

**DATE ISSUED:** December 7, 2005

**REPORT NO. PC-05-330**

**ATTENTION:** **Planning Commission, Agenda of December 15, 2005**

**SUBJECT:** POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT  
FIVE-YEAR REVIEW – PROJECT No. 67904, PROCESS 4.

**OWNER/**

**APPLICANT:** Joseph Watkins, III, Ph.D., Vice President for Community Development,  
Point Loma Nazarene University

### **SUMMARY**

**Issue:** Should the Planning Commission find that the Point Loma Nazarene University is operating in conformance with Conditional Use Permit 87-0142?

#### **Staff Recommendation:**

ADOPT a resolution finding the University continues to operate in compliance with Conditional Use Permit 87 0142.

**Community Planning Group Recommendation:** The Peninsula Community Planning Board voted 10-0-0 on September 15, 2005 to recommend that the University continue to operate in compliance, with conditions that the City install a sidewalk and speed bumps along Loma Land Drive.

**Environmental Review:** The information contained in Revised Environmental Impact Report 87-0142(SCH 87042217) (November 17, 1989) was reviewed and determined to continue to be relevant. No updates to EIR 87-0142 are required.

**Fiscal Impact:** The cost of processing this application is paid for by the City as part of the Development Services Department Mitigation Monitoring oversight.

**Code Enforcement Impact:** Neighborhood Code Compliance investigated the matter of closure of the Dupont and Garden Lane access points and found the University to be in compliance.

## **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this report is to satisfy Condition 15 of CUP 87-0142 which requires a five-year review of the Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) Conditional Use Permit (CUP). City Council approved the CUP as a Master Plan on November 27, 1990 as modified by a settlement agreement on November 20, 1992. The previous five-year review was completed as documented in Staff Report P98-230 at the Planning Commission on December 17, 1998. The previous staff review concluded that PLNU is operating in conformance with the CUP, but made several management recommendations in response to concerns raised by the public. This five-year review begins with the previous finding of compliance and evaluates the changes to the University since the last staff review, evaluates the previous management recommendations, and considers new management recommendations.

The PLNU Point Loma campus is located at 3900 Loma Land Drive (APN 532-510 2100) within the Sunset Cliffs neighborhood of the Peninsula Community Plan and Local Coastal Program Plan, west of Catalina Boulevard and east of the Sunset Cliffs Natural Park, adjacent to U.S. Navy property to the south. The project site is within the Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone, Coastal Overlay Zone (Appealable), First Public Roadway, Point Loma Theosophical Institute Historic District, RS-1-7 Zone, Council District 2. The 87 acre campus is home to 1963.85 full-time equivalent students with undergraduate and graduate enrollment in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies, and the College of Education. Point Loma Nazarene University is the official University of the Southwest Educational Region of the Church of the Nazarene.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff has completed the five-year review of the PLNU CUP as required by existing CUP condition #15. In addition to staff review, public input was solicited and received including review by, and recommendation of approval by, the Peninsula Community Planning Board. Staff and public review have determined that the University continues to operate within the limits of the CUP.

The staff review process was initiated following public dialogue with Council District 2 and Development Service Department (DSD) staff in the Spring of 2005. Public Notice of the Five-Year Review was issued on May 27, 2005. Public input was received from approximately 13 individuals / organizations reflecting eight primary issue areas. Staff issued an initial Assessment Letter on September 2, 2005 and received a response from the University on September 28, 2005.

Issues addressed by the previous CUP review were not the focus of this evaluation. This evaluation began with the baseline of compliance as previously established. This evaluation focused on three areas: (1) evaluation of CUP compliance for the build-out of the University's Master Plan, (2) issues of concern as raised by the community, and (3) evaluation of the previous management recommendations. Each of these areas are discussed below.

## **I. Master Plan Build-out**

Since issuance of the previous staff report evaluating compliance with the CUP, PLNU has completed build-out of the Master Plan with seven new buildings, and two new parking structures for a net increase of 53,316 square feet. Staff has evaluated the new structures and finds them to be in compliance with the terms of the CUP.

Three new classroom buildings have been completed with the following additional square footage:

- Bond Academic Center 909 square feet
- Athletic Training Facility 3,226 square feet
- Fermanian School of Business 14,074 square feet

Three new office spaces have been completed with the following additional square footage:

- Fermanian Armenian Center 900 square feet
- Draper Hall 45,975 square feet
- Physical Plant Remodel 456 square feet

One new dormitory has been completed:

- Nease Hall Addition 17,776 square feet

Two new parking structures have been completed providing a total of 1809 spaces whereas the CUP only requires 1,357 off-street campus parking spaces which is a gain of 292 spaces since 1998.

## **II. Community Concerns**

Public input was received from approximately 13 individuals / organizations reflecting eight primary issue areas. Following is a summary of the primary issues as identified to staff during the course of public input.

### **Enrollment**

Condition 14 of the CUP specifies that enrollment shall not exceed 2,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students. As discussed in and established by the previous CUP review, the following method was adopted: total student credit hours completed for the academic year / 32 credit hours.

The issue of current enrollment was raised to the City to further evaluate. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the public inquiry received by DSD focused on enrollment concerns. In response, the City requested and received data from the PLNU Registrar certifying current enrollment for the 2004-2005 Academic Year as 1963.85 for the Point Loma Campus. Total off-site enrollment at other PLNU campuses totaled 1,074. City staff concludes that PLNU is operating in accordance with this provision of the CUP.

## **Traffic / Parking**

A primary issue of concern centers on traffic and parking in the single-family residential neighborhood to the east of the PLNU Point Loma campus. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of the public inquiry received by DSD focused on traffic / parking concerns. Staff reviewed these concerns and condensed two primary issues:

- Neighborhood traffic issues such as quantity and speeds;
- Students parking in the neighborhood resulting in lack of street parking for the residents.

Central to the discussion of traffic and parking is existing Condition #25 of the CUP regarding use of the Dupont Street access for emergency vehicles only. The community has urged the University and the City to realize compliance with this permit condition. The Dupont Street access has been open to pedestrians giving students the ability to park in the neighborhood and enter the campus on-foot through this point. This situation has resulted in excessive neighborhood parking congestion and unwanted student activity around this Dupont access point. Working with the community, Council District 2, and DSD, PLNU has achieved compliance with this permit condition effective August 2005 with installation of a temporary gate while design and procurement was completed on a more permanent and aesthetically-pleasing long-term solution. Following staff and Neighborhood Code Compliance investigation, the City continues to understand this permit condition of “emergency vehicle access only” to mean no public or private access of any kind including pedestrian activity. Adequate and monitored public access is available to the campus through the main Loma Land Drive entrance approximately two blocks to the north of the Dupont access location.

In response to the fulfillment of this permit condition, the University and DSD have received much feedback from the neighbors, mostly positive and in support of the closure. Staff therefore concludes successful resolution of this issue.

## **Pedestrian Safety**

The issue of pedestrian safety is closely tied to the primary issue of neighborhood traffic. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the public input received expressed concerns over pedestrian safety. Staff believes it reasonable that reduction of student vehicles in the neighborhood associated with the closure of the Dupont Street entrance will correlate with increased pedestrian safety in the community.

The University has also entered into discussions with the City to provide voluntary funding to create new sidewalks along the northerly side of Loma Land Drive leading up to the main campus entrance. The successful closure of the Dupont Street access point has the intended consequence of funneling more traffic through Loma Land Drive to the main entrance. Although not a condition of the CUP, the University is in the process of negotiating with the City to pay a substantial portion of the cost of installing new sidewalks along Loma Land Drive if new sidewalks are desired by the community.

The reduction of neighborhood traffic and the creation of the sidewalk should provide substantial improvement to pedestrian safety in this single-family residential community. Staff therefore concludes successful resolution of this issue.

### **Noise**

Also closely tied with the closing of the Dupont Street access point and neighborhood traffic, is the issue of noise. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the public input received expressed concerns over noise from late-night student activity on neighborhood streets. Closure of the Dupont access point seems to have greatly reduced the noise complaints. Staff therefore considers this issue resolved.

### **Security and Public Access**

Thirty-one percent (31%) of the public input focused on the need to retain public access through the University property to achieve coastal access to Sunset Cliffs Natural Park. This issue was elevated following closure of the Dupont access point and closure of another access point to the south at Garden Lane. The University has met with the Coastal Commission and has agreed to keep the Garden Lane access point open during the daytime until a comprehensive perimeter security plan can be prepared, submitted, and approved. However, in accordance with the CUP, the Dupont access point will remain closed.

The public, including the Coastal Commission, believes the University must maintain these access points (Dupont and Garden Lane) as open to the public. Public access is required to be maintained via Loma Land Drive and Western Loop Road as defined in the Coastal Development Permit A-6-PEN-91-55. However, as stated in the Council Resolution R-276946<sup>1</sup> approving the Conditional Use and Coastal Development Permit, City Council finds there is no legal public access through PLNU. However, the University provides and encourages public access through the University main gate at Loma Land Drive as designated by the posted "Coastal Access" signs. Public parking is provided from Western Loop Road.

The University has agreed to continue to work with City staff, Coastal Commission staff, and the public to further investigate solutions for perimeter security to balance the needs of campus security, public protection, resource protection, and public access. In terms of campus security, the university finds an increase in incidents such as vandalism, theft, prowls, and illegal activity in the neighboring Sunset Cliffs Natural Park. University losses have exceeded \$100,000 according to the PLNU Director of Public Safety. The PLNU south canyon system is designated open space which contains ecological, archaeological, and paleontological resources under the stewardship of the University. Heavy pedestrian traffic from the Garden Lane access continue to erode these resources. The University has documented instances of homeless persons using this preserve, and instances of public injuries occurring while walking the steep trail through this preserve. The

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<sup>1</sup> [http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/RightSite/getcontent/local.pdf?DMW\\_OBJECTID=0900145180029877](http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/RightSite/getcontent/local.pdf?DMW_OBJECTID=0900145180029877)

University, as a steward of this public resource, must continue to look for ways to balance the needs for campus security, public safety, public access, and resource protection. The interim solution to retain daytime public pedestrian access through Garden Lane is satisfactory to City staff and Coastal Commission staff until a long-term solution can be reached. Staff therefore considers this issue resolved on the interim and awaits submittal of a long-term perimeter protection plan by the University.

### **Other Issues**

Other issues examined as part of the CUP review include landscaping, perimeter buffer area, campus parking, and maintenance of the PLNU historical buildings.

Landscaping concerns were raised by neighbors citing removal of trees and vegetation within the buffer / setback areas of the University perimeter. PLNU verified that some trees have been removed due to disease, but new trees have been planted. Additional plantings are scheduled. Community concerns also noted inappropriate activities in the buffer area such as storage of materials. PLNU has corrected these conditions and removed the materials and has relocated a temporary construction trailer from a parking area within this setback / buffer zone. Staff evaluation included review and surveillance of the designated historic structures on campus. Staff finds the University to be in compliance.

### **III. 1997 Management Recommendations**

Previous staff evaluation of the PLNU CUP (staff report P98-230) made several management recommendations to further the goals of the CUP. Each of these are discussed below.

1. *Limit vehicle access to 870 Moana Drive and 4065 John Street to Handicap access only. All employee and guest activity would be accessed through the campus.*

At 870 Moana Drive, signage encourage employees and guests to park on campus. 4065 John Street has gated and locked access and is seldom used.

2. *Work with the owner of 4055 John Street to agree upon installation of a nine-foot privacy fence (six-foot solid and three-foot open lath material) between 4065 and 4055 John Street.*

Privacy fencing was installed in consultation with the owner following the previous review.

3. *Adopt the prescribed method of calculating Full-Time Equivalent students.*

This method had been adopted. Current FTE calculations are made using this CUP FTE method.

4. *Ensure that all future Substantial Conformance Reviews for future significant building projects will be reviewed by the Peninsula Community Planning Group.*

No Substantial Conformance Review (SCR) requests have been put forth by PLNU since the previous staff report. Development Services Department (DSD) staff understand the public sensitivity to the SCR process and the inherent mistrust that it can create and are working to improve the SCR procedures accordingly. Until the new procedures are in place, DSD agrees to continue to ensure that SCR requests involving PLNU will receive review by the Peninsula Community Planning Board.

5. *Continue to finance and develop additional parking structures.*

PLNU has fulfilled this management recommendation with the completion of two additional on site parking structures.

6. *Determine the feasibility of installing speed bumps on the Western Loop Road.*

Speed bumps are not in place. The University plans to resurface the road under the existing Use Agreement between the University and the City and will coordinate with Transportation Division for speed calming devices at that time.

7. *Establish additional or revised sign text for coastal access signs.*

PLNU has fulfilled this management recommendation with the installation of a large Coastal Access sign near the main entrance.

8. *Continue to seek traffic solutions such as residential parking permits.*

PLNU has fulfilled this management recommendation by closing the Dupont access point. It continues to be the understanding of City staff that the local neighborhood does not want a residential parking permit program.

9. *Continue to meet and dialogue between neighbors and University officials to solve problems.*

PLNU has fulfilled this management recommendation by creating the position of Vice President of Community Development under the leadership of Dr. Joseph Watkins. This position is the focal point for community / university liaison and is used to address and solve problems, elevating problems as needed to the President and Academic Council.

#### **IV. 2005 Management Recommendations**

Staff offers the following new management recommendations for consideration by the Planning Commission.

1. Continue to dialogue with the community. Encourage PLNU to continue to send out periodic neighborhood newsletters to keep the community informed.
2. Continue dialogue with the Coastal Commission, the City, the Sunset Cliffs Recreation Council, and the public on balancing issues of public access, campus security, and resource protection.
3. Communicate with the Planning Department the maintenance plan for historical preservation of the designated PLNU historical structures.
4. Encourage PLNU to continue to maintain a senior-level point of contact for community outreach.
5. Continue dialogue between the City, PLNU, and neighbors to determine feasibility and interest for construction of public sidewalks along Loma Land Drive. PLNU contribution to the effort should be a fixed fee not to exceed half of the cost.
6. Investigate feasibility of other traffic calming solutions proposed by the community such as speed calming devices along Loma Land Drive, reduction of the posted speed limit along Loma Land Drive, and enhanced monitoring and enforcement along Loma Land Drive.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The matter before the Planning Commission is a question of compliance with the existing CUP. In response to this matter, staff has completed a five-year review of the PLNU CUP as required by existing CUP condition #15. In addition to staff review, public input was solicited and received including review by, and recommendation of approval by, the Peninsula Community Planning Board. Staff and public review have determined that the University continues to operate within the limits of the CUP. Previous management recommendations have been fulfilled. Additional management recommendations have been made to further University relations with the community.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

ADOPT a resolution finding the University is not in compliance with Conditional Use Permit 87-0142.



**Respectfully submitted,**

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**Jeffrey D. Strohminger**  
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**Development Services Department**

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STROHMINGER/CHW

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photo
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. Existing Conditions
5. Conditional Use Permit 87 0142
6. Public Correspondence
7. Peninsula Community Planning Board Minutes
8. Draft Resolution