



Project Address: 1402 Pankratz Street (District 12 – Alder Matthews)
Application Type: Conditional Use
Legistar File ID # [88341](#)
Prepared By: Colin Punt, Planning Division
Report includes comments from other City agencies, as noted.
Reviewed By: Kevin Firchow, AICP, Principal Planner

Summary

Applicant: Chet Droessler; Isthmus Montessori Academy; 1802 Pankratz Street; Madison, WI 53704

Contact: Brad Koning; Sketchworks Architecture; 2501 Parmenter St, Ste 300A

Requested Action: The applicant requests approval of a conditional use for a school in a Suburban Employment (SE) district at 1402 Pankratz Street per §28.082(1) MGO.

Proposal Summary: The applicant proposes to operate a private school in an existing one-story office building at 1402 Pankratz Street.

Applicable Regulations & Standards: This proposal is subject to the standards for Conditional Uses found in §28.183 MGO.

Review Required By: Plan Commission

Summary Recommendation The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the approval standards for Conditional Use are met and **approve** the request for a conditional use for a school in a Suburban Employment (SE) district at 1402 Pankratz Street. This recommendation is subject to input at the public hearing and the conditions recommended by the reviewing agencies beginning on page 4.

Background Information

Parcel Location: The 2.54-acre subject property is located on Packers Avenue (on the west) and between Pankratz Street (on the east) at the southern end of Pankratz Street. The site is within Aldermanic District 12 (Alder Matthews), the Madison Municipal School District, and Urban Design District #4.

Existing Conditions and Land Use: The subject site is zoned SE (Suburban Employment) and includes an existing 35,952-square foot one-story office building and a surface parking lot. The subject site takes access off only Pankratz Street.

Surrounding Land Use and Zoning:

North: A shared surface parking lot with a vacant lot and office buildings beyond, zoned SE;

South: A golf course, zoned PR (Parks and Recreation District);

East: Across Pankratz Street, a golf course, zoned PR; and

West: Across Packers Avenue, a warehouse zoned IL (Industrial-Limited district).

Adopted Land Use Plan: The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) recommends Employment uses for the subject site. The [Northeast Area Plan](#) (2024) has generally similar recommendations.

Zoning Summary: The property is zoned SE (Suburban Employment District).

Requirements	Required	Proposed
Lot Area (sq. ft.)	20,000 sq. ft.	110,621 sq. ft.
Lot Width	65'	>65'
Front Yard Setback	0' or 5'	Adequate
Max. Front Yard Setback: TOD	20'	Existing front yard setback
Side Yard Setback	15' or 20% building height	21.46' existing south side yard Adequate north side yard
Rear Yard Setback	30'	32.65' existing rear yard
Maximum Lot Coverage	75%	Existing lot coverage
Minimum Building Height	2 stories/22' measured to building cornice	1 story existing building
Maximum Building Height	5 stories/68'	1 story existing building

Site Design	Required	Proposed
Number Parking Stalls	No minimum required: TOD	67 existing stalls
Electric Vehicle Stalls	Not required	None
Accessible Stalls	Yes	4
Loading	Not required	Drop-off/pick-up area
Number Bike Parking Stalls	Schools, public and private: 1 space per 5 students (12)	14
Landscaping and Screening	Not required	Existing landscaping
Lighting	Not required	Existing lighting
Building Form and Design	Not required	Existing building

Other Critical Zoning Items	Urban Design (UDD 4), Barrier Free (ILHR 69), Utility Easements, TOD Overlay
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Tables Prepared by Jenny Kirchgatter, Assistant Zoning Administrator

Environmental Corridor Status: The subject site is not located in a mapped environmental corridor.

Public Utilities and Services: This property is served by a range of urban services, including a BRT route.

Previous Approvals: A conditional use for a private school for this user was approved at this location in May 2015 (ID [37782](#)). In April 2018 a conditional use was approved to allow the school to move to 1802 Pankratz Street (ID [50871](#)). Isthmus Montessori Academy has not occupied this building since moving to the building at 1802 Pankratz Street.

Project Description, Analysis, and Conclusion

The applicant, representing Isthmus Montessori Academy (IMA), requests a conditional use to operate a private school in the existing building at 1402 Pankratz Street

IMA previously planned to expand their currently occupied building at 1802 Pankratz Street, but new construction is not currently financially feasible for the school. However, the school's identified need to expand space for the junior and senior high school programs require space unavailable in the current building at 1802 Pankratz Street. The tenant space IMA had previously moved out of at 1402 Pankratz Street is currently available. IMA now intends

to purchase that building and move the junior high and senior high programs from 1802 to 1402. The existing tenants will continue to lease tenant space and will remain until their full lease options expire.

The school initially intends to occupy approximately 8,000 square feet primarily in the northwest wing of 1402 Pankratz St. The letter of intent estimates a capacity of 50 to 60 junior high and senior high students (ages 12 to 18) and five to seven teachers. The plan consists of several “lab” spaces that are flexible workspace areas used for a variety of curriculum. A limited number of enclosed rooms will be provided that include academic subject and workshop activities. Additional restrooms will be provided within the space. A secure reception area will be located near the main entrance for students and visitors. School hours planned to be 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on school days.

As the student population for this location is planned to be junior and senior high, students will be dropped off at the beginning of the day and picked up at the end of the day by their respective supervising adults. Staff will be present to receive or release students at both times of day. Drop-off will be at the building’s main entrance and students will proceed to the secure student entrance inside the main lobby. Traffic flow for student drop-off will operate in a counterclockwise traffic pattern, as indicated on the submitted site plan. There are no buses for drop-off or pick-up. Students bicycling or driving themselves, bicycle parking is located at the northwest corner of the building and designated student vehicle parking stalls will be marked. The letter of intent anticipates that 10% of senior high students will provide their own transportation.

No exterior construction is proposed with the new use; all construction is interior build-out of the existing building.

If approved, the applicant intends to begin construction in summer 2025, with completion before school starts in August 2025.

Conformance with Adopted Plans

The [Comprehensive Plan](#) (2023) recommends Employment uses for the subject site. While schools are not generally included in Employment areas, limited service uses can be included, according to the [Comprehensive Plan](#). The [Northeast Area Plan](#) (2024) has generally similar recommendations, as well as a four-story height limit and a street connection between Pankratz Street and Shopko Drive to the south.

Conditional Use Standards

The applicant requests approval of a conditional use for a school in an SE district per §28.082(1) MGO.

With regard to the conditional use approval standards, the Plan Commission shall not approve a conditional use without due consideration of the City’s adopted plan recommendations, design guidelines, supplemental regulations, and finding that all of the conditional use standards of §28.183(6) M.G.O. are met. Staff advises the Plan Commission that in evaluating the conditional use standards, State law requires that conditional use findings must be based on “substantial evidence” that directly pertains to each standard and not based on personal preference or speculation.

The City Plan Commission shall not approve a conditional use without due consideration of the recommendations in the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan and any applicable, neighborhood, neighborhood development, or special area plan. As noted above, the Planning Division believes that the proposal can be found consistent with the recommendations of the [Comprehensive Plan](#).

Staff provides the following comments regarding standard five, that “adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, internal circulation improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit and vehicles, parking supply (in cases with minimum parking requirements) and other necessary site improvements have been or are being provided.” Traffic Engineering staff have reviewed the drop-off and pick-up plan and believe the queuing as shown is adequate. When considering the provision of adequate bicycle parking, the size and arrangement of the parking lot for queuing, and the provided schedules and enrollment estimates in the letter of intent, staff believes that standard five can be found met.

Staff also notes that the supplemental regulations for schools found in §28.151 MGO require that a school established within a predominantly residential or mixed use area shall have vehicular access to a collector or higher classification street. As this location is in a predominantly employment area, this supplemental regulation is no applicable. Further, given its location and surroundings, no additional transition area between this use and adjacent property is required per the supplemental regulations.

Staff believes that, with the satisfaction of the conditions recommended below, all other conditional use approval standards can be found met or are not applicable to this proposal.

Urban Design Commission Review

The subject site is within Urban Design District 4. However, as no exterior construction is proposed, the proposal has been administratively reviewed and approved by the Secretary of the Urban Design Commission.

Conclusion

The Planning Division believes that the school expansion in an SE zoning district can meet the Conditional Use approval standards, including those related to uses, values, and enjoyment and normal and orderly development. If approved, the Plan Commission retains continuing jurisdiction, meaning that should complaints arise the Commission could take further action, requiring additional conditions or possible revocation of the conditional use should it find the approval standards cannot be met.

A time of report writing, staff is unaware of any comments or concerns from the public.

Recommendation

Planning Division Recommendations (Contact Colin Punt, 608-243-0455)

The Planning Division recommends that the Plan Commission find that the approval standards for Conditional Use are met and **approve** the request for a conditional use for a school in a Suburban Employment (SE) district at **1402 Pankratz Street**. This request is subject to input at the public hearing and the comments and conditions recommended by reviewing agencies below:

Recommended Conditions of Approval: Major/Non-Standard Conditions are Shaded

Zoning Administrator (Contact Jenny Kirchgatter, 608-266-4429)

1. Per Section 28.186(4)(b), the property owner or operator is required to bring the property into compliance with all elements of the approved site plans by the date established by the Zoning Administrator as part of the site and building plan approval. Work with Zoning staff to establish a final site compliance date.

2. Signage approvals are not granted by the Plan Commission. Signage must be reviewed for compliance with Chapter 31 Sign Codes of the Madison General Ordinances and Chapter 33 Urban Design District ordinances. Signage permits are issued by the Zoning Section of the Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development.

City Engineering Division – Mapping Section (Contact Julius Smith, 2608-64-9276)

3. Identify on the plans the lot and block numbers of recorded Certified Survey Map or Plat.
4. The address of the tenant build out for IMA is 1402 Pankratz St Suite 130. The site plan shall reflect a proper street address of the property as reflected by official City of Madison Assessor's and Engineering Division records.

Traffic Engineering Division (Contact Sean Malloy, 608-266-5987)

5. "Stop" signs shall be installed at a height of seven (7) feet from the bottom of the sign at all class III driveway approaches, including existing driveways, behind the property line and noted on the plan. All directional/regulatory signage and pavement markings on the site shall be shown and noted on the plan.

Metro Transit (Contact Tim Sobota, 608-261-4289)

6. Metro Transit operates daily all-day transit service along Packers Avenue near this property - with trips at least every 30 minutes (every 15 minutes or less during the day on weekdays and Saturdays).
7. Metro Transit would initially estimate the following counts of potentially eligible trips towards US Green Building Council/LEED Quality Access to Transit points: 65 Weekday & 48 Weekend. Please contact Metro Transit if additional analysis would be of interest.

Parking Utility (Contact Trent Schultz, 608-246-5806)

8. A Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan is required for the project, per MGO 16.03. The applicant shall submit a TDM Plan to tdm@cityofmadison.com. Applicable fees will be assessed after the TDM Plan is reviewed by staff.

The Planning Division, Fire Department, and Parks Division have reviewed this request and has recommended no conditions of approval.