



(Kevin Painchaud / Lookout Santa Cruz)

STORMS 2023: ROAD TO RECOVERY

Save West Cliff to participate in Thursday city meeting, unveil new resources

BY MAX CHUN

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The City of Santa Cruz will host a community meeting Thursday about the status of West Cliff Drive repairs and the one-way pilot project for the storm-ravaged coastal roadway. Community group Save West Cliff will present resources of its own that it hopes will serve as a valuable resource to the agencies planning the road's future.

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The City of Santa Cruz will hold its first in-person community meeting Thursday regarding the current status of West Cliff Drive as the city's public works department continues to evaluate next steps for the iconic, [but severely damaged](#), scenic Santa Cruz road. Notably, resident group [Save West Cliff](#) will be participating for the first time after mostly watching and relaying information to curious residents since the violent winter storms hit.

The meeting will be held in three separate rooms at the London Nelson Community Center. City Public Works personnel will be in one room discussing progress on emergency repairs and the status of ongoing studies to determine the feasibility of turning at least one West Cliff-adjacent street [into a cul-de-sac to manage traffic issues](#) and [transforming a stretch of West Cliff Drive into a one-way street](#). The Public Works department is set to bring an official plan for that pilot project to the Santa Cruz City Council in May.

Climate initiative group Farallon Strategies will be in another room, laying out the roadmap for the plans in motion and breaking down their funding components.

In the third room, Save West Cliff will be presenting a book that contains a visual record of the coastal road, charting the striking coastal erosion over the past 100-plus years in order to better illustrate the imminent effects on the road, said Save West Cliff leader Al Ramadan.

"This helps people truly understand the existential threat that we're facing," he said. "This isn't about one-way or two-way, this is about no way."

In addition, Ramadan said the group will zero in on an area that stretches from the municipal wharf to Natural Bridges State Beach, dubbed the West Cliff Recreation Area, or WCRA, by community members, the City of Santa Cruz and Save West Cliff itself. As the area contains Lighthouse Field State Beach, Steamer Lane, Cowell Beach, the [famous surfer statue](#) and more, it should be a major priority, said Ramadan.

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"That's the place we love, and that's what we want to protect," he said, adding that the group has worked with the city and residents for three to four months now to get this area defined.

Former Santa Cruz Mayor Hilary Bryant, also a Save West Cliff leader, said she hopes the group's resources can be helpful in guiding the work of the multiple agencies in charge of the various parts of the WCRA.

"It's a way to take the land, sea and infrastructure and look at them holistically," she said. "That way we're able to move forward with whatever the community decides should be done with correct historical context, structure and backbone."



The area that has been dubbed the West Cliff Recreation Area. (Via Save West Cliff)

Further, Bryant said the group will encourage community input Thursday, and incorporate the public's comments into the resources as recovery continues.

"We want to make sure this is helpful and a robust tool for how we move forward," she said.

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Ramadan admitted that getting federal, local and state agencies on the same page is likely a long-term challenge, but said Save West Cliff has to start somewhere.

"Not everyone agrees on everything, but for us to truly get to a place where we can give our kids and grandkids at least a chance of having this, we've got to acknowledge that we've got a bigger existential threat," he said. "Let's get on with that."

Thursday's meeting takes place from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. in Rooms 3, 4 and 5 at the London Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St., at Laurel Street, Santa Cruz.

MAX CHUN

Max Chun is a locally grown reporter with an eye for community activism, human interest stories, and anything Santa Cruz.

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