

High-Rise, Coast Hearings Expected To Draw Crowds

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Two major studies being conducted by the city have become "box-office" draws of the first magnitude.

Crowds in excess of a hundred persons are turning out at each planning commission hearing on a plan for north coast development and at sessions of the planning commission and-or city council on the impact and desirability of high-rise residential developments.

At a joint meeting of the city council and planning commission Wednesday to get information for the high-rise study, an estimated 150 persons overflowed a conference room at the main library and stood or sat in adjacent halls.

Mayor Al Castagnola noted: "Perhaps at our next hearing on this we will use the civic auditorium."

When and where are future meetings scheduled on the two studies?

A schedule of meetings for the North Coast Development Plan has been announced as follows, all to be held at city hall.

Oct. 4—Planning commission work session, 7:30 p.m., public invited to attend but not to participate.

Oct. 11—Planning commission public hearing, 7:30 p.m., public invited and urged to participate.

Oct. 24—The city council will receive the plan and set the date for its required public hearing.

Nov. 14—City council public hearing, 7:30 p.m., public invited and urged to participate.

The schedule has been set up on the assumption that both the council and commission hearings will be special meetings. It is possible that, in both cases, adoption may be continued to regular meetings, to be announced at that time.

The schedule for the high-rise study has only one firm date: Oct. 15, when it is to be completed.

Paul Sedway of the Sedway-Cooke firm conducting the study, has indicated it is on target to meet the deadline.

Thinking is that the final report and recommendations will go to the city council, which authorized the study, and then be kicked back to the planning commission for analysis. Earliest date for this would be a regular work session already scheduled for Nov. 1.

From that date on there is no way to determine at this early time what the schedule will be.

The report and recommendations may, for example, call for changes in the city's zoning and land use regulations, which can be accomplished only through specific ordinance changes.

Any ordinance change would require regular advertisement, public hearings and formal action by both the planning commission and the city council.

The only thing that is certain is there will be "plenty of public hearings."

Mayor Al Castagnola pledged these hearings, as have the planning commissioners and other city councilmen.

Castagnola has said also that the city will take no action on pending high-rise proposals until the study has been completed and the recommendations acted upon.

If the city holds to this, it could be several months before

action could be taken on applications for high-rise developments at the foot of Frederick Street and on West Cliff Drive. These development proposals triggered the high-rise study but are not bound by the study conclusions inasmuch as they were submitted before the study was authorized.

At the same time, the city is not under legal obligation to grant permits for the projects simply because they were submitted before the study was ordered.

Decisions on these projects will be on their merits, the planning commissioners and council members have stressed.

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Chuck Abbott, 79, nationally known for his efforts to help revitalize downtown Santa Cruz, has aligned himself solidly with opponents of high-rise developments for the city.

"I hope we in Santa Cruz are not forced to settle the high-rise issue by initiative petition," Abbott has told city officials in a memo.

Abbott was among 20 speakers Wednesday night at a joint meeting of the city council and city planning commission to discuss a study the city is having made of the impact and desirability of high-rise developments.

Abbott said at this meeting that a 60-foot limit should be put on the height of buildings in the city.

In the memo filed with the officials to give his full views on the controversial high-rise question, Abbott elaborated:

"High-rise buildings have proven to be a big mistake in other cities with environmental and geographic assets similar to Santa Cruz. We have already committed Error No. 1 by permitting a medium-high-rise a

AMBAG Clears On Its Planning

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) got over a major hurdle Wednesday night when it was informed that the federal department of Housing and Urban Development has certified AMBAG's comprehensive planning program.

Les Doolittle, AMBAG executive director, said the notice was the second of three certifications needed by AMBAG before it becomes eligible for HUD funding or grants. AMBAG's organization plan was approved last June. "Functional plans" for services such as water, sewers and open space still must be approved by HUD on a county-by-county basis.

The comprehensive planning program includes a program design to help determine what

