

## Morgan Hill Times

Synthetic snow could blanket SE MH

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By [Natalie Everett](#)

Soon, residents and people in the region might enjoy zipping through southeast Morgan Hill on snowboards and skis - even in the summer.

That is, if Martin Benik of Leading Edge Slope Developments has his way and his project Morgan Hill Snowflex Center is approved by the city.

With Snowflex technology, Astroturf meets winter sports via a synthetic surface that mimics the effects of real snow without the flakes or the low temperatures, according to the Web site [morganhillsnowflex.com](http://morganhillsnowflex.com).

"Manufactured in tile form, Snowflex forms a uniform surface that can be made into complex features and shapes," reads the site.

Benik's plan for Morgan Hill Snowflex Center includes a 600-foot main slope and a "nursery" slope with three jumps. Since the center would not rely on the weather, the center would be open year-round.

Benik plans to nestle the 60,640-square-foot Snowflex center in Morgan Hill's embattled southeast quadrant area, roughly the area south and east of U.S. 101 and Tennant Avenue.

The city will soon begin three different studies for a package environmental impact report on what to do with the area. Possibilities include agricultural preservation, public facilities or other governmental uses, and a sports recreation and leisure zoning that would make projects like the Snowflex center possible.

This area is the last quarter of the city's "greenbelt," or the open space surrounding the city, to be broken down into preservable or developable land. Because of the many landowners with differing opinions on what to do with the area, designating any of it has been an uphill



battle.

"We are at the stage of working through the Environmental Impact Report consultant selection process, negotiating cost-sharing for the EIR between the city and all applicants, and getting a contract together," said Kathy Molloy Previsich, the city's community development director. "It will be a complex study."

Molloy Previsich said after the study is completed, there will be public hearings on it at City Hall. Then, the document would go before the Local Agency Formation Commission, since some portions that are outside city limits might be recommended for annexation. All of this will take between 18 months and two years, Molloy Previsich said.

Still, that's not enough to scare away developers. Leading Edge Slope Developments is just one of six companies with an eye on the area.

If Benik's project is approved, Morgan Hill would be one of the first in North America with such a center.

"This is long over due in California," Benik said. "It's really exciting."

Why pick Morgan Hill?

"Location, location, location! There is a huge population one hour's drive away," Benik said.

There are 33 sites worldwide that use Briton Engineering's Snowflex technology, according to Benik.



**Natalie Everett**

Natalie Everett is the education and city reporter for The Times. Reach her at (408) 779-4106, ext. 201, or [neverett@morganhilltimes.com](mailto:neverett@morganhilltimes.com).