

DISASTER OR EMERGENCY CONSTRUCTION REPAIR

$5 TO $25 MILLION

PROJECTS OF THE YEAR
APWA
Public Works
AWARD WINNER
2026

WEST CLIFF DRIVE EMERGENCY REPAIRS

Managing Agency: City of Santa Cruz Public Works
Primary Contractor: Granite Construction Company
Primary Consultant: MME Civil + Structural Engineering
Nominated By: APWA Monterey Bay Chapter

The West Cliff Drive Emergency Repairs project in Santa Cruz, California, was a $21.5 million response to severe coastal damage caused by January 2023 atmospheric river storms and high surf. The storms caused bluff erosion, roadway collapse, and infrastructure failures at multiple sites along West Cliff Drive.

Repair locations included sites at 920, 932, 944, 960, and 1016 West Cliff Drive, as well as the Bethany Creek Culvert. Damage ranged from collapsed revetments and roadways to sinkholes, bluff failures, and structural undermining. Repairs involved constructing retaining walls, revetments, and culvert replacements, often under uncertain subsurface conditions.

As unexpected conditions arose during construction, solutions were found and implemented in real time. These included mass concrete walls, grouted rock revetments, pier-supported structures, and culvert reconstruction with improved hydraulic capacity and coastal resilience. The team also incorporated durability features such as corrosion-resistant materials and erosion mitigation strategies.





An accelerated timeline made close collaboration between the city, engineers, and contractors essential. This was accomplished using the construction manager at risk (CMAR) delivery method. This enabled rapid design adjustments, cost control, and efficient construction despite challenging marine conditions and ongoing storms.

Environmental controls included management of construction sites to avoid inadvertent discharges to Bethany Creek or the ocean. The work activities were scheduled according to the tide schedules to reduce the risk of mixing seawater with construction operations.





Robust fall protection systems were installed for the construction crew. Fencing, signage, and other traffic controls were used to keep the public safe during construction.

The city put up a dedicated website, newsletter, QR-coded project signs, and contact list for all West Cliff issues. The results of the project are restored roadway access, improved coastal resilience, and strengthened infrastructure against future storm impacts.