

For more nearly 170 years, the United Church of Christ Church Building & Loan Fund (CB&LF) has served new and renewing congregations of the United Church of Christ and other Christian denominations throughout the U.S. Through innovative programs that help churches plan, raise, finance, and build projects that advance the mission of the Church, CB&LF has partnered with congregations to transform their local communities.

Since FCCE entered a partnership with CB&LF we have had the benefit of guidance and consultation from their development partners at AIM Development Group. They (Sandra Acosta and Heather Caudill) have helped us face challenging questions about our priorities and the balance of our desired mission in the community and our need for financial sustainability. They have assisted us with a comprehensive financial analysis, conducted an analysis of future space needs for the church to worship, facilitated fellowship, and do missional work. Their guidance has helped to drive the next steps toward our goal to repurpose unused church property.

First, our team agreed that we are not interested in selling our church property at this time. Rather, we agreed that developing affordable senior housing is our priority and should be a separate project than any developing an expansion to our educational facility for revenue generation. However, we do want to see Element Education remain on our campus and expand their facilities to suit their future needs, and we will be meeting with them soon.

To advance the goal of developing affordable senior housing, our team needed to study and discern on two key questions: 1) what should our church relationship be with a developer (what legal framework would best fit for our church) and what would that relationship require of church members and our resources, 2) how do we go about identifying the appropriate development partner for FCCE.

We'd have several meetings to talk through opinions and ideas about the process of selecting a developer to work with us on affordable housing development. This meant we also needed to have very honest conversations about the role of the church and our team members in a development process. With these key decisions made, we are well on our way to releasing a Request for Developer Qualifications search process this summer to evaluate, interview, and select an appropriate experienced developer to work with.

In addition, a small subset of our Master Plan team met with the City of Escondido's Planning Director and other staff to review our housing concept and get their general impression of how we should proceed with the city. We were encouraged to complete the Pre-Development Application to get a process started.

We shared with city staff the state legislation (SB4, known as Affordable Housing on Faith Lands Act) that, under key considerations, makes affordable housing a "ministerial approval process." That means our outlook is much brighter for a faster-track approval process to actual development.

Our team is pleased to see the light grow brighter! We anticipate that the process to identify a development partner and bring that partnership to the congregation by mid-September.

Our Master Plan team includes Kurt Hunker, Team Lead and Carolyn Hammock, Cynthia Selbrede, Dana Stevens, Deb Pint our Church Moderator, Don Dohanyos, Mike Dyekman, and Tom Galyean, also with Pastor Holgie Choi.

