

**SAVE  
WEST  
CLIFF**

## **Save West Cliff // Comments at City Council May 23rd**

Mayor Keeley and Council members,

We hear the concerns about traffic.

And we will hear more today.

We live with them too.

My wife Christine is worried whenever she walks our daughter along the pedestrian path.

She is terrified she is going to get hit by a one-wheel or e-Bike knocking Laurina's wheelchair over. Or worse.

These concerns are real.

They are personal.

And they impact the way we access West Cliff.

But they are not the problem.

They are a ramification of a different problem.

We all want Access to our beloved and iconic West Cliff. Cars, Bikes, Pedestrians, Scooters, e-Bikes, dogs and more.

We just don't have sufficient space for all our collective needs.

And on Jan 5th it all became very real. We lost our pedestrian/bike path and half the road.

This damage was caused by the real problem.

It's not a problem on land. Over which the city has jurisdiction.

In fact, it comes from the other side of the high tide line --- The Ocean Side.

To help us all understand this ocean threat, we put together a coffee table resource book called "West Cliff. Beloved and Iconic. A Visual record".

We are submitting it as part of our testimony today.

The logo consists of a red square with the words "SAVE WEST CLIFF" written in white, bold, uppercase letters, stacked vertically in the center.

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We expect this book to be broadly available in local bookstores and on our web site [savewestcliff.com](http://savewestcliff.com) soon.

In this book, we use historical aerial photographs to help us come to terms with the loss we have suffered along West Cliff over the past 100 years.

It has been substantial.

In the book we also explain this ocean threat in more detail. Backed by some of the greatest scientists of our time.

The threat is not sea level rise - although it has a role to play.

The threat comes from Bomb cyclones or so-called West Coast Hurricanes powered by Atmospheric Rivers.

When these hurricanes come from the West or Southwest, we are in big trouble.

These West storms cause of 76% of the damage to West Cliff.

Jan 5th was one of those storms.

So were the storms during the Super El Nino years of 1983/84 and 1997/98.

Dr Gary Griggs from UCSC and Dr Curt Storlazzi from USGS have been writing about this threat for decades.

Unfortunately, we haven't been listening to them.

And if you are paying attention to NOAA and our scientific community right now, you will know that many are expecting a Super El Nino this winter. Sea temperatures in the Pacific are the hottest on record.

Which means more Atmospheric Rivers, more Bomb Cyclones and yes - more of the dreaded West Storms.

We have got to get real about this ocean threat.

We are done with the decades of indecision.

So today we are demanding action.

Here to read our request is former Mayor Hilary Bryant.



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We are asking Council to issue the following directives to staff today:

1. Instruct staff to move expeditiously to restore access to West Cliff. The 3-Year Plan circulated as part of today's agenda should be immediately prioritized and activated with external funding. We need a completed plan and active projects by August 2023 to reduce the risk of losing access entirely. We are less concerned about the 1-way / 2-way debate than we are about NO Way. NO access is a disaster for the whole community. Please get these emergency repairs greenlighted ASAP and allow the city to demonstrate that they can execute on the repairs.
2. Provide City Manager Matt Huffaker, Laura Schmidt, and the entire city staff the direction and permission to work with the community to develop a 50-year roadmap. We are encouraged by the initial start in the Dynamic Coast section of the Draft 3-Year Plan attached to today's agenda. We must have the courage and conviction to collectively re-imagine how we access our Beloved and Iconic West Cliff for generations to come. Please give staff and Farallon the confidence to take the long-term view to use nature-based solutions to mitigate the West Swell threat and expand access and recreation in the West Cliff Recreation Area. Let's also set an aggressive deadline of a final draft for review by Fall of 2023 so we don't drift into another decade of indecision.
3. The City of Santa Cruz cannot do this alone, and we need to build a holistic solution that covers not only the land side of the equation but also the ocean side. We must have a strong coalition of agencies, non-profits, and funders to solve this multi-jurisdictional challenge. Please direct staff and the Farallon team to actively engage with state and federal inter-agencies to determine a partner to lead on the ocean to enable us to work collectively and simultaneously on this effort from both sides. Let's have the framework of a coalition plan by August 2023.

Please issue these directives today.

Time is running out.

Our biggest concern is we are too late.

Thank you,

Save West Cliff

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