

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: August 25, 2022

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Over-the-Street Banner Policy Update

Recommended Action: Approve updates to Administrative Policy V-17: Capitola Village Street Banner Program to ensure consistency with current best practices.

Background: The City allows banners to be above the street at Capitola Avenue in front of City Hall and on Monterey Avenue at Park Place (bottom of the hill entering the Village). The City first adopted a banner policy in 2003. According to the banner policy the intent is to provide a tool to promote events, provide the community with information, and enhance the streetscape.

The current banner policy regulates over-the-street banners; those banners may be allowed for special events, and by nonprofits, government agencies, and public information campaigns.

This policy only contains regulations regarding over-the-street banners flown at these two locations. Banners flown from the vertical Village banner poles are regulated by Administrative Policy V-16: Village Streetscape Decorations.

Discussion: Based on a recent review of Administrative Policies, staff identified a need to update the banner policy to ensure the City has content neutral banner and clear regulations. Specifically, the current banner policy allows nonprofits to hang banners but not-for-profit businesses. In addition, while the current policy prohibits commercial advertising on banners, the policy does not include specific standards related to what kind of language is appropriate for the banners.

To resolve these issues staff reviewed all approved banner applications over the last seven years. That review showed that banners were only hung for special events and for governmental information campaigns (safe streets, census, bike to work).

Changes to Special Event Banners: For the special events, most of the banners hung over the last seven years were clearly intended to notify the public about the pending event, however some included additional information about event sponsors or included information about how to sign up for the event.

Staff concluded the clearest way to ensure that banners for special events are not inherently commercial in nature is to limit their content to event title, dates, and graphics applicable to the event. This simple format has been used for years for events like the Wharf to Wharf and Art and Wine Festival.

Changes to Informational Banners: Previously the policy allowed nonprofits, government agencies and "public information campaigns" to hang banners. Because the policy treated nonprofits differently than other users, and allowed banners for "public information campaigns" but did not define what that was, staff has proposed a revision to the policy that would only allow informational banners for public agency community outreach. This revision would mean the Regional Transportation Commission could propose a banner promoting safe driving habits or the library could propose a banner encouraging people to read. With the revision, the City would no longer allow nonprofits to utilize the City's over-the-street banner poles, however as previously noted, no nonprofit informational banners has been hung over street in the last seven years.

Fiscal Impact: None

Attachments:

1. Draft Administrative Policy, redlined version
2. Draft Administrative Policy, clean version

Reviewed By: Chloé Woodmansee, City Clerk; Tamar Burke, Assistant City Attorney

Prepared and Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager