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Roads and Streets Highway Commission Adopts Route 4

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It's Four.

Brushing aside a contingent of some 35 local residents opposed to freeway alternate Route 4, the State Highway Commission Wednesday in Sacramento went ahead and adopted the northerly freeway spur, along with the B-E alignment for the Highway 100 "beach loop."

The Route 4 opponents, wearing paper tags and carrying placards, were told by commissioners they should have spoken up at an October public hearing on the freeway.

The Route 4 backers spoke up loud and clear at that hearing, and the volume of their testimony apparently turned the trick: In adopting the 4 alignment the commission flies in the face of recommendations of

the Santa Cruz City Council, The Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, the city planning commission and the State Division of Highways.

All of them, except the planners, favored Route 5. The planning commission held out for a Route 2 central Mission Street corridor alignment.

The highway commission, in its 5-0 vote, recommends a Highway 1 alignment which skirts the north side of the city and the southern tip of the UCSC campus. It would cross Highway 9 and connect with existing Route 1 at its Highway 17 interchange on the east and near Western Avenue to the west. The \$39-million, 8.8-mile project is slated for construction in 1978 at the earliest.

Denied permission to address

the commission officially, the Santa Cruz delegation cornered Assemblyman Frank Murphy Jr., R-Santa Cruz, and Senator Donald Grunsky, R-Watsonville.

The legislators advised the Santa Cruzans to gain official backing of local governmental agencies if Murphy and Grunsky were to continue the fight against 4. They said the only hope now is through legislative channels.

The commission decision also ignores a last-ditch request by the city council to delay a route choice until completion of a review of the general plan.

Mayor Richard Werner said he was surprised at the commission's refusal of the delay request.

"I think we've got some work to do," he said. "If that's what the commission hands us, we've

got to adjust our thinking. I want to make sure that's their final decision before we do any planning of on and off-ramps."

He said he didn't know if further avenues were open for a battle against the choice, but is "willing to explore possibilities of further opposition."

Councilman Eugene Fleming said he disagreed with the commission's choice and would continue to do so, since Route 4 offers little hope of easing the city's internal traffic problems.

He said if the present thinking of the council persists, he thought the city would refuse to sign an agreement to permit construction of the freeway at all.

Councilwoman Anne Garnie, one of two Route 4 backers on the council, said she was

not surprised by the commission's decision and hoped the freeway construction would not be delayed.

The Route 4 victory is not as popular as it once might have been. In recent months, a conservation-oriented move has gathered steam against any freeways at all.

Dorothy Cope, leader of Coastal Coalition, was among the local delegates in Sacramento. She said she asked both Murphy and Grunsky to take the local freeway off state plans, but both refused.

She added her group is as violently opposed to 4 as it was to 5.

The commission's decision was one of few, if not the only, times the group has recommended a freeway route in opposition to city council wishes.