

Transit plan approved

By BOB SMITH

Santa Cruz County's portion of the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) was approved Thursday by the county transportation commission.

The plan calls for the widening of the 41st Avenue overpass next year, the widening of the Bay Avenue freeway underpass in Capitola in 1987-88, and the widening of Main Street (Highway 152) in Watsonville from three to four lanes between Green Valley Road and Penn-

sylvania Avenue in 1986-87.

Missing from the plan are any major improvements to the county's two freeways — Highway 17 and Highway 1.

Improvements along those two corridors, as called for in the county's controversial but now approved Regional Transportation Plan, are limited to extending the median strips on Highway 17, revamping two Highway 1 interchanges in Capitola, and repair of a persistent slide on Highway 1 near La Selva Beach.

The plan's approval was a blow to San Lorenzo Valley Supervisor Joe Cucchiara, who has been pressing for inclusion of a favorite Valley project — the construction of the Graham Hill Road-Highway 9 interchange — in the county plan.

The Highway 9 interchange, planned by the county for the last decade but dropped from a list of federally funded rural highway projects when the 1980 census put the Valley into the urban category, has been left off the state's list of state highway improvement projects because of a lack of state funds for highway projects.

Cucchiara has been hoping that the project would be put back on the list, but was told this morning that the only way to accomplish that would be drop another project.

Transportation Commission Executive Director Ron Marquez pointed to the Bay Avenue undercrossing and Main Street widening projects as two possibilities.

No one was ready to suggest the swap, however, and Cucchiara simply requested a change in the language of the plan, emphasizing that the Highway 9-Graham Hill Road interchange is the county's No. 1 choice if the state transportation commission decides to add projects to the funding list.

Other state highway projects included on the list include:

✓ Installation this year of median barriers on Highway 17 between Beulah Park and Santa's Village.

✓ Repair of slide damage on Highway 1, north of the Mar Monte overcrossing this year.