

City Church: Narrative of the Proposed Project

Overview

City Church has existed as a religious organization in Charlottesville, Virginia for over 75 years. The organization's mission to "Love God – Serve Others" is carried out locally, regionally and globally through a variety of avenues. City Church is a relationally driven organization, focusing on building relationships not only within the organization's community, but also within Charlottesville and the neighboring counties.

History of Location

Prior to 2013, City Church was providing three services at the location owned by the organization at 1010 East Rio Road, Charlottesville, VA 22902. That location is now referred to as City Church Central. There were three primary limitations that were a weekly issue at City Church Central: parking, auditorium capacity, and children's facilities. Meeting three times in a small, outdated facility each Sunday morning required a great deal of energy and duplication of effort that was not beneficial for the organization or for those it serves. Additionally, the facility is not ADA compliant, thus not able to accommodate those who are handicapped.

Current Operations

Due to these constraints, during March of 2013, City Church moved the adult Sunday morning services to the Martin Luther King Performing Arts Center at Charlottesville High School, and the children's program to the gym complex at the High School. The proximity of Charlottesville High School to City Church Central and the centrality of its location in the city are very favorable for the many attendees who travel from various directions to the Sunday morning meetings. Maintaining a central location continues to be a key factor in planning for the future.

City Church Central continues to be well utilized, housing staff offices and hosting the variety of activities the organization provides in addition to the Sunday morning meetings. Most notably, the Sunday morning youth program remained at City Church Central as the facility at Charlottesville High School was not adequate to host it.

The religious organization would prefer not to need to be mobile on a weekly basis. Although Charlottesville High School and the Martin Luther King Performing Arts facility has been a positive short-term solution for the organization, having a temporary meeting location on Sundays has constraints and limitations for the religious organization.

Search Process

During the past four years, the leadership of City Church has reviewed multiple options to purchase land and build upon it, or to purchase and renovate an existing facility. To date, there have been no viable options that fit the defined criteria; therefore, there is a desire to capitalize on the favorable location of

City Church Central by reviewing the options available there. These options are incorporated into the proposed project.

Project

The project for the religious community at this time is to build a larger facility, with adequate parking, at the Rio Road location - large enough to accommodate current and future City Church adherents. It is projected that over 1,200 people in the community and neighboring counties call City Church their place of worship. Sunday morning meetings average around 570 adults, 70 youth and 110 children. Meeting in the local high school and Martin Luther King Performing Arts Center has allowed the organization to utilize a vast facility and property which has been very beneficial in making it possible for attendees to all meet together in a single service. While that works quite well, the current owned property cannot sustain a facility of similar size, so a compromise proposal is to build a suitable facility large enough to accommodate Sunday morning attendance with two meeting times. This would allow the organization to fit comfortably now and allow room for growth in the future.

The primary usage of the facility will be on Sunday mornings between 9AM and 1PM. There will be regularly scheduled meetings throughout the week, but these will be a fraction of the size of the Sunday morning meetings. The facility will continue to host the offices for City Church staff.

The Goal

The organization's goal is to build a facility that would be cost effective and meet the needs of the religious organization. The expanded facility will allow the attendees of each Sunday morning service to meet at one location. Currently, the youth, meeting at City Church Central, are distanced from the adults and the children, meeting at the high school. Convenient parking is also an important target for the organization and including parking beneath the facility results in an acceptable ratio of parking to auditorium seating space.

As the funding for the project will be donated through those who attend City Church, it is important to build a facility that meets the needs of the local community, without being extravagant. City Church does not receive funds from any outside group, thus the organization will have the ability to design a facility that will benefit the local community and not be constrained by requirements of third parties who contribute to the project.

All these components are guiding the organization's future. Utilizing the current location with a larger facility has the greatest value at this time. It will benefit not only the religious organization, but the community and county as well.

Benefit to the Community

City Church Central continues to be used for both City Church and for other organizations, religious and secular, within the community. In addition to the organization's own activities, the facility has hosted a home owners association meeting, served the homeless through PACEM twice a year for the past 5 years and will soon be hosting JABA's Presidential Volunteer Award ceremony. Under this plan, the

community will have access to a new, larger facility that can be used for a multitude of groups and purposes; this will only strengthen the church's ability to serve the community in new ways. For example, it will enhance the organization's continued focus on supporting charitable organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Loaves and Fishes.

The proposed application, utilizing the current property, will allow the Rio Road location to remain a central location for many of the organizations and activities in the community. It will allow the site to be used fully and will remove the need to purchase a larger parcel of property in the county for the organization's home. The larger facility will allow City Church the opportunity to continue to grow and serve as an integral part of the community.

**City Church: Narrative of the Proposed Project's Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan,
Including the land use and the master plan for the Applicable development area.**

1. *Pedestrian Orientation*

Sidewalks are planned to provide direct access to the church from Rio Road East, separated from the street, including cross-walks.

2. *Mixture of Uses*

Not applicable.

3. *Neighborhood Centers*

Not applicable.

4. *Mixture of Housing Types and Affordable Units*

Not applicable.

5. *Interconnected Streets and Transportation Networks*

Not applicable.

6. *Multi-modal Transportation Opportunities*

Multi-modal transportation includes travel by car, on-foot, or on bicycle. Modal activity by mass-transit may be planned by the church.

7. *Parks, Recreational Amenities, and Open Space*

The site is to be used as a church with ancillary parking to support the use. Parks, recreational amenities and open spaces are not proposed.

8. *Buildings and Spaces of Human Scale*

Although the primary building facade does not face the street, the building entrance has been provided such that pedestrian access from the street is linked directly to the building front. This pedestrian sidewalk leading from the building to the sidewalk along Rio Road East will help to create a comfortable and inviting place for pedestrians. The building will be set approximately on grade at an elevation below Rio Road East and close to the street, so that it will not feel overwhelming, but will provide a sense of enclosure and give a comfortable scale to the street. Rio Road East contains a raised median and there will be one primary entrance. A secondary exit-only entrance is to be maintained. The building is rectangular in shape. Forming and massing to be determined as the Architectural elements come to fruition. A terrace top roof may be desired.

9. *Relegated Parking*

Relegated parking is proposed as all of the parking is either beside, behind or under the building. The building façade will respect the building positioning. A sidewalk connection is provided from the sidewalk along Rio Road East to the building and its entrance. The parking lot does not separate the sidewalk from the street. The building is positioned to provide easy access to the building from the sidewalk. The layout provides for direct pedestrian access to the building front from the street sidewalk. Limited parallel parking as planned along the building front. Sidewalk encroachment has been minimized. Dumpster loading is positioned to the rear of building, away from surface parking. Parking lot landscaping is proposed to reduce heat effects and provide a more pleasing environment for pedestrians. Pedestrian crossings in auto paths will be clearly marked.

10. Redevelopment

Redevelopment of this land will improve the utilization of space available and will no longer be a poor performing or under-utilized property.

11. Respecting Terrain and Careful Grading and Re-grading of Terrain

Where possible all grades are proposed to be 3:1 or flatter, softening the lay of land and facilitating maintenance. The proposed building is positioned to fit within the existing sloped grade so that the parking under the building can be accessed from the rear. The drop in existing ground elevation across the building is about 10 feet, approximately the same as the distance between parking level and first floor. The building and exterior parking positioning respects the existing grading to the fullest extent, allowing the lower area to potentially satisfy stormwater management requirements and minimize use of retaining walls.

12. Clear Boundaries between the Development Areas and the Rural Areas

The use of this site extends to the boundary so that the full potential of the Development Areas is achieved. However, a buffered boundary is in place and consists of a heavily vegetated row of mature white pine trees planned to remain in place between City Church and CATEC. Street trees are planned along Rio Road East. Southern Railroad acts as the third boundary to a residential area.

City Church: Narrative of the Proposed Project's Impacts on Environmental features

This site contains critical slopes which, by and large, are a result of previous development. According to County Engineer, they are defined as managed critical slopes. They will need to be disturbed for the proposed redevelopment. If special approval is required, please let the applicant know and include in the present cycle for special use permit review.

City Church: Narrative of the Proposed Project's Impacts on Public Facilities and Public Infrastructure

Public Facilities

Water: A new water connection is planned to the existing ACSA waterline across Rio Road East. The pipeline will be sized to accommodate both fire suppression, including fire hydrant and building sprinkler system, and domestic flow. The current infrastructure is more than adequate as there is a nearby connection to the 36 inch RWSA waterline.

Sewer: The wastewater will be pumped via private force main to a nearby ACSA sanitary sewer manhole.

Stormwater: This has two parts:

- a) Off-site stormwater passes through the site and will be re-routed to by-pass the proposed church building location.
- b) The current site contains a stormwater management facility. A new facility will be designed to meet the current Virginia Stormwater Regulations, last revised July 1, 2014, along with the DEQ VRRM redevelopment spreadsheet. Adequate Channel will be addressed.

Electric, gas and communications:

These utilities are located along the road frontage of the site and will provide service as needed.

Public Infrastructure

Roads: Rio Road East fronts the property. The site current contains a primary entrance for an existing church building. This entrance aligns with Belvedere Boulevard and is planned to remain in its current location, with modifications as required commensurate to the proposed major site plan amendment. A secondary entrance is to be converted to a right out only entrance. A right turn warrant traffic analysis has been submitted to VDOT.

Sidewalks: Rio Road East currently includes a sidewalk along the site's entire frontage. The southeast end contains a landscaped buffer strip consistent with the Neighborhood Model. The northwest end was constructed by VDOT along and adjacent to the back of curb. A two foot buffer strip can be provided as part of the right turn road improvements.

NOTE: The property is currently developed as a church site. The proposed new building will have greater capacity, but the impact on existing public utilities and public infrastructure is expected to be minimal. The existing church building is planned to be removed in its entirety.