




PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DATE: JUNE 4, 2026  
AGENDA ITEM NO.: 3

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

<b>Case Number</b>	PR-2024-001684 (CUP)	
<b>Request</b>	To consider a Conditional Use Permit to permit a charter school (Vista Norte Public Charter) consisting of up to 450 students.	
<b>Applicant</b>	Travis Chopp of Alta Vista Public Charter, Inc. dba Vista Norte Public Charter	
<b>Project Location</b>	7680 Casa Blanca Street, situated on the south side of Casa Blanca Street between Winstrom and Depot Streets	
<b>APN</b>	230-243-003	
<b>Project Area</b>	0.57-acre	
<b>Ward</b>	5	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Casa Blanca	
<b>General Plan Designation</b>	MDR – Medium Density Residential	
<b>Zoning Designation</b>	R-1-7000 – Single Family Residential Zone	
<b>Staff Planner</b>	Yenifer Cid, Associate Planner 951-826-5652 <a href="mailto:ycid@riversideca.gov">ycid@riversideca.gov</a>	

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission:

- DETERMINE** that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities), as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment; and
- APPROVE** Planning Case PR-2024-001684 (Conditional Use Permit) based on the findings outlined in the staff report and summarized in the attached findings and subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Exhibits 1 & 2).

## SITE BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

The project site consists of a single 0.57-acre parcel and is fully developed with two buildings, an outdoor playground and a 12-stall surface parking lot. Building A, a 2,378-square-foot structure, is occupied by Vista Norte Public Charter School (Charter School), and Building B, a 2,306-square-foot structure, is utilized by Casa Blanca Home of Neighborly Services (Community Center) and the Charter School.

The site has primarily been used by the Casa Blanca Home of Neighborly Services as a community center since 1953, with a portion of the site being occupied by a preschool in 2013, and more recently by the Charter School since 2015 (Exhibit 3).

Surrounding land uses include single family residential to the west and north (across Casa Blanca Street), vacant land to the south (across Railroad Avenue) and east (across Winstrom Street) (Exhibit 4).

## PROPOSAL

The applicant is requesting approval of a Conditional Use Permit to permit and legalize the operations of the existing Charter School.

The proposal includes the continued operation of both facilities on-site with the Charter School occupying Building A and B and the Community Center occupying a portion of Building B.

Charter School operating hours are Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a total student enrollment of 450 students between the ages of 14 and 23. Students primarily work on assignments off-site and attend scheduled appointments with teachers once a week for one to two hours. The school is staffed by 10 teachers and 5 administrative staff. Teachers' schedules are staggered throughout the day across three shifts. Each teacher serves a maximum of five students per hour, resulting in a maximum of 50 students on-site at any given time, including overlap in schedules.

Community programs provided by Casa Blanca Home of Neighborly Services primarily operates from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and provides services such as parenting classes, counseling, music lessons, and similar educational and support programs to the surrounding community. Additional community services include a daily food pantry and a weekly food drive. The food pantry operates Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., serving approximately 15 families per day at an average rate of two families per hour. The weekly food distribution is held every Wednesday from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and serves approximately 85 families.

No modifications to the site or existing buildings are included as part of the proposal.

Vehicle access to on-site parking and student drop off and pick up will continue to be provided by a one-way ingress driveway and a separate one-way egress driveway along Railroad Avenue.

## PROJECT ANALYSIS

### *Authorization and Compliance Summary*

	Consistent	Inconsistent
<b>General Plan 2025</b> The project is consistent with the underlying General Plan 2025 Land Use designation of MDR – Medium Density Residential (Exhibit 5). This designation provides single family housing but also allows for community serving uses such as day care facilities and schools. The	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>proposed development also furthers the Objectives and Policies of the General Plan 2025, specifically:</p> <p><u>Objective LU-9</u>: Provide for continuing growth within the General Plan Area, with land uses and intensities appropriately designated to meet the needs of anticipated growth and to achieve the community's needs.</p> <p><u>Objective ED-3</u>: Plan proactively for all education needs.</p> <p><u>Policy ED-3.1</u>: Partner with local schools, colleges, early childhood education programs and other educational institutions to accommodate the educational needs of residents.</p> <p>Additionally, the Educational Element of the General Plan, indicates, "Education provides the knowledge, skills and resources to foster a thriving economy and build a harmonious community." Education and schools are a cornerstone of the community where youth gain life skills and receive quality education leading to an overall improvement in quality of life.</p>		
<p><b>Zoning Code Land Use Consistency (Title 19)</b></p> <p>The project site is zoned R-1-7000 – Single Family Residential (Exhibit 6). The R-1-7000 – Single Family Residential Zone allows for charter school facilities subject to the approval of a Conditional Use Permit and compliance with the Site Location, Operation, and Development Standards.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Compliance with Citywide Design &amp; Sign Guidelines</b></p> <p>The proposed project substantially meets the objectives of the Citywide Design Guidelines for residential development related to architectural treatment and landscaping. There will be no modification to the existing buildings. As proposed, the project is consistent with the Citywide Design Guidelines.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan</b></p> <p>The project site is located within Compatibility Zone E (Other Airport Environs) of the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (RCALUCP) for Riverside Municipal Airport. Zone E does not restrict non-residential intensities. The proposed project is consistent with RCALUCP for the Riverside Municipal Airport.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The Charter School is utilizing a facility that was previously used as a preschool. While the proposal for the Charter School includes enrollment of up to 450 kids, the site is primarily used as a physical check-in for students, once a week. This ensures students are actively working on and completing work plans outside of class. About 75 percent of enrolled students are between the ages of 15-18 years old, as shown below:

Charter School Student Age	
Students Age:	Percentage Total:
14	5.6%
15	13.9%
16	19.5%
17	29.1%
18	13.9%
19	7.2%
20	6.4%
21	2.8%
22	1.2%
23	0.4%
Total:	100%

Based on operational characteristics, approximately 80 percent of students are dropped off and picked up on a daily basis. The remainder of students arrive at the site by either walking, biking, or personal vehicle; of those driving, generally up to 3 students commute by personal vehicle per day.

Staff observed parking during daytime operations and found a majority of employees and students park on-site and off-site along the project site's frontage with Railroad Avenue. The site along the south side of Railroad Avenue is currently undeveloped and provides ample on street parking with little to no impact on the surrounding neighboring properties (Exhibit 3). Staff also observed that, of the 12 existing on-site parking spaces, there is a constant turnover of vehicles, leaving parking spaces open during operating hours. Based on the charter school's unique operational characteristics and the community center's hours of operations, the site experiences a consistent turnover of vehicles throughout the day, ensuring adequate on- and off-site parking without impacting the surrounding neighborhood.

As proposed, the project meets all applicable development standards of the Zoning Code.

## FINDINGS SUMMARY

### *Conditional Use Permit*

The inclusion of the Charter School and the Community Center provides a critical educational resource for the Casa Blanca Neighborhood by serving a wide range of school age children to young adults, ensuring a critical educational component with continued education. Although the site is compact, the school's unique operating characteristics reduce impacts generally associated with more traditional schools. As previously indicated, the majority of the student's work is conducted at home, which minimizes the number of hours students spend on-site per week and in return, reduces traffic and parking concerns to the immediate neighborhood.

Therefore, the project will not be materially detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to the environment or to the property or improvements within the area. The project complies with the standards of the Zoning Code and Citywide Design Guidelines.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This proposal is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines, as the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENTS**

Public hearing notices were mailed to property owners within 300 feet of the site. As of the writing of this report, no responses have been received by Planning Staff.

## **APPEAL INFORMATION**

Actions by the City Planning Commission, including any environmental findings, may be appealed to the City Council within ten calendar days after the decision. Appeal filing and processing information may be obtained from the Planning Department Public Information Section, 3rd Floor, City Hall.

## **EXHIBITS LIST**

1. Staff Recommended Findings
2. Conditions of Approval
3. Existing Site Photos
4. Location Map
5. General Plan Map
6. Zoning Map
7. Project Plans (Site Plan, Floor Plan, and Building Elevations)
8. Project Description

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Prepared by: Yenifer Cid, Associate Planner  
Reviewed by: Brian Norton, Principal Planner  
Approved by: Laurel Reimer, City Planner



*EXHIBIT 1 – FINDINGS*

**PLANNING CASE: PR-2024-001684** (Conditional Use Permit)

**Conditional Use Permit Findings pursuant to Chapter 19.760.040, as outlined in the Staff Report**

1. The Charter School is substantially compatible with other existing and proposed uses in the area, including factors relating to the nature of its location, operation, building design, site design, traffic characteristics and environmental impacts;
2. The Charter School will not be materially detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to the environment or to the property or improvements within the area; and
3. The Charter School will be consistent with the purpose of the Zoning Code and the application of any required development standards in the furtherance of a compelling governmental interest and is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.



*EXHIBIT 2 – CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL*

**PLANNING CASE: PR-2024-001684** (Conditional Use Permit)

**Planning**

1. Plans shall conform to the exhibits attached to this report. Proposed modifications to the approved design shall be submitted to the Planning Division and shall include revised exhibits and a narrative description of the proposed modifications. The applicant is advised that an additional application and fee may be required.
2. The subject property shall be developed and operated substantially as described in the text of this report and as shown on the project plans on file with this case except for any specific modifications that may be required by these conditions of approval.
3. *Advisory:* Signs and murals shall be permitted in accordance with Chapter 19.620 of the Zoning Code. Any signs shall be subject to separate review and assessment, including any required variances. A separate sign application, including fees and additional sets of plans, is necessary prior to any sign permit issuance.

*Operational Conditions:*

4. Any modification to increase the maximum enrollment shall require review by the Planning Division and shall be subject to compliance with Title 19 (Zoning) and any required entitlements at the time of modification.
5. The charter school operation shall be limited to Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. No weekend or night operation shall be permitted. Should the applicant request revised hours of operation in the future, staff shall require review by the Planning Division for compliance with Title 19 and any other necessary City Codes.
6. The site shall be fully landscaped and maintained and kept clean in a neat, weed, and graffiti free condition at all times.

*Standard Conditions:*

7. There shall be a one-year time limit in which to take action on the Conditional Use Permit beginning the day following approval by the Planning Commission unless a public hearing is held by City Council; in that event the time limit begins the day following City Council approval.
8. The Conditional Use Permit may be granted time extensions by the Community & Economic Development Director, or their designee, up to a total of five years beyond the original approval expiration date prior to issuance of any building permits. Once a building permit has been issued, the development will be considered vested and time extensions are no longer needed.

Prior to **June 4, 2027**, if building permits have not been obtained, a time extension request shall be submitted to the Planning Division. The request shall include a letter stating the reasons for the extension of time and associated fee shall be submitted to the Planning

Division. **PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE APPLICANT WILL NOT BE NOTIFIED BY THE PLANNING DIVISION ABOUT THE PENDING EXPIRATION OF THE SUBJECT ENTITLEMENT.**

9. Within 30 days of approval of this case by the City, the developer shall execute an agreement approved by the City Attorney's Office to defend, indemnify, including reimbursement, and hold harmless the City of Riverside, its agents, officers and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against the City of Riverside, its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul, an approval by the City's advisory agency, appeal board, or legislative body concerning this approval, which action is brought within the time period provided for in Section 66499.37 of the Government Code. The City will promptly notify the developer of any such claim, action or proceeding and the City will cooperate in the defense of the proceeding.
10. The Conditional Use Permit may be modified or revoked by the City Planning Commission or the City Council should they determine that the proposed use or conditions under which it is being operated or maintained is detrimental to the public health, welfare or materially injurious to public safety, property or improvements in the vicinity or if the property is operated or maintained so as to constitute a public nuisance.
11. This project shall fully and continually comply with all applicable conditions of approval, State, Federal and local laws in effect at the time the permit is approved and exercised and which may become effective and applicable thereafter, and in accordance with the terms contained within the staff report and all testimony regarding this case. Failure to do so will be grounds for Code Enforcement action, revocation, or further legal action.
12. This permit is issued based upon the plans and information submitted by the applicant, which has been used as the basis for evaluation of the proposed use in this staff report and for the conditions of approval herein. Permittee shall notify Community Development Department, Planning Division, of any change in operations and such change may require a revision to this permit. Failure to notify the city of any change in operations is material grounds for revocation of this conditional use permit.
13. The Applicant of the business subject to this Conditional Use Permit acknowledges all of the conditions imposed and accepts this permit subject to those conditions and with the full awareness of the provisions of Title 19 of the Riverside Municipal Code. The Applicant shall inform all its employees and future operators of the business subject to this permit of the restrictions and conditions of this permit as they apply to the business operations.
14. Failure to abide by all conditions of this Conditional Use Permit shall be cause for revocation.
15. Enumeration of the conditions herein shall not exclude or excuse compliance with all applicable rules and regulations in effect at the time this permit is exercised.

**Fire Prevention Division**

*Prior Issuance of Building Permit:*

16. **Codes in Effect:** The proposed project shall fully comply with the 2025 Edition of Title 24, the California Building Standards Code, as adopted and amended by the City of Riverside, or the version of these codes in effect at the time a building permit application is filed.
17. **Existing Fire Protection Systems:** Existing fire protection systems required by the California Fire Code and/or Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) shall be maintained in an operative condition at all times and replaced or repaired where defective. For alterations to buildings or structures or when otherwise deemed necessary, fire protection and life safety systems shall be extended, altered or augmented to maintain protection. For existing fire alarm systems and fire sprinkler monitoring systems certificated by Underwriters

Laboratories (UL), Factory Mutual (FM) or Electrical Testing Laboratories (ETL), certification shall be maintained for the life of the system.

18. **Separate Permits Required:** Where installation or modification is required, a separate plan review and permit application must be submitted directly to the Fire Department for each of the following improvements:
- Underground piping for private fire water supply (Fire Underground)
  - Automatic Fire Sprinkler System (Fire Overhead)
  - Fire Alarm System
19. **Fire Alarm System:** A fire alarm system monitored by a central station is required. Fire alarm system must meet minimum requirements of the California Fire Code, 2025 Edition and NFPA 72.

**Interior Finishes and Decorative Materials:** Interior finishes including wall, ceiling and floor finishes and trim, decorative materials and artificial vegetation shall meet the minimum requirements for a Group E Occupancy as specified in California Fire Code, 2025 Edition Chapter 8, Interior Finish, Decorative Materials and Furnishings.

#### **Public Works – Traffic Division**

20. Within 30 days of approval of this case by the Planning Commission, applicant shall submit a traffic design plan to Traffic Division, which shall include the following:
- a. Construction of a stop sign (R1-1), stop bar, stop legend, at the Project's "Exit Only" Driveway. Stop signs must conform to City Standard 664 and the stop bar and legend must conform to the City standard 650.
  - b. Construction of bike rack that can accommodate a minimum of two bikes.
  - c. All signage and striping improvements must comply with the most current California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards and should be per City of Riverside, Public Works requirements. The applicant shall hire a contractor to complete the work. The contractor shall complete the construction work with an approved Public Works Permit. The installation of the signage and striping shall be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Public Works. The applicant is **solely responsible for the procurement and installation of the improvements.**
21. **Completion of Work:** Within 180 days of approval of this case by the Planning Commission, applicant shall fully complete the proposed improvements with final inspection by the Public Work Department.