

4-27-61

Downtown Traffic Loop Endorsed By Commission

The proposed one-way traffic loop on Pacific avenue and Front street was endorsed yesterday after critical review by the Santa Cruz Downtown Parking commission.

However, Councilman George Wilson, liaison member to the commission, served notice there are still a number of questions to be asked when the sweeping proposal is received by the city council, May 9.

A joint council-parking commission meeting tentatively has been set for next Tuesday night to hash out any major questions.

The one-way loop proposal is the heart of the first stage of a long-range program to clear up traffic circulation problems throughout Santa Cruz.

"This is what we can do immediately without too much cost," City Manager Peter Tedesco explained.

The recommendations, which received unanimous commission support, were prepared by the staff traffic advisory committee in conjunction with consultant Doug Carmody. This "immediate" program includes the following points:

1. One-way southbound traffic on Pacific from the post office plaza to Front street.

2. One-way northbound traffic on Pacific avenue from Beach street to Pacific-Front, along Front to the post office plaza and along the River street

extension from Front to Water streets.

3. Restripe Water street for two eastbound lanes and one westbound lane from River to Ocean street.

4. Close off Front at the post office plaza, permitting only free turns onto Water or Pacific. Develop Front between new River street and the plaza as an "on-street" parking lot with one-hour meters.

5. Add signals at Laurel and Pacific, Laurel and Front, and River and Water. The latter already are in.

6. Meter the River street extension for four-hour parking.

"For a few months — until driving habits change — this will be confusing," Chairman Sam Leask III said.

However, he listed a number of points recommending the abrupt pattern change.

Parking spaces on both sides of the street would be accessible; delays for double parkers or just plain parkers would be eliminated; and a left turn will be permitted from Soquel avenue, opening a link with Lincoln street and lower Pacific.

"Any kind of turn would go as long as it was southward on Pacific and northward on Front," Commissioner Sid Carter summarized.

Commissioner Fred Van Selus expressed the only serious reservations.

"I like it traffic-wise. But how about business-wise. Has anyone contacted Monterey or other tourist cities to see how one-way streets have affected business on the left hand side of the street?" he asked.

Carter said the one-ways have been well received by businessmen in Santa Barbara.

"Tourists are used to one-way streets now. In 1953, when we got our ears beaten down, this sort of thing was a little new everywhere."

Chief of Police Geno Pini pointed out the recommended changes would reduce possible "conflicts" at the post office plaza from 27 to 1. That would be the left hand turns from Water to Pacific and from Mission to Water.

Wilson said the council will be interested in the costs involved — primarily in reorienting meters and installing signals — and in the basic concepts in the long-term program under consideration.

CHILD IS BURNED

A 4-month-old child was badly burned about 4:30 p.m. today at the intersection of Pacific and Front streets.

Conelrad Test Slated Tomorrow

A special Conelrad drill will be radio broadcast tomorrow from 1 to 1:30 o'clock as part of a nationwide civil defense drill.

Santa Cruzans should tune their standard radios to 640 or 1240 for the drill. All FM radio and TV stations will be cut off for the half hour drill. No public warning will be sounded.

Prior to the exercise, the California disaster office will send sealed envelopes to all civil defense organizations. City and county participation will be limited to transmitting attack observations and other information contained in the envelopes.

The exercise, tagged "Operation Alert 1961," will be the largest civil defense drill ever conducted in California. In addition to city and county offices,