

1,500 new homes, shopping center on drawing board for Scotts Valley

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SCOTTS VALLEY — A Texas development company is considering the north end of Scotts Valley for a 320-acre project which could include a "quality" shopping center with a department store, a medical office complex and as many as 1,500 new homes.

In return for project approval, Can-Am Retail Development Inc. of Houston may offer to build a new freeway overpass at Granite Creek Road, relocate Vine Hill Elementary School and Mountain Brook Mobile Home Park and build a new city park, say those familiar with the proposal. The park would include a baseball diamond, tennis courts and a swimming pool,

The five-year, three-phased project would be among the largest developments undertaken in Santa Cruz County, if not the largest.

But first, Can-Am will have to get the approval of the Scotts Valley City Council, whose three-member majority has pledged to curtail runaway development.

Can-Am has purchased 180 acres of land formerly owned by Noor Bilawalla and is negotiating for Bilawalla's Santa's Village property, said company president Norm McCallum.

A preliminary land-use plan is expected within 30 days, said McCallum, who has discussed the plan with all five City Council members, School Board trustees and the Scotts Valley Union School District Superintendent of Schools Don Slezak.

The project will be similar to one proposed by Caz Development Co. of Santa Clara, which had offered to develop all of Bilawalla's land and to make substantial street improvements if it were allowed to build the Orchard Business Park light-industrial complex.

City Council members turned down the application for Orchard Business Park, but expressed interest in having one builder develop the vast amount of vacant land in the city's north side.

Can-Am, unlike Caz, has gone ahead and purchased the land. The company also has offered the Scotts Valley Union School District \$60,000 to study the district's long-term educational needs.

Can-Am's plan will not go before the council for at least a year, said McCallum.

The company also will need to wait until the city adopts its new General Plan, said Mayor Barbara Leichter. Estimates for that range from spring to early fall 1985.

The project gets its first official airing Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. when School Board trustees discuss Can-Am's proposed contract to pay for a long-range master plan. Trustees meet at the district office, 155 Treetop Drive.

The \$60,000 would pay for a plan to determine whether the school district should close Vine Hill School and build a new school on its Glenwood Drive property.

The money is essentially a gift, because "there are no strings attached" compell-

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ing the district to act on the study's findings, said district fiscal officer Sheri DiSalvo.

Some of the other ideas of the development include:

- A "regional shopping center" on 27 acres of land on which the controversial Orchard Business Park was proposed.

McCallum said it is "premature" to say what kind of shopping center will be built. "Several stores are interested in going into that area. It's a case of putting together the proper land-use plan."

Sources say FedMart (an East Coast discount chain), Ross or Target stores have been mentioned.

A regional shopping center is one such as Vallco Village or Valley Fair in the Santa Clara County, which draw shoppers from outside the area.

Said McCallum, "We did a demographic study which tells us that everybody in Santa Cruz goes to San Jose to do their major shopping. There's a vacuum there we'd like to fill."

- Relocating or purchasing Vine Hill

Elementary School to build a new freeway interchange and building a new school on Glenwood Drive.

- Building between 1,200 and 1,500 residential units and a new mobile-home park which would include coaches relocated from Mountain Brook Mobile Park.

- Building a medical office complex on Scotts Valley Drive where Mountain Brook Mobile Park is now.

Moving Siltanen Park farther up Glenwood Drive so that it would be next to the relocated or new school. McCallum has mentioned putting in a baseball diamond, swimming pool and tennis courts.

- Building married-student housing, athletic fields or a field house for Bethany Bible College.

McCallum expressed confidence about dealing with the Scotts Valley City Council.

"I have met with all five members of the council, and I think they are all responsible people who aren't against growth but who are in favor of organized growth."

"I hope you'll emphasize that there is intelligent, responsible growth, and there

is chaotic growth. What we want to do is offer a very positive development for Scotts Valley."

Council members are not so sure.

Joe Miller acknowledged that the development, particularly the shopping center, "would mean an enormous amount of money for Scotts Valley."

"But I question whether he can do it. He says he can draw shoppers from Santa Clara County, but I'm not sure that's true." Leichter said that at this stage the project is "a developer's pipe dream" and that she would want to hear what the residents on the north end of town have to say.

"If they want to add almost one-third of the population of the city to their area, then it could be a possibility," Leichter said.

The project would be the first in California for Can-Am, a retail development company which has four commercial projects encompassing 850,000 square feet pending in Texas.

McCallum has hired Scotts Valley civil engineer Gene Scothorn to work with him.