

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: March 12, 2026

From: Police Department

Subject: RING Radio System Federal Funding Request

Recommended Action: Authorize the Vice Mayor to send a letter to federal representatives requesting support for funding in the amount of \$5.4 million for the Regional Interoperable Next Generation (RING) Radio System serving Santa Cruz County public safety agencies.

Background: The City of Capitola Police Department participates in the countywide public safety radio communications system serving law enforcement, fire, EMS, dispatch, and emergency management agencies throughout Santa Cruz County. The existing radio infrastructure is aging and no longer meets the operational and coverage needs of public safety personnel.

On December 11, 2025, the Capitola City Council approved the City's participation in the Regional Interoperable Next Generation (RING) Radio System. The RING Radio System is a countywide initiative designed to replace the existing communications network with a secure, encrypted, interoperable public safety radio system. The upgraded system will:

- Improve officer safety through reliable, uninterrupted communications
- Enhance interoperability between law enforcement, fire, EMS, and allied agencies
- Increase coverage throughout Santa Cruz County, including coastal and mountainous terrain
- Support coordinated response during wildfires, natural disasters, and large-scale emergencies
- Provide long-term sustainability through established regional governance and operational planning

Discussion: Santa Cruz County has requested a total of \$6.6 million in federal funding to assist with capital construction costs associated with implementing the RING Radio System. Local jurisdictions, including the City of Capitola, have demonstrated commitment through participation in regional planning efforts and agreement to long-term operational responsibilities.

Initial requests seek investment in core backbone infrastructure that will help all member and subscriber agencies reduce costs. There are three initial funding streams in development with several others being explored.

Source	Status / Timeline	Amount Requested
UASI (Bay Area DHS grant)	Submitted / January 2026	\$1M
SHSGP	Submitted / February 2026	\$200K annually for 3 years
Community Project Funding / Congressionally Directed Funding	In flight / Due March 6-13* *multiple applications	\$5.4M
		\$6.6M proposed

Federal participation would reduce the financial burden on local agencies and help ensure full countywide implementation of this critical public safety infrastructure project. Staff recommends authorizing the Vice Mayor to send a letter to the federal representatives requesting support of funding for the RING Radio System.

Fiscal Impact: There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with authorizing the Vice Mayor to send the support letter. Long-term operational costs associated with the RING system will be addressed through future budget processes.

Attachments:

1. Letter of Support

Report Prepared By: Pedro Zamora, Police Captain

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager