

## Harbor-to-Pleasure Point bike-pedestrian link closer to reality

by Kurtis Alexander

LIVE OAK — " Tom Sullivan, owner of Amsterdam Bicycles on East Cliff Drive, knows all too well the problem with riding from his shop at 12th Avenue toward Santa Cruz: the narrow and sometimes harrowing stretch of road along Schwan Lake.

The two or three times a day he heads that way, alongside what he suspects are 500 bicyclists a day on the popular East Cliff Drive route, he hopes he doesn't fall prey to fast cars, a sloping roadway and a tiny shoulder.

"It's a nice turn with a deep bank there," Sullivan said. "I'm pretty sure someone eats it every month."

The section of East Cliff Drive, absent of sidewalks and with little road to share, is one of many similar traffic hang-ups between Santa Cruz Harbor and Pleasure Point. The obstacles mar what would otherwise be a peaceful jaunt for bicyclists and pedestrians along the picturesque Monterey Bay.

Three major construction projects, at a cost of about \$13 million, are now in the works that are expected to make the walk or ride a safer, more carefree experience.

- Starting at the harbor, bike lanes and pedestrian paths recently completed on Lake Avenue will be extended along Twin Lakes Beach and up East Cliff Drive around Schwan Lake.

- Continuing on East Cliff Drive, from 17th Avenue to 32nd Avenue, bike lanes will be widened and a separate walkway will be built.

- And farther along East Cliff Drive, between 32nd Avenue and 41st Avenue, road work is scheduled to accompany the seawall project, improving the street for one-way automobile traffic and adding separate bike and pedestrian paths.

Each of the plans comes with a number of extras, too. Signs that describe local ecology, picnic areas with newly landscaped trees and benches and even a beach shower at 32nd Avenue play into a regional vision of a recreational trail stretching the entire length of the Monterey Bay.

Some neighborhood groups had pushed for even grander improvements, like a continuous "esplanade" with no road-crossings along sections of coastline. Such ideas, though, were doomed by logistical concerns and property issues.

Mobility for bikes and pedestrians remains the priority for pushing forward.

"It'll be safe to travel on bike or walk for a good part of Live Oak after these projects are complete," said county Supervisor John Leopold. "With two daughters, the idea of biking from the Hook to the yacht harbor is now an exercise in risk-taking."

The improvements will be paid for mostly by the county's Redevelopment Agency, which unlike most public agencies has a windfall of cash. Per state law, the agency receives a fraction of local property taxes that it must spend on local projects.

The funding is included in the agency's budget this year.

The projects, said Redevelopment Agency Director Betsey Lynberg, will be done in phases, with the Pleasure Point section expected to be completed next year and the section along Schwan Lake as well as 17th-Avenue-to-32nd-Avenue section the following year.

The final segment along Twin Lakes Beach is due in 2013.

### **EAST-WEST CORRIDOR**

Several projects are in the pipeline that will make it easier for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel between Santa Cruz Harbor and 41st Avenue in Pleasure Point.

Among the major efforts, from west to east:

■ Twin Lakes beachfront: New pedestrian paths and expanded bike lanes will be built on East Cliff Drive between Fifth Avenue and 12th Avenue, providing a continuous route along the beach and a safer trek up the narrow stretch along Schwan Lake. The Schwan Lake section is scheduled to be done in 2011. The beachfront work is currently in the design phase and isn't expected to be complete until 2013.

■ East Cliff Drive between 17th Avenue and 32nd Avenue: Bike lanes will be expanded to a minimum of five feet and a separate 4- to 8-foot-wide pathway will be built alongside East Cliff Drive. Plans to make this one-mile section of road a one-way route for cars, like the Pleasure Point section, have been dropped. The work is expected to be done in 2011.

■ Pleasure Point Parkway Project: An 8-foot-wide pedestrian path and a separate 8-foot-wide bicycle/multi-use trail will accompany plans to rebuild East Cliff Drive above the new seawall, between 32nd Avenue and 41st Avenue. The road will remain a one-way route for cars. The work is expected to be done next year.