

Capitola Planning Commission

Agenda Report



Meeting: December 7, 2023

From: Community Development Department

Topic: 4400 Jade Street – Capitola Community Center

Permit Number: #23-0506

APN: 034-551-02

Design Permit to remodel the Capitola Community Center at Jade Street Park, located within the P/OS (Parks and Open Space) zoning district.

This project is in the Coastal Zone but does not require a Coastal Development Permit.

Environmental Determination: Categorical Exemption 15301(d & e)

Property Owner: Soquel Union Elementary School District

Representative: Kailash Mozumder, Capitola Public Works Department

Recommended Action: Planning Commission approve application #23-0506 based on Conditions and Findings for Approval.

Applicant Proposal: The City of Capitola is proposing to renovate the Jade Street Community Center located at 4400 Jade Street. The entire building will be upgraded, including the interior, exterior, and landscape. No additions to the building are proposed. Exterior improvements include an updated entryway, new siding, a new roof, and updated landscaping and flatwork. Interior improvements included updated layout, mechanical, ADA improvements, and finishes. The city is also working on a separate project to update Jade Street Park, which is not part of the current application.

Background: On November 22, 2022, the City Council authorized the City Manager to sign a 30-year use agreement between the City of Capitola and Soquel Union Elementary School District for the Jade Street Park Property, including the Capitola Community Center. The agreement requires the city to complete certain specific infrastructure improvements to the Community Center within four years.

On February 23, 2023, the City Council authorized an agreement with Boone Low Ratliff Architects for the design of the remodel of the Community Center, inclusive of stakeholder input, site analysis, preparation of a conceptual design, and development of initial construction documents.

On November 15, 2023, the Development and Design Review Staff reviewed the application and provided the applicant with the following direction:

Public Works Representative, Kailash Mozumder: Described the lease extension, improvements, and deferred maintenance at the property. Public Works has been working directly with the architect and therefore had no new input regarding the proposed plans.

Building Inspector, Eric Martin: Noted that additional details showing attic access and the roof hatch will be required with building permits.

Associate Planner, Sean Sesanto: Had no comments.

Development Standards: The Parks and Open Space (P/OS) zoning district allows subordinate and supportive recreational buildings. Other than a maximum FAR of 0.25, the Zoning Ordinance defers authority to regulate other measurable development standards to the Planning Commission through the design review process. Table 1 outlines the land use regulations for development in the P/OS zoning district.

Table 1 – P/OS Land use Regulations

P/OS Regulation	Analysis
Maximum FAR 0.25	The existing FAR is 0.03. No addition is proposed.
The project is consistent with the purpose of the P/OS zoning district.	The project will maintain the existing purpose of providing recreational facilities and open space for the public, which is consistent with the purpose of the P/OS zoning district.
Development shall be subordinate to its recreational, scenic, or natural resource purpose consistent with the local coastal program (LCP). Natural resource protection shall include protection of arroyos; creeks, riparian corridors, and other environmentally sensitive habitat; and woodlands.	The recreation center site includes landscaped open space. It is not an environmentally sensitive habitat. The project will maintain its existing recreational and scenic purposes.
No new structures are permitted on the open, sandy beach area of Capitola except for appropriate public facilities, required shoreline protective structures, and structures required for public health and safety if otherwise consistent with the local coastal program.	The project is not located on or adjacent to a beach or shoreline.

Discussion: The property is located within the Jewel Box neighborhood on a nine-and-a-half-acre parcel with shared use between City of Capitola Parks and Recreation and the Opal Cliffs Elementary School. The surrounding neighborhood includes two mobile home parks, single-family homes, and multi-family developments. The southern property line is shared with the railway corridor.

The existing Capitola Community Center has numerous deferred maintenance items and is not up to modern building codes with respect to plumbing, electrical, and ADA access. Table 2 is a summary of the proposed project renovations. The items listed as primary improvements are required through the City's contract with the school district. The items listed as ancillary improvements are dependent on additional funding for the project.

Table 2. Summary of Improvements

Item	Proposed Renovation
Primary Improvements	
Exterior siding/roof/paint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace all siding with new vertical and horizontal cement board • Replace roof hatch and gutters • Replace tile roof with a standing seam metal roof and cover exposed rafters
Plumbing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixtures updated to comply with current code • Addition of accessible water fountain and filling station • Upgrades associated with single-user restroom and kitchen renovations
HVAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace unit
ADA Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add new single-user ADA restroom opposite multi-stall restrooms. • Improvements throughout the building, including signage, door hardware, relocation of outlets and switches, and new reception desk. • Upgrade accessible parking and path of travel to building.
Ancillary Improvements as funding allows	
Interior renovation (offices, closets, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New paint and wainscot • Acoustic ceiling treatments • Reconfiguration of existing office space
Flooring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New flooring throughout, dance floor to remain
Partitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collapsible acoustic wall between Meeting Rooms B & C • Solid wall with storage between Meeting Rooms A & B
Kitchen renovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remodel kitchen per current code • Replace pass through window
Replace doors/windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace where required
Electrical upgrades (exterior power and interior service)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrades throughout building, exterior patios, and accessible parking to meet current code • Potential service upgrade to accommodate HVAC
Restroom renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixtures • New Paint and tile
Site Improvements and Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed improvement to the exterior patios and entranceway* • Not required by the lease agreement

Design Permit: The project includes a complete interior and exterior renovation of the Community Center, including improvements to the associated exterior patios, pathways, and parking lot. The project scope does not include the Universally Accessible Playground Project for Jade Street Park, which is in the planning stage as a separate project.

Design, material finishes, and colors are inspired by the Capitola Wharf and the ocean. The building will utilize a combination of textured concrete and horizontal fiber cement board with wood and grey color tones. New patio areas will be created on the south and east sides of the center, and the existing patio area to the west will be enlarged. New ADA pathways will lead to the planned playground project. Site improvements also use coastal themes, with gently curved walkways, wavy concrete joints, wharf-inspired thick-wooden benches, and decorative stone features throughout.

Design Criteria: When considering a design permit application, the Planning Commission shall evaluate applications to ensure they satisfy the 19 design review criteria outlined in §17.120.070. The extensive list of criteria is discussed below with consideration for community character, compatibility, privacy, architectural style, etc. Staff has reviewed the proposed renovations for the Community Center and found the design to comply with the considerations to the extent they apply. Specifically, the proposed renovations improve the existing building design relative to the following criteria:

A. Community Character. The overall project design including site plan, height, massing, architectural style, materials, and landscaping contributes to Capitola's unique coastal village character and distinctive sense of place.

Staff Analysis: The project maintains the overall height and massing of the existing structure. The architectural style will be upgraded new windows and doors in the existing openings, a mix of new siding materials including horizontal boards and stucco, and a new standing seam metal roof. The design draws on the Capitola Wharf and other coastal themes for choices on colors, materials, and design.

E. Pedestrian Environment. The primary entrances are oriented towards and visible from the street to support an active public realm and an inviting pedestrian environment.

Staff Analysis: The project improves the public interface in terms of use and access. New ADA pedestrian pathways improve access on the site. The existing entrance and patios will be enhanced to activate the public realm around the periphery of the building.

I. Architectural Style. Buildings feature an architectural style that is compatible with the surrounding built and natural environment, is an authentic implementation of appropriate established architectural styles, and reflects Capitola's unique coastal village character.

Staff Analysis: As shown on page A8.1 and A8.2 of the plans, the color and materials were chosen to relate to the Capitola Wharf. The project incorporates concrete piers, wood rafters and beams, a mix of grey fiber and spruce vintage wood fiber cement siding, and color accents at the entryways relative to the color pallet and materials of the Capitola Wharf and the ocean.

J. Articulation and Visual Interest. Building facades are well articulated to add visual interest, distinctiveness, and human scale. Building elements such as roofs, doors, windows, and porches are part of an integrated design and relate to the human scale. Architectural details such as trim, eaves, window boxes, and brackets contribute to the visual interest of the building.

Staff Analysis: The project enhances visual interest with a greater variety of exterior finishes, a new reverse-pitch shed roof over the main entry, and covering the currently exposed rafters with the replacement metal seam roof. Replacement trims, doors, and windows will add to the visual interest of the building.

K. Materials. Building facades include a mix of natural, high-quality, and durable materials that are appropriate to the architectural style, enhance building articulation, and are compatible with surrounding development.

Staff Analysis: The project utilizes high-quality materials that refine the structure's appearance and will extend its lifetime, including a fiber cement board, stucco, concrete piers, aluminum bronze windows and doors, and a new standing seam metal roof.

O. Open Space and Public Places. Single-family dwellings feature inviting front yards that enhance Capitola's distinctive neighborhoods. Multifamily residential projects include public and private open space that is attractive, accessible, and functional. Nonresidential development provides semi-public outdoor spaces, such as plazas and courtyards, which help support pedestrian activity within an active and engaging public realm.

Staff Analysis: The project will improve the appearance and function of the Community Center, with new and enlarged outdoor patios, seating areas, and signage. The updated patio between the Community Center and Jade Street Park be enhanced with built-in seating, pathways, and better connectivity between the two uses.

P. Signs. The number, location, size, and design of signs complement the project design and are compatible with the surrounding context.

Staff Analysis: The new monument sign at the entryway utilized reclaimed wood from the wharf complimenting the materials on the facility upgrade and tying into the theme of the project.

Q. Lighting. Exterior lighting is an integral part of the project design with light fixtures designed, located, and positioned to minimize illumination of the sky and adjacent properties.

Staff Analysis: Exterior lighting will enhance on-site visibility.

S. Mechanical Equipment, Trash Receptacles, and Utilities. Mechanical equipment, trash receptacles, and utilities are contained within architectural enclosures or fencing, sited in unobtrusive locations, and/or screened by landscaping.

Staff Analysis: Mechanical equipment will utilize existing enclosures. The existing and proposed site maintains trash receptacles for visitors.

Signs: The project includes a new monument sign located by the entryway to the Community Center. The proposed sign will incorporate reclaimed wood from the Capitola Wharf and 8-inch-tall metal lettering painted white. The sign is eight feet wide and four feet tall for a total of 32 square feet. The sign code exempts City signs from sign permits. Also, the PO/S zone does not have maximum height or size limits. For comparison, the sign code allows monument signs up to 35 square feet in area and 4 feet in height in the Community Commercial zone and up to 60 square feet in area and 8 feet in height in the Regional Commercial zone.

Trees: The project includes the removal of four Liquid Ambar trees between the Community Center and parking lot. Nine replacement trees are proposed throughout the immediate project area including one Japanese Maple, one Star Magnolia, and seven London Plants trees.

Extended Approval: The Community Center project is not fully funded at this time. To qualify for grant funding, projects often have to be "shovel ready" with approved plans. As the timeline for construction has not been determined, condition of approval 11 sets the initial approval for five years.

CEQA: Section 15301(d) of the CEQA Guidelines exempts renovation and repair of an existing building that primarily involves alterations to meet current health and safety standards. Section 15301(e) of the CEQA Guidelines also exempts minor floor area additions up to 2,500 square feet. No adverse environmental impacts were discovered during project review by Planning Department Staff.

Attachments:

1. Capitola Community Center – Plan Set

Conditions of Approval:

1. The project approval consists of a Design Permit for the renovation and repair to the existing Community Center building. The proposed project is approved as indicated on the final plans reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission on December 7, 2023, except as modified through conditions imposed by the Planning Commission during the hearing.
2. Prior to construction, a building permit shall be secured for any new construction or modifications to structures authorized by this permit. Final building plans shall be consistent with the plans approved by the Planning Commission. All construction and site improvements shall be completed according to the approved plans.
3. At time of submittal for building permit review, the Conditions of Approval must be printed in full on the cover sheet of the construction plans.
4. Prior to issuance of a building permit, the applicant must provide documentation of plan approval by the following entities: Santa Cruz County Sanitation Department, Soquel Water District, and Central Fire Protection District.
5. During construction, noise shall be prohibited between the hours of nine p.m. and seven-thirty a.m. on weekdays. Construction noise shall be prohibited on weekends with the exception of Saturday work between nine a.m. and four p.m. or if approved by the building official. §9.12.010B
6. This permit shall expire five years from the date of issuance. The applicant shall have an approved building permit and construction underway before this date to prevent permit expiration. Applications for extension may be submitted by the applicant prior to expiration pursuant to Municipal Code section 17.156.080.

Design Permit Findings:

- A. The proposed project is consistent with the general plan, local coastal program, and any applicable specific plan, area plan, or other design policies and regulations adopted by the city council.**

Community Development Staff and the Planning Commission have reviewed the project. The proposed Community Center renovation project complies with the development standards of the P/OS (Parks and Open Space) zoning district.

- B. The proposed project complies with all applicable provisions of the zoning code and municipal code.**

Community Development Staff and the Planning Commission have reviewed the application for the proposed Community Center renovation. The project complies with all applicable provisions of the zoning code and municipal code.

C. The proposed project has been reviewed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Section 15301d & e of the CEQA Guidelines exempts renovations and minor additions to existing buildings. This project involves renovation of the Community Center within the P/OS (Parks and Open Space) zoning district. No adverse environmental impacts were discovered during review of the proposed project.

D. The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

Community Development Staff and the Planning Commission have reviewed the project. The proposed Community Center renovation project will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to the properties in the vicinity.

E. The proposed project complies with all applicable design review criteria in Section 17.120.070 (Design review criteria).

The Community Development Staff and the Planning Commission have reviewed the application. The proposed Community Center renovation project complies with all applicable design review criteria in Section 17.120.070.

F. The proposed project maintains the character, scale, and development pattern of the neighborhood.

Community Development Staff and the Planning Commission have all reviewed the application for the Community Center renovation project. The design of the building renovations and enhancements will fit in nicely with the existing neighborhood. The project will maintain the character, scale, and development pattern of the neighborhood.

Report prepared by: Sean Sesanto, Associate Planner