



Kathy Kreiger/ Voice

Construction work at the Park Avenue/Highway 1 interchange has turned up what most residents of the county need and want—water.

Traffic delays explained as water under the bridge

Kathy Kreiger
Campus Editor

CAB. COLL
VOICE 5-16-90

Motorists using the Park Avenue/Highway 1 interchange can count on at least another four to eight weeks of traffic slowdowns.

Improvements to the interchange, originally scheduled to be completed in April, will probably not be finished until mid-June at the earliest, and could go into the middle of July, according to Caltrans officials.

The inspector overseeing the \$1.4 million project for Caltrans, John Harger, blamed the delay on two things: the October 17 earthquake and a waterline that was shown at an incorrect elevation and had to be lowered.

The project, on the state's drawing boards since 1984, is de-

signed to correct traffic backups, according to Linda Wilshusen, the Executive Director of the County Transportation Commission.

Park Avenue will be widened to four lanes: two lanes northbound, one lane southbound, and a continuous back-to-back left-hand turn lane in the middle. There will be bike lanes on both sides and a sidewalk on the east side of Park Avenue. Both the north and southbound offramps will be widened and traffic signals will be installed, according to Wilshusen.

The signals at the intersection of Cabrillo College Drive and Park Avenue, which have been in place for some time, were paid for by the county, said Wilshusen.

Harger said the project was

originally slated to start in mid-October of last year, but the earthquake slowed things down. The contractor, Don Caputo Construction Company, helped in earthquake relief. Harger said it was difficult to get things to the site because of roads being closed.

A water main running under the freeway that had to be lowered added \$44,000 to the project's cost, said Ramin Abidi, resident engineer for Caltrans.

Tom Fenker, foreman for the contractor, said it added two weeks to the project.

Harger said that the construction drawings showed the depth of the line incorrectly.

The original drawings showing the location of the waterlines

See Traffic back page

Traffic delays soon to be thing of the past

from front

came from the Soquel Creek Water District. Mike Munson, Assistant General Manger of the water district, said the district's drawings were correct.

Munson said there was a two or three year lapse between the initial design and when the final construction drawings were made, because, "The original engineers were not involved in the final design phase." He added that somehow the transfer wasn't made in the final drawings.

"It's really a difficult thing to place the blame," Munson said. "These things happen."

Caltrans paid the extra money to lower it, Abidi said.

Caltrans planner Mike Ellis said that the amount is "not small potatoes—it's \$44,000 we can't spend elsewhere."

However, he said that Caltrans does establish a contingency fund for jobs, usually 10 percent of the total bid.

Another difficulty has been the amount of traffic at the intersection during construction.

Harger said, "It's a real difficult location. There's not a lot of room. In a confined space, it's hard to 'blow and go.' You have to stop and let traffic go by."

Harger said the closing of Cabrillo at semester's end in May will help, "but then we've got tourists."

Fenker said that "traffic is horrendous."

Fenker advised Cabrillo students frustrated by the traffic snarls in the interchange to use an alternative route, such as getting off at an earlier exit.

Most people involved in the project agreed on the importance of passing proposition 111, which will appear on the June ballot. Proposition 111 would raise the present nine-cents-a-gallon gas tax by five cents this year and an additional penny for each of the next four years. The money will go for highway projects, to maintain and build local roads and for mass transit.

Harger said, "111 is so important now. We can't afford not to maintain roads. It doesn't take a genius to see that."

"There's a lot of public benefit. The whole idea is to make getting from A to B easier, safer and nicer."

Wilshusen underscored his message: "If proposition 111 doesn't pass, this project is the last we'll see for a long time."

Fenker agreed. "Any money for roads is desperately needed," he said. "If people are going to continue to drive, they're going to need something to drive on." He said he favors the development of mass transit, but said "unless there's a change of attitude, it's like a cowboy and his horse: they just won't leave it home."