



Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel

The city will pay for roughly 10 percent of the \$1.9 million trestle replacement project. The state and Union Pacific Railroad will pay for the rest.

City plans trestle rebuild

Project would reopen West Cliff bridge to cars

By **INGA MILLER**

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Bridges

SANTA CRUZ — One of Santa Cruz's historic transportation structures might be the answer to one of its contemporary problems: afternoon traffic jams between downtown and the beach.

Construction crews will begin removing the chain-link fence surrounding the old wooden railroad trestle on West Cliff Drive as early June. It will be the first step in re-building the decrepit bridge and opening it once again to auto traffic.

"We want a lane for cars, and a bike lane," said Hank Myers, who is in charge of bridge construction for the city. He said pedestrian lanes in both directions are also part of the plan.

The shortcut has been open to joggers and cyclists only since 1992 when the bridge was deemed unsafe for cars. The entire bridge, with the exception of its

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historic "howtress," or wooden arches, will be demolished, and rebuilt.

The cost is estimated at \$1.9 million. The city will pay about \$190,000, with another 10 percent from Union Pacific Railroad, which owns the trestle. The state Department of Transportation will pick up the rest of the tab.

"I think it's going to enhance the area quite a bit," Myers said, noting the attention planners are spending on detail. Old-fashioned lamps are one of the charms planned. The project will go out to bid after final approval from Caltrans, Myers said.

A step in that direction was made Tuesday when the City Council voted unanimously to condemn the adjacent slope owned by Vieira Drywall & Taping for two easements the company was unwilling to grant. The easements are necessary for trestle construction. Compensation for the easements has yet to be decided.