

CASE STUDY: QUARRY FALLS

CHALLENGE

Sudberry Properties Inc. teamed up with the owners of an active gravel mine in Mission Valley, San Diego and proposed a new master-planned community called Quarry Falls which included 5,000 homes with mixed use and commercial elements. Quarry Falls was located in the city council district of Donna Frye — an ardent no-growth advocate. Getting a sizable project approved in her district was considered impossible. If the local council woman was a NO vote, then it would take winning over the other city council members to get it approved. Anti-growth activists were trying to get the planning groups to officially oppose the Quarry Falls proposal. Winning the planning groups' endorsements would have a tremendous effect on the City Planning Commission's recommendation to the San Diego City Council. Also, while well into the entitlement process, another San Diego developer with dubious motives retained a local PR firm and began funding an anti-Quarry Falls campaign. The challenge was to earn support and approval for 5,000 homes.

APPROACH

Davies' goal was to get supporters organized and involved in the community planning group process as early as

possible with an objective to win endorsements for Quarry Falls. Clear and concise motivating messages had to be created to reinforce the positive benefits of the proposal. Davies used direct mail, phone banks, online communication, small group meetings and a website to deliver key messages to targeted audiences. Credible spokespeople were organized to carry the key messages to civic and community leaders along with their friends, coworkers and neighbors. This effort would demonstrate that there was substantial citywide support for the Quarry Falls proposal. Davies personalized all the direct mail letters, which included response cards for identifying supporters and followed with high-touch phone calls to seal commitments and motivate supporters to contact their community planning group, the Planning Commission and the City Council in support of Quarry Falls.

SOLUTION

Both Mission Valley planning groups voted in favor of the Quarry Falls development proposal. The City of San Diego Planning Commission unanimously approved Quarry Falls. The San Diego City Council voted 7 to 1 in favor of Quarry Falls with only Donna Frye dissenting. Supporters outnumbered opponents at the final city council hearing 4 to 1 and included environmental and smart planning organizations.

RESULTS

Earned approval from the City of San Diego.

