

Downtown Gets Back to Its Roots



By Donna R. Maurillo

If you have the feeling that you've been transported back into Santa Cruz of the 1800s when you visit downtown, you have plenty of company. Dirt roads and wooden sidewalks have given the appearance of a town still in its formative stages. Would anyone be surprised to see mule teams and grizzled cowboys on Pacific Avenue?

Yet, within a few months, all this will be gone, and we will return to the 20th Century, looking very much improved — in fact, much better than our pre-quake appearance. Reconstruction work is showing major progress, made easier thanks to the positive support of downtown business people, shoppers, and property owners.

This is where the project stands at press time:

■ **Granite Construction continues to install lateral utility lines on Pacific Avenue between Cathcart and Church Streets.** These lines are the ones that run between the main lines and the face of each building. Where there are empty lots, laterals are being placed in anticipation of future construction. This means that, as new buildings are constructed, the City won't have to damage new sidewalks to install those lines. Because the City is planning ahead, BSI construction manager Michael Egge has met with private developers to determine, when possible, exactly where those lines will be required for each new building design.

■ **Once the lateral lines are installed,** the contractor will install underground irrigation and streetlight conduits. Then work can begin on new sidewalks, street pavement, light fixtures, and other streetscape elements. The area of Pacific Avenue between Cathcart and Church Streets is expected to be open by the end of August, according to the contractor's current schedule.

■ **Reconstruction work near the Post Office continues to make progress,** although the schedule is delayed by a few days. Granite Construction has provided a revised time line that indicates Front Street will reopen by July 9. All curbs are expected to be installed by the time *Business to Business* is published, and permanent asphalt will be placed following sidewalk installation.

■ **New sidewalks are expected to be placed in this area during the first week of July,** according to Granite's revised schedule. To maintain pedestrian access at all times, concrete will be poured first in the section closest to the curb. Then the boardwalk will be moved over that area, and concrete will be poured in the section closest to the buildings. Sidewalks then will be sawcut, allowed to finish curing, and then opened for pedestrian use.

■ **Storm drain upgrades are being installed in the Mission/Water Streets intersection,** which means that minor traffic diversions have been necessary in the area. In addition, Pacific Bell is lowering lines in this area to accom-

modate the storm drain work. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the intersection is expected to remain open at all times, and left turns will be allowed as well. This work is scheduled for completion by the end of July.

■ **The construction trailer for the Cedar Street parking garage is scheduled to be moved to the former Gottschalk's site by the end of June,** when the lot will have been backfilled. This will allow sewer replacement work to be resumed on Locust Street between the back property line of the ID Building and Cedar Street. Work is expected to take about 10 days; the contractor will make every attempt to keep at least one lane of Locust Street open for west-bound vehicular traffic.

■ **The entire east side of Pacific Avenue between Laurel and Cathcart Streets is now under construction for new lateral utility line placement.** First, sidewalks will be sawcut with narrow openings to allow utility line placement, connecting the face of each building to the main lines under the street. Then these small trenches will be backfilled, the sidewalks will be demolished, and wooden walkways will be installed. By July 1, curb and gutter work is expected to begin, followed by asphalt and sidewalk placement, and installation of streetscape elements. Reconstruction work in this area is expected to be completed by late August, according to Granite's schedule.

■ **Once work is completed on the east side of Pacific between Laurel and Cathcart Streets,** the contractor


will move to the west side of the street. This area is scheduled for completion by early November.

■ **Bus access to the Metro Center will be maintained at all times during reconstruction south of Cathcart Street.** In addition, one lane of Pacific Avenue between Laurel and Cathcart Streets always will be open to vehicular traffic. This has been possible because this part of Pacific is wider than the area north of Cathcart, which has been open only to pedestrians.

■ **Several private property owners will be working on their own projects,** but these are not expected to impact street work. In addition to private construction already underway, the building owner where Zachary's is located will be remodeling in July and August. Designs are proceeding for a new Flatiron Building at the intersection of Pacific and Front Streets, and the former location of Union Grove Music (next to the Catalyst) will be demolished.

■ **A reminder: Post Office boxes which were located in front of the Veterans' Building have been moved to two locations during street work.** They can be found curbside at the south end of the Pacific Western Bank parking lot, and behind the Town Clock near Bank of the West. They will remain at these locations until sometime in September.

■ **Several people still ask if the World War I monument will be returned to its previous location at the top of the Mall.** Yes, it will be. Currently, the monument is being fitted with a new granite base, and new lighting will illuminate the eagle at night.

■ **New Streetscape handbooks have been distributed to all business owners on Pacific Avenue.** Anyone who has not received one may call me at 429-0153. These books have revised maps, time lines, and details about the Streetscape work, including a few architects' drawings. Also, please call me if you have questions or problems with any reconstruction work. If I can't take care of it, I'll find someone who can. 

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