



## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

**From:** Jason Simpson, City Manager

**Prepared by:** Damaris Abraham, Assistant Community Development Director

**Date:** February 27, 2024

**Subject:** Notice of Decision – Planning Commission Denial of Planning Application No. 2022-02 (Ambassador Discipleship Center) to remodel an existing 14,565 sq. ft. four-story building with a 2,087 sq. ft. addition (16,652 sq. ft. total) and a 3,906 sq. ft. storage building and to establish and operate a congregate living and educational facility located at 164 and 184 South Main Street

### **Recommendation**

On February 20, 2024, a timely appeal of the decision of the Planning Commission to deny Planning Application No. 2022-02 was filed with the City. In accordance with Sections 17.410.090.A and B of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code (LEMC), this report is submitted for informational purposes only. There is no action requested from the City Council as a timely appeal was filed for this application.

### **Background**

The Ambassador Discipleship Center Project consists of applications for Commercial Design Review No. 2022-14 and Conditional Use Permit No. 2022-21, which collectively are being processed under Planning Application No. 2022-02.

**Commercial Design Review No. 2022-14** proposes to remodel the existing 14,565 sq. ft. four-story Ambassador Hotel building with a 2,087 sq. ft. addition (16,652 sq. ft. total) as a new congregate living and educational facility to include new sleeping dorm rooms, offices, conference/training rooms, a 1,358 sq. ft. dining room and kitchen area/retail commercial restaurant and the demolition of the service station and the repair and reconstruction of a 3,906 sq. ft. storage/parking building. The project also includes site improvements such as parking lot paving for 29 parking spaces, a new 3,765 sq. ft. basketball court, water quality detention basin, new sidewalks, lighting, trash enclosure, and landscaping on the approximately 0.85-acre site.

**Conditional Use Permit No. 2022-21** proposes to establish and operate a congregate living and educational facility within the *Ambassador Residence Building* for 52 participants plus staff for a

total of 64 occupants. The program will serve as a transitional housing option, in a congregate dormitory setting, for participants enrolled in or moving on from other programs not located on the property. The program is administered in group, individual, and educational sessions. Participants may include men, women and families each in designated areas of the building. Information regarding the program has been provided by the applicant.

The project site consists of two (2) parcels totaling 0.85 acres in size and is located at the southeast corner of Main Street and Prospect Street, more specifically 164 and 184 South Main Street within the Downtown Elsinore Specific Plan. The first parcel is 0.38 acres of mostly flat terrain that contains the existing vacant Ambassador Hotel, swimming pool, outdoor areas, and a gravel parking lot. The second parcel is 0.47 acres and contains an abandoned service station building and a fire damaged mechanics service garage structure. The project site encompasses Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 373-153-039 and 373-153-041.

### **Discussion**

The Planning Commission originally heard the project on January 16, 2024. At that meeting, the Planning Commission accepted public oral testimony from fifteen (15) speakers. Three (3) people spoke in opposition, ten (10) people spoke in support of the project, and two (2) speakers were neutral. Issues raised at the meeting include the location of the proposed project on Main Street and the impacts it will have on the other businesses in the Downtown Core Area. The Planning Commission raised concerns about the project's location, compatibility with other uses in the Downtown Area, and consistency with the vision of a vibrant and walkable downtown. The Planning Commission also raised concerns about the retail component of the project, hours of operation, and accessibility to the public. The Planning Commission continued consideration of the item to February 6, 2024 in order to allow the applicant additional time to address the issues raised.

At the February 6, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, the Planning Commission accepted public oral testimony from thirty-seven (37) speakers. Fifteen (15) people spoke in opposition and twenty-two (22) people spoke in support of the project. Seven (7) written comments (six (6) in opposition and one (1) in support) were received and are included to this staff report as Attachment 2. The applicant provided a presentation to address the issues raised, including modification of the project's retail component to include a proposed 50's style diner, retail/gift shop, and conference room to complement the other uses in the downtown area. The Planning Commission expressed concern that although the applicant has provided additional information regarding the proposed project, the location for the proposed project creates incompatibility with other uses in the Downtown Core area. The Planning Commission voted 4-1 to deny Commercial Design Review No. 2022-21 and Conditional Use Permit No. 2022-14.

On February 20, 2024, the applicant, Brett Masters, Dream Center Lake Elsinore, filed a timely appeal of the Planning Commission's decision to deny Commercial Design Review No. 2022-21 and Conditional Use Permit No. 2022-14. In accordance with Section 17.410.100 of the Lake Elsinore Municipal Code (LEMC), the City Clerk will schedule the appeal hearing for a future meeting of the Council no later than 60 days following the filing date of the appeal. The City will also provide required public notice of the appeal hearing. City Council deliberation is reserved

for the noticed public hearing and no substantive discussion by the City Council is scheduled for February 27, 2024. This Report is solely to provide the City Council with Notice of the Planning Commission Decision.

**Fiscal Impact**

The time and costs related to processing this application have been covered by fees paid for by the applicant. No General Fund budgets have been allocated or used in the processing of this application.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Planning Commission Staff Report  
Attachment 2 – Public Comments  
Attachment 3 – Appeal Form dated February 20, 2024