

# Watsonville may get transit center

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**WATSONVILLE** — The Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District has received a \$1.1 million grant from a special state fund to build a new transit center in downtown Watsonville.

The center would be located in the vacant Crocker Bank building at Rodriguez Street and West Lake Avenue and will include shops, restrooms, and an information booth. Transit district General Manager Scott Galloway hopes to also house the Greyhound and MST (Monterey-Salinas Transit) in the center.

Watsonville doesn't have a central, enclosed transit center, and Galloway said, "We're positive it will boost ridership."

Ever since the Santa Cruz Metro Center opened on Pacific Avenue, ridership has improved on the Santa Cruz bus lines, he pointed out. Also, he said, "The building becomes a marketing tool" for the district.

Galloway estimated it will take a year to get the project through the planning stages and another nine months to refurbish the building, construct a parking lot and install landscaping. He anticipates the center will open in September 1989.

Final cost, including funds contributed by the transit district, will

bring the project to about \$1.4 million, he said. The district owns the building, but must buy some adjacent land to provide adequate parking space for the buses.

Galloway met Thursday afternoon with City Manager John Radin and Mayor Betty Murphy, and said he was excited the center will finally get built.

He said he hopes to work with the city in its redevelopment project to maintain a uniform architectural theme, employing either a mission or turn-of-the-century design, for the center.

But, he added, the transit district isn't building a new center; just remodeling an older structure, so the design is somewhat limited to what already exists.

The project has been in limbo for more than a year. The transit district received a state grant for the project "some time ago," Galloway said. But Gov. George Deukmejian thwarted the effort last year when he cut the money from his budget.

The governor, however, allowed the district and others whose funding had been eliminated to apply for a grant from the Petroleum Violation Escrow Account, which was set up to finance projects that would help reduce gasoline consumption. The account was established by the state after several large oil companies were charged with price fixing.