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Sales Gain On Downtown SC

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The Capitola Mall is slowly but steadily triumphing over the city of Santa Cruz downtown area in the battle for consumer dollars.

That news was confirmed for downtown business leaders who attended the Wednesday meeting of the economic concerns committee of the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce.

The news was reconfirmed by a report from Steve Russell of the city Planning Department.

Using 1978 figures, the last for which totals are available, the report showed that the city Parking District, which includes the downtown SC shopping area from Laurel Street to North Pacific Avenue and from Center Street to the river, had a net increase of taxable sales in 1978 of only 8.6 percent. The total sales reported came to \$66.67 million.

Capitola, in the same year, had total taxable sales of \$70.27 million, an 18 percent increase.

Manny Shaffer, who had questioned an earlier city of Santa Cruz report on the figures for the downtown business area, commented after the report:

"I am disappointed. Capitola has essentially more sales and we should look for the reason. Are we in trouble or aren't we? I think we are."

Shaffer noted also that the percent of sales increase in downtown SC was under the inflation figure.

The report shows that since 1975, Capitola has experienced big percentage increases in total taxable sales.

In 1976, when the full Capitola Mall went into operation, sales jumped from \$26.4 million the previous year to \$41.4 million, a 56 percent increase.

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In that same year, the Santa Cruz downtown sales came to \$54.6 million and represented a 16.9 percent increase over the previous year.

In 1977 Capitola had a 43.7 percent increase, compared with 12.4 percent for Santa Cruz.

In some areas of the downtown business community there is concern that with Roos Atkins closing the growth in the downtown area will be even less this year.