

DATE ISSUED: June 15, 2005

REPORT NO. 05-135

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of June 21, 2005

SUBJECT: YMCA Turning Point – Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 83865,
Project No. 30734 Council District 3 Process 5

OWNER/
APPLICANT: YMCA of San Diego County (Attachment 10)

SUMMARY

Issues - Should the City Council approve CUP No. 83865 for permission to operate an 18-bed transitional housing program in a 6-unit apartment complex designed to assist and support those at-risk youths that have aged out of the foster care system and other at-risk youths through various stages of personal, professional, and academic growth?

Staff's Recommendation:

APPROVE CUP No. 83865

Community Planning Group Recommendation – On July 7, 2004, the City Heights Area Planning Committee voted 12-2-3 to recommend approval with the condition that garages cannot be used for storage and that the doors to the garages be removed to insure their continued use as off-street parking (Attachment 9).

Environmental Review – The City of San Diego as Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has prepared Determination of Environmental Exemption No. 30734, dated April 23, 2004. This activity is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Existing Facilities, of the California Environmental Quality Act (Attachment 13).

Fiscal Impact Statement - All costs associated with the processing of this project are paid by the applicant through maintenance of a deposit account with the City of San Diego.

Code Enforcement Impact – None with this action.

Housing Impact Statement - The Mid-City Communities Plan locates the 0.14-acre site within a transition zone designated for commercial and residential development at 21 to 25 dwelling units per acre (Attachment 2). Based on the existing land use, 2 to 4 dwelling units could potentially be allowed. Currently, 6 dwelling units exist on the proposed site with one unit to be converted to an office. This project is exempt from the requirements of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance since the proposed project will not result in additional residential units.

Water Quality Impact Statement – None with this action.

BACKGROUND

The relatively flat rectangular shaped 6,250 square-foot site is located at 4262 Swift Avenue on the west side of Swift Avenue between El Cajon Boulevard to the north and Orange Avenue to the south (Attachment 1). The site is located in the Central Urbanized Planned District portion of the Mid-City Communities Plan within the City Heights Community of the CT-2-3 zone (Attachment 2). Although the site is within the CT-2-3 zone it has been developed by applying use and development regulations for the RM-2-5 zone. Development in the CT-2-3 zone is subject to the CU-2-3 zone use and development regulations if the development is also within the CU-2-3 zone and fronts on a major street as designated in the applicable community plan. Or as in this case, if no portion of the development is in the CU-2-3 zone or if no portion fronts on a major street then the RM-2-5 zone use and development regulations apply (San Diego Municipal Code (SDMC) section 151.0236(b) (Attachment 16)).

The subject property is currently improved with an existing 5,102 square-foot, 6-unit apartment complex that was constructed in 1990. The building was then operating as an apartment complex until the year 2003, when the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) Youth and Family Services program purchased it. The YMCA purchased the complex to relocate the Turning Point Transitional Living Program from its current rented location. From December of 2003 to the present the YMCA has been renting the apartments to participants of the Turning Point Program and providing services to them at a separate off-site location.

DISCUSSION

The YMCA of San Diego County is seeking to obtain a Conditional Use Permit to operate an 18-bed transitional housing program in an existing 5,102 square-foot, 6-unit apartment complex located at 4262 Swift Avenue (Attachment 3). One of the apartments will serve as an office and will house no residents. The remaining 9 bedrooms will each house 2 residents. The YMCA is proposing no structural or architectural changes to the apartment complex aside from landscaping to bring it up to City standards. The program is an 18-month transitional living program designed to assist and support at-risk youths through various stages of personal, professional and academic growth. Participants in the program are those that have aged out of the foster care system (at-risk youths) and other at-risk youths (other youths that don't have

stable housing). The program provides shared apartment living in a safe environment and helps participants develop the skills necessary to live a self-sufficient, independent life.

To be eligible for this program, participants must be:

- Legal adults between the ages of 16-21 years of age;
- Those individuals who are under the age of 18 must be legally emancipated;
- Currently homeless or are facing potential homelessness; and
- Referred from a qualified social services agency;

Eligibility is also based on need, bed availability and screening process. A counselor will work 5 days a week 8 hours a day. A case manager and job developer will work 5 days a week 8 hours a day. Their time will be split between the Swift Avenue address and another office. There will also be an on-site manager who lives at the facility. The on-site manager is required to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The on-site manager is allowed to take time off for vacation, sick leave, holidays and doctor appointments, etc. YMCA's internal policy is that if the on-site manager is not available for any reason he is to contact the Program Director, who then would be the contact person. The program is designed to carefully and thoroughly screen all program applicants to ensure that applicants with a history of violence are not accepted into the program. The program proposes to maintain a zero tolerance policy for drug use (by random drug testing) and/or threats or acts of violence by the program participants.

Each participant will receive an individual case plan and meet with the case manager on a weekly basis. The plan will address increasing independent living skills, educational growth and employment services. The 18-month program is designed in 3 stages:

Stage 1: Participants will obtain and maintain employment, open a checking account and obtain medical insurance;

Stage 2: Participants will stabilize their employment or enroll in an academic program and develop a savings plan; and

Stage 3: Participants will begin the transition into independent life outside of the program and demonstrate independent living skills.

Along with the 3 stages, each participant must attend a minimum of 4 education groups per month. Education group topics include: cooking, cleaning, healthy relationships, job development, anger management and community development. Counseling for each participant is available through a group process format or through individual sessions. Counseling is not mandatory unless the staff team deems it necessary. The counselor also will provide drug and alcohol education groups for the youth.

There are no State licensing requirements for this type of program and youths ordered by County, State or Federal courts for confinement/placement are not permitted to reside at this facility per (SDMC) section 141.0406(a)(2) (Attachment 12).

Community Plan Analysis

The Mid-City Communities Plan designates the proposed project within a transition zone intended for commercial and residential development at 21 to 25 dwelling units per acre. According to the community plan, property within this transitional zone may be developed according to the designated residential zone, or if lots are consolidated such that the property fronts on the commercial corridor, they may be developed with those commercial and/or residential uses permitted in the abutting commercial zone. Although the project does lie in close proximity to the El Cajon Boulevard commercial corridor, it does not include the consolidation of additional properties and remains strictly as a proposed residential use.

The Plan does not specifically address the provision of transitional housing programs only that subsidized housing social services, and residential care facilities are located along transportation corridors so these uses and facilities are accessible by public transit. Additionally, the project proposes no structural or architectural changes to the existing apartment complex aside from additional landscaping and the conversion of one existing dwelling unit to an office, and therefore does not adversely affect the goals and recommendations in the Mid-City Communities Plan.

Community Group Input

The project was presented to the City Heights Area Planning Committee (CHAPC) on July 7, 2004. At that meeting the CHAPC reviewed the project and voted to recommend approval of the conditional use permit with the conditions that the garage doors be removed to ensure that the garages would be used for parking rather than storage (Attachment 9).

Staff acknowledges the CHAPC requests. The project as proposed is required to maintain 7 off-street parking spaces on the property at all times in the approximate locations shown on the approved Exhibit "A". However, staff cannot support their recommended conditions for the following reasons: 1) The Land Development Code (LDC) section 131.0454 (Attachment 14) requires there be storage outside of the units whereas, storage can be located within the garage; and 2) The LDC does not contain language that require the garage doors to be removed.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 83865 because the proposed project implements recommendations found in the Progress Guide and General Plan by providing decent, safe and sanitary housing for youths that are homeless or facing homelessness. The YMCA Turning Point Transitional Housing Program will provide an opportunity for at risks youths to live in an apartment in a safe environment and will help them develop the skills necessary to live a self-sufficient, independent life. The proposed transitional housing program is allowed (SDMC section 141.0313) in the CT-2-3 zone with a CUP (Attachment 15). The project as proposed complies with all applicable regulations for the CT-2-3 zone of the Central Urbanized Planned District portion of the Mid-City Communities Plan within the City Heights Community. Staff recommends approval of Conditional Use Permit No. 83865.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve Conditional Use Permit No. 83865, with modifications.
2. Deny Conditional Use Permit No. 83865, if the findings required to approve the project cannot be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary W. Halbert
Development Services Director

Approved: Ellen Oppenheim
Acting Deputy City Manager

GWH/VSL

Attachments:

1. Aerial Photograph
2. Community Plan Land Use Map
3. Project Location Map
4. [Project Data Sheet](#)
5. Project Site Plan
6. Project Plans
7. [Draft Permit with Conditions](#)
8. [Draft Resolution with Findings](#)
9. Community Planning Group Recommendation
10. Ownership Disclosure Statement
11. [Project Chronology](#)
12. Copy of SDMC 141.0406(a)(2)
13. Copy of CEQA Exemption
14. Copy of SDMC 131.0454
15. Copy of SDMC 141.0313
16. Copy of SDMC 151.0236(b)