

# Capitola City Council

## Agenda Report



**Meeting:** February 12, 2026  
**From:** Public Works Department  
**Subject:** Measure Q Grant Application

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**Recommended Action:** Authorize staff to submit a Tier 2 Measure Q Community Impact Grant application in an amount not to exceed \$325,000 for invasive species removal, native habitat restoration, and interpretive signage improvements adjacent to the Park at Rispin Mansion along Soquel Creek.

**Background:** In November 2024, Santa Cruz County voters approved Measure Q to fund projects that improve water quality, reduce wildfire risk, protect wildlife habitat, and expand equitable access to parks and open space throughout Santa Cruz County. Grant awards are guided by the Measure Q Grant Guidelines and a Five-Year Vision Plan that identify priority actions, geographies, and outcomes for investment.

The Measure Q Grant Program includes two funding tiers. Tier 1 Community Catalyst Grants support smaller-scale stewardship, education, and pilot projects, while Tier 2 Community Impact Grants support more complex, multi-benefit projects that provide broader community or regional benefit.

The current Measure Q grant application period is open from January 26, 2026, through March 6, 2026, with awards anticipated in May 2026.

**Discussion:** The recently opened Park at Rispin Mansion is a publicly accessible park that includes landscaped areas, natural open space, and riparian habitat adjacent to Soquel Creek. The proposed improvements would benefit the Soquel Creek watershed, which flows directly adjacent to the park and supports riparian habitat and downstream water quality. Portions of the natural and riparian areas adjacent to the park are designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA) and are impacted by invasive plant species that degrade habitat quality and ecological function.

The City has previously invested in the Park at Rispin Mansion to establish public access and improve site conditions. In addition, the City has supported stewardship efforts at the site, including a volunteer invasive species removal event conducted in 2025. Building on this prior work, staff has identified invasive species management and habitat restoration adjacent to the park as a priority opportunity to protect sensitive resources and preserve prior public investment.

The proposed Measure Q grant application would fund:

- Removal of priority invasive plant species in natural and riparian areas adjacent to the Park at Rispin Mansion;
- Native habitat restoration and enhancement following invasive species removal; and
- Installation of interpretive signage focused on habitat protection, watershed health, and stewardship.

All work would be designed and implemented consistent with applicable environmental regulations and ESHA requirements. As the project is scalable, the final scope would be refined based on the grant award amount and site conditions.

Given the ecological sensitivity of the site, the scale of work needed to achieve meaningful environmental benefit, and the opportunity to implement a coordinated restoration effort, staff recommends pursuing a Tier 2 Community Impact Grant.

### *Alternative Projects Considered*

Other Council-priority park projects were evaluated for Measure Q eligibility and competitiveness. Esplanade Park is scheduled to receive funding through a State Coastal Conservancy grant for planning and conceptual design work on Feb. 19, and staff is currently advancing that scope. Additional Measure Q funding would be more appropriate for a future implementation phase following completion of the planning effort.

The Monterey Park Playground Project is primarily recreational in nature and has not yet completed public outreach or project definition; therefore, not currently positioned to compete effectively under Measure Q's environmental and habitat-focused evaluation criteria.

Staff recommends the Park at Rispin Mansion Project as the most grant-ready and competitive Measure Q application at this time.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact associated with submitting the grant application. No match is required for Measure Q funding. If the grant is awarded, staff would return to Council with any required grant agreements, environmental compliance actions, or budget adjustments.

#### Attachments:

1. ESHA and Riparian Areas Map – Park at Rispin Mansion

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

Report Prepared By: Jessica Kahn, Public Works Director

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager