



**APPLICANT LETTER FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT REQUEST – Updated September 12, 2023**

**Project Application No:** PA-22-45  
**Project Title:** Vista Meridian Global Academy  
**Location:** 1620 Sunflower Avenue, Costa Mesa, 92626  
**APN:** 415-112-27 ("Parcel 1")  
**Property Owner:** SFHY Enterprise, LLC (Tim Nguyen, Manager)  
**Applicant:** Vista Meridian Global Academy (Public Charter High School)  
**Applicant Contact:** Collin Felch, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Vista Charter Public Schools  
**Applicant's Representative:** Joseph Smith, AICP, California Coastal Works  
(Main Contact) [jsmith@californiacw.com](mailto:jsmith@californiacw.com) (619) 943-1337  
**Architect:** Arthur Fernandez, Rafael Franco & Associates  
**Project Description:** Authorize a public charter school use at an existing office site to facilitate a public high school (grades 9 to 12) for up to 500 students, including the interior remodel of an existing office building, designated drop-off/pick-up area, and minor ancillary improvements such as building signage; no grading or new landscaping proposed; student transport via school bus/shuttles and vehicles as students will not be allowed to drive to campus

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**I. SITE INFO & PROPOSED OPERATIONS SUMMARY**

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| <b>Zoning</b>                                  | MP – Industrial Park. CMMC allows "Schools: Primary, Secondary and Colleges" as a conditionally-permitted use in the MP zone [CMMC 13.30, Table 13-30(36)].<br><br><i>A conditional use permit is requested from the City to authorize the use.</i> |
| <b>General Plan Land Use &amp; Consistency</b> | Industrial Park. CM General Plan states "Institutional uses may also be appropriate, provided that land use compatibility and traffic issues  |

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|  | <p>have been addressed. Institutional uses will require discretionary approval.”</p> <p>A conditional use permit is requested from the City to authorize the use. The project site includes an onsite vehicle queuing plan with ample onsite parking to accommodate the use. The applicant utilizes buses and shuttles to transport students daily to/from school and anticipates approximately 40% of the students will use this option. The school site is located less than one-half mile from the Santa Ana River Bicycle Trail and will also promote staff and students to bike to school. Bike racks will be provided at the front of the building. Students may also be dropped off/picked up by vehicles; however, students are not allowed to drive to campus and park. The project team includes a traffic engineer to ensure compatibility with the City’s traffic standards.</p> <p>Further, the project is consistent with General Plan Policy LU-1.1 to “Provide for the development of a mix and balance of housing opportunities, commercial goods and services, and employment opportunities in consideration of the needs of the business and residential segments of the community.”</p> <p>The project will provide new educational opportunities in the City and a range of options for families with students in grades 9 through 12. The proposed school would provide a local educational opportunity that supports the City’s goals of providing high quality and diverse services to residents.</p> |
| <b>Lot Size</b>  | 2.16 acres (94,481 sf)  |
| <b>Public Charter School Explanation &amp; Vista Meridian Overview</b> | <p>Vista Meridian Global Academy (Vista Meridian) is a tuition-free, public charter school, authorized by the Orange County Department of Education and independently operated by Vista Charter Public Schools. As a charter school, Vista Meridian serves all students free of charge, regardless of academic level, special education status, etc. Vista Meridian still follows state and federal guidelines with respect to standardized testing and other reporting measures. However, as a charter school, Vista Meridian also has greater autonomy in areas, such as governance, staffing, curriculum, and budgeting to provide its students with the highest quality educational experience, as outlined in its approved charter</p>   |



petition. This greater autonomy also allows Vista Meridian to be more adaptive and innovative in its approach to teaching and learning to truly prepare its students for the rigors of college and the rapidly-evolving 21st century workforce.

For more information on the state's purpose for charter schools, please reference California Education Code Section 47602 at this link: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=47601](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=47601)

Though Vista Meridian is a public school, the land on which the school will be located is not owned by the Newport Mesa Unified School District nor will state funds be used for the construction, renovation or alteration of the campus and building. Public charter schools, including Vista Meridian, are subject to the California Building Code requirements for public schools.

For more information on compliance with the California Building Code and local jurisdiction of charter schools, please reference California Education Code Section 47610 at this link: [https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=47610](https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC&sectionNum=47610)

Vista Meridian offers a rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum so that every student graduates well prepared and confident in their next step, whether in a post-secondary institution or through a career. In order to accomplish that, Vista Meridian offers four Career Technical Education (CTE) pathways that culminate in a professional certification and with the opportunity to receive college credits for free while still enrolled in high school through dual enrollment. Vista Meridian is building its dual enrollment course pathways with Orange Coast College to debut next fall. These pathways include International Business, Biotechnology, Cybersecurity, and Climate Change Leadership. In addition to CTE and dual enrollment, Vista Meridian offers free breakfast and lunch for all students, a free before and after school program, which includes multiple clubs and athletic teams for students, free transportation to



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|  | and from school for students requesting it, and many other opportunities for students and families free of charge, including college counseling, mental health counseling, and internships.  |
| <b>Building Improvements and New Development</b> | <p>The proposal includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior remodel to an existing 37,455 sf, two-story office building to facilitate a public high school (grades 9 to 12). The building would include classrooms, offices, multi-purpose areas, recreation/workout area, gymnasium, cafeteria and commercial kitchen, and restrooms. No modifications to the building footprint or height are proposed. Interior modifications include seismic upgrades to comply with California Building Code requirements for public schools.</li> <li>• Exterior building modifications include two new building-mounted signage, indicating school name and logo, and minor exterior painting to building exterior. Building signage will not be illuminated.</li> <li>• Minor ancillary site improvements including ADA site accessibility, parking lot restriping to accommodate a drop-off/pick-up area, and bicycle racks.</li> <li>• No grading, new landscaping or paving is proposed; existing landscaping and paving to remain.</li> </ul> <p><u>Onsite Capacity – Existing vs Proposed:</u></p> <p>The building owner estimates around 200 employees worked in the office building previously. Note that all 200 were adults. While the proposed high school is requesting a maximum student capacity of 500 (125 per each grade level), full-time staff is estimated at 38 adults with eight additional part-time staff (46 total). For students of driving age, no students will be allowed to drive to campus. This is a requirement of Vista schools. Also, it is estimated that approximately one-third of the students will arrive/depart via the school's fleet of buses and vans and drop-off/pick-up times would occur over an extended period (1.5 hours in the AM and two hours in the PM).</p> |

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| <b>Onsite Parking Program</b> | <p>CMMC does not specifically provide parking requirements for a public charter school. However, the following parking program is proposed based on similar CMMC parking requirements and past City approvals. Note that <b>students would NOT be permitted to drive to campus</b> and Vista Meridian anticipates approximately 40% of its students would utilize school-based transportation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Full-time staff: <b>36 spaces</b> (1 per 1 FT / 36 employees)</li><li>• Part-time staff: <b>8 spaces</b> (0.5 per 1 PT / 15 employees)</li><li>• Admin/Visitor/Other Purposes: <b>50 spaces</b> (10% student body @ 500 students; note that school provides daily student transport via bus/shuttle and does not allow students to drive to campus).</li></ul> <p>Vista Meridian currently has three 65-passenger buses and nine 10-person vans with plans to expand its fleet as our enrollment and transportation demand grows. All of Vista's buses and vans are parked and stored at two separate off-site locations in Santa Ana, and thus Vista Meridian will not have any designated parking spaces for the buses or vans at its Vista Meridian location at this time. Vista's buses and vans pick-up and drop-off students from safe, convenient public locations. Those pick-up and drop-off locations are based on where students live who request transportation, and the routes and pick-up and drop-off times are decided and communicated at the beginning of each school year. Some locations could be at/near City public parks; however, Vista Meridian will coordinate with City staff/Parks and Recreation to understand if this is feasible and accepted. There will also be a shuttle from Vista's Elementary/Middle School in Santa Ana located at 2609 West 5th Street to transport older siblings to the Vista Meridian high school. Historically, Vista has had approximately 1/3 of its student enrollment use Vista buses and vans. However, Vista is projecting a higher use for Vista Meridian since there will be larger percentage of students who will be coming from Santa Ana upon the school's opening and will be utilizing Vista's shuttle from the Elementary/Middle School location. As a result, <b>Vista Meridian</b></p> |
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**projects approximately 40% of the student population to utilize its school-based transportation upon opening.**

- Daily Deliveries/Surplus: **5 spaces**

- Total Parking Program: **99 spaces**

- Additional Onsite Spaces Designated as “Reciprocal Shared Parking” with Parcel 2 (shared parking for use by both Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian Parcel) and Parcel 2 (Adjacent Corner Parcel); both parcels are under the same ownership): **53 spaces**

- Total Spaces Provided Onsite: **152 spaces** (all spaces and drive aisles striped to meet current City of Costa Mesa Parking Design Guidelines)

- Other Parking Available:

- Additional Loading/Unloading on Parcel 1: **2 spaces** (these two spaces are not included in the 152-space total)

- Bicycle Parking: **24 storage spaces** (8 provided, with an expansion area for an additional 16 spaces; more racks can be provided as needed)

- Parking on Parcel 2 (adjacent corner parcel): **92 spaces** provided on Parcel 2. These spaces may also be used as needed for Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian) activities such as after-hours events, evening special events, etc.

- Summary: Parcel 1 would have a total of 152 spaces for daily use. Of that amount, 99 spaces are proposed as part of Vista Meridian’s Site-Specific Parking Program. This parking accounts for full- and part-time staff, administration, visitors, daily deliveries, and other general parking. Two additional loading/unloading spaces would be available (not counted in the 152 total spaces). Vista Meridian’s onsite parking provides an additional 53 spaces that are designated spaces under a Reciprocal Shared Parking Agreement with Parcel 2 (adjacent corner parcel) as a requirement from an earlier Parcel Map subdivision approved by the City of Costa Mesa. All spaces on the Vista Meridian

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|  | <p>site (Parcel 1), including proposed school program parking and reciprocal shared parking would be available for general public use as needed (e.g., as-needed daytime parking, evening special events, etc.). The parking listed above assumes all spaces are re-striped per current CMMC parking standards for stalls and drive aisles. Parcel 2 (adjacent corner parcel) has 92 spaces on its site which may also be used by Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian) activities such as after-hours events, evening special events, etc. In addition to school-based transportation (buses and shuttles), Vista Meridian will promote a bike-to-school program given its orientation near the Santa Ana River Trail. As noted above, students will not be permitted to drive to school.</p> <p>As part of the school's commitment to promote alternate transportation options for its community, the school will promote a Bike-to-School Program. The following is the type of messaging that will be distributed to Vista Meridian's staff and families: "We are excited to communicate our "Bike to School Program" at Vista Meridian. In addition to having a new, state-of-the-art building to call home, Vista Meridian is located in a convenient, bicycle-friendly area near multiple bike paths, most notably the Santa Ana River Trail less than half of a mile away. In order to provide an alternate transportation option, as well as promote active, healthy lifestyles for families and staff in the Costa Mesa region, Vista Meridian encourages staff and students to participate. For convenience, bike racks will be installed in the front of the building for bicycle parking."</p> |
| <b>Parking Orientation and Drive Aisle</b> | <p>Parking lot and drop-off/pick-up area to provide the following. Note that the parking totals account for all spaces as re-striped per current CMMC parking standards for stalls and drive aisles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22'-0" minimum' wide drive aisle for ingress/egress, vehicle queuing/circulation through the parking lot, including emergency and waste collection access.</li> <li>• 152 total vehicle spaces provided onsite, not including an additional two 25'x16' (400 sf) loading/unloading spaces or an additional 92</li> </ul>  |



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|  | <p>spaces on Parcel 2 (adjacent corner parcel) that may be used by Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 spaces are designated for electric vehicles (9 would be provided as “EV-ready” stalls and 26 would be provided as “future EV-ready” stalls). No restrictions for their use are proposed.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Reciprocal Access &amp; Parking for Parcels 1 &amp; 2</b> | <p>A reciprocal access easement exists between Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian at 1620 Sunflower Ave) and Parcel 2 (contiguous/adjacent corner parcel located immediately southeast at 1600 Sunflower Ave and not a part of the project) to allow for shared access of drive aisles and parking (Instrument No, 20020449420). This was a City requirement for Parcel Map No. 88-160. Similar to Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian parcel), Parcel 2’s use is also office. The access easement allows for the proposed vehicle queuing plan to utilize the southern portions for Parcel 2’s drive aisles for exiting vehicles and also includes a provision where approximately 53 of Parcel 1’s 152 spaces be available for Parcel 2 as needed. The proposed parking program has 99 spaces set aside for the public charter school use. The undesignated and designated spaces would be available for as-needed school activities, such as after-hours school events. Likewise, the 92 spaces provided on Parcel 2 would also be available for the use of Parcel 1 (Vista Meridian) activities, such as after-hours events. The proposed conversion from office use to public charter school on Parcel 1 does not increase Parcel 1’s existing building square footage. As part of the applicant’s operations, the proposed public charter school would utilize its fleet of buses and shuttles to transport students daily to/from school. Students may also be dropped off/picked up by vehicles; however, students would NOT be allowed to drive to campus and park.</p> |
| <b>Drop-off/Pick-up Times</b>                                | <p>Due to new state laws that require high schools in California to start no earlier than 8:30 AM and stipulate a required number of instructional minutes, the option to stagger the school schedule for drop-off and pick-up times will be infeasible. Meeting the required instructional minutes with a later start time than 8:30 AM would extend the minimum school day to 4:30-5:00 PM (the current school day for high school is already 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM to meet state</p>  |



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|   | <p>requirements). However, instead of staggering the school schedule (which is very successful in accomplishing the same benefit in reducing reduce traffic during impacted times at Vista's other campuses), Vista Meridian will provide a wider range of drop-off times in the morning over a 1.5-hour period from 7:00 AM to 8:30 AM. In the afternoon, Vista Meridian offers after-school activities (after-school educational programs, clubs, sports) which significantly reduces the number of students getting picked up right at the 4:00 PM dismissal, and most students get picked up throughout the two-hour period between 4:00 to 6:00 PM.</p> <p>In addition to the extended drop-off and pick-up times planned for Vista Meridian, <b>Vista Meridian anticipates up to 40% of its students will take school-provided buses and vans to and from school.</b> The school will also promote its Bike-to-School Program since its location is less than one-half mile from the Santa Ana River Trail and connected via east and west bike lanes on Sunflower Ave.</p>   |
| <b>Drop-off/Pick-up Protocol and Onsite Vehicle Queuing Program</b> | <p>At all of Vista's campuses, student drop-off and pick-up is operated in a "valet" format – a staff member is designated at the drop-off/pick-up point who will open the vehicle door and welcomes each student being dropped off in the morning, and in the afternoon during pick up, a staff member will call student names on the radio when their parents arrive. The students are located close by, so they come out to the car immediately once their name is called. For Vista Meridian, the drop-off/pick-up location is located on the west side of the building and vehicles will follow the proposed vehicle queuing program to/from Hyland Ave. as noted in the application and site plan. Students will congregate in the indoor gym after drop-off and prior to pick-up.</p> <p>The queuing line and drop-off/pick-up location would be managed by a minimum of five staff. Three staff members would be located throughout the queuing line to ensure parents are entering and following the correct queuing route, as well as making sure that the flow of traffic remains efficient. One staff would be posted to the driveway entry at Hyland Ave, with the other two staff posted at mid-way points in the queuing line. Two additional staff would be posted at</p> |



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|                                    | <p>the drop-off/pick-up location (gym entrance) on the west side of the building. These staff would be valets, opening doors, welcoming kids in the morning, and calling the student names over radio in the afternoon. As needed, additional staff would be available to assist with queuing directions and/or valet drop-off/pick-up. Additionally, temporary onsite signage and cones would be placed by staff prior to morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times to visually assist parents with onsite circulation and protocol. Signage and cones would be removed during school hours and after-hours.</p> <p>Onsite vehicle queuing for drop-off/pick-up will be provided as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vehicle queuing line begins at the Hyland Ave entry, orients around school and exits back onto Hyland Ave.</li> <li>• Onsite queuing line provides 23 vehicle capacity at 25 linear foot per vehicle for a total length of 660 linear feet.</li> <li>• Daily staff traffic monitors to be positioned at key locations along queuing line, including at entry and exit points, internal turning locations, and drop-off/pick-up locations. Cones and temporary signage deployed to indicate queuing.</li> <li>• Drop-off/Pick-up location located at west school entry (spaces 43-47 would be made unavailable for parking during drop-off/pick-up times - indicated by permanent signage at spaces and temporary cones placed; for safety purposes, spaces 131-139 located west of the drop-off/pick-up area would also be temporarily made unavailable); students would queue inside building gymnasium/multi-purpose room.</li> <li>• Exit onto Highland Ave during AM drop-off hours and PM pick-up hours.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Grades and Student Capacity</b> | <p>Up to 500 students between grades 9 to 12 (maximum capacity). The school would not provide instruction for grades K to 8. The proposed maximum breakdown of student capacity by grade follows:</p>  |

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|                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-8th: Not Proposed</li> <li>• 9th: 125 students</li> <li>• 10th: 125 students</li> <li>• 11th: 125 students</li> <li>• 12<sup>th</sup>: 125 students</li> </ul> <p><u>Actual Student Enrollment and Maximum Capacity:</u></p> <p>As described in “Other Schools Operated by Vista Charter Public Schools” below, there is a range between actual student enrollment and maximum capacity at each of Vista’s schools. While Vista Meridian is requesting a 500 maximum student capacity in the CUP, actual student enrollment will fluctuate.</p>   |
| <b>Daily Staff</b> | <p>Up to 51 total employees comprised of up to 36 full time and 15 part time. The staff mix is anticipated to be comprised of up to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 teachers</li> <li>• 10 office/other staff</li> <li>• 12 paraprofessionals</li> <li>• 2 administrative staff</li> <li>• 4 custodians</li> </ul> <p>Nearly all employees will work during the school day. Anticipated working hours is as follows (may adjust as needed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 36 staff will work from 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM</li> <li>• Approximately 7 staff will work from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM</li> <li>• Approximately 7 staff will work from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM</li> <li>• Approximately 1 staff will work from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Operational Days and Hours</b> | <p><u>Educational instruction hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monday to Thursday: 8:30 AM (school begins) to 4:00 PM (dismissal).</li><li>• Friday: 8:30 AM (school begins) to 2:00 PM (dismissal).</li></ul> <p><u>Drop-off/Pick-up hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early drop-off begins at 7:00 AM and regular drop-off begins at 7:30 AM. Regular pick-up runs for 30 minutes past the school day (to 4:30 PM Monday to Thursday, and 2:30 PM on Friday) and afterhours pick-up runs until 6:00 PM Monday to Thursday, and 6:00 PM on Fridays.</li></ul> <p><u>Afterschool program hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anticipate approximately 33% of the students to attend an afterschool program with staggered pick-up times from school dismissal until 6:00 PM Monday to Friday.</li></ul> <p><u>Delivery hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All deliveries will occur during campus open hours (7:30 AM to 4:30 PM); two 25'x16' loading/unloading spaces are provided on the west side of the building.</li></ul> <p><u>Campus closed hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The school will generally be closed Monday to Friday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 AM and all day on Saturday and Sunday.</li></ul> <p><u>After hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evening custodial services will be provided until 10:00 PM Monday to Friday.</li></ul> <p><u>Special events programming hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School would be used infrequently for small events/gatherings and school-related special events.</li></ul> |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typical school-related events include back-to-school night, open house, and awards ceremonies.</li><li>• Generally, three open house events held between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM in September, November, and March.</li><li>• Generally, four staggered awards ceremonies in November, January, March, and June with roughly 20% of students honored from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM.</li><li>• At this time, graduation is anticipated at an off-site location.</li></ul> <p><u>School closures will occur during the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saturdays</li><li>• Sundays</li><li>• Martin Luther King Jr. Day</li><li>• Presidents' Day</li><li>• First week in April ("Spring Break")</li><li>• Memorial Day</li><li>• Second Monday in June to 2nd Friday in August ("Summer Break")</li><li>• Labor Day</li><li>• Veterans Day</li><li>• Thanksgiving week</li><li>• Three weeks surrounding Christmas and New Year's Day</li></ul> |
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| <b>Outdoor Student Use &amp; Lunch Location (Indoors Only)</b> | <p>The largest concentration of students outdoors would occur during morning drop-offs and afternoon dismissals generally over a period of 60 minutes prior to the 8:30 AM school start and 30 minutes after the 4:00 PM (Mon-Thurs) dismissal or 2:00 PM (Friday) dismissal. The drop-off/pick-up area is located on the west side of the building, outside the gymnasium/multi-purpose room. All students are transited to/from campus via school-provided transit (bus and shuttle), bicycles or vehicle drop-off/pick-up. Students are allowed to ride a bicycle to school, but not allowed to drive a vehicle to school.</p> <p>No outside use of intercom or bell systems is proposed. Staff will use voice and/or whistles to make note of educational transitions throughout the day.</p> <p>Educational instruction occurs indoors within classrooms, work rooms and the gymnasium/multi-purpose space. Vista Meridian plans to have a staggered recess and lunch schedule with 9th/10th grade and 11th/12th grade having separate lunch and recess times. The proposed recess times are 10:00-10:20 AM for 9th/10th grade and 10:30-10:50 AM for 11th/12th grade. The proposed lunch times are 11:55 AM-12:25 PM for 9th/10th grade and 12:35-1:05 PM for 11th/12th grade. During recess and lunch, students will remain inside and will utilize the entire multipurpose space as indicated in the floorplan, which will include the cafeteria, weight room, large gymnasium, and small gymnasium space. During this time, students will also have access to common areas within the building that will offer flexible/lounge seating as well as breakout conference rooms for activities such as reading, studying, and school club meetings.</p> <p>Vista Meridian will be a closed campus. Students will not be permitted to leave campus during the school day.</p> |
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| <b>Analysis with City Council Policy P-20-01 (Private Outdoor Play Area Development Standards and Conditions)</b> | <p>In 2002, the City Council adopted Policy P-20-01 to specify standards and conditions for private outdoor play areas associated with private schools and private play areas not associated with private schools. As described, the policy was created in response to concerns with children's vulnerability and protection when playing in an outdoor area. The conditions and requirements of the policy are intended to be applied whenever a private outdoor play yard is proposed.</p> <p>Vista Meridian is a tuition-free, public charter school for grades 9-12, authorized by the Orange County Department of Education and independently operated by Vista Charter Public Schools. For all intents and purposes, Vista is a public school and serves all students free of charge, regardless of academic level, special education status, etc.</p> <p>The approximately two-acre site located at 1620 Sunflower Avenue is an ideal location for Vista Meridian's high school campus. The site is fully developed with a 37,455 sf, two-story office building, 152 parking spaces, drive aisles, and vehicle access from two streets. A mix of trees and low-lying plants are located around the parcel and building perimeter and parking medians. The site is fully built-out.</p> <p>The current layout of the existing office building is ideal for conversion into a high school with the first and second floors generally built in an open-floor plan concept that can easily be converted into classrooms, multi-purpose rooms, breakout rooms, staff rooms, cafeteria, restrooms, and office/administrative. One of the building's highlights is an existing full-size, indoor basketball court, sports court, and recreation room on the first floor. As part of the planned remodel, these spaces will be improved in order to provide Vista Meridian with ample indoor recreation space, including a large gymnasium, small gymnasium, and weight room. As the site is fully built-out with parking, drive aisles, and the building footprint, outdoor recreation areas cannot be feasibly provided at the site. As such, no outdoor play areas are associated with the Vista Meridian campus at this time.</p> <p>Some consideration was given to convert a portion of the rear parking area into an outdoor space for students, but given the City's parking</p> |
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|  | <p>needs for the school use (i.e., 99 spaces) and an additional 53 spaces that must be provided for use by an adjacent parcel via a reciprocal parking easement required by the City by an earlier Parcel Map, the outdoor concept was determined infeasible. However, should the City be amenable to reconsidering the reciprocal parking requirement at a later date, Vista Meridian would consider converting an area of approximately 53 spaces into an additional recreational area for students to enjoy outdoors. Vista Meridian is willing to discuss this option with the City once the school's operations are established at the site.</p> <p>Due to the ability to provide indoor recreation, students will have access to physical education and sporting electives in a safe environment. Vista Meridian is aware of the Council's policy on private play areas and acknowledges the policy's goal to create 182 sf of outdoor space per student for high schools. This equates to 91,000 sf of outdoor space per student at the Vista Meridian campus – a 94,481 sf site that is currently developed.</p> |
| <p><b>Other Schools Operated by Vista Charter Public Schools</b></p> | <p>For the past two years, Vista's high school program is temporarily operating out of a few classrooms and offices at its Elementary/Middle School site in Santa Ana and is currently serving grades 9 and 10 at this time. The temporary site is projected to reach and exceed its capacity next school year (commencing in Fall 2023), which is why Vista is planning to begin serving its current high school students and new students from Costa Mesa at the Vista Meridian campus beginning in Fall 2023. Vista Meridian would be Vista's first dedicated and separate high school for grades 9-12.</p> <p><u>List of Other Vista Charter Public Schools:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vista Condor Global Academy (Santa Ana, Grades TK-5, 336 current students, 500 student capacity)</li> <li>• Vista Heritage Global Academy (Santa Ana, Grades 6-8, 316 current students, 450 student capacity)</li> </ul>   |



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palm Lane Global Academy (Anaheim, Grades TK-6, 273 current students, 502 student capacity)</li> <li>• Vista Charter Middle School (Los Angeles, Grades 6-8, 374 current students, 420 student capacity)</li> <li>• Vista Horizon Global Academy (Los Angeles, Grades TK-5, 147 current students, 450 student capacity)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Construction Duration and Opening</b> | Construction generally consists of an interior remodel with seismic upgrades and is anticipated over a two-month duration, with the school opening following.   |
| <b>Community Outreach Efforts</b>        | <p>Between January to March 2023, Vista Meridian conducted extensive outreach to neighboring businesses located within 500 feet of the proposed school site at 1620 Sunflower avenue. The Vista Meridian team canvassed the area and met individually with a number of key stakeholders including: 1) representatives from C.J. Segerstrom &amp; Sons who own Harbor Gateway at Hyland and Sunflower; 2) delegates from SOCO commercial and retail center; 3) individual owners Hyland Park Business Plaza, the 19-unit complex on the north side of the school; and 4) with the onsite manager of the FedEx facility directly to the west. The Vista Meridian team presented information about the school's mission, operational functions, and key facts regarding pick up, drop off, and important protocols such as no student drivers and the school being a closed campus.</p> <p>In addition to these outreach efforts, and with the goal to best serve families and children within Costa Mesa, Vista Meridian will continue to establish partnerships and work with community leaders such as faculty and staff at Orange Coast College, members of the Chamber of Commerce, and delegates from various non-profit organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs and Olive Crest. Vista Meridian is committed to any collaborative process that provides its youth with educational pathways and success.</p> |

## II. DRAFT CUP JUSTIFICATIONS (CMMC 13-29(g)(2))

The following justifications are provided to facilitate the City's review process related to CUP findings to be made by the Planning Commission. Based on existing conditions, the location of the proposed public charter school, and the scope of the proposed project, the proposed findings to authorize a CUP for the requested use can be made as follows:

***The proposed development or use is substantially compatible with developments in the same general area and would not be materially detrimental to other properties within the area.***

The proposed public charter school improvements and operating plan are compatible with the allowed office, commercial, industrial park, and institutional/research and development uses in the vicinity. An existing two-story office building on the site would be converted via tenant improvements to facilitate the needs for a public charter high school. No expansion of the building footprint or increase in height is proposed. The site is entirely surrounded by office, commercial, and industrial park uses. No residential uses are in the vicinity of the site, with the nearest residential uses located on the opposite side (south) of the I-405 Freeway, approximately one-third mile away from the school site. Building and site alterations to establish the school conform to all current building and safety standards. The school's parking program will not exceed the existing onsite parking available and the site includes adequate surplus parking for as-needed school activities such as special events. The site includes an ample onsite vehicle queuing lane and operations will not interfere with access to adjacent and surrounding properties. Two loading/unloading spaces are provided. All rooftop equipment is existing and screened from view. No new landscaping or paving is proposed as the existing site improvements are adequate for continued use.

***Granting the conditional use permit will not be materially detrimental to the health, safety and general welfare of the public or otherwise injurious to property or improvements within the immediate neighborhood.***

The school's operations, including circulation, parking, and operational hours are designed to provide a typical school day for students and avoid conflicts with surrounding properties. Additionally, the operation of the school will be required to comply with all local, state, and federal regulations. During morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up, pedestrian and vehicular access would be provided from Hyland Drive via an existing on-site two-way driveway. Vehicles would queue on the site around the building with sufficient capacity to accommodate up to 23 queued vehicles assuming a 25-foot linear length per vehicle, for a total queuing length of 660 linear feet. Vehicles would exit onto Hyland Avenue via an onsite, existing two-lane driveway. The proposed site design includes the provision of adequate emergency vehicle access and public services and utilities. The school would utilize buses and shuttles to

transport students daily to/from school and promotes a “Bike-to-School Program” due to its location less than one-half mile to the Santa Ana River Trail. Bike lanes on Sunflower Avenue connect the school site to the Santa Ana River Trail. Students may also be dropped off/picked up by vehicles; however, students would not be allowed to drive to campus and park.

***Granting the conditional use permit will not allow a use, density or intensity which is not in accordance with the general plan designation and any applicable specific plan for the property.***

The project complies with the General Plan, and with approval of the requested entitlement, the standards prescribed in the Zoning Code. The proposed use converts an existing office use to a public charter school and is consistent with the Industrial Park General Plan land use designation and MP – Industrial Park zoning classification. The proposed project does not increase the building square footage and does not otherwise change the site’s existing density or intensity. The existing use of the site is office with 152 parking spaces currently available. The proposed parking program for Vista Meridian is 99 spaces, with an additional 53 spaces provided onsite that is shared with Parcel 2 (adjacent corner parcel) pursuant to a reciprocal parking easement. The Vista Meridian parcel has two additional loading/unloading spaces. Parcel 2 has an additional 92 spaces that can be used by Vista Meridian as well. All spaces are available for general public use as needed. Vista Meridian includes an initial capacity of 24 bicycle storage spaces. There are no Specific Plan’s applicable to this site. The project will provide new educational opportunities in the City and a range of options for families with students in grades 9 through 12. The proposed school would provide a local educational opportunity that supports the City’s goals of providing high quality and diverse services to residents.

### III. DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTIFICATION

The following justification is provided to facilitate the City's environmental determination process pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on the scope of the proposed project, the proposed project can be Categorically Exempt from the requirements to prepare additional environmental documentation per the following CEQA Guideline:

#### ***Use of Existing Buildings and Site Improvements for Public Charter School:***

Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities). The Class 1 exemption consists of the repair, maintenance, and/or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities, involving negligible or no expansion of the use beyond that existing at the time of this determination. The proposed project includes the conversion of an existing 37,455 sf, two-story office building to a public charter school use on an existing developed site. The proposed project includes the remodeling of an existing building and minor ancillary site improvements. No physical expansion of the building footprint or increase in height is proposed. The site has ample onsite parking and a vehicle queuing lane to facilitate the proposed use.

Section 15332, Class 32 (In-Fill Development Projects). Class 32 consists of projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the conditions of the section. The proposed project is consistent with the Industrial Park land use designation in General Plan that states "Institutional uses may also be appropriate, provided that land use compatibility and traffic issues have been addressed. Institutional uses will require discretionary approval." The proposed project site is approximately 2.168 acres in size, is located within an urban area, and can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. The project is consistent with the General Plan designations and policies, and is consistent with all applicable zoning regulations upon approval of the requested entitlement. The project site and adjacent areas have no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. As designed, the project will not have significant environmental impacts related to traffic, noise, air quality, and water quality.

In addition, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 (c), none of the six exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to the proposed project.