

the process itself that should be overhauled and not the requirement to have one,” he explained.”After all, there are a LOT of items that require an SUP.”

Councilmember Devon Reese chimed in. He had voted in favor of the ordinance change. He said the shading ordinance needed to be changed because it was discriminatory and a form of NIMBY-ism. More dense housing, he said, translates into more economically diverse housing options.

“Knowlton Development wants to do mixed-use housing, including low-income and affordable units near the river as well,” he explained. “A park adjacent to the parcel would have been impacted by the shading ordinance.

“Shade ordinances, such as this one, are largely a form of housing discrimination cloaked in a more palatable form (no density here because dense housing invites poorer folks to live in an area),” Reese added. “There were probably legitimate reasons for this at one point in time ... but the net result has been ... parcels downtown that have not been built in some time for a variety of factors, with the shading ordinance being one of them.”

The shade ordinance, Reese said, was inhibiting development broadly. Moreover, the

luxury hotel project has to undergo many more steps before it is constructed.

“When a project attempts to be built in that specific site, it will have layers upon layers of design review,” he said.

Mayor Hillary Schieve supports the high-rise but called the shading ordinance change a difficult decision.

“A lot of what we’ve talked about is that infill downtown and how do we make that happen,” she said, citing the need for “all types of housing.”

Councilmember Brekhuis opposed the ordinance change.

“That always raises flags in terms of priorities,” she said. “If this is not about one project, it sounds more and more that it is. The conversation started with this project’s representative about this ordinance change when we have a whole bunch more lined up to do.”

Reese disagreed. He said the mayor and council have been clear with the community:

“The council has previously made a priority of in-fill development,” he said. “Build up, more dense, and not out.” □

“Shade ordinances ... are largely a form of housing discrimination cloaked in a more palatable form.”

Devon Reese
Reno City Councilmember

This story was published in collaboration with the news website ThisIsReno.com.

More housing



The site where the funky arts motel Wildflower Village once stood on Fourth Street is now under construction. The project, which is being built by S3 Development Company, will include 164 luxury apartments.
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