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### 4-LANE FREEWAY

# State to study revived west side 101 bypass

By CAROL BENFELL  
Staff Writer

City and state officials are considering a new four-lane freeway west of Santa Rosa. Caltrans will begin a feasibility study next month on a proposed Highway 101 bypass. The existing Highway 101 would become a business loop from roughly Todd Road to Airport Boulevard.

Any actual construction would be years or decades away, city officials say.

But questions are already being raised about the effect of the multimillion-dollar project on the environmentally sensitive Laguna, as well as the potential for creating an undesirable strip of commercial development along the bypass route.

Initially, the bypass was to be located roughly 1,500 feet west of Fulton Road, just outside the city limits of Santa Rosa. Now the study will look at a mile-wide band west

of the Countryside Subdivision on Fulton and east of the Laguna, said Myron Steele, deputy director of the city Public Works Department.

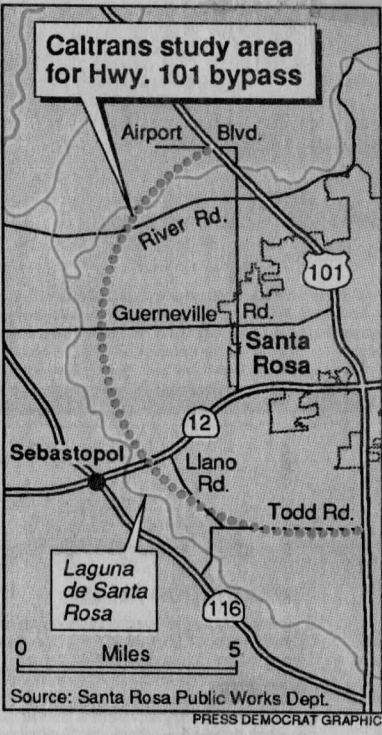
Supervisor Ernie Carpenter, who represents the west county, worried the highway would encroach on the laguna.

"From the point of view of the west county, this is a declaration of war," he said.

Except for Mayor Nanci Burton, Santa Rosa city council members said they knew nothing about the study or the bypass. Burton will be meeting in two weeks with staff for an update on the issue, she said.

A Highway 101 bypass has been suggested before. Caltrans wanted to route the freeway down Stony Point Road before Highway 101 was built in 1956. Former city Traffic Engineer Basil Andrews raised the bypass concept in 1984.

The bypass surfaced anew last year, after Caltrans said it wanted to widen the present Highway 101



to eight lanes, demolishing a wide swath of downtown businesses and homes.

Caltrans said Santa Rosa needed *See Bypass, Page A10*

# Bypass

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four additional lanes on Highway 101 to handle an expected increase in traffic.

Rosalind Daniels, the city Public Works Director, asked Caltrans instead to study the possibility of constructing a bypass. Present Highway 101 would be widened to six lanes and become a business 101 loop.

Caltrans likes the idea and will begin the study as soon as the city sends it aerial photographs of the route area, said Dick Giegling, supervisor of transportation engineering at Caltrans.

"There are an awful lot of advantages to it," said Giegling. "A bypass makes more sense than trying to put eight lanes through a highly developed city."

In concept, the bypass would leave existing Highway 101 at Todd Avenue. It would follow a route west of the present city limits and the Countryside subdivision west of Fulton, and rejoin Highway 101 at Airport Boulevard north of Santa Rosa, Steele said.

Interchanges are tentatively planned at Highway 12, Guerneville Road and River Road, he said.

If past history is any indication, roadside businesses serving travelers, such as gas stations, motels and coffee shops, would be drawn to those interchange areas, said Wayne Goldberg, head of the city Planning Department.

"It's fine to ask questions to see if

a bypass is worth talking about . . . but there are a lot of things you'd want to think about" before building one, Goldberg said. "For the most part, development comes to the freeways not vice versa."

Goldberg said vernal pools will be one issue. The 200-foot wide roadway would travel through an area of vernal pools, a kind of seasonal wetland that frequently contains two species of rare plants, now being considered for federal listing as endangered.

Even if a study found a bypass was feasible, it would be years before a road could be built, city and state engineers agree. Environmental and engineering studies would be necessary and city and state officials would have to find a way to pay for the project.

Giegling estimated the freeway would cost about \$7 million a mile to build in today's dollars. The bypass would be between six and 10 miles long. There would be additional costs for buying or condemning property on which to build the road.

### FOR THE RECORD

The Sonoma Navy League's benefit Polenta Feed and Silent Auction at 6:30 p.m. Friday costs \$15 per person; not \$25 as reported in a Tuesday story. The event will be at the Druids Hall, 1011 College Ave., in Santa Rosa.

The Press Democrat uses this space to correct errors that appear in the news columns. Errors may be reported to the City Desk, 526-8585.

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