

Special Use Permit Application Information

Crozet Baptist Church
TMP 056A1-01-00-08200
Applicant Name: Christi Gillette
Application Number: SP2020-00001
Address of Property: 5804 St. George Ave., Crozet, VA 22932
Zoning: R-2, Residential
Overlay District: Steep Slopes- Managed

Project Proposal:

Little Explorers Discovery School opened in January of 2019 in the children's wing of Crozet Baptist Church. Since then, the preschool program has filled to its capacity of 25 students for all four days of enrollment (Tuesday through Friday). As of January 2020, the current waitlist includes 27 children, with desired preschool schedules ranging from 2 mornings per week to full week enrollment. The waitlist continues to grow, and at our capacity, we unfortunately continue to turn away families.

The community of Crozet is continuing to grow at a rapid pace, leaving an increasing number of local families in search of a preschool or after-school program. Crozet Baptist Church has an additional area of their building (unused during weekdays) that could be utilized by Little Explorers Discovery School. The space is large enough to house up to 20 additional preschoolers and up to 30 school-age children.

The current children's wing has a building capacity that can hold up to 49 children based on the Virginia Department of Social Services building capacity measurements. Based on this information and with the potential addition of the extra space in the church, Little Explorers Discovery School would technically be able to house 69 children at one time. **However, Little Explorers Discovery School is seeking an amendment for its Special Use Permit to allow a capacity of 50 children present at one time.**

We anticipate that with our staggered outdoor time and the new drop-off procedure that there will be a minimal change to local residences and the traffic flow on St. George Ave. More information is provided to expand on this below.

Our mission of the school is that children are a part of a unique experience where learning is student-driven and a love and appreciation of our world is fostered through a response to student curiosity and readiness. It is evident that the need continues to exist within our community, and with the success that we have found in our first year since opening, we are inspired and hopeful to expand the population that we serve.

Additional Information:

Proposed number of employees: 10

Proposed number of spots for each group of children:

- Preschool half-day: 25
- Preschool full-day: 25
- After-school (preschool): 10-15
- After-school (school age): 20-30

Proposed number of children outside at one time, including both pre-school age children and the older children: About 25 children will be outside at one time. Both ages will be outside during after school hours at the same time.

Rough estimate of the number of children who walk or bike to the Little Explorers Discovery School: 3

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

The Crozet Master Plan recommends this area for neighborhood density residential uses. Non-residential uses within this designation include institutional uses, such as places of worship, public and private schools, and early childhood education centers (daycare centers and preschools).

- Since the church is located in a development area, the additional usage of the building for the school will continue to support the county's economical development plan by promoting new employment activities in the development area.
- It will also support objective 6 of the comprehensive plan for development areas by increasing local business development opportunities, including support for entrepreneurial and startup businesses.
- Additionally, our after-school program supports Objective 7, as we will continue to support and foster skills for children in grades K-6 by providing support for tutoring and enrichment opportunities, in addition to programs in the areas of STEM, Family and Consumer Sciences, nature exploration, literacy, and history.

Impacts on public facilities and public infrastructure:

The existing building is on public water/sewer and served by public streets and appears to have no impact on this infrastructure. There should be no impacts on fire and police services from this proposed use.

Project's Impacts on Environmental Features

The plan for changes to the outdoor area of the church is minimal. No trees or existing environmental features will be removed or torn down. Since opening, a wooden fence around the property line has been erected. Playground features will continue to be added over time, making the space more engaging for children and more aesthetically pleasing.

Proposed Ways to Address Impacts from the Project

Noise- The preschool children utilize the half of the playground that sits closest to the church, creating over 50 feet between the playground and the adjoining neighbor's yard. This is the space utilized for the majority of the outdoor time during the day. Classes will have designated outdoor times so that everyone is not outdoors at the same time.

The remaining space next to the adjoining neighbor's yard is utilized by children 5 years and older. Most of the children this age only attend Little Explorers Discovery School for our after-school program, and those children are

only present between the hours of 2:45pm-5:30pm. This new change will not add more than 5-10 available spots to our after-school program, as most of the new enrollment spots will be utilized by preschool children, creating minimal increase to the capacity of the children utilizing the adjoining space to the neighbor's yard.

Traffic- To date, a car line has been utilized in the morning for preschool drop-off. It has worked well to create a quick and steady flow of our 25 preschool children in the morning drop-off. However, with the additional enrollment, the car line will not be used anymore, so as not to back up traffic onto St. George Ave. The current car line fills the length of the parking lot for a few minutes at drop-off time. To avoid a backup and create more of a staggered entrance and exit of traffic from the parking lot with our increased enrollment, parents and caregivers will park and walk their children into the building. Early drop-off will take place at 7:30am. Elementary schools begin their day at 8:00am, and their doors open at 7:40am. Our early drop-off time could overlap slightly with traffic from the elementary school, but so far, our enrollment for early drop-off has been non-existent. We expect that in time we will have a small enrollment during this time, which we do not expect to exceed 10 children.

Our doors will open for our regular start time for preschool children at 8:15am, and parents will be asked to drop-off their children by 9:00am. After 9:00am, parents will be asked to notify the school of a late drop-off. They will be asked to enter the parking lot through a specified lane of traffic and exit through another specified lane ([see map](#)). We anticipate that drop-off will be spread throughout this 45-minute window, based on the fact that we currently have a number of families that bring their children after our 8:30am drop-off time. This increased drop-off window will significantly stagger the morning traffic headed to and from Little Explorers.

Little Explorers will continue to have staggered drop-off and pick-up periods throughout the day. Half day students will have a pick-up window from 12:15-12:45pm. Full day children (about 15 children) will leave at 2:45pm. The school-age children will continue to arrive by bus from Brownsville Elementary School and Crozet Elementary School, causing no change in traffic during this time. Children in the after-school program typically depart anywhere from 4:30pm-5:30pm, so the traffic is very staggered during later afternoon/evening hours. With the later closing time of 6:00pm, the traffic will be even more staggered.

Outside of our normal business hours, we hope to offer a "parent's night out" about once per month to the community. This is something that we have not yet offered at Little Explorers, but has already been permitted within our current Special Use Permit. This would take place on a Friday or Saturday evening from about 5:00-8:00pm.

Little Explorers currently holds events and celebrations with our LEDS families once every few months. These events have included holiday celebrations and end of year celebrations. We will continue to offer these events with our increased enrollment. The events typically take place on a weekday evening from about 6:00-7:30pm.

Expected Traffic Patterns- Most of the traffic currently traveling to Little Explorers comes from the Crozet Avenue direction, into the church parking lot, and exists back towards Crozet Avenue. We expect this trend to continue with the increased enrollment.

Other information that may help identify potential impacts of the development

- Maximum Number of Students present **at one time**: 50 (Enrollment will not be limited, but there will never be more than 50 children present at one time.)
- Hours of operation: Monday through Friday, 7:30am-6:00pm
 - Early drop off begins at 7:30am.
 - Regular preschool drop off begins at 8:15am.
 - Half-day preschool dismisses from 12:15-12:45pm.
 - Full-day preschool dismisses at 2:45pm.
 - Extended care and after-school program closes at 6:00pm.
- No water/sewer demands

*Maps showing the proposed project's regional context and existing natural and manmade physical conditions and a conceptual plan are attached.