

# Mall foes march through Seacliff

## Project opponents asking county to change parcel's commercial zoning

By MARINA MALIKOFF  
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APTOS — Opponents of a proposed shopping center near Seacliff State Beach marched through Seacliff Saturday, snarling traffic in their wake.

"If you think traffic is bad with us marching, you should see it when we get a mall in," said one protester.

Singing songs, waving an American flag and hoisting signs reading "Parks Not Malls," and "Stop the Malling of Aptos," nearly 100 residents and community members took the block-long protest to the fenced-off property at Sea Ridge Road and McGregor Drive. The grassy 3 acres is vacant except for a Barry Swenson Builders project sign.

Swenson representatives began a series of community meetings late last year to discuss the company's interest in building a nine-store, 31,000-square-foot shopping center that would be anchored by a New Leaf Community Market.

Project critics say the mall would destroy the town's village-like atmosphere, create traffic congestion, and threaten the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary at the foot of the village.

"We cannot see putting a strip mall on this corner," Pepper Goleish said. "We feel like we are a village, and we don't want to look like a big town."

Goleish is a member of the Coalition to Stop the Seacliff Strip Mall, which organized the march.

"We are also concerned with runoff into the sanctuary," said Surfrider Foundation representative Boots McGhee. "The more concrete and asphalt we put down, the more runoff we have, and that is a detriment to the sanctuary."

The county Board of Supervisors in December asked the Planning Commission to make a zoning recommendation for the property. Protesters said they are attempting to have the parcel re-zoned from commercial use back to the visitor-serving designation it had until 1994.

"This should be saved as open space because if it becomes a mall, it will disfigure the whole bucolic nature of Seacliff," resident Jeanne Davies said.

A neighborhood park or tourism-related use such as a marine museum or a small bed and breakfast would be more appropriate, protesters said.

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