



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Planning and Building



**Date:** June 9, 2014  
**Board Meeting Date:** July 15, 2014  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** Newspaper and 10-Day  
Notice to Property  
Owners within 300 Feet  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**From:** Steve Monowitz, Acting Community Development Director

**Subject:** EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Public hearing to consider an appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to certify the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve a Use Permit, to allow operation of a 24-child preschool/day care center in an existing single-family residence in the unincorporated West Menlo Park area of San Mateo County.

County File Number: PLN 2013-00191 (Toddle, LLC)

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Deny the appeal and uphold the decision of the Planning Commission to approve a Use Permit to allow operation of Toddle, LLC, a 24-child preschool/day care center, and certify the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, based on the findings contained in Attachment A.

**BACKGROUND:**

The applicants, Heather Hopkins and Amy Burnett, for Toddle, LLC/3131 Alameda, LLC, request approval of a use permit to allow operation of a preschool/day care center for up to 24 children, ages 2 to 6. Staff would include two full-time staff and one part-time aide. The preschool/day care center would target clientele needing short-term day care services, typically on short notice. Drop-offs and pick-ups would be staggered using a computerized system. Parking includes two garage spaces for full-time staff and four on-site customer parking spaces, including one Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant parking space. The Center would operate on weekdays only. The project requires only minor alterations to the interior and exterior of the residence.

**DISCUSSION:**

The Planning Commission considered the project at its February 12, 2014 meeting, and by a vote of 5-0, unanimously approved the project. On February 26, 2014, Planning

staff received an appeal challenging the Planning Commission's decision, as filed by 14 neighbors (Appellants) and including a petition in opposition to the project with over 120 signatures. The appeal focuses on the following concerns, as summarized below:

The Appellants assert that project impacts to traffic and parking are significant: The Appellants question the accuracy of the traffic study prepared by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. (traffic study), as the study was conducted in July when residents were out of town and off the roads. Appellants also question the methods used to compensate for the timing of the traffic study (e.g., use of an 18% adjustment factor and year-old school enrollment records). The traffic study found that the greatest traffic impacts are estimated to occur between 12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., outside of the commute periods, with approximately 20 trips (10 in and 10 out) per hour. Also, project parking demand is not anticipated to exceed available on-site and street parking. Recommendations of the traffic study have been incorporated as conditions of project approval, including, but not limited to, addition of a third parking space on-site, limiting drop-offs/pick-ups to two every 12 minutes, and including language in client contracts to require clients to park for less than 10 minutes and to access the Center via Alameda de las Pulgas and Manzanita Avenue (not Barney Avenue).

The Appellants state that outdoor playtime activities would violate the County's Noise Control Regulations: As proposed, no more than 12 children would play outdoors at any one time and outdoor activities would occur during the standard work day. Condition of Approval No. 6 limits outdoor daily playtimes to two 30-minute sessions in the morning and one 45-minute session in the afternoon. Noise levels from outdoor play areas are expected to comply with the County's Noise Control regulations.

Land Use Impacts: The Appellants state that the project would convert the residential property to a commercial use. Schools are allowed in the R-1 (One-Family Residential) Zoning District, subject to the approval of a use permit. The County has historically considered day care facilities and preschools to be schools, as they include an educational component (e.g., kindergarten readiness) and have similar operational and land use impacts.

As discussed in the staff report, the project complies with applicable policies of the County's General Plan and Zoning Regulations related to the R-1/S-72 Zoning District, parking, and required use permit findings.

Approval of this project contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 of a Livable Community by extending the existing system of preschool and day care services offered in San Mateo County and improving access to such services by locating a facility where residents reside.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**  
No fiscal impact.