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## Madonna plans \$500 million development in SLO

By [Alex Kacik](#) / Friday, August 21st, 2015 / [Comments Off on Madonna plans \\$500 million development in SLO](#)

John Madonna plans to transform 111 acres in San Luis Obispo into a \$500 million mixed-use project that caters to the city's aging population.

The proposed Froom Ranch project includes a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) that offers 350 residential units for seniors, 150,000-350,000 square feet of commercial retailers for its residents, 200 apartments and around 60-100 single-family detached units. It would be the first CCRC in San Luis Obispo County and would supplement a small supply of senior housing that fails to meet the growing need, Madonna said.

"I want to develop a property here that stands out, that benefits and endures with the community," he said. "This is not just a development project, it's more than that to me."

Madonna is the son of the late construction magnate and entrepreneur Alex Madonna, who owned and operated the iconic Madonna Inn. John Madonna, who manages his San Luis Obispo-based company John Madonna Construction, purchased the land along Los Osos Valley Road near the Froom Ranch Shopping Center from his mother Phyllis Madonna in 2012.

The land is predominantly used for cattle grazing, the rock quarry and commercial development. While the initial idea was to use the land to grow his construction company, manage the quarry or use it for agriculture, plans changed when Madonna recognized the area's expanding demand for independent, assisted and skilled nursing facilities, he said.

"Building a project over the next 10 years is not that big of a deal time-wise for me until I start looking at the people I won't be able to serve," said Madonna, adding that if the project isn't expedited, it likely won't be operating until at least 2018.

CCRCs are part independent living, part assisted living and part skilled nursing homes. It's a tiered system that adapts to residents' needs as they age. Healthy adults pay a hefty entrance fee that pays for future care and funds the facility's operations. They must pass a physical to qualify for a home, apartment or condo where they can live independently. When they need more help day to day, they can move to onsite assisted living or skilled nursing facilities.

"It would be all in one," Madonna said. It will include a recreation center, restaurants, a library, a pool, gardens, trails, a small theater and more.

The first phase of the CCRC would cost north of \$100 million and the second would cost about \$150-\$200 million, Madonna said. If the first phase is well-received, they will proceed with the second phase.

The project is fashioned after the University Village in Thousand Oaks. Life Care Services, a Des Moines-based continuing care manager that oversees University Village, will operate the CCRC in the Froom Ranch project and Vic Montgomery of RRM Design Group in San Luis Obispo is the planner and architect. Villaggio Communities, which develops senior living communities, is negotiating the property's acquisition, Montgomery said.

The project would use some existing wells on the property and draw from the city's reservoirs to satisfy its water needs, Madonna said.

"We have the right infrastructure to serve it, it's the right place at the right time," Montgomery said. "The city of SLO has been proactive in securing a water supply for the long-term implementation of the general plan."

The city annexed the previously unincorporated land into the city's jurisdiction in its 2015 general plan. The general plan requires that 50 percent of the property must be preserved as agricultural open space. It also mandates trail connections, updated roads, wetland and slope protection, height limits that accommodate mountain views, and historic building preservation.

There are 106 CCRCs in California that house more than 28,000 seniors but the practice is more common on the East Coast.

Cities throughout the state and country are trying to find ways to accommodate the growing aging population. In 2050, the population aged 65 and over is projected to be 83.7 million, almost double its estimated population of 43.1 million in 2012, according to the U.S. Census.

"It's a difficult thing we all have to face eventually. If not with ourselves, with our parents," Madonna said. "California as a whole is underserved compared to the East Coast, especially in San Luis Obispo County."

Madonna expects to introduce a plan that details the utility use, scope and project details to the planning department in September.