

Council Kills Action U On Hitchhiking Law T

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A hitchhiking ordinance for the City of Santa Cruz is dead — for the time being at least, or until further consideration can be given to controlling the situation on a statewide basis.

Councilman Vernon Smith, head of a committee with Mrs. Lorette Wood and Norman Walters, said Tuesday night his group had met with city and police officials and found such a law would be difficult to enforce and that records show "contrary to what was previously suspected, that no traffic accidents have been caused, or do hazards exist, as a result

of hitchhiking activities."

However, Smith added, "Any further regulation or prohibition of hitchhiking should be considered on a statewide basis since it would appear unwise for the city to be the only city or county in the state of California to prohibit or further regulate hitchhiking. Larger cities with greater facilities and financial means have considered, but have rejected, the idea of passing hitchhiking legislation."

The council accepted the recommendation 6 to 1, Mrs. Anne Garni objecting, but made clear the matter needs further investigation.

The committee's recommendation that the "council encourage the state legislature and the League of California Cities to consider the matter of hitchhiking on a statewide basis," was supported.

Walters noted that San Francisco was interested in getting the issue resolved on a statewide basis.

Council members said the topic may be a major point of discussion when the League

of California Cities meets Oct. 27.

The committee also noted that "experience has already indicated that the issuance of a citation to a hitchhiker is impractical since most of them are itinerant and cannot be located without an unwarranted amount of cost and manpower after failure to appear in court."

A large majority of those in a packed city council chambers voiced opposition to the hitchhiking ordinance proposal last month.

Mrs. Garni felt the city was "allowing something that shouldn't be allowed."

But city attorney Rod Atchison said "Santa Cruz may be bearing the burden of a statewide problem" if such a law were passed.

Councilman Al Castagnola felt the duty of the city now was to enforce the ordinances and laws it has. He did not feel the city was "backing down on the problem" of hitchhiking, but agreed with the recommendation for enforcement on a larger basis than the city alone.

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