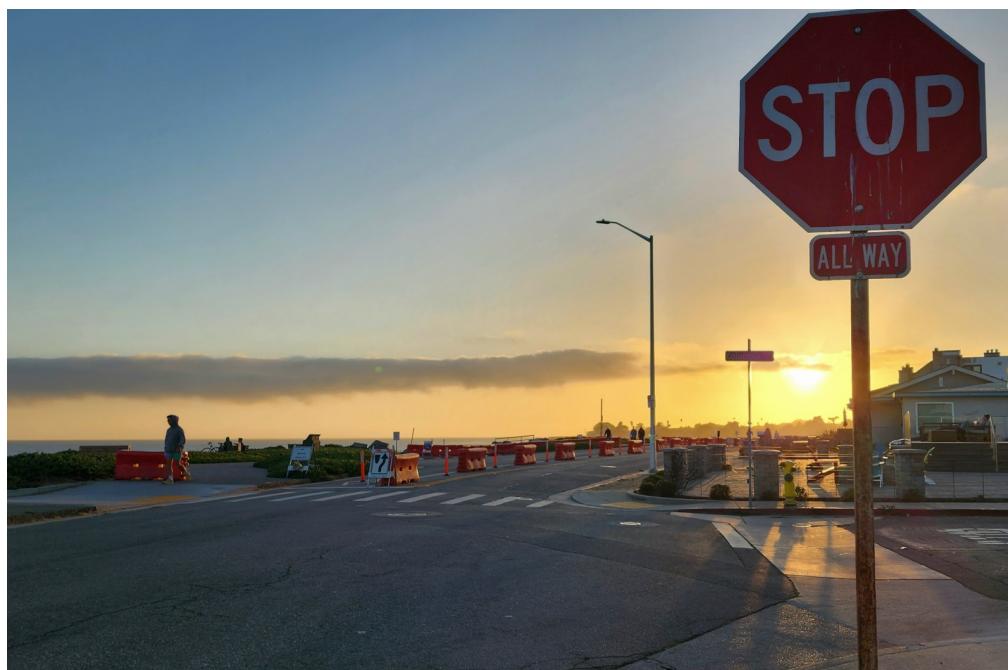


BUSINESS

Construction begins to restore West Cliff Drive

Four infill walls to be built



Construction is set to begin to restore the most damaged areas of West Cliff Drive between the 900 and 1000 blocks of the scenic roadway as early as next week. (Aric Sleeper/Santa Cruz Sentinel)

By **ARIC SLEEPER** | asleeper@santacrussentinel.com |

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SANTA CRUZ – City of Santa Cruz Public Works staff announced that work will soon begin on four infill walls along West Cliff Drive.

The announcement and update from Public Works at the Santa Cruz City Council meeting Tuesday comes ahead of another public check-in regarding the long-term vision for the damaged road and pedestrian path planned for the City Council meeting later this month.

“We’ve decoupled the infrastructure and transportation portion of West Cliff Drive in today’s council meeting and as a follow up, in the next meeting, you’ll have an update in regards to our roadmap and adaptive pathways,” said Public Works Director Nathan Nguyen. “More on that to come.”

The effort to repair the damage begins with the construction of four infill walls on the 900 and 1000 blocks of West Cliff Drive — along the one-way portion of the scenic roadway between Columbia Street and Woodrow Avenue and near Bethany Curve — and the replacement of rip-rap and the Bethany Curve bridge and culvert, which currently serves as an impasse. According to the [staff report](#) from the meeting, the ultimate design for the centenarian structure’s replacement is currently being developed by Mesiti-Miller Engineering, and staff hopes to complete the Bethany Curve project next summer along with the rip-rap re-up.

The construction of the four infill walls will occur in phases and has been prioritized to begin at the damaged area near 1016 W. Cliff Drive, and will then start at 932, followed by 928, and with the last infill wall created at 1030 W. Cliff Drive.



The Bethany Curve bridge and culvert on West Cliff Drive sustained heavy damage during the January storms and its replacement is currently in the design phase. (Aric Sleeper/Santa

"As soon as next week, we're going to be mobilizing construction crews at the four locations," said Kevin Crossley, Santa Cruz city engineer at the meeting Tuesday.

"We're not starting all at once. There's going to be a slow rollout and things will kind of ramp up over the next month or so."

Crossley mentioned that during construction, the 900 block of West Cliff Drive, which currently serves as a one-way, will be closed to non-resident vehicle traffic entirely. Pedestrians and cyclists will tentatively have the ability pass through, but that may change as construction ensues.

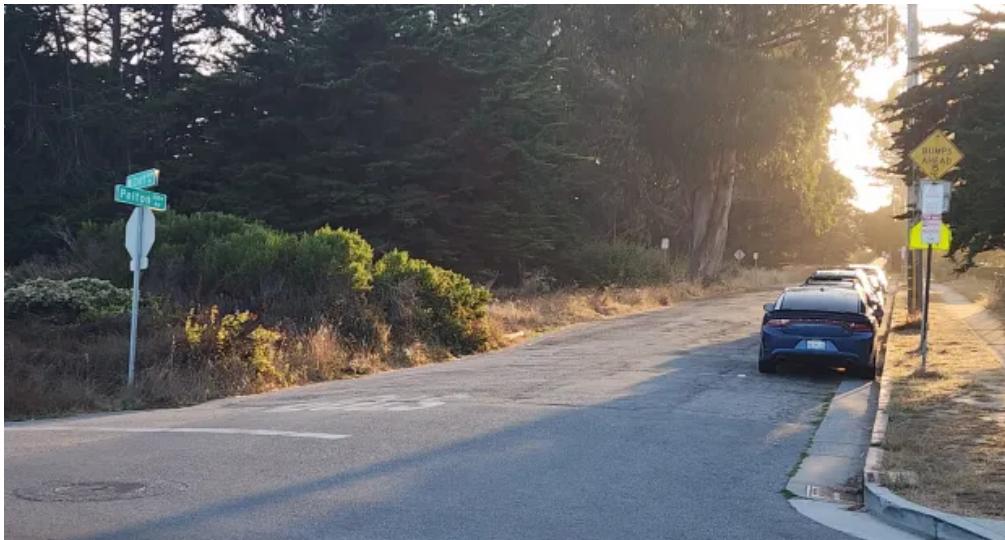
"We're hoping to maintain pedestrian and bicycle traffic through the work zones throughout the duration of work," said Crossley.

Because Public Works wants to finish the walls before the onset of winter, the city is allowing crews from local contractor Granite Construction to work 10 hour days, nights and on Saturdays.

As to the appearance of the infill walls, Crossley said that the outer layer will be formed from shotcrete, or concrete that is sprayed on a surface at high velocity, so the walls will have a textured appearance that blends in with the natural surroundings.

"Once the wall is built, the roadway, the path and the railing will be restored to bring it back to its previous configuration," said Crossley. "We're not trying to push walls out into the ocean where there wasn't a bluff face there before, we're just trying to repair the contours of the coastline as it was before the events in early 2023."

Crossley pointed out that there will be numerous large trucks in and out of the constrained area, which will result in some potentially dangerous situations so pedestrians and cyclists should be extra vigilant in the construction zones.



Residents along Pelton Avenue on the west side of Santa Cruz said that the area has been negatively impacted by traffic since traffic patterns changed with the closure of portions of West Cliff Drive after the winter storms. (Aric Sleeper/Santa Cruz Sentinel)

"We need people to honor the barriers, the cones and the traffic control signs that are out so we can keep the work zone safe," said Crossley. "We need everybody to respect the signs, be aware, make eye contact with construction workers if you see them, because this is a dangerous situation and we want to keep everybody safe."

A comprehensive update of the regulatory, visioning, and roadmap processes for West Cliff Drive will be presented Sept. 26 at the Santa Cruz City Council meeting, and a community meeting about the 50-year vision for West Cliff Drive will be held from 5:30-7 p.m., Oct. 3 at the London Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St., Santa Cruz.

For information and updates about the West Cliff Drive restoration work, visit cityofsantacruz.com.

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