

Beautz faces struggle over Live Oak development

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Although Jan Beautz was elected to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors with 62 percent of the vote in District 1, it does not appear that she will receive such overwhelming support from her fellow supervisors.

Beautz faces an especially tough battle in her quest to lower the number of houses allowed to be built in Live Oak.

Currently, the county's General Plan, which outlines the direction and scope of development, projects an additional 15,000 to 20,000 residents for the urban no-man's land squashed between Santa Cruz and Capitola.

Beautz has said repeatedly that that is too many people for so small an area. She wants the 1990 revision of the General Plan to call for fewer housing units in Live Oak.

"The densities definitely have to be reduced," Beautz said in a recent interview. "A large part of the problem in Live Oak is there are just too many units on these small parcels of land. It crowds people too much."

But it looks as if it will be very difficult for her to get two more votes on the Board of Supervisors to support a density reduction.

Pajaro Valley Supervisor Sherry Mehl said, "So much of District 4 (the Pajaro Valley) is zoned commercial-agricultural that we couldn't find a new site for Murphy's Crossing (farm-worker housing). There's not much leeway in Watsonville."

Aptos-Corralitos-La Selva Beach Supervisor Robley Levy has a strong record of working to reduce housing construction in her district.

With her backing, the county bought the Aptos Polo Grounds

for a park, eliminating a proposal to build housing for older people there.

The residents of Rio del Mar have vigorously opposed further developments proposed by the Seascape Land Co., which built much of Rio del Mar. Levy has generally supported the residents.

Santa Cruz area Supervisor Gary Patton is hardly likely to agree to a satellite suburb of 20,000 residents somewhere to the north of Santa Cruz.

And Supervisor Fred Keeley ran on a strong growth-management platform in his San Lorenzo Valley-Scotts Valley district.

The supervisors might want to accommodate Beautz's call for lower Live Oak densities, if it didn't mean a demographic bulge elsewhere in the county.

But it is not likely they will