

## Gautho, Julia

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**From:** Ford, Kiana@Coastal <kiana.ford@coastal.ca.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 22, 2025 1:27 PM  
**To:** Kahn, Jessica  
**Cc:** City Council; Graeven, Rainey@Coastal  
**Subject:** [PDF] Agenda Item 9A  
**Attachments:** 10.22.25 City Council Hearing Item #9A Coastal Commission Letter.pdf

Good Afternoon, Jessica,

Please see attached a letter from the Coastal Commission Central Coast District Office regarding item 9A on tomorrow's City Council agenda.

Best,  
Kiana

**Kiana Ford** | Coastal Planner

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

Central Coast District

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**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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**October 22, 2025**

Jessica Kahn, P.E.  
Public Works Director  
City of Capitola, CA 95010  
[jkahn@ci.capitola.ca.us](mailto:jkahn@ci.capitola.ca.us)

Capitola City Council  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010  
[citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us](mailto:citycouncil@ci.capitola.ca.us)

Subject: **Grand Avenue Pathway – Item 9A**

Dear Director Kahn and Honorable Members of the Capitola City Council,

We have reviewed the agenda report, including the attached geologic investigation, which includes recommendations to preserve the Grand Avenue bluff top pathway. We write today to express our strong support for relocating the pathway inland along the City-owned right of way and urge the City Council to direct staff to pursue the implementation measures outlined in the agenda report.

We believe these measures are important in order to allow the public to continue to have access to this significant coastal resource, including its public recreational opportunities and coastal views. Furthermore, such measures are consistent with the Coastal Act's requirement to maximize public access and recreation, and the relevant City of Capitola Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies, which speak to "providing safe and adequate pedestrian access to and along the shoreline" and maintaining "existing pathways and park sites for public use".

Moreover, and consistent with our past letters related to the Grand Avenue Pathway (see attached letters dated May 23, 2017 and December 16, 2019), we continue to support restoring and maintaining lateral public access along the bluff in concert with related efforts to help improve drainage and minimize runoff and saturation of the bluff (including but not limited to additional drainage infrastructure to help prevent runoff down the bluff, converting existing landscaping along Depot Hill to drought tolerant landscaping to help minimize saturation of the bluff, etc.). We also continue to support a more informal path (e.g., compacted dirt, decomposed granite, etc. as opposed to concrete or asphalt), which may offer the City more flexibility to continue to adapt/relocate the pathway as needed.

A renewed effort to restore a continuous pathway experience benefits all users (those young and old, residents and visitors, and those able-bodied and not) given the

## **Grand Avenue Pathway**

sweeping views it provides of the Monterey Bay, especially when there are fairly limited comparable alternative access opportunities along the Depot Hill stretch of coast. Furthermore, we understand the City is committed to undertaking City-wide adaptation planning, and thus that planning process may elucidate other mechanisms to continue to provide access here, or possibly help enhance and/or create new access opportunities in the vicinity.

Thank you for consideration of these comments, and we offer our support to City staff as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Dan Carl  
District Director  
Central Coast District  
California Coastal Commission

Attachments: May 23, 2017 and December 16, 2019 Coastal Commission letters to the City regarding the Grand Avenue Pathway

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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May 23, 2017

City Council  
City of Capitola  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010

**Subject: Grand Avenue Pathway Relocation - Item 9A, May 25, 2017 City Council Hearing**

Dear Hon. Mayor Harlan and fellow Council Members:

We write today to express our strong support for relocating the Grand Avenue bluff top pathway inland along the City-owned right of way consistent with the original recommendation to Council back in March. We have reviewed the staff report, including the attached geologic report, which appears to suggest that the path will essentially be abandoned and remain closed indefinitely. We believe the City should explore other alternatives to allow the public, including the residents of the City of Capitola, to continue to have access to this amazing coastal resource and its magnificent coastal views.

Our understanding is that, over the years, the City has granted *revocable* encroachment permits to a number of private property owners with property frontage along the old Grand Avenue right-of-way. We strongly encourage the City to reclaim all areas of the publically-owned right-of-way along this entire stretch of Depot Hill that have been encroached upon by such private residential development so that this *publicly-owned right-of-way property* can be used to ensure that a path remains available for public access. We believe that reverting the encroached-upon areas to public access use is consistent with Coastal Act and relevant City Local Coastal Program (LCP) policies that require maximization of public access and recreation opportunities. And while we understand the significant erosion concerns raised by the geologic report, we would submit that an appropriate interim solution may be to establish a less formalized pathway (e.g. compacted dirt, decomposed granite, etc. as opposed to concrete or asphalt) along the inland extent of the public right-of-way to allow the public to continue to utilize this incredible coastal resource.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Craig".

Susan Craig  
District Manager  
Central Coast District Office

**CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION**

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December 16, 2019

City Council  
City of Capitola  
420 Capitola Avenue  
Capitola, CA 95010

**Subject: Grand Avenue Pathway Emergency Declaration - Item 10A**

Dear Honorable Members of the Capitola City Council:

It is our understanding that the portion of the Grand Avenue pathway that was previously closed under City-issued Coastal Development Permit (CDP) #17-0380 was further undermined following heavy rain, and that emergency action was taken, including the creation of a new drainage inlet and the placement of plastic sheeting. Accordingly, the City should process an emergency CDP as soon as possible for any work that has already been done, and for any additional work still necessary to abate the emergency situation (e.g., removing any fencing, asphalt, etc.; installation of drainage components and plastic sheeting on the bluff area). We would like to encourage the City to remove any non-plant materials from the top of the bluff and along the bluff (e.g.: asphalt, plastic, sand bags, and fencing) to prevent these materials from falling onto the beach area and ultimately into the ocean. In terms of the required follow-up CDP to authorize the work done under the Emergency CDP, we would encourage the City to: 1) examine what level of storm (i.e., the 10-year storm, 20-year storm, etc.) that the existing drainage inlets can accommodate; 2) consider additional drainage improvements to prevent runoff down the bluff, as well as explore other measures that may be suitable to prevent/reduce erosion in this area; and 3) examine the feasibility of reclaiming the public right-of-way to allow for a through public pathway, even if such a path could only exist for a relatively short planning horizon (e.g., 5-20 years) and is a more informal pathway (e.g. compacted dirt, decomposed granite, etc. as opposed to concrete or asphalt). We see the follow-up CDP process as an opportunity to seek solutions that both address coastal bluff erosion as well as restore lateral public coastal access along the bluff.

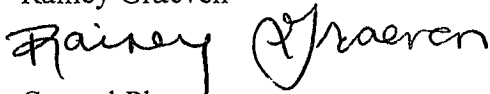
In terms of longer term solutions and planning, it is our understanding that the City received a grant to complete a formal hazards assessment and will be undertaking a Local Coastal Program (LCP) update to appropriately plan for coastal hazards and sea level rise. We are interested in coordinating with City planning and public works staff (who are copied on this letter), including to better understand what the City has learned thus far from the hazards assessment, and to assist the City in its upcoming LCP update process. Please let us know how we can best assist with this process at your convenience.

City Council  
Grand Avenue Pathway Emergency Declaration - Item 10A  
December 16, 2019  
Page 2

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rainey Graeven

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rainey Graeven". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Coastal Planner  
Central Coast District Office

cc: Katie Herlihy, Community Development Director  
Steve Jesberg, Public Works Director