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The Mercury News

NASA may share Army housing

SIX-ACRE JOINT PROJECT CONSIDERED IN MTN. VIEW

By Joshua L. Kwan
Mercury News

The U.S. Army may turn a six-acre military housing development in Mountain View into a joint project with NASA to help relieve the housing need created by the agency's planned research park.

In a meeting with the Mountain View City Council on Tuesday night, an Army representative said the military was in early discussions with NASA officials to explore the possibility of sharing the housing development and its construction costs. NASA, which operates the Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, might also provide emergency services for the community.

The Army owns a 16-acre parcel of land at Moffett Boulevard and Middlefield Road, all but six acres of which have been developed. It has selected a private developer to renovate housing and build new homes there for some of the soldiers and personnel from the other branches of the military serving at Moffett Field.

Draft plans call for a 44-unit complex of townhomes with a one-acre park.

When Mayor Mike Kasperzak suggested that the Army coordinate its housing proposal with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, he was met with a surprising

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answer: The two parts of the federal government were already in preliminary talks about sharing the site.

NASA/Ames officials could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

The plot of land is unusual for military housing because it is about one mile away from the base and, in this case, in the midst of a region squeezed for housing. That makes the Mountain View parcel extremely attractive for developers.

Under federal rules, the military can enter into agreements with private developers to improve housing for its soldiers and also provide developers with this incentive: Should the Army no longer need the housing within the 50-year contract, the developer gains ownership of the property.

That potential scenario has some council members worried. Rosemary Stasek said Tuesday that she hoped the Army would require the developer, Clark Pinnacle, to build the complex to Mountain View standards, which has a different building code from the Army's.

In a previous meeting in January, the council also told Clark Pinnacle officials to carve out space for a park in the development. On Tuesday, the developer showed off designs for a park; Stasek was encouraged by those changes. "It seems like they're open to listening," she said.

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