

Earthquake - Santa Cruz City - rebuilding

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# Santa Cruz rebuilding moves forward

## Project approved at site of building damaged in quake

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Santa Cruz's approval this week of a four-story office, retail and apartment complex in the heart of downtown comes amid a flurry of building activity that may seal most of the remaining gaps left over from the 1989

earthquake. The city council late Tuesday unanimously endorsed plans by Redtree Properties to build a 90,000-square-foot complex at Pacific and Soquel avenues. A vacant, weed-filled lot that was formerly the site of the Trust Building, the property was purchased by Redtree early this year for \$1.2 million. The temblor severely damaged the building, and fire finished it off shortly afterward. Acting as the redevelopment agency, the council also agreed to parking-fee subsidies worth

**Construction on the \$11 million project is expected to begin next month and be completed next summer.**

\$11,000 a year for up to five years to help the developer attract tenants, none of whom have yet been announced. Construction on the \$11 mil-

lion project, a brick, girder and glass design that blends classic and modern features, is expected to begin next month and be completed next summer, said Redtree project manager John Tremoulis.

"I think the downtown is going to be healthy for a long time," he said.

Meanwhile, construction is under way or imminent on three other key downtown lots left vacant by the Loma Prieta earth-

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The project will include retail space, offices and 22,500 square feet of top-floor residential space.

## Santa Cruz OKs 4-story complex on site left empty after quake

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quake. Building began this month on the "flatiron" property, a triangular parcel at the head of Pacific Avenue and Front Street.

The owner of the Cooper House, a former courthouse that had been the centerpiece of the downtown district, has filed for a building permit to construct a five-story replacement. Redevelopment Director Ceil Cirillo said such a step suggests the long-awaited construction will be under way soon.

And city officials earlier this month entered a negotiating agreement with the owners of the former Ford's department store lot at Pacific Avenue and Cathcart Street, a move that is expected to lead to a five-story

project recommendation this fall, Cirillo said.

### Parking garage

In addition, construction of a new three-story city parking garage to be located behind the Redtree project is expected to begin next spring, city planners said.

Cirillo said the spate of activity is largely coincidental as builders try to begin construction in the dry summer and fall months, but he added that city officials have been toiling behind the scenes to encourage developers to act.

There is still work to be done, however. Gaping holes remain at Pacific Avenue and Church Street and up the road at the former site of Bookshop Santa Cruz and the Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting Co., the scene of a deadly collapse during the temblor.

The Redtree project will include 25,000 square feet of ground-floor and mezzanine retail space, 40,000 square feet of second- and third-floor office space and 22,500 square feet of top-floor residential space. The split-level, one-bedroom apartments will be rented at market rate, Tremoulis said.

### Speedy approval

The council's speedy and unanimous approval was unusual for such a large and prominent project. The last major downtown building, the Cinema 9 complex completed in 1995, generated considerable debate over the aesthetics of its design and the choice of tenants, which include two national retail chains.

Tremoulis said working closely with city planners helped the developers dodge potential conflicts.