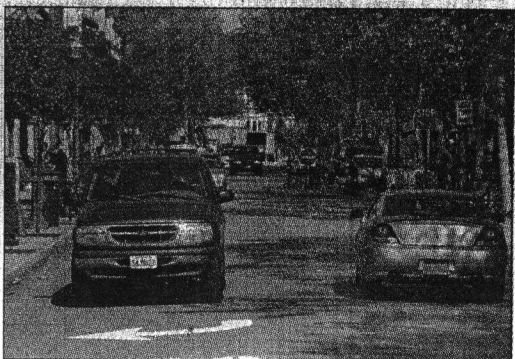


DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

The Santa Cruz City Council is looking at a plan to implement two-way traffic on Pacific Avenue in downtown Santa Cruz.

Council pushes study of 2-way Pacific Ave.

Public meeting to be scheduled before Nov. 8 vote

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SANTA CRUZ — The City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to expedite a study on whether to make downtown's central corridor a two-way street in an effort to improve access for shoppers and diners.

The Downtown Association, which represents more than 500 merchants, asked the city to create two-way traffic on Pacific Avenue from Church Street to Cathcart Street by Dec. 2 to see what impact it may have on holiday commerce. A one-way pattern would remain in effect on the north end of the street, from the three-way intersection with Water and Front streets to Locust Street,

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PACIFIC AVE.

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and stay two-way south of Cathcart Street to the beach.

The recommendation stems from a national retail expert who found during a recent study that merchants could see a bump in business of up to 30 percent by making Pacific Avenue more navigable.

But critics suggested other options, including keeping one-way traffic in effect or transforming the street to a pedestrian mall. They urged the council, which expects to hear the proposal Nov. 8 after commission meetings, not to rush a decision or spend up an estimated \$20,000 on sign and striping changes.

A joint meeting of the Public Works Commission and Downtown Commission has yet to be scheduled, but is expected next week.

Although she voted in favor of the study, Councilwoman Katherine Beiers said the process was moving too quickly, and she hoped to hear input from down-

town residents.

"The street doesn't belong to just the landlords and retailers, how wonderful they are," she said. "It doesn't belong to us. It belongs to the community."

Larry Pearson, owner of Pacific Cookie Co. and a leader of the Vision Santa Cruz group that planned rebuilding after the 1989 earthquake, said merchants need an urgent boost.

"One of the serious needs we have currently is for a significant anchor to work magic on retail sales and they won't come here with the way it is," Pearson said. "This is an important project for us because we have seen a slow but sure vacancy rate increase downtown."

Also Tuesday, the council approved a five-year extension with Jamie and Tim Loustalot to run the city-owned DeLaveaga Golf Course, with the pledge to trim \$140,000 each year. The contract will be open again in September 2016, when the concessionaire agreement with the operator of the course's restaurant also expires.

Dannettee Shoemaker, head of the Parks and Recreation Department, said the course expects an increase in rev-

enue of \$40,000 due to more aggressive promotions on social networking sites that helped to increase play by 500 to 600 rounds each month this summer.

Of the revenue projections, Shoemaker said in an interview Monday, "It's a very conservative estimate. We're hoping it's more."

DeLaveaga has lost more than \$2 million since 2007, requiring city subsidies. Critics have said the city should not have forgiven the debt amid cuts in recent years to staff and social services spending.

The Loustalots, whose contract began in June 2001, expect to cut \$100,000 per year in costs to the city by trimming a maintenance position, taking on expenses for advertising and phones, and returning 5 percent of revenue from golf lessons to the city, as opposed to 1 percent.

The council also unanimously passed a resolution in support of the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People. Members of the Save the Knoll Coalition, a group that formed to protect an Ohlone burial site contained within a Market Street housing development, had urged the council to support the declaration.