



"Placerville, a Unique Historical Past Forging into a Golden Future"

Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: September 15, 2020

Prepared By: Andrew Painter, City Planner

ITEM 3: KID'S TOWN MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL - CUP20-02

PROJECT INFORMATION SUMMARY

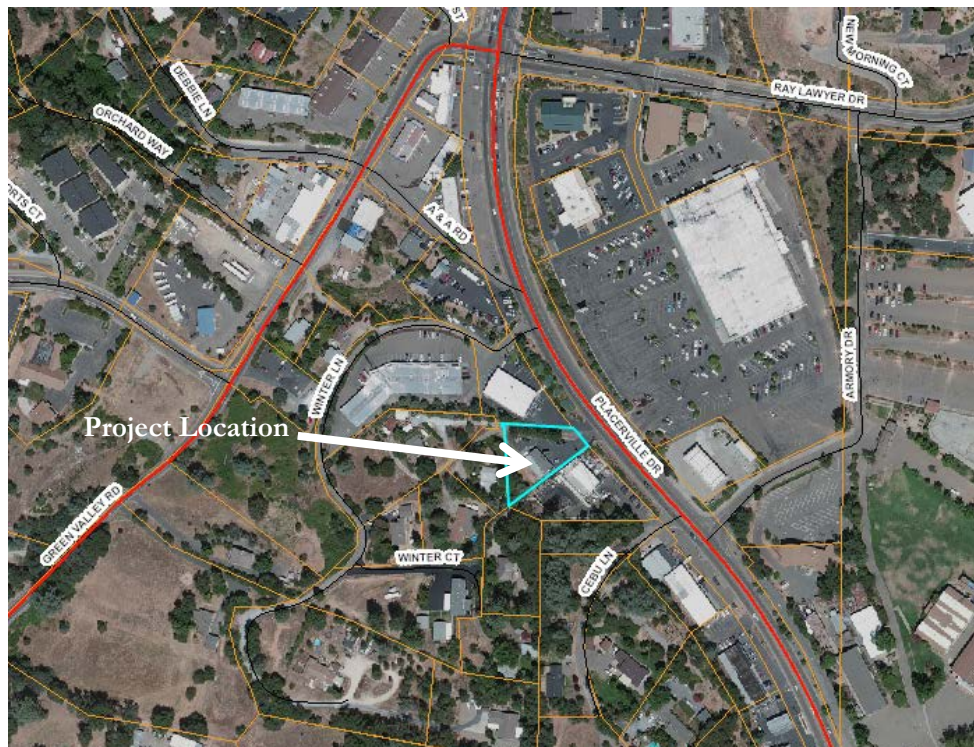
Request: To consider a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a preschool/ child care center facility for up to 26 children, six months to six years old, within an existing 1,740-square-foot building; and, to consider a categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15303, "Conversion of Small Structures."

Recommendations:

- 1) Open/close the public hearing;
- 2) Determine the project can be found exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 – "Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines; and,
- 3) Approve Conditional Use Permit No. CUP20-02 based on the findings identified in the Staff Report and subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Project Site Size, Location and Parcel Number: The 0.46-acre project site is located at 163 Placerville Drive, Placerville. The Assessor's Parcel Number is 325-120-033. Access is via Placerville Drive, and Sunset Knoll, a private driveway/road within the project parcel, serves project site vehicle exiting and residential uses located west of the project with addresses of 161, 169 and 181 Placerville Drive. See Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1. Project Location: 163 Placerville Dr.



Representatives: Kid's Town Preschool, Inc. – Resa Aldrich, Applicant
Jon Westphal, Architect, JNW Architect
Shirley Lumsden, Property Owner

General Plan: Commercial (C)

Zoning: Commercial (C)

Decision-Making Authority: Per Placerville Zoning Code (PZC) 10-3-1(C) and 10-3-6, the Planning Commission is the decision-maker for the requested conditional use permit (CUP).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Written notice for this public hearing was mailed to property owners within three hundred feet (300') of the project site, posted at Placerville City Hall, as well as the City's website (cityofplacerville.org), and published in the Mountain Democrat. No public comments were received as of the completion of this report on September 10, 2020.

DISCUSSION

Environmental Review

This project qualifies as a Class 3 categorical exemption pursuant to Guideline 15303 of the California Environmental Quality Act (Conversion of an Existing Structure from One Use to Another), in that the request would convert an existing structure from an office use to an educational use (child care center), when the new use is consistent with the current zoning and General Plan land use designation of the site.

Surrounding Uses

	General Plan	Zoning	Current Land Use
On-Site:	Commercial	C	Vacant Commercial Building
North:	Commercial	C	Office, Commercial Services
South:	Commercial	C	Vacant Eating and Drinking Establishment
East:	Commercial	C	Food Market, Banking, Gas Station and Fairgrounds
West:	Commercial	C	Single-Family Residences

Background and Previous Actions

Per the El Dorado County Assessor's records, the subject site commercial building was constructed in 1965. The building is currently vacant; however, it was previously occupied by commercial services, real estate, and professional office uses. Other site improvements include a parking area for nine vehicles, signage consisting of a pole sign along the Placerville Drive street frontage and support brackets and exterior lighting for a former sign panel that adorned the building's roof. Existing landscaping onsite include a field fence and a row of eleven native pine trees, and immature pine and live oak that separate the onsite parking area from Sunset Knoll.

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to operate a preschool and daycare facility (classified as a child care center per the Placerville Zoning Code) in an existing commercial building. Maximum enrollment is 26 children ages six months to 6 years. The facility will have a staff size of 3 to 4 adults. Enrollment

would be open to the general public. The request involves the conversion of the office building into three playrooms, three restrooms, and a small office space. An outdoor play area will be provided along the rear of the building, adjacent to the rear or side yards of the existing single-family residences located west of the proposed project site. Wrought-iron fencing and gates extend along the front and north side of the building.

Nine paved on-site parking spaces are shown on the Site Plan to serve the use with access from Placerville Drive. A parking lot consisting of angled parking stalls is designed for single-vehicle circulation through the site from east to the west, then north onto the private road, Sunset Knoll, located within and along the project site's northern property boundary. Sunset Knoll intersects easterly with Placerville Drive.

The center facility would serve children between the hours of 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday through Friday, with most children arrivals occurring between 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM and departures occurring between 4:00 PM and 5:30 PM. State licensing requirements for a child care center mandate that parents or guardians must check-in and check-out in the facility when dropping off or picking up children. This check-in and check-out takes three to five minutes each time, spreading out outbound vehicle traffic to once every three to five minutes.

To address concerns from the neighbors of noise made by children playing outside during recess times, the applicant states the children would not use the outdoor play area before 9:00 a.m. Also, state licensing requirements would limit the maximum number of children in the outdoor play area at one time to 12 children due to the size of the play area.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

General Plan Consistency

The General Plan land use designation for the site is Commercial. This land use designation is intended to provide for the development of commercial retail sales and services, including entertainment and other commercial activities to serve the residents of the community, create conditions conducive to a convenient and desirable environment for customers and employees, and protect areas in this designation from encroachment by heavy commercial, residential, or other incompatible uses. The following General Plan goals and policies are applicable to the proposed project

Land Use Goal C: To protect and provide for the expansion of Placerville's commercial services sector to meet the needs of both Placerville area residents and visitors.

Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resources Goal D: To protect Placerville's natural vegetation and diverse wildlife

Policy D.9: The City shall seek to protect and manage Placerville's tree cover to maximize ecological and aesthetic values consistent with the reasonably economic enjoyment of private property.

Analysis: Staff believes that the proposed use of the site as a child care center is consistent with the General Plan, in that it conforms to Land Use Goal C because it would provide for the expansion of childcare services, convenient to meet the needs of working parents in the project vicinity and the greater Placerville area residents. In addition, sufficient space exists between the property and

adjoining commercial properties so as not to discourage future commercial uses that may locate by-right in the Commercial Zone District.

Protecting and managing tree cover on the site to meet the intent of General Plan Goal D and Policy D.9 of the Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resources section can be obtained by conditioning the project to preserve, protect and maintain an existing row of eleven pine trees (See Figures 8 and 9), and immature pine and live oaks located within the landscape area adjacent to Sunset Knoll on the project parcel with the recording of a landscape maintenance agreement between the property owner, applicant and the City, utilizing a form prepared by staff, to ensure the ongoing maintenance and preservation of the landscape. This existing tree cover provides visual interest to the site and the Placerville Drive streetscape and they performs a partial screening of the parking area.

Additional conditions require the Applicant to submit for staff approval a landscape plan exhibit showing the location on the site of each tree, and to cause the removal of the invasive, non-native, Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) present within this landscape area, and located also at the southeast corner of the site adjacent to the pole sign (See Figures 2 and 6).

Zoning Classification and Regulations Consistency

Zone Classification

The project site is located within the Commercial (C) zoning district (PZC 10-5-15). This zoning district was established to allow for retail sales and services, entertainment and other light commercial activities to serve the residents of the community, planned in well-planned areas properly located in relation to access, topography and residential areas.

The zoning district requires Planning Commission approval of a conditional use permit for a Community Care Facility use, of which a child care center is a subcategory of a Community Care Facility. Per PZC 10-3-3, the Commission may approve conditional uses where such uses are:

- deemed essential or desirable to the public convenience or welfare;
- in harmony with the various elements or objectives of the general plan, and
- not detrimental to surrounding property.

Per PZC 10-3-6(D), the Commission may require such terms and conditions to the granting of a conditional use permit as the Commission may deem necessary.

Analysis: Staff believes the site is suitable and adequate for the proposed use and is in harmony with the General Plan because it would be located within an area that is accessible by existing streets, not located in a sensitive area, and would not require site work (e.g., grading or new building construction) as the building already exists. In addition, the use is necessary or desirable for the development of the community, in that a child care center would provide a valuable service to families living and working in the neighborhood, and the greater Placerville area. Also, the proposed use would not be detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare in that the site and use operation is limited to 26 children. Use operation would minimize impacts resulting from noise generated by children through a staggered scheduled use of the playground where not all children would be outside at a time. There would be sufficient parking and circulation to meet the anticipated demands resulting from the proposed child care center. Also, sufficient space exists between the property and adjoining commercial properties so as not to discourage future commercial uses that may locate by-right in the Commercial Zone District.

Development Regulations

City Parking Regulations (PZC 10-4-4)

Minimum on-site parking standards for various uses are provided under Subsection (E) of PZC 10-4-4. The minimum parking standard for a nursery school use (synonymous with a preschool or child care center) is one parking space per 500 square feet of gross building floor area.

Parking Stall and Parking Aisle Requirements (PZC 10-4-4(C))

Each parking stall shall have a minimum size of nine feet by eighteen feet (9'x18') when free of obstructions such as columns or walls; ten feet by eighteen feet (10'x18') where columns or walls are located adjacent to space.

Accessible parking is required under the California Building Code, with a minimum of one van accessible space (twelve feet by eighteen feet (12'x18')) and accessible space access aisle width of five feet for a parking area consisting of one to 25 spaces.

Analysis: Nine parking spaces are proposed on-site with the request. The nine spaces provided exceed the minimum required under the Placerville Zoning Ordinance (PZC) for a preschool / child care center. A minimum of four spaces would be required per PZC 10-4-4(E) under the parking ratio of one space per 500 square feet for a 1,740-square foot building preschool (PZC 10-4-4(E)). The excess space capacity will be helpful as no drop-off zone is required or proposed as all parents are required under State law at a licensed daycare center to accompany their child into and out of the facility to check-in and to check-out.

The existing parking lot layout with its angled parking spaces directs drivers using the site to enter from Placerville Drive and exit onto Sunset Knoll. Sunset Knoll is a private road located on the project site parcel. The property owner and their tenants can use this road to egress the site. The existing layout therefore is consistent with all PZC parking requirements for an angled parking area by providing an aisle width and an exit in the direction of traffic vehicle traffic flow.

Under the existing and proposed parking lot orientation and traffic flow, the center facility use would generate peak traffic onto Sunset Knoll and Placerville Drive during child drop-off in the AM and pick-up in the PM, Monday through Friday. Potentially this could be a maximum of twenty six vehicles during each pick-up and drop-off time if each child was picked-up and dropped-off in separate vehicles. However, the Applicant approximates that parent vehicles would be on the site between three to five minutes due to check-in and check-out procedures. Thus, an outbound vehicle from the preschool / day care center every three to five minutes would not substantially impact traffic on the private road Sunset Knoll, or the public street Placerville Drive.

Staff recommends conditions that require that all parking on site be striped and maintained to meet minimum City and State requirements; that parking shall only be located where authorized under the approved Site Plan, and that no pressure washing of the parking or driveway areas, playground areas, or the trash storage area unless the city approves a collection system to keep water from entering the storm drain.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the CUP is to ensure the proposed establishment is appropriately located and operated. In addition, conditions may be placed on the business in order to protect the public health, safety, peace, and welfare. The CUP process also allows the City to monitor the use and verify that it is operating in accordance with the terms of its CUP. In reviewing the application and site conditions, staff finds that the proposed child care facility will be compatible with the adjacent uses as conditioned. The proposed use will be conducted entirely within the building and project parcel, with a required outdoor play area limited under State license to a maximum of twelve children at any time when in use thus minimizing any impacts with respect to noise since there are no other tenants on the same parcel. Also, there are no sensitive uses or receptors (e.g. schools, senior residential care facilities) in the area that would be negatively affected by the proposed use.

RECOMMENDED PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

I. CEQA Determination

Motion: Determine the project request can be found exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15303 – “Conversion of Small Structures” of the CEQA Guidelines based on the findings included in the Staff Report.

CEQA Findings:

1. The project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guideline 15303 which exempts projects involving the conversion of an existing facility from one land use to another when the new use is consistent with the current zoning and General Plan land use designation of the site.

II. Project Determination

Motion: Approve Conditional Use Permit No. CUP20-02, located at 163 Placerville Drive, APN 325-120-033, based on the project information and findings included in the Staff Report, and subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.

Project Findings:

1. The proposed use is consistent with the General Plan as set out in the staff report because it would expand childcare services within the community, desirable to the public convenience.
2. The proposed facility would be compatible with the uses in the immediate vicinity because the facility would be located within a free-standing building; the project site provides sufficient parking and circulation areas to meet the anticipated additional demands resulting from the proposed change in use to a child care center.
3. The proposed use would not be detrimental to the general welfare of persons residing in the immediate vicinity, the neighborhood or the community at large because the proposed facility would serve residents and employees in the vicinity. The child care center would bring vitality to the site and surroundings by occupying an existing building that

has been vacant for an extended period of time; and, outdoor play is limited to a maximum of 12 children under State licensing that would minimize noise impacts on neighboring residential and commercial uses.

The decision of the Planning Commission is final unless the project or project conditions are appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days.

Attachments:

- A. [Applicant Submittal Package / Site Plan / Interior Elevation and Aerial View](#)
- B. [Recommended CUP 20-02 Conditions of Approval](#)

Figure 2 Street view of 163 Placerville Drive. Staff photo.



Figure 3 Front and south building elevations. Staff photo.



Figure 4 North building elevation. Staff photo.



Figure 5 Rear yard. Staff photo.

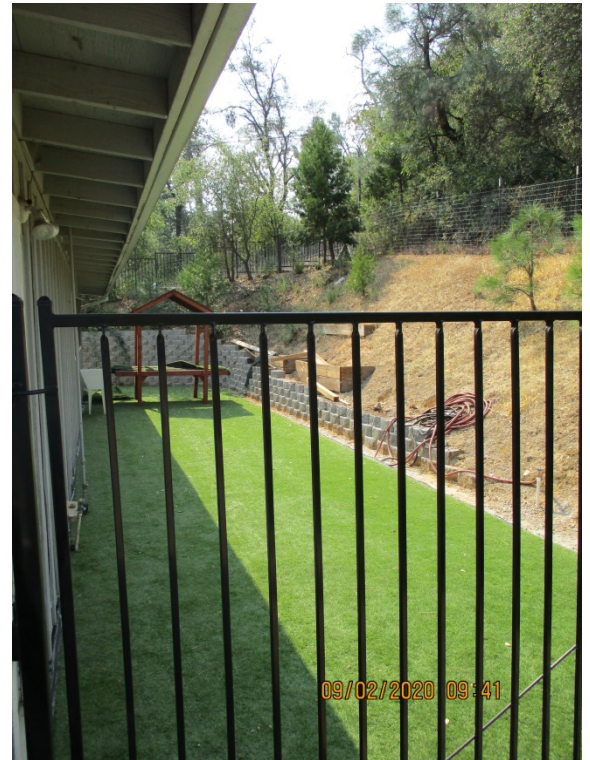


Figure 6 Pole sign at driveway entrance. Staff photo.



Figure 7 Roof sign support structure and lighting. Staff photo.



Figure 6 Sunset Knoll, looking east toward Placerville Drive. Staff photo.



Figure 7 Existing landscaping and post and rail fence. Staff photo.

