

Agenda Report

March 9, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Planning & Community Development Department

SUBJECT: APPEAL OF THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS' QUASI-JUDICIAL DECISION TO APPROVE MINOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT #7318 TO ESTABLISH A SAFE PARKING LAND USE AT AN EXISTING RELIGIOUS FACILITY (ALL SAINTS CHURCH) AT 202 NORTH EUCLID AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities), 15303 (Class 3, Small Structures), and 15311 (Class 11, Accessory Structures); and there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt classes, and therefore, there are no unusual circumstances or exceptions to the exemptions; and
2. Adopt the findings in Attachment A to uphold the Board of Zoning Appeals' decision and approve Minor Conditional Use Permit #7318, with the conditions in Attachment B.

BACKGROUND:

On March 5, 2025, Erica Tamblin, on behalf of All Saints Church (All Saints or Applicant or Appellant 3) submitted an application for Minor Conditional Use Permit (MCUP) #7318 to allow a Safe Parking activity in conjunction with the religious facility (All Saints) in the PS (Public and Semi-Public) zoning district. The Safe Parking activity would establish a program that would allow up to 25 participants (unhoused individuals or families) in up to 25 vehicles to park on-site overnight.

The MCUP was approved by the Hearing Officer on June 18, 2025, and subsequently approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) on September 25, 2025. The BZA's decision was then appealed to the Pasadena City Council.

This item was heard by the City Council on November 17, 2025. At the conclusion of public comment, a motion was made to close the public hearing, which passed on a 7-0 vote. After the public hearing was closed, a motion was made to find the MCUP exempt from environmental review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities). This resulted in a 4-3 vote of the seven Councilmembers present. Pursuant to the City Charter, “[n]o action of the City Council, including the adoption of ordinances, resolutions and motions, shall be valid unless it receives the affirmative vote of five members.” (Charter § 506.) As a result, because the motion received only four affirmative votes, it failed and no action was taken on the CEQA exemption.

Discussion ensued noting the absence of a councilmember, and a request was made that the public hearing be continued to a future City Council meeting to provide an opportunity for the full City Council to make a determination on the overall matter. A second motion was made to reopen and continue the public hearing to January 12, 2026. This also resulted in a 4-3 vote and, as a result, this motion also failed. No motion was made on the MCUP. Consequently, the City did not make a final decision on November 17, 2025 regarding the appeal of the September 25, 2025 BZA determination, because it was unable to adopt the CEQA findings in connection with Permit No. 7318 due to the lack of five affirmative votes.

On February 2, 2026, the City Council considered a motion to rescind the closure of the public hearing and deemed denial of the CEQA action. This was authorized by Robert’s Rules of Order, which the City Council previously determined would govern City Council business unless otherwise provided (see Resolution No. 9716, adopted in 2019), and which permits a motion to be rescinded in the same way it was adopted. After discussion, a motion was made to reopen the public hearing and continue the item to tonight’s meeting; the motion was approved 5-2, with one abstention.

Discussion and analysis of the proposed Safe Parking activity can be found in the City Council staff report and attachments dated November 17, 2025 (Attachment C).

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

City staff has concluded that the Safe Parking activity is exempt from environmental review under CEQA pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3), Section 15301, Class 1 (Existing Facilities). Section 15301 exempts the operation, permitting, licensing or minor alteration of existing facilities where there is negligible or no expansion of the use. The Safe Parking activity for no more than 25 vehicles would occur on an existing surface parking lot with 109 spaces. There would be a negligible expansion of the existing use as the vehicles would be parked in the existing parking lot. Furthermore, operation of a Safe Parking activity on a religious facility site is considered an accessory activity to an existing use and would not require any physical construction to occur to permit the Safe Parking use.¹

¹ The installation of portable restrooms and handwashing facilities are not considered construction.

No exceptions exist under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to render inapplicable the Section 15301 exemption. There is no cumulative impact from any successive projects of the same type in the same place (Section 15300.2(b)); there are no unusual circumstances related to this activity (permitting use of an existing parking lot) compared to other exempt uses within this class which includes permitting of existing facilities involving negligible expansion of the existing or former use (Section 15300.2(c) & Section 15301, subs. (c), (n) & (p) [other exempt activities include permitting of “[e]xisting highways and streets, sidewalks, ... and similar facilities”, and conversion of single family homes to office or day care uses]); the Safe Parking activity will not result in any damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway (Section 15300.2(d)); and the parking lot is not located on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code (Section 15300.2(e)).

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(f) states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. The site is located within the boundaries of the Pasadena Civic Center Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and contains the All-Saints Church religious facility, a contributing historic resource to the district. A “substantial adverse change” in the significance of a historical resource means an alteration that materially impairs the physical characteristics that convey the resource’s significance and justify its eligibility. The Safe Parking activity, proposed on an existing parking lot and where no physical construction would occur to facilitate the use, would not materially impair the significance of the historical resource. The Safe Parking activity would not physically alter, destroy, or demolish the historical resource or its surroundings in a way that diminishes its historical value. Therefore, the categorical exemption remains applicable.

The applicant requested that the City Council consider whether the following two exemptions also apply: CEQA Guidelines Sections 15303 (Class 3, Small Structures) and 15311 (Class 11, Accessory Structures), and Public Resource Code Section 21080.10 for contracts for homelessness services.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3, Small Structures) specifically exempts the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. Examples of this exemption include, but are not limited to: Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 (Class 11, Accessory Structures) exempts construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.

The proposed Safe Parking activity would be an accessory activity to the existing

institutional facility (All Saints Church), with the proposed portable restroom and handwashing facility being accessory structures. Therefore, the scale of the project falls under the scope of projects exempted per Class 3. Likewise, the proposed activity, along with the proposed restroom and handwashing facilities, would be accessory to the existing institutional use, and therefore exempt per Class 11. There are no features that distinguish the project from others in these exempt classes and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances. The above explanation regarding the lack of any exceptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies here as well. In addition, the potential exception to the use of a Class 3 and Class 11 exemption – based on the project's location (Section 15300.2(a)) does not apply here. The parking lot is located in a developed area and has no potential to impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

Appellant Maryland Homeowner's Association argues that the activity will potentially have a significant negative effect on the environment from air pollution from participants idling their car. However, the activity does not increase the number of people living in or idling their vehicles, but provides a safe location for a limited number of unhoused participants to park their vehicles overnight. In addition, the Applicant has clarified that the Safe Parking program would not permit idling.

Therefore, staff recommends the City Council find the Safe Parking activity is exempt from environmental review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301, 15303 and 15311.

Senate Bill 1361 took effect on January 1, 2025, and it amended Public Resource Code Section 21080.10 to exempt from CEQA any actions taken by local agencies "to approve a contract for providing services for people experiencing homelessness." Services include, but are not limited to, case management, resource navigation, security services, residential services, and counseling services. The City Council could consider this exemption for future contracts for providing services for people experiencing homelessness. This bill did not create a new CEQA exemption for this conditional use permit. Therefore, staff recommends this exemption does not apply to the Safe Parking activity.

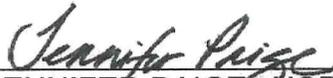
CONCLUSION:

Staff continues to determine that the findings necessary for approving MCUP #7318 for the establishment of a Safe Parking use at an existing religious facility site can be made. Therefore, staff recommends that the City Council approve the MCUP subject to the findings in Attachment A and recommended conditions of approval in Attachment B.

FISCAL IMPACT:

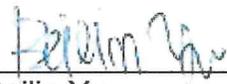
There is no direct fiscal impact as a result of this action.

Respectfully submitted,



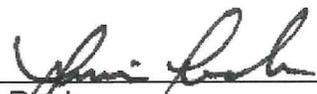
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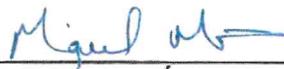
Beilin Yu
Zoning Administrator

Concurred by:



Luis Rocha
Planning Manager

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager

Attachments: (3)

- Attachment A: Specific Findings
- Attachment B: Conditions of Approval
- Attachment C: City Council Staff Report November 17, 2025