

Mixed reaction to proposal

By Donna Horowitz

Independent Journal reporter

The developer of a residential project proposed for Bel Marin Keys said he has scaled back the plan to respond to concerns raised by area residents and county officials.

"We have dramatically reduced the size of the project and we have eliminated many of the so-called unmitigatable impacts identified in the EIR (environmental impact report)," said Robert Eves, president of Venture Corp. of Mill Valley.

His firm unveiled a plan yesterday that reduces the development by one third — from 1,190 homes to 833 — and eliminates a 150,000-square-foot shopping center.

"This is our compromise," Eves said.

The company, which has been planning the project near Novato for 10 years, revised the plan with the help of residents, he said.

One of those residents, Spike Flertzheim, likes the new plan. "I think Venture Corp. really listened to what the community had to say."

Flertzheim is a member of the Committee for Responsible Development of Bel Marin Keys, a community group which hosted a meeting last night to unveil the new plan. He said the group believes in limited development to complete the community.

Flertzheim said the previous proposal had too many homes and he didn't like the way they were laid out.

He said placement of homes along the perimeter road would increase security for residents. Without the homes, outsiders would have been able to launch their boats into the water anywhere along the road.

David Sowers, vice chairman of the Bel Marin Keys Planning Advisory Board, was not appeased: "This is just tokenism."

He said no more than 160 homes should be built. He said a second access road must be built before further development is allowed.

He said Bel Marin Keys Boulevard — the only current access road — already is congested during peak commute hours.

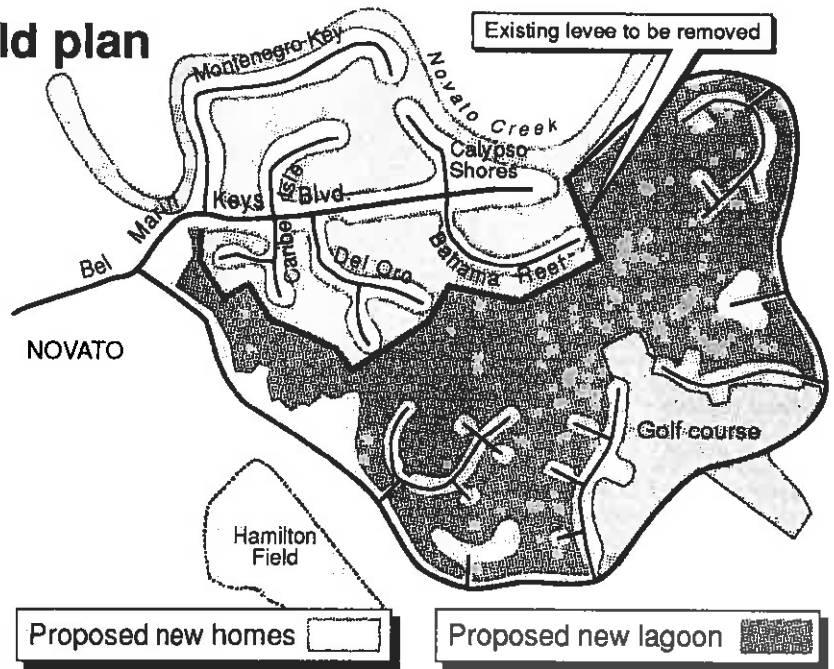
Planning Commission Chairwoman Deborah Rowland said the developer was moving in the right direction, but that there are still a number of problems with the project.

"They need an alternate access," she said.

Days after the commission rejected its previous proposal, Venture Corp. sued the county over its countywide plan, saying it was inadequate.

Bel Marin Keys expansion plan

Old plan



New plan

