

No easy answers for Pebble Beach Drive

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Living on the magnificent Pacific can have its challenges, that's for certain.

Crescent City Manager Eric Wier declared "...it was a wet and wild weekend" as he addressed the City Council, last Tuesday for an update on the crumbling cliffs along iconic Pebble Beach Drive. In the interests of public safety, the City barricaded Pebble Beach Drive between 7th and 8th streets. The road will remain closed until further notice.

Wier told councilors the collapsed bluff will require full buffeted support and along the length of the bluff from the road down to the coastline, and deep into the earth. The slide covered a width of between 50-75 ft and plummeted 30 ft underneath Pebble Beach Drive to the shoreline.

The road is unsafe for vehicle or pedestrian access. Wier strongly reiterated the public should not frequent this immediate area of Pebble Beach Drive. The remainder of this celebrated road is secure and safe for both north and south of the slide area.

Wier told councilors the design of this support system is approximately 20-30 percent complete, pending additional testing and studies requests from the California Coastal Commission (CCC). Upon completion of the design component, the Coastal Commission permitting process will follow. The actual construction of the stabilization of the compromised bluff will follow CCC approval Wier continued, "... City portion of the stabilization was \$30 million back in 2020. Now, through inflation, the costs have risen approximately \$3-4 million." To date there has been no Federal or State approval of funding from the tumultuous December 2016 storm surge and the application under the Coastal Stabilization Plan remains unfunded.

The financing solution looms ominously.

Wier spoke about advanced funding as an extremely remote and unfeasible option. This process involves the City up fronting all the funding and requesting reimbursement from the Federal Highway Administration at 88 percent, California Dept. of Transportation, 9 Percent and the City's portion would 3 percent but the City would be tasked to up-front all costs, an option deemed unrealistic by the City Manager.

The County also faces bluff challenges on its portion of Pebble Beach Drive, North to Preston Island. That project is estimated to cost about \$60 million. The City is meeting with engineering consultants to evaluate its options.

Indeed, living on the ocean has its challenges.