

# Coastal Commission will hear bike-path appeals

*Bicycle Paths*  
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The state Coastal Commission has agreed to hear an appeal against the city's plan to widen the West Cliff Drive bike path.

**SANTA  
CRUZ**

The Coastal Commission received three appeals to the project and is scheduled to hear the challenges next month.

The Santa Cruz City Council has approved the project and rejected an appeal filed last month, but the Coastal Commission has final say.

The \$1 million project will widen the path to 14 feet on a 2.5 mile section between Bay Street and Swanton Boulevard by narrowing the road to a minimum of 22 feet on 6 percent of the road.

City planners say the project will slow vehicle traffic and give pedestrians, cyclists and other path users more elbow room.

The West Cliff Drive Owners Association and two Santa Cruz residents filed the appeals, arguing the project poses problems for the ocean-front neighborhood.

"Right now we feel we're on the winning side," said David Britton, president of the homeowners group.

Britton says the project poses a safety hazard because fast-moving cyclists who travel the road will have to ride the path once the road is narrowed. Britton and West Cliff Drive residents also say a narrowed road would slow emergency vehicle response and construction could impact the fragile cliff-side environment.

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Britton also says the city needs to prepare a comprehensive plan for West Cliff Drive before proceeding. Because the Coastal Commission has made the same point, he said the argument has the best chance with the agency.

"That may be the most potent ammunition," Britton said.

Susan Craig, Coastal Commission planner, said the commission's concerns were expressed in the appeals and her agency did not need to appeal as well.

Construction was supposed to begin this fall, but bids came in over budget. The project has been sent out to bid again, and construction is expected to begin this spring.

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