

September 30, 2025

Hi Katie,

Thank you—and Sean, Amin, Riley, and your SJ State intern (go Spartans!)—for taking the time to review my appeal and for meeting me out on the Park Ave. bluff. I really appreciate how respectfully everyone has listened and how much effort the RTC team put into walking the area and seeing things the way residents do. It made a big difference to me.

The changes you shared with me today (9/30) to the fence plan at the north address my concerns about public access to this area and do what's needed to keep ocean views open and inviting for everyone—neighbors and visitors alike.

So, with those updates in place, I'm officially withdrawing my appeal of the fencing project.

Stepping back a bit: as a community, I hope we keep in mind just how special the handful of places along this stretch—the east side right-of-way—are for ocean views. There are only four approaches between the Boardwalk and La Selva Beach where the ocean views open up:

- The Harbor
- Cliff Drive and the Capitola Trestle
- Park Ave. Bluff
- Sumner Beach to Manresa Park

Anyone who's ever looked for a place to enjoy the ocean knows a view like that doubles the value of real estate compared to lots just a block away! These spots are precious, and, if we handle them right, people will be able to enjoy these views for generations when public access is part of the plan.

Let's continue to approach decisions about these four areas with care and creativity, making sure we hold onto what makes them so special.

Thanks,

Brad



CITY OF CAPITOLA APPEAL INFORMATION

CITY OF CAPITOLA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
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831-475-7300 WWW.CITYOFCAPITOLA.ORG

Appellants should always attend the hearing to present their case to the decision makers.

CITY OF CAPITOLA

APPEAL APPLICATION FORM

TYPE OF APPEAL (check one)	APPEAL FEE
	See Fee Schedule
Coastal Appeal XXXXXXXX	\$0

APPELLANT INFORMATION

Name: Bradley Todd

Address: 1001 Sir Francis Ave, Capitola Zip 95010

Phone: 408 442 2805

Email: Brad.g.todd@gmail.com

APPEAL INFORMATION

Project Address: Coastal Bluff Adjacent to Park Avenue.

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 036-201-02

Property Owner: Santa Cruz County

Application Number:

Capitola Coastal Bluff Fence Appeal

Key Grounds for Appeal

Bradley Todd's appeal regarding the proposed fencing along the coastal bluff adjacent to Park Avenue relies on several requirements from Capitola's Coastal Overlay Zone (COZ) and Local Coastal Program (LCP), as well as the California Coastal Act. The central concerns relate to:

- Preserving and enhancing public access to 1,300 feet of coastal bluff,
- Maintaining or enhancing public ocean views,
- Ensuring low-cost public recreational access,
- Providing opportunities for visitors and maintaining coastal resources, and

- **Adhering to LCP goals for appropriate coastal development.**

Significance of Public Use—Informal Survey Findings

A critical component of the appeal is the **informal survey** conducted by the appellant, which demonstrates

- Approximately **15 people per daylight hour** (about **200 people per day**) regularly walk or bike the area between Park Avenue and the bluff, enjoying direct ocean views from the bluff rather than from the street above.
- On special occasions (e.g., local events like the Wharf-to-Wharf race), usage can be even higher.
- This empirical evidence underscores that **public use of the bluff area is regular, significant, and active**, not just hypothetical or occasional.

This survey data meaningfully supports the appeal by providing **quantitative evidence of the community's ongoing use and enjoyment** of this scenic resource. The proposed fencing would eliminate a valued access point for hundreds, if not thousands, of visitors every year.

Regulatory Background and Policy Context

The COZ and LCP require that any development, including fencing:

- Be consistent with LCP/Coastal Act mandates for maximizing public access and recreational use;
- Protect, maintain, and enhance scenic and visual resources;
- Weigh public safety needs carefully against these other priorities.

Past staff analysis appears to have overlooked this user group, focusing only on car and pedestrian views from Park Avenue rather than those utilizing the bluff path directly. **The survey's data highlights that these users represent a substantial portion of the population impacted by the proposed closure.**

Precedents and Alternative Approaches

- Other Capitola coastal sites—such as Grand Avenue, Cliff Drive, and New Brighton State Park—use various design solutions (setback fencing, signage, railings, landscape buffers) that balance public safety and continued public access.
- The appeal recommends that the City and RTC consider **less restrictive safety measures** or even **expand and formalize public access** along the 1,300' coastal bluff segment to create a unique park opportunity for both residents and visitors.

Conclusion

Including the informal survey findings makes clear that **the project's impact would be substantial**: eliminating a well-used, unique access and view corridor for ~ 7,000 visits annually. This contravenes the goals of Capitola's LCP and the California Coastal Act

to **maximize public access and recreation** along the coast. The City and RTC should explore safety solutions that **preserve or enhance existing public use**—as documented by real-world visitor data—instead of foreclosing it.

Citations for context:

- Capitola Municipal Code 17.44.010 & 17.44.130
- Capitola Local Coastal Program
- California Coastal Act
- Comparable coastal management examples (Grand Avenue, Cliff Drive, New Brighton State Park)