

✓ A Santa Cruz mall by any other name . . .

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SANTA CRUZ — What's in a name? Plenty, says local columnist Bruce Bratton, who is part of a movement to rename the Pacific Garden Mall.

"It's still a minor movement," Bratton conceded Monday, but he said a growing number of residents believe a new name will be needed to more accurately describe the rebuilt downtown area.

The idea is gaining legitimacy. It was mentioned in a recent Downtown Association bulletin as a "move afoot."

When Bratton thinks of the word "mall," he says he thinks of Valley Fair, Eastridge, Northridge and other indoor shopping centers.

That's because the meaning of the word has changed since the Pacific Garden Mall was created out of Pacific Avenue in 1969.

"It was pretty much just a pleasant walk among buildings," Bratton said.

According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary, the word "mall" was entirely appropriate back then. Webster's defines the word as "a (usually) public area (typically a lane or similar

strip) often set with trees or bushes or flowers and designed as a promenade for leisurely strolling or as a pedestrian walk."

Bratton said that he and others hope the rebuilt "mall" will include plenty of what's included in that definition. But since the suburbs have now misappropriated the word "mall" to their enclosed shopping centers, Bratton said a new name needs to be found.

"I think that would be a great idea," said William Rubel of the Downtown Commission. "I'd like to see a name that better speaks to the strengths of down-

town Santa Cruz," Rubel said.

But coming up with a new name may not be easy. Rubel said nothing immediately came to mind. Bratton tossed out "arcade," but quickly took it back. "It's not really an arcade, is it?" he said.

"Maybe we should call it a concourse, or something like the Pacific Garden Walk," Bratton said.

What to call "it" is not as important as getting "it" built, commented Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt.

She agreed that the word "mall" is now a misnomer. "I could see that after the

earthquake when all of the out-of-town workers and media were here. They were confused about just where the mall was," she said.

Wormhoudt said the name "Pacific Garden Mall" does not stir her historic interest.

But, she added, "I don't know why we even need a name. Most downtowns don't have a name. Downtown San Francisco doesn't."

"Isn't Pacific Avenue enough?" Wormhoudt asked.