

# Capitola mall bus parking is hot topic

## Council, transit district at loggerheads

CAPITOLA — Depending on who you talk to, the city of Capitola either has or has not adequately dealt with the increased transit needs for the already approved Capitola Mall expansion.

The City Council is expected Thursday to approve recommended findings that prove those expected transit impacts are taken care of. Scott Galloway, executive director of the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, doesn't agree.

At the heart of the disagreement is whether a bus transfer center, to be built in front of the expanded mall, adequately handles the need for increased transit services to the mall.

The City Council two weeks ago approved in concept an agreement that does not include a bus overflow parking area which the Transit District insists it not only needs, but is required to adequately meet the transit needs listed in the environmental impact report of the mall expansion project.

The Transit Board is scheduled to discuss the issue during an executive session

Friday. Galloway refused to guess whether the Transit Board would vote to pursue legal action.

A prolonged court fight could delay the \$35-million mall expansion project, which has already gained most necessary approvals. It is scheduled to break ground later this summer and be completed by the fall of 1988.

The recommended findings to come before the council Thursday night says simply that the city has met the conditions of the environmental impact report.

Planning Director Susan Tupper, who prepared the findings — in a memo to the council — wrote, "A safe area is provided to eliminate the present conflict arising from the mingling of buses, pedestrians and automobile traffic; shelter and lights are provided; and an area to be used only

by buses is clearly established. Staff feels that the plans for the center and the transit agreement...are in complete conformance with the requirements established in the environmental review documents."

Tupper added that a bus parking overflow area is "not mentioned" in the supplemental environmental impact report prepared for the mall expansion project. The report says increased transit effects from the expansion could be avoided by providing additional transit service and facilities.

Issues to be considered in the environmental impact report included safe pedestrian access to the mall from the transit facility, separation of bus traffic from automobiles and pedestrians, a shelter for waiting passengers and additional parking spaces lost by the mall.

All those issues were covered in the approved transit agreement, according to the city.

The approved transit agreement allows for the stacking of up to six buses in front of the mall. The council majority objected to the overflow area that could allow for another three more buses to stack up.

Galloway contended that the bus overflow area is just that — an area that the district did not expect to have to use. Council members said if the Transit District wanted a transfer center, it could buy land for it, but shouldn't expect mall developer Cypress Properties to provide it free.

Galloway added that the bus overflow parking area was OK'd by Cypress Properties. Cypress spokesman John Gatto confirmed later that the overflow area was indeed approved by developers.

The council will discuss the recommended findings Thursday night. The meeting begins at 7 in the council chamber at City Hall.