

City of Capitola

Planning Commission Meeting Agenda

Thursday, September 04, 2025 – 6:00 PM



City Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Chairperson: Paul Estey

Commissioners: Matthew Howard, Nathan Kieu, TJ Welch, Courtney Christiansen

All correspondence received prior to 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday preceding a Planning Commission Meeting will be distributed to Commissioners to review prior to the meeting. Information submitted after 5 p.m. on that Wednesday may not have time to reach Commissioners, nor be read by them prior to consideration of an item.

1. Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioners Matthew Howard, Nathan Kieu, TJ Welch, Courtney Christiansen, and Chair Paul Estey

2. New Business

A. Oath of Office of newly appointed Planning Commissioner

3. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

A. Additional Materials Item 7A - Correspondence Received

4. Oral Communications

Please review the section How to Provide Comments to the Planning Commission for instructions. Oral Communications allows time for members of the public to address the Planning Commission on any Consent Item on tonight's agenda or on any topic within the jurisdiction of the City that is not on the Public Hearing section of the Agenda. Members of the public may speak for up to three minutes unless otherwise specified by the Chair. Individuals may not speak more than once during Oral Communications. All speakers must address the entire legislative body and will not be permitted to engage in dialogue.

5. Planning Commission/Staff Comments

6. Consent Calendar

All matters listed under "Consent Calendar" are considered by the Planning Commission to be routine and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Planning Commission votes on the action unless the Planning Commission request specific items to be discussed for separate review. Items pulled for separate discussion will be considered in the order listed on the Agenda.

A. Approval of August 21, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes

7. Public Hearings

Public Hearings are intended to provide an opportunity for public discussion of each item listed as a Public Hearing. The following procedure is as follows: 1) Staff Presentation; 2) Planning Commission Questions; 3) Public Comment; 4) Planning Commission Deliberation; and 5) Decision.

A. Cliff Drive Resiliency Project and Local Coastal Program Amendments

Project Description: Permit #24-0421 for Amendments to the City's Local Coastal Program including amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space, Chapter 17.64 ESHA, Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading, and Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards, as well as amendment to Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards. The proposed LCP and LUP amendments affects properties within the Coastal Zone and are not effective within the Coastal Zone unless certified by the California Coastal Commission.

Recommended Action: Consider and Adopt resolutions recommending the City Council adopt amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space, Chapter 17.64 ESHA, Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading, and Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards, as well as amendment to Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards.

8. Director's Report

9. Adjournment – Adjourn to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission on October 2nd, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

How to View the Meeting

Meetings are open to the public for in-person attendance at the Capitola City Council Chambers located at 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, California, 95010

Other ways to Watch:

Spectrum Cable Television channel 8

City of Capitola, California YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@cityofcapitolacalifornia3172>

To Join Zoom Application or Call in to Zoom:

Meeting link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84412302975?pwd=NmIrdGZRU2tnYXRjeSs5SIZweUIOQT09>

Or dial one of these phone numbers: 1 (669) 900 6833, 1 (408) 638 0968, 1 (346) 248 7799

Meeting ID: 844 1230 2975

Meeting Passcode: 161805

How to Provide Comments to the Planning Commission

Members of the public may provide public comments to the Planning Commission in-person during the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting in person, please email your comments to and they will be included as a part of the record for that meeting. Emailed comments will be accepted after the start of the meeting until the Chairman announces that public comment for that item is closed.

Appeals: The following decisions of the Planning Commission can be appealed to the City Council within the (10) calendar days following the date of the Commission action: Design Permit, Conditional Use Permit, Variance, and Coastal Permit. If the tenth day falls on a weekend or holiday, the appeal period is extended to the next business day. All appeals must be in submitted writing on an official city application form, setting forth the nature of the action and the basis upon which the action is considered to be in error, and addressed to the City Council in care of the City Clerk. An appeal must be accompanied by a filing fee, unless the item involves a Coastal Permit that is appealable to the Coastal Commission, in which case there is no fee. If you challenge a decision of the Planning Commission in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this agenda, or in written correspondence delivered to the City at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Notice regarding Planning Commission meetings: The Planning Commission meets regularly on the 1st Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola.

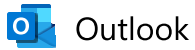
Agenda and Agenda Packet Materials: The Planning Commission Agenda and complete Agenda Packet are available on the Internet at the City's website: <https://www.cityofcapitola.org/> . Need more information? Contact the Community Development Department at (831) 475-7300.

Agenda Materials Distributed after Distribution of the Agenda Packet: Materials that are a public record under Government Code § 54957.5(A) and that relate to an agenda item of a regular meeting of the Planning Commission that are distributed to a majority of all the members of the Planning Commission more than 72 hours prior to that meeting shall be available for public inspection at City Hall located at 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, during normal business hours.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Disability-related aids or services are available to enable persons with a disability to participate in this meeting consistent with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Assisted listening devices are available for individuals with hearing impairments at the meeting in the City Council Chambers. Should you require special accommodations to participate in the meeting due to a disability, please contact the Community Development Department at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting at (831) 475-7300. In an effort to accommodate individuals with environmental sensitivities, attendees are requested to refrain from wearing perfumes and other scented products.

Si desea asistir a esta reunión pública y necesita ayuda - como un intérprete de lenguaje de señas americano, español u otro equipo especial - favor de llamar al Departamento de la Secretaría de la Ciudad al 831-475-7300 al menos tres días antes para que podamos coordinar dicha asistencia especial o envíe un correo electrónico a jgautho@ci.capitola.ca.us.

Televised Meetings: Planning Commission meetings are cablecast "Live" on Charter Communications Cable TV Channel 8 and are recorded to be replayed on the following Monday and Friday at 1:00 p.m. on Charter Channel 71 and Comcast Channel 25. Meetings can also be viewed from the City's website: <https://www.cityofcapitola.org/> .




Outlook

[PDF] Cliff Drive Protection Plan

From Leslie Nielsen <lpbeach21@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/3/2025 11:39 AM

To PLANNING COMMISSION <planningcommission@ci.capitola.ca.us>

 1 attachment (208 KB)

Joint_Letter_Cliff_Protection_Plan.pdf;

Dear Capitola Planning Commission,

Please see attached our letter sent to the key constituents of the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project. We also copied Katie Herlihy and Breeze Kinsey.

Best regards,
Leslie Nielsen
(Cliff Drive Homeowners Coordinator)
(408) 391-6178

The **SOBRATO** Organization

Sobrato Development Company, LLC Sobrato Family Holdings, LLC
 Sobrato Builders, Incorporated Sobrato Family Foundation
 Sobrato Construction Corporation

Sept. 2, 2025

Jamie Goldstein, City Manager, Capitola
 Jessica Khan, Public Works Director, Capitola
 Robert Stephens, President CSWST2
 John Kasunich, Haro Kasunich Geotechnical and Coastal Engineer
 Rainey Graeven, Kiana Ford, Kevin Kahn, Central Coast California Coastal Commission
 Capitola City Council and Planning Commission

Re: Cliff Drive Bluff Protection Project

Dear Jamie, Jessica, Robert, John, Rainey, Kiana, Kevin, Capitola City Council and Planning Commission,

As the owners of the homes along the section of Cliff Drive between the public stairway providing access to the north end of the Capitola beach and the road access to the Capitola Wharf, we are important stakeholders in the design and scope of the Cliff Drive Protection Project. We believe the only feasible solution to protect our homes and the public right of way is to add more rip rap to the existing system that has been in place since the 1960's, originally constructed along the entire bluff as one unified project. The project and its associated protections cannot be stopped or started at random points without creating risks from eddies and flanking erosion.

In the 2023 City-facilitated meeting, while we did not commit to participate in an undefined plan that might not prove financially feasible for either the property owners or the City, we expressed interest in achieving a comprehensive solution and requested that we be kept informed and involved.

Recent disclosures suggest the City is exploring a design that includes additional rip rap because 1) the absorption provided by rip rap protects the wharf from reflected waves, and 2) it is significantly more cost-effective than a concrete sea wall, particularly given current funding limitations. We support this approach, have discussed the expected costs among ourselves, and are willing to pay for rip rap added in front of our homes as part of the overall protection plan.

We are available to meet with all parties involved to ensure a solution is implemented that addresses erosion risks without creating new problems for residents or the wharf. It makes no sense to adopt a piecemeal approach when we are ready to fund the portion that benefits both our homes, the portion of Cliff Drive behind our homes and the wharf.

Sincerely,



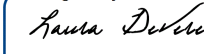
John M. Sobrato, 4940 Cliff Drive

DocuSigned by:

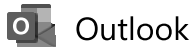


Leslie Nielsen, 4930 Cliff Drive

Signed by:



Laura DeVore, 4920 Cliff Drive



Agenda Item 7A public comment

From Leslie Nielsen <lpbeach21@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/3/2025 2:36 PM

To PLANNING COMMISSION <planningcommission@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Dear City of Capitola Planning Commission,

Thank you for taking the time to review the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project.

This is a critical project to address the safety and ongoing access to the beach, village, and transportation through the City.

I have reviewed the materials attached to the staff report, and would like to suggest you postpone adopting resolutions or make them contingent on amending language in the documents, specifically CMC Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards as suggested by the Coastal Commission and the Land Use Plan (LUP) Chapter 2.

In the LUP redline for Chapter 2, pages 24-25 refer to CLIFF DRIVE and HOOPER BEACH with a note (all descriptions below as of 2025) and the document says;

“A city stairway provides access to Hooper beach..”

“Access is also provided via a vertical stairway.. to Hooper beach”

No such access has existed since the storm in January 2023. It was mentioned in the presentation to City Council last week that the stairs to Hooper beach are not in scope for Phase 1 of the project. The City public works director has also informed us that the bluff below are homes is not in scope for Phase 1. She also commented at the 8/28 City Council meeting that they will be learning from phase 1 efforts of the project. I do not want to learn about flanking erosion on adjacent properties as part of a project that has not fully comprehended the design and plan.

Please make sure you see a FULL protection plan for this project before approving moving forward in a piecemeal fashion, which makes no sense. The staff report for your agenda item 7A shows an attachment called – 10. Cliff Drive Resiliency Full Bluff Protection Plan. This item appears to be a one-page conceptual plan of the Phase 1 area only. This project should not be allowed to move forward without a complete understanding of the full plan, and we have not seen one.

I represent the neighbors adjacent to the proposed phase 1 project area. We are working with coastal engineers and the coastal commission to design a revetment maintenance plan for the bluff below our homes. Wave runup does not function to powerpoint boundaries, and our neighboring designs must be collaborative. To date, our suggestion to achieve this has been met with telling us we are out of scope for phase 1, and only a willingness to discuss Phase 2.

We need to work together on Phase 1 for a comprehensive solution that protects all of Cliff Drive and the Wharf.

Regards,

Leslie Nielsen



Fwd: Item 7a for public comment planning commission

From Cami Corvin <corvinslegalservices@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/3/2025 2:57 PM

To PLANNING COMMISSION <planningcommission@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Please see below,

Thank you,

Camilla "Cami" Corvin

Contract Paralegal

Notary Public

Legal Document Assistant

LDA Registration #59

County of Santa Cruz

Corvin's Legal Services

1840 41st Ave., Suite 205

Capitola, CA 95010

☎ 408-406-4137

DISCLAIMER TO CONSUMERS: I am not an attorney, cannot give legal advice, and my office is not a law firm. I may only complete documents at your specific direction.

FOR ATTORNEYS: I am a paralegal pursuant to California Business & Professions Code §6450. I provide paralegal services only under contract with a licensed California attorney.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This electronic message, including any attachments, is confidential and may contain privileged information under federal and/or state law. If you are not the intended recipient or responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are not authorized to read, share, forward, distribute, copy, or take any action based on its contents. If you have received this communication in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete it from your system.

Sent by mobile device

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Cami Corvin** <corvinslegalservices@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Sep 3, 2025 at 14:52

Subject: Item 7a for public comment planning commission

To: <kherlihy@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Dear Planning Commission,

Item 3 A.

As you review the proposed Cliff Drive Resiliency plans, I respectfully ask that you consider the broader challenges we face as a City in addressing the Rail Corridor and surrounding infrastructure in a piecemeal manner.

Capital Improvement Projects of this magnitude should be guided by a long-term, comprehensive plan that incorporates all elements during the design phase. While we recognize that construction may be phased due to funding limitations, beginning without a full bluff protection strategy in place risks being shortsighted.

Recently, we've heard of a new grant to study multimodal transportation through the village and city, planned updates to the Stockton Bridge, and now a section of Cliff Drive—yet this proposal does not address the stairs to Hooper's Beach. Notably, the rail corridor and trestle are also absent as part of the solution set.

I urge the Commission to require City Staff to approach these Capital Improvement Projects comprehensively—ensuring that no critical components are overlooked, whether due to complexity, sensitivity, or private property considerations that impact our neighbors.

Thank you for your careful attention to these concerns.

Respectfully,

Cami

Camilla "Cami" Corvin
Contract Paralegal
Notary Public
Legal Document Assistant
LDA Registration #59
County of Santa Cruz

Corvin's Legal Services
1840 41st Ave., Suite 205
Capitola, CA 95010
☎ 408-406-4137

DISCLAIMER TO CONSUMERS: I am not an attorney, cannot give legal advice, and my office is not a law firm. I may only complete documents at your specific direction.

FOR ATTORNEYS: I am a paralegal pursuant to California Business & Professions Code §6450. I provide paralegal services only under contract with a licensed California attorney.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This electronic message, including any attachments, is confidential and may contain privileged information under federal and/or state law. If you are not the intended recipient or responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are not authorized to read, share, forward, distribute, copy, or take any action based on its contents. If you have received this

communication in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete it from your system.

Item 3 A.

Sent by mobile device

City of Capitola

Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 21, 2025 – 6:00 PM

City Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010

Chairperson: Paul Estey

Commissioners: Matthew Howard, Nathan Kieu, TJ Welch, Courtney Christiansen



1. **Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance** - *The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. In attendance: Commissioners Howard, Kieu, and Chair Estey. Absent: Commissioners Christiansen and Welch.*
2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda** - *The Deputy City Clerk announced that two emails had been received as additional materials for Item 7A, seven emails received as additional materials for Item 7B, and one email received as additional materials for Item 8A.*
3. **New Business**
 - A. **Oath of Office of newly appointed Planning Commissioner** – *Continued to the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.*
4. **Oral Communications**
 - Goran Klepic
 - Terre Thomas
5. **Consent Calendar**
 - A. **Approval of July 17, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes**

Motion to approve Item 6A: Commissioner Howard

Second: Commissioner Kieu

Voting Yea: Howard, Kieu, Estey

Absent: Christiansen, Welch

6. Planning Commission/Staff Comments

Director Herlihy announced that the Capitola mall redevelopment zoning options will be presented at the City Council meeting on August 28th at 6:00 PM.

7. Public Hearings

A. 1400 Wharf Road

Project Description: Amendment to permit #20-0141, a Design Permit and Conditional Use Permit for the rehabilitation, repair, and expansion of the historic Capitola Wharf. The Capitola Wharf is located at 1400 Wharf Road within the PF (Public Facilities) zoning district, at APN: 034-072-01, -02. This project received a Coastal Development Permit issued by the California Coastal Commission.

Recommended Action: Approve the amendments for permit #20-0141 and provide direction on the location of the donor panels.

Director Herlihy presented the staff report.

Public Comment:

- **Gayle Ortiz**

Motion to approve the amendments to Permit #20-0141: Commissioner Howard

Second: Commissioner Kieu

Voting Yea: Howard, Kieu, Estey

Absent: Christiansen, Welch

B. Citywide Zoning Code Amendments (CEQA Exempt)

Project Description: Amendments to Capitola Municipal Code Title 17: Zoning Code, the Zoning Map, and the General Plan Land Use Element affecting the Multifamily Residential (RM) zoning district and accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations. The Zoning Code and Zoning Map are part of the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP), and amendments require certification by the California Coastal Commission before taking effect in the Coastal Zone. The proposed amendments would apply to properties citywide.

Recommended Action: Consider and Adopt resolutions recommending the City Council adopt the proposed Zoning Code, Zoning Map, and General Plan Amendments.

Ben Noble presented the staff report.

The Commission discussed the proposed amendments.

Public Comment:

- **Jeff**
- **Narendra Dev**
- **Liz**
- **Suzanne**
- **Speaker**
- **Mary Margulies**
- **Jennifer Webb**
- **Tiffany**
- **Terre Thomas**
- **Jennifer Collins**
- **Janine Roth, YIMBY representative**
- **Delaney Bolanger**
- **Robin Peak**
- **Melody Newcome**

Motion to adopt a resolution recommending the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance amending Residential Multi-Family (RM) Zone and the Zoning Map, and finding the project exempt from CEQA, with amendment to the proposed ordinance that the minimum side setback for RM-30 and RM-40 subzones to be no less than 3 feet and no more than 10 feet: Commissioner Kieu

Second: Commissioner Howard

Voting Yea: Howard, Kieu, Estey

Absent: Christiansen, Welch

Motion to adopt a resolution recommending the City Council adopt the proposed resolution for a text amendment to the General Plan for Land Use Designations and finding the project exempt from CEQA: Commissioner Howard

Second: Commissioner Kieu

Voting Yea: Howard, Kieu, Estey

Absent: Christiansen, Welch

Motion to adopt a resolution recommending the City Council adopt the proposed ordinance amending the Zoning Code for Accessory Dwelling Units and finding the project exempt from CEQA, with an amendment clarifying chapter definitions:

Commissioner Kieu

Second: Commissioner Howard

Voting Yea: Howard, Kieu, Estey

Absent: Christiansen, Welch

8. Director's Report

A. Cliff Drive Resiliency Project and Local Coastal Program Update

Director Herlihy informed the Planning Commission of the available public draft of amendments to Local Coastal Program that will be discussed at the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on September 4th. The public draft is on the City website. She also reminded the Commission that there will be an update on the Capitola mall redevelopment zoning options at the City Council meeting on August 28, 2025.

- 9. Adjournment –** *The meeting adjourned at 7:48 PM. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Commission is on September 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM.*

Capitola Planning Commission

Agenda Report

Meeting: September 4, 2025

From: Community and Economic Development Department

Subject: Cliff Drive Resiliency Project and Local Coastal Program Amendments



Project Description: Permit #24-0421 for Amendments to the City's Local Coastal Program including amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space, Chapter 17.64 ESHA, Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading, and Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards, as well as amendment to Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards. The proposed LCP and LUP amendments affects properties within the Coastal Zone and are not effective within the Coastal Zone unless certified by the California Coastal Commission.

Recommended Action: Consider and Adopt resolutions recommending the City Council adopt amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space, Chapter 17.64 ESHA, Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading, and Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards, as well as amendment to Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards.

Property Owner: The proposed LCP amendments affect properties within the Coastal Zone

Representative: Katie Herlihy, Community and Economic Development Director

Background: The Public Works Department initiated the [Cliff Drive Resiliency Project](#) as a comprehensive effort to address bluff erosion, sea-level rise, and stormwater drainage impacts along the Cliff Drive corridor while also enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and coastal access. The project extends from the western City limit to Capitola Village and includes connections to Hooper Beach and the Capitola Wharf overlook. Following an August 2024 presentation regarding alternatives for the project, the City Council reviewed the feasibility study and directed staff to move forward with Alternative 3 for full bluff protection, which includes continuous bluff stabilization along the project length, a Class I facility, cantilevered sections where needed, overlooks, and reconfigured parking. (Attachment 10)

The City hosted a community meeting on August 12, 2025, and presented an overview of the project. A summary of the questions and answers from this meeting is included as Attachment 11.

The City Council received an update on the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project at the August 28, 2025 meeting, including a phased approach due to overall cost and the current \$10.5 million committed funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Emergency Relief Program. (Attachment 9)

The City received a \$500,000 Coastal Commission LCP grant for the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project. As part of the grant contract, the City is required to update Capitola's Local Coastal Program relative to the Cliff Drive improvements.

Discussion: Capitola's Local Coastal Program (LCP) is the guiding policy and regulatory framework for development and resources within the City's coastal zone. There are two key components to a Local Coastal Program. The LCP [Land Use Plan](#) is a long range planning document which establishes broad policies for land use, coastal access, habitat protection, and hazard management. The LCP Implementation Plan (sections of [CMC Title 17 Zoning Code](#)) contains specific zoning standards, ordinances, and procedures to carry out the Land Use Plan policies. The City must amend the two documents to update outdated references and policies related to Cliff Drive resilience planning. These updates address increased coastal erosion, sea-level rise, and public access needs.

The following list contains the sections of the LCP proposed for amendments:

1. CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space
2. CMC Chapter 17.64 ESHA
3. CMC Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading
4. CMC Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards
5. Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access
6. Capitola's Local Coastal Land Use Plan Chapter 7: Natural Hazards

The update to Chapter 17.32: Parks and Open Space includes a new allowance for improvements along Cliff Drive related to the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project, as well as new limitations for development to ensure it is subordinate to recreational, scenic, or natural resources and prohibited on beaches except for public facilities (such as flumes, jetties, beach erosion control structures, lifeguard stands, etc.).

Chapter 17.68: Geological Hazards amendments create consistency in the definition of bluff/Seacliff, introduce a definition for coastal hazards, expand the purpose statement of the geological hazards overlay, remove references to outdated documents for geological reports, and remove the reference to the economic life of the project while maintaining a minimum fifty-year standard.

The amendment to Chapter 17.64: Ecologically Sensitive Habitat Areas clarifies that resource-dependent uses (low-intensity public access and recreation, nature study, restoration) are included as an exception for development within ESHA.

The amendment to Chapter 17.76: Parking and Loading corrects the reference to the Southern Pacific railroad right-of-way by replacing it with the Regional Transportation Commission.

The proposed Land Use Plan amendments would update descriptions of existing conditions, replace references to Southern Pacific Railroad with the Regional Transportation Commission, amend policies to include support for multi-modal enhancements, public access, coastal planning for sea-level rise, shoreline structures, and drainage, and introduce new policies for future climate adaptation planning.

Attachments:

1. Resolution for LCP-LUP Amendments
2. Resolution for LCP-IP Amendments
3. CMC Chapters 17.32 Parks and Open Space
4. CMC Chapter 17.64 ESHA
5. CMC Chapter 17.76 Parking and Loading
6. CMC Chapter 17.68 Geological Hazards
7. Capitola's Land Use Plan Chapter 2: Public Access
8. Capitola's Local Coastal Land Use Plan Chapter 7: Natural Hazards
9. Cliff Drive Resiliency August 28, 2025 City Council Staff Report
10. Cliff Drive Resiliency Full Bluff Protection Plan
11. Cliff Drive Resiliency Community Meeting 8/12/2025 Questions and Answers

Report Prepared By: Katie Herlihy, Community and Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Rosie Wyatt, Deputy City Clerk

Approved By: Katie Herlihy, Community and Economic Development Director

RESOLUTION NO. 24-____
A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CAPITOLA
RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO THE CAPITOLA
LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM LAND USE PLAN (CHAPTER 2: PUBLIC ACCESS
AND CHAPTER 7: NATURAL HAZARDS)

WHEREAS, the City of Capitola has an adopted Local Coastal Program (LCP), consisting of a Land Use Plan (LUP) and Implementation Plan (IP), certified by the California Coastal Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Public Works Department has initiated the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project to address bluff erosion, sea-level rise, stormwater drainage impacts, and to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and coastal access along Cliff Drive; and

WHEREAS, the City of Capitola received a \$500,000 Coastal Commission Local Coastal Program grant requiring updates to Capitola's LCP relative to the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Land Use Plan amendments update outdated references, clarify policies, and introduce new policies related to coastal erosion, sea-level rise, shoreline structures, public access, and climate adaptation planning; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments specifically revise Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards of the Land Use Plan to reflect current conditions and future planning needs; and

WHEREAS, the amendments were duly noticed and made available for public review at City Hall, the Community Center, the Capitola Library, and online; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments, considered all testimony, and finds that the amendments are consistent with the California Coastal Act and the General Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Capitola hereby recommends the City Council adopt amendments to the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, specifically amendments to Chapter 2: Public Access and Chapter 7: Natural Hazards.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 4th day of September 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Paul Estey, Chair

Attest:

Rosie Wyatt, Deputy City Clerk

Includes changes per CAP-MAJ-1-07
Includes changes per CAP-MAJ-2-04

II. PUBLIC ACCESS COMPONENT

BACKGROUND

The California Coastal Act of 1976 includes strong policies to assure public access to and along the shoreline. Section 30500(a) of the Act requires that each Local Coastal Program contain a specific public access component to assure that maximum public access to and along the coast and public recreational opportunities are provided.

RELEVANT COASTAL ACT POLICIES

There are numerous references throughout the Coastal Act to the provision and protection of public access. Section 30001.5 provides the legislative intent on access protection. Section 30001.5 states:

The legislature further finds and declares that the basic goals of the state for the coastal zone are to:

- a) Protect, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance and restore the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and manmade resources.
- b) Assure orderly, balanced utilization and conservation of coastal zone resources taking into account the social and economic needs of the people of the state.
- c) Maximize public access to and along the coast and maximize public recreational opportunities in the coastal zone consistent with sound resources conservation principles and constitutionally protected rights of private property owners.
- d) Assure priority for coastal-dependent and coastal-related development over other development on the coast. (Amended by Cal. Stats. 1979, CH. 1090.)
- e) Encourage state and local initiatives and cooperation in preparing procedures to implement coordinated planning and development for mutually beneficial uses, including educational uses, in the coastal zone.

The following are the major Coastal Act policies dealing with public access.

SEC. 30210

In carrying out the requirement of Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution, maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people, consistent with public safety needs and the need to

protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse.

SEC. 30211

Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

SEC. 30212

- a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects, except where (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security, or the protection of fragile coastal resources; (2) adequate access exists nearby; or (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. Dedicated accessway shall not be required to be opened to public use until a public agency or private association agrees to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability of the accessway.
- b) For purposes of this section, "new development" does not include:
 - 1) Replacement of any structure pursuant to the provisions of subdivision (g) of section 30610.
 - 2) The demolition and reconstruction of a single-family residence; provided that the reconstructed residence shall not exceed either the floor area, height, or bulk of the former structure by more than 10 percent, and that the reconstructed residence shall be sited in the same location on the affected property as the former structure.
 - 3) Improvements to any structure which do not change the intensity of its use, which do not increase either to floor area, height, or bulk of the structure by more than 10 percent, which do not block or impede public access, and which do not result in a seaward encroachment by the structure.
 - 4) Any repair or maintenance activity for which the commission has determined, pursuant to Section 30610, that a coastal development permit will be required unless the regional commission or the commission determines that such activity will have an adverse effect on lateral public access along the beach.

As used in this subdivision, "bulk" means total interior cubic volume as measured from the exterior surface of the structure.

- c) Nothing in this division shall restrict public access, nor shall it excuse the performance of duties and responsibilities of public agencies which are required by Sections 66478.1 to 66478.14, inclusive, of the Government Code

and by Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. (Amended by Cal. Stats. 1979, Ch. 919.)

SECTION 30212.5

Wherever appropriate and feasible, public facilities, including parking areas or facilities, shall be distributed throughout an area so as to mitigate against the impacts, social and otherwise, of overcrowding or overuse by the public or any single area.

SECTION 30213

Lower cost visitor and recreational facilities and housing opportunities for persons of low and moderate income shall be protected, encouraged, and where feasible, provided. Developments providing public recreational opportunities are preferred. New housing in the coastal zone shall be developed in conformity with the standards, policies, and goals of local housing elements adopted in accordance with the requirements of subdivision (c) of Section 65302 of the Government Code.

SECTION 30214

- a) The public access policies of this article shall be implemented in a manner that takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access, depending on the facts and circumstances in each case; including, but not limited to, the following:
 - 1) Topographic and geologic site characteristics.
 - 2) The capacity of the site to sustain use and the level of intensity of use.
 - 3) The appropriateness of limiting public access to the right to pass and repass, depending on such factors as the fragility of the natural resources in the area and the proximity of the access area to adjacent residential uses.
 - 4) The need to provide for the management of access areas, so as to protect the privacy of adjacent property owners and to protect the aesthetic values of the area by providing for the collection of litter.
- b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the public access policies of this article be carried out in a reasonable manner that considers that equities and that balances the rights of the individual property owner with the public's constitutional rights of access, pursuant to Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. Nothing in this section, or any amendment thereto, shall be considered as a limitation on the rights guaranteed to the public under Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution.
- c) In carrying out the public access policies of this article, the commission, regional commissioners and any other responsible public agency shall consider and encourage the utilization of innovative access management techniques, including, but not limited

to, agreements with private organizations which would minimize management costs and encourage the use of volunteer programs. (Added by Stats. 1979, Ch. 919.)

DEFINITIONS

Shoreline Access is the provision of the pedestrian access from a public thoroughfare to and along the shoreline.

Lateral Accessway is an area of land providing public access along the water's edge. Lateral accessways should be used for public pass and repass, passive recreational use, or as otherwise found appropriate in a certified LUP. Lateral accessways can be on a beach, where contact with the water's edge is possible, or a bluff where only visual access is possible, or at the rear (water side) of buildings adjacent to the water's edge (i.e. the Esplanade).

Vertical Accessway is an area of land providing a connection between the first public road, trail, or use area nearest the sea and the publicly owned tidelands or established lateral accessway. A vertical accessway should be used for public pass and repass, passive recreational use or as otherwise found appropriate in a certified LUP.

Scenic Overlook is an area of land providing public access along a shorefront bluff or along the coast inland from the shoreline.

Upland Trail is an area of land providing public access along a shorefront bluff or along the coast inland from the shoreline. An upland trail can also provide access from the first public road nearest the sea to a scenic trail or another upland trail paralleling the shoreline. An upland trail should be used for public pass and repass, or as otherwise found appropriate in a certified LUP.

EXISTING ACCESS AND FUTURE DEMAND IN CAPITOLA

Working Paper Number One for the Capitola LUP entitled Access (issued in June, 1979) includes a description of existing vertical and lateral accessways and scenic vista points in the Capitola Coastal Zone. The Working Paper also includes a detailed survey of the parking situation in Capitola Village as a constraint to access. Additional work on parking and vehicular concerns was done by a transportation consultant and the data from those studies is also available for review.

The land adjacent to Capitola's shoreline is densely developed with residential development along the ~~Cliff Drive and~~ Grand Avenue bluffs, as well as a mixture of residential and commercial uses in Capitola Village adjacent to Capitola Beach. Vertical access to the sea from Cliff Drive and Grand Avenue is ~~virtually impossible~~ difficult due to the height of the cliff and ~~substantial~~ continuing erosion; however, there are public access stairways from both Cliff Avenue and Cliff Drive, which connect to the Village and Hooper Beach, respectively. That said, most users of the Capitola shoreline typically gain access from the Esplanade, the wharf area, or from New Brighton beach.

Following is a general description of the major lateral and vertical access areas and scenic overlooks.

CLIFF DRIVE (all descriptions below as of 2025)

~~Two well-used viewpoints are located along Cliff Drive between the western city limit line and the wharf. Both pullouts are unpaved, have garbage cans and are lined with safety railings approximately five feet inland because the cliff was receding and undermining the posts. The western viewpoint is owned by the City and has room for approximately 11 cars. There are no benches, but people sometimes sit on the railing. Through a Coastal Conservancy Grant, the City has recently provided a stairway access to the beach. The city is developing a vista point along Cliff Drive in the turnout above the Hooper Beach stairway.~~

~~On the inland side of Cliff Drive, an unpaved area along the Southern Pacific right-of-way is used for public parking (approximately 50 spaces). The City has a formal agreement with Southern Pacific concerning use of this area. People going to Capitola Beach often park here and walk down to the beach. There are no sidewalks or bike paths in the City's narrow road right-of-way; this causes dangerous conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. The City of Capitola has been given a grant by the Coastal Conservancy (for funding) to develop a paved parking lot on the Southern Pacific Railroad property.~~

Cliff Drive is a key route linking Capitola Village to the greater Santa Cruz County community. The corridor provides visitors with parking and access to the wharf, beach and village, as well as two popular vista points in the area between the western city limit line and the wharf. On the inland side of Cliff Drive, the City manages a parking area within the former Southern Pacific right-of-way, by formal agreement with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (SCCRTC), which purchased the rail right-of-way in 2012.

A City stairway provides access to Hooper Beach at the downcoast viewpoint. The Cliff Drive corridor does not include contiguous sidewalks or a separated bike path. In the upper Cliff Drive corridor, pedestrians and bicyclists share an approximately six foot-wide portion of the right-of-way, which may result in dangerous conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists.

Regional improvements in multi-modal access in the RTC right-of-way are planned as part of a Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail , but they are not currently (2025) in place.

The Cliff Drive corridor has historically been protected from erosion by a shoreline armoring system consisting of a rock revetment at the base of the bluff and a retaining wall at the top of the bluff. The base of the bluff has been undermined over time, and the retaining wall at the top of the bluff is being undercut as the bluff recedes. Adapting the corridor to respond to ongoing erosion and increasing impacts due to sea level rise is necessary to preserve the Cliff Drive corridor and improve conditions for all users. Protecting the bluff with an updated armoring system is likely a necessary component;

however, a full analysis as part of a project evaluation that identifies a suite of alternatives is essential to determine a preferred and feasible course of action. The cost of addressing these threats is high, and if funds are not available to address the entire bluff all at once, a phased approach should be employed.

HOOPER BEACH

This small City-owned and maintained beach is located west of the wharf. Access at the end of Wharf Road is down a roadway that is occasionally used as a boat ramp. Access is also provided via a vertical stairway along the midpoint of Cliff Drive as noted above. There are 11 public parking spaces at the end of Wharf Road; 9 in close proximity to the front of the Venetian Court and approximately 26 private spaces reserved for guests of the two motels. Pedestrian access is also obtained along the beach from the main beach to the east.

~~Underlying title to Hooper Beach is owned by Esther H. Hooper. There are no signs indicating that this beach is private and there are no barriers to keep the public out. On the beach itself are located two garbage cans and a City sign; "No dogs on beach—Capitola City Ordinance." These improvements were placed there by the City.~~

~~In recent years, the City's maintenance of this beach has included lifeguard service (summer only), raking, litter pick-up and rat abatement in the rocks (principally in the new rip-rap placed below the Cliff Drive houses).~~

~~Public beach use is clearly evident. Also, small sailboats are stored on the beach during the summer.~~

CAPITOLA WHARF

The Wharf is located on tidelands and submerged public trust lands. In 1935, the State gave the lands in trust to the County of Santa Cruz. In December of 1979, Santa Cruz County conveyed those portions of the tidelands and submerged lands within City limits to the City of Capitola.

Before storms weakened the structure in early 1978, and made it unsafe for public use, the wharf was used for pier fishing, a bait and tackle shop, boat rental and boat launching.

The City of Capitola owns the wharf and received a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board to partially fund the rehabilitation of the wharf. The wharf restoration project was financed with 75% federal and state funds, plus 25% local funds. Repair work on the wharf structure was completed in 1981.

New buildings on the wharf now house a small restaurant, bait and tackle shop, boat rental concession and wharf maintenance.

The reopening of the wharf has provided free public fishing access. A condition of the financial participation of the Wildlife Conservation Board is that free public access to the facility be maximized.

Following completion in 1981, the City built two structures on the end of the wharf including a small restaurant and a bait and tackle shop with boat rental concessions. The wharf continued to provide free public fishing access. A condition of the financial participation of the Wildlife Conservation Board was that free public access to the facility be maximized.

In 2021, the City completed Phase 1 of a Wharf Resiliency and Public Access Improvement Project. The project repaired the steel piles at the head of the wharf and the structure underneath the wharf buildings. In the winter of 2022 and 2023 the Wharf sustained severe storm damage which resulted in the demolition of the two structures housing the restaurant and the bait and tackle shop.

Phase 2 of the Wharf Resiliency and Public Access Improvements incorporated storm damage repair into the design. The project involved new decking, new railing, repairs and replacement to 148 piles, utility repairs and replacement, and the installation of permanent public restrooms with three stalls. Additionally, amenities including a new gated archway with mosaic panels, a bronze fish pathway leading to 4 scenic viewing stations each with binoculars and picnic tables, a water filling station, 40 benches, 4 picnic benches, 10 bike racks, and public art donor wall were installed through a partnership with a local community group which created the Capitola Wharf Enhancement Project. The Capitola Wharf reopened in the summer of 2024.

In 2024, the City began work on a Wharf Master Plan, to guide the future use of the Wharf. This effort was still in the initial public outreach and planning phase in the summer of 2025.

VENETIAN COURT

This condominium style subdivision (apparently one of the first in the state) was created in 1924. The units, fronting on Capitola beach, include a paved walkway with a contiguous two foot seawall, following the perimeter boundary of the subdivision at the edge of the beach. Access to the units (which are used as permanent homes, weekend homes, vacation rentals and motel units) and to the beach is gained in three locations:

- at the west side of the complex, a paved walkway comes down from the end of the Wharf Road to the perimeter walkway;
- a paved walkway starting at the sidewalk along Wharf Road and passing down through the middle of the complex with a sign at the beginning of the walkway which reads:

“Private Property
Right to Pass Revocable At Any Time”
- four steps come down from the sidewalk at the west end of the Stockton Avenue bridge and join the perimeter walkway.

THE ESPLANADE

There are several commercial buildings in the ocean side of the Esplanade. Between the buildings are separate accessways from the Esplanade to the beach:

- between 221 and 215 Esplanade is a breezeway that dead ends at Soquel Creek Lagoon, without steps down to the waterline;
- between 207 and 203 the Esplanade is a breezeway that terminates on Capitola Beach;
- running behind 203 the Esplanade is a narrow deck that was declared open to public use by the courts (Hansen V. Korzyna).

Curb Parking is provided along the Esplanade.

CAPITOLA BEACH

The City beach receives extensive public use. An aerial survey taken by the County on four afternoons in August of 1976 showed an average of 429 people on the beach in mid-afternoon and a maximum of 520. With an estimated area of 4.4 acres, the average density of beach use was 97.4 people per acre, with a maximum of 118.2. Trash cans and a public restroom at the beach are maintained by the City.

Public parking is located along both sides of the Esplanade and on nearby city streets. A groin marks the eastern end of the beach.

The recently completed Esplanade Park project, a joint project between the Coastal Conservancy, the County of Santa Cruz Sanitation District and the City of Capitola, has provided a landscaped pedestrian area used for viewing and other passive open space activities. The project has consolidated the restrooms and sewage pump station into an architecturally-designed building. Other benefits of the project include:

- providing facilities adjacent to the beach and the sea for persons who find use of the beach itself difficult (i.e. the elderly and handicapped, etc.)
- significantly expanding area of land near the beach available for open space recreational use for residents and visitors.
- providing opportunities for enhancement of a visually degraded area.

FROM CAPITOLA BEACH TO NEW BRIGHTON BEACH

During low tide, people sometimes pass between Capitola and New Brighton beaches by walking along a narrow sand and rock beach that lies at the base of 90 foot high bluffs. Steep topography restricts access options from above the beach; due to the dangerous situation caused by the eroding cliffs, access is discouraged by the City along the cliff base as well.

EL SALTO/ESCALONA GULCH

At the turn of the century, access along the top of the cliff was a tree-lined public path known as Lovers' Lane, on the ocean side of Grand Avenue. Lovers' Lane was lost in the 1930s because of cliff erosion.

Escalona Drive (called Railroad Avenue on the 1884 Camp Capitola subdivision map) is paved to the point approximately 500 feet east of Sacramento Avenue. At that point, a chain blocks vehicular access and what is apparently a private dirt road curving south out toward the ocean. The original subdivision map shows Escalona Drive in this area curving around to meet Grand Avenue at the edge of the cliff. The current parcel map shows Grand Avenue ending at Sacramento Avenue – it has been closed between Hollister and Sacramento Avenues because of cliff erosion. These parcel maps show Escalona Drive with an undeveloped right-of-way curving over 400 feet beyond the chain.

A footpath runs from near the chain on Escalona Drive down through Escalona Gulch and up to Grove Lane on the east side of the gulch. The course of the gulch becomes steep near the ocean and there is no access to the water below. A five foot wide pedestrian easement is recorded on the east bank of the gulch, but it does not run as far as the railroad.

A condition of coastal permit No. P-80-11 for a land division on part of the El Salto Resort property, was that an offer of dedication for two easements be made. These easements are to provide a public trail from El Salto Drive (also known as Prospect Street) to the bluff edge for observation of the shoreline. So far, the property owner has chosen not to exercise the permit for the land division and has not recorded the easement offers. If and when these offers are recorded, the city should accept it in order to help realize the goal of a bluff-top trail.

RAILROAD

The ~~Southern Pacific~~ Regional Transportation Commission Railroad right-of-way next to Park Avenue has been used by pedestrians traveling parallel to the coastline. The wide part of the right-of-way is used by many people to view the ocean. The entrance to this potential vista point would be from Grove Lane as it crosses the railroad tracks. Two undeveloped pedestrian paths cross the right-of-way on the way down to New Brighton beach; the western path goes from the parklike area in the wide portion of the right-of-way down steeply to the emergency access road leading to New Brighton beach. The other path goes from Park Avenue opposite Coronado Street down to the New Brighton parking lot. Both paths are heavily used by the local residents, though neither one is recognized as an official access point by State Park representatives. The authorized entrance to the park is almost one-third of a mile to the northeast. During early public workshops on the Capitola LCP, citizens and City officials suggested that these paths should remain open. Later sections of this document include information on possibilities for future uses of the railroad right-of-way and for New Brighton State beach.

SOQUEL CREEK

The Local Coastal Program Working Paper Number 1 – Access – described the issues and possibilities concerning public access along Soquel Creek. The Capitola General Plan Circulation Element has a policy that Soquel Creek have a pedestrian path from Highway One to the Village Center. In fact, the Soquel Creek corridor has a long history of public trail use. As development has taken place in the corridor, access has been altered, and in some cases, diminished.

Because of the sensitive nature of the riparian corridor and the habitat it provides for various species of resident and migratory birds (including the black crown night herons, which are on the Audobon Society “blue list”) an extension of the path, and especially the use of bridges, should not be required.

The dedications offered by Timmons, Rafaelo and Golino, for access easements should not be accepted by the City. However, the City shall accept and require scenic conservation easements to ensure that the banks of the creek are maintained in their natural conditions.

The City should continue to maintain the existing paths and provide for public access at the city-owned parks along the northerly reaches of the creek. In addition, the city should enhance the public’s abilities to reach upper Soquel Creek from the lagoon, by way of Riverview Drive and Wharf Road.

NEW BRIGHTON STATE BEACH

New Brighton beach, as part of the state park, has become a large day-use parking area. Facilities for camping accommodate recreational vehicles and tents. Campers arriving by bicycle can stay overnight for a nominal fee. In addition to the previously-mentioned emergency access road, there is a walkway down from the camping area to the beach. People can also enter New Brighton beach on foot from the southeast along the beach from Seacliff and Rio Del Mar. The county’s aerial beach survey in 1976 counted an average of 175 people on this 13.4 acre beach, for an average density of 13.1 people per acre. The maximum counted in four August afternoons was 223, representing a density of 16.6 people per acre. The City would encourage greater usage and access by the public of New Brighton beach.

EXISTING POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

The Capitola General Plan (January 1975) includes some policies for the provision and protection of public access within Capitola. These include goals for the creation of a cycling and pedestrian path system and the protection and enhancement of scenic overlooks. Some of the general plan goals are beginning to be realized through the completion of the East Cliffs bikeway by Santa Cruz County, and by the requirement of access easements by the City and Coastal Commission. The City is also taking positive steps toward improving coastal access by restoration of the Capitola Wharf, obtaining a Coastal Conservancy Grant for a stairway from the wharf to the beach, and through operation of the shuttle bus system.

There is no reference or requirement in Capitola's zoning ordinance regarding the provision of access with new or expanded developments. The City has required access easements along Soquel Creek and the shoreline in development permits on a case-by-case basis. While this is a positive step, a certifiable LUP must include a more comprehensive long-term program for providing and protecting coastal access. The following policies set the framework for the access program. The implementation portion of the LCP will include specific regulations requiring access and the City's program for improving trails and overlooks.

The LCP represents the commitment of the City of Capitola to provide continuing protection and enhancement of its coastal resources. It is recommended that certain resource areas in this jurisdiction may require further public attention to ensure their protection and enhancement. Included in this concern are:

- degraded, or less than pristine, wetlands of any size, such as the lagoon at the mouth of Soquel Creek;
- some form of deterioration or development pressures;
- areas which are appropriate for well-adjusted visitor, commercial, and recreational facilities such as the beach area.

POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION FOR
PUBLIC ACCESS COMPONENT – CAPITOLA LCP

GENERAL POLICIES

- Policy II-1 It shall be the policy of the City of Capitola to provide safe and adequate pedestrian access to and along the shoreline as designated in the Shoreline Access Plan (see Maps II-1,2, and 3).

Implementation:

- a) Develop ordinance to require dedications to implement the shoreline access plan.

Use available coastal access and open space grant programs for acquisition and development (i.e. Coastal Conservancy and State Parks and Recreation).

- Policy II-2 It shall be the policy of the City of Capitola to maintain the existing shuttle bus system so that it serves as an alternative to automobile use and parking within the Village. Furthermore, the City shall continue to seek out and implement other parking alternatives that may become available in the future. The intensity of development within Capitola Village shall be limited to the availability of parking. The City may designate two Village metered parking spaces, or similar space, to allow for the operation of a Valet Parking Program. These two parking spaces shall be available for use by the general public when the Valet Parking Program is not in operation. The Valet Parking Program shall not otherwise reduce the general public parking supply.

Implementation:

- a) The City shall continue to provide a free summer beach shuttle program on summer weekends and summer holidays from a remote lot or lots, such as on Bay Avenue.
- b) Continue the financing mechanism for the free summer beach shuttle program.
- c) Periodically review parking innovations [and multi-modal enhancements](#) in other coastal communities for possible use in Capitola.
- d) The City or a private entity approved by the City may operate a valet parking program by leasing private parking spaces and/or lots during weekends and/or evenings, and where the spaces/lots are located

within a reasonable distance from the Village. The program operator can charge a reasonable fee, approved by the City, to users of the valet parking program. For a fee, automobile drivers may leave their cars with a valet, when then has the choice to park in the leased private parking spaces/lots when the businesses or services that typically use these spaces/lots are not open. The owners of these spaces/lots are compensated for the use of the spaces/lots, and issues such as liability will be addressed by the private company operating the valet service.

- Policy II-3 It shall be the policy of the City of Capitola to design and implement a sign program for visitor information to specifically facilitate the use of beach access points.

Implementation:

Develop a beach access signage program and a signage program to direct visitors to the Shuttlebus lot, keeping traffic from circling in the Village area when possible.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

- Policy II-4 ~~Provide for a safe pedestrian and bicycle path and/or sidewalk on or along Cliff Drive, and provide improvements including landscaping, benches, etc., and parking turn-out areas to facilitate both pedestrian and auto use.~~

The City shall evaluate ways to maximize Cliff Drive's public access and multimodal transportation utility, and shall pursue funding and projects to transform Cliff Drive into a complete street to provide safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Development along Cliff Drive shall be designed to enhance and maximize public access and multimodal transportation opportunities while simultaneously minimizing and mitigating for any unavoidable adverse coastal resource impacts to the maximum extent feasible. Any critical infrastructure/public works development along Cliff Drive shall incorporate user amenities such as benches, waste, and recycling facilities, and vehicular and bicycle parking for those visiting the coastline.

Implementation:

- a) Develop a bicycle plan for the Cliff Drive/Village/Park Avenue area and seek ~~Regional Transportation Commission~~ funds for development.
- ~~b)~~ Develop a beautification and access improvement plan for the Cliff Drive Wharf area.

~~Policy II-5 Obtain agreement from Southern Pacific and improve parking area on inland side of Cliff Drive within Southern Pacific and Cliff Drive rights of way. This is intended to add to Wharf user parking.~~

~~Continue collaboration with SCCRTC through design and construction phases of the Coastal Rail Trail project to provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists travelling along Cliff Drive. Integrate parking along Cliff Drive to support users visiting the coast, wharf, and coastal trail.~~

~~Implementation:~~

~~Acquire necessary easements for long term usage of Southern Pacific right of way for parking and utilize Coastal Conservancy funding for development.~~

HOOPER BEACH AREA

~~Policy II-6 Overnight storage of catamarans and other small craft will not be allowed to conflict with the use of beach area by the general public.~~

~~Implementation:~~

~~Establish an ordinance to prohibit overnight storage of catamarans and other small craft on the beach, under the wharf, or in any other area used by the public.~~

Policy II-75 Maintain, at minimum, the existing rights of the public to use the sandy beach.

Implementation:

None.

WHARF AREA

Policy II-86 Complete restoration of the wharf as a free access public fishing pier and develop small, low intensity facilities that provide complementing public services (i.e. food service facilities, fishing/boating accessory shop, maintenance and repair operations, water taxi service, public restrooms, etc.)

Implementation

Develop concessionaire agreements that specify and limit types of uses on the wharf, consistent with Policy II-68.

Policy II-~~9~~⁷ Provide adequate parking nearby to support the wharf uses (specifically boat launching activities) and establish operational guidelines that minimize conflicts between pedestrians and Wharf traffic.

Implementation:

~~a) Acquire necessary easements for long term usage of Southern Pacific right of way for parking and utilize Coastal Conservancy funding for development.~~

b) Develop concessionaire agreements that specify and limit types of uses of wharf consistent with Policy II-~~6~~⁸.

Policy II-~~10~~⁸ Improve the design of Wharf Road/Cliff Drive intersection to improve multi-modal transportation and traffic circulation (see Exhibit II-1).

Implementation:

Place improvements for intersection within the City's Capital Improvements Program (1981-82).

VENETIAN COURT AREA:

Policy II-~~11~~⁹ Clarify and maintain public access over and along the Venetian Court perimeter walkway adjacent to the public beach.

Implementation:

Maintain the existing public access through and along the Venetian Court.

THE VILLAGE AREA:

Policy II-~~12~~¹⁰ Develop a scheme for safe bicycle connection between Cliff Drive and Park Avenue and improve bicycle parking facilities.

Implementation:

Develop overall bicycle plan for Cliff Drive-Village-Park Avenue transition utilizing directional signing and seek Regional Transportation Commission funds for development.

CAPITOLA BEACH AREA:

Policy II-~~14~~¹¹ Maintain a commitment to all existing access walkways and paths to Capitola Beach.

Implementation:

Develop an inventory of all existing, as well as desired public accessways.

RESTROOM/PUMP STATION PARKING AREA:

Policy II-~~15~~12 Maintain the Esplanade public facilities/park area improvements.

BETWEEN CAPITOLA AND NEW BRIGHTON BEACH:

Policy II-~~16~~13 Access along beach should not be formalized, and due to safety factors, should be signed to warn of potential hazards from tidal action and cliff erosion.

Implementation:

Provide warning signing at either end of the beach.

Policy II-~~17~~14 ~~Designate Park Avenue and the Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way along the bluff top as the lateral coastal accessway~~ Preserve coastal access between Capitola Village and New Brighton and develop vista points and connecting pathways in cooperation with ~~Southern Pacific Railroad~~ RTC and State Parks. Evaluate the potential for continuation of the Grand Avenue bluff-top path from Hollister Avenue to Escalona Avenue concurrent with any development proposals for parcels adjacent to this area.

Implementation:

Acquire right-of-way easements from Southern Pacific and seek funding from the Transportation Commission, Coastal Conservancy, and private sources for development of bicycle path, improved pedestrian accessways, and vista points which are not hazardous.

Policy II-~~18~~15 Because of environmental sensitivity of the natural ecosystem along the creek, the City will maintain existing pathways and park sites for public use but will prevent further disruption that might occur because of expansion of path systems along Soquel Creek.

Implementation:

Develop an ordinance that requires scenic conservation easements or land dedications to preserve the open space/habitat qualities of Soquel Creek.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-____

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CAPITOLA
RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO THE CAPITOLA
LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (CMC TITLE 17 ZONING
ORDINANCE CHAPTER 17.32: PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, CHAPTER 17.64: ESHA,
CHAPTER 17.76: PARKING AND LOADING, AND CHAPTER 17.68 GEOLOGICAL
HAZARDS)**

WHEREAS, the City of Capitola has an adopted Local Coastal Program (LCP), consisting of a Land Use Plan (LUP) and Implementation Plan (IP), certified by the California Coastal Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Implementation Plan (Zoning Code) must be updated to ensure consistency with the Land Use Plan and to implement the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments update four chapters of the Capitola Municipal Code (CMC) within Title 17 – Zoning:

1. Chapter 17.32: Parks and Open Space – to allow for Cliff Drive improvements, add restrictions on beach development, and clarify public facility allowances;
2. Chapter 17.64: Ecologically Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) – to clarify resource-dependent uses permitted in ESHA;
3. Chapter 17.76: Parking and Loading – to update reference from Southern Pacific Railroad to the Regional Transportation Commission;
4. Chapter 17.68: Geological Hazards – to update definitions, purposes, and technical standards for bluff/seacliff protection and coastal hazard analysis; and

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments update outdated references and provide clear, enforceable regulations consistent with the California Coastal Act; and

WHEREAS, the amendments were duly noticed and made available for public review at City Hall, the Community Center, the Capitola Library, and online; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendments, considered all testimony, and finds that the amendments are consistent with the California Coastal Act, the General Plan, and the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission of the City of Capitola hereby recommends the City Council adopt amendments to the Local Coastal

Program Implementation Plan, specifically amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32, 17.64, 17.68, and 17.76.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 27th day of August, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Chair Paul Estey

Attest:

Rosie Wyatt, Deputy City Clerk

VII. NATURAL HAZARDS

BACKGROUND

The hazards policy group of the land use plan concerns the following: seismic shaking, liquefaction, tsunamis, landslides, flooding, and bluff and beach erosion. A brief definition of each type of hazard is given along with a summary of the hazards existing in Capitola's coastal zone. For a more detailed discussion of each type of hazard and the remainder of the background information below, see Capitola LCP Working Paper #2 (May 1980; available at Commission or City offices).

SEISMIC SHAKING

Seismic shaking is caused by movement of the earth's crust in fault zones. Active faults are located offshore from Capitola in Monterey Bay and in the Santa Cruz mountains. While no active faults underlie the City, a high magnitude earthquake along any of the nearby faults would result in intense shaking.

LIQUEFACTION

Liquefaction occurs in areas underlain by unconsolidated water-saturated sediments. During seismic shaking, these areas acquire liquid-like properties which can result in ground failure and buildings sinking, tilting, or toppling. The hazard areas in the coastal zone are the Village, the Soquel Creek mouth and banks, and Noble Gulch. A map is attached which shows the areas subject to liquefaction.

TSUNAMIS

Tsunamis or seismic sea waves are large oceanic waves, resulting from submarine volcanic eruptions, seismic events, or landslides. The maximum probable tsunami to hit Capitola's shoreline is estimated to be 20 feet in height. Portions of the Village and mouth of Soquel Creek could be inundated as indicated on the attached map.

LANDSLIDES

Landslides occur as a result of ground failure in inherently unstable materials, as well as during seismic shaking on steep slopes. Several human-induced factors contribute to slope instability. These activities include removal of vegetation, alteration of slopes by grading and construction, top loading of slopes with structures, and alteration of slope drainage patterns by channeling runoff from impervious surfaces or otherwise blocking natural drainage paths.

There exist in the coastal zone several areas with slopes of 30 percent or greater. These areas are located along Soquel Creek, Noble Gulch, and Escalona Gulch. The Escalona Gulch landsliding potential is compounded by the fact that the area is covered by highly erodible soils.

FLOODING

The lowlands along Soquel Creek, most of the Village, and the lowlands immediately adjacent to Noble Gulch lie within the 100 year floodplain (i.e. all this area is expected to flood at least once every 100 years). Soquel Creek has flooded several times in the past and will probably flood again. Development within the floodplain increases the severity of floods by obstructing waterflow and supplying debris which can accumulate, causing flood waters to back up and rise.

BLUFF AND BEACH EROSION

The beaches and bluffs of most of the California coastline are eroding. ~~In~~ Bluffs in the City of Capitola, ~~the bluffs~~ extend both up and downcoast of the Village, and these areas are eroding at ~~a moderate to~~ fairly high rate (~~from up to~~ 1.5 to 3 feet per year). Both private and public development is presently threatened by ~~such~~ bluff retreat. The most important public ~~property~~ properties immediately endangered ~~is~~ are along Grand Avenue at Depot Hill and Cliff Drive. Several residential structures are also threatened along those bluffs. ~~Presently the only seawall or protective device to reduce the rate of erosion is the rip-rap placed at the base of the bluff just upcoast of Hooper Beach.~~ Other than armoring nearest the Village, the bluffs along Depot Hill are almost entirely unarmored (as of 2025). The armoring at Cliff Drive is significant, but it is being undercut by ongoing and episodic erosion. Without intervention, the bluff will continue to recede, threatening the Cliff Drive corridor. In terms of beach/shoreline erosion, Capitola Beach ~~has~~ experienced periodic episodes of erosion and lost sand after the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor was completed, ~~apparently including~~ because the harbor and its jetties ~~have~~ interfered with downcoast transport of beach sand. ~~The City had a groin installed in 1970 and~~ In 1970, the Army Corps of Engineers constructed a groin at the downcoast end of the Esplanade, which was accompanied by imported sand to fully recharge the beach. The groin has helped maintain and restore beach width at Capitola Beach, and was refurbished in 2020 to help extend its life and preserve its efficacy. A concrete seawall ~~at the inland boundary of the~~ separates the beach from ~~protects~~ the parking lot and Village businesses ~~from wave attack unless the waves are large enough to,~~ although large waves/wave events periodically top the wall, resulting in flooding and storm damage in the Village, ~~an event which has occurred in recent past winters.~~

RELEVANT COASTAL ACT POLICIES

The following Coastal Act policies pertain to natural hazards in Capitola's coastal zone:

SEC. 30253 (1) AND (2)

New development shall:

- 1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.

- 2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

SEC. 30211

Development shall not interfere with the public's right of access to the sea where acquired through use or legislative authorization, including, but not limited to, the use of dry sand and rocky coastal beaches to the first line of terrestrial vegetation.

SEC. 30212

- a) Public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast shall be provided in new development projects except where (1) it is inconsistent with public safety, military security needs, or the protection of fragile coastal resources, (2) adequate access exists nearby, or (3) agriculture would be adversely affected. Dedicated accessway shall not be required to be opened to public use until a public agency or private association agrees to accept responsibility for maintenance and liability of the accessway.
- b) For purposes of this section, "new development" does not include:
 - Replacement of any structure pursuant to the provisions of subdivision (g) of section 30610.
 - a. The demolition and reconstruction of a single-family residence; provided that the reconstructed residence shall not exceed either the floor area, height, or bulk of the former structure by more than 10 percent, and that the reconstructed residence shall be sited in the same location on the affected property as the former structure.
 - b. Improvements to any structure which do not change the intensity of its use, which do not increase either to floor area, height, or bulk of the structure by more than 10 percent, which do not block or impede public access, and which do not result in a seaward encroachment by the structure.
 - c. Any repair or maintenance activity for which the commission has determined, pursuant to Section 30610, that a coastal development permit will be required unless the regional commission or the commission determines that such activity will have an adverse effect on lateral public access along the beach.
- c) As used in this subdivision, "bulk" means total interior cubic volume as measured from the exterior surface of the structure.

Nothing in this division shall restrict public access, nor shall it excuse the performance of duties and responsibilities of public agencies which are required by Sections 66478.1 to 66478.14, inclusive, of the Government Code and by Section 4 of Article X of the California Constitution. (Amended by Cal. Stats. 1979, Ch. 919.)

SEC. 30230

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

SEC. 30231

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

SEC. 30233 (a)

- a) The diking, filling, or dredging of open coastal waters, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes shall be permitted in accordance with other applicable provisions of this division, where there is no feasible less environmentally damaging alternative, and where feasible mitigation measures have been provided to minimize adverse environmental effects, and shall be limited to the following:
 - 1) New or expanded port, energy, and coastal-dependent industrial facilities, including commercial fishing facilities.
 - 2) Maintaining existing, or restoring previously dredged, depths in existing navigational channels, turning basins, vessel berthing and mooring areas, and boat launching ramps.
 - 3) In wetland areas only, entrance channels for new or expanded boating facilities; and in a degraded wetland, identified by the Department of Fish and Game pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 30411, for boating facilities if, in conjunction with such boating facilities, a substantial portion of the degraded wetland is restored and maintained as a biologically productive wetland; provided, however, that in no event shall the size of the wetland area used for such boating facility, including berthing space, turning basins, necessary support service facilities, be greater than 25 percent of the total wetland area to be restored.
 - 4) In open coastal waters, other than wetlands, including streams, estuaries, and lakes, new or expanded boating facilities.

- 5) Incidental public service purposes, including, but not limited to, burying cables and pipes or inspection of piers and maintenance of existing intake or outfall lines.
- 6) Mineral extraction, including sand for restoring beaches, except in environmentally sensitive areas.
- 7) Restoration purposes.
- 8) Nature study, aquaculture, or similar resource-development activities.

SEC. 30235

Revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes shall be permitted when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply. Existing marine structures causing water stagnation contributing to pollution problems and fishkills should be phased out or upgraded where feasible.

SEC. 30244

Where development would adversely impact archaeological or paleontological resources as identified by the State Historic Preservation Officer, reasonable mitigation shall be required.

SEC. 30251

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

SEC. 30270

The commission shall take into account the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities in order to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise.

~~EXISTING~~ POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

SEISMIC SHAKING & LIQUEFACTION

The City of Capitola has adopted and enforced the Uniform Building Code which stipulates standard construction methods for areas subject to earthquakes. The Seismic Safety Element of the General Plan has a policy which requires that in areas identified in the General Plan EIR as having high to very high seismic shaking hazard, a geologic study shall be done which delineates adequate structural mitigation measures prior to approval of development plans.

TSUNAMIS

The General Plan states that any development, redevelopment, or major rehabilitation along the beachfront and mouth of Soquel Creek that may be subject to runup shall require a report demonstrating measures of mitigation for potential flooding. The General Plan also requires an adequate setback from bluff edges to reduce the hazard of wave runup. This setback is to be determined in a geologic report which the City is to require for all bluff top developments.

LANDSLIDES

Although the City's General Plan does not have a specific section on landslides, unstable slopes are treated by the Open Space Element. The Open Space Element prohibits development along riparian areas which are susceptible to landslides.

FLOODING

The General Plan states that no new development should take place within the 100-year flood plain of Soquel Creek unless federal flood plain standards are met. The zoning ordinance includes a flood plain zoning overlay and flood plain regulations which are applied to the 100-year flood plain as designated by FEMA. The flood plain ordinance does not allow new construction or substantial improvement in the designated flood way and requires that such development in the flood plain be elevated above the flood height for residential construction or flood-proofed for commercial development.

BLUFF AND BEACH EROSION

In response to ongoing bluff and beach erosion, multiple armoring structures exist along the Capitola shoreline. However, such armoring structures, while protecting development inland of them, have a series of adverse coastal resource impacts, including ultimately leading to a loss of beach.

The bluffs and beaches are threatened by storms, erosion, and sea level rise; and adaptation, in light of such coastal hazards, will prove critical in coming years. The City will continue to engage in coastal adaptation planning to address known vulnerabilities of bluff and beach erosion and explore mechanisms to better protect resources and enhance and adapt public and recreational access opportunities and amenities.

~~The City's General Plan includes the Coastal Commission's interim guideline (of 1974) on bluff top development as a policy in the Seismic Safety Element. However, the Coastal Commission has revised its bluff top policy to make it more clear and stringent; this indicates a need for the City to possibly update its policy. The Conservation Element has policies on both beach and bluff erosion. It recommends replacement of sand lost from erosion and stabilization measures for Capitola Beach. The Conservation Element also includes a policy that shoreline protection works can be placed after detailed study of the subject area. It also ranks the types of permissible shoreline works as follows:~~

- ~~1) Addition of rip-rap at the base of the cliffs;~~
- ~~2) Provision of additional rock groins to encourage permanent expansion of beaches if feasible;~~
- ~~3) Provision of seawalls as a last resort where other methods are not satisfactory.~~

STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Several agencies have jurisdiction over areas that are involved in the above hazard types. These are:

- California Coastal Commission – Even after the City's LCP has been certified and is being implemented, the Coastal Commission retains ~~permit control~~ jurisdiction over tidelands, submerged lands, and public trust lands (pursuant to Coastal Act Section 30519), and performs an oversight role in relation to the City's delegated jurisdictional responsibilities.
- State Department of Fish and ~~Game~~ Wildlife– Requires a permit for any activity in Soquel Creek and the immediate banks, and reviews any project proposed for ocean waters.
- State Lands Commission – Requires a permit for any project which is a seaward of the Mean High Tide line or which would alter the MHT line, i.e. the State's boundary.
- State Department of Parks and Recreation – If their property is to be utilized for any project, including as access to another site, the Department's permission is necessary.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Requires a permit for any activity which is seaward of the Mean High Tide line or is in any navigable water or wetland.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board – Activities affecting California's surface, coastal, or ground waters require a permit from the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary – Regulated activities below Mean High Tide Line require a National Marine Sanctuary permit.

Natural Hazards Component Policies

GENERAL POLICIES

Policy VII-1 It shall be the policy of the City of Capitola to adequately plan for natural hazards in new development, reduce risks to life and property, and revise all plans and Zoning Ordinances to be in conformance with all the policies of the Coastal Act relating to hazards and shoreline structures. *The City shall further take into account the effects of sea level rise in coastal resources planning and management policies and activities in order to identify, assess, and, to the extent feasible, avoid and mitigate the adverse effects of sea level rise.*

Implementation:

- a) Requires geologic/engineering reports in areas of high seismic shaking for structures subject to public use or multi-residential as required by the UBC.
- b) Revise Zoning Ordinance to require geologic reports for all development proposed on coastal bluffs or beaches, including shoreline structures such as seawalls and including provisions of Policy VII-8.

Policy VII-2 All geologic/engineering reports required by the City pursuant to the policies of this component shall be prepared *by a* qualified geologist/engineer according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California ~~Division of Mines and Geology~~ *Geological Survey* and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance. ~~, specifically CDMG notes Numbers 37 (Guidelines to Geologic/Seismic Reports), 43 (Recommended Guidelines for Determining the Maximum Probably Earthquakes), 44 (Recommended Guidelines for Preparing Engineering Geologic Reports) and interpretive Coastal Commission for Bluff Top Development.~~

Implementation:

Incorporate policy requirements for all development proposals subject to Policy VII-2.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

Seismic Safety Policies

Policy VII-3 The City shall require all new building plans, for public use structures or multi-residential (more than three units), to conform with the Uniform Building Code construction standards.

Implementation:

Requires geologic/engineering reports in areas or high seismic shaking for structures subject to public use or multi-residential as required by the UBC.

Tsunamis

Policy VII-4 Measures to mitigate possible flooding shall be submitted for all new structures that will be occupied by the public located in areas as shown on Map VII-3.

Implementation:

Develop regulations limiting development in coastal flood hazard areas as designated by FEMA.

Landslides

Policy VII-5 A geologic/engineering report which indicated methods of achieving structural stability and mitigation measures to prevent erosion shall be submitted for any structure which is to be constructed on a slope in excess of 30 percent.

Implementation:

Revise Zoning Ordinance to require geologic/engineering report for structures to be built on slopes in excess of 30 percent.

Flooding

Policy VII-6 It shall be the policy of the City to adopt a local flood plain ordinance consistent with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requirements for designated 100-year [riverine](#) flood plains

Implementation:

Adopt [riverine](#) flood plain ordinance.

Beach and Bluff Erosion

Objective: Protect and enhance bluff, shoreline, offshore, and sandy beach recreational areas for public use and enjoyment while ensuring all development (including private structures and public infrastructure) is protected, as much as possible, from both current and future coastal hazards. Ensure that otherwise allowable development is sited, designed, and conditioned to minimize risks to life and property, to avoid being subject to coastal hazards, and where development cannot entirely avoid

coastal hazards, to appropriately mitigate for adverse impacts to coastal resources, including to bluff, shoreline, offshore, and sandy beach recreational areas.

- Policy VII-7 Bluff and cliff top development shall be approved only if design and setback provisions are adequate to assure stability and structural integrity for ~~the expected economic lifespan of the development~~ (at least 50 years) and if the development (including storm runoff, foot traffic, grading, and irrigation) will neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion problems or geologic instability of the site or surrounding area. This policy shall be carried out by requiring geologic reports as per Policy VII-8.

Implementation:

~~Revise Zoning Ordinance to require geologic reports for all development proposed on coastal bluffs or beaches, including shoreline structures such as seawalls and with specific emphasis on provisions outlined in Policy VII-7.~~

- Policy VII-8 A geologic/engineering report shall be submitted for any bluff top or cliff development proposed within 200 feet of the cliff edge.

The City may designate a lesser area of demonstration in specific areas of known geologic stability (as determined by adequate geologic evaluation and historic evidence) ~~or where adequate protective works already exist.~~ The City may designate a greater area of demonstration or exclude development entirely in areas of known high instability.

The ~~technical geology~~ report shall be prepared by a ~~registered geologist or professional civil engineer~~ ~~qualified professional~~ with expertise in ~~shoreline processes soils or foundation engineering or by a certified engineering geologist.~~ The report shall consider and analyze any information required by Policy VII-2.

Implementation:

~~a) Revise Zoning ordinance to require geologic reports for all development proposed on coastal bluffs or beaches, including shoreline structures, such as seawalls and including provisions of Policy VII-8.~~

b) Develop maps for public information showing areas and parcels requiring the submittal of geologic reports.

- Policy VII-9 Shoreline structures, ~~such as including~~ but not limited to seawalls, revetments, groins, and breakwaters, shall be permitted only to serve coastal dependent uses, to protect existing ~~development structures~~ (other than accessory structures), or to protect public beaches in danger of

erosion; shall **only** be permitted ~~only~~ if nonstructural solutions (such as ~~artificial~~ beach nourishment and relocating structures) **and any other less environmentally damaging alternatives (such as nature-based adaptation measures)** have proved to be infeasible; **shall only be permitted if determined to be the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative to protect the endangered structure/beach/use; and, shall only be permitted if all coastal resource impacts are avoided as much as possible, and where all unavoidable impacts are commensurately mitigated.** Such structures shall be designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply, public access, **visual resources**, marine habitats, ~~and~~ paleontological resources, **and other coastal resources**. It is further the policy of the City of Capitola that no permanent channelization of the mouth of Soquel Creek shall be permitted. The seasonal movement of sand to form the lagoon, maintenance dredging and infill of bulkheads shall not be considered permanent channelization.

Implementation:

Incorporate policy direction in Planning Commission and Architectural and Site Review for projects involving shoreline structures.

- Policy VII-10 The City should continue to participate with the State Department of Boating and waterways in studying the bluff erosion problem and possible solutions. The City should participate in any proposed shoreline project only if the project is in conformance with other LCP policies.

Implementation:

- a) Present results of bluff erosion study by the Department of Boating and Waterways to the public for review. Pursue funding for proposed measures, if any, if they appear feasible.
- b) Develop an ordinance to require notification of potential erosion hazards to any new owner, upon sale of properties along Coastal bluffs within Capitola.

- Policy VII-11 The City shall construct future drainage projects and improve existing drainage facilities where feasible so that runoff is **filtered and treated, and** directed away from the coastal bluffs, ~~or if it cannot be~~ **(except that where such measures are infeasible it shall be** discharged in a place and manner so as not to contribute to erosion of a bluff or beach.)

As a condition of approval for any coastal adaptation strategies along Cliff Drive, require the removal of any non-native and invasive plants and replacement with native bluff plants and explore the feasibility of directing drainage to inland drainage systems. Ensure that drainage in coastal hazard areas does not contribute to coastal bluff or other shoreline erosion,

and camouflage all drainage elements to minimize impact to visual resources.

Implementation:

Cooperate with AMBAG in the development of erosion control regulations for all new development as required by the regional Water Quality Control Board with specific emphasis on reducing erosion impacts on coastal bluffs and beaches.

Policy VII-12 Notwithstanding other LCP provisions, resiliency and adaptation projects may be approved along Cliff Drive provided they use the best available science to address and mitigate impacts from sea level rise and climate change related phenomena, enhance public recreational access, and protect/enhance ESHA/paleontological resources.

Capitola Village

Policy VII-13 Capitola Village is critically important for the City, not only for its residents, but also its visitor-focused economy and its significant public recreational access offerings. Due to its low-lying nature, the Village and its fronting beach are threatened by storms, erosion, and sea level rise. Adaptation in light of such coastal hazards will prove critical in coming years. The City is pursuing funding to embark on coastal adaptation planning to address known vulnerabilities of the Village and Capitola Beach and explore mechanisms to better protect Village resources and enhance and adapt public and recreational access opportunities and amenities.

MAP NOTES

The LCP Land Use Plan Map has been prepared by using the same format as the City of Capitola General Plan Map, in order to make it easier to use. The land use designations in the General Plan are carried over into the Land Use Plan where they are consistent with the Coastal Act of 1976. The maps included in the text should be considered as part of the Land Use Plan Map and provide further interpretation of the Land Use Plan policies. The full-size versions of these reduced maps will be available for review in the City offices.

Also, as in a General Plan Map, this Land Use Plan Map is not meant to be a parcel-by-parcel description of appropriate land uses. Rather, the Map should be used in conjunction with the Policies to guide development of individual parcels. Other map notes follow.

- 1) The Map shows land use designations only for those areas that are both in the Coastal Zone and the City limits.
- 2) The Coastal Zone boundary line is approximate. Official boundary maps are available in the Coastal Commission and the City of Capitola offices.
- 3) As under the current Capitola General Plan, in some cases, the designated land use is not representative of the existing land use. The designated use should direct future permits and planning.
- 4) The location of coastal bluffs that are shown are only approximate. Policies of the Natural Hazards Component should guide land use involving bluffs.
- 5) In areas designated residential, public facilities (e.g. fire station, parks, schools) are permitted uses.
- 6) The V-5 symbol on the map denotes that a site is designated for a visitor-serving use. Visitor-serving uses are defined in the Recreation and Visitor-Serving Component.
- 7) The Mixed Commercial-Residential land use indicates that combined commercial and residential uses are appropriate on a single site. This land use designation is defined in the Housing Component.
- 8) The map has 6 high-density residential uses designated. Two of these sites have been identified in the Housing Component Policies as suitable for low and moderate income housing projects.
- 9) The Village Center area is outlined. Design and Development Guidelines for the Village are included in the Visual Resources and Special Communities Component. Land areas in the Village are designated for Residential or Mixed Commercial-Residential, Visitor-Serving and Public Facilities compatible with land use patterns.

Chapter 17.32

SPECIAL PURPOSE ZONING DISTRICTS Revised 1/25 Revised 6/25

Sections:

17.32.010 Purpose of the special purpose zoning districts.

17.32.020 Land use regulations. Revised 1/25 Revised 6/25

17.32.030 Development standards.

17.32.010 Purpose of the special purpose zoning districts.

A. Community Facility (CF). The CF zoning district provides areas for public and community facilities serving Capitola residents and visitors. Land uses permitted in the CF zoning district include public uses such as governmental offices, police and fire stations, community centers, schools, libraries, and other similar uses. The CF zoning district implements the public/quasi-public land use designation in the general plan.

B. Parks and Open Space (P/OS). The P/OS zoning district provides parks, recreational facilities, and open space for the use and enjoyment of the community and visitors. The P/OS zoning district also protects and preserves environmentally sensitive natural areas and habitat in Capitola. The P/OS zoning district implements the parks and open space land use designation in the general plan. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.32.020 Land use regulations. Revised 1/25 Revised 6/25

A. Permitted Uses. Table 17.32-1 identifies land uses permitted in the CF and P/OS zoning districts.

B. Commercial Uses in the P/OS Zoning District. Commercial uses that are accessory to a permitted use in the P/OS zoning district are permitted with a conditional use permit as long as the park, recreation, and open space purposes are met by the overall development.

C. Visitor Accommodations in New Brighton State Beach. Visitor accommodations and campground uses are permitted in the New Brighton State Beach.

D. P/OS Standards. The following standards apply to uses in the P/OS zoning district:

1. Any structure, land use, or removal of vegetation or natural materials that in the opinion of the community development director is inconsistent with the purpose of the P/OS zoning district is prohibited.
2. Development shall be subordinate to its recreational, scenic, or natural resource purpose consistent with the local coastal program (LCP). Natural resource protection shall include protection of arroyos; creeks, riparian corridors, and other environmentally sensitive habitat; and woodlands.
3. No new structures are permitted on the open, sandy beach area of Capitola except for appropriate public facilities (e.g., the flume and jetties), required shoreline protective structures (approved beach erosion control structures), and structures required for public health and safety (e.g., lifeguard stands) if otherwise consistent with the local coastal program.

Table 17.32-1: Permitted Land Uses in the CF and P/OS Zoning Districts

Key		Zoning District		Additional Regulations
P	Permitted Use			
A	Administrative Permit required			
M	Minor Use Permit required			
C	Conditional Use Permit required			
—	Use not allowed	CF	P/OS	
Public and Quasi-Public Uses				
Colleges and Trade Schools		C	—	
Community Assembly		P [1]	—	
Cultural Institutions		P [1]	—	
Day Care Centers		P [1]	—	
Government Offices		P	—	
Parks and Recreational Facilities		P [1]	P [1]	
Public Paths and Coastal Accessways [2]		P	P	
Public Safety Facilities		P	—	
Schools, Public or Private		P	—	
Transportation, Communication, and Utilities Uses				
Recycling Collection Facilities		C	—	Section 17.96.130
Utilities, Major		C	C	
Utilities, Minor		P	P	
Wireless Telecommunications Facilities		See Chapter 17.104		
Other Uses				
Accessory Uses and Structures		See Chapter 17.52		
Temporary Uses and Structures		See Section 17.96.180		
Urban Agriculture				
Community Gardens		M [1]	M [1]	

Note:

[1] Publicly owned and/or operated facilities only.

[\[2\] Coastal armoring to support public paths and coastal accessways along Cliff Drive is allowable. See Capitola LCP policy II-4 and VII-12.](#)

(Ord. 1066 § 2 (Att. 1), 2024; Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.32.030 Development standards.

A. Floor Area Ratio. The maximum permitted floor area ratio (FAR) is 0.25 in the P/OS zoning district and as determined by the planning commission through the design review process in the CF zoning district.

B. Other Development Standards. Other development standards (e.g., setbacks, height, building coverage) in the CF and P/OS zoning districts shall be determined by the planning commission through the design review and coastal development permit (if in the coastal zone) process. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

Chapter 17.64

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITAT AREAS

Sections:

- 17.64.010 Purpose.
- 17.64.020 Applicability.
- 17.64.030 General standards.
- 17.64.040 Soquel Creek, Lagoon, and Riparian Corridor.
- 17.64.050 Monarch butterfly habitat – Rispin-Soquel Creek and Escalona Gulch.

17.64.010 Purpose.

This chapter establishes standards to protect and preserve environmentally sensitive habitat areas in Capitola consistent with Capitola's general plan, local coastal program (LCP), and the requirements of the Coastal Act. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.64.020 Applicability.

This chapter applies to the following environmentally sensitive habitat areas. Environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) are any areas in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments. ESHA includes wetlands, coastal streams and riparian vegetation, and terrestrial ESHA, including habitats of plant and animal species listed under the federal or California Endangered Species Act. The ESHA map identifies properties in the general location of sensitive habitats. The precise location of sensitive habitats within a site shall be identified in the biological study as required within Section 17.64.030(G) (Biological Study). In addition, the following areas are categorically ESHA as identified in Capitola's LCP:

- A. Soquel Creek, Lagoon, and Riparian Corridor.
- B. Noble Gulch Riparian Corridor.
- C. Tannery Gulch Riparian Corridor.
- D. Monarch butterfly habitat – Rispin-Soquel Creek and Escalona Gulch. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.64.030 General standards.

The following standards apply to all environmentally sensitive habitat areas:

- A. Allowable Development within Sensitive Habitat Area. The only allowed development within the sensitive habitat areas as identified in the biological study required in subsection G of this section (Biological Study) shall be those uses dependent on the resource (e.g., low-intensity public access and recreation, nature study, restoration). The only new uses allowed in wetlands and streams/riparian areas shall be those specified in Coastal Act Sections 30233 and 30236, respectively.
- B. Impact Prevention. Allowable development within an environmentally sensitive habitat area shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade the area.

C. Long-Term Protection. Allowable development shall be sited, designed, and maintained to achieve the long-term protection of the environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

D. Prohibited Areas for Development. With the exception of restoration and resource protection and enhancement activities and resource-dependent uses as set forth in A above, no new development may encroach into the waters of Soquel Creek or Lagoon, be sited within the root zone of riparian or butterfly host trees, or require the removal of trees in a monarch butterfly habitat area which provide roosting habitat or wind protection.

E. Minimum Setbacks.

1. Development may not encroach into required minimum setbacks from environmentally sensitive habitat areas as shown in Table 17.64-1 (Required Setbacks from Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas), except as allowed in subsection (E)(2) of this section. The setbacks listed below are minimums and may be increased depending on the findings of the biological study required in subsection G of this section.

Table 17.64-1: Required Setbacks from Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area	Minimum Setback
Soquel Creek and Lagoon	35 feet from the western shoreline of Soquel Creek Lagoon [1]
Soquel Creek Riparian Corridor	25 feet from the outer edge of riparian vegetation. On the heavily developed east side of the lagoon and creek (from Stockton Avenue to Center Street) the setback requirement shall be measured from the bank of Soquel Creek. In no case may the setback be located on the west side of the pedestrian path.
Noble Gulch Riparian Corridor	35 feet from the outer edge of riparian vegetation
Tannery Gulch Riparian Corridor	50 feet from the outer edge of riparian vegetation
Other ESHA	A setback sufficient to ensure the protection of ESHA habitat values as identified in the biological study as required within subsection G of this section (Biological Study).

Note:

[1] Does not apply to public facilities outside the coastal zone. Within the coastal zone, applies to public facilities unless otherwise specified in Section 30233 of the Coastal Act.

2. To allow for a minimum level of development on a physically constrained lot, the city may allow a reduction to the required minimum setback; provided, that a biological study determines that the reduced setback does not have a significant adverse effect on the ESHA and its habitat value.

F. Setback Exceptions on Developed Lots.

1. The city may grant an exception to the minimum setbacks in subsection E of this section (Minimum Setbacks) for the following projects on developed lots:
 - a. An addition or modifications to an existing single-family home, or an accessory structure, that does not extend closer to the environmentally sensitive habitat area, and provided the addition or modification or accessory structure is compatible with, and will not significantly degrade, the ESHA and/or its habitat values.
2. A “developed lot” means a lot that is developed or utilized to its ultimate potential use according to the applicable zoning district. For example, an R-1 lot that contains a single-family home or a permitted public/quasi-public use is considered developed. A residential or commercial lot that is vacant or used periodically for temporary uses (e.g., seasonal holiday sales) is not considered developed.
3. The city may grant an exception with the approval of an administrative permit, or a coastal development permit for sites located within the coastal zone, upon finding that the project is:
 - a. Sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade environmentally sensitive habitat areas;
 - b. Consistent with the recommendation of the biological study prepared for the proposed development; and
 - c. Compatible with the continuance of habitat and recreation activities within environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
4. The city may attach conditions to the administrative permit or coastal development permit to ensure compliance with all city policies and regulations pertaining to the protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas.
5. City approval of an exception shall not require the applicant to prepare a biological study.

G. Biological Study. For any proposed development located on a parcel within the ESHA areas identified above, the city shall contract with a qualified biologist at the applicant’s expense to prepare a biological study. Biological studies shall at a minimum include the following:

1. Field surveys to determine the presence and location of any sensitive habitats and sensitive plant and animal species; and
2. A biological report which includes vegetation maps, a list of all observed native plant and animal species, an evaluation of other sensitive species which were not observed but have the potential to occur on the site, an impact analysis, and recommendations for avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating impacts. The biological report shall identify appropriate building and other setbacks, appropriate use, restoration, and development standards within setbacks, wetland buffers, landscape recommendations, and mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements as appropriate.

H. Waiver of Biological Study. The city may waive the requirement of a biological study on a developed lot if a project is proposed in a previously developed area of the lot and the project will not degrade the ESHA and/or its habitat values.

I. Conservation Easements and/or Deed Restrictions. If necessary and appropriate to protect natural areas and ESHA, the city shall require a permanent conservation easement or deed restriction over any portion of the property containing environmentally sensitive habitat areas and their required setbacks.

J. Erosion Control and Water Quality.

1. All development shall conform to erosion control and water quality requirements consistent with federal, state, and local regulations. Within riparian areas, allowed grading shall be minimized within the riparian setback area. Grading shall not be permitted to damage the roots of riparian trees or trees within butterfly habitat areas. Grading shall only take place during the dry season.

2. During construction, erosion control measures shall be implemented, including limiting removal of vegetation, minimizing exposure of bare soils, replanting disturbed soils with suitable native species, controlling runoff, and preventing sedimentation from entering drainages. All areas outside the immediate construction areas shall not be disturbed. The city shall require measures for temporary drainage retention during construction, including mulching, erosion control seeding, and other measures as needed to prevent any sediment from reaching sensitive habitat areas.

K. Removal of Native Riparian Trees. Removal of native riparian trees within riparian corridors is prohibited unless it is determined by the community development director, on the basis of an arborist report, that such removal is in the public interest by reason of good forestry practice, disease of the tree, or safety considerations.

L. Dead Trees in Riparian Corridors. Snags, or standing dead trees, shall not be removed from riparian corridors unless in imminent danger of falling, where same would lead to a public safety issue. Removal shall be consistent with all applicable provisions of Chapter 12.12 (Community Tree and Forest Management). Any removed tree shall be replaced with a healthy young tree of an appropriate native riparian species or appropriate habitat for monarch butterflies.

M. Landscaping Plan. A landscaping plan shall be prepared for proposed developments that identifies the location and extent of any proposed modification to existing vegetation and the locations, kinds, and extent of new landscaping. The emphasis of such plans shall be on the maintenance and enhancement of native species, the removal of existing invasive species, and the enhancement of natural habitat. New invasive plant or tree species are prohibited, with the exception of species which positively contribute to monarch butterfly habitat.

N. Wood-Burning Fireplaces. Wood-burning fireplaces shall be prohibited in structures built on sites where monarch butterflies may be disturbed due to chimney smoke. The city discourages wood-burning fireplaces for residential uses in all other areas of Capitola. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.64.040 Soquel Creek, Lagoon, and Riparian Corridor.

The following standards apply in the Soquel Creek, Lagoon, and Riparian Corridor in addition to the standards in Section 17.64.030 (General standards):

A. No New Development. No new development is permitted within the riparian corridor along Soquel Creek and Lagoon, except for restoration and resource protection and enhancement activities, and, outside the coastal zone only, public facilities.

B. Division of Land. New divisions of land may be approved only if each new parcel contains adequate area outside the riparian or stream bank setback to accommodate new development. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

17.64.050 Monarch butterfly habitat – Rispin-Soquel Creek and Escalona Gulch.

The following standard applies to both the Rispin-Soquel Creek and the Escalona Gulch monarch butterfly habitat areas in addition to the standards in Section 17.64.030 (General standards):

A. Permitted Construction Periods. Construction for otherwise allowable development within or on properties contiguous to the designated butterfly groves shall be prohibited during fall and winter months when the monarch butterflies are present. Removal or modification of trees (including pruning) within the groves shall not be permitted during these periods except when determined by the community development director, on the basis of an arborist report, to be an emergency necessary to protect human life or property.

B. Tree Protection.

1. Development shall be sited and designed to avoid removal of large trees. New development located immediately adjacent to large trees shall be evaluated by an arborist to ensure that the development will not negatively impact the tree in the future.

2. Trees removed for construction shall be replaced based on a written tree replanting program developed in consultation with a qualified monarch butterfly expert. The trees shall be sited in strategic locations as identified by the replanting program.

3. Barrier fencing shall be installed around large trees, especially cluster trees, for protection during construction.

C. Structure Height. The city shall limit structure heights as needed to prevent shading of cluster sites.

D. Construction Involving Heavy Equipment. No construction involving heavy equipment that may bump into the cluster trees or produce heavy plumes of exhaust smoke is permitted during the months in which the monarch butterflies are in residence (October 1st to March 1st). (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

Chapter 17.68

GH GEOLOGIC HAZARDS DISTRICT*

Sections:

- 17.68.010 Definitions.
- 17.68.020 Applicability.
- 17.68.030 Purpose.
- 17.68.040 Combining district.
- 17.68.050 Principal permitted uses.
- 17.68.060 Accessory uses.
- 17.68.070 Conditional uses.
- 17.68.080 Development standards.
- 17.68.090 Beach area regulations.
- 17.68.100 Bluff and cliff area regulations.
- 17.68.110 Earthquake fault areas.
- 17.68.120 Floodplain.
- 17.68.130 Landslide areas.
- 17.68.140 Steep slope areas.
- 17.68.150 Other geologic hazard areas.
- 17.68.160 Contents of geologic/engineering reports.
- 17.68.170 Appeals.
- 17.68.180 Requirement of disclosure of property location by seller to seller's agent.
- 17.68.190 Report to be noted on subdivision maps.

* Prior ordinance history: Ords. 472, 562.

17.68.010 Definitions. For purposes of this chapter the following definitions shall apply:

A. "Bluff or Seacliff" means a landform that includes a scarp or steep face of rock adjacent to the bay or ocean and meeting one of the following two parameters:

- a. The toe is now or was historically (generally within the last two hundred years) subject to marine erosion.
- b. The toe of which lies within an area otherwise identified in Public Resources Code Section 30603(a)(1) or (a)(2).

~~or cliff" means the scarp or steep face of rock, decomposed rocks, sediment or soil resulting from erosion, faulting, folding or excavation of land mass and exceeding ten feet in height, and includes what we commonly know as "cliffs."~~

B. "Floodplain" means the land on either side of the creek or other watercourse which may be subject to flooding, includes

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

but is not necessarily limited to any one-hundred year floodplain, as determined by the Federal Flood Insurance Program.

C. "Geological hazard" means a threat to life, property or public safety caused by geological or hydrological processes such as faulting and secondary seismic effects, including but not limited to: liquefaction, landsliding, erosion, flooding, tsunami, or storm wave inundation. (Ord. 628 §2 (part), 1987).

D. "Coastal hazard" includes but is not limited to episodic and long-term shoreline retreat and coastal erosion, high seas, ocean waves, storms, tsunami, tidal scour, wave overtopping, coastal flooding, landslides, bluff and geologic instability, bluff retreat, liquefaction and their interaction, many of which are likely to worsen with sea level rise.

17.68.020 Applicability. The regulations set forth in this chapter apply in all GH districts. (Ord. 628 §2 (part), 1987).

17.68.030 Purpose. The GH district is designed to inform property owners and potential property owners of lands which are located in areas containing geological hazards, including, but not limited to, floodplains, fault zones, known landslide areas, bluffs, tsunami inundation areas, and high liquefaction areas. Along the shoreline and in areas subject to coastal hazards, the GH district is also designed (a) to protect and enhance bluff, shoreline, offshore, and sandy beach recreational areas for public use and enjoyment while ensuring all development (including private structures and public infrastructure) is safe from coastal hazards as much as possible both now and in the future; and (b) to ensure that otherwise allowable development is sited, designed, and conditioned to minimize risks to life and property, to avoid being subject to coastal hazards, and where development cannot entirely avoid coastal hazards, to appropriately mitigate for all adverse impacts to coastal resources, including to bluff, shoreline, offshore, and sandy beach recreational areas.

(Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.040 Combining district. Land classified GH shall also have a basic zoning classification as defined in Chapters 17.12 through 17.45. For example, R-1-GH means that the R-1 district regulations apply as well as the GH regulations. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

17.68.050 Principal permitted uses. The following are principal permitted uses the GH district:

A. All uses permitted in the basic zoning district. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.060 Accessory uses. The following are accessory uses permitted in the GH district:

A. All accessory uses permitted in the basic zoning district. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.070 Conditional uses. The following are conditional uses in the GH district:

A. All conditional uses in the basic zoning district. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.080 Development standards. The development standards in the GH district shall be the same as the basic zoning district except in those instances when more restrictive standards are necessary to provide assurance that stability and structural integrity can be maintained for ~~the economic life of the project~~ (fifty years.) (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.090 Beach area regulations. In the GH district:

A. A geologic/engineering report shall be required for all developments located on a beach, including shoreline protective measures. "Shoreline protective measures" includes the installation, in an area where coastal process operate, of any structure or material, including but not limited to riprap or a seawall, for the purpose of protecting a structure, road, utility or transmission line. Shoreline protection structures shall be permitted only when they are:

1. Necessary to protect existing development other than accessory structures; or
 2. Necessary to protect public beaches in danger from erosion, and only if nonstructural solutions (i.e., artificial beach nourishment, relocation of structures, have proven to be infeasible; and
 3. Designed so as to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply, public access, marine habitats, and paleontological resources
 4. Designed to provide vertical access where feasible
- (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.100 Bluff and seacliff area regulations. In the GH

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

district:

A. Bluff and seacliff top development shall be permitted only if the design and setback provisions are designed to assure stability and structural integrity for ~~the expected life of the development~~ (at least fifty years;) ~~and~~ if the development (including storm runoff, foot traffic, grading and irrigation) will neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion problems or geological instability of the site or surrounding areas.

B. A geologic/engineering report shall be required for any blufftop or seacliff development which is proposed within two hundred feet of the seacliff edge. In specific areas of known geological stability ~~or where adequate protective devices already exist~~ (as determined by adequate geologic evaluation and historic evidence), a lesser area of demonstration may be designated. The city may designate a greater area of demonstration or exclude development entirely in areas of known high instability. (Ord. 677 §15 (A), 1989; Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.110 Earthquake fault areas. In any area determined by the State Geologist, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 2622, to be a special studies zone, a geologic/ engineering report shall be required before any developmental permit may be issued. Nothing in this section shall diminish the duties of any person arising out of the AlquistPriolo- Special Studies Zone Act (Public Resources Code Section 2621 and following.) (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.120 Floodplain. Any development in the GH district which is proposed to be located within the one-hundred year riverine floodplain of Soquel Creek or Noble Creek shall be constructed so as to conform to the Federal Flood Insurance program guidelines for development control. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.130 Landslide areas. In areas determined by the planning director, the public works director, the building inspector or the planning commission to have a landslide potential, a geologic/engineering report shall be required. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.140 Steep slope areas. Any development in the G-H district which is designed to be built on a slope in excess of

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

thirty percent shall require a geologic/engineering **report**. The report shall include methods of achieving structural stability as well as any mitigation measures for preventing erosion. (Ord. 677 §15 (B), 1989: Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.150 Other Geologic hazard areas. The planning commission may require a geologic/engineering report in other areas of geologic hazards. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.160 Contents of geologic/engineering reports. All geologic/engineering reports required by this chapter shall be prepared according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California ~~Division of Mines and Geology~~ Geologic Survey and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance to project sea level rise and other climate-change related environmental changes, coastal erosion, bluff failure, flooding, and other coastal hazards. ~~specifically, No. 37 Guidelines for Preparing Engineering Geological Reports and Coastal Commission Guidelines for Bluff Top Development.~~ The required geological reports for all developments shall be prepared by a registered geologist or professional engineer with expertise in soils or foundations engineering, or by a certified engineering geologist. Because the city staff may not contain the expertise necessary to evaluate the adequacy of a report, the city may employ, at the applicant's expense, an appropriate expert to evaluate the adequacy of the report. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.170 Appeals. Planning commission determination made pursuant to this chapter may be appealed to the city council as provided in Chapter 2.56. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.180 Requirement of disclosure of property location by seller to seller's agent. A person who is acting ~~on~~ behalf of real property which is located within a GH district, or the seller if ~~he-is~~ ~~they are~~ acting without an agent, shall disclose any prospective purchaser the fact that the property is located within a GH district. The planning director may adopt methods of informing owners and real estate salespersons of this requirement. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

17.68.190 Report to be noted on subdivision maps. All geologic/engineering reports prepared in conjunction with an application to subdivided property shall be noted on the map as

Chapter 17.68 – GH Geologic Hazards District

provided in Government Code Section 66434(f). (Ord. 628
§2(part), 1987).

Excerpt from Chapter 17.76 - PARKING AND LOADING

17.76.090 Visitor serving parking.

A. Shuttle Program Parking. Parking for the free summer beach shuttle program shall be provided in a remote lot or lots, such as those located on Bay Avenue and the Village public parking lots. The free shuttle shall operate, at a minimum, on weekends and holidays between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend.

B. Public Parking in the Coastal Zone.

1. Public parking existing as of June 9, 2021, in the following locations in the CF zoning district shall be maintained for public parking:

- a. The Upper City Hall parking lot;
- b. The Cliff Drive overlook parking; and
- c. The Cliff Drive ~~Southern Pacific~~ Regional Transportation Commission railroad right-of-way parking unless Cliff Drive must be relocated due to cliff erosion.

2. Substantial changes in public parking facilities in the coastal zone require a local coastal program (LCP) amendment.

3. Expansion of any existing legally established residential parking programs and/or new residential parking programs in the coastal zone require an amendment to coastal development permit 3-87-42 and consistency with the LCP land use plan.

4. The city shall evaluate the potential impact on public coastal access when considering a coastal development permit application for any development that would reduce public parking spaces near beach access points, shoreline trails, or parklands, including any changes to the residential parking program established under coastal development permit 3-87-42. When parking is reduced, the city shall evaluate alternative opportunities for public coastal access as needed to ensure existing levels of public access are maintained, or if possible enhanced. Such opportunities may include bicycle lanes and bicycle parking, pedestrian trails, relocated vehicular parking spaces, and enhanced shuttle/transit service. (Ord. 1043 § 2 (Att. 2), 2020)

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: August 28, 2025

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Cliff Drive Resiliency Project and Local Coastal Program Update



Recommended Action: Receive an update on the Cliff Drive Resiliency Project and the associated Local Coastal Program (LCP) amendments and provide direction to staff as needed.

Background: The Cliff Drive Resiliency Project is a comprehensive effort to address bluff erosion, sea-level rise, and stormwater drainage impacts along the Cliff Drive corridor while enhancing pedestrian, bicycle, and coastal access. The project extends from the western City limit to Capitola Village and includes connections to Hoopers Beach and the Capitola Wharf overlook.

In August 2024, the City Council reviewed the feasibility study and directed staff to move forward with Alternative 3 – Full Bluff Protection, which envisioned continuous bluff stabilization along the project length, a Class I facility, cantilevered sections where needed, overlooks, and reconfigured parking.

Since that meeting, staff and the consultant team have determined the full buildout of Alternative 3 in one phase is not feasible given the current \$10.5 million committed through the Federal Highway Administration Emergency Relief (FHWA ER) Program and \$500,000 California Coastal Commission (CCC) LCP grant. Detailed engineering review, tidal access limitations, and seasonal weather constraints also limit how much work can be completed in a single season. Additionally, FHWA ER funds are restricted to eligible repair scope and require a local match (approximately 11.47%).

To advance the project within these realities, while maintaining compatibility with full buildout, staff developed Alternative 4 – Partial Bluff Protection (Phased). This approach prioritizes the most at-risk bluff segments and implements the work in phases as funding is secured.

Discussion: Since the last Council update, detailed engineering and constructability reviews have shown the full project cannot be completed with the funding currently available. The work area is subject to seasonal weather restrictions and tidal limitations, and certain bluff segments present a more immediate risk to roadway stability. For these reasons, the project will need to be implemented in phases.

Phase 1 will focus on the section of bluff that is most vulnerable to ongoing erosion. The design incorporates a shotcrete tieback wall, supported by reinforced rock slope protection to an elevation that protects against a 100-year storm event. Based on geologist recommendations, Phase 1 will embed the wall into the Purisima formation to provide stability, with existing Rock Slope Protection (RSP) reused and new RSP added to reduce wave energy. If new RSP is not permitted, the design can be modified to increase embedment depth instead. Temporary pedestrian and bicycle safety measures will be installed along the coastal side of Cliff Drive until later phases are built.

Future phases will extend stabilization east and west, complete the Class I path improvements, reconfigure parking, and add native landscaping and overlooks. These phases remain compatible with the original Alternative 3 vision and can be implemented as funding becomes available.

The CCC grant supports design, outreach, and LCP updates, and required Local Coastal Program (LCP) updates. The LCP is composed of two parts: the Land Use Plan (LUP), which sets policies for coastal land use, access, and resource protection, and the Implementation Plan (IP), which provides zoning regulations and procedures to carry out the LUP. The current amendments primarily update outdated references, clarify definitions, and align hazard policies and related provisions to facilitate the Cliff Drive project. This is considered a policy “cleanup” phase; more significant changes will occur after

development of the City's mandatory Climate Adaptation Plan, for which the City has applied for an Ocean Protection Council grant and is awaiting an award decision. The FHWA Emergency Relief Program funding covers eligible repairs and requires a local match, with its own obligation/use deadlines. Staff has requested—and Caltrans has indicated support for—an extension to this funding deadline. This will allow environmental review to be completed after the LCP amendments are adopted, provide additional time to coordinate with design and permitting, and extend the window for pursuing additional construction funding for later phases.

Coordination between City staff and CCC has resulted in Draft amendments for both the Land Use Plan and Implementation Plan. Public access policies have been updated to reflect Cliff Drive enhancements, remove outdated Southern Pacific Railroad and RTC references, and incorporate multimodal improvements. The natural hazards section now includes sea-level rise policies and specific objectives for Cliff Drive and Capitola Village. Implementation Plan updates clarify zoning allowances for project improvements, refine hazard definitions and evaluation requirements, and update parking and right-of-way references.

A community meeting was held on August 12, 2025, to present the refined concept, phasing approach, and LCP updates. Key questions discussed included the purpose of the cantilevered walkway for continuous access, the project's seismic performance, design measures to prevent erosion at wall endpoints, and the role of rock slope protection (RSP) in reducing wave energy. The Planning Commission is scheduled to receive an informational item on the LCP on August 21. Following that, staff will release the draft LCP policy amendments for public review and schedule Planning Commission and City Council hearings for adoption. Adopted policy amendments will then be submitted to the California Coastal Commission for certification.

Fiscal Impact: Phase 1 is partially funded through the \$10.5 million FHWA Emergency Relief Program grant and the \$500,000 Coastal Commission LCP grant. FHWA ER funds require a local match of approximately 11.47%. Additional construction funding will be required for subsequent phases. The requested funding extension will allow more time to secure these funds before later phases proceed.

Attachments:

1. Q&A from Community Meeting
2. Preliminary Design Drawings

Report Prepared By: Jessica Kahn, Public Works Director; Katie Herlihy, Community Development Director

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk; Jim Malberg, Finance Director; Samantha Zutler, City Attorney

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager

CLIFF DRIVE RESILIENCY PROJECT

August 12, 2025 Community Meeting Questions & Answers

COASTAL COMMISSION AND PERMITTING

Q1. Do our (City) policies supercede the Coastal Commission?

A1. No. Capitola's Local Coastal Program (LCP) implements the California Coastal Act and is certified by the Coastal Commission. The City issues permits under the LCP, but projects in certain areas can be appealed to the Commission.

Q2. Have we reached out to universities for research or grant support?

A2. Yes. UCSC has participated in regional adaptation planning.

Q3. When will permit applications be submitted?

A3. For the near-term stabilization work, the City is preparing to submit permit applications in the coming months. A full Coastal Development Permit (CDP) will also be required for the longer-term phased project.

Q4. Will the Coastal Commission allow a phased approach?

A4. Yes. The City is coordinating closely with Commission staff to ensure that a phased approach can move forward.

DESIGN AND ENGINEERING

Q5. What is the design of the footing and embedment?

A5. The footing is designed to be thick and deeply set into the stable rock at the base of the bluff, following geologist recommendations. Existing rock slope protection (RSP) will be restacked to provide additional support. The footing adds stability but does not support structures above it.

Q6. Does the design address earthquakes?

A6. Yes. While concrete could crack during a seismic event, anchors and wire mesh reinforcement will hold the structure in place.

Q7. Why use a cantilevered path, and how far does it extend?

A7. The cantilever is necessary to create the planned coastal trail facility. It extends up to about 30 inches.

Q8. Will backfill be needed behind the cantilevered walkway?

A8. The old wall will be removed and the new walkway built at the cliff edge. Fill could be added if needed to extend the walkway.

Q9. Could removing the cantilever reduce costs and allow more seawall to be built?

A9. No. The cantilever cost is a small percentage of the overall budget, and eliminating it would not create additional seawall.

Q10. How will erosion at the ends of the wall be handled?

A10. The wall ends will be reinforced with additional concrete or RSP to prevent flanking erosion.

Q11. Why is the bike lane in the middle of the road?

A11. The lane runs between future perpendicular parking and the travel lane to maintain a safe and consistent facility.

Q12. How will Rock Slope Protection (RSP) be used, and can more be approved?

A12. RSP helps absorb wave energy, and the plan is to reuse the existing material. Importing new RSP is not currently allowed.

Q13. Was West Cliff (in the City of Santa Cruz) allowed RSP?

A13. Yes, but only as a temporary measure.

PHASING, SCOPE, AND FUNDING

Q14. Can private property be included in the project?

A14. No. Current funding is limited to public land. Private property would need to pursue their own projects and permits. The initial phase ends at the public parking lot, though future connections such as the staircase could be considered later. The City could potentially coordinate with private projects, but additional mitigations would be required.

Q15. How many phases are anticipated?

A15. At least three phases are likely, due to funding limitations and the small number of qualified contractors. The most compromised sections will be addressed first.

Q16. Is the small initial scope worthwhile given overall cost?

A16. Yes. Completing Phase I will improve the City's ability to secure future funding. Current funding is from the Federal Highway Administration.

Q17. Why was this area selected first?

A17. This section has the most critical erosion concerns, including sea caves and documented bluff loss.




[PDF] LCP Local Assistance Grant

From Graeven, Rainey@Coastal <Rainey.Graeven@coastal.ca.gov>

Date Thu 8/28/2025 10:56 AM

To Herlihy, Katie (kherlihy@ci.capitola.ca.us) <kherlihy@ci.capitola.ca.us>; PLANNING COMMISSION
<planningcommission@ci.capitola.ca.us>

Cc Kahn, Jessica <jkahn@ci.capitola.ca.us>; Breeze Kinsey <breeze@civicknit.com>

 1 attachment (411 KB)

Local Coastal Program Local Assistance Grant Letter 8.28.25.pdf;

Dear Ms. Herlihy and Planning Commission,

Please find our comments related to the LCP Local Assistance Grant attached. Please feel free to get in touch with any questions.

Thank you,

Rainey Graeven

Central Coast District Supervisor
California Coastal Commission
725 Front Street, Suite 300
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT
725 FRONT STREET, SUITE 300
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
PHONE: (831) 427-4863
EMAIL: CENTRALCOAST@COASTAL.CA.GOV
WEB: WWW.COASTAL.CA.GOV

**August 28, 2025****Sent Electronically**

Katie Herlihy, Community Development Director
420 Capitola Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010
kherlihy@ci.capitola.ca.us

Capitola Planning Commission
planningcommission@ci.capitola.ca.us

Subject: **Local Coastal Program (LCP) Local Assistance Grant Program**

Dear Ms. Herlihy and Planning Commissioners,

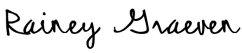
We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the City's proposed LCP amendments, and we would like to offer the following comments related to broader adaptation planning as well as specific suggestions to the proposed LCP amendment language. As part of its eighth round of rolling LCP grants, the Coastal Commission awarded the City of Capitola \$450,000 to complete necessary technical and environmental studies, engage with the community, regulatory agencies, and key stakeholders, and update its LCP with a particular emphasis on adapting the Cliff Drive corridor. First and foremost, we would like to commend the City for taking this initial step to embark on critical coastal adaptation planning, and we hope the City will continue its efforts and the momentum showcased here to address coastal hazards and complete a comprehensive and city-wide coastal adaptation plan update. In terms of the subject grant, we have worked closely with City staff and its team of consultants over the last few years, reviewing and providing feedback on various grant deliverables to facilitate both the LCP amendment and an actual phased adaptation project along Cliff Drive, and we will continue to work closely with the City on the forthcoming CDP for an adaptation project along Cliff Drive.

In terms of the proposed LCP amendment, we have reviewed the draft amendment language on the City's website and would like to offer the following recommendations (see attachment with substantive changes to IP Sections 17.68.090 and 17.68.160 and LUP Policy VII-2; existing LCP language is shown in black, the proposed changes posted to the City's website are shown in green strikethrough and underline, and the additional changes requested here are shown in purple strikethrough and underline). We believe the items depicted in purple were inadvertently left out of the version posted to the City's website. Substantively, these changes would: 1) align the LCP with the deriving Coastal Act sections; 2) align the LUP with the IP via ensuring that any changes to the LUP are also reflected in the IP and vice versa; 3) clarify the requisite

information and analysis required of geologic/engineering reports¹; and 4) correct minor miscellaneous typos.

We appreciate the Planning Commission's consideration of these suggestions and hope that they are incorporated into the proposed LCP amendment package.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

AFF4284CFEB54FA
Rainey Graeven

Cc (Sent Electronically):

Breeze Kinsey, CivicKnit
Jessica Kahn, Public Works Director

¹ LUP Chapter 5 and the corresponding IP Chapter 17.68 have not been updated since they were originally certified in 1987 and reference manuals and guidance documents that have long since been updated and replaced. The amendment language posted to the City's website proposes to strike the out-of-date language but does not include language to update/replace those out-of-date references. The proposed modifications identified here would thus update the language to identify the information needs/analysis that should be included in any geologic/geotechnical reports.

17.68.090 Beach area regulations. In the GH district:

A. A geologic/engineering report shall be required for all developments located on or adjacent to ~~near~~ a beach, including shoreline protective measures. "Shoreline protective measures" includes the installation, in an area where coastal process operate, of any structure or material, including but not limited to riprap or a seawall, for the purpose of protecting any structure, including a road, utility or transmission line. Shoreline protection structures shall be permitted only ~~when they are:~~

1. ~~Necessary~~ If required to protect coastal-dependent uses, and or existing development structures (other than accessory structures), or public beaches in danger from erosion; or and

2. ~~Necessary to protect public beaches in danger from erosion, and o~~ Only if ~~nonstructural solutions (e.g., i.e., artificial beach nourishment, relocation of structures, etc.) and any other less environmentally damaging alternatives (such as nature-based adaptation measures)~~ have proven to be infeasible; and

3. If they are determined to be the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative to protect the endangered structure/beach/use; and

4. If all coastal resource impacts are avoided, and where all unavoidable impacts are commensurately mitigated; including that they are d ~~Designed so as to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply, public access, marine habitats, visual resources, and paleontological resources, and any other coastal resources; and~~

54- ~~Designed to provide lateral and vertical public access elements where feasible (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).~~

Commented [RG1]: IP Section 17.68.090 should be updated in accordance with the deriving Coastal Act Sections (Sections 30235 and 30253) and to mirror the edits that were included for corresponding LUP Policy VII-9.

17.68.160 Contents of geologic/engineering reports. All geologic/engineering reports required by this chapter shall be prepared according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California ~~Division of Mines and Geologic Survey~~ and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance to project sea level rise and other climate change related environmental changes, coastal erosion, bluff failure, flooding, and other coastal hazards., specifically, No. 37 Guidelines for Preparing Engineering Geological Reports and Coastal Commission Guidelines for Bluff Top Development. Reports shall consider a range of erosion and sea level amounts based on various time horizons so as to understand the coastal hazards risks and potential adaptation pathways for the proposed development, and all development shall be sited to maintain a minimum factor of safety against land sliding of 1.5 (static) and 1.1 (pseudo static) for a period of 50 years. The required geological reports for all developments shall be prepared by a registered geologist or professional engineer with expertise in soils or foundations engineering, or by a certified engineering geologist. Because the city staff may not contain the expertise necessary to evaluate the adequacy of a report, the city may employ, at the applicant's expense, an appropriate expert to evaluate the adequacy of the report. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

Commented [RG2]: We recommended adding the detail highlighted here to replace the out-of-date references proposed to be struck in the proceeding sentence.

LUP Chapter 5 Natural Hazards: Policy VII-2:

All geologic/engineering reports required by the City pursuant to the policies of this component shall be prepared by a qualified geologist/engineer according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California Geologic Survey and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance to project sea level rise and other climate change related environmental changes, coastal erosion, bluff failure, flooding, and other coastal hazards. Reports shall consider a range of erosion and sea level amounts based on various time horizons so as to understand the coastal hazards risks and potential adaptation pathways for the proposed development, and all development shall be sited to maintain a minimum factor of safety against land sliding of 1.5 (static) and 1.1 (pseudo static) for a period of 50 years. Division of Mines and Geology, specifically CDMG notes Numbers 37 (Guidelines to Geologic/Seismic Reports), 43 (Recommended Guidelines for Determining the Maximum Probably Earthquakes, 44 (Recommended Guidelines for Preparing Engineering Geologic Reports), and interpretive Coastal Commission for Bluff Top Development.

Commented [RG3]: This language mirrors the language suggested for IP Section 17.68.160 directly above.

Minor miscellaneous typos:

- LUP Policy II-7: “b” needs to be updated to “a” because was the “a” bullet struck.
- LUP Policy VII-8: “Implementation b” needs to be updated to “Implementation a” because a was struck.



City of Capitola Planning Commission Meeting

September 4, 2025



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Project Background

Purpose: Address bluff erosion, sea-level rise & stormwater drainage impacts along Cliff Drive corridor

Project extends from western City limit to Capitola Village

Features: Pedestrian & bike access, connections to Hooper Beach & Wharf overlook



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Project Direction

August 2024: City Council reviewed alternatives → selected Alternative 3
(Full Bluff Protection)

- Continuous bluff stabilization
- Class I multi-use path
- Cantilevered sections where needed
- Overlooks & reconfigured parking



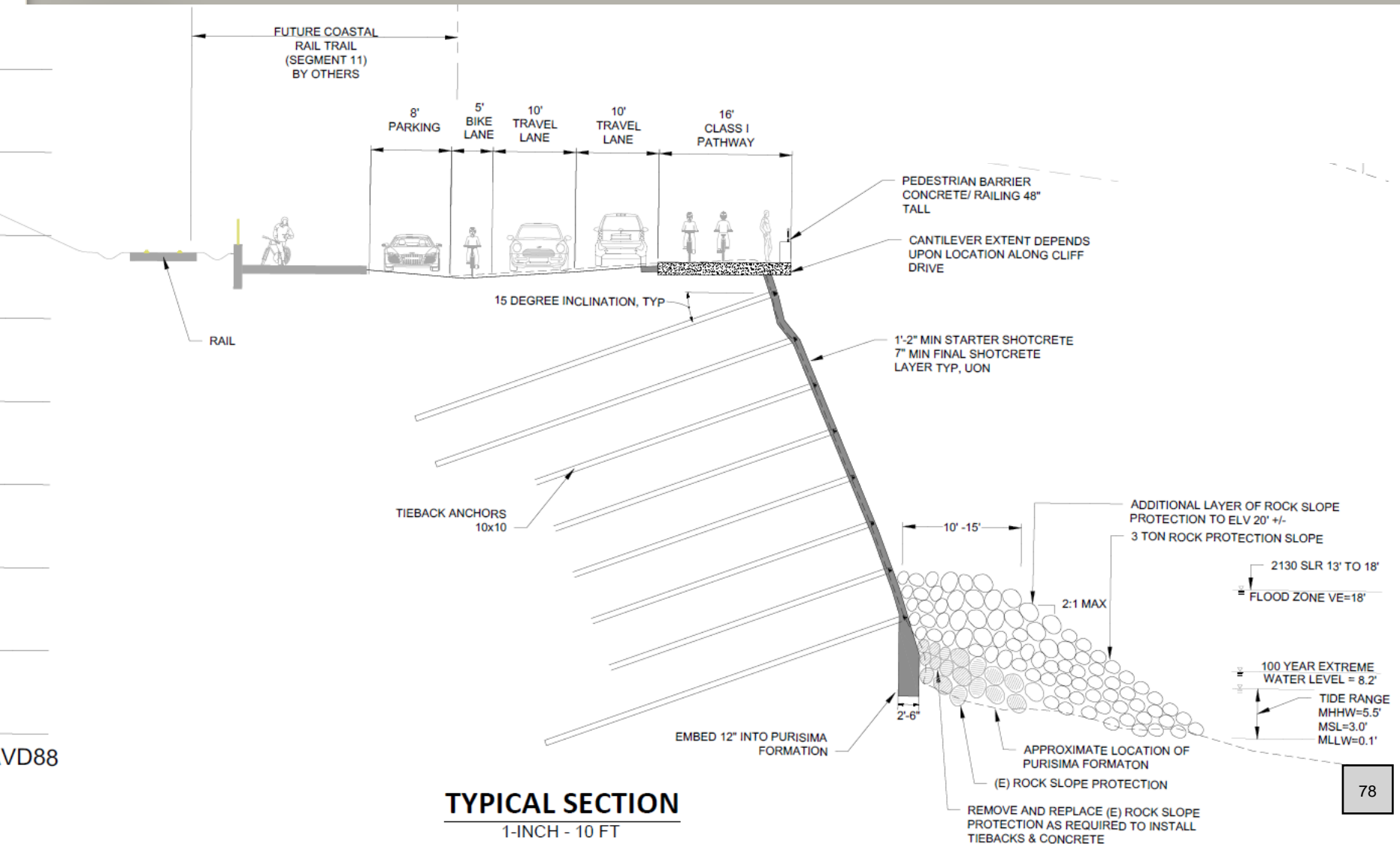
Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

**Budget limitations require
focus on areas of risk**





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Alternative 4 – Partial Bluff Protection (Phased): Target highest-risk areas first, ensuring compatibility with full Alternative 3 design





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Community Engagement

Community Meeting: August 12, 2025

Project overview & Q&A
(Attachment 11)

City Council Update: August 28, 2025

Phased approach discussed due to \$10.5M FHWA funding
(Attachment 9)



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Why LCP Amendment Are Needed

LCP = Policy & Regulatory Framework for Capitola's coastal zone

- Must reflect current conditions and resilience planning
- Updates ensure consistency with:
 - Sea-level rise planning
 - Public access improvements
 - Bluff stabilization & shoreline structures



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Proposed Amendments

Chapter 17.32 – Parks & Open Space

- Allows Cliff Drive Resiliency Project improvements
- Limits development to ensure scenic/recreational priority
- Prohibits private development on beaches

Chapter 17.68 – Geological Hazards

- New definitions: bluff/seacliff and coastal hazards
- Expanded purpose statement
- Removes outdated report references
- Establishes 50-year minimum standard



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Proposed Amendments

Chapter 17.64 – ESHA

Clarifies exception for resource-dependent uses:

- Low-intensity public access & recreation
- Nature study
- Restoration

Chapter 17.76 – Parking & Loading

Updates reference from Southern Pacific Railroad → Regional Transportation Commission



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Proposed Amendments to LCP Land Use Plan

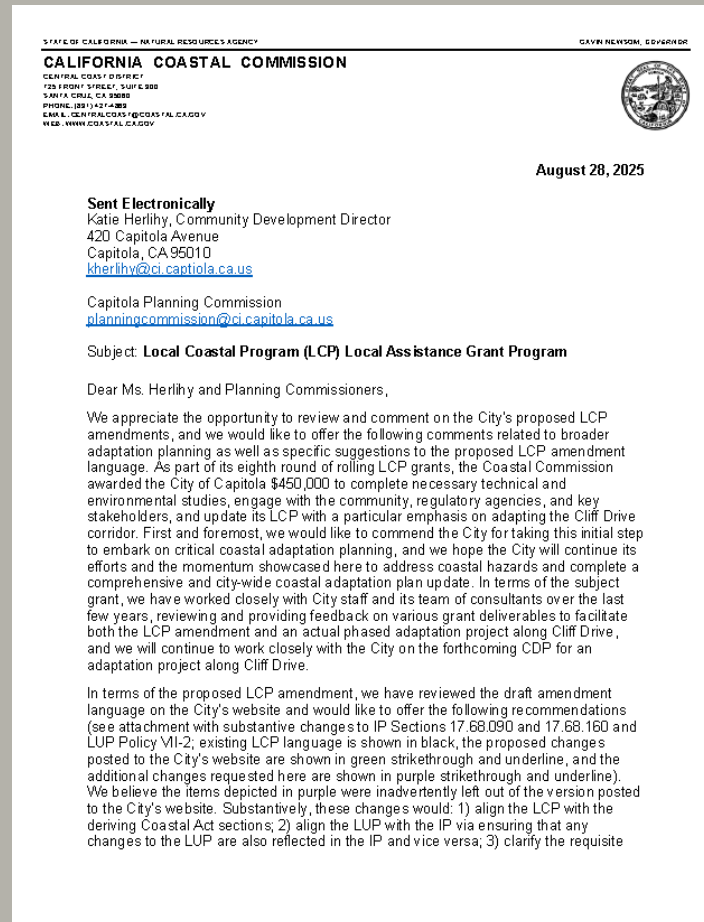
1. Update existing condition descriptions
2. Replace outdated references (SPRR → RTC)
3. Amend policies to:
 - Support multi-modal enhancements
 - Enhance public coastal access
 - Address sea-level rise & shoreline structures
 - Improve drainage management
4. Climate adaptation policies to initiate adaptation planning



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Coastal Commission Staff Comments (Attachment 12)





Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

What does this mean?

1. Reports must follow state standards

2. Hazards must be evaluated for different future scenarios

- Reports must consider different rates of erosion and sea level rise at various future time horizons (e.g., 20 years, 50 years, 100 years).
- The purpose is to identify long-term risks from coastal hazards and explore possible adaptation strategies for the proposed development.

3. Safety standards for development siting

- Proposed development must be located so that it achieves at least the following minimum "factor of safety" against landslides:
 - 1.5 (static): when considering normal, non-earthquake conditions.
 - 1.1 (pseudo-static): when considering earthquake shaking forces.
- Engineering standards indicating the margin between stability and potential failure.
- This level of safety must be maintained for at least 50 years

A. A geologic/engineering report shall be required for all developments located on or adjacent to ~~near~~ a beach, including shoreline protective measures. "Shoreline protective measures" includes the installation, in an area where coastal process operate, of any structure or material, including but not limited to riprap or a seawall, for the purpose of protecting any structure, including a road, utility or transmission line. Shoreline protection structures shall be permitted only ~~when they are~~:

1. Necessary ~~If required~~ to protect coastal-dependent uses, ~~and/or~~ existing development structures (other than accessory structures), or public beaches in danger from erosion; ~~or and~~

2. ~~Necessary to protect public beaches in danger from erosion, and only if~~ nonstructural solutions (e.g., i.e., ~~artificial~~ beach nourishment, relocation of structures, etc.) ~~and any other less environmentally damaging alternatives (such as nature-based adaptation measures)~~ have proven to be infeasible; and

3. ~~If they are determined to be the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative to protect the endangered structure/beach/use; and~~

4. ~~If all coastal resource impacts are avoided, and where all unavoidable impacts are commensurately mitigated; including that they are d~~Designed so as to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply, public access, marine habitats, visual resources, ~~and~~ paleontological resources, and any other coastal resources; and

54. Designed to provide lateral and vertical public access elements where feasible (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

Coastal Commission Recommended Change:

LUP Chapter 5 Natural Hazards: Policy VII-2:

Item 7 A.

All geologic/engineering reports required by the City pursuant to the policies of this component shall be prepared by a qualified geologist/engineer according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California Geologic Survey and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance to project sea level rise and other climate change related environmental changes, coastal erosion, bluff failure, flooding, and other coastal hazards. Reports shall consider a range of erosion and sea level amounts based on various time horizons so as to understand the coastal hazards risks and potential adaptation pathways for the proposed development, and all development shall be sited to maintain a minimum factor of safety against land sliding of 1.5 (static) and 1.1 (pseudo static) for a period of 50 years. ~~Division of Mines and Geology, specifically CDMG notes Numbers 37 (Guidelines to Geologic/Seismic Reports), 43 (Recommended Guidelines for Determining the Maximum Probably Earthquakes, 44 (Recommended Guidelines for Preparing Engineering Geologic Reports), and interpretive Coastal Commission for Bluff Top Development.~~

Staff Recommendation: Policy VII-2 Bluff and hillside stability evaluations shall consider a range of coastal hazards—including erosion rates, wave climate, storm surge, and sea-level rise—over an 50-year planning horizon. Proposed development shall incorporate mitigation measures designed to perform for a minimum of 50 years post-occupancy. Site-specific analysis must be prepared and sealed by a California-licensed Geotechnical Engineer (GE) or Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG) and accepted by the City of Capitola.

Coastal Commission Recommendation:

17.68.160 Contents of geologic/engineering reports. All geologic/engineering reports re Item 7 A.
by this chapter shall be prepared according to the guidelines for practice issued by the California Geologic Survey and shall be based on the best available, professionally accepted science and scientific guidance to project sea level rise and other climate change related environmental changes, coastal erosion, bluff failure, flooding, and other coastal hazards. Reports shall consider a range of erosion and sea level amounts based on various time horizons so as to understand the coastal hazards risks and potential adaptation pathways for the proposed development, and all development shall be sited to maintain a minimum factor of safety against land sliding of 1.5 (static) and 1.1 (pseudo static) for a period of 50 years. The required geological reports for all developments shall be prepared by a registered geologist or professional engineer with expertise in soils or foundations engineering, or by a certified engineering geologist. Because the city staff may not contain the expertise necessary to evaluate the adequacy of a report, the city may employ, at the applicant's expense, an appropriate expert to evaluate the adequacy of the report. (Ord. 628 §2(part), 1987).

Staff Recommendation:

17.68.160. Contents of geologic/engineering reports. Bluff and hillside stability evaluations shall consider a range of coastal hazards—including erosion rates, wave climate, storm surge, and sea-level rise—over an 50-year planning horizon. Proposed development shall incorporate mitigation measures designed to perform for a minimum of 50 years post-occupancy. Slope stability shall meet minimum factors of safety of 1.5 (static) and 1.1 (seismic, pseudostatic) unless otherwise justified by a site-specific analysis prepared and sealed by a California-licensed Geotechnical Engineer (GE) or Certified Engineering Geologist (CEG) and accepted by the City of Capitola.



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 21 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 24 of Land Use Plan

The land adjacent to Capitola's shoreline is densely developed with residential development along the ~~Cliff Drive and~~ Grand Avenue bluffs, as well as a mixture of residential and commercial uses in Capitola Village adjacent to Capitola Beach. Vertical access to the sea from Cliff Drive and Grand Avenue is ~~virtually impossible~~ difficult due to the height of the cliff and ~~substantial~~ continuing erosion; however, there are public access stairways from both Cliff Avenue and Cliff Drive, which connect to the Village and Hooper Beach, respectively. That said, most users of the Capitola shoreline typically gain access from the Esplanade, the wharf area, or from New Brighton beach.

Vertical access to the sea from Cliff Drive and Grand Avenue is difficult due to the height of the cliff and continuing erosion; however, there are public access stairways from both Cliff Avenue and Cliff Drive, which connect to the Village and Hooper Beach, respectively. The wooden staircase is often impacted during storm events causing temporary closures to the Cliff Drive access to Hooper Beach. That said, most users of the Capitola shoreline typically gain access...



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 22 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack

Page 25 of Land Use Plan

A City stairway provides access to Hooper Beach at the downcoast viewpoint. The Cliff Drive corridor does not include contiguous sidewalks or a separated bike path. In the upper Cliff Drive corridor, pedestrians and bicyclists share an approximately six foot-wide portion of the right-of-way, which may result in dangerous conflicts between pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists.

A City stairway provides access to Hooper Beach at the downcoast viewpoint. The wooden staircase is often impacted during storm events causing temporary closures to the Cliff Drive access to Hooper Beach.

The Cliff Drive corridor does not..



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 23 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 26 of Land Use Plan

HOOPER BEACH

This small City-owned and maintained beach is located west of the wharf. Access at the end of Wharf Road is down a roadway that is occasionally used as a boat ramp. Access is also provided via a vertical stairway along the midpoint of Cliff Drive as noted above. There are 11 public parking spaces at the end of Wharf Road; 9 in close proximity to the front of the Venetian Court and approximately 26 private spaces reserved for guests of the two motels. Pedestrian access is also obtained along the beach from the main beach to the east.

Access is also provided via a vertical stairway along the midpoint of Cliff Drive and, as noted above, is often impacted during storm events causing temporary closures. There are 11 public ...



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 32 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 35 of Land Use Plan

Policy II-97 Provide adequate parking nearby to support the wharf uses (specifically boat launching activities) and establish operational guidelines that minimize conflicts between pedestrians and Wharf traffic.

Implementation:

~~a) Acquire necessary easements for long term usage of Southern Pacific right of way for parking and utilize Coastal Conservancy funding for development.~~

a)

~~b)~~ Develop concessionaire agreements that specify and limit types of uses of wharf consistent with Policy II-68.



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 32 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 35 of Land Use Plan

THE VILLAGE AREA:

Policy II-~~12~~10 Develop a scheme for safe bicycle connection between Cliff Drive and Park Avenue and improve bicycle parking facilities.

Implementation:

Develop overall bicycle plan for Cliff Drive-Village-Park Avenue transition utilizing directional signing and seek ~~Regional Transportation Commission~~ funds for development.



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 45 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 83 of Land Use Program

Policy VII-8 A geologic/engineering report shall be submitted for any bluff top or cliff development proposed within 200 feet of the cliff edge.

The City may designate a lesser area of demonstration in specific areas of known geologic stability (as determined by adequate geologic evaluation and historic evidence) ~~or where adequate protective works already exist.~~
The City may designate a greater area of demonstration or exclude development entirely in areas of known high instability.

The ~~technical geology~~ report shall be prepared by a ~~registered geologist or professional civil engineer~~ qualified professional with expertise in shoreline processes ~~soils or foundation engineering or by a certified engineering geologist.~~ The report shall consider and analyze any information required by Policy VII-2.

Implementation:

~~a) Revise Zoning ordinance to require geologic reports for all development proposed on coastal bluffs or beaches, including shoreline structures, such as seawalls and including provisions of Policy VII-8.~~

a) ~~b)~~ Develop maps for public information showing areas and parcels requiring the submittal of geologic reports.



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Page 46 & 47 of Planning Commission Agenda Pack
Page 84 & 85 of Land Use Program

Policy VII-11 The City shall construct future drainage projects and improve existing drainage facilities where feasible so that runoff is ~~filtered and treated, and directed away from the coastal bluffs, or if it cannot be~~ (except that where such measures are infeasible it shall be discharged in a place and manner so as not to contribute to erosion of a bluff or beach.)

As a condition of approval for any coastal adaptation strategies along Cliff Drive, ~~require the removal of any non-native and invasive plants and replacement with native bluff plants and~~ explore the feasibility of directing drainage to inland drainage systems. Ensure that drainage in coastal hazard areas does not contribute to coastal bluff or other shoreline erosion,

and camouflage all drainage elements to minimize impact to visual resources.



Cliff Drive Resiliency Project LCP & LUP Zoning Amendments

Item 7 A.

Recommended Action:

Adopt resolutions recommending City Council approval of:

1. Amendments to CMC Chapters 17.32, 17.64, 17.76, 17.68
2. Amendments to Land Use Plan Chapters 2 & 7

with the updated redlines provided during the hearing.