

Proposed mall draws opponents

By James Bronson
STAFF WRITER

Residents of a Gardena condominium complex and a Torrance city councilman have vowed to fight a proposed \$10 million mini-shopping mall that would be built in Gardena across the street from the Radium Swap Meet.

The proposed Redondo Beach Shopping Mall near Van Ness Avenue and Redondo Beach Boulevard would create parking, noise and massive traffic problems in the residential area near El Camino College, said Councilman Dan Walker and residents of the Thoroughbred Condominiums.

Walker, a consultant to Pioneer Theaters, which owns the Radium, said developers lied during a packed Gardena Planning Commission hearing last week when they said the two-story development would be a mall, not an indoor swap meet.

An in-house memorandum by

President Investment Co., which Walker said was used to attract investors, says: "The success and the close proximity of the Radium lends great value to our project as we intend to attract a similar type of customer."

The development would have a three-level parking structure with parking for 1,150 cars, which the report says is "more than ample parking for the customers and employees."

It also said 60 percent of the Radium's tenants "will apply for leases at the new Redondo Beach Shopping Mall.

"We also have estimated that we have 30 percent of the spaces already reserved for Asian business people from Korea and Taiwan," the report says.

Said Walker: "Their whole thrust is that it's going to be a high-line development that has nothing to do with a swap meet. This is not an enclosed mall.

MALL/B2

Mall

FROM PAGE B1

We're talking about a swap meet."

Walker said the development would have two to three entrances and exits on both Redondo Beach and Manhattan Beach boulevards. It would create gridlock, he said, if an anticipated 15,000 customers shopped there on weekends and 5,000 customers on weekdays. Its presence would devalue surrounding properties, Walker said.

550-tenant mall

The mall, which Walker said would have 550 tenants, would not have enough parking spaces to accommodate the cars of tenants and employees, he said.

Said Glen Halbman, who owns a condominium adjacent the proposed mall: "I'm strongly opposed to the thing. . . . It's going to be too noisy. The property value is going to go down because people would be less likely to buy a condo with a shopping center next door."

Halbman also said cars that can't find parking at the mini-mall will flood the neighborhood.

Steve McCaskey, president of the Thoroughbred Condominium Homeowners Association, also objects to the project on the 7.7-acre site of the defunct Golden Nursery.

"We don't need it next door to us," McCaskey said. "We've got a lot of malls around. We're going to have noise, security problems and very, very con-

It's going to be too noisy. The property value is going to go down because people would be less likely to buy a condo with a shopping center next door.

—Glen Halbman
Mall project neighbor

gested traffic problems. There are no neighbors who are for it."

Plans have changed

Monterey Park attorney Kirk Downing said the memorandum obtained by Walker is out of date and that plans for the site have changed dramatically.

"The Planning Commission didn't want to move the swap meet across the street," Downing said. "We've changed the whole dimension and thrust. Walker knows this. It's one of the dirtiest, lowest campaigns I've ever come across."

Downing, who represents developer Michael Su, said the mall would occupy 189,000 square feet.

Su also is owner of the defunct Golden West nightclub at 148th Street and Western Avenue, where the doors are locked and weeds grow through cracked blacktop.

Su also plans to build a small

hotel and a condominium on the nightclub property, according to Downing. Su is on a business trip to Japan until mid-May and could not be reached for comment.

Planning Commission members did not vote on the proposed mall, opting instead to order an independent traffic study, said planner Roy Kato.

Staff recommended OK

Kato said the city staff recommended approval of the development and that another commission hearing is scheduled for June 7.

"We will have under 500 merchants there," Downing said. "We are not sure how many. The merchants will sell jewelry, purses, leather goods, luggage, high-quality clothing and accessories. We're trying to get people who will be selling expensive commodities. The investment required would take a swap meet person years to make a down payment."

Unlike some Radium tenants who frequently move from swap meet to swap meet, Downing said, the mini-shopping mall tenants would be permanent residents.

"Our concept is small to medium-sized, fully walled stores," he said. "There would be 180-square-foot units and many food court services."

Downing said many of the people who complained about the project were misinformed by the Radium operators.

"Many of the people we talked to aren't Gardena residents but, nevertheless, these are our neighbors and we don't want to create all kinds of problems for them."

Daily Breeze - May 9, 1988