Siskiyou County Supervisors Meeting, 05/07/2024
RE: Appeal of Golden Eagle Charter School, Use Permit UP-23-08/ Addendum to Certified Mitigated Negative Declaration

Board of Supervisors,

May 2nd, 2024

CEQA requires that traffic engineering be conducted to analyze this school project's potentially significant traffic safety risks. Such risks include introducing additional vehicles bringing students to and from this school on a 35 mph road that has no sidewalks, no bike lanes, no street lights or painted safety signage.

Project's Failure to Comply With Senate Bill 743 and CEQA Guidelines §15064.3(b) to Reduce Transportation Emissions

California requires the County to determine the significance of this school Project's transportation impacts. (See: CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3). For a school that is not within one-half mile of an existing major transit stop or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor, the school (including Golden Eagle's school) can be presumed to cause a significant transportation impact unless transportation mitigations are adopted to reduce the greenhouse gases emitted from vehicle use while driving students to school.

Traffic engineering is accordingly required to analyze how many additional *vehicle miles traveled* ("VMT") will result from accessing this school by car. There are no nearby transit stops, bus stops or bus routes, or other alternative transportation options for these students. California has required since 2020 that the County examine ways to reduce the increased greenhouse gas emissions that will result from such increased VMT. Golden Eagle's earlier 2020 traffic impact study for its previously proposed Pine Street school location within the City of Mt. Shasta included such a VMT screening analysis by a licensed traffic engineer. But Golden Eagle presented nothing equivalent to meet CEQA Guidelines §15064.3 for its W.A. Barr Road school site, and did not employ a traffic engineer to research these safety issues. As described below in greater detail, the Addendum to the MND fails to comply with that VMT analysis requirement.

Project's Addendum to the MND Ignores Local Transportation Plans When Concluding There Would be no Conflict with Such Plans.

The Addendum, on page 36, inadequately analyzes if the school Project would "*Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities*?" It erroneously concludes there would be no such conflict. But the Addendum never mentions or evaluates the suggestions or potential conflicts with the following two very relevant local plans that include analysis for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan

The County failed to evaluate this Golden Eagle school Project with regards to known safety issues that directly apply along W.A. Barr Road. The "2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan," page 46, addresses the high-level collision safety problems with bicycles and pedestrians along W.A. Barr Road in this school's vicinity, but the County never acknowledged in any Project related documents or complied with this Plan's suggestions.[1] The Addendum purports to answer the question if the Project would: "*Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?*" The Addendum concludes, but without even acknowledging the existence of the 2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan: "*No. The project would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy regarding the circulation system.*" That conclusion is meritless and incorrect.

This Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan was undertaken from 2021 through 2022 and finalized in 2023, with considerable input from the public, the City of Mt. Shasta, and professional planners and designers. It is the most comprehensive plan to date for non-vehicular mobility on this portion of W.A. Barr Rd. Particular attention should be paid to page 31 where this section of W.A. Barr Road received a "high density of comments"; to page 37, where this section of road is considered "highest priority"; to pages 69 to 80, where this section of road is "recommended for Class 2 bikeway"; to page 85, where this section of road is recommended for a trail study area for pedestrians"; and to pages 127 to 129, where this section of road is recommended for "long term high priority bike lane." The Project's latest Staff Report that includes a review letter by Headway Transportation, does not reference the City of Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan. It also does not include any comprehensive data, such as vehicle counts, line of sight, user demand, crossing locations, etc. The Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan is much more comprehensive. The applicant acknowledges increased vehicular traffic from the new building occupants, and this increased traffic is exactly the impact to existing cyclists and pedestrians that needs to be evaluated. These are significant new impacts, not "minor technical changes," that require more current analysis. The Addendum to the MND's rationalization for not considering this transportation impact is a major omission and a violation of CEQA.

Siskiyou County 2021 Regional Transportation Plan

The Project's Addendum also never mentioned the 2021 Regional Transportation Plan[2] from the Siskiyou County Local Transportation Commission, dated August 2021. It states:

> "*Siskiyou County offers several recreational off-road biking and hiking trails and is striving to improve roadway bicycle and pedestrian access and safety. Constraints with bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the County include a transportation network that is*

[1] 2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan, see https://www.mtshastaca.gov/media/1916

[2] See: Siskiyou County 2021 Regional Transportation Plan, available online at: https://www.co.siskiyou.ca.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/transportation_commission/page/29563/scltc_2021_rtp.pdf

not well connected or maintained, as well as long distances between destinations. The cities of Yreka has an adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2007) and Mt. Shasta is currently developing a citywide Active Transportation Plan."

On person mentioned when he commented on this Plan on 2/18/2021 that W.A. Barr Road needs improvement for bicyclists to avoid dangerous encounters:

> "Most drivers are very courteous when I ride my road bike on rural roads; however, when I ride near areas with more tourists, I have more frightening encounters. Providing a shoulder on the length of Old Stage Road and **WA Barr Road** would help."

The County's failure to evaluate the dangers of this school Project with both of these applicable local transportation plans violates CEQA and undermines its conclusion of no conflict and no significant transportation-related impact.

Failure to Conduct Expert Traffic Engineering to Solve School's Road Safety Risks

No adequate evaluation by a licensed traffic engineer has yet been presented or discussed in the Addendum to the MND or circulated for public review. The Planning Commission instead accepted a clearly inadequate report from a consultant who is not a traffic engineer. Traffic engineers have the needed training for such transportation analysis that civil engineers may not. Then with no traffic engineering whatsoever, and left to its own devices, the Commission fabricated its own vague 25 mph speed limit reduction and speed limit signage solution, and even then left the final resolution of such conditions open to some future Public Works department decision. In order to evade CEQA, the Planning Commission called this mitigation a "condition of approval," because if correctly labeled as an environmental "mitigation," the County could not legally use an Addendum to the MND, but would instead have to prepare a MND or an EIR.

As the Addendum states on page 5, a subsequent MND is required when "*Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous MND due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects*," or "*The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous MND.*" Had adequate traffic engineering been employed, the County could have seen with certainty that its required condition for a speed limit reduction on W.A. Barr Road and new signs is evidence of a major revision of the former MND, thus requiring formal CEQA review at this time with a MND or an EIR.

Evidence of Transportation Risks That Were Not Analyzed Before Approval.

The record before the Planning Commission shows clearly that such transportation risks and impacts would be potentially significant unless mitigated. The County's senior civil engineer Terry Smith suggested in an email that a School Zone be implemented as a condition of approval. He stated he had developed a "School Zone Sign Plan," but the Commission never

discussed receiving a copy of it or approving such a Plan.[3] The public and the Commission were not even informed that Mr. Smith had developed a School Zone Sign Plan, so as a result, the Commission fumbled around trying to figure out what length of W.A. Barr Road would be designated for the slower 25 mph speed limit.[4] The Commission ultimately delegated that decision "to the satisfaction of Public Works" to be worked out later.[5] Condition of Approval #15 states: "*A 25 MPH sign shall be installed to the satisfaction of the Public Works Department.*"

> However, by delegating those speed reduction and signage details to the Public Works department to be finalized in the future behind closed doors without public review, the County clearly violated CEQA. (See *Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino* (1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296, 307 (holding that: "By deferring environmental assessment to a future date, the conditions run counter to that policy of CEQA which requires environmental review at the earliest feasible stage in the planning process." The court rebuffed that county for delaying such analysis "*subject to the approval of the planning commission staff*" rather than discussing such analysis with open public participation before the planning commission.)

The public commented about these traffic safety risks, including people who had lived nearby. The Planning Commission on Jan. 17, 2024 acknowledged the risk this school would create. It finally vaguely formulated Condition #15 with a reduced speed limit to reduce such risks, leaving the ultimate design details up to Public Works. The Commission also required for mitigation purposes that the applicant alter the Project's Site Plan by replacing a single driveway with a double driveway, presumably to reduce such safety risks. But even then, no professional traffic engineering analysis about the safety of that double driveway design was presented to the Commission or to the public.

The County never evaluated the safety risk that students might encounter if they attempt to cross W.A.Barr Road at or near the school's entrance driveway.

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[3] Terry Smith, Senior Engineer, County of Siskiyou, wrote in an email about this school Project on Oct. 11, 2023: "*Public Works has not identified any impacts from UP-2308 except, if requested, a "School Zone" with a twenty-five (25) mile per hour speed limit on WA Barr Road could be established. We received a call from concerned parents about a reduced speed limit adjacent to the school.* ***I studied the area and developed a "school zone sign plan" but have been unable to contact with the school to discuss it. Their phone is never answered, I have tried every extension and have yet to receive a reply to voice messages.*** *You might reference the School Zone in the Use Permit discussions. If they want it they must request it.*"

[4] The Planning Commission discussed the County's confusion on where to place speed signs and flashing lights. But the Commissioners on their own devised a condition/mitigation about speed limits without having any professional "school zone sign plan" that Terry Smith stated that he had developed. See Transcript of 2/21/2024 Planning Commission's public hearing at timestamp 45:10, where Tom Deany, Director of Public Works, Siskiyou County, talks for several minutes about his confusion and indecision regarding such traffic speeds, signs and flashing lights.

[5] See Transcript of 2/21/2024 Planning Commission's public hearing at timestamp 48:08, where Hailey Lang asks that Condition of Approval #15 be modified to "read 25 mile an hour signs will be installed to the satisfaction of Public Works?"

Students sometimes cross streets. Not all will walk all the way to Ream Avenue to cross. Some kids will get out of a car that stops briefly while driving north to let them out,and they'll have to cross the street to get to the school. Some kids prefer to walk from Ream St toward the school on the east side of WABarr so they're always facing (and can see) oncoming northbound traffic ... and then cross once they reach the school.

BUT NO SIGNED, PAINTED, LIGHTED OR KNOWN CROSSWALK WAS PROPOSED
Such handling of a serious transportation safety issue that risks the lives of the school's children and other citizens without a traffic engineer's analysis and approval was unprofessional. Moreover, without adequate environmental review of such transportation safety risks, the Project's approval violates CEQA.

Addendum to the MND Does Not Evaluate Project's Air Pollution Impact from Increased Vehicle Miles Traveled to Reach Project Location.

The Addendum to the MND then incorrectly answers the question if the Project would: "*Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)*?" That law requires a VMT analysis to reduce greenhouse gases and reduce vehicle trips in cases like this school poses. But the Addendum to the MND states, without sufficient analysis, that there is no conflict and "*There is adequate existing public infrastructure (roadways) available to serve the local area and project ...*" That conclusion is without support in the Addendum or elsewhere. Simply pointing out that roads exist between this school and the community does not exempt this school from the required CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3(b) VMT analysis. *See also VMT discussion below.*

Addendum to the MND is not Based on a Competent Traffic Engineering Report.

In 2020, Golden Eagle previously sought to construct its new school on Pine Street in the City of Mt. Shasta. At that time it had a Traffic Impact Study dated May 29, 2018 prepared by Traffic Works (Traffic Engineering, Transportation Planning & Forensic Services). That study was prepared by a traffic engineer. However, for the current W.A. Barr Road school site, Golden Eagle did not submit any licensed traffic engineer's study of these transportation safety risks.

Instead, the first "Transportation Review Letter" from Headway Transportation's civil engineer Loren Chilson (an informal traffic study) was prepared on April 12, 2023. At that time, the Project's construction of a 28,300 s.f. new school building were not proposed by the applicant, and that school building's size and its traffic impacts were not included in this Review Letter's analysis. So with such a small addition of only 960 s.f. being reviewed, he claimed the Project was exempt from the VMT analysis requirement, and wrote on page 3: "*CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, ..*" As the result, he underestimated the VMT that the project would generate. Mr. Chilson also never analyzed a School Zone designation, the need for a speed limit reduction, or the safety risk of not having any bike lanes or sidewalks on Ream Avenue or W.A. Barr Road.

Then on December 8, 2023, Mr. Chilson submitted an Updated Transportation Review Letter that includes anew but incorrectly assumes the new school building would be 23,800 s.f. in floor area. This new school building's size was later corrected by planning staff to 28,300 s.f. --- a nearly 20% greater floor area, but Mr. Chilson never updated his transportation review letter with the correct building size. That is all that he corrected, since his updated review never evaluated that the Project would increase the floor area of all the buildings by nearly four times more than what currently exists. Nor does his Dec. 8, 2023 *updated transportation review letter* ever mention any School Zone or a need for a reduced speed limit near the school.

Moreover, his letter was based on the outdated Site Plan that had only a single, 2-way driveway, not the later modified version with two driveways which was first drawn by the Project's architect on Feb. 6, 2024, two months after Mr. Chilson's transportation letter was submitted.

His transportation letter is therefore inadequate to support the Addendum to the MND's conclusion of no significant impact since he had not reviewed any changes that might result from the large increase in floor areas, the different two-driveway design, the speed limit condition, and any uncertain signage and roadway problems that would later be resolved presumably by Public Works. Mr. Chilson appeared at the Planning Commission's Feb. 2, 2024 public hearing but said almost nothing then. He could have discussed the newly-proposed double driveways, or the speed limit changes, but did not.

Instead, with no evidence to support his opinion or any mention of the existence of the 2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan, he stated on page 3 of his transportation letter:

> *"The absence of sidewalks and marked bicycle lanes in the project area is not a significant concern related to this specific school operation since few students would walk or bike to this school even if those facilities were in place.*
>
> *"The Project would not conflict with any multimodal (bicycle or pedestrian) transportation programs or plans or impact any existing multimodal facilities. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on bicycle or pedestrian travel."*

His conclusions are simply not supported by facts and substantial evidence. For this Appeal, as a past resident who lived nearby and directly north of this school site, I can attest to the existing difficulties of pedestrian and bicycle safety on this road, especially with no shoulder, separation of users, or a marked bicycle lane. The increased vehicle traffic this school will generate will only increase the interactions between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians.

The concern should be the additional traffic created by the proposed facility and how it will impact the existing pedestrian and cycling users. As mentioned above, neither the traffic

consultant, the applicant, or the Planning Department referenced the existing Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan.[6]

Previous Traffic Impact Study for Golden Eagle Predicted an Increased VMT.

Some years ago Golden Eagle hired a traffic engineer to review its previously-proposed school location on Pine Street in the City of Mt. Shasta.[7] That 2018 Traffic Impact Study, p. 16, addressed the question of whether Golden Eagle's school would "Conflict with adopted policies regarding Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)?" It estimated that VMT would increase even at that more centralized school location not far from the center of the City:

> *"Generally speaking, the City and State of California have goals of reducing VMT and Green House Gas emissions. The project would increase travel and therefore can be expected to increase VMT to some degree. VMT is simplistically calculated by multiplying the number of daily trips by the trip lengths. Since Mount Shasta does not have a travel demand model, it is difficult to ascertain or quantify the trip lengths to/from the proposed project relative to the trips and their length made to existing schools. The trip lengths may be shorter, longer, or very similar. To be conservative, it should be assumed that an increase in VMT is probable with the project."* (Emphasis added)

County Violates CEQA Guidelines §15064.3 by Failing to Conduct an Adequate VMT Analysis for School's Transportation Impacts to Air Quality.

Golden Eagle is proposing to construct a major school building at a somewhat remote location near the western edge of the Mt. Shasta community on W.A. Barr Road. Very little development exists to the west of the Project site other than some homes in the Shasta Brown Ranch subdivision. As a consequence of this school's location not near the City's downtown, it is harder for most students to walk or bicycle to the school, and more vehicle trips will result accordingly. As Golden Eagle's student enrollment increases, it will attract students who might otherwise attend centrally-located public schools in Mt. Shasta. It is likely that the Project's total *vehicle miles traveled* (VMT) will increase due to the school's location and the expanded student count that the applicant has requested for up to 325 students.

Under such conditions after Senate Bill 743 was passed, California has since 2020 required that a VMT analysis be prepared to help reduce VMT and to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the development of multimodal (alternative) transportation networks. Bicycle use

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[6] The 2022 Mt. Shasta Mobility Plan (Walk, Bike, Ride) is available online at https://www.mtshastaca.gov/media/1916 , and will be made available to County officials if requested.

[7] That 2018 Traffic Impact Study for Golden Eagle Charter School's Pine Street school location is available online at the following link, and will be made available to County officials if requested: https://drive.google.com/file/d/10xFILrPl5bWKMOzYbWIQ-OLvB9wME3Bc/view?usp=sharing

or pedestrian access reduces air pollution. Promoting bicycle use by students and improving safe pedestrian walkways is one way the County could have partially mitigated the air pollution caused by this Project's increased vehicle miles.

But the Project's transportation consultant failed to provide an adequate VMT analysis. He was given bad data by the applicant that led to him underestimating the school's size. Project applicant's agent Nick Trover initially withheld from Mr. Chilson that they were planning on adding the 28,300 square foot building, so it was not described in Chilson's first transportation report. As a result, Mr. Chilson underestimated the need for such a Senate Bill 743 VMT/air quality analysis. When he was corrected later in 2023 and he then prepared a revised report, he removed previously incorrect information in his second traffic study about only a 960 square foot building being proposed. But he did not follow up by analyzing the increased VMT's that would result by adding a new 28,300 square foot new building that would nearly quadruple the square footage of all the school's buildings to accommodate more students.

Engineer's Report is Inadequate Where He Significantly Underestimated Student Population and VMT.

Mr. Chilson's revised transportation letter also did not take into account that the applicant requested approval **for a maximum of 325 students at the school.**[8] California estimates that a school requires between 59 to 92 square feet of floor area per student.[9] If the school's total building areas of 39,430 sq. ft.[10] were to handle just 225 students as Mr. Chilton presumed and the Staff Report used, that would mean that Golden Eagle would be providing about 175 square feet of school building for each student.[11] **That total floor area that Golden Eagle proposes to construct would be more than twice as large as California estimates is needed for just 225 students**. Not only did Golden Eagle underestimate the size of its new building, its consultants underestimated the number of students who would study here.

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[8] Golden Eagle's Ms. Shelly Blakely, in her August 8, 2023 Environmental Questionnaire that she filled out, signed and submitted to the Planning Department, stated for her Description of Proposal: **"Additionally, the applicant is requesting the maximum student count raised to 325."**

[9] See: California Department of Education's "Guide to School Site Analysis and Development", 2000 edition available online, states that: the California Department of Education recommends that the size of schools be calculated at 59 square feet (the minimum) per pupil for kindergarten through grade six; at 80 square feet (the minimum) per pupil for grades seven and eight; and at an average of 92 square feet (the minimum) per pupil for grades nine through twelve.
https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/guideschoolsite.asp#:~:text=For%20kindergarten%20and%20grades%20one,80%20square%20feet%20per%20pupil

[10] Total building area calculation: The application documents are somewhat inconsistent, but they state the existing school has one main classroom combined with an admin. building that is approximately 8,150 sq. ft. (or 8,250 sq. ft.) and a separate modular classroom building that is approximately 1,920 sq. ft. And they now propose to add 960 sq. ft and a larger building of 28,300 sq. ft., for a total building area of roughly about 39,430 square feet.

[11] Calculation: 39,430 s.f. / 225 students = 175 s.f. per student.

Their use of a 225 student enrollment is unreasonably low, considering Ms. Blakely's formal August 8, 2023 Environmental Questionnaire that she submitted requesting the school's permit allow up to 325 students. Perhaps due to miscommunication between the applicant, the County and Mr. Chilson, they appear to have greatly underestimated the Project's student count and its VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.

California's Office of Planning and Research writes[12] that "*projects that generate or attract fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact.*" But Golden Eagle's project would generate many more trips than that. The Project's ADDENDUM to the MND, Pdf p. 31, states: "*The daily trip generation would be approximately **640 daily one-way trips**.*" That is evidence that this school project, with much more than 110 trips per day, might have a significant air quality impact from all the parents driving their kids to this remotely-located school outside City limits. The County ignored the law when it prepared no alternative VMT analysis with transportation mitigations to reduce such trips and their related air quality and greenhouse gas emission impacts.

Mr. Chilson continued to understate the requirement for a VMT analysis when he reported (on PDF p. 4) that a categorical exemption applies to the existing building and the new building size (as he implied to be insignificant):

> "*Lead agencies can consider increasing and varied school options and new locations as a potential measure to reduce VMT. With this understanding, existing/former use, the categorical exemption for existing facilities, student count, and building size are not critical factors in determining potential VMT impacts since providing increased access (more locations) of schools is deemed a VMT benefit.*"

California does allow an exemption when less than 10,000 s.f. of new building(s) are added, and less than 110 trips per day are generated, so long as other transportation is available instead of cars (i.e. bus service, etc.) and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area.[13] (CEQA Guidelines, § 15301, subd. (e)(2).) But this project has much more than 110 trips per day, and is much larger than 10,000 s.f. of floor area. There is no public transportation for kids to use to get to the school on W.A. Barr Road. Moreover, the school is in an "environmentally sensitive area" where air pollution can sometimes reduce clear views of our scenic volcano that occupants of the

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[12] See: https://opr.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf

[13] See: TECHNICAL ADVISORY ON EVALUATING TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS IN CEQA https://opr.ca.gov/docs/20190122-743_Technical_Advisory.pdf "CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, so long as the project is in an area where public infrastructure is available to allow for maximum planned development and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area. (CEQA Guidelines, § 1530§, subd. (e)(2).) Typical project types for which trip generation increases relatively linearly with building footprint (i.e., general office building, single tenant office building, office park, and business park) generate or attract an additional 110-124 trips per 10,000 square feet. Therefore, absent substantial evidence otherwise, it is reasonable to conclude that the addition of 110 or fewer trips could be considered not to lead to a significant impact."

neighboring Mount Shasta Ranch B&B so highly value. There is no major transit stop nearby either.

Mr. Chilson's conclusion is without merit where he writes: "*Therefore, the project is deemed exempt from detailed VMT analysis, could provide a VMT benefit, and would under absolute worst-case scenario have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.*" Considering the various errors he made, Mt. Chilson provided no numerical analysis or substantial evidence to support his opinion that the Golden Eagle school project would have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

In summary, due to the reasons and evidence above, a thorough traffic analysis, by a licensed traffic engineer, needs to be completed. The appeal should be upheld and further CEQA analysis required. This is also essential to provide the necessary safety for students and staff.

Sincerely,

Chris Marrone

December 8, 2023

Mr. Nick Trover
TROVER Construction Project Management
974 Forest Avenue
Chico, CA 95928

Updated Transportation Review Letter – Golden Eagle Charter School, Mt. Shasta, CA

Dear Mr. Trover,

This letter provides the findings of a Traffic/Transportation Technical Review completed to identify potential transportation related environmental impacts using the current California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) transportation checklist criteria, including vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This review is of the proposed Golden Eagle Charter School in Mt. Shasta, California (the "Project").

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would repurpose an existing church and private school facility located at 1030 WA Barr Road to a public Charter School. The site is on the west side of WA Barr Road, with the existing church/school driveway approximately 450 feet south of W. Ream Avenue/Shasta Ranch Road (measured center of road to center of driveway). The site can be accessed and exited both to/from the north and south on WA Barr Road with connections to the greater Mt. Shasta community to the north via W. Ream Avenue and Old Stage Road and to the south via Siskiyou Lake Boulevard.

The project location is shown on **Figure 1** and the existing site condition is shown on **Figure 2**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We understand there is a current Use Permit on the subject property for a private school with up to 60 students and the former church facilities/operations (with no stated maximum capacity for church occupancy).

The Golden Eagle Charter School project will repurpose the existing buildings to operate a public charter school with up to 225 students and an estimated 35 staff at maximum capacity. The project includes adding an approximately 23,800 square foot classroom/multi-purpose building, as shown in **Figure 3,** and an approximately 960 square foot portable building.

The project will utilize the existing driveway on WA Barr Road which served the former church and private school. No modifications are proposed at this driveway or on WA Barr Road.

The existing parking lot will be modified to include a turnaround for safer pick-up/drop-off operations (so that backing from parking spaces is not necessary) and to provide a turnaround for emergency response vehicles/fire trucks.

Bus service would not be provided with the project, therefore bus circulation and maneuvering space is not a key component of the site or driveway design. Minor changes may be made during the parking lot modification design process to accommodate an occasional bus entering/exiting the project site.

The project will make minor updates and modifications to the site parking lot, internal roadway(s), and driveway if necessary, including providing a secondary or gated emergency access if required by California Fire Code.

CEQA THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on criteria outlined in the CEQA Appendix G Environmental Checklist Form (see **Attachment A**), the Project would create a significant transportation impact if it would:

- Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities
- Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b), which addresses Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)
- Result in inadequate emergency access

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Public Transit Evaluation

The project would not make any changes to any existing public transit system/services or conflict with any public transit programs or plans. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on public transit.

Roadways / Vehicle Circulation Evaluation

The Project would not conflict with any roadway programs, long-range planning, or vehicle circulation policies. Traffic operations, level of service, and delay are no longer considered environmental impacts under the current CEQA guidelines.

Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on roadway programs or vehicle circulation. It is important to note the subject site has a current Use Permit for school operations.

Alternative Transportation Mode Evaluation

As a charter school serving the broader community, rather than a specified zone or district immediately adjacent to the school, travel to/from the school will be primarily by vehicle mode. The absence of sidewalks and marked bicycle lanes in the project area is not a significant concern related to this specific school operation since few students would walk or bike to this school even if those facilities were in place.

The Project would not conflict with any multimodal (bicycle or pedestrian) transportation programs or plans or impact any existing multimodal facilities. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on bicycle or pedestrian travel.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Evaluation

Per Senate Bill 743, the CEQA guidelines require the evaluation of VMT as a key criterion to determine potentially significant transportation impacts.

The Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, December 2018, published by the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), established recommended VMT significance criteria and screening thresholds for various project types/land uses.

The Technical Advisory indicates lead agencies can "screen out" (not evaluate in detail) VMT impacts based on project size, maps/project location within a region, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing.

Related to small projects, the footnote on page 12 of the *OPR Technical Advisory* states:

"CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, so long as the project is in an area where public infrastructure is available to allow for maximum planned development and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15301, subd. (e)(2).)"

This project is a repurposing and expansion of an existing building/facility with a former school use and there is a current Use Permit on the property for school operations.

There is adequate existing public infrastructure (roadways) available to serve the local area and project, and to our knowledge the site is not within an environmentally sensitive area (the project site is already developed).

More importantly however, the *OPR Technical Advisory (Other Project Types, page 17)* also states "*Of land use projects, residential, office, and retail projects tend to have the greatest influence on VMT*." and it establishes criteria for the evaluation of these three types of development projects. Schools are not mentioned in the VMT threshold discussions. Rather, schools are mentioned in Section H. VMT Mitigation and Alternatives of the Technical Advisory where it states:

"Potential measures to reduce vehicle miles traveled include, but are not limited to:

- Increase access to common goods and services, such as groceries, schools, and daycare."

In short, lead agencies can consider increasing and varied school options and new locations as a potential measure to reduce VMT. With this understanding, existing/former use, the categorical exemption for existing facilities, student count, and building size are not critical factors in determining potential VMT impacts since providing increased access (more locations) of schools is deemed a VMT benefit.

Overall, the Technical Advisory indicates that school land use, unrelated to building size, student count, or other quantity metrics, is not likely to cause any significant impact related to VMT, and can potentially provide a VMT benefit.

Therefore, the project is deemed exempt from detailed VMT analysis, could provide a VMT benefit, and would under absolute worst-case scenario have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Design Feature Evaluation

Initial evaluation of the existing access routes to the Project does not indicate any incompatible uses or unusual conditions, and the Project will not introduce features significantly affecting safety. Any modifications at the project driveway will be in accordance with Mt. Shasta Municipal Code/ City standards.

The project would have a less-than-significant impact related to safety and design features.

Emergency Access Evaluation

The project site plan is currently under review by City staff and Fire Department officials. The project will provide a secondary or gated emergency site access if required by California Fire Code.

Two routes exist to evacuate the project site in case of emergency, north via WA Barr Road and W. Ream Avenue and south via WA Barr Road and Siskiyou Lake Boulevard.

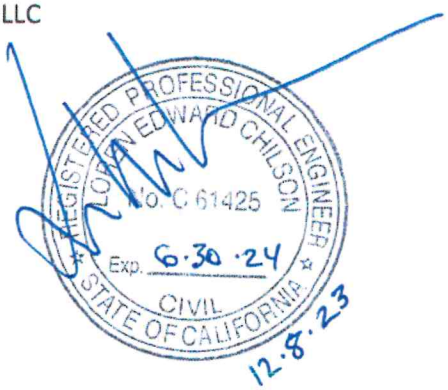
The project will provide adequate emergency access per City and Fire Code standards. Therefore, the project will have a less-than-significant impact related to emergency access.

CONCLUSIONS

The following is a list of key findings:

- The potential project impacts related to public transit, roadways/vehicle circulation, and alternative modes of travel would be less-than-significant.
- The project would have a less-than-significant impact on VMT, and could potentially be of benefit for VMT reduction.
- The project would have a less-than-significant impact related to safety and design features.
- The project would have a less-than-significant impact on emergency access.

Sincerely,
Headway Transportation, LLC



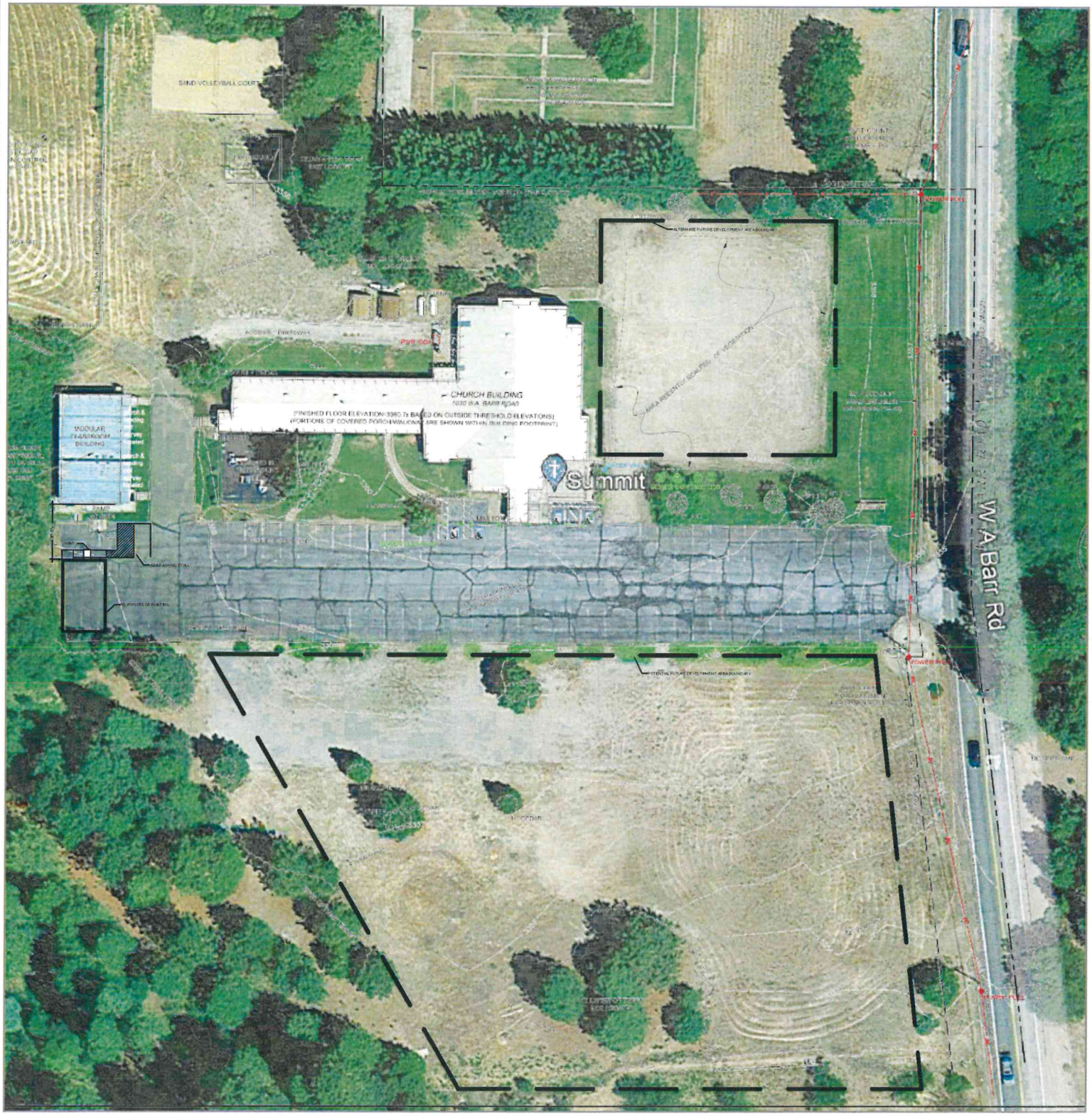
Loren E. Chilson, PE
Principal
Attachments:

Figure 1 – Project Location
Figure 2 – Existing Site Conditions
Figure 3 – Proposed Site Conditions
Attachment A - CEQA Checklist for Transportation

HEADWAY

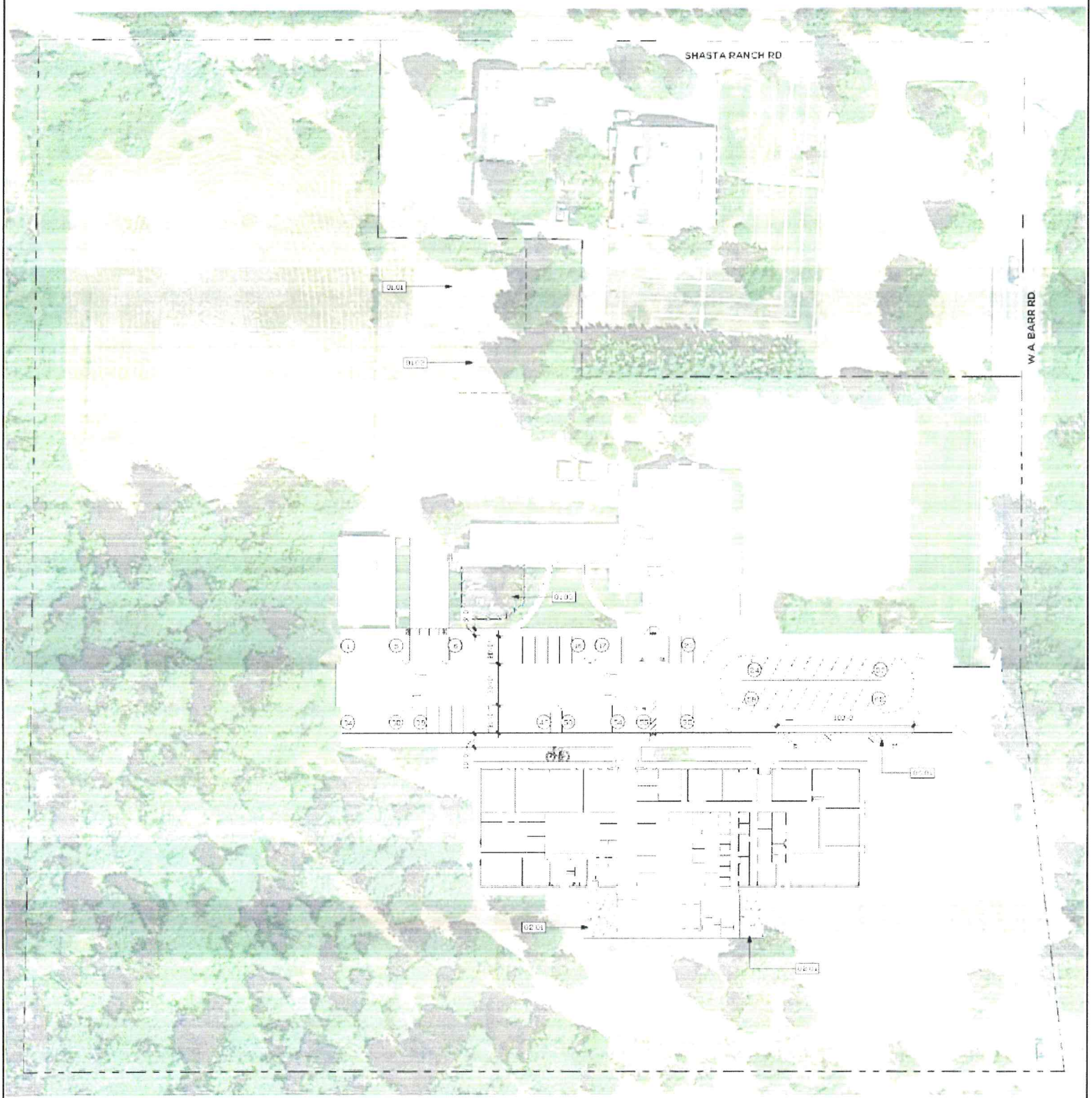
NO SCALE

Figure 1
Golden Eagle Charter School
Transportation Review Letter
Project Location



NO SCALE

Figure 2
Golden Eagle Charter School
Transportation Review Letter
Existing Conditions



HEADWAY

NO SCALE

Figure 3
Golden Eagle Charter School
Transportation Review Letter
Proposed Site Conditions

Attachment A

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
XVI. RECREATION.				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☐
XVII. TRANSPORTATION. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐
XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES.				
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☐	☐	☐	☐
XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the project:				
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☐

HEADWAY TRANSPORTATION

April 12, 2023

Mr. Nick Trover
TROVER Construction Project Management
974 Forest Avenue
Chico, CA 95928

Transportation Review Letter – Golden Eagle Charter School, Mt. Shasta, CA

Dear Mr. Trover,

This letter provides the findings of a Traffic/Transportation Technical Review completed to identify potential transportation related environmental impacts using the current California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) transportation checklist criteria, including vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This review is of the proposed Golden Eagle Charter School in Mt. Shasta, California (the "Project").

PROJECT LOCATION

The Project would repurpose an existing church and private school facility located at 1030 WA Barr Road to a public Charter School. The site is on the west side of WA Barr Road, with the existing church/school driveway approximately 450 feet south of W. Ream Avenue/Shasta Ranch Road (measured center of road to center of driveway). The site can be accessed and exited both to/from the north and south on WA Barr Road with connections to the greater Mt. Shasta community to the north via W. Ream Avenue and Old Stage Road and to the south via Siskiyou Lake Boulevard.

The project location is shown on **Figure 1** and the existing site condition is shown on **Figure 2**.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

We understand there is a current Use Permit on the subject property for a private school with up to 60 students and the former church facilities/operations (with no stated maximum capacity for church occupancy).

Golden Eagle Charter School project will repurpose the existing buildings to operate a public charter school with up to 225 students and an estimated 35 staff at maximum capacity. The project includes adding an approximately 960 square foot portable building.

The project will utilize the existing driveway on WA Barr Road which served the former church and private school. No modifications are proposed at this driveway or on WA Barr Road.

The existing parking lot will be modified to include a turnaround for safer pick-up/drop-off operations (so that backing from parking spaces is not necessary) and to provide a turnaround for emergency response vehicles/fire trucks.

Bus service would not be provided with the project, therefore bus circulation and maneuvering space is not a key component of the site or driveway design. Minor changes may be made during the parking lot modification design process to accommodate an occasional bus entering/exiting the project site.

The project will make minor updates and modifications to the site parking lot, internal roadway(s), and driveway if necessary, including providing a secondary or gated emergency access if required by California Fire Code.

CEQA THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on criteria outlined in the CEQA Appendix G Environmental Checklist Form (see **Attachment A**), the Project would create a significant transportation impact if it would:

> Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities
> Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b), which addresses Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
> Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)
> Result in inadequate emergency access

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Public Transit Evaluation

The project would not make any changes to any existing public transit system/services or conflict with any public transit programs or plans. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on public transit.

Roadways / Vehicle Circulation Evaluation

The Project would not conflict with any roadway programs, long-range planning, or vehicle circulation policies. Traffic operations, level of service, and delay are no longer considered environmental impacts under the current CEQA guidelines.

Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on roadway programs or vehicle circulation. It is important to note the subject site has a current Use Permit for school operations.

Alternative Transportation Mode Evaluation

As a charter school serving the broader community, rather than a specified zone or district immediately adjacent to the school, travel to/from the school will be primarily by vehicle mode. The absence of sidewalks and marked bicycle lanes in the project area is not a significant concern related to this specific school operation since few students would walk or bike to this school even if those facilities were in place.

The Project would not conflict with any multimodal (bicycle or pedestrian) transportation programs or plans or impact any existing multimodal facilities. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact on bicycle or pedestrian travel.

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Evaluation

Per Senate Bill 743, the CEQA guidelines require the evaluation of VMT as a key criterion to determine potentially significant transportation impacts.

The Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA, December 2018, published by the State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), established recommended VMT significance criteria and screening thresholds for various project types/land uses.

The Technical Advisory indicates lead agencies can "screen out" (not evaluate in detail) VMT impacts based on project size, maps/project location within a region, transit availability, and provision of affordable housing.

Related to small projects, the footnote on page 12 of the *OPR Technical Advisory* states:

"CEQA provides a categorical exemption for existing facilities, including additions to existing structures of up to 10,000 square feet, so long as the project is in an area where public infrastructure is available to allow for maximum planned development and the project is not in an environmentally sensitive area. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15301, subd. (e)(2).)"

This project is a repurposing of an existing building/facility with a former school use and there is a current Use Permit on the property for school operations. A 960 square foot addition is proposed.

There is adequate existing public infrastructure (roadways) available to serve the local area and project, and to our knowledge the site is not within an environmentally sensitive area (the project site is already developed). The project is therefore exempt from VMT analysis.

More importantly however, the *OPR Technical Advisory (Other Project Types, page 17)* also states "*Of land use projects, residential, office, and retail projects tend to have the greatest influence on VMT.*" and it establishes criteria for the evaluation of these three types of development projects. Schools are not mentioned in the VMT threshold discussions. Rather, schools are mentioned in Section H. VMT Mitigation and Alternatives of the Technical Advisory where it states:

"Potential measures to reduce vehicle miles traveled include, but are not limited to:

- Increase access to common goods and services, such as groceries, schools, and daycare."

In short, lead agencies can consider increasing and varied school options and new locations as a potential measure to reduce VMT. With this understanding, existing/former use, the categorical exemption for existing facilities, student count, and building size are not critical factors in determining potential VMT impacts since providing increased access (more locations) of schools is deemed a VMT benefit.

Overall, the Technical Advisory indicates that school land use, unrelated to building size, student count, or other quantity metrics, is not likely to cause any significant impact related to VMT, and can potentially provide a VMT benefit.

Therefore, the project is deemed exempt from VMT analysis, could provide a VMT benefit, and would under absolute worst-case scenario have a less-than-significant impact on VMT.

Design Feature Evaluation

Initial evaluation of the existing access routes to the Project does not indicate any incompatible uses or unusual conditions, and the Project will not introduce features significantly affecting safety. Any modifications at the project driveway will be in accordance with Mt. Shasta Municipal Code/ City standards.

The project would have a less-than-significant impact related to safety and design features.

Emergency Access Evaluation

The project site plan is currently under review by City staff and Fire Department officials. The project will provide a secondary or gated emergency site access if required by California Fire Code.

Two routes exist to evacuate the project site in case of emergency, north via WA Barr Road and W. Ream Avenue and south via WA Barr Road and Siskiyou Lake Boulevard.

The project will provide adequate emergency access per City and Fire Code standards. Therefore, the project will have a less-than-significant impact related to emergency access.

CONCLUSIONS

The following is a list of key findings:

The potential project impacts related to public transit, roadways/vehicle circulation, and alternative modes of travel would be less-than-significant.
The project would have a less-than-significant impact on VMT, and could potentially be of benefit for VMT reduction.
The project would have a less-than-significant impact related to safety and design features.
The project would have a less-than-significant impact on emergency access.

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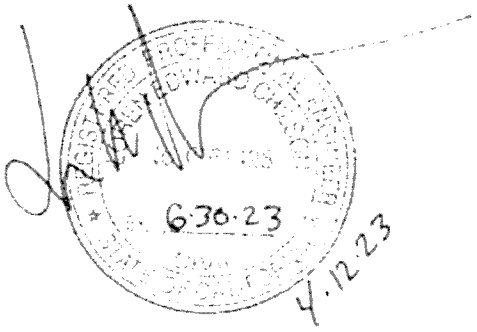
Headway Transportation, LLC



Loren E. Chilson, PE
Principal
Attachments:

Figure 1 – Project Location
Figure 2 – Existing Site Conditions
Attachment A - CEQA Checklist for Transportation

Attachment A

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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