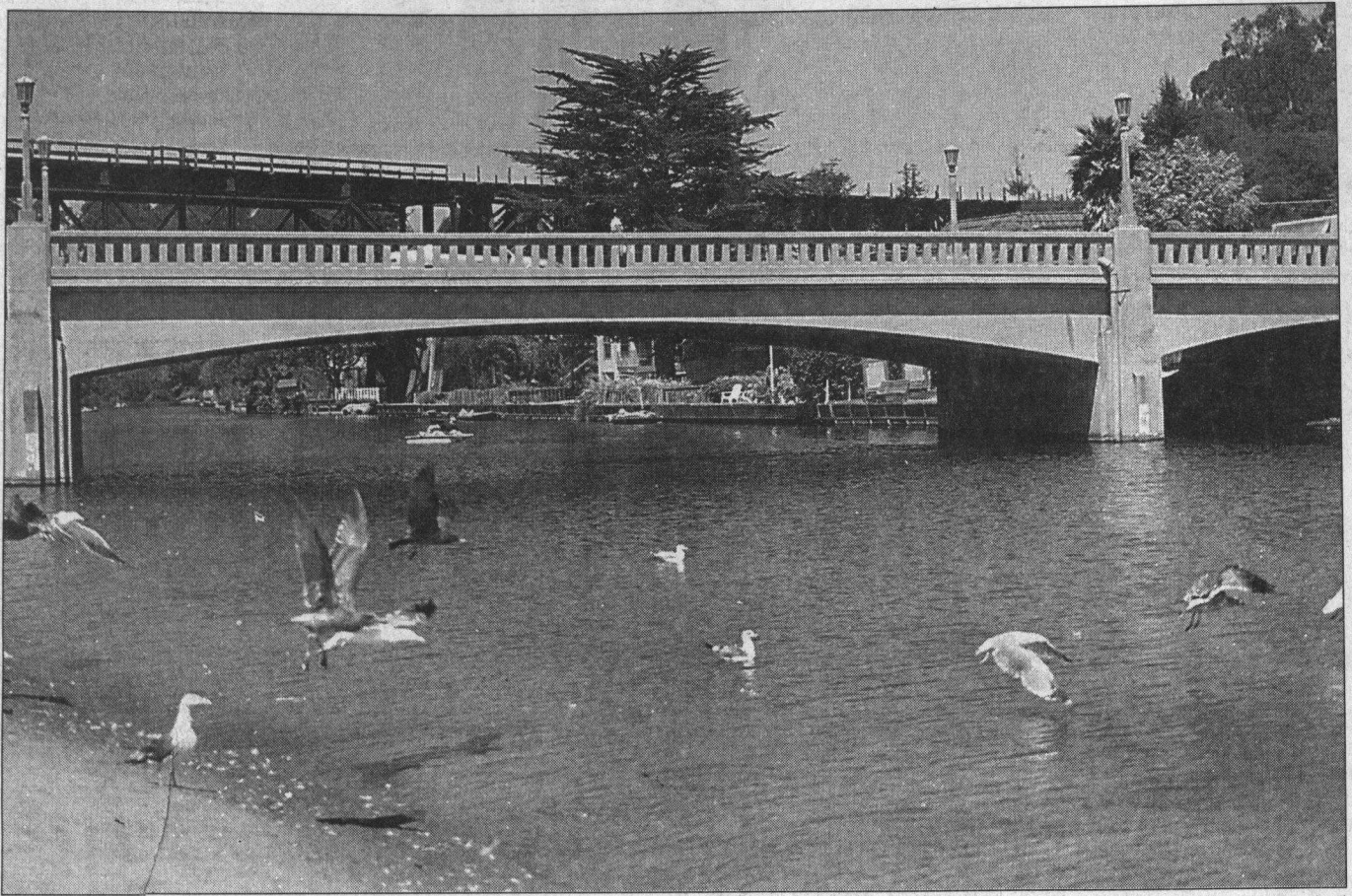


CONSTRUCTION COMING SOON?



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

Stockton Bridge on Cliff Drive has been one of the entrances to Capitola Village for more than 60 years. The city's new public works director is recommending the bridge be replaced with one that would be better suited for Soquel Creek.

Public works' director considering replacing gateway to the Village

By **JONDI GUMZ**
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Bridges

Capitola is considering replacing Stockton Bridge, which has been a key entry into Capitola Village for more than 60 years.

Public works Director John Fantham will broach the idea tonight with a committee of merchants and residents that is planning the second phase of improvements to the Village.

The city had been planning to upgrade sewer and water lines and improve the street and sidewalks near the bridge on Cliff Drive next year, but the cost of replacing the bridge, estimated at \$2 million, wasn't part of the project.

"It seems like you have to do the two together to get it done right," said Fantham, who took over the public works department last month.

Another reason to replace the bridge, he said, is that Capitola could experience flooding once Bargetto Bridge upstream on Soquel Creek is replaced. That project, which eliminates in-stream supports and should result in fewer log jams, is supposed to be done by fall 2002.

"With the bridges upstream being cleared, anything coming down could hang up at the Stockton Bridge," Fantham said.

"It could be quite devastating," added Peter Hubback, a Village property owner who chairs the Village committee.

Bill Steinke, who owns Modern Artifacts on Capitola Avenue, praised Fantham for raising the idea.

"In one way, it makes sense (to do the bridge in conjunction with the other road work), limiting time when everything's torn up," Steinke said.

At the same time, he does not want the next phase of the Village's improvements put on hold to look for money for the bridge project.

Fantham was in charge of county public works when the county replaced Porter Street Bridge with a design that eliminated in-stream supports several years ago. The supports tend to snag trees that fall into the creek in winter storms.

Fantham suggests the new Capitola span be a little wider with room for bike lanes. The existing bridge has only a sidewalk.

"It's a great idea," said Councilman Bruce Arthur, who is on the Village planning committee. "All we need is the money."

This year, the city set aside \$900,000 for capital projects, but the bridge isn't on the list the council approved during budget hearings a few months ago.

Fantham said the state has money available for bridge replacements, but the city would have to pay 20 percent, about \$200,000, of the cost.

"We're looking at ways to fund that," Fantham said.

In Soquel, at Bargetto Bridge, traffic has been detoured around the bridge, but a detour wouldn't work in Capitola.

"We'd have to keep one lane open for fire and emergency situations," Fantham said.

The village master plan advisory committee meets at City Hall, 420 Capitola Ave., at 6:30 tonight to consider the bridge project and a five-year plan for parking.

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