

# Construction may start in spring on upscale Graham Hill housing

Graham Hill 2-14-01  
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An upscale residential development at the Graham Hill showgrounds, in the works for a decade, may break ground this spring.

Peter Dunne of Los Gatos-based Standard Pacific, which owns the wooded 170-acre site between Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley, hopes to begin work in May.

Plans to build 60 homes on half-acre lots were approved by the county Board of Supervisors four years ago, but requirements to obtain fire and sewer service haven't

been met.

The developer could clear those obstacles March 7 when the Local Agency Formation Commission meets. The commission will consider a request to annex the showgrounds to the Scotts Valley Fire District and a proposal for a taxing district to pay for a sewer line to the Santa Cruz wastewater treatment plant.

The annexation proposal also affects Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park and about 45 homeowners along Graham Hill Road.

This area is the responsibility of the county Fire Department, which has been contracting with the California Department of Forestry, but Dunne said the Scotts Valley Fire District historically has responded to emergency calls.

Response time from Scotts Valley's Sims Road station a half-mile away is about three minutes.

However, tight finances have prompted fire officials to consider staffing the Sims Road station with volunteers and moving full-time firefighters to a new station on Glenwood Drive. In November, voters rejected a tax measure to staff all three stations with paramedic firefighters.

If firefighters respond to Graham Hill from the main station on Erba Lane, the response time would be longer. But the Erba Lane station is closer to Graham Hill than the nearest CDF station.

Patrick McCormick, executive officer of Local Agency Formation Commission, expects to have an annexation recommendation by the end of the month. He said he can't calculate how much property owners in the showgrounds development would pay for the new sewer line until he has cost estimates from the county Public Works Department.

McCormick said it hasn't been decided whether other homes on Graham Hill Road with septic problems would be allowed to hook into the new sewer line. County environmental health officials are studying that issue.

Standard Pacific bought the showgrounds property from the S.H. Cowell Foundation, which was established by the family that once owned Pogonip, Gray Whale Ranch and the property that is now Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

*The Scotts Valley Fire District board will discuss the Sims Road fire station at 7 tonight at 7 Erba Lane, Scotts Valley.*

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