

Council considers growth boundary

Watsonville - Growth

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Residents and city officials have had two weeks to get used to the ideas presented in the urban-growth strategy — specifically, the idea of preserving some farmland and selecting some neighborhoods for incorporation into the city.

WATSONVILLE Tuesday, the City Council will decide whether to endorse it. If the council does, the nonprofit group that came up with the proposal, Action Pajaro Valley, will begin to circulate petitions to place the measure on November's ballot.

The urban-growth initiative calls for annexing:

■ 340 acres in the Buena Vista neighborhood north of the airport, to be developed in three phases during the next 20 years.

■ 65 acres surrounding Atkinson Lane to the south of the city, to be developed during the next

25 years primarily as farmworker housing.

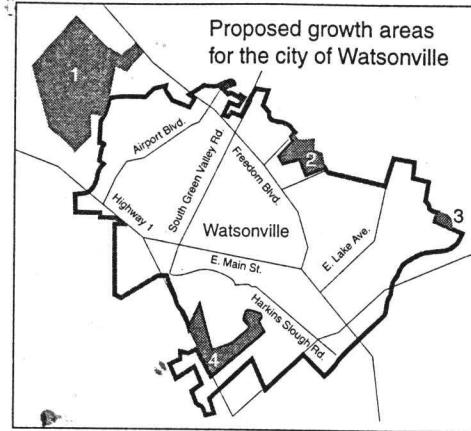
■ 4 acres to the south of the city in the Villages neighborhood. The Local Area Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County recently approved this annexation for development as senior housing.

■ 94 acres in the Manabe/Burgstrom area to the south of the city near Highway 1 to be developed primarily as industrial and commercial in the next 20 years.

The proposal also calls for the preservation of prime farmland for the next 20 to 25 years to the northeast of the city from the Atkinson Lane area to Salsipuedes Creek surrounding East Lake Avenue.

If approved by voters in November, the initiative could pave the way for 4,000 houses and apartments in the next 25 years. About half of those would go in the annexed areas. City Manager Carlos Palacios said growth projections call for 6,000 houses by then.

No land would be annexed into the city if the



Local Area Formation Commission denies the annexation request. So far, only neighbors in the Buena Vista neighborhood have opposed the plan. City Clerk Lorraine Washington said

she's received no letters opposing the proposal and only five phone calls this week from residents concerned about the issue. Mayor Betty Bobeda said she hasn't received one piece of correspondence on the issue. She supports the initiative.

The proposal has the support of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, the Monterey Bay Area Central Labor Council, the Latino and the Pajaro Valley chambers of commerce, Watsonville Wetlands Watch and the League of United Latin American Citizens.

The city Planning Commissioners endorsed the initiative last week.

The council will discuss the endorsement at its 6:30 p.m. session Tuesday. Meetings are held at the Watsonville City Council Chamber, 250 Main St.

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