

DATE ISSUED: April 14, 2005 **REPORT NO.** PC-04-166

ATTENTION: **Planning Commission, Agenda of April 21, 2005**

SUBJECT: SAN DIEGO HEALTH & FAITH ALLIANCE HEALTH & EDUCATION
CENTER PROJECT NO. 29545, PROCESS 4

OWNER: Roman Catholic Bishop of San Diego (Attachment 13)

APPLICANT: S.V.D.P. Management, Inc. on behalf of the San Diego Health & Faith
Alliance, Inc.

SUMMARY

Issue(s) – Should the Planning Commission approve an application for a Conditional Use Permit and a Site Development Permit to convert a portion of an unoccupied convent building at the St. Rita’s Church, for use as a social service institution which would provide free health care services as part of a clinical training program at 5202 Santa Margarita Street within the Encanto Neighborhoods planning area of the Southeastern San Diego community planning area?

Staff Recommendation:

APPROVE Conditional Use Permit No.104035 and Site Development Permit No.109955 with conditions (Attachment 6 and 7).

Community Planning Group Recommendation - On August 16, 2004, the Encanto Neighborhoods Community Planning Group voted 6-5-1 to recommend denial of the project (Attachment 8)

Other Recommendations – The Southeastern Economic Development Corporation submitted a letter in opposition to the project (Attachment 9).

Environmental Review – This project has been exempted from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing facilities) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

Fiscal Impact – All costs associated with the processing of this application are paid for by the applicant.

Code Enforcement Impact - None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement – The proposal would remodel a portion of an existing building and change the use from an unoccupied convent building to a social service institution. The action would not create new housing units or delete housing units, and therefore, would not have an impact on housing availability.

BACKGROUND

The 2.7-acre site is located at 5202 Santa Margarita Street at its intersection with Churchward Street, east of Euclid Avenue. The site is double-fronted, with frontage on Santa Margarita Street and Imperial Avenue (Attachment 2). It is designated for residential use (residential low medium density at 10-15 dwelling units per acre) within the Encanto Neighborhoods planning area of the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan, and zoned MF-3000, a residential multi-family zone within the Southeastern San Diego Planned District (SESD PDO) (Attachment 1). The site is not located within a redevelopment area however, it is located immediately east of the Central Imperial Redevelopment Project Area (Attachment 3).

The site is improved with a church facility and a school. The church building, rectory, and the convent building front on Santa Margarita Street. A parking lot is located behind these buildings and accessed off of Imperial Avenue. This parking lot is surfaced but un-striped and accommodates approximately 100 spaces. The facility also includes an elementary school located within two classroom buildings oriented towards Imperial Avenue (Attachment 4). The existing church site is previously conforming as it was constructed in the 1950s when the site was zoned R-4, a city-wide multi-family zone.

The site directly across Churchward Street to the south of the subject property is a part of the St. Rita's complex. It is developed with a one-story parish hall, parking lot and playground area. Surrounding uses consist of a gas station adjacent to the west fronting on Euclid Avenue, commercial and residential uses across Imperial Avenue to the north, and single family residential uses to the east and south (Attachment 5).

The proposed facility requires a Process 4 Conditional Use Permit for a Social Service Institution in accordance with San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) Section 126.0303. A Social Service Institution is defined as *an organization engaged in activities that promote social welfare, including philanthropic assistance to the sick, needy, or unfortunate. This term does not include residential care facilities, provisions for on-site residence or confinement adult day care, alcohol recovery facilities, and parolee rehabilitation services.* A Site Development Permit is required in the SESD PDO (Section 103.1703(b) E) for any use that requires a Conditional Use Permit. The site does not contain any environmentally sensitive lands, nor have any deviations to any development regulation been requested.

DISCUSSION

Project Description

The proposed project is the establishment of a social service institution that would be operated by a non profit organization, the San Diego Faith and Health Care Alliance, within a portion of the vacant 5,820-square foot, convent building. The facility would occupy the westerly 2,451 square feet of the building which would be renovated to contain offices and exam rooms. The remainder of the building would continue to be used by the church related uses.

The facility would provide required training hours for graduate students of various colleges in San Diego for future professions in the health care field, and provide free medical services for those in the community without health care insurance or access to health care. No advertisement of the clinical facility is proposed as, according to the applicant, the medical and counseling services are offered “as-a-product-of-training.”

The San Diego Health and Faith Alliance Inc. is a collaborative of local universities which provides instruction for future health care professionals. The Alliance membership currently consists of the University of California at San Diego’s School of Medicine, University of California at San Diego’s School of Pharmacy, the Point Loma Nazarene University’s School of Nursing, the University of San Diego’s School of Marriage and Family Therapy, and the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Program of San Diego. The Alliance is affiliated with and received initial start-up funding from Father Joe’s Villages, a non-profit organization.

The proposed hours of operation would be two days a week falling between Monday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. There would be a maximum of 13 trainees, faculty members, volunteers and staff on site during the peak hours of the day and no more than six individuals receiving care at any given time as noted below:

Staff: One or two resident physicians, and one faculty physician from UCSD School of Medicine;
 One pharmacy trainee and one faculty pharmacist from UCSD School of Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Sciences;
 One or two student nurses, and one nurse faculty from Point Loma Nazarene; University School of Nursing or USC School of Nursing;
 One student family counselor from the University of San Diego’s MFT program;
 One pastoral care trainee from the Clinical Pastoral Care (CPE) programs of San Diego;
 Three staff.

Clients: Six (or fewer) receiving services at one time.

The students would perform their required clinical care training hours at the facility in order to qualify for a doctorate, licensure, or specialty board of certification, under the supervision of on-

site university faculty. The type of care provided would include general medical exams, and treatment for diabetes and high blood pressure and similar services. Marriage counseling and pastoral counseling services would also be provided. No controlled substances (narcotics) would be kept on site. The applicant has submitted that it is anticipated that the majority of those utilizing the facility would be either referred by the clergy and staff members of St. Rita's Parish, other churches or clinics in the community area, or through "word of mouth" communication in the community. There will be no active advertisement.

The stated purpose of the facility is to first, train health care and pastoral care professionals in the local community with the goal that, upon graduation, these health care professionals might continue to work in the community or in similar communities. The second goal is to provide health services to those individuals with no health care insurance or access to health care. Potential clients are interviewed and, if it is determined that individuals have existing health care insurance or are already utilizing a medical clinic, they would be referred back to their provider of care. If an individual has insurance but no established provider of care, they would be referred to other area medical facilities.

Community Plan Analysis:

The project site is designated residential low medium density at 10-15 dwelling units per acre (DU/AC) by the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan. The community plan does not identify specific sites for social service use, rather they are considered on a case-by-case basis through the Conditional Use Permit process.

The Social and Economic Element of the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan includes an objective to: "Provide adequate health care for all residents of the community, while reducing the impacts of social service facilities intended to serve the population at large." The proposed project would provide free medical services to those individuals residing in the community without health care insurance or access to health care. More specifically, the health professions or clinical training program under the proposed project would target providing health care services to those who reside in the area served by St. Rita's Catholic Church and the program is not intended to serve the population at large and those living outside of the community. The proposed use would be occupying a portion of an existing convent building at the St. Rita's Catholic Church site since the training program emphasizes and includes a pastoral care component. It is anticipated that the facility would serve approximately six clients at any given time; and therefore, the number of potential clients would not adversely impact other agencies within the immediate neighborhood.

There are seven other agencies that offer social or health services located within a two mile radius of the proposed project (Attachment 12). None of these agencies offer a clinical training program and free medical services to those individuals residing in the community without health care insurance or access to health care. The proposed location near the activity core area of Encanto Neighborhoods planning area and near transit would be appropriate to meet the objective of providing adequate health care for all residents of the community. Therefore, staff

believes the proposed project would not adversely affect the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan in that it would provide much needed health care for residents in this community and not be intended to serve the population at large.

Community Planning Group Vote

On August 16, 2004, the Encanto Neighborhoods Community Planning Group recommended denial of the project by a vote of 6-5-1 (Attachment 8). According to the minutes from that meeting, the community and board members expressed concerns about the proposed location of the facility.

Southeastern Economic Development Corporation

The Southeastern Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) submitted a letter to the Development Services Department dated May 14, 2004 during the first review of the project (Attachment 9). The letter identified several issues/concerns about the proposed facility including a concern about a concentration of social service agencies in the community, stating “there are as many as 60 such agencies currently existing in the southeastern community, the majority of which serve the entire County.” SEDC believes that the applicant did not substantiate the need for free medical and mental health services for community residents in view of the median incomes in the community. This information was forwarded to the applicant in the initial project assessment letter. In response to their concerns, the applicant prepared a response letter to SEDC (Attachment 10). Staff has not received further written correspondence from SEDC, however, SEDC staff have stated that their position remains unchanged. City staff have also prepared an analysis and response to the issues/concerns outlined in SEDC’s correspondence (Attachment 11).

CONCLUSION:

This project has been reviewed and has been determined to be consistent with the development regulations and permitted uses in effect at the time of construction. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the State of California’s Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development determines areas of highest priority need to receive free services by trainees and faculty and have designated St Rita’s Catholic Church as one of those areas. Staff’s analysis is that the proposed re-use of the building to a social service institution will not adversely affect the community plan, and provides a needed service to the community.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. **Approve Conditional Use Permit & Site Development Permit No. 29545, with modifications.**
2. **Deny Conditional Use Permit No. 104035 and Site Development Permit No. 109955 if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Deputy Director
Customer Services and Information Division,
Development Service Department

Sandra Teasley
Development Project Manager
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MEE/SMT

Attachments:

1. Community Plan Land Use Map
2. Location Map
3. Redevelopment Area Map Boundaries
4. Project Plans
5. Aerial Photograph of Surrounding Uses
6. Draft Permit with Conditions
7. Draft Resolution with Findings
8. Community Planning Group Recommendation (Minutes)
9. SEDCLetter to the City dated May 14, 2004
10. San Diego Health & Faith Alliance's Correspondence to SEDC dated June 2004
11. Staff Response to SEDC's Issues/Concerns outlined in SEDC Correspondence dated May 14, 2004
12. Other Agencies within 2-mile radius
13. Ownership Disclosure Statement
14. Data Sheet
15. Project Chronology
16. Site Photos