

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: February 12, 2026

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Name Change for City-Owned Parking Lots Located Near City Hall

Recommended Action: Approve renaming the parking facilities currently known as “Beach and Village Parking Lots 1 & 2” to “City Upper Lot” and “City Lower Lot.”

Background: On March 28, 2013, the City Council approved the project scope, construction plans, and financing for the Lower Pacific Cove Parking Lot Project. As the project neared completion, the City Council considered operating guidelines for the new facility, and the Traffic and Parking Commission (which has since disbanded at City Council recommendation), evaluated naming options for both the upper and lower Pacific Cove parking lots.

At its January 18, 2014, meeting, the Traffic and Parking Commission unanimously recommended renaming the Upper and Lower Pacific Cove Parking Lots to “Beach and Village Parking Lots 1 & 2,” with the upper lot designated as Lot 1 and the lower lot as Lot 2. The recommendation was intended to better identify the lots as serving beach and Village visitors and to support operational needs such as permit issuance and parking management. The City Council subsequently approved this naming convention.

Since that time, the lots have continued to function as important public parking facilities supporting access to City amenities, including the beach and Village area.

Discussion: While the original naming recommendation was intended to assist visitors by identifying the lots with their intended purpose, experience over time has demonstrated that the names “Beach” and “Village” create unintended confusion. The parking lots are not located directly adjacent to either the beach or the Village and visitors unfamiliar with the area frequently interpret the names as indicating immediate proximity.

Each summer since 2014, Junior Guard participants have been provided with parking permits for the Beach and Village Parking Lot 2. The change was intended to reduce mid-day pick-up and drop-off traffic in the Village. While the change improved traffic conditions, the confusing naming of the lots has now led to unintended consequences: permit holders are parking in higher-cost Village spaces, believing they are complying with the rules when they are not.

Confusion between the names of the City-owned lots behind City Hall and the location of public parking spaces in Capitola Village has resulted in recurring wayfinding challenges, visitor inquiries, incorrect assumptions regarding walking distance and accessibility, and “free” use of higher-priced Village parking spots by some permit holders. The current naming convention can lead to frustration for visitors and increased staff time spent providing clarification, especially during the summer months when the Junior Guards program is in session.

Renaming the lots to “City Upper Lot” and “City Lower Lot” would provide clear, neutral, and geographically accurate identifiers. The proposed names maintain the existing distinction between the two facilities while removing references that imply a specific destination. The use of “Upper” and “Lower” reflects the physical relationship between the lots and is consistent with commonly used internal and operational terminology. Staff does not propose utilizing the term “City Hall Parking Lot” as most people identify City Hall parking as the smaller lot adjacent to Capitola Ave.

The proposed change would not alter the operational purpose of the lots, their role in supporting beach and Village access, or existing parking management practices. Rather, the change would improve clarity and reduce confusion while maintaining continuity in parking operations.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve renaming Beach and Village Parking Lot 1 to City Upper Lot, and Beach and Village Parking Lot 2 to City Lower Lot, for the following reasons:

- Improves wayfinding and reduces visitor confusion.
- Aligns lot names with their actual geographic location.
- Reduces staff time spent clarifying directions and parking locations.
- Provides clear, neutral naming that remains applicable over time regardless of surrounding land use changes.

Staff has discussed this recommendation with leadership from Capitola Village and Wharf Business Improvement Area nonprofit, and they support the change.

Implementation would include updating signage, City maps, website references, permit materials, and coordination with digital mapping platforms. Approximately five existing signs would need to be replaced to reflect the new lot names. Sign replacement is anticipated to cost approximately \$300 total and will be covered within the existing facilities budget. A brief public information effort is recommended to ensure a smooth transition and maintain public awareness of the change.

Fiscal Impact: None. Seasonal parking permits have not yet been printed (thus, we are not required to re-print at extra cost), and the cost to purchase updated parking lot signs is incorporated in the facilities budget.

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

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