

Planning Commission Staff Report

February 12, 2014
Item 6.d.

- SUBJECT:** Work Session for PUD-98 and P13-2518
- APPLICANT:** Keith Henderson for CarMax Auto Superstores
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Alameda County Surplus Property Authority
- PURPOSE:** Work Session to review and receive comments on applications for PUD Development Plan and Sign Design Review to construct an automobile dealership consisting of an approximately 13,064-square-foot sales and presentation building, approximately 45,000-square-foot service building, vehicle sales display area, non-public car wash, project signage, and related site improvements on approximately 19.66 acres of the Auto Mall site at Staples Ranch.
- GENERAL PLAN:** Retail/Highway/Service Commercial/Business and Professional Offices, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, and Parks and Recreation
- SPECIFIC PLAN:** Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch
- ZONING:** Planned Unit Development – Commercial (PUD-C) District
- LOCATION:** Approximately 19.66 acres of the Auto Mall Site at Staples Ranch
- EXHIBITS:** [A. Planning Commission Work Session Topics](#)
[B. Project Plans and Project Description](#)
[C. Location Map and Noticing Map](#)

I. BACKGROUND

CarMax Auto Superstores has submitted for Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Sign Design Review applications for the development of an automobile dealership on approximately 19.66 acres of the 37-acre Auto Mall site at Staples Ranch.

The Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch (Specific Plan) was adopted by City Council on August 24, 2010, and is applicable to the subject site. The Specific Plan contains design standards for properties subject to the Specific Plan, and includes the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The purpose of the workshop is to receive comments from the Commission members and public regarding the project. No action on the project will be made at the work session. The project will require review by the Planning Commission and final decision by City Council. A list of discussion topics and questions are included as Exhibit A to this report.

II. SITE DESCRIPTION

The approximately 37-acre Auto Mall site is located north of Stoneridge Drive and the Neighborhood Park, south of Interstate-580, east of the Continuing Life Communities (CLC) site, and west of El Charro Road. Of the 37 acres, the applicant proposes to develop approximately 19.66 acres located adjacent to the Continuing Life Communities site. Figure 1 provides a vicinity map of the area.

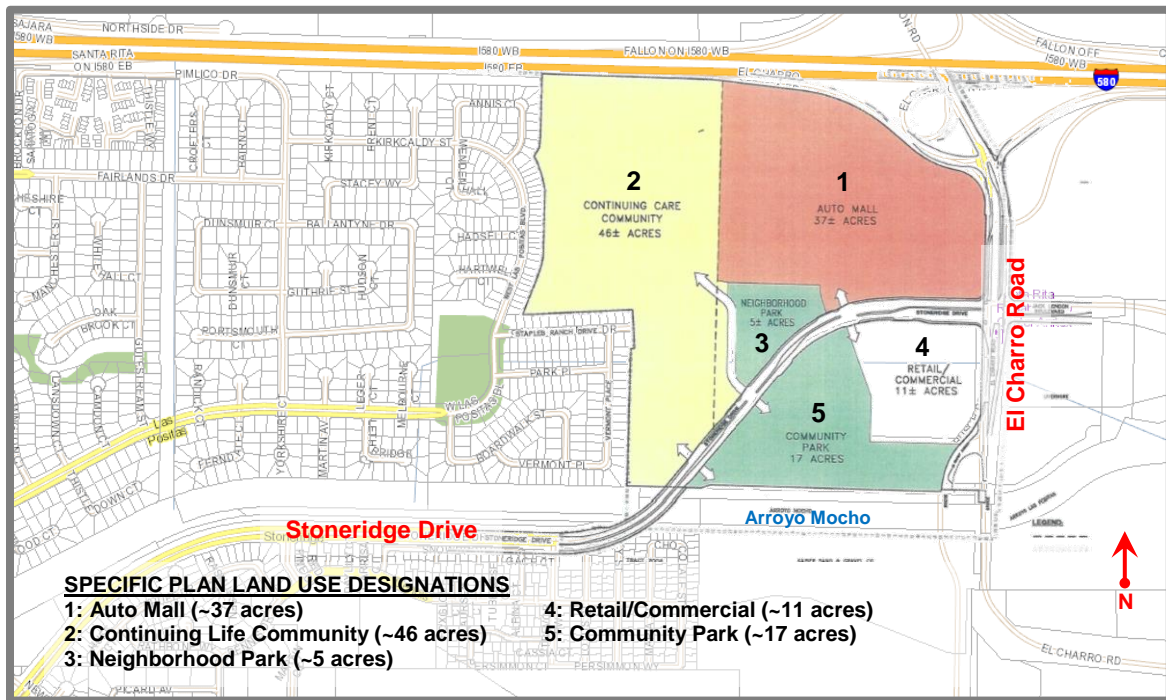


FIGURE 1: Vicinity Map

As noted in Figure 1, the Auto Mall site is one of five designations within the Staples Ranch area. Other land use designations within the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch include the Continuing Life Community, Neighborhood Park, Retail/Commercial, and Community Park.



FIGURE 2: Aerial Photograph from Google Earth, dated August 2012

The project site is vacant and relatively flat, with elevations ranging from approximately 349.4-feet near the northwestern corner to 351.6 near the southeastern corner. Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of stockpiled dirt is located in the middle of the project site. No driveways or entry drives currently provide access to the site, and no mature trees are located on the site. Figure 2 shows an aerial photograph from Google Earth. Since the photograph is from August of 2012, the Stoneridge Drive, the CLC site, and the Neighborhood Park site appear as under construction.

III. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to construct a pre-owned automobile dealership consisting of an approximately 13,064-square-foot sales and presentation building, approximately 45,000-square-foot service building, vehicle sales display area, non-public car wash, project signage, and related site improvements. The project characteristics are outlined below Figure 3.

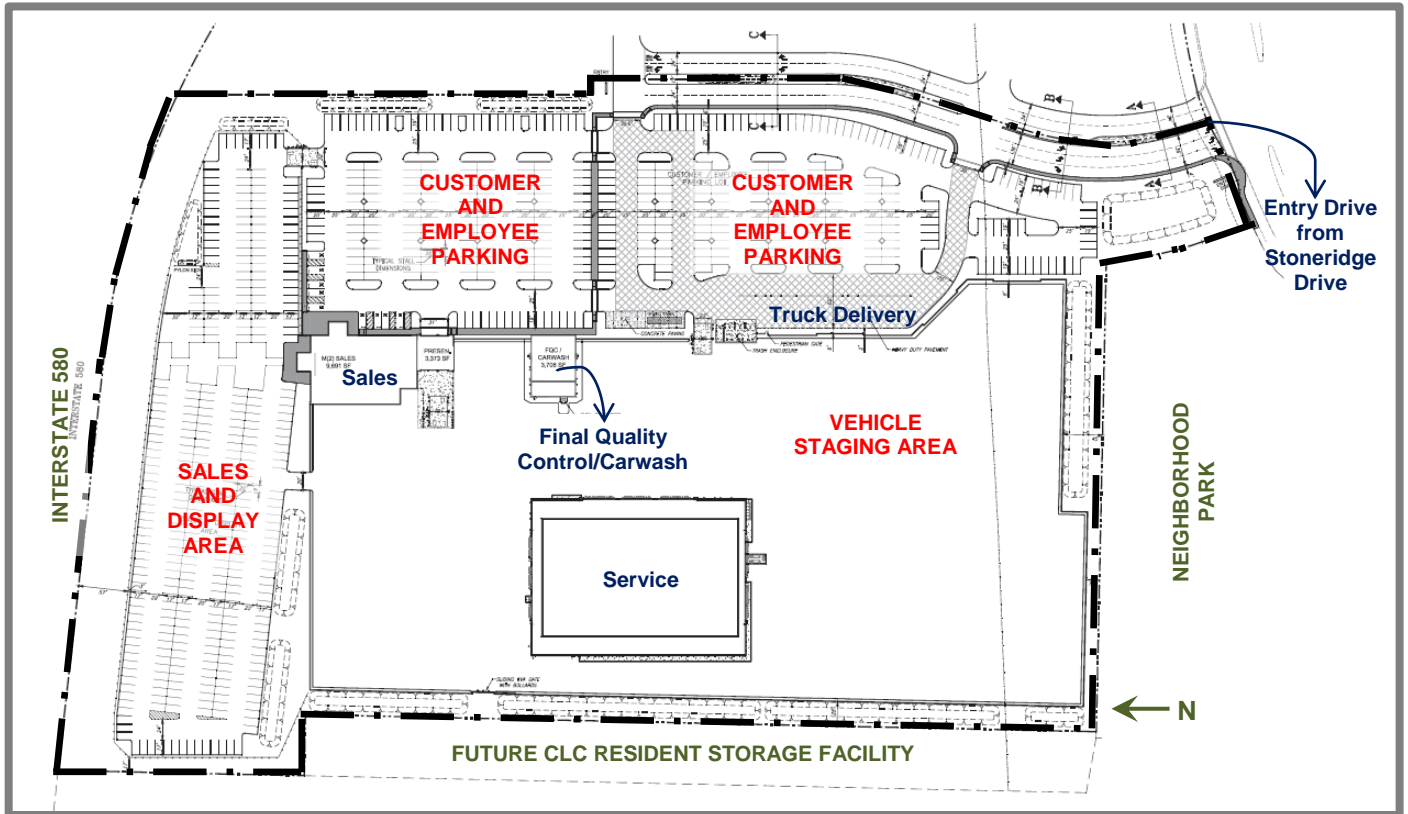


FIGURE 3: Proposed Site Plan

- A. **Site Plan and Project Layout:** The project site is accessed from Stoneridge Drive via an entry drive, and consists of three different areas, inclusive of the vehicle staging area, customer and employee parking area, and the sales and display area.
- a. **Site Access:** The entry drive from Stoneridge Drive has two lanes to enter the project site (or adjacent future development) and three lanes for exiting. A left turn pocket allows access to the project site's southern driveway. The access drive continues further north and ends at a proposed stop sign intersection where in-coming visitors would make a left turn into the subject site (or a right-turn into the future auto dealer's site).
 - b. **Customer and Employee Parking Area:** A total of 431 parking spaces are proposed in the customer and employee parking lot area. Heavy duty pavement is proposed in some of the drive aisles located in southern area of the site (shown with hatched shading on the site plan), but will not be visually different than the standard asphalt proposed elsewhere on the site. A delivery area for trucks is proposed south of the trash enclosure and tire storage structure and is noted in Figure 3. Parking stalls in this area are proposed to be 20-foot deep by 9-feet wide with 25-foot wide drive aisles [the 20-foot depth exceeds the minimum 19-feet required by the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC). The applicant has indicated this facilitates customer viewing of the vehicles. The parking stall and drive aisle widths meet the minimum standards in the PMC].

- c. Sales and Display Area: The sales and display area is where cars for sale are parked. Customers are typically escorted by an employee in this area and only employees are permitted to drive cars within this area (the parking stalls are 9-foot wide by 17-foot deep and the drive aisles are 20-foot wide).
 - d. Vehicle Staging Area: The vehicle staging area is accessible only to employees and functions as a “staging” area for vehicles to be serviced, inspected, or that are otherwise not ready for sale. To facilitate operations and maintain flexibility, the applicant does not propose to stripe any parking stalls in the vehicle staging area (with the exception of the emergency vehicle access easement). To secure the area, a wall is proposed around the vehicle staging area.
- B. **Operations**: The operating hours for sales are anticipated to be 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday – Saturday, with limited hours on Sunday. The service facility is expected to be open to the public from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. The project description included with this staff report as part of Exhibit B provides details on the operation of the auto dealership, including service facility functions, wholesale auctions, and site access.
- C. **Proposed Buildings**: Three buildings are proposed: the sales and presentation building, the final quality control and car wash building, and the service building. Elevation drawings of all buildings are provided in the materials for this workshop. View perspectives from the entry drive from Stoneridge Drive, the Neighborhood Park, and Interstate-580 have also been included.
- a. Sales and Presentation Building: The approximately 13,064-square foot sales and presentation building is located near the northern area of the site, and is where customers would interact with sales representatives, and obtain access to the sales and display area of the parking lot. Two pedestrian entries are proposed, on the northern and eastern facades, and are visually identified with gabled roofs. The building is single story with a maximum height of 37-foot-3-inches to the peak of the gabled entries, although the majority of the roof line is flat, where the “primary” cornice is 24-foot tall. A roof screen is proposed to be a height of 29 feet. The service lanes have roll-up doors facing east. Exterior materials include a blue standing seam roof on the gable elements, two earth-tone shades of brick, exterior insulation and finish systems (EFIS), and at the base of the building, split-face CMU. Figure 4 shows the east and north elevations of the sales and presentation building.
 - b. Final Quality Control and Car Wash: The final quality control (FQC) and non-public car wash building is located south of the sales and presentation building and is accessible only to employees for final preparation of vehicles. A fuel pump is also proposed adjacent to the FQC building. Materials are similar to the sales and presentation building. The height of the building to the cornice is 21-foot and the height to the roof screen is 26-feet. Figure 5 shows the east elevation of the sales and presentation building. Since this façade is in a prominent location and faces the customer/employee parking lot, staff has

requested that the applicant incorporate glazing in addition to architectural details, to which the applicant has agreed.



FIGURE 4: East and North Sales Building Elevations

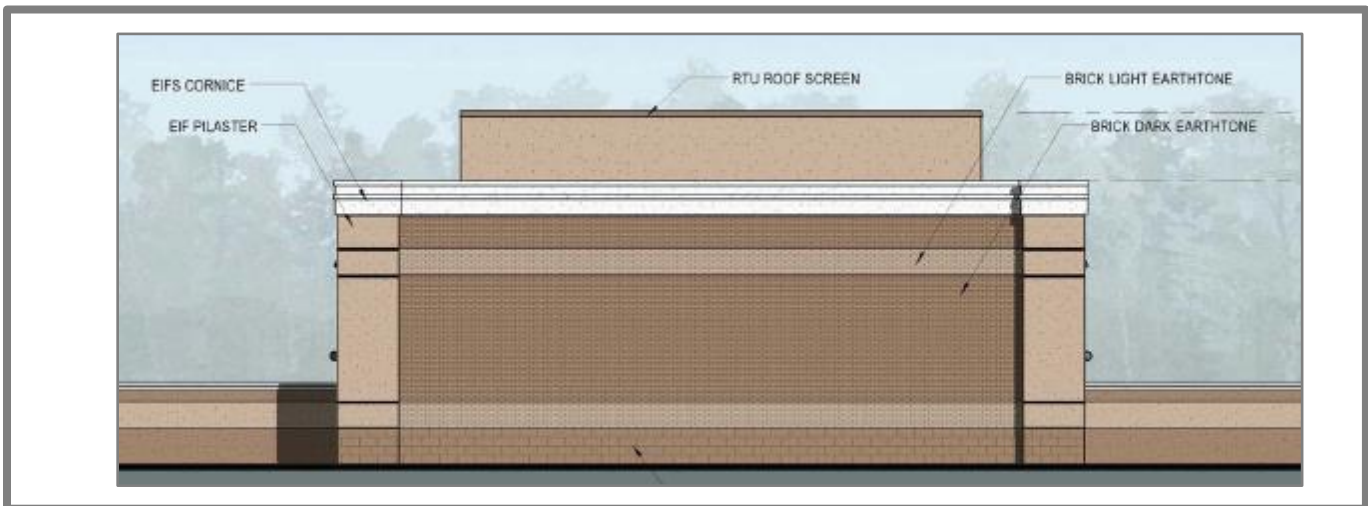


FIGURE 5: East Elevation of FQC Building

- c. **Service Building:** An approximately 45,000-square-foot service building is located within the vehicle staging area. The interior of the building includes service bays and employee areas (locker room, break room, etc.). The materials for the exterior of the building are similar to that of the other two buildings, and the roofline is flat (to a height of 24-feet to the lower parapet and 28-feet to the roof

screen). Trellises are proposed on the service building to break up mass. Figure 6 shows the south and east elevations of the proposed service building.

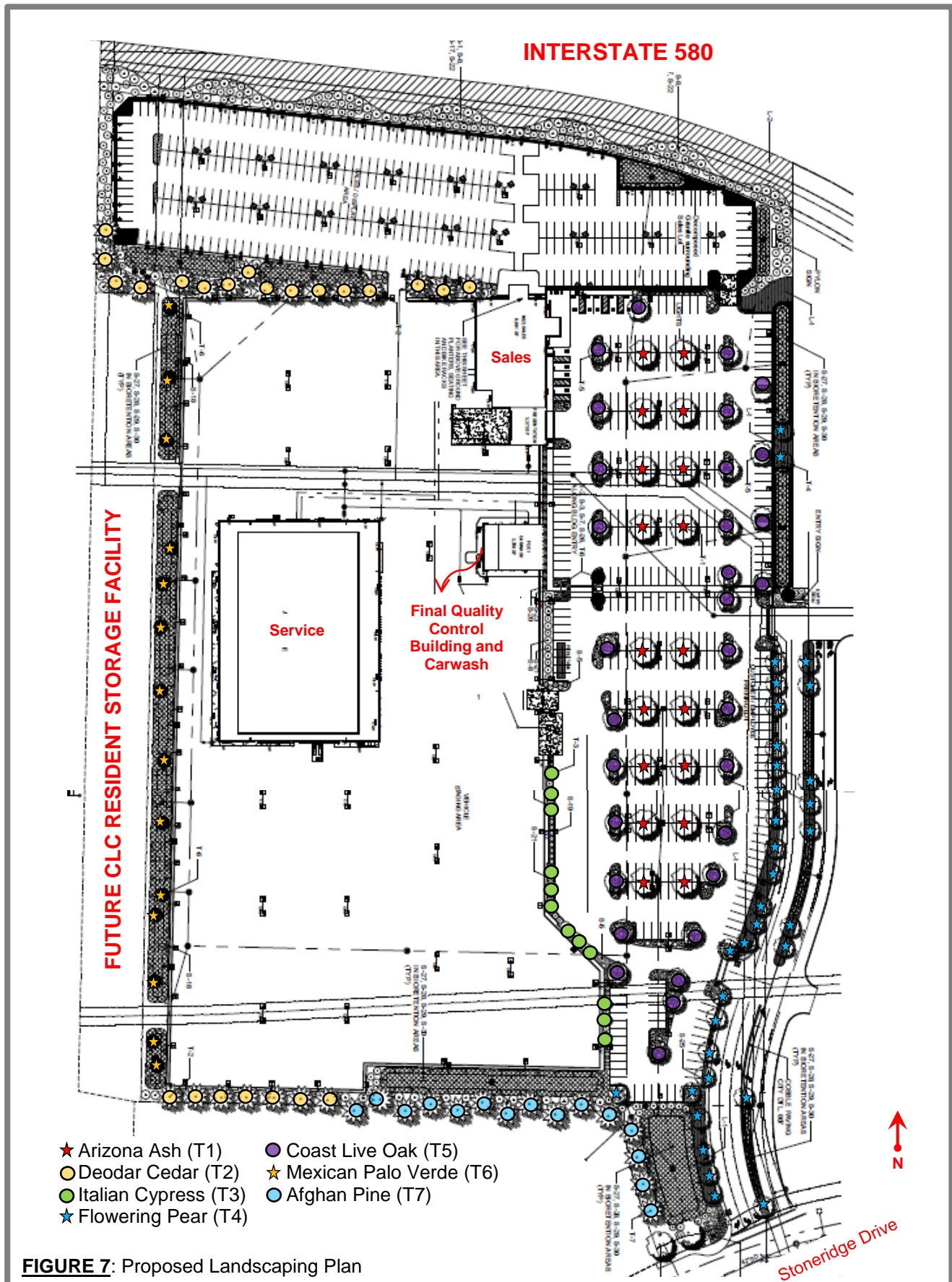


FIGURE 6: South and East Elevations of the Service Building

D. **Landscaping:** Landscaping plans inclusive of a plant palette are on Sheets L1.0 and L2.0. Proposed trees (all 24-inch box size) are shown in Figure 7. In addition, a view of the sales building and service buildings at initial planting, 5-year growth, and 10-year growth is part of the project plans, and is shown in Figure 8. The tree species include:

- Arizona ash (which may be modified to another species) – identified as “T1” and located in “landscape planter diamonds” in the customer/employee parking lot.
- Deodar cedar – identified as “T2” and located in the planting area between the sales/display area and the northern boundary of the vehicle staging area, and also located in the planting area between the neighborhood park and the southern boundary of the vehicle staging area.
- Italian cypress – identified as “T3” in the planter area south of the tire/trash enclosure and between the vehicle staging area and the customer/employee parking lot.
- Flowering pear – identified as “T4” and located along the proposed eastern property boundary of the project site.
- Coast live oak – identified as “T5” and located in landscape fingers within the customer/employee parking lot.
- Mexican palo verde – identified as “T6” and located in the stormwater treatment area proposed along the western boundary of the subject site (and adjacent to the future C.L.C. resident storage facility).
- Afghan pine – identified as “T7” and located along the southern property boundary, adjacent to the Neighborhood Park.

A variety of shrubs and ground cover are proposed in various planter area and bioretention areas. In particular, planter areas are located between the eastern portion of the wall around the vehicle staging area and the customer/employee parking lot. Also, above-ground planters and seating are proposed adjacent to the customer entrances to the sales/presentation building.





Initial Planting: 8-foot to 10-foot tall Deciduous and Evergreen Trees



5-Year Tree Growth: 18-foot to 22-foot tall Deciduous and Evergreen Trees

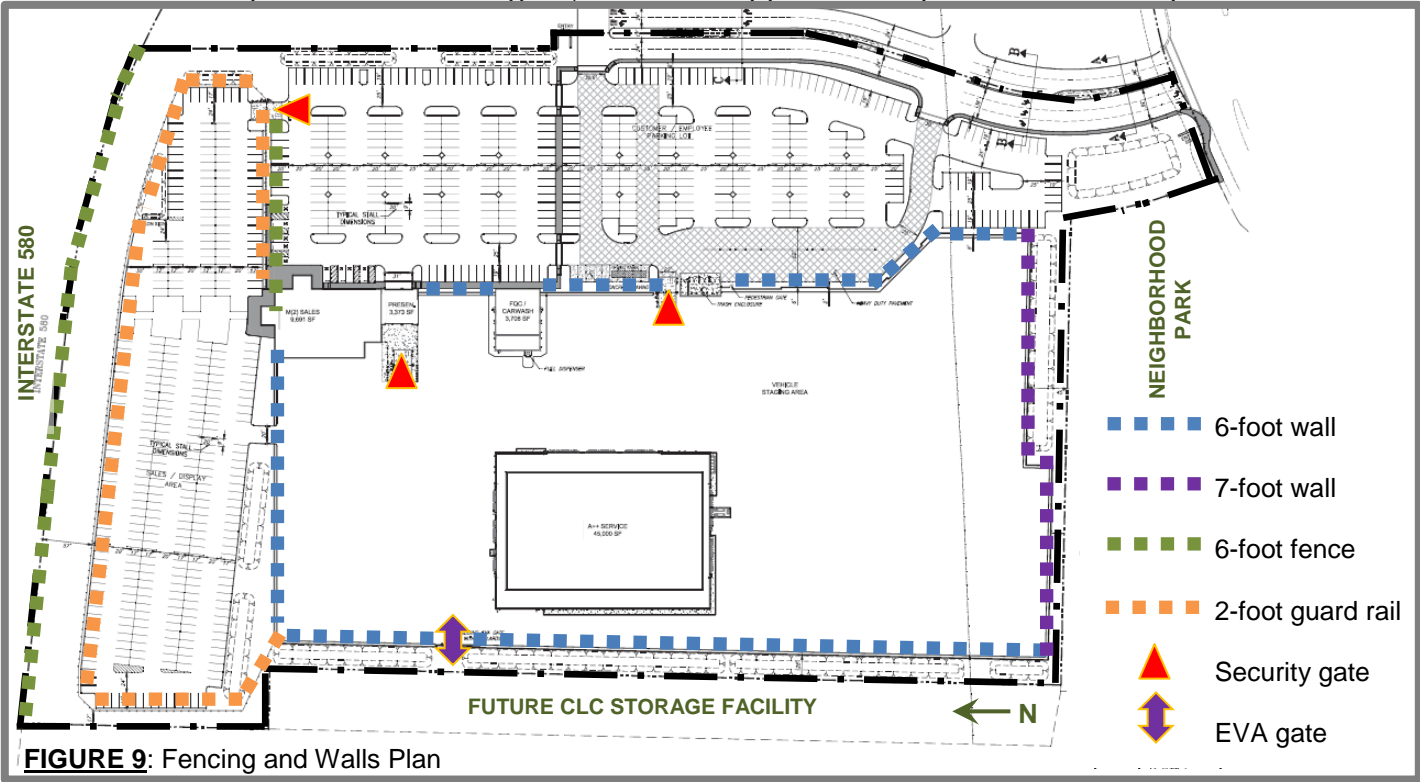


10-Year Tree Growth: Approximately 30-foot tall Deciduous and Evergreen Trees

FIGURE 8: Photographic Rendering as Viewed from I-580 Showing Landscaping at Initial Planting, 5-yrs, and 10-yrs

E. **Fencing and Walls:** A “fencing and walls” plan is included in the plans, and shown in Figure 9 of this report.

- **Wall Around Vehicle Staging Area** – A 6-foot tall (7-foot tall along the southern boundary of the vehicle staging area, adjacent to the Neighborhood Park) stucco wall is proposed around the vehicle staging area (blue and purple in Figure 9). The wall will consist of stucco veneer with a light earthtone color on the “top half” and a dark earth tone color on the “bottom half,” with a 6-inch tall white cap along the top of the wall and top of the pilasters. The distance between pilasters varies between 17 to 30 feet. The wall “jogs” in and out along where it abuts the customer/employee parking lot to decrease the appearance of a single plane.
- **Ornamental Fence** – A 6-foot tall black ornamental fence is proposed along the property boundary adjacent to Interstate-580, and between the sales/display and customer/employee parking lot (shown in green in Figure 9).
- **Guard Rail** – An approximately 2-foot tall guard rail is proposed around the sales/display parking area (shown in orange in Figure 9).
- **EVA Gate** – A sliding gate made of tube steel framing and infill panels and removable bollards are proposed at the emergency vehicle access easement opening at the western property line of the project site (purple arrow).
- **Security Gate** – A total of 3 security gates (identified as “delta gate” on the project plans) are proposed (red triangles in Figure 9). Two of the three security gates will be visible to customers, as one is proposed north the trash/tire enclosure and the other is proposed between the sales/display area and the customer/employee parking lot (the third is within the vehicle staging area). The security gate is described as an embassy-style security gate in the project description, and is controlled by employees with a key-card. Staff has asked for a specification of the gate, which the applicant will provide on future plans.



F. **Lighting:** Two sheets are included as part of the project plans, where one identifies lighting during operational hours and the other identifies after-hours lighting. Pole-mounted lighting at a height of 25-feet with “shoebox-style” fixtures are proposed along the access drive, in both the sales/inventory and customer/employee parking lots, and the vehicle staging area. Wall sconces are also proposed on all three buildings. The footcandle levels at grade are shown in a chart on the lighting plans and are summarized below.

- **Lighting Levels During Operational Hours** – The lighting levels during operational hours are summarized in Table 1. As noted, the *average* footcandle level for the overall site is 7.47, with a maximum average of 28.04. The sales/display area has a maximum level of 44.3 footcandles during operational hours.

Table 1: Proposed Lighting Levels During Operational Hours, in footcandles

	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Overall Site	7.47	44.3	0.0
Customer/Employee Parking Lot	10.38	25.5	2.5
Sales/Display Parking Lot	28.04	44.3	8.6
Vehicle Staging Area	8.27	28.5	1.4

- **Lighting Levels After Operational Hours** – The lighting levels after operational hours are summarized in Table 2. As noted, the *average* footcandle level for the overall site is 3.57 during non-operational hours, with a maximum level of 23.7 footcandles in the vehicle staging area.

Table 2: Proposed Lighting Levels After Operational Hours, in footcandles

	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Overall Site	3.57	23.7	0.0
Customer/Employee Parking Lot	5.32	13.0	1.4
Sales/Display Parking Lot	8.66	16.4	1.3
Vehicle Staging Area	5.35	23.7	0.5

For comparison, the approved lighting plan for the recently constructed Mercedes-Benz dealership indicates lighting levels as identified in Table 3.

Table 3: Mercedes-Benz of Pleasanton lighting levels, in footcandles

	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Display Area along I-580	3.1	10	0.1
Display Area along Owens Court	19.8	42.4	2.9
Display Area along Owens Drive	1.6	4.7	0.0
Customer Parking Area	7.0	9.6	2.6
Service Vehicle Parking	1.2	5.6	0.0

Also for comparison, the preliminary lighting plan for the previous Staples Ranch auto dealer is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Previous Staples Ranch Auto Dealer proposed lighting levels, in footcandles

	Average	Maximum
Display Area	13	28
Non-Parking Area	3.5	10

According to the Illuminating Engineering Society (and as referenced in Table 3.1-2 of the Stoneridge Drive Specific Plan Amendment/Staples Ranch EIR), targeted footcandle levels for exterior park lighting vary as identified in Table 5.

Table 5: Targeted lighting levels for exterior park lighting, in footcandles

Area/Sport Court	Targeted Lighting Level
Paths and steps in a garden	1
Playground	5
Municipal league baseball field (infield)	20
Municipal league baseball field (outfield)	10
High school level football, soccer, or lacrosse field	20
Recreation level tennis court	10
Club level tennis court	20
Tournament level tennis court	30

The maximum lighting levels for the subject site in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) are indicated in Table 6. The MMRP also requires that during *non-operational* hours, all exterior parking lot lighting levels be designed such that they do not exceed 10 footcandles.

Table 6: Lighting maximums for project site per the MMRP, in footcandles

Area	Maximum Lighting Level
First row of lighting by northern property boundary	50
First row of lighting by eastern and southern property boundaries	35
Designated display areas	30
Remainder of auto mall site	10
Maximum spill-over from auto mall site to CLC site	1

The maximum heights for pole lighting as required by the MMRP are listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Maximum lighting pole heights, in feet

Area	Maximum Height
Sales and Service Lot	25
Fixtures Adjacent to CLC site	14

G. **Signage:** The signage proposal included with the application materials consists of a freeway-oriented pylon sign, a sign at the entry drive to the project site, and building-mounted signage on the north and east facades of the sales/presentation building, and above the presentation lanes. Figure 10 shows one design for the pylon sign and a representation of the proposed building-mounted signs. Figure 11 shows the monument sign proposed at the entry drive.

- **Freeway-Oriented Pylon Sign:** Pylon design “E” is shown in Figure 10, and indicates an overall width of 25-feet and height of 45-feet. The “CARmax” copy and dashes consist yellow and white individual channel letters/dashes, both face lit and halo backlit, within a blue aluminum cabinet proposed to be 25-feet wide by 8-feet-1-inch tall. To allow for future auto dealerships to have freeway oriented identification, 4 additional cabinets measuring 11-feet-4-inches wide by 5-feet tall are shown under the “CARmax” cabinet. These internally illuminated cabinets would have aluminum faces with routed out copy, such that only the copy would illuminate.
- **Building Mounted Signage:** Two identical signs are proposed, one each on the north and east facades of the sales and presentation building. The sign copy reads, “CARmax,” is proposed to be yellow and white internally illuminated individual channel letters, measures 2-feet-2.25-inches tall by 16-feet-6.5-inches wide, and is located on a 8-foot-3.5-inch tall by 16-foot-8-inch wide blue wall panel above the pedestrian entries to the building. White internally illuminated channel letters with copy reading “service” is proposed above the larger of two roll-up doors that secure the presentation lanes.
- **Monument Sign at Entry Drive:** Monument sign design “A” is shown in Figure 11, where the overall height and width are proposed to be 8-feet by 15-feet-2-inches wide, respectively (although the applicant has agreed to reduce to the height to 6-feet). The sign is slightly curved, and will also have yellow and white individual channel letters both face lit and halo lit. Similarly to the pylon sign cabinet, the background is proposed to be blue finish aluminum.

H. **Parcel Map and Easements:** Subsequent to PUD review by City Council, the applicant would apply to subdivide the subject Auto Mall site such that the CarMax property (Lot 1, approximately 19.66 acres) is independent of the remaining 16.10 acres (Lot 2). As shown on Sheet C3.0 of the project plans, a 60-foot wide public access easement (PAE) and public services easement (PSE) is proposed between lots 1 and 2. The 28-foot wide maintenance access easement (MAE) that runs north-south is proposed to be abandoned. Portions of the emergency vehicle access easement (EVAE) and water line easement (WLE) on the subject property are proposed to be abandoned and relocated.

Easements to remain in their entirety include:

- Pacific Telephone and Telegraph’s (PT&T, now AT&T) 20-foot wide easement that crosses east-west through the southern portion of the site. No buildings can be located within this easement;
- Zone 7’s 25-foot wide water transmission line easement that crosses through the site along the northern property line; and
- PG&E’s 30-foot wide gas pipeline easement that crosses through the site along the northern property line.

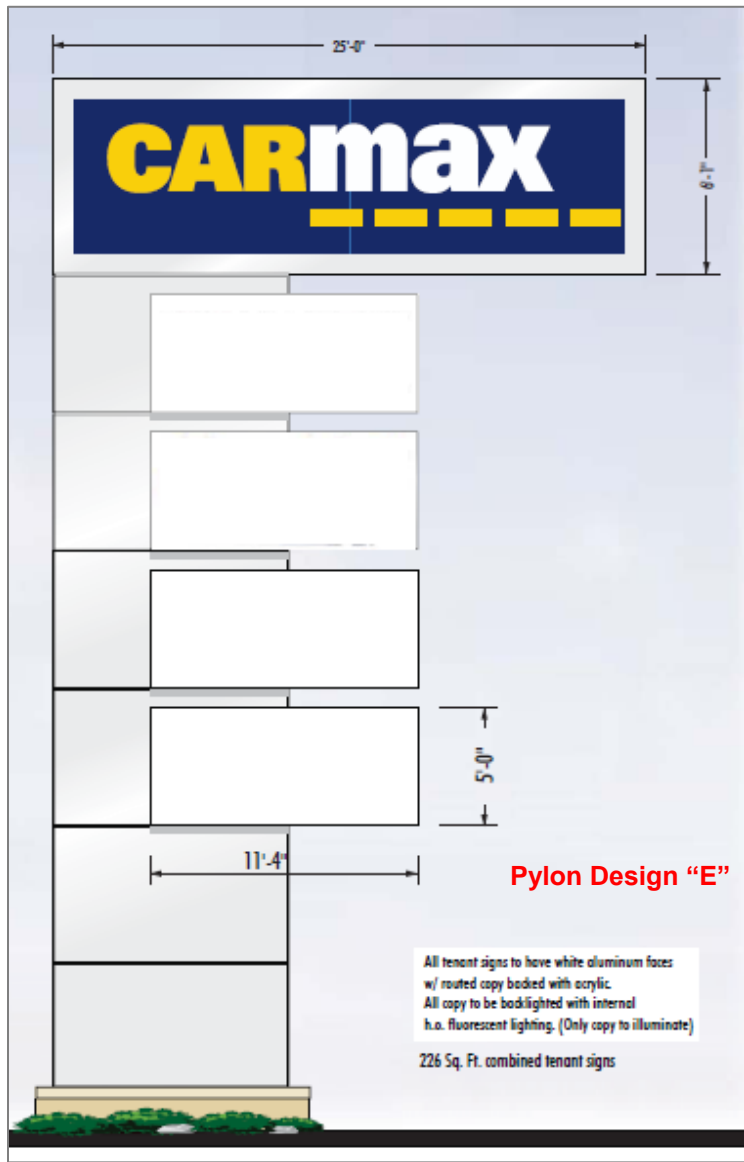


FIGURE 10: Proposed Pylon Sign and Building-Mounted Sign



Building Signage (East façade)



FIGURE 11:
Proposed Monument Sign at Entry Drive

- I. **Grading and Drainage**: Sheet C5.0 shows the preliminary grading and drainage plan. The site would be graded such that finished grades would vary between 350 feet and 353.5 feet. No dirt would have to be hauled off-site, as whatever dirt that is cut would be used for fill in various areas of the site.

IV. CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE WORK SESSION

The following section aims to provide discussion topics and analysis of key issues. This work session will allow the Planning Commission to provide direction to the applicant and staff regarding any issues it wishes to be addressed before the project formally returns to the Planning Commission for a recommendation to the City Council. The areas noted below are where staff would find the Commission's input most helpful. A list of these discussion topics and specific questions regarding the proposal is attached to this report as Exhibit A for the Planning Commission's consideration and discussion.

A. Site Plan

The site plan has been designed to provide access and circulation to and from a single street, which provides access from Stoneridge Drive. For security reasons and in keeping with CarMax's corporate standards, various areas of the site are proposed to be enclosed with a fence or wall. As noted in Figure 9 of this staff report, the vehicle staging area will be enclosed with a 6-foot to 7-foot tall stucco wall, and the sales and display parking area will be enclosed with a guard rail and partially surrounded by a 6-foot ornamental fence.

The parking stalls in the customer and employee area meet or exceed minimum dimensions required by the PMC and are accessible via two driveways from the access drive. The customer and employee parking area will have trees and shrubs in landscape fingers and diamond planters. Due to concerns regarding leaf and fruit litter, no landscaping is proposed within the vehicle staging area. Landscaping along Interstate-580 and adjacent to the sales and display area consists of shrubs and groundcover.

Customer access to the sales building is from pedestrian entrances on the north and east facades. The FQC building and service building are not accessible to the public, and are located within the vehicle staging area.

Discussion Point

- A. Are the on-site circulation, parking layout, and positioning of the buildings acceptable?

B. Sales Building Design

The subject site is very visible, from both Interstate-580 and Stoneridge Drive, and adjacent land uses such as Continuing Life Communities. The building designs are especially important due to the site's prominent location, and buildings are expected to have high quality materials, well-designed architecture, and adequate landscaping. Staff and the applicant have made a significant effort to improve the design of the buildings, particularly of the sales and presentation building, within the limitations of corporate standards and identity.



FIGURE 12: Perspective view of the Sales Building from the Sales and Display Parking Area

Figure 12 provides a perspective view of the sales building from the sales and display parking area. The proposed buildings, including the sales building, are single-story, and would be constructed of mainly earth-tone materials.

Discussion Point

B. Are the building designs, colors and materials, and heights for the sales building acceptable?

C. Service Building

Staff and the applicant have also spent significant time discussing the massing and appearance of the proposed service building. At approximately 45,000-square feet, it is the largest building, and significantly larger when compared to the sales and presentation building (approximately 13,064-square-feet) and the FQC building (approximately 3,708-square-feet).

Consistent with Design Standard 1.3.5 in the Specific Plan, staff has requested that the applicant incorporate landscaping (e.g. green walls and/or trees) around the service building to soften its appearance. The applicant has indicated that landscaping in the vehicle staging area is not possible due to operational constraints and corporate standards, and further, its visibility is limited due to the fact that it is located within the vehicle staging area. In order to reduce the apparent massing of the service building, the applicant has added trellises to the east, north, and south elevations, and proposes to plant 24-inch box-size cedar trees outside the vehicle staging area to screen the building.

The plans provided for this workshop include perspective views of the service building, as viewed from the entry drive and from the Neighborhood Park, and are shown in Figure 13.

Providing trees and landscaping immediately around the service building would provide screening closer to the building, allowing for better screening, and create shadows on the building from the trees. Given the proposed design and size of the service building, staff's objective is to screen it adequately from the Neighborhood Park, Stoneridge Drive, Interstate-580, and the adjacent CLC site.

Discussion Point

C. Are the proposed architecture, architectural detail, and landscape screening for the service building acceptable?



Perspective View of Service Building and Project Site from Neighborhood Park



Perspective View of Service Building, Sales Building, and Project Site from Entry Drive

FIGURE 13: Perspective views of the Sales and Service Building

C. Signage

As mentioned in this report, a pylon sign is proposed along Interstate-580 and a monument sign is proposed facing Stoneridge Drive. The plan sheets for this workshop include several different options for the pylon sign, which are all proposed to be 45-feet tall (this is within the 48-feet maximum permitted by the Specific Plan). Since the remainder of the auto mall site will be developed in the future, and the Specific Plan limits freeway

same color for the background panels would allow for a more visually consistent sign (instead of only one panel being blue and others white, or multi-colored panels). Further, staff would like the applicant to provide a nighttime view of the sign.

Figure 11 in this staff report and Sheet 4 of the sign plan indicate a sign at the drive entrance to the site from Stoneridge Drive. Instead of a multi-tenant sign at this location, staff finds the proposed single-tenant sign to be more appropriate for the location since the other side of the entry drive provides a location for the future auto developer's signage, and also provides the applicant the ability to reduce the sign height from 8-feet to 6-feet (this modification would be shown on future plans).

Discussion Point

D. Are the proposed signs acceptable?

V. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this workshop was sent to all property owners and occupants within 1,000 feet of the Auto Mall site. Staff has not received any comments as of the publication of this report, and will forward to the Commission any public comments received after publication of this report.

VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Since the Planning Commission will take no formal action on the project at the work session, no environmental document accompanies this work session report. Environmental documentation will be provided in conjunction with the Planning Commission's formal review of the PUD application.

VII. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission review the attached material, take public testimony, and make suggestions/comments to the applicant and staff regarding the development of the site.

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