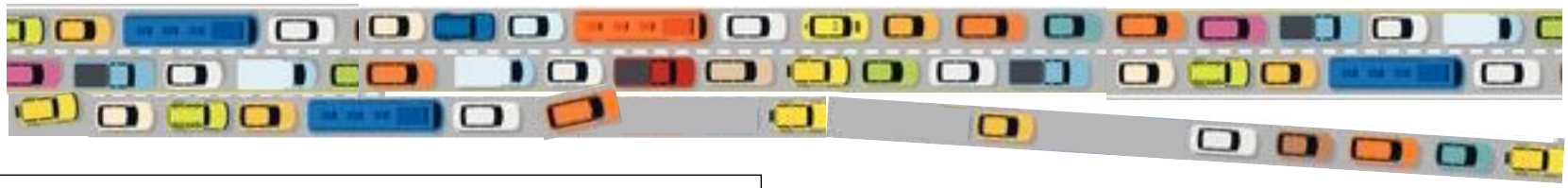
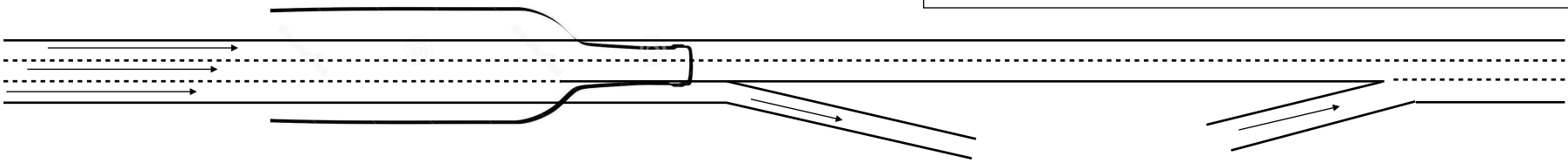
Auxiliary Lanes Don't Relieve Congestion



Auxiliary lanes, or "exit-only lanes" begin at one freeway entrance and end at the next exit. Auxiliary lanes are often used for safer merging when the distance between highway exits is short, e.g. between 41st Ave and Bay Ave. The longer auxiliary lanes proposed for Hwy 1 (1 mile and 1.5 miles) will encourage some drivers to switch into those lanes during periods of congestion. When the lane ends, drivers merge back into the through-lane, causing delays that exacerbate traffic congestion.

Each overpass acts as a bottleneck, as the auxiliary lane ends at the offramp. Six bottlenecks on Highway 1 will remain if the proposed auxiliary lanes are built: at Morrissey, Soquel, 41st Ave, Bay Ave, Park Ave, and State Park Dr.



Eliminating the bottlenecks by reconstructing overpasses is not financially feasible, since state and federal money for highway expansion is a thing of the past. In 2011 the Federal Highway Administration wrote to Santa Cruz County stating it would no longer bankroll the environmental review for the Highway 1 project, since the County has no prospect of funding the project. The only funds available to the County are the Measure D funds to build 4 miles of auxiliary lanes.

Meanwhile California has passed climate action legislation mandating reductions in vehicle miles travelled. Caltrans is under a mandate to fund highway maintenance rather than expansion..

Temporary relief (at best) is all that would result even if the bottlenecks could be removed. UC Davis Professor Susan Handy was commissioned by the Air Resources Board to survey studies on highway expansion. She concludes, "Adding capacity to roadways fails to alleviate congestion for long because it actually increases vehicle miles traveled (VMT)."

The increase in VMT is known as *induced travel.* In the aftermath of highway expansion, people make decisions to take more trips, to shift the time of their trips, and to relocate their homes farther from their jobs. Induced travel is most rapid when there is a large pent up demand for auto travel. Silicon Valley is a source of enormous pent-up demand for housing. A momentary relief of congestion on Highway 1 would result in more Silicon Valley workers outbidding local residents for Santa Cruz County housing, putting more cars on Hwy 1.