

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: March 13, 2025

From: City Manager Department

Subject: 2025-2029 Strategic Plan



Recommended Action: Adopt the City of Capitola Strategic Plan.

Background & Discussion: In Fiscal Year 2023-24, the City Council directed staff to initiate a Strategic Planning Project aimed at defining five-, ten-, and fifteen-year goals for the City. Recognizing the need for a structured approach, the Council allocated \$50,000 in the FY 2023-24 budget for this effort and approved a contract with BerryDunn, a consulting firm experienced in strategic planning, on December 14, 2023.

In March 2024, the City paused the project until the fall to allow for alignment with other City initiatives. In late summer, staff collaborated with BerryDunn to prepare for community and staff engagement, including writing surveys, developing outreach strategies, and coordinating stakeholder interviews. Staff presented an update on the Strategic Plan Project to the City Council on September 12, 2024. Also in September, staff met with BerryDunn project managers to evaluate progress and plan next steps.

Outreach & Public Input: The project was publicly introduced to the community at the Capitola Wharf Grand Opening Event on September 25 and at an in-person community forum on October 1. Staff publicized the project to encourage broad engagement and participation through press releases, social media content across multiple channels, articles in the biweekly City newsletter, and bilingual flyers distributed throughout the City. Paid social media ads (reaching more than 30,000 accounts) targeted both English and Spanish-speaking communities, and the City website was updated to provide one-click access to project information and the community input portal.

Opportunities for public and employee input included:

- Taking a digital or hardcopy survey (220 received, including members of Capitola's advisory bodies)
- Taking an employee-specific survey (33 responses received)
- Attending one of three virtual employee workshops (45 attendees)
- Visiting and contributing to the online community input portal (over 2,000 visitors)
- Emailing or writing to the City (several emails and one mailed letter were forwarded to BerryDunn for data synthesis)
- Participating in an individual or group stakeholder interview (45 interviews held)

Stakeholders included City of Capitola advisory body members, partner agencies (such as Central Fire, Soquel Union Elementary School District, and Soquel Creek Water District), local non-profits, business owners, commercial property owners, hoteliers, and developers, as well as City Council Members and Department Directors.

Drafting the Plan: BerryDunn synthesized public input, employee feedback, and existing data from City documents such as the Annual Budget, Climate Action Plan, General Plan, Housing Element, and the community visioning document, Vision Capitola. This informed an environmental scan of the City, which was presented to the City Council during a public planning session on November 13, 2024. The scan was later updated in January 2025 to include additional public input.

During the November planning session, BerryDunn worked with the City Council and Council candidates to develop mission and vision statements, identify core values, and establish key priorities for the strategic plan.

City Council Draft Plan Review: BerryDunn presented the draft Strategic Plan to the City Council during a public meeting on February 4, 2025. The draft included two options for the City's Mission and Vision Statements, a revised list of Capitola's core values, and six proposed strategic priorities:

1. **Community Safety:** Ensuring a safe and resilient community with collaborative public safety and emergency preparedness.
2. **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Building safe streets and public facilities to improve connectivity and foster a vibrant, accessible City.
3. **Attainable Housing:** Implementing the Housing Element to support diverse housing opportunities and community-focused attainable housing.
4. **Economic Opportunity:** Supporting local businesses and national establishments to maintain Capitola's economic vitality.
5. **Healthy Families, Community, and Environment:** Promoting an inclusive City where families and individuals can connect and thrive.
6. **Accountable Government:** Engaging residents through collaboration and responsible management of City resources to ensure long-term stability.

Each priority includes five to six objectives with performance measures to track progress.

Public Review Period: To encourage public participation, staff publicized the draft review period through press releases, social media campaigns, dedicated City website content, biweekly newsletter articles, and bilingual mailers to all City residents.

The public review period received a strong response, with more than 2,000 visitors to the feedback portal and **200 survey responses**. Feedback was overall positive, with community members supporting the proposed six priorities. Based on public input, minor changes were made to the proposed mission and vision statements, which will be outlined in the presentation during the March 27 City Council meeting. The updated mission and vision statements, key values, six priorities, and performance measures are included in the Draft Strategic Plan (Attachment 1). A fully designed, aesthetically appealing strategic plan will be presented on March 27.

Fiscal Impact: \$50,000 was allocated for this project in the FY 2023-24 budget. Future activities related to the strategic plan may require additional budget allocations.

Attachments:

1. Draft Strategic Plan

Report Prepared By: Chloé Woodmansee, Assistant to the City Manager

Report Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Report Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager