

# Aptos Village faces tough choice

By JENNIFER KOSS  
STAFF WRITER

The Aptos Village community may be asked to decide whether their neighborhood should be a residential or commercial center.

Future development of the village hinges on the answer, because traffic circulation and parking would have to be improved if it was decided the area should be a business center, said Jeff Oberdorfer, a local architect hired by the county to do an economic study of Aptos Village.

"My gut feeling is moving toward residential," Oberdorfer said, "but I think there has to be a community consensus on that."

Oberdorfer and Edwin Astone, a Sacramento marketing consultant helping with the study,

discussed their findings at this morning's breakfast meeting of the Aptos Chamber of Commerce. A grant is paying for the study, which is independent of studies being done on the viability of Aptos' incorporation.

The study includes a plan for turning the Terrible Herbst gas station at Soquel Drive and Trout Gulch into a combination commercial area and parking lot, Oberdorfer said. The plan would provide a surplus of 60 parking spaces — the exact amount the village is now short.

Oberdorfer is also doing economic studies of Soquel, Felton, Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek. The purpose is to give the county an idea of what capital improvements need to be done in

those areas, Oberdorfer said.

Surveys were sent to residents, property owners and business owners in each of the areas, Astone said, and the results form the basis of each of the studies. The Aptos Village survey was peculiar in that there was a lot of confusion as to the boundaries of Aptos Village, he said.

"People who have responded to the Aptos survey don't know where Aptos Village is," Astone said, "or don't even believe that there is an Aptos Village."

Some people wondered whether it included the Rancho del Mar or Deer Park shopping centers, Astone said. It does not, but Astone said the study would include information about where those areas fit into the general

scheme of Aptos, because survey respondents did not seem to feel Aptos Village constituted the Aptos community's economic base.

The Aptos survey also stood alone in that fewer were completed and returned — 14.7 percent — than in any other village. Average return rate was around 30 percent, Astone said.

Comments in the survey of Aptos Village residents were many and varied, Astone said.

Among the more interesting: "Aptos Village would make a nice orchard," "Love the character — hope it never changes," "Clean it up!" "Keep it rural" and "Make it Carmel — a Pacific Garden Mall type with exclusive shops to bring in customers."