

Seacliff Improvement Association



Fall 2025

SIA is Looking for New Board Members

Emily Chorba
SIA President

The Seacliff Improvement Association is committed to fostering collaboration with county government, promoting civic improvement, advancing public works, enhancing environmental beauty, and conserving natural resources. Achieving these objectives depends on the active participation of dedicated members.

We are seeking candidates to fill two board vacancies. After one year of service, board members may be considered for officer roles such as President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, or Membership Chair. We also require a volunteer to manage website updates using WordPress. If you are organized and committed to improving our neighborhood, your involvement would be greatly appreciated.

The board meets on the second Tuesday of each month for approximately 90 minutes, with meetings held in person when possible and via Zoom as needed.

Take the next step in making a difference—join the Seacliff Improvement Association board and help shape the future of our community. Your skills and dedication can have a lasting impact. Contact us today at info@seacliffimprovement.org to express your interest or request more information. We encourage you to seize this opportunity to serve and lead.

Thank you for considering this important opportunity to serve the SIA and our community. We look forward to hearing from you soon.



Thanks for Coming!



Update from the 2nd District

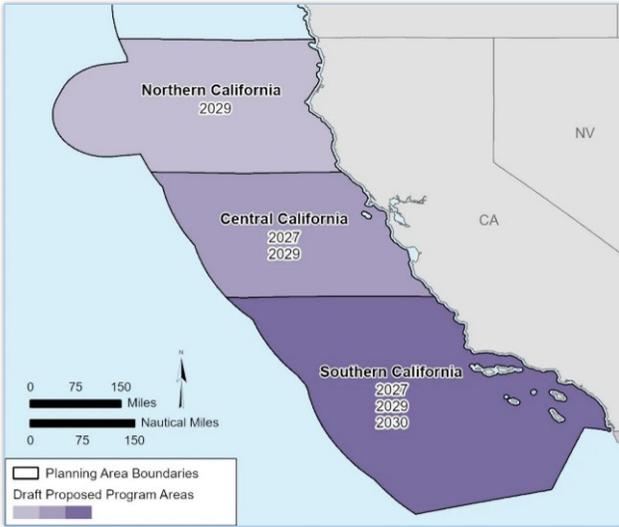
Kim De Serpa
Second District
Supervisor

As we close out the year, I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your 2nd District Supervisor. It has been a full and lively season here along the coast, and I truly appreciate everyone who has reached out, stopped me in the neighborhood, or taken a moment to stay engaged in local issues. Whether you're celebrating the holidays, spending time with loved ones, or simply enjoying a quieter stretch of the year, I hope this season brings you some peace and comfort.

Over these past months, many of you have shared concerns about storm impacts, safety, road conditions, and the day-to-day challenges in our coastal neighborhoods. These conversations guide my work every single day, and I'm grateful for the steady partnership and community spirit that makes our district such a special place.

Protecting Our Coastline: Public Comments Needed

Santa Cruz County has always defended its coastline—from early grassroots efforts like Save Our Shores to partnerships that secured lasting protections for Monterey Bay. We're being called to do that again.



The federal government is proposing new offshore oil drilling off California, including here along the Central Coast. That threatens our beaches, marine life, fisheries, and coastal economy.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) has opened a 60-day public comment period. I'll be submitting my own comment, and I'm asking you to add your voice as well. Comments are due **January 23, 2026**.

Visit the [BOEM Comment Page](#) and select **Submit a Public Comment** on the right side of the page.

Scam/Fraud Prevention Workshop

It's always a good time to brush up on how to protect yourself from the most common scams impacting our community. Join District Attorney Jeff Rossell and Aptos Community Policing Sergeant Travis Huntsman for a practical, informative session on keeping your finances and your family safe.

Friday, December 12

3:00-4:30 PM

Cabrillo Horticulture Center, 6500 Soquel Drive, Room 5005

For more information, contact my office at **(831) 454-2200**.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) Ordinance

Many residents have asked where things stand on the County's Battery Energy Storage Systems ordinance. This isn't a vote on a particular project – it's the rulebook that will guide how these facilities are sited, built, and monitored. The clock is ticking. Without clear local rules in place, or if those rules become too restrictive, developers can bypass Santa Cruz County and go straight to the state. That would limit our ability to require stronger safety standards. The Board has asked staff to return with a revised ordinance that reflects community input while keeping decision-making local.

Supporting Food Security

When federal SNAP benefits were disrupted earlier this fall, many families, older adults, and people with disabilities suddenly faced uncertainty. Local grocery stores were bracing for major losses as well.

What happened next was remarkable—individuals, small businesses, and local governments rallied to help Second Harvest Food Bank fill the gap. If you donated or volunteered: thank you.

Even with SNAP restored, the need remains high. Second Harvest estimates that **1 in 4 Santa Cruz County residents** relies on food assistance. If you're considering end-of-year giving, please remember the organizations feeding our community: [Meals on Wheels](#), [Grey Bears](#), [Teen Kitchen Project](#), [Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes](#), and others that provide thousands of meals each week. They rely on steady community support to keep up with demand.

Power Reliability and Fire Safety

Power outages were a major frustration for many District 2 residents this year. After meeting with PG&E and hosting a large town hall at Seascapes Resort, we pushed for clearer notices, better wildfire-season coordination, and faster response times. PG&E has since completed several upgrades in the greater Aptos area and committed to improving communication before and during outages. Winter storms may still cause brief interruptions, but service should be more stable than it was over the summer. I'll keep pressing for improvements as we head into next fire season.

Community Investments Moving Forward

Great things are happening across District 2. We recently celebrated the groundbreaking of Treasure Cove, Capitola's first universally accessible playground and the third in the county—an inspiring example of community spaces that welcome everyone.

District 2 also received the first **Measure Q environmental grant: \$720,000** to restore Freedom Lake next to Scott Park. Years of overgrowth and invasive species have hidden its potential. This funding will help restore habitat, clear the lake, and return the area to a healthier, more welcoming space.

Thank you for your continued engagement, and I wish you all a joyful and peaceful holiday season.

Supervisor Kim De Serpa

Second.district@santacruzcountyca.gov

(831) 454-2200

[Sign up for my newsletter!](#)

SIA Change of Nonprofit Tax Status Approved

The Seacliff Improvement Association members approved a change of tax status from 501(c)4 to 501(c)3. This change was in response to missed donation opportunities because our association is not currently a tax deductible non-profit.

Converting to 501(c)(3) status involves amending our articles of incorporation, bylaws, and administrative procedures to comply with 501(c)(3) rules. The SIA board will begin the tax status change in 2026.



Let's Stay Safe in Seacliff

Travis Huntsman

Santa Cruz County Sherriff Sergeant, Aptos Service Center

Hello everyone! I want to take this opportunity in to provide some community safety information, as well as information to help report criminal activity in our neighborhood. Community vigilance and law enforcement partnerships are great ways to increase overall safety for our communities. The Sheriff's Office values our partnerships within the community, and we are always looking for opportunities to strengthen these bonds.

Over the past several months, we have seen an uptick in theft-related activity with numerous residential burglaries that were reported in the greater Aptos area, as well as other theft-related crimes. While these burglaries appeared to have been committed by the same individual and there has not been any significant loss of property, it's a good opportunity to talk about safety as it relates to your residence, as well as personal safety.

Generally, thefts are crimes of opportunity, meaning that criminals are looking for the easy snatch and grab of your personal property. This could mean smashing a car window to grab a purse or backpack left in plain view, or entering an unlocked garage door on a dark side yard to see what can be stolen. Here are a few tips to help keep your residence safer from this type of criminal activity:

-  Make it harder to gain entry of doors and windows with secure locks and check regularly
-  Light the perimeter using motion lights and or outdoor lighting
-  Trim the landscaping around your home
-  Make your home look occupied using smart lights and sound-producing devices
-  Install visible deterrents including alarms and cameras
-  Create a [Neighborhood Watch](#)
-  Lock it up—check doors and windows of vehicles and your home
-  Avoid broadcasting your absence and expensive purchases on social media

While all crime cannot be completely deterred, you can take proactive steps to increase security and watch out for suspicious activity. What makes someone suspicious? Consider suspicious people and or vehicles:

- ✓ Do they seems out of place, have not been seen in the neighborhood before?
- ✓ Should they be there?
- ✓ Are they displaying odd behaviors or actions?
- ✓ Do they appears to be loitering with no apparent business in the area?

So, you believe there is a suspicious person sitting in a vehicle outside your neighbor's house. What do you do? **Call DISPATCH! 831.471.1121** for non-emergencies and **911** for emergencies. Don't fall into the belief that "Someone else will call." Take the opportunity to make the report. Dispatch is going to ask lots of questions. It's ok if you don't have all the answers. Do your best to explain why you believe this person or vehicle is suspicious. If its safe to do so, try and get a license plate or better yet, a photo(s) of the person or vehicle, to show the deputy that responds.

Now, let's review some considerations for personal safety while out in our community:

1. Be intentionally aware of your surroundings
2. Trust your instincts, your ability to perceive danger is far greater than you might think
3. Stay Connected, let friends or family know where you're going and when to expect you back
4. Move with purpose
5. Try and stay in well-lit areas at night, parking lots, streets, or other places where there are not a lot of people
6. Keep valuables subtle; flashy jewelry and accessories can make you a target unknowingly
7. Know your exits and safe spots. Consider an emergency in a supermarket or business. What is the best route to get to safety?
8. Use de-escalation tactics, if confronted with hostility, stay calm, move away, and look for opportunities to remove yourself from the situation.
9. Carry personal tools, there are numerous products that are designed for personal protection and self-defense. If you choose to carry these items, have a plan and know when you intend to use them.



I discussed several topics in this article. I hope that one or two of the above items can help you be a little safer in our community. If you have questions that specifically pertain to your neighborhood or are interested in discussing these topics in greater detail, please feel free to send me an [email](#).

Visit the Santa Cruz County Sheriff [website](#) where you can get more information about crime prevention, statistics—including the county [crime map](#), [request a vacation check](#), and [volunteer opportunities](#).

I hope you all have a happy, healthy, and safe holiday. As we wind down another year, I wanted to take this opportunity to

Thank You All for supporting the Sheriff's Office and being community partners. As a lifelong resident of this community, I am blessed to have the opportunity to serve the community that raised me, as I raise my own family.



Order Your Dogs of Seacliff 2026 Calendar!

Our first annual Dogs of Seacliff Calendar has had a very enthusiastic response. There were over 70 dog photos submitted! This is a limited edition - only 100 ordered - with approximately 70 already sold.

Calendars are \$30 each and can be ordered at: [Dogs of Seacliff Calendar 2026](#). Contact Samantha Olden directly at 831-252-0657 if you prefer to pay by check. Calendars will be delivered before Christmas. 100% of the proceeds are being donated to the SIA!



Community Update: Seacliff Improvement Efforts and Volunteer Opportunities

Emily Chorba
SIA President

The Seacliff Improvement Association (SIA) board, neighbors, and our dedicated working group have been actively expanding our advocacy for Seacliff residents throughout the State Parks planning process. Our outreach includes engagement with California State Parks, state legislative representatives, our local Supervisor, and other key stakeholders to ensure that community voices are heard and respected.

Petition Drive: Protecting Seacliff's Upper-Level Open Space

We recently launched a petition to preserve the upper-level day-use parking and maintain the open field at Seacliff, reflecting the original vision for "Foster Field" as a green, welcoming space for both residents and visitors. This petition, which has already gathered over 500 signatures and continues to grow, clearly states our opposition to any proposals for camping or RV parking on the upper bluff level.



Bluff at Seacliff State Beach

Why Oppose Camping and RV Parking on the Upper Bluff?

Allowing camping and increased RV traffic on the upper bluff would fundamentally change the character of our neighborhood. Extensive studies have shown that higher volumes of RV traffic are closely associated with increased noise and air pollution, as well as greater environmental degradation. For example, research from the National Park Service and several urban planning organizations indicates that areas with significant RV presence experience a marked rise in 24/7 noise levels and pollutants such as diesel particulates and solid waste, all of which negatively impact the quality of life for nearby residents. The original design of Seacliff intended the upper-level field to provide open space and scenic views, not to serve as a round-the-clock campground. While beach-level RV parking may be suitable at larger, less residential parks like New Brighton State Beach or Sunset State Park, placing such facilities at the heart of Seacliff would undermine our neighborhood's tranquility, safety, and environmental health.

Community Involvement: Make a Difference in Seacliff

Volunteers have played a crucial role in gathering petition signatures, organizing informational meetings, and raising awareness among neighbors. Every hour counts—whether you can lend an hour a week to canvass for signatures, help with outreach to legislators, support our legal and research efforts, or contribute ideas for native garden landscaping, your involvement matters and makes a tangible impact. Even small commitments, like distributing flyers or sending a few emails, help strengthen our community's voice.

Rail and Trail Update

Rebecca Downing

At the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) meeting this month, commissioners changed tracks to begin developing the Interim Trail in place of existing railbed for Coastal Rail Trail Segments 9-11 from the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz to State Park Drive in Seacliff. To preserve the approximately \$120 million in grant funding already awarded, the commission made the decision while continuing long-term planning for future passenger rail service. The RTC risked losing not just the grant funds but potential future funding awards because the cost of building the trail next to the tracks would have been significantly more than the agency has for the project.

According to RTC Executive Director Sarah Christensen. "The Interim Trail is designed so that the corridor remains preserved for potential future passenger rail service and preserves existing freight for the customers being served in Watsonville." Commission staff will now develop a proposal to allow the construction of the Interim Trail without the need for adverse abandonment of the freight easement or rail-banking, measures required to legally change the use of freight corridors. The Santa Cruz Branch Line only operates between Watsonville and Pajaro due to track repairs required throughout the system including almost \$1 Billion in unfunded bridge repairs or replacements.

As a representative of Santa Cruz METRO, I serve on the commission, and am happy to answer [questions](#) about this and other county transportation projects. You can also read about the progress of each section, including Segments 11 and 12 that pass through Seacliff at the [Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network](#) webpage of the [Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission](#).

Pizza, Planning and Public Works News Shared at the Annual Meeting

Rebecca Downing

Our members met at the Aptos Library for the 2025 annual meeting, a BYOB pizza party preceding updates from SIA President Emily Chorba, Brent Lay, the SIA California State Parks Liaison, 2nd District Supervisor, Kim De Serpa and Matt Machado, Deputy County Executive Officer and Director of Community Development and Infrastructure.

Emily recapped SIA 2025 events including quarterly meetings now being held at the Aptos Library, our ice cream social in June, and association plans for next year. She was followed by Brent who briefed members on Seacliff State Beach news including the recently released [Seacliff Resilience Sea Level Rise Adaptation Study](#).

Kim shared the highlights from her first year in office along with county priorities for 2026 including projected economic vitality and budget challenges, transportation and infrastructure, public health and safety, utilities and power reliability, and broadband connectivity.

Matt's news included the anticipated completion of the Mar Vista pedestrian bridge by the end of Summer 2026 and announced intermittent closures of Mc Gregor Drive over the next 6-8 months. With the change to an interim rail trail, Segment 11 and 12, passing through Seacliff, are expected to begin construction in 2027. He also shared that the design of the [Soquel Drive Congested Corridor](#) work continues between State Park Drive and Freedom Boulevard. This safety project includes buffered bike lanes, improved sidewalks, and bus stops.





Seacliff Improvement Association 2025 YTD Treasurer's Report

Welcome New Members!

Patricia DeCuir
Wendi Knapp
Aaron Lazenby
Gigi Marie
Jeff Needham
Tracy Neves

We thank all 271
member households for
your continued support.

Have You Renewed for 2026?

If you receive an email requesting payment of your 2026 dues of \$25, please use this [member-ship form](#) to renew. You can also renew [on our website](#). If you have an idea for a Seacliff improvement, please include it with your payment or send it to us at: info@seacliffimprovement.org

	YTD
Ending Balance from Dec 2024	\$23,423.48
INCOME:	
Membership Dues	\$6,195.33
General Donations	\$3,218.03
Beachgate Trail Donations	\$500.00
Wells Fargo Account Interest	\$2.13
TOTAL INCOME:	\$9,915.49
EXPENSES:	
Beachgate Trail Expenses	\$1,400.00
Insurance	\$414.00
Membership Meetings Expenses	\$346.25
Membership Supplies	\$85.72
Mini Park	\$1,372.02
Newsletter	\$2,895.03
4th of July Parade	\$25.00
Post Box Annual Rental	\$210.00
Seacliff Street Fair	\$300.00
Survey Monkey Subscription	\$1,263.60
Website	\$1,484.69
Annual Zoom Membership	\$159.90
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$9,956.21
ENDING CASH BALANCE: \$23,382.76	
Beachgate Trail YTD Balance: \$2,910.62	

Welcome Samantha to our SIA Board of Directors!

The association board is pleased to welcome Samantha Olden as our new director. Samantha loves living in Seacliff and felt called to board service as an investment in our community. She lived in Seacliff from 1996 - 2005 and loved it here so much that she returned 4 years ago. She has served on the boards of other local organizations and wants to share her skills with Seacliff using her previous experience with community networking, fundraising, and marketing. She already started this with our [Dogs of Seacliff 2026 calendar!](#)



Samantha hopes her board service will build and nurture relationships with neighbors, support our local businesses, and promote public safety. She is looking forward to opportunities to organize events and special projects, like the calendar, which keeps Seacliff the special and beautiful place we all love.

If you wish to learn more about the association including our bylaws, activities, our newsletter archive, and board service, visit: [Seacliff Improvement Association](#). Our membership meets quarterly, and our board of directors meets on the second Tuesday of the month. All are welcome to join us so let us know if you wish to attend at: info@seacliffimprovement.org so we can confirm the meeting time and location.