

Bob Botts for Banning City Council
Building a Better Banning
With A Vision and A Plan
Executive Summary

It is the opinion of the Bob Botts for City Council “Building A Better Banning” Community Task Force that although the socio-economic conditions and level of the City of Banning trail most other Cities in Riverside County and that of the State of California, the community is poised for potential economic expansion and rebirth, as a thriving, prosperous City in the San Geronio Pass Area.

However, the Task Force believes that at the current pace, or lack of economic stimulus and aggressive rebuilding, the City will continue to languish in its existing condition and difficulties. The City continues to have a median Household Income that is \$11,318 less than other residents in California. Over 60% of students attending the K-12 School District come from homes of families that are on some form of welfare or public assistance. Youth and sports activities and fields are limited. Most school facilities are old and in need of repair or replacement.

There is limited industrial and manufacturing activities to serve as an economic engine for the City in order to expand its economy and produce new income and new jobs within its boundaries. New housing development is poised to begin. However residential units do not pay their way, that is, they consume more in services from City Government than they pay for in taxes.

The City’s downtown area is in need of extreme repair and immediate revitalization and Banning is a community that generally needs to be cleaned up, beautified and revitalized.

The Task Force believes that the City of Banning needs to be run more like a business; which would produce more efficiencies, more aggressiveness in moving forward with and actually completing tasks and projects, and systems that would track projects and activities and hold decision makers and staff accountable for getting things done in a timely and professional fashion.

It is the considered opinion of the Task Force that the City needs a comprehensive, albeit simple and straight forward, Vision and Plan. It needs to be a Plan all stakeholders (Decision Makers, City Staff, Business and Charitable Organizations and Citizens of Banning) understand and can participate and buy into. This will help to more rapidly and effectively move the City forward commercially, economically, visibly, and educationally, in order to improve the quality of life for all citizens; whether they live on the Eastside or Westside of Banning.

Why a Vision and a Plan?

Any organization needs a vision and strategic plan to know how it can arrive where it wants to be in the future. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to build a successful road map for an entity or City if they do not know where they are going or where they want to be in five to ten years. Once the City decides what and where they want to be, then a plan (road map) can be developed as to how to get there. A major caveat is that the road map must be followed, reviewed, and reported on frequently, to make sure that everyone is still on the right track.

The Task Force believes a Vision is needed setting new and higher horizons for a better Banning, and implementable expectations for the City of Banning and its residents, in order to succeed and prosper.

This new, Building A Better Banning Vision and Plan needs to contain the basic elements of where and what we want the city to look like, and be, in 5 to 10 years. This means a plan that doesn't simply get put on the shelf to gather dust, but one that everyone understands, buys into, supports, and helps makes happen.

The Task Force acknowledges the importance of the recently updated General Plan, as the very important “forward look” for land use planning and zoning designations for the City for many years to come, and the great contributions by many Banning Citizens in the updating process. The General Plan is a critical document to the future of Banning. The contents of our proposed Plan should serve to augment and expand the GP into other areas not generally associated with a General Plan.

The ultimate plan must be one that the City Policy Makers, City Staff, Banning Citizens and private sector businesses and charitable organizations can support, follow, and measure, and to see how we are doing...to see what progress we are making as a united City.

City Policymakers need to ask the question on anything new being proposed, “How does this fit into or support ‘The Plan?’” If it doesn't, should it be added to the Plan or postponed? Community organizations should ask themselves what can they and their organization do to enhance and work for accomplishment of ‘The Plan’.

The Task Force recognizes that the Mayor, Council and City Staff, as well as other private organizations are working on some elements that are outlined in this document. However, there is no plan or no one place to go to answer the question, “What is the Vision and Plan for the City of Banning over the next five years”.

It is the recommendation of the Building A Better Banning Committee that this or a similar, comprehensive plan be adopted by the City Council, and include the issues set forth in this document.

By adopting a plan, public decision makers and staff, as well as private sector participants can be held accountable for progress of the plan. The City General Plan, Police Department Strategic Plan and Redevelopment Plan should be integral parts of a comprehensive Strategic Vision and Plan in order to move the City of Banning forward in a positive way. For the economic, cultural, health, aesthetics, education, well being, and general benefit of its citizens, significant initiatives must be undertaken in a number of areas.

The City needs to move forward with a very aggressive plan of market driven economic development focusing on the recruitment of commercial, industrial, and manufacturing companies to produce new, well paying jobs. Residential development will ultimately help provide the impetus for more retail shopping opportunities in Banning. However it is an agreed upon principle that residential units do not pay their own way. That is, they demand and use more in services from the City than they provide in tax revenue to the City.

To provide for the long term financial viability of Banning, the City needs to embark on an aggressive annexation program to enlarge the City's availability of land for future development; not only of residential but commercial, retail, and industrial property. This includes all property not currently within Banning on the north and south of the existing city boundaries in the General Plan.

Although annexation and economic development are two of the major components of creating a better Banning, there are many other areas that will be enumerated in the New Horizon's Plan.

The Vision: The Building A Better Banning Committee describes the future City of Banning as a fun and exciting place to live and work. A community that is a mix of the new and old; clean, beautified and well maintained. New, clean manufacturing companies make up the skyline of the southeastern industrial parks, with a thriving, revitalized airport that accommodates small jets and is abuzz with on-site manufacturing activities as well as transportation limos shuttling visitors to and from the downtown Business and Art District of Banning as well as the Morongo Casino.

The future includes an educational environment where students and young people are actively engaged in expanded youth sports and are busy in business internships throughout the City in effective coordination with the School District. The economy has improved with Per Capita Income up significantly, with many Banning residents having eliminated long commutes by now being employed locally.

Local citizens and visitors can be seen downtown, viewing the murals and shopping for art in numerous galleries, after having shopped the many new boutique stores, following lunch at a

Banning Bistro's side walk café. The landscape is dotted with swaying trees, and the sound of splashing water at the sidewalk fountains and streetscape. Evening brings movies to a refurbished historical theater as well as a new play in town at the Theater

For the Performing Arts, the Banning Bowl and Classical Ballet or Saturday Night Classical Guitar at the Banning Cultural Alliance Center with Mariachis at the Cultural Alliance are available.

Many new homes have been completed in the North and South portions of the City and residents now have the opportunity to shop locally for most of their consumer needs including their choice of a number of upscale restaurants strategically located throughout the City.

The following three page outline includes a brief description of the major issues, which are contained in the full version of the Vision and Plan, which is available upon request.

The Committee believes that the issues of this document could be the beginning of such a plan, when coupled with the Police Department's Strategic Plan, the City Redevelopment Plan, along with the data and suggestions generated from the numerous Public Forums that have been conducted over the years. HOWEVER, effective, positive results will be limited, if the Plan is not actively implemented, tracked, monitored and supported by City Staff and a broad cross section of the community.

Summary of Critical Issues and Proposals

Expand Economic Development

Create new manufacturing and logistic jobs through industrial recruitment.
Enhance the standard of living and quality of life for those who call Banning “Home”.
Aggressively recruit retail shopping facilities.
Aggressively recruit Upscale Restaurants.
Extend Ramsey Street to Fields Road.
Modernize Banning Airport and extend runway to accommodate small jet and turbo prop aircraft.
Review East Ramsey for special focus for revitalization, beautification and new retail outlets including a grocery store.
Create Plans for the development of the mid and western portions of Ramsey.
Accomplish this much-needed economic development through the expansion of staff.

Crime and Citizen Safety – Support the Police Department’s Strategic Plan

Insure that all of the City of Banning is a safe place in which to live, work and play.
Support the Police Department’s Strategic Plan. (Copies are available from the Banning Police Department).
Increase Police staffing to an ultimate goal of two Officers per 1000 residents to crime and gang and drug activity.
Work to minimize “Parolee Dumping” in Banning.
Insure that Jessica’s Law is implemented in Banning.
Monitor the expansion of the County Prison Facility and its release program to insure safety to Banning Residents. Secure additional resources from the County of Riverside to support the Banning Police and County Court Facility

City Beautification

Aggressively expand and implement Code Enforcement on Commercial, Retail, Residential, and Industrial Properties.
Expand incentive programs for residents and businesses to clean up and improve their properties.
Work with Businesses and Community Organizations for the creation of a Property Improvement District to assist in revitalization and beautification

Neighborhood Associations

Create and support Neighborhood Associations.
Set up Neighborhood Association Presidents to meet monthly at City Hall with some Council and Staff.
Create Neighborhood Watch Programs within each Association.
Create a new position in Economic Development, a Community Outreach Specialist,

to assist with Neighborhood Associations and other Economic Development Programs.

Youth-Park and Recreation

Expand park system and develop Soccer Fields.
Expand Youth Sports Programs – Soccer, Basketball, Tennis, and Golf.
Develop and/or expand a Youth Mentoring Program.
Explore concept of the Smith Creek Park Development.

Revitalization of Banning

Downtown

Continue the implementation and expansion of the Downtown Business and Art District.
Recruit retail businesses which can include artists, art galleries, art studios (including Mixed Use Development), restaurants and sidewalk cafés, entertainment and support the Murals and Banner Programs.
Continue the City Sponsored Façade Program

Ramsey Corridor

Develop a strategy and plan for the development of mid and west Ramsey.

Education

Work closely with the Banning Unified School District on programs for Banning's youth, as outlined in the total Plan.

Governance

Run the City like a business. Create a Plan and then follow it; measure results.
Improve communications, cooperation and collaboration with the School District, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, and City of Beaumont.
Create Council Working Groups (CWG-Two Councilpersons each) to work with the foregoing entities. **The City Council should work to build bridges with other organizations.**
Create staff expectations and goals and then track the results. Provide incentives and reward for those who achieve their goals.
Support the creation of an Inter-Faith Council made up of the many varied religious and ethnic groups and organizations in Banning. This should include the creation of a Community-wide Mayor's Prayer Breakfast coinciding with the annual National Day of Prayer.
Create Council Standing Committees including Ways and Means, Legislative Review, and Personnel Committee.

In cooperation with the cities of Calimesa, Beaumont, Banning, Cabazon and the Morongo Band of Mission Indians, create a Pass Area Group of Governments made up of the Mayor, a City Council Person and the City Manager, from each of the cities. This organization would meet at least monthly to discuss common problems among the Jurisdictions and to develop local solutions. It can serve also as a strong advocate for The Pass Area to other governmental units including Western Regional Council of Government, Riverside, Riverside Transportation Commission, the County, State and Federal Government.

Transportation

Help facilitate the relocation of the California Highway Patrol “Weigh Station”.

Work to minimize traffic congestion and freeway tie-ups.

Enter into discussions regarding the extension of Ramsey Street.

Work cooperatively with the City of Beaumont on joint traffic issues.

Insure that infrastructure and roads are completed by the time construction of new homes and businesses are occupied.

Extend Sun Lakes Blvd. Eastward to Sunset.

Work for timely completion of the Sunset Grade Separation

Transfer the responsibility of the Banning Airport to the Economic Development Department. Develop plans to expand and upgrade the entire airport; fueling and equipment, as well as entering into discussions and negotiations with the Morongo Tribe relating to the extension of the runway. Analyze the potential for hiring an airport manager and/or contract for a Fixed Based Operator to manage the airport for the City.

Take the lead in the development of a Light Rail Station in the City of Banning

To accommodate future Metrolink train transportation from Los Angeles to the Coachella Valley and return.

Housing

Continue new housing development while minimizing negative impacts on existing residents.

City should initiate aggressive annexation of County properties on the north and south sides of Banning and begin to review potential expansion Eastward.

Promote Low- and Moderate-Income Senior Housing Development.

Art and Culture

Continue the review of Art In Public Places for appropriate funding sources.

Support the Banning Cultural Alliance, Banning Playhouse Bowl and other Multi-Cultural Performing Arts Groups.

Water

Insure an adequate supply of water for existing and new residents from Ground Water, State Water and Tertiary Treated Water sources.

Expedite Tertiary Treatment facilities and pipelines in order to use non-potable (non-drinkable) water for irrigation of golf courses, parks and freeway landscape.

Education

Improve communications and coordination with the Banning Unified School District.

Partner with the School District in the creation of High School Career Academies which will assist high school students in job and career selection and training.

Coordinate and partner with the School District on joint projects and joint use of property and facilities including sports activities.

Marketing

The City needs to implement a full blown marketing and communications program to improve communication and maintain an informed citizenry.

All marketing and Public Relations activities including Channel 10, the City Website and City Newsletter should be moved to the Economic Development Department.