

Newell suggests county buy Wingspread to protect benefits

In order to protect the financial benefits to the county that may result from the Wingspread development, Santa Cruz County Administrative Officer George Newell has recommended that the county purchase the Porter Sesnon property and lease it back to the project's developers.

In a letter to the Board of Supervisors, Newell said this is the best way to ensure that the land is not incorporated or

annexed by another municipal government, which would mean a loss of the monetary benefits of the project to the county.

Newell's recommendation, what he called a "modified and redesigned variation of Wingspread Plan B," is similar to the so-called Plan C which was rejected by the Supervisors in a narrow 3-2 vote Feb. 11.

The modified Plan B, was to be presented to the supervisors on their consent agenda for

their meeting yesterday.

Newell wrote that such a system also "produces substantially more revenue to the county."

He had previously said the plan could yield the county as much as \$2.5 million a year. This is especially important in Santa Cruz County where the majority, 57 percent, live outside city limits, but the majority of hotel-tax revenues are generated within the city

limits.

The hotly debated Wingspread development, on the coastal Porter-Sesnon property south of Capitola, involves 467 condominium rental units, a performing arts center, and playing fields for sports.

Newell recommended that the supervisors also require a financial feasibility analysis before entering into a purchase and lease-back system.