

CITY OF BANNING

MEMORANDUM



DATE: JUNE 20, 2006
TO: APRIL CALHOUN
FROM: OSCAR W. ORCI
RE: BANNING CULTURAL ALLIANCE ART DISTRICT PROPOSAL

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide comments, questions, or concerns associated with the Banning Cultural Alliance Arts District Proposal. The following is a list of questions/comments/concerns:

1. I do not see a market study or feasibility study in the proposal that would indicate the suitability (success) of an art program in the downtown. The City should be provided specific examples from other communities regarding the success of an art's program. The examples should include information regarding the life of program, the City's participation/role, and how success has been defined.
2. I do not see how "success" will be quantified/measured. The proposal indicates success will mean an increase in foot traffic. How will foot traffic equal success? Who and when will measure foot traffic? Perhaps success can be measured in terms of retail sales tax increases (e.g. 10% increase in sales tax equals success), or the reduction in vacant buildings, etc?
3. I agree with the concept of the an arts district as well as the philosophy stated in the proposal; however, since people are proposed to reside in the downtown, "every day" uses such as dry cleaners, food stores, etc should be encouraged.
4. Is the art district intended for the City's residents or more of a regional draw? The proposal appears to create a colony for local artists that will draw folks to the downtown. What do Banning residents want? We should place a one page questionnaire in the utility bills asking residents for their desire for the downtown.
5. A PBID will require the approval from the property owners. As I understand it, they have not been willing to establish a district; therefore, how will the Cultural Alliance establish such a PBID?
6. Some of the vacant buildings in the downtown area are in serious need of repair or may have to be demolished. Who will be responsible to determine if these buildings are habitable? Who will pay for the restoration?

Our Mission as a City is to provide citizens a safe, pleasant and prosperous community in which to live, work and play. We will achieve this in a cost effective, citizen friendly and open manner.

Imaged

7. I am not certain if the City can exempt personal income tax on income derived from sale of arts?

8. Zoning Overlay will be the best mechanism to establish the following:

- Zoning land uses; and
- Permitting Process;

Please note that the current Zoning Code does allow for mix-use (residential/commercial) projects as well as the land uses listed in the proposal. The Zoning code may need some clarification, but the land uses listed in the proposal are permitted in the Downtown.

Also, the proposal does not address development standards. For example, art related uses such as theaters require a great amount of parking spaces; will these uses be exempt from the development standards or be given special consideration? If so, what will be an acceptable impact the business community?

9. The following items need to be process separately through other City departments, except for Architectural design assistance:

- Grants
- Utility discounts
- Marketing
- Business License fee waivers
- Low interest loans
- Mentoring
- Rental subsidies
- Property Tax incentives

10. The exemptions proposed indicate that the arts will not "pay-their-way", so who will subsidize these uses, the balance of the businesses in the downtown or the City, including residential community? Will ancillary uses such as coffee houses, restaurants be subject to the exemptions/incentives? How will a subsidy improve the City's economic development?

As always, should you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.