Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: August 27, 2026

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Agreement with the RTC for the Capitola Trestle Assessment

Recommended Action: Authorize the City Manager to execute a Cooperative Agreement with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for the Capitola Trestle Assessment.

Background: The Capitola Trestle is owned by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and spans Soquel Creek within the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line corridor in the City of Capitola. The purpose of the proposed assessment is to provide updated technical information regarding the existing condition of the structure and evaluate potential rehabilitation or retrofit alternatives.

In 2021, the RTC commissioned a conceptual study (Attachment 2) evaluating the potential conversion of the Capitola Trestle for pedestrian and bicycle use. While that study concluded that repurposing the structure may be feasible, it also identified several significant information gaps, including the need for updated structural inspections, geotechnical investigations, seismic evaluation, and planning-level retrofit recommendations before future decisions could be made.

On May 21, 2026, the City Council passed a motion requesting the RTC reprogram up to $200,000 in previously awarded Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds from the Bay Avenue Corridor Project to support preliminary planning and feasibility work for the Capitola Trestle. Council also acknowledged that a future agreement with the RTC would be required to establish the roles, responsibilities, and implementation of the assessment.

On June 11, 2026, the RTC approved the City's request to reprogram the funding, shifting $200,000 from the Bay Avenue Corridor Final Design project to planning and feasibility work associated with the Capitola Trestle.

On August 6, 2026, the RTC approved the proposed Cooperative Agreement with the City of Capitola establishing the roles and responsibilities for completion of the Capitola Trestle Assessment.

Discussion: The Capitola Trestle Assessment will provide the technical information necessary to evaluate the existing condition of the structure, identify feasible rehabilitation or retrofit alternatives, and support future policy decisions regarding the structure.

The proposed Cooperative Agreement establishes the respective responsibilities of the City and RTC for completion of the assessment. Under the agreement, the City will serve as the project sponsor and implementing agency and will be responsible for project management, technical direction, review and acceptance of deliverables, and determining how the assessment results will inform future City consideration. The RTC will administer the consultant task order through its existing on-call engineering consultant contract, process consultant invoices, and provide contract administration, technical review, and project coordination.

The scope of work includes:

- Review of previous studies and available bridge information;
- Updated structural condition assessment;
- Geotechnical investigation, as necessary;
- Preliminary seismic evaluation;
- Evaluation of rehabilitation and retrofit alternatives;

- Planning-level construction cost estimates;
- Technical memorandum summarizing findings and recommendations; and
- Presentation of the assessment results to the City Council.

The assessment is anticipated to be completed approximately four months following issuance of the consultant Notice to Proceed.

The Cooperative Agreement is limited to completion of the Capitola Trestle Assessment and associated planning work. Approval of the agreement does not authorize or commit either the City or the RTC to environmental review, final design, right-of-way acquisition, construction, funding, operation, maintenance, or conversion of the Capitola Trestle. Rather, the assessment is intended to provide the technical basis for future policy decisions regarding the Trestle structure.

The agreement also establishes each agency's responsibilities for implementation of the assessment, authorizes use of the previously reprogrammed RSTPX funds, and includes mutual indemnification provisions between the City and RTC.

Approval of the Cooperative Agreement will allow the RTC to issue the consultant task order and initiate the Capitola Trestle Assessment.

Fiscal Impact: The Capitola Trestle Assessment will be funded with previously programmed Regional Surface Transportation Program Exchange (RSTPX) funds administered by the RTC. The Cooperative Agreement authorizes the RTC to expend up to $200,000 for consultant services and eligible contract administration costs. No additional City funding or General Fund appropriation is required.

Attachments:

1. Cooperative Agreement between the City of Capitola and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission for the Capitola Trestle Assessment
2. https://www.sccrtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Submittal_Capitola-RR-Bridge-Conceptual-Repurposing-Study-Rev-1.pdf

Alignment with 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Priority: Sustainable Infrastructure; Healthy Families, Community, and Environment

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