

Gold Rush Ranch and Golf Resort

Project History and Evolution to Current Plan

The Gold Rush Ranch project site has been the subject of potential development for over a decade. During the mid to late 1990's The City of Sutter Creek discussed the development of this site with sponsors of a project called Whitehorse. The Whitehorse project provided a potential benefit to the City in that it was intended to provide significant funding for wastewater treatment plant upgrades and land area for treated wastewater disposal. The Whitehorse sponsors did not complete the application process, but the City continued to consider the site as a suitable location for creative wastewater planning. This objective was manifested in the City's decision to directly place the property under contract for the City's own account in 2002. At that time, the City sought to enter into a public/private partnership with a developer who could properly design and develop a golf course community on the site, and in fact entered into such an agreement with Troy Claveran. The City intended to fund the acquisition of the ranch through the issuance of revenue bonds. However, the purchase and sale agreement was to expire prior to the City's completion of its funding efforts. At that time, Mr. Claveran proceeded to acquire the property for his own account with the understanding that he would proceed to submit a development application to the City. The City made a financial contribution to Mr. Claveran's acquisition in exchange for a wastewater disposal easement.

Mr. Claveran and the City commenced a process to address CEQA requirements and determined that the project might be applied for and processed in phases. Those phases included golf course first, resort and timeshare second and residential development third. However, after initial efforts to commence the land use approval process, it became preferable to consolidate the application into one phase which described all the proposed elements of the project. Once this comprehensive approach was selected, Mr. Claveran sought to introduce new partners with extensive land use entitlement and development experience into the project. Bill Bunce and John Telischak joined the development team at that time, and the partnership has remained intact to the present.

With knowledge of the many considerations in the approval process for large projects, in 2003 and prior to submitting a project application, the Gold Rush Ranch partnership commenced an active and thorough outreach process seeking to gain input and feedback from the broadest possible segments of the local community. The partnership's objective was to design a project based on a collaborative effort with all facets of the local community. Multiple public forums were held to solicit comments from the residents of Sutter Creek and surrounding areas. These forums were well attended and many dozens of comments were submitted for consideration. Simultaneously, the partnership met with state and

local agencies to more particularly identify the needs of the community and the region. Additionally, the partnership met with environmental groups, water and wastewater agencies, representatives of the school district, fire district and recreation agencies, the downtown business community, the police department, City officials and library representatives, among others. The outreach efforts continue at this time throughout the post-application submittal phases of the project.

From this extensive collaboration, certain guiding principles and community visions emerged. Those principles included the creation of a high quality golf course community, the integration of this community with the existing community and with the natural environment, maximum conservation of natural resources, a range of housing opportunities for existing and future residents, an emphasis on the unique history of the community and significant support for existing and new public facilities. These principles became the foundation of the Gold Rush Ranch project design and the ultimate submittal of the Gold Rush Ranch Specific Plan.

Results of this collaborative process are the inclusion of provisions for significant public benefits and amenities, including:

- ◆ the dedication of a site for public safety facilities
- ◆ the creation of public walking, bicycle and nature trails
- ◆ Site and financial support for new school facilities
- ◆ the permanent preservation of 300 acres of open space
- ◆ construction of an 18 hole championship golf course which provides discount for Sutter Creek residents
- ◆ support for youth golf programs
- ◆ construction of tennis courts
- ◆ generation of incremental tax revenues for the City as may be applicable to the hotel and timeshare project components
- ◆ new funds for the renovation of the City's wastewater treatment facility and land area for the disposal of treated wastewater
- ◆ the establishment of a permanent annual funding mechanism for the Sutter Creek Fire Department
- ◆ the management of cultural and historic resources on the project site,
- ◆ a site for a new County library
- ◆ the contribution of funds for the development of off-site public ball-fields,
- ◆ construction of 5 acres of new parks on the project site
- ◆ design guidelines to ensure consistency with Sutter Creek's existing aesthetic character
- ◆ opportunities for the creation of workforce housing
- ◆ net benefits to the City's general fund
- ◆ generation of full time employment opportunities for local residents

The Specific Plan was drafted to implement the project and has been the source of on-going public dialogue and outreach by the project sponsors. Since the submittal of the Specific Plan to the City of Sutter Creek, over a dozen City and Gold Rush Ranch sponsored public forums have been held to communicate and discuss the details of the Specific Plan. Numerous site tours and public outreach meetings have been held by the project sponsors as well. The result of this extensive public participation is a project that has been well vetted by the Sutter Creek community and surrounding area.