

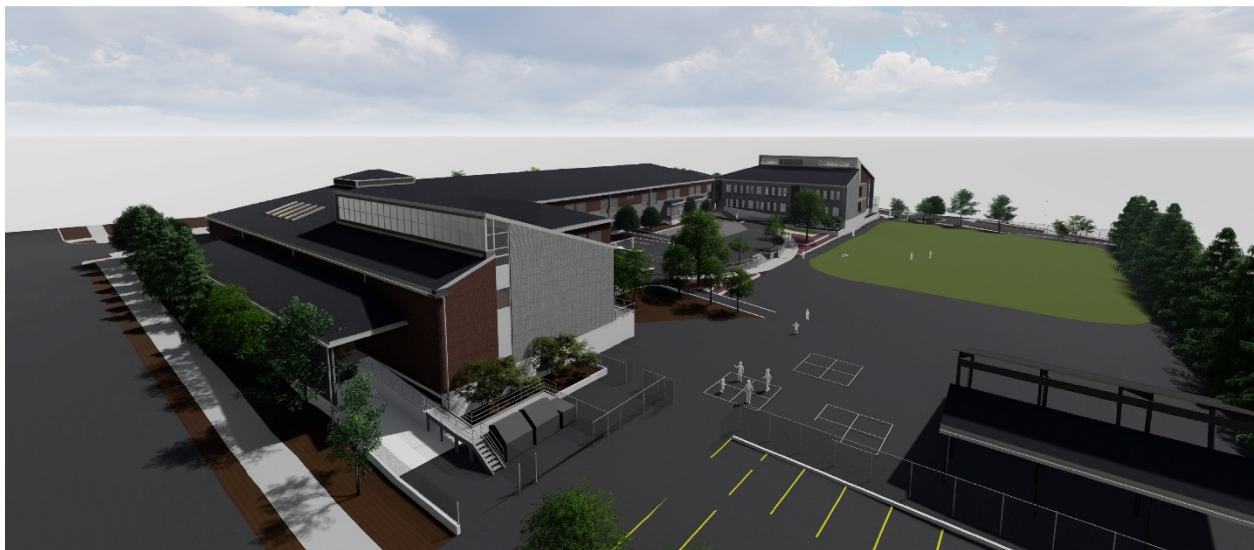
# **PUBLIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **WEST WOODLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DESIGN DEPARTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Project #3035027-SD**

**February 6, 2020**

This report is produced pursuant to the City of Seattle Municipal Code (SMC 23.44.006 F and 23.79) (the “Code”). The intent and purpose of this report is to document public testimony and make recommendations to the City for modifications to development standards in order to facilitate construction of the new West Woodland Elementary School located at 5601 4th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107.



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Attachment 1: Meeting #1 Minutes, January 6, 2020

# West Woodland Elementary School Development Standard Advisory Committee Report and Recommendations

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Project Description

On August 27, 2019, the Seattle Public Schools submitted a request for departures from seven (7) Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Development Standards to accommodate an addition project at West Woodland Elementary School located at 5601 4th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107.

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is proposing to remove the existing portables and build two additions: (12) additional classrooms totaling 20,000 sq. ft. and a renovated Student Commons including a 5,000 sq. ft. gymnasium, for a combined 25,000 square feet of additional space. There will also be associated life safety and sustainability upgrades. The purpose of the project is to address current and projected enrollment in the District. If budget allows, a detached 2,500 square foot covered play area would also be built. The new West Woodland Elementary School would have a maximum capacity of 620 students.



**Exhibit 1 Existing Site Plan w/Proposed Overlay**

**1.2 Neighborhood Characteristics**

The proposed project is located at 5601 4th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98107. The project site is bounded by NW 58th Street to the north, 4th Avenue NW to the east, NW 56th Street to the south, and single-family properties to the west. Across the street to the north, east, and south of the property are single family residences.

**1.3 Requests for Departure and Committee Formation**

The City initiated the Development Standard Departure Process, pursuant to SMC 23.44.006F and 23.79. The Code requires that the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) convene a Development Standard Advisory Committee (hereinafter as the Committee) when the School District proposes a departure from the development standards identified under the Code. These standards are popularly referred to as the “zoning code.”

The purpose of the Committee is 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 Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) from DON. (SMC 23.79.008)

Following completion of the Committee Report and its transmittal to SDCI, the Director of SDCI will issue a formal report and decision. The Director of SDCI will consider the recommendations of the Committee and will determine the extent of departure from established development standards which may be allowed, as well as identify all mitigating measures which may be required. The Director’s decision is appealable.

In September 2019 DON sent notices to residents within 600 feet of the West Woodland Elementary School requesting self-nominations for membership on the Committee. Seven community members applied, and on December 10, 2019 the Committee was formed. The Committee is composed of eight voting members and two alternates, a representative from SDCI and a City non-voting Chair.

The Committee was appointed as follows:

Marie Sumpter	Person residing within 600'
Faith Cooley	Person owning property or a business within 600'
Roxanne Baechler-Gill	Representative of the general neighborhood
Miriam Hinden	Representative of the general neighborhood
Meaghan Williams	At large to represent citywide education issues
Lisa Downey	Representative of the West Woodland Elementary PTSA

Lisa Younglove	Representative of the West Woodland Elementary PTSA
Paul Wight	Representative of the Seattle School District
Holly Godard (Ex-officio)	Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI)
Maureen Sheehan (Ex-officio)	Department of Neighborhoods (DON)

## 2. Departures

### 2.1 Specific District Requests

In order to accommodate the educational program for this project, the District requested the following departures from the development standards found in SMC 23.51B.002.

#### Departure #1 – Greater than Allowed Building Height

Existing Standard: SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.c

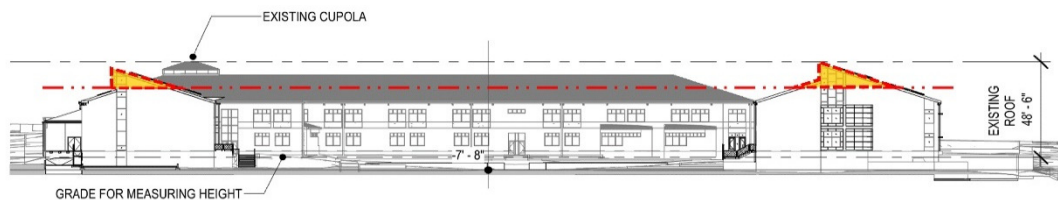
For additions to existing public schools on existing public school sites, the maximum height permitted is the height of the existing school or 35 feet plus 15 feet for a pitched roof (total 50 feet), whichever is greater....No portion of a shed roof is permitted to extend beyond the 35 foot limit under this provision.

### DEPARTURE No.1: BUILDING HEIGHT

SMC 23.51B.002.D.1.C



BUILDING HEIGHT - EAST ELEVATION



BUILDING HEIGHT - WEST ELEVATION

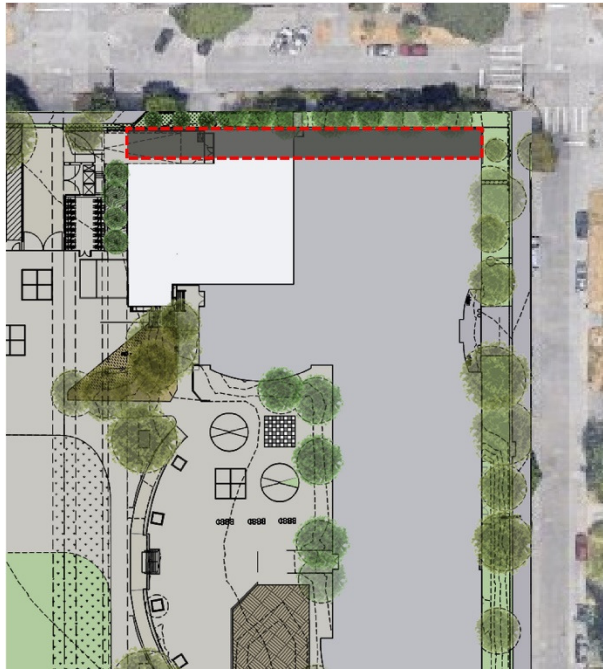
#### Exhibit 2 Proposed Height

Departure Requested: 13 feet 6 inches above the height limit.

#### Departure #2 – Less than Required Building Setback

Existing Standard: SMC 23.51B.002.E.3.a – Table C

New public school construction on existing public school sites across a street or alley from lots in residential zones shall provide either the setback of the previous structure on the site or minimum setbacks according to the height of the school and the designation of the facing residential zone as shown in Table C for 23.51B.002, whichever is less: Greater than 20 up to 35: SF/LR1 = 10 ft



**Exhibit 3 Proposed Building Setback**

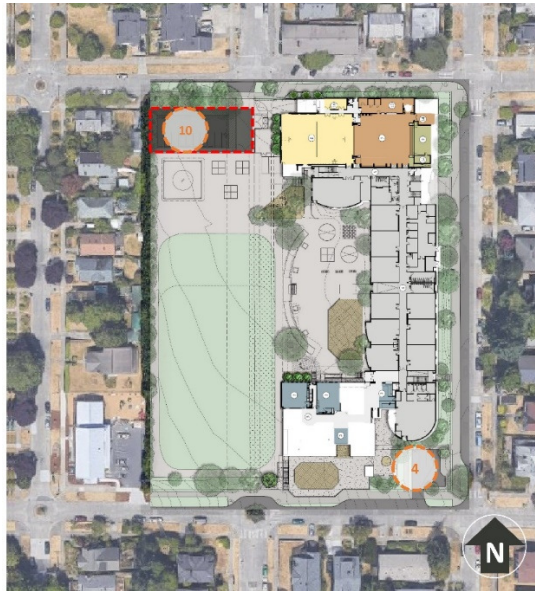
Departure Requested: zero (0) foot setback over the entire length of the north façade.

**Departure #3 – Less than Required Off-street Parking**

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015 (Table C – Row N)

1 space for each 80 square feet of all auditoria or public assembly rooms, or 1 space for every 8 fixed seats in auditoria or public assembly rooms containing fixed seats, for new public schools on a new or existing public school site.

Per footnote 7: When an existing public school on an existing public school site is remodeled, additional parking is required if any auditorium or other place of assembly is expanded or additional fixed seats are added. Additional parking is required as shown on Table C for 23.54.015 for the increase in floor area or increase in number of seats only.



**Exhibit 4 Proposed On-Site Parking**

Departure Requested: to allow for 68 parking spaces less than the code required parking to be provided on-site. [78 required stalls – 10 proposed stalls = 68 stall departure requested]

**Departure #4 – Secured Bicycle Parking**

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015.K.2.a

Provide secure locations and arrangements of long-term bicycle parking, with features such as locked rooms or cages and bicycle lockers. The bicycle parking should be installed in a manner that avoids creating conflicts with automobile accesses and driveways.



**Exhibit 5 Proposed Bicycle Parking**



Departure Requested: 36 long-term bicycle parking spots unsecured.

**Departure #5 – Access to Bicycle Parking**

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015.K.2.b

Provide pedestrian and bicycle access to long-term bicycle parking that is separate from other vehicular entry and egress points.

Departure Requested: shared access (with vehicles and pedestrians) to (36) secured longterm bicycle parking spots.

**Departure #6 – Unprotected Bicycle Parking**

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015.K.2.h

Provide full weather protection for all required long-term bicycle parking.

Departure Requested: 36 long-term bicycle parking spots to be unprotected from weather.

**Departure #7 – Message Board**

Existing Standard: SMC 23.55.020.B

- B. No flashing, changing image or message board signs shall be permitted.
- D. The following signs are permitted in all single family zones:
  - 7. For elementary or secondary schools, one electric or nonilluminated 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 turn off by 10 p.m.



**Exhibit 6 Proposed Message Board**

Departure Requested: To install a double-sided, electronic, changing image message board.

**2.2 Committee Review and Recommendations**

### **2.2.1 Process & Public Meeting**

The Committee was convened in one public meeting on January 6, 2020, approximately 19 people signed in, 6 of whom provided public comment, at West Woodland Elementary School. The common theme raised in public comment were the parking and traffic impacts on the neighborhood; however, many attendees expressed confidence that this could be resolved with continued intervention from the school and improvements made by SDOT. There were also concerns with students being able to climb on to the roof of the school, and an interest in seeing this project address that problem.

### **2.2.2 Review Criteria**

Section 23.79 of the Code directs the Committee to evaluate the requested departures for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the Code, and to balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

#### **a. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:**

- (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.

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 departure may be allowed for special facilities, such as a gymnasium, which are unique and/or an 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.

### **2.2.3 Application of Review Criteria to Requested Departures and Committee Recommendations**

The Seattle Municipal Code intent is to grant departures from the requirements of the Municipal Code to accommodate the educational needs of the programs to be located in single family zoned neighborhoods. The Seattle School District has demonstrated that it cannot accommodate the program necessary for this area without granting departures for: 1) height, 2) setback, 3) parking, and 4) secure bicycle parking, 5) access to bicycle parking, 6) unprotected bicycle parking, and 7) a double-sided, electronic, changing image message board.

#### **Need for Departures**

The committee recognized the need for the requested departures. There was significant discussion about the large number of students who walk or bicycle to school and the lack of separation of vehicles and bicycles/pedestrians on the north side of the property. Ultimately, the committee agreed the placement and improved facilities were a necessary improvement but emphasized the

need for ongoing enforcement of parking restrictions and communication by the school to ensure the safety of students.

#### **DEPARTURE #1 – GREATER THAN ALLOWED BUILDING HEIGHT**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's increased height having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding neighborhood.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's increased height having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's increased height having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's increased height having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking in the neighborhood.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's increased height having an impact on housing and open space.

The additional height requested by SPS was met with little concern due to the current height of the school already exceeding what is being proposed and the additional height would increase daylight coming into the new spaces, making for a more conducive learning environment.

After consideration of the above, the Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 1 – That the departure to allow greater than allowed building height be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools without modifications.**

#### **DEPARTURE #2 – LESS THAN REQUIRED BUILDING SETBACK**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's less than required building setback having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's less than required building setback having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's less than required building setback having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did have concerns about the school's less than required building setback having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking in the neighborhood.

- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about the school's less than required building setback having an impact on housing and open space.

The committee believed the request to be reasonable and in agreement that the use of brick along the wall to be consistent with the existing school to be a natural choice.

After consideration of the above, the Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 2 – That the departure to allow less than allowed building setback be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools without modifications.**

### **DEPARTURE #3 – LESS THAN REQUIRED OFF-STREET PARKING**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than require off-street parking having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than require off-street parking having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than require off-street parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did have concerns about less than required off-street parking having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking the neighborhood. The committee recommended a condition as noted below.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about less than require off-street parking having an impact on housing and open space.

The committee deliberated about how the north end parking lot can be used in a way that limits conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists. The current on site parking in this location is intended to be used only for staff, but parents use it for drop off/pick up. The new configuration is less accommodating for drop off/pick up, which will serve to somewhat deter that use. The committee felt the staff only use could be reinforced with more signage and enforcement by school staff during school hours.

After consideration of the above, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 3 – That the departure to allow less than required off-street parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools with the following condition:**

- a. **Seattle Public Schools shall provide increased supervision and signage to enforce the staff-only use of the north parking lot during school hours.**

#### DEPARTURE #4 – SECURED BICYCLE PARKING

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about not providing secure bicycle parking having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about not providing secure bicycle parking having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about not providing secure bicycle parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about not providing secure bicycle parking having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking the neighborhood.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about not providing secure bicycle parking having an impact on housing and open space.

The committee heard and discussed concerns of bicycle vandalism and theft during the school day due to the proximity to the street with only a fence to secure the bikes. The committee felt the site constraints and cost to provide secure bicycle parking were prohibitive.

After consideration of the above, the Committee recommends:

**Recommendation 4 – That the departure to not provide secure bicycle parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools without modifications.**

#### DEPARTURE #5 – ACCESS TO BICYCLE PARKING

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about access to bicycle parking having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about access to bicycle parking having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about access to bicycle parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did have concerns about access to bicycle parking having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking the neighborhood, which were addressed in the recommended conditions.

- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about access to bicycle parking having an impact on housing and open space.

The Committee was concerned with the possible conflicts between bicycles, pedestrians, and vehicles due to the proposed shared access. The committee heard from neighbors that safety in the neighborhood is a challenge due to parents parking in front of driveways and speeding. The committee acknowledged that the school has made a good effort in communicating traffic and parking expectations to parents. The committee felt safety expectations could be reinforced during high traffic times. They also suggested giving neighbors a phone number and/or email to report unsafe behavior.

After consideration of the above, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 5 – That the departure to allow shared access to bicycle parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools with the following conditions:**

- 1) **Update the school traffic management plan (TMP) to include:**
  - a. **Expanded means of communication with school families and the neighborhood regarding parking courtesy and protocols in the neighborhood. This could include expanded website information, flyers to take home, and additional reminders at meetings.**
  - b. **SPS to request via Seattle School Safety Committee that SDOT review and, if approved, install speed humps on surrounding local access streets including 4th Avenue NW.**
  - c. **Provide staff or adult volunteer oversight/monitoring of the access to the lot where pedestrian and bicycle paths cross for 20 minutes before and after school.**

#### **DEPARTURE #6 – UNPROTECTED BICYCLE PARKING**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about unprotected bicycle parking having an impact on its relationship to the surrounding area.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about unprotected bicycle parking having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about unprotected bicycle parking having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about unprotected bicycle parking having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking the neighborhood.

- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about unprotected bicycle parking having an impact on housing and open space.

The Committee accepted the site limitations which made it unworkable to cover the bicycle parking. The greatest concern is that additional bicycle parking be provided to meet the school's demand.

After consideration of the above, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 6 – That the departure to allow unprotected bicycle parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools without modification.**

#### **DEPARTURE #7 – MESSAGE BOARD**

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the committee, and they did have concerns about a message board having an impact on the surrounding area. The committee discussed a variety of mitigation measures for the sign design and use and recommended conditions listed below.
- 2) **Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about a message board having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about a message board having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about a message board having an impact on traffic, circulation and parking the neighborhood.
- 5) **Impacts on housing and open space** were considered by the committee, and they did not have concerns about a message board having an impact on housing and open space.

The committee saw a need for a message board in front of the school to share a message in multiple languages on one sign and share messages in the event of an emergency. The committee noted that the neighborhood that could be impacted by light and glare from the sign, and proposed mitigation measures to address impacts.

After consideration of the above, the committee recommends:

**Recommendation 7 – That the departure to allow an electronic message board be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools without modification and with the following conditions:**

- a. **The sign must use a monochromatic color scheme**
- b. **The sign can use only minimal animation**
- c. **The images on the sign must be non-flashing**

- d. Time of use is restricted to 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**
- e. Encourage school to use the sign only when necessary**
- f. Encourage the District to find the least-obtrusive sign that matches the character of the building.**

For the Committee

Maureen Sheehan  
Non-Voting Chair