

Highway 1 stretch may prove tricky for widening

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SANTA CRUZ — Caltrans says widening Highway 1 shouldn't pose any significant engineering problems except for a tricky section between Capitola and Soquel.

Caltrans is nearing the end of a study on widening the local stretch of Highway 1 between Santa Cruz and Aptos. The agency has recently focused its attention on the modifications that will need to be made to exits and onramps to accommodate the project.

The county Regional Transportation Commission has committed to widening the highway and is awaiting the Caltrans report and others before proceeding.

Luis Duazo, Caltrans project manager, said most of the design problems he sees can be addressed with minor changes. But the highway from 41st Avenue to the Bay Avenue/Porter Street onramps poses a challenge.

The interchanges are already close, Duazo said. Widening the highway, which is elevated in that area already, will make for even more of a space crunch.

One idea being studied is elevated, twisting ramps that coil together to make use of tight space. What such fancy roadwork would cost is unknown. Cost estimates for the entire project range from \$100 million to \$200 million.

Duazo will present details on highway widening design and



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel file

An update of an as-yet-unfinished CalTrans study on highway widening shows the Highway 1 interchanges at 41st Avenue and Porter Street/Bay Avenue will be the most problematic.

interchanges at Thursday's Regional Transportation Commission meeting. Caltrans should be done with its study in Febru-

ary. The commission meets at 9 a.m. in the county Board of Supervisors Chamber, 701 Ocean St.