



Southbound Highway 1 traffic flows under La Fonda Bridge during a moment of midday non-congestion.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

# La Fonda bridge ready for demolition

*Highway*  
New span to have bike lanes, wider sidewalks

By SHANNA MCCORD

smccord@santacruzsentinel.com

SANTA CRUZ — La Fonda bridge over Highway 1 is set to crumble in the next major step in constructing new lanes between Soquel and Morrissey.

The 64-year-old span that links the Prospect Heights neighborhood, which is home to Delaveaga Elementary School, with Harbor High School and Palo Alto Medical Foundation offices will be missing for up to eight months while a new, wider bridge with bike lanes and larger sidewalks is built.

Bridge demolition and reconstruction

## AT A GLANCE DETOUR FOR DEMOLITION

**WHEN:** Midnight-5 a.m. Aug. 6 and 7; 11 p.m.-4 a.m. Aug. 13 and 14

**GOING SOUTH:** Southbound Highway 1 will be closed Aug. 6 and 7. Traffic going south will exit at Morrissey Boulevard, turn right on Morrissey and left on Soquel Drive.

**GOING NORTH:** Northbound Highway 1 will be closed Aug. 13 and 14. Traffic going north will exit at Soquel Drive, turn left on Soquel and follow to Morrissey Boulevard, make a right and follow to the highway.

tion are part of a \$21 million project to improve the flow of traffic on the

one-mile section of Highway 1.

A new lane will be added in each direction for cars entering and exiting the highway between the two exits.

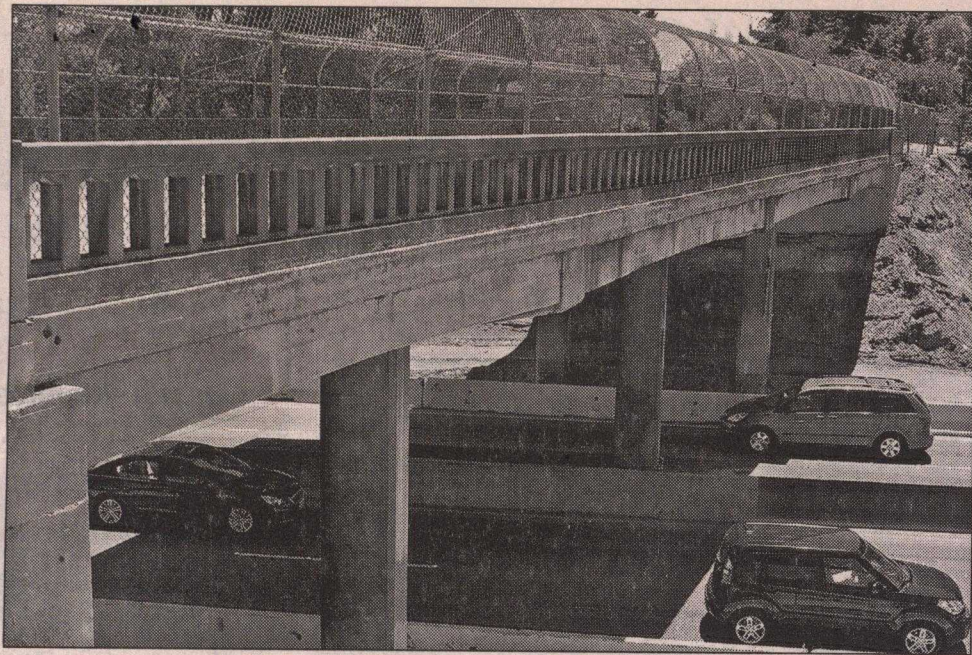
"It's important to remember this section of highway is one of the busiest on Highway 1," said Karena Pushnik of the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission. "The project is getting some of the merging traffic away from the through traffic in this especially well used corridor."

Beginning Aug. 6 and 7, southbound Highway 1 will be closed from midnight to 5 a.m. while crews tear apart the old concrete and steel. The second phase of bridge demolition takes place Aug. 13 and 14 with



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SEE LA FONDA ON C10 Work will begin Aug. 6 to demolish La Fonda Bridge.



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La Fonda Bridge will soon be a historic footnote to the Highway 1 Auxiliary Lane Project.

## LA FONDA

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northbound lanes shut down while the work is done from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m.

One lane in the opposite direction will be open on the nights the bridge is taken down. Traffic will be detoured at Morrissey Boulevard and Soquel.

Officials with Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, the agency acting as project manager, say hundreds of cars are expected to be impacted by the nighttime bridge demolition.

The bigger hassle is expected to be felt by the drivers, cyclists and pedestrians who cross the bridge at La Fonda daily to get to work, school or elsewhere. An estimated 3,000 cars cross the bridge each day.

Not having the bridge for several months means commuters will be forced to use Morrissey Boulevard and Soquel Drive to cross between the two areas of Santa Cruz.

The Regional Transportation Commission has tried to make the months of detours smoother for students and their families by providing alternative routes and encouraging carpooling.

A shuttle service will be provided for students who've already been walking or biking across the bridge to get to Harbor High or Delaveaga Elementary.

A traffic guard will be stationed at Morrissey Boulevard and Fairmount Avenue before and after school to assist children walking or biking, which was a request by residents.

A California Highway Patrol officer will monitor the interchange at Morrissey.

"The first few weeks will be

confusing," the commission's Kim Shultz said. "People will have to adjust their travel patterns and leave earlier."

This won't be the first time the area has been without a cross-town link.

Residents went through a similar experience in 2007 and 2008 when the Branciforte bridge was torn down and replaced during the Fishhook expansion project.

At least one nearby resident says he won't miss the bridge at La Fonda while it's down.

Michael Summers, 46, who's lived on La Fonda Avenue for 10 years, is looking forward to a break from all the cars that travel up and down his street each day.

"I'm looking forward to the quietness," he said. "It doesn't bother me at all. I'm going to organize a block party."

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