

INDIO

Development could bring thousands of homes and more to north Indio

Proposal also calls for shops, restaurants, other businesses

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About 180 acres of desert dirt in north Indio could become a new development with up to 3,200 apartments, as well as shops, restaurants and other businesses, possibly including a distribution center.

Plans for the project, The Oasis at Indio, are in very early stages.

A community representative for BH Properties, a Los Angeles-based real estate investing company, said it's working on getting entitlements that would allow it to eventually develop the property at the southwest corner of the intersection of Monroe Street and Avenue 42, just north of Interstate 10.

Those entitlements are merely the first of multiple rounds of city approvals that would be required before building any large-scale project on the site.

Beatrice Eslamboly, the BH Properties representative, said the company is seeking to secure entitlements to build up to 3,240 multifamily residential units, 1.8 million square feet of space designated for "light industrial use" and about 20,000 square feet of space for commercial or retail use.

However, Eslamboly said those numbers merely represent the maximum the company would be allowed to build and not how much it would ultimately choose to build. Those proposed limits, she said, reflect what is allowed and envisioned for the site in the city's housing element and other documents meant to guide development.

Eslamboly said the company is interested in bringing a large supermarket and a hotel of the caliber of a Radisson or Hilton Garden Inn, along with other kinds of businesses that residents want and are not currently available on the north side of Indio. She said the developers also hoping to bring a medical urgent care facility, something nearby residents have indicated is needed.

The overall intent of the project, she said is to bring new housing, jobs and businesses to Indio and provide a city-like and sustainable lifestyle option where people can get goods and services in walking

distance of their homes. She said there is demand for such communities in the Coachella Valley, with people increasingly seeking a more walkable lifestyle.

The company has created an informational website for the project, theoasisatindio.com, that includes site plans and renderings of potential designs.

A presentation posted on the website touts several community benefits the firm says the project would bring, including the expansion of Avenue 42 to four lanes and a new Imperial Irrigation District power substation that Eslamboly said would provide power not only for the development, but also for some surrounding businesses and homes.

Eslamboly said potential users of the “light industrial” space include certain types of less intensive manufacturing, a tech company or a distribution center. She said the company is not seeking to allow more impactful heavy industrial uses, citing tire manufacturing as an example of one that would not be allowed.

The project is in an environmental review stage of the entitlement process, which requires that a report be produced outlining potential environmental impacts of the project and ways to mitigate them. A draft of that report was released this week. Following the completion of that environmental review process, the entitlement request would go before the city’s planning commission and eventually the city council.

The possibility of such a big development is generating concerns among some residents of the nearby Sun City Shadow Hills neighborhood.

Deborah Gmeiner, a member of the Sun City Shadow Hills City Development Coordination Committee, said it is concerned that the streets in the area do not have the capacity to handle the increased traffic such a big development would bring. She said there is particular concern that a distribution center — if one ends up being included among the light industrial uses — could bring heavy truck traffic, air pollution and noise.

A statement provided by Eslamboly on behalf of the Oasis at Indio team said the “team is committed to transparency and open communication throughout the approval and development process.” The statement also encouraged people interested in receiving information to sign up to receive project updates on the website and send questions to outreach@theoasisatindio.com.

Eslamboly also said the developers are seeking to get feedback from the community and that the community comment period that will follow the release of the environmental impact

report will provide ample opportunity to do just that.

“We’re here to listen to that and make the project even better if there is a way to do that,” she said.

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