

*Close-up: The minds behind Quarry Falls*

## Sudberry Properties strives to balance urban planning aspects in proposed community

By ANN CHIN  
*The Daily Transcript*

Written in volumes of paperwork is the vision of a master-planned community thriving on its mixed-use development, with elements creating a place to live socially and work.

Behind the scenes of the proposed Quarry Falls community is a team organized by **Sudberry Properties**, working to develop the vision into a reality.

The community is set on a 230-acre, sand-and-gravel quarry west of Interstate 805 and north of Friars Road in Mission Valley.

The Grant Family, owners of the still active quarry, selected Sudberry to revive the property into a neighborhood.

The idea of the community stems from "The City of Villages" concept, which is included in the city of San Diego's 2002 Strategic Framework Element.

The city's goal is to balance aspects of urban community planning to achieve "smart growth."

The Quarry Falls plan has been registered as a pilot project with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Neighborhood Design. Key environmental elements include building jobs closer to homes and creating a walkable community.

Additionally, the plan details that 75 percent of the construction waste is to be recycled.

The design maps out one-third of the property to be landscaped into public parks and open space. The rest of the area will be developed into office and retail areas along with mixed density homes. More than 400 of the 4,510 homes will be affordable housing along with additional senior residences.

The developer estimates the project, when finished, will cost roughly \$2 billion in private funding. The community is also estimated to add \$2.8 million in new revenue each year.

Along with development comes a transportation mitigation package, which will cost approximately \$50 million in traffic improvements including five freeway interchanges.

Upon approval, Quarry Falls will be constructed in four phases and will take about 15-20 years to complete.

### Team of planners

Piecing the puzzles of this vast project is a team of civil engineers, architects, planners and other professionals with various skill sets.

Additionally, 20 consultants are guiding the project with a wide range of expertise, according to Marco Sessa, Sudberry's vice president of development.

Sessa has been leading the Quarry Falls entitlement process full time since joining the company in 2002.

His background in engineering and construction has aided in the project design.

However, the multiple facets of the project called for additional experience.

In 2006 Stephen Haase joined as vice president of development, with 17 years of experience in the cities of San Diego and San Jose in the public sector.

Haase said his job is to take **Carrier Johnson's** conceptual design "in vision for the community we want to build in Mission Valley and really begin to fit that into the requirements to get it approved."

Senior Vice President Colton Sudberry said his colleagues are in charge of the entitlement process because of their background strengths in engineering and planning.

"Where I get more involved is when we go start programming for the vertical development," Sudberry said of the largely residential project.

Although he gives input on potential tenants and allotted space for retail, he said these developments are still 10 years down the line.

Currently the project is in draft form of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which was released to the public in November.

The team is in the process of responding to feedback from the EIR. Approximately 50 letters and e-mails were received from organiza-



Photo: J. Kat Woronowicz

**Stephen Haase, from left, Marco Sessa and Colton Sudberry have put together a team of civil engineers, architects, planners and other professionals with various skill sets.**

tions such as the San Diego Association of Governments, the California Department of Transportation, local planning groups and individuals, according to Haase.

A majority of the feedback has been positive, according to Sessa. Those in opposition to the project typically take stances stemming from their initial reactions, which are often emotional, Haase said.

He added that their job is to help people address the facts and "really evaluate whether we're delivering a project that is going to add benefit to the community."

After the final EIR is published around April, the City Council will decide whether the document is adequate before holding a public hearing.

### The long road ahead

"We're tremendously pleased with where the design is," said Sessa, adding he is satisfied "with the things that have now gelled as part of the community."

Community elements already approved include Mission Valley's first K-12 school, High Tech High.

Also upon the project's approval, approximately 17 acres along the San Diego River will be donated to the San Diego River Park Foundation for public use.

The quarry is also in the process of compacting the soil to prepare for construction. Haase expects this to be completed in a year or two.

Sudberry said he is also satisfied with the progression of the project and added, "It's been a long time in the making."

However, the project has yet to break ground.

If the proposed Quarry Falls community receives City Council approval this summer, the first phase will begin at the earliest toward the end of 2009. The initial phase will take three to four years, according to Haase.

Development will be phased in as mining operations conclude and portions of the land are released for construction, Sessa said.

The next two phases of development could last six to 10 years. The final phase is not projected to begin until 2020.

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