

Board asked *Watsonville Annexation* to oppose Watsonville annexation

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SANTA CRUZ — County supervisors should oppose efforts by the city of Watsonville to annex and develop farm land west of the city limits, the county's planning director is recommending.

Planning Director Dan Shaw cited a number of state and local rules that he said "directly state that agricultural lands shall be preserved for agricultural use."

City officials have not filed applications, but have made it clear they're interested in annexing some of the fields in the Highway 1-Riverside Drive area. Several developers have expressed interest in the area.

Shaw said there are four parcels of farm land in the area that are not prime quality, and could be considered for annexation and

development.

"The city is surrounded on the east and west by (prime) agricultural land, and to the south by Monterey County," Shaw said in his letter to supervisors. "These factors clearly complicate annexation options."

Shaw said a preliminary review indicates the Buena Vista area northwest of the city "should be explored further as an example of an appropriate area for residential annexation."

The area is not designated as prime agricultural land "and is relatively close to existing urban development," Shaw said.

The county's Agricultural Advisory Commission previously stated its opposition to any annexation of prime farm land.

Any annexation would have to be

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approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission, a seven-member group with representatives from local governments.

Supervisors took no stand on the issue today, but directed Shaw to forward his report to Watsonville city officials for comment.

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