

Downtown SC Sales Stagnate

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Business in the city of Santa Cruz downtown area showed little, if any, growth in 1980, according to the annual taxable retail sales reported by the state.

If automobiles are excluded from the total sales figures, there was a 2.6 percent growth in downtown business last year. But if automobiles are included, there was zero growth, Santa Cruz Finance Director Robert Shepherd said this morning.

The downtown area encompasses the downtown parking district, which includes the Pacific Garden Mall, the San Lorenzo Plaza and takes in some two blocks on each side of the mall from Mission to Laurel, Shepherd said.

The downtown business growth was far off the pace scored statewide, in the county, citywide and in Capitola and Scotts Valley.

Only Watsonville had a lower rate of growth, losing four-tenths of a percentage point in 1980, or showing a downward rather than an upward movement.

Capitola had 17.6 percent growth, Scotts Valley 10.9 percent, the county 8.6 percent and the city of Santa Cruz as a whole 8.3 percent. The statewide growth was 8.4 percent.

Shepherd said that downtown apparel stores dropped 12.4 percent from the previous year. General merchandise and other retail categories, which include many Pacific Garden Mall stores, increased by 8.9 percent. Taxable food and liquor store sales increased by 22.7 percent, eating and drinking establishments increased only by 2.2 percent. Home furnishings, in line with a statewide trend, dropped 11.3 percent, while automobile sales fell by 8 percent.

In the downtown area the taxable sales for the fourth quarter were \$21.4 million, or 27.7 percent of city sales.

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