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# National City boots auto businesses

 (/staff/allison-sampite-montecalvo/)

By Allison Sampite-Montecalvo(/staff/allison-sampite-montecalvo/) | 5:18 p.m. Aug. 19, 2015 | Updated, 5:32 p.m. | Aug. 24, 2015

**NATIONAL CITY** — The second of two National City auto shops on the city’s west side is expected to relocate by the end of the month in a city effort to clean up an area that has moved away from its industrial past.

Carolina Martinez, policy advocate for the Environment Health Coalition, a nonprofit that fights toxic pollution in underserved communities, said the move is historic.

“It’s another step toward a healthier community for Old Town National City residents, who want and deserve a better quality of life,” she said.

National City’s Old Town, a 1940s industrial area, was rezoned in 2010 to separate industrial uses from residential neighborhoods.

The residents began working with the city in 2005 to establish a schedule that would terminate the businesses that pose health hazards to residents, including children and seniors with asthma or other respiratory illnesses.

National City adopted what’s called an amortization ordinance in 2006. This gave the city authority to phase out nonconforming uses that endanger residents.

In December 2012 the city and its consultants released a list of 137 businesses that were flagged for potential removal in order of priority, using a formula approved by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Along the way, consultants found that some businesses changed their practices or were able to demonstrate that they were in compliance with new zoning regulations.

But two auto shops were unable to clean up.

Nearly a year later in November 2013, the City Council approved the phasing out of two businesses, setting a time frame to allow owners to recover any investments and plan their relocation.

Jose’s Auto Electric was ordered to stop operating at 108 W. 18th St. by July 25 and has since moved.

Steve’s West Coast Automotive, at 1732 Coolidge Ave., is expected to relocate from in front of National City’s Kimball Elementary to Chula Vista by the end of the month.

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The auto shops had vehicles parked across the sidewalks, sometimes forcing children to walk in the streets. Its machines also polluted the air, according to a city staff report.

Together the businesses were cited more than 23 times for code violations during an eight-year period, according to the Environmental Health Coalition. Although the violations were corrected, pollutions had already occurred.

“We’re very happy that this has been resolved amicably,” said City Manager Leslie Deese. “We look forward to looking at what new uses might come into those areas.”

Deese said that in the future the City Council would need to review the phasing out of remaining businesses with similar effects on the city and its residents.



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