

Capitola wants state to pay for Bay Ave. interchange

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Faced with paying as much as 30 percent of a \$3.1 million improvement project at Bay Avenue and Highway 1, the City of Capitola and Santa Cruz County are making plans to get the state to pay for it.

That's what Capitola City Manager Steve Burrell said this morning, in the wake of last week's City Council decision to

sign a cost-sharing agreement with Caltrans. The Board of Supervisors is expected to sign a similar agreement tomorrow.

Caltrans is proposing in the agreement to fund the project by 70 to 75 percent, with the rest of the bill shared by Capitola and the county.

"What this does is say that we acknowledge that we have to pay a portion," Burrell said.

However, neither Capitola nor the county intends to give

up that easy. They've got two to three years until Caltrans completes design of the project, Burrell said. During that time, they'll work with both local and state transportation officials to figure out a way to get Caltrans to pick up the entire tab.

He pointed to the Soquel Drive/Highway 1 and 41st Avenue/Highway 1 improvement projects as success stories as far as getting the state

to foot the bill. Capitola was originally supposed to pay a portion of the 41st Avenue improvements, Burrell said, but Caltrans ended up paying for it.

The \$3.1 million proposed cost of the project is a rough estimate, he added, and could be more or less depending on the design.

One part that would be likely to be expensive is a proposed "transitional" lane on the Bay

Avenue exit, where the existing bridge would be widened to include an additional lane.

However, Burrell said Caltrans has acknowledged full responsibility for that part of the project.

The project would also include a wider underpass than at first envisioned. Cost of that and the additional lane is estimated to be \$1 million.

The project has been delayed

by the discovery of a possible Ohlone Indian site earlier this year, and is not expected to be completed until 1993.

The state Office of Historic Preservation will do an archaeological survey over the next two to three months. Depending on the outcome, either a negative declaration will be issued or an Environmental Impact Report will be done.