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Sep 29 • Written By Mike McGuire

Marketplace Developer Outlines His Boulevard Vision



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spring.

In a presentation to the Castro Valley Rotary Club at its September 14 meeting, developer Craig Semmelmeier said he plans to transform both the lumber yard at the west end of town and the former dry cleaner and cigarette store that now lies vacant at the corner of Wilbeam Avenue and Castro Valley Boulevard.

Semmelmeier said his company, Main Street Property Services, plans to keep the original buildings and update them, rather than tear them down and start over. The original designs had much to offer, he said.

“We look around and see buildings in Castro Valley that, many of them, when they were probably originally built, were much more attractive than the renovations that have taken place,” said Semmelmeier, who is the founder and principal partner at Main Street.

For example, the Wilbeam site formerly housed the “Flying A” gas station, and that it used to have a restaurant within it. Semmelmeier said he’d like to put a restaurant back in there. He’s negotiating with an upscale hamburger chain that would put in outdoor seating for as many as 150 people. In the backlot, he sees a barbecue place with an outside smoker, and retail stores potentially inside.

His company, at the Marketplace and elsewhere, seeks to attract retailers whose products aren’t currently found in town, Semmelmeier said. He also firmly believes that businesses help their business neighbors flourish by providing other products the same customers need.

Semmelmeier is in the process of updating Castro Valley Lumber at 2455 Castro Valley Blvd. It currently has five buildings in a long, narrow lot with somewhat difficult access, hemmed in by the end of Norbridge Avenue and Interstate 580, he said. The property was at the center of a debate in January this year when an

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As for the Castro Valley Marketplace, Semmelmeier said since its overhaul of the long-vacant Daughtrey’s Building and official opening last year, essential businesses have successfully opened during the pandemic and the non-essential business will be opening soon, particularly in the mezzanine area.

He urged Castro Valley to think more strategically about what retailers it wants to attract long-term, rather than just looking to immediately generate sales tax revenues.

“Castro Valley built itself, and the county built it more as a thoroughfare than a place to go to,” he said. “All the projects we do really rely on Castro Valley being a place to go.”

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