

SJM 3/12/92 B-1 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

# Toxics-cleanup tab estimated at under \$10,000

BY PAUL ROGERS  
Mercury News Staff Writer

Toxic contamination on the site of the proposed homeless day center in Santa Cruz is limited and can be taken care of for less than \$10,000, according to a study released Wednesday.

Five soil samples drawn from the lot, which sits at 117 Coral St. in a partially industrial area near Highway 1 and River Street, detected only small traces of gasoline in one area and no solvents, as had been feared.

Groundwater samples revealed traces of

gasoline and diesel fuel in one area, but contamination levels were significantly less than state drinking water standards prohibit.

There were also traces of benzene in one sample, but not extensive enough to warrant a major cleanup, engineers said.

The land is in an area that for 60 years has been home to various auto repair shops and petroleum distributors such as Texaco and Richfield Oil.

"It looks like it's not that bad," said a relieved Mayor Don Lane. "Anything could have turned up."

The tests, conducted by engineers from

Weber and Associates of Watsonville, were ordered as part of the land deal for the homeless facility.

Their results were nervously awaited by local homeless activists and Santa Cruz officials who have worked for more than a year to bring the project to fruition.

The center plans to provide a place where street people could shower, receive mail and apply for jobs. It has received wide praise from liberals and conservatives as a practical way to help homeless people help themselves. It also has secured nearly \$1 million in funding commitments from the city and county.

The report said chemical traces on the site were probably the result of years of runoff from an adjacent parking lot that belonged to several auto repair shops.

Geologists Victor Bertschinger and Joseph Hayes recommended that a shallow monitoring well be installed on the south end of the property so engineers can periodically check the groundwater.

If the levels of chemical traces in the groundwater are not found to be higher in future samples, the chemicals will degrade naturally and will not require excavation for cleanup, they said.