

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: April 9, 2026

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Stockton Avenue Bridge – Structural Evaluation Findings

Recommended Action: Receive the structural evaluation of the Stockton Avenue Bridge and provide direction on next steps.

Background: The Stockton Avenue Bridge is a critical connection within Capitola and serves as a primary access route to Capitola Village and the surrounding coastal areas.

On August 24, 2023, the City Council accepted \$500,000 in grant funding from the California Department of Water Resources for the Stockton Bridge Debris Mitigation Project. The adopted FY 2022–23 budget also allocated \$350,000 for the initial phase of the project, bringing total available funding to approximately \$850,000.

Following the January 2023 storm events and ongoing concerns regarding debris accumulation and hydraulic capacity, the City initiated a debris mitigation and bridge replacement feasibility effort.

On January 25, 2024, Council authorized a professional services agreement to complete a feasibility study evaluating debris mitigation alternatives and bridge replacement. That study identified bridge replacement as the most effective long-term solution to reduce flood risk and improve hydraulic performance.

On November 14, 2024, Council received the feasibility study and directed staff to prioritize bridge replacement and begin advancing the project, including development of plans, permits, and community outreach.

On March 27, 2025, Council considered a proposed amendment to advance preliminary engineering design and related work. Following public comment and Council discussion, Council approved a motion to proceed with additional analysis of the existing bridge, including a structural evaluation, along with continued public outreach and consideration of historic preservation. That structural evaluation has now been completed and is included as Attachment 1. The report provides detailed documentation of observed conditions, including reinforcing steel loss, concrete deterioration, and structural limitations that inform the findings summarized below.

Discussion: The structural evaluation identified widespread deterioration of the bridge deck and reinforcing steel. Field observations confirmed concrete spalling, exposed and corroded reinforcement, and areas of reinforcing steel loss. Inspection access points confirmed that these conditions are present throughout the structure and are not isolated.

The evaluation concludes that, at a minimum, a full deck replacement would be required to address the observed deficiencies. However, given the age of the structure, extent of deterioration, and underlying conditions, the report recommends full bridge replacement as the most effective long-term solution.

A deck replacement would require removal and reconstruction of the primary structural deck system and would need to address underlying girder conditions, load capacity, and long-term durability. Based on current information, this approach would involve significant cost and complexity while not resolving other known issues, including hydraulic constraints and debris accumulation. While deck replacement could address the immediate structural deficiencies of the deck, it would not address the age of the structure, potential seismic vulnerabilities, or hydraulic limitations. As a result, it would represent a substantial investment in an aging structure without providing a comparable long-term solution.

While the bridge does not currently present an immediate collapse risk, the evaluation notes that deterioration will continue over time, including increased cracking and ongoing degradation of the deck. Continued maintenance and repair would be expected, with associated costs and operational impacts.

The findings of the structural evaluation are consistent with prior feasibility work and further support the previously identified need for bridge replacement. Replacement would address both structural deficiencies and previously identified concerns related to debris accumulation, hydraulic capacity, and long-term resiliency of this critical access route.

Fiscal Impact: The Stockton Avenue Bridge effort is supported by approximately \$850,000 in combined grant and City funding.

To date, approximately \$200,000 has been expended for construction activities necessary to complete the structural investigation, including work to access and evaluate internal bridge conditions. Approximately \$151,000 has been expended for professional services, including feasibility analysis and structural evaluation.

The remaining funds are restricted in use and are intended to support debris mitigation and bridge replacement planning activities, including design, environmental review, and future funding applications. These funds are not intended to support ongoing or large-scale structural repair of the existing bridge.

Based on the findings of the structural evaluation, and consistent with prior hydrological and debris studies, staff recommends utilizing the remaining project funding to advance engineering design for a replacement bridge. This next phase would include preliminary design, environmental review, and coordination with a historic preservation specialist to address historic resource considerations.

Attachments:

1. Stockton Avenue Bridge Existing Condition – Executive Summary (April 2026)
2. Stockton Avenue Bridge Condition Evaluation (March 2026)
3. Stockton Avenue Bridge – Debris Mitigation Feasibility Report (June 2024)

Alignment with 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Priority: Community Safety; Sustainable Infrastructure

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