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## Little enthusiasm for new Agoura Village development

■ Shops, homes in the works at intersection of Kanan, Agoura roads

By Stephanie Bertholdo  
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The Ave, a mixed-use development approved for Agoura Village, received a less than enthusiastic reception during a June 12 community forum in the Agoura Hills Recreation Center, the latest in a series of attempts to convince residents about the need for new commercial and residential growth in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains, just south of the city.

The development by Gary Collett and Lou Mellman of the California Commercial Investment Group of Westlake Village is one of several mixed-use projects planned for the Agoura Village zone on Agoura Road south of the 101 Freeway between Kanan and

Cornell roads at the gateway to the Santa Monica Mountains.

The 18.5-acre development comprises 119,000 square feet of commercial area and 118 residential rental units. A three-story, 120-room hotel is also planned.

Residents showed their displeasure when they learned that neither Collett nor Mellman would attend the forum. The Ave developers were instead represented by Brad Rosenheim, who is also point

Residents showed their displeasure when they learned developer would not attend a community forum to discuss the project

man for Cornerstone, another Agoura Village mixed-use development that was halted May 23 when a judge ruled the 8-acre project needed further environmental review.

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## Glad grads finally rejoice

Photos by RICHARD GILLARD  
Acorn Newspapers

**YES, IT'S OVER!**—At top, the audience applauds during commencement at Agoura High School on June 15. At right, graduate Kelsey Hopkins is pleased to finally have her diploma in hand. See more Acorn graduation coverage on pages 20-22.



Courtesy of National Park Service

**OUT THE OTHER SIDE**—P-64, nicknamed the Culvert Cat, crosses under a local roadway. The National Park Service keeps location confidential to protect both the lions and the NPS photo equipment.

## Crafty cougar caught, collared

By Ian Bradley  
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There's a new member of the local mountain lion population that's being studied by the National Park Service.

P-54 became the 15th cougar fitted with a GPS collar when she was captured on Feb. 27 near the Pepperdine University campus in Malibu.

The study tracks animals in the Santa Monica Mountains, Simi Hills and Santa Susana Mountains.

Kate Kuykendall, public affairs officer for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, a division of the park service, said P-54 was fitted with an identification tag following her birth in Jan. 2017, but at some point the tag came off and they lost track of her.

"(When we captured her) we thought it was probably P-54, but mountain lions are always surprising us so we've learned not to be certain until it's proven," Kuykendall said.

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## Westlake hopes to drive reinvestment in biz park

■ Changes would permit mixed use

By Ian Bradley  
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A decade-old plan to repurpose 200 acres of commercial and industrial land in the City of Westlake Village could clear a path for as many as 1,000 new apartments and condos.

Last week, city officials hosted a scoping meeting for the North Business Park Specific Plan to

discuss the latest iteration of the land-use document.

The area bordered by Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Lindero Canyon Road and the 101 Freeway is currently occupied by a web of office buildings and industrial parks. But the city has been developing a plan to rezone the area for mixed commercial, retail and residential use—a first in Westlake Village.

Scott Wolfe, planning director for Westlake Village, said the zoning changes are meant to serve as

incentive for existing owners to reinvest in their properties.

"(With) the Four Seasons, Dole headquarters, Oaks Christian and Calvary (Community Church), we have like half-a-billion dollars' worth of reinvestment in those properties," Wolfe said.

"We knew there was going to be economic pressure to continue redevelopment in that area but the proposals we were getting were for things like high-rise buildings.

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## Agoura Village

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Agoura Village developers who have been approved by the city are required to hold two community forums to discuss the scope and impact of their projects, but since The Ave was already underway, the developer needed to only conduct one meeting.

But the glare from large windows at the recreation center last week prevented the crowd from seeing a PowerPoint presentation about the details of The Ave. Rosenheim promised that the slide show would be posted on the city’s website

When Rosenheim assured everyone that the project team at the meeting would be able to answer all questions during a breakout session at the forum, the crowd bristled and tensions flared.

“I am your neighbor and I don’t want to be abused by anyone,” Rosenheim said. “If you don’t like the rules, you should go to the City Council.”

Rosenheim said Agoura Village was envisioned as a city hub where residents could live, dine, shop and be entertained. He said that between the hotel, apartments, shops and offices, The Ave would offer a variety of gathering spaces for residents

and visitors. He hinted there would be room for the city to host concerts in a public plaza and there could be a bocce ball court and other recreational opportunities at a hillside knoll that would be preserved.

For Cornerstone to proceed, developers were told to scale back the removal of 29 oak trees in order to meet legal compliance.

At The Ave, 17 of the 21 oak trees that need to be uprooted will be relocated on the site, Rosenheim said. Ten newly planted oak trees on Agoura Road will also be relocated and 67 new oak trees will be planted.

### Traffic

It’s expected that the development will add more than 3,000 car trips per day to the already busy Kanan Road-Agoura Road intersection. But according to a developers’ traffic study, only 149 trips during peak morning hours and 263 extra car trips during peak evening hours would be generated.

“I don’t believe the streets will be significantly impacted (and) I don’t believe there is a safety hazard,” Rosenheim said. But it’s a corner that regularly bears the brunt of summer beach traffic from the Valley to T.O.”

David Shender, the developer’s traffic engineer, said when Agoura Village is fully built residents could expect more than 20,000 additional car trips on local roads, spread throughout the day and evening.

“It’s all about the traffic problems because the traffic now is already prohibitive,” said resident Jon Cavanaugh, adding that emergency vehicles could be stuck in traffic during an emergency.

Rosenheim said the environmental review process engages public safety agencies, including the fire and police departments.

### Occupancy

Resident Penny Sylvester asked about the rental price range for the apartments. Rosenheim said all units will be offered at the market rate. Other residents expressed concern about the ability of a hotel to achieve occupancy due to the large number of rooms already available throughout the Conejo Valley.

## Measure up

### ■ Numbers show Ave development falls well within the Agoura Village plan guidelines

- The Agoura Village Specific Plan (AVSP) allows developers to include as little as 15 percent public space. The Ave provides 57 percent public space. About 6 acres will remain open space.
- The AVSP requires a minimum of 15 percent of surface parking areas to be landscaped. The Ave parking lots will be 47 percent landscaped.
- The AVSP allows developers to use 60 percent of the land for buildings. The Ave structures occupy only 22 percent of the site.

Rosenheim read written questions. One person wondered about the need for additional office space since many office buildings in the area remain vacant. Rosenheim said the office space in The Ave would be occupied by the developers.

Regarding the housing, Michelle Barbour of Agoura Hills said, “What’s frustrating about this is that three-quarters of (the project) is apartments, with one quarter for residents to use.”

Residents are also worried the decade-old Agoura Village plan already needs revision.

“The Agoura Village concept is outdated,” former Agoura Hills Mayor Joan Yacovone said. “It doesn’t make sense anymore.”

“I truly believe we need to look at all future projects with a new consciousness and a new set of eyes,” said Agoura resident Larry Brown. “It is a different world than it was in the 2000s when this thing was being considered.”

To continue with their project, The Ave developers must submit an environmental impact study that meets the demands of the California Environmental Quality Act.

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