

Santa Cruz Sells Out

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are 300 feet (a football field's length) away from any actual homes.

Homeless people have begun their own organization (ROAR: Restore Our American Rights) to help monitor the areas, provide representatives to meet business concerns, and press to expand the safe zones. City police and sheriff's deputies have been referring homeless folks in vehicles to the potential safe zones at Natural Bridges and Harvey West Industrial Park.

While a tolerant policy towards the enforcement of the Sleeping Ban is reasonable, non-enforcement of other laws is clearly a form of sabotage by which police stir up trouble between businesses and homeless survival sleepers. Since the SCPD has traditionally favored the Sleeping Ban as a "useful police tool," police obstruction and misinformation here is clearly illegal politicking — an attempt to blame and pressure liberals on the City Council. In other words, another level of homeless-bashing.

In Eugene, Oregon, people are allowed to sleep in vehicles in selected areas. Interviewed by telephone, Wayne Ford of the Homeless Action Coalition in Eugene said, "We tried putting safe zones in industrial areas, but we got a lot of opposition from the businesses there. What we did instead was allow one vehicle with people living or camping in it per driveway city-wide. Then we set up 16 separate areas with three cars each spread around the city. Complaints dropped to zero overnight."

Meanwhile, in Santa Cruz, the promised dumpsters and portapotties — which were due over a year ago from Councilmember Christopher Krohn's Bathroom Task Force — still have not been placed. Homeless people were not included in Mayor Keith Sugar's negotia-

tions and operational discussions.

Sugar and Krohn have failed to counter this flood of filthy fear-mongering with public advocacy for the sensible safe sleep zones, thus allowing organized bigotry a media monopoly. All that evil needs to triumph is that good people do nothing.

Area businesses are complaining of an influx of campers and buses in an area that has been unofficially used for sleeping by homeless people and truckers for years. Joe Kirkwood, whose camper appeared in a photo that has been widely publicized, reported on the campers in the photo. "At least two of those campers have now left the area and are now parked in residential areas since the police have promised to crack down."

When asked about people with non-California license plates, Kirkwood said, "I have Oregon plates myself. My vehicle broke down and I'm stuck here until I make repairs before I go back to Oregon. The Connecticut plates, quoted in the article, are on a Ryder Rent-a-Truck that was parked there for three days. No one slept in it. It was just someone moving from the East Coast who parked the truck there for a couple of days. The camper with Nevada plates belongs to a mother with two children who has lived in Santa Cruz for years. Her father, who lives in Nevada, bought the camper for her and the kids when high rents drove them out of their housing."

Why aren't those residents and businesses that are complaining asking for portapotties and dumpsters? As an immediate sanitation need, dumpsters and portapotties must be installed regardless of whether the safe zones are created or not. To do otherwise is to pit homeless people against neighbors and workers.

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