

ELEMENTS OF THE LAND USE PATTERN

Residential Areas

Policy 2007.4 - In addition to residences, residential areas may contain normal accessory uses, recreation facilities and, under appropriate controls, institutions and facilities such as churches, schools, youth and senior centers and nursing homes.

As discussed earlier, the project entails expansion of current school facilities while continuing a school use for the site. This use has been permitted within a residential area under appropriate controls via the Planned Development and associated CUP. The environmental assessment determined that incorporation of all mitigation measures for the proposed project would reduce adverse environmental effects to less than significant levels.

Public Facilities and Services

Goal 2041.6 - To permit use of excess space in public schools only if such private uses are compatible with ongoing education activities and surrounding land uses, and consistent with the park and recreation goals and policies of this plan.

This goal is not directly applicable because the site is currently used for a private school. The site was previously established for a public school and was transferred in ownership to accommodate for the private Charles Armstrong School (CAS). CAS entails a similar use and engages in similar activities to

that of a public school. The location of the private school structures, parking areas, and use of the site was deemed acceptable when transferred from the previous public school use. Consistency with Park and Recreation Goals and Policies are discussed further in this report.

Policy 2042.18 - Community use of existing public facilities should be optimized through cooperation with other public agencies, careful scheduling of activities, and structural modifications, if needed, to permit multiple uses.

McDougal Park (a public facility) directly abuts the CAS site along its western boundary, but has no direct frontage along any public street. With the past sale of the former public school to Armstrong School and of the McDougal playing fields to the City, this new public park was created which could only be accessed across the CAS school campus. Based on the easements recorded with the two sales, the park is available for public access on a part-time basis:

- Sunrise to 8 AM – Monday through Friday, after 4:00 PM - Monday through Friday during the Armstrong school year, and after 12:30 PM during the Armstrong Summer Session; there is no limit on public access on Saturday and Sunday.

This neighborhood park is used for organized games of the local youth soccer and softball leagues and passive recreation. As of this time, no changes are proposed to the access easement to permit additional “public access time” for the park.

Policy 2042.20 - The concept of “joint occupancy” of schools (i.e. education and compatible non-school uses) shall be supported as a means of retaining neighborhood-based elementary education and recreational facilities. Non-school uses shall be of a scale and intensity compatible with the public school and its neighborhood. The basic objectives of “joint occupancy” shall be as follows:

- Maintenance and continued operation of neighborhood schools, including the public recreational uses at the schools, while allowing for the joint occupancy of vacant school property and buildings during periods of less than capacity enrollment.*
- Maintenance of the residential integrity of the public school neighborhood.*
- Involvement of community and neighborhood residents in determining the compatibility of any proposed joint occupancy with the primary school use.*

This policy is not directly applicable because the site is currently used for a private school. As discussed earlier, the site previously consisted of a public school and associated playfields. The site has since changed ownership to accommodate for the private Charles Armstrong School (CAS) and the McDougal public park (recreational facility). CAS is a similar use and engages in similar activities to that of a neighborhood public school. All uses taking place within the CAS campus are school-related. No additional joint-occupancy modifications are proposed as part of the project. CAS, as mandated by the reciprocal access easement for the public park will continue to provide access to McDougal Park through the school grounds on a part-time basis.

Policy 2042.21 - While the city's primary policy is to preserve neighborhood-based elementary education, it does recognize that should enrollments continue to decline, local school districts may be forced to sell or lease in total one or more school properties in the City. The City will maintain liaison with the school districts to ensure early awareness of such a sale or lease. If it is found that the sale or lease cannot be avoided, alternative uses of the site or sites shall be permitted according to the following policies:

- a. Every effort (including City purchase if possible) shall be made to maintain public use of the outdoor recreation areas of the City's school sites. In neighborhoods presently deficient in neighborhood park acreage, changes in use of school sites should be permitted only if recreation areas are kept available for public use. If complete preservation of public recreational areas is not possible, the City will explore options for joint use, clustered housing or other uses to maximize the area available for public recreation.*
- b. Any new zoning of school district property should take into consideration the land use of adjacent properties and the ability of the circulation system to handle anticipated traffic impacts.*

With the past sale of the former McDougal public school for the Charles Armstrong private school, and adjacent playfields to the City of Belmont for establishment of a public park, a new neighborhood park was created for the surrounding residential area. However, this park is only provided part-time access through the CAS property during the school year. The result of this past action (via the binding reciprocal access agreement) did not further the above policy of providing full availability of recreation areas for public use. No changes to the access easement are proposed by CAS to permit additional "public access time" for the park as part of this application. This policy was more directly applicable at the time of sale of the previous public school to CAS and adjacent playfield to Belmont for the neighborhood park.

Institutional Facilities

Goal 2051.1 - To accommodate private institutions which provide educational, religious, cultural, health and charitable services to members of the community.

The subject property consists of a private educational institution. The proposed expansion would enable the school to improve its educational offerings and services.

Goal 2051.2 - To ensure that institutional uses are designed and operated in a manner that preserves and enhances the character of Belmont's residential neighborhoods.

The design of the proposed expanded school facilities and operation of the school will create some noise and traffic impacts to surrounding residential uses. These impacts have been deemed by the project Initial Study to be able to be reduced to less than significant levels. The project was also designed to shift the proposed new buildings as far from north and eastern Belmont residences as

possible. In addition, it is expected that the operation of the school can be sufficiently maintained without significantly disturbing neighboring residential uses, since the project will be conditioned through performance standards and adherence to mitigation measures required in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Policy 2052.1 - All institutional uses should be served directly by major collector or arterial roads.

The CAS project site is not directly served by a major collector or arterial street. The subject property is served by a local street. As such, the existing institutional use (CAS) does not specifically meet this General Plan policy. The school was developed in the mid-1950's – before adoption of this policy. It was sold to CAS and approved for operation as a private school by the City in 1984 after this policy was adopted. Since the policy indicates “should” rather than “shall”, it is not mandatory, and apparently has not been used as a mandatory requirement in the past.

Policy 2052.2 - All institutional uses should be located and designed to be compatible with the residential character of the surrounding neighborhood. In particular, compatibility of uses in terms of traffic generation, parking, and noise shall be ensured prior to the establishment of any new institutional use or expansion of an existing use.

As indicated by Policy 2007.4, certain institutional uses, including schools, are viewed as complementary to residential uses; other residential areas within Belmont include neighborhood schools, either public or private. The proposed project for the site provides sufficient area to accommodate the school facility expansion, parking, setbacks and landscaping and open space. Implementation of project mitigation measures (a parking management plan, placing restrictions on school use of on-street parking, and continued use of on-site traffic flow controls) will reduce adverse traffic generation/circulation impacts to less than significant levels.

Noise associated with the construction/operation of the school will have detrimental impacts to the surrounding residential area. Some current outdoor school activities would be moved within the enclosed space of the proposed activity center, reducing ambient noise levels. While the locating the activity center within the site will create a new source of noise within the southern portion of the school campus, these factors will be reduced to less than significant levels through the implementation of mitigation measures for the project.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Goal 2080.1 - To provide a transportation system consistent with the residential, small city character and physical setting of Belmont.

No changes are proposed to the existing transportation system or surrounding streets of the project site. No off-site mitigation measures (with the exception of limiting on-street parking by CAS employees/visitors) are required as part of the Initial Study for the project.

Goal 2080.4 - To route through vehicular traffic around, rather than through, residential neighborhoods.

Incorporating this goal in site development and management of traffic issues for the community suggests that vehicular traffic should be concentrated on collector streets and main arterials. The subject site is surrounded by residential uses and located on a local street. Vehicular traffic to the subject site must move through residential areas (and associated local streets) to access/depart the school. As such, the project does not further this goal. However, it is not physically possible to route such traffic away from residential neighborhoods, and the traffic pattern is one that will not change from the established pattern of nearly twenty years.

Trafficways

Policy 2081.2 - Through traffic should be routed to streets on the periphery of residential areas to the maximum extent possible.

The subject school is located within a residential area; employees/visitors/students for the school must utilize surrounding local (residential) streets to access the site. As discussed above, the project cannot reduce the routing of through traffic to the periphery areas of the surrounding residential area because it is a physical impossibility to access the site without using local streets.

Policy 2081.3 - When it is determined that through traffic is adversely affecting a residential area, reasonable actions should be taken to re-route the traffic or otherwise reduce the traffic or mitigate its effects.

Project mitigation measures (including a parking management plan, regulation of pick-up/drop-off procedures, and discouragement of school use of adjacent on-street parking) are required to reduce traffic/circulation impacts to less than significant levels. Existing through traffic on surrounding streets (of the project site) has contributed to excessive levels of delay at certain street intersections (Ralston/Chula Vista). As of this time, no significant capital improvements are anticipated for this intersection (or required as mitigation measures for this project) to improve the existing conditions.

Policy 2081.5 - Streets and roads should be designed for safe travel at moderate speeds and for low maintenance costs.

No adverse safety conditions (on adjacent streets) have been identified as part of the Initial Study for the school facilities expansion.

Policy 2081.10 - New stop signs, traffic signals or other means of traffic control should be installed only where necessary to ensure safe use of a roadway or intersection by automobiles and pedestrians.

No off-site mitigation measures (with the exception of discouraging on-street parking by CAS employees/visitors) are required as part of the Initial Study for the project. This study also recommends

implementation of a parking management plan to ensure efficient use of the project site's lower schoolyard area for parking, and continued use of traffic flow controls through regulation of pick-up and drop-off activities at the campus. Taken together, these mitigation measures will reduce project associated traffic/circulation impacts to less than significant levels.

Public and Private Group Transportation

Policy 2082.3 - Commuter buses, van pools and other forms of private transit should be encouraged or required, where appropriate, especially in conjunction with major new industrial or commercial developments.

CAS incorporates carpooling programs for the student population to reduce the number of morning/afternoon vehicle trips to the project site.

Policy 2082.5 - The City shall encourage improvement of bus routes and schedules to provide transportation to commuter trains, local schools and recreational facilities without infringing on quiet neighborhoods.

No improvements to public bus routes or schedules are anticipated in conjunction with the review of the proposed project for the CAS site. As discussed above, CAS has carpooling programs in place as part of the school operations to reduce the number of drop-offs/pick-ups for site for the morning/afternoon peak commute hour period.

Parking

Policy 2084.2 - No new non-residential use shall be permitted unless adequate off-street parking and loading spaces can be provided, Standards for off-street parking and loading shall be reviewed and revised as needed for all non-residential uses.

While the project is not a new use, approximately 70 marked spaces are provided on the CAS campus to meet the minimum requirement of 60 spaces. Additional non-marked spaces are provided in dirt and grass areas around the lower driveway circulation roadway and on the basketball courts. The project meets required parking per the Zoning Code (based on number of school employees).

Policy 2084.5 - In residential areas, the intensity of use shall not be increased unless adequate off-street parking is provided. Standards shall be reviewed for off-street parking in residential areas and standards established for the use of public rights-of-way for residential off-street parking.

The proposed site plan layout modifications for the school facilities expansion will result in 70 off-street spaces for the school, meeting required parking per the Belmont Zoning Code (60 spaces required).

SEISMIC SAFETY – SAFETY ELEMENT

Goal 3040.2 - To continue to obtain and incorporate into City decision-making information delineating geologic, hydrologic and seismic hazards.

The project Initial Study includes an assessment of geologic, hydrologic, and seismic hazards for the proposed development. Appropriate mitigation measures have been recommended for the project to reduce these associated environmental factors to less than significant levels.

Goal 3040.3 - To encourage public and private development that is located, designed and constructed in such a way as to minimize the risk of loss of life and injury in the event of a major earthquake, flood, wildfire or other disaster.

The school facilities expansion will be required to meet current Uniform Building and Fire codes. These codes are designed in the review of new construction to protect persons and property from fire, erosion, earthquake, and other natural hazards.

Policy 3041.1 - The City shall require investigations by both registered soils engineers and engineering geologists prior to issuing building permits for any new construction unless waived due to current existing information and location. All such reports shall be independently evaluated, on behalf of the City, for completeness and accuracy.

As discussed earlier, a geotechnical report has been prepared for the project. The findings of this report have been independently evaluated and included as part of the Initial Study for the project. The environmental study concluded that should the design and recommendations of the applicant's geotechnical study and City's third party consultant (Cotton & Shires) be included for the project, issues related to soils stability would be mitigated to less than significant levels.

Policy 3041.4 - All environmental reports submitted to the City in support of development proposals shall include sections evaluating seismic, geologic, fire and flood hazards.

The project environmental study includes an evaluation of seismic, geologic, fire, and flood hazards. Adherence to appropriate mitigation measures for the project would assure support of the development proposal as currently designed.

Policy 3041.13 - No new construction shall be permitted in areas where emergency access cannot be adequately ensured.

Both the Police Department and South County Fire Authority have confirmed that adequate emergency services can be provided for the site. All service levels can be maintained to protect the public health, safety and welfare.

Policy 3041.14 - Sprinkler systems and/or smoke detectors should be required according to ordinance provisions administered by the South County Fire District.

Should the project be approved, a fire sprinkler system would be required (as per SCFA) for any new buildings for the subject site.

Policy 3041.15 - Fire retardant roofing and exterior siding materials should be required for any major remodeling of structures in presently developed areas which are adjacent to wooded open space areas or without adequate emergency access or water flow, assuming that 80 percent of the siding or roofing is being remodeled.

Should the project be approved, appropriate fire retardant materials for new on-site building would be required as per the Uniform Fire Code as administered by SCFA.

Policy 3041.16 - All geologic reports required by the City in support of a development application shall include an evaluation of seismic conditions on and near the site and how they could affect the proposed development.

The findings of a prepared geotechnical report for the proposed development have been evaluated and included as part of the environmental assessment for the project. The environmental study concluded that incorporating the design and recommendations of the applicant's geotechnical study, and City's third party consultant (Cotton & Shires) would reduce seismic safety factors to less than significant levels for the project.

Policy 3041.19 - The City supports strict control of the use, storage and transport of toxic, explosive or other hazardous materials.

No storage, or transport of toxic, explosive or other hazardous materials is proposed for the project. The project Initial Study included a records search of federal, state, and local databases pertaining to the transport, storage or disposal of hazardous materials or wastes. Regulatory records indicate no potential on- or off-site sources of hazardous substances that could affect soil and groundwater quality at the site.