

# Aptos village plan

By BOB SMITH

Last spring, the Aptos Village Plan was briefly considered by the Santa Cruz county planning commission.

The commission sent it back to the planning department with instruction to do a traffic study and an environmental assessment.

At the time, the commission was told the plan would be back before them in about three months.

But to date, it has remained on a shelf in the planning department.

The plan was a result of a \$12,000 study by a consultant and nearly one year's work by a citizen's committee.

Completed in March, it was then sent to the planning commission. They held one hearing at Cabrillo College.

"It went out to lunch and hasn't been heard from since," quipped Mrs. Glenn Specht.

Deputy planning director Henry Baker, who ran the trouble-ridden department through much of the committee's lifetime, said he hasn't had the money or the staff time to complete the planning commission's requests.

"I've got it and we're working on the alternatives — it was sent back for a traffic and environmental assessment review," Baker said.

"The problem is staffing — finding the staff time to proceed with the study.

"If we had something like three or four months of staff time to refine the commission's concerns — we could have a technical document to refer to the Environmental Review Committee to see if it gets a negative declaration or requires an environmental impact report.

"The plan talks about some increase in the density, but if we start playing the numbers game, it's not that different from the

Aptos general plan," Baker said. Total acreage allocations in the various land use categories differ slightly between the General Plan and the amplifying Village Plan.

For example, the village design calls for 25.7 acres in commercial use; the general plan designates 24.2 acres.

The general plan shows 89.2 acres in various residential uses. Taking the high and low density ranges, the general plan would permit a range of 524 to 1,526 dwelling units in the village.

The village design is more complex. Beside 13.2 acres that would be residential on the second floor with commercial business on the ground floor, the plan allots 82.5 acres as purely residential.

The low end of the maximum built-out density for the village plan show nearly twice the number allowed in the general plan — 953 dwelling units. But the high end density is very close to the general plan — 1,541.4.

The open space and transportation figures are very close in both plans. Both specify 15.4 acres in the Aptos Creek riparian corridor, and 11 acres for roads and railways.

Only in the allocation for parks, recreation, leisure and open space land does the village plan specify more than the general plan. The general plan calls for 29 acres in the open space-parks category. The village design ups the figure to 34.2 acres.

Early in the study, consultant Richard Petersen spotlighted the village's transportation problems as a major concern in any future design for the area.

But the citizens committee was never able to fully explore the alternatives and solutions to the village's traffic congestion, when the answers lay outside the village study area.

Mrs. Specht charges that outgoing Supervisor Dale Dawson

and county planning department representative Susan Blair steered the committee away from the traffic aspect of the study.

"Dawson and Mrs. Blair made a point that we should not look at the traffic outside the area.

"And when the planning commission looked at it, they made a point of traffic."

Although he isn't enthusiastic about the extension of Polo Drive across Valencia Creek to Valencia Drive, Dawson says he recognizes that a traffic problem now exists.

"All the traffic from Trout Gulch, Valencia and Day Valley goes through the village. Somewhere, they'll have to deal with how the traffic is to be handled.

"Some people want a four lane road through the village. I think that would be a disaster."

If the link was built through the Polo Grounds, which are now being farmed, Dawson said: "I'm concerned about the connection and what the development patterns would be."

Although there may be problems with the implementation of the plan's concept, Dawson would like to see the policy adopted by the planning commission and the supervisors before he leaves the board next January.

"The policies in the plan are good policies. They could be adopted today and I would urge the planning commission to do what is necessary to get them adopted."

If Dawson doesn't get the plan's policies before the board next month, it will then be up to supervisor-elect Marilyn Liddicoat.

She now plans a study with Phil Baldwin and Ed Borovatz to determine the priorities for the planning department.

"I can't promise that the Aptos village plan will take precedent," she declared.

—what's become of it?