

Commission approves preliminary plans for nearly 400 homes on south side

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A proposal to build 393 homes on Santa Fe's south side gained preliminary approval Thursday from the city's Planning Commission.

The Vista de la Sierra subdivision would be built in three phases on around 80 acres of vacant land on Governor Miles Road between Richards Avenue and Beckner Road.

The homes would be priced from \$200,000 to just below \$400,000, with 20 percent meeting affordable housing requirements, developer Jeff Branch told *The New Mexican* earlier this year.

The proposed project would help ease the city's housing shortage by putting hundreds of affordable and midrange homes on the market, said Jennifer Jenkins, principal at JenkinsGavin Inc., a Santa Fe-based development management firm representing the developer.

"This neighborhood is intended to be a moderately priced neighborhood," Jenkins told the Planning Commission.

Most of the homes in the proposed subdivision would be two-story structures ranging from 1,275 to 3,000 square feet. The lots would measure 50 by 110 feet, 40 by 105 feet and 45 by 105 feet, Branch said previously.

The Planning Commission on Thursday approved preliminary plans for lots, street layouts, landscaping and other features in the proposed housing development.

The approval is contingent on several conditions, including that the developer build a roundabout at the subdivision's main intersection with Beckner Road.

"This is a significant public improvement," Jenkins said of the roundabout.

Some residents, however, said the proposed development would lead to more traffic, especially during peak hours. Others raised concerns about flooding. They said the arroyo that snakes through the proposed subdivision caused considerable flooding in the nearby Nava Adé neighborhood in 2018.

To alleviate flooding concerns, the proposal includes arroyo improvements that would redirect flows, Jenkins said.

At nearly 400 homes, density was another concern.

"The numbers are astounding," said Allison Marks, who lives in a surrounding neighborhood.

The plans need to get final approval from the commission before the developer could apply for a building permit.

The commission denied a request for a setback variance for the proposed development.