

Sentinel Editorial

Transportation Needs

It is about time that we start to take a broader viewpoint about the transportation needs in Santa Cruz County.

At the present time too many public officials are willing to blame the automobile for our environmental problems.

We're not going to resolve any transportation needs by ignoring roads and highways, including freeways.

The automobile is our major source of public transportation and trucks provide almost all our commercial transportation.

If we continue to fail to plan adequately for transportation facilities, the congestion is going to be costly, both in lives and dollars.

As it happens we strongly favor developing an integrated transportation system which will utilize all the facilities we can develop to move people and goods.

We want a good transit system that can provide sufficient service that it will be used by the people.

We would like to see bicycle paths so that safer bicycle traffic can be developed, both for persons using bicycles as a mode of transportation and for those who want to use them for recreational purposes.

But we don't believe that we ignore the automobile as our principal source of

transportation. Nor do we believe that restricting the movement of people is a step ahead for the public welfare.

It is ridiculous for a County that has no satisfactory public transportation facilities to seek to ban freeways. We have no railroad passenger service, nor is it likely that we will have in the foreseeable future.

We have no marine transportation facilities, nor do we have any airports serviced even by feeder lines or helicopters.

We don't even have good bus service except Greyhound service between here and San Francisco. The bus service to the south borders on the ridiculous.

Getting between Santa Cruz and Boulder Creek or Santa Cruz and Watsonville by public transportation is just about as easy as catching a ferry to Monterey.

And while there are projects on a drawing board someplace to build bicycle paths, we still have many areas where it is unsafe to walk between communities.

The current bicycle popularity is growing, but we hope we might be able to match its popularity with some better system of preventing thieves from stealing the bikes.

In the meantime, we hope that our public officials will take another look at our transportation needs so that we might

develop an adequate planning program for the future.

We're not going to be able to do this by ignoring the motor vehicle as a means of transportation. It is going to remain the major source of transportation for the foreseeable future.

As a result, we must not only maintain our existing facilities but create a program that will present a reasonable approach to meeting the needs of the years ahead.

Safety is a major factor, but so is the time-distance factor. We are putting our heads in the sands if we think highway bottlenecks are going to reduce traffic or that people will not come to Santa Cruz because some of the natives (and newcomers) would prefer that they stay home.

If it takes an hour to drive 20 miles we are not only going to rack up the nerves of a few thousand local motorists, but we are also going to boost the cost of most of the goods we consume, simply because of the transportation cost.

We don't want to see the County covered with asphalt, nor do we believe such a fear is justified. We simply want an adequate system of freeways, streets and roads so that people can get from one place to another with a degree of safety and ease.