

# 140-unit Aptos hotel is approved

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HOTELS & BOARDING HOUSES

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SANTA CRUZ — County supervisors Tuesday unanimously approved the proposed Seacliff Inn of Aptos, a 140-unit inn which will be the third largest hotel in the county.

The inn will include two 600-square-foot conference rooms, a restaurant, bar and gift shop. They will be built in six, two-story clusters around a swimming pool-putting green area adjacent to Highway 1 at State Park Drive in Aptos, across from Rancho del Mar shopping center.

John Gamman, land use planner and environmental consultant on the project, told The Sentinel that construction could possibly begin as soon as this fall, but more likely would be in the spring of 1984.

Approval came on the condition that a traffic study be done and a traffic improvement district be formed by the applicant. The cost of these is not to exceed \$20,000.

The subject of the study and improvements are to center on the Soquel Drive-State Park Drive intersection.

Although Supervisor Gary Patton went along with the added condition and subsequent approval, he warned the mitigations will not be sufficient to alleviate what Aptos Supervisor Robley Levy has already described as "the great traffic snarl."

"This is like cholesterol building up in the blood," said Patton. "We already have the equivalent of high blood pressure at that intersection. I feel we should have done better in trying to solve the traffic problem."

Patton maintained that developments throughout the county are "one-by-one filling up streets and intersections with traffic."

Levy replied that the "substantial contribution" by this developer will help solve the problem. "If we knew

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## Hotel

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how to solve this problem, it would be different," she said. "At this point, we don't know how which is the reason for the traffic study."

All along — including during the county Planning Commission's recommendation for approval and the previous board hearing — heavy traffic in the area has been the primary concern.

An estimated \$60,000 in off-site improvements to widen State Park Drive are included in the proposal.

A left-turn stacking lane will be built on State Park Drive as it leads onto Old Dominion Court at the entrance to the development. Widening will be done at State Park Drive and Soquel Drive.

Both a left-turn-only lane and right-turn-only lane will be built on State Park Drive at that intersection. An existing "sweeping curve" on east-bound Soquel Drive will also be changed to a "right-angle curve" to reduce traffic speeds.

Developers have already negotiated with owners of adjacent Resurrection Church to close off their driveway closest to State Park Drive to avoid additional congestion.

Supervisors, however, eliminated the need of construction of a 50-foot-wide frontage road, adjacent the inn and the freeway. The savings from that road, estimated at \$20,000, will go instead into the additional traffic study and formation of traffic improvement district.

According to Gamman, the development will increase traffic on State Park Drive by 3½ percent or 47 cars per hour during peak commuter traffic. State Park Drive is now handling about 13,000 cars per day, but capacity is more than adequate at 20,000, he said.

Gamman was quick to point out — and it was reiterated by supervisors — "that not one person has opposed the project during Planning Commission or the previous board hearing."