

Capitola meters due by August

Parking
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CAPITOLA — Customers of Capitola Village businesses will be paying to park by early August when the city's multi-million-dollar downtown parking plan gets started, the Chamber of Commerce here was told this morning.

City Manager Steve Burrell told chamber directors that the innovative computerized parking banks to be installed downtown are presently on a ship from the manufacturer in Sweden.

The BART-like machines will take the place of the traditional parking meter at every stall. Called a "pay-and-display" system, each bank will handle about 40 parking spaces. Users will get a ticket from the banks, which they must display on the dashboard of their car.

Some 260 spaces downtown will be included in the pay-parking area. The projected \$200,000-a-year revenue is expected to be the major funding source for the city's multi-faceted Capitola Village parking plan.

That plan features the city buying Pacific Cove Mobile Home Park and eventually converting it into a 203-space parking lot. The city is also buying a five-acre parcel on McGregor Drive to be used as a permanent shuttle bus lot for beach-goers.

Other facets of the plan include neighborhood parking permits, so residential area won't be flooded by visitors looking for free parking, as well as a business license surcharge and village assessment district — both of which will help pay for the purchase of Pacific Cove.

Burrell called the purchase of the mobile home park and subsequent partial conversion to a parking lot as the "last

chance to really do something about the parking problem."

He maintained open space downtown was virtually nonexistent.

Chamber President Kirk Gardner expressed pleasure that the city has "taken the lead" to tackle the parking problem.

"It's an extremely expensive proposition, but if we don't do something, small businesses are going to die," Gardner said. "These small business owners simply cannot solve the problem on their own."

About the only concerns expressed came from director Michael Koch, an attorney downtown.

Koch maintained the 50-cents per hour parking bank charge was too high, saying it would cost business people upwards of \$100 a month just to park near their business. He stressed the need to accommodate employees.

Burrell replied that the objective of the pay-parking was to get employees of downtown businesses to use the shuttle bus. He said it would defeat the whole purpose of the plan — which is to open up parking spaces to customers — if employees take up the parking.

Koch contended that many business people are in and out during the day and need their cars. He reiterated the need to accommodate them.

Director Ted Burke also questioned the high price-tag for the Pacific Cove parking lot. Burrell had earlier explained that while the city was buying the 83-space park for \$1.5 million, it was going to cost upwards of \$4 million to buy out coach owners, relocate them and develop the lot.