

To: Spring Lake Park Planning & Zoning Commission

From: Phil Carlson, Stantec

City of Spring Lake Park

File: Bethel City of Hope
8485 Plaza Blvd NE
Applicant: Joe Nick, City of Hope
Owners: Brian & Peter Lunseth

Date: January 25, 2021

Re: Conditional Use Permit, Bethel City of Hope Church, 8485 Plaza Blvd NE

INTRODUCTION

Bethel City of Hope Church wants to lease space in the multi-tenant building at 8485 Plaza Blvd NE. Churches are considered an “assembly” use in the Zoning Code, requiring a Conditional Use Permit. The church would occupy an existing space (Unit D) in the building and make little or no changes to the building and site.

The property is guided Commercial and zoned C-1 Shopping Center Commercial – see map excerpts on the next page. “Assembly uses, including auditoriums, religious and philanthropic uses” are by Conditional Use Permit in the C-1 district.

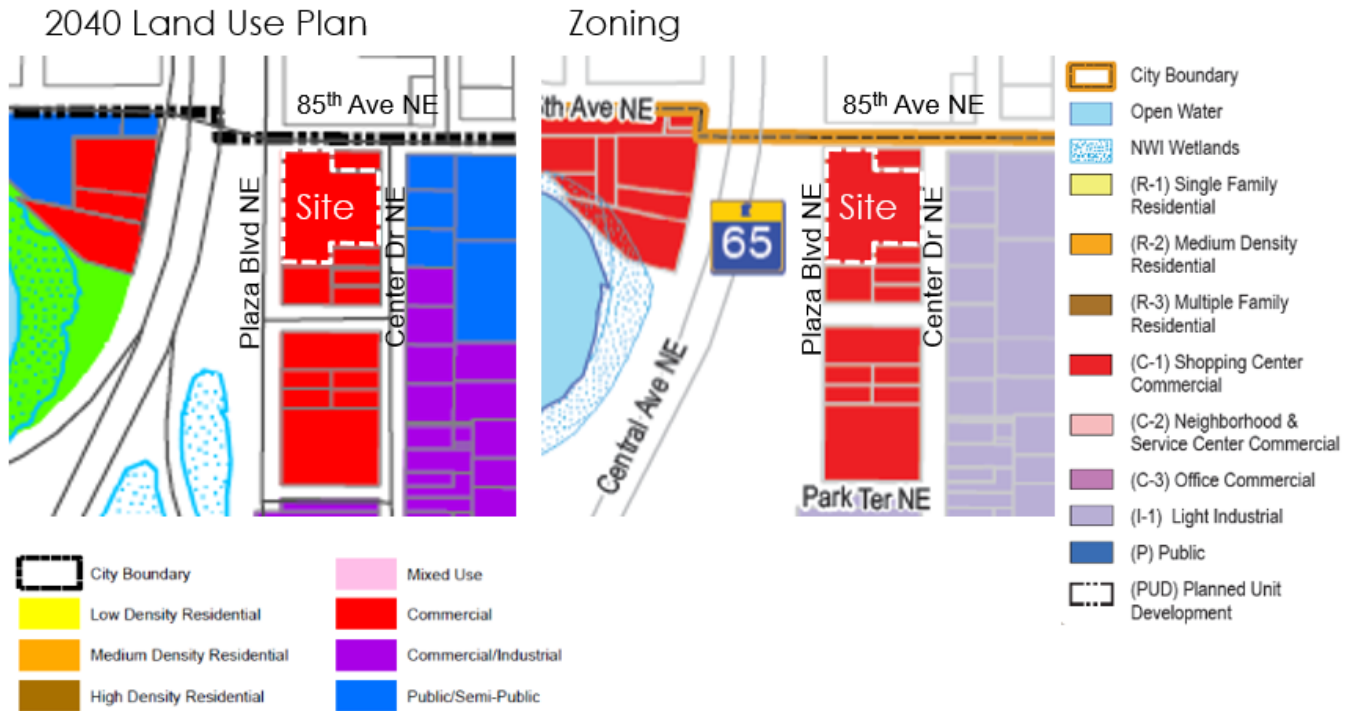
Surrounding uses are commercial in the other building tenant spaces and other parcels south on the same block; church and industrial in the block to the east; commercial use across 85th Avenue in Blaine; and Highway 65 to the west.



SITE ISSUES – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

The Zoning Code allows the City to impose reasonable conditions on certain uses to address issues that may impact surrounding properties. In this case, there is an existing multi-tenant commercial building with several other uses. The church would join those uses and share parking, but no changes are proposed of the exterior of the building or site, other than occupying a space on the existing signs.

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Parking

The key issue for this use on this site is parking. A church use can have intense parking needs, but the largest gatherings are typically on Sunday, when other businesses are often closed. Parking demand for a church typically adds up the various components of the uses separately – sanctuary, classrooms, office space. Parking analysis is as follows:

- Available parking
 - 95 parking spaces, total on site (83 in front, 12 in back)
 - 85 spaces available to the church on Sunday, according to the owners
 - 55 or more spaces available for the church during the week, according to the owners



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- Building use:
 - Sanctuary, occupying about 3,200 sq ft, with seating for 200-250
 - Two classrooms, 500 sq ft each, 25 seats each
 - 800 sq ft – pastor’s office, kitchen, restrooms, storage
- Parking demand, based on Spring Lake Park Zoning Code:
 - Sanctuary: 1 space per 3 seats = 83 spaces (at 250 seating)
 - Classrooms: 2 spaces per classroom = 4 spaces
 - Office: assume only the pastor’s office = 1 space
 - Sunday (maximum use) total: 88 spaces
 - Weekday – 55 spaces available:
 - Assume meetings in each classroom, 1 space/3 seats = 17 spaces
 - Pastor’s office = 1 space
 - Sanctuary: 37 spaces available, could handle a gathering of 110 people at 1/3 seats

At full capacity on Sunday and following the Zoning Code formulas, parking demand would be within a few spaces of the available parking. During a weekday, the space could be fairly heavily used with 160 people at several meetings, and still stay under the 55 spaces available. Parking is not allowed on Plaza Drive NE, so parking for the church and other businesses needs to be handled on site. Parking formulas are generalized and not exact – the proposed parking seems reasonable.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

I recommend approval of the Conditional Use Permit for Bethel City of Hope Church at 8485 Plaza Drive NE as presented in the application, with the following conditions:

- 1) The owners will share with the City the lease language indicating the use of 85 parking spaces on site for the church on Sundays and 55 spaces other days. If parking becomes a problem, in the City’s opinion, on site or on the street, the City reserves the right to revisit the Conditional Use Permit and impose additional conditions or limit the use of the space.
- 2) The church or the property owners will apply for a sign permit if and when the church wishes to install new signage, which will comply with the City’s sign regulations.
- 3) Any changes proposed to the exterior of the building or site as a result of this church use, other than signage, will be reviewed by City staff to see if such changes require review of the Conditional Use Permit. In such a case, the City reserves the right to refer the Conditional Use Permit to the Planning Commission and City Council and impose additional conditions or limit the use of the space.

Findings of Fact for Approval of the CUP

- 1) The proposed church use in an existing multi-tenant commercial building appears to not involve issues beyond parking. From information supplied by the applicant and owners, parking appears to be adequate.

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- 2) It is reasonable and appropriate for the City to review and respond to potential parking issues on site which could result in traffic or safety issues. Such review may involve imposing additional conditions on the use, which is an appropriate function of the City's zoning authority.

OPTIONS

- 1) Recommend approval of the CUP as presented with the recommended conditions and findings, or as modified by the Planning Commission.
- 2) Recommend denial of the CUP and variance, with findings for denial for each.
- 3) Continue the items to a future meeting to gather more information or for more discussion.

60-DAY RULE

The Conditional Use Permit application was received on November 24, 2020 and was considered complete on December 7, 2020 with receipt of information on site and building use. The 60-day deadline for final action by the City Council is February 5, 2021. The City hereby extends the deadline an additional 60 days, as permitted by State statute, to March 6, 2021, to give the City more time to review and act on the application, assuming the City Council may not be able to make a decision at its meeting on February 1, 2021.