

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: November 13, 2025

From: Community and Economic Development Department

Subject: 41st Avenue Corridor Plan – Public Outreach Summary and Draft Goals

Recommended Action: Provide direction on the proposed goals for the 41st Avenue Corridor Plan based on the results of initial community outreach.

Background: On March 27, 2025, the City Council authorized an agreement with SWA Group to prepare the 41st Avenue Corridor Plan. The Plan will establish a long-term vision for 41st Avenue to help it transition into a more vibrant, multimodal corridor that supports economic vitality, future housing opportunities, and improved public spaces.

Since project initiation, SWA Group has completed background analysis and community engagement activities to identify existing conditions, opportunities, and community priorities. This report summarizes the results of the first phase of public outreach and presents draft goals for City Council discussion and direction.

The 41st Avenue Corridor Plan is currently in the visioning phase, focusing on defining community goals and priorities that will guide future corridor improvements. To inform this phase, City staff and SWA Group conducted initial public outreach to gather input on how residents, business owners, and visitors experience the corridor today and what changes they would like to see in the future.

Feedback from the online survey and community workshop has been used to shape a set of five draft goals that reflect community values related to mobility, safety, economic vitality, and design character. These goals will form the foundation for concept development in the next phase of the Plan.

To gather community input on corridor priorities and desired improvements, the City and SWA Group used three complementary outreach methods:

- **Online Community Survey:** An online survey was distributed through the City's website and social media platforms. The survey asked respondents to identify priorities related to mobility, safety, public spaces, and future development. The survey was available for 45 days and there was a total of 197 survey respondents.
- **Community Workshop:** On October 8, 2025, the City hosted an in-person community workshop. SWA Group prepared six interactive poster boards summarizing the draft corridor goals and proposed actions. Participants provided feedback through stickers, written comments, and discussion with staff and the consultant team. There were 50 – 60 participants.
- In addition to the online survey and community workshop, the City hosted a stakeholder meeting with local and regional agencies on September 30, 2025, and a stakeholder meeting with local businesses, property owners, and business associations on November 5, 2025. On November 7, at the request of the Dakota Apartments, staff hosted an in-person briefing on-site for residents.

Discussion: Feedback from these outreach efforts has been used to shape a set of five draft goals that reflect community values related to mobility, safety, economic vitality, and design character. The intent of the draft goals is to form the foundation for the concepts developed in the next phase of the 41st Avenue Corridor Plan.

Goal 1 – Multi-Modal Street: Overall, public input strongly supports creating a corridor that enhances connectivity for all users, without compromising vehicle circulation. Participants overwhelmingly endorsed a corridor that accommodates walking, biking, driving, and transit. According to the survey, 86% of respondents prioritized improving traffic efficiency and reducing congestion, while 63% called for safer pedestrian facilities and 54% supported enhanced bicycle infrastructure. Comments frequently noted that 41st Avenue currently feels dominated by vehicles and walking or biking is often uncomfortable due to narrow sidewalks, inconsistent bike lanes, and fast traffic. Workshop participants supported redesigning the corridor as a complete street with defined zones for different users, improved transit stops, and safer intersections, particularly near the freeway and Clares Street.

Goal 2 – Safe and Healthy Street: Public feedback strongly validates this goal, with broad agreement that a safe and healthy street is foundational to all other corridor improvements. Safety and traffic operations were dominant topics during outreach. In addition to the 86% of survey respondents prioritizing traffic efficiency, 63% highlighted the need for safer pedestrian crossings, and approximately 34% reported feeling “somewhat unsafe” traveling along the corridor, with another 7% indicating “very unsafe.” Comments emphasized challenges at key intersections near the freeway and Clares Street, along with concerns about speeding and signal timing.

Goal 3 – Memorable and High-Quality Public Realm: The public strongly supports transforming 41st Avenue into a high-quality public realm where design, landscaping, and community activity reinforce a shared sense of place. Residents and visitors want 41st Avenue to evolve from a purely functional commercial corridor into a welcoming, memorable street. Survey results show 74% support for landscaping and street trees, 56% for public art, and 51% for outdoor gathering areas or events. Workshop feedback emphasized the importance of shade, benches, and human-scale design. Participants described the current environment as “generic” or “uninviting” and encouraged consistent materials, lighting, and coordinated signage to enhance the overall street experience.

Goal 4 – Activate Businesses Through the Public Realm: Community feedback aligns with this goal, emphasizing support for public realm improvements that energize business activity while maintaining accessibility. Participants recognized that an attractive, walkable public realm directly supports local businesses. Survey comments noted difficulties entering and exiting driveways, congestion near commercial nodes, and a desire for more places to linger, such as sidewalk cafés, shade structures, and small plazas. Workshop discussions reinforced the idea that beautification and public amenities could help transform 41st Avenue into an active street that encourages people to visit, shop, and stay longer.

Goal 5 – Design for Future Residential: Feedback on this goal indicated residents are open to new housing if it aligns with Capitola’s small-town identity and includes tangible improvements to safety, mobility, and sustainability. Participants acknowledged the potential for new housing near the Capitola Mall and surrounding parcels but stressed that residential growth must be supported by safe mobility options, thoughtful design, and compatibility with existing commercial uses. Many respondents viewed the future residential goal as an opportunity to introduce green infrastructure, enhance streetscape character and a stronger sense of neighborhood identity, provided that congestion and access issues are proactively addressed.

Next Steps: Based on Council direction, SWA Group will refine the goals for the 41st Avenue Corridor Plan and develop conceptual design alternatives. A second round of community engagement will be conducted, followed by presentation of refined concepts to the Council for review in early 2026.

Fiscal Impact: No additional fiscal impact is associated with this update. The contract with SWA Group for the 41st Avenue Corridor Plan, in an amount not to exceed \$105,000, remains funded through the FY 2024–25 budget allocation and REAP 2.0 Grant funding.

Attachments:

1. Public Outreach Summary

Report Prepared By: Katie Herlihy, Community and Economic Development Director

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk, and Marc Tran, City Attorney

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager