

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: March 13, 2025

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Rail Trail Project Town Hall Plan

Recommended Action: Approve the proposed town hall meeting plan and outreach strategy.

Background: On February 13, 2025, the City Council heard an item regarding Park Avenue Traffic Calming Improvements with Coastal Rail Trail Options. The staff report for that item can be reviewed by clicking the link listed as Attachment 1. At the conclusion of that hearing City Council directed staff to host a town hall meeting in collaboration with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to review long-term impacts of the Rail Trail, provide updates on the use of the Capitola Trestle, review impacts of potential litigation from Measure L, and provide a general overview of the Rail Trail project's impacts in Capitola.

The RTC independently hosted a public meeting at New Brighton Middle School on March 4 to provide context regarding the Rail Trail.

Discussion: To provide time for community outreach and collaboration between the City, Santa Cruz County, and RTC staff, staff proposes the following meeting plan and outreach strategy.

Project Town Hall

Date: Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Time: 5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

Location: New Brighton Middle School Performing Arts Center

The meeting will be a noticed City Council meeting; Council Members will be in attendance as audience members. There will be no Council decision.

To foster inclusive community engagement and provide multiple avenues for residents to participate, staff suggests the town hall meeting is structured in the following manner:

- **Mayor Welcome**
- **Meeting Overview:** Staff is looking into hiring a meeting facilitator.
- **Formal Presentation:** RTC staff, in collaboration with SC County and City staff, will present an overview of project background and key topics.
- **Informational materials:** Materials will be available 12 days in advance on the City website on March 21.
- **Pre-Submitted Questions:** The City will accept questions through an online submission portal for two weeks before the town hall meeting.
- **Synthesis and Preparation:** Staff will review pre-submitted questions, identify repeated themes and summarize those questions, and provide answers to the summarized questions following the presentation.
- **Public Comment and Question:** After addressing pre-submitted questions, there will be a 45 minute public comment session. After the conclusion of public comment, questions raised by the public during that time will be addressed by staff. Members of the public will submit speaker cards and have up to 2 minutes to speak.
- **Set End Time:** The meeting will have a clearly communicated end time.
- **Meeting Summary:** Following the meeting, staff will prepare a meeting summary, that includes informational materials, all pre-submitted questions, the summarized pre-submitted questions and their responses, as well as a summary of the public comment and questions and their responses.

Topics will include:

- Current Project: Rail Trail Segment 10 and 11
- Use of Capitola Trestle
- Park Avenue Trail Realignment
- Funding
- Ongoing Maintenance Costs
- Mobile Home Encroachments
- Measure L
- Timeline: Park Ave, EIR, Permits, Construction
- Future Zero Emissions Passenger Rail and Trail (ZEPRT)

In addition, Council discussed the possibility of a topic around potential litigation. Staff recommends not discussing potential litigation in open session.

The meeting will be recorded by Community Television of Santa Cruz County (CTV) at an added cost, ensuring it is available for the public to view if they are unable to attend in-person. The public can participate by pre-submitting questions, attending in person, and/or watching the meeting video on the City's YouTube Channel live.

To promote the meeting and encourage public participation, staff will issue a press release, social media content, updates to the City website, and postcard mailed to residents and project stakeholders.

Since February 13th, the City has received a number of emails from the public concerning this topic. All emails received have been saved to a public DropBox Folder, linked as Attachment 2.

Following the Town Hall, staff is recommending a special City Council meeting on April 17 to make a final decision on the Park Ave alignment of the rail trail.

Fiscal Impact: Staff estimates that outreach efforts and meeting costs will be approximately \$5,000. This estimate includes printing, mailing, postage, location use fees, and CTV broadcasting costs.

Attachments:

1. Link to February 13th Staff Report:
<https://mccmeetingspublic.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/capitolaca-meet-22dcaa307be5437dbb1328e7ace00934/ITEM-Attachment-007-c0473858d01a4529a85b7dc9ae72d794.pdf>
2. Link to DropBox Folder (Emails Received 2/13 – 3/6):
https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4hn7q7g5ph4lh8dfpt9xf/ADOhq2XzWE9dex2XpDFN5_c?rlkey=ynxkqpqf123jgd6iqyf7xcd8v&st=ko7ddavl&dl=0

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Prepared and Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager