

✓ SCOTTS Valley 1990

Skypark project has neighbors angry, worried

By KATHY KREIGER
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — A proposed major new development may not be built until the 21st century, but neighbors are already worried about the 4,000 extra cars it would funnel through their neighborhoods daily.

Located where the city of Santa Cruz once had an airport, the 96-acre property known as Skypark is slated to include 500,000 square feet of shops and businesses, 320 houses, a park and a new middle school.

Traffic and a proposed road face neighborhood opposition, and figure to be the central issues in a public hearing on the project's environmental report at tonight's City Council meeting.

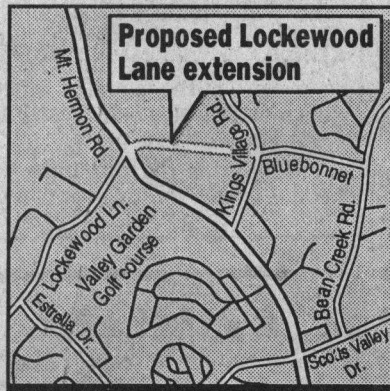
"What is happening along Bluebonnet Lane is absolutely unthinkable, in this quiet little neighborhood," said John Corrick, a 20-year resident of the Bean Creek Road area, in a letter of protest to the city. "... Please do not even THINK about diverting any of that heavy Mount Hermon traffic into our quiet little residential neighborhood. We LIVE here." Although the project could mean some \$1.5 million in sales-tax revenues to the city, it will also mean residents in surrounding areas will have thousands of cars passing through their neighborhoods each day.

Neighborhood opposition has centered on a proposed road through the project.

Formerly known as the "Bean Creek Bypass," the road has previously aroused vehement opposition from neighbors in the Bluebonnet Lane and Bean Creek Road neighborhoods.

Now the road is shown in documents as the "Lockewood Lane Extension," but neighbors aren't any happier with it.

Nearly 50 residents showed up



last week when the Planning Commission took public comment on the environmental report.

Traffic on Bluebonnet Lane is expected to increase from 600 cars a day to 4,600 if the proposed road is put in, according to the report.

Traffic on Bean Creek Road, measured at about 3,000 vehicle trips per day in 1988, would be expected to more than double, to 7,000 trips per day.

Residential streets are not expected to carry more than 3,000 trips a day, said the report.

The bypass, shown in the city's 1986 General Plan, would make it easier for through traffic to use a shortcut well known to locals who want to bypass traffic jams and stoplights on Mount Hermon Road.

The proposed "Lockewood Lane Extension" would tie that route to Lockewood Lane on the west, and ultimately Graham Hill Road.

City officials deny the road is a bypass.

"We don't consider it a bypass, we consider it access to the property," said City Manager Chuck Comstock, who said that improvements planned for the Mount Hermon Road/Scotts Valley Drive intersections should improve traffic flow enough that people won't need a bypass.

Project at a glance

PROJECT STATISTICS:

- 96 acres
- 500,000 square feet of retail and office space
- 320 housing units
- New middle school on 5.5 acres
- 16-acre community park
- 11.5 acres of open space

LOCATION:

Northeast of Mount Hermon Road, between Kings Village Road and Lockhart Gulch Road.

BACKGROUND:

Site of former Santa Cruz Skypark Airport.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Operating expenses: Yearly tax and fee-revenues to the city would be about \$1.1 million; costs to the city are estimated at \$300,000.

Infrastructure costs: Project impact fees paid by developers, estimated at \$4.8 million, would not cover the estimated \$11 million in infrastructure costs.

ISSUES:

● **Traffic:** Neighbors in surrounding residential areas on Bluebonnet Lane, Bean Creek Road and Lockewood Lane fear effect of some 4,000 car trips daily.

● **Wild plants:** A locally rare native orchid, the hooded ladies' tresses, would be eliminated from the site.

● **Police:** The project would generate as many as 1,500 addi-

tional calls to the city's police department, requiring two new officers and one more support worker.

● **Sewage:** The city's sewage system would have to be enlarged.

BENEFITS TO CITY:

● **Tax revenues:** \$1.5 million per year estimated income from sales taxes.

● **Park:** Park facilities for about 5,600 people.

● **School:** Proposed site of new middle school.

● **Housing:** Some 320 houses, at least 40 units for low-to-moderate-income families.

● **Jobs:** an estimated 600 to 800 jobs created.

MEETINGS & DEADLINES

Today: Comments on draft environmental impact report heard at 7 p.m.

Thurs. Jan. 30: Deadline for written comment on draft report.

Feb. 17 (tentative): Final report available.

March 11 (tentative): Final report hearing at Planning Commission. If needed, a second hearing will be April 2.

April 22 (tentative): Final report hearing and vote by City Council. If needed, a second hearing will be May 13.

FOR INFORMATION, or to confirm dates and times, call 438-2324.