

Alverno High School Master Plan Amendment

August, 2007

Revised February, 2008

Revised December, 2010

This application by Alverno High School (the school) is a request to amend the original Conditional Use Permit (CUP), approved by the City Council in 1959, which was granted to the high school and related uses (Resolution No. 1642, June 9, 1959 and amended by Resolution No. 2000, February 11, 1964), to guide the addition of new facilities and renovations to the campus. This application does not include the adaptive reuse of the Villa, which is to be addressed under a separate conditional use permit under the City of Sierra Madre Zoning Ordinance. The school has committed to file this application within one year of the approval of the Master Plan. The Sierra Madre City Council approved a Temporary Use Permit (TUP 09-17) for the operation of the Villa for non-school events on May 11, 2010 (Resolution 10-33). The TUP contains 48 interim operational measures regulating, noise, traffic, use, time and requiring monitoring and quarterly neighbor meetings. All of these conditions are intended to address operational issues stemming from the use of the Villa for non-school events and will be reevaluated with the separate adaptive reuse permit.

Alverno High School is a private catholic girl's high school, located on the western border of Sierra Madre. The school is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary community and lay members. The school's present enrollment is 225 students, well under the City approved enrollment of 500 students. The school has 40 faculty and staff members. The existing school consists of classrooms, offices, chapel, library, outdoor tennis, volleyball and basketball courts, softball field, parking lots, drive lanes, caretaker's home and the historic Barlow estate, known as the Villa de Sol D'Oro (the Villa).

The campus has remained relatively unchanged since the original approvals and construction over 50 years ago. Changes in educational programming, and the desire to continue to attract the highest caliber of students, has led to the need to amend the existing master plan. Since the school is non-profit, projects must be phased in as financing is obtained. Approval of this Master Plan would permit the school to move to the next phase, raising funds and developing the detailed planning for the Master Plan approved projects. The estimated costs of the Master Plan are \$8.3 million (2005 dollars). As a phased Master Plan, the school recognizes that it must return to the City for further reviews and permits as projects come on line.

Need for the Amendment/Master Plan Projects

In order to compete with other successful schools in the San Gabriel Valley, Alverno needs to renovate and add new facilities. The need to improve the school is seen in the profound changes occurring in college preparatory education nationwide, statewide and locally. Alverno's enrollment was fairly steady until the early 1990's, when La Salle High School made the decision to change from an all boy's school to co-education. Alverno's enrollment plummeted to 200 students and the Board of Trustees considered closing the school or going to co-education as well. These changes forced the Board to focus on the main mission of the school, finding the value of providing quality education to young women. The following Master Plan has been carefully considered, based on years of input from parents, students, faculty, City staff, community groups and the neighborhood.

If the Master Plan is approved, Alverno would:

- Construct a 12,860 square feet Multi-Purpose Educational Building - a combination gymnasium, auditorium and performing arts building;
- Replace the existing softball field with a joint regulation Soccer/Softball Field;
- Create an amphitheater/outdoor classroom of 2,900 square feet;
- Relocate the tennis courts from their current location across from the Villa to a site by the soccer/softball field;
- Reconfigure the parking areas by reducing the size of the Wilson Street parking area and enlarging the parking area off Michillinda Avenue. Additional parking above the code required number of parking spaces (112) will be provided. In addition, at the southwest portion of the campus 52 valet tandem spaces will be available for special events;
- Add amenities, such as the central court yard, flag court, upgrade the perimeter fencing and landscaping and improve the overall image of the campus.
- Enhance the cultural, educational, recreational and social environment of the Sierra Madre community.
- Decrease the enrollment from the current approved 500 students, to 400 students.

The school is committed to preserving the Villa, an architectural treasure and community asset. The project will require the removal of two protected trees – both for the enlargement of the Soccer/Softball Field. Removal of these protected trees can only be granted with the approval of the City of Sierra Madre's Tree Commission by a Tree Removal Permit. The Tree Commission approved the Tree Removal Permit on October 2007, as part of their review of this Master Plan, with a series of required mitigation measures. The school has 479 trees and has worked hard to maintain the aesthetic of the campus. The Master Plan has been carefully designed to minimize the loss of trees, both

protected and not protected, in the school's commitment to preserve the environment of the campus and the surrounding community. The Master Plan has also been designed to reduce the impacts from the school to the surrounding neighborhood. The enrollment would be limited to 400 students. These Master Plan improvements are necessary for student enrichment and to keep up with the changing times.

Alverno High School has always considered itself a valuable member of the Sierra Madre Community; as such an agreement exists between the City and the School for the use of the school's existing facilities. The school has provided facilities free of charge to the City and City organizations, such as the Friends of the Library, the Volunteer Fire Department and various service clubs. The school has also participated in and sponsored community events. The Master Plan will allow for the use of the Multi-Purpose Building by the City and community organizations, increasing the recreational and social opportunities in Sierra Madre. The City will also have access to the Soccer/Softball Field, however AYSO and adult play will not be permitted. The fields will not include lighting and will not be used for nighttime play or activities.

Alverno's Master Planning Process

This Master Plan was preceded by several years of careful planning by the school, involving outreach to the surrounding community and involvement of the City staff, including the use of a facilitator recommended by the City. The school's first Strategic Plan covered the period from 1997-2002. It adopted a series of goals for the educational program, student body, faculty, and the physical plant and for improving community outreach. The plan identified the need to construct a multi-purpose facility for the spiritual, academic, artistic and athletic activities at the school.

The 2003-2008 Strategic Plan expanded on these goals, including calling for the enlargement of the softball field to a full regulation soccer field/softball field, renovation of the school's chapel, native garden rehabilitation, installation of a student garden, art exhibition space and a courtyard/amphitheatre. The plan called for improved infrastructure and hardscape that would reflect the modern campus, without betraying its historic flavor, including signage, parking and low level parking lot lighting. The 2009-2014 Strategic Plan adopted the same facility goals as the 2003-2008 plan.

The school retained the Pasadena architectural firm of Gonzales/Goodale to prepare a Phase I Facilities Assessment, which was completed in August of 2000. This Phase I plan outlined a series of renovations and minor campus improvements to meet safety, routine maintenance and aesthetic concerns, such as the renovation of the library, conversion of a classroom to a computer lab and conversion of the former locker room to a second science classroom. The school has continued to upgrade its facilities over the last several years.

Gonzales/Goodale completed the Phase II Master Plan in January of 2001. This plan included an analysis of the existing facilities and reviewed several study options for the location of the Multi-Purpose Building and the Soccer/Softball Field. The school outreached to the community several times during the ten year planning process, including holding workshops on the proposed Master Plan. A more detailed description of the school's community outreach efforts is contained in a separate document submitted with this application, including the recommendations of the facilitation efforts in 2006-07. (Please see the separate "Public Outreach Efforts" binder.)



The School

Alverno High School is an innovative and challenging college-prep Catholic high school for girls set in the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains. Alverno's unique student government program gives girls powerful leadership roles in the school. The school offers rigorous college-prep academics with Advanced Placement and honors courses in all subject areas.

With roots firmly set in both the Immaculate Heart and Franciscan communities, service is an important part of the Alverno philosophy. During the 2008-2009 school year, Alverno girls dedicated 18,000 hours to helping others. Sierra Madre sponsored a community service day and Alverno students volunteered at three sites: Cleaning up the Library landscape, cleaning up the Dog Park, and painting the trellises in the park. Alverno has participated in the organization and actual walk of the Sierra Madre Relay for Life for the last three years. They also donated over 200 inches of hair and 48 pony-tails to "Locks of Love" to make wigs for children with medical hair loss. Alverno students have also volunteered or given special programs at Sierra Madre Elementary School.

As well as fine academic and service programs, Alverno offer quality arts and sports. In sports, the Jaguars were 2004 CIF Southern Section Division VI Softball Champions and CIF Southern Section Division VII Champions in 2009, as well as Horizon League champions in cross country, basketball, volleyball and soccer. Alverno produces two plays per year, has a band, two choirs and dance performances. Art classes regularly exhibit works across campus and Alverno artists visit local elementary schools with art workshops.

Location

Alverno High School is located on a large, 12.10 acre site on the western boundary of the City of Sierra Madre. The school is bounded on the west by Michillinda Avenue, the north by Grandview Avenue, on the east by Wilson Street, and on the south by West Highland Avenue. The City of Pasadena is

immediately west of the school. Sierra Madre Boulevard is located one-quarter mile south of the site. The school is surrounded by low-density residential uses.

General Plan and Zoning

The General Plan and Zoning designations for the site are both Institutional; a designation that permits private schools with a Conditional Use Permit.

Present Development

The existing school consists of three large classroom buildings, a library, administration offices, cafeteria, faculty offices, chapel, and caretaker's facility, art studio, garages, storage and the historic Villa. Structures on the property cover 55,846 square feet, less than 11% of the site. There are 479 trees on the site, 26 of which are protected.

Land Use

At this time, Alverno has no facility that can hold the entire student body and faculty under one roof. The volleyball and basketball teams currently practice at Foothills Community Church. This gym which also serves as home court is not regulation size. When a competing team refuses to play on a non-regulation court, other facilities must be found on short notice. Without a theater, students must be transported to rented theater space off-campus for rehearsals and performances.

There is currently no place on campus for students to be comfortably gathered in one area. In good weather, some events can be held on the school terrace with students sitting on the ground. It is even more challenging to find an on-campus meeting location that can accommodate all parents, students and faculty. Therefore the Master Plan proposes construction of a 12,860 square foot Multi-Purpose Building.

The Multi-Purpose Building would be a combination gymnasium, auditorium and performing arts facility; the proposed building would be 12,860 square feet, bringing lot coverage to 69,138 square feet, just over 13% of the existing site. Approximately 8,600 square feet of the building is listed for occupancy purposes, such as the locker room, rehearsal room and basketball court, resulting in a maximum fire code occupancy of 574 persons. The Multi-Purpose Building would be used for campus events, such as worship services, athletic events, school plays and productions. There were some questions from the community whether the Multi-Purpose Building was intended for non-school events such as weddings and receptions. Alverno does not intend the Multi-Purpose Building to be used for non-school events, with the exception of events proposed by the City.

In order to minimize the loss of trees, the building is proposed to be located on the existing tennis courts, across from the Villa and 35 feet from the west property line on Michillinda Avenue. No protected trees are removed for the construction of the building. Concept floor plans, architectural renderings and massing studies for the new building have been developed. The architects have suggested a building compatible with the existing school buildings. The maximum height would be 35 feet, far lower than the 45 foot height of the main Villa roof and the 60 foot height of the tower. The architecture would be simple, and would not compete with the Villa in any way. The City will require a complete design review, with detailed floor plans, elevations, materials board and other plans at the design review stage. Approval of the Master Plan would permit the school to begin the fund raising efforts for the detailed planning and construction of the building.

The proposed Soccer/Softball Field is a response to the growing popularity with girls of both the team sports. The expanded field is considered necessary for the girl's physical education and fitness, as well as to compete with other private schools. Alverno currently plays soccer at Hahamongna Watershed Park in La Canada-Flintridge, a 20-30 minute drive from campus.

The Soccer/Softball Field would be located at the southeast corner of Highland Avenue and Wilson Street, running parallel to Wilson. A 430 square foot restroom will be built next to the field and adjacent to the Villa. This site was chosen because it has historically served as the school's Softball Field (non-regulation as well), had sufficient size, there are no existing buildings and the fewest number of trees would be impacted. Construction of the field in this location would result in the reduction in the size of the existing Wilson Street parking lot. The community was very concerned about the use of the field for adult play and AYSO and that no field lights be provided. The field will not be lighted; therefore there will be no night games. Also, the school will not rent the field to outside groups, like AYSO, or for adult soccer. The field will be available for City requested team sports. A copy of the agreement between the school and the City making the field & the school's other facilities available to the City can be found in the Public Outreach Efforts binder.

The school is proposing a small, amphitheater/outdoor classroom. It would provide a gathering place for outdoor instruction. It too is considered necessary to compete with other schools. It would be created when the site is graded for the athletic field, and will be located nearby to the Soccer/Softball Field, west of the Wilson Street parking lot.

This Master Plan addresses the use of the Villa for the school's educational purposes. The Villa has been used for school activities and events since the early 1970's. The Villa has served as a venue for classes, the school's chapel, for school performances and other school activities. The City of Sierra Madre and the greater Sierra Madre community uses the Villa for many events. The

original conditional use permit was silent on the use of the Villa. This plan will provide certainty in the use for the school, the neighbors and the City. This application does not include the adaptive reuse of the Villa for private fund raising events critical for the school's operations. The private events include weddings and wedding receptions. The Villa's private events will be addressed under a separate conditional use permit authorized by the Sierra Madre Zoning Ordinance. The Villa's private events currently approved and operate under a Temporary Use Permit, which was approved by the Sierra Madre City Council in May of 2010. The school has committed to file the adaptive use permit for the Villa within one year of the approval of the Master Plan. This period of time allows for additional neighborhood meetings and the development of various operational plans.

Environmental Review

The City retained the Planning Center to prepare an initial study of the project's environmental and regulatory setting, review the environmental impacts and suggest mitigation measures for the proposed Master Plan. The Planning Center identified potential impacts in biological resources, cultural resources, hazards from wild land fires and construction vibration impacts to the Villa. The study recommends mitigation measures to be incorporated into the Master Plan approval and subsequent development approvals and permits issued by the City of Sierra Madre for the project phases. The school has included a series of additional mitigations and operational conditions in the Master Plan to address the concerns of the neighbors and the City staff.

The Planning Center conducted an extensive noise analysis examining construction noise, construction vibration and operational noise impacts from the Master Plan. The Master Plan includes a series of mitigation measures to protect Villa, including the preservation of the Villa's entry gates, addition of mature trees between the Villa and the proposed Multi-Purpose Building, reconstruction of a historic bench/wall east of the Villa and screening of the proposed tennis court from the Villa. The study identified potential impacts from the removal of trees and the protection of habitat for a non-threatened bat species. These impacts were considered less than significant with the tree replacement requirements as conditioned by the City's Tree Commission.

The Planning Center also reviewed the traffic and parking impacts from the Master Plan. The study concluded that the project would not result in traffic that would exceed any service thresholds in the neighborhood and that no mitigation measures are required beyond those included in the Master Plan and in City codes. The project does not conflict with any congestion management program or level of service requirements established by Metro. The study found that the proposed driveways and expanded parking lot would be designed in accordance with appropriate standards. The study found that the proposed 112 parking spaces would meet the demands of the school activities and the proposed

additional 52 spaces for events at the Multi-Purpose Building and the Villa would meet the parking demands generated by school activities. The Master Plan includes a provision that the Villa and Multi-Purpose Building not be used simultaneously for separate major events. The study included an extensive review of air quality and green-house gas emissions (GHG) as required AB-32. No air quality or GHG impacts were identified.

Grading Plan and Storm Water Protection

The school retained civil engineers, RKA & Associates, to prepare concept grading plans for the Multi-Purpose Building, the Soccer/Softball Field, parking areas and associated Master Plan developments. The engineers also prepared an assessment of the utility needs for the school.

The site would be graded for the new building, soccer/softball field, outdoor amphitheater and parking lots. The engineers have designed a balanced grading plan in order to limit the amount of soil export/import. The Soccer/Softball Field will require a cut of 10,610 cubic yards, with a fill of 11,990. This results in the need to import 1,380 cubic yards of soil. A small amount of fill would be used to construct the amphitheater, immediately north of the athletic field. The engineer's have estimated that the Multi-Purpose Building will require a cut of 700 CY (cubic yards), with a fill of 1,330 CY.

The City of Sierra Madre is located in the Los Angeles River watershed and subject to several new surface water quality requirements, including National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, the Standard Urban Storm Water Management Plan (SUSMP) and the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. These programs are designed to improve the quality of urban runoff reaching the Los Angeles River and its tributaries relying on best management practices.

The school has sufficient open spaces in order to design infiltration trenches to control the onsite storm water and dry-weather runoff from the new parking areas and the impervious surfaces of the Multi-Purpose Building, including the roof and courtyard areas. Pervious paving or turf block will be installed on the south-west area of the campus, along the Villa's western access drive, further reducing urban runoff. The eastern portion of the campus, including the Wilson Avenue parking area, will have drains directed to the Soccer/Softball field, which will provide for infiltration of urban runoff in the turf area.

Access to Utilities and Streets

The school is served by fully developed streets, which were installed when the school was originally developed. No additional right-of-way dedications are required. Sidewalks exist on Michillinda Avenue, Highland Avenue and Wilson

Street. The Master Plan would improve the Grandview frontage, with the installation of landscaping and a decomposed granite walkway. The school is fully served by the City of Sierra Madre Water Department, the Los Angeles County Sanitation District sewer system, Southern California Edison, Southern California Gas Company and telecommunications facilities.

Traffic/Parking and Circulation

Included with this Master Plan proposal is a traffic and parking study commissioned by the school by a professional traffic engineer, W.G Zimmerman Engineers, Inc. The Planning Center also completed a separate traffic and parking study. The Zimmerman traffic counts were taken over a two-year period, from 2005 through 2006, including during peak activity times at the school. The Planning Center report is based on updated March 2010 traffic counts. The existing and proposed parking areas were also analyzed. The school is primarily served by Michillinda Avenue, a major arterial street. A major goal of the Master Plan is to reduce traffic on the residential streets.

The reports found the following:

- These two studies indicate no adverse traffic or parking impacts from the proposed increase in enrollment from 228 to 400 students. Total increases in traffic are less than 4.3% on Michillinda Avenue.
- The traffic analysis concluded that the proposed enrollment increase does not result in warrants for either a stop sign or traffic signal on Michillinda Avenue. Additionally, there are no impacts on the signalized intersection of Michillinda Avenue and Sierra Madre Boulevard.
- The studies conclude that traffic will decrease on Wilson Street and Highland Avenue. This is due to the reduction in parking stalls in the current student lot on Wilson Avenue. A significant portion of this existing parking lot would be converted to the proposed Soccer/Softball Field. There are no adverse impacts on Grandview Avenue from the proposed plan.
- The school's proposed parking plan exceeds the City of Sierra Madre's parking code requirements of 110 stalls, providing 112 parking stalls. The Code requires one stall for every 4 students and one stall for every two faculty and staff. This results in 80 stalls for the students and 30 stalls for the estimated future staff of 60 persons.
- The code also requires parking stalls for the Multi-Purpose Building based on 5,640 square feet of assembly space, meaning 51 more spaces are required. Those spaces are provided on the drive lanes surrounding the Villa; 52 tandem valet parking spaces are provided and will be used for additional on campus parking for special events. Access will be provided from Michillinda Avenue and Highland Avenue.
- The proposed circulation plan on the Michillinda parking area was significantly revised to provide for two lanes of "student drop-off and pick-

up.” This double lane provides stacking for a minimum of 24 cars. Student drop-off and pick-up areas were enlarged as well.

Discussions with the City staff and the community have resulted in positive changes to the parking and circulation plan for the campus. The community expressed concerns about the queuing of vehicles in the early morning and afternoon, as parent’s drop-off and pick-up their children, so the double drop-off and pick-up lanes were designed. The community also expressed concerns about the traffic on Wilson Avenue and concerns over headlights shining into residents’ homes. The Wilson lot will be reduced from 60 to 38 stalls due to the construction of the Soccer/Softball Field and the school is proposing that this lot be used by the faculty, along with the existing faculty spaces adjacent to the Faculty Building, reducing traffic further on these neighborhood streets.

The Michillinda parking lot would be used for campus visitors and for student parking. It will be enlarged and will be landscaped. The code required parking is provided in these three lots. The additional 52 tandem parking spaces will be accessed from Michillinda Avenue, a major arterial, and will not access through Highland Avenue driveway. Due to parking limitations, the school will not schedule major events in the Villa and the Multi-Purpose Building at the same time. For example, if the Villa is being used for a school dance, the Multi-Purpose Building would be dark.

Tree Protection Plan/ Concept Landscape Plan

At their October 2007 meeting the Tree Commission approved the removal of two protected trees, which are located on the future Soccer/Softball Field. The Commission requires a series of mitigation measures. Alverno is committed to maintaining and enhancing the campus “arboretum.” The school retained two separate arborists, Jan Scow and Greg Applegate, to prepare the City required reviews of the impacts of the Master Plan on protected trees. The school contains a wide variety of trees; 479 trees were mapped on the site and 26 are protected.

During the Master Plan process the school was required to remove one oak tree (Tree #168), based on safety recommendations from the arborist. This tree had split and was in danger of collapse. The tree was located south of the Multi-Purpose Building and would not have been impacted by the construction.

The protected trees to be removed are in the area of the Soccer/Softball Field. The Master Plan proposes removing only two protected trees. One is a Coast Live Oak (#336) that is in decline and the other is a Western Sycamore (#347), which is crowded and stunted. Both arborists have recommended the removal of these protected trees. Both arborists recommend against any attempts to relocate Oak #336 due to the size and declining health condition. The likely chance of survival after transplant is very low.



The location of the Multi-Purpose Building has been deliberately planned to take advantage of the existing tennis courts, in order to preserve as many trees as possible. The building's footprint has been adjusted to work around the protected trees located to the north of the building. Even with all of these planning efforts, it is estimated that 12 trees will require removal to construct the building and two trees will be removed to construct the special events parking. All of these trees are considered common varieties – including Chinese Elm, Jacaranda, Citrus, Avocado, Palm and Eucalyptus. Should this Master Plan be approved, the school will return later with elevations and detailed plans for the Multi-Purpose Building, including the more exact locations of the protected trees, their drip lines, building foundations and utility trenches.

Besides the two protected trees, it is estimated that the Soccer/Softball Field will require the removal of 27 trees. These trees are also considered common, including Citrus, Ficus and Palms. A row of Deodar Cedars lines the eastside of the campus. The field location would result in the loss of six Deodar Cedars, which are proposed for replacement mitigation. The school considered an alternate location for the Soccer/Softball Field, but found that more trees would be removed, including the Italian Cyprus trees that lead up to the Villa from Highland Avenue.

Additionally, the construction of the Wilson parking area would result in the loss of six trees. Again these trees are considered common. Five of these trees are listed in “severe dieback” condition by the arborists.

The school planners found that it is extremely difficult to locate any facilities on the campus, due to the existing density of the trees. The Master Plan would result in the loss of 47 trees, but upon closer examination many of these trees are in poor health or very common varieties. The school will comply with the mitigations and will replace the protected trees it removes and is proposing to replace the common trees as well. Included with this proposal are the minutes of the Tree Commission meeting, two tree studies by the licensed arborists, as well as a catalog of all existing trees and their conditions, and a study of the protected trees, together with suggested methods (mitigations) to conserve the trees both during and after construction. The school retained Jon Cichetti and Associates, landscape architects, to prepare a concept landscape plan that would add trees, shrubs and ground cover throughout the campus, including in the common areas, along walkways, in the parking areas and the campus perimeter. The concept landscaping plan also includes a view fence on Michillinda Avenue, designed to harmonize with the Villa's historic entry gates.

Historic Resources

The Villa has been identified as the primary historic resource on the site. In acknowledgement of that, the City of Sierra Madre has designated it a Historic Residence. The school retained the historic resources consultant, Sapphos Environmental, Inc, to review the impacts of the proposed Master Plan on the Villa and to suggest mitigation measures. The Villa is a major asset to Alverno and the Sierra Madre Community. The Villa is used for school events, such as receptions and fund raisers and for non-school events, such as wedding receptions and for commercial filming. The Villa is also used by the Sierra Madre community for events, such as fundraisers and City meetings. Preservation of the Villa is a major priority of the school and the Master Plan was designed with the goal to protect and enhance the Villa. As discussed in several sections of this Master Plan document, this application does not include the adaptive reuse of the Villa, which is to be addressed under a separate conditional use permit authorized under the Sierra Madre Zoning Ordinance.



The Villa was built in the 1920's by Dr. and Mrs. W. Jarvis Barlow. Dr. Barlow's medical specialty was tuberculosis. The Barlow's chose noted Pasadena architect Wallace Neff to design the building, and further asked Mr. Neff to design it as a replica of an existing Tuscan villa in Florence Italy designed by the great artist Michelangelo. The façade of the Villa is a two-thirds scale replica of the original Villa Collazzi.

The Barlow's lived in the Villa for many years. In 1949, after her husband died, Mrs. Barlow sold the property to the Sisters of Saint Francis for use as a convent. In 1960 Alverno High School was built on the property. The Villa has housed a variety of school related uses over the years, including a chapel, library and meeting space. The Villa is no longer used as a convent, with the departure of the last of the Sisters of Saint Francis.

There are no changes to the Villa from the proposed Master Plan. The school has embarked on a multi-year plan to update electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, as well as to complete interior and exterior renovations. The school's architects prepared a massing and setback study, to evaluate any potential impacts from the construction of the Multi-Purpose Building, north and west of the Villa, as well as the construction of the Soccer/Softball Field. The grading for the Soccer/Softball Field will result in the partial demolition and reconstruction of an historic seat wall on the east side of the Villa. The Master Plan proposes to retain all of the historic entry gates. The historic entry gate on Michillinda would be retained as a pedestrian walkway onto the campus.

The historic resources consultant recommends the following:

- Additional mature trees shall be added between the Villa and the Multi-Purpose Building to further screen the building from the Villa's view shed.

The trees should harmonize with the existing landscape character and should be of sufficient height to screen the Multi-Purpose Building from the western façade of the Villa.

- The historic bench/wall feature shall be measured and documented according to the Historic American Building Survey standards prior to the removal of the eastern portion of the bench/wall feature to accommodate the setback requirements for the proposed Soccer/Softball Field.
- A historic resources specialist shall be present during the demolition of the eastern portion of the bench/wall feature to ensure that only this portion of the feature is removed.
- The proposed tennis court south of the Villa shall be screened.
- The construction contractor shall not operate vibration-intensive construction equipment/activities such as jackhammers, large bulldozers, scrapers, excavators, or vibratory compactors, within 25 feet of the Villa unless vibration levels from such equipment do not exceed 0.12 inches per second at the structure.

The school will comply with the recommended mitigations. The historic resources consultant is also recommending that the school complete a Phase I archaeological survey prior to construction of the Soccer/Softball Field and the Multi-Purpose Building. The school will also be required to consult with Native American Heritage Commission and Native American groups/individuals to determine if any sacred sites are within the proposed project areas. Included is the required Certificate of Appropriateness application.

Noise

The Planning Center completed an extensive review of the noise setting and potential impacts from the Master Plan, relying on the highly-detailed “SoundPlan” model. The noise model examined the potential noise generate from the use of the Multi-Purpose Building, the Soccer/Softball Field, the 2,900 square foot amphitheater/outdoor classroom, the parking lots and the on campus drive lanes. Construction noise impacts were also reviewed. Ambient noise levels were taken on the school’s perimeter from the four boundaries. The City’s Noise Ordinance limits noise levels to 80 dBA at 25 feet from the source, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. (Section 9.32.060 – Special Exemption Provisions). The City’s noise ordinance also limits noise generated in a residential area to 6 dBA above the ambient noise level (Section 9.32.030 – Residential Noise Limits). Most of the ambient noise in the area is generated from vehicles traveling on the adjacent streets. Existing -noise on the site is generated by various uses: the usual noise associated with a school, use of the fields and the Villa, and parking lots and drive lanes. .

Computer noise modeling relying on SoundPlan was conducted to calculate the noise propagation and exposure at the campus and nearby residences. Noise from the sports field, the tennis court and the amphitheatre/outdoor classroom

would generate noise levels less than 50 dBA outside of the campus property line. The study concluded that the noise from these uses would not be substantial and is compatible with the adjacent residential neighborhood.

The Planning Center reviewed potential noise from the school's proposed parking lots and the tandem parking proposed south of the Villa. The ambient noise conditions on Wilson Street range from 48 to 52 dBA, 57 to 61 dBA on Michillinda Avenue and 47 to 51 dBA on Highland Avenue. The noise generated from the use of the parking lots would be well under the 80 dBA noise limit at a distance of 25 feet under the noisiest conditions. The on campus noise projected for the Wilson and Michillinda lots are both 45 dBA and the Villa parking area would be 50 dBA. The study predicted a 1 dBA increase in noise levels and in no cases would the noise level exceed 45 dBA at the adjacent residences. Noise associated with the evening use of parking lots would also not result in a 6 dBA increase in noise levels.

The school has four major events that generate outdoor noise – three school dances and an annual fund raising event for parents and alumni. School events are typically held on Fridays or Saturdays and end at 11:00 p.m. The Planning Center measured noise generated from a school dance at seven monitoring stations. Multiple measurements were taken from these monitoring stations in order to determine pre-dance conditions (7:45 p.m.), dance conditions (8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and post-dance conditions (11:45 p.m.). The report concluded that there were no violations of the City's noise ordinance. Dance noise levels ranged from a low of 52 dBA at the east parking lot on Wilson Street to 65 dBA at Site 7 on Michillinda Avenue. There were no ordinance violations in the pre-dance and post-dance conditions.

The study reviewed the potential noise generated by the Multi-Purpose Building, which is setback 35 feet from Michillinda Avenue. The main doors open internal to the campus and the building facade would include windows that could not be opened, which helps to mitigate noise impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhood. The model relied upon a noise level of 60 dBA generated from the dances in the Multi-Purpose Building, using data from on the actual noise levels from dances at the Villa. The 60 dBA generated from the dances would be far less than the 6 dBA allowance from the ambient noise level at the nearest residences, as permitted under Section 9.32.030 A – Residential Noise Limits, since the Michillinda Avenue ambient noise levels range from 57 dBA to 61 dBA from 5:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

As mentioned further in the Master Plan (see Community Outreach and Facilitation Group discussion), the school conducted an extensive outreach effort to the neighbors as part of the development of the Master Plan, including retaining a professional facilitator (Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman – MIG, Inc.) to work with the school and a key group of neighbors in 2006-2007 in order to address noise and other operational issues. A series of additional meetings were

held by the school and the neighbors during the development of the Temporary Use Permit in 2009-2010. Noise concerns raised by the neighbors at the various neighborhood meetings focus on the noise generated by school events, such as dances and athletic practices, as well as private events held at the Villa. This Master Plan does not specifically address the noise issues associated with the private events held at the Villa, since these are being addressed by the conditions in the Temporary Use Permit and will be further studied as part of the separate Conditional Use Permit for the adaptive reuse of the Villa. In general, neighbors have expressed concern about the noise from music, especially base levels. They have also raised the issue of noise from early morning softball practice and the school's public address and bell system. Other noise issues raised include noises from vehicles, including doors closing, car alarms and traffic noise, especially after 10 p.m.

Two neighbors filed litigation against the school in 1998 regarding filming activities and use of the Villa. The litigation resulted in a confidential settlement agreement in 1999. The school learned in 2006 that a redacted version of the confidential settlement agreement was release to the neighborhood and the City. The school has attempted to contact the original litigants and their attorney to obtain a release of the agreement, so that the entire settlement agreement can be made public. The litigants and their attorney have refused to grant this release. It is important to note that the Master Plan incorporates and improves upon the agreed to mitigations found in the settlement agreement.

The school has implemented proactive mitigations in dealing with noise issues raised by the neighbors and the City as complaints arise. The school began keeping a log of neighborhood communications in 2005 and has responded to all. The school began the practice of providing an annual calendar of the school events to the neighbors every September. This has now been modified by the TUP to provide quarterly updates, which are mailed and provided on-line. The school also required that the private security guard(s) carry a decibel meter to monitor the noise levels from the school and private events on campus. The meter is used to lower sound levels, when appropriate. The school has worked closely with the Sierra Madre Police Department and the neighbors to resolve neighborhood complaints.

Community Outreach and Facilitation Group

The Alverno Board of Trustees established the goal of seeking neighbor comments on the Master Plan and school operations early in the Master Planning Process to assist the school in identifying and resolving issues. This application is accompanied with a detailed report on the school's outreach efforts. The report summarizes the agendas, minutes and results of the various outreach meetings. (Please see the "Public Outreach Efforts" binder.)

The Board of Trustees opted for a collaborative approach with the City and the neighbors, since in the past the school has been seen as not the best of neighbors. This is evidenced by the filing of two lawsuits against the School in 1995 for filming related activities (Janet Owens v. Mt. Alverno High School and Chui Chow v. Mt Alverno High School). Both of these lawsuits resulted in settlement agreements, where the school agreed to a series of operational changes to the filming at the Villa. The settlement agreement is confidential and the school has unsuccessfully sought for a public disclosure from the plaintiffs of its terms, in order to illustrate the good faith which Alverno operates the Villa's activities. The City also adopted strict filming regulations since 1995. These regulations require that adjacent neighbors approve of the filming. We believe that the proposed operational conditions of the amended Master Plan will improve upon the terms settlement agreement and makes the compliant resolution process transparent for all.

The school has held three Master Plan neighborhood workshops to seek neighborhood concerns and suggestions. All neighbors within 300 feet of the campus were invited to participate. The workshops were followed by four meetings with a select group of neighbors with a professional facilitator, MIG, Inc., as recommended by the City staff. The neighborhood facilitation group met in 2006-07 to further define the issues raised at the general workshops and to identify solutions. The final report from the facilitator is included with this application. The Temporary Use Permit meetings with the neighbors in 2009-2010 identified and refined the noise issues and suggested mitigation measures. The school has carefully considered the comments and adjusted the Master Plan where practicable.

Alverno has been and remains committed to resolving the school's operational issues as they are raised by the neighbors or the City. The school has a history of being proactive to resolve issues. For example, neighbors raised the issue of the school's public address system and classroom bells. The school decided to change to a "tone" system, installing classroom phones and strictly limiting the use of the public address system for emergencies only. We have not received complaints since this new system was installed.

The Master Plan workshops resulted in complaints about cars queuing on Michillinda in the morning, as parents dropped off students. The school instituted a "drop-off" program supervised by school staff. Another recent example is a neighbor complaint regarding softball practice starting too early on Saturdays. The school has now limited starting times on Saturdays to 9:00 a.m. The school is also improving its maintenance efforts, such as the beautification of the entry, based on input from the neighbors. The school has limited student dances to three per year and has one major parent fund raising event in order to be sensitive to the neighbor's concerns. The school employs private security and uses school personnel for these events at the request of the neighbors.

The Master Plan re-configures the parking lots to reduce trips on local residential streets and the school sends out a schedule of events to all concerned neighbors quarterly and will continue to do so. The school is committed to being a good neighbor.

Phasing

The school does not have sufficient funds in hand to complete the Master Plan and will begin a development campaign once the plan is approved. Ideally the school would be able to raise sufficient funds to complete the entire Master Plan over a period of ten years. A major phasing consideration will be to maintain the code required parking during the construction process.

If the Soccer/Softball Field is constructed first, this would necessitate the construction of the main parking lot on Michillinda Avenue first, since the Wilson Street parking lot would be reduced in size. The new Wilson Street lot would be constructed immediately after the construction of the Soccer/Softball Field. If the Multi-Purpose Building is constructed first, the school would then construct the Michillinda Avenue parking lot with this building. The school may be required to construct temporary parking areas during the construction phase, as directed by the City. The likely location of this temporary parking area would be lawns west and south of the Villa.

The school is planning to improve the Michillinda Avenue frontage as Phase I. This project includes the installation of the view fence and landscaping. It will be the school's major fund raising effort in 2011-2012. The school would phase the remaining perimeter improvements of fencing and landscaping with the adjacent campus improvements. The Grandview Avenue landscape improvements would be constructed with the Michillinda Avenue parking lot. Improvements to the Wilson Street perimeter would be constructed in conjunction with the Soccer/Softball Field.

Burden of Proof

Section 17.60.040 of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code requires that an applicant for a conditional use permit show, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Planning Commission that six findings have been conclusive made. They are

- A. That the site for the proposed use is adequate in size, shape, and topography.

Alverno High School is situated on a 12.10 acre campus, one of the largest school sites in the City of Sierra Madre. The school has one of the smallest proposed enrollments (400 students) in the community and its buildings cover

less than 11% of the site. The approved Master Plan would increase this coverage to 13%, continuing to provide generous amounts of open spaces. The school gently slopes 30 feet from Highland to Grandview, in a distance of 670 feet, which has reduced to insignificant the impacts from grading. This slope mirrors the surrounding grades of adjacent homes.

- B. That the site has sufficient access to streets which are adequate, in width and pavement type, to carry the quality of traffic generated by the proposed use.

The school is served by a major arterial street, Michillinda Avenue. At full enrollment of 400 students, the increases in traffic will be 4.3%, on Michillinda Avenue, which is considered minimal. The Master Plan will decrease traffic on Highland Avenue, Wilson Street and Grandview Avenue. The Master Plan meets and exceeds the City's parking codes. Additional traffic and parking mitigation measures have been imposed, including double "drop-off" lanes in the student parking lot.

- C. That the proposed use will not unreasonably interfere with the use, possession and enjoyment of surrounding and adjacent properties.

The Master Plan has been carefully designed to eliminate or reduce to insignificant any impacts. The plan continues and enhances the 50 year use of the 12 acre site for a girl's high school. A series of conditions will be imposed to protect the surrounding and adjacent properties, including reasonable limits on enrollment, use of the school facilities, including the Villa, the Multi-Purpose Building and the Soccer/Softball Field.

- D. That there is a demonstrated need for the use requested.

Alverno has demonstrated through the Strategic Planning and Master Plan processes, the need for the amendment. The new facilities will permit the school to meet the changing educational needs for young women and allow the school to continue to attract the highest caliber students. The Master Plan will also provide direct benefits to the City of Sierra Madre, its residents and businesses, by providing much needed facilities and services. These new facilities would be subject to the existing facilities use agreement between the City and the School.

- E. That the use, if permitted, will, as to location and operation, be consistent with the objectives of the general plan; and

Objective L36 of the general plan is *"to provide for the development of private institutional uses in areas where institutional uses currently exist and ensure that they are compatible with and complement adjacent land uses."* The school has occupied the site for over 50 years and makes a great effort, as illustrated in this Master Plan, to be compatible with and to complement adjacent land uses. It is

common for schools to be in residential areas and the size of the site is more than adequate for the intensity of the use of the school and by the greater Sierra Madre community. The school has also complied with general plan objectives by providing the City and its residents with facilities for governmental, entertainment, athletic and cultural events. The need for these community facilities cannot be met alone by the City of Sierra Madre.

- F. That the public interest, convenience, necessity require that the use be permitted at the location requested.

The two major changes to the campus are the expansion of the existing Softball Field to a Soccer/Softball Field and the construction of a Multi-Purpose Building. Master planners reviewed alternative locations for the field and found that the impacts were greater in these alternative locations. The planners reviewed plans turning the field to an east-west orientation, which resulted in the destruction of the Villa's mirror pool and cypress trees. The planners reviewed the location of the field in the north-west portion of the campus; however, this would result in the relocation of the existing parking area off of Michillinda Avenue, resulting in increased traffic impacts on surrounding local residential streets. They concluded from these studies that the public interest, convenience and necessity are better served with the expansion of the Soccer/Softball Field in the proposed location. The Multi-Purpose Facility would be located on the site of the present tennis courts, an area previously disturbed for development. Other site alternatives were considered inferior, would result in additional tree loss, increase traffic on local residential streets and other create other impacts.