

Doesn't anyone want to claim Live Oak?

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SANTA CRUZ — No one wants Live Oak.

It has substandard houses and serious drainage problems.

"The city of Santa Cruz doesn't want it. Capitola doesn't want it. And, the county of Santa Cruz doesn't want it," Michael Routh, a commissioner with the Local Agency Formation Commission, said Wednesday night.

Routh was responding to Santa Cruz City's "sphere of influence map" that stops 20 blocks short of butting against Capitola's sphere of influence line in the Live Oak area.

The "spheres" designate areas adjacent to cities that may annex someday — if the people in those areas want to go into the cities.

The Local Agency Formation Commission is the state-designated body to approve or disapprove annexations and spheres of influence.

Santa Cruz was willing to include a few more blocks toward Live Oak — from the east of Seventh Avenue to around 10th Avenue, but stopped well back of the 30th Avenue boundary set by Capitola.

Commissioner and county Supervisor Gary Patton said he would be willing to look at the full Live Oak issue before allowing the city to annex anything on its eastern boundary.

Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt

told the commission the city was willing to reach out for an area that included Dominican Hospital to the east as the major medical facility had always had close ties with the city.

Patton's suggestion to shrink the sphere appeared to persuade commission, which will consider the city sphere at its July meeting when it expects to take final action.

That would leave the city with only three areas to include: the Carbonera West area, the Highview Drive area and Ocean Street Extension.

The latter two areas have a majority of residents who oppose being in the sphere of influence.

Routh said that the Highview Drive area might be better off being designated as an area of its own within the sphere of influence so that a larger area would not carry it into the city if it decides to be annexed.

Annexation can be stopped when protests are made from persons who own 51 percent of the land to be annexed.

City Planning Director Peter Katzlberger noted the city has not aggressively gone after outside territory, saying the last large annexation was of about 90 acres to the west that's owned by Teachers Management Investments.

The land has remained open space, and Patton said it might be a good idea to consider de-annexation since the city had not indicated it wants to grow.