

New city library complex planned for downtown

Development includes large library, shops, offices, housing and parking

By JOHN VIERIA

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WATSONVILLE — Developers of Main Street's 200-block unveiled a proposal for a new Watsonville Public Library, office space for Graniterock, space for retail shops, parking and housing.

"I think it's going to be a gem," said George Ow Jr., of Ow Family Property at a meeting of the Watsonville Public Library Board of Trustees Wednesday afternoon.

The 200-block project is being developed through a joint venture

with Ow Family Property and Barry Swenson Builders. The architectural design for the development is being handled by Thatcher and Thompson Architects. Developers are working closely with the Watsonville Redevelopment Agency in trying to attract prospective tenants to the building.

"It's definitely on track and we're really excited about it," said Jan Davison, the city's director of Housing and Economic Development.

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Matthew Thompson discusses the proposed design plans of a development on the 200 block of Main Street, which includes a new public library, to members of the Watsonville Public Library Board of Trustees Wednesday afternoon.

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The proposed downtown library will be 40,000 square feet and will help to ease the cramped conditions evident at the library's current location. According to Watsonville Public Library Director Deborah Barrow, moving the public library to Main Street will be convenient to residents shopping in the downtown area.

The proposed 200-block development also provides office space for Graniterock, which will be located above the public library. On the side of the block facing Main Street, developers envision a row of retail shops including an outdoor seating cafe on the corner of Main and Sec-

ond streets adjacent to the entrance to the public library.

To accommodate customers, tenants and the public, a parking garage will be constructed next to the Graniterock/public library building and have up to 500 parking spaces, said Matthew Thompson of Thatcher and Thompson Architects.

Housing will be created above the parking garage to increase the housing demands and to add customers for downtown businesses. According to Thompson, the housing will be best suited for smaller households of single or dual occupancy.

The 200-block proposal will be brought before the Watsonville Planning Commission on Monday at 7 p.m. at city hall and the Watsonville City Council on May 11.

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