

Public-works commission updates earthquake repairs

By JOHN ROBINSON
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SANTA CRUZ — Repairs on the Murray Street bridge over the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor will take at least two to four months, City Public Works Director Larry Irwin said Monday at a meeting of the Public Works Commission.

Traffic will continue to back up on Soquel Avenue and other alternate crosstown routes until the bridge is repaired.

"There isn't major structural damage to the bridge," Irwin said. "But the engineers have to prepare plans to rehabilitate the bridge."

Bridge supports and crossbeams shifted out of alignment during the Oct. 17 quake, causing the bridge to be shut down.

Demolition on the Riverside Avenue bridge, which was severely damaged in the quake, may begin as early as this week, Irwin said. A contractor has been chosen for the job and it will cost \$500,000 to remove the bridge and repair the levee.

Engineers have said the Riverside Avenue bridge could collapse during a storm and back up the San Lorenzo River, causing major flooding. The bridge removal is expected to take 60 to 90 days.

Engineers are also examining more buildings on the Pacific Garden Mall which may have to fall to the wrecking ball.

The Palomar Hotel, which is not scheduled for demolition, is still unsafe, Irwin said. City officials have marked out a safety area

around the hotel in case it collapses during an aftershock.

Irwin said that the building, which was constructed in the 1930s, has adequate vertical supports, but the supports which would prevent sideways movement are heavily damaged.

Questions have also been raised about the St. George Hotel, which is slated for demolition.

The hotel shares common walls with the Flat Iron Building, which houses the Teacup restaurant, and the old County Bank building. Irwin said that those buildings may also have to come down with the St. George if they cannot be shored up adequately.