City of San Clemente
Planning Division

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Riley Christie
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California Coastal Commission
301 E. Ocean Blvd., Suite 300
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Subject: CDP App No. 5-26-0761, City of San Clemente Review of Chabad Jewish Center and Supplemental Information in Response to Incomplete Application

Please accept the following comments from the City of San Clemente, organized by the numbers referenced in the CCC Incomplete Letter dated October 6, 2026.

1. Building Height and Number of Stories
The approved project consists of a two-story structure with an attic area above the second floor designated for mechanical equipment and storage. This area is identified on the approved plans as "Attic Storage" and "Mechanical Attic" and is not for habitable occupancy. Thus, the project complies with the City's two-story height limit.

3. Local Approval and Approved Plans
The project received local approval from the City's Planning Commission in 2024. The approved In-Concept plans are available here and the applicant can print additional copies showing minor deviations for City review and In-Concept stamp upon request:

Additionally, on June 17, 2025, the City Council approved an off-site parking agreement associated with the project, allowing the use of City parking spaces at Bonito Park to satisfy the parking requirements for the expansion of the religious facility.

With respect to deviations from the previously approved plans, the proposed modifications to the rear accessibility ramp and the associated removal of one parking space are considered minor modifications that may be approved administratively, subject to confirmation that the project continues to satisfy applicable accessibility and parking requirements. These modifications do not materially alter the approved use or overall development.

4. Property History
The property was originally constructed as an office/commercial building in the 1990's. Because it complied with the City's zoning and parking standards, it likely qualified for a Categorical Exclusion (CatEx) under the Coastal Commission's approved 1982 CatEx Order and thus no CDP was required. Arguably, the current project qualifies for a CatEx as well – the only nuance is religious/assembly uses are not referenced but could be characterized as commercial uses in a commercial zone.

Based on the available project records, the property was previously used for an educational program operated by the Orange County Department of Education. This educational use reportedly operated for several years prior to 2013 without obtaining the necessary City land use approvals.

Following the discontinuation of that use, the subject Chabad Jewish Center obtained approval for a religious facility with an ancillary religious school component. The attached 2013 Planning Commission staff report and resolution provide additional background regarding the property's previous operations.

5. Parking and TDM The additional parking required for the expansion of the religious facility was addressed through the off-site parking agreement. Additionally, the site is within a few hundred feet of a trolley stop and within ½ mile of a train station.

6. Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP)
The scope of improvements approved by the City in 2024 did not trigger a requirement to prepare a WQMP. The project includes gutters and downspouts and meets the City's landscape standards.

7. Demolition Assessment and Project Review
The City's 2024 review and approval of the project did not include a specific assessment or calculation of the percentage of the existing structure proposed for demolition. The project was evaluated as an expansion and modification of an existing legally established religious facility. The existing structure was determined to comply with the applicable development standards, and the proposed improvements were reviewed for consistency with the City's zoning and development requirements. Consequently, the local entitlement review did not require a separate percentage-of-demolition calculation. However, even if the project were a new use, it would comply with all zoning standards, so the demo calculation is irrelevant for City purposes – if there is a Coastal resource concern, then the applicant should independently evaluate the proposed demolition using the Commission's applicable structural demolition calculation methodology and provide the required calculations.

Thank you for your consideration of the applicant's proposed project and the City's interests. Feel free to contact me for further information or coordination with Planning or another City department.

Sincerely,

Zach Rehm
City Planner

cc: Herman Jack Ajamian, Designer
Rabbi Slavin, Applicant