

# The Mall Cleanup

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The attractiveness of the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall as a leisurely place to shop with family and friends has diminished.

A solid foundation of downtown businessmen, on the mall and its surrounding areas, now is making a commitment to reverse this negative momentum.

For the cleanup goal to be realized, it is going to take an overall community effort, from John Q. Citizen, to businessman, to policemen and judges.

The subject potentially is a highly volatile issue, and it will take much patience and reason to overcome some of the overreaction that can be foreseen for the goal to be accomplished.

The mall cleanup petition circulation effort organized by consumers, merchants and senior citizens clearly isn't intended as a "them against us" document.

Rather, it is a move by a concerned citizenry to assure that grievances of ordinary people are dealt with accordingly, and that those people are not subjected to undue harassment.

The incidents of citizens being subjected to panhandling, verbal abuse, purse snatches and the like while browsing or shopping along the mall have increased markedly in recent years.

With all due respect to an individual's right to his own lifestyle, etc., petitioners want to assure the public that it has the opportunity to shop in a unique atmosphere without unnecessary disturbance.

How can this be done, realistically?

Frankly, there is no list of specifics, but as one downtowner said, "Carmel did it, why can't we." What Carmel did, according to a business association spokesman there, is, among other things: place "no bare feet, no eating" signs at entrances to stores; periodically turn on a sprinkler system at the park where many of the freeloaders were hanging out, and adding a "friendly police force" to walk the area.

All those things aside, the person said, "We were just lucky, I guess."

It probably will take a little bit of luck, along with residents and businessmen who aren't afraid to make a few citizens' complaints about infractions, a judge who will respond accord-

ingly, city and county cooperation, and more.

It is often said that the older businessmen of the Santa Cruz community are tired of the battle, that they have given up.

Now, they are getting together in what looks like a solid front with consumers, senior citizens and "common folk" to restore that comfortable shopping atmosphere that once existed along the mall.

In this instance, they are actually us, or the great majority of Santa Cruz area citizens.

As one businessman said, "In the long run, it is the input from citizens, letting the city council and other elected officials know, that is going to make the difference. We are looking for solidarity and commitment, and if we get that, we think the city council will know what we are talking about and act accordingly."

As Chuck Abbott, founder of the mall, said, "The business of downtowns is business," and the mall was designed for the "convenience of the pedestrian shopper."

Some of that convenience has withered, and it's time for it to return.