

STUPID LAWS: LAUGH 'EM AWAY BEFORE THEY SWEEP US AWAY

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**. This will classify **95% of the sidewalk as sterile "forbidden zones"** with no resting, vending, or performing. This **attack on street counter-culture** has nothing to do with **"bad behavior."** It's about **"bigot aesthetics"-& homeless cleansing** clearing away visible poverty, traditional Santa Cruz diversity, and 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 broader "drive the homeless away" agenda.

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 in the side streets**. A recent *New England Journal of Medicine* study claims **75% of homeless people smoke compared with 18% generally**. Along with the banning of smoking in all parks, this is another police tool to drive homeless people out of sight.

+++ **Bans tarps & blankets** now used to display jewelry, artwork, political fliers, etc. and requires all devices on the sidewalk to be "free-standing". This oks guitar cases and cups, but **may restrict backpacks & other items** (particularly with patches or buttons) as possible "display devices" only allowable only in special spots.

+++ **Reduces allowed space to an absurd 12 sq ft area [3 "squares"]** which will include table, instruments, people, chair & possessions—virtually requiring special permits for performers in groups of two or more. Not to mention a tape measure to "follow the law".

+++ **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 selectively-enforced "Move Along Every Hour" law**, police can now ban you from any one spot for 24 hours & require you to move 100'-- to fight over scarce "legal" spaces.

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 real 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 elderly residents, homeless locals, visiting travelers, UCSC students, & naive tourists will find sidewalk sitting spots few and far between. Those who sit will be selectively targeted or ignored, depending on their appearance and activity. Increased police activity will either drive poor people away or **produce a hostile response and more conflict downtown**.

+++ **Come next Week's Sunday Funday Frolic** to reclaim sidewalk now decreed a merchant monopoly.

+++ **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 (rnorse3@hotmail.com); pass on links.

+++ **E-mail City Council** at [citycouncil \[at\] cityofsantacruz.com](mailto:citycouncil@cityofsantacruz.com) and demand restoration of a friendly downtown.

+++ **Spread opposition**; Write local papers; Use Facebook & Twitter; **Ordinances become law on October 24**;

+++ **Support businesses who oppose, speak up to those who support the laws stealing public space**.

+++ **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.

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