

Gautho, Julia

From: Matt Miller <matt.miller@ecoact.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 26, 2025 4:43 PM
To: City Council
Subject: [PDF] City Council Meeting 2/27, Item 7.B.
Attachments: City of Capitola - Letter of Support for Bay Avenue Corridor.pdf

Hello City of Capitola team,

Please find the attached letter of support for staff recommendations on Item 7.B.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Matt Miller (he/him)
Director, Mobility Transformation

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2/26/25

City of Capitola City Council
420 Capitola Avenue
Capitola, CA 95010
RE: Item 7.B. Bay Avenue Corridor Study

Dear Mayor Clarke and Capitola City Council,

Ecology Action, a California environmental non-profit headquartered in Santa Cruz, works to advance equitable community climate solutions in high greenhouse gas emitting sectors, including transportation. Our Modo Active Transportation team offers youth pedestrian and bike safety education at schools across the county, including Capitola, transportation planning like Complete Streets to School and Active Transportation Plans, and hosts community events like Walk and Roll to School Day, and Bike to Work Day, Bike Month, and Biketober. While bicycle and pedestrian safety and encouragement programs are an important part of the local effort to increase walking and biking, we also appreciate that the physical infrastructure community members must navigate needs to be safe, easy, and accessible to use for all modes of transportation. Today that picture is incomplete in Capitola.

We support Capitola staff's recommendation to 1) identify Alternative 2 as the preferred long-term improvement alternative for the Bay Avenue corridor; 2) authorize staff to proceed with public engagement and conceptual design refinement; and 3) direct staff to pursue grant funding opportunities for final design and construction.

In the staff cited case study of La Jolla Boulevard in San Diego, it's notable that project saw a four-lane road reduced to a two-lane road and the traffic count remained approximately the same (23,000 vehicles per day before, 22,000 after), but walking, bicycling, transit use, on-street parking and retail sales all climbed to much higher levels, the accordingly to the City of San Diego. Retail sales rose 30 percent and noise levels dropped 77 percent. Because traffic moves slower, businesses report higher visibility. As a result of the roundabouts and traffic calming, speeds were reduced from 40–45 mph to 19 mph, according to city transportation engineers. Traffic crashes fell by 90 percent. Motorists understandably dreaded this change before it was made. But they found that instead of waiting 24 seconds for a pedestrian to cross 70 feet of road, they now only wait 3–4 seconds, or don't have to wait at all. Businesses that feared the loss of customers arriving in cars actually improved their trade. All those changes demonstrate that a traffic calmed street with roundabouts treatments can lead to improvements in safety, flow, emissions reduction, and more attractive spaces for to walk, bike, and roll which means higher quality of life for all.

When the Santa Cruz County Delegation traveled to the Netherlands for a study visit in June 2024, we studied roundabouts and learned they are a widely used Dutch strategy to reduce traffic casualties and serious injury, slow speed for all users, improve eye contact and interaction between road users, and once installed there is no operational cost. Compared to a four-way intersection with 32 conflict points, roundabouts have 8 conflict points. We encourage the exploration of Dutch style roundabouts in Capitola to ensure dedicated spaces for cars, bikes, and pedestrians.



This concept can improve inequities by closing a gap in existing multimodal infrastructure and expanding travel options for those who do not or cannot travel by vehicle. It encourages a mode shift from single-occupancy vehicles to bicycling and walking and reduces VMT and GHG emissions by providing a safer, comfortable, and accessible alternative to driving. For those who choose to or only have the option to drive, the experience for drivers will be improved with better flow and reduced likelihood of crashes. Residents and visitors will especially choose to bicycle and walk during periods of high automobile congestion to reduce travel times and provide reasonable alternatives.

Ecology Action strongly supports the implementation of the staff recommendation to proceed down this path of Alternative 2. If eventually implemented, it will greatly improve Capitola's active transportation network, increase safety, and improve the livability, equity, and quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Miller".

Matt Miller
Director, Mobility Transformation