

County Growth Management A Hot Item On Ballot

County supervisors—at least three of the five—are seeking a mandate from voters June 6 to develop and enforce a growth management plan in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County.

Measure J on the primary ballot could give the board that mandate.

While the measure does not contain a growth management plan, it does direct the board to develop one within six months, and sets six specific policies:

- Supervisors must decide each year what this county's "fair share" of the state population will be and limit growth to that "fair share."
- Preserve agricultural lands.

- Define "urban" and "rural" areas and encourage new residential developments to locate in urban areas, and discourage them from locating in rural areas.

- Not allow development to proceed "without the provision of adequate services."
- Mandate that "at least 15 percent of housing units newly constructed for sale or rental each year shall be capable of purchase or rental by persons with average or below average incomes."

- Stop the division of land when it threatens damage to "natural resources."

The measure was put on the ballot in a surprise move by Supervisors Gary Patton and Ed Borovatz — surprising in that the board was in the process of developing its own growth management ordinance.

It is said that since both supervisors are standing for election (Borovatz in a recall election, Patton for re-election), the measure has political overtones.

Supervisor Cecil Smith argued strongly that the measure should not have gone to the ballot in its present form, and the board should have waited until it had developed a comprehensive plan, and then put it to a vote of the people.

He and Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat voted to put Measure J on the ballot, but Liddicoat noted she did so in order to avoid the label of "anti-growth management."

She and Smith rebelled against the board rebutting the "against argument," but both signed the "yes" argument on the sample ballot.

Patton stated the merit of the measure is it will prevent the county from becoming an uncontrolled, growth county as each year the board must determine the "fair share" increase.

While the state population increase percentage-wise has, in recent years, been only about half that of the county's, it has been pointed out that a future board could determine that the "fair share" here could be twice that of the state—a choice that would leave things as they are.

It also has been pointed out that county government's jurisdiction in planning does not include the four cities in the county, and they could take up the proposed increase the county envisions.

County Planner Chris Schenk told the board the plan could not successfully be implemented "without the cooperation of the cities."

According to the ballot analysis by County Counsel Clair Carlson, the measure "makes findings that the county of Santa Cruz is one of the fastest growing counties in the state and this rapid population growth has already increased the cost of and demand for government services, and is further threatening the loss of agricultural lands and mineral, timber, fish, wildlife, air, water and scenic resources."

During board considerations of a series of reports on which it was developing a growth management program, Deputy County Counsel Dwight Herr wrote a legal opinion that basically said a growth management plan that was "inclusionary" would withstand a court test, but one that was "exclusionary" might have trouble.

Herr explained that the Petaluma plan (one of the first cities to develop growth management) had been upheld in court because it allowed all segments of development access to the development process, but that a plan to stop development until services are provided (as in the city of Livermore) has been returned to court for decision.

The only aspect of the Measure J that could be successfully tested in court, in the view of county counsel's opinion, would be the restriction of develop-

ment until provision of services are made.

The testable condition was included in the growth management plan by recommendation of Supervisor Phil Baldwin, Soquel-Live Oak representative.

Following the June 6 primary, whether or not the measure passes, the board of supervisors is set upon a course to complete a growth management plan for the unincorporated areas of the county.

As all three of the supervisors who pushed for the county to develop the plan and put the measure on the ballot are facing election June 6, it is uncertain what will be the impact of Measure J.

It could mean a mandate for a conservationist board to be very restrictive on growth, or a slight warning to a more developmental-oriented board to go carefully.

Orientation Meet For New SCHS Students

An orientation meeting for incoming freshmen and their parents will be Tuesday evening at 7:30 in the Santa Cruz High School auditorium.

Principal Jim Coulter, Vice Principal Howard Rhine, and school counselors will be on hand to talk about the school.

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