

# Project takes a bite of business

Transportation = 1990-1995  
SC downtown proposals ask business owners to part with parking spaces and building space

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SANTA CRUZ — Tom Manoff figures he paid the price of progress in 1966 when the city took 12 feet of his restaurant to widen Water Street.

He built a new Manoff's Rancho Burger further back and stayed in business.

Guess what? The city is back, this time with a proposal to use most of his restaurant's parking spaces to widen River Street, envisioned as a gateway to Santa Cruz's rebuilt and expanding downtown.

"Once in a lifetime is enough," moaned Manoff. "It looks like someday the city will be all freeway, streets and parking structures, but no buildings. I think that's their goal."

Manoff's is among the businesses that would lose parking or part of a building under an estimated \$4.5

million project that will be considered for approval by the city transportation commission and the City Council this summer.

One of the largest street projects contemplated by the city and talked about for more than a decade, it is certain to be controversial, largely because of the need to acquire parts of eight homes and businesses, according to Larry Erwin, director of Public Works.

As proposed, River Street would be widened from Highway 1 to Water Street from two to four lanes with bike lanes.

Under the preferred alternative, a landscaped median would be included from Highway 1 to Pacific Avenue with a left-hand turn break at San Lorenzo Lumber.

The other alternative would have a continuous two-

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Tom Manoff hopes Rancho Burger doesn't lose parking space.

## Downtown proposals

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way left turn lane between the two directions of traffic.

Under both alternatives, all onstreet parking would be removed. Four homes and eight buildings occupied by five different businesses would need to be acquired, and 17 off-street parking spaces would be taken, according to environmental studies. Those residents and businesses would be eligible for a variety of relocation payments and services.

Erwin maintains the widening is needed to ease existing traffic backups along River Street and to accommodate more cars anticipated with the rebuilding of the earthquake-damaged downtown and new growth forecast.

Whatever form of the project is approved, it will be about five years before it's built, said Erwin. Then the city may work in phases, starting with the portion of River Street close to Highway 1 rather than nearer to Water Street.

That delay would be of some comfort to Bill Strubing, owner of Skateworks.

Strubing said he hasn't decided if he'll stay — a lot will depend on how much of the building the city would take. "When you've got a proposal that says we may need two to 25 feet, how do you venture the impact on you?"

Strubing says he knew the expansion was possible when he leased the building about a year ago. If the city takes only a small part of the building and pays for new siding, Strubing says he'll probably stay. Still he hopes to convince the city to shelve its plans.

"I don't think they have a problem out here on River Street and I'd rather they didn't do anything," he said.

Among the other businesses that would be affected are Lloyd's Tire Service, which would lose its showroom area, said co-owner Larry Johnson. Johnson said he would stay and remodel.

"We're not thrilled about it, but in the long run it's probably going to be good for Santa Cruz," he said.

According to the environmental report, several buildings in the project area were evaluated for historical significance, including the John William Skinkinson House, a log cabin storefront, at 602 River Street.

Only one, an old art deco auto court at 240 River Street, might qualify for federal protection, and the others wouldn't be threatened by the street expansion. The project was altered so the auto court would not be torn down, according to Erwin.

A public hearing on the plans will be at 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 22 before the City Transportation Commission in the Santa Cruz City Council Chamber.