

Capitola's Outdoor Dining Program
Proposed Coastal Access Enhancements and Mitigation

Overall the City believes that the proposed outdoor dining program enhances coastal access because:

- City has an overabundance of public parking, having added 240 spaces in 2013.
- 340 days a year there is available public parking 24/7.
- The outdoor dining program offer additional opportunities for visitors to experience the coast and Capitola Village.
- The program will add 50 new bike parking spaces, supporting multimodal access to the coast and the future regional bikeshare program.
- During the few days of peak visitation, the dining decks will help relieve stress and prevent degradation on coastal resources.
- The prototype street dining deck design will be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and are compatible with the character of the Village
- The outdoor dining provides an equitable alternative of coastal access for mobility challenged visitors.
- Capitola is a renown visitor-friendly coastal village due to City leadership's ongoing investment into coastal access and recreation

One major investment over the years has been in public parking. There are currently 740 parking spaces in the village available to the public. In 2013, the City of Capitola developed the Lower Pac Cove parking lot adding 220 new parking spaces for the Village at a cost of \$3.5 million. The Lower and Upper Pac Cove parking lots, which combined have 455 parking spaces, are rarely full. The highest demand for parking occurs on the 15 weekends between Memorial Day to Labor Day from 11 am and 4 pm. The parking lots never hit full capacity mid-week. Over the course of a year, there is a surplus of public parking over 98% of the time. The city only hits full capacity for a few hours on approximately 25 days of the year. For the other 8,630 hours of the year there is available parking and the dining decks offer enhanced public access over the status quo.

One of the basic goals of the Coastal Act (Section 30001.5) is to protect, maintain, and where feasible, enhance and resource the overall quality of the coastal zone environment and its natural and manmade resources. A second goal is to maximize public access to and along the coast consistent with sound resource conservation principles. The proposed outdoor dining program aligns with these goals as it adds the variety of experiences available to visitors. The Capitola beach is approximately six acres in size. On the busiest days, when most parking spaces in the village are utilized, the beach is often overcrowded resulting in a negative visitor experience and public safety concerns. Providing alternatives for visitors, such as having lunch on a street dining deck, assists in relieving stress on our limited coastal resources.

Outdoor dining which replaces public parking spaces with the opportunity to dine, enhances public beach access as many of the spaces have views of the Monterey Bay. Converting parking spaces in the village from automobile parking to street dining increases prime coastal access. Each parking space can accommodate one car. A member of the public parks their car, pays the hourly fee for the space, and has sole access of that space for up to three hours. On the contemplated street dining decks, the same space can accommodate up to three dining tables comfortably. The street dining is open to the public to sit and dine while taking in views of the coast and Capitola's seaside charm. Typical turnover time for dining is close to one hour. Up to

nine parties could enjoy the same space in the three-hour time. In either scenario, the public has to pay to utilize the public space.

Capitola's outdoor dining program will enhance multimodal transportation infrastructure. The program requires two bicycle parking spaces for each automobile parking space converted to outdoor dining. This requirement creates prime coastal access for bicycle parking which is a greener alternative to the automobile and benefits community health and the environment. This mitigation measure is consistent with the City's certified LCP/IP which specifically states, "When parking is reduced, the city shall evaluate alternative opportunities for public coastal access as needed to ensure existing levels of public access are maintained, or if possible enhanced," and identifies bicycle parking as a suggested mitigation measure.

The City's commitment to multimodal access does not end there. Over the past two years, the City has been dedicated toward the creation of a regional bike share program that will extend from Watsonville to Santa Cruz, provide additional transportation alternatives to the car on a regional basis. The regional bike share system is planned to be in effect by September 2022, in preparation for the start of the UCSC school year. Cyclists will have more opportunities to park bicycle within the Village due to the required onsite bicycle parking within the outdoor dining program.

Coastal Act Section 30251 requires the scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. It further specifies that permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural landforms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas are required to be subordinate to the character of the coastal setting. The outdoor dining program includes a City sponsored prototype design which will enhance the general appearance of Capitola. Policy III-7 of Capitola's LCP ensures the special scale and character of Capitola Village be maintained within development proposals. The policy puts emphasis on design within the street to include: 1) landscaping; 2) street, path, and public space lighting; 3) paving patterns and paving materials; 4) traffic and parking furniture including directional signs, directional islands, bicycle racks; and 5) signage. The prototype design will include planters, lighting, decking materials, bicycle parking, and limited signs. The overall aesthetic and character of the village will be enhanced with the activated space and the design will be subordinate to the character of the village while increasing opportunities for the public to take in the views. The prototype design includes planters for railing, but prohibits enclosed roof structures to ensure views are protected.

Capitola's Local Coastal Program supports projects that provide facilities close to the beach for persons who find use of the beach itself difficult. The street dining decks provide an equitable option for all to take in the scenic and visual qualities of the coastal area with the comforts of a table and chairs. The outdoor dining is required to be ADA accessible and have appropriate table heights to accommodate a visitor in a wheelchair. The outdoor dining programs ensures that safe passageways will be clear and accessible for the public.

Capitola also provides a free alternative for visitors to sit down and take in the views. Visitors can choose from the 61 city benches located throughout the village. The Esplanade is lined with City benches that look out onto the Monterey Bay. During the pandemic, the benches were utilized in the temporary outdoor dining areas as safety barriers since they are extremely heavy made of concrete and wood. Understanding the value of this community asset, the City Council

recently directed staff to require all benches be removed from the temporary outdoor dining and returned to the original locations throughout the village by June 15, 2022.

Lastly, the City is dedicated to coastal access and recreation. Capitola is home to a robust Junior Guards program which serve about 1,000 children each summer and employs 25 lifeguards. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, the City has lifeguard on duty seven days a week and on weekends provides a free beach shuttle services from Lower Pac Cove parking lot to Capitola Village (\$65,000). The City just completed the rebuilding the flume and jetty (\$460,000). The City is currently in the planning and funding stages for rebuilding the Capitola Wharf (\$7 million). The city dedicates staff on weekends throughout the year to trash removal in the Village and maintains public restrooms in Esplanade Park and on the wharf.