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Apple Valley land is in short supply

NEW DEVELOPMENT MOVES TO HIGH-DENSITY

Contributing Writer

Population: 47,500***Major access routes: County Road 42 and Cedar Avenue******Community development director: Richard Kelley***

Apple Valley may sit on the metro outskirts, but the city is running out of developable land.

"The land that is available is down to 15 percent," says Richard Kelley, Apple Valley's community development director. "What we're seeing is a desire to use that land more intensely; our residential proposals are for medium and higher-density housing and very few are for detached housing."

Housing developments under construction include the Hawthorne project on Galaxie Avenue at 157th Street. Ryland Homes is building the second phase of construction and when completed, Hawthorne will have just under 400 for-sale townhomes.

Construction is nearing completion at The Timbers at Apple Valley, a 110-unit, market-rate senior apartment building at 140th Street and Pennock Avenue. Dominion Development is building the apartments.

Near The Timbers on 140th Avenue is the Summerhill Cooperative of Apple Valley, a 70-unit senior cooperative being developed by a group with the same name.

Two mixed-use projects also illustrate the higher-density development trend.

Tradition Development is building Cobblestone Lake, a mixed-use project on 320 acres of a former gravel pit at 160th Street and Pilot Knob Road. Over five to seven years, the developers plan to build 150,000 square feet of commercial space and about 2,500 housing units, including single-family homes, townhomes and apartments. Phase one included about 65 single-family homes. Kelley says the developer received preliminary approval for phase two, which will include about 250 attached and detached townhouses. Construction on those homes is set to begin this spring.

The centerpiece of the Cobblestone Lake project is a 40-acre lake surrounded by trails and a public park.

Hartford Development has preliminary approval for the first phase of Legacy of Apple Valley at Galaxie Avenue and 153rd Street. The development would include a mix of townhomes, apartments, senior housing and retail, built by Hartford and several partners.

Retail activity continued in 2002 with the opening of a 150,000 square foot Home Depot store on the south side of County Road 42 at Flagstaff Avenue. New Century Inc. is developing six outlots on the property and one is under construction, but no tenants are named.

The second phase of retailers opened their doors at Fischer Marketplace this fall. The 650,000 square foot shopping center is located on the north side of County Road 42 between Galaxie and Flagstaff avenues. New tenants include Barnes & Noble, Michaels, International House of Pancakes, Quizno's, Noodles & Co., Ruby Tuesday and the Pickled Parrot. The first crop of tenants included Menards, Sam's Club and Kohl's.

The city's Kmart store closed last summer and the space is being remodeled for a Burlington Coat Factory, Kelley says.

"We're continuing to see a pretty strong interest for retail and service development to serve both Apple

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Valley and the neighboring communities' residential base," he says. "We'd like to see a few more boutique operations that offer specialty retail, instead of more of the same thing."

Land also is running out in Valley Business Park, an industrial park at Pilot Knob Road and 147th Street. Kelley says one, 5-acre parcel remains in the 50-acre park.

Questar, a school testing evaluation company, has a 55,000 square foot building under construction in the park. Qualtech, which performs mainframe computer reconfigurations, has a purchase agreement for a parcel and plans to build a 25,000 to 30,000 square foot facility.

In addition, Manley Development Co. plans to build Town Office Park, which will contain 80,000 square feet of condo-style, owner-occupied office/warehouse/fabrication space. The developers have letters of intent for about half the space, Kelley says.

-Jessica Griffith is a St. Paul-based freelance writer.



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