

# Opinion

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Watsonville

## Sentinel Editorial

# Freedom Annexation

Although the political complications are difficult, we believe the Local Agency Formation Commission's decision to provide for an election to determine if Freedom residents want to annex to the city of Watsonville is a sound move.

It is readily apparent that some of the more vocal residents of the currently unincorporated section of the county, recognized as Freedom, do not want to become a part of Watsonville.

They have been at odds with the city for years and nothing much has changed.

However, when the Local Agency Formation Commission voted in favor of the election, it was a definite move in the right direction.

The present density in Freedom qualifies the area as an urban sector.

Thus, the residents really have three choices:

1. To stay as they are, an unincorporated area under the jurisdiction of the county Board of Supervisors.
2. Incorporate themselves into the county's fifth city.
3. Annex to the city of Watsonville.

If we interpret the present political climate, a number of residents would prefer the status quo.

These residents dislike Watsonville for one reason or another, generally due to the fact that they believe the Watsonville authorities have treated them like a third cousin.

They have the same feeling about Watsonville that a number of Live Oak residents feel about Santa Cruz.

However, in the interest of better government, and, hopefully, more efficient government, annexation to the city of Watsonville would provide for government under a single entity, a preferable position.

It would mean the eventual elimination of special districts, including to a degree, the Freedom Fire District. Unfortunately, the fire district boundaries and the proposed area of annexation are not unlike.

Thus, the annexation would mean major changes in the fire district or, more likely the creation of a new fire district.

The same situation to a degree would apply to the Freedom Sanitation district.

But when you look at the overall picture, an urban area adjacent to another urban area, it seems to make good sense that it becomes one entity.

In this particular instance you have a growing retail area developing in Freedom while Watsonville is discussing upgrading its downtown to better preserve the central business district.

It is almost impossible to tell whether the two areas would be more compatible under a single jurisdiction.

Ultimately, from a financial point of view, it would be far better to have a single form of government even though there could be initial advantages or disadvantages.

Basically you are talking about one area no matter where the current boundary lines are located.

Under normal circumstances a municipality has the better opportunity to develop a higher level of urban services at a reasonable cost than an unincorporated region.

It was unfortunate that the school impact issue was put into the package as it again is an issue that will eventually have to be faced by the entire district rather than by a segment of the district.

Nevertheless, we hope that the citizens of the Freedom area will give serious thought to the positive approach to creating a single city.