

# City may fast track two-way Pacific

Mayor seeks to test idea during holiday season

*Pacific Avenue*  
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SANTA CRUZ — The City Council will consider today whether to fast track a study on the conversion of downtown's main commercial corridor to a two-way street in time for the holiday shopping season.

Acting on a national retail expert's analysis that business on Pacific Avenue could improve up to 30 percent if its one-way segments were replaced, Mayor Ryan Coonerty and two other business-focused council members will urge two city panels to take public comment and make suggestions before returning with a proposal Nov. 8.

Special sessions of the Downtown Commission and Public Works and Transportation Commission have not yet been scheduled but are expected next week if the council agrees to study the matter.

The changes sought by the Downtown Association, a merchants group, would create two-way traffic from Church Street to Cathcart Street and convert one-way portions of Lincoln Street and Walnut Ave-

SEE PACIFIC ON A2

## IF YOU GO

SANTA CRUZ CITY COUNCIL

**WHEN:** 3 p.m., Pacific Avenue proposal and other general business; 5 p.m., oral communications; 7 p.m., council's three-year strategic plan

**WHERE:** Council Chamber, 809 Center St.

**DETAILS:** www.cityofsantacruz.com

## PACIFIC

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nue that lead onto Pacific Avenue. If approved and implemented by Dec. 2, Coonerty said the city could evaluate the impact after the holidays and, if problems arise, reverse the changes.

"The fact that we can do this as a trial experiment is the biggest argument in favor," Coonerty said. "In these economic times, why not try things and see how they work and make a decision then?"

Councilwomen Lynn Robinson and Hilary Bryant also are recommending studying the change suggested by consultant Robert Gibbs, who said

the "negative impact of the one-way street on retail sales and the downtown's overall sustainability cannot be over-emphasized."

Critics are sure to raise concerns about whether the street can support two 10-foot traffic lanes and metered parking, and whether the conversion will increase vehicle traffic rather than encourage bicycling and walking.

Urging more time for public review, former Supervisor Gary Patton wrote a letter to the council that said, in part, "If the changes proposed were, indeed, to increase vehicular traffic on Pacific and other downtown streets, as I understand would be the objective, this might well have significant impacts on air quality,

noise and the potential for injury accidents."

But Downtown Association leaders say by creating better traffic flow on Pacific Avenue, vehicle emissions would be reduced. The association also argues that, in addition to making downtown more accessible and improving links to the beach area, the change would improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians by slowing vehicle speeds.

Although Public Works Director Mark Dettle said the narrow lanes "will be tight," he expects they would slow traffic well below the 25 mph limit.

"Twelve-foot lanes are more comfortable; you'll see that in most areas," Dettle said. "When you put 10-foot in, opposing traffic feels a little

more uncomfortable."

The Downtown Association said the change would be easy and inexpensive, requiring only a one-way buffer at Church Street to be removed and striping and signs to be changed. No street parking or planters would be taken out.

Also Tuesday, the council will consider extending a contract with DeLaveaga Golf Course operators for five years, with the expectation that the operators will continue cutting costs and increasing revenue. In May, the council instructed the Parks and Recreation Department to cut costs for the course, which is supposed to be largely self-sustaining but has racked up more than \$2 million in losses since 2007.