

East Side To Remain Neighborhood Shopping Area, Economist Claims

By Jack Rannells

If East Santa Cruz retailers tend to their interests they can expect total sales of \$1.75-2.5 million in 1970 and \$3.5-2.75 million in 1985.

These sales volumes will require an area, including parking, of four to five acres in 1970 and seven to eight acres in 1985.

Keys to his development are a 3-to-1 parking to sales space ratio, separation of non-compatible land uses — residential from commercial, retail from non-retail — and compact arrangement of retail facilities for shopper convenience.

Even with these, the East Side is not likely to evolve into more than a neighborhood shopping area.

These are the basic conclusions and recommendations included in a report on economic potential of the East Santa Cruz shopping area, prepared by economist and research planner Egon P. (Pete) Winter.

The study was ordered by the city council last fall as documentation for city-wide master plan development and proposed rezoning of the East Side, requested by the East Santa Cruz Businessmen's association.

These ends are reflected in a final recommendation by Winter:

"With the 1970 potential at a convenient planning distance and the 1985 potential serving as a bench mark, it is recommended to start now the planning of the spatial re-arrangements which would facilitate reaching the 1970 potential and to reserve sufficient space in the site plans for 1985 potential."

Copies of the study were distributed to the city council, planning commission and the businessmen's association Friday. The commission will hold first hearing on the rezoning proposal Wednesday evening.

The East Side sales potential figures are the product of 1959 sales and projected increases in population, income and spending patterns, according to the report.

Basis for the projections were estimated 1959 sales of apparel and home goods — appliances and furniture. These were expanded separately for seven buyer areas.

The 1959 apparel and home goods sales were estimated at \$200,000 and \$275,000, respectively, and projected to \$496,000 and \$653,000 for 1970 and \$1,023,000 and \$1,485,000 for 1985.

Winter concerned himself only with retail stores, these of two

types: "convenience;" including food, liquor and general merchandise; and "comparison," household goods, apparel and specialty. Customers of convenience stores ostensibly can easily be drained off by developments "closer to home."

The relationship of retail and non-retail, comparison and convenience are significant in Winter's analysis.

"The neighborhood character of the (East Side) shopping area is emphasized by relatively high ratio of convenience to comparison goods stores (1 to 1.5) or better," the report asserts. "Medium size retail and large shopping centers have a much higher ratio of comparison goods stores."

However, Winter finds that "it is unlikely the present ratio will continue until 1970. Competition of new convenience goods stores in new and more populated neighborhoods will attract many of the new customers moving into these urbanized areas."

"By 1970, it is likely that a comparison-convenience ratio of 1 to 1 or 1 to 1/2 will prevail, requiring an area of 4 to 5 acres," the report says.

"These acreage requirements may appear low compared with the present spread of the area," Winter says. "But it should be

kept in mind that retail facilities are now scattered, that they are mixed with non-retail facilities and that their sales per store are low on a city-wide basis."

Winter said the latter point is derived from state board of equalization figures.

Length of the present shopping area — 3000 feet along Soquel avenue and 2000 feet along Water street — and mixture of retail and non-retail are considered sales deterring factors, because they make pedestrian shopping impractical.

Winter also points to aesthetic grounds, the poor sales atmosphere created by the retail, non-retail mixture.

Another deterring factor is lack of a "sales generator" such as a department store or discount house, Winter asserts.

"The shopping area does have major appliance and food stores which for the time being act as sales generators, but particularly the latter's importance will be reduced as new food centers are started in urbanizing areas from which they now draw customers," the report says.

Winter has assumed the first two factors will be remedied by the self-interest of the East Santa Cruz Businessmen's association and others.