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Merrill Asks ESCBA Support Of Land Swap For Courthouse Site

Supervisor Walter G. Merrill this morning urged the East Santa Cruz Businessmen's association to back the proposed land "swap" that will shift the site for a new courthouse to the intersection of Ocean and Water streets.

He also suggested that the association poll the membership and pass a resolution endorsing the exchange with the Santa Cruz urban redevelopment agency.

"I strongly favor binding this transaction at the November 2 meeting of the board of supervisors and I am most enthusiastic as regards the accessibility of this property to our freeway systems and the low cost of the parcel," Merrill emphasized.

In the swap, the county will trade its 3½-acre parcel (old Garibaldi hotel site) on the west bank of the San Lorenzo park project for 10 to 11 acres on the east bank at the Ocean and Water streets corner.

Merrill reported that the association has scheduled a meeting for 7:30 o'clock tomorrow night in the East Side firehouse.

The URA parcel offered is valued at more than \$500,000, according to the supervisor. He ex-

plained that the value of the county's holdings is \$338,333, based on a sale price of \$2.40 per square foot.

"However, the county acquired its present holding for \$1.55 per square foot on a purchase of \$165,000, plus \$50,000 for owner-participation costs," Merrill stated.

The agency is asking an additional \$30,000 in the trade, bringing the entire cost to the county for the East Side spot to \$245,000, or 50 cents per square foot, Merrill states. Based on actual value of the county holdings, the URA offer would range from 57-70 cents per square foot.

"Support the supervisor of your district (Merrill) in his efforts to obtain this site," Merrill stated in his letter to association members.

A few weeks ago Merrill outlined the proposed swap with association members and made a tour of the site with them. After one of the leaders said that the association would support Merrill's drive for the swap, a reversal of the position followed stating that the association had not yet taken any action on the plan.

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