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Village Walk Taking Shape

Murrieta—Village Walk Plaza is taking shape with vertical development and infrastructure improvements to what will be Southwest Riverside County's first cross-shopping power retail center. Village Walk Plaza is on schedule to open in October of this year with a blend of large retail stores, specialty shops, boutiques, kiosks and a smorgasbord of eateries.

Heavy construction activities include the vertical development of nine "big box" buildings, seven mid-size specialty-retail buildings and four multiple-suite complexes. The 320,000 square-foot power center will feature approximately 310,000 square feet of retail space, 10,000 square feet of restaurant space and about 1,400 parking spaces.

Under development by the Arthur Pearlman Corporation, the project includes four-sided architecture, enhanced facades, and a variety of landscaping motifs that will promote a park-like outdoor shopping experience. Most of the exterior construction to the major buildings will wrap up in August, with façade completion and initial tenant improvements to follow in September.

"We've designed the exteriors of the buildings to be visibly appealing from all four sides," says Steven Felderman, president of Arthur Pearlman Corporation. "This four-sided style of design will enhance the shopping experience for customers and provide a distinctive exterior view for passers-by on the freeway. "

The vision for Village Walk is of a destination shopping center where people will visit multiple stores and enjoy a variety of shopping and pleasurable opportunities.

A growing list of tenants includes Bed Bath & Beyond, Babies R Us, Sports Authority, Office Depot, Party City, PETCO, Guitar Center, Levitz Furniture, David's Bridal, Lakeshore Learning, Famous Footwear and more. Project Manager Judy Rosen, of Rancon, is looking for a few more good tenants to round out the mix of this next-generation shopping experience.

"We are talking with at least one more big-box retailer to complete the national brand exposure on our large pads," says Rosen. "With that we are looking to fill the remaining spaces with a variety of boutiques, eateries, specialty shops and great restaurants."

Plans for Village Walk Plaza include major environmental improvements for a year-round creek that runs along the south side of the project. This natural drainage channel has historically collected storm runoff from the neighborhoods and developments east of the I-15. As a result its banks and streambed have been inundated with non-native weeds, grasses, plants and trees.

As part of a restoration plan approved by both Federal and State agencies, Rancon and the Arthur Pearlman Corporation, who are joint venture partners in Village Walk, will be expanding and improving both wetland and upland habitat. This effort will establish a Conservation Easement to protect a six-acre site in perpetuity.

This work, which is currently underway, includes improving the natural flow of the creek constructing an environmentally friendly crossing and a retention basin that will actually filter runoff water through a natural layer of plants and other features.

“We are making improvements to the streambed that will not only protect the natural flow of water, but also reintroduce native species of vegetation to the area,” says Felderman. “All the ecoscaping on the south side of the project is being done with native plants, grasses and trees. It will be both unique and drought tolerant.”

A primary access to Village Walk Plaza off Kalmia, the newly installed crossing over the creek will provide access to the project and a great view of the restored creekbed and habitat.

“In addition to dealing with the normal challenges that go along with creating a project of this magnitude, we’ve had to come up with highly creative solutions for the creek,” says Rosen. “While at times it’s been extremely difficult, I think we’ve ultimately added even more to the overall appeal and value of Village Walk Plaza.”

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