

Religious Uses Zoning Study

City Council
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Religious Uses Zoning Study

- Why do this study?
- Planning Commission's recommendation
- What it would mean for religious institutions



Why do this study?



- A U.S. District Court settlement (First Lutheran v. City of Saint Paul) requires it:
 - By February 1, 2022, the City must complete a zoning study that “propose(s) amendments to the City’s zoning ordinance to establish a better process for land use applications for religious organizations.”
 - Stemmed from City Council’s decision on Listening House and the process that led to it



Why do this study?



- Our past practice modeled on “home occupation” standards was confusing.
 - 2004 action for St. Mary’s Episcopal in Union Park permitted several uses (preschool, yoga classes, block nurse offices, music lessons, travel agency, massage therapy) subject to home occupation standards such as:
 - “The tenants are limited to uses that are low profile, generate minimal traffic, are compatible with the church’s presence in the community...”
 - “Service and teaching occupations shall serve no more than one (1) party per employee at a time and shall not serve groups or classes.”
 - “There shall be no detriments to the residential character of the neighborhood due to... any... annoyance resulting from the home occupation.”
 - Subsequent approvals replicated that approval at several other churches



Planning Commission's recommendation

1. Expanded definitions for “religious institution” and “community center” will permit most desired uses at religious institution campuses
2. Day care/preschool definition expanded to allow it at *existing* religious institutions (in addition to former ones)
3. Emergency housing allowed at religious institutions (no zoning limits)
4. Overnight shelter allowed at religious institutions, up to 25 adults
5. Homeless services facility allowed at religious institutions, subject to same regulations as elsewhere (litter collection plan, >7,000 s.f. requires conditional use permit)



- Expanded “religious institution” definition

Before

- Focus was only on worship and clergy housing

Now

- Includes gathering space, religious education facilities, and other spaces for religious exercise

Sec. 65.236. Religious institution.

A church, chapel, synagogue, temple or other similar place of worship, along with uses directly associated with religious exercise and the place of worship such as a rectory, parsonage, convent, monastery, gathering spaces, and religious retreat and education facilities.



- Expanded “community center” definition

Before

- “Noncommercial recreation” was mainly for rec. centers, had to have direct access to arterial street, needed CUP in residential districts

Now

- “Community center” includes rec. center use and much of what happens at religious campuses; no need to be on arterial; no CUP

Sec. 65.221. Community center.

A facility that may include such things as recreational and cultural facilities, gymnasiums, swimming pools, outdoor recreation, meeting rooms, performance space, social service facilities and public health facilities. A community center may provide for such things as art, music, dance, adult and general education classes; child and adult day care; counseling; public health and social services; legal clinics; civic events; community meetings; performances; and receptions.

Standards and conditions:

1. Unless operated by a religious institution, other tax-exempt organization or a government agency, the use requires a conditional use permit in residential districts. A community center operated by a religious institution, other tax-exempt organization or a government agency may provide space for other types of organizations.
2. A conditional use permit is required for the use in the I2 general industrial district.



City recreation centers

Name	Zoning	Direct arterial access?
Rice	RT1	No
Martin Luther King	RT2	No
Dayton's Bluff	RT1	No
Duluth & Case	R4	No
Hazel Park	R4	No
Linwood	R4	No
Groveland	R3	No
El Rio Vista	RM1	No



What would it mean for religious institutions?

- Examples, as applied in all districts that allow religious institutions:
 - Preschools: Allowed by zoning
 - Food shelf: Allowed by zoning
 - Receptions: Allowed by zoning
 - Music performances: Allowed by zoning
 - Blood drives: Allowed by zoning
 - Community meetings: Allowed by zoning
 - Voting: Allowed by zoning (no change needed –already allowed everywhere)
 - Emergency housing: Allowed by zoning
 - Homeless services facilities: CUP if over 7,000 s.f. in most districts, no CUP if less
 - Overnight shelter: Allowed by zoning for up to 25 adults plus children in their care
 - Accounting or travel agency office: Needs zoning letter from City (same as now)
 - Senior living: smaller facilities allowed, larger ones may need rezoning

Questions?



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