



# County of Santa Cruz 0331

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## REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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TOM BURNS, AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR

October 26, 2000

Agenda: November 7, 2000

Board of Supervisors  
County of Santa Cruz  
701 Ocean Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

### **Status of East Cliff Drive Stabilization and Pathway Project**

Dear Members of the Board:

For some time, the County and Redevelopment Agency have been involved in exploring options for enhancing public use of East Cliff Drive, in the Pleasure Point area. In particular, efforts have focused on providing a generous public walkway and bikeway along the roadway and stabilizing the underlying cliffs, which have been subject to periodic wave attack and erosion. (See Attachments 1 and 2 for location map and project description.) The purpose of this letter is to provide your Board with a status report on the overall project.

### **Background and History**

Failures of the cliffs along East Cliff Drive have occurred periodically over the past several decades. As it became clear that continued failures would ultimately undermine the roadway, public access through the area, and area utilities, the County and area residents were able, through the assistance of then-Congressman Panetta, to secure funding for a Corps of Engineers study of cliff stability issues in the area. That study, which was completed in 1994, concluded that cliff stabilization was critically needed and would qualify for federal funding.

In the meantime, significant additional cliff failures occurred in early 1994, resulting in restricting traffic on East Cliff Drive to one-way. This restriction caused a number of traffic circulation problems in adjoining neighborhoods. Because of these problems and the general interest in addressing long-term cliff stabilization and public access issues in the area, Supervisor Beautz established a citizens' task force to further evaluate the problem. That task force agreed on the following goals to guide further discussions:

- Given the scenic and recreational attraction of the area, it is essential that walking and bicycling along the cliff area be made as safe and enjoyable as possible;

- While many local residents might prefer complete closure of East Cliff Drive to through traffic, because of the unique qualities the area provides for the entire community as well as coastal visitors, one-way vehicle access should be maintained along East Cliff Drive;
- Because of the narrow width of local streets, the traffic circulation system should encourage through traffic to remain on East Cliff Drive, and where diversion of traffic is required, the impacts should be spread out throughout the neighboring streets; and
- In order to reduce the loading on the cliffs, vehicular traffic should be shifted as far as possible away from the cliff edge.

The recommendations of the Task Force were considered by the Board in 1995. At that time Public Works staff was directed to actively pursue outside funding for cliff stabilization projects in the area. Subsequent to that initial Board action, numerous activities have been taken by County Public Works and Redevelopment Agency staffs over the years towards initiating a project in the area, including:

- Construction of the first phase of cliff stabilization at Larch Lane;
- Receipt of funding from the State Department of Boating and Waterways of almost \$1 million towards additional cliff stabilization projects;
- Initial commitments from the Army Corps of Engineers for funding of approximately \$2 million for additional cliff stabilization projects;
- Numerous meetings have been held in the area with interested neighbors and task force members regarding the project; and
- Receipt of additional grants for a future pathway project and enhanced beach access in the area.

### **Recent Activity**

In the past year, as other projects have been completed, staff has had the opportunity to become more engaged in project design, financing and permit issues. An initial community design workshop was held last spring, with significant public attendance and participation. (Significant public concerns were expressed at that meeting regarding potential seawall impacts.) As well, your Board has approved contracts with outside consultants to refine the proposed cliff stabilization design and conduct preliminary environmental analysis on the project. The studies conclude that a cliff stabilization project, using a sculpted colored shotcrete facing can meet engineering and aesthetic requirements and can be built within the cliff stabilization project's budget of \$4.0 million. From a geologic perspective it appears, based upon the preliminary environmental studies, that the project would have little likelihood of impacting the adjacent beach or surf area.

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### **Next Steps**

We are tentatively scheduled to conduct the next community workshop on the project within the next six weeks and wanted an opportunity for the Board to review the direction of the project prior to that meeting. Staff believes that there are two potential tracks that can be taken on the project at this time. The first, based on the technical information we have received to date, would be to proceed through the permit process with a conditional negative declaration. The Planning Department has indicated that it believes such an action would be justified based upon the current technical information. On the other hand, given the high level of public controversy surrounding the project, the magnitude of the project, and the complexity of the environmental issues, the other option would be to proceed with preparation of an EIR for the project. While this approach would initially appear to be more time-consuming and costly, it often proves to be the wisest approach for a project with complex technical issues and public controversy. This is because preparation of an EIR requires consolidation of all the technical reports, an objective review of alternatives, and a structured public review process, thereby providing a thorough basis for decision making and a clear public record. Given the circumstances with this project, we believe that providing for a more thorough evaluation of the environmental concerns with the project through preparation of an EIR would be the most prudent approach.

In order for the project to proceed to possible construction in 2002, it is essential that the EIR process begin as soon as possible. (See Attachment 3 for proposed project schedule.) This will necessitate hiring an EIR consultant by early 2001 and completing the permit process by the end of the year. On a parallel track we will need to hire a consulting engineer to complete final plans. Finally, we will need to work with the Corps of Engineers and State Department of Boating and Waterways on project financing. As part of the financing process, the current budget indicates that approximately \$1 .0 million of local funding will need to be identified for the cliff stabilization portion of the project. In addition, we will need to define full financing for the pathway portion of the project.

### **Conclusion/Recommendation**

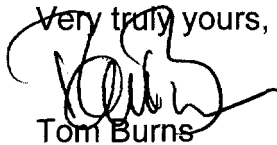
Completion of cliff stabilization and pedestrian, bikeway and beach access improvements in the Pleasure Point part of East Cliff Drive is a critical project for the County in order to maintain public access to this important area. In order to facilitate construction by 2002, it will be critical to proceed with the project engineering, permit process and financing in an expeditious fashion. It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board take the following actions:

1. Accept and file this status report on the East Cliff Drive Stabilization Project, including the project description provided for the project;

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2. Affirm the goals for the project as outlined in this letter and as presented to the Board in 1995;
3. Approve the project processing approach suggested in this letter, including the preparation of an EIR on an accelerated time line; and
4. Direct the Public Works Director, RDA Administrator, and Planning Director to take actions needed to assure that the project proceeds in a timely fashion consistent with the time line presented in this letter.

Very truly yours,

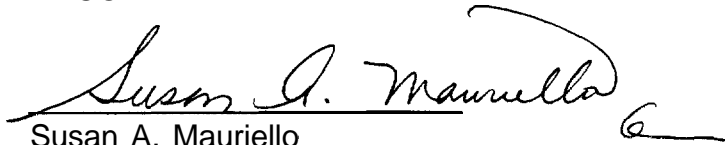


Tom Burns  
Redevelopment Agency Administrator



Thomas L. Bolich  
Director of Public Works

RECOMMENDED:

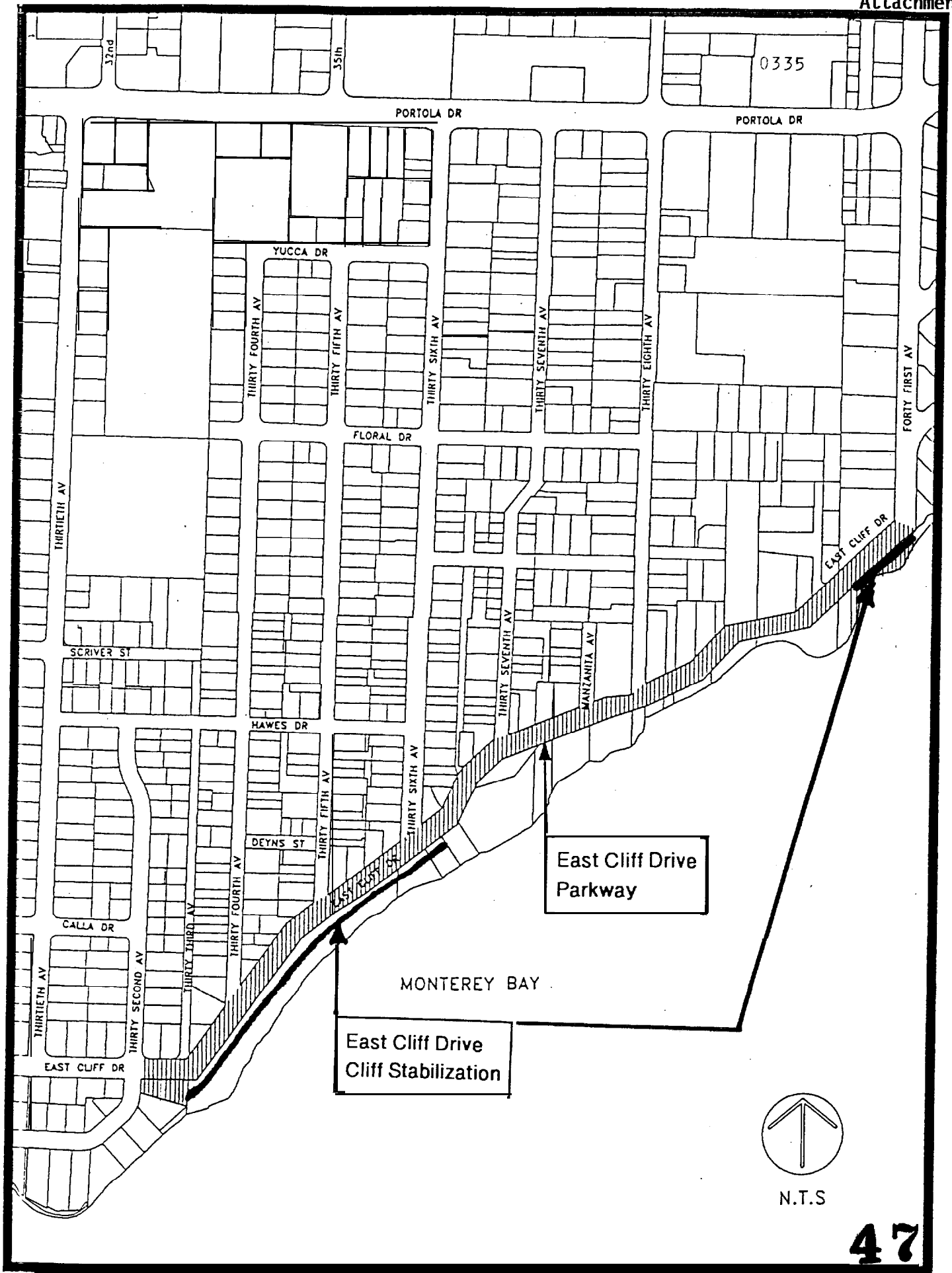


Susan A. Mauriello  
County Administrative Officer

Attachments

cc. RDA  
Planning Department  
Public Works  
Parks Department

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## **East Cliff Drive Cliff Stabilization and Pathway Project Proposed Project Description**

0336

The general project scope includes construction of engineered walls with a sculpted stained shotcrete facing in two locations, and the construction of new pedestrian and bicycle pathway improvements. One-way vehicle traffic is maintained between 32nd and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenues. A majority of the existing rock rip-rap and concrete rubble in the vicinity of the walls will be removed from the beaches.

### **Seawall Design (see Figures 1 and 2)**

The largest seawall is located between 33rd and 36th Avenues, the second seawall will be located at the Hook Overlook at the end of 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. In order to construct walls that protect the slope, look natural and provide access to the beach and surf, the shotcrete facing will be sculpted and stained to match the existing soils and rock, the wall will be designed to closely follow the existing natural cliff face, and stairways (two between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Avenues and one at 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue) will be incorporated into the seawall design. In a few locations, the wall will be constructed to reclaim cliff-top area lost in recent slipouts in order to construct pathway improvements.

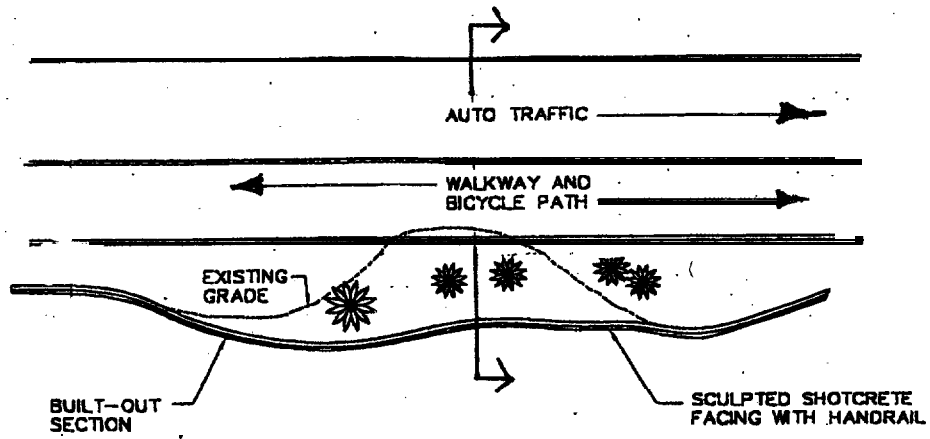
### **Pathway (see Figures 3 and 4)**

The pedestrian and bicycle pathway will be a minimum of 16 feet wide and located on the ocean side of the roadway. In order to accommodate different user groups two different surfaces will be used on the pathway - decomposed granite for walkers and asphalt concrete for bicyclists. Where there is sufficient room, the pathway will meander between the cliff-top and the roadway, permitting the planting of a natural landscape edge and the incorporation of viewing vantage points along the pathway.

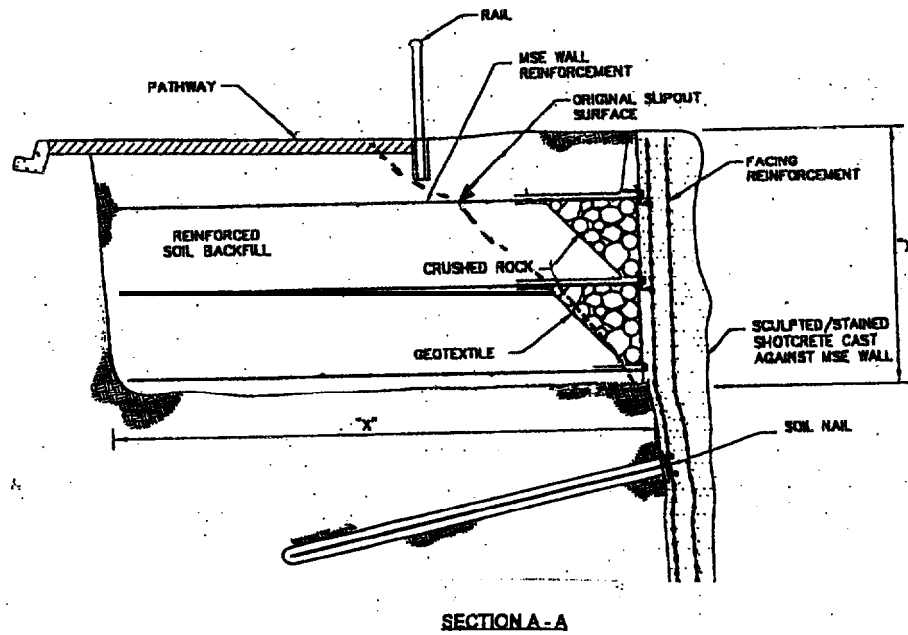
### **Roadway (see Figures 3 and 4)**

East Cliff Drive will remain one-way from 32<sup>nd</sup> to 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. The travel lane will be 16 feet wide except where additional width is needed to accommodate vehicle turning movements where the Avenues intersect East Cliff Drive. Pedestrian crosswalks will be incorporated into the final design. There will be no net loss of parking.



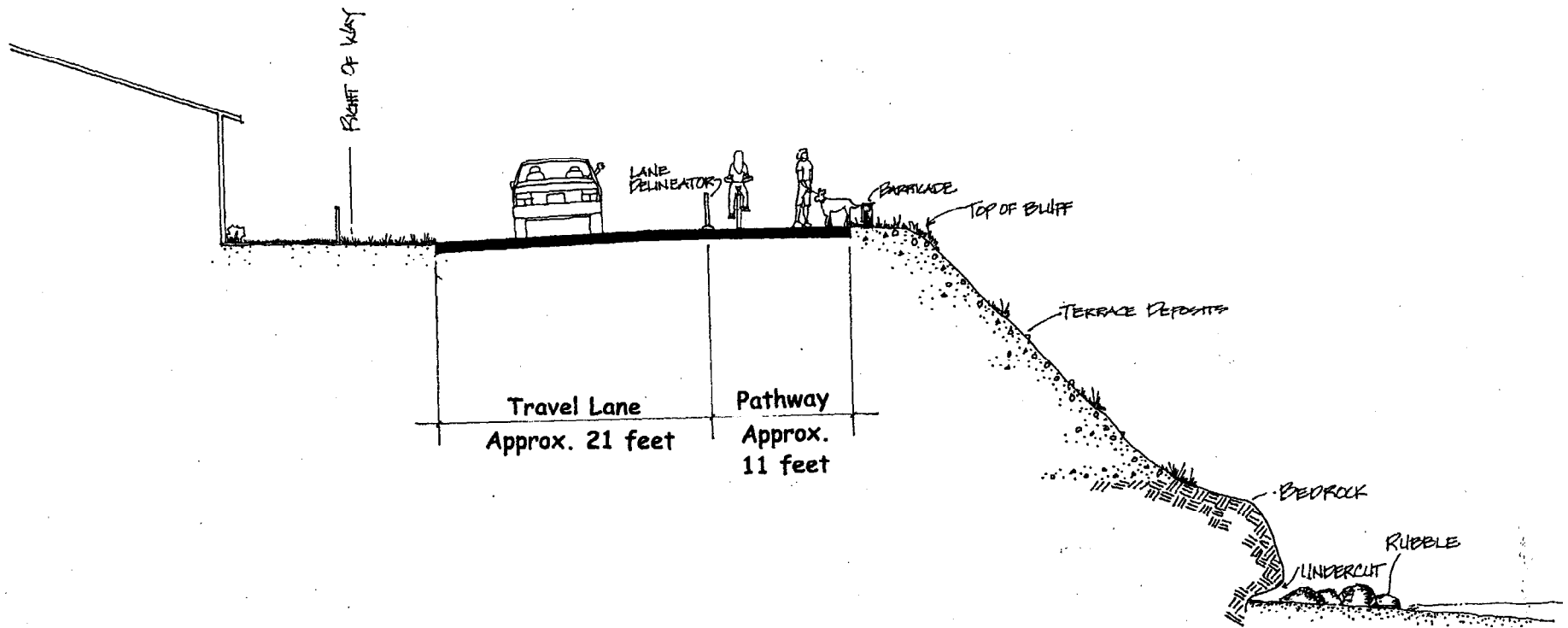


WALKWAY/BICYCLE PATH - PLAN



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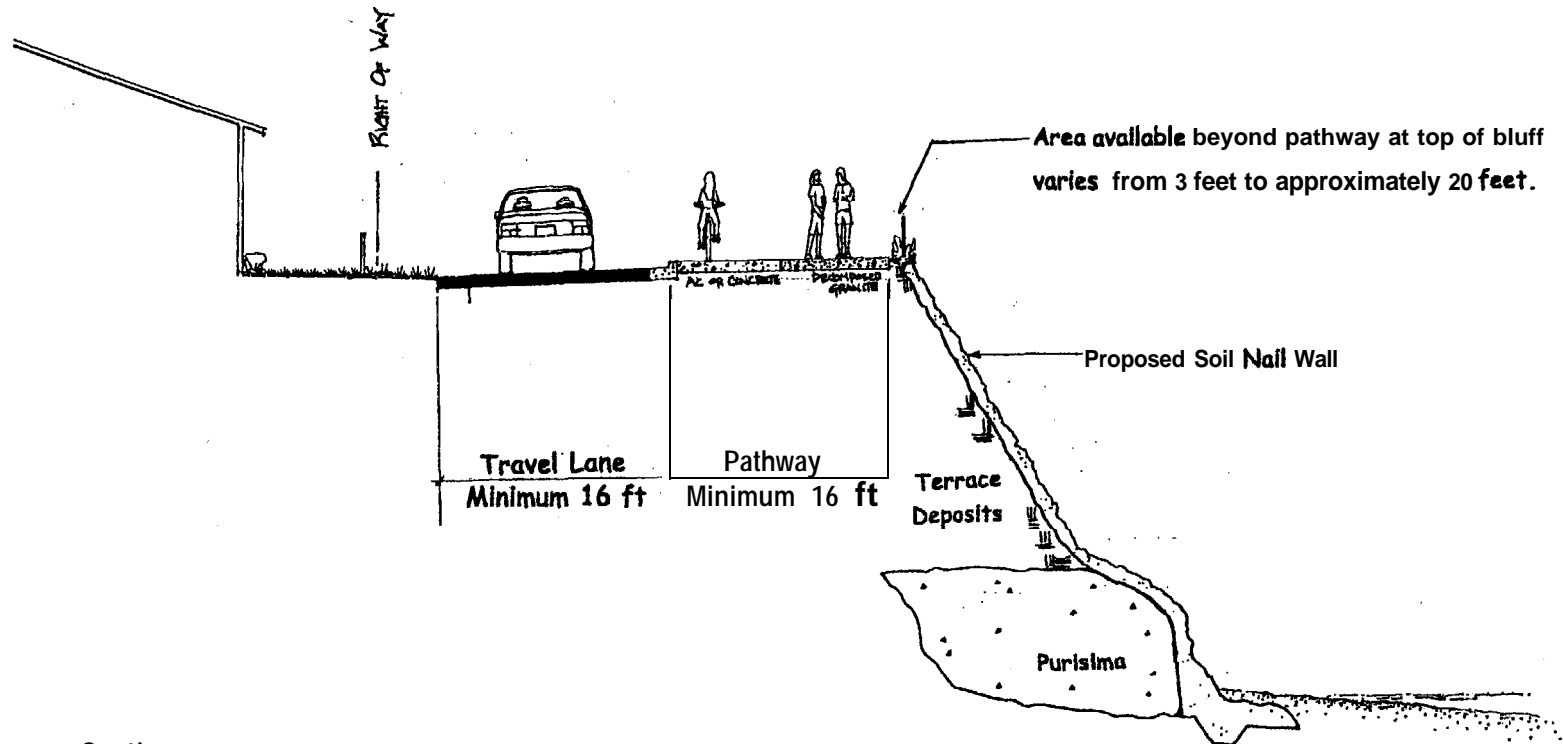


Section Existing Conditions  
East cliff Drive Parkway

Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency

FIGURE 3

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Section  
East Cliff Drive Parkway  
 Santa Cruz County Redevelopment Agency

FIGURE 4

**East Cliff Drive Cliff Stabilization and Pathway Project  
Proposed Project Schedule**

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|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| <b>Community Meeting</b>  | December 2000              |
| <b>Conceptual Design Complete</b>   | November 2000              |
| <b>Permit Process</b>   |                            |
| Application Submitted   | November 2000              |
| Draft Environmental impact Report Released  | May 2001                   |
| Public Comment Period   | May - June 2001            |
| Final Environmental Impact Report Released  | August 2001                |
| Public Hearing  | October 2001               |
| Other Permits Finalized   | December 2001              |
| <b>Final Design</b>   |                            |
| Cliff Stabilization   | March 2001 - December 2001 |
| Pathway Improvements  | June 2001 - March 2002     |
| <b>Army Corps of Engineers</b>  |                            |
| Plan Review & Coordination  | June 2001 - December 2001  |
| Funding Confirmed   | September 2001             |
| Project Coordination Agreement Approved   | December 2001              |
| <b>Cliff Stabilization Bidding &amp; Construction</b><br>(by Army Corps of Engineers) |                            |
| Advertise Bid   | January - February 2002    |
| Award Contract  | March 2002                 |
| Construction  | April 2002 -September 2002 |
| <b>Pathway Improvements Bidding &amp; Construction</b><br>(by County of Santa Cruz)   |                            |
| Advertise Bid   | May 2002                   |
| Award Contract  | June 2002                  |
| Construction  | July - November 2002       |