

Is Lifestyle On The Mall A Hindrance?

By BILL NEUBAUER

Sentinel Staff Writer

An extra \$5,000 will be spent in 1977-78 policing the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall following a businessman's complaint about "an increasing flow of winos, drunks, panhandlers, bums and transients with their whole life in a pack on their back. ' ' "

Louis Rittenhouse Jr. of The Copper Flower told the Santa Cruz City Council Monday that "without a police officer there constantly I feel the mall would be a zoo. ' ' "

Rittenhouse warned the council that the downtown area is the core of the city, does an estimated \$40 million business per year and that if "it ends up like Market Street in San Francisco, full of trash and with winos in the doorways, then the city is in trouble. ' ' "

Rittenhouse reported that many of the more "straight ' ' members of the community are now afraid to shop in the downtown area and are going to the 41st Avenue shopping center.

"They don 't come here because they don 't feel they want to put up with the transients, bums, the people from New York with their lives on their backs, ' ' Rittenhouse said.

The cure, he said, is more police coverage.

Chief Geno Pini said the money could provide for coverage later in the day and additional coverage on Sunday, but he also told the council:

"The police department does not have the solution to all the social problems caused by different lifestyles. ' ' "

Pini said the department averages around 40 arrests on weekends citywide of people who are camping illegally and that there are from four to six arrests nightly for this sort of thing.

He agreed, further, that the city gets more than its fair share of such problems, based upon population, but he implied strongly something that was stated later by Councilman Bert Muhly, to wit: "There are limits to which the police can go to solve societal problems. ' ' "

Muhly said further after proposing the extra \$5,000 in the budget, that the merchants can 't be too choosy, that a lot of the \$40 million business done is attracted to the area because of the lifestyles along the mall.

Rittenhouse said "Terrific! ' ' to the extra funding, after noting, "If someone panhandles you or hassles you, you go to shop where there is no trash, where you are not bothered by people who haven 't bathed in three weeks. ' ' "