

✓ of Watsonville CP 5/19/87

City Council approves plan for 100 block

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Visitors to Watsonville who arrive via the Pajaro River Bridge may someday be greeted by a block of restaurants, stores and offices, all designed in Mission-era architecture.

That is, if all goes according to the latest plan of the City Council.

The council, acting as the Redevelopment Agency, last night decided it would like to see the entire east side of the 100 block of Main Street developed in Spanish-style architecture.

In particular, the council was impressed with a drawing presented by Stella Romo, who hopes to develop most of the block.

Romo and her husband, Ramiro, are longtime residents of Watsonville who have been in business downtown for several years. Their Restaurante Jalisco on the 200 block of Main Street will soon be closing to make way for the redevelopment of that block.

The city last night completed the purchase of the last property on the 200 block, which

was owned by Mrs. Romo's parents, Pete and Maria Sanchez, and included the Pasa Tiempo, Playas Novillero and Mi Casita. The city agreed to pay the Sanchezes \$535,000.

The Romos are now interested in putting their efforts into the east side of the 100 block. They already own several parcels there, and have options to buy several others — including the troubled rooming house at 53 Union Street. City Attorney Don Haile told the council he is now — for the third time in recent years — beginning legal pro-

ceedings against the owner of that property, where the living conditions are "deplorable."

Romo said she would like to buy the building, renovate it and provide strict management, protecting the property and its tenants from the drug addicts and derelicts who frequent the building. This would enable the Romos to collect rent until they were ready to demolish the building and move ahead with their redevelopment plans.

The Romos hope to take over about 75 percent of the block

and redevelop it over the next five years, Romo told the Redevelopment Agency last night. Their plans call for restaurants, stores and offices in a two-story building fronting Main Street, and a Mexican-style open-air market, or "mercado," on the Union Street side of the block.

Romo showed the council a drawing of what the 100 block could look like if she and her husband were successful with their plans. The council liked her idea, which was similar to one of several rough drawings

presented to the council by the city staff last month.

It didn't take the council long to agree that the Spanish-style architecture would be an appropriate theme for the 100 block and to ask the staff to set architectural guidelines for any future development on that block.

Following that decision by the council, Harley Iiams returned to the council with his proposal to build a convenience store on the 100 block, at Main and East Front streets. When

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Iiams first presented his proposal a few months ago, the council put him off, saying it wanted to first adopt one style of architecture for the 100 block to avoid it being developed piecemeal.

Last night, Iiams was told to redesign his project to match the architecture of Romo's proposal. Iiams is scheduled to come back to the Redevelopment Agency Sept. 15.

In another matter last night, the agency approved a use permit for a new restaurant and bar on the northwest corner of Rodriguez Street and West Lake Avenue. The restaurant is proposed by Richard L. Halward of Watsonville.