

Supporters of mall place petition on hold

By Jeff Gentile
Emerald Contributor

A controversial proposal to open two blocks of downtown Willamette Street to automotive traffic has been dormant since early September, but opponents of the proposal say they are prepared for a new battle should the issue rise again.

The Eugene City Council decided by a 4-3 vote on Sept. 7 not to reopen the Willamette Street pedestrian mall between Eighth and 10th avenues to motor vehicle traffic, leading many people to feel that the matter has been settled.

However, the Save the Downtown Mall Committee, a group of civic leaders and business people involved in creating the mall in 1970-71, has filed an initiative petition that would prevent future decisions to reopen Willamette Street without voter approval.

Ruth Miller, a member of the committee, said the petition is ready to be printed and circulated if it appeared that the City Council were going to open Willamette Street to traffic.

"We have it," Miller said of the petition. "It's ready to print if we ever felt we had to do that."

The idea of reopening Willamette emerged two years ago as part of an updated urban renewal plan for downtown Eugene. Willamette Street has been closed from Eighth to 10th avenues since construction on the downtown mall first began in 1970.

The Downtown Commission and Planning Commission recommended to the City Council that the two-block stretch be rebuilt into a narrow two-lane street with parking bays where customers could be dropped off.

Although a number of downtown businesses sup-



Photo by Mark Ylen

This fountain sits on the downtown mall on the disputed section of Willamette Street between Eighth and 10th avenues.

ported the Willamette proposal, opposition quickly made itself known. One of the strongest expressions of public disapproval came July 13, when almost 500 city residents turned out for a public hearing.

During the hearing, which lasted more than five hours, more than two-thirds of those who spoke opposed allowing motor vehicle traffic on Willamette.

Mike Schwartz, the owner of M. Jacob's and a supporter of reintroducing traffic to Willamette, said

that well-organized opposition from outside downtown is largely responsible for killing the Willamette proposal.

The Save the Downtown Mall Committee formed two years ago primarily to oppose the \$1.5 million proposal. Other groups that opposed the plan include the League of Women Voters of Lane County, the Eugene Commission on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and downtown businesses such as the Literary Lion, the Ugly Duckling, Creative Kids, Prince Puckler's, Seymour's Greenery and Aster Publishing.

Downtown businesses that supported opening Willamette include M. Jacob's Furniture, Rubenstein's, Harry Ritchie's Jewelers, Eugene Athletic, Kaufman's, McKenzie Outfitters, Hallmark, Burch's Fine Footwear and Olympic Outfitters. The Eugene Chamber of Commerce, both city commissions and a minority of the City Council also favored the proposal.

Mayoral candidate and council member Jeff Miller said that a two-way street would provide access, circulation and visibility by automobile that the downtown area needs to stimulate economic development.

Opponents say there is no reasonable evidence that reopening Willamette to traffic will stimulate economic activity.

While Miller said the city council would need to have a vote from the people before Willamette would be opened, Schue warned that it is hard to predict what future councils may decide.

That uncertainty is why the Save the Downtown Mall Committee is saving its petition.

In the meantime, Ruth Miller said, the committee will move ahead with plans to enhance the downtown mall area.

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OX

Bates & McFarlane
Clue -2
One works at Rennie's
One takes a chew
I bet you're wondering
How we know you!...

Beta's

The back 9 was fine
The front was good
to for the second
great golf party we
would like to thank
you. Thanks Alpha Chi.

Delta Upsilon Pledges:
Thank you for the beautiful flowers.
It's a date - now name the time and place.

ΔΔΔ

Pledge Class

Eric W.

J.B. lied through
his teeth!

105 PERSONALS

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105 PERSONALS

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IS
HOWDY STOUT?**

105 PERSONALS

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DERBY DAYS
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RENNIES
Tonight at 8pm**

Blonde Law Goddess
Have a wonderful birthday, and I hope things keep JELLING for you. Ice cream sounds great. Art.

The guy with the GREEN CAPRI lots of luck and kick some Black & Decker Butt! Love, LUSH ('scooter).

To the "lonely for our
Love" brown house men

We have to ask
A question for you all
But we're kind of shy
And didn't want to call
We're going to a barndance
Drinking and dancing all night
Join us as our dates
It'll be out-of-sight

What do ya say?
Give us a call
Hugs and kisses
Kelly M. & your foxy neighbors

To 2 more than Friends
Guys whom we're "just dating". Our definition of Commitment (ke-mit-ment): a relationship between 2 people who want to be together w/o spending every waking moment clung together.

Love, US!?

UNDERGROUND for a year is bliss, but my night of lurking is approaching.

BEWARE!! LOST SOUL

105 PERSONALS

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