

Wingspread Moves Step Forward

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The Wingspread plan, which could include a performing arts theater, conference center, playing fields, condominiums and office buildings on 67 acres opposite Cabrillo College and across Highway 1 — may be heading toward approval after four years of planning and talks between the county and developers.

Hare, Brewer and Kelley of Palo Alto last month presented complete plans for the project, which the county has been asking for since 1980, said Steve Amsbaugh, assistant planning director and head of the county's Wingspread task force.

The proposal has met strong opposition from area residents who say the development would erode beach cliffs and create traffic problems in the area.

But "for the first time, we have a fair relationship between the applicant and ourselves," Amsbaugh said.

The developers finally agreed to
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submit a new environmental impact report (EIR) for a revamped proposal, Amsbaugh said. They had planned to present their choice of consultant this week, but that has been delayed for a few weeks due to holiday vacations, Amsbaugh said.

If the county okays the subsequent report, a Wingspread decision would come before county supervisors by summer, he said.

Developers are looking at two proposals — Plan A and Plan B — which the county planning commission will decide on at different dates this year, Amsbaugh said.

Plan A calls for 200 housing units, a conference center, commercial businesses, 612 parking spaces, private tennis courts and swimming pools. It will be reviewed by the planning department in February.

Plan B — 295 units, a 1700-seat performing arts center, 1698 parking spaces and baseball and soccer fields — will be reviewed this summer.

Wingspread plans have been marked by controversy from the beginning. In 1981, the developers sued the county after supervisors refused to accept their initial EIR.

Supervisors said the EIR would have to wait until a water study of

Soquel Creek, which runs through the proposed project, was complete. The court order led to the county's acceptance of the environmental report, although the county said it was too imprecise.

Developers initiated their two proposals in July 1983, seeking approval of Plan B. At that time planners told them an amended EIR would be needed before they would approve the plan.

Planners asked for more specific floor plans, parking locations, traffic impacts and soil data.

But the specifics submitted by developers revealed 585 separately rentable units rather than the 295 units requested under Plan B, and planners again delayed the environmental review process.

Among the problems was a conflict over the height of the proposed buildings. The county's general plan called for a 25-foot height limit. One Plan B building, the proposed Sea Lodge, would be 70 feet high.

In addition, residents in line of the proposed projects said the project would ruin the coastal environment, and the buildings would block ocean views. Some residents, along with the supervisors, favor turning a portion of the site into state park land.

Public hearings on the project can only be held after the completed plans have gone through the planning commission. • —Bruce Barton