

✓ Transit board reaffirms opposition to widening Highway 17

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The Santa Cruz County Transportation Commission this morning reaffirmed its opposition to any widening of Highway 17.

County Supervisors Robley, Levy and Joe Cucchiara joined Santa Cruz Mayor John Laird and Councilwoman Mardi Wormhoudt and Andy Schiffrin, aide to Supervisor Gary Patton, in opposing the widening.

The policy statement was contained in an amendment proposed by Patton in a letter to the Transportation Commission suggesting amendments to the county's Regional Trans-

portation Plan.

Patton suggested adding a policy statement to the plan, saying that the commission "continues . . . to support safety improvements on the highway as a high priority but not its widening."

The commission majority rebuffed an attempt by Commission chairman Bart Cavallaro to delete the words "not its widening" from Patton's suggested changes.

Levy voted against the Cavallaro motion after telling the other commissioners that she felt the change does not pre-

clude "any safety improvements."

Siding with Cavallaro in trying to keep the door open to widening Highway 17 were Watsonville City Councilwoman Betty Murphy, Transit District representative Jean McNeil, and Karen Branch, aide to Pajaro Valley Supervisor E. Wayne Moore Jr.

The commission drew criticism from Lionel Stoloff, manager of the Santa Cruz Chamber of Commerce and two other speakers during a public hearing on the regional transportation plan update. They

complained that the public hearing had been poorly advertised and the public was given only four days to obtain copies of the 150-page report and prepare comments on it before the hearing today.

The commission agreed to hold a public hearing on the Regional Transportation Plan, which becomes the county's master plan for all forms of transportation improvements, at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, in the Board of Supervisors chambers at the County Governmental Center in Santa Cruz.

In approving changes to the

Regional Transportation Plan, the commission this morning adopted a Santa Cruz City Council-recommended list of "safety improvements" to Highway 17. Those recommendations include:

✓ The installation of emergency call boxes/pay phones along the freeway.

✓ Regulation of truck traffic both in terms of right turn only and, particularly, a commute hours ban.

✓ Lexington Basin improvements.

✓ Better banking of curves.

✓ Additional lighting.

✓ A chain link fence median addition, and safety bumpers that would make it impossible for cars to ride up the median strips

✓ More and better-placed left turn lanes.

✓ More Highway Patrol officers.

✓ More turnouts and shoulders.

✓ Lighted accident signs.

✓ Additional carpooling and vanpooling.

✓ More commuter bus service.

✓ Mass public transit over the hill.