

SCOTTSDALE REPUBLIC

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OPINION
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Let's move to tap wealth of ideas for McDowell

The lull in the economy gives south Scottsdale the chance to redefine the McDowell Road corridor and prepare for a comeback. This can start by changing

OUR VIEW

maps and attitudes

at City Hall.

Some changes, including allowing apartments or condominiums on McDowell Road, will be necessary to promote strong business growth. That was one of the messages to come out of Saturday's McDowell Road Corridor/South Scottsdale Economic Development Summit, the first step to revitalizing the area. It's a good message.

The belief is that more businesses would come to south Scottsdale if the owners knew employees could afford to live in the area. More people would also spur more retail, which residents say the area sorely needs.

Commercial and employment hubs are also necessary to stimulate activity in the area — and not just tattoo parlors or office space.

The area must think big and capitalize on General Dynamics and Arizona State University's SkySong, which are the area's major employers.

Having zoning that promotes economic development would entice companies that do business with General Dynamics to come here. And a strong business climate could spur more activity at SkySong. This would go a long way toward boosting the job base



CHARLIE LEIGHT/THE REPUBLIC

Capitalizing on the potential of SkySong, a development dominated by these huge sails, is key to the revitalization.

and recouping some lost revenue.

That could still include cars, but it is likely that dealerships will no longer be the area's anchor, just part of the mix — another message to come out of the summit.

Residents seemed open to ideas presented at the summit. This is good because residents, land and business owners, and other interested parties must be on board before the city can change the economic landscape. And everyone, particularly residents, must understand what they are rallying for.

Turning apartments and large employers into neighbors might sound like a good

idea over lunch. But those developments will likely include taller and larger buildings and late-night deliveries. Those issues can be addressed with proper setbacks and buffers. Still, everyone's input is essential to McDowell Road's future.

South Scottsdale has the potential to be one of the liveliest places in the Valley with the McDowell and Scottsdale roads intersection at the heart of it. But that will happen only if residents and interested parties are part of the process.

Talks should also extend to Tempe and Phoenix. While south Scottsdale residents enjoy views of Papago Park and proximity to the Phoenix Zoo, the Desert Botanical Garden and Tempe Town Lake, those attractions are not in Scottsdale.

The city should embrace its participation with Tempe and Phoenix in the Discovery Triangle to stimulate its southern portion, another message from the summit, and come up with trolleys or buses that link south Scottsdale to those attractions.

Residents seemed open to the idea. Mayor Jim Lane, however, has been highly skeptical of the city's participation.

But it was Lane who held the summit to get residents and other interested parties talking about ideas and to guide revitalization efforts. He should keep his word and allow south Scottsdale to build upon its ideas, which include tapping regional assets, and turn them into reality.