

# Report out on street people

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Most Santa Cruz residents and businessmen wish the street people would go away but realize the problem won't simply vanish.

That finding was included in a recently completed draft report by William Friedland, UC-Santa Cruz sociology professor, and Robert Marotto, who just completed his doctoral dissertation in sociology at UCSC.

The report was commissioned jointly by the city and the university, with the city paying \$5,000 and the university paying \$6,000 for the research work.

Friedland said today he doesn't want to discuss the draft report submitted to the city earlier this month, because it "is already obsolete." That report was meant as a preliminary draft to be used for discussion only, he said, and the complete draft report will be released next week.

The preliminary report argues that it is incorrect to use the word "transient" when referring to the people who con-

gregate on Santa Cruz's streets, and instead calls them "street people" or "the new poor."

Nearly half the people interviewed by UCSC students and fellow street people for the report said they have been in Santa Cruz for at least one year, and 10 percent of those surveyed said they had been here for more than five years.

Some transients do join the street population, the report says, but mostly just in the summer. During the winter, the street population — estimated at between 250 and 400 — is more stable.

It will come as no surprise to anyone who frequents the Pacific Garden Mall that the report says the street people are highly visible.

"The concentration of street people in the downtown area means that they are in a regular relationship with other segments of the community," the report says. "In this respect, Santa Cruz is different from many metropolitan communities where the poor are ghettoized and largely invisible; in this community, street people

are in daily contact with other members of the community."

The street people can be seen during the day in groups at the top of the Pacific Garden Mall, at San Lorenzo Park and at Scribner Park, the small square on North Pacific Avenue at Mission Street.

"Between dusk and dawn, street people become invisible, either because they have found shelter somewhere downtown, or have left the downtown area for their 'suburb bedrooms' in the surrounding countryside," according to the report.

Santa Cruz's street people or "new poor" are part of national trends in employment, housing and social services, the report says. The majority of the new poor are relatively young, unemployed, homeless white men with a fair amount of education, and that is true of the Santa Cruz street people, the report says.

In surveys of the street people, respondents said what they most need and are not now getting are shelter and financial resources, including jobs or job-training. The street

people were also asked what services they would like to see made available to them, and again, employment came out high on the list of requests. Some also asked for creation of a shelter or campsite for them, and 18 percent of those surveyed asked for a bathing facility to be made available.

The report suggests the city of Santa Cruz work to alter the least desirable behavior of the street people, perhaps by some kind of law enforcement or by encouraging self-regulation among the street people themselves. Part of this would be to get them not to congregate in large groups in the downtown area.

The report suggests the city try to help guarantee a minimal level of subsistence for the homeless and poor, and that more long-term programs be developed to provide housing and employment so the street people could have "an opportunity for re-entering the straight community."

Friedland said he will deliver his completed draft report to the city's Downtown Commission next week.