BZA Application No. 21275

HSMG Properties, LLC 4401 16th Street, NW April 30, 2025

Applicant:

HSMG Properties, LLC
<u>Soles Montessori</u>
Hussain Shehab
Maribel Gutierrez-Shehab

Zoning Attorney

Sullivan & Barros, LLP Alexandra Wilson

Traffic Consultant

Symmetra Design Board of Zoning Adjustment Nicole White District of Columbia

CASE NO.21275

Project Anchitect
Synfoni Bailey-Green

 S^B

Overview and Requested Relief

- The Property is improved with a large church, located in the R-1B zone.
- The Applicant is proposing to adaptively reuse the church building and convert it to a Child Development Center—<u>Soles</u> <u>Montessori</u>—with 118 children and 25 staff members.
- The Applicant is not proposing any changes to the building envelope, nor any substantial internal demolition and intends to use the structure as-is.



View from corner of 16th Street and Webster



Overview and Requested Relief

Special Exception for Child Development Center

Daycare use requires special exception approval in the R-1B zone pursuant to U-203.1(h).

Special Exception for Landscape/Screening:

The Applicant plans to use the existing on-site parking lot for parking, pick-up, and drop-off. Although past rulings by the ZA, BZA, and OP have exempted nonconforming standalone lots from certain landscaping and screening requirements (C-714.3 and C-715.9), the change of use will trigger de novo review of the lot.

Condition/Flexibility:

As discussed more fully herein, there are 4 spaces (2 legal, 2 stacked) in public space which are subject to PS approval, accordingly the Applicant is requesting a condition in which the 13 legal spaces + 8 stacked spaces are required and up to 2 more legal and 2 more stacked spaces permitted, subject to public space approval.



Rear view, from the alley









Community & Agency Support

- The Office of Planning recommends approval.
- DDOT has no objection, and the Applicant agrees to their proposed conditions and changes to the TDM plan, and notes that it is requesting flexibility based on the DDOT note regarding the spaces in public space:
- The Applicant will provide 13 zoning-compliant off-street parking spaces and eight (8) additional non-compliant parking spaces in a stacked configuration. The applicant may also provide four (4) additional stacked parking spaces in public space along the Webster Street NW right-of-way, only if a Public Space Occupancy Permit is approved.
- ANC 4E voted unanimously in support on March 25, 2025; and they voted again on April 29, 2025, for the newly added relief and we presented the proposed condition.
- There are 9 letters of support in the record from neighbors, including the only directly abutting/adjacent neighbor to the north and St. George Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church located directly across Webster Street. Multiple community meetings were held, and the neighbors have been extremely receptive and supportive.



Background Information & Proposed Use

Overview of Proposed School

The proposed school, Soles Montessori Child Development Center is an early childhood education facility operated by Maribel Gutierrez-Shehab and Hussain Shehab. They currently own two nearby Montessori schools under the same name. These existing locations, both within a mile of the new site are leased and facing expiring leases. The Applicants aim to consolidate operations into a single, owned location.



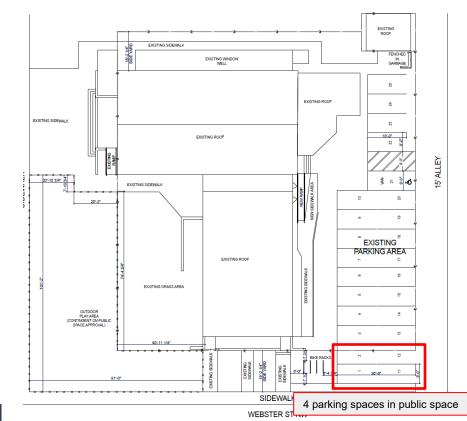




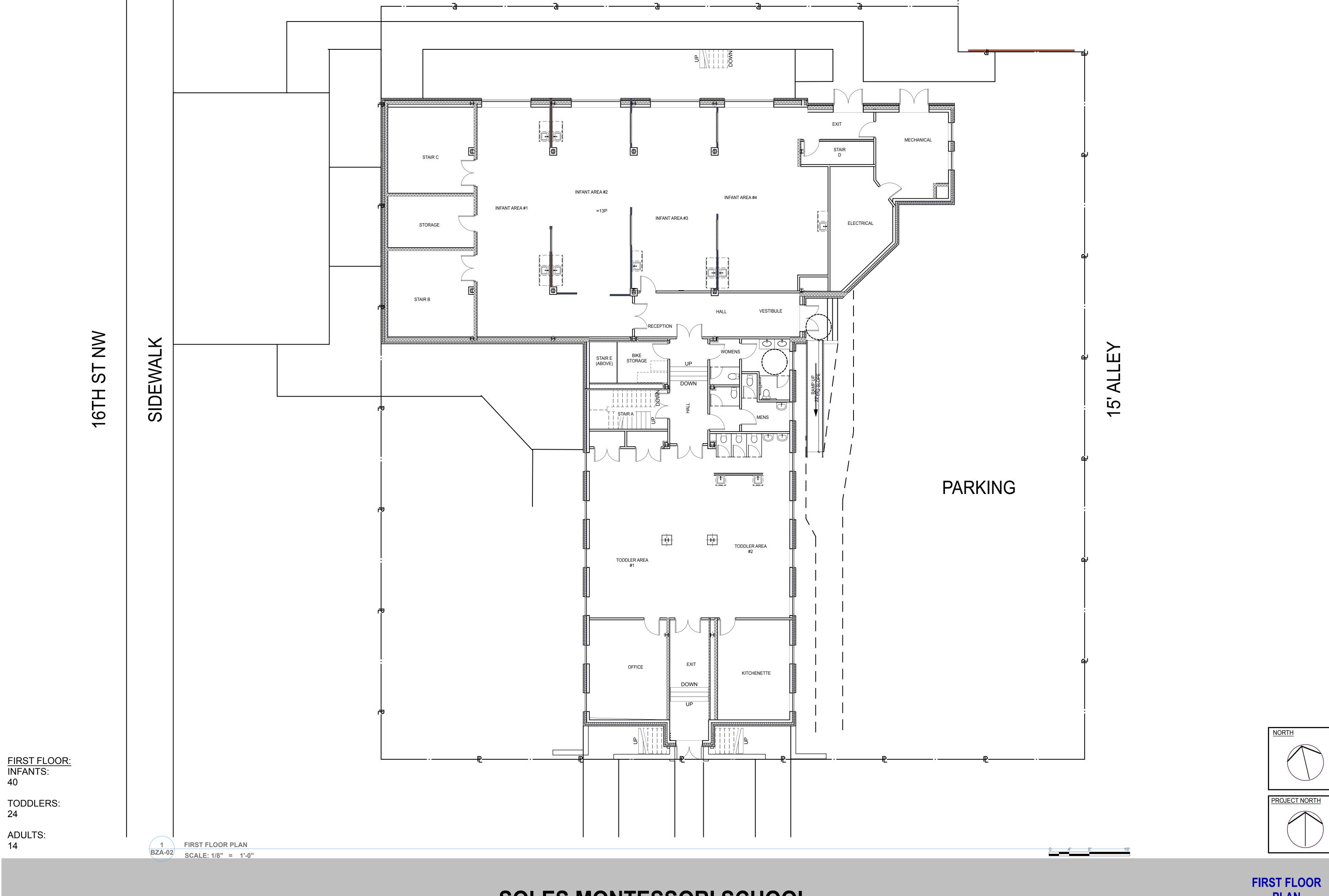
Background Information & Proposed Use

Facility Plans and Operations

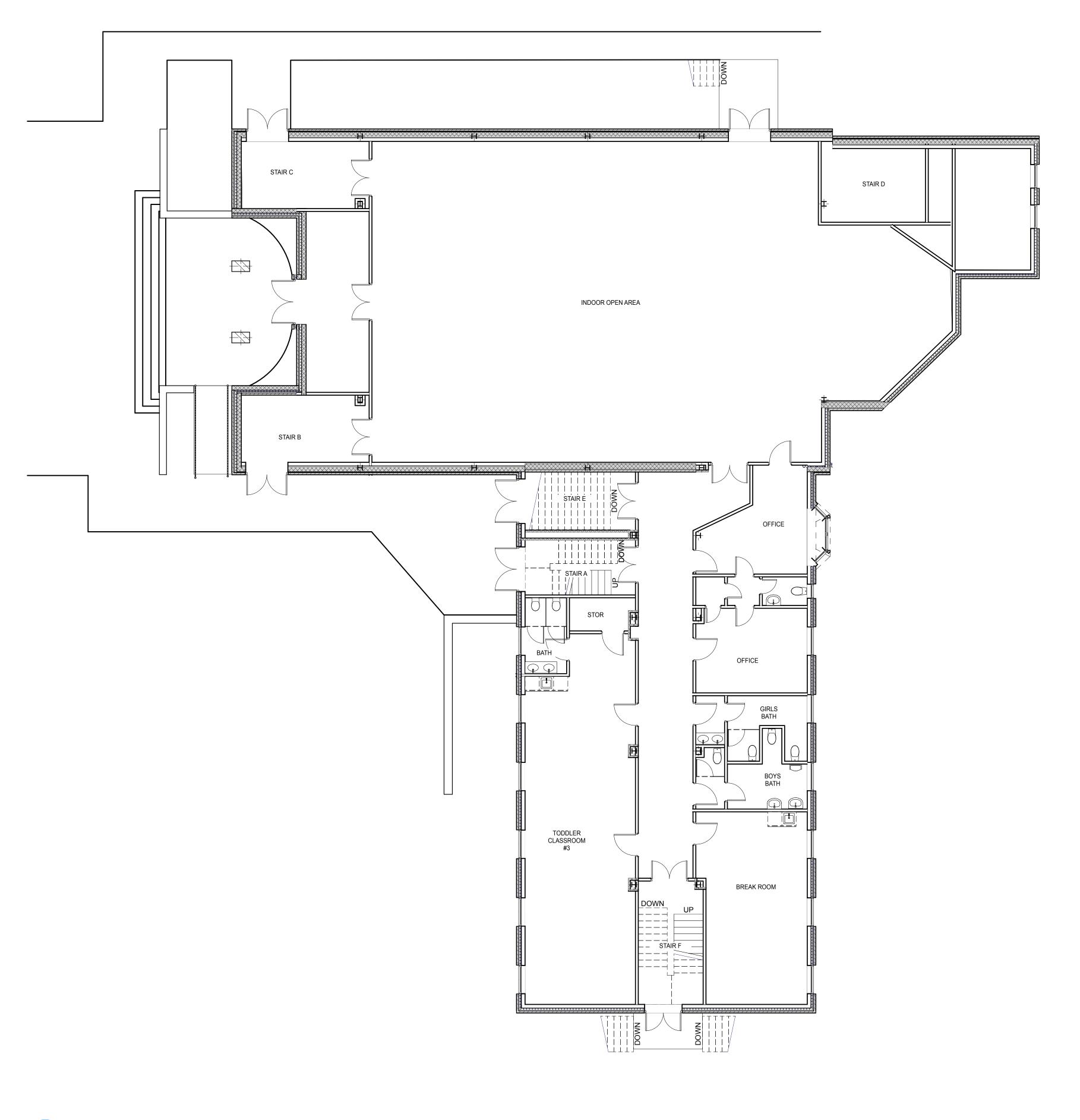
- The existing Building will be converted to classrooms and administrative space. There are already some classroom and admin spaces on the south side, so limited interior work is proposed.
- The second floor of the sanctuary will remain an open space, potentially usable as an indoor play area.
- Plans potentially include an outdoor play area (subject to Public Space approval). The Applicant acknowledges that BZA approval does not imply public space approval but of course wanted to include it in the plans.
- Restriping parking area, 'stacked' spaces (discussed in more detail in transportation slides); 13 legal spaces per condition.
- Screened dumpster off the alley (weekly pickup).
- Pest control monthly (already happening on site).



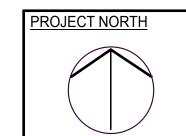








NORTH

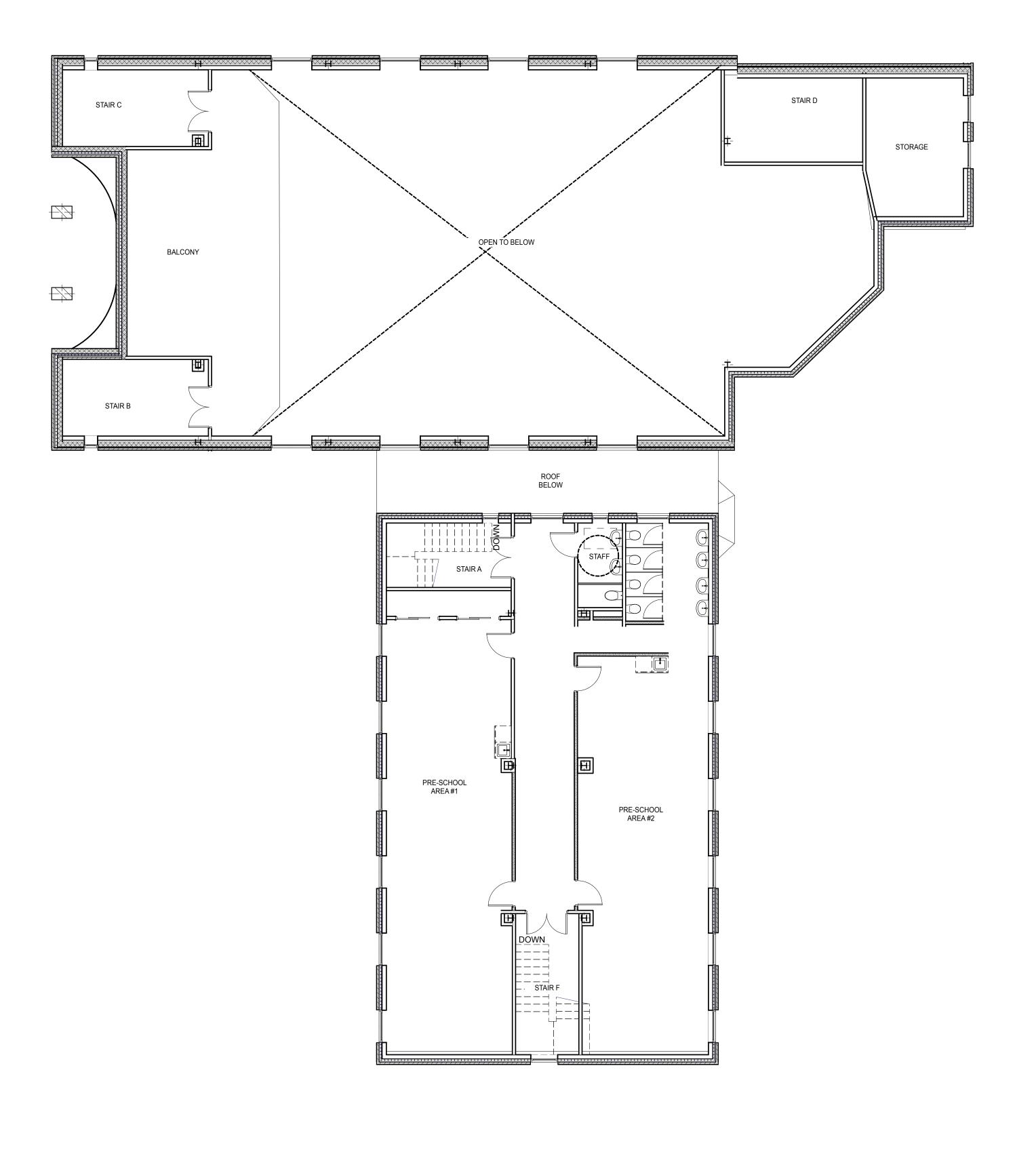


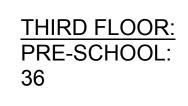
SECOND FLOOR: TODDLERS: 18

ADULTS: 3



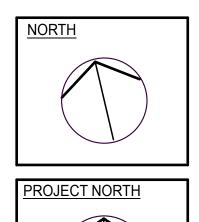


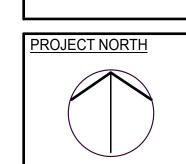




ADULTS:







Additional Operational and Program Details

- Capacity: 118 children and up to 25 staff members (many will already come from the existing schools) and the waitlist.
- Operating Hours: Monday–Friday, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, with core daycare hours from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.
- Age Range: Primarily for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years; a summer program will be available for children up to 13 years, including siblings and local children, within the 118-student cap.
- The summer program is classified as daytime care use, too.











General Special Exception Criteria

The Applicant's proposal aligns with the intent and purpose of zoning regulations, particularly for an area defined by institutional, religious, educational, and diplomatic uses. The former church at this location was no longer viable and was, according to some neighbors, a nuisance property. Rather than constructing a new building, the Applicant proposes an adaptive reuse that fulfills a community need, consolidates two separate schools, and is not disruptive to the fabric of the community.

The property is on a corner lot with an adjacent alley, limiting direct impact to only one abutting neighbor to the north. There is ample on-site parking to accommodate staff and family needs, preventing spillover into neighborhood parking. A 25-foot separation exists between the subject building and the neighboring home due to combined side yards, preserving privacy. The north neighbor is supportive, and no activities or exits will occur in the side yard to maintain their enjoyment of their property.



Specific Criteria of U-203.1(h)	Proposed
(1)The facility shall be located and designed to create no objectionable traffic condition and no unsafe condition for picking up and dropping off persons in attendance;	The proposed facility is designed to avoid objectionable traffic or safety issues during child pick-up and drop-off. With ample on-site parking and a designated lot, all pick-up and drop-off activities will occur entirely on the property.
(2)Any off-site play area shall be located so as not to endanger individuals traveling between the play area and the center or facility;	The Applicant plans to have an on-site outdoor play area, which is subject to public space approval. In the event approval isn't granted, nearby parks—such as Upshur Park, just 0.2 miles away—could serve as alternative play spaces. To ensure safety during off-site travel, the school will use the same adult-to-child supervision ratios as inside the center, along with walk ropes for older children and wagons or strollers for younger ones.
(3)The Board of Zoning Adjustment may require special treatment in the way of design, screening of buildings, planting and parking areas, signs, or other requirements as it deems necessary to protect adjacent and nearby properties; and	The Applicant will comply with any requirements. A neighbor requested the Applicant fence the garbage area to avoid illegal dumping. The ANC noted they would also suggest that in the resolution in support. Accordingly, that is shown on the site plan on the Updated Plans.
(4) More than one (1) child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility in a square or within one thousand feet (1,000 ft.) of another child/elderly development center or adult day treatment facility may be approved only when the Board of Zoning Adjustment finds that the cumulative effect of these facilities will not have an adverse impact on the neighborhood due to traffic, noise, operations, or other similar factors;	A nearby childcare center, Amazing Life Games, is located just 300 feet away at 4300 16th Street NW, within Grace Lutheran Church, and operates under BZA Case No. 18336. It serves 35 children ages 2.5 to 5 with 5 staff members. In contrast, Soles Montessori will serve children as young as 6 weeks old, addressing a critical gap in care for infants and toddlers. The proposal aims to consolidate two existing Soles Montessori locations into one central facility, continuing to serve their current families—many of whom are local residents—and accommodate children on the waitlist. The proximity of multiple centers is not expected to negatively impact the neighborhood, as the proposed operations have been designed to minimize traffic, noise, and other disruptions.

Specific Criteria of C-714.3 and C-715.9	Proposed
C- 714.3: In granting a waiver from the screening requirements, the Board may consider: (a) Impacts on the pedestrian environment within adjacent streets, sidewalks, and other public areas; (b) Existing vegetation, buildings or protective and screening walls located on adjacent property; (c) Existing topographic conditions; (d) Traffic conditions; and (e) In granting a modification or waiver, the Board of Zoning Adjustment may require any special treatment of the premises that it deems necessary to prevent adverse impacts on neighboring properties or the general public. C- 715.9: The Board of Zoning Adjustment may grant, as a special exception, a full or partial reduction in the landscape standards for parking lots required by this section if, in addition to meeting the general requirements of Subtitle X, the applicant demonstrates that complying with the landscape standards is impractical because of size of lot, or other conditions relating to the lot or surrounding area that would tend to make full compliance unduly restrictive, prohibitively costly, or unreasonable.	The existing parking lot is integrated into the property's current design, and bringing it into full compliance would require demo and reconfiguration, contradicting the project's cost-effective adaptive reuse approach. Compliance would also reduce the number of functional parking spaces and disrupt safe pick-up and drop-off operations, which are vital for a childcare facility. Neighborhood Context and Visual Impact - The area is primarily composed of institutional and religious properties with similar parking arrangements. The parking lot is not visually disruptive, as its appearance is softened by setbacks, topography, and nearby structures. No pedestrian areas exist where screening would otherwise be required (specifically where the lot meets the alley), preserving safety standards.
	Sustainability and Practicality - The project emphasizes adaptive reuse and sustainability, reducing demolition and material waste. Enforcing new parking construction standards would undermine this environmentally conscious approach. Granting relief supports a needed childcare service without imposing unreasonable costs or logistical challenges that could compromise the project's success. The Applicant will look for ways to upgrade and update the parking lot where possible, including potential landscaping in existing PS if required by DDOT.









TRANSPORTATION

Presenter:

Nicole White, P.E., PTOE

DDOT CONDITIONS

DDOT has no objection to the approval of this application with the following additions:

- The Applicant construct the four (4) short-term bike parking spaces, the equivalent to two
 (2) inverted U-style racks in public space on the Webster Street, NW;
- The Applicant construct the one (1) long-term bike parking space required by zoning in the bike storage room noted on in the Architectural Plans (Exhibit 21C).
- The Applicant implement the TDM plan from the Applicant's April 17, 2025
 Transportation Statement [Exhibit 32A]), for the life of the project, with the following modifications:
 - Provide Capital Bikeshare corporate membership to all interested staff
 - Comply with Commuter Benefits Act of 2014
 - Comply with Transportation Benefits Equity Amendment Act if over 20 staff members (including part-time staff)
 - Charge staff "market rate" for parking or comply with DC Parking Cashout Law when the number of staff reaches 20.

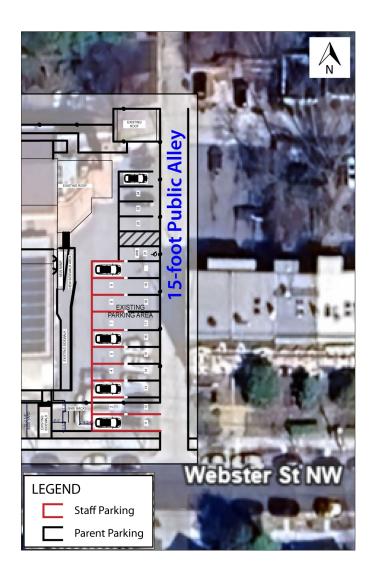
SITE ACCESS

- Vehicular access through the public alley (one-way southbound)
- Non-daycare users would remain two-way in the alley



PARKING

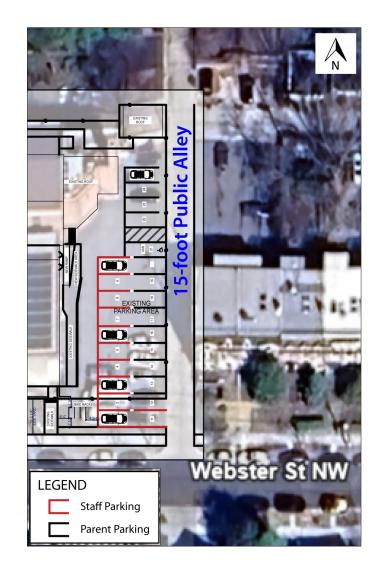
- Five (5) spaces required by zoning
- 21-25 parking spaces provided:
 - 13 zoning-compliant spaces
 - 8 non-complaint stacked spaces
 - 4 stacked spaces in public space
 - Only if a Public Space Occupancy Permit is approved



PICK-UP/DROP-OFF

- 8 11 parking spaces for staff parking
- 13 14 spaces available for pick-up/dropoff operations
- Pick-up/drop-off will be staggered
- Parents will be directed to approach the alley from Allison Street and depart to Webster Street
- The parent handbook will include language to help manage and enforce pick-up and drop-off operations

Staff Parking	Pick-up/Drop-off	Total Parking
8 - 11	13 - 14	21- 25



PARENT HANDBOOK LANGUAGE

Parking Policies and Alley Use

- U-turns and double parking are strictly prohibited during pick-up and drop-off times.
- To ensure safety and maintain traffic flow, the alley will operate as one-way southbound during designated pick-up and drop-off times. Parents must enter from Allison Street and exit via Webster Street. Please note: the alley remains two-way at all times for residents and non-daycare users.
- Parking spaces in the parking lot are available for pick-up and drop-off. Do not block the alley while waiting for a space to become available.

Enforcement and Penalties for Policy Violations

- Staff will actively monitor and enforce all pick-up and drop-off procedures.
- First Violation: A written warning will be issued to the parent or guardian outlining the policy violation.
- Second Violation: A monetary penalty of \$50 will be assessed.
- Third Violation: Repeated non-compliance may result in termination of your child's enrollment at Soles Montessori.

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- Appoint Daycare Transportation Coordinator
- Meet with goDCgo to develop goals and plans
- Conduct commuter survey of staff
- Conduct Show of Hands Commute Survey of students
- Check in with goDCgo's School Services Team halfway through the year to track progress
- Send out reminders for Commuter Benefits Open Enrollment
- Promote commuter benefits and other sustainable transportation programs to new and existing hires
- Provide transportation information to new and existing students and families
- Provide brochures in communal areas for staff, student, and parent inquiries
- Provide information on nearby transportation options on the daycare's website (work with goDCgo to create a Get Around Guide customized for the daycare)
- Include transportation information in daycare newsletter
- Promote sustainable transportation in communal areas
- Host a tabling event with goDCgo to sign staff up for commuter benefits
- Participate in Sustainable Transportation Holidays

- Install 4 short-term bicycle parking spaces (2 inverted-U bike racks)
- Promote Capital Bikeshare as a form of commuting to and from the daycare
- Provide Capital Bikeshare corporate membership to all interested staff
- Host bike safety course for staff
- Promote WABA bicycling classes to staff
- Facilitate car/vanpool formation meetings and ride matching (goDCgo can help with this)
- Promote the Carpool Now App and Commuter Connections' ride matching platform
- Sign up for and promote SchoolPool, a ride matching platform for students and families
- Comply with DC Parking Cashout Law or charge staff "market rate" for parking when the number of staff reaches 20
- Comply with Commuter Benefits Act of 2014
- Comply with Transportation Benefits Equity
 Amendment Act if over 20 staff members (including part-time staff)

Questions?



Additional Transportation Data

Presenter:

Nicole White, P.E., PTOE

TRANSPORTATION OVERVIEW

- Immediately fronting (within ½ mile of) the 16th Street NW Metrobus Priority Corridor Network routes
- ¾ mile from the Georgia Avenue-Petworth Metrorail station



TRAVEL MODE SPLIT

- Data based on Spring 2025 transportation survey data at the two existing locations (100% response rate)
 - 4101 9th Street NW 33 children
 - 1414 Delafield Place NW 12 children
- Due to the small sample size and the lack of data from other sources, a range of mode splits are calculated using the margin of error at a 95% confidence level

Student Mode Split

Staff Mode Split

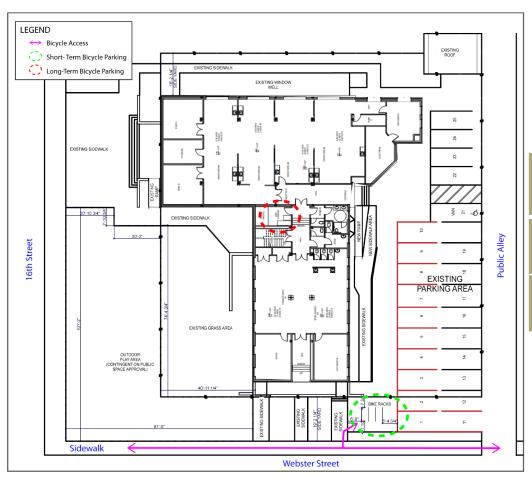
Mode	From	Margin of Error = 11.54%			Mode	From	Margin of Error = 17.73%	
Mode	Survey	Lower Bound Upper Bound	Mode	Survey	Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Auto	31%	20%	43%		Auto	43%	25%	61%
Transit	0%	0%	12%		Transit	29%	11%	46%
Bike	13%	2%	25%		Bike	0%	0%	18%
Walk	56%	44%	67%		Walk	29%	11%	46%
Total	100%	-	-		Total	100%	-	-

TRIP GENERATION

Total Auto Trino	AM Peak (7:30-8:30 AM)			PM Peak (3:00-4:00 PM)		
Total Auto Trips	IN	OUT	TOTAL	IN	OUT	TOTAL
Mode Split (parent surveys)	16	14	30	14	16	30
with Upper Bound Vehicle Mode Split	23	20	43	20	23	43

• Below the threshold of 25 or more vehicle trips in the peak direction (i.e., higher of either inbound or outbound) during any of the critical peak hours to trigger traffic analysis

BICYCLE PARKING



Land Use/Units	Bike Parking Ratio per ZR-16	Bike Parking Required by ZR-16	Parking Proposed
Daytime Care (long-term)	1 space for each 10,000 sq. ft.	2	2
Daytime Care (short-term)	1 space for each 10,000 sq. ft.	2	4

LOADING & TRASH

- No loading berth is required (<30,000 SF)
- Trash will be stored in a commercial dumpster in the backyard.
- Dumpster will be rolled out to the alley for collection.
- Trash collection will occur twice weekly, outside of child pick-up and drop-off times.

