



# CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

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To: Planning Commission  
From: Department of Community Development  
Date: May 10, 2023 (Regular Meeting)  
Re: Private School Off-Street Parking Approval Request – 847 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (KEYS Academy)

### **Summary:**

Project name	KEYS Academy
Address/Location	847, 861, and 871 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way
Tax Map Parcels	15-O-2
Total Land Area	+/- 3.07-acres
Property Owner	Cantrell Avenue Properties LLC
Owner's Representative	KEYS Academy
Present Zoning	B-2, General Business District
Request	Approval of the minimum number of off-street parking spaces to be provided for a private day school in accordance with Section 10-3-25 (12) of the Zoning Ordinance
Staff Recommendation	Approval
Planning Commission	May 10, 2023 (Public Hearing)
City Council	N/A

### **Background:**

The following land uses are located on and adjacent to the property:

**Site:** Office buildings, zoned B-2

**North:** Across Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, commercial uses, zoned B-2

**East:** Commercial uses, zoned B-2

**South:** Commercial and residential uses, zoned B-2 and R-3

**West:** Commercial uses, zoned B-2

### **Key Issues:**

As described in the applicant's letter, KEYS Academy proposes to lease a building addressed as 847 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way to use as KEYS Academy-Harrisonburg, a private day school, and to house and run the secondary alternative education program for Harrisonburg City Public Schools (HCPS). In

order to move the project forward, review and approval by Planning Commission for the proposed number of minimum off-street parking spaces is required per Section 10-3-25 (12) of the Zoning Ordinance (ZO). Section 10-3-23 (12) requires the following:

Elementary schools, junior or senior high schools, or equivalent facilities: Proposed off-street parking spaces shall be programmed by the applicable school authorities as necessary to meet state standards for use and consideration of site locations, then submitted to the planning commission for comprehensive site plan review.

This process includes for KEYS Academy to determine the amount of parking they believe is adequate for their site based on division and state agency recommendations. Within the attached letter, KEYS Academy describes that KEYS Academy-Harrisonburg would serve up to 32 students, the secondary alternative education center (KEYS-AEC) would serve up to 20 students, and both the KEYS Academy and KEYS-AEC would employ 22 shared staff. The letter goes on to describe that the schools would need 22 off-street parking spaces for staff and 8-12 off-street parking spaces for visitors, for no more than 35 off-street parking spaces for the schools' use.

A document titled *Guidelines for School Facilities in Virginia's Public Schools (2021)* prepared by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), among other things, states:

Adequate parking for staff and an additional 10 percent to 20 percent parking space [sic] for visitors should be provided. Student parking to accommodate one-third of the student enrollment should be provided.

Based on the *Guidelines* document, the site should have 22 spaces for staff, 18 spaces for one-third of the student enrollment, and 4 parking spaces for visitors if 10 percent is used, which is a total of 44 off-street parking spaces. Given the KEYS Academy's experience in operating similar schools in Culpepper, Charlottesville, Stuarts Draft, and Ruther Glen, staff is comfortable accepting the proposal with establishing a minimum requirement of 35 off-street parking spaces for the KEYS Academy-Harrisonburg and KEYS-AEC.

Using aerial photos, staff counted 142 off-street parking spaces on the property. Based on current uses on the property, the buildings addressed as 861 and 871 Martin Luther King Jr. Way require 106 off-street parking spaces, leaving 36 off-street parking spaces available for 847 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, where KEYS Academy proposes to locate. (Note: The 106 off-street parking spaces required for 861 and 871 Martin Luther King Jr. Way was calculated using square footage listed in information available from the City Real Estate Office and a 2001 engineered comprehensive site plan. Further confirmation about the uses on the site will be needed during the building permitting/change of use permit process.)

KEYS Academy continues to coordinate with City departments on the location and access for the proposed fence and proposed routing for public school buses through the site.

*Recommendation*

Staff has no concerns with the proposed number of minimum off-street parking spaces and recommends approval.

**Environmental Impact:**

N/A

**Fiscal Impact:**

N/A

**Prior Actions:**

N/A

**Alternatives:**

- (a) Approve the proposed number of minimum off-street parking spaces as proposed by KEYS Academy; or
- (b) Deny the request.

**Community Engagement:**

N/A

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends alternative (a) to approve the proposed number of minimum off-street parking spaces as proposed by KEYS Academy.

**Attachments:**

- 1. Site maps
- 2. Supporting documents

**Review:**

N/A