City of Seattle

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

**Application Number:** 3006335

**Applicant Name:** Seattle School District Number One

**Address of Proposal:** 1610 North 41st Street (Hamilton International Middle School)

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to allow expansion of an existing institution (Hamilton Middle School) and an addition of a new gymnasium to provide an additional 27,000 sq. ft. of school facility space. Parking for 20 vehicles will be provided within a covered garage. Two, 2,300 sq. ft. portable classrooms to be demolished. Pending LBA 3006336. Determination of Non-Significance provided by Seattle Public Schools. [1]

The following approvals are required:

**SEPA** – for conditioning only. SMC 25.05

**Development Standard Departure for Public Schools**. SMC 23.79

1. To allow less than the required quantity of on-site parking. (SMC 23.54.015)
2. To allow continued on-street bus loading and unloading. (SMC 23.44.017G)
3. To allow greater than allowed building height (SMC 23.44.017B)
4. To allow greater than allowed lot coverage (SMC 23.44.017A3)
5. To allow encroachment into rear setback (SMC 23.44.017C)
6. To allow greater than allowed curbcut width (SMC 23.54.030)

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** [ ] Exempt [X] DNS[2] [ ] MDNS [ ] EIS

[ ] DNS with conditions

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

[1]Project originally noticed as; Land use application to allow expansion of an existing institution (Hamilton Middle School) and an addition of a new gymnasium to provide an additional 27,000 sq. ft. of school facility space. Parking for 42 vehicles will be provided within a covered garage. Two, 2,300 sq. ft. portable classrooms to be demolished. Pending LBA 3006336. Determination of Non-Significance provided by Seattle Public Schools

[2]Environmental documents and determination of non-significance prepared by Seattle School District number one. DNS issued on November 15, 2006.

## BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The subject site is located north of N. 41st Street between Woodlawn Avenue North and Densmore Avenue North in the Wallingford neighborhood. The 2.06 acre site is zoned Single Family 5000.

The school site occupies a full block and shares a property line with the Wallingford Playfield Park on the north where North 42nd Street once existed. North 42nd Street was vacated by the city of Seattle in the early 1970's to create more park and recreation space, but the school district's asphalt play area occupies a portion of the vacated right of way which is owned by Parks.

Surrounding property to the north is zoned Single Family 5000 and is developed with the Wallingford Playfield, a Seattle park. Property to the south across N. 41st Street, to the east across Densmore Avenue North, and to the west across Woodlawn Avenue North is zoned single family 5000 and developed with single family homes.

The site is developed with Hamilton International Middle School (Hamilton) which consists of a three-story, 107,000 square foot building. The building, built in 1926, is a designated city of Seattle historic landmark. North of the building is an asphalt area used for play, parking and service. Vehicular access is from Woodlawn Avenue North and Densmore Avenue North. Two portable classroom buildings are located on the west side of the asphalt area.

Related Action

The district has requested a lot boundary adjustment (LBA) (project # 3006336) from DPD which proposes to relocate the boundary between District property and Seattle Parks and Recreation property along the north boundary. Decisions regarding departures and compliance with development standards are based on property boundaries and sizes post LBA. The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department would lose property to accommodate the proposed gymnasium but gain property where the district proposes a parking garage. The District has reduced the size of the parking garage to fit within the proposed boundary. The following table describes the proposed parcel sizes;

| Property Owner | Existing | Post LBA |
|---|---|---|
| Seattle Parks and Recreation<br>Parcel A | 195,442 SF | 89,649 SF |
| Seattle School District<br>Parcel B | 195,484 SF | 89,607 SF |

Proposal Description

As part of the Building Excellence Phase II Capital Improvement Program, the Seattle School District (District) proposes modernization and renovation of Hamilton. The proposal includes the renovation of the existing three-story building and demolition of two portable classrooms. The proposal also includes construction of a new gymnasium addition and an on-grade parking structure capped with a rooftop open play area.

The existing building is largely unchanged from the original 1926 construction. It does not provide adequate space for physical education does not contain an assembly space adequate for the student body and does not meet the educational needs of the school.

The building would undergo substantial internal modifications; however, since the Landmarks Preservation Board has identified the building exterior for preservation, major components of the building's facade would remain unchanged.

The renovated building would house 24 classrooms for grades 6 through 8 and special classrooms for special education, science, technology, music, visual arts, and performing arts. Each general classroom would be approximately 900 square feet (current average is 600 square feet per room). The building would be designed to house approximately 900 students, with capacity for up to 1,000 students. The building would include physical education facilities, including a gymnasium with seating for approximately 900 spectators, locker areas, and a fitness center; a library and computer lab; a three-story open common area for student and community gathering; administrative space; student health center; and food service area.

The parking structure would be constructed at the back of the school building on the northwest portion of the property, with access from Woodlawn Avenue N. The structure would provide parking for 20 vehicles. A loading berth would also be accessed from Woodlawn Avenue N. sharing the curbcut with the garage access.

The parking structure would be capped to support an overhead outdoor play area to replace the play yard that would be eliminated with the addition of the gymnasium and parking structure. The new play area would be accessed from the new gymnasium or the second-story commons area of the building.

In addition to the new buildings, the project would result in several improvements to exterior areas. Pedestrian curb cuts in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be installed at intersections adjacent to the school. New landscaping, walkways, and seating will also be constructed throughout the site.

<u>Public Comments</u>

DPD received or was copied on about 130 letters in support and in opposition to the proposal. Additionally, a petition in support of the project was received with 99 signatures. The Master Use Permit public comment period ended on April 11, 2007. The comment letters and petitions are available in the Master Use Permit file at DPD. Most support letters, and the petitions in support of the project generally indicated this because of the green energy concept proposed (ground source heat pump), improvements to the playfield after installation of the heat pumps, better connection to the park from the school and opportunity to use the gym and recreation space. The Wallingford Community Council requested mediation between the District, the Parks Department, the DPD, and 12 members of the community selected by the Community Council; although no mediation has occurred. Many letters identified concerns about the following;

- Loss of Park land in the short term to allow for construction staging and the ground source heat pump; and in the long term to allow for the school addition.

- Opposition to the Lot Boundary Adjustment, primarily because of concern for loss of park land, natural habitat and trees.
- Crime, noise and transient visitors to the park and school.
- Aesthetics and architectural critique of the addition
- No consideration of alternatives
- No genuine public involvement
- The size of the addition as compared to the site size
- The departure requests for height, bus loading/unloading, lot coverage, curbcut width and setback
- Appropriate separation between the proposed building and the park
- No consideration of locating Hamilton at Lincoln
- Health of trees on North 42nd Street-impacts from bus loading/unloading
- The need for a parking garage

Develop Standard Departure Committee Meetings

Three public meetings of the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee ("Committee") were held to consider development standard departures for the proposed school. The meetings were on April 26, May 17 and June 11 in 2007. The Department of Neighborhoods prepared and submitted a report to document public testimony and make recommendations to DPD for modifications to land use code development standards. The report contains a majority report, a minority report, committee minutes and public comments. For further detail, the report is available at DPD in the Master Use Permit file for this project.

## ANALYSIS - Development Standard Departure

The Development Standard Departure process is conducted pursuant to the provisions of Seattle Municipal Code sections 23.79.002-.012. Pursuant to these provisions an Advisory Committee was convened, public comment received, and a written recommendation to the Director of DPD made. This analysis and decision is made pursuant to the requirements of SMC section 23.79.010 that the Director determine the amount of departure to be allowed as well as mitigation measures to be imposed. Criteria set forth in the applicable code sections are to be used for both the Committee's recommendation and the Director's decision.

Section SMC 23.79.008 states that departures shall be evaluated for consistency with the general objectives and intent of the City's Land Use Code, including the rezone evaluation criteria in Chapter 23.34 of the Seattle Municipal Code, to ensure that the proposed facility is compatible with the character and use of its surroundings. In reaching recommendations, the advisory committee shall consider and balance the interrelationships among the following factors:

**A**. **Relationship to Surrounding Areas**: The advisory committee shall evaluate the acceptable or necessary level of departure according to:

1) Appropriateness in relation to the character and scale of the surrounding area;
2) Presence of edges (significant setbacks, major arterials, topographic breaks, and similar features) which provide a transition in scale;
3) Location and design of structures to reduce the appearance of bulk;
4) Impacts on traffic, noise, circulation and parking in the area; and
5) Impacts on housing and open space.

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

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

Table A describes the proposed departure requests based on plans submitted to DPD. The committee was provided plans that differed from what DPD has on file today, primarily with respect to the lot boundary and the size of the parking garage. It was disclosed that the LBA was not approved at the departure meetings.

| **Table A** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Development Standard** | **Required/Allowed** | **Proposed** | **Majority Committee Recommendation** |
| Curbcut width 23.54.030f2b(3) | 25 feet | 50 feet (combines access to garage and loading berth) | 50 feet only if parking structure is constructed; otherwise 25 feet. |
| Parking Quantity 23.54.015 | 178 parking spaces | 20 parking spaces | Waive all required parking (allowing zero parking spaces on-site) |
| On Street Bus load/unloading 23.44.017G3 | Not allowed | 22 buses | 22 buses (with a limit of 15 minutes lay over, not including the actual loading process for the children) |
| Rear Setback 23.44.017C4b | 20 feet average 10 feet minimum | zero | zero |
| Lot Coverage 23.44.017A3 | 35% | 64% | 81% |
| Height 23.44.017B3 & 4 | Elevation 268.3 (average height of existing school) | Elevation 283 (gym elevation 272.75) | Elevation 284 |

*Minority Report*

The following are the recommendations, as excerpted from the minority report, which is part of the Development Standard Departure Advisory Committee Report prepared by Department of Neighborhoods

**Recommendation 1** – The present design of the Hamilton School should be remanded back to the Seattle School District for reconsideration of its basic assumption. In particular the Seattle School District should: 1) direct that the ultimate design utilize the existing building envelope effectively; 2) provide ample open space; 3) maintain a distance from the park. The District should also join the mediation effort proposed by the Wallingford community Council to utilize community and parks input at the start of redesign of the portion of the building affected.

**Land Use Recommendation 2** – The departure for increased height for an addition of such magnitude should not be granted. No hardship exists. There are opportunities to provide a gymnasium in a configuration that would work that is level with the accessible entrance to the building. This option would reduce the height of the addition to a level that would not negatively impact Wallingford Playfield or community.

**Land Use Recommendation 3** – 135 parking stalls below code requirement.
While the minority members agree with the Committee recommendation to allow a departure of no on site parking, it was in the spirit that an above ground parking garage not be built in a SF zone. The neighborhood is impacted by parking difficulties during the school year and this issue should not be minimized.

**Land Use Recommendation 4** – The departure for greater than 80% lot coverage should be denied. The required lot coverage is 35%. The current structure covers 53% of the lot. Not only is the project bulky, but the shadow cast on the park space to the north will create difficulties in the park. This request goes far beyond any past District request on all other projects for Lot Coverage. (If the District does not build its parking structure, lot coverage could be reduced significantly. (See Recommendation #3.) The minority's recommendation that the District redesign the new buildings in the spirit of the Land Use code can facilitate these changes.

**Land Use Recommendation 5** – Zero setback at north property line. The district is not only asking for a zero setback from the property line, it has made the assumption that it can claim 27' of park land on its northern boundary. The obvious concern for the park is loss of land and also an enormous shadow that creates a permanent problem fro the park in plant growth. There is considerable concern regarding the increase of crime in the park given a 30' high wall with no setback that is not visible from the street.

## Departure Requests

*Curbcut Width*

The District is requesting a curbcut width of 50 feet so the parking garage and loading berth access can be combined. Access would be from Woodlawn Avenue North.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

Curbcuts in single family neighborhoods are typically 10 feet wide and sometimes up to 23 feet wide. It is not uncommon to have several curbcuts grouped close together but it is unusual to have a 50 foot wide curbcut in a single family neighborhood.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale.*

   This criterion is not applicable

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

   This criterion is not applicable

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

   Impacts to vehicle circulation would be positive in that a wide curbcut will enable more efficient maneuvering space. Impacts to pedestrian circulation would not be positive in that a wider area of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians is proposed. During typical weeks, the loading berth will be used daily to receive food service deliveries and twice a week for garbage/recycling service. The school will also receive supplies about 3 times per month. During special events or activities, the loading berth could be used more frequently.

   The loading berth and parking garage is not expected to have a high traffic volume; so pedestrian and vehicle conflict is not expected to occur often. Alternatives to the proposed curbcut would not be much of an improvement for pedestrians in that two separated curbcuts along this frontage would not be ideal for pedestrians either.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   This criterion is not applicable

*B. Need for Departure*

The key element that influenced the decision of the Committee related to the need for Departure criterion. Clearly delivery of supplies and material are needed for any school so that the need for the loading dock portion of the curbcut was unquestioned. Additionally if there is a parking structure located anywhere near the current proposed location, access and egress to that structure would be needed. The Committee evaluated whether the need for a wider curbcut might be eliminated by either allowing multiple curbcuts with one directly adjacent to the "T" intersection to access the parking garage, and another at the location of the loading dock, or by joint use of a single narrower curb-cut.

It was clear from presentations by the District and information from SDOT, that the other options were desirable. A curbcut essentially completing a fourth leg of the NE 42nd /Woodlawn Avenue N intersection would not be prudent and, in the view of SDOT, might lead to a dangerous situation. The Committee discussed access to both the loading

dock and parking structure from a single smaller curbcut, but concluded that would create significant conflicts between garage users and delivery trucks. For these reasons the Committee concluded that the District had justified the need for the departure and DPD concurs.

The committee noted that the need for a wider curbcut was directly related to the location of the parking structure and loading berth. Many on the Committee hope that the District will take advantage of the committee recommendation that no parking structure be built; therefore they only recommended the departure if a parking structure is built.

*Quantity of Parking*

The district is seeking to reduce the off-street parking quantity by up to 155 spaces. The Code required amount of off-street parking for the school is 178 spaces, and the project will provide 20 spaces according to plans date stamped August 30, 2007. The Code required parking ratio is based on amount of public assembly space for students, and not estimated parking demand. In this case the assembly space will be primarily used by students and not drivers of vehicles.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

   The District is proposing a 20 space parking garage that would take access from Woodlawn Avenue North. The garage will have an approximate façade length of 64 feet and be about 14 feet in height at its tallest point as perceived from the sidewalk. The façade finish materials are proposed to consist of concrete panel, brick and sandblasted foundation wall. The playfield on top of the garage will be fenced with "open railing". Parking garages are typically not located in single family areas so there is potential for the structure to be out of scale with the area; however, there is opportunity to design a façade that would better fit into the neighborhood using finish materials, landscaping and modulation.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale.*

   None have been identified.

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

   See discussion under criterion no. 1

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

   This is discussed in detail under the SEPA analysis in this document.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   This is not applicable.

*B. Need for Departure*

This departure is fairly typical for school projects based on DPD experience because of the large amount of space required for parking, and that the code requirement usually exceeds demand for elementary and middle schools. Additionally, the cost of parking adversely affects other integral program elements for schools. The departure is consistent with City parking policy which is to reduce the amount of resources put towards parking, and to reduce the amount of single occupant vehicle trips. The Transportation Technical Report and DPD analysis concludes that the parking demand can be met with available street parking. Discussion of transportation impacts under the SEPA analysis provides details on parking demand and utilization.

DPD conditionally approves a departure to allow 20 on-site parking spaces. During special events street parking is expected to be at or near capacity; therefore, the District shall prepare a memorandum of agreement stipulating that large events will not be held at the Lincoln High School site and the Hamilton Middle School site simultaneously. Additionally, the District shall ensure that parking capacity at Lincoln High School will be available for use during events at Hamilton Middle School. Parking utilization shall be examined after the first year of operation and at least every three years thereafter as described under the bus loading and unloading departure analysis.

*Bus loading and unloading*

The land use code requires that bus loading and unloading be accommodated on-site rather than on the streets adjacent to the school. Currently the school loads its buses on the streets adjacent to the school. A total of 22 buses use the public streets for loading and unloading; 6 buses load off of North 42nd Street between Densmore and Wallingford Avenue N., 10 off of Densmore Avenue North and 6 half-size buses associated with the special needs program, off of Woodlawn Avenue N. The buses are at the school for drop off in the morning and then leave the site. In the afternoon, buses arrive at staggered time to pick up children and are parked along the street for 45 minutes or more. The District requested that this situation continue unchanged.

The curbs along the N. 42nd Street and Densmore Avenue N. school frontage are signed for "bus-loading only" between 7:00 and 9:00 A.M. and between 1:00 and 3:00 P.M. The curb along the Woodlawn Avenue N school frontage is signed for "bus-loading only" between 7:00 and 9:00 A.M. and between 2:00 and 4:00 P.M. School-related and resident parking occurs in these areas when they are not restricted to bus loading. There is a "school load" zone designated (7:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.) for parent drop-off and pickup of students along the north side of the half-block section of N 41st Street east of Woodlawn Avenue N. However, parent drop-off and pick-up occurs along several streets surrounding the school site. In the school years prior to 2006/2007, the official parent drop-off and pickup zone was along Densmore Avenue N. and buses waited east of the school on N. 41st Street. The District re-allocated the load/unload zones in an effort to improve traffic flow.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

   The surrounding area is developed with single family residential homes and park land. The introduction of new loading and unloading activity on the street would not be

desirable in a single family neighborhood; however, this activity has occurred at this location for many years.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale*

   Since this request is for bus loading and unloading only and does not involve the development of any structures for this use, this criterion does not directly apply.

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

   Since this request is for bus loading and unloading only and does not involve the development of any structures for this use, this criterion does not apply.

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

   The surrounding streets have 66 foot right of ways but only 28 foot wide roadways. This typically accommodates curbside parking on both sides of the street with one travel lane in the middle. When buses are present the travel lane is likely more narrow and creates more congestion; however, the roadway width is adequate to permit one vehicle to pass. This proposal is not likely to change the impacts already occurring in the area with respect to traffic, noise, circulation and parking. It is acknowledged that congestion and traffic occurs during the loading and unloading process.

   Further discussion of the transportation impacts are discussed under the SEPA analysis.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   There would be no direct impact of granting this departure request on housing or open space. However, denial of the departure could result in reductions to the outdoor playfield as well as the gymnasium. The proposed project at Hamilton would not likely occur if unloading and loading of buses had to occur on-site.

*B. Need for Departure*

A bus load and unload area is required to continue to meet the needs of the district and students. Designing bus load and unload area on-site is not feasible considering the size of this site. This departure is fairly typical for school projects based on DPD experience because of the large amount of space required for buses and the fact that most loading and unloading currently exists on the public streets.

The key element that influenced the decision of the Committee related to the need for Departure criterion. It is acknowledged by all that the on-street bus loading and unloading clearly affects the surrounding area. However given the current school assignment patterns and programs at Hamilton, bus transportation of children to and from the facility is simply unavoidable. It is also clear that insufficient land exists to accommodate a large bus pull out zone anywhere on the site. Therefore the need for granting the departure is clear and the Committee concluded that the need for granting

this departure clearly outweighs the acknowledged impacts on the immediately surrounding blocks.

The use of the adjacent streets for lay-over and staging during the afternoon is also clearly a major impact on the neighborhood and should be reduced. Therefore the Committee recommended granting the departure request only on condition that this lay over and staging be severely limited. The Committee recommended that staging or lay-over time is limited to 15 minutes not including the actual loading of children. It is unclear whether this condition would be achievable because of various factors such as traffic, routing patterns, or driver's discretion. Additionally, such a condition would be difficult to enforce. DPD concurs with the concept of the committee recommendation but modifies it to require the District coordinate with the provider of bus service to make all practicable attempts to limit staging or lay-over at the school or in single family residential neighborhoods during the PM pick up of children.

The project will also be conditioned to examine parking utilization and circulation to improve traffic flow. In the first year of operation and at least every third year thereafter, review parking needs, pick-up/drop-off activities and bus loading operations and determine if changes are desired to improve traffic flow and reduce parking spillover on the street. Changes that must be considered, but not limited to, are the following;

- Notifying parents through school newsletters or other media about appropriate locations for student drop-off and pick-up. Parents should be reminded regularly not to park in bus loading areas or block crosswalks.
- Using school staff or volunteers during arrival and dismissal times to assist children and parents with arrival and departure and to help reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.
- Providing alternate locations for drop-off and pick-up.
- Staggered school start and dismissal times to spread traffic and parking demand,
- Using the Lincoln site to accommodate employee parking

*Rear Setback*

The code requires an average setback on the north property line of 20 feet and a minimum of 10 feet. This is based on the façade height of the gymnasium which is between 36 and 50 feet along the north elevation. The minimum average setback may be reduced to 15 feet and the minimum to 5 feet, and waived by the Director when a waiver would contribute to reduced demolition of residential structures through the departure process.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

The context on the block west of Densmore Avenue North and North 42nd Street is defined by the school and the park in that there are not any homes abutting the school or park. The setback waiver is appropriate because there are no abutting homes; therefore there is no pattern or rhythm of setbacks. The perception of a setback is present since the park is not developed with any structures near the north property line. It is acknowledged that the gymnasium structure does change the character and scale of the surrounding area regardless of whether there is a 20 foot setback between the park and the school.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale.*

   None have been identified.

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

   The design has received preliminary approval from the Landmark Preservation Board and will have further review to ensure that the addition is compatible with the existing historic landmark. The design of the gym is well articulated with a variety of finish materials which attempt to reduce the appearance of height, bulk and scale. The finish materials proposed include, brick veneer, translucent panels, concrete masonry unit and metal roof.

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

   This criterion is not applicable

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   The setback departure has no discernable impacts on housing, but does impact open space in that the building will create shadow on the park. See the discussion of shadows under the SEPA analysis.

*B. Need for Departure*

The key element that influenced the decision of the Committee related to the need for Departure criterion. The District noted in its presentations that the zero-foot setback and related lot line adjustment were incorporated into the design in order to allow a more efficient design for the gymnasium that would allow joint community and school use. The greater area allows incorporation of public access off of Densmore Avenue along with a lobby and restrooms that would be available for community use when the school was closed but the gymnasium open. In discussing the effects of denial of the departure request the District listed two alternatives 1) if the lot boundary adjustment and subsequent property exchange was not granted, but the zero foot setback was granted, then the District would eliminate the lobby and retain the restrooms; 2) if both were denied the lobby and restrooms would be eliminated, and the entry to the gym would be relocated. While the setback clearly affects the adjacent park, the majority on the Committee concluded that the benefits from the entry, lobby, and restrooms, outweighed the negative effects.

DPD concurs with the committee. The project does not require the taking of housing or park land to enable the project. If a setback was provided then the setback area would likely be used as open space abutting the park, but at the expense of losing restroom and lobby space in the gym.

*Lot Coverage*

The Code would allow total lot coverage of 35% for Hamilton. Lot coverage may be increased to 45% or waived by the Director when waiver would contribute to reduced demolition of residential structures through the departure process.

The code allows an exception for corner lots in that ½ the width of side streets may be included in the lot area used in calculating lot coverage. The District did not use the exception or used it incorrectly in presenting their need for a lot coverage departure. The proposed lot coverage for the current project is 64% this is due to a reduced footprint (smaller garage) and a larger lot area (using the streets). During the departure committee process the District should have requested a departure of 69% instead of 81%.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

   The school structure currently exceeds lot coverage and was built in 1926. The additions would increase the bulk and scale on the site. It is acknowledged that the school is larger than a single family home which characterizes the surrounding area.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale.*

   The abutting Park provides a substantial transition in scale in that lot coverage is not perceived to be as great.

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

   The project design has received preliminary approval from the Landmark Preservation Board and will have further review to ensure that the addition is compatible with the existing historic landmark. The design of the gym is well articulated with a variety of finish materials which attempt to reduce the appearance of height, bulk and scale. The finish materials proposed include, brick veneer, translucent panels, concrete masonry unit and metal roof. The parking structure also uses a variety of finish materials which will contribute towards reducing the bulk of the structure.

   Improvements to park property north of the gym and parking structure have not been determined.

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

   No direct impacts have been identified.

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   The lot coverage departure allows the program to fit within the site currently occupied by the school with no demolition of housing.

*B. Need for Departure*

The majority on the Committee concluded that the departure for increased lot coverage was clearly needed if the Hamilton program was to be accommodated on this site. It was clear from District presentations that it would be exceedingly difficult to accommodate the Hamilton program without exceeding the lot coverage. The increased lot coverage is primarily driven by the addition of the new gymnasium and structured parking. Especially in the case of the gymnasium addition, this is considered a critical part of the new school program in that it provides both the gymnasium space itself and the school's only large general assembly area.

Alternatives to the proposed design which would be compliant with lot coverage would require the taking of housing or park land, but these alternatives are obviously not desirable. Relocation of Hamilton to Lincoln which is requested by many in the community has not been proposed by the District.

The granting of the departure would allow the school district to achieve their educational and programmatic needs for Hamilton on the existing school site without the expansion of the property and the potential demolition of single-family housing stock; therefore, DPD concurs with the committee recommendation.

*Structure Height*

The School District is requesting a departure from height to allow the additions to exceed the height of the existing school. The existing school height is calculated to be at elevation 268.30 (based on SMC 23.86.006F). The existing school height is determined by calculating the roof area of the existing building using the roof elevations. The main entry portion of the existing school, along N. 41st Street, is the highest portion of the building at elevation 283 or about 56 feet above existing grade. The departure is to allow the areas currently with skylights, internal to the footprint, and behind this main entry portion of the building to be filled in at the same elevation. Additionally, the departure is to allow the gymnasium to be as high as elevation 272.75 or about 38 feet above existing grade.

*A. Relationship to Surrounding Areas:*

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

   The design has received preliminary approval from the Landmark Preservation Board and will have further review to ensure that the addition is compatible with the existing historic landmark. The design of the gym is well articulated with a variety of finish materials which attempt to reduce the appearance of height, bulk and scale. The finish materials proposed include, brick veneer, translucent panels, concrete masonry unit and metal roof. The surrounding area is developed with single family homes as such a

gymnasium is not necessarily appropriate. The infilling of the building within the building footprint will not be noticeable to the public or perceived from the street.

2. *Presence of edges, significant setbacks, major arterial streets, topographic breaks, and similar features which provide a transition in scale.*

   The sidewalk along Densmore Avenue North is slightly higher than the finished floor of the gymnasium so this minimally contributes towards decreasing the perception of height, bulk and scale. There are no other features, like arterial streets or significant topographic breaks which provide a transition in scale

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

   The gymnasium is located with zero setbacks on the east and on the north so its location doesn't reduce the appearance of bulk. The design of the structure does reduce the appearance of bulk. This includes the use of a barrel vaulted roof interrupted with a series of protruding bays facing Densmore Avenue N. The low height of the barrel roof begins near the Densmore Avenue property line and increases for the width of the gym. The portion of the roof which exceeds the height limit is located at about 2/3 of the width of the structure and consists of a short segment before decreasing height on the west side. As viewed from the north elevation the form would represent a shallow arc. A flat roof design would likely look more bulky and be taller along the side walls.

   The infilling of the building within the building footprint will not be noticeable to the public or perceived from the street.

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

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

5. *Impacts on housing and open space*

   The height departure is expected to have minimal impact on housing. The gymnasium will have an impact on private views but this is due to the location of the gymnasium and not necessarily related to the 4.5 foot departure.

   The applicant provided shadow studies which show that shadows would be cast into the park, primarily in the winter. This is discussed in the SEPA section of this document. Comparing a code compliant design and the proposed design with a height departure, it is likely that the shadow impacts on the Park would not be reduced enough to make a considerable difference.

*B. Need for Departure*

The Committee concluded that the need to infill the building within the existing footprint was needed and was appropriate at the height proposed. The need for the height of the new gymnasium addition was somewhat less clear, and the Committee questioned

whether the gym could be further depressed into the site and/or its roof flattened to reduce height. The District indicated that it is not feasible to lower the finished floor of the gym because utility vaults (QWEST) are located under a portion of the gym and lowering the vaults is not feasible. Flattening the roof would probably result in a greater appearance of height and bulk. For these reasons, the majority of the Committee concluded that the need for the height of the gymnasium addition outweighs the impacts of its height at 4.5 feet above what would otherwise be allowed. DPD concurs with committee recommendation.

## DECISION – DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

The development standard departures as described in Table A are **conditionally granted**.

## CONDITIONS – DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

See conditions at the end of this document.

## ANALYSIS - SEPA

Environmental impacts of the proposal have been analyzed in environmental documents prepared by Seattle School District Number One. These include a November 2006 SEPA environmental checklist. Environmental information prepared previously and related to the proposal includes: Building Excellence Phase II Capital Improvement Program Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement dated September 1, 2000; Transportation Technical Report (Heffron Transportation, October 23, 2006 and March 26, 2007); and Geotechnical report (Shannon & Wilson, Inc. April 21, 2006).

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

Disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental documents listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, written descriptions of the project, traffic and parking study and geotechnical reports) and the experience of this agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and conditioning.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from demolition and building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources.

Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC 25.05.794). Although not significant, these impacts can be adverse and, in some cases, mitigation is warranted.

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

*Noise*

The project is expected to generate loud noise during demolition and construction. These impacts would be especially adverse in the early morning, in the evening, and on weekends. The Seattle Noise Ordinance permits increases in permissible sound levels associated with construction and equipment between the hours of 7:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekdays and 9:00 AM and 10:00 PM on weekends. The surrounding properties are developed with single family housing and will be impacted by construction noise.

The limitations stipulated in the Noise Ordinance are not sufficient to mitigate noise impacts; therefore, pursuant to SEPA authority, the applicant shall be required to limit periods of construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) to non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition. Additionally DPD will evaluate other requests on a case by case basis to allow for emergencies, special construction activities (like continuous concrete pours), safety, or street-use related situations that warrant work outside of the construction hours.

*Construction Traffic and Parking*

Building demolition would result in approximately 5,000 cubic yards (CY) of debris leaving the site. Excavation north of the building for the gymnasium and parking area would result in about 8,000 cubic yards of earth exported from the site during the first twelve months of construction. This quantity of grading may be overstated because the parking garage has been decreased in size. The demolition and earth material is expected to be moved using dump trucks with trailers (carrying an average of 15 CY each) or larger belly dump trucks (carrying 20 CY each). The average truck size is expected to be about 18 CY. The exporting effort is expected to be spread over the first year of construction with demolition material leaving the site during the first six months and earthwork occurring over the first year. Based on these assumptions, the export of both demolition debris and excavated material would average approximately 5 truckloads per day. Each truckload would generate two trips (one inbound and one outbound) and would most likely occur during daytime hours (8:00 A.M. through 4:00 P.M.). Most construction transportation is stopped by 4:00 P.M. to avoid unnecessary delay to truck drivers from peak hour congestion. There will likely be a range of truck activity at the site depending on the stage of construction. On average, the project would generate less than 2 truck trips per hour during days when materials are hauled away from the site. During peak days, the number could be 4 truck trips per hour, but these days would be relatively infrequent.

The construction of the project would also require employees and equipment that would generate traffic to and from the site. The number of workers at the project site at any one time would vary depending upon the nature and construction phase of the project. Based on previous estimates for other District renovation projects such as Garfield High School and Roosevelt High School, the average number of construction employees on site would be approximately 10 to 15. However, during peak activities such as finish work, the number could range from 20 to 60 employees. Trips generated by workers are not expected to degrade level of service at neighboring intersections since they will not likely occur during AM or PM peak hours.

The presence of a temporary construction work force would also generate demand for parking spaces around Hamilton. However, the school will be closed during construction and some of the demand may be accommodated on site. Based on the parking utilization survey results, there would be adequate parking supply to accommodate the construction-related demand.

As a result of the truck trips and construction worker parking demands and vehicle trips, the neighborhood could experience a noticeable impact; therefore, as recommended in the Transportation Technical Report prepared by Heffron, the following SEPA condition is required;

- Prepare a construction management plan (CMP) that addresses truck haul routes, lane closures, sidewalk closures, construction and hauling schedules, and parking plans that minimize impacts to nearby residential streets.

*Air Quality*

The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality and will require permits for removal of asbestos (if any) during demolition. The owner and/or responsible party (ies) are required to comply with the PSCAA rules pertaining to demolition of projects with or without asbestos. This will ensure proper handling

and disposal of asbestos, as well as demolition of structures without asbestos. No further SEPA conditioning is necessary.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated from the proposal and include: increased traffic and increased parking demand; possible increase in light and glare; increased bulk and scale of the building; increased ambient noise due to increased human activity; increased demand on public services and utilities; increased energy consumption; potential impact on a designated City Landmark; increased shadow impacts on public places; and decreased air quality. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because most impacts are minor in scope; however, some impacts warrant further discussion.

*Historic Preservation*

The school is a historic building and is protected by the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance which is administered by the Landmark Preservation Board. SEPA policy (SMC 25.05.675H) states that, "*For projects involving structures or sites which have been designated as historic landmarks, compliance with the Landmark Preservation Ordinance shall constitute compliance with the policy in subsection H2a above*". Subsection H2a is the SEPA policy for Historic Preservation. The Board is reviewing the addition to the building through the certificate of approval process pursuant to the Landmark Preservation Ordinance. The Landmarks Preservation Board issued a preliminary design Certificate of Approval on January 18, 2007. The preliminary design approval is conditional upon Board review and approval of all construction drawings, finishes and details necessary for a final Certificate of Approval. No SEPA conditioning is necessary.

*Shadows on Open Spaces*

Seattle's SEPA shadow policy aims to "*minimize or prevent light blockage and the creation of shadows on open spaces most used by the public.*" SMC 25.05.675.Q. The SEPA policies define specific public places that are to be protected under this policy. Additionally, SEPA policy suggests mitigation or denial of a project if it is found, "*…that a proposed project would substantially block sunlight from open spaces …at a time when the public most frequently uses that space…*" In this case, Wallingford Playfield Park has the potential to be affected by the proposed project. The Park is 4.4 acres in size and contains tennis courts, play fields, play area/play structure, walking paths/garden and a wading pool. Factors that influence the extent of shading include: weather (e.g., cloud cover); time of day and year; building height, width and facade orientation; and the proximity of significant landscaping.

The applicant provided shadow diagrams prepared by BLRB Architects that depict shading from the project for vernal and autumnal equinoxes (March 21 and September 21 respectively), summer solstice (June 21) and winter solstice (December 21). In the mornings and afternoons, at 10 AM and 2 PM respectively, the project would cast minimal shadow on park property during the summer and some shadow during the spring and fall, primarily impacting the "sunken garden" portion of the park. During the winter, the project would cast a longer shadow that would reach the "sunken garden" and a portion of the playfields in the southwest and central part

of the park. The tennis courts, play area/play structure and wading pool would not be impacted by shadows cast from the project based on the shadow studies provided by BLRB Architects.

Most of the shadow impact will occur in winter when the park is likely used less and the probability of cloud cover is high. The sunken garden portion of the Park will be primarily impacted by shadows; however, the proposed project would not substantially block sunlight in the 4.4 acre park, thus no mitigation is warranted pursuant to SEPA authority.

*Parking and Traffic*

The district is seeking to reduce the off-street parking quantity by 155 spaces. The Code required amount of off-street parking for the school is 178 spaces, and the project will provide 20 spaces according to plans dated August 30, 2007.

A Transportation Technical Report prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. dated October 23, 2006 and memorandum dated March 26, 2007 in response to a DPD correction were prepared. Elements addressed in the report include the school's effect on the roadway system, intersection operations, parking, traffic safety, site access, transit, and non-motorized facilities.

As described in the technical report, a parking utilization study was performed on Wednesday, April 5 and Thursday, April 6 and on Saturday, April 15 and Saturday April 22. The study measured parking during three weekday times, 9:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 8:00 PM and during 1:00 PM and 8:00 PM on Saturday to determine existing on-street parking utilization. School was in session during the study periods. A utilization study was also performed when school was not in session on April 12 and 13 so a comparison could be made. The study area is defined to be 800 feet walking distance from the subject property edges.

The study found that the worst parking utilization time period on the streets was on a weekday while school was in session at 1:00 PM, and the average existing utilization was 66 (%) percent. This means 66 (%) percent of the available legal on-street parking spaces were occupied (459 total vehicles parked / 697 total on-street supply). The worst parking utilization time period on the streets when school was not in session or on Saturday ranged from 40 (%) percent to 46 (%) percent utilization.

Using Institute of Transportation Engineers data for Parking Generation, it was found that the proposed middle school would generate a demand for 110 parking spaces. This is based on 1000 students at a rate of 0.11 vehicles per student (Land Use Category 522, ITE, Parking Generation, 3rd Edition). Using a current enrollment of 724 students results in an increase of 276 up to the proposed capacity of 1000 students; therefore, an increase in parking demands of 30 parking spaces. Similar demand would be generated using employees instead of students. Assuming all the increased demand uses the streets, then the worst case utilization would be 70% at 1:00 PM on a weekday when school is in session. However, the proposed project is expected to provide parking for 20 vehicles in a parking garage; therefore 10 vehicles would be expected to spillover onto the streets. The City considers a utilization rate of 85(%) percent to be at capacity; therefore spillover parking from the project could be accommodated on the streets.

It is expected that between 2:00 and 3:00 P.M. parking demand and utilization rates would increase as bus loading reduces the available capacity, and parents arrive to pick up children.

During this hour, parking utilization would likely be near or at capacity. During the parking utilization study increased demand was observed during these times.

Another factor which could influence on-street parking supply is the establishment of a residential parking zone. Within an 800-foot walking distance of the school, northwest of the site and north of N 42nd Street, there is a Residential Parking Zone (RPZ) that restricts parking to two-hour durations between 7:00AM and 4:00 PM Monday thru Friday except with a Zone 22 permit. The Wallingford neighborhood has requested an extension of the existing RPZ which will add new restrictions to study area roadways and reduce the unrestricted parking supply.

During special events street parking is expected to be at or near capacity; therefore, the District shall prepare a memorandum of agreement stipulating that large events will not be held at the Lincoln High School site and the Hamilton Middle School site simultaneously. They shall ensure that parking capacity at Lincoln High School would be available for use during events at Hamilton Middle School. The project will be conditioned to examine parking utilization and circulation to improve traffic flow as conditioned under the departure analysis.

The proposed project would result in a net increase in overall traffic volumes generated at the site compared to existing conditions. The table below, as excerpted from the Transportation Technical Report describes the traffic generation;

Table 7. Summary of Future Hamilton International Middle School Traffic Generation

| | Existing (2006) 724 Students | | | Proposed (2010) 1,000 Students | | | Net Change + 276 Students | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Period | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total | In | Out | Total |
| Daily | 585 | 585 | 1,170 | 810 | 810 | 1,620 | 225 | 225 | 450 |
| AM Peak Hour (7:00 to 8:00 A.M.) | 210 | 175 | 385 | 290 | 240 | 530 | 80 | 65 | 145 |
| School PM Peak Hour (2:00 to 3:00 P.M.) | 95 | 120 | 215 | 135 | 165 | 300 | 40 | 45 | 85 |
| Commuter PM Peak Hour (5:00 to 6:00 P.M.) | 55 | 55 | 110 | 80 | 70 | 150 | 25 | 15 | 40 |

*Source: Heffron Transportation, Inc., 2006, using rates and equations from ITE's Trip Generation, 7th Ed, 2003, Middle School/Junior High School - LU Code 522. Classes begin at 7:45 A.M. and students are dismissed at 2:15 P.M.*

The vehicle trips were distributed and assigned to seven neighborhood intersections to determine impacts on level of service. The report found that all intersections would operate at LOS C or better in 2010 which is the forcasted date the school would be completed. The project would add small amounts of delay to several study intersections but would not degrade overall level of service at any of the intersections. No SEPA conditioning is necessary for traffic impacts.

## CONDITIONS - SEPA

Prior to Construction Permit Issuance

1. The responsible party shall submit a draft construction management plan (CMP) that addresses truck haul routes, lane closures, sidewalk closures, construction and hauling schedules, and parking plans that minimize impacts to nearby residential streets.

*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. The responsible party shall abide by the approved construction management plan approved by DPD.
3. All construction activities are subject to the limitations of the Noise Ordinance. Construction activities (including but not limited to demolition, grading, deliveries, framing, roofing, and painting) shall be limited to non-holiday weekdays[3] from 7am to 6pm. Non-noisy activities, such as site security, monitoring, weather protection shall not be limited by this condition. Construction activities outside the above-stated restrictions may be authorized by the Land Use Planner (Jess Harris- (206)684-7744 or Bob McElhose - (206)386-9745) when necessitated by emergencies, special construction activities (like continuous concrete pours), safety, or street-use related situations. Requests for extended construction hours or weekend days must be submitted to the Land Use Planner at least three (3) days in advance of the requested dates in order to allow DPD to evaluate the request.

[3] New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Junior's Birthday, President's Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Veterans' Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

## CONDITIONS – DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURE

Prior to Occupancy

4. Provide documentation acknowledging compliance with the following condition; in the first year of operation and at least every third year thereafter, review parking needs, pick-up/drop-off activities and bus loading operations and determine if changes are desired to improve traffic flow and reduce parking spillover on the street. Changes that must be considered, but not limited to, are the following;
    - Notifying parents through school newsletters or other media about appropriate locations for student drop-off and pick-up. Parents should be reminded regularly not to park in bus loading areas or block crosswalks.
    - Using school staff or volunteers during arrival and dismissal times to assist children and parents with arrival and departure and to help reduce vehicular/pedestrian conflicts.
    - Providing alternate locations for drop-off and pick-up.
    - Staggered school start and dismissal times to spread traffic and parking demand,
    - Using the Lincoln site to accommodate employee parking
5. Prepare and submit to DPD, a memorandum of agreement stipulating that large events will not be held at the Lincoln High School site and the Hamilton Middle School site

simultaneously. Ensure that parking capacity at Lincoln High School would be available for use during events at Hamilton Middle School.

**6.** Provide documentation stating what the anticipated lay-over or staging time will be in compliance with the following condition; the District shall coordinate with the provider of bus service to make all practicable attempts to limit staging or lay-over at the school or in single family residential neighborhoods during the PM pick up of children.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: September 13, 2007
Jess Harris, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner

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