

Owners of Alpine and Homewood part of 49er stadium deal

By Lisa Fernandez and Howard Mintz, Contra Costa Times

The San Francisco 49ers are going into the theme park business, investing in a \$70 million deal to buy the Great America theme park – and bumping out of the way one of their biggest opponents to building their new stadium in Santa Clara: the park's current owner.

While the team already provides its share of ups and downs on the field, taking control of the roller coasters next door to the planned \$1 billion stadium gives the Niners a chance to blend football and thrill rides into one of the Bay Area's biggest attractions.

Jed York, the 49ers president, cheered the deal in a statement Monday, saying it creates "great synergy and collaboration between two of the largest family entertainment destinations in the region."

The team wouldn't reveal whether it plans to integrate Jim Harbaugh with Planet Snoopy – but teaming up with a San Francisco real estate firm to buy Great America will pay off immediately on one front: eliminating the park's owner, Cedar Fair Entertainment, and its lingering lawsuit to hold up the \$1 billion stadium deal.

Santa Clara stadium backers have sparred with the park owners ever since the 49ers and city officials began negotiating a South Bay stadium deal five years ago.

In a statement, JMA Ventures, the real estate firm heading the Great America purchase, praised the prospect of pairing Great America with the 49ers stadium, a stark departure from public comments by Cedar Fair officials who've expressed concern an

NFL stadium could damage the park's business and create parking headaches for park patrons.

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