



PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: January 21, 2025

To: Town of Truckee Planning Commission

From: Lucas Kannall, Assistant Planner

RE: Planning Application 2023-00000172/DP (Kidzone Museum Development Permit); 10010 Estates Drive; APN 019-450-035-000

Approved by: Denyelle Nishimori, Community Development Director

Recommended Action: That the Planning Commission adopt Resolution 2025-01 taking the following actions based on the recommended findings and subject to the recommended conditions of approval:

1. Determine the project exempt further environmental review pursuant to Section 15168 (Program EIR) of the California Environmental Quality Act; and
2. Approve the Development Permit.

Project Description:

The applicant is requesting a Development Permit to construct a 10,500 square-foot museum located within a 1.7 acre lease area in the Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD) Truckee River Regional Park. The museum will be constructed in two phases, with the first phase including 6,500 square feet of the building and the additional 4,000 square feet being added in a second phase. The final structure will include 6,876 square feet of museum space, 847 square feet of retail space (including a gift shop and grab-and-go café), 374 square feet of office space, 525 square feet of facility space (restrooms, lactation room), 1,190 square feet of storage and 688 square feet of miscellaneous space including interior walls or unusable areas. The museum will be constructed of all weather, insulated metal panels that will be painted, slate grey, natural green and weathered copper. The wall panels will be inset with low emissivity, divided light windows to increase the energy efficiency of the building. The site will contain 30 parking stalls and 23,901 square feet of paving including pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The building, paving and related infrastructure will result in 47% of site coverage for the lease area or 34,804 square feet, which would result in 4.2% site coverage for the entire parcel. The project also includes approximately 17,245 square feet of outdoor play area. Due to the District-imposed site limitations, parking demand can only be met for the facility and occupancy will be limited to that of the building itself.

Planning Commission's Role: The Planning Commission's role is to review the site layout and design of the building to ensure the project is consistent with the Development Code and the Town's 2040 General Plan and determine if the findings can be made for approval of the Development Permit and the staff recommended CEQA determination.

Location:

The property is located within the Truckee River Regional Park just south of the Truckee River and North of Brockway Road (APN 019-450-035-000; 10010 Estates Drive).



Figure 1: Vicinity Map

Project Site Information:

Zoning District:	Public Facilities (PF)
General Plan Designation:	Open Space Recreation
Parcel Size:	19.02 acres (1.7 acre lease area)
Existing Utilities:	Public water, electricity, gas, and sewer

Discussion/Analysis:

Background

The Kidzone Museum, as it currently operates, is located within a 3,400 square foot tent structure located at 11643 Donner Pass Road adjacent to the high school. This facility was approved in 2000 through a Conditional Use Permit. After 24 years of operation at this location, it has outgrown its current facility and is looking to upgrade to a larger, more permanent structure.

Proposed Use and Setting

The project parcel is located within the Public Facilities (PF) zoning district, which is applied to areas appropriate for public, institutional and auxiliary uses that are established in response to recreational, safety, cultural and welfare needs. This parcel is also part of the Truckee River Regional Park, which aims to be a versatile facility that caters to a wide variety of recreational needs. The park includes a skate park, river BBQ area, amphitheater, disc golf, ball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, a community garden and a section of the Truckee River Legacy Trail.

The proposed use of a museum within the Public Facilities zoning district is a permitted use as long as it is operated by a public agency or nonprofit that operates similar to a public agency. The Kidzone Museum, acting as a nonprofit, and working with assistance from the TDRPD would qualify as a nonprofit operating similar to a public agency.

The museum would include both indoor and outdoor facilities, with the indoor space being comprised of museum space, retail space (including a gift shop and grab-and-go café), office space, facility space

(restrooms, lactation room) and storage space. The outdoor areas would include a turf area, stage and bandshell, play houses, mud kitchen, water play area, sand box, garden beds, log and stump scramble area, climbing play structure and an arts and crafts area.

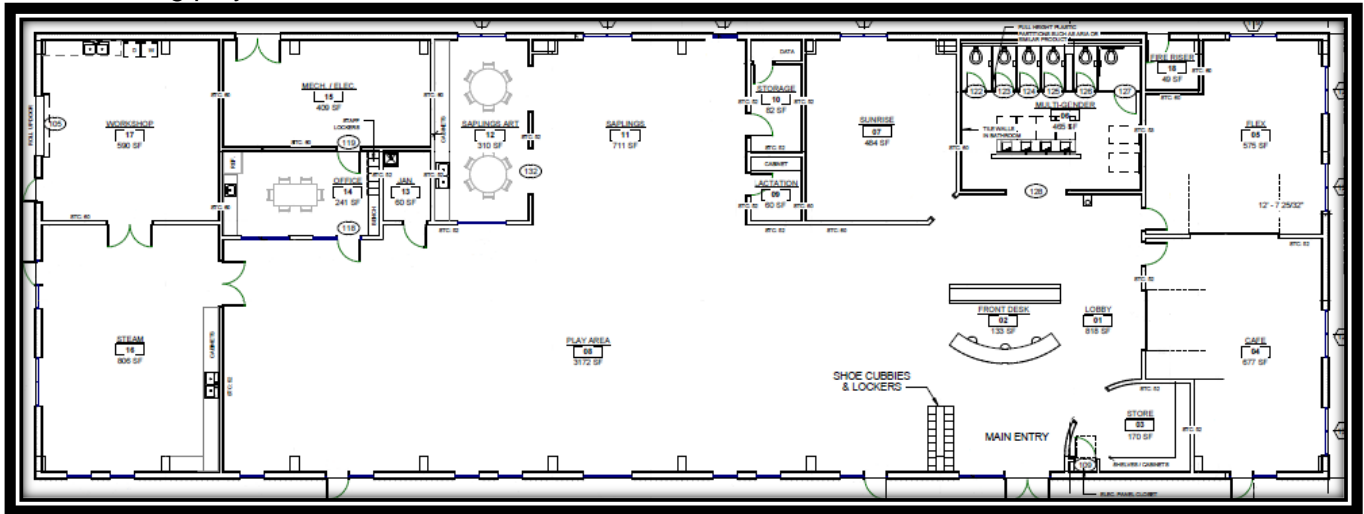


Figure 2: Floor Plan (Phase 2)

Phased Development

The applicant is requesting that the museum building be allowed to be constructed in two phases, with the first phase constructing 6,500 square feet of the building and the second phase adding an additional 4,000 square feet. The area reserved for the addition will be soft-scaped for use as an exterior learning and play area until the second phase can be constructed. Construction is anticipated to begin for Phase 1 in the spring of 2025 with construction completed in the fall of 2026. It is then estimated that Phase 2 would commence in the summer of 2028 and complete construction within a year.

Development Code Consistency

Parking

The project proposes 30 parking spaces to support the new museum building, including 23 regular parking spaces, 7 compact parking spaces and 2 ADA van accessible spaces. The building is divided into two specific uses, with parking calculations based on each use. The main museum use comprises 9,770 square feet of the building and requires one parking space per every 500 square feet, requiring 19.54 parking spaces rounded up to 20 spaces. The cafe area within the building totals 677 square feet and includes 218 square feet of outdoor seating area. The required parking for fast food uses is one parking space per 100 square feet of floor space and one parking space per 100 square feet of outdoor eating area for a total of 8.95 parking spaces rounded up to 9 spaces. The extra parking space can be used for a potential future company vehicle. Development Code Section 18.48.050.B allows for up to 25% of required parking spaces to be compact spaces, and as such, 7 of the 30 included parking spaces will be compact spaces. Bicycle parking spaces are required to be provided at a rate of 15% of the required car parking. To meet this requirement, the project proposes 4 bike racks that can accommodate two bikes each, exceeding the required bike parking by 3 spaces.

Landscaping

The project proposes 22,100 square feet of landscaping with an alternative proposal as allowed by Development Code Section 18.40.040.4 (Alternatives to landscape requirements). This allows the review authority to modify the requirements of the landscaping section if they find that the project will achieve the same effect as the landscape requirements of the Development Code. The Development Code requires that projects include 200 square feet of interior parking lot landscaping for every 5 parking spots and the applicant is only proposing approximately 400 square feet of internal landscaping. This would fall about 800 square feet short of the requirement however this would be made up for with more robust landscape screening for the parking lot along the eastern side. Development Code, Section 18.50.030.A (Location of parking areas) strongly encourages that parking lots be situated away from the street front to prevent them

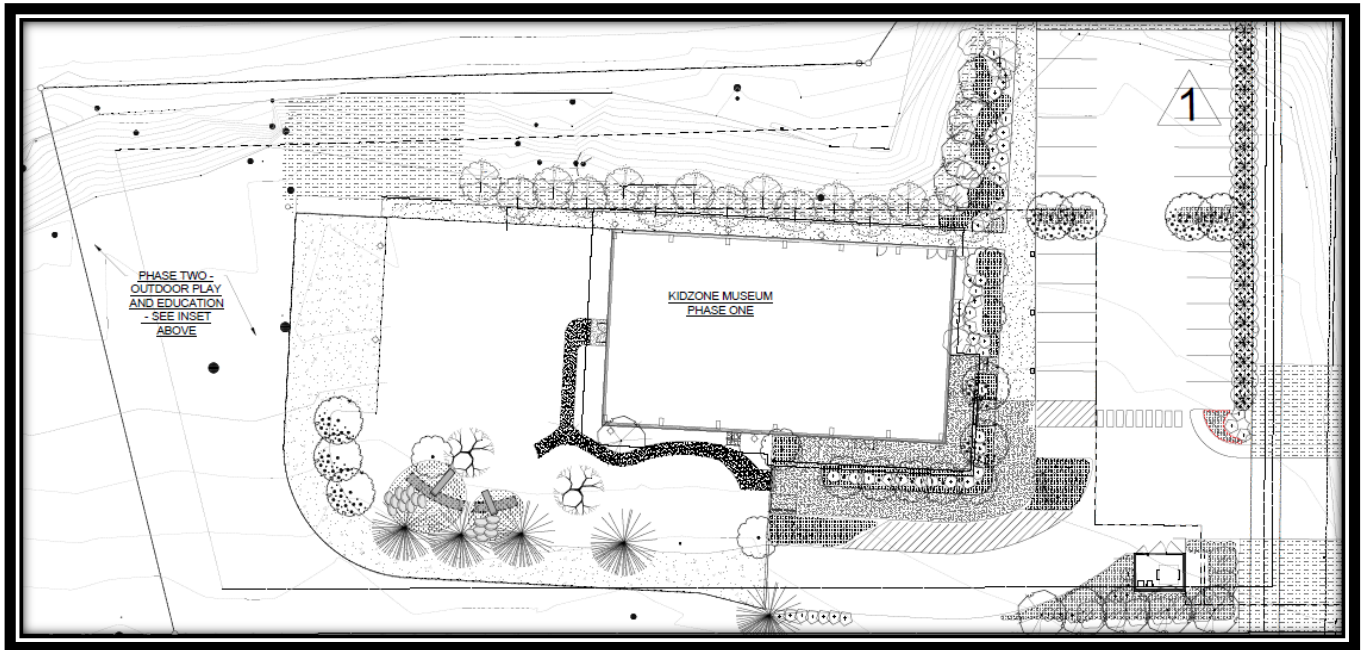


Figure 3: Landscaping Plan

from becoming the dominant feature of the development when viewed from the road. This is not feasible for this project due to the shape of the lease area. To compensate for the parking lot being placed in front of the building and being a prominent feature of the development, the applicant is proposing to increase the vegetative screening along the eastern side of the parking lot and raising the height of the planting buffer to six feet. Additionally, a portion of the landscaping for the entrance to the parking lot will be located within a Liberty Utility powerline easement. The applicant has requested approval of this encroachment into the easement from Liberty Utilities and is still awaiting a reply. If approval from Liberty Utilities is obtained, the landscaping will be installed as shown in the plan set included as Attachment 1, Exhibit A. If approval is denied, the applicant will add additional trees and shrubs adjacent to the encroachment just outside of the easement and retain the maximum amount possible of native vegetation within the easement. This alternative approval would be reviewed and approved at staff's discretion, unless the Planning Commission elects to have it return for the Commission's review.

In addition to the parking lot screening landscaping, various shrubs and trees will be planted along the perimeter of the facility to help it blend with its natural surrounding while retaining natural vegetation on site. Stands of trees which have naturally grown too close together will be thinned while maintaining the healthiest specimens and increasing their chances of thriving.

The interior of the fenced outdoor play area will also include ornamental landscaping, native trees and a vegetable garden to demonstrate gardening techniques to the museum's guests.

Workforce Housing

Since the existing Kidzone Museum, located adjacent to the High School at 11643 Donner Pass Road, is being proposed to be demolished, the square footage of the old facility will be subtracted from the square footage of the new facility for the purposes of determining required workforce housing. The new facility would be 10,500 square feet and the old facility is 3,885 square feet, requiring 6,615 square feet of eligible space for workforce housing analysis. According to Development Code, Section 18.216.040 (Workforce Housing Requirements), this would fall within the small project category and would require workforce housing units to be constructed for at least 3.5% of the proposed full time equivalent employees. This section of the Development Code also dictates how potential employees shall be calculated based on prescribed uses, although museums do not appear on the list of potential uses. In the instance that a use is not included, the applicant shall provide an independent calculation of the number of employees expected to be generated by the new development, which shall be accepted or denied by the review authority. The applicants expected full-time equivalent employee calculation is included as Attachment 3. The Kidzone is expecting to employ 10.5 full-time equivalent employees at the new facility and had previously employed 8 full time equivalent employees for an increase of 2.5 employees. In part, they are achieving this minimal increase by contracting general maintenance, janitorial services and landscaping services out to local companies specializing in those areas. Due to this modest increase, the applicant is requesting to pay an in-lieu fee as opposed to constructing workforce housing as allowed by Development Code, Section 18.216.040.F.3 (In-lieu Affordable Housing Fee), which allows projects that generate less than 20 full time equivalent employees to opt into the in-lieu fee at the developer's discretion. Small projects are required to provide workforce housing at a rate of 3.5% and the new museum will be adding 2.5 full-time employees for 0.09 of an in-lieu fee. The current affordable housing in-lieu fee, as adopted through Resolution 2024-65, is \$136,851, which would require the Kidzone Museum to pay \$12,316.59 for their additional 2.5 employees.

Traffic

The proposed project would be exempt from Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis, since the proposed project is less than 15,000 square feet and located within the Town's VMT Exemption Zone. Additionally, the use was determined to be predominantly local serving since it would not necessarily be a destination attraction. Despite this, a traffic study was required to determine any Level of Service (LOS) impacts to intersections in the vicinity of the project site. LOS is a quantitative and qualitative measure of traffic conditions on isolated sections of roadways or intersections. A traffic study was prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc, who determined that the LOS at all intersections affected by the project would remain within their acceptable levels. The LSC Traffic Study has been included as Attachment 4.

Land Use Approvals

The applicant is requesting approval to construct and operate a 10,500 square foot structure to be used for as museum and would also include a cafe. Approval of this proposal could be granted through a Development Permit due to the proposed use and building size falling within the Development Permit qualifications per Development Code, Table 2-10.

General Plan

The project site is located in the Open Space Recreation General Plan land use designation.

The Open Space Recreation land use designation allows recreational uses compatible with the natural resources in the area, such as skiing, camping, existing golf courses, horseback riding and clustered residential or lodging uses. In addition, public recreation uses, such as park and recreation facilities, libraries, and community centers are permitted. This designation is intended to minimize suburban sprawl; protect significant vistas, wildlife movement corridors and biological resource areas while still accommodating recreational uses. The recreational and educational purpose of the development is in

alignment with the Open Space Recreation General Plan designation and the use is supported by several General Plan policies intended to provide recreation and learning opportunities within the Town including:

Land Use – 5.1	Work with all special districts to ensure coordination of development and provision of services in the Town.
Community Character – 1.8	In development projects, balance the duality of tree, including specimen tree, native vegetation and natural landscape preservation, with wildfire risk reduction, including maintenance of defensible space and ladder fuels reduction.
Community Character - 3.1	Require all new development to incorporate high-quality design, architecture, and planning to enhance the overall quality of the built environment in Truckee and create a visually interesting and aesthetically pleasing town environment.
Community Character Element	This element incorporates policies related to the relationship between the built and natural environments in forming Truckee’s character, maintenance of high-quality design, creation of connected neighborhoods with nearby services, compatible and well-designed commercial and industrial areas, and policies for specific areas of the town, including the Downtown and Gateway District.
Community Character – 6.5	Support the work of community institutions, government agencies, nonprofits, and the Thoe Forest Health System to enhance desired community services, including a library, parks and recreational amenities, childcare services, health clinics and wellness gardens.
Mobility Element – 2.13	Require new and intensifying nonresidential and multi-family residential projects to have adequate bike parking and storage.
Conservation and Open Space – 3.4	Require that all new development avoid identified sensitive habitats, wetlands, other non-wetland waters, native wildlife nursery sites, and wildlife corridors within or adjacent to the development site, as feasible, by implementing no-disturbance buffers around these areas or implementing project-specific design features in wildlife corridors.
Safety and Noise Element – 8.14	<p>Require the following standard construction noise control measures to be included as requirements at construction sites in order to minimize construction noise impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equip all internal combustion engine–driven equipment with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for the equipment; □ locate stationary noise generating equipment as far as possible from noise-sensitive uses when noise-sensitive uses adjoin or are near a construction project area; • Use “quiet” air compressors and other stationary noise-generating equipment where appropriate technology exists; and • Require the project sponsor to designate a “disturbance coordinator” who would be responsible for responding to any local complaints about construction noise. The disturbance coordinator will determine the cause of the noise complaint (e.g., starting too early, bad muffler) and will require that reasonable measures warranted to correct the problem be implemented. The project sponsor shall also post a telephone number for excessive noise complaints in conspicuous locations in the vicinity of the project site and send a notice to neighbors in the project vicinity with information on the construction schedule and the telephone number for noise complaints.

The Public Facilities (PF) zoning district is applied to areas appropriate for public, institutional and auxiliary uses that are established in response to the recreational, safety and welfare needs of the Town. The

operation of a museum by a nonprofit is allowed within this zoning district if the nonprofit operates similarly to a public agency.



Figure 4: Front of Kidzone Museum

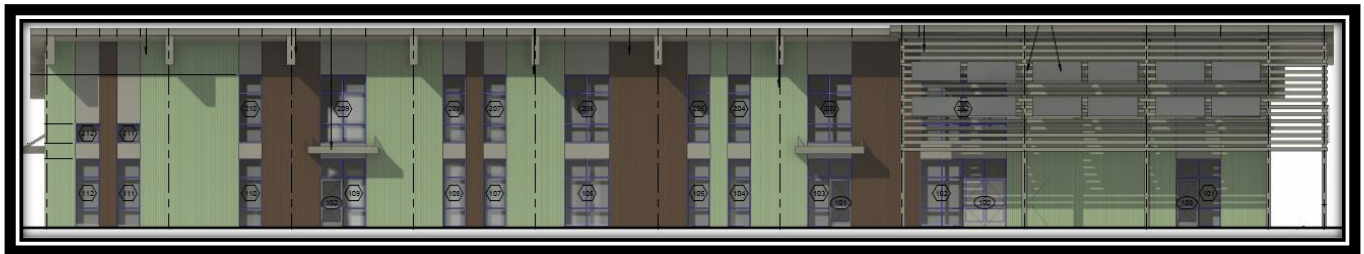


Figure 5: South Elevation of Kidzone Museum

It is staff's opinion that the construction of the proposed museum is supported by the General Plan and Development Code since it provides for recreational and educational opportunities that serve the community. The Kidzone Museum is an existing facility in town that is now constructing a larger location to serve its growing user base. The proposed structure will meet the minimum development standards required for the Public Facilities zoning district, including height, site coverage, open space, landscaping, parking and signage.

Environmental Review:

Section 15168 of the California Environmental Quality Act and CEQA Guidelines allows for a project to be considered as part of a holistic evaluation of projects within the town as long as it is consistent with the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the jurisdiction's General Plan. The current proposal was compared to the Town's EIR for the 2040 General Plan and was found to be consistent, which allows for the project to be considered along with cumulative impacts from other projects, that might be evaluated when projects are looked at on a case-by-case basis. Despite required mitigation for potential impacts to sensitive species on site included in the Biological Resources Technical Report prepared for the project, as well as required mitigation for noise during construction, the mitigation was found to be consistent with requirements from the 2040 General Plan. As such, surveying for special status species and best practices

for reducing noise during construction are included in the conditions of approval as required by the General Plan and the special studies prepared for the project. The checklist detailing the project's consistency with the General Plan is included as Attachment 5. Accordingly, staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the project to be consistent with the Town's 2040 General Plan Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15168.

Public Communication:

Notice of the public hearing was published in the *Sierra Sun* on January 10, 2025, and mailed to all property owners within 500 feet of the project site on January 8, 2025. As of the date of publication of this staff report, no public comments have been received.

Staff Summary and Recommendation:

Staff supports the approval of the Development Permit to construct a 10,500 square foot museum and related facilities and infrastructure as part of a phased development. The proposed establishment will relocate from an existing facility within a tent that is nearing the end of its useful lifespan to an upgraded and larger facility to be able to continue providing recreational and educational experiences for local children. It will also be located in close proximity to the Truckee River Legacy Trail, allowing the museum to serve the public utilizing alternative forms of transportation. The proposal includes high quality architecture and materials compatible with desired design outcomes and is located within the Truckee River Regional Park close to other recreational amenities. Staff recommends that the project be found consistent with the 2040 General Plan as allowed pursuant to CEQA, Section 15168 and also recommends approval of the requested Development Permit on the basis that the findings can be made.

Alternative Actions:

Actions that the Planning Commission may take as an alternative to the recommended action include:

1. Continue the public hearing to a date and time certain.
 - a. The Planning Commission may request additional information from the applicant and/or staff (if new information is presented at the next meeting, the public portion of the hearing must be reopened on the new information submitted).
2. Environmental Review
 - a. Begin preparation of an initial study to determine the appropriate level of environmental review.
3. Land Use Permits
 - a. Add, delete, or modify conditions of approval.
 - b. Deny the project on the basis that all the required findings cannot be made.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2025-01
 - a. Exhibit A - Recommended Conditions of Approval
 - b. Exhibit B – Findings
- 1.a Exhibit C – Applicant Plan Set
2. Applicant Letter of Justification
3. Applicant Workforce Housing Calculation
4. Traffic Study
5. CEQA 15168 Checklist