

Proposed Old River Ranch touts fresh idea

Big southwest plan to boast amenities within walking distance, consultant says

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2005

On the agenda for the Bakersfield Planning Commission's Thursday meeting are several smaller development issues and one mammoth 1,833-acre development plan known as Old River Ranch.

Half the size of Delano

Where: Nearly three square miles of land between Panama Lane and Taft Highway and between Old River Road and Allen Road.

What: Old River Ranch -- around 5,900 single-family homes, 1,058 apartments and 93 acres of commercial space with schools and parks.

City planner Marc Gauthier said the Old River Ranch project will add a city roughly half the size of Delano to southwest Bakersfield.

Developers with the Petrini companies, a local development business, estimate it will take them the next 13 to 15 years to build the 7,000 homes and the stores to support them.

Petrini spokesman Larry Pickett said the company pulled together the land for Old River Ranch over the last few years because more land gives a developer more control over how the community they are building looks and feels.

Gauthier said the Old River Ranch plan is starkly different from the Rosedale Ranch project in northwest Bakersfield, which includes substantial commercial and industrial sections of its 1,600-acre plan.

The Petrinis "just put enough commercial in to support their needs," he said. The rest is classic southwest Bakersfield commercial development, Gauthier said.

Consultant Dave Dmohowski said the project will contain walking and biking trails designed to eliminate some of the more classic complaints about suburban developments in Bakersfield.

"Sometimes you can't get out of the cul-de-sac when the park or the store is across the street," he said.

All homes in the development, he said, will be within a 10-minute walk of a park, school, store or some other destination point. You'll be able to walk or bicycle throughout the development relatively easily, Dmohowski said.

New chief of bureau eager to take reins

Ryan Schuster, staff writer

Bakersfield Californian, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2005

Richard Jelmini will take the reins as president of the Kern County Farm Bureau in November. Jelmini will take over for President Pete Belluomini when Belluomini's two-year term expires.

"I'm excited," Jelmini said. "After all the years I've been on the board you just have things you want to do as president. You want to leave your stamp on the board."

Jelmini, 47, owns R&M Jelmini Farms, where he grows cotton, alfalfa, almonds, carrots, wheat and corn. He has spent the last two years as first vice president and the previous two years as second vice president.

Jelmini's move to president is expected to be ratified at an Oct. 27 board meeting.

Belluomini, 45, who is farm manager of Lehr Bros. Inc., said he will remain on the board for a while after his term expires.

"I'm proud of the time I've spent in leadership," Belluomini said. "I've been president for two years, but it's the end of eight years I've been in office."

"We saw the advent of the rural crime division. We saw some of the efforts to clean up trash on the roadsides. Our educational programs have been at their highest points. We've been influential in issues like water and [air](#). I'm proud of having the organization at the forefront of these issues."

Hoggard Questions Air Impact Fee Plan

The Hanford Sentinel, Sept. 29, 2005

CORCORAN - Proposed air pollution impact fees on new development in the San Joaquin Valley sparked questions at the Corcoran City Council meeting Wednesday. "At this point, we don't know if they are doing anything to make the air better," said Ron Hoggard, Corcoran city manager.

Developers of certain size lots will pay the fee to offset pollution caused by the development itself and the motor vehicle trips associated with it over time.

LA area's ports spread cancer threat far inland, study shows

The Associated Press

In the Bakersfield Californian, L.A. Times, S.F. Chronicle and O.C. Register, Wednesday Oct. 5, 2005

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Diesel emissions from the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports are increasing cancer risks miles inland, according to a new study.

The study by the California Air Resources Board concluded that air pollution from the ports creates a potential risk of 50 additional cancer cases per million people within 15 miles of the facilities. About 2 million people live in that area.

For the 53,000 residents closest to the ports, the risk leaps to 500 cases per million people, according to a draft of the study, which is the first thorough examination of the cancer risk from diesel fumes generated at the ports.

"I'm not aware of any other assessment on emissions and risks from the ports that have been done in so much detail," said Jean Ospital, health effects officer at the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the area's air quality regulator.

Ospital said it's surprising that port pollution seeps so far inland.

The study was done to help the air board as it reviews proposed rules for limiting ship and cargo equipment pollution. Both ports have launched emission reduction programs.

The study concluded that the two ports emitted 1,760 tons of diesel pollution in 2002.

Diesel fumes are responsible for 71 percent of the region's cancer risk linked to air pollution, earlier research showed.

The main risk from diesel emissions is lung cancer, which is usually fatal, said Jerry Martin, an air resources board spokesman.

Diesel pollution from the ports also causes 29 premature deaths of people aged 30 and older, 750 asthma attacks, 6,600 lost workdays and 35,000 days of restricted activity each year, according to the study.

Activity at the two ports is expected to triple by 2020. This could boost diesel emissions by 60 percent unless new pollution controls are put in place, the study says.

[Visalia Times-Delta editorial, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2005:](#)

East downtown gets its vision

At Monday's Visalia City Council work session, it didn't look as if anything heroic or special was taking place. It looked very much like a hundred other work sessions in which policies are deliberated and recommendations made.

In actuality, Visalia's City Council members were taking some very courageous actions that will keep this city the Jewel of the Valley for generations.

Council members on Monday approved a sweeping strategic plan for developing the east downtown area over the next 20 years. It is by far the most visionary and substantial policy decision this or any other council has ever made, with the possible exception of the adoption of the so-called 2020 growth plan 15 years ago.

The East Downtown Strategic Plan is a long-term blueprint for developing Visalia's precious urban space in ways that are not only unprecedented but almost unimaginable. It foresees an area roughly east of Santa Fe Street to Ben Maddox Way and between Mineral King Boulevard and Goshen/Murray avenue that would become a model of mixed-use development, with residential, business, commercial and public space working together to form a unique urban environment.

To even conceive that an area that now is a confusion of empty, dusty lots and ragtag industrial buildings will become an urban oasis to rival downtown Sacramento or San Diego takes a profound leap of the imagination. But that's what council members did.

When the principles and practices of the East Downtown Strategic Plan are fully realized in 20 years or so, that area will be a city within a city offering residents, business people and merchants unseen opportunities for making the most of a thriving environment. It will meld offices and apartments, parks and pubs, shops and walks, restaurants and public art.

The east downtown area will also expand and enhance the existing downtown and its surrounding commercial areas and reinforce what is already one of Visalia's greatest strengths: the viability and opportunity in its downtown.

We salute and commend our City Council for taking this bold step, and thank the many volunteers who worked on developing this unique vision for our city. Many, many things remain to be done to even begin realizing the dreams of these visionary folks. The council's approval was a acknowledgment to go forward. The heavy lifting of financing, property and business development and urban planning and construction are all to come. But the adoption of this plan had to come first, and this council took the same approach to providing for the city's future that previous councils always have: They actively pursued an action plan that will transform Visalia's core.

Their predecessors did the same thing when they insisted on concentric growth when drawing up a series of general plans in the 1970s and '80s; when they directed major retail along Mooney Boulevard; when they committed the city to the Convention Center and Radisson Hotel; when they established a Property Based Improvement District to ensure downtown would thrive.

The East Downtown Strategic Plan tops them all in the breadth of its scope and vision. Not only will it adopt some of the latest strategies in urban design, it will invent new ones. It will demand public and private cooperation and follow-through. Eventually, it will create a space that its framers rightly boast will be the most sought-after in-town residential and business address in the San Joaquin Valley.

When council members were saying their "ayes" on Monday, it didn't look like a courageous act, but it was. In 20 years, anyone who was in that room will be able to reflect on the success story that is East Downtown Visalia and remember that they were there when it all started.

[Sacramento Bee editorial, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2005](#)

Editorial: Clean air mischief

Don't let polluters off the hook

Sleazy contractors aren't the only people shamelessly exploiting the tragedy created by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. On the political front, California Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, and Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, introduced a pair of bills to suspend or cancel altogether clean air protections approved by Congress and put aside almost all restrictions on gas and oil development anywhere in the country.

Barton's bill contains a slew of provisions to weaken environmental protections that President Bush tried but failed to impose last summer, when the Senate rejected his administration's assault on the nation's historic Clean Air Act.

It would also delay until 2015 existing smog cleanup deadlines in cities affected by the hurricanes, for no good reason condemning citizens in some of the most polluted cities in America to breathe bad air. Current law already allows for delays in Clean Air Act enforcement where warranted. The bill would derail the EPA's widely celebrated new clean diesel standards as well.

Before it ran into a wave of opposition from Republicans and stalled, Pombo's measure went even further. Hypocritically entitled the National Energy Supply Diversification and Disruption Prevention Act, it would have given the federal government power to waive any laws restricting oil and gas development practically anywhere in the country. When even the president's brother, Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, along with Florida's two senators announced their opposition, Pombo quickly announced that he would seek a compromise. We hope he keeps his promise.

Pombo and Barton and their oil industry cronies say these measures are necessary to respond to the supply shortages and price spikes caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But nothing in either measure is likely to increase supplies significantly in the short term. They are simply a crass attempt to exploit a national disaster for the benefit of an oil and gas industry already enjoying windfall profits.

[Letter to the Fresno Bee, Wednesday, October 5, 2005:](#)

Save the SUV: Let roads and highways crumble

Our country spends billions of dollars every year building and rebuilding paved roads (see Measure C). But this is contrary to the wishes of the American people. It's obvious that the SUV-driving public shuns pavement, preferring instead to smash through snowdrifts, fishtail across deserts, climb mountains (when you can see them) and fly-fish from the driver's seat.

But sadly, we're a nation of neglected 4x4s; our giant chrome stallions remain pitifully tethered to the mundane merry-go-round of daily life, running errands instead of running free. It's high time we get what we apparently want: millions of miles of invigorating off-roading. With no pavement or road maintenance, that trip to the grocery store would finally provide every exciting challenge promised by advertisements.

The billions upon billions of dollars we'll save can fund the finest, most efficient, most environmentally friendly public transportation system in the world, including ubiquitous local and long-distance rail and transit services that actually work.

Rugged SUV individualists can find endless pleasure plying the bumpy remnants of our obsolete highways, enjoying lousy gas mileage and slow commutes. The rest of us would get clean, fast transportation that actually makes sense to both our principles and our pocketbooks.

Matt Cowall, Fresno