

Date of meeting: 07/13/10
Agenda Item: _____

TO: Planning Commission
AUTHORIZED
BY: _____
DATE: July 8, 2010 Ronald Munekawa, Chief of Planning
SUBMITTED BY: _____
William Wanner, Principal Planner
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SUBJECT: PA 10-001, St. Matthew Catholic Parish and School, 1 Notre Dame Ave
(APN 034-232-340, -350, -370)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Planning Commission review the proposed master plan and new gymnasium building at the St. Matthew Parish and School grounds on a preliminary basis, and provide input to the applicant and staff.

BACKGROUND:

On June 9, 2009, the Planning Commission denied a proposal by St. Matthew Parish and School to construct a new 13,061 square foot Parish community center building on the St. Matthew Parish and school grounds. The proposed building included a gymnasium/multiple purpose room, meeting rooms, offices, and restroom facilities to serve as a facility for school athletic practice & games, group meetings, and other Parish activities. The major issue was that the new community center required an additional 273 parking spaces on the site, while the applicant was proposing 56 new on-site spaces. St Matthew's requested a variance for the remaining 217 spaces required for the new building. The Planning Commission found that the lack of on-site parking would intensify parking problems in the neighborhood, and that a variance to reduce required parking would not mitigate the impact of a lack of parking on the site. Discussion by the Planning Commission also included comments regarding the preparation of a master plan to address parking issues and regulate uses on the site, and the creation of an overlay zone to regulate floor area and eliminate the need for a floor area ratio variance.

Attachment 1 contains the Administrative Report, Findings, and minutes for the June 9, 2009 Planning Commission meeting.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The project area consists of a 7.12 acre (310,400 square foot) site located west of El Camino Real between Notre Dame Avenue and Aragon Boulevard. The property is used as a private school and church, including a Rectory with 5 one-bedroom units. Surrounding uses include

residential uses, offices and commercial uses, and the City's Central Park is located northeast of the project site. The property is zoned R1-C (One-Family Dwellings).

The St Matthew grounds comprise three parcels and several buildings totaling approximately 89,373 square feet of floor area. The last building to be constructed on site is the current church building, which was added in 1966. The proposed location for the new building is currently a landscaped area, generally bounded by the existing auditorium/gym building on the south and west sides, the central walkway to the St Matthew Church on the north side, and South El Camino Real on the east side. Currently, there are approximately 198 parking spaces on-site, located in 3 lots that are accessible from Notre Dame Ave, El Camino Real and Aragon Blvd.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project applicant has submitted an information packet that contains a description of the new project, details of the proposed Master Plan, and a memo explaining how St Matthew is addressing the major issues raised during the previous planning application (see Attachment 2). The applicant's project description is summarized below.

Proposed Master Plan

St Matthew Parish and School is proposing to construct a new gymnasium and associated parking lot improvements. A Master Plan has been developed to allow for the construction of the gym and to establish use limitations for activities that occur on the property. The Plan states that the gym will be for the use of the students of the school and not rented out or used by the community at large. Use limitations in the Plan prohibit concurrent use of either the new gym or the existing auditorium within 30 minutes of Church services on Saturday evenings and Sundays until 1:30pm. In addition, the Master Plan prohibits use of either the gym or auditorium during the 11 major non-regularly scheduled masses that occur during the year (see Attachment 2, Tab 3, page 3 of the applicant's information packet).

The Master Plan also allows for 6 special events per year that are defined as events that may result in more than 275 vehicles to the site. The applicant is proposing that these special events would be established through a special permit application process filed with the Zoning Administrator. The Special Permit process would include neighborhood notification, submittal of a parking and traffic management plan, and the potential for parking enforcement as needed for these events. In addition, St Matthew is proposing to maintain a calendar of events that will describe activities on the property which will be available for public view (see Attachment 2, Tab 3, pages 3-5 of the applicant's information packet).

Proposed Gymnasium Building and Parking Lot Improvements

The applicant states that the new gymnasium contains approximately 12,000 square feet of floor area with a building height of approximately 23 feet to the plate line and 32 feet to the top of the curved roof (see project plans – Attachment 3). The proposed building has a contemporary architectural style characterized by stucco walls, metal louvers, and metal roofing. The proposed building design and materials are the same as presented in the previous planning application. Construction of the gym and parking areas will necessitate the removal of 32 trees. The applicant is proposing 92 replacement trees.

The applicant states that St Matthew will be constructing 110 new parking spaces on the property. The two main parking areas on the west and south sides of the property will be redesigned to achieve additional parking spaces and improve traffic flow, while the northern parking area off Notre Dame will be expanded to accommodate new parking spaces. It is estimated that the proposed parking lot revisions will result in approximately 298 parking spaces on the site.

Overlay Zone

The applicant is proposing an overlay zoning designation for the property to establish the appropriate development standards for the site. An overlay designation has been used in the City to provide development criteria for uses that are unique to a particular zoning district. Since the use of the property for a church and school is not typical in the R1-C (single family) district, and the existing buildings exceed the maximum allowed floor area ratio, the overlay would be used to establish permitted uses and activities, and building floor area for the site which would allow construction of the gym without the requirement for a floor area ratio variance.

Proposed Project and Code Compliance

As presently designed, the applicant will be requesting the following approvals during the formal planning application: Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) for the design and construction of the gymnasium building and parking areas; Reclassification to add an overlay zone designation on the property to establish development standards for the campus, including the maximum allowed floor area ratio; Special Use Permit for the approval of a master plan to regulate uses on the site; and a Site Development Permit for the removal of major vegetation.

The General Plan Land Use Plan designates the project site as single family residential, which allows development of church and private educational uses subject to a Special Use Permit and conformance with applicable code requirements. The formal planning application submittal will be reviewed to ensure that the project will conform to all applicable polices and guidelines set forth in the General Plan and Zoning Code.

ISSUES:

Master Plan - Periodic Public Hearings

The proposed master plan calls for the submittal of special use permit planning applications for review of the six special events that would occur each semester on the campus. The Planning Division is concerned that the use permit process: would be time consuming and lead to processing delays that could jeopardize the schedule of events; could result in different regulations being required for individual events that may be difficult to monitor and enforce, as well as be confusing to the neighborhood; and not be an effective utilization of City staff time for these special events that could be managed through ongoing discussion with the neighborhood. This is a secondary approach used by Serra High which allows for feedback on special events from the neighbors, and results in any appropriate adjustments. This process has resulted in an ongoing working relationship between the school and the neighborhood that effectively resolves issues that arise at the school.

As such, the Planning Staff suggests that there should not be a formal planning application process for any special events. Any issues related to these events should be discussed and resolved at the neighborhood meetings between the neighbors and St. Matthew staff similar to the Serra High School use permit requirements. It should also be noted that the site plan, parking provisions, and event details for the annual Carnival are currently reviewed by the City's Special Events Committee prior to authorizing the event. Staff suggests that the review of the Carnival by the Special Events Committee continue as part of any approval of the Master Plan. If activities during the special events at the St Matthew campus create situations that violate the master plan, and any other conditions of approval that may be placed on the project, and the issues cannot be resolved at the neighborhood meetings, or through the Special Events Committee, the special use permit could be brought back before the Planning Commission for additional discussion, new conditions, or revocation.

Parking and Traffic

The City's traffic consultant, Hexagon Transportation Engineering Consultants (Hexagon), prepared the parking and traffic report for the previous community center project. The applicant requested that the City retain Hexagon to review the current proposal for the gymnasium building and on-site parking, as well as the applicant's master plan and use restrictions for potential impacts on traffic and parking. In consideration of neighborhood comments from the previous project, Hexagon was directed to also study traffic and parking conditions on streets in the neighborhood. Since the project is currently in the pre-application planning phase, the Hexagon report (see Attachment 4) is considered a preliminary draft document that can be modified as needed during the public review process as part of the formal planning application. The Draft Parking and Traffic Report is summarized in the following paragraphs.

Project Traffic

The Draft Report states that the proposed project traffic and parking generation were determined on the basis of the increases in existing activities that are projected to occur as a result of construction of the new school gymnasium. Although these are not new functions to the St. Matthew's campus, the project could result in an increase in the size or frequency of these functions. In addition, the project also may result in an increase in traffic during certain hours because it would allow the activities to occur simultaneously with performances, drama club meetings, and music and arts programs held at the existing auditorium. The project could add up to 40 additional PM peak hour trips (20 in and 20 out) above the traffic generated by the current sports practices, and typical recurring uses in the old auditorium would generate up to 50 additional trips (25 in and 25 out) during the weekday PM peak hour. Overall the project equates to an additional 90 hourly vehicle trips (45 inbound and 45 outbound) during the weekday PM peak hour.

The Report analyzed the level of service to local intersections as a result of the project trips. Results show that the signalized study intersections would continue to operate at Level of Service (LOS) A. At the unsignalized intersections of El Camino Real at Aragon Boulevard and El Camino Real at Mission Drive the left turns would continue to operate at LOS F during each of the weekday AM and PM peak hours. This condition reflects side street traffic attempting to make left turns onto El Camino Real. The City does not have a level of service standard for

unsignalized intersections. However, when observations indicate that intersections do not operate at a reasonable level of service, the City will perform a signal warrant analysis. Hexagon conducted a signal warrant analysis for the intersections operating at LOS F. The analysis indicates that traffic signals are not warranted at these intersections due to the relatively low volume of traffic turning left from these side streets onto El Camino Real.

Parking

The site currently contains approximately 198 parking spaces. The project will add approximately 100 new parking spaces for a total of 298 parking spaces on site. (This number includes an adjustment in spaces from the applicant’s proposal based on modifications to some parking spaces and for circulation improvements in the parking lot to meet code requirements.) The parking requirement for the uses on the site is 410 spaces, which is based on required parking for the church, auditorium, Rectory, and the school. The new gymnasium is for use only by the school, and as such does not require additional parking above the requirement for the school (see below for code required parking calculations).

The following parking data is from Table 8 on page 37 of the Hexagon Report in Attachment 4.

<u>Use</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>San Mateo Zoning Code Requirements</u>	<u>Spaces</u>
<u>Required</u>			
School	55 employees	1 space per employee	55
Church	1,651 linear feet of pew	1 space for each 5 fixed seats 18 linear inches equals 1 seat	220
Rectory	5 one bedroom units	1.8 spaces per unit	9
	2 guest/visitor rooms	0.2 spaces per unit	1
<u>Auditorium</u>	4,384 square feet	1 space per 35 square feet	125
		Required parking spaces	410
		Existing parking spaces	198
		Existing parking surplus (Deficit)	(212)
		Proposed new parking spaces	100
		Total parking spaces	298
Proposed parking surplus (Deficit)			112

The existing parking supply for the project site is at a deficit of 212 spaces. With the proposed reconfiguration to add 100 additional parking spaces, the site still would not meet the City’s parking code requirements if the buildings and uses on the site were constructed today, however, the deficit would be reduced to 112 spaces. Zoning Code section 27.64.020 requires additional parking in an existing parking lot only for a proposed new use or intensification that requires additional parking, and grandfathers in any deficit based on existing uses. The gym itself doesn’t require additional parking spaces under the zoning code since it is for use by the school. Even though a deficit would remain, the project would improve parking conditions by adding on-site spaces without increasing demand.

Hexagon analyzed the demand for parking at various times and days of the week. On weekdays, the morning drop off and afternoon pick up of children results in a high level of activity that is organized and traffic flows smoothly. Although there is ample parking on site, some parents use Aragon Boulevard to pick up and drop off children. Outside of these drop off and pick up times, the weekday peak parking demand is estimated at 95 vehicles, which can be accommodated on-site.

Weekend parking demand is based on site observations conducted by Hexagon on Saturdays and Sundays in 2006, 2009, and 2010. The observations show that Sunday masses at St. Matthew generate more parking demand than can be accommodated by the existing supply on site. The most recent Sunday field observation (May 16, 2010) found a peak parking demand of 346 vehicles, which exceeds the number of existing (198) and proposed (298) parking spaces. Approximately 233 vehicles were observed parking on site. Vehicles park on site wherever they possibly can, creating their own spaces. Parishioners double park, park in red zones, park on one side of the church driveways, move cones and park illegally at the end of the aisle along the back fence near the Notre Dame driveway and move cones to enter via the Aragon driveway despite it being blocked off. Other vehicles were parked on Notre Dame Avenue, on El Camino Real, and on surrounding neighborhood streets. In addition, parishioners were parked in the Pacific Western Bank Parking lot across El Camino where the church has an agreement with the Bank to use parking spaces on Sundays. The draft Hexagon report states that the off-site demand could be met by parking along Notre Dame, on El Camino Real, and in the Pacific Western Bank Parking lot.

Hexagon also analyzed potential parking impacts for the special events that occur during the year. The draft report states that most of the special events do not draw the attendance of a typical Sunday Mass, nor do they occur more than a few times each year, and that there would be adequate parking on-site. However, the Carnival is a very large event, drawing as many attendees as a Sunday Mass, and the Carnival occupies the surface parking lot on site, thus potentially rendering all on-site parking unavailable. Therefore, this event exhibits similar parking demand (and traffic circulation around the site) as Sunday Mass, except that the supply of parking on site is minimal. It is estimated that the Carnival would generate a parking demand of about 340 vehicles that would need to be accommodated off-site. The draft report makes a recommendation for a traffic management plan, including a recommendation to secure off-site parking, to reduce parking impacts on the neighborhood (see recommendation 4 below).

Recommendations

Although the construction of the new gymnasium does not require additional parking spaces per the zoning code, Hexagon has made some recommendations to minimize potential impacts related to actual demand for parking based on St Matthew activities. The Hexagon Report makes the following recommendations for the formal planning application phase of the project, as described in the Executive Summary of the Traffic Report (Attachment 4):

Recommendation #1: Install pedestrian countdown signal heads at the El Camino Real & Ninth Avenue intersection to facilitate pedestrian crossings of El Camino Real and use of the Pacific Western Bank overflow parking lot.

Recommendation #2: Provide a bike parking area for Sunday Masses.

Recommendation #3: In conjunction with the parking lot reconstruction, St. Matthew should discourage parishioners from parking in the neighborhood. Any written documents published by the Church should urge parishioners and school families to respect the serenity of the surrounding homes and not park on neighborhood streets. During peak times, the church should deploy roving parking monitors to watch for parking in the neighborhood and to ask church or school patrons to relocate to the parking that is being provided for them, either on site or at the Pacific Western Bank. The church should enter into a long-term lease for use of the Pacific Western Bank parking lot. The church should consider a fence along the frontage on Aragon Boulevard.

Recommendation #4: Implement a Parking and Traffic Management Plan during the annual Carnival event. The plan could include a combination of the following:

- A. Lease and secure several hundred parking spaces (e.g. 300-400 spaces) at off-site locations.
 - B. Lease shuttle buses and hire shuttle drivers.
 - C. Develop a logistical plan for shuttling visitors to and from the Carnival.
 - D. Develop and implement a thorough directional signage plan to ensure that cars are directed to the proper parking areas.
 - E. Provide advance notice of parking and shuttle arrangements for the event such as:
 - 1. Issuing informational flyers to parishioners, staff, volunteers, event participants, and vendors;
 - 2. Provide information in newsletters;
 - 3. Post information on St. Matthew's website; and
 - 4. Provide information through other means of advertising for the event.
 - F. Use traffic control personnel to direct traffic to off-site parking areas and prevent cars from parking on adjacent neighborhood streets.
 - G. Hire traffic enforcement officers to monitor parking on adjacent residential streets.
- The above measures A through G should be implemented through the annual City approval process.

Parking Conclusions Summary

The project meets the Zoning Code parking requirement for an elementary and junior high school. Since the proposed new gym will be used solely for school purposes, the gym building will not result in the requirement for additional parking spaces. The Master Plan requirement to not use either the gym or auditorium during Saturday and Sunday Mass, along with the provision of approximately 100 new parking spaces on-site, will reduce existing parking impacts. The supply of 298 on-site parking spaces will be adequate to accommodate demand during most on-site activities, except for Sunday Mass and the annual Carnival. Implementation of the Hexagon recommendations to provide additional parking off-site for Sunday Mass and the Carnival should further reduce parking impacts. The Hexagon recommendations pertaining to discouraging parking in the neighborhood should also reduce parking issues for local residents.

Design Review

The existing buildings were constructed at different times, beginning in 1937 through 1965, and differ in architectural style. The proposed design utilizes some of the materials and colors found on existing buildings but also sets itself apart with a more contemporary architectural style.

The community center building for the previous planning application was reviewed by Cannon Design Group, the City's design review consultant. Since the proposed gymnasium building is similar to the community center, staff is transmitting the design review comments for the

community center to the Planning Commission for review (see both design review letters in Attachment 5). In summary, the consultant stated that the building is well designed and fits in its proposed location. The courtyard and oak tree on the north side, adjacent to the main pedestrian walkway, provides a gracious entry to the new building. However, the consultant states that the height and mass of the proposed building will overwhelm the older auditorium building adjacent to the new gym building. In the first design review letter (dated March 25, 2008) the consultant recommended lowering the roof over the mechanical area to provide a more sympathetic scale and height relative to the auditorium building. He also recommended lowering the roof on the opposite end of the building to reduce mass adjacent to the walkway and Parish Hall. In response to the applicants desire to simplify mechanical ducting and retain the building height, the consultant prepared a second letter (dated August 25, 2008). He remained concerned over the building height and mass and recommended lowering the roof only on the El Camino Real elevation which would reduce building mass and still allow for adequate mechanical equipment.

PUBLIC INPUT:

The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on June 23, 2010 at the project site. Approximately 50 members of the public attended the meeting. The major issues raised by the public at the meeting are summarized below by topic.

Parking

- There was concern about the existing parking problems on Aragon Blvd and other nearby residential streets and that overall parking for the church and school is not adequate.
- The applicant should provide all required parking (410 spaces) on the site.
- Construct a parking structure to provide code required parking.
- Visitors to the site will not use the parking lot if street parking is more convenient.
- People are parking in “no parking” areas and are not given parking tickets.
- St. Matthew should work with police to get enforcement going now.
- Additional parking should be provided for the gym building. Additional activities will occur in the gym that requires parking.
- The church and school has made some parking improvements.
- Establish parking permit program for the neighborhood.

Master Plan

- The master plan proposes self monitoring for non-concurrent uses on the site. Neighbors will end up monitoring parking problems. St. Matthew should provide police officers for all major and special events to ticket parking violators.
- Problems at the site have been going on for many years. How will they be fixed now?
- St. Matthew can not control non-concurrent uses on the site. What happens if a basketball game is scheduled and a funeral needs to take place on the same day?
- Need to guarantee that parking monitors will be available during school drop off and pick up.
- The parking committee proposed for St. Matthew should also include neighbors.

Traffic and Circulation

- There are narrow streets in the neighborhood and it's difficult to maneuver with street parking and high volume of vehicles.
- Take some traffic off of residential street. It's difficult to back out of driveway during drop off and pick up times.

Other Issues

- The buildings on the site are currently over the maximum allowed floor area. Don't need an additional building.
- There are public access walkways into the Capistrano neighborhood to the north. These walkways should be closed to prohibit people from parking in the neighborhood and walking to the site.

Additionally, staff has received written comments outlining concerns and recommendations from the public (see Attachment 6).

PLANNING COMMISSION INPUT:

The applicant and staff are seeking input and direction on the following issues:

1. Comments on the Master Plan as proposed by the applicant, specifically:
 - a. The proposal for non-current use of the church and both the auditorium and gymnasium buildings, including the ability of St. Matthew to self regulate this requirement.
 - b. The provision that the 6 special events require a use permit planning application to be processed and approved each semester.
 - c. The proposal for an overlay zone to regulate uses and floor area on the site.
2. The adequacy of parking both on-site and off-site, including the recommendations contained in the draft traffic report for off-site parking.
3. The design of the proposed gymnasium building.

NEXT STEPS:

The applicant will revise the plans as necessary or provide additional information to respond to comments from the Planning Commission and submit those materials as part of the formal planning application. As part of the formal application, additional materials will be submitted to complete the application packet. Staff will prepare an Initial Study to determine the level of environmental review required to adequately address any impacts resulting from the project.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Administrative Report, Findings, and Minutes for the June 9, 2009 Planning Commission meeting
2. Applicant's Project Description and Master Plan
3. Project Plans
4. Draft Traffic and Parking Report
5. Design Review Letters

6. Public Comments

COURTESY COPIES:

Interest Parties list

Project Applicant