

Demand quality design

This marks the 24th anniversary of the Tower District Specific Plan.

Countless residents and businesses helped draft the plan and implement it since 1991. It provides a comprehensive process for managing historic resources alongside new development in our established neighborhood. Tower's continued success can be credited to legal policies that balance: quality, stability, economic development and fiscal responsibility.

Blackstone and Clinton avenues are at the northeast corner of the Tower District boundary. There, Rich Development proposes a banal drive-thru and strip mall anchored by Smart & Final. We worked hard to find design and site layout comprises at this important transition between a high-traffic commercial corridor and a residential neighborhood. Ultimately, our design review committee voted unanimously against.

In my eight years of service on the committee, this is the third time a developer decided he or she should enjoy the fruits of business in Tower without meeting long-standing design guidelines. Rich Development feels entitled to special treatment. Councilmember Clint Olivier has taken up its cause in name of the free market.

This ignores half of the supply-and-demand economy. You and I, who live together in this neighborhood and city, are the demand. We demand quality design and walkability.

Kiel Schmidt

Fresno