

## EDITORIALS

# Reason for compromise

**N**OW THAT ALL SIDES are armed for battle in the legal wrangling over the Whiskey Gulch development, there is all the more reason to pursue an out-of-court settlement.

DeMonet Industries, the developer with exclusive rights to rebuild Whiskey Gulch, has offered East Palo Alto up to \$150,000 to defend the Whiskey Gulch environmental impact report. This offer will allow the financially strapped city of East Palo Alto to defend itself against two lawsuits — one filed by Palo Alto, the other by the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association.

Although the DeMonet contribution should encourage Palo Alto to strike a pretrial settlement, the money could be viewed as encouraging East Palo Alto to go to court. However, East Palo Alto should keep in mind that, by going to court, its risks prolonged delays before development of any kind can begin. And, of course, it runs the risk of losing the case.

East Palo Alto is burdened further by what seems to be weak case. DeMonet proposes building twin 18-story towers, including a hotel, restaurants, offices, shops, movie theaters and a performing arts center. Such a project requires a thorough environmental study of this

specific plan. The plaintiffs' charge that the EIR does not adequately address problems such a development will cause rings true.

A compromise could delay construction for a short time as a more thorough EIR is prepared, but a court fight could last much longer. And the longer it takes for the project to be completed, the longer East Palo Alto will have to wait for the much-needed tax revenues that Whiskey Gulch development can bring.

Officials in both cities also should keep in mind their duty to cooperate in the best interests of the region. After all, the negative impacts of traffic, smog and visual intrusions, and the positive impacts of economic revitalization will have a wide effect.

This will not be the last time the neighboring communities could benefit from cooperation. Other development and transportation issues not yet foreseen will affect both cities, so officials from both communities would do well to cultivate a spirit of cooperation.

There already is a history, dating back several generations, of animosity between the two communities. An extended court battle would only worsen the relationship.