



# Inland News

## New plans revive project for Murrieta's Golden Triangle



 [Download story podcast](#)

10:00 PM PDT on Tuesday, April 24, 2007

By **ROCKY SALMON**  
The Press-Enterprise

**MURRIETA** - Plans for a community-defining retail and entertainment center in Murrieta's Golden Triangle have been revived.

On Tuesday, the city and a Temecula-based developer announced new plans for The Golden Triangle in Murrieta's most prime location for retail development. It calls for five to six-story buildings with offices on top of retail stores along a Main Street.

The \$300 million-plus project will include at least nine upscale restaurants, a theater, a 24-hour entertainment facility, and a hotel with a conference center.

The 61-acre project nestled between Interstate 15 and Interstate 215 is considered the city's most important undeveloped piece of land. City officials have worked for years with the property owners, the Domenigoni family, to develop the property into a destination center, such as the Irvine Spectrum or Ontario Mills.

"This is a legacy project," said Kirk Wright, CEO for the new developer, The Garrett Group of Temecula. "We are developing this project for the long term. It's going to be enduring and timeless."

City officials said they are happy with the proposed project and are hoping the center will open by December 2009.

"We wanted a lifestyle center, not just a place to hang out," Councilman Rick Gibbs said. "A place where on a hot day, you might come to with the kids to have an ice cream cone, toss coins into a fountain while strolling minstrels pass by, and then you might end it by getting the kids a pair of jeans."

The center will be called The Golden Triangle and feature a look of international architecture, said Wright.

The project covers more than 1.3 million square-feet and will include a number of water features. A small main street is the focal point that will include two restaurants and a water fountain. Surrounding the fountain are retail stores, the two entertainment buildings and another restaurant.

Nearby are the multistory buildings that will feature retail stores at ground level and offices on the upper floors.

The hotel will be near the corner of Murrieta Hot Springs and I-15 and will be a well-known chain, Wright said. The rest of the acreage is interspersed with offices and parking structures that connect directly to the offices.

The project will be built in phases and The Garrett Group hopes to break ground in fall 2008.

The Golden Triangle has been the topic of several development plans over the past two decades. Originally, a 66-acre regional mall was slated for the land until Temecula offered the developer incentives to switch cities. That eventually led to construction of The Promenade mall in Temecula.

In 1998, the huge parcel sparked a political storm when developer Zev Buffman want to move a proposed Wild West entertainment center called RogersDale U.S.A. from Temecula to Murrieta.

Buffman and the Domenigonis asked the city to help finance the project by issuing bonds. The City Council agreed, drawing vocal critics to meetings and starting a referendum drive by residents concerned about the city's involvement.

A year later, the project nearly died when the Domenigonis did not renew Buffman's option to buy the property. The city kept joint-powers authority and a smaller entertainment complex was born with ideas ranging from a skating rink to a conference center. The center plans eventually failed.

In 2003, the Domenigonis joined with the Lewis Group, from Upland, to design a new complex, which was nearly the same size and acreage of the project unveiled Tuesday. The Lewis Group project was tabled in August 2006 when the partnership dissolved because of rising construction costs. Those included escalating costs to build improvements to the I-215 Interchange at Murrieta Hot Springs Road.

In the past year, 20 separate developers have pitched projects to a small group that included Mayor Doug McAllister and Councilman Rick Gibbs. Andy Domenigoni and Paul Garrett had known each other for more than four decades so the discussions between both sides seemed natural, Wright said.

Gibbs said it was apparent from the first presentation that The Garrett Group had a feel for the valley.

"The Garrett Group knew what we were looking for," Gibbs said. "We looked at some other firms who were really intriguing. Some were so intriguing I don't think they understood the valley at all."

*Reach Rocky Salmon at 951-375-3739 or [rsalmon@PE.com](mailto:rsalmon@PE.com)*

---

**The Golden Triangle**

**Restaurants:** Nine places at 32,000 square-feet

**Retail:** 227,000 square feet

**Department store:** 150,000 square feet

**Theater/entertainment:** 90,000 square feet

**Hotel/conference:** 167,000 square feet

SOURCE: CITY OF MURRIETA

---

---