



DATE: February 26, 2020

AGENDA ITEM # 2

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Complete Streets Commission

FROM: Sean K. Gallegos, Associate Planner

SUBJECT: 461 Orange Avenue – New Private School

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval of Use Permit Application 19-UP-02 to the Planning Commission subject to the staff recommendations

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a Conditional Use Permit application for a new Chinese immersion and after-school program that proposes to occupy existing classrooms at the Foothills Congregational Church facility at 461 Orange Avenue. The programs would include up to 75 students, ten employees/teachers, and operate between 12:00 pm and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The church building is located in the PCF (Public and Community Facilities) District and private schools are allowed as a conditional use.

The project's traffic impact analysis is included as Attachment C in the Planning Commission Agenda Report (Attachment A), and the project plans are included as Attachment G.

BACKGROUND

The role of the Complete Streets Commission is to be an advisory body to City Council on bicycle, pedestrian, parking and traffic matters. For development applications, the Commission's role is not specifically defined, but in order to be consistent with the past role of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission, the Commission should review and provide a recommendation on the elements of the application that pertain to bicycle, pedestrian, parking and traffic issues.

With regard to traffic analysis, the Circulation Element in the General Plan includes an implementing program (C8) that outlines the criteria for reviewing traffic and circulation for new development as follows:

Evaluate development proposals and design roadway and access improvements based on established Level of Service standards and vehicle trip distribution to minimize impact on local residential and collector streets:

- 1) Require public review of any development project or other proposal that causes an intersection to degrade by one or more levels of service (e.g., LOS A to B, LOS B to D);
- 2) Require a transportation analysis for all development projects resulting in 50 or more net new daily trips. The analysis shall identify potential impacts to intersection and roadway operations, project access, and non-automobile travel modes, and shall identify feasible improvements or project modifications to reduce or eliminate impacts. Impact significance should be consistent with the criteria maintained by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority. City staff

should have the discretion to require focused studies regarding access, sight distance, and other operational and safety issues;

- 3) As part of the development review process, the primary access for major traffic generators should be established on arterial roadways, and overall access should be designed to minimize traffic intrusion to residential neighborhoods; and
- 4) Only after preparation of an environmental impact report with associated findings, accept Level of Service E or F operations at City-monitored signalized intersections after finding that no practical and feasible improvements can be implemented to mitigate the lower levels of service. A proposed development that causes or exacerbates LOS E or F operations and causes a significant intersection impact should be considered for approval if it will provide a clear, overall benefit to the City (e.g., library expansion or relocation, new community center).

With regards to bicycle parking standards, the City does not have an adopted ordinance, but does rely on the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) Bicycle Technical Guidelines as a recommended bicycle parking guideline. A Class I space is defined as one that protects the entire bicycle and its components from theft, vandalism or inclement weather and is appropriate for long-term parking (two hours to all day). A Class II space is defined as a rack to which the frame and at least one wheel can be secured with a user provided U-lock or padlock and cable and is appropriate for short-term parking (less than two hours).

On November 21, 2019 the Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a conditional use permit for a new Chinese immersion and after-school program that propose to occupy existing classrooms at the Foothills Congregational Church facility at 461 Orange Avenue. Following public comment and Commission discussion of the proposal, the Commission unanimously voted to approve the conditional use permit subject to the listed findings and conditions contained in the resolution and the following recommended conditions:

- Provide an annual compliance report submitted to the Community Development Department;
- Develop a traffic management plan that addresses drop-off/pick-up and a carpool van;
- Use appropriate signage, staffing and monitoring that shall be outlined in the traffic management plan;
- Acknowledgement or check in by those taking students to or from site with drop-off/pick-up locations limited to Lincoln Avenue and the applicant discouraging the use of Orange Avenue;
- Complete Streets Commission to review the use permit prior to consideration by the City Council;
- Develop a plan for outdoor activities; and
- Any student population increase beyond approved enrollment number requires a use permit amendment.

The Planning Commission Agenda Report is provided in Attachment A, the Planning Commission Late Correspondence is provided as Attachment B, and the draft meeting minutes for the August 1, 2019 Planning Commission agenda report are provided as Attachment C.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Use

Los Altos Chinese School is seeking a use permit to locate at 461 Orange Avenue and use a portion of the existing church facility. The private school (Chinese immersion and after-school programs) was previously located at the Hillview Community Center at 97 Hillview Avenue in Los Altos Avenue. A total of 3,211 square feet of floor area in the existing church school buildings would be occupied, with no outdoor play areas proposed for the use.

The private school use is to be located on the lower level of the classroom building. The Use Permit is requesting the use of room 102 for a kindergarten program, and rooms 101, 112, 113, and 117 for after-school programs in the classroom building.

After extensive discussions between the applicant and residents, the applicant revised the use permit application to limit the after-school program and kindergarten operation. The initial enrollment will include a maximum of 20 kindergarten children (afternoon) from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., 20 after-school program students from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and a maximum of 55 after-school program students from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Los Altos Chinese School anticipates a maximum of 12 kindergarten children in each afternoon class, and 15 students in each class of the after-school program. The ultimate enrollment for the Kindergarten & After School Program could be a maximum of 75 children/students. The kindergarten and after-school program will operate Monday through Friday.

There will be two (2) teachers for each kindergarten class, plus eight (8) teachers for the after-school program. The 2019 church room assignment schedule for the initial enrollment is included in the Project Trip Generation Analysis. The private school will not include outdoor play programs for either of the new private school uses. A cover letter and amendment letter with additional information about Los Altos Chinese School and the existing uses on the site is included as Attachment D.

Traffic and Site Circulation

The private school is a new use on the site that will add traffic to the surrounding streets that provide access to the site. The primary street that will provide access to the site is Lincoln Avenue, with a secondary access located on Orange Avenue. To evaluate any potential traffic impacts related to the proposed use, a traffic impact analysis (TIA) was prepared and is included in Attachment C in the Planning Commission Agenda Report (Attachment A).

The data in Table 1 below indicates the morning kindergarten class (15 children) will generate 14 trips during the AM peak hour (8 in & 6 out) and the afternoon kindergarten & after school program (75 children/students) will generate 47 trips during the PM peak hour (22 in and 25 out). The morning kindergarten classes and after school program are estimated to generate a total of approximately 224 daily trips.

Table 1: Project Trip Generation							
Land Use	AM Peak Hour Trips (a & b)			PM Peak Hour Trips (a & b)			Daily
	In	Out	Total	In	Out	Total	
ITE Trip Generation Rates (Private School)	(0.50)	(0.41)		(0.29)	0.33)		2.48
Morning Kindergarten Classes (15 Children)	8	6	14	0	0	0	224
After School Program (75 students)	0	0	0	22	25	47	
<p>Notes:</p> <p>(a) Peak hour trips based on private school (K-8) rates, ITE LU #534</p> <p>(b) Represents peak hour of adjacent street system (highest hour between 7 & 9 AM)</p> <p>(c) Represents afternoon PM peak hour of the “generator”</p> <p>(d) Daily trips based on private school (K-12) rates, ITE LU #536 (total of 90 students)</p>							

The traffic impact analysis includes an analysis of the nearby street network and the intersections of Foothill Expressway/Main Street, Main Street-Burke Road/University Avenue, University Avenue/Lincoln Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Orange Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Sherman Street and Orange Avenue/Sherman Street that will receive additional traffic from the project, and evaluated the traffic conditions for two scenarios as follows:

- Existing Conditions. Existing AM and PM peak-hour traffic volumes at study intersections were based on new traffic counts collected in August 2019.
- Existing Plus Project Conditions. Existing plus project conditions reflect the projected traffic volumes on the existing roadway network with completion of the project.

The results of the level of service analysis for existing plus project scenarios are shown in Table 5 of the traffic impact analysis (Attachment A).

The traffic impact analysis found that the project would not create a significant impact at the study intersections under any scenario. The intersections of Lincoln Avenue/University Avenue, or Orange Avenue/Lincoln Avenue, or Orange Avenue/Sherman Street, or Lincoln Avenue/Sherman Street would operate at LOS A during the AM and LOS A during the PM peak hours under existing plus project conditions. The intersections of Main Street-Burke Road/University Avenue, or University Avenue/Sherman Street would operate at LOS A during the AM and LOS B during the PM peak hours under existing plus project conditions. The intersection of Foothill Expressway/Main Street would maintain an LOS B-, with no change in LOS. The intersection of El Monte Avenue would maintain an LOS C, with no change in LOS. The TIA found that the private school use would have a negligible impact on study intersections, with an increase in critical delay of only 1.4 seconds

during the worst-case scenario (AM peak at Orange/Sherman). Therefore, based on the findings outlined in the TIA, it does not appear that the new private school use will result in any significant traffic impacts.

The Foothills Congregational Church is accessed via University Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Orange Avenue and Sherman Street. A review of the existing plus project PM peak hour volumes at the study intersections adjacent to the project site (Orange Avenue/Lincoln Avenue, Lincoln Avenue/Sherman Street and Orange Avenue/Sherman Street) demonstrates the individual movements are less than 60 vehicles per hour (vph) in all cases. In addition, the LOS data in Table 5 indicates that vehicles delay at these study intersections are in the LOS A range under the existing plus project scenario. Therefore, it's concluded the project traffic will not impact circulation on the local street system.

In response to public comments regarding roadway descriptions in the TIA, the traffic consultant provided a response to public comments. The letter indicates the roadway classification descriptions in the TIA referenced the City's General Plan Circulation Element. Foothill Expressway is an Expressway within the study area and El Monte Avenue is classified as an Arterial between I-280 and Foothill Expressway. Main Street is a designated collector street east of Foothill Expressway. Burke Road, University Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Orange Avenue and Sherman Street are local residential collector streets.

Traffic Management Plan

In response to Planning Commission Direction, the applicant prepared a Traffic Management Plan. The proposal includes the following:

- Parents to sign an enrollment agreement stipulating their agreement to follow the traffic management plan or face penalties for noncompliance.
- Staff member shall monitor the traffic management plan weekdays from 4:30 pm to 6:00 p.m.
- The kindergarten and after-school program may not use promotional signage along Orange Avenue or Lincoln Avenue.
- Staff will supervise students in the Foothills Congregational Church (FCC) Parish Hall or courtyard area.
- The FCC shall submit an annual compliance report to the City of Los Altos.
- A Traffic Management Plan Map.

The Traffic Management Plan is provided in Attachment F.

Parking

The TIA includes an evaluation of parking in the general vicinity of the project site (Foothills Congregational Church). The parking survey recorded the total number of existing on-street and surface lot parking spaces with access on Lincoln Avenue, Orange Avenue, and Sherman Street. The parking survey recorded the actual number of vehicles parked in each area between 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on August 29, 2019. The survey was conducted every 15 minutes to identify peak demand period and any patterns related to parking space turn-over-rates. The parking survey data in Table 3 in the TIA indicates that the peak demand period was documented at 5:00 p.m. (34 of the 193 spaces occupied, 18%). It's noted that the peak demand period for the on-street parking along Lincoln

Avenue (Areas 1-4) was also at 5:00 p.m. (17 of the 139 spaces occupied, 12%). A summary of the table is provided in Table 3 in the TIA.

As outlined in Section 14.74.120 of the Zoning Code, community facilities are subject to the following parking requirements:

“For private schools...one parking space for every two employees, including teachers and administrators, plus sufficient space for the safe, convenient loading and unloading of students, and such additional area for student and visitor parking as may be prescribed by the commission.”

The adjacent 139 parking spaces along Lincoln Avenue which serves Foothills Congregational Church and the neighboring St. Nicholas Catholic Church were created through a joint effort between the City and the churches. A total of eight parking spaces are required for staff, which includes parking for two kindergarten school instructors, eight after-school teachers, and two full-time and four part-time church administrators. Using the ITE Parking Generation rates (average) the project would require 27 parking spaces. The parking lot provides sufficient short-term parking spaces for drop-off and pick-up, and its design allows for sufficient parking for the staggered drop-off and pick-up periods.

Under a worst-case scenario, the private school use could use the remaining 122 spaces of the 139 parking spaces along Lincoln, if the drop-off and pick-up users all parked at once. However, the staggered drop-off and pick-up times for the private school and church programming do not require all parking spaces on the site at one time of the 139 parking spaces immediately adjacent to the site along Lincoln Avenue. Due to limited parking and no loading areas available along Orange Avenue, the following is recommended:

- No parking shall be permitted on Orange Avenue.

Church services and ancillary community meetings are held outside the pick-up and drop off hours, or on nights and weekends when the Los Altos Chinese School programs are closed. The parking analysis demonstrates there is sufficient off-site parking along Lincoln Avenue to support the existing and proposed uses.

Transit Stop

The project site is proximate to bus stops for VTA routes 40 and 52, with the nearest bus stop located at University Avenue and El Monte Avenue. The site is generally well-served by transit; with VTA bus stops located on both sides of El Monte Avenue. Thus, the project is well placed for its residents to utilize public transit and is consistent with the Los Altos General Plan policies that encouraging the use of public transit.

Bicycle and Pedestrian

As recommended by the VTA guidelines, the project should provide at least one Class I bicycle parking spaces and five Class II spaces. As specified on the Site Plan (A1.0), there are no Class I facilities proposed for the site. One Class II bicycle rack (ten spaces) is proposed along the Lincoln Avenue entrances for the site (see sheet A1.0). The following is recommended to enhance bicycle usage as follows:

- A new class I bicycle facility shall be installed on-site for use by the private school.

Overall, the proposed project's bicycle parking, with the proposed condition, will meet the VTA Guidelines for bicycle parking spaces for a new private school.

The proposed project maintains the existing sidewalks and street trees along the Lincoln Avenue and Orange Avenue frontages to facilitate pedestrian travel in the surrounding area. The City's Pedestrian Master Plan includes goals, policies and actions for improving the pedestrian environment in Los Altos, including planning for pedestrian accommodation and facilities that serve people of all ages and abilities, developing a safe pedestrian network, and increasing pedestrian mode share. The proposed project would not alter pedestrian access points to existing facilities and would support the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan. Overall, the existing pedestrian amenities appear to meet or exceed all applicable City policies and guidelines.

Environmental Review

This is a conditional use permit and is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, as amended, because it involves the occupancy of an existing religious institution classroom building.

Attachments:

- A. Planning Commission Meeting Agenda, November 21, 2019
- B. Planning Commission Late Correspondence, November 21, 2019
- C. Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, November 21, 2019
- D. Applicant Cover Letter and Amendment Letter
- E. Traffic Impact Analysis – Response to Public Comments
- F. Los Altos Conditional Use Permit Traffic Management Plan
- G. Project Plans

RECOMMENDATIONS

461 Orange Avenue – 19-UP-02

1. No parking shall be permitted on Orange Avenue.
2. Install a new Class I bicycle locker per VTA Standards
3. Foothills Congregational Church and the private school shall comply with the Traffic Management Plan