



YOUTH SERVICES

Diamond Youth Shelter: Conditional Use Authorization Frequently Asked Questions

September 2014

What is the Diamond Youth Shelter?

Diamond Youth Shelter is a program of Larkin Street Youth Services since 1993, when we took over the site from Catholic Charities. Diamond provides emergency shelter services to runaway and homeless youth who are 12 – 17 years of age. Currently, youth stay at the shelter overnight, and they go to school or participate in programming at our Sutter Street Drop-In Center during the day.

What is Larkin Street proposing to do at Diamond Youth Shelter?

Larkin Street has applied to the San Francisco Planning Commission for a new Conditional Use Authorization that will allow Diamond Youth Shelter to extend its hours of operation to 24 hours/day. Currently, Diamond is permitted to operate only from “dusk to dawn.”

Why?

Because of changes in the State and Federal regulatory requirements, Larkin Street must pursue expanding Diamond’s on-site hours of operation from 12 hours/day to 24 hours/day. In addition to wanting the best possible outcomes for kids at Diamond, we know that the program is increasingly vulnerable to funding cuts and possible closure if we do not move to a 24-hour structure.

Why did Larkin Street assure neighbors in 2007—in preparation for the site’s renovation—that it would continue as an overnight-only shelter?

The State licensing regulations and Federal funder requirements noted above were not yet factors when the site was renovated. Moreover, our recent internal analysis of youth outcomes points to the fact that 24-hour services at the shelter will support more positive transitions off the streets. These are new developments since 2007.

What will change?

The shelter’s hours of operation will be extended from “dusk to dawn” to 24 hours/day. Youth will have access to **structured onsite activities under staff supervision** during daylight hours, although many who are working, attending school, or engaged in other Larkin Street programs will not remain onsite during the day.

What will not change?

The only proposed change is Diamond’s hours of operation. The target population (12 – 17 year-olds) and the shelter’s capacity (20 beds) will remain the same as throughout the program’s 20-plus-year history in the neighborhood. Although the shelter can serve up to 20 youth, we generally serve between 8 – 12 youth nightly.

How will this change impact the neighborhood?

We do not anticipate any negative impacts on the community. Staff will be on-site 24 hours/day, and youth who utilize the shelter during the day will be closely supervised. We will continue to work with our neighbors to mitigate any issues that might arise.

What is the process for obtaining a new Conditional Use Authorization? How can neighbors participate?

Larkin Street submitted a formal application to the Planning Commission in March 2014; a hearing date in front of the Commission is scheduled for **October 23 at City Hall**. The Planning Commission will solicit comments from all neighbors within 300 feet of Diamond Youth Shelter, and Larkin Street will continue to hold community meetings as needed to address any concerns. The neighborhood will have the opportunity to send a representative to the Commission Hearing to offer support for and concerns about the change.

Where can I get more information?

Anyone with questions or concerns about this process should contact Larkin Street's executive director:

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