

## LATEST HEADLINES

# Santa Cruz: Locals unite to ‘Save West Cliff’

Former Mayor Hilary Bryant co-founded the group



West Cliff is one of the iconic treasures of Santa Cruz County. A group has formed with the hashtag #savewestcliff to proactively envision and create a sustainable future for the area. (Shmuel Thaler – Santa Cruz Sentinel)

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SANTA CRUZ – To help coordinate the efforts of the city of Santa Cruz, local nonprofits and city residents to stabilize, repair and reimagine West Cliff Drive after recent storms caused multiple devastating collapses along the scenic street, a group of prominent locals have banded together and named their group Save West Cliff.

“The impact of the storms was so devastating for so many parts of our community,” said former Santa Cruz Mayor Hilary Bryant. “On West Cliff, we probably had 30 years of erosion in a couple of days. I live in a neighborhood behind it and I have never seen anything like that. It was astonishing how dramatic the impact was.”

According to Bryant, who leads the Save West Cliff effort alongside other founding members – such as Play Bigger CEO Al Ramadan, founder of Arrow Surfboards Bob Pearson and CEO of the Save the Waves Coalition Nik Strong-Cvetich – the group was formed to bring awareness to the damage and repair process and give community members a venue to voice their opinions about the roadway’s future.



January's atmospheric river storms battered much of West Cliff, causing major erosion and cliff failures. Most notably, this one between Woodrow Avenue and Columbia Street.  
(Shmuel Thaler – Santa Cruz Sentinel)

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“Oftentimes when you have these big infrastructural problems, the work is done within the government parameters and the community isn’t engaged until the very end,” said Bryant. “This feels like such an important space for so many people, not just in the immediate neighborhoods, but the entire community, and we wanted to encourage people to engage in the process early and participate in the conversation.”

Bryant explained that it was easy to rally numerous community members to the Save the West Cliff effort, not just those living nearby, because the “world-class recreation area” is shared by walkers, gawkers, runners, bicyclists and surfers from all over the city, county and beyond.

“It’s one of those places that we all have an attachment to for whatever reason,” said Bryant. “We all feel very passionate about it and want to protect and preserve the area for future generations.”

Opinions regarding West Cliff Drive’s future [vary](#), from permanently transforming portions into a one-way or closing off the street entirely to automobile traffic. Bryant points out that the group was formed to bring all the perspectives together despite how difficult that may be in a city populated by impassioned residents.

“This cannot be everything to everybody,” said Bryant. “People want to be heard and that’s going to be a big part of this. We want to bring as many people into the conversation as possible and share the information with our network and get people involved and get people engaged.”

Bryant and others in the group met virtually with Santa Cruz city staff in late January to discuss the repairs and long-term vision for West Cliff Drive. Bryant said that it was clear that city staff were just as passionate about the repairs and the roadway’s future but also shared the sentiment that a consensus has yet to be reached, which makes further community engagement essential.

“The city has certainly been receptive and responsive,” said Bryant. “I know that they are also meeting with neighbors who have been impacted. They’ve been really engaged and we just want to say that we are here to help.”

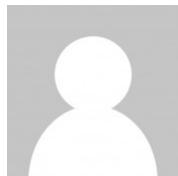
The city of Santa Cruz will host a virtual meeting on Zoom from 5:30-7 p.m. Feb. 13 to discuss the current plans and next steps for West Cliff Drive. The meeting will feature presentations from Tiffany Wise-West, climate action and sustainability manager with the city and Santa Cruz Public Works Director Nathan Nguyen.

The pair will review the damage done to West Cliff Drive, the repair process, the [2020 West Cliff Drive Adaptation and Management Plan](#) and the city’s plans moving forward.

For information about the meeting, visit [cityofsantacruz.com](#).

To join the Save the West Cliff group, visit [savewestcliff.com](#).

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