

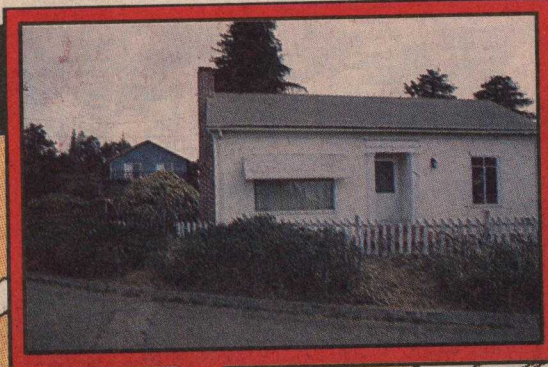
# For a safer 'fish hook'

## Highway 1-17 interchange



The colored lanes represent new connecting roads.

Houses on Lee Street



Maxter's



Caltrans has proposed four design alternatives to smooth out the 'fish hook.' The option shown here, Alternative B, is the one that would require taking the most private property.

Ocean Street Terrace condominiums

Sentinel graphic

The above alternative would entail the demolition of some existing buildings.

## State weighs the options for Highway 1 interchange

By DENISE FRANKLIN  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — For Ruth Smith, a new interchange at highways 1 and 17 could mean losing her home. But to the thousands who drive through the interchange daily, a new design will eliminate congestion and dangers.

The state Department of Transportation unveiled four possible designs for a new multimillion-dollar interchange during an open house Thursday at the Civic Auditorium. Smith was there, eyeing three designs that would demolish her home at 109 Lee St.

"How are you going to fight it?" the 76-year-old retired nurse asked. "They are going to do what they are going to do anyhow. You get to the point: Why fight city hall?"

All the designs eliminate the dangerous situation of traffic coming from the "fish hook" exit



'You get to the point: Why fight city hall?'

— Ruth Smith

ramp and merging Highway 17 traffic.

All add a southbound lane on Highway 1 from Highway 17 to Branciforte Drive to ease congestion that now occurs as four lanes merge into two.

Three designs would require demolition of existing buildings.

Not only could several Lee Street homes be demolished; two designs also eliminate Maxter's Night Club on Ocean Street, the Ocean Street Terrace condomini-

ums across from the Santa Cruz Memorial Park cemetery, and two buildings just north of the condos.

The state could offer to buy the property or relocate owners to a comparable site. If the owners refuse, the state could take the property under eminent domain.

Smith said she has known for 25 years that someday her home

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## Traffic options

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could be sacrificed for freeway.

"When they make up their mind, I would like to know as soon as possible. It is wrong to have the people on so-called tennerhooks all these years," she said. She said she doesn't necessarily support the one design that wouldn't eliminate her home.

"It would be fine if they were not going to take the house, but as long as I don't know whether they are going to take it, it is just as bad," she said. "If they don't take it, they are going to build a retaining wall in front of the house, so that is what I will be looking at."

Carol Hensley, co-owner of Maxter's night club, said it came as no surprise that two of the plans would eliminate the club, the former site of Colonial Inn.

In fact, she said, she and partner Andy Jaquez, will continue their plans to buy the building.

"We are not going to be out of business either way, maybe just at another location. We are not really worried about it," Hensley said.

Helen Johanns, who lives at the Ocean Street Terrace condominiums, was at the open house as well. Even the alternatives that don't require demolition of the six-unit complex have Johanns worried.

"I'm worried about the traffic being moved closer to us," Johanns said. "I think maybe it would be best to take the whole complex rather than expose us to more lead pollution and air pollution and noise pollution."

Johanns said she will bring the matter up at her homeowners' association meeting.

Ralph Harrison of Caltrans explained how each of the alternatives would improve the flow of traffic.

Alternatives "A" and "A1" include an overpass directly connecting Highway 17 to north-

bound Highway 1. Both would cost \$42 million.

A and A1 differ only in their alignment. With A1, Highway 17 is realigned more into the area of the so-called "fish hook," alleviating the need to demolish any homes on Lee Street. Under A, four to five homes would go.

"The downside of A1," said Harrison, "is that instead of a straight alignment of Highway 17, it puts in a curve."

In "B" and "B1," Highway 17 ends with a collection of ramps just before Ocean Street. One is an exit ramp to Ocean Street and one is a ramp connecting to northbound Highway 1. To get southbound on Highway 1, motorists would travel as they do now, but without a "fish hook" curve.

In B1, Highway 17 would be realigned more into the current fish hook area, causing fewer homes on Lee Street to be torn down. B would take out six to seven homes; B1 would take out three.

Alternative B would cost \$33 million and B1 would cost \$1 million more because of the need to build retaining walls along Highway 17.

Funds for interchange were approved by voters when they passed Proposition 111. The next step is environmental review and then public hearings to select the best design.

Construction will begin in 1997, with Caltrans promising no disruption of traffic. The new interchange is to be completed in 2000.

To comment on the alternatives or to get more information, call (415) 923-4444 or write to Preston Kelley, District Director, State Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 7310, San Francisco, Calif., 94120.