

## Crowd praises SB train station plans

November 18, 2002

JANET LAVELLE  
Staff Writer

SOLANA BEACH --- A proposal for a \$40 million development at the Solana Beach train station evoked comments of approval Monday night among the group of 40 people who attended a workshop unveiling the plans.

"I think this looks like a very good project," said Encinitas resident Rick Froese, a regular Amtrak rider who said he attended the workshop hosted by Sedona Pacific development company to see what was planned for the station. "It seems to me this has a lot less impact on the community than what has been approved before by the community."

Many in the crowd nodded their heads in agreement as they eyed sketches for a complex that would include restaurants, shops, offices, 132 apartments and possibly a theater clustered around the existing train station at Lomas Santa Fe Drive and North Cedros Avenue.

Greg Shannon, president of Sedona Pacific development company, presented the latest version of his firm's plans during the workshop at the Del Mar Hilton. A similar presentation is slated for Thursday before the North County Transportation District.

The district owns the property, and Shannon is pursuing a contract with the agency to build the development. Shannon said he hopes to submit his development plans to the city of Solana Beach in January, with the goal of breaking ground in spring 2004 and finishing the project in fall 2005.

The Sedona Pacific project is smaller in scale than an earlier plan. The proposal presented Monday reflected comments Sedona Pacific collected at two workshops and a City Council meeting earlier this year, Shannon said.

The architectural scheme was drafted by San Diego-based Studio E Architects for

Sedona Pacific. Architect Eric Naslund said the plan calls for 26 two- and three-story buildings totaling 138,800 square feet surrounded by plazas and landscaped areas. The development would sit above a 722-space underground parking garage. The plan also included an underground space that could become a new home for the North Coast Repertory Theatre.

Several people said Monday that they were excited at the prospect of the theater moving into the complex, since it is searching for a larger home.

Shannon said he has been meeting with theater representatives, and the move hinges on the success of the repertory's fund-raising campaign. Sedona Pacific would rent the space and provide parking for \$1 a year over 55 years.

"We still have a long way to go, but hopefully the community can get behind this so we can make it happen," Shannon said.

Asked about apartment rents in the complex, Shannon said that except for 13 units set aside for low income residents, the rest would be top-dollar rentals, with a studio likely costing \$1,000 a month. Ten of the 132 living units would be combined work and living spaces, with a two-bedroom costing as much as \$2,500 monthly.

One resident asked Naslund wondered whether the ventilation system pumping car exhaust out of the underground garage would be a noisy nuisance. He said the garage would be open at the west end, facing out onto the sunken railroad track, so that fresh air would waft into the garage and cut down on the need for

machinery.

"I guarantee you that standing on Cedros Avenue you won't be able to hear it," Naslund said.

Others asked about a bridge that was once envisioned as an access to the complex from Highway 101. The bridge would extend from the coast highway across the train tracks and into the parking garage.

Naslund said the bridge was "a significant hurdle physically and visually" and Shannon said the span wasn't necessary.

In order to create clearance over the train track and a proposed Coastal Rail Trail that would parallel the tracks, the bridge would require a 20 percent grade and overshadow the trail, they said. And traffic studies showed that the bridge would not significantly cut down on traffic along Cedros Avenue, Shannon said.

Some participants briefly debated whether the design would encourage drivers to use nearby residential streets to reach the train station, rather than the main Lomas Santa Fe Drive thoroughfare.

"I think it's a great project," Solana Beach resident Tim Coughlin said. "My only concern is about traffic being brought into the neighborhood."

Former mayor Celine Olson said she believed that only local residents would know the shortcuts. "Only people who really know the route would do that," she predicted.

Reach reporter Janet Lavelle at (760) 943-2314 or [jlavelle@nctimes.com](mailto:jlavelle@nctimes.com).