

**County of Loudoun**  
**Department of Planning**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** October 6, 2009

**TO:** Sophia Fisher, Project Manager  
Land Use Review

**FROM:** Joe Gorney, AICP, LEED AP, Senior Planner  
Community Planning

**SUBJECT:** ZMAP 2008-0023, Cedar Green Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Referral

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Staff finds that the proposed civic use is in conformance with the land use policies of the Plan and supports siting the church in the proposed location. However, the applicant has not adequately addressed design, parking, and Green Infrastructure issues.

**BACKGROUND**

Iglesia Galilea de las Asambleas de Dios proposes a Zoning Map Amendment to convert two lots from the Single Family Residential Zoning District (R-4) to the Planned Development-Industrial Park (PD-IP) Zoning District. Each lot currently contains a single-family dwelling. The applicant wishes to develop the properties as a single parcel of approximately 2.9 acres for a 9,600-square foot church with a maximum of 420 seats. The applicant expects to demolish the dwelling on the existing northern lot and to retain the dwelling on the southern lot as an accessory/rectory use.

The site is generally southeast of the intersection of Route 28 and Church Road (Route 625) and more specifically southwest of the intersection of Shaw Road and Cedar Green Road. The property lies within the Airport Impact Overlay District (AI) LDN 60 1-mile buffer. The property also lies within the Route 28 Highway Improvement Transportation District (Route 28 Tax District).

The lot is surrounded by commercial and light industrial uses zoned PD-IP to the west (Belfort Furniture warehouse/showroom, outdoor storage), civic uses to the north zoned R-4 (Buddhist monastery), a single-family attached development zoned R-16 (Townhouse/Multi-Family) to the east (Old Sterling Gable), and vacant parcels zoned R-4 to the south. The site contains isolated forest resources and hydric soils.

Staff has reviewed responses to Community Planning First Referral dated March 23, 2009. Below is a discussion of outstanding issues.

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The subject property is governed under the policies of the Revised General Plan. The property is located within the Sterling Community of the Suburban Policy Area, and is designated as a Business area (Revised General Plan, Chapter 7, Planned Land Use Map). The policies of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Mobility Master Plan (Bike/Ped Plan) and the Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP) also apply.

Specifically, the Business and Light-Industrial policies of Chapters 6 and 11 of the Revised General Plan apply to the proposed development including streetscape, building placement and design, landscaping and buffering, parking, stormwater management, lighting, and open space.

The environmental features on the subject site were assessed applying the Green Infrastructure policies of Chapter 5 of the Revised General Plan, including policies pertaining to plant and wildlife habitats, surface and groundwater resources, river and stream corridor resources, forest, trees, and vegetation, and the built environment.

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations were assessed using the Land Development, Transportation Project Development, Walkways and Sidewalks, and Baseline Connecting Roadways policies and guidance of Chapters 4 and 5 of the Bike/Ped Plan.

## OUTSTANDING ISSUES

### Streetscape

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant provide further details regarding street trees in order to promote an overhead leaf canopy for Cedar Green Road. The applicant was also asked to consider gateways, walls, enhanced plantings, or other design elements along the Cedar Green Road frontage.

The applicant states that design elements such as gateways, walls, and enhanced landscaping will be considered during the site plan stage.

***Staff recommends that the applicant commit to the design elements that will be incorporated along Cedar Green Road, such as street trees and enhanced landscaping. Staff recommends that the applicant submit an illustrative depicting these elements.***

### Building Placement and Design

In the First Referral the applicant was asked to consider various building placement and design issues to ensure compatibility with the surrounding community. Staff recommended that the applicant incorporate usable outdoor spaces and amenities for church members and employees, such as pavilions, shaded benches, and picnic tables. Staff also recommended that the applicant describe how parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, amenities, and landscape materials would be integrated with the building placement and design.

In response the applicant submitted illustrative church elevations, which depict the following:

- Front building width along Cedar Green Road - approximately 60 feet;
- Roof height - 35 feet;
- Steeple height - approximately 19 feet above the roof with a total height of approximately 54 feet;
- Side width – approximately 120 feet;
- Roof type - metal seam;
- Wall facades – approximately 4 feet of split face block topped with vertical siding;
- Buffer widths – 15 feet along each lot line; and,
- A driveway through the front buffer from Cedar Green Road to the church.

The application also includes an open space of 40 x 140 feet north of the church, although no amenities are designated for the space. Staff notes that an extension of Shaw Road adjacent to the northern boundary of the site is being considered as part of the Countywide Transportation Plan update. If Shaw Road is extended, the applicant's designated open space would overlook the intersection of Shaw Road and Cedar Green Road.

***Staff recommends that the church be shifted to the north and the open space relocated to a position between the rectory and the proposed church. Such a location would facilitate the creation of an interior court shielded from noise impacts from the possible extension of Shaw Road. The applicant should also commit to the specific types and numbers of features and amenities to be included in the open space. The applicant should include walkways and outdoor seating throughout the site.***

***Staff also recommends the use of natural stone, brick, and wood and discourages the use of standard concrete block to help ensure compatibility with the adjacent single-family uses. All ground-mounted mechanical equipment should be screened from view.***

### **Landscaping and Buffering**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant commit to a landscape plan with special attention to the project's visual impact. Staff recommended that elevations and plantings be planned to screen parking and filter views of the church from nearby residences. Staff also recommended that plantings along Cedar Green Road frame the church. The applicant was asked to commit to the landscaping and buffering, a long-term maintenance plan, and the use of native species for most or all of the plantings.

The applicant is requesting reduced setbacks along the side yards to 15 feet. No justification is given and no landscaping is depicted on the concept plan. A general depiction of trees, shrubs, grasses, perennials, depressed parking areas, and/or berms throughout the site would help determine whether the landscaping and buffering are adequate to ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses and to assess the visual impact of the project. Planting areas and landscape materials could enhance the visual

quality of the project, provide shade and visual interest, mitigate environmental impacts, buffer pedestrians from automobile traffic, provide patrons with open space, allow the incorporation of indigenous vegetation into the project, and provide habitat for wildlife.

***Staff recommends that the applicant incorporate further details regarding landscape, buffer, and open space components in conformance with County policies.***

### **Parking**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the concept plan provide information regarding the location of parking, travel lanes, drop-off points, and the number of parking spaces. Staff noted that the County discourages developments from providing additional impervious surfaces that exceed the parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff also encouraged the use of pervious parking surfaces.

In response to First Referral comments, the applicant updated the Concept Plan and depicted 180 parking spaces. The applicant states that only 105 spaces are required but that approximately 150 to 190 parking spaces will be provided. The depicted 180 spaces represent approximately 170 percent of the parking requirement.

***Staff recommends that the applicant provide no more than the required amount of parking to prevent the creation of unnecessary amounts of impervious cover and to help ensure compatibility with the surrounding uses.***

***Staff recommends that the applicant provide information regarding landscape treatments to help mitigate the impacts of parking and that the applicant commit to these measures. Staff suggests that the applicant consider vegetated berms and massed plantings.***

### **Stormwater Management**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant consider LID facilities on-site, such as permeable pavers, porous concrete, cisterns, planted swales, curb cuts, rain gardens, and bioretention filters adjacent to impervious areas, to promote infiltration on-site, minimize peak storm flows, and help filter non-point source pollutants. Staff also recommended that pipe installation be minimized.

In response, the applicant stated that stormwater management and best management practices will be developed and that Low Impact Development will be considered at the site plan stage. The applicant did not address the incorporation of specific LID techniques.

***To adequately convey and treat stormwater on-site and preclude impacts to neighboring properties, staff recommends that the applicant commit to the water management techniques that will be incorporated into the project. Staff also recommends that the applicant address the incorporation of LID techniques, such as permeable pavers, porous concrete, rain gardens, oil-water separators, and native landscaping, to meet aesthetic and water quality goals.***

### **Bicycle & Pedestrian Accommodations**

Staff previously recommended that the applicant commit to the installation of a 5-foot sidewalk and curb and gutter construction on the west side of Cedar Green Road to match the facilities on the east side of the road. Staff recommended that safe crossing facilities be provided across the church driveway and to the residential area on the east side of Cedar Green Road and that all pedestrian facilities, including those within the site, be depicted on the proposed concept plan. Staff also recommended that all bicycle and pedestrian facilities be constructed in accordance with County policies, AASHTO, ADAAG, and the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Design Toolkit.

The applicant updated the Concept Plan with a 5-foot wide sidewalk and a 4-foot wide landscape strip along Cedar Green Road and a crosswalk to the east side of Cedar Green Road. However, the applicant states in the Response Letter that since a sidewalk is not included in the Site Plan for the adjacent Wat Yarnna Rangsee Complex to the north, "a sidewalk will not be functional." It is unclear from the applicant's comments whether they intend to construct a sidewalk.

***Staff recommends that the applicant commit to the construction of the sidewalk and crosswalk as depicted on the Concept Plan. Staff also recommends that the applicant incorporate internal circulation paths from Cedar Green Road and the parking areas to the church and the rectory.***

### **Lighting**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant commit to lighting that is fully shielded, provides a glare-free environment, is confined to the site, and is turned off after business hours, unless required for security purposes, and that illumination levels will be no greater than necessary for a light's intended purpose. Staff recommended that all lighting be mounted as low as practicable and designed to preclude light trespass onto adjoining properties, glare to passersby, skyglow, and deterioration of the nighttime environment.

In response, the applicant stated that a lighting plan will be developed at the site plan stage that meets the County's requirements.

***Staff recommends that the applicant commit to lighting that is fully shielded, provides a glare-free environment, is confined to the site, and is turned off after business hours, unless required for security purposes, and that illumination levels will be no greater than necessary for a light's intended purpose. Staff also recommends that all lighting be mounted as low as practicable and designed to preclude light trespass onto adjoining properties, glare to passersby, skyglow, and deterioration of the nighttime environment.***

### **Wetlands**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant verify whether wetlands exist on-site. Should any wetlands exist on-site, staff recommended that the applicant avoid

these areas. For any impacts to on-site resources, staff recommended, in order of preference, mitigation on-site, within the same watershed, and within Loudoun County.

In response, the applicant stated that there does not appear to be any wetlands on-site but that wetlands might exist on the neighboring property. The applicant states that a US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) confirmation will be requested.

***Staff recommends that the applicant confirm whether they have contacted the USACE regarding the presence of wetlands on or near the site. The applicant should specify the site design details and development techniques that will be incorporated into the project to preclude impacts to any on-site or nearby wetlands.***

### **Forest Resources**

In the First Referral, staff recommended that the applicant evaluate the species and condition of the on-site forest resources and provide this information to County staff so that opportunities to preserve viable resources and incorporate them into the development could be evaluated.

In response, the applicant depicted individual tree resources on the Existing Conditions Plat and specified the species, sizes, and condition ratings of the trees. Of particular note is a 53-inch dbh (diameter at breast height) Osage Orange tree (*Maculura pomifera*) in Fair to Good condition. The applicant stated that the church cannot commit to saving the tree since the full impact cannot be realized until the final site plan design, during which time an effort will be made to preserve the tree, if possible.

***Staff recommends that the applicant design for and commit to the preservation of significant tree resources, including their critical root zones. The applicant should also specify the protection measures that will be taken to ensure the health of the trees during construction. Staff recommends that the applicant coordinate with the County Urban Forester regarding opportunities to preserve the Osage Orange tree and other viable trees and incorporate them into the site design.***

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff finds that the proposed civic use is in conformance with the land use policies of the Plan and supports siting the church in the proposed location. However, the applicant has not adequately addressed design, parking, and Green Infrastructure issues.

Staff recommends the following:

- Reduce the parking to the minimum required to address both design and Green Infrastructure policies;
- Shift the church to the north and relocate the open space to a position between the rectory and the proposed church to help buffer the open space from a possible extension of Shaw Road on the north side of the property;
- Provide commitments for the provision of street trees and the preservation of on-site trees;

- Submit an illustrative depicting landscape areas, buffers, open space, and pedestrian pathways;
- Commit to Low Impact Development (LID) water management techniques to meet aesthetic and water quality goals; and,
- Specify the site design details and development techniques to preclude impacts to any on-site or +nearby wetlands.

cc: Julie Pastor, AICP, Planning Director  
Cindy Keegan, AICP, Program Manager, Community Planning (via email)