

# Shafting Non-Shoppers: Expanding the Destructive Downtown Ordinances Merchant Monopolization of Public Spaces Marches On

In a disguised attack on the entire non-commercial street scene, City Council voted to restrict still further the very limited public space currently allowed the community downtown. Under the guise of health concerns, reducing congestion, and preventing a "trip-and-fall" hazard (none of which is documented), the reactionary new laws **crowd street performers, vendors, homeless people**, tablers, local residents, & tourists together & **sterile 95% of the sidewalk as "forbidden zones"** for resting, vending, or performing. This is a merchant/right-wing **attack on the street counter-culture**. It has nothing to do with **"bad behavior."** It's about **"bigot aesthetics"**--clearing away visible poverty, traditional Santa Cruz diversity, and political activists. Council staff showed **no input from those impacted** (other than merchants) and had no info on costs or stats documenting problems.

## THE NEW LAWS

The new law changes:

+++ **Extends the Smoking Ban to the side streets** one block in either direction from Pacific Avenue, including all alleys & side streets and to all surface parking lots in downtown between Laurel Street and Water St. perhaps private parking lots as well (Julie Hendee, one of the authors of the law wasn't sure!).

+++ **Requires** street artists, street vendors, panhandlers, and political activists to provide "freestanding" display devices such as **tables or boxes** on which to hoist above the sidewalk anything with them. This **bans tarps & blankets** now used to display jewelry, artwork, political fliers and likely laying objects directly on the sidewalk. This includes panhandler's cups and caps as well as street performers' guitar cases and change bowls.

+++ **Reduces the total display device space to 16 sq ft** now to include all the person's personal possessions;

+++ **Requires a 12' distance** between display devices, isolating community members.

+++ **Reduces available space 4/5 to include 95% of the sidewalk** by expanding the "forbidden zones" to 14' from buildings, street corners, intersections, kiosks, drinking fountains, public telephones, public benches, public trash compactors, information/directory signs, sculptures or artwork, ATM-style machines, outside street cafes, vending carts, and fences. This bans sitting on any sidewalk that is narrower than 14' (**stops use of all sidewalks in other business & beachfront districts**).

+++ Defines "display devices" as **any kind of container "capable of being used for holding...tangible things"**—which may include a backpack or sleeping bag, making likely its use against homeless people.

When added to the frequent merchant expansion of their displays onto the sidewalk in front of their shops this exclusion of non-commercial activity will be nearly all-embracing. This, of course, suits those whose objective is to drive away the once-vibrant street scene in Santa Cruz and 'Capitola-ize' the Avenue.

The resulting congestion will have people **competing for the public spaces** (when there is actually room for all). It will severely crowd not just those using display devices, but others **trying to sit down in the few remaining spots available** whether these be elderly residents, homeless locals, visiting travelers, UCSC students, or naive tourists (who will, of course be selectively ignored or courteously directed to pay-cafes). And either drive such people away or **produce a hostile response and more conflict downtown**.

## FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE WEALTH-A-FICATION OF DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ

+++ **Use your video phone** to show authorities harassing the public on the streets downtown. Post on You-Tube and [www.indybay.org/santacruz](http://www.indybay.org/santacruz) . Send them to HUFF ([morse3@hotmail.com](mailto:morse3@hotmail.com) ).

+++ **E-mail City Council** at [citycouncil \[at\] cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:citycouncil@cityofsantacruz.com) .and demand these ordinances be reviewed for cost, effectiveness, impact, and unintended consequences by citizen committees and with public input.

+++ **Spread** opposition; Write local papers; Use Facebook & Twitter;. Ordinances become final a month after a **2nd vote in two weeks (October 24)** **Support businesses who oppose**, publicize those who don't.

+++ **Post your own accounts** of discrimination downtown. The Coffee Roasting Company & Starbucks recently banned large backpacks; CruzioWorks refuses 24-hour service to Dan Madison for his homeless appearance.

+++ **Come to City Council 3 PM September 24th** to oppose the 2nd Vote on these laws!

[This side of the flier by Norse of HUFF \(Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom\) 831-423-4833 www.huffsantacruz.org](http://www.huffsantacruz.org) 9-14-13