

# The future of rural Granite Bay?

## More controversy brews over 'Park at Granite Bay' ambitions

BY ANDREW WESTROPE

**W**hen it spent last month weighing the proposal for a new 56-home neighborhood on Sierra College Boulevard, Granite Bay's Municipal Advisory Council will be revisiting a heated, ongoing controversy.

The proposed project, called The Park at Granite Bay, faces criticism from some residents who fear that developers will turn their rural neighborhoods into a dense suburbia.

According to the project's website, [theparkatgranitebay.com](http://theparkatgranitebay.com), The Park will build 56 unique homes and a 0.81-acre park on a 16.3-acre plot. The site is zoned

single-family residential, with a combining agriculture district and a minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet. The project application would rezone the property as single-family residential with a minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet, and amend Granite Bay's general plan to change the site's land use from rural low-density residential to high-density residential.

The applicant is Maverick Partners West, a real estate investment and development company headquartered in Sacramento.





The proposal follows a series of land use changes criticized by neighbors for their density or non-conformity with surrounding properties, most notably Greyhawk III, a 20.55-acre housing project on Sierra College Boulevard and Eureka Road which was initially rejected by the Granite Bay MAC. The Placer County Board of Supervisors overruled that decision June 7.

Speaking for the developer, Bill Halldin said several workshops and forums collected feedback from residents, and as a result, the project will include a 15-foot buffer zone around its perimeter and only allow single-story homes to abut neighboring properties.

He added that the county's environmental impact report found no issues, and the project's Facebook page had over 1,600 likes as of Wednesday.

Speaking for a petition that collected over 700 signatures last year opposing The Park at Granite Bay, resident Marianna Bekhet said her biggest problems with the proposal are the possibility of serious traffic impacts and setting a precedent for rezoning rural land, as the proposal calls for 40 more homes than the land is currently zoned for (16).

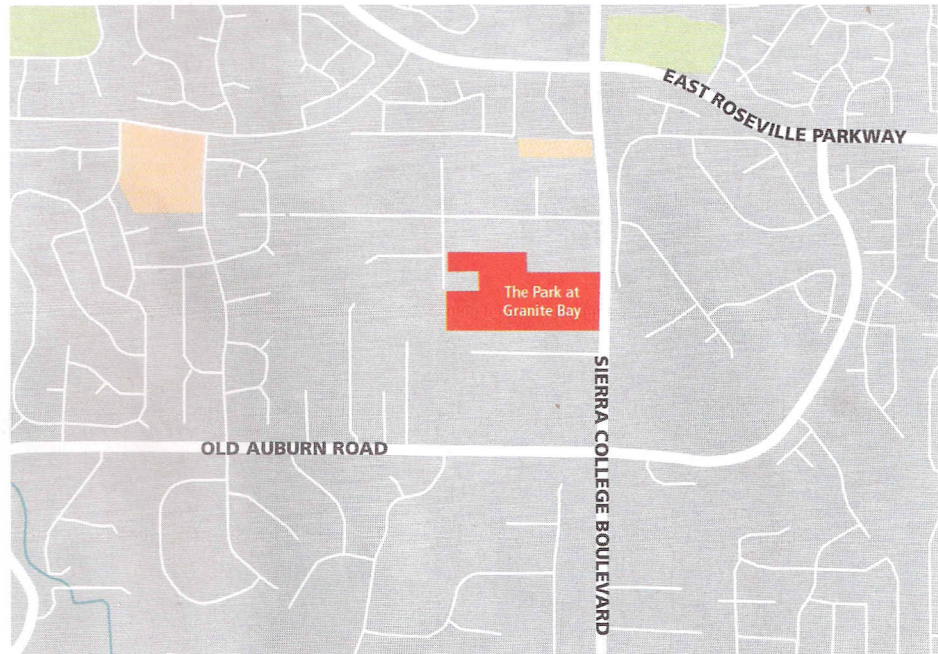
Bekhet also worries that, precedent aside, adding 56 houses to the neighborhood will impact the home values and lifestyles of people who bought there expecting to maintain a rural homestead.

"This is clearly taking rural, agricultural land surrounded on four sides by people who can keep farm animals, and turning it into suburbia," she said. "If you were buying (a home) expecting to have maybe two or three neighbors, and now you could have eight to 12, if you're ever trying to sell it, that's going to look very different."

Bekhet estimated about 10 people have property sharing a fence with the project site, with lots ranging from one to five acres, and all but one of them — a renter — is opposed to the project.

Bekhet and her neighbors collected more than 700 signatures last year on a petition against The Park at Granite Bay, which she said fell on deaf ears when presented to the office of Supervisor Kirk Uhler.

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**“ The major reason we got so many people to sign it ... is the traffic impact and traffic safety. They're worried about this kind of thing happening in the rest of the open space around. ”**

Marianna Bekhet, Granite Bay resident

and traffic safety,” she said. “They're worried about this kind of thing happening in the rest of the open space around.”

Another neighbor, Carla Novaresi, said the project confronts the reason she moved to Granite Bay in the first place — to have open space and keep animals. It will also funnel the neighborhood's drainage through her property, since the county doesn't have a system of its own in place.

“I have a major concern with it — the amount of water, but now I'm going to be getting chemicals, gas and whatever else anybody dumps in the storm water, and I could have continuous water year round,” she said.

Halldin, on the other hand, was adamant that The Park at Granite Bay has local support, as more than 800 people signed up for the “interest list,” most of whom, he said, were local people looking for housing options to continue to live in or move back to Granite Bay. ■

