

Comment left on a note from a neighbor at Friday charrette session

Re: the hotel

I learned last night as I left that the Doubletree hotel on the 183 service road north of Steck is being converted to condos. That reminded me that the Allandale Hotel on Northcross converted to condos about five years ago.

That led me to wonder what the market potential for a hotel is. I realize the prospect is appealing to the owner, giving him upfront working capital and making the potential problems the hotel's issue, not theirs... but how would a struggling hotel reflect on the surrounding development?

There is also hotel space at the Arboretum and the Domain – in fact, the same person who told me about the Doubletree said her out-of-town relatives stay at the Domain – the teenage nieces and nephews like the vibe and the upscale retail. We've spoken about neighborhood retail – I doubt we could compete with the Apple Store, Juicy Couture, etc. Therefore, I recommend turning the hotel into another office building, with retail on the first floor. Whatever the square footage is could then be sliced off the tops of the Mopac-facing buildings, getting them down to 6 or, preferably, 5 stories.

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