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City manager talks city growth

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Don't worry about the Laguna Report — it's unlikely many of its recommendations will be adopted.

That summed up the opinion of Sebastopol City Manager Melvin Davis, who spoke at Sebastopol's Rotary Club Friday.

Davis tried to dispell rumors surrounding the Laguna Report, such as "no net fill" and no development proposals along the 76-foot floodplain becoming city policy.

"All the dire things recommended in the Laguna Study will probably not take place," Davis told Rotary, whose members are comprised of area businessmen.

Davis advised property owners within or near the 76-foot flood plain level near the Laguna "not to panic."

Davis said he thought the no development stipulation would not be adopted. And a recent study committee found the "no net fill" clause of the Laguna Report an unfeasible stipulation, Davis said.

A blanket recommendation requiring an environmental impact report for all properties was illegal, Davis said.

"You have to make that decision at the time of the application," Davis said.

Davis also did not force the city hiring or appointing a staff person to police and educate area citizens about the Laguna.

However, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is looking at the possibility of designating the entire Laguna area up to the 75-foot elevation level as a floodway. If federally designated a floodway, no development would be allowed.

Davis said the city has asked FEMA to allow lands within city limits to be exempt from the floodway designation.

One suggestion Davis believed would occur was construction of a linear park along the Laguna. Davis said the park would be facilitated by the city's purchase of Southern Pacific land in a wooded area of the Laguna.

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