



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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June 21, 2018

CHAIR AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach

California

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Categorical Exemption CE18-079 and approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP 18-009) to allow a childcare service, community wellness programming and a 1,760-square-foot outdoor play area at an existing church, Grace United Methodist, at 2325 E. 3rd Street, in the Single-Family Residential District (R-1-N) Zone. (District 2)

APPLICANT: Los Altos YMCA
2325 E. 3rd Street
Long Beach, CA 90804
(Application No. 1803-06)

DISCUSSION

The subject property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of 3rd Street and Junipero Avenue in the Single-Family Residential (R-1-N) District and is developed with two buildings operated as a church by the Grace United Methodist Church. A special use permit was approved in 1965 to reestablish the church following a fire that destroyed the original building. The three-story building to the east dates to 1921, according to County Records. The project site is supported by off-site parking located across the street at the southeast corner of the intersection in the Two-Family Residential (R-2-N) District (Exhibit A – Location Map).

The addition of the childcare and wellness programming is an expansion or intensification of the church use, requiring the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP); there are no records of a licensed childcare facility operating from this location. Therefore, a CUP is required for the church to provide these services through a joint partnership with the YMCA.

The childcare and wellness programming will operate from the lower level (semi-subterranean) of the three-story building. The lower level was primarily developed as a banquet hall, a portion of which was converted to a recreation/gymnasium room and will now be repurposed for the childcare and wellness and fitness programming. In addition, an area of the parking lot will be used to accommodate an outdoor play area (Exhibit B – Plans).

The childcare services will run from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The childcare services proposed will consist of before-school care (6:30 a.m. to school start time) and after school care (end of school day to 6:30 p.m.) and day camp services when area schools are closed for breaks (winter, summer, etc.). The health and wellness programming includes sports practices and clinics, group exercise classes, basic cardio and strength, and fitness equipment would operate between the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

In considering an application for a church and childcare service, Chapter 21.52 of the Long Beach Municipal Code establishes specific conditions which must be satisfied unless waived. For a church use, this includes the following: a) limiting a church use in a single-family residential zone to an expansion; b) the development of a master plan; c) size limitation to 40,000 square feet; d) conformance with development standards, and 3) parking. In addition, childcare facilities must be evaluated for: a) the amount of outdoor play area, b) proximity to other childcare facilities, c) the hours of operation, and d) off-street parking and loading spaces. The following provides a review of the required play area, parking and loading assessment, and the one-half mile location criteria. The complete findings and analysis of the special use conditions is provided in Exhibit C – Findings and Conditions.

Play Area

Long Beach Municipal Code Chapter 21.52 requires a total of 75 square feet of outdoor play area per child. The applicant is proposing to accommodate up to 60 children at any one time, requiring 4,500 square feet of outdoor play area. The applicant is proposing to utilize the northern portion of the parking lot area totaling 1,720 square feet. The applicant is proposing to supplement the outdoor area with an indoor gymnasium totaling 3,678 square feet, which is designed for use as a basketball court and can be converted to accommodate a range of indoor activities including soccer, volleyball, kickball, four square, hop scotch, fitness obstacle courses, tag, and other interactive games.

The proposed outdoor play area has residential uses abutting the area to the east and west side. To ensure that the use of the area operates in a manner compatible with the adjacent residents, the following conditions specific to this area are included: a) use of the outdoor area shall be restricted to no more than ten children at one time, b) use of the area shall be limited to 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, c) outdoor play shall prohibit the use of games involving balls, d) the applicant shall cordon off the area with removable fencing to warn drivers that children are at play, and e) the applicant shall provide not less than two signs posted on the block wall of the play area indicating the use restrictions for the area.

Parking

The existing church is non-conforming with regards to the amount of on-site parking provided; there are a total 58 existing parking spaces between the two parcels. Based on the current parking standard requirement, one parking space is required for every 3.3 fixed seats provided. Since the rotunda provides seating for 925 people, 281 parking spaces are required. Therefore, the site is non-conforming with regards to parking. In order to facilitate the expansion of the use and ensure there is adequate parking to support the parking

demand generated by the childcare and wellness programming, the operators have proposed to stagger operations so that the primary assembly area within the rotunda building would not be utilized at the same time. The childcare and health and wellness programming requires 21 parking spaces where there will be fewer than 51 parking spaces available to support the use; as many as seven spaces would be unavailable when the outdoor area is in use.

Use	Parking Requirement	Required
Childcare (60 children)	1 space per every 10 children, plus 2 loading and unloading spaces.	6
Health and Wellness Room (1,470 sq. ft.)	5 spaces, plus 4 spaces per 1,000, plus 20 per 1,000 sq. ft.	9.4
Gymnasium (1 basketball court)	5 per court	5
Total		21
*An additional two spaces for loading were required to accommodate the two shuttle vans during hours of operation.		

Childcare Center Within One-half Mile of the Project Site

In accordance with Chapter 21.52 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, in a residential district no other childcare facility may be located and operating within one-half mile of the proposed site. City records indicate there are four licensed childcare locations, providing a variety of childcare services, within a one-half mile radius of the project site. The proposed childcare services are to be within an existing place of religious worship, as such its operation from the location would not be a negligible change from the current church operations. Furthermore, within the adopted Housing Element of the General Plan there is a documented need for childcare that is accessible to families, particularly single-parent households. In consideration of this demonstrated need and the ability to utilize an existing facility, waiver of this requirement is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff finds that the proposed CUP for the church to provide childcare services and community health and wellness programming by the YMCA with the incorporation of the recommended conditions of operation of approval will not cause any substantial adverse effects on neighboring land uses or the community. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, Zoning regulation, and all special development standards for churches and childcare services as appropriate and detailed in the required Findings (Exhibit C – Findings and Conditions).

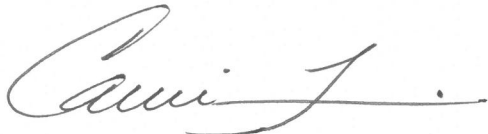
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

A total of 1,404 public hearing notices were distributed on June 4, 2018, in accordance with the provision of the Zoning Ordinance. At the time the staff report was prepared staff received verbal comments from two residents raising a range of concerns about the proposed use including: 1) noise from the use of the outdoor area, 2) parking, and 3) impact on property values. In addition, staff received 27 letters expressing support for the application (Exhibit D – Public Comments Received).

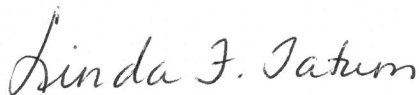
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project is exempt per section 15301 - Existing Facilities and 15304 - Minor Alteration to Land, as the project involves a change of use within the building which requires minor alterations to an existing structure and will require the addition of landscaping as conditioned (Exhibit E – Categorical Exemption CE18-079).

Respectfully submitted,



CARRIE TAI, AICP
CURRENT PLANNING OFFICER



LINDA F. TATUM, FAICP
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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- Attachments:
- Exhibit A – Location Map
 - Exhibit B – Plans
 - Exhibit C – Findings and Conditions
 - Exhibit D – Public Comments
 - Exhibit E – Categorical Exemption CE18-079