

**CITY OF TEMPE  
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION**

**Meeting Date: 10/25/2022  
Agenda Item: 11**

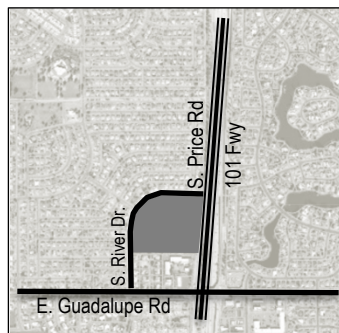
**ACTION:** Request a Use Permit to allow a K-8 private school for VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, located at 6240 South River Drive. The applicant is Dan Kuiper.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** N/A

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff – Approve, subject to conditions

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** VALLEY CHRISTIANS SCHOOLS (PL220265) is requesting a use permit to allow a new private middle school on a shared campus with an existing church. No new buildings are proposed for this use. The request includes the following:

ZUP220054 Use Permit to allow a K-8 private school in the R-3 and AG zoning districts.



Property Owner	Sun Valley Community Church
Applicant	Dan Kuiper, Valley Christian Schools
Zoning Districts	R-3 Multi-Family Residential Limited and AG Agricultural
Site Area	16.36 acres, 712,745. s.f.
Building Area	+/- 91,380 s.f.
Lot Coverage	13% (25% max. allowed AG, 50% max. allowed in R-3)
Landscape Area	28% (25% min. required in R-3)
Building Height	30 ft (30 max. allowed)
Building Setbacks	East Front (on Price Road) 40', South Side 15', West Rear (on River Drive) 20' North Side (on Watson Drive) existing setbacks based on AG, the most restrictive of two districts.
Vehicle Parking	671 spaces (509 min. required)
Bicycle Parking	65 spaces minimum required
Hours of Operation	7:00am to 6:00pm M-F, occasional weekday evening or Saturday school events, no Sunday use

**ATTACHMENTS:** Development Project File

**STAFF CONTACT(S):** Diana Kaminski, Senior Planner (480) 858-2391

Department Director: Jeff Tamulevich, Community Development Director

Legal review by: N/A

Prepared by: Diana Kaminski, Senior Planner

Reviewed by: Steve Abrahamson, Principal Planner

## COMMENTS

The site is located north of Guadalupe Road, west of the Price Road and 101 Freeway, adjacent to the existing Valley Christian Elementary School campus to the south. The property is accessed from Price Road and Watson and River drives. Single-family residences are located on the west side of River Drive and north of Watson Drive. The site is located in the Bethany Community Church Subdivision and the Kiwanis/The Lakes Character Area Plan. The nearest public school to the site is Fuller Elementary School, approximately 2,000 feet north west of the property, which is similar in lot size to this site and adjacent to Optimist Park. The site contains six existing educational buildings including classrooms, a cafeteria/indoor activity room and office space along with a worship center. The applicant was a former tenant of the site from 1982 to 1992. Valley Christian High School became Valley Christian Schools and four years ago purchased the property to the south for operations of their elementary school. The proposed expansion to the north on the church property would add a middle school capacity to the campus and share resources with the school and church communities. The letter of explanation provides more details on the history and operations of the school.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Upon completion of this report on October 17<sup>th</sup>, staff has received one email and one phone call of inquiry. Both were asking why the existing school in the neighborhood was getting a use permit, not realizing they were two different properties and this was for the former school site on the parcel to the north. Staff explained the code and process requirements to expand the school to the other site and there were no further questions or concerns expressed.

**USE PERMIT** The proposed use requires a Use Permit to allow a private school within the AG and R-3 zoning districts.

Section 6-308(E) Approval criteria for Use Permit (*in italics*):

1. *Any significant increase in vehicular or pedestrian traffic*; The original site was designed for higher capacity use with a school and church on site and had three additional buildings which were later removed and restored as landscaped open space. The parking provided is 671 spaces and the proposed use requires 509 parking spaces. The church functions primarily on weekends and the school use is during the week. The primary times of traffic would be 8:00-8:20 am and 3:20-4:00 pm weekdays for vehicle drop off and students walking or biking to campus. This traffic is supervised by staff on site and a site circulation plan is provided to show queuing for student drop off and pick up. The proposed use permit is a re-introduction of a prior use on the site and would not significantly increase traffic beyond the original use and design of the site, which had higher capacity with the buildings that were removed.
2. *Nuisance arising from the emission of odor, dust, gas, noise, vibration, smoke, heat or glare at a level exceeding that of ambient conditions*; the area is located adjacent to the 101 freeway which has higher ambient noise than general neighborhood conditions. There is an existing elementary school to the south of the site, which may have playground noise from students during recess. The noise levels would be limited by business hours of the school and contained within the playground areas near the buildings. Although the school will activate the site during weekdays, it is not anticipated that nuisances from this use will exceed that of the ambient conditions.
3. *Contribution to the deterioration of the neighborhood or to the downgrading of property values, which is in conflict with the goals, objectives or policies for rehabilitation, redevelopment or conservation as set forth in the city's adopted plans or General Plan*; the site has been underutilized for the size of the property with the church use and the western side on River Drive is missing landscape. The addition of a school to the site will activate the area and provide investment in revitalizing the property and requirements to restore landscape to the site. Having a private school serving K through 8 within walking distance to the neighborhood promotes a walkable community with school choice supporting families in the area.
4. *Compatibility with existing surrounding structures and uses*; the proposed school is planning to utilize existing building infrastructure on the church campus and no new buildings are needed. The existing buildings were approved and built for school use, so this is a compatible use for these structures in this area.
5. *Adequate control of disruptive behavior both inside and outside the premises which may create a nuisance to the surrounding area or general public*; the school is proposing security fencing between buildings to provide security to the campus and control points of egress. Outdoor activities are supervised by staff and on-site security is provided during school hours and events. There are up to 19 staff utilized for student drop off and pick up times to help monitor behavior and assure safe arrival and departure of students. The applicant has four years of experience on the campus to the south of this site, and more than 40 years of experience in education within the valley.

### REASONS FOR APPROVAL:

Based on the information provided by the applicant, the public input received and the above analysis staff supports the approval of the requested Use Permit. This request meets the required criteria and will conform to the conditions.

### SHOULD AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION BE TAKEN ON THIS REQUEST, THE FOLLOWING NUMBERED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL SHALL APPLY, BUT MAY BE AMENDED BY THE DECISION-MAKING BODY.

#### CONDITION(S) OF APPROVAL: (Non-standard conditions are identified in bold)

EACH NUMBERED ITEM IS A CONDITION OF APPROVAL. THE DECISION-MAKING BODY MAY MODIFY, DELETE OR ADD TO THESE CONDITIONS.

1. If Building Permits are required, this Use Permit is valid after Building Permits have been obtained, the required inspections have been completed and a Final Inspection has been passed. As part of the Building Permit process, on-site storm water retention may be required to be verified or accomplished on this Site.
2. The Use Permit is valid for the plans as submitted within this application. Any additions or modifications may be submitted for review during the building plan check process.
3. No outdoor live entertainment or outdoor speakers shall be allowed.
4. Hours of operation shall be between 7:00 am and 6:00pm Monday through Friday, with allowed evening events no more than once a week or Saturday events no more than once a month.
5. All nonconforming building lighting shall be removed and replaced with compliant light fixtures. Details can be resolved during Building Safety Plan Review.
6. Replace all dead or missing trees along the River Drive landscape area and in the parking lot landscape islands; along with any other missing landscape material.
7. Provide bicycle park racks for a minimum of 66 bike parking spaces per City of Tempe Public Works Department bicycle rack detail T-578 standard (1 rack parks two bikes).
8. Development Plan Review is required for any site plan, landscape plan or building elevation modifications prior to occupancy of the campus to assure security fencing and lighting is provided and landscaping is brought up to code.

#### CODE/ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS:

THE BULLETED ITEMS REFER TO EXISTING CODE OR ORDINANCES THAT PLANNING STAFF OBSERVES ARE PERTINENT TO THIS CASE. THE BULLET ITEMS ARE INCLUDED TO ALERT THE DESIGN TEAM AND ASSIST IN OBTAINING A BUILDING PERMIT AND ARE NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST.

#### USE PERMIT:

- The Use Permit is valid for VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS and may be transferable to successors in interest through an administrative review with the Community Development Director, or designee.
- Any modifications to the site or landscape or building elevations requires planning entitlement approval through the Development Plan Review process.
- The use permit approval shall be void if the use is not commenced or if an application for a building permit has not been submitted, whichever is applicable, within twelve (12) months after the use permit is granted or within the time stipulated by the decision-making body.
- Specific requirements of the **Zoning and Development Code (ZDC)** are not listed as a condition of approval but will apply to any application. To avoid unnecessary review time and reduce the potential for multiple plan check submittals, become familiar with the ZDC. Access the ZDC through <http://www.tempe.gov/zoning> or purchase from Development Services.
- All business signs shall receive a Sign Permit. Contact sign staff at 480-350-8435.
- Any intensification or expansion of use shall require a new Use Permit.

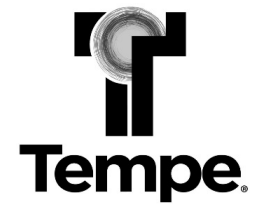
- All required permits and clearances shall be obtained from the Audit and Licensing Division of the City of Tempe prior to the Use Permit becoming effective.
- All required Federal, State, County, and Municipal permits, licenses, and clearances shall be obtained, or the Use Permit is void.

**HISTORY & FACTS:**

- 1930-1976 Historic aerials show this site used for agricultural purposes
- May 27, 1971 City Council approved an ordinance for annexation of this area into Tempe.
- July 20, 1977 Design Review Board approved the gymnasium building for Bethany Community Church at 6240 S. Price Road. The same organization had building permits for a school located south of the subject site at 6304 S. Price Road.
- November 6, 1979 Bethany Community Church first classroom building was completed.
- 1981-1989 Property record card information provided additional details on entitlements with Design Review Board and Board of Adjustment for various buildings constructed on the site.
- June 26, 1985 Board of Adjustment approved a variance for Bethany Community Church to allow the name of Valley Christian High School on the existing 24 s.f. freestanding identification sign, a variance to increase the maximum allowable area of a directional sign from 2 s.f. to 9 s.f., a variance to increase the maximum allowable height of the directional sign from 3' to 3.5' in height, and a variance to allow identification and advertising copy on the directional sign.
- May 5, 2005 City Council approved a Subdivision Plat for Bethany Community Center for Lot 1.

**ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT CODE REFERENCE:**

- Section 3-102, Permitted Uses in Residential Districts
- Section 6-308, Use Permit



# DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FILE

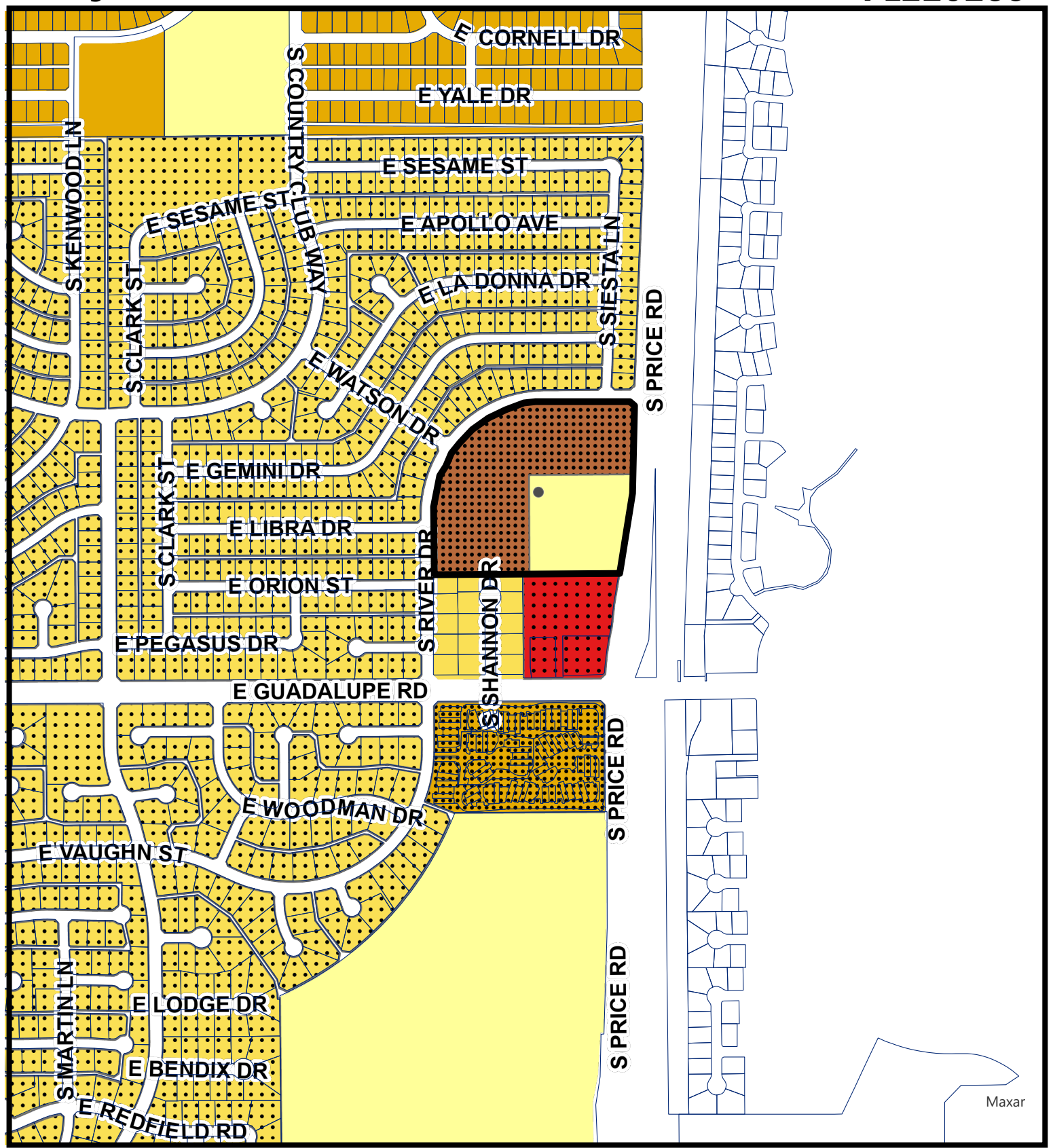
for

## VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (PL220265)

### ATTACHMENTS:

1. Location Map
2. Aerial
3. Site Context Photos
- 4-5. Letter of Explanation
6. Aerial Campus Traffic Circulation Plan
7. Aerial Campus Fencing Plan
8. Campus Map with building references and exiting
9. Building Map with uses and square footages
- 10-11. Floor Plans of Building A (Typical Classroom arrangement)
12. Campus Site Plan with Parking Calculations

# Valley Christian Schools



Planned Commercial Center Neighborhood (PCC-1)	Override 1	Private
Agricultural (AG)	Twelve Point	Railroad
Single-Family Residential (R1-8)	CenterlineSubType	Street
Single-Family Residential (R1-7)	ADOT	<all other values>
Single-Family Residential (R1-6)	Canal	<b>Zoning District</b>
Single-Family Residential (R1-4)	Monument	Light Industrial District (LID)
Multi-Family Residential Limited (R-3)		General Industrial District (GID)

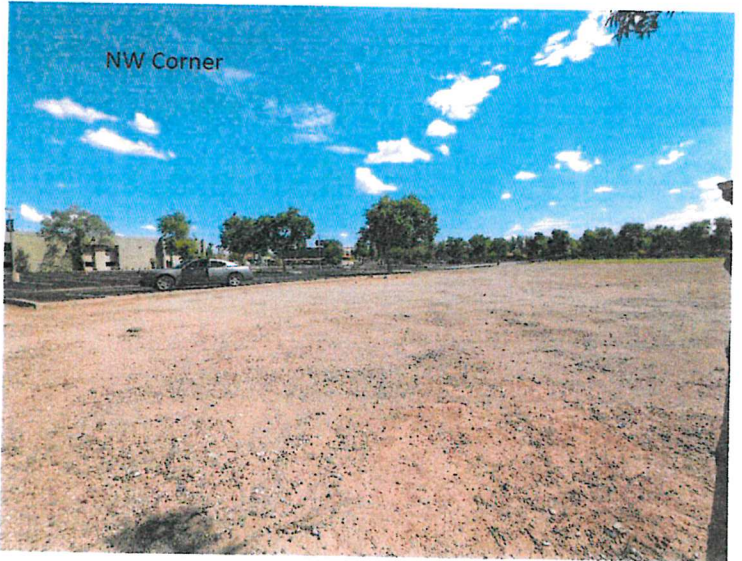
ATTACHMENT 1

Maxar





SW Corner



NW Corner



SE Corner



NE Corner



9-30-22

To Whom it May Concern,

Valley Christian Schools (VCS) is applying for a Use Permit for 6240 S. Price Rd., Temp, AZ 85283. Currently Sun Valley Community Church operates at this location. VCS is applying for a use permit to operate a private school on this location. This would include grades Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Valley Christian High School, (now Valley Christian Schools), has a history of residing at this location. The school leased space from Bethany Community Church from 1982 – Oct. of 1992. We then moved to a rental facility at Price and Broadway until 1997 before we moved to 6900 W. Galveston Rd. in Chandler. Currently Valley Christian Schools owns and operates a K-6 grade campus just south of the 6240 S. Price Rd. property. Its address is 6304 S. Price Rd. We have operated there for four years. At 1005 E. Guadalupe Rd. we currently educate our 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Our lease of that facility ends May 31, 2023.

Our hope is to continue to operate at 6304 S. Price Rd., but move our 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades, along with our 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades to the 6240 S. Price location. We would also want the flexibility to move our entire K-8 to this site in the future.

The school operates during weekdays from August – May with the anticipation of approximately 10 staff working year around at this location. Students start arriving on the campus around 7:30 a.m. and most of the students will have left by 4:00 p.m. There are a number of after school clubs where some students will be in attendance until about 5:15 p.m. Some staff will arrive at the school at 7:00 a.m. and remain until 6:00 p.m. each weekday school is in session. We estimate weekday evening use of approximately 15-20 times a year with anywhere from 100-1000 people in attendance at these evening events. Presently we estimate 2-3 times we would have a Saturday event. We presently do not anticipate using the site on Sunday, but would like to leave that possibility open if we needed to use it for a function. It would not be over one or two times a year, and it would not overlap with anything the church would be doing.

Sun Valley Community church would lease back the facility from us for 1-2 years while they build a new facility at another location. There is no plan to have overlapping weekday use between the church and school, and we are in the process of coordinating calendars so this will not happen. The church will continue to have worship services on Sunday. The estimate is an average of 500 parishioners that attend their Sunday services. They have about five staff members that work weekdays on this campus.

Initially there would be 24 employees at this location and eventually 35-40. We estimate the initial student population to be 300 students with the hopes of growing to 450 in a few years.

We anticipate no adverse effect on the surrounding community except for slightly higher traffic flow on River, Price, and Watson roads during drop off and pick up times. Drop off times are from 8:00 a.m. – 8:20 a.m. and pickup is from 3:20 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Que lines for drop off and pick up will all be confined to the parking lot. There are approximately 9-12 staff members that supervise drop off and 15-19 staff that supervise pick up. There are no students that arrive or dismiss from the campus other than with private vehicles. The diagram for drop off and pick up is shown on another document. There are 671 parking spaces at this location.

For recess and break times, students would be confined to the building areas with six-foot-high fencing being erected in areas that are currently open to the perimeter of the buildings. You can see where the fencing would be installed on the fencing diagram. There would be security gates installed within this fencing that would require clearance or a code to enter. Students are supervised at all times. Teachers and aides have supervision duties at recess and times when students are outside. We also have a security officer who would be on the property at all times. Currently there are no plans to have sporting events on this property.

Initially we do not anticipate changing any external structures or adding any buildings. In the future, this could be a possibility, but we would go through the proper Tempe City permitting process. We do anticipate making some internal changes in some of the buildings. But again, we would go through the required permitting process with the City of Tempe. The buildings would be used for normal educational purposes.

Overall, we believe the request for the use of this property is very similar to what the facility has been used for in the past and would not cause any major change to the neighborhood and surrounding community.

Thank you for your consideration.

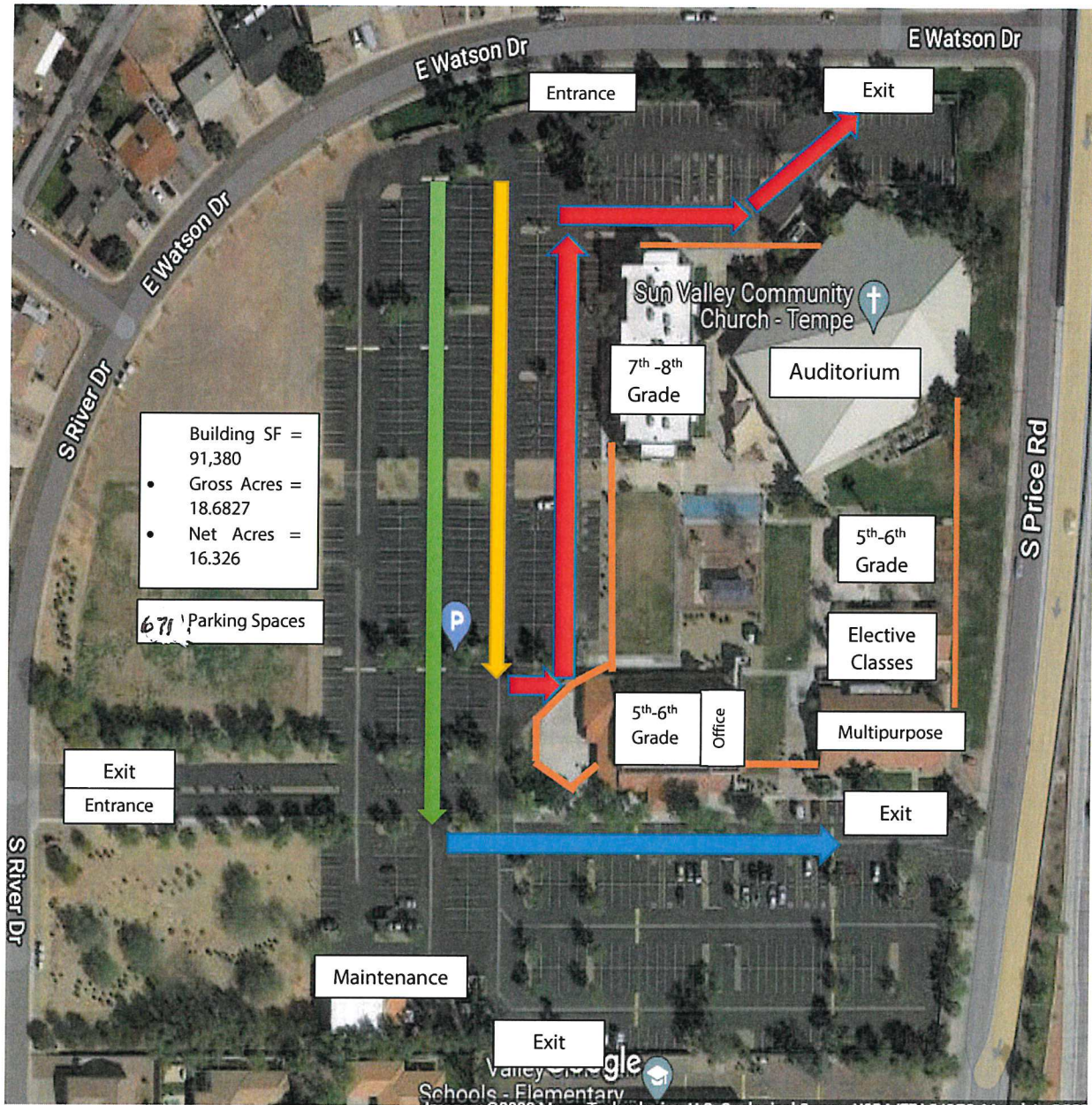


Dan Kuiper

Head of School

Valley Christian Schools

VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS CAMPUS LAYOUT (5-8)



**ORANGE** line designates five-foot-high security fencing with gates. 

**GREEN** arrows indicate two lanes of arrival/dismissal lanes (Grades 7/8) 

**BLUE** arrow indicates merge to one lane for arrival/dismissal (Grades 7/8). 

**YELLOW** arrows indicate two lanes of arrival/dismissal staging area (Grades 5/6) 

**RED** arrows indicated merge to one lane for arrival/dismissal lanes (Grades 5/6) 

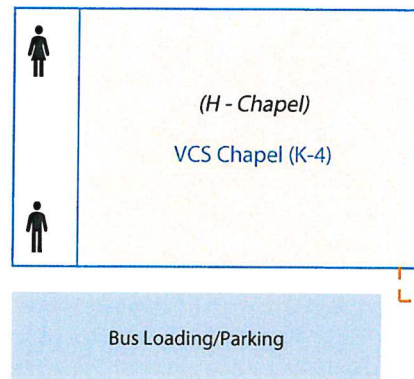
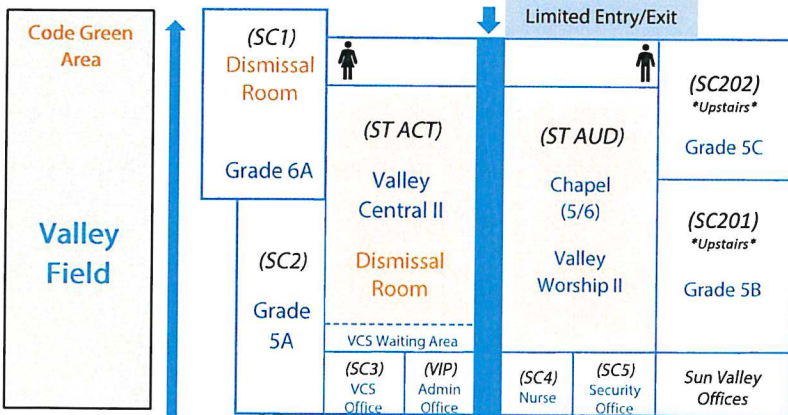
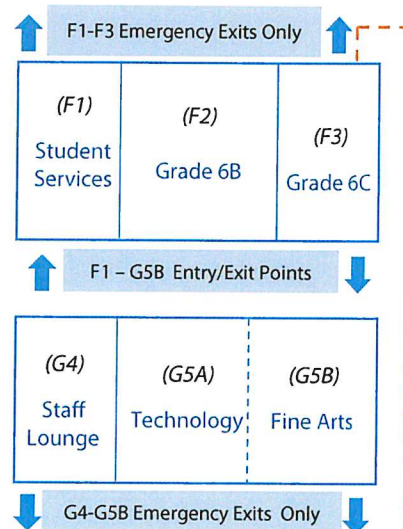
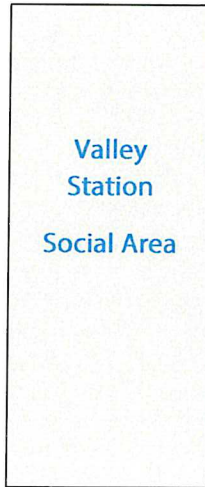
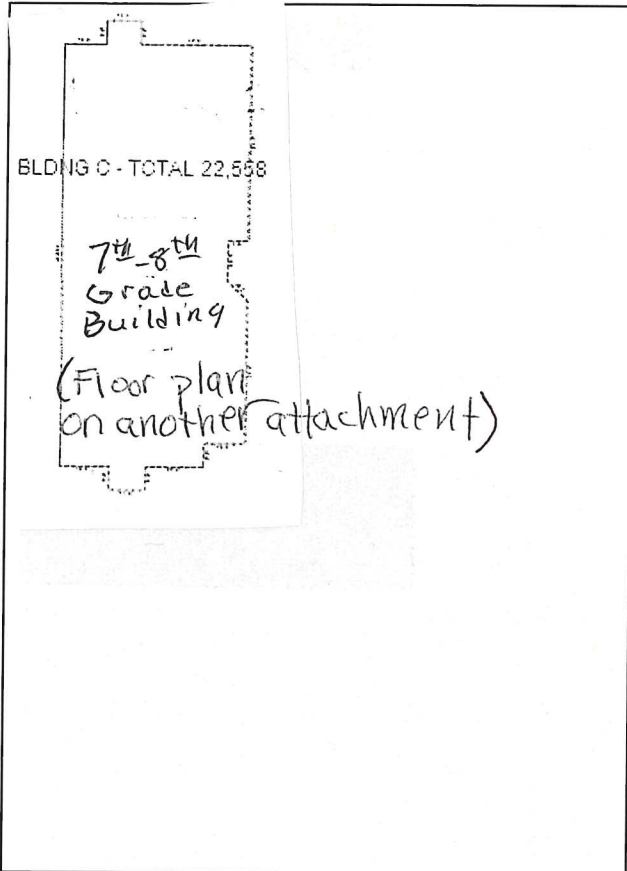
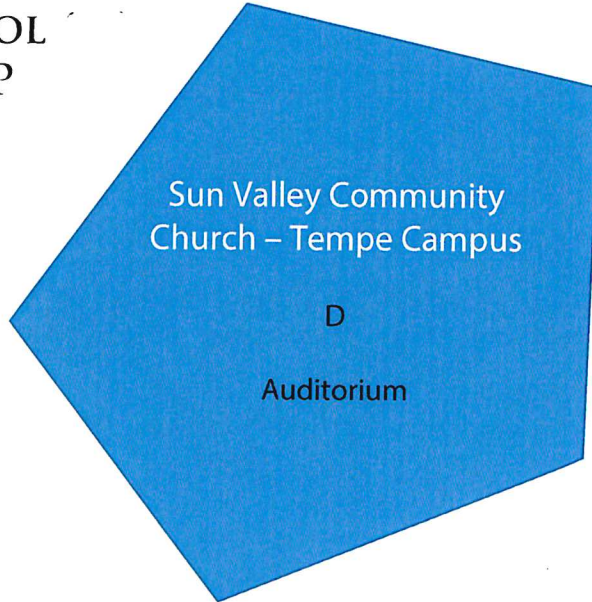
VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS FENCE LAYOUT (5-8)



ORANGE line designates six-foot-high security fencing with gates.



# VCS MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMPUS MAP



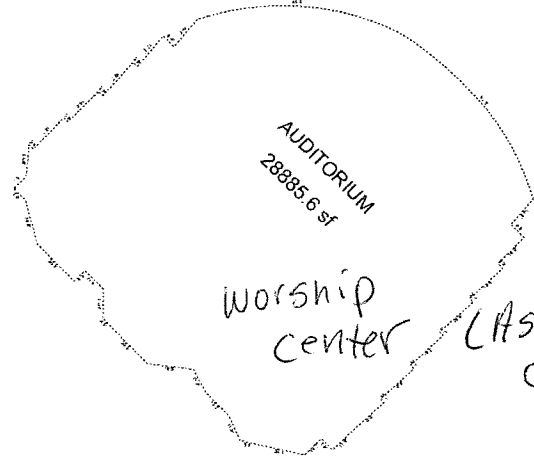
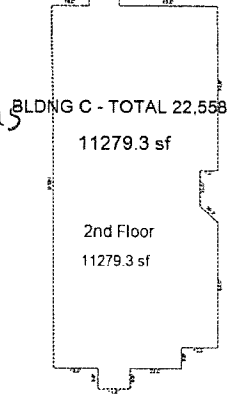
S Price Road

S Price Road

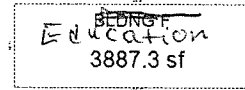
North ↑

Children's Building?

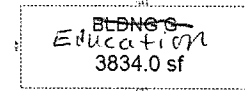
Use  
7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>  
Classrooms



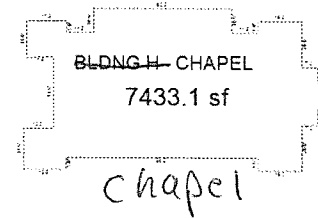
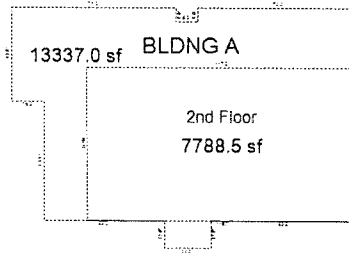
Use  
(Assemblies, programs, chapels)



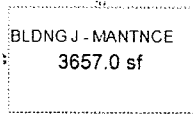
Use  
Classrooms  
5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>



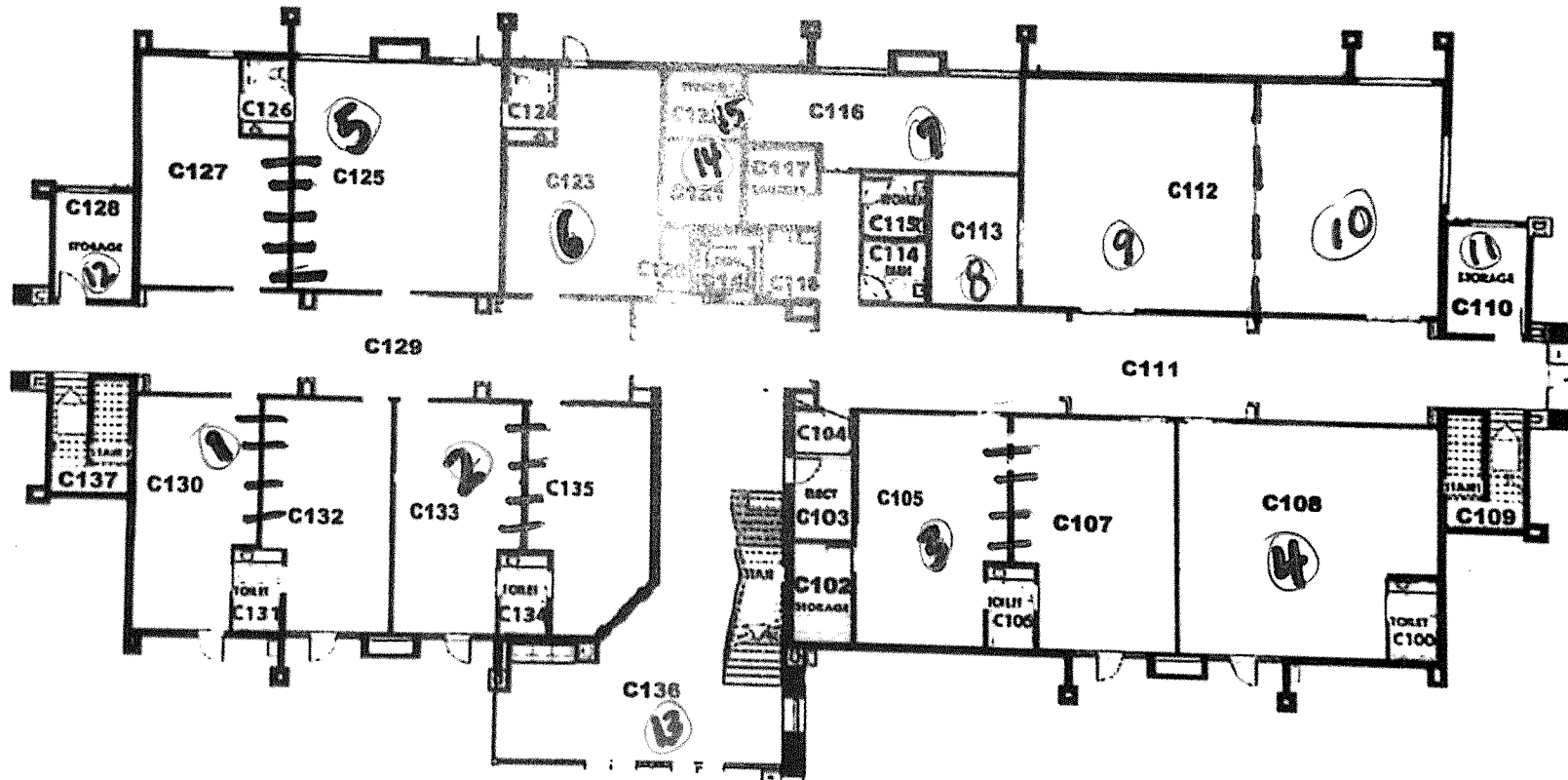
Use 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>  
Administration + Classrooms



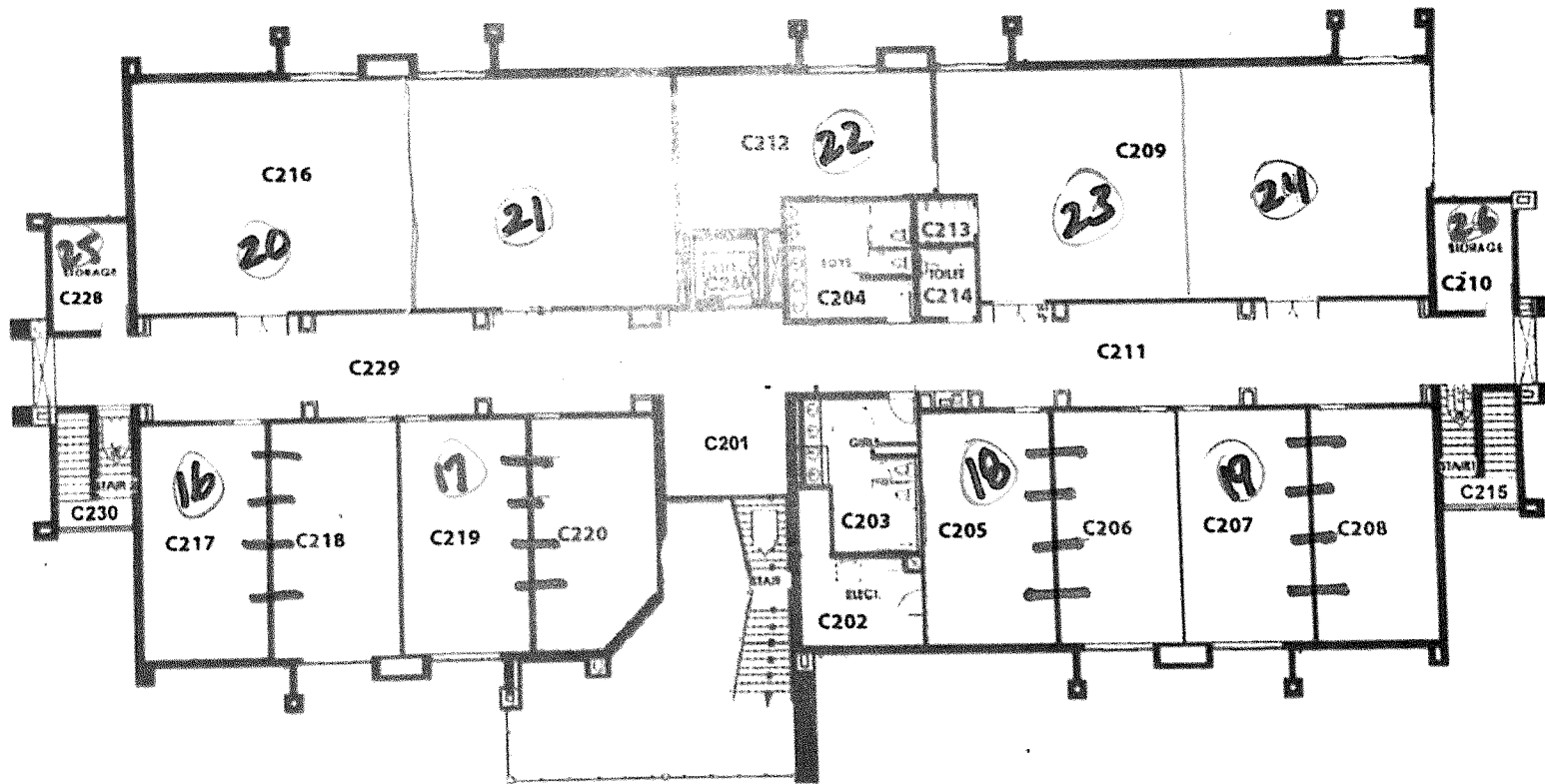
Use  
Lunchroom,  
Indoor activity  
Space



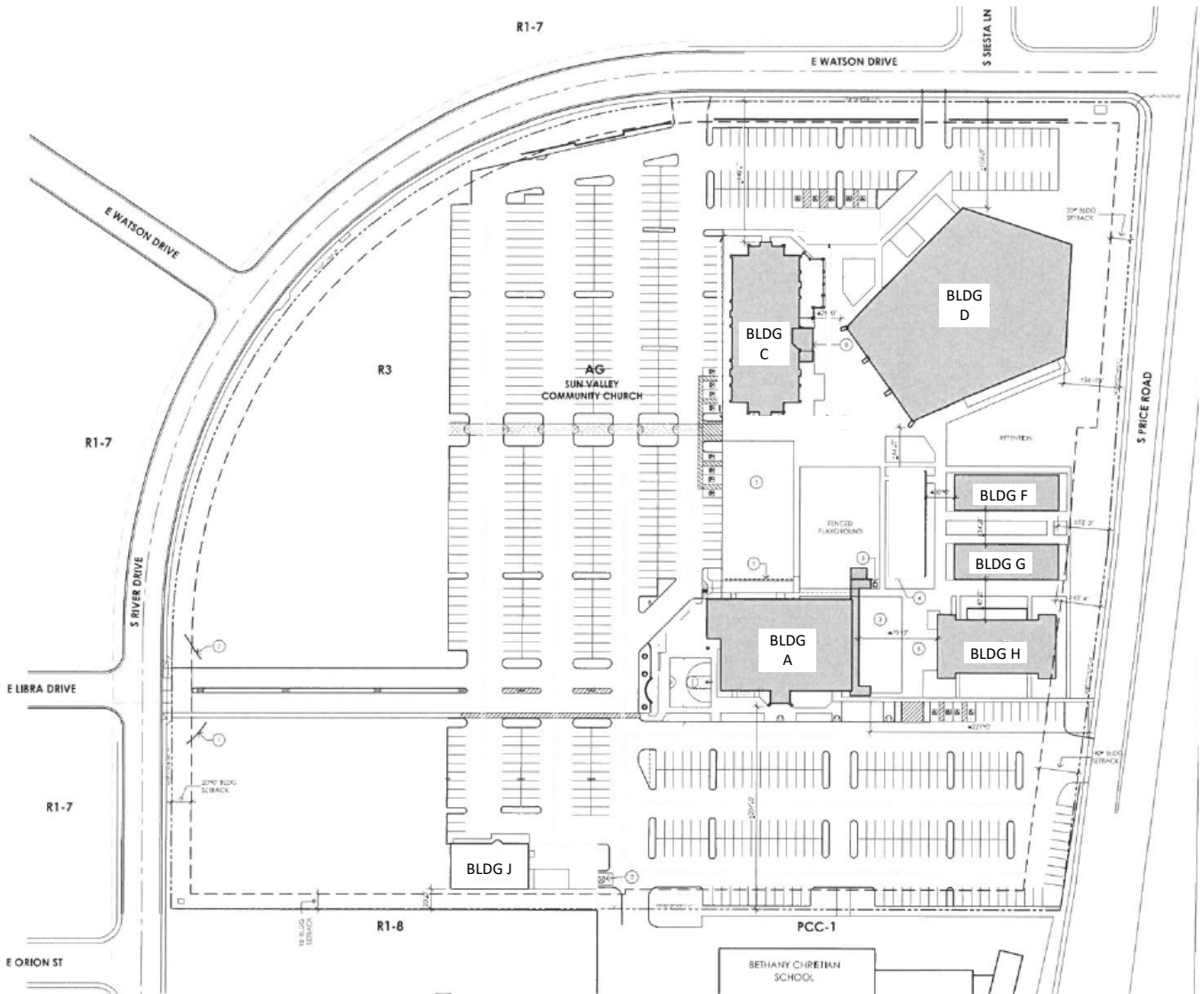
7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade - LOWER LEVEL



7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Grade - UPPER LEVEL







<b>BUILDING</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>SF</b>	<b>RATIO</b>	<b>PARKING</b>	<b>Bike parking</b>
A	Office/Admin	7789	1/300	25.96	2
A	Classroom (Elementary/Jr High)	13337	1/300	44.46	13
C	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Classrooms	22558	1/300	75.19	23
D	Auditorium (current worship center)	28885	1/125	277.27	14
F	6th Grade Classrooms	3887	1/300	12.96	4
G	Classrooms & Teacher Lounge	3834	1/300	12.78	4
H	Lunchroom & Indoor Activity Gym	7433	1/125	59.46	4
J	Maintenance building (warehouse)	3657	1/10,000	1	1
		<b>PARKING REQUIRED:</b>	<b>91380</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>65</b>
		<b>PARKING PROVIDED:</b>		<b>671</b>	<b>66</b>