

Company wants to build subdivision near Apple Valley

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By IMRAN GHORI

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A San Diego-based developer is proposing to build a 3,114-home subdivision near Apple Valley, a project that would be one of the largest ever in San Bernardino County.

Strata Equity Group is seeking to build a master planned community on 1,557 acres of flat desert land two miles east of Apple Valley that it is calling Hacienda at Fairview Valley. It would also include 15 acres of commercial development and 336 acres of parks and open space.

The project would require a general plan amendment as the rural zoning designation in the area ranges from 5 acres to 40 acres minimum lot sizes. Hacienda would be split into villages with minimum lot sizes ranging from 4,000 square feet to 2 acres.

A representative for Strata could not be reached for comment Thursday.

The county is analyzing the application, which it received last October. Earlier this week, the Board of Supervisors agreed to seek an environmental consultant to prepare an environmental impact report.

The county plans a thorough study looking at all aspects of the project, said Julie Rynerson Rock, director of land use services for the county. She estimated it would take a year to complete the study and for the project to go before the county planning commission for consideration.

Rock said she expects the project may spark opposition.

"You have a lot of people who are not interested in having the desert change that rapidly," she said.

The Center for Biological Diversity is watching the project with concern, said Jonathan Evans, an attorney for the environmental group.

Evans questioned the reasoning behind building such a large development in a rural, desert area that doesn't have adequate water supply or freeway access. The group is concerned the development would create more pollution, further tax the groundwater basin and harm the desert tortoise, he said.

"This proposal is dumb growth at its worst," he said.

Reach Imran Ghorl at 909-806-3061 or ighori@PE.com

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