

# Lighthouse Field

## proposal on agenda

### West Cliff Drive may be moved

SANTA CRUZ — A plan to improve Lighthouse Field, including a controversial proposal to move West Cliff Drive 40 feet from the eroding coastline, will be considered by the Santa Cruz City Council Tuesday night.

Consultants are scheduled to unveil a proposal for building restrooms, additional parking and picnic areas and improving the natural trails of Lighthouse Field, possibly with a layer of decomposed granite.

But the issue expected to grab the most attention is a suggestion to move West Cliff Drive a maximum of 30 to 40 feet from the Lighthouse west to Columbia Street and east to the first turn-out area.

The city's Public Works Department estimates that moving the scenic road from the eroding cliffs would save the city about \$200,000 a year.

City engineers say moving the street will cost \$110,000. Erosion control measures to protect the scenic drive will cost \$320,000 a year, plus \$15,000 to \$20,000 annually for maintenance.

City Manager Richard Wilson has recommended that the council approve the move, pointing to how much money it would save the city.

Besides, when it comes to erosion, the state would rather switch than fight.

It costs a lot of money to battle erosion, Wilson said, and the state's policy is that "it makes more sense to adjust your development plans."

The erosion is so badly in some areas, particularly along the footpaths, that the city has placed blinking road barricades in the street.

To make room for the realignment of West Cliff Drive, 10 parking spaces at the Lighthouse were to have been removed and added at the east end of the lot by Pelton Street.

The Lighthouse Field Advisory Committee deleted this recommendation from the consultant's plan after residents complained it would worsen traffic in their neighborhood, said city Parks and Recreation Director Jim Lang.

Much of the protests against realigning the street come from the West Cliff Drive Preservation Committee, a coalition of surfers, West Cliff Drive residents and local property owners.

Chairman Gus Michell questioned the long-term savings of moving West Cliff Drive. The realignment, Michell said, "will remove something historic from Santa Cruz ... people enjoy that they can drive along the road and watch the waves and the surfers."

His group favors realigning West Cliff Drive only in the three spots where it is the worst.

The city's consultant has been contracted to come up with a plan to develop a park at the popular recreational area. In 1978 the state purchased the 36 acres for \$5 million.

In May the state Parks and Recreation Commission approved a General Plan for Lighthouse Field State Beach, calling for low-key improvements in the natural trails and a review of road and parking safety.

Franks said the realignment "wouldn't be that much" and the road will be reconstructed so as to slow traffic along the scenic thoroughfare.

Other parts of the plan call for moving the parking area so that it faces Monterey Bay, rather than the street.

The city and the county share a joint powers agreement to come up with a plan to develop the park. The plan must then be approved by the state.

The City Council is scheduled to hear the Lighthouse Field development plan during its 7:30 p.m. session at City Hall.