



Agenda Item

Planning Commission

Item #: 4.2.

7/6/2026

File #: 26-0402

TO: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

THRU: Hayden Beckman, Planning Manager

FROM: Lauren Briggs, Planning Technician

1. SUBJECT

A Public Hearing to consider a proposal to operate a new charter elementary school with a maximum enrollment of 864 students within two existing buildings and construct two new play areas within an existing parking lot on a property located at 1937 and 2011 W. Chapman Ave. and finding of CEQA exemption (PA25-0156: Conditional Use Permit No. 25-0156 and Minor Site Plan Review No. 25-0156).

2. SUMMARY

The applicant is proposing a new 864-student charter elementary school (California Republic Leadership Academy) and related site improvements on a property with two existing commercial buildings located at 1937 and 2011 W. Chapman Ave.

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Conduct and close the Public Hearing.
2. Adopt Planning Commission Resolution No. 15-26 approving Planning Application No. 25-0156 (Conditional Use Permit No. 25-0156 and Minor Site Plan Review No. 25-0156), to allow an 864-student charter elementary school and related site improvements on an existing commercial site located at 1937 and 2011 W. Chapman Ave.
3. Find the request categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

4. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Property Information	
Applicant	David Hyun
Property Owner	2000 Chapman Inc.
Property Location	039-331-40
Existing General Plan Land Use Element Designation	General Commercial Max. 1.0 FAR (GC)
Existing Zoning Classification	General Business (C2)

Old Towne	No
Specific Plan/PC	N/A
Site Size	2.7 acres
Circulation	The site is located on the north side of W. Chapman Avenue, east of N. Eckhoff Street. There is a driveway that points into the site from W. Chapman Avenue. Orange's Circulation and Mobility Plan designates Chapman Avenue as a "Major Arterial" street, which is a two-lane divided roadway with a median or centerline and left turn lanes. "Major Arterials" may prohibit on-street parking.
Existing Conditions	The 2.7-acre project site is currently utilized by several educational use tenants. There is surface parking that extends to the north property line of the project, behind the back of the existing buildings. A mix of single-family and multi-family residences and commercial buildings surround the site.
Surrounding Land Uses and Zoning	North: Single-Family Residential-6 (R1-6) and Single-Family Residential with a single story overlay zone for single- and multi-family uses across W. Maple Avenue South: General Business (C2) with office use along Chapman Avenue East: General Business (C2) and Multifamily Residential with a single story overlay zone (R3(A)) with single-family uses along Chapman Avenue and multi-family residential uses along W. Maple Avenue West: General Business (C2) and Single-Family Residential (R1-6) with an office use
Previous Applications/Entitlements	N/A

5. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant proposes to establish and operate a new 864-student charter elementary school located within two existing two-story commercial buildings located at 1937 and 2011 W. Chapman Avenue. The property is currently developed and occupied as a commercial site with existing educational uses and a surface parking lot. The proposed charter elementary school would consist of students from Transitional Kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade.

The applicant proposes to open in 2027-2028 school year with an enrollment of 520 students and will increase incrementally over the first three years. The school proposes to reach its maximum capacity with 864 students in 2029-2030 school year and maintain consistent maximum enrollment. There will be a total of 35 teachers across all grades and 10 non-teaching administrative staff on-site. The applicant acknowledges that school may reach full enrollment of 864 students by the opening in the

2027-2028 school year.

The school will have all vehicle queueing associated with drop-off and pick-up of students entirely on-site, with all vehicular and pedestrian access provided from the existing entry along the north side of W. Chapman Avenue. There will be no access from the project site to Maple Avenue along the north side of the site. The applicant proposes a staggered student drop-off and pick-up schedule described below:

	Drop off/Pick-up Schedule	
Time Frame	Number of Students	Grade Level(s)
7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	252	K, 1, 2
8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	316	TK a.m., 3-5
8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	276	6-8
11:30 a.m. (drop off)	20	TK p.m.
12:00 p.m. (pick up)	40	TK a.m.
2:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	252	K,1,2
3:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	296	TK p.m., 3-5
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	276	6-8

Both existing two-story buildings measure 23 feet high, and each provides 26,956 interior square feet, for a grand total of approximately 53,913 interior square feet. In order to accommodate the new charter school operating within the two existing commercial buildings, the applicant proposes to reconfigure the interior layout. The proposed interior improvements would create 45 total classrooms, including specialty program rooms for music and art, and 11 breakout rooms as small meeting places for faculty and students. There will be one multipurpose room with a connected warming kitchen, and 10 offices and school support spaces. The physical buildings will not increase square footage; the applicant will utilize only the existing space for interior tenant improvements.

For student recreational space, the applicant proposes to provide two new exterior play areas, one measuring 9,210 square feet and the other 10,760 square feet, located behind the existing buildings. The applicant proposes utilizing the existing surface parking lot to accommodate this area and remove 111 of the 211 existing parking spaces, leaving 100 parking spaces available. Access to the on-site parking spaces would be available to staff and guests only.

Development Standards

There are no changes proposed to the exterior of the building, therefore a comparison of the building to the existing development standards has not been conducted, except for parking.

	Required	Proposed	Code Section
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<p><i>Parking (Kindergarten-8th Grade)</i></p>	<p>1.8 spaces per classroom, plus adequate loading/unloading zone (total 45 classrooms) = 81 required parking space and 4 accessible parking spaces</p>	<p>The site has a total of 100 parking spaces (Surplus of 19 parking spaces).</p>	<p>Table 17.34.060 (B)</p>
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6. PROJECT ANALYSIS

Issue 1: Proposed Student Drop-off/Pick-up Area

The existing commercial buildings are not required by the provisions of the Orange Municipal Code to provide drop-off and pick-up areas, nor recreational spaces. To provide recreational space for students, additional parking spaces will be removed, which impacts the design and available space on-site for efficient student drop-off at the school.

To assist parents and guardians with drop-off/pick up, the school has prepared a vehicular queuing system. Vehicles entering will proceed north through the drive aisle between the two existing buildings and the outdoor play areas, with one lane in each direction. The on-site vehicular queue begins to the north of the fire access lane which encompasses the vehicular aisle between the two existing buildings and hammerhead turnaround to the north of the two existing buildings. The vehicular queue follows the path around the surface parking lot’s outer drive aisles in a counterclockwise direction. The designated pick-up and drop-off zone is located at the farthest point along the vehicular queue facing southbound and adjacent to the westerly play area, just north of the 2011 W. Chapman Avenue building and adjacent to the associated play area.

The pick-up/drop-off zone can accommodate six cars at a time, with students proceeding to the play yard in the morning before school, and students gathering in the play yard for pickup after school. Once the students are picked up or dropped off, the vehicle will proceed south through the fire access lane and will exit the project site through the existing driveway on W. Chapman Avenue using right-turn egress. The proposed queuing system design could accommodate approximately 58 total cars at once.

The school will also utilize automated dismissal software to enhance safety and efficiency. Each vehicle receives a numbered placard corresponding to the student’s class, allowing staff to prepare the student for pickup as the vehicle approaches. This process ensures that students are ready at the curb upon arrival, minimizing waiting times and congestion. The school will include five to eight traffic control coordinators, wearing vests for identification purposes, will assist at the loading zone and will encourage drivers to depart promptly upon drop-off/pick-up. The applicant’s consultant, Linscott, Law & Greenspan (LLG) Transportation Engineers and Planners’, has prepared a traffic analysis which includes an assessment of this pickup and drop-off system (Attachment 6).

7. AUTHORIZING GUIDELINES

Orange Municipal Code (OMC) Section 17.08.020 and Sections 17.10.030 authorizes the Planning Commission to review and take action on Conditional Use Permits for schools .

8. PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice was provided to owners and tenants within 300 feet of the project and posted at the project site on or before June 25, 2026.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1 Existing Facilities) because the project involves a negligible expansion of an existing use, consisting of interior tenant improvements of the two existing buildings, and conversion of two new play areas from the existing parking lot. There is no environmental public review required for a Categorical Exemption.

10. ADVISORY BOARD ACTION

Staff Review Committee:

The Staff Review Committee reviewed the project on Wednesday, January 28, 2026 and Wednesday March 11, 2026, and recommended approval with conditions.

11. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Draft Planning Commission Resolution No. PC 26-0402
- Attachment 2 Applicant Letter of Justification dated June 29, 2026
- Attachment 3 Project Plans
- Attachment 4 Vicinity Map
- Attachment 5 Applicant Community Outreach Memorandum
- Attachment 6 Traffic Impact Analysis
- Attachment 7 Site Photos