

STRATEGIC PLAN

— 2025-2029 —



INTRODUCTION

The City of Capitola’s Strategic Plan serves as a comprehensive roadmap to guide the City’s development and long-term success. Through a collaborative process involving input from community members, stakeholders, and city leadership, this plan lays out clear goals, priorities, and actionable steps designed to address the unique needs and aspirations of our city.

As Capitola continues to evolve, having a well-defined strategy is essential to making informed and effective decisions. The Strategic Plan provides a structured framework to ensure the city’s resources, efforts, and initiatives are aligned with the community’s vision for the future. It is a dynamic tool that not only reflects current challenges and opportunities but also anticipates future needs, enabling the City Council and staff to make decisions that are forward-thinking, responsive, and sustainable.

The plan outlines specific focus areas and sets measurable objectives that will guide the city’s actions and investments in the coming years. By establishing these priorities, the Strategic Plan helps ensure the City of Capitola can grow responsibly while maintaining the values that make it a unique and vibrant place to live. It equips city leaders with the tools they need to navigate an increasingly complex world, balancing immediate needs with long-term goals, and ensuring that decisions today will foster a thriving, sustainable community for generations to come.

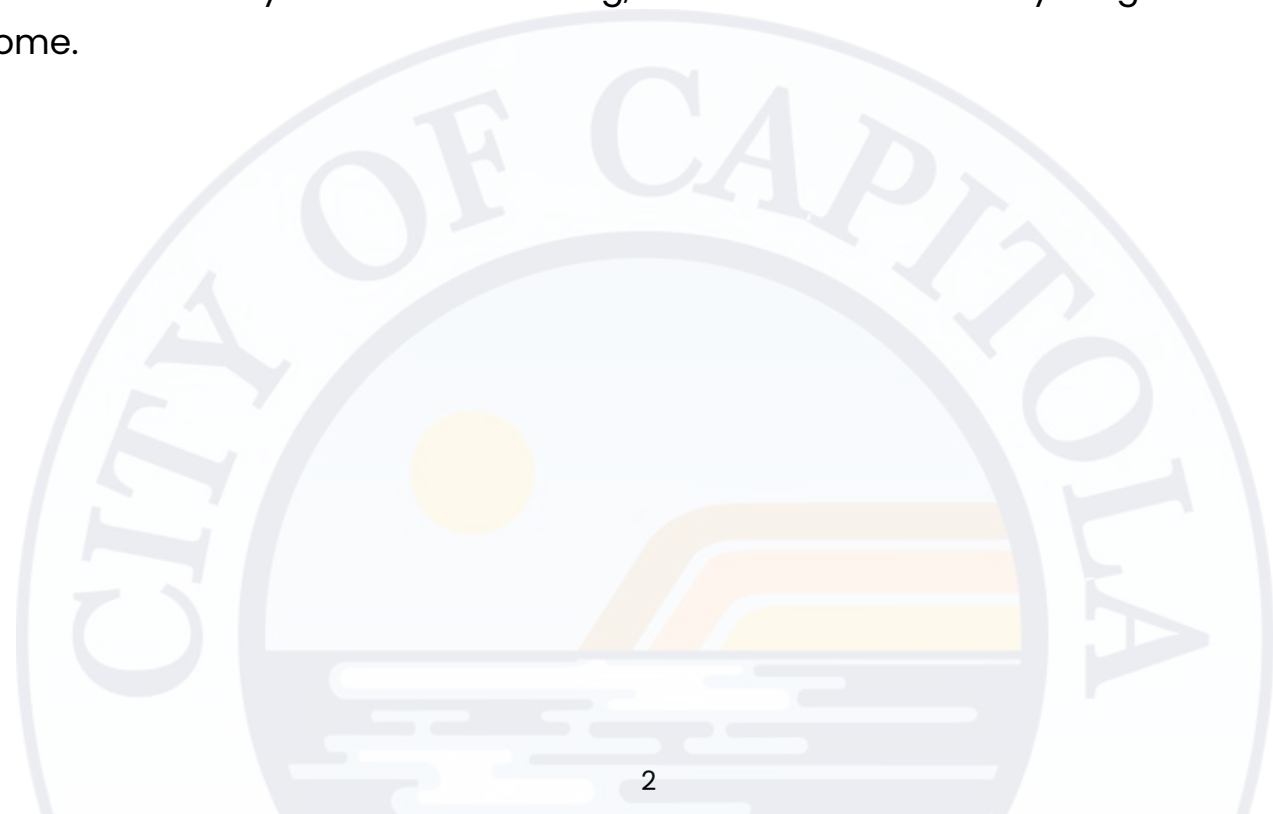


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LETTERS FROM LEADERSHIP

Dear Residents of Capitola,

On behalf of the Capitola City Council, we are proud to present the City's 2025 – 2029 Strategic Plan. For the first time, in partnership with residents, city staff, business owners, stakeholders, partner agencies, and our broader community, we have worked together to develop a plan that will serve as an important tool in shaping the future of Capitola.

Over the duration of this project, we have worked closely with our partners at BerryDunn, a consulting firm with deep expertise in strategic planning and community development. Together, we have developed a roadmap to help guide the city's decision-making, investments, and prosperity for years to come. The plan reflects our collective vision for the future and prioritizes initiatives that align with the needs, aspirations, and values of Capitola residents and businesses.

The creation of this plan is an important step in ensuring that Capitola remains a dynamic and resilient city. As we face new challenges and opportunities, the Strategic Plan provides a clear and actionable framework to address key priorities. It also sets the stage for continued collaboration and engagement with the community as we move forward in implementing the strategies outlined in the plan.

This plan represents the culmination of months of careful planning, analysis, and community engagement. We are excited to share the outcomes of this process and look forward to working with you as we begin to put the plan into action. Our commitment to Capitola's future remains steadfast, and we believe that this plan will serve as a valuable tool for making informed, thoughtful decisions that benefit everyone in our community.

Thank you for your support throughout this process. Together, we can ensure Capitola's future reflects our shared vision and strengthens the foundation for future generations.

Capitola City Council



Mayor
Joe Clarke



Council Member
Alexander Pederson



Council Member
Gerry Jensen



Council Member
Margaux Morgan



Council Member
Melinda Orbach



Previous Mayor
Kristen Brown



Previous Mayor
Yvette Brooks

WHY A STRATEGIC PLAN?

What does it do?

Strategic planning is a critical and common tool for local governments as it allows elected officials and organization staff to set clear focus areas, allocate resources efficiently, and address community needs in a structured way. By creating a framework for decision-making, a strategic plan provides a roadmap that can adapt to both short-term and long-term goals, helping the City align their policies with the needs of the community.

A primary benefit of establishing a strategic plan is that it equips local governments to make decisions to prepare for future challenges. The plan helps the City to prepare for the future and anticipate challenges that may arise including budgetary constraints or an economic change that impacts the organization. Strategic planning and budgetary alignment help to prioritize and manage limited resources effectively. By carefully constructing the budget, local governments make difficult decisions on how to allocate funds, resources, and staff.

A well-constructed strategic plan provides a framework for making those tough choices, ensuring that money is spent on initiatives that will have the most significant impact on the community's growth and well-being. Local governments use the strategic plan to develop adaptive solutions for identified issues. This foresight can save resources in the long run and improve the quality of life for residents by ensuring that government actions are aligned with expectations for the public.

In addition to proactive planning, local government strategic thinking fosters greater transparency and community engagement. By involving community members in the planning process, including with community forums and surveys, the City gathered valuable insights about what residents want for their community. This collaborative approach supports the trust built by the City. Continuing this relationship and collaboration throughout the life of the strategic plan by communicating the strategic focus area and objectives asserts that stakeholders understand the steps that are taken by the City to complete the plan and measure progress. Performance measures allow for monitoring and evaluation, so progress can be tracked, and adjustments can be made as necessary. This ensures that local governments remain accountable and flexible as they work for their communities today and in the future.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

PLAN AT A GLANCE

Mission

Why we're here



We are a vibrant coastal community committed to delivering dependable, accessible services that foster connection and belonging through participatory governance.

Vision

Where we're going



The City of Capitola is a thriving, family-friendly community that prioritizes resident needs while fostering a healthy balance between sustainable tourism, economic growth, and coastal environment and lifestyle.

VALUES

The "Capitola Way"



Collaborative Engagement

We collaborate with the community and partners through clear communication, fostering inclusive dialogue, and shared ethical solutions grounded in honesty and integrity.

Dynamic Innovation

We embrace progressive practices and continually strive for improvement and incorporating the best solutions for evolving community needs.

Fiscal Sustainability

We engage in responsible financial stewardship, prioritizing resources, and supporting economic development to increase revenue, maintain and deliver quality services now and into the future.

Resilient Community

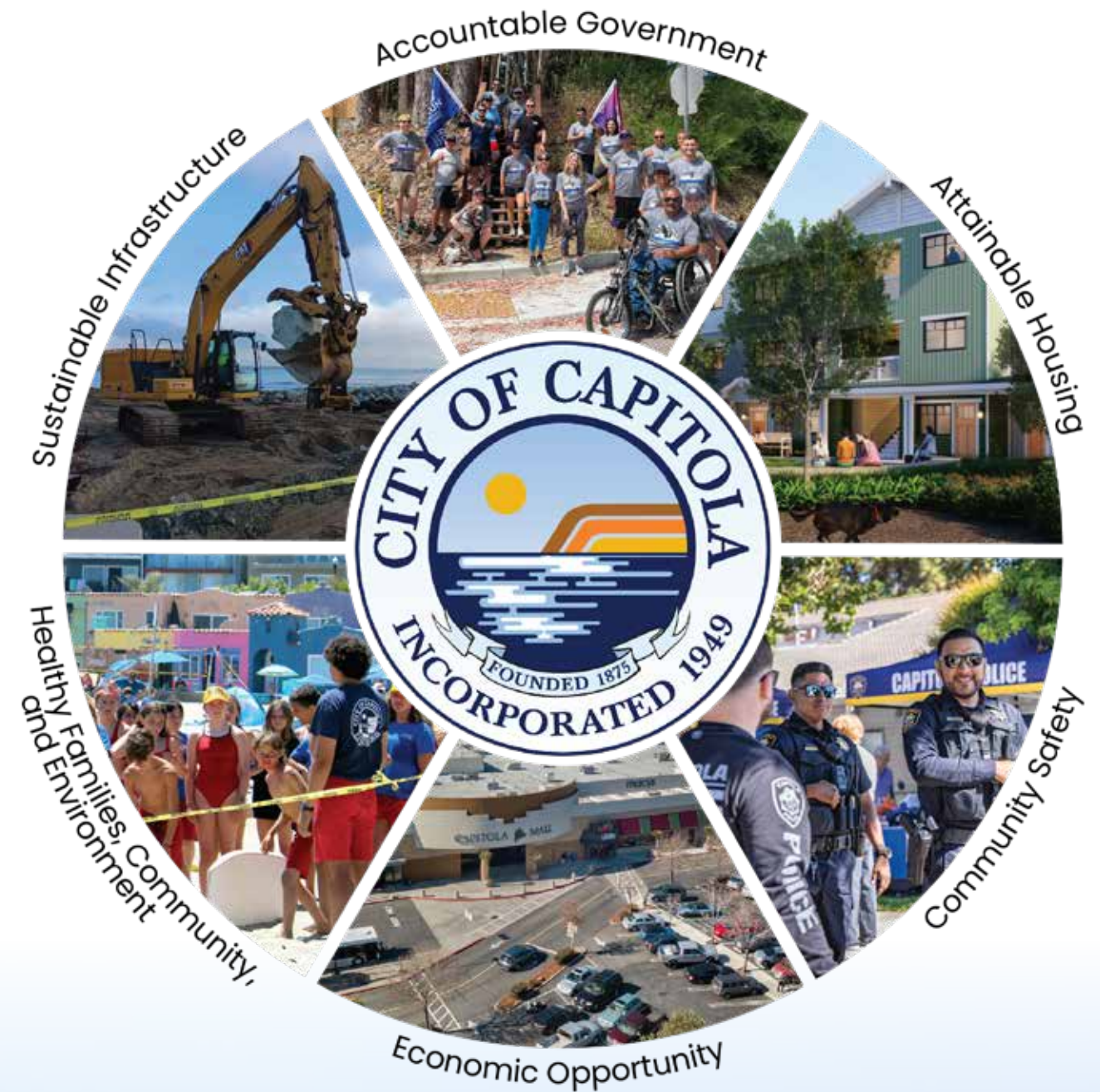
We dedicate our time to ensuring safety across our neighborhoods, streets, and coastline, fostering a strong sense of security while preparing for emergencies, disasters, and the effects of climate change.

Respectful Service

We treat everyone with respect, courtesy, and dignity, fostering a welcoming, and inclusive community environment.

Responsible Growth

We commit to sustainable decision-making, planning for future generations while safeguarding the natural environment, resources, and history to maintain Capitola's charm.



OUR GOAL



We maintain the trust of our community by engaging residents through collaboration and effective communication while responsibly managing City resources and finances to ensure long-term stability.

Objectives

- Encourage broader engagement to increase access to local government for all members in the community.
- Ensure resources are available so we are prepared for disasters and one-time expenses.
- Increase accessibility for public participation in City appointed and elected positions to enhance community representation.
- Research and review city limits to evaluate where and how the City provides service to enhance efficiency.
- Review and identify potential funding sources to diversify our revenue to ensure the city has sufficient resources to meet our needs.
- Utilize evolving technology and tools for fiscal transparency to respond to changing needs while informing and collaborating with the community to enhance trust.

Performance Measures

- Evaluate revenue options prior to 2026 election
- Growth in social media 'followers' (or appropriate term), newsletter recipient list, etc.
- Increase and diversify presentations (by front line/middle management staff) to City Council to increase facetime and outreach applications
- Increase in local government academy participant applications
- Increase public access to forms both online and in multiple languages
- Percent of revenue that is sales tax
- Percent increase of parking revenues
- Track and see increase in number of attendees (in person and/or virtually) for public meetings



**ACCOUNTABLE
GOVERNMENT**



OUR GOAL



We will implement our Housing Element and infrastructure that balances diverse housing opportunities, supports varied income levels, and ensures thoughtful, community-focused attainable housing.

Objectives

- Adopt regulations and programs to streamline development approvals for different housing types to create opportunities for housing affordability at all income levels.
- Collaborate with property owners, developers, and non-profits to support opportunities to increase Capitola's housing stock.
- Evaluate opportunities to incentivize housing development on the Capitola Mall site and along the 41st Avenue corridor.
- Improve communication of housing options and opportunities through education and outreach, so residents are aware of available resources.
- Improve the efficiency of the design review process for single-family home and second story additions to sustain aging housing stock while protecting neighborhood esthetics.
- Maintain and improve the character of existing residential neighborhoods and historic districts through thoughtful design to preserve the unique quality of life in Capitola.
- Pursue grants and additional revenue sources to assist with planning of infill housing production and maintaining existing housing stock.

Performance Measures

- Annual Housing Report to the State of California Housing and Community Development
 - Add regulations to diversify housing
 - Amend Incentives for Community Benefits for mall site and surrounding areas by December 2025
 - Annual developer interest meeting
 - Meetings with Non-Profit Housing Organizations
 - Number of ADU
 - Number of multifamily
 - Number of single family
 - Number of units
 - Number of units by income
 - Remove barriers to housing in Zoning Code
- Community survey results on resident satisfaction with integration of new housing development
- Implement the Housing Element
 - Time to get a planning permit
 - Time to get building permit
- Increase in funding available for housing annually
- Update communication on housing opportunities on website and in newsletter biannually



**ATTAINABLE
HOUSING**



OUR GOAL



We will be a safe and resilient community, relying on the proactive training and expertise of our trusted police department to collaboratively provide public safety and emergency preparedness.

Objectives

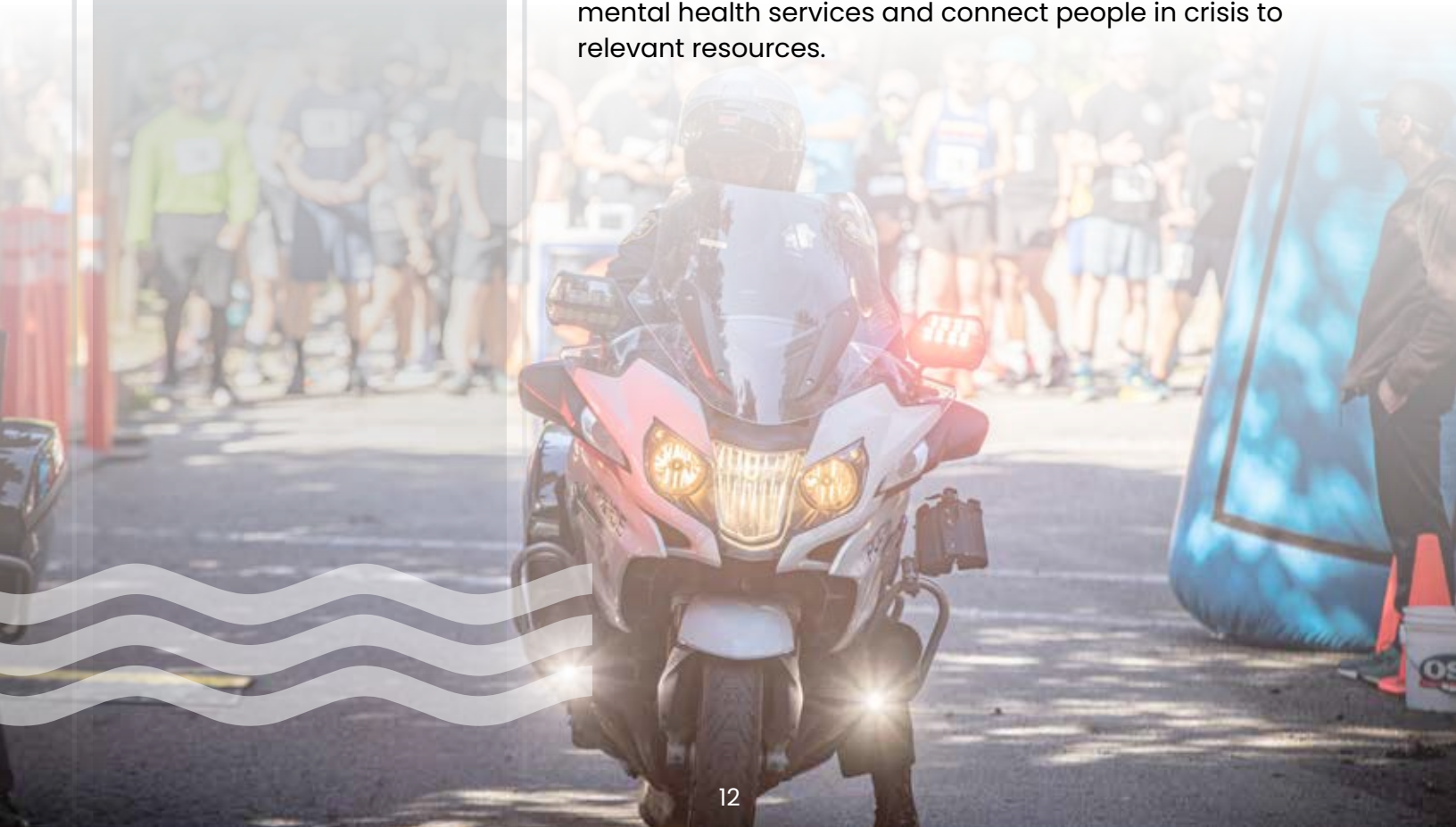
- Complete emergency operation plan in collaboration with the County Office of Response, Recovery, and Resilience (OR3) to ensure readiness for emergencies.
- Continue to review and revise Police Department policies and programs with the Chief's Advisory Committee (CAC) to ensure alignment with best practices.
- Improve crime prevention using environmental design principles to reduce crime.
- Preserve the Police Department and community's relationship with a priority of accessibility to all so that all community members feel comfortable connecting with police.
- Proactively share information and advocate for state legislation to support e-bike safety.
- Support and grow the CAC to provide feedback and input to the Police Department.
- Support pedestrian, bike, and car safety to decrease critical traffic related incidents.
- Utilize technology to effectively communicate with the community so they feel informed and safe.
- Work with the regional partners on efforts to sustain mental health services and connect people in crisis to relevant resources.

Performance Measures

- Increase year-over-year in police public education programs
- Increase number of followers over time
- Maintain number of crisis intervention trained police officers
- Maintaining strategic communication training for police officers
- Number of e-bike related incidents
- Number of policies and programs reviewed by CAC
- Number of social media posts over time
- Number of people who attend National Night Out year-over-year
- Percentage decrease year-over-year in vehicle, pedestrian, and bike collisions
- Percentage improvement/maintain in response time to emergency calls
- Percentage reduction in part-one crime
- Percentage reduction in property crime
- Percentage reduction in violent crime
- Percentage of residents signed up for emergency alerts systems year-over-year
- Percentage of violent crimes filed by the DA



**COMMUNITY
SAFETY**



OUR GOAL



We will create a thriving economy and maintain our regional shopping identity by supporting local businesses and national establishments in the Village, Bay Avenue, and 41st Avenue corridor.

Objectives

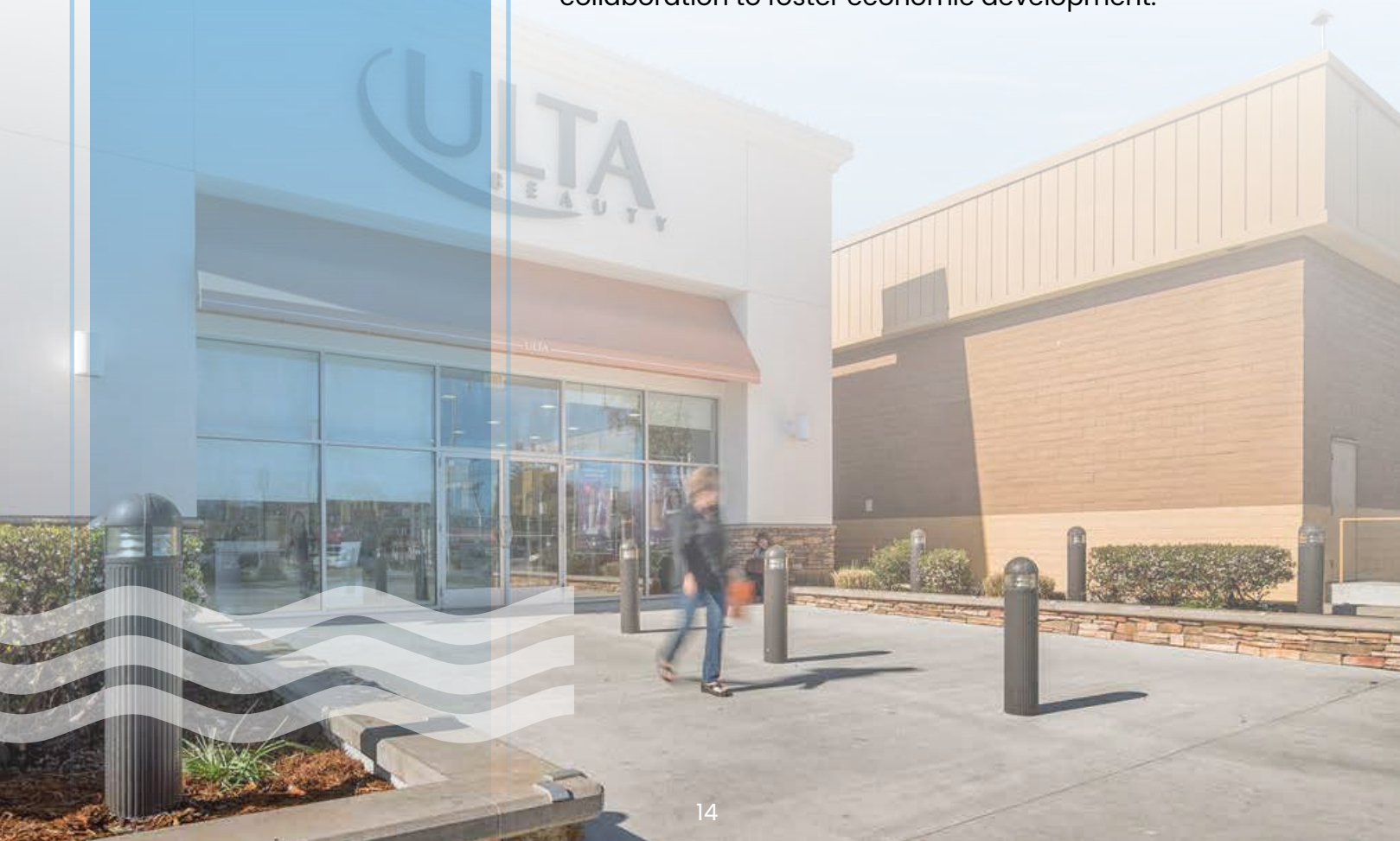
- Attract and retain high-quality jobs to enhance community economic stability.
- Attract new healthcare providers and facilities to the region to offer a range of high-quality services to enhance choice and access for residents.
- Complete 41st Avenue corridor plan to develop and improve public spaces to build a sense of community and promote economic activity.
- Create a citywide hotel incentive program to support tourism and generate revenue.
- Develop programs and identify zoning code amendments to support new and existing businesses citywide.
- Encourage and support Capitola's authentic sense of place to grow community, create a unique experience, and encourage sustainable tourism.
- Evaluate existing public parking and on-site parking requirements to support economic growth and resident needs.
- Partner and leverage relationships with regional business groups and organizations to enhance communication and collaboration to foster economic development.

Performance Measures

- Complete all zoning code updates by December 2026
- Count/number of funding to local business groups
- Evaluate public parking by 2026
- Hotel incentives zoning by December 2025
- Track growth in different business sectors
- Track meetings with partners and leverage relationships
- Track the number of business licenses and any trends/change over time



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



OUR GOAL



We will promote a thriving, inclusive city where families and individuals can grow together and connect in community spaces.

Objectives

- Collaborate with the region to improve access to healthcare for families, children, and seniors.
- Diversify outreach so that all residents have access to what the community offers.
- Foster and enhance the City's work with regional partner organizations to provide for the needs of our residents.
- Improve the City's facilities to support opportunities for community building, planned programming, and social interaction.
- Maintain and care for green and open spaces to promote wellness and ensure opportunities for gathering.
- Plan for accessible and resilient public spaces so that people have places to gather, work and play.
- Provide accessible, diverse, and responsive programs so that all generations can thrive.
- Update and execute the City's Climate Action Plan so that we protect our residents and sustain our city for the future.

Performance Measures

- Annual evaluation of regional partnerships, demonstrating measurable outcomes such as increased service delivery, expanded program access, or joint funding leveraged to address community needs
- Completion of planned and future capital improvement projects
- Decrease in staff time on programs due to efficiency and community involvement
- Grow through programs – skill development for professional staff
- Increase and/or preserve land for green spaces
- Increase in Community use of parks and green space for both recreation and public
- Implement measurable Climate Action Plan goals, such as reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy savings in city facilities, or urban greening initiatives
- Number of programs, new and recurring, and attendance
- Participant growth and access to diverse programs
- Receive oral presentations from Community Impact Grant recipients on use of City funds to highlight achievements and discover potential for collaboration and further partnerships
- Repeat of funded outreach programs to increase accessibility



**HEALTHY FAMILIES,
COMMUNITY, AND
ENVIRONMENT**



OUR GOAL



Our community will build and maintain safe streets, sidewalks, and public facilities that improve connectivity, fostering a vibrant City that is accessible and welcoming for all.

Objectives

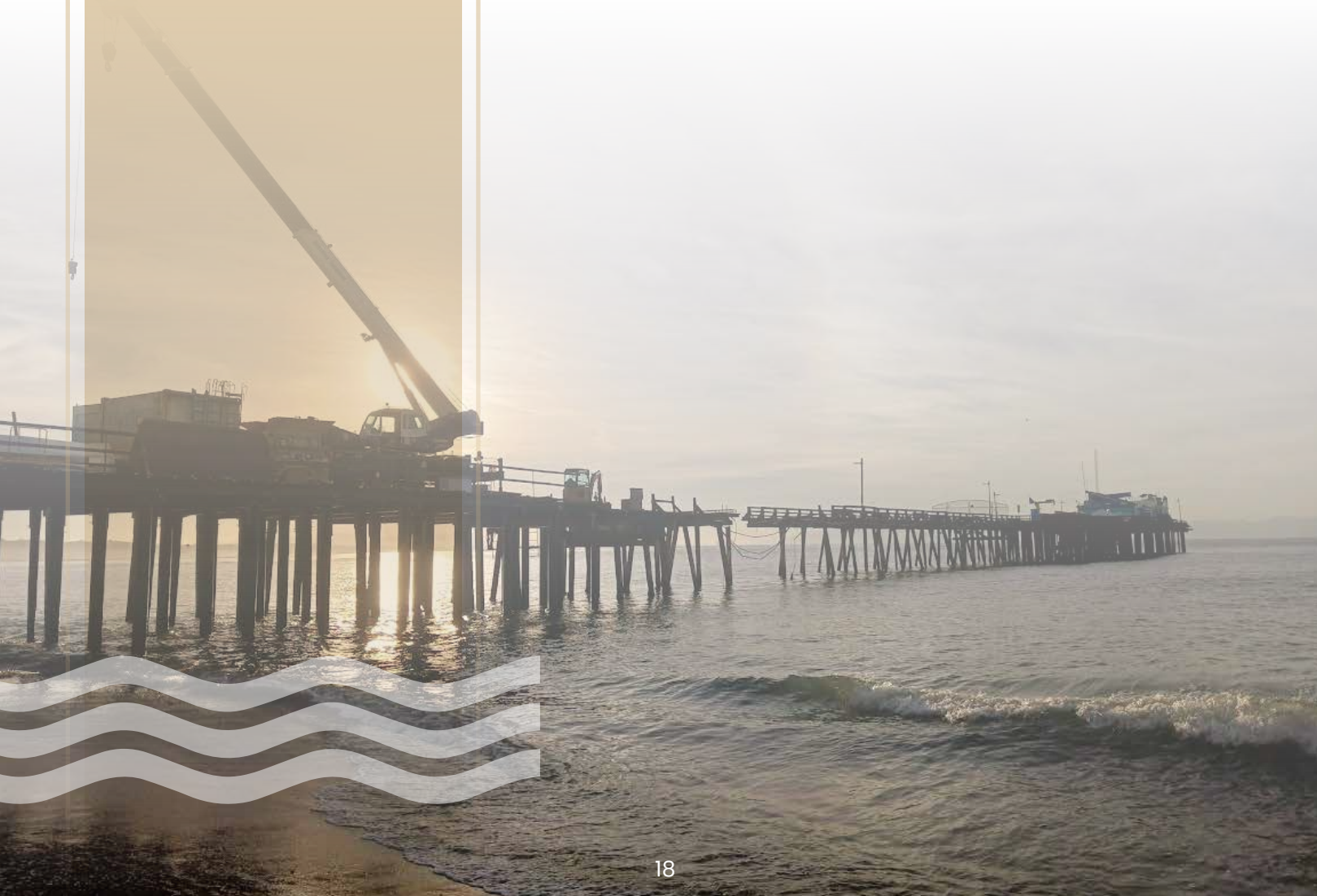
- Create an active transportation plan with multi-modal infrastructure to increase mobility for residents and visitors.
- Create and maintain a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to have a schedule for developing and improving public resources.
- Complete and executive the American Disability Act (ADA) Transition Plan to make the city more accessible.
- Explore building, zoning, and municipal code updates to encourage resilient construction and reconstruction in flood prone areas of the city.
- Implement the Climate Action Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan to build and maintain city assets so that we can respond effectively to weather events.
- Plan for infrastructure to support future increase in housing stock.
- Provide public facilities to meet existing and projected service needs.

Performance Measures

- Complete CIP projects year-over-year
- Consistent participation in monthly Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) meeting
- Finalize Climate Action Plan update in 2025
- Implement the Pavement Management Plan
- Increased connectivity of trails, sidewalks, and walkways (linear feet completed)
- Increase Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for city streets
- Meet ADA compliance targets as outlined in the ADA Transition Plan
- Percentage increase in the number of commuters biking or walking
- Reduce average vehicular speed on arterial streets by fiscal year 2027



**SUSTAINABLE
INFRASTRUCTURE**



TIMELINE OF PROCESS



ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



WHAT'S NEXT?

Implementation

We know our community has high standards and aspirations for the City. We enjoy a high quality of life here, and residents are proud to live, work, and play in Capitola. Our community wants the city to remain an excellent place to be. The plan's five-year timeline allows for thoughtful sequencing of initiatives that will make our continued high quality of life possible. With the strategic plan in place, the City is building an implementation plan to translate the focus areas, goals, and objectives into action steps with assigned responsibilities and established timelines. This will allow City departments to work together to achieve our desired future. Regular monitoring and evaluation systems will be put in place to help ensure continuous improvement and ongoing alignment with the City's vision and strategic focus areas. We are committed to focusing resources on the focus areas that best serve the needs of the community as captured in this plan, so we will align the strategic plan with the City's annual budget process, so we can ensure that resources are utilized efficiently and directed toward the most important priorities. As needs or opportunities shift during the life of the plan, the City expects to address any needed changes as part of the annual budget process. And, with the strategic plan as a guide, other City plans and initiatives can be built to align so that everything is flowing in a common direction. The values expressed in this plan will drive how the City makes decisions and delivers services, and employees will apply these principles in their day-to-day work.

Keeping Track of Progress

The City will monitor progress toward strategic plan goals and objectives and report on performance measures. Tracking keeps us transparent and holds us accountable. We will utilize the strategic plan as a tool during the City's annual budgeting process, and maintain the strategic plan website – so residents, businesses and visitors can learn about the City's strategic objectives and progress towards meeting them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The City of Capitola Council would like to extend its deepest gratitude to all individuals and organizations who contributed to the creation of the City's first-ever Strategic Plan.

The input, support, and dedication of these community members, committees, and partners have been invaluable throughout the process.



Our residents and community members!



Current and former City Council Members 2024 and 2025

Mayor Joe Clarke, Vice Mayor Alexander Pederson, Council Member Gerry Jensen, Council Member Margaux Morgan, Council Member Melinda Orbach, Previous Mayor Kristen Brown, and Previous Mayor Yvette Brooks

City Manager, Jamie Goldstein; Chief of Police, Sarah Ryan; Finance Director, Jim Malberg; Community Development Director, Katie Herlihy; Public Works Director, Jessica Kahn; Director of Recreation & Community Services, Nikki Bryant; City Clerk, Julia Gautho; Assistant to the City Manager, Chloé Woodmansee; and previous Chief of Police, Andrew Dally

City Advisory Boards and Commissions, our very own Capitola Village and Wharf Business Improvement Area and Capitola-Soquel Chamber of Commerce, allied Santa Cruz County partner public agencies, many of our valued nonprofit entities, numerous important local businesses, and other great community organizations and partners.



BerryDunn

Principal: Seth Hedstrom
PM and Facilitator: Maddison Powers Spencer
Facilitator: Michelle Kennedy



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— 2025-2029 —

