

PUBLIC SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT STANDARD ADVISORY COMMITTEE

KIMBALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DESIGN DEPARTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Project #3035786-SD

July 30, 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 comment and make recommendations to the City for modifications to development standards in order to facilitate construction of the new Kimball Elementary School located at 3200 23rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144.



1. Background

1.1 Project Description

On January 9, 2020, the Seattle Public Schools submitted a request for departures from six (6) Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Development Standards to accommodate new school at Kimball Elementary School located at 3200 23rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144.

Kimball Elementary School is a highly regarded asset to the Beacon Hill community, both the building and play fields included, and has historically served predominantly underrepresented communities throughout its long history in this neighborhood.

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is proposing to demolish the existing elementary school serving Kindergarten through 5th grade and construct a new elementary school serving a capacity of 650 students in Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade. The proposed 95,000 sq. ft. building would contain (34) classrooms in Pre-K through 5th grade with additional spaces for special education, music, art as well as a library, cafeteria/commons, gymnasium, and family engagement center. The proposed building would be energy efficient and would preserve many of the site's natural features such as sloping hills and trees. The proposed project would develop the open space on the site to include areas for student recreation, outdoor learning, as well as staff and visitor parking. The purpose of the proposed project is to increase capacity to address projected growth in the Beacon Hill neighborhood.

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

- KEY
-  GRASS / SHRUB BEDS
 -  CONCRETE SURFACE (SIDEWALKS, STAIRS, RAMPS)
 -  ASPHALT SURFACE (PLAY AREAS AND PARKING)
 -  WOOD CHIPS (PLAY EQUIPMENT AREAS)
 -  EXISTING TREE
 -  NEW TREE
 -  BUILDING
 -  BUS LOADING ZONE
 -  PARENT QUEUING AND DROPOFF
 -  MAJOR PEDESTRIAN ACCESS POINT
 -  MAIN ENTRY



Exhibit 1 Proposed Site Plan

1.2 Neighborhood Characteristics

The proposed project is located at 3200 23rd Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144. The project site is bounded by S Hanford Street to the north, 24th Avenue S to the east, S Hinds Street to the south, and 23rd Avenue S to the west. Across in all directions of the property are single family residences, including directly to the south of the school along the west border of the block the school is located on.

1.3 Requests for Departure and Process

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)

Due to public health mandates on social distancing and limited gatherings related to COVID-19, the Seattle City Council approved legislation on Monday, April 27 to keep key projects safely moving forward for at least 180-days by suspending public meeting requirements.

While this ordinance is in effect, in lieu of the committee holding public meetings DON staff will accept written public comment and the Director of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods will make a recommendation to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI), taking into consideration the public's comments.

Following completion of the Recommendation 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 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.

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.b

For new public school construction on existing public school sites, the maximum permitted height is 35 feet plus 15 feet for a pitched roof. All parts of the roof above the height limit must be pitched at a rate of not less than 4:12. No portion of a shed roof is permitted to extend beyond the 35 foot height limit under this provision.



Building Elevation at 24th Ave S

AVG. EXISTING GRADE ----- 35' MAX BUILDING HEIGHT ABOVE AVG. EXISTING GRADE ----- STREET LEVEL GRADE

Exhibit 2 Proposed Height

Departure Requested: 23 feet above the height limit.

Departure #2 – 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 3 Proposed On-Site Parking

Departure Requested: to allow for 100 parking spaces less than the code required parking to be provided on-site. [140 required stalls – 40 proposed stalls = 100 stall departure requested]

Departure #3 – Long Term Bike Storage Quantity

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015.K, (Table D, Row B.9)

Long-term parking for bicycles shall be for bicycles parked four or more hour.



Exhibit 4 Proposed Bicycle Parking

Departure Requested: 61 bike long term storage spaces of the 75 required

Departure #4 – Shared Bike Storage Access

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.



Exhibit 5 Proposed Bicycle Storage Access

Departure Requested: shared access path for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Departure #5 – Bike Storage Protection

Existing Standard: SMC 23.54.015.K.2.h

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



Exhibit 6 Proposed Bicycle Long-Term Bike Storage

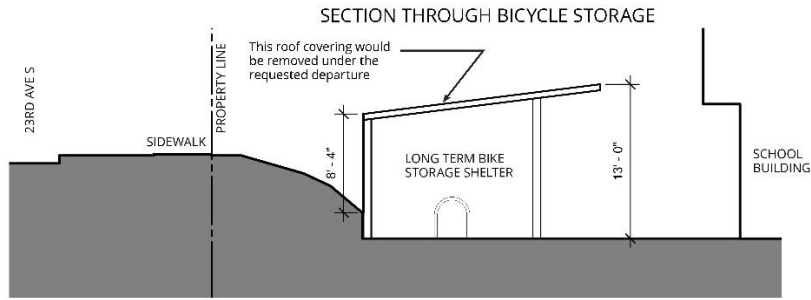


Exhibit 7 Proposed Bicycle Long-Term Bike Storage

Departure Requested: for a bike storage without any roof covering.

Departure #6 – Double-Sided, Electronic, Changing Image 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 8 Proposed Location of Message Board (S. Hanford St/23rd Ave S)

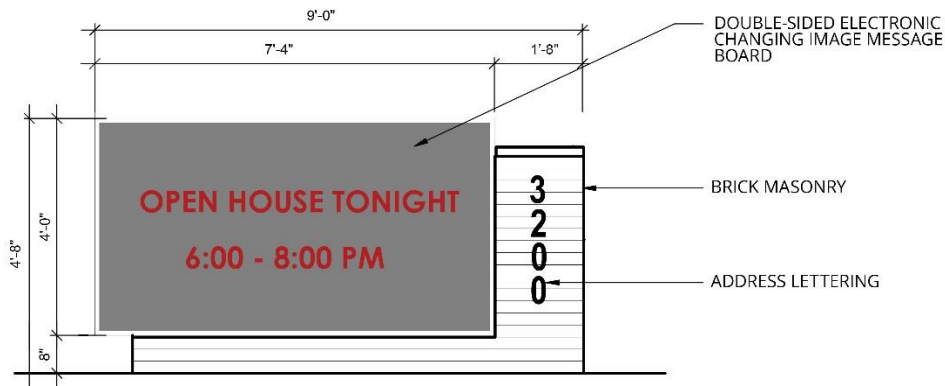


Exhibit 9 Proposed Message Board

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

2.2 DON Review and Recommendations

2.2.1 Public Comment

The public comment period was opened on May 27, 2020. A press release was sent out directly to media outlets and shared in the Kimball newsletter and staff bulletin on 5/29, sent out to a project distribution list of approximately 80 individuals and postcards were sent to addresses within approximately 600 ft of the school. Signs were posted at the perimeter of the school requesting public comment and shared in the Land Use Information Bulletin (LUIB).

A total of 17 public comments were received.

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) parking, and 3) long term bicycle parking, 5) access to bicycle parking, 5) unprotected bicycle parking, and 6) a double-sided, electronic, changing image message board.

Need for Departures

The community did not disagree about the need for a new Kimball Elementary School, but there were concerns that the building being proposed did not necessitate all requested departures, specifically the height. Several community members expressed their support for the requested departures. The recommended conditions below will attempt to mitigate the impacts on the neighborhood.

DEPARTURE #1 – GREATER THAN ALLOWED BUILDING HEIGHT

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

We received the most comments on this departure, both in favor and critical of the increased height. Those critical of the requested departure felt that the School District had not demonstrated the need for the additional height and that this great of a height departure has not been requested for schools in other parts of the city. Others saw the increased height was necessary to achieve a reasonable footprint, allowing adequate space for outdoor play and the impacts on the neighborhood would be minimal.

What could be agreed on was that a new school was necessary and welcomed by the neighborhood. It is becoming increasingly common for school to be locating mechanical spaces on

the roof to maximize space both in the school and on the ground. These mechanical spaces take up a small percentage of the roof and designed to be setback from the buildings edge to minimize their visibility from the street level.

Some neighbors disapproved of the color scheme and monolithic facades of the building. Altering the color scheme of the façade would help the building blend into the landscaping and surrounding neighborhood and reducing the appearance of bulk.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 1 – That the departure to allow greater than allowed building height be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools with the following conditions:

- 1) **The School District install and maintain landscaping buffer around the perimeter of the school.**
- 2) **The School District reconsider the color palate of the façade to include warmer tones that blend into the landscaping and create an appearance of camouflaging the building.**

DEPARTURE #2 – LESS THAN REQUIRED OFF-STREET PARKING

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the community, 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 community, 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 community, 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 community, and they did have concerns about less than required off-street 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 community, and they did not have concerns about less than require off-street parking having an impact on housing and open space.

Some comments expressed a need for all parking by staff and school administration to be on site and others would like to see daytime parking accommodated on site but preferred there be open space for play area. This is a common debate at most Seattle Public School due to the urban nature of their locations, and with proper education and enforcement by school administration, the proposed amount of parking can meet the needs of the school and neighborhood.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 2 – That the departure to allow less than required off-street parking be GRANTED as requested by Seattle Public Schools with the following conditions:

- 1) Transportation Management Plan (TMP):** Prior to the school opening, the District and school principal should establish a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to educate parents and students about the preferred access and circulation. The effort should encourage supervised walking (such as walking school buses), carpooling, and school bus ridership for those eligible. The plan should define clear procedures and travel routes and preferred load/unload locations.
- 2) Engage Seattle School Safety Committee:** The District should engage with the Seattle School Safety Committee (led by SDOT) to review walk routes and determine if any changes should be made to crosswalk locations, signage, pavement markings, school zone speed limits, or crossing guard locations.
- 3) Develop Neighborhood Communication Plan for School Events:** The District and school administration should develop a neighborhood communication plan to inform nearby neighbors of events each year. The plan should be updated annually (or as events are scheduled) and should provide information about the dates, times, and rough magnitude of attendance. The communication would be intended to allow neighbors to plan for the occasional increase in on-street parking demand that would occur with large events.
- 4) Update right-of-way and curb-side signage:** The District should work with SDOT to confirm the locations, extent, and signage of school-bus and passenger-vehicle load/unload zones adjacent to the school site.

DEPARTURE #3 – LONG TERM BIKE STORAGE QUANTITY

- 1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about less than required long term bike storage quantity 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 community, and they did not have concerns about less than required long term bike storage quantity having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about less than required long term bike storage quantity having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the community, and they did have concerns about less than required long term bike storage quantity 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 community, and they did not have concerns about less than required long term bike storage quantity having an impact on housing and open space.

Combined, we received the most comments around access to safe, secure, long-term bicycle parking. While the current number of staff and students riding a bike to the school is currently low, the community wants to encourage bicycle parking and having a place to park your bike during the day is believed to be essential in encouraging that.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 3 – That the departure to allow about less than required long term bike storage quantity be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools with the following condition:

- 1) **Seattle Public Schools provide at a minimum 50% of the code required number of long term bike parking stalls**

DEPARTURE #4 – SHARED BIKE STORAGE ACCESS

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about shared bike storage access 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 community, and they did not have concerns about shared bike storage access having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about shared bike storage access having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about shared bike storage access 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 community, and they did not have concerns about shared bike storage access having an impact on housing and open space.

One comment was received for this departure, and it was in favor of the shared access. The proposed pathway is nearly twice the required width allowing safe passage for both pedestrians and bicycles.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 4 – That the departure to allow shared access to bicycle parking be GRANTED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools.

DEPARTURE #5 – BIKE STORAGE PROTECTION

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about not providing bike storage protection 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 community, and they did not have concerns about not providing bike storage protection having an impact on the transition in scale.
- 3) **Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk** were considered by the community, and they did not have concerns about not providing bike storage protection having an impact on the appearance of bulk.
- 4) **Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area** were considered by the community, and they did have concerns about not providing bike storage protection 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 community, and they did not have concerns about not providing bike storage protection having an impact on housing and open space.

Several comments shared the belief that to encourage students and staff to ride more requires the ability to park their bikes in a place that protects them from the weather and to not cover the long-term bike parking effectively means it is no longer long-term bike parking. The safety concern of people climbing onto the structure should not outweigh the need for secure bike parking and can be dealt with through design and placement of the structure.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 5 – That the departure to not provide secure bicycle parking be DENIED as requested by the Seattle Public Schools.

DEPARTURE #6 – DOUBLE-SIDED, ELECTRONIC, CHANGING IMAGE MESSAGE BOARD

- 1) **Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area** were considered by the community, and they did have concerns about a message board having an impact on the surrounding area. The community 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 community, 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 community, 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 community, 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 community, and they did not have concerns about a message board having an impact on housing and open space.

One comment was received saying the sign is not a top priority and another comment noting that it will help drive community engagement and awareness of school events. The sign does not appear to be of large concern to the community. The following conditions are recommended to mitigate the perceived impacts on the surrounding neighborhood.

After consideration of the above, the Department of Neighborhoods recommends:

Recommendation 6 – 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:

- 1) **The sign must use a monochromatic color scheme**
- 2) **The images on the sign must be non-flashing**
- 3) **Time of use is restricted to 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.**

Maureen Sheehan,
Department of Neighborhoods

June 26, 2020

Attn. Maureen Sheehan
P.O. Box 94649
Seattle, WA 98124-4649
Maureen.Sheehan@seattle.gov

Re: Bike Parking at Kimball Elementary School

Dear Ms. Sheehan,

We are providing comments on the requested departure from the bicycle parking requirements for the new Kimball Elementary School.

In the submitted presentation, the Seattle Public Schools has not provided sufficient rational basis for its requested departure. In its presentation, SPS states:

Based on observations by the school's administrators, an average of 5 student/staff currently commute to the school by bicycle so the district proposes to install 14 long term bicycle storage spaces now. If bike ridership changes in the future, more spaces could be added. The district plans to install the code required 26 short term bicycle parking spaces.

While this statement attempts to justify what amount of bike parking to provide right now, it does not account for: (A) peak ridership during the year, such as on Bike to School Day, (B) city policy to quadruple bike ridership. In addition, it does not provide any justification for reducing the required performance standards of the bicycle parking. An investment in a school is a 30 to 50 year proposition. Now is the time to get the design right, achieving economies of scale.

Table D of SMC 23.54.015 establishes specific bicycle parking quantity requirements for several land use types, including elementary schools. Prior to a 2018 update, the requirement was 1 long-term bike parking space for each classroom and no short-term bike parking. The initial SDCI draft proposed 2 long-term bike parking spaces and 2 short-term bike parking spaces for each classroom. Following input on national best practices, the final draft as adopted by council required 3 long-term bike parking spaces and 1 short-term bike parking spaces for each classroom.

The standards were based on the City of Seattle's goal to quadruple bicycle ridership from 2014 to 2030. This would result in a commuter bike ridership of approximately 12.5% in 2030. With an average class size of approximately 30 students, three long-term bike spaces per classroom enables 10% of students to ride their bikes to school

Increasing walking and biking to school is a priority of the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools. The City's Safe Routes to School Program dedicates millions of dollars to improving the safety of streets around elementary schools, the School Speed Zone program helps make our streets a little calmer and safer, and SPS's partnership with Cascade Bicycle Club trains kids on how to safely ride to school.

Despite the millions of dollars invested in improving the safety of kids bicycling to school, there can still only be as many kids biking to school as there are safe places to lock-up their bikes. Although a recent study did not determine causation, the [study](#) found that increase bike parking correlated with a 5x higher bike ridership at schools.

The new quantity requirements were established just two years ago by Seattle City Council. It is clear from the site plans that space is not a constraint at the site. In fact, the proposed location of the long-term bike parking looks to be at least a couple hundred feet from the entrance of the school. While ten percent of students and teachers may not currently ride to school everyday, it is important that there is enough space on peak ridership days (such as Bike to School Day), and for accommodating 10% of students by the year 2030.

SPS proposes to provide less than a fifth of the required long-term bike parking — meaning only 2% of students, faculty, and staff would have a safe place to lock their bike. SPS does provide the required amount of short-term bike parking, but this is not a substitute for ensuring bikes stored for a long-period of time will be protected from theft and the weather.

Long-term bike parking is meant for bikes stored for four hours or more. This standard applies to all students, teachers, and staff. Short-term bike parking is meant for people who are visiting the school for less than 4 hours. Bikes parked for longer periods of time are at more risk of being stolen, which is why security requirements are higher for long-term bike parking rather than being simple racks on a sidewalk. Bikes parked for longer periods of time are also more exposed to the weather, especially if uncovered.

The requested departure to not cover the long-term bike parking effectively means it is no longer long-term bike parking. It's both exposed to the weather and thieves can climb over the fence and enter into the storage area. Effectively, there is zero long-term bike parking proposed.

Besides the quantity requirements, we are concerned by the quality aspects of the bike parking. The SMC and SDOT's [Bicycle Parking Guidelines](#) establish specific performance standards for bike parking.

The racks for the short-term bike parking is not specified. There are specific design requirements that short-term bike parking must meet. However, it is clear that the short-term bike parking is too far from the school entrance. The guidelines recommend the short-term bike parking to be within 25 to 50 feet of the building entrance, and the clear intent is for short-term bike parking to be closer to the front door than long-term bike parking.

The location and quality of the long-term bike parking is also problematic.. The SMC specifically states:

Provide bicycle parking in a highly visible, safe, and convenient location, emphasizing user convenience and theft deterrence, based on rules promulgated by the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation that address the considerations in this subsection 23.54.015.K.2

SDOT's Bicycle Parking Guidelines requires for long-term bike parking:

- Must provide bicycles full weather protection and theft protection
- Must be located on site or within 100-feet of pedestrian entrance, no further from building entrance than closest non-disabled vehicle parking space
- A minimum of 50% of the bicycle parking shall allow bicycles to sit horizontally on the ground to accommodate non-standard bicycles and the needs of those who cannot lift a bicycle. Double stack bicycle racks must include an assisted lift mechanism.
- Provide easily accessible electrical outlets within the long term bike parking area.
- Ground-level rack should accommodate recumbent bikes, folding bikes, cargo bikes, bikes with trailers, family bikes, etc.
- When planning a long term bicycle parking a area account for a minimum of 12 sq ft for every required bicycle parking space.

The proposed long-term bike parking is farther than the closest non-disabled vehicle parking space, and thus does not meet the distance requirements of SDOT's Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

There is insufficient information to know whether the long-term bike parking meets any of the other requirements of the Bicycle Parking Guidelines.

SPS provides no justification for departures from the performance standards for short-term and long-term bike parking. In addition, SPS's rationale of setting the amount of bike parking based on current average usage is inconsistent with the rationale behind city council's update to the bike parking code to enable quadrupling of bike ridership by 2030. Furthermore, the elimination of any cover to the long-term bike parking means that Kimball Elementary would effectively have zero long-term bike parking.

We request that SPS put forth a plan that meets the standards established by the Seattle City Council just two years ago and the criteria set by the Seattle Department of Transportation. Any additional justification that SPS provides should be subject to public comment prior to any action by the Development Standard Advisory Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brock".

Brock Howell
Bicycle Security Advisors
brock@bicyclesecurityadvocates.org
206-856-4788

CC: Nathan Torgelson, Sam Zimbabwe, CM Tammy Morales, and CM Dan Strauss

Sheehan, Maureen

From: khyimo <khyimo@protonmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2020 11:10 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary Departures

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: External Email

Maureen Sheehan,

I have reviewed your report and while I would not immediately take exception to the departures you have listed. I absolutely take exception to the drab brutal 1930's modernist character of the the building that is proposed. Wiping a few colored stripes onto a ponderous grey unit masonry facade does not come close to creating a compatible character for an addition to the fine grained residential community surrounding the Kimball site.

The plan configuration is the best aspect of the building mass. It at least makes a nod to attempting to manage the scale of what looks in elevation like a massive 90 year old concrete masonry reformatory in some beleaguered eastern european industrial town. This design is its own worst enemy. You will, I believe, get an astonishing level of push back on this solution, on all of it's departures, if you do not address the offensive lack of compatible character in it's materials pallet and design expression.

Beacon Hill is becoming a young family dominated neighborhood concentration zone. A sustainable future for their children is a central aspiration shared widely here.

An elementary school Here should embody a bleeding edge expression of that in its design and materials pallet. Which I think ought to mean modern massive wood technology. not concrete, a challenge but a far more sustainable application of regional material resources in our times.

Compatibility in this community, can be found without losing all your departures, but to reach that you will need to propose a building the growing population of futurist visionaries who are moving here, could love for their children to be schooled in. This design, frankly sucks.

You have a truly great structural engineer, and the best food service consultant in the Region, and a building that seems arranged on the site in a intelligent way. Try to make it better. Not just compatible, but expressive of Beacon Hill's aspirational visions of how we reach a sustainable future for the children it will house and educate.

George Robertson
3416 19th Ave S
Seattle, WA 98144

June 24, 2020

Maureen Sheehan
Department of Neighborhoods Contact
Phone: (206) 684-0302
Email: maureen.sheehan@seattle.gov

Dear Maureen Sheehan:

We are writing about the requested departures related to the replacement of Kimball Elementary School.

We want to start by saying that we are profoundly supportive of Kimball Elementary School being replaced. Our two older children attend Kimball, and our youngest will start there in a few years, and the school building is outdated and overcrowded and certainly needs to be replaced. Both of us attended Seattle Public Schools, one of us (Noah) attended Kimball (as did his siblings and several other family members), and we are actively involved in the school community. The school is incredibly diverse and has a high percentage of low-income students and English language learners; these kids deserve an outstanding new building.

We also live right near Kimball, and we are mindful that the new building will be part of the Beacon Hill community for decades to come, so the new building should enhance the neighborhood and be something local residents are excited about. We walk, bike, or drive by Kimball almost every day, and we can see Kimball from our home, so we care a lot about the building design and that the building fit into the neighborhood.

While we are very excited to see Kimball replaced, **we are deeply concerned that the proposed height variance for this project is wildly incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood and without any showing from the School District that the variance is actually necessary.** We also think that if Kimball were in a wealthier neighborhood, this type of variance would not even be proposed, much less accepted. In explaining our concerns, we will start with the impact on the neighborhood, then go on to the problems with the proposal under the Seattle Municipal Code, then explain why we think it would be inequitable to grant this variance here.

The departure would significantly impact the neighborhood: Kimball is in an entirely residential neighborhood and is surrounded by single family homes (some on the same block as Kimball), many of them only one story tall. There are no multi-family or commercial uses in the immediate area. Kimball currently fits into the neighborhood because the existing structure is primarily one story and fits the scale of the surrounding buildings. From the main thoroughfare passing Kimball (23rd Avenue South), you barely notice the building because it sits almost entirely below street level because of the slope of the site. Of course, we would not expect that a replacement project fit in in exactly the same way, but the current proposal is far out of scale with the existing building and the surrounding neighborhood. **The current design seeks to build significant parts of the structure 58' tall (23' above the maximum height) and virtually all of the**

structure 43'4" tall (8'4" above the maximum height). This building will tower over everything in the surrounding neighborhood and will stick out like a sore thumb. It will also obstruct views of the Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington for many residents who live across the street from the school and on the hills to the south and west of Kimball.

To get a sense of how radically the proposed design would alter the character of the neighborhood, two slides are instructive. First, look at the Site Sections on page 21, which show how the new design dwarfs the existing structure. Second, look at the Building Height slide on page 35, showing pedestrians walking down 23rd Avenue South. Currently, when you walk down that street, you can see over Kimball to the Cascades. In the revised design, the school towers over pedestrians and the surrounding homes.

The departure would be unnecessary and inconsistent with the considerations in the Code: If the proposed design were the only possible way to meet the educational needs of the School District and the community, this might be an acceptable proposal and comply with the Seattle Municipal Code requirements for a departure. But there is simply no evidence that this was the only option.

The SMC says that little “or no departure may be granted for a facility which can be accommodated within the established development standards,” and that the City should consider before granting a departure the building’s “[a]ppropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area.” SMC 23.79.008. Zoning rules for the Kimball site would allow a building up to 35’ tall, and Kimball sits on a large site, nearly a full city block. The site is also sloped, so it would be possible to build a structure taller than 35’ lower on the site that would not appear nearly so out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. But the proposed design nonetheless inexplicably seeks to exceed the maximum height limit by 23’.

There appear to be any number of ways to have avoided needing such a massive variance or any variance at all, from covering more of the site (the current design for the new building appears to cover less of the site than the existing buildings on the site cover), to locating the building lower down the slope of the site. If you walk the building site, it is unfathomable why the School District would need a height departure to meet the programmatic needs of the new school. In addition, nothing in the departure request indicates why the same square footage could not have been accommodated on the site without seeking a huge variance. That alone is sufficient reason to deny the requested departure.

To learn about the departure process for schools and what is typical, we reviewed all of the departure requests for school buildings since 2008 (at least all of the SPS departure information that is available on the City’s website). **We could find no height departure request that was approved that was remotely comparable to this one.** While the City has approved some height departures, all of the departures involved situations where either (a) the new school was above the height limit but comparable or shorter than the building being replaced or remodeled (West Woodland Elementary and Webster School are examples); (b) the departure was just a few feet above the height limit and simply to enclose a mechanical penthouse that could be there regardless (such as with Olympic Hills Elementary, Magnolia Elementary, and Thornton Creek Elementary); or (c) minor height departures for schools in neighborhoods where there were similar height or taller structures adjacent to the school (as with Loyal Heights, Denny/Sealth,

and Wilson Pacific Elementary and Middle School). In fact, even when faced with much smaller potential departure requests than here, the School District has instead adopted design changes, such as with the Genesee Hill project in 2013, where the District minimized the requested departure by moving mechanical equipment to the basement instead of in a penthouse on top of the school, as is proposed for Kimball. Similarly, with the 2018 Wing Luke Phase II proposal, the community refused to support the height departure (smaller than Kimball's) and the City then did not grant a departure much smaller than is at issue here. It is important to note that in the case of Wing Luke, there is L1 zoning in the immediate area and no community views being blocked by the new building, and still the height departure was denied for Phase II.

We understand that the building needs to be larger than the existing structure to meet modern standards and accommodate more students, but the design must be balanced “in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area.” SMC 23.79.008. Here, doubling the height of the current building to 2 stories would make Kimball significantly larger than the buildings nearby and should be more than sufficient to accommodate the expanded needs; **this proposal would make the building nearly 4 times taller than it is currently.**

The departure would be inequitable: The proposed departure is not only contrary to the City code, but approving it would also raise serious questions of equity in how the City handles departures (and how/when the District requests them). As noted above, we reviewed all of the recent departure requests for school buildings. It appears that the City often denies even seemingly minor departure requests in wealthy neighborhoods (such as a 2015 proposal to add four portables at Laurelhurst Elementary, where the coverage variance was denied and no additional portables were located on the site for classrooms), and the School District often doesn't even request height departures in such neighborhoods (e.g., Coe, Arbor Heights, and Queen Anne Elementary). To approve a 23' height departure when a different design could be accommodated at the Kimball site, in one of the City's most diverse neighborhoods, would seriously call into question the City's commitment to equity in how it applies departure standards that are supposed to be fairly applied throughout the City.

In a wealthier neighborhood, it is unimaginable that the School District would even have proposed, or that the City would grant, an unprecedented departure to create a building dwarfing the nearby homes and blocking many views of the mountains and water for the neighborhood. In none of the departures that we reviewed were aerial views of residents being impacted by the departure being requested by the District or granted by the City. Departures should be sought and granted equally, not based on which neighborhood is most likely to have the time and resources to protest loudly.

On the note of equity, we also have been troubled by the process used here. It appears that the only design proposal the School District ever meaningfully considered presumed that this massive departure would be granted. The neighborhood was never consulted before the District settled on this approach. Even now, there is minimal signage at the school notifying people of the proposed departure (two letter-sized pieces of paper posted far from the sidewalk and impossible to see unless you are searching for them), and very little notice was provided to the neighborhood about the requested departure.

Neighbors we have spoken with have been unaware and then shocked at the scale of the proposed new building. We understand that it is a challenging time and changes needed to be made to the usual community process to move things forward, but many in the area don't know this process is happening and the ones that are aware of the rebuild have no idea the proposed rebuild will so substantially change the character of the site. Yes, some know the new school will be larger than the current school, but no one imagines that the new school will be three to four times taller than the existing building.

Like all building sites, we understand that Kimball's site is unique and provides some distinct challenges for the architects in order to meet all the programmatic needs of the District and learning community, but we believe in the creativity and abilities of the project team to find a design that meets these goals, fits into the neighborhood, and excites the current and future students at Kimball. Through reviewing the designs of the schools the District has done in the previous and current BEX levies, we know this is possible—they have risen to the challenge time and time again (especially in wealthy neighborhoods), and we know they can do it here too.

Thank you for considering our input. To reiterate, we very much want to see Kimball replaced with an outstanding new building, for the sake of our own kids and for all the kids on Beacon Hill who deserve an excellent setting for their education. But the School District's design proposal and departure request (and a review of the existing site and programmatic needs) never explain why these goals cannot be met "within the established development standards." SMC 23.79.008. **We hope that the City will deny this height departure request and the District will quickly propose a new approach that achieves the school's educational needs while also fitting into the scale and character of the neighborhood.**

Sincerely,

Jasmin Weaver and Noah Purcell
3426 19th Ave S
Seattle, WA 98144

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Jennifer Morales <jvanminnen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 2:03 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Cc: Jerry Morales
Subject: Rebuild of Kimball Elementary

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Ms. Sheehan,

It has recently been brought to our attention that there are plans in progress to significantly remodel and improve Kimball Elementary on 23rd Ave S on Beacon Hill. While we wholeheartedly support a more modern and updated school, we are concerned that we did not have the opportunity to review the plans prior to being finalized. We are requesting the plans be put on hold in favor of the opportunity for our community to come together to ask questions, provide input and review the plans before moving forward.

Thanks for your consideration,
Jennifer and Jerry Morales

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Jorji Knickrehm <jorjjill@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 2:40 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Reactions to Kimball Elementary Departures draft document

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Maureen,

I'm a parent of two SPS kids, both of whom attended Kimball Elementary. I also live very close, next to Blaine Memorial Church. I love the school, as does everyone in the neighborhood. Thank you for allowing us to provide input and showing us the Kimball Departures draft.

There are many things about the plan that seem great, particularly the emphasis on keeping as many trees as possible, especially the 'essential' trees. I have two items that I'd like to express negative reactions to. The first is not one of your departures, but hopefully there is a way to make a change in regards to it; the second is about the departures.

1. This design cuts too drastically into the outdoor play areas. In particular, the smaller Kindergarten/First grade play equipment area at the North end of the school is gone, and has not been replaced anywhere. So will all the kids have to play together (even the very youngest ones) on the now-smaller playground area on the south side of the school? The diminished playground doesn't seem large enough at all if that is the case, and it seems like the little kids will not have anywhere to learn the monkey bars, etc. without big kids using all the equipment and being scary. Having two playgrounds is currently a big plus for Kimball. I would urge finding an area for the K-1 kids to play separately even if that means a slightly smaller footprint inside.

2. I strongly think there should be a roof over the bike storage. Although legend has it that a few kids have ventured onto the Kimball roof over the years, it has certainly not been widespread and should not be a reason to not protect bikes from the many Seattle downpours that are bound to occur. Wet bikes will discourage teachers and students from riding to school, and we should be encouraging ridership, not discouraging it.

Thanks for allowing me to have a voice, I really appreciate it!!

All the best,
Jorji Knickrehm
(206) 240-9854

Sheehan, Maureen

From: kristina veirs <kveirs@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 25, 2020 2:43 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary School Design Departures

CAUTION: External Email

June 25th, 2020

Maureen Sheehan
Department of Neighborhoods

I like the overall design, the number of trees to be saved and trees to be planted. My only concern is the number of **proposed parking spaces**.

I want Kimball to provide enough parking for its administration and teachers, now and future. Parking should not be forced on to neighborhood streets. I would like Kimball to be a good neighbor.

Sincerely,
Kristina Veirs
3314 24th Ave South
23 year resident

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Kyl Dinsio <kyljane@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2020 8:46 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen; Gray, Melissa G
Subject: Kimball feedback

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: External Email

Hello,

I am a parent at Kimball school and would like to supply some feedback on the proposed plans. Overall, the design is very nice and is a definite improvement over the existing building.

I am concerned about a few things. Firstly, this:
> Departure #2 Requested for 100 Parking Spaces of the 140 required.

The wording here is extremely deceptive, whether that was deliberate or not. It makes it sound like the design will have 100 spaces rather than proposed 140. But that's not the case. The site will have 40 spaces of the proposed 140. This is a wholly insufficient amount of parking for that building. I live across the street from Kimball on S. Hinds and our street is already crowded with cars from every house on the street being multigenerational homes. There is no room for extra Kimball staff parking.

The "parking survey" results of the neighborhood are highly questionable as they were pre-COVID 19. In this new era, more people are working from home indefinitely and a new survey should, at minimum, should be done.

Also, there are no bus routes that go down 23rd and the light rail stations are not convenient either (particularly in winter weather). Almost all of the teachers have to drive in because they don't make enough money to live in Seattle, so it should be obvious that 40 is a paltry amount of parking just for the teachers, not even including staff, volunteers, and others.

The last thing teachers need every morning is to worry about finding a parking spot in the neighborhood.

I understand from the design that the alternative would be to use some of the open asphalt area for parking. Honestly, I don't see this as a problem. Having that much open asphalt is not a fun playground space and I'm kind of shocked that is still in the proposal. I thought the students would get a playground upgrade with the new building, but apparently not.

Going onto the Kimball building site now and seeing such a large expanse of concrete is not inviting. It is, frankly, sad that we can't provide a better playground structure for the students. So, if that space is not going to be a beautiful playground area, then it might as well be parking because a giant asphalt 'playground' is both unattractive and uninspiring.

Thank you for considering,
Kyl Dinsio

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Ly <writetoly@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, May 31, 2020 3:26 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball design Departures

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Maureen:

Thanks for the opportunity to read the design departures document. I am a parent and our family lives 3 blocks away.

All the departures seem to make sense as long as the core faculty who need parking spaces the most are accommodated through the 40 spaces. As far as events, I would say that the I've seen at most 200+ families attend on a busy night. Half of those families that attend seem to live in walking distance so the overflow parking solution should work out ok.

I am all for preserving the play-space over making a large parking lot that's mostly unused.

For the last departure- I don't think a big lit sign is needed. Perhaps it's a nice to have but as a parent, I don't think it's top priority. Plus there is some traffic but I wouldn't say those driving down 23rd will be interested in looking at a sign.

Thank you. It's exciting that our neighborhood will be getting a newly built school.

Ly
(Mom to a 2nd grader)

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Michael Brooks <michaelbrookslaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 27, 2020 11:31 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Comments on Kimball Design Departures
Attachments: 2-27-20 Traffic and parking on Hinds.jpg; 2-27-20 Traffic and parking on Hinds 2.jpg; 2-27-20 Traffic and parking on Hinds 3.jpg

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

CAUTION: External Email

Hi Ms. Sheehan,

My husband and I have lived across the street from Kimball--2317 S Hinds St--for the past 10 years. The elementary school and recess area is the predominant view from our home's north facing windows. It's right in front of our house that the busses drop off and pick up, where some of the teachers park, and where many parents improperly drop off and pick up their students.

The design is overall quite good and I have few issues with it. I attended the last design meeting at the school and so have been interested in the design iterations and the objections of our neighbors and the response of the City and the architect firm.

Here are my issues with and comments on the latest iteration of the proposal:

1) Blank, flat, monolithic facade of the gym in conjunction with the increase in height that includes the mechanical penthouse. Please do something to make this facade more interesting and less of a monolith. Landscaping/trees, an overhang, faux windows. I don't know what more to suggest, but it is unattractive as currently depicted and is going to be eye-catching/reflective with that unbroken wall of gray.

2) Building color and accent colors. Right now we look out at a nondescript mid-tone brown building and lots of trees. Except for the playground equipment, the school building fades into the background. For the new building, the architects have proposed a mid- or light-gray building which, on the south side, is going to be really reflective and much more bright and eye-catching than the current structure, making the new building feel more imposing and a visual distraction in this residential neighborhood. The mechanical penthouse surround appears to be an even lighter gray and I would ask that this be camouflaged as much as possible.

Regarding the multiple and bright "accent" colors, no one wants to look at these from their residence. It's unkind to leave a neighborhood with such a garish color scheme like so many spec builders who feel they have to make their modern box houses stand out. By all means, make the school fun on the inside, but please try to otherwise choose a color scheme that integrates into the neighborhood. As far as I'm aware, there are no homes in North Beacon Hill painted any of those colors. Pick one or two mellow accent colors for the exterior.

3) [If not providing a roundabout for student drop off/pick up] Enforce the parent pick up location on 24th. I've attached stills from a video I shot on 2/27/20. Hinds is terribly congested with 1) busses during drop off and pickup times, 2) parent vehicles during drop off and pick up times, and 3) teacher parked vehicles all day. So much so that It is difficult to get out of our driveway at pickup and drop off times.

4) Add a curb cut out on the west side of 24th for a parent student load/unload zone. At the last design meeting at the school, the City rep (a man whose name I'm forgetting) said this was being considered. It does not seem to be represented in this Design Departures document but needs to be an integral part of the plan. If parents do not find 24th convenient, they are going to continue to drop off/pickup on Hinds. You are also going to have a lot of unhappy neighbors who live on 24th.

Please let me know if you have any questions about my comments. Thank you for the consideration.

Best,
Michael Brooks
(206) 295-3459

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Michelle Scalley-Kim <scalleykim@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, June 26, 2020 12:16 PM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary School design

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Maureen,

I am writing to relay my support of the proposed deviations from code for the Kimball Elementary School, including the potentially controversial height adjustment . I'm a Beacon Hill resident and parent of two Kimball alumni. We live on 19th and Stevens and my view may be potentially impacted by the school. Despite this, I believe the impact will be minimal and worth it if the school truly requires it.. My only concern is that the design is a bit drab...my husband equated it to the county jail. Perhaps more windows to take advantage of the view are in order?

Thank you,

Michelle Scalley-Kim
Beacon Hill resident

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Morgan Hougland, LEED AP <mhougland@hewittseattle.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2020 11:38 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: SPS - Kimball Elementary Replacement Building - Requests for Departures Public Comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Kimball Elementary

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Maureen,

Below are my comments on the Kimball Elementary Replacement Building – Requests for Departures

I only have issues with Departures #3 and #5. The others I feel are totally appropriate for a neighborhood school and are well considered.

Departure #3: The quantity of bicycle parking provided should not be based on the current bicycle commuting facilities at Kimball which discourage bicycling due to the very limited quantity, total lack of weather protection, and poor placement to ensure bicycle security. If the code required amount can't be met then its future accommodation needs to be planned for and space allocated to expand. The current planned location for the long term bike parking appears to be in a decent location, somewhat close to the main entrance, but it is hard to tell if the area is easy for students and staff working within the building to keep an eye on this area throughout the day. The short term bike parking location is terribly located. It is at the farthest possible point away from any school entrance. If the intent is for someone to use these racks for short term use, it seems like they should be as close to the main entrance as possible. Why would someone lock there bike at the Southeast corner of the site and then walk around to the opposite Northwest corner of the site to go to the building entrance. At the least, a portion of these should be distributed around the site near entrances, especially the main entrance.

Please to not grant this departure as currently proposed.



SOME OF THE SHORT TERM BIKE PARKING SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED TO THIS AREA DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO THE MAIN SCHOOL ENTRANCE AND DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO OTHER ENTRANCES.

NOTE: THE L AREA THOU BICYC

TORAGE

Proposed 14 Secured
Long Term Bike
Storage Spaces

and 26 short
term
while open
or use.

administrators,
commute
proposes to
es now. If bike
aces could be
ode required



Departure #5: The Architects and Landscape Architects need to more creative on this one. To encourage students and staff to ride more requires the ability to park their bikes in a place that protects them from the weather during the length of the school day and during afterschool events. As a year round cyclist I have found that even though there is a great deal of seasonal rain in our region it is usually mild in its intensity and duration, therefore allowing bicycle commuting to be a viable and pleasant mode of transit throughout the year. The lack of weather protected bike parking has been one of the two main factors that caused a lot of students and staff to not ride their bikes to Kimball. During the 4 years that my son attended Kimball we were often discouraged from having him ride his bike due to not having a weather protected location to lock his bike up during the day. The other issue was the location of the current Kimball bike racks. They were / are in a location that did not allow for many eyes to be on the location and keep bikes secure.

In addition, with the increasing popularity of e-bikes becoming part of this equation, and with the limited car parking available to teachers (Departure #2), it would prove beneficial to encourage cycling to school by teachers and staff. Especially with the location of the Kimball site being in such a hilly part of the neighborhood, e-bikes are an ideal mode of transit and should be encouraged and accommodated with weather protected bike storage areas and racks specific to e-bikes and e-cargo bikes.

Please do not allow this departure to be granted in its current iteration.

P.S. These concerns were also raised during the SDAT (School Design Advisory Team) Committee of Kimball Parents and Teachers to the NAC Architects and Osborne Consulting (Landscape Architects).

Thanks for your consideration,

Morgan Houglan, father of Solomon Houglan-Ramirez (past Kimball Cougar and now a proud Mercer Mustang 6th grader)

Morgan Houglan, LEED AP

HEWITT

101 Stewart Street, Suite 200 | Seattle, Washington 98101-1048

206.624.8154 phone | 206.834.3857 direct | 206.790.4481 mobile

www.hewittseattle.com | newforma personal file transfer

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Patrick Nelson <pnelson101@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 03, 2020 11:15 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary School Zoning comments

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Kimball Elementary

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Ms. Sheehan,

Please let me know if these comments should be submitted through another channel. I am a north Beacon Hill resident with one child currently attending Kimball and a toddler who will attend in the future. My daughter and I are also one of the estimated 5 bicycle commuters, so I hope I can provide some first hand experience regarding the several bicycle related variances.

1) Greater than allowed building height.

Fully in favor. This is needed to fit the necessary student capacity in a reasonable footprint. The site slopes downward reducing the visual impact, and to the extent that there is it seems appropriate for a school to act as a neighborhood anchor.

2) Reduction of on-site parking.

Fully in favor. Students are not parking cars all day and it is silly to size parking for once a month events. If anything, I'd prefer the design exclude overflow parking on the play area so that kids aren't playing on oil and tire rubber.

3) Reduction of bike storage.

Fully in favor. The bike capacity in the variance is still a substantial improvement over existing facilities and looks to provide enough for foreseeable usage.

4) Bike storage without roof protection.

Strongly opposed. The SPS school year aligns with Seattle's rainy season. One reason bike usage is currently so low may be the lack of anywhere dry to store a bike. The "safety concern" does not seem to outweigh this need as the structure will still be 8+ feet off the ground and a small enough area to not be as inviting for mischief as a school roof.

5) Shared access path for pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Fully in favor. The path appears wide and pickup/dropoff hours already create a mixing zone of young students who would likely walk though a bike only path anyway.

6) Addition of an electric message board.

Fully in favor. This will help drive community engagement and awareness of school events.

Thank you,

Patrick Nelson

July 25th, 2020

Maureen Sheehan

Major Institutions and Schools Coordinator

Office: 206.684.0302

seattle.gov/neighborhoods

Dear Ms. Sheehan,

We have been residents on Beacon Hill for the past 44 years. Our children and grandchildren have attended Kimball Elementary School where they enjoyed mostly great teachers and a wonderfully diverse and positive experience. We have had a series of great principals and have enjoyed the open space concept of the school.

It came as quite a shock to us to see a plan for the new school rolled out with no community involvement and to see the school design be a complete departure from the current character of the building in the neighborhood. I understand that the Covid-19 pandemic made the solicitation of input more difficult, but to completely abandon the public process is something that the city would only do in the south end where less public outcry would be expected. The architects plan for the school requires several zoning departures without addressing the question of why the district's educational goals cannot be met within the existing code requirements. In particular, the height variance of 23 feet above the current limit creates a building which is completely out of scale with the neighborhood and will impact the entire neighborhood from 23rd St. up to Beacon Avenue. This height variance is also two times higher than other variance requests the district is making for schools in other neighborhoods such as the Northgate proposal.

This building will have a significant effect on the neighborhood, and we deserve to have a role in the process. We are more than happy to participate in Zoom meetings to review and address our concerns. We believe that the educational goals of the district can be met without such a serious departure from the height limit and would like to see alternatives to that end. I can be reached at pauldpurcell@gmail.com or 206-478-4153.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Purcell

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Robert Getch <robert.getch@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 10:23 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Re: Kimball Elementary Departures

CAUTION: External Email

Hello,

I noticed after I hit send my signature did not append to the email. Here it is:

Robert Getch

*Beacon Hill Safe Streets
Chair*
Cell: (503) 729-8258
robert.getch@gmail.com

On Sat, Jun 27, 2020, 9:43 AM Robert Getch <robert.getch@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

I apologize that I am a day late here, our organization met the day before the comment deadline. I am the chair of Beacon Hill Safe Streets and we are reaching out with concern about the departures related to bike parking, particularly departures 3 and 5.

While we understand that current bike volumes may be low, we have worked with parents in years past who referred to it as inadequate. We also have been working with residents on concerns about how kids get to school safely during a pandemic without mass transit and biking is one of those options. We believe that SPS and its contractors should not receive a departure from the long term parking requirements.

We also have heard from parents that it was difficult for kids to have a place to put on gear and get ready to use their bike or for school and feel that a covered bike parking area would be helpful. While we understand from the materials about the safety concerns, we feel there should be a change to the plans to ensure the roof can be built versus abandoning the needed coverings.

We hope that you will take this comment into consideration.

Thank you,

Rob



Seattle

School Traffic Safety Committee

July 15, 2020

To: Kimball Elementary School Departure Committee
c/o Maureen Sheehan, Maureen.Sheehan@seattle.gov

Re: Kimball Elementary Departure Requests # 2, # 3, # 4, & # 5

The Seattle School Traffic Safety Committee (STSC), an advisory committee established by the City of Seattle, strongly supports the announced plans for the much-needed expansion and replacement of Kimball Elementary School. But the STSC urges that the School Departure Request # 2 be granted with conditions and that Departure Requests # 3, #4, # 5 regarding bicycle parking, all as contained in the “Kimball Elementary School Departures Presentation”¹ be denied or conditioned as described below.

The issues:

Students, teachers, and staff get to and from school by one of 5 modes of transportation: via school buses, private automobiles, transit, walking, and rolling (on bicycles, scooters, or other wheeled modes). **An increase in school population will by nature increase the impacts of one or the other of these modes.** The School Traffic Safety Committee supports the current code (SMC 23.54.015) which intentionally tries to ease the impacts of traffic by encouraging the least impactful and most healthy modes: walking, biking. More importantly, bicycle use is increasing and it’s the City’s announced goal to quadruple bike commuting by 2030, only 10 years away.

The departure requests:

Our comments below are first directed to the specific Departure Requests and then to a more general comment pertaining to all of the bicycle parking-related departure requests. Following that is more detailed explanation of the reasoning underlying our comments.

Departure Request # 2 and its map for parking shows overflow parking at the south end of the student exercise and play area.² The request proposes overflow parking sharing a portion of the children’s play area during special events during non-school hours, retaining that area as part of the children’s play area at other times. But the plan presented shows parking stalls arranged in a parking lot fashion. Hopefully, the stalls shown are only an indication of the number of cars that could be parked. If it were actually striped as shown, its very nature would imply that the area is a principally a parking area and only secondarily to be used for play. This

¹ Kimball Elementary School Departures Presentation, undated, pp. 49-50, accessed on July 12, 2020 from <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/MajorInstitutions/Kimball%20Elementary/KimballDeparturesFINAL.pdf>

² Ibid, p. 42

departure, if granted, should be conditioned that no parking striping or traffic striping in that area are to be installed for the life of the project.

Departure Request # 3 would reduce the number of long-term bicycle spaces required by schools in SMC 23.54.015 Table D item “B.9. Schools, Primary & Secondary” from 75 to 14, an 81% reduction.³ The justification is the number of bikes currently counted. There are problems with that justification.

As discussed in more detail later in these comments, attractive, ample, and convenient bicycle parking plays a large part in encouraging cycling by students, parents, teachers, and staff. Encouraging bicycling is a way of reducing vehicular traffic and parking in the neighborhood, it is consistent with City policy and objectives, and it promotes a healthier lifestyle and increases student concentration and learning.

Bicycle use is growing rapidly as discussed in detail later in these comments. New forms of cycling such as electric assisted cycling and family and cargo bicycles (which are up to twice the size of normal bikes) are rapidly expanding and attracting more people to cycle for more uses. The school is built for expanding enrollment. All of these factors multiply each other creating the need to provide in the near future code-required amount of bicycle storage.

The plan submitted shows no provision for expanding the long-term bicycle parking area in the future as the need grows. But (1) there is no undertaking offered that such an expansion would occur, (2) the City has no mechanism for ensuring that expansion would occur, (3) to install the provisions in the future (the levelling and paving of the required area, the provisions to enable roofing, and least of all, the provision of the racks themselves) would be much more difficult and expensive than installing them during original construction, and (4) there is no mechanism for ensuring that funds would be made available for that expansion in the future.

For those reasons, we strongly request the Departure Request # 3 be denied. If the request is unfortunately granted, then at the very least it should be conditioned that the needed grading, paving, and foundation for a future roof structure to accommodate the code-required amount of storage be installed as part of, and simultaneously with, this project’s construction.

Departure Request # 4 deals with shared bike storage access. Although it does not mention it as part of the requested departure, it shows the short-term bicycle storage to be in an inappropriate location.

The plans submitted do not label uses of the various spaces, but we presume that there will be a gymnasium and/or a large indoor activity space and that there could be a more public entrance for attendees of special events in those.

The most important issue here is the location of the short-term bicycle parking. It is not at a convenient location for short trips to the school, and it is not within 25 to 50 feet of the main entrance to the school nor to potential entrances to large public spaces in the school, all as required by The Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines, p. 9.⁴ One of the several potential ways of

³ Ibid, p. 49

⁴ Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines, p. 9, [online here](#).

adding parking near the main school entrance could be easily accomplished by shifting the front parking lot closer to S. Hanford Street, allowing the front sidewalk to be widened to allow for some bike parking along the front of the school and, if there is a separate public entrance to large areas for special events, shifting some of the short-term bike parking to there.

Why Departure Request # 4 requests a departure for shared bike storage access is unclear. To quote 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.”* A reasonable reading of that sentence may be that it does not require a separation between pedestrian and the bicycle access, but rather, allows them both to be combined but requires them to be separated from vehicular traffic like driveways and parking areas. Of course, ample sidewalk space would be needed for the pedestrian and bike traffic; relocating short-term bicycle parking would help with that.

We propose that Departure # 4 be granted with conditions: relocate the short-term bicycle parking nearer to the school’s main entrance and, if there is to be a separate entrance for public events, relocating a portion of it to near there.

Departure Request # 5 asks to omit “full weather protection” for long-term bike storage protection.⁵ The rationale for that requirement is not to provide protection for the users but to provide protection for the bikes which increasingly are susceptible to weather deterioration, especially those that are electric and the family and cargo bikes, many of which have wooden portions or cockpits within which rain can puddle.

The rationale offered is that this would avoid people climbing on its roof. That could easily be avoided by the architectural design of the shelter, or by the use of materials that aren’t conducive to climbing, or by shifting it to be against the blank walls school’s wing, among other possibilities. School buildings certainly don’t generally omit roofs to keep people from climbing on them, and many school buildings, such as Green Lake Elementary, have covered bicycle parking without any climbing issues.

Departure Request # 5 should be denied.

General considerations to bike parking: In 2018 SMC 23.54.015 was deliberately changed by City Council and signed into law by the mayor. One of its principle features was to increase required bicycle provisions, including bicycle parking at schools, as a means to encourage the use of bicycling to lessen the impacts created by driving. As Brock Howell of Bicycle Security Advisors reported in his June 22 letter to the School Departures Committee:

“The standards were based on the City of Seattle’s goal to quadruple bicycle ridership from 2014 to 2030. This would result in a commuter bike ridership of approximately 12.5% in 2030. With an average class size of approximately 30 students, three long-term bike spaces per classroom enables 10% of students to ride their bikes to school”

⁵ Ibid, p.p. 55-57

Impacts of the transportation modes:

An increase in the use of private automobiles by parents driving their kids and by teachers and staff commuting increases traffic congestion around the schools and throughout the city in general. And it increases the need for parking, either by parking on streets throughout the neighborhood, or by undertaking the expense of creating parking lots and driveways. And most importantly, the increase in traffic increases the danger of getting hit by traffic for all pedestrians and especially for kids. (Ironically, the traffic peaks at the identical time that kids are walking, running, biking, and playing at bell times).

A superior alternative to the above is to encourage active transportation like walking and biking. This helps decrease traffic and parking impacts. But instead of encouraging the use of bikes to reduce vehicular traffic, the proposed departures disregard the city's goals and standards as codified in SMC 23.54.015.

Health:

An important benefit of encouraging active transportation is its life-long effects on students. School is where kids learn many skills and habits that will stay with them over their entire life. There is a large volume of literature about the benefits of kids walking or biking to school both during school and later throughout their lives. Some typical excerpts:

*“There is a growing body of evidence showing a positive relationship between physical activity and measures of academic achievement, including grade point average (Kontomaa et al, 2013), rate of learning (Hillman et al., 2009), and classroom behavior (Davis and Cooper, 2011), as well as cognitive, social, and motor skill development and ability (Active Living Research, 2015)”*⁶

*“The trip to school is a crucial opportunity for children and youth to get regular physical activity by walking or bicycling. Walking and bicycling not only create healthier students, but also support focused learning and academic performance. In order to achieve these benefits, walking and biking to school need to be convenient, comfortable, and safe.”*⁷

*“... kids who cycled or walked to school, rather than traveling by car or public transportation, performed measurably better on tasks demanding concentration, such as solving puzzles, and that the effects lasted for up to four hours after they got to school”*⁸

Provision of adequate bicycle parking is one of the tools that will help Kimball Elementary encourage their students to thrive.

⁶ Safe Routes Partnership, *Research: Academic Performance and Attendance* [online here](#).

⁷ “Making Strides 2020; State Report Cards on Support for Walking, Bicycling, and Active Kids and Communities”, p. 14, by the Safe Routes Partnership website [introduction here](#) and the [full report here](#).

⁸ “The Link Between Kids Who Walk or Bike to School and Concentration”, an article in City Lab [online here](#)

Bicycle Parking Makes a Difference:

The availability and convenience of bicycle parking influences the choice of whether or not to bike to school. It makes an implicit impact on the students' psyches to see the prominence that it is given and to see peers using it.

A recent study of bicycle use in 15 schools concluded as follows:

*"Factors that contribute to student cycling at the individual school level are varied and complex. In this study, **the size of bike parking, cycling promotive school policies, and participation in grant-funded promotional programming emerged as clear distinctions between [schools that had higher rates of bicycling] and control schools.**"⁹*

The University of Washington produces an annual Transportation Report surveying the campus about the use of all modes of transport. One of the questions lists 7 potential bicycle facility improvements and asked if they would encourage more bicycle commuting.

In 2014, 46% answered that more secure parking would provide more encouragement (ranked # 4 in the choices for improvements – more bike paths & lanes was # 1,), 44% answered that covered parking would be an encouragement, (ranked # 5 in the list), and 31% answered that more bike racks would be an encouragement (ranked # 7 in the list).¹⁰

After providing more parking, the 2019 survey results changed to 15% answered that more secure parking would provide more encouragement (ranked # 2 in the choices for improvements – more bike paths & lanes was # 1,), over 12% answered that covered parking would be an encouragement, (ranked # 5 in the list), and over 10% answered that more bike racks would be an encouragement (ranked # 7 in the list).¹¹

The Need for Bicycle Parking is Expected to Grow

Schools are built with the expectation that they will be in service for many decades. It is predicted by many that the amount of biking to school is increasing and will continue to increase.

Only 3 limited and inconsistent studies have been completed in Seattle about the rate of bike usage in schools.¹² Unfortunately only a few, inconsistent schools agreed to participate (there was no participation by Kimball Elementary nor any nearby schools). The results were that 3% of the students biked to the participating schools in 2015 and 2016 and 1.8% in 2018.

But there are other indications that the rate of cycling is increasing, and with the recent popularity of electric bicycles and family bicycles the rate of increase may accelerate.

⁹ *What Makes a "Biking" School? How Some Schools Have Pulled Ahead in Cycling Rates*, an info brief by the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, p. 7, [online here](#).

¹⁰ *University of Washington 2014 Transportation Survey Final Report*, March 2015, p. 42, [online here](#).

¹¹ *University of Washington 2019 Transportation Survey Final Report*, March 2020, p. 40. [online here](#).

¹² SDOT, *Safe Routes to School Student Travel Survey*, [online here](#)

In January 2020 (prior to the pandemic, the Seattle Times reported a 12% increase in 2019 over 2018 at Fremont Bridge and an increase of 79% on 2nd Ave. downtown, among others.¹³ The results were reported in more detail on the Seattle Bike Blog.¹⁴

The kinds of bike parking make a big difference

More importantly, the departure requests would shift the balance of long-term and short term bicycle parking spaces from the code-required 108 (75%) long-term to 36 (33%) long-term. Based on an average classroom size on 30 students plus teacher, this would result in only 3% of the students having access to long-term storage throughout the day.

The distinction between short-term and long-term is much more significant than it may appear to be. Long term stalls have many more needs and consequential code requirements than short term stalls, as follows.

SMC 25.54.015,K,2 reads in part:

“2. Performance Standards. Provide bicycle parking in a highly visible, safe, and convenient location, emphasizing user convenience and theft deterrence, based on rules promulgated by the Director of the Seattle Department of Transportation that address the considerations in this subsection 23.54.015.K.2.” [those rules are *The Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines* located [online here](#).]

“f. Where practicable, long-term bicycle parking shall include a variety of rack types to accommodate different types of bicycles.”

A selection of requirements for long-term parking above the requirements for short term parking from the Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines¹⁵ includes:

- *Must provide full weather protection and theft protection*
- *Must be located on site or within 100 feet of pedestrian entrance, no further than closest non-disabled vehicle parking space*
- *A minimum of 50% of the bicycle parking shall allow bicycles to sit horizontally on the ground to accommodate non-standard bicycles and the needs of those who cannot lift a bicycle.*
- *Provide easily accessible electrical outlets within the long term bike parking area.*
- *Ground -level rack should accommodate recumbent bikes, folding bikes, cargo bikes, bikes with trailers, family bikes, etc.* [Parenthetical comment: many of these sorts of bikes are much longer than a normal bike. They are increasingly used by parents transporting their kids. It's important that there be adequate provisions for them.]
- *When planning a long term bicycle parking area account for a minimum of 12 sq ft for every required bicycle parking space.*

¹³ Seattle Times, *Bike ridership hits record highs on 2 Seattle routes*, January 6, 2020, [online here](#).

¹⁴ Seattle Bike Blog, *Seattle's 2019 bike boom in 6 charts + Where should Seattle's next bike counters go? updated*, January 6, 2020, [online here](#).

¹⁵ SDOT *Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines May 2018 Draft*, pp. 12-13, [online here](#).

- *Bicycle parking access plan must be submitted to Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) during building permit review*

Also note that *The Seattle Bicycle Parking Guidelines* do not permit the “coat hanger” or “ribbon” style of racks. As the Guide illustrates, they do not provide adequate support.

Summary

Providing adequate bike parking facilities will help alleviate traffic impacts in the neighborhood and reduce the expense of creating and maintaining as much auto parking and driveways now and throughout the future. As biking becomes increasingly common, especially with the advent of family bikes and electric bikes, adequate and appropriate bike parking is becoming more critical. It will help encourage kids, parents, and staff to bike to school, which in turn will help generate healthier lifestyles and improve learning.

The School Traffic Safety Committee and others stand willing to help correct the deficiencies to more closely meet the code. We realize that may require some tradeoffs and are willing to work with the architects and school district towards a solution that works for all.

Sincerely,
On behalf of the School Traffic Safety Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Bruch', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Lee Bruch
Member

Website: <https://www.seattle.gov/school-traffic-safety-committee>
Email: stsc@seattle.gov

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Acker, Tiffany <foremt@spu.edu>
Sent: Saturday, June 27, 2020 9:34 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary

CAUTION: External Email

Hello, Ms. Sheehan.

We are writing to you as parents who have had kids at Kimball for the past seven years and will be at Kimball for another four years. We are very excited about the school getting rebuilt! There was a couple of great Kimball community meetings housed in our gym to seek family and staff input. This was wonderful!

With such a significant amount of time investing in this school community, we care deeply about the issues that concern our families and neighborhood. We are very concerned about the omission of the community input meetings regarding the new building due to Covid-19. South East Seattle has a history of being ignored by the Seattle School District, and this is evident when comparing projects to our north end counterparts. We have a high low-income and ELL population which means there is likely more work to be done to communicate and get the word out about what is happening. But that is what is necessary and equitable.

As a person who lives near Kimball and has been talking to neighbors, there is a lot of concern about the height of the new building not fitting in to the neighborhood. It is a drastic difference from the current building which is barely above street level. Many neighbors have enjoyed views of the Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington for years and have no idea that their views will go away with this new building. There has not been enough done to ensure that information has been distributed and feedback has been heard.

My biggest concern is that people in our neighborhood are used to not being heard and having to just go along with whatever people in power decide. This needs to end. They deserve just as much attention, choice, and voice as people in wealthier neighborhoods. I urge you to consider meaningful community engagement, even in this time of pandemic. Virtual meetings have been well-attended for our PTSA, more so than the rest of the year in-person.

Thank you for reading.

Tiffany & Chris Acker

Sheehan, Maureen

From: Tracy Lai <talyce.lai@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, May 30, 2020 10:47 AM
To: Sheehan, Maureen
Subject: Kimball Elementary School - comments on plans

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Ms.Sheehan,

My family is a Kimball family (2 graduates) ad we live on 24th Avenue South across from the portables.

I realize that these plans were developed pre-pandemic but I'm wondering if the structures will be adaptable to circumstances that require physical distancing (even if the actual re-opening is several years ahead), since public health experts suggest that we will be living in a COVID-19 world for the foreseeable future.

I am glad that attention to preserving and adding trees is a central part of the plan.

The departures from on-site parking are appropriate, especially since the proximity to public transit (which will hopefully stay intact) or bicycle commuting could be viable for employees. I am personally a bicycle commuter to an educational institution on Capitol Hill.

Adding bicycle parking, with or without cover, is an important commitment to supporting and normalizing regular cycling.

Will the electronic message board be solar powered and can it be shut off when schools aren't in session (if the traditional school year continues)?

My biggest concern is the tremendous height that would be added to the main building. I appreciate the arguments for doing so but as a resident in the immediate neighborhood, I am not looking forward to increased shade/shadow.

Hanford and 24th Avenue South get crazy, especially the drop-off of children in the mornings.

Sincerely,
Tracy Lai