



*Artist's drawing of proposed facade of new Transit Center*

# State Grant Gives Green Light To New Downtown Transit Center

A state grant of nearly \$1.5 million announced today will give the green light to a new \$2.5 million center for metro buses in downtown Santa Cruz.

The center will replace the present bus stops along Soquel Avenue between Front Street and Pacific Avenue and be located just south of Soquel Avenue.

It will provide working lanes for up to 24 buses and a connection to the Greyhound and Peerless bus lines.

The center also will bring some major changes to the lower Pacific Garden Mall and could result in an extension southward of the mall and major improvements of Cathcart

Street through to Elm, according to Transit District Manager Scott Galloway.

The transit district already had purchased the Penney's Auto Center and lands nearby and will tear down the building to replace it with the center.

The bus station will extend through from Pacific Avenue to Front Street, have waiting areas, an information center and restrooms.

Galloway said that construction of the center could begin as early as January.

In announcing the grant from the state Transportation Commission,

state Sen. Henry Mello, D-Watsonville, and Assemblyman Sam Farr, D-Monterey, noted it would serve as an element to bring added life to the downtown center.

"This construction is a key to the continued development of a mass transit system for Santa Cruz County," Mello said, and Farr added, "This allocation is crucially important in increasing the efficiency and safety of the service."

The project was started in 1976 after it became clear that the current location along Soquel Avenue posed safety and traffic congestion problems.