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Orlando developer targets Apopka area for 244-home gated community

Orlando-based Elevation Development is under contract for 115 acres in Northwest Orange County's Tangerine Rural Settlement Area with zoning as a private airport. (Courtesy of Elevation Development)

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An Orlando developer wants to convert a private airport near Apopka into a high-end residential neighborhood with estate homes on large lots.

Orlando-based Elevation Development and Waad Capital LLC submitted a pre-application request for a project called The Vias at Round Lake, a proposed 244-lot subdivision near Apopka.

The site at 5354 Cemetery Rd. is known as the Tangerine Airport, although current land use is rural. The site is zoned agricultural, with allowance for airport use, but it mainly functions as an aircraft repair and maintenance facility. The airfield is owned and managed by James Kimball. The developer would apply to rezone the property to Planned Development.

The Vias at Round Lake would be a gated community covering 115 acres, featuring executive and estate-style homes. There would be 39 homesites measuring 80 feet by 120 feet and 205 lots measuring 70 feet by 120 feet. The proposed density is 2.1 dwelling units per acre.

“The project features premium oversized lots and preserved open space. The low-density layout targets rising demand for higher-end residential options in this part of Central Florida,” said Jawaad Khanani, Vice President at Elevation Development and managing partner at Waad Capital.

Kathleen Rutland with Land Advisors represented the sellers and helped negotiate the deal. Khanani said the site wasn’t initially listed for sale, but they managed to position themselves to move forward with approvals.

Elevation Development will entertain offers from builders for the finished lots in a few months. They are targeting upper-tier or luxury production homebuilders.

Khanani believes that some builders naturally gravitate toward projects with larger lot sizes and no townhomes.

“Buyers are looking for more space, larger backyards and a little more privacy,” Khanani said. “Keeping this around two units per acre supports that and helps set a thoughtful precedent for future zoning in the Round Lake area. For now, we’re focused on getting it through approvals.”

The amenities plans include 10 acres of preserved open space and park area, a clubhouse, and walking trails.

The site is currently under contract, aiming for a late 2026 closing date.

Khanani said they had been monitoring the Round Lake/Kelly Park Corridor for a while.

“There’s been continued activity, residential and commercial, in this submarket and strong demographics,” he said. “But there are very few large tracts left in this area. So when a site like this became available, it was an easy decision to move on it.”

Elevation Development and Waad Capital are planning similar projects in surrounding areas, including larger lots, a gated community and a focus on move-up buyers, Khanani said. Municipalities in this region have been supportive of the lower-density direction.

But getting approvals in Orange County for new development in and around the Tangerine Rural Settlement Area can be a challenge.

Last year, Richmond American Homes filed a preliminary subdivision plan for Sadler Homes Estates, a large-lot subdivision on 239 acres at 7876 Sadler Rd. south of Lake Ola but were denied. The revised plan for the community submitted on Oct. 1 was also denied.

County planners also denied plans for Trimble Estates, which was designed for 100 1-acre lots on 106 acres in the rural settlement area. The owners filed a vested rights appeal with the county, but the case is still unresolved.

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