



The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

Go west, Roseville? A growing city ponders life after build-out

March 20, 2002
Section: EDITORIALS
Page: B6

OUR VIEWS

--Roseville, population 83,000, has run out of room to build. It has already approved plans for new neighborhoods on just about every square inch of undeveloped land within its city limits. When that building is done, the city will have grown by another 25 percent, to roughly 110,000.

The question before the City Council tonight is whether it wants to consider growing another 20 percent beyond that, by extending the city boundaries to the west. It's appropriate for the council to consider this move, with an open mind. And it's time for all inside Roseville to begin thinking long and hard about what it wants to look like at build-out - and if it is to grow outward, what kind of growth it wants.

On a map, the future Roseville could look like something similar to Oklahoma. It would have its existing boundaries, a rectangular center. And it would have this new 3,100-acre appendage pointing westward.

For Roseville, the panhandle would begin at Fiddymont Road, the existing western boundary of the city (Roseville Sun City is just to the east). The first piece of that panhandle is this 3,100 acres. The city has been studying how it would impact the existing Roseville if this rangeland becomes subdivisions with 20,000-some new residents.

The expansion would have its potential challenges. There's the issue of traffic, particularly if Watt Avenue (due south) isn't extended to connect with this community.

There's a limited water supply, and the need to either find a new supply, double-plumb the new homes so that wastewater greens the lawns - or possibly both.

And there are questions about schools (one new high school, a middle school and six elementaries) and how to find the money to build them (area residents just turned down a bond to build a new high school).

At this stage, none of these challenges appear so insurmountable that the council should simply say no. Yet all of them are real, as is the need to build more affordable housing throughout Placer County, and neighborhoods where residents can use transit, not just cars. Before Roseville goes west, there's a lot of work to do, and tough questions to answer.

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The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

Roseville votes to study annexation The city will help craft how the land to the west is developed.

March 24, 2002

Section: NEIGHBORS

Page: N1

By Maija-Liisa Young
Neighbors Staff Writer

--Roseville will begin studying possible annexation and development of property west of the city.

The City Council, in a 4-1 vote Wednesday, agreed to work with developers who propose residential, commercial and industrial projects on 3,100 acres west of Fiddymont Road. Councilman Richard Roccucci opposed the project, saying the development would reduce the quality of life in Roseville.

Westpark Associates of Roseville and Signature Properties of Pleasanton propose projects that would surround the city's new wastewater treatment plant.

Although the property is in unincorporated Placer County, it is covered by a memorandum of understanding between the city and the county. The memorandum is intended to give the city greater control of property along its borders, said Kathy Pease, a senior planner.

More than 1,000 acres of the property are proposed for parks, 200 acres for industrial space and 100 acres for a regional sports complex.

In May 2000, the City Council agreed to begin studying the potential for new development west of Roseville. As part of the process, city staff members prepared a feasibility analysis that examines technical studies for electricity, traffic, water, wastewater, solid waste and fiscal impacts of developing the property.

A community workshop was held in February to discuss the results of that analysis. The comments from the workshop and the results of the analysis were discussed at last week's council meeting.

The project would not overburden solid waste, electricity or wastewater services, Pease said. However, serving the development would produce a net loss to the general fund, she said, because it would not create enough money to cover the cost of police, fire protection and parks. If the development were approved, several city streets would operate at a low level of service by 2015 because of traffic from the project, said Rob Jensen, senior civil engineer.

The city also would need to consider new water sources, said Derrick Whitehead, environmental utilities director.

John Murray, chief operating officer for **Westpark** Associates, told the council and staff members that he would work with the city to solve these problems.

"We're willing to reduce the number of units as a traffic solution. We'll work with Derrick for some water solutions," he said. "From my experience, the process here is smart growth."

Mary Circle, a Roseville resident, said she attended the community workshop and was very impressed with how well city officials had researched the project.

Scott Heightower, who lives near the proposed project site, said the property eventually would be developed and that he would rather Roseville oversee the development than the county.

Jack Wallace, a longtime Roseville resident, said the traffic study does not cover the Cirby Way corridor, which he said is already congested.

After hearing the comments from city staff members and the public, Roccucci said he could not support the project.

"I don't believe this project is in the best interest of the city," Roccucci said. "I don't want to lower our standards any more."

Mayor Claudia Gamar disagreed.

The land will be developed eventually, Gamar said. Roseville has the opportunity to be involved and oversee what will be built on the site, she said.

"We are held up around the state as a city that does good planning and good growth, and I want to continue that," she said.

After the meeting, Murray said he was very pleased with the council's decision.

"The next stop is to take the recommendations and incorporate the changes in the land plan, including reducing the number of units. Then (we'll) make our application to the city," he said.

Once the application is filed with the city, the environmental studies can begin, he said.

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The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

Critics of Roseville plan seek voter OK on growth A 3,100-acre westward expansion project spurs the move to require ballot approval.

December 1, 2002

Section: METRO

Page: B1

By Jennifer K. Morita
Bee Staff Writer

--On vast fields stretching across 3,100 acres, developers envision the suburban village they want to build west of Roseville and annex into the city.

It would be a community with plenty of parks and open space, shops and jobs, the kind of place where residents could hop on their bikes to go to work, do some shopping nearby or take a short stroll to sit under a tree and read a book.

But critics of the project say expanding Roseville's borders to swallow another 3,100 acres and some 8,400 housing units would destroy valuable ecosystems, exacerbate air pollution and traffic and strain services for existing residents.

Consequently, members of the local watchdog group Friends of Roseville (FORE) - Phil Ozenick, Sandra Saraceni and Jack Wallace - have written a ballot measure that, if passed, would require voter approval for any future annexations into the city.

After a year-long feasibility study, the draft environmental impact report for **Westpark Associates and Signature Properties'** proposed West Roseville Specific Plan is scheduled to be released early next year.

While the proposal makes its way through a complex planning process and awaits consideration by city officials and the Placer County Local Area Formation Commission, FORE volunteers are collecting signatures - 6,901 are needed by Feb. 4 - to place their measure on a special-election ballot.

"We're going to need to do something before the people get pushed aside and the decisions are made before they really have an opportunity to say anything," Saraceni said.

The West Roseville Specific Plan proposes adding 6,000 single-family homes and a mix of roughly 2,400 condominiums, townhomes and apartments that would be built in six phases over 15 years.

A 200-acre high-tech and light-industrial job center along Blue Oaks Boulevard would have a transportation hub for buses and carpools to connect with the proposed Placer Parkway, which as planned would link south Placer County to the Interstate 5 corridor.

Developers also plan to set aside 1,100 acres for parks and open space, including a 100-acre regional sports complex with 10 tournament soccer fields, two football practice fields and a championship stadium for youth soccer and football.

"We want to bring forward a project that enhances the amenities and quality of life that I think people in Roseville expect," said John M. Murray, **Westpark** Associates Chief Operating Officer. "It balances the need for affordable housing and upscale housing for families and seniors, as well as the need to preserve open space and other important resources.

"The whole idea is that the plan incorporate as many 'smart-growth' techniques as possible. It's kind of a unique proposal. I don't think there's anything like it in Placer County or Roseville today."

Features such as 10-foot-wide bicycle and pedestrian "paseos" and a village center with retail and office space, as well as townhouses similar to the graceful brownstones on the East Coast, are what groups such as Smart Growth America are lobbying cities and developers to include in their projects.

The Washington D.C.-based Smart Growth America promotes "walkable communities" that are close to transportation centers, preserve open space and prime agricultural land and contain a mix of affordable homes, shops and jobs.

But some environmentalists, such as Terry Davis, coordinator of the Sierra Club's Motherlode Chapter, say the West Roseville proposal could have all the smart-growth features in the world and would still be objectionable because of its location.

"It should be closer to Roseville's existing urban core," Davis said. "This plan paves the way for additional growth and makes property further west suddenly accessible and potentially contiguous with Roseville. It really opens the whole of western Placer County and threatens to compromise all our efforts to preserve vernal pool habitats."

As it is, more than 90 percent of California's vernal pools, with their complex ecosystem of brilliantly colored flowers, rare plants and endangered animals, have disappeared in the wake of development, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Loomis resident Ed Pandolfino, conservation chairman for the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, said the area is a popular nesting ground for Swainson's hawks and home to other endangered or threatened species, such as grasshopper sparrows, prairie falcons and a burrowing owl that hunts during the day.

"This annexation is absolutely unnecessary," Pandolfino said. "The existing general plan for the county and the cities have enough room to accommodate all the growth that is projected for the county through 2040. It just makes absolutely no sense to do this.

"The only thing driving this are speculators who bought some land and are working the political process as hard as they can to get Roseville to expand."

The proposed 3,100-acre annexation is not part of any existing general plan, nor is the property currently in Roseville's sphere of influence.

"But, on the other hand, this piece is clearly a logical growth path for the city of Roseville," said Placer County Supervisor Robert Weygandt, who is chairman of the county's Local Area Formation Commission.

"Whether or not we want that growth is another question. But I also believe, strongly, that unless there is some really compelling reason to do otherwise, residential growth should be directed to the cities," Weygandt said.

University of California, Davis, professor Bob Johnston has been studying urban growth in the region for 25 years. He contends that Roseville and the county would be better off delaying a decision on the annexation.

"I think the developers are banking on Placer Parkway, which I don't like because it increases the web of freeways in this region and will cause development all around it," Johnston said. "I don't know if this project is good or bad. It's better than if it were in the middle of nowhere.

"But it needs to be studied in a regional context as part of the scenario of where does growth go in this region for the next 50 years."

Robert Fountain, director of the Sacramento Regional Research Institute at California State University, Sacramento, said since the development of North Natomas - with its retail and housing mix, walkways and proximity to light rail lines - developers are under increasing pressure to produce better and smarter communities.

"It was a giant step in this region," Fountain said. "Proposals like the one in West Roseville (are) head-and-shoulders better than anything we've seen before.

"This truly is smart growth internally. The question is whether putting it there is smart growth regionally. That's never been defined. There is no coherent concept of smart growth in this region."

When developers began to design their project, they spent a year identifying natural resources and carefully mapping where to put homes and roads, Murray said. As a result, only 6 percent to 7 percent of the oak trees in the area would be cut down and most of the major vernal pools would be preserved as open space.

Roseville Mayor F.C. "Rocky" Rockholm said open space is just one of the reasons he supports the project.

"That area could be turned into a conservatory or nature study area for children," Rockholm said.

"We know that property is going to be developed either by us or by Placer County. We need to control our borders because you only have to drive to Auburn to see what happens if you let the county surround you."

FORE's Saraceni said the group has resorted to the ballot measure to ensure residents' concerns about development are heard. "It's really just to give the people the opportunity to make an important decision on the future of their city, because you're not going to get it from the council," Saraceni said.

In 1996, Roseville voters overwhelmingly turned down a similar measure that would have required a vote anytime proposed amendments to the general plan would cause traffic conditions to fall below a level defined as acceptable.

Roseville's Daron Anderson worked with residents and businesses and formed Roseville Citizens for Responsible Planning to fight the 1996 measure.

"The American way is that we elect people that we believe exhibit strong leadership, and we develop a system or process, which has been established here in the city of Roseville and has certainly created a model community," said Anderson.

"I think this project has the potential to really be a great community. With the soccer fields and open space, it could be a real benefit to the city of Roseville, but we still need to get the details on environmental impacts, traffic and water impacts."

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The Web Site of **The Sacramento Bee**

Roseville growth initiative on ballot If approved in November, the measure would let voters decide on any city expansion to the west.

May 15, 2004

Section: METRO

Page: B1

By Jennifer K. Morita
Bee Staff Writer

--This November, Roseville voters will decide whether they want to control the city's ability to grow westward over the next 30 years.

The Placer County registrar of voters verified enough signatures to put city critic Phil Ozenick's growth management initiative on the Nov. 2 ballot. If the initiative is approved, plans to annex unincorporated land west of Fiddymont Road and north of Baseline Road would need a vote of the people.

"We feel growth should be something that we should be able to vote on," said resident Alyssa Mulcahy, who helped gather signatures. "It doesn't mean there can't be growth. It just means people have to vote on it. Developers have to make their pitch and if it's so great and people really think we need more housing, then they can vote for it."

Meanwhile, city officials are moving ahead with plans to adopt their own growth limit ordinance sometime this summer.

"I want to put something in place so anybody thinking about this initiative could have a clear look at our ordinance and make their decision," Roseville Mayor F.C. "Rocky" Rockholm said. "I still think what they're proposing is the wrong way to go for Roseville," he said of initiative proponents. "I just don't agree with their approach."

The City Council, which has until June 16 to certify the initiative petition, will discuss options at its next meeting, scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Ozenick, backed by members of the citizens group Friends of Roseville, or FORE, proposed the urban growth boundary in January.

A month later, the City Council approved a 3,162-acre annexation as part of the West Roseville Specific Plan. Council members also gave the go-ahead to a development agreement allowing **WestPark** Associates and Signature Properties to build more than 8,000 homes and apartments west of Fiddymont Road.

Since the council already approved the West Roseville Specific Plan, Ozenick's initiative would not affect the project, according to city staff.

The ballot measure could, however, put a kink in plans to increase Roseville's sphere of influence by 2,300 acres north and south of the West Roseville Specific Plan area - the precursor to a future annexation.

City staff told the council last month that Ozenick's initiative won't stop the county from developing the land, leaving Roseville with no control over roads, traffic, open space and other impacts.

City officials have yet to say what their growth boundary policy would look like, but Rockholm has stated in the past that he doesn't want Roseville to grow beyond Watt Avenue.

Mulcahy and other initiative proponents doubt that the city's ordinance would control growth effectively.

"The trouble with that is a few years down the road, we may have a different council or a developer might say he's going to give us this and that," Mulcahy said. "If it's left up to the council, all they have to do is have a meeting and do away with the ordinance."

FORE had to gather at least 5,085 valid signatures of at least 5,085 registered voters to qualify the initiative for the ballot.

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The Web Site of The Sacramento Bee

Roseville annexation plan wins approval The action clears the way for development west of the city.

July 15, 2004
Section: METRO
Page: B3

By Niesha Gates
Bee Staff Writer

--Roseville's annexation of 3,162 acres of farmland west of the city was approved Wednesday, an action that will allow construction of homes to begin as soon as next spring, officials said.

The Placer Local Agency Formation Commission voted unanimously to expand Roseville's boundaries for the development project known as the West Roseville Specific Plan. The project calls for more than 8,000 homes and apartments that will house about 20,000 new residents. The LAFCO board also unanimously voted to increase the city's sphere of influence by 2,365 acres surrounding the annexation area.

"This is a very good proposal to promote orderly growth, which is part of why we're here," said Spencer Short, Lincoln's mayor and a LAFCO board member.

Critics have argued against increasing Roseville's sphere of influence, because it sets the stage for more development.

Roseville officials say the extra acreage will play a part in the city's 20-year plan for growth.

"Clearly, it's an area that we contemplated developing, or we wouldn't include it," Patty Dunn, assistant city manager and community development director, said after the meeting. "It's something the council will have to decide on, but it represents a future growth area."

The LAFCO vote was the final step developers **WestPark** Associates and Signature Properties needed to begin seeking specific construction approvals from the city.

John Tallman, vice president of Signature Properties, said the vote puts to rest years of waiting.

"It's a great day that's been seven years in the making," Tallman said after the approvals were granted. "It shows that we spent a lot of time doing our homework."

The West Roseville Specific Plan includes six schools, a library, a technology business park and a "village center" with restaurants, shops and loft-style homes surrounding a park. The plan also will leave more than 600 acres as open space.

Scott Hightower, who lives about a mile from the future community, told LAFCO members he is pleased with the plan.

"I think it's probably the highest quality project I've ever seen," Hightower said.

Dick Eagan, the only other person to speak during the public comment portion of the meeting, said he "likes the all-inclusive nature of the community."

The plan has not been without controversy, however.

Concerns over the impacts on water supply, air quality and traffic contained in the plan's environmental impact report prompted two lawsuits against Roseville earlier this year.

The Sierra Club, the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society and the town of Loomis filed one lawsuit, claiming the environmental impact report on the project doesn't adequately address these impacts. Four citizens also sued Roseville over the plan.

The lawsuits are in settlement negotiations, officials said.

LAFCO members questioned Roseville staff members about water availability in the annexed and surrounding areas.

Derek Whitehead, environmental facilities director for the city, told the commission the water supply would be met by using groundwater, reclaimed water and an agreement with the San Juan Water District for surface water from the American River.

Other impacts, such as traffic, will be mitigated through improvements paid by development fees, officials said.

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The Sacramento Bee

Wednesday, Aug 16, 2004

Roseville, developers reach pact on habitat

By Jennifer K. Morita
BEE STAFF WRITER

The city of Roseville and developers of a 3,000-acre housing project have reached a settlement with environmentalists that could raise as much as \$85 million to protect Placer County habitat.

"In many ways, the agreement is a model for the region," Sierra Club Mother Lode Coordinator Terry Davis said. "We're having difficulty finding funding to pre-

serve natural habitat in western Placer County before it's consumed by growth. This is a way we can do that."

Roseville officials earlier this year approved a plan by WestPark Associates and Signature Properties to extend the city limits westward for the construction of 8,390 homes and apartments.

Known as the West Roseville Specific Plan, the project is expected to add 20,000 residents to the city. **► ROSEVILLE, back page, A16**

Roseville: Fees placed on home resales

► FROM PAGE A1
pected to add 20,000 residents to the city.

The Sierra Club, Sierra Foot-hills Audubon Society and town of Loomis promptly sued Roseville and the developers, claiming their environmental analysis did not adequately address impacts on traffic, air quality and the water supply.

"We worked a very long time on the project and felt that it was very thoroughly analyzed and did a lot more than any other project of its size or scale has ever done in this region," Signature Properties Sacramento Vice President John Tallman said.

"But obviously there were some that didn't feel that way, and over the course of the last four or five months, we crafted something that takes the open space commitment to a new height," he said.

City officials, who have called the project one of the best-planned in Roseville history, entered into settlement talks soon after the lawsuit was filed partly to avoid an expensive and lengthy court battle.

The Sierra Club, Audubon Society and Loomis are the same entities that sued Placer County over its approval of the Bickford Ranch development near Lin-

coln. That case is still making its way through the courts nearly three years later.

The West Roseville Specific Plan settlement agreement calls for a half-percent conveyance fee on the gross sales price of resale homes for 20 years. The fee won't apply to the initial purchase of the new homes.

The money will go to the private, nonprofit Placer Land Trust, which will focus on preserving vernal pools and grasslands in the western part of the county.

Most of the land will be preserved by purchasing conservation easements from willing landowners. These easements prevent property owners from subdividing their land for development.

"We've raised the bar," Roseville Mayor F.C. "Rocky" Rockholm said. "This is going to preserve more open space and still allow us to build in a responsible manner."

Environmentalists say western Placer County has some of the finest habitats for threatened species, such as grasshopper sparrows, prairie falcons and burrowing owls. Davis said they hope to preserve as many as 6,600 acres.

The settlement agreement provides a relatively reliable source

of funding for open-space preservation in a county that is among the fastest-growing in the state.

Four years ago, Placer voters turned down a proposal for a quarter-cent sales tax increase that would have raised an estimated \$8.3 million annually for a county-run open-space preservation program.

Now, WestPark Associates and Signature Properties have agreed to loan the private Placer Land Trust \$8 million in the next three years so it can begin preserving land before money from the conveyance fee comes in.

But even with the advance, Davis acknowledged that it may not be possible to save 6,600 acres in a region where pressure to develop is high.

"Our hope is that the real estate market will cool down a bit," Davis said. "The 6,600 acres is a goal, and it depends on a certain rate of resale, a certain inflation of the value of these homes and other factors that are all like looking into a crystal ball."

"But we feel the potential is there, and it's not an unrealistic goal."

In a separate deal, Loomis will receive \$75 per dwelling unit to improve a portion of Sierra College Boulevard.

Loomis officials said earlier

they joined the lawsuit because they believe the Roseville project will add too much traffic to regional roadways.

The settlement agreement is expected to generate \$600,000 to widen and install traffic signals on Sierra College Boulevard from Rocklin to Loomis.

Although this stretch of the rural thoroughfare is miles from the Roseville project, Loomis officials say the fee is the town's fair share of regional road improvement money.

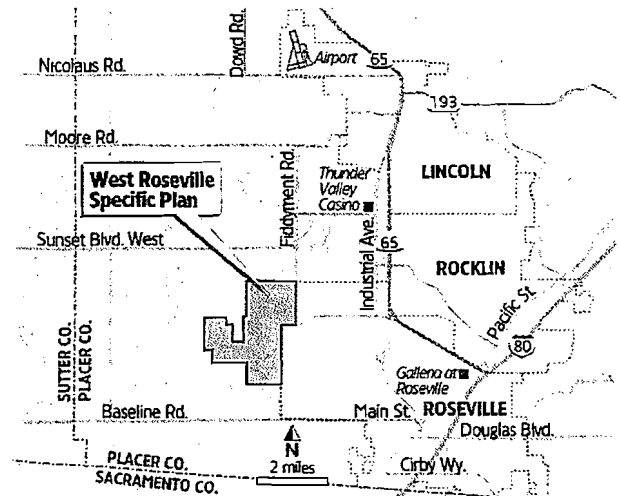
"Improvements to Sierra College Boulevard through Loomis are at the bottom of a list of regional road projects," Mayor Miguel Ucovich said. "So we needed to come up with another method of securing that money."

"We're appreciative that Roseville and developers were willing to do this."

The agreement with the environmental groups also requires the city to operate a 15-passenger bus from the future development to the Watt Avenue/Interstate 80 light-rail station during commuter hours once 3,000 building permits have been issued.

Developers also will pay another dwelling-unit fee to raise \$1 million for the Placer County Air Pollution Control District.

In the project plan the city ap-



proved earlier this year, developers promised to pay several other impact fees - costs that will ultimately get tacked onto the price of the new homes.

Roseville already has among the highest median sale price in the Sacramento region.

But the city also will require 10 percent of the new homes be affordable to low- and moderate-income buyers.

"There's going to be such a mixed variety of housing units, with condos and rental apartments, that there will be something for everybody," Rockholm added.

Tallman said developers hope to begin construction next year, with the first homes going up in spring 2006.

Rockholm said the settlement agreement was reached in "record time."

"I stand by what I said about this being a well-planned project," Rockholm said. "But going to court is not always the answer. It wastes a lot of money, and you end up with the same settlement."

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Sacramento Business Journal - April 11, 2005
<http://sacramento.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2005/04/11/daily3.html>

SACRAMENTO Business Journal

LATEST NEWS

April 11, 2005

Environmentalists settle West Placer lawsuit

Celia Lamb

Staff Writer

Placer County landowners and federal agencies have settled a lawsuit that challenged development plans for 3,142 acres west of Roseville, the environmental groups involved in the suit announced Monday.

Butte Environmental Council and Defenders of Wildlife sued the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in November. The environmental groups claimed the agencies violated the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act by permitting the destruction of vernal pools that provide critical habitat for threatened and endangered species. The proposed Westpark/Fiddymont Ranch project would cover 2,436 acres of vernal pool grasslands.

The settlement involves the two federal agencies and two development companies -- 1600 Placer Investors and Roseville/Fiddymont Land Ventures, according to the press release from the environmental groups. The agreement requires developers to preserve two acres of vernal pool critical habitat in Placer County for each acre developed.

"The settlement allows the project to go forward," said Annie Mudge, an attorney with Stoel Rives LLP, which represented the developers. "Roseville approved the project last year, and developers are delighted to be under way with construction again."

The developers believe the project will benefit the region by adding 8,390 homes, a regional sports park, a mini-downtown or "village center," miles of recreational trails and several new schools, Mudge added. About 670 acres within the project area will remain open space.

The Westpark/Fiddymont Ranch project is part of the West Roseville Specific Plan, which was challenged in state court last year by a different set of environmental groups. That suit was settled by imposing a requirement for fees on homebuilding and home sales, with revenue to be used to buy conservation land. The fees are expected to raise up to \$85 million over the next 20 years.

The federal suit settlement announced Monday "significantly strengthens the (earlier) settlement by 'front-loading' the protection of thousands of acres of vernal pool grasslands within the first five years of the development project, instead of waiting another 10 years," said Kim Delfino, director of California programs for Defenders of Wildlife.

The settlement for the state suit required the preservation of 4,500 acres of grasslands, Delfino said. The federal settlement requires at least 3,835 acres of that total to be habitat critical for the recovery of vernal pool species.

The state suit required developers to lend the nonprofit Placer Land Trust \$8 million to start buying land. The federal settlement upped the ante. Landowners paid a \$26 million no-interest loan upfront to the trust for the recent purchase of 1,084 acres on three parcels in the path of future development, Delfino said. It's the largest purchase so far for the newly formed land trust.

The land trust must start repaying the loan after initial home building permits are issued, but about \$18 million won't be paid back until the trust has finished buying the critical habitat.

Developers have also agreed to lend an undisclosed sum to the land trust immediately, so it can buy land or conservation easements on an additional 1,000 acres of vernal pool grasslands within the next five years, Delfino said.

The federal settlement also requires developers to pay the land trust \$661,380 for land management over the next two years, plus \$350,000 for two studies. They would address the cumulative losses of vernal pool grasslands within the Central Valley, and the biological viability of small vernal pool preserve areas that are surrounded by development.

The federal agencies agreed to write terms of the settlement into their approvals for the project, setting an "important precedent for future development in Placer County," according to the press release.

The settlement agreement was completed 30 days ago, but the announcement was delayed by a gag order from the court.

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Sacramento Business Journal - August 17, 2004

<http://sacramento.bizjournals.com/sacramento/stories/2004/08/16/daily13.html>

SACRAMENTO Business Journal

LATEST NEWS

August 17, 2004

Environmentalists, Loomis settle lawsuit against Roseville

Celia Lamb

Environmentalists and the town of Loomis have settled a lawsuit that alleged the city of Roseville's approval of a proposed 8,390-home development west of the city violated California environmental law.

A settlement with the environmental groups requires fees on homebuilding and home sales in the West Roseville Specific Plan area to generate revenue for open space land purchases, according to a city of Roseville press release. The fees could raise up to \$85 million over the next 20 years.

"The agreement will benefit all present and future Roseville residents as well as the greater Placer County region," said Roseville mayor F.C. "Rocky" Rockholm. "The environmental legacy of West Roseville will be felt for generations to come as more open space is purchased and set aside for all to enjoy."

A separate settlement with Loomis requires a \$75-per-home fee to pay for Sierra College Boulevard "improvements," the press release said. The city expects that fee will raise \$600,000.

Roseville's City Council approved the 3,162-acre West Roseville Specific Plan on Feb. 4. Westpark Associates and Signature Properties Inc., which own the property, plan to develop housing for 20,810 people and commercial projects that could support 3,726 jobs. They have dedicated nearly 950 acres for open space and parks.

The Sierra Club, the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society and Loomis sued the city in Placer County Superior Court to challenge that approval. The settlements concluded five months of negotiations.

The agreement with environmental groups calls for:

*A fee of 0.5 percent of the gross sales price on every resale of a single-family home in West Roseville for 20 years following the initial sale. New home sales are not subject to the fee. The nonprofit Placer Land Trust will collect the money and use it to buy and preserve open space, with a priority on vernal pool and grassland habitats in western Placer County.

*One 15-passenger bus to carry West Roseville residents to and from the Watt/I-80 light-rail station during peak commute times. The city will provide the bus after 3,000 building permits have been issued in the West Roseville development.

*About \$1 million in per-home fees for the Placer County Air Pollution Control District, on top of the \$785,700 already required of landowners by development agreements with the city. The air district will use the fees "for mitigation of air quality impacts," according to the press release.

"Western Placer County is one of the finest examples of harmony between wildlife and working farms," Ed Pandolfino, conservation chair for Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, said in the press release. "In winter grasslands attract hundreds of hawks and the flooded rice fields support thousands of ducks and geese. With

this agreement as a model we can have growth in west Placer and still preserve our important wildlife legacy."

"I commend the city for its willingness to address the impacts of growth," Terry Davis, a representative for the Sierra Club's Mother Lode Chapter, said in the press release. "In many ways the agreement is a model for the region."

Signature Properties and Westpark Associates have also approved the agreements, according to the press release.

The West Roseville Specific Plan area is west of Fiddyment Road and north of Pleasant Grove Boulevard. The Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission recently approved Roseville's request to annex the land.

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Record Roseville land sale could change buying style

MIKE MCCARTHY / STAFF WRITER

A consortium of three builders has paid the highest price ever for a piece of land in the Sacramento region, some \$400 million, to buy 1,483 acres west of Roseville from developer William Falik and his partners.

The purchase of the Westpark Associates portion of the 3,162-acre West Roseville Specific Plan area will likely set a model for future land acquisitions in the Sacramento region. Such consortiums are almost unknown locally; more often, individual homebuilders will scrap over land, bidding the price into the stratosphere.

In this case, the builders offered a can't-refuse price, giving Falik's group a likely profit of hundreds of millions of dollars.

The deal displays the continuing powerful demand for new homes, combined with the relative shortage of zoned residential acreage.

"It shows how difficult entitlements are to get in this region," said Steve Thurtle, senior vice president of Richland Planned Communities Inc., one of Roseville's biggest land developers. "If the market continues strong, there will be more of this, where entire projects are bought by consortiums of builders."

He's heard of only one other such consortium purchase, a much smaller deal in West Sacramento in which Shea Homes and Meritage bought 594 lots in Bridgeway Islands.

But the consortium technique is fairly common in the land-starved Bay Area, said Thurtle and others.

Pulte Homes Inc., Centex Homes and Lennar Corp. purchased the Westpark piece this week. The price was not disclosed, but industry observers say it was \$400 million.

Land set for 4,000-plus homes: Overall, the Westpark project is approved for 4,285 houses, condominiums and apartments. The land was annexed to Roseville last year.

Also annexed was the balance of the West Roseville Specific Plan, 1,678 acres controlled by Signature Homes. That company plans to start construction on its first of 4,000 homes this summer.

Falik's group appears to have made a good profit. The group bought the Westpark land in 1989 for \$9.6 million, or a little more than \$6,000 per acre for what was then almost 1,600 acres, said Dave Jarrette, a partner in the Roseville appraisal firm of Giannelli, Jarrette, Waters & Holland.

The developers later sold about 100 acres to Roseville, which used it to build a wastewater treatment plant. Last week's sale would put the per-acre price for the remaining 1,483 acres at almost \$270,000, the going rate for such land, he said.

What's remarkable, if reports of the price are correct, is the bulk sale price.

"It is by far the granddaddy of all sales of all time in the Sacramento region for a single piece of property," Jarrette said. "It shows an extreme confidence in the market, and the project, to plunk down that much money."

The closest deal to it was this year's sale

'It is by far the granddaddy of all sales of all time in the Sacramento region for a single piece of property.'

Dave Jarrette

Giannelli, Jarrette, Waters & Holland

Del Webb to take reins: Pulte's Del Webb division, builder of the Sun City projects in Roseville and Lincoln, will be the project manager for the group, because its staff has extensive experience with land development, said Judy Bennett, a spokeswoman for Del Webb.

Del Webb builds age-restricted projects, and the West Roseville land will be no exception. The company plans to build 710 detached, single-family homes.

Webb will also coordinate construction of roads, a school and other public works, as well as creation of the community's clubhouse and other amenities, she said.

The partners split the housing approximately in quarters, with the two Pulte operations getting half the total, she said.

The consortium also bought the specific plan's main commercial area, the village center that's planned for retail and offices as well as high-density housing.

Some 35 percent of the specific-plan land is open space and parks, an unusually large amount for the Sacramento region.

Webb won't target the retiree crowd for this project. Noting that 30 percent of its buyers in Sun City Lincoln Hills have been working people, the company will gear the Westpark project to that market — people aged 55 to 60 who might prefer, for instance, to have tennis classes rather than sewing classes in the clubhouse.

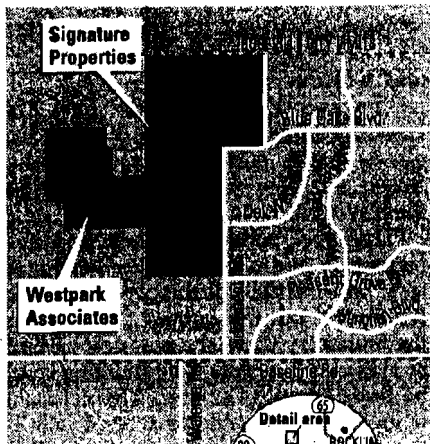
Del Webb will soon begin holding focus groups to learn what future homebuyers may want there, Bennett said.

To further cater to those active youngsters, the project could include a full-sized gym and a large swimming pool.

Del Webb plans to start a 650-home age-restricted project in Elk Grove's Laguna Ridge community this summer. The company is also working with the city of Galt, hoping to get approval of a much larger project.

Del Webb also has purchased a large parcel in Placer Vineyards, still being processed by Placer County. Observers say Del Webb may have been impelled to this purchase because Placer Vineyards, farther west of Roseville, may take quite awhile to develop.

Pulte Homes, the Pulte group that builds conventional homes, will also develop some of the site, Bennett said.



of Delta Shores in south Sacramento for about \$100 million. Before that, the record-breaker was Hovnanian Forecast Homes' purchase last year of 434 acres in North Natomas for \$92 million.

The broker for the Westpark deal was Chris Ksidakis of Gateway Co.