

NEWLAND SIERRA

POSITION: The Chamber's Infrastructure, Housing & Land Use Committee voted to SUPPORT the proposed development on October 17, 2017. The Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT the proposed development on January 9, 2018.

STATUS: Newland Sierra requires a County General Plan Amendment. It is expected to be before the County's Planning Commission in mid-2018.

AT-A-GLANCE

Newland Communities is proposing a development project in Northern San Diego County that includes 2,135 new housing units at varying price points, significant open space preservation and transportation improvements to address congestion concerns. The project requires a General Plan amendment as it is currently zoned for 2 million square feet of retail and 99 homes on large lots.

SUMMARY

The Newland Sierra development is a proposed project in Northern San Diego County, located between the cities of San Marcos, Escondido and Vista, off of Deer Springs Road exit on the I-15. It is being proposed by Newland Communities. In total, the project is comprised of 1,986 acres, of which only 777 will be developed, with the remainder (over 60%) being reserved for open space.

Specifically, the project includes:

- 2,135 homes at varying price points both detached and attached
- 36 acres of park space
- 19 miles of trails
- 81,000 square feet of retail
- Widening of the existing Deer Springs Road to four lanes (as currently dictated in the County's Transportation Element)

Because the project requires a General Plan (GP) Amendment, it requires approval by the voters or by the County Board of Supervisors. At time of writing this brief, Newland had completed its Environmental Impact Report and comment period on that report concluded in mid-August of this year.

The land is currently slated, via the General Plan, for development. However, the development approved within the General Plan is limited to 99 homes on substantially sized lots and over 2 million sq. ft. of commercial, retail and office space.

ANALYSIS

At issue is whether the County Board of Supervisors should approve the General Plan (GP) amendment to allow Newland Sierra to be built on land owned by Newland Communities.

The current zoning in the County's GP allows for 99 homes on large lots with over 2 million square feet of commercial retail and office space. Given the housing crisis that is looming over the region's economy, the shift from large commercial space to thousands of new houses, starting at \$380,000 (which is well below the County's median price point for homes at over \$600,000), is promising. The current need for additional housing stock locally cannot be understated, as reports have placed our housing deficit at 50 percent. By 2020, the County will need 162,000 new units, but is on pace to build a mere 80,000. Further,

the units ultimately brought to market, if staying on trend developed in previous years, will produce homes that are still unaffordable for low and moderate income families. If granted the amendment, Newland hopes to deliver the new homes in 2022.

For reference, the table below shows the county’s progress in building the homes committed to during the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) process mandated by the state. Tellingly, the County (like most jurisdictions) lags in producing units, and currently sits at a deficit of over 17,000 homes that must be built to comply with state requirements. Newland Sierra could help in chipping away at the housing deficit and the County should be very interested in considering such opportunities to deliver homes to a community in need.

2010-2020 RHNA Cycle (Unincorporated County Allocation)											
Income Category	RHNA Allocation	Housing Production									Remaining Allocation
		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Subtotal	
Very Low	2,085	18	1	3	1	0	1	0	1	25	2,060
Low	1,585	82	22	20	21	25	25	24	80	299	1,286
Moderate	5,864	9	90	36	65	114	228	177	94	813	5,051
Above Moderate	12,878	268	304	260	393	576	613	381	712	3,507	9,371
Total	22,412	377	417	319	480	715	867	582	887	4,644	17,768

While it is a deviation from what the County planned when it’s GP was adopted in 2011, the developer has mitigated the impacts of their proposal through a variety of community benefits and improvements including:

- \$167 million in public benefit including \$58 million in transportation improvements;
- \$11 million in TIF funds for the County;
- Addresses traffic concerns by including a widening of Deer Spring Road, which experiences congestion today due to intra-county travel, from two to four lanes;
- Possible expansion of the existing park and ride currently near the site and the developer is actively pursuing an internal and external shuttle system to reduce resident’s future reliance on individual vehicles;
- The first carbon neutral, net-zero project in San Diego County.