



**North Fair Oaks Community Council**  
San Mateo County Coordinated  
Departmental Response



**Date:** October 20, 2016  
**NFOCC Meeting Date:** October 27, 2016  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** 500-foot Notice  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Members, North Fair Oaks Community Council

**From:** Planning Staff

**Subject:** Consideration of a Use Permit, pursuant to Section 6500 of the San Mateo County Zoning Regulations, to convert an existing 0.43-acre parking lot (zoned M-1) to accommodate two playground areas, an assembly area, drop-off driveway zone, and staff and visitor parking located at 860 Charter Street, North Fair Oaks (APN 054-081-010) as part of a proposed charter school located on the adjacent parcel (APN 054-081-140), which is within the city limits of Redwood City.

County File Number PLN: 2014-00368

**PROPOSAL:**

The applicant, Launchpad Development Fifteen, LLC/Rocketship Education, is proposing to convert the existing single-story, 23,200 sq. ft. building located at 860 Charter Street in the City of Redwood City (APN 054-081-140), for use as an elementary school. The interior of the building will be renovated to include Transition Kindergarten through 5th Grade classrooms, special meeting rooms, faculty and administration offices, lounge areas and other support facilities. An approximately 1,968 sq. ft. learning lab and a 1,926 sq. ft. lunch room and assembly area will also be part of the proposed project. The project will also include the conversion of a parking lot, located in unincorporated San Mateo County (APN 054-081-010), to accommodate two playground areas, an assembly area, drop-off driveway zone, and staff and visitor parking.

An approximately 12,458 sq. ft. outdoor play area will be located at the front of the building and will be bordered by Charter Street and Bay Road. The play area will include a paved area for a basketball court, four-square, hopscotch, etc., and a turf area that will include play structures. When not in use, the central portion of the play area will be used as a pick-up/drop-off area. Tall fences, bollards, and a concrete seat wall will separate the play areas from the vehicle driveway.

Trees and shrubs will be planted around the play areas and around the perimeter of the site, including at select locations along the Charter Street and Bay Road street frontages, to provide privacy screening and shade for the play areas. Approximately 18 new trees will be planted and all trees will be a minimum of 24-inch box size. A minimum of 75 percent of the final plantings will be drought-tolerant California native and/or other suitable plants.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the North Fair Oaks Community Council provide a recommendation to the San Mateo County Planning Commission regarding the subject project proposal.

**BACKGROUND:**

Report Prepared By: Rob Bartoli, Project Planner, Telephone 650/363-1857

Applicant: Launchpad Development Fifteen, LLC/ Rocketship Education

Owner: Ks Mattson Partners LLP

Location: 860 Charter Street, Redwood City

APN: 054-081-010

Parcel Size: 0.43-acre

Existing Zoning: M-1 (Light Industrial)

General Plan Designation: Industrial Mixed Use - Urban

Existing Land Use: Parking lot and metal storage shed located at APN 054-081-010, for adjacent 23,200 sq. ft., one-story warehouse structure, which is located within the City of Redwood City at APN 054-081-140. The building is currently occupied by a specialty auto sales company. APN 054-081-140 is 0.69-acre in size.

Water Supply: Existing connection to City of Redwood City

Sewage Disposal: Existing connection to San Mateo County's Fair Oaks Sewer Maintenance District

Flood Zone: Zone X (area of minimal flooding); FEMA FIRM Panel 06081C0302E; effective October 16, 2012.

Environmental Evaluation: The required 30-day review and comment period for the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) commenced on September 30, 2016 and ends on November 1, 2016. The City of Redwood City is the lead agency.

Setting: The project site is located in a developed area and is surrounded primarily by light industrial and commercial uses within unincorporated San Mateo County. Light industrial and commercial uses surround the site on all sides. Specifically, businesses

in the area immediately to the east, south, and west of the site generally consist of small to medium-sized auto body and fabrication and repair facilities, air conditioning and heating repair, and construction management and storage facilities and other similar uses characteristic of light industrial areas. Larger light industrial business parks are located north of the site, across Bay Road.

South of Spring Street and within Redwood City, uses primarily consist of low density residential neighborhoods. Hoover Elementary School (Kindergarten through 8th Grade) and Hoover Park are located less than 0.25-mile southwest of the site.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **A. KEY ISSUES**

#### **1. Conformance with the General Plan**

Staff has reviewed and determined that the project complies with all of the applicable General Plan Policies, including the following:

##### **a. Urban Land Use**

Policy 8.14 (*Land Use Compatibility*) speaks to ensuring that industrial development is compatible with adjacent land uses. While the development of a school and associated parking lot and play area is not an industrial use, the proposed project is on an industrial zoned property. Light industrial and commercial uses surround the site on all sides. The proposed operation of a school and the associated parking facility, which is located in the unincorporated portion of the County has been mitigated and conditioned to reduce the impact of the school on surrounding industrial uses. These mitigations and conditions include restricting access to the site during drop-off and pick-up operations and requiring an operations plan that could be implemented if excess queues in the street occur.

Policy 8.36 (*Uses*) seeks to allow uses in zoning districts that are consistent with the overall land use designation.

The proposed project involves the renovation of an existing building and will avoid styles, colors, and materials that negatively impact the surrounding area. The proposed project has been designed to blend in with the surrounding community. The proposed project will not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

The operation of a school has the potential to impact surrounding uses by generating new vehicle trips to and from the site. These trips can impact the function of intersections and streets. As part of the environmental review for the project, a traffic study was prepared. The traffic study reviewed both traffic operations within the study area and

site access and circulation. The analysis of traffic circulation focused on the drop-off and pick-up operations of the school.

### *Traffic*

The proposed project will generate a net 462 trips during the AM peak hour and 247 trips during the PM peak hour. Per the traffic study and the IS/MND, the added project trips will not have a significant impact at any of the intersections included in the study area.

The proposed project will implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program to encourage students and employees to carpool, take transit, or use active modes of transport to get to and from school.

### *Site Circulation and Access*

Vehicular access to the site will be provided by three driveways. The existing driveway at the rear of the building will remain and will continue to provide access from Charter Street to surface parking spaces in this location. The existing 20-foot-wide easement that provides 150 linear feet of emergency access to adjacent properties will remain and will be clear at all times.

Primary access to the main parking lot used for student drop-off and pick-up will be provided via two driveways, one each on Charter Street and Bay Road. Charter Street is a County maintained road. Both driveways will be 24 feet wide. During the peak hours immediately before and after school, the driveway on Charter Street will be an inbound-only driveway, and the driveway on Bay Road will be outbound-only. School staff will be positioned at each driveway to restrict traffic entering and exiting these driveways to right turns only during these hours. The loading zone will begin on the south side of the crosswalk. Staff will be positioned at the crosswalk to ensure pedestrian safety and to direct vehicle traffic.

Vehicles will be directed to proceed into the designated loading area in groups (five vehicles in lane A and four vehicles in lane B) when the previous vehicles have cleared the loading zone. Support staff will then escort children between their vehicles and the designated walking path that leads to the indoor cafeteria. The total loading area provided will be 202 feet in length. No student activity will be permitted in the outdoor play area during drop-off and pick-up times. All students will remain indoors. During off-peak periods, the Charter Street driveway will be fenced and the Bay Road driveway will serve both inbound and outbound traffic.

Short-term traffic during drop-off (morning) and pick-up (afternoon) will be managed by on-site staff, with scheduled arrival/departure times by grade for students. Dismissal periods will be staggered to manage the flow of the pick-up activities and to minimize overcrowding on and near the school site. An all-student assembly is held at 8:00 a.m. each morning, which precludes a staggered drop-off time. Transitional Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 2:00 p.m.; regular Kindergarten and Grade 1 dismissal will be at 3:45 p.m.; Grades 2 and 3 will be dismissed at 4:00 p.m.; and Grades 4 and 5 will be dismissed at 4:10 p.m. Students that will attend after-school programs will be picked up between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

At full capacity, on most days of the week approximately 30 students will be dismissed at 2:00 p.m.; 120 students will be dismissed at 3:45 p.m.; approximately 180 students will be dismissed at 4:00 p.m.; approximately 100 students will be dismissed at 4:10 p.m.; and approximately 50 students will be picked up between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. On minimum days, which include a shorter school day on Thursdays, students will be dismissed as follows: 120 students at 1:50 p.m.; 160 students at 2:00 p.m.; 150 students at 2:10 p.m.; and 50 students between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Play periods, based on grades, will occur throughout the day with a maximum of 90 students at play at any one time.

If excess queues occur on-site on a continual basis, the project sponsor will work with City and County staff to identify possible changes in drop-off and/or pick-up procedures. These procedures will further ensure that drop-off and pick-up operations will not create safety hazards on surrounding public roadways. A condition of approval has been proposed by County staff to this project to require changes to operations if queues continue.

b. Man-Made Hazard Policies

Policy 16.50 (*Reduce Public Exposure to Hazardous Waste*) states that the County will work toward reducing public exposure to hazardous waste. Site contamination has been identified on the portion of the project site located within Redwood City jurisdiction. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has approved an Indoor Air Sampling Mitigation Work Plan (Work Plan) to mitigate vapor intrusion of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) present within groundwater beneath the site. The existing property owner has installed a soil vapor recovery system designed to interrupt the potential exposure pathway of contaminants to indoor air. The Work Plan also includes a monitoring and reporting component that will be overseen by DTSC to ensure the effectiveness of the system.

2. Conformance with the North Fair Oaks Community Plan

The North Fair Oaks Community Plan notes that the existing land use designation for the project site is General Industrial. The Community Plan states that property will have the future designation of Industrial Mixed-Use. This designation will allow high density land uses with a primarily industrial focus while also allowing a mix of secondary commercial, public, institutional uses. The objective of this land use designation is to preserve and promote job-generating uses in designated areas while catalyzing reuse of under-utilized industrial buildings for commercial and institutional uses such as schools. The proposed use of the parcel as a parking lot for an adjacent school would be conforming to the future land use designation of Industrial Mixed-Use. Policy 2B of the Community Plan speaks to allowing a range of uses in the Bay Street/Spring Street area of North Fair Oaks, including institutional uses. The proposed use of the parcel as a parking lot for a school is not in conflict with any of the goals or policies of the North Fair Oaks Community Plan.

3. Conformance with the Zoning Regulations

The general purpose of the M-1 Zoning District is to provide industrial areas primarily for the location of manufacturing uses that do not create more than a moderate impact on the surrounding area and are adequately scaled and set back from adjacent residential land uses; accommodate a compatible mix of trades and services, transportation, communication, utility, and institutional land uses; and protect the functional and economic viability of industrial areas by restricting incompatible land uses.

As discussed previously, the bulk of this public school project is located within Redwood City's jurisdiction. Redwood City's zoning designation for their portion of this project is "Industrial Restricted," which allows public schools by right. However, because there is insufficient parking on the Redwood City parcel to meet the City's parking standards, they are requiring a Use Permit.

The portion of the project within the County's jurisdiction is zoned Light Industrial (M-1). The M-1 Zoning District does not list schools or their support facilities (parking, play grounds, etc.) as principally permitted uses. However, Chapter 24 (Use Permits) of the County Zoning Regulations does allow the issuance of a Use Permit for any public service use or building, in any district, when found to be necessary for the public health, safety, convenience or welfare.

The proposed facility, while being primarily in Redwood City's jurisdiction, is also fully compliant with the M-1 development standards, with the exception of the number of parking spaces, as shown on the chart below.

Development Standards	M-1	Proposed
Maximum Height of Structures	75 feet	Equipment Cabinet: 10 feet
Minimum Front Yard Setback	0 feet	Approximately 500 feet
Minimum Side Yard Setbacks	0 feet	Approximately 500 feet (left side); 1,200 feet (right side)
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	0 feet	Approximately 0.40 of a mile
Minimum Building Site	5,000 sq. ft.	18,730.8 sq. ft.
Parking	40* spaces	35 spaces
* As the requirement for parking is driven by the use of the school located on the parcel within the city limits of Redwood City, the required number of parking spaces is the requirement of the City of Redwood City Zoning Code.		

There are eight parking spaces provided to the rear of the building, located on the Redwood City portion of the property, and 27 parking spaces at the front of the building within the County's jurisdiction for a total of 35 on-site parking spaces. The parking area at the front of the site is provided with surface spaces and parking lifts to stack the parking. As outlined below, Redwood City's parking regulations require 40 spaces for the school use and the applicant has provided 35 on-site parking spaces. The County's requirements for parking for schools is the same as Redwood City's.

Redwood City Zoning Standard	Required
1 parking space per classroom	15 spaces
1 parking space per office	3 spaces
1 parking space per 100 sq. ft. of auditorium (assembly room 1,928 sq. ft.)	19.28 spaces
<i>Total on-site parking required</i>	<i>40 spaces</i>

The City of Redwood City received a Use Permit application for this project that included the reduction of the required amount of off-street parking spaces. The City of Redwood City will make a decision on the Use Permit and IS/MND for the project at their November 1, 2016 Planning Commission meeting.

Bike parking (25 spaces) will also be provided adjacent to the building.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Location Map
- B. Site Plan and Elevations

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