

✓ Work on Skypark project under way

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Work has begun on the first phase of what will be a 190-home development at the old Skypark airport site on Mount Hermon Road.

Augie Dent, manager of land and planning for developer Kaufman and Broad, said preliminary grading work will take about a month. Construction of the first batch of houses is expected to begin in late May.

Skypark is an 82-acre development on Mount Hermon Road next to Scotts Valley Square. It includes the housing subdivision, a 27-acre city park and a proposed 25-acre commercial/office area.

The final documents approving the 190-home subdivision were signed by city officials last week, and Dent said that phase of the project could be completed

in as little as two years. The single-family homes are expected to sell for between \$230,000 and \$250,000.

Consultant Michael D'Amico now is helping the city find a potential developer for the commercial portion of Skypark. Proposals from developers must be submitted to the city by May 8. D'Amico said he expects a commercial developer to be selected by mid-May.

When the city signed the necessary agreements last week for work to begin on the subdivision, the Scotts Valley school district reaped a huge windfall.

The final agreement included a \$2.85 million settlement with the district for 5½ acres in Skypark that was to be used for a new middle school. The land proved unsuitable, however, because of nearby businesses, and Kaufman and Broad agreed to pay the school district for the

site.

Superintendent Andre LaCouture said the school district received its check Friday. The money has been earmarked for the construction fund that will be used to build a new high school, middle school and elementary school in the next four years.

During last week's City Council meeting, Councilwoman Peggie Lopez noted that signing the final documents for the Skypark development amounted to a landmark moment.

"It's been thousands of hours of work put in on this. ... There are times a lot of us didn't think it would happen," said Lopez, adding that it "won't take nearly as long" to build the houses as it did to approve the project.

Negotiations with Skypark landowners and work on a development agreement have spanned the last decade.