

Sidewalk dining headed for Mall

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SANTA CRUZ — Area residents may soon discover the pleasure of people-watching in European-style sidewalk cafes on the Pacific Avenue Mall.

Four restaurants in the north mall area — Zoccoli's delicatessen, Swan-Heavenly Goose restaurant, Plaza Bakery and the Coffee Roasting Co. — got permission from the City Council Tuesday to set up tables on the mall sidewalk during the day.

Zoccoli's already has been doing it on a trial basis since December, according to city officials and John Mills, a former Zoccoli's employee.

Allowing the tables in front of the individual restaurants is a temporary arrangement while the businesses and the city discuss a possible permanent set-up, according to Mills and city Planning Director Peter Katzlberger.

The businesses have been lobbying a mayor's committee on north Mall redevelopment on the idea of having one large cafe area on the plaza in front of Coffee Roasting Co. and World Savings, to be shared by all four restaurants.

The city wants to have some such renovation done in time for the Mall's 20th anniversary celebration later this year.

Katzlberger said the City Council has approved the concept of some kind of redesign in the north Mall area, and has designated \$100,000 for the pro-

ject. The mayor's committee, called the Focus Downtown Group, has listened to many ideas. And, Katzlberger said, a landscape architect has been hired and is drawing plans and recommendations for some sort of redesign.

Mills said the outdoor cafe idea would involve removing some of the large trees, planter boxes and benches now on the plaza to make way for the tables, chairs and umbrellas.

He envisions a cafe based on a "European model," where tables in the eating area are marked as belonging to each of several restaurants. The four restaurants would share responsibility for busing and maintaining the area, Mills said.

Besides the eating area, Mills said he'd like to see some kiosks, such as a magazine stand, and some street food vendors, such as the mini creperies one sees in Paris.

Colleen Crosby, a co-owner of Coffee Roasting Co., said she is enthused that planners are looking at "creating sort of a village atmosphere" in the area near her business. "We feel positive and happy about it, and we think it will attract a lot more customers to the area," she said.

Mills said he is excited about the coming improvements on the mall.

"I see exciting changes happening. Downtown is going to be an exciting place for people to spend their time and their money," Mills said.