

ZONING COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

1. **FILE NAME:** Twin Cities German Immersion School **FILE #:** 18-126-865
 2. **APPLICANT:** Rehder And Associates on behalf of Twin Cities German Immersion School
HEARING DATE: December 20, 2018
 3. **TYPE OF APPLICATION:** Variance
 4. **LOCATION:** 1031 Como Ave (between Argyle and Churchill)
 5. **PIN & LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** 62923220173 Warrendale Subj To Esmt, Vac Alley Accruing And Fol, Beg At The Nw Cor Of Lot 19 Thence Sely On The Nely Lot Line 60 Ft Thence S 78 Ft To Pt 48.5 Ft E At Ra From W Line Of Sd Lot Thence Swly 41.4 Ft To Pt On S Line 25 Ft E At Ra From W Line Thence Wly On SD LINE 28 FT TO SW COR THENCE N 130.7 FT TO POB BEING PT OF LOT 19 ALSO ALL OF LOTS 10 THRU LOT 15 & LOTS 20 THRU LOT 23 BLK 4
 6. **PLANNING DISTRICT:** 10 **PRESENT ZONING:** R4
 7. **ZONING CODE REFERENCE:** §§ 61.601; 61.202(b); 63.207
 8. **STAFF REPORT DATE:** 12/14/1028 **BY:** Josh Williams
 9. **DATE RECEIVED:** November 29, 2018 **60 DAY DEADLINE FOR ACTION:** January 25, 2019
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- A. **PURPOSE:** Variances for maximum building height (30' allowed, 33'-1" proposed), maximum lot coverage (35% allowed, 36% proposed), and minimum off-street parking (86 spaces required, 50 spaces proposed).
- B. **PARCEL SIZE:** 77,471 sf, plus 6,020 sf for half the alley (approx. 1.92 acres)
- C. **EXISTING LAND USE:** K – 8 school with 587 students and 80.5 FTE staff
- D. **SURROUNDING LAND USE:**
North: R4 single-family and duplex
East: R4 single-family and multi-family
South: R4 single-family and institutional
West: R4 single-family
- E. **ZONING CODE CITATION:** §61.202(b) authorizes the planning commission to grant variances when related to permits; §61.601(b) lists the findings that must be made for the Planning Commission to grant a variance of code requirements; §63.207 lists off-street parking requirements by use.
- F. **PARKING:** Zoning Code § 63.207 requires a minimum of 1 off-street parking space for each employee of an elementary or middle school. The expected staff FTEs requires 86 off-street parking spaces (fractional spaces including .5 are disregarded). The project is proposing a 36 space parking deficiency. The site plan includes: 1) 26 existing surface off-street vehicle parking spaces, 2) removal of 7 off-street parking spaces, 3) one required bicycle parking space plus excess bicycle parking of 36 spaces, which allows for a 10% parking reduction, and 4) proposed shared parking for 15 off-street parking spaces with an adjacent church at 1040 Como Ave.

G. HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The property is currently developed with a K – 8 school. The applicant is proposing a new 3-story, 23,500 sf building addition for classrooms, gymnasium and cafeteria, as well as expanded green space for use as a play area and infrastructure underneath to manage stormwater run-off from the building addition. The proposed site plan is predicated on removal of the existing Aula (former St. Andrews Church) building and east surface parking lot.

An application was submitted by a third-party seeking to designate the former church as historic. The Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC), at a public hearing on November 5, 2018, voted that the former St. Andrew's Church is eligible for local designation as a Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Site. Sec.73.05 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code requires the HPC to solicit recommendations on any proposed local designation from both the Planning Commission and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). On December 14, the Planning Commission

voted to recommend against proposed designation. Also on December 14, a letter from SHPO supporting the nomination was provided to the Saint Paul HPC. The next step in the nomination process is for the HPC to hold a public hearing on the proposed preservation plan. If the HPC supports the preservation plan, both the nomination and preservation plan will be forwarded to the City Council, along with the recommendations from the HPC, SHPO, and the Planning Commission for a public hearing on the nomination. If the building is designated, the HPC would need to review and approve all exterior work at the property, including any proposed demolition. Any HPC decision on an application for exterior work would be appealable to the City Council.

- H. **DISTRICT COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:** The District 10 Como Community Council has recommended approval of all three variances, and that the Twin Cities German Immersion School not be required to retain or replace the 7 off-street parking spaces currently located east of the former church building.

I. **FINDINGS:**

1. Twin Cities German Immersion School ("TCGIS") has stated that proposed building on their site will allow growth in their enrollment that will require 6 additional employees. This will bring the total number of employees to 86.5, and an off-street parking requirement of 86 spaces. The projected increased in employees is necessary to accommodate the planned expansion of enrollment to 3 sections for each grade, K-8. According to the applicant, the current enrollment of the school is 585 students, and the projected future enrollment is 648 students.

In 2013, TCGIS received site plan approval for construction of a new school building connecting an existing school building on the site to the existing former St. Andrews Church building, and for changes to parking and landscaping, resulting in a net loss of approximately 8 off-street spaces on the site and the addition of play areas and landscaped areas. At the time of that approval, TCGIS reported 32 employees, for an off-street parking requirement of 32 spaces; the site plan approved in 2013 included 33 off-street spaces.
2. The applicant is proposing to meet the off-street parking requirement of 86 spaces through an existing 26-space surface lot, providing 37 secured bicycle parking spaces (1 required) to reduce the required amount of off-street parking by 10%, a shared parking agreement with a neighboring property for 15 off-street spaces, removal of an existing 7-space lot, and a 36-space variance of the requirement.
3. Section 61.601 states that the Planning Commission shall have the power to grant variances from the strict enforcement of the provisions of this code upon a finding that:
 - (a) *The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code.* For variances of maximum building height and maximum lot coverage, this finding is met. The magnitude of those variances is small, and they are reasonable accommodations for an allowed use that requires larger buildings than other uses permitted in the zoning district. This finding can be met for the variance of minimum off-street parking, provided the applicant does not further reduce the amount of off-street parking provided on-site. The proposed site plan would result in the loss 7 off-street parking spaces currently located to the east of the former church. Requirements to amend the site plan to limit the employment at the school to no more than 86.5 full-time equivalent employees and to include 7 additional off-street parking spaces should be conditions of approval of the off-street parking variance, and the approved variance should be for 29 spaces less than required, not the requested 36.

- (b) *The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.* This finding is met. Policy 1.55 of the Land Use Chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* calls for the City to “collaborate with public and private elementary and secondary schools in conjunction with construction or major remodeling”. The requested variances are reasonable to accommodate the proposed school building height and total lot coverage, and to accommodate the projected student enrollment and corresponding staffing needs as described by the applicant.

The proposed variances are also consistent with the *Como Park Community Plan*, which calls for the neighborhood to be home to institutions offering desirable services close to home. The requested variances help facilitate the construction of a new building that meets the needs of TCGIS for projected enrollment and staffing.

- (c) *The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision; that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.* This finding is met for the variances of maximum building height and maximum lot coverage. The proposed new building would occupy a similar though slightly larger footprint as the existing former church, and will be of similar mass and slightly lower height than the existing building. The requested variance of maximum lot coverage is small relative to the size of the property, and reducing the footprint of the proposed new building to meet the maximum lot coverage requirement, while potentially feasible, would have a minimal impact on the overall site plan while potentially negatively impacting the functionality of the proposed building for its intended use.

The school is an allowed use, and the configuration of buildings on the lot does not provide sufficient area to construct additional, new parking sufficient to meet the off-street parking requirement. This finding can be met for the variance of minimum off-street parking, provided the applicant does not further reduce the amount of off-street parking provided on-site or increase the number of full-time equivalent employees above the 86.5 covered by the requested variance. The proposed site plan would result in the loss 7 off-street parking spaces currently located to the east of the former church. A requirement to amend the site plan to include 7 additional off-street parking spaces should be a condition of approval.

- (d) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.* This finding is met for the variances of maximum building height and maximum lot coverage. The proposed new school building is an allowed use and will, if approved, occupy a similar though slightly larger footprint as the existing former church, and will be of similar mass and slightly lower height than the existing building. The former church building, which will be replaced by the proposed school building, was built long prior to the current owner’s control of the site.

This finding can be met for the variance of minimum off-street parking, provided the applicant does not further reduce the amount of off-street parking provided on-site. The proposed site plan would result in the loss 7 off-street parking spaces currently located to the east of the former church. A requirement to amend the site plan to include 7 additional off-street parking spaces should be a condition of approval, and the approved variance should be for 29 spaces, not the requested 36.

In 2014, the applicant constructed a new building connecting an already existing school building on the property with the former church building. At that time, surface parking to south and west of the existing school building was removed to

accommodate the new school building and an outdoor play space. Based on review of a 2011 aerial photo of the site, it appears that a least 24 off-street parking spaces were removed. Also at that time, according to site plan records, the former rectory building, to the west of the former church was demolished and replaced by a new 26-space parking lot, and the existing parking lot to the east of the former church was reduced in size by 10 spaces, from 17 to the current 7. The net impact to off-street parking on the site was a loss of 8 spaces. The net loss of 8 off-street spaces at the time of the 2014 expansion can be off-set by a shared parking agreement for use of 15 spaces with the owner of the adjacent property at 1040 Como Avenue. Approval and monitoring of the shared parking agreement by the Zoning Administrator should be a condition of approval.

- (e) *The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located.* This finding is met. Elementary and middle schools are allowed uses in the R4 one-family residential district, and the proposed variances do not change the use.
- (f) *The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.* This finding is met for all proposed variances. The proposed building will be similar in mass to the existing building proposed for removal, and the use already exists in the area. The variances will allow increased enrollment and employment at TCGIS, increasing traffic to and from site. The applicant has provided a traffic impact study (TIS) for review by Public Works. Final approval of the study by Public Works, along with implementation of any recommendations therein, should be a condition of approval of the variances.

J. **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Based on the above findings, staff recommends approval of the variances for maximum building height (30' allowed, 33'-1" proposed), maximum lot coverage (35% allowed, 36% proposed), and partial approval of the variance of minimum off-street parking (87 spaces required, 50 spaces proposed by applicant, 57 recommended), subject to the following additional conditions:

1. Final plans for this use must be approved by the Zoning Administrator. Those plans shall include seven (7) additional off-street parking spaces but shall otherwise be in substantial compliance with the plan submitted and approved as part of this application.
2. The applicant shall submit a traffic impact study (TIS) for final review and acceptance by Public Works, and the implementation of any recommendations therein contained is required.
3. Approval of and monitoring by the Zoning Administrator of a shared parking agreement with the owners of the property at 1040 Como Avenue for 15 off-street spaces is required.
4. Twin Cities German Immersion School shall have not more than 86.5 full-time equivalent employees at 1031 Como Avenue.



APPLICATION FOR ZONING VARIANCE

Department of Safety and Inspections

375 Jackson Street, Suite 220

Saint Paul, MN 55101

General DSI Line: 651-266-9008

RECEIVED

NOV 26 2018

By: City of St Paul DSI

Zoning office use only

File no. 18.126865

Fee \$856

Tentative hearing date:

12.20.18

APPLICANT

Name Twin Cities German Immersion School Company K-12 School

Address 1031 Como Ave.

City Saint Paul St. MN Zip 55105 Daytime phone (651)492-7106

Property interest of applicant (owner, contract purchaser, etc.) Owner

Name of owner (if different) _____

PROPERTY LOCATION

Address 1031 Como Ave.

Legal description: See Attached

(attach additional sheet if necessary)

Lot size 1.76 Acres Present zoning R4 Present use K-12 Education

Proposed Use K-12 Education Single Family Residential

Variance[s] requested:

1. Lot Coverage
2. Maximum Height
3. Required Parking

Supporting Information: Supply the necessary information that is applicable to your variance request, provide details regarding the project, explain why a variance is needed. Attach additional sheet as necessary. Clearly state how each of the required six findings are met (list them).

See Attached

Applicant's signature

Date

11.9.18

City agent

VARIANCE

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION:

Parcel 1:

Lots 10, 13, 14, 15, 20, 22 and 23, Block 4 in "Warrendale"; and that part of Lot 19, Block 4, "Warrendale", described as beginning at the most northerly corner of said lot; thence Southwesterly, along the Northwesternly line of said lot, to the most westerly corner of said lot; then Easterly, along the Southwesterly line of said lot, to a point thereon 25 feet Southeasterly from, and as measured at right angles, to said Northwesternly line; thence Northeasterly 41.4 feet to the point 48.5 feet Southeasterly from, and as measured at right angles, to said Northwesternly line; thence Northeasterly to a point on the Northeasterly line of said lot distant 60 feet Southeasterly, as measured along said Northeasterly line, from the most Northerly corner of said lot; thence Northwesternly, along said Northeasterly line to the place of beginning, according to the recorded plat thereof, Ramsey County, Minnesota.

"Twin Cities German Immersion School" is commonly referenced as the "owner" or "school" throughout the variance.

Parcel 2:

Lots 11, 12, and 21, Block 4 "Warrendale", according to the recorded plat thereof, Ramsey County, Minnesota

ZONED:

R-4 One-Family Residential

Height Max		Yard Setbacks (Ft)		
Stories	Feet	Front	Side	Rear
(3)	30' (l)	25(g)	4 (h)	25

(g) Where at least fifty (50) percent of the front footage of any block is built up with principal structures, the minimum front yard setback for new structures shall be the average setback of the existing structures, or if the block average is more than the minimum required front setback listed in the dimensional standard table, it shall be the setback requirement in the district plus half the amount the average setback is greater than the setback requirement in the table. Existing structures set back twenty (20) percent more or less than the average shall be discounted from the formula.

(h) For permitted and conditional principal uses allowed in residential districts other than residential uses, the side yard setback shall be a minimum of nine (9) feet.

(l) For R1—R4 residential districts in planning districts 14 and 15, excluding property with local heritage preservation site or district designation, the following maximum building heights shall apply at side setback lines: 28 feet in R1, 26 feet in R2, 24 feet in R3, and 22 feet in R4. One (1) foot shall be added to the maximum building height per each one (1) foot the portion of the building is set back from the nearest side setback line, to a maximum height of thirty-five (35) feet. Building height for flat roofs shall be measured to the highest point of the parapet, if present.

Project Description:

The Twin Cities German Immersion School proposes an approximate 23,500 s.f. building addition on the current location of the "Aula", (church) to meet the programmatic needs of the school.

The addition includes a 7,200 s.f. gymnasium, kitchen and cafeteria and 8,300 s.f. classroom space. The addition offers improvements which provide greater safety and security measures as well as accessibility.

The design process included an extensive investigation of the location, size and cost of the addition. This included review of a possible addition on both the existing west parking lot and the east turf field space evaluating the values of each location. At the beginning of the investigative process these were the preferred two locations as there was concern of disruption to the school year and students during construction. Ultimately with the review of numerous options including multiple other sites, the project submitted was selected. This area offers no available properties that are affordable to meet the needs of the Twin Cities German School.

The proposed addition includes the use of similar brick material, metal panels and architectural precast public art on the exterior facades. Windows are provided on all elevations as well as the gym.

The gym floor is below grade and will be located on the same elevation as the existing lower level of the school, [WHICH IS] the current cafeteria. This arrangement provides better internal circulation and greater accessibility. The classroom space is located above the gymnasium and is on the same floor elevation as the existing second floor. There is a one story addition on the east side that includes the kitchen and cafeteria which aligns with the first floor and provides many windows making for a pleasant space. The proposed cafeteria location is a much improved space when compared to the current below grade cafeteria's limited windows, convoluted ADA accessibility, minimally sufficient exterior access. Even though the below grade cafeteria is accessible, access to the elevator is removed from the main circulation to the cafeteria.

Variance(s) requested:

1. LOT COVERAGE

Sec. 66.232. - Maximum lot coverage.

In residential districts, principal buildings shall not cover more than thirty-five (35) percent of any zoning lot. For R1—R4 residential districts in planning districts 14 and 15, excluding property with local heritage preservation site or district designation, the total lot coverage of all buildings, including accessory buildings, shall not exceed forty (40) percent.

TOTAL LOT COVERAGE

At the time of TCGIS purchase	65% lot coverage	50,341sf/ 77,471 sf
After TCGIS first project	60% lot coverage	46,539 sf/ 77,471 sf
After TCGIS proposed project	56% lot coverage	42,935 sf/ 77,471 sf]

PRINCIPAL BUILDING COVERAGE 77,471+6020= 83,491

At the time of TCGIS purchase	25% principal building coverage	21,081 sf/ 83,491sf
After TCGIS first project	32% principal building coverage	26,827 sf/ 83,491sf
After TCGIS proposed project	36% principal building coverage	30,290 sf/ 83,491sf

1. Maximum lot coverage is 35%. The proposed addition increases the lot coverage to 36%. A variance is requested to allow for the additional 1% of lot coverage.

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code

- The variance is in harmony with the general intent of the zoning code.
- The lot coverage of the site has been improved since the school has owned the property decreasing from 65% to 55%. When originally purchased, 65% of the property was covered in impervious surface consisting of asphalt paving, concrete sidewalk and building structures.
- The principal building coverage for the proposed project will minimally increase from 35% to 39%
- The proposed building would be constructed of similar building materials to the existing with [mass less assuming from the street than the Aula (church), which would be demolished to allow for the construction of the proposed building addition.
- The addition's massing is mitigated by a variety of scales and setbacks, and the footprint is comparable to the footprint of the existing Aula (church) building.
- The proposed use of the building addition is consistent with the uses allowed in the zone R4 neighborhood.

2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan

- The request of this variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allowed use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.
- Over the history of the property, the school has reduced the amount of impervious surface and improved storm water management.
- The school proposes a large turf play area with a subsurface infiltration basin to address and handle onsite the rain water
- The 2013/14 project included a stormwater, infiltration system below the existing west parking lot.

3. The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision and that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.

- There are practical difficulties inherited with the purchase of the property that the owner has taken steps to improve with each project. The owner intends to use the property in a reasonable manner.
 - The project as proposed addresses the practical difficulties created by the previous owner, inheriting significant lot coverage of asphalt paving, concrete and building.
 - The existing church, referred to “Aula” by the owner, height is approximately 38’6” above grade, measured to the midpoint of the pitched roof. 46’9” to the peak and 32’ to the eave. This is 4’6” higher than the 3’ height variance requested. Even though the footprint is slightly larger, the proposed addition is smaller in scale and less assuming than the existing facility.
4. **Plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.**
- The owner did not create the lot coverage issues inherited with the purchase of the property from the previous owners.
 - This immediate area offers no available and economically feasible properties which meet the needs of the Twin Cities German School available to meet the 35% maximum lot coverage.
 - The owner has worked towards improving and creating a more environmentally sustainable environment with storm water management systems and rain gardens.
 - The mass of the proposed building is less imposing than the current Aula.
5. **The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located**
- The variance does not propose any use not allowed in the zoning district.
 - The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allow use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.
6. **The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area**
- The variance does not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.
 - The mass of the proposed building is less imposing than the current Aula.
 - The exterior of the addition will be attractive. The materials proposed to be used on the project are consistent and compatible with the materials of the Aula and the 2013 addition and will serve the school well into the future.
 - Twin Cities German Immersion School is a highly recognized educational institution and a great asset to the community. It’s stability will only increase property values over time.
 - The lot coverage percentage and water management has only improved under the ownership of the current owner.
 - Landscaping, play areas, turf fields and rain gardens have added to the character of the surrounding area.

2. HEIGHT MAXIMUM

R-4 One-Family Residential allows for Height Maximum of 30'. The project proposes a roof deck height between 32'-8 and 33'-1". The existing church, referred to "Aula" by the owner, height is approximately 38'6" above grade, measured to the midpoint of the pitched roof and 46'9" to the peak and 32' to the eave. The 38'-6" is 4'6" higher than the 3' height variance requested.

We are matching the finish floor elevations of the existing school building to improve accessibility between all areas of the building. Construction methods and mechanical systems were different when the school was constructed providing very little floor to floor height dimensions to accommodate the structure and building systems.

Established elements around the building do not allow for much grade changes between existing exterior elements such as play areas, parking lots, and the finish floor elevations

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code

- The variance is in harmony with the general intent of the zoning code.
- The requested 3' variance from 30' to 34' will be negligible in comparison to the height of the Aula building currently located at the same set back and 8'6" above the max height. With the tallest part to the peak approximately 16'-9" above maximum height.
- The proposed elevations vary between 32'8 and 33'2 above grade, depending on the grading around the building. Grade elevations are fairly flat and tie into many existing fixed points around the building perimeter such as play area, parking lot, city sidewalks and entrances. Modification of grades around the building were investigated, but were determined to not improve the way the site functioned.
- The below code section allows for up to 35' for side setbacks in R1—R4 residential districts. Based on the distance to each side setback lines, this would be allowed for this property.
 - (I) *For R1—R4 residential districts in planning districts 14 and 15, excluding property with local heritage preservation site or district designation, the following maximum building heights shall apply at side setback lines: 28 feet in R1, 26 feet in R2, 24 feet in R3, and 22 feet in R4. One (1) foot shall be added to the maximum building height per each one (1) foot the portion of the building is set back from the nearest side setback line, to a maximum height of thirty-five (35) feet. Building height for flat roofs shall be measured to the highest point of the parapet, if present.*
- The proposed building would be constructed of similar building materials to the existing with mass less assuming from the street than the existing church which would be demolished to allow for the construction of the proposed building addition.
- The Building mass is broken up to different scales and footprint is fairly comparable to the footprint of the existing Aula (church) building.
- The proposed use of the building addition is consistent with the uses allowed in the zone R4 neighborhood.

2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan

- The request of this variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allow use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.

3. The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision and that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.

- There are practical difficulties inherited with the purchase of the property that the owner has taken steps to improve with each project. The owner intends to use the property in a reasonable manner.
 - The project as proposed resolves the elevation changes between the original educational building and the Aula (church) and difference in finish floor level and grade.
 - The floors of the original classroom building establish the finish floor levels of the 2014 addition, which do not align with the finish floor levels of the Aula (church) facility. This requires a lot of [floor] level transitions for the students which is difficult for many younger students as well as those with disabilities. Multiple lifts and elevators have been installed to navigate between the buildings. There are no immediate, direct accessible routes between the buildings because the original school and Aula installed the elevators at opposite ends of the buildings requiring someone with a disability to go back and forth, and up and down levels to travel between buildings.
 - The 2014 addition intended to resolve some of the elevation changes. However it was not structurally feasible and cost prohibited with the way the Aula was constructed.
 - The existing church, referred to "Aula" by the owner, height is approximately 38'6" above grade, measured to the midpoint of the pitched roof. 46'9" to the peak and 32' to the eave. The existing condition is 4'6" higher than the 3' height variance requested.
4. **Plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.**
- The owner did not create the floor elevation issues inherited with the purchase of the property from the previous owners.
 - The owner did not create the floor to floor heights and construction type inherited with the existing building. Raising the height of the roof better accommodates typical construction and building systems.
 - Several of the stairs in the Aula are narrower than what is allowed per code but were unable to be modified because they are structurally integral with the stairwells. These narrow stairways contribute to the general poor building circulation that this project addresses. The current Aula is 16,167 s.f. total building square footage, 12,654 square feet or 78% of the total building square footage is usable. The unusable space consists of un-accessible rooms, excess mechanical space, non-compliant stairways, bell towers, entry vestibule and choir stairs and loft. The owner has worked towards improving and creating a more accessible facility for its students.
5. **The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located**
- The variance does not propose any use not allowed in the zoning district.
 - The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allow use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.
6. **The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area**
- The variance does not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.
 - The building does not impair the adequate supply of light to the adjacent properties being on the north side and lower in elevation than the existing building. The surrounding buildings will cast more shadows against the play area and parking lot then it will cast against neighboring properties. The elevation has windows on all sides, brick detailing and cast panel public art. It is believed that the development of this facility will not negatively affect the property values of the surrounding areas and will benefit the community as a whole. The school is currently viewed as a great addition and resource to the community.
 - The mass of the proposed building is less imposing than the current Aula.
 - The materials proposed to be used on the project are consistent and compatible with the materials of the Aula and the 2014 addition.
 - The height of the proposed addition is significantly less in height than the Aula [church] and has no negative effect on the essential character of the surrounding area.

- Landscaping, play areas, turf fields and rain gardens have added to the character of the surrounding area

3. **PARKING SPACE .**

Elementary/middle/junior high school

1 space per full-time employee

TCGIS currently has 80.5 FTEs.

The addition will add (6) six more FTE's, once construction is complete for a total of 87 FTE's

*(6) six staff walk or use mass transit to commute to school.

Parking Calculations

	<u>Exist</u>	<u>Additional</u>	<u>Req.</u>
Teacher or administrators (part or full-time)	80.5	6	86

Parking Provided

TCGIS lot	26
Bike rack spaces (10% of required) 36 spaces	9
Parking Agreement with OPC (across street)	15
	50 parking
<u>Difference</u>	36 spaces

Staff Walkers: 6

Staff Bikers: 7

Staff mass transit: 3

Total 16 do not drive, reducing the parking discrepancy to 20

Total of 86 staff or 18% don't drive

Twin Cities German Immersion consistently has a fair amount of teachers from Germany that stay between 1 to 3 years and typically do not invest in automobiles. Culturally they are very accustomed to riding a bike or using public transportation. Many rely on public transportation, car pool, walking and riding bike as their mode of transportation to Twin Cities German Immersion School. When we add staff with the building project expansion, Twin Cities German Immersion will have a total of 87, so potentially an additional 1-2 staff would not drive.

Although on-street parking does not count towards off street parking, there is available on-street parking both adjacent to Twin Cities German Immersion's site as well 10 spaces across Como Ave. from the site. Additional space is available on Jessamine Ave. W. which is located one block to the south, adjacent to the train track easement. Parking does not interfere with residential use as several garages and few, if any houses abut Jessamine Street. Space is almost always available. There is about 950 lineal feet of curb along Jessamine Ave. from Chatsworth to Churchill available for parking. A generous length for parallel parking stalls is 25', which would accommodate approximately 34 cars on the north side of Jessamine.

63.210. - Bicycle parking.

(a) Bicycle parking required. Bicycle parking shall be provided according to the greater of the following:

- (1) Off-street parking facilities shall provide a minimum of one (1) secure bicycle parking space for every twenty (20) motor vehicle parking spaces, disregarding fractional bicycle spaces. A minimum of one (1) secure bicycle parking space shall be provided for an off-street parking facility with twelve (12) or more motor vehicle parking spaces; or*
- (2) For dwelling units, a minimum of one (1) secure bicycle parking space shall be provided for every fourteen (14) dwelling units. A fractional space up to and including one-half (½) shall be disregarded, and any fraction over one-half (½) shall require one (1) secure bicycle parking space.*

(b) Substitution for required motor vehicle parking. Bicycle parking may be substituted for up to ten (10) percent of minimum off-street parking requirements. For the purpose of calculating a substitution, two (2) secure bicycle lockers are the equivalent of one (1) parking space; four (4) spaces in a secure bicycle rack are the equivalent of one

1. The variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the zoning code

- The variance is in harmony with the general intent of the zoning code.
- Shared use parking agreements as well as encouraging students and faculty staff to walk or ride bikes to school is consistent with the sustainability efforts and vision of the City of Saint Paul to reduce the over building of parking lots. The school has many students and staff that ride their bikes.
- The school's current parking is being provided by a combination of off-street parking provided on the school property, off-street parking being provided on the OPC property and on-street parking. The school uses on-street parking during the day, when most people are at work. Shared parking is consistent with the cities goal to fully use existing parking through partnerships before using existing green space to create more.
- Twin Cities German Immersion School is willing to work with the neighborhood to create safe streets for children (proper signage) and be courteous of the neighbors (not parking too close to driveways, etc.). The school is also investing over \$12,000 in a traffic and parking study from a reputable traffic engineering firm.
- In lieu of using the remaining open area for more parking, the school proposes a large turf play area with a subsurface infiltration basin to address and handle onsite the rain water.
- The 2013/14 project included a storm water, infiltration system below the existing west parking lot.
- The proposed use of the building addition is consistent with the uses allowed in the zone R4 neighborhood.

2. The variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan

- The request of this variance is consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- Shared use parking agreements as well as encouraging students and faculty staff to walk or ride bikes to school is consistent with the sustainability efforts and vision of the City of Saint Paul to reduce the over building of parking lots
- The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allow use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.
- Over the history of the property, the school has reduced the amount of impervious surface and improved storm water management.
- In lieu of using the remaining open are for more parking, the school proposes a large turf play area with a subsurface infiltration basin to address and handle onsite the rain water
- The 2013/14 project included a storm water, infiltration system below the existing west parking lot.
- There are many K-12 facilities throughout the City of Saint Paul that provide limited parking [which appears to not meet the current parking requirements] or has shared parking agreements. Much of the limitations are due to dense urban environments that are confined and adjacent properties are not available for purchase/ expansion without affecting the neighborhood in some manner.
- Some examples:
 - Metro Deaf School (Brewster Site) limited parking
 - Nova Classical Academy has a parking agreement with City of Saint Paul
 - Linwood Monroe Arts Plus Lower School
 - Community of Peace Academy has limited parking and shared parking agreement.
 - Saint Anthony Park Elementary (SAP) only has on-street parking. SAP just completed a new construction project and no parking was added.

- Chelsea Heights Elementary only has 11 off street parking spots.
- Great River (K-12) has approximately 30 parking spots.

3. **The applicant has established that there are practical difficulties in complying with the provision and that the property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the provision. Economic considerations alone do not constitute practical difficulties.**

- There are practical difficulties inherited with the purchase of the property that the owner has taken steps to improve with each project. The owner intends to use the property in a reasonable manner.
- The owner had discussions with multiple properties over a period of nearly two years to try to meet the parking or lot coverage requirements. The owner couldn't negotiate a price that was feasible for the project.
- The school has a parking agreement with the OPC, located across the street at 1040 Como Ave.

4. **Plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowner.**

- The owner did not create the limited expansion opportunities needed to address the parking shortage or needed open green space.
- Limited parking in a dense urban environment is not unique to this school. It is difficult for schools in an urban area to acquire property sufficient to build a free-standing gymnasium or parking lot. The option to place parking or an addition on their east outdoor turf field would leave them without a playing field. It also poses accessibility, security and maintenance issues being removed from their primary facility. Allowing the turf field to provide the storm water management requirements preserves the student's play area.
- This nearby community does not have an open lot available, sufficient in size to accommodate the addition, parking, and green space.
- The size of the addition is based on the programmatic requirements of the school. The addition has been laid out on the site as efficiently as practical and desires to retain outdoor play space. The owner has attempted to acquire several nearby properties to use for additional parking and /or green space.
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5. **The variance will not permit any use that is not allowed in the zoning district where the affected land is located**

- The variance does not propose any use not allowed in the zoning district.
- The proposed use of the building addition is an extension of the current use as a K-12 educational facility which is an allow use in the zoned area R4 neighborhood.

6. **The variance will not alter the essential character of the surrounding area**

- The variance does not alter the essential character of the surrounding area.
- Landscaping, play areas, turf fields and rain gardens have added to the character of the surrounding area.

1031 Como Avenue (year 2011)

