



Building Image, Reputation to Advance Approval For a Proposed New Community in San Diego

Situation

Gable PR was retained by Sudberry Properties to build image and reputation and counter opposition to its proposed Quarry Falls, a 230-acre mixed-use project to be built in the population center of San Diego on the site of Mission Valley's last sand and gravel quarry as it moved toward approval by the Planning Commission and San Diego City Council. The challenge was to counter a misinformation campaign being run by Quarry Falls opponents, which were funded by a competing developer. The comprehensive development process had been underway for almost six years and involved community input on all issues. The opponents claimed the community with more than 4,000 homes, plus shops and offices, would cause severe damage to traffic in the region but failed to note that the developer would be required to spend more than \$50 million on new roads and improvements to existing roads and freeway interchanges. The real agenda: the opposition wanted to shrink the project and make it less competitive with its own developments.

The Plan

The team developed message strategies on the sensitivity of the design of Quarry Falls, how it fit with the smart growth and sustainable development edicts adopted by the San Diego City Council, Sudberry's concern for the well being of the community of Mission Valley, and the need for Quarry Falls to strengthen Mission Valley's infrastructure. Key elements would include a comprehensive facts versus myths feature to counter the false claims of the opposition; a steady stream of stories about the quality of the design of Quarry Falls and its sensitivity to the environment, traffic and the community's growth potential; opinion pieces signed by elected officials and planning experts; and the endorsement of Quarry Falls by elected officials and the heads of important organizations. The concept was to educate the media who were covering the proposed development, reposition the opposition, reach key leaders throughout San Diego and generate letters of support to the Planning Commission and the San Diego City Council urging approval of Quarry Falls and the Sudberry vision of turning a declining quarry into a thriving green community in the heart of the city.



The Results

The agency tracked all media and saw a shift from negative coverage started early by the opposition to more balanced coverage by the end of six months. Gable PR secured more than 4 million media impressions, with coverage in: The San Diego Union-Tribune, The San Diego Business Journal, The San Diego Daily Transcript, The North County Times, Urban Land Magazine, Voice of San Diego, San Diego Metropolitan, San Diego City Beat, Smart Business, Community papers throughout the county, Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development newsletters and broadcast media. The development team used agency materials to brief community groups and counter the opponent's myths.

The Quarry Falls Community Plan was approved by both the Planning Commission and San Diego City Council, allowing Sudberry Properties to begin detailed construction documents for design of the project's first phase and offsite improvements. During the City Council hearing, Quarry Falls was praised by elected officials as being a new standard for sustainable development and smart growth – the key positioning used throughout the Gable PR program.

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