



Land Use Services Department
Planning Division

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HEARING

Land Use Services Department

Applicant: Church of the Woods

Appellants: Save Our Forest Association, Inc.,
Sierra Club – San Bernardino Mountains Group,
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society

Agenda Item #3

Heidi Duron

Planning Director

October 20, 2020



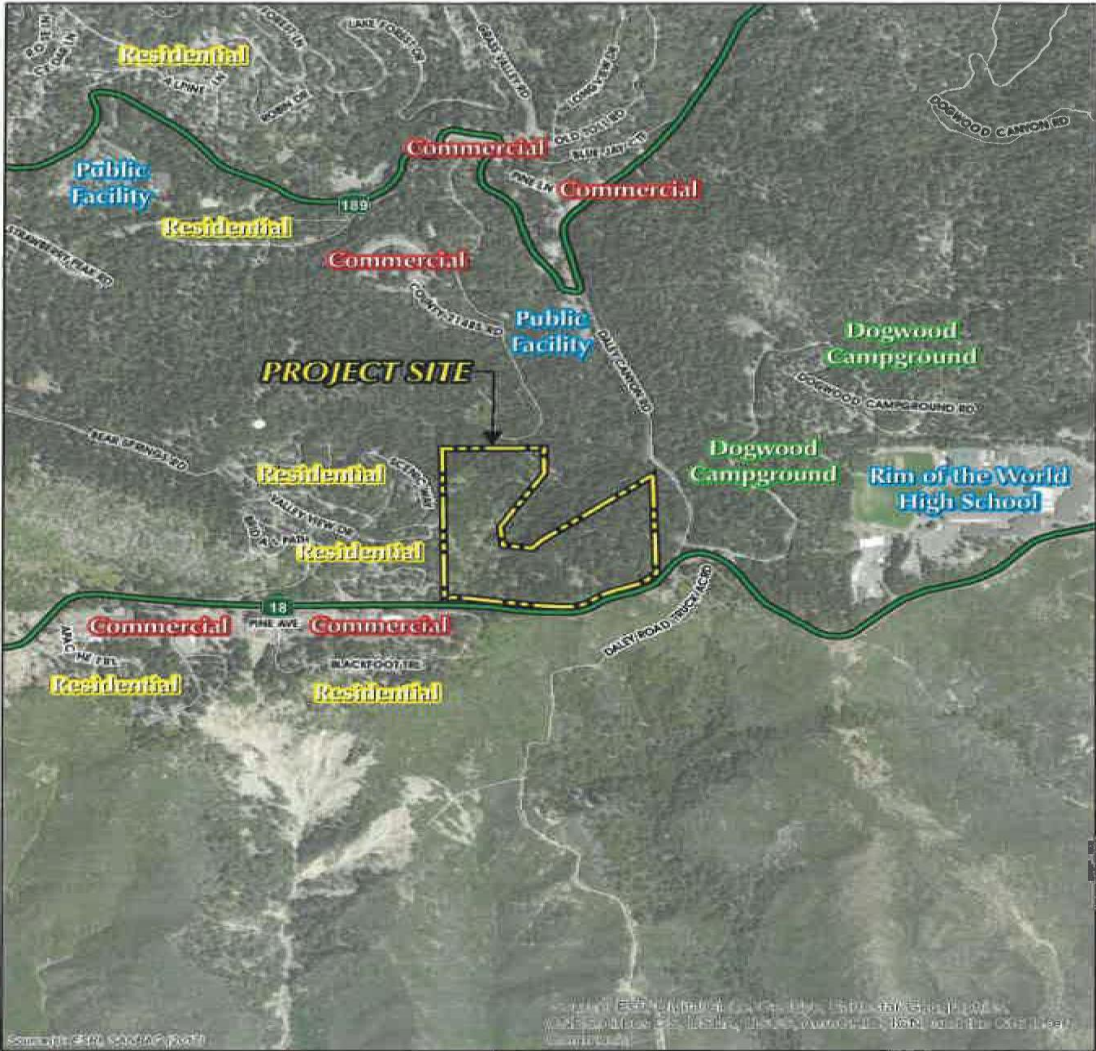
Church of the Woods Project:

Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for a religious facility on a 13.6-acre portion of 27.12 acres
Located on State Highway 18 in the Community of Rim Forest, and comprised of:

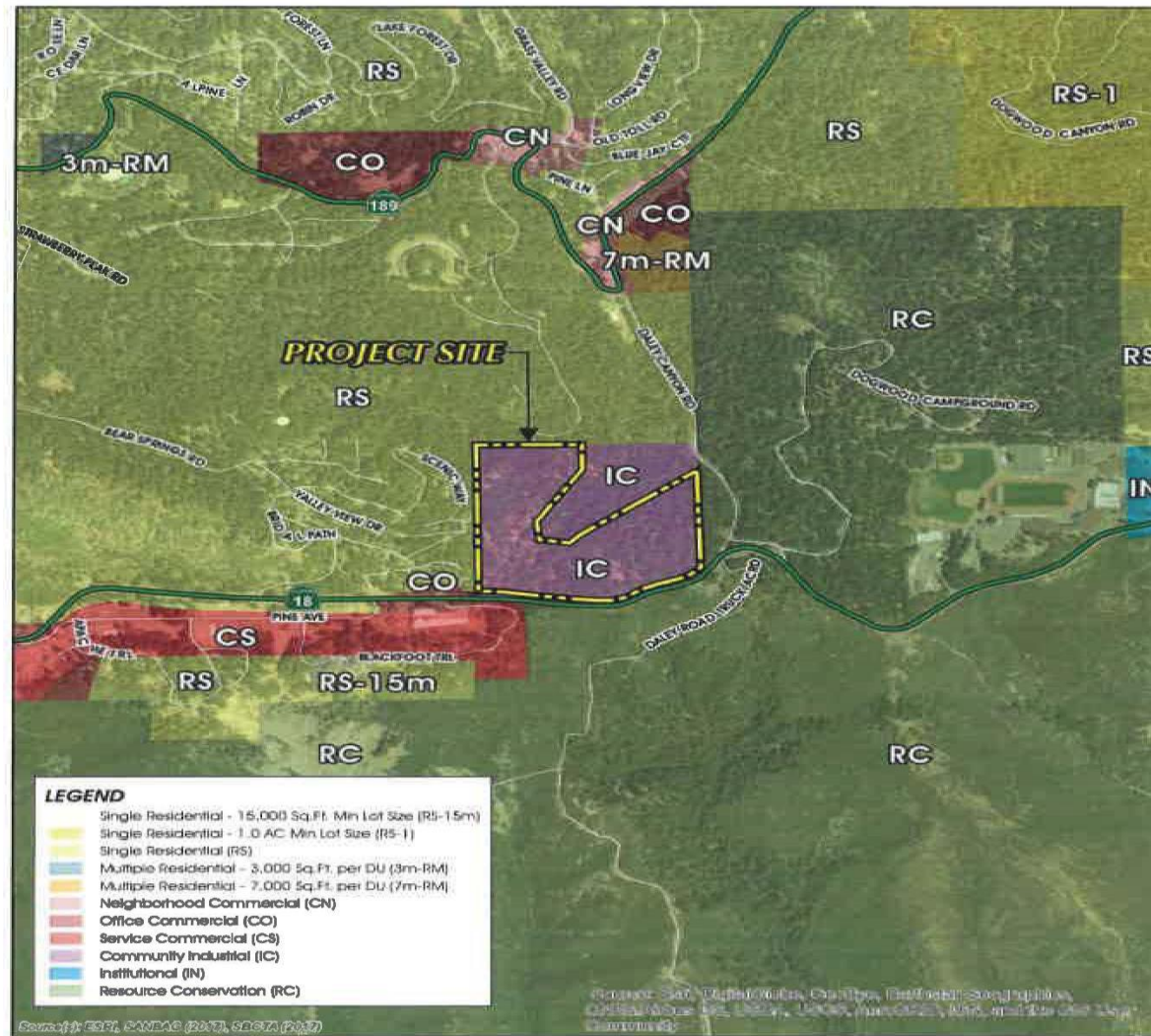
- 41,037 s.f. 2-story Assembly Building with seating capacity of 600
- 27,364 s.f. 2-story Youth Center/Gym/Auditorium
- 1,500 s.f. 2-story Caretaker Residence

Appeal:

Project approval by the County Planning Commission appealed by Save Our Forest Association, Inc., Sierra Club – San Bernardino Mountains Group, and San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society



Land Use Designations





LOOKING EAST ALONG STATE ROUTE 18



LOOKING WEST ALONG STATE ROUTE 18

Church of the Woods Project Site Plan



- Original Project filed in 2003 including a church and a school.
- Planning Commission approved the Project in May 2004.
- Planning Commission approval appealed to the Board of Supervisors.
- Appeal not scheduled for hearing, due to application withdrawal and resubmittal of revised project, substantially reduced by elimination of the school.
- Draft EIR circulated in 2010. Project not scheduled for hearing, pending consideration of additional revisions to the Project design.
- County initiated the Rimforest Storm Drain Project in 2016 and purchased a portion of the Project site from the applicant. The EIR for the County storm drain project was certified in May of 2017.
- Current Project proposal filed in May of 2017 with further reduction to the development footprint.

- May 2004 - Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted for the original Project.
- 2010 - Draft EIR distributed for public review. Final EIR not certified due to further consideration of revisions.
- 2017 – Rimforest Storm Drain Project EIR certified.
- 2018 - Based on final revisions to the Project, Draft Revised EIR prepared.
- January 2019 – 45-day public review period of the Draft Revised EIR .
- February 2019 - County received over 200 written comments on Draft Revised EIR.
- January 2020 - Final EIR completed.

- Noise – temporary, during construction
- Traffic – interim, pending circulation improvements. Project required to pay fair share toward improvements. (significant impact due to timing)
- Land Use – also based on timing of traffic improvements, because of policies requiring projects to mitigate traffic impacts.
- Biological Resources – cumulative impacts.

- To construct a new church campus that would include worship facilities, a youth center gymnasium, children's ministry, sports courts, and a sports field.
- To relieve space constraints and address operational deficiencies at the existing Church of the Woods facilities.
- To develop a church campus in a natural setting which provides facilities to accommodate spiritual, educational, and recreational activities.
- To maintain approximately 50% of the church campus as natural open space.
- To foster community engagement on the church campus with meeting space, classrooms, and recreational facilities available to local public and private organizations.

Planning Commission Public Hearing on January 23, 2020

- PC approved the Project by a vote of 5-0, directing staff to file the Notice of Determination.

Appeal filed:

- On January 30, 2020 by Shute, Mihaly & Weinberger, LLP, on behalf of Save Our Forest Association, Inc., Sierra Club – San Bernardino Mountains Group, and San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society.

1. The EIR does not comply with CEQA:
 - Inadequate Project description
 - Fails to mitigate impacts
 - Fails to provide adequate alternatives
2. Project does not comply with State Planning and Zoning Law, inconsistent with the Development Code.
3. CUP findings not supported by evidence, Project is inconsistent with General Plan and Community Plan policies.

- The Project description includes all requirements detailed in the CEQA Guidelines.
- Mitigation measures have reduced Project-level impacts to below levels of significance with the exception of cumulative impacts to Biological Resources and short-term Land Use, Noise and Traffic, addressed through Overriding Considerations
- Benefits cited in Statement of Overriding Considerations effectively provide a balance against the adverse impacts identified.
- The Project is a reduced Project alternative to a previously reviewed Project, and includes additional alternatives.
- The Project is consistent with the Goals and Policies of the County General Plan and Lake Arrowhead Community Plan.
- Compliance with all applicable Development Code standards and regulations pertaining to site development such as access, drainage, parking, setbacks and landscaping.

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Conduct a public hearing to consider an appeal of the Planning Commission action approving a Conditional Use Permit for the Church of the Woods Project.
2. Deny the appeal and take the following actions for project approval:
 - a. Certify the Environmental Impact Report.
 - b. Adopt the CEQA Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations.
 - c. Adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.
 - d. Adopt the recommended Findings for approval of the Conditional Use Permit.
 - e. Approve the Conditional Use Permit for the religious facility, subject to the recommended Conditions of Approval.
 - f. Direct the Clerk of the Board to file a Notice of Determination.