



City of Seattle  
 Gregory J. Nickels, 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:** 3008096  
**Applicant Name:** Seattle Public School District  
**Address of Proposal:** 2600 Southwest Thistle Street

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use Application to allow a 147,764 sq. ft. expansion of an existing institution (Chief Sealth High School) in an environmentally critical area to accommodate new classrooms, common space and gymnasium for Denny Middle School. Parking for 175 vehicles to be provided on site. Review includes interior alterations to existing school and grading of 27,000 cu. yds. of material. Eight portables and one detached building totaling 8,000 sq. ft. to be demolished. Environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools.

\*Note: The project description has been revised from the original notice of application: “Land Use Application to allow a 147,764 sq. ft. expansion of an existing institution (Chief Sealth High School) in an environmentally critical area to accommodate new classrooms, common space and gymnasium for Denny Middle School. Parking for 175 vehicles to be provided on site. Review includes interior alterations to existing school and grading of 27,000 cu. yds. of material. Seven portables totaling 9,000 sq. ft. to be demolished. Environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools.”

The following approvals are required:

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

**Development Standard Departure – To approve or condition the following departures**  
 (SMC 23.79):

1. To allow less than required onsite parking – SMC 23.44.017.E  
 (Required 352 spaces; Proposed 175 spaces)
2. To allow greater than allowed structure height – SMC 23.44.017B  
 (Required 35’ plus 15’ with pitched roof or average height of existing school (322.74’);  
 Proposed 345.0’)

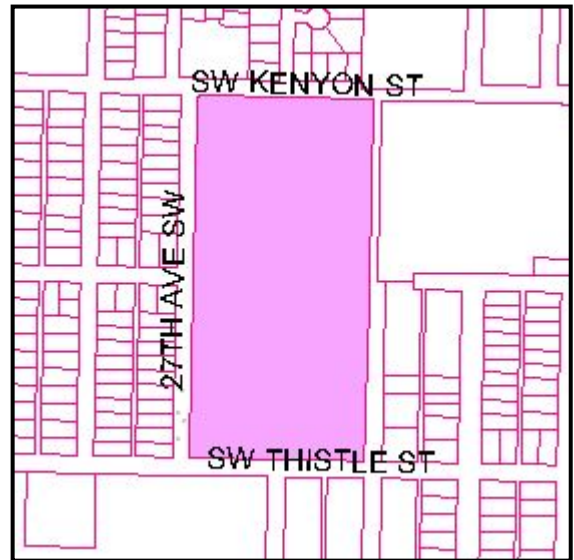
**SEPA DETERMINATION:** [ ] Exempt [X]<sup>1</sup> DNS [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS  
 [X] DNS with conditions  
 [ ] DNS involving non exempt grading or demolition or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

<sup>1</sup>Environmental Documents prepared and SEPA Threshold Determination of Non-Significance issued by Seattle School District on May 14, 2008.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### Site and Vicinity Description

The Chief Sealth High School Campus encompasses approximately 17.44 acres located in a Single Family 5000 (SF 5000) zone in the City's Westwood neighborhood. The Campus is bounded on the west by 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest, on the north by Southwest Kenyon Street, on the south by the Southwest Thistle Street, and on the east by an unimproved City right-of-way (25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest) and the Longfellow Creek Greenspace. The school site consists of a main two-story 161,296 sq. ft. building comprising of classrooms, library, performing arts theater, auditorium and commons area; a three-story 51,233 sq. ft. gymnasium building; covered walkways between the two (2) buildings; surface tennis courts; a ball field with bleacher seating; one (1) detached building; and eight (8) portable classroom buildings.



Chief Sealth High School is a 9<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education program. In the 2007-2008 school year, approximately 950 students and eighty-three (83) peak-hour workers (teachers, staff, etc.) attended the high school. Student enrollment for the high school is slated to increase to 1,200 students by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year with the staff count remaining the same.

The subject site also comprises three (3) onsite surface parking areas: southeast parking lot (101 stalls), service parking lot (16 stalls), and northwest parking lot (55 stalls). Vehicular access to these parking areas is via curb cuts along Southwest Thistle Street and Southwest Kenyon Street. Both 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Kenyon Street are classified as non-arterial streets; and Southwest Thistle is classified as a Secondary Arterial, pursuant to SMC Chapter 23.53, with a total of two (2) lanes of traffic running east and west direction. 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest is considered an unimproved right-of-way. Sidewalks, curbs and gutters exist along both sides of Southwest Thistle Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Kenyon Street that surround the Chief Sealth campus.

A mix of shrubs and mature trees (125) are located throughout and along the perimeter of the school property. Five (5) trees (40" diameter Douglas fir, 20" Madrone, 32" Madrone, 18" Madrone and 18" Madrone) located west of the high school's main building have been determined by an arborist (Robert W. Williams, ISA Certified Arborist, Robert W. Williams and Associates) as meeting the criteria to be classified as exceptional tree status (Director's Rule (DR) 6-2001).

Approximately 200' east of the campus's east boundary line is Longfellow Creek (Type II stream) with two (2) (Type A and B) wetlands occurring just west of the Creek. No wetlands, riparian corridors or buffers are situated on the site. Overall, site topography slopes down to the east and south approximately 70'. Three (3) separate areas on the Sealth property-identified as the "West Slope", "Central Slope" and "East Slope"-contain steep slopes. The West Slope, situated west and northwest of the existing main school building, rises between 15' to 24' in height. The Central Slope is located west and north of the existing ball field and rises between 8' and 23' in height. The East Slope is

situated east of the existing gymnasium building and has a grade differential of as much as 18'. These areas have been identified as Environmentally Critical Area (ECA)-Steep Slope. However, based on findings of a preliminary geological report, it was determined that these slopes were created by previous legal grading activities. As a result, the applicant has been granted a limited exemption (#3008096) from ECA Steep Slope Development Standards for all work associated with this project but ECA review is still required for the building permit application(s).

Surrounding properties to the west, and north of the subject property are also zoned SF 5000 and are developed with single family housing. Properties to the north, east and south of the site are zoned Lowrise 1 (L-1) and are developed with multifamily housing. Directly to the south across Southwest Thistle Street and to the west of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest are a City of Seattle Parks and Recreation-owned facility (Southwest Community Center and Pool); and District-owned property comprising of a series of outdoor lighted athletic fields with accessory surface parking/structures/seating and a public school (Denny Middle School).

Denny Middle School is a 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 8<sup>th</sup> education program currently located at 8402 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest. During the 2007-2008 school year, approximately 630 students and fifty-six (56) workers (teachers, staff, etc.) attended the middle school. Student enrollment for the middle school is slated to increase to 900 students by the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year with the staff count remaining the same.

### Proposal

The Seattle School District (District) proposes modernization and renovation of Chief Sealth High School and the relocation of Denny Middle School to the Site as part of the Building Excellence Phase III Capital Improvement Program. Covered walkways between the main high school building and gym; existing tennis courts, existing ball field; and one (1) detached building and eight (8) portables totaling approximately 8,000 sq. ft. of structure are proposed to be removed.

A new three-story, 147,764 sq. ft. addition will be constructed between the existing high school and the gymnasium to create one (1) contiguous building. This proposed expansion would house new classrooms, library and offices for Denny Middle School. Facilities to be shared by both schools will include the galleria, health center, kitchen and servery, auditorium, and those facilities which are currently shared by both schools (i.e., the performing arts center and music areas). Although the schools will be co-located they will continue to operate separately.

The project includes the addition and reconfiguration of parking stalls in existing onsite surface parking areas. The Service and Southeast parking areas are planned to be dedicated for high school students/staff/visitor usage. In turn, the Northwest parking area would be utilized by the Denny Middle School staff and visitors. A summary of the parking count changes are identified in the table below.

Parking areas	Existing Stalls <sup>1,2</sup>	Proposed Stalls	Change in Stall Count
Southeast	101	105	4
Service	16	20	4
Northwest	55	50	-5
<b>Total Parking</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>3</b>

1. These parking stall counts, referenced in the Heffron Transportation Analysis Report (May 14, 2008), reflect the number of striped parking stalls counted in the field and currently onsite.

2. DPD's historical permits reflect only 105 striped parking existing at the Site.

One (1) new curb cut 30' in width is proposed along Southwest Kenyon Street to connect with a new inbound-only access driveway along the site's easterly boundary for the one-way southbound service drive exiting via a new 22' wide curb onto Southwest Thistle Street. This new access drive would be used for school buses serving Denny Middle School and deliveries to the school's loading dock. Existing vehicular access will remain.

Excavation of approximately 12,000 cubic yards (cu. yds.) of material and infill of approximately 15,000 cu. yds. of new material is anticipated to occur during the construction of the foundation for the new addition and site improvements.

Construction of the addition and poor tree health status determinations necessitates the removal of thirty-eight (38) mature trees. Tree protection measures are planned for the five (5) previously cited exceptional trees and the remaining trees within close proximity to the construction areas. Approximately 202 trees are planned to be planted throughout the property. Landscaping enhancements inclusive of new native drought-tolerant plantings, ornamental shrubs and groundcovers are also proposed. Site improvements including expansion of stormwater facilities with new conveyance piping, catch basins, bio-retention areas, outdoor basket ball courts, new pedestrian pathways and bike racks/storage areas are included in the school proposal.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Project Phasing**

Construction at the Chief Sealth High School site is planned to be completed in three (3) Phases-Phase 1A, Phase 1B and Phase 2.

Phase 1A involves tenant improvements to the existing high school buildings. Renovation of the existing Chief Sealth High School buildings include seismic upgrades, interior alterations, new piping distribution, new unit ventilators, fire alarm and electric system upgrades, remodeling of forty (40) classrooms, replacement of the existing auditorium stage and fly loft, and a new auditorium entry. No change to the existing seating capacity of the gymnasium, auditorium and the Little Theater are proposed. Construction permits for this work (#6155041 and #6172311) has been reviewed and approved by DPD. This work, which began in summer of 2008 and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2010, will be accomplished independently from the remainder of the project and is categorically exempt from SEPA analysis. During this time, students and faculty of Chief Sealth High School were relocated to the Boren Interim Site located at 5950 Delridge Way SW.

Phase 1B will include exterior construction to the high school, grading and demolition of the existing portables and detached building is expected to be completed by summer of 2011.

Construction of the new Denny Middle School addition and other site improvements (Phase 2) is slated to begin in the spring of 2009 and finish in the spring of 2011.

#### Previous SEPA Related Actions

Prior to application for a Master Use Permit, the District exercised its prerogative to act as lead agency and on May 14, 2008 issued an appealable SEPA threshold determination of non-significance (DNS). During the District's SEPA appeal period, one (1) appeal was received. After reviewing testimony and exhibits provided during the appeal hearing, a non-City Hearing Examiner affirmed the District's threshold determination on August 6, 2008.

The District's SEPA analysis considers future use of the Denny Middle School site after the middle school program is relocated to the Sealth site. The checklist states, "*Upon completion of the new Denny Middle School, the existing middle school will be demolished and the site regarded for reuse. Improvements at this site could potentially include up to 12 tennis courts, a softball field and bleachers, open lawn area, security lighting, parking, and fencing. In this option, the softball field would be placed south of the existing Southwest Community Center and basketball court, and displace approximately 180 parking spaces. All of the displaced parking spaces would be relocated to the north side of the Denny Middle School site, at the corner of 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Thistle Street. There would be no net loss of parking for the Southwest Community Center and Southwest Sport Complex.*"

On June 12, 2008, the District submitted their MUP application (filed under #3008096) which included documents and plans to DPD for review concerning future development at the existing Chief Sealth High School Campus only. No MUP application concerning the demolition of the existing Denny Middle School and proposed improvements at that site has been filled with DPD. As a result, the subject of this analysis and decision is limited to the Denny/Sealth proposal located at 2600 Southwest Thistle Street.

For the purposes of this permit application, exercise of substantive SEPA authority by the DPD is limited to conditioning only. 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

The required public comment period ended on August 27, 2008. DPD received twenty-two (22) written comments regarding this proposal. The following concerns were cited:

- Negative impacts on the surrounding residential neighborhoods from increased on-street parking.
- Negative impacts from access to schools through residential neighborhood for parent drop-off and school buses.
- Negative environmental impacts on Longfellow Creek from increased shading of trees and creek resulting from structure height departure (to 60').
- Opposition to parking departure which shifts parking from campus to surrounding residential streets and results in increased noise, air pollution and vandalism.

- Parking departure shifts parking to residential street thus shifting patrol responsibility from School District to Seattle Police Department.
- Increased on-street parking will have negative impacts on pedestrian safety.
- Opposed to proposed east access to parking from SW Thistle because of negative impacts to Longfellow Creek.
- General concerns about negative impacts to Longfellow Creek.

#### Development Standard Departure Committee Meeting

Three (3) public meeting of the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee (“Advisory Committee”) were held on September 16, 2008, October 7, 2008 and October 20, 2008 at Denny Middle School to consider development standard departures for the school proposal. The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) prepared and submitted a report to document public testimony and make recommendations to DPD for modifications to land use code development standards. The report contains a majority report, committee minutes and public comments. Public comments at the meetings focused on questions regarding future parking demand and availability associated with the combining of both schools on one site, critique of the parking analysis and concern about the impact of additional on-street parking in the neighborhood. For further detail, this report is available at DPD in the Master Use Permit file for this project.

#### ANALYSIS – Development Standard Departure

The Development Standard Departure process is being conducted pursuant to the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code sections 23.79.002-.012. Pursuant to these provisions an Advisory Committee was convened, public comment was received, and a written recommendation to the Director of DPD was made. This analysis and decision is made pursuant to the requirements of SMC section 23.79.010 that the Director 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, 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 of DPD 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:

- 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 Requests and Advisory Committee Recommendation

In October 2007, the Seattle School District requested the Director to initiate the departure process for Chief Sealth High School/Denny Middle School. Two (2) departures were requested: one (1) departure from permitted structure height and one (1) departure from required onsite parking quantity. Table A describes the proposed departure requests based on plans submitted to DPD.

Development Standard	Required/Allowed	Proposed	Departure
Parking Quantity 23.54.15	352 parking spaces	175 parking spaces	177 parking spaces
Height 23.44.017.B.3 & 23.86.006.F.2	Elevation 322.74’ (average height of the existing high school)	Elevation 341.0’	Elevation 345’

The Advisory Committee met on September 16, 2008. At the meeting, the Advisory Committee determined that the departure from structure height was MINOR in nature. During this same meeting the Advisory Committee listened to public comment and recommended APPROVAL of the above mentioned departure.

After further deliberations and listening to public comment, the Advisory Committee determined that the departure from required parking quantity was MAJOR in nature. They met again on October 7, 2008 and October 20, 2008, taking public comment and recommended APPROVAL of the departure from required parking quantity subject to the following conditions:

1. Seattle Public School (SPS) make formal requests to Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to prohibit parking on the east side of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest between Southwest Kenyon Street and Southwest Holden Street from 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
2. Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School encourage staff to park in designated areas on site.
3. Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School encourage carpool and use of mass transit.
4. SPS to encourage parking on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest between Southwest Thistle Street and Southwest Kenyon Street.

5. SPS to request that the City of Seattle create angle parking between Southwest Thistle Street and Southwest Kenyon Street on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest.
6. SPS will explore the option of shared parking with the Filipino American Seventh Day Adventist Church located at 2620 Southwest Kenyon Street.
7. SPS will make request to SDOT to prohibit parking on the south side of Southwest Kenyon Street between 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest from 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
8. There should be no parking on both sides of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest from Southwest Kenyon Street to Southwest Holden Street from 7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
9. SPS will require the school principals from Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School to collaborate on the prevention of major events on concurrent nights that would exceed the available onsite parking. SPS will be required to publish a common event calendar that will be on Denny/Sealth School websites. The calendar is to be displayed and mailed to local neighbors within 300 feet.
10. SPS and SDOT will work to improve parking signage on site. SPS to enforce no parking within a 30 feet clearance of the school driveways.

Details of the recommendations and discussion concerning the conditions were captured in a December 2008 report prepared by the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) and forwarded to DPD.

#### Director's Analysis of Development Standard Departures

##### Structure Height

The first departure requested is from allowable structure height. SMC 23.44.017B23 allows new public school construction on existing public school sites to be 35 feet in height plus 15 feet for a 3:12 pitched roof, or a height equal to the existing school whichever is greater. Per SMC 23.86.006.F.2, the method to determine the height of the existing public school structure is the following: *"If all parts of the new roof are not pitched at a rate of not less than four to twelve (4:12), then the elevation of the new construction may extend to the average height of the existing structure. The average height shall be determined by measuring the area of each portion of the building at each height and averaging those areas."* The average height of the existing Sealth buildings combined is 322.74' in elevation above sea level. The District is requesting a structure height departure to allow the addition to exceed the height of the existing school at a maximum average height allowance of 345.00' in elevation above sea level.

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

##### *1. Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;*

The tallest point of the existing classroom/auditorium building is approximately 351' in elevation (42' in height). The height of the existing gymnasium is built to approximately 334' in elevation (43' in height). The addition to the existing buildings will have a maximum above-ground elevation height of 341' in elevation. The Seattle Municipal Code establishes a maximum height for a public school of 35' plus 15' for a pitched roof, or a height equal to the average height of the existing school, whichever is greater (SMC 23.44.017 and 23.86.006.F.2). The average height of the existing school



is 322.74' in elevation. Therefore, the proposed addition will require a departure from building height as allowed under SMC 23.44.017 and SMC 23.79.

Views from homes on Southwest Kenyon Street may be somewhat altered as a result of the proposed project. Neighbors looking on this portion of the school property currently look across the street at a parking lot, a ball field, tennis courts, an auditorium, and a gymnasium. With the proposed addition, the view will be of a parking lot, lawn, basketball courts, the concrete façade of the new addition, and the auditorium. Although the features and buildings seen by residents to the north may change with construction of the project, the view from that area will remain that of school facilities. Similarly, the view of the site for residents to the east and south would be slightly altered to include the proposed addition, but would still be that of school facilities. Since the site slopes east towards Longfellow Creek, as proposed, the addition would not block the view of residents west of the property who are located at a higher elevation. Vegetation to be planted as part of the planned site improvements will not block the views from surrounding properties, but may provide some screening of school buildings. Existing vegetation along the boundaries of the site would continue to provide screening for surrounding properties. It is expected that future rooftop features/equipment would not further substantially alter residential views; however, these features/equipment was not identified on the submitted MUP drawings.

The proposed addition will be designed and constructed to integrate and complement the existing character of the school site and surroundings. The highest point (at 341' in elevation or 49' in height) will be close to the center of the site. This is approximately 11' higher in elevation than the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest right-of-way (at an elevation height of 330') abutting the site to the west. The existing and proposed topography and landscaping will help to mitigate significant aesthetic impacts would result from the proposed project.

2. *Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;*

The project site is bounded by Southwest Thistle Street to the south, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest to the west, Southwest Kenyon Street to the north, and by unimproved City of Seattle right-of-way (25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest alignment) and the Seattle Parks' Longfellow Creek Greenspace to the east. The proposed new Middle School structures will maintain a 50' setback from the property line on the east and 120' from the closest multifamily structure on the lot to the east across the unimproved 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest right-of-way. Existing trees along this portion of the site will be enhanced with additional evergreen tree plantings.

3. *Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*

The existing Chief Sealth High School sits in a bowl approximately 40' in elevation height below the street (27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest) to the west. The greatest mass of the proposed new middle school building will be located on the downward slope of the site. The design includes inverted sloped roofs creating clerestories that allow maximum light into the structure while decreasing the appearance of bulk. The highest point of the new structure will be approximately 341' in elevation height (49' in height), under the 345' elevation height recommended by the Advisory Committee and below the

maximum 60' height allowed to be granted pursuant to SMC 23.79 (development standard departures). The District requested the maximum 345' elevation height departure in order to accommodate for future rooftop features that haven't been identified on the submitted MUP plans. Finally the eight (8) portable classroom units and one (1) detached building will be removed and will be replaced with landscaping and pedestrian pathways opening the site up.

4. *Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*

The structure height is not expected to impact traffic, noise, circulation and parking.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

The structure height departure and the parking departure have no impact on housing or 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 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 Seattle School District is proposing to relocate the Denny Middle School to the northeast corner of the Chief Sealth High School site and renovate the high school buildings. The renovated high school would accommodate 1,200 students (an increase of 250 students) and the middle school would accommodate 900 students (and increase of 270 students at the existing site). The introduction of an increased student population and relocation of the Denny Middle School to an existing school site requires the District to design a building that addresses the educational needs for students/faculty and is constructed to meet applicable zoning codes-specifically the maximum average structure height requirement. Like many of Seattle's existing school sites, space is at a premium and programmatic needs for buildings, paved physical education areas, a grass field, parking and a minimal amount of landscaped setbacks all compete for site area. In order to meet the program and design requirements adopted by the District, one (1) departure from the Land Use Code was required.

The Advisory Committee recommended departure from required maximum structure height elevation of 322.74' to a maximum structure elevation height of 345' with no conditions.

DPD finds the recommendation of DON appropriate however there is a concern that the committee did not address future height impacts associated with the installation of rooftop features, (i.e..mechanical equipment, penthouse). Also, this equipment isn't identified on the submitted plans. Therefore, the project will be conditioned to identify any future rooftop features that will be constructed taller than the allowed 345' elevation height prior to the issuance of final building permit.

Parking Quantity

The second departure is from required onsite parking quantity. The addition of the Denny Middle School to the site will require an additional 247 parking spaces beyond the 105 parking spaces currently permitted and existing on site. The District is requesting a departure of 177 spaces and proposes to provide 175 spaces on the site.

**A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:**

*1. Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;*

The new parking is located on portions of the site where parking already exists. Chief Sealth High School currently has 105 spaces established by previous permits. In actuality there exist approximately 172 *striped* parking spaces on the site with an additional 20-25 *unstriped* spaces. The existing Denny Middle School, two (2) blocks to the west across Southwest Thistle Street currently has no onsite parking.

The proposal is to establish 175 parking spaces on the site with 125 stalls dedicated to the high school and fifty (50) stalls dedicated to the middle school. The Transportation Impact Analysis identified an additional ninety-six (96) spaces on surface streets abutting the site. In addition, the District-owned sports complex across Southwest Thistle Street to the south provides 300 more spaces. The Seattle Municipal Code would require 352 parking spaces on this site based on existing permitted parking and typical occupancies and the size and capacity of the new auditorium and gymnasium. However, all assembly areas are seldom used simultaneously and, as the Advisory Committee recommended, the two schools should coordinate to avoid such events, the maximum required parking required is likely more than would be appropriate for the site. As proposed the parking areas will be screened with landscaping.

Granting the requested departure would not result in a change in character for the surrounding area.

*2. Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;*

This request for a reduction in the number of onsite parking spaces does not involve the erection of structures for this use. Therefore, this criterion does not directly apply to this request.

*3. Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;*

This parking departure request does not involve the erection of structures for this use. Therefore, this criterion does not directly apply to this request.

*4. Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and*

The addition of the Denny Middle School to the Chief Sealth High School site is expected to result in an increase in traffic along roadways adjacent to the site. Enrollment at Chief Sealth is expected to increase from 950 students with 83 teachers and staff to 1,200 students (increase of 250 students) with approximately 105 teachers and staff. Denny Middle School currently has an enrollment of 630 students with 56 teachers and staff and is expected to increase to 900 students with approximately 80 teachers and staff. Currently both schools have the same start and dismissal times-7:40 a.m. and 2:15 p.m., respectively which would result in all traffic arriving and leaving the site at the same time and magnifying the traffic and pedestrian flows during these peak hours. After the project is complete, the District plans to start classes at Denny Middle School at 7:45 am and start classes at Chief Sealth High School at 8:15 am. This change in schedules would separate peak traffic flows to each school by a half hour and better allow Chief Sealth students to access the site using Metro bus routes.

Based on data in the Transportation Impact Analysis prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. (dated May 14, 2008), relocating Denny Middle School and increasing the enrollment capacity of both schools would degrade operations of several intersections that serve the site: Southwest Kenyon Street opposite 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest; Southwest Kenyon Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest; Southwest Thistle Street and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest; and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Holden Street. Through traffic along Southwest Thistle Street would also experience increased delays due to the increase in pedestrian crossings. Most of these intersections operate at an overall Level of Service (LOS) A during the day with LOS D being acceptable operating conditions within the City of Seattle. With the completed project the intersection of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Kenyon Street would operate at LOS D while operations at the other intersections would drop to LOS C during peak periods. Turns from the outbound driveway of Chief Sealth High School onto Southwest Thistle Street currently operate at LOS F during AM peak hour and LOS D at PM peak hour. This would not change after the project is completed.

Overall, the project would add delay to several locations during the morning and afternoon peak hours. The largest increases in delay would affect drivers leaving the school site onto SW Kenyon Street and SW Thistle Street. Delays at these access points would be similar to conditions at many school access points during morning and afternoon periods. Delays to other locations would not represent significant adverse impacts. However, some measures are recommended to minimize the potential for school related traffic to impact residential streets.

The transportation study also included a parking demand and utilization study. This study indicates that there will be a daily school parking demand of about 295 parking spaces based on a future school capacity for both schools. The study also identifies a total of 374 unrestricted on-street parking spaces with the study area with 163 of these spaces located on the three (3) streets that bound the site which are typically about 8% occupied. Currently there are approximately 197 parking spaces located onsite; 25 of these spaces are “informal” spaces where vehicles are parked in unstriped areas of the campus. The District proposal would establish the number of onsite parking to 175 spaces. The study indicates that the overspill of 120 vehicles would increase the on-street utilization to about 80% on the three streets that bound the site and to about 46% for the larger study area (400-foot walking distance).

Some increase in noise is expected to occur with increase in student population. Noise associated with pedestrians talking as they travel to and from parked cars and the sounds generated by the cars themselves would continue to be experienced in nearby residential areas in similar amounts and at similar times to the current conditions.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space.*

The parking departure does not have any impact on housing or open space.

- C. *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.*

As stated above, there are approximately 172 striped parking spaces provided on the site that exceeds previously permitted number of 105 spaces. Under previous permits the City of Seattle required only the 105 spaces for the high school. A strict interpretation of the Land Use Code would assume that all facilities on the site (classrooms, auditoria, gymnasias, athletic fields) could be in use simultaneously creating a need for up to 352 spaces. This is usually not the case and, in fact, the Advisory Committee, in its recommendation to grant the departure from required parking, recommended a condition that requires the "school principals from Denny and Sealth to collaborate on the prevention of major events on concurrent nights that would exceed available onsite parking."

DPD finds the recommendation of DON appropriate and approves the recommended departures from development standards with the recommended conditions.

**DECISION-DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE**

The development standard departure to allow greater than allowed structure height (up to 345 feet in elevation) is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED.**

The development standard departure to allow less than required onsite parking (a waiver of 177 parking spaces) is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED.**

**CONDITIONS-DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE**

Conditions are listed at the end of this document.

**ANALYSIS – SEPA**

Environmental impacts of the proposal have been analyzed in environmental documents prepared by Seattle School District. These include a SEPA Checklist dated May 14, 2008 and a Determination of Non-Significance issued by Seattle School District dated May 14, 2008.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.660 provides that proposals can be conditioned or denied 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.

### Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from demolition and building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC 25.05.794). Although not significant, these impacts are adverse and, in some cases, mitigation is warranted.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading, and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation, and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way); the Building Code (construction measures in general); Environmentally Critical Areas Ordinance (protection of water quality and soil stability in environmentally critical areas) and the Noise Ordinance (construction noise). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate short-term impacts to the environment and, with the exception of noise and parking impacts, they will be sufficient without conditioning pursuant to SEPA policies. Further discussion of short term noise, air quality, earth and construction traffic and parking related impacts follows.

Noise

The Chief Sealth High School/Denny Middle School site abuts three (3) arterials; 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest, Southwest Thistle Street, and Southwest Kenyon Street. Residential properties are situated across these streets on the north and west of the project site. East of the site is a large multifamily residential development. Across Southwest Thistle Street, to the south, is the District owned sports complex and athletic field. Vehicular noise, school bus traffic and voices from nearby outdoor facilities are cited as existing noise sources.

Short-term noise and vibration from construction equipment and construction activity (e.g., backhoes, trucks, concrete mixers, generators, pneumatic hand tools, engine noise, back-up alarms, etc.); demolition of the portable buildings; construction of the proposed addition and alterations; site work; and, construction vehicles entering and exiting the site would occur as a result of construction and construction-related traffic. Compliance with the Noise Ordinance (SMC 25.08) is required and will limit construction noise, registering 55 dB(A) or more at the receiving property line or a distance of 50 feet from the equipment, to the hours between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, and between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays. This level can be further reduced by 10 dB(A) between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. during the weekdays, and between 10:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. on weekends where the receiving property lies within a residential district of the City (25.08.420). The use of impact construction equipment such as jackhammers, pile drivers and other loud noise emitters are restricted further in accordance with SMC 25.08.425.

To mitigate noise impacts resulting from demolition of various areas of the school and construction of the school additions with associated external and internal alterations, the SEPA checklist and Appendix E (Construction Requirements) of the checklist notes that all construction activity would be restricted to hours and decibel levels designated by the Seattle Noise Control Ordinance (SMC 25.08.425). Further, *“If construction activities exceed permitted noise levels, the District would instruct the contractor to implement measures to reduce noise impacts to comply with the Noise Ordinance, which may include additional muffling of equipment.”*

Although compliance with the Noise Ordinance is required, due to the proximity of the project site to nearby residential uses, additional measures to mitigate the anticipated noise impacts may be necessary. The SEPA Policies at SMC 25.05.675.B and 25.05.665 allow the Director to require additional mitigating measures to further address adverse noise impacts during construction. Pursuant to these policies, it is the Department’s conclusion that limiting hours of construction beyond the requirements of the Noise Ordinance may be necessary on this site. Therefore, as a condition of approval, construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Interior work that involves mechanical equipment, including compressors and generators, may be allowed on Saturdays between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. once the shell of the structure is completely enclosed, provided windows and doors remain closed. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition.

Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized by the Land Use Planner when necessitated by unforeseen construction, safety, or street-use related situations. Requests for extended construction hours or weekend days must be submitted to the Land Use Planner at least three (3) days in advance of the requested dates in order to allow DPD to evaluate the request.



Air Quality

Demolition, grading and construction activities each may create adverse air quality impacts in the surrounding area. Additionally, the indirect impact of construction activities including construction worker commutes, truck trips, the operation of construction equipment and machinery, and the manufacturer of the construction materials themselves result in increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that adversely impact air quality and contribute to climate change and global warming. It is the City policy to minimize or prevent adverse impacts resulting from toxic or hazardous materials and transmissions. The Seattle Stormwater, Grading and Control Code (SMC 22.800-22.808) regulates onsite grading activities and requires soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of work. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) has local responsibility for regulation and permitting of stationary sources (i.e. power plants), construction emissions and the removal of hazardous materials such as asbestos.

The SEPA checklist notes that preliminary results from a preliminary limited hazardous material survey report conducted on portions of the existing main building, gymnasium, detached building (to be demolished) and portables (to be demolished) indicate the presence of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs), lead-containing paints (LCP), and underground and above-ground storage tanks (USTs and ASTs). The following measures are cited in the SEPA checklist and Appendix E (Construction Requirements) to reduce or control emissions during construction:

- Site-specific development would comply with PSCAA's regulations concerning construction activity.
- During excavation and construction, temporary dirt driveway(s), and construction surfaces will be watered to control dust; temporary ground covers will be used; and, the project site will be sprinkled with approved dust palliatives as necessary to control dust.
- Wheel-cleaning stations would be provided to ensure construction vehicles and undercarriages do not carry excess dirt from the site onto adjacent roadways.
- Streets would be regularly cleaned to conform to City of Seattle requirements to ensure that excess dust and debris inadvertently transported from the construction site to adjacent roads is removed.
- Prior to demolition of the portables/detached building and the remodel of the existing high school, identified asbestos-containing materials will be abated in compliance with applicable local, state and federal regulations and will utilize work practices and engineering controls to prevent migration of elevated fiber concentrations from regulated work areas. The contractor will be required to be trained and licensed in the abatement work. Other hazardous materials identified in the final hazardous materials survey, including mercury-containing fluorescent light tubes, lead-containing paint, and/or fuel oil in the storage tanks, will be removed by certified firms as required by regulations and will be disposed of at an approved disposal site.
- All renovation and demolition work for the Denny/Sealth Project will comply with Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations (Regulation III, Article 4, Asbestos Control Standards), Department of Ecology standards (air quality standards per WAC 173-400 to 173-495 general occupational health standards per WAC 296-62) and Seattle Municipal Code requirements (SMC 21.36.028, Asbestos material and asbestos-containing waste material).

Existing regulations are sufficient to control short-term air quality impacts. No potential short term significant adverse impacts to air are anticipated and therefore conditioning air quality mitigation is not necessary.

Earth

The proposal identifies selective construction activity (hazard tree removal, buried fire service utility, slope regrading, driveway paving) within the identified steep slope areas. The ECA Ordinance and Directors Rule (DR) 3-2007 require submission of a soils report to evaluate the site conditions and provide recommendations for safe construction in areas with steep slopes, liquefaction zones, and/or a history of unstable soil conditions. Pursuant to this requirement the applicant submitted a Subsurface Exploration, Geologic Hazards and Final Geotechnical Engineering Report dated April 10, 2008 and an additional Slope ECA Recommendation's report addendum dated October 28, 2008; both prepared by Kurt D. Merriman, P.E. (Associated Earth Sciences, Inc.). These reports evaluate the soil and site conditions and provides recommendations for erosion and drainage controls, grading, earthwork, foundation construction, slab-on-grade support, and retaining walls.

The summary of the Geotechnical Engineering Report findings is the following: *"One of the exploration borings, EB-4, encountered medium dense to dense sand with silt interbeds interpreted as possible recessional outwash. Recessional outwash was deposited by meltwater streams from a retreating continental glacier and resembles alluvial sediments. Due to the depth at which it was encountered in EB-4, it is unlikely that recessional outwash at this site will be excavated in significant quantities for reuse in structural fill applications. With proper preparation as described in this report, recessional outwash is suitable for support of foundations for the planned new Denny Middle School building."....."In our opinion, the west slope is composed of glacially consolidated soils, appears to have performed adequately from a slope stability standpoint for many years, and the current steep slope geometry was established by earthwork cuts completed during construction of Chief Sealth High School."..... In our opinion, the central slope is composed primarily of glacially consolidated soils, appears to have performed adequately from a slope stability standpoint for many years, and the current steep slope geometry was established by earthwork cuts completed during construction of Chief Sealth High School.".... In our opinion, the east slope is composed of glacially consolidated soils, appears to have performed adequately from a slope stability standpoint for many years, and the current steep slope geometry was established by earthwork cuts completed during construction of Chief Sealth High School."* The submitted report, which is located in the project file, further details the specific requirements for proper installation of foundations; pavements; floor slabs; drainage; excavations; grading techniques; site preparation; buried utility considerations and seismic considerations.

The summary of the ECA Recommendation's report addendum findings is the following: *"The current design proposes a buried fire service water line that crosses the west Steep Slope ECA near the southwest site corner....In our opinion, provided that the recommendations presented (above) are incorporated, the proposed water line should be allowed."....."The central Steep Slope ECA is now proposed to be regarded to a shallower slope inclination to improve maintenance access.....In our opinion, if the proposed regarding of the central Steep Slope ECA incorporates the recommendations included in this letter, the resulting slope is expected to perform adequately and will not result in a decrease in adverse impacts to the existing slope."* This report addendum, including recommendations, is also located in the project file.

A DPD Geotechnical Engineer has reviewed the abovementioned soils reports in association with submitted plans and has deemed these soils reports to be relatively complete for this proposal. The soils reports, construction plans, and shoring of excavations as needed, will be reviewed again by the DPD Geotechnical Engineer and Building Plans Examiner who will require any additional soils-related information, recommendations, declarations, covenants and bonds as necessary to assure safe grading and excavation. This project constitutes a "large project" under the terms of the Stormwater, Grading

and Drainage Control Code (SGDCC) (SMC 22.802.015 D). As such, there are many additional requirements for erosion control including a provision for implementation of best management practices and a requirement for incorporation of an engineered erosion control plan which will be reviewed jointly by the DPD building plans examiner and geotechnical engineer prior to issuance of the permit. The SGDCC provides extensive conditioning authority and prescriptive construction methodology to assure safe construction techniques are used; therefore, no additional conditioning is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

#### Construction-Related Streets, Parking and Pedestrian Circulation

This proposal includes demolition and onsite excavation/grading. The Street Use Ordinance includes regulations which mitigate dust, mud and circulation. Any temporary closure of the sidewalk and/or traffic lane(s) is controlled with a street use permit through the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). It is the City's policy to minimize or prevent adverse traffic impacts which would undermine the stability, safety, and/or character of a neighborhood or surrounding areas (25.05.675 R).

The District indicates the construction period for the project would last for up to thirty-six (36) months. It's estimated that a maximum of 100 construction workers will be working onsite at any given time during construction. During this time period, it is estimated there will be weeks of very intense construction traffic while other days will have minimal traffic. Per the Revised Transportation Impact Analysis (dated May 14, 2008) prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc., *"the demolition and earthwork would result in movement of about 27,000 total cy of material. Assuming an average of 18-cubic yards per truck and about three months for the demolition and earthwork efforts, this activity will generate approximately 125 truck loads per week. With five days per week and typical construction hours, this would equate to between 3 and 4 truckloads per hour (6 to 8 truck trips per hour with a truck in and out for each load). Trucks are expected to arrive at the Chief Sealth site from the east on SW Thistle Street, turn north on 27th Avenue SW, and enter the site from SW Kenyon Street. Trucks leaving the site are expected to exit onto SW Thistle Street east toward Delridge Way SW."*

This activity likely will be noticeable to drivers and residents along nearby roadways; however, it would occur for a relatively short period of time and would not result in significant adverse impacts to traffic operations or capacity. Construction employee traffic and parking would be accommodated either on-site or on-street along the site frontage.

Students in the existing programs at Chief Sealth High School would be relocated to the Boren Interim Site during the first two years of construction; therefore, there would be no school traffic at the Chief Sealth High School site during the initial phase of construction. However, once the high school students and faculty return, construction activity associated with the middle school will still exist. Per the applicant, construction access would be limited to SW Kenyon Street. However, there is a concern that the submitted MUP materials don't clearly indicate nor quantify the amount of dedicated onsite parking for construction staff. Nor do the plans identify a temporary pedestrian circulation plan for students/staff impacted while the middle school construction occurs.

Construction activities such as demolition and hauling, material deliveries and grading would generate a noticeable amount of truck traffic. Also these activities may result in obstacles to pedestrians and bicyclists. Similarly, bus stops, traffic lanes and on-street parking may be affected by construction staging, deliveries, etc. Adverse impacts are not adequately mitigated by existing City codes nor has the District specifically identified the City agency responsible for receiving and enforcing the

approved parking and traffic control plan. Thus, additional mitigation is warranted pursuant to the Construction Impacts Policy (SMC 25.05.675 B). As recommended in the transportation report, a construction management plan (CMP) addressing street closures, bus stop relocations and sidewalk closures, construction employee parking, as well as truck routes and hours of truck traffic will be required to mitigate identified impacts.

### Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts anticipated from the proposal include: increased parking demand; possible increased traffic demand; possible increase in light and glare; increased bulk and scale of the building; and possible increased ambient noise due to increase in human activity.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site collection of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long-term impacts. However, the proposal represents a substantial renovation of an existing public high school. Therefore additional discussion regarding historic preservation, traffic and parking is warranted.

### Historic Preservation

Section 25.05.675 H of the SEPA code describes the City's policies for protecting historical sites. *"It is the City's policy to maintain and preserve significant historic sites and structures and to provide opportunity for analysis of archeological sites.....For projects involving structures or sites which are not yet designated as historical landmarks but which appear to meet the criteria for designation, the decisionmaker or any interested person may refer the site or structure to the Landmarks Preservation Board for consideration.....On sites with potential archaeological significance, the decisionmaker may require an assessment of the archaeological potential of the site."*

SEPA provides authority to mitigate impacts to historic buildings (SMC 25.05.675.H.2.c). In this instance, the existing public school is not designated as a historical landmark. However, because this proposal involves the demolition and renovation of a structure which is more than fifty (50) years old, the District submitted a Landmarks Nomination application to the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) Landmark Preservation Board for both Chief Sealth High School and Denny Middle School on March 25, 2008. At the April 16, 2008 meeting of the City's Landmarks Preservation Board, the Board voted to deny the designation of both Chief Sealth High School and Denny Middle School with a finding that neither school meets any of the designation standards for nomination as an historic building.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Emissions from the generation of greenhouse gases due to the increased energy and transportation demands may be adverse but are not expected to be significant due to the relatively minor contribution of emissions from this specific project. The other impacts such as but not limited to, increased ambient noise, and increased demand on public services and utilities are mitigated by codes and are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by condition.

### Transportation

Heffron Transportation, Inc. prepared a Revised Transportation Impact Analysis Report (dated May 14, 2008) and a correction response memorandum (dated February 11, 2009) for this proposal. This report evaluates transportation impacts of the high school/middle school proposal. Specifically, it evaluates possible impacts from increased student enrollment capacity, site reconfiguration and changes to parking supply and access. This analysis in the report is based on the planned increase of the student population at Chief Sealth High School from 950 students to 1,200 and at Denny Middle School from 630 students to 900 students.

### Traffic

The following roadways are adjacent to the proposed site:

- **Southwest Thistle Street** is a minor arterial that provides east-west access between 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Delridge Way Southwest. This roadway segment has two travel lanes (one in each direction) and parallel on-street parking allowed on both sides along most of the street. Near the project site, on-street parking is permitted on the north side of the street adjacent to the Chief Sealth High School; however, approximately twelve (12) spaces are restricted to school loading only between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Marked and signed crosswalks are located at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Southwest, 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest, and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest/Chief Sealth High School. At the 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest/Chief Sealth High School intersection the roadway has been narrowed with curb-bulbs at the crosswalk to shorten crossing distance and enhance pedestrian visibility to drivers.
- **Southwest Kenyon Street** is a two-lane, east-west residential access street that connects between 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest. Traffic circles control movements at intersections with 28<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Avenues Southwest. Its approach to 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest is controlled by a stop sign. Its intersections with 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest are uncontrolled. In the study area, Southwest Kenyon Street terminates at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest just east of the Chief Sealth High School site.
- **27th Avenue Southwest** is a two-lane, north-south residential access street that connects Southwest Thistle Street to Southwest Kenyon Street.

King County Metro Route 22 provides direct service to Chief Sealth. Additional Metro Routes that travel along Delridge Way Southwest (120) and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest provide service within the immediate vicinity. Prior to the 2007-2008 school year, the District provided yellow bus transportation to Chief Sealth students. The District now provides Metro bus passes to eligible students for use on regular Metro bus routes that serve the site.

The addition of the Denny Middle School to the Chief Sealth High School site is expected to result in an increase in traffic along roadways adjacent to the site. The traffic volume resulting from the existing high school was developed from new traffic counts performed at Chief Sealth High School's driveways in late September 2007 and were found to be similar to the *Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Trip Generation Manual (7<sup>th</sup> edition)* for the category of "High School". The ITE rate for the category of "Middle School/Junior High School" was used to estimate the traffic generated by Denny Middle School. The increase in high school student population from 950 to 1,200 students in the future would generate approximately 430 net new daily trips. As noted in the traffic study, 54 of these new trips would be generated during the school PM peak hour (2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.).

Currently, both schools have the same start and dismissal times-7:40 a.m. and 2:15 p.m., respectively. In order to reduce the potential traffic volume impacts of both schools, the District has committed to changing the start times of the schools. Per the report, the District plans to start classes at the Denny Middle School at 7:45 a.m. and start classes at Chief Sealth High School at 8:15 a.m. As a result, this change in schedules would separate peak traffic flows to each school by a half hour. Accounting for these time shifts and the potential increase in enrollment noted above, the high school would generate approximately 35 new trips during the school PM peak hour (2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m.).

Relocation of Denny Middle School to the Chief Sealth High School site will add 268 trips during the school PM peak hour at the high school site driveways, although most already occur on local streets as trips to the current Middle school site. The increase in middle school student population from 635 to 900 students would generate approximately 430 net new daily trips, of which 80 would be generated during the school PM peak hour.

The transportation report identified eight (8) unsignalized intersections for analysis during both the AM and school PM peak hours for operational characteristics. The table below illustrates each intersection’s forecasted level-of-service (LOS) with and without the proposed project. It also includes the assumption that a traffic control (stop signs) would be placed on the north and south approaches at the Southwest Kenyon Street/26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest intersection. The identified delays are divided into several grade levels, ranging from LOS A (minimal) to LOS F (long delays).

<b>Intersection</b>	<b>AM 2012 LOS Without Project</b>	<b>AM 2012 With Project</b>	<b>PM 2012 LOS Without Project</b>	<b>PM 2012 LOS With Project</b>
SW Kenyon St/26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW	A	C	A	C
SW Holden St/26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW	A	A	A	A
SW Kenyon St /27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW	A	C	A	A
SW Thistle St/27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW	A	A	A	A
SW Thistle St/West Access	A	A	A	A
SW Thistle St/Driveway/26 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW	C	D	A	A
SW Thistle St/Inbound Driveway	A	A	A	A
SW Thistle St/Bus Exit	---	A	---	A

The LOS analysis indicates all of the studied intersections will operate at LOS C or better except for the site access intersection with Southwest Thistle Street opposite 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest which would decline from LOS C to LOS D during the AM peak hour. Most of this delay would occur on the school site itself, as cars queue to exit the Chief Sealth parking lot.

In summary, the project would add new traffic to SW Kenyon Street, 27th Avenue SW, and 26th Avenue SW with the relocation of Denny Middle School to the site. However, these roadways would continue to operate at acceptable levels of service with the project. Similar to most schools, parent pick-up and drop-off at the site will likely result in noticeable congestion and delay at site access

driveways, within parking lots, and at pickup/ drop-off areas during times just before and after school. As a result, parking conditions on the site and along nearby roadways are expected to be congested during those times. Therefore, the Heffron report recommends the following measures be implemented to minimize the potential for school related traffic to impact residential streets:

- Consult with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) regarding methods to control the Southwest Kenyon Street/26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest/Site Access intersection. One (1) recommendation is that stop signs be placed on the northbound and southbound approaches to this intersection.
- Driveways along Southwest Thistle Street and Southwest Kenyon Street should be well marked and signed in order to minimize/avoid driver confusion and prevent vehicles entering the wrong way on the bus exit lane for the proposed bus egress driveway and Chief Sealth access driveways. “Do Not Enter” signs should be placed facing Southwest Thistle Street at the bus exit point; and parking entry signs and pavement marking should be included for the automobile entrance.
- District should direct bus drivers to arrive at the site using Southwest Thistle Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Kenyon Street to minimize new impacts from bus traffic on local residential streets.
- In the first year of operation and each September thereafter, review onsite parking, site access, pick-up/drop-off activities and bus loading operations and determine if changes are desired. Changes that could be considered include:
  - a. Notifying parents through school newsletters or other media about appropriate locations for student drop-off and pick-up. Parents should be reminded regularly not to park in bus loading areas or block crosswalks.
  - b. Using school staff or volunteers in the parking lots during arrival and dismissal times to assist children and parents with arrival and departure and to help reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

DPD concurs the recommendations are appropriate. However, the aforementioned recommendations include street improvements that require approval from SDOT and the recommended directional signage hasn’t been incorporated in the MUP drawings. Additionally, it is of utmost importance that the District commits to alternating start and dismissal times between the two (2) schools. Therefore, in order to ensure that the identified traffic impacts are mitigated adequately, the following condition will be required in addition to the measures recommended per the Heffron report:

- Submit documentation from the District acknowledging a commitment to stagger the start and dismissal times for Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School in order to reduce potential traffic volume impacts of both schools on the same property.

### Parking

DPD’s historical permit records indicate 105 parking spaces exist at the Chief Sealth site. The transportation report states that, based on field counts, there are currently 172 parking spaces onsite distributed amongst three (3) distinct surface parking lots: southeast parking lot (101 stalls), service parking lot (16 stalls), and northwest parking lot (55 stalls). Also, field observations revealed unmarked paved areas along the west side of the tennis courts/softball fields and in the service parking lot commonly being utilized to accommodate parking for an additional twenty-five (25) vehicles. Per the Land Use Code, the proposed addition, which includes the creation of commons areas for each of the schools and fixed seating for the proposed middle school gym, will require parking for 247

vehicles. The submitted MUP plans indicate a total of 175 surface parking spaces are provided. Existing vehicular access to the surface parking spaces will remain; only minor alterations to the some curb cuts and driveways are proposed.

As described in the Heffron Transportation report, a parking utilization study was conducted within a 400' walking distance of the subject property's boundaries with the intent to determine the number of parking spaces available during a typical school day and provide a base to determine parking occupancy rates. Studies were conducted on September 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. A utilization study was also performed during a varsity football game on Friday October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 7:30 p.m. to document on-street parking demand in the study area during an evening with a high school sporting event at the nearby Southwest Athletic Complex. The current on-street parking supply within the study area is approximately 374 spaces with an additional unrestricted twelve (12) spaces (school load only from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) available at night. Based on current parking, the study found that on-street parking occupancy rates within the study area during the school day time periods (9:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.) were fairly consistent throughout the day at 13% average (50 or 51 total parked vehicles/374 total spaces). Parking demand during the evening football game increased to about 24% (92/386) parking utilization on streets surrounding the high school campus.

A parking demand analysis was included within the technical report to assess how the proposed number of onsite parking spaces would match the anticipated parking demand for an expected future 1,200 student enrollment at Chief Sealth High School and estimated future staffing levels/parents associated with an expected future student enrollment of 900 students for the new Denny Middle School. Based on field results in September 2007, the peak parking demand of the existing high school student population (950 students) and staff is 170 vehicle parking spaces. Since a small number of cars (5 cars) park on the site in areas not formally striped, the total school parking demand for the existing Denny Middle School was determined from counts of the limited onsite parking and on-street parking surrounding the school performed with school in session in September 2007 and during the summer. Based on these counts, the middle school-related peak parking demand is sixty-seven (67) vehicle parking spaces. Using a peak parking demand rate of .18 vehicles per student, Heffron's analysis showed that an additional forty-five (45) parking spaces would be required to meet the future parking demand for the additional 250 students; and, at a peak parking demand rate of 1.08 vehicles per employee, the Denny Middle School parking demand is expected to increase to eighty (80) vehicles depending on future staffing levels. As a result, a total of 295 ((170+67) + (45+13)) parking spaces would be required to meet the peak parking demand.

In summary, it is estimated that there will be a total parking demand for 295 parking spaces during school hours. A total of 175 surface parking spaces will be provided onsite. With the overall increase in student population and staff for both the high school and the middle school, there would be a deficit of 120 (295-175) parking spaces during a typical school day. In addition, due to the potential for increased event frequency and the overall increase in assembly space associated with the proposal, concurrent school/community events could generate the need for more onsite parking capacity. If spillover parking does occur, the parking studies indicate that this parking could be accommodated on the neighboring streets, with an increase in on-street parking utilization from the current 13% to 46% within 400' of the school site.

DPD has reviewed this technical report and agrees with its findings. However the report doesn't approximate the amount of parking demand that would occur during multiple school/community events occurring simultaneously on the campus and surrounding sport complex and community center properties. Thus, it is unclear what the additional amount of parking spillover would occur. Therefore, in order to mitigate unknown future parking spillover impacts, as recommended in the



Transportation Technical Report prepared by Heffron, a SEPA condition will be added to require the District to prepare a memorandum of agreement between the Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School stipulating that the scheduling of events with large attendance (1,000) on the same day/evening will be avoided. Also the agreement should include a requirement that all onsite parking be made available to attendees and participants; and signage and/or other notification encouraging attendees and participants to park in the Southwest Sports Complex surface parking lot.

### **DECISION - SEPA**

The environmental checklist, Master Use Permit plans submitted on the project, public comment and responses to requests for information all comprise Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) record. Pursuant to SMC 25.05.600.D.1, DPD relies on the environmental documents and technical reports prepared by the Seattle School District in their role as lead agency. DPD has determined that the DNS issued and utilized for the environmental analysis of the *Denny Middle School/Chief Sealth High School* and permitted herein, is adequate. The SEPA conditions listed below are imposed based on Master Use Permit (MUP) plans as well as on all environmental documentation submitted to date.

### **CONDITIONS - SEPA**

#### **Prior to the Issuance of the Demolition or Building Permit**

1. In order to address construction related transportation and parking impacts, the responsible party shall submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) to be reviewed and approved by DPD in consultation with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). A construction transportation plan for workers and truck deliveries/routes shall be prepared to minimize disruption to traffic flow on adjacent streets and roadways. This plan shall include a requirement that truck trips be scheduled to avoid peak periods of 7:00-9:00 a.m. and 4:00-6:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The plan shall consider the need for special signage, flaggers, haul route definitions, street cleaning; identification of construction-worker parking; identification of potential street and/or sidewalk closures; coordination with Metro Transit relative to construction activity that could affect transit service proximate to the project site; vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian circulation and safety; and construction-related air quality recommendations noted in the Environmental Checklist.
2. The District shall prepare and submit to DPD, a memorandum of agreement between Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School stipulating that large attendance events (more than 1,000 attendees) will not be scheduled on the same day/evening. The agreement should also include a requirement that all onsite parking be made available to attendees and participants; and signage and/or other notification encouraging attendees and participants to park in the Southwest Sports Complex surface parking lot.
3. Obtain necessary approval(s) from Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) in order to allow proposed stop sign installation on the right-of-way as a means to control the Southwest Kenyon Street/26<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest/Site Access intersection. If SDOT doesn't approve the proposed stop sign, the applicant must submit a memo from the transportation consultant stating that the revised control methods would not further degrade the LOS for the aforementioned intersection.

4. In order to minimize/avoid driver confusion and prevent vehicles entering the wrong way on the bus exit lane for the proposed bus egress driveway and Chief Sealth access driveways, the applicant must document future signage language, sign locations and pavement markings on the plans prior to building permit approval.
5. Submit documentation from the District acknowledging a commitment to:
  - Stagger the start and dismissal times for Denny Middle School and Chief Sealth High School by at least 30 minutes in order to reduce potential traffic volume impacts of both schools on the same property.
  - Direct bus drivers to arrive at the site using Southwest Thistle Street, 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southwest and Southwest Kenyon Street to minimize new impacts from bus traffic on local residential streets.
  - In the first year of operation and each September thereafter, review onsite parking, site access, pick-up/drop-off activities and bus loading operations and determine if changes are desired. Changes that could be considered include:
    - a. Notifying parents through school newsletters or other media about appropriate locations for student drop-off and pick-up. Parents should be reminded regularly not to park in bus loading areas or block crosswalks.
    - b. Using school staff or volunteers in the parking lots during arrival and dismissal times to assist children and parents with arrival and departure and to help reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.

#### During Construction

The following condition(s) to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. If more than one street abuts the site, conditions shall be posted at each street. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DPD. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other waterproofing material and shall remain posted on-site for the duration of the construction.

6. The construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Interior work that involves mechanical equipment, including compressors and generators, may be allowed on Saturdays between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. once the shell of the structure is completely enclosed, provided windows and doors remain closed. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition. Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized by the Land Use Planner (Tamara Garrett 684-0976) when necessitated by unforeseen construction, safety, or street-use related situations. Requests for extended construction hours or weekend days must be submitted to the Land Use Planner at least three (3) days in advance of the requested dates in order to allow DPD to evaluate the request.
7. Comply with the provisions set forth in the approved Construction Management Plan.

