

Big bucks spent on EDC growth initiatives

By Peter Hecht, Sacramento Bee

Building and real estate interests, led by the developer of the Serrano El Dorado Hills community, have dumped more than \$1million into the campaign to defeat growth control ballot measures in El Dorado County.

Parker Development Co., builder of the 4,700-home Serrano community, has donated \$866,750 through its affiliates, Serrano Associates and Marble Valley Co., to campaign committees opposing local November ballot initiatives M, N and O. The money has helped bankroll a blitz of mailers as well as anti-initiative television commercials during the World Series.

Parker Development is seeking county zoning changes to build 3,236 homes and townhouses and retail and event centers in a development called the Village of Marble Valley, planned for oak-studded hills south of Highway 50 in El Dorado Hills. In addition, the company is hoping to win approval to build 1,028 homes and townhouses on the site of the former El Dorado Hills golf course and a second location in the community.

A ballot measure backed by growth control advocates – Measure M – could challenge Parker Development's plans. Measure M would ban any new residential subdivisions in the county if the California Department of Transportation determines that any stretch of Highway 50 west of Placerville is at or is forecast to reach gridlock traffic levels. The measure also would prevent the county from rezoning rural residential properties for higher-density housing construction.

Another growth restricting initiative, Measure O, qualified for the ballot thanks to a grass-roots movement of residents

fighting a proposed 1,045-home subdivision, San Stino, near Shingle Springs communities of mostly 5-acre parcels. Measure 0 seeks to amend the general plan to effectively stop San Stino and similar building plans by restricting higher-density residential construction in Shingle Springs, Camino, Pollock Pines and parts of El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park.

A third initiative, Measure N, was put on the ballot by a Sacramento commercial builders alliance, Region Builders. Measure N would extend for 25 years the provisions of a 1998 voter-approved measure that imposed steep traffic impact fees on subdivision developers. But Measure N also proposes allowing local county road funds to be used for improvements to Highway 50, a move seen by opponents as a potential boon for commercial building in the freeway corridor.

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