

# \$413,000 plan for Capitola restoration Ok'd

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CAPITOLA — A \$413,000 restoration plan that primarily improves pedestrian safety around Capitola's main beachside area, the Esplanade, has been approved despite the city being \$119,000 short of funding.

The City Council Thursday night unanimously approved the final plan, with the exception of the precise location of a single crosswalk.

They agreed to continue the funding matter in order to not delay the project, which is scheduled to get under way in October and be completed by early spring.

Public Works Director Craig French told council members that the city has enough funding to allow restoration of the Esplanade up to Capitola Avenue. Depending on final bid results, the work could then be expanded up through the intersection of Monterey Avenue. The city could also dip into its General Fund or make budget adjustments to pay for completing the project.

The restoration plan is designed primarily to serve pedestrians. Sidewalks will be reconstructed and streets narrowed to improve pedestrian safety on the Esplanade and Monterey Avenue, as well as specially designated crosswalks with special lighting added.

In addition, landscaping will be increased, special centralized areas will be provided for newsracks and an extension will be built atop the existing seawall along the Esplanade.

While not funded in the plan, council members paved the way for a future town clock to be located on the southern end of Lawn Way and the Esplanade. A 16-foot-high replica of an 1890 street clock is envisioned. Council members directed that the

plan include an area for the clock and electrical wiring be installed.

As far as the precise location of the single crosswalk in question, they continued that matter for two weeks in order to see where on Capitola Avenue, near Monterey Avenue, the crosswalk is proposed to be.

Councilman Ron Graves led the charge against the crosswalk proposed to be 12 feet from the intersection of Capitola and Monterey avenues. He said it would be a safety hazard, gaining concurrence from Councilwoman Stephanie Harlan.

Downtown merchant Paula Pinsoneault agreed, calling the proposed crosswalk location a "danger zone."

Council members agreed to a two-week continuance on the crosswalk location to give them time to go to the location to see exactly how the crosswalk would be aligned.

They also made minor changes to the plan, including directing staff to come up with a location for an additional loading zone.

An important segment of the plan is the retention of on-street parking spaces. Despite the amenities, only two spaces are proposed to be eliminated, dropping the number to 97. However, bicycle parking will double to 32 spots and two motorcycle spaces will be added for a total of 12.

The project is the second phase of a \$750,000-plus Esplanade restoration plan. The first \$240,885-phase included the city's acquisition of Hooper's Beach, a privately-owned beach west of Capitola Wharf and construction of a stairway on Cliff Drive to the beach.

A State Coastal Conservancy grant provides \$213,000 toward the second