

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS INDEX SHEET**

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**Creation Date:** 2/17/10

**Source Code:** PLANN

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**Resolution(s):** 29-2010

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**Contract(s):**

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**Continue Date(s):** [1] 6/15/10

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- Item: 46.** Public hearing held to consider the Planning Commission's recommendation on revisions to the Aptos Village Plan, proposed General Plan land use designation changes and rezonings to implement the Plan Revisions;  
closed public hearing;
- (1) ADOPTED RESOLUTION NO. 29-2010 approving the revised Aptos Village Plan (as set forth in Attachment 3) as an amendment to the General Plan with the following modifications:
- (a) page 33 of the Plan (agenda packet page 540), the last sentence of the second paragraph is modified to read: As well, the total unit sizes should not exceed 50% of the square footage of the mixed use and commercial buildings so that they do not overwhelm the scale of the commercial uses in the Village;
- (b) page 66 of the Plan (agenda packet page 568), Site # 1, under Uses/Other Resources, the first sentence is modified to read: Multi-family dwellings developed at RM-3 density;
- (c) the Aptos Village Plan acknowledgement page shall include acknowledgement of Sandy Lydon's writing of the Aptos Village History;
- (d) on page 17 of the Plan (agenda packet page 524), the following bullet point is added: Acknowledgement of the rich history of Aptos Village through the placement of plaques, monuments, and signs that recognize historical uses, events, and people that formed Aptos Village;
- (e) on page 31 of the Plan (agenda packet page 538), the second sentence under the heading Parcel Reconfiguration is corrected to read, Development proposals in the past have not moved beyond the application stage in part because the proposals attempted to fit the development into a single parcel, without regard to what might occur on adjoining parcels;
- (f) on page 37 of the Plan (agenda packet page 544), the following bullet point is added between the fourth and fifth bullet points: Include left turn and right turn lanes on the new east-west street at the intersection with Trout Gulch Road;
- (g) on page 38 of the Plan (agenda packet page 545), staff is directed to include the following language: If feasible, the County will include a mini/micro park along the south side of Soquel Drive, in the vacant area between buildings. This could provide a resting spot, with a beautiful ocean view;
- (h) on page 41 of the Plan (agenda packet page 548), the second to last paragraph beginning, 'Needed bike improvements include...' is modified to read: Needed bike improvements include better signage throughout the Village, such as more sharrows and clearer signs about bikes riding in the traffic lane where there are no bicycle lanes. In addition, bike racks should be provided throughout the Village, and secure bike storage should be included in conjunction with rental housing. Figure 17 shows existing bicycle lanes. Additionally, the heading Sidewalk Improvements is modified to Pedestrian Improvements, under which a new bullet point is added as follows: Encourage other off-road or other pedestrian access through-out the Village;
- (i) on page 62 of the Plan (agenda packet page 569), the first bullet point on the second column is modified to read: To ensure that larger commercial uses not dominate the new development area or existing commercial areas including the Bayview Hotel, the PUD will establish frontage and appearance standards for anchor, sub-anchor and other new buildings that reflect the historical nature of the Village.
- Additionally, the third bullet point on the second column of page 62 is modified to read: To provide for an interesting variety of exterior materials and to honor the character of the current Village, most buildings will be wood-sided, but a variety and mixture of materials are allowed;
- (j) Public Works staff is directed to report back in June 2010 on the status of the Soquel Drive Planline and Public Utilities Commission process for the rail line

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crossings, their work with the Regional Transportation Commission on the Soquel Drive Planline process, and the Aptos Creek Road right-of-way issues; and approving the General Plan Amendment to change the land use designations for various parcels in Aptos Village, as set forth in Exhibit A to Attachment 1;

(2) ADOPTED ORDINANCE NO. 5065 Rezoning Various Parcels in Aptos Village to implement the Aptos Village Plan, as set forth in Exhibit A in Attachment 2,

(3) certified the CEQA Negative Declaration with Mitigation (as set forth in Attachment 9); and

(4) directed Planning staff to prepare a camera-ready version of the revised Aptos Village Plan for use by the public

**COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ**  
**STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



AT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

On the Date of February 23, 2010

REGULAR AGENDA

Item No. 46

Closed public hearing;

Upon the motion of Supervisor Pirie, duly seconded by Supervisor Stone, the Board, by unanimous vote, (1) ADOPTED RESOLUTION NO. 29-2010 approving the revised Aptos Village Plan (as set forth in Attachment 3) as an amendment to the General Plan with the following modifications:

- (a) page 33 of the Plan (agenda packet page 540), the last sentence of the second paragraph is modified to read: As well, the total unit sizes should not exceed 50% of the square footage of the mixed use and commercial buildings so that they do not overwhelm the scale of the commercial uses in the Village;
- (b) page 66 of the Plan (agenda packet page 568), Site # 1, under Uses/Other Resources, the first sentence is modified to read: Multi-family dwellings developed at RM-3 density;
- (c) the Aptos Village Plan acknowledgement page shall include acknowledgement of Sandy Lydon's writing of the Aptos Village History;
- (d) on page 17 of the Plan (agenda packet page 524), the following bullet point is added: Acknowledgement of the rich history of Aptos Village through the placement of plaques, monuments, and signs that recognize historical uses, events, and people that formed Aptos Village;
- (e) on page 31 of the Plan (agenda packet page 538), the second sentence under the heading Parcel Reconfiguration is corrected to read, Development proposals in the past have not moved beyond the application stage in part because the proposals attempted to fit the development into a single parcel, without regard to what might occur on adjoining parcels;
- (f) on page 37 of the Plan (agenda packet page 544), the following bullet point is added between the fourth and fifth bullet points: Include left turn and right turn lanes on the new east-west street at the intersection with trout Gulch Road;
- (g) on page 38 of the Plan (agenda packet page 545), staff is directed to include the following language: If feasible, the County will include a mini/micro park along the south side of Soquel Drive, in the vacant area between buildings. This could provide a

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On the Date of February 23, 2010

resting spot, with a beautiful ocean view;

(h) on page 41 of the Plan (agenda packet page 548), the second to last paragraph beginning, 'Needed bike improvements include...' is modified to read: Needed bike improvements include better signage throughout the Village, such as more sharrows and clearer signs about bikes riding in the traffic lane where there are no bicycle lanes. In addition, bike racks should be provided throughout the Village, and secure bike storage should be included in conjunction with rental housing. Figure 17 shows existing bicycle lanes. Additionally, the heading Sidewalk Improvements is modified to Pedestrian Improvements, under which a new bullet point is added as follows:

Encourage other off-road or other pedestrian access through-out the Village;

(i) on page 62 of the Plan (agenda packet page 569), the first bullet point on the second column is modified to read: To ensure that larger commercial uses not dominate the new development area or existing commercial areas including the Bayview Hotel, the PUD will establish frontage and appearance standards for anchor, sub-anchor and other new buildings that reflect the historical nature of the Village. Additionally, the third bullet point on the second column of page 62 is modified to read: To provide for an interesting variety of exterior materials and to honor the character of the current Village, most buildings will be wood-sided, but a variety and mixture of materials are allowed;

(j) Public Works staff is directed to report back in June 2010 on the status of the Soquel Drive Planline and Public Utilities Commission process for the rail line crossings, their work with the Regional Transportation Commission on the Soquel Drive Planline process, and the Aptos Creek Road right-of-way issues; and approving the General Plan Amendment to change the land use designations for various parcels in Aptos Village, as set forth in Exhibit A to Attachment 1;

(2) ADOPTED ORDINANCE NO. 5065 Rezoning Various Parcels in Aptos Village to implement the Aptos Village Plan, as set forth in Exhibit A in Attachment 2,

(3) certified the CEQA Negative Declaration with Mitigation (as set forth in Attachment 9); and

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AT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

On the Date of February 23, 2010

(4) directed Planning staff to prepare a camera-ready version of the revised Aptos Village Plan for use by the public

cc:

CAO

County Counsel

Planning Department

Public Works

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State of California, County of Santa Cruz-ss.

*I, Susan A. Mauriello, Ex-officio Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the order made and entered in the Minutes of said Board of Supervisors. In witness thereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed tthe seal of said Board of Supervisors.*

by \_\_\_\_\_, Deputy Clerk ON March 04, 2010



# COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060  
 (831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123  
**TOM BURNS, PLANNING DIRECTOR**

February 12, 2010

**AGENDA: February 23, 2010**

Board of Supervisors  
 County of Santa Cruz  
 701 Ocean Street  
 Santa Cruz CA 95060

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER REVISIONS TO THE APTOS VILLAGE PLAN AND ASSOCIATED REZONINGS AND LAND USE DESIGNATION CHANGES**

Members of the Board:

Your Board and the Aptos community have long desired an update to the existing Aptos Village Plan. With considerable effort and input from the Aptos community, a revised Plan is now ready for your review and action.

### **Background**

Development in Aptos Village is currently subject to the provisions of the Aptos Village Community Design Framework (also known as the Aptos Village Plan), attached as Exhibit K, a specific plan adopted by your Board in 1979 and revised in 1985. This Plan, a part of the Santa Cruz County General Plan, is the first of the modern-day Village Plans that specifically address appropriate land uses and infrastructure needs for a particular area in greater detail than the more broad based General Plan.

### **What the Existing Plan Allows**

The existing Plan defines Aptos Village as an 80+ acre area that encompasses the commercial areas of the Village as well as properties to the freeway to the south, Aptos Village Park and the Village Glen residential subdivision to the west, the residential areas of Vista Mar Court, Cathedral Drive and Village Drive to the north and the residential areas of Quail Run and the Aptos Knolls Mobile Home Park to the east.

Attachment 4 contains a chart that summarizes the key features of the existing Plan (and proposed Plan) and includes the following:

#### Residential

The total number of projected new housing units is not quantified but the existing Plan calls for mixed use in the Village Core area, townhouses and apartments on the northern hillsides and

medium density "residential hillside clusters" of multi-family housing for a total new population of about 2,500 additional persons.

### Commercial

It is envisioned that the increased population in the residential and commercial mixed-use areas would facilitate the needed population for a pedestrian-oriented Village. No upper limit of overall maximum commercial space was quantified.

In the Village Core area, the existing Plan encourages small-scale pedestrian-oriented commercial with an emphasis on mixed-use buildings oriented to landscaped pedestrian malls. Office use sizes are envisioned to be 300-800 square feet; retail about 1,500-2,000 square feet with a maximum 10,000 square foot size limitation for new buildings.

In the Hihn Subdivision area, specialty shops and cottage industry work/live uses are envisioned.

The commercial areas south of Soquel Drive should continue the then (mid-1970s) level of development.

### Scale and Style of Commercial Development

The existing Plan envisions one and two-story commercial buildings with an emphasis on 1890s period architectural style and materials as an homage to the Bayview Hotel era.

### Circulation

The Plan recommends extending Granite Way to Aptos Creek Road as a one-way westerly street in conjunction with converting Trout Gulch Road to a one-way northerly road.

## **What Has Been Developed under the Existing Aptos Village Plan**

Since the adoption of the Aptos Village Plan in 1979, three commercial projects have been constructed in the Village: Aptos Station in 1981, the Founders Title Building in 1985 and the Appenrodt building in 2006.

Most of the residential areas have been developed with single-family infill housing rather than the envisioned multi-family townhouses and garden apartments. The 49-unit Village Glen townhouse project, on the west side of Aptos Creek Road, was built in the mid to late 1980s.

## **Need for Change**

### Village Core

Even though it is one of the largest vacant commercially zoned areas in the unincorporated area, the 6-acre vacant commercial area behind the Bayview Hotel and Aptos Station has not been developed under the current Aptos Village Plan. While there have been several attempts in the past, current parcel configuration, property owner coordination and infrastructure challenges have stymied these attempts.



The current Plan provides a vision for what the Village should look like but does not provide concrete guidance in how the area can be developed. This lack of specificity is addressed in Objective 2.24(b) of the General Plan which recommends that the County “review and update the Aptos Village Community Design Framework to develop a more specific plan governing land use, circulation, design and improvements in the village area.”

#### Hihn Subdivision

The Hihn subdivision is an eclectic area of residential, commercial and mixed uses scattered willy-nilly on small parcels. This mix of uses gives the area a special charm not found in most County neighborhoods.

Due to the small parcel sizes, the area has parking challenges. Currently, there are existing houses zoned Commercial and several businesses that are not allowed uses in their current C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) zone district and inadequate zoning provisions to recognize the mixed uses (see Attachment 5 for current zoning). This has resulted in a number of existing uses becoming legal nonconforming or legal significantly nonconforming, thereby seriously hindering the continued maintenance and vitality of this interesting neighborhood.

#### South of Soquel Drive

This area of predominantly older commercial buildings hugging Soquel Drive is highly constrained by a sharp drop in slope to the rear of the buildings and insufficient level land to provide parking. The area is currently zoned C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) which renders several of the existing commercial uses legal nonconforming and stymies changes of commercial use.

### **Community Involvement and Goals**

In 2001, the Aptos business community and the County began discussing the possibilities of coordinating development of these vacant parcels.

In 2002, two community meetings were held to elicit comments from area residents, business owners and other interested persons about what future development should occur in the Village. In response to positive public input at these meetings and your Board’s direction in 2002, a community design charette was held in 2003 where four “design teams” generated their desired concepts for the Village. This resulted in several common goals:

- A memorable community open space (Village Common) surrounded by a variety of mixed-use development;
- A pedestrian friendly mixed-use neighborhood street that runs east-west across the vacant commercial area;
- New residential development on Granite Way and on the upper floors of mixed-use buildings;
- A desire for a community skatepark; and
- A more pronounced gateway to Nisene Marks State Park.

After the charette, smaller committees focused more deeply into the issues of traffic and parking, building design and uses, the Village Common and the skatepark.

A community "progress" meeting was held in 2008 and, more recently, six community meetings were held in late 2009 to introduce the draft Plan revisions. In response to comments received at these community meetings, the draft Plan was further revised.

## **Resources, Constraints and Challenges**

### Soquel Drive

While Soquel Drive is the major arterial in the Aptos area, it is only a 50-foot wide right-of-way in the vicinity of Aptos Village. The narrowness of the right-of-way presents a challenge for providing the required and desired feature upgrades to this major road that bisects Aptos Village.

### Railroad

The existing railroad runs adjacent to Soquel Drive and also bisects the Village. Its location precludes expansion of Soquel Drive to the north just as the location of existing commercial buildings precludes expansion to the south. Its presence also imposes certain setbacks from crossing gates. In addition, the existing train trestles which bookend the Village preclude significant widening of Soquel Drive.

The installation of railroad crossing arms to new and existing streets adds considerable additional infrastructure costs to developing the Village.

### Traffic

A Traffic Impact Study and updates have been prepared by TJKM Transportation Consultants (Attachment 5 of the Initial Study) that address anticipated future mixed-use (commercial and residential) development within the Aptos Village Plan area. Under Existing Conditions, eight out of ten study intersections currently operate at acceptable service levels during the p.m. peak hour. The following two intersections currently operate unacceptably during the a.m. and p.m. peak hour:

- *Soquel Drive/Trout Gulch Road:* This all-way stop controlled intersection currently operates at LOS F during the a.m. peak hour and LOS D during the p.m. peak hour. Signalization and installation of an exclusive westbound left-turn lane as specified in the 2009/2010 County of Santa Cruz Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is expected to improve the intersection operating condition to an acceptable level.
- *Soquel Drive/Aptos Creek Road:* This one-way stop control intersection operates at LOS E during the p.m. peak hour. The 2009/2010 CIP specifies the installation of an exclusive eastbound left-turn lane on Soquel Drive.

The specified CIP projects are expected to improve the operation of the above intersections to acceptable County LOS standards of LOS C or better. These projects are part of the current County Capital Improvement Program and are currently under design.

See the Infrastructure Section for discussion of traffic impacts of proposed future development in Aptos Village.

### Archaeology

Aptos Village is located within a mapped archaeological resource area. A Cultural Resources report has been prepared, by Albion Environmental Inc. and Sandy Lydon, which evaluates the archaeological resources within the vacant areas of the Village Core (Attachment 3 of the Initial Study).

The Cultural Resources report determined (through field investigation, review of previous reports, and archival data) that a number of recorded archaeological sites exist within the vicinity of the Aptos Village. A pedestrian survey of the vacant areas within the Village Core was performed and some cultural remains were identified. Further investigation was performed through the excavation of backhoe trenches in the area where the cultural remains were found. The results of the excavation showed that although cultural remains were present in the trenches, the prehistoric cultural remains were intermixed with historic and modern materials. The report concludes that the site does not appear to provide evidence for intensive prehistoric occupation, and that the site integrity appears to have been seriously impacted through historic and modern activities.

### Biotic

A Biotic Assessment (botanical and wildlife) was prepared by Ecosystems West, dated November 2009, based on several site visits (Attachment 2 of the Initial Study). One active nest site for the San Francisco Dusky Footed Woodrat was identified in the northwest corner of the Village Plan area, in the vicinity of the future active public recreation use area. The nest structure was located approximately 20 feet up in the tree canopy of a coast live oak tree.

Nesting passerine birds, raptors, and roosting bats may be present in the Village Plan area at various times of the year, but were not directly observed during the on-site biotic survey.

Protected fish species including tidewater goby, Coho salmon and steelhead may be present in the creeks on the periphery of the Village Plan area at various times of the year, but were not directly observed during the on-site biotic survey.

No other candidate, sensitive, or special status species are known to exist within the Aptos Village Plan area.

### Historic Structures

In 2003, the Historic Resources Commission (HRC) reviewed the historic resources of the Aptos Planning Area and designated/redesignated historic structures within Aptos Village. Currently, there are 18 historic structures. The majority of the structures are located in the Hihn Subdivision area. Three are located in the Village Core area:

- The Bayview Hotel (NR1—property listed in the National Register of Historic Places),
- The Apple Barn (NR3—property eligible, in the opinion of the HRC, to be listed on the National Register),
- The Aptos firehouse/VFW Hall (NR5—property determined to have local historic significance).

Two historic reports have been prepared: one by Albion Environmental Inc. and one by Urban Programmers. See the Historic Resources Commission Review Section of this report for more information.

### Water

Aptos Village is served by the Soquel Creek Water District. The groundwater basin that serves as the principal source of supply has reached or exceeded its safe yield. As a result, the Water District has instituted a number of measures including a "water offset" program that requires developers to retrofit existing water consuming fixtures at a ratio of 1.2 to 1 of projected water demand.

The revised Aptos Village Plan requires any development to meet this offset program or any future requirements adopted by the Water District as well as requiring the use of drought-tolerant landscaping.

### Achieving Appropriate Level of Plan Specificity

As stated earlier, General Plan Objective 2.24(b) recommends that the Aptos Village Plan be reviewed and updated to provide a more specific plan governing land use, circulation, design and improvements.

Staff wrestled with the appropriate degree of specificity to add to the Plan. While it was clear that a more focused vision was needed, locking in every possible detail such as the type of landscaping and allowed building materials and colors seemed destined to result in an inflexible document that would not foresee changing public tastes, changing requirements for green, stormwater and other development standards and innovative developer ideas for the vacant land in the Village. On the other hand, the mostly developed Hihn Subdivision and South of Soquel Drive areas needed specific regulations on land use, parking and signage.

Staff settled on a hybrid approach to these two needs. For the Hihn Subdivision and South of Soquel Drive areas, specific regulations are stated in the revised Plan. For the vacant land in the Village Core, a blueprint for the area is proposed that includes the maximum sizes and stories for commercial and residential buildings, needed parking and desired design elements. The specifics will be imposed by the use of a Planned Unit Development for the Village Core.

## **Proposed Plan Provisions**

### General Concept

Building on the goals established by the community meetings, the key goals for the revised Plan are:

- Creating a Village Common in Aptos Village thereby making Aptos Village the heart of the Aptos community.
- Establishing a new east-west street to connect Trout Gulch and Aptos Creek Roads.
- Establishing a new north-south street connecting Soquel Drive to the new east-west street, intersecting at a Village Common, to provide a face of the new Village Core area to the vehicles and pedestrians using Soquel Drive and to connect the existing Village businesses to the new area.

- Defining improvement of Aptos Creek Road such that it will become a prominent entrance to Nisene Marks State Park.
- Building new housing developed as a transitional edge to the existing residential neighborhoods, with commercial and mixed commercial and residential uses in the interior of the Village.
- Defining a network of sidewalks making it pleasant to be a pedestrian in the Village.
- Requiring abundant parking, both on and off street, to make shopping convenient. To enhance the Village atmosphere, most off-street parking will be located behind buildings.
- Establishing well-landscaped streets to give the Village a pleasant and inviting ambience.
- Ensuring a mix of housing, shopping, dining, community services and employment to make the Village a colorful, friendly place and one that complements the scale of the current Village area.
- Providing a mechanism to protect the Hihn Subdivision (east of Trout Gulch Road) as a mixed-use area.
- Providing a mechanism to protect the existing business area along Soquel Drive as a vibrant and integral part of the overall commercial area in the Village.

These concepts are further discussed below.

#### Village Core

The Village Core area includes the existing commercial buildings fronting on Soquel Drive, the Apple Barn building fronting on Trout Gulch Road and the approximately six acres of vacant land behind these buildings.

To develop this vacant land, adequate access is crucial. To that end and to meet one of the community's goals, a new east-west street is proposed in this area to connect Trout Gulch Road and Aptos Creek Road. In addition, a new north-south street from Soquel Drive to this new street is proposed to open up the area visually to pedestrians and automobiles using Soquel Drive and to connect with the existing commercial businesses. A Village Common is proposed at the intersection of these new streets to provide a new "heart" for Aptos Village and meet another of the community's goals. These proposed features are illustrated in Figure 11 of the Plan.

A market study was commissioned to study this area and concluded that there was a strong economic basis for expanding both commercial and residential land uses in the core of the Village. In order to find the right combination of land uses, it is critical to balance a number of factors, including:

- Providing enough square footage to attract the right range of businesses and create a strong pedestrian element;
- Limiting the square footage so that traffic impacts can be mitigated to reasonable levels;
- Providing enough square footage of uses (commercial and residential) to be able to financially support the substantial infrastructure needed to be constructed in the area; and
- Defining the proper scale of development that fits into the character of the Village.

It is important to achieve a critical mass of activity to create the vitality needed for the economic success for future businesses in the area. It is equally important to establish a scale of development that complements and does not overwhelm the character of the Village. Based on these factors, the revised Plan proposes a combination of new commercial, mixed use and residential development with 75,000 square feet maximum of commercial use and a maximum of 63 residential units (with the majority of residential units in mixed-use buildings).

The most important buildings are proposed to anchor the area around the Village Common. This includes the main anchor building: the Apple Barn building. The Plan proposes that the Apple Barn building be relocated from its current location at the eastern edge of the Village Core to its center, incorporating this historic building into the heart of the Village. This relocation is dependant on Historic Resources Commission approval of a Historic Resource Preservation Plan and meeting all imposed conditions. New buildings around the Village Common are proposed to be a maximum of three stories. While three story buildings may be considered, no building is intended to overshadow or displace the prominence of the Bayview Hotel: a four story, approximately 50-foot in height historic building.

Mixed-use buildings containing small businesses are proposed along both sides of the new east-west street to the west of the Village Common area and along both sides of the new north-south street. Buildings in this area are limited to a maximum of two stories with lofts, meaning that the buildings must appear as two stories from the street. The Plan proposes that the existing historic Aptos firehouse/VFW Hall building be relocated elsewhere in the Village to accommodate the new street and buildings. This relocation is dependant on Historic Resources Commission approval of a Historic Resource Preservation Plan and meeting all imposed conditions.

Commercial buildings are proposed on both sides of the new east-west street east of the Village Common area. One sub-anchor building not exceeding 7,500 square feet is allowed in the Village and could be located in this area. Buildings in this area are limited to a maximum of two stories.

Abundant parking is proposed and is discussed below in the Infrastructure Section of this report.

Attached multi-family residential units are proposed on the south and north sides of Granite Way to act as a transition area between the new commercial and mixed use areas to the south and the single-family residential areas to the north.

More detail about these various areas of the Village Core are illustrated in Figures 23 and 24 of the Plan.

#### Design Standards for the Village Core

The revised Plan foresees the new commercial and mixed use areas as vital and pedestrian friendly with narrow streets to slow traffic and wide sidewalks conducive to sidewalk cafes and abundant landscaping, an enjoyable place to live and shop.

To implement this vision, the revised Plan establishes some basic design standards for the Village Core. These include:

- To encourage more opportunities for quasi-public outdoor uses, the County-controlled right-of-way along the new roadways in the Village Core will only cover the curb-to-curb area, allowing for more flexible uses along the sidewalk areas and private financing for the maintenance of planters and sidewalk areas.
- To create a more pedestrian and business friendly environment, require that new buildings be built in a location close to the new street (through reduction or elimination of front yard setbacks) with off-street parking generally to the rear of buildings.
- To ensure that larger commercial uses not dominate the new development area or existing commercial areas including the Bayview Hotel, the PUD will establish frontage and appearance standards for anchor, sub-anchor and other new buildings.
- The architectural style of the buildings fronting the new east-west and new north-south streets shall give the impression of being constructed over a period of time, as is the case of organic main streets, rather than appearing to be matching or identical.
- To provide for an interesting variety of exterior materials and to honor the character of the current Village, a variety and mixture of exterior materials are encouraged.
- To encourage more vital activities in commercial and mixed use areas, require dooryard areas that allow for quasi-public outdoor areas in the front of businesses for street furniture and other uses, wherever possible.
- To enhance the appearance of the new development areas, require privately maintained planting pockets along the new roadways.
- To encourage more interest in business areas and passage to parking lots, allow arcades through commercial and mixed-use buildings.
- To encourage residential activity along the new roadways to enhance vitality and create a public presence 24/7, allow overhanging decks (on upper stories) or porches to intrude into traditional setback areas.
- To encourage more interesting architectural texture, allow other building projections into setback areas.
- To provide visual interest, a variety of roof types shall be used in both commercial and residential structures.
- To provide for complementary storefronts among buildings and provide light and adequate window area, establish standards for storefronts. Awnings may be used to shield glare and provide visual interest.

To provide more specificity to allowed uses and design, the use of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) will be required.

#### Village Core PUD

Any developer desiring to develop within the Village Core will be required to apply for a Planned Unit Development to be used as an implementation measure of this Plan. The PUD will establish more specific allowed commercial uses, building and business sizes and heights, number of parking spaces, and design features. The PUD will also provide more specificity to infrastructure requirements, phasing, timing and pay back protocol for future developers.

Processing of the PUD will require early notification of the public with public meetings and public hearings with the Planning Commission and your Board.

### Hihn Subdivision

As described previously, development in the Hihn Subdivision is an eclectic mix of residential, commercial and mixed uses on predominantly small parcels. One of the goals of the revised Plan is to recognize the uniqueness of this neighborhood and support its continued use for residential, commercial and mixed uses.

The biggest challenge for this area is the current zoning that mandates that uses be either residential or commercial but not both. Changing the existing Commercial zoning to the "SU" Special Use zone district allows the parcels to be utilized for either residential, commercial or mixed use.

Many of the existing commercial businesses are legal nonconforming or legal significantly nonconforming. Under current regulations, changing a nonconforming use to a different business requires a public hearing before the Zoning Administrator and may result in imposed conditions, such as parking, that cannot be met. The revised Plan allows these changes of use with a simple administrative permit. Those legal businesses that have inadequate or no parking may change use without meeting current parking standards as long as the new use is not more intensive (such as changing from retail to restaurant use). This is a major change in policy for existing businesses and one long needed in the Hihn Subdivision.

Another challenge in this area is meeting the current parking standards. The revised Plan changes the current requirement for retail and general offices uses of one space per 200 square feet of net commercial area to one space for 300 feet. This new standard would be imposed on new commercial buildings and uses (such as conversion of a residence to commercial use) but not for changes of legal commercial uses as described above. In addition, businesses on Aptos Street could count the on-street parking area along their frontage towards their required parking requirement.

Staff believes that these proposed changes will contribute to the continued vitality of this special neighborhood.

### South of Soquel Drive

Like the Hihn Subdivision, the commercial businesses on the south side of Soquel Drive are not being well served by their existing zoning. The current C-1 (Neighborhood Commercial) zoning renders several of the existing businesses as legal nonconforming and is too restrictive for this commercial area. For example, in the C-1 zone district, a building may not be used solely as an office. Staff is, therefore, recommending that the zoning be changed to C-2 (Community Commercial), a zone district that provides for a wider variety of uses.

As discussed above for the Hihn subdivision, under current regulations, changing a nonconforming use to a different business requires a public hearing and may result in imposed conditions, such as parking, that cannot be met. The revised Plan also allows changes of use in this area with a simple administrative permit and does not require additional parking unless a more intensive use is proposed.



