

REPORT TO THE HEARING OFFICER

DATE ISSUED: February 12, 2026
HEARING DATE: February 24, 2026 AGENDA ITEM: 4
PROJECT NUMBER: R2014-02985-(4)
PERMIT NUMBER(S): Conditional Use Permit 201400140
Minor Parking Deviation RPPL2025003832
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT: 4
PROJECT LOCATION: 11413 Laurel Ave., Whittier, CA 90605
OWNER: South Whittier Four Square Church
APPLICANT: South Whittier Four Square Church
CASE PLANNER: Carl Nadela, AICP, Principal Regional Planner
cnadela@planning.lacounty.gov

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation is made prior to the public hearing and is subject to change based upon testimony and/or documentary evidence presented at the public hearing:

LA County Planning staff ("Staff") recommends **APPROVAL** of Project Number R2014-02985-(4), Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") Number 201400140 and Minor Parking Deviation ("MPDEV") RPPL2025003832, based on the Findings (Exhibit C – Findings) contained within this report and subject to the Draft Conditions of Approval (Exhibit D – Conditions of Approval).

Staff recommends the following motions:

CEQA:

I, THE HEARING OFFICER, CLOSE THE PUBLIC HEARING AND FIND THAT THE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO STATE AND LOCAL CEQA GUIDELINES.

ENTITLEMENT(S)

I, THE HEARING OFFICER, APPROVE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NUMBER 201400140 AND MINOR PARKING DEVIATION NUMBER RPPL2025003832 SUBJECT TO THE ATTACHED FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Entitlement(s) Requested

- Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) for the legalization of the conversion of an existing accessory Single-Family Residence (“SFR”) and a portion of an existing church to a sober living facility with a maximum of 22 residents and three staff at a time in the C-3-BE (General Commercial - Billboard Exclusion) Zone pursuant to County Code Section 22.20.030 (Land Use Regulations for Zone C-3).
- Minor Parking Deviation (“MPDEV”) for the reduction of the required parking spaces for the existing church from 10 to eight parking spaces (20% reduction) pursuant to County Code Section 22.176.010 (Parking Deviations, Minor – Applicability).

B. Project

The Project is for the legalization of the conversion of an existing accessory SFR and a portion of an existing church to an sober living facility for adult men recovering from substance abuse with 22 residents and six total staff, three in a daytime shift and three in a nighttime shift. The Project also includes a request for the reduction of the required parking spaces for the existing church from 10 to 8 parking spaces (20% reduction).

C. Hearing Proceedings

A duly noticed public hearing was conducted for the Project via video conferencing and in-person on October 21, 2025. On this date, the Hearing Officer heard a presentation from Staff. The applicant was present and provided testimony about the existing facility and the services they provide. Several members of the public were also present and testified in favor of the Project. The Hearing Officer then indicated that she had no concerns about the Project itself but she was not sure if the description of the Project as an "Adult Residential Facility" was accurate since Adult Residential Facilities are licensed by the State and the subject facility had no license. The Hearing Officer requested Staff to look into this matter and continued the public hearing to December 16, 2025.

On December 4, 2025, Staff sent a Supplemental Report to the Hearing Officer indicating that the facility is considered a sober living facility and provided the justification for the determination. At the December 16, 2025 public hearing, the Hearing Officer asked the applicant to contact the State Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to confirm Staff's determination. The Hearing Officer then continued the public hearing to January 6, 2026 and subsequently to February 24, 2026.

D. Project Updates

Since the December 16, 2025 public hearing, the applicant and Staff has contacted DHCS and received confirmation that the subject facility does not need any license from the State. See attached email exchange between Staff and DHCS.

On their website referenced in their response email, DHCS states that **Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) abuse recovery or treatment service** "can be detoxification services, group sessions, individual sessions, one-on-one counseling, educational sessions, and or recovery or treatment planning. If a sober living facility is providing just one of the mentioned services, then it should be classified as a residential treatment program and must obtain a valid license from DHCS."

Pursuant to this, Staff recommends the following additional Condition of Approval to the subject CUP:

26. That facility shall not provide any Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) abuse recovery or treatment service, as defined and determined by California Department of Health Care Services.

Report

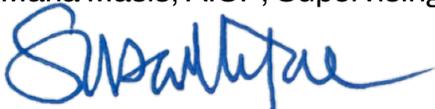
Reviewed By:



Maria Masis, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner

Report

Approved By:



Susan Tae, AICP, Assistant Administrator

Attachments: Emails between Staff and DHCS

Carl Nadela

From: Fong, Vincent@DHCS <Vincent.Fong@dhcs.ca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 23, 2025 10:38 AM
To: Carl Nadela
Subject: RE: [External]RE: Sober Living Facility at South Whittier Four Square Church (11413 LAUREL AVE WHITTIER CA 90605)

CAUTION: External Email. Proceed Responsibly.

Hello Carl,

I am the current officer of the week and have received your most recent email. As it pertains to sober living homes, you should reference our website which addresses sober living homes and unlicensed facilities at [Licensing and Certification - Complaints](#). If the entity you are inquiring about does not provide any AOD recovery or treatment services they do not require a license from DHCS. The definition of what constitutes AOD recovery and treatment services is explained there and provides regulatory citations for your reference.

With the very limited information you have provided below, it appears that a license is not required at this time.

Vincent Fong

Licensing and Certification Analyst | Licensing and Certification Division
California Department of Health Care Services
(916) 345-7431 | dhcs.ca.gov



From: DHCS LCD Questions <LCDQuestions@dhcs.ca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 11:29 AM
To: Fong, Vincent@DHCS <Vincent.Fong@dhcs.ca.gov>
Subject: FW: [External]RE: Sober Living Facility at South Whittier Four Square Church (11413 LAUREL AVE WHITTIER CA 90605)
Importance: High

From: Carl Nadela <cnadela@planning.lacounty.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 9:01 AM
To: DHCS LCD Questions <LCDQuestions@dhcs.ca.gov>

Subject: [External]RE: Sober Living Facility at South Whittier Four Square Church (11413 LAUREL AVE WHITTIER CA 90605)

Hello,

Can I follow-up on the question below? I need to get this information as soon as possible in preparation for the hearing on 1/6/2026. Hope you can help me with this.

Regards,

CARL VINCENT NADELA, AICP (he/him/his)

PRINCIPAL REGIONAL PLANNER, Puente Whittier Development Services

Office: (213) 974-6411 • Direct: (213) 893-7010

Email: cnadela@planning.lacounty.gov

Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012
planning.lacounty.gov



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From: Carl Nadela

Sent: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 8:36 AM

To: 'LCDQuestions@dhcs.ca.gov' <LCDQuestions@dhcs.ca.gov>

Subject: Sober Living Facility at South Whittier Four Square Church (11413 LAUREL AVE WHITTIER CA 90605)

Hello,

Can I get confirmation that the facility referenced above does not require any sort of license from the State? Below is a summary of what they do:

1. They are an existing church that has been in existence since the 1960s.
2. The church started operating the subject sober living facility in 1994.
3. The facility serves adult men recovering from substance abuse.
4. The facility has 22 residents with six staff, three in a day time shift and three in a night time shift.
5. The staff members are “volunteers/helpers/raising leaders” who have also graduated from the facility.
6. Spiritual guidance and life counselling are provided by three pastors of the church.
7. The facility does not offer any medical care or detoxification services.
8. The facility provides “informal peer support, communal living, house-meeting, & house- rule enforcement”.

The operators of the facility informed as that they do not need any license from the State and have operated accordingly for the last 30 years. We are processing a Conditional Use Permit for the facility and just need confirmation that this is indeed the case. Would you be able to confirm that for us, even just through a response to this email?

Thanks!

Regards,

CARL VINCENT NADELA, AICP (he/him/his)

PRINCIPAL REGIONAL PLANNER, Puente Whittier Development Services

Office: (213) 974-6411 • Direct: (213) 893-7010

Email: cnadela@planning.lacounty.gov

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