



# Memorandum

<b>Date:</b> January 23, 2026	
<b>To:</b> Gina Paolini	<b>Organization:</b> City of Capitola
<b>From:</b> RRM Design Group	<b>Title:</b> Design Review Team
<b>Project Name:</b> Capitola On-Call Architectural and Landscape Review	<b>Project Number:</b> 1783-11-PP25
<b>Topic:</b> 1475 41 <sup>st</sup> Ave Design Review Memorandum	

Dear Gina,

We have reviewed the proposed design for compliance with Section 17.120.070 – Design Review Criteria, found within the City of Capitola Municipal Code.

Project documents reviewed include the 2<sup>nd</sup> Submittal Sign Application; 1404 38<sup>th</sup> Ave Site Plan – 11.7.25; 20251107 2<sup>nd</sup> Submittal Arch + Survey Plan Set including sheets: Cover Page, Sheet A0.00; Architectural Site Plan, Sheet A1.01; Demolition Floor Plan, Sheet A1.03; Dumpster Enclosure Details, Sheet A1.07; Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment and Signage Plan, Sheet A2.02; Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment and Signage Plan, Sheet A2.02a; Roof Plan, Sheet A4.00; Exterior Elevations, Sheet A4.01; Exterior Elevations, Sheet A4.02; Material Board, Sheet A4.03; Building Section, Sheet A4.04; Existing Land Survey, Sheet ALTA.1; Existing Land Survey, Sheet ALTA.2; 20251107 Signage Plan Set; 20251107 TESLA CUP Operational Letter; and Kings Plaza – Dirt Section – 11.7.25; Landscape Plan – 11.7.25.

## Neighborhood Character and Patterns

According to the City of Capitola Zoning Map, the project site is zoned Community Commercial (C-C). The parcel currently contains an existing commercial shopping center, surrounded by commercial businesses and large expanses of parking lots. The area immediately surrounding the project site is characterized by a variety of commercial land uses, including Regional Commercial (C-R) parcels to the north across Capitola Road, Community Commercial (C-C) parcels to the south, Community Commercial (C-C) parcels to the east, and Community Commercial (C-C) parcels to the west.

## Project Design Review

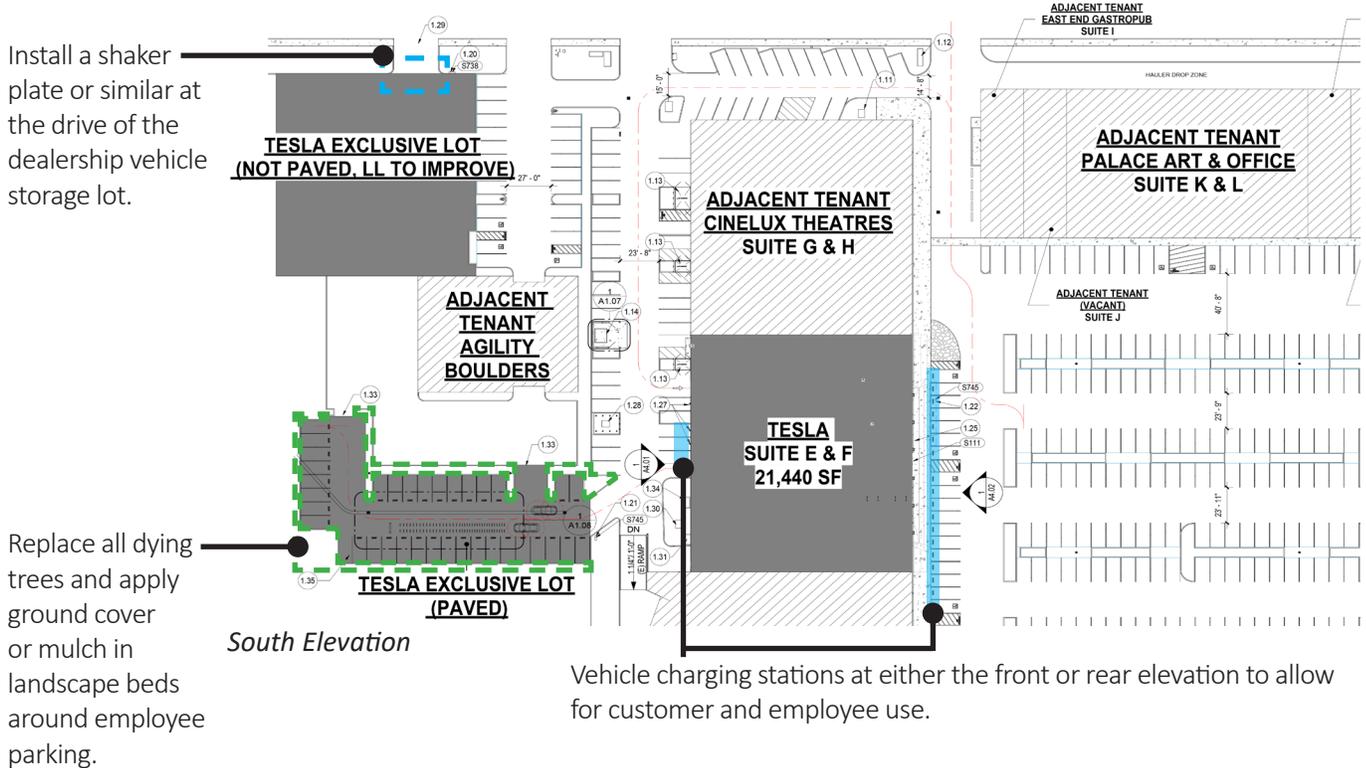
The project proposal consists of exterior façade upgrades on an existing commercial storefront, interior renovations to accommodate a new Tesla dealership and vehicle service center, and installation of a gravel-surfaced storage area on an adjacent vacant lot to facilitate dealership vehicle storage. The project does not identify an architectural style, however, in an effort to be consistent with newly renovated adjacent storefronts elsewhere within the center, the applicant should look for opportunities to incorporate design elements consistent with the “Contemporary” architectural style and/or those consistent with the company branding going forward.



*Project Location*

*Site Planning*

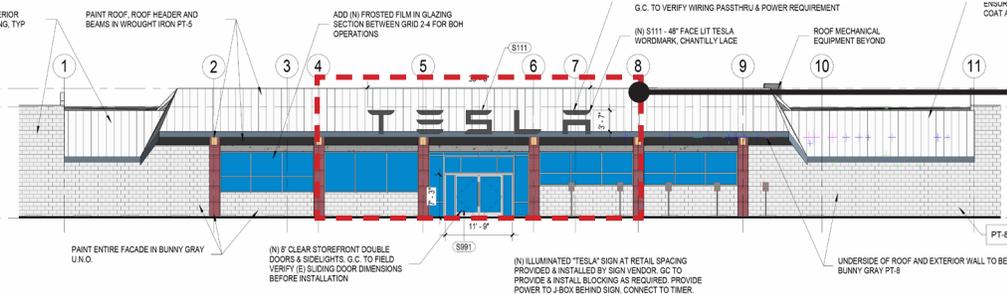
Effective site planning requires thoughtful consideration of building placement and configuration in relation to entries, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parking, and open space. In review of the Architectural Site Plan shown on Sheet A1.01, the applicant intends to utilize the north elevation storefront to serve as the entrance for both vehicle sales and vehicle service users. The applicant provided site plan indicates visitors intending to visit for service of a vehicle will park adjacent to the Tesla storefront and once vehicle intake is completed, an employee will drive the vehicle around building to either enter the building service area at the rear or to the nearby parking lots. Future users would benefit from the placement of additional signage at both the front and rear elevations to provide clear direction for dealership users and users seeking to service a vehicle. In an effort to accommodate electric vehicle users visiting the future Tesla dealership and vehicle servicing center, the applicant is encouraged to provide electric charging stations at the parking spaces directly adjacent to the commercial storefront or elsewhere on the property.



The project proposal includes one individual parking area and one vehicle storage area situated at the rear of the commercial center. The parking area consists of an existing paved lot to be used for employee parking. The vehicle storage area is a vacant parcel with graded and compacted gravel surface to accommodate dealership vehicle storage and will incorporate a variety of landscaping on the west (38<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and south edges. The applicant should refresh and replace dying landscaping along the south and east property line of the lot (CMC 17.120.070 M). Additionally, the existing paved lot to be used for employee parking could benefit from replacing dead trees and installing ground cover or mulch to the landscape beds around the exterior of the lot (CMC 17.120.070 M). Lastly, to avoid gravel spilling onto 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, the applicant should coordinate with City Public Works to determine if installation of a shaker plate or similar at the dealership parking area entry/exit to remove any rock or sediment from vehicle tires prior to turning onto 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

*Architecture*

Building massing involves the size, shape, and visual presence of a structure and is a fundamental aspect of architectural design. Minimal changes to the building massing are proposed as part of the project, including the more prominent commercial storefront at the north elevation. The applicant should look for opportunities to incorporate entry elements to further enhance the overall commercial shopping center through further exterior renovations, particularly along the north elevation (CMC 17.120.070 H). This could include an emphasized primary entry or other pedestrian focused design interventions. Successful examples available for the applicant to use as inspiration can be found locally on the adjacent recently renovated New Leaf Market.



Explore existing Tesla dealerships and the adjacent New Leaf Market for entryway inspiration.

*Front North Elevation*



*Recently Renovated Adjacent New Leaf Market*

As shown on the Exterior Elevations on Sheet A4.02, the applicant intends to maintain the existing commercial storefront appearance and exclusively add a large, illuminated sign. The minimal design enhancements proposed does not enhance the visual interest and engagement with the public realm and the applicant should look for opportunities to further enhance the project design by improving the entryway. This could include the introduction of additional colors or materials, paneling system, roof changes, creating more of a commercial storefront presence, applying stylistically consistent canopies or awnings over entries, enhanced front door, and/or any design intervention that would assist in proposing a more engaging commercial storefront appearance (CMC 17.120.070 J).



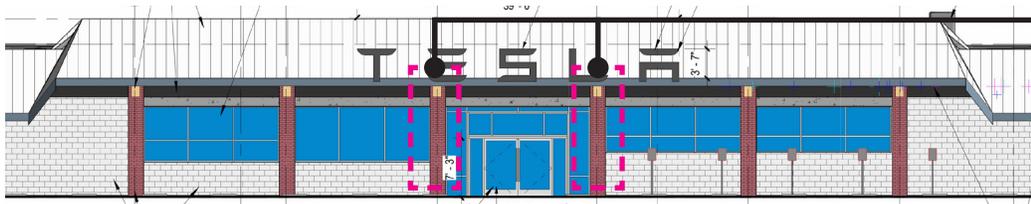
*Example of Enhanced Detailing*

Look to pre-existing Tesla dealerships for inspiration on architectural detailing such as the red accent color, floor-to-ceiling windows for showrooms, and awnings above entrances.



*Example of Articulation with Awnings*

Primary entries contribute to the overall identity of buildings by defining architectural style and providing pedestrian connectivity. As currently designed, the primary entry lacks clear definition, visual interest, and general alignment with Tesla branding. The applicant should look for opportunities to further define the primary entrance by incorporating additional colors and materials to the entry to differentiate from the remainder of the storefront.



*Front North Elevation*

Alter colors and materials on columns adjacent to primary entry to emphasize entrance point to pedestrians and improve overall visual interest of the commercial storefront.

Articulated entrance elevation



Enhanced detailing

Awning

*Existing Tesla Dealership Entrance*

Windows and doors help define architectural style and add to the visual interest of a development. The applicant is not proposing any changes to the current window and door schedule found on the existing commercial storefront. However, the applicant should look for opportunities to modify the current storefront window application to create a more engaging storefront. Potential design interventions to accomplish this could be replacing the existing windows. Lastly, the applicant should explore applying a color such as the accent red to the proposed roll-up doors shown on the South Exterior Elevations on Sheet A4.01.



*Front North Elevation*

Look at enhancing entry. Also could expand existing storefront windows to the ground level to enhance visual appearance of the overall primary entry and establish a sense of transparency.



*Example of Floor-to-Ceiling Windows at Sales Area of Tesla Dealer*

Colors and materials support articulation and reinforce the intended architectural style. The applicant has proposed using the following colors and materials as part of the project: Bunny Gray colored Exterior Paint; and Wrought Iron colored Exterior Paint. While the colors appear consistent with the existing commercial storefront and surrounding uses, the applicant should explore incorporation of additional colors commonly found on Tesla branded dealerships and/or found elsewhere within the center. For example, the accent Tesla red paint could be incorporated as banding or onto the existing columns to assist in emphasizing the primary entry among other potential design interventions.



*Red Accent Color Branding*

Utilize Tesla red accent color on the proposed project to further enhance the existing commercial storefront.

**Design Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made to better respond to the proposed “Contemporary” architectural style and desired enhancements of company branding in order to enhance the overall project design.

*Site Plan*

- 1. Explore construction of electric vehicle chargers at either the front or rear elevations per Building Code requirements.
- 2. Coordinate with Public Works to determine if installing a shaker plate or similar at the entrance of the future dealership vehicle storage lot to avoid gravel and sediment being tracked into adjacent 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue is necessary.

*Architecture*

- 3. Incorporate additional architectural detailing on the front north elevation through introduction of additional colors or materials, creating more of a commercial storefront presence, and/or any design intervention that would assist in proposing a more engaging commercial storefront appearance (CMC 17.120.070 J).
- 4. Further define the primary entrance by incorporating additional colors and materials to the entry to differentiate from the remainder of the storefront.
- 5. Modify the current window and door schedule to improve entry to enhance the visual appearance of the commercial storefront and better showcase internal Tesla showrooms.
- 6. Explore applying the accent red color typically found on Tesla dealerships onto the roll up doors of the rear elevation to enhance the overall project design.
- 7. Incorporate the accent red material commonly found on Tesla branding and dealerships.

Overall, we feel the applicant has proposed a project that is appropriate to the location and surrounding context of the site. However, as addressed above, we have a number of concerns regarding the entry, windows, and materials/colors, among others, that will have to be adequately addressed by the applicant to ensure a project that appropriately reflects the existing commercial context while also being consistent with City’s desire for high quality new developments.

Very truly yours,

**RRM Design Group**