

**From:** Kahn, Jessica  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 23, 2025 10:29 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Subject:** Grand Avenue Pathway – Responses to Council Questions

Good morning,

I received the following questions regarding the Grand Avenue Pathway item on this evening's agenda and wanted to provide written responses in advance. Please let me know if you would like any additional detail. The consulting geologist who prepared the report will also be present at the meeting to answer technical questions.

**1. If we were to pursue relocation of the path, where would the funding for this project come from?**

This project is not currently budgeted, and there is no dedicated fund in the Public Works budget for this pathway since it requires minimal maintenance and has no irrigation (unlike a park, which has an established maintenance budget). The recently completed study and some additional design work could be covered under the Public Works operational budget. However, additional design or construction would require identifying a separate funding source. In discussing with the Finance Department, the Contingency Reserve would be a likely funding source, but please recall we are under policy levels in that fund pending storm damage reimbursements.

**2. Given how difficult it has been to secure all of the funding we need for Cliff Drive, how likely would it be for us to get grant funding for this project?**

While this could be considered a coastal access project, the documentation showing the pathway's remaining life is roughly 10 years would make it less competitive for most grant programs.

**3. Are the plants along the bluffs currently drought tolerant?**

The geologist noted that the vegetation along the bluff top and face was not deliberately installed and that drought tolerance is not a significant factor for bluff stability—provided the area is not irrigated. Rainfall and perched water above the bedrock are seasonal contributors to soil saturation, while the bedrock failure below primarily controls bluff retreat. Vegetation can help reduce surface erosion from rainfall and runoff, but the type of vegetation itself has limited influence on overall bluff stability.

**4. Can we convert existing landscaping along the Grand Avenue pathway to drought-tolerant landscaping to help minimize bluff saturation?**

If a relocation project proceeds, staff could evaluate plantings as part of design. However, irrigation would not be recommended. The geologist confirmed that vegetation type has minimal influence on bluff retreat, which is largely driven by underlying bedrock failure and seasonal rainfall.

**5. What would the cost be for a more informal, community-based approach?**

The pathway design would need to be prepared by a licensed professional to ensure appropriate grading and drainage. Field-fitting a pathway without engineering oversight would not be appropriate given the bluff's sensitivity. Construction feasibility for a community effort would depend on grading needs identified in the engineered plans—most of the work would need to be done by hand. Any grading, drainage, or use of machinery beyond hand tools should be handled by licensed professionals.

**6. What will the risk/liability be for the City if we allow a community group to reclaim encroachments and relocate this pathway?**

This question is primarily for Sam. Private property owners are responsible for removing any encroachments. For volunteer efforts, the City can have participants sign waivers (as was done when the fence was relocated a few years ago). Construction work must follow an approved engineered plan; significant grading and drainage must be handled by professionals, though volunteers could assist with limited work such as spreading decomposed granite, light compaction, or installing fencing.

**Jessica Kahn, P.E.**  
Public Works Director  
City of Capitola  
(831) 475-7300 x 217  
[jkahn@ci.capitola.ca.us](mailto:jkahn@ci.capitola.ca.us)