

Planning Commission Agenda Report

September 26, 2018
Item 5.a.

- SUBJECT:** P18-0217 and P18-0218
- APPLICANT:** Rosalind Rondash, Sonshine Enrichment Center Preschool
- PROPERTY OWNER:** Trinity Lutheran Church
- PURPOSE:** Applications for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and Design Review approvals to allow Sonshine Enrichment Center Preschool to remove two existing modular classrooms and construct an approximately 8,824-square-foot preschool building, and to increase preschool enrollment from 99 to 120 students
- LOCATION:** 1225 Hopyard Road
- GENERAL PLAN:** Public and Institutional
- ZONING:** R-1-6,500 (One-Family Residential) District
- EXHIBITS:**
- A. [Draft Resolution and Conditions of Approval](#)
 - B. [Narrative, Site Plan, and Floor Plan dated "Received August 24, 2018"](#)
 - C. [Location and Notification Map](#)
 - D. [Letter of Opposition](#)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission approve Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Case No. P18-0217 and Design Review Case No. P18-0218 based on the findings and subject to the draft conditions of approval in Exhibit A.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sonshine Enrichment Center Preschool (Sonshine), an existing preschool located at 1225 Hopyard Road on the site of the Trinity Lutheran Church, requests CUP and Design Review approvals to build permanent classroom facilities and to expand the overall enrollment by 21 students (from 99 to 120 students total). Physical improvements subject to Design Review include the construction of a new 8,824-square-foot preschool building and related site improvements including new landscaping. Nursery Schools (preschools) in the R-1-6,500 zoning district require Planning Commission review and approval of a CUP. Although the

preschool is subject to an existing CUP, a new CUP has been requested to reflect the proposed permanent facilities, as well as the increased enrollment. As proposed, staff believes this use, building design, and site layout are consistent with the objectives of the zoning district and will continue to be compatible with the surrounding uses.

BACKGROUND

In 1967, Trinity Lutheran Church site received CUP (UP-67-2) and Design Review (Z-67-8) approvals for the construction of an approximately 4,760-square-foot church facility that included a sanctuary, classrooms, administrative offices and a total of 69 parking spaces. Access was originally taken only from Golden Road, with a parking lot that wrapped around to Hopyard Road.

In 1993 and 1997, Trinity Lutheran Church received design approval to install temporary modular buildings to the northwest of the church building. The modular buildings were to house children in Sunday school as well as those enrolled in an on-site preschool program (Sonshine). The modular buildings were originally conditioned to be removed by 2001.

In 1999, Trinity Lutheran Church received CUP (UP-99-40) and Design Review (Z-99-212) approvals to expand the church facility with the construction of a new additions including a 6,220-square-foot sanctuary, 1,920-square-foot administrative office space, 1,560-square-foot multipurpose space, as well as to reconfigure the parking lot to remove all parking adjacent to Hopyard Road and create a new 44 stall parking lot accessed from Del Valle Parkway, for a total of 95 parking stalls. In addition, conditions of approval allowed the modular buildings to remain on site until June 2006 in anticipation of the future submittals for review and approval of a future education building. This condition was further extended to 2007.

In 2007, Trinity Lutheran Church received CUP (PCUP-155) and Design Review (PDR-513) approvals for replacement of the existing temporary modular buildings with an approximately 8,100-square-foot single-story education building to the east of the existing church building; the construction of an approximately 3,108-square-foot multipurpose room addition to be attached to the northwest of the existing church building, along Hopyard Road; and the expansion of the existing parking lot along Golden Road. This approval further extended the approval for the on-site modular buildings. The approval was made by the City Council following an appeal of the Planning Commission's decision, by neighbors along Golden Avenue who had concerns that the expanded parking lot and new configuration would create new parking stalls directly facing the single-family homes and headlight glare directly towards the existing homes. This project, however, was never constructed, and the entitlements expired.

In 2010, Trinity Lutheran Church received administrative approval to allow the two existing modular buildings to remain on-site for ten additional years (until June 10, 2020) or until a permanent education building is constructed.

SITE AND AREA DESCRIPTION

The subject site is bounded by Del Valle Parkway, Hopyard Road, and Golden Road, on a relatively flat, approximately 3.14-acre parcel. The site currently includes the Trinity Lutheran

Church and Sonshine Preschool; collectively these uses occupy approximately 18,678 square feet of building area including the sanctuary, administrative offices, multipurpose rooms, and modular classrooms. In addition to the buildings, the site has two parking lots with a total of 94 parking stalls¹, the west parking lot (50 spaces) has access from Golden Road, and the east parking lot (44 spaces) has access from Del Valle Parkway as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Aerial Photo



Located on the adjacent parcel to the west of the site is Early Years Children’s Center daycare which is not affiliated with the church. Early Years Children’s Center has an agreement with the church to use 14 of the church’s parking spaces in the Golden Road parking lot during weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. A private swim center is located to the north and Harvest Park is located to the east. Residential uses surround the site, located across Golden Road to the northwest, Del Valle Parkway to the southwest, and Hopyard Road to the south and southwest.

PROPOSED PROJECT

Sonshine currently operates within two modular buildings, and also makes use of one classroom and the kitchen within the Church building. These uses are proposed to be housed instead within a new 8,824-square-foot permanent building that will contain six classrooms, a kitchen, administrative offices, and storage facilities. The proposed preschool would continue to provide instruction for preschool-aged students. The preschool program would operate primarily during the typical school year (closed during the summer and on Federal Holidays) except for an annual Vacation Bible School (VBS) held in coordination with the church for one

¹ One standard space was removed with restriping to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking requirements

week each summer typically between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Typical hours of operation for the preschool would be Monday through Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. In addition, three handwriting classes are held for an additional hour on Fridays, and two additional preschool classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays that would stay until 3:30 p.m., all with approximately 20 students per class.

The applicant is proposing a maximum of 120 students within the six classrooms. The previous CUP approval references that the facility was licensed for a total of 99 students within five classrooms. There would be approximately 12 teachers, one floater teacher, and two-three administrative staff on-site at any one time. In addition, the school is a co-op facility in which approximately one parent volunteer per class may be expected per day. Collectively, a total of 22 staff and parent volunteers may be on-site at any given time during the preschool's operating hours.

The majority of students for the preschool would be dropped off/picked up by parents/guardians. For both drop-off and pick-up, parents/guardians would park on-site in either the Golden Road or Del Valle Parkway parking lots. As conditioned, no double parking, parking in non-designated stalls, or curbside drop-off and pick-up would be permitted.

The proposed building would be located in generally the same area as the existing modular buildings, wrapped along the southern portion of the existing outdoor play area as shown in Figure 2. The new building has been designed to complement the existing church building including the gabled entry with exposed rafter tails, wood posts, stucco and lapped wood siding, and asphalt shingle roof to match the existing church campus as shown in the rendering in Figure 3. In addition to the new building, minor on-site improvements to include pedestrian access improvements and landscape improvements along Golden Road are proposed. The proposed floor plan (Figure 4) for the preschool program consists of six classrooms, staff offices, a kitchen, and storage room.

The existing outdoor play equipment is proposed to be retained in place north of the proposed buildings with no new or additional play structures proposed at this time. The existing chain-link fencing surrounding the play area is proposed to be removed and replaced with a new solid wood fence that will be moved out to enlarge the open outdoor grass area. The classrooms would be divided into two play groups (as is the current practice) with a maximum of 60 students allowed in the play area at a time during regular preschool hours.

Current preschool operations require the use of one classroom and the kitchen facilities at the church to be utilized by the preschool each day. With the construction of the new preschool building, all preschool operations will now be able to be housed within the single building. The classroom and kitchen facilities within the church building will be able to be reclaimed by the church for church operations and Sunday school purposes. In addition to the reclaimed classroom within the church building, the church would continue to use three to four preschool classrooms within the new preschool building (currently, these classes are held in the modular as well as in the Church's classrooms) for up to 80 children for Sunday school. Sunday school participation is not anticipated to increase or intensify above its current levels.

Figure 2 – Proposed Site Plan

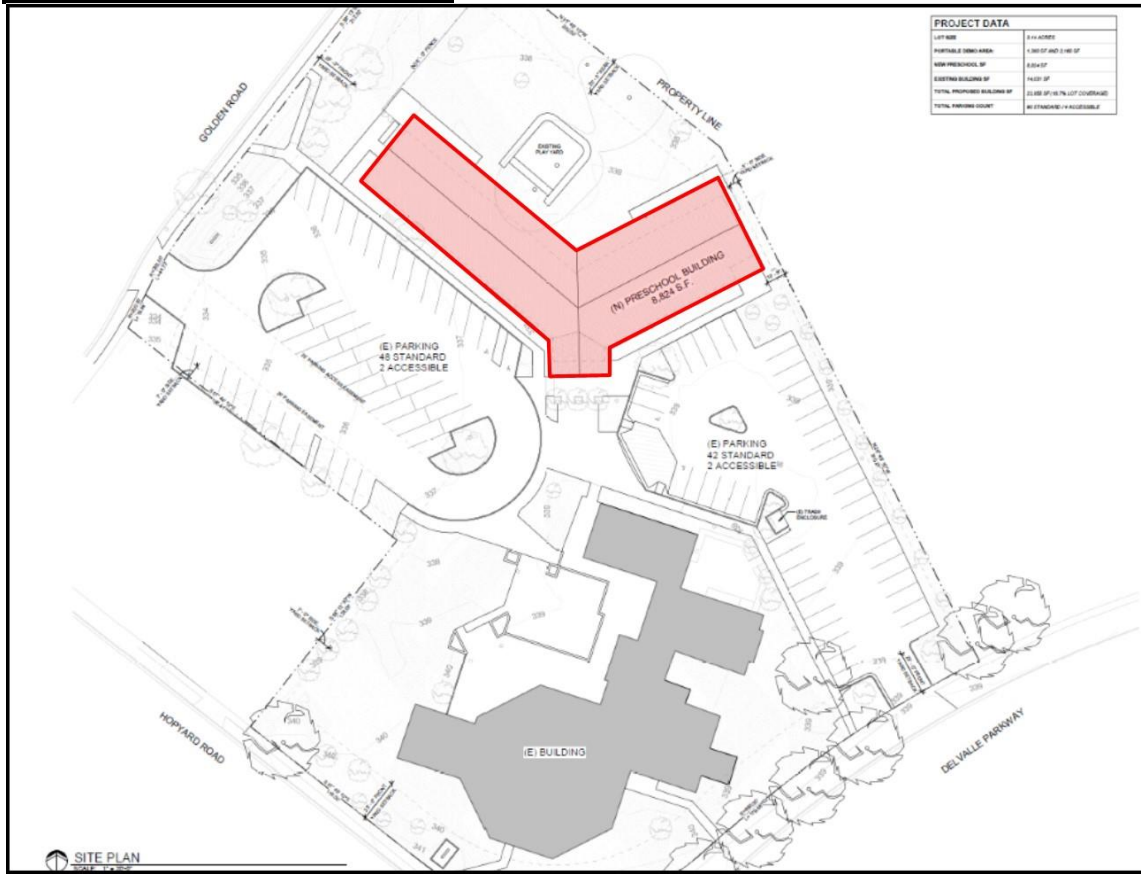
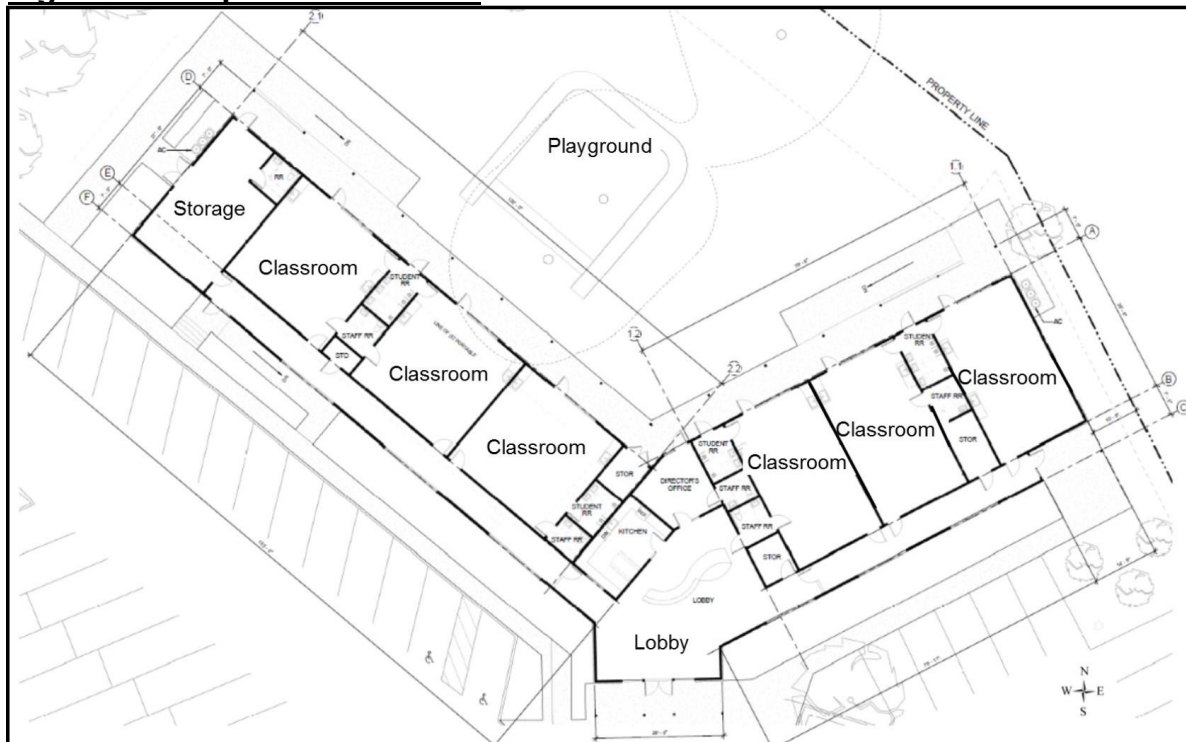


Figure 3 – Elevation Rendering



Figure 4 – Proposed Floor Plan



Please see the attached narrative and project plans (Exhibit B) for additional information on the proposed use.

Public Outreach

Staff always recommends that applicants speak to neighbors and property owners in close vicinity about their proposal to allow for public feedback and project refinement. On May 16, 2018, the applicant held a neighborhood outreach meeting. Notices were delivered by hand going door to door to homes directly adjacent to the church, mailed to additional homes including the swim club and adjacent HOA and apartment complex across Hopyard Road, and through social media postings on Nextdoor. A summary of the meeting can be found with the project narrative included within Exhibit B. To date, the applicant has indicated that no objections to the project have been received.

STAFF REVIEW/ANALYSIS

Land Use

The subject parcel has a General Plan land use designation of Public and Institutional and is zoned R-1-6,500 (One-Family Residential) District where nursery schools/preschools are conditionally permitted. Accordingly, the applicant has applied for a CUP. If the CUP were granted, the proposed preschool would be consistent with the applicable land use regulations. As noted, the preschool use was incorporated as a component of a series of prior CUP approvals for the entire Trinity Lutheran Church facility; however, the current CUP is intended to reflect the updated, permanent facilities and related site improvements, and to establish a

maximum enrollment of 120 students; it also provides an opportunity to update and clarify conditions of approval.

One of the primary concerns in reviewing a CUP application is the effect of a proposed use on surrounding uses. The applicant has been operating a preschool at their current location for approximately 20 years with just under 100 students. Staff is not aware of any known or reported issues with this operation. And, over the years, the Planning Commission has granted a number of CUPs for similar preschool facilities in residential areas. These approved uses have generally not proven to result in substantial issues or incompatibilities with surrounding uses in the vicinity. The new preschool building would be located in generally the same area as the existing modular buildings and would not require changes to the existing on-site access and circulation. The existing outdoor play equipment would remain the same, with the outdoor play area slightly enlarged, but generally in the same location. The overall operations of the preschool would also remain generally the same, with an overall increase of 21 students above current enrollment.

Should future problems arise with the proposed use, the City would have the ability to bring the application back to the Planning Commission for mitigation, or possible permit revocation, if necessary. Based on the existing use and operation history as well as past experience with similar uses, staff believes that such an action would be unlikely.

In addition, the following sections of this Agenda Report provide detailed analysis of the areas with the greatest likelihood of creating neighborhood compatibility issues, including parking, noise and traffic. As detailed in that analysis, the proposed use would not generate noise, traffic, or parking shortages such that surrounding residential neighborhoods would be adversely affected. Therefore, from a land use perspective, and as conditioned, staff finds the proposed use to be acceptable on the site and believes that the proposed use will be compatible with the surrounding uses, and will not result in adverse impacts to the community.

Architecture and Development Standards

Staff believes the new preschool is attractive and well designed to include a range of materials and finishes that are compatible with the existing church campus and surrounding uses. Staff believes that the location and design of the new building is consistent with the zoning standards.

The Floor Area Ratio (FAR) would increase from 12.8% to 16.7% with the proposed project, which complies with the General Plan's 60% FAR limit for Public and Institutional properties.

The project is required to comply with the development standards of the R-1-6,500 District. As shown below in Table 1, the proposed project would comply with all height, floor area ratio, and setback standards.

Table 1 - Site Development Standards

Site Development Standards	R-1-6,500 Development Standards	Proposed Project
Setbacks		
Front Yard	23 feet min.	59 feet 11 inches to Golden Road
Side Yard	5 feet min.	10 feet 6 inches Harvest Park property line
Rear Yard	20 feet min.	20 feet Swim Center property line
Height		
(measured from grade to the mean height between the main roof ridge and the eaves per the PMC)	30 feet max.	14 feet
(measured from grade to the roof peak)	N/A	20 feet 3 inches
Floor Area Ratio	40%	16.7% (includes existing church facilities and new preschool building)

Traffic and Circulation

The Traffic Engineering Division has reviewed the project narrative and plan that was prepared for the proposed use, and has determined that the proposed hours of operation and increase in the number of students would not have a significant impact to existing traffic levels, primarily because the attendance for the preschool and the associated increase in peak hour trip generation are minimal and therefore no additional traffic analysis was required. Additionally, the proposed preschool’s peak traffic activities would not coincide with the City’s AM/PM peak hour traffic levels or the church’s peak activities. To ensure adequate access and circulation is maintained, the Traffic Engineering Division has included a recommended condition of approval requiring that all parents/guardians be required to park in an available parking space and that double parking or curbside drop-off and pick-up would be prohibited.

Parking

For the proposed use, the Pleasanton Municipal Code (PMC) requires one parking space for each employee, including teachers and administrators, and one parking space for every four students in the tenth grade or above. (The PMC student parking requirement is not applicable to the preschool since the children are below the tenth grade.) According to the application narrative, the preschool would have a maximum of 22 persons, including parent volunteers, on-site at any given time during the preschool operating hours, requiring a total of 22 parking spaces.

There are 94 parking spaces available on-site. Of these, 14 spaces are used by Early Years Children Center daycare during weekdays from approximately 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. under an existing agreement with Trinity Lutheran Church.

The church currently does not hold any weekday services or study groups during the preschool hours of operation and maintains a limited administrative staff with approximately three staff members working between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. daily. All church services are held on Sundays, with choir practice and bible study groups held during the week at 7 p.m., after the preschool is closed.

Based on the existing use by Early Years Children Center (14 spaces), and Trinity Lutheran Church (3 spaces), 77 other parking spaces would be available for all on-site uses during the preschool's operating times. As noted, Sonshine requires a maximum of 22 parking spaces per the PMC, meaning that a surplus of 55 parking spaces would be available on-site at almost all times. Therefore, the proposed use would be consistent with the PMC and not result in a deficit of parking.

Staff notes that the PMC parking requirements do not directly address parking demand during school drop-off and pick-up times, which would be periods with the greatest likelihood of parking issues or conflicts among uses on the site. However, staff anticipates conflicts related to parking demand and potential congestion will be minimized since (1) the opening and closing hours for the preschool are outside of the most parking-intensive operating hours for the church (i.e., church services, choir practice, and bible study); (2) drop-off and pick-up related parking is generally short term, allowing for a "turnover" of spaces during the pick-up and drop-off periods; (3) start times between the preschool's classes for two-year olds, and three- and four-year olds are staggered, reducing peak parking demand at pick-off and drop-off times; and (4) some proportion of students can reasonably be expected to carpool or walk, reducing the peak pick-up/drop-off parking requirement to less than one vehicle per student.

Therefore, based on the above parking analysis and recommended conditions of approval, staff believes that the proposed use would not adversely affect parking supply at the subject site and that adequate parking exists on-site to accommodate all existing and proposed uses. However, should parking problems occur, staff has included a condition of approval which allows the Director of Community Development to refer the use permit back to the Planning Commission for possible additional mitigation measures (Exhibit A). Possible mitigating conditions could include reducing the number of students and/or modifying the preschool's schedule.

Noise

The PMC states that a proposed conditional use must be in accordance with the objectives of the Zoning Ordinance. One of those objectives is to "promote the stability of existing land uses that conform with the General Plan and to protect them from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions." Although the total number of students would increase over current levels, staff does not expect the preschool would generate interior noise levels substantially greater than the existing facility. In particular, the permanent building, built to current structural and

energy efficiency standards will be considerably better insulated and provide improved noise mitigation than that the existing modular buildings currently in use. All classes would continue to be held indoors, with the exterior doors closed during business hours. Although other similar applications have included conditions requiring all exterior windows to remain closed during business hours as well, staff believes that the building design and location of the windows generally facing the City park and swim center, and not the residential homes, does not warrant this condition at this time. According to the applicant, there would be no loud amplified noise, music or speech generating noise above typical speech levels. Beyond that, based upon the interior floor plan of the proposed facility, in conjunction with operational features of the project, staff does not believe that any special noise mitigation (i.e., double layer of sheetrock on interior walls) would be necessary.

In terms of noise impacts related to the outdoor play area, the existing play area does face the front yards of the residences across Golden Road to the north, with the nearest residence located approximately 110 feet from the new solid wood fence of the playground. Staff is not aware of existing problems or complaints with respect to noise from the existing preschool operations. Given the removal and replacement of the chain-link fence with a solid wood fence to help reduce outdoor noise impacts, and that the existing play equipment location is not proposed to be changed and will continue to be located adjacent to the building generally facing the adjacent public park and swim center, staff does not anticipate the enlarged outdoor play area will create any adverse exterior noise impacts even though its northern edge would be closer to the residential homes. Given the lack of reported noise issues, relatively small increase in enrollment, and fact that the current outdoor play equipment location and the nature of the proposed use is not substantially changing, staff believes there will not be substantial noise impacts from the proposed project.

Landscape and Tree Removal

An arborist report was prepared for the proposed project which specifies the species, size, health, and value of the existing trees on the site that exceed six inches in diameter. The arborist report evaluated a total of 23 trees on-site, eight of which are heritage trees. Based on the proposed site plan, it is estimated approximately 19 trees would be preserved and four would be removed (one heritage tree). Based on the current application, the mature trees within the existing playground area will be retained. The trees to be removed are located adjacent to the Golden Road parking lot and the modular buildings and will be removed to accommodate the new construction.

The preliminary landscape plan includes new landscaping with trees to be planted along the perimeter of the playground area between the playground and City park as well as along the Golden Road street frontage. Additional landscaping will also be planted throughout the site between the building and existing parking lot. There is also a new two-foot tall stacked stone meandering retaining wall along Golden Road. More details are available in Exhibit B. Overall, staff believes the proposed plant species, quantities, and sizes are adequate and appropriate to the site.

ALTERNATIVES

As articulated above, staff believes the use, as proposed, is consistent with the objectives of the zoning district and the project has been designed to complement the existing church facility. However, alternatives to the proposal that could be considered by the Planning Commission include:

1. Denial of the application. Such an action would continue to allow preschool with up to 99 students in the existing modulars, since such a use is already conditionally permitted on the subject property and allow for the preschool to remain in the existing modular classrooms until 2020 at which time (unless a revised application is approved) the preschool would have to shut down or relocate; or
2. Approval of the CUP and Design Review with modifications. The Planning Commission could approve the CUP to operate a preschool at the current level of enrollment, with modified hours of operation, or other changes such as building design or site improvement changes.

Since staff believes the findings to approve the project could be made as proposed and conditioned, believes the project will not adversely impact any existing uses or the surrounding area, and the project has been designed to be compatible with the existing church as well as all applicable site development standards, staff recommends that neither of the two project alternatives above be pursued.

SUMMARY OF PROS/CONS OF PROJECT

PROS	CONS
Removes old outdated modular buildings with an attractive permanent building.	Increases traffic and parking demand at this project site by 21 additional students (however, circulation and parking impacts would not be adverse)
Provides expanded educational services to support academic growth and improvement for young children	
Consistent with zoning regulations	

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of this application was sent to surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of the site. Staff has provided the location and noticing maps as Exhibit C for reference. At the time this report was published, staff received one email in opposition to the project included in Exhibit D.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15303, New Construction, Class 3. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

CONCLUSION

As proposed and conditioned, staff believes that the proposed building and expanded use will be compatible with and will not detrimentally affect the existing or future adjacent/nearby uses or residences. Conditions of approval have been included which will ensure that the safety and general welfare of the surrounding area, and the City in general, is maintained. Staff believes that the proposed use will fulfill a community need and that the proposed location is appropriate.

Staff Planner: Jennifer Hagen, Associate Planner, 925-931-5607 or jhagen@cityofpleasantonca.gov

Reviewed/Approved By:

Steve Otto, Senior Planner

Ellen Clark, Planning Manager

Gerry Beaudin, Director of Community Development