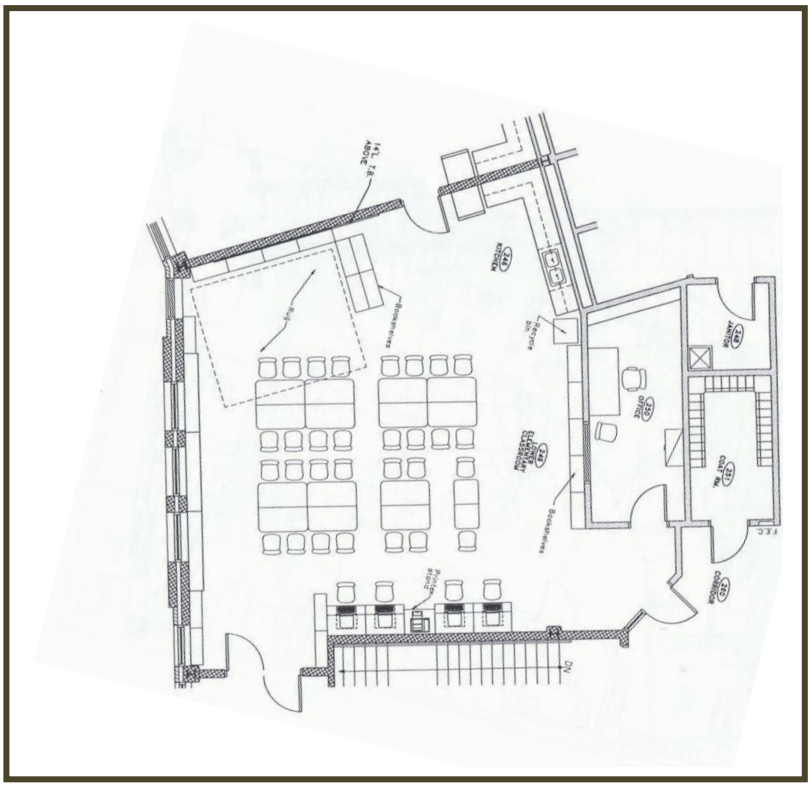
C.1 Facilities Acquisition

Description of Space & Environment

Square footage & **Number of Classrooms:**
The square footage is based on approximately 50 sq. feet per student. It is projected that in year 1 the school will require 2,000-2500 sq. feet of space (including office and storage space of approximately 500 sq. feet) that will include 1-2 classrooms (Montessori schools typically start out with 'one room classroom' model and gradually add classrooms). Space needs for year 2 will increase to approximately 3,200 sq. feet (including office, storage and 2 classrooms), and by our 3rd year we project space requirements to increase to 4,000 to include an additional classroom for increased levels of program. (Restrooms are included in the square footage needs.)

Ideally, we seek space which will include an outdoor area (with an outdoor water source) to accommodate our outdoor education curricular elements, and a garden & composting area. We understand that this area (in terms of ample space) may be compromised during our early start-up years, but will remain committed to ensure outdoor education occurs at whatever level possible (can take advantage of local parks, wildlife areas, etc.).



An example of an ideal Elementary I (K-3) space might look something like the sample floor plan at the right. Note the flexibility and openness of the space.

Ideal Montessori classrooms are designed on a "rectangular unit" to allow for maximum light and open areas. Rectangular spaces also allow for flexibility—teachers have the freedom to arrange the classroom to meet their needs. Classrooms generally need to be arranged in terms of various *activity areas* (curricular areas, wet/dry areas, etc.); *gathering areas* (classroom circle meetings, small group lessons, peer groupings, etc.); *entry area* that sets the tone of the classroom; *transitional spaces* including entry to classroom, to outdoor environment, etc.; and *thermal* comfort and appropriate *lighting* (artificial and natural).

We believe in the adage, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child". In many societies education is often a cultural center of communities (towns, villages, etc.). We believe that interpersonal contact between the school and our larger community is important and are guided by the following ideals in our search for space:

- ✓ Ideally, the location of our school needs to be central to residential neighborhoods—perhaps even within walking distance for students.

- ✓ Ideally, we want a space that can provide a meeting and gathering facility for the greater community.

- ✓ Ideally, we want to educate our community about common values. We hope to provide observation rooms/areas and spaces to exhibit student work as one way to make our values visible to the outside community.

- ✓ Ideally, we strive to "anchor" our school to the community, and strive to create a brand and physical site that reflects the identity and history of Maricopa.

Location & Layout Options:
Camino Montessori has begun the process of looking for leased space for the school to reside within the targeted market area of the Maricopa Unified School District. To date, several locations have been found that meet most of our requirements and we have had very preliminary discussions regarding potential costs and lease agreements. In the two options listed below the landlords are willing to negotiate lower square footage costs.

- *Trinity Crossing Development (projected future center of town at Porter Rd. & Maricopa/Casa Grande highway)*—This site is a restored historical ranch house that has been modified to include small offices spaces and currently has 2 large rooms (one w/approx. 1500 sq. feet and the other w/approx 1000 sq. feet), and the landlord plans to add an additional space to the house that would be appropriate for school use (1000-1500 sq. feet). The facility has met all City zoning requirements and is up to code requirements for fire safety and health. There is a fully equipped kitchen area and ample bathrooms that would provide necessary water sources. One of the two spaces has ample natural lighting, and although the smaller space does not have windows, it opens to the kitchen/reception area which has good natural lighting. Currently, there is a church leasing the 2 mentioned spaces, however the landlord is confident the church would be willing to sublet/share the space with Camino. The facility sits on 2 acres of undeveloped land, and a portion of the lot could be made available to Camino for outdoor environment/playground use. The property borders the Santa Rosa Wash area which would provide a wonderful curricular connection to our science curriculum. The only negative about this space is that students will need to be transported to/from school since it is not within safe walking distance of the surrounding neighborhoods. There is easy access for drop off/pick up of students, as well as ample parking.

- *Retail space located within a strip mall on Maricopa Highway at the Garvey intersection (central old town);* The site is located in the corner section of the L-shaped mall. It is composed of a large "sanctuary room" (great for accommodating student functions and other school events), and 4 individual classrooms ranging from 700-1000 sq. feet each. There is an open reception area at the front of the space which is the only area with natural lighting. None of the classrooms have windows, however they do have doors that give access to the outside perimeter in the rear of the strip mall (which is fenced in). All of the classroom spaces were licensed for daycare use in 2009, which indicates that an E1 Educational Occupancy would be relatively simple to procure. Very little needs to be done to get the classroom spaces ready for students, other than minor beautification.

Another positive is that the space is located in the Heritage District of Maricopa which would connect Camino to an historical area of the community. Two major disadvantages with this option are the busy aspect of the parking lot due to traffic coming in and out for the other retail, and the outdoor space does not provide ample space for a playground, or other outdoor activities related to the curriculum. When I met with the pastor of the church she was very willing to negotiate a favorable lease agreement, especially for the start-up year.

Both locations have the space available for Camino to grow into on a year to year basis, and both would require very little modification to ensure readiness for students. In both cases the landlords are willing to consider including improvement costs in the lease. No lease will be signed until a charter has been granted, and we will continue to pursue additional site options between now and the end of January, 2012 in order to be ready to move quickly to procure space upon our charter authorization.

Financial Arrangements & Considerations

Both the Start-up & 3 Year Budgets account for anticipated costs related to the lease, required fire & safety inspections, City of Maricopa regulatory code requirements, including the procurement of our E1 Occupancy. Our intent is to work with the landlord to ensure any additional costs related to ensuring building compliance be included in our lease.

TIMELINE ATTACHED