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Critics prompt tract plan redesign

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The developers of a proposed housing tract in the San Rafael Hills said Tuesday they will redesign the project so that homes are not built on a visually prominent ridge and exposed to most of upper Chevy Chase Canyon.

Homes By Polygon and the MacDonald family announced they will redraw the plans one day after Glendale's Planning Commission shot down their request to allow 53 of the homes to encroach into a ridgeline preservation zone not previously approved for residential development.

"We just feel that we are going to be here for a long time and we want to work with the community," said Marlene Roth, who represents the developers. The revisions will affect about 18 of the homes planned on the ridge area and mean the deletion of about five of them, Roth said.

"We will also be redesigning the landscaping and making other modifications with the intent to reduce or eliminate the visual impact," she added.

Roth said the changes will address the concerns of planning commissioners, who sharply criticized building on the ridgeline and exposing the development to view from neighborhoods in Chevy Chase Canyon not affected before.

Granting the developers' request, the City Council continued the matter until next Tuesday and scheduled a special Planning Commission meeting Monday to see the revised plans. The council also postponed a related hearing on whether a further environmental impact study should be required.

The expanded development into the ridgeline was one of about 12

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Ridgeline

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changes the developers were requesting from conditions of the plan approved by the City Council last year for the largest tract in the city's history. The plans approved include only one encroachment onto the main northern ridge for the extension of Mountain Street, which will be the project's only thoroughfare.

Roth said the relocation of 53 homes to the northeast corner of the 317-acre site was done to achieve a better design of Mountain Street as it hugs the hillside and make room for more single-family houses.

Building the tract in the hills had

faced longstanding opposition by the Chevy Chase Canyon Homeowners Association, which finally relented to the plans proposed last year by the former developers, Robert Hensler and the MacDonald family, with the understanding that no homes would be in their view and that the ridgelines would not be cut down.

Situated above Glendale Community College northeast of Mountain Street and the Glendale Freeway, the tract is planned as a mix of single-family homes, townhomes and condominiums. Although approved for 588 units, the developers are now planning 569 dwellings with a greater number of single-family homes.