

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF BUILDING AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING AN APPROXIMATE 4,300 SQUARE FOOT ADDITION; TENANT IMPROVEMENTS; FAÇADE REFRESH; SIGN PROGRAM; AND ACCESS, PARKING, AND LANDSCAPING UPGRADES WITH A FENCING REQUEST IN THE OPEN SPACE EASEMENT.

PROJECT ADDRESS: 3450 Broad Street **FILE NUMBER:** ARCH-0672-2024

BY: Hannah Hanh, Associate Planner
Phone Number: (805) 781-7432
Email: hhanh@slocity.org

FROM: Rachel Cohen, Principal Planner
Phone Number: (805) 781-7574
Email: rcohen@slocity.org

APPLICANT: San Luis Obispo Classical Academy

REPRESENTATIVE: Tim Ronda, SDG Architects

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Architectural Review Commission consider the following actions:

1. Review the project in terms of its consistency with the Community Design Guidelines and Sign Regulations and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the proposed building, site, and sign designs; and
2. Review the proposed fencing in terms of its consistency with the Open Space, Drainage, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Access Easement Agreement and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

San Luis Obispo Classical Academy (SLOCA, Applicant) has applied for a Moderate Development Review (ARCH-0672-2024) application to construct various building and site improvements at 3450 Broad Street (Attachment A – SLOCA Project Description, Attachment B – SLOCA Project Plans). This application is accompanied by the Applicant's Planned Development Amendment (PDEV-0673-2024), Conditional Use Permit (USE-0674-2024), and Tree Removal Application (TREE-0033-2025) for a project to establish and operate a private elementary school and daycare (i.e., infant childcare through eighth grade) at the existing development.

The project is intended to relocate and consolidate existing SLOCA students and staff from three (3) separate locations, including (1) the K-8 school site at 165 Grand Avenue, (2) the preschool and infant care site at the intersection of Grand Avenue and Slack Street, and (3) staff offices at 1880 Santa Barbara Avenue. As proposed, the elementary school would consist of seven (7) preschool and infant rooms; 19 classrooms and educational flex spaces; a gymnasium; a library; a kitchen and breakroom; administration offices and meeting rooms; storage rooms; and an outdoor field with various recreational activity areas.

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Proposed building improvements include (a) an approximate 4,300 square foot addition (i.e., enclose loading dock to accommodate gymnasium, second floor offices, and library mezzanine) to the existing approximate 50,800 square foot building (to produce an approximate 55,100 square foot building); (b) tenant improvements to create classrooms, offices, library, gymnasium, etc.; (c) a façade refresh with new exterior colors and finishes; and (d) the establishment of a new sign program. Proposed site improvements include (a) removal of the north parking lot and replacement with an outdoor field and various activity areas; (b) design revisions to the south parking lot to accommodate new access and circulation improvements; and (c) landscaping upgrades, which include a request to install fencing within the open space easement.

Required Advisory Body Reviews

In addition to the Architectural Review Commission’s (ARC) review, the overall project scope requires a review and recommendation by the Tree Committee (TC) for the accompanying tree removal request, and a review and final decision by the Planning Commission (PC) to allow the proposed private elementary school and daycare along with all associated building and site improvements.

On [March 24, 2025](#), the TC reviewed the Applicant’s request to remove 20 existing trees and provide 45 compensatory tree plantings, and recommended the PC approve the tree removal request as part of the project.

The project is tentatively scheduled for the PC’s review and final decision on June 11, 2025. At this meeting, the PC’s review will consider recommendations from the preceding ARC and TC reviews as part of their final decision on the project.

2.0 PROJECT SITE INFORMATION

Site Data	
Location	3450 Broad Street
Land Use Designation	Services and Manufacturing (SM)
Zone	Service Commercial Zone with Special Considerations Overlay and Planned Development Overlay (C-S-S-PD)
Project Site	Approximately 3.5 acres
Surrounding Uses	North – Single-family residences
	South – Vehicle repair, single-family residence, etc.
	East – Manufacturing, distribution, wholesale, etc.
	West – Vacant, open space

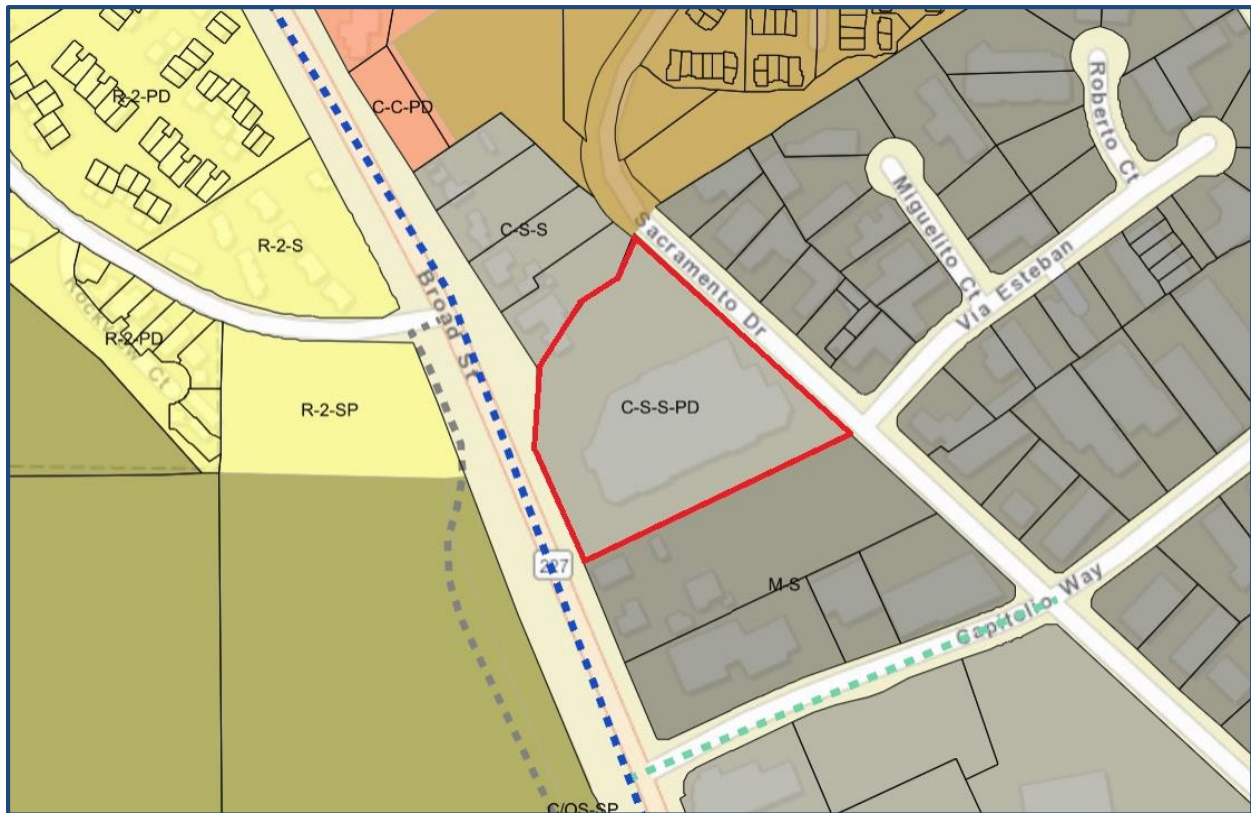


Figure 1 – Project Site

Prior Approvals / Site Background Information

Original Site Development

On November 17, 1997, the ARC approved a development project for a 52,000 square foot commercial building with supporting site improvements such as parking, access, and landscaping, including a creek setback exception along portions of the creek to accommodate a bike path, at 3450 Broad Street. This approval sustained when the City Council denied an appeal of, and upheld, the ARC's approval of the Acacia Creek Commercial Center (now referred to as the Acacia Creek Business Park) on January 6, 1998 (Attachment C – Resolution No. 8753 [1998 Series]).

Following project approval, the Acacia Creek Business Park was constructed and is now the existing development that is proposed with various building and site improvements to accommodate a future school and daycare. It should be noted that the original site development required enhancement of the riparian corridor for Acacia Creek (located to the north side of the existing bike path), which resulted in the dedication of an open space easement to the City (Attachment D – Open Space, Drainage, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Access Easement). To protect this open space area, the agreement detailed allowable uses and structures such as open fencing within the easement area. **Analysis regarding the ARC's purview as it relates to project consistency with the applicable condition of this agreement is provided in Sections 4.0 and 5.0 below.**

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Special Considerations Overlay (S Overlay)

The project site is located in a S Overlay that requires the processing of an Administrative Use Permit (now referred to as a Minor Use Permit) with proposed development to ensure that particular special considerations associated with the site are addressed. The special considerations for this site include (a) its location along Highway 227 (Broad Street) and concerns for areawide circulation impacts; (b) the need for various frontage improvements (which have been addressed as part of the original site development); and (c) the location of a portion of the riparian corridor of Acacia Creek within the site.

Following the ARC’s review of the proposed and site improvements, the PC will review the preceding recommendations and all accompanying applications, including the Conditional Use Permit (USE-0674-2024) to establish a school and daycare and any potential impacts related to access, circulation, and the creek, as part of the final decision on the project.

Planned Development Overlay (PD Overlay)

The project site is located in a PD Overlay that allows use of the existing building for large professional office uses. On April 6, 1999, the City Council adopted [Ordinance No. 1351 \(1999 Series\)](#) amending the zoning map from C-S-S to C-S-S-PD to enable large professional office uses for the property at 3450 Broad Street. At that time, LUE Policy 3.3.2.E stated that large offices, with no single tenant space less than 2,500 square feet, and having no substantial public visitation or need for access to downtown government services, may be in the Services and Manufacturing district (i.e., land use designation), subject to approval of a PD Overlay.

Per [Section 17.48.090\(D\)](#) (Amendment to the Final Development Plan), amendments to large office PD ordinances approved by the City Council prior to 2003 (such as Ordinance No. 1351) to allow changes to the proposed use may be approved by the PC. Following the ARC’s review and in accordance with this section, the PC will review all accompanying applications, including the Planned Development Amendment (PDEV-0673-2024) to change the existing office use to the proposed school and daycare, as part of the final decision on the project.

3.0 PROPOSED DESIGN

Architecture: Contemporary metal building

Design Details and Materials: Metal siding, roofing, and awnings; aluminum storefront doors and windows; and wood vertical screens

Colors: Muted earth-tone colors, including white, gray, and walnut



Figure 2 – Rendering of Main Building Entry Along Sacramento Drive



Figure 3 – Rendering of Building Entry/Exit at the Outdoor Field

4.0 FOCUS OF REVIEW

As detailed in [Section 17.106.020\(B\)\(2\)](#) (Nonresidential Enlargement or Modification), a significant building enlargement and/or modification includes the lesser of the following:

- An increase in gross floor area equal to, or exceeding 25 percent of, the existing gross floor area of the structure (which equates to an increase of approximately 12,700 square feet for the existing 50,802 square foot building); or
- An increase of *more than 2,500 square feet*.

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Since the project includes a building addition of approximately 4,300 square feet, approval of a Moderate Development Review application is required.

Per [Section 17.106.040\(A\)\(1\)](#) (Recommendations from Advisory Bodies), the ARC’s role for Moderate Development Review applications is to (1) evaluate the project for consistency with design principles and objectives in the [Community Design Guidelines](#), [Sign Regulations](#), and applicable City standards, and (2) provide a recommendation to the PC regarding the proposed building, site, and sign designs. Note – The final review authority is elevated to the PC, instead of the Community Development Director, because accompanying applications for the project (i.e., Planned Development Amendment and Conditional Use Permit) require the PC as the final decisionmaker.

In addition, the ARC is to review and determine if the fencing proposed within the open space easement is appropriate to open space preservation and whether it should be approved as described in Condition 3.a. of the Agreement (Figure 4 – Excerpt of the Open Space Easement Agreement).

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|---|
| <p>3. The restrictions hereby imposed upon the use of the open space portion of the subject property by Owner and the acts which owner shall refrain from doing upon the subject property are, and shall be, as follows:</p> <p>a. No structures will be placed or erected upon said premises. If desired, see-through fencing appropriate to open space preservation may be allowed if approved by the city's Architectural Review Commission.</p> |
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Figure 4 – Excerpt of the Open Space Easement Agreement (Attachment D)

5.0 CONSISTENCY REVIEW

Staff has evaluated the project for consistency with applicable guidance in the Community Design Guidelines and Sign Regulations, and compliance with conditions of the underlying agreement related to the original development approval in the following discussion.

Community Design Guidelines

The project includes a gross floor area increase of approximately 4,300 square feet consisting of the (1) enclosure of the loading dock to create the gym and gym lobby, (2) addition of second floor offices, and (3) addition of a library mezzanine. While the project results in a gross floor area increase, most of the improvements are limited to the interior of the building (i.e., new second floor offices and library mezzanine to be created within the existing building space without increasing its height) and the only exterior building wall change is to enclose the loading dock (located on the north elevation) and create a gym lobby without altering the footprint of the existing loading dock area. Accompanying site improvements would remove hardscape (i.e., existing north parking lot) and replace with outdoor recreational and landscaping areas (i.e., outdoor field and activity areas). Additional native trees would also be planted throughout the site (around the outdoor field, along the side yard on Sacramento Drive, and in the south parking lot).



Figure 5 – Proposed Building Elevations

As proposed, the building improvements include a limited change to its existing form (i.e., one new wall to enclose the loading dock) and an overall façade refresh with a consistent use of new paint colors in a muted color palette and complementary metal/wood materials and detailing throughout all elevations of the existing metal building. The accompanying site improvements would also introduce outdoor spaces and additional landscaping and native trees to soften the overall appearance of the development. As proposed, the project would be consistent with the Community Design Guidelines, specifically Section 3.1(B) (General Architectural Design Guidelines) for the consistent muted use of colors, materials, and detailing throughout all elevations, and Section 3.1(C) (Site Planning) for the integration of landscaping to define new outdoor spaces and the addition of pedestrian amenities and native trees throughout the project site. No discussion items have been identified for the ARC’s review.

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Sign Regulations

As part of the project, a new sign program is proposed to accommodate the school and daycare (SLOCA) as the sole tenant for the entire building. The sign program includes a total of seven (7) signs, which include various exceptions (as bolded in Table 1 below) to create a comprehensive set of signs for the large site (Figure 6 – Proposed Sign Program, Table 1 – Sign Program Summary).

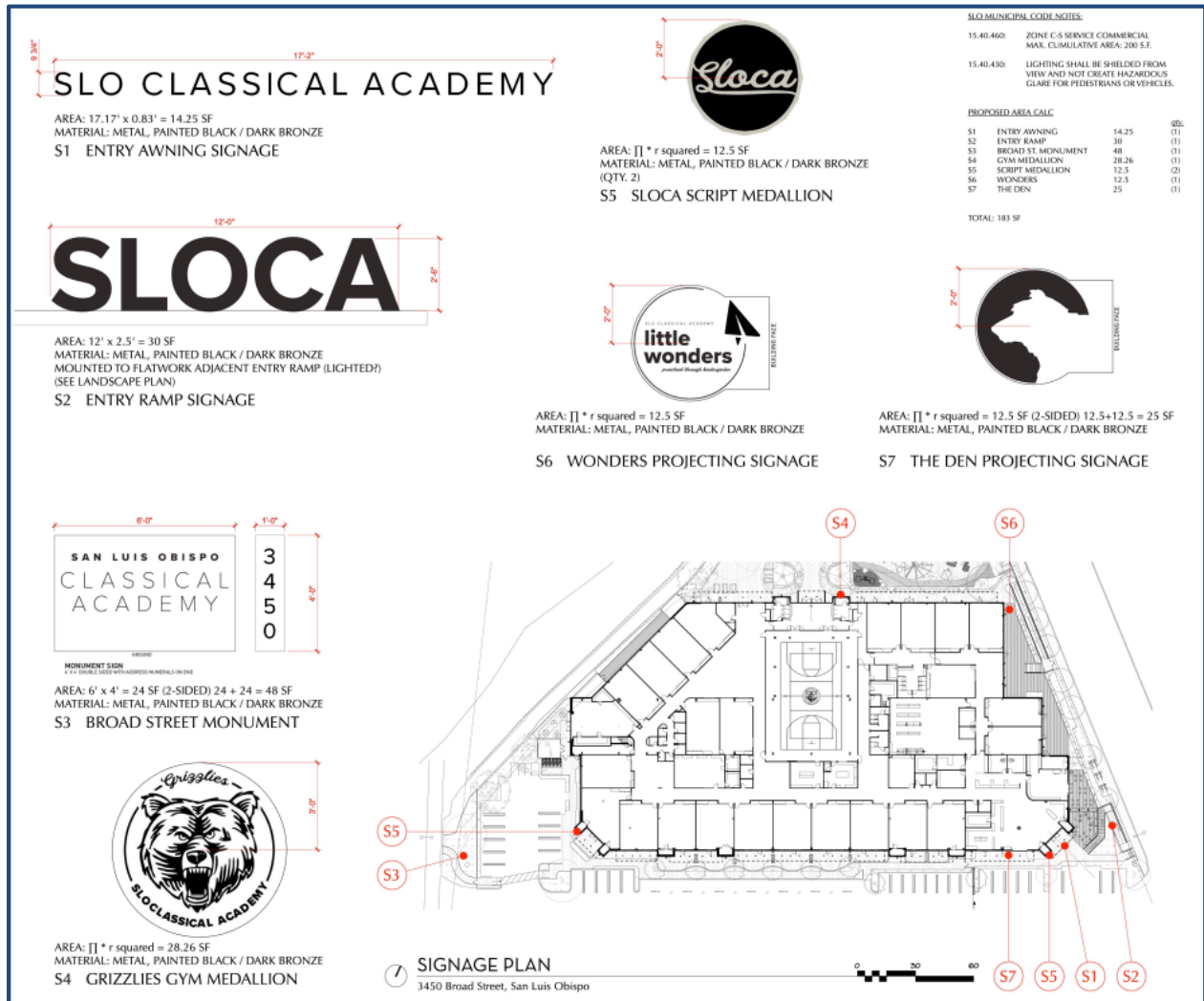


Figure 6 – Proposed Sign Program

Table 1 – Sign Program Summary		
Sign Details	Proposed	Allowed / Required
Cumulative Sign Area	183 square feet (SF)	200 SF
Number of Signs	Seven (7) signs	Two (2) signs
Type of Signs		

Awning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One (1) sign at main building entry along Sacramento • 14.25 SF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One (1) sign per tenant • 25% of awning area or 25 SF, whichever is less
Monument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two (2) signs along the Sacramento and Broad frontages • 30 SF and 24 SF (one-side) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One (1) sign per premises per frontage • 24 SF (for single largest face)
Wall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three (3) signs at building entries, but one without public entrance at the gym/field • (1) 28.26 SF and (2) 12.5 SF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two (2) signs at building entries with public entrance • Less than 100 square feet or 15% of building face, whichever is less
Projecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two (2) signs • 12.5 SF (one-side) 	Not allowed in the C-S zone

As proposed, the sign program includes a variety of signs throughout the project building and site that are primarily oriented at the street frontages to provide visibility (i.e., awning, monument, and wall signs to indicate SLOCA as the tenant) and at select building entries to indicate changes in the use of different rooms and areas (i.e., wall and projecting signs to indicate the gym, little wonders, and den).

The ARC should review and determine whether the sign program has been designed with consideration to the number of signs (e.g., does the sign program include an adequate number of signs without resulting in clutter?), sign placement (e.g., do the signs provide sufficient visibility and information while remaining well integrated with the project building and throughout the site?), sign scale in relation to building scale, and readability (e.g., are the signs appropriately sized in order to provide information without being too large?). In addition, the ARC should consider whether the colors, placement, and materials of all signs are compatible with the architecture and facade details of the structure.

Fencing in the Open Space Easement

The open space easement¹ is delineated as an orange dashed line (along the existing bike path) on the site plans and landscaping plans (Attachment B – SLOCA Project Plans). Six-foot-high (6’0”) black aluminum fencing (identified as Fence, F1 on Sheet L1.0 of the Project Plans) is proposed, within the open space easement, between the public bike path and the private school, outdoor field, and parking area to provide security and

¹ Approved plans for the original site development were hand drawn in the late 1990s. Based on more recent surveying and mapping tools available, the open space easement is shown on this plan set with increased accuracy and thus indicates that the easement extends into the existing building and hardscape envelopes at some minor portions.

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create separate spaces between these uses. As proposed, the black aluminum fencing is open, see-through fencing that would provide separation and protect uses on both sides.

The ARC should review and determine if the proposed fencing is consistent with “see-through fencing appropriate to open space preservation” that may be allowed by the ARC per Condition 3.a. of the Agreement.

6.0 PROJECT STATISTICS

The project would result in limited changes to development standards as summarized in Table 2 (Summary of Changes to Applicable Development Standards). As proposed, the project would comply with the allowance or requirement of each affected development standard, and no conflicts are identified.

Table 2 – Summary of Changes to Applicable Development Standards		
Project Details	Proposed	Allowed / Required
Maximum Floor Area Ratio	0.36	1.5
Public Art	Onsite contribution or in-lieu fee payment	Onsite, offsite, or in-lieu fee contribution
Tree Removals	TC reviewed and recommended approval of the tree removal request; PC to review the recommendation as part of the final project decision	
Number of Vehicle Spaces	88 spaces	88 spaces
Number of Bicycle Spaces	16 spaces	As determined by the Community Development Director ²
• Short-term	14 short-term	
• Long-term	2 long-term	
Environmental Review	Categorically exempt from environmental review under Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects) of the CEQA Guidelines	

² Since there are no specified City bike parking requirements for educational facilities, the project is utilizing guidance provided by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for elementary schools as directed by the Transportation Manager (on behalf of the Community Development Director). FHWA guidance for elementary schools include base requirements of 1 stall per 10 employees and 1 stall per 10 students above second grade; an allowable adjustment/reduction of 50% in spaces based on geographic draw; and a minimum 50% of the bike parking to be long-term spaces with the remaining as short-term racks. As proposed, the bike parking is consistent with FHWA guidance.

7.0 ACTION ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend approval of the building and site improvements for the Moderate Development Review application. An action recommending approval of these improvements will be forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and as part of final action on the project. This action may include recommendations for conditions to address consistency with the Community Design Guidelines, Sign Regulations, and/or the Open Space Easement Agreement.
2. Continue review of the proposed building and site improvements to a hearing date certain or uncertain. An action continuing the review should include clear direction to the applicant and staff on any pertinent issues related to consistency with the Community Design Guidelines, Sign Regulations, and/or the Open Space Easement Agreement.
3. Recommend denial of the building and site improvements for the Moderate Development Review application. An action recommending denial of these improvements should include findings that cite the basis for denial and reference inconsistency with the General Plan, Zoning Regulations, Community Design Guidelines, Sign Regulations, Open Space Easement Agreement, or other policy document.

8.0 ATTACHMENTS

- A. SLOCA Project Description
- B. SLOCA Project Plans
- C. Resolution No. 8753 (1998 Series)
- D. Open Space, Drainage, and Bicycle/Pedestrian Access Easement