

Local EQ, 1989- SC County - Rebuilding

Santa Cruz mayor calls for consensus on rebuilding

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Reconstruction of Santa Cruz's Pacific Garden Mall should begin soon, but it will probably take five years to repair all the destruction caused by the Oct. 17 earthquake.

Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt gave the five-year estimate last night during a talk on planning for the city's downtown. It was the first in a series of free public lectures at the Loudon Nelson Center on downtown reconstruction, sponsored by the city, UC-Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz Downtown Association and Santa Cruz Cable TV.

Wormhoudt's talk was prefaced by a slide show narrated by Watsonville resident Manny Shaffer. Shaffer had worked in the late 1960s with retired photographer Chuck Abbott, who spearheaded the transformation of Santa Cruz's unattractive downtown into the shoppers' mecca of pre-earthquake days.

Called the "Private Revitalization of Downtown," or PROD, the transformation in the '60s created "a vibrant, wonderful, healthy and alive place that all of us loved," Wormhoudt said, and of-

Lecture series to explore various aspects of city life

A talk by Santa Cruz Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt last night kicked off a weekly lecture series on rebuilding downtown Santa Cruz that will continue into mid-March.

Watsonville city and business leaders have been invited to attend the free lectures to glean ideas for reconstruction of their own downtown, said lectures host James Pepper, a UC-Santa Cruz associate professor of environmental studies who has expanded his class this year to include the lectures.

The lectures will be held on

Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. at the Loudon Nelson Center in Santa Cruz, except for the Feb. 28 lecture, which has been scheduled for 8 p.m. The topics, speakers and dates of the remaining lectures are as follows:

Jan. 18 - "Rebuilding: Lessons From the Past" by Sandy Lydon, history instructor, Cabrillo College.

Jan. 24 - "Public Spaces Reconsidered" by William H. Whyte Jr., author and social critic, New York City.

Jan. 31 - "The Value of the Ordinary" by Paul Groth, professor of landscape architecture, UC-Berkeley.

Feb. 7 - "Downtown Life, Downtown Living" by Clare Cooper Marcus, professor of landscape architecture, UC-Berkeley.

Feb. 15 - "Great Streets: The Key to Public Life" by Allan Jacobs, professor of city and regional planning, UC-Berkeley.

Feb. 22 - "Making Places From Spaces" by Donlyn Lyndon, professor of architecture, UC-Berkeley.

Feb. 28 - "The Transit-Pedestrian Connection" by Peter Calthorpe, architect and community designer, San Francisco.

March 7 - "Participation, Patterns and Process" by Christopher Alexander, professor of architecture, UC-Berkeley.

March 14 - "Moving From Knowledge to Action" by John Friedman, professor of urban planning, UCLA.

fers a "message of real hope" that the post-quake downtown can be brought back to life.

The Santa Cruz City Council has agreed to "fast-tracking" of applications to reconstruct downtown buildings that would be closely restored to their original, pre-earthquake forms, Wormhoudt said. Those applications could be moved quickly because the state would not require

environmental reviews to be done on buildings restored to their original forms, she said.

Rebuilding the entire downtown, however, will require a consensus among the diverse groups in Santa Cruz and a substantial investment of private capital, Wormhoudt said. To help reach that consensus, she said, the City Council this week named a 36-member group composed of

business and public representatives to work on a reconstruction plan for downtown.

If the group comes up with a plan on which its members agree, it would probably be adopted by the council, Wormhoudt said.

Consensus already exists in the community that the downtown should be rebuilt, she said, and many people also feel downtown housing lost in the quake should

be replaced.

The city lost 400 housing units and 300,000 square feet of space in a downtown that accounted for 20 percent of the city's sales-tax revenue, Wormhoudt said.

Some people have proposed a building moratorium in the downtown until a comprehensive plan is designed. But some merchants are deep in debt and need to rebuild quickly to survive,

Wormhoudt said. "The longer it sits as it is and more businesses move to other locations and more investments move to other locations," she said, "the harder it will be to bring it back."

Wormhoudt also suggested that a market analysis be done to determine whether the city could support proposed changes in the downtown, such as an expansion of the downtown area all the way to the beach and the establishment of a large department store such as Nordstrom.

Areas of the downtown are still fenced off because buildings in those areas are unsafe, Wormhoudt said, but the council is now saying to the owners of those buildings, "You have to abate this nuisance." Whether the buildings are rebuilt or torn down is up to the owners, she said.

Anyone who wants to participate in helping plan the overall reconstruction of the downtown is welcome, Wormhoudt said.

"I think we can put downtown Santa Cruz back together again, I know we can," she said, "and I invite you to join me in that process."