

# GROWTH 1-percent growth rate OK'd again

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8-31-89

SANTA CRUZ — The county Planning Commission voted Wednesday to recommend the Board of Supervisors approve a 1-percent growth rate for 1990.

The action was virtually identical to the Planning Commission's recommendation of last year. Only one commissioner spoke out against the growth rate.

That 1-percent rate would allow approximately 500 new building permits to be issued in the unincorporated area of the county in 1990. To meet state housing requirements, the commission also recommended that an additional 1,384 building permits be offered to anyone who wants to build affordable housing

in the county.

The extra affordable-housing permits were made available this year as well. According to Dave Laughlin, the county's housing program manager, no one applied for those permits.

The additional affordable-housing permits were approved to placate officials at the state's Department of Housing and Community Development. HCD officials have been critical of the county's growth-management law, which requires supervisors to set annual growth rates. They contend that the county's growth control policies have restricted the supply of affordable housing here and claim that the county is not providing its "fair share" of regional affordable-housing needs, as determined by the Association of

Monterey Bay Area Governments. Therefore, they say, the county's General Plan "housing element" does not comply with state law.

In May, HCD officials ruled that the county was ineligible for \$500,000 in federal Community Development Block Grant funds because the housing element was out of compliance. The county wanted to use the money to help property owners fix up run-down housing in Davenport, Live Oak and Freedom.

Planning Commissioner Dale Skillicorn voted against the 1-percent growth rate Wednesday, saying the growth control has driven local housing prices beyond the reach of many families.

"I believe such an unrealistic view-

point is a service to not only the poor but to seniors living on a fixed income as well," Skillicorn said.

But his fellow commissioners disagree, blaming housing costs on the general popularity of Santa Cruz County.

"The demand is insatiable for this county," said Commissioner Denise Colbert. "We can never, never, never meet the demand."

"People want to come here," added Commissioner Ted Durkee. "It's one of the great frustrations. How do we provide for them all?"

One woman spoke at the commission's public hearing on the subject. She said she approved of the recommendation.