

Hello Friends,

I have a couple of questions that, I would like to ask each of you. First of all, I would like for you to read the next couple of paragraphs from an article printed in the Record Gazette, dated May 17, 2013 regarding: the Village at Paseo San Gorgonio.

Village at Paseo San Gorgonio is planned to be a 68,955 square-foot commercial project between the Gas Company, next to the Banning Chamber of Commerce, east towards Martin Street could include one building that will have either a sit-down restaurant, or four smaller restaurants; another building is being considered for a sit-down restaurant at the corner of Martin and Ramsey streets.

A 26,000 square-foot, two-story building expected to rise up next to the The Gas Company along Ramsey Street could house up to 10 retail stores on the lower floor, and just as many on the second floor, though it seems as though Pearlman is hoping to lease office spaces on that level, with access to an outdoor patio and dining area.

Another 30,000 square-foot building is being considered for either a hotel or office space. Among the approved businesses intended for the four-parcel site that have been approached include Applebee's, Red Lobster, Guys Italian Dinner House, Chevys Mexican Restaurant, Elephant Bar, P.F. Changs, Johnny Russo, Rubios, Olive Garden, and Macaroni Grill and Chili's; hotels that have been approached include Hampton Inn, Doubletree, Embassy Suites, Marriott, Starwood, and Radisson Inns. No commercial entity has signed a lease agreement yet.

On January 28, 2014, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors approved a 7 year lease for the Riverside County Probation Department to occupy 15,432 sf on the 2nd floor of the proposed 30,000 sf building described above. Presently, the Probation Department is occupying several offices inside the old Court Building, and will be moving in to the Village at Paseo San Gorgonio around October 1, 2014.

Now, when looking at the article above, I see that restaurants such as: Rubio's, Macaroni Grill, Chili's etc., have been contacted about available restaurant pads. I would also think that, Baskin Robbins, Yogurt Stores, Coffee Franchises have also been contacted. And, lastly, I would think there would possibly be children's stores, dress shops, etc., also being considered as tenants.

The question I have is: Do the people of Banning really want a County Probation Office in a shopping center that, is suppose to draw residents and visitors in to the downtown area?

Understanding that, this is the City's last attempt to get their downtown area right. You need to remember that, Probation Offices are not exempt from having violent crimes occur at or around their offices. Furthermore, Probation Officers are involved in many Officer Involved Shootings throughout each year. (Google: Probation Officer Shootings).

Furthermore, felons that have been convicted of crimes such as: robbery, rape, assault and battery, etc. will be checking in with this office daily. Is this the type of activity that you want, in what was suppose to be the: Jewell of the City ?

I understand that, these people may frequent the Paseo anyway, but do you want to require that they report and check in there, or have them report to a building a few blocks away? I believe there are other options, such as: the vacant land located next to the new courthouse that can be used for new construction. And, there are other vacant buildings in town that could serve the County's needs and purpose.

Please provide me with your views and opinions, as it will help me in figuring out what to do with this dilemma. I know we need the Probation Department. But, do we need it in our premier downtown shopping area? Do you think that, the presence of this Department will prohibit known anchor stores/restaurants from coming in to this center? Will this Department stop you from shopping at this center? Will you worry or think about your safety, when shopping at this center?

Thank you, and I will be looking forward to your input. BTW, there will be a report given by the developer Art Pearlman, at the City Council meeting on February 11th, 2014.

Don Peterson, Councilman
City of Banning, CA

Friends,

I forgot to mention one thing, Sales Tax! How much Sales Tax will the Probation Department generate? Please keep in mind that, this property was purchased with Redevelopment funds and, the City is still repaying the Bond at roughly 7% interest. I do not foresee the Probation Office ever generating any income on a continuous basis to help re-pay the bond. So, why was the money borrowed and spent, if it wasn't going to generate future income, jobs and benefits for the City?

Now, I should be fair and say: we will receive one time fees for building permits, (if they are not waived) and we will receive a small percentage of annual property taxes. But what long term financial advantages are there for the City? Personally, I do not see any.

In fact, by allowing the Probation Department to occupy space in the Village at Paseo San Gorgonio, it may prohibit the growth of Sales Tax and recurring revenue for the City for a long time. So now what?

Thank you again for your time, and input. BTW, please forward this email to your friends, as I would like to know their thoughts as well.

Hope to see you all on February 11th.

Don Peterson, Councilman
City of Banning, CA