

# Planning Commission Staff Report

October 12, 2011 Item 5.a.

**SUBJECT**: P11-0712

APPLICANT: University of San Francisco

**PROPERTY OWNERS**: Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and MLIC Asset

Holdings II LLC

**PURPOSE**: Application for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a college

for adult education.

GENERAL PLAN: Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and

**Professional Offices** 

**ZONING**: Planned Unit Development – Commercial-Office District

**LOCATION**: 6120 Stoneridge Mall Road, Suites 150 & 190

**EXHIBITS**: A. Draft Conditions of Approval

B. Applicant Narrative and Project Plans

C. Trip Generation Analysis by Hexagon Transportation

Consultants, Inc.

D. Letter from Stoneridge Properties, LLC E. PUD-Minor Modification Approval Letter

F. Location Map G. Noticing Map

#### **BACKGROUND**

The University of San Francisco is proposing to locate a regional campus at 6120 Stoneridge Mall Road, Suites 150 and 190 within the Stoneridge Corporate Plaza development. The subject site is located within a Planned Unit Development (PUD) – Office-Commercial zoning district. The PUD did not allow schools and colleges for adult education. Therefore, the applicant submitted for a Minor Modification to Stoneridge Corporate Plaza located at 6120, 6130, 6140, 6150, and 6160 Stoneridge Mall Road in order to establish schools and colleges for adult education if more than twenty students are present at the facility at one time as conditionally permitted uses. This modification was administratively approved by the Planning Manager (Exhibit E). The applicant submitted the subject conditional use permit application for concurrent processing with the Minor Modification to establish a regional campus for the University of San Francisco at the subject location.

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located within Stoneridge Corporate Plaza, across from Stoneridge Mall. The site is bounded by Interstate Highway 680 to the east, BART and the property approved for the Windstar development to the north, Stoneridge Mall to the west and office/commercial uses in Pleasanton Corporate Commons directly to the south. Figure 1 provides photographs of the site and building.

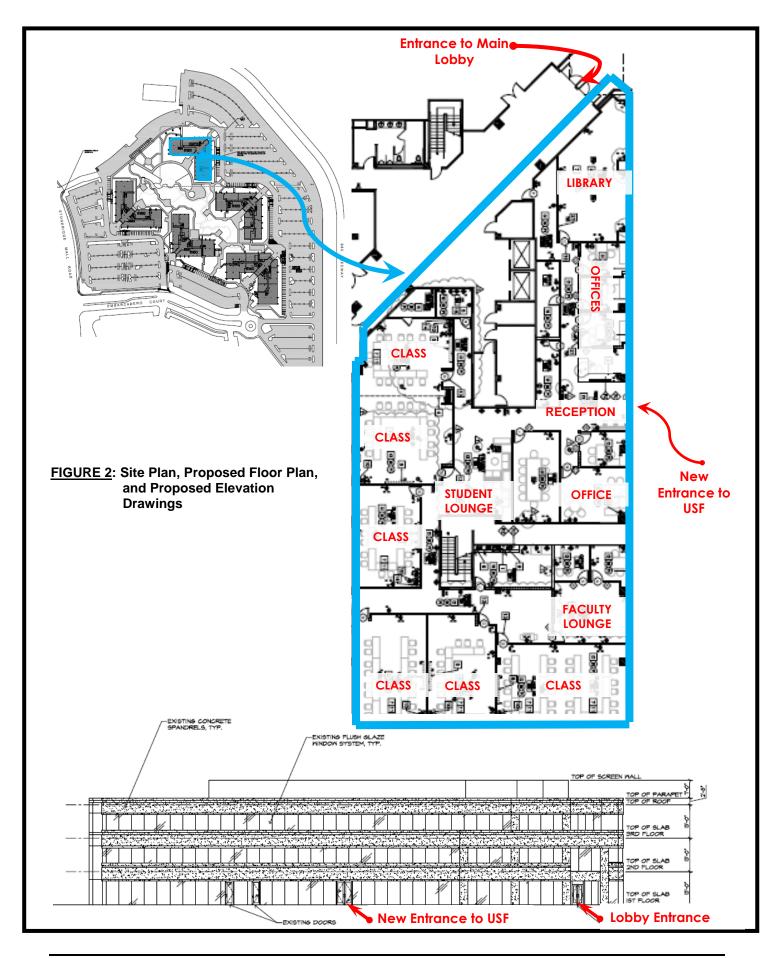






FIGURE 1: Photographs of subject site and subject building

Stoneridge Corporate Plaza consists of five buildings situated around a park which is open to the public. Access to the southern portion of the development is provided from Embarcadero Court and access to the northern portion of the development is provided from a drive aisle from Stoneridge Mall Road. A parking lot surrounds the buildings. The three-story subject building is approximately 72,080 square feet in size. Businesses currently occupying the building include: American Baptist Homes of the West (office), CommVault Americas (office), Insurance Company of the West (office), and Seniority, Inc. (office).



#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed conditional use permit is to operate a college for adult education at the subject location. The University of San Francisco East Bay Campus offers undergraduate degree completion, credential and graduate programs in Education, Nursing, and Business and Professional Studies. As described in the project narrative, the proposed use would operate with the schedule outlined in Table 1 (the "Number of People" shown in Table 1 varies from the applicant's narrative in that Table 1 includes the maximum of eight faculty members that could be at the campus if all six classrooms were being used simultaneously).

**TABLE 1**: Operational Details

	DAYS OF WEEK	HOURS	NUMBER OF PEOPLE
STUDENTS & FACULTY	Monday – Thursday	4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	25 – 58
	Monday – Thursday	6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	50 – 108
	Saturday	8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.	25 – 83
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	Monday – Friday	9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	5 – 10
	Saturday	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	5 – 10

Administrative staff is present at the campus on Fridays, but no classes are held on Fridays or Sundays. However occasional meetings at the campus may be held on Fridays. Students have access to campus facilities, such as the library, when administrative staff and/or faculty are present.

Figure 2 shows a site plan, proposed floor plan, and proposed western elevation drawings of the subject suite. The subject tenant space is approximately 11,178-square-feet in size and is located on the first floor of the building. The floor plan consists of 6 classrooms, a student lounge, a faculty lounge, library, a conference room and administrative offices. As shown in Figure 2, an entrance and pedestrian pathway leading directly to the university's reception area is proposed on the west elevation.

## **ANALYSIS**

Conditional uses are those uses which, by their nature require special consideration so that they may be located properly with respect to the objectives of the Municipal Code and with respect to their effects on surrounding properties. In order to achieve these purposes, the Planning Commission is empowered to approve, conditionally approve, or deny applications for use permits. The following sections seek to provide analysis of the proposed use with respect to potential impacts to land use, parking, and noise.

# Land Use

The subject site has a General Plan designation of Retail/Highway/Service Commercial, Business and Professional Offices. The property is zoned Planned Unit Development – Commercial–Office (PUD-C-O) District. The PUD-Minor-Modification recently approved establishes schools and colleges with more than 20 students for adult education as conditionally permitted uses in Stoneridge Corporate Plaza (6120-6160 Stoneridge Mall Road).

One of the primary objectives in reviewing a Conditional Use Permit application is to ensure that impacts to adjacent land uses are minimal. The proposed college campus will be located indoors within an enclosed building with the majority of classes scheduled after normal business hours. Land uses on surrounding properties include land zoned for high density residential and commercial to the north, commercial retail to the west, and office to the south. Multi-family residences exist further south on Stoneridge Mall Road across from JC Penny Plaza.

The proposed university would hold classes on weekdays (with the exception of Fridays) between 4:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The campus would be closed on Sundays for instruction.

Instruction entails a lecture and discussion between students and faculty. There are no laboratories for experiments or operational components that would be disturbing to adjoining tenants.

# Parking and Trip Generation

The architectural plans note that a total of 1,741 parking spaces are on the subject property. The subject building and other buildings on the site have approximate square footage as follows:

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(Subject Building) 6120 Stoneridge Mall Road: 72,080 square feet
6130 Stoneridge Mall Road: 111,516 square feet
6140 Stoneridge Mall Road: 190,447 square feet
6150 Stoneridge Mall Road: 75,354 square feet
6160 Stoneridge Mall Road: 110,432 square feet
TOTAL: 559,829 square feet
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Therefore, Stoneridge Corporate Plaza was constructed at an approximate parking ratio of 1 parking space per 322 square feet. The tenant space that the University of San Francisco will occupy is approximately 11,178 square feet in size and therefore approximately 35 spaces are "theoretically" allocated to the suite.

Pleasanton Municipal Code Sections 18.88.030(D)(2) and 18.88.030(E)(2) address parking requirements for schools and colleges. These two code sections require the greatest number of parking spaces as determined by square footage or number of people that are at the facility at one time. Table 2 summarizes how many parking spaces the proposed university would require based on these criteria.

TABLE 2: Parking Requirements based on Pleasanton Municipal Code

PLEASANTON MUNICIPAL CODE REQUIREMENT	UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO PROPOSAL	REQUIRED PARKING SPACES
1 space for each 60 square feet of floor area usable for seating in all facilities in which simultaneous use is probable	Classrooms: 4,007 square feet Student Lounge: 268 square feet Library: 631 square feet TOTAL: 4,906 square feet.	82
1 space for each employee, including teachers and administrators and one space for each four students	10 administrative staff 8 faculty 110 students	46

As noted in Table 2, the requirements of the Pleasanton Municipal Code vary depending on whether the calculation is based on square foot or number of administrators, faculty, and students. The number of parking spaces based on the number of employees and calculating 1 space for each 4 students is 46.

The tenant space is 11,178 square feet and consists of 6 classrooms and a student lounge, faculty lounge, library, a conference room and administrative offices. The aggregate square footage of areas likely to be used simultaneously is 4,906 square feet and consists of classrooms, the student lounge, and the library. Therefore, 82 parking spaces are required based on a requirement of 1 parking space for each 60 square feet. However, this also assumes that all classrooms are concurrently occupied. Even though all of the classrooms could theoretically be utilized at the same time, it is not likely that they will all be used simultaneously at full capacity.

The applicant secured the services of a traffic consultant to complete a trip generation analysis for the proposed regional campus. The study is attached to this staff report as Exhibit C. The intent for the study was to evaluate the impact to traffic during peak afternoon hours as a result of the proposed campus. The study identified the existing transit services and surveyed students that visit the existing 3 regional University of San Francisco campuses in Cupertino, San Ramon, and Santa Rosa. The study notes the peak hour of trip generation occurred between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. and most trips were generated by students arriving for class by automobile. Additionally, the average trip generation rate between the other campuses is estimated at 1.49 trips for each 1,000 square feet. The Traffic and Safety Division has reviewed the proposed operation and trip generation analysis and finds that the estimated trip generation is similar to that of an office use (1.33 trips/1,000 square feet).

Based on the traffic consultant's travel demand forecast model which considers proximity, frequency, and routes of transit service in addition to automobile ownership and income statistics of university staff and students, it is estimated that approximately 6% of the visitors to the university campus would use transit to access the subject location. The study notes that the percentage of BART ridership to and from the subject location may in actuality be greater than 6% since the operational hours and headways for BART are typically more convenient and therefore more desirable when compared to bus service, which is what is currently located in close proximity to the other regional campus locations.

In summary, the proposed use is not expected to result in traffic or parking issues. The applicant has clarified that all classes do not run concurrently and some courses are completed online. However, as previously noted, if all classes were to run at the same time and assuming that all administrators, faculty, and students drove alone, a total of 128 parking spaces would be needed. The subject site is in an office park and therefore most other businesses will operate during normal business hours (until 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.). The proposed university operates during late afternoons and evenings to accommodate the schedule of adult students and therefore adequate parking on-site is expected to serve the use. Additionally, the building's close proximity to the BART station makes public transit a more attractive option for students. Finally, if parking or circulation problems occur in the future, staff has included a condition of approval that allows the Director of Community Development to refer the Conditional Use Permit back to the Planning Commission for possible mitigation measures.

## Noise

A proposed conditional use must be in accord 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 objectionable intrusions." The PMC establishes noise limits for commercial zoned properties. For commercial zoned properties, PMC Section 9.04.040 states that,

No person shall produce or allow to be produced by any machine, animal, device, or any combination of the same, on commercial property, a noise level in excess of 70 dBA at any point outside of the property plane, unless otherwise provided in this chapter.

The proposed university consists of lecture and discussion between professors, teachers, administrators, and students. No activities that could be noisy or disturbing to the adjacent tenants are a part of the business operation.

The hours of operation for the business overlap with that of the surrounding tenants, but the greatest number of people for the subject business are scheduled for classes later in the evening hours, when surrounding businesses are closed for the day. Therefore, any noise associated with the subject business due to concurrent classes is expected to be nominal and is not expected to negatively impact surrounding businesses.

Therefore, staff does not believe that noise will be of concern to businesses that are tenants of the same building or businesses located on surrounding properties. Also, since other commercial uses provide substantial buffer between the site and residential uses, staff believes that the proposed university campus will not be concern to residents. If concerns regarding noise arise in the future, a condition of approval allows the Director of Community Development to refer the Conditional Use Permit back to the Planning Commission for possible mitigation measures.

#### Tenant Improvements

The applicant proposes interior tenant improvements and to install a new exterior entrance and pedestrian pathway to the exterior of the building. These improvements are subject to review and approval by the Building and Safety Division and by the Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Department.

# <u>Signage</u>

No signage is proposed as part of this application. A condition of approval requires the applicant to secure City approval should any signage be desired in the future.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notices regarding the proposed Conditional Use Permit application and related public hearing were mailed to the surrounding property owners and tenants within a 1,000-foot radius of project site. A map showing the noticing area is attached to this report. The public notice was also published in *The Valley Times*. At the time this report was prepared, staff has not received any comments or concerns.

## STONERIDGE PROPERTIES, LLC

The applicant has contacted Stoneridge Properties, the property management company for Stoneridge Mall and the surrounding areas, and has obtained a letter indicating that it does not oppose the University of San Francisco locating at the subject address. This correspondence is attached to this staff report as Exhibit D.

## **GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Land Use Element and Public Facilities and Community Program Element of the General Plan state several goals, policies, and programs that support the proposed project.

LU Goal 2: Achieve and maintain a complete well-rounded community of

desirable neighborhoods, a strong employment base, and a

variety of community facilities.

LU Program 2.2: Encourage the reuse of vacant and underutilized parcels and

buildings within existing urban areas.

LU Policy 13: Ensure that neighborhood, community, and regional

commercial centers provide goods and services needed by residents and businesses of Pleasanton and its market area.

LU Program 15.2: Promote the location of business services in Pleasanton to

support industrial, commercial, and office complexes.

PFCP Policy 7: Encourage and support high quality public and private

educational facilities in Pleasanton and facilitate lifelong

educational opportunities for all ages.

The University of San Francisco's regional campus will further these goals and programs in that it will provide adult educational opportunities to the community of Pleasanton and surrounding communities. The proposed school would be relocating to Pleasanton and the site's proximity to the BART station would make the educational opportunities offered by the

university also available to people outside the immediate Tri-Valley region. Additionally, conditions of approval are required for the use in order to prevent noise pollution, issues regarding parking and circulation, and other harmful intrusions. The use is compatible with other uses within the building and uses surrounding the property and is located with a substantial distance to existing residential neighborhoods.

### **FINDINGS**

The Planning Commission must make the following findings prior to granting the use permit:

A. That the proposed location of the conditional use is in accordance with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the purpose of the district in which the site is located.

The objectives of the Zoning Ordinance include fostering a harmonious, convenient, workable relationship among land uses, protecting land uses from inharmonious influences and harmful intrusions, promoting a safe, effective traffic circulation system, and ensuring that public and private lands ultimately are used for the purposes which are most appropriate and beneficial to the City as a whole. The subject site is zoned PUD-C-O District which generally has the characteristics of the City's O (Office) District. One purpose of the O District is to provide space for semipublic facilities and institutions that appropriately may be located in office districts.

Staff believes the proposed use as conditioned would be consistent with the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the Office District purpose in that it would provide a regional campus for a university that offers a multitude of educational opportunities. The location of the university is in close proximity to the BART station, which will make the educational opportunities offered by the University of San Francisco available to people in Pleasanton, the Tri-Valley region, and the greater Bay Area. Additionally, adequate parking on the site exists for students who drive to the subject location, and since the majority of the student population will visit the university in the late afternoon and evenings, the proposed use is not expected to cause parking conflicts. The subject site is currently surrounded by commercial uses and a substantial buffer exists between the property and existing residential uses. Therefore, staff believes that this finding may be made.

B. That the proposed location of the conditional use and the conditions under which it would be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or materially injurious to the properties or improvements in the vicinity.

The proposed university will be operated in a manner such that the public health, safety, and welfare will not be compromised. Staff does not expect significant concerns to arise from the proposed use since the proposed class size, hours of operation, and teacher-to-student ratio will ensure that it operates in harmony with the surrounding uses. Further, the conditions of approval require the applicant to

mitigate potential nuisances that may arise with the proposed use or possible future use. Staff believes that this finding may be made.

C. That the proposed conditional use will comply with each of the applicable provisions of the Municipal Code which apply to Conditional Uses.

The PUD zoning of the subject site permits the establishment of schools and colleges for adult education with more than 20 students at one time subject to conditional use permit approval. The proposed use, as conditioned, would comply with applicable provisions of the governing PUD and zoning ordinance. Granting a conditional use permit to the applicant would be consistent with the City's ability to regulate zoning as listed in the Municipal Code. The proposed use, as conditioned, will be integrated within the existing building without detrimentally impacting the surrounding properties or the City in general. Therefore, staff believes that this finding may be made.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15301, Existing Facilities, Class 1. Therefore, no environmental document accompanies this report.

#### CONCLUSION

The subject conditional use permit will allow the University of San Francisco to locate and operate at Stoneridge Corporate Plaza. The proposed business operation, as conditioned, will be compatible with surrounding land uses and will not create a conflict with respect to parking, noise, or other nuisance and is expected to be compatible with surrounding land uses. Therefore, staff believes the proposal merits approval.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission approve Case P11-0712 by taking the following actions:

- 1. Make the required conditional use permit findings as listed in the staff report; and
- 2. Approve Case P11-0712 subject to the conditions listed in "Exhibit A."

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