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Joe Ferris

Dreams for Downtown

Locals look ten years into the future

A MASTER plan for long-term development of downtown Santa Cruz was released this week by a city-appointed task force, unveiling the dreams of residents, merchants and city planners. Eight months in the making, the plan projects a commercial upswing along the Pacific Garden Mall and cites a potpourri of civic improvements for the area's traffic and open space problems.

Among the predictions for the eighties: sales of shopper's goods will increase 20 per cent, retail space will increase 6,500 square feet per year, and restaurant business will go up by 50 per cent. There'll be 240 new jobs in service professions, and 400 to 900 new positions will be created for office workers.

The downtown area plan, which will be mulled over by city planners and council members in the

next few months, proposes both short term, easily financed solutions to downtown overcrowding as well as more visionary and wide sweeping changes which would require large private outlays.

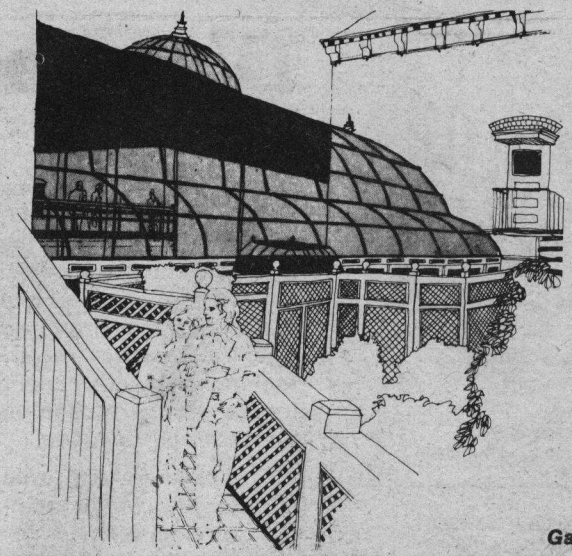
The changes center around the 14-year-old Mall and the residential and commercial areas bordered by Mission Street, Laurel Street, Highway 1 and the San Lorenzo River. The easiest improvements involve re-routing of tourist and local traffic through the downtown along River Street.

Planners believe that beach-going autos should take River instead of the residential Chestnut causeway currently used. This, they say, would preserve residential areas north of downtown which are currently crowded by autos and, at the same time, encourage shopping

in the business district.

According to the study, city officials should obtain the first right of refusal on several sites in the downtown area to offset parking problems. One possible location, according to planners, is located at Front and Cathcart streets. Although the site is currently used by an

(Continued on Page 6)



→over

Galleria

Toxic Waste Controls

The county is writing a waste control law and the city is close behind

MIRRORING the national concern over toxic waste, county government and local cities are considering ordinances on hazardous materials.

County supervisors are expected to adopt in June an ordinance that requires any user of 50 gallons of li-

Other incidents occurred last year at three industrial sites, in Watsonville and Scotts Valley, where spills

were identified. At present, Santa Cruz County has no legal dump site for toxic wastes. •



Downtown Plans

(Continued from Page 5)

automobile dealership, it would make for a likely parking area should it become available in the future. Another potential parking site is a vacant lot at the junction of Front and Pacific. The study recommended two-hour parking zones along residences west of Pacific Avenue.

The planners also eyed downtown sites for commercial expansion. A key proposal calls for the construction of a gallery-shop complex behind the Cooperhouse and old county jail. Paid for by private development, the "Galleria" would provide stylized rear entries to existing mall shops and simultaneously serve as a scenic, enclosed shopping area which could partially compete with the Capitola Mall.

Another plan is for the commercial development of North Pacific Avenue, extending the brick theme of the mall towards existing open space and light industrial areas. Future commercial development, say the planners, should be

towards the San Lorenzo, not into the neighborhoods. One idea calls for the commercial development of the triangle surrounding the Town Clock and the adjacent hillsides along Pacific.

Public hearings on the suggestions have yet to be scheduled by the city council and planning commission. The downtown plan is a list of intentions meant to serve as a planning guideline over the next decade—an adjunct to the adopted city General Plan.

Meetings on the plan were first held in September after the city council appointed an 11-member committee comprised of downtown merchants, residents and representatives of housing groups, the transit district, and public safety committees. •

5-Day Forecast

Skies clearing today and mostly fair Friday. Chance of scattered showers Saturday and Sunday. Temperatures in the high 60s. •