

# Labor shortage slows Tumon Bay Mall development

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*(Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)*

Representatives of the developer for the new Tumon Bay Mall say they need to look for other construction companies to work with after the current one reported a lack of workers for the project.

Phillip Schrage, Grandview Development's lead for leasing and marketing, on Thursday told the Guam Land Use Commission that the project's general contractor, BME & Sons Inc., is short on skilled temporary foreign labor because of the ongoing H-2B visa denials.

"It's looking nice, but we still got a ways to go," Schrage said of the mall development.

No active construction could be seen outside of the Tumon mall Thursday. There were no construction vehicles or equipment on site.

Schrage said the first phase of the nearly 180,000 square-foot mall is complete, and the developer is looking to hire two or three local contractors for phase two.

Phase one included much of the civil and exterior work, such as landscaping and parking. The mall is expected to have 711 parking spaces, with spaces that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and bus parking.

Phase two is relative to interior work and touch-ups on the exterior. The developer is unsure when phase two can begin because it is still looking for manpower, but the phase is expected to take nine months to complete.

Schrage also said his team still is looking for possible anchor tenants for the mall.

Grandview Development is the sister company of Goodwind Development, which owns the Micronesia Mall in Dededo. Macy's is the Micronesia Mall's anchor tenant.



The Tumon Bay Mall building can be seen standing silent and inactive in Tumon on Thursday, Oct. 26, 2017. (Photo: Rick Cruz/PDN)

## 41 foreign workers left

In recent years, Guam typically saw on average 1,500 H-2B visa workers.

As of Thursday, there are only 41 H-2B workers left, according to Greg Massey, administrator for Guam Department of Labor's Alien Labor Processing and Certification Division.

Gov. Eddie Calvo has reached out to federal officials to discuss Guam's situation but has received little response. He recently called on the halt of military buildup construction until the foreign labor issue is resolved.

"I wish we weren't in the predicament we're in," said commission chairman John Arroyo. Commissioners accepted Grandview Development's status report and said they hoped the H-2B visa issue could be resolved soon.

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