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In this photo from the EIR, the subdivision (outlined in red) is proposed on the south side of Green Valley Road near the intersection with Malcolm Dixon Road.

DIXON RANCH GETS OK FROM COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Contentious project now goes to Board of Supervisors

After a four-hour hearing the El Dorado County Planning Commission approved the Dixon Ranch residential development at its Dec. 14 meeting.

Located in El Dorado Hills, the development proposes 604 new single-family homes on 280 acres on the south side of Green Valley Road near Malcolm Dixon Road. A 5-acre lot is carved out to accommodate an existing residence in the area.

As part of approving the project, the commissioners changed the property's zoning with some of it zoned high-density residential and other parts medium-density residential. The commission also expanded the amount of zoned open space from 1.28 acres to approximately 68 acres.

Historically Dixon Ranch was used for

commercial grazing under a Williamson Act contract. While under contract the property was zoned exclusively agriculture but later designated as low-density residential.

The confusing nature of the zoning led people at the hearing to different conclusions about what was or wasn't allowed. One man suggested only 28 homes could be built based on the zoning.

Development Services Director Roger Trout said the property's zoning prior to the commission's action was merely a "place holder" until a developer decided what to do with it.

Designed to attract buyers of all ages, approximately 160 of the homes to be built will be age-restricted to those 55 or older.

The remaining 444 lots are planned for both production and custom homes with no age restriction.

Joel Korotkin, the agent for the project, said he expected the homes to be priced between \$488,000 and \$873,000.

To be developed in two phases over as long a period as 20 years, phase one will add 411 lots and phase two another 194.

The project also includes 84 acres of open space areas in the form of parks, trails, landscaped lots and natural open spaces.

The developer agreed to a long list of

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Holiday Inn Express in EDH

HOTEL SELLS FOR HEFTY PRICE IN EL DORADO HILLS

In another sign that Sacramento's hospitality market is becoming more attractive to investors, a hotel in El Dorado Hills recently sold for a robust price.

A San Francisco investor purchased the Holiday Inn Express in the El Dorado Hills Town Center in December for \$14.4 million, or \$155,203 per room, and plans a major renovation.

The price reflects the hotel's strong performance since it opened in late 2005, said Justin Myers, a vice president for Irvine-based hotel brokerage firm Atlas Hospitality Group. The hotel, which was originally built for roughly \$12 million, had been run by McDermid Management Co. of Colorado.

"El Dorado Hills is an affluent market, and because of its proximity to Intel and Folsom, it is a strong hotel market," said Myers, who represented the seller.

The buyer, Rajputana Hospitality, will spend \$1 million on renovations and will also keep the entire staff of the hotel, Myers said.

"It is a very well constructed hotel in a unique center — it backs up to a man-made lake," Myers said. "It is a Santana Row kind of spot but on a smaller scale."

Santana Row is an upscale mixed-use shopping center in San Jose. The El Dorado Hills Town Center holds events, concerts and even parades, while also including retail, office, service, and restaurant uses in

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Hello All,

A lot of folks are upset over the recent EID rate increases, and I don't blame them. But we are not alone, if that's any consolation.

We residents of drought-ravaged California can expect to pay more for water this year year as utilities pass on the cost of mandatory conservation measures to their customers, according to a recent survey by credit-rating agency Fitch, Inc.

Seventy-eight percent of the 46 retail water utilities polled by Fitch said that rate increases would either begin next year or have already started.

The median increase in 2016 will be about 5 percent, although the largest increase will be 31 percent, Fitch said.

Facing a record-breaking drought, the California Water Resources Board last year adopted emergency regulations requiring a statewide 25 percent reduction in water sales.

As a result, many water utilities will experience reduced financial margins in fiscal years 2015 and 2016.

Kathryn Masterson, senior director at Fitch, said that the persistence of this latest drought has begun to outstrip the tools utilities typically use to manage the state's hydrological cycles.

Fitch said that while fiscal 2015 will show lower financial margins for many utilities, fiscal 2016 may see modest improvements, with the full rate impact benefitting financial margins in fiscal 2017, even if the drought continues at its present level of severity.

Let's hope that the EID directors keep an eye on finances and try and limit our increases in the future.

Sincerely,

John E. Thomson

President

DIXON RANCH *(continued)*

traffic improvements to be implemented on Green Valley Road, including road widening, new lanes and light signals. Class II bike lanes are to be constructed on both sides of the road. Some of the improvements the developers will pay for directly; others are already part of the county's capital improvement program, which the developer will contribute to through traffic impact mitigation fees.

The developers also signed an agreement with the county that extends the term of the approved tentative subdivision map for up to 20 years. In return, the developer agreed to pay a county/community benefit fee to be used by the county for any purpose that benefits the county, such as facilities improvement, maintenance or new construction.

Pro and con

The Dixon Ranch development attracted a room full of people both for and against the project.

Many supporters were staff from other senior living facilities in the county along with their residents. Sheri Peifer, chief strategy officer for Eskaton in Placerville, spoke favorably of the project as did several Eskaton residents, who said they appreciated how the homes for seniors included features that took their physical needs into account.

Others said it would bring additional money to the Green Valley area.

Speaking against were many of those who own property — varying in size from 1 to 10 acres — adjacent to the proposed project and others who objected to its size, density and impact.

Project neighbors told commissioners they bought where they did because the area was zoned 5-acre residential. Enjoying the rural atmosphere, they worried how the added noise, possible health risks from construction-related asbestos, draining of their wells and the sheer size of the project would affect their lifestyle.

They urged the project be downsized, be located elsewhere or, at the least, include transition zones between their property and the new homes.

Traffic issues were also brought up by several other speakers. Opponents claimed the project would add an additional 5,000 vehicle trips on Green Valley Road.

They asked the commissioners to deny the project and request the developers return with a less dense design.

Other concerns aired by opponents included the potential for more traffic accidents, the need for Class 1 rather than Class 2 bike

lanes, the impact of the development on oak woodland and whether there is sufficient water for the homes given the drought.

Korotkin noted that the developer completed three traffic studies and said the planned improvements — additional lanes, wider lanes and new signal lights — would mitigate issues.

He also said the development would get its water from the El Dorado Irrigation District. Putting in the infrastructure will allow others to use EID as well, Korotkin added.

As far as minimizing the impact on surrounding homeowners, he said they plan to use landscaping and setbacks as buffers.

With most of their questions answered during the presentation, the planning commissioners didn't raise many objections. Commissioner Gary Miller questioned the developer's request to reduce setbacks, street widths and sidewalks and worried that could lead to substandard housing.

Korotkin said the homes wouldn't be substandard.

The commission voted 3-1 to approve the project with Commissioners Dave Pratt, Brian Shinault and Tom Heflin voting for, Miller voting no and Rich Stewart recusing himself because of a potential conflict of interest.

The commission's recommendation now goes to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors for final approval. ~

Credit: Dawn Hodson, EDH Telegraph

HOTEL *(continued)*

addition to the hotel.

Sacramento's hotel market has surged in recent months, with some properties selling for record-setting prices and investors planning roughly 20 new lodgings from downtown to the foothills. Rising room and occupancy rates are the primary cause, and analysts believe the market will stay healthy for years. ~

Credit: Mark Anderson, Sac. Bus. Journal



Happy Valentine's Day



Artist's conception of proposed Lennar senior living center

LENNAR PLANS SENIOR LIVING CENTER IN EDH

Second EDH senior project in two years

A senior living center that is scheduled for a public review is just one piece of a massive El Dorado County development aimed at people 55 and older, reports Ben van der Meer in the Sacramento Business Journal.

The center, a two-story apartment complex with services for retirees, is part of a development by Lennar Homes called Heritage at El Dorado Hills. In addition to the senior living center, the development also will include 1,100 single-story homes on 250 acres. Robert Tummolo, division president with Lennar, said the first move-ins should begin this summer.

"There will be a lot of amenities where active adults can not only utilize them, but socialize," Tummolo said. A number of trails and pocket parks will connect the homes, and the entire development will share a pool, tennis courts, amphitheater, social center, exercise and yoga studio and other features.

Models for the homes are now under construction, in three different product lines. Tummolo said the homes will include an additional small living space with kitchenette that could host a family member, an extended guest or a caretaker.

The first phase will have 285 homes, with a grand opening event set for early next month. Home sales have already begun. Westmont, which is developing the assisted living/memory care facility in the project, is hoping to get underway by year's end. That project is before El Dorado County's planning commission this week.

Tummolo said he believes Heritage at El Dorado Hills will benefit from both being new and offering features attractive to both retirees from the region and the Bay Area.

"We're seeing a lot of move-down buyers who want to be closer to family," he said. "Certainly, we're very conscious of people who wanted to age in place and designed the

homes so they could do so."

Two years ago, in July of 2014, the Board of Supervisors approved plans for another new residential senior care facility in El Dorado Hills, to be located on a 20.3-acre site in Town Center West on the south side of Town Center Boulevard near the intersection of Latrobe Road. Plans called for a 114,000-square-foot, three-story building consisting of 130 units of studios, one- and two-bedroom suites, and dining and recreation facilities. No dates were given as to start of construction or completion. ~



LATEST WATER NEWS

*State conservation rules extended,
EID customers conserve,
EID rates going up*

California water officials have extended the state's mandatory conservation rules for an additional nine months, as residents fell behind in meeting water savings targets for a third consecutive month.

The rules, which mandate a 25 percent reduction in statewide water use to help conserve supplies during California's punishing drought, were extended past their mid-February expiration date through October, according to a release from the State Water Resources Control Board.

Governor Brown issued an executive order last year giving the water board authority to extend or scrap the conservation requirements as it sees fit. The extended regulations keep intact the state's 25 percent reduction target while providing slightly reduced

requirements for cities that can prove they have successfully cut water use, invested in recycling or desalination programs, or have added a significant number of new residents.

The water board reported that Californians cut water use by 18.3 percent in December, down from 20.4 percent in November and 22.2 percent in October. While the state failed to meet the 25 percent target over each of the past three months, it remains on track to satisfy the larger, year-long 25 percent target, barely, thanks to better-than-average conservation gains made in the hot summer months, when water use typically spikes due to an increase in outdoor irrigation use.

Officials say that, "While the recent rains and growing snowpack are wonderful to behold, we won't know until spring what effect it will have on the bottom line for California's unprecedented drought. We have to keep conserving water every way we can. Every drop saved today is one that we may be very glad we have tomorrow."

EID Customers' Conserve

Meanwhile, for the month of December, EID customers reduced their water use by 35 percent compared to December 2013.

EID is required to reduce its water consumption by 28 percent from June 2015 through February 2016, compared to the same months in 2013, under a mandate issued by the State Water Resources Control Board.

"EID customers have responded tremendously well to help us continue to meet and exceed our state-mandated conservation targets," said EID Public Information Officer Jesse Saich. "The rain we've been experiencing has been a welcome respite during this historic drought. During these months when outdoor irrigation is turned off, finding ways to conserve inside becomes more important."

EID Rate Hike

At the same time, at its January 11 meeting, the EID Board of Directors approved a series of rate increases for water, waste-

(continued on page 4)



SHERIFF EXPLAINS NEW OFFICE FACILITY

Sheriff John D'Agostini has held several town hall style meetings throughout the county to ask for the public's feedback and input on the project and the design of the proposed new Sheriff's Office Building.

According to Sheriff D'Agostini, our current Sheriff's Office Facility was built in 1971, and over the decades the department has outgrown the facility not only in size but also the functionality.

As part of the meetings, The Sheriff explained how the proposed building will provide the necessary items for the Sheriff's Office to be more functional, productive and cost effective in serving the citizens of El Dorado County.

If built, the facility will house all employees under one roof. ~



February - Wharton Esterick

Winter Garden

In winter's cold and sparkling snow,
The garden in my mind does grow.
I look outside to blinding white,
And see my tulips blooming bright.
And over there a sweet carnation,
Softly scents my imagination.

On this cold and freezing day,
The Russian sage does gently sway,
And miniature roses perfume the air,
I can see them blooming there.
Though days are short, my vision's clear.
And through the snow, the buds appear.

In my mind, clematis climbs,
And morning glories do entwine.
Woodland phlox and scarlet pinks,
Replace the frost, if I just blink.
My inner eye sees past the snow.
And in my mind, my garden grows.

—Cynthia Adams

WATER *(continued)*

water (sewer), and recycled water for 2016 through 2020.

The rate increases are designed to bring in the revenue needed to cover operating expenses and meet debt service obligations for vital capital projects like the emergency Esmeralda tunnel repairs (\$6.1 million), Forebay dam modifications (\$19 million), flume replacement (\$11.6 million), Main Ditch piping (\$6 million), and Sly Park Intertie (\$6.6 million).

For water, the 2016–2020 increases are 5%, 5%, 4%, 3%, and 3%. Sewer rate increases are 0%, 5%, 4%, 3%, and 3%. And recycled water rates will increase by 5%, 5%, 4%, 3%, and 3%.

Average water customer bills will see an increase of \$2.50 per month in 2016 and additional increases of \$2.62 in 2017, \$2.21 in 2018, \$1.72 in 2019 and \$1.78 in 2020.

Average sewer customer bills will see a monthly increase of \$3.35 in 2017, and additional increases of \$2.82 in 2018, \$2.20 in 2019, and \$2.26 in 2020. There is no sewer rate increase for 2016.

The first increase will take effect on February 1, 2016. All subsequent increases will be effective on or after January 1 of each year beginning January 2017 through January 2020. ~



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BLAC HEARS KIRK BONE, SETS MAY BOARD MEETING DATE

The BLAC Board of Directors hosted Director of Government Relations for Parker Development Company Kirk Bone at its February meeting. Bone updated the Board and BLAC members in attendance on the proposed plans for Village J.

The next regular board of directors meeting of the Bass Lake Action Committee will be held on May 2, 2016, at 7:00 PM at the home of John and Fran Thomson, 501 Kirkwood Court in Woodridge, El Dorado Hills, 530-677-3039.

As always, all BLAC members are cordially invited to attend all meetings. For further information about BLAC meetings and membership, please contact Vice President Kathy Prevost at 530-672-6836. ~

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