



THE LIGHT PROJECT

City of San Diego Planning Commission

September 28, 2023



HISTORY

From Vacant Lot to a Community Sanctuary



HISTORY

- Founded in San Diego in 2008
- Regular attendance of about 800 people
- Currently operates in a leased facility in City Heights
- Multiple services held on Sundays due to facility's limited size

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Strong tradition of community service
- Small groups, benevolence ministries, free counseling, and youth clubs
- The church reaches hundreds of people in need each year.



FINDING A PERMANENT HOME

- Church's vision is to build and own a permanent home
- 5.9-acre site in Del Cerro became available
- Purchased site in 2017

PROJECT ELEMENTS

900-seat sanctuary

12 rooms

for Sunday School & church programs

No K-12 school or daycare program

Gymnasium / Multi-Purpose Court
(no bleachers)

Prayer room

Outside space for fellowship and coffee

Office / Administrative space

356 parking spaces provided
319 required

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project Description



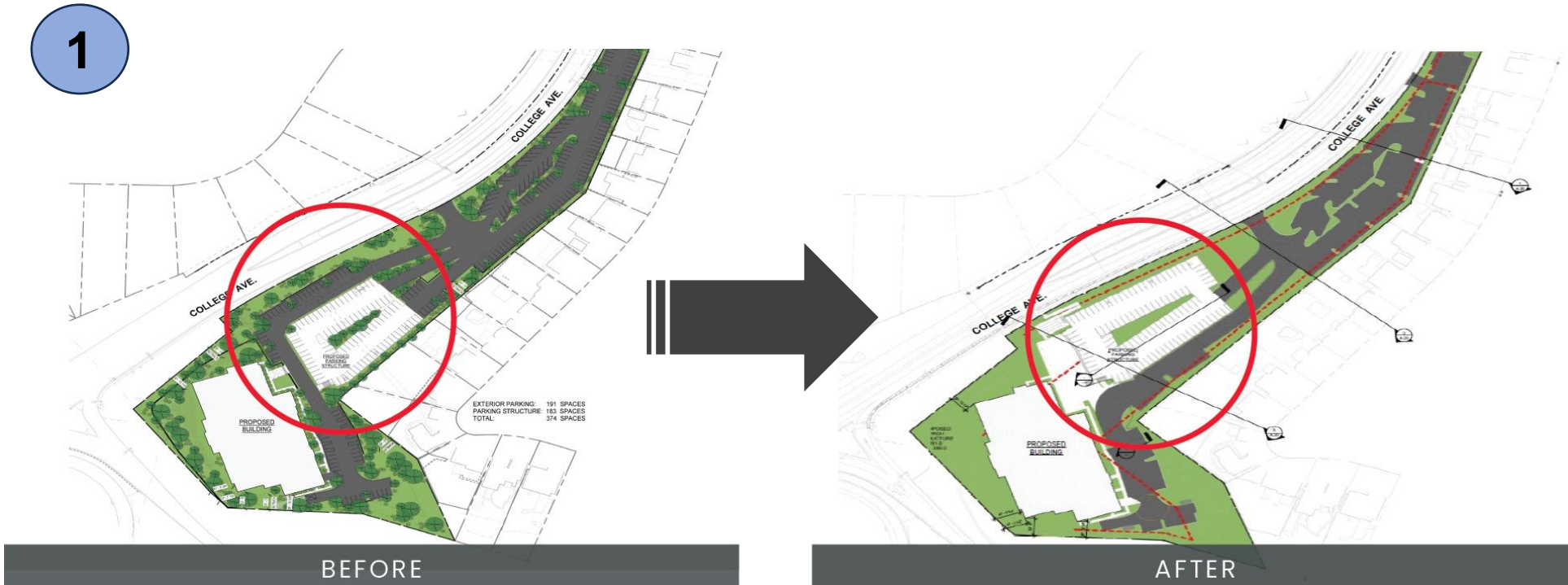
DESIGN

The Church is designed in a Mission style, reflecting San Diego's history and culture.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Modifications Made as a Result of Public Input



Moved parking garage location
closer to College Avenue to reduce proximity to existing homes



Reduced building height
from 33' to 30' with the exception of tower elements



Increased landscaping
at retaining wall location



North entrance to be gated
at all times except during church services

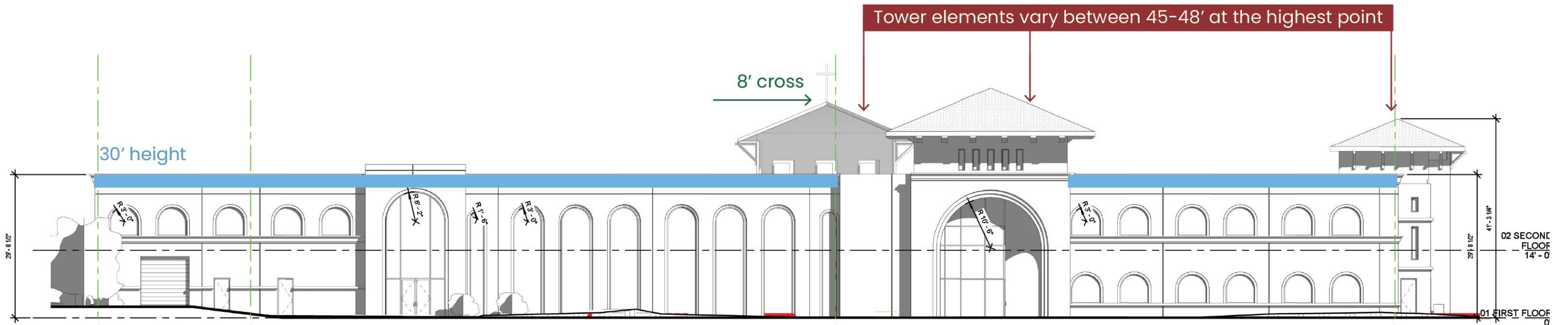


Enhanced landscape buffer
between adjacent homes and surface parking

Deviations

1. Building Height

More than 88% of the building is at or below the 30' height limit



Deviations

2. Retaining Wall



- One of the retaining walls is 20'; Applicable limit is 6'
- Minimal visibility of wall since it is below the grade of College Avenue
- Extensively landscaped with vining plants and trees

3. Side Yard Setbacks



- 14' setback proposed
- Requirement based on width of the lot; irregular shape of the lot requires a deviation

4. Long Term Bicycle Parking



- Three long-term bicycle spaces
- 18 short-term spaces for congregation
- Required spaces calculated as percentage of total parking
- Parking based on peak use so calculation not appropriate

LOCAL MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

- ✓ New, signalized intersection at the church's main entrance on College Avenue
- ✓ Median changes
- ✓ Sidewalk improvements
- ✓ Bike lane improvements

TRAFFIC & ACCESS

Local Mobility Analysis



TRIP GENERATION

Weekdays: 280 daily trips
for bible study days / less otherwise

Weekends: 1,976 daily trips
for max capacity

95% projected travel to/from south

5% projected travel to/from south



TRAFFIC & ACCESS

Local Mobility Analysis

FUTURE ROADWAY CONDITIONS

Current level of service (LOS) at College Ave / Del Cerro Blvd.

	Horizon Year Level of Service	Added Trips from Church
Weekday AM Peak Period	LOS D	2 trips Increase of 0.07%
Weekday PM Peak Period	LOS C	5 trips Increase of 0.20%
Sundays	LOS C	35 trips Increase of 1.66%

Potential delays at the proposed new signalized intersection

	Projected Delay	Projected Level of Service
Opening Year	10-19 seconds	LOS B
Horizon Year	12-20 seconds	LOS B

Transportation & Access Improvements

Sidewalk & Bike Lane

NORTH OF MAIN ENTRY

- 5' wide sidewalk with a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and street
- Will transition to the existing sidewalk north of the project

Stairs & ADA Ramp

ACCESS TO COLLEGE AVE

- Stairs and ADA access ramp to be installed, connecting the site to the sidewalk

Secondary Access Driveway

- Secondary right-in / right-out private gated driveway
- Closed except during Church services on Sundays and religious holidays



New, Automated Signalized Intersection

MAIN ENTRY

- Fully signalized access driveway installed along College Ave
- Southbound turn lane from College Ave
- Northbound right turn only lane from College Ave



Bike & Pedestrian path

SOUTH OF MAIN ENTRY

- 12' shared bike and pedestrian path to be installed on northbound College Ave
- Layout required by the City's Transportation Dept, consistent with the City's Bicycle Master Plan and other active transportation policies



The site is located within 1/2 mile walking distance of four bus stops and approximately 1 mile from two trolley stops.



FULLY SIGNALIZED & AUTOMATED INTERSECTION — MAIN ENTRANCE TO CHURCH ALONG COLLEGE AVE

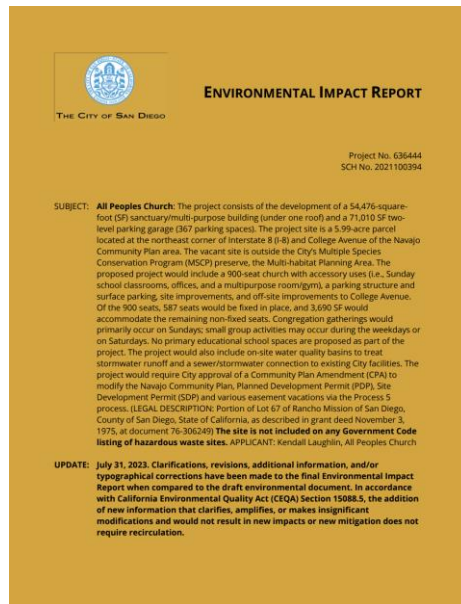


- Light to remain green unless sensors detect a car wanting to turn
- Intersection located as far south as possible, where the road is relatively level
- Maintains adequate distance from the I-8 interchange
- Construction will require the removal of three trees, which will be replaced
- Will continue to work with community to ensure new tree placements are consistent with plans

PROXIMITY OF NEW INTERSECTION TO I-8 INTERCHANGE AND COLLEGE AVENUE/DEL CERRO BLVD.



CEQA Process



155
Comments Received

0
Significant Unmitigated Impacts

4
Mitigation Measures Required to Fully Reduce Impacts

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to assess potential environmental impacts that could result from the project's development.

The Draft EIR was released for public review and comment on August 31, 2022. The public review period concluded on October 17, 2022.

RECEIVED 155 COMMENTS TOTAL

- Two state agencies
- Three organizations, including Navajo Community Planners
- 150 community, individual, or group letters
- Six letters were received after the comment period closed (5:00 P.M. on 10/17)

VMT ANALYSIS

As part of the environmental review, the project traffic engineer conducted a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) analysis.

The Light Project meets the "Small Project" screening criteria of less than 300 daily weekday trips (the project is projected to generate 280 avg. daily trips on weekdays). **The project was presumed therefore to have a less than significant VMT impact.**

FINAL EIR PUBLISHED ON JULY 31, 2023

The Final EIR included responses to all comments received – including those that were submitted after the deadline. It also included minor clarifications to the Draft EIR. Public comments and revisions to the Draft EIR did not result in significant new information to trigger a recirculation of the document.

On September 11, 2023, the City published an Errata to the Final EIR to accurately reflect that baseline traffic data was collected in 2019.

EIR FINDINGS

- No significant unmitigated impacts
- Mitigation proposed to reduce impacts to less than significant:
- Biological resources
- Historical resources
- Noise
- Tribal cultural resources
- No significant impacts from VMT or GHG emissions

Planning Considerations

	Current	Proposed	Request
Community Plan Initiation June 2018	Residential	No Change	Add Cross to Figure 24 “Other Community Facilities”
Zoning	RS-1-7	No Change	No Change
Site Development Permit (SDP)	----	----	Required for impacts to biological resources
Planned Development Permit (PDP)	----	----	In lieu of a Conditional Use Permit, the San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) provides for permitting via a PDP. SDMC 143.0402-0403, Table 143-04A “Development that complies with the applicable land use plan designation but contains uses that are not permitted in the underlying base zone.”

The building plans submitted to the City require four deviations from the SDMC requirements regarding:

1. **Building Height**
(limited architectural features)
2. **Retaining Wall**
3. **Side Yard Setback Requirement**
(irregularly shaped lot)
4. **Long-Term Bicycle Parking**

§126.0605 Findings for Planned Development Permit Approval

A Planned Development Permit may be approved or conditionally approved only if the decision maker makes all of the *findings* in Section 126.0605(a) and the supplemental *findings* in Section 126.0605(b)-(c) that are applicable to the proposed *development* as specified in this section.

(a) Findings for all Planned Development Permits

- (1) The proposed *development* will not adversely affect the applicable *land use plan*;
- (2) The proposed *development* will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare; and
- (3) The proposed *development* will comply with the regulations of the Land Development Code including any proposed deviations pursuant to Section 126.0602(b)(1) that are appropriate for this location and will result in a more desirable project than would be achieved if designed in strict conformance with the development regulations of the applicable zone, and any allowable deviations that are otherwise authorized pursuant to the Land Development Code.

(b) Supplemental Findings--Environmentally Sensitive Lands

A Site Development Permit required in accordance with Section 143.0110 because of potential impacts to *environmentally sensitive lands* may be approved or conditionally approved only if the decision maker makes the following supplemental *findings* in addition to the *findings* in Section 126.0505(a):

- (1) The site is physically suitable for the design and siting of the proposed *development* and the *development* will result in minimum disturbance to *environmentally sensitive lands*;
- (2) The proposed *development* will minimize the alteration of natural land forms and will not result in undue risk from geologic and erosional forces, *flood hazards*, or fire hazards;
- (3) The proposed *development* will be sited and designed to prevent adverse impacts on any adjacent *environmentally sensitive lands*;
- (4) The proposed *development* will be consistent with the City of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan and Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (*VPHCP*);
- (5) The proposed *development* will not contribute to the erosion of public beaches or adversely impact local shoreline sand supply; and
- (6) The nature and extent of mitigation required as a condition of the permit is reasonably related to, and calculated to alleviate, negative impacts created by the proposed *development*.



SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional Detail

The proposed project and its zoning are consistent with common land use practice. The project would locate a community facility in the RS-1-7 zone, below grade in a location immediately adjacent to a freeway for convenient access to and from surrounding neighborhoods. The Church will also serve as a buffer between the freeway and the residential neighborhood.

The following pages outline two additional details that support the proposed development:

1. Places of Worship in Communities

2. Existing Development Patterns

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Places of Worship in Communities



St. Therese – Del Cerro



Temple Emanu-El – Del Cerro



Chabad Center – University City



St. Therese of Carmel – Carmel Valley

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Existing Development Patterns

The project location echoes existing religious assembly placements within the Navajo Community.

Denial, absent a compelling interest, would result in a substantial burden on religious exercise.



- RS-1-7
- RM-1-1
- Other

1. Mission Valley Christian Fellowship
2. Ascension Lutheran Church
3. Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints
4. Spring Valley United Pentecostal Church
5. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
6. Palisades Presbyterian Church
7. Temple Emanu-El
8. St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church
9. Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe
10. Del Cerro Baptist Church & Holy Spirit Anglican Church
11. San Diego Gospel Hall
12. Flood Church (CC-3-8)
13. Grove Church (CC-3-9)
14. St. Therese Catholic Church

85% of the houses of worship shown in the Navajo Community Planning Area are on residentially zoned parcels.

SUMMARY

Findings

Approval of a SDP and a PDP requires the adoption of certain specified findings.

The project meets all of these required findings.

1. The proposed development will not adversely affect the applicable land use plan.
2. The proposed development will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare.
3. The proposed development will comply with the regulations of the Land Development Code including any allowable deviations pursuant to the Land Development Code.
4. The site is physically suitable for the design and siting of the proposed development and the development will result in minimum disturbance to environmentally sensitive lands.
5. The proposed development will minimize the alteration of natural landforms and will not result in undue risk from geologic and erosional forces, flood hazards, or fire hazards.
6. The proposed development will be sited and designed to prevent adverse impacts on any adjacent environmentally sensitive lands.
7. The proposed development will be consistent with the City of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan and Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (VPHCP).
8. The proposed development will not contribute to the erosion of public beaches or adversely impact local shoreline sand supply.
9. The nature and extent of mitigation required as a condition of the permit is reasonably related to, and calculated to alleviate, negative impacts created by the proposed development.