

The Apple Barn is just a small part of the proposed Aptos Village Plan.

# UPDATING THE APTOS VILLAGE PLAN

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**Draft goes before Santa Cruz County Planning Commission in January**

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Over the past several years, County planning staff, Aptos Village property owners, and the public have been involved in a process to update the 1985 Aptos Village Plan. A new draft plan has now been completed and will go before the Santa Cruz County Planning Commission in 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 27, 2010.

Both the Existing Aptos Village Plan (EP) and the Updated Aptos Village Plan

(UP) share a common vision.

That vision is of a small village that is the “heart” of Aptos, a place for the young and old to live, work, shop, walk, eat and be entertained, with a mix of housing, shops and offices.

The idea is that some people will be within a short walk of the village, while others will be driving by on their way to and from work or school. Many of the needs of daily life would be available in the neighborhood-serving businesses of the village.

While that has been the vision since the first Aptos Village Plan was adopted in 1979 (and updated in 1985), and several development proposals have been put for-

ward, the vision was never realized. The primary reason was that the configuration of parcels and ownership in the village made it infeasible to develop coherently.

The process of updating the Aptos Village Plan started in 2001 when the Aptos business community and area residents began discussing how to make development more feasible and in keeping with the current desires of the community.

The UP, now in draft form, shares the same vision but addresses the parcel configuration. It also contains important additions of green concepts, limitations on residential development, and changes to allowed commercial development.

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"Aptos Village Plan" from pg 1

I thought it would be instructive to compare the key features of the Existing Aptos Village Plan (EP) with those of the draft Village Plan update (UP).

Land Uses

While both plans call for a mix of residential and commercial uses, the EP covers an 80-acre area and would allow 2,500-3,000 more residents. The number of homes allowed to be built isn't specified.

The UP version covers a much smaller area and would allow 63 modest new residences to accommodate about 200 people.

In the EP, the homes would be on the edges of the village with some mixed use in the village core.

The UP envisions three housing areas: six townhouses on the northern slope, up to 11 townhouses on the south side of Granite Way, and apartments above businesses in the core area.

Building Size and Appearance

Whereas the EP identifies 1890 as the architectural style and allows only wood siding, the UP allows a variety of styles and siding so that buildings appear to have been built over time. The idea is to avoid the "theme park" look that has been frozen in time. The UP requires a repetition of existing designs, such as porches and overhangs.

Limitations on the size of stores and buildings.

The EP, while encouraging small-scale commercial development, limits a single building to 10,000 square feet but does not limit the total square footage of commercial buildings. The UP also emphasizes small-scale commercial uses, but limits the total commercial use to 75,000 square feet.

COMPARISON OF EXISTING APTOS VILLAGE PLAN (AVP) AND DRAFT AVP UPDATE (12/17/09)

KEY FEATURES	EXISTING AVP	DRAFT AVP UPDATE
Description of "Vision"	Small scale mixed use development maintaining "rustic" feel. Community focal point.	Create a "heart" of Aptos community meeting place. Small scale mixed commercial and residential uses serving Aptos community. Emphasizes pedestrian use. Creates a village green in center for public use.
Design and Architecture	Identifies 1890s as the architectural style. Wood siding on buildings in a variety of styles, some brick allowed, a rustic look. Pitched roofs only. No flat or mansard. No siding of concrete block, adobe, stucco or plaster.	More variety of styles and siding allowed so that buildings appear to have been built over time. Requires repetition of existing themes such as porches, overhangs. Does not specifically prohibit adobe, stucco, flat roofs, or mansard roofs.
Historic Buildings	Written prior to historical buildings in the village being recognized but protects Bayview Hotel and the "heritage" feel of the village	Lists all 18 recognized historical buildings and requires Historical Preservation Plans be approved before any significant changes. Anticipates Apple Barn being moved to face the Village Green. Supervisor Pirie seeking additional historical elements.

A comparison chart between the original draft of the Aptos Village Plan and the current update. Visit our website at [www.tpgonlinedaily.com](http://www.tpgonlinedaily.com) for the full chart.

The UP would also allow the 12,000 square foot Apple Barn, the largest building in the village, to be moved and become the anchor retail. It is anticipated that this historical barn will be readapted as a grocery store. The plan also allows a "sub-anchor" store of up to 7,500 square feet.

In the UP, stores are limited in size so that it is unlikely that they will be chain store "magnets," pulling lots of shoppers from outside the area.

The maximum building height allowed in the EP is two stories. However, the UP would allow two-story buildings, two-story buildings with lofts, and four three-story buildings, or partially three story. I feel that the UP allows too many three-story buildings for the village area and therefore I will be requesting that only two such buildings be allowed. The

historic Bay View Hotel will continue to be the dominant visual feature in the village.

Parks

The EP includes the existing Aptos Village Park but no others.

The UP adds two new parks. One is a 10,000 square foot village common or village green in the center of the village. We expect public events and gatherings such as art, wine and craft fairs, holiday celebrations, and other community get-togethers to take place on the village common. On many days, however, no special event would be happening and the village common could be used by children playing, friends sitting on the grass and talking, and others eating a picnic lunch.

Traffic Circulation

Traffic circulation is another key difference between the existing and updated plans. The EP allows the extension of Granite Way from Cathedral to Aptos Creek Road, and is one-way only, southbound. Also under the EP, Trout Gulch Road would become a one-way northbound street from Soquel Drive to Cathedral.

The UP has no one-way streets. Instead, there would be a new east-west street between Trout Gulch and Aptos Creek Road. There would also be a new north-south street from Soquel Drive to that new street, intersecting at the village green. Signals would also be added at Trout Gulch and Soquel Drive and at Aptos Creek Road and Soquel Drive. Traffic studies have concluded that the signals will result in traffic moving better than at present, even after build-out of the village.

The EP does not allow vehicles in interior portions of the village. Instead, buildings are accessed by pathways.



The Bayview Hotel



## CoverStory

*"AVP" from pg 4*

In the UP, the streets are designed for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as vehicles. They are narrow in order to slow traffic and incorporate on-street parking, trees, sidewalks, and street-facing buildings. The buildings are to have walkways around them, and in some cases through them.

### Parking

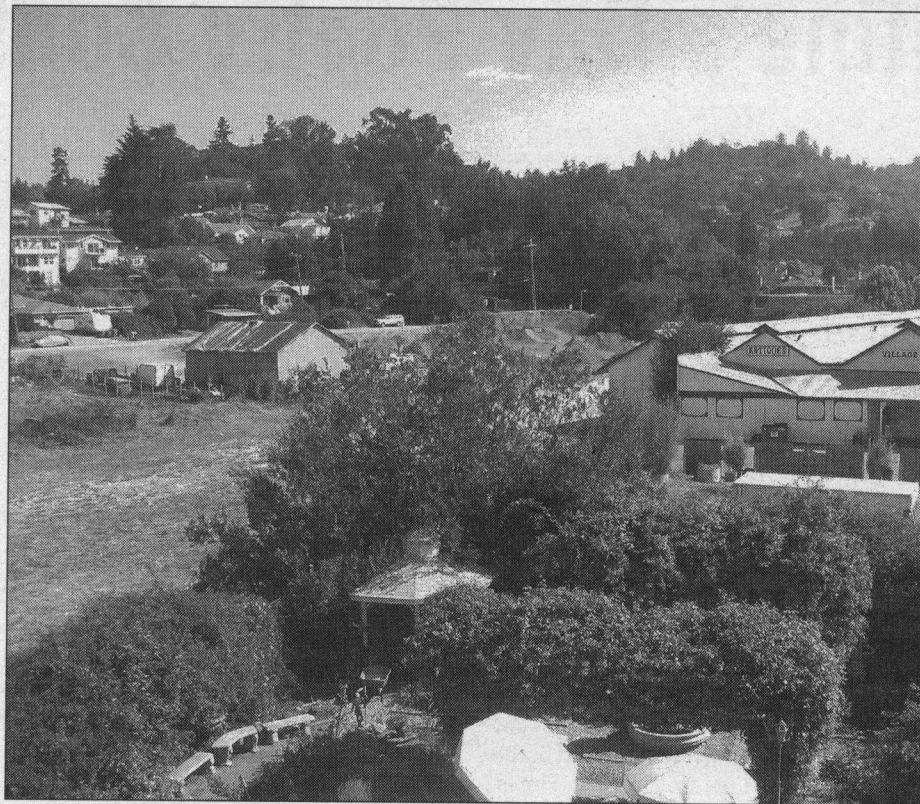
The lack of convenient parking in the village is one of the most frequent complaints that I hear from residents. The EP has very little information about parking (it probably wasn't an issue in 1979) but calls for parallel parking rather than the existing perpendicular parking along the north side of Soquel Drive.

The UP emphasizes parking, more than doubling the amount from the current 400 spaces to 800-900 spaces. A new parking area for the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park is also included.

### Green Building

The EP is silent on several topics that are included in the new plan - water, energy and green building.

The UP requires that any development in the village conform to the water conservation restrictions of Soquel Creek Water District, which now require that water demand be cut by 1.2 gallons for



**Aptos Village — Room to Grow**

each gallon of new water demand.

The parking lot and street layout integrate rain gardens and vegetated swales

to filter pollutants and percolate storm water. The proposed storm water management plan includes an underground cis-

tern to capture and reuse runoff to supplement landscape irrigation. Trees and shrubs that are native or adapted to the Aptos Village microclimate are specified, thus reducing irrigation water demands and maintenance. Deciduous trees are proposed for solar cooling in the summer and heating in the winter.

In the UP, buildings must comply with the County's Green Building code. A sampling includes use of recycled materials, low emission paint, flooring made of recycled materials, windows rated for efficiency and located for solar orientation, and weather sensitive irrigation control and recycling of construction debris.

The draft update to the Aptos Village Plan is now available for viewing at [www.sccoplanning.com](http://www.sccoplanning.com). If you have comments, concerns, or questions about the draft, please feel free to send them to me at [Ellen.Pirie@co.santa-cruz.ca.us](mailto:Ellen.Pirie@co.santa-cruz.ca.us). The draft update is expected to go to the Planning Commission on January 27 and then to the Board of Supervisors. I hope you will review the plan and come to the public meetings to share your thoughts. ■

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*And as always, I'll be at the Sheriff's office in Rancho del Mar on Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. to hear from constituents on this topic, or any other.*