

Patton Tries To Curtail Growth Rate For '80s

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Supervisors' Chairman Gary Patton is trying to lock the unincorporated area into a 2 percent growth rate over the next eight years guaranteeing in 1990 there would be a population here of no more than 232,000.

His own voter initiative, Measure J, which was passed in 1978, may stop him from doing so.

Patton this morning presented the board with a recommendation for a 2 percent rate which took most people by surprise because it was higher than the 1.9 percent recommended by county planners. It would increase the 10-year population goal from 218,500 set three years ago.

Patton noted that his 2 percent rate would be only half of the 4 percent that occurred throughout the 1970s.

Conservative Supervisor Wayne Moore Jr., who doesn't say anything good about Measure J, this morning state that Patton's long-term rate would violate the provision of J that states each year's board should set the next year's rate.

Patton, with full support of the board, sent his recommendation to County Counsel Clair Carlson to study and return this

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afternoon for the board's final vote.

His recommendation would give some latitude to future boards in that it would allow changes when the population grew or decreased unexpectedly and if city annexations changed the present 57-43 ratio between county and cities territories.

Moore maintained Measure J's mandate that the board decide the county's "fair share" each year would not allow the board to set a firm long-term rate and accused Patton of "taking advantage of the board's present makeup." It is 3-2 on the liberal side.

Supervisor Dan Forbus said he is "close to the chairman's two percent" and that he would be ready immediately to go for a 2.1 percent rate. Each tenth of a percent is equal to about 49 new homes.

A number of speakers asked the board to hold over its decision until Oct. 6, as the planning recommendation, information from the local Builders Exchange and Patton's recommendation all came up at the last minute and the public has not had time to review it.

Bob Leach of Scotts Valley said the major problem with the county's growth management program is that the system is "uncertain" and that rules change each year, during the year, so people have to wait years for building permits around which the program is centered.

Supervisor Robley Levy said a long-term rate would solve some of that and indicated her support for Patton's recommendation.