

# Wingspread plan 'B' gets green light

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By JAMIE MARKS

Sentinel Staff Writer

SANTA CRUZ — Wingspread Beach Plan B, with its performing arts complex, sports fields and 295 "lockout" condominium rooms, has received a green light from a recently completed draft environmental impact report.

The EIR, done by EIP Associates of San Francisco, states, "No unavoidable significant adverse impacts have been identified for the project."

In looking at 11 different areas, from traffic to geology, the EIR suggests steps to mitigate the project's presence. If those are followed, then EIP has found the impacts "low" to "insignificant."

"We feel this vindicates our beliefs about Plan B," said Timothy Welch, of Conference Associates, the project applicant for developer Ryland Kelley.

"This gives us a really clean environmental report," he added. "Now it gets down to the political will of the board."

Aptos Supervisor Robley Levy, whose political support has been divided on the two Wingspread Beach projects, said she has only had a preliminary look at the EIR.

"The public perceives traffic as a major issue, so we'll have to look

closely at that," she said. "Clearly, it's a matter of balancing the public benefits against the environmental impacts."

The EIR says that with installation of signals, the traffic congestion would be dropped to "insignificant." It calls for installing traffic signals at Park Avenue and McGregor Drive, and State Park Drive and Sea Ridge. It suggests McGregor Drive be widened at the project site, calls for a three-way stop sign at McGregor and Mar Vista drives, and recommends theater events not be scheduled during peak commuter hours.

The cost of these projects is more than \$310,000, according to the EIR. Welch said Kelley "expects to be asked to pay for all of the costs." But he hinted that Kelley would try to have some of the costs carried by another source of revenue.

The EIR points out that Plan B would generate \$395,300 a year in transient occupancy taxes, but Welch said Conference Associates has calculated the revenues at \$1.4 million. "Even using the EIR's figures on room rates, we think they made a mistake and it should really be \$919,581," he said.

Wingspread Beach has been mired in controversy since Kelley first

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proposed building the conference center in October 1980 on the 72.5-acre Porter Sesnon property, between New Brighton and Seacliff state beaches. Kelley has been through two EIRs, subsequent environmental reports and three different projects.

Welch said he now expects Plan A, for 195 units, and the larger Plan B, which has 295 lockout units that can be rented separately as 585 units, to be heard by the Planning Commission in August or September.

The commission voted to defer

judgment on Plan A until Plan B's EIR process is concluded. The public comment period for the draft EIR closes July 11.

Much of the project's support comes from the cultural and sports communities.

But neighborhood opposition has been led by the Friends of Porter Sesnon, a group that has matched the public-relations tactics of Conference Associates point for point.

Vickie Powell, the founder of FOPS, said today she had just received the EIR and would reserve her comments until the group had had time to review it.