

Opinion Editorial  
Monterey County Weekly  
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6-13-14  
Word Count: 607

Salinas is the largest city along the Central Coast of California and as such, we grapple with big city issues. One of the most pressing is a bold move by the County of Monterey to purchase near 300,000 square feet of existing office space in the heart of the City's industrial zone. I think it's high time the County of Monterey hear more from the public concerning what a bad idea this is.

At first glance, I can see why the County's attention is on this acquisition. Known as the "Capital One Property," the complex features good construction, an impressive cafeteria, nice landscaping and a modern day care facility. Best of all, the County would come into ownership for a steal.

The owner of the property is more than willing to sell and if the sale goes to a public entity like the County, a handsome write off could take place. I've heard rumors the sale price could come in as low as \$30 per square foot. This is far below an estimated \$300 or \$400 per square foot for new construction of government office space.

The more important points, lie in the details behind the deal. While the building is modern and in great shape, it would most likely need to be retrofitted for County use. Further, there is currently zero mass transit or bicycle lanes that lead to the facility. Finally, the complex lies on the far south end of town smack dab in the middle of the greatest concentration of industrial uses in Salinas. Most days, the roads nearby are locked with thousands of trucks hauling produce.

It's important to mention that the City and County have committed to planning and development of government facilities in the City Center. This move is a slap in the face by the County to those agreements. Almost immediately, space currently leased by the County in the City Center would fall vacant due to the giant sucking sound toward the Capital One building south of the city.

At a recent Salinas City Council Meeting, I asked the City Manager to immediately agendize a modification to our zoning code that would inhibit the County's move. I even had the guts to stand up at a community meeting and proclaim that we can and will beat the county with this action. However, recent analysis indicates the County can and will do whatever it wants in this situation. This leaves me with the appeal that I'm making here.

The City of Salinas needs your help to apply political pressure to block the County of Monterey's move to acquire the Capital One building. This move would be bad for those accessing County Services, our local economy and most of all, an opportunity for County Government to set an example in smart growth in our City. Please do your part in contacting your County Official today to let them know how you feel about this important topic.

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