

Planners OK Aptos Village revamp

Aptos-2000

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Plan will go before county supervisors

By **KIMBERLY WHITE**

kwhite@santacruzsentinel.com

✓ **APTOS** — The county's Planning Commission voted unanimously Wednesday to approve final plans for a development project in the heart of Aptos Village. The work on the 11.5-acre, mixed-use project could begin

early next year.

The proposal will likely go before the county Board of Supervisors in mid-August, according to senior planner Randall Adams.

Details related to the railroad crossings that cut through the area still must be worked out, and the commission recom-

mended some minor modifications to peripheral aspects of the plan. But Wednesday's thumbs up moved the long-awaited concept a step closer to reality.

Plans were previously submitted in July 2010, Adams said, but were never implemented.

"It's been a long journey and we're still working our way through the process," said Jesse Nickell, vice president of Barry Swenson Builder.

The plan approved Wednesday involves the construction of up to 63 residential units and 75,000 square feet of commercial space — bordered by Soquel Drive and Aptos Creek and Trout Gulch roads — as well as two new roads. Some of the residential development would be mixed in with the commercial, while other stand-alone townhouses

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would be located on the hillside above, according to the plans approved Wednesday. The historic Apple Barn would also be moved from its current location on Trout Gulch Road to the east side of the village common.

A team of architects headed by Matthew Thompson, of Santa Cruz-based Thacher & Thompson Architects, worked to develop a design that also includes covered walkways, porches and a village green with trees, picnic tables and planters.

The project is in line with the Aptos Village Plan, which governs the use of 15 acres in Mid-County. The plan was first approved in 1979, then updated in February 2010, after a series of community meetings held jointly with county officials and developers so residents could provide input on what amenities they wanted to see.

The revised plan includes specific arrangements for uses and structures, new streets, a common area and a public park, according to a staff report.

The modifications the commission requested at Wednesday's meeting related to that park and not the development itself, said Adams, adding the commission "wants the developer to work with the community to help with the development of the park."

The commission, he said, "was very happy with the way the project had come together and the fruition of the plan."

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