

Traffic Statistics Show Santa Cruz Is Terminal City; Many Organizations Back Route Plan

12-10-53

Traffic Patterns

A survey conducted here by the state division of highways indicated that 73 per cent of the vehicular traffic on Highway 17, or the Los Gatos highway, has as its destination the city of Santa Cruz.

Such was disclosed yesterday by Joseph Sinclair, district engineer of District IV, San Francisco, during the hearing held here in the Santa Cruz civic auditorium.

Sinclair said that of the remaining 27 per cent of traffic, three per cent has a destination north of Santa Cruz and 24 per cent south of the city.

"These figures indicate that Santa Cruz is a terminal city," he said.

Sinclair said that either channelization would be installed in the proposed Scotts Valley by-pass in the Los Gatos highway realignment, or ultimately interchanges would be constructed at both ends.

He said that cost of the estimated freeway has been placed at \$1,900,000, a saving of \$600,000 over what it would cost to realign the existing route, which would entail the purchase of right-of-ways and improved properties.

Eventually, he said, the total Highway 17 projects in the county will probably cost about \$3,300,000, but that much money will not be expended now because of budgetary limitations.

Sinclair said the interchange road to Mt. Hermon would provide a direct connection for the valley, adding that if the present road was realigned, it might have an adverse effect upon the Scotts Valley school.

H. Stephen Chase, state highway commissioner from Sacramento and acting chairman of the hearing yesterday, called upon B. W. Booker, assistant state highway engineer, in charge of District IV, at San Francisco, to discuss the proposed route.

Booker said the Los Gatos highway is the heaviest travelled route in Santa Cruz county, with in excess of 20,000 cars using it on a summer Sunday, and about 11,000 on a summer Monday.

In the future, he said, traffic on this road would probably increase to a greater extent than on any other road in the county, as both the Bay Shore and the East Shore highways were being developed.

Booker said the proposed by-pass was by far the better route, and was justified because it cost so much less than the realignment of the existing highway.

He said that the residents of Scotts Valley should not be concerned about the by-pass, as the proposed freeway would be fenced and would not allow competitive businesses to spring up.

"If you have good business, such as motels, shops, etc., to offer the public, people will come to that area. They go where they find what they want," Booker pointed out.

A number of individuals, speaking for themselves as well as the organizations they represented, expressed their views on the proposed realignment when they appeared at yesterday's hearing.

A portion of the names of some 60 organizations and persons who indicated to the commission that they wished to go on record in favor of the realignment were published in yesterday's Sentinel-News.

Les Ley, chairman of the county planning commission as well as chairman of the Santa Cruz chamber of commerce industrial committee, said that the proposed ex-

pressway was an industrial necessity for this county and its development.

Fred Pracht, county road commissioner, stated that the county made a mistake in not getting behind the engineers when they built the Santa Cruz-Watsonville freeway, with the result that the road is now a maze of access roads, instead of a limited freeway, as was first proposed.

Watsonville representatives stressed the fact that businessmen in that area were interested in getting their fruits, vegetables and other produce to San Francisco as rapidly as possible and therefore were all in favor of the proposed expressway.

Other persons who went on record in favor of the freeway were Russell D. Tripp for the Capitola chamber of commerce; H. Y. Stuart, secretary of the Soquel Businessmen's association; who said that Soquel residents were originally concerned about the by-pass when the Santa Cruz-Rob Roy freeway went in, but now are pleased with the entire situation; Alvin Wendt, of the Seaciff Improvement association, who said the same of Aptos as Stuart reported regarding Soquel; and Harry Lyon of the Rio del Mar Improvement association.

Paul Veatch of the Apartment House Owners' association; Franklin Morrison of the Santa Cruz Real Estate board, who said that local operators voted 30 to 1 in favor of the realignment; Floyd Weymouth of the Santa Cruz County Safety council; William W. Kelly of the Santa Cruz County Insurance exchange; and Charles McLean, for the Santa Cruz County Farm bureau, who spoke in behalf of the farmers although he said the bureau had not gone on record officially.

Lloyd Howard, manager of the local Pacific Greyhound bus depot, who spoke in favor of the realignment, although not for the company; Ed Winn, vice president of the Highway Transport company; David Johnson for Miles & Sons trucking company, as well as for the Truck Owners' Association of California; the H. R. Basford Manufacturing company; Jack Reynolds for the A. K. Salz Tannery, and Robert Kinzie Jr., for the Santa Cruz Portland Cement company.

Kinzie said that the company was interested in getting its product out of here the cheapest way possible, adding that if the road wasn't put through Santa Cruz wouldn't be termed a terminal but a dead end, as far as the company was concerned.

Carl Boppell of the Santa Cruz Shirt company; George Bertolucci, who represented the Santa Cruz and San Benito county councils of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and Malio Stagnaro, representing the Santa Cruz fish dealers as well as 132 commercial fishermen.

Others who indicated to the commission they were in favor of the road but sent no representatives were Ralph Mattison of the Aptos chamber of commerce; La Selva Beach Improvement association; Live Oak Improvement club; Peerless Stages; Santa Cruz County Motor Express; Pacific Motor Trucking company; Owens Brothers Transfer and Storage; AFL Teamsters association; Blue Bird Van and Storage; Santa Cruz Artichoke and Sprout Growers' association; Levi Strauss and Walti Schilling Meat company; theavenport Improvement club and the Cave Gulch Improvement club.

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