

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: December 14, 2023

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Bay Avenue and Hill Street Traffic Safety Update

Recommended Action: Receive an update on the Bay Avenue and Hill Street Short-Term Traffic Safety Improvement Project and direct staff to pursue a corridor study.

Background: The Bay Avenue and Hill Street (Bay/Hill) intersection is an all-way stop-controlled intersection that provides connectivity to Highway 1 and the Capitola Village. The section of Bay Avenue at this location is a four-lane wide roadway with a center left turn lane. The City has received community feedback regarding concerns about pedestrian safety at the crosswalks. During peak hours, the intersection experiences congestion from heavy vehicle and pedestrian cross traffic due to access to the Nob Hill Plaza, the Rispin Bridge crossing, and the surrounding residential and commercial land uses. The adopted FY 2023-24 budget allocated \$50,000 to make improvements to this intersection.

On September 28, 2023, staff presented various options for the Hill/Bay intersection for City Council consideration. In response, the City Council formed an ad-hoc subcommittee, comprised of Council Members Clarke and Pedersen, to collaborate with staff, gather input from adjacent businesses, and solicit public feedback. The subcommittee's primary goal is to explore short-term solutions and present a comprehensive report to the City Council.

In November, the City amended its contract with Kimley Horn to develop options for a short-term (quick-build) project, incorporating the outcomes of the ad-hoc subcommittee. The contract also includes an updated traffic analysis for long-term design improvements at the Bay/Hill and Bay Avenue/Capitola Avenue intersections. The subcommittee held a community meeting on November 29 and received public commentary expressing concerns not only about the Bay/Hill intersection, but also about safety and maneuverability along the entire Bay Avenue corridor from the Highway 1 off-ramp to the Capitola Avenue intersection.

Discussion: The proposed timeline outlines key milestones for the project, including community engagement, design refinement, construction, and the potential initiation of the long-term study.

Late December/Early January: Conduct meetings with adjacent businesses and partners, including Bay Avenue Senior Housing, to gather feedback regarding the quick build project.

Mid-January: Refine the design of the quick-build project based on input received during community meetings, addressing concerns and incorporating specific suggestions to enhance effectiveness.

January 25 or February 8: Present the refined design to the City Council for approval before moving forward with the implementation phase.

Spring 2024: Commence construction of the quick-build project.

Winter/Spring 2024: If directed, initiate the evaluation of long-term options for Bay Avenue. This comprehensive study will consider various solutions for the entire corridor, aiming to identify sustainable, long-term improvements.

Summer 2024: Present the findings of the long-term study to the City Council, including evaluation results, potential solutions, and recommendations for the long-term enhancement of Bay Avenue.

Fiscal Impact: The current \$50,000 allocation for the short-term quick build project is sufficient for construction and subsequent evaluation of its effectiveness. Additionally, there is sufficient funding in the existing Roundabout Design Project for the expansion of the traffic analysis to include Bay Avenue to the Highway 1 off-ramp and consider active transportation safety improvements on the corridor. Future

funding needs for construction on Bay Avenue will be determined based on the outcomes of the quick build project and the identification of the specific long-term project.

Environmental Determination: The requested action, providing direction to staff to proceed with developing a quick-build project, is not a project that is subject to environmental review because simply developing a project cannot possibly impact the environment (California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines section 15061). Moreover, staff will return to the City Council with the final design of the quick build project once it is developed. Therefore, no further environmental review is required.

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