

Franich plans move forward

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Watsonville annexation

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Development plans for the 72-acre Franich property at the northeast corner of Watsonville are moving along rapidly.

After settling legal disputes that started in 1981 over city annexation, the Franich family is now prepared to submit development plans to the city by February, accord-

ing to District 7 Councilwoman Betty Bobeda.

At a Thursday evening meeting, an architect hired by the Franich family, Matthew Thompson, of Thatcher & Thompson Architects, presented a preliminary report of use proposals.

Development on the farmland is carefully delineated in the document. Sixteen acres are reserved for a community

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park, 10 acres for an elementary school, and nine acres for low-to moderate-income housing to be managed by non-profit groups.

The plans are limited in scope by a 1993 "statement of understanding" between the Franich family and the City of Watsonville.

In his recommendations, Thompson said the school and park will be constructed off of East Lake Avenue, near a proposed extension of Wagoner Street.

A proposed extension of Bridge Street would sweep around the property with an entrance on East Lake Avenue south of Nugent Avenue.

Lake Village Drive, Acorn Way and McKenzie Avenue would remain cul-de-sacs and would buttress the new elementary school.

Though the go-ahead has been okayed, there is still some opposition to the development.

People attending last night's meeting expressed concerns about "drainage, traffic and compatibility" with neighboring communities, Thompson said.

"They would like to see adequate drainage," around the property that residents say contribute to annual flooding, Bobeda said.

The draining issue is one of several still being considered as the process moves forward.

"I think the architect is doing a good job of addressing the neighborhood issues," said Interim Community Development Administrator Dave Williams. "At this point though, (the proposals) are rough concepts. It's really preliminary."