

BROADWAY'S TIME IS NOW



By [Ben van der Meer](#) – Staff Writer, Sacramento Business Journal
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Four years ago, an [informal survey of local urban development experts](#) identified Broadway in Sacramento as the most likely to be the next “R Street”-like redevelopment corridor.

With more than a half-dozen sizable projects now underway, in the works or being considered along the street, “next” appears to have become “now.”

“There’s a lot of little projects, but ‘little’ means \$10 million to \$20 million,” said [Jon Gianulias](#) of Core Commercial Real Estate, which developed a retail project on one prominent Broadway corridor last year. “It’s got a lot of potential to be its own really great street.”

All the factors cited in the survey seem to be playing out as expected: Broadway is benefiting from its proximity to upscale neighborhoods like Land Park and to downtown Sacramento, from its variety of existing buildings and uses and from city plans to improve the street.

But while the redevelopment of Broadway may be reaching a critical mass, it has taken time to build. As the development cycle ramped up over the past five years or so, developers and builders like Bardis Homes, SKK Developments and Indie Capital landed on Broadway.

Bardis Homes became the principal homebuilder for [The Mill at Broadway](#), a redevelopment of land south of Broadway that was formerly the site of a lumber products factory. Indie Capital built infill single-family homes near 10th and Broadway, with more to come at Ninth and Broadway. SKK teamed with Bryant Properties at Third and Broadway for a two-phase project of multistory self-storage units, now nearly complete, followed by an apartment building of 59 units to start soon.

Both Indie Capital projects flank another sign of change: [Redevelopment](#) of the site of a former grocery store between Ninth and 10th streets on Broadway into a

building of three tenants: Selland's Market-Cafe, Silva Stowell Architects LLP and Bike Dog Brewing Co.

The residential component

While those projects toward Broadway's western end are taking shape, it's the portion immediately south of midtown Sacramento, between 16th and 25th streets, seeing the surge of interest now.

Gianulias' retail project on the northeast corner of Broadway and 16th Street wrapped up earlier this year, but most of the other projects, either under construction or in the works, have a residential component. That's a change for that section of Broadway, which is home mostly to a variety of single-story retail buildings, mostly housing restaurants.

"Generally, my sense is that Broadway has been overlooked, and now it's being rediscovered."

ANDREW SKANCHY

manager at Sacramento-based Trondheim

Trondheim Properties, which is already building an apartment project at 1818 X St. just off Broadway, has filed plans for a bigger project of apartments over retail called [The Fitzgerald](#) to the south, at 1827 Broadway.

[Andrew Skanchy](#), manager at Sacramento-based Trondheim, said Broadway has attributes such as ample parking that make an infill project easier than in midtown or downtown Sacramento.

"Generally, my sense is that Broadway has been overlooked, and now it's being rediscovered," he said.

Housing is an element that's still missing, though, Skanchy said.

"The areas you see becoming vibrant have that component," he said. "You not only put people on the street and activate it, you have them frequenting the businesses on the corridor."

Skanchy said Trondheim, which owns more property in the same area, might pursue additional projects. But doing so would require picking up more property, he said.

Two blocks east of the Fitzgerald site, an even bigger project would hinge on a change of ownership. Cushman & Wakefield is marketing a long-scrutinized site at 1901 Broadway, where redevelopment concepts for an empty office building have floated around for nearly 15 years.

The 1.27-acre site of a full city block could house up to 225 residential units, according to the brokerage's listing, in which the property is unpriced. The property has only been listed since August, but a project of that size, if realized, would be the biggest of its kind along Broadway.

Gianulias is in the early stages of thinking about something similar for the Dimple Records cluster of buildings he owns southeast of 16th and Broadway. With the record store [having closed](#) this summer, he's considering a multistory project of housing units and retail on the site of about three-quarters of an acre.

Authenticity

Other projects in the works are concentrating more on enhancing what's already on Broadway.

At [1700 Broadway](#), the Wong Family Benevolent Association wants to upgrade an existing building from 1920 and create new retail spaces, and then build a new three-story building behind it with apartments above association assembly space.

Developer [Ken Fahn](#) said he's planning a refresh, not a teardown, for a building housing Mexican restaurant Pancho's on the southwest corner of 21st Street and Broadway.

Fahn, who's worked on adaptive reuse projects on other buildings in Sacramento, said Broadway has authenticity, and the best path forward will be to keep that in mind.

"Buildings often provide a continuity to history, and tearing down old buildings is not cool," he said, adding the project for the Pancho's building will expose more of its historic features. "Broadway has some buildings worth restoring."

Narrowing Broadway

He and others working on Broadway projects, though, said what happens on lots along the street will only go so far to create a new dynamic. The bigger changes

may stem from a city plan to change Broadway itself, making it, well, a little less broad.

In early 2022, the city plans to begin its “Complete Streets” [makeover](#) for Broadway, from Third to 24th streets.

[Megan Johnson](#), a city senior engineer, said the entire street would have only one lane in each direction, along with a median turn lane. That will also mean new parallel parking along Broadway itself, and closest to the sidewalk, buffered bike lanes. At intersections, sidewalks will bulb out, making it easier for a business like Pancho’s to create outdoor seating, as Fahn is hoping to do.

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JON GIANULIAS

Core Commercial Real Estate



Jon Gianulias of Core Commercial Real Estate

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Similarly, sidewalks themselves will be vertical rather than rolled, to reduce parking on the sidewalk itself, Johnson said, though the city is still scoping out where exactly to make that change.

“We think a street where people feel comfortable walking or riding their bike out in public is a street that’s better for businesses and consumers,” she said.

Construction should take about a year and cost \$8 million, while the city is looking for funding to do a similar makeover of Broadway from 24th to 28th streets.

Both Fahn and Gianulias, who recently served as chair on the Greater Broadway Partnership, said changing Broadway as a street will change Broadway into the more urban destination it’s already becoming.

The current partnership chair, [Josh Nelson](#), CEO of Selland Family Restaurants, said he’d also like to see greater density along the street. While the gaps are filling in with projects like the building reuse Selland’s Market Cafe is part of, he said, there are still many buildings and properties with owners who aren’t investing in them or getting better-quality tenants.

Farther east on Broadway, in Sacramento’s Oak Park neighborhood, investors like architect [Ron Vrilakas](#) and former Sacramento Mayor [Kevin Johnson](#) have created a denser neighborhood with walkability, Nelson said.

“I know there’s a lot going on, but it still feels like something that’s evolving rather than happening quickly,” Nelson said. “We’re pretty spread out.”

But Nelson said he believes change is coming. In 2015, many people familiar with Broadway said changes would be stymied by those longtime property owners who wouldn’t sell or invest in their properties.

In recent years, though, established local developers like Fahn, [Sotiris Kolokotronis](#) and [Louie Pappas](#) have begun buying those properties, he said.

“You’re going to just start to see the change,” Nelson said. “All of these guys know what they’re doing, and have the means to do something.”

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