

# Capitola City Council

## Agenda Report



**Meeting:** August 28, 2025

**From:** Public Works Department

**Subject:** Park at Rispin Mansion Project Update

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**Recommended Action:** Provide direction to staff regarding the materials and design for the additional hardscaping approved in May 2025 and the approach to landscaping in areas of the Park at Rispin Mansion outside the current construction scope.

**Background:** The Park at Rispin Mansion project is a multi-year effort to create a new public park and event space on the historic Rispin Mansion property, providing community gathering areas, open space, and access to the Soquel Creek corridor. The project includes an amphitheater, walking loop, fountain plaza, sundial installation, and multiple landscaped areas, with design elements intended to reflect the site's historic character. This design was scaled back from earlier plans due to cost constraints.

Construction began in spring 2024 following the Council's award of a \$949,000 contract to Betz Works. Work to date has included major grading, utility installation, and the construction of site features such as the amphitheater and connecting pathways. Progress was delayed by seasonal weather conditions and PG&E utility connection issues, which required a \$50,000 change order for additional underground work and ADA accessibility hardscape.

On May 8, 2025, the City Council approved a second change order increasing project funding using Measure Q resources to add hardscaping around the fountain, between the fountain and amphitheater, and in the sundial plaza area. At that time, these improvements were proposed in stamped concrete to provide a durable, low-maintenance surface that matches the original design intent.

When the park opens, the contractor's work will include essential infrastructure and amenities such as fencing and gates, benches, picnic tables, trash and recycling receptacles, a drinking fountain, dog waste stations, and site lighting. Historic features, including the grand staircase, concrete columns, masonry walls, and the fountain structure, will be repaired or restored. The amphitheater will be completed with a broom-finished concrete oval pathway, and the lower patio ADA improvements will be in stamped concrete. Irrigation service will be stubbed out for future planting, and limited landscaping with wood chip groundcover will be provided in the walking loop center and the potential future bocce ball area. Civil improvements will include grading, drainage, erosion control, curbs, concrete flatwork, decomposed granite pathways, and guardrails.

Several features originally identified as excluded project elements will now be delivered for park opening using the Public Works Parks budget: including the fountain emitters, bike post bollards, ceramic planters and urns, a game table with benches, and the sundial and pad. The arbor and bocce ball court remain excluded due to high costs, primarily related to the required concrete footings. Public art components—such as murals, mosaics, and a sculpture or installation for the fountain—are not currently included, however a grant request for public art for the fountain has been submitted. The fountain was identified by the Building Official as a fall hazard and required fencing or temporary fill. The fountain has been temporarily filled until the public art project is ready to commence; staff intends to landscape this area, in coordination with the museum, in the interim until a permanent art installation is implemented.

**Discussion:** Staff is requesting direction on the following elements of this Project.

### **Hardscape Options**

Since Council's May 2025 action, the project has continued to progress; however, the contractor has indicated that stamped concrete is not feasible for all of the upper hardscape areas identified in the change order due to constructability constraints, site conditions, and cost impacts.

The oval pathway to the amphitheater will be completed in broom-finished concrete, as planned. The ADA accessibility improvements for the lower patio are being installed in stamped concrete, also as originally planned. For the remaining areas — the fountain plaza, the landing between the fountain and amphitheater, and the sundial plaza — three options are available:

1. Stamped Asphalt – Fits within the current budget. Patterned and colored to resemble pavers, installed over asphalt. Decorative but visually and texturally different from concrete.
2. Stamped Concrete – Matches the original design intent and the amphitheater area's aesthetic but requires an additional budget allocation.
3. Decomposed Granite with Historic Pavers in Landing – Use stored historic pavers for landing with decomposed granite elsewhere, allowing for future paver installation. Not enough historic pavers exist for all areas. New pavers could be added later through a “adopt-a-brick” fundraising campaign to install pavers around the fountain and sundial, similar to the Capitola Library.

### **Landscaping Approach and Options**

The current contract includes only limited landscaping along the park wall on Wharf Road and areas adjacent to the fountain and amphitheater. Plans for un-landscaped areas currently consist of wood chip groundcover with stubbed-out water service for future planting and irrigation in the walking loop center and the planned bocce ball court location.

The original 2015 landscape plan is extensive and would exceed current staff maintenance capacity. Volunteer maintenance has been discussed but is not yet formalized. If directed by Council, staff could develop a scaled-back landscape plan/themes for near-term implementation and issue a request for proposals from interested community groups to determine their capacity and interest in helping develop and/or maintain planted areas in the park. The ultimate scope of this plan would be tailored to the skills, resources, and long-term commitment of the selected community group. Unplanted areas could be prepared with topsoil prior to opening, designated as “future planting areas,” and covered with mulch over the winter to prevent erosion.

Fiscal Impact: The fiscal impact will depend on Council's selection of the hardscape option and any additional direction regarding landscaping. Available park funding sources could cover the lower-cost alternatives without additional General Fund contributions.

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