

# Ax falls on transit plans

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SANTA CRUZ — Local transportation needs took it on the chin when supervisors decided Tuesday to drastically scale back a sales-tax proposal.

Cuts in bus service — including possibly up to 71 jobs in the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District, as well as hoped-for plans to widen Highway 1 — may take place, after the board's decision to limit proceeds from a proposed half-cent county sales tax to earthquake relief over the next 10 years. As much as \$159 million in bonds for road-widening projects, bus service and park develop-

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## Transit cuts

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ment was expected to be raised in the next 40 years from the original sales-tax plan.

Transit District General Manager Scott Galloway said Tuesday that directors would now fall back on an alternate plan to cut bus service 29 percent in December. Such a cutback could necessitate firing up to 60 bus drivers and 11 mechanics, he said. Consultants are studying various alternatives, and will make a recommendation next month.

Last month, the Transit Board adopted its 1990-91 budget based on hopes that the half-cent sales tax would not only include monies for transit, but would be passed by county voters in November. Even with the sales-tax monies, the financially troubled transit district would have had to cut service 18 percent.

As for widening Highway 1 from Santa Cruz to Aptos to three lanes in each direction, county Transportation Commission spokeswoman Pat Dellin said the priority road project will now be delayed even longer.

The tax measure would have raised an estimat-

ed \$43 million, which would have been used as the local share toward the \$150-million project, Dellin said.

"This means both a larger service cut to the transit district, and the current delays on Highway 1 will be longer," said Santa Cruz City Councilman John Laird, who sits on both the Transit Board and Transportation Commission.

Laird, who suggested the quake-repair-only tax, conceded it was a difficult decision. "It was one of those decisions where I had to decide whether to have both my arm and leg cut off, or just one," he said.

Andy Schiffrin, aide to Supervisor Gary Patton and an alternate on the Transportation Commission, added, "We'll just have to take a harder look at (future) resources and see what effect this will have."

Dellin said the Transportation Commission hasn't discussed any other revenue-raising options. Ironically, the commission first proposed the sales-tax measure last spring, conducting a survey that indicated public support for a measure aimed at transportation and earthquake relief.