

# Cross Creek Ranch—Formerly La Paz— Set To Break Ground Soon

The massive mixed-use development has just secured financing and is aiming to be operational by the end of next year.

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Architectural drawings of the forthcoming development Cross Creek Ranch, formerly known as La Paz  
[jayluchs.com](http://jayluchs.com)

Cross Creek Ranch, formerly known as the La Paz Ranch development, is back in headlines for what feels like the umpteenth time this week, but according to recent reports the long-awaited mixed-use development could finally be taking shape—21 years after it was first discussed and 13 years after securing permits.

Recently, the project secured \$130 million in financing to begin construction. In a statement to the press issued last week, Pacific Equity Properties, Inc., the owners of the development, announced they had received the loan from Related Fund Management, calling the transaction "one of the largest commercial loans in Los Angeles County this year." The loan was sourced by Integrated Capital Management.

The long-embattled project was first proposed 21 years ago.

In December 2000, then-consultant for the project Don Schmitz described the proposed retail space: 126,000 square feet [now 112,000] on 18.5 acres. Schmitz told then-Mayor Ken Kearsley, "it would not be too proud to suggest that this would become the Village Center for the city," (according to *Malibu Times* reporting from the Dec. 5, 2000, council meeting).

Other proposals from that meeting now read as laughable in 2021 Malibu, including: "Pepperdine's 138-unit senior living project and a 15,000-to-20,000-square-foot city senior center, plus an optional urgent care facility, and the Yamaguchi family's 16-acre project, including a ballfield and 37 houses of up to 3,000 square feet each." At the time, Council Member Sharon Barovsky invited slow-growth preservationists to float a bond issue to buy the land: "That is the only legal way to stop them from going forward if they don't ask for a variance." In the 21 years since, 15 acres of the 140 acres of available land in the Civic Center have been preserved in award-winning Legacy Park. The rest is zoned for development.

Now, new architectural drawings depict a campus of office buildings and retail, with siding designed to look like reclaimed wood and native plants around a wide green lawn. The project includes 70,000 square feet set aside for retail and another 42,000 square feet for "creative office space," plus both surface and underground parking.

"Cross Creek Ranch combines a coastal location with global appeal, an accomplished sponsor with deep development experience, a marquee and thoughtfully conceived project, progressive architectural design, and a lender that shares our conviction," John Carrick, managing principal and co-founder of Integrated Capital Management, said in a statement provided by developers. "This is the definition of 'forever' real estate."

The leasing agent for the retail portion of the property is a familiar name around Malibu and the west side: Jay Luchs.

Luchs described the new design as “slightly more rustic than the original look” of La Paz. “Every building will look a little different.”

The leasing agent also described a project that will have a similar feel to Malibu's other shopping centers, integrating food with retail.

“One of the most important things in leasing retail for me is having food offered to the community, so if you can't do food, you shouldn't build,” Luchs said. “But if you can do food and ice cream and coffee and smoothies and a little pizza place and a bigger restaurant with outdoor seating, those kinds of things lead to people and then brands want to be near that, and it creates a community. To me, that's one of the most important parts of this project.”

When the project site was sold to current owners in 2017, Planning Commissioner John Mazza—an outspoken opponent to the plan since he sat on the Malibu Township Council in the early 2000s—expressed concern over vacancies in other retail centers.

“It's as big as the [Malibu Colony Plaza] so it's a very big project and the question is, 'How are they going to fill it?' There are a lot of vacancies downtown,” Mazza told *The Malibu Times* at the time. “In theory, it could drive rents down in the Civic Center and there's the possibility that we'll have more local-serving businesses. It's going to be a shock when people see how big it is.”

In response to questions over potential vacancies, Luchs said he was “concerned” but that he is always concerned about filling centers; he added that “nothing is overnight and nothing is easy” but he was cautiously optimistic about filling space in the center, which has a goal of opening for business by the end of 2022.

“There's some interest from tenants already and we have a way to go, but if you get the first few tenants that are so known and popular and great—we're just getting going. I'd hate to be overconfident, but we feel good about initial responses,” Luchs said. “Surviving 2020 was finding those tenants that were still doing deals, that were relevant, that were growing, and a lot of those brands were young. I'm always interested and always have been in finding young brands that are cool and not just everywhere.”

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