

**AGENCY:** Planning Commission

**MEETING DATE:** May 29, 2024

**PREPARED BY:** MJC

**PRESENTED BY:** Marie Jones

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

**APPLICATION NO.:** Design Review-24 (DR 6-24); Coastal Development Permit (CDP 6-24); Sign Permit (SP 8-24)

**APPLICANT/AGENT:** Fort Bragg Fire District

**OWNER:** Fort Bragg Fire District

**REQUEST:** The Fort Bragg Fire Station Located at 141 N. Main St. is comprised of three buildings that were constructed between 1947 and 1997. The North Wing, constructed in 1947, houses the north apparatus room and adjoining rooms to the west. The project would replace this with a new building that will match the size and location of the existing building.

**LOCATION:** 141 N. Main St. This property is in the Coastal Zone.

**ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NO.:** 008-161-12 and 04

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** **CEQA Categorical Exemption 15302.** Replacement or Reconstruction. Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

**SURROUNDING LAND USES:**

NORTH:	Insurance Company and Plumber
EAST:	Chase Bank and Highway 1
SOUTH:	Fire Department and Auto Repair
WEST:	Parking Lot and Vacant Mill Site

**APPEALABLE PROJECT:**

- Can be appealed to City Council
- Can be appealed to Coastal Commission

## RECOMMENDED ACTION

Receive Report, Hold a Public Hearing, Deliberate and Adopt a Resolution of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission Approving Design Review 6-24 (DR 6-24), Coastal Development Permit 6-24 (CDP 6-24), and Sign Permit 8-24 (SP 8-24) to replace an existing 4,715 SF Fire Station with a new 4,631 SF building.

## ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

1. Receive report, hold a public hearing, deliberate and provide direction to prepare a resolution for denial.
2. Receive report, hold a public hearing, continue the public hearing and request additional information.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Fort Bragg Fire Station located at 141 N. Main St. in Fort Bragg is comprised of three buildings constructed between 1947 and 1997. The North Wing, constructed in 1947 of unreinforced masonry, houses the North Apparatus Room and adjoining rooms to the west. The City's Public Facilities Master Plan indicated that there is a "considerable risk of major structure damage" to this wing in the event of a major earthquake. In 2023, a structural and architectural analysis was conducted which determined that the cost of rehabilitation was similar to the cost of new construction. The City Council decided that a new building would be a better use of funds and the building was redesigned. The City is now seeking permits for the construction project.



*Figure 1: Photo Illustrating Fire Station Parcels.*

## PROJECT HISTORY

1. The applicant submitted a complete application on May 1, 2024.
2. MJC prepared and finalized this permit analysis and resolution on May 10, 2024.

## LAND USE ANALYSIS

The project site is in the Central Business District and, while this use is not spelled out in the use tables, it is most similar to “Ambulance, Taxi or Limousine Dispatch Facility”, which is not permitted within the Central Business District. However, the proposed project is a replacement of an existing Fire Station that existed prior to the adoption of the Zoning Ordinance. Therefore, it is a pre-existing non-conforming use and may be continued without Use Permit approval. If, in the future, the Fire Department wishes to expand its facilities, the property should be rezoned as a Public Facilities zoning district.

## DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The project includes the replacement of the existing building with a new building in the same footprint. The replaced building would comply with all development standards (see below).

	Standard	Existing Building	Proposed Reconstruction
Front Setback	0 feet	0 feet	58 feet
Side: Street Side (North)	0 feet	0 feet	67 feet
Side: Interior (South)	0 feet	0 feet	10 feet
Rear	15 feet	48 feet	64 feet
Height	35 feet	22 feet	22 feet, 2 inches
Lot Coverage	No Limitation	100 percent	100 percent
Floor Area Raio	2.0	0.63	0.62

**Parking.** Table 3-7 of the CLUDC stipulates the quantity of parking spaces required for each land use. However, there is no parking standard listed for a fire station. The facility has functioned for more than 70 years with the existing parking spaces provided on the back of this parcel and on the adjoining parcel which is also owned by the Fire Station. So as a practical matter there is sufficient parking currently provided for the facility. The CLUDC also requires that one of the spaces be an ADA space and one is already designated in the current lot.

**LANDSCAPING STANDARDS.** Landscaping is not required in front of buildings that are built up to the lot line in the Central Business District (CDB) and no landscaping is proposed for the project.

**Fencing.** The proposed project does not include fencing.

**Lighting.** The applicant is proposing to add light fixtures on the exterior of the building, using full cutoff wall pack lighting which complies with the requirement for night-sky compliant lighting.

## **COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT**

This project is in the Coastal Zone, and it is not exempt from requiring a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) because it “is located between the sea and the first public road paralleling the sea” (see CLUDC Section 17.71.040(B)(4)).

This project has the potential to impact archaeological resources, which is analyzed below:

- The project does not have the potential to impact visual resources because views to the ocean are currently blocked by the existing building, which will be replaced.
- The project site is fully developed/paved and so it cannot have an impact on biological or botanical resources as there are none located on the site.
- Coastal access is provided to the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, which can be accessed by existing sidewalks in the front of the building, and by Chief Celeri Drive, which is located behind the building. Therefore, the project will not impact coastal access.

**Archaeological Resources.** The project site is fully developed with the existing building footprint and paving on the back portion of the parcel for parking, so a pre-construction archaeological survey is not possible. There is a chance that the ground disturbance associated with constructing the replacement buildings will result in the disturbance of the ground and could impact cultural resources. Standard condition 6 will minimize potential impacts to cultural resources.

**Stormwater Analysis.** The Department of Public Works reviewed the project and recommends the following Special Condition be included to ensure conformance with Section 17.64 Stormwater Runoff Pollution Control:

**Special Condition 1:** All construction, including but not limited to installation of concrete, overlay, site improvements and drainage, shall be performed in conformance with Municipal Code Section 17.64 Stormwater Runoff Pollution Control. Applicant shall complete “Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control Applicant Checklist” and “Small Construction Site Storm Water Erosion and Sediment Control Plan Template” forms prior to issuance of the building permit. The applicant shall abide by all “during-construction” site measures as delineated on the forms, and no sediment will be allowed to drain or blow offsite.

**Hazards Analysis.** The project site is relatively flat with no risk of landslide or flooding, or . tsunami risk as outlined below. The project is designed to reduce earthquake risk, which is the major impetus for the replacement building.

**Tsunami.** In 2010 a tsunami analysis was completed by ESA as part of the Mill Site rezoning process. That study found that a tsunami wave is likely into Soldiers Bay in the event of an offshore earthquake. However as illustrated in the image below, that Tsunami wave would not reach the Central Business District of Fort Bragg or the Fire Station.

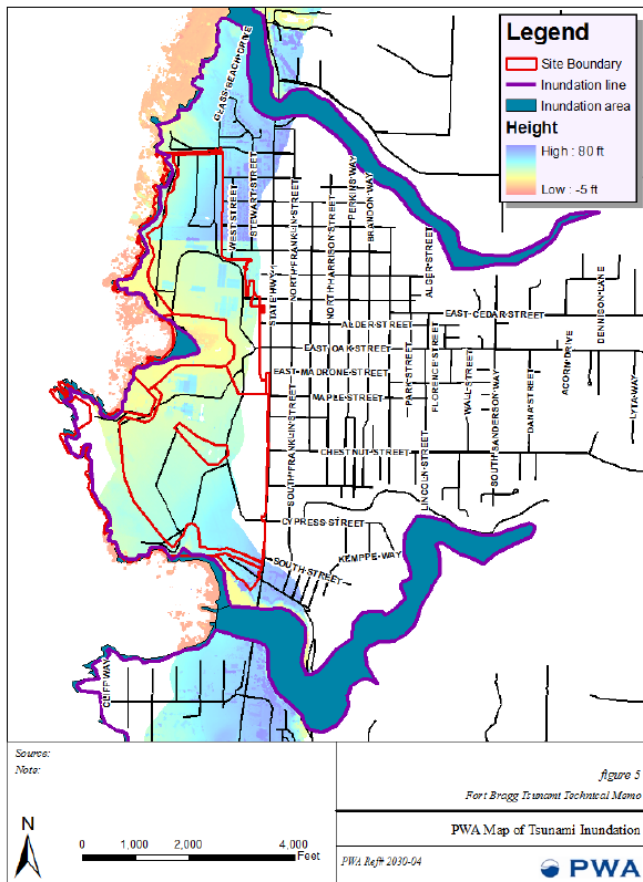


Figure 2: Tsunami Inundation Map

**Earthquakes.** Fort Bragg and all of California's coast are subject to periodic significant earthquakes. Indeed, the purpose of this project is to significantly reduce the potential structural damage to the Fire Station that could result from a significant seismic event. As a critical services facility the building is subject to the Essential Services Building Seismic Safety Act (Health and Safety Code §16000). In 1986, the state passed the Essential Services Building Seismic Safety Act to require enhanced regulatory oversight by local governments during the design and construction of new essential service facilities, such as fire and police stations and emergency communications and operations facilities. The Division of the State Architect enforces this Act. Pursuant to the Act, the Division of the State Architect within DGS adopted regulations that apply to the construction of all new essential services buildings (California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 1, §4-201 to §4-249). The building will have to comply with the regulations that apply specifically to essential services buildings such as this Fire Station.

**DESIGN REVIEW**

The project requires a Design Review Permit per Section 17.71.050 of the CLUDC. As conditioned below, the proposed project would meet the Design Review criteria. 17.71.050(E). Project Review Criteria. The review authority shall evaluate each application to ensure that the project:

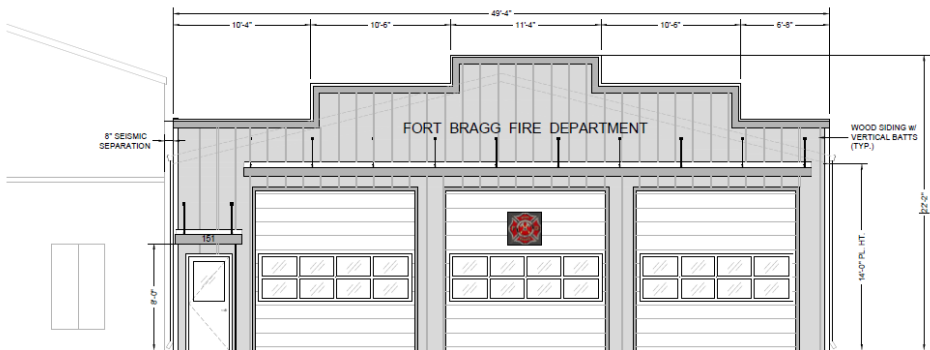
**1. Complies with the purpose and requirements of this Section.**

The proposed design, as conditioned below, is consistent with the purpose and requirements of Design Review.

**2. Provides architectural design, building massing and scale appropriate to and compatible with the site surroundings and the community.**

This finding can be made. The proposed reconstruction would consist of an architectural look that combines false fronts and awnings, and historic board and batten exterior cladding. The overall look is historic. The new structure would have better design quality than the existing building and would provide an upgrade to the architectural character of the buildings in the immediate site surroundings.

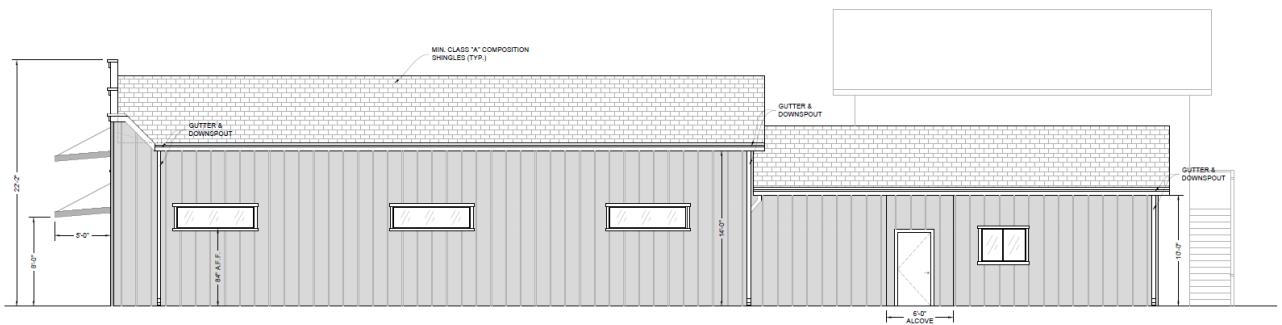
*Figure 3 East Elevation – Facing Highway 1*



**EAST ELEVATION**

SCALE 3/16"=1'-0"

*Figure 4 North Elevation.*



**NORTH ELEVATION**

SCALE 3/16"=1'-0"

Figure 5: West Elevation

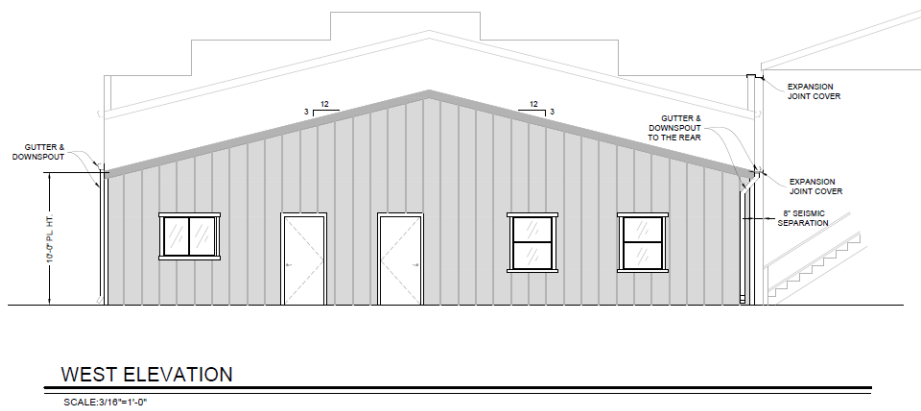
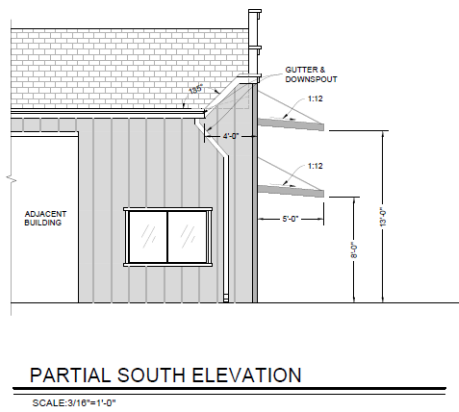


Figure 6: Partial South Elevation



The surrounding commercial land uses have an eclectic mix of designs, as follows:

Figure 7: North Insurance Company and Construction Business



*Figure 8 South - The Shop*



*Figure 9 East – Chase Bank, Residence and Vacant Lot*



*Figure 10 Parking Lot, Alley, Fort Bragg Coastal Trail, and the Pacific Ocean*



- 3. Provides attractive and desirable site layout and design, including building arrangement, exterior appearance and setbacks, drainage, fences and walls, grading, landscaping, lighting, signs, etc.**

This finding can be made as described in detail below:

- **Site Layout and Design.** The proposed project provides a desirable layout for a fire station.
- **Exterior Appearance.** The exterior appearance will be a slight improvement on the appearance of the existing structure as stucco would be replaced with board and batten, which is a preferred building material.
- **Setbacks.** The project complies with all setbacks.
- **Drainage.** The project site is currently covered completely with impervious surfaces which is permissible in the Central Business District.
- **Fences, walls, lighting, or landscaping.** No fences, walls or landscaping are



proposed for the project, as the site is constrained and the replacement building will occupy the entire building frontage on Main Street.

**4. Provides efficient and safe public access, circulation, and parking.**

No changes to circulation or access are proposed. The building would facilitate rapid response by emergency vehicles.

**5. Provides appropriate open space and landscaping, including the use of water efficient landscaping.**

The existing facility has no landscaping and no landscaping is proposed for this building replacement project.

**6. Is consistent with the General Plan, any applicable specific plan, and the certified Local Coastal Program if located in the Coastal Zone.**

This finding can be made. The project is consistent with the CLUDC, and the Coastal General Plan, which includes many policies related to fire safety, seismic safety and tsunami safety, which are specifically implemented by this project, including the following:

Policy SF-2.1 Seismic Hazards: Reduce the risk of loss of life, personal injury, and damage to property resulting from seismic hazards.

Program SF-2.1.3: Monitor and review existing critical, high priority buildings to ensure structural compliance with seismic safety standards.

Program SF-2.1.7: Continue to comply with State law regarding reinforcement of unreinforced masonry structures.

Policy SF-2.5: Review development proposals to ensure that new development is not in an area subject to tsunami damage and if such development is otherwise allowable that it is designed to withstand tsunami damage.

Policy SF-2.6: Avoid siting new critical facilities, including fire and police stations and hospitals in tsunami inundation zones to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy SF-5.2 Maintain a High Level of Fire Protection: Work with the Fire Protection Authority to ensure a continued high level of fire protection.

Policy SF-5.4 Fire Protection Authority Needs: Anticipate the needs of the Fort Bragg Fire Protection Authority.

Policy SF-7.1 Emergency Medical Response: Ensure that the Fire Protection Authority and the Mendocino Coast District Hospital continue to maintain a high level of emergency medical response.

Additionally, The General Plan notes that the purpose of the Central Business District is as follows:

This designation applies to the core of the downtown, which is the civic, cultural, and commercial center of the community. Uses and site development patterns in the Central Business District are typically pedestrian-oriented. This designation is intended to accommodate government and professional offices, retail stores, theaters, and other similar uses. Residential uses on upper floors or on the ground floor at the rear of buildings are encouraged at a density of up to 40 units per net acre.

Certainly, the Fire Station is part of the civic heart of the City. And the downtown location for the Fire Station also helps to implement the following General Plan policies related to the Central Business District:

Policy CD-3.3 Economic Vitality: Continue to support the economic diversity and vitality of downtown businesses.

Policy CD-3.5 Strengthen the Distinctive Identity of the Central Business District: Strengthen the distinctive identity and unique sense of place of the Central Business District.

**7. Complies with, and is consistent with, the City's Design Guidelines.**

<b>Table 2</b>	
<b>Citywide Design Guideline (2022)</b>	<b>Compliance Analysis</b>
<p><b>Central Business District</b> (page 6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize transparent storefronts, especially along the ground floor.</li> <li>• Orient buildings to face the street. Architecture should complement and respect the historic Central Business District vernacular.</li> <li>• Keep the downtown a lively mixed-use, 24-hour core.</li> </ul>	<p>Yes, as described below:            The applicant's project is not located within the retail-oriented area of the CBD where transparent storefronts are appropriate. Indeed, this project is not a storefront, however the fire doors do include transparent windows.            The new building would be oriented to the street as required.</p>
<p><b>Colors</b> (page 17)            Colors used on exterior facades should be <i>harmonious</i> and <i>contrasting compatible colors</i> are encouraged to accentuate details.</p> <p><b>CBD Architecture</b> (page 27)  <b>Mandatory Standards</b>            To divide the building mass of larger buildings into smaller scale components, buildings over 50 feet of frontage, visible from a public right of way, shall reduce the perceived mass and bulk by using one or more of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. change in roof heights or wall plane;</li> <li>b. projecting or recessed elements;</li> <li>c. varying cornice or rooflines; or</li> <li>d. other similar means.</li> </ol>	<p>The applicant has proposed a two-color scheme for the building (Gentle Cream and Heritage Red) (see Attachment 4 for exact colors). The colors are appropriate for a fire station.</p> <p>Likewise, the project complies with this mandatory standard to divide the mass of larger buildings through changes in roof heights, wall plane and projecting elements. It also includes varying cornice and roof lines.</p>

<p><b>Architecture (page 31) - Mandatory Standards</b></p> <p>All roof-mounted equipment should be completely screened from views above. Special consideration should be given to the location and screening of noise-generating equipment such as refrigeration units, air conditioning, and exhaust fans so that they don't disturb residences.</p>	<p>The project includes roof-mounted equipment, but there are no nearby residences or second-story uses that would view the roof-mounted equipment, so this standard does not apply to this project.</p>
<p><b>Site Amenities (page 31) - Mandatory Standards</b></p> <p>1. Outdoor Space. Include publicly accessible, designed outdoor space for resident and public use that is proportionate to the size of the proposed buildings. Public spaces can include plazas, parks, courtyards, corridors, sidewalk cafes, trails, outdoor seating areas and/or similar active and passive areas. Public spaces should be located in visually prominent, accessible and safe locations that promote year-round activity.</p> <p>2. Usable open space or public gathering places accessible to the community (e.g., a roof garden, expanded waiting area adjacent to a bus stop, etc.) shall be provided when feasible.</p> <p>3. Landscaping, shade trees and benches shall be incorporated into the site design as well as outdoor dining areas to encourage pedestrian activity on the ground floor level of a building.</p>	<p>1. The primary entrance to the Fire Station is located on the adjoining parcel and includes a mini-plaza and highly visible entryway. These are pre-existing and no changes are proposed to them.</p>  <p>2. Outdoor open space areas for public gathering are not appropriate for the Fire Station. The Fire Station's main bay is used from time to time for public events.</p> <p>3. The parcel has no opportunities for landscaping since the Fire Station will occupy the entire building frontage.</p>

**SIGN PERMIT & SIGN DESIGN REVIEW**

The applicant has proposed a simple raised letter sign made from wooden letters that would be painted red and placed on the front of the building, above the Fire Station doors.

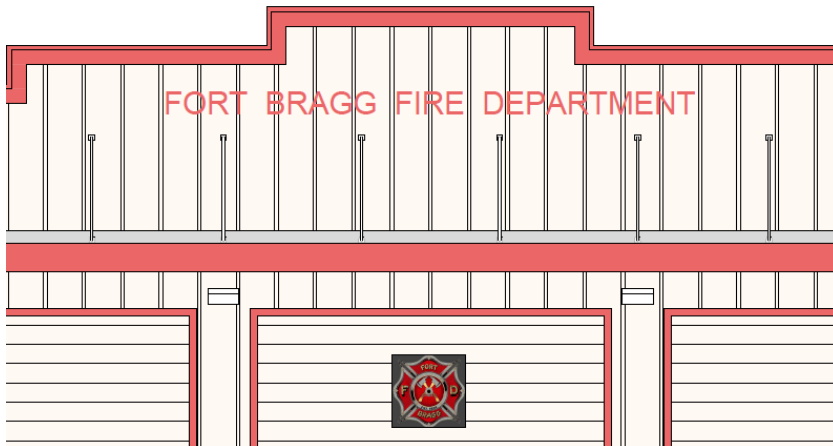


Figure 11: Fire Station Sign

The sign would be 9 inches high and 21 feet long for a total of 15 SF of signage, which is under the minimum sign limit of 25 SF per building.

The proposed sign complies with the sign design guidelines as follows:

Sign Guidelines	Compliance analysis
<p><b>Sign Placement</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The project’s canopy signs do “not project above the edge of the rooflines” or “obstruct windows and/or doorways.”</li> <li>2. The location and extent of the signs will “not obstruct scenic views.”</li> </ol>	<p>The sign would not obscure views.</p>
<p><b>Wall Signs</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory Standards</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wall signs shall not project from the surface upon which they are attached more than that required for construction purposes and in no case more than 6 inches.</li> </ol> <p><b>Preferred Standards</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A wall sign should be located where the architectural features or details of the building suggest a location, size, or shape for the sign. The best location for a wall sign is generally a blank area between the first and second floors of a building.</li> <li>2. Wall signs and “ghost” signs painted directly on a structure may be appropriate in some cases. On historic structures, ghost signs often lend an air of age and authenticity.</li> </ol>	<p>The proposed letter would not project from the wall.</p> <p>The sign is located below the parapet in a good location which compliments the architecture.</p>
<p><b>Location:</b> Signs should be sized and placed consistent with the proportions of the building’s façade.</p>	<p>It is so placed.</p>

<p><b>Colors:</b> Three or fewer colors are encouraged on a single sign. Contrast is an important influence on the legibility of signs.</p>	<p>The sign is one color, red, which contrasts with the underlying white of the building.</p>
<p><b>Preferred Materials:</b> Metal (formed, etched, cast, engraved, and properly primed and painted or factory coated to protect against erosion)</p>	<p>The sign is made of aluminum 9-foot high offset letters.</p>

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Receive Report, Hold a Public Hearing, Deliberate and Adopt a Resolution of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission Approving Design Review 6-24 (DR 6-24), Coastal Development Permit 6-24 (CDP 6-24), Sign Permit 8-24 (SP 8-24) to 1) replace an existing 4,715 SF Fire Station with a New 4,631 SF Building.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution of the Fort Bragg Planning Commission Approving Design Review 6-24 (DR 6-24), Coastal Development Permit 6-24 (CDP 6-24), Sign Permit 8-24 (SP 8-24) to replace an existing 4,715 SF Fire Station with a New 4,631 SF Building.
2. Proposed Site Plan
3. Proposed Floor Plan
4. Proposed Building Elevations
5. Colors & Signage
6. Lighting Plan
7. Public Hearing Notice