

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: February 10, 2022

From: Department of Public Works

Subject: Realignment of the Proposed Pedestrian Pathway from the Upper Beach and Village Parking Lot to Monterey Avenue



Recommended Action: Approve a new proposed route for the pedestrian pathway from the Upper Beach and Village Parking Lot to Monterey Avenue.

Background: On March 25, 2021, the City Council approved an agreement with the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) for studies and construction of a pathway along the rail corridor connecting the Upper Beach and Village Parking Lot and Monterey Avenue. Since then, the City Public Works Department has been working with RTC staff and County of Santa Cruz staff to review preliminary designs and associated studies for the Rail Trail Segments 10 and 11 Project that goes through Capitola, including the area of the pathway project. The County has taken the lead on the preliminary design and are currently preparing the environmental review documents.

Discussion: The purpose of this project is to provide a dedicated pedestrian pathway to leave the Upper Beach and Village Parking and connect to Monterey Ave. The original planned route of the pathway involved ramping up from the parking lot to the rail corridor then traveling approximately 75 feet along the rail corridor to Monterey Avenue. From there the pathway continued across Monterey Avenue to the vacant lot east of Monterey Ave. This route was selected as it provided very good pedestrian separation from vehicular traffic. However, a number of factors have led staff to reconsider their recommendation regarding the path alignment

First, in participation in rail trail design meetings with other jurisdictions it has become apparent to City staff the final design for this section of the rail trail will not be finalized in the near future. This is important because if the ultimate location of the trail is on the south side of the tracks, the path the City is proposing to construct now would likely become obsolete. Second, the potential for soil contamination in the rail corridor would likely slow down the City's pathway project. Third, a large cypress tree that was previously blocking an alternative pathway alignment collapsed earlier this winter, thereby reducing the number of trees that would need to be removed if the pathway were to be located outside the rail corridor.

Based on these factors, staff proposes moving the pathway design away from the rail corridor and instead designing the pathway as a sidewalk from the Upper Beach and Village Parking Lot to Monterey Avenue.

This proposed change will follow the slopes and alignment of the existing road to the parking lot and provide separation between vehicles and pedestrians. Under this proposal the sidewalk would be located almost entirely on City property and the work to be done on the rail right of way will not require extensive environmental studies.

The impacts on the large oak trees along this new route will likely be less than the original route. However, the proposed sidewalk would still be located near six large oak trees and removal or heavy trimming on some, or all of these trees will be needed. The project would still include

improvements to vacant land east of Monterey Avenue with a new curb and gutter, a turn out along Park Avenue, and minor landscaping, but no pathway.

Removing the project from rail property will allow City staff to expedite the design, permitting, and construction of the sidewalk.

Fiscal Impact: The project has previously received \$250,000 in RTC grant funding and \$50,000 in General Fund. The City has expended \$30,000 on surveying, previous route layouts and coordination with the RTC. Staff believe the remaining funding should be sufficient to complete the sidewalk but will need to verify as preliminary design work is completed. The preliminary design work should be completed in time to consider additional funding during budget adoption process.

Attachments:

1. Site Map

Report Prepared By: Steve Jesberg, Public Works Director

Reviewed By: Chloé Woodmansee, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager