

# Squeezing Vehicle Parking Downtown Punishes Business & the Poor

Santa Cruz City Council is set to rubberstamp **increased parking fees, new parking meters, a two-hour "Move Along" vehicular law, "no vending from vehicles", and a "no vehicles above 6' in height" requirement along Pacific Ave. and adjacent streets..** It's item #18 on the so-called "Consent Public Hearings" section of the agenda.

The proposed ordinance changes seriously **impact downtown vehicle accessibility for the general public, for those who are disabled and required to use vehicles higher than 6', and for artists like Alex Skelton and Joff Jones.** These two were driven off Pacific Ave. by the "performance pens" "no art to be displayed for more than 1 hour" ordinances several years ago.

They returned and were showing their work on the side of their vehicles--which would now potentially be banned under the "no vending" provision. **Curtis Reliford**--who has already suffered racial and class discrimination--would now find his musical offerings and charity work excluded from Pacific Avenue view.

There is also an obvious economic impact, encouraging folks with vehicles to patronize other nearby cities and businesses where they won't face jacked-up meter costs and likely parking tickets for parking longer than 2 hours.

For a city government supposedly concerned with carbon impact, **encouraging folks to drive their cars to more distant cities,** aggravates a growing crisis.

The prior intensified anti-homeless Downtown ordinances have also **crowded and diminished musical performers,** political tablers, and social gatherings on the Pacific Avenue sidewalk. Vendors of arts and crafts have been outright banned.

Plus, of course, accomplishing their main unstated purpose--**to drive away visible poor people under the guise of "problematic street behavior".** Homeless folks report being driven out into the rain by SCPD and P&R rangers in spite of the more liberal nighttime policy regarding Sleeping Ban enforcement by **Chief Mills.**

The recent division of the City into 5 policing districts has apparently intensified "move along" directives by police officials like Lt. **Bill Azua** on public sidewalks where homeless folks have the right to congregate, whatever the aesthetic affectations of Taco Bell, Staff of Life, and other NIMBY businesses.

The proposed increased parking meter costs not only seem to **negatively impact businesses,** but also puts a **particular burden on poor people.** Especially those whose vehicles are their homes. **Were the vehicularly housed and disabled part of the so-called "Stakeholder" group consulted in creating the staff recommendations? If so, please provide their testimony--when, where, and what was presented.**

Have city staff has reportedly posted areas under bridges as "no sleeping/camping /assembling" areas--as activist Brent Adams claims? What about the **shrill high-pitched "mosquito" noise devices** discouraging public assembly in different spots around the city? Is the City still enforcing its unique "no public on City Hall grounds at night & over the weekends"?

The combined impact of these misguided laws is clearly to Yuppify the City and drive the visible poor out of town. **Delay any vote on these laws until the stakeholders who are most impacted by these laws--**not just some hand-picked businesses--are able to provide relevant information on the impacts. Particularly the disabled, the poor, the artists, and the general public.