



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Planning Division

m e m o r a n d u m

TO: Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin and City Council Members

FROM: Lorrie Pearson, AICP, Community Development Services Director
Marcus Ricci, AICP, Planner II

DATE: April 1, 2021

SUBJECT: **An Ordinance Approving a Special Use Permit** (121 Goose Alley / Plan Case 2416-SU-21 – Norman Baxley / Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana)

Introduction

Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, represented by Monica Huang, Head of School, requests a special use permit to operate a school at 121 Goose Alley in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District. The property is owned by Baxley Media Group, represented by Norman Baxley, which applied for and supports the request. Section V-1.A.3 and Table V-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance allow an Elementary, Junior High, or Senior High School in the B-4 district with a special use permit.

At its March 18, 2021, meeting, the Plan Commission voted unanimously to forward the case to City Council with a recommendation to **APPROVE** the request with conditions (eight ayes, zero nays); staff concurs with this recommendation. Staff will provide corrections to information given during discussion in the Plan Commission section below.

Background

Introduction

Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana (“the school”) is owned by the Montessori Society of Champaign-Urbana, a not-for-profit corporation comprised of the parents of children enrolled in the school. Founded in 1962, the school’s first location was on the site of the current University of Illinois State Farm Center. After many years of small, sometimes multiple sites, the Society purchased the school’s location off Burwash Avenue in Savoy. Programs at this site are directed towards children from kindergarten through secondary-school age, extended-day programs, and child-care. The school would like to expand programming by shifting some of the oldest students to a new location with diversified educational opportunities, including more activities with outside organizations.

Description of the Site and Surrounding Properties

The property is located on the north side of Main Street, between North Race Street and North Broadway Avenue (Exhibit A). The site of the proposed school is the north half of the property, commonly known as 121 Goose Alley. The most recent tenant was Pixo, a web design and technology firm; they still occupy a nearby office space. The site has been vacant for two years. It is approximately 3,322 square feet spread across one- and two-story portions of the building (Exhibits E & G – Site Photos & Real Estate Flier). There is a dedicated entrance on the north side of the building and a shared entrance on the east side, which opens to Crane Alley, a pedestrian-only walkway between

Main and Water Streets. The south half of the property, commonly known as 120-122 West Main Street, is occupied by Cinema Gallery and Urbana Dance Academy. Nearby uses include food sales and services, professional services, retail trade, and recreation. Table 1 summarizes the current zoning, existing land uses, and 2005 Comprehensive Plan future land use designations of the site and surrounding land (Exhibits B & C).

Table 1. Zoning, Existing Land Use, Future Land Use Designation

	Zoning	Existing Land Use	Future Land Use
Site	B-4, Central Business	Art gallery, Dance school	Central Business
North	B-4, Central Business	Bar, Parking, Restaurant	Central Business
East	B-4, Central Business	Art gallery, Professional office, Retail	Central Business
South	B-4, Central Business	Bar, Professional office, Restaurant, Retail	Central Business
West	B-4, Central Business	Bakery, Professional office, Restaurant	Central Business

Proposed Use

The school would assign the oldest students – 10 to 14 years old – to the new location in Downtown Urbana, with two main benefits. First, being downtown opens up new experiential opportunities better-appreciated by older students: research trips to The Urbana Free Library, taking art and music lessons at the Community Center for the Arts, gardening with local restaurants, and conducting science and environmental programming at Boneyard Creek (Exhibit D – SUP Application: Answers). Second, it would free up capacity for younger students at the current facility, which is better-equipped for their need for regular outdoor play.

The proposed school would use the existing layout of the space; no renovations are planned. The current layout is well-suited for the Montessori style of education. This would include instructional areas for Research and Development, Communications, Cultural Studies, Fine Arts/Maker Space, and a space for group work in a Project Meeting Room (Exhibit D – SUP Application: Floor Plan). There are also bathrooms, a kitchen, and a dining area. The school is planning to sign a three-year lease with the applicant/owner.

Public Outreach and Comment

Staff received one comment to the required mailing to nearby landowners or signs posted on the property. This comment was regarding how it would affect nearby video gaming license holders. Staff informed the caller that, though state law requires 100 feet between any existing school and a new video gaming terminal license, a school can choose to move next to an existing gaming terminal or gaming hall. New gaming hall licenses would not be able to be issued near the proposed school because existing gaming terminals downtown were already excluding the addition of any new gaming hall.¹

City staff emailed downtown merchants, including liquor licensees, to inform them of the proposed school and solicit comments. Staff received eight responses, seven in support, and one asking about potential conflicts with gaming licenses (Exhibit H). Staff received other questions about parking and

¹ State law requires 100 feet between video gaming and a school or place of worship, which the state cannot waive (The Video Gaming Act; 230 ILCS 40). Urbana zoning requires 500 feet between a new principal use gaming hall and an existing gaming hall, school, and other protected uses and 250 feet between a new gaming hall and existing gaming terminals (Table V-1). Urbana does not require a minimum distance between gaming terminals, or between gaming terminals and a school.

student drop-offs, traffic management, and whether a new school downtown would affect registered sex offenders. Staff informed the latter inquirer that registered child sex offenders cannot live within 500 feet of a school, and that there are currently no registered child sex offenders living within 500 feet of the property. Most of the other responses strongly supported the school, and included offers from downtown merchants of services to the students, e.g., yoga, art, and music classes, and multimedia educational resources.

Discussion

Requirements for a Special Use Permit

According to Section VII-4.A of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, an application for a special use permit shall demonstrate the following:

1. That the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at that location.

Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana was established in 1963 to serve the Champaign-Urbana community, and has stated that this location provides students and their families the opportunity to practice sustainability by taking on the responsibility to get themselves to school. “As a progressive, forward-thinking school, the board and staff promote independence and sustainability, and values the greater community. This property was identified as a great potential site for an upper-elementary and secondary school due to its location and proximity to transit, restaurants, city activities and experiences, as well as places for hands-on learning. Families and students will appreciate the abundance of green space near the location: Leal Park and Crystal Lake Park are within walking distance and perfect for 10-14 year olds, and would be convenient for having scientific studies of the ecosystem, hosting picnics and absorbing the peace and beauty of Crystal Lake on a weekly basis. As a school that focuses on sustainability and caring for the environment, having seven bus stops within a two-block radius (serving eight different bus lines) encourages school families and students to take public transportation to school. Bicycling is a feasible option, too, as there are dedicated bicycle lanes on Main Street, Broadway Avenue, and portions of Race Street” (Exhibit D – SUP Application). The school has agreed to work with the applicant/owner to install bicycle loops to provide secure parking for students’ and staff members’ bicycles. Sidewalks in this area are well-maintained, and are also regulated by the city’s Snow Removal Ordinance.

2. That the proposed use is designed, located, and proposed to be operated so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious to the public welfare.

The school plans to start with a small number of students, to test how the new program will work, and gradually increase enrollment levels as interest and staff support grow. Current and proposed school hours are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; students arrive between 8 and 8:15 a.m. and depart between 2:45 and 3 p.m. These drop-off and pick-up times (“transition times”) correspond with the lowest periods of downtown traffic: avoiding lunch and five-o’clock traffic, and during daylight throughout the year. School and City staff have discussed options for handling traffic flow during transition times to minimize conflicts with existing traffic patterns. City staff researched how the introduction of a use protected from adult uses – liquor, cannabis, video gaming, registered sex offenders – might affect activities in Downtown Urbana’s Central Business District (see Plan Commission section).

Enrollment plans. At this time, ten students are enrolled for next year’s program. Ideally, the school would like to have 17 students for the 2021-2022 school year, 22 students for the 2022-2023 school year, and 28 students for the 2023-2024 school year. The school would like to limit the duration of the special use permit to this three-year timeframe, allowing both it and the City a “trial period” to determine if the school is a good fit for this downtown location, and to determine if downtown Urbana is a good fit for the school. If there is student interest, the school may offer limited after-school programming until 5:30 p.m. for up to 20% of the student body.

Parking and loading. The B-4, Central Business, Zoning District has no minimum parking requirements, but the school plans to rent three parking spaces in the City parking deck (111 West Main Street) for the two teachers and one administrator. Students will be encouraged to walk, bike, or take the bus to school. Parents will also be encouraged to establish carpools with other families, all in an effort to reduce car traffic on site, and to be more environmentally-friendly. Acknowledging that it is not always possible to walk, bike, or take the bus to school due to weather, finances, or personal preference, the school has developed a plan for students to be safely dropped off and picked up from the school. Parents would enter City Lot 1 from West Water Street, park in any available metered parking space, drop off or pick up their child, and then exit the lot back onto West Water Street (Exhibit F – Proposed Parking and Loading Plan). During the period that a business may be using the east half of Lot 1 for outdoor dining due to COVID accommodations, parents will exit east down Goose Alley onto North Broadway Avenue. If all parking spaces in City Lot 1 are full, there are additional parking spaces in City Lot 2, east of Bunny’s Tavern.² There are also approximately 60 on-street metered parking spaces along West Main Street, North Broadway Avenue, and North Race Street within a 1-1/2 block radius of the proposed school, all of which afford safe pedestrian access to the school via sidewalks, marked crosswalks, and/or signalized intersections. Recent parking surveys of the 122 parking spaces in Lots 1 and 2 and the adjacent on-street parking showed an average 87% vacancy rate in mid-morning and an average 63% vacancy in mid-afternoon.

Daily activities. Some educational programming would take students to downtown establishments including art and music at the art school, environmental studies at Boneyard Creek, and research at the library (Exhibit D – SUP Application). The children will also be allowed to go on group lunches to restaurants within walking distance along safe pedestrian routes such as The Dancing Dog Eatery, Courier Café, Broadway Food Hall, etc. This would be limited to once per week for the first half of the initial school year. School programming goals also include collaborating with local merchants, e.g., gardening with Courier Café and organizing fundraisers featuring local products.

3. That the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of, and preserves the essential character of, the district in which it shall be located, except where such regulations and standards are modified by Section VII-7.

The school would use the existing building in its current form, with no planned exterior or interior modifications, other than possible decoration. The building would remain compliant with the regulations of the B-4 district and would preserve its essential character. The transition of this space from a professional office use to an educational use is a multi-step process, including the requested special use permit, required building permits, potential approvals for an upgraded kitchen, and any

² In 2020, the City issued permits for outdoor dining, which reduced parking capacity between 50% (City Lot 1, normally 45 parking spaces) and 100% (City Lot 2, normally 20 parking spaces). Similar permits may be issued in 2021. Current parking capacity for these lots is 38 spaces (City Lot 1) and 9 spaces (City Lot 2).

required educational certifications. The building permit process will include review of the building's functionality for an educational use, which is different from requirements for an office use. Granting of the special use permit is the merely first – and most straightforward – step in this process.

Synopsis and Response

The use of the property as a school would bring more young people and their families downtown, which would be very beneficial to nearby establishments and to the downtown community as a whole, with students using the library, creating at the art and music school, recreating at the dance academy and yoga studios, eating at the restaurants, working at the café gardens, and studying at the creek. The school meets the criteria for special use permit approval, with staff recommending conditions to reduce potential conflicts with neighboring uses.

In response to the requirements in Section VII-4.A. of the Zoning Ordinance, the Plan Commission shall make a recommendation to the City Council for or against the proposed special use, and may also recommend such additional conditions and requirements on the operation of the proposed use as are appropriate or necessary for the public health, safety, and welfare, and to carry out the purposes of this Ordinance, including but not limited to conditions that:

1. Regulate the location, extent, and intensity of such use;
2. Require adherence to an approved site plan;
3. Require landscaping and the screening of such use by means of fences, walls, or vegetation;
4. Stipulate a required minimum lot size or yards, and maximum height of buildings and structures;
5. Regulate vehicular access and volume, and the design and location of parking and loading areas and structures;
6. Require conformance to health, safety, and sanitation requirements as necessary;
7. Regulate signs and outdoor lighting; and
8. Any other conditions deemed necessary to affect the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance.

Plan Commission

On March 18, 2021, the Plan Commission held a public hearing on this case. Commissioners asked staff about the proposed floor plan, how a school might affect liquor and cannabis licenses, and traffic management, including school and slow zones (Exhibit H). Both Monica Huang and Norman Baxley were present to answer questions, but they received no questions from the Commission. There were also no comments from the public.

Commissioners had several comments regarding the building's suitability for an educational use, and did not recommend a condition to require the applicant to adhere to the floor plans they submitted in the application. Staff stated that the proposed school should not affect future cannabis uses as the various uses are either prohibited downtown, or they are permitted and the proposed school would not affect that permission. Staff explained that, although current State liquor legislation prohibits the issuance of new liquor licenses to retail liquor establishments near a school, the Local Liquor Commissioner can waive this protective buffer if the school waives their right to the buffer. Ms. Huang was notified that such a waiver would be required for the special use permit and was talking to the school board about signing one.³ The Commission asked questions about school zones, and

³ 235 ILCS 5/6-11, Sec. 6-11. Sale near churches, schools, and hospitals. Renewals of existing liquor licenses are exempt from this restriction, as are other various specific liquor activities.

encouraged staff to research the topic further.⁴ Planning staff said they would work with Public Works staff to research solutions that would comply with applicable traffic control regulations. Following the discussion, the Plan Commission unanimously voted to forward the case to City Council with a recommendation to approve the request with six conditions (eight ayes, zero nays).

Summary of Findings

1. Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, represented by Monica Huang, requests a special use permit to operate a school at 121 Goose Alley in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District. The property is owned by Baxley Media Group, represented by Norman Baxley, which applied for and supports the request. Section V-1.A.3 and Table V-1 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance allow an Elementary, Junior High, or Senior High School in the B-4 district with a special use permit.
2. The proposed school would be conducive to the public at this location, due to its ease of access by walking, bicycle, mass transit, or by car. The educational and experiential opportunities in this downtown location are aligned with the Montessori educational style.
3. The proposed school would not be injurious or detrimental to the B-4 zoning district, or injurious to the general public: planned enrollment loads are reasonable and would be capped; student loading can be conducted within public parking areas in a safe manner; daily activities would not pose unreasonable demands on the district; and liquor license issuance would not be affected.
4. The proposed school would use the existing building without planned exterior or interior modifications, maintaining its current level of conformity with the B-4 zoning district, and complying with relevant state and local regulations, including building and health code.
5. At the March 18, 2021, meeting, the Urbana Plan Commission held a public hearing and voted unanimously, with eight ayes and zero nays, to forward the case to the City Council with a recommendation to approve, with six conditions.

Options

The Urbana City Council has the following options:

1. Approve the Ordinance, or
2. Approve the Ordinance with certain terms and conditions, or
3. Deny the Ordinance.

⁴ Staff stated that the speed limit downtown is 35 mph; it is 30 mph. Public Works staff notified Planning staff that school zones are typically requested by the school, are established at the local level with recommendations by the Traffic Commission to City Council, and that State law would require speed limits to be reduced to 20 mph in designated areas.

Recommendation

At the March 18, 2021, meeting, the Plan Commission voted unanimously, with eight ayes and zero nays, to forward the case to the City Council with a recommendation to approve, with the following conditions:

- Parking and loading must be in general conformance with the plan submitted (Exhibit F).
- This special use permit will expire on August 31, 2024. The school may apply for another special use permit for this or another location, as permitted by the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.
- Student enrollment will be capped at 28 students.
- The school must rent at least three parking spaces within 450 feet of the school, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
- The school must work with the property owner to install at least three bicycle loops on the property, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.
- The school must sign a waiver of its protective buffer from new retail liquor licenses and renewals of existing liquor licenses, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

Additional discussion between Community Development Services and Public Works Departments leads staff to recommend that the fourth condition be amended as follows:

- The school must rent at least three parking spaces within 450 feet of the school, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. If, upon operation, it is determined by the City Engineer that the school's pick-up/drop-off plan creates safety or traffic issues, the Zoning Administrator may require the school to secure up to 12 additional parking spaces to establish a student pick-up/drop-off zone in a location determined by the City Engineer, or otherwise alter its pick-up/drop-off plan to mitigate the issues.

Staff also recommend that, if the special use permit is granted, the City Council also support an ordinance amendment granting the Mayor, as Local Liquor Commissioner, the right to waive the 100-foot buffer for new or renewal liquor licenses sought subsequent to the approval of the special use permit. If this special use permit is approved, staff will bring the appropriate modifying amendments to Council in the coming weeks.

Attachments: Exhibit A: Location & Land Use Map
 Exhibit B: Zoning Map
 Exhibit C: Future Land Use Map
 Exhibit D: Special Use Permit Application
 Exhibit E: Site Photos
 Exhibit F: Proposed Loading and Parking Plan
 Exhibit G: Real Estate Flier
 Exhibit H: Correspondence
 Exhibit I: DRAFT Plan Commission Meeting Minutes – March 18, 2021

cc: Norman Baxley, Baxley Media Group, Applicant
 Monica Huang, Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana (Contingency Tenant), Head of School

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-04-013

AN ORDINANCE APPROVING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

(121 Goose Alley / Plan Case 2416-SU-21 – Norman Baxley / Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana)

WHEREAS, the City of Urbana (“City”) is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6, of the Illinois Constitution, 1970, and may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs, and the passage of this Ordinance constitutes an exercise of the City’s home rule powers and functions as granted in the Illinois Constitution, 1970; and

WHEREAS, Norman Baxley has petitioned the City on behalf of the Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana for approval of a special use permit to operate a school at 121 Goose Alley in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District; and

WHEREAS, the proposed school would be conducive to the public at this location, due to its ease of access by walking, bicycle, mass transit, or by car and because the educational and experiential opportunities in the downtown location are aligned with the Montessori educational style; and

WHEREAS, the proposed school would not be injurious or detrimental to the B-4 zoning district, or injurious to the general public because planned enrollment loads are reasonable and would be capped, student loading can be conducted within public parking areas in a safe manner, daily activities would not pose unreasonable demands on the district, and liquor licenses would not be affected; and

WHEREAS, the proposed school would use the existing building, maintaining its current level of conformity with the B-4 zoning district, and complying with relevant state and local regulations, including building and health codes; and

WHEREAS, after due publication, the Urbana Plan Commission held a public hearing on March 18, 2021, and voted with eight (8) ayes, and zero (0) nays to forward Plan Case 2416-SU-21 to

the Urbana City Council with a recommendation to approve the request for a special use permit, subject to the conditions specified in Section 1 herein; and

WHEREAS, approval of the special use permit, with the conditions set forth below, is consistent with the requirements of Section VII-4 of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance, Special Use Procedures, and with the general intent of that section of the Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, after due consideration, finds that approving a special use permit as herein provided is in the best interests of the residents of the City and is desirable for the welfare of the City's government and affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the City Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, as follows:

Section 1.

An Ordinance is hereby enacted and a special use permit is hereby approved to allow operation of a school in the B-4, Central Business, Zoning District with the following conditions:

1. Parking and loading must be in general conformance with the plan submitted (Attachment 1).
2. This special use permit will expire on August 31, 2024. The school may apply for another special use permit for this or another location, as permitted by the Urbana Zoning Ordinance.
3. Student enrollment is capped at 28 students.
4. The school must rent at least three parking spaces within 450 feet of the school, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. If, upon operation, it is determined by the City Engineer that the school's pick-up/drop-off plan creates safety or traffic issues, the Zoning Administrator may require the school to secure up to 12 additional parking spaces to establish a student pick-up/drop-off zone, in a location determined by the City Engineer, or otherwise alter its pick-up/drop-off plan to mitigate the issues.
5. The school must work with the property owner to install at least three bicycle loops on the property, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

6. The school must sign a waiver of its protective buffer from new retail liquor licenses and renewals of existing liquor licenses, prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

Legal Description:

Lot 40 and the East 11 feet 9 inches of Lot 42 in the Original Town of Urbana, situated in Champaign County

PIN: 92-21-17-202-017

Section 2.

Upon approval of this Ordinance, the City Clerk is directed to record a certified copy of this Ordinance with the Champaign County Office of Recorder of Deeds. The City Clerk is directed to publish this Ordinance in pamphlet form by authority of the corporate authorities, and this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in accordance with Section 1-2-4 of the Illinois Municipal Code.

This Ordinance is hereby passed by the affirmative vote, the “ayes” and “nays” being called, of a majority of the members of the Council of the City of Urbana, Illinois, at a meeting of said Council.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL this date day of Month, Year.

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSTENTIONS:

Phyllis D. Clark, City Clerk

APPROVED BY THE MAYOR this date day of Month, Year.

Diane Wolfe Marlin, Mayor

ATTACHMENT 1: Proposed Loading and Parking Plan - Montessori School

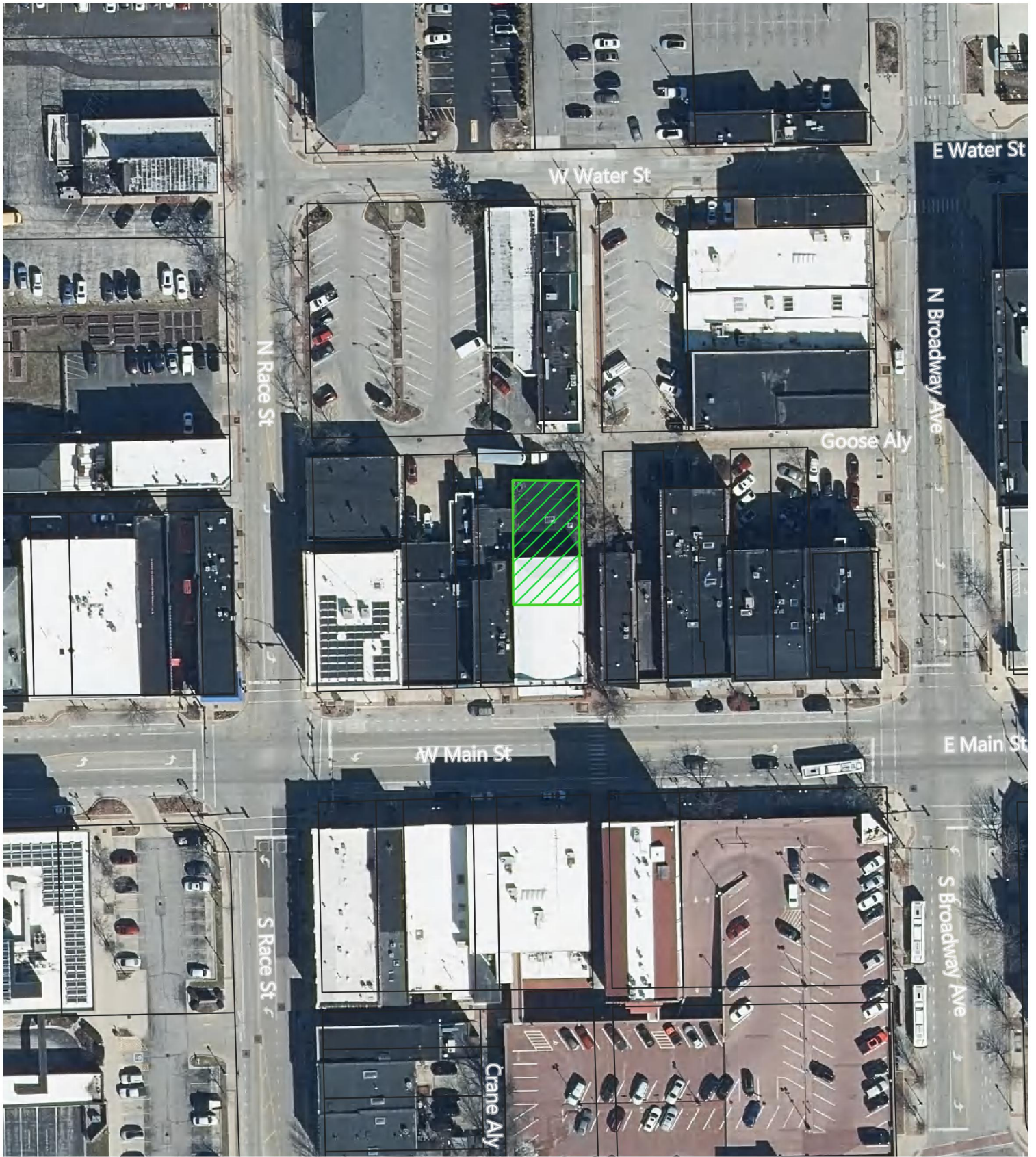


Yellow line: Traffic flow when east half of Lot 1 is open, i.e., non-COVID operation without outdoor dining. Car would park in legal parking space, drop off child, exit onto Water Street.

Green line: Traffic flow when east half of Lot 1 is closed, i.e. COVID operation with outdoor dining. Car would park in legal parking space, drop off child, exit via Goose Alley to Broadway Ave.

Red box: Outdoor dining during COVID operation. Red boxes are current outdoor dining areas; orange boxes are Summer 2020 outdoor dining areas.

Exhibit A - Location & Land Use



0 50 100 150 200 ft



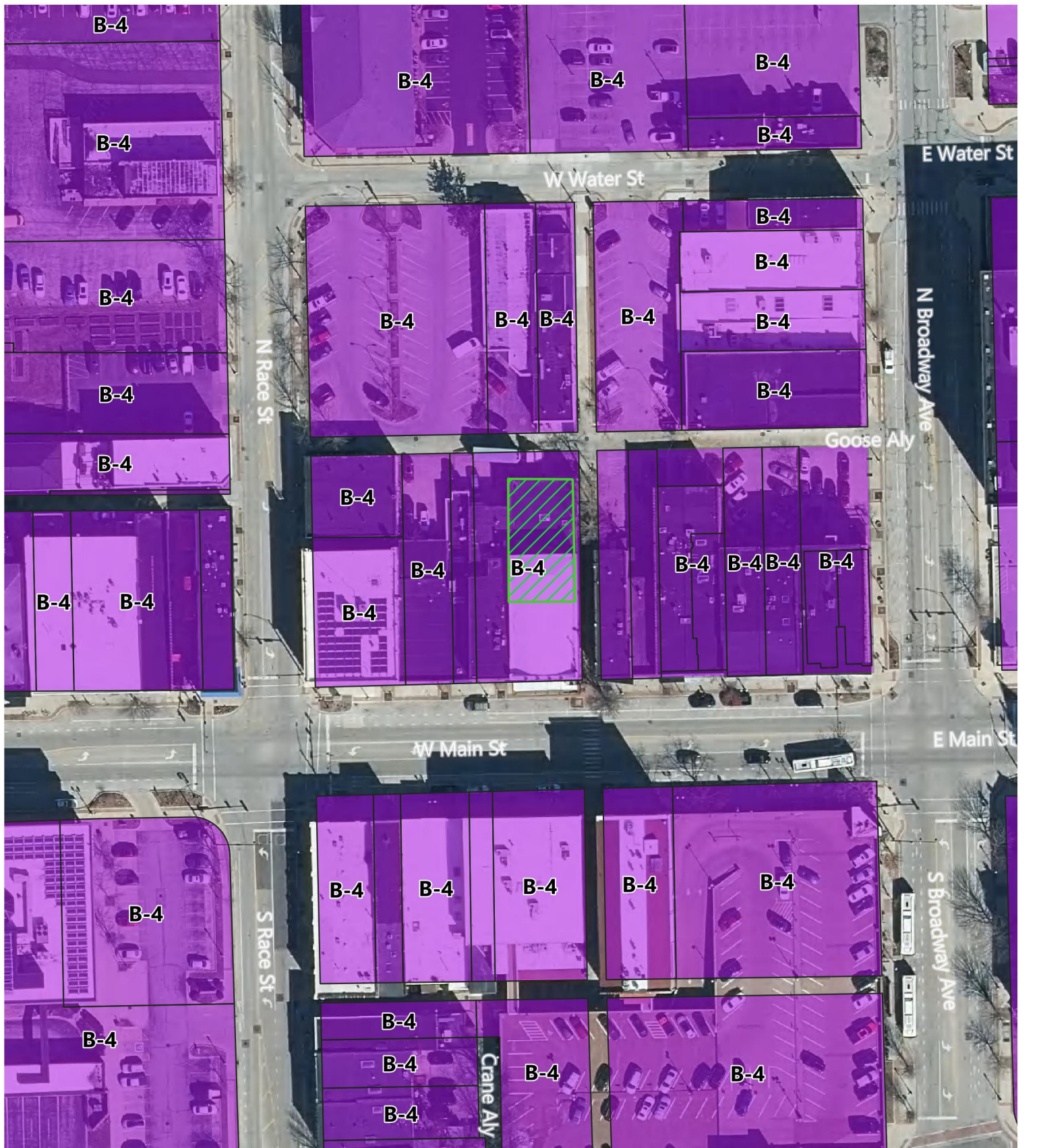
Case: 2416-SU-21
Subject: Special Use Permit
Location: 121 Goose Alley
Applicant: Montessori School of C-U

Legend

 SUBJECT PROPERTY



Exhibit B - Current Zoning



Case: 2416-SU-21
Subject: Special Use Permit
Location: 121 Goose Alley
Applicant: Montessori School of C-U

Legend

 SUBJECT PROPERTY


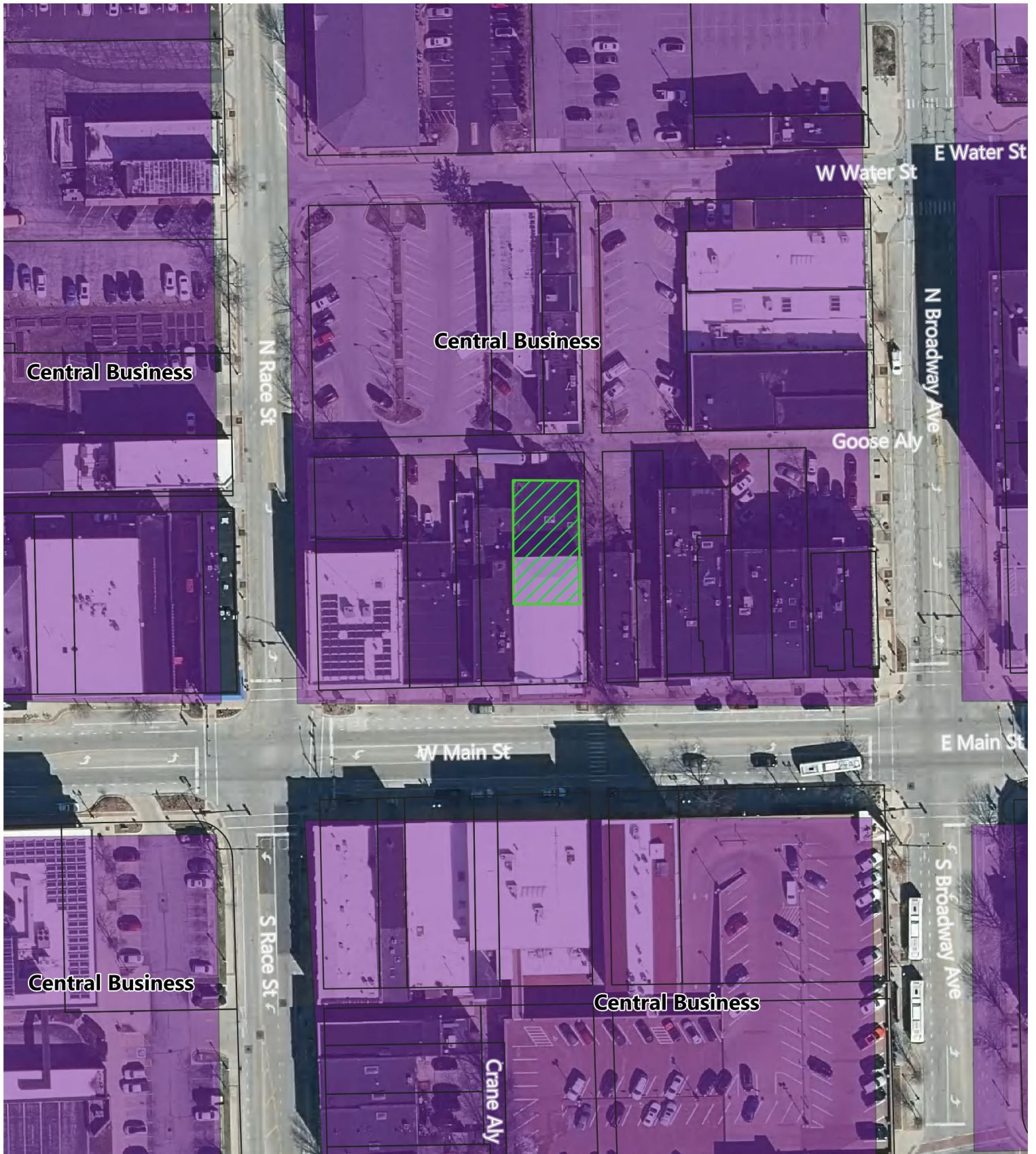
Zoning
 B-4



Exhibit C - Future Land Use



Case: 2416-SU-21
Subject: Special Use Permit
Location: 121 Goose Alley
Applicant: Montessori School of C-U

Legend

 SUBJECT PROPERTY



Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application



Application for Special Use Permit

PLAN COMMISSION

The application fee must accompany the application when submitted for processing. Please refer to the City's website at <http://www.urbanaininois.us/fees> for the current fee associated with this application. **The Applicant is also responsible for paying the cost of legal publication fees.** Estimated costs for these fees usually run between \$75.00 and \$225.00. The applicant will be billed separately by the News-Gazette.

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Request Filed _____ Plan Case No. _____
Fee Paid - Check No. _____ Amount _____ Date _____

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

A SPECIAL USE PERMIT is requested in conformity with the powers vested in the Plan Commission to recommend to the City Council under Section _____ of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance to allow *(Insert proposed use)* _____ on the property described below.

1. APPLICANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Applicant(s): _____ Phone: _____
Address *(street/city/state/zip code)*: _____
Email Address: _____

2. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Address/Location of Subject Site: _____
PIN # of Location: _____
Lot Size: _____
Current Zoning Designation: _____
Current Land Use *(vacant, residence, grocery, factory, etc)*: _____
Proposed Land Use: _____
Legal Description *(If additional space is needed, please submit on separate sheet of paper)*: _____

Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

3. CONSULTANT INFORMATION

Name of Architect(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*):

Email Address:

Name of Engineers(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*):

Email Address:

Name of Surveyor(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*):

Email Address:

Name of Professional Site Planner(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*):

Email Address:

Name of Attorney(s):

Phone:

Address (*street/city/state/zip code*):

Email Address:

4. REASONS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Explain how the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at the location of the property.

Explain how the proposed use is designed, located and proposed to be operated, so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious or detrimental to the public welfare.

Explain how the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of and preserves the essential character of the district in which it shall be located.

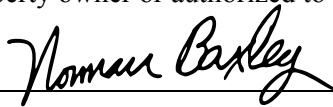
Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

NOTE: *If additional space is needed to accurately answer any question, please attach extra pages to the application.*

By submitting this application, you are granting permission for City staff to post on the property a temporary yard sign announcing the public hearing to be held for your request.

CERTIFICATION BY THE APPLICANT

I certify all the information contained in this application form or any attachment(s), document(s) or plan(s) submitted herewith are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am either the property owner or authorized to make this application on the owner's behalf.



Applicant's Signature

02/16/2021

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM ONCE COMPLETED TO:

City of Urbana
Community Development Department Services
Planning Division
400 South Vine Street, Urbana, IL 61801
Phone: (217) 384-2440
Fax: (217) 384-2367

Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

4. REASONS FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Explain how the proposed use is conducive to the public convenience at the location of the property.

Montessori School of Champaign Urbana (MSCU) was established in 1963 to serve the Champaign Urbana community. As a progressive, forward thinking school, MSCU promotes independence and sustainability and value our greater community. Our current school hours are from 8am to 3pm (no after school program offered).

- a) 121 Goose Alley was identified as a great potential temporary site for upper elementary/secondary school due to its location and proximity to transit, restaurants, city activities and experiences (such as Community Center for the Arts and Urbana Library) as well as places for hands on learning. As a school that focuses on sustainable and caring for our environment, having 5 bus stops within a two block radius helps encourage our families and students to take public transportation to school.

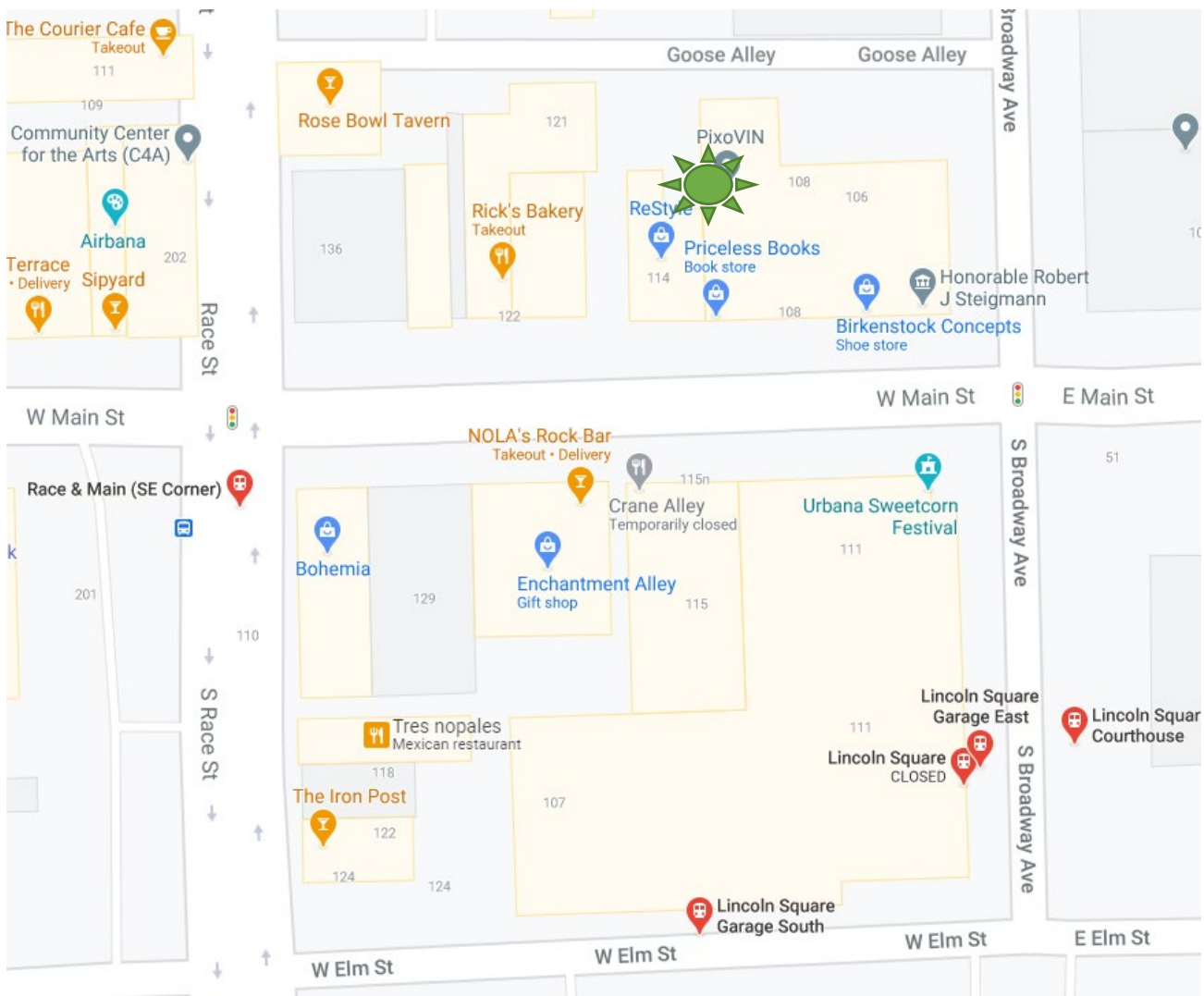
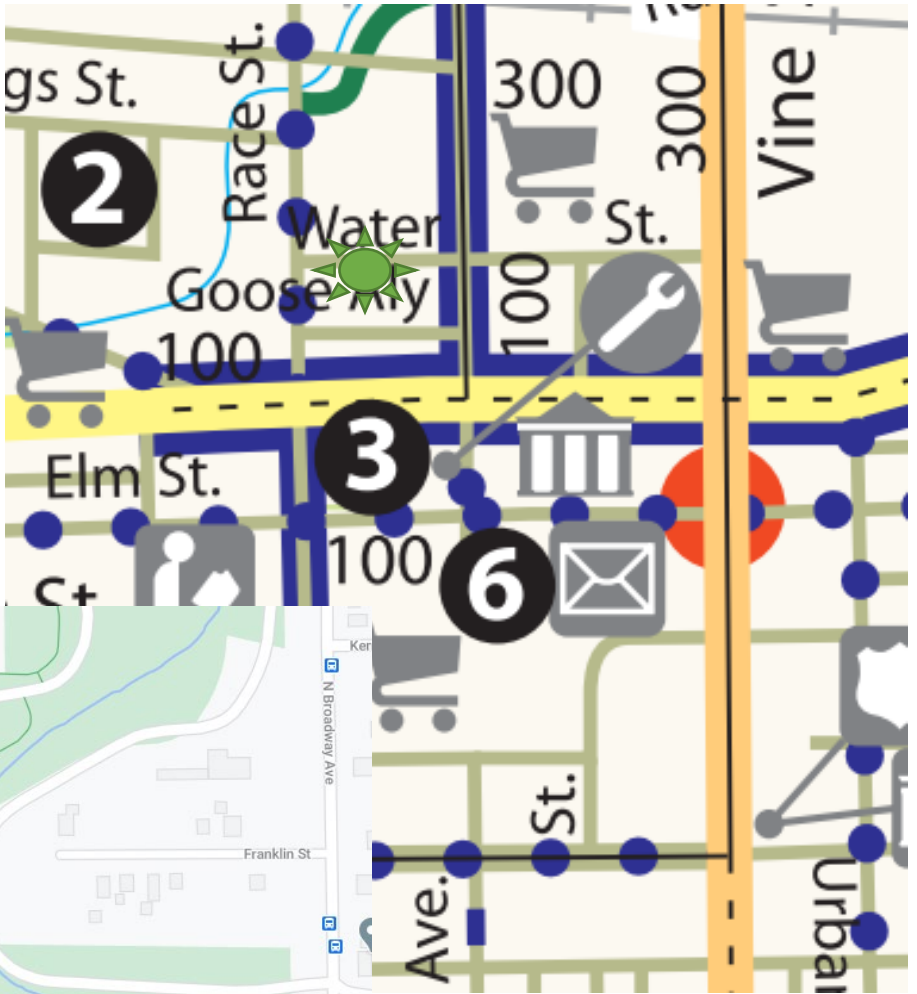


Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

b) Urbana also has many protected bike routes throughout the city. The area near Goose Alley is no exception. Families who live in Urbana will appreciate an opportunity to bike or walk to school. Students can use the bike racks on Race.



c) Our families and students will appreciate the plethora of green space nearby the location. Leal Park and Crystal Lake Park are within walking distance and perfect for 10 to 14 year olds. We envision having scientific studies of the ecosystem, hosting picnics and absorbing the peace and beauty of Crystal Lake on a weekly basis.

Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

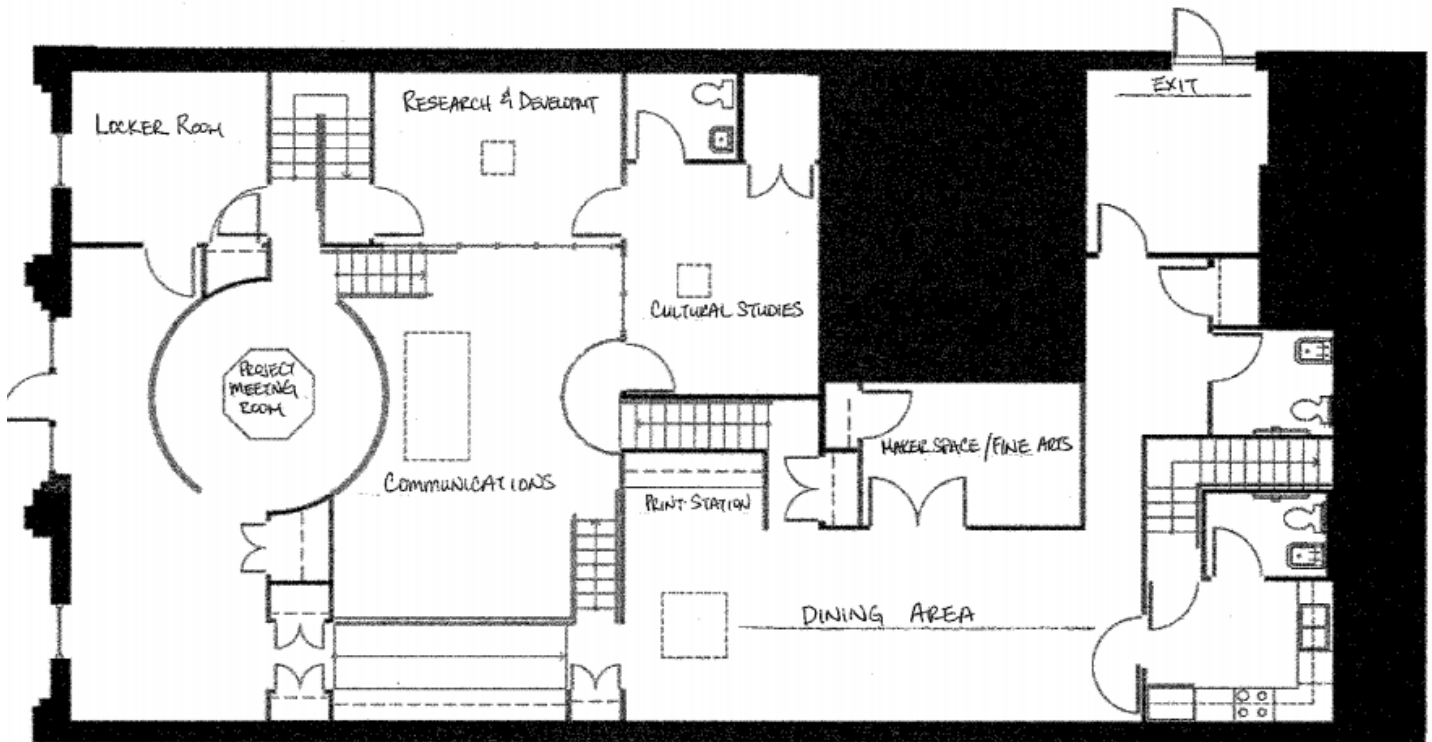
Explain how the proposed use is designed, located and proposed to be operated, so that it will not be unreasonably injurious or detrimental to the district in which it shall be located, or otherwise injurious or detrimental to the public welfare.

- a) Parking – since this is a school for elementary/middle school students only the teacher will need parking. Our current plan is to rent three parking spaces from the city of Urbana at the Urbana Parking Deck Garage at 111 W. Main Street. Our second choice for parking is on Lot 26 at Coler Ave and Springfield Ave.
- b) At the moment, we have 10 students enrolled in our program for next year. Of the 10 students, 6 of them live in Urbana. Of the 6 that live in Urbana, 2 of them are sibling and the other 4 live within biking or walking distance to the site. Ideally, we would like to have 20 students starting in August. Our proposed traffic route is as follows: We will request families who need to drop off to drive in from Race street and turn Right onto Water Street into the parking lot. Families will drop off their children (without exiting their car) and the children will walk along the blue dotted line below into the building. Families will continue to follow the green line and take a right on Waters Street when exiting the parking lot. Families will be allowed to drop off their children from 8:00am to 8:15am with school starting promptly at 8:15am. Pick up will be from 2:45pm to 3:00pm. MSCU currently does a similar drop off for our upper elementary and secondary students. We find that our drop off for that class takes no longer than 15 minutes for 20 students.



Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

Inside Goose Ally, MSCU has decided that we will not change anything. MSCU is a non-traditional school and will not have “traditional” classroom space. Instead, we plan to have stations and areas for our students and teachers to conduct research, collaborate and share information. Using the 121 Goose Ally floorplan, here is our tentative proposed use of the space.



- **Locker room** – a space for student to hang their coats and store their personal items.
- **Research & Development** - integrated study of applied math and science. Here is where students will learn how math and science are often intertwined. A study on Crystal Lake’s ecosystem may lead to calculating the volume of the lake.
- **Project Meeting Room** - This is where students will meet to work on their group project. This is also a good place for them to practice their leadership and negotiation skills as they prepare for the Montessori Model United Nations conference that takes place annual with Montessori schools around the world as they debate current global issues and world problems.
- **Communications** - This is where critical thinking and writers workshop will take place. Our emphasis on clear concise communication will ensure our graduates are able to communicate effectively. Modular seating will also be available to give students a quiet place to sit and write.
- **Cultural Studies** - This is where our students will be when they are learning about history, social studies, culture, customs and languages.
- **Print Station** – A place for students to print items to demonstrate mastery of a concept. We will also have a 3D printer as well as a sewing machine.
- **Maker Space/Fine Arts** - Our students are into everything from Claymation to journalism. This is a space for our students to put together everything from their yearbook to recording their weekly newsletter. This is also a great space for our annual Rube Goldberg competition.
- **Dining Area** – One of our families is a master craftsman and will be making some farm style tables for us. During lunch time, our students and teachers will sit here and eat café style. When it is not lunch time, students can sit here comfortable and work in between classes to catch up on homework, lessons and with one another.

Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

Explain how the proposed use conforms to the applicable regulations and standards of and preserves the essential character of the district in which it shall be located.

MSCU students will uplift and contribute to the well-being of the Urbana community by supporting local businesses and organizations.

- a) Proximity to downtown business and restaurants means our students and staff will frequent and support local businesses. MSCU secondary students will be given the opportunity to pick and eat at two local restaurants per week. Students will be able to go to places such as Dancing Dog, Courier Café, Rick's Bakery, Siam Terrance and Strawberry Fields, Masajita Grill, etc...

MSCU also has a long standing tradition where we support local businesses. We've held fundraising events at Siam Terrance and invited local business owners (e.g. Dustin Kelly of Autumn Berry Jam) as our guest speaker. We anticipate that we will continue to have fundraising events as we get to know our neighbors in the downtown area.

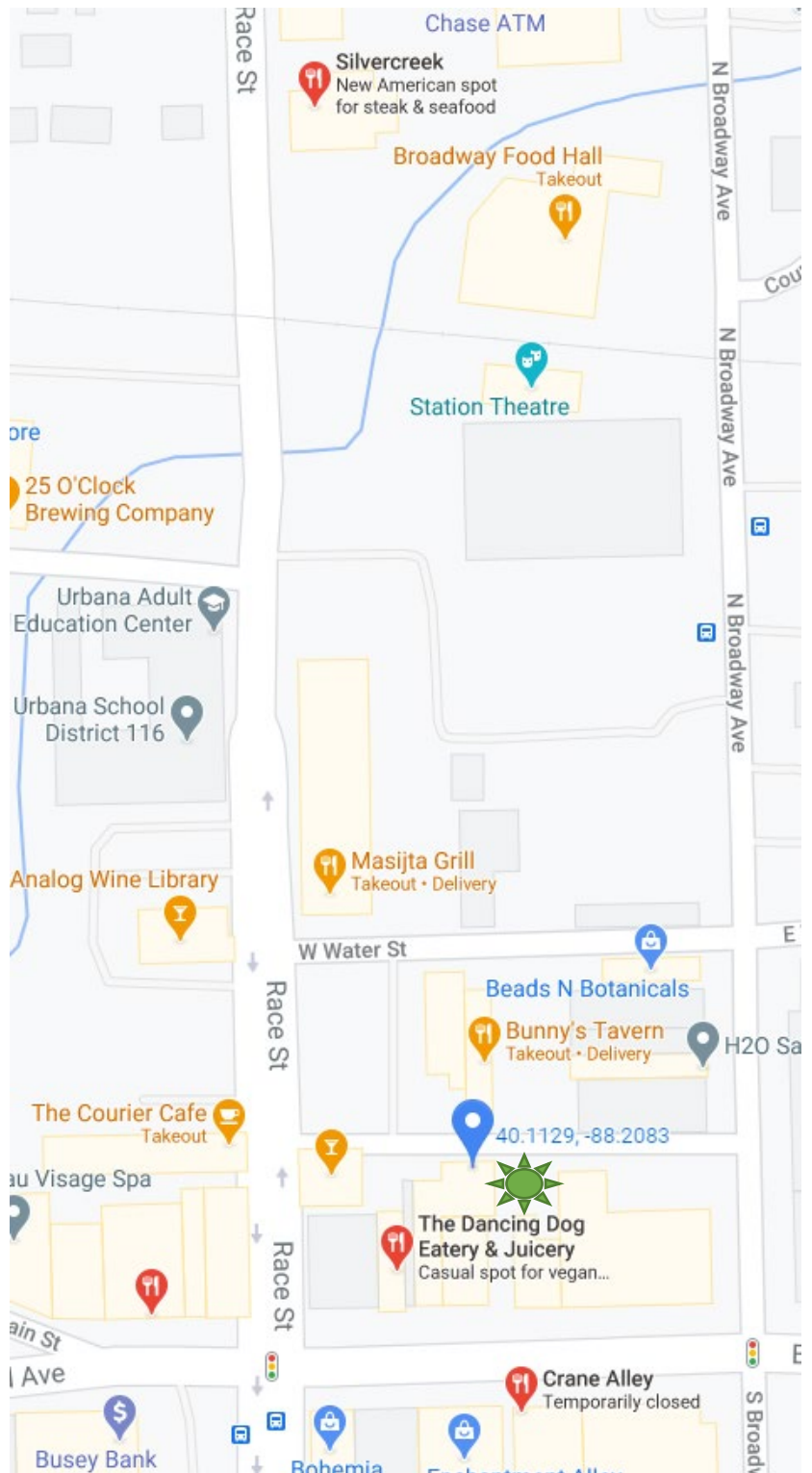


Exhibit D - Special Use Permit Application

- b) Proximity to Community Center for the Arts (C4A) means our students can take music lessons simply by walking over. Our student would be available to take lessons during off hours and support music and art teachers at C4A. Our program will work closely with C4A to share their offerings with our families to promote art and music education.



- c) Our school will promote physical health and encourage our students to walk to the Urbana library and utilize the plethora of resources the library has to offer. Our dream would be to work with places like Courier Café and help them with their outdoor garden as part of our outdoor education. Whether it is weeding or harvesting, our students are eager to learn about the joys of farm to table.

MSCU would like to engage in a three-year lease and establish ourselves in the city of Urbana. In three years, we hope to find a larger and permanent location for the remainder of our school. We believe residing in 121 Goose Alley will be a mutually beneficial to the Urbana downtown community and to MSCU.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our vision and our plans with all of you.

Exhibit E - Site Photos



Figure 1. Looking southeast from Goose Alley towards property.



Figure 2. Looking north along Goose Alley; side entrance on left on east side of property.



Figure 3. Looking west down Goose Alley; property on left.



Figure 4. Looking southwest from Water Street to Lot 1 around 3 p.m.

Exhibit F: Proposed Loading and Parking Plan



Yellow line: Traffic flow when east half of Lot 1 is open, i.e., non-COVID operation without outdoor dining. Car would park in legal parking space, drop off child, exit onto Water Street.
Green line: Traffic flow when east half of Lot 1 is closed, i.e. COVID operation with outdoor dining. Car would park in legal parking space, drop off child, exit via Goose Alley to Broadway Ave.
Red box: Outdoor dining during COVID operation. Red boxes are current outdoor dining areas; orange boxes are Summer 2020 outdoor dining areas.

Exhibit F: Proposed Loading and Parking Plan





-  On-street metered parking
-  City-lot metered parking

Exhibit G - Real Estate Flier



FOR LEASE

GUTH
& ASSOCIATES

121 Goose Alley

Urbana, Illinois

Needing private office space for your company? Move in ready office space available in Downtown Urbana with multiple private offices, large open work area, conference room(s), full kitchen for employees/ break room. Private entrance along Goose Alley which provides close proximity to Downtown Urbana restaurants, retail and cafes. Beautiful architectural elements within the space.

Property Highlights:

- Move In Ready
- Downtown Urbana with retail, restaurants, cafes
- Unique architectural design elements
- Multiple offices, conference rooms
- Full kitchen/break room
- Near Mass Transit
- Close proximity to UI Campus
- Fiber network
- Security System



Contact

Jill Guth

Managing Broker

jill.guth@outlook.com

(217) 778-8305

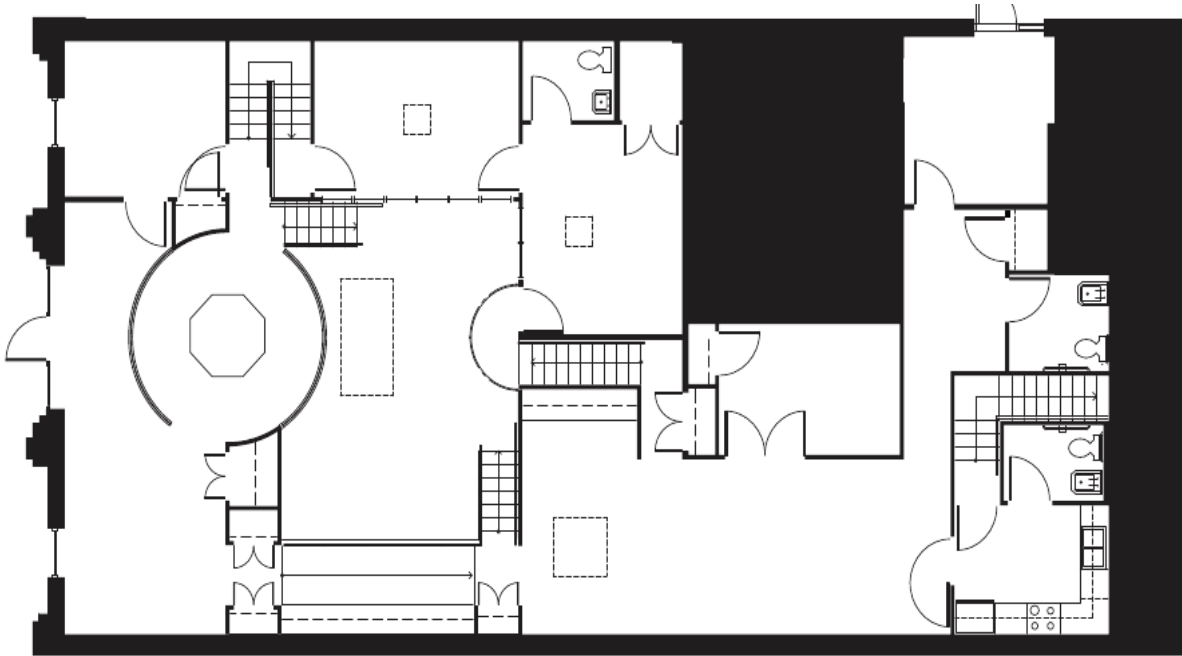
Building SF: 3,222

Lease Price: \$15 / SF / YR / GROSS

GUTH
& ASSOCIATES

Exhibit G - Real Estate Flier

FOR LEASE



Building SF: 3,222
Lease Price: \$15 / SF / YR / GROSS

Contact
Jill Guth

Broker
jill.guth@outlook.com
(217) 778-8305

GUTH
& ASSOCIATES



Exhibit H – Correspondence

- Tom Sheehan, 25 O’Clock Brewing Company – support
- Tom Faux, Community Center for the Arts – support; traffic concern
- Kathryn Fitzgerald, Amara Yoga – support; invitation for classes
- Catherine, Beads & Botanicals – no problem; parking concern
- Scott Glassman, Crane Alley – questions about licenses
- Gene Koprowski, Transcendence Media – support; offer media library
- Denis & Aisha Chiaramonte, Capoeira Angola Center – support
- Anonymous, downtown property lessor – student safety concerns: traffic; nearby adult uses; registered sex offenders
- Lois Steinberg, Iyengar Yoga Champaign-Urbana – support; invitation for classes

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Thomas Sheehan](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Cc: [Garcia, Kevin](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 9:57:08 AM
Importance: Low

Marcus,

I think this is an excellent addition to downtown Urbana! My brother-in-law, Jeff Butler, teaches Montessori. I have a daughter who would be in that age range by summer and a six year old who would both thrive in that learning environment. I am looking forward to hearing more about this opportunity for our community.

--

Tom Sheehan

25 O'Clock Brewing Company, LLC
208 W. Griggs St.
Urbana, IL 61801

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Tom Faux](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Cc: [Garcia, Kevin](#); [Robin Kearton](#)
Subject: [*** SPAM ***] Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 6:50:30 PM
Importance: Low

*** Email From An External Source ***

Marcus,

Thanks for the note.

The Community Center for the Arts wholeheartedly supports this. 28 students and their teachers will go a long way toward making downtown a more vital and interesting place.

One concern: we would strongly urge the city to put either a SLOW sign, or a speed bump on the southbound side of Race St., approaching Main St.

A number of C4A students and parents have had near disasters crossing that street. The street can be treacherous on dark winter evenings, and kids walking or on bikes—and parents—sometimes aren't good about crossing with lights. We have long thought that it might be a matter of time before someone is hit by a car.

That aside, we welcome the presence of the Montessori school and we would certainly open to collaborating with them.

best regards,

Tom Faux

Director of Programming
[Community Center for the Arts](#)
202 West Main St.
Urbana, Illinois 61801
Text: (217) 550-9647

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Kathryn Fitzgerald](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 6:30:03 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

LOVE this!!!! maybe they want kids yoga and art - they could walk over to Amara. Of course you can share it with my name. I think this is exactly what downtown needs more of - maybe we could turn the hotel into a school if they cant get it together to make it into a real hotel - we just need a bit of a downtown park/playspace. Just to let you know my kids camp is almost full for this summer - with a wait list for 2 of the 7 weeks already - I'm limiting it to 10 kids as per last years guidelines, but hoping we can add more kids. We use to have 20 kids and a ton of them rode bikes or walked over with their parents. If you hear anything about the state issuing new guidelines let me know because we are finally bringing in some \$ after a whole year of losing \$ every month and it is because of the kids camp. You can let them know that too.

Love, Peace, Calm
Stay well and hope to see you soon,

Kathryn Fitzgerald Art Director Amara Yoga & Arts

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Beads Botanicals](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 5:27:57 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Hey Marcus,

Thanks for emailing me. Probably my biggest concern would be impact on parking, what with a couple of businesses, out of COVID necessity, having taken over parts of parking lots. Otherwise, my business is around the corner, so I don't think there will be a problem.

Catherine

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [scott.g](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 1:46:05 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Marcus,

Thanks for reaching out and informing me of this development.

You noted this will not impact liquor licenses, but will it impact Gaming Licenses? New or already established?

Are there any other State, County, or City laws that may have an impact on downtown businesses? Specifically Restaurants and Bars?

Thanks,
Scott

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: genek@alumni.uchicago.edu
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Cc: [Garcia, Kevin](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?/Transcendence Media Supports Plan, Offers Free Educational TV to Montessori Students
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 6:57:53 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Hi, Marcus. I think this is a wonderful idea -- very pleased to hear that we are expanding educational opportunities for youngsters in Urbana. We are the affiliate for FNX/PBS TV here in town -- and I would like to offer the Montessori school free access to our content for educational purposes.

As you know, FNX (originating at PBS San Bernardino) provides documentaries on American Indian/Native American cultural history, music, dance and more. We have about 60 shows provided by the network so far, and air some of them on <http://www.champaignpublicmedia.org> already.

However, we are working with VIEWIT to launch a dedicated free TV streaming service for the area and for the entire state eventually to provide this educational content to the community (supported by underwriting, etc. No subscription fees.)

So please do pass along to the planners and the City Council that we support this plan, and we offer to partner for free with the Montessori School to provide the free educational TV content for the students, teachers and families. Here's a recent documentary on the Cherokee Indians and a playwright who wrote a work about President Jackson and the Cherokees,
<https://www.facebook.com/ChampaignPublicMedia/videos/1065024387356165>

Gene Koprowski

President and Executive Producer

Transcendence Media

217-766-3666

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Denis & Aisha chiaramonte](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 7:12:38 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Dear Marcus Ricci,

Welcome, we are excited to have your school be part of Downtown Urbana.

Sincerely,

Denis and Aisha Chiaramonte
Owners of the Capoeira Angola Center IL

*** Email From An External Source ***

Hello Mr. Ricci,

Yes, you can use our identity and share our excitement about having a school in downtown Urbana. We had the opportunity to lease the space above the Cinema Gallery and during the Summer we would organize a three week long camp for children ages 5-10 years ago. The camp offered classes in movement, music, and art. Our space location in Downtown Urbana offered many experiences that the children also enjoyed. During that time there was a skate shop and comic book store that we took the kids to visit. This was a fun experience for the kids, and an opportunity to collaborate with the near businesses. We are now located in Lincoln Square and look forward to meeting our new neighbors.

Sincerely,

Denis and Aisha Chiaramonte

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
To: [XX](#)
Subject: RE: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 2:11:56 PM

Good afternoon, XX.

I appreciate your concerns. I have been conducting parking surveys in and around the block and believe there is more than sufficient available metered parking lot and on-street parking spaces, both in the morning and afternoon during the planned 15-minute drop-off periods. We will be recommending a condition on the special use permit that the Zoning Administrator is authorized to require a certain number of parking spaces dedicated for drop-offs, should it turn out that that is necessary to provide a reasonable level of safety.

Regarding your question about registered sex offenders: the required buffer from schools is only for registered child sex offenders, and it restricts them from living within 500 feet of a school or park, or service that directly works with children. It does not restrict them from working or shopping within 500 feet of that facility. According to the Urbana Police Department, there are currently no registered child sex offenders living within 500 feet of the proposed site, so the school would not displace any current residents from their home. Granting the special use permit would create a 500-foot buffer around the school into which registered child sex offenders could not create a new residence.

I will share your comments and my response with City Council and remove all identifying information. Please contact us if you have any additional comments or questions.

Be safe, stay healthy,
Marcus

Marcus Ricci, AICP
Planner II

From: XX
Sent: Friday, March 19, 2021 10:27 AM
To: Ricci, Marcus <mericci@urbanaininois.us>
Subject: Re: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?

I know I was supposed to write comments by 5 last night, but I would like to know the plans for parent pickups and drop offs which would be complicated by the liquor and band trucks already partially blocking Goose Alley. I am concerned about the safety for the students because of traffic and people drawn to the bars which operate during the day as well as evenings. If there are people already doing business or living in the downtown area who are registered sex offenders, that would also have to be "excused" for the school... They are a blend of concerns from my tenants.

XX

Exhibit H – Correspondence

From: [Lois Steinberg](#)
To: [Ricci, Marcus](#)
Subject: Fwd: Proposed school in Downtown Urbana - your thoughts?
Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 2:47:39 PM

*** Email From An External Source ***

Dear Marcus,

Iyengar Yoga Champaign-Urbana is all for this! Post-pandemic, if there ever will be that as we are in the Age of Pandemics, the students of your school can walk down to my center for a special field trip yoga class!

Sincerely,

Lois Steinberg

Exhibit I: DRAFT Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

URBANA PLAN COMMISSION

DRAFT

DATE: March 18, 2021

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: City Council Chambers | Zoom Webinar

MEMBERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Dustin Allred, Jane Billman, Andrew Fell, Lew Hopkins, Debarah McFarland, Jonah Weisskopf, Chenxi Yu

MEMBER ATTENDING AT CITY BUILDING: Tyler Fitch

STAFF PRESENT: City of Urbana (Host); Brianna Gaspar, UPTV Camera Operator, Marcus Ricci, Planner II; Kat Trotter, Planner I

OTHERS ATTENDING REMOTELY: Norman Baxley, Ryan Donaldson, Monica Huang

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Fitch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was taken, and there was a quorum with all members present.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the March 4, 2021 regular Plan Commission meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Fell moved that the Plan Commission approve the minutes as written. Ms. Billman seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes
Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Ms. McFarland	-	Abstain	Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Mr. Allred	-	Yes

The minutes were approved by a vote of 7 yeses and 1 abstention.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Correspondence received for Plan Case No. 2416-SU-21:

- Email from Thomas Sheehan of 25 O’Clock Brewing Company, LLC
- Email from Tom Faux
- Email from Kathryn Fitzgerald
- Email from Catherine of Beads Botanicals
- Email from Scott G
- Email from Gene Koprowski
- Email from Denis and Aisha Chiaramonte
- Email from Anonymous Person
- Email from Lois Steinberg

5. CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARINGS

There were none.

6. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

7. NEW PUBLIC HEARINGS

Plan Case No. 2416-SU-21 – A request by Norman Baxley, on behalf of Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, for a Special Use Permit to allow operation of a School at 121 Goose Alley in the B-4, Central Business Zoning District.

Chair Fitch opened the public hearing for Plan Case No. 2416-SU-21. Marcus Ricci, Planner II, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. He began by explaining the purpose of the proposed Special Use Permit request, which is to allow the operation of a school in the B-4 (Central Business) Zoning District. He noted the location, existing uses, zoning and future land use designations of the proposed site as well as for the adjacent properties. He reviewed the requirements for a Special Use Permit according to Section VII-4.A of the Urbana Zoning Ordinance. He summarized staff findings and read the options of the Plan Commission. He presented City staff’s recommendation for APPROVAL with the following conditions:

1. Operation must be in general conformance with the floor plan submitted with the Special Use Permit application (Exhibit D);
2. Parking and loading must be in general conformance with the plan submitted (Exhibit F);
3. The Special Use Permit would expire on August 31, 2024. The school may apply for another special use permit for this or another location, as permitted by the Urbana Zoning Ordinance;
4. Student enrollment will be capped at 28 students;
5. The school must rent at least three parking spaces;
6. The school must work with the property owner to install bicycle loops on the property;

Chair Fitch asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for City staff.

Mr. Allred asked why the City would essentially lock the floorplan to the Special Use Permit rather than keeping it flexible. He did not understand how the applicant uses the interior of the building would be important. Mr. Ricci explained that this is one of the default conditions placed on Special Use Permits that gives the City some confidence that the interior would not be altered in a major fashion or possibly increase the occupancy level. There is no requirement in the Zoning Ordinance that the floor plan remain static. He added this condition because both the applicant and the Montessori school said that they were not planning any major renovations.

Mr. Allred asked about potential conflicts with cannabis uses. The NuMed facility has a medical cannabis dispensary. Would the school locating at 121 Goose Alley create a conflict for NuMed with regards to buffer requirements from schools? Mr. Ricci stated that NuMed is now called nuEra. It is both an adult and a medical cannabis dispensary. From his analysis, the proposed school would not affect any future cannabis uses in Downtown Urbana as they are already prohibited from the downtown area or there is not a school buffer requirement depending on each type of cannabis use. The only type of cannabis uses that require a buffer from school zones are medical cultivation centers and non-medical dispensaries, and neither of these are allowed in the downtown area. Craft growers and infusers would be allowed in the downtown area but do not require a buffer from school zones. He shared the interactive map that shows what cannabis uses would be allowed on any given parcel.

Mr. Ricci stated that nuEra is located 1,000 feet from the downtown area, so it would not be affected by the presence of the proposed school. Mr. Hopkins asked if the school had located Downtown Urbana first, then nuEra would not have been allowed in its current location. Mr. Ricci said that was correct. Mr. Allred clarified that there is a buffer of 2,500 feet for cannabis cultivation centers and 1,000 feet for medical dispensaries. Mr. Ricci noted that there are other schools located in and around Downtown Urbana that trigger the buffer requirements, so adding another school in the downtown area would not change the permission of a current cannabis use.

Mr. Allred stated that the written staff report addresses the issuance of new liquor licenses to retail liquor establishments. What about existing liquor licenses for businesses located within the 100 feet of the proposed site? Would the existing liquor licenses be grandfathered in? A new retail liquor establishment could not be located within 100 feet of an existing church or school; however, a school can locate near an establishment with a liquor license. It is a one-way prohibition. Renewals of established businesses with liquor-licenses are exempt from the 100-foot school buffer requirement. If an established business with a liquor-license wanted to expand their license, it is possible that it might be affected by the proposed school. However, the Montessori school is considering signing a waiver to prevent them from affecting businesses expanding their liquor licenses or new businesses needing a liquor license in the future.

Mr. Fell stated that the application asks to be allowed to operate a church on the proposed site, but the written staff report talks about a school use. Mr. Ricci stated that he would change the application to reflect school, not church.

Mr. Fell stated that he had many building code questions. He asked if the plans had been reviewed by the City's Building Safety Division staff. Mr. Ricci replied no.

Exhibit I: DRAFT Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

Chair Fitch asked about the traffic speed in Downtown Urbana. Mr. Ricci believed that the speed limit was 35 mph [it is 30 mph]. Chair Fitch asked if this would need to become a school zone. Mr. Ricci stated that during internal discussion, Public Works staff brought up this concern. The triggering requirements for a school zone were not discussed though. He mentioned other businesses that were school-aged-student oriented. He pointed out that there is a marked cross walk on Main Street and signalized intersections at both ends. The school could request a school zone, which would go before the Traffic Commission. He could check into this more and get back to the Plan Commission. Chair Fitch thought this would be a good idea and he asked for more information about speed suppression and traffic suppression measures being required. Mr. Ricci mentioned that the communication received about installing a speed bump or a slow sign came from the proprietor of C4A Art and Music School.

With there being no further questions for City staff, Chair Fitch opened the hearing for public input. He stated the rules and procedure for public input. He invited the applicant(s) to speak.

Norman Baxley, applicant, raised his hand to speak. He stated that he was available to answer any questions.

Monica Huang, representative for the Montessori school, raised her hand to speak. She thanked the Plan Commission for their consideration of the proposed Special Use Permit.

There was no further testimony or input from the public, so Chair Fitch closed the public input portion of the hearing. He then opened the hearing for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Mr. Fell stated that he did not intend to sound like he was opposed to the proposed Special Use Permit. However, he had a lot of questions for the Building Safety Division. Building Safety staff needs to review this plan in terms of allowing a school use with the existing Building Code. He believed that the school and the building had different use occupancy codes, which are drastically different. One difference is the Champaign-Urbana Public Health regulations for the existing kitchen. Some of the differences are going to take some effort to work around.

Mr. Hopkins expressed concern about the building meeting American Disability Act (ADA) regulations. While it is hard to determine from the submitted floor plan, what the levels are; however, it was reasonably clear that there are places in this space that are not accessible. While the occupancy codes and accessibility compliance are not within the purview of the Plan Commission, he felt it was important to point them out. Mr. Fell stated that he would not feel comfortable tying the floor plan to the Special Use Permit. Mr. Hopkins added that the Building Safety Division would assess an occupancy limit based on the Building Code, so the Plan Commission did not need to worry about this either. Chair Fitch agreed with both Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Fell.

Chair Fitch reiterated concern about traffic suppression. While he did not want a speed bump in the middle of Downtown Urbana, he felt signage was important. He felt it would be appropriate to have signage at the unlit crosswalk on Main Street, possibly at the egress of Water Street and along Goose Alley. He suggested looking further into the school zone requirements.

Exhibit I: DRAFT Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

Ms. Billman moved that the Plan Commission forward Case No. 2416-SU-21 to the Urbana City Council with a recommendation for approval with the following conditions:

1. Parking and loading must be in general conformance with the plan submitted (Exhibit F);
2. The Special Use Permit would expire on August 31, 2024. The school may apply for another special use permit for this or another location, as permitted by the Urbana Zoning Ordinance;
3. Student enrollment will be capped at 28 students;
4. The school must rent at least three parking spaces;
5. The school must work with the property owner to install bicycle loops on the property.
6. The school must sign a waiver of its protective buffer from future retail liquor licenses.

Mr. Hopkins asked for a friendly amendment to delete Condition #1 that the Operation be in general conformance with the floor plan. Ms. Billman agreed to the amendment. Mr. Hopkins seconded the motion.

Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Fell	-	Yes	Mr. Fitch	-	Yes
Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes	Ms. McFarland	-	Yes
Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes	Ms. Yu	-	Yes
Mr. Allred	-	Yes	Ms. Billman	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ricci noted that Plan Case No. 2416-SU-21 would be forwarded to Committee of the Whole on April 5, 2021.

8. NEW BUSINESS

CCZBA-002-AM-21 – A request by Ryan and Amanda Donaldson, dba D5 Holdings Group, LLC to amend the Champaign County Zoning Map to change the zoning district designation at 3804 Cunningham Avenue from the AG-2, Agriculture Zoning District, to the B-4, General Business Zoning District, in order to establish and operate the proposed Special Use in related Zoning Case CCZBA-003-S-21.

Chair Fitch opened Case No. CCZBA-002-AM-21. Kat Trotter, Planner I, presented the staff report to the Plan Commission. She began by explaining the purpose of the proposed zoning amendment request, which is to allow the applicant to establish and operate the Illini Fire Service, LLC, a fire suppression equipment and design company. She stated that at the March 11, 2021 meeting of the Champaign County Zoning Board of Appeals, they voted unanimously to enact the rezoning with one condition. She noted the location, existing land uses, and zoning of the subject property and adjacent properties. City staff found that the proposed rezoning to County B-4 (General Business) Zoning District would generally be consistent with the City's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. She showed the Site Plan and talked about the drainage concerns

Exhibit I: DRAFT Plan Commission Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2021

detailed in the County memo. She read the options of the Plan Commission and presented City staff's recommendation to DEFEAT A RESOLUTION OF PROTEST as presented. She mentioned that Ryan Donaldson, applicant, was available to answer questions.

Chair Fitch asked if any members of the Plan Commission had questions for City Council. There were none, so he opened the case for public input. There was no public input. Chair Fitch closed the public input portion and opened the case for Plan Commission discussion and/or motion(s).

Chair Fitch stated that he was glad that they are addressing the drainage issues.

Mr. Hopkins moved that the Plan Commission forward Case No. CCZBA-002-AM-21 to the City Council with a recommendation to DEFEAT a Resolution of Protest. Mr. Allred seconded the motion. Roll call on the motion was as follows:

Mr. Fitch	-	Yes	Mr. Hopkins	-	Yes
Ms. McFarland	-	Yes	Mr. Weisskopf	-	Yes
Ms. Yu	-	Yes	Mr. Allred	-	Yes
Ms. Billman	-	Yes	Mr. Fell	-	Yes

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Trotter noted that Case No. CCZBA-002-AM-21 would be forwarded to City Council on Monday, April 12, 2021.

9. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was none.

10. STAFF REPORT

Chair Fitch inquired about Plan Case Nos. 2411-PUD-20 and 2412-PUD-20. Had City Council discussed these two cases and taken any action? Mr. Ricci reported that City Council denied the Planned Unit Development requests.

11. STUDY SESSION

There was none.

12. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Garcia, Secretary
Urbana Plan Commission