documents did not include any architectural concept, just a selection of renderings from other documents, including the CFA.
- There was a concern with maintaining trees on site and not using mass grading to remove existing vegetation. Maintaining site vegetation like Ambiente is viewed more positively.
- The floodplain was not shown clearly on the available drawings.
- The traffic analysis for parking appeared to be low with no employee parking, and this is in the highest traffic area in town
- It was noted that available water is sufficient, but is another water user needed in Sedona?
- A complete listing of the typical and total guest room sizes relative to a standard bay should be provided. This should include a compilation of total beds and sofa beds.
- Orchard Parking seems to have been hidden in the orchard area.

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- It was noted that the proposed development falls flat on a sustainability perspective.
- The climate action plan was not addressed in the plan submitted.
- Given its location, Oak Creek access is important
- Grading and earthwork was not provided.
- Is LEED certification anticipated?
- Did the developer consider vegetated roofs, ebikes, bike storage?
- Is water conservation included? Is gray water harvesting to be used?
- Are there irrigation rights on the property that are intended to be used?
- Will the restaurant include a connection to healthy foods?
- What use of fertilizer and pesticides are planned
- How will the concern with exiting safely from the facility be addressed?
- How will the development preserve the creek ecology?
- Is there employee housing?
- What is the number of employees for the development? (Developer responded that 30 would be on site at one time with a greater total number throughout the day.
- Developer did not include the presentation ahead of time. The Commission should have been given time to review and study this before the hearing.
- The developer must mention all CFA requirements in any future response.
- No demolition can be performed till a survey of historic features is completed,
- Wedding noise has been a continuing problem with other resorts on Oak Creek, and how will this development be addressed since they are noted as a developer of destination wedding resorts?
- How will the restaurant noise be contained for residents in the area?
- How will the difficulty of entering and exiting the facility be managed given the limited sight distances?
- How many rooms and what size and the number of occupants will be included in the resort plan?
- How many staff will be needed by the resort? Where will this staff be from given the local staffing issues at other businesses in Sedona?
- Does Sedona need more resorts?
- How will access to the creek be provided? (The developer stated that the public will be welcome to access the creek through their development)
- A resident noted that campers are routinely removed from under the SR179 bridge.
- How will water conservation be managed on the site?
- How will the destruction of this unique riparian habitat be considered during the construction and operation of the development

March 2023 Proposal Comments

With these prior comments, the following comments are being submitted on the March 2023 submittal from the Developer:

1. **Overall Hotel Concept** - While the number of rooms has been reduced to 70 from 80, a similar number and size of buildings is still planned. These concept drawings do not show this as being a rural concept, nor does it resemble anything that could be

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reasonably called a cottage or cabin as called for in the CFA.

It is notable that the size of rooms varies from over 500 square feet to over 1,100 square feet. This is quite large compared to a standard hotel room of about 300 square feet. In addition, these rooms have about half with double queen and king rooms, with some additional junior rooms for multiple children. It is hard to compile the total number of beds, but it likely will accommodate well over 200 guests in the various structures. The total number of guests that these various rooms can accommodate needs to be compiled in one location, as this reviewer could not locate this summary.

Again, it is hard to envision these very large rooms as being consistent with a cottage or cabin, in spite of the developers repeatedly calling them that. They are not cottages or cabins.

- 2. Employees and Housing** - While the new plan includes 4 on-site housing units for staff, the total number of employees has not been included in this submittal. It should be noted that for a hotel of this level of luxury, especially since it includes a large restaurant, spa, event (wedding) building, and valet parking, it would be expected that the employee to guest ratio should be between 1:1 to 2:1.

Since this hotel would serve at least 200 guests given the number of rooms and beds, it should be expected that this hotel would require at least 200 employees to perhaps twice that to service these guests and the events that they would support. Clearly the 4 employee housing units would be rather insignificant (say 2%) compared to the need for hotel workers. These same 200+ workers would also need to be identified and transported to the development each day, impacting traffic in the most congested part of the community.

- 3. Floodway and Floodplain** - This proposed development is located in one of the few remaining intact riparian areas in Sedona, let alone Arizona. This unique ecology, according to the Community Plan, is to be preserved and not disrupted. While in many locations on the drawings it is hard to identify the location of the 100-year floodplain, the design shows that a large portion of the development buildings are located in the 100-year floodplain, using columns to support the buildings 1' above the calculated 100-year flood water surface. In a number of cases, the patio areas and decks are cantilevered over the floodway.

It should be noted that these floodplain co-located buildings will completely destroy the existing floodplain ecology that is so important to a healthy riparian area by covering them up from the sunshine that they need to thrive. It is clear that this is an attempt to locate the large development buildings as close as possible to the creek to utilize this unique habitat for the guests while at the same time destroying the majority of the habitat that is present in Oak Creek.

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It should also be noted that during the recent 2023 25-year (4% annual recurrence) flooding event, which is much smaller than the 100-year (1% annual recurrence) flooding event that is the development standard, standing waves were observed in this section of the creek that exceeded 4' above the average water surface.

It should be noted that the steady state computer modeling methods of calculating water surface does not take into account the presence of standing waves that are commonly seen in mountain streams like Oak Creek. This is to point out that the safety of the guests and visitors could easily be impacted by a large flash flood in the Oak Creek watershed.

It also needs to be considered that while the current 1% recurrence (100-year flood) is the development standard, we all know that with climate disruption, more intense and frequent events are likely going forward. In addition, this climate disruption also is causing increasing wildfires in the upper basin areas which as you know will make the runoff from smaller storms more rapid and the volume larger. The large burn areas in Flagstaff routinely are experiencing large increases in flood volume due to these burn scars, something we should expect in Oak Creek.

4. **Room Sizes** - As noted earlier, the proposed design includes rather large room sizes that do not meet the intent of cabins or cottages as noted in the CFA. The developer simply referring to these large buildings as cottages does make them so. This is a huge difference from the intent of the CFA and the intent is to attempt to try to make the development into something it most definitely is not - a cabin or cottage that has a rural or boutique setting.
5. **Restaurant, Event Facility, and Fitness Spa** - The developer has maintained that the restaurant as well as the "event facility", which should more appropriately be called a wedding hall, are appropriate for the size of the development. Both of these large facilities are intended for the wedding ceremony and perhaps more importantly the reception facility that most definitely includes music and dancing. This is similar to the large weddings that are taking place routinely at L'Auberge de Sedona.

The latest proposal notes that this restaurant will be a "small" upscale restaurant open to the public. At 4,800 square feet and using a generous 20 sq ft per diner, this relates to a seating capacity of 240. This restaurant is certainly not small and would likely be one of the largest restaurants in Sedona. This restaurant is open to the public and would likely draw even more traffic to the location along with a large number of wait and cook staff needed to serve these customers, likely another 50 staff members.

It also needs to be understood that the event facility will also serve essentially as another restaurant for receptions, requiring additional staffing in the kitchen to prepare the meals, wait table, and bus and clean the facility.

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The Fitness Spa is also rather large at 2,800 sq ft, which depending on the type of spa experience would serve 30 to 60 users at a time. This will also be open to the public and would potentially result in additional traffic in addition to the restaurant and other on site uses.

The nearby residents have spoken at great lengths about how the existing Uptown resorts already have caused disruption in the area. The audio analysis included in these documents was performed in the middle of the existing vegetation and not in the future setting of large buildings with hard reflective surfaces as well as an open environment that will aid the conduction of sound to the entire Uptown area.

All of the proposed facilities include accordion doors on three sides of each building which will inevitably be opened for the convenience of the dining guests as well as the reception crowd that will want to party long into the evening hours and disrupt the peaceful surroundings. It is unlikely that the neighbors will ever again be able to hear the quiet babble of the Oak Creek if this development is to be constructed and operated.

6. **Site Grading** - In the last public hearing, the developer noted that the soil balance would not be changed on the site and that there would not be mass grading. It seems from the provided drawings that a completely different scenario is in play. While the areas under the proposed buildings in the floodplain area will not have grading since these buildings will be kept above the floodplain elevation with posts, almost all other areas with new buildings and roadways will have all vegetation removed and the areas completely regraded to the planned contours.

This is not as presented at the last public hearing. The only areas that will not have the existing vegetation removed and graded are those areas in the floodway and floodplain that cannot be effectively used for the development site. These areas are called the preserve, in spite of the fact that they will also include the addition of walkways along the creek.

As noted before, the soils that will be graded have taken decades to develop and will be removed and will not be left as they have on the Ambiente development on 89A. This will include a huge amount of disruption on the site and the final development will have none of the current character of the largely undeveloped site.

Comparison of Development to CFA Vision

For some final comparisons to the Oak Creek CFA, these properties are located within the Heart of Sedona, a pedestrian-friendly area that is focused on Oak Creek and Sedona's heritage. The CFA notes that future development and redevelopment should be a mix of uses that preserves the Oak Creek riparian corridor, with natural hillsides, open fields, and a variety of modestly scaled buildings, thus sustaining the distinct historic context and character.

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The proposed development fails on almost all counts as it does nothing but degrade the existing riparian corridor, regrades the existing natural hillsides to accommodate roadways and walkways and buildings, and does not include anything that could be termed a modestly scaled building similar to a cottage or cabin. It does not sustain the distinct historic context or character of the site.

To specifically address the Community Expectation from the Oak Creek CFA the development would need to:

- **Retain large parcels and rural character** - This proposed development does not retain anything that could be called rural character. It is nothing less than a highly manicured wedding resort and event facility intended as a location for expensive destination weddings. With large resort suites, large restaurant and event facility with dance floor and a sound system, spa, lobby with exclusive valet parking it is intended for use for well to do weddings in our serene surroundings.
- **Support agriculture as a key character element** - There is nothing in this development proposal that can be termed agricultural in nature. The prior proposal indicated the use of non-fruit bearing trees in a parking area camouflage as an orchard. While the planting plan is not included, it will likely include large areas of non-native grasses intended to give that country club feel. This is not agriculture.
- **Support non-residential uses (e.g., bed and breakfast, neighborhood cafe) if tied to the preservation of large land areas and generate less traffic than medium-density residential** - This facility will generate large amounts of traffic, both for the guests that attend and park using valet parking, outside users of the large restaurant, and the 200+ daily workers that will pamper the facility guests. This is not in the theme of bed and breakfast or neighborhood cafe, and does not protect any large tracts of the property, other than areas that are already in the floodway and not buildable.
- **Retain similarly affordable housing currently provided in existing mobile home/RV parks** - Clearly this development does not include anything close to affordable housing and is way out of character from the nearby mobile home/RV park. There is nothing affordable about this development.
- **Protect riparian environment along Oak Creek** - Riparian zones are the areas bordering rivers and other bodies of surface water. They include the floodplain as well as the riparian buffers adjacent to the floodplain. Riparian zones provide many environmental and recreational benefits to streams, groundwater and downstream land areas.

This development makes no real effort to protect this unique riparian environment that has largely been destroyed in Arizona through development. In fact, this development takes special measures to encroach on the floodplain as well as even the floodway with cantilever structures that project into this area. All of this disruption completely destroys

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the existing riparian environment and ecology. On this issue alone, this development should be summarily rejected.

- **Evaluate potential for environmentally sensitive public creek access** - This appropriate access to Oak Creek is an issue that has been discussed in prior public hearings. The developer originally said that public access to the property would be allowed, but at the last presentation this was noted as missing. In this latest proposal, there are some access corridors provided on the northern edge of the property that do not have any real connection to any existing creek access.
- Preserve historic resources (Gassaway House) - There are several historic structures on the site, and it does not appear that these will be retained in the final development construction other than as an afterthought.

Summary

This development proposal should be summarily rejected for the reasons noted above. This is not a good fit for Sedona and does a complete disservice to the effort to retain and preserve the Oak Creek riparian area. This proposal is nothing more than a disguised development that does not meet any of the requirements intended in the Oak Creek CFA. It is recommended that this proposal be rejected.

Sincerely,



Mark TenBroek
Uptown Sedona resident

Date: August 31, 2023

Re: Oak Creek Heritage Lodge - Comprehensive Review Comments

By: D. Tracy

Acknowledgments. I acknowledge that many of the issues outlined below are beyond the scope of the P&Z Commission comprehensive review process. The purpose of this laundry list is to document the various issues that are inherent to this neighborhood so that future changes can be evaluated in light of other known neighborhood/community topics of interest.

Disclaimers. Although I am a previous owner for 20+ years of a portion of this project site and continue to serve as a volunteer caretaker, I have no financial interest in this project. I do have a continuing interest in the [re]development of this area since I was a participant in the original CFA planning group.

Irrigation rights. At previous P&Z Commission meetings on this project, concern was raised over pumping water from Oak Creek. I believe that the community benefits outweigh the disadvantages and pumping should continue. In support of this position are the following points:

- Creek water is used to irrigate locally grown fruit and nut trees. This would not be as feasible using more costly water from AZ Water Company.
- Creek water is also used to irrigate lawn grasses and other flora. Via photosynthesis, these green plants convert CO₂ into oxygen and thus improve local air quality.
- In turn, the lawn grasses reduce soil erosion and sediment transport into Oak Creek, esp dog feces and wildlife feces which wash down Schnebly Hill Road from upper elevations, including Forest Service lands.
- The grasses and trees moderate the heat sink effect of near-by asphalt roads and concrete surfaces.
- This property has “grandfather” water rights which have been kept active for over 100 years. Water rights that are not kept active are subject to forfeiture.
- It might be possible to revive/restore the old Farley-Steele irrigation ditch using these historic water rights. This would greatly enhance the experience for visitors and residents traversing the pathway along Schnebly Hill Road.
- Oak Creek water which is not used locally to help keep the Verde Valley green, becomes the property of Salt River Project (SRP) which can then be sold at a profit to residences down in the Valley to fill swimming pools and hot tubs.

Recommendation: Allow property owners with valid water rights to continue withdrawing water from Oak Creek and help keep the Verde Valley green. **I agree, and using Oak Creek water for re-activating the historic ditch would be essential both to the historic vision, and for the environmental/sustainable goal of landscaping with edible trees and shrubs. I believe this far outweighs any concern about water “conservation”. I’m sure someone could do the math on all the ditches along Oak Creek and show that that amount of agriculture would have little effect on the overall flow of the surface waters.**

Protect Oak Creek vs. reduce flooding and erosion. The CFA plan on page 13 lists these two community goals: “Protect Oak Creek and its riparian habitat” and “Reduce the impacts of flooding and erosion on the community and the environment.” These goals are somewhat in conflict. Furthermore, the CFA notes that “Oak Creek is to be permanently protected in its natural state” and “Drainages flowing into Oak Creek should be retained unaltered ...” Leaving Oak Creek and its associated dry washes and the riparian corridor in their natural state, i.e. unmanaged, poses an

increased risk to the community of flooding, erosion, and wildfires. Below are discussion comments related to these conflicting goals:

- The USGS website for the Oak Creek stream gauge located at Tlaquepaque notes that 233 sq miles of Oak Creek watershed lies upstream of the SR 179 bridge.
<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/monitoring-location/09504420/#parameterCode=00065&period=P7D>
- The water from this large drainage area has to pass underneath the SR 179 pedestrian bridge, owned by the city of Sedona. Adjacent to this ped bridge and immediately upstream are two large land parcels, Coconino tax parcels 40118072B and 40118073. These parcels totaling 6.5 acres are entirely in the floodway and are privately owned by the Eng family of Buckeye, who also own the Center for the New Age property on SR 179. The two large land parcels are designated “open space” in the CFA (page 14).
- This area is filled with debris dams from previous flood events which increases bank erosion and sediment flows into Oak Creek as well as serves as a fuel source for wildfires. See photos at this Dropbox link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/sx6pgb0enm448s984qbma/h?rlkey=oxnfvinaopfndmigbi5fss33e&dl=0>

There have been several fires in this area from illegal transient campsites in the past. A fire starting in this area and propagating north would trap the residents of the Rancho Sedona RV park and the residential homeowners across the dry wash from their only escape route on Bear Wallow Lane.

- These two parcels are entirely under water during significant flood events and the uncontrolled vegetative growth in this area impedes the flow of flood waters, and serves as a repository for dead and fallen trees and debris such as lawn furniture, fences, decks, and trash.
- To leave this riparian area in its natural state increases our community exposure to flooding, bank erosion, sedimentation loading, transient camping, and wildfires.
- As a corollary, on September 10, 2009 our community experienced a disastrous flood in the adjacent Soldiers Pass watershed area which inundated Tlaquepaque:
<https://www.weather.gov/fgz/SedonaFlood2009>

This drainage artery was not left in its natural state after this disaster, but was subsequently improved to minimize future flood damage. Similarly, we the community should not require Oak Creek and its associated dry washes to be protected in their natural state until we have a disastrous flood event or wildfire. A proactive approach is better.

- As another example, the Forest Service has learned to better manage our forests by controlled burning, rather than leaving them in their natural state and subjecting the environment to uncontrolled and devastating wildfires. We should benefit from their experiences and apply their lessons learned to this CFA.
- As a sidenote, both the Oak Creek riparian corridor and the dry wash within this project site, contain man-made improvements to minimize the impacts of flooding and erosion noted above. So to protect Oak Creek and its associated drainages in their unaltered, natural state as required by the CFA (page 13) is somewhat a moot issue.
- An option considered years ago was for the City to condemn these two tax parcels and implement a management plan to address the aforementioned community issues. A “Flood Control Facility” is a permitted use under the current RS-10 zoning for these parcels and is an allowable use in the OC district with a conditional use permit (CUP). However, this public ownership/control option is not so appealing today, given the court ruling which

allows transients to legally “hang-out” in this desirable area in the heart of our tourist district.

Recommendation: P&Z needs to clarify that protecting the safety of our community from flooding and wildfires and reducing sediment loading in the creek has precedence over retaining Oak Creek and its drainages in their natural state. **I have previously expressed my opinion that prohibiting anything in the floodway is counterproductive, and based on a mistaken assumption that that total preservation is always the best “environmental” solution. There are sensitive and ecologically appropriate ways to develop in such environments, and if so done, it would allow for less visible density on the more open fields between the riparian zone and Schnebly Hill road.**

Public creek access: The CFA notes on page 7 that Oak Creek is on private land and that there is no legal access for the public. Yet many residents and visitors to Sedona, and even members of our police dept, believe that the public and their dogs have the right to cool off in the creek and pursue other activities such as sunbathing, sleeping, swimming, skinny-dipping, bathing, doing laundry, fishing, tubing, kayaking, exploration, meditation, etc. The issue is amplified when “no trespassing” signs are torn down or spray painted so trespassers can claim ignorance of their illegal presence on private lands. Here are some other comments:

- The land under the SR 179 bridge is owned by ADOT, and is thus considered public, and affords easy access to the creek. But ADOT has stated that they do not support public access because of graffiti, trash, and illegal camping. Attached is a recent video showing the degradation caused by public access under this bridge area. ADOT has expressed an interest in erecting fences, gates, and appropriate signage in the past, but has not followed thru.
- There are water quality issues involved when people recreate in Oak Creek. E. coli, from wildlife and dog feces as well as human wastes and trash, is contained in the sediment in the streambed. When it is disturbed by foot traffic, it goes back into suspension and becomes a health risk which can result in death. High bacteria counts are a common reason the Slide Rock State Park is periodically closed.
- Previous City Councils and the Creekwalk Committee formed to study the issue of public creek access, concluded that if a public creekwalk were built by the City, the public would not be allowed to enter the water.

Recommendations: To protect Oak Creek, we need a plan to manage access or the creek will be “loved to death” as warned by the Oak Creek Watershed Council (OCWC) on their website: <https://oakcreekwatershed.org/resources/documentary-loved-to-death/>

New members of the Sedona police dept need to be educated as to court rulings. The Community needs to [re]engage with other stakeholders such as SRP, ADWR, ADEQ, ADOT, USFS, OCWC and private property owners to further protect this natural resource. I personally am not against people swimming in Oak Creek, but I have been dismayed by the rapid increase in the permanent “occupation”. **I agree; swimming should be OK, but camping in town should not be allowed, just as it is not allowed in the USFS “Neighborwoods” areas adjacent to private land around Sedona. It is important that the few spots where there might be public creek access in Sedona not be taken over by any group of people that would make it uncomfortable for others to use it.**

Parking on Schnebly Hill Road (SHR). One of the CFA goals is to “Create a more walkable and bike-able community.” (page 21) At the present time, cars are allowed to park in the SHR right of way, thus forcing foot traffic into the street. Just as this new development must provide adequate on-site parking, the community needs to implement a no parking policy on busy SHR. Below are more talking points on this issue:

- This SHR on-street parking issue reached a crisis point several years ago when visitors attending an event at Tlaq parked on both sides on SHR and two RVs could not pass. Since then, our neighborhood tries to coordinate with the City's public works dept to erect no parking signs and barricades for major Tlaq events. But local businesses still use SHR for all day employee parking and serve as a catalyst for visitors to do the same.
- The SHR neighborhood prefers that visitors to the Rancho Sedona RV park leave their big rigs and trailers parked in the RV park and walk to nearby attractions. Similarly, we prefer that mountain bikers use their bikes to access Forest Service lands rather than use the limited vehicle parking at the Huckaby trailhead.
- It is challenging to convince visitors and residents to walk and bike when we, as a community, fail to provide a safe means to do so.

Recommendation: To help the community achieve this walking/biking goal, P&Z should recommend that city council enact an ordinance prohibiting on-street parking on SHR. **There really is not adequate space for on-street parking, except perhaps on the east side immediately north of the roundabout, and this is where overflow parking for festival days tends to happen. This does make pedestrian use even more difficult and dangerous, so I am in agreement that this is not a good place to allow for on-street parking. There may also be reason to shift the SHR pavement a bit to the east in this area, in order to make a 5' wide walking path happen on the west side of the road without having to create retaining walls and railings on the steep embankment in this area.**

Off highway vehicle (OHV) noise/speeding/dust. The CFA notes that “Schnebly Hill Road is narrow with no shoulder and several blind curves that can make for a hazardous experience.” (page 8). Here are some additional discussion points about this safety hazard:

- The first mile or so of Schnebly Hill Road is paved from the SR 179 roundabout to the Huckaby trailhead with several hidden residential driveways. This portion of SHR is all uphill so OHV drivers "power up" to maintain speed which amplifies their exhaust noise.
- There is a single 25 MPH speed limit sign north of Bear Wallow Lane and is only visible to northbound (NB) SHR traffic. (Update: A 25 MPH speed limit sign and a “Hidden Driveway” sign were added recently to the SB SHR traffic lane.)
- The speed issue is exacerbated when OHVs return southbound (SB) on SHR, all downhill, to return their rental vehicles within their allotted time period. This downhill speed issue is also a concern with some Jeep drivers and visitors and even mountain bikers who have been observed passing cars on this downhill section of SHR.
- Although the speed limit on the unpaved portion of SHR past the Huckaby trailhead is 15 MPH, this is rarely enforced. OHV drivers want to experience the thrill of off-road dirt track racing, so excessive speed, “doughnuts”, and “catching air” are common. Additionally, the aggressive tread design on ATV tires pick up dust which then drifts outside the roadway, leaving SHR sunken, rough, and prone to channeling and sediment transport to Oak Creek. More information was included in the council packet for their August 22, 2023 meeting.
- It is worth noting that when OHVs are part of a guided “caravan” tour, all the drivers are issued dust masks. But hikers and bikers and visitors in open Jeep tour vehicles have to suffer thru the resultant OHV dust storms.
- Compounding the safety problems on SHR are visitors frequently making U-turns in these hidden driveways and in the street. This U-turn issue arises because visitors fail to recognize/heed signage at the SHR roundabout that the road to Uptown requires a left turn at the SHR/SR 179 roundabout. All the the previous SR 179 roundabout signs from the I-17

exit to Sedona require SR 179 traffic to proceed straight.

Recommendations: Convince ADOT to improve the signage at the SR 179/SHR roundabout. Post more speed limit signs and enforce same. Require governors on OHVs to limit speed on paved roads and dirt roads. Support use of mufflers on OHV. Advocate for battery powered OHVs. **Also make blasting music from open-aired OHV's illegal.**

Shared use path (SUP). This CFA never envisioned a ten feet wide shared use path that has been the standard for other parts of the City and recommended in the staff report. The character of this area, which is a key trait that the neighborhood seeks to preserve, is its rural nature, defined by its lack of curbs and gutters along the streets, lack of sidewalks, and use of modest trails rather than SUPs with footprints equivalent to a paved lane of traffic. Here are some other arguments in further support of this issue.

- The CFA strategy (page 21) was to “Provide a non-motorized alternative to Schnebly Hill Road with a pedestrian and bicycle trail.” A ten feet wide path is an invite to not only motorized ebikes and scooters capable of high speeds, but also OHVs and ATVs. These motorized conveyances need to stay on Schnebly Hill Road in a share-the-road arrangement along with the more aggressive mountain bikers. This is the current situation in this area and seems to work mostly well. The CFA ped/bike trail was intended only for hikers and recreational bicycle riders and does not need to be ten feet wide to meet this objective.
- To require a ten feet SUP will result in clear cutting much of the natural vegetation and trees that form the attractive streetscape of this area.
- There is an existing ped/bike trail along the westerly edge of Schnebly Hill Road, from the roundabout to the Sedona Creative Life Center. This existing trail is only a foot or so wide in many sections, which allows for a tree canopy covered walking experience. The CFA also provided (page 21) that “The trail should be set back from the road to improve safety and experience whenever possible.” and “Consider trail alignments ... along drainages and irrigation ditches.”

Recommendations: The Community, esp the immediate neighborhood, needs to decide the ultimate design and alignment of this pedestrian/bicycle trail, considering the impact on the streetscape, the walking experience, and the safety aspects. Moreover, since the Community “owns” a large swath of open space along both sides of Schnebly Hill Road, we need to decide if this area is to serve as a linear park, greenway, orchards, or other agricultural uses, as suggested in the CFA (page 14). If this is a public pathway, how do we control transient activity, including transients sleeping under the dry wash bridge on SHR? And finally, if a trail alignment along the historic Farley-Steele irrigation ditch is desired, who would be responsible for historic [interpretive] signage as suggested in the CFA (page 20)? **I also feel strongly that there should not be a 10' wide multi-modal pathway in this neighborhood; we have discussed this over and over during the CFA planning process, and it is annoying that the City keeps coming back and wanting to implement this as part of some larger plan. All engineering infrastructure in this area needs to be sensitive to the historic/incremental character described in the CFA plan, and not look like the rest of Sedona.**

Affordable housing. The current submittal indicates that four affordable housing units are being provided. This was not a specific goal of this CFA, but rather a take-off from the Sedona Community Plan which expected retention of affordable housing currently provided in the existing RV park. The CFA planning group did not include additional affordable housing; the rationale being that complying with the other CFA goals was perceived to be enough of a challenge, and potentially an impediment, to the desired [re]development of this area. Below are some additional comments.

- Adding affordable housing in the heart of our tourist district adds to our intracity traffic congestion. Residents in these units will need to drive to west Sedona to shop for groceries, for medical treatments, go to the hardware store, do business with the City, etc. What concessions were given to the developer in return for this perceived community benefit?
- While “residing” in a resort might initially sound appealing, it is not the same as residing in a conventional neighborhood with stable occupants. Resort guests are constantly changing which is the same STR issue that has decimated our neighborhoods. It is not a good long-term housing situation for either the affordable housing residents or the resort guests.
- Given the high land prices and development costs in this area, it might make more sense to use these units for resort guests and redirect the tax loading to more affordable land acquisition and development in other parts of the City. For example, the tax revenue at 13.5% tax load on four resort units at \$1000/night and 70% occupancy would be \$135,000 per year.
- Plus, there are additional sales taxes from these higher income resort guests who go shopping, dining, and visiting attractions in the nearby tourist district. Affordable housing tenants simply do not have this level of discretionary spending.

Recommendations: Use the resort accommodations for their intended purposes and use the resultant tax benefits to provide affordable housing in closer proximity to the services required by the tenants of these housing units. The traffic impacts will be lessened two-fold: the resort guests will walk or bike to their attractions and the affordable housing tenants will drive less to meet their needs. **I don't have strong feelings one way or the other about this issue.**

Flexibility in site design standards. On page 14 of the CFA is a mention that flexibility in site design standards will be considered to help meet the CFA goals. Is there a list of these changes in the standards that have been considered or will be included as part of the comprehensive review process? **In my opinion, this is very important, and should be considered on a site-by-site and project-by-project basis, rather than trying to pre-determine a different set of standards.**

Public-private partnerships. On page 24 of the CFA is this statement: “To realize the vision set forth in this plan, contributions and participation from both public, private and non-profit entities will be necessary.” Does the City plan to budget funds for capital improvements, or property/easement purchase, for specific community benefits? For example, will the City provide the funding for the pedestrian and bicycle trails in the public right-of way along Schnebly Hill Road and Bear Wallow Lane? Who will decide the plantings for this area and be responsible for irrigation and pruning? How about the bridge crossing over Oak Creek to connect this CFA to Uptown? Other proposed trails in this CFA as shown on page 23 to connect to Forest Service trails such as the Huckaby Trail?

Diversify the City's lodging options. One of the objectives of the Oak Creek Heritage District was to offer some alternatives to the typical hotel experience (page 25). One such option was a tree house as shown in a CFA photo on page 27, and quite popular in other resort settings. Is this a viable option above the floodway/floodplain area in the northern portion of this project site? Although the CFA only supports minor improvements within the riparian corridor (page 13), some flexibility in design might result in other community benefits such as reduced flooding and erosion. FEMA provides guidelines on improvements in the floodway. It seems a bit disingenuous that the City can build a significant (\$3M+) pedestrian crossing in the regulatory floodway under SR 179 and on the southern border of this CFA, but a private developer cannot build minor support columns and/or parking to support elevated lodging units on the northern end of this project site. **Agreed.**

Signage. One of the comments from the original CFA planning group was that signage in the SHR streetscape should not underscore the commercial nature of any development, esp signage which is located 750 feet or more from the SR 179 roundabout. Commercial signage detracts from the rural streetscape character which the CFA seeks to achieve.

Recommendations: The neighborhood requests the right to approve or deny any proposed street signage. **Not sure we need full veto-power, but neighborhood input should be part of the staff review process for signage.**

No comment for now on David's remaining questions and suggestions:

APS stub poles. APS has been replacing the old wood poles in this area with new metal and wood poles. After APS transfers their electric lines to the new poles, APS cuts off the top of their old wood pole, thus creating a "stub" pole next to the new pole. The old stub pole remains in place until the other utility providers, such as the cable and phone companies, transfer their services to the new pole. The last utility company to transfer service is responsible for removing the stub pole. Unfortunately, this can take years as APS lacks the authority to mandate these transfers and pole removal. In the interim, one of our community's most scenic streetscapes, historic Schnebly Hill Road, is blighted with stub poles.

Recommendations: We have alerted the Mayor's office that APS may need help from the City to motivate the cable and phone companies to transfer their utilities and remove the stub poles.

Bear Wallow resident issues. There are several issues unique to this area of the CFA. (1) Amplified music and loudspeaker sounds from L'Auberge which is situated directly across Oak Creek from the residences on Bear Wallow Lane and the Rancho Sedona RV park. (2) Flooding in Bear Wallow wash which periodically prevents residents from accessing their homes. (3) Having to drive thru the center of the RV park to access their homes. (4) Concern that the Sedona Creative Life Center will expand commercial operations into this neighborhood since acquiring STRs and vacant lots at the end of Bear Wallow Lane.

USFS issues. Since the primary access to the Forest Service is thru the Schnebly CFA, an issue for one is an issue for the other. Among the issues documented thru the years are the following:

- The FS does not adequately maintain the paved portion of Schnebly Hill Road which extends past City limits to the Huckaby trailhead. The edge of this roadway has eroded and resulted in potholes which extend into the travel lanes. This degradation is due to Jeep drivers, OHVs, and others who drive off the roadway to park and point out red rock formations, or because there is insufficient parking at the trailhead, or to unload their OHVs, or simply to avoid paying the parking fee at the trailhead.
- On rare occasions, semi-tractor trailer rigs will not notice or ignore the warning signs on SHR just past the SHR roundabout. Since there is not a dedicated turn-around area at the trailhead, the driver of the big rig must either back all the way down SHR or more usually, just "plow over" the native vegetation to turn around.
- Although there are signs posted that prohibit camping in this area, it is common for RVs to spend the night at the trailhead. These rigs arrive after dusk and depart at daybreak to avoid enforcement and fines by Forest Service personnel. This issue is compounded because the only RV park in Sedona, Rancho Sedona, is often full and charges for use of its facilities. And the free FS 525 dispersed camping site has a limited number of spaces.
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/coconino/recarea/?recid=84034>
- Litter and dog feces continue to be an on-going problem both at the trailhead and along

SHR in spite of a dog waste station installed at the trailhead. Trash is dispersed throughout this area by wildlife upsetting waste containers, party goers tossing alcohol containers before entering City limits, and Jeep tour vehicles and OHVs with open sides.

- As noted in a previous item, erosion of the dirt portion of SHR has escalated since OHVs started using this road. The combination of excessive speed, wheel spin, and aggressive tire tread design cause dirt to become airborne and then blown out of the roadway corridor by wind action. This excavation is severe enough to expose the markers for the fiber optic lines buried beneath the roadway. Recent remedial action, like hauling and spreading new fill dirt to smooth the road surface, does not solve the problem. A smoother road leads to greater speeds which then leads to more erosion and increased sediment flow from the watershed.

Recommendations: Similar to Oak Creek, our Forest Service lands are being overwhelmed by usage. At some time, the only viable solution may be to enact a paid reservation system to allocate available capacity among increasing demand.

File: W/David/Oak Creek Heritage Lodge – Comprehensive Review comments.odt

Attachment: DPhoto/Creekwalk underpass/Video – Homeless trash – Oak Creek – SR 179 bridge - Sedona

Date: September 15, 2023

Re: Oak Creek Heritage Lodge - Comprehensive Review Comments – Supplement #1

By: D. Tracy

This supplement is in addition to my comments dated August 31, 2023.

Natural grade. The LDC defines this as: “The grade prior to manmade disturbance of a site.” Since this site has had multiple prior owners, does this term refer to the prior owner or the first pioneer family, the Farley-Steeles in the early 1900s ? Or some owner in between ? Previous owners have removed or brought in fill or altered the grade to facilitate gravity irrigation of the orchards. Or to create driveways or retaining walls or foundations for structures or to prevent flooding. The grade next to Schnebly Hill Road was altered in 1902 when red rock was blasted to create this road. The natural grade in floodway/floodplain areas can change due to a flood event.

Recommendation: Consider applying flexibility in site design to establish a reasonable interpretation of natural grade that results in a functional and attractive project.

Trees. Previous submittal materials included much tree information, presumably because there are so many trees on this site. The CFA (page 27) required that:

“Site design shall retain large native trees and as much of the natural vegetation as possible.”

Obviously, this requirement is subject to interpretation and moreover, retaining large native trees may not result in the best project. As noted in my original comments, this would be another opportunity to consider “flexibility in site design standards” as noted on page 14 of the CFA. The following is a list of additional comments and field observations in support of a less rigid interpretation of this standard. (Although not native, I included some comments about orchard trees because there has been neighborhood interest in replicating orchards in the public space adjacent to the historic irrigation ditch.)

- Trees can be broadly categorized as native or non-native and then further subdivided according to water source, i.e. riparian (in the creek), dry wash, irrigation pump, or natural rainfall. Trees with roots in the creek will grow the fastest (6 – 12 feet per year) while trees dependent only on rainfall will grow the slowest. Irrigated trees such as the orchard fruit and nut trees will be dependent upon the frequency of watering.
- Weather patterns during the past 20+ years have been variable and volatile. The warmer winters adversely affect the fruit trees that require a certain number of chilling hours. Warm temperatures in February produce flower buds which can be wiped out by a subsequent winter snow storm. Above normal rainfall and snow in the winter causes excess tree growth in the spring which is difficult to sustain during the summer months which have been hotter and drier.
- The only orchard tree which seems to do fairly well are the persimmon trees because they bloom later in the spring and the fruit ripens in Oct/Nov, generally before freezing weather. Pomegranate trees (bushes) have been surprisingly tolerant of summer heat and drought. Younger and healthier trees do better than older trees. When Sedona's economy was dependent on its agricultural roots, stone fruit trees like peaches were replaced after 10 – 15 years and apple trees after 20 – 25 years. With the exception of one plum tree, all the orchard trees on this site are considerably older than 25 years.
- Large mature orchard trees do best with flood irrigation or above ground sprinklers if the root zone extends under adjacent lawn areas. Drip irrigation is more water efficient, but

- requires many small heads which are prone to plugging from sediment in the creek water.
- Scaffold branches on any trees that grow horizontally are more susceptible to breakage in a snow storm such as the one earlier this year on March 1. But this is the most desirable branch structure for fruit and nut production and also tree canopy for shade. I have adjusted pruning techniques to compensate for some of these more frequently occurring weather extremes.
 - With the exception of the orchard trees and the mesquite trees on the southern most parcel next to Schnebly Hill Road, most of the other trees on site are “volunteers”, growing wherever conditions allow. But such haphazard native growth is problematic. For example, there are still large cottonwood trees on site, but in the past 20 years I have removed nine large cottonwoods and the City has removed 4 or 5 from the SHR right-of-way with two more on the target list and two on a watch list. Some of the cottonwood trees may have died because these volunteers grew too close together and could not compete for the available soil nutrients, sunlight, or water. Even Cottonwood trees with roots in the creek die, as is evident today. Although Cottonwood trees are fast growing, their branches are not resilient and pose a hazard to buildings, vehicles, and people underneath them.
 - Another example of the problem with unmanaged tree growth is in the riparian corridor where tree roots have a constant and unlimited water supply. Volunteers grow 6 – 12 feet a year and so close together that they can not grow scaffold branches and foliage. As a result, some of these “pencil” trees die and must be removed.
 - Four large pine trees on site have died, due to pine bark beetles.
 - Orchard trees have died for a host of reasons including old age, snow/ice storms, disease (nematodes?), deer, ravens, and beavers. Drought has not been a problem since the property is irrigated via water rights.

Recommendations: Since the older, more mature native trees on site have a limited remaining life, it makes more sense to optimize the placement of buildings and pathways for functionality and aesthetics and replace the older trees with new trees and perhaps a species better suited for the intended purpose (shade, screening, fruit production, beauty, etc) and adaptable to the current climatology. While the developer can expedite new tree growth within his project with his water rights, the community needs to address the public space adjacent to the historic irrigation ditch. We will need to select slower growing, drought resistant trees, or purchase costly water from Arizona Water Company, or use some of the developer's water rights.

Parking on site. My original comments only discussed the issues with parking on Schnebly Hill Road. The issue of on-site parking warrants some commentary. With the present design, parking (by valet) is at the intersection of Schnebly Hill Road and Bear Wallow Lane. A previous design iteration contemplated parking in the floodway, in the northwesterly section of the site. Presumably, the parking site was changed because the CFA (page 13) included the following language:

“Maintain the Oak Creek floodway in a natural state, with only minor improvements within the riparian corridor, such as trails, parks, or temporary structures other than tents or tentlike structures.”

Parking was not specifically listed as an example of a minor improvement, but would seem to qualify as such. Below are some other factors for P&Z to include in their review of this project.

- The CFA planning group considered parking a viable use in the floodway since vehicles could be moved out of this area prior to a flood event.
- Vehicles parked in the floodway would not be visible to visitors from the Uptown tourist district

due to the dense tree canopy in this area. This was one of the objectives of the CFA. As an example, the adjacent Rancho Sedona RV park is also in the floodway and is well protected from the Uptown viewshed by the tree foliage.

- In contrast, the present parking location is on a hillside which is visible from Uptown and also from the Schnebly Hill Road and Bear Wallow streetscapes. To adequately screen this area will require many new trees.
- Although there have been concerns with the number of parking spaces required versus provided, valet parking will accommodate far more vehicles than self parking with marked spaces. Also, self parking cars are already coming to market which will further increase the efficiency of available parking. If the lodge can not accommodate the vehicles for their guests, employees, public visitors to their restaurant, then they will have to arrange off site parking, or shuttle service, or ride sharing, or require reservations or turn away customers. This would be a business decision, not a community problem to solve. But the neighborhood is not supportive of parking on the streets, so this is not an overflow option for the lodge.
- A sensitive design for parking in the floodway should not adversely affect the riparian corridor or the health of Oak Creek. (Note: There used to be a firm in Flagstaff that specialized in natural stream design, but the primary engineer died in a plane crash some years ago.)
- As a sidenote, the most likely time for a flood event in Oak Creek is in Jan, Feb, March which are typically slower months for Sedona lodging. So there might not be that many vehicles to relocate and there will be ample advance notice.

Recommendations. Consider allowing some amount of parking in the floodway to alleviate the visual impact of a single large parking lot adjacent to the Schnebly Hill Road streetscape. Again, exercising some flexibility in site design standards might help achieve this more worthwhile CFA objective.

Accessory use. The submittal materials and staff responses include discussions about a nexus between the number of lodging units and the number and/or size of the accessory uses and the percentage of accessory use by the lodging guests versus the public. I do not recall these issues being discussed by the CFA planning group nor is there any mention in the CFA or the LDC. The LDC made note that if an accessory use were to be a primary use, such as a stand alone restaurant, office, retail store, spa, etc., then it had to be sited within 750 feet of the roundabout. LDC Section 9.9 further defined accessory use as:

“A use conducted on the same lot as the principal use of the structure to which it is related and that is clearly incidental to and customarily found in connection with such principal use.”

Here are my comments on this issue.

- My understanding is that this OCHL, aka resort, will be designed and marketed as a luxury resort and compete with L'Auberge and Enchantment. To attract such wealthy guests, the lodge will need to offer amenities such as a signature restaurant and a first class wellness center. These are guest expectations and customarily found in such lodging facilities and exactly the type of visitors that Sedona prefers.
- From a practical perspective, the business model for a resort is to keep their guests on site to maximize revenue. As a result, guests will have priority access to the accessory uses and access by the public will be on a space available only. Example: recent ads by L'Auberge and Enchantment for locals to visit their restaurants (slow periods). To require a certain percentage of use by guests is not only not necessary, but would be impossible to monitor and enforce.
- My concern from a neighborhood perspective, is if some of our Bear Wallow residents or RV park visitors wanted to celebrate a special occasion at the OCHL restaurant and were

told that the restaurant was fully occupied by lodging guests or was primarily for lodging guests and they would have to go elsewhere.

- From a business perspective, is it OK for a OCHL guest to eat at L'Auberge with a reservation, but a L'Auberge guest may not be able to reserve a table at the OCHL restaurant because outside guests are limited by a government imposed quota ? This does not seem fair.
- While hoteliers compete for guests, they also understand that this competition is good for business. For example, a guest at L'Auberge who walks across the creekwalk bridge to have a drink at the OCHL bar may want to return to Sedona and stay at the lodge. Or an Enchantment guest who take the Enchantment shuttle to eat at the OCHL restaurant may opt to be a OCHL guest on their next trip to Sedona. In this instance, Sedona benefits from the lodging tax since Enchantment is outside city limits.
- Requiring the OCHL to limit the use of its amenities by non-guests places one resort at a competitive disadvantage with a similar resort (L'Auberge) just across the creek. This was not envisioned in the CFA nor an equitable position for the community. Such regulatory limits may constitute a restraint of trade, but that would require a legal review.

Recommendations. Allow the developer to make, and thus be responsible for, decisions concerning the proper mix of lodging units and amenities and the use of their facilities by others, based on [free] market forces, and within the guidelines noted in the CFA and LDC. Good decisions will benefit both the developer and the community, i.e. sales tax generation.

P&Z development review process. As noted in the **Acknowledgement** introduction in my initial comments, the reason to document all these issues is to share with the Commissioners, the background that has resulted in the latest submittal. The concern being that the Commission may want to make changes, additions, and/or add conditions just prior to approval , but after the last public (neighborhood) comment opportunity. This can be a problem if the proposed changes are contrary to the interests of the neighborhood.

This developer and his design professionals have held three on-site meetings which were well attended and numerous additional meetings with individual neighbors or small groups both on and off the site. The site plan has been changed multiple times, based on comments from these meetings. If the Commission desires to make a substantive, last minute, change to the current design, then the neighborhood would like the opportunity to evaluate the change. The review process does not allow this, except for an appeal to Council, which basically restarts the approval process.

The OCHL is a significant project for our community with many interested parties: the developer, neighborhood, community, staff, Commission, utility and service providers, as well as groups like the OCWC, ADEQ, NFS, KSB, SHS, just to mention a few. There will be issues and conflicts that arise during this review process that the Commissioners will need to address. Again, my comments are intended to identify some of those issues from a neighborhood perspective, and hopefully resolve them prior to the public hearing.

Recommendations. Discuss these issues and resolve as many as possible prior to the public hearing. Produce a short list of the any issues which can not be resolved, along with background information and arguments, both pro and con, for Commission deliberation at the public hearing.

File: W/David/Oak Creek Heritage Lodge – Comprehensive Review comments – Supplement #1.odt

Oak Creek heritage lodge

Michelle Jack <michellejack7@msn.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 10:37 AM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

Hi Cari,

As a Sedona resident for the last 22 years and having lived in Sedona back in the 70's, I have great love for the beauty of Sedona, a truly unique place on the earth. Please don't sell out Sedona for another resort that we don't want or even need. Does Sedona really need the money????

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Michelle Jack

75 Monte Vista Lane

Sedona, az

Sent from my iPhone

Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

Shaeri Richards <shaeri.richards@gmail.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 11:30 AM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

Hi,

I'm writing to ask that members of the P&Z commission vote no on the proposed Oak Creek Heritage Lodge project. In looking at a design of the project it does not seem to me to meet the proposed structure requirement of the CFA for the area.

The name of the resort includes the word heritage, but based on the proposal, there seems nothing "heritage" about it. It looks completely modern and out of harmony with this beautiful area.

As a 32 year resident of Sedona, I support the protection of our lovely town and its rural nature, especially in those areas that are not already developed. After looking at this design, I hope you will agree and vote no.

Thank you,
Shaeri Richards
520 Morgan Rd,
Sedona, AZ 86336
928-282-3988

Oak Creek Resort

Margaret Connery <margaret.connery@hotmail.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 12:12 PM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

I am looking at the drawings for the Oak Creek Resort planned for Schnebly Hill Road, but I'm having a real difficult time seeing anything that looks like a cabin. Those buildings belong in Phoenix, not in Sedona.

Margaret Connery
Village of Oak Creek
714-813-3592

Sent from my iPhone

Opposed to Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

Mitch Laurich <mitchlaurich@yahoo.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 1:51 PM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

Dear Cari & P&Z Commission:

As a home owner and full-time resident of Sedona, I am opposed to and urge the Planning & Zoning Commissioners to vote, "No," on RD Olson Development's newest proposed design of the Oak Creek Heritage Lodge hotel development.

Considering the existing hotels, motels and short-term rentals that already exist, as well as other lodging developments recently approved to move forward (e.g., Saddlerock Village/Oxford Hotel), there is no further need for additional lodging in Sedona. Our challenged city does not need any new traffic brought to the area when there is already no viable solution to ease our existing traffic and wildfire evacuation woes.

The proposed contemporary two-story structure, as opposed to cabins and cottages, continues to violate the Schnebly Hill CFA. I strongly feel that any future lodging must also provide affordable housing for its staff. I urge P&Z to send a strong message to this developer, and all developers, who don't respect our City's CFAs nor provide affordable employee housing. Just say, "No."

Please also consider refraining from scheduling meetings so close to major holidays when many residents are away.

Respectfully,

Mitch Laurich
160 Saddlerock
Sedona AZ 86336

Schnebly drawing plans

saundrat03@npgcable.com <saundrat03@npgcable.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 2:09 PM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

To Cari Meyer / Planning Manager / the Mayor / whom it may concern,

This subject is concerning the Schnebly drawing plans (Schnebly Hill Road between State Route 179 and Bear Wallow Lane) **this plan said cabins and not a huge over sight building for up to 70 room hotel.**

Resident is saying No! Far over reach!

Mrs. Tanner

Comments on Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

Daniel Garland <djgarland@gmail.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 3:51 PM

To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

Dear Cari and Planning and Zoning Committee,

I hope you are all enjoying this beautiful fall. As a Sedona resident and a nearby business owner, I'd like to share a few comments regarding the proposed Oak Creek Heritage Lodge development on Schnebly Hill Road.

First and foremost, I'll admit that in general I oppose the development entirely. Among many complaints, it will put additional strain on Sedona's housing and the employment pool, while adding traffic to one of our most congested intersections in town. As someone who was born and raised in this town, this corridor along Schnebly Hill Rd is one of the last developable areas that is still recognizable as a piece of our historic rural beginnings and has so far remained out of the grasp of out-of-town developers looking to extract as much from our tourism-rich economy as possible. It will be a sad day when the character of this district is forever changed in favor of catering to luxury-minded tourists, corporate getaways, and overly-planned Instagrammable wedding parties. I can see no way an argument can be made that a development such as Oak Creek Heritage Lodge benefits our community at large, in fact I would argue that it is exactly the type of development Sedona does not need at this time.

That said, I also acknowledge that the properties in question are already zoned for lodging and that it may be a matter of *how* this property is developed rather than *if* it is developed. Having seen firsthand the extraordinary amount of work that goes into developing and updating Sedona's Community Plan, I ask the committee to please meticulously measure the development proposal against the recommendations set forth by our community members in the existing Community Focus Plan for the area. Primary concerns include:

- **Scale of development.** The Oak Creek Heritage District proposes a permitted lodging use of "small designer hotels, bed and breakfast inns, cottages, bungalows, and alternative lodging types, including cabins." I would ask the committee to evaluate whether the proposed development matches the description above." I do not believe it does.

- **Preservation of the riparian corridor and open space,** or as stated in the CFA, "natural hillsides, open fields." A development such as this will likely look to leverage the value of its creekside location for its guests. The creek and surrounding floodway should be explicitly off-limits for any sort of improvement or commercial use. Open space with a rural, agricultural feel is one of the primary visions of this CFA and it is of utmost importance that it be maintained.

- **Sustaining historical context and character.** Sedona's historic character is all but lost and we must take advantage of every opportunity we have as a city to encourage new development to preserve that distinct character through material usage and architecture styling. Plenty of examples are shared in the CFA and the drawings of the proposed development I have seen do not match those recommendations.

- **Modestly scaled buildings.** Please do not consider any requests for variances on building sizes or height, there is no benefit to our community to do so.

- **Pedestrian & bicycle network.** Sedona has done a great job lately in beginning to develop a proper network of pathways for alternative modes of transportation, and it is imperative that new developments partake in the responsibility of growing that network to the benefit of residents and visitors alike. Any proposal must have a robust consideration of walkability, bike-ability, and connectivity that does not rely on the narrow Schnebly Hill Road.

Let us be mindful that this development has the potential to alter the character of the heart of Sedona in a major way and may set a precedent for future development. We may not be able to stop this land from being developed, but we can do everything in our power to ensure that the community's vision for this area is honored and that we derive benefit for our community first and foremost, not the other way around.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments and I thank you all for your contributions to our community.

Warmly,

Daniel Garland, Jr.

Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

Leslie O <dmbbnny@gmail.com>

Mon 11/20/2023 5:27 PM


To: Cari Meyer <CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov>

While we are not at all in favor of this proposed development, we are *totally* opposed to the current revision to the lodging component of the Oak Creek Heritage Lodge. The glassy, contemporary two-story lodging is *completely* antithetical to the rustic ambience of Schnebly Hill Road. We would hope the firm returns to the drawing board and creates a venue functional for them, but consistent with the natural and rugged beauty of Sedona.

Thank you for reading our input.

Leslie Owens and Family



From: Terrie Frankel Twins@esedona.net 
Subject: Oak Creek Heritage Resort P & Z meeting tonight, 11/21/2023 IMPORTANT
Date: November 21, 2023 at 9:19 AM
To: CMeyer@sedonaaz.gov CMeyer@Sedonaaz.gov
Cc: Bob Olson bob.olson@rdodevelopment.com, Luke sefton LS@sefengco.com, Anthony W anthony.wrzosek@rdodevelopment.com

Hello Cari Meyer, Planning Manager
Kathy Levin, Chair
Charlotte Hosseini, Vice Chair
George Braam, Kali Gajewski, Will Hirst, Sarah Wiehl, Lynn Zonakis

Wishing the best for tonight's P&Z presentation for R.D.Olson's "Oak Creek Heritage Resort."
<https://www.sedonaaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/50399>

As 30+ year residents of Sedona, we support the building of the "Oak Creek Heritage Resort."

The community of merchants and neighbors that we have spoken with are all in agreement that they look forward to this important project be green lighted and built.
The Zoning has been in place for over 4 years. R.D. Olson is a highly respected builder who has built over 26 Resorts - and over the past few years has worked with the Community in good faith to address every request from neighbors and P & Z. We urge the P & Z Board to allow the process to proceed in a timely manner.

The people who signed Petitions supporting "Oak Creek Heritage Resort" are:

Fred Shinn - Alcoa Executive retired - House of Seven Arches
Steve Lowry - Red Rock Heights
Kate Lowry - Red Rock Heights
Terrie Frankel - Author retired - Red Rock Heights - House of Seven Arches
Greg Stevenson - Owner of The Hike House
Marty Herman - Owner of Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art
Monica Beeler
Jody Beeler
David Dorman
Emily Young - Restaurateur
Lowell Penz - Red Rock Heights
Sharon Penz - Red Rock Heights
Al Comello - Comello Media
Diana Rogers
Victor Roach
Rick Rosenzweig - Sound Investments (since passed)
Christopher Leon
Theresa Gatto - Red Rock Heights
Jerry Gatto - Red Rock Heights
Judy Szechter - Owner of Judy's Arizona - Hillside Shopping Center

Some of the many friends and neighbors who have expressed support of "Oak Creek Heritage Resort" are:
Mary and Tim Kyllo , Jake Weber , Dawson & Rosenthal , Sandy Leavitt, Peg Fuege, Mike Winebarger, Steve Segner

Attached are some of the Letters submitted to P & Z, supporting the now "Oak Creek Heritage Resort."

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Fred Shinn and Terrie Frankel
85 Sedona View Drive
Sedona, AZ 86336
928-239-0165
928-274-0433

Attached are Letters from:
Greg Stevenson, Owner of The Hike House
Marty Herman, Owner of Exposures International Gallery
Steve and Kate Lowry
Terrie Frankel Sips - House of Seven Arches - located above the property on Schnebly Hill
Fred Shinn - House of Seven Arches - located above the property on Schnebly Hill
Rick Rosenzweig - former Broker Sound Investments (recently deceased).
Judy Szechter - Owner of Judy's Arizona - Hillside Shopping Center



May 10,2022

Re: Oak Creek Resort

To whom it concern:

We welcome the establishment of a small boutique hotel along Schnebly Hill Road. We believe accommodations in close proximity to town and hiking trails make it more conducive to walking/hiking. We are also in favor of a bike/pedestrian sidewalk along Schnebly Hill Road as walking along this road is problematic.

Regards,

**Greg Stevenson
The Hike House**

Cari Meyer
Planning Mgr
City of Sedona Planning Dept
102 Roadrunner Dr # 106
Sedona AZ

This letter is to communicate a robust and firm support for the newly proposed Oak Creek Resort on Schnebly Hill Rd here in West Sedona.

I am owner of the unique and now world famous Exposures International Gallery on State Route 179, in the heart of the Gallery District where we have been for the last 25 years. This proposed resort hotel in my view seems absolutely perfect for Sedona and in my experience fits the needs of the visitors perfectly... trying find adequate accommodations and parking in the heart of Sedona that fit their lifestyle.

Most recently, and in this last year, I have collected a huge amount of data about my visitors who purchase fine art from our Gallery on Rt. 179. To my surprise, 85% were not just visitors to Sedona they were previous visitors and most importantly for us, previous clients. Also, only 25 % were from AZ and the balance were from all over the world. That to me means to me, Sedona, for the last several decades has invited these kind of visitor's and the City, as well as its merchant, have done a very fine job of offering the right kind of experience where they come back again and again bringing their smiles and their wallets for another great experience . That said, and keeping this in mind, I would think we all need to continue to offer and build the type of Sedona accommodate these high end visitors as they are our economic sustainability and our economic future in my view.

Having been a marketing professional for the last 50 years including owning a major advertising agency in Los Angeles, I would be more than willing to expand my knowledge and my thinking on this subject with any future request by the City.

My only motivation for this communication is the well meaning and and future well being of the City of Sedona Arizona.

Sincerely,



Marty Herman
Owner
Exposures International Gallery
561 State Route 179
Sedona AZ 8633
Cell 928-300-6100

To whom it may concern

My name is Steve Lowry my wife is Kate Lowry we live at 30 Forest View Dr. in Sedona Arizona.

We are writing this letter in support of the Red Rock Resort that is proposed by the river in Sedona we feel it would be a great asset to the community and look forward to seeing the project begin.

Thanks

Steve and Kate Lowry

Steve & Kate Lowry

April 15, 2022

To: Robert Olson
President, Oak Creek Resort,

This letter is to show our support for your Oak Creek Resort, to be built on Schnebly Hill Road.

We believe Oak Creek Resort will be a much-needed addition to our Community. With your experience of having built over 26 resorts, and you and your team's consistent invitation to all neighbors to express our concerns and desires, we believe you will build a first-class resort in an ideal location. We 'get' that the needs of the City, neighbors and tourists will be addressed by you with concern and care.

I have lived here for over 28 years and have noticed the need for a connection between Uptown and Hillside, that only a hotel of the quality of Oak Creek Resort will fill. The option of staying at the centrally located Oak Creek Resort will be apparent to those wishing to walk – or ride via our new Sedona Shuttle – to Uptown, Hillside, Tlaquepaque and neighboring trails.

Both Fred Shinn and I have spoken to several neighbors, all of whom support the building of your Resort for several reasons:

- There will be a much-needed sidewalk on Schnebly Hill Road, thus making pedestrian access safer.
- Our current views of the exquisite Red Rocks will not be affected.
- We prefer a hotel on this property to more Air B & Bs.
- We welcome you and your wealth of experience.

In short, we believe you will build a much-needed addition to our already beautiful town. We feel blessed that someone of your caliber feels as passionately about Sedona as we do, and is willing to take on this endeavor with enthusiasm and expertise.

Thank you,



Terrie Frankel Sipos
House of Seven Arches
85 Sedona View Drive
Sedona, AZ 86336
928-274-0433

April 15, 2022

To: Robert Olson
Oak Creek Resort
Sedona, Arizona 86336

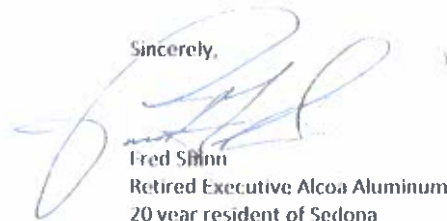
This letter is to show our support for your Oak Creek Resort on Schnebly Hill Road beneath our House of Seven Arches.

We live across the road and believe your resort will make our lives even better. The beauty of nature will be enhanced with your resort as it will not affect our views of the Red Rocks.

We appreciate you involving the neighbors with your plans. To date we have participated in several gatherings initiated by you and your company, to get feedback from those of us who live close by. Personally, we prefer a hotel to Air B & B, and believe that with your experience of building over 2 dozen resorts, you will bring a personal quality of design, building and management that only such experience can contribute.

You have 100% of our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fred Shinn", is written over a faint, illegible printed name.

Fred Shinn
Retired Executive Alcoa Aluminum
20 year resident of Sedona
928-239-0165
85 Sedona View Drive
Sedona, Arizona 86336

From: SOUND INVESTMENTS
Sent: Saturday, April 9, 2022 11:37 PM
To: Luke sefton <L.S@sefengco.com>
Subject: The proposed Oak Creek Hotel

Luke Sefton, Principal
Sefton Engineering Consultants
40 Stutz Bearcat Drive

Dear Luke,

I wanted to share some thoughts with you on the proposed Oak Creek Hotel at 115 Schnebly Hill Road.

It would be hard to find a more perfect location for a new hotel in Sedona. Many of our existing hotels are situated along the main highways with great views but relatively plain surroundings. The proposed Oak Creek Hotel site stands head and shoulders above most of these locations. Situated on several acres of ditch-irrigated land fronting on Oak Creek with dramatic views of surrounding red rock formations, the site captures the essence of why visitors love to come to Sedona. A bonus is the short walking distance to Sedona's most popular shopping facilities including Uptown, Tlaquepaque and the Hillside. There is also ample room for recreation and exercise on the property. The developer is also highly experienced in building high quality hotels. A new hotel in this location would be a celebrated sister to the imaginative Ambiente Hotel currently under construction. The Oak Creek Hotel would be the highest and best use of the land.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Rosenzweig
Commercial real estate broker

Rick Rosenzweig, Broker
Sound Investments
161 Starlite Drive
Sedona, AZ 86336
928-274-0670 cell
soundinvestments1@msn.com

5/10/22

As a merchant at
Hillside Shopping center
Tucson Arizona I am
in support of this
Oak Creek Resort project
on Shneely Hill Rd.
Doubtless an addition to our
community!
I am also a Sedona resident.

Thank you,

Judy L. Sreeter

Judy L. Sreeter

(480) 427-1177

Kyle Sandidge

From: donotreply@sedonaaz.gov
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 1:06 PM
To: Cari Meyer; Kyle Sandidge; Megan Yates
Subject: Comment on Development Proposal

A new entry to a form/survey has been submitted.

Form Name: Comments on Development Proposals
Date & Time: 12/05/2023 1:05 p.m.
Response #: 442
Submitter ID: 6201
IP address: 47.215.230.152
Time to complete: 7 min. , 6 sec.

Survey Details

Page 1

We want to hear what you think. Please share your thoughts below. If you have questions about the project, please enter your contact information so that we can respond. Please note that all information submitted (including name and addresses) will become part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

1. Project Name:

Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

2. What are your comments, concerns, ideas, and suggestions about this project?

Hi,

If you possibly can please do not approve this project. Sedona already has far too many hotels, lodges, resorts, and short-term rentals. There are only negatives and absolutely no benefit to the community by allowing another resort to be built. It will only have detrimental effects on the community including increased traffic, increased noise, wasting precious water resources, destroying existing vegetation and trees, increased pollution, and increased light pollution. There won't even be any employment benefit since there is no where in Sedona for employees to live so it's only a possible employment benefit for Other communities not Sedona.

Please do not approve this project.

3. Your contact information

Name: john duchnowski
Mailing Address: 460 morgan road, sedona,az
E-mail: jda1b2c3@yahoo.com

4. Would you like to receive notices about this project, such as public meeting dates?

(o) Yes

Thank you,
City of Sedona

This is an automated message generated by Granicus. Please do not reply directly to this email.

Kyle Sandidge

From: donotreply@sedonaaz.gov
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 6:43 AM
To: Cari Meyer; Kyle Sandidge; Megan Yates
Subject: Comment on Development Proposal

A new entry to a form/survey has been submitted.

Form Name: Comments on Development Proposals
Date & Time: 12/07/2023 6:42 a.m.
Response #: 443
Submitter ID: 6203
IP address: 47.215.238.253
Time to complete: 38 min. , 24 sec.

Survey Details

Page 1

We want to hear what you think. Please share your thoughts below. If you have questions about the project, please enter your contact information so that we can respond. Please note that all information submitted (including name and addresses) will become part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

1. Project Name:

Oak Creek Heritage Lodge

2. What are your comments, concerns, ideas, and suggestions about this project?

Not only is this concerning to me to build projects like this in Sedona AND on Oak Creek, it is concerning to hundreds of other residents too. It is concerning to the flora and fauna of the entire Oak Creek Canyon. It will bring in more people and automobile traffic only adding to the already existent noise and crowd pollution. The present situation in Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon has been created by millions of tourists who show up yearly to Sedona who, already, are destroying the peace and beauty that is Sedona. Every type of pollution that exists does so from yearly visitors coming in and destroying Sedona and Oak Creek Canyon. The dangerous traffic situation that has been created just from visitors is a disaster as I am sure you know. Sedona's capacity to hold the already astronomical tourist numbers is depleting resources, including housing for locals, and is creating an out of control situation that is already extremely unsustainable and dangerous for Sedona. This project, like so many others, is a bid for greed and lust to "control" Sedona. Where is the concern for locals who are being literally pushed out of their homes so that others can come in and buy these homes just to make these homes into hotels....??? This project, like so many others in Sedona, is destroying the neighborhoods of Sedona and crushing people's lives. HELP!!!! DO NOT PASS THIS PROPOSAL!! What if it was your home that was being taken away or destroyed because someone wanted it so that they could have more money....??? Another project like this would only add to the destruction of Sedona.

3. Your contact information

Name: Lucy Monica George
Mailing Address: 1980 Del Monte Dr Sedona AZ 86336
E-mail: lucymmgeorge@gmail.com

4. Would you like to receive notices about this project, such as public meeting dates?

Yes

Thank you,
City of Sedona

This is an automated message generated by Granicus. Please do not reply directly to this email.

Date: December 12, 2023

Re: Oak Creek Heritage Lodge - Comprehensive Review Comments – Supplement #2

By: D. Tracy

This supplement is in addition to my comments dated August 31, 2023, and Supplement #1 dated September 15, 2023. The focus of this supplement is the shared use path (SUP) which is shown as the “Schnebly Hill Road (SHR) Trail Options” as a slide in the developer's presentation to P&Z on November 21, 2023 and included in the City of Sedona website as part of the project submittals.

On December 6, 2023, Max Licher and I walked and discussed this proposed pathway and believe that some modifications may help the community achieve the CFA goals, esp. the character as detailed on page 6 of the CFA. Below are some comments to consider as part of the SUP design.

Irrigation ditch. Our deliberations were hampered because the historic irrigation is not readily apparent on the presentation slide, but it is another character defining feature of this area. We both felt that having water flow in this historic ditch would enhance the walking experience and potentially support gardens and native vegetation along a pathway. The developer is planning to maintain the water rights, so any land on the low side of the ditch has grandfather water rights.

Trail options. None of the four options presented at the November 21 P&Z meeting seemed compelling because the options included a ten foot wide path and the removal of 40 to 57 trees. Since this will impact the streetscape and the character, we believe a narrower path, like 5 to 6 feet, is preferred in most segments. This can be accomplished by separating the bike traffic from foot traffic, and utilizing some of the proposed pathways within the development to handle the large volume of foot traffic from the RV park and Bear Wallow neighborhood. Additionally, this SUP should be designed primarily for foot traffic and not motorized conveyances and serious mountain bikers – see next item.

SHR bike lane. From the SR 179 roundabout and continuing northerly to the Bear Wallow intersection, consider widening the SHR pavement to accommodate a bike lane on the northbound (NB) east side. Motorists could then safely pass these slower bikers on their uphill climb. For bike traffic southbound (SB) on SHR, this is all downhill so bike speeds are much greater and bikers could share the road with vehicles. Foot traffic would be discouraged from walking on the paved portion of SHR within this segment from the roundabout to Bear Wallow Lane.

SUP – 25 SHR. Due to the steep terrain in this area, the path was originally proposed as an 8 foot wide boardwalk by the City some years ago. Since this boardwalk will connect to the existing six foot wide sidewalk along SR 179, which is designed for more foot traffic than SHR, we believe that a six foot boardwalk along SHR is adequate and will preserve more native vegetation. A handrail will be required on the west side of this boardwalk. This segment is outside the scope of this development and needs to be budgeted as a City project.

SUP - 65 SHR. This parcel contains a row of mesquite trees which are close to SHR. Some of these trees will need to be removed to accommodate the secondary service driveway into and out of the project. Max favors the SUP to be located just west of these mesquite trees, and “overlay” the developer's planned driveways and internal pathways in this area. I agree with this approach until the mesquite trees become large enough to support a canopy covered walk experience, at which time the walkway could shift back under the trees, but still be separated from SHR. This growth can be accelerated by water from the irrigation ditch and thinning out the less desirable mesquite trees.

SUP – 95 SHR. This parcel includes a cement lined section of the irrigation ditch and the future event (lawn) area for the project. We both prefer that the pathway, aka trail, be located adjacent to this ditch. Max prefers that the five feet pathway be located on the west side while I prefer the east side. My rationale include the canopy provided by the large mesquite trees and the closer coupling to SHR. Also any land on the low side of the ditch can be irrigated and used for gardens. The path material will need to be permeable so as to minimize impact to root zones.

SUP – 105 SHR. This parcel extends from the existing driveway for 115 SHR north to the existing driveway for 165 and 167 SHR, also the location for the main entrance to the resort. This parcel includes the dry wash and the remnants of a suspended pipe that conveyed irrigation water from the cement lined ditch on the north side of the dry wash to the cement lined section on 95 SHR. Again, I favor a narrow path, aligned on the east side of the ditch, and weaving thru the large canopy trees. Perhaps a boardwalk on piers that would also support the irrigation pipe. This path would cross over the ditch just south of the main entrance and then connect to the main entrance into the resort at a point about a car length or two west of SHR edge of pavement. Max favors a path alignment which runs diagonal from 95 SHR and west of the ditch and at a lower elevation and connect to the resort at the interesection of the main driveway and the roadway to the resort parking. Both alignments require new foot bridges over the dry wash.

SUP – 195 SHR. After crossing the main entrance into the resort and continuing north, Max and I agree that the SUP needs to split into two spurs. One spur will continue diagonally thru the development, over laying proposed pathways and the resort parking area and terminating at the southeastly corner of the RV park overflow parking area. The other spur will continue northerly on the west side of the irrigation ditch, but skirting significant trees and periodically crossing the ditch as the ditch meanders away from the road.

The rationale for the two spurs is to minimize the grade climb for foot traffic from the RV park and Bear Wallow neighborhood. The developer is amenable to public access in the resort and the RV resort is willing to continue the path thru their overflow parking area on the east side and connect to the SUP along Bear Wallow Lane. The pathway thru the RV overflow parking area will be the same width as the connecting pathway thru the resort (10 feet ?) with appropriate marking or signage.

SUP – 20 Bear Wallow Lane. The path along this segment follows the ditch along its westerly side, but jogging as necessary to skirt around significant vegetation. At the intersection with Bear Wallow Lane, stairs may be needed to connect the path up to SHR and its terminus on the west side of SHR. It may be possible to accommodate ADA access by painting “switchback” path lanes on Bear Wallow Lane. The SHR and Bear Wallow intersection is awkward due to the angle, steep incline, and compromised sight lines. These problems are exacerbated for large RV trailer rigs exiting the RV park and encountering speeding downhill traffic on SB SHR. This intersection may warrant a redesign, which could then better integrate the foot traffic trail and bike lanes. Again, the City may want to budget for redesigning this intersection and, as noted previously, widening the pavement to include the bike lane on the NB lane of SHR and the foot traffic path on the west side, north to the Sedona Creative Life Center, another destination which could be more beneficially accessed by foot rather than cars.

December 7, 2023

To: Planning & Zoning Commissioners, Community Development and Public Works Staff, and R. D. Olson Development

Re: Oak Creek Heritage Lodge application for Comprehensive Review, following the P&Z Work Session

From: Max Licher (neighbor, architect, and participant in the Schnebly Hill CFA planning process)

Earlier in this process, I submitted several letters commenting primarily on large scale issues pertaining to the fit of this proposal with the goals set out in the CFA vision, as well as issues that I saw with some of the City's specific requirements that were perhaps counter to the intended goals and vision of the CFA.

Given that many things are clearer in hindsight, I can see now that had we as City and neighborhood planners envisioned that this number of parcels would have been combined into one project, we would have added more particular direction for how such a large project would have to meet the CFA vision. The density values would also have been articulated differently (the doubling of density incentive would have been based on actual developable land, not total acreage, and maximum percentages of accessory use would also have been defined).

That said, we have the tools that we have, and in overall concept, I do feel that this project in its current state of modification, is better than the alternative of 10,000 sf residential lots, and will meet the CFA goals better than a residential development at the maximum allowable density would. It appears that R.D Olson Development has the resources and intent to create a quality project that will meet and exceed the City requirements, and they have hung in with City staff and the neighbors through a lengthy period of input and refinement.

So, the following comments are to encourage refinement towards the realization of the historic and agricultural themes defined in the CFA. To me, as a neighbor and local architect, the challenge in this location is to keep new construction and infrastructure a bit "rough around the edges", quirky, and not overly refined or standardized.

Architecture: I'm not sure that the historic patterns of local cabins and early residences that you have illustrated translate well to the larger multi-story structures. It is not my intent to offer particular design direction; rather to suggest that another possible way of conceiving these buildings would be to think of them as early Sedona lodges, with Mary Colter & C.F. Whittlesey's work at the Grand Canyon, or Mayhew's Lodge on Oak Creek Canyon as examples. I appreciate the differentiation between the 4 clusters, and think this could be taken even a bit further (think Bright Angel Lodge, El Tovar, and the original Maswik Lodge at the south rim of the Grand Canyon) (not the weirdly modern Kachina Lodge:).

First Perceptions: This is to re-iterate one of my earlier comments regarding what is now identified as the Workforce House. I understand the reasoning behind moving the "back of house" functions closer to the roundabout and away from more of the existing neighbors, but from another perspective this is unfortunate because these functions become the first impression of a pedestrian or driver heading north up Schnebly Hill Road. In the best of worlds, this part of the development would help make the transition from the commercial cluster at the roundabout to the rest of the mixed-use neighborhood, and it would have a welcoming feeling. I think this building will be one of the most important architectural challenges, to have it serve as these proposes as well as the more practical functions it needs to provide for the resort. Like it or not, this will be the primary connection between the resort and the shopping district to the south.

Pathways and other Civil Infrastructure: The CFA neighborhood working group held a strong opinion that all civil infrastructure in the area needed to have an old-time feel and scale; stacked stone retaining walls, gravel pathways, country road shoulders (no curb & gutter), small signage, etc. In light of this, I do not think that the 10' wide multi-modal pathway paralleling SHR is appropriate, due to the way it would feel, as well as the loss of vegetation due to both width and the required retaining implications of the terrain in the ROW and adjacent property. Most bicycles could be accommodated on SHR itself; in the long term a bike lane is needed on the uphill side of the road, as bikes climbing the hill will be going slower than cars, while downhill riders are going close to the speed limit and can share the road with cars. This would allow for the primary public pathway on the west side of the road to be for pedestrians only, and a 6' width with occasional bifurcations would allow for comfortable human encounters (as with the sidewalk along 179 between the pedestrian bridge and Tlaquepaque).

I commend OCHL for supplying bicycles for use by their customers, and because of this, they may want a wider internal path from the bike home to SHR, but this does not have to be the same thing as the main public pathway, except for perhaps a short portion close to junction with the road. I would also suggest that OCHR work with Rancho Sedona RV Park to make/allow for a connecting pathway for RS customers to pass through the property at an angle, rather than having to go all the way up Bear Wallow to meet the public SHR pathway. I have had nothing but positive encounters with all of the RS customers that I have encountered over many years in the neighborhood, and do not think this neighborhood connection through the resort would be detrimental in the slightest.

It appears that there are several places in the current plan where there are internal pathways fairly close and parallel to the proposed public pathway, and perhaps these could be combined on the flat terrain in the development property at a wider width with less impact than along the road. I would be happy to participate further in helping sort out the best solution for all the various pathway needs in the neighborhood. There is reason to do this concurrently with figuring out the best long-term needs along SHR beyond this project.

Landscape Vision: This is another area where the CFA perhaps did not articulate enough nuance to the vision, but could be easily understood per the following: The CFA along SHR contains both historic agricultural lands (most of the original Steele/Farley properties), as well as native-vegetated semi-arid uplands. The goal of preserving the historic agricultural theme of the neighborhood pertains primarily to the properties under consideration in this project and to a lesser extent, a portion of the Rancho Sedona undeveloped property. The goal for preserving natural hillsides with native vegetation pertains to the rest of the properties along the road as it climbs towards USFS lands.

It appears to me that the current landscape conceptual plan relies too heavily on arid-adapted native plants (some of which would never be found in this habitat zone), and not enough on the historic plants that are found at most of the early settlement sites in the region. I would urge the developers to create a landscape vision for the development that centers on orchards, other edible/useful plants, and the decorative garden plants that were available to and frequently used by early settlers. The beauty is that this property has water rights to Oak Creek, and the possibility exists to use those to pump water into the historic ditch for the length of this

development, and make it a “living” piece of infrastructure that actually irrigates some of this landscape, rather than a static relic with a descriptive plaque or two. This was one of the ideas that had a lot of traction during the neighborhood discussions during the CFA planning process.

One of the reasons for making CFA plans is to acknowledge that different parts of the City are appropriate for different types of development, and this should carry over into landscape vision as well. Areas along Oak Creek were initially settled because of access to water, and this water was used to create agricultural landscapes that supported the local population. Many of us have long argued that regional goals of sustainability should encourage some level of local food production, and that we should retain as many of those historic agricultural properties in working condition as possible. While retaining the historic ditches in the Verde Valley does use some of the water that would otherwise remain in the creeks and rivers (ending up in reservoirs down in the Phoenix area), I do not believe that it is of a large enough percentage that it is compromising the natural riparian vegetation along Oak Creek and the other Verde River tributaries.

I would urge The City to support such a vision for this development, rather than try to steer it towards another generic xeriscape. The vast majority of Sedona’s red-rock uplands can and should be encouraged to use low-water use landscaping, and it should not be seen as hypocritical to have a different vision and goal for the areas along Oak Creek. For this particular project, I would urge that the fruit trees be substantial and more than just symbolic, that the fruit be used in the resort restaurant. While there may not be enough room for a substantial vegetable garden like the one at Orchard Canyon (the former Garlands Lodge) that serves its restaurant, there certainly could be herb gardens incorporated throughout the plan that would be useful. It will be ideas like these that will make the project theme more “real”, and less of a token nod to the local history of the area.

Neighborhood Integration: I appreciate the developers’ commitment to keeping their property open to all respectful neighbors, and having lived in the neighborhood for 28 years, can attest to the benefits of having the various larger property owners be open to local use as long as it isn’t abused. To the same point, having the restaurant and other facilities open to locals is an important part of community integration, as long as it doesn’t exacerbate local traffic or increase parking requirements dramatically. I believe that there can be ways to require that such usage by locals is primarily pedestrian or via shuttle or a combination of both.

The easement in the floodway being discussed for a portion of a future "Oak Creek Walk" is exactly what was thought about in the CFA planning process. The City and neighborhood planners never expected that the Creek Walk would be implemented exclusively on the east side of Oak Creek, rather that it would need to cross back and forth in such a way that it did not impact the various resort properties' ability to have some private space for their customers along Oak Creek. There was recognition that if the Creek Walk were to ever happen, that it would be a City Project requiring the cooperation of multiple property owners, and that no one developer would be forced to implement such a project. Thus, acquiring the easement now serves the CFA's purpose without requiring more as a condition of approval.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Licher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Max Licher
16 Bear Wallow Lane
Sedona, AZ 86336

mlicher9@gmail.com

928-282-7071(h)
928-282-4702(w)