

Luxury home plan on tonight's agenda

■ BOMBAY

from Page 1B

bought the land in 1991, Fresno developer Ed Kashian sued the city over general-plan zoning he contended was unfairly restrictive. After a five-year court battle, which the city was winning, the two sides began negotiating a compromise.

The result was the proposed 25-home project, which would leave 200 acres in open-space preserve to be managed by a local land trust.

Though the project would require a general plan amendment to allow higher housing density, several city leaders touted the proposal as a suitable compromise. Without enough money in the city budget to buy the property outright, they said, the proposal would be the next best thing to achieving Santa Cruz's greenbelt goals. Under current zoning, the Bombay Corp. could build seven homes scattered throughout the property, effectively foreclosing its use as a park or nature preserve.

But the compromise proposal proved so unpopular when unveiled at a public hearing last year that the city put a measure on the Nov. 3 ballot that would raise money to buy the land. The Bombay Corp. has given the city an option, through Nov. 15, to buy the land for \$3.9 million.

Measure G would allow the city to issue \$7 million in bonds to pay for fire station improvements, urban park development and the Bombay

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land. The city and the state already have pledged \$1 million each toward the purchase.

But Measure G will require approval by two-thirds of voters, a difficult hurdle even for popular measures. Opponents of the measure see the city as using the popular fire station issue to slip through a costly land purchase.

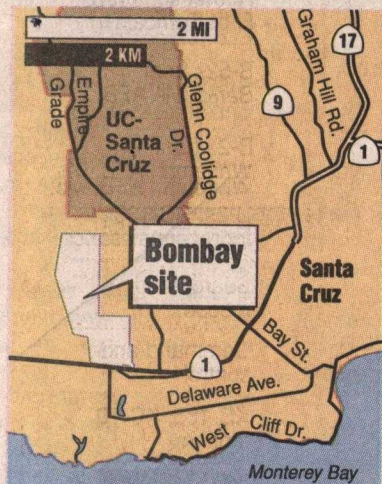
If the measure fails, the city will have to come up with the remaining \$2.9 million to buy the land or allow some form of development.

Charlene Attack, a local lawyer representing the Bombay Corp., said that if the city rejects the 25-home proposal, the company will be prepared to submit a seven-home alternative within a few months.

"We'd go back and apply for what we're entitled to under this zoning," Attack said.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED

The city council will consider the 25-home plan at its 7 p.m. meeting today at City Hall, 809 Center St.



MERCURY NEWS

Council to weigh Bombay project

Plan for 25 homes gets airing tonight

BY JOHN WOOLFOLK

Mercury News Staff Writer

Plans to build 25 luxury homes on coastal uplands long coveted by Santa Cruz voters for parkland will be considered by the city council tonight.

The city's planning commission has recommended against approval of the plan by the Bombay Corp., which owns the 246-acre property on the city's west edge. The land was among five properties marked as future parkland under a 1979 greenbelt initiative.

"Seeing that the property sits in a greenbelt area, we felt that certain things needed to be looked at very closely," said Rod Quartararo, a planning commissioner. "We felt that visually... it just wouldn't go along with what was expressed in the general plan."

The Bombay property, as it is known, has been the subject of a bitter legal battle between the city and its owner. Shortly after his company

See BOMBAY, Page 2B