

City under construction

Watsonville's largest shopping center tops the list of up coming projects

By MICHAEL MERRILL
STAFF WRITER

WATSONVILLE — The face of the city will continue to change as several construction projects from the largest shopping center in city history to new restaurants and entertainment centers start up and many more proceed through planning stages this summer.

Overlook

By far the largest is the 270,000-square-

foot Overlook Project, between Main Street and Harkins Slough Road. DBO Development awarded a contract to Granite Construction last week; site preparation is already underway.

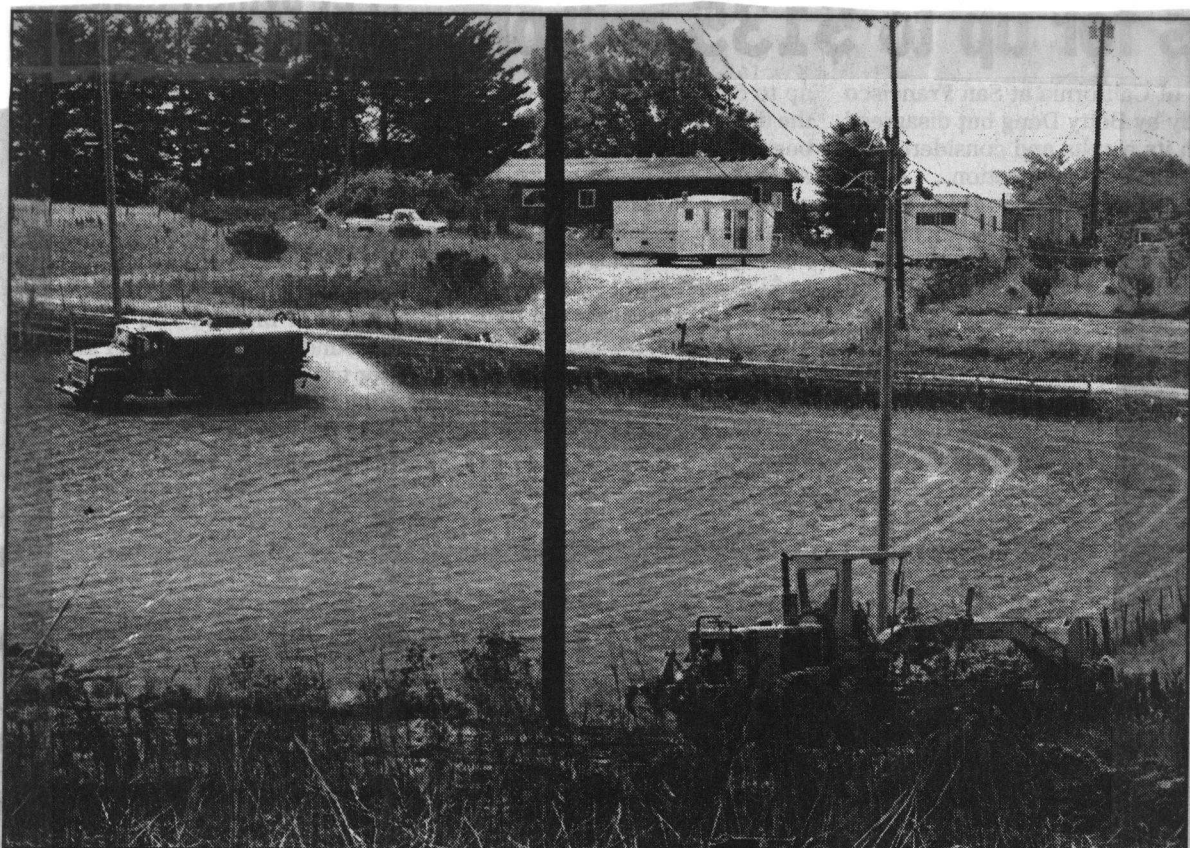
The shopping center, which will be the city's largest, will include a Target department store, a Lucky's grocery store, Staples office supply store and several other stores and restaurants. Orosco said the property is already 80 percent leased. According to a city economic analysis the project will

generate up to \$800,000 in annual tax revenue and employ up to 800 people.

Included in the project is a conservation plan for the slough. DBO will grant access to Watsonville Wetlands Watch for education, restoration and enhancement to a large section of Struve Slough, which will be designated an environmentally-managed open space.

Additionally, a plan to provide for the establishment of 300 additional housing

- ✓ **Overlook** ✓ **Red Roof Inn**
- ✓ **Roller rink** ✓ **Burger King**
- ✓ **Indoor soccer arena**
- ✓ **Airborne Express**
- ✓ **El Alteño** ✓ **Coast Produce**



Tarmo Hannula

A water tanker and a grader work a section of the Overlook shopping center site beside Harkins Slough Road below a house that will be demolished, according to construction supervisors.

units within the existing city limits to compensate for the loss of housing at the Overlook site is included in the project.

Red Roof Inn

The planned Red Roof Inn on West Beach near Lee Road is another project that could have a major impact on the local economy. A group of local investors, lead by Watsonville realtor Chuck Allen, plans to build a \$4 million, 92-room hotel. Watsonville Interim Community Development Administrator Dave Williams said the city received the foundation plans Friday and they are under review. Williams said construction could start as soon as Sept. 12.

A city report on the project says that it could bring 80 new job openings from the combined hotel, convenience store and restaurant and \$140,000 in annual tax revenues.

Roller rink

Plans to build a new 20,000-square foot roller skating rink behind Cabrillo Lanes on Auto Center Drive are still in the works. Deputy City Manager Marcela Tavanztis said the city is providing James Pringle, developer of the project, with consulting services and assisting him with the process.

The project has been stalled due to the purchase of Cabrillo Lanes by AMF Corp., but city officials said they expect grading and site preparation begin before October. The Pringle family, who owns The Rink in Scotts Valley, have been working on the project for over a year.

Indoor soccer arena

Plans to build an indoor soccer arena on an empty lot on Second Street between Rodriguez and Main streets are still being developed. The indoor field will be

housed in a clamshell building to be 128 feet wide and 256 feet in length.

Santa Cruz public defender Larry Biggam and contractor Kevin McKloskey formed Soccer Central LLC, a limited liability corporation, and have agreed to invest \$500,000 in the 33,000-square-foot indoor arena that will feature a professionally designed playing field with artificial turf. In addition to soccer, the facility will be available for special events, expositions, concerts, aerobics classes and other community events.

The city is leasing the land to Soccer Central and is investing \$100,000 for site improvement. As part of the deal, Soccer Central will agree to pay the redevelopment agency seven percent of the gross receipts from soccer events and provide the facility free of charge to the city and redevelopment

agency for six special events per year. Over a five year period, the city's investment is projected to return approximately \$260,000.

Airborne Express

A new Airborne Express distribution facility in the city's industrial area has received the go-ahead.

The plan to build a 33,724-square-foot regional distribution facility at 270 W. Riverside Dr. was recently given initial approval by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments. The site at Locust and Riverside is currently being used by Airborne Express and Elixer Distributing.

The Airborne Express proposal is to build offices, restrooms, a lunch room, lobby and warehouse. Plans call for tilt-up panel construction, a

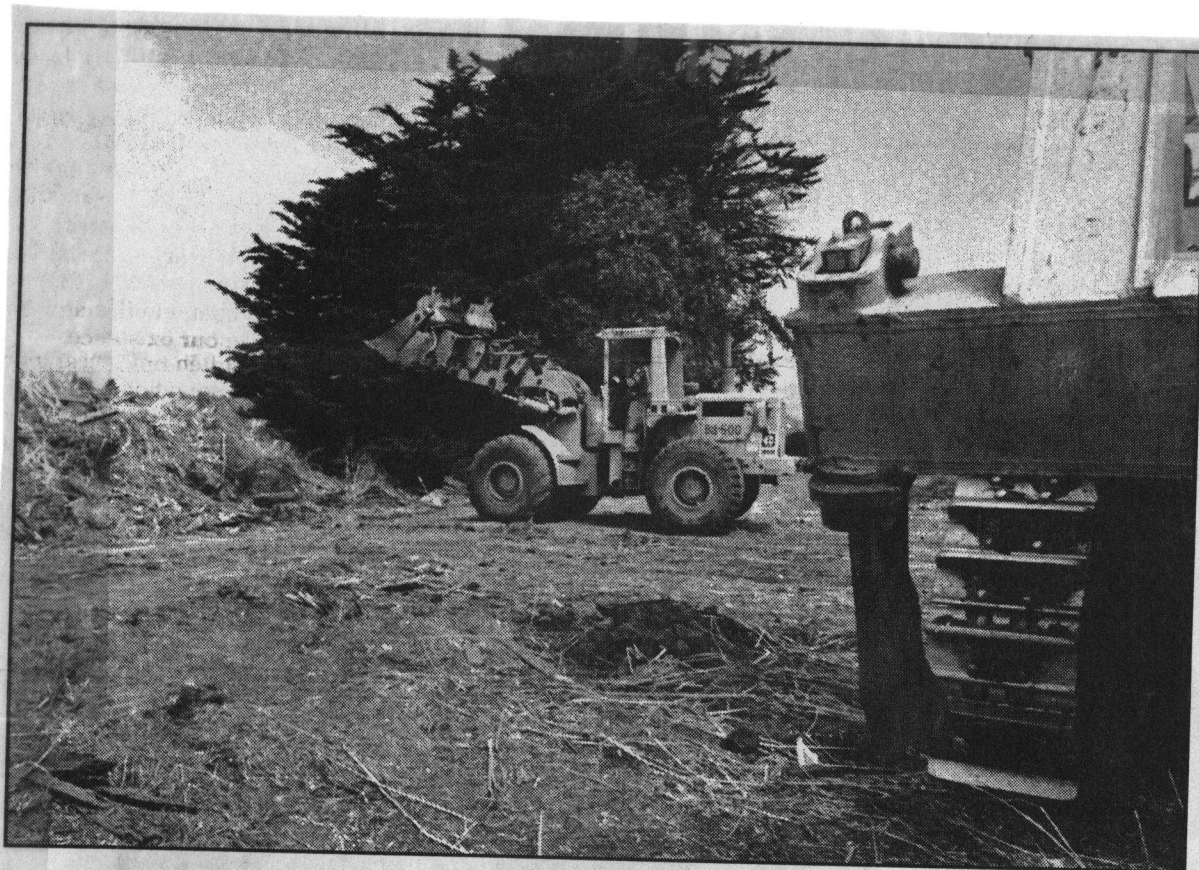
metal roof screen and roll up doors on all sides.

Williams, a Watsonville city planner, said construction may begin as soon as the final plans are approved by the city planning department. "Work could begin in a few as three weeks," Williams said.

Burger King

All the permits are approved and construction of the new Burger King restaurant on the corner of Main Street and Riverside Drive can begin as soon as the current occupant, Romo Auto Sales, moves from the property.

Owner Ramiro Romo said he will be begin moving the cars to his new car lots on Riverside Drive, approximately 100 feet away from the current location, this weekend. He said the property should be vacant by the middle of next week and ready for Burger King franchisee Arty Hyatt, who operates the Capitola Burger King and several others in California.



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Several pieces of heavy equipment were busy Tuesday at the Overlook shopping center site clearing brush and leveling the property.

El Alteño

The 4000 square-foot Restaurant El Alteño, 325 Main St., should be open for business in approximately 2 months. Owner Ramiro Romo said the interior is completed and he is waiting for the patio to be completed. The present building was constructed after the historic Rodgers building was damaged in the Loma Prieta earthquake and was later demolished. At the time of the earthquake, the Romo family operated their Jalisco's restaurant in the Rodgers building.

Coast Produce

Coast Produce will be moving from their current location on Lee Road when their new building on Kearney Street is completed. According to Williams, the plans are in the final approval stages, and construction could begin within the next three weeks.



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Construction nears completion of the new Romo Auto Sales car lot at the corner of Union Street and Riverside Drive Tuesday afternoon. The business will move down Riverside one block from the corner of Main Street.