

CAPITOLA MALL ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS COMMUNITY MEETING SUMMARY

On October 8, 2025 the City of Capitola hosted a community meeting for two related City projects: the 41st Avenue Corridor Vision Plan and the Capitola Mall Zoning Code Amendments. For the Mall project, the purpose of the meeting was to provide background information on the project and to receive feedback on design considerations unique to Mall redevelopment. The City advertised the meeting on the City website, email blasts, social media, and staff updates at public meetings.

The workshop was held at New Brighton Middle School and began with a presentation by the project consultants. After the presentation staff answered questions about the Mall Zoning Code Amendments. For the Capitol Mall project, participants then viewed posters with information about unique design considerations for Capitola Mall redevelopment related to the following topics:

- Site layout and circulation
- Publicly accessible open space
- Parking
- Building massing
- Façade composition
- Ground floor residential frontages

For each topic, the display boards described existing policies and standards, showed example mid-rise development projects, and identified new standards that may be needed for the Mall property. Participants used adhesive notes and index cards to respond to the following questions for each topic:

- Is the topic important to you?
- What do you like or dislike in the photographs of example development?
- What kind of new standards are needed for Mall redevelopment to address the topic?

Participants discussed the posters with City staff and consultants during the open house. Participants were also asked to provide any additional comments about the Capitola Mall Zoning Code Amendments Project. At the end of the meeting staff answered additional questions from participants about the Capitola Mall Rezoning Project.

In total, approximately 50 people (excluding staff and consultants) attended the community meeting.

Community Meeting Feedback

During meeting Q&A, residents asked questions about the Housing Element, the number of units assigned to the Mall property in the Housing Element sites inventory, and potential community impacts resulting from a Mall redevelopment project. Answers to many of these questions are provided in the City's Mall Redevelopment FAQ webpage, available here:

<https://www.cityofcapitola.org/communitydevelopment/page/capitola-mall-zoning-code-amendments>

Attached to this summary are photographs of the posters with public comments and transcribed public comments from the display boards. Major themes from these comments include the following:

- **Walkable, transit-oriented design:** Support for pedestrian and bicycle circulation, limited internal streets, and integration of a public transit hub.
- **Green, inviting open spaces:** Desire for parks, playgrounds, and natural landscaping (grass, trees, seating) rather than paved plazas.
- **Human-scale buildings:** Preference for varied heights, generous setbacks, and non-monolithic massing that fits Capitola's character.
- **Mixed-use activity:** Calls for ground-floor retail, cafés, and community spaces balanced with housing and family-oriented amenities.
- **Sustainability and design quality:** Interest in green walls, solar panels, rooftop gardens, and architecture reflecting a coastal identity.
- **Efficient, integrated parking:** Support for podium or wrap parking with good bicycle facilities and minimal surface lots.
- **Community continuity:** Concern about displacement of local institutions (museum, cafés, studios) and interest in re-locating or integrating them.
- **Housing and affordability:** Support for new housing, including affordable units, alongside questions about density, scale, and SB 35 compliance.

Attachments:

1. Transcribed comments from posters
2. Photographs of posters with public input

TRANSCRIBED COMMENTS POSTED ON DISPLAY BOARDS

Site Layout and Circulation

- Would love to see a public transit hub incorporated in the plan — I like how the Tanforan redevelopment accommodates for the BART station
- Yes [site layout and circulation is important to me]
- San Bruno will feel more cohesive; Better activation + public safety w/o the street cutting through
- Minimize internal streets
Keep them narrow so people drive slow
They should only serve destinations, not through traffic
- Yes [site layout and circulation is important to me]
- Leave open space between buildings — no “closed in” feeling
- Yes layout is important
One should be able to walk (maybe bike) thru the development
Tanforan site appears to be a better use of space

Parking

- Yes [parking design is important to me]
- Podium is great, but would consider wrap if it provides additional parking to the public & brings revenue to the city
- BICYCLE PARKING!
- Prefer open space in center — podium would facilitate this
- Podium — leave open space in middle of housing — not parking
- Podium parking is more aesthetically pleasing
- Where to put retail...!?
- YES [parking design is important to me] 500 sq ft = 1 spot; 500-800 sq ft = 2 spots; 800+ = 2.5
- Please a hotel w/ retail & parks!

Publicly Accessible Open Space

- Yes! Must have retail / hotel
- Children’s playground
- Yes, very [important]; do not like pavement, grass and real plants preferred; seating nice
- Please! Parks!
- Yes [publicly accessible open space is important]; Green space is important + infrastructure for music artists / local concerts for activation + seating areas
- Open space important — don’t like cluttered space — openness preferred
- Yes open space! What about small businesses like cafés and restaurants on the ground floor?

Building Massing

- Yes, Mountain View and SF are optimal. Santa Ana leaves an environ. for potential nuisance with wider ceiling; its also too modern
- Generous setbacks; not so monolithic
- Vary roof heights to break monotony; screen with trees maybe? Provides shade too
- Prefer style like Sunnyvale; Mathilda Apts; Varied Building heights; less monotonous
- Building too close to the corner; give more space for sidewalk
- No flat building fronts; vary height; require insets

Ground Floor Residential Frontages

- If all the ground floor units are residential, what happens to potential retailers? I think we need to consider retail floor units – especially since this project displaces retailers (many of which are local businesses) out of the mall
- No – not if it replaces business storefront
- Activities and amenities for kids and families
- This needs: services, clinics; childcare; retail
- Ugly!
- Love the bookstore and museum
- Should have ground floor retail and mandated non-profit spaces
- Ground floor business helps residents get what they need close by
- WRONG! All retail business is already on 41st and many big retail spaces have been empty for years. Why add more?
- Buildings too close to sidewalk. Give more room on sidewalks!
- Continuity of retail space is critical. Look no further than Oakland or Berkeley to see the result of disparate retail spaces
- Ensure that retail space has infrastructure planned for restaurants (hood vents, grease traps, etc) with wind direction in mind

Façade Composition

- #1 Radius, #2 The Julian
- 1. Yes [façade composition is important to me 2. Dislike the 2 designs. It's too boxy for a coastal city. The Mountain View design has more uniqueness
- I'd love to see green walls aka vertical gardens considered for a façade! More vegetation to replace concrete
- Living Walls, Solar, Ceramic
- Variety of bldgs. Important, not monotonous!

Capitola Mall Property

- Need parking
- Where are the 121 low income units going to be allocated? SB35 risk
- Incorporating transit in the mall area will help the parking issues with the transit riders!

Additional Comments

- I am all for tall building in Mall area!
 - Doesn't live near the proposed site
 - Yes I do, I want affordable housing for my kids
- Good compromise for location to build
- Provide another example of a residential development plan that is this massive anywhere else in California
- Sooo.... No more mall shopping? Sounds like only housing.....
- The mall is home to empty storefronts and outdated stores, sure – but its all full of lively community spaces like the children's museum, the board game hall, Coffee Conspiracy, and the dance studio. What happens to those businesses? There needs to be a plan to ensure those community spaces don't disappear – for example, by allowing retailers in ground-floor units
- Ok – Think old El Paseo de Saratoga – wooden structures, waterfalls- surrounded by wooden benches – beautiful woodsy shops on 1st level + apartments built above. Smelled great! Parking lot high rise “70's”, Earthy, Jonie Steele
- Mixed uses with pedestrian only space
- I don't see any roof tops with small garden areas, and no roof tops with solar panels. Will there be innovative environmental projects on/in or around these housing complexes?
- Since this project needs 80/20 rates, we can assume all/most might need 80% market rate. Would SB35 kick in without builder's ? income
- The mall is home to several beloved institutions that serve as valuable community spaces – such as the children's museum, the board game hall, and dance studio. What happens to those businesses? Is there a plan to rehome these community spaces and local businesses? The children's museum and board game café especially provide an important social function that malls