

SING OUT & SAVE VIBRANT STREET LIFE !

DOWNTOWN FOR ALL ! NOT JUST THE RICH, CONSERVATIVE, & FEARFUL

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24th 2:45 PM

Organize Outside Council Chambers 809 Center St.

In a **disguised attack on the entire non-commercial street scene**, City Council will vote to restrict still further the **very limited public space currently allowed** the community downtown. Under the guise of reducing congestion, and preventing a "trip-and-fall" hazard (both undocumented), the reactionary new laws **crowd street performers, vendors, homeless people, tablers, local residents, & tourists** with what smells like malicious intent. This will classify **95% of the sidewalk as sterile "forbidden zones"** with no resting, vending, or performing and ban frequently used blankets. The **attack on street counter-culture** has nothing to do with **"bad behavior."** It's about **bigot aesthetics-& homeless cleansing** to clear away visible poverty, traditional Santa Cruz diversity, and unwanted political activism.

Council staff took **no input from those targeted**. They provided **no info on the costs of current selective enforcement**, nor stats of real problems. This **merchant monopolization of sidewalk space** is part of a disturbing if masked **"scapegoat the homeless" agenda**. Fearful and greedy merchants & NIMBYs label homeless people and the street culture as "a public safety problem" and "unsightly". With no credible stats, this **phony "perception" of danger** replaces targeting **unmet real needs like jobs, housing, respect & restoration of civil rights eroded over the last decade**.

THE NEW LAWS AS AMENDED

+++ **Extends the Smoking Ban to the side streets** one block in either direction from Pacific Avenue, including all alleys & side streets & to all surface parking lots between Laurel Street & Water St. perhaps private parking lots as well. Ignores that **current law already bans smoking 25' from a door or window**, targeting the heavily homeless smoker population.

+++ **Bans tarps & blankets** now used to display jewelry, artwork, political fliers, etc. and requires all devices on the sidewalk to be "free-standing", penalizing poor people, squelching downtown color & spontaneity.

+++ **Reduces total allowed space to 12 sq ft area [3 "squares"]** which now includes table, instruments, chair, people & possessions—virtually requiring special permits. The ill-defined space requires a tape measure.

+++ **Requires 12' distance** between display devices, isolating performers and forcing away other vendors.

+++ **Reduces total available space 4/5 to exclude 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 containers, 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' (**no sidewalk use in other business districts at all if buildings adjoin**).

+++ **In conjunction with Santa Cruz's unique "Move Along Every Hour" law**, police can then ban individuals from any one spot for 24 hours & require them to move 100'--further reducing "legal" spots.

When added to the **frequent merchant expansion of their displays** onto the sidewalk, this exclusion of non-commercial activity is nearly all-embracing. Backed up by selective enforcement at merchant whim, this suits those whose real objective is to **clamp down on the once-vibrant street scene** in Santa Cruz and to 'Carmel-ize' the Avenue.

This will cause real congestion with people **competing for the public spaces** (when open sidewalks actually have 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, disabled folks, 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, more conflict downtown, & greater expense**. Police will be given greater power to drive away a significant number of people currently using the sidewalk.

+++ **Use your video phone** to capture evidence of authorities harassing the public on the streets downtown. Post on You-Tube and www.indybay.org/santacruz. Send them to HUFF (rmorse3@hotmail.com); pass on links.

+++ **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. Send them back to citizen committees for 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, Verve, & Starbucks* refused service to homeless people with backpacks; *CruzioWorks* refused 24-hour service to homeless **Dan Madison**.

+++ **Witness & support other street performers & streetfolk** when they face harassment from authorities.

+++ **Get familiar with the Downtown Ordinances**, often misquoted by police and hosts. Copies available through *HUFF* (Wednesdays 11 AM, Sub Rosa Cafe 703 Pacific) & soon at the *Sub Rosa Cafe* (703 Pacific).

+++ **Prepare to sustain a long struggle** by documenting police and merchant behavior regularly, organizing solidarity between vendors, activists, and others seeking to use the public space. Report harassment accurately.

Flier by Norse of HUFF (Homeless United for Friendship & Freedom) 831-423-4833 www.huffsantacruz.org 9-23-13