

## UP FRONT

## Tightening the (Green) Belt

ON FRIDAY, SEPT. 25, supporters of an undeveloped greenbelt around the city of Santa Cruz gathered at the Louden Nelson Center to kick off a campaign for Measure I. The initiative would give the City Council two years longer to come up with a plan to preserve the land for all time.

There are few people voicing any opposition to the measure. There isn't even an organized campaign against it.

But if Measure I does pass this November, it will by no means guarantee the preservation of 400 acres of uncorrupted land. Owners

of the property want to develop or sell. And in a decade of federal and state budget cuts that promise to tighten the purse strings of cities across America, some wonder whether the city will ever be able to come up with the \$10 million that may be needed to buy it.

Ultimately, it's going to be up to the new City Council, Measure I advocates admit. "The people who are really going to decide are the people on the City Council," says County Supervisor Gary Patton, who is co-chairing the Campaign for Measure I. "Measure I gives them two years to come up with a plan."

It looks like the Council will need those two years. Few of the 15 candidates say they have a plan for buying up to \$10 million worth of land.



DAVID ALEXANDER

**Supervisor Gary Patton and former Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt are happy that there isn't an organized group opposing Measure I, the greenbelt proposal.**

Only two claim to already have answers. Businessman and City Council candidate Mike Everett says he has a secret way to finance the project, although he claims it's premature to comment on his plan. "It will come out," he says. Everett also believes the city could save some money by letting developers build on some of the land.

Santa Cruz council candidate and San Jose urban planner Dan Garr has gone public with his plan for funding the greenbelt. Shoving aside Measure I's proposal for massive planning sessions between the council and the community, Garr thinks the project can be funded quickly and easily through skypark land the city already owns in Scotts Valley. That land is about to be developed, and will defi-

nately supply the city of Santa Cruz with millions of dollars, Garr says. If Santa Cruz could get the county to kick in half of the greenbelt costs, the project could easily be paid for, according to Garr.

But progressive candidates shrug off plans like the one Garr is proposing. Former Santa Cruz Mayor Mike Rotkin and community activist Cynthia Mathews believe it's far too soon to plan for the project. "What we need to do is take a little more time," Mathews says. But, whatever the cost, progressives seem deter-

mined to see the greenbelt preserved.

Ultimately, it will be the City Council, not Measure I, which will determine whether there is a greenbelt, Patton says. While all the candidates say they are pro-greenbelt, some of the more pro-business candidates, like Garr, Everett, and Joe Ghio, indicate that the greenbelt's price-tag may be too high if budgets are tight in 1994.

Bob Semas, one of only two registered Republicans in the race, ties the preservation of the greenbelt to increased development within the city. "What we really need to do is build our economic base," he says. "It takes commercial transactions to generate money for the city, and we've driven business out."

— Erik Espe