



Item #1

OC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

DATE: August 27, 2025

TO: Orange County Planning Commission

FROM: OC Development Services / Planning Division

SUBJECT: Traffic Analysis update for Planning Application PA23-0052

PROPOSAL: Staff will present an updated Traffic Analysis for the Fairmont Schools

ZONING: North Tustin Specific Plan - "North Tustin Specific Plan, Public/Quasi-Public District Regulations (PQP)"

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: 4 Public Facilities

LOCATION: The project is located at 12421 Newport Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (APN: 401-191-02) and 12381 Newport Avenue, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (APN: 401-191-25) in unincorporated County of Orange within the Second (2nd) Supervisorial District

APPLICANT: Jackson, Chad, President of Fairmont Schools
Jackson, David R. and Stacey, Property Owners

STAFF CONTACT: Arturo Cervantes, Senior Planner
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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

OC Development Services/Planning recommends the Planning Commission:

1. Receive and file the staff report as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

Fairmont Schools has operated at 12421 Newport Avenue since acquiring the Edgewood School in 1998, continuing the site's use as a private school which was established in 1971. The campus includes over

10,000 square feet of instructional space, along with shared learning areas, administrative offices, restrooms, food service space, and outdoor facilities, and is supported by 27 on-site parking spaces. Fairmont acquired the adjacent, closed church facility at 12381 Newport Avenue, which includes two connected buildings totaling 4,700 square feet, and a 68-space parking lot. Fairmont repurposed the church facilities for educational use, enabling them to expand their student capacity and parking.

Use Permit PA23-0052 was approved on December 13, 2023 by the Orange County Planning Commission, allowing Fairmont to expand and establish “Educational Institution” as the principal land use across the two adjacent properties located at 12421 and 12381 Newport Avenue, in accordance with the County of Orange Zoning Code and the North Tustin Specific Plan. The approval allowed for an increased student enrollment from 320 to 420 students (Pre-school through 8th Grade), conversion of existing multi-purpose and Sunday School rooms into six new classrooms (for a total of 23 classrooms), and repurposing of the church sanctuary into a school-exclusive performing arts venue with seating for 200. Additional improvements include updated landscaping and hardscaping, accessibility enhancements, revised signage, and the installation of a six-foot open perimeter fence with automatic gates. The Use Permit also allowed for reduced parking requirements and outlined plans to enhance pedestrian connectivity between the two properties (Attachment 1 – Staff Report).

As part of the approval, the Planning Commission added “Condition of Approval – Traffic,” which required the applicant to provide an updated Traffic Impact Analysis (Analysis) for the project site one (1) year after the effective approval date, and again upon reaching their increased enrollment capacity of 420 students. The purpose of this updated Analysis was to evaluate key ingress/egress and circulation components of the project, provide an updated trip generation analysis, a drop-off/pick-up queuing observation analysis, and a parking demand analysis. The project has reached its one-year operational milestone and has provided the County with an updated analysis.

DISCUSSION:

The applicant retained RK Engineering Group, Inc. (RKE), the firm that prepared the original Traffic Impact Analysis in 2023, to prepare an updated Analysis evaluating traffic and parking impacts after one year of operation (Attachment 2 - Traffic Monitoring Program). To establish existing baseline conditions, RKE obtained 24-hour trip generation counts, drop-off/pick-up queue observation counts, and parking demand counts. They also observed video footage and conducted in-person field review of on-site circulation.

The updated Analysis shows that the existing trip generation counts are consistent with the forecasted trip generation detailed in the 2023 traffic study that accounted for a higher number of student enrollment. The existing enrollment of 366 students currently generates approximately 453 weekday daily trips which include approximately 453 drop-off (AM) peak hour trips and 372 pick-up (PM) peak hour trips, which is within the forecasted trip generation ranges for the future enrollment of 420 students.

The updated Analysis indicates that during drop-off/pick-up queuing, spillover onto Newport Avenue was minimal, with the site being able to accommodate queues during 93.8% of the peak drop-off/pick-up times. There were zero occurrences of vehicles overflowing onto Vanderlip Avenue during the observed peak periods.

Additionally, the updated Analysis identified that a maximum of 54 of the available parking spaces were occupied during peak times, out of a total of 106 available spaces across all five parking areas.

RKE also included observations of illegal U-Turns on Newport Avenue in the updated Analysis. A total of 20 illegal northbound U-turn movements were recorded at the intersection of Newport Avenue and Vanderlip Avenue during the drop-off and pick-up periods.

Based on the information, RKE has concluded that there are no significant traffic deficiencies that would require substantial improvements. RKE has recommended, and the school has agreed, to implement the following operations to ensure drop-offs/pick-ups continue to remain efficient as student enrollment continues to grow:

1. The school shall continuously monitor drop-off/pick-up operations and on-site circulation to ensure spillage onto Newport Avenue or Vanderlip Avenue remains infrequent and temporary. In the rare instances that queues may spill back onto Newport Avenue or Vanderlip Avenue, the school shall ensure vehicles do not obstruct through traffic (vehicles and bicycles) along either roadway.
2. Continuously monitor that the No U-Turn signage remains installed within the center raised median along Newport Avenue.
3. School staff shall periodically educate parents and students on proper drop-off/pick-up operations as well as periodically monitor and report vehicles that are observed to violate these protocols.

Furthermore, upon reaching the approved maximum enrollment capacity of 420 students, the applicant shall prepare a final, updated parking and traffic analysis, as required by the "Condition of Approval - Traffic." Once completed, the analysis will be presented to the Planning Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting.

In accordance with the "Condition of Approval - Traffic," property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site were mailed courtesy notice at least 10 days prior to the presentation of this update to the Planning Commission.

Submitted by:

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Arturo Cervantes, Senior Planner
OC Development Services/Planning

Concurred by:

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Cindy Salazar, Division Manager
OC Development Services/Planning

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Staff Report for PA23-0052
2. Traffic Monitoring Program (April 16, 2025)