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City, county working out growth-

By Will Wellons

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — If cities were cheese, nearly all would be Swiss.

Most cities have holes, or islands of land that for one reason or another have never been annexed. The gaps cause headaches for planners, who must decide whether the city or the county will provide utilities, or fire and police protection.

But planners from Orange County and Winter Park are trying to resolve some of those problems by developing a model agreement to settle disputes.

The county picked Winter Park because the city is compact and has had few annexation disputes with the county, said assistant county planning director David Heath.

Their agreement, to be developed with the help of a \$13,000 state grant, will serve as a guide for other Orange cities that will be making similar agreements with the county to comply with growth management laws that take effect in 1990.

The agreement is important because planners will set the land use for Winter Park's five islands and seven other areas on the edges of the city that Winter Park would like to annex.

A land-use ~~plan~~ plan is the general blueprint for devel-

planning kinks

opment and determines whether a residential neighborhood could be transformed into offices or businesses.

Most of Winter Park's islands, such as a two-block area along Stonehurst Drive or a two-block area along Lindberg Drive, would keep the current residential land use, city planner Jeff Briggs said.

Other areas may change. For example, Briggs and Heath are still unsure what to do about seven blocks directly east of Winter Park Hospital, or 10 blocks east of U.S. Highway 17-92 next to Maitland's city limits.

The hospital area is zoned residential, but several doctors want to convert homes into offices. That could leave a hodgepodge of homes and offices, Briggs said. "We need to bring some order to that section."

The neighborhood near U.S. 17-92 would make a good place for low-income housing, Briggs said. But the area also could be used for offices.

"Developers might be more willing to buy a large tract and improve it if we rezone it to professional offices, although we also need affordable housing," Briggs said. "We will probably do a little of both."

The model agreement, funded by a state Department of Community Affairs grant, should be completed by October, Heath said. The agreement will need to be approved by the Winter Park City Commission and the Orange County Commission later this year.

The county is using the model as a warm-up for future agreements, but Briggs wants to use the study as ammunition to persuade the Legislature to allow the city to annex its islands.

"These islands only make problems," Briggs said.