



City of Seattle
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 3016830
Applicant Name: Tim Ausink, Heery International, for Seattle Public Schools
Address of Proposal: 3701 SW 104th Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow a three-story 89,000 sq. ft. structure (Arbor Heights Elementary School) in an environmentally critical area. Project includes 10,500 cu. yds. of grading. Environmental documents are being prepared by Seattle Public Schools.*

The following approvals are required:

Development Standard Departure - Chapter 23.79 Seattle Municipal Code to approve or condition the following departures:

1. To allow less than required off-street parking – SMC 23.51B.002 G.
2. To allow continued on-street bus loading and unloading– SMC 23.51B.002 I.
3. To allow changing image capabilities on a reader-board sign– SMC 23.55.020 B.
4. To allow less than required structure modulation– SMC 23.51B.002 F.

SEPA – For conditioning only - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☒ EIS*

 ☐ DNS with conditions

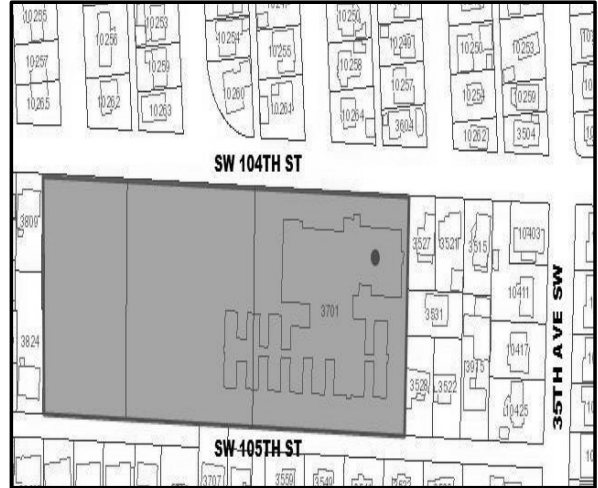
 ☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition, or
 another agency with jurisdiction.

*Environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools: Arbor Heights Elementary School Replacement, SEPA Addendum to Building Excellence Phase IV Capital Improvement Program Programmatic EIS (SPS, 2012).

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location

Arbor Heights Elementary School is located on an approximately five and one half (5.6) acre site in Southwest Seattle at 3701 SW 104th Street. The site is bound by SW 104th Street on the north, SW 105th Street on the south and by private property on the east and west. There are two areas of steep slope Environmentally Critical Area (ECA) mapped on the site. Two City-defined exceptional trees are located in the newly dedicated right of way along SW 105th Street.



Zoning

The proposal is located in a Single Family (SF 7200) zone.

Proposal Information

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) proposes to allow a three-story 89,000 square foot structure (Arbor Heights Elementary School) with associated parking and outdoor play fields in an environmentally critical area. Project includes 10,500 cubic yards of grading.

Two project analyses are being conducted; project number 3015968 to demolish the existing school, and project number 3016830 to build the new school. Construction of the new school is the subject of this review.

Environmentally Critical Area review is required at this site. Based on a review of the submitted information and the City GIS system, DPD concludes that the ECA Steep Slope Areas surrounding the site have been created by previous legal grading activities (per SMC 25.09.180 B2b) associated with construction of the elementary school and subsequent improvements on the property. For this reason, an ECA Steep Slope Area Variance is not required for this project. The project therefore has been given an ECA exemption.

Previous SEPA Related Actions

Prior to application for a Master Use Permit, the District exercised its prerogative to act as lead agency. A Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued by Seattle Public Schools on March 26, 2014. An appeal was registered. On May 15, 2014 the DNS was recommended to be affirmed by the Hearing Examiner Pro Tem. The Seattle School District submitted their MUP application to DPD for review. For the purposes of this permit application, exercise of substantive SEPA authority by DPD is limited to conditioning only for impacts previously identified by SPS. Conditioning pursuant to this authority will rely on the threshold DNS issued by the District and on environmental documents prepared by the District.

Public Comments

Several comment letters were received during the official extended public comment period which ended on March 26, 2014. They can be viewed in the public electronic file at the following link <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/> under the project number.

Development Standard Departure

The Seattle School District submitted a request for departures from certain Seattle Municipal Code Development Standards for the proposed new elementary school. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is charged with administering the School Departure process per SMC 23.79.004. DON formed the required School Departure Advisory Committee of eight voting members with a City non-voting Chair. The final Development Standard Departure report is not copied here but is available in the public electronic file at the following link <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/> under the project number.

ANALYSIS - SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

The School Development Standard Departure process is conducted pursuant to the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code sections 23.79.002-.012. An Advisory Committee convened, public comment was received, and a written recommendation to the Director of DPD was prepared. The Director prepares an analysis and decision per SMC section 23.79.010. The Director will determine the amount of departure to be allowed as well as mitigation measures to be imposed. The Director's decision shall be based on an evaluation of the factors set forth in Section 23.79.008 C, the majority recommendations and minority reports of the Advisory Committee, comments at the public meeting(s) and other comments from the public. If the Director modifies the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the reasons for the modification shall be put forth in writing.

In reviewing the departure request, Section 23.79.008 directs the Advisory Committee to “gather and evaluate public comment”, and to “recommend maximum departures which may be allowed for each development standard from which a departure has been requested”. It states, “Departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the objectives and intent of the City's Land Use Code....., to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings”. The Advisory Committee is directed to consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors in SMC 23.79.008 C 1:

- a. *Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*** *The advisory committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:*
 - 1. *Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;*
 - 2. *Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;*
 - 3. *Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*
 - 4. *Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*
 - 5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

More flexibility in the development standards may be allowed if the impacts on the surrounding community are anticipated to be negligible or are reduced by mitigation; whereas, a minimal amount or no departure from development standards may be allowed if the anticipated impacts are significant and cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

- b. *Need for Departure:*** *The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departures may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas, a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.*

Departure Request and Advisory Committee Recommendations

On November 11, 2013, the Seattle School District submitted a request for departures from certain Seattle Municipal Code development standards to accommodate demolition of the current Arbor Heights Elementary School and construction of a replacement school to accommodate between 490 and 650 students at 3701 SW 104th Street in southwest Seattle.

The City initiated the Development Standard Departure Process, pursuant to SMC 23.44.17 and 23.79. The code requires that the Department of Neighborhoods convene an Advisory Committee (Development Standard Advisory Committee) when the School District proposes a departure from the development standards identified under the code.

The purposes of the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee are: 1) to gather public comment and evaluate the proposed departures for consistency with the objectives and intent of the City's land use policies to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings; and 2) to develop a report and recommendation to the City of Seattle Department of Planning and Development from the Department of Neighborhoods.

Following completion of the Committee Report and its transmittal to the City Department of Planning and Development, that department will produce a formal report and determination. The Director of the Department of Planning and Development will determine the amount of departure from established development standards which may be allowed, as well as identify all mitigating measures which may be required. This decision is appealable.

In October 2013, the Department of Neighborhoods sent notices to residents within 600 feet of the proposed new school and to a list of individuals and organizations that had shown interest in other community issues in the vicinity. DON accepted self-nominations for membership on the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee, and the Committee was formed. The Committee is composed of eight voting members with a City non-voting Chair.

In order to allow efficient use of the site and to accommodate new school construction, the Seattle School District determined that the following departures from City codes are necessary:

Departure #1 - Less than Required Off-street Parking (SMC 23.51B.002 G).

The Seattle Municipal Code requires that schools provide off-street parking. The total requirement is 71 parking stalls. The school presently provides a total of 6 off-site stalls. The district is proposing to provide a total of 55 stalls. This would require a departure of 16 stalls less than required.

Departure #2 - Continued On-street Bus Loading and Unloading (SMC 23.51B.002 I).

Whenever a school is renovated or reconstructed, the Land Use Code requires that bus loading be accommodated on-site. Currently, all busses load off of 104th Avenue Southwest. The Seattle School District is requesting that on street bus loading on 104th be maintained to accommodate four full-sized school busses. In addition, the Seattle School District is requesting the option to accommodate some special education busses along SW 105th Street.

Departure #3 - Allow Changing Image capabilities onto an Otherwise-Allowed Reader-board Sign (SMC 23.55.020 B)

Signs are strictly regulated within single family zones. Arbor Heights Elementary School is located in a single family zone. Seattle Municipal Code section **SMC 23.55.020 B** states that within any single family zone: *No flashing, changing-image or message board signs shall be permitted.* and then clarifies in **23.55.020(D) (7)** that: *For elementary or secondary schools, one electric or non-illuminated double-faced identifying sign, not to exceed 30 square feet of area per sign face on each street frontage, provided that the signs shall be located and landscaped so that light and glare impacts on surrounding properties are reduced, and so that any illumination is controlled by a timer set to turnoff by 10 p.m.* The code defines an identifying sign as either a ground, wall or roof sign.

The Seattle School District has proposed to install a double-sided, illuminated electronic reader board sign on SW 104th St, approximately 10' to 16' above ground at the school's main entry canopy. The sign is proposed to be 25 square feet per sign face. The purpose is to better communicate school events to the public. The sign would display programmed messages created via computer located in the school office.

The Seattle School District has specified that the sign shall not exceed 30 square feet. However, the sign is proposed to include a changeable image; therefore, the District has requested a departure for changing image capacity (programmable messages).

Departure #4 - Less than Required Structure Modulation (SMC 23.51B.002 F)

When a new public school structure is built on a new public school site or on an existing public school site, the maximum width of a structure is 66 feet. Modulation is required along several façades, and especially along portions of 104th Avenue SW and the gymnasium wall.

The Seattle School District believes that the modulation in the currently proposed design is both more efficient and creates a more appealing design. The District requests less modulation.

The Committee was convened in a public meeting February 18, 2014 at Arbor Heights Elementary School Library. After a full review of the departure requests and consideration of all public testimony and correspondence, the majority of the Committee agreed that the issue was not overly complex, no additional technical information was needed, and that additional public testimony would simply re-enforce already known positions. Therefore, the Committee concluded that only one meeting was necessary and moved to make their recommendations at that meeting.

Director's Analysis

The Director's decision shall be based on an evaluation of the factors set forth in SMC Section 23.79.008 C, the majority recommendations and minority reports of the Advisory Committee, comments at the public meeting(s) and other comments from the public. SMC 23.79.008 C 1(a) lists the following factors for consideration:

- a. ***Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*** *The advisory committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:*
1. *Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;*
 2. *Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;*
 3. *Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*
 4. *Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*
 5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

Departure #1 is a District request to allow less than required off-street parking (SMC 23.51B.002 G). The Seattle Municipal Code requires that schools provide off-street parking. The total requirement is 71 parking stalls. The school presently provides six stalls and the district is proposing to provide a total of 55 stalls. This would require that a departure be granted for 16 stalls less than required. Members of the Advisory Committee were generally supportive of granting the departure. They noted that the proposal increases on-site parking from five to 63 and that while this was still less than required it was appropriate in relationship to the surrounding area and available parking in the area. The reduction reduces impacts on school open space and recreational programs. Overflow parking in the area will have some impact, but not to a significant degree. The location of the proposed parking is within the site and well-screened from most of the surrounding development.

The Advisory Committee noted that the impact of parent and visitor parking in the surrounding neighborhood is currently acceptable and that the increase in proposed off-street parking would further reduce this impact. Members noted that their greatest concern related to daily staff parking. Parents typically drop off or pick up or are present for limited durations during conferences etc. However staff park long-term on the surrounding streets. This concern may be exacerbated by the projected increase in school enrollment and concomitant increase in staff. The Committee therefore agreed that the departure be granted a condition to encourage staff parking on school property, traffic through the site be one-way and for parking to be available to the public after school hours, at the discretion of School District security review. In light of the criteria the Committee recommends that the departure be granted. Considering the criteria, the majority recommendation from the Advisory Committee and public comments, the Director grants the departure request.

Departure #2 is a request to allow continued on-street bus loading and unloading (SMC 23.51B.002 I). Whenever a school is renovated or reconstructed, the Land Use Code requires that bus loading be accommodated on-site. Specifically, the Seattle Municipal Code states in Section 23.51B.002 that off-street bus loading and unloading shall be provided and may be located in any required yard. Currently, all busses load off of SW 104th Street. The Seattle School District is requesting that on-street bus loading on SW 104th Street be maintained to accommodate four full-sized school busses. In addition, the Seattle School District is requesting an option to accommodate special education busses along SW 105th Street.

The Committee concluded that the Seattle School District was able to generally justify need for the departure for continued on-street bus loading. Because the District and neighborhood both wish to retain as much open play space as possible and accommodate other uses, the new site plan Arbor Heights Elementary School proposes to continue on-street bus loading. Members noted no real problems with the current practice and thus concluded that the request met the spirit of the review criteria. The Committee therefore recommended that the departure be granted without conditions. The departure request appears to be appropriate at the proposed location on SW 104th Street and on SW 105th Street for Special Education busses where there will be minimal impact on traffic, noise and circulation in the area. Street improvements will create a better street design and help formalize traffic flow in the area while busses are present. Allowing bus loading on the street will help to preserve school property for open space, parking and school structures. Considering the criteria, the majority recommendation from the Advisory Committee and public comments the Director grants the departure request.

Departure #3 is a request to allow a changing image reader board sign (SMC 23.55.020 B). Signs are strictly regulated within single family zones. Arbor Heights Elementary School is located in a single family zone. Seattle Municipal Code section SMC 23.55.020 B states that within any single family zone: *No flashing, changing-image or message board signs shall be permitted.* and then clarifies in 23.55.020(D) (7) that: *For elementary or secondary schools, one electric or non-illuminated double-faced identifying sign, not to exceed 30 square feet of area per sign face on each street frontage, provided that the signs shall be located and landscaped so that light and glare impacts on surrounding properties are reduced, and so that any illumination is controlled by a timer set to turnoff by 10 p.m.* The code defines an identifying sign as either a ground, wall or roof sign.

The Seattle School District has proposed a double-sided illuminated electronic reader board sign located approximately 10' to 16' above ground at the school's main entry canopy. It is proposed to be 25 square feet per sign face (50 square feet total). The school wishes to provide better communication of school events to the public. The sign would have the capability to display programmed messages created via computer located in the school office.

The Seattle School District has specified that the sign shall not exceed 30 square feet. However, the sign does include a changeable image and therefore the District has requested a departure to include changing image capacity (i.e. programmable messages).

The Committee reviewed the departure request using their collective knowledge of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is characterized by single family residential development and illuminated changing image signs are not otherwise present in the area. The Committee members acknowledged this but noted that the Seattle School District had gone to some length to mitigate possible negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhood through the design and placement of the sign. The committee noted that the district commits to install a sign no larger than allowed under the zoning; and that the sign is not intrusive from either street view. They noted that current setbacks help mitigate any intrusive sign presence. In addition, testimony and other discussions with adjacent residents raised no major concerns so long as the sign is installed as presented.

The Committee members concluded that the sign would be an important element to provide updates on school activities and evening events, to inform neighbors of upcoming events that could affect parking in the area, to announce student, staff and school achievements throughout the year and help to build school spirit with the school community. The Committee liked that the school could display PTSA messages that would include requests for volunteer help, announce upcoming meetings and further encourage involvement in school events.

The majority of members of the Committee concluded that this was a commendable goal and that the reader board would be an effective tool. They considered the School district's need for the reader board and were generally in favor of this proposal. There were, however some concerns. Members concluded that limits on hours of operation were reasonable and that great care should be taken to assure that the level of illumination be reasonable. The Committee therefore recommended that the departure be granted with conditions that the sign be illuminated only between the hours of 7AM and 7PM on days when the school is in session, except for special events as approved by the School Principal; the sign not be operational during summer break; that the sign be on a dimmer that adjusts illumination levels to ambient light levels. The changing image capacity of the proposed sign does not appear to impact traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area nor to affect the character and scale of the surrounding area in a negative way. The sign is small enough to not contribute to an increased sense of bulk and will not affect housing or open space. Considering the criteria, the majority recommendation from the Advisory Committee and public comments the Director grants the departure request.

The Director considers the recommended Departure #4 to allow less than required structure modulation (SMC 23.51B.002 F). When a new public school structure is built on a new public school site or on an existing public school site, there are maximum structure widths. Modulated facades help reduce a sense of bulk and scale on a building façade.

Development standards require modulation along various façades of the Arbor Heights building proposal on 104th Avenue SW and the gymnasium wall. Seattle School District believes that modulation in the current proposal provides for more efficient building usage and creates a more appealing design. The District requests that modulation, as shown on the plans and elevations, be approved.

Committee members reviewed the modulation departure within the context of the overall building design and concluded that it met the spirit of the review criteria. After review of the structure design the Committee concluded that the current design appeared to provide sufficient facade variety and modulation.

The issue affects the 104th street façade and the wall of the north wall of the gymnasium and lunchroom. This portion of the facade is less articulated and without major doors windows or other relief. Still, members concluded that the design was sufficiently respectful of the surrounding neighborhood to warrant approval of the District's request. Favorable design solutions weighing in on this decision include the setback of this portion of the building from 104th; the proposed landscaping along 104th to the north of the service area; and the topographic change which partially reduces the apparent height and bulk of the wall.

Committee members expressed some concern over the treatment of the gymnasium wall and strongly suggested adding plants directly along the north wall of the gymnasium section or other features such as brick patterns to soften this facade. The Committee therefore recommends that the departure be granted with conditions to allow less than required modulation be approved on condition that the District use various other design elements to soften facades such as trees and other landscaping and window treatments etc., especially along the north wall of the gymnasium.

The Director finds that a longer building façade will not adversely impact traffic, noise, circulation, parking, housing or open space in the area. Setbacks, streets and topographic breaks help to provide transition in scale at this location. The proposal is appropriate in relation to the scale of the surrounding area. Considering the criteria, the majority recommendation from the Advisory Committee and public comments the Director grants the departure request as conditioned.

b. Need for Departure: The physical requirements of the specific proposal and the project's relationship to educational needs shall be balanced with the level of impacts on the surrounding area. Greater departures may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or integral and necessary part of the educational process; whereas, a lesser or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards.

The committee discussed the overall need for departures (SMC 23.79.008C1b) as part of their deliberations. The Seattle Municipal Code generally envisions granting departures from the requirements of the Municipal Code to accommodate the educational needs of the educational programs to be located in the proposed buildings. In the case of the Arbor Heights School site, its size and location present some obstacles to meeting those needs. Some combination of off street parking, on-street bus loading and structure modulation appear necessary. Without some departures, the alternatives would be either: 1) further reductions in critical open play space, 2) expansion of the site through either street vacations or the purchase of adjacent property, or 3) major reductions in the proposed size and educational program of the school.

After considering the overall design and program requirements, the Committee generally determined that departures are warranted. The advisory committee evaluated the level of departure according to the review criteria and weighed the need for departure to balance the level of impacts on the surrounding area.

The Director's analysis balances departure requests through criteria based on the relationship to surrounding areas with need for development standard departures and finds that the departure recommendations of the Advisory Committee should be accepted. See the decision at the end of this document.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The proposal's environmental impacts have been analyzed in environmental documents prepared by the Seattle School District. Documents include a SEPA Checklist dated April 2014 and a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) issued by Seattle School District dated March 26, 2014.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.660 provides that proposals can be conditioned in order to mitigate environmental impacts. All conditions must be related to impacts identified in the environmental documents, based on adopted policies, and must be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. This proposal is reviewed under that substantive SEPA authority.

The Department is reviewing the environmental impacts of the proposal in order to impose further conditions, if necessary. Disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made in the environmental documents listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, written descriptions of the project, geotechnical report, transportation and parking report, construction requirements, arborist reports and renderings) and the experience of this agency with review of similar proposals form the basis of this analysis and conditioning.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) establishes the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for specific elements of the environment, certain neighborhood plans, and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

The overview policy states in part: *“Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact; it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation (subject to some limitations).”* Under certain limitations/circumstances, (SMC 25.05.665.D.1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation for short and/or long term impacts. Applicable codes may include the Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808), the Grading Code (SMC 22.170), the Street Use Ordinance (SMC Title 15), the Seattle Building Code, and the Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08), Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations, and city ECA regulations.

Environmental impacts were identified in the Seattle Public School environmental documents which can be found in the city’s electronic file for projects 3015968 and 3016830. Impacts include impacts on earth, air, plants, construction noise, aesthetics, light and glare, cultural preservation, and transportation. The impacts identified by SPS are subject to additional mitigation as described below. SMC Section 25.05.670 Cumulative effects policy states that a project or action which by itself does not create undue impacts on the environments may create undue impacts when combined with the cumulative effects of prior or simultaneous developments. These effects are discussed below.

Short Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: temporary soil erosion; decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during demolition, filling and transport of materials to and from the site; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel traveling to and from the work site; consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources; disruption of utilities serving the area; and conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment.

Earth

The project will require grading/excavation and construction permits. The existing Codes (The City of Seattle Stormwater Code, SMC 22.800, Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas SMC 25.09, and the City of Seattle Grading Code SMC 22.170) provide authority to require appropriate mitigation for this project, and that no specific conditioning is warranted in this regard. Surface water controls (i.e. temporary interceptor swales, check dams, silt fences, etc.) will be constructed simultaneously with clearing and grading for project development. Surface water and erosion control measures will be relocated or new measures will be installed so as site conditions change, erosion control measures remain in accordance with City of Seattle Best Management Practices (BMP) requirements during the construction period. SPS states that they will specify BMP's required by the contractor. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Grading/excavation

During demolition, grading and excavation activities City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded, uncovered trucks which minimize the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed in route to or from a site. The contractor will obtain the City of Seattle's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) approval that erosion control measures are in place and functioning and will maintain erosion control measures as earthwork and utility construction commences in accordance with City of Seattle standards, as part of building permit review. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Air Quality

Demolition, grading and construction activities each may create adverse air quality impacts in the surrounding area. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Stormwater Code (SMC 22.800-808) and the Grading Code (SMC 22.170) regulate on-site grading activities and require that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of the work. Construction activities will include several measures to minimize impacts to air quality. The contractor chosen for the proposed project would be required to comply with Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations. Regulations that apply to the proposed project include Regulation I, Section 9.11 prohibiting the emission of air contaminants that would or could be injurious to human health, plant or animal life, or property; and Regulation I, Section 9.15 prohibiting the emission of fugitive dust, unless reasonable precautions are employed to minimize the emissions. SPS has indicated in their documents measures to avoid and mitigate adverse air quality impacts. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Construction Noise

There will be noise associated with building demolition, construction and excavation required to prepare the building site and foundation. There will be noise associated with building construction. The limitations of the Noise Ordinance are found to be adequate to mitigate the potential noise impacts. Pursuant to the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC.25.05.665) and the SEPA Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B), no additional mitigation is warranted.

Construction Parking

During construction, parking demand will increase due to additional demand created by construction personnel and equipment. It is the City's policy to minimize temporary adverse impacts associated with construction activities. Construction workers can be expected to arrive in early morning hours and to leave in the mid-afternoon. Surrounding residents generate their peak need for on-street parking in the evening and overnight hours when construction workers can be expected to have departed. However, construction parking impacts will be present. SPS states in the environmental documents that they will require the selected contractor to develop a construction management plan (CMP) that addresses traffic and pedestrian control during school construction. Among other measures the CMP will identify parking locations for the construction staff which to the extent possible, should be contained on-site.

There will be a variety of construction vehicles required to demolish and to prepare the building site, to support construction activities to build the foundation, build the building and complete landscaping. As development proceeds, vehicles associated with construction of the building could adversely affect the surrounding residential uses. The applicant has anticipated this and has proposed mitigation in the SEPA checklist which includes mitigating measures such as the following: construction vehicles will not be parked in traffic lanes, walkways leading past the site will remain clear of construction vehicles and debris, and will remain passable. Flaggers will be provided as required. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Construction Traffic

Site preparation will include demolition of the existing building. Existing City code (SMC 11.62) requires truck activities to use arterial streets to every extent possible. Traffic impacts resulting from the truck traffic associated with the removal of the existing building will be of short duration and mitigated in part by enforcement of SMC 11.62. The findings in the Heffron *Traffic Impact Analysis* prepared for this project note that truck traffic associated with construction (including earthwork) will likely be noticeable, but would not result in significant impacts to traffic operations. SPS states in the environmental documents that they will require the selected contractor to develop a construction management plan (CMP) that addresses traffic and pedestrian control during school construction. Among other measures the plan will define truck routes, lane closures, walkway closures and parking disruptions. No further short term conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Greenhouse gas emissions

Construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacture of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

SPS has proposed mitigation to address short term impacts as described above and in the project documents. The measures outlined in their environmental documents adequately address impacts. No further conditioning of the short term impact elements of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Long Term Impacts

Long term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of this proposal, including: increased surface water runoff due to greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased demand for public services and utilities; loss of plant and animal habitat; and increased light and glare and cumulative effects. Compliance with applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse long-term impacts to the environment.

Cumulative Effects

An individual project may have an adverse impact on the environment or public facilities and services which, though acceptable in isolation, could not be sustained given the probable development of subsequent projects with similar impacts. A new private school has opened east of the Arbor Heights redevelopment and will contribute additional area impacts. There will be increased drop off and pick up of students, increased pedestrians at similar school hours and school year schedules. The District will work with SDOT to understand the significance of these impacts and an appropriate level of mitigation. If SDOT approves, the School District shall install stop signs to create a four-way stop at the intersection of 35th Avenue SW and SW 104th Street to mitigate traffic impacts.

Earth

The site slopes gently from west to east and from north to south. Steep slope areas surrounding the site have been created by previous legal grading activities (per SMC 25.09.180 B2b) associated with construction of the elementary school and subsequent improvements on the property. The ECA Ordinance and Director's Rule (DR) 18-2011 require submission of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction in landslide prone areas. Pursuant to this requirement the applicant submitted a geotechnical engineering study. The study has been reviewed and approved by DPD's geotechnical experts, who will require what is needed for the proposed work to proceed without undue risk to the property or to adjacent properties. The project will require grading/excavation and construction permits. The existing Codes (The City of Seattle Stormwater Code, SMC 22.800, Regulations for

Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) SMC 25.09, and the City of Seattle Grading Code SMC 22.170) provide authority to require appropriate mitigation for this project. Surface water controls (i.e. temporary interceptor swales, check dams, silt fences, etc.) will be constructed simultaneously with clearing and grading for project development. Surface water and erosion control measures will be relocated or new measures will be installed so as site conditions change, erosion control measures remain in accordance with City of Seattle Best Management Practices (BMP) requirements during the construction period. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

A geotechnical investigation was performed at the project site by AMEC Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc. in January 2014. The study included geotechnical engineering recommendations to use in the foundation design of the proposed school building. These recommendations have been incorporated into the plans for the Arbor Heights Elementary School and have been approved in DPD's ECA review of the project. Temporary erosion and sedimentation control BMPs and construction water treatment measures will be installed to minimize erosion and to treat stormwater runoff during construction. No further mitigation is necessary or warranted.

Air

Upon completion, the project would result in a decrease in air quality over existing conditions, especially at morning and afternoon peak loading and unloading periods, but the increase is not expected to be significant. As has been done at other schools, the District has begun a program to encourage non-motorized trips (such as walking, biking, and bussing) and it is expected that these efforts would be continued at the new Elementary School. Therefore, no additional mitigation measures are required.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Operational activities, primarily vehicular trips associated with the project and the projects' energy consumption, are expected to result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions which adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. While these impacts are adverse, they are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of greenhouse gas emissions from this project. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Water

Rain water on roofs and roof decks are the major sources of water runoff on this site. The rainwater will be collected in gutters and connected to the storm drainage system. Therefore, drainage will be directed away from adjoining residential properties consistent with the City of Seattle Stormwater Code. No additional mitigation measures will be required pursuant to SEPA.

Plants

A report conducted by Tree Solutions, Inc. identifies trees on the site. Approximately 50 native and non-native trees will be removed from the site. Many of the trees are small in size (6 inches diameter). The landscaped areas of native and non-native trees and shrubs adjacent to the existing school building and play structure are scheduled for removal to accommodate the new school buildings. Trees along the northern perimeter of the site will be removed although the seven palm trees will be transplanted elsewhere on site. The conifer trees forming a screen along the eastern edge of the site are not on school property and therefore will not be removed. Along the southern boundary of the site, the proposed southern wing of the new building will face SW 105th Street where frontage improvements will require regrading and removal of most of the trees and shrubs, including the Pacific madrone. This is needed to widen the street right-of-way and create the bus dropoff/pickup areas and install the sidewalk necessary for pedestrian safety. At the west end of the site, vegetation on the slopes around the existing play ground will be retained including the conifer and deciduous trees at the northwest and southwest corners of the site.

The proposed landscape planting concept includes the exclusive use of native and adapted, drought resistant plants. Nine trees will be saved and transplanted: two 24" Douglas firs will be relocated to the future main entrance and seven palm trees will be transplanted to the new Dinosaur Garden near the future play area. Trees on the western edges of the site will remain undisturbed. Street trees will be planted in the planting strip where possible. Several options were explored to avoid removal of the Pacific madrone tree. Its location at the edge of the property line will be in conflict with improvements required to meet City right of way standards. Mitigation for its removal is under discussion with the City.

SPS will follow standard best practices for preservation of all other vegetation and trees during construction that are scheduled for retention, including retaining a certified arborist to advise during site disturbance activities. No further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

Environmental Health

A Phase I Abatement and Finishes Removal process will be conducted to remove any toxic materials, such as asbestos containing materials, PCB containing light ballast, mercury containing fluorescent lighting tubes and switches, in advance of school demolition activities. Project specifications require adherence to all applicable local, state and federal regulations governing hazardous materials removal and disposal, eliminating public exposure. The underground fuel storage tank will either be closed in place or removed in accordance with state regulations (WAC 173-360). No mitigation is necessary or warranted.

Noise

After construction, the site will continue to serve as a school and noise levels are expected to be higher than those that are currently being experienced as enrollment is expected to increase by over 200 students. The noise levels are expected to be typical of schools today, and less than what would have been experienced when 800 students attended Arbor Heights during the height of enrollment in the 1960s. No noise impacts are identified. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required. No additional mitigation measures will be required pursuant to SEPA.

Light and Glare

New perimeter lighting will be installed along SW 104th and SW 105th. Streets as well as within the site on and around the school building and play spaces increasing light during night time hours. The lighted classrooms and some exterior lighting from the completed project are not expected to be a safety hazard or interfere with views. New lighting will increase light impacts but new modern cut-off type fixtures reduce light trespass and glare. It is anticipated that both interior and exterior lights will be on timers to ensure lights are off at 10:00 p.m. With these controls in place no further mitigation is warranted.

Historic Preservation

The City of Seattle has determined that preserving historic buildings and districts is important to the citizenry for retaining a living sense and appreciation of the past, and has established the Landmarks Preservation Board to determine the historical and cultural significance of individual buildings and sites. Pursuant to SPS's self-nomination policy, SPS contracted with the Johnson Partnership in July 2013 to prepare a nomination form for the school to be reviewed by the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board (LPB) (Johnson Partnership, 2013). The LPB reviewed the nomination on September 4, 2013 and determined the school did not meet necessary significance criteria for designation as a Landmark. As regards the existing building no conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to specific environmental policies or the SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665).

In the event that historic or cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during the project, construction would be temporarily halted in the immediate vicinity of the identified resources and the City, DAHP, and affected Tribes would be notified. Mitigation and/or avoidance measures would be negotiated with the City, DAHP, and other stakeholders. No additional mitigation is required.

Transportation

Technical information regarding traffic impacts and projections for the school's re-opening is included in a Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. dated November 2013. The Analysis is available for review on the DPD website at <http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/>.

There are six striped parking spaces currently located adjacent to the north side of the school building that will be eliminated. The completed project will provide 55 parking spaces (an increase of 49 spaces compared to existing) in a new parking lot located east of the new school building (accessed from driveways on SW 105th Street and SW 104th Street). As outlined in Appendix B, Transportation Impact Analysis (Heffron Transportation, Inc., November 2013), there are an estimated 463 on-street parking spaces within an 800-foot walking distance of the school site that are typically about 30% utilized during midday on school days and 32% utilized on weekday evenings (when school events could take place). Therefore, on-street parking capacity is able to accommodate overspill demand from the school.

The proposal will not require any new roads or streets; however, the proposed project would improve the site frontages with curb, gutter, sidewalks, planter strips, and recessed (curb-bulb) areas along both SW 104th Street and SW 105th Street to provide on-street designated school bus, special-education (SPED) bus, kindergarten, and child care dropoff/ pick-up areas. These designated areas could be available as on-street parking supply, but would have time restrictions during morning arrival and afternoon departure load/unload times, similar to the existing locations along SW 104th Street. All improvements would be ADA compliant.

Based on daily trip generation rates published for elementary schools by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, Arbor Heights Elementary is expected to generate about 850 trips per day (425 in, 425 out). The peak traffic volumes are expected to occur in the morning just before school (expected between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M.). Based on peak hour trip generation rates derived specifically for Arbor Heights Elementary, the proposed replacement school is expected to generate a net increase of 172 morning peak hour trips (104 in, 68 out).

Traffic associated with the new school is expected to add some delay to the study-area intersections during the peak 20 minutes before and after school. However, all of the intersections evaluated for this analysis, including the site access driveways, would operate at LOS B or better with the replacement school and the larger school would not result in adverse traffic impacts. For more information about the anticipated school traffic generation, please refer to Appendix B – Transportation Impact Analysis (Heffron Transportation, Inc., November 2013).

The following summarizes the findings of the traffic analysis and mitigation by Seattle Public Schools:

- (1) Prior to the school reopening, the SPS and school principal will establish a communication plan to educate parents and students about the revised access and parking elements for the new school site layout. The effort should encourage school bus ridership, carpooling, and supervised walking (such as walking school buses). The plan should define clear procedures and travel routes for parent vehicles (including on-site circulation for the drop-off/pick-up location), school buses, pedestrian, and loading zones (with parking time restrictions).
- (2) SPS will work with SDOT to confirm the locations and signage of parent-vehicle load/unload zones (assumed to be along the north side of SW 105th Street) and school-bus load/unload zones (assumed to be the south side of SW 104th Street).
- (3) SPS will engage the Seattle School Safety Committee (of which SDOT is a member) to review walk routes and determine if any changes should be made to crosswalk locations, signage, pavement markings, school zone speed limits, or crossing guard locations.
- (4) SPS and school administration will develop a neighborhood communication plan to inform nearby neighbors of events each year.

The plan should be updated annually (or as events are scheduled) and should provide information about the dates, times, and rough magnitude of attendance. The communication would be intended to allow neighbors to plan for the occasional increase in on-street parking demand that would occur with large events.

- (5) The roadway frontage improvements along SW 104th Street and SW 105th Street will be designed to ensure that adequate sight lines are available for drivers exiting the site driveway.
- (6) SPS will require the selected contractor to develop a construction management plan (CMP) that addresses traffic and pedestrian control during school construction. It will define truck routes, lane closures, walkway closures, and parking disruptions, as necessary. To the extent possible, the CMP will direct trucks along the shortest route to arterials and away from residential streets to avoid unnecessary conflicts with resident and pedestrian activity. It will also include measures to keep adjacent streets clean on a daily basis at the truck exit points (such as street sweeping or on-site truck wheel cleaning) to reduce tracking dirt offsite. The CMP will also identify parking locations for the construction staff, which to the extent possible, should be contained on-site.

Transportation access

To better serve the school drop off and pick up as well as traffic flow in and out of the site the parking lot will be a one way in and out of the site. Traffic will be directed to enter on 104th Street and exit on 105th Street.

The District will engage the Seattle School Safety Committee (of which the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is a member) to review walk routes and determine any needed changes to crosswalk locations, signage, pavement markings, school zone speed limits, crossing guard locations and traffic control for the adjacent uncontrolled intersections .

The District and school administration will develop a neighborhood communication plan to inform nearby neighbors of events each year. The plan will be updated annually (or as events are scheduled) and will provide information about the dates, times and estimated attendance. The communication will be intended to allow neighbors to estimate occasional on-street parking demand that may occur with large events. In light of these transportation impacts, and in order to provide for mitigation, the proposal has been conditioned to provide one way access.

DECISION - SEPA

The application is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

DECISION - DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The application is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Issuance of Certificate of Occupancy

1. Install signage to direct one way traffic on and off the site at the east parking lot with entry on SW 104th Street and exiting on SW 105th Street. Include site access instructions in public documentation and parent information and the neighborhood communication plan.
2. The District shall install stop signs to create a four-way stop at the intersection of 35th Avenue SW and SW 104th Street if SDOT gives approval.

CONDITIONS-DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

For the Life of the Project

3. Encourage staff parking on site, create on way traffic and allow public parking after school hours at the discretion of the School District and include the parking and access instruction in employee communications.
4. The electronic school sign shall be illuminated only between the hours of 7AM and 7PM on days when school is in session, except for special events as approved by the School Principal, the sign will not be operational during summer break, and the sign be on a dimmer that adjusts illumination levels to ambient light levels.
5. Soften facades without code required modulation with additional landscaping, building materials and/or fenestration.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: October 23, 2014
Holly J. Godard, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

HG:drm

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