

Local

Watsonville - Politics + Gov't

Election '89

Earthquake intensifies spotlight on District 2

Even before the Oct. 17 earthquake, Watsonville's District 2 was in the spotlight.

The district covers the downtown business area, long a source of controversy, and a large portion of the city's poor people.

The earthquake has focused even more attention on District 2, which took the brunt of Watsonville's quake damage. Every candidate for the council, not just those in District 2, has an idea on how the downtown should be redeveloped.

District 2 is Watsonville's smallest district, both from a geographical and a registered-voter standpoint. There are 799 registered voters, by far the lowest of the city's seven districts. The district is predominantly Hispanic.

Two Latinos and one Anglo are seeking the District 2 seat. The two Latinos, Daniel Dodge and Oscar Rios, have similar liberal philosophies; Dodge had endorsed Rios before deciding to run himself. The Anglo is Ray Hoffman, a native of Watsonville who has lived in the Downtown for 30 years. His philosophy is a bit more conservative than his opponents.

The limits of the district, which includes the parts of lower Main Street targeted for redevelopment, run from the Pajaro River at the south, over Riverside to Lincoln, across Lincoln to East Lake, out East Lake to Madison, across Madison to East Fifth, down East Fifth to Brennan, across Brennan, Union and Alexander to East Beach, down East Beach to Main, across Main to Second, over Second to Rodriguez, out Rodriguez to Riverside again and back to the river along the city limits.



Kurt Ellison

The Oct. 17 earthquake did some of its worst damage in the older residential areas of District 2. This Marchant Street house typifies the new problems facing an already crowded, poor district.

**Dodge favors
caution on
development**



**Hoffman says
district needs
'special effort'**



**Rios takes
his stand on
people's rights**



By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

Before the Oct. 17 earthquake hit Watsonville, City Council candidate Dan Dodge spoke out against cramming too much new housing in the downtown.

Dodge has had to revise his stand slightly.

"I'd hate to say there should be no (new) housing downtown," he said.

He wants to see housing that has been destroyed rebuilt, but is still leery about cramming a lot of housing in downtown.

"We've tended to make the downtown a dumping ground for our housing problems," Dodge said. "I think we have to look toward the northern part of the city" for development of more low- and moderate-income housing.

The city needs to move quickly with a plan for rebuilding the businesses and homes, but not too quickly, Dodge said.

"We need to wait until the new council is elected," he said.

The election was postponed until Dec. 5 because of the quake.

Dodge, 32, has lived in Watsonville for 10 years and in the downtown for seven years. After working at S. Martinelli and Co. cider plant for five years, he entered a paralegal training program at Santa Clara University. He completed the program this year and is now working part-time for a San Jose law firm.

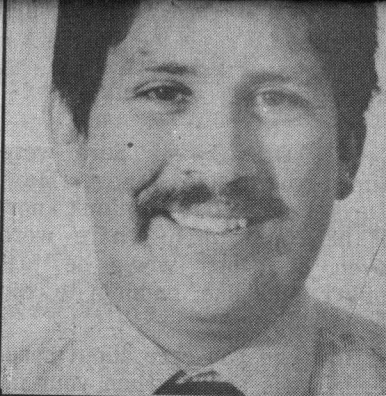
Dodge was a supporter of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund's successful lawsuit to force district elections in Watsonville. He spoke at several public meetings in favor of the district system. This is his first attempt at public office.

The city, Dodge said, has to take an active role on youth problems.

"I think we really have a youth problem, especially in the Latino community," Dodge said.

The problems, he said, go deeper than the gangs. A variety of efforts can be made to reduce the problems, including recreational and educational programs. Dodge said he'd like to see the city encourage academic outreach programs, although it would be up to other agencies to run the programs.

Dodge, who grew up in Santa



DAN DODGE

- **Age: 32**
- **Occupation: Paralegal**
- **Favors low- and moderate-income housing in north end of city.**
- **Endorses the rent-control initiative for mobile homes and says he might propose rent control for other housing.**
- **Wants City Manager John Radin dismissed.**

Cruz and frequently visited relatives in Watsonville, isn't impressed with the way the city has grown and instead advocates stricter controls. Homes have been built near sloughs that used to flood every winter, he said.

"It's obvious that Hope Drive is falling down the hill," Dodge said. Hope Drive is above Struve Slough, between Green Valley Road and Pennsylvania Drive.

Dodge said he's opposed to the proposed annexation and development of Tony Franich's 72-acre apple orchard on East Lake Avenue.

He supports the ballot initiative for a mobile-home rent-control law that's more favorable to tenants than the current law. Rent control for other housing "is definitely needed in my district," Dodge said, adding that he would possibly propose such control.

The 4 percent city tax on utilities should be continued only if it's absolutely necessary, Dodge said.

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By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

As an Anglo, District 2 City Council candidate Ray Hoffman is in the minority — his district is 79 percent Hispanic.

And one of Hoffman's opponents, Oscar Rios, said the district needs Latino representation.

Hoffman's response is that the district simply needs representation.

"It needs somebody who will listen to the needs" of the people, Hoffman said, regardless of race.

It will take a "special effort," Hoffman said, to meet the needs of his constituency, which includes a relatively high percentage of the poor. Hoffman said he's willing to make that effort and would set up "town hall" meetings to find out what the people are thinking.

Even people who haven't voted may have concerns about the way the city is running, Hoffman said. The people of District 2, he said, need to work together.

Before the earthquake, Hoffman said he wanted to see renovation of existing older neighborhoods as one way of helping alleviate the housing shortage. With a number of older homes destroyed or heavily damaged by the earthquake, Hoffman said he favors establishment of a redevelopment agency to help rebuild the city.

The City Council now acts as its own redevelopment agency; Hoffman said he's like to see a separate agency established. He sees the disaster as "a golden way to reshape the downtown."

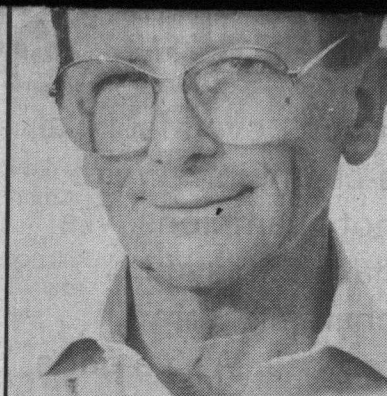
"It's frightening," he said. "Where do you start?"

Hoffman wants to see crime reduced, and said one way to steer youths in the right direction is to provide more recreation programs.

Hoffman, 69, is a semi-retired interior decorator. He was born in Watsonville and has lived all but 10 years of his life here. He is descended from the Amesti family, the pioneer Watsonville family for whom Amesti Road is named.

Hoffman said affordable housing in the city is inadequate, and renovation of existing older neighborhoods is one possible solution. "There's not enough vacant land left" to meet all the housing needs, he said.

Hoffman has lived in downtown



RAY HOFFMAN

- **Age: 69**
- **Occupation: Interior decorator**
- **Wants to see creation of a separate redevelopment agency.**
- **Favors 'some type of rent control' for mobile homes, but opposes it for other types of housing.**
- **Favors continuation of the 4 percent utility tax, until 'an alternative is found.'**

Watsonville for 30 years, about the same amount of time the City Council has been talking about downtown redevelopment.

"The 100 and 200 blocks should be a planned development," said Hoffman, who calls redevelopment an extremely high priority.

Hoffman said the city's growth has gone fairly well in recent years, but said there's room for improvement.

Hoffman said he thinks some form of rent control is appropriate for the city's mobile-home parks, but opposes rent control in other types of housing.

The 4 percent utility tax that the city imposed this year should be continued, Hoffman said, until an alternative is found.

"The city needs money badly," he said. He said he'd like to see a town hall meeting to determine the future of the tax.

On the status of City Manager John Radin, who has drawn some

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By LANE WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

It wasn't coincidence that Oscar Rios arrived in Watsonville at the beginning of what turned out to be a long strike against the city's largest frozen-food company.

"I came for the development of people's rights," said Rios, who is carrying that philosophy into his campaign for a seat for City Council in District 2.

Rios began as a volunteer for the Cannery Workers Project, a non-profit social service agency, and is now the paid director of the agency's Watsonville office. He was a driver for UPS in San Francisco before moving to Watsonville.

District 2 needs Latino representation, Rios said.

"I want the people to have a voice on the inside," he said.

He makes no bones about the fact that he moved to District 2 from District 4 in July, just in time to be eligible to run. Since first moving into District 2, Rios has moved from Grove Street to Jefferson Street, within the district.

Rios said he's for growth as long as it isn't at the expense of people being displaced from their homes or jobs.

Rios said he's supportive of efforts to retain the jobs in Watsonville now and to bring new jobs to the community.

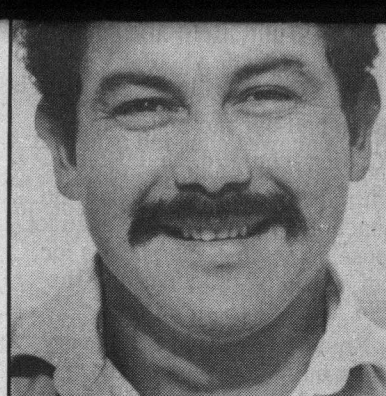
The city, Rios said, must make every effort to obtain funding to rebuild from the Oct. 17 earthquake. Rebuilding of the residential and commercial areas, he said, has to be simultaneous.

Rios supports more efforts to get affordable housing for the city and endorses a measure on the November ballot that would give mobile-home-park tenants a more favorable rent-control law.

He's against Tony Franich's proposed annexation and development of 72 acres of agricultural land on East Lake Avenue.

"It would be at the expense of (farm-worker) jobs, so I'm not for it," Rios said.

Rios said he's for redevelopment of downtown Watsonville, but not if it means more traffic problems and displacing people. On any downtown project, Rios said, "we should have some affirmative action" to assure that



OSCAR RIOS

- **Age: 39**
- **Occupation: Regional organizer for the Cannery Workers Organizing Project, Watsonville.**
- **Opposes the Franich annexation.**
- **Favors redevelopment of downtown, but not if it means displacement of residents or workers.**
- **Says District 2 needs Latino representation.**

some of the jobs go to local people.

Rios said the city must play a leadership role in maintaining, protecting and creating jobs in Watsonville.

There are various grants available to address gang and other youth problems, said Rios, who supports strong city efforts to get those funds.

"If we don't do something, it will get worse," Rios said of the gang problem.

Rios said he's not impressed by City manager John Radin, but said it's premature to determine his future now.

"John Radin's record speaks for itself," Rios said. "You look at the 200 block."

Radin has drawn criticism in some circles for his support of tearing down buildings in the 200 block before new construction was ready to begin.

Rios said he turned his campaign committee into an earthquake-relief committee after the

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