



School of Architecture, Design  
& Planning

June 22, 2010

Bonnie Johnson  
Department of Urban Planning  
University of Kansas  
1465 Jayhawk Blvd., 317 Marvin Hall  
Lawrence, Kansas 66045

**Re: Nomination of Zach Flanders' Work for the APA New Horizons Award**

Dear Bonnie,

This letter and attached materials nominate Zach Flanders to receive the Kansas Chapter of the American Planning Association New Horizons Award.

Attached is an executed application form, my explanation of how Zach's work meets all of the criteria for this award, along with the project itself. Also attached is a letter of support from David Longhurst, developer of the Oread Hotel in Lawrence, Kansas which is the subject of Zach Flanders' study.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Yours truly,

Kirk McClure  
Professor

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## **New Horizon Award (Individual Student Project)**

Nomination of : Zach Flanders  
Project: Oread Hotel: Public/Private Financing Evaluation

Nomination by: Kirk McClure  
Affiliation: Department of Urban Planning, University of Kansas

### ***Eligibility:***

*These awards are open to any student project/paper/plan produced while the student(s) were enrolled in a graduate level planning program during the Fall 2008 through Spring 2010 semesters.*

The nominee, Zach Flanders, was a student in good standing with the Department of Urban Planning at the University of Kansas from the Fall semester of 2008 until his graduation at the end of the Spring semester of 2010.

### ***Criteria:***

*The applications should focus on how the nominee's achievement illustrates excellence in planning with attention to comprehension of planning principles and the planning process. In addition, the nomination should particularly demonstrate how the project pushes the boundaries of planning in creative and innovative ways. However, in being creative, the project should continue to be feasible. By being innovative yet viable, the winning projects will contribute to advancing the field.*

Zach Flanders prepared the attached study, Oread Hotel: Public/Private Financing Evaluation, as part of his work in the course UBPL 714: Local Economic Development Planning. This course is an implementation seminar, which is the culmination of a sequence of courses in development studies. In this seminar, students complete a project that addresses a real world planning problem. In this problem, Zach addresses the proposal by a private developer that the City of Lawrence, Kansas approve the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the designation of a Transportation Development District (TDD) to support the development of the Oread Hotel.

The project prepared by Zach Flanders represents excellence in planning across many dimensions.

The analysis performed by Zach is highly technical calling upon him to employ sophisticated pro forma analysis of the proposed project's financial feasibility under a variety of financing alternatives. This is done to determine whether or not some, all, or none of the publicly supported financing is justified. Zach performed this analysis at a very professional level, providing the reader with insights into the implications to the proposed project of various levels of public assistance.

The physical product produced by Zach is highly professional in its presentation. The report meets or exceeds professional standards in its appearance and readability.

Zach Flanders' work demonstrates a comprehension of advanced planning principles. The development of large scale real estate very often involves a public/private partnership with the community partnering with a private developer to bring a project to fruition. This process calls upon a community to participate in terms of providing infrastructure to support the project as well as financing to pay for its development. Flanders' report explains and examines this process with a complex, large scale project. His project outlines the complicated balance that must be met between protecting the interests and resources of the tax payers with the private sector interests who seek to profit from the development.

As the real estate development process advances and evolves, new and increasingly complicated financing tools come into the process. TIF and TDD designation are examples of these new tools. If planners are to meet the challenge of using these new tools, they must not only be familiar with them but must also have the capacity to analyze their use. This analysis must provide guidance to communities in terms of cost effective use of these tools. This analysis must guard against excessive, unwise or risky use of these financial tools where they do not serve legitimate public purposes and/or do not possess a strong probability of success. The organization and content of Zach's analysis addresses these issues well. The report both explains these new financial tools as well as details their proper use.

Zach's report pushes the boundaries of planning in creative and innovative ways by the introduction of the concept of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Ratings for this project. Zach introduces the concept as well as begins would could be an innovative negotiation between a community and a developer, helping to leverage the adoption of LEED standards in exchange for additional financial incentives.

Zach' project is very much part of the cutting edge practice of planning. The project determines the financial feasibility of the proposed Oread Hotel project at the edge of the University of Kansas. This project involves a complex partnership between the City of Lawrence and the private developer with the partnership covering many issues including financing with TIF as well as the proceeds from a new TDD designation along with concentrated public improvements. Zach's project demonstrates an understanding and mastery of this complex partnership and how the partnership should be defined to further both the public as well as the private interests, advancing the practice of planning.