

Felton

# Residents of Felton have a vision

## Plan for town under scrutiny

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FELTON — Keep "the Western, anarchistic feeling of Felton," but improve the main roads and put the power lines that break the view of surrounding forested mountains underground.

That is the view of residents who are working to develop a plan for the town.

Citizens will go back into talks on their town plan at 7 p.m. Monday at Felton Community Hall to discuss where the money will come from to finance ideas that have come out of four town meetings.

The vision developed from those meetings is of a village at the hub of the San Lorenzo Valley that keeps its character.

It is a vision of small businesses owned by residents, the broad main street preserved; a good place to take an afternoon or evening walk and stop for an ice cream cone or a sandwich at local cafe or market.

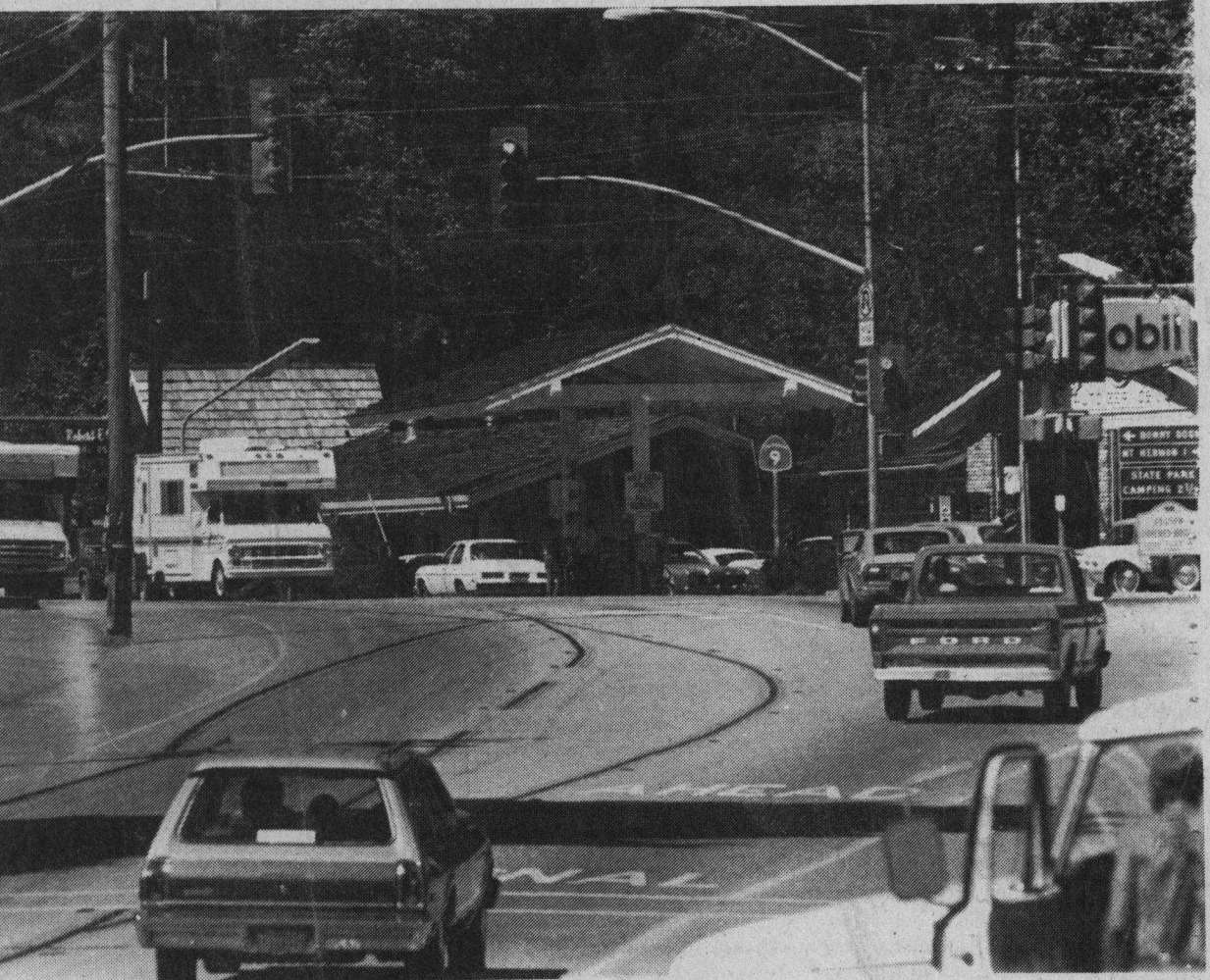
It is a pleasant place just to walk to the post office and pick up the day's mail; a town that will be revitalized, but change slowly and "organically."

Those changes will include improvements to the main intersection, a sister-bridge carrying traffic out of town, a signal at the Mount Hermon Road intersection and a low median strip along Highway 9 from the intersection to Hihn Road.

The town desires a common ground in the vacant lot in front of the covered bridge that would include a tot-lot and park area for adults. The commons also could accommodate a 70-car parking lot for visitors.

Architect and plan coordinator Jeff Oberdorfer says one recommendation is for a tram or horse-drawn carriage to carry visitors from the covered bridge and Roaring Camp to downtown Felton.

"Many people come in and take a picture of the covered bridge and then drive down to Santa Cruz' Mall without ever going over to the village. If only 30 percent of them visited the town for food and shopping, it would make a great difference,"



Felton residents are working to develop plan for the town.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

Oberdorfer makes a point of saying that town planning is being done by residents.

In the first four meetings, residents said they liked the unhurried atmosphere and charm, seeing friends downtown and knowing everyone by name. The also liked walking, jogging and riding horses in Cowell Park; watching the steam trains at Roaring Camp; and the view from Mount Hermon Road as one enters town.

"They don't want a mall such as those in Carmel, Capitola or Santa Cruz. They don't want boutiques," said Oberdorfer. "The people like the broad street running through town and they want to keep the Western, anarchistic feeling of the town, they say."

Town planners recommend the new bridge to carrying traffic out of town eastward be a near-replica to the existing two-lane bridge that con-

nects to Graham Hill Road.

The bridge is part of the 1986-87 list of projects planned by the county and CalTrans.

The project will cost \$1.5 million and will include widening Graham Hill Road going into Highway 9 and sidewalks. "Highway 9 may be broadened somewhat going northward," Oberdorfer said.

He said the median strip along Highway 9, south, will have low plants so that traffic can see businesses on both sides of the street and will have crossing areas for cars and pedestrians.

Parking will be angled for safety since 60 percent of the town's accidents are from cars backing out of parking spaces.

Oberdorfer says parking is no problem in Felton and only at peak times — a good Friday night — does the town feel the crunch.

"If we can make traffic and ped-

estrian movement pleasant, people won't mind walking half a block from their cars if necessary."

He said the planning process is already resulting in the rezoning to residential use of the west side of Gushee Street between Felton-Empire and Hihn roads.

He said the rezoning might include allowances for bed and breakfast inns.

Keeping the views from the crest of the hill on Mount Hermon Road and the view to the covered bridge is a high priority and zoning will include "viewshed protection," Oberdorfer said.

Planning has been done by a core group of about 50 residents with meetings drawing up to 90 people.

"This plan was brought out of consensus decisions by the residents," Oberdorfer said.

"The people actually did the sign work themselves."