



Legislation Text

File #: 21-966, **Version:** 1

FROM:
Planning

TITLE:
Master Case No. 21-043; Tentative Parcel Map No. 21-008 (TPM No. 20466); Minor Use Permit No. 21-001; Design Review Project No. 21-017 - A request to operate a charter high school (Real Journey Academies, Inc.) grades 9th and 12th with a maximum capacity of 800 students within a new three-story, 51,000 square foot building.

RECOMMENDATION:
Based on the information in the staff report and subject to the attached Findings and Conditions of Approval, staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution PC No. 2021 - _____, to:

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (MMRP) and direct staff to file a Notice of Determination; and,
2. Approve Tentative Parcel Map No. 21-008 (TPM No. 20466);
3. Approve Minor Use Permit No. 21-001; and,
4. Approve Design Review No. 21-017.

APPLICANT:
Red Hook Capital Partners
Hugo Garcia
2120 E. Grand Avenue, Suite 135
El Segundo, CA 90245

LOCATION:
The project site is located at 7775 Sierra Avenue (APNs: 0190-171-69 and -71).

REQUEST:
Approval of:

1. Tentative Parcel Map No. 21-008 (TPM No. 20466): a request to consolidate two parcels into one parcel totaling 2.5 acres.
2. Minor Use Permit No. 21-001: a request to operate a charter high school (Real Journey Academies);
3. Design Review No. 21-017: a request to construct a new 51,000 square foot commercial building for a charter high school, to construct onsite and offsite improvements and install fencing, shade covers, and synthetic turf.

PROJECT PLANNER:

Paul Gonzales, Senior Planner

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A. Existing Land Use Designation:

	General Plan	Zoning	Existing Land Use
Site:	Walkable Mixed Use - 1 (WMXU-1)	Form Based Code (Transitional District)	Vacant
North:	Walkable Mixed Use - 1 (WMXU-1)	Form Based Code (Transitional District)	Vacant
South:	Walkable Mixed Use - 1 (WMXU-1)	Form Based Code (Transitional District)	Single-Family Residential Homes
East:	Single-Family Residential (R-SF)	Single-Family Residential (R-1)	Single-Family Residential Homes
West:	Walkable Mixed Use - 1 (WMXU-1)	Form Based Code (Transitional District)	Church and Single-Family Homes.

PREVIOUS HEARINGS/APPROVALS:

- **June 23, 1952:** The subject property was annexed into the City of Fontana as part of the incorporation of the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDING:

An Initial Study (IS) has been prepared for this project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on the information in the IS, no significant impact is anticipated as a result of project implementation, with mitigation incorporated, and a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been prepared for the Planning Commission’s consideration per Section 15070 of the California Environmental Quality Act and per Section 6.04 of the City of Fontana 2019 Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The applicant has applied for a Minor Use Permit to operate a charter high school (Real Journey Academies, Inc.) grades 9th and 12th with a maximum capacity of 800 students within a new three-story, 51,000 square foot building located east of Sierra Avenue and south Miller Avenue. The proposal includes the consolidation of two parcels into one, a design review for the site and architectural review for a new commercial building and the installation of the onsite and offsite improvements. Additionally, the proposed project will have an outdoor physical education (PE) area, fencing, drop off/pick up area, and parking area. The outdoor PE area will include a play court (synthetic turf), shade structure, and three strips of turf area.

III. ANALYSIS:

Tentative Parcel Map No. 21-008 (TPM No. 20466):

The proposed charter school project site is currently composed of two (2) parcels. The applicant has filed for a tentative parcel map to consolidate two (2) currently vacant parcels into one (1) parcel totaling approximately 2.5 acres for the proposed charter school site.

Minor Use Permit No. 21-001:

The applicant is requesting approval of Minor Use Permit No. 21-001 to operate a charter high school for grades 9th through 12th, with a maximum capacity of 800 students, staff, and visitors in a new 51,000 square foot building.

The proposed school's layout includes three floors of school related functions. The first floor will have teachers work area, teachers' lounge, conference rooms, offices, parents' workroom, restrooms, atrium, e-sports area, make space, storage, media recording studio, lockers, and kitchen. The second floor will include classrooms, two science classrooms, restrooms, janitor closet, and the maker space. Finally, the third floor will have regular classroom, science classroom, Special Education classrooms, restrooms, teachers' lounge,

The applicant (Real Journey Academies) currently operates two (2) elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school within the San Bernardino, Moreno Valley, and Highland area. The following sections include a summary of the operations of the proposed Real Journey Academy to be located on the subject site.

Real Journey Academies School Program:

According to the application, students are focused on an entrepreneur-infused curriculum for 9th and 12th graders that includes entrepreneurial skills within their daily interactions, such as, storytelling, working in teams, analyzing data, and pitching ideas. In addition to learning entrepreneurial skills, students will take all the required courses to qualify for admissions to California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) colleges, which may include Financial Algebra, Geometry, Biology, World History, English, Spanish, Physical Education, Project Management, Introduction to Media, and Online Marketing. The teacher-to-student classroom ratio at the proposed charter school will be 1:25.

Academic Year:

The length of the proposed school's academic year is 10 months (180 instructional days) that commences the first week of August and ends the last week of May. Students and teachers will have time off during the summer, winter, and spring breaks while administrators and staff work on-site year-round.

Hours of Operation:

The school will maintain three (3) daily schedules as follows:

1. Site Hours: 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
2. Business Hours 7:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
3. School Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

All grade levels will start at the same time. The students will be commencing at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 4:00 pm. The students will have two different schedules (A and B). For example, one day they will have schedule A and the following day will house schedule B students.

Outside Activity/Physical Education (PE):

According to the applicant, P.E. activities will be held within the e-sports room and play court. The charter high school will have extracurricular activities such as basketball, soccer, track, and other sports that are requested by the students. The high school will enter into agreements with different facilities to accommodate the proposed sports.

The applicant will not use any form of outdoor amplification or sound system or outdoor bell system. The practice of not using a bell system has been in place at the applicant's other campuses for the last six years.

Circulation:

The site will have two access points but during the peak time of drop off and picking up of students, the southern access point will be used as the primary entrance and the northerly access point will be used as a secondary access point. Vehicles will enter on Sierra Avenue and will be directed onto the site in a counter-clockwise circular pattern as depicted on the site plan when dropping off or picking up the students.

Daily drop-off will begin 45 minutes prior to the start of school and daily pick-up will begin at the end of school for 30 minutes.

A total of four (4) to six (6) adult staff will serve as traffic monitors. The staff members will guide the cars to the queuing line of pick-up/drop-off vehicles, and another staff member will be stationed at the various turns to keep the vehicles moving and finally a staff member will be directing vehicles to exit onto Sierra Avenue.

During regular school hours, the southerly driveway will remain open to allow visitors and deliveries, however, southerly gate and the northerly driveway will remain closed after pick-up and drop-off times are completed and during business hours.

Campus Security Plan:

The applicant is anticipating implementing a closed-campus policy that prohibits students from leaving the site during school hours, including lunches and breaks. Additionally, the school will employ, as it does for its other campuses, a full-time security officer that will be on-site and outdoors patrolling the school from the beginning of the drop-off time (7:00 a.m.) until the end of pick-up time (6:00 p.m.) to ensure general safety for students and the community.

Design Review No. 21-017:

As previously mentioned, the applicant is proposing to construct a three-story 51,000 square foot commercial building for the establishment of a charter high school. The building will be located along Sierra Avenue on two vacant parcels totaling 2.5 acres.

The proposal also includes a recreational area and shade structure located at the rear of the building. As mentioned above, the project is located in the Transitional District of the Form Based Code. The Transitional District allows for 65% of the total parking requirement as identified in the Fontana Municipal Code. The applicant has provided a total of 157 parking spaces. This number will be sufficient for the proposed charter school given the 9th and 10th grade students will not be permitted to drive per the charter and the school does not anticipate on having more than 45 staff members on site at one time.

The applicant is proposing a modern architectural style for the proposed building. The building will be painted with a modern color scheme (beige, white, dark brown, and blue-grayish color) to complement the modern design of the building. The use of a variety of colors and decorative awnings of a contrasting color will further add architectural diversity to building. The west and east side (facing Sierra Avenue and rear of the building) of the building will have a tower element painted in beige to further enhances the modern design of the building. The building will have rectangle shapes storefront windows and metal awnings on three sides of the building to enhance the architectural style.

The applicant will install a six-foot high tubular steel fence along the north, east, and west property lines. A six (6) foot high solid wall is proposed on the southerly property line to maintain the privacy of the existing home adjacent to the project site. The block will provide additional security and privacy for the students and staff. Additionally, the project will have two six-foot high wrought iron gates located at the north and south entrance of the property. Furthermore, the applicant will provide a decorative trash enclosure that will complement the color scheme of the building.

MOTION:

Approve staff recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Plan
3. Floor Plan
4. Elevations
5. Tentative Parcel Map No. 21-008
6. Planning Commission Resolution and Conditions of Approval
7. Notice of Determination
8. Notice of Public Hearing
9. Mr. Constant's Public Comment

UNDER SEPARATE COVER:

1. Site and Floor Plan Sets
2. Initial Study and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP)