

**SUP-23-05 Phoenix Country Day School**  
**Statement of Direction**  
**November 9, 2023**

Phoenix Country Day School (located at 3901 E Stanford Drive) submitted an Intermediate Special Use Permit (SUP) amendment application to construct a Performance Arts Center for school use. Construction of the building is along the Stanford Drive frontage and will be placed over existing parking spaces (which will result in the relocation of these parking spaces plus seven more spaces to western part of the campus - just north of the existing maintenance building). Landscaping will be placed around the new Performance Art Building and the relocated parking area.

The site is approximately 38.8 acres. It adjoins the City of Phoenix to the east (along 40<sup>th</sup> Street with single-family residential on 24,000 minimum square foot lots) and commercial uses to the south. Within the Town limits, the site adjoins Stanford Drive to the north (with the Camelback Bible Church located across the street) and R-43 single-family residential zoned properties to the west (which were annexed into the Town at nonconforming sizes that range from one quarter of an acre to one third of an acre). The Cudia City Wash (also referred to as the Echo Canyon Wash) bisects the property/campus with the lower and middle school grade activities generally north of the wash and the upper grade school activities south of the wash.

Section 1102.3 of the Town's Zoning Ordinance states the Town Council must issue a Statement of Direction (SOD) for the Special Use Permit application within 45 days of the first staff presentation. In this case, the SOD must be issued on or before December 10, 2023.

Town Council is generally supportive of this request, subject to public input. The SOD is not a final decision of the Town Council and does not create any vested rights to the approval of a SUP. Any application for a SUP does not rely solely upon the matters addressed in the SOD. The following is the SOD for the Phoenix Country Day School Performance Art Building and associated improvements:

- The General Plan encourages the renovation of SUP sites while protecting the Town's low-density residential character and quality of life. The Town shall require development or redevelopment within Special Use Permit properties to provide any necessary mitigation achieved through context and scale, architectural design, setbacks, sound moderation, resort property programming, and landscape buffering (General Plan Land Use Policy LU.3.2).
- The Town shall recognize and support the continued vitality of the places of worship and schools and the added value they bring to the community (General Plan Community Character & Housing Policy CC&H 4.3)
- Other General Plan policies related to SUP properties encourage the use of enhanced aesthetics, buffers between uses of significantly differing function and intensity, the integration of pedestrian amenities, attractive streetscapes, use of shade trees, and the integration of art.

The Planning Commission shall focus their review on the visible, audible, and operational effects the intermediate amendment may have on the neighbors. In particular, the Planning Commission shall focus their review on:

1. **Use.** *The use of a private school is not altered by this request. The proposed Performance Arts Center building will complement the existing facilities used on campus and in the school's music and theater arts program. A performance arts auditorium is a use (similar to the Dorrance auditorium) which is in compliance with Section 1102.2, Uses Permitted, of the Town's Zoning Ordinance (for private schools).*

The primary areas for Planning Commission review include, and are not limited to, the design/layout of the proposed improvements, the impact of the Performance Arts Center to the surrounding area outside the site (specifically traffic, noise, and light impacts), as well as the specific operational factors (hours of operation, etc.).

2. **Noise Mitigation/Impact.** *The proposed Performance Arts Center is located at a setback of 40 feet from Stanford Drive with the primary entrances located at the western and southern parts of the building. The service area will also be located on the north elevation of the building off Stanford Drive and the relocated parking area will be placed along the western part of the campus near the existing residential properties.*

The Planning Commission shall evaluate impacts such as noise, light, traffic, and any other adverse effects these improvements may have on the neighboring properties. Specifically, the Planning Commission shall evaluate the associated impacts of traffic along Stanford Drive, the visual and noise impact to nearby homes, and the use of the outdoor space adjacent to Performance Art building.

3. **Heights/Viewsheds.** *The Special Use Permit (SUP) Guidelines suggest a maximum height of 35 feet for principal structures at private schools. The guidelines further apply the Open Space Criteria whereby no structure would penetrate an imaginary plane starting at a setback of 20 feet from all property lines at 16 feet above natural grade which slopes upward at a ratio of one foot vertically for each five feet horizontally (which limits the building height to 24 feet at a setback of 40 feet). The proposed Performance Arts Center building has different heights ranging from approximately 29 feet to 35 feet tall, with the auditorium portion of the proposed building partially sunken below grade to accommodate an interior height of 38-feet tall. Due to the 40-foot setback from the Stanford Drive/North property line, the northern portion of the building encroaches into the Open Space Criteria plane.*

The Planning Commission shall evaluate the proposed heights and viewsheds of the Performance Arts Center as seen from off-site (particularly impact to the views of Camelback Mountain). This may require additional visuals (e.g., sightline representations, renderings, etc.). Mechanical screening and architectural elements of the building shall be included in the maximum height measurement.

4. **Setbacks.** *SUP Guidelines as applied to this site suggest that the building setback adjoining a public street (Stanford Drive) is 40 feet (proposed at 40 feet) and 60 feet adjoining residential (proposed at approximately 550 feet to the from the west property line for the proposed Performance Arts Center and approximately 35 feet from the new/relocated parking area).*

The Planning Commission shall explore appropriate setbacks for the Performance Arts Center, with particular attention to the setback along Stanford Drive. The Commission shall also identify any mitigating circumstances that may buffer the development (e.g., how Stanford Drive meanders and creates a deeper landscape buffer within the right-of-way, the location of the building site away from nearby residential homes, the type and quality of landscaping, building articulation, location of outdoor congregation areas, etc.)

5. **Landscaping/Buffers.** *SUP Guidelines suggest a 30-foot wide landscape buffer along a collector street (Stanford Drive), 40-foot wide landscape buffer adjoining residential (west property line), shielding of parking lots from residential and the public street with walls and/or berms, and parking lots and internal driveways be minimally setback 60 feet from adjacent residential-zoned property. The proposal has a 40-foot wide landscape buffer along Stanford Drive with various curved accent walls up to 4 feet tall. The relocated parking spaces north of the maintenance building has an approximate 35-foot setback to the west residential property line that match the existing parking lot condition, with no changes to the existing landscape hedge that screens the parking lot from the homes along 37<sup>th</sup> Place.*

The Planning Commission focus on landscaping/buffers shall be along Stanford Drive near the Performance Arts Center and within the new parking area. This includes, and is not limited to, appropriate screening or relocation of the utility boxes, the location and screening of the building service area, harmony of the proposed landscaping and accent walls with the adjacent Stanford Drive landscaping, appropriate type of plant material for the location (e.g., drought tolerance, scale, seasonal color), and appropriate stipulations (such as maintenance and replacing dead plant material). The Planning Commission shall also explore the use of screen walls, additional landscaping, etc. to mitigate any adverse impacts (such as noise and/or lighting) from the new/relocated parking area.

6. **Exterior Lighting.** *SUP Guidelines suggest that exterior lighting be hooded and shielded so as not to be visible from an adjacent property, the brightness for any up-lighting not exceed 300 lumens, pole lights be a maximum height of 16 feet tall (although encouragement is for pole fixtures at lower heights), fixtures be minimally setback equal to the height of the fixture, and the maximum illumination output be 0.5 foot candles adjacent to residential and 0.75 foot candles along other property lines (Section 1023, Zoning Ordinance). The Town typically suggests a color temperature of not more than 3,000 Kelvins to maintain a warm and soft color scale. In general, the proposed lighting is compliant with Town guidelines based on the material submitted to date.*

The Planning Commission focus on exterior lighting shall be how the new lighting meets SUP Guidelines. Some focus areas include the mounted height of light fixtures on the Performance Arts Center building, how illumination might wash the building, and evaluation of the new parking lot lights (e.g. height, setback, quantity, etc.). The

hours of operation of the new lighting shall also be examined.

7. **Traffic, Parking, and Circulation.** *There are no proposed traffic or circulation changes. The proposed Performance Arts Center will be placed on the eastern portion of the existing parking lot along Stanford Drive (taking 49 parking spaces), with 56 parking spaces placed on the west side of the campus just north of the existing maintenance building. The Town Zoning Ordinance recommends that new parking spaces shall be 180 square feet (typically 9 feet wide by 20 feet long).*

*There are four driveways into the school along Stanford Drive. The three westernmost driveways will remain the same along with the current circulation pattern. The easternmost driveway will be used as a service driveway for the Performance Arts Center. The proposed Performance Arts Center is planned for events related to student usage. Any occasional non-student, non-faculty audiences will only occur on weekday late afternoons and evenings, and on weekends when normal student activities are not occurring. Per the applicant's narrative, the performances will occur after school hours.*

The traffic, parking, and circulation is reviewed by the Town's professional staff to ensure compliance with the required safety standards and code requirements. This may require additional analysis which shall include, and is not limited to, the verification that the proposed Performance Arts Center will not negatively impact the traffic onto nearby public streets and the verification of adequate on-site parking. The size/dimension of the new/relocated parking spaces shall be evaluated (in comparison with the current spaces on campus).

8. **Signage.** *The SUP Guidelines suggest up to one identification/monument sign at each entrance not more than 8 feet tall and a sign area not more than 32 square feet at each entrance. Directional signs typically shall not exceed 12 square feet in area and 5 feet tall. The narrative identifies any and all signage associated with the Performance Arts Center will complement and mimic the existing signage on campus. The Town has allowed on certain signature buildings (e.g., aquatic center and gymnasium) signage that is generally not more than 25 square feet in area and mounted not more than 11 feet from grade. The applicant needs to provide information on any proposed signage (includes sign location(s), elevation views, dimensions, lighting details, etc.).*

The applicant must provide a sign package for review. The Planning Commission review shall focus on the impact of sign location, size, and illumination on the streetscape and compliance with SUP Guidelines.

The Town Council recognizes that too many and/or overly detailed plans and documents may create a substantial financial burden on the applicant. Therefore, the Planning Commission shall consider requesting and/or requiring only the necessary plans and documents needed to evaluate and complete the Intermediate SUP Amendment.

As per Section 1102.3.C.3.c of the Zoning Ordinance, at any time during the review process, the Planning Commission may request clarification and/or expansion of this Statement of Direction based on additional information. The Planning Commission shall complete their review and make a recommendation to the Town Council on or before March 5, 2024. The expectation is the applicant will provide all necessary information for the Planning Commission to complete their review and render a recommendation prior to March 5<sup>th</sup>.