



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL      DATE: JULY 28, 2015**

**FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT      WARD: 5**  
**DEPARTMENT**

**SUBJECT: PLANNING CASE P14-0362 – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO ESTABLISH A  
CHARTER SCHOOL (“RIVER SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL”) AT 4020  
JEFFERSON STREET – LARRY SLUSSER OF THE LEGACY GROUP ON  
BEHALF OF RIVER SPRINGS CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **ISSUE:**

The issue for City Council consideration is a proposal by Larry Slusser of the Legacy Group on behalf of River Springs Charter School to consider a Conditional Use Permit to establish a charter school (“River Springs Charter School”) for kindergarten through 12th grade students, with up to 625 students and 57 staff at any given time, within an existing 41,700 square foot building previously occupied as a YMCA, located on a 2.8 acre site at 4020 Jefferson Street.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Determine the proposed project is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects);
2. Approve Planning Case P14-0362 based on and subject to the findings in the Planning Commission Report (attachment 2) and the Planning Commission’s recommended conditions (attachment 1); and
3. Approve Exhibits 6-10 of the June 18, 2015 City Planning Commission staff report (attachment 2) as approved project plans, subject to the Planning Commission’s recommended conditions of approval (attachment 1).

## **STAFF/PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommended approval subject to the recommended conditions of approval in the staff report. On June 18, 2015, the City Planning Commission recommended approval of Planning Case P14-0362 by a vote of 8 ayes, 0 noes and 0 abstentions, with modifications to staff recommended conditions.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The applicant is requesting consideration of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to establish a campus of “River Springs Charter School” at the subject site. River Springs Charter School (RSCS) is operated as an Independent Study School, which offers flexibility to meet individual student needs, interests, and styles of learning. Independent study students do not attend in-school instruction on a daily basis, as they have a flexible schedule which complements their off-site independent instruction (home schooling). RSCS proposes to provide two concurrent programs at the subject site; Magnolia K-8 Academy for grades K – 8 and Renaissance Real World High School Academy for grades 9-12. Currently, River Springs Charter School operates several facilities in Riverside, including a facility at 8775 Magnolia Avenue. The school’s lease at the Magnolia Avenue site will expire in July 2015, thereby justifying the need for this application to accommodate the existing student base.

### **Proposed site and building modifications**

In order for the former YMCA building to meet the needs of the proposed school, a significant amount of interior improvements must occur. In addition, a majority of the easterly portion of the building is proposed to be demolished and replaced with a newly constructed complementary two-story portion. Modifications to the existing parking lot are also proposed to meet the needs and demand of the proposed project.

### **Proposed Operations**

As shown in the proposed project description, anticipated occupancy for RSCS will be up to 625 students and 57 staff at any given time. While the actual “enrollment” may be closer to 1000, only 625 students will be at the facility at one time, as students typically come either 2 or 3 days each week, depending upon the program in which they are enrolled. A total of 28 classrooms are proposed in addition to chemistry, computer and art rooms. A total of three on-site outdoor play areas are proposed as well.

The applicant prepared a Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), which evaluated vehicular circulation to and from the site, as well as on site-parking and maneuvering. Recommended conditions from the TIA were integrated into the proposal.

### **Neighborhood Compatibility**

Based on the operational characteristics of the proposed use, the project can be operated in a manner that will not be detrimental to surrounding land uses, including the existing surrounding single family residential neighborhood. Adequate access to the subject site exists from Jefferson Avenue, which will adequately accommodate traffic to and from the site. In addition, the applicant hosted a neighborhood outreach meeting regarding the proposal in August 2014. The meeting involved approximately 15 neighbors.

Please refer to the June 18, 2015 City Planning Commission staff report, recommended conditions and minutes.

## **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no impact to the General Fund, since all project costs are borne by the applicant.

Prepared by: Emilio Ramirez, Interim Community & Economic Development Director  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Brent A. Mason, Finance Director/Treasurer  
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. City Planning Commission Recommended Conditions – June 18, 2015
2. City Planning Commission Report – June 18, 2015
3. City Planning Commission Minutes