

# Childcare Facility Preliminary Assessment of Feasibility

Edenvale Community Center

330 Branham Lane East, San Jose, CA 95111



**Prepared by Matthew Tinsley, SCCOE, September 2025**

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## 1. Summary

This report provides the findings of a site visit by Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) staff to the Edenvale Community Center at 330 Branham Lane East, San Jose, CA 95111. The facility is approximately 20,200 square feet in size and has fire sprinklers throughout, meeting new fire safety requirements to serve infants and toddlers. The visit focused on two existing classrooms (approximately 900 square feet each), currently used for teen afterschool programs, and a community room (approximately 1,800 square feet) immediately across a hallway from the existing classrooms. The purpose of the site was to make a preliminary assessment of the feasibility of retrofitting these existing spaces to serve as a licensed childcare facility. The intended outcome of the visit was to assess the space, highlight opportunities and challenges associated with developing it as a childcare facility, and determine a list of next steps required to complete the feasibility assessment.

The proposed childcare spaces can be accessed via a side door to the center that is separate from the main entrance. The other end of this hallway leads into the main entrance; a door at this point would separate the childcare spaces from the rest of the building, providing access control. The existing classrooms are completely built out and include all the necessary fixtures to serve as childcare space. Each already has a restroom with a toddler height sink and toilet. There is existing millwork with storage cupboards, “cubbies” by the entrance, and an adult and toddler height sink in the main classroom area. These rooms also have doors to the main hallway and a separate door to a small, enclosed, outdoor space with direct access to an existing parking lot. This could be used as an emergency exit or as an entrance to a play area that would replace part of the current parking lot (please see below). Both interior and exterior doors in these rooms are glass, allowing ample natural light into the space.

The community room, across the hallway from these classrooms has a row of glass windows looking onto the hallway and two exterior doors to the front landscaped area of the building. This allows the required two exits for safety. The room has a partition system that allows it to be temporarily divided into two. There is a lofted ceiling and exterior clerestory windows allowing ample natural light into the space. There is no existing plumbing in this room, so conversion of this space into childcare space would require trenching through the existing foundation.

The building has a 50+ spaces dedicated parking lot and is owned by the City of San Jose. It neighbors a Boys and Girls Club afterschool center and Davis Intermediate School, part of Oak Grove School District. Please see Appendix A for site visit photographs with annotations.

Opportunities: The existing classrooms require little to no renovation to serve as childcare space, there is sufficient parking for staff, the building meets new fire code requirements for serving infants and toddlers, and allows for a simple and secure access to the childcare space for families.

Challenges: There is currently less than 500 square feet of outdoor space, between the two existing classrooms, that could serve as a play area. This is insufficient and so additional outdoor space would need to be created. The most likely option is to turn part of the existing parking lot into an outdoor play area (please see below). The community room would need significant renovation, including trenching and installation of new water and sewer lines, to be converted into either two classrooms or one classroom and non-classroom accessory space. Existing restrooms in the community center could be used by staff but are outside the proposed childcare space.

Recommendation: Based on the findings of the initial assessment, should the decision be made to continue evaluating this space, we recommend the following steps. First, assessment by an architecture and engineering team of the feasibility of using a portion of the existing parking lot to create an outdoor play area. Second, evaluation of the best use of the community room as either (i) two classrooms, or (ii) one classroom and accessory space and the associated costs of each. This evaluation may require outreach to childcare operators about their interest in operating a licensed program at a site with either three classrooms or extremely limited non-classroom and accessory space. Alternative uses include the site operating as satellite space for an existing provider with a nearby center or as an unlicensed childcare center (e.g. a parent co-op program). However, both of these uses would still require the development of outdoor play space.

## **2. Local Childcare Need**

Data from the Local Early Education Planning Council (LPC) 2023 Childcare Needs Assessment<sup>1</sup> (published in March 2025) shows that in the City of San Jose there are approximately 19,242 children ages 0-2 years for whom there is no child care slot. For preschool age children (ages 3-4 years), supply exceeds the demand by 3,600 slots. Within zip code 95111, the LPC ZIP Code Priorities Report (2024)<sup>2</sup> shows there are over 1,500 preschool age children, that almost 800 are eligible for subsidized childcare, and that 81% of eligible children are currently unserved by a subsidized program. Similarly, there are almost 2,000 infants and toddlers in this zip code, almost 900 are eligible for subsidized childcare, and that 97% of eligible infants and toddlers are currently

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/2023\\_LPC-Needs-Assessment.pdf](https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/2023_LPC-Needs-Assessment.pdf)

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/Santa-Clara-County-LPC-ZIP-Code-Priorities-Report\\_2024-CSPP.pdf](https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/Santa-Clara-County-LPC-ZIP-Code-Priorities-Report_2024-CSPP.pdf)

unserved by a subsidized program<sup>3</sup>. Based on these data, this zip code is classified as Priority One, meaning that providers seeking to serve subsidy-eligible children in this zip code will receive preferential access to new subsidized childcare contracts from the state in any upcoming expansion.

Data from the SCCOE Resource and Referral Agency Childcare Portal ([www.childcarescc.org](http://www.childcarescc.org)) indicates that there are 51 licensed private childcare providers in zip code 95111 with a combined capacity of 812, less than 25% of the population of children ages 0-5 in the area. Of those 45 are family childcare homes (FCCH) and six are centers. Twenty three of the FCCH and one of the centers accept childcare subsidy vouchers, the remainder are private pay only. Together these data suggest (i) there is unmet need for childcare in this zip code, (ii) there is substantial unmet need for subsidized care in this zip code, especially for infant and toddler care, and (iii) any childcare center at this site should be designed to support infant and toddler care.

### 3. Site & Facility Assessment

In order for a space to support a high quality early childhood program it should provide (i) ample classroom space with direct connections to outdoor play areas, (ii) non-classroom space to support teacher work, administration, and family support activities, (iii) accessory space for food and janitorial services, (iv) outdoor space that supports a variety of play activities and gross motor development, with appropriate separation between age groups, (v) safe and efficient access for child drop-off and services, and (vi) staff parking and efficient traffic circulation.

#### Indoor classroom space:

Childcare licensing requires a minimum of 35 square feet of **unencumbered** classroom space per child. Current best practice recommends classrooms be 1,000 to 1,300 square feet. The existing two classrooms are approximately 900 square feet each. The licensed capacity of these classrooms will depend on exact furniture layout and other constraints but a typical classroom enrollment of 12 toddlers (18-36 months) is possible in this space. Given that these rooms already have toddler height sinks and toilets, and all the necessary cabinetry, our recommendation is that they be used for toddler care (i.e. 18-36 month old children) as infant care would require additional space for cribs. One classroom could be used for younger toddlers and the second for older children to allow for developmentally consistent grouping.

The existing, 1,800 square foot community room could be converted into ECE learning space. However, this will require significant investment. There is currently no plumbing and so installing toilets, sinks, dishwashers etc. will require connecting to existing utility

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/Santa-Clara-County-LPC-ZIP-Code-Priorities-Report\\_2024-CCTR.pdf](https://www.sccoe.org/supoffice/lpc/Documents/Reports/Santa-Clara-County-LPC-ZIP-Code-Priorities-Report_2024-CCTR.pdf)

lines, which may require trenching through the existing concrete slab. This space could be converted into a single, large, classroom with low walls or furniture dividers to designate different learning spaces. Alternatively, a full height wall could be built to divide the space into two, small, classrooms or to one classroom and non-classroom accessory space. This room does have direct outside access, meeting emergency exit requirements but does not have direct access to appropriate outdoor space for play.

#### Non-classroom and accessory space:

A childcare facility requires a variety of spaces in addition to classrooms. These include separate offices for administration, assessment, and parent conferences; teacher work spaces; rooms for food service, laundry, and janitorial storage that are separate from childcare areas; adult restrooms, a reception area with access control, and circulation.

There is currently no non-classroom or accessory space associated with the existing classrooms. Existing restrooms in the community center could be used by staff but are outside the proposed childcare space. The only opportunity to build non-classroom space within the proposed childcare footprint would be to include it in the renovation of the community room, sacrificing the possibility of a fourth classroom. This creates a potential barrier to recruit a provider to offer childcare services by reducing the number of children who can be served in the space, affecting fiscal sustainability. Alternatively, if the site does not include accessory spaces, this creates substantial difficulties in program operations. This is a significant barrier to the feasibility of this site supporting a stand-alone, licensed childcare center. Other alternative uses, such as an unlicensed program (e.g. parent co-op program) or as a satellite site for a nearby early learning program, are possible but depend on factors outside the scope of this study.

#### Outdoor play space:

There is currently no licensable outdoor play space at the site. There is an enclosed courtyard of approximately 500 square feet between the two existing classrooms. After renovations, this could serve as outdoor space for six children at a time. This is insufficient and so additional space needs to be found for the site to be feasible. Given the existing layout, the only possibility is to take some of the existing parking lot behind the community center and convert it to outdoor play space, with the enclosed courtyard being used as access to this area.

The site has a parking lot with 50+ spaces alongside and behind the center, bounded by the Boys and Girls Club on one side and Davis Intermediate School on the other. During the time of the visit, a mid-week morning, a majority of the spaces were empty. This suggests that a portion of the lot might be able to be used as outdoor play space. Depending on the classroom configuration, scheduling, and enrollment, the outdoor

space would need to be approximately 2,000 to 5,000 square feet. This could be achieved by taking the space behind the center and using it as outdoor space while maintaining existing parking alongside the center, adjacent to Branham Lane East. This configuration preserves parking access and circulation, while giving shelter and privacy to the play area. It would also allow access to the childcare space from an existing door and to the outdoor space from the existing classrooms and community room via the enclosed courtyard.

SCCOE staff had a number of concerns about this plan to create an outdoor space. Most importantly, this area of the parking lot is also a fire lane. Determining which parts of the site are served by this fire access, and whether this area can be repurposed as outdoor play space, will determine whether childcare is a feasible use of this site. Additionally, determining the parking demand on site - and whether there are existing agreements with neighboring sites about use of the lot - is necessary. This analysis requires contracting with an architect, landscape designer, and utilities engineer and may also require discussion with the San Jose Fire Department. There is also a significant grade immediately beyond the existing lot that runs down onto the school site. Use of the space as a play area may affect drainage and runoff and will need to be understood. This renovation will also result in a significant capital expense.

#### Safe child drop off:

The side entrance to the community center, adjacent to the parking lot, opens into the proposed childcare space and could serve as a dedicated childcare entrance into a reception area. Nearby parking spaces could be reserved for short term parking (e.g. 10 minutes) to allow safe and efficient childcare drop-off and pickup. SCCOE staff noted that drop off and pick up for a program that includes infants and toddlers is complicated because parents need to leave their cars and accompany children to the classrooms. SCCOE staff had no significant concerns about developing a safe child drop-off area for this space.

#### Services access:

The side entrance to the community center, described above, could also serve as services access to the proposed childcare space. This would support food service deliveries from an off-site kitchen and other services. SCCOE staff did not have concerns about services access to this space.

#### Staff parking:

Using the site as a childcare center will create demand for 12-15 staff parking spaces, depending on the number of classrooms, the ages of the children served, and other

operating features. There is likely sufficient parking to meet staff's needs, contingent on existing parking demand and the extent of the parking lot renovated into outdoor play space.

#### General comments:

While there are two existing classrooms that are “turnkey” spaces for childcare with bathrooms, toddler height fixtures, and millwork, these spaces are small. Modifying the community room to support either two small classrooms, one large classroom, or a classroom and accessory space, will be complex and expensive due to the lack of existing plumbing access. The lack of additional space for non-classroom uses creates a difficult trade off for any potential operator between having enough classrooms for a fiscally sustainable program and having other areas necessary for program operations.

Access to outdoor space is another major concern. There is currently no sufficient outdoor space and the best option for creating this space may not be feasible due to the need for fire access to the site and, potentially, neighboring facilities. Determining whether a portion of the parking lot can be repurposed into an outdoor play area is the key to the feasibility of using the site as childcare space. If it is possible to repurpose part of the parking lot, it will require significant capital investment.

There appear to be no concerns with access control, services accessibility, and staff parking.

#### **4. Operational Considerations**

General recommendations for fiscally sustainable childcare operations are that (i) a new center should support a minimum of four classrooms to allow for efficiencies of scale, administrative oversight, and robust operations, (ii) the site should provide care for infants, toddlers, and preschool age children to allow families to enroll at the site for as long as possible, (iii) the program should provide full-day care, (iv) the site should have space for a warming kitchen to allow central food service, and (v) programs serving infants and toddlers should have on-site laundry facilities.

As discussed above, the proposed space will require significant trade offs between these competing uses. The existing classrooms are best suited to provide toddler care as they are too small to accommodate the increased class size of a preschool room and are also too small to meet infant room's requirements for crib space. Converting the community room into two classrooms may allow sufficient enrollment for a fiscally sustainable program, but does not provide space for non-classroom uses. Converting it to one classroom and accessory space does not allow the center to serve the full infant to preschool age range, as these two ages must be physically separated. All of these

constraints make it less likely that a provider would be interested in the space - although they do not rule it out completely. For example, a provider with a nearby preschool center may be interested in using the space for a satellite infant and toddler program. Examining these possibilities is outside of the scope of this assessment.

Additional operational considerations include the cost of rent, utilities, janitorial, and landscape services, that have a significant impact on the program operations budget and could determine whether the site is attractive to childcare providers. Most childcare providers operate with very thin margins and so it would be important to determine what terms might be available from the City of San Jose before reaching out to potential operators.

## **5. ROM Capital Costs Estimate**

Based on prior experience and recent childcare construction projects, SCCOE staff estimates the cost of transitioning the site from its current state to a licensed childcare facility to be on the order of \$2.5-3 million. These estimates assume a cost of:

- \$800,000 thousand in soft costs (architect, permitting etc.) and contingency,
- \$500 sqft to retrofit the community room,
- \$300 sqft to renovate a portion of the parking lot into playground spaces.

These estimates are approximations only and do not take into account construction cost inflation or unforeseen delays. They are provided to give a sense of the scale of the capital costs and funding required to develop the existing space into a childcare facility.

## **6. Conclusion & Next Steps**

This site is challenging to convert into a stand alone licensed childcare facility due to the lack of classroom space, non-classroom and accessory space, and outdoor play areas. Conversion of the community room and a portion of the parking lot to new uses will require substantial funds. Additionally, converting a portion of the parking lot into play space may not be possible given its current use as fire access. If that is the case, this site may not be a feasible location for childcare. There are three recommended next steps.

First, determining the viability of converting a section of the parking lot into outdoor play space. This includes assessing the need for fire access, alternatives to the current design, and the cost of conversion if alternatives do exist. It also includes understanding any constraints on what can be done with the existing parking lot, e.g. current use demands, any use by neighboring facilities, and any imposed by regulatory or funding requirements.

Second, the development of a preliminary indoor and outdoor space plan by an architect experienced in designing childcare centers. This could resolve space use

questions (e.g. the best use of the community room) and would provide additional information on design requirements for the outdoor space.

Finally, discussion with the City of San Jose, the building owner, about (i) use of the space for childcare and how it would interact with the ongoing use of the rest of the building as a community center, (ii) the conversion of part of the parking lot into outdoor play space, and (iii) their expectations for rent and other operational costs for potential childcare providers on site. Any ability to reduce these costs could have a significant impact on the attractiveness of the site to a potential childcare tenant.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A: Site visit photographs with annotations

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View from the community center entrance to the hallway of the proposed childcare space. To the right is the community room. The end of the hallway is the proposed childcare entrance. The doorways to the front left are the center restrooms that could be used by childcare staff.



Existing classroom with bathroom in back left corner (including toddler height toilet and sink), counters and cabinetry (including toddler height sink in back middle and storage along the left wall).



Bathroom in existing classrooms with the toddler height sink, mirror, and toilet installed.



View of enclosed courtyard between the two existing classrooms showing direct access to the outdoor space.



Community room. Note the lowered ceiling halfway down to accommodate the existing partition system, the glass wall between the room and interior hallway, and the exit door to the front exterior of the community center providing emergency egress.



View of the existing parking lot behind the center proposed to be renovated into an outdoor play area. Note the red curbing indicating fire lane access.



Additional view of the parking lot behind the center showing proximity of the lot to the building. The horizontal panelled section of the building in the center of the photo is the wall between the lot and the enclosed courtyard, illustrating the potential path of travel to the proposed outdoor space.