

Aptos Village Plan Revision Heading to Planning Commission

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by Linda Fridy

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After six community meetings and an environmental review, the latest version of the Aptos Village Plan is expected to be scheduled for a public hearing by the county Planning Commission on Jan. 27.

"The plan is the blueprint for the future of Aptos Village," said county planner Glenda Hill, who is leading the effort to revise the decades-old framework for future development in the village area.

The meetings, which focused on different neighborhoods, drew crowds from 15 to 70 people, said Hill.

The biggest concern was, of course, traffic, and the plan calls for more traffic signals and turn lanes both within and entering the Village area.

"Some of them are necessary right now even if there's no more development," she noted.

Other concerns expressed by residents included establishing the character of the Village, assuring there is adequate parking and incorporating a green approach to development.

Will It Preserve Historic Elements?

The county's historic resources commission did not vote to approve the plan, noted member Carolyn Swift.

The Village Plan area, which now covers a smaller area incorporating primarily the commercial area between the railroad bridges, contains 18 historic structures, many of them private homes.

The beautiful Bayview Hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and any development around it would be evaluated for its impact.

Two historic structures may be relocated: the apple barn and the Aptos Fire House/VFW Hall. The plan calls for them to be moved to the "core" area to the north of Soquel Drive, anchored by a new open village common.

"My main concern is the apple barn," said Swift. "The whole issue is whether or not it can be moved."

The ultimate decision lies with how much the Aptos community cares about the landmark, she said, but it is



The revised Aptos Village Plan calls for relocating the historic former apple barn.

dear to her.

"It meant a lot to me as a child. I went by it every day. I love the building," she said.

Those specific plans would go to the commission for review and approval, county staff noted.

One of the historic structures plays a pivotal role in future traffic solutions: the Aptos Creek Bridge.

"Any thoughts of altering it in any way must be done very carefully," said Hill.

In addition to concerns about the narrow bridge, Soquel Drive has a narrow right-of-way through the Village.

"It's a major arterial roadway that is hampered by its width," she said. "It's

challenging to get all the appropriate improvements in that much room."

A New Skatepark

One element of the plan addresses a modern trend. A skatepark is suggested for a parcel along Aptos Creek Road before the entrance to Nisene Marks State Park and near the existing Aptos Village Park.

That was the one area that the environmental review found a protected species. San Francisco dusky-footed woodrats had an active nest high in a nearby tree.

Any development within the plan area would have to undergo a full planning process and conform to the

plan when it is approved, noted Hill. Projects would also need separate environmental impact reviews and must meet Soquel Creek Water District water offset requirements.

Barry Swenson Builder owns property in the area and has expressed interest in developing it, but has not presented a specific project.

Hill said some residents have been confused that the Aptos Village Plan included a Swenson project. She explained that the plan does not include any specific developments, but provides comprehensive planning for the whole area that would apply to anyone wishing to build there. ■

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Christmas Is

The most wonderful time of the year! We reach back in memory to Christmas long ago. We even remember the favorite gifts we received and the family and friends that graced the holiday dinner table. What a blessing memory is.

And now we live in a fast-moving world. Something new is on the market every day. It isn't easy keeping up with the times. Somewhere in the midst of all the commercialism try to find a quiet corner in your life where you can concentrate on the true meaning of Christmas.



Two thousand years ago in the village of Bethlehem, in a humble stable, a King was born. Heaven joined earth to show us how to live.

It was a lesson of peace which is so needed today.

Nothing is ever

gained by discord, violence and hatred.

Let us replace the negativity with love and understanding and our future will give rise to hope.

May the peace of Christmas be yours.

Sister Roseen Maier
Dominican Oaks, Santa Cruz