

Vision Santa Cruz

# ✓ Agency will guide rebuilding

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SANTA CRUZ — The city started looking ahead 50 years or so with an agreement for a non-profit agency to guide the rebuilding of downtown.

The City Council adopted a plan for a 36-member group proposed by Mayor Mardi Wormhoudt and Councilman John Laird. The council will appoint 11 members including three council members. Business interests will appoint 16 and nine others will come from different groups including UC Santa Cruz, the county, and different advisory groups.

Members of the "public-private partnership" as the planning group is becoming known, can expect a busy year. The council intends to formally appoint the group Jan. 9. Its first meeting is tentatively set for Jan 11.

An interim board of eight members, two council members, two Downtown Association representatives, two Chamber of Commerce representatives, one from the Historical Trust and one from a downtown neighborhood group, will prepare bylaws and other preliminary duties to get the larger group going.

Wormhoudt described the group's task as striking a "delicate balance. We want to plan carefully but we want to move with efficiency and speed.

"Consensus is the key word here," Wormhoudt said. The group would strive to reach agreement on broad issues and forward them to the council. The council retains ultimate authority on specific zoning and planning questions.

The council also agreed to City Manager Dick Wilson's plan to hire an executive director for a redevelopment agency that will merge two ex-

isting redevelopment districts. The council sits as the agency board of directors.

Wilson also asked for and got approval for an economist to prepare a market study of the downtown.

In the past, redevelopment has been a part-time activity in Santa Cruz, Wilson told the council. He said redevelopment law will help speed the process of planning and rebuilding.

San Jose redevelopment director Frank Taylor has agreed to lend Santa Cruz two staffers part time until the city gets its plan under way.

The council agreed to transfer \$350,000 in emergency reserves to the redevelopment agency as a beginning fund balance.

Wilson said he expects consultant costs over the next year will total \$250,000, with city staff costs about the same.