



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning and Development
Diane M. Sugimura, Director

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

Application Number: 3004967
Applicant Name: Lindy Gaylord for IRIS Holdings, LLC
Address of Proposal: 516 Harrison Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow an underground parking garage, with one level of above grade parking, containing 1,050 parking spaces, 4,250 sq. ft. of administrative office, 30,000 sq. ft. of customer service office and 1,010 sq. ft. of retail (coffee cart). This project was previously permitted under Project #2500762 (customer service office has increased from 10,500 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft.).

The following approval is required:

SEPA - Environmental Determination - Chapter 25.05 SMC

SEPA DETERMINATION: Exempt DNS MDNS EIS
 DNS with conditions
 DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition, or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity

The site is located on the block bounded by Fifth Avenue North on the west, Harrison Street on the south, Broad Street on the east and Mercer Street on the north. It is east of the Seattle Center, and is known as the Fifth Avenue Parking Lot. It was previously known as the Metro Bus Barn site and was also identified in some Seattle Center documents as Parking Lot No. 2.

The site is zoned NC3-85' (Neighborhood Commercial 3 with a structure height limit of 85 feet). The parcels to the west (Seattle Center) are also zoned NC3-85'. North of Mercer Street the zoning changes to NC3-40'. Across Broad Street to the southeast the zoning is SM-85' (Seattle Mixed with a height limit of 85 feet). The project site is currently developed with surface parking and a skate park. The entire site has an area of approximately 535,788 sq. ft. The area to be developed under this permit is 184,400 square feet.

Proposal Description

This project was previously permitted under Project #2500762. The only change is an increase in the size of the customer service office from 10,500 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft. This increase in area requires additional SEPA review.

The proposal is to construct a parking garage for as many as 1,050 vehicles (252,220 sq. ft.), to be owned and operated by the Seattle Center. The project will include a customer service office (30,000 sq. ft.) at grade along the Fifth Avenue and (vacated) Republican Street façades, an office for parking management (4,250 sq. ft.) and a "coffee cart" (retail use, 1,010 sq. ft.). The structure will include one and a half levels of above grade, structured (covered) parking and three and a half levels of parking below grade. Existing surface parking for 1,217 vehicles will be replaced by the new garage. In addition to the consolidation of parking, the project includes the relocation of the existing skate park, basketball court and recycling center off-site to other locations off-site.

Ingress and egress for the parking garage will be on Harrison Street and the vacated Republican Street right-of-way, which is the same as the existing surface lot. Pedestrian connections across Fifth Avenue to the Seattle Center would occur in the same locations as the current locations, with a greater percentage of pedestrian connections occurring at the southern edge of the site (due to the garage's location on the southwest corner of the site.)

The environmental impacts of the original project (MUP No. 2500762) were initially evaluated under the *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Seattle Center 2000 Master Plan* issued in July 1990 by the Seattle Center. The Seattle Center issued an *Addendum to Seattle Center 2000 Master Plan EIS Seattle Center Master Plan Amendment for Fifth Avenue Parking Lot Revisions* on January 28, 2005. The July 1990 EIS analyzed environmental impacts for a range of alternatives for the subject site, which included below grade structured parking for up to 1,600 vehicles. In December 1996, an Addendum to the Master Plan EIS was prepared for construction of the surface parking lot which now occupies the site. The most recent addendum was prepared to provide additional analysis on changes to the Seattle Center's Master Plan including the consolidation of the existing surface parking lots into a structured parking garage on the southwest portion of the site.

There is a mapped "steep-slope" environmentally critical area (ECA) immediately north of vacated Republican Street. However, the site received an ECA Exemption (No. 2402284) as a previously developed site, and it was noted by a DPD Site Inspector on February 9, 2005, that the site is flat.

The garage will be owned and operated by the Seattle Center. As a city facility, the project has been undergoing review by the Seattle Design Commission, but was not required to undergo the Design Review process described in SMC Chapter 23.41. It is anticipated that some minor design revisions, within the scope of the proposed project, may occur as a result of Seattle Design Commission review. For that reason, the applicant has agreed to return to the Design Commission for final approval of any design changes, prior to the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy for the future building permit for this project.

Public Comment

Public notice of the proposed project was published on June 15, 2006. The project was re-noticed on June 29, 2006, due to an error in the language of the original notice. The comment period for that notice ended July 12, 2006. No comment letters were received during the comment periods.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated May 24, 2006 and annotated by the Department. The potential impacts for the original project (MUP No. 2500762) were disclosed and analyzed in the *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Seattle Center 2000 Master Plan* which was issued in July 1990 by the Seattle Center. Additional analysis on changes to the Seattle Center's Master Plan, including the proposal to construct a structured parking facility on the southwest portion of the site, was discussed in the *Addendum to Seattle Center 2000 Master Plan EIS Seattle Center Master Plan Amendment for Fifth Avenue Parking Lot Revisions* (January 28, 2005.) The information in the environmental checklist and other environmental documents, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, further project descriptions), and the experience of DPD with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and conditioning decision wherein substantive SEPA conditioning will be considered and imposed as warranted.

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

"where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations).

Under certain limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts follows.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: temporary soil erosion; decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates during excavation, filling

and transport of materials to and from the site; increased noise and vibration from construction operations and equipment; increased traffic and parking demand from construction personnel traveling to and from the work site; consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources; disruption of utilities serving the area; and conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code regulates site excavation for foundation purposes and requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. The Street Use Ordinance requires debris to be removed from the street right of way, and regulates obstruction of the sidewalk. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures and life safety issues. And, the Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city.

Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, impacts associated with traffic and parking during construction warrant further discussion.

Traffic and Parking

According to the environmental documents cited above, the duration of the construction period is expected to be approximately ten months. Construction traffic may temporarily increase congestion in the area. Of the construction vehicle traffic, soil-hauling trucks are expected to cause the greatest short-term impact during the construction period. Crossings of the pedestrian walkway by trucks may require manual traffic control on occasion. Also, pedestrian traffic within the parking lot and on adjacent sidewalks may need to be temporarily re-routed during construction.

Construction and staging for the garage is currently planned to be located south of vacated Republican Street. It is expected that the existing 828 surface parking stalls north of Republican Street would be maintained through the construction period. The reduction of the existing parking supply, from 1,217 to 828 spaces, is only expected to be an issue on several peak event days during the year. At those times, people may need to park in facilities that may be less convenient. This may transfer demands to other area parking, increasing the influence area of Center activities during construction.

As a condition of approval of this project, a Construction Management Plan (CMP) shall be required for temporary impacts from construction traffic and staging and for peak event parking impacts.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term impacts associated with the proposed action are expected to be minimal. The proposal would result in a reduction of approximately 200 parking spaces. This represents a roughly 17 percent reduction in the capacity of parking on the subject site, and a reduction of approximately 5 percent for Seattle Center as a whole. However, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated from this reduction.

The proposed reduction in parking spaces would reduce the site-specific traffic volumes accessing the site on a peak usage basis, with these trips being dispersed to other parking locations in the general

vicinity. No change in the way vehicles would enter or exit the site is anticipated. Primary site ingress and egress is planned through the traffic signal at Fifth Avenue/Republican Street and from Harrison Street on the south. No changes to the street system are proposed as part of the project, or would necessarily result from the proposed action. Therefore, no change in impacts or any significant adverse impact is identified.

Because the size of the proposed customer service office has increased from 10,500 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft. the parking requirement has also increased. Roughly 33 additional spaces will be required as compared with the smaller customer service office previously proposed. As shown in the parking calculations on page A101 of the plans and in the SEPA checklist, the Seattle Center has a surplus of parking above that needed to meet code requirements. Any additional parking demand associated with the larger customer service office is not anticipated to be significant.

Long-term impacts anticipated in association with the increase in the size of the customer service office from 10,500 sq. ft. to 30,000 sq. ft. are minor in scope and typical of neighborhood commercial development. DPD expects them to be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and ordinances. Since no on-site use would change in a manner that increases site traffic, no noticeable change in traffic volumes or resulting traffic operations is anticipated as a result of the proposal. Since there would be no increase in traffic volume associated with the proposal, there is not expected to be an increase in any vehicular traffic hazard.

No SEPA conditioning of long term impacts is warranted.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have significant adverse impacts upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030.(2)(C).

[] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

CONDITIONS – SEPA

Prior to Building Permit Issuance

1) In order to mitigate construction-related traffic and parking impacts, the applicant shall submit a Construction Management Plan (CMP) to DPD for review and approval. The CMP shall address

temporary impacts from construction traffic and staging, as well as peak event parking impacts during construction.

Conditions during Construction

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

2) To mitigate construction-related traffic and parking impacts, the applicant shall implement the construction traffic and parking plan, described above.

NON-APPEALABLE, VOLUNTARY CONDITION

Prior to issuance of the Final Certificate of Occupancy

3) The applicant will receive final design approval from the Seattle Design Commission.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Molly Hurley
Senior Land Use Planner