

# Farmers market changing overseers

## Organic growers to assume control

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Santa Cruz organic growers Tuesday wrested control of the weekly farmers market away from downtown merchants who say it has gotten out of hand.

The city council voted 6-1 to allow the growers to take over the Wednesday market and operate it at the same time and location, under a new non-profit group, as the Santa Cruz Community Farmers Market.

Last week, the Downtown Association of Santa Cruz, which created the market to lure shoppers downtown after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, voted to move it to Sunday morning.

### Drifters bothersome

The association, which represents more than 500 businesses, said vagrants and drifters were troubling merchants around the site at Lincoln and Cedar streets. A Sunday morning market, they said, would be held when most businesses are closed.

"There's a very evident crime and social problem associated with the market," said Downtown Association Executive Director Linda Steinau, adding that attempts to relocate the event have failed. "It has turned out to be very problematic for surrounding businesses," she said.

But the 45 farmers who participate in the event said they had other weekend markets to attend and feared shoppers might not follow them to a new time and place. They were backed by a majority of city council members, who said changing the market to a new day would ruin it.

### 'Death call'

"It's my feeling that it would just be the death call for the farmers market, rather than a compromise," Councilwoman Jane Yokoyama said.

Councilwoman Mary Beth Campbell was the lone dissenter.

"The Downtown Association has built this market," Campbell said. "I can't see turning it over to another group."

Councilman Scott Kennedy said <sup>+</sup> he would have supported markets on both days, although Downtown Association officials said they were not interested in running a second market.

In approving the change of management, the council imposed several conditions, including that the farmers pay for a police officer to provide security for the event.

The Downtown Association will continue to run the market until the end of the month.