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1,478 Have Signed Petition About Mall

By **BILL NEUBAUER**

Sentinel Staff Writer

Citizens Worried About Downtown have collected 1,478 signatures thus far in a petition drive to get Santa Cruz City Council action to enforce municipal laws and regulations against offenders on the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall.

The drive was launched last Friday, with petitions being placed in numerous business places along the mall for signing by persons interested in the effort to make the mall more attractive to tourists and local shoppers alike.

The citizens group is seeking 3,000 signatures to give to the council to back up pleas for assignment of two police officers to regular mall duty and for the development of a long-range plan to safeguard the mall for everyone to use without harassment of one kind or another.

The petition states in part: "Today's consumer in the downtown area is faced with panhandling, purse snatches, fistfights, trashing and verbal assaults to such a degree that it is repulsive to the majority of citizens and leads them to avoid the mall. Many of our senior citizens who reside in the down-

town area fear to leave their place of residence because of harassment. A new attitude toward the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall and indeed the entire downtown area is needed to restore the mall as a unique shopping area."

For the first half of 1977, the city police records show, there were 2,516 calls for service, or problems, logged for the two police coverage zones involving the mall and adjacent downtown areas.

In 1976, there were logged for

the total city 23,332 incidents or problems. Of these, 4,261 came from the two zones covering the mall and adjacent area, or over 18 per cent.

The Citizens Worried About Downtown have stressed in all their efforts they will oppose "witch hunts" of any type because of different lifestyles, economic conditions and the like. And the police have stated that law offenders, against whom the petitions are aimed, come in all sizes, shapes, colors, age groups and lifestyles.

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