

**STAFF REPORT – PLANNING
CITY OF TEMECULA
PLANNING COMMISSION**

TO: Planning Commission Chairperson and members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Matt Peters, Director of Community Development

DATE OF MEETING: September 3, 2025

PREPARED BY: Jaime Cardenas, Case Planner

PROJECT SUMMARY: Planning Application No. PA25-0137, a Modification Application for the review and consideration by the Planning Commission of the as-built gray color scheme of 13 of Temecula Town Center's buildings (APNs: 921-320-012, -018, -021, -038, -041, -048, -052, 919-430-012).

RECOMMENDATION: Recommendation of Redesign in Order to Comply with the Temecula General Plan and the Temecula Municipal Code

CEQA: Project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (a), Projects Which are Disapproved

PROJECT DATA SUMMARY

Name of Applicant: Jennifer Lovelace

General Plan Designation: Community Commercial (CC)

Zoning Designation: Community Commercial (CC)

**Existing Conditions/
Land Use:**

Site:	Existing Commercial Center / Community Commercial (CC)
North:	Existing Commercial Center / Community Commercial (CC)
South:	Existing Commercial Center / Community Commercial (CC)
East:	Existing Commercial Center / Community Commercial (CC)
West:	Existing Commercial Center / Community Commercial (CC)

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

On June 1, 2005, the Planning Commission approved (PA04-0530) a new façade change to Temecula Town Center (TTC) that incorporated new decorative steel grill designs into stucco facade elements. A variety of decorative cornice treatments were also applied at the top of the stucco elements to provide interest and break-up the rooflines. In addition, pre-cast grapevine medallions were applied on each side of the stucco elements to evoke the wine making theme throughout the center. The center repainted all the new tower elements with earth tones that complement the center's red prominent brickwork. Approved colors and materials that were approved and conditioned with this Modification Application were the following (no gray tones):

- Metal Roof Paint Frazee 7826A — Ayres Rock
- Concrete Roof Tile Eagle Flat 4615 — Weathered Teracota
- Stucco Color Frazee 7784M — Nullabor Sand
- Stucco Color Frazee 8234M — Daplin
- Stucco Color Frazee 8205D — Brass Bucket
- Stucco Color Frazee 8185D — Ardmore Green
- Stucco Color Frazee 8223N — Sienna Sand
- Stucco Color Frazee 8386N — Winestain
- Stucco Color Frazee 7755D — Tannery
- Trellis Paint Olympic Solid Body Stain -Chamoix
- Metal Mesh Frazee 8243M — Amber Waves

On July 20, 2017, the Planning Commission approved (PA17-0167) a Modification Application to TTC that would change the facades to a more modern/Spanish architectural style (see sample image below). The project was approved but never constructed.

On January 31, 2023, Code Enforcement responded to a complaint regarding the paint color changes occurring at TTC. After an investigation, it was determined that there had not been a Modification Application for planning staff/planning commission to review the paint colors. It is important to note that the center was not done painting the buildings at this time but despite the warning they continued painting without approvals. Code Enforcement notified the property owner/representatives that they must submit a Modification Application to review the new colors.

On February 15, 2023, Planning accepted PA23-0066, a Modification Application (planning review only) to review the unpermitted paint scheme where staff subsequently provided the applicant with the following comments on March 6, 2023:

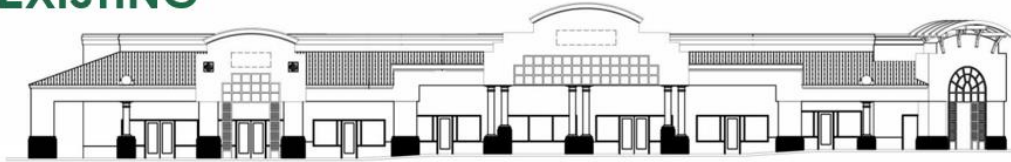
The planning department cannot support the proposed paint modifications:

Whereas, in 2005 the Planning Commission approved a new façade change to this shopping center that incorporated new decorative steel grill designs into stucco facade elements. A variety of decorative cornice treatments were also applied at the top of the stucco elements to provide interest and break-up the rooflines. In addition, pre-cast grapevine medallions were applied on each side of the stucco elements to evoke the wine

making theme throughout the center. The center repainted all the new tower elements with earth tones that complement the center's red prominent brickwork.

Whereas, on July 20, 2017, the Planning Commission approved a Major Modification to the center that would change the facades to a more modern/Spanish architectural style (see sample image below). The project was approved but never constructed.

EXISTING



PROPOSED



Whereas the proposed gray tones are not an accurate paint scheme that are consistent with existing architecture of the buildings.

Now, therefore, new paint colors should be provided to ensure that the new paint scheme is consistent with the aesthetic of the center.

On March 10, 2023, the applicant requested direction on how to move forward with the gray paint colors they already finished applying to the buildings since they did not intend to revert to the previous color scheme. Since Planning Department staff had already communicated that they would not be in support of the colors, staff decided to seek input from the Planning Commission Commercial Center Sub Committee.

On May 5, 2023, Planning staff including Jaime Cardenas, Scott Cooper, and Matt Peters met with the Planning Commission Commercial Center Subcommittee that includes Gary Watts and Lanae Turley-Trejo. The meeting was conducted on-site at TTC where staff discussed the history of the center, changes in ownership, previous entitlements, architecture and appropriate uses of colors, and examples of other areas in Temecula that underwent paint modifications.

The subcommittee briefly asked about the enforcement/compliance, asked what appropriate colors would be, and provided staff with their opinions and direction which was consistent with the comment letter staff provided to the applicant dated March 6, 2023. The subcommittee mentioned they would like to see a color that is consistent with the architectural style and colors

that are compatible with the surrounding areas. They affirmed that grey is not a compatible nor appropriate color for the center. They requested staff convey to the property owners that:

(1) the owners should repaint the center to the colors identified in the last approved Modification Application or

(2) if they choose to change the colors that they should be “in the family of colors” of the latest approved Modification Application. An acceptable color alternative would be an “off-white” color since it is a more congruent color to the prominent brick and tile throughout the center.

The following months entailed a series of rescheduled meetings, meetings to discuss the owner’s justification for painting the site gray, and email exchanges where staff reiterated the same messages and code interpretations, and staff and City Attorney responding to applicant’s counsel. After a lack of appropriate responsiveness, the planning application was cancelled due to inactivity, and the case was turned over to Code Enforcement.

On September 6, 2023, the following “Cease and Desist” legal correspondence letter from Richards Watson Gershon, the City’s legal counsel, was provided to TTC’s Management company:

On August 12, 2023, the Property was found to be in violation of Sections 17.05.030 and 17.08.070 of the Temecula Municipal Code (“TMC” or “Code”). The City’s Code Enforcement Field Supervisor, Tom Cole, served an official Notice and Order to Pay Civil Penalty of five hundred dollars (\$500) for “continued violations” of the TMC for an unapproved color scheme at the Property. As explained in prior correspondence with City personnel, the Property owner/manager initiated a gray-scale color scheme at the Property without necessary approval from the City. The unapproved color scheme is inconsistent with the existing architecture of the building and the building performance standards set forth in the Code, which call for architecturally compatible colors and paint schemes for the Spanish-influenced architecture style of the Property.

On August 22, 2023, the Properties were again found to be in continued violation of Sections 17.05.030 and 17.08.070 of the TMC, causing Code Enforcement to issue a further Notice and Order to Pay Civil Penalty of one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

On August 28, 2023, the Properties were again found to be in continued violation of Sections 17.05.030 and 17.08.070 of the TMC, causing Code Enforcement to issue a third Notice and Order to Pay Civil Penalty of one thousand dollars (\$1,000).

The above referenced citations were paid but the Temecula Town Center Owner(s) remained dissatisfied with the City’s “interpretation” of the municipal code as it applies to their unpermitted colors. Staff advised the applicant that they may elect to argue their points before the Planning Commission if they believe their project is consistent with the Development Code and General Plan as it relates to the commercial center’s paint scheme and its compatibility to the rest of the center and the surrounding neighborhood.

On October 18, 2024, the Community Development Department accepted PA24-0383, a second Modification Application submitted by an architect who provided his opinion and justification for the unpermitted paint. Staff responded with a detailed correction letter that encapsulated the City's stance on the unpermitted colors discussed in meetings, on conference calls, formal correspondence (via corrections letters and citations) and emails. The comment letter provided again iterated:

(1) that the owners should repaint the center to the last approved Modification Application; or,

(2) that if they choose to change the colors that they should be "in the family of colors" of the latest approved Modification Application. No resubmittals were accepted since the applicant then elected to submit a third Planning Application; this time to appeal to the Planning Commission to preserve the unpermitted colors.

Due to the applicant/architect emailing staff to inform is the City that he was removing himself from the project (March 11, 2025), a lack of reasonable responsiveness, and a lack of submitting a Modification Application for Planning Commission review, the case was once again turned over to Code Enforcement. During the period between August 11, 2023, and March 31, 2025, 18 citations were issued, with the owner incurring \$17,500 in fines.

On April 1, 2025, Jennifer Lovelace, the property owner representative, confirmed that they would like to pursue a Major Modification Application for the project, for approval of the existing colors, to be considered at a Planning Commission hearing with the understanding that staff cannot make the findings to support the new colors.

On April 14, 2025, the applicant submitted PA25-0137, a Modification Application for the review and consideration by the Planning Commission of the as-built gray color scheme of the TTC's buildings.

ANALYSIS

Temecula Town Center (TTC) is approximately 50-acres and is located to the northeast of the Ynez Road and Rancho California Road intersection. The commercial center contains office, retail and restaurant uses. The vicinity around this intersection includes similar commercial businesses in addition to the Temecula Auto Mall to the north and high-density residential apartments to the south. There are 24 buildings in the TTC (including attached major tenant anchor buildings). Thirteen of the buildings were painted with gray color tones including Dorian Gray (SW 7017), Dovetail (SW7018), Wall Street (SW7665). Warm White (DEW380) was used on the accent trim pieces.

General Plan

Temecula's General Plan's Community Design Element section aims to address the City's image enhancement and uphold design excellence. Goal 2, *Design Excellence* discusses the importance of an attractive community through maintenance and preservation of quality visual design. The thirteen painted buildings painted in gray tones stray significantly from the previously approved palette. Furthermore, the General Plan's Community Design Element is focused on enhancing Temecula's image and promoting a cohesive look among commercial centers and the

surrounding neighborhood. The extensive use of gray paint undermines the prescribed objectives by introducing a monochromatic aesthetic that clashes with the center’s prominent warm-colored brickwork and s-tile roofing materials. For this reason, staff offered the applicant to either return the colors to the previous condition or to pursue the modification application with a color scheme that the Planning Commission Commercial Center Sub Committee recommended; new colors should be “in the family of colors” of the last approved modification application on file, or an “off-white” color alternative could be considered.

Municipal Code

Temecula Municipal Code Section 17.08.070.B.2 Commercial/Office/Industrial Performance Standards describes the criteria of quality and compatibility of building design. The section goes on to describe uniform standards designed to provide variety and visual interest including the *use of a variety of complementary colors and avoid[s] the use of just one color/dark colors*”. As presented, staff cannot make the findings to support the proposed colors since they do not match the previously approved colors of the commercial center, nor have they proposed any color alternatives (including lighter earth tone colors that are “in the family of colors” to the original nor the “off-white” color option that was offered by the subcommittee.

Staff has made several attempts to work with the applicant to redesign the project so that it meets the development standards set forth in the Temecula Municipal Code and the General Plan. With no feasible way of preserving the unpermitted gray paint scheme nor finding consistency with the General Plan or Municipal Code, staff recommends the denial of PA25-0137, subject to CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (a), Projects Which are Disapproved.

LEGAL NOTICING REQUIREMENTS

The notice of the public hearing was published in the *Press Enterprise* on August 21, 2025, and mailed to the property owners within a 600-foot radius.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), staff has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15270 (a), Projects Which are Disapproved as a project is exempt from CEQA as staff is recommending that the project be disapproved as currently designed.

FINDINGS

Development Plan (Code Section 17.05.010.F)

The proposed use is in conformance with the General Plan for Temecula and with all applicable requirements of State law and other Ordinances of the City.

The project is not in conformance with the General Plan and the Temecula Municipal Code because Temecula’s General Plan’s Community Design Element section aims to address the City’s image enhancement and uphold design excellence. Goal 2, Design Excellence discusses the importance an attractive community through maintenance and preservation of quality visual design. For this reason, staff offered the applicant to either return the colors to the previous condition or to pursue the modification application with a color scheme that the Planning Commission Commercial Center Sub Committee recommended; new colors should be “in the

family of colors” of the last approved modification application on file, or an “off-white” color alternative could be considered. Furthermore, Temecula Municipal Code Section 17.08.070.B.2 Commercial/Office/Industrial Performance Standards describes the criteria of quality and compatibility of building design. The section goes on to describe uniform standards designed to provide variety and visual interest including the use of a variety of complementary colors and avoid[s] the use of just one color/dark colors”. As presented, the proposed colors since do not match the previously approved colors of the commercial center, nor have they proposed any color alternatives (including lighter earth tone colors that are “in the family of colors” to the original nor an “off-white” color option that would be compatible with the building’s design. Moreover, the gray color is a dark color that is not consistent with the standard set forth in Temecula Municipal Code Section 17.08.070.B.2.

The overall development of the land is designed for the protection of the public health, safety, and general welfare.

The overall design of the project, including the site, building, parking, circulation and other associated site improvements, is consistent with, and intended to protect the health and safety of those working and living in and around the site. The project has been reviewed for, and as conditioned, has been found to be consistent with all applicable policies, guidelines, standards and regulations intended to ensure that the development will be constructed and function in a manner consistent with the public health, safety, and welfare.

- ATTACHMENTS**
1. Aerial Map
 2. Draft PC Resolution
 3. Plan Reductions
 4. Applicant’s Statement of Justification
 5. Notice of Public Hearing