

FINDINGS

Variance Findings

- 1. The strict application of the provision of the zoning ordinance would result in practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships inconsistent with the general purposes and intent of the zoning regulations.**

The strict application of the Zoning Ordinance would result in practical difficulties for the school. The subject parking lot has provided the parking for the existing commercial building since 1980 under a parking affidavit dated October 7, 1980. Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code 12.21-A,4(f), parking is required to be provided on the same lot with each classroom contained in any elementary school.

The existing commercial building is situated at the intersection of Constance Street and Pico Boulevard. Abutting the southerly side of the building is a 20-foot wide alley that separates the parking lot from the building.

In order to provide the required parking on-site, portions of the building would have to be reduced and demolished. The project proposes no change in the building footprint or operation of the parking lot that services the existing building. Furthermore, the parking lot provides a capacity to queue vehicular traffic during school drop-off/pick-up times thus reducing the potential for queued vehicles within the roadway. This current site configuration provides the functional equivalent of providing on-site parking while minimizing potential for traffic during drop-off/pick-up times as operations are contained within the school and parking lots.

The intent of the regulation prohibiting off-site parking is to limit the distance pedestrians walking from a parking site to the school site. The current site configuration in conjunction with the proposed circulation plan will meet this objective in that the drop-off/pick-up area is immediately at the south entry and will be clearly striped with pedestrian paths. Ultimately, although the parking is provided off-site, the impacts of such will be minimized with the project's site planning and operations. As such, the requirement to provide parking on-site presents an unnecessary hardship that is inconsistent with the intent of the zoning regulations.

- 2. That there are special circumstances applicable to the subject property such as size, shape, topography, location or surroundings that do not apply generally to other property in the same zone and vicinity.**

The existing commercial building is almost entirely built out to the property lines for the school site making the provision of on-site parking infeasible. The existing parking site which has serviced the school site since 1980 is separated by a 20-foot wide alley. Typical properties within the same zone and vicinity have parking provided on-site that are associated with existing buildings such as the property to the north or to the west and are not separated by an alley or other improvements.

Along the south side of Pico Boulevard between the I-110 Freeway and Westlake Avenue is a 0.5 mile stretch of CM zoned properties. Only 15 percent of such properties are abutting an alley to the rear. On the north side of Pico Boulevard along this stretch, no properties are abutting an alley. As such, the only way to improve these properties without a variance would be through vacation of the alley. The project site could not have been merged through a subdivision action because of the alley that bisects the project site. As a consequence, unlike other properties in the same zone and vicinity, the property is not unified with public improvements within its boundaries.

Because the change of use is into an elementary school, parking is required to be provided on-site. In contrast, changes of uses of other types can secure off-site parking without a variance through a covenant with off-site parking being provided within 750 feet, consistent with LAMC Sections 12.21-A,4(g) and 12.26-E,5.

3. **That the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question.**

The variance is necessary for the applicant to preserve its property right to convert an existing building into a school use. This substantial property right is possessed by other properties in the same zone and vicinity. CM zoned properties in the vicinity could accommodate the redevelopment of the property because there is already on-site parking associated with such existing buildings within a property unencumbered with public improvements or an alley. Due to special circumstances with the subject property not observed among similar properties within the vicinity and with the requirement to provide on-site parking, the property is denied substantial property right.

The variance would allow for the applicant to provide a public-serving school use associated parking located off-site. While the parking site is located 20 feet from the school site, it is provided in an accessible location for both employees and students that will enter and exit the school site.

Because the building is almost entirely built out to the property lines, there is no additional area within the property to provide the required on-site parking. With the variance, off-site parking will be able to continue to be provided to the school site just as it has functioned with the existing commercial building since 1980.

For these reasons, the variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a substantial property right or use generally possessed by other property in the same zone and vicinity but which, because of the special circumstances and practical difficulties or unnecessary hardships, is denied to the property in question.

4. **That the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare, or injurious to the property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.**

The granting of the variance to allow off-site parking will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare. The project is consistent with the intent of the zoning regulations for on-site parking regulations. Implications associated with off-site parking will be minimal due to the distance between the school site and parking lot, being separated by a 20-foot alley that primarily serves as access to the parking lot, and the school's proposed circulation plan with the location of the drop-off/pick-up area. This area mimics the intent of providing on-site parking in that it provides direct access to the school site or entry without any obstruction. Furthermore, between the location of the parking lot and school site, no pedestrian will traverse a public street or any other private property in either direction. There will be no change in the operational relationship between the parking lot and the school site from what currently exists.

Therefore, the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or improvements in the same zone or vicinity in which the property is located.

5. That the granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

The project site is located within the Westlake Community Plan, which is one of 35 Community Plans that the Land Use Element of the General Plan is comprised of. The Community Plan designates the site for Low Medium Residential land uses corresponding to the RD1.5, RD2, RD3, RD4, and RD5, RU, and RZ2.5, RZ3, RZ4, RZ5 zones and Commercial Manufacturing land uses corresponding to the CM and P zones. The project site is zoned CM-1, and RD1.5-1-HPOZ and is thus consistent with the existing land use designation. The Westlake Community Plan discusses the demand for new and improved public facilities. In order to acquire a new site or expand an existing site, residential properties must be acquired. An alternative to this that wouldn't decrease the housing stock in the community is to improve existing facilities as a prime consideration. The project is consistent with the following Community Plan goal and objective:

Schools

Objective 1: To secure appropriate locations and adequate facilities for schools to serve the needs of the existing and future population.

Objective 2: To site schools in locations complementary to existing land uses and in locations which will enhance community identity.

The granting of the variance will allow for the conversion of an existing commercial building into a new public charter elementary school with off-site parking. The location of the school is appropriate given that it is a partially occupied site that would benefit from the change of use without acquiring any residential property. The school will further goals, objectives, and policies by meeting the growing demand for school facilities within the community. As such, the granting of the variance will not adversely affect any element of the General Plan.

Conditional Use Findings

6. That the project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood or will perform a function or provide a service that is essential or beneficial to the community, city or region.

The applicant is seeking a Conditional Use for the conversion of an existing commercial building for a new public charter elementary school, Equitas Academy 5 and 6, along with deviations in certain development standards. As a tenant improvement project, the new schools will serve a maximum of 1,000 students in Grades K through 4. The project will convert an existing commercial building for the two schools totaling 53,262 square feet. The building will include 38 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, administrative office, and an open play area on the second level. Parking will be provided in an adjacent surface parking lot at 1321-1331 South Union Avenue with 54 parking spaces. As the subject property is currently only partially occupied by Equitas Academy's corporate offices on the second floor, the project will improve an underutilized site with a modern school building and landscaping and hardscape enhancements. Therefore, the project will enhance the built environment.

The project will benefit the public convenience and welfare by providing additional educational opportunities to serve the local community. The Pico Union neighborhood is densely

populated, and local families will benefit from having additional elementary schools in their neighborhood within easy walking or biking distance. The schools will relieve demand on other schools in the area and give neighborhood children an opportunity to attend a public elementary school with rigorous academic standards.

The schools' design and layout will ensure the public welfare and neighboring community will not be negatively affected. The schools will be developed within the footprint of the existing building to preserve the scale and visual character of the neighborhood. The design of the existing building will be updated with new windows, signage, and landscaping improvements to improve the pedestrian experience on the surrounding streets.

For these reasons, the project will enhance the built environment in the surrounding neighborhood and perform a function and provide a service that is essential and beneficial to the community.

7. That the project's location, size, height, operations and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood or the public health, welfare, and safety.

The applicant is seeking a Conditional Use for the construction, use, and maintenance of two (2) new public charter elementary schools, Equitas Academy 5 and 6, along with deviations in certain development standards. At completion, the new schools will serve a maximum of 1,000 students in Grades K through 4. The project will convert an existing commercial building for the two schools totaling 53,262 square feet. The building will include 38 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, administrative office, and an open play area on the second level. Parking will be provided in an adjacent surface parking lot at 1321-1331 South Union Avenue with 54 parking spaces.

As the project is converting an existing commercial building and proposes to continue to use the existing parking lot across the alley, a conditional use permit is required for the school use, maintaining the existing side and rear setbacks, a 1-foot and 1.5 inch front yard setback to accommodate exterior retrofitted shotcrete concrete walls that are approximately 1-foot thick, and to maintain the existing parking area in the R zone.

The subject property is located in the Pico Union area within the Westlake Community Plan. The project is a desirable use in the proposed location and will be compatible with surrounding properties and the surrounding area. Because the project will convert an existing two-story building, the project will be compatible with other existing low-rise institutional, commercial and residential buildings in the vicinity.

The façade of the existing building will be updated with new paint, plaster finishing, new windows, metal siding, and clay roof tiles to enhance the visual appeal of the project area. New landscaping will also be provided surrounding and within the project site to improve the pedestrian experience in the immediate area and act as a buffer between the adjacent residential uses. The parking for the schools will be provided in the existing parking lot on the Parking Site, which has provided parking for the School Site for more than 40 years. The parking spaces provided exceed the required number of spaces, and the Parking Site will also accommodate queuing of up to 17 vehicles for student drop-off and pick-up. With the help of parent volunteers during drop-off/pick-up times to assist in guiding vehicular and pedestrian traffic, the operation of the schools will not interfere with traffic in the public right-of-way.

Although the proposed outdoor play area on the second floor is located in proximity to the adjacent mixed-use building to the east, a 16-foot high acoustical wall will be constructed

along the eastern building perimeter to buffer this area from the apartments. The interior side of the wall will include a vertical garden to further increase the sound barrier effect.

A school is a desirable use in the proposed location. The project's physical features and operation will be compatible with the neighborhood and will not adversely affect the community. The proposed school use, the requested deviations in building setbacks, and maintaining parking in the R zone are permitted by Conditional Use in the underlying zone; the project has been designed and conditioned to minimize any potential impacts associated with these features and use. Therefore, the project's location, size, height, operations, and other significant features will be compatible with and will not adversely affect or further degrade adjacent properties, the surrounding neighborhood or the public health, welfare, and safety.

8. That the project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent and provisions of the General Plan, the applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.

The project site is located within the Westlake Community Plan area, in the city of Los Angeles. The Community Plan designates the site for Low Medium Residential land uses corresponding to the RD1.5, RD2, RD3, RD4, and RD5, RU, and RZ2.5, RZ3, RZ4, and RZ5 zones and Commercial Manufacturing land uses corresponding to the CM and P zones. The project site is zoned CM-1, and RD1.5-1-HPOZ and is thus consistent with the existing land use designation. The subject property is also within the Pico-Union Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The subject property is not located within the boundaries of and is not subject to any other specific plan or overlay.

The LAMC permits the use of a school within any zone with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit, to maintain public parking in the R zone, and also allows deviations in certain development standards, including those requested herein. Therefore, the requested Conditional Use Permit for the proposed project is permissible per the underlying zoning and land use designation. The project is also consistent with the following specific goal, objective, and policy of the Community Plan:

Residential

Objective 3: To sequence housing development so as to provide a workable, efficient, and adequate balance between land use, circulation, and service system facilities at all times.

Industrial

Objective 4: To improve the quality of industrial developments and to protect the amenities of adjacent areas.

The proposed school use would provide for a compatible neighborhood serving use being located along Pico Boulevard where other commercial, institutional uses are observed. Residential uses are in close proximity further outside of this area and would benefit from the project. Furthermore, the Community Plan discusses the need for public improvements within this area of Pico Union where the project is located. By improving an underutilized site, the project will provide an additional amenity located within an area outside of where existing industrial uses are concentrated. Industrial uses are concentrated within the southern section of the community plan area near the Harbor Freeway and Venice Boulevard

The project is further consistent with other elements of the General Plan, including the Framework Element. The Framework Element was adopted by the City of Los Angeles in

December 1996 and re-adopted in August 2001 and provides guidance regarding policy issues for the entire City of Los Angeles, including the project site. The Framework Element also sets forth a Citywide comprehensive long-range growth strategy and defines Citywide policies regarding such issues as land use, housing, urban form, neighborhood design, open space, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and public services. The project supports the following goal and objectives of the Framework Element which relates specifically to schools:

GOAL 9N: “PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL OF THE CITY’S CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES TO SERVE EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CITY.”

Objective 9.32: “Work constructively with LAUSD to promote the siting and construction of adequate school facilities phased with growth.”

Policy 9.32.1: “Work with the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure that school facilities and programs are expanded commensurate with the City’s population growth and development.”

Policy 9.32.2: “Explore creative alternatives for providing new school sites in the City, where appropriate.”

The project will enable Equitas Academy to continue to provide and expand a valuable public service for the region. Due to high demand in this area, the project will provide a consolidated and permanent campus exclusively for students at Equitas 5 and 6 and will provide additional amenities, all of which will enhance the quality of education that is available to the community. The entire region has experienced increased population growth, and the project will provide a new and enhanced educational facility to better serve the growing community. The proposed school use is desirable for a currently underutilized property in such a neighborhood, and the requested deviations are relatively minor and appropriate to facilitate the provision of a new school site, in keeping with the goals of the General Plan.

The proposed project is entirely consistent with the applicable provisions of the LAMC and the General Plan. The requests herein, including the operation of a new public charter elementary school, maintaining parking in the R zone and to maintain the existing rear and side setbacks along with a reduced front yard setback, are all permissible with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit; such approval will not change the land use designation or zone of the project site and will not restrict or prohibit the use of the site for other permitted uses. The proposed project is a compatible and desirable use in the subject location, and is consistent with the goals of the General Plan. In addition, the operation has been carefully conditioned to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and to ensure that there will be no negative impacts on the surrounding community.

The **Mobility Element** of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is not likely to be affected by the recommended action herein. The project will be required to provide dedications along Pico Boulevard and Union Avenue and improvements along Pico Boulevard, Union Avenue, Constance street and the alley. The Department of Transportation submitted a Traffic Impact Assessment of the proposed project, dated October 13, 2020, and that determined that the project would not result in any significant VMT impact. The Mobility Element includes the following objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

Policy 1.1: Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.

Policy 1.3: Prioritize the safety of school children on all streets regardless of highway classifications.

Policy 2.3: Recognize walking as a component of every trip, and ensure high-quality pedestrian access in all site planning and public right-of-way modifications to provide a safe and comfortable walking environment.

The proposed project has been conditioned to provide two student access points on the north side of the building along Pico Boulevard and on the south side along the alley. Recognizing that students will come to the site from every direction, providing for a secondary access will reduce the potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict. During drop-off/pick-up times, those walking north along Union Avenue towards the school site will be directed away from the alley and south entry to enter along Pico Boulevard. The south entrance along the alley has been designed with safety in mind. Those entering the site from Constance Street will have exclusive access within a pedestrian path along the alley that leads directly to the south entrance. The drop-off/pick-up area has been designed with adequate crosswalk striping to delineate pedestrian paths and as part of the school's circulation plan, the alley will function for one way traffic in the east to west direction. Taken altogether, these measures increase and prioritize pedestrian/school children safety.

Policy 3.3: Promote equitable land use decisions that result in fewer vehicle trips by providing greater proximity and access to jobs, destinations, and other neighborhood services.

The is located within walking distance of surrounding multi-family residential neighborhoods which could reduce the need for students to drive to work and instead walk or bike. The project will be located along Pico Boulevard, a commercial corridor that provides a variety of neighborhood-serving uses. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the goal, objective and policies of the General Plan and does not conflict with any applicable regulations or standards.

Therefore, the project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan.

Site Plan Review Findings

9. That the project is in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan.

The project site is located within the Westlake Community Plan area, in the city of Los Angeles. The Community Plan designates the site for Low Medium Residential land uses corresponding to the RD1.5, RD2, RD3, RD4, and RD5, RU, and RZ2.5, RZ3, RZ4, and RZ5 Zones and Commercial Manufacturing land uses corresponding to the CM and P zones. The project site is zoned CM-1, and RD1.5-1-HPOZ and is thus consistent with the existing land use designation. The subject property is also within the Pico-Union Historic Preservation Overlay Zone. The subject property is not located within the boundaries of and is not subject to any other specific plan or overlay.

The LAMC permits the use of a school within any zone with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit, to maintain public parking in the R zone, and also allows deviations in certain development standards, including those requested herein. Therefore, the requested Conditional Use Permit for the proposed project is permissible per the underlying zoning and

land use designation. The project is also consistent with the following specific goal, objective, and policy of the Community Plan:

GOAL 4: “PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL OF THE CITY’S CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES TO SERVE EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CITY.”

Objective 4-1: “Work constructively with LAUSD to promote the siting and construction of adequate school facilities phased with growth.”

Policy 4-1.1: “Explore creative alternatives for providing new school sites in the City, where appropriate.”

The project is further consistent with other elements of the General Plan, including the Framework Element. The Framework Element was adopted by the City of Los Angeles in December 1996 and re-adopted in August 2001 and provides guidance regarding policy issues for the entire City of Los Angeles, including the project site. The Framework Element also sets forth a Citywide comprehensive long-range growth strategy and defines Citywide policies regarding such issues as land use, housing, urban form, neighborhood design, open space, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, and public services. The project supports the following goal and objectives of the Framework Element which relates specifically to schools:

GOAL 9N: “PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE A QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL OF THE CITY’S CHILDREN, INCLUDING THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND ADEQUATE SCHOOL FACILITIES TO SERVE EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE CITY.”

Objective 9.32: “Work constructively with LAUSD to promote the siting and construction of adequate school facilities phased with growth.”

Policy 9.32.1: “Work with the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure that school facilities and programs are expanded commensurate with the City’s population growth and development.”

Policy 9.32.2: “Explore creative alternatives for providing new school sites in the City, where appropriate.”

The project will enable Equitas Academy to continue to provide and expand a valuable public service for the region. Due to high demand in this area, the project will provide a consolidated and permanent campus exclusively for students at Equitas 5 and 6 and will provide additional amenities, all of which will enhance the quality of education that is available to the community. The entire region has experienced increased population growth, and the project will provide a new and enhanced educational facility to better serve the growing community. The proposed school use is desirable for a currently underutilized property in such a neighborhood, and the requested deviations are relatively minor and appropriate to facilitate the provision of a new school site, in keeping with the goals of the General Plan.

The proposed project is entirely consistent with the applicable provisions of the LAMC and the General Plan. The requests herein, including the operation of a new public charter elementary school, maintaining parking in the R Zone and to maintain the existing rear and side setbacks along with a reduced front yard setback, are all permissible with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit; such approval will not change the land use designation or zone of the project site

and will not restrict or prohibit the use of the site for other permitted uses. The proposed project is a compatible and desirable use in the subject location, and is consistent with the goals of the General Plan. In addition, the operation has been carefully conditioned to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations and to ensure that there will be no negative impacts on the surrounding community.

The **Mobility Element** of the General Plan (Mobility Plan 2035) is not likely to be affected by the recommended action herein. The project will be required to provide dedications along Pico Boulevard and Union Avenue and improvements along Pico Boulevard, Union Avenue, Constance street and the alley. The Department of Transportation submitted a Traffic Impact Assessment of the proposed project, dated October 13, 2017, and that determined that the project would not result in any significant VMT impact. The Mobility Element includes the following objectives and policies relevant to the instant request:

Policy 1.1: Design, plan, and operate streets to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable roadway user.

Policy 1.3: Prioritize the safety of school children on all streets regardless of highway classifications.

Policy 2.3: Recognize walking as a component of every trip, and ensure high-quality pedestrian access in all site planning and public right-of-way modifications to provide a safe and comfortable walking environment.

The proposed project has been conditioned to provide two student access points on the north side of the building along Pico Boulevard and on the south side along the alley. Recognizing that students will come to the site from every direction, providing for a secondary access will reduce the potential for vehicle and pedestrian conflict. During drop-off/pick-up times, those walking north along Union Avenue towards the school site will be directed away from the alley and south entry to enter along Pico Boulevard. The south entrance along the alley has been designed with safety in mind. Those entering the site from Constance Street will have exclusive access within a pedestrian path along the alley that leads directly to the south entrance. The drop-off/pick-up area has been designed with adequate crosswalk striping to delineate pedestrian paths and as part of the school's circulation plan, the alley will function for one way traffic in the east to west direction. Taken altogether, these measures increase and prioritize pedestrian/school children safety.

Policy 3.3: Promote equitable land use decisions that result in fewer vehicle trips by providing greater proximity and access to jobs, destinations, and other neighborhood services.

The is located within walking distance of surrounding multi-family residential neighborhoods which could reduce the need for students to drive to work and instead walk or bike. The project will be located along Pico Boulevard, a commercial corridor that provides a variety of neighborhood-serving uses. Therefore, the project is in substantial conformance with the goal, objective and policies of the General Plan and does not conflict with any applicable regulations or standards.

Therefore, the project substantially conforms with the purpose, intent, and provisions of the General Plan.

10. That the project consists of an arrangement of buildings and structures (including height, bulk and setbacks), off-street parking facilities, loading areas, lighting, landscaping, trash collection, and other such pertinent improvements, that is or will be

compatible with existing and future development on adjacent properties and neighboring properties.

The project site consists of four contiguous lots as a corner site currently improved with an existing commercial building at the intersection of Constance Street to the west and Pico Boulevard to the north. The project site includes three contiguous parcels currently improved with an existing surface parking lot fronting Union Avenue to the east. In total, the project site is approximately 56,376 square feet in size. The two areas are separated by a 20-foot alleyway south of the commercial building and north of the parking lot.

Surrounding properties consist of a mixture of commercial and multi-family development. The property to the north across Pico Boulevard is zoned CM-1 and [Q]C2-1 and improved with a one-story commercial buildings and surface parking lot. The property to the east, abutting the commercial building is zoned CM-1 and improved with a three-story mixed-use building. Furthermore, properties to the east of the parking lot across Union Avenue are zoned RD1.5-1-HPOZ and improved with multi-family buildings. The properties to the south of the existing commercial building and parking lot are zoned RD1.5-1-HPOZ and improved with multi-family buildings. The property to the west of the commercial building is zoned CM-1 and improved with a one-story school building for Equitas Academy 1. The properties to the west of the parking lot are zoned RD1.5-1-HPOZ and improved with multi-family buildings.

The project involves the conversion of an existing commercial building for two (2) charter elementary schools (Equitas 5-6 Elementary Schools) for grades K-4 totaling 53,262 square feet with a combined maximum enrollment of 1,000 students. The building will include 38 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, administrative office, and an open play area on the second level.

Each elementary school will have a maximum enrollment of 500 students. The first level will include 24 classrooms for grades K-2 between the two schools as well as a shared multi-purpose room. The second level will include the remaining 14 classrooms for Grades 3 and 4 between the two schools, Equitas' corporate offices, and the outdoor play area. This outdoor play area will be improved with an exterior side acoustical wall 16 feet in height with a vertical garden on the interior side of the wall to be located on the eastern side of the building. Parking will be provided in an adjacent surface parking lot at 1321-1331 South Union Avenue with 54 parking spaces.

Height, Bulk, and Setbacks

The conversion of an existing building will have minimal impacts with regard to height, bulk, and setbacks. There is no change in the building footprint. With the addition of an outdoor play area, a 16-foot acoustical wall will be constructed to buffer the play area from the adjacent neighboring building while still allowing for access to natural daylight. Additionally, two structural walls are proposed on the exterior walls along the façade facing Pico Boulevard and will decrease the existing front yard setback by approximately 1 foot to 1-foot and 1.5 inches. Therefore, the height, bulk, and setbacks of project are consistent with existing development in the immediate surrounding area and will be compatible with the existing and future developments in the neighborhood.

Parking

Vehicular access to the parking site is provided via the two-way alley intersecting with Constance Street to the west or Union Avenue to the east. Vehicular access to the site during drop-off/pick-up times as part of the circulation plan is for ingress to occur along Union Avenue

into alley, directly into the parking lot and within the drive aisles, back into the alley for egress to ultimately occur along Constance Street.

Parking provided for the school site has functioned as a parking site for the existing commercial building since 1980. With the circulation plan directing vehicular traffic into a drop-off/pick-up area that is directly at the south building entry, project operations will minimize conflicts with the adjacent residential uses. Therefore, the parking facilities will be compatible with the existing and future development in the neighborhood.

Lighting

Lighting is required to be provided per LAMC requirements. The project proposes lighting at parking lot entrances and exits. The project is required to provide outdoor lighting with shielding, so that the light source cannot be seen from adjacent residential properties. The Project would also comply with LAMC lighting regulations that include the following: approval of street lighting plans by the Bureau of Street Lighting; limited light intensity from signage to no more than three foot-candles above ambient lighting; and limited exterior lighting to no more than two foot-candles of lighting intensity or direct glare onto specified sensitive uses, under the terms of the LAMC Section 93.0117(b). Therefore, the lighting will be compatible with the existing and future developments in the neighborhood.

On-Site Landscaping

The project includes new landscaping, including 15 new trees, shrubs and groundcover plantings around the perimeter of the parking site that's adjacent to the neighboring residential property, and four landscaped finger islands in the parking lot. The outdoor play area features a vertical garden on the eastern wall, which will double as an educational amenity for students. Therefore, the on-site landscaping will be compatible with the existing and future developments in the neighborhood.

Loading/Trash Area

Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.21-C,6(f), the project is not required to include a designated loading area because the site abuts an alley. Thus, no loading area is proposed.

The Project includes a trash enclosure within the parking lot located along the alley between the parking lot's drive aisles. This location allows for the trash enclosure to be located away from adjacent neighboring uses. Access to the trash area will be provided from the alley between Union Avenue and Constance Street. Therefore, as proposed, the project is compatible with existing and future development on neighboring properties.

11. That any residential project provides recreational and service amenities to improve habitability for its residents and minimize impacts on neighboring properties.

This finding does not apply because it is not a residential project.

Environmental Findings

12. Flood Insurance. The National Flood Insurance Program rate maps, which are a part of the Flood Hazard Management Specific Plan adopted by the City Council by Ordinance No. 172,081, have been reviewed and it has been determined that this project is located in Zone C, areas outside of a flood zone.