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Plan to incorporate Salida qualifies for ballot; developers pledge \$80M

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A complex development plan that eventually could enable Salida to become an incorporated city has qualified for the ballot.

The measure, dubbed Salida Now, may go before voters in a special election this November.

Lee Lundrigan, Stanislaus County's clerk recorder and registrar of voters, verified late Tuesday that the initiative had enough signatures to qualify for the ballot.

County supervisors will be told for-mally at their meeting Tuesday.

If approved by Stanislaus County voters, the measure could lead to Salida doubling in population, creating a regional retail center, developing business and industrial parks, and building a new roadway that connects to Highway 99.

Building developers, primarily Pacific Union Homes and The Stringer Co., are financing the Salida Now effort.

"The major donations are coming from the developers because they're the ones with the money," explained Donald Murphy, a Salida resident who is helping lead the Salida Now effort.

Murphy said developers have committed in writing to supplying \$80 million to improve Salida.

The proposed plan could enable Salida to develop a shopping center that could generate enough sales tax to finance city services, Murphy said.

Salida should become its own city, Murphy said, because "it needs its independence from Modesto."

"We've been mapped out to be a bedroom community that shops in Modesto," Murphy said, adding that Modesto routinely stops Salida from getting retail shops of its own.

But Modesto is not the biggest threat to Salida Now's development plans.

Another ballot measure, called Stamp Out Sprawl or SOS, will be voted on in February in Stanislaus County. If passed, it would limit development outside the county's incorporated cities.

By passing Salida Now first, Murphy said, SOS wouldn't apply to Salida.