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A freight train passes model homes under construction Thursday at the McKinley Village development in Sacramento.

# McKinley Village developers seek to connect with the neighbors

BY TONY BIZJAK  
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Houses have begun sprouting this year for what may be the most unusual new neighborhood in the Sacramento region.

McKinley Village, nearly a decade in the making, sits on a 49-acre, football-shaped site between East Sacramento and midtown. But it's not really a part of either, at least not yet.

A freight rail line on a curving embankment cuts between the area and neighboring East Sacramento. The Capital City Freeway to the north slices between the site and the northeast corner of nearby midtown.

Despite those physical barriers, developers Kevin Carson of The New Home Co. and his partners say they can build a neighborhood that will connect with the surrounding area, both physically with two new connector streets, and thematically, with architecture and densities that fit East Sacramento and midtown.

The 336-unit project of mainly two-story houses will offer residents access to nearby jobs, restaurants, nightlife and other urban amenities, developers say.

"It's an infill site close to jobs, close to all the things people want," Carson said, standing on the

site Thursday between rainstorms as crews labored on the first sets of model homes. "We feel it is going to do very well."

The project, a joint venture between Carson's company and Riverview Capital Investments, headed by developer Phil Angelides, is expected to fill out slowly over four years, like many housing developments in Sacramento after the recession.

But as the first houses rise, some early numbers are positive. Carson said more than 1,200 people have signed up for early viewings when model homes open. That likely will happen in August, he said.

Regionally, Sacramento's housing market is showing some life. The North State Building Industry Association says January new home sales were the highest for the first month of the year since 2007, before the recession hit.

"We're excited," BIA spokesman Ioannis Kazanis said. "It kind of sets the tone for the rest of the year."

The McKinley Village property has long been the focus of debate. Several previous proposals died, opposed by nearby residents because of proposed building heights, densities and traffic issues.

McKinley Village is a moderately dense housing project, mixing East Sac-



Kevin Carson, Northern California president of the New Home Co., speaks in front of model homes under construction at the new McKinley Village development.

ramento and midtown densities. Houses will surround a main park and community swimming pool. Streets will be named for local artists, and artists will be commissioned to provide public art onsite, partly as a way of drawing people to visit the neighborhood and helping connect it to the rest of the city, developers said.

The site will have only two entrance and exit points, and that has prompted concerns about added traffic among some residents near those planned new roads.

One entrance, called A Street, will cross westward over the Capital City Freeway and drop cars onto 28th Street in midtown, near the B Street Theatre. The other, to be called McKinley Village Way, will exit the site under the

needed - as part of a Caltrans plan to widen the freeway to reduce congestion in the corridor. That project, however, is in early discussion stages, and is likely many years away.

Developer Carson said homes will range from 1,300 to 3,150 square feet. The prices are not yet set, he said, but could range from \$450,000 to \$800,000-plus.

The project includes a 14-foot tall sound wall along the freeway, blocking the roadway and much of its noise. The railroad berm on the other side of the project, which carries freight and passenger trains, is elevated, though, and visible and audible in much of the community.

Megan Norris, a vice president with Riverview Capital Investments, said the development team worked with sound engineers to boost thickness of the walls of homes that back onto the track area and to reduce vibrations.

The city's environmental review for the project has been challenged in court. The lawsuit argues that the city failed to adequately study health, noise, traffic and other impacts of the project, noting it is next to a rail line, freeway and near a city landfill.

A lower court rejected the lawsuit a year ago, saying the city adequately complied with environmental law. The plaintiff, listed as East Sacramento Partnership for a Livable City, has appealed.

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Sheriff Scott Jones Rep. Ami Bera

## POLITICS

# Carpenters endorse Republican Scott Jones over Bera

BY CHRISTOPHER CADELAGO  
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Democratic Rep. Ami Bera, fighting for union supporters he upset by voting to advance a controversial trade agreement, has lost the backing of one labor group in his re-election battle this year.

The Northern California Carpenters Regional Council, the labor group for carpenters, pile drivers, millwrights and other skilled tradespeople, this week endorsed Sheriff Scott Jones, Bera's Republican challenger in the swing district covering suburban Sacramento County.

Agustin "Augie" Beltran, director of public and governmental relations for the carpenters, issued a statement asserting that Jones understands the need to protect and promote American workers. While they supported Bera in the past, Beltran said, "he has not demonstrated the commitment to working men and women that we expected."

Dave Gilliard, the sheriff's political strategist, called the group's support of a GOP congressional candidate "extraordinary" and a testament to Jones' efforts to help working families struggling in today's economy.

Bera has stressed that his backing of President Barack Obama's request for trade-negotiating powers does not mean he'll ultimately support the Trans-Pacific Partnership. He said he is gathering input and expects to take a stance on the issue after a report is issued this spring.

On Wednesday, Bera issued prepared remarks responding to the carpenters' decision to help Jones.

"The endorsement that matters the most to me is from the folks in the 7th Congressional District who will have the opportunity this fall to evaluate my record of working

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