

DEVELOPMENT

# SDNA project on hold

## Hearing delayed 60 days

By Rusty Bradshaw  
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City Rancho Estates residents got a reprieve from a dense housing development adjoining their properties, but it may end up being just delaying the inevitable.

A Planning and Zoning hearing scheduled Jan. 16 was delayed 60 days to allow Youngtown officials to go through the general plan amendment process to allow rezoning



Mike LeVault

about 22 acres of property between the town's Agua Fria Ranch subdivision and Sun City's Rancho Estates. Strategic Development of North America approached Youngtown officials with a rezoning request for the property fronting 112th Avenue and extending west between North Kolina Lane and West Cumberland Drive. The property is zoned for single-family dwelling and rural districts.

The Rancho Estates area was originally zoned to allow for larger lots to allow for a house and outbuildings on each property. The original design was to allow for horse properties, although there

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## Housing

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is likely no longer residents who own horses in Rancho Estates.

The proposed development property was once within Sun City but was annexed by Youngtown in 1996.

"Every time a developer approaches a municipality for a zoning changes, there is a set procedure we must go through," said Youngtown Mayor Mike LeVault.

He said the planning and zoning hearing is likely rescheduled for April, although nothing was listed on the town's calendar of events on its website, [www.youngtownaz.org](http://www.youngtownaz.org).

Rancho Estates residents object to the development in the form it was presented to Youngtown officials. SDNA officials want to construct a planned area development with selected use for only single-family residences, according to John Luke of SDNA in a letter to residents.

"The current site has the Hansen residence and two out buildings," he stated in the letter. "The remaining part of the site has been graded or disturbed."

Rancho Estates resident Doug Hill said the devel-

opment plan is to build 130 starter homes, including single and two-story, on the property. He believes that will bring increased traffic into the ranchette neighborhood.

"This could bring up to 200 cars per day out of there, we have no street lights and the roads are designed more for a rural neighborhood," Mr. Hill said.

Rancho Estates resident Shelly Ellison also believes at least part of the property planned for development, although in Youngtown, remains under the Rancho Estates CC&Rs. A March 19, 1975 "Declaration of Restrictions" states, "No building, structure or improvement, other than landscaping, may be placed thereon." The property described is commonly referred to as Tract D, upon which SDNA plans to construct another 25 homes "when legal issues are resolved," according to an aerial map with notes submitted to Youngtown officials.

"We believe the Rancho Estates CC&Rs are the legal issues they refer to," Mr. Ellison said.

Rancho Estates residents do not oppose housing on the property, but want it to match their neighborhood.

"We have no problem if they build them to meet our CC&Rs," Mr. Ellison said.

That is not likely, according to Mr. LeVault.

"When developers plan something like this they are most interested in how much money they can make," he said. "By planning it as they have, they believe that is the most cost effective for them."

Developers will incur additional costs to the development because of potential requirements to get the plan approved. Mr. LeVault said it is likely a sewer lift station will need to be moved closer to the development. He added the developer could make a deal to share costs with EPCOR Water Co. or have the water company cover the entire cost.

"They will construct a road on the west edge of the development to connect with Peoria Avenue," Mr. LeVault explained. "We are also working with the developer to mitigate the increased traffic on 112th Avenue."

That increase in traffic is also a concern for Rancho Estates residents.

"The road to the west is fine, but the one to 112th (avenue) and eventually onto 111th (avenue), we believe, will be more widely used be-

cause it is quicker and easier," said Rancho Estates resident Mark Haugebak.

Mr. LeVault hopes, if the development gains approval, it will help get an extension of Peoria Avenue from where it drops into the Agua Fria riverbed area to between Agua Fria Ranch's northern wall and a business there to connect with Agua Fria Parkway, which eventually connects with Olive Avenue.

"That would help alleviate increased traffic on Peoria east into Sun City and clean up the north entrance/exit to Agua Fria Ranch," he explained.

Mr. LeVault said town officials will require the property developer to make streets and roadways within the housing development privately owned so Youngtown will not be responsible for maintenance.

Youngtown has no property tax so will not receive revenue in that way if the development gets the green light. The town's revenue is more tied to state-shared revenue, so could see some benefit from the added housing.

"If there is no growth, we will not benefit from state-shared revenue coming from growth," Mr. LeVault said.

Youngtown is limited in

growth to some infill opportunities, such as the SDNA housing development.

Despite that, Rancho Estates residents plan to continue the fight. Other concerns are increased foot traffic in their neighborhood which has no streetlights and narrow, rural-style streets that include no sidewalks; asbestos, lead and other construction debris buried on the development site; increased air particulates during construction; and the possibility of residents losing some property to easements if sidewalks are required to deal with the added foot traffic.

"This does not fit the character of our neighborhood and we are afraid it will set a precedent," Mr. Hill said.

Rancho Estates residents approached Sun City Home Owners Association for assistance. While the agency has no jurisdiction on land zoning, even in Sun City, Rick Gray, SCHOA board member, agreed to be a liaison between SCHOA and residents. Mr. Hill said Mr. Gray has been trying to negotiate a compromise between residents and the developer.

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# Developers find use for every inch of Sun City

ANNIE BOON  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City's newest developments are plugging their way through the planning and permit process.

Developers say the projects are right on track.

Both the Riverwalk Village at Sun City condominiums and Sun City Manor subdivision are fielding hundreds of calls from potential residents interested in taking advantage of a new housing option in the world's first active adult retirement community.

Ground has yet to break on the Riverwalk Village at Sun City condominium development, but more than 50 residents have already put down deposits to reserve their condo, said Carl Bommarito, president of Vision 5 Development, Inc. There also is a list of 275 names of those interested in learning more about the condos.

"Everything is progressing forward. We're working on our plat and all the documents and paperwork," Bommarito said. "People are still coming in and signing reservations, which is wonderful."

The land has been graded and prepared for construction, and providing the project continues smoothly, groundbreaking should be in January and residents could move in by fall, he said.

Plans for the gated Riverwalk development include 213 condominium units and a retail strip on 15 acres at the northeast corner of 99th and Olive avenues, with the New River bordering one side. The first phase will feature 191 units designed from 12 one- and two-bedroom floor plans. There will be 22 three-bedroom plans with "mother-in-law" suites planned during phase two of construction. The units range from 937 to 2,514 square feet.

The condo units will be arranged in separate three-story buildings with ground level parking and private storage facilities for each unit. Elevators will be large enough to accommodate multiple wheelchairs and emergency gurneys. Common amenities will include a clubhouse, fitness center, heated

See SPACE, A5



PETE PALLAGI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Land is prepared where Vision 5 Development Inc. will build Riverwalk Village at Sun City, a new housing option in the retirement community.

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# SPACE: Interest high in Sun City

## From A1

pool and a Jacuzzi. A garden area will include several 7 feet by 8 feet garden plots.

Sun City Manor developers, Namwest LLC, hope to start construction on its 140 single-family, single-story homes in August or September. David McBride, vice president of land development, said models should be ready to view sometime in April.

The development will be on the vacant land next to Sunland Mortuary off Sunland Drive and Del Webb Boulevard. McBride said a sales trailer has not yet been established for the site. Architectural drawings indicate the homes will likely be 1,600- to 1,900-square feet and positioned on spacious lots.

There had been concerns that access through Sunland

Drive or Del Webb Boulevard wouldn't accommodate the traffic, but after a traffic study was completed, experts concluded that the streets could handle the flow of cars, McBride said.

Both Riverwalk Village and Sun City Manor will be a part of the Recreation Centers of Sun City, as each new home owner will pay the \$330 per lot RCSC assessment fee and the \$2,100 capital preservation fee. And both developers said they are honoring Sun City's senior age-overlay restrictions.

Doug Kelsey, Sun City Home Owners Association president, said Sun City Manor will enforce its own set of CC&R's until the development has been sold out. Once that happens, Namwest will step aside and the existing Sun City CC&Rs will take precedence, Kelsey said. HOA doesn't foresee a problem with Namwest's CC&Rs

because they are actually more restrictive than Sun City's. But in the event of a conflict between CC&Rs, Kelsey said Sun City's rules will trump Namwest's.

Riverwalk Village also will have its own set of CC&Rs, and Bommarito said he's working with SCHOA to ensure the governing documents are aligned.

The Riverwalk Village sales center summer hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday. It's in a retail shopping strip at 9008 N. 99th Ave.

For information about the Riverwalk Village at Sun City condominiums, call Vision 5 Development at 480-837-9300.

For information about Sun City Manor, call Namwest LLC at 602-344-4600.

Annie Boon may be reached at 876-2532 or [aboone@aztrib.com](mailto:aboone@aztrib.com).

DAILY NEWS-SUN

**SATURDAY, JAN. 24, AND SUNDAY, JAN. 25, 2004**

# Phase II addition

## Residential developer eyes Sun City plot

**ANNIE KARSTENS**  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sun City may get its first new homes in two decades if the sale of nearly 30 acres is finalized.

Developers are planning 261 new homes on vacant land at Sunland Memorial Park Mortuary and Cremation Center. The land and cemetery are owned by Service Corporation International, which put the unused land up for sale about two years ago.

CBJ Development Inc. holds a contract on the land and has proposed building the single-level homes, but the sale is not quite final, said Greg Bolton, SCI spokesman.

Sunland will remain under the ownership of SCI, which owns cemeteries and funeral homes across America. The pet cemetery won't be disturbed and Sunland will retain a 10-acre portion of the unused land for future burial plots.

What's left is 27 acres of land that CBJ President Brad Junker said is a prime real estate opportunity. Contracts have been drawn up for

preliminary building plans, but the sale of the land, for an undisclosed multi-million dollar price, is pending the necessary county approvals.

Junker said he is confident the contract will be finalized soon and he hopes to break ground this summer and have the entire development built out by the fall of 2005.

"A lot of people don't want to buy used homes, they want the new ones," Junker said, emphasizing the appeal of developing new homes among old ones.

"It's the first project of individual residential units that's been built in Sun City for about 20 years."

For the last couple of decades, the Recreation Centers of Sun City has leased the property from SCI for \$1 a year for use by the Sun City Agricultural Club, also known as the Sun City Garden Club, said Norm Dickson, vice president of the RCSC board of directors.

**See HOMES, A5**

Carol Allen peers over her fence at 27 acres on which 261 single-story homes may be built. The land is currently taken care of by the owners of Sunland Memorial Park and Cemetery in Phase II of Sun City.

**STEVE CHERNEK/DAILY NEWS-SUN**

When the land was put up for sale, the RCSC proposed splitting the land and buying just the 10-acre portion used for gardening. SCI rejected the offer, and the RCSC couldn't afford the price tag on the entire lot.

CBJ has been in business for about six years and has developments under way in El Mirage, Phoenix, Avondale and other Valley locations. Junker said he's been contacted by prospective buyers from all over the country who have heard they may be building in Sun City. One request came from Chicago, he said.

"That's shocking because we haven't even turned a shovel of dirt yet," Junker said. "This means that we were correct in our assumption that people want to move here and just want new homes to move into."

The new homes would be incorporated into the recreation center system and other community functions as a full-fledged part of Sun City, Junker said, adding that all age-restrictions will be enforced, and no existing policies or procedures will be changed.

Junker said one of CBJ's primary goals is to stay consistent with what Sun City already is.

"We're doing the best we can to cooperate with neighbors and to be a vital part of Sun City," he said. "There's always opposition to everything, but we've been getting mostly positive reactions."

Tom Stolt, first vice president of the Sun City Home Owners Association, said there is no set date for the final sale, but CBJ and the HOA have been in talks for about three months.

"The developers have been kind enough to meet with us and ask what our thoughts are," he said.

Elaine Averitt, long-range planner for Maricopa County Planning and Development, said CBJ is off to a good start in the preliminary stages of the planning and rezoning process, but company officials should expect the approval process to last about eight months.

Averitt said CBJ Development had a pre-application meeting Nov. 18 with county planners, giving Junker the opportunity to present his rezoning proposal.

The current zoning states that residential homes must be built on no less than 1 acre of land, or 43,560 square feet. Junker's pre-application proposal requests an R-2 zoning, which would permit one home per 6,000 square feet, Averitt said.

Averitt said the average lot size in Sun City is more than 8,000 square feet, although it ranges greatly.

The proposal also includes a Residential Unit Plan of Development overlay to allow large-scale residential development where variation in development standards is warranted due to topography, innovative project design, or other considerations, Averitt said.

In addition to the rezoning approval process, CBJ officials are required to maintain regular meetings with the HOA, the RCSC and other local officials. They will also be involved in a public participation program that enforces communication with the community and ensures the public's voice will be heard.

CBJ is required by law to send an informative document to neighbors within 300 feet of the development before any building can start, Averitt said.

There will also be a meeting between CBJ and a Technical Advisory Committee before any sale or contract is finalized. No date is set for the TAC meeting, which is open to the public. Participants will include county planning and development representatives, the Maricopa County Department of Transportation, county flood control district representatives, Maricopa County Environmental Services, the Board of Supervisors and local organizations such as HOA and RCSC.

Sun City resident Mary Ruth Saletzki, who lives in the 16000 block of 110th Avenue where a brick wall separates her backyard and the vacant lot, said although the new homes seem like an improvement, she is wary of the small lots the homes will occupy.

"I suppose the builders are trying to make the most of the property," she said. "It's OK if people don't mind living close enough to pass their coffee cups to each other through their windows."

Saletzki was also concerned with traffic and suggested building a private drive for the new neighborhood.

There are only two ways into and out of the land adjacent to Sunland: Del Webb Boulevard onto Sunland Drive, which is a single lane road that wraps around the cemetery's private drive; and the round-about way of Agua Fria Drive.

Junker said he recognizes traffic concerns and has no answers at this stage of planning, but said a solution will arise out of meetings with the county.

When traffic and access questions are answered, Saletzki said she will look forward to the development.

"If the new homes are nice and new, it will probably improve the value of our property," she said.

Sun City residents Roger and Carol Allen, who also live in the 16000 block of 110th Avenue and share a wall with the unused land, said they like the lot as is

and would rather the land simply become an extension of the cemetery.

"Well, they're not noisy neighbors," Carol said with a chuckle.

The Allens said they believe 261 homes seems to be an excessive number, but they are glad the units will be single-level houses rather than multiple-story apartments. Both of them enjoy the quiet streets of their neighborhood and would balk at sharing it with hundreds of new vehicles, they said. Roger also hopes the developers would incorporate desert landscaping, as he has enjoyed in his own yard.

HOA President Jim Corcoran echoed some anxieties about the density, traffic and landscaping.

"If you figure two cars per home, or one car and a golf car per house, we're talking 530 or so more vehicles in the area," Corcoran said.

Upgrading the streets to four-lane roads, and improving the quality and width of the terrain is key, he said.

"Sunland (Drive) is so bad, I won't even drive my golf car on it," he said.

Corcoran is also worried that with the continuing drought, 261 new grass yards will only add to the problem.

Junker said he had initially planned on some grass yards, but later realized that many Sun City residents have converted to desert landscaping. He is currently researching the options, and no decisions have been made.

Dan Salter, Sunland's general manager, said Sunland and its pet cemetery will stay in tact and under the same management, despite rumors circulating about the entire cemetery being sold.

Salter also said he is all for some new neighbors.

"I think it's wonderful," he said. "There's hardly any place to grow out here and anytime you can revitalize an area is beneficial."

Sunland's private drive has always been used for residential traffic, and so far it hasn't been a nuisance, Salter said.

"As long as people are mindful of funeral processions, we don't have any problems," he said. "However, anytime you have that significant amount of additional cars, there's bound to be an impact."

The Sun City Posse's headquarters are also adjacent to the property. Cmdr. Leta McCormick said she foresees the development having a positive impact on the community.

"We would have no problem with new neighbors," McCormick said. "They'll be good neighbors, as will we."

Added HOA's Corcoran, "Growth is always good. By selling all those new homes, it'll bring more folks in which will certainly build the economy."

# HOA, PORA join forces

## Groups unite in opposition to Continental plan

By JEFF OWENS  
DAILY NEWS-SUN

In a display of solidarity, the Sun City Home Owners Association will bolster the position taken by Sun City West's Property Owners and Residents Association opposing aspects of Continental Homes' planned Pleasant Valley Ranch development.

Continental wants to build 2,400 family homes on 638 acres on Deer Valley Road at the entrance to the Sun City West expansion area.

HOA leaders have decided to draft a letter to the county Planning and Infrastructure Development Department supporting PORA's bid to limit the development to slightly fewer than 1,800 homes.

"PORA's stand is to reduce the density," said Jerry Swin-

*'There's no doubt that development will impact Sun City. Our principal concern is traffic.'*

**Byron Healy  
HOA president**

tek, HOA vice president.

HOA Director Blaine Donaldson said, "I would like to see us go on record as supporting PORA's position."

PORA rejects Continental's proposed density of 6.35 homes per acre, but will accept a higher density figure than Sun City West's 2.7

homes per acre.

While PORA has a long list of reasons why it doesn't want Continental packing so many houses in Sun City West's back yard, HOA is casting wary eyes on a single main concern: traffic.

"There's no doubt that development will impact Sun City," said Byron Healy, HOA president. "Our principal concern is traffic."

Healy and the other HOA directors are concerned that Pleasant Valley Ranch will pack even more cars on already-crowded Bell Road, currently the main east-west access route across the Sun Cities/Surprise area.

Further congestion on El Mirage Road, Union Hills

► See High density, A5

◀ From A1

Drive, Loop 303 and 99th Avenue is also a concern, Healy said.

Loop 303, which will arc north of the development, isn't scheduled for completion until 2002, and widening El Mirage Road into a six-lane major thoroughfare is still in the planning stages.

Healy said increased air pollution and "a very deep concern about additional water (consumption)" are also on HOA's list regarding the development.

PORA President Phil Garner said while his group has formally given its input to the county, "We can't demand, we can only recommend."

Inadvertently, Continental has proven to be the catalyst for improved cooperation between HOA and PORA, a development applauded by both leaders.

"We're trying to build a spirit of cooperation," Healy said. "It hasn't (often) been done in the past. We think it's beneficial to both communities."

PORA numbers about 16,000 members, roughly half the population of Sun City West. HOA consists of about 18,000 Sun City residents.

"I'm pleased to see HOA — a long-established organization — lend more credence to what PORA is doing," Garner said. "That's an effort both Byron and I want to do."

# Coalition plans petition drive

## STAFF REPORT

The Sun City West Community Coalition plans to ask every resident of Sun City West to sign petitions to cut down the size of the proposed Pleasant Valley Ranch development adjacent to the community.

The coalition has been fighting to slim down the planned 2,400-home project on Deer Valley Drive at the entrance to the expansion area — or to stop construction there entirely.

The petition drive began last week with phone calls to the 800 or so people who attended an earlier coalition meeting and left their names and phone numbers on sign-in sheets.

Those residents were asked to help by taking petitions to 50 of their friends and neighbors. Callers said the coalition would provide the circulators with names and addresses for their use.

Coalition head Leonard Guy was critical of the Sun City West Property Owners and Residents Association at its meeting last week, suggesting that his group might be more representative of community opinion about the project than the much-bigger PORA membership seems to be.

Guy asked if PORA had polled its members and later said he and the coalition in-