

Aptos Village traffic plans before public

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Six plans on how to increase parking in Aptos Village and ease the flow of traffic were presented last week at a public workshop in Aptos.

Two of the plans called for making Soquel Drive one-way between Trout Gulch Road and T. Hopkins right-of-way.

Both of the one-way proposals made Soquel Drive one-way heading east (toward Watsonville) and completing the loop with a westbound one-way street to the north of the existing road. One of the plans called for Soquel Drive to be a two-lane road, while the other proposed making Soquel drive a one-lane road and utilizing the extra space for parking.

The six proposals were developed by Jeff Oberdorfer, a planning consultant hired by the county.

Two of the other proposals called for a left-turn lane at Trout Gulch Road, and two others involved a median strip on Soquel Drive.

"We're looking at these schemes to try to match the ambiance of the Village," Oberdorfer said.

The basic problem in Aptos Village is not the lack of parking, since almost never is more than 60 percent of the parking being utilized, Oberdorfer said.

Rather, he said, the problem is that the Village is not attractive for pedestrians, so people with business in the Village want to park right in front of the building where they are going, and if they have to visit another store or business in the area, they will drive and find another parking space rather than walk a minimal distance.

To make Aptos Village more attractive, Oberdorfer suggested that development of vacant parcels be coordinated so that a planned scheme could be carried out.

"The shapes of the remaining vacant parcels themselves are so awkward that it's hard for people to develop them in a way that makes sense," Oberdorfer said.

He presented three schemes of possible development and discussed how each would affect parking and change the ambiance of the Village.

One of the schemes called for pedestrian plazas and for employee parking in the back on Granite Way. This would leave more parking spaces for customers.

The next workshop, the third in a series of three, will deal with getting property owners together in order to develop a coordinated scheme. That workshop will be held in mid-January.

Oberdorfer said there may be a fourth workshop to pull all the ideas together.

When the workshops are completed and a plan is complete, Oberdorfer said he would go before the Board of Supervisors to present the plan.