

Citizens' Group In Consensus On Lighthouse Field Park Plan

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A proposal to close West Cliff Drive on weekends was rejected Thursday night by more than 75 community members who reached a consensus on what should be included in the development of Lighthouse Field State Beach.

A San Francisco consulting firm, hired to draft the development proposal, will now interpret that consensus and present a final draft proposal to the Lighthouse Field Advisory Committee, which is expected to hold a public hearing for further comment.

Approval of the eventual development plan for the 36-acre oceanfront property must come from the Santa Cruz City Council, the county Board of Supervisors, Coastal Commission and state Parks Commission.

Thursday night's meeting was the third and last in a series of workshops designed to involve local residents in the initial planning process.

CHNMB Associates, the planning consultants hired to draft the plan, presented a composite drawing Thursday night of ideas expressed at the first two workshops.

There was little comment on the major

elements of the design of the park, which include the following:

- Trails — Low key decomposed granite paths following existing field pathways within the field and separate asphalt bike and concrete pedestrian paths on the perimeter.

- Planting — Some new planting of trees, shrubs and grasses to enhance existing planting.

- Turf — Minor area of lawn, irrigated for picnicking and unstructured play north of the lighthouse and adjacent to parking lot and minimal new restroom facility.

- Pond — Minimal improvements for a seasonal pond and streamlet.

It has been clear from the start that workshop participants and the majority of some 500 persons responding to a written questionnaire prefer only minimal development of the field. Thus, the plan presented Thursday night provided no provision for concessions or other structured facilities.

Parking will be provided near the lighthouse and at both ends of the field on West Cliff Drive at Pelton Avenue and Columbia Street. By the end of the night, the lot near Pelton Avenue was scaled down from 150 spaces to about 75 when workshop participants voted not to block off West Cliff on weekends.

Residents who live on side streets, such as Pelton and Manor and Monterey avenues and Columbia Street, led objections to the proposed closure, fearing their streets would be clogged by the estimated 6,000 cars which travel West Cliff Drive on summer Saturdays and Sundays.

Minor realignment of West Cliff Drive away from the cliffs at eroded zones and curbing to keep vehicles out of the field was endorsed Thursday night, but workshop participants voted down a proposal to re-route West Cliff around the perimeter of the field.

Re-routing did have support and appears likely to be proposed again when the Lighthouse Field Advisory Committee holds public hearings on the plan.

Cost of the design elements was placed at slightly more than \$1 million and annual maintenance at \$86,000.