Outlook

[PDF] Public comment-Item 9A/B- Capitola City Infrastructure-Stockton Bridge

From Tj Welch <noworries4tj@gmail.com>
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To City Council <citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us>; City Clerk <cityclerk@ci.capitola.ca.us>
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1 attachment (60 KB)
Item 9AB- Capitola City Infrastructure-Stockton Bridge.pdf;

Please accept my public comments for City Council meeting Thursday, April 9, 2026- items 9A and B.
Please include these in the minutes as public comment.

Respectfully,

TJ Welch
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Mayor and Council Members,

For years, Capitola has prided itself on being a jewel of the Monterey Bay. My wife and I decided decades ago to make it our home because of its character and natural beauty. But a look beneath the scenic surface reveals a city struggling to maintain its most basic foundations and responsibilities.

From the literal crumbling of our cliffs to the deteriorating state of our streets, the data is clear, Capitola is failing to meet the needs of its community.

The warning signs have been visible for nearly a decade. In 2017, the upper portion of Esplanade Park was closed following winter storms. While the city manager said the closure was intended to be a temporary safety measure, it should be opened by the end of 2017, it never happened. Nine years later is serves as an indication of management style we are struggling with today.

Nowhere is this more evident than on our roads. In California, the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) is the gold standard for measuring street health, with a score of 100 representing a new road and 75 being the target for a "State of Good Repair". Falling below a PCI of 60 is considered a critical threshold—a "point of no return" where repair costs skyrocket.

Capitola currently sits precariously at a network-wide score of 61, but our arterial streets have already crossed into the danger zone with a failing score of 58. We are essentially watching our tax dollars evaporate as we wait longer to fix roads that are becoming ten times more expensive to repair.

In 2012, City Manager Jamie Goldstein successfully advocated for **Measure O**, a permanent quarter-cent sales tax designed specifically to end this cycle of neglect. Goldstein stated Measure O was essential for the following reasons:

- **Addressing a Structural Deficit:** To close the gap where expenses outpaced revenues and prevent cuts to public safety and parks.
- **Replenishing Reserves:** To increase contingency reserves to 15% and emergency reserves to 10% to protect against future disasters.
- **Prioritizing Infrastructure:** To provide a dedicated funding stream for the 5-Year Capital Improvement Program, specifically for deferred street maintenance.
- **A Permanent Revenue Stream:** Unlike temporary taxes, it was meant to provide a predictable, long-term financial foundation.

Yet, our streets and infrastructure continue deteriorate.

Then came Measure F in 2016-City Manager **Jamie Goldstein** again stated that **Measure F** was needed primarily to secure the city's long-term financial stability and fund critical infrastructure, including strengthening our wharf. Which by the way, had a restaurant at that time, only to be torn down under the guise of an emergency.

Here we are today with a wharf that does not meet community wishes and a deteriorating infrastructure.

Then came Measure Y in 2024- City Manager Goldstein's says it is needed to bridge a projected **$2 million budget gap** expected by 2029.

Goldstein has highlighted several reasons why these tax initiatives are vital for the city. Despite the urgent need to bridge that $2 million dollar gap or fund the "State of Good Repair" for our failing streets, the new Measure Y revenue has already been largely spoken for—not by asphalt, a completed wharf or esplanade park, but by city hall payroll. Rather than being reserved for infrastructure, these funds were utilized to increase city salaries, including raises of 16 percent or more for city manager staff.

Oh, and don't forget Measure J, which raised TOT tax by 2% in 2018.

City Manager Jamie Goldstein has spent years sounding the alarm, advocating for a series of measures—O, F, J and Y—to bridge the gap.

However, despite the community support on tax measures, the city is still facing a projected $2 million dollar budget gap by 2029. You can be certain we will soon be hearing our city manager ask for yet another tax measure.

This City operates paycheck to paycheck. Tax measure to tax measure. With no real budget for capital improvements. We can no longer afford operate this way.

If we want to maintain the "the Capitola that many of us moved here for," we must prioritize the long-term predictable funding that the tax measures were designed to provide. We must move beyond temporary fixes and commit to a sustained "State of Good Repair." Our cliffs, our streets, and our community's safety depend on it.

At this point, the city council and city manager are just like our city infrastructure-Failing!!

That brings me to tonight's agenda. At this time there is no reason for you to discuss tearing down our historic Stockton bridge, building a frivolous roundabout, or even repairing the iconic Depot Hil Path. What this City Council needs to discuss is a responsible budget, including a capital improvement budget, and a realistic plan towards maintaining the city 's basic infrastructure.