

Scotts Valley - 1990
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Scotts Valley likely to expand

BY TERRI MORGAN
Special to the Mercury News

Scotts Valley is expected to win permission to annex the former Santa Cruz Skypark Airport on Thursday, allowing the city to move ahead with its plans for 200 new homes and a community park.

"We're recommending approval," said Patrick McCormick, executive officer of the Santa Cruz County Local Agency Formation Commission. "It looks pretty good."

93-acre site

The ambitious Skypark project, first described in Scotts Valley's 1986 general plan, would expand the city's commercial core and create a transit center, more than 200 new homes and a community park. Scotts Valley will combine the former airport with several adjacent parcels along the city's southwest border, then oversee development of the entire 93-acre site.

"This is one of the critical things," said Scotts Valley City Councilman Joe Miller. "Without the annexation it all falls apart."

A new downtown

The Skypark project is planned for an area bounded by the Kings Village shopping center on Mount Hermon Road, Lockhart Gulch Road, Blue Bonnet Lane and the Watkins-Johnson facility. About one-third of the parcel, including most of the former airport, will be used to create a central downtown district for Scotts Valley, which planners envision as a shopping area with office space and pedestrian walkways.

Homes will be built in three separate housing developments encompassing nearly 40 acres. The city is planning to develop a 16-acre community park and leave the remainder of the site, about 11½ acres, as open space.

The 46-acre airport is bordered on three sides by Scotts Valley. Santa Cruz, which owns the property, has been planning to trans-

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fer land-use authority of the parcel to Scotts Valley ever since the airport closed a decade ago.

"It's land right in the middle of the city, and annexation will put it where it belongs," said Dick Wilson, Santa Cruz city manager.

State law limits Santa Cruz to public uses of the site because it is located in the middle of another jurisdiction. Annexation will clear the way for Santa Cruz to

sell the property to developers.

"There's an awful lot at stake with this for Santa Cruz," said Miller. "It's worth millions to them to deal it."

Scotts Valley has five years to find a mutually acceptable developer to purchase the property from Santa Cruz, Miller added. A deal is not set by the deadline. Santa Cruz will be allowed to see the land for residential use.

"Ultimately, it's a very valuable piece of land," Wilson said. "But it's premature to start counting our money."