

Updated: Fri, Jan 22, 2016, 7:40 am

Uploaded: Sun, Jan 17, 2016, 7:49 am

Outlook 2016: Good times are back for Pleasanton

City revenues soar past \$106 million, projected to increase by \$6.1 million, or 6% this year

by Jeb Bing

With the city's tax receipts projected to be at a record high this year and millions of dollars in new residential and commercial projects underway or planned, good times are back in 2016 for what should be a banner year for Pleasanton.

City revenues have soared past \$106 million and are projected to increase by \$6.1 million, or 6%, in the current fiscal year that ends June 30, and by another \$3.5 million, or 3%, in fiscal 2016-17. These revenues are primarily derived from property, sales and hotel taxes and business license fees, accounting for 83% of total municipal revenues.

Just 15 days into the new year, Pleasanton is looking for a year with a number of commercial, retail and residential developments totaling in the millions of dollars that will also produce more millions in terms of property and sales taxes coming back to the city.

The brisk pace at the start of the new year marks what could be one of the biggest building booms in recent years.

The projects represent multimillion-dollar developments from the city's far east end on El Charro Road to next to the West Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, where software company Workday plans to build its new headquarters building on Stoneridge Mall Road.

Workday

Workday has all the approvals it needs to start construction at anytime this year on the city's newest and largest office building. Located between I-580 and Stoneridge Mall Road, the five-story glass and steel building will serve as the global software company's headquarters. It will be adjacent to five other multi-story buildings Workday owns in the adjacent office center across from Stoneridge Shopping Center.

Along with the new office building, Workday also will build a five-story parking garage with two levels below ground and three stories on top. The Pleasanton Police Department will open its first substation at Workday, moving into a new station building before Workday starts construction.

Also, as part of the project, are plans for "gateway" paths from the BART station to Workday, the parking garage and to the mall.

CarMax/Stoneridge Chrysler-Jeep

Just east on I-580 in Staples Ranch, work is underway on a CarMax superstore, which will open this spring. CarMax is the country's largest retailer of used cars.

Its architecturally unique building is next to another new business in Pleasanton, Stoneridge Chrysler-Jeep, a dealership that moved here from Dublin late last year. These two car sales companies will bring lucrative sales taxes to Pleasanton starting this year.

Pacific Pearl

Just across Stoneridge Drive, signs mark the location of Pacific Pearl, an Asian-focused community shopping center. Construction will start shortly on this 120,000-square-foot center on 11.5 acres on the southwest corner of El Charro Road and Stoneridge.

The center will be anchored by Marina Food grocery store and will include a variety of 20-30 restaurants, retail and service businesses. Developers plan to open the center in 2017.

Housing/apartment developments

Last week, the City Council approved a 43-home development on Lund Ranch in southeast Pleasanton. That's likely to be the last major housing development in the near future, certainly in 2016.

Still, new apartment houses that were approved to satisfy state and court orders two years ago are under construction in several parts of the city and will be home to more than 8,000 new residents starting this year.

One of these, a 16-acre, high-density complex of multistory buildings, is under construction at Bernal Avenue and Stanley Boulevard across from McDonald's. Called Vintage Village, the development by Carmel Partners will offer 345 upscale one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments in a number of all-rental buildings with a 39,000-square-foot retail center at the corner when completed later this year.

Also under construction is a multimillion-dollar development by Essex Properties across from the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station. This project includes two sites with three- and four-story buildings, one consisting of eight apartment buildings with 250 units on Owens Drive across from the station, and the second at Gibraltar and Hacienda drives, also with eight buildings with 247 units. As part of the development, Owens Drive will be narrowed this year from three lanes to two to allow for diagonal parking in front of the buildings.

Also expected to start this year is development of part of the turf area of California Center, now renamed Rosewood Commons. This project will include five residential buildings with the two-story buildings facing the streets and three- and four-story buildings in the back. A retail center is planned for the corner of Rosewood and Owens drives.

Construction of another apartment complex on West Las Positas Boulevard across from Hart Middle School with 177 units and buildings as high as four stories is just starting after the demolition a few weeks ago of a vacant, one-story office building on the site.

Work should be wrapping up this year on another residential project, called Township Square. Located next to Safeway and Gateway Center on Valley Avenue, the development includes 62 three-story townhomes, 35 more traditional two-story homes and 210 apartment units in buildings that will back onto I-680.

Bernal Community Park

The \$16.5 million Bernal Community Park will open in September. This new phase of development of the 318-acre tract of city-owned land that was given to the city of Pleasanton in 2000 by Greenbriar Homes will include 48 acres of oak woodland called a "Grand Meadow" and another 10 acres that will include three lighted multipurpose, all-weather synthetic sports fields, group picnic areas, a children's play area and drinking fountains.

Already, motorists on both Bernal and Valley avenues can see green native grasses, tall field lights and a split-rail fence that replaced the chain-link fencing around the area.

Representatives of Pleasanton's major youth sports organizations have pledged \$2 million as their contribution toward the project, the funding to be raised through fundraisers that will be underway all year.

Johnson Drive

Likely to be the most controversial project in 2016 is the planned creation of the city's first economic development zone on Johnson Drive. The 40-acre site is partly owned by Nearon Enterprises, which bought the property after Clorox moved its research center to a new corporate campus nearby. The research center was torn down, and the property -- the oldest industrial-zoned acreage in Pleasanton -- is now mostly empty.

Costco has signed a letter of intent to acquire the site if the economic rezoning is approved. The City Council and Planning Commission will hold a joint public hearing on the rezoning plan in March. A definitive environmental impact report (EIR) is scheduled to be completed in July.

Other than a Costco membership store, at least two hotels could be built on the site, which extends from near Stoneridge Drive on the south to Black Tie Transportation on the north.

Downtown Pleasanton

Downtown Pleasanton will also see new businesses, including Inklings, a combined coffee shop and meeting room gathering place and a new two-story restaurant at 725 Main St., where the Union Jack Pub was torn down in 2007.

Kottinger Gardens

In March, Kottinger Place will be torn down and its senior residents moved to temporary housing while the first phase of a new 185-unit, affordable-priced housing development for seniors gets underway. Once completed in 2018, work will begin on replacing the nearby and aging Pleasanton Gardens.

Civic center/library

Also scheduled for 2016 is the completion of a task force study on where, when and if to build a new civic center and public library. It's expected that the City Council will take advantage of Pleasanton's new prosperity to replace the current City Hall, which is now the oldest in Alameda County.