

Transit proposal could go to voters this fall

A study that could lead to a countywide vote next November, on some form of rapid transit will be discussed Friday morning by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District board of directors.

The board will be presented with three staff recommendations — two of which would result in a ballot measure in November.

Money is now available from the state for funding up to 90 percent of a "fixed guideway" in Santa Cruz County, but voters must first authorize the proposal by passing a ballot measure.

A fixed guideway is a rail or cable system on which transit vehicles would travel.

The district board last July authorized a grant application to the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration for \$30,000 to determine the feasibility of such a project in Santa Cruz. That study has since been expanded and the grant application increased to \$41,875.

The study will examine the feasibility of several different

types of mass transit in the county:

—Regular rail service between Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

—A rail link between the Harvey West park-and-ride lot and the Boardwalk.

—A rail line running from Harvey West to the Boardwalk, Capitola and Rio del Mar, and the possible extension to Felton.

—A rail line between Watsonville and Watsonville Junction (for recreational purposes.)

—Electric-powered vehicles running in Santa Cruz from the Pacific Garden Mall to the Santa Cruz beach, and in Capitola from its shuttle bus parking lot to the Village. The vehicle would be powered by energy picked up from an electric cable embedded in the street.

Other proposals to be studied call for constructing people movers, elevated fixed guideways and accelerated walkways in the following locations:

—Between the County Government Center and the Holiday Inn and the Downtown Transit

Center, the Boardwalk and Dream Inn along the San Lorenzo River levee.

—From Harvey West Park to the government center, downtown Santa Cruz and the beach.

—A line between Harvey West and UC Santa Cruz.

The money won't be available to start the study until March, and Ed Van Der Zande, the district's manager of development and engineering, says there are three options open to the board.

The board could decide now to put the authorization issue on the November ballot without a specific plan in mind. Or it could speed up the study, limit the study to one or two public meetings, and get a specific proposal on the November ballot.

The third option, recommended by the staff, Van Der Zande said, is to let the study proceed at a normal pace, hold public hearings on the proposals throughout the county, and then put the issue before the voters on the June, 1985 ballot.