

# 41st Avenue Overcrossing Progresses

By Wally Trabing

There's a small battlefield near Santa Cruz that's receiving a half-million dollar safety proofing.

It's a small area around the "X" where the Santa Cruz Watsonville limited Freeway and 41st avenue cross.

Since 1951 two motorists have gone to their graves from here and 48 others have been injured in metal skirmishes at that intersection.

Now the state is building an overcrossing that will lift 41st avenue motorists over the freeway. It is figured to save many gallons of blood and probably many lives in the future.

And it's interesting, too.

For every grown-up kid who has pushed dirt around in his back yard to make walls, bridges and dams, an overcrossing under construction along a big highway is an eye-catcher every time. They wish they had time to stop but they don't.

Don David, state bridge specialist said the commonly used word "overpass" is for railroads. Officially an auto bridge over a highway is an overcrossing.

Gerald Sommers, assistant resident engineer for the state division of highways, says the 41st avenue overcrossing will be built in a pattern similar to the Morrissey overcrossing.

It's going to cost money — about \$530,000 for the materials and labor; around \$50,000 for designers and state highway overseers; and more for purchase of rights-of-way.

It will take about 160 days of hard dirty work to finish the job — hard work, a powerful lot of dirt moving; and some hard thinking so that all the pieces will fit. David calls it 30 per cent complete.

There are now 24 men on the job pushing dirt, grading, and preparing foundation beds, in addition to a bridge specialist, three surveyors, a laboratory man, construction inspector and a resident engineer and his assistant.

In the bridge man's parlance, this job is called a two-quadrant cloverleaf.

And by the time you lay out those circular swinging approaches to allow access on and off the freeway, Sommers said you can figure on spreading over four acres.

Whenever possible, designers attempt to place the overcrossing so that dirt from the approaches may be used for the ramps on either side of the overcrossing. Sommers figured that about 35,000 yards of dirt have been used in the ramps. That's about 53,000 tons.

As those big Euclid scrapers with wheels and tires almost as large as ferris wheels build up the ramps at 14 yards a scoop, every eight inch layer is compacted by a "sheep's foot tamper."

This is a huge roller with spikes which is pulled over the ground to make it solid. Sommers said these ramps are built up to 22 to 24 feet and allowed to settle slightly.

The main girders are made in Oakland and hauled down here by truck. The overcrossing crosses the freeway in four sections, the

## 41st Avenue Overcrossing Work Moves On



From the air, the area around 41st avenue looks as if some giant hot-rod had churned up the soil in great sweeping, skidding circles. But in reality all this area is needed in the construction of the 41st avenue overcrossing. Fifty-five thousand tons of dirt is being used to build the ramps leading up to the overcrossing. Said to be 30 per cent completed the labor and material cost for the crossing is about \$530,000.

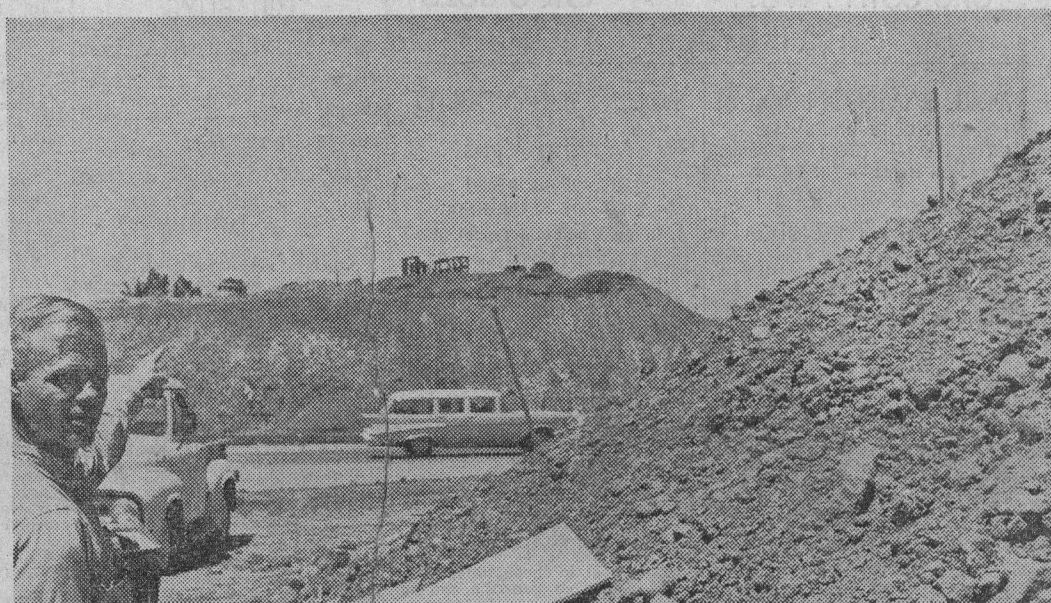
longest being 76 feet and made of pre-stressed concrete.

After the girders are on their supports, wooden forms are built so that the cement roadway may be poured.

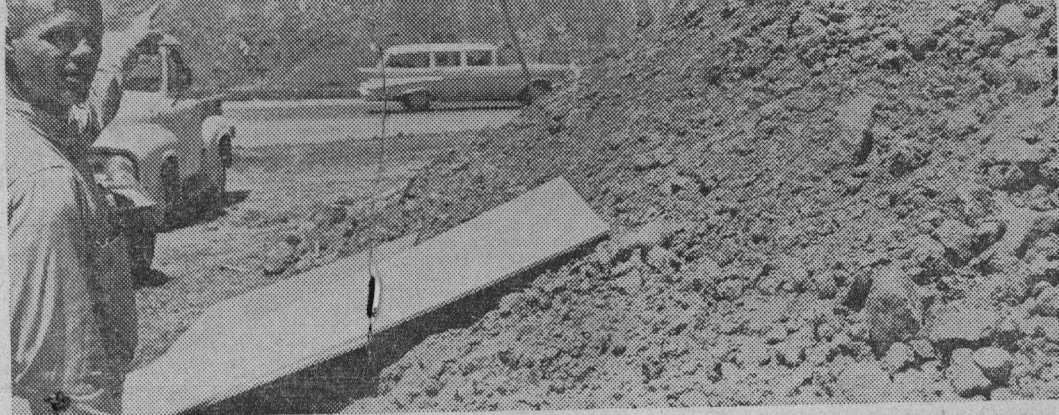
To help support this tremendous weight, 40 foot round holes are drilled and filled with steel rods and concrete to stabilize the ground for the footing and columns.

The overcrossing will have a 14-foot clearance above the freeway.

## Mounds Of Dirt Are Solid





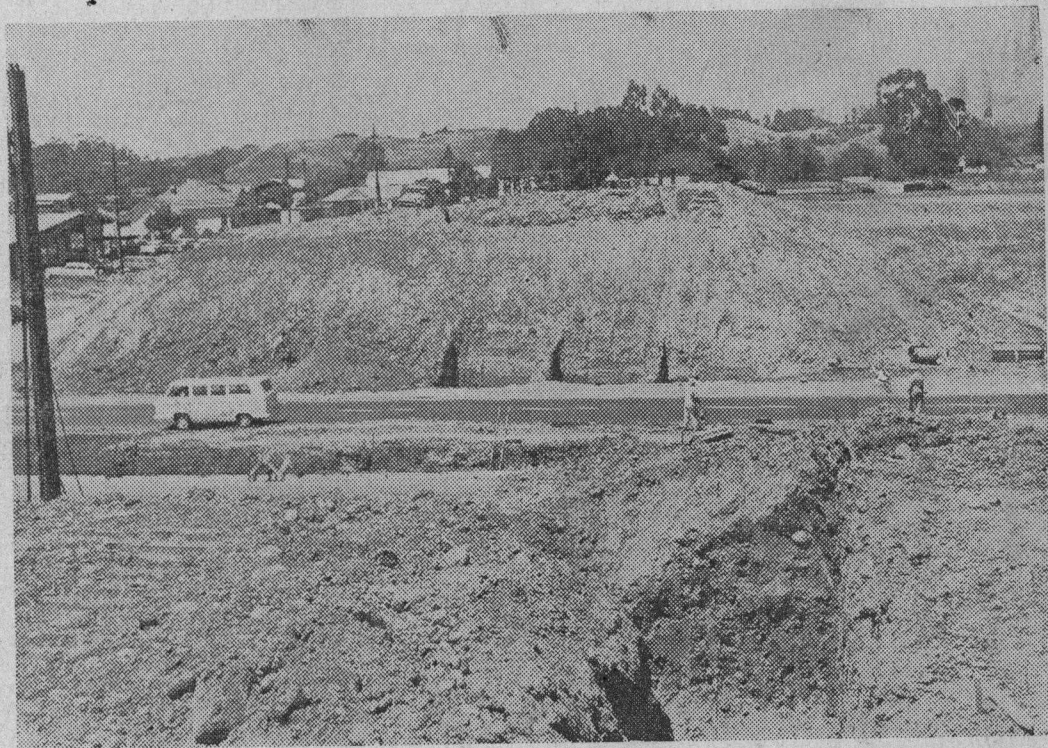


Gerald Sommers, assistant resident engineer for the state points out the two huge mounds of dirt which will be used to support either end of the 41st

avenue overcrossing. A total of 35,000 yards of dirt was scraped from the construction area to build these ramps. This overcrossing will be similar to

the Morrissey boulevard crossing. Every eighth layer of dirt was compacted with a special roller before more height was added.

## Where Overcrossing Will Rise



The photograph was taken standing on one of the 41st avenue overcrossing approach ramps looking across to the

other over the Watsonville-Santa Cruz limited freeway. The trench in the foreground will receive the foundation to support the end of the bridge.

Two persons have died and 46 have been injured in auto accidents at this intersection since 1951.

