

# Aptos has room for development

By DICK LITTLE

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN CORRESPONDENT

SANTA CRUZ — There's lots of development opportunities in Aptos if you have patience, determination, and are willing to travel through what may be a long and arduous process, according to County Planning Director Alvin James.

The area has 11 "opportunity sites," James told an audience of more than 130 people Thursday attending a breakfast sponsored by the Aptos Chamber of Commerce at the Aptos Seascapes golf course, but the "public has an interest in how your property is used."

The group of "opportunity sites" outlined by James includes the MacGregor/Searidge area, where several proposals are pending (the Planning Commission has ordered a new plan be drawn up for the area). Poor Clares is across the street and is zoned for visitor accommodation.

Aptos Village will also get a new look from planners during the Seacrest update. (One major site, owned by Capitol funding group, is available.)

Nearly six acres are available along Haas Drive for low density residential, while nearly 23 acres are available next to Aptos High School on Freedom Boulevard for "rural residential."

The Aptos Par Three golf course is available, but Santa Cruz County Supervisor Walt Symons is asking

## County population growth slows

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SANTA CRUZ — The growth rate in the unincorporated areas of Santa Cruz County dropped below 1.5 percent for the first time in ten years. The State Department of Finance set the rate at 1.1 percent. The new figures show for 1998 the unincorporated areas of the county grew slower than any of its four cities.

Planning Director Alvin James announced the new growth rate during a meeting of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce Thursday at the Aptos Seascapes Golf Course. He said the figures were developed by the State Department of Finance.

Planners say the rate will probably jump dramatically next year because a number of permits issued over the past three years are being used now to develop new homes, mostly in the Aptos and Live Oak Areas.

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the site be preserved as a park (the property is zoned for recreation.) Deer Park orchard is also available, but it's zoned for agriculture.

More than 78 acres are available for residential development on the inland side of Highway One toward Capitola. Eleven acres next to Twin Lakes Baptist Church are zoned for high density residential, 65 acres near Bush Gulch are available for low density housing, and the Erlach property has nearly three acres of medium density available.

James said coastal sites are "special sites," and many of the restrictions on development come from the state and federal governments.

The planning director said new

guidelines for residential housing are being developed in the wake of complaints from residents with the Rio Highlands and Seascapes Housing projects. In both cases, neighbors complained that the developers did not follow guidelines outlined by the planning department.

A proposed golf course on nearly 200 acres of land between La Selva Beach and Watsonville is still alive, according to James. He said the developers are working on a salamander habitat protection area for the site.

James was given high praise from Symons, who said "...he has made a tremendous contribution (to the community)."

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They also said plans are being developed to severely limit permits over the next several years. The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors have ordered the growth rate slowed to 0.75 percent. Total population in Santa Cruz County was 252,800 people, which ranked the county 21 out of 58 counties in the state.

The unincorporated areas of Monterey County continued their rapid growth at 2.5 percent. The total population was set at 391,300 people ranking it 19th in the state.

Monterey County's unincorporated areas grew by more than 2,400 people. Santa Cruz County's unincorporated areas added 3,800 people.

The city of Santa Cruz was the fastest growing city in the county with a growth rate of 2.6 percent, adding 1,400 people. Scotts Valley grew at just under two percent, adding 200 people. For the second year in a row, Watsonville was the slowest growing city with a rate of 1.35%, adding 500 people to its boundaries. Capitola's growth rate was 1.36%, adding 150 new citizens.

The state's growth rate was 1.6 percent, with Kings County the fastest growing county at 6.03 percent.

REFERENCE

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